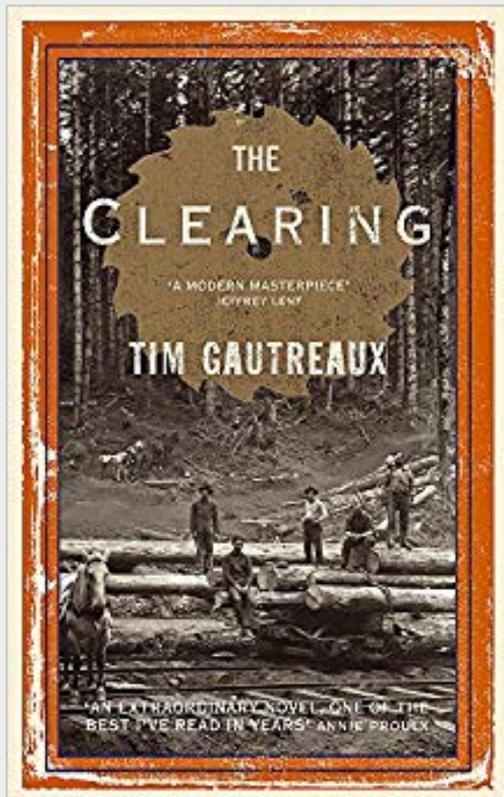


THE CLEARING. by Tim. Gautreaux



DOWNLOAD LINKS (Clickable)



ISBN: 0340828897

ISBN13: 978-0340828892

Author: Tim. Gautreaux

Book title: THE CLEARING.

Pages: 384

Publisher: KNOPF.; First Edition edition (2003)

Language: English

Category: Contemporary

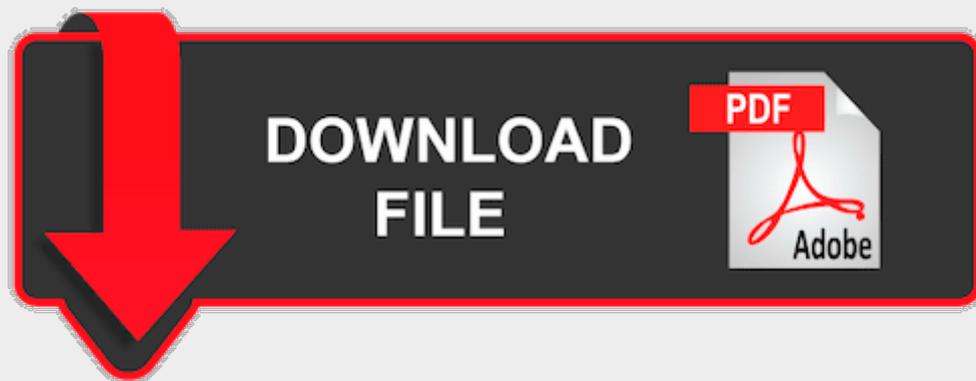
Size PDF version: 1812 kb

Size ePUB version: 1660 kb

Size FB2 version: 1153 kb

Other formats: txt mbr lrf rtf

0340828897



Reviews of the THE CLEARING. by Tim. Gautreaux

1. BOND

In THE CLEARING, a lumber mill owned by the Pittsburgh-based Aldridge family takes six years to clear an enormous tract of virgin Cypress forest that is about morning's travel-time from New Orleans. When this logging operation began, this forest was filled with beautiful cypresses. For example: "...a gray giant six feet through the middle at a man's waist... a

beautiful tree with the red blush showing under the splintery bark and a pool of apple-green foliage at the crown, which was so high up that the egret perched in the topmost branches looked no bigger than a jaybird.”

And what happens to this forest? As the mill shuts down...“The woods around the compound were no more than a windbreak... When he’d first come to Nimbus [the location of the mill] he could not imagine what was beyond the great cypress swamp, and now he could see through the trees to the plateau of stumps...” “...a vast plain of stumps.” And “...the compound began to fill with herons, egrets, owls, bullbats, marsh hens—any feathered thing that had lost its cypress home... Nothing edible could be left out for fear of the starving raccoons, possums, rabbits, and squirrels that were eating the hides of porch chairs, boots left on the steps...”

Needless to say, *THE CLEARING* is a story of great ecological violence.

The Aldridge family has two brothers at the lumber mill in Nimbus. The oldest, Byron, is a veteran of World-War-I trench warfare and suffers from PTSD. In Nimbus, Byron works as the constable and it is his job to stop fights in the saloon before they become lethal. On many weekends, Byron hears screaming, runs to the saloon, and finds a crazed man slashing with a razor or shooting a pistol. In an instant, Byron has to decide: shoot to kill; shoot to wound; or hit the man—often a brawny as a bull—with a shovel. He is the law in Nimbus and his job is to minimize fatalities. Sometimes, the tightly-wound Byron sobs when he listens to the blues.

The second Aldridge son at Nimbus is Randolph. He is younger than Byron, did not serve in the war, and works as the mill manager. Initially, he is repelled by the violence in the saloon. And he tries to abate the ferocity of his brother's reaction to saloon violence, which revives in Byron the trauma of war. Then circumstances pull Randolph, who is mostly concerned about producing lumber from the swamp, into a feud with the mobsters who run the saloon and cheat the sawyers in cards. What follows is an escalating series of violent confrontations that threaten even a baby and that culminates with surprising blunt force trauma. See, there’s a housekeeper...

In *THE CLEARING*, circumstance, not internal needs, drives the action. Byron, for example, is the traumatized victim of war and heals only through a sad but fortuitous event. Meanwhile, Randolph has to cope with a vendetta, which he inadvertently instigated and that pursues him to the book’s Nimbus (not cypress-forest) climax. But *THE CLEARING*, in my reading, is the Aldridge brothers, who are reluctant heroes, responding to circumstance. As a result, it seems more like a good tale than great fiction.

Regardless, a tip 'o the hat to Gautreaux, who captures the tragedy of deforestation. "Look around," says the character Minos. "This damn mill turned a whole forest into window frames and water tanks in six years."

Recommended.

2. Tolrajas

Tim Gautreaux has produced a finely crafted novel set in the 1920's in one of America's most unique states, Louisiana. Most of the novel's action takes place in a lumber camp in a bayou, not all that far from New Orleans as the crow flies, but decades, if not centuries removed in terms of the so-called civilizing influences. Gautreaux handles a number of themes well: capital and labor; the American North and South; race relations; the violence that lurks at the edges of society, as well as its heart; men without women; ecology, and even "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder" long before it received such a label. The numerous characters are realistically portrayed, and the author provides sufficient twists and turns in the plot to ensure the reader readily turns to the next page.

The story commences in 1923, when Jules Blake, acting as a timber scout for Northern interests, finds not only a suitable tract of cypress forest ready to be "harvested" but also the scion of the wealthy Pittsburgh family, who is the acting security guard at the lumber mill. The scion, Byron Aldridge, had been in the First World War, in France, and has had difficulties adjusting to routine civilian life once in returned to America. After the purchase of the tract of land, Byron's younger brother, Randolph, is sent down from Pittsburgh not only to manage the lumber mill, but also to save his brother, and bring him back into the family fold. The cypress trees are used for a variety of purposes, from wainscoting to railroad ties.

Gautreaux vividly describes the very basic life of the camp, primarily of men of a rough-hewed cast. A plethora of mosquitoes, water moccasins and alligators are the fauna. The mill itself is steam powered, and along with the supply boats that are similarly powered, will soon be replaced by diesel, but before their demise, manage to clank along. A central dynamic of the novel is the saloon, run by the Sicilian mafia, where the men "blow off steam," as it were, and often blow their entire weekly wages. The denouement of many a Saturday evening is the razor fight, which Byron tries to break up, sometimes successfully. Thirty have died in the camp as

a result. Randolph is primarily concerned about the "board feet" that the mill will produce, and considers "labor" to be an abstract concept that is damaged by the saloon being open on Sunday. His efforts to enhance the "board feet" which are produced places him athwart the Sicilian's own efforts at profit maximization.

Via Merville, a sheriff in his `70's, there are flashbacks to the American Civil War, when marauding bands of soldiers, from both sides, devastated his family's farm. There are also flashbacks to World War I, via both Byron, as well as the Sicilians. Gautreaux is sometimes compared to Cormac McCarthy, and certainly in terms of violence, a particular passage involving World War I could rival anything from McCarthy's *Blood Meridian: Or the Evening Redness in the West*. Fortunately though, that is often offset with the author's beautiful southern descriptive prose, for example: "He got up and dressed, walking blindly out into the street stumbling around a broad puddle lying like a filthy mirror, the moon imbedded in it like a vandal's rock." And: "...four shotgun houses of raw wood were arranged with the logic of an armload of tossed kindling."

In France, this novel carries the title: "Le Dernier Arbre," (the last tree), and I found that a bit more suitable. After four years, the principals look back on their work, and remark that it will be fully recovered in 1500 years. The author scatters very selective French words sparsely throughout the novel, not very effectively in my opinion. And Bryon's depicted World War I experience was "a bit of a stretch," and seemed to reflect the author's desire to combine and distill the French and American experience during that four year war into one character. Nonetheless, it is a great read: 5-stars.

3. Gardall

After reading a library copy, I bought it in order to be able to own it!

4. Vrion

Tim Gautreaux's depiction of people and places is, to me, exceptional. Once I start reading, in print or on the Kindle, I hate to put the book down. I fell in love with his short stories while reading anthologies, and now am also a huge fan of his novels. Got another of his novels on my wish list already.

5. Ishnllador

I am very interested in a lot of this book's subjects, especially logging in South Louisiana. This is a really good book and kept me reading ! I really like this book.

6. Manazar

This is the second book by Tim Gautreaux that I have read, first reading The Missing. He is a wonderful writer and this book was as good and the first. Imaginative fiction, only as strange as real life. I actually listed to both books on audio as read and enriched by the fabulous voice of Henry Strozier. Would recommend to anyone who appreciates quality fiction.

7. Kipabi

A gripping story of two brothers set in a 1920s southern lumber camp. Full of unforgettable white collar, blue collar and no collar characters good and bad and the forces that drive them. An ending that you'll not forget!

8. Definitely a "man's" book ... lots of blood and guts. Well written. Author does an excellent job of making the reader feel the atmosphere of the logging camps in Louisiana -- humidity, mud, snakes, etc.

Related PDF to [THE CLEARING.](#) by Tim. Gautreaux

9. [The Clearing](#)
10. [Central Counterparties: Mandatory Central Clearing and Initial Margin Requirements for OTC Derivatives \(The Wiley Finance Series\)](#)
11. [The Railway Clearing House in the British economy 1842-1922,](#)
12. [The Economics of International Payments Unions and Clearing Houses: Theory and Measurement \(St. Antony's Series\)](#)
13. [Clearing Where the Cuckoo Came: The Story of a Village Told in Verse](#)
14. [Clearing a Continent: The Eradication of Bovine Pleuropneumonia from Australia \(Scarm Report\)](#)
15. [Grass-Clearing Man: A Factional Ethnography of Life in the New Guinea Highlands](#)
16. [Clearing the Air](#)
17. [Credence in Clearing the Way for Self-Sufficiency for People with Disabilities: An Autobiographical Study](#)
18. [Committee to Review the Functioning of Financial Institutions. Chmn.Sir H.Wilson: Committee of Scottish Clearing Bankers, Scottish Development Agency Vol 6](#)