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Years of Neglect

Gail Godwin

If I weren't going to be in Europe in September, I would love to join in a celebration of Barbara Pym. I just finished *A Very Private Eye*, and I found it very engrossing and poignant – especially the spirit in which she met her 'years of neglect'.

If I were to contribute any words to her day of celebration, I would like those words to take the tone of vindicated indignation: If there are any publishers out there who still tremble at the tenor of the times, let them not shake so much that they lose their hold on the kind of writing that endures the madness and turbulence of the ever-fickle *Zeitgeist*. Barbara Pym recorded and preserved a corner of English life that was important to her while the sixties raced by on the highroad. Now the sixties are gone, but her valiantly civilised and unpretentious landscapes remain vividly before us. That should tell us something.