

# The Concept of “A Community of Shared Destiny” in Robert Frost’s Poems

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**Abstract.** Robert Frost was one of the most well-known poets in the United States. He used to live in the farm in New Hampshire. With familiarity with the natural scenery. Frost’s Poems were famous for the specific images in New England. However, his poems were rarely so plain as it appeared. Frost seemed likely to use the simple words to express the deep meanings. In his poems, the concept of “A community of Shared Destiny” was gradually but deeply implicated. The “community” included “Nature and Man”, “Animals and Man” “Man and Man” and so on.

**Keywords:** A Community of Shared Destiny; Robert Frost; Poems.

## 1. Introduction

Since the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China, President Xi Jinping has mentioned the concept “A Community of Shared Destiny” in large majority of occasions. “A Community of Shared Destiny” was first proposed in the speech of Moscow State Institute of International Relations, which refers to the closed related situations among a variety of nations. Broadly speaking, in the concept, the “community” does not only contain human beings, but everything in the universe, including nature, animals and man. Apparently, Robert Frost is a pastoral poet, but his poetry was filled with wisdom in natural description. Elliot believes, Frost’s poetry describes the ordinary scenery in the countryside, but it contains the extremely profound and complicated meanings inside.[1] Like Emerson, Robert Frost believed that nature, including the animals and plants, and man are United. To put it another way, nature, animals and all human beings are shared in one future. Therefore, we should respect the things around us. In the poetry of Robert Frost, we can easily see the closed relationships between “nature and man”, “animals and man” and “man and man”. This thesis will illustrate the unique ideology of Frost’s poetry. That is, Man does not stand on its own. Nature, animals and man are closely related. The broad meaning of the concept in “A Community of Shared destiny” can be thoroughly implicated in his poetry.

## 2. The Basic Analysis of Frosts Poems from Three Aspects

### 2.1 The “Shared Future” between Nature and Man

Robert Frost was a famous American poet. He got the Get Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for four times. His works made the New England’s countryside as background and explore the social and philosophy issues.[2] He was grown up in the farm in New Hampshire. Therefore, his poetry was filled with the elements of the nature world. However, Frost refused to commit himself as a pastoral poet. Frost believed that nature and Man are related. Almost every poem contains both nature and man.

In 1913, Robert Frost published a collection of poems called *A Boy’s Will*, including a piece of work named *Going for Water*, which thoroughly implicated the inseparable relationship between nature and man.

Going for Water  
The well was dry beside the door,  
And so we went with pail and can  
Across the fields behind the house  
To seek the brook if still it ran;

Not loth to have excuse to go,  
Because the autumn eve was fair  
(Though chill), because the fields were ours,  
And by the brook our woods were there.

We ran as if to meet the moon  
That slowly dawned behind the trees,  
The barren boughs without the leaves,  
Without the birds, without the breeze.

But once within the wood, we paused  
Like gnomes that hid us from the moon,  
Ready to run to hiding new  
With laughter when she found us soon.

Each laid on other a staying hand  
To listen ere we dared to look,  
And in the hush we joined to make  
We heard, we knew we heard the brook.

A note as from a single place,  
A slender tinkling fall that made  
Now drops that floated on the pool  
Like pearls, and now a silver blade.

The poem narrates an affair of going out for water. The first section told us that there was little water in the well so that the poet related the human surroundings to the nature. In order to looking for some water, we went to the brook. The natural scenery and “we” integrated into one. We could play hide- and- seek game with the moon, which brought us a strong sense of happiness. When we heard the sound of the brook, the poet use simile to express the joy we felt. In the poem, Frost described a scene of harmony between nature and man. The poet emphasized that only if the harmonious relationship between nature and man could bring both side a great sense of happiness. Therefore, the element of “A community of shared destiny” was perfectly implicated. However, Frost’s another poem illustrated the opposite side. In 1923, Robert Frost published a poem called *Fire and Ice*. In *Fire and Ice*, Frost appears to tell the readers that if we could not be friendly to the nature, the only result would be wreck and ruin.

Fire and Ice  
Some say the world will end in fire;  
Some say in ice.  
From what I've tasted of desire  
I hold with those who favor fire.  
But if it had to perish twice,  
I think I know enough of hate  
To say that for destruction ice  
Is also great  
And would suffice.

In Ancient Greek mythology, Fire and Ice is the sin of human beings. Prometheus brought fire to man, but humans used it the wrong way, so it might cause a disaster. Because of the anger and jealousy, the Goddess of Ice, Thenea ruined everything. However, anger and jealousy were caused after the

apple picking by Eve. Therefore, through metaphor, the poet dedicated himself to tell the readers that we human beings should be harmonious to the surroundings, including the nature, or the world would be ruin. We are united and related to each other, which equals to the “Community” shared the common destiny.

## 2.2 The “Shared Destiny” between Animals and Man

Besides the natural scenery, Robert Frost used a large number of animals in his poems. Coincidentally, the animals in his poems were mostly like human beings. They could both comprehend and emphasize with humans. On the other hand, the person in the poem could also understand the animals. It seemed that there was something special between animals and man in Frost’s poems. In 1913, Robert Frost published a collection of poems called *A Boy’s Will*, including a piece of work named *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening  
Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village, though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods, fill up with snow.  
My little horse must think it queer,  
To stop without a farmhouse nearby,  
Between the woods and frozen lake,  
The darkest evening of the year.  
He gives his harness bells a shake,  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound’s the sweep,  
Of easy wind and downy flake.  
The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* is one of the most well-known poems of Robert Frost. Since it was published, the critics has showed a great interest in the poem. The poem pictured a scene of a snowy evening in the woods. The poet stooped in the woods and was fantastic by the attracting scene. However, with the freezing weather, there might be a great danger around if they stayed too long time. The horse in the poem realized the danger around them and he shook the bell to warn the poet to leave the woods. Then the poet was suddenly enlightened and realized the responsibility he should hold. In the poem, the horse could understand the poet and he knew he was the same “community of shared destiny” with the poet.

## 2.3 The “Shared Destiny” between Man and Man

In Frost’s poems, the themes vary a lot. A part of his poems pictured a scene of social times between man and man. in 1914, Frost published a poem called *Mending Wall*. In the poem, Frost dedicated himself to express that man should be close but not isolated against each other.

Mending Wall  
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,  
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;  
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.  
...  
There where it is we do not need the wall:

He is all pine and I am apple orchard.  
My apple trees will never get across  
And eat the cones under his pines,  
I tell him. He only says,  
"Good fences make good neighbours."  
Spring is the mischief in me,  
and I wonder If I could put a notion in his head:  
"Why do they make good neighbours? Isn't it  
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.  
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
What I was walking in or walling out,  
And to whom I was like to give offence.  
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That wants it down."

...

He says again, "Good fences make good neighbours."

In the poem, the poet described an affair of mending the wall. It seemed that the nature could hardly bear the existence of the wall, because through the wind and rain, the wall had been cracked once again. With the coming of spring, human beings came out to mend the walls. However, the poet did not believe the necessity of mending the walls. But the neighbours told him that "Good fences make good neighbours.", which made the poet feel confused. From the poem, the poet was likely to express that man shared a common destiny but should not be isolated against each other.

### 3. Conclusion

From the analysis of the themes of Robert Frost's poems, we could easily draw a conclusion that Frost devote himself to share a system of ideology that nature, animals and man are united. To some extent, they are mixed and mingled each other. This essay analyzed four poems of Frost, namely *Going for Water*, *Fire and Ice*, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* and *Mending Wall*. The essay illustrated from three aspects, including the community of shared destiny between nature and man, animals and man and man and man.

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