

**SOCIETY
FOR
THE
STUDY
OF**



MIDWESTERN LITERATURE

Newsletter
Volume Eight
Number Three
Fall 1978

Society for the Study of
Midwestern Literature

Newsletter

Volume VIII

Number Three
Fall, 1978

The Ninth Annual Conference

The Ninth Annual Conference, which will again focus on "The Cultural Heritage of the Midwest," will be held at the Kellogg Center, Michigan State University, on May 3, 4, and 5, 1979. The recipient of the MidAmerica Award for 1979 will be Walter Havighurst, Professor Emeritus of English at Miami University, novelist and in Ohioana's words, "Dean of Midwestern Historians."

Twenty papers will be presented, and members of the Society are encouraged to participate. Proposals will be received until March 1 in the following areas:

The Historical Heritage

The Political Heritage

The Literary Heritage

Midwestern Art and Architecture

Midwestern Popular Culture

The Midwestern Quality of Life

Other areas of interest

A special focus, for which papers from the above categories are solicited, is "Midwestern Culture in the Classroom." It will include a variety of subject matters and techniques. For further information and/or the submission of titles and brief descriptions, write

David D. Anderson
181 Ernst Bessey Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824

* * *

The Life Membership Campaign

The campaign to enroll 100 Life Members in the Society is continuing, with less than an overwhelming response to date. Because success of this campaign is crucial to the success of the fundraising drive for the Center for the Study of Midwestern Literature and Culture, we encourage you to take this opportunity, when annual dues are due, to become a Life Member. The fee is \$150.00, payable in two annual payments of \$75.00 each.

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Plans for 1979-1980

MidAmerica VI is in press and will appear early in 1979. MidAmerica VII, for which essays are solicited, will go to press in November, 1979. Also needed are Newsletter items (brief reviews, checklists, announcements, accounts of research in progress and publications, etc.), essays and edited material for Midwestern Miscellany, which is now formally an annual, and participants for the Annual Conference and special programs for MLA, Midwest MLA, Popular Culture Association, and Midwest Popular Culture Association. For further details or submission of items or proposals, write Dave Anderson. Because these programs often fill quickly, it is suggested that you write promptly.

* * *

Garland's Prairie Muse

Hamlin Garland knew that his reputation would depend on his honest prose depiction of hardships undergone by the post-pioneer generation. His fiction showed the sons, daughters, and wives who were stunted in spirit and, often, in body by life on the Middle Border. The fathers, of course, worked as hard. But they at least felt the great yearning

for triumph in the land, the restless desire for fulfillment that drew them always westward.

Garland's Middle Border was the westward moving line occupied by the "plowman," the farmer who brought his family and intended to settle, the men he called (Memories of the Middle Border, 1931, p. 100) the "vedettes" of advancing civilization, the generation that came after the hunters and trappers and Indian fighters had moved on to the plains and into the Rockies.

But the hardships and the history were matter for his prose. He published several volumes of poetry. Though as he said in the foreword to Prairie Songs (1893, p. 1) he did not expect his verses to be "taken to represent my larger work," he spent much of his writing time composing in measured language. He used verse to set down fond appreciation for life on the prairie, of the colors and forms and sounds that he found little room for in the best of his spare and hard-bitten fiction.

The boy in A Son of the Middle Border experienced the hand and head-hardening bitterness of endless dreary, physically demanding toil. But that boy also at moments knew a rapture of the senses. Those moments gave Garland the impetus for verse. Most of his poetry was conventional rhyming appreciation of the prairie's spring and summer, wolves and geese, green and white grasses, wind-bowed wheatfields, groves and creeks, fires and blizzards. His usual aim was to describe, though often he worked also for nostalgia, presenting the description as the memories of a city-bound adult looking back on the delights of prairie boyhood. Garland, indeed, said often that his purpose was to record the appearance and feel of the Upper Mississippi prairie before memory of it vanished. His attitude was accepting. He did not demand effort to restore the early environment, he did not in verse decry the economic developments and the machine farming that had destroyed the old ways, he did not condemn the original settlers for avidity and ignorance. He was, he frequently said, glad that he had been born early enough to see the prairie as it was when the

first settlers arrived. But he did not suggest giving it back to the buffalo.

There were of course a few other notes in Garland's songbag--the word he would have used. Proud of having taken part in "the last Long Trail exploration on this continent" (Memories, p. 102), the Alaska gold rush, he wrote a number of poems that sound like Robert Service, probably because like Service he modelled his Klondike verse on the macho metrics and bravura of Kipling.

Garland also occasionally took part in the statement of bitterness at the results of industrialism in the city. This theme was most successfully treated by Stephen Crane. But it also appeared in a few poems by William Dean Howells, Garland's mentor and, to an extent, master. The two stanzas of Garland's poem "Altruism," for example, scold the well to do, ending with lines that Howells could have written (except for the -eth ending):

. The food
You eat shall bitter be,
While law robs them and feedeth thee.

The most interesting of Garland's poems, however, are those recalling prairie life. Among these, the best are not the verses of fervid rhetoric in which he insistently directs the reader's feelings, but the occasional piece of quiet, almost static contemplation.

The poem "In August," for instance, tells of the locust' "quavering ecstatic duo," a boy's call, the mourning dove's "sob." Meanwhile, the wind

Wanders by, heavy with odors
Of corn and wheat and melon vines;
The trees tremble with delirious joy
as the breeze
Greets them, one by one--now the oak,
Now the great sycamore, now the elm.

Memories of Marvell and Keats, perhaps, but nicely, if a bit tritely, done. The poem rounds off deftly:

And the locusts in brazen chorus, cry
Like stricken things, and the ring-
dove's note
Sobs on in the dim distance.

Garland here almost grasps a realization of deeper life in the prairie, an animate force underlying the merely picturesque. The reader will wish that he had more often forgotten to urge on the feelings and point to the moral.

A less ambitious poem, "Fighting Fire," also comes close to more profound insight than Garland was capable of developing. Here the observer sees a line of red fire that "gnaws" its way toward ricks of grain as four men, shown almost in silhouette, move in "unhasting resolute action" to take up positions against it. The speaker reports:

The smell of burning hay fills the
train;
Then loosely, amply, as a curtain
falls
Swinging in the wind, the smoke
shuts down,
And all is lost to sight.

It would improve the poem to eliminate mention of the train, and also to kill the last line. Concentration on the experience could have made a fine mood piece.

But Garland seldom wrote as well. At his worst he was merely "poetic," as in "The Herald Crane," a poem opening:

Ah! says thou so, bold sailor
In the sun-lit deeps of sky!
Dost thou so soon the seed-time tell
In thy imperial cry,

In such work he illustrated what his contemporaries thought poetry to be-- grand addresses to anthropomorphic aspects of nature. These poems were a soaring on Pegasus to them, but for the modern reader they are only spavined imitation of the Romantics.

More often Garland set down workmanlike verse, not at all original in language or form, often wordy, easy and trite in diction, but recording with reasonable faithfulness an experience he knew. The faults, and the virtues, of his usual poem show in the first stanza of "Plowing":

A lonely task it is to plow!
All day the black and shining soil
Rolls like a ribbon from the mold-
board's

Glistening curve. All day the horses
toil
And battle with the flies, and strain
Their creaking harnesses. All day
The crickets jeer from wind-blown
shocks of grain.

He could have omitted the first line, found a more accurate verb for the crickets' action, and avoided the this-is-verse signpost given by the parallelism of the two uses of "All day." But he gives some of the feeling of farm work. As Sandburg did with some of his poems of factory life, Garland was introducing to poetry a set of experiences few upper middle class poetry readers had first hand experience with.

On other than esthetic grounds, Garland's verse is successful. Much of it gives an accurate record of the unbroken prairie's appeal to the senses. It is a valuable album of memories to have, an appreciative presentation of the Mid-western world as it was before man intruded.

Garland once remarked (foreword to Prairie Poems, p. 3), with no trace of guilt, that he helped turn the original sod. Today's reader may regret the loss of all that wonder, may wish that somewhere a county or two, instead of only an occasional fragment of parkland, preserved the land as it was. But Garland's verse records something of the great prairie's individual beauties, of its compelling grandeur, and even of its almost mystical surge of life.

Bernard F. Engel
Michigan State University

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Hugh MacDiarmid, Regionalist

The death of Hugh MacDiarmid (nom de plume of Christopher M. Grieve) in September of 1978 removes from our poetry and literary journalism one of those great but cantankerous talents the British love but that we lock up (witness Ezra Pound). The man who could write that the "Cheka's horrors" are "necessary, and insignificant," asking "What matters 't wa we kill" (in "First Hymn to Lenin") is either a fool,

a complete idealist, or a deliberately shocking scold.

MacDiarmid was not at all the first, he was surely the second, and he was just as certainly the third. Scotland's counterpart, one might say, to Robinson Jeffers ("I'd sooner, except the penalties, kill a man than hawk").

But though his talent was major, MacDiarmid remains little known in this country. He wrote well in standard English, but was at his best in the Lowland Scots that is inaccessible to most of us. Laboring through one of his dialect poems is like trying to translate Rilke with the German worked up 25 years ago for the doctoral exam: without an advanced level of learning and a "feel" for the language, the task is impossible except on the merest literal level. Or like trying to chat with the maids and waiters in Trinidad: the structure and half the vocabulary of their lingo are familiar, but understanding is limited because much of the island English is words from Dutch, Portuguese, Asian, and native languages.

Translation of MacDiarmid, moreover, loses too much. It is the Scots that, for example, makes the invective of this descriptive passage from "Tarras" ugly and sinister:

The fog-wa' splits and a gair is set
O' corbie oats and corcolet
And drulle water like sheepelk seeps
Through the duffie peats, and
 cranglin' creeps,
Crowdles like a crab, syne cowds awa',

The English of this is flaccid: "The fog-wall splits and a patch is seen / Of black oats and lichen . . ." In response to those, including friends, who protested his slipping back and forth between standard English and Scots, MacDiarmid wrote (in "The Caledonian Antisyzygy") that he sought like the nightingale to "find an emotion / And vibrate in the memory" as no other singer could do.

Though MacDiarmid lived a busy life in the midst of controversy, far from a stone tower of isolation, the analogy to Jeffers

is apt. Both poets were idealists who could envision a world better by far than what they found around them; both sought to awaken the conscience, to taunt and nag and warn that a more humane way of life must develop.

MacDiarmid was much the more political. In seeming inconsistency, he was both a strong Communist and a leading advocate of Scottish nationalism, a dogmatic atheist and yet an admirer of Christ. What underlay these positions was his belief that a better world is possible not merely in the shining future but immediately ("Second Hymn to Lenin"):

Oh, it's nonsense, nonsense, nonsense,
Nonsense at this time o' day
That breid-and-butter problems
S'ud be in ony man's way.

Though much of his adult life he believed that the Russian revolution of 1917 had shown the road to Utopia, and he wrote of--indeed, fawned over--Lenin as a saintly hero. Yet even in that phase he compared Lenin not to other revolutionists and reformers but to Rilke. Both the radical and the poet, he wrote (in "The Seamless Garment") "Made a single reality" of "love and pity and fear." He was therefore quite consistent in writing in (in "Better One Golden Lyric") "Better a'e gowden lyric / Than a social problem solved."

What he wanted is vision, a spiritual conversion such as the experience of "becoming one with . . . the world" that he told of in "In the Slums of Glasgow." Because it is visionary, MacDiarmid, said, poetry should be the strongest political force--an idea old in Western history, though novel to most of us positivists.

As for his Scottish nationalism, this was not fueled by nostalgia for the bonnie prince, nor by gloating over North Sea oil, but by the conviction that the "Union" with Britain suppressed native Scots decency, replacing it with a system that gave power to a nobility, clergy, and politicians who serve not the "nation" but England ("Scotland's Pride"), which enriched ("My Quarrel with England")

The kinds o' English, and o'Scots,
The least congenial to my thoughts.

One conventional judgment is that MacDiarmid's fine lyrics will survive but that the future will forget his political poems. I am inclined rather to believe that, as with Pope's satires, MacDiarmid's political poems have a force which will win them admirers decades after specific hero and target alike are remembered only in footnotes.

Literature, the most specific of the arts, pays a heavy price for that specificity. It being unlikely that Lowland Scots will ever be an International language, MacDiarmid's best work will not become well known in that considerable world which is deaf to the dialect.

But it is a muckle thing to be one of the half dozen best writers in a tongue that has a history of ten centuries. MacDiarmid's work will have only occasional recognition in studies of the national (that is, British) literature. But within its own regional culture it is superb. It expresses the aspiration of a thoughtful and sensitive representative of that culture as no other language could.

Bernard F. Engel
Michigan State University

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Sherwood Anderson's Many Marriages

When Sherwood Anderson's Many Marriages appeared in early 1923 it was regarded immediately as a mature, perceptive, poetic work by one of our strongest writers; to F. Scott Fitzgerald it was a masterpiece, to Theodore Dreiser a work of genius, to Percy Stone in The Bookman and Llewellyn Jones in the Chicago Evening Post it was the finest thing Anderson had done. Sales reflected its reception: in two months it sold nearly ten thousand copies.

But suddenly a reaction against the subject matter of the book drove it into obscurity, and that obscurity, reinforced by scholarly neglect and occasional adverse criticism, continues

today. Not only did some critics insist that its subject matter--the rebellion of a middle-aged manufacturer of washing machines against a sterile marriage--was trite, but increasingly it was denounced as dirty. It was banned in Boston, elsewhere it moved under bookstore counters, its sales fell to nothing, and it became one of the forgotten books of its decade. Reissued by Grosset and Dunlap in an inexpensive edition using remaining printed sheets and the original plates, it was no more successful, and for fifty years it has been out of print.

Now, in a new critical edition edited by Douglas G. Rogers (Scarecrow Press, 1978, \$10.00) it is again available (contributing to the growing numbers of Anderson's works in print, more than at any time since 1930), and both the work and the edition are worthy of comment.

First, the novel. As Professor Rogers makes clear in his introduction, the uncertain course of its initial publication history in a shortened version as a six-part serial in The Dial as well as in the book-length version, combined with Anderson's unclear prefatory statement in the book version, provides problems for editors and scholars as they attempt to examine the novel's structure and development, but these problems are essentially unimportant. The book version is that which Anderson presented to the larger reading audience, and it is that version which must be considered in discussing its merits and shortcomings as a work of literary art.

Re-reading the novel after a lapse of nearly a decade makes one point evident immediately. It is neither as good as Fitzgerald and Dreiser initially insisted that it was, nor is it as bad as critics then and now have maintained. Contrary to some observers then and more recently, the subject matter is not trite, nor will it be as long as middle-aged Americans find themselves examining lives that have been half-spent and perhaps mis-spent.

Nor is it as critics then and now have insisted, a manifestation of Anderson's belated discovery of the role of sex in human life nor is his motivation either to celebrate sex or to exploit it with a

small-town leer. Anderson knew, as he had made clear as early as Winesburg, Ohio and as late as his Memoirs that the sublimation of the sex drive, the perversion of natural sex relationships, not unknown in Anderson's day or ours, are, as modern psychology continues to assert, psychologically damaging to the human psyche, producing, in Anderson's terms, the grotesque, but more important to Anderson, they are symptomatic of other distortions, other sublimations, other refusals that prevent the clear perception of human reality. Anderson's cry, "How many marriages among people," is not merely the cry of John Webster's middle-aged frustration nor, for that matter, reflective of Anderson's own predicament at the moment; it is a protest against the empty relationships of all kinds that have driven his people into frustration and despair.

Much had been made, for the most part detrimentally, of Anderson's profuse use of symbols in the novel: the statue of the Virgin, the "Jewel of Life," candles, Webster's nudity, all of which are less significant as symbols in spite of critical preoccupation with them than they are indicative of Webster's state of mind: his middle-aged preoccupation with a younger woman and with his own aging body and his conviction that personal meaning existed somewhere beyond the world of washing-machine manufacturing and domestic trivia.

Most Important in the novel and almost uniformly ignored by critics then and now is Webster's attempt to understand the forces or, in Anderson's word, "fancies" that are driving him toward a crisis. Through his attempts at explanation - to his daughter, to the young secretary whom he convinces himself he loves--Webster is not seeking their understanding; he is seeking his own.

Many Marriages is a sad book, as is any novel dealing with the search for self, whether the protagonist is adolescent or middle-aged, and the illusion of discovery at the end is just that, as it invariably is in such cases. But it is not a bad book; in fact, it is better than I remembered it to be, and it is a true book, a remarkable portrait of one of the more than ten thousand men between

30 and 60 who disappear permanently in America every year.

Professor Rogers has done a fine job of preparing this critical edition, an edition that is for personal reading as well as scholarly research. The introduction defines its place in the Anderson canon; it sketches Anderson's attitude during its writing; and it defines the critical approaches Rogers uses. Notes are useful, but they do not interfere with the text, as is so often the case.

My only objection to this edition is aesthetic. Both Sherwood Anderson and the editor deserve a more attractive book than Scarecrow seems willing to produce.

David D. Anderson

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Midwest Heritage

The Pilot issue of Midwest Heritage, a popular expression of the ideas which we consider usually in a more scholarly fashion, will be produced in the Spring of 1979 in the School of Journalism of the University of Iowa. Clarence Andrews of SSML is acting as publisher and Jess Gorkin, formerly of PARADE and now of the Whitney Publishing Company, publishers of VOGUE, will serve as consultant. A staff of young people with professional experience has been secured.

In addition to publishing a pilot issue, the staff will:

Set up a complete advertising program, produce rate cards and prospectuses, and sample advertising agencies for possible advertisers for the first year;

Plan a marketing campaign to estimate the possible audience; a program for soliciting subscriptions will be designed and arrangements made for newsstand distribution.

Conceive a long range formula for the magazine. This formula will be also conceived in terms of the first year of publication. We will sample an audience for its interests and develop the formula along the lines of those interests.

Design the magazine from cover-to-cover, producing paper, type, page and full dummies. Type styles will be selected and a logo will be designed.

Design auxiliary materials--letterheads, stationery for dealing with authors, contracts, rejection and acceptance forms, copyright releases, and the like.

Select the regular departments and the people who will write them.

Set up a table of organization and write job descriptions for all staff members.

Apply for an IRS non-profit number.

Apply for an Iowa Charter of Incorporation.

Set up a budget for regular operation.

Discuss publication costs and schedules with reliable and able printers.

Members of SSML who have ideas for the magazine are invited to submit them to Andrews, 106CC, University of Iowa, Iowa City, 62240. Members who would like to head up a regular feature (Books, Films, Music, Midwest Politics, Midwest Sports, Midwest Theater, Midwest Art, etc) should also submit a brief stating their interests and their capabilities. As much documentation as possible should also be provided--tear sheets of reviews or other writings, for example.

Members who have ideas for articles should submit an outline or precise of the article, together with an introductory paragraph and a title. If photographs or illustrations would enhance the article, the author should state what materials are available.

Finally, this is a popular publication, not a scholarly one. Editorial matter will be produced in good (better, best) popular style. Scholarly jargon should be avoided at all costs.

For details, write:

Dr. Clarence Andrews
108 Pearl Street
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

* * *

Historical Preservation

Michigan's Capitol is unique and it should be preserved, an architectural historian said in a recent conference at Michigan State University.

"Not only is Michigan's Capitol unusual among capitol buildings, it is also unusual among buildings of its period," Kingsbury Marzolf, University of Michigan architectural historian, told Michigan's local historical commission members meeting in MSU's Kellogg Center for Continuing Education.

"It has the dome, the wings and the symmetry of other capitol buildings, but it is quite different in detail," Marzolf explained.

Its architectural style represents a transition into beaux arts classicism, he added.

Marzolf called the Capitol "an important piece of architecture in Michigan....a symbol."

"Nineteenth century architects had a flair for designing the monumental," he noted. "Their buildings had grandeur, color and character...and the Lansing structure is no exception."

Marzolf said that Michigan's Capitol now seems safe from those who onetime sought to scrap it....that today's preservation movement is its savior.

The architectural historian addressed a statewide meeting of history buffs and professionals called to herald the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Michigan Capitol Jan. 1, 1979. An evening tour of the historic structure was a feature.

Michigan Historical Commission Day was arranged by the Michigan History Division of the Michigan Department of State with cooperation of MSU's Lifelong Educational Programs.

* * *

The Saga of a Midwestern Woman

In a time when most women were still housebound, Petra Jorgen taught country school, attended college, and took an interest in the fight for woman suffrage. Julie Jensen McDonald's own Danish heritage inspired her to write Petra, an authentic portrayal of Danish settlers in Iowa. Just published by the Iowa State University Press, Petra's story begins in the late 19th century and follows her to middle-aged widowhood. Along the way she experiences joy, tragedy, and love.

Born shortly after her father's death, the young Danish-American girl grows up in a household dominated by women. As a child her closest friend and companion is her only brother Stig, a high-spirited youth. As a young woman, Petra leaves home to teach country school and to attend college. She has many adventures both in and out of the classroom. In her woodworking class, she is the first girl.

To support her education, the enterprising Petra becomes a businesswoman. After signing up for a book company's sales program, she and a girlfriend discover that they must first pay for the books and then earn any profits by selling them. Loading the books in their old Ford, they become traveling salespersons for a summer.

Petra's awareness of her status as a woman arouses her sympathy for the plight of women, but her militancy lacks a wholehearted commitment. Petra has fallen in love with a stoic young Dane named Lauritz, whom she marries. The heroine's life reflects the influence of World War I and the Gay Twenties, culminating with the Great Depression. A grimly realistic depiction of the 1918 flu epidemic shows its horrors.

Strong women populate this movingly human tale of the struggles of life and love. There are Mamma Jorgen and her four daughters: Petra, Else, Valborg, and Kamille; Lily Hertert, the banker's wife; and Dagmar Jensen, wife of a prospering Danish immigrant. While the widowed mother ekes out a living as laundress, her girls take up such

diverse occupations as a printer and typesetter, seamstress, teacher, artist, and nurse. Their lives are basically tragic, and the men in their lives tend to have fatal weaknesses--whether moral or physical, leaving their women to fend for themselves.

The cultural adaptation of "Old Country" ways to a new land is shown in rich detail in the descriptions of holiday celebrations, superstitions, and everyday life. Danish ways followed by the immigrants were largely changed or abandoned by a new generation eager to become "real" Americans.

Julie McDonald is a feature writer and reviewer for the Quad-City Times, Davenport, Iowa, and a lecturer in journalism, St. Ambrose College. She grew up in western Iowa in an area settled by Danes. Her own Danish background plus her careful research imbue this saga of human struggle with a rare authenticity.

Petra is available at bookstores or from the Iowa State University Press.

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A Communication

Dear Colleagues:

The fourth annual meeting of the Missouri Philological Association will be held March 15-17, 1979. PLEASE NOTE: Contrary to the original plans, the meeting is now scheduled to be held at Southwest Missouri State University, Springfield, Missouri.

The keynote speaker will be Professor Walter J. Ong, S. J., President of the Modern Language Association and Professor of English and Humanities in Psychiatry at Saint Louis University. His address is scheduled for the Friday night dinner (March 16). A special feature of the 1979 meeting will be "Mark Twain Today,"* a program featuring presentations by scholars and a readers theater group, all of which will demonstrate the ongoing importance of Missouri's best known writer.

As in the past, reading sessions will

be held on Friday and Saturday. The registration fee is \$7.00; additional charges will be made for meals. Further information about the meeting will appear early in 1979.

Sincerely yours,

Frank M. Patterson
Executive Secretary,
MPA

*This project is supported by a grant from the Missouri Committee for the Humanities, Inc., the state-based arm of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

* * *

AMERICA BETWEEN THE WARS: 1918-1941

A Call for Papers

The fall meeting of the Ohio-Indiana American Studies Association will be held on October 26-27, 1979 at the Toledo Museum of Art and the University of Toledo. This meeting will have as its general theme American culture and experience between the wars (1918-1941). Paper topics may be set within the boundaries of the 1920s or 1930s. We especially welcome, however, papers that attempt to deal with the continuities and discontinuities shaping American culture and experience through both decades. Papers are invited in the following areas:

Painting and Graphic Arts in the
1920s and 1930s
Ethnic groups
Architecture and Decorative Arts
Labor
Cities and Suburbs
Women in the 1920s and 1930s
Images of American Life in Film
Images of American Life in Popular
Culture
Education in the Roaring Twenties
and in the Depression
Literature and Culture
Writers in the 1920s and 1930s: from
literary experimentation to
political involvement
Music in the Jazz Age and After
American Youth in the 1920s and 1930s

Papers should be either comparative or interdisciplinary in nature; they should not exceed twenty minutes. Send all inquiries and papers to Guy Szuberla, Department of English, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio 43606. Deadline for submission of papers is May 1, 1979.

Papers presented at the conference will be considered for publication in THE OLD NORTHWEST.

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THE GREAT LAKES REVIEW

by Paul J. Ferlazzo

After four years under the fine editorship of Gerald Nemanic at Northeastern Illinois University, The Great Lakes Review has been moved to Central Michigan University and the new editorship of Martha H. Brown and Ronald Primeau. The Summer 1978 issue, Vol. 5, No. 1, is the first from its new home.

Aside from a few small changes in its physical appearance, the issue has the same interesting format and array of material we have come to expect of the GLR. There's a witty and insightful article on science fiction writers from the Midwest by Henry Golemba; a piece by Peter Scholl on the Hoosier Jean Shepherd, little known as a writer but widely known for a TV series called "Jean Shepherd's America"; a report on a two-way cable TV experiment in Columbus, Ohio, by Bernard Alford; an article by Leo Teholiz on Robert Stearns, who was among other things the creator of the cartoon character, Ossawald Crumb; an essay by Phil Greasley on Anderson's Kit Brandon; Don Pady's bibliography of William Allen White, Part I of Clarence Andrew's comprehensive bibliography of "books--novels, plays, anthologies of poetry and short stories--and films which have their settings, themes, subjects and characters primarily in the Chicago metropolitan area," and an assortment of poetry and book reviews. The new editors are to be congratulated on their first showing for this highly worthwhile collection of items on Midwest Culture.

The broad approach of this journal to Midwest Culture--publishing in the same issue articles from several disciplines--points to the fact that interest in the region has a lively following among the various academic specialties. This indicates a viable direction for the future of English, History, and American Studies departments in colleges and universities in the Midwest. A Program in Midwest Studies, or a concentration in Midwest Culture seem like promising and useful adjuncts to the American Literature, History, or American Studies degree. Regional studies programs already exist in the South and Northeast, and a Southwestern program has been spoken of. Clearly the field is ready for a major Midwestern institution to organize a multidisciplinary program on Midwest Culture.

The GLR is calling for manuscripts for its summer 1979 number, a special issue devoted to Women in the Midwest. "The editors welcome manuscripts devoted to history, literature, and biography as well as interdisciplinary studies on the contributions of Midwestern women in the social sciences, the fine arts, and performing arts." Two copies of manuscripts 10-15 pages in length should be submitted by June 1, 1979. The address: The Editors, Central Michigan University, P. O. Box 122 Anspach Hall, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859.

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A CALL TO FULBRIGHTERS

The Fulbright Alumni Association is a private, non-profit organization promoting international educational and cultural exchange by mobilizing the collective wisdom of former Fulbright grantees.

Individuals who have studied, lectured, done research, or engaged in other activities such as composing music, painting, sculpting, and writing outside the United States are encouraged to join.

Dues is \$10 per year and includes subscriptions to The Fulbrighters' Newsletter, a quarterly of notes and news about the activities and interests of the Association and its members, and the

quarterly magazine, Exchange, published through the U.S. Department of State. Regional and national meetings are held regularly to facilitate the exchange of information among members, review accomplishments, and formulate goals for the future.

Send your name, address, and professional affiliation to:

The Fulbright Alumni Association
P.O. Box 1042
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Please include the name of your host country and institution, and the years spent abroad. Make checks payable to the Association. Former Senator J. William Fulbright is the Honorary Chairman, and historian Arthur P. Dudden the Founding President.

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Society for the Study of Midwestern
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Study of Midwestern Literature

* * *

highland haven

a fictional memoir by William Thomas

I got so much into the habit of going to the Marsh house for my evening meal and spending the evening there that it became customary for me to tell Hubert or Ellen when I was not coming instead of when I was. We still liked one another. Hubert had got acquainted with some people he thought congenial, and said he would ask them to the house for a "liberal" meeting, and if the gathering were successful we could make it a weekly or bi-weekly occasion.

So on a Thursday night we had eight people besides us three. Among them were the photographer who regularly made photographs and blueprints for Highland Haven, and a trio of women who came and went together, two high-school teachers and a librarian. I never let any of these women know I had been a teacher, for I abhorred shop talk. Their prim plainness showed to disadvantage beside the cool beauty of Ellen and the dark loveliness of the one other woman there, Florence Laing.

At that first meeting, which opened formally with me as chairman (that was Hubert's idea), we had a planned program. Hubert gave a talk on the aims of the Communist Party in the United States (he no longer concealed his affiliation), and Florence Laing talked on Russia. She was as much and as little Communist as I. We could all think Russia something then, a great country whose resources were being utilized for social good, where everybody was assured of material well-being, where exploitation and tyranny and capitalist economics were deposed forever. We had read the same books and, though none of us actually knew anything except what their authors told us about it, we could talk idealistically and vaguely about "the Russian experiment" and "a new society."

Florence Laing had introduced herself to Hubert after hearing him speak somewhere. She was thirty-five, I judged, a tall woman with dark hair and dark skin, full-breasted and well proportioned. She wore

her hair long and knotted low at the back of her head, which I fancied gave her an Italian Renaissance look. She'd get attention from any man with an eye for women. The first time I saw her I thought of how a romp with her would be good fun.

That Florence Laing was bored with her life was a conclusion I may have jumped at, but I shortly learned she was married to a man much older than herself and by him had a child, a boy four years old. Anybody who saw Christian Laing (later I did), a meek little man past sixty, would naturally wonder how he had managed to get Florence for a wife. Ellen told me her story, having got it partly from Hubert and partly from Florence herself.

Eight years before, Florence, divorced, ill, without money, family, or resources, was clerking in a dime store and going nights to business school in Detroit. She had a pulmonary ailment, and overworked and stinted herself for food until she became really sick and had to take to bed, and then lost her job and might have starved or killed herself if Christian had not rescued her. He, a lonely bachelor, was a railway mail clerk, who had saved money. He offered to provide for her until she recovered her health if she would promise to marry him. Aside from Christian Laing she had no straw to grasp at, and she agreed.

After two years in Colorado she was well, and able to look toward a future less desolate than her past had been. She hoped Christian would not hold her to her promise, and tried every means she could think of to make him voluntarily renounced her, writing that she was a bad woman who could never make a good wife, had had sexual experience before marriage, that her adultery was the cause of her divorce, and so on. But he blithely ignored all this, and one day appeared in Denver, announced he had reached retirement age and retired, had inherited property in Moorton, and was ready to marry and take her there, where they would henceforth live on his adjusted pay of one hundred dollars a month.

When she saw how enthusiastic this little man, her benefactor, was about their life together, and his confidence in her, she could not bring herself to break her word. Besides, he promised economic security if not affluence, something she had never known, so she married him. And he was so good to her, so patient and kind, that, in a moment of self-castigation for past sins and self-abasement for present distaste, she asked what she could do to repay him. He said give him a child. She gave him a child, though childbirth at thirty-one was hard for Florence and she nearly died of it. The doctor said she ought never to have another baby, and, though Ellen did not know for sure that he had given her a Fallopian operation, she suspected Florence was now sterile. Christian Laing literally worshiped his son, and Florence considered her debt to him paid.

"Sounds highly romantic," I remarked to Ellen after she told me.

"But not impossible."

"Not even improbable. Just the way life is sometimes: unreal, far-fetched, and a little screwy."

The more I learn of life the more I am convinced its rationale is demanded only by fiction. There is nothing in Florence's narrative that couldn't have happened. Some people may wonder why she should tell it, but I've no wish to make judgments. Ellen did not violate confidence in repeating it to me.

That first of our liberal meetings was successful enough, we decided, to warrant our making it a regular event, and we set the date for the same night of the following week. The photographer and the librarian and the schoolteachers came back, and Florence Laing, and one of the other three, a boy who was a high-school student. This time we hadn't planned a program, and simply talked among ourselves, Hubert or Florence or I now and then having the attention of the group. We met a third time in the same way, except that the photographer and the high-school boy absented themselves, and the discussion had less to do with social and economic subjects and

more to do with personal experience and amusements. At our fourth meeting the fourth week there were only Hubert and Ellen and Florence and I, and we played bridge.

That a discussion gathering turned into a bridge game within so short a time is unflattering to our collective social consciousness, but that is the way it was, and Hubert was as willing as the rest of us. We four continued to meet on Thursday nights, and I surmised that to Christian Laing those occasions were still liberal meetings. I was at the Marsh house as many other evenings as before, but always on Thursdays now, for the addition of Florence to our triumvirate renewed our enthusiasm. She has a keen wit--though I thought it not up to Ellen's--and we had a lot of fun.

I can't say when or how I came to knowledge of the fact that Florence and Hubert were in love. It is something you know, if you've been in love yourself, about people who are, though they may take pains to conceal it, which Florence did not. I wasn't startled by it; it seemed natural, in truth inevitable, that when a man like Hubert and a woman like Florence come together they should love. I dare say Ellen knew they were lovers before I did, and I was certain their love was soon consummated. That Florence was a passionate woman I saw indicated by a number of signs: her full lips, her protruding teeth, the down on her upper lip, the profuseness of hair on her arms and legs, her large wide-set eyes--adding to more than probability, as a man can verify by individual research or by perusal of the works of Havelock Ellis.

The first couple of times Florence came she drove her car, but after that she walked (it was a mile between the houses), and then Hubert took her home. Once we had a picnic supper along the river, taking Jane and Jimmie; another night we went to the movies; but mostly we stayed at the house and played bridge, for it was clear that Florence wished not to risk being seen. So far as pairing off was done, it was Florence and Hubert to Ellen and me, which was natural enough. My presence gave Hubert a tacit freedom to link himself with Florence by leaving me with Ellen;

I could see he was using me, but I didn't care. If Florence had looked at me with such adoration in her eyes as she had sometimes when I saw her looking at Hubert, I would have gone for her too.

Florence made hardly any effort to disguise her feeling. She never quite embraced Hubert in the presence of Ellen, and me, but she ran her fingers through his hair, and put her hand on his shoulder, and constantly practiced a physical familiarity that bespoke the way of lovers. She probably took Ellen's measure pretty accurately, and judged Ellen would not fight to keep a man--Ellen was that kind of woman--and knew it was no use trying to fool her. She also thought it no use trying to fool me--or thought it not worth the effort, as I suspect was more likely.

From the way Ellen acted you might have supposed her unaware of what had happened and was happening. At the bridge table we were gay and in good humor. At the end of an evening, when Florence said it was time for her to go, Hubert would rise at once, and they would go in his car. I would stay a while talking to Ellen, and then go home. On other nights, when Hubert was away speaking, I stayed the evening with Ellen, talking about books or reading poetry aloud. She had several big anthologies of verse, and I say by her bed leafing through them, reading things I liked, Shakespeare's sonnets, verses of Herrick and Donne, the "Ode to a Nightingale" and the "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "My Last Duchess," "A Grammarian's Funeral," "The Statue and the Bust," "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," or stanzas from "Modern Love." She never tired of it, and sometimes I stayed late, but Hubert never got back while I was there. One time I stayed till after midnight because Ellen urged me to, but at twelve thirty he had not come, and I left as soon as I saw Ellen then wanted me to go.

I would drive to the farm and be there without having thought about what turns to make on the road, the Ford motor running smoothly on a damp night, and I thinking of nothing in particular and of many things I had seen and remembered. Sometimes there were patches of fog on the road, and I looked at the trees just

outside the rays of the headlights and was reminded of trees as they were in Japanese prints, and thought what consummate artists the Japanese wood-block cutters were to make one hold their representation a basis for comparison of the real, fancy the real as pictorial and the pictorial more real than reality. I was habitually a careful driver, but sometimes I switched off the lights and, for a few seconds before I switched them on again, moved at fifty miles an hour into blackness. I couldn't have told why I did a thing like that.

If I had to wait at a railroad crossing for a train to pass, I thought of the times I had been on trains slipping through summer or winter darkness, down to Chicago from Madison, or on excursion trips from Baltimore to New York or Columbus to Detroit. Then some association would recall other events, and I considered how my life had been shaped by accident, and knew that the loss of my job teaching had closed a period in it. I knew the present was but an interim and it could be only a temporary connection I had with the burial-park business and Highland Haven. In a practical way I was no better off for having gone to college, and my formal education was almost a handicap in what I was doing. I belonged to the generation lost in the Depression, and we could see, if nobody else could, that the change in the American economy was fundamental, and, though we might hope for a future better than our present, we couldn't see much probability of ourselves' realizing it. For when good times should come again--if they ever did--we would have become older and unable to pick up where we had been obliged to leave off or to meet younger competition. I was sure I could never have the enthusiasm I once had, and knew that feeling was partly because I had more years now, but it was also because my experience had been too much of failure and disappointment. I had meant to be a writer and instead had become a teacher of English and none of the splendid things I projected had been done.

Sooner or later I thought of one or another of the girls I had been in love with, and wondered where she was at that moment and what her life was like that

she had not wished me to share in. Then of a sudden the little drama I had helped to stage came before my eyes. My proper role as spectator appeared to be changing to participant; for into my mind's picture always came Ellen, a vision of pink-skinned gold-haired loveliness that I wanted to embrace.

I was in love with Ellen, and loved her as if I had never before known the delight and torment of loving a woman. I wanted her, well or ill, always in my life, and knew that if I failed to keep her in it, the absence of her would leave an unfillable void.

VI

The Highland Haven sales went on, Pierce gave a dinner for the investors (they filled the dining room of the Pilgrim Hotel), and a new investment contract was designed for those who wanted to get in before it was too late. The Park looked like a park, with roads stoned, new grass coming, trees and shrubs planted, the stream dredged and dammed, and plots of flowers. Stakes outlined the foundation of the cathedral home. On the Fourth of July there was another celebration.

Groups of visitors were routine, the samesmen getting them up and I having only to prevent conflict. I had a free hand writing the advertising and publicity, Pierce only deciding the amount of space we would fill each week in The Independent. It still got the big play, but the daily papers now realized they had lost and were losing advertising revenue, and changed their attitude.

Stoddard, advertising manager of The Tribune, himself came to the office one day to see, as he put it, if he couldn't set right what had been an unfortunate misunderstanding.

"Mr. Pierce is the man to talk to about that," I said. "He usually comes in about four. But there's something I'd like to know."

"Yes?"

"How does it happen that Highland Haven

has never once been mentioned in the news columns of The Tribune? If somebody in Vernon Heights builds a garage, you run a picture of it, but nobody has ever learned from The Tribune that Highland Haven exists."

"The Tribune," Stoddard replied loftily, "does not barter editorial space for advertising."

I laughed, and said I'd let Mr. Pierce know he'd been there. Both dailies gave free publicity in the guise of news, every day with a page about new stores opening, new lines of merchandise stocked by dealers, new appointments of motor car and radio distributors, that sort of thing.

Stoddard didn't get far with Pierce that day, for Pierce was a man who, if he got up a grudge, held it a long time, and he was still sore. I didn't care whether he advertised in The Tribune or not; but Rolland, the one crew manager who was a little brighter than the others and had some influence with Pierce, persuaded him it would be a good thing to give The Tribune some advertising now that Stoddard was willing to play ball. Pierce acceded, and Rolland telephoned Stoddard, and Pierce and he got together at last. Pierce agreed to take a half-page in the next Sunday's issue, and a four-inch double-column space daily for a month thereafter. It was my task to fill it. I picked some of the latest photographs for cuts and set about devising new combinations of old words for the copy.

After that all was lovely between Pierce and Stoddard, for Stoddard was the kind of straight-talking man Pierce liked, and Stoddard could sell him whatever idea he had. He did, too; half-pages, full pages, double-page spreads--just as they had been in The Independent, at a much higher rate. Then Gilman, from The Beacon, determined to have a share of it too, and shortly Highland Haven was getting news stories in both dailies, and advertising in both, to virtual abandonment of The Independent.

It looked bad for Hubert Marsh, for as he became more soapboxy and franker about his Communist affiliation his

old advertisers quit him one by one. Pierce didn't quit him because he disliked Hubert's politics; Pierce had no political or social attitude at all. He stopped advertising in The Independent because he thought he got more value for the money expended advertising in the other papers.

Sooner than I'd had any idea of, it looked bad for me. There came to be such a rapprochement between Pierce and Stoddard that Stoddard would come to the office once a week with a complete layout, cuts, copy, and all, and Pierce would approve it. Gilman began doing the same thing. The upshot of that was there was no need for me. Pierce put me at making a survey of all the cemeteries within a radius of twenty-five miles, gathering information for use by the sales staff; that job took three weeks, but I couldn't stretch it any longer. When it was finished Pierce told me he wanted me to go back to selling, his way of saying I was no longer on the regular payroll.

I hadn't repeated my one big sale, hadn't made another comparable to it, and I never did. One day I was in the office alone when a man came in and said he wanted to buy a lot; his ten-year-old daughter had died that morning. I showed him the plat of the Park and asked if he wanted to go there and pick out a location on the ground, and he said yes, he guessed that was the thing to do. We drove to the Park, and he picked a spot, and I marked it on my blueprint. He sat sadly by me all the way there and back, saying nothing, and at the office wrote a check for a hundred dollars, and I took it to the girl in Hendrix's office and got him his deed, and helped make arrangements for having the grave dug.

I felt low taking commission on that sale. Something like that made me wish myself out of the business--and as most of us like a fine roast but look upon butchering as a wretched occupation. If I hadn't constantly been thinking that next day or next week I might make another sale and a nice commission, perhaps I would have washed my hands of it the day my advertising job was done.

The investment sale in Highland Haven was

practically finished; Pierce was beginning promotion of another burial park (to be called Wildwood Glen) in the southern part of the state, and the older, more experienced salesmen were moving on to it; and there was more work in selling one lot in Highland Haven for use than in selling fifty or a hundred for investment. There were always visitors to the Park on Sundays now, and one or more salesmen were regularly there throughout the day. I made a sale in the Veterans' Block to a man I got in touch with that way; that little commission was my only compensation for the weary Sunday hours I spent at the Park trying to talk enthusiastically about it. The Park looked drab, for it was hot and dry, with dust storms in the West and dust blowing all the way to the Atlantic seaboard.

Work on the cathedral home began. It was finished within six weeks, and was a stimulation to sales, which had fallen short of expectations during the summer. Pierce gave daily lectures on the techniques of selling for use, about how to get coming to you names of prospects by contacts within church and social organizations and fraternal orders. I knew a girl who I thought might do some scouting for me, and told her I would pay five dollars for every sale I made to a person she sent me to. One of the names she gave me was that of David Gorenflo.

When I called at his house, my first thought was that she didn't have much sense if she considered this family a prospect, for it was a jerry-built bungalow almost by itself in a field. But I didn't trust the appearance of poverty. I didn't know then that Gorenflo, a trucker and hauler, was getting aid from the County Relief Administration, but I'd once made a mistake not going to see a man who was on Relief. I learned that he afterward invested several thousand dollars in Highland Haven through another salesman.

In time I sold the Gorenflos a lot; they hadn't owned any, so I didn't feel that I was taking advantage of them; but it startling to hear David Gorenflo utter phrases I had written and to realize that my advertising copy had made people like him believe that a man's

first duty after providing food, shelter, and insurance for his family was to own a burial lot.

The first time I called I met their son, Ralph Gorenflo. Nobody else was home that day, and I found him in a building at the back which looked like a chicken coop. There was a sign on the door reading "Danger! High Explosives," but I'd known artists who put such signs on the doors of their studios, and it didn't keep me from approaching. I knocked on the half-open door and heard "Come in."

This fine-looking boy, with light brown curly hair and clear pink skin, sat on a stool at a workbench. He looked older than his age, which I later learned was sixteen. He had quite escaped the pimply stage of adolescence, and already had a stiff growth of light brown beard. Seeing him unshaved, you would have judged him to be twenty, but I saw him so only once, and I think he shaved daily. I never saw him when he wasn't clean and neat, and that was one of the many ways in which he differed from his parents. The more I saw of Ralph Gorenflo the more I marveled that such parents could have so extraordinary a son.

I told him who I was and what I had come for; he said his father and mother would not be back until late and I had better return the next day. I didn't mind, for his place looked so interesting that I was as well satisfied not to see them then. He was binding a book, at that moment stitching the gatherings in a sewing frame; and some sheets of another were in a press at the end of the bench. Everywhere I looked I saw something of interest; a woodworking vise and carpenter's tools; a small lathe; in a corner a darkroom of wallboard and in it an enlarger and other photographic equipment; a gun-case with three or four rifles and several pistols; at the far end a couch under some bookshelves against the end wall, and an easy chair and a desk. It was a pleasant, well lit, well ventilated place, with series of windows along both sides (all with bars set into the frames), and an iron stove. I surmised he spent most of his free time there. After I had seen his parents and the inside of their house I knew why

he preferred to.

I remarked about what he was doing. He said he'd bound many books and that was the way he earned most of his money.

"I learned bookbinding in the crafts department at school. But that was just a start. I've learned a lot more since I've been working at it by myself. Here's a book I finished binding last week."

It was Tom Jones--in black linen covers with a red morocco spine and gold lettering. A fine job.

"Maybe you'll bind something for me."

"Of course. If you wish."

"Have you read this?" That was an unconsidered question, but unhappily you can't erase the spoken word. The way he looked at me made me doubly sorry I had asked it.

"Yes," he answered. "A couple of times."

We went on to talk about literature, and the conversation had more surprises: he had read Sterne and Smollett, Thackeray and Hardy; and such modern novelists as Dreiser, Lewis, Hemingway, Huxley, Joyce, Mann, and Sigrid Undset. He admitted he hadn't been able to make a go of Proust, however; and I could have named many writers he hadn't read; but only because I had lived a dozen years longer than he.

I saw Ralph Gorenflo at his shop several times after that. I talked to him every time I came to see his parents about the lot, and came back to see him after the sale was made. He bound three books for me, Vanity Fair and my two-volume Byron; he did a nice job on them, and I was willing enough to pay the price he asked, cost of materials and forty cents an hour for his time. He had a variety of interests and skills, and to talk to him was a study in the development of a personality; he was adding to his knowledge and experience so rapidly that I could almost see him mentally growing; fast taking on the traits and attitudes of young manhood, he still tended to keep juvenile characteristics.

As I got to know him better I perceived many things about him that marked his real age, and he revealed the ramifications and contradictions of the adolescent mind. He was an Eagle scout and faithfully attended Scout meetings; he had the boy's mania for collecting things--stamps, arrowheads, pistols, guns; spoke of "woodcraft" as if it were some mysterious rite; and was enthusiastic about target-shooting. The time when I had gone through that stage seemed far in the past to me, and I wondered if I would look back on my present self from the age of forty as I now looked at sixteen from twenty-eight.

But the first impression I had of Ralph Gorenflo lasted. He was the kind of boy most mothers would have been burstingly proud of, though I saw no evidence of such feeling on the part of his own. He and I never discussed his parents. He seemed wholly independent of them, and I thought it likely that they were somehow awed by the anomaly they had produced.

It was inevitable that I should think of introducing Ralph to Hubert and Ellen Marsh and making him a member of our group. I knew they two would receive him as an equal and not condescend; I thought Florence Laing would also, though I was less sure of her. The affair between Florence and Hubert was no business of mine, but it had reached a point where I didn't see how Ellen could go on ignoring it. I knew Ellen had no thought of divorcing Hubert because he fancied another woman; she had said things from which I inferred that had happened before. And in moments of reason I could not, however much I loved her, wholeheartedly wish Ellen free to marry me. I was not sure, for one thing, that she felt about me as I did about her, and, though she never put it into words, I knew she thought Hubert would eventually get enough of Florence and make an end of his own accord. But if her best course of action lay in making no response, with Florence and Hubert--though it was mostly Florence--as brazen as they were, our being together of an evening could produce a tension which

was a damper on conviviality and a test of good humor. So aside from the fact that Ralph Gorenflo was a person who I thought would be congenial, I had another reason for wanting to bring him in.

He agreed to come, and we went on a Thursday night, when Florence would be there. If I have anything to blame myself for, this is it. Ralph was a sensation. As a protege of mine, he conducted himself in a way that was all I could wish, and talked as confidently and easily with Hubert and Florence and Ellen as he did with me. We played bridge, Ellen insisting on being the one to withdraw, and Ralph's skill at the game was on a level with his other abilities. When we two were partners and the cards running our way, we bid and made little slams and grand slams easily. When we stopped playing, he and I were high scorers.

I could see that Ellen was interested in him, and thought Hubert, who had the radical's propensity for categorizing--that often irritated me, respected his mind.

Florence, whose attitude I had wondered about, bubbled with maternalism. She looked at him, it struck me, as if she were trying to decide whether she would rather have him as a lover or as a son.

Both Hubert and Ellen made it clear they wanted him to come back, and on the way home he let me know he wanted to. I took him again the following Monday, when he seemed disappointed at Florence's not being there. But he was cheered by the assurance that she would be there Thursday, and that he was invited. After he was one of us, and regularly there on Thursday nights, though I did not always go after him. He came other nights too, but without the enthusiasm he displayed in Florence's presence.

He was smitten with her, and the way she acted toward him was the opposite of discouragement. Hubert, who didn't conceive of Ralph as a rival, regarded

Florence's mothering with tolerance and, if a more positive attitude had been required of him, might have encouraged it. It had the effect of creating an appearance that covered reality, which Hubert could not have regretted; for there were moments when he must have been displeased, not to say chagrined, at her lack of tact in the presence of Ellen.

Ralph was not able to see that, believing all Florence's vivacity genuine and her sweetest smiles for him. He didn't really care about coming to the Marshes' on any night other than Thursday (and I ceased to suggest that he do so), but he was always there then. At the bridge table, when he was dummy he sat looking at her with rapt attention and a moon-calf expression that embarrassed all of us but Florence herself, who acted as if it were homage due her.

Ellen privately expressed to me her concern over such quick growth of adolescent love. "I'm afraid when he's brought down to earth it's going to hurt him badly," she said. "He thinks she's an angel. Of course I know she isn't that. It's not true that a wife is always last to know such a thing."

I concurred that Ralph would probably get a pretty hard jolt; and I would have been the unwitting medium of inflicting it on him. "I ought to have known what would happen," I said. "But I didn't foresee this. I don't know what's to do about it now, do you?"

"No. But sometimes I feel like giving Florence a good sound slap for the way she teases him. She can't help knowing what she's doing."

We agreed that Florence ought to be soundly spanked for the way she acted. Once in friendly frolic she struggled with him, and, allowing him to overcome her, manoeuvred his hands onto her breasts, and kissed him at the end. He went for this as any normal boy must whose experience it is for the first time. I liked Florence, and she stimulated me too, and I mightn't have turned down a chance to lie with her; but I didn't like that kind of teasing.

Ralph had no idea of Florence and Hubert's

relationship. To him, the fact that Hubert and Ellen were husband and wife precluded any act with another person on the part of either beyond the bounds of friendship, and he loved Florence too much and too uncritically to believe her capable of dishonor or deceit. He was jealous, naturally, of Hubert's privilege of taking Florence home; but after one oblique suggestion to me, which I had to ignore, that we take her with us, he concealed that feeling and admitted Hubert's prerogative.

Florence and Hubert became, if possible, still more brazen. Florence always wanted to leave at ten o'clock or soon after, saying she had to get up early next morning or had been up late the night before or making some other remark that it would have been more tactful to leave unsaid. Sometimes Ralph and I stayed longer, but when Florence was gone the evening was over for him, and it required no urging to get him away before he could begin to wonder why Hubert didn't come home. One such night after I'd taken Ralph to his house I found the street I usually traveled blocked by repair work and turned into a cross street; by the curb at the middle of the block was Hubert's car. I recognized both the license number and a sign attached to the plate.

My first thought was that Hubert and Florence were in it, but they were not, and on second thought I knew they wouldn't be. I had enough vulgar curiosity to wish to determine if my suspicion were correct; I drove past the Laing house and, sure enough, the garage doors were open and the moonlight made it easy to see that the garage was empty. I also saw Christian Laing through the uncurtained front window, sitting in an armchair by a floor lamp, with a big book open on his lap that looked like a Bible. I thought it would be appropriate if he were reading the story of David and Bathsheba.

I drove the rest of the way home thinking about Ellen.

Hot days came again, and I had neither energy nor inclination to persuade people to buy burial lots. I went to sales meeting two or three mornings a week, and on those days made one or two calls

during the forenoon, and in the afternoon went to see Ellen. She spent most of her time in bed, with the supposition that rest was doing her good and the optimistic belief that it would enable her to recover. But she was not at all better--the truth was she was worse--than when she came to Moorton. Now she coughed more, and had the afternoon rises in temperature that mark tuberculosis in an advanced stage.

But she suffered as well from the tedium of an invalid life, and decided it wouldn't hurt her to go riding with me when I proposed it. On a sunny afternoon we drove into the country. I knew the least-traveled roads, and followed one with several woods; I drove into an unfenced woods a little distance on the wagon trail. Ellen made no objection, and we left the car there. We walked into the denser wood, where in many places the honey locusts and spice and hawthorn bushes made a thicket.

We found a spot screened from all sides and sat down. I put my arm around Ellen. I had held her hand often, and kissed it with mock gallantry, but had never embraced her before, and no act on the part of either of us could have been interpreted as other than a friendly one. Now she leaned her head on my breast, and my face was against the top of it, in its wholesome hairy smell.

I said: "I don't see why I should wait longer to kiss you, do you?"

"No," she answered, and I kissed her. Then she said: "I don't know why you waited as long as you did."

"Because I don't like to stop with just kisses."

"Why should you?" She looked straight into my eyes.

"I like to be pretty sure a woman is willing to have me go all the way before I start."

"You ought to know by now that I'm willing."

"I've been wanting you a long time," I said.

(TO BE CONTINUED)