

point both well taken and well made. Foote's discussion of Lewis's understudied *The Boss* demonstrates her great skills as a reader, as she lays out the multiple themes and contexts of this Tammany Hall novel. The move into questions of the public sphere and its implications for regionalist representation here are provocative and fresh.

Readers interested in the literary and cultural history of Iowa (or the Midwest) will find little new here, and the reading of Hamlin Garland is far from satisfying on its own terms. But those interested in literary regionalism will find a wide-ranging exploration of most of the current issues in the field. What it lacks in terms of an original through-argument it more than makes up for in its suggestive forays off the main-traveled roads of regionalist criticism.

*Dictionary of Midwestern Literature*, Volume 1, *The Authors*, general editor Philip A. Greasley. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001. 666 pp. Illustrations, appendix, index. \$59.95 cloth.

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My biased view is that the Midwest, the neglected middle child of American regions, needs all the attention it can get. So I'm inclined to cheer the appearance of even something as ordinary as a dictionary—in this case, a *Dictionary of Midwestern Literature*, the first volume of Indiana University Press's planned three-volume project treating midwestern literary matters. Admittedly, a regional reference book can seem of minor importance at a time when global perspectives rule the day. Beyond this, in the world of literary scholarship, regional concerns—especially midwestern literary concerns—have long been at the far margin of interest. The tide may be turning (a vast *Encyclopedia of the Midwest*, produced at Ohio State University, is scheduled for publication in 2004), yet even if it isn't, the *Dictionary* is, among other things, a reminder of the scope and depth of writing by midwesterners.

Put together by the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature, an academic group based at Michigan State University, the *Dictionary* has entries on some 400 midwestern authors, past and present, the well known and the largely unknown, ranging from the popular newspaper columnist Franklin P. Adams to the contemporary poet Amy Jo Zook (writing as Amy Jo Schoonover). The entries provide basic biographical information, a discussion of significance—meaning significance for the literature or culture of the Midwest—a short listing of selected works, and suggestions for further reading. Philip A.

Greasley, the general editor, says in his introduction that the *Dictionary* is intended for literary scholars, librarians, high school and college students, and the general public. It is unlikely that literary scholars will have more than passing interest, but as a general reference work the volume fills a useful niche on the uncrowded shelf of guides to midwestern writing.

As the inclusion of Franklin P. Adams (and such fellow journalists as Mike Royko and Eric Sevareid) suggests, the *Dictionary* takes a broad view of "literature." Along with expected sketches of novelists, poets, and playwrights, there are entries for historians (Bruce Catton, Frederick Jackson Turner), politicians (William Jennings Bryan, Abraham Lincoln), architects (Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright), editors (William Marion Reedy), musicians (Meredith Willson), schoolbook compilers (William Holmes McGuffey), ethnologists (Henry Schoolcraft), and environmentalists (Aldo Leopold). What constitutes a "midwestern" writer is equally broad. Adams was born and educated in the region, but his reputation was made writing for New York newspapers. Likewise, Ray Bradbury, Tillie Olsen, and Theodore Roethke all have midwestern connections but are more commonly identified with the West Coast, just as Archibald MacLeish, Mark Van Doren, and Donald Hall are with the East Coast.

Inevitably, worthy names may have been omitted and unworthy ones included. Wallace Stegner comes to mind on the worthy side. Ordinarily considered a western writer, he seems to fall within the *Dictionary's* wide net: he was born in Iowa, received M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Iowa, taught for a time at the University of Wisconsin, and one of his novels, *Crossing to Safety* (which Stegner said was in some ways his most personal work), draws on deep friendships begun in Madison. But the game of who should or shouldn't be in a work such as this only adds to its appeal. Philip Greasley says the *Dictionary* is intended to serve as the "beginning of an extended conversation regarding the nature of Midwestern life and literature, not the end" (8). If it does even something of the sort, it more than serves its purpose.

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