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## Reviews

Glen GoodKnight

Paula DiSante

Nancy-Lou Patterson

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## Reviews

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*The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers, 1899-1936: The Making of a Detective Novelist*. Barbara Reynolds. Reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson.

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## REVIEWS

## SUPERB MILESTONE

Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull, J.R.R. Tolkien: *Artist & Illustrator*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston and New York, 1995. ISBN 0-395-74815-x.

It is a challenge to objectively review a book when you already not only know but respect and admire both the authors for many reasons. Nevertheless this book is so solid, so radiant of work carefully done, and such a major contribution to both Tolkien studies and one's personal delight, that I doubt I could praise it less if written by authors unknown to me.

This is a large art size book (9 x 11.5") as it needs to be to feature the many amazing illustrations, both in color and in black and white, that are presented profusely throughout. Two previously unpublished pieces from the book are shown here as part of the review.

In the Foreword the authors say:

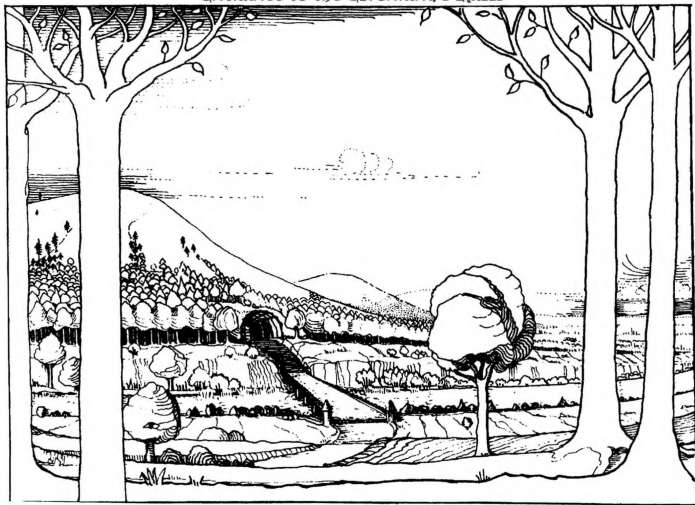
We have long felt that Tolkien's art deserves to be as well known as his writings. The two were closely linked, and in his paintings and drawings he displayed remarkable powers of invention that equaled his skill with words. ... Our purpose in this book is to show, as widely as possible, the unsuspected range of Tolkien's art, and to relate it both to his life and to the writings for which he is most renowned.

This they have accomplished in a very satisfying manner. The books is divided in seven sections plus Bibliography and Index: Early Works; Visions, Myths and Legends; Art for Children; *The Hobbit*; *The Lord of the Rings*; Patterns and Devices; and Appendix on Calligraphy.

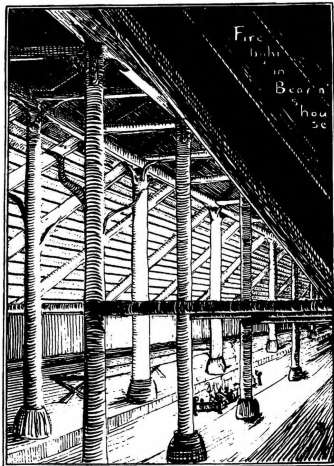
The section on "Early Works" shows that Tolkien was indeed a sensitive artist with nature scenes and realistic drawing of places.

The next section, "Visions, Myths and Legends" begins with rapid sketches of what might be called mental visualizations. The drawings of "Before" and "Afterwards";

## ENTRANCE TO THE ELVENKING'S HALLS



# Fire Light in Beorn's House



"Wickedness" and "Thought" are examples. The section goes on with stylized scenes with unusual colors, and then with various early drawings of Beleriand/Middle-earth, including my personal favorite of all of Tolkien's drawings, "Taniquetil" (The Halls of Manwe).

The section on "Art for Children" not only includes art found *The Father Christmas Letters* and *Mr. Bliss*, but also four other drawing from the unpublished story "Roverandom."

The section on "The Hobbit" contains many preliminary maps, sketches leading up to the final previously published illustrations. This chapter is quite visually rich, and contain some very pleasant surprises.

This is followed by "The Lord of Rings" which is much like the previous chapter, gives us visual details that future Tolkien artists would do well to consult. We are given sketches of the Falls of Rauros, Farmer Cotton's house, and Tolkien's own designs for the covers of *The Fellowship of the Rings*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King*, among many others.

The final chapter is on "Patterns and Devices," showing Tolkien was a doodler *par excellence*. The superbly executed heraldic devices were sometimes drawn on envelopes.

Lastly we are treated to a Short "Appendix on Callig-

raphy," which was another *forte* of Tolkien. The untitled floral alphabet is a delight.

Throughout the book we are given a solid text written by two competent authorities that enlighten the visual feast. It succeeds in effectively demonstrating that Tolkien was both highly talented and multifaceted in his art as well as his writing. This indispensable reference work won the 1996 Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Inklings Studies. Bravo! Highly recommended!

— Glen GoodKnight

## Over Rivers, Through Woods, Up Mountains

The 1996 J. R. R. Tolkien Calendar, HarperPrism, a Division of HarperPaperbacks, New York, NY, ISBN: 0-06-105504-2

As with last year's calendar, the 1996 J. R. R. Tolkien Calendar is presented in the large, spiral-bound British format, and does not list real-world or Middle-earth dates of significance. This matters little, since this calendar has traditionally been about one thing: the paintings.

And a lovely set of paintings we have this year. Ted Nasmith takes us not only from *The Hobbit* to *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*, but also gives a glimpse of *Smith of Wootton Major*. The result is a fine addition to the corpus of calendars that have been offered over the years to Middle-earth travelers.

January's "The Attack of the Wraiths" employs a narrow vertical composition that contributes to the claustrophobic terror of the scene. The Lord of the Nazgûl manages to appear both human and bat-shaped as he menaces the fleeing Frodo with knife and sword.

Nasmith captures the idea of "deadly gleam" not only in the cold light upon the weapons of the Nazgûl, but also in the unearthly red of their eyes. Those eyes, along with the orange glow from the blade of Sting, are tiny bits of eye-catching contrast in a painting dominated by purples, blues and greys. By sticking closely to this night palette, the artist supplies a real feel for the terror of Frodo's close call at Weathertop.

February: "The Willow-Man is Tamed." This is another vertical composition — also used to good effect. If the viewer does not know just how dangerous Old Man Willow can be, this painting would probably look rather bucolic, what with its meandering river and the air alight with floating willow leaves.

Merry's legs sticking out of a crack in the tree indicate, of course, that this particular arboreal life form is anything but benign. Nasmith sets the scale of Tree vs. Hobbit very well, and we also get a genuine feel for Old Man Willows antiquity. Sam pounds fruitlessly on the tree trunk. Frodo, his head still swimming with confusion after his own

near-fatal encounter with the Willow-Man, stands helplessly nearby.

But Tom Bombadil's confident stance leaves little doubt that he's in charge as he hefts a branch, ready to issue a word of command and whack the malevolent tree. Nasmith throws much of the tree into ominous shadow, but fills his foreground with light to bring the viewer's eye down to the characters inhabiting the lower portion of the painting.

March: "Gandalf and Shadowfax." The calendar's only "portrait," this painting shares a Baroque/Pre-Raphaelite look. It does not depict a particular scene with the two characters, but rather suggests a little something about their relationship.

Shadowfax, although rearing up, seems to do so with complete control — and Gandalf doesn't look the least bit surprised by it. It's as if the pair has stopped for a brief moment to allow the viewer to get a good look before they once more go racing away on some important errand.

In this piece, Nasmith uses a much freer brush stroke than he usually displays. Shadowfax's mane and tail ripple up in ways similar to Gandalf's shimmering beard — no doubt a conscious visual link between the two figures. Again, a highly restricted palette of purples and greys, offset only by the distinctive blue of Gandalf's robe and hat, give the piece a "portrait painting" feel.

April: "Scouring the Mountain." Smaug sets the Lonely Mountain's steep sides ablaze with a prodigious blast of dragon's breath in this vertically composed piece. The combination of smoke and outstretched wings nearly obliterates the sky, leaving only a few stars to twinkle far above the reek.

The extent of the destruction is suggested by the background fire that crackles upon the mountainside behind Smaug. The dragon himself, eyes red with rage, pours his flame into pathways only just recently trod by Bilbo and the Dwarves. Nasmith plays down the "coat of jewels" on Smaug's belly, so that the viewer's eye is drawn not to that particular glimmer, but to the white-hot blast issuing from the dragon's mouth. It's an effective choice that helps focus the viewer on Smaug's power and mastery.

May: "The Fifth Day After Weathertop." This painting of Strider and the hobbits trudging through a dense, forested area would, at first glance, seem like quite a straightforward representation of the scene. The thing that sets it apart from the "conventional" is the artist's depiction of Frodo astride the pony.

Frodo doesn't appear to be in the same plane of existence as the other four characters. In fact, he is not. He's very much a shadow figure, shrouded in mist. After five days of having the knife tip from the Nazgûl blade slowly working its way towards his heart (as Elrond confirms later at Rivendell), Frodo is already half in the world of the Ringwraiths.

He now looks very much like one of them, wrapped as he is in his dark cloak with only a pale, ghostly hint of face, hand and foot to distinguish him as a still-living creature. This is a very effective painting, thanks to this visual marriage of the natural world to the unnatural world of the wraiths.

June: "Tuor Reaches the Hidden City of Gondolin." "Tuor, you've just reached the fabled hidden city of Gondolin! What are you going to do next?" No — he's not going to Disneyland. The Magic Kingdom can't compare to this stunning view of the Hidden Kingdom. This is truly a landscape plucked right out of Tolkien's vivid descriptions and made to come to life.

Gondolin gleams like a pearl, accented with many golden domes. The sunlight spilling over the mountain tops gives a marvelous sense of depth and space. This is also enhanced by Tuor's high vantage point over the wide, tilled fields, pools and fountains that radiate out from the central hub of the city. Rich green countryside, indomitable rock walls, the rush and fall of crystal water, a majestic flight of eagles — this is the Middle-earth of J. R. R. Tolkien. A remarkable achievement.

July: "The Password into Moria," Gandalf sits in annoyed puzzlement, his head in his hand, the smooth wall behind him already glowing with the outline of the hidden entrance to Moria. Now if he can just come up with the right words, the door will actually open. Two of the hobbits wait patiently nearby for him to unlock the secret. But the wizard has yet to remember the solution to the riddle of "Speak, friend, and enter."

Nasmith makes the rock surface glow with the elaborate, moonlit outline of the door. This is reflected as a wavering image in the eerie pool at the bottom of the composition. The appearance of the Watcher in the Water is prefigured by the snake-like, moss-covered tree root arching out of the dark pool. The surface is also dotted with bubbles which add to the disquieting look of the water.

August: "Through the Marshes," Sam trudges behind the spider-like Gollum, who beckons the hobbits onward. Frodo, drained of energy, drags behind Sam, trying vainly to keep pace with him. A pale, watery sun hangs in a heavily misted sky, offering little comfort and no warmth.

Nasmith chooses not to show the mysterious lights, or the dead faces of the Elves, Men and Orcs in the water, shows instead the rotting bones of the long-dead warriors. This is an unusual depiction of the Dead in this scene, but it is still effective. The presence of a snake slithering amid the bones is a creepy touch. The misty sky, which fills two-thirds of the painting, enhances the brooding oppression and endlessness of the marshes.

September: "Smith and the Queen of Faery," Nasmith looks to *Smith of Wootton Major* for September's painting for Smith's encounter with the tall, stately Queen — whom he has previously met in another persona earlier in the

story. This is a faithful depiction of the scene as Tolkien described it. Of particular interest is the juxtaposition of "...a night-sky of innumerable stars" and the golden stars found in the scarlet lining of the Queen's cloak.

The artist plays with many effects and techniques in this piece: the gossamer sleeves of the Queen's robe, the light of white flame upon her head, the gleam of starlight in the water at her feet, the glow of the star on Smith's brow. Nasmith also warms the scene with generous accents of red — not the easiest color to satisfactorily reconcile under starlight! Here, it works, and lends an inviting richness to the painting.

October: "The Mûmak of Harad." The rampaging Mûmak is given the huge scale needed to convey his terror and menace. Sam, perched among the tree branches, gets an eyeful of Oliphaunt as the creature crashes through the brush. At the base of the tree, nearly hidden in their camouflaging clothes, a couple of Rangers of Ithilien, along with Frodo, shrink into the protection of the tree's shadows.

Nasmith also includes the dead soldier from Harad — the one Sam sees and wonders about before the battle sweeps too close. Clinging to the back of the Mûmak is the warrior who looks insignificant in contrast to the great beast. The air hums with arrows, and the Mûmak kicks up a thick, obscuring dust as he passes. One can just about feel the ground rumbling underfoot as the creature charges.

November: "Across Gorgoroth." This painting is as impressive for its dread and horror as "Tuor Reaches the Hidden City of Gondolin" is for its beauty. The plain of Gorgoroth is a pitted, cracked expanse gasping out noxious fumes. The vapors range from a toxic purple-grey to a choking, sulfurous yellow. Over all this lies a pall of impenetrable volcanic ash, which spews forth in towering billows from the cone of Mount Doom. Deadly lightning crackles between the ash and the mountainside.

In the foreground, looking small and beaten down, Sam helps a stricken Frodo, who has fallen to his knees. In the lower left-hand corner, nearly hidden in the swirling vapors, sits Gollum — who all but blends into the blasted landscape like one more wedge of flinty rock. This painting is another triumph of visualization for Nasmith. It is difficult to imagine a more effective rendition of this scene.

December: "Departure at the Grey Havens." Subdued, dusty-rose shadows highlighted by the orange glow of a westerling sun provide the mood for this emotional farewell at the Havens. The beautiful white ship, with its simple but elegant lines and detail, certainly looks as if it is of Elven craftsmanship. The artist shows the preparations of making the ship ready to depart (Elves loading cargo, releasing lines, going over check lists) as part of the background.

This ordinariness in the background action brings into sharp focus Frodo's heartfelt good-bye to Sam in the fore-

ground of the picture. Nasmith places the figures in the lower third of the painting and chooses a low angle of focus. But even so, the sky does not predominate in the other two-thirds of the picture. Instead, the looming curves of the ship's stern and bow, plus the tall masts and large, furled sails keep the ship as the set piece of the painting — the overriding reality for all those gathered there at the quay.

Nasmith has once again come through with more beautiful and stirring work, proving himself to be the most sensitive, in-tune of all the artists who have illustrated the Tolkien calendars in the last decade. *The 1996 J. R. R. Tolkien Calendar* is a true achievement of art and illustration, and should hang on the wall of every loyal Tolkien admirer.

— Paula DiSante

## SILVER AND GOLD

**Brian Horne, Editor, *Charles Williams: A Celebration*** (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 1995), 283 pp. ISBN: 0-85244-331-5.

Charles Williams, as Brian Horne tells us, always thought of himself as a poet; the word "Poet" is carved on his tombstone. Eighteen people — teachers, writers, poets, critics, broadcasters, publishers, scholars, theologians, musicians, and lecturers — have contributed essays to this elegant *Festschrift* prepared to mark the 50th anniversary of his death. All the essays are interesting; some are distinguished. A few present strikingly new material, and one or two contain elements I found (to quote Brian Horne) "unattractive." Eric Hascall begins with an elegant memoir, "Charles Williams as I Knew Him," which emphasizes "how very organically in Williams' view of reality the intellectual and the aesthetic were mutually integrated." (p. viii) I think this is truer of Williams than of any other Inkling (not that CW was not *sui generis*: he was). Unlike Lewis and Tolkien, who were trained scholars, and whose scholarship and fiction, while clearly, recognizably, and distinctly Lewisian and Tolkienian, are also easily identifiable as being scholarship on the one hand and fiction on the other, Williams, who believed in the "ostentation [that is, the self-consciousness] of poetry," always wrote like Williams the poet, which is perhaps why not everybody has acquired a taste for him.

Charles Hadfield provides a second, and very charming, memoir, "C.W. at Amen House," which gives a detailed portrait of Williams' working life at Oxford Press, when it was located in London before its removal to Oxford was forced by the Blitz. Charles Hadfield's wife wrote two biographies of Williams, and it is illuminating to hear from him (Hadfield) in his own right. Williams, as it were, laid a spell upon people at the Press, giving everybody new names and fitting them into his personal drama; clearly both Hadfields rejoiced in their roles.

Eric Routley has contributed a jaunty and delicately

competitive essay, "Charles Williams: A Comment from the Puritan Tradition," and if you thought Puritans — Routley says he is himself a "direct heir" (p. 21) of that tradition— never show off, read this and see a self-proclaimed heir strutting his stuff. Somewhere about a third of the way through, he gets to Williams, of whose works he very particularly approves *The Descent of the Dove* and *He Came Down from Heaven*, and one can't disagree with him on that. Ralph Townsend writes on "Doctrine and Mystery in the Prose of Charles Williams and Lancelot Andrewes," in whom he "finds 'a correspondence in thought and expression,'" (p. 37) a thesis he ably and rightly defends, in the first of several essays in this volume that attempt to relate the essentially unique Williams to other thinker/writers. Here, *He Came Down From Heaven* is presented as Williams' "most coherent working-out of the implications of the doctrine of the Incarnation," (p. 39) correctly, I think.

John Heath Stubbs presents a very successful essay on "The Figure of Cressida," which from now on ought to be read by anybody attempting to address Williams' ideas on this subject, clearly for Stubbs really sets out clearly the history of that figure, thus enabling us to compare the Cressida of everybody else with that of Williams. He explains that for Williams, "the images and characters [of poetry] had an existence independent of the individual poet's imagination." (p. 50) Williams was (I think) not always able to extend this courtesy to the living people upon whom he fastened certain archetypes, not least in the case of the hapless young librarian of Amen House whom he saw under the figure of Cressida because she rejected his advances, made to her in what is obvious now as a case of sexuality where it ought not to be, that is, forced by a mature married man, a senior editor, upon his subordinate, a young unmarried woman. She had the courage to reject him and marry somebody else, and he, God help him, found it hard to forgive her.

A very strong essay is Charles A. Huttar's "Arms and the Man; The Place of Beatrice in Charles Williams' Romantic Theology," which well addresses not only Williams' concept of "a double vision of the beloved, seeing through his or her ordinary humanness to the glory of a restored *Imago Dei* in that person." (p. 65) Along with Dorothy L. Sayers and others of my betters, I agree that this phrase describes a real experience, and I think, along with Huttar, that Williams eventually learned that not every such vision is presented to us in order that we may act upon it. Huttar makes a convincing case that Williams and his wife Michal (as usual with him, he gave her this name, and as usual with his readers, we accept it) recovered their relationship after what Huttar daintily calls "a Celian interlude," (p. 89) Celia being the name Williams gave to the above mentioned librarian.

Now we come to two very interesting essays which take, very unselfconsciously, what seem to me to be utterly opposing points of view on a very vexed element in Wil-

liams' work. First is Elisabeth Brewer's excellent study of "Women in the Arthurian Poems of Charles Williams." We read here about Guinevere, Dindrane, Blanchefleur, Elaine, and Morgause, in a series of illuminating examinations of these figures in Arthurian literature and in Williams' poetry. I would recommend the essay on this aspect alone, but there is more. Brewer accurately says that "One of the most striking features of the cycle is the introduction of the slaves, all of them female." (p. 109) This is an important subject and Brewer does her best to prove that the free women and slave women are presented "with remarkable fairness," (n. 114) but also "as symbols rather than as individuals, and for their spiritual potential rather than as sexual objects ... symbols, without condescension," (p. 114) Frankly, I cannot entirely agree with her, but the case is well argued and is addressed directly, here, for what may be the first time, with all the "whipping and stripping" included. The slaves, she says, signify "humble servants and learners" (p. 115) Thanks, but no thanks.

The second essay is Brenda Boughton's "The Role of Slaves in Charles Williams' Poetry." She begins well, by reminding us both of the realities and the romantic images of slavery, emphasizing the role of slaves as "outsiders." (p. 116) Having reviewed the matter (fairly), she asks: "What were the poetic purposes that required the introduction of slaves [in Williams' Arthurian]?" (p. 119) She chooses six poems and discusses them in detail. Her most telling comment, for me, is her agreement that, judging from Lois Lang-Sims' report on her experience of "becoming 'Lalage'" (p. 129) for Williams, "Their relationship was not based on an equality; and 'Lalage' was more a figment of his own mind than she was a Lois in the fullness of her being," as Glen Cavaliero has said (quoted here, on p. 129) She concludes that Williams' presentation of the slaves in his poetry as all, eventually, reaching positive outcomes, "looks a bit like skewing the picture if one considers at all the evidence of the realities." (P. 130) This essay alone would make this *Festschrift* essential for all students of Williams.

A very strong essay follows: Kerry Lynn Henderson's "It is Love that I am Seeking," Charles Williams and *The Silver Stair*." This is a detailed and illuminating reading of this obscure book, which, as one who spent a very hot summer trying to produce a long essay on Williams' poetry, I can tell you I wish I had been able to read beforehand. She tells us clearly that "silver is associated with renunciation, the Way of Rejection of Images." (p. 151)

Richard Sturch's strong and balanced essay, "Common Themes Among Inklings," refers to "Charles Williams, C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien (with perhaps a few shy allusions to George MacDonald)," (p. 153) and deals with the importance of wise choice as a theme for all four authors. And George Sayer, in "Charles Williams and C.S. Lewis as Literary Critics," contributes a delicious essay warmly presenting both critics in their best light, in case one had forgotten where their great gifts as scholars actu-

ally lay, and how good, as critics, they actually were. A pleasure to read, and I say that not only about Lewis and Williams, but also about George Sayer.

A useful article by Glen Cavaliero, "Charles Williams and Twentieth Century Verse Drama," documents the author's works, concluding that "The failure of Williams' Arthurian poems to attract a large following is bound up with the failure of verse drama to find an audience." (p. 204) He rightly emphasizes the powerful originality of Williams' most remarkable dramatic characters, the Skeleton ("Christ's Back") and similar figures unique to Williams. But I think we can no longer write so blissfully, as Cavaliero does, of "The dramatic stroke whereby Mother Myrrh the Negress who symbolizes Hell acts as midwife at the Incarnation," without revulsion (despite the implicit allusion to the magus Balthazar) at the racism openly expressed in this phrase. (I know, I know, we can all imagine the gleeful performance of this role by, say, Whoopi Goldberg. But that would be to create a witty, and I believe, something else.)

While we are on this subject, we come to "Objections to Charles Williams" by Stephen Medcalf, which includes the doubts of Kenneth Allott about the quality of Williams' poetry, and Leavis' objection to his "preoccupation with the horror of evil" as "an arrest at the schoolboy . . . level," (p. 208) Medcalf, showing off a little himself, I think, adds to this list the names of "Dorothy Sayers and, alas C.S. Lewis," (p. 209) who have, he thinks, sadly misled us. This essay, written by somebody who will obviously brook no objections to Williams, completely dismisses Williams' actual weaknesses, by setting up a series of straw persons and then (surprise, surprise) knocking them down.

One of the more interesting and elegant essays in the volume follows, "Charles Williams and R.H. Benson," by Gwen Watkins. She traces (convincingly) Williams' incorporation of a number of elements from Benson's novels, not as slavish imitations, but as elegant parallels which help us to understand more completely the literary environment in which Williams' novels were written. Another comparative essay, "Charles Williams and Albert Schweitzer" by James Brabazon is, to put it charitably, unconvincing. In great contrast, Donald Nicholson's "James I: The Art of Historical Biography," makes a very strong case for Williams' success as a biographer, in a book I wish I could acquire. The essay is humane, detailed, and will surely be added to the modest but growing list of "must read" essays on Williams.

George Every's essay, "Taliessin in Byzantium," tells us that Williams' "interest in slave girls points to his enthusiasm for the typists and shop-assistants who came to his extension lectures," (p. 262) and does his best to explain to us that not all of these characters in Williams' poetry are slaves. What a relief! What condescension! Finally, Huw Mordecai, in "Charles Williams and the Occult," discusses his subject with accuracy and balance (two

traits Williams valued), maintaining Williams' "peculiar orthodoxy" (p. 272) in a lovely essay well suited to conclude this full, provocative, and for the most part successful collection. Highly recommended.

— Nancy-Lou Patterson

## Joyously! Rapturously!

*The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers, 1899-1936: The Making of a Detective Novelist*, Chosen and Edited by Barbara Reynolds with a Preface by P. D. James (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995), 421 pp. ISBN 0-340-53623-3

More than 220 reviews ago, the first review I wrote for the Mythopoeic Society discussed Janet Hitchmans' mean spirited biography of Dorothy L. Sayers; that was in 1975. I've been waiting ever since for the publication of this superb book, edited and annotated by Miss Sayers' longtime colleague, friend, and best biographer, Barbara Reynolds. I'm delighted to say that *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers* has been well worth the wait. And to think there is a second volume coming (1937 to 1957) adds a touch of delicious anticipation to the pleasure of reading Miss Sayers' letters from February 1989 (to her mother, discussing hoops, toy monkeys, violin practice, and snowdrops) to December 1936 (to Maurice Browne, discussing her play *Busman's Honeymoon*, which marked the transition of her career from Lord Peter to all that came after).

Everything Miss Sayers' admirers have been waiting to read is contained here — the book reads, indeed, like a superb epistolary novel (you know, like *The Documents in the Case*, or *The Moonstone*, or *Dracula*; but I digress). Here is the gifted only child, gobbling up Latin, French and German; the musician and participant both in home-grown and in schoolgirl costume drama; the rapturous undergraduate at Oxford; the new-minted poet whose first slim volumes appear in her twenties, and who plots a controversy to push their sales; the young teachers (whose students frustrated her attempts to teach them French), Here also, never before revealed, is the young retreatant, who goes to a convent to find silence.

We read about her adventures caught in a France just newly plunged into World War I, about her flats in Bloomsbury (and I wish I'd had these letters when I wrote my essay on her Bloomsbury years); her job as an advertising copywriter; her deliciously ferocious letters to her would-be lover John Courson (take that! and that!); her rueful and oddly forthright letters home about Bill, who *did* become her lover; the skillful obfuscations by which she concealed her resulting child, hiding him, as it were, in plain sight; the happy — or at least so described — early years with her husband; her charming and poignant letters to her son: all these revelations of her private voice are touching and delicious.

But the deft and sympathetic editing of Barbara Reynolds has added an element at least as valuable, for



both scholars and readers of detective fiction (so frequently encased in the same skin); the promise of the title, "The Making of a Detective Novelist," is fulfilled by a long series of letters obviously selected for their relevance to this subject, and truly, *truly* useful in our understanding of her career as a novelist. Many new insights are offered, a rich array of things we have always wanted to know. Long shelves of essays will no doubt be filled from these materials, so conveniently available now. This book is a landmark in Sayers studies and will become not only essential but classic. Joyously, rapturously, ecstatically recommended

— Nancy-Lou Patterson

## Really Useful

**Kathryn Lindskoog, *Finding the Landlord: A Guidebook to C.S. Lewis' Pilgrim's Regress*** (Chicago, Illinois: Cornerstone Press, 1995), 165 pp. ISBN: 0-940895-35-8.

C.S. Lewis wrote to Kathryn Lindskoog in 1957, "I hope we shall have some really useful critical works from your hand." His hopes have been rewarded in *Finding the Landlord*, partly because *Finding the Landlord* has been written to be, like some of Lewis' own most important works, a popular work, that is, intended for a general reader, rather than as a work of detailed literary criticism. *The Pilgrim's Regress*, as it happens, was not. Unlike its model, Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, it requires a sophisticated reader, somebody who has read (or read about) the works he satirizes.

He thus set up a wall exactly where he had meant to open a doorway; he never made this mistake again. All the rest of his books are clearly set out either for the general public or for students of literature. All his works in both categories are immensely readable, except this one, which even he found it necessary (in a subsequently published version) to explain. Following his example, Kay Lindskoog has undertaken to write a very straightforward guide to the symbols and allegorical elements and literary/intellectual parodies in *Regress*, and she has succeeded, partly because her Guidebook is neither too detailed nor too didactic.

Readers will really have to read Lewis' *The Pilgrim's Regress* for themselves; this is no crib. But along the way, Lindskoog's discernments, definitions, and interpretations are really useful, clear, and best of all, lightly laid on rather than heavy-handed. Reading *Regress* in her company (and you'll want to read it after you hear what she has to say) is a very good way to address this early and difficult work of Lewis'.

She begins with a brief summary of Lewis' early life (of which *Regress* is an allegorical version), and concludes with a useful discussion of allegory as a form. She adds an intensely annotated bibliography for scholars, some of whom do or do not, and will, or will not, agree with her interpretations (you know who you are). In between, she

gives clear comments on the images, sources, and ideas of each of the man sub-sections of *Regress*. I was struck by the number of scriptural references Lewis used; obviously, nurtured on the Anglican liturgy, he had heard regular readings with every worship service he had attended from boyhood on.

But this book suggests that he had already taken up his custom of regular private Bible reading, as well as his custom of re-reading an "old" book between every "new" book. *Regress* alludes to many books in each category, and would provide a powerful reading program for the study of Lewis, his own period pro and con), and the works of previous periods that he valued most.

Along with this, Lindskoog has called attention to the excellence of Lewis' poetry when it is read in its original place of publication rather than in its "collected" version (where so many appear in variant or "revised" as well as re-titled forms). The impression that Lewis was not a very good poet comes, I am beginning to suspect, from the fact that so few of the poems are easily available in their original published form without recourse to massive inter-library searches, something the lay reader cannot easily undertake.

So much of what Lewis was always trying to tell us is, in fact, in *The Pilgrim's Regress*, that a convenient, brief, and telling guidebook like this one should make a major contribution toward encouraging people to read *Regress*, surely a contribution Kay Lindskoog's fellow scholars can, and, indeed, Lewis would have welcomed. Happily recommended.

— Nancy-Lou Patterson



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