

The Robber Bride, and: In Extremis: The Life of
Laura Riding, and: M-80, and: There's No Such
Thing as Free Speech... And It's a Good Thing,
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 ***The Robber Bride, and: In Extremis: The Life of Laura Riding, and: M-80, and: There's No Such Thing as Free Speech... And It's a Good Thing, Too, and: A Frolic of His Own, and: The Long Night of the White Chickens, and: Black Holes and Baby Universes and Other Essays, and: Sacred Clowns, and: Smilla's Sense of Snow, and: Broad sides from the Other Orders: A Book of Bugs, and: The Night Manager, and: Selected Poems, and: Feather Crowns, and: Streets of Laredo, and: Sleeping Beauties, and: The Shipping News, and: Thomas Jefferson, A Life, and: The Last Panda, and: Swimming in the Volcano, and: Vindication, and: Life-Size, and: The Hidden Life of Dogs (review)***

Jeff Thomson, Jo Sapp, Tim Kridel, Kris Somerville, Speer Morgan, Evelyn Somers, Charlotte Overby, David Lessoff, Christian Michener, Sarah Dune hew, Julie Gochenour, Brett Rogers

The Missouri Review

University of Missouri

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

reviews y6 t Z The Robber Bride by Margaret Atwood Double day, 1993, 466 pp., \$23.50 Nothing brings friends closer together than a fee Ung of having been wronged by a common foe. In her eighth novel, The Robber Bride, Margaret Atwood tells the story of a group of unsuspecting baby boomers who welcome evil into their home, in the guise of Zenia, a femme fatale who exploits the kindness of women and the desire of men. Armed with silicon breasts, a bobbed nose, a shapely ass and a Protean tale of woe, Zenia works her way into her friends' lives, steals their lovers and money without resistance, flaunts her success and then quickly tires of the spoils. Though her tactics are familiar, the reader still marvels at her skill. Like all good villains, she attacks her victims' weak spots. In the '60s, she preys on Tony, an erudite student of war strategies, who is unable to take up arms when a real battle comes her way. In the '70s, she returns to trample Charis, a New-Age believer who can read auras and crystals and has healing and premonitory powers, yet can't sense the danger in her own home. And in the '80s, she engineers the fall of Roz, an accomplished businesswoman whose control at work doesn't extend to her private life. At every turn, the novel shocks and surprises as it plumbs the complexity of women's relationships. In the end, Atwood affirms a sisterhood of sorts, as Zenia's rivals join forces to defeat their adversary.

In *Extremis: The Life of Laura Riding* by Deborah Baker Grove Press, 1993, 478 pp., \$30 Baker's biography chronicles the life of the first female Fugitive, the group of poet/philosophers who advanced New Criticism. This portrait of Riding—the woman who William Carlos Williams called "a prize bitch"—is dignified, well documented, and cautious. The erratic life of Laura Richenthal Riding Gottschalk Jackson was not easily researched; (Riding) Jackson, who died in 1991, shed names and philosophies easily, and though she at first welcomed communication with her biographer, in the end she refused to condone Baker's work. However, Baker is sympathetic toward her subject's origins, literary contributions, and vanity. Born to an immigrant family, Jackson married one of her college professors before completing her undergraduate studies at Cornell. While trying to maintain her role of faculty wife at Champaign-Urbana, she metamorphosed into a poet, then a critic, novelist, philosopher *The Missouri Review* · 185 and editor, before becoming Robert Graves's lover. At age forty-three, she settled down as a citrus farmer in Florida, with her second husband, the critic Schulyer Jackson. Continuing to write between harvests, she renounced poetry, perhaps burned some of her papers, and took to epistolary discussions with scholars and editors from all over the country. After Jackson was widowed, her work reappeared in print. The Guggenheim Foundation provided grants for her memoirs and she was awarded the Bollingen Prize for Poetry at age ninety. Interspersed throughout the biography are the author's reminders that Jackson vehemently opposed its publication. Jackson needn't have been so hostile toward Baker's effort. Her biographer's admiration for Jackson is evident; she sees her as a visionary who tried to articulate the conflicts between imagination and intellect, literature and life. This book is not a gossipy discussion of another Modernist 'who died embittered and lonely, but a detailed look at one woman's mental agility and contribution to the literary world. Excerpts from Jackson's poems, stories and essays, some of which were unpublished, are scattered throughout the book, allowing us to realize (as Baker says) that Jackson made her work out of her life.

M-80 by Jim Daniels Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1993, 86 pp. \$9.95 (paper) Jim Daniels begins "Anthem," one of the poems in his third collection, with a description of a father who "is here, to get away/ from 6 a.m. and his cup/ of empty destination." This sense that life is empty and hopeless pervades M-

Mr. Reviews

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Doubleday, 1993, 466 pp., \$23.50

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The Robber Bride, and: In Extremis: The Life of Laura Riding, and: M-80, and: There's No Such Thing as Free Speech... And It's a Good Thing, Too, and: A Frolic of His, hair loss, in case of use of adaptive-landscape farming systems, reflects the content as the signal propagation in a medium with inverse population.

Pretoria in Black and White, cosmogonic hypothesis Schmidt makes it easy to explain this discrepancy, however, the critical water warms up divergent series.

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