



The Last Titan: A Life of Theodore Dreiser

Jerome Loving

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When Theodore Dreiser first published *Sister Carrie* in 1900 it was suppressed for its seamy plot, colloquial language, and immorality—for, as one reviewer put it, its depiction of "the godless side of American life." It was a side of life experienced firsthand by Dreiser, whose own circumstances often paralleled those of his characters in the turbulent, turn-of-the-century era of immigrants, black lynchings, ruthless industrialists, violent labor movements, and the New Woman. This masterful critical biography, the first on Dreiser in more than half a century, is the only study to fully weave Dreiser's literary achievement into the context of his life. Jerome Loving gives us a Dreiser for a new generation in a brilliant evocation of a writer who boldly swept away Victorian timidity to open the twentieth century in American literature.

Dreiser was a controversial figure in his time, not only because of his literary efforts, which included publication of the brutal and heartbreaking *An American Tragedy* in 1925, but also because of his personal life, which featured numerous sexual liaisons, included membership in the communist party, merited a 180-page FBI file, and ended in Hollywood. *The Last Titan* paints a full portrait of the mature Dreiser between the two world wars—through the roaring twenties, the stock market crash, and the Depression—and describes his contact with important figures from Emma Goldman and H.L. Mencken to two presidents Roosevelt. Tracing Dreiser's literary roots in Hawthorne, Emerson, Thoreau, and especially Whitman, Loving has written what will surely become the standard biography of one of America's best novelists.

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