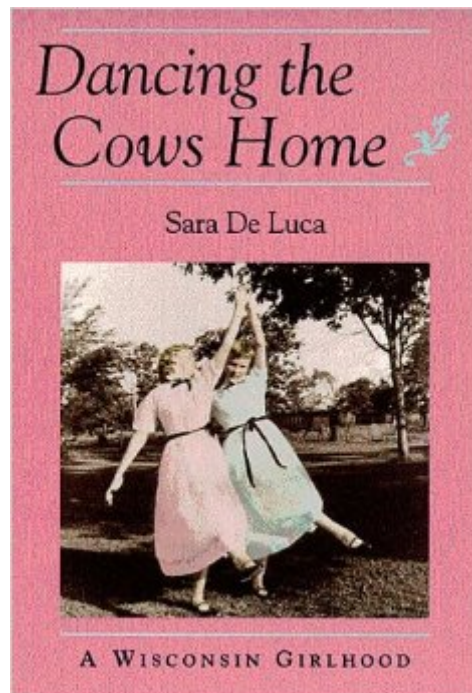


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Dancing The Cows Home: A Wisconsin Girlhood (Midwest Reflections)



Synopsis

From the vantage of middle age, Sara recalls with pride and humor her early years of growing up on a Wisconsin dairy farm with a twin sister in the 1940s and '50s. This is a personal portrayal of Scandinavian-American parents, siblings, family, and neighbors who painted the rural landscape of western Wisconsin in somber tones of duty and self-sacrifice, yet touched it with hope and grace.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"It depicts the struggles and rewards of daily farming and of the individual family members' participation within it and with each other. It is a history of childhood, family, heritage, culture, and agriculture, it is fascinating and well written." -- North Dakota History

In 1955, inspired by a televised automobile advertisement, twelve-year-old Sara Hellerud and her twin sister Susie took up dancing. Like the pair of huckstering ballerinas who sailed over the Buick, they vaulted over milk cans and barbed wire. The TV dancers had provided an irresistible contrast to the workaday world of their family's dairy farm in Polk County, Wisconsin. This and other fantasies shared by the twins enabled them to dance through a tense childhood and adolescence. Sara, the cautious, quietly observant twin, narrates this reminiscence of sisters whose dreams were intermittently encouraged or dashed by their ambitious, stout-hearted Norwegian-American mother and their alternately abusive and loving Danish-American father, who felt enslaved by his land and cattle. The twins' emotionally fragile older sister, mischievous younger brother, and sturdy baby

sister each found ways to cope. This is a personal portrayal of parents, siblings, family, and neighbors who painted the rural landscape in somber tones of duty and self-sacrifice, yet touched it with hope and grace. From the vantage of middle-age, Sara recalls her early years with pride and humor as well as a deep sense of loss. She also explores the process through which the twins unraveled their symbiotic, almost merged, identity to become independent young women eager to investigate the wider world. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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