**"The Gift Outright"**

Robert Frost (1874-1963)

*A Poem for J.F. Kennedy’s Presidential Inauguration*

*January, 1961*

The land was ours before we were the land’s   
She was our land more than a hundred years   
Before we were her people. She was ours   
In Massachusetts, in Virginia,   
But we were England’s, still colonials,   
Possessing what we still were unpossessed by,   
Possessed by what we now no more possessed.   
Something we were withholding made us weak   
Until we found out that it was ourselves   
We were withholding from our land of living,   
And forthwith found salvation in surrender.   
Such as we were we gave ourselves outright   
(The deed of gift was many deeds of war)   
To the land vaguely realizing westward,   
But still unstoried, artless, unenhanced,   
Such as she was, such as she will become.