



Fire Along the Sky: Being the Adventures of Captain Shane Hardacre in the New World (Excelsior Editions)

Robert Moss

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Revised and Expanded Edition containing the love letters of Valerie D'Arcy, complete and unexpurgated

A wildly entertaining historical adventure, deep inside the crucible in which America was forged.

“Splendidly researched and wildly amusing historical adventure ... Tom Jones as The Deerslayer.” — *Kirkus Reviews*

Dearest Shane, I dream you as the leopard. Last night you came to me in his skin.

So, in the voice of one of his lovers, we first encounter Shane Hardacre, the narrator and protagonist of *Fire Along the Sky*. An eloquent Anglo-Irish rake and fictional kinsman of Sir William Johnson, the King's Superintendent of Indians, Shane comes to the New World from London because of a doubtful wager. “I laid money on whether a man would take his own life,” as Shane informs us. That man was Robert Davers, a Norfolk baronet who sought to escape melancholia and learn the nature of the soul among the dream-catchers of North America. He ignored Johnson's caution that “if you go looking for the spirit world of Indians, you will find you are already inside it” and found savage death during the Pontiac revolt.

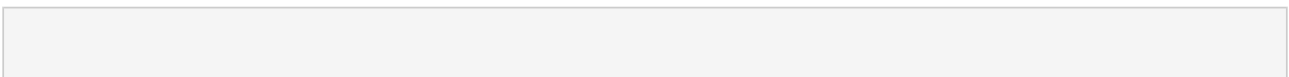
We enter the extraordinary world created by William Johnson in the Mohawk Valley in the aftermath of the French and Indian War, in the time when America was forged. We meet extraordinary historical figures: the warrior chief Pontiac and the Delaware Prophet who inspired his revolt; Angelique, the “Pompadour of Detroit”; Molly Brant and her brother Joseph; and Patience Wright, the “wax sybil,” an American spy in London who rivaled Madame Tussaud. The action races from the notorious Hell-Fire Club in England to the murder of Pontiac near St. Louis, from Mesmer's performance for Ben Franklin in a Paris salon to bigamy and intrigue in New Orleans when an Irish captain-general held the city in the name of the Spanish king.

Fire Along the Sky is grand entertainment that carries lightly a wealth of original research summarized in the copious notes “from the editor.” Through the narrator's worldly skepticism, we are given a window into the shamanic dream practices of early Native Americans. The voice of Valerie D'Arcy, in the correspondence interwoven with Shane's narrative, provides a knowing woman's counterpoint to Shane's phallogocentric assumptions.

I had intended to burn all your manuscripts but I now see that this would do a disservice to those in future times who may wish to know the secret springs of our history in this world turned upside down...

“This splendid piece of storytelling offers the added delight of a likely sequel set during the American Revolution.” — *Publishers Weekly*

“This is a splendid work which will bring pleasure to all readers.” — *New England Review of Books*



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Donna Macdonald:

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