



# 英语文学与智慧人生

陈立华 主编



WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

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# 英语文学与智慧人生

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## 前言



《英语文学与智慧人生》教材，适用于为大学生开设的以提高人文素质、艺术修养、文学品鉴能力为核心的综合素质教育类双语或全英文课程。目的是引导学生通过阅读经典原文英语文学作品，学习英语文学中体现的人生观，体会英语文学中折射的伦理、道德、美学论题，感悟英语文学中阐释的人生哲理，品味英语文学的语言魅力，使学生进一步拓宽知识面，强化人文素质，提高个人能力与魅力，陶冶性情，为适应当前社会对高素质人才的需求打下基础。

现今大学生群体普遍存在着价值观缺失的现象，主要体现在以技术崇拜替代人文修养，从而消弭价值追求。随着科学技术日新月异地发展，人们的生活越来越离不开科技进步与创新。由此导致整个社会对于技术的崇拜与日剧增，而对于人文教育与文学素养的关注越来越少。这一点在大学生群体中的反映尤为明显。现今的大学校园中，已很难看到有人读诗、写诗，很难看到有人阅读经典文学作品，探讨文学给予人生的启迪。仿佛文学大师留给我们的财富已经随着市场经济摧枯拉朽般的胜利而被永远地埋葬，成了历史的尘封记忆。

大学教育最基本的使命是培养具有综合素质、心智健全的人，能为自己的存在寻求意义。“我是谁”，“我为什么而生”，“我为什么而活着”，是每个人面临的哲学命题。伟大的文学家正是用他们的作品滋养我们的心灵，丰富我们的阅历，解答我们的疑惑。不管文学以何种体裁出现，其实质都是告诉人们生活的哲理和意义，给红尘中翻滚的生灵以理性的光芒，照亮前行的道路。

《英语文学与智慧人生》教材的编写及应用，正是希望从这一层面为大学生提供精神生活的支点，强化人生的理想，启迪人生的智慧，揭开世俗的迷雾。不管是在精神迷茫的时刻，还是在情绪晦暗的时候，抑或是在陷入迷狂的瞬间，文学总会给予我们可靠的心灵指引。同学们通过阅读、聆听或观看文学，通过老师的细读、分析、品鉴，领悟到人生或世界的真相，点燃起心中生存的信念，寻找到个人的生存目标。

本教材在编撰过程中，得到中南财经政法大学外国语学院专家教授及文学方向老师的大力支持，在此表示衷心感谢。由于我们能力有限，不足之处在所难免，恳望读者斧正。

编者

2016年5月

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# 第一讲： 人生如棋，落子不悔！我选择，我认命

## ——读 Robert Frost 的诗

### I. 导 读

罗伯特·弗罗斯特是 20 世纪美国最受欢迎的诗人之一，曾四次获得普利策奖，被称为“美国文学中的桂冠诗人”，其代表作《未选择的路》《雪夜林边小驻》《补墙》因通俗易懂的语言及引人深思的哲理而广为流传。由于诗人独有的生活经历，其诗歌大多从大自然的乡村生活中汲取题材，并未带有现代主义诗歌的特点。诗人通常运用淡淡的乡村景色，传达深刻的人生哲理，正如中国的一句古诗所言“清水出芙蓉，天然去雕饰”。这与其身处的工业社会的大环境、大背景貌似格格不入，但诗人坚持自我，追求大自然的宁静和纯粹，通过与自然、乡村生活的亲密接触，净澈灵魂，为饱受尘世喧闹折磨的身心寻找静谧的归宿。人只有将自己回归到自然，与自然融为一体，才能拥有自然的胸怀和纯净，才能击退压在肩头的烦恼，最终使身与心得到安息。

上述三首诗歌都是围绕“选择”这一主题展开，包括选择哪条人生之路，黑夜中是选择前进还是驻足，邻里之间的那道围墙到底是选择拆掉还是留下等。《未选择的路》创作于 1915 年，其实是当时诗人现实生活的写照。弗罗斯特不知是应该继续经营新罕布什尔的一家农场还是全身心地投入到诗歌的创作中；最终诗人选择了后者，举家迁往英国，后来在庞德等意象派诗人的帮助下名声大噪，随后全家返回美国。一个深秋的清晨，诗人独自漫步于林间小路，地上铺满枯黄的落叶，途经一个岔路口，诗人久久地凝望、徘徊，这似乎是在不经意间询问每个行走在征途上的远行者，脚下的路到底该如何取舍？我们对未来的态度是复杂而又矛盾的，无知中充满期待，焦虑中满怀向往。那一眼望去看不到终点的树林代表着漫漫的人生，穿叉于林中的小路代表着人生的选择，选择不一样，人生也会不尽相同，人生的体悟和感知也不同。人的一生中会出现许多个十字路口，我们每个人都在不断地权衡着每个选择的利弊，我们可怜而又可悲地在惴惴不安中度日如年。如何才能牢牢地握紧自己的命运，不被选择牵着鼻子走呢？唯一的出路就是拼尽全力走好全程，因为当你挥霍时间、消耗体力徘徊在选择这个关口时，你身边的后来者可能在不断地积蓄着超越你的能量，让本有相对优势的你，在这种隐形的竞争中无声无息地落于人后了。这启

发我们在考虑周全的情况下，应当机立断做出决定，不应消耗过多，未来路途遥远，自己的选择跪着也要走完全程，哪里还有后悔的机会，时不我待。诗人最终选了那条人迹罕至却充斥着诱惑的路，从此也就决定了人生之路。诗歌饱含人生哲理，引人深思，其中人生感悟娓娓道来：一旦作出抉择，其他道路皆是陌路，往后忆及，皆已物是人非。反观，任何不努力奋斗的人，没有勇气翻越人生座座高山的人，选择哪条道路其结果不是一样的呢？何必心生怨恨、怨念，只会愁了自己。只要是自己选择的并真心地付诸努力，结果上天自有安排，该是你所得的，时间都会给你。

《雪夜林边小驻》背景置于一个圣诞节的前夕，弗罗斯特冒着严寒将自家农场里的鸡蛋拿到镇上去卖，希望能挣到一些给孩子们买圣诞节礼物的钱，然而事与愿违，希望再一次破灭，诗人带着失望、抑郁的心绪落寞而归。在回家的路上，弗罗斯特在小马儿的陪伴下踽踽前行，抬起头来映入眼帘的是灌木林、冰湖和纷飞的雪花，这环绕在身旁的景物是如此的萧条、冷清，而此时更加荒凉的是饱经岁月蹂躏的身心。不堪重负的“我”渴望与自然融为一体，归于尘土，死亡的念头萦绕于心头。这无边的黑夜、萧条低垂的灌木林、在寂静中默默飞舞悄悄融化的雪花、一点点凝固的湖水，都在默默地召唤着饱经风霜的一群群赶路人。“我”企盼能化身为自然的某个部分，像这林、这水一般就这样躺在自然的怀抱里，什么也不想，什么也不背负，就这样躺着就好。从小马儿身上传来的一声铃响，瞬间打破了心中的美好，脑海中有两个声音在厮杀：前进？休憩？前进？休憩？这是个选择的问题。“我”在接下来的诗行中给出了自己的答案。我要践行我作为丈夫、父亲、诗人的家庭和社会责任，我才有权利休息。面对生活中的种种生存责任和压力，“我”最终还是毅然决然地选择了扛起肩头重担，不做生活的懦夫。不管此时此刻的内心是多么的无助，多么渴望能够在自然中沉沉地睡去，但是家、国的牵挂仍是无法割舍，这表明了作者积极乐观、勇于接受生活重压的坚强人生态度，这首诗激励着千千万万个仍生活于水深火热中的美国人民，给予民众一剂心灵的安慰良方，具有极强的普世性。

《补墙》描写的是邻里之间是否需要用一道围墙来隔开院落，看似是对简单乡村生活的片段描写，实是对人与人之间应如何处理好关系的思考和质问。邻居双方关于是否补墙所持的观点不尽一致，概括起来为：既希望有那么一道围墙对个人的隐私起到保护的作用，又渴望打破这道屏障实现人与人之间的坦诚交往，这突出反映了现代人之间的交流方式问题以及人与人之间信任感的缺失。补墙概括起来又成为现代社会中人际关系的一种选择性问题，它用是否补墙来揭露人性的矛盾性和复杂性。“我”不想邻里之间修筑一道墙，因为一旦有了这实实在在的一道墙，人与人之间的正常沟通将会无形受阻，那么心灵上的分享将无法触及，人与人之间的冷漠将会杀死每一个人内心的善良因子，人们终将会陷入精神荒芜的沙漠里。而墙另一边的邻居却更喜欢添上这一堵墙，因为墙能带来最直接的安全感，它能保护个人免受外界自然或人为暴力的袭击，而且能保护个人的隐私，这些都给个人的生活带来极尽的安全感和归属感。一旦这堵墙消失，内心的恐惧油然而生。为避免心灵遭受这样的折磨，邻居誓死捍卫邻里的那一道墙，却不知有可能将自己推入更加艰难险阻的境地，因为可能会将自己逼到狭窄的类似角落的环境里生存，苦守安全感，将人生的快乐推之门外。关于是否应该补墙，邻里双方意见不一。没有哪一个是绝对的正确，也没有哪一个不合乎道理，选择怎样的生活方式，每个人都有自己把握的权利。仔细阅读全

诗，反复揣摩诗歌中所出现的所有意象，不难发现诗人想借邻里之间是否应该补墙这一话题，引出现代社会中阻碍人与人之间交流的因素，引发人类的思考。诗行间无不透露出诗人对人类社会的人文关怀和关爱，希望人与人之间能够做到相互关爱、理解和宽容。最终到底是选择保护个人的隐私还是选择情感交流，这是个人的选择问题，并不能拿出道德的标尺加以指责和评判。

弗罗斯特的这三首诗歌，表现了生活在现代社会中的人们心灵处于孤立无援的境地。迫于生存的压力，人们可能时时刻刻需要做出一些抉择，而这每个选择都会让人惶惶不安、患得患失，但我们不能望而生畏，止步不前，应勇于面对生活的激流，奋力拼搏。

## II. Selected Reading

### The Road Not Taken

Robert Frost

Two roads **diverged** in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was **grassy** and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had **trodden** black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

Diverge: 分叉

Grassy: 长满草的，草绿色的

Trodden: tread 的过去分词，  
踩，踏



## Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know,  
His house is in the village though.  
He will not see me stopping here,  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it **queer**,  
To stop without a farmhouse near,  
Between the woods and frozen lake,  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake,  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

## Fire and Ice

Robert Frost

Some say the world will end in fire,  
Some say in ice.  
From what I've tasted of desire  
I hold with those who favor fire.  
But if it had to **perish** twice,  
I think I know enough of hate  
To say that for destruction ice  
Is also great  
And would suffice.

## Mending Wall

Robert Frost

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,

Queer: 古怪的, 奇怪的

Perish: 死亡; 毁灭; 腐烂

That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,  
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;  
And makes gaps even two can pass **abreast**.  
The work of hunters is another thing:  
I have come after them and made repair  
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,  
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,  
To please the **yelping** dogs. The gaps I mean,  
No one has seen them made or heard them made,  
But at spring mending-time we find them there.  
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;  
And on a day we meet to walk the line  
And set the wall between us once again.  
We keep the wall between us as we go.  
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.  
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls  
We have to use a spell to make them balance:  
“Stay where you are until our backs are turned!”  
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.  
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,  
One on a side. It comes to little more:  
There where it is we do not need the wall;  
He is all **pine** and I am apple **orchard**.  
My apple trees will never get across  
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.  
He only says, “Good **fences** make good neighbors.”  
Spring is the **mischief** in me, and I wonder  
If I could put a notion in his head:  
“Why do they make good neighbors? Isn’t it  
Where there are **cows**? But here there are no cows.  
Before I built a wall I’d ask to know  
What I was walling in or walling out,  
And to whom I was like to give **offense**.  
Something there is that doesn’t love a wall,  
That wants it down.” I could say “Elves” to him,  
But it’s not elves exactly, and I’d rather  
He said it for himself. I see him there  
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top

**Abreast:** 并列，并排

**Yelp:** 尖叫，喊叫

**Pine:** 松木

**Orchard:** 果园

**Fence:** 栅栏；篱笆

**Mischief:** 麻烦，问题；恶作剧

**Cow:** 奶牛

**Offense:** 进攻

In each hand, like an old-stone **savage** armed.  
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,  
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.  
He will not go behind his father's saying,  
And he likes having thought of it so well  
He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

## After Apple-Picking

Robert Frost

My long two-pointed **ladder** 's sticking through a tree  
Toward heaven still,  
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill  
Beside it, and there may be two or three  
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.  
But I am done with apple-picking now.  
**Essence** of winter sleep is on the night,  
The scent of apples: I am **drowsing** off.  
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight  
I got from looking through a pane of glass  
I **skimmed** this morning from the drinking **trough**  
And held against the world of **hoary** grass.  
It melted, and I let it fall and break.  
But I was well  
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,  
And I could tell  
What form my dreaming was about to take.  
**Magnified** apples appear and disappear,  
Stem end and blossom end,  
And every **fleck** of **russet** showing clear.  
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,  
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.  
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.  
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin  
The rumbling sound  
Of load on load of apples coming in.  
For I have had too much  
Of apple-picking: I am overtired  
Of the great harvest I myself desired.

**Savage:** 野蛮的; 凶残的;  
残暴的

**Ladder:** 梯子

**Essence:** 本质, 实质

**Drowse:** 昏睡; 打瞌睡

**Skim:** 掠过; 撇去; 隐瞒

**Trough:** 饲料槽; 水槽

**Hoary:** 灰白的

**Magnify:** 放大; 夸张

**Fleck:** 斑点; 微粒

**Russet:** 黄褐色的; 赤褐  
色的

There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,  
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.  
For all  
That struck the earth,  
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,  
Went surely to the cider-apple heap  
As of no worth.  
One can see what will trouble  
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.  
Were he not gone,  
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his  
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,  
Or just some human sleep.

Bruised: 青肿的；瘀紫的  
Stubble: 作物收割后的草茬；  
胡茬

(Frost, Robert. Robert Frost's Poems. New York: St. Martin's Paperbacks, 2002.)

### ◎ Questions for Discussion

1. What are the features of the style of Frost's poetry?
2. What's the symbolic meaning of the word "road"?
3. How do you understand such images as woods, snow, lake, bells, wind, flake, and sleep in the poem?
4. In your daily life, have you ever felt or experienced "walls"? Explain some.
5. In your opinion, how can people deal with the visible or invisible walls?

## 第二讲： 鸡蛋的诱惑，欲望的折磨：谁让我们变成了畸人？ ——读 Sherwood Anderson 的小说《鸡蛋》

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### I. 导 读

《鸡蛋》是美国中西部的著名小说家舍伍德·安德森的小说。安德森于 1876 年生于俄亥俄州的小镇卡姆登。少年时代的安德森迫于生计四处打零工，只断断续续上过几年学。在他 36 岁时，已有妻儿并成为了出色商人的他毅然放弃一切，在一些作家朋友的鼓励下开始了其写作生涯。其主要作品有短篇小说集《俄亥俄州瓦温斯堡镇》；长篇小说《穷白人》《黑色的笑》；自传《讲故事人的故事》。出生于小镇的安德森经历了美国从农业、手工业时代向工业文明的转折变化，故其作品多以小镇生活为背景，讲述小镇中普通阶层的故事，展示了他们在商品经济冲击下所产生的畸形心态，带有自然主义和神秘主义色彩。

小说《鸡蛋》以一个孩子的视角讲述了父亲结婚后在母亲影响下开始了艰辛的创业历程，而其色彩斑斓的“美国梦”却终究破灭的故事。小说开头就讲到父亲本来是一个“快乐、和蔼”的农场工人，过着悠然自得的日子。然而在 35 岁那年，父亲娶了一位乡村教师，在母亲的“熏陶”和诱导下变得野心勃勃，从此踏上了追求发家致富的征途。首先，父亲离开原来工作的农场，和母亲一起租了块地开始了养鸡场的生意。然而，事与愿违，养鸡场的鸡不是病死，就是被车碾死。父母亲含辛茹苦十载，不仅没赚钱，反而把父亲先前在农场上赚来的辛苦钱赔在给鸡买药治病上了。含辛茹苦的付出和事与愿违的结局让原本天性快乐的父亲变得挫气和沮丧，久而久之，他“头变秃了”，性情也变得“沉默和沮丧”，甚至怪异了。尽管如此，经历过一段时间的失落和困惑后，在母亲的安慰和鼓励下，父亲又变得雄心壮志，开始了第二次创业，做起了餐馆生意。不善交际、纯朴老实的父亲理所当然地在餐馆生意上再次摔了跟头。父亲的失败不仅是个人的失败，更是整个 20 世纪农民、小资产阶级破产的一个缩影，象征着“美国梦”的破灭。

追寻历史的足迹，受宗教迫害的英国清教徒乘坐“五月花号”漂洋过海，来到了今天的美国，广袤的土地、秀丽的风光使他们热血沸腾，决心在此重建新家园。如果说得天独厚的地理优势为“美国梦”提供了自然条件，那么 1776 年的《独立宣言》就为“美国梦”提供



了政治根基。在这样一个新生的国家，只要你有梦想，只要你持之以恒地为之付出努力，一切皆是有可能的。

父亲的“美国梦”源于母亲。“作为一名教师，毫无疑问她阅读过各种书籍和杂志”，受过高等教育的她诱使父亲放弃了原来的生活，鼓励父亲去开创一片新的天地。然而养鸡场的生活却是一场灾难，让人压抑和沮丧，因为每天都会亲眼目睹死亡。“毛茸茸的小鸡长得就如同你在复活节卡片上看到的一样……吃了大量的父亲辛辛苦苦赚钱买来的食物后，染上了病……愚蠢地盯着太阳然后就死了。”父母亲的创业十分艰难，他们为孵不出小鸡着急，为生病死掉或被车碾死的鸡难过。如此，能顺利长大的鸡少之又少，如同在20世纪实现“美国梦”一样艰辛。这种挫败感使父亲变成了秃头，沉闷寡言、抑郁不堪、目光呆滞。然而“美国梦”是极具诱惑力的、令人热血沸腾的，在母亲的抚慰和鼓励下，父亲仍然能够看见“美国梦”闪烁着万丈光芒，驱使其飞蛾扑火般地冲上去。在第二次的创业中，无论父母亲怎样努力经营，生意一直处于萧条状况。“急中生智”的父亲想到要以“取悦”的方式招揽生意，并拿出看家本领“鸡蛋戏法”紧张兮兮地娱乐顾客。他努力地挤出微笑，卖力地演出，然而表演最终没有成功，父亲的努力也没有换来顾客的喝彩。在顾客的嘲笑声中，父亲终于意识到自己的“美国梦”彻底破灭了，绝望的他将拿起鸡蛋砸向了顾客。之后，父亲来到母亲床边，如同一个受了委屈的小男孩一般，放声大哭了起来。母亲轻抚着父亲的秃头，用母性的温柔安抚着他受伤的心灵。看到母亲就好像看到梦起航的地方，不久他变得平静下来，再次变得坚强起来，从摔倒的地方爬了起来。不断地在现实的泥沼中摔倒再爬起，这就是父亲追寻“美国梦”的辛酸历程。

鸡蛋的诱惑，欲望的折磨，是什么让本性欢快的父亲变得沉闷沮丧？是什么让父亲变得滑稽可笑？鸡蛋又有着怎样深刻的含义？一方面，“鸡蛋”象征着“美国梦”，小说中的父亲从农民变成了商人，开养鸡场为的是发家致富，为的是利。在十年含辛茹苦的养鸡生意失败后，他们又转战另一个生意，开起了餐馆。为了吸引更多的顾客，故事中的父亲不惜违背自己的本性用鸡蛋取悦顾客，他手中鸡蛋的破碎则象征着财富或是往上爬的梦想的破灭，即“美国梦”的破碎。另一方面，鸡蛋又象征着生活本身。是的，父亲很想粉碎掉所有的鸡蛋，很想放弃掉所谓的“美国梦”过上自己简单纯朴的生活，可是作为一个丈夫、一个孩子的父亲，他身上承载着责任，他必须克服命运的打击。于是即使失败后，在母亲的抚慰下，他仍不得不将鸡蛋轻轻地放在桌子上，平息心中的怒火、藏起内心脆弱的一面，为了家人继续战斗下去。生活总是充满了无奈，却又让人不得不继续下去。

小说中父亲的失败是必然的。进入20世纪，资本主义的腾飞使得美国人想要通过勤劳致富的游戏规则被打破。第一次世界大战之后，随着资本主义机械文明的高度发展，垄断资本集团给美国社会带来了巨大的贫富差距。在这样的环境中，贫困的劳动人民始终处在社会的底层，在随后金融危机的打击中失去工作，甚至流离失所。实现了发财梦的资本家们过着上流社会奢华的生活；而对于绝大多数人来说，“美国梦”终究只是可望而不可求，永远不能企及的镜中花水中月罢了。

## II. Selected Reading

### The Egg

Sherwood Anderson

My father was, I am sure, intended by nature to be a cheerful, kindly man. Until he was thirty-four years old he worked as a **farmhand** for a man named Thomas Butterworth whose place lay near the town of Bidwell, Ohio. He had then a horse of his own and on Saturday evenings drove into town to spend a few hours in social **intercourse** with other farmhands. In town he drank several glasses of beer and stood about in Ben Head's saloon—crowded on Saturday evenings with visiting farmhands. Songs were sung and glasses **thumped** on the bar. At ten o'clock father drove home along a lonely country road, made his horse comfortable for the night and himself went to bed, quite happy in his position in life. He had at that time no notion of trying to rise in the world.

It was in the spring of his thirty-fifth year that father married my mother, then a country schoolteacher, and in the following spring I came **wriggling** and crying into the world. Something happened to the two people. They became ambitious. The American passion for getting up in the world took possession of them.

It may have been that mother was responsible. Being a schoolteacher she had no doubt read books and magazines. She had, I presume, read of how Garfield, Lincoln, and other Americans rose from poverty to fame and greatness and as I lay beside her—in the days of her lying-in—she may have dreamed that I would someday rule men and cities. At any rate she **induced** father to give up his place as a farmhand, sell his horse and **embark on** an independent enterprise of his own. She was a tall silent woman with a long nose and troubled grey eyes. For herself she wanted nothing. For father and myself she was incurably ambitious.

Farmhand: 农场工人

Intercourse: 交流; 交际

Thump: 撞击; 重击

Wriggle: 扭动

Induce: 引导; 引诱

Embark on: 开始; 从事

The first venture into which the two people went turned out badly. They rented ten acres of poor stony land on Griggs's Road, eight miles from Bidwell, and launched into chicken raising. I grew into boyhood on the place and got my first impressions of life there. From the beginning they were impressions of disaster and if, in my turn, I am a **gloomy** man inclined to see the darker side of life, I attribute it to the fact that what should have been for me the happy joyous days of childhood were spent on a chicken farm.

One **unversed** in such matters can have no notion of the many and tragic things that can happen to a chicken. It is born out of an egg, lives for a few weeks as a tiny **fluffy** thing such as you will see pictured on Easter cards, then becomes hideously naked, eats quantities of corn and meal bought by the sweat of your father's brow, gets diseases called pip, **cholera**, and other names, stands looking with stupid eyes at the sun, becomes sick and dies. A few hens and now and then a rooster, intended to serve God's mysterious ends, struggle through to maturity. The hens lay eggs out of which come other chickens and the **dreadful** cycle is thus made complete. It is all unbelievably complex. Most philosophers must have been raised on chicken farms. One hopes for so much from a chicken and is so dreadfully **disillusioned**. Small chickens, just setting out on the journey of life, look so bright and alert and they are in fact so dreadfully stupid. They are so much like people they mix one up in one's judgments of life. If disease does not kill them they wait until your expectations are thoroughly aroused and then walk under the wheels of a wagon—to go **squashed** and dead back to their maker. Vermin **infest** their youth, and fortunes must be spent for **curative** powders. In later life I have seen how a literature has been built up on the subject of fortunes to be made out of the raising of chickens. It is intended to be read by the gods who have just eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is a hopeful literature and declares that much may be

Gloomy: 忧郁的; 阴郁的

Unversed: 无经验的; 不熟练的

Fluffy: 毛茸茸的; 柔软的

Cholera: 霍乱

Dreadful: 可怕的; 令人畏惧的

Disillusioned: 醒悟的; 幻想破灭的

Squash: 挤进

Infest: 大批出现; 成群

Curative: 医疗的

done by simple ambitious people who own a few hens. Do not be led astray by it. It was not written for you. Go hunt for gold on the frozen hills of Alaska, put your faith in the honesty of a politician, believe if you will that the world is daily growing better and that good will triumph over evil, but do not read and believe the literature that is written concerning the hen. It was not written for you.

I, however, digress. My tale does not primarily concern itself with the hen. If correctly told it will center on the egg. For ten years my father and mother struggled to make our chicken farm pay and then they gave up that struggle and began another. They moved into the town of Bidwell, Ohio and embarked in the restaurant business. After ten years of worry with incubators that did not hatch, and with tiny—and in their own way lovely—balls of fluff that passed on into semi-naked pullerhood and from that into dead henhood, we threw all aside and packing our belongings on a wagon drove down Griggs's Road toward Bidwell, a tiny caravan of hope looking for a new place from which to start on our upward journey through life.

We must have been a sad looking lot, not, I fancy, unlike refugees fleeing from a battlefield. Mother and I walked in the road. The wagon that contained our goods had been borrowed for the day from Mr. Albert Griggs, a neighbor. Out of its sides stuck the legs of cheap chairs and at the back of the pile of beds, tables, and boxes filled with kitchen utensils was a crate of live chickens, and on top of that the baby carriage in which I had been wheeled about in my infancy. Why we stuck to the baby carriage I don't know. It was unlikely other children would be born and the wheels were broken. People who have few possessions cling tightly to those they have. That is one of the facts that make life so discouraging.

Father rode on top of the wagon. He was then a bald-headed man of forty-five, a little fat and from long association with mother and the chickens he had become habitually silent and discouraged. All during our ten years

Triumph: 胜利; 成就

Incubator: 保育器

Fluff: 绒毛

Pullerhood: 头罩

Caravan: (可供居住的)拖车; 移民列车

Refugee: 难民

Utensil: 器具, 用具

Infancy: 婴儿期; 幼年期

Cling to: 紧贴; 依附