

Reluctance

by Robert Frost

Out through the fields and the woods
And over the walls I have wended;
I have climbed the hills of view
And looked at the world, and descended;
I have come by the highway home,
And lo, it is ended.

The leaves are all dead on the ground,
Save those that the oak is keeping
To ravel them one by one
And let them go scraping and creeping
Out over the crusted snow,
When others are sleeping.

And the dead leaves lie huddled and still,
No longer blown hither and thither;
The last lone aster is gone;
The flowers of the witch hazel wither;
The heart is still aching to seek,
But the feet question 'Whither?'

Ah, when to the heart of man
Was it ever less than a treason
To go with the drift of things,
To yield with a grace to reason,
And bow and accept the end
Of a love or a season?

DRA Comment: If I had to choose just one poem, this would be my favorite. I first read it back in 1995 when I was studying at Harvard--although we never studied poetry (smile)—it was a poem that I have gone back to many times in my life (and, in my writing). I don't think there is a more beautiful stanza in all of poetry than the last one here. There will be a time in your lives when you have to "yield with a grace to reason". Find strength, not sadness, in this verse. It has often sustained me.