



Book Review: "Glimmerglass," A Novel by Marly Youmans

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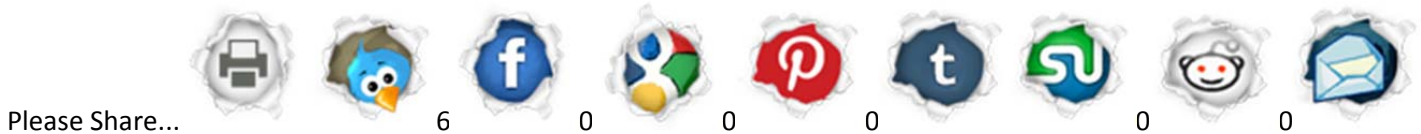


Photo by [Rebecca Beatrice Miller](#)

"What a queer place I've come to!" Queer, she thought, in an ancient, nigh-magical sense, crooked and foreign, stirring with beings alien to the daily world of getting and selling. Slowly the boy turned his head until he stared directly at her. What was left of the artist in her felt the glance like a hard slap.

It is a rare treat to read a book that makes you feel lucky to have stumbled upon it. When I plucked *Glimmerglass* by Marly Youmans from the bookstore shelf, I hadn't heard of the author or the novel, but the [book jacket illustrations](#) caught my eye. At only 194 pages it at first seemed like a small story that would provide a quick, easy read. I soon found myself lost in the village of Cooper Patent in all its weirdness and on a life or death journey with the heroine, Cynthia Sorrell.

Cynthia is a stifled painter with a failed marriage and a barren life. She arrives in town looking for a rental home and a place, maybe, to lick the wounds life has dealt her. When she is shown the cottage with seven doors on the shores of Glimmerglass Lake she isn't sure she's going to take it. It's almost as if some force compels her to do so.

It isn't long before she learns that the cottage gatehouse is subordinate to Sea House; a mansion encrusted with fossils and filled with unused rooms with locked doors and missing keys. Sea Glass is owned by the Wild brothers, Andrew and Teddy. Cynthia is drawn to them yet senses something otherworldly about the duo, especially the dwarf-like Teddy.

She spends her days getting to know Cooper Patent and its inhabitants and is soon commissioned to paint portraits of some of them, including the Wild brothers. She is happy for the work but longs for something more

artistically fulfilling. One day she catches sight of a white slip of a boy in the woods near her cottage. She is startled at first but also entranced and gives chase. Was he just a dream or could he be her Muse?

He isn't the only mystery in *Glimmerglass*. Possible ghosts, a minotaur, and an angel populate the pages along with questions. What happened to Moss Wild, the missing childhood cousin of Andrew and Teddy? Who has the missing key for the last door in Sea Glass — the one that opens into the bottom of a hill? If Cynthia trusts the wrong Wild brother, will she end up lost as well?

This is the tale of a woman's journey and the courage required to live a creative life, or any life, to its fullest. Ghosts and "wizened creatures" are just a few of the obstacles for a late bloomer on the verge of giving up on life's dreams. If she is to make a home here, if she is to salvage a family for herself, she will have to stand her ground and maybe go deeper. Cynthia's reserves of strength, belief and imagination will be tested and the dangers are real. But so are the rewards.

Part fairy tale, part cautionary tale with a dash of fantasy and allegory, Youmans has created a special world in *Glimmerglass*. Cooper Patent is a village rooted in the States, but it shimmers with hints of Neverland, the Land of Oz and a visit through the looking glass. The setting has an eerie beauty to it along with tingling suspense and a real-world mystery clamoring for resolution. The language is spare and illuminating and sparkles a bit at the edges. I finished it late last night "before threading the eye of the needle and sliding head first into the plush midnight fabric of sleep."

Marly Youmans is the author of several novels as well as volumes of poetry and southern fantasies. You can find out more about her by visiting her [blog](#).

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About Suzanne Brazil



Suzanne M. Brazil is a freelance writer and editor living in a recently empty nest in the suburbs of Chicago. Her work has been featured in Chicken Soup for the Soul, Writer's Digest, The Daily Herald and many local publications. She is a frequent blog contributor and is working on the second draft of her first novel.