Robert Frost seems like a traditional poet. Robert Frost thus seems like a literary anomaly. Born three years after Marcel Proust, one before Thomas Mann, and two before F.T. Marinetti, Frost appears to stand apart from the modernist ranks that these and other writers constitute. Ezra Pound urged poets to “make it new,” but Frost distrusted an age that “ran wild in the quest of new ways to be new.” While William Carlos Williams broke from iambic pentameter to explore free verse, Frost composed in metered lines and found new uses for the sonnet; while Wallace Stevens wrote philosophical tercets about a “supreme fiction,” Frost wrote poetic narratives about witches and hired men; while T.S. Eliot moved to London to analyze urban malaise through verse that quotes great European literature, and Langston Hughes moved to Harlem to write of African American experience in poems adapting jazz and blues, Frost settled in New England to write about rural couples in lines using their own colloquialisms. While Eliot insisted that poetry of his time “must be difficult,” Frost wrote verse that was lucid.

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