

[PDF] Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: The American Classic, In Words And Photographs, Of Three Tenant Families In The Deep South

Walker Evans, James Agee - pdf download free book



Books Details:

Title: Let Us Now Praise Famous Men:

Author: Walker Evans, James Agee

Released: 2001-08-14

Language:

Pages: 432

ISBN: 0618127496

ISBN13: 978-0618127498

ASIN: 0618127496

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Description:

Just what kind of book is *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*? It contains many things: poems; confessional reveries; disquisitions on the proper way to listen to Beethoven; snippets of dialogue, both real and imagined; a lengthy response to a survey from the *Partisan Review*; exhaustive catalogs of furniture, clothing, objects, and smells. And then there are Walker Evans's famously stark portraits of depression-era sharecroppers--photographs that both stand apart from and reinforce James Agee's words.

Assigned to do a story for *Fortune* magazine about sharecroppers in the Deep South, Agee and Evans spent four weeks living with a poor white tenant family, winning the Burroughs's trust and immersing themselves in a sharecropper's daily existence. Given a first draft of the resulting article, the editors at *Fortune* quite understandably threw up their hands--as did several other editors who subsequently worked with a later book-length manuscript. The writing was contrary. It refused to accommodate itself to the reader, and at times it positively bristled with hostility. (What other book could take Marx as the epigraph and then announce: "These words are quoted here to mislead those who will be misled by them"?) Response to the book was puzzled or unfriendly, and *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* sputtered out of print only a few short years after its publication. It took the 1960s, and a vogue for social justice, to bring Agee's masterwork the audience it deserved.

Yet the book is far more interesting--aesthetically and morally--than the sort of guilty-liberal tract for which it is often mistaken. On an existential level, Agee's text is a deeply felt examination of what it means to suffer, to struggle to live in spite of suffering. On a personal level, it is the painful, beautifully written portrait of one man's obsession. In its collaboration with Evans's photographs, the book is also a groundbreaking experiment in form. In the end, however, it is more than merely the sum of its parts. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* is, quite simply, a book unlike any other, simmering with anger and beauty and mystery. --*Mary Park* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Library Journal Agee's textual portraits and Evans's photographic records of three sharecropper families in the South instantly became, when published in 1939, one of the most brutally revealing records of an America that was ignored by society--a class of people whose level of poverty left them as spiritually, mentally, and physically worn as the land on which they toiled. Time has done nothing to decrease this book's power. This handsome edition sports the original text plus 64 new archival photos.

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