

In this we have a stalwart western hero who pits a strong back and a "never say die" attitude against an accidentally uncovered vampire from the days of the Spanish Conquistadores. The story is exciting and, though it abounds with pulp convention, will stay with the reader long after being laid aside. Howard's writing makes it near impossible for us to forget that horrible, red-eyed thing that has escaped the mound. Another of his stories in this area is worth mentioning. "The Man on the Ground" is a western spectre story that displays clear, colorful writing and a strong understanding of the western character.

Though Howard's western work is of little interest to the western fan, his work borderlining the field is of more than passing interest to both western and fantasy readers.

—Joe R. Lansdale

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HOWARD, Troy. See PAINE, Lauran.

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HOWARD, Vechel. See RIGSBY, Howard.

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HOYT, Nelson. See KING, Albert.

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HUDSON, Lois Phillips. American. Born in Jamestown, North Dakota, 24 August 1927. Educated at the University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Washington, B.A. 1949; University of Washington, Seattle, 1949; Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, M.A. 1951. Married Randolph Hudson in 1950 (divorced); two daughters. Teacher at junior high school, Shelton, Washington, 1949-50; and high school, Ithaca, New York, 1951-55. Assistant Professor, 1969-75, and since 1975 Associate Professor of English, University of Washington, Seattle. Since 1952 full-time writer. Recipient: Friends of American Writers award, 1962. Address: Department of English, GN-30, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98195, U.S.A.

#### WESTERN PUBLICATIONS

##### Novel

*The Bones of Plenty*. Boston, Little Brown, 1962; London, Heinemann, 1963.

##### Short Stories

*Reapers of the Dust: A Prairie Chronicle*. Boston, Little Brown, 1965.

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Lois Phillips Hudson's reputation is secured chiefly by two works, a novel of the Great Drought and Depression published in 1962, *The Bones of Plenty*, followed by a collection of short stories, *Reapers of the Dust* in 1964. Although both of these works were reviewed widely at the time of publication, and almost universally praised, Hudson has acquired only a modest critical reputation. Part of the reason is that both books went out of print rather quickly and remained so for almost 20 years. But with the paperback re-issue of both books in 1984, her work has become accessible to a whole new generation of readers. In the interim years Hudson has written many stories and essays which as yet remain uncollected, although a number of her stories have been widely anthologized. Her principal effort during these intervening years has gone toward a new novel, a manuscript of some 2000 pages, titled *The Kindly Fruits of the Earth*.

Both *The Bones of Plenty* and *Reapers of the Dust* have frequently been compared to *The Grapes of Wrath*, a comparison Hudson herself dislikes. Although the comparison is perhaps inevitable, as the books recount the same historical disasters, Hudson's conceptualization seems grittier, without a trace of sentimentality or cosy romanticizing of prairie life, though no less eloquent or impassioned than Steinbeck's work. Katherine Anne Porter praised Hudson for just this sense of authenticity: "[Hudson has created] an answer in pure human speech to the sub-human characters in *Grapes of Wrath* . . . Maybe this is because she is within her scene, a living part of it, and not a tourist with a note-book."

In her essay, "On Saving History from the Historians," Hudson writes that in order to truly understand the irreconcilable fact of any wholesale disaster, one must begin with "feeling one rape, one death," of experiencing the "small desolations" that have added up to that incomprehensibly vast desolation." In *The Bones of Plenty* Hudson evokes the whole "desolation" of the Dust Bowl through her rendering of the "small desolations" one family experiences in their last year as "reapers of the dust" of the North Dakota plains.

To this end Hudson invests her narrative with nothing short of a tragic sense by juxtaposing the urgency of time with the human desire for timelessness, symbolized in the idea of roots. Her narrative strategy is to isolate a moment in time by choosing a day and telling the story of that day. The first chapter is titled simply, "Friday, February 16, 1933," the last, "Saturday, May 16, [1934]." Yet within each specific moment, Hudson employs another technique which gives a sense of the simultaneity of time and the tragic connection of events. Mighty events are placed against little ones. World events are juxtaposed to the "small desolations" of prairie life, creating a tragic montage of events with workings of its own. Thus she succeeds in creating a nonlinear structure, which is framed by the linear structure of chronology—the tiny "desolations" are set within the larger context of a world in turmoil. Banks may be failing all across the country, but we feel the closing of the Eureka town bank because the characters we have come to know have put their money there.

Take the chapter titled, "Saturday, November 11." It is turkey slaughtering day, the final harvest of the year. But across the plains, farm strikes disrupt this final harvest. In New York, a "cloud of dust . . . from the prairies [darkens] the sky . . . as it pass[es] over on its way to sink into the Atlantic." And across the Atlantic, the German Reich withdraws from the League of Nations.

If time is the relentless pursuer, then space is that spot in the universe where humankind endeavors to hold still, to create places which speak his name. What the book establishes is the terrible cost of putting down roots—those connections of culture, craft, and habit which tell us who we are.

The book, to be sure, is full of social protest. Hudson mercilessly exposes the economic system which has betrayed the farmer out of existence, and shows the western myth of rugged individualism to be fatally flawed, a myth that has become as used up as the land itself. The pioneer virtues extolled by the central character George Custer are in marked contrast to the realism of his father-in-law, Will Shepard, who knows that the days of the small farmer are over. Sheer will and strength, even cleverness, are no match for the economic and natural forces unleashed upon the world in 1933. But Hudson's work goes beyond a critique of the economic and political debacle that sent the world into chaos. Her ultimate concern is to affirm the determination of the human spirit to endure the impermanence of existence.

*Reapers of the Dust* begins where *Bones* leaves off. It is comprised of a series of 12 interlocking stories which trace the family's last months on the prairie and their journey to the Washington coast, where they begin a nomadic life in search of the roots they have lost. The child Lucy, through whose eyes many of the events in *Bones* are shown, becomes the grown narrator of the stories in *Reapers of the Dust*. The stories are bound together by the themes of displacement and loss, and by the redemption the discovery of love provides. Again and again her characters seek out the "landmarks" which will tell them who they are. They search for a configuration of footprints in the snow, a pattern in the prairie sky, the "fresh and green fields" of their innocence, and they look into the faces of their children for intimations of their own immortality.

Both *Reapers* and *Bones* depict the betrayal of good people by a harsh and indifferent universe, the rootlessness and dislocation which follow, and the courage and pride with which they bear their sorrows. Though both *Bones* and *Reapers* chronicle the last grim years of the prairie farmer, ultimately, Hudson writes not of defeat but of hope. Both works, and the stories of the intervening 20 years, are bound together by a single narrative thread: the search for permanence in a world that has become tragically impermanent.

*The Kindly Fruits of the Earth* bears mention not only because it has occupied so much of Hudson's life, but because it is a fictional reflection of her years of work as an environmental and human rights activist. The book connects the Abolitionist movement on the East coast with the settlement of California during the tumultuous decade that preceded the Civil War. It describes the devastation to the land as well as the outright genocide of the Native American people of California.

Hudson is a consummate writer who possesses a wondering, remembering eye for the tiniest detail, a keen ear for the rhythms of human speech, and a comic sense that redeems her work from bitterness, a writer whose time has clearly come.

—Ann Putnam

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**HUFFAKER, Clair.** American. Born in Magna, Utah, in 1928. Educated at Princeton University, New Jersey; Columbia University, New York, B.A.; the Sorbonne, Paris. Served in United States Navy during World War II; gunner's mate on aircraft carrier "Ranger." Married: one son. Assistant editor, *Time*, Chicago, Illinois; editor, *Action* magazine; writer and screenwriter, head of production company, 1969–90. *Died in 1990.*

#### WESTERN PUBLICATIONS

##### Novels

- Badge for a Gunfighter.* New York and London, Fawcett, 1957.  
*Rider from Thunder Mountain.* New York, Fawcett, 1957; London, Fawcett, 1959.  
*Cowboy* (novelization of screenplay). New York and London, Fawcett, 1958.  
*Guns of Rio Conchos.* New York, Fawcett, 1958; London, Fawcett, 1959; as *Rio Conchos*, London, Futura, 1975.  
*Posse from Hell.* New York, Fawcett, 1958; London, Fawcett, 1959.  
*Badman.* New York and London, Fawcett, 1958; as *The War Wagon*, London, Gold Lion, 1974.  
*Flaming Lance.* New York, Simon and Schuster, 1958.  
*Seven Ways from Sundown.* New York, Fawcett, 1960; London, Futura, 1974.  
*Nobody Loves a Drunken Indian.* New York, McKay, 1967.  
*The Cowboy and the Cossack.* New York, Trident Press, 1973.  
*Guns from Thunder Mountain.* New York, Pocket Books, 1975.

#### OTHER PUBLICATIONS

##### Novel

- Good Lord, You're Upside Down!* New York, Cornerstone Library, 1963; London, Muller, 1964.

##### Plays

- Screenplays: *Seven Ways from Sundown*, 1960; *Flaming Star*, with Nunnally Johnson, 1960; *Posse from Hell*, 1961; *Comancheros*, with James Edward Grant, 1961; *The Second Time Around*, 1962; *Rio Conchos*, with Joseph Landon, 1964; *Tarzan and the Valley of Gold*, 1966; *The War Wagon*, 1967; *100 Rifles*, with Tom Gries, 1969; *Hellfighters*, 1970; *Flap (The Last Warrior)*, 1970; *The Deserter* (as Cecil D. Hanse), 1971.

##### Other

- One Time, I Saw Morning Come Home: A Remembrance.* New York, Simon and Schuster, 1974.  
*Clair Huffaker's Profiles of the American West* (for children). New York, Pocket Books, 1976.

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With the production of the movie *Flap* in 1970, Clair Huffaker gained national recognition. Huffaker's early western novels had been fairly typical formula westerns (some adapted from film scripts), although his service as a script writer had given him particular effectiveness with plot situation and dialogue. However, *Flap*, which had originally been published as a novel under the title *Nobody Loves a Drunken Indian*, immediately became a popular movie, and the paperback reprints ran through a number of editions. Huffaker had hit the temper of the times, for the novel dealt with the civil rights of the American Indian and, for good measure, the white man's destruction of the natural environment. The novel even begins with Flapping Eagle's (or Flap's) battle against a bulldozer. Most of all, however, Huffaker introduced a protagonist of romantically heroic proportions who could out-drink, out-fight, and out-manuever his antagonists. *Flap* is not dissimilar to Kazantzakis's *Zorba the Greek*. Interestingly enough, in the