

Sunrise

Connecticut Muse

By Fiona de Merell

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Robert Crooke's clean, spare narrative proves that less can be more. He occasionally allows himself some purple prose but the impact and enormity of his characters' actions and their wider parallels are all the more resonant for the uncluttered narrative that describes them. In *Sunrise*, Crooke offers not only a story about individuals but also a wider view on America's sense of self. The narrative's early reference to *The Great Gatsby* speaks for the then and now of society: "Fitzgerald had captured America in a moment's irreconcilable balance between disappointment and hope." This is what *Sunrise* does so well. The Montauk of Stephen's experience offers an uncomfortable sense of elitism, community, flawed loyalty and an age about to be lost which serves as a microcosm of contemporary America as it searches for meaning and identity. *Sunrise* shows what people are prepared to do for what they think they want and how they deal with the consequences. Like all stories that speak truly of the human condition, it stays with the reader long after the last page has been turned.