



Moth at the Window: Poetry of Grover W. Clayton and Recollections of Indiana

Mary F. Lachman

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For more than sixty years a handwritten poetry journal languished in an attic until it was discovered by the author while sorting through her mother's personal effect prior to the estate sale. When Lachman read the poems she was enthralled by the writing of a man she had never known.

In "Moth at the Window" the author weaves together poems from that original collection with historical tidbits of the era and her own personal reflections of travels to her grandparent's home.

Here is an excerpt from the book...

Kissing the Rose

I kissed a prairie rose, a bud of rarest hue,
Upon its dainty lips, I felt a drop of dew.
A thrill of wondrous awe imbued me through and through
And something seemed to say that God had kissed it too.

Moth at the Window: Poetry of Grover W. Clayton and Recollections of Indiana Details

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Author : Mary F. Lachman

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From Reader Review *Moth at the Window: Poetry of Grover W. Clayton and Recollections of Indiana* for online ebook

Candace Lacroix says

My girlfriend won this and read her favorites to me, Which I fell in love with. A great piece of work...Moth's scare me but the artwork brought a whole new beauty to my fear.

Amanda Butler says

I received this copy through Goodreads First Reads.

The premise of this book is beautiful; the author found her grandfather's poetry hidden away in an attic. This discovery led to not only a family treasure, but an inside look at mid-western America. Mary F. Lachman's grandfather, Grover Clayton, was a dentist in a small town in Indiana. The poems throughout this book span from the 1920's to the 1940's.

Lachman begins the book with an introduction, a short summary of Indiana during this time period, and a summary of the relevant family history. She also peppers her own childhood memories of Indiana throughout the narrative, some of which do seem out of place. I found the way the family history was presented slightly confusing, even with the genealogy listed in the back. I found it amazing that the author can trace her family to the eighteenth century. I loved the fact that she included pictures of G.W. Clayton and the family. In this sense, the reading experience becomes the action of holding someone's history in your hands.

Clayton's education from Union Christian College is reflected in his traditional poems. With most of his poems in rhythmic couplets or ABAB format, I as the reader felt drawn toward the subject matter, which spanned from religion to a sense of wonderment at the beauty of nature. Other themes include love and loss.

My favorite poems included "Campfires", "A Wish", "Human Cloth", "Longing" (A poem written by Clayton and his wife), and "Twilight."

There were some grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors throughout the text. An edit note seems to have been made on page 155, "(check date)."

This book is cemented further as a family heirloom as the author's son provided inner illustrations as well as the cover. The illustrations, history, verses, and anecdotes all come together to create a slice of American history.

This review can also be found on my blog at: <https://arsamandica.wordpress.com/201....>

Mary Lachman says

Review posted at Barnes & Noble by Kathrin Lassila Day - March 2015

This sweet, moving book is filled with poetry and an especially personal variety of history. Mary Lachman (a

friend of mine) has combined her grandfather's poems—a trove she discovered after his death—with her own childhood vacation experiences of the region where he lived. His poems are an intimate autobiography; her stories give us the day-to-day scenes of family life that, though they usually see print only in biographies of eminent figures, make up so much of the culture of a particular place and time. In the case of *Moth at the Window*, the place is southern Indiana and the time the mid-twentieth century (with glances back to earlier generations). Every chapter provides poems of a particular theme, along with Mary's memories.

Mary gives us just enough wonderful vacation scenes to make us wish for more. She had an uncle who “would spread peanut butter on sliced Vidalia onions.” She had an aunt whose bathroom was done completely in pink, from the tile to the rug to the faux-fur cover over the toilet lid. She and her brother were at her step-grandmother's house one day when an auburn piglet wandered into the yard. Mary and her brother chased it ferociously, and must have come incredibly close to catching it, but the pig “scrambled and squealed and scampered into little crannies between bushes that we children could never fit through.” They lost the race, to their deep chagrin.

Mary's grandfather, Grover W. Clayton, was a high school principal and a dedicated amateur poet—which today sounds like an incongruous combination, but it shouldn't. There are more than 80 poems in this book, and although Clayton wasn't Shelley (and who among us is?), he wrote poems of wisdom and feeling that show us a man with a great heart. The book has love poems, religious poems, poems about nature, meditations on death and loss—including the death of Clayton's infant son—and many poems in which one watches a human being sorting out his values, choices, and path through life.

A few excerpts:

“The crown of life is confidence of friends.
It may be earned, but never bought nor sold.”

“Though it may seem to be a paradox,
We only keep the love we give away.”

“When the sun has set
And men view my life
In its afterglow,
May they truly say
They have lost a friend.”

Thank you, Mary, for a book full of warmth.

Mary Lachman says

Moth at the Window by Mary Lachman

Reviewed by Barbara Bryner 3/15

Prompted by the discovery of a decades-old cache of poems hand-written on scraps of paper, Mary Lachman has prepared a loving tribute to dentist and part-time minister Grover Washington Clayton, 1884-1959, a grandfather she never knew. The book is well-organized, beginning with a brief introduction to the history of Indiana, where Clayton's family had lived since the 1840's. Lachman has grouped Clayton's poems thematically between prose sections of her own memories of visits to her mother's family. The text is

illustrated by many family photographs and some paintings, most notably “Moth at the Window” by the author's son.

The insight into her grandfather's life provided by his poems is an enviable heritage to his descendants. Trying to discern a man's inner life through his poetry may lead to intriguing differences of opinion. Since many of the poems are undated, it must be difficult if not impossible to correlate poetic topics to known life events.

Some of the poems especially appealed to me: “Apologia”, “Room Within the Heart”, “Reflections on a New Year's Eve” and “Introspection”. Others seemed trite or obscure. Any study of the development of writing style and ability is hindered by lack of dates. Clayton must have been a modest man writing for his own satisfaction, not for posterity!

The book could have benefited by closer proof-reading in both prose and poetry sections. However, some of what I perceived as misspelling or awkward word usage may be a result of the difficulty of deciphering the hand-writing. Or it may be a difference in interpretation. (For example, is the title “The Mountain Trial” a misspelling-- or a play on words? Regardless, Lachman has produced a remarkable labor of love.

Talix A.R. A.R. says

Moth at the Window - Love it!

Not only is this a personal treasure for M.F. Lachman who chose to share the insights, passions and creative immoralities of generations both past + present with the world but this is a beautiful piece of work combining the talents of many, all of one family. A Stunning and inspiring piece of art.

To find something so unique, profound and intriguing left of those who came before, is such a special and transformative experience but to then openly share it with the world - A great honor and even enlightening ordeal for the rest of us - Explosive!

My only sadness lives upon the unfortunate truth that Grover. W. Clayton will never know the power of his passions on others (me, now a fan). Deeply inspiring - And proof that the being is so much more than ever perceived on the surface.

Talix Cross
A fellow poet

Brenda Schneider says

Enjoyable poetry. I received this book through Good reads.
