**30th July 2026**

# Night

**"I have been acquainted with the night."**

Robert Frost, *Acquainted with the night*

Robert Frost wrote *Acquainted with the Night* in 1928. Like all of Frost's poetry, in needs careful thought, reading and re-reading, left alone for a while, then re-read once more, before it seeps into your soul and begins to make sense. But I'll quote the two stanzas that created this thought.

I have been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain – and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed by the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I went back to this poem after a difficult pastoral encounter. It's not that I was facing pain and anguish for the first time, or that I wasn't confident when the going was tough, or that I felt I'd failed, or that I didn't feel I had offered anything useful. But for the first time in a while, what I was dealing with slipped under my defences and affected me deeply.

You can't be acquainted with the night without being affected by the night. You can't be in the rain and always be protected from the storm. You can't outwalk the city lights and not be scared. You can't look down the saddest lane and not be sad. You can't meet people in the darkness and not want to drop your eyes to avoid their gaze. As carers, we are human. We will always be human. We *should* always be human. So, when we are acquainted with the night of pain and sorrow, we *will* be affected.

But would we choose *not* to walk the alleyways and lanes of the night and leave those in pain and sorrow to walk their dark streets alone? Of course not. So, if we are human, and if we are inevitably affected by the night too, we have a responsibility to take care of ourselves, to process our own sorrow and pain, to deal with our fears and questions, to restore our soul. How do we do that? You will have your approach to that as I have mine. But is it necessary? Absolutely, or otherwise we will never be able to go out into the night again, and, instead, choose to stay safe in our warm spaces, while other have to face the night by themselves.

**A prayer for today**

*For blessings of the light, I give thanks. For comfort in the dark, I hope and pray. Amen*

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