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Haunted By Home

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Illustration by Janie Dodd

Haunted By Home A Review

By Leroy Thomas

Lynn Riggs is a too honored Oklahoma writer not to be included in this Western Oklahoma journal. Phyllis Cole Braunlich's *HAUNTED BY HOME: THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF LYNN RIGGS* (ISBN 0-8061-2142-4) was published in November, 1988 by the OU Press and will probably prove to be a major breakthrough in Riggs scholarship.

Riggs' most prized work was *GREEN GROW THE LILACS*, upon which the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *OKLAHOMA!* was based.

HAUNTED BY HOME contains eleven chapters, and each title is a drawing card for an interesting expose. Examples include "The Golden World of Santa Fe" (Chapter 1), "Breaking Out: Oklahoma

University" (Chapter 3), "The Big Time: Broadway, Yaddo, and Paris" (Chapter 4), "Success Without Stability: The debut of *GREEN GROW THE LILACS*" (Chapter 6), "Reflected Glory: *GREEN GROW THE LILACS* Returns as *OKLAHOMA!*" (Chapter 10), and "Facing Toward the Western Sky" (Chapter 11). Within these pages, Braunlich describes what Riggs' friend Spud Johnson portrayed as "a long walk, in the rain."

Braunlich's biography is a chronicle of Riggs' association with the literary and cafe society on both coasts and in New Mexico during the twenties, thirties, and forties and reveals his close friends and associates to be Paul Green, Barrett H. Clark, Joan Crawford, and Bette Davis.

Braunlich, a Tulsa writer, cites

Riggs as one who had a "firm but tender love of the word" and says that his "courage and conviction" serve as examples "for writers everywhere who believe in their material and who know that what they have to say must be said in spite of all."

HAUNTED BY HOME has received praise from scholars and writers such as Dr. Paul Ruggiers and Paul Horgan as well as from actress Celeste Holm and director Mary Hunter Wolf.

Braunlich's biography (248 pages, 17 illustrations, notes, and bibliography) is a necessity for the private and public library and may be purchased for \$24.95 from the University of Oklahoma Press (1005 Asp Avenue — Norman 73019; 405-325-5111). ■