

# A Farmer Remembers Lincoln

By Witter Bynner

"Lincoln?—

Well, I was in the old Second Maine,  
The first regiment in Washington from the Pine Tree State.  
Of course I didn't get the butt of the clip;  
We was there for guardin' Washington—  
We was all green.

"I ain't never ben to the theayter in my life—  
I didn't know how to behave.  
I ain't never ben since.  
I can see as plain as my hat the box where he sat in  
When he was shot.  
I can tell you, sir, there was a panic  
When we found our President was in the shape he was in!  
Never saw a soldier in the world but what liked him.

"Yes, sir. His looks was kind o' hard to forget.  
He was a spare man,  
An old farmer.  
Everything was all right, you know,  
But he wasn't a smooth-appearin' man at all—  
Not in no ways;  
Thin-faced, long-necked,  
And a swellin' kind of a thick lip like.

"And he was a jolly old fellow—always cheerful;  
He wasn't so high but the boys could talk to him their own ways.  
While I was servin' at the Hospital  
He'd come in and say, 'You look nice in here,'  
Praise us up, you know.  
And he'd bend over and talk to the boys—  
And he'd talk so good to 'em—so close—  
That's why I call him a farmer.  
I don't mean that everything about him wasn't all right, you understand,  
It's just—well, I was a farmer—  
And he was my neighbor, anybody's neighbor.  
I guess even you young folks would 'a' liked him."

Source: Modern American Poetry (1919)



Witter Bynner was born in Brooklyn, New York. In 1922 he moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he and his partner Robert Hunt entertained artists and literary figures like D.H. Lawrence, Georgia O'Keefe and Carl Sandburg at their home. His early poetry is influenced by the work of A.E. Housman while his later poetry reflects his familiarity with Japanese and Chinese poetry, becoming less traditionally structured in form.

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