

AMERICAN EVES  
IN  
SHORT STORIES

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER  
TRUMAN CAPOTE  
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD  
JOHN STEINBECK  
FLANNERY O'CONNOR

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THE SIGN OF



A GOOD BOOK

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—Tokyo—

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## は し が き

新世界としての処女地アメリカが、旧世界のヨーロッパ人にとって「エデンの園」であったとしたら、そこで夢の実現に努力した人々は「アメリカのアダム」であった。アメリカの文学作品の多くが、「高貴な野蛮人」あるいは「高貴な自然人」として彼らを描いている。そして彼らのほとんどは男性であり、アメリカの大地は、Hemingway の作品の題名のように、*Men Without Women* の世界であったかのようなのである。たしかに、植民、建国、開拓と続くアメリカの歴史は、女性が主人公となるにはあまりに苛酷で猛々しい現実であったということかもしれない。しかし、エデンにイヴがいたように、アメリカにも絶えず女性は存在し続け、またその力が必要とされたであろう。

このような観点から、さまざまな時期の「アメリカのイヴ」を掘り起こして、女性の力の普遍性を検証する仕事が行なわれている(亀井俊介『アメリカのイヴたち』、『荒野のアメリカ』)。今世紀になって、アメリカの文化や文学が成熟するにつれ、とくに、いわゆる Southern Renaissance 以後南部を中心として女流作家の台頭は目覚ましく、また男性作家による女性像の彫琢も多種多様になってきた。近年は文学研究においても、女性の視点を取り入れることにより、より豊かな解釈の可能性を求めようとするフェミニズム的アプローチも見られるようになった。このように、アメリカ文学における女性のテーマは、その読者や研究者に大きな関心事の一つになってきたと思う。

Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* の Ma や、Cather, *My Antonia* の Antonia のような、たくましく豊かなアメリカの大地そのもののような長編小説のヒロインとともに、アメリカの短編小説の中

## は し が き

にも、多くの魅力的で印象深い女主人公が登場する。本テキストは、さまざまにニュアンスの違いはあっても、いかにもアメリカ的な特性を備えた女主人公が登場する5編の短編を選んで構成した。それらはいずれも、多くの選集やテキストに選ばれている定評のある作品であり、またそれぞれの作者も、高い評価を得た著名な作家ばかりである。ここで改めて個々の作家やその文学にふれることはしないが、偶然ながら、南部出身の作家や、南部の問題を扱った作品が大半を占めることになった。改めて、南部の問題の根深さを思わずにはいられなかった。これらの5編は、1920年代から1960年代までに発表された現代の作品であり、作品の配列は、それぞれの主人公の年齢順にした。さまざまな時期のアメリカのイヴ像を鑑賞して頂きたいと思う。

巻末の紹介と注釈の執筆にあたっては、*Webster's Third New International Dictionary* や『研究社英和大辞典』等の多くの辞書類や、各作品に関する研究書やテキスト版の注釈等を参照させて頂いた。それぞれに感謝するとともに、万全をつくしてもなお編者たちの解釈には勝手な思いすぎしや不備な点があるかもしれない。多くの方の御指導が得られれば、改版に際し訂正を進めて誤り無きを期したいと思う。

1987年10月

編 注 者

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*The Grave*

The grandfather, dead for more than thirty years, had been twice disturbed in his long repose by the constancy and possessiveness of his widow. She removed his bones first to Louisiana and then to Texas as if she had set out to find her own burial place, knowing well she would never return to the places she had left. In Texas she set up a small cemetery in a corner of her first farm, and as the family connection grew, and oddments of relations came over from Kentucky to settle, it contained at last about twenty graves. After the grandmother's death, part of her land was to be sold for the benefit of certain of her children, and the cemetery happened to lie in the part set aside for sale. It was necessary to take up the bodies and bury them again in the family plot in the big new public cemetery, where the grandmother had been buried. At last her husband was to lie beside her for eternity, as she had planned.

The family cemetery had been a pleasant small neglected garden of tangled rose bushes and ragged cedar trees and cypress, the simple flat stones rising out of uncropped sweet-smelling wild grass. The graves were lying open and empty one burning day when Miranda and her brother

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Paul, who often went together to hunt rabbits and doves, propped their twenty-two Winchester rifles carefully against the rail fence, climbed over and explored among the graves. She was nine years old and he was twelve.

5 They peered into the pits all shaped alike with such purposeful accuracy, and looking at each other with pleased adventurous eyes, they said in solemn tones: "These were graves!" trying by words to shape a special, suitable emotion in their minds, but they felt nothing  
10 except an agreeable thrill of wonder: they were seeing a new sight, doing something they had not done before. In them both there was also a small disappointment at the entire commonplaceness of the actual spectacle. Even if it had once contained a coffin for years upon  
15 years, when the coffin was gone a grave was just a hole in the ground. Miranda leaped into the pit that had held her grandfather's bones. Scratching around aimlessly and pleasurably as any young animal, she scooped up a lump of earth and weighed it in her palm. It had a  
20 pleasantly sweet, corrupt smell, being mixed with cedar needles and small leaves, and as the crumbs fell apart, she saw a silver dove no larger than a hazel nut, with spread wings and a neat fan-shaped tail. The breast had a deep round hollow in it. Turning it up to the  
25 fierce sunlight, she saw that the inside of the hollow was cut in little whorls. She scrambled out, over the pile of loose earth that had fallen back into one end of the grave, calling to Paul that she had found something, he must guess what . . . His head appeared smiling over the



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rim of another grave. He waved a closed hand at her. "I've got something too!" They ran to compare treasures, making a game of it, so many guesses each, all wrong, and a final showdown with opened palms. Paul had found a thin wide gold ring carved with intricate 5 flowers and leaves. Miranda was smitten at sight of the ring and wished to have it. Paul seemed more impressed by the dove. They made a trade, with some little bickering. After he had got the dove in his hand, Paul said, "Don't you know what this is? This is a screw head for 10 a coffin! . . . I'll bet nobody else in the world has one like this!"

Miranda glanced at it without covetousness. She had the gold ring on her thumb; it fitted perfectly. "Maybe we ought to go now," she said, "maybe one of the nig- 15 gers'll see us and tell somebody." They knew the land had been sold, the cemetery was no longer theirs, and they felt like trespassers. They climbed back over the fence, slung their rifles loosely under their arms—they had been shooting at targets with various kinds of firearms since 20 they were seven years old—and set out to look for the rabbits and doves or whatever small game might happen along. On these expeditions Miranda always followed at Paul's heels along the path, obeying instructions about handling her gun when going through fences; learning 25 how to stand it up properly so it would not slip and fire unexpectedly; how to wait her time for a shot and not just bang away in the air without looking, spoiling shots for Paul, who really could hit things if given a chance.

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Now and then, in her excitement at seeing birds whizz up suddenly before her face, or a rabbit leap across her very toes, she lost her head, and almost without sighting she flung her rifle up and pulled the trigger. She hardly  
5 ever hit any sort of mark. She had no proper sense of hunting at all. Her brother would be often completely disgusted with her. "You don't care whether you get your bird or not," he said. "That's no way to hunt." Miranda could not understand his indignation. She  
10 had seen him smash his hat and yell with fury when he had missed his aim. "What I like about shooting," said Miranda, with exasperating inconsequence, "is pulling the trigger and hearing the noise."

"Then, by golly," said Paul, "whyn't you go back to  
15 the range and shoot at bulls-eyes?"

"I'd just as soon" said Miranda, "only like this, we walk around more."

"Well, you just stay behind and stop spoiling my shots," said Paul, who, when he made a kill, wanted to be certain  
20 he had made it. Miranda, who alone brought down a bird once in twenty rounds, always claimed as her own any game they got when they fired at the same moment. It was tiresome and unfair and her brother was sick of it.

"Now, the first dove we see, or the first rabbit, is mine,"  
25 he told her. "And the next will be yours. Remember that and don't get smarty."

"What about snakes?" asked Miranda idly. "Can I have the first snake?"

Waving her thumb gently and watching her gold ring

*The Grave*

glitter, Miranda lost interest in shooting. She was wearing her summer roughing outfit: dark blue overalls, a light blue shirt, a hired-man's straw hat, and thick brown sandals. Her brother had the same outfit except his was a sober hickory-nut color. Ordinarily Miranda 5 preferred her overalls to any other dress, though it was making rather a scandal in the countryside, for the year was 1903, and in the back country the law of female decorum had teeth in it. Her father had been criticized for letting his girls dress like boys and go careering 10 around astride barebacked horses. Big sister Maria, the really independent and fearless one, in spite of her rather affected ways, rode at a dead run with only a rope knotted around her horse's nose. It was said the motherless family was running down, with the Grandmother 15 no longer there to hold it together. It was known that she had discriminated against her son Harry in her will, and that he was in straits about money. Some of his old neighbors reflected with vicious satisfaction that now he would probably not be so stiffnecked, nor have any 20 more high-stepping horses either. Miranda knew this, though she could not say how. She had met along the road old women of the kind who smoked corn-cob pipes, who had treated her grandmother with most sincere respect. They slanted their gummy old eyes side-ways at 25 the granddaughter and said, "Ain't you ashamed of yoself, Missy? It's aginst the Scriptures to dress like that. Whut yo Pappy thinkin about?" Miranda, with her powerful social sense, which was like a fine set of

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antennae radiating from every pore of her skin, would feel ashamed because she knew well it was rude and ill-bred to shock anybody, even bad-tempered old crones, though she had faith in her father's judgment and was  
5 perfectly comfortable in the clothes. Her father had said, "They're just what you need, and they'll save your dresses for school . . ." This sounded quite simple and natural to her. She had been brought up in rigorous economy. Wastefulness was vulgar. It was also a sin.  
10 These were truths; she had heard them repeated many times and never once disputed.

Now the ring, shining with the serene purity of fine gold on her rather grubby thumb, turned her feelings against her overalls and sockless feet, toes sticking through  
15 the thick brown leather straps. She wanted to go back to the farmhouse, take a good cold bath, dust herself with plenty of Maria's violet talcum powder—provided Maria was not present to object, of course—put on the thinnest, most becoming dress she owned, with a big sash, and  
20 sit in a wicker chair under the trees . . . These things were not all she wanted, of course; she had vague stirrings of desire for luxury and a grand way of living which could not take precise form in her imagination but were founded on family legend of past wealth and leisure. These  
25 immediate comforts were what she could have, and she wanted them at once. She lagged rather far behind Paul, and once she thought of just turning back without a word and going home. She stopped, thinking that Paul would never do that to her, and so she would have