Michael Karmon

A Late Walk

for high voice and guitar

poems by Robert Frost (1874-1963)

I. My November Guest
II. Wind and Window Flower
   III. Going for Water
      IV. Storm Fear
      V. A Late Walk

ca. 12 minutes
My November Guest

My Sorrow, when she's here with me,
Thinks these dark days of autumn rain
Are beautiful as days can be;
She loves the bare, the withered tree;
She walks the sodden pasture lane.

Her pleasure will not let me stay.
She talks and I am fain to list:
She's glad the birds are gone away,
She's glad her simple worsted grey
Is silver now with clinging mist.

Not yesterday I learned to know
The love of bare November days
Before the coming of the snow,
But it were vain to tell her so,
And they are better for her praise.

Wind and Window Flower

Lovers, forget your love,
And list to the love of these,
She a window flower,
And he a winter breeze.

He marked her through the pane,
He could not help but mark,
And only passed her by,
To come again at dark.

He was a winter wind,
Concerned with ice and snow,
Dead weeds and unmated birds,
And little of love could know.

But he sighed upon the sill,
He gave the sash a shake,
As witness all within
Who lay that night awake.

Perchance he half prevailed
To win her for the flight
From the firelit looking-glass
And warm stove-window light.

But the flower leaned aside
And thought of naught to say,
And morning found the breeze
A hundred miles away.

A Late Walk

When I go up through the mowing field,
The headless aftermath,
Smooth-laid like thatch with the heavy dew,
Half closes the garden path.

And when I come to the garden ground,
The whir of sober birds
Up from the tangle of withered weeds
Is sadder than any words
A tree beside the wall stands bare,
But a leaf that lingered brown,
Disturbed, I doubt not, by my thought,
Comes softly rattling down.

I end not far from my going forth
By picking the faded blue
Of the last remaining aster flower
To carry again to you.

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.

Storm Fear

When the wind works against us in the dark,
And pelts with snow
The lowest chamber window on the east,
And whispers with a sort of stifled bark,
The beast,
'Come out! Come out!'-
It costs no inward struggle not to go,
Ah, no!
I count our strength,
Two and a child,
Those of us not asleep subdued to mark
How the cold creeps as the fire dies at length,-
How drifts are piled,
Dooryard and road ungraded,
Till even the comforting barn grows far away
And my heart owns a doubt
Whether 'tis in us to arise with day
And save ourselves unaided.
I. My November Guest

My sorrow, when she's here with me, Thinks these dark days of autumn rain Are beautiful as days can be; She loves the bare, the withered tree; She walks the sodden pasture lane. Her pleasure will not let me stay. She talks and I am fain to list: She's glad the birds are gone a-

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She's glad her simple worsted grey
Is silver now with clinging mist.

The desolate, deserted trees,
The faded earth, the heavy sky,
The

beauties she so truly sees,

She thinks I have no eye for
these, And vex-es me for rea-son why. Not yes-ter-day I learned to

know The love of bare No- vem- ber days Be- fore the com-ing of the snow,

But it were vain to tell her so, And they are bet-ter for her praise.

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II. Wind and Window Flower

\( \text{\textnotesize \( j = \text{ca. 66} \)} \)

Lovers, forget your love, And list to the love of these,

\( \text{\textnotesize \( j = \text{ca. 58} \)} \)

She a window flower, and he a winter breeze.

frost-y window veil Was melted down at noon, And the

caged yellow bird Hung over her in tune, He

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marked her through the pane, He could not help but mark,

And only passed her by, To come again at dark.

He was a winter wind, C. II

cerned with ice and snow, Dead weeds and unmated birds, And
lit-tle of love could know.

sighed up-on the sill, He gave the sash a shake, As wit-ness all with-in Who

lay that night a-wake. Per-chance he half pre-vailed To win her for the flight From the

fi-re lit look-ing glass And warm stove win-dow light.
But the flower leaned aside
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thought of naught to say,
And morning found the breeze
A hundred miles away.

way.
III. Going for Water

The well was dry beside the door, And

so we went with pail and can

A-cross the fields be-hind the house To

seek the brook if still it ran;

Not

loth to have ex-cuse to go, Be-cause the au-tumn 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 lay 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.

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.
IV. Storm Fear

\[ j = \text{ca. 58} \]

When the wind works against us in the dark, And pelts with snow

The lowest chamber window on the east, And

whispers with a sort of stifled bark, The beast, Come out! Come out! It

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1 count our strength,       Two and a child,

Those of us not asleep subdued to mark How the

cold creeps as the fire dies at length, How drifts are piled

Door-yard and road ungrad-ed Till even the comfort ing barn grows far a-
way, And my heart owns a doubt Wheth-er

tis in us to a-rise with day And save our-selves un-aid-ed.
When I go up through the mowing field, The headless after-
math, Smooth laid like thatch with the heavy dew, Half closes the garden path.

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