



Lynd Ward: Gods' Man, Madman's Drum, Wild Pilgrimage

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In this, the first of two volumes collecting all his woodcut novels, The Library of America brings together Lynd Ward's earliest books, published when the artist was still in his twenties. *Gods' Man* (1929), the audaciously ambitious work that made Ward's reputation, is a modern morality play, an allegory of the deadly bargain a striving young artist often makes with life. *Madman's Drum* (1930), a multigenerational saga worthy of Faulkner, traces the legacy of violence haunting a family whose stock in trade is human souls. *Wild Pilgrimage* (1932), perhaps the most accomplished of these early books, is a study in the brutalization of an American factory worker whose heart can still respond to beauty but whose mind is twisted in rage against the system and its shackles.

The images reproduced in this volume are taken from prints pulled from the original woodblocks or first-generation electrotypes. Ward's novels are presented, for the first time since the 1930s, in the format that the artist intended, one image per right-hand page, and are followed by five essays in which he discusses the technical challenges of his craft. Art Spiegelman contributes an introductory essay, "Reading Pictures," that defines Ward's towering achievement in that most demanding of graphic-story forms, the wordless novel in woodcuts.

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