



A Boy's Will

Robert Frost (1874 - 1963)

Read by:	Becky Miller	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case, jewel box, or paper sleeve
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A Boy's Will is the first book of poems by Frost, published in 1913 when he was in his late thirties, and deals with the ideas of development and maturity. Most of the poems had never been published and were written over the preceding two decades. The book is admittedly partly autobiographical: Frost wrote that the poems were “pretty near being the story of five years” of his life. The title comes from a line in “My Lost Youth” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: “A boy’s will is the wind’s will/And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts” and reflects on Frost’s wayward early years. The first poem, “Into My Own”, marks a turning away from people and the later “Tuft of Flowers” marks a return. The pastoral settings paint a distinctively New England landscape and give rise to questions of the relationship of

man and nature. The book is dedicated to his wife Elinor, who helped choose the poems and their sequencing in the book. First printed in London, his friend Ezra Pound wrote in his review in the *New Freeman* that “The man has the good sense to speak naturally and to paint the thing, the thing as he sees it. And to do this is a very different matter from gunning about for the circumplectious polysyllable”. Pound introduced him to W. B. Yeats, who considered it “the best poetry written in America in a long time”. The book was well-received, with critics praising the directness, simplicity, and Frost’s “ear for silences”.

Robert Lee Frost (March 26, 1874 - January 29, 1963) was the best known and perhaps the most unusual American poet of the twentieth century. His work combines the pastoral imagery of Wordsworth, the introspection of Emily Dickinson, and the New England temperament of Ralph Waldo Emerson with the ambiguity, irony and honesty we associate with modernism. His concept of poetry centered on what he called the “sentence-sound,” the tonal sound of a sentence separate from the sound or meaning of its words. He was unique at the time in adhering to strict rules of meter, rhyme and stanzas; he was clear in his rejection of free verse, claiming “I’d just as soon play tennis with the net down.” Within the formal structures, however, he managed to utilize colloquial expressions and find a conversational tone that conveyed the character of New England and felt uniquely American.

Frost was born in California and moved to Massachusetts at age 11 following the death of his father. He graduated from Lawrence High School as valedictorian and went on to attend Dartmouth and Harvard before settling on a farm in Derry, New Hampshire. After publishing his first poems he became convinced of his destiny as a poet. In 1912 he sold his farm and moved to England, where he came to know Ezra Pound and Edward Thomas and published his first collection, *A Boy’s Will*, in 1915. He won the Pulitzer prize for poetry four times and was awarded honorary degrees from Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge, and Dartmouth, and was the first to serve in the position that came to be known as the Poet Laureate. He was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1960.