



Beyond the Gray Leaf: The Life and Poems of J.P. Irvine

Dustin Renwick

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Walt Whitman, John Burroughs, and J.P. Irvine represent a handful of the thousands of government clerks who worked in Washington, D.C., after the Civil War. But Irvine, a small-town poet from the Illinois prairies, was the one selected to address President Ulysses S. Grant and a crowd of 10,000 on Memorial Day 1873. Those words were lost, along with the legacy of the man. Until now. Dustin Renwick tracked down that piece and more for his book, which explores Irvine's life from his pioneer upbringing in western Illinois to his years in the nation's capital. The poet excelled in his depictions of the Civil War, and the Chicago Tribune called some of Irvine's nature poems "nearly pure gold." Beyond the Gray Leaf weaves biography and historical context with the rediscovered poems of this forgotten literary figure from 19th-century America.

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