



MIDWESTERN
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edited by
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in honor of
Harry Mark Petrakis

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PREFACE

Once again, *Midwestern Miscellany* is a true miscellany, a collection of insights in prose and verse that bring us closer to a still-elusive definition of the Midwestern experience, past and present. The essays included range from an appraisal of the experience of a young woman school teacher in Jackson County, Michigan, in the 1870s to contemporary poetic interpretations of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, with a variety of works, settings, and interpretations in between. They deal with place, with experience, with meaning, with the elements that make clear the diversity of the Midwestern experience, yet make it ultimately one.

This issue is suitably inscribed to Harry Mark Patrakis, novelist, winner of the Society's Mark Twain Award for 1988, for his eloquent, poetic recreation of the Greek-American experience in Chicago.

September, 1988

DAVID D. ANDERSON

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THE DIARIES OF AN 1870s MICHIGAN SCHOOLTEACHER: "TO REAR THE TENDER THOUGHT"

MARILYN MAYER CULPEPPER
AND
PAULINE GORDON ADAMS

In the years following the Civil War, the divisive forces that precipitated the conflict gradually subsided and were replaced by a growing spirit of reunification and a renewed sense of national democratic purpose. This national renaissance, so to speak, was fostered on the rapidly filling up frontiers of the West; it was making inroads in the South; it was being rekindled in the Northeast. America's philosophical baggage from the Ante Bellum period was being eased open. Out came the old Puritan belief in education as a duty to God. Out of that baggage also came the Enlightenment with its emphasis on reason and knowledge of the world in which we live. Unloaded, too, was the widely accepted Jeffersonian conviction that no great democratic society could exist without, among other things, an educated citizenry, educated by a publicly supported school system. And so it is not surprising to discover an increased awareness of public education in that Post Bellum period.

Chaos pervaded the national educational enterprise. What students learned or did not learn during any school term was anybody's guess. A child could have been exposed to the same books or lack of books, the same lessons repeatedly, term after term, with different teachers and end up with only a modicum of knowledge—far beneath the essentials needed by citizens of a rapidly progressing society—progressing technologically, economically, socially—a society based on professed democratic values. This state of being demanded the establishment of a

national body to discover the nature of the problem and to recommend solutions. Nationally, one of the first major efforts to gather information about and to regulate education was the creation of a Department of Education in 1867. It is largely through the efforts of that Department of Education that any educational statistics for the nation in the latter part of the nineteenth century exist. Between 1870 and 1890, America's population increased from approximately thirty-eight and a half million to more than sixty-two and a half million people. Not only did the population increase dramatically but there was an appreciable percentage increase, from 57% to 68%, of school age children enrolled in public schools. During that period, annual expenditures for public schools increased over 120%.¹

Other statistics, however, are not as favorable. The average number of days per year that schools were open increased from 132.2 to only 134.7 days. The average number of days per year that each enrolled pupil attended school increased from 78.4 to only 86.3 days.² Teachers' salaries—though they varied dramatically from state to state, from urban to rural, from one room school to graded school, from male to female—were uniformly low. The following scattering of numbers for the decades after the Civil War indicate some of the erratic and mean nature of those salaries:

Average Monthly Salaries³

<i>State</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Alabama	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00
Arizona	110.00	90.00
California	85.00	68.15
Massachusetts	84.78	35.25
Michigan	48.50	28.73
Nevada	112.63	85.20

Michigan's educational picture fitted snugly into this overall national one. As settlers had moved into the state from New England and New York, they had brought with them the district school system which had been their heritage following the disintegration of the original centralized village system of colonial days. Michigan's earliest constitution provided for a "system of common schools [tuition free] by which a school should

be kept up in each school district at least three months in every year. . . ." and for the appointment of a "superintendent of Public Instruction."⁴ In 1839 a law was passed requiring all "educational institutions in the State to report annually to the department of public instruction."⁵ By 1871, Michigan passed a compulsory school attendance law for children up to fourteen years of age. It required these children to attend at least twelve weeks of public school each year; however, the law was so unpopular, so far ahead of its time, that it was largely ignored.⁶

The creation of the State Department of Instruction in 1837 was a positive step towards state supervision of schools, but the primary control over school affairs was centered in the districts which were responsible for the examining, certifying, and hiring of teachers; they were also responsible for the visiting of schools.

The district boards examined teachers on the basis of their knowledge of subjects taught in the schools, "their moral character, and their ability to teach and govern a school."⁷ There were three levels of certification. First grade certificates were usually valid for two years, second grade certificates for one year, and third grade for six months. The district boards also determined the lengths and the dates of the school terms and were required to keep the schools in repair "with the necessary conveniences." Funds for the support of the schools were derived primarily from local school taxes and secondarily from state moneys. In the mid 1870s the per capita expenditure for each pupil enrolled was \$10.31.⁸ (An interesting figure in relation to Massachusetts, for example, which was spending \$20 per pupil).⁹

During the 1874-75 school year in Michigan, there were 5,789 schoolhouses representing 5,706 school districts. Of these, only 295 schoolhouses embodied graded schools.¹⁰ These buildings were far from uniform structures. Most were brick; nearly as many were log; some were stone. Nearly all had inadequate seating capacities for the constantly increasing number of students. In the year 1874-75 there were 343,981 students enrolled in the Michigan public schools.¹¹

The early common schools had focused primarily on basic instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic. But since the common schools constituted the sum total of education for most students, it was decided to add history and geography, subjects

which hitherto had been the province of the classical schools and colleges. Textbooks were generally selected by the teacher and/or by the district boards.

The above aseptic data can be found in any one of several informative works on the history of American education. But what was it like for a living, breathing, full-blooded teacher in this school system in the 1870s? To find that answer, one must look elsewhere—away from the researched texts. One can look, as in this case, into the personal diary entries from 1874 to 1879 of a young, rural school teacher in Jackson County, Michigan.

Lillie S. Hallifax of Henrietta (Jackson County), Michigan was typical of her time and place. In 1870, not yet 17 years old, she started teaching in the rural school system of Jackson County within weeks of her own "graduation" from that very system. The school year consisted of several terms—sometimes three, sometimes four—depending on the district. The terms varied in length, anywhere from eight to sixteen weeks, depending on the discretion of the township board and were usually scheduled around planting and harvesting season. For example, Lillie's winter term at one school began late November and concluded in early March. At another school, Lillie's spring-summer term started late April and terminated the first week in August. One fall term, Lillie taught from mid-August until late October. It was not unusual for students to miss the first few days of classes, their parents unaware that school had started in that district at that time.

Such sporadic scheduling was often accompanied by less than rigid class hours. School days ideally started at 8:30 with Lillie tolling the school bell or assigning the task to an energetic, early arriving "scholar." But before the morning bell could be rung, Lillie had to dust and sweep the schoolhouse. At times, when snow or mud clogged the roads and paths, it was 9:00 or even later that school commenced. Then there were those cold winter days when a fire had to be started in the stove. On February 28, 1876, she wrote, "Had a terrible time with our stove. It smoked so I did not call school until 10 o'clock." Cold weather often imposed its own will on the school day. On February 4, 1875, the temperatures were so low that "only seventeen scholars braved the weather . . . school could not be kept warm." On February 12, Lillie let out school several hours

early "on account of the cold." Four days later, she herself, was long delayed by the snow but was pleased to find her students, those who had made it, "busy on their own." From time to time, classes were dismissed for a day's harvesting chores. If farm chores were pressing and school were not cancelled, parents took it upon themselves to keep their children at home. On July 7, 1876, Lillie bemoaned that fact in her diary entry: "The school is quite small as many are obliged to remain at home and assist in the haying and the harvesting." One day in 1876, the superintendent himself came to get pupils to help shuck corn. There were also half day interruptions when Lillie was sent word (and this happened as frequently as once, sometimes twice, a month) that school was to be cancelled because of a funeral. It was devastating for her when, in the spring of '77, the funeral marked the passing of one of her winter term pupils.

The schoolhouses in which she taught (Coon Hill, Reed District, Southwell's District, Conway-Livingston County, Baldwin, Hall District, among others) were usually one room schoolhouses—cold, draughty, often dirty, often ill equipped with such paraphernalia of teaching as books, maps, dictionaries, even desks. (In an effort to alleviate the drabness of the room, Lillie enlisted the scholars' help. Each was asked to contribute three cents to buy mottoes, which Lillie then embroidered and hung on the walls. The children were delighted with the first motto: "Kind words can never die." It was quickly followed by "It's never too late to mend" and similar familiar homilies by which to live.

These unpleasant physical conditions plus the great diversity in her students' ages (from six to twenty-one, older, even than she herself) and intellectual preparation might have made for insuperable disciplinary problems for such a young woman as Lillie Hallifax, but this was not the case. She adamantly refused to put up with disorderliness in her classroom. When Mr. Berry called to see about his boys, Lillie "decidedly told him he might take them out—which he did." When Scepter Bidwell ran away from school to fight, she confronted him concerning his "ill conduct." Shortly thereafter, she wrote, "He finally gave me occasion to punish him and upon my making that mention he ran out doors. When he came back I told him he must either take a whipping or leave the school. He preferred to leave." Upon his,

return the next day, Lillie gave him the choice either to take a punishment or get down on his knees and say, "he would try to do right hereafter." After much consideration, young Bidwell chose the latter. Other pupils who persisted in fighting at recess or noontime were quickly subdued with a few well placed strokes of Lillie's switch. Other less serious violations were punished by the pupil's being kept in at recess or after school.

Lillie expected colleagues to be equally as demanding of "good conduct" as she. Her resentment of a permissive teacher who preceded Lillie peeks through in an entry at the beginning of a new term where she complained, "Oh, it is so noisy. I can't tell whether I shall ever get them quieted down. They say they had always been used to whispering and it seemed to be hard for them to get along without it." But Lillie, in short order, re-programmed the unruly students into orderly, mannerly, attentive "scholars." Her expectations of her colleagues to be attentive disciplinarians extended to her superiors. On April 1, 1876, she wrote, "Mr. [illegible] is to be our next superintendent and I sincerely hope he will be a little more strict."

The diaries contain much about discipline but little about what, exactly, she taught those disparate "scholars." Standard education texts list McGuffey's Readers and similar common school books of that era, but what did the schoolroom teacher herself think of these books, how did she use them, how did her students react—these are the questions that whet the curiosity of a reader of diaries. Lillie's failure to write much about the specifics of class content, however, does not bespeak a lack of interest in the nourishment of young minds. On July 13, 1876, she was exhilarated; "I left and went to school to perform once more the delightful task, to rear the tender thought, to teach the young idea how to shoot, and to pour the fresh instruction in the mind."¹² Daily, she put her young wards through their paces in reading, "ciphering," grammar, writing, geography, history, penmanship, and, of course, spelling. Spelling bees were frequent, mostly reserved for Fridays with cards or a picture as modest prizes for "the two who succeeded." Lillie employed a similar reward system for those who succeeded in the recitation of their multiplication tables, for those who did well on their rhetorical exercises, and for those who had perfect attendance.

If her class were unusually large (over fifty students), the officials allowed her an assistant. In 1875, while teaching fifty-two scholars, she requested help. Soon a Miss Cookingham was hired at the wages of \$3.50 a week to assist Lillie. But, for the most part, she was alone with her scholars and was generally pleased with their progress, declaring them "bright as silver dollars." After five months at Baldwin School, she expressed great sorrow at leaving for her students "seemed to be willing to do anything for me." (Lillie probably meant the children worked at their studies.) On the off days, she despaired: "This seems to be a poor day for the scholars for several of them have had poor lessons who have always had perfect lessons. I hope they will be better tomorrow for that makes the school pleasant." At times a backslider had to be kept after school "to learn her lesson."

Lillie set high standards of excellence for her scholars. She rejoiced in their successes, and was genuinely touched by their remembrances of "bouquets," of papers of freshly picked strawberries, of harvest gifts of shiny apples or juicy ripe peaches.

The final day of each term was always accompanied by considerable pomp and ceremony. On occasion, an organ was brought in to provide background music as the children spoke their pieces. For days the children had been carefully drilled in their "readings and oratorical exercises" and on the appointed day, parents, friends, visiting teachers from other districts flooded the schoolhouse to overflowing to observe the ceremonies. Traditionally each term the children "surprised" their teacher with gifts: a napkin ring, a book, perhaps a picture. Chromos were exchanged accompanied by a copious shedding of tears and "many expressions of love." These last sessions were apparently pressure days for Lillie as she writes "I had a terrible headache all day, as I always do on the last days of school."

When Lillie started teaching, her weekly wages were as low as \$2.50-\$3.00. (Perhaps she started out as an assistant and that accounts for the low figure. Since she began teaching in 1870 and since her diaries begin in 1875, little detail is available on her earliest teaching experiences.) By mid decade, she earned \$5-\$6 a week and by the end she was delighted to be earning as much as \$30-\$35 a month. Judging from the diaries, however, it wasn't the money that attracted her; it was the teaching. On December 2, 1875, she wrote: "The day passed, and one more

day is added now to childhood's happy hours and one to quiet age [at this point, she is only 22 years old]. I hope that each pupil under my instructions has gained something to add to the store of knowledge. I cannot but feel interested in each one, and anxious to see them improve." On April 13, 1877: "I really enjoy school life, and it is where I have spent many many happy days." On April 30, 1876, a Sunday: "It has been quite a dull and lonesome day to me but tomorrow will bring another school day and lonesomeness will be a thing unknown to me. For in school the hours fly very rapidly with me." There are many such entries, though to be fair, at rare times, Lillie had second thoughts about her chosen profession. July 7, 1876: "It is so very warm I almost dread the time when we will have to be confined in the schoolroom again. It hardly seems we have had a vacation. The time has flown so fast."

But such regrets are few and her teaching is recognized by her superiors as well as by parents. Various authorities vie with each other to obtain her services in their districts; a Mr. Jones, a principal from as far away as Three Rivers, "tried to engage me to teach in a graded school there." On January 6, 1876, Lillie described Superintendent Hall's visit. "Mr. Hall visited school most of the day and wrote in Register 'Scholars interested. Method of teaching *excellent*'." On August 23, 1876, Lillie was pleased when one of her young students reported that her mother thought "that I have never learned so much from any other teacher."

Though Lillie S. Hallifax was not an intellectual, the diaries present a picture of a young woman bent on increasing her knowledge partly to improve her competence in the classroom and partly to improve her competence on the teacher certification examinations that she was required to take periodically. It was not mandatory to have a college degree in order to teach in those days. Instead of college diplomas, rural teachers went to major towns in their locality (Lillie to Jackson) or to designated local schoolhouses (Lillie also experienced this) to be examined. These sessions involved written examinations and culminated in percentage grades. If the applicants passed, they received either a third grade certificate, if that is what they applied for, which was valid for six months within a certain district, or first or second grade certificates valid for two years or one year

respectively throughout the township in which it was issued. Lillie's diaries note many an evening or early morning devoted to studying physiology, history (particularly U.S. history), philosophy, civil government. The studying seemed to be a precautionary measure for apparently the quality of the testing varied considerably. At times Lillie found the testing somewhat superficial; other times it was much more exacting. When examined in April of 1877 at the Hanover School by Superintendent Snow for her second grade certificate, she informed her diary that she had completed all the tests but philosophy and civil government. She had been compelled to stop early because of a demanding train schedule. In 1879, shortly before her marriage, Lillie's third grade certificate to teach in Henrietta township reveals a 90 in Orthography, 100 in Reading, 90 in Penmanship, 75 in Geography, 85 in Grammar, 100 in Arithmetic, 100 in Mental Arithmetic, and 75 in U.S. History for an "average standing of 89+."

Aside from academic competence, the Teacher's Certificate certified that the recipient "is a person of good moral character." How this was determined, if determined at all, is unclear. The young rural teachers often came from the general area in which they taught. They and their families were well known and their daily comings and goings, if not scrutinized, were observed. Lillie resented it when Mrs. S----- "came over expressly to warn me and give me some advice. I can read it all but she needn't have taken the trouble. I consider I am old enough and capable of managing my own affairs. They are working more for their own interests than for mine." Furthermore, the teachers boarded with families in the immediate vicinity of the schoolhouse and these families changed from week to week, sometimes from day to day. Each of Lillie's diary entries starts out with a notation of place. For example, "At Mr. Southwell's," "At Mr. Gott's," "At Mr. Weeks," "At Mr. Howe's" etcetera. This boarding around, whatever its conveniences and/or inconveniences, certainly gave the community a chance to make some moral judgments of their teachers and the teachers a chance to learn how life was lived by others. Lillie, at times, recorded brief observations about her host families but most of the time these observations were confined to events rather than judgments. The diaries indicate that though Lillie had a healthy young woman's interest in men and social activities (dating, dancing, sports, particularly croquet,

card playing), she was proper. She attended church frequently; she occasionally taught Sunday School; she was devoted to her widowed mother and to her siblings; she did not indulge in alcohol. April 8, 1876, "Jerome and Son treated me to wine, but I wouldn't drink mine, and consequently I had to be laughed at but I could stand that better than I could the wine." She did not think it proper for anyone to drink excessively. On New Year's Eve, 1874, she went to the Corners to a dance. "About seventy couples there, Some drank more than they ought. Ladies too if they might be so called." In all respects, she appeared to have the "good moral character" her teaching certificate certified.

Beyond the previously mentioned studying for certification, Lillie revealed an idiosyncratic interest in an odd assortment of facts in the memoranda section of her diaries. There can be found recordings on the geography of Jackson County, on the dimension of the Pacific Ocean, on the elevation of the Sahara, on the races of people who inhabit Africa, on the square mileage of the U.S. and Australia, and so on and on.

Reading was a source of great pleasure to her. The diary records reveal an odd assortment of books that engaged her attention in the five-year period that they covered: *The Curse of Clifton*, *Mormonism*, *Ethlyor's Mistake* ("a good book"), *Lucy Boston*, *The Curiosity Shop*, *Pope*, *Claudia*, *Bunyan's Complete Works*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Benjamin Franklin*, *Helen's Babies* ("which is quite a book"), *My Wife and I*. Although she wrote on August 30, 1877, "I think a good book has a great influence over me," what that specific influence might have been is never disclosed. Nor did she comment on the content or style of the book. Lillie particularly enjoyed reading aloud with friends, an activity that invariably brought laughter and tears if the text were "the least bit sad or touching." (January 23, 1876)

Writing, as well as reading, was important to Lillie. The very existence of these five diaries testify to this importance. She "penned down some poetry," though none appear in the diaries; on rare occasions, she wrote an article for the local paper. When the opportunity presented itself, she attended a concert "which I enjoyed very much[;] met many friends and the concert was very good. More attended than I expected. Sold 194 tickets I understand." It is curious that instead of recording the program or her reactions to the music, she recorded the number of tickets

sold. She also saw plays such as *Man and Wife or False and True* at the Opera House in Jackson. At odd moments tucked here and there in her daily schedule, she tutored children, particularly her nieces, in reading and figuring. One 1875 evening she wrote of her elation in teaching "Mrs. Anna Wallace, a German lady, to read who could not read a word in English." On April 10, 1876, "Joanna [Lillie's sister] came with a mortgage for me to reckon the interest on for Mr. Pettis. He said I could make my charge for my work or he would find me a fellow." All these involvements, though peripheral to her teaching duties, are, in a way, spin offs from teaching,

True, she also performed women's work, washing, ironing, cleaning, quilting, sewing, and sometimes, though rarely, cooking. These chores, completed early in the morning or on Saturdays and Sundays, or during vacation time, Lillie carried out reluctantly, much preferring her school work.

Though, for Lillie, school and scholars came first, she was very much a sociable being. Visiting was a prime passion, one she indulged in year round, any time of day, even before eight on a school morning. Visiting meant "conversations spiced with wit," music, playing cards (particularly whist and pedro), playing "a new game called Parcheesi" and, in the warm weather, countless games of croquet. Visiting and being visited also meant much time spent in the company of young men whom she discretely referred to only by their initials. Picnicking, watching baseball games, dancing sometimes until three in the morning (!), and, in the cold weather, sleighing pleasurably employed her robust energies.

Today, there is no way of evaluating for certain her effectiveness in the classroom, however her compassion for each of her "scholars," her enthusiasm for her metier, the gratitude of parents and school supervisors, her catholic interests—all provide circumstantial evidence of her success. Were Lillie alive today, she would surely have chosen the professional life, which may or may not have included marriage. In her own time, she delayed marriage until she was 26, enjoying her school life. So enamored of her work was she, as a matter of fact, that at times she questioned whether "life would always be this happy."

Lillie was a natural. She was young, healthy, accommodating, fulfilled. The pages of her diaries resonate with her con-

viction that she knew what she was doing and that what she was doing was important and that she was good at it.

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NOTES

1. Edward H. Reisner, *Nationalism and Education Since 1789* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), p. 464.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 464-5.
3. This chart is based on information found in the *Report of the Commissioner of Education 1876* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1878, p. XXV.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
7. W. L. Smith, *Historical Sketches of Education in Michigan* (Lansing: W. S. George and Company, State Printers and Binders, 1881), p. 33.
8. *Report of the Commissioner of Education 1876*, p. 199.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Lillie should have placed "delightful task, to rear the tender thought, to teach the young idea how to shoot" in quotation marks to indicate its rightful author, Thompson (about whom little is known).

CITATIONS

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THE GREAT WAR,
THE MIDWEST, AND MODERNISM:
CATHER, DOS PASSOS, AND HEMINGWAY

JOHN ROHRKEMPER

It has become a commonplace to associate the modernist movement in the arts with The Great War—World War I—particularly in our discussions of American literature. Of course we know that modernism in the arts in fact had begun to emerge in the years before the war. Picasso, for instance, had begun exploring the geometric planes of cubism in the first decade of the century. The Armory Show shocked, outraged, and delighted American viewers in 1913, over a year before the outbreak of European hostilities. Stravinsky already had established his own modern aesthetic in such works as *The Firebird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911), and *The Rite of Spring* (1913). Mann's "Death in Venice" appeared in 1911, Proust's *À la Recherche du temps perdu* began to appear in 1913, and Joyce's *Dubliners* was published in 1914 (as he finished his *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*). Pound, Flint, and others had been calling themselves Imagists for some time when *Des Imagistes* was published in 1914. What the above list of achievements might suggest is the quickening of modernism which occurred immediately prior to the war. While it is a mistake to conceive of the war as giving birth to the modernist movement, it is perfectly understandable and appropriate that we view the war as the *symbolic* beginning of the movement, the dramatic break with the historical past paralleling what modern artists sought on an aesthetic level.

Still, the Great War occupies a central role in the lives and the works of many modern American writers, especially combatants such as John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway. In their teens and early twenties, they had dashed off to Europe "before the

whole show [went] belly up," as Dos Passos wrote in a letter to a friend at the time. They went to war with a sense of high adventure, perhaps to receive a sabre wound as Catherine Barkley, in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, imagined her fiancé might. He, of course, was blown to bits by a mine. Others were offered up for the target practice of the futile but regular massed charges that characterized the trench warfare. Many drowned in poisonous gas while others, weak from influenza and other diseases, drowned in a soupy mix of mud and their own wastes during those rainy four years. The war dragged on while over eight million young men went "belly-up" and another twenty million suffered casualties.

Those Americans who survived and were later to write of the war tended to come from comfortable, middle-class homes and had been raised on a diet of pious idealism and patriotic optimism. It therefore is not surprising that the unexpected horror of that war would fill their early writings. But they also were raised—as budding artists—on the nourishing diet of the new modernism, both before and immediately after the war. To them, the war was important personally as well as historically as a clean break with the past. There had been no gradual maturation, no gentle easing into maturity for the generation of Dos Passos and Hemingway. Their lives had seemed radically, often painfully discontinuous, but they perhaps could assuage that pain in an artistic movement that revelled in the juxtaposition of radically dichotomous images. The use of juxtaposition—the practice of placing concrete images hard against each other without transition—was central to the aesthetic of modernism, from the hard angles and broken planes of cubism, to the montage of cinema, to the unstated metaphorical connections of Imagist poetry. The modernist tendency to juxtaposition proved a natural vehicle to explore the radically new experiences—indeed, the radically new world—discovered on the fields of France, in the mountains of Italy. Juxtaposed against the strafed European countryside was a remembered land of one's youth, an idyllic America, an early twentieth century manifestation of the New Eden.

By the early twentieth century that American Eden as likely as not was associated with the Midwest. Unlike the Northeast, the Midwest still seemed to cling to the ideal of Jefferson's

yeoman farmer; unlike the South, it had not been cursed with the mark of Cain that was slavery. The heartland of both progressivism and isolationism in the years prior to the war, the region might offer the starkest contrast to the political cynicism and violent destruction which the war revealed to the American soldier-writer—and to the non-combatant writer, such as Willa Cather, as well. By examining three works of fiction which appeared within a few years of the armistice—Cather's *One of Ours*, Dos Passos' *Three Soldiers*, and Hemingway's *In Our Time*—we can see the ways these writers explored the striking contrast between the American Midwest and war-ravaged Europe while at the same time finding harmony in theme and style through experimentation with the modernist technique of juxtaposition.

Willa Cather, a full generation older than Dos Passos and Hemingway, is a writer whose work has roots in the regionalist realism of the latter nineteenth century, but which also heralds the emerging modernism of the twentieth. *One of Ours* was her first novel to be published after the war, appearing in 1922. As in so much of the fiction of this expatriated Midwesterner, it betrays an ambivalence toward her native region. While the Nebraska countryside of the first part of the novel is often beautiful and expansive, it also proves stifling to the personal stirrings and ambitions of the novel's hero, Claude Wheeler. For Claude—as for so many other characters in Midwestern fiction—the very qualities which make the land so beautiful also suggest its torpidity. Early in the novel Claude watches the season's first snowfall and reflects, "There was something beautiful about the submissive way in which the country met winter. It made one contented, —sad too" (74). Claude sees in the Nebraska landscape a mirror of his own ineffectualness: "Claude was aware that his energy, instead of accomplishing something, was spent in resisting unalterable conditions" (90). As he finds himself drifting into a relationship with a young neighbor woman, Enid, he again reflects: "This country itself was sad . . . and you could no more change that than you could change the story in an unhappy human face" (134).

Claude's face grows increasingly unhappy throughout the first half of the book as he seems to effect less and less control over his own fate, culminating in his marriage to Enid which is

made less of his own choice than from a sense of inevitability. On their wedding night Enid pleads illness and asks him to sleep apart from her. To Claude's great frustration, their marriage is never consummated. Claude, an agnostic, must even helplessly stand by as Enid departs for overseas missionary work. Finally, it is the war which offers him the promise of escaping a life increasingly pared thin. At the same time, the outbreak of war brings Europe to Nebraska—hard against it as in a juxtaposed image:

His mother, he knew, had always thought of Paris as the wickedest of cities, the capital of a frivolous, wine-drinking, Catholic people, who were responsible for the massacre of St. Bartholomew and for the grinning atheist, Voltaire. For the last two weeks, ever since the French began to fall back in Lorraine, he had noticed with amusement her growing solicitude for Paris.

It was curious, he reflected . . . that Paris seemed suddenly to have become the capital, not of France, but of the world! He knew he was not the only farmer boy who wished himself tonight beside the Marne. . . . In great sleepy continents, in land-locked harvest towns, in the little islands of the sea, for four days men watched the name as they might stand out at night to watch a comet, or to see a star fall. (148-49)

Later, when Claude finally gets to Europe and combat, the narrative will move fluidly between the two continents, between Claude and his mother's home where she will tack to the wall a map of France to remind us of how, psychologically at least, France and Nebraska have become contiguous.

Cather knew from her own experience the limitations as well as the possibilities, the disappointments as well as the rewards of life in the Midwest. Claude's Midwest is far from idyllic. *One of Ours*, unlike the other two books I will consider, rather unambiguously suggests that the war has a positive effect of allowing her hero's full humanity to flower. Nevertheless, Stanley Cooperman misses the mark in his otherwise fine study, *World War I and the American Novel*, when he asserts that *One of Ours* is but one more example of a naive homefront novel that celebrates what was, in reality, a slaughterhouse (129-36). Cather quite clearly sees, from her homefront vantage, the brutality and waste of the war, never shying from frank and explicit scenes of the war's horror. Furthermore, Cather created, in Claude's com-

rade David Gerhardt, the most eloquent spokesman of the book, and he, more clearly and completely than any of the other characters, analyzes the war, always in terms of its tragic waste.

Perhaps for Cather the war clarifies the falseness of the Edenic myth. Thus, she uses what seems to be the sharp contrast between Claude's mother's Midwest and the France of Catholicism, Voltaire, and, of course, the war to suggest that they are, in fact, not on different planes of experience, but part of a continuous and fluid whole. To do so she is willing to violate the actual chronology of history (and apologize for it in a footnote) and have a fatal outbreak of influenza on the troopship carrying Claude to Europe. These young men are not pristine Adams approaching a post-lapsarian Europe; they are carrying sickness and death *from* the New Eden with them. Of course the idea of the war as symbolic *of*—rather than an aberration *from*—the normal order of things is one that Hemingway would suggest in the death in childbirth of Catherine Barkley, but there the source of her misfortune is, at least in part, in the conception of a child *in Europe during the war*. In Cather's novel the men carry the influenza with them like original sin.

Ultimately, Cather uses structural and stylistic juxtaposition of the Midwest and warring Europe as a way to demystify the Midwestern experience, to undercut our tendency to view that region in Edenic terms. The map of France on Mrs. Wheeler's wall does not chart some radical difference between one place and another; rather, it maps the continuity of human aspirations and suffering, our hopes and our frustrations, whether we sit at night watching an artillery barrage in France or a first snow dusting the Nebraska farmland.

John Dos Passos' first novel, *One Man's Initiation—1917*, is a fairly slight affair written in off-duty hours while he was an ambulance driver in France. Published in 1920 in England it is a very personal work without the psychic distancing often thought necessary for a successful work of art. It clearly demonstrates, however, that Dos Passos was well aware of the use of juxtaposition and how it suited a novel about the war. Structurally, it is an extended series of juxtapositions contrasting the past, which represents beauty, art, order, and humanism, with the war's reign of chaos, destruction, death, and barbarism; simultaneously, it juxtaposes the natural world's beauty and the wartime defile-

ment of it. Typical is this early contrast in the first pages of the book as Martin, the book's protagonist, sits at a Parisian sidewalk cafe shortly after arriving in France. As the sun sets,

the foliage of the Jardin du Luxembourg shown bright green above the deep alleys of bluish shadow. From the pavement in front of the mauve-colored houses rose little kiosks with advertisements in bright orange and vermilion and blue. In the middle of the triangle formed by the streets was a round pool of jade water. (53)

We immediately are jolted out of this sensual reverie, however, when a young soldier sits down at a table across from Martin:

He found himself staring at a face that still had some of the chubbiness of boyhood. Between the pale-brown frightened eyes, where the nose should have been, was a triangular black patch that ended in mechanical contrivance with shiny metal rods that took the place of his jaw. (54)

This is a remarkable effective juxtaposition because it contrasts the differences between both the past and the present and the natural and the artificial. The past and the natural blend harmoniously in the pool of water in the middle of the triangle formed by the ancient streets; the artificial and the dehumanized present are epitomized by the triangular nose and metal jaw. Such a juxtaposition, characteristic of *One Man's Initiation—1917*, allows Dos Passos to make a powerful implicit comment on the effects of the war.

Before this novel had even been published, Dos Passos was at work on another novel which was to make him pre-eminent among young novelists of the war: *Three Soldiers*, which appeared to critical acclaim and considerable extra-literary controversy in 1921. This is a more ambitious effort than its predecessor. In it, Dos Passos focuses on three representative recruits: John Andrews, a well-educated and sophisticated Easterner who has enlisted because "he was sick of revolt, of thought, of carrying his individuality like a banner" (26); Fuselli, from San Francisco, the son of immigrants and an unpleasant man on the make who sees the war as nothing more than a chance for advancement; and Chrisfield, a sensitive young farm boy from southern Indiana who has enlisted because his country has said that it needed him. All three are ground up in the

deadening routine and stupidity of the military machine. Andrews, deciding he cannot, in fact, live without his freedom, deserts the army *after* the armistice; Fuselli, stuck in dreary desk jobs, never gets a chance to employ the one thing he has which might bring him distinction, his purely physical courage. It is the Midwesterner Chrisfield—his name suggesting Christ, the sacrificial lamb—who suffers the most, however, from his wartime experiences. It is precisely his openness, his naturalness, his naivete—which Dos Passos constantly presents while reminding us in various ways of his Midwestern background—which make him vulnerable to the horror of the war.

In a strange, dreamlike scene during his first engagement in battle, Chrisfield is horrified by the sight of a dead and mutilated German soldier:

He kicked the German. He could feel the ribs against his toes through the leather of his boot. He kicked again and again with all his might. The German rolled over heavily. He had no face. . . . where the face should have been was a spongy mass of purple and yellow and red. (149)

This sudden confrontation with the reality of death, of war, is more than Chrisfield can stand. He becomes, as a defense against the horror, a hollow killing machine. The only strong feeling he can muster is revenge, so he murders a sergeant who previously had mistreated him. Returning to camp after the murder, he falls in for a march, a human machine whose feet "beat the ground in time with the other feet" (190). Wrapped in the Adamic innocence which Dos Passos repeatedly associated with Chrisfield's Midwestern background, he loses all identity in the presence of this unfathomed evil, and becomes as faceless as the German soldier he encountered in the field.

Dos Passos, at the time he wrote *Three Soldiers*, knew little of the actual Midwest, but in his perception of the Midwesterner as this century's version of the American Adam he knew that he had a powerful symbol for the radical loss of innocence that he and his fellows felt as a result of their wartime experiences. If the rapid removal from one world and immersion into another so drastically different was typical of the American soldier's experience, Dos Passos' depiction of a Midwestern soldier's experience heightened the effect of that transition and his use of the

modernist technique of juxtaposition complemented it and heightened it further. The success of *Three Soldiers* undoubtedly encouraged him in his further structural and stylistic experiments which were to culminate in his *U.S.A.*, the trilogy that, perhaps more than any other work of modern American fiction, is a masterpiece of the technique of juxtaposition.

Ernest Hemingway's *In Our Time* (the 1925 American edition) is, itself, a model of the use of juxtaposition. Not a novel yet more than a collection of stories, it is a unified work exploring Hemingway's "time," ranging from America's cities and towns to foreign battlefields, from the hunting camps and trout streams of northern Michigan to the bull rings of Spain, juxtaposing these locations through a series of alternating short stories and shorter vignettes. One story, "Soldier's Home," which is at the very center of the book both literally and figuratively, well illustrates Hemingway's method. Robert Slabey, Clinton Burhans, and others have argued persuasively that Hemingway carefully and systematically ordered the stories and vignettes of *In Our Time* and thereby created a structural unity, so we should assume significance in the placement of "Soldier's Home" at the physical center of the book.

The story is central in other ways as well. Focusing on the extraordinary difficulty a young veteran faces in adjusting to his return to his parents' home after the war, this story directly links the homefront and the battlefield, the two geographic and psychic markers which recur throughout *In Our Time*. The two-word title, "Soldier's Home," suggests these two physical and psychic locales. Furthermore, the story is thematically central to the book, focusing on what Linda Wagner has called the principle theme of *In Our Time*: alienation, particularly from those to whom we are or should be the closest, perhaps even from ourselves (58).

The story also is central in that it significantly is located in the central United States, not the eastern reaches of the Midwest of Nick Adams' Michigan, but now the western edge of the region—Oklahoma, with reference to Kansas as well. Thus, as in *One of Ours*, the story's geographical poles are Europe and the Midwest.

Stylistically, the story is central in that it is representative of Hemingway's method in its use of juxtaposition, beautifully illustrated in the two brief paragraphs which begin the story:

Krebs went to the war from a Methodist college in Kansas. There is a picture which shows him among his fraternity brothers, all of them wearing exactly the same height and style collar. He enlisted in the marines in 1917 and did not return to the United States until the second division returned from the Rhine in the summer of 1919.

There is a picture which shows him on the Rhine with two German girls and another corporal. Krebs and the corporal look too big for their uniforms. The German girls are not beautiful. The Rhine does not show in the picture. (69)

Notice the first sentence which quietly, almost offhandedly contrasts Krebs's two worlds: the heartland locale of Kansas, the reference to college with its presumed goals of liberalizing and humanizing, the religious element suggesting virtue and purpose—all this contrasted with simply "the war." Hemingway needs no further elaboration of this half of the juxtaposition, for the reader need only look backward or forward from this story for details of how the war affected liberality and humanity, virtue and purpose.

Then Hemingway, in a sense, elaborates on this initial juxtaposition with the image of the two photographs, described in strikingly parallel ways. The description of each photograph begins "There is a picture which shows him. . . ." This is followed in each case by a location and an indication of his companions: "among his fraternity brothers" in the first; "on the Rhine with two German girls and another corporal" in the second. Notice the subtle shift in prepositions, from "among" his fraternity brothers to merely "with" the girls and the other corporal, a shift suggesting the apartness, the alienation which Krebs and so many other characters in *In Our Time* have come to feel. This is followed by a more precise description of the "fit" or the appropriateness and match of the situation. The fraternity picture shows all the brothers wearing "exactly the same height and style collar," but in the war snapshot "Krebs and the corporal look *too big* for their uniforms. The German girls are *not beautiful*. The Rhine *does not show* in the picture."

In this passage we have Hemingway the modernist at his best, juxtaposing two disparate images and reinforcing the juxtaposition with a carefully modulated syntactical parallel. Significantly, here and elsewhere in *In Our Time*, the juxtaposition is based on the contrast of the Midwest and warring Europe. It is essential to note, however, that Hemingway does not merely suggest a vast difference between the Midwest and Europe in order to posit a simplistic view of the Adamic fall. If we enlarge our focus to include the two vignettes which surround the story, we can see a more complicated relationship.

The first vignette shows a young American soldier's terrified prayer as he sweats out a fierce enemy bombardment on the Italian front. The second shows a pair of cops coming upon two Hungarian immigrants apparently robbing a cigar store in an unnamed American city. One cop shoots and kills both robbers. His partner, in fear, upbraids him for doing it, to which he responds "They're crooks aint they. . . . They're wops aint they? Who the hell is going to make any trouble?" When asked how he knows they are wops, he replies, "Wops . . . I can tell wops a mile off" (79). These two vignettes, both dealing with individuals "in another country" and facing violence, suggest that corruption and violence are not endemic to *one* culture, but are an integral part of life in our time. Like Cather, Hemingway looks critically upon the Edenic myth, juxtaposing what at first appear to be radically different images in order to suggest their continuity.

In each of the works considered the author focuses on what seems at first to be all contrast—Europe and the war contrasted with the bucolic Midwest. The contrast is immediately familiar for, after all, the story of the young American rube off to see "gay Paree" was the stuff of such countless stories, jokes, and songs that it virtually became a part of the American folklore. All three writers—particularly Cather and Hemingway—use this easy assumption to paint a grim picture of our Edenic pretensions. Likewise, all three—and particularly Dos Passos and Hemingway—experiment with the modernist technique of juxtaposition to do so.

We tend to associate the modernist movement with such sophisticated cultural centers as New York, London, and Paris, but it might serve us well to consider the importance of the Midwest—and particularly the idea of the Midwest—in our

attempts to understand the emergence of a modern American literature. For the psychological and emotional as well as physical difference between the supposedly Edenic Midwest and warring Europe provided a thematic parallel to the fragmentation and recombination of images that was juxtaposition. On those writers most profoundly touched by the war, the awareness of this parallel seemed to have an important galvanizing effect.

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SIX POEMS BY JANET LEWIS FROM
THE INDIANS IN THE WOODS

KATHLEEN ROUT

When *Poetry* magazine was founded in Chicago in 1912, one of its major aims was to publish verse that was freed from the constrictions of our "classical heritage." The goal was certainly furthered when Janet Lewis's early poems found their way into print, for her work owed as much to early Indian poetry as to anything found in say, *The Oxford Book of English Verse* or in the *Collected Poems* of her husband, critic and scholar Yvor Winters.¹ The five short poems first published under the title "The Indians in The Woods" in the 1922-23 volume of *Poetry* constituted one third of the total body of short poems later published as *The Indians in the Woods* under separate cover as Monroe Wheeler's *Manikin I*.²

These poems are clearly influenced by the Imagists, but might just as easily be considered Indian in that their content reflects a fascination with Ojibway (Chippewa) legend and their style manifests the same quality of being "rooted in things"³ as does most Indian lyric. Like Indian lyric also, the poems concentrate on objects in the natural world, express an imaginative identification with animals or nature itself or comment on the intensity of an experience simply by noting it with precision. This early work is Indian rather than western at least partly in that it always focusses on nature or on people out of doors; interpersonal relationships in all of their possible complexity, abstract meditations on life or death, humor, protest or didacticism do not enter. On the other hand, her vocabulary and her sensibilities are clearly those of one who has received a white majority education, complete with an awareness of the place of the Ojibway in her America. The historic sense is atypical of

Ojibway verse; usually, American Indians reserved tribal history and legends about the animals or demigods for stories, not short verse, which were told to the children during long winter nights. Lyric verse was intended to capture the historical moment and its attendant emotion; it is not inappropriate to suggest that an image is in Indian verse, what Ezra Pound stated it was to an Imagist in the first volume of *Poetry*: "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time."⁴ Janet Lewis's verse, as we shall see, uses the Indian-Imagist technique, but sometimes does so expressly for the purpose of transmitting Ojibway folklore.

Janet Lewis's interest in Ojibway culture is the result of her early experiences vacationing every summer in the Upper Peninsula. Her father, a professor at Lewis Institute in Chicago, took the family each year to stay on either St. Joseph's Island or Neebish near the Sault. There, the children became intimately acquainted with the members of the Johnston family, descendants of John Johnston of northern Ireland, who arrived in what is now Northern Michigan in 1791, and his Ojibway wife, the Woman of the Glade, or Ozpah-guscoday-wayquay, daughter of Waubojeeg, the White Fisher. Their grand-daughter, Anna Maria Johnston, rented cabins to tourists on Encampment Island, and there the Lewises learned the same Chippewa legends and lore that Henry Schoolcraft, Anna Maria's uncle, had collected and that Longfellow had adapted as *Hiawatha*. A family history of the Johnstons, spanning the full three generations, was the subject of Ms. Lewis's first novel, *The Invasion* (1932). In her early poetry, Janet Lewis's interest was in conveying the Indian consciousness in verse reminiscent of Indian poetry.

First, it might be helpful to look at some Ojibway verse:

The bush is sitting under a tree
and singing

This fanciful fragment is almost precious in the speaker's identification with the unsuspecting bush; as such, however, it provides a good introduction to the way Indian verse concentrates on simple natural objects while offering a sense of the aliveness and even humanity of all nature. "Song" reads:

Whence does he spring,
the deer?
Whence does he spring,
the deer, the deer, the deer?⁶

This poem's charm lies in the imitative "springing" rhythm of the final line as much as in its delight in the mere existence of a beautiful creature, which is also manifested in the three-fold repetition of "the deer."⁷ Further, the question can be taken as either the hunter's surprised comment upon a stag's bursting out of a thicket or a metaphysician's spontaneous question about the mystery of life. And then there's "Spring Song":

As my eyes search the prairie
I feel the summer in the spring.⁸

This last is typically Indian in that it emphasizes the fleeting emotion of a specific moment that the author or singer wishes to preserve. Here, the hunter or walker notices as he or she scans the horizon that the breeze is softer than it was. He "feels," or senses, summer; he does not remark that he knows rationally that summer will come. This impression, shared by many of us, is an evanescent experience that we would probably enjoy but not bother to note unless we were writing a Thoreauvian journal. Even then, it would be the subject of a passing comment and not the focus of a special separate work.

Similarly, the conciseness of "Love Song" is at first misleading:

A loon I thought it was
But it was
My love's splashing oar.⁹

If we consider the implied emotion in this experience, we see that the Ojibway author has, in capturing a moment that could have its counterpart in anyone's life, given us enough of a *hint* of the speaker's feeling that we are able to fill in with our own experiences and remember or at least understand the joyful surprise of the speaker who discovers that what she thought was merely a sound of no personal significance to her was in fact a signal of the approach of her unexpected or long awaited lover.

It is not possible to evaluate rhyme or to scan Indian verse, since we have it only in literal translation. Janet Lewis's poetry, though, falls easily into iambic feet; occasionally, but rarely, in the fifteen poems that make up the full *Indians in the Woods* collection, she even uses rhyme, always subtly. An interesting

comparison in the use of subtle rhyme might be made between one of her poems and Pound's, "In a Station of the Metro."

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.¹⁰

The conciseness and visual clarity of Pound's observation, as well as its freshness of perception in connecting two such disparate things on the sole basis of their analogous visual impact, has been remarked upon before, as has the sophisticated use of approximate rhyme in *crowd* and *bough*. This 1916 work may have directly influenced Lewis's "Like Summer Hay":

Like summer hay it falls
Over the marshes, over
The cranberry flats,
Places where
 the wild deer lay.
Now the deer leave tracks
Down the pine hollow; petals
Laid two by two, brown
Against the snow.

The equation of "hay" and "snow" is as original and unusual in its way as Pound's metaphor. The word "petals" follows, as with Pound, a semi-colon for the full effect of the inverted foot, and the use of "brown" and "snow" to conclude the two lines, is, on top of the other two considerations, almost derivative. Lewis, however, also uses internal rhymes and repetitions to enrich the texture of her verse. In the first stanza "over" is repeated, and in the second we have "two by two," while "hay" in the middle of line one anticipates "lay" at the end of line four, and "laid" of line three in the second stanza is echoed by "against" in line four. "Flats" in stanza one is echoed in "tracks" of stanza two, which in addition is replete with internal *oh*, *oo*, and *ow* sounds, culminating in the above-mentioned approximate rhyme of "brown/Against the snow." Thus, while Mrs. Lewis's subject matter is as far as possible from the subways of Paris, her love of the Michigan woods and her affinity for Indian perceptions of nature are both clearly disciplined by a sophisticated poetic technique that is self-conscious in its rhythms and also absolutely fashionable for its time,

If we look now at the title poem, "The Indians in the Woods," we can again see the simultaneous presence of a Western standard of prosody and an Ojibway worldview:

Ah, the woods, the woods
Where small things
Are distinct and visible,

The berry plant,
The berry leaf, remembered
Line for line.

There are three figures
Walking in the woods
Whose feet press down
Needle and leaf and vine.

The first two stanzas are "majority culture" in their statement that "small things" are "distinct and visible" in the woods while they are not, as the city-bred poet is well aware, in other more hectic places; in the second stanza, which comes down to cases, we have not an Ojibway comment on an emotion related to the berry plant, but only the remark that this is one example of an item that is important to the poet, that she remembers "line for line," like a poem. The final stanza is written by a non-Indian who presents herself as embracing Chippewa legend; the three Indian "figures," as we must discover from the other poems or from the 1980 introduction, are not real people, but rather spirits. One is certainly Manibush or Manibozho, the spirit of life, a metamorphic culture hero who serves as intermediary between man and the gods or who may take the form alternately of the People or of any of the animals which frequent the woodlands. Another may be the un-named wife of Manibush, or Nokomis, the earth, also known as the Grandmother, or her daughter, Manibush's mother, or even his father, the West Wind.

The subtle echoes of sound can be seen and heard in the repeated "berry" of stanza two, the "woods" ending lines one and eight, "leaf" echoing from line five to line ten, and of course the rhyming of lines six and ten, "line" and "vine." The content, focussing as it does in stanzas one and two on the significance of every one of a myriad of small items that make up the ground cover in a forest, draws the reader's attention to the interest in

natural objects typical of both Indian and Imagist poetry. The final stanza changes our perspective as the poet mentions the three legendary "figures" who, though spirits, are real enough for their feet to invisibly "press down" the undergrowth even as we look.

Nokomis, the Earth, or the Grandmother, is the speaker of this next poem, "The Grandmother Remembers": (originally titled "A Song for the Grandmother")

Ah, the cold, cold days
When we lived
On wintergreen berries and nuts,
On caraway seeds.

The deer went over the grass
With wet hooves
To the river to drink.

Their shadows passed
Our tent.

This poem captures a moment in time through the details of the scarcity of food, cold, and the presence of deer outside the tent. The poem seems to refer back to a time of near-starvation, yet there are not only deer present, but they walk on grass, as though spring were here already. Why is no effort made to kill a deer, but the people lie in the tent as the animals pass on their way to the water? Are both the deer, whose "shadows" are all that we perceive, and the "grass" they walk through, products of the imagination? The echo of "grass" in "shadows passed" seems to reinforce this possibility. If this is the case, then the author is presenting for us the hallucinations of a starving people who fantasize that there are deer and fresh green grass outside their tents as they lie within chewing on the last of their winter stores.

This is the first of several poems in which inclement weather is featured and discomfort is taken for granted. It also employs not one but several images, unlike traditional Ojibway verse. One similar poem which appears to be contemporary rather than legendary is "Anishinabeg in the Cranberry Swamp":

Autumn bows
The headed grass
With frost
And narrowed stem. Hoarfrost
Has rutted the swamp.

Their baskets fill
 With berries green as water.
 Their fingers cut
 With searching the hard grass.

Boats gather
 At the point of land,
 Deep hulls
 Beneath the swing
 Of wide red sails.

They beg old quilts
 And blankets,
 Wake at morning
 Frost from hip to shoulder
 Like morning mist.

Here, "The People" (Anishinabeg is the Ojibway term for themselves) of past glory pick cranberries, perhaps to sell, in the late autumn. The final stanza compresses two important facts—their poverty (in the begging) and the hardy closeness to nature retained from their Ojibway ancestors (in the fact of their being able to sleep outside in cold weather and in their blending into the landscape, covered by frost). The People are "bowed" as the grass is, their "fingers cut" just as the swamp is full of deep ruts from the frost. The sole pleasurable note in the description of the scene is the view the non-Indian outsider has of the boats with the red Indian sails; the experience itself is hard and unpleasant, as are a number of the experiences that The People have either as children of the forest or as disinherited Native Americans. This work not only contains several clear images, but comes close to editorial comment in the final stanza, without being what Pound would have labelled "viewy."¹²

"The Threshing Wind" is a more tightly unified poem on a subject of cold and discomfort during harvest time.

Cold and clear weather,
 And the wind harries us
 With a continual
 Beating of the grass
 For some fine seed.

The wild rice
 Draws out its pointed leaves
 With a perpetual flickering
 As of wings
 Or minnows turning.

These hold
 The hard brown husk
 That Manibush beat out,
 Drawing the sharp green leaves
 Against his shoulder.

The autumn wind "harries" the people as it is "beating" the grass, and in turn Manibush, archetype of The People through time, *beats* the stalks of wild rice against the side of the canoe in the traditional manner of loosening the grains, filling the boat with rice for The People's needs. He and the wind each reap a harvest from the earth, and the wind simultaneously threshes the people themselves, exacting from them perhaps endurance, forcing them to adapt and be strong or die. The people are harried and the leaves of the rice flicker in the wind; in its turn the rice is linked with all nature, for the leaves move like "wings" or like "minnows." Manibush, as both the Spirit of Life and the symbol of The People, unites the two actions as man uses nature to survive and nature shapes and tests man. The perennial quality of all of these actions or conditions is implied not only in the seasonality of the work, but in the terms "continual" and "perpetual." The Indians of the present, at least in this poem, have the same experiences as their ancestors did, depending upon the regularity of the seasons and the bounty of the earth for survival. The presence of Manibush makes it clear that the author intends this unity and interdependence between nature and man to be both legendary and mystical. This fascination with the significance of everyday events and their importance in the great cycle of Life combines with a realistic depiction of the hardships of an existence close to the bone to create for us an intuitive and yet unromanticized response to nature that is quintessentially primitive.

It might be interesting to conclude with two of Lewis's most purely Imagist poems, a fall-spring pair that depend upon and reveal the role of Manibush in bringing about the cycle of the

seasons. The first, "He Goes Away Again," refers to the autumnal departure of Manibush, who, like Persephone, takes warmth and comfort with him:

In thorny juniper
The wind is cold,

In thorny juniper.

Shadows
Of stones grow white with evening.

The deer, the deer
Among the withered asters.

The spider,
Making tight her web.

In this work, the isolated images combine to create a total impression that is clearly evocative of fall. (One wonders, incidentally, whether "the deer, the deer" deliberately echoes "Song" above.) At any rate, the cold, the white frost that eradicates the shadows of the stones, the withered asters tell us without narrative what is happening and when. The spider here, like the bush in the early fragment we examined, is humanized by the speaker, who feels also the need to "make tight" the dwelling place against the winter wind.

A counterpart to this poem is "One Sits in The Woods," in which someone, perhaps the speaker, sits and feels, rather than hears or sees, the slow return of Manibush as the plants begin to flicker with new vitality again.

Gradual, continual approach
Of some one through the woods,
But no one comes.

The thin flame
Shoots up
Among grasses.

Violets, color of stone,
Minute and scarce
Where the great ants climb.

The tentative nature of spring's beginning is indicated by the terms "gradual," "thin," "minute and scarce," while "continual" stresses the unceasing increase in plant growth. As with "Cranberry Swamp," the word "continual" also serves to reinforce the cyclic pattern of the seasons. The vagueness of the first stanza, which captures only a sense of someone's approach, is ballasted by two progressively more concrete stanzas. In stanza two, a symbolic "flame" of life flickers "among grasses," and its warm and orangey image is clear and distinct even though we know that the "flame" is imaginary, a heat that expels the "hoarfrost" of winter. In stanza three we find an image of real gray-blue violets sprinkled in the grass and accompanied by large black ants foraging for food, a vision as evocative of early spring as the "withered asters" are of late fall.

In each of these two poems Lewis conveys the Ojibway belief that the spirit of life is represented and contained in one metamorphic male fertility figure, Manibush, whose presence or absence in the Upper Peninsula determines how the People will fare. The life they live is harsh, especially in winter, but they know, with the intuitive certainty of a pre-scientific people, that although the spirit of life may depart, he continually returns.

I think it is clear that Janet Lewis loved Northern Michigan and poetry about equally, that her consciousness was equally receptive to Indian perceptions and to the white man's historical perspective on their fate, and that her poetic technique in turn revealed both Indian and contemporary Imagist influences that made it possible for her to present the Ojibway worldview to the mainstream white readers of *Poetry* magazine in 1922 and to ourselves, more than two generations later.

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NOTES

1. *Poetry* had first published a single poem of hers in 1920, the year Lewis graduated from the University of Chicago, where she had been a member of its Poetry Club. Charles L. Crow, *Janet Lewis* (Boise: Boise State University, 1980).
2. *The Indians in the Woods* was reprinted, with a short introduction by Lewis, in 1980. See note 11.
3. Frederick W. Turner III, editor, *The Portable North American Indian Reader* (New York: The Viking Press), p. 235.
4. Ezra Pound, "A Few Don'ts By An Imagiste," *Poetry*, I (1912-1913), p. 200.

5. Turner, p. 239.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Turner considers this line "quintessentially modern with its anticipation of Gertrude Stein, . . . its imagistic thingness/ineffability." *Ibid.*, p. 235.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
9. Margot Astrov, editor, *American Indian Prose and Poetry* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1962), p. 79.
10. *Selected Poems of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1957), p. 38.
11. All of the Lewis poems are from *The Indians in the Woods* (Palo Alto, California: The Matrix Press), 1980, no pagination.
12. Pound, "A Few Don'ts . . .", p. 203.

JOHN BROWN (NÉ JAKE BRAUNOWITZ) OF THE WASTELAND OF JO SINCLAIR (NÉE RUTH SEID)

ELLEN SERLEN UFFEN

Twentieth-century western society, by arrogantly internalizing myth, transformed the Holy Grail into the individual human psyche. What we now find, after our quests, if we are successful, is only ourselves, now naked and alone, free of the screens of ego. If Godhead exists at all in the twentieth century, it is diminished by such narrow definition. If April is cruel in the wasteland, it is so because the rebirth of nature and of human potentiality have become mockery in an earth rendered sterile by egocentricity. Such an attitude, suggesting, as it must, disengagement from tradition and the past, cannot allow any but superficial attachment to the present and future. Consequently, our identity, like our history, continues to elude us.

Jake Brown, in Jo Sinclair's Harper Prize winning novel, *Wasteland* (1946), is a product of this modern dilemma. But Jake's problem is the more intense because he is a Diaspora Jew. As a first-generation Midwestern American, he is guiltier about his removal from the past, more ambivalent than his gentile counterparts about his need to reattach himself and, literally, to call himself by his right name. When we first encounter Jake, it is the early 1940s. He is 35 years old and a fairly successful newspaper photographer, his full potential hampered, we discover, by an inability to assert himself creatively. Jake is estranged from his family, although he still lives in his parents' house with them, immigrants from eastern Europe, silent and distant; with his older brother, Sig, a failure to himself, never having fulfilled his own proud promise; and with his younger sister, Debby, a budding writer and a lesbian. Two other sisters

are no longer at home: Sarah, the eldest, has a husband, two sons, and family problems of her own, and Roz is divorced and working as a cocktail waitress. Jake is embarrassed by all of them, except Debby, who has, more smoothly than the others, adapted herself to the world outside of "the house." Jake also calls himself John, a name "as American-looking, as anonymous as any name he could think of" (78).¹ (Sig had already, years earlier, changed the family name from Braunowitz to Brown.) For a long time, Jake Braunowitz, now John Brown, not surprisingly, had

been searching for a kind of identity—for himself, away from these people who were unreal and strange to him. Away from the house, he had no identity; he was not alive, he was without framework of name, without flesh of heritage, without blood of pride or love. And yet, within the house, walking in the dim, dirty rooms, he was a shadow to the shadows of his parents, his sister and brother. And the shadows of his two other sisters, and of Sarah's family, all these lengthened on the walls of the house, too. (20)

Jake knows that ". . . he would remain rootless, nameless, even with this fine John Brown of a name, until he named himself inside . . . real identity happens inside of a guy first, and then the outside identity does not matter much. But how does a guy get such an inside identity, for God's sake!" (84-5)

The sad result of Jake's failure to name himself is evident in every aspect of his life, public and personal, including, importantly, his attitude toward his profession. If a photographer lacks identity, he lacks imaginative vision; to photograph a subject in a way peculiar to the individual artist, is to identify one's own reality. It is to give meaning with sight. To caption the pictures is to go a step further and to give meaning with words. To combine sight and language is to give lift to vision and wholeness to an otherwise fragmented world. Jake, in contrast, has a hidden file of pictures he is afraid to show publicly. These do not even include pictures of his family. He has never been able to photograph them. His disaffection precludes understanding. What he sees instead is the collective failure of his family to thrive. Jake will not give life to their private wastelands: to his father's sullenness and his mother's sadness, to Roz's masks of

makeup, to Sarah's gross overweightness and her children's belligerence.

But there are also images in Jake's life which suggest the potential for reclamation and the possibility of seeing beyond the barren waste, images of eternal return, of Jewishness and wholeness. The Friday night Sabbath, for instance, provided for Jake "A custom, a landmark in the undirected week, a stable thing in a world that was insecure and perilous" (24). It is a full meal Jake receives on the Sabbath, of special, customary food. He loves to partake of the challah, the gefilte fish, the chicken, the soup and noodles, and is pleased that the meal is the same every week. But even here, although the whole family does come together, we recognize glimmers of wasteland in the fact that, oddly, they do not all eat together. Sometimes Jake sits alone in the kitchen, served by his silent mother, at once a part of the Sabbath, and apart from it, attracted to tradition, still tenuously connected to it, yet shamed by the bond.

There is another event, however, this one on an annual, rather than a weekly cycle, which is far more significant to Jake—the holiday of Passover, the celebration of the deliverance of the Jews by Moses from their bondage under the Pharaoh in Egypt. Jewish families commemorate the event each year with two traditional feasts, or Seders, on the first two nights of the week-long festival, during each of which the ancient story is ritually retold. Passover occurs on the Jewish lunar calendar in April, the beginning of Spring and the rebirth of earth and, not incidentally in Jo Sinclair's novel, around the time of Jake's birthday. In *Wasteland* the Passover Seder is a recurring leitmotif and, the story of Passover itself, a paradigm for salvation. Thematically and structurally, the Seder is also an organizing principle, a focus and point of continual return for both characters and readers.

It is in the nature of wasteland that it is disorderly and chaotic, an existential state of affairs in which human energies are stultified, unable to be directed to creative use. "Seder," on the contrary, means "order" in Hebrew. Jake's family is together. They sit around the table celebrating an ancient act of deliverance, a pattern repeated most recently in their own release from Russia to freedom in America. The scene, for Jake, is pervaded by a sense of warmth and candlelight and the permanence of

tradition and collective Jewishness. Other families are arranged similarly, celebrating the same act, and have been so and done so throughout Jewish history. The father has always conducted the ceremony, reading in Hebrew from the Haggadah, the book which tells the Passover story. The youngest son—Jake here—has always recited the Four Questions, which define the distinctness of Passover. To speak them is to be part of “those ancient, ageless, never-dying evenings . . . a definite, named (in the Bible, named) part of this holy thing” (53-4) and a link between the past and the future. But even the peace of Passover is not without a qualifier: Jake does not know Hebrew, the talismanic language which provides the magical connections to history. Consequently, he must do his part in English. Just as he partakes of the warmth of the Sabbath but is removed from it, so here he is participant in the Seder but is removed again from its wholeness and warmth.

Present tensions are also dramatically apparent at the few Seders we witness. Jake, as he gets older, recognizes with increasing clarity the contrast between the “spring and hope,” or the “sense of God” (59) the Seder and the Questions mean to him, and the individual wastelands of the members of his family ranged around the table. In the midst of his pleasure he questions the lie of his own past, more youthful perceptions. He now can see Sig, tapping his fingers, anxious to be gone; his mother, “the face closed to him and to the entire Passover story” (62); his father, reciting “mechanically, a singsong reading of one word after another, one automatic phrase after another” (62); he looks at Roz and sees the “whore of Babylon at God’s table” (255). He sees his sister, Debby, five years earlier at the last Seder he witnessed, the year he did not sit at the table and thus caused her to take his place. She “stole the questions” that year and, with them, his identity as a Jew, finally, and his pride. They have been replaced with shame and with guilt as well since, by making his sister act his role as son, has he not, perhaps, encouraged her homosexuality?

The disintegration of the significance of the Seder to Jake is a result of his increasing awareness of individual and collective wastelands. The emergence of wasteland in his consciousness, tied as it is to Jewish things, is to him solely a Jewish fact. This leads, in turn, to his shame at being a Jew in a non-Jewish world which, to carry the logic further, he perceives as not partaking of

wasteland. To be Jewish, that is, is to be still in bondage; to be a non-Jew is to be free of the shackles of consciousness and shame. This is the cruelty of April. The rebirth of creative human possibility, linked as it is here with the deliverance of the Jews and with Jake’s own birthday, in *Wasteland* are travesties. It is ironic that in America, the land of freedom, this traditional celebration of freedom has become emblematic to Jake of a new kind of bondage, one which emanates from within, one which is self-imposed. It is ironic, too, although Jake, of course, does not recognize this, that it is the freedom of America which allows him the freedom to contemplate such things.

Jake’s sadness and his failure to find the reasons for it lead him, with Debby’s urging, to a psychiatrist whom she has seen earlier, with success. Jake visits him regularly on Saturdays. (More irony: is this a modern substitute for the traditional Sabbath worship service? Has the psychiatrist supplanted God?) He gradually makes Jake understand by the painful process of sensitizing him to others’ feelings and by enabling him to see history. Jake comes to realize that the coldness of his father derived from the tyrannical “Buba,” his father’s mother, who controlled both her son and, from the time of his marriage in Russia, his wife, Esther, as well. Her tyranny robbed Esther of vitality, and led to the emotionally debilitated state in which her children have always known her. Jake also sees his brother Sig’s disappointment at his inability to live up to his family’s expectations of him; he sees Roz’s sadness caused by her failure in marriage and begins to know that she’s worthy of respect; he sees that Sarah and her family, particularly her sons, Bernie and Allen, can, with his help, find their way out of despair.

The immediate result of Jake’s new vision is his ability to take pictures of his family and to place captions on the pictures. By photographing them, Jake grants them a place in his life. He is allowing his foreign family, his Yiddish-speaking family, a larger, American context outside of the dreaded one of “the house.” His psychiatrist believes that the pictures free Jake of wasteland and allow him identity as a member of his family and as a photographer as well.

How Jo Sinclair has organized the book to lead Jake to knowledge is the unusual interest of *Wasteland*. She has created a complex literary architecture, involving the interweaving of

many voices to create a prismatic vision of past and present reality. The narrative is composed, for most of the novel, of sessions of psychoanalysis, chapters of discussions between Jake and his psychiatrist. These alternate with other sections in which the psychiatrist, presumably recording his impressions, analyzes the sessions. The discussions between Jake and his doctor are presented using third-person narrative, but limited to the point of view of Jake. We are allowed to see into him, to hear what he is thinking and what he is saying, but the voice that speaks is not his.

During these weekly (and then, as healing progresses, bi-weekly) sessions, Jake and the doctor discuss the various members of the Brown family. This signals the protean third-person storyteller to shift narrative emphasis and see through the eyes of the character currently being considered while still retaining omniscient privileges. The transition, usually to another time as well as to another person, is often achieved by the simple expedients of an ellipsis and a space of the page. Here, for instance, Jake discusses his parents' youth in Russia, focusing on his mother, particularly:

His voice was very soft. "Her name is Esther, did I tell you? His is Joseph. They're cousins; second, or maybe third, cousins. She was very pretty when she was a girl. Debby saw a picture of her at our aunt's house. A lot of men were crazy about her, but she wasn't in love with anyone . . .

She was not in love with anyone, certainly not with her cousin Joseph. At twenty-one, life was quite exciting. She was strong and healthy and not bad looking (the Mima had told her that, and the eyes of the men in town had told, too). Having passed her apprenticeship, she was now an expert seamstress, with plenty of work. And in the evenings there were the promenades at the railroad station, arm in arm with her best friends. The daily promenade meant giggling and gossip, watching the trains puff in, and giggling again as they passed the clumps of young men with eager eyes. (152)

Esther's story, seen consistently from her perspective, brings the family from Russia to the present in America. The section ends, twenty pages of family history later, during the Depression in the American Midwest, with the nocturnal delivery of an eviction notice, and then a return to Jake by way of another ellipsis:

Esther buried her face in the pillow. Only the cold was real. Only the aching bloodcurdling cold; nothing else was real. . . Jake opened his eyes, looked dazedly at the doctor. "I'd like to have taken pictures of those people. They'd make real art. That grandmother of mine, by God. The old man riding that white horse. My mother getting off the ship with Sig, looking around at the new country, scared to death but not showing it." (173)

By the end of the section, Jake has begun to comprehend, with heightened sensitivity and tolerance, the motivations of his parents. The facts have always been his; it is he, after all, who is relating the story to the psychiatrist. In Sinclair's telling, however, we tend to forget this since we seem to be experiencing the characters themselves—Esther here—doing the speaking and feeling. What we feel we are experiencing, that is, is an *actual* (i.e., fictional) first-person view of reality rather than the mock first-person perspective the book presents. By retaining the third person, but shifting perspective to accommodate the personal visions of the various characters, Sinclair has created a narrative which enables us comfortably to enter the subjective reality of the people while, at the same time, reflecting an objectivity which lends credibility to the whole fictional world of the novel.

Other characters and events are viewed similarly. The result of this ebb and flow of fictional emphasis and narrative perspective is a complexity (albeit highly concentrated) approaching that of the dynamics of the human family experience, born, in the real world, of lifetimes of intimacy. The focus is, on one level, always on Jake, with the aim of clarifying his relationship with his parents and brother and sisters. Yet, since we see each character through the eyes of each, we are also coming to understand who they *all* are to each other. As the narrative progresses and we are introduced to Sig, to Sarah, to Roz and Debby and the rest, each new fact causes some degree of modification in the individual relationship under consideration. In the larger, family scheme, this alteration, in turn, causes the whole configuration of relations to adjust accordingly. What we feel is the human equivalent of what we see through a fine kaleidoscope. Delicate changes occur, things fall into place in slightly (and sometimes, in radically) different patterns, but the elements of the new image are

magically those of the old. Our new, more subtle view of each member of the Brown family and their interrelationships shows us, in terms of plot, that there is not clear guilt. Wastelands arise unknowingly and spirits are lost gradually.

But with knowledge of reasons and of history, the family can be restored and spirits can be revived. *Wasteland* ends in the Spring, in a year the first Passover Seder falls on the day of Jake's birthday; he has enlisted, according to plan, in the Signal Corps; his nephews, Bernie, will go to summer camp, and Allen will study Hebrew; Jake photographs the Seder; and the final words of *Wasteland* are the first words of the Four Questions: "Wherefore is this night distinguished from all other nights? . . ." Thus, presumably, tradition is reestablished and continuity ensured.²

Or so it seems. All of this having been said, there are hints underneath of a darker, more enigmatic text than is immediately apparent. The relative ease of Sinclair's ending after 35 years of Jake's despair may in fact hold out promise as spurious as that proffered by the false messiahs of Jewish history. On the contrary, redemption, perhaps, has yet to be achieved here. Even the apparently simple premise that Jake is a photojournalist, a still photographer, alone suggests some degree of ambiguity.³ In one way, of course, we can read photography as a creative art and, therefore, a foil to wasteland. We know that when Jake is finally freed to take pictures of his family and to "caption" them, as he calls it, this is his way of giving them life and identifying them in terms of himself and the reality outside of "the house." Yet, a photograph, in fact, stops life, captures it, stills breath, holds a moment up to scrutiny. It is a way of controlling and organizing reality by keeping it in place and making it stay eternally the same. Moreover, when Jake finally does caption his family, Debby becomes "YOUNG WRITER" (197), his parents, "AMERICANS IN KITCHEN, EVENING" (219), and for his picture of the Seder table (which he photographs devoid of participants), he considers "JEWISH HOLIDAY, TWENTIETH CENTURY," and then thinks again: "Or I could call it, 'THEY KEEP FAITH IN AMERICA, TOO'" (317). The captions are curiously general and impersonal—no one is named—and present a solution also curiously disconnected from Jake's problem. He seems little closer to accepting, without shame and with pride, his foreign parents, his Jewishness, his family's "failures." Even

his return to his given name of Jake near the end of the book is a partial solution since "Braunowitz" much earlier was permanently changed to "Brown." Does this suggest, in fact, that the final solutions are out of our hands and, despite our best efforts, wholeness, once lost, cannot be reclaimed? Perhaps.

Jake's psychiatrist, however, has no such skepticism. He sees all of this as evidence that his patient is well on the way to health: whereas "S," we learn—Jake as "Subject"—"is by no means completely integrated, his realization of his problems and their solutions continues to grow" (307). Clearly, we are meant to see "integration" as a desirable end or, at least, meant to believe that the psychiatrist believes it desirable. When Jake, with Debby, donates blood at the end, the doctor views this event similarly:

Jake's Jewish blood, in his mind not too long ago a despised thing, has been accepted and now flows in the mixture of American blood. S has proved to himself, in a most obvious way, that he is a member of a group which is of value to the world.

S has given his blood. He has made a gesture opposite wasteland, a gift of life. He gave as a Jew, and as a patriot, to some degree; but, most important, he gave as Everyman. He wanted to be the anonymous man of America, the man who is as same as the next man . . . (289-90)

But is this what he should be?⁴ Are we meant to accept the evaluation of the doctor, a non-Jew, a representative of gentile America, who, significantly, is never himself identified by name in the book? Is it right to believe that a man who despised himself and his family for being foreigners and Jews, is "cured" when he is able to see himself as an anonymous Everyman, in context, much like the psychiatrist who has facilitated the cure? Is this not, like Jake's choice of captions, or choice of his own name, a gesture which denies identity? To be Jewish in America is, of course, not to be Everyman, it is not to merge, it is not ever to be part of the equalizing fact of—here—Midwestern life. On the contrary, to be Jewish in America is to carry history, its strengths and its burdens as well, in a land of freedom. In part, Jake does do this, although this "cure" is the one, ironically, that his psychiatrist, as a non-Jew, is unaware of. By reaccepting his name of Jake, that is, he has, in effect, reaccepted not only his own

Jewishness, but Jewish tradition as well: eastern European Jews customarily name their children after relatives who have died, as a way of remembering them and giving them eternal life. This Jake, then, whether he is consciously aware of it or not, bears the identity of another and other Jews.⁵

It is World War II, however, peripheral to the action of the novel and physically distant from it, but permeating the events nonetheless, which lends the ultimate lie to Jake's "cure." The enormity of the Holocaust mocks his hurts and makes them petty and renders his deepest pain mere self-indulgence. It is preposterous that Jake's Jewish identity shames him when, in Europe, millions are being slaughtered for no other reason but their identity. The counterpoint is beyond irony and so absurd as not even to warrant direct treatment in the novel. Jake, the spoiled child of America, who was born the year his parents arrived in their new land, has much to learn. It is to credit that, at the end of the book, he does begin to recognize that he has a responsibility to the universe beyond his psyche. To enlist in the war is to play a role in the salvation of the Jews; to enlist particularly in the Signal Corps is his way, perhaps, of establishing some more personal means of communication, of connection, between himself and his past. He is a latter-day Moses, living the Passover story for real and leading himself and his people out of the wasteland into the promised land.

Michigan State University

NOTES

1. Jake's choosing the name of a fanatic abolitionist is an irony that may be lost on him, but not on the reader. Anonymity is not so easily achieved in this novel.
2. The original reviewers agreed. Most of them read the book unambiguously, as the story of Jake's reawakening to and reacceptance of his heritage. Cf. Richard Plant, "The Ghetto Within," *New Republic* 10 June 1946: 843-44; Harold Fields, "A Personal Conflict and Victory," 16 February 1946: *Yale Review* Spring 1946: 575.
3. That Jake and his profession are modeled on Jo Sinclair's brother, Herman, is irrelevant fictionally, although it may be interesting biographically. Once the real fact is used in a work of fiction, it becomes a fact of fiction whose relation to the reality outside the work is merely coincidental.
4. Not one of the reviewers questioned the judgment of the psychiatrist. In fact, Wallace Stegner, in his *Atlantic* review (April 1946: 164-66), went this step further in his otherwise positive evaluation: ". . . There is the suspicion more or less constantly present that one function of the book is to justify and demonstrate psychoanalysis, and whenever that suspicion intrudes, the book suffers" (166).

5. Yet even here, there is some irony: Jake's sister, Debby, the center of the family, the one to whom the rest look for advice and knowledge and who has herself, we are made to believe, undergone a successful psychiatric cure, is a lesbian. Debby, the creative writer, is the only one of her family who will certainly, in the most literal sense, not be creative. She will never produce another generation of Jews.

WORK CITED

Sinclair, Jo. *Wasteland*. New York: Harper, 1946.

MICHIGAN UPPER PENINSULA LITERARY
TRADITIONS AND THE POETRY OF
T. KILGORE SPLAKE

THOMAS H. SMITH

Certain geographic regions provide the focus for literary recognition. Those associated with the "Southern Writers" have a well established reputation, as do the writers, playwrights, and poets identified with the New England literary territory. New York's position as the center for the publishing industry in the United States serves as a magnet attracting many writers seeking literary contacts or connections, and further publicity to their writing fame. The Pacific West Coast centers of Los Angeles and San Francisco serve as a mecca for large numbers of aspiring as well as established writers. The *Haight Ashbury Literary Journal* still is in print and providing a sounding board for the San Francisco Bay artists.

To writers and observers of the American literary scene living in more populated and cosmopolitan areas of the United States, Upper Peninsula Michigan must seem like a remote if not unknown region. Robert Traver in his prologue to *Anatomy of a Murder*, provides an excellent description of Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

"... the Upper Peninsula of Michigan is simple U.P. to its inhabitants. The U.P. is a wild, harsh and broken land, rubbed and ground on the relentless hone of many past glaciers, the last one, in its slow convulsive retreat, leaving the country a jumble of swamps and hills and rocks and endless waterways. Lying as it does within the southernmost rim of the great Canadian pre-Cambrian shield, the region is perhaps more nearly allied with Canada by climate and geological affinity; with Wisconsin by the logic of geog-

raphy; but a region by the same logic beyond logic, finally wound up as part of the state of Michigan; this after a fairy tale series of political blunders and compromises that doubtless made angels weep."

The 16,538 square acres of the Upper Peninsula became an official part of Michigan upon the state's entry into the Union on January 26, 1837. This acquisition was the result of a reluctant compromise which gave the State of Ohio a portion of 'disputed' land on Michigan's southern boundary near Toledo, Ohio, in exchange for the Upper Peninsula territories. Shortly after this compromise large deposits of iron, copper, and other minerals were discovered in the Upper Peninsula which provided a period of great wealth for the U.P. mining areas from the 1840s to the 1930s. Traver commented that "the unwanted ugly duckling had turned into a fabulous golden-haired princess."

In this isolated and little known corner of the Midwest, a literary heritage with a solid writing tradition prevails. The sparsely populated and rural setting of Michigan's Upper Peninsula has a hearty and very independent group of writers and poets who pursue their art with little recognition or sense of celebrity.

In its literary history, Upper Peninsula writers and poets would have their works published in the literary magazines and journals that existed in the U.P. Patrick O'Neill used to edit *The Lake Superior Review* in Ironwood, Susan Stephens published *Tailings* in Houghton, and Michael Felton produced the *Chunga Review* in Felch. For a short time Shirle Pratt published *The Upper Peninsula Today* in Munising in the 1970s. *The Woodsrunner*, a literary publication of Lake Superior State College in Sault Sainte Marie, printed its final edition in 1987. *The Woodsrunner* had published a variety of literature for seventeen years under the supervision of William Rabe and editor Peter Thomas.

The Upper Peninsula literary lines and traditions are presently very much alive with several fine literary magazines currently publishing. *Passages North*, edited by Elinor Benedict, is published by the Bay Arts Writers' Guild in Escanaba. Another literary magazine, *Above the Bridge* was started four years ago by Patrice Oliver Cross of Gwinn, and is currently being produced and edited by Jacqueline Miller and Judith Hendrickson of Marquette. Gary Silver edits the literary journal *The Big*

Two-Hearted for the Mid-Peninsula Library Co-operative in Iron Mountain.

In addition to the literary journals and magazines in the U.P. there is an association of Upper Peninsula writers who have incorporated as the "Upper Peninsula of Michigan Writers' Association." The Writers Association sponsors an annual writing conference usually held the first weekend in October. This fall conference allows an opportunity for Upper Peninsula writers to meet, talk about recent writing projects, and exchange literary ideas. The conference also presents a variety of literary speakers and many different writing workshops. In 1987, the Upper Peninsula Writers' Association celebrated its 30th anniversary at a conference held in L'Anse. The 1988 fall conference is scheduled to convene in Iron Mountain.

T. Kilgore Splake exemplifies a writer and poet truly in love with Michigan's Upper Peninsula. He admires the sense of "Sisu" found in the character of U.P. peoples. Sisu is the Finnish moral which describes those who "persevere in the face of dire adversity." Splake also feels a deep sense of artistic mystery permeating the wide variety of Upper Peninsula scenes. He has a strong attachment to the karmic beauty in the forest, the rich textures and poetic rhythms surrounding the old mining ruins, abandoned sand hill farms and Lake Superior waters.

Splake's writing home is near the small community of Melstrand, in the center of the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore Area. When not musing over the red, brown and yellow-gray sandstone escarpments of the Pictured Rocks, Splake finds much creative solitude meditating over Lake Superior waves. He says, "when I can observe all the moods of the lake, I feel closer to an understanding of life." Poet Splake feels there is much truth in the Zen saying, "the waves come and go, but the ocean is still there." Following is an illustrative collection of his Upper Peninsula verse.

Kellogg Community College

UNTITLED

No cemetery in Melstrand or Shingleton, and
only a backyard of ancient stained limestone
slabs and worn twisted wooden markers at
Whetmore.

Ah, the Poor Indian
spirits and ghosts of unlucky lumberjacks
resting unattended,

the ill small
children of early pioneer families lying
under apple trees long lost,

their invisible specters friendly companions
in light morning mists and when low black
clouds bring early evening darkness.

DREAM KILL

nervous fingers and
unsteady eye narrow down a lead bead, in
silent aftershock soft brown fur lies steaming
in gray early mists, tearing open its chest,
devouring the heart, saving the liver for later
sustenance on our long odyssey, crawling
inside between mahogany stained ribs for
sanguine warmth, needing his clear eyes and
sharp scent for flight back to tribal hogans,
the times of great feasts, abundant eagle
feathers and hides, fat fish bellies smoking,
visiting in dead of winter the Indian "shamans"
around flickering fires, carving grotesque
blood tortured faces from flat antler bones,
back to a beginning when sweet luscious fish
would soon leave fossil lines in white coral
along red and golden gravels of great lake
shores.

OPTIMIST

the small opening
 an old Indian settlement or logging camp
 site, when the bulldozer came sending huge
 pine stumps rolling, pleasant clearing for
 children's summertime odyssey,

leisure Coleman Stove breakfasts, Tonka
 Toy excavations, bb-gun targeting, and
 resting place from fishing treks around
 evening campfire coals,

now older, alone, sons in distant parts
 passing, I repay my woodland debt sowing
 wildflower seeds, hoping soon bright colors
 hide scars and treads,

Blazing Star "perennials" waiting through a
 winter pause, next spring hopefully to leave
 dusty footprints among flowery blossoms.

SILENT SERMON IN THE PORCUPINES

raging Presque Isle torrents
 boiling into calm Superior, a late afternoon
 March thaw,

nervously perched atop sparkling granite
 precipice, contemplating the leap and many
 miles to Government Peak that might give
 new vitality, fresh vision,

to miss
 and become unknown casualty to frigid lake
 soundings, aware snows still deep on back
 forest trails,

staring down pale currents until dusk, finally
 departing before evening shadows quickly
 changed to black night,

to fight my sanity on
 more familiar grounds, soon enough another
 spring for inviting icy demons and quiet
 forest spirits.

THE POOR FARM

Ontonagon lighthouses
 finished, maybe Presque Isle Falls with good
 camera light,
 almost speeding past an elegant brick house alone in
 unfarmed meadow,

windows smashed,
 frames twisted,
 rotting porch

huge oak paneled hall stairway, upstairs the
 bathrooms with split porcelain stools, wash
 bowls torn from walls,

artificial leg in downstairs pantry,
 attic a dark assemblage of old clothes, bed
 frames, scattered books, broken utensils,
 thin light beaming through small roof cracks,
 basement full of rusty pipes and rain water,
 a distant neighbor halted his plowing,

"It's the old
 County Poor Farm, the last few years the local
 boys got all drunk up and tore hell out of
 the place. Kids didn't show in Court and
 nothing happened."

I tried to
 visualize small frightened children left by
 failing mothers, husbands long gone,

assorted elders afflicted by stange ailments
 and odd notions,

poor soul minus his leather limb,
 black anger of destructive youth, wondering
 if I possess the same juices and how deeply
 buried,

sadness for the decaying farm that failed a
 gentleness for painfully weak and troubled
 souls.

FARMS

Rigid square brick houses, weathered barns and
sloping outbuildings, a red and brown tapestry
surrounding the highway to the distant horizon
like inert board game players,

an
adolescent crop, mindlessly nurtured by weary
uncaring parents,

hoping soon to join
distant military ranks or escape to downstate
college freedom,

young girls teasing Dad's huge ancient Buick
topend down narrow pitted concrete, billowing
light dresses flying high above naked white
thighs,

hungry
pickup truck locals honking in close hot
summer pursuit,

momentary frolic before disappearing into
the landscape, soon indifferent to bedroom
and children, prisoner of obsolete machines
and costly feed,

making steady unconscious
complaints about weather they can't change
either.

SAUL BELLOW AND THE
MIDWESTERN TRADITION: BEGINNINGS

DAVID D. ANDERSON

"I am an American, Chicago born—Chicago, that somber city," Augie March announces at the beginning of Saul Bellow's telling of Augie's adventures in and beyond the city. Chicago was the city to which Abraham Bellows, Russian onion importer and Canadian bootlegger supplier, brought his family from Montreal in 1924. In Chicago Abraham became a coal merchant, and his nine-year-old son Solomon, the youngest of his four children and the only one Canadian-born, became Solly. Five years earlier, Al Capone, known publicly as Al Brown, had come to Chicago to work for the ambitious Johnny Torrio after having served an apprenticeship in the Five Pointers gang in Lower Manhattan; in the same year, 1919, William Hale "Big Bill" Thompson had been re-elected mayor of Chicago, and the Eighteenth Amendment had become the law of the land.

Later in 1924, as young Solly began to explore the streets and parks of the Humboldt Park neighborhood of the Northwest Side, two young University of Chicago students, seventeen and eighteen, murders of young Bobby Franks, were defended by sixty-eight-year-old Clarence Darrow, a trial young Solly followed in the newspapers. On November 10, 1924, Dion O'Bannon, former altar boy, florist, and North Side gang leader, was gunned down in his flower shop in the shadow of Holy Name Cathedral, resulting in perhaps the most elaborate of a decade of elaborate funerals. One of the floral tributes read simply, "from Al." From the Four Deuces at 2222 Wabash Avenue, forty-six-year-old Torrio ruled the city; twenty-five-year-old Capone was his enforcer.

The Chicago Solly Bellows had begun to explore in his Northside neighborhood was ethnically somewhat different from—there were more Jews and Polish than Irish—but culturally virtually identical to the Southside neighborhood that a twenty-one-year-old bespectacled third-generation Irish Chicagoan, James T. Farrell, was about to put behind him, together with his Catholicism, and to enroll in the University, the first of his family to do so. Young Farrell was to carry the memory and the reality of that Chicago with him until his death in 1979, and he was to define it most clearly in *Young Lonigan* published in 1932, when Solly was a Tuly High School student. Like Bellow's North Side, 58th Street was a neighborhood of self-styled tough guys in their mid-teens, first and second and third-generation Americans, who hung around on street corners and in pool rooms, determined to prove themselves with violence, sex, and illegal, sometimes poisonous booze; it was a neighborhood, too, of first generation immigrants who had a graft with the city, the machine, or the mob, and the upwardly mobile second-generation, who found an open society, the public schools and libraries, and the great university William Rainey Harper had built a generation earlier. Bellow himself, in a 1982 interview, describes his Chicago in the twenties as he began his acquaintance with the city and the world:

Then I was on the streets of Chicago and playing a game called Piggie-move-up, which was a baseball game played in the street, and hanging upside down by my knees from porch railings, which was my favorite diversion in Chicago as a kid. Well, I was a street kid, although I played the violin and attended a Hebrew school. But I broke with that—the choice was between the Hebrew school and the poolroom and the playground, and the poolroom and the playground won out. Together with the public library.

A long early-adolescent illness made him a reader, and the orthodox identity of his early years eased; from the library, he remembers, "I took home Dreiser and Sherwood Anderson. I didn't bring home the wisdom of Maimonides." And before he graduated from Tuly High School in 1933, he knew that he would become a famous writer.

During Solly Bellows's first decade in Chicago, the city's ninetieth, while his life began the direction that it was to follow,

the city added nearly seven hundred thousand to its population. At Tuly High School, Solly was, according to his friend Dave Peltz, a good runner on the track team, a fair swimmer, a middling tennis player, and a remarkable writer among a group of young people who met, argued, and read at the Mission House near Humboldt Park. In the back of a volume of Oscar Wilde's verse, Solly and his friends wrote the titles of books they would write. Solly, as his friend Sam Friedfeld remembers, chose "Black leaves whirling in the wind," from Wilde. But Solly was to remain Solomon Bellows until the publication of "Two Morning Monologues," his first published fiction, in 1941, when he became Saul Bellow. Much later, in 1965, he told a *Paris Review* interviewer, Gordon Lloyd Harper, that "I think I was lucky to have grown up in the Middle West . . .;" and still later, in 1975, he published a novel called, perhaps coincidentally, *Humboldt's Gift*. In the previous year, 1974, in "Zetland: by a Character Witness," he memorialized the youth of his friend and high school classmate Isaac Rosenfeld, dead in Chicago in 1956, and his own youth and their friendship. In fact and fiction he continues to remember the Chicago and the people of his youth.

While Solly Bellows's life took on form and purpose, the history of Chicago was written in obituaries: those of O'Bannion, of Big Jim Colosimo, of Frank Capone, of Hymie Weiss, of the three Genna bothers, of young Assistant State's Attorney William H. McSwiggen, of a young optometrist friend of Bugs Moran's, Dr. Reinhart H. Seimner, and six others on St. Valentine's Day, 1929, of Jake Lingle, the *Tribune* police reporter and intimate of Al Capone, of the more than a hundred others, some of them nameless, while Al Capone, whom the students of Chicago's Medill School of Journalism named one of 1930's ten "outstanding personages of the world . . . the characters that actually made history," reigned supreme from the Hawthorne Inn in Cicero and the Lexington Hotel at State and Twenty-second.

Political obituaries were written too during Solly Bellows's first decade in Chicago: of Big Bill Thompson—twice; of Governor Len Small, Thompson's creature in Springfield; of William E. Dever, interregnum reform mayor; of State's Attorney Robert Emmet Crowe, whose 128 convictions for murder in his first two terms did not include a single gangster; and ultimately of Mayor Anton "Tony" Cermak, partner of Boss Ed

Kelly, founder of the Kelly-Nash machine. Cermak, winner over Thompson in 1932, was dead of an assassin's bullet aimed at President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt in Miami on February 15, 1933. But there were those who insisted that Guiseppe Zangara's hand was guided by Capone, then under federal indictment; there are still those, Saul Bellow among them, who insist that Cermak agreed on his hospital deathbed that he, rather than Roosevelt, was the target.

But Chicago's obituary of a different sort was also written during Solly Bellows's first decade in the city. This obituary marked the literary death of a city that M. L. Mencken had declared to be the literary capital of the nation in 1916. In an essay published that year, Mencken wrote: "In Chicago there is the mysterious something that makes for individuality, personality and charm. In Chicago a spirit broods upon the face of the waters. Find a writer who is indubitably an American in every pulse-beat, snort and adenoid, an American who has something new and peculiarly American to say and who says it in an unmistakable American way and nine times out of ten you will find that he has some sort of connection with the gargantuan and inordinate abbatoir by Lake Michigan—that he was bred there, or got his start there or passed through there in days when he was young and tender." In Chicago, Mencken concluded, the young writer found ". . . free play for prairie energy" and "some imaginative equivalent for the stupendous activity they were bred to."

The Chicago of which Mencken wrote was that of the decade in which he was writing, the decade of Chicago's second literary generation, that of the liberation, of the rejection by young Midwesterners of the values of the stable towns and villages in Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Iowa from whence they had come. But the liberation, the renaissance, the literary dominance of which Mencken wrote, had, by 1916, largely run its course, its momentum spent in little more than a decade, and the three significant works by which it is marked, Carl Sandburg's *Chicago Poems*, Edgar Lee Masters's *Spoon River Anthology*, and Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, were already in print, in whole or in part, as were the first two, or moving toward realization in the mind and art of the writer, as was *Winesburg, Ohio*.

This second generation was of a renaissance that had begun in the last decade of the nineteenth century on the newspapers and at the University. The first generation had run its course by 1910; although Robert Herrick remained actively writing at the University, William Vaughn Moody was dying; most of Hamlin Garland's best work was behind him, and he was soon to leave Chicago; Eugene Field was fifteen years in his grave; Brand Whitlock was reform mayor of Toledo. By 1915 the Press Club and the Whitechapel Club were respectable memories, and the first generation of the Chicago Renaissance had passed the torch to a younger, quite different, determinedly artistic and liberated group of the young.

The Chicago Liberation movement was essentially an ingathering of the young from the Midwestern towns and farms from whence all railroads led to Chicago. This group in their youth had known Chicago as the site of the World's Fair of 1893 and the mail-order merchandising capital of a limited and limiting world that in little more than two nineteenth-century generations had epitomized the American Midwestern experience. Of that experience and of the making of the Midwestern mind that drove, sent, or lured this new generation to Chicago in the second decade of a new century, Sherwood Anderson wrote.

In our father's day, at night in the forests of Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and on the wide prairies, wolves howled. There was fear in our fathers and mothers, pushing them forward, making the new land. When the land was conquered fear remained, the fear of failure. Deep in our American souls, the wolves still howl.

And so, perhaps driven by or from their parents' fear or their own, the wolves at their psychic heels, seeking their own success in a new age, on their own terms, they came to Chicago, a movement later transmuted into a new Midwestern myth by Sherwood Anderson, Carl Sandburg, and Floyd Dell. It was a movement of liberation, of exciting new journals—the *Friday Literary Review* of the *Chicago Evening Post*, founded by Dell and Francis Hackett in 1909, *Poetry*, founded by Harriet Monroe in 1912, *The Little Review*, founded by Margaret Anderson in 1914—but above all, it was a movement made up of people and

of intellectual and literary excitement, limited by no rules except those they discovered for themselves.

In confidence, fear, or anticipation, they came: Floyd Dell, Susan Glaspell, Arthur Davison Ficke, George Cram Cooke from Davenport, Iowa; Ben Hecht from Racine, Wisconsin; Margaret Anderson from Columbus, Indiana; Carl Sandburg from Galesburg, Illinois; Edgar Lee Masters from Garnett, Kansas and rural central Illinois; Vachel Lindsay from Springfield, Illinois; Sherwood Anderson, the oldest, at 37 in 1913, from Clyde, Ohio, by way of Chicago, Springfield, Cleveland, and Elyria, Ohio, like Sandburg, having experienced the heady, innocent excitement and dysentarial misery of what fellow Midwesterner John Hay called a "splendid little war."

Burton Rascoe, from Fulton, Kentucky, by way of the University of Chicago and the literary editorship of the *Tribune*, later insisted that the Renaissance of the Liberation had begun with the founding of the *Friday Literary Review*, the first authentic voice of liberation and a new literature and the first to succumb—to gentility rather than financial failure. But the spiritual beginning was perhaps more properly that day in 1911, when twenty-four-year-old Floyd Dell gave a newly-arrived twenty-one-year-old Margaret Anderson, an apprentice book reviewer, her assignment and instructions: "Here is a book on China," Anderson remembered him saying; "Now don't send me an article about China but one about yourself."

Whenever the moment of its birth, however, the apogee of artistic liberation was reached in March 1914, with the publication of the first issue of *The Little Review*, which, Margaret Anderson later insisted, "betrayed nothing but my adolescence." Nevertheless it also contained, in Sherwood Anderson's essay "The New Note," the essence of the spirit of liberation:

In the trade of writing the so-called new note is as old as the world. Simply stated, it is a cry for the reinjection of truth and honesty into the craft; it is an appeal from the standards set up by money-making magazine and book publishers in Europe and America to the older, sweeter standards of the craft itself; it is the voice of the new man, come into a new world, proclaiming his right to speak out to the body and soul of youth. . .

. . . Given this note of craft love all the rest must follow, as the spirit of self-revelation, which is also a part of the new note, will follow. . . .

But the Chicago Liberation was a liberation of literary substance as well as youthful spirit, of solid literary accomplishment as well as—and perhaps inspired by—the intense conversations in the 57th Street artistic bohemia, at Schlogl's tavern, in *The Little Review* editorial office in the Fine Arts Building, on the North Shore beach of Lake Michigan, and it was the substance, the literary accomplishment, of the Chicago Liberation, that was to fuel the imagination of young Solly Bellows and a generation of writers who were to come of age in the 1920s and '30s. Carl Sandburg gave voice to the Chicago proletariat—a word just beginning its American intellectual vogue—in their own language and place; Edgar Lee Masters wrote free-verse epitaphs for the dead for whom the wolves still howled; Sherwood Anderson, the literary son of Mark Twain and younger brother of Theodore Dreiser, in William Faulkner's words forty years later, gave language, form, and identity to a new American literature.

Of the three, Anderson's contribution was, for young Bellows and for the generations of writers who emerged in the twenties and thirties, the most immediate, the most important, and the most lasting. In his apprenticeship novels, *Windy McPherson's Son* and *Marching Men*, both apparently written in Elyria, rewritten in Chicago, and published in 1916 and 1917, and the unpublished "Mary Cochran" and "Talbot Whittingham," also apparently from the Elyria years, Anderson had attempted to explore the inner life of his people as they searched for meaning, for purpose, for permanent relationships. But until he began the stories that were to become *Winesburg, Ohio* he had not yet learned that what they sought could neither be found nor articulated; that it could only be felt, and it could be felt only in moments of transcendent acceptance.

Almost simultaneously Anderson learned the language of his people, or more properly, he learned that his language, that of the easy rhythms and seemingly artless digressions of an oral, rural nineteenth-century Midwestern people, was their language. And he learned, too, that there are no plots in human life, that the story of a life is that of what people do and what is done to them.

In the cross-fertilization of the liberation Anderson learned much: he learned that he could tell a story to attentive listeners, as Margaret Anderson recounts in her *My Thirty Years' War*, and he learned, too, that these were not the stories he had told in the countless smoking cars and barrooms of his advertising career. They were stories of the people whose lives he had somehow touched, that somehow he understood, those who were spiritually twisted like the apples in the orchards north of Clyde, people whom he called "grotesques." But they were neither the symbolic grotesques of Cloyd Head's "Grotesques, a Decoration in Black and White," a one-act play presented at the Chicago Little Theatre on November 16, 1915, nor were they the charmingly outrageous and rebellious "Ten Grotesques" that Arthur Davison Ficke described in verse in *The Little Review* of March 1915. Anderson's people were drawn from life and experience, whether from Clyde, from The Army, from Elyria, or from his Chicago boarding house, and were transmuted by his imagination—by what he called his fancy—into both the stuff of literary art and recognizable, memorable human beings, each an individual, deftly sketched, and each deserving of compassion and understanding. In creating them, Anderson combined memory, talent, imagination, and he reordered our understanding of the American Midwestern experience.

These are the people—Curtis Hartman, Enoch Robinson, Wing Biddlebaum, Kate Swift, Elizabeth Willard—about whom Herbert Gold wrote nearly four decades later when he pointed out that Anderson "helped to create the image we have of ourselves as Americans . . . all of the people of Winesburg haunt us as do our neighbors, our friends, our own secret selves which we first met one spring-time in childhood." These are the people who teach us about ourselves, as does Alice Hindman when she learns that "people must live and die alone, even in Winesburg," as does Dr. Parcival when he tells George Willard that "we are all Christ and we are all crucified."

But when *Winesburg, Ohio* was published in 1919, the Liberation and the Renaissance had already drifted into literary history; Floyd Dell had gone East in 1913; Margaret Anderson had taken *The Little Review* to San Francisco in 1916 and then to New York and on to Paris, where it died; George Cram Cooke and Susan Glaspell, married, had gone to Provincetown to

reshape the American theater; Edgar Lee Masters went to New York in 1915; Anderson, in 1921, tried New York, went briefly to France, and then followed the path of destiny to New Orleans and beyond. When young Solly Bellows came to Chicago, all that remained was to write the obituaries—of the spirit of liberation, of a dynamic time and experience, and finally, happily prematurely, of a literary place.

The first obituary of the Renaissance was an exercise of nostalgic criticism by Harry Hansen, then literary editor of the *Chicago Daily News*, and, in a sense, both the earliest and certainly the last member of the Liberation. Coming from Davenport to study at the University in 1905 under Herrick and Robert Morss Lovett, graduating in 1909 and shortly thereafter becoming a reporter on the *Daily News*, Hansen was a foreign and war correspondent in Europe from 1914 to 1917. Then he served as foreign editor, 1917-1919, and covered the Paris Peace Conference. Finally, in 1919, he became literary editor, a position he held until, in 1926, one of the last of the Liberation, he moved to the *New York World*.

Midwest Portraits, published in 1923, the year before Solly Bellows came to Chicago, begins with an exercise in nostalgia, as the voices of those who once frequented the back room at Schlogl's haunt his memory—Anderson, Sandburg, Hecht, Masters, and dozens of others, all of whom had left the city behind. But it concludes with assessments of their work that are often acute. Of Sandburg, he writes, "No man has a keener sense for the significant phrase in homely surrounding . . .;" of Anderson, "that he will profoundly affect American writing . . . is assured;" of Masters, "He had never duplicated the Anthology of Spoon River, but it is not necessary that he should do so;" of Hecht, "He is today a man whose promise is better than his performance." But however clear the insights, Hansen's portraits are permeated with regret for what Chicago was once, but was no more.

Sherwood Anderson's obituary for the Liberation, in *Dark Laughter*, published in 1925, his only work to approach best-seller status, is brief and barbed, an epitaph for both what he was later to call a "robin's egg renaissance" and for his second marriage, to Tennessee Mitchell, a dancer, sculptor, and epitome of the liberated woman. Bruce Dudley, the protagonist, is a

refugee from a movement without a soul and a wife without talent; seeking, in the flowing river, to find both escape and fulfillment, he punctuates his memories with an acid "for the sake of art, eh?"

By 1926 Chicago had become for Waldo Frank a "city which does not think, does not even act"; to Samuel Putnam, however, Chicago was simply dead, and his essay in Mencken's *American Mercury* in March 1926 is entitled "Chicago: an Obituary." "Today," he writes, "she is, aesthetically and creatively, a cactus desert. Desolation everywhere. The burned-out crater of a once quite lively young Vesuvius." Putnam, with Hecht a founder of the Chicago *Literary Times* in 1923, surely concurred with Hecht's salutation to the city in the first issue. Hecht had written:

Chicago, the jazz baby—the reeking, cinder ridden, joyous Baptist stronghold, Chicago, the chewing gum center of the world, the bleating, slant-headed roundezvous of sociopaths and pants makers—in the name of the Seven Holy Imperishable Arts, Chicago salutes you.

For Putnam three years later, the situation was worse: "The chief excitement is the visiting lecturer, ordinarily a second-rate fellow. Chicago has become a one-night stand on the lyceum circuit." He concludes with an image of Opie Read, asleep in a chair at a Press Club of "butchers, bakers, dentists and their ilk." "Let him dream. It would be a shame to disturb him. After all, he typifies Chicago."

Even as Putnam wrote, the bespectacled young Chicago Irishman, a student at the University, was writing a story called "Studs" that would become a trilogy defining the city and its values and the life of a young man dead at 29. But of all of this, young Solly Bellows, street and park kid, would-be writer, reader of Dreiser and Masters and Sherwood Anderson, was unaware. He would, perhaps, become a sociologist. And a writer.

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