11-15-2001

Years Later, Sophia Starling Bennett Remembers Her Travels with John Sprockett

Robert Cooperman

Follow this and additional works at: https://dc.swosu.edu/westview

Part of the Fiction Commons, Nonfiction Commons, Photography Commons, and the Poetry Commons

Recommended Citation

Cooperman, Robert (2001) "Years Later, Sophia Starling Bennett Remembers Her Travels with John Sprockett," Westview: Vol. 21 : Iss. 1 , Article 33.
Available at: https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol21/iss1/33

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Westview by an authorized administrator of SWOSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.
Years Later, Sophia Starling Bennett Remembers Her Travels with John Sprockett

by Robert Cooperman

It wasn't landscape I went after, but adventures big as my dreams of escaping the kitchen gardens of England. My two sons and daughter would be horrified that I longed to shrug off duty, the prospect of family, for the specious joy of traveling with a half-corsair, half-poet. I told the story of our sojourn to my granddaughter, a new woman learning the typewriter, each key clattering, "Freedom!"

All I can now recall of Mr. Sprockett's face are those terrible scars, lightning-blasts seared into his cheek by the bear he slew, or so the saga grew before I met him. I dared not stare at their grim artistry; had I a daguerrotype of the man I would have destroyed it when I wed Edward, out of respect for the institution and for his calling as healer to the poor. Besides, the time for journeys was over; England had won, and duty, and usefulness.

When I learned that John had been murdered, I sat for days in darkness; Edward, for once, unable to ease the pain of another. Memories shimmered, of kissing dreadful, raised skin: for an instant, the beauty of Michaelangelo, the saintliness of a man--lethal as a mountain--who would have gladly died to see me smile.
I never regretted marrying Edward
and giving our lives to the care of the poor,
not even when my heart was ripped by John's death.
Yet, some nights, I can still hear him
reciting Keats, the Bard, his own rough rhymes,
his voice intoxicating as rare champagne,
his hands gentle as if with an unnested owlet.
Early on, I forgave Edward for reserving
that touch for his most pitiful destitutes,
just as he never asked about John Sprockett
and our nights of holy flames amid the snow.

This concludes the series of The Badman and the Lady.
Westview thanks Robert Cooperman for his participation in this series.
The poems that comprise The Badman and the Lady are part of In the Colorado Gold Fever Mountains.
Purchase information may be obtained from Western Reflections Inc., P.O. Box 410, Ouray, CO 81427.