

exploitive landlords, as well as the social and political movements that fought against them as Garland grew older and became politically involved with advocacy for the single tax. In the midst of all this, we see how frontier stresses were not conducive to a comfortable or happy family life.

Garland's interests were more artistic than political, though. In addition to his literary depictions of "boy life on the prairie" and the antagonistic forces at work against rural midwesterners in stories of literary naturalism, Garland was himself a literary theorist advocating what he called "veritism." The truthfulness of art (literary and otherwise) was to come not from European or East Coast models, but from the realities and authenticity of the local land and the life of its people. Scholars of Iowa will thus be also interested in Garland's yeoman attempts at sparking a specifically midwestern literature. The Midwest (and particularly Chicago) never quite became the new literary center that Garland had envisioned. Garland himself was drawn to the cultural vibrancy of the East Coast and ended up spending much of his time and literary capital there. At the same time, he never gave up his presence in Chicago until much later in life when he moved to California to be with his daughter and her family. We thus see the burgeoning literary culture as it developed in the middle lands into the twentieth century.

Although Newlin keeps Garland's story at the forefront, the entirety of the monumental detail in the biography's 400-plus pages likely will attract only the most ardent of literary historians. Garland's own peripatetic life (which included European jaunts, Klondike adventures, and a dedicated love for the American Southwest), let alone his voluminous output of writings on disparate subjects and in a variety of genres, can obscure the image of Garland as a "midwestern writer." A close reading of the early chapters and a judicious selection of the remainder of the book, however, will reward the Iowa scholar with a strong portrayal of midwestern history, literary regionalism, and artistic influence from the "middle border" from 1860 to between the world wars.

The Plowman Sings: The Essential Fiction, Poetry, and Drama of America's Forgotten Regionalist Jay G. Sigmund, edited by Zachary Michael Jack. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008. ix, 119 pp. Index. \$22.00 paper.

Reviewer Mike Chasar is assistant professor of English at Willamette University. His research and writing have focused on American literature, 1880–1945.

Like all work popular in ages past but now out of fashion, Jay Sigmund's writing leaves us wondering what readers ever saw in it. His stories are short vignettes or heavy-handed morality tales about the ambivalences of modernity in small-town Iowa. His poems in free verse and rhyme are far too expository for most current tastes. The one-act play included here is most charitably described as Thornton Wilder lite.

It's no surprise, then, that Sigmund's editor doesn't really try to recuperate the Cedar Rapids native via the rubric of lasting literary accomplishment so much as the historical role Sigmund played in putting Iowa on the national literary map. An insurance man by occupation, Sigmund also entertained Sherwood Anderson and Carl Sandburg. He hobnobbed with modernist writers in Chicago and published regularly in the *Chicago Tribune*. He was so well received by East Coast tastemakers, in fact, that six years *before* the founding of the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, *Des Moines Register* headlines could cite him in trumpeting "Iowa City Now U.S. Literary Center."

The publication of *The Plowman Sings* during the same year that UNESCO designated Iowa City a "World City of Literature" should provide those interested in the making of literary history with ample food for thought. One might legitimately wonder whether the Writers' Workshop could have gained the traction it did without Sigmund's trail blazing. (Sigmund was also an early mentor to fellow Cedar Rapids native and future Writers' Workshop director Paul Engle.) What does it mean that Iowa City's literariness was purchased via writing that no one would choose to represent it today? Does Iowa City have a responsibility to acknowledge these roots, and how should that be done? And, if there's one Sigmund in Iowa's literary past, are there more? Where did they go, and what can they help us learn today?

Frontier Medicine: From the Atlantic to the Pacific, 1492–1941, by David Dary. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008. viii, 381 pp. Illustrations, glossary, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00 cloth.

Reviewer Martha K. Robinson is assistant professor of history at Clarion University of Pennsylvania. Her research and writing have focused on health and medicine in early America.

In *Frontier Medicine: From the Atlantic to the Pacific, 1492–1941*, David Dary surveys a broad range of North American medical history, with particular attention paid to medicine in the nineteenth-century West. The book begins with a brief treatment of Native American medicine and medicine in colonial America and ends with a short discussion of