

Jeffrey Meyers: On "Nothing Gold Can Stay"

Another brilliant, complex and resonant short poem, "Nothing Cold Can Stay," reconsiders (like several lyrics in *A Boy's Will*) the perennial theme of mutability. The opening line-- "Nature's first green is gold"--is extremely ambiguous. It could mean either that nature's first green in the springtime has now turned to autumnal gold or that nature's first growth is golden, or precious, because it lasts such a short time, cannot hold its color and fades as soon as the leaves fall in autumn. The fall of the leaves is connected to the Fall of Man, when "Eden sank to grief." Just as the dawn inevitably "goes down" (like the leaves) to day, so the negative thought in the title--which suggests the transience of all things--is inevitably and tragically repeated in the last line of the poem.

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

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