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2017-05

## Writing Alberta: Building on a Literary Identity

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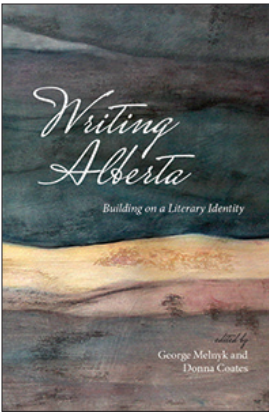
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**WRITING ALBERTA: Alberta Building on a Literary Identity**  
Edited by George Melnyk and Donna Coates

ISBN 978-1-55238-891-4

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## Double Vision in Betty Lambert's *Jennie's Story*

*Cynthia Zimmerman*

Betty Lambert's *Jennie's Story* is set in a southern Alberta farmhouse in 1938-39. The demands of the Second World War would soon change everything, but at this point the prairies are in the grip of the draughts, plagues, soil erosion, and despair known as the Great Depression of the 1930s. Politically, it is the time of the Social Credit and Premier William Aberhart (1935-43)—a premier known for his outspoken religiosity and fiery speeches. Originally a Baptist minister and school principal in Calgary, “Bible Bill” preaches the doctrine as a way to end the Depression. Also in existence is a particularly insidious law which Betty Lambert spent much time researching. Getting it right would be critical to the underpinnings of her play, *Jennie's Story*. The legal information about that law is included as “Author's Notes” to the play publication:

For the legal background for this play, see “The Sexual Sterilization Act” (Alberta, 1928), especially Section 5, which concerns “multiplication of the evil by the transmission of the disability to progeny.” In 1937, just before the time of the play, an amendment [to the Sexual Sterilization Act] was passed, making it possible to sterilize a person without his or her consent, provided consent was given by an appropriate relative or, if the appropriate relative did not exist or was not resident in Alberta, by the Minister of Health. This law was repealed in 1971. (Lambert, “Jennie's Story” 304)<sup>1</sup>

The Statute on Sterilization (1928), which is based on the eugenics argument, states that a person can be sterilized to prevent “the transmission of evil.” “Evil” includes everything from promiscuity, to alcoholism, to feeble-mindedness. Lambert’s protagonist will refer to the statute which is used against her explicitly in Act I, Scene v. Speaking to her husband, she says:

See, I was 16, and so they had ta get. ... Ma had to sign the paper. ... See, Harry, when I wrote the letter to that doctor, the one who done it, he said he didn’t know what to think. That’s why he wrote back so fast, come up to see him in Calgary. He’s in private practice now. He was just startin’ out then, ony job he could get. Anyways, he said, he said, he said ... he didn’t have no idea I could write a word of English. (*Tries to laugh, numb with shock.*) See there’s this law, Harry. Against “the transmission of evil.” And they said I wasn’t too—No, they said I was feeble-minded. ‘n’ the other ... I was evil. (342)

The central story of the play is based on one that Betty Lambert was told by her mother when she was growing up on the prairies. A true story, it concerned a young prairie girl who had worked as a domestic for the local priest who sexually abused her. During this time, at some point she was taken to Calgary for an appendectomy. Years later she married, happily, but she could not conceive. After investigating, she discovered that she had, in fact, been sterilized years before. It was not an appendix that they removed. She returned home and swallowed sufficient amounts of the household cleanser, lye, to commit a wrenching suicide. Lambert was haunted by the awful incident. In an interview she confided:

That is a story that I had been told since I was a girl, and I knew the husband, so that when I came to write ... I mean, it’s always bothered me, it’s something I knew I’d have to deal with one day ... it seemed to me that men could cut you out for being sexual. I mean literally eviscerate you. (Worthington 60)

In another interview she also said about her work that:

You write almost therapeutically. There are things you want so badly to understand—it's not at all a matter of me knowing what's wrong with me and wanting to set it out on the page ... it's a matter of me NOT knowing and wanting to find out. (Wyman 6)

*Jennie's Story* is an example of just that: of NOT knowing and wanting to find out. Imagining it, writing it out, creating her own scenario as a route to understanding, Lambert retains the basics of the original for her play.

The first production of *Jennie's Story* was staged for the Canadian Theatre Today Conference held in Saskatoon in 1981. It was produced by Vancouver's New Play Centre, directed by Jace van der Veen. The same production was later mounted in the fall of 1981 at the Waterfront Theatre in Vancouver. *Jennie's Story* was a finalist for the 1982 Governor General's Literary Award. Subsequent productions, all directed by Bill Glassco, were at the National Arts Centre (February 1983), the St Lawrence Centre in Toronto (April 1983), and the Canmore Opera House, produced by Alberta Theatre Projects (January 1984).

Lambert's play includes a cast of five: the priest Father Edward Fabriceau, Jennie and her mother Edna Delevault, Jennie's husband Harry McGrane,<sup>2</sup> and one more: fifteen-year-old Molly Dorval, who is brought to the farmhouse to help feed the farmhands during harvest threshing. As Harry says, unaware of its portent: "Here's Miss Molly Dorval come to save the homestead!" (323). "And the Dorval girl, Ma. My, she's a pretty one" (322), Jennie says. Stage directions indicate that Molly makes "(a quick conspiratorial glance at HARRY; a smothered laugh)" when they enter. "JENNIE, at the door, notes this, and is slightly disturbed" (323). Molly arrives immediately before Jennie is to leave for her visit to the doctor in Calgary, the same doctor who did her surgery several years before. During the four days Jennie is gone, Molly proves she is incredibly competent:

MOLLY: Everythin's done! My goodness, Miz McGrane's go-  
ingta drop dead, everythin' done and 18 threshers fed mornin'  
noon 'n' night. I never worked so hard my whole entire life, an'  
nothin' dirty to start with! (332)

When the harvesting is over, she stays. Molly is a lovely and lively uneducated farm girl. She is a Thea to Jennie's Hedda Gabler: strong, resourceful, life-affirming, cheerful, and adaptable. But unlike Thea, she is also fertile. In fact, Jennie's mother guesses Molly is already about four months pregnant when she first comes to the farm.

MOLLY: How could you tell, Mrs. Delevault?

EDNA: I kin tell.

MOLLY: (*Drinks tea.*) Well. I guess I'll hafta kill myself.

EDNA: (*Pause.*) Fine idea. Don't be a stupid girl, suicide's a sin, and you know it, yer a good Catholic. If you're a bad girl, yer still a good Catholic. (*Pause.*) Let's think it out. You leave it to me. God works in mysterious ways. There's a way outa anything, if you don't let go. (*Pause.*) How old're you, Molly? (329)

Edna is quick to think that perhaps Jennie and Harry could adopt Molly's child, an idea Harry will not be adverse to. That Edna is thinking *this* way, even before Jennie returns home with confirmation of her hysterectomy, indicates Edna knows the truth and explains why Jennie's planned trip to Calgary has frightened her so: as Jennie will say with horror upon her return, "You knew all along" (336).

Molly is clearly a double for Jennie. Also a local farm girl hired to help out, she has the same desires as Jennie for a husband, family, and home. She is light-hearted, unreflective, and in tune with the natural world. She too is considered prescient, as Edna notes just before Jennie's return:

EDNA: You heard truck come over bridge?

MOLLY: Just now. (*Moves kettle to hot part of range.*)

EDNA: Bridge's a good piece away.

MOLLY: Oh I got good ears. My da says I can hear grass grow.

EDNA: (*Speaks as if JENNIE were dead.*) My Jennie used to hear things.

I better get away this waxing brick then. (*Gets up stiffly.*) Yes, my Jennie was like that. My Jennie could allus hear things. ... (331)

However, Molly's character differences from Jennie are more to the point than her similarities. She is not as readily obedient, as "biddable" (320) as Jennie, nor is she as timid. Stage directions indicate Edna is aware that "MOLLY is not going to be a meek slave" and Edna "grudgingly likes her for it" (323). Molly gets very excited about the technology Harry has introduced to the homestead, repeatedly turning the lights on and off with glee, unlike Edna and Jennie who stick with the kerosene lamp. When she tells Harry about her sly adventures at the hot spring at her uncle's place and how "My Uncle Charlie, he's got it all wired off so's us kids won't get at it. But we do anyways," Harry says: "But you aren't scared off" (330). Molly is a feisty, spirited one compared to Jennie. She is also less reverent and brazenly tells them all that her cousin, Father Fabrizieu, is "cursed" (324). Most importantly, although Molly is the same age as Jennie was when Jennie was working for the priest, Molly's sexual mishap will not have tragic consequences. In fact, Molly will ultimately replace Jennie in the homestead and in the marriage bed.

Harry honours Jennie's wish to be cremated, to go up into the skies and not into the cold, dark earth. He completes his prison term for the "desecration of the dead" (361) and, several months after Jennie's awful suicide, Harry returns to the farm. It is the closing scene of the play. Molly waits on him; her babe, Ben, is in a nearby basket. The marriage bans have already been announced. What are we to make of this closure to the play with its apparently happy ending? That is to say, after witnessing a transformed and vehement Jennie extract confessions from her betrayers, after watching her heroically overcome the pressures to withhold a revelation which involves religious authority, and knowing the desperate measure soon to follow this climactic confrontation, this nice domestic scene comes as a shock. I certainly found it most unsettling, as did others.

In their published conversation, director Bonnie Worthington tells Lambert it is a "tacked-on happy ending" (65) and totally unnecessary. Critic Rosalind Kerr argues the ending is necessary but that instead of a "healing catharsis," this ending "demonstrates to us how insignificant and nontragic the lives of women are" (99). Furthermore, the substitution of Molly is a way "to represent the state of bitter competition that [Lambert] believes exists between women" (110). Lambert expresses this clearly when she tells Worthington, "look at what I was saying—you bloody women, you'd better not kill yourselves, because there's going to be someone there

moving into your place!” (65). Nonetheless, I would argue that Lambert’s response to Worthington is a defensive reaction to a specific charge: the charge that that scene should be removed, that it is unnecessary and tacked-on. What Lambert means—and she says so—is that “suicide is not an answer” (64).

In *Jennie’s Story*, for example, she is not a completely evolved character. She is not at all a role model for women, because what she does is she accepts. She doesn’t see any way of breaking out of her world, and she turns her anger inwards. (62)

People are NOT replaceable but life goes on. In direct reaction to Worthington, Lambert says, “No, it wasn’t supposed to be that, it was supposed to be—look, she killed herself and it was not the answer. It is not an answer” (65). The ending of the play is problematic. How does one understand the gap between the effect Lambert wants and the way, in fact, so many have responded? Could it be because, as the writer, she was “recollecting in tranquility”? She had the distance, the overview, but the reader/audience is given no time at all between the experience of the terrible tragedy and the happy ending. Lambert brings us into painful intimacy with the main character, only to draw back at the climactic moment, like a camera suddenly pulling back from a close-up.

Young Jennie had been the priest’s perfect victim: naïve, obedient without questioning, supposedly “not that bright,” and sworn to silence. Her mother’s consent, her betrayal, as well as Jennie’s silence, aid the sterilization procedure. Later, Jennie’s time with her husband is happy. She is a sensual and sexually satisfied woman. Ignorance is bliss. But once she knows the “truth” everything falls apart: ejected from the natural cycle, unable to reproduce, Jennie feels herself damaged, “dirty” (Lambert, “Jennie’s Story” 345), “no good for anything” (346), both unnatural and undesirable. Representing innocence and vulnerability, being the one who went to work for the priest so her mother would not have to, the one who needs a child to confer value and identity as a female, Jennie embodies complex feminist ideas. And yet does her sacrifice redeem anything? No, not for Lambert. Jennie’s heroic “moment of truth” is “largely overshadowed,” as Rosalind Kerr says (111). When Max Wyman asks Lambert about the final



scene, she explains it to him as well. She says she could not let the play end with the woman's suicide, though many people would like her to. "I can't," she says, "I don't like that classic tragic form. That's no answer to human suffering" (6).

In the "Introduction" to the first publication of *Jennie's Story*, Pamela Hawthorn refers to what she considers characteristic of Lambert's talent: "an intense, emotional connection to the material that poured out" (8). In *Jennie's Story*, the personal connection is not simply that the plot is based on the upsetting anecdote told to Lambert as a child; it is also that the play theatricalizes her personal philosophy with its deep roots in her religious upbringing. This view is fundamental to Lambert's intended meaning. Although Lambert admits to Worthington that "[she is] not sure that final scene does what [she] want[s] it to" (66), understanding her spiritual premise illuminates what otherwise might appear a too-sudden switch from searing individual tragedy to a signal that for the others there is the possibility of ongoing happiness. In the same way that Molly is the life-affirming "double" to Jennie, Harry is the life-affirming "double" to Father Edward Fabrizeau. *Jennie's Story* has more than one priest onstage. Harry is the one who embodies the spiritual way of seeing of that other priest, Gerard Manly Hopkins, the priest whose poetry is recited and referred to repeatedly in the play. It is Harry's philosophical perspective that Lambert finds compelling.

My appreciation of Lambert's "double vision" came about as a result of archival work on the Betty Lambert Papers held by Simon Fraser University.<sup>3</sup> In her personal diaries and journal entries, I read what a fighter Lambert was—how she refused to give in to the polio that hit her as a child; how she fought the poverty she was born into. I saw her letter to Joy Coghill written shortly after she was diagnosed with cancer. She explained that she would never, even though she knew her illness was fatal, never, ever commit suicide and I realized how many of Harry's lines spoke to her purpose:

JENNIE: It happened, so it happened, forget it.

HARRY: (*Pause.*) No, you don't forget something like that. But you can't brood on it. You can't just lie up here and brood on it.

JENNIE: I want to die.

HARRY: (*Angrily.*) Don't talk like that! (*Pause.*) Things happen to people. Bad things. You can't give in. You got to keep your hope. (80)

Then I learned that the poem which frames this play, "God's Grandeur," which Harry teaches to Jennie and then to Molly, was Lambert's favourite poem and the one she requested be read at her Memorial Service. Beginning with man's plight as "Crushed," blighted, "seared," the poem ultimately celebrates nature's plenitude. I want to argue that the spirit of its comfort is actually woven throughout the fabric of the play and offers, subtly—perhaps too subtly—a more hopeful way of accommodating the tragedy. To access this alternative framework is to shift focus away from Jennie's heroic, though futile "sacrifice," away from any sense of her as a "kind of everywoman" (Kerr 103). It is to look instead to her husband, the one who has learned the painful rituals of atonement, the reconciliation of God and man, which can sustain him. It is Harry who will prove to be the play's most evolved character.

Therefore, while the play is called *Jennie's Story*, it is not something pertinent to Jennie's life which opens the play or closes it. It opens at harvest time with Jennie's intuitive knowing that Billy, the hired hand, has died a natural death. Billy's death is set in obvious contrast to the suicide. Jennie's death occurs offstage while the others, preoccupied with the blessing ceremony, have momentarily forgotten about her. The play concludes in the spring, with a recent birth and a wedding planned for the next day. The play pays close attention to the changing seasons and to the natural cycle of things. The setting is the remarkably prosperous farm of Harry McGrane. Somehow his farm has been spared the blight. Even Father Fabriceau remarks on Harry's good luck:

FATHER: (*Pause.*) The whole district hailed out last summer except for you.

The whole country in a black depression and you get a new truck and electricity. ... (312)

Harry has been so successful, so lucky, that he is putting in electricity—he has put technology to good use. Associated with light, with bringing in the light, he represents positive change. “That’s right,” he says to the priest, “ever since you married us, Jennie’s brought me nothin’ but luck” (312).

Unlike Father Edward Fabrizeau, the other man in Jennie’s life, Harry, is not dark, brooding, morose. He is a believer and observant, conscious of the importance of ritual, but he is his own man and his own kind of priest, a Gerard Manly Hopkins kind of priest who believes in joy and loves the physical world. As he puts it,

God help me, I love the world, Jennie. I love the world. I love it all, the way the thunderhead comes up dark and purple and the still before it breaks, everything holding its breath, I love it though it’ll flatten my field. (344)

For Lambert, Harry McGrane, with a name that links him to the land, represents the physicality of the Dionysian side of our natures. He has learned how to hang on to hope and how to celebrate life.

But his is not a naïve optimism. Harry has known violence in his past. His father had been a brutal man, a “bully” he says, who beat his brother so bad that “Jamie was never right in the head” (350). Moreover, Harry has spent time in prison for killing a man (341, 362). Lambert does not explore his crime, but it is an interesting addition to Harry’s story and to his character. He is no coward (although Jennie will accuse him of being one), and he burns his own hand to keep him from taking revenge. His past means that he can say to Jennie, “You’re not the only one things happen to” (344). He can also honour her wish to be cremated, knowing he can take the consequences—another prison term. He will let Fabrizeau bear the burden of belief that Jennie is “in danger of her immortal soul” (353). Harry will act according to his own conscience, pay the price, mourn his losses, and accept the unalterable facts of nature.

Moreover, Harry is an unusually generous and free-thinking man: he will love and marry Jennie although he knows about the rumours; he is prepared to adopt the child of an unwed mother so they can have a family; he frequently makes reference to what is natural—whether it be Billy’s manner of dying or Jennie’s true nature or the ways of the world. In fact,

he says that what the priest did *as a man* he can understand: “it’s ony nature. The Church says it’s bad, but it’s ony nature. But what happened after, what he did to you”—that Harry *cannot* understand, “It’s even against the Church” (345). Harry is not moralistic, and although he is described as having “an edge of steel in his voice” (310), he is definitely a Lambertan, if not a Lawrentian hero. He will be moved to the breaking point, and he will not break. He is strong, successful, proud, self-educated, tender, playful, and compassionate; he has known deep suffering and he is moved by literature and poetry. As Molly is the adaptive, life-affirming double to Jennie, Harry is the life-affirming resilient double to dour Father Edward Fabrizeau. Eddie is the farmer’s son who cannot remember to shut the gate, who cannot control his desire or his despair, and he falls apart in a most unseemly fashion. “What can I do,” he cries. And Harry says, “You can live and do yer job an’ make the best of it. Molly will have her baby and we’ll take it. . . . You’re a bad priest but you’re our priest. So, bless this place and go. . . . Damn you, Eddie, be a priest!” (360).

At this point it is useful to turn to the first version of Jennie’s Story, the unpublished, unproduced, undated play for CBC Radio called “Fire People.”<sup>4</sup> The major characters, the plot outline, and all of the main script details are the same. However, there are revisions, significant alterations, and additions. First of all, Molly has increased visibility in *Jennie’s Story*. Jennie “watches this girl taking over her kitchen” (338); Jennie notices Harry’s attraction to her. In the original, Harry does NOT come to Molly’s bedside the first night Jennie is away. He does not listen to her tell the seductive little anecdote about swimming naked in an underground hot spring while Edna sleeps soundly beside her. In “Fire People,” Molly tells the anecdote directly to Jennie and simply reports that she had also told Mister McGrane. The revision alerts us to the potential for intimacy between Molly and Harry.<sup>5</sup>

However, to support my reading, the most important changes are to the confrontation and the closure. In the radio play, Jennie comes downstairs to see her mother and the priest. It is a radio play and nothing is said of her appearance, although she has something in her hands. In *Jennie’s Story*, Lambert carefully describes Jennie’s appearance:

JENNIE appears behind MOLLY. She is wearing a new flannelette nightgown, buttoned to the neck, long sleeves. Her feet

are bare, her hair is cropped off, and in her hands she holds a long fiery-red braid of hair. (353)

She takes the scarf from her mother (a Christmas gift) and “puts the scarf around her neck so it hangs like a vestment” (353). About her cropped hair she says, “Don’t mind, Mother, it’s only what they do to nuns” (354). The change in her appearance marks the dramatic change in identification: gone is Harry’s sensuous young wife, his “pagan lady” (308). Here now, is the nun, the desexualized one outside the cycle of generation. In this role, she says:

... I feel free ‘n’ I can think, and what I think is, it was an untrue blessing, and Harry can annul me. ... Harry can annul me and marry Molly Dorval. (*Turns and goes to MOLLY.*) Molly Dorval, may your union be holy. (*Turns MOLLY to EDNA.*) Molly Dorval, I give you to my mother who will have no more children and you kin be hers, reborn, in the fire ‘n’ the spirit. Amen. (356)

In the play Jennie herself blesses this union, but having Jennie explicitly endorse this union is not in “Fire People.” This is another example of Lambert underlining her central thesis: necessary continuity, the affirmation of life over death.

Similarly, the closing scene of *Jennie’s Story* has a poignant, intensely rendered sympathy with Harry. He enters “bone tired” and “sits at his old place at the table” (362). He is in a suit. He does not touch the food placed before him. The laughter and the baby on his lap, which were in “Fire People,” have been removed. In fact, only **after** (emphasis mine) Molly recites the lines she has memorized from “God’s Grandeur” does he raise his head (363). At this moment of communication, he looks up.

Although Harry says, “Damn it, Jennie, you’re alive and life’s a miracle! The rest we can swallow” (346), and although he begs her to come back, she cannot. Jennie has swallowed the lye/lie. It is Harry who is to be the play’s moral anchor. The real focus of the play is not the revenge or the substitution, but the courage to live, which is central to Lambert’s work and to her life: “They won’t beat Harry down,” says Edna (361). It is through Harry’s eyes that we realize a vision of humanity that is harsh,

unflinching, and yet cautiously optimistic. Harry's favourite poem, "God's Grandeur," was also Lambert's, with its famous lines of solace:

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?  
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;  
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;  
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil  
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
And though the last lights off the black West went  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—  
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent  
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

This poem, lines from which are recited early in the play by Harry and at the end by Molly, provides the frame to *Jennie's Story*; "God's Grandeur" puts Jennie's individual suffering in perspective. The religious abstraction, intended as comfort, can be read as sentimental. But is it not true that, when facing death, people often cling to the common abstractions of love, family, religion? It is the ending that Lambert prefers.

## NOTES

- 1 In 1996, after a court case which lasted six years, Leilani Muir became the first victim of sterilization to win a judgment against the Alberta government. She was awarded damages totaling \$740,000. Around her eleventh birthday, she had been admitted to the Provincial Training School for Mental Defectives in Alberta and given a simple IQ test. This was sufficient for her to be deemed "unfit" to bear children. In 1959, when she was fourteen, she was sterilized in accordance with Alberta's eugenics policy. She was one of approximately two thousand and eight hundred victims. For more information, see [www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/episode/2011/11/14/leilani-muir-successfully-sues-alberta-govt-for-wrongful-sterilization](http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/episode/2011/11/14/leilani-muir-successfully-sues-alberta-govt-for-wrongful-sterilization) and the NFB documentary film by Whiting in 1996.
- 2 Lambert gives Harry the surname McGrane. According to Lambert's sister Dorothy, McGrane was the surname of their maternal grandmother who had been a serving girl

in Ireland. A young man named Thomas Craven fell in love with her and married her. The problem was that this young man was in training to be a priest. He was promptly excommunicated by the Church and disinherited by his wealthy parents. The young couple immigrated to the Canadian prairies, changed their name to Cooper, and began a difficult and impoverished life together. Betty's mother was their first born and, like her parents, she raised her three daughters with a religious sense of life. This story of her grandparents, part of Lambert's history, also contributed to her anger against the authoritarianism of the Roman Catholic Church.

- 3 Her scripts, journals, and letters are housed with the Betty Lambert Papers at Simon Fraser University. For more information on the author, see Beavington.
- 4 The manuscript for "Fire People" can be found with the Betty Lambert Papers at Simon Fraser University. One significant alteration is the title, which I do not develop in the body of this paper, but which clearly points to the alternate vision Lambert is embracing. Lambert in fact weaves many explicit verbal references to this alternate way of seeing throughout the play. The title highlights the references to the "firefolk" (Lambert, "Jennie's Story" 343, 361), to Jennie as Harry's "pagan lady," and to his love of her exuberant sexuality reinforced by her long "fiery-red braid." As he says, "it allus gets away on you. It's not in yer nature to braid your hair so tight" (351). When she crops it, she is literally cutting off the pagan, earthy side of her nature. The most explicit identification occurs when she describes the way she wants her life to end: "Ony when I go, Harry, don't put me in the ground. I want to go like the fire-folk, burnin', burnin', burnin', like those old Fire People made the rings up on the butte. Take me down ta the river and cut me some kindlin,' and let me go up into the sky like fire-folk" (343). Lambert mentions the "butte" and "the rings" in the "Author's Notes": "The 'Indian rings' referred to in the play are found in southern Alberta, and also in Saskatchewan, along the river, on buttes. As Harry says in the play, they are often found one day's canoe trip apart. Archaeologists guess the age of the circles to be perhaps 100,000 years, and, because of the placement of larger boulders, that they were used as an almanac of some kind" (304).
- 5 In *Jennie's Story*, just before the Father and Edna arrive, before the final confrontation, Jennie seems to be warming to Harry's "we can still make a life" (351). Then he hears the car approaching and she is shocked to discover that she has not heard it. She quickly goes upstairs "in darkness" (351). In "Fire People" he tells her they can still make a life; he shoots at the coyote and hears the car. He does not say that he likes it "when [she lets her] hair go loose like that" (351), of how he first fell in love with her. The "Fire People" does not include this short-lived softening with its sense that, perhaps, they might still be able to move forward together. It is noteworthy that when Molly greets Harry upon his return from prison, Molly's hair is loose.

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