Juanita Brooks's *Quicksand and Cactus*: The Evolution of a Literary Memoir

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JUANITA BROOKS HOLDS AN UNDISPUTED PLACE among Mormon historians. Her landmark and still definitive history of the Mountain Meadows massacre was first published by Stanford University Press in 1950 and reprinted by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1962. By 1979, it had gone through its sixth printing. Yet her most substantial contribution was in the writing of biographies and the editing of pioneer diaries. Among her biographies, two are outstanding: *Dudley Leavitt: Pioneer to Southern Utah* (St. George: by the author, 1942) and *John Doyle Lee: Zealot — Pioneer Builder — Scapegoat* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark, 1961). At least two of the diaries which she edited with detailed annotation are unexcelled: *A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee, 1848–1876*, 2 vols., in collaboration with Robert Glass Cleland (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1955) and *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society-University of Utah Press, 1964).

Consequently, when the autobiography of this woman who had given voice to so many other Utah lives appeared in 1982, it met an approving host of loyal readers. A first printing quickly sold out, and the Mormon History Association honored the work with its 1982 Best Book Award. A respectable number of reviews appeared in regional periodicals, most of them unreservedly, even eloquently, positive. According to one reviewer, "It is in fact something of a gentle comedy, a charming parable on life in Dixie. . . . She miniaturizes, domesticates, reduces the grand scheme to the small manageable detail" (Shepperson 1983). Another wrote, "There are dignity and delight in equal measure . . . . The transparent surfaces of Juanita's unhurried prose play, as in Willa Cather, over unsuspected depths" (Mulder 1984).

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A few reviewers had reservations. One was unhappy that the account brought Brooks's life only to early middle age: "Her memoir ends where her career begins. It contains only the slightest insights into her jousting with church leaders high and low while digging out facts that made her books and articles important" (Johnston 1983). Another noted the disparity between the two parts into which the work is divided. The second half, which treats her early adulthood, "Lacks the depth, comprehensiveness, and continuity of the first half; chapter titles are often misleading, unrelated stories are sometimes strung together without transition, and even the selection of topics is disappointing. This section of the book does not adequately convey a sense of the significance of Brooks's life and works on Utah letters" (Hefner 1983).

The manifest inconsistencies of *Quicksand and Cactus* can easily puzzle, if not annoy, a reader. Its two halves differ so sharply that they might have been written by different authors. Noting the unexpected halt of the account, the reader is provoked to ask, Why this much and no more?

Many of these inconsistencies lie in the circumstances of Brooks's life and in her compositional process. Granted ideal circumstances, she could have written a better autobiography. As it is, she did well enough. Despite its imperfections, it is a compelling, even remarkable literary work, surely one of the best of Mormon memoirs.

The first twenty-one chapters of *Quicksand and Cactus*, "Wide Wonderful World," cover Brooks's childhood to age thirteen. They are not expository, nor do they advance by the cohesive chronology of ordinary narrative. Rather they have the flavor and episodic organization of the personal essay. Some resemble fiction. One, "The Outsider," was in fact published separately as a short story. They progress casually, almost haphazardly, through the experiences of the girl Juanita Leavitt, who, although she narrates in the first person, is by no means the single center of attention. Her setting is Bunkerville, Nevada, on the Virgin River, a Mormon village unchanged from frontier times. Surrounding her are a multitudinous family, quaint neighbors, domestic animals, the irascible river, and the stark desert.

These chapters achieve a frequent, though not infallible, felicity of style — simple, concrete, quietly evocative of scene and setting, often laconic and wry: "Pa was a messy washer. He needed a bigger dish, for one thing. He'd sozzle and slosh around — hands to elbow, and head all over, often wiping long dirty streaks onto the towel. Then he'd stand straddle-legged and bent at the knee to try to see in the mirror" (Brooks 1982, 12–13).

Often the depiction of family and neighbors is satiric, emphasizing their foibles and eccentricities. Hence the men of Bunkerville are seen relaxing at noon during the annual cleaning of the Big Ditch: "Men who would shrink from speaking from the pulpit would wax eloquent over the shovel handle; men who turned to stone if asked to address the meeting could entertain the crowd with ease. Here the cloak of sanctity was torn off, tainted jokes were told, testimonies of the over zealous were repeated amid hilarity that was suppressed in church. Here, too, originated tall tales that became legend" (Brooks 1982, 108). A sampling of irreverent tales is provided. A man named Chris,

hearing noises in the night, commanded the evil spirit in his home to depart. Hearing further noises his wife rammed a broomhandle under the bed. "The Spirit of Evil gave a squeal and came out so fast it knocked Chris down, tipped the table over, and scattered tinware from hell to breakfast!" (Brooks 1982, 108–9). It was, of course, a pig.

Frequently it is the girl Juanita whom Brooks satirizes, treating with a cheerful irony her frail, ungainly body or her unsuspecting naivety. Juanita and her sister Charity accompany their father on his mail run to the railroad town of Moapa, where they absorb the marvels of rushing trains and exotic persons. Unable to blow out the electric light in their boarding house room, Juanita encloses the burning bulb in a drawer for the night. She also endures the incredulity of the proprietress who upon learning that Juanita is older than Charity shrieks: "Lordy, Lordy! Can you beat that! The little one here says she is fifteen whole months older! Whoooooeee!!!! Who ever heard tell of such a thing!" (Brooks 1982, 71).

The second half of *Quicksand and Cactus*, entitled "That Untravell'd World," is composed of sixteen brief chapters and an epilogue added by the publisher. They recount a heroic story. Juanita finishes high school, briefly teaches grade school, marries Ernest Pulsipher, and bears a son, Ernie. Her simple ambition at this moment is to be a rural wife. Shortly after their wedding Ernest is diagnosed as having cancer. Fifteen months later, Juanita is a widow. Accompanied by Ernie, she goes to college on the most meager of means. She graduates from BYU, accepts a position in English and debate at Dixie College, and eagerly seizes the opportunity for a sabbatical at Columbia, where she takes a master's degree in English. She returns to Dixie as dean of women, buys a house, and settles into a fruitful life as a professional woman. Then matchmakers align her with Will Brooks, the sheriff of Washington County, recently a widower. There the autobiography prematurely ends as Juanita Leavitt Pulsipher, thirty-five, assumes the Brooks name, which she will make famous.

These chapters proceed by conventional narrative, chronicling the notable events of her life. Although there is no likelihood of mistaking them for literary essays, they have beneath their placid expository surface some share of kinetic style and compelling episode, some stirring of passion and hope.

For example, on a lonely night in Salt Lake City, where Juanita waited with the suffering Ernest, a stranger knocked at the door and asked whether there was trouble within. He entered and gave a blessing to Ernest, who then slept soundly and awakened refreshed and temporarily renewed. It was a miracle. "He told the most incredible story: He lived way down on the Wasatch Boulevard, or above it. As he sat relaxed in his chair, he had such a strong feeling that he was needed somewhere that he got his overcoat and hat and started out. He caught the first streetcar north to North Temple, changed to another for the high Avenues, got off at the stop near the Ensign Ward church, and walked to our little house" (Brooks 1982, 236–37).

In the summer of 1923, working as a cook at a gypsum mill in southern Nevada, she suffered sexual harassment from a barbaric, predatory man, whom

she privately called Old Judas. On one occasion the man cornered her in a room:

"I turned around quickly, the butcher knife still in my hands, and faced him.

" 'Damn your dirty heart!' I said slowly. 'You dare to touch me, and I'll split you from stern to gudgeon!' "

She found herself again threatened on the mailtruck as she returned home at the end of the summer. He stopped the truck in a remote place and informed her that he meant to have sex with her.

"This time I had no defense; I did not care to argue or discuss this matter; I could only pray silently: 'Dear Lord, God help me!'

"Little Ernie had gone to sleep; he was lying between us, his head in my lap; it would be easy to slip a cushion under it, but I had no intention of doing it. I would remain where I was; he would have to drag me out" (Brooks 1982, 167–69).

Again a miracle. To this remote, unlikely spot came a man leading a lame horse, who cheerfully insisted on tying up his animal and riding the mailtruck into town, unwittingly foiling Judas' plan.

Despite such vivid episodes this section of the autobiography is weaker, less satisfying. Too often its sentences are prosaic and merely factual, its events arid and without emotion. An illustration is the brief account of Juanita's love for her cousin Albert Leavitt in the winter of 1916–17. Church music brought them together, she serving as organist, he as choir director. "Before we knew it," she writes, "we were going steady, and becoming altogether too fond of each other." Their fathers, conspiring to sever the attachment, succeeded in having Albert called on a mission. Brooks recounts this turn of events impassively: "Though for a while I was very lonely, I soon adjusted" (Brooks 1982, 198).

The actuality was much more poignant as an incident told long afterward by her sister Charity reveals. Albert had been gone perhaps a year. One night Juanita and Charity were in the kitchen of their parents' home where a fire burned in the range. Kneeling, Juanita read a letter from Albert in the flickering light of the open firebox. Tears glinted silver on her cheeks as she finished each page and quietly put it into the fire. Charity pitied her yet dared say nothing. Later Juanita explained. Albert had met a young woman whom he hoped to marry when his mission was over; he hoped Juanita would understand (Rowley 1985). In the printed account there is nothing of tears or firelight — only "I soon adjusted."

Neither of the two sections was written under propitious circumstances. When Brooks composed the first between 1944 and 1949, she was distracted by a multitude of family affairs, community activities, and historical projects. She had determination but little time. When she composed the second between 1970 and 1975, she had time but neither peace nor health.

Brooks had little tolerance for either idleness or solitude. Upon their marriage in 1933, she and Will composed an instant family of five sons — her one and his four. Within five years, they had added a daughter and three more

sons. They took in nephews and nieces and gave lodging to an unending troop of itinerant friends and relatives. Unquestionably Brooks found fulfillment in cooking meals, comforting wailing offspring, and sharing their robust enthusiasms. During the Depression years, she also undertook the duties of Relief Society president of the St. George Stake, vigorously implementing the new welfare program of the Mormon Church. She served regularly as a Sunday School teacher in her ward. Similarly she gave enthusiastic supervision, nationally recognized, to a WPA (Work Projects Administration) project for collecting pioneer diaries in southwestern Utah. From 1944 to 1952 she worked as a field representative for the Huntington Library, collecting pioneer documents for its archives. From 1950 to 1960 she was again a full-time teacher of English and debate at Dixie College.

As if she were not busy enough, Brooks also yearned to write. She aspired to a novel but settled instead for freelance articles about current events and episodes from the history of Dixie. Over the years she placed a surprising number in *The Improvement Era*, *Arizona Highways*, and other regional journals. With incredible luck she placed two articles about her pioneer family and community in *Harper's* — "A Close-up of Polygamy," 1934, and "The Water's In," 1941, articles very like the chapters of the first section of *Quicksand and Cactus*.

It was Dale Morgan who in 1944 fired Brooks with a perhaps premature ambition to see the story of her childhood placed with a national publisher. Morgan's work on the WPA Utah Writer's Project had awakened him to an interest in Western history which he, unmarried and totally deaf, would pursue with a singular devotion for the rest of his life. As WPA colleagues, Brooks and Morgan had begun in 1941 an intellectually intimate correspondence that would continue for many years. The development of the first half of *Quicksand and Cactus* may be closely followed in the letters they exchanged between St. George and Washington, D.C., where Morgan had found wartime employment.

"I want to tell you about Juanita Brooks," Morgan wrote to another correspondent in early 1944, "and a new book of which I am what you might call the spiritual father. Some weeks back I got to thinking about Juanita, her valiant and rather extraordinary life, her remarkable knowledge of the history and folkways of the southern Mormon frontier, and so on. Accordingly I wrote her that she was commanded to write a book, in some degree autobiographical, but with a large basis of social history, a kind of passionately personal book about that life she knows so well. I outlined in general what the book would be, and told her that her whole life had literally been a preparation to write it. Well, the idea struck fire in her mind, and she now sends me thirty or forty pages she has dashed off — a couple of short chapters, ideas for other chapters, reminiscences, etc. The material is absolutely wonderful!" (Morgan to McQuown 1944).

Quickly Brooks and Morgan fell into the relationship of student and mentor. Drafts went back and forth, Brooks revising as she found time, Morgan marking, annotating, and commenting both on the drafts and in his letters.

In June, 1944, she mailed Morgan a manuscript of completed chapters about her childhood and an outline of chapters about her early adulthood. Morgan recommended an immediate submission of the unfinished work, believing it of sufficient promise to elicit a contract. Having successfully placed his history of the Humboldt River, he was confident in his knowledge of the ways of eastern publishing.

The first attempt was Houghton Mifflin's Life in America competition. Scenting a certain victory, Morgan exulted in a 20 June 1944 letter: "I can tell you, Juanita, I feel proud to have played any part in the conception and development of this book. It is a rich and mature statement of life, and a glowing (if unconscious) revelation of a wise and gallant personality. It will be a memorable book when it is finished, and no one else could have written it so well. I am sure it will be a great success in every way, artistic and financial" (JB 1:7). At the end of July, however, Houghton Mifflin rejected the work. Thereupon Morgan actively took on the task of finding a publisher. In August 1944, he wrote to Bernard DeVoto for suggestions and followed a variety of other leads. In early October he submitted the manuscript to Farrar & Rinehart and, upon that firm's rejection, submitted in late October to H. E. Dutton.

Brooks's spirits went predictably up and down during this process. On 11 October she wrote with a half-incredulous excitement: "I daren't hope too much; I daren't say a word except to Will, but if ever we really land anything, I'll stage a celebration for sure!" (DM 71:161). Earlier, recalling that she had provided historical material for Maurine Whipple's novel *Giant Joshua*, she brooded: "I have always said that a quail has its place as well as a canary, but I feel like a quail. Perhaps I should stay with the one thing which I have been able to do — collect material for others to work into best selling novels" (13 Aug. 1944, DM 71:161).

Following the Dutton rejection, Morgan himself was sobered. Tacitly admitting the strategical error of submitting a preliminary draft, he now wanted Brooks to finish and polish the work before further submission. Since editors had shown little enthusiasm for the outline of her later life, Morgan recommended that she concentrate on the chapters about her childhood, advice which she heeded. During the first half of 1945, further rounds of revision and criticism ensued. Despairing of success, Brooks drudged on, apologizing as she mailed a revised draft on 10 March 1945, "I'm heartily sick of it, and ashamed that after all my promises to myself and to you, it should not be more complete and better done" (DM 71:161). Her interest was shifting to a new project, her collecting of diaries for the Huntington Library having recently led to a modest fellowship for writing a history of the Mountain Meadows massacre.

Brooks's connection with the Huntington opened other doors for *Quicksand and Cactus*. Alerted to her work on the massacre, the firm of Alfred A. Knopf became interested in the autobiography and solicited a submission. By November 1945, Knopf had read and rejected it. In early 1948 Rinehart invited Brooks to submit *Quicksand and Cactus* along with the now-completed manuscript of *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*. In April the firm regretfully declined both.

At Morgan's suggestion, Bobbs-Merrill requested to see the autobiography in January of 1949. By now Stanford University Press had accepted the manuscript on the massacre, a fact so bolstering to Brooks's confidence that she undertook a major revision of the autobiography, substituting a third person fictional character named Sal for the first person Juanita of the earlier drafts. In a letter to D. L. Chambers at Bobbs-Merrill on 10 February 1949 she explained her fictionalization: "While I can see that it may lose something in authenticity, I hope that it may gain in vitality. I had felt that, to justify a book, the subject of an autobiography should have achieved distinction in some field, while a good story may be just a good story" (JB 2:7). Her efforts were in vain. Bobbs-Merrill rejected her manuscript, and the fictional chapters joined the others in her files where all would rest undisturbed for many years. By 1949 six eastern publishers had given *Quicksand and Cactus* a close, respectful look and had determined that it would not sell in a national market.

Fortunately Brooks had cracked an insular market in the West. *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, published in 1950, established her reputation as a Utah historian, and her fame expanded steadily thereafter. However, her reputation would remain regional. Her *Harper's* articles notwithstanding, she would never achieve a national readership.

Brooks's early labor on *Quicksand and Cactus* was more profitable than she, in her discouragement, might have recognized. She had learned much from Dale Morgan, whom Charles Peterson, in his introduction to the published work, justly calls a "stern taskmaster" (Brooks 1982, xxviii). Sometimes Morgan scolded her for her stylistic lapses. With an extraordinary perspicacity for one untrained in literature, he urged her to get "a sense of relaxed richness into your prose. Don't be in such a hurry to say things that you say them in pedestrian fashion, in other words. Build up what you are saying with the richness of all the sensory perceptions so that what you are writing becomes an experience in itself, not just a narration of an experience" (13 Nov. 1944, JB 1:7). He fretted constantly over the disorganization of the work. "No matter how excellent your stories are . . . your book must lead somewhere; it must have a cumulative impact" (12 April 1944, JB 1:7). He also had strong reservations about her tendency to work in "the borderland of fiction," rearranging the facts of her life for dramatic impact or inventing dialogue which she could not have actually remembered. He warned against the inclusion of tall tales and folklore, which "arouse so strong a suspicion that they lead one to question the historicity of some of the other chapters" (26 April 1945, JB 1:7). For Morgan, there was no room in autobiography for an imaginative enlargement upon fact.

It may be fairly said that Brooks's work under Morgan's tutelage was an indispensable training for the successes which lay ahead, amounting to, again in Charles Peterson's words, "a stiff seminar in the historical method" (Brooks 1982, xxix). It was indeed a seminar, not only in historiography but in creative writing as well, an intense experience in advanced technique. One can scarcely imagine a more lucky eventuality in Brooks's professional life than the extraordinary course in home study that Morgan gave her.

However, it is apparent from the published *Quicksand and Cactus* that Brooks did not entirely produce the qualities Morgan recommended. The first section remains episodic in structure, and its style fluctuates between a plodding simplicity and a colloquial brilliance. It has little of philosophic texture or literary allusion; rather it smacks of common sense and rural acuity. Abundant in folktales and imaginary dialogue, it occupies a misty terrain somewhere between history, folklore, and fiction. Still, as a work of literature it makes its own way. Delighting as well as informing, it reveals a universal human nature among the customs, foibles, and wonders of a tiny desert community now lost in the past.

By the mid-1960s Juanita had become a venerable folkfigure sought by numerous clubs and fireside groups, who eagerly paid her bus fare in return for her willing discussion of the Mountain Meadows massacre or of her own life. In informal circumstances, her wit and integrity deeply affected her listeners. Often she gave oral renditions of chapters from her dormant autobiography. One was "The Outsider," which Golden Taylor of Utah State University asked in 1963 to include in an anthology of short fiction typifying Western life: "I realize that you tell it with the utmost fidelity as autobiography, but just a touch of fiction would justify its inclusion" (4 Dec. 1963, JB 5:8). Brooks was agreeable, the written chapter already having, as Morgan had lamented, a fictional tone. In 1967 it appeared in Taylor's compilation, *Great Western Short Stories* (Palo Alto, California: The American West Publishing Co.), augustly positioned between Willa Cather's "Neighbor Rosicky" and Hamlin Garland's "Under the Lion's Paw."

John Greenway, an editor who heard "The Outsider" at a folklore conference in Logan, wanted to publish it as an example of literary folklore. Respecting Taylor's prior right, Brooks obtained his consent before agreeing. Shortly Greenway's interest expanded to other accounts. Consequently "Old Tubucks," "The Outsider," and "Selah" appeared in a 1964 issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* under the supertitle "Memories of a Mormon Girlhood." Brooks did not disabuse Taylor and Greenway of their belief that she was putting the accounts into writing for the first time. When it seemed to enhance the prospects of publication, she was entirely capable of a discreet dissemblance.

In 1960, Brooks and her husband moved to Salt Lake, where she had convenient access to the sources of her editing and writing and where she delighted in an association with well-to-do, highly cultivated people. Although Will professed satisfaction with city life, his joy when visiting southern Utah was so undisguised that in 1963 Brooks agreed to return to St. George. In early 1970, Will died. The bell of the St. George tabernacle tolled as it had in early days and a great crowd assembled for the funeral, including Utah's governor, who delivered an impromptu eulogy. It was a mark of respect for Brooks as well as for her husband. She and he had bonded along hundreds of surfaces and in burying him she buried a part of herself. Publicly she remained industrious and courageous. When Norma Mikkelsen, director of the University of Utah Press, proposed a resumption of work on *Quicksand and Cactus*, she agreed.

She returned to Salt Lake in late 1970, bringing the earlier *Quicksand and Cactus* chapters jumbled together in a box, and settled down to work.

Dale Morgan was no longer an influence. Brooks's correspondence with him had long since grown sporadic. In 1971, he died of cancer. A new source of encouragement was Trudy McMurrin, assigned to Brooks as a developmental editor by the university press. Assisted by Mikkelsen and McMurrin, Brooks made a selection of first-person chapters giving a coherent account of her childhood and prepared to go forward from where they stopped. She established a routine of talking about her subject matter with McMurrin, as if she could best generate ideas by an oral process. There were long telephone conversations, discussions at lunch, interchanges at Brooks's house as McMurrin drove home from the press. When at last she seemed ready to write, McMurrin provided her with summary outlines, "little descriptions of what she said she was going to write" (McMurrin 1985). As drafts emerged from Brooks's typewriter, McMurrin picked them up, read them, and returned them with encouraging endorsements. One can see emergent details of the published version in a letter Brooks wrote Todd and Betty Berens, western history buffs from California, 4 August 1974: "I must contact Norma at the University Press today, also. Now that I have myself working in the dining room of the boardinghouse at the Gyp Mine and plaster mill I can summarize the season in a few sentences. Writing the account of the winter with one dress will be, I think, fun to do. I'm never sure when to go into detail" (Brooks 1974).

It was a protracted, sometimes painful process. Aging and temperamental, Brooks found herself suffering renewed grief as she sifted the memories of her brief marriage to a dying man and of the privations of her early widowhood. Another problem arose as she completed the chapters about her widowhood and approached her life with Will. She had married a family, as she often told people, and she now found it impossible to organize a complex account that would synthesize and track each of the children of the composite Brooks family.

There were many distractions. Friends took her to concerts and plays. She accepted incessant invitations to speak before groups. Numerous relatives came by to visit or find lodging. She also worked on other books — an edition of the journal of Martha Spence Heywood, a biography of Emma Lee. Nonetheless, considering the time she disposed of, the page count of her continued autobiography was meager. At home alone, she behaved like a recluse. She kept her drapes closed at all times, ate abstemiously, and worked at irregular hours of the day and night in a barren basement room. She wrote to the Berens 21 June 1975: "I'm trying desperately to finish this *Quicksand & Cactus* deal, but find it hard to stay with it — hard to follow my own advice to others 'Glue the seat of your pants to the seat of the chair and *stay there*.' "

Gradually it dawned on McMurrin that supposedly finished portions of *Quicksand and Cactus* were permanently disappearing. "I should have been meticulously and frantically making copies of everything and I realized that too late," McMurrin recounted, blaming the low budget of the university press. Brooks was, in fact, suffering early symptoms of a debilitating senility. With a gallant attempt at humor, she wrote pathetically to the Berens 30 August 1976:

"My only worry is that I am more and more aware that OLD AGE has stepped around the corner, grabbed me, and said, 'I Got You!' " As 1977 dawned, Brooks's children boxed her manuscripts, closed the house, and took her home to St. George to stay. At seventy-nine she had come to the end of her writing career. These melancholy facts explain the abbreviated nature of the second section of *Quicksand and Cactus*. Brooks suffered, with Will's death, a sapped determination and, with the advance of her disease, a deteriorated competence.

Behind the publication of *Quicksand and Cactus* is a story of creative editing. Despite the earnest efforts of Mikkelsen and McMurrin, the manuscript materials had remained in a formidable disarray. Many chapters existed in multiple versions offering confusing recombinations of incidents and ideas. Such was the lack of dates and unifying themes that an order for the whole work was still by no means obvious. For this reason, the University of Utah Press did not make further negotiations with the family for publishing the work. Karl Brooks of St. George, acting as his mother's executor, hired a professional editor to compile a publishable manuscript but soon found the arrangement unsatisfactory. In late 1980, he approached Howe Brothers of Salt Lake, whose energetic young proprietor, Richard Howe, agreed to prepare and publish the work. Enlisting historian Charles Peterson to write a biographical introduction, Howe consulted Trudy McMurrin and studied the correspondence between Brooks and Morgan to clarify the evolution of the early chapters. He spread manuscripts across the carpet of his living room and for three months methodically sorted, collated, and harmonized. He dated the composition of the chapters through the apparent age of paper, the distinctive traits of the several typewriters Brooks had used over the years, and the frequent appearance of carbon copies on the backs of ruined pages of other manuscripts Brooks was known to have been working on.

Like a sleuth Howe contemplated internal and external evidence and arrived at an arrangement of chapters which seemed logical. According to Howe: "I would say the first third of the book was more or less intact. The second third of the book I had to do a little more collating and the last part I had to do even more." Still, Howe asserted that he did very little actual writing: "If I did any, it was no more than a total of maybe a paragraph or two. Any time that I felt a transition was needed, I know I would do this; a couple of times I went to that third person narrative and picked a transition up from there and stuck that in a place or two and I think that I consulted with Karl when I did that" (Howe 1985). Thus it was finally Richard Howe to whom fell the perhaps unenviable privilege of determining the order in which the autobiography of Juanita Brooks would present itself to the world.

Quicksand and Cactus will be a forever unfinished work. That fact does not invalidate its beauty. There is a propriety in its incompleteness. There was something unfinished about Brooks's living personality. Although her courage, wit, and critical intelligence made her the close friend of sophisticated people, she remained unsophisticated and rural. Not only was she the chronicler of pioneer Utah, she was a living remnant of it. That was part of her charisma.

There was a feral grandeur about her, something of the solidity of granite found in the wild. There is a similar dignity about her autobiography. It is rough and unfinished but not hollow; it is filled at the center.

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