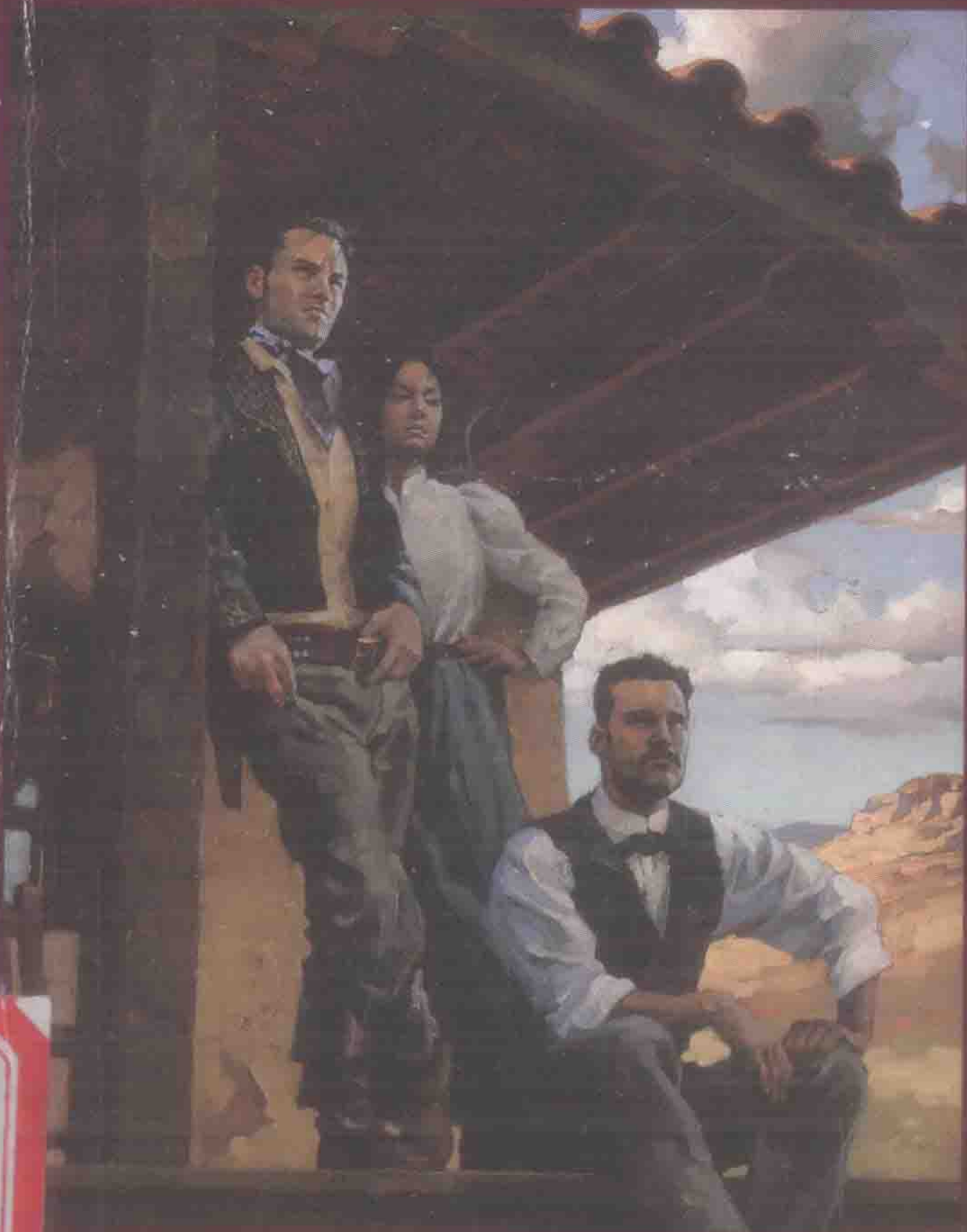


THE SACKETTS

LOUIS L'AMOUR

THE DAYBREAKERS



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THE DAYBREAKERS



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THE DAYBREAKERS

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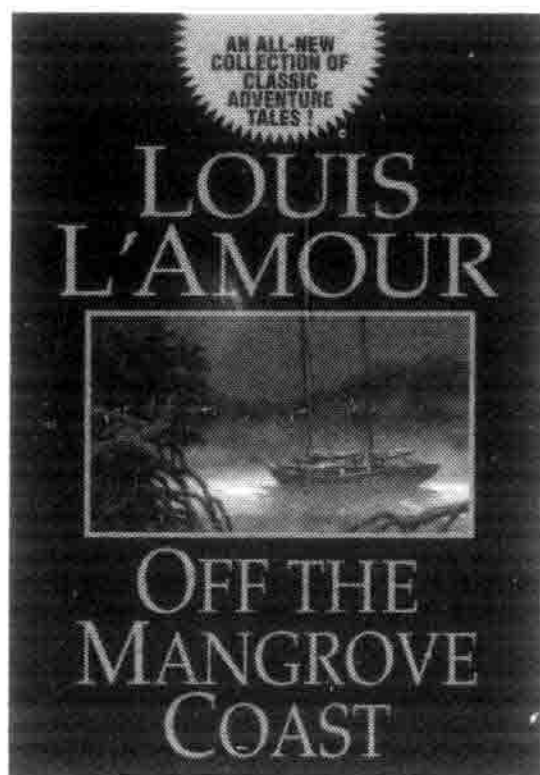
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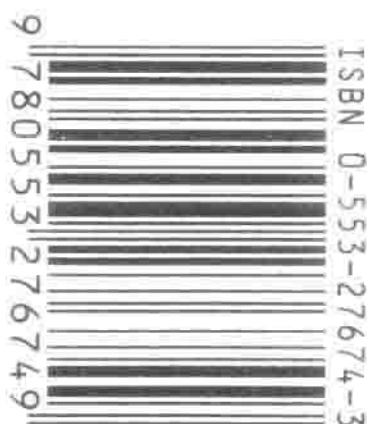
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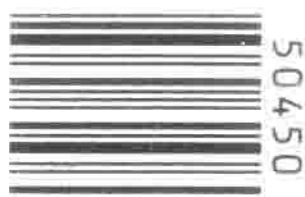
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POETRY

SMOKE FROM THIS ALTAR

THE CHRONOLOGY OF LOUIS L'AMOUR'S SACKETT NOVELS

SACKETT'S LAND *circa 1600*

TO THE FAR BLUE MOUNTAINS *circa 1600–
1620*

THE WARRIOR'S PATH *circa 1620s*

JUBAL SACKETT *circa 1620s*

RIDE THE RIVER *circa 1840s–1850s (before
Civil War)*

THE DAYBREAKERS *circa 1870–1872*

SACKETT *circa 1874–1875*

LANDO *circa 1873–1875*

MOJAVE CROSSING *circa 1875–1879*

MUSTANG MAN *circa 1875–1879*

THE LONELY MEN *circa 1875–1879*

GALLOWAY *circa 1875–1879*

TREASURE MOUNTAIN *circa 1875–1879*

LONELY ON THE MOUNTAIN *circa 1875–
1879*

RIDE THE DARK TRAIL *circa 1875–1879*

THE SACKETT BRAND *circa 1875–1879*

THE SKY-LINERS *circa 1875–1879*

About Louis L'Amour

"I think of myself in the oral tradition—as a troubadour, a village tale-teller, the man in the shadows of the campfire. That's the way I'd like to be remembered—as a storyteller. A good storyteller."

It is doubtful that any author could be as at home in the world re-created in his novels as Louis Dearborn L'Amour. Not only could he physically fill the boots of the rugged characters he wrote about, but he literally "walked the land my characters walk." His personal experiences as well as his lifelong devotion to historical research combined to give Mr. L'Amour the unique knowledge and understanding of people, events, and the challenge of the American frontier that became the hallmarks of his popularity.

Of French-Irish descent, Mr. L'Amour could trace his own family in North America back to the early 1600s and follow their steady progression westward, "always on the frontier." As a boy growing up in Jamestown, North Dakota, he absorbed all he could about his family's frontier heritage, including the story of his great-grandfather who was scalped by Sioux warriors.

Spurred by an eager curiosity and desire to broaden his horizons, Mr. L'Amour left home at the age of fifteen and enjoyed a wide variety of jobs including seaman, lumberjack, elephant handler, skinner of dead cattle, miner, and an officer in the transportation corps during World War II. During his "yondering" days he also circled the world on a freighter, sailed a dhow on the Red Sea, was shipwrecked in the West Indies and stranded in the Mojave Desert. He won fifty-one of fifty-nine fights as a professional boxer and worked as a journalist and lecturer. He was a voracious reader and collector of rare books. His personal library contained 17,000 volumes.

Mr. L'Amour "wanted to write almost from the time I could talk." After developing a widespread following for his many frontier and adventure stories written for fiction magazines, Mr. L'Amour published his first full-length novel, *Hondo*, in the United States in 1953. Every one of his more than 100 books is in print; there are nearly 260 million copies of his books in print worldwide, making him one of the best-selling authors in modern literary history. His books have been translated into twenty languages, and more than forty-five of his novels and stories have been made into feature films and television movies.

His hardcover bestsellers include *The Lonesome Gods*, *The Walking Drum* (his twelfth-century historical novel), *Jubal Sackett*, *Last of the Breed*, and *The Haunted Mesa*. His memoir, *Education of a Wandering Man*, was a leading bestseller in 1989. Audio dramatizations and adaptations of many L'Amour stories are available on cassette tapes from Bantam Audio publishing.

The recipient of many great honors and awards, in 1983 Mr. L'Amour became the first novelist ever to be awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by the United States Congress in honor of his life's work. In 1984 he was also awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Reagan.

Louis L'Amour died on June 10, 1988. His wife, Kathy, and their two children, Beau and Angelique, carry the L'Amour tradition forward with new books written by the author during his lifetime to be published by Bantam.

**A Preview of the Most Sought-After
Louis L'Amour Book Ever**

SMOKE FROM THIS ALTAR

**A Bantam Hardcover,
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As a wonderful gift to L'Amour readers everywhere, Bantam Books has just published Louis's very first book, *Smoke from This Altar*, in a beautiful keepsake Bantam Hardcover edition.

Smoke from This Altar has never before been available nationally. As you read in Chapter 15 of *Education*, it was published more than fifty years ago for sale in Oklahoma bookstores. In the intervening years, *Smoke from This Altar* has become the hardest to find L'Amour title of all, with the few circulating copies from that small print run commanding top dollar from rare-book collectors. L'Amour fans have long been searching for it at their local bookstores, but to no avail.

Smoke from This Altar contains the best of Louis L'Amour's poems collected in book form. Like the short stories in the classic, million copy-selling *Yondering*, they are inspired by many of the events you just read about in *Education*—the author's experiences and memories of his wanderings around the world. Impassioned and heroic, the poems in this book are unique examples of Louis's storytelling ability as he writes about people and their love of the land.

For the Bantam edition of *Smoke from This Altar*, the L'Amour family has selected twenty additional poems by Louis that were not included in the original publication. And Louis's wife, Kathy, has written an introduction that we're pleased to preview for you here. In it she talks about the special place this book has held in the L'Amours' lives:

Louis's love of poetry and the English language was so strong and important in his life that it carried him through many dangerous and lonely days. At the time, poetry was the expression of Louis's most important thoughts and feelings. It was the first manner in which he wrote about his life, his views, and the places he had seen. Some of these poems got published in various newspapers and magazines, and though he made only a few dollars from these sales, they gave him the optimism to keep writing. . . .

Louis returned to the United States in the late nineteen thirties after years at sea, and moved in with his parents on a small farm near Choctaw, Oklahoma, that Parker, his brother, had bought for them a few years before. He was thirty years old, and knew that if he was ever going to make something of himself as a writer, he had better get started. He began writing short story after short story but they almost all were rejected. I think that he must have felt very tempted to leave again, to go back to the kind of life he had lived before he settled down and forced himself to think about his future. You can feel that wanderlust calling to him in several of these poems. . . .

During his travels he would occasionally compose poems, and it always seemed remarkable to me that he could both create and then remember them without writing them down; it seemed as if he could never forget a line or even a word. Louis explained that before the development of writing, poetry was one of the tricks ancient people used to remember stories. The rhyme and meter of each line would help you to remember the next. Because of this, poems that told a story, like those of Robert Service, were very popular with the hobos and sailors of his day. They were men with few possessions, some even

illiterate, and so they were, in a way, like those prehistoric people who carried their literature in their heads.

When we first began dating, Louis gave me a copy of *Smoke from This Altar*, and through it I began to learn a little about the man who would become my husband and the father of our children. Many of the poems are about what he saw and thought and felt while he was in China and the South Pacific; and others are about places he visited that we went back to together. . . .

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CHAPTER I

My Brother, Orrin Sackett, was big enough to fight bears with a switch. Me, I was the skinny one, tall as Orrin, but no meat to my bones except around the shoulders and arms. Orrin could sing like an angel, or like a true Welshman which was better than any angel. Far away back and on three sides of the family, we were Welsh. Orrin was a strapping big man, but for such a big man he was surprising quick.

Folks said I was the quiet one, and in the high-up hills where we grew up as boys, folks fought shy of me come fighting time. Orrin was bigger than me, fit to wrassle a bull, but he lacked a streak of something I had.

Maybe you recall the Sackett-Higgins feud? Time I tell about, we Sacketts were just fresh out of Higgin-ses.

Long Higgins, the mean one, was also the last one. He came hunting Sackett hide with an old squirrel rifle. It was Orrin he was hunting, being mighty brave because he knew Orrin wouldn't be packing anything in the way of sidearms at a wedding.

Orrin was doing no thinking about Higgin-ses this day with Mary Tripp there to greet him and his mind set on marrying, so I figured it was my place to meet Long Higgins down there in the road. Just as I was fixing to call him to a stand, Preacher Myrick drove his rig between us, and by the time I got around it Long Higgins was standing spraddlelegged in the road with a bead on Orrin.

Folks started to scream and Long Higgins shot and Mary who saw him first pushed Orrin to save him. Only she fell off balance and fell right into the bullet intended for Orrin.

"Long!"

He turned sharp around, knowing my voice, and he had that rifle waist-high and aimed for me, his lips drawn down hard.

Long Higgins was a good hip shot with a rifle and he shot quick . . . maybe too quick.

That old hog-leg of mine went back into the holster and Long Higgins lay there in the dust and when I turned around, that walk up into the trees was the longest I ever did take except one I took a long time later.

Ollie Shaddock might have been down there and I knew if Ollie called I'd have to turn around, for Ollie was the Law in those mountains and away back somewheres we were kin.

When Ma saw me cutting up through the woods she knew something was cross-ways. Took me only a minute to tell her. She sat in that old rocker and looked me right in the eye while I told it. "Tye," she was almighty stern, "was Long Higgins looking at you when you fetched him?"

"Right in the eye."

"Take the dapple," Ma said, "he's the runningest horse on the mountain. You go west, and when you find a place with deep, rich soil and a mite of game in the hills, you get somebody to write a letter and we'll come down there, the boys an' me."

She looked around at the place, which was mighty rundown. Work as we would, and us Sacketts were workers, we still hadn't anything extra, and scarcely a poor living, so Ma had been talking up the west ever since Pa died.

Most of it she got from Pa, for he was a wandering and a knowing man, never to home long, but Ma loved him for all of that, and so did we younguns. He had a Welshman's tongue, Pa did, a tongue that could twist a fine sound from a word and he could bring a singing to your blood so you could just see that far land yonder, waiting for folks to come and crop it.

Those old blue eyes of Ma's were harder to face