

## Jeffrey Meyers: On "The Witch of Coös"

"The Witch of Coös" (named for a county in northern New Hampshire) is a ghost - or skeleton - story inspired by the heroines in the tales of Edgar Poe who burst the confines of their coffins. The down-to-earth narrator confirms the reality of the supernatural events, which were told to him by the witch and her son (two "old-believers," or old-fashioned mediums) when their desire to confess overcame the need to keep their long-held secret. Forty years ago, they told him, a skeleton locked in the cellar carried itself "like a pile of dishes" up two flights of stairs and into the attic. The bones belonged to the woman's lover, whom her late French-Canadian husband, Toffile Lajway (Théophile LaJoie), had killed and buried under the house. Punning and quoting Chaucer's "Prioress' Tale," Frost said the theme of the poem was "murder will out - he's murder trying to get out."

From Robert Frost: A Biography. Copyright © 1996 by Jeffrey Meyers.

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**Criticism Target:**

Robert Frost [2]

**Author:**

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