

world. For it was in all the world that he had faith, and it was to all the world that his word had ever gone.

PAUL ROSENFELD.

Emerald Lake

I DO not know whether, as a manner of living, Emerald Lake is worse than those Calabrian villages from which so many of its inhabitants come, but as an architectural litter it is almost as desperate as anything our landscape offers. Once the bed of a broad shallow lake, the region is as low as land can be, and its fields are almost perpetually damp. Streets have been cut in long straight lines and left to wallow in their mud. A gaudy sign-board announces the shifty "real-estate development company" which is responsible for the little foreign settlement. Looking down these vapid streets, one sees a broken line of square, flat-roofed houses of brick and stone, like a caricature of the squat earthquake buildings of Caserta, with here and there a balcony and a touch of color. But in spite of the sprawling space all about, these houses bulge with dark people. A little squalid shop usually darkens the ground floor, and from the apartments above float streamers of bright-colored clothes. Already these streets suggest the time when the combined genius of the land speculator and the Italian padrone will have built Emerald Lake solidly up to the great city which it brushes.

But now the little settlement overflows its streets. The scene is dotted with tiny homesteads, dilapidated shacks of weather-beaten boards thrown together out of old lumber and tar-paper, with a window or two and a stove-pipe chimney. Each little hut is set in its patch of garden and surrounded by its stockade of palings, a brave gesture of an ownership that looks so pitifully clinging and uncertain. On the gaunt and rocky places is tethered the ubiquitous goat against whose marauding these proprietors waste their precious lumber. Black-haired babies and bristly dogs roll in the gutter and on the sidewalks where some bold entrepreneur has already laid his line of "concrete." There are few trees, and the settlement lies in a hot September glare that seems only too grateful to the swarthy, heavy, incorrigibly healthy women who drag themselves to the corner grocery or stand fiercely talking at the doorways. They are all smoothly black-haired, and they all look middle-aged and they all look alike. But for all their clumsiness there is a certain piratical vigor and intensity about them. In my childhood, whenever I rode through Emerald Lake in the car, this

was what was most the very essence of "foreign" to me. And as I heard tales of these Italian neighbors going in so whole-heartedly for the anger or lasciviousness or murder which life elementally seemed to demand of them, I wondered at our complacent way of fearing them and of pitying their weak servitude to emotion. These Italians always looked very determined to me, and, illiterate and primitive as I knew them to be, they insisted, against the gray background of our town life, upon seeming important as people. Even the babies have a certain intensity and determination as they totter on the sidewalks, giving evidence that these broad women are not middle-aged but the authentic mothers of them and in the full tide of their prolific career. The young girls you do not see until six o'clock calls them pouring out of the mills, running and chattering in a confused babble. The fact that the eternal-looking mothers were once such ungainly, flimsy, indefinite young animals is no more mysterious perhaps than the fact that the cheerfully guttural men who are repairing the electric road were once like those definite little babies who are bruising themselves on the pavement. For such integrated and elemental people youth cannot be a protective period of prolonged infancy. It is rather something quick, unpleasant, irrelevant, to explode quickly into the real business of working and fighting and breeding. Such people do not fool and fritter away their passions, but get them somehow conserved for life. Emerald Lake represents the injection of sudden vitality into our Puritan town.

The question of what we are going to do with this vitality is so important that it vaguely stirs our community conscience. And they with us! What will America do to these babies in their growing up? Will they lose something of that intensity and become like the painfully collared Domenicoes who stand around the saloon of an evening? If they surrender ditch-digging to some even more needy race, will there be provided for them or will they create for themselves work that will keep all that elemental vigor? Will the girls stay soft and foolish and fail to jump suddenly into eternal-looking mothers? Will they make us gayer, intenser, more primitive, or will our streets merely sophisticate and corrode their vigor? If they become more like us, what obscure things will happen to their souls, and if they do not, what things will happen to ours?

Our town shows its sense of the significance of all these matters by sending Emerald Lake a school, a raw red brick hulk with hideous green shades and a proud and strutting flag-pole. Indeed with characteristic American other-worldliness the school has preceded the sewer. The school is the

gift of democracy, while the sewer waits on the demand of property-owners. The town trusts the school to Americanize Emerald Lake, as it pulls the little children from the gutters to the kindergarten and sends around the truant officer to catch those under fourteen. The children sing patriotic songs, and salute the American flag every morning, and learn the varied information which the millions of other American children are learning at the same moment all over our broad land.

As yet Emerald Lake has no church and probably will not have a church. For its people seem to have all the robust atheism of those Latin peoples who at once so much enjoy the voluptuousness of religious devotion and get along so easily without it. But it is our custom to contrast rather unfavorably this churchlessness of Emerald Lake with the Polish settlement at the other end of the town, where the church under a nationalistic priest has made a patriotic Poland out of the invigorated neighborhood.

It is surprising how little we know about the inhabitants of Emerald Lake. We do not know whether they come from the same Italian villages, or whether they have drifted in as isolated families. We do not know what old customs and associations they keep up, how they feel themselves related to each other, what they think of us, their neighbors. Politically, Emerald Lake does not count. Even if there were many more naturalized citizens, its voting would still be a mere ratification of the policy of one or the other of the native local politicians who direct township affairs as retainers of our tight little Puritan aristocracy. Emerald Lake's political activity is likely to be limited for some time to such matters as pulling wires for a new saloon license, getting its thirteen-year-old children out of the clutch of the truant officer, coaxing off some youthful brigand from the Recorder's court. Emerald Lake is not yet aware that its true interests lie in securing well paved streets, well drained land, lights, city water and sewers, sanitary tenements, garden space, protection against exploiting builders and landlords, a modern school. It knows that it is not interested in just which popular fellow of the ward shall be councilman. But our town is as innocent as any other of any machinery for getting the newcomer to feel his interest in these needs of his, and to express it effectively. All we can think of to do is to let him say who shall be councilman, and, if he owns a piece of land, pay a few dollars of taxes. We don't work him into the local freemasonry of politics. We tolerate his coming and settling on unoccupied territory which is geographically within our borders, but it is only geographically that Emerald Lake is a part of us.

The Italian of Emerald Lake forces himself upon our attention, works himself in, through acquiring property. There have been times when he unwittingly did it by crime and disease. Our aesthetic stomach has seemed strong enough to stand almost anything he may give us in the manner of living. But his soundest instinct is property. Italian names dot the tax-rolls of the township. Insusceptible to ugliness, mildly susceptible to pestilence, our Puritan community is impressed by property. The Italian first makes his impression as a propertied man. And this is the road along which Emerald Lake advances. To see it for the first time is to feel a chill of despair. Such squalor, such filth, such gaunt forsaken rubbish of lane and hut. Yet I can remember when Emerald Lake was only hovels, and there were not even palings to protect the garden-patch. These queer little buildings, these gardens, these little shops, represent economic advance. For Emerald Lake was true pioneer territory, without any free homestead land. Even the foothold had to be struggled for. There is something unconquerably robust about Emerald Lake. Its dilapidation is the squalor of hope. It is not the squalor of recession and defeat.

RANDOLPH BOURNE.

VERSE

The Dancers

From the grey woods they come, on silent feet
 Into a cone of light
 A moment poised,
 A lifting note,
 O fair! O fleet!
 Whence did you come in your amazing flight?
 And whither now
 Do you, reluctant, wistfully retreat?
 Oh, surely you have danced upon the hills
 With the immortals!
 As an arrow thrills
 Through the blue air and sings,
 You join with the proud wind, your fluent limbs
 As tameless as his wings.
 Within your hollowed hand you hold the draught
 That wakes us from our ancient lethargy
 To skyey joy
 Like yours, luring and swift and free.
 Yours is the birth in beauty that was sung
 A golden age ago;
 And now you come
 With pipe and cymbal and the quickening drum,
 Till men have hope of conquest over time
 And death and tears.
 Dreams know not any bars.
 You leap like living music through the air,
 And love triumphant treads among the stars.

BABETTE DEUTSCH.