



Strange Comfort: Essays on the Work of Malcolm Lowry

Sherrill Grace

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Strange Comfort collects the best of Sherrill Grace's many published essays on the novelist and writer Malcolm Lowry, along with new pieces that incorporate her contemporary approach to his work. There are essays on *Under the Volcano*, on some of the stories in *Hear us O Lord from heaven thy dwelling place*, and on Lowry's most important themes: endless voyaging, the creative role and identity of the artist, the nightmare of history, the pressures of memory and the urgent need to protect the garden of our world. A visionary, Lowry prophetically addressed the dominant issues of our 21st century.

In her new essays, Dr. Grace explores his disturbing vision of the devastating impact of perpetual war, only one of many of Lowry's preoccupations, and establishes that in many respects, Malcolm Lowry was an environmentalist avant la lettre, commenting on his vision of the natural world as an escape from the horror "of existence as sold to you."

Lowry was an intensely autobiographical writer, a quality not appreciated during his lifetime. Today, critical perspectives have changed considerably, and Lowry's anxiety about writing elements of his own life into fiction invites critical reassessment. Many of these essays offer a fresh look at Lowry's attempts to apprehend and portray the writer, writing.

The title, *Strange Comfort*, comes from a Lowry short story called "Strange Comfort Afforded by the Profession." These essays illustrate some of the ways in which Lowry found comfort in the world of art, of other writers and the landscape of his beloved Dollarton, British Columbia. Malcolm Lowry was in many ways a British writer, but his spiritual home—his creative comfort—surrounded him on the beach at Dollarton. 2009 marked the centenary of Lowry's birth and this volume of essays, old and new, celebrates Lowry's deep and enduring relevance for our times.

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