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Editors: Marvin Malone
Alexander Taylor

Art Editor: A. Sypher

New York Representative: Harold Briggs

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Box 111, Storrs, Conn.

The Visit

for Robert Frost

The little world of the garden bare,
Swept by the frost from wall to wall,
We carry our roots to the cellar's bin
When, look !, a brown thrush comes to call.

The short day runs on frozen feet,
Its shadows lengthen out ahead,
But today a gentleman in brown
Sings in our hedge, pecks at our bread.

All through the night we hear the surge
And ebb of wind against the panes,
Housed in his twigs and straw our guest
Startles us with his summer strains.

The morning climbs its shrunken arch,
The sun dial wakes, but the bird is gone
As if he had told us all he dared
Of life renewed by the grace of song.

-- James Hearst

Cedar Falls, Iowa