

BOOKS

This novel is by a very talented Southern author

The Annunciation

By Ellen Gilchrist. Published by Little, Brown & Company, 1983.

In an excellent opening chapter, writer (and NPR commentator) Ellen Gilchrist introduces Amanda, a delightful, spunky four-year-old madly in love with her eight-year-old cousin Guy. The children live at Esperanza, a remote plantation in the delta; the time is the 1940s.

"Amanda and Guy. Amanda and Guy. The only white children for ten miles down either road. The only white children with two pairs of shoes and shampoo. Amanda and Guy and the love that passed between them like a field of light. Everyone at Esperanza watched it, but only the black people knew what they were watching. Only the black people knew what it meant."

As Amanda grows to be the prettiest girl in the county and Guy develops into an all-star football player, their love deepens and blossoms. In the short span of the first chapter, Gilchrist captures the first ten years of their love with tenderness, humor, and a

compelling authenticity.

The story of *The Annunciation* is Amanda's story: lovable Amanda, feisty to the core, unconventional, and totally true to herself. She gives birth to a daughter when she is fourteen, but has no say when the baby is given over to the nuns for adoption. Both Guy and Amanda are haunted by the child as they go separate ways: Amanda to school, marriage, and a self-destructive New Orleans social life. Much later, she breaks a hard-drinking pattern and moves (alone) to the hill country of Arkansas to find herself and to translate the lost poems of a French girl.

It is in Fayetteville (where author Gilchrist actually lives) that Amanda emerges from her depression. At mid-life, the sparkling clear-eyed child within comes forth again. She falls in love with Will, a younger man, on the same day she gets a Chinese fortune cookie that says: "Your most secret desire is about to come true." Amanda and Will's unconventional relationship brings about what Amanda describes as: "an outrageous pregnancy. . . . She would wake from sleep and be filled with a terrible joy, a holy and beautiful wonder."

Underlying Amanda's story is the story of the poet whose lost work she is translating. Helene also had an illicit love affair at an early age and was locked up by the nuns. After her baby was taken away, the girl killed herself; her maid hid the poems, which were lost for centuries. The child poet's dark view of religion accords perfectly with Amanda's. The brilliant irreverent poems are the backbone of the novel, pointing clearly to Amanda's spiritual conflict:

Sing a song of Jesus, so powerless he allowed his own subjects to torture him to death.

Sing Jacob, ready to hack his own kid and blame the blood on God.

Sing Joseph, sweet faceless cuckold of history.

All on their way with Sister Clara to the land the meek inherit, the ones whose shadows tremble in the sun.

Ellen Gilchrist is some fine story teller. If you loved her collection of short stories, *Victory Over Japan*, as I did, you will also enjoy this earlier 1983 first novel. Gilchrist is an original voice, a very talented Southerner whose sense of place ranks her with the best of the new regional writers.

—Lois Wadsworth

Inside a Summer Morning



by Loren Swift

I came outside and sat in the morning. Inside the morning. The world, enveloped in a soft lemon-yellow light, engulfed every strand of grass and feathery, beaded head of grass.

... inside the light heading diagonally through the fruit trees ... inside the unceasing drone, mantra-like, of thousands upon thousands of insects seen and unseen, already busy.

... inside the trills, songs and chattering close and distant of unseen birds circumscribing the interior of the sky and interstices of trees.

... inside the beginning of the day—pre-heat, already plenty warm—enough so that earth smells rise into the fresh light and no dew remains. The cats lie sprawled in the mottled shade as if on a baked, burnt-orange African plain . . . all forewarning of a great, latent summer scorcher by mid-afternoon.

The morning is engulfing.

THEATRE

Sagebrush Cinderella

Just where is Sagebrush, Oregon?

Don't feel bad if you don't know, because it's the fictional setting for the Neighborhood Players-River Road Parks' latest production entitled *Sagebrush Cinderella*.

The non-existent Sagebrush Hotel sets the scene for this family Western that boasts a Duchess, an ex-pirate, a clogging clan, a missing shoe, an a tour knee at law (that's Western for lawyer) and of course our Cinderella style heroine.

Writer/Director Janet Steiger Carr has blended the talents of her 19 member cast, who range in age from 9 to 14, into a hootin' and hollerin' western melodrama that

will delight the young and young at heart.

The production will open Thursday, August 22nd, in the Kelly Middle School Theatre, at 850 Howard. Additional performances will be Friday, August 23 and Saturday and Sunday, August 24 and 25. The Thursday and Friday shows will be at 7:00, Saturday and Sunday at 2:00. General admission is \$2.00. The family rate is \$6.00 for up to six people.

There will also be a special 50¢ preview show on Wednesday, August 21, at 7:00. Proceeds from this show will go to benefit Lane Co. kids with kidney disease. For more information or tickets call 688-4052.

A place for everyone!



PERALANDRA

BOOKS & MUSIC FOR THE MIND & SPIRIT

OPEN MON.-SAT., 10-6
790 EAST 11th (AT ALDER)
485-4848

Southern comfort at Folkways

Hammocks, straw hats, natural fibre clothing, jewelry and folk art from around the world!

Fifth St. Public Market downstairs 683-2204

762 E. 13th Ave. next to the Excelsior 343-8667



FOLKWAYS IMPORTS

FUTONS & FRAMES

Bed Frames and Couch Frames starting at \$95
Futons starting at \$85

May be seen at Saturday Market or Michael's Custom Woodworking 89703 Demming Rd. in Elmira

For more information call 935-2443

VISA MasterCard

Deliveries available



122 E. BROADWAY, EUGENE, OR 97401

HUNDERTWASSER
SUMMER OF '85

JULY 5TH -
SEPTEMBER 15TH

EXHIBIT OF IMPORTANT WORKS

- "REGENTAG PORTFOLIO" (10 PIECES)
- "MIDORI NO NAMIDA" (5 PIECES)
- "GREEN POWER" - "MEADOWMAN"

35 DIFFERENT IMAGES - BOOKS - POSTERS

HOURS: TUES-SAT 11-5:30 (503) 344-5580
SPECIAL HOURS BY APPOINTMENT



MAINSTAGE THEATRE COMPANY
presents
Rodgers and Hammerstein's

The King and I

THEATER-ON-THE-MALL

(Will Move to Soreng Theatre in Case of Rain)

Final 3 Performances
August 1st, 2nd & 3rd

Tickets: \$5.00 Regular and \$4.00 Discount
(Discount prices for Seniors and Children 12 yrs old and under)

CALL 683-4368

EUGENE'S BEST THEATER BARGAIN

Tickets Available at:

The Bon, Fletcher's for Children, Backstage Dancewear, Postal Instant Press and at 975 Overpark Arcade.