

## Book Reviews

**Abigail Santamaria, *Joy: Poet, Seeker, and the Woman Who Captivated C.S. Lewis*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015), \$28.00 (hardcover).  
Joy Davidman, *A Naked Tree: Love Sonnets to C. S. Lewis and Other Poems*. Ed. Don W. King. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015), \$30.00 (paperback).**

One hundred years after Joy Davidman's birth, two new books help solidify her permanent place in the world of letters. Readers now have all of her poetry carefully curated in one volume, and access to her life through a uniquely authoritative biography. Don W. King and Abigail Santamaria have labored to bring Joy Davidman finally, fully before us.

Before beginning, the reader should know that I played a small part in these two books. I discussed the poems with King over a couple of years and endorsed his book. As she graciously acknowledges, I had a larger hand in Santamaria's biography. I came late and contributed little to *Joy*; I hope that in a similar way and for the same reasons, I have done what any Inking would.

*Joy: Poet, Seeker, and the Woman Who Captivated C.S. Lewis* impresses everywhere. In the years since Lyle Dorsett's *And God Came In*, much has come to light about the life and person of Joy Davidman. The depth and breadth of Santamaria's research and the incisiveness of her writing make this biography definitive. She had unprecedented access to people Davidman knew and conducted interviews with many people who have since died. Belle Kaufmann, David Gresham, and many others gave the author substantial firsthand information. Douglas Gresham let her explore the newly discovered Davidman papers years before anyone else. This primary research proves especially effective in distinguishing between the sometimes sanitized versions of Davidman's life (some of which she offered about herself).

Helpfully, *Joy* organizes Davidman's life into three mostly chronological categories: accomplished poet, devoted seeker, and the woman C.S. Lewis loved. *Joy* does much to clarify our understanding of Davidman as a poet. Her poetry in King's edition, considered alongside Santamaria's work, gives readers a clear view of Davidman as a respected poet with a significant reputation; our understanding of twentieth century poetry should now widen to include her. Significantly, *Joy* also demonstrates how Davidman more than once wrote series of sonnets after she had "developed an intense crush" on an older man "who did not return her affection" (Santamaria 76). Santamaria cites Joy's brother Howard Davidman's claim that his sister "'pursued with vigor what she wanted'" (118). *Joy* helps us understand Davidman's some-

times fearsome emotional ambition and contextualizes her sonnets for Lewis.

*Joy* also describes Davidman's role as a seeker of truth. Davidman's own spiritual journey recognizably mirrors Lewis's, with an early rejection of weakly held faith, an intellectual odyssey during which she sorted through philosophical stances that led to dead ends, and ultimately a shocked encounter with a God who was there. She called herself "the world's most astonished atheist" (Davidman "Longest Way" 23). Coming from an agnostic, nominally Jewish home, her conversion followed doomed love affairs, a decadeslong commitment to the Communist Party ending in disillusionment, a curious commitment to the pseudopsychiatric practices of Dianetics, and a deeply troubled marriage.

Eventually Davidman found herself one night on her knees, speaking to a God she could hardly believe she believed in. *Joy* traces Davidman's more deliberate approach to her newfound worldview: "'this time I looked before I leaped; I *studied* religions'" (qtd. in Santamaria 176). Her studies and nascent Christianity soon led her to Lewis. *Joy* guides readers along Davidman's tortuous path to Christ and to the man who meant most to her on her journey.

Thanks in part to newly available materials, *Joy* revealingly examines Davidman's curious courtship with Lewis. Clearly, Davidman likely went to England with designs on snaring, even seducing Lewis. Certainly she had already started writing sonnets for him, however much she may have despaired of winning his love. *Joy* describes the initial tensions between the two, mostly due to Davidman's "vigor," observing that Lewis "confided his true feelings for Joy to no one, perhaps not even to himself" (Santamaria 302). But once Lewis finally acknowledged his love for her, Davidman surprised him with almost unimaginable happiness.

*Joy* serves as a corrective, dispelling much of the romanticism that has grown up around Davidman's troubled marriage to William Gresham and her eventual courtship with Lewis. While Gresham certainly had disastrous shortcomings that contributed a lion's share to the downfall of their marriage, Davidman too played her part. Santamaria calls into question the demonized view readers have come to accept about Gresham, showing Davidman's willingness to paint a darker picture of him and a brighter picture of herself as partly to blame. Revealingly, when her boys got a pet lizard, Davidman named him "Bill." Although she may have had reason enough for resenting and divorcing Gresham and for seeking solace in the company of the man she most admired, Davidman appears in these pages as no innocent victim. Nor does Gresham seem nearly so much of a monster.

Ultimately, *Joy* sets several records straight about this complex woman. *Joy* dispels myths (no reliable records of any physical abuse by Gresham have appeared) and corrects facts (Davidman shared no poetry prize with Robert Frost). Thanks to Santamaria's clear, balanced presentation of the facts, readers find a portrait of a broken life on the mend and finally made

whole by the Great Healer. In the end, despite (or even because of) her difficulties, Davidman gave Lewis a happiness that had long passed him by. Refusing temptations to flattery, this book compellingly fulfills a biography's task by sorting through every available account to present Davidman as a real, flawed, whole person. *Joy's* portrait may trouble readers who want some idealized, happy ending. The actual facts prove far less tidy, as real life itself often does.

Don W. King's *A Naked Tree: Love Sonnets to C.S. Lewis and Other Poems*, makes an extraordinary and permanent contribution even as it solidifies Davidman's poetic reputation and offers insight into her complex, brilliant life, including her relationship with Lewis. Readers will find three sections of poetry collected here: Davidman's long-out-of-print *Letter to a Comrade*, poems written before and after that collection, and 61 poems for Lewis, including 45 love sonnets. As King notes, readers previously had access to about seventy poems, but this volume gathers everything currently available in one attractive edition.

*Letter to a Comrade* contains a number of poems revealing Davidman's hopes for the Communist Party and her political outrage on the cusp of the attempted fascist domination of the world by Axis powers. Far from being propaganda, in these poems Davidman's strong voice earned praise from all reviewers for her "great promise" (Santamaria 80). "Snow in Madrid" (quoted in *Shadowlands*) haunts: "The cruel sky lets fall / Something one does not fight" (3-4). *Comrade* captures a strong poet developing a muscular style.

Among the miscellaneous poems, readers will find themes that echo in *Joy*, especially Davidman's earnest striving against odds and despair when her idealism falls short, along with several spiritual themes and metaphors. "Againrising" explores themes of crucifixion and resurrection, years before Davidman's conversion: "spread on the clock / I was crucified... and all inside / I was alive" (11-12, 31-32). But her tone, even while sounding spiritual, often approaches fatalism. "Jacob and the Angel" pictures the narrator "... dead at length, / Out of this rotten earth" (19-20).

Significantly, one theme in the miscellany reappears later. At least twice after falling for an older, unavailable man, Davidman poured out angst, passion, and despair into series of sonnets. In fact, her Lewis poems borrow lines from those written for previous objects of her obsessive affections. "Notes on an Obsession" contains horrific images of pains and concludes "There are many deaths... / And yet this loss is loss, this love hurts too" (II 7-9; cf. "Love Sonnets to C.S. Lewis" IV, 7-9). Davidman clearly longed for, but often painfully despaired of, finding love.

These themes find full voice in the poems to Lewis, only recently discovered, and published here for the first time. Written between 1949-1955, these poems vacillate between hope for and resignation over ever winning Lewis's heart. Readers alternately encounter a woman set at snaring Lewis's

affections with will and passion, meeting rejection, then despairing, only to emerge with greater hope and determination to win Lewis's love. If he had never reciprocated Davidman's love, these poems would ache with embarrassing rawness. But they also display Davidman's keen insight into Lewis. At one point she tells him to "Quarrel with God if you like, but not with me," claiming that she "might have ways to teach you tenderness / More than you have learned from all your prayers" (XXXIX 13-14). She insightfully challenges his glacial indifference to love and his appearance of piety, at one point calling him "my Antarctica" (XXXVI 9). Perhaps these very verses helped Davidman melt Lewis.

Lewis once praised Davidman's mind as "lithe and quick and muscular as a leopard. ... How many bubbles of mine she pricked!" (Lewis 4). These love poems demonstrate her rare understanding of Lewis and show an intimate playfulness that seems to have characterized their courtship. More than once Davidman calls out Lewis for his "love of blondes"; tellingly, she accuses him of protecting himself from love "more by childishness than chastity" (XX 14, XXXVI 5). And though she often despairs of winning Lewis's love, she perceives, even foresees, the kind of happiness they later would enjoy:

But one day, riding on the upper deck  
Of a large, red, respectable Oxford bus  
You in the seat in front, and I behind  
Coveting the back of your nice neck  
Where your hair curls—why, I might lean and  
kiss;  
Somehow I do not think that God would mind.  
(XXXVIII 9-14)

In the end, God did not seem to mind. The swelling pathos alongside the romantic and even erotic nature of these poems allow readers an intimate look inside a love that was—at their writing—still very much up in the air. And while the question of whether Lewis ever read these sonnets remains an unanswered mystery, reading them ourselves gives a deep and poignant glance into their several loves.

King's careful, deliberate, and light touch in editing offers readers an insightful introduction, dates, and helpful end material. Readers will find here a vital addition to their libraries. Two vital additions, in fact. Thanks to Santamaria and King, Joy Davidman now stands before us spoiling for a fight about what mattered most to her: language, God, and love.

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**Logos 6, C.S. Lewis Books Collection. (Faithlife/Logos Bible Software, 2015), \$399.95.**

This review of the Logos 6 version of the Logos Bible Software focuses solely on the C.S. Lewis Books Collection consisting of 30 titles. My journey as a reviewer using the software and the collection is provided below.

First, subscribers should be aware that Faithlife Corporation became the parent company of Logos Bible Software in 2014. Users are hence required to have dual accounts through both companies, which I found confusing but was glad to see the question addressed in the FAQs on the website. Logos 6 is an extremely versatile and impressive set of tools for Bible study, but for use with e-books, the search and study capabilities are significantly more limited.

Books on Logos 6 are referred to as "resources" and appear in your virtual library. The library and software are capable of being synched and used across different digital devices (phones, tablets, etc.), which is useful for today's on-the-go consumer. My own testing only occurred on a desktop PC, so this review does not address functionality on mobile devices or Mac platforms.

#### *Ease of Use and Learning*

The learning curve for using the Logos 6 software is significant. As someone who has taken a database searching graduate-level class and is a regular user of databases and other software, I found Logos in the middle zone of difficulty. It is not solely for technical expert use. In fact the training videos are definitely geared towards church and ministry workers, but the software is also not user-intuitive and easy to navigate. Watching training videos and looking through help menus was essential for me to understand the full capabilities of the software.

I found the training videos by Morris Proctor to be the most helpful. They focus on different software elements allowing you to skip those you don't need. However, the Proctor videos were hard to find on the Logos website. It would have been beneficial to have one or two videos focused solely on using and searching the "Resource Library", rather than skimming through the 5 to 10 I needed to watch to find all of the necessary information. They are, understandably, focused on using the Bible study software capabilities, so Logos may wish to develop new videos for their non-Bible study users as their

e-book collections continue to grow. There are no videos specifically for Logos 6 as the software is still very new, but I found the Logos 5 videos sufficient.

### *Menus*

Upon opening the software, the homepage was overwhelming with feeds from blog posts, daily devotionals, etc. Luckily, the homepage is customizable by the user and can be honed to just those feeds one wishes to see. The tabs and menus are relatively straightforward. Tabs include: Home, Library, and Search. Menus include: Documents, Guides, and Tools. Most of the menus contain Bible study resources which are not applicable to the non-Bible e-book user.

The tools which seemed most beneficial to non-Bible e-book users included: various forms of highlighting, favorites (which may be Logos's version of bookmarking), forming book collections, reading lists, and note taking. The Tools menu is also the heart of the program settings and allows further user customization. The Library tab allows you to view all the books you own, and change the way books are displayed by cover view, details view, etc. with customizable field columns. There is also a simple search box to allow the user to find a title quickly.

### *Searching*

The most valuable feature of Logos 6 for non-Bible e-book users is the Search tab. For non-Bible e-book collections, the "Basic Search" is the only useable option via this tab. A series of helpful searching "examples" appears below the search box to assist users in formatting the kind of search they want. A significant limitation is that there is only one search box, so the searching is command-based, meaning there are certain words and formats the user must enter into the search box to search successfully. For example, in order to exclude a word from your search, a minus sign (-) is entered before the word, such as excluding all instances of the word "education": -education.

If you want to search a particular field, the entry requires the field name, followed by a colon, and then the search terms. For example, to search for an author name, the user enters "author:smith" (which Logos calls a "filter field") to search for authors with "Smith" in their name. Filter field searches are done under the Library tab rather than the Search tab. This is where the help menus and videos become essential to understand how to maximize the search function.

As a user, I would appreciate the eventual implementation of drop-down menus for fields and multiple search boxes for advanced searching, which is more standardized and intuitive. There was one option for drop-down field searching (still with only one search box). However, the fields appeared limited, and I was not able to get it to work well.

Search results are, happily, easy to navigate and exportable into a variety

of file formats and programs, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and as text and HTML documents. Previous searches are also able to be saved and accessed later. There is a great capacity for limiting the kinds of resources being searched and forming different groupings of resources for specific searching needs.

As someone who is often asked to search for C.S. Lewis quotes for patron reference questions, my two big questions for Logos 6 were: "Can it full-text search across books, not just in individual titles?" and "Can it search phrases as well as individual words?" The answer to both questions is YES. Windows 7 allows full-text searching across documents, but I have yet to get it to work with phrases, as previous versions of Windows had allowed. And although I do not use an e-reader, informal polling of users and a brief internet search suggest that it is far from a standard option. My guess (and hope) is that future e-book readers will change these limitations, but for now, Logos 6 has the upper hand by meeting these two significant searching needs.

### ***Books Included***

Another big question I had, which I am sure is shared by many C.S. Lewis fans, is which Lewis books are included in the Logos collection of 30 titles. Here is a complete listing:

<i>Mere Christianity</i>	<i>The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition</i>
<i>The Screwtape Letters</i>	<i>Selected Literary Essays</i>
<i>The Great Divorce</i>	<i>Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Literature</i>
<i>The Abolition of Man</i>	<i>Studies in Words</i>
<i>A Grief Observed</i>	<i>The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature</i>
<i>Miracles</i>	<i>An Experiment in Criticism</i>
<i>Weight of Glory</i>	<i>Image and Imagination: Essays and Reviews</i>
<i>The Problem of Pain</i>	<i>The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis, vols. 1-3, edited by Walter Hooper</i>
<i>George MacDonald An Anthology: 365 Readings</i> +	<i>Letters to an American Lady</i> *
<i>Out of the Silent Planet</i>	<i>Words to Live By: A Guide for the Merely Christian, edited by Paul F. Ford</i> *

<i>Perelandra</i>	<i>A Year with Aslan: Daily Reflections from The Chronicles of Narnia</i> , edited by Julia L. Roller*
<i>That Hideous Strength</i>	<i>A Year with C.S. Lewis: Daily Readings from His Classic Words</i> , edited by Patricia S. Klein*
<i>The Pilgrim's Regress</i>	<i>Yours, Jack: Spiritual Direction from C.S. Lewis</i> , edited by Paul F. Ford*
<i>God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics</i>	<i>The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition</i>
<i>Christian Reflections</i>	<i>Selected Literary Essays</i>

Lewis fans will note right away that several significant titles are missing:

<i>The Chronicles of Narnia</i> (7 titles)	<i>The Four Loves</i>
<i>Surprised by Joy</i>	<i>Letters to Malcolm</i>

Other titles not included:

<i>Boxen</i>	<i>English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama</i>
<i>The Personal Heresy</i>	<i>All My Road Before Me</i>
<i>A Preface to "Paradise Lost"</i>	All poetry titles: <i>Spirits in Bondage</i> , <i>Dymer</i> , <i>Poems</i> , <i>Narrative Poems</i> , etc.
<i>Arthurian Torso</i>	<i>Reflections on the Psalms</i>

I did not go extensively through the essay collections to determine which content was present. Prospective buyers should also notice that the *George MacDonald Anthology* (with the + sign next to it) is not by Lewis, but contains excerpts by George MacDonald which are edited by Lewis. There are also five anthologies (with \* signs next to them) which are excerpts of Lewis's works. The contents of *Letters to an American Lady* and *Yours, Jack* are, to the best of my knowledge, included in the three volumes of *Collected Letters*. The other three volumes are excerpts from various works, several of which are already included in the library (but also some that are not, such as *The Chronicles of Narnia* in *A Year with Aslan*). Logos stated that while they would like to add more titles, publisher contracts may keep some titles permanently excluded. It is unclear at this time which additional titles would be added, if any.

### *Price Comparisons*

A price tag of \$400 made me wonder how the Logos Lewis Collection differs from other e-book sources with the same titles. I went through each title doing a price comparison to the Kindle versions of the same books offered on Amazon.com. Individual book titles were higher on Logos than Amazon, and the total cost of the collection on Amazon was \$255.50, a \$144.45 price difference. If the five anthologies of Lewis works and the George MacDonald anthology are left off of the list, the total cost for Kindle versions is \$202.50. Given the limitations of full-text searching across titles with individual e-book readers, and the very competitive prices on Amazon.com, which may not be applicable for all e-book readers, users may find the premium for these features worth the cost.

### *Conclusions*

In the end, the decision comes down to which elements are most important to the user. If you need powerful searching capabilities across various titles and have a capacity for learning software, Logos is a great tool. If your interest is in reading the books themselves, don't have a great need for searching, and want some of the Lewis titles not available via Logos, then pick your favorite e-book reader. For my continued Lewis quote hunting on behalf of Wade Center patrons, I'm grateful for Logos and the narrowed field of books to check.

Our sincere thanks to Faithlife/Logos Bible Software for making this resource available to the Wade Center in return for our review.

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**George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin and Other Fairy Tales*, Eds. Shelley King and John B. Pierce. (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2014), \$16.95 (paperback).**

This excellent new scholarly edition of *The Princess and the Goblin* attempts to place George MacDonald's beloved children's classic fully within its Victorian context. Edited by nineteenth-century literature scholars Shelley King and John B. Pierce, the book reproduces four of MacDonald's shorter fairy tales ("The Light Princess," "The Giant's Heart," "The Golden Key," and "The History of Photogen and Nycteris: A Day and Night Märchen") and the text from the first serial publication of *The Princess and the Goblin* in *Good Words for the Young* (1870-71), a periodical that MacDonald edited for Alex-

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ander Strahan from 1870 to 1874. This original version includes an editorial frame narrative in which MacDonald as “Mr. Editor” addresses a precocious child reader who three times interrupts the story with comments and questions. In 1872 when he published the story in its entirety, MacDonald removed the frame, and virtually all subsequent editions have chosen to imitate the book rather than the periodical, meaning that this is the first time the frame has been reprinted in almost a hundred years. As King and Pierce point out, this frame narrative emphasizes an important aspect of MacDonald’s aesthetic of the fantastic—good fairy tales should provoke questions, awaken wondering speculation and stimulate imaginative free play in the reader.

In their insightful, engaging introduction, King and Pierce show how *The Princess and the Goblin* together with MacDonald’s shorter fairy tales can be understood as part of “a larger cultural discussion of the place of fantasy as a genre and the function of the imagination in works for younger readers” (18). After a brief summation of MacDonald’s life and works up to 1860, King and Pierce discuss what it meant to be a fairy tale writer in nineteenth-century Britain and how MacDonald’s earliest stories were received by reviewers. MacDonald’s fairy tales “are best understood in the context of a Victorian approach to literary fairy tales that combined the supernatural elements associated with traditional fairy tales with either the comedy of social satire or a deep Christian mysticism” (357) and Appendix C provides brief excerpts from three stories (John Ruskin’s “The King of the Golden River” (1851), William Thackeray’s “The Rose and the Ring” (1855) and Norman MacLeod’s “The Gold Thread” (1861)) selected to exemplify this Victorian approach to fairy tales. Through a fascinating examination of an article by Sir Joshua Girling Fitch from 1860, King and Pierce go on to show how MacDonald was not alone in his desire to produce quality literature for children designed, in Fitch’s words, “not so much to impart instruction, as to promote growth” (23). MacDonald’s essays on the imagination (“The Fantastic Imagination” (1893) and “The Imagination: Its Function and Its Culture” (1867), both of which are included in their entirety in Appendix B echo Fitch’s injunction: the imagination should indirectly “rouse” and “wake” people from lethargy into “a noble unrest” rather than directly strive to teach them moral principles (25).

This attitude stresses the interpretational autonomy of the reader, and accordingly in *The Princess and the Goblin* MacDonald employs various narrative strategies that invite readers to engage their imaginations actively and independently. In addition to the frame narrative portraying an ideal reader who is alert and full of questions, MacDonald also uses incomplete representation and partial explanations—as when he says of Irene’s amazing toys, “I am afraid of attempting to describe them” (50)—to give the reader blank spaces in which the imagination can freely play. Even Arthur Hughes’s

illustrations follow MacDonald's lead in "enticing the reader's imagination" with mystery and anticipation rather than overly explaining motives or surroundings (33). Similarly, the restored frame narrative shows MacDonald paradoxically finishing his story by refusing to say it is finished:

Not more unfinished than a story ought to be, I hope. If you ever knew a story finished, all I can say is, I *never* did. Somehow stories won't finish. I think I know why, but I won't say that either now.  
(191)

Like Dante's conclusion to the *Paradiso* where "power fail[s] high fantasy," MacDonald's refusal to speak here directly borders on the apophatic (Dante, 585). Its denials and negations guard against the idolatrous finalization of interpretation, perpetually provoking the reader to new imaginative heights and thereby to personal growth.

Like other Broadview editions, this glossy paperback is attractive, sturdy and packed with useful contextual information. The notes are sparse and mostly confined to definitions of unusual words and textual details about the serial publication as compared to the first book publication. In addition to MacDonald's essays on the imagination (Appendix B) and excerpts from other contemporary tales (Appendix C), the book also includes contemporary review of *Dealings with the Fairies* and *The Princess and the Goblin* (Appendix A), a note on and facsimiles of the manuscript of *The Princess and the Goblin* held by the Brander Library in Huntly, Aberdeenshire (Appendix D), and a selected bibliography of primary and secondary sources relating to *The Princess and the Goblin*. Arthur Hughes's thirty woodcut illustrations are reprinted as close to their original location in the text as possible. Unfortunately, twenty-first century reprographics seem to be lagging behind the nineteenth century as the images are somewhat washed-out in comparison to Victorian editions, meaning that despite the sensitive commentary from King and Pierce in the introduction this is not the best edition for considering how Hughes's delicate artistic style "entice[s] the imagination" (33). This is, though, a relatively minor flaw that is partially redressed by the fact that the images are also significantly larger than Hughes's originals.

The only real issue with this otherwise commendable edition is the attention (or lack thereof) that it gives to the "and Other Fairy Tales" of its title. The introduction does devote roughly two pages to summarizing and commenting on "The Light Princess" and another page to "The Giant's Heart," but it strangely never goes beyond noting the titles and publication details of "The Golden Key" and "The History of Photogen and Nycteris." King and Pierce spend almost as much time in the introduction on Sir Joshua Girling Fitch's article—that never mentions MacDonald—as on all of MacDonald's shorter fairy tales. Moreover, the textual and artistic decisions relating to

the “other fairy tales” are nowhere directly discussed and are oddly contradictory to the same decisions so eloquently explained and analyzed for *The Princess and the Goblin*. For example, King and Pierce mention in a note that “The Giant’s Heart” was originally published as “Tell Us a Story” in *The Illustrated London News* (231), but they seem unaware that this version also had a frame narrative even more elaborate than *The Princess and the Goblin*, evidence that surely would have strengthened their case for MacDonald’s imaginative play with his readers. Or again, despite discussing contemporary reviews of *Dealings with the Fairies* and the works of Arthur Hughes leading up to his illustrations for *The Princess and the Goblin* (1870-71), they fail to discuss or include for comparison the illustrations that Hughes did specifically for *Dealings with the Fairies* (1867), even though all the reviews in Appendix A clearly comment on Hughes’s illustrations. Add to this smaller details like the fact that the bibliography contains a section on “Selected Criticism Related to *The Princess and the Goblin*” but nothing relating to the shorter fairy tales and that in the Acknowledgements King and Pierce self-identify as “editor[s] of MacDonald’s *The Princess and the Goblin*” (7) with no mention of the shorter fairy tales, and one starts getting the distinct impression that the “other fairy tales” are more of an unmarked appendix than title texts that are carefully researched and presented in their own right.

It is a shame and a missed opportunity that Broadview did not commission a separate volume for all of MacDonald’s “other fairy tales” rather than cursorily offering only a handful as supporting context for *The Princess and the Goblin*. Nevertheless, for the student and scholar of *The Princess and the Goblin* this is an invaluable edition, one which will hopefully reinvigorate intellectual and imaginative interest in this seminal work of Victorian children’s literature.

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### Works Cited

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**Robert Peirano, *Under the Mercy: Charles Williams and the Holy Grail*. Berkeley, California: Apocryphile Press, 2014), \$14.95 (paperback).**

As readers of *VII* will know, relatively few books of historical/critical analysis about Charles Williams have been published recently. Williams

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was a man of myriad, diverse accomplishments. As a popular teacher for the London County Council, he opened the world of literature to ordinary adults. As a prolific reviewer of books, he evaluated works from histories to pulp fiction. As a creator of religious plays for amateur theatrical companies, he drew upon tradition extending back to the mystery plays of the Middle Ages, using the stage to offer and explain religious teachings to a popular audience. As a voracious reader, he became a concise interpreter of history for non-historians, theology for non-theologians, and liturgy and doctrine for those within and outside of the Church of England. As a writer of novels and theological treatises, he wove all of his expressive gifts and polymath learning into a complex tapestry that continues to dazzle and to surprise, even seventy years after his death. According to author Robert Peirano, by virtue of the sheer breadth of these accomplishments, Williams certainly deserves a wider audience than the limited number of publications about him might indicate.

Above and beyond all of these achievements, however, the apotheosis of Williams's professional and personal life was the creation of poetry. He had modest early success, publishing deeply personal romantic poetry arising from his courtship and subsequent marriage to Florence "Michal" Conway. Later, Williams turned to a different poetic focal point: recasting the mythology of the ancient British King Arthur toward the attainment of the most significant goal of all: the Quest of the Holy Graal. (As a side note, "Graal" was Charles Williams's preferred spelling. However, Peirano uses "Grail" throughout his book. In keeping with Williams, I have chosen to use "Graal.")

In this book, Robert Peirano concedes that Williams's Arthurian poetry is neither easy nor pedestrian. It is filled with complex psychological twists and turns. The Quest is undertaken by characters whose lofty intentions fall prey to their all-too-human foibles. They are easily distracted by lust and greed and their star-bedazzled eyes are rubbed by hands drenched in blood. Jealousy, regret, longing, and death are all part of the story of the Quest. The sheer complexity of these tales makes them difficult to harness, to summarize. Not surprisingly, Williams's dense poetry does not make for facile reading or immediate analysis; yet this poetry represents the pinnacle of Williams's creative genius.

Before embarking upon this Quest in poetry, Williams worked the Graal myth into the first of his novels to be published: *War in Heaven* (1930). It is here that Robert Peirano begins his analysis of Williams's Graal Quest. Peirano's book, *Under the Mercy: Charles Williams and the Holy Grail*, follows the chance discovery of the "Graal," the chalice used by Jesus at the Last Supper and according to legend brought to Britain after the Resurrection by Joseph of Arimathea and subsequently sheltered at Glastonbury and the village of Fardles. In *War in Heaven*, the Graal is under attack by evil men who

desire its mythical powers. Peirano shows through *War in Heaven* a clear division between the forces of good and evil in conflict over the Graal, and the first important expression of Williams's formulations of the Doctrines of Co-Inherence, Exchange, and Substitution. Peirano begins by explaining the three terms, and then follows them through the story to fulfillment of the purpose of the Graal in a final Holy Eucharist. Ultimately, the novel's Archdeacon Julian Davenant becomes the Graal's protector and servant.

Through patient, lucid scholarship, Peirano weaves into a delicate web the long-ago time of knights and chivalry, loyalty and betrayal, salvation and damnation as portrayed in selected portions of *Taliessin Through Logres* (1938) and *The Region of the Summer Stars* (1944). Of singular importance to this Quest, as Peirano observes, is Taliessin, court poet to King Arthur, and alter-ego of Charles Williams. Co-Inherence, Exchange, and Substitution again arise in discussion of the Graal. Peirano demonstrates in detail how chosen characters of the Arthur stories are involved in a web of relationships spanning space and time. For him, Taliessin comes to focus and to intuit "the conceptual thread conjoining all of the poem's elements; humanity's co-inherence with the Incarnation's birth, death, and Resurrection through the achievement of the Holy Grail" (103).

Charles Williams's tombstone at the parish church of St. Cross-Holywell in Oxford, England, bears his name, the dates of his birth and death, and is centered on a single word: "poet." Like Williams, Robert Peirano has found his calling in the chaste and demanding purity of poetry. His book testifies to the beauty of the Graal itself, of Arthur's court poet, to the soul of Charles Williams as revealed in the mythological world he re-created, to the gentle heart of Robert Peirano—and to the deep magic that lies at the heart of all human substitutions and exchanges.

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