



The Persephone Biannually

N°22 Autumn/Winter 2017-18
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'The Oil Shop' by Mabel Frances Layng (1881-1937)
Northampton Museum and Art Gallery



OUR BOOKS FOR AUTUMN/WINTER 2017–18

E*mmeline*, Persephone Book No. 123, is a historical novel, written in 1980, which is set in America in the 1840s. It is about thirteen-year-old Emmeline Mosher, who leaves her home in Fayette in Maine and goes to work in the mills at Lowell in Massachusetts. This was common practice: the girls (around eight thousand of them in Lowell alone) were housed in large boarding houses, worked in the mills all day, and the money they earned was sent back to their, mostly farming, families. Even though the work was hard, many of the girls were pleased to have the freedom to work. However, Emmeline goes to Lowell reluctantly and is disorientated and lonely. But she is also beautiful – and a double tragedy ensues.

The author of *Emmeline* was the New York writer Judith Rossner (1935–2005). Her most famous novel was *Waiting for Mr Goodbar* (four million copies sold), her best was *Emmeline*, although, shamefully, it has not been in print since it was first published. It is, as Lucy Ellmann writes in her Afterword (which we extract on p. 22), ‘a richly-formed examination of womanhood, conducted with almost unbroken tenderness. It

moves from childhood sexual abuse to adult incest without ever getting puerile.’ It is a novel which, as the original *Chicago Tribune* reviewer wrote, ‘raises disturbing questions about all our received moral truths.’

A page-turner from beginning to end, *Emmeline* is unusual because it is a fascinating, in some ways almost documentary, book about the life of the mill girls in Lowell. And because most of them were so young, the novel raises many questions to do with childhood, the way society treats children, and at what age they become adults, and all the things that were rarely discussed. (Cf. *Family Secrets: The Things we Tried to Hide* by Deborah Cohen, which we sell in the shop.) Emmeline knows nothing about real life, and when she is seduced knows nothing about what is happening to her. Yet society then punishes her in the traditional but appalling way – by taking her baby away from her. The fact that this tragedy is then compounded by another – the Oedipus story from Jocasta’s point of view – is what makes this book unforgettably powerful.

The real disaster was that no one ever told Emmeline the



A fragment of an American mid-C19th linen and wool plain weave, indigo dyed.



A 1933 textile design by Stanley Wilkinson, a student at Bradford School of Art.



A 1953 printed cotton by Susie Cooper for Cavendish textiles.

truth about life or the facts of life or accepted that she was still a child who should have been treated as such. A few pages before the end of the book the local preacher tells Emmeline: 'You have committed two grave sins.' She responds: 'I didn't know! The first time I was a child! I didn't know it was possible for me to sin! I thought only evil people sinned. I was never even on guard!' And she adds: 'I had seen the word adultery in my Bible. When I asked my mother what it meant, she told me I would know when I needed to know.' It is the age-old shocker (as Lucy Ellmann makes clear): that young women were deliberately kept in ignorance. After all, knowledge is

power, and the patriarchy kept itself in power by ensuring that women had no knowledge. It was only in the past few decades that western society started to become more honest. In the memoir of Harriet Harman, which we also sell in the shop, it is striking that, most unusually for the early 1960s, her parents dinned into their four daughters a) that they had to be able to earn their own living and be independent and b) that they must not get pregnant.

The *Chicago Tribune* continued: 'It is interesting to compare *Emmeline* to *Wuthering Heights*, for both novels are starkly elemental dramas of the passions and their effect on human

destiny. This is a novel of great power, masterfully told, and its last lines descend on the reader with a great cosmic chill.

Emmeline does what all great novels should do. Transforming pain into purpose, it once again makes us aware of the inadequacy of our attitudes towards others and towards the world itself.'

Newsweek wrote: 'The book uses a spare, reticent style which accentuates the C19th setting with the force of a ballad – fateful, darkly chorded and daringly imagined. Judith Rossner makes no overt feminist issue of Emmeline's hard fate and her heroine never congeals into Pioneer Woman. The subject is loneliness and she portrays it



intimately and exactly. She also creates a feat of historical recreation.’ In England the *Observer* called Emmeline ‘compulsively readable’, the *Guardian* thought it was ‘told with harrowing clarity and a beautiful unforced sense of its period ... a triumph of narration, simple and piercing’ and the *Telegraph* said it was ‘brilliant ... stunningly well done ... cannot be laid aside once started.’

In 1976 the well-known documentary film maker David Hoffman interviewed a woman in Fayette, Nettie Mitchell; she had known the real-life Emeline Bachelder Gurney when she was a child. David Hoffman then suggested to Judith Rossner that she write a novel based on what happened; a few years after her

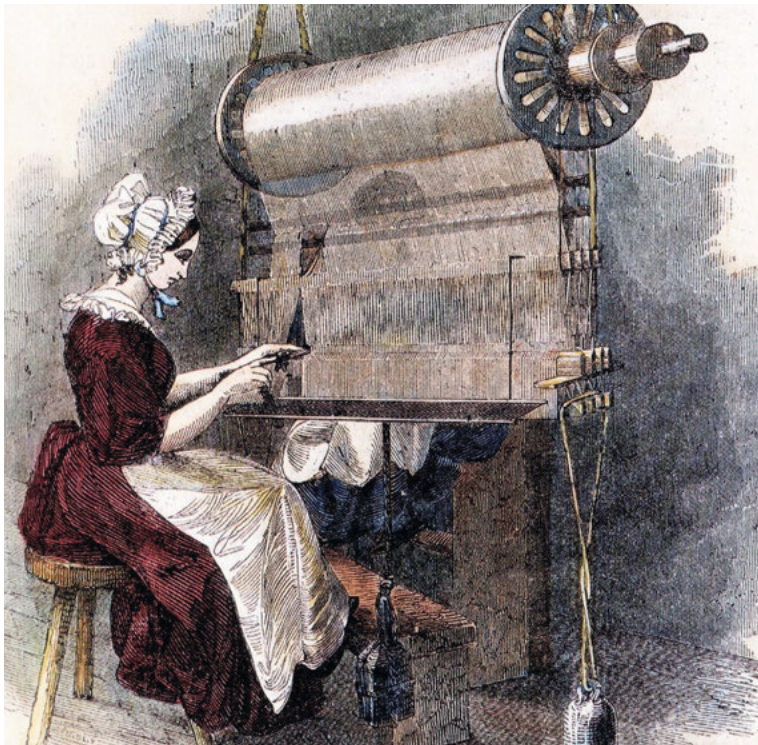
novel was published he himself made a documentary about Emeline/Emmeline called *Sins of Our Mothers*. Then in 1997 Santa Fe Opera commissioned an opera (called *Emmeline*) by Tobias Picker; it has been performed several times since then, most recently (in the spring of 2017 at Boston University Theatre). We hope to persuade an opera company to put this on in the UK.

It was five years ago that we published our one hundredth book, *The Persephone Book of Short Stories*. It has been a great success and we have sold 10,000 copies and counting: this is an amazing number given that many people ‘don’t like’ short stories. The collection consists of ten stories from short story collec-

tions by ‘our’ writers, ten stories that appeared in the *Biannually*, and ten that were chosen especially for PB No.100. One of the latter was the much-admired and much-loved ‘The Music Box’ by Malachi Whitaker, and now we are publishing a new collection of her stories in a volume we have called *The Journey Home and Other Stories*.

Malachi Whitaker (whose real name was Marjorie but she preferred the zanier Malachi) was born in Yorkshire in 1895. She married, and after some time abroad came back to Yorkshire, where she lived for the rest of her life. Hers is very much a Yorkshire voice. As the novelist and critic Philip Hensher, author of the Preface, observes: ‘It is a Yorkshire woman’s voice, apparently direct, straight-faced in humour and tragedy, confident of its own reach and power. She needed the place she came from.’

In the late 1920s Malachi Whitaker began writing (or perhaps had always been writing and now began to publish) short stories. Jonathan Cape, the London publisher, brought out her first collection in 1929. Three more collections followed in 1930, 1932 and 1934. After that she wrote very little, and although she published a memoir, her output of short stories dwindled. Partly this was because she adopted two children, partly because the Whitaker family moved house so frequently, but mostly because, after an outpouring when she was in her



An 1841 engraving taken from *The Lowell Mill Girls* by Alice Flanagan (2006)

thirties, Malachi Whitaker seems to have been written out.

Yet she had been an extraordinary, indeed an important writer. Every one of the twenty stories we publish (five from each of the four volumes) is a gem, and it was of course very hard to choose twenty from a possible total of nearly eighty. Two selections of stories were published in the late 1940s and one in 1984 but nothing since then. We did not particularly try to 'be different' from the previous selections, but several of the stories have not in fact been reprinted since they appeared in the early 1930s.

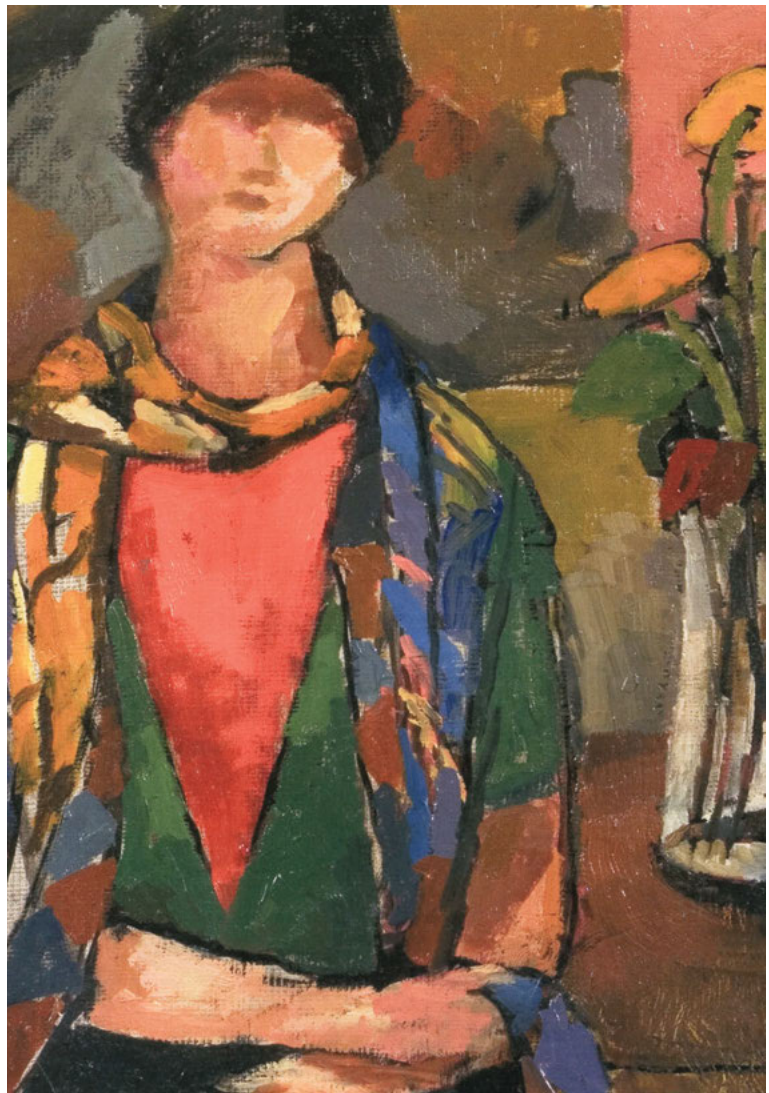
'Like many of the best short story writers,' writes Philip Hensher, 'Malachi Whitaker is fascinated by the ordinary. Just as in Chekhov, the banal dissolves under her precise gaze, to be replaced by the unique, the freshly experienced. These things happen all the time: and yet these things have never happened before. Her stories explore, with an eager gleam, ordinary people in extraordinary situations. She loves embarrassment, that unstoppable response when things go wrong.'

'The short story was the perfect vehicle for Whitaker's gifts, and for her particular subject. The world's oddities are glimpsed in a flash, and we pass on, partly enlightened, amused or startled... She is a unique and daring writer,

whose work richly rewards exploration and rediscovery. Under her intense, scrupulous gaze, the event that happens all the time and the event that is happening only once are, in the logic of art, strangely identical.

'Malachi Whitaker is not like other authors. Her career is exceedingly strange in its shape, and her work quite unlike

anything else. She gathered no followers and was almost forgotten in her later, silent years. Reading her now, it is inexplicable how English letters failed to find a place for a writer of such verve, colour, range and power. She is one of the great English short story writers, and her work is slowly reaching some prominence.'



'Scarves' by Duffy Ayers b. 1915 The Fry Gallery. The artist still lives in Bloomsbury, round the corner from the shop.

Guard Your Daughters by Diana Tutton, Persephone Book No. 125, is a 1953 novel about a family of five daughters living in the country – or rather four daughters since one has recently escaped by marrying and it is Morgan, Cressida, Teresa and Thisbe who are still at home with their parents. Their mother stops her daughters going to school or making friends. But because she tends to make scenes or retire to bed, her family do all they can to avoid defying or upsetting her; yet they do so in a continually light-hearted, cheerful fashion.

Thus on one level this is a ‘fun’ book in the *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day/Miss Buncle’s Book* vein i.e. a light novel which makes no pretence to

be anything other than an easy read. But entwined within the lightweight, sometimes hilarious, descriptions of the sisters’ everyday life is an exploration of the source and the cause of insanity: only gradually is it revealed that the girls’ mother is far more than merely neurotic. And in this respect the book is more like PB No. 59 *There Were No Windows* than anything else.

Diana Tutton (1915–91), who is pictured below (as with Elisabeth de Waal, the only surviving photographs are a contact sheet of Polyfotos), wrote three novels and in each of them she took a story with a dark undertone and wrote in a style that is more usual in the frothiest of social comedy. *Mamma* (1955)

is about a middle-aged widow who is in love with her daughter’s husband, and *The Young Ones* (1959) is about incest: a young couple fall in love, discover they are in fact brother and sister, but marry nevertheless. *Guard Your Daughters* (Diana Tutton’s first published novel, although it was written after *Mamma*) is about a family keeping up a brave front of being bohemian and fun. The novel’s sophistication lies in the reader not knowing whether to read it as lightweight domestic fiction or something much more upsetting and peculiar.

We know from the first sentence (as we do in *Earth and High Heaven*, PB No. 122) what the ending will be: ‘I’m very fond of my new friends, but I



do get angry when they tell me how dull my life must have been before I came to London. We were queer, I suppose, and restricted, and we used to fret and grumble, but the one thing our sort of family doesn't suffer from is boredom.' The tone of voice is light and 'girlish'. But this too is a book about family secrets. Most frequently compared with *I Capture the Castle*, another important inspiration was surely the 'madwoman in the attic' in *Jane Eyre*.

Guard Your Daughters, as well, is about motherhood: was Mrs Harvey a 'good enough' mother (whom her daughters love very much) or a controlling, destructive one? (Diana Tutton wrote a sequel in the late 1950s which, alas, was never published. It was called *Unguarded Moments* and its setting is London seven years after Mrs Harvey had a total breakdown and all the girls moved out: to freedom and their own lives. Morgan has married and had two children. In this novel, too, there is a dark side: one of her children disappears and is not found for a heart-stopping few hours.)

Because there are such sharply contrasting readings of *Guard Your Daughters*, we decided not to commission a Preface but instead we have created a Publisher's Afterword which is a 'collage' of various points of view, the positive response intertwined with the negative. On the flap the original publisher said: 'Seldom has a first novel come our way

which has given us such pleasure to read or such confidence to publish.' Their enthusiasm helped ensure that *Guard Your Daughters* was a bestseller when first published, and as a Book of the Month Choice it sold 200,000 copies. John Betjeman in the *Daily Telegraph* called it 'a really talented first novel, a thoroughly "nice" book full of likeable characters. The excellence of this story lies in the depth behind the flashing surface.' And the *Spectator* wrote that 'the whole thing is so true, so lively, so full of charm, that there is nothing left

to say but thank you.' A few years ago the book was very popular with the blogging community. Stuck in a Book wrote: 'What a heavenly book! What a glorious find! This is a novel which glories in its own delightful eccentricity – but not without serious undertones. The main wonder of the novel is the family, and Morgan's voice. I have no idea how Diana Tutton has created such a loveable character. *Guard Your Daughters* is so funny, so lively and delightful. It's a warm blanket of a novel, but never cloying or sentimental.'



*Penelope Pilkington (dates unknown but any information from a Persephone reader gratefully received) painted 'Morning Tea with Mrs Higgs' which dates from the early to mid 1950s. It has very much the atmosphere of **Guard Your Daughters**. (And for anyone who has read Celia Fremlin's *Seven Chars of Chelsea*, it is fascinating that by the early 1950s the manners and mannerisms of the 1940s had completely vanished.)*

'SMOKE OF THE TIDE'

BY MALACHI WHITAKER

A fair, middle-aged man with a red face and prominent, light-blue eyes, walked out of the door of a pleasant-looking cottage in the High Street. Dusk was deepening into night as he left, and a few stars showed in the sky directly above him. They looked pale because of a steady red glow that came from the village fair-ground. Over the cottage roofs that stood between him and the fair, strong, black smoke rolled, taking the gleam from the light beneath it. He drew up the smell into his nostrils, and quivered as a certain rapture took hold of him.

The name of the man was Albert Shepherd. He had been born in the cottage which he had just left; indeed, his father and mother still lived there, although all their children had married and left them. Albert was the youngest, and he had been the most successful; that is to say, in northern standards, he had made a lot of brass. He was married to a London woman, and did not often come home, because she could not see the astonishing beauty of the industrial north; she thought it was dirty and depressing. The blue-grey landscapes with their design of mill chimneys – Marion called them smokestacks, and nobody knew what she meant – the

rolling hills, the mingling of smoke and cloud, the white steam from the dye-houses, the cobbled streets and houses of blackened stone; all this meant nothing to Marion.

It meant a great deal to Albert Shepherd. He was never fully happy in the south. He loved his wife, and lived there because she liked it best. However, every now and then his homesickness would be too much for him, and he would suddenly say, 'I have to go to Bradford on business.' Each time he asked her to go with him, and each time she refused.

He had not been home in September for years. When he had arrived yesterday there had been a great commotion on the Green. Steam wagons were clanking and snorting, and caravans were springing up like mushrooms across the road from the spare ground. Children were running about shrieking, 'The Tide – the Tide's come!'

It was twenty years since he had smelt the smoke of the Tide. Here, a fair was called either a Feast or a Tide; mostly the latter. He recalled how often he, and the other boys in the school close by, had heard the measured hammering as the Tide was being set up, and how they had longed for the morning to go and the evening

to come so that they could rush in and see everything, and spend their money. Even when the money was spent there were other things to watch; other people spending theirs, sometimes winning, more often losing, at games of chance.

This Saturday night, twenty years after, he wanted just as badly to go again. For some whim, he had put only one and sixpence in his pocket. He remembered thinking, when he was ten, that one and sixpence would have been the ideal sum to take to the Tide. When he had had only threepence it had seemed that the very fruits of paradise could have been got for one and six. Well, he would see.

He hastened his footsteps to get there, rattling his coppers in his fingers, and whistling the tune that, out of three, came loudest to his ears through the air.

Raucous shouts, laughter, raised voices, blaring music, the occasional ring of a bell as some champion mallet-slinger touched the tam-o'-shanter of Donald Dinnie, met him as he entered the stall-lined avenue. Here were children's toys, balloons, and brandy snap. Always he had wanted to buy some brandy snap, but his mother would never let him have any. Instead, she made her own, and

sometimes, if she left it a second too long in the oven, it was burnt a deep brown, instead of being the pale yellow of his dreams. At last he would have some. As other people were waiting before him he saw the price. 'Nay,' he thought, 'if I spend fourpence of my one and six I shan't have much left.' Casting a lingering glance at the yellow brandy snap, he moved away.

There was so much to see! At one sideshow there were some balls which had merely to be rolled into holes. It looked easy. The amount of the prize was written above each hole, threepence, sixpence – on one, a shilling.

He bought three balls for threepence and rolled them carefully down. The very first one stopped in the shilling place, the second missed, and the third fell into the threepenny hole. He shouted 'Sitha!' as pleased as a child, and instead of trying again he picked up his winnings and walked away, leaving a crowd behind him, gazing and exclaiming after him. He heard a voice saying, 'It's Albert Shepherd, wheer's 'e sprung from?'

He looked about, trying to place the voice, but the seething crowd prevented him from finding out what he wanted to know. Somebody else would be sure to recognise him. He longed wistfully for a friend, one with whom he could share his happiness. He looked up at the hundred waving legs which were rushing through the

air not far above him in the Flying Chairs. Each time the machine gyrated, the flying chairs and flying legs came nearer to his head. He wondered whether he dare risk these, and decided not to.

'I'll have six goes on the motor cars with my winnings,' he told himself.

How delightful it was in the motor cars, better by far than in his own. These were upholstered in red plush; they went down a valley, up a hill,

down a valley, up a hill with great speed and regularity. He couldn't help saying, 'Whoo-hoo,' each time the motor car he was in arrived at the exact middle of the dip.

From the centrepiece, inside which a greasy-looking man counted piles of coppers, came the loud, intoxicating blare of a popular song. The second time it was played he hummed it. A little painted image of a man, with a feather in his hat, tapped at a drum, and at each



All the Fun of the Fair' Ernest Procter 1927

tap a great drum beat from somewhere inside. It was entrancing to meet, on one side, this little iron man, who stared so bravely before him, and tapped away so obediently; yet it was just as entrancing to roll around to the other side, where the real man kept on counting his piles of coppers.

Round and round he went. The faces of all the people in the fairground below were bathed in floods of light. From here he could see little boys darting among the crowd, looking for stray dropped pennies. Albert Shepherd couldn't help laughing to himself. He seemed to be riding above the cares of all the world. There was no time to think of care; always a hill or a valley loomed ahead, and a mad noise urged you on. Away with the dull streets, the hidden offices, the slights and drawbacks even successful men have to meet in business!

Suddenly he thought, 'If only Marion had liked this. If only I had gone to work at the mill every day, like father, and Marion had been happy and contented, like mother. Once a year we could have brought the kids down to the Tide – poor little devils, Marion never lets 'em get within miles of one – and bought 'em a red and yellow wheelbarrow apiece.'

His face clouded over with sadness, to think that they would never know this joy. 'What's in front of them?' he thought; 'the way Marion's bringin' 'em up, they'll soon

grow ashamed of her and me.' He made a sudden resolution. He would send for the children in spite of Marion's protests, and let them spend the day with their granny. On Monday night he would take them to the Tide. What did it matter if their bedtime was early, they should stay up until ten for once. Let them get hold of this before their cage claimed them; let them have something bright to look back on. What did it matter if it was tawdry? Everybody needs a bit of tinsel once in a few years.

When he had had four rides, he got up and walked unsteadily down the wooden platform. As he went, he nodded to the little man with the drum.

After the excitement of the cars, it seemed quieter down among the people. Some stopped him and spoke; old men tottering in with their children and grandchildren greeted him and treated him like a boy. 'Nah then, Albert, what's tha' doin' 'ere bi thyself?'

Over in one corner he met the blacksmith, on whom he had played a number of boyish tricks. He always felt a little ashamed in front of this man. The smith was throwing wooden balls at coconuts, as yet without success. They began to talk together. Some young lads brushed past them, chased by a crowd of shrieking girls with feather dusters in their hands and imitation beetles on the end of tiny wooden ladders.

The blacksmith spat in disgust. 'Lads aren't what they used to

be,' he said. 'Now when I wa' smithyin' down at quarry, thirty year sin, lads wor lads. Ther' was one young devil 'at used to play a trick on me ivery morn. 'E used to climb up to t'chimbley, an' put a slate across t'top, an' as sooin as Ah fired up, place filled wi' smoke. Ah niver could remember, an' Ah niver caught 'im, but they don't do things like that now. They daresn't. They run away from lasses i'stead.'

Albert Shepherd looked up at this bulky old man who towered above him and laughed inwardly. It was he who used to climb up and put the slate over the chimney to smoke the blacksmith out, but he did not dare to say so. He bought some wooden balls and began aimlessly throwing them at a young man who was trotting up and down behind a high netting with three hats piled on his head. You had to knock the top one off. He found he could knock off the hat, or all three hats, quite easily, and did it so many times that the man asked him humbly to stop it. 'I'm not the right chap,' he said, 'and I'm not used to this. The right chap's got a less 'ead than me, and the 'ats fit 'im tighter.'

Excited by his victories, Albert offered to change places with him, and the man came out grinning and rubbing his neck. Soon a crowd drew round, and money poured in. Albert found it hard to walk backwards and forwards in an unconcerned way. As soon as he saw a ball coming, he would flinch

and duck, so that his hats were rarely knocked off. He was forced to smile as he wondered what Marion or his business friends would think if they saw him running up and down inside a netting at a fair, having his hat knocked off.

The music from the motor cars, the flying chairs and the roundabouts came all together into his ears. When one tune stopped, and only two strove for mastery, his spirits lowered; as soon as the third tune got up again they returned. All at once, he saw his father and mother. He laughed, and turned away his face, but to no purpose. Through all the din his mother's voice broke accusingly, 'Our Albert, come out!' and he obeyed it, as he had obeyed it a hundred times before, in his younger days.

He went with them to the sideshows, the dartboard and the ringboard; many a game he won. He got boxes of toffee, and eggcups, and china mugs, and strange little ornaments, the kind his mother loved to put on her bedroom mantelpiece. He did not remember when he had last felt so happy.

Each year his mother and father came down to the Tide, just for a walk round, to see old friends; very soon they went back home. This night their son did not go with them. It grew later and later and, one by one, the stalls were shut down. For the last time the harsh music crashed out, and above it you could hear the steady thump, thump of the Tide's heart – the

great power engine which drove the roundabouts.

Instead of going home, Albert Shepherd went for a short walk, up a green lane on the hillside. In his pockets a number of pennies still rattled – so far as he had counted he had elevenpence left – and in his nostrils the smell of the thick smoke lingered.

He met a policeman, walking with slow, even steps.

'Good night,' he said; he could see it was Willie Ambler, a boy who had been at school with him.

'Hello, Albert,' said the policeman, 'how long are you over for? Did you come just for

t'feest, like?'

'Ay,' answered Albert, 'I've just had a look in at t'Tide.' Marion hated to hear him talk like this, he reflected.

'It gets worse ivery year, doesn't it?' said the policeman, gazing yearningly over at the spot where the smoke still rolled up to the exquisite midnight sky, in which a full round moon was now sailing.

'Ay,' said Albert. It would never do for them both to confess how deeply they loved it; so they stood there for a long time, until the glow died away, and only the moon was left serenely looking down.



'Autumn' 1893 by John Nash (1893-1897) Northampton Museum and Art Gallery

THE PERSEPHONE 125

1. **William – an Englishman** by Cicely Hamilton Prize-winning 1919 novel about the effect of WW1 on a socialist clerk and a suffragette. Preface: Nicola Beauman
2. **Mariana** by Monica Dickens This funny, romantic first novel, which came out in 1940, describes a young girl's life in the 1930s. Preface: Harriet Lane **Also a Persephone Classic**
3. **Someone at a Distance** by Dorothy Whipple 'A very good novel indeed' (*Spectator*) about the destruction of a formerly happy 1950s marriage. Preface: Nina Bawden, R4 'Book at Bedtime' **Also a Persephone Classic**
4. **Fidelity** by Susan Glaspell 1915 novel by a Pulitzer-winning writer brilliantly describing the effect of a girl in Iowa running off with a married man. Preface: Laura Godwin
5. **An Interrupted Life** by Etty Hillesum From 1941–43 a woman in Amsterdam, 'the Anne Frank for grown-ups', wrote diaries and letters: they are among the great documents of our time. Preface: Eva Hoffman
6. **The Victorian Chaise-longue** by Marghanita Laski A 'little jewel of horror': 'Melly' lies on a chaise-longue in the 1950s and wakes as 'Milly' ninety years before. Preface: PD James
7. **The Home-Maker** by Dorothy Canfield Fisher An ahead-of-its-time 'remarkable and brave 1924 novel about being a house-husband' (Carol Shields). Preface: Karen Knox **Also a Persephone Classic**
8. **Good Evening, Mrs Craven: the Wartime Stories of Mollie Panter-Downes** Short stories first published in *The New Yorker* from 1938–44. Five of them were twice read on R4, and on R7. Preface: Gregory LeStage **An unabridged**
9. **Few Eggs and No Oranges** by Vere Hodgson A 600-page diary, written from 1940–45 in Notting Hill Gate, full of acute observation, wit and humanity. Preface: Jenny Hartley
10. **Good Things in England** by Florence White 'One of the great English cookbooks, full of delightful, delicious recipes that actually work.' Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall
11. **Julian Grenfell** by Nicholas Mosley A biography of the First World War poet, and of his mother Ettie Desborough. Preface: author
12. **It's Hard to be Hip over Thirty and Other Tragedies of Married Life** by Judith Viorst Funny, weary and wise 1960s poems about marriage, children and reality. Preface: author
13. **Consequences** by EM Delafield By the author of *Diary of a Provincial Lady*, PB No. 105, this 1919 novel is about a girl entering a convent after she fails to marry. Preface: Nicola Beauman
14. **Farewell Leicester Square** by Betty Miller Novel (by Jonathan Miller's mother) about a Jewish film-director and 'the discreet discrimination of the bourgeoisie' (*Guardian*). Preface: Jane Miller
15. **Tell It to a Stranger** by Elizabeth Berridge Funny, observant, bleak 1947 short stories, twice an *Evening Standard* bestseller. Preface: AN Wilson
16. **Saplings** by Noel Streatfeild A novel by the well-known author of *Ballet Shoes*, about the destruction of a family during WW2; a R4 ten-part serial. Afterword: Jeremy Holmes **Also a Persephone Classic**
17. **Marjory Fleming** by Oriel Malet A deeply empathetic novel about the real life of the Scottish child prodigy who lived from 1803–11; translated into French; a play on BBC Radio Scotland.
18. **Every Eye** by Isobel English An unusual 1956 novel about a girl travelling to Spain, highly praised by Muriel Spark: a R4 'Afternoon Play' in 2004. Preface: Neville Braybrooke
19. **They Knew Mr Knight** by Dorothy Whipple A 1934 novel about a man driven to committing fraud and what happens to him and his family; a 1946 film. Afterwords: Terence Handley MacMath and Christopher Beauman
20. **A Woman's Place** by Ruth Adam A survey of women's lives from 1900–75, very readably written by a novelist-historian: an overview full of insights. Preface: Yvonne Roberts
21. **Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day** by Winifred Watson A delightful 1938 novel about a governess and a night-club singer. Read on R4 by Maureen Lipman; now a film with Frances McDormand and Amy Adams. Preface: Henrietta Twycross-Martin. **A Persephone audiobook read by Frances McDormand. Also a Persephone Classic**
22. **Consider the Years** by Virginia Graham Sharp, funny, evocative WW2 poems by Joyce Grenfell's closest friend and collaborator. Preface: Anne Harvey
23. **Reuben Sachs** by Amy Levy A fierce 1880s satire on the London Jewish community by 'the Jewish Jane Austen', praised by Oscar Wilde. Preface: Julia Neuberger
24. **Family Roundabout** by Richmal Crompton By the author of *William*, a 1948 family saga contrasting two matriarchs and their very different children. Preface: Juliet Aykroyd

- 25. The Montana Stories by Katherine Mansfield** All the short stories written during the author's last year; with a detailed editorial note and the contemporary illustrations. Five were read on R4 in 2002.
- 26. Brook Evans by Susan Glaspell** An unusual novel written in 1928, the same year as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, about the enduring effect of a love affair on three generations of a family.
- 27. The Children who Lived in a Barn by Eleanor Graham** A 1938 classic about five children fending for themselves; starring the unforgettable hay-box. Preface: Jacqueline Wilson
- 28. Little Boy Lost by Marghanita Laski** Novel about a father's search for his son in France in late 1945, the *Guardian's* Nicholas Lezard's Paperback Choice, R4 'Book at Bedtime' read by Jamie Glover. Afterword: Anne Sebba. Also a **Persephone Classic**
- 29. The Making of a Marchioness by Frances Hodgson Burnett** A very entertaining 1901 novel about the melodrama when a governess marries a Marquis; a R4 Classic Serial. Preface: Isabel Raphael, Afterword: Gretchen Gerzina. A **Persephone audiobook (unabridged)** read by Lucy Scott. Also a **Persephone Classic**
- 30. Kitchen Essays by Agnes Jekyll** Witty and useful essays about cooking, with recipes, published in *The Times* and reprinted as a book in 1922. 'One of the best reads outside Elizabeth David' wrote gastropoda.com. Also a **Persephone Classic**
- 31. A House in the Country by Jocelyn Playfair** An unusual and very interesting 1944 novel about a group of people living in the country during WW2. Preface: Ruth Gorb
- 32. The Carlyles at Home by Thea Holme** A 1965 mixture of biography and social history describing Thomas and Jane Carlyle's life in Chelsea.
- 33. The Far Cry by Emma Smith** A beautifully written 1949 novel about a young girl's passage to India: a great Persephone favourite. R4 'Book at Bedtime'. Preface: author
- 34. Minnie's Room: The Peacetime Stories of Mollie Panter-Downes 1947–1965:** Second volume of short stories first published in *The New Yorker*, previously unknown in the UK.
- 35. Greenery Street by Denis Mackail** A delightful, very funny 1925 novel about a young couple's first year of married life in a (real) street in Chelsea. Preface: Rebecca Cohen
- 36. Lettice Delmer by Susan Miles** A unique 1920s novel in verse describing a girl's stormy adolescence and path to redemption; much admired by TS Eliot.
- 37. The Runaway by Elizabeth Anna Hart** A Victorian novel for children and grown-ups, republished in 1936 with Gwen Raverat wood engravings. Afterwords: Anne Harvey, Frances Spalding
- 38. Cheerful Weather for the Wedding by Julia Strachey** A funny, sardonic 1932 novella by a niece of Lytton Strachey, praised by Virginia Woolf. Preface: Frances Partridge. An **unabridged Persephone audiobook** read by Miriam Margolyes. A film with Felicity Jones. Also a **Persephone Classic**.
- 39. Manja by Anna Gmeyner** A 1938 German novel, newly translated, about five children conceived on the same night in 1920, and their lives until the Nazi takeover. Preface: Eva Ibbotson (the author's daughter)
- 40. The Priory by Dorothy Whipple** A much-loved 1939 novel about a family, upstairs and downstairs, living in a large country house. 'Warm, witty and realistic' (Hatchards). Preface: David Conville
- 41. Hostages to Fortune by Elizabeth Cambridge** 'Deals with domesticity without being in the least bit cosy' (Harriet Lane, *Observer*): a remarkable fictional portrait of a doctor's family in rural Oxfordshire in the 1920s.
- 42. The Blank Wall by Elisabeth Sanxay Holding** 'The top suspense writer of them all' (Chandler). A 1947 thriller about a mother shielding her daughter from a blackmailer. Filmed as *The Reckless Moment* (1949) and *The Deep End* (2001); a R4 serial in 2006.
- 43. The Wise Virgins by Leonard Woolf** This wise, and witty 1914 novel contrasts the bohemian Virginia and Vanessa with the girl next door in 'Richstead' (Putney). Preface: Lyndall Gordon
- 44. Tea with Mr Rochester by Frances Towers** Magical, unsettling 1949 stories, a surprise favourite, that are unusually beautifully written; read on R4 in 2003 and 2006. Preface: Frances Thomas
- 45. Good Food on the Aga by Ambrose Heath** A 1933 cookery book written for Aga owners which can be used by anyone; with illustrations by Edward Bawden
- 46. Miss Ranskill Comes Home by Barbara Euphan Todd** A wry 1946 novel: Miss Ranskill is shipwrecked and gets back to a changed wartime England. Preface: Wendy Pollard
- 47. The New House by Lettice Cooper** 1936 portrayal of the day a family moves into a new house, and the resulting adjustments and tensions. Preface: Jilly Cooper
- 48. The Casino by Margaret Bonham** 1940s short stories with a unique voice and dark sense of humour; they have been read several times on BBC R4. Preface: Cary Bazalgette
- 49. Bricks and Mortar by Helen Ashton** An excellent 1932 novel by a very popular pre- and post-war writer, chronicling the life of a hard-working, kindly London architect and his wife over thirty-five years.
- 50. The World that was Ours by Hilda Bernstein** A memoir that reads like a novel of the events before and after the 1964 Rivonia

Trial. Mandela was given a life sentence but the Bernsteins escaped to England. Preface and Afterword: the author **Also a Persephone Classic**

51. Operation Heartbreak by Duff Cooper A soldier misses going to war – until the end of his life. ‘The novel I enjoyed more than any other in the immediate post-war years’ (Nina Bawden). Afterword: Max Arthur

52. The Village by Marghanita Laski This 1952 comedy of manners describes post-war readjustments in village life when love ignores the class barrier. Afterword: Juliet Gardiner

53. Lady Rose and Mrs Memmary by Ruby Ferguson A 1937 novel about Lady Rose, who inherits a great house, marries well – and then meets the love of her life on a park bench. A great favourite of the Queen Mother. Preface: Candia McWilliam

54. They Can't Ration These by Vicomte de Mauduit 1940 cookery book about ‘food for free’, full of excellent (and fashionable) recipes.

55. Flush by Virginia Woolf A light-hearted but surprisingly feminist 1933 ‘life’ of Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s spaniel, ‘a little masterpiece of comedy’ (*TLS*). A ‘Book at Bedtime’ on BBC R4. Preface: Sally Beaman

56. They Were Sisters by Dorothy Whipple A 1943 novel by this superb writer, contrasting three different marriages. Preface: Celia Brayfield

57. The Hopkins Manuscript by RC Sherriff A 1939 novel about what might happen if the moon crashed into the earth in 1946 ‘written’ by Mr Hopkins: Preface: Michael Moorcock, Afterword: George Gamow

58. Hetty Dorval by Ethel Wilson First novel (1947) set in the beautiful landscape of British Columbia; a young girl is befriended by the lovely and selfish ‘Menace’ – but is she? Afterword: Northrop Frye

59. There Were No Windows by Norah Hoult A touching and funny 1944 novel, about an elderly woman with memory loss living in Kensington during the Blitz. Afterword: Julia Briggs

60. Doreen by Barbara Noble A 1946 novel about a child who is evacuated to the country during the war. Her mother regrets it; the family that takes her in wants to keep her. Preface: Jessica Mann

61. A London Child of the 1870s by Molly Hughes A 1934 memoir about an ‘ordinary, suburban Victorian family’ in Islington, a great favourite with all ages. Preface: Adam Gopnik

62. How to Run Your Home Without Help by Kay Smallshaw A 1949 manual for the newly servantless housewife full of advice that is historically interesting, useful nowadays and, as well, unintentionally funny. Preface: Christina Hardyment

63. Princes in the Land by Joanna Cannan A 1938 novel about a daughter of the aristocracy who marries an Oxford don; her three children fail to turn out as she hoped.

64. The Woman Novelist and Other Stories by Diana Gardner Late 1930s and early 1940s short stories that are witty, sharp and with an unusual undertone. Preface: Claire Gardner

65. Alas, Poor Lady by Rachel Ferguson Polemical but intensely readable 1937 novel about the unthinking cruelty with which Victorian parents gave birth to daughters without anticipating any future for them apart from marriage.

66. Gardener's Nightcap by Muriel Stuart A 1938 pot pourri: miniature essays on gardening – such as Dark Ladies (fritillary), Better Gooseberries, Phlox Failure – which will be enjoyed by all gardeners,

67. The Fortnight in September by RC Sherriff Another novel by the author of *Journey's End*, and of *The Hopkins Manuscript*, Persephone Book No. 57, about a family on holiday in Bognor in 1931; a quiet masterpiece. **Also a Persephone Classic**

68. The Expendable Man by Dorothy B Hughes A 1963 thriller about a young doctor in Arizona which encapsulates the social, racial and moral tensions of the time. Afterword: Dominic Power

69. Journal of Katherine Mansfield The husband of the great short story writer (cf. *The Montana Stories*, Persephone Book No. 25) assembled this Journal from unposted letters, scraps of writing etc: a unique portrait.

70. Plats du Jour by Patience Gray and Primrose Boyd A 1957 cookery book which was a bestseller at the time and a pioneering work for British cooks. The line drawings and the endpapers are by David Gentleman.

71. The Shuttle by Frances Hodgson Burnett A 1907 page-turner about an American heiress married to an English aristocrat, whose beautiful and enterprising sister sets out to rescue her. Preface: Anne Sebba

72. House-Bound by Winifred Peck This 1942 novel describes an Edinburgh woman deciding, radically, to run her house without help and do her own cooking; the war is in the background and foreground. Afterword: Penelope Fitzgerald

73. The Young Pretenders by Edith Henrietta Fowler An 1895 novel for adults and children about 5-year-old Babs, who lives with her uncle and aunt and has not yet learnt to dissemble. Preface: Charlotte Mitchell

74. The Closed Door and Other Stories by Dorothy Whipple Short stories drawn from the three collections published during Dorothy Whipple's lifetime. Five

stories were read on BBC R4.

75. On the Other Side: Letters to my Children from Germany 1940–46 by Mathilde Wolff-Mönckeberg. Written in Hamburg but never sent, these letters provide a crucial counter-point to *Few Eggs and No Oranges*, PB No. 9, Preface: Ruth Evans

76. The Crowded Street by Winifred Holtby A 1924 novel about Muriel's attempts to escape from small-town Yorkshire, and her rescue by Delia, alias Vera Brittain. Preface: Marion Shaw

77. Daddy's Gone A-Hunting by Penelope Mortimer 1958 novel about the 'captive wives' of the pre-women's lib era, bored and lonely in suburbia. Preface: Valerie Grove

78. A Very Great Profession: The Woman's Novel 1914–39 by Nicola Beauman A mixture of literary criticism and historical evocation, first published in 1983, about the women writers of the inter-war period.

79. Round About a Pound a Week by Maud Pember Reeves A study of working-class life in Lambeth in the early C20th that is witty, readable, poignant and fascinating – and relevant nowadays. Preface: Polly Toynbee

80. The Country Housewife's Book by Lucy H Yates A useful 1934 book on topics such as the storeroom and larder, garden produce, and game.

81. Miss Bunclie's Book by DE Stevenson A woman writes a novel, as 'John Smith', about the village she lives in. A delightful and funny 1934 book by an author whose work sold in millions. Preface: Aline Templeton

82. Amours de Voyage by Arthur Hugh Clough A novel in verse, set in Rome in 1849, funny and beautiful and profound, and extraordinarily modern in tone. Preface: Julian Barnes

83. Making Conversation by Christine Longford. An amusing, unusual 1931 novel about a girl

growing up which is in the vein of *Cold Comfort Farm* and *Persephone* Book No. 38 *Cheerful Weather for the Wedding*. Preface: Rachel Billington

84. A New System of Domestic Cookery by Mrs Rundell 1816 facsimile edition of an 1806 cookbook: long, detailed and fascinating. Preface: Janet Morgan

85. High Wages by Dorothy Whipple Another novel by *Persephone's* bestselling writer: about a girl setting up a dress shop just before the First World War. Preface: Jane Brockett

86. To Bed with Grand Music by Marghanita Laski A couple are separated by the war. She is serially unfaithful, a quite new take on 'women in wartime'. Preface: Juliet Gardiner

87. Dimanche and Other Stories by Irène Némirovsky Ten short stories by the author of *Suite Française*, written between 1934 and 1942. 'Luminous, extraordinary, stunning' said the reviewers.

88. Still Missing by Beth Gutcheon A 1981 novel about a woman whose six year-old son sets off on his own for school and does not return. But his mother never gives up hope...

89. The Mystery of Mrs Blencarrow by Mrs Oliphant Two 1880s novellas about women shockingly, and secretly, abandoned by their husbands, that were favourites of Penelope Fitzgerald. Afterword: Merryn Williams

90. The Winds of Heaven by Monica Dickens 1955 novel by the author of *Mariana* about a widow with three rather unsympathetic daughters who finds happiness in the end. Afterword: AS Byatt

91. Miss Bunclie Married by DE Stevenson A very enjoyable sequel to *Miss Bunclie's Book* (No. 81): Miss Bunclie marries and moves to a new village. Afterword: Fiona Bevan

92. Midsummer Night in the Workhouse by Diana Athill 'Funny, engaging and unexpected' (*Paris Review*): 1950s stories by the editor

and memoir writer. Preface: author, who also reads six of the stories as a *Persephone* Audiobook.

93. The Sack of Bath by Adam Fergusson A 1973 polemic, with many black and white photographs, raging at the destruction of Bath's C18th artisan terraced housing. Preface: author

94. No Surrender by Constance Maud A fascinating and path-breaking 1911 suffragette novel about a mill girl and her aristocratic friend. Preface: Lydia Fellgett

95. Greenbanks by Dorothy Whipple A 1932 novel by our most popular author about a family and, in particular, a grandmother and her grand-daughter. Afterword: Charles Lock

96. Dinners for Beginners by Rachel and Margaret Ryan A 1934 cookery book for the novice cook telling her everything in exacting detail: eye-opening and useful.

97. Harriet by Elizabeth Jenkins A brilliant but disquieting 1934 novel about the 1877 murder of Harriet Staunton. Afterword: Rachel Cooke

98. A Writer's Diary by Virginia Woolf Extracts from the diaries, covering the years 1918–41, selected by Leonard Woolf in 1953 in order to show his late wife in the act of writing. Preface: Lyndall Gordon

99. Patience by John Coates A hilarious 1953 novel about a 'happily married' Catholic mother of three in St John's Wood who falls 'improperly in love'. Preface: Maureen Lipman

100. The Persephone Book of Short Stories Thirty stories, ten by 'our' authors, ten from the last decade's *Biannuals* and ten that are newly reprinted. A *Persephone* bestseller.

101. Heat Lightning by Helen Hull A young married woman spends a sultry and revelatory week with her family in small-town Michigan; a 1932 Book-of-the-Month Club Selection. Preface: Patricia McClelland Miller

- 102. The Exiles Return by Elisabeth de Waal** A novel, written in the late 1950s but never published, about five exiles returning to Vienna after the war: a meditation on 'going back' and a love story. Preface: Edmund de Waal
- 103. The Squire by Enid Bagnold** A woman gives birth to her fifth child: a rare novel (written in 1938) about the process of birth. Preface: Anne Sebba
- 104. The Two Mrs Abbotts by DE Stevenson** The third 'Miss Buncl' book, published in 1943, is about Barbara Abbott, as she now is, and the 'young' Mrs Abbott, keeping the home fires burning during the war.
- 105. Diary of a Provincial Lady by EM Delafield** One of the funniest books ever written: a 1930 novel, written as a diary, about everyday family life. Illustrated by Arthur Watts. Afterword: Nicola Beauman
- 106. Into the Whirlwind by Eugenia Ginzburg** A Russian woman is arrested in 1937 and sent to the Gulag. Filmed as *Within the Whirlwind* with Emily Watson. Afterword: Rodric Braithwaite
- 107. Wilfred and Eileen by Jonathan Smith** A 1976 novel, based on fact, set in the years 1913–15. Wilfred, badly wounded in France, is rescued by his wife. A four-part television serial in 1981. Afterword: author
- 108. The Happy Tree by Rosalind Murray** A 1926 novel about the long-term and devastating effect of WW1 on the young, in particular on a young woman living in London during the war years. Preface: Charlotte Mitchell
- 109. The Country Life Cookery Book by Ambrose Heath** This 1937 cookbook, organised by month (and thus by excellent seasonal recipes) is illustrated by a dozen beautiful wood engravings by Eric Ravilious. Preface: Simon Hopkinson.
- 110. Because of the Lockwoods by Dorothy Whipple** Her 1949 novel: the Hunters are patronised by the wealthy Lockwoods; as she grows up Thea Hunter begins to question their integrity. Preface: Harriet Evans
- 111. London War Notes by Mollie Panter-Downes** These extraordinary 'Letters from London', describing everyday life in WW2, were written for *The New Yorker* and then collected in one volume in 1971. Preface: David Kynaston
- 112. Vain Shadow by Jane Hervey** A Waugh-ish black comedy written in the 1950s but not published until 1963 about the days after the death of a patriarch in a large country house and the effect on his family. Preface: Celia Robertson
- 113. Greengates by RC Sherriff** A 1936 novel about retirement: Mr Baldwin realises the truth of 'for better for worse but not for lunch' but finds a new life by moving to 'metroland'. Preface: Juliet Gardiner
- 114. Gardeners' Choice by Evelyn Dunbar and Charles Mahoney** Two artist friends collaborated over the text and drawings of this rare and delightful 1937 gardening book. Preface: Edward Bawden, Afterword: Christopher Campbell-Howes
- 115. Maman, What Are We Called Now? by Jacqueline Mesnil-Amar** The author kept a diary in July and August 1944: an unparalleled insight into the last days of the Occupation in Paris. Photographs: Thérèse Bonney. Preface: Caroline Moorehead
- 116. A Lady and Her Husband by Amber Reeves** A 1914 novel about a woman who realises that the girls in her husband's chain of tea shops are underpaid – and does something about it. Preface: Samantha Ellis
- 117. The Godwits Fly by Robin Hyde** A semi-autobiographical lyrically written 1938 novel by the major New Zealand writer, who published ten books in ten years and died in London in August 1939 when she was 33. Preface: Ann Thwaite
- 118. Every Good Deed and Other Stories by Dorothy Whipple** A 1944 novella and nine short stories written between 1931 and 1961 which display the author's 'wonderful power of taking quite ordinary people in quite unromantic surroundings and making them live.'
- 119. Long Live Great Bardfield: The Autobiography of Tirzah Garwood.** This touching, funny and perceptive memoir first came out in a limited edition in 2012. Our version has many wood engravings and photographs (including one of Tirzah's husband Eric Ravilious).. Preface: Anne Ullmann
- 120. Madame Solario by Gladys Huntington** Published anonymously, in 1956, this superb novel in the Henry James/Edith Wharton tradition is set on Lake Como in 1906. Its incestuous undertones made it a *succès de scandale*. Afterword: Alison Adburgham
- 121. Effi Briest by Theodor Fontane.** A classic of European literature written in 1895 by the great German novelist: neglected in the UK yet on a par with *Anna Karenina* and *Madame Bovary*. Afterword: Charlie Lee-Potter
- 122. Earth and High Heaven by Gwethalyn Graham** A 1944 Canadian bestselling novel about a young woman falling in love with a Jewish man and her father's, and Canada's, upsetting anti-semitism. Preface: Emily Rhodes
- 123. Emmeline by Judith Rossner** A 1980 novel set in the 1840s, about a 13-year-old girl working in the mills at Lowell; she is seduced, and tragedy ensues. An unforgettable, unusual and subtle feminist statement. Preface: Lucy Ellmann
- 124. The Journey Home and Other Stories by Malachi Whitaker** Four volumes of these startling stories came out in the early 1930s; we reprint 20. Preface: Philip Hensher, Afterword: Valerie Waterhouse
- 125. Guard Your Daughters by Diana Tutton** A 1953 novel written in a light, very readable style which yet has dark undertones: four sisters live in the country deferring to their loveable but demanding mother,

OUR BLOGGERS WRITE

‘**E**arth and High Heaven is a book I couldn’t stop reading but didn’t want to finish. It’s hard to convey in a review just how lovely this book is, you may just need to read it. There is something about Gwethalyn Graham’s story-telling, the way in which she creates relationships, the emotional and upsetting nature of the divisions that she portrays which makes this novel so compelling. Erica, the heroine, is an innocent in the ways of the society in which she lives, she herself is incapable of disliking someone simply because they happen to be Jewish – and so discovering this attitude exists within the very walls of her home, she is devastated. This is a surprisingly emotional read, and I defy anyone not to rush through it – desperate to see if the happy ending implied in that first sentence comes true. Erica is the driving force of the novel, a wonderfully sympathetic character through whose eyes we see the divisions within a society.’
Heavenali

‘**C**onjuring a group of rich, fashionable Edwardian holidaymakers, Gladys Huntington’s decorous prose in *Madame Solario* shimmers like the waters of Lake Como beyond the terraces and gardens of the luxurious Hotel Bellevue. With the deftest of touches, the author evokes a self-contained world – ‘a forcing house for situations’ – of

Visconti-like elegance and exclusivity. But with the sudden arrival of the fabulously beautiful Madame Solario, swiftly followed by her handsome and charismatic brother, dark forces are unleashed which jeopardise this hitherto well-ordered community. In an atmosphere of rumour, jealousy and creeping suspicion, pages which at first exhale an aroma as delicate as Parma violets start to emit the noxious whiff of corruption, sexual intrigue and barely contained violence. Beguiling and disturbing in roughly equal measure.’
@Disraeli81 on Instagram

‘**W**hat makes up daily life, and therefore life, are the small things, the banalities, the furniture, the clothing, the coffee. And even though this is not what life is really about, Fontane seems to say, you better make the best of it here and there and enjoy what you can when you can, otherwise your life will be completely miserable. This is the trap he has laid out for us: *Effi Briest* is one huge trap, where nothing is really what it is about, where every word is double speak or a metaphor that fits or feeds the self-contradictory life-style of a highly civilised and decadent society. The book is full of funny platitudes and banal, beautiful, little details, enchanting pleasures and pains. What it describes, in the most lovely way, is the absence of love.

What Fontane talks about in the most thoughtful manner, is the absence of original thoughts that come out of the brains and hearts of his characters. The timeless genius of *Effi Briest* was being an utterly contemporary and generous response to the gutless, clueless, fearful members of an utterly perverted society. There is a lot of humour in this and no sarcasm or irony. It spreads generous compassion for the lost and the confused, the rich, the poor, the weak, the young, the awkward, the mean, and the cruel, as long as they are occasionally trying to be better than themselves, and at least once in a while reflect on their wrong-doings.’ Full-Stop.net

‘**H**appy are they that go to bed with grand music, like Pythagoras, or have ways to compose the fantastical spirit, whose unruly wanderings take off inwardly to sleep.” Sir Thomas Browne in his essay “On Dreams” accurately describes the main character in Marghanita Laski’s wartime novel, *To Bed with Grand Music*. One of the most interesting things that the author does is challenge the dominant and enduring narrative of what people were like during WW2, especially Londoners during The Blitz. When modern audiences think about life during this time in history, we think of people sacrificing luxuries for The Greater Good, keeping the home

fires burning, and being friendly and restrained. This book shows that, in truth, life couldn't have been like that. There was some sense of community, but not nearly to the level that history would have us believe. Overall, *To Bed with Grand Music* was a surprising and thought-provoking read. It gives the reader pause to see if he/she would, if found in similar circumstances and of a similar age, behave in the ways that Deborah does.' Books for Years

'In *They Were Sisters* Geoffrey is hideously cruel, having himself been ignored and abandoned in his childhood. The episode with the dog is heart-breaking. His mastery over his family reminds us of the power that men and fathers wielded even into the post-war years. His behaviour can be represented to the world as for the good of the family, although Dorothy Whipple makes it clear that he only thinks of himself. The other monster is Vera, who is so beautiful that every door is opened to her, all misdemeanours forgiven, until she becomes middle-aged. Her nemesis is age, and she is forced to face her weaknesses when her niece replaces her in her young man's attentions.' Book Word

'Although a sweet fairy tale on the surface, the story speaks of many deep-rooted societal issues, class snobbery being one of them. *Lady Rose and Mrs Memmary* also raises the question whether it is worth

shunning home and hearth, life and one's family, for the sake of true love. As with all good books, Ruby Ferguson leaves this point as an open-ended question. Full of beautiful descriptive writing, this is a sweet love letter to Scotland and so much more. The story aims to address prejudice regarding class consciousness and certainly reaffirms the belief that marrying for love is of paramount importance.' Bag Full of Books

'*The Runaway* is a story for children, but it is so very well written that I think it can be appreciated at any age. I loved spending time with Clarice and Olga. What I learned of their background enabled me to understand how they had grown into the girls they were. They complemented each other beautifully, and I found that I could empathise and understand each of them. I loved Clarice for her lovely mix of imagination and sensibleness; and I appreciated that she was good not for its own sake but because the world and the people around her cared for her and she cared for them and wanted them to be happy. I loved Olga for her vitality, her *joie de vivre*, and her gift for doing the unexpected. The story shows them both off so well, a dramatic conclusion bringing the best out of both of them, and I was captivated from the first page to the last. The illustrations are utterly charming, and they match the story perfectly.' Beyond Eden Rock

'Alex in *Consequences* reminded me a bit of myself in the early chapters – technically pretty, talented, and promising but a bit off as a child, never quite fitting in with the other children. With me, that was because anxiety and only-child syndrome plagued me early on, causing me to act like I deserved and needed to be the centre of attention. With Alex, it seemed to be about a need for affection and attention. I consequently emotionally invested myself in the story and buckled in for a very angsty and uncomfortable ride. Alex took everything to the extreme, desperate for friendship and human affection, developing deep and overwhelming crushes on others that often caused her to self-destruct. Angst really is the driving force of the book. Everything about it is about deep and unrestrained feeling. I often found myself needing to put it down to recover or to cringe. Alex had my sympathy throughout, and reading of a Victorian heroine like her was refreshing.' A Blog with a View

'Tirzah Garwood's lively, vibrant voice and passionate interest in art and creativity sing out from this marvellous book, that chronicles not only the life of an artist and her friends, but that of an ordinary woman struggling to carve out a life for herself amidst the everyday drudgery of childcare and housework. What makes *Long Live Great Bardfield* so special is not the accounts of what such and such a famous

person said or looked like, but how Tirzah coped with the many and various challenges her life threw at her, while still managing to maintain a sense of joy, wonder and impressive acceptance of the world she lived in. This is a valuable and precious account of pre-war life that paints a portrait of a thoroughly modern woman, living with thoroughly modern people, whose lives were just as complex as our own and certainly not ruled by the strict social standards historians seem to want to place pre-war life within. Tirzah's approach to life was impressively reasonable, fair, refreshing; she loved freely and forgave freely, and never begrudged others for their failures. She did not have an easy life; Eric's early death was devastating, as was her own protracted battle with the cancer that would eventually kill her, leaving her unable to see her children grow up, but she faced it with an irrepressible curiosity, fearlessness and zest that made me wish I had known her. This is a marvellous book, worth reading for Tirzah's generous, lively and wonderfully honest depiction of a woman's life in the pre and post war era alone. I can't recommend it highly enough.' Book Snob

‘**T**he *Sack of Bath* was written in the 1970s as a rallying cry about the destruction of Bath's beautiful Georgian architecture. Fergusson writes about it rather eloquently: “The set pieces – Royal Crescent, the Circus, Milsom Street, the Pump Room, and so on – stand glorious

and glistening. But now, more and more because the devastation goes on, they have become like mountains without foothills, like Old Masters without frames. The Bath of the working classes, the Bath which made Beau Nash's fashionable resort possible, has been bodily swept away. Irreplaceable, unreproducible, serendipitous Bath is either being wrenched out pocket by pocket or bulldozed in its entirety.” It's hard not to get worked up and cross when one sees the before-and-after pictures of streets which were knocked down and replaced with architectural horrors. This is not an academic's careful analysis – this is impassioned. Thank goodness Fergusson wrote this book, helping stem the tide of wanton destruction – and, now, it's a really engaging cultural document.’ Stuck in a Book

‘**F**ontane gives a strong commentary on the social standing of women during the time period. When Effi's affair comes to light, her parents are more concerned about their place in society than to receive their daughter back into the house. Effi herself retreats to a life of seclusion with her trusted maid and only friend, to be joined later by the dog Rollo, who had always given her company on her lonely days at the first house. Though I really enjoyed *Effi Briest*, I felt the tones in the book undergo drastic changes. I was completely immersed in the first hundred pages when the young Effi is made to stay in the house in the rural countryside with nothing

much to do. And then the novel changes abruptly from the *Jane Eyre*-like tone to a calmer one. After that we encounter a duel. Perhaps the author wished to show the changes in Effi's life through the different tones but I felt they did not blend well as a whole. Yet overall this was a wonderful book. I laughed and empathised with Effi. I secretly prayed that she should have a happy ending because so many things were out of her control. This novel will stay in my mind for a long time as will the unfortunate Effi.’ The Book Satchell

‘I am sorry I did not take the advice of my fellow bloggers at once and dive into this charming, funny novel by Winifred Watson. It is sweet without being too sickly, escapist with a good dose of humour and wisecracks to keep it grounded. For once it was not relegated to the underground storage room of the library, but up proud and yellow on the “mood boosting” books’ shelf. And never a truer word was spoken. *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day* is a fairy tale but there is just enough backbone to Guinevere Pettigrew and just enough careless charm and genuine warmth to Delysia and her friends to make this story seem almost feasible, while the witty, self-deprecating observations keep us one step removed from fantasy land. One could dismiss this as “romantic tosh” but it is far more subversive than that.’ Finding Time to Write

GREAT BARDFIELD AGAIN

On the day I was due back in Eastbourne, I went round very early in the morning to see Eric in his rooms in Redcliffe Road. He was rather surprised to see me and we were constantly interrupted by his char lady who was bustling about, in fact it was a very inappropriate moment for saying: 'You are mine.' It was a large room furnished with a yellow maple wood chest of drawers, two or three chairs and a child's cot with bars. This was not because he wanted or expected any children but because he liked the bars (p.158).

He wrote a letter to my father to tell him that we wanted to get married. My father wrote back saying couldn't we wait until like his friend Clifford Webb he had won his artistic spurs and he didn't like to think of his daughter developing into a domestic drudge, etc. Clifford Webb was a friend of his who had been with him in Mesopotamia, he wasn't a particularly good artist and Eric wasn't flattered by the comparison (p.158).

Both Eric [Ravilious] and Edward [Bawden] had been members of the Design School at the College and I learned that there was a gulf between this school and the Painting School which was considered superior; painting, especially oils, being a higher and more aesthetically valuable form of art than commercial design. Eric had an

inferiority complex because he was a designer and it took years to get rid of this feeling. It was an attitude I very much resented as I could not see that there was very much reason except tradition behind the scale of values attached to different forms of painting. Why should watercolour which is a far more difficult medium than oil, be less valuable; it is I suppose more perishable but I wonder if that is the only reason? (p. 167).

It was fatal to be too successful because your admirers invariably tired of your work and the unfortunate idol was left either dead or if he was lucky later on he might be resurrected if he adopted a new style and successfully changed his work in some way. Eric aimed modestly at being a good second-rate painter and engraver (p. 168).

I determined to write an autobiography for my grandchild-

ren. I suppose that an escape from death generally has that effect on people, only most of them don't have the time or inclination to really carry out their desire, and in writing as in drawing, I could completely forget my present circumstances (p. 422).

I hope, dear reader, that you may be one of my descendants, but I have only three children, my grandfather had six and as I write a German aeroplane has circled round above my head taking photographs of the damage that yesterday's raiders have done, reminding me that there is no certainty of our survival. If you are not one of my descendants then all I ask of you is that you love the country as I do, and when you come into a room, discreetly observe its pictures and its furnishings, and sympathise with painters and craftsmen (p. 423).

Extracts from Tirzah Garwood's Long Live Great Bardfield, PB 119.



'Haystacks, Place Farm' by John Aldridge (Tirzah Garwood's lover)

AS OUR BOMBERS STRUCK

On the *Other Side*, *Persephone Book No. 75* by Tilli Wolff-Mönckeberg, was first published in 1979. It was reviewed by Margaret Forster in the Evening Standard:

Two sorts of books about the Second World War still stream from the presses: those going over and over the many battles, and those detailing the lives of the major participants. I am sick of them.

What we have very little of, on the other hand, are first-hand accounts from Germany about all those millions of Germans in whose name that war was perpetrated. Every sensible, sane person in this country knew perfectly well that the whole of Germany could not be full of murderous Nazis. What about all those charming, hospitable “ordinary” people they had seen on holiday? Had they vanished the minute war was declared?

Well, no, they had not. They were still there, but their voice – to their own shame – went unheard.

Mathilde Wolff-Mönckeberg was one of them.

Daughter of a former Lord Mayor of Hamburg, and wife of a professor at Hamburg University, she was 60 when the war came. She immediately had all contact severed with four out of her five children who were, suddenly, in enemy countries.

She kept a diary for them, thinking she would not survive, and when she did, she hid it.

Her youngest daughter Ruth found it five years ago and presents it as *On the Other Side*. It is a fascinating document which I was unable to put down.

Mathilde (Tilli) was a highly intelligent, sensitive, compassionate woman who watched what was happening in her country with growing horror. She hated Hitler, never in her life gave the Hitler salute, and found enduring his rule “like being swept out to sea on a murderous tidal wave”.

All around she was aware of terrible things, the worst being the treatment of the Jews. “It is so vile ... I can only blush with embarrassment.” Before anyone angrily asks why she did not do something about it, she is ahead of them, despising her own passivity, condemning her own fear in the face of the might and power of the Nazis.

Her distress and bitterness at her own apathy was matched only by her self-contempt for the comparative comfort in which she and her husband managed to live. They had little food – it is a great day when someone sends her a pound of dripping from Norway – but she never omits to mention that others had less.

Their small flat was soon packed to the door with the homeless, but she stresses that at least they had a home. They suffered frightful bombings, but they lived.

Regularly, Tilli prayed for defeat by the British and yet

there was a natural sorrow in the humiliation of Germany. She wanted the Nazi Government brought down but the devastation of her country crucified her. The bravery of the German soldiers made her weep with pride as well as pain.

When the end came, she was eager to accept that she must be made to suffer. The arrogance of the conquerors was a shock to her, but she knew she must bear the yoke and felt it only just that an ordinary woman like herself who had never hurt anyone should be classed with brutal murderers.

Her husband called the British “self-righteous puritans”, but she thought no one could escape collective guilt. She had, she felt, not a single thing to be proud of.

Yet she had. This narrative is something to be intensely proud of if only she had known it.

Her daughter, Ruth Evans, sets it in perfect context with a beautifully-written foreword and epilogue. If only people would flock in their thousands to read it as they do to every bloodthirsty battle story.

Mathilde Wolff-Mönckeberg’s account of the day-to-day living of a woman in Hamburg throughout the war distils hatred into understanding and I can think of no greater purpose for any book.

EMMELINE: LUCY ELLMANN

E*mmeline* is a richly formulated examination of womanhood, conducted with almost unbroken tenderness. And it really packs a punch! It's almost as if something revelatory has been injected straight into your bloodstream: the novel stays with you for days. Though not rip-roaringly angry, the anger quietly grows on you; by the end, the novel works as a howl of protest against the patriarchal system.

At first quietly, in the end obstreperously, *Emmeline* makes its own human rights case: Rossner skewers sexism (shown in the exploitation of the female body in Lowell, for work and play), racism (the ghettoising of the Irish, both in Manchester and Massachusetts) and, most remarkably, the incest taboo. We've come a long way here from all those penny novelettes that smugly smirked at seduction, prostitution, and death: the rights and wrongs of Emmeline's life are not so clear-cut. Rossner was pushing into brand-new territory, saying in an interview (in connection with the 1996 opera based on her book, by Tobias Picker) that she'd wanted to look at the Oedipal myth from Jocasta's point of view. Great idea! (She should have moved on to Medea next.)

With casual negligence, no one helps Emmeline get up to speed on the ways of the world so as to save her from

unspeakable *faux pas*. A little sex education wouldn't have gone amiss – raised eyebrows and the occasional mystifying warning from adults and peers are not quite the same. 'She wanted to know how Mr Maguire had taken advantage of Lucy Shorter, but she feared being marked as an idiot, or a child, or both, if she asked.' But she *is* a child. Emmeline is never shown the ropes. This universal lack of due care and kindness accentuates how alone she is – a dangerous condition to be in, under the circumstances, and one which soon spirals out of control.

Emmeline is poignantly denied two rightful satisfactions: being with her mother and being with her child. Maternal love is repeatedly dissed by people around her. Lowell has no patience with mothers: it's understood that Emmeline's baby will be snatched away, for the good of the society in which they (and we) live, a society built on hatred of women, and of the mother figure in particular. The easiest way of knocking and mocking women is to downgrade their most basic biological function: motherhood. This is why childcare arrangements remain a constant refrain for feminists.

Nature approves of procreation though, and it's arguably unnatural in us to disparage it. Maternal investment, in the form of gestation,

childbirth and breastfeeding, is essential to mammalian success (while the male's biological contribution is comparatively minimal). And yet our male-centred culture persists in implying that there's little point in being female. Our (so-called) authority figures are almost always male.

Considering the illegitimacy of its tenets, and the tragedy of its continuation, there are surprisingly few novels that openly confront the patriarchy. Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata*, though a mess, does touch on it. Nabokov's *Lolita*, Jelinek's *Lust*, and Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes* also come to mind. *Emmeline*, obliquely and perhaps only half-consciously on Rossner's part, is another. Sin mounting upon sin, Emmeline inadvertently betrays patriarchy twice, and it will have its revenge. Her initial crime – essentially that of being female and therefore capable of pregnancy – is unacceptable. Yet seducing little girls at the mills goes down fine! The seducers are mildly reprimanded, and the violated girls quickly removed from sight. Emmeline is in the hands of an unjust society – and the heart of its problem with her is motherhood.

These paragraphs are from Lucy Ellmann's Afterword to the Persephone edition of Emmeline.

‘SEASIDE INCIDENT’

As she walked, Lydia was unpleasantly conscious of the chilly wind dappling her bare arms with gooseflesh, and hugged the thin shawl closer. The muslin dress rippled round her legs, making a fresh, frilling noise, like leaves in high summer. On the right, a sparkling sea pounced on the sand in brittle, kittenish dashes; sun-burnt fishermen were busy tarring their boats; handsome, powerful men, with blue eyes, who looked up and winked at the elegant young woman walking there alone.

Lydia made up her mind to walk to the end of the new esplanade. How wonderful it was to be living in an age of progress. Why, two or three years ago this very place had been nothing but a cluster of fishing huts, and now it was a busy watering place, only half a day’s journey from London in a fast chaise!

It had been kind of Tom to send her here after her illness; few men would trouble about a sick woman, one who was growing older too. It was so easy to find a fresh young girl, easy to discard one past her first bloom. Yes, Tom was kind, there were few such as he ... yet life without him was freer and happier. But how otherwise could a woman exist, without money, talents or assets other than an elegant shape, and a small hand and foot.

A young man was leaning over the sea wall ahead; he

seemed to be scribbling something, a letter, or the verses which boys of sensibility ground out to a pattern. The breeze ruffled his hair, bright as horse chestnuts shaken from their doeskin shells. Tom’s was thin and greying now.

Lydia found herself staring at the stranger, admiring his broad shoulders and those ruffled curls, which made her long to touch them; they would be thick and warm as a bird’s plumage. To her embarrassment, he looked up, meeting her eyes, and for the first time in years she blushed. His glance was sparkling and impertinent; a man had no business with such long, thick eyelashes either.

Annoyed, she turned to stare at the piles of building material on the other side of the road, and, for a moment, did not realise that the new esplanade had petered out into ruts, stones and knops of turf, till her foot turned over on a clod of earth. With a squeal of pain, Lydia fell, and lay, a drift of muslin, her little reticule spilling its contents over the grass.

Now he’d think she’d fallen deliberately. She flushed angrily, but the young man was at her side, his merry eyes now full of concern. He knelt down, feeling her leg, not amorously, but with cool, professional hands.

‘I have some medical training, madam,’ he explained. ‘You are fortunate only to have strained your ankle. I’ll wet my handker-

chief and bind it; cold water will relieve the contusion.’

Like a stocky pony, he bounded over the low wall, dashed to the sea, was back in a moment, and had bound his wet handkerchief deftly and comfortably round her foot.

‘There, is that more comfortable? Take my hand; see if you can stand.’

‘Thank you, sir, I am most grateful. I cannot think how I could be so stupid.’

Once more he appraised her with those merry hazel eyes, till, as if she’d gazed too long at the sparkling sea, her senses were dazzled and confused. But he said seriously:

‘Do you live far, madam? Can you walk, if I support you? Or shall I fetch a chaise from the town?’

‘No, no, I can walk quite well. I am staying only half a mile from here.’

Lydia bit her lip. Did it sound too obvious? But she couldn’t bear to lose him yet. And the foot didn’t hurt ... much. She put her hand on his arm and together they walked back.

How quickly, too quickly, in spite of slow steps, they reached her lodgings. But she had never talked with a man so freely. He spoke eagerly, like a boy, of all he’d been doing; told her of spending the spring in the Isle of Wight.

Then he talked of Canterbury, where he and his brother had

been staying. The brother was called Tom, too; the name, with its associations, came between them, making her sad for a moment.

Speaking of his sick brother, his voice had trembled, but now it danced with merriment as he described a mad party he'd attended.

Conversation discovered joint friends; this gave their meeting respectability, sanctioned the adventure, silencing her apprehension about what Tom would think if he knew.

Forgetting she had been sick and was thirty, her dark eyes shone, her cheek had been whipped by the wind to a carnation bloom, and tiny, vine-like tendrils of dark hair strayed from the modish turban.

They had reached her lodgings. Lydia turned.

'You will come inside? After your great kindness, you must not leave without refreshment.'

He paused, looking at her like a child whose longed-for treat has come true. Lydia found herself regretting her vanished youth, wishing she were the girl of twenty again, free and unspoiled. Yet her girlhood self would have had nothing to give. That was the bitter thing, in youth one was sealed up, stiff, prudish; with age one could unfold, give graciously, yet then the gift was tarnished, perhaps unwanted...

How fortunate that Tom had left her the travelling case of liqueurs. She lifted out one of the small decanters, and two of the fragile, gold-banded glasses.

Her guest strolled round the room, looking at the green African parrot in its cage, picking up a book, unfolding music. His voice was excited and his hand, holding the paper, trembled.

'You like Haydn, too? And you read Spenser! Why, you have marked my favourite passage. I believe that we were destined to meet...'

'If only we had been, if only we could be drinking to the future!' she thought, lifting the glass of golden liqueur.

He turned to her, and their eyes met. She felt as if drowned in those dazzling, golden-brown orbs; as if he could see everything, know, understand, and forgive, yet they asked something of her, too. She took a step forward, and, in the moment before the embrace, knew that although this would bring her bitter sorrow, it might bring him some form of salvation.

Poor child, poor child, how he needed kindness and love. She smoothed his thick hair; curling tendrils of it caught on her hand, as his arms clung desperately, and his mouth reached for hers.

When, hours later, Lydia sat alone, her dark, cloudy hair fallen from its Grecian knot, she realised that, for the first and last time, she was in love, and without hope. A girl would have been full of happiness, drowsy with love; a girl would have remembered, and been satisfied with all he had whispered in her ear, his kisses, the joy he had

shown in her beauty and love. But Lydia, a woman, knew, too well, that he had taken her gift as a hungry man takes bread or water.

She rose, and moved around the room. Yes, temporary home as it is, her own possessions gave it personality; a Wedgwood vase, shaped like a Grecian urn, framed reproductions of Claude and Poussin, tastefully bound copies of Spenser, Chaucer and Shakespeare. Tom laughed at her, his learned lady, laughed, and bought what books and music she wished, as one might buy bones for a performing dog. The Aeolian harp, too, that hung and made queer, jangling music that fitted well with her mood and longings, it was like her, an instrument to be strummed on by a passing breeze!

Lydia wandered about the room, trying vainly to find some signs of the lover who had gone. Nothing was left, only the two gold-rimmed glasses on the table, and the fast-fading echoes of his voice in her mind. Then she saw a fragment of paper on the floor. In a bold, sensitive handwriting, lines of verse he had scribbled.

When I have fears that I
may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my
teeming brain,
Before high-piled books, in
charact'ry,
Hold the rich garner, the full
ripened grain;
When I behold, upon the
night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high

romance,
 And feel that I may never live
 to trace
 Their shadows, with the magic
 hand of chance;
 And when I feel, fair creature
 of an hour!
 That I shall never look upon
 thee more,
 Never have relish in the faery
 power
 Of unreflecting love; then on
 the shore
 Of the wide world I stand
 alone, and think,
 Till love and fame to
 nothingness do sink.

Underneath, very small, were initials: J K.

Holding the verses close to her, as if they were infinitely precious, Lydia walked to the window. For a moment her tears made the bright sea even brighter, then she could look out steadily and courageously again. He had gone, but in the few hours of their love and friendship Lydia knew she had granted, and been given, in her turn, immortality, and that he had endowed her with more richness than a lifetime of love.

Note by the author, Margaret Stanley-Wrench. The only evidence I have about ‘The Lady from Hastings’ is in a letter from John Keats to his brother George and his sister-in-law dated October, 1818. Here is the relevant quotation:

‘Since I wrote this far I have met with that same Lady again, whom I saw at Hastings and whom I met when we were going

to the English Opera. It was in a street which goes from Bedford to Lamb’s Conduit Street – I passed her and turned back: she seemed glad of it – glad to see me, and not offended at my passing her before. We walked on towards Islington, where we called on a friend of hers who keeps a Boarding School ... I pressed to attend her home. She consented, and then again my thoughts were at work what it might lead to, tho’ now they had received a sort of genteel hint from the Boarding School.

‘Our walk ended in 34 Gloucester Street, Queen Square – not exactly so, for we went upstairs into her sitting room, a very tasty sort of place with books, pictures, a bronze statuette of Buonaparte, Music, Aeolian Harp; a Parrot, a Linnet, a Case of choice Liqueurs, &c., &c. She behaved in the kindest manner – made me take home a Grouse for Tom’s dinner. Asked for my address for the purpose of sending more game.

‘As I had warmed with her

before and kissed her I thought it would be living backwards not to do so again – she had a better taste: she perceived how much a thing of course it was and shrunk from it – not in a prudish way, but in as I say a good taste. She continued to disappoint me in a way which made me feel more pleasure than a simple kiss could do. She said I should please her much more if I would only press her hand and go away. Whether she was in a different disposition when I saw her before – or whether I have in fancy wronged her I cannot tell.’

I based the story on what may have happened at that first meeting in Hastings, and conjectured that this lady may have inspired the sonnet quoted in the story.

On January 19th 1951 John O’London’s Weekly published this story, and the author’s note, by Margaret Stanley-Wrench. She was a poet who wrote about Chaucer and published two ‘pony’ books for children.



Dorothy Coke (1897–1979) ‘Brighton in the 1950s’

SHERRIF: NOW A CLASSIC

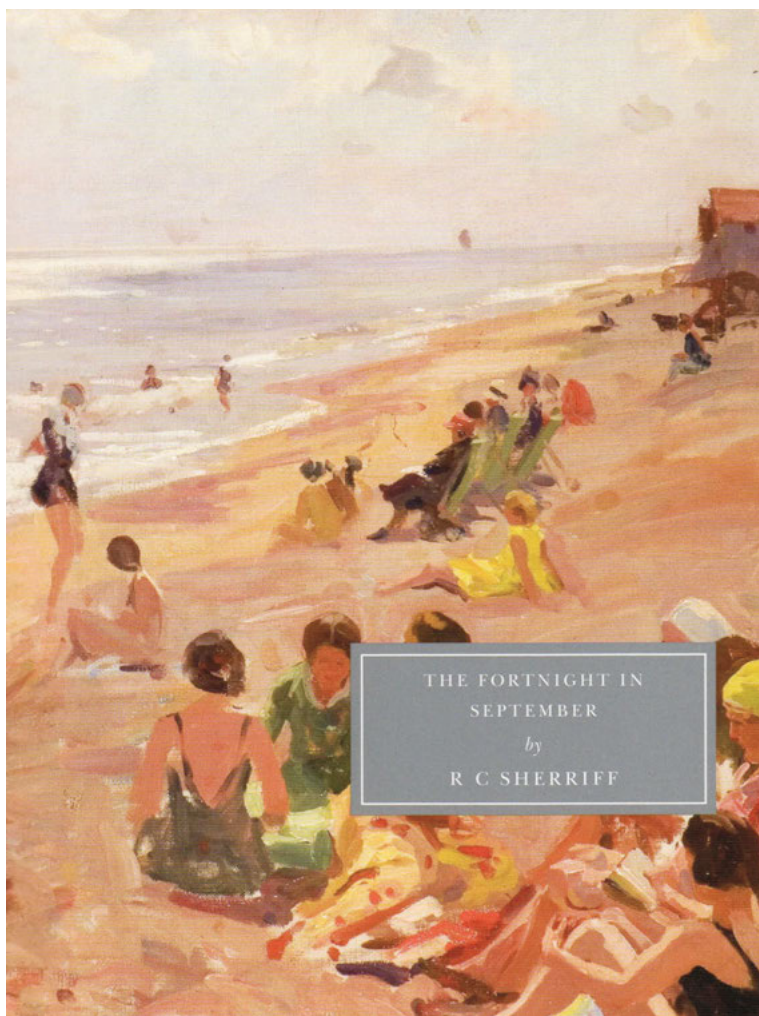
The hugely successful *Journey's End* dates from 1928. Three years later R C Sherriff published his first novel *The Fortnight in September*. The *Spectator* reviewer wrote: 'There is more simple human goodness and understanding in this book than in anything I have read for years. Once more, the author of *Journey's End* has enriched our lives.'

In the winter of 2017/18, when a new film of *Journey's End* is released in the cinema, the focus will also be on Sherriff's novels *The Fortnight in September* (now published as a Persephone Classic), *Greengates* and *The Hopkins Manuscript*. Yet the strap line for Persephone Books is 'for women, by women and about women'. So why are a dozen of our nearly one hundred authors men? It is partly to show that we may reject the patriarchy, but we do not reject men as individuals, far from it. And it is partly because the patron saint of the books we love – books with a domestic slant which are yet unput-downable – is E M Forster: he is one of our very favourite novelists, and certainly we are more Morganites than Jane-ites. So for us Forsterian feminists there is no anomaly in welcoming a dozen men into the pantheon of Persephone Books.

R C Sherriff is one of the most beloved of all the male Persephone authors. (The others,

for reference, are Arthur Hugh Clough, John Coates, Duff Cooper, Adam Fergusson, Theodor Fontane, Ambrose Heath, Denis Mackail, Vicomte de Mauduit, Nicholas Mosley, Jonathan Smith and Leonard Woolf.) And Sherriff shares many characteristics with Morgan Forster. The two men, although only fifteen years apart in age, apparently never met; yet they were almost neighbours since Esher is only five miles away

from Weybridge; both lived with their mothers and were full-time writers; and both deplored the showy. Plot is minimal in their novels (a girl is kissed in a field of violets, a family takes a train to Bognor Regis); as Michael Morpurgo said about *The Fortnight in September*, but he might as well have said it about *A Room with a View*: 'Nothing much happens in this wonderful book except ordinary things which make it extraordinary.'



OUR REVIEWERS WRITE

‘**R**avilious and Co. (2017) by Andy Friend is a definitive effort to recognise the Great Bardfield Artists as the beginning of something akin to what the Bloomsbury Group had at Charleston. Both were noted for their “overlapping life stories”: “Friendship merged or sparked into love, often regardless of marriage ties, with predictable complications.” Yet for all his excellently researched material, I never felt Andy Friend got quite to the heart of the entanglements between his subjects. He diligently reports, but stops short of re-animating. Luckily we have *Long Live Great Bardfield*, Tirzah Garwood’s own excellent autobiography to fall back on, from which, it turns out, much of the best colour of Andy Friend’s work is taken. Garwood’s style, her clear and candid prose, is charming. She remains resolutely cheerful throughout, whether describing the delight she took in her work, or the trials and tribulations of her and her husband’s affairs; and she paints captivating visual portraits. Andy Friend provides us with a good sense of her work yet he seems to consider *Long Live Great Bardfield*, which he references often, more a source for information than an artistic achievement in its own right.’ Lucy Scholes in *Apollo*

‘**E**ffi Briest is one of the greatest adultery novels of all time, up there on the shelf

beside *Madame Bovary* and *Anna Karenina*. All are C19th realist fictions in which women are punished, first with social ostracism, then death, for extramarital sex. But unlike Emma Bovary or Anna Karenina, there is something irrepressibly innocent and life-affirming about Effi. The end is still tragic, but as she brilliantly observes, for those who understand life as a glittering banquet, to be called away a little early does not matter.’ Ruth Scurr in *The Amorist*

‘**U**nsettling and tinged with sadness, Theodor Fontane’s C19th German masterpiece about the charming, vivacious and pretty *Effi Briest* who is married off to her mother’s old flame is one of the most wonderful novels I have ever read. This is a beautiful new edition of an enduring classic. While *Earth and High Heaven* is a sparkling, harrowing and emotionally intense read about the unfathomable mysteries of the human heart, with insight into the challenges faced by Jews in the period.’ Rebecca Wallersteiner in *The Lady*

‘**P**rinces in the Land by Joanna Cannan is a subtle depiction of the claustrophobia and melancholy of thwarted maternal ambition. It addresses the loss of a mother who realises she’s raised children she doesn’t recognise, since “the kingdoms she had won for them had been

rejected.” Published in 1938, this surprising novel addresses the contemporary premise that motherhood is absolutely not the definition of a woman.’ Clover Stroud in *Waitrose Weekend*

‘**T**he *Blank Wall* was like a revelation to me: a rather quiet, unhysterical novel about a respectable suburban woman who, when we first meet her, has no voice of her own, or any real sense of her identity and value. Her husband and her children tell her who she is and what to do, what to think. And then, as events unfold, she falls into this different place inside her where she discovers her courage, her fierceness, her hidden desires. It’s about how ordinary life is scary; about how the self that the world sees and the self that crouches under the surface are so different. A book about not having a voice. A wonderful book. I urge you to read it.’ Nicci Gerrard at the Baileys Prize

‘**L**ike Frances Hodgson Burnett’s children’s classic *The Secret Garden*, *The Shuttle* is a novel about regeneration through caring for the land. Its spirited American heroine, Bettina, suspects something is gravely wrong with her sister’s marriage to an aristocratic fortune hunter, and sets out to save both her sister and a ruined country estate. A gripping adult fairy tale for feminists of both sexes.’ Amanda Craig in *The Week*

EVENTS

On **Tuesday November 21st** at 6 for 6.30 we shall show *American Friends* (1991); set in the Swiss Alps and Oxford in the early 1860s, it is about Michael Palin's great-grandfather, an Oxford don, and his romantic encounter with a young American woman. The film will be introduced by its writer and star Michael Palin and by its director Tristram Powell. A glass of wine and cheese straws will be served.

On **November 25th and 26th from 10-4** we shall be at the **Christmas Fair at Great Dixter** nr. Rye. A selection of our books will be for sale; if one is out of stock it will be sent post free on Monday.

On **Wednesday December 6th** the writer **Claire Tomalin** will give an informal talk called *A Bloomsbury Life*: this will be about her own forays in Bloomsbury (Great Turnstile and Grays Inn Rd) described in her recent *A Life of My Own* and those of some of the subjects of her books (Mary Wollstonecraft in Store Street, Katherine Mansfield in Grays Inn Rd, Dickens in Doughty Street).

On **Thursday December 7th** Lamb's Conduit Street will have its annual **Christmas Fair**. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served free of charge throughout the day and until 8 p.m. in the shop. The books will be at the usual price of £13 or three for £33 but gift wrapping will be free.

Without a Trace, the film of Beth Gutcheon's *Still Missing*, Persephone Book No. 88, will be shown on **Thursday January 18th** at 6 for 6.30. A glass of wine and cheese straws will be served.



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At a **Lunch from 12.30-2.30** on **Wednesday February 7th** Tilda Yolland will be 'in conversation' about her mother Diana Tutton, author of *Guard Your Daughters*. Diana Tutton's granddaughter hopes to be present if work commitments permit.

On **Wednesday February 21st** we shall have a visit to the **Bradford College Textile Archive**

(which kindly allowed us to use the Malachi Whitaker fabric). We shall meet for lunch at 12.30 p.m. and then visit the collection at 2.

We shall have a **Behind the Scenes Tour of the British Library Conservation Unit** on **Tuesday March 6th** at 2 p.m. and will then come back to the shop for a **Cream Tea** afterwards.

On **Wednesday March 14th** at 4.30 we shall show the documentary *Sins of Our Mothers* which is about the truth behind the story of *Emmeline*. The director, David Hoffman, hopes to be present to introduce the film. Tea will be served at 4.

On **Wednesday March 21st** there will be a visit to the house in **Lichfield** where Diana Tutton was brought up. We shall meet at **Pipe Hill House** at 1 p.m. for a simple lunch, then have a walk round the town and go to the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum before tea at Hindleys.

On **Tuesday April 3rd** at 4.30 we shall show the 2005 film *Memories of Dreams* about **Hilda Bernstein** (author of *The World that Was Ours*, PB No. 50) made by her daughter Toni Strasburg. A cream tea will be served at 4.

All lunches cost £25, all other events £15. Please ring the office to book a ticket. The LCS Christmas Fair is free of charge.

Printed by the Lavenham Press, Lavenham, Suffolk CO10 9RN.

If we have failed to acknowledge something that appears in the Persephone Biannually, please let us know.

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