MARITAL RELATIONSHIP

“Love is an irresistible desire to be irresistibly desired.”

Robert Frost
*The Figure a Poem Makes* (1939)

*Maritus* in Latin means husband. *The English Oxford Dictionary* defines it as “of marriage or marriage relations”. *The Oxford Dictionary* explains marriage thus: “marriage is a legal union of a man and a woman for cohabitation and often procreation”. It is derived from a French word *marier* which means marry. Marital relations if good can make a home activate positive energy, and bring the house and the surroundings brimming with joy and happiness. In case it is built on suspicion, compromise rather than love, it devours happiness, makes life sour and turns it into a Pandemonium. Life is just “staying” for people who stand still on the earth, counting the winter dinners and giving half of their time to music. In “The Investment,” Frost makes an invocation saying that he does not want people to end their lives just finishing their marital lives. Marriage is an investment that grows, the poet here wants everyone to find the true colours and music out of their lives and “live” their lives to the hilt.

Marriage is the most sacred union of two souls that has sought the silent approval of the Almighty. Marriage binds the two so close that the two complement each other. Their life does not come to a standstill, instead it gains momentum, so much so that many have confessed saying, “it’s bliss on Earth”. Otherwise, with all the hardships around, it would be difficult for man to pursue this journey all alone. Love is the most wonderful thing that could happen in one’s life. It electrifies one’s life making it worth living. The narrator’s travels in “Reluctance” have finally led him
back home, but he is unhappy to find nothing left but the dead leaves of the winter season. He is not willing to accept such an ending to all his adventures and refuses to “yield” or “go with the drift of things” simply because the season proclaims it so. His travels may have come to an end and the season ended, but that does not mean that he has to accept the turn of events without emotions. “The flowers of the witch-hazel wither, / The heart is still aching to seek, / But the feet question, “Wither?””

The narrator realises that no matter how much one tries to resist, one has to bow and accept the end, may it be one’s love or season. This poem stems directly from Frost’s life. He wrote this poem while he was living with his mother and sister at Lawrence, Massachusetts, before he had convinced his future wife Elinor to marry him. As Jay Parini, the biographer of Frost brings to light the fact that Frost, when firmly rejected by Elinor during his visit to her school, was so disheartened that he even contemplated committing suicide and becoming a part of the “last lone aster” and “dead leaves.” However, he eventually found courage and decided not to go “with the drift of things” and accept Elinor’s rejection. Such an admission to failure would have been “treason” to his heart and his love. God had gifted him with a priceless gift of life, which he had to live. (Gerber, Philip L. 3.)

Communication is perhaps the only possible escape from isolation and despair; it is also the key to a successful marriage but at the same time Frost insists that communication is extremely difficult to achieve. In “Home Burial” Frost describes two terrible events, the death of a child and the destruction of a marriage. The death of course is tragic, but the most unfortunate thing is the inability of the husband and wife to communicate with each other and express their grief. It is this communication gap that destroys their marriage. Frost as usual is adept at highlighting this inability to communicate by introducing free verse dialogues where each
character speaks to the reader, but neither of them tries to understand the other. The reader is left to understand that a healthy communication could have saved their marriage and done away with their isolation. It was their unwillingness to take any necessary steps to create a healthy relationship that doomed them forever. In this poem the woman rebukes her husband and resents the necessity of him having to bury their child, and talking about everyday concerns as if life without their child should not be worth living. For her the only suitable response to the death of her child is to die, and her resentment seems beyond relief or cure. The failure to allow mourning to be altered into catharsis leads not only to melancholy, gloom, and depression but also, in Frost’s poem, to misanthropy. (Pack, Robert. 104) The wife’s bereavement not only worsens the antagonism but leads astray the sexual tension between them into an infectious hatred that seems likely to lead to obvious assault. This very hostility is clearly seen in the husband’s final words in response to his wife’s threat to leave; “I’ll follow and bring you back by force. I will –” (120). The relationship between the husband and wife in “The Death of the Hired Man”, a poem written about the same time is unlike the couple in “Home Burial”. The relationship between husband and wife in each poem is first suggested by their position on the stairs where they meet to talk. In “Home Burial” the man is seen in a threatening and dominating position above the woman, “Mounting until she cowered under him” (11) while in “Hired Man” they sit next to each other at the same level: “She took the market things from Warren’s arms / And set them on the porch, then drew him down / To sit beside her on the wooden steps” (8-10). This equality of position suggests their respect for each other just as in “West-Running Brook” there is a mutuality that defines the couple, a harmony that allows the woman to say of the symbolic brook that it “Can trust itself to go by contraries / The way I can with you – and you with me –” (9-10). This couple
in “The Death of the Hired Man” views Silas, their farmhand, from divergent perspectives – Mary with immediate compassion and Warren being more judgemental.

The narrator describes Warren’s return with the news of Silas’s death: He “slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.” (173) Finally, he takes Mary’s hand, uniting himself with the moonlight as well as with some kind of universal “tenderness” that her hand can be seen to represent. The poem concludes with Warren’s statement of Silas’s death, “Dead, was all he answered.” (175) In effect their mourning of Silas has already taken place since their grief has focused on Silas’s life – a focus that makes the question of judgment after death and Silas’s ultimate worthiness seem less compelling. The fact being suggested is that life and mourning are inseparable, and this has to be acknowledged and accepted. The sharing of grief, as this poem shows, may make grief more bearable and even strengthen the bond between those who are able to share their sorrow. In “The Death of the Hired Man” the couple have a difference of opinion, but there is no confrontation, no raising of voice, no accusation or putting allegations on each other. Instead, there is mutual respect for each other’s view. This is regarding their definition of home or their view regarding Silas. There is a mutual compatibility between the two. Warren’s picking up a little stick, breaking it and tossing it by is symbolic of being more humane, showing empathy, doing away with his pride, his ego, being less judgemental and more compassionate. To be more precise, Warren gives up his obstinacy and mellows down. He now is forgiving and accepts Silas. Mary calling Silas “worthless” hurt him. He immediately tried to soften her judgement of Silas with an observation that, “I can’t think Si ever hurt anyone.” In calling him “Si”, Warren reveals his affection for Silas, which previously he had repressed. (Vogel, Nancy. 201) What the reader
ultimately gets to see is that Warren’s instincts are tilted towards Mary. He is convinced by her argument and feels more compassionate towards Silas. The spouse in Warren’s case has been able to convince her husband to mellow down and show sympathy and affection towards Silas.

The woman in “A Servant to Servants” is a typical 1900 rural New England woman with a history of mental illness. She’d been in the asylum once. Mental illness runs in her family. She mentions her uncle who, being insane was kept in a cage. The cause of his insanity being he was dumped in love. What is ironical here is:

And just when he was at the height,

Father and mother married, and mother came,

A bride, to help take care of such a creature,

And accommodate her young life to his.

That was what marrying father meant to her. (125-129)

The very authenticity and sacredness of marriage is scorned. Her life is much the same. Drudgery, insecurity and desire for appreciation are the predominant features of her life. She is desperately in need of an ear, so that she could pour out her heart. This is reason enough why she is not perturbed on being disturbed or delayed from her household chores. She is not anxious to get back to work, instead she is relieved, happy, with a whiff of fresh air. In short, she feels at liberty to give vent to her unspoken thoughts. “I guess you’d find. . . . It seems to me / I can’t express my feelings anymore.” (6-7) A feeling of captivity has replaced the verve or the dynamism to live life in full swing. Life is derailed, with no igniting force, no spark. She doesn’t even know, “Whether I am glad, sorry, or anything.” (12) She has developed an indifferent attitude. Her life is devoid of beauty and hope. Her kitchen
overlooks a beautiful lake, but this scenic beauty fails to delight her. She is fatigued, wishes to rest, “its rest I want – there, I have said it out –” (49). Len, her husband, is very optimistic. He feels it is medication that will cure her but forgets its rest she needs. This also brings out the callous attitude of Len in contrast to her self-sacrificing and self-effacing nature. There is a constant urge to be appreciated, complimented, accepted and recognised. In spite of all the atrocities she is going through she innocently shields her husband, “It’s not that Len don’t want the best for me.” (60) She feels guilty if there is a grain of suspicion in her heart regarding Len and doesn’t wish to encourage herself in this respect. There is undaunted loyalty in her heart for him. She does not blame him. Instead she holds him as her ideal and defends him when she says, “His work’s a man’s, of course, from sun to sun, / But he works when he works as hard as I do –” (66-67). She subtly tries to bring out Len’s shortcoming, but then censures the hired men who shamelessly took advantage, were overbearing without the least guilt in doing so. She’s hurt because in spite of working all day she is not given any significance. The hired men for whom she cooks do not give her any respect. The reader is bound to analyse that if the husband does not respect his wife, the others of course will take her for granted. However, the following lines make it clearer:

We have four here to board, great good-for-nothings,
Sprawling about the kitchen with their talk
While I fry their bacon. Much they care!
No more put out in what they do or say
Than if I wasn’t in the room at all.
Coming and going all the time, they are:
I don’t learn what their names are, let alone
Their characters or whether they are safe
To have inside the house with doors unlocked. (76-84)

Let alone their “characters” or whether they are “safe” – a deep feeling of insecurity is seen in her. Her self-esteem is hurt when in spite of her working and catering to them they do not in the least bother about her. Leave that alone, they behave as if she is not there in the room. She is probably scared of her husband, for she says, “I didn’t want the blame if things went wrong.” (150) In spite of the fact that she is insecure, she does not dare tell her husband. She has developed a very complacent attitude. She feels what is inevitable will happen and is well aware of her limitations,

. . . I’m past such help –

Unless Len took the notion, which he won’t

And I won’t ask him – it’s not sure enough.

I s’pose I’ve got to go the road I’m going:

Other folks have to, and why shouldn’t I? (156-160)

She recollects her dark past that still threatens and gives her nightmares. This makes her feel helpless serving as the sole reason why she does not revolt or question Len. This woman in Frost’s gallery of portraits is docile, submissive and of a mule mentality, a woman who is a loser in life.

“The Housekeeper” portrays the life of John and Estelle in a live-in relationship for fifteen years and both, happy and content with each other. She is often bullied, but she bears all his tantrums, his selfish behaviour and male chauvinism with a smile, only because she loves him. Love has the capacity to endure. “She seems to have the housework, and besides / Half of the outdoor work, though as for that, / He’d
say she does it more because she likes it.” (116-118) “... He manages to keep the upper hand / On his own farm. He’s boss. . . .” (144-145) “John bought him, and we paid the bill with beads –” (165). John does not wish to make a commitment whereas Estelle wants to give a legal name to their relationship. She walks out of the relationship and elopes with a man who promises marriage to her. Although her former relationship was satisfying, she wanted society to accord a legal status to her relationship. Here the woman’s fragile self-esteem and self-respect is hurt, she is different from the woman in “A Servant to Servants”, and she refuses to let anyone take her for granted. She takes her own decision and walks out on him – never to return. Every relationship calls for a feeling of security and commitment, without which the flexibility is lost and the strings give way. To walk out on someone after living with him for fifteen long years is indeed a bold decision which is not taken in a second. It must have taken her quite some time to muster up courage, contemplate within herself before deciding on an elopement with someone who had consented to marry her. A legal name to her marriage would completely secure her self-respect and welcome her to motherhood.

Fear comes from the unconscious mind, a mind that is troubled, anxious because of some prior wrong and also insecurity. The fear felt by the woman in “The Fear” is caused by her belief that she is being spied on by her previous lover who is vindictive and has followed her to cause harm to Joel, her husband: “I’ll be the one if anybody goes!” (61). She wishes to be the first to face the danger, thus safeguarding him from any misfortune. The poem could also reveal the vanity of a woman who thinks that her former lover is obsessed with her and the disappointment and humiliation felt when she realises how wrong she was. The extinguishing of the lantern is symbolic of the burning desire to have her lover spying on her. In the words
of Frost as quoted in the very beginning of the chapter, “Love is an irresistible desire to be irresistibly desired” serves a perfect definition of “love”.

It is not always vanity that strains the relationship between the husband and wife, but other factors also, the absence of a child being one of them. Marital relations in “The Impulse” get strained due to this very reason. The child being the quintessence of married life overrules every other thing that is important. In fact, the bonding of the parents becomes strong. Life becomes a blessing and an honour to live. It gives meaning to their relationship. Every woman craves to become a mother, give birth and nurture the child in the best possible manner so that one day when the child grows she feels proud to be called his mother. This bliss of married life was not experienced by the woman in “The Impulse”. The world seemed lifeless to her; there was absolutely no verve or enthusiasm in life. The house haunted her, so she followed her husband to his work place. She tried all possible ways to pass her time, but failed. It is a misconception that only death can separate the married couple. Here, through this poem Frost has shown that death is not the only reason or cause of separation. The loneliness and barrenness in one’s life in the absence of a child could definitely be the one to head the list. She desperately tried all possible means to keep herself happy in his company, but the emptiness within was so threatening that she wanted to break free from it. One day she left, “never to return”. He called out to her, but she didn’t answer or return. She stood, and then ran and hid herself never to be found again. What happened after that, Frost has penned down as a wonderful piece of aphorism:

Sudden and swift and light as that

The ties gave,
And he learned of finalities

Besides the grave (25-28)

The couple was in love with each other, but there was something that was corroding their happiness. The woman soon realised what it was, she tried her best to keep herself happy but all attempts proved futile until her last attempt, in which she succeeded. Her spouse had never expected this to happen, but the relationship ended very swiftly. It was later in life that he realised there is something more, a feeling of contentment, and a sense of completeness that one experiences on having a child. It is the child that further tightens the bond and harmonises the relationship between the parents.

Love sometimes makes one very possessive. There are people who have a certain obsession regarding their loved one. “Paul’s Wife” is a kind of satire. Paul, the protagonist in the poem is a hero in true spirit – very brave, daring and admired much, but he was very sensitive at the mere mention of his wife. When people asked him about his wife he didn’t answer, did not even lose his temper and surprisingly, he just disappeared, in which direction nobody knew. Although very soon they got to know his whereabouts. Gossip mongering is all that people do. Some said he’d been jilted, others said she’d eloped with someone and abandoned him forever. It was also some vague assumption that she was not his equal, that Paul was ashamed of her, for she was some “half breed squaw” (39). He was “all duty to her” (12), “had to run right off to look her up” (13). This clearly points out his cause of apprehension. But, the portrait drawn by Murphy (Paul’s close associate) makes it clear that there was no question of his being ashamed of anything. A black-tongued person that he was, he knew what he was capable of. He “told the boss the load would be all right, / ‘The
sun will bring your load in’ – and it did –” (46-47). His wife was an enigma, as Murphy witnessed: “. . . Paul sawed his wife / Out of a white-pine log.” (54-55) He himself had discovered her. The appearance of the girl is like a myth. One day these two lovers were tracked down by Murphy and the others. “And there, well after dark, let Murphy tell it, / They saw Paul and his creature keeping house.” (127-128) She seemed a nymph of the wood that had illuminated the whole place. “Brightly, as if a star played on the place, / Paul darkly, like her shadow. All the light / Was from the girl herself, though, not from a star,” (135-137) the aura of her presence heightened the wilderness of the ruffians, who yelled out their throats and threw a bottle, “As a brute tribute of respect to beauty. / Of course, the bottle fell short by a mile, / But the shout reached the girl and put her light out.” (141-143) She disappeared into oblivion. So, Paul did have a wife but as Murphy said, he put on those airs about his wife to keep her to himself. He had an obsession for her. The poem speaks of the relationship between a man and a woman. Sometimes love becomes very selfish:

Owning a wife with him meant owning her.

She wasn’t anybody else’s business,

Either to praise her, or so much as name her.

Murphy’s idea was that a man like Paul

Wouldn’t be spoken to about a wife

In any way the world knew how to speak. (151-157)

People in love sometimes forget the fragile line that is drawn; they refuse to share their love with anyone, as in the case of Paul. He didn’t want her to be seen or talked to. Sometimes such erratic behaviour results in not only being irrational but
also proves disastrous. This is what Murphy comments towards the end. Though Paul didn’t want to talk about her, “the world knew how to speak.”

Leave aside obsession, there are some exceptions that are selfless in love. Love, some say, does not ask for any favour. “Place for a Third” serves as a remarkable example of selfless love. Eliza, Laban’s third wife had made three marriages to three of his. Thinking of three women in a burial row made her impatient and she expressed her displeasure on being given a place near them. She felt it below her dignity to be placed with the other two. True love reads the mind as well as the heart. Laban knew exactly what she had on her mind. His love for her was so deep that he took the initiative to look for the grave of the young boy who happened to be her first husband and of whom she was very fond:

    He found the grave a town or two away,

    The headstone cut with John, Beloved Husband,

    Beside it room reserved, they say a sister’s,

    A never-married sister, of that husband. (38-41)

The unfortunate Laban didn’t know what to do, but fulfilment of his beloved Eliza’s wish had now become the ultimate goal of his life. Laying aside all inhibitions, he begged John’s sister for the grave. The sister after a lot of contemplation and queries, why he wanted, how much he cared and why he cared made a firm decision that she wouldn’t give. “Eliza’s had too many other men”, she said (78). The disillusioned Laban had no option but to buy her a new plot to lie alone. This served as a blessing in disguise as it gave him a lot of choice when his time came to lie for the last time and that of course would be beside his very own Eliza.
“Two Look at Two” has a different outlook. It’s about a man and a woman having a difficult relationship. The image of the couple going up a mountain symbolises their tough journey through life because of the differences in their relationship. Love and forgetting might have carried them a little further, but with darkness all around they would soon have to halt. Looking back, the path was rough and unsafe in darkness, when suddenly they halted because of a tumbled wall that had barbed wire fencing. This gives one an image of a prison, being trapped in a relationship, or it could even be trapped momentarily because of a difficult time in the relationship. Going beyond was not safe. Love can’t work all the magic in a relationship on its own. Selfless love and commitment is what is needed. They thought they were done. It was an end to their relationship, but the poet says there was something more to that, “A doe from round a spruce stood looking at them” (15). “She seemed to think that two thus they were safe.” (21) She sighed and then passed unperturbed along the wall. This is all, but no, not yet, she snorted, as though bidding them to wait:

A buck from round the spruce stood looking at them
Across the wall as near the wall as they.
This was an antlered buck of lusty nostrils,
Not the same doe come back into her place. (27-30)

It kept shaking its head, “As if to ask, ‘why don’t you make some motion? / Or give some sign of life? Because you can’t. / I doubt if you’re as living as you look.’” (32-34) One should take the initiative to make the relationship work. To puff it up with life, meaning thereby that if they can’t, then their relationship is dead. With this it too passed “unscared” (37) along the wall. Looking at the two was like looking at oneself in a mirror, they could see themselves in the deer. This made them realise that
“earth is one unlooked-for favor” (41) love is selfless, does not ask for anything in return, instead it only gives. This strengthened their relationship and made them certain that earth returned their love.

Another Frost’s poem of selfless and true love that has immortalised itself is “Not to Keep”. The very title echoes the plight and sacrifice made by the soldier’s wife. Her undaunted service for the country is no less than her husband’s. Being a wife she could not claim her right over him. He belonged to the country first, and then to her. The opening line is full of irony, “They sent him back to her.” (1) And she could have him; they’d given him back to her – alive. “Alive” that is where the actual irony lies. He’d not been disfigured physically, but the mental trauma he’d been through was irreparable. “They had given him back to her, but not to keep.” (23) He had been sent because at that point he was of no use to them, he had been sent so that timely medicine, proper rest and good care could be taken. Who else could do that, but the spouse? The husband too is convinced of this truth for he says: “. . . and you a week, / Can cure me to go again.” (16-17) The husband also knows why he had been sent. And this needed no words; it was understood by a mere gesture of the eyes. Selfless love does not need a voice, it is the heart that speaks and the other reciprocates.

True love calls for a total commitment, a lot of adjustments, adapting oneself to suit the mood of the other, as Fred, in the “West-Running Brook” tells his beloved about the speciality of the “West Running Brook” that it “Can trust itself to go by contraries / The way I can with you – and you with me –” (9-10). This is marital relationship in true spirit: being dedicated, having full trust and faith in each other.
“Trust” is the keyword that secures and brings everlasting contentment in a happy married life.

The thought of writing “On the Heart’s Beginning to Cloud the Mind” occurred when travelling by train Frost crossed the desert of Utah at midnight. It begins with a lot of pessimism. The poet is under depression, he sees a “flickering, human pathetic light” and felt it would soon be extinguished. This is symbolic of a faint ray of hope that illumines the darkness within one’s self and it often flickers if not supported. The poet remembers having heard that the flickering was because of the trees and that people could burn the fire as long as they please. Similarly, the faint ray could further illuminate one’s world if one chose to; one could also put it out if one pleased. Life after all is not so bad: “He is husband, she is wife. / She fears not him, they fear not life.” (36-37) meaning to say that the two together can beat the world. No matter what hurdles come their way. If they are together they will definitely find their way out. The world seems lost, unconquerable, if one of them is left alone. If a harmonious relationship is built up in a marriage, the two can beat the world. The last stanza of “All Revelation” clearly states that together one can conquer the world. Life will be a victory, with peace and harmony prevalent at all times.

Eyes seeking the response of eyes

Bring out the stars, bring out the flowers,
Thus concentrating earth and skies
So none need be afraid of size.
All revelation has been ours. (16-20)

“My Butterfly” is a beautiful elegy dedicated to Elinor, Frost’s wife. Winter is prevailing not only in the surroundings, but even within his heart. He has described
his love as the elegant butterfly, “My Butterfly” he calls it. He summons his love, saying that the “emulous” flowers are dead, even the foolish sun that scared you has fled, it is only me that is left to mourn thee. He recalls the blissful moments they had spent. “It seemed God let thee flutter from his gentle clasp:” (27) He describes his love as a butterfly that flew away from God’s grasp, then fearing that she would win, he snatched her away with ungentle grasp. Life loses its charm, the verve and zing goes missing, the spark dimmers and one feels totally shattered on losing one’s love. With perfect alacrity which seems to be his forte, Frost has done full justice by peeping within the heart of true dedicated love and exhibiting to the world what actually marital relationship means.

“The Silken Tent” is a masterpiece of Frost. It has the right to stand with the best poems of Frost. Frost once said: “Like a piece of ice on a hot stove the poem must ride on its own melting . . . read it a hundred times; it will forever keep its freshness as a petal keeps its fragrance. It can never lose its sense of a meaning that once unfolded by surprise as it went.” The very word silk is symbolic of lustre, sheen, elite texture, durability and warmth; tent provides shelter, a feeling of security, relaxation, ease and comfort. All these qualities combined together stand for his love. Frost has dedicated this poem to his wife who was his source of inspiration. Small things don’t perturb her, she is very strong, can stand the change of time. She “is loosely bound / By countless silken ties of love and thought” (9-10). She is an epitome of love. She is very cautious even to the slightest wave of capriciousness.

His poem “A Late Walk” has a nostalgic note. It talks about some great loss in life. It is about his life – Frost’s own life, the autumn of his life where he refers
to the continuous chirping of the birds to be distressing. A beautiful depiction of the season along with his own life,

A tree beside the wall stands bare,

But a leaf that lingered brown,

Disturbed, I doubt not, by my thought,

Comes softly rattling down. (9-12)

He ends not far from where he’d started. He picks up the last remains of the faded blue aster flower to bring to the grave of his beloved, just as he’d brought fresh ones for her during spring when she was alive. Here he is talking of a great loss in life. The twelfth line where he uses the antithesis, “Coming softly rattling down” has the same connotation to his loneliness, for when one is lonely, even the falling of a lone leaf seem to be breaking the silence of his thoughts. The language in “Never Again Would Birds’ Song Be the Same” is not elevated, though the concept is. The tone is conversational; it seems that Frost is paying respect to women. The poet says that women are considered the daughters of Eve and after hearing the woman’s voice, the bird’s voice is never as sweet. It is only she, who could have an influence on the birds as she was their source of inspiration. Frost has beautifully ended the sonnet with an epithet that speaks all. “Never again would birds’ song be the same. / And to do that to birds was why she came.” (13-14) How very true. It is the most wonderful tribute that a devoted husband can pay to his soul mate.

"The Subverted Flower" has been read as an intensely personal poem. It is based on Frost's fantasies related to an incident that occurred during his courtship with Elinor White, who later became his wife during the summer of 1892. Jay Parini calls the summer an “idyllic one” for Frost, but writes about how the two took together the
outing. The poem was so personal that Elinor would not let him publish it during her life time (Parini 33). It was first published in “A Witness Tree”, four years after Elinor’s death. In the poem as the man experiences rejection of his passionate expressions, his culpability, apprehension, and agitation stimulate an awareness of himself as a brute. Simultaneously, the woman who shuns him is transformed progressively from one who is "richly erotic" to a "pathetic imbecile." Schmukler hypothesizes that “Frost's perception of the rejection by the young woman is linked to his early conflict with his mother. The safety of the walled garden, from the young woman's perspective, is viewed symbolically as maternal. The theme of ‘protective walls’ representing woman is juxtaposed with the intense feeling aroused by the rejecting fiancé and the psychotic sister.”

It is not necessary that love is both sided. An example of unrequited love is found in “Wind and Window Flower”, a masterpiece of his that brings to light a clear picture of the conservative society. The winter breeze loves the window flower. They are from entirely two different worlds. The winter breeze, symbolic of cold and barreness, is just the opposite of the window flower which symbolises warmth and light – both representing two different characteristic traits. The winter breeze makes an effort to attract the window flower, but the flower is unaware of his true intentions and “leaned aside”. The moment or chance for love passes: “. . . found the breeze / A hundred miles away.” (27-28) This reminds one of the adage so commonly used, “Opportunities strike your door once.” This poem is a tragic story of one-sided love. “A Dream Pang” also talks of love that does not reciprocate. This poem tells us of a wanderer, who in a dream, had withdrawn into the forest and his song was swallowed up in leaves. When his love came to the forest edge, she looked and pondered for long, but did not enter, though the wish was strong. Instead, shook her head as though
trying to say, “‘I dare not – too far in his footsteps stray – / He must seek me would he undo the wrong.’” (7-8) The poet says he was a witness to all this and it hurt him not to call and tell her what he felt for her. “To Earthward” symbolises the depth of love and the feelings of a person madly in love. But now that love is lost; she’s not with him and this pricking of the heart and pain is not enough for him. All he wants is the return of that loss and since he can’t get it, he just wishes to rest and never wake up. After one experiences a certain loss in life, that certain and peculiar scent could take one back to the exact feelings that one felt. In grief, there comes a time when one realises that the one loved is not coming back, no matter how much one prays or lives in false hope. At the spur of the moment one decides to quit, doing away with life because that is the only way to be relieved of the pain. For Frost who had been an optimist throughout his life this pain is not enough – he wishes to reach the catharsis so that his pain begins to heal.

Though every relationship has its own significance, the marital relationship happens to be the most fragile and sacred and needs a lot of adjustments. There are times when in order to maintain compatibility one has to let go of one’s ego. Not doing so results in severe clashes and broken homes. This could have an adverse effect during the initial years of the child’s upbringing. It could scar his relationship with either of his parents. Knowing well the responsibilities of a bard, Frost has very sagaciously brought about both the perspectives giving ample scope to his readers to look behind the veil of this rosy relationship.

Shakespeare in his poem “The Seven Ages” says,

The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,

With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;

His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide

For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,

Turning again toward childish treble, pipes

And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,

That ends this strange eventful history,

Is second childishness and mere oblivion,

Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything. (19-28)

With age when eyesight become weak and one has a blurred vision that is the time one needs one’s spouse most. In the absence of which life becomes dull, and difficult to pull through, but with one’s spouse along, the end journey becomes smooth. If one is with one’s better half, there is no need of anyone else. This is the quintessence and the mother of every relationship. If this seed is healthy, the plant emerging from it will be strong and healthy, fully armed to meet every challenge of life. This relationship basically teaches one what interdependence is. If one is the breadwinner, the other converts the house into a home and with her self-sacrificing nature she serves as the hallmark and the most sought after tonic required to build a strong and happy home.
Works cited

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