



**Frostiana: Seven Country Songs for Men's,
Women's and Mixed Voices with Piano
Accompaniment: Stopping by Woods on a Snowy
Evening**

Robert Frost

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In 1958, Randall Thompson was commissioned to compose a piece celebrating the 200th anniversary of the incorporation of the town of Amherst, Massachusetts. The townspeople suggested that Thompson set a poem by Robert Frost, the quintessential New England poet who had lived for a time in Amherst. Thompson, a friend of Frost's, agreed but rejected the town's choice of poem, *The Gift Outright*. Instead, he chose to compose a suite of seven poems, and titled it *Frostiana*. Thompson subtitled the suite *Seven Country Songs*, and the poems he selected certainly provide a nostalgic glimpse of rural New England life. A common thread unites the poems, emphasizing the importance of the many small choices we are called to make throughout life. Through his sensitive settings of Frost's texts, Thompson gently counsels us to take the road less traveled, to keep our promises before we sleep, to stay our minds upon something like a star. Thompson himself conducted the premiere at the Bicentennial Commemoration on October 18, 1959. The Bicentennial Chorus, comprised of singers from throughout the township, was accompanied on the piano, as Thompson didn't orchestrate the work until 1965. Robert Frost attended, and was so delighted that at the conclusion of the performance, he rose to his feet and shouted, "Sing that again!"

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