

## Wish You Were Here: Love & Longing in an American Heartland

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and remind readers how much democracy is still about your neighbors, which is connected to Klobuchar's zeal for bipartisanship. Despite all we hear about polarization, there has been bipartisan cooperation among lawmakers, especially among those from the same region. As Klobuchar shows, midwesterners have stuck together on a variety of regional and other kinds of issues despite party differences. They are neighbors. But so, too, are those seeking to help veterans, to lower medical costs, or to combat sex trafficking. So, too, are those people you get to know by working with them. So, too, are our global trading partners. Throughout the book, Klobuchar pauses to let readers know what she learned from her many experiences, but the overall lesson is the need for cooperation and compromise if lawmakers hope to do their jobs and serve the public.

*Wish You Were Here: Love & Longing in an American Heartland*, by Zachary Michael Jack. American Midwest Series. Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2016. xi, 256 pp. Illustrations, bibliography. \$15.96 paperback, \$9.99 e-book.

Reviewer Julianne Couch is an adjunct faculty member at Upper Iowa University and the University of Wyoming. She is the author of *The Small-Town Midwest: Resilience and Hope in the Twenty-First Century* (2016).

For Zachary Michael Jack, rural Iowa is a place not just to live and work, but a place to fall in love and to fall in love with. In these collected essays, Jack considers his professional and personal situation as a seventh-generation Iowa farmer who must commute out of state for professional work. He sees his life as an extension of the practices and choices of his ancestors. In turn, readers can see Jack as a proxy for generations of Iowans, and midwesterners, in rural America.

In part one, Jack describes his youth in a small town singled out in the national conversation as an example of how far rural America had fallen. Jack, who has spent time living and studying in distant locations, consciously defied the brain drain trend and as a result feels that he has been viewed as a quaint but mystifying artifact of times past.

Jack considers his Iowa ancestors and their youthful options for courtship and marriage as he reflects on his own. With few young unmarried women nearby in rural Iowa, he says he finds it hard to forge long-lasting romantic relationships. In "Digital Divides," Jack visits online dating sites with mixed results. Even the Internet, with its possibilities for forging human connection across the globe, cannot span rural and urban social divides.

In part two, Jack looks at courtship and other circumstances of his farm-family parents in the 1960s. We learn about their options for meeting

mates through social customs of the era, such as corn-picking contests, country dances, and church events. We see men who had choices for off-farm work, such as his own father's work in the aviation industry. Tradition and family necessity forced Jack's father to return to the farm, setting the stage for Jack's perception of his life choices. He writes, "In the end, I live here because I love here. It is too easy . . . to be a simple eulogist, the regionally bereaved" (5).

In part three, Jack considers his grandparents, who graduated from high school in 1935. He unpacks the easy myth that limited choices mean quicker decisions. He regards his grandmother's suitors as if he is the parent greeting these young men at the farm lane gate, weighing whether they are worth the young lady's time. He presents his relatives not as exceptional but as typical. He shows the nuance in farm families in which the men are competent but the women broadly capable and, in his view, the "Wonder Women," as one essay is titled.

Within families, adherence to gender roles can exclude and even inhibit storytelling. After Jack's grandmother's death, female relatives took charge of her home and its contents, disposing of items they felt she would not want anyone to see. He protested. He wanted to know his grandmother as a full person. Historians, however, work with incomplete artifacts to find patterns in the knowable past. Readers treated to Jack's gifts as a storyteller will appreciate the quilt he has constructed from his own narrative, sewn into coherence with fabric from the past.

*Everyday Life: How the Ordinary Became Extraordinary*, by Joseph A. Amato. London: Reaktion Books, 2016. 256 pp. Notes, index. \$25.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Tom Morain is a former administrator of the State Historical Society of Iowa and recently semiretired Director of Government Relations at Grace-land University. He is the author of *Prairie Grass Roots: An Iowa Small Town in the Early Twentieth Century* (1988).

Joseph Amato has written a thoughtful, theoretical approach to the study of everyday history. "Everyday history" needs explanation to avoid two possibilities for misunderstanding. In this context, "everyday" is by no means to be confused with the mundane or insignificant. It has more to do with daily activity and how daily activities have evolved over time. Second, Amato specifically differentiates everyday history from the broader social science approaches of social and cultural history. While the latter describe how particular groups respond to events or situations, everyday history focuses on individuals and how they interpret their environment through the lens of their unique culture. "Daily life," Amato writes, "receives its definition around what first