

Book-review : wild strawberry patch by James Ramp

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BOOK-REVIEW

WILD STRAWBERRY PATCH by James Ramp
(Fanfare Publications PO Box 2312, San Francisco, Calif.) \$2.—

Here is, at long last, a collection of short stories wholly to be recommended, a book full of genuine sentiment, yet evading the pitfalls of sentimentality. Miles removed from the world of hustlers, and equally far removed from the darkness of the big cities, the author creates a world of his own. He is to be congratulated for the beauty of his writing, the tenderness of his emotions, and for his ability to draw a picture of a rural world in which true happiness can still be achieved. Even if one were tempted to classify these stories as fables, the obvious sincerity of the author makes them—even looked at as fables—wholly convincing and their homespun flavor and deeply felt love for the countryside shines through.

In the recountings of the coming together of lonesome farm boys, aided and abetted occasionally by understanding fathers or grandmothers, one feels a tenderness and warmth for *people* and accepts the fact that they are 'doing what comes nacherally'. 'Ah, Wilderness were Paradise enow!'

Diego de Angelis

Homosexual Drama And Its Disguises

By Stanley Kauffmann

A recent Broadway production raises again the subject of the homosexual dramatist. It is a subject that nobody is comfortable about. All of us admirably «normal» people are a bit irritated by it and wish it could disappear. However, it promises to be a matter of continuing, perhaps increasing, significance.

The principal complaint against homosexual dramatists is well-known. Because three of the most successful American playwrights of the last twenty years are (reputed) homosexuals and because their plays often treat of women and marriage, therefore, it is said, postwar American drama presents a badly distorted picture of American women, marriage, and society in general. Certainly there is substance in the charge; but is it rightly directed?

The first, obvious point is that there is no law against heterosexual dramatists, and there is no demonstrable cabal against their being produced. If there are heterosexuals, who have talent equivalent with those three men, why aren't these «normal» people writing? Why don't they counterbalance or correct the distorted picture?

But, to talk of what is and not of what might be, the fact is that the homosexual dramatist is not to blame in this matter. If he writes of marriage and of other relationships about which he knows or cares little, it is because he has no choice but to masquerade. Both convention and the law demand it. In society the homosexual's life must be discreetly concealed. As material for drama, that must be even more intensely concealed. If he is to write of his experience, he must invent a two-sex version of the one-sex experience that he really knows. It is we who insist on it, not he.

There would seem to be only two alternative ways to end this masquerading. First, the Dramatists' Guild can pass a law forbidding membership to those who do not pass a medico-psychological test for heterosexuality. Or, second, social and theatrical convention can be widened so that homosexual life may be as freely dramatized as heterosexual life, may be as frankly treated in our drama as it is in contemporary fiction.