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A Time to Harvest: the Farm Paintings of Franklin Halverson

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result, the unfolding history become the story of the secret, that matters and gives motive to the ever widening ripples of guilt.

Families always lend themselves to fiction. The sins of the parents weigh down on the offspring as each, in turn, attempts to make their own way, never able to escape the biological and social conditioning of father and mother. If, as is the case here, murder and suicide, rape and incest are part of this conditioning—as cause and result, character and plot—then the patterns and rhythms of one child's life reflecting the larger lives of the parents and the species loom large.

Manfred's interpolated stories, within the larger novel, prove him, again, one of the masters of the form. Just whose story is this after all? Parents? Children? How can so many diverse story lines weave into a whole? Manfred knows that behind each life are a million tiny stories, and behind the aggregate of each family's stories are the stories of the species, ontogeny perhaps recapitulating phylogeny after all. Anyone interested in such reciprocal relationships—real and imagined—and especially in Iowa's own reciprocal relationship of land and people will find this latest book of Frederick Manfred's essential reading. Here again fiction intrudes on history and gives it truths beyond its knowing.

A Time to Harvest: The Farm Paintings of Franklin Halverson, with stories by Bob Barnard. Mount Horeb, WI: Midwest Traditions, 1993. 112 pp. Illustrations, appendix. \$24.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY RICHARD BROADIE, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

This attractive volume combines the paintings of Franklin Halverson (1892–1898), a former farmer and commercial artist from Sioux Rapids, Iowa, with short accounts of farm life by Bob Barnard, a retired farmer and current resident of Spirit Lake, Iowa. Many of Barnard's stories are constructed to fit the images in Halverson's paintings; at other times, he draws from the experiences of his own youth and the recollections of older farmers to describe life as it really was on a north-west Iowa farm in the early twentieth century.

The quality of art, like beauty, is to a large extent in the eyes of the beholder. Certainly there are far better qualified critics of Halverson's work, but I am confident that most will find the paintings reproduced in this book to be pleasant and aesthetically pleasing. Halverson's art is romantic and nostalgic—it depicts what many of us want to remember about farming before the advent of the tractor—but few will mind the lack of harsh realism that has always been as much a part of rural life as the idealized images in these paintings.

Bob Barnard's stories tell much about life on an Iowa farm when he grew up in the 1920s and 1930s and in Halverson's youth a generation before. He describes how farm families lived, how they entertained themselves, and how the work was done in an era that few now remember. His final essay, in which he discusses the harsh winter of 1936, was particularly accurate and enjoyable to read. I have heard similar stories from my own parents and grandparents who lived but a few miles from Halverson and Barnard.

This book is well worth having. The art will make a fine addition to your coffee table for all to enjoy, and the essays will not be out of place in your library with more formal histories.

The Attic: A Memoir, by Curtis Harnack. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993. vii, 190 pp. Illustrations, tables. \$14.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY H. ROGER GRANT, UNIVERSITY OF AKRON

Difficult as it is to imagine, Curtis Harnack's second memoir is even more engrossing than his earlier one, *We Have All Gone Away*, published by Iowa State University Press in 1973. Unlike that work, which is a traditional autobiography, *The Attic* contains more than passages about the life of this prominent educator and writer. Harnack uses the occasion of cleaning out the massive attic of the family's farmhouse near Remsen, in Plymouth County, Iowa, following the death of an elderly uncle to discuss his own formative years, including a stint in the Navy at the end of World War II, and especially the lives of various family members.

Perhaps the most satisfying section relates to his Aunt Bertha. This portion is based in part on her diaries, which Harnack discovered in that remarkable attic of memories and memorabilia. Using his Aunt Bertha's writings, Harnack describes the life of a woman who remained unmarried, and explains how "old maids" on the Middle Border handled their status. Aunt Bertha struggled to find herself in society, a process that involved time with another single sister in a South Dakota village and at a business college in Sioux City. This is social history at its best. After all, stories of "common" people are not always available, even though scholars in recent years have attempted to examine the past from the "bottom up."

There is no question that *The Attic* is a "good read." Harnack has much to say about his Iowa roots and the social milieu of the first part of the twentieth century. And he does so in a pleasant, logical fashion. This nicely produced book is enhanced by numerous photographs, surely products of that attic cleaning.

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