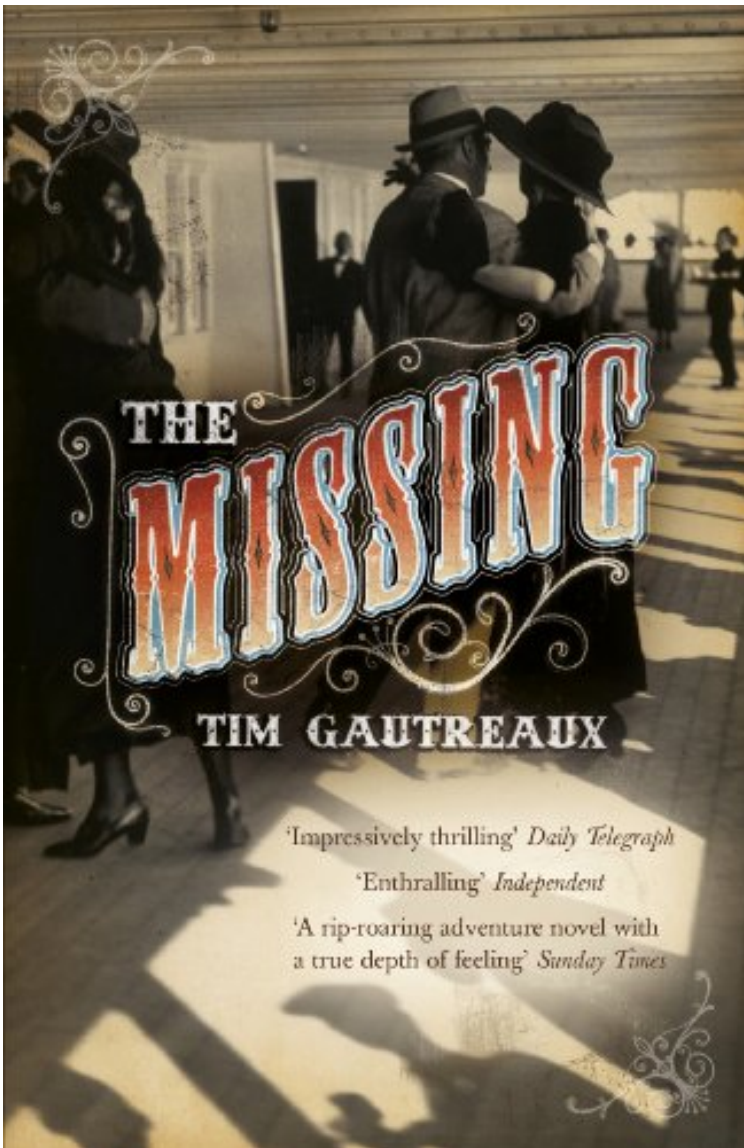


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The Missing (English Edition)



Par Tim Gautreaux
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Par Tim Gautreaux : **The Missing (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Missing (English Edition):

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurLouisiana is the setting for this riveting tale of a kidnapped child and the man on her trail - Sam Simoneaux, who feels honour-bound to help find her. Leaving his stalwart wife behind, he works his passage on a pleasure steamer up the Mississippi, entering a wild world of jazz, moonshine and lawlessness. It is a journey that will lead Sam to confront not only violent criminals but his own past, and to make some hard decisions about the value of vengeance.ExtraitChapter OneSam Simoneaux leaned against the ships rail, holding on in the snarling wind as his lieutenant struggled toward himthrough the spray, grabbing latches, guy wires, valve handles. Pretty bad belowdecks, the lieutenant cried out against theblow.Thats a fact. Stinks too bad to eat.I noticed you have a bit of an accent. Where are you from?Sam

felt sorry for him. The lieutenant was trying to be popular with his men, but none of them could imagine such a white-blond beanpole from a farm in Indiana leading anyone into battle. I don't think I have an accent. But you do. The lieutenant gave him a startled look. Me? Yeah. Where I was raised in south Louisiana, nobody talks like you. The lieutenant smiled. Everybody's got an accent, then. Sam looked at the spray running over the man's pale freckles, thinking that in a heavy frost he'd be nearly invisible. You come up on a farm? Yeah, sure. My family moved down from Canada about twenty years ago. I was raised on a farm but figured I could do better, Sam yelled. The lady down the road from us had a piano and she taught it to me. Moved to New Orleans when I was sixteen to be close to the music. The lieutenant bent into the next blast of wind. I'm with you there. I can't throw bales far enough to farm. How many days till we get to France? The colonel says three more, the captain, two, the pilot, four. Sam nodded. Nobody knows what's goin' on, like usual. Well, it's a big war, the lieutenant said. They watched a huge swell climb the side of the rusty ship and engulf a machine-gun crew hunkered down below them in a makeshift nest of sandbags, the deluge flushing men out on deck, where they slid on their bellies in the foam. The next few days were a lurching penance of bad ocean, flint-topped rollers breaking against the bows and spray blowing by the portholes like broken glass. Inside the ship, Sam slept among the thousands of complaining, groaning, and heaving men, but spent his waking hours at the rails, sometimes with his friend Melvin Robicheaux, a tough little fellow from outside of Baton Rouge. On November 11, 1918, their steamer escaped the mountainous Atlantic and landed at Saint-Nazaire, where the wharves were jammed with people cheering, some dancing together, others running in wild rings. Robicheaux pointed down over the rusty side of the ship. How come everybody's dancin'? They all got a bottle of wine. You think they glad to see us? Tugboats and dock locomotives were blowing their whistles through a hanging gauze of coal smoke. As he watched the celebration, Sam felt happy that he'd shown up with his rifle. The French looked like desperate people ecstatic about an approaching rescue. However, as the tugboats whistled and pushed the ship against the dock, he sensed the festival wasn't for this boatload of soldiers but for some more important event. Hardly anybody was waving at the ship. Four thousand troops unloaded onto the dock, and when all the men were lined up under the freight sheds and out of the wind, a colonel climbed onto a pile of ammunition crates and announced through a megaphone that an armistice had just been signed and the war was over. Many cheered, but a portion of the young recruits seemed disappointed that they wouldn't get to shoot at anybody. The weapons hanging on them, the ammunition stacked around in wooden crates, the cannons still being unloaded by the puffing dock cranes were suddenly redundant. Sam wondered what he would tell his friends back home of his war experience. The most valuable trophies of war were the stories, and this one was good only for a derisive laugh. Robicheaux poked him in the back with the tip of his bayonet scabbard. This like that time you tried workin' at Steins? What? Stein, the shoe man. Oh. I guess so. He had tried for two weeks to get a job at Steins Shoe Emporium on Canal Street, but the morning after the old man had finally decided to take him on, Sam showed up for work only to find a wreath on the door and a typed note announcing the death of Solomon Stein and the permanent closure of his shop. He stood in his ranks for an hour feeling awkward and unnecessary while the officers tried to figure what to do with all these soldiers and their tons of gear. Sam's long suit was patience, or at least an ability to wait for something good to happen, so he stood there, watching the civilians cheer as the men around him grumbled that they might have to file onto the ship for a lurching voyage back to New Orleans. It was cold, and he was hungry. After a long while, boys pushing carts of food came up and fed each man a miniature loaf of hard bread with a slice of cheese hanging out like a pale tongue. Then they were marched five miles to the edge of the city, where they pitched camp in a bald field that, judging by the stumps and posturing bronze statues, must once have been a landscaped park. An icy breeze flowed down a boulevard feeding into the camp, and Sam fastened the top button on his tunic and closed his coat. He had never felt a wind that cold in his life. That night he was sure he would freeze to death. Robicheaux, his tent mate, lay on his cot talking nonstop. Hey, Simoneaux, I'm thinkin' of a warm fire, me. Hot potatoes in each pocket. How about you? I'm thinkin' about those recruiting posters. They made joinin' up look like a good idea, he said glumly. I liked the one with the Hun molesting them Belgian women. Sam raised his head from his cot and looked at him. You liked it? I mean it made me mad. Made me want to come over and help 'em out. You wanted to make them Belgian women grateful, huh? You bet. Sam covered his head. Sometimes I think about the music. I was sales clerk at Gruenwalds when I joined up, and we got in all this sheet music full of sunshine, like Over There, Somewhere in France Is Daddy, Keep Your Head Down, Fritzie Boy. Robicheaux sniffed. You didn't think you'd need to keep your head down between your legs to keep your ears from freezin' off. So far, Sam said dreamily, it's not a happy

song. At home, the war had seemed a colorful musical production, a gay fox-trot in the key of C, but the voyage on the Alex Denkman changed all that. The Denkman was a round-bottom, coal-burning nausea machine, its hull so fouled with giant streamers of rust that the government decided painting a camouflage pattern on it was unnecessary. A boy who'd grown up in Sam's hometown had died en route of a burst appendix and was buried at sea after a perfunctory prayer. Sam and several other Louisiana men had stood in snow flurries on the fantail and watched the shrouded figure bob in the ship's rolling wake, refusing to sink, as though the corpse itself didn't feel right about the lead-cold sea and was trying to drift back toward the warm soil of a Louisiana graveyard. He was a Duplechen boy, his father a wiry little farmer who was good with mules. Sam knew the man and could imagine his sorrow, the vacant place at his table, the forever-broken link. This cold camp seemed a minor inconvenience next to that, and he turned over and went to sleep. One morning, after a week of camping among the statues, he watched a group of officers drive up in an open motorcar and choose squads of ten to travel to Paris and work in hospitals. Sam drew this duty and was put in charge of guarding a narcotics dispensary. Sometimes he was sent through the pungent wards to deliver a dose of morphine to a nurse, and the things he saw on these errands aged him. The amputations, the groaning, the smell of infection and illness were proof of how little he knew about the meanness of warfare. At the end of each day, he felt humbled and simple. Sometimes he and his contingent would walk to a caf where there was a very bad piano, and Sam would practice for an hour straight. The men didn't talk about the things they had seen in the wards, because all of it was beyond words. Sam was afraid that talking about it would make pictures stick in his head forever. They all worked in the ward for those too sick to move, and it was so huge that the ten of them combined had never seen half of it, much less the satellite buildings and compounds. There were French hospitals. English hospitals. American hospitals. Nothing in the patriotic posters or sheet music hinted at the blown-away jawbones, the baked eyeballs, or the trembling black rubber tubes dripping pus. Eventually, because he could speak Cajun French, which to the Parisians sounded like a very bad seventeenth-century patois from the south of France, he was asked to perform some rudimentary interpreting. But every Frenchman he talked to raised his eyebrows in alarm, studied his pleasant face, and asked which colony he came from. In January he was pulled off hospital duty and teamed up with eight fellow Louisianans under the Indiana lieutenant, for battlefield cleanup in the Argonne. They were told they were going to a forest, and Robicheaux picked up his rifle and said, Hot damn, maybe we can shoot us a deer and get some good meat. But days later, when they jumped off the muddy, open truck, they saw a dead and ice-glazed countryside convulsed with shell craters and stippled with exploded trees, a...Revue de presse Praise for (THE CLEARING) An extraordinary novel, one of the best I've read in years (Annie Proulx, Guardian Summer Books) So firmly located and vividly realised that you can almost smell the Louisiana swampwater . . . a gripping, action-packed tale, but also a notably intelligent one (Jem Poster, Guardian) Near-perfect . . . untouchably good (Alan Warner, Daily Telegraph Summer Books) Astonishingly powerful ... brilliantly written and the characters in their mire are superbly realised (Daily Telegraph) Carries an emotional charge far beyond its pages...I cannot recommend it highly enough. (Peter Straus, Literary) He captures the fetid atmosphere of a frontier society poised to join the modern world with great skill, each sentence polished to perfection (Independent on Sunday) 'Compels you forward like a handcar on a downhill slope, until the final escape...you read it in wonder' (Kent Haruf) 'It presents the reader with an interesting dilemma: do you give in to the stifling suspense and read quickly, to find out what happens to the novel's vivid characters, or do you go slow, savoring each delicious sentence, and thereby risking, by the climax, a nervous breakdown?' (Richard Russo) 'A marvelous evocation of time and place merges seamlessly with Gautreaux's powerful and timeless story' (William Gay)