

April 2019

A Cabin the Clearing

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uni.edu/hearst_documents

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Recommended Citation

"A Cabin the Clearing" (2019). *James Hearst Documents*. 48.
https://scholarworks.uni.edu/hearst_documents/48

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the James Hearst Collection at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in James Hearst Documents by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.



A C A B I N I N T H E C L E A R I N G



At Christmas 1951 a new poem

comes to you with Holiday Greetings

the warmest

from Robert Frost *your fellow bard*



A CABIN IN THE CLEARING
BY ROBERT FROST



Copyright 1951 by Robert Frost

MIST

I don't believe the sleepers in this house
Know where they are.

SMOKE

They've been here long enough
To push the woods back from around the house
And part them in the middle with a path.

MIST

And still I doubt if they know where they are.
And I begin to fear they never will.
All they maintain the path for is the comfort
Of visiting with the equally bewildered.
Nearer in plight their neighbors are than distance.

SMOKE

I am the guardian wraith of starlit smoke
That leans out this and that way from their chimney.
I will not have their happiness despaired of.

MIST

No one - not I - would give them up for lost
Simply because they don't know where they are.
I am the damper counterpart of smoke
That gives off from a garden ground at night
But lifts no higher than a garden grows.
I cotton to their landscape. That's who I am.
I am no further from their fate than you are.

SMOKE

They must by now have learned the native tongue.
Why don't they ask the Red Man where they are?

MIST

They often do, and none the wiser for it.
So do they also ask philosophers
Who come to look in on them from the pulpit.
They will ask anyone there is to ask—
In the fond faith accumulated fact
Will of itself take fire and light the world up.
Learning has been a part of their religion.

SMOKE

If the day ever comes when they know *who*
They are, they may know better where they are.
But who they are is too much to believe—
Either for them or the onlooking world.
They are too sudden to be credible.

MIST

Listen, they murmur talking in the dark
On what should be their daylong theme continued.
Putting the lamp out has not put their thought out.
Let us pretend the dew drops from the eaves
Are you and I eavesdropping on their unrest—
A mist and smoke eavesdropping on a haze—
And see if we can tell the bass from the soprano.

*Than smoke and mist who better could appraise
The kindred spirit of an inner haze.*

Decorations by Leo Manso



Printed at The Spiral Press, New York

