***Directive***

**Robert Frost**

Back out of all this now too much for us,  
Back in a time made simple by the loss  
Of detail, burned, dissolved, and broken off  
Like graveyard marble sculpture in the weather,  
There is a house that is no more a house  
Upon a farm that is no more a farm  
And in a town that is no more a town.  
The road there, if you’ll let a guide direct you  
Who only has at heart your getting lost,  
May seem as if it should have been a quarry–  
Great monolithic knees the former town  
Long since gave up pretense of keeping covered.  
And there’s a story in a book about it:  
Besides the wear of iron wagon wheels  
The ledges show lines ruled southeast-northwest,  
The chisel work of an enormous Glacier  
That braced his feet against the Arctic Pole.  
You must not mind a certain coolness from him  
Still said to haunt this side of Panther Mountain.  
Nor need you mind the serial ordeal  
Of being watched from forty cellar holes  
As if by eye pairs out of forty firkins.  
As for the woods’ excitement over you  
That sends light rustle rushes to their leaves,  
Charge that to upstart inexperience.  
Where were they all not twenty years ago?  
They think too much of having shaded out  
A few old pecker-fretted apple trees.  
Make yourself up a cheering song of how  
Someone’s road home from work this once was  
Who may be just ahead of you on foot  
Or creaking with a buggy load of grain.  
The height of the adventure is the height  
Of country where two village cultures faded  
Into each other. Both of them are lost.  
And if you’re lost enough to find yourself  
By now, pull in your ladder road behind you  
And put a sign up CLOSED to all but me.  
Then make yourself at home. The only field  
Now left’s no bigger than a harness gall.  
First there’s the children’s house of make believe,  
Some shattered dishes underneath a pine,  
The playthings in the playhouse of the children.  
Weep for what little things could make them glad.  
Then for the house that is no more a house,  
But only a belilaced cellar hole,  
Now slowly closing like a dent in dough.  
This was no playhouse but a house in earnest.  
Your destination and your destiny’s  
A brook that was the water of the house,  
Cold as a spring as yet so near its source,  
Too lofty and original to rage.  
(We know the valley streams that when aroused  
Will leave their tatters hung on barb and thorn.)  
I have kept hidden in the instep arch  
Of an old cedar at the waterside  
A broken drinking goblet like the Grail  
Under a spell so the wrong ones can’t find it,  
So can’t get saved, as Saint Mark says they mustn’t.  
(I stole the goblet from the children’s playhouse.)  
Here are your waters and your watering place.  
Drink and be whole again beyond confusion.