

Joe Hill's Activist Poetry

VS

Robert Frost's Think-a-Lot Poetry

Intro and Assignment

Most modern poetry does not ask readers to do anything more than explore the feelings and thoughts of the poet, and poetry critical of society is becoming rarer. Joe Hill's poetry from the early 20th century is uniquely 'unpoetic' insofar as it encourages action and revels criticizing society and even individuals.

For this unit, we will compare Joe Hill's and Robert Frost's poetry. The links below lead to two good collections of poems, one for each poet.

<http://www.folkarchive.de/hill.html>

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/robert-frost#tab-poems>

To write an introduction, please read a brief biography of each poet. Note that both had experience with factories and that they were contemporaries (lived at the same time).

To help you organize ideas about these two extremely different poets, use the chart below:

JOE HILL

ROBERT FROST

Most poems are literal, without metaphor, but they are rich in irony and sarcasm.	Most poems are rich in metaphor and simile.
Most poems express intense emotions ranging from outrage to grief.	Most poems are calm and restrained.

<p>Most poems express feelings for others and are products of Joe's class consciousness.</p>	<p>Most poems are about the poet or about unknown or imaginary characters.</p>
<p>Many poems are actionable and were written to inspire workers and strikers.</p>	<p>Perhaps not even one poem is actionable; a few express mild interest in the fate of workers; most are only intended to inspire the reader to reflect, agree, or enjoy them.</p>
<p>Many poems were controversial because they promoted ideas and actions that threatened the ruling class.</p>	<p>None of the poems are controversial; none promote any obviously dangerous ideas. The poet was, in fact, loved by the ruling class and was a poet laureate.</p>