

jects plays into our natural curiosity—who among us would not *really* like to know what has become of the Nelsons, or what happens to a rock group that wants to eat in a fancy restaurant but on principle will not wear neckties, or what life was like behind the scenes of the Symbionese Liberation Army—and Davidson's articulate insights can give us at least as much excuse for reading her work as for watching a fine TV talk show. The

best of the popular magazines consistently duplicate the quality of her writing, but *Real Property* brings together the scattered articles of a single writer lets us view that one consciousness as it plays upon many different topics.

Anyone interested in reading "The Man With Ten Wives" without purchasing *Real Property* may find the original article in *Rolling Stone*, October 23, 1975, pp. 48–54.

Dear Diary . . .

Will I Ever Forget This Day? Excerpts from the Diaries of Carol Lynn Pearson, edited by Elouise M. Bell. Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1980. 130 pp. \$5.50.

Reviewed by MARY L. BRADFORD.

That last bastion of privacy—our personal diaries—has now been turned into a "program." From the pulpit, we are admonished to keep diaries; we are treated to snatches of personal diaries in sacrament meeting, we are urged to share our diaries in Relief Society, and our children are instructed in the rules and regulations of diary-keeping. I know whereof I speak, having been on the Diary Speaker circuit for several years now. My own diary-keeping goes back to my thirteenth year and is so extensive that I now have a large collection of beat-up loose-leaf notebooks, old ledgers, gold-tooled gift volumes, old school notebooks and fat folders full of typewritten entries. I have been keeping diaries for so many years that I have taken to organizing them under titles: Diet Diary, Dream Diary, Travel Diary, Dialogue Diary, Depression Diary, Poetry Diary, etc. Not content to keep my habit to myself, I have passed it on to my daughter, who began her diary when she was in fourth grade and continues it as a sophomore at BYU. She and I are known in some parts as a Mother-Daughter Diary Duo—traveling about with dramatic readings and witty presentations based on our

combined works. I must admit, however, that she has the advantage of me. She has read my teenage diaries, while I have never been allowed into hers, except as she chooses to quote them to me, always exclaiming "Mother! Listen to this! I can't believe I *said* this! Or thought this!"

Carol Lynn Pearson responded in much the same way when asked to publish her diary, started in her high school senior year and continuing to the present: "You're kidding. I said that? I did that? I felt that way?" Carol Lynn was persuaded to publish by her friend Elouise Bell, who as a teacher of college students and former member of the Young Women's Mutual Board, was charged with moving the diary program along. According to the introduction, when Elouise first approached Carol Lynn with the idea, Carol Lynn responded in her typically disarming way, "Just the fact that I have become somewhat well-known in Mormondom does not make the mundanities of my life any more significant than the mundanities of anybody else's life . . . In my mind I see an intelligent person picking up the book as she wanders through her local bookstore and saying: 'My gosh, her diaries now. Who does she think she is?'"

And that is about what I said when I was handed a copy of this attractive book. It is not that I was offended by another title from my friend Carol Lynn Pearson, but only that I was worried: How could a still living person publish

her diaries, edited, no less, by another living person and not be—(a) censored and (b) part of a stultifying “program” which would just naturally kill off what I consider to be the main purpose of diary keeping in the first place: therapy.

So I read Elouise’s introduction and Carol Lynn’s introductory letter and decided to proceed. Though Elouise’s reasoning—that young people should keep diaries so that “the angels may quote from them” (as President Kimball has put it) was disquieting (diaries are supposed to be private—that’s why they are such good therapy), I was convinced that Carol Lynn’s reasons for keeping a diary were worth sharing: learning from one’s own growth cycle, being honest about oneself and one’s life, and best of all, remembering. “Will I Ever Forget This Day?” asks the title. The answer is, “Yes, I will, if I don’t write it down.”

As Mormons, we are commanded to keep a record of our people. It is comforting to think that our own personal lives, even with their sins and errors, are an important part of that record. Carol Lynn leads the way by being willing to serve as a model for Mormon diary keepers. The question is: Will others be inspired to take up the habit if they are not already hooked? I am not persuaded that people who have not already been trained to write as children or who are not otherwise addicted to writing will be moved to do so by this book, or any book. As a text in a class devoted to diary keeping, it could be useful—but a class in diary-keeping! I realize that such workshops are popular in the Church, but I am not convinced that they can do anything more than produce guilt. Besides, the minute somebody tells you how to write and what to include, it ceases to fulfill its role as friend and therapist. But I am open to persuasion. I hope that people will read this book and become motivated to write. Which brings me to the second question: Who is the intended reader of this volume? Elouise speaks of the mutual and the young adult in her

introduction, and most of her advice seems geared to the younger teenager. But Carol Lynn’s diary is really the story of a grown-up young woman in her early twenties. Although touches of the lonely and the frustrated do occasionally come through, the picture of Carol Lynn is one of Success! Although her romances didn’t work out very well (glossed over as they are and sketchily described), she wins every prize and every part she ever tries out for. Only a few failures are recorded here, and although the reader finds some self-doubt and sorrow, the overwhelming picture is one of a self-contained, disciplined young woman who has always known where she is going.

But I quibble. For those of us who grew up in the forties, fifties and sixties, this book introduces a “good” Mormon girl who kept the commandments and who worried about her relationship with God and her place in his scheme of things. True, she is quite a bit more accomplished than most and independent enough to spend a year in Europe, with a side trip to Israel and a stint in a Kibbutz, where she manages to record the rhythm of a young woman’s search for identity.

Though I would love to read the parts she and Elouise excised, I am convinced that the real Carol Lynn Pearson is standing up. I am glad that she was willing to turn her observant eye inward on herself to record “the twenty-one years of my own daily actions, my thought processes, my growth, my disappointments, my stupidity, my wisdom, my ignorance, my fears, my exaggerations, and a bit of courage” and to be thankful with her that she was able to see her whole life pass before her without having to die first. In spite of its limitations, this book presents an endearing and spirited account, a welcome opportunity to meet the young Carol Lynn Wright Pearson who has succeeded in preserving her sense of wonder. It is comforting to learn that the girl is truly the mother of the woman, a consistent clear-eyed writer, whose light shines through any bushel.