

*The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Diffuse, Twelve Poems, Lolly Willowes, Mr Fortune's Maggot, The True Heart, Summer Will Show, After the Death of Don Juan, The Corner that Held Them, The Flint Anchor, The Salutation, More Joy in Heaven, The Cat's Cradle Book, A Garland of Straw, The Museum of Cheats, Winter in the Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, A Stranger with a Bag, Swans on an Autumn River, Two Conversation Pieces, The Innocent and the Guilty, Kingdoms of Elfin, Scenes of Childhood, One Thing Leading to Another, The Music at Long Verney, Dorset Stories, Portrait of a Tortoise, Somerset, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve Poems, Lolly Willowes, Mr Fortune's Maggot, The True Heart, Summer Will Show, After the Death of Don Juan, The Corner that Held Them, The Flint Anchor, The Salutation, More Joy in Heaven, The Cat's Cradle Book, A Garland of Straw, The Museum of Cheats, Winter in the Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, A Stranger with a Bag, Swans on an Autumn River, Two Conversation Pieces, The Innocent and the Guilty, Kingdoms of Elfin, Scenes of Childhood, One Thing Leading to Another, The Music at Long Verney, Dorset Stories, Portrait of a Tortoise, Somerset, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve Poems, Lolly Willowes, Mr Fortune's Maggot, The True Heart, Summer Will Show, After the Death of Don Juan, The Corner that Held Them, The Flint Anchor, The Salutation, More Joy in Heaven, The Cat's Cradle Book, A Garland of Straw, The Museum of Cheats, Winter in the Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, A Stranger with a Bag, Swans on an Autumn River, Two Conversation Pieces, The Innocent and the Guilty, Kingdoms of Elfin, Scenes of Childhood, One Thing Leading to Another, The Music at Long Verney, Dorset Stories, Portrait of a Tortoise, Somerset, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve Poems, Lolly Willowes, Mr Fortune's Maggot, The True Heart, Summer Will Show, After the Death of Don Juan, The Corner that Held Them, The Flint Anchor, The Salutation, More Joy in Heaven, The Cat's Cradle Book, A Garland of Straw, The Museum of Cheats, Winter in the Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, A Stranger with a Bag, Swans on an Autumn River, Two Conversation Pieces, The Innocent and the Guilty, Kingdoms of Elfin, Scenes of Childhood, One Thing Leading to Another, The Music at Long Verney, Dorset Stories, Portrait of a Tortoise, Somerset, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve Poems, Lolly Willowes, Mr Fortune's Maggot, The True Heart, Summer Will Show, After the Death of Don Juan, The Corner that Held Them, The Flint Anchor, The Salutation, More Joy in Heaven, The Cat's Cradle Book, A Garland of Straw, The Museum of Cheats, Winter in the Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, A Stranger with a Bag, Swans on an Autumn River, Two Conversation Pieces, The Innocent and the Guilty, Kingdoms of Elfin, Scenes of Childhood, One Thing Leading to Another, The Music at Long Verney, Dorset Stories, Portrait of a Tortoise, Somerset, The Espalier, Time Importuned,*

## ***The Sylvia Townsend Warner Society Newsletter Number Forty-One***

*Poems, The Flint Anchor, The Winter in the Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, The Flint Anchor, Stranger with a Bag, Swans on an Autumn River, Two Conversation Pieces, The Innocent and the Guilty, Kingdoms of Elfin, Scenes of Childhood, One Thing Leading to Another, The Music at Long Verney, Dorset Stories, Portrait of a Tortoise, Somerset, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve Poems, Lolly Willowes, Mr Fortune's Maggot, The True Heart, Summer Will Show, After the Death of Don Juan, The Corner that Held Them, The Flint Anchor, The Salutation, More Joy in Heaven, The Cat's Cradle Book, A Garland of Straw, The Museum of Cheats, Winter in the Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, A Stranger with a Bag, Swans on an Autumn River, Two Conversation Pieces, The Innocent and the Guilty, Kingdoms of Elfin, The Museum*

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MAIDEN NEWTON  
DORCHESTER  
DORSET

MAIDEN NEWTON 27th

December 19th

From: VALENTINE ACKLAND

Dearest Betty,

I dare not hope that this book hasn't been sent to you already – although I wish it may not have been! If it has, I've arranged with Longmans that you can change it but I hope you will lend me a copy of it to read at a more leisured time!

Anyway – it (or whatever else you get in exchange) comes with my best love for Christmas – and my most genuine and most thankful thanks for undertaking the lettering for the seat.....My sister wrote me more about it yesterday and I told her everything must wait until after Christmas, and that even then I didn't know how long the foundry would take. I told her to go ahead with getting the new seat in situ, and the label could be added later – as I suppose it can –

I've been at a Sale and I'm dog tired. Forgive this muddled letter. I do hope your Christmas will be very happy and very tranquil, dear Betty.

Love always,

*Valentine*

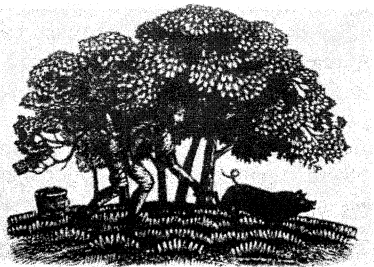
### ***English Climate: Wartime Stories***

Persephone Books, 2020, ISBN 9781910263273

with a new preface by Lydia Fellgett

The good news : These stories, from 1940-46, are cleanly set on off-white paper in a not-too-small font, ITC Baskerville, 221 pages. A handsome book and easy to hold, as are all the Persephones, it is the first Warner in their list, and should gain Sylvia new readers. It begins with 'The Water and the Wine' (October 1940) and ends with 'Major Brice and Mrs Conway' (May 1946).

The less-good news : Persephone claims four of the stories have never been collected before, but this is not so. Alas, they show no awareness of *Dorset Stories* (Black Dog Books, 2006). Between *A Garland of Straw*, *The Museum of Cheats* and *Dorset Stories* all but two of the twenty-two stories are represented. These two, 'Arsace, Il Faut Partir' and 'Scorched Earth Policy' are in our *Journal* 2004 and 2007, respectively. Furthermore, the publishers imply these are her only wartime fiction – "Her wartime stories therefore, collected here as *English Climate*...". However, between 1940 and 1946, *The New Yorker* published another thirteen. Basic copy-editing slipped as the preface states between 1936 and 1977 'over a hundred and fifty' stories were published by *The New Yorker*, while the dust jacket claims '144'. Similarly, the jacket claims eleven volumes of short stories, while the preface, eight. Fellgett's preface has some sloppy mistakes : the novel is not *The Summer Will Show*; sometimes *The New Yorker* is the *New Yorker*; Valentine died on November 9<sup>th</sup>, not 10<sup>th</sup>; *Kingdoms of Elfin* was the last collection of stories, not *A Stranger with a Bag*.



Wood engraving by Reynolds Stone from *A Butler's Recipe Book 1719*, edited by Philip James, with a foreword by Ambrose Heath (Cambridge University Press)

In the following letter, Betty is the artist **Elizabeth Muntz**, Dorset notable and Powys connected, to whom in 1962 Valentine gave as a Christmas present *Naughty Children : An Anthology* compiled by Christianna Brand & illustrated by Edward Ardizzone, Gollancz, 1962. 'wish' is typed in red, a common emphasis of Valentine's. The 'seat' probably refers to the gravestone of her mother Ruth, who had died in 1961.

### **NEWSLETTER NUMBER FORTY-ONE**

T. F. Powys – Arthur Machen – Claire Harman – Michael Schmidt  
*Lolly Willowes*, the opera – Stephen Tomlin – poems – new books and old – fairies

Thanks go to Judith Bond, Annie Rhodes, Michael Alec Rose and Peter Swaab for contributing to this issue.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1937 Yeats wrote to a Mrs. Llewelyn Davies "I have rehearsed my B.B.C. broadcast grouped under the heading "In the Poets' Pub" – poems by Belloc, Chesterton, de la Mare, Newbolt, a woman whose name I forget,\* and York Powell's 'The Lady [sic] and the Shark'"... The \*footnote identifies the forgotten one as our Sylvia. (*W.B. Yeats, 1865-1939*, Joseph M. Hone, 1962)

Aired on 2.iv.37, "... the object of this programme, which W. B. Yeats has come over from Ireland to produce and superintend, is to show that poetry can still be popular even in England, when it is made exciting. The poems chosen are Belloc's *Do you remember an inn, Miranda?*, Chesterton's *Rolling English Road*, de la Mare's *Three Jolly Farmers*, Newbolt's *Drake's Drum*, Sylvia Townsend Warner's *The Sailor*, and York Powell's ballad *The Sailor and the Shark*." (from the BBC website)

\* \* \* \* \*

We note with sadness the death of member **Rebecca J. Taksel** (1943-2020). Besides her interest in Sylvia (see Newsletter 35), Rebecca was a lifelong advocate of civil rights (hearing Dr. King deliver his 'I have a Dream' speech in 1963), animal rights and environmental causes, and advocated strongly for jazz as her country's contribution to world music. She was a teacher, dancer, designer and for many years the Editor of the *Redwood Coast Review*, a literary quarterly.

\* \* \* \* \*

*The Nation & Athenæum*, 22 March 1930 reported "Things to see and hear in the coming week : Tuesday, March 25, Miss Sylvia Townsend Warner, at 50, Holland Park, 4-"

\* \* \* \* \*

Gadding about New York in 1929, Sylvia was very social, meeting Dorothy Parker, Elinor Wylie, Anne Parrish and others. She must have also met the novelist **Natalie Sedgwick Colby**, for in her memoir *Remembering* (1938) Colby writes "But in spite of editors and funeral flowers we had fun in those two little rooms. Up there came Sylvia Townsend Warner (creator of those fantasies which grow most opulently in England out of daughters of Church of England fathers), and Georgia O'Keefe".

clothing and their singing. Often they are known by their voices alone. 'Three women were gathering shell-fish in the month of March, on the lowest point of the strand when they heard the most beautiful music. They set to work to dance with it, and danced themselves sick. Then they thanked the invisible musician and went home.'

\*for those interested in Maxwell, see Alec Wilkinson's memoir *My Mentor : A Young Man's Friendship with William Maxwell* (Houghton Mifflin, 2002).

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1965 the Berg Collection of English and American Literature at The New York Public Library mounted an exhibit of their novels in manuscript. It was duly included in that year's *Bulletin*, John D. Gordon writes the usual about **Lolly Willowes**, but concludes "The manuscript of *Lolly Willowes*, here displayed, carries a note in the author's hand that it was 'written in London, c. 1923-1925.' It runs to 291 well-corrected pages, perhaps the corrections are somewhat less numerous than would be expected of a stylist. It is to be observed, however, that there is a liberal sprinkling of leaves of paper of smaller size than the rest, and this suggests that many of the original pages were so illegible as to require copying. At first Miss Warner intended to divide the novel into chapters and after the third changed her mind."

\* \* \* \* \*

On June 10, 1976, the House of Representatives of the United States, Committee on Agriculture held hearings on H.R. 12917, the Rural Development Act to assist small farmers upgrading their farming operations. Surprisingly, Sylvia appears. The daily record reports from the statement of Mrs. Christine Stevens, Secretary, Society for Animal Protective Legislation: ... "The close caging of chickens, both for the broiler trade and for the eggs, leads to massive suffering. Yet these remarkable birds that give us both meat and eggs are able to recover from the hideous ordeal to which they are subjected if given a chance. The distinguished author, **Sylvia Townsend Warner**, recently wrote:

'A friend of mine [Robin Wordsworth, Baglake Farm, Litton Cheney, Dorchester, Dorset – that letter about the new hens is submitted on the next page], married to a dairy farmer... bought a dozen battery chickens, which were being sold for boiling. The hens were featherless, could not use their legs or wings, were terrified of daylight.

However, my friend put them in a shed, lifted them onto the perch at night, fed them. All the hens recovered, grew feathers, are leading an outdoor life and certainly laying eggs.

It seems to me that nature is very merciful to man, forgiving him his trespasses against her and has a remarkable power to put things right.' "

No source is given for Sylvia's words. Does anyone know from where they come?

city would serve them better than I did. I was beside myself'.

243: marginal bracketing: 'Blessed are they who heal us of self-despisings.'

243: marginal bracketing: 'I had a mind to write to her; but I felt as I have often felt before in great crises, a restraint which was gentle and incomprehensible, but nevertheless unmistakable.'

Perhaps further books from the library of STW and VA will appear on the market soon, and perhaps members will be able to share details of other volumes they come across? In the meantime if any members of the Society would like further details of these marginalia or want to examine particular volumes, they are welcome to get in touch with me to help with my not very sharp feelings of acquisitiveness guilt.

\* \* \* \* \*

Wow! Thank you, Peter, for taking the time to write up and share this enviable coup. We all probably have an inscribed copy or two, but this is truly exciting. I have only one I think – *The Diary of Montaigne's Journey to Italy in 1580 and 1581* (Hogarth Press, 1929). Inscribed in pen in Sylvia's script – Valentine Ackland / 1<sup>st</sup> of May / 1947 and in Valentine's hand, references and page numbers on the inside back cover. It would be cool to know what other members have acquired.

\* \* \* \* \*

On 13 February 2020 The Royal Literary Fund issued a podcast of twenty-five minutes of **Claire Harman** speaking about the painstaking, and sometimes obsessive art of literary biography, and how careful detective work can bring new insights into even the most written-about lives. You may find it through her website or at [rlf.org.uk/showcase/wa\\_episode255](http://rlf.org.uk/showcase/wa_episode255).

### *October – John Clare*

The cotter journeying with his noisy swine,  
Along the woodside where the brambles twine,  
Shaking from mossy oaks the acorns brown,  
Or from the hedges red haws dashing down;  
The nutters, rustling in the yellow woods,  
Who tease the wild things in their solitudes;  
Such are the pictures that October yields,  
To please the poet as he walks the fields.

expression of his was ever so sincere as the most ordinary expression of the most trifling pleasure or pain.'

p. 66: marginal bracketing: 'I could never endure to speak if people did not listen.'

p. 146: marginal bracketing: 'More painful still; he loves somebody, man or woman, with a surpassing devotion; he is so lost in his love that he cannot endure a moment without it; and when he sees it pass away in death, he is told that it is extinguished—that that heart and mind absolutely are *not*.'

p. 187: marginal bracketing: 'They were perfectly orthodox, except that they denied a few orthodox doctrines.'

p. 197: marginal bracketing: 'I half or a quarter knew a multitude of things, but no one thing thoroughly, and was never sure, just when I most wanted to be sure.'

p. 219: marginal bracketing, about the man overseeing the clerks working as assistants at a publisher's: 'I meditated much upon him. If ever I had occasion to rebuke anybody, I always did it apologetically, unless I happened to be in a flaming passion—and this was my habit, not from any respectable motive of consideration for the person rebuked, but partly because I am timid, and partly because I shrink from giving pain. This man said with perfect ease what I could not have said unless I had been wrought up to white heat. With all my dislike to him, I envied him: I envied his complete certainty; for although his language was harsh in the extreme, he was always sure of his ground, and the victim upon whom his lash descended could never say that he had given absolutely no reason for the chastisement, and that it was altogether a mistake.'

234: marginal bracketing: 'I had, it is true, an hour of two's unspeakable peace in the early morning'.

238: marginal cross: 'Two of my chief failings were forgetfulness and a want of thoroughness in investigation.'

239: marginal bracketing, about some business correspondence: 'I thought that if I was incapable of getting to the bottom of such a very shallow complication as this, of what value were any of my thinkings on more difficult subjects, and I fell a prey to self-contempt and scepticism. Contempt from those about us is hard to bear, but God help the poor wretch who contemns himself.'

240: marginal bracketing: 'the longing for death as the cancellation of the blunder of my existence!'

241: two marginal crosses, against (1) 'With a storm of tears, I laid open all my heart. I told her how nothing I had ever attempted had succeeded' and (2) 'I was useless, even to the best friends I had ever known, and that the meanest clerk in the

From *Time* magazine June 29, 1931 : A review of Edith Olivier's *Dwarf's Blood* oddly ends – "Authoress Olivier rarely goes to London; when she does, Sylvia Townsend Warner and many another writer are glad to see her."

\* \* \* \* \*

At the National Library of Australia : *The Sailor*, words by Sylvia Townsend Warner, music by Terry Vaughan (1915-1996). A vocal score of five unnumbered pages in manuscript, ca. 1946 - 1950. Bib ID 7832574.

#### from the Catalog of Copyright Entries of the United States of America

1918 : "Carol (A) of St. Brigit; two-part song words by Sylvia Townsend Warner, music by Percy C. Buck [of Great Britain] 4to. (Edward Arnold's series, no. 107) 10505 © June 11, 1918; 1 c. June 29, 1918; E 421228; Edward Arnold. London" – and later, from 1946 : "A carol of St. Brigit; w Sylvia Townsend Warner, m Percy C. Buck, edited by Thomas F. Dunhill. © 11Jun18; E421228. R5863; 27May46; P.C. Buck A. London."

1936 : "Fields Beyond; a play in 3 acts, by C.W. Crouch, based upon the novel *The True Heart* by Sylvia Townsend Warner. © 1 c. Mar. 19, 1934; D 27164; Charles Willard Crouch, Hollywood, Calif. 1460"

1947 : "BECKHARD, ROBERT L 1917- Four Epitaphs; for full chorus of mixed voices a cappella, [by] Robert L. Beckhard, [words by] Sylvia Townsend Warner. © The Boston Music Co., Boston; 10Nov47; EP20161."

#### Valentine Noticed

From the *Report of the Special commission to investigate the activities within this commonwealth [Massachusetts] of communistic, fascist, Nazi and other subversive organizations, so called* (May 27, 1938). Among other threats "subversive to our American form of government", the *Report* lists *The Fight*, a monthly magazine published by the American League Against War and Fascism. It notes that the October 1937 issue contains book recommendations such as " 'Invitation to Madrid' – By Valentine Ackland ; illustrated by H.J. Glintenkamp (Page 21): The English poet, attending the International Writers' Congress in Spain, found a new form of humanity coming to birth. 'And it is good.' "

#### A Garland of Herbs

By Elizabeth Wade White. Illustrated by Prentiss Taylor.  
Designed by P. C. Crane. Printed by E. L. Hildreth Company, Inc. 1936.  
200 copies.

In *Fifty Fifty: Carcanet's Jubilee in Letters* (see Newsletter 40) **Michael Schmidt** wrote "Sylvia Townsend Warner became the subject of a poem I published in [my] *The Love of Strangers* (1989)". With the kind permission of Mr. Schmidt, here is that poem.

If I'd known how well, after your death, I'd come to know you  
That day you climbed four flights (and you almost eighty)  
For an interview in Churton Place,  
I would have taken more attentive note;  
And the time we taped you down in Maiden Newton –  
Late winter, pitch dark at five, thorned boughs across the door –  
And caught your rusty voice doing 'Gloriana  
Dying', with you dying . . .  
My heart wasn't in it.

Now she's in deep:  
You may imagine you're dead. I tell you different.  
If dead, what are these spells you still weave? If dead  
Why are you so indiscreet, your secrets spill  
Like leaves from a frost-stung tree, with besom and basket  
She gathers facts, as if such truth really mattered.  
It puzzles me how you kept no secret from yourself,  
You were your chronicler and stood in your own eyes  
Naked as a girl half-loved, distrusted.

Wanting to write of you  
I write of her. She climbs with her bright youth into your frame  
And both of you are altered – merged? Married, is it?  
She borrows your irony, or is borrowed by it;  
Your styles were made for each other, but I love only her.  
Just now she's away in your house, sleeps in your musty room  
In the bed you died on, loved on, and she gives you  
– You were a white witch – house room, heart room.  
I say the rosary of her absence, doubt's *pater noster*  
Meanwhile.

You called me a rogue, your rogue cat liked me,  
Sat on my lap, stitched me gently with his claws,  
Needling, needling, hinting what he might do.  
Was his name Tib, or Titus? Is he still alive,  
Bleached by years, as you were: white witch, white cat . . .  
I say the rosary of her absence, she sleeps in your bed  
Under coral rug, sea-blue counterpane, and moonlight sends

passages from pages 335, 346, 347, 397, 497, 505 have been noted in VA's hand on inside back cover.

11. Ann Blainey, *The Farthing Poet: A Biography of Richard Hengist Horne, A Lesser Literary Lion* (London: Longmans, 1968). With Valentine Ackland's bookplate inside front cover.

12. Christopher Devlin, *Poor Kit Smart* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1961). Pencil signature 'V.A. 1962' on inside cover, together with name stamp 'Valentine Ackland, Maiden Newton, Dorchester, Dorset, England'.

13. Joseph Hone, *The Moores of Moore Hall* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939). Pencil signature 'Valentine Ackland' on inside cover.

14. R. W. Ketton-Cremer, *Horace Walpole: A Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1946). With Valentine Ackland's bookplate inside front cover. Sentences noted on p. 172 and inside back cover.

15. Eugene Lyons, *The Life and Death of Sacco and Vanzetti* (New York: International Publishers, 1928). Pen signature 'V. Ackland' on inside cover.

16. Ruth Michaelis-Jena, *The Brothers Grimm* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970). Pen signature 'Sylvia Townsend Warner. Maiden Newton, 1970' inside front cover.

17. Rabindranath Tagore, *My Reminiscences* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1917). With Valentine Ackland's bookplate inside front cover. Inside back cover has VA's pencil calculations of US dollar to pound conversion rates in 1950.

18. Edward John Trelawny, *Adventures of a Younger Son*, vol 1 (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914). Inscribed by STW 'Valentine with my love. 24: ix: 1952'.

The book most extensively annotated by STW is Hale White's 1881 *Autobiography of Mark Rutherford*, and I hope some readers may share my fascination with what caught her eye in this late Victorian classic, a fictionalised narrative of the author's own journey from religious faith to doubt. Warner made a note on one passage on page 59, marked another three passages with a cross (pages 238 and 241), and marked eleven other passages with pencilled vertical lines by the side of the text.

p.59: 'My predecessor had died in harness at the age of seventy-five [...] after a course of three sermons on a Sunday for fifty years'. Pencilled asterisk after 'fifty years', with a note at the foot of the page: '52 x 50 = 2600. 2,600 x 3 = 7,800. Sermons!'

p.61: marginal bracketing of this passage, about Mr Catfield, the deacon: 'I could never call him a hypocrite. He was as sincere as he could be, and yet no religious

cover, facing page torn out. Pencil markings by STW (see below).

4. *The Diary of Thomas Turner of East Hoathly (1754-1765)*, ed. Florence Maris Turner. Introduction by J.B. Priestley (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head Limited, 1925). STW's bookplate and pen signature 'Sylvia Townsend Warner.' inside front cover. A few pencil markings by STW.

5. *The Letters of Sacco and Vanzetti*, edited by Marion D. Frankfurter and Gardner Jackson (London: Constable & Company, 1929). Pen signature 'Valentine Ackland. April 1929'. Some passages marked in pencil on pages 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 57, 67, 68, 79, 101, 128, 148, 168, 207, 208, 221, 224, 225, 227, 258, 290, 291, 295, 362, 363, 379, 380. The inside back cover further notes passages on pages 11, 12-13, 15-16, 91, 202, 203, 227.

6 and 7. *Purefoy Letters 1735-1753, Vols I and II*, ed. G. Eland (London: Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd, 1931). With STW's bookplate inside front cover, and pen inscription 'Sylvia from Valentine — on Bishop Valentine's Day, 1947' (vol I) and 'Sylvia from Valentine, Valentine's Day, 1947' (vol II).

8. *Scottish Diaries and Memoirs 1550-1746*, ed. J.G. Fyfe (Stirling: Eneas Mackay, 1928), inscribed 'To Valentine and Sylvia, on Ruth's birthday, with much love. 13 Feb 1945'. Passages marked in pencil on pages 161 and 169, and four passages noted in pencil in VA's hand on inside back cover (pages 161, 169, 189, 259-60).

9. *Tom Moore's Diary*, edited with an introduction by J.B. Priestley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933). With Valentine Ackland's bookplate inside front cover. Marginal cross by the entry for April 3, 1832 (p. 167), an entry also noted on the inside back cover.

10. Bernard Berenson, *Sunset and Twilight: From the Diaries of 1947-1958*, ed. Nicky Mariano (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1964). With Valentine Ackland's bookstamp inside front cover, and 'a handwritten note 'from Alyse Gregory. Christmas 1964'. Marginal markings on pages 3, 4, 7, 9, 15, 17, 18, 21, 70, 71, 72, 75, 77, 79, 82, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, 101, 103, 107, 111 ('My lifelong worst suffering has come from inability to express myself satisfactorily', entry for 22/12/48), 117, 119, 123, 125, 129, 130, 135, 136, 140, 141, 145, 151, 152, 153, 158, 161, 163, 164, 165, 170, 171, 183,, 186, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 197, 199, 202, 203, 208, 209, 212, 221, 227, 230, 231, 233, 234, 240, , 243, 246, 247, 249, 251, 252, 256, 263, 266, 275, 282, 283, 288, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 310, 318, 319, 323, 327, 331, 332, 335, 338, 339, 340, 342, 345, 350, 352, 353, 354, 355, 357, 359, 360, 370, 372, 379, 380, 382, 389, 397, 399, 404, 407, 410, 411, 413, 414, 419, 420, 425, 426, 427, 430, 433, 438, 439, 441 ('the growing conviction that there is no use in talking' is heavily scored), 445, 448, 449, 460, 463, 466, 472, 474, 475, 482, 497, 498, 500, 505, 506, 507, 509, 513, 514, 515, 517, 524, 526, 527, 528; and

A foliage patchwork, webbing her face with summer,  
Years of summer.

Jealous of the dead! No, afraid rather  
Of her new intimacies. Oh, you had family,  
They survive: cousins, eager of tongue, amiable,  
Loving, loving.

Also a coven of friends  
Strayed now through England. She makes her way  
Like a nurse among them, nodding, smiling, noting symptoms,  
Or like a good daughter in search of you  
In the stale upper air where memories embroider the shroud.  
Which is she, nurse or daughter? Daughter or wife?  
The story of your life displaces hers, rebarbative,  
And will not merge.

Release her back to me:  
What sacrifice do you require?  
I cannot share with you: she is not Proserpine,  
I am not Dis. She ate the fruit I offered whole, without remorse  
Till latterly. I claimed her by contract where I named her —  
Hardest of all to love, best loved of all.

from 'Events' in the *New Statesman and Nation*, 22 September 1945

**WHAT** is happening to the Novel? 12 public lectures, Tues., 6.30 p.m., beginning Sept. 25th. Lecturers: Phyllis Bentley, Elizabeth Drew, Stella Gibbons, Willy Goldman, Compton Mackenzie, V. S. Pritchett, S. Gorley Putt, Frank Swinnerton, L. A. G. Strong, H. M. Tomlinson, Philip Toynbee, Sylvia Townsend Warner. Course fee 5s. Details from Sec., Motley College, 61 Westminster Bridge Rd., S.E.1 (Wat. 6872).

In Newsletter 38 we reported a sighting of a book & letter from Nangle Rare Books of Dorchester. His advertisement generously quoted the entire letter from Sylvia to a Philip Smith, of Melbury Osmund. Member Annie Rhodes bought them, Jørgen Meldgaard's *Eskimo Sculpture* (1960) and the letter, kindly sending photocopies of the latter, with its wonderful 'y's. Does anyone know about Philip Smith and his connection to Sylvia?

***A Lot of Lives : Biographical Books  
from Warner's and Ackland's Library***

Peter Swaab

A better person would have told friends in the STW Society, but I didn't, on the grounds that all's fair in love, war and book-collecting. A friend had tipped me off that an auction house was selling a group of books that had belonged to Warner and Ackland. The lot was made up of 18 volumes, all of them biographical or autobiographical – journals, letters, memoirs and diaries as well as biographies and autobiographies. I bid, and won, and a big box of books arrived after a brief Covid delay.

I asked Mr George Wewiora at the auction house about the provenance of the books, and he kindly replied: 'The books were originally sold by Dominic Winter who were responsible for disposing of the contents of Warner's estate round about 1980. They were sold as a collection of biographical works and the significance of the signatures was overlooked at the time. They were purchased by a private collector in Bury (Lancashire) who was the former Director of Education of Bury. Following the collector's death 3 years ago we were asked to clear the huge library of books he left behind. We are still disposing of the library and discovered the Warner/Ackland books amongst them still with the original Dominic Winter invoice.'

Eleven of the books belonged to Valentine, two of them being gifts (one from Alyse Gregory, one from Sylvia). Six belonged to Sylvia, three of them gifts from Valentine. The remaining book was a gift to both of them. All of the books have either a bookplate or a signature, and most include their dates of acquisition (between April 1929 and 1970). Some include marginal and other markings, and on the basis of this small sample Valentine was the more assiduous annotator. I have gone through the books looking for marginalia and include a compressed version of what I found in the list below. Pedantry, snooping, honest curiosity and love of the author all played their part in this quest for traces. I ploughed on regardless through Valentine's copy of Bernard Berenson's diaries (see 10. Below) even as my list of marked pages grew to absurd lengths. Fandom, scholarship, affection and absurdity are not exactly strangers to one other.

1. *A Quaker Journal, Being the Diary and Reminiscences of William Lucas of Hitchin (1804-1861), A Member of the Society of Friends, Vol II*, eds G.E. Bryant and G.P. Baker (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1933). Inscribed 'Sylvia, on Valentine's birthday, with Valentine's Love. 20. v. 34'.

2. *Dr Campbell's Diary of a Visit to England in 1775*, ed. James L. Clifford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947). With Valentine Ackland's bookplate inside front cover.

3. [William Hale White], *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d. but 1913). Pen signature 'Sylvia Townsend Warner' inside front

Maiden Newton, Dochester.  
22:11:1969

Dear Mr Smith,

Here, at letter lag last,  
is the book of Eskimo  
Sculpture. I have  
looked at the illustrations  
with great interest & admir-  
ation, remembering what  
Pastor said:  
L'art est plus belle  
D'une femme rebelle.  
For I was comparing them  
in my mind with some  
day sculptures - I had looked  
at each, where the plaster  
of the objects for the most  
part only reflects the action of



*Life-Writing, Genre and Criticism in the Texts of Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland: Women Writing for Women*

Ailsa Granne

Routledge – 2020 – 9780367520724

**Ailsa Granne** holds a BA in literature from the Open University and an MA from King's College London. She completed her PhD in 2015 at the Centre for Life Writing Research at King's. Before becoming a student of English literature, her career was spent working in the NHS as a pharmacist and later as a hospital general manager.

Sylvia Townsend Warner has increasingly become recognized as a significant and distinctive talent amongst twentieth-century authors. This volume explores her remarkable relationship with Valentine Ackland – her partner for 40 years – by closely examining their letters and diaries alongside a selection of their other texts, in particular their poetry. This analysis reveals the crucial role their writing played in establishing, maintaining and defending their intimacy and describes the emergence of an alternative textual world upon which they became wholly reliant. Examining how Warner and Ackland exploited the distance between their lived life and their accounts of it gives rise to many fascinating and untold stories. Furthermore, in investigating the fluidity of the boundaries between letters, diaries and fiction this book also provides a fresh perspective on these life-writing forms.

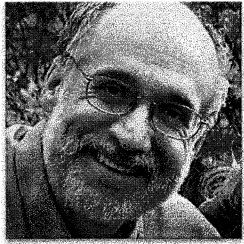
Warner's and Ackland's need to speak as women, writers and lovers shaped their texts so that they became not simply records of events nor acts of communication but complex documents in which love is won and lost, myths are created and lives are changed, as will be the perspectives of those who read this book. (publisher's blurb)

On a personal note: Congratulations and kudos to Ailsa! This is an important book in Warner/Ackland studies. Foremost is its shift in perspective – from St. Sylvia & pathetic Valentine to one that humanizes both Warner and her tormented and less-talented lover. I now wonder if Valentine had not met Sylvia, or had run off with Elizabeth, could she have honed her gifts to a happier and finer degree? The book is well-sourced, including much unpublished materials; its arguments well-supported by a wide knowledge of the current theoretical approaches to life-writing, i.e., letters, diaries, memoir, autobiographical fiction, autobiography, and queer theory. Above all, it is very readable, well-organized and a fascinating story of shared lives lived, and shared lives altered by textual practice.

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Composer **Jonathan David** has produced a CD of his songs for solo voice and piano, *The Persistence of Song*, on the Centaur label. Of the 16, two are *Azrael* (soprano) and *King Duffus* (baritone). For more see [jonathandavidmusic.com](http://jonathandavidmusic.com)

rolling cylinders between the palms:  
these Eskimo sculptures have  
so much attention, almost as  
if the figures had been  
implicit in the road or  
~~some~~ waiting for the artist  
to reveal them; and this  
makes the artist much more  
~~is~~ significant than the holder  
of cylinders.  
I am sorry to have kept  
the book so long. Perhaps  
you heard from Aylmer Francis  
how we had to go to  
Laden for Valentine to have  
a further operation.  
Yours sincerely  
Sylvia Townsend Warner.



**Lolly Willowes**  
by Michael Alec Rose

This two-act chamber opera premiered on April 18, 2019 at the Midtown Arts & Theater Center, Houston, Texas. The *Houstonia* magazine wrote

“inspired by Mozart’s treatment of music and drama, Rose has crafted a haunting score for vocalists and string quartet, with the latter filling both a pragmatic and imaginative function. Without the restraint of a conductor or limitations of an orchestra pit, the four string players play an equal role onstage as eerie presences that dance and swirl around Laura, embodying the book’s whispered voices that guide her as she ventures out into the rural village of Great Mop.”

Mr. Rose writes of his opera:

“One of my best days was three years ago, shortly after I sent my libretto-adaptation of *Lolly Willowes* to Tanya Stobbs. Tanya wrote back to say that I had done “a fantastic job condensing *Lolly Willowes* to this essence.” I started composing the music that day in earnest.

My whole life, I have been bewitched by melody. No matter if it’s Josquin or Jerome Kern, Mozart or Joni Mitchell, Elgar or Ellington: the rise and fall of a great melodic line, the give and take of its rhythm, the way it gives wild flight to its already airborne lyrics – these gifts are obvious and arcane magic to me, alchemy, a transformation of leaden feeling into expressive gold.

I recognized in Laura Willowes a woman whose odyssey of self-understanding corresponds to the miracle of song, whose ordeal and transfiguration make an all-encompassing melodic arc. I knew I must find a way to realize this music.

One thing you may hear in the music is my lifelong hunch that Laura (or anyone) cannot undergo such an adventure of self-discovery alone. There is always a set of guiding spirits – *daimones* – giving encouragement and admonition. There is always an abiding force making all life-affirmations possible, going by many, many names, an energy both incomprehensible and very near, potentially empowering because, in the end, it gracefully lets us *be*.

What I also hope everyone hears – what I hope I have offered – is a Sabbath of melodies, a congregation of singable tunes, investigating their own true natures, learning their combined, complex landscape by heart. This catalogue of songs is nothing more or less than Lolly herself.

As a composer and music teacher, I have spent a lifetime of energy on the unyielding question of music’s “morality.” It is one reason I think I was so drawn to this story. Who is it that answers Laura’s desperate voice of need? I don’t know if the power of song is moral, immoral, or amoral. I do know that it is *amorous*: motivating, upholding, and becoming love for everyone and everything.”

For more information, or to contact him, please see [Michaelalecrose.com](http://Michaelalecrose.com)

766 *f* [Laura straightens to her full height and noble stature] *mf, legato*

pledge! I am a witch by vo - ca - tion!

770 *f* *mf* *f*

Sa - tant! He took pi - ty on my be - wild - er - ment, he