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Adresse postale : BP v 18 Bouaké 01

Contact : +225 0757504341

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# ÉDITORIAL

La parution de ce premier numéro de la revue *Perspectives Plurielles* marque une étape importante dans la création d'un espace scientifique ouvert, rigoureux et durable, dédié à la production et à la diffusion des savoirs en Arts, Lettres et Langues ainsi qu'en Sciences Humaines et Sociales. La revue est née du constat partagé de la nécessité de cadres éditoriaux capables d'analyser, de manière critique et pluraliste, les dynamiques sociales, culturelles, politiques et territoriales contemporaines, notamment dans les sociétés du Sud.

Dans un contexte caractérisé par la complexité croissante des phénomènes sociaux et l'entrecroisement des disciplines, *Perspectives Plurielles* ambitionne de promouvoir une démarche scientifique fondée sur la pluralité des regards, la diversité méthodologique et le dialogue interdisciplinaire. Elle entend ainsi valoriser des travaux originaux qui interrogent les transformations du monde social, en accordant une attention particulière aux ancrages empiriques, aux cadres théoriques mobilisés et à la rigueur des démarches méthodologiques.

Ce numéro inaugural illustre pleinement cette orientation. Les contributions réunies abordent des thématiques variées, allant des enjeux de gestion territoriale et environnementale aux questions de pédagogie, de condition physique et de pouvoir, en passant par l'analyse critique d'œuvres littéraires et des pratiques sociales. Cette diversité témoigne à la fois de la richesse des champs couverts par les sciences humaines et sociales et de la pertinence des approches croisées pour comprendre les réalités contemporaines.

Le comité de rédaction exprime sa profonde gratitude à l'ensemble des auteurs, évaluateurs et partenaires institutionnels dont l'engagement et le professionnalisme ont permis la concrétisation de ce projet éditorial. Nous espérons que *Perspectives Plurielles* s'affirmera, au fil des numéros, comme un lieu de référence pour la réflexion scientifique, un espace de confrontation d'idées et un vecteur de visibilité pour les recherches menées en Afrique et ailleurs.

Bonne lecture.

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# Arts, Lettres et Langues

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## A REALISTIC DEPICTION OF RESILIENCE AND SURVIVAL IN *THE SAINTS OF SWALLOW HILL* (2022) BY DONNA EVERHART

UNE REPRÉSENTATION RÉALISTE DE LA RÉSILIENCE ET DE LA SURVIE DANS *THE SAINTS OF SWALLOW HILL* (2022) DE DONNA EVERHART

**Diome FAYE**

Department of Anglophone Studies, Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar, Senegal

E-mail : [diome.faye@ucad.edu.sn](mailto:diome.faye@ucad.edu.sn)

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**Abstract:** In Donna Everhart's fiction, the themes of resilience and survival are echoed with a detailed realistic approach. By laying the emphasis on mimesis or the appearance reality, Everhart, in *The Saints of Swallow Hill*, aims to be an objective, faithful, and truthful portrayal of the happy and the unhappy, the beautiful and the ugly, the positive and the negative sides of ordinary people's lives in the USA during the Great Depression. Considered to be a champion, a molder of humanistic and didactic perspectives of American literature in the twenty first century, Everhart carefully selects her themes, characters, settings, events, structure and style to make the story tell itself, provide significance and convey humanistic messages. This article purports to be in line with her humanistic perspectives by focusing on the themes of resilience and survival that are perfectly embodied by Delwood Reese and Rae Lynn..

**Keywords:** *Resilience, survival, camp, Swallow Hill, Great Depression*

**Résumé :** Dans les œuvres de fiction de Donna Everhart, les thèmes de la résilience et de la survie sont abordés avec un réalisme détaillé. En mettant l'accent sur le mimétisme ou l'apparence de la réalité, Everhart, dans *Les Saints de Swallow Hill*, se veut un portrait objectif, fidèle et véridique du bonheur et du malheur, du beau et du laid, des côtés positifs et négatifs de la vie des gens ordinaires aux États-Unis d'Amérique durant la période de la Grande Dépression. Considérée comme une fervente défenseuse des perspectives humanistes et didactiques de la littérature américaine du vingt et unième siècle, Everhart choisit avec soin ses thèmes, personnages, décors, événements, structure et style pour que l'histoire se raconte d'elle-même, ait du sens et véhicule des messages humanistiques. Cet article se veut un miroir de ses perspectives humanistes en mettant en exergue les thèmes de la résilience et de la survie, parfaitement incarnés par Delwood Reese et Rae Lynn.

**Mots-clés :** *Résilience, survie, camp, Swallow Hill, Grande Dépression*

## Introduction

Born and raised in Raleigh, North Carolina, Donna Everhart is today one of the most audible voices of the Southern fiction. Most of the time drawing heavily on her Southern roots, Everhart's novels often explore themes such as resilience, survival, family, and the inherent complexities of human nature. From a realistic point of view, her storytelling is imbued with a strong sense of place and atmosphere, smoothly transporting readers to the American South through various historical periods such as the Great Depression. With a background that includes a successful career in the corporate world before devoting herself fully to writing, Everhart's path to becoming a bestselling author is as captivating as the stories she tells. Through works such as "*The Education of Dixie Dupree*," "*The Distiller's Daughter*," and "*The Saints of Swallow Hill*," she has garnered a loyal readership and critical acclaim for her authentic and moving tales.

A champion of the semiotics of space, the choice of Swallow Hill as a setting, located in the heart of the South during the Great Depression, serves as the brutal backdrop for Donna Everhart's "*The Saints of Swallow Hill*." This resin camp is a place where the terrifying realities of the time come to life through the daily struggles of its inhabitants. Isolated and unforgiving, Swallow Hill is characterized by the harsh labor and precarious conditions endured by the workers who extract the sticky resin from the pine trees, often at the expense of their own well-being. Life is here dominated by endless work, scarce resources and a pervasive sense of oppression that blurs the line between survival and exploitation.

In *The Saints of Swallow Hill* where the raw beauty of the human spirit triumphs over the relentless hardships of the Great Depression, Donna Everhart's evocative tale transports readers to the turpentine camps of the rural South, a harsh and unforgiving setting where two mysterious souls, Rae Lynn and Delwood Reese, seek solace and redemption. The purpose of the article is to demonstrate how Delwood Reese and Rae Lynn's paths, peppered with pain, secrets, and an unwavering will to survive, illuminate the unwavering hope that shines through the darkest moments and how Everhart offers a poignant exploration of resilience, survival, love and the indomitable strength of the human heart.

### I. The Influence of Environment on Resilience

In the harsh and unyielding environment of Swallow Hill, we come across key characters whose lives are irrevocably linked to the camp. Delwood Reese, known simply as Del, arrives in this desolate place driven by a desperate need to escape his past and seeks solace among the pines. His first days at Swallow Hill are marked by a rude awakening to the stark contrasts between her former life and the grueling existence in the camp. The transition is anything but easy for Del, who must cope with physically demanding labor and dehumanizing conditions.

However, despite the adversity, it is through her interactions with her fellow workers that Del begins to build relationships that will shape her journey and the narrative itself. The brutal atmosphere of Swallow Hill is the crucible in which these characters are tested, reflecting broader themes of resilience, identity and human struggle against oppression. The camp, with its oppressive regime and the camaraderie among its workers, provides the setting for the unfolding drama and character development as they confront their past and chart their future amidst the resin-drenched pine trees. Del's capacity of resilience goes hand in hand with the hostility of the environment in which he evolves as it is accounted for in the following lines

*Now, with them other two, it had started off innocent enough. He'd come here after the farm he'd worked at for a couple years failed and the family was forced to move in with relatives somewhere in Virginia. Since the big crash back in '29, farms were going bust all over the countryside with crop prices dropping so it was near about impossible for anyone to make a living, much less pay their bills (Everhart, 2022:4-5)*

Del is a man tormented by his past and driven by a desperate need to start over. He flees a life of loss and regret, seeking solace in the hope of anonymity and a fresh start at Swallow Hill. His life before the camp was marked by sadness and unhappiness. Memories of a shattered family, the crushing weight of economic hardship and a string of bad decisions create a burden too heavy to bear. Swallow Hill, despite its notorious reputation, offers Del a glimmer of hope, an escape from the ghosts that haunt him.

Upon arriving at Swallow Hill, Del is immediately confronted with harsh realities he had only known through hearsay. The acrid smell of turpentine permeates the air. The camp is an unforgiving place, with stifling heat and incessant physical labor. The workers, hardened by their own struggles, have little compassion to offer. Each carries the weight of their personal battles, etched on their weary faces. Del quickly learns that to survive here, he must navigate the camp's brutal hierarchy and its unwritten rules. His first days are a veritable trial by fire. The work is exhausting, and the foremen impose a strict regimen with little tolerance for novices. Del's inexperience immediately sets him apart, making him a target of scorn and derision. In particular, the foreman, Crow, who wields his authority with an iron fist, takes a momentary dislike to Del. It is a daily struggle for Del to prove his worth, to show that he can withstand the physical demands and psychological pressure. In so doing, the following lines are very informative.

*Del gagged, choked, and flopped onto his belly. He threw up. When he finally opened his eyes, he saw brilliant green stripes. He shut them, opened them again, and blades of grass came into focus. He rolled over and stared into the troubled faces of Woot and Hicky, gaping at him in openmouthed surprise. He felt like he'd been beaten, his body aching all over (Everhart, 2022:28)*

Despite the initial isolation and daily hardships, Del begins to bond with some of the camp residents. He meets friends like Abe, an elderly man who becomes something of a mentor, offering pearls of wisdom gleaned from his years of survival in such a brutal environment. There is also Shorty, a frail worker and indomitable man who, despite his small size, inspires a certain respect among the other workers. These relationships bring a glimmer of humanity amid the desolation. As Del adjusts to camp life, he begins to find a fragile rhythm and routine. The camaraderie formed with his fellow workers goes beyond shared hardships; it becomes an unspoken bond that sustains them. Together, they share frugal meals, swap stories from their past, and provide each other with subtle, often wordless, support. Del's growing familiarity with the work and his surroundings gives him courage, enabling him to endure the daily grind with a new resilience.

However, there is still an underlying tension at Swallow Hill. Del's past may have brought him here, but it has not faded from his memory. He is constantly reminded of the life he left behind, the people he hurt, the opportunities squandered and the dreams unfulfilled. These thoughts linger in the back of his mind as he swings his axe, scrapes pine trees and carries buckets of raw resin. This haunting introspection fuels his determination to build a new identity and perhaps, just maybe, to find redemption in this wild and unforgiving land. Del's journey during these first days at Swallow Hill sets the stage for the profound transformations to come. His experiences, both painful and empowering, shape his understanding of resilience and hope. As he delves deeper into the camp's complex web of relationships and rivalries, Del's path lays the foundation for the intertwined lives and dramatic twists and turns that await him at Swallow Hill. The action verbs of the following quotation show Del's resilience and determination to refuse to be at the mercy of the harsh environment.

*Hours passed, and as the sun rose higher, heat built inside the little box too. He needed to relieve himself and as he rubbed sweat from his face, he vowed, somehow Crow would pay. His head pounded in rhythm with his heart as he watched the streaks of sunlight coming through the cracks, slanting across him as time passed. He closed his eyes again, imagined pine branches waving in the morning's hot breeze, the horizon smeared with a melting orange sun. After a while, he roused and became aware of someone laughing directly above him, and thought he might be dreaming (Everhart, 2022:95)*

Among the workers is Rae Lynn Cobb, a woman driven by her own intense motivations, who has made the radical decision to disguise herself as a man to find work and survive in this male-dominated world. Rae Lynn's life before Swallow Hill was fraught with challenges and her decision to live under a false identity in the camp is a testament to her determination and resourcefulness. Yet this deception comes with its dangers. She must navigate complex social dynamics and maintain her deception, while constantly aware that her discovery could lead to disastrous consequences. Rae Lynn's journey is a tapestry woven from threads of hardship,

resilience and a relentless quest for survival. Her past is shadowed by abuse and loss, forcing her to take drastic measures to secure her future. As a woman in the South during the Great Depression, Rae Lynn knew that opportunities for women, especially those in precarious situations, were nonexistent. Her decision to disguise herself as a man was born out of necessity, a gamble to gain entry to Swallow Hill, a place where men were expected to bear the brunt of the work.

This transformation required not only a change in appearance, but also in attitude. Rae Lynn cut her hair short and adopted rugged, masculine clothing, typical of the men who worked at the camp. This physical change was perhaps the easiest part. The mental and emotional challenge of presenting oneself as a man at all times, of learning to speak, walk, and work like those around one, requires constant vigilance. She chooses the name Ray, as close to her own as she dares, to avoid any missteps. The dangers she faces are multiple: a slip of the tongue, an exposed wrist, the slightest mistake could reveal her secret and put her in grave danger. In this perspective, Rae Lynn's resilience is pointed out through mimesis in the following words.

*She didn't want to think about how she'd lost part of her own finger, but her mind took her back to that day anyway. They'd been married only a week. She hadn't yet learned how treacherous it was working alongside Warren, but her first lesson was only seconds away. He had a propensity for not paying attention at the most critical times. Prone to being a bit too fast, a bit careless. That day, he'd said, "Hey, shug, come over home here and take ahold a this here for me" (Everhart, 2022:21)*

Ray's days are marked by the grueling demands of the resin camp. The physical rigor tests her limits, but as a woman of character, she faces each challenge with determination. The camaraderie she observes among the men is something she approaches with caution. Building relationships could mean security and solidarity; however, it also carries the risk of exposure. Trust is a double-edged sword in an environment where revealing one's true identity could have disastrous consequences.

Del and Rae Lynn's paths finally cross in the bustling, humid atmosphere of Swallow Hill, a place where hope seems hard to come by. At first, their meeting is purely coincidental, facilitated by the unforgiving environment and harsh expectations of the turpentine camp. From the start, a tacit understanding is established between them, fueled by shared experiences of pain, loss and survival. As they work side by side, their initial interactions are cautious. Del, having been in the camp longer than Rae Lynn, offers her valuable guidance in navigating the camp's deceptive social landscape. He becomes an unexpected source of support, helping her manage the grueling physical labor that could easily jeopardize her true identity. Rae Lynn, on the other hand, brings a freshness and resilience that Del finds both intriguing and inspiring. Her ability to endure and adapt, despite everything she's been through, subtly encourages her to reevaluate her own ways of

coping. In this strategy of resilience, Donna Everhart expresses at the same her humanistic message based on the universal values of giving and taking what is best.

*She'd never noticed this before, and tears came, as they did so often now. After a few minutes, she wiped her face on her apron. She stared at her kitchen, at all the little things she'd done to make it hers, realizing it really never had been, when it came right down to it. The tone of that letter said it was Eugene's. At least Warren had a little bit of money set aside, but once gone, that was it. They had some gum stores she could sell, but not much, and there was the question of time. (Everhart, 2022:90)*

In nutshell, Del and Rae Lynn's Resilience, in *The Saints of Swallow Hill*, is the ability to adapt in hostile environment and recover over time. Everhart's conception of resilience matches well with The British Psychological Society definition of resilience as the fact of maintaining mental well-being despite challenges, supported by personal strengths, relationships and external resources. Throughout the novel, Del and Rae Lynn's resilience is about integrating difficult experiences into a new sense of self and moving forward, not returning to life as it was before. Del and Rae Lynn's commitment to live or exist despite the oppressive environment of the Swallow Hill accounts for their determination to survive.

## II. Survival as the Dynamic Interferences of Individuals

In their attempt to survive in the difficult or dangerous environment where they evolve, Del and Rae Lynn create moments of solidarity that punctuate their harsh daily routines. Whether exchanging a knowing glance when the supervisor's back is turned or discreetly supporting each other during particularly difficult tasks, they develop a silent but profound camaraderie. It is through these shared struggles that they begin to build a fragile but growing sense of mutual trust. They find in each other a rare shred of kindness and understanding in a place that rarely offers it. As their bond strengthens, they begin to open up about their pasts in whispered and stolen conversations. Del reveals snippets of his life before Swallow Hill, his regrets, and the pain he fled. Rae Lynn, though more reserved, shares fragmented pieces of her tumultuous history, her fears of discovery and the life she left behind. In this perspective of survival, each revelation is a step toward tearing down the walls they each built to protect themselves from an unforgiving world as it is revealed in the following lines.

*He showed up to the little house beside the commissary before the sun was up; having spent the evening worrying, half expecting someone to come with the bad news. If the woman didn't live, he would tell Peewee to call in the Sheriff. If she did live, he wanted Peewee to kick Crow out of the camp. (Everhart, 2022:200)*

In line with Golden and Maysless (2008) in generating a sense of trust, Del and Rae Lynn relationship becomes much more than just a means of survival; it transforms into a beacon of hope. Despite the oppressive atmosphere of the camp, their budding friendship injects brief moments of light into their otherwise bleak

existence. They begin to dream, albeit tentatively, of a future beyond the walls of Swallow Hill, a life where they can seek solace and peace, far from the torment of their pasts. In essence, the meeting between Del and Rae Lynn marks a major turning point in *The Saints of Swallow Hill*. It is through their connection that they find the strength to confront not only their personal demons, but also the external adversities that Swallow Hill continually throws at them. Their growing mutual trust lays the foundation for what is to come, setting the stage for challenges that will test the limits of their courage and solidarity.

As tensions escalate within the Swallow Hill turpentine camp, the workers' simmering discontent begins to boil over. The harsh working conditions, combined with the oppressive attitude of the camp guards, create fertile ground for protest. Del and Rae Lynn find themselves at the center of these growing conflicts, each battling their own demons while navigating the turmoil around them. As suggested by James Gilligan (2011) in time of uncertainty, Del, still burdened by the weight of his painful past, finds it increasingly difficult to remain passive in the face of such widespread suffering and injustice. His interactions with his fellow workers reveal a multitude of grievances: the lack of fair wages, unsafe working conditions and the camp management's blatant disregard for their humanity. These injustices rekindle a flame within him, restoring a sense of purpose he thought he had lost. The leadership qualities he longed for begin to emerge as he begins discreetly organizing small acts of defiance among her peers. Rae Lynn, meanwhile, remains a figure of quiet strength and determination. The precarious nature of her situation forces her to act cautiously to avoid revealing her true identity.

The empathy Rae Lynn shows toward others earn her the trust and respect of many workers. The solidarity she shares with Del becomes a cornerstone of her strategy for navigating the escalating violence and authoritarianism at Swallow Hill. Together, they form a tacit alliance intended to challenge the camp's oppressive power structure. This strategy of survival matches well with the theory of Landau and Wielding (2008) that focuses on tapping into the inherent strength of individuals and their families and emphasizes survival rather than vulnerability.

*Rae Lynn couldn't speak. Her stomach was trying to crawl up to her throat. The howls and helps faded in and out and told them the hunt was still on. How long could someone stay on the run in this heat without water, or food? Toward suppertime, Rae Lynn noticed the long, drawn-out howls coon hounds are known for had gone silent. (Everhart, 2022:250)*

The opposing forces within the camp are increasingly felt, symbolized by the cruel and tyrannical superintendents who strive to crush any form of dissent. These supervisors, embodying the harsh realities of unbridled power, resort to intimidation and brutality to maintain their control. This rising tension leads to a series of confrontations in which workers, led by figures like Del and Rae Lynn, begin to fight back in order to survive. Acts of resistance, though initially small and

sporadic, begin to take hold the scale. The seeds of rebellion are sown through clandestine meetings and shared stories of suffering and hope. Del's leadership and Rae Lynn's unwavering support galvanize the workers, instilling in them the belief that change is possible. The camp becomes a tinderbox, both perilous but also ripe for transformation. The workers' resolve strengthens as they realize that their collective power may be the only way to achieve justice and dignity. During these turbulent times, Del and Rae Lynn's bond deepens. They navigate the mounting dangers together, their shared experiences and mutual respect strengthening their commitment to the fight for better conditions. Every encounter with the superintendents and every project whispered among the workers adds to the mounting tension that promises an inevitable confrontation.

In the midst of chaos, the resilience of the human spirit and the instinct to seek allies and form communities emerge as the only means of survival. Despite the oppressive environment in Swallow Hill, small acts of kindness and solidarity become acts of rebellion in their own right. The stark contrasts between oppressors and oppressed underscore the central theme of fighting injustice, a battle in which Del and Rae Lynn are now fully embroiled.

As the conflict within Swallow Hill escalates, the characters are pushed to their limits, setting the stage for climactic confrontations and transformative choices that will define the fate of the camp and its inhabitants. With the lines clearly drawn and the stakes higher than ever, Del and Rae Lynn prepare for the battles to come, knowing that their resilience and unity could mean the difference between tyranny and freedom. As tensions within Swallow Hill reach a fever pitch, decisive confrontations loom, profoundly reshaping the destinies of Del, Rae Lynn and the camp itself. The oppressive atmosphere, fraught with power struggles, finally boils over into inevitable conflicts that call into question the very essence of their being.

Del finds herself at the center of a fierce confrontation with the camp overseer, whose relentless control has terrorized the workers for far too long. Her pent-up defiance of the overseer's tyranny is no longer containable. This confrontation is not just about personal vendettas; it embodies the collective despair of workers pushed to their limits. Del's act of resistance is a spark that ignites a broader rebellion among the workers, challenging the established order of Swallow Hill. At the same time, Rae Lynn's carefully hidden identity is threatened, creating an intense and personal turning point. When her true gender is finally revealed, she must confront the heartbreaking consequences of her deception and the brutal reality of being a woman in a man's world. Yet, it is this revelation that galvanizes her resolve. Faced with mounting danger, Rae Lynn finally confronts those who wronged her, revealing not only her gender, but also her full, unwavering self.

The denouement of their intertwined stories sees them come together in palpable solidarity. United by their shared struggles and newfound courage, Del and Rae Lynn become catalysts for change within the camp. Major conflicts reach their breaking point as the two characters, supported by other disgruntled workers, challenge the authority and abuses that have long plagued Swallow Hill. These confrontations culminate in transformative decisions for Del and Rae Lynn.

In the wake of the turbulence that rocked Swallow Hill since its founding, the camp undergoes a period of reflection and adjustment. The once harsh and unforgiving atmosphere of the turpentine camp begins to give way to a cautious glimmer of hope, as the characters learn to embrace the changes brought about by their struggles and resistance. Del, after facing so many personal battles and making significant progress toward change, finally finds a sense of peace and acceptance in order to survive. His journey, marked by pain, endurance, and moments of profound revelation, allows him to appreciate the strength he never knew he possessed. Del's legacy at Swallow Hill becomes one of quiet resilience and unwavering determination, inspiring others to find their own inner strength.

The revelation of her true identity, once a source of immense peril, becomes a testament to her unyielding spirit. Rae Lynn's evolution is not only about survival, but also about reclaiming and redefining her identity in the face of adversity. Her journey illustrates the power of self-acceptance and the importance of fighting for one's place in the world. Together, Del and Rae Lynn embody themes of resilience and survival, their intertwined stories highlighting the enduring human spirit. The bonds they form and the adversities they face together foster mutual understanding and deep respect, ultimately shaping their future paths. Their relationship becomes a beacon of hope for the other workers at Swallow Hill, signifying that even in the darkest circumstances, solidarity and compassion can lead to meaningful change and survival. This humanistic perspective is expressed as follows:

*In the evenings, Rae Lynn withdrew to her room at the top of the stairs and next to Cornelia's. On the opposite side were Amos and Sudie May's, then the children, who shared a room for now, and Del's room was last, centered in the long hall. She still couldn't quite get used to being in such close proximity to him, and they often ran into each other in the hallway on the bed. (Everhart, 2022:323)*

As Swallow Hill evolves, the impact of collective struggles and the seeds of rebellion sown by workers begins to manifest. The camp, once dominated by oppressive forces, begins to show signs of an emerging sense of community and empowerment. The workers, inspired by the courage and perseverance of individuals like Del and Rae Lynn, begin to envision a future where their voices are heard and their rights recognized. Reflecting on their journeys, Del and Rae Lynn realize that their experiences have not only shaped their own lives but have also contributed to a broader legacy of change within the camp. They understand that their stories of resilience and identity are part of a larger narrative of survival and

hope, a story that will continue to inspire others long after the immediate conflicts have subsided.

In analyzing the themes of resilience and survival in *The Saints of Swallow Hill*, our analysis concludes with a sense of closure and optimism about the future. In laying the emphasis on the personal growth of the characters and their changes within the camp, Everhart underscores the novel's central themes: the power of human endurance, the search for identity, and the indomitable will to survive. Through the different stories, Everhart leaves readers with a poignant reminder of the lasting impact of solidarity and the transformative potential of hope, even in the most difficult times.

## Conclusion

*The Saints of the Swallow Hill* is a perfect illustration of resilience and survival in the way it concretely and faithfully exposes, without idealization or bias, the daily experience of Americans and more particularly of Southern Americans during the Great Depression era. It looks like an open window on American society, culture, values, problems and paradoxes during the Great Depression. By making Delwood Reese and Rae Lynn symbols of resilience and survival in an industrial and competitive society, Donna Everhart explores at the same time what makes the beauty but also the ugliness and even the pathological side of the American society. On the one hand, *The Saint of the Swallow Hill* praises the spirit of resilience and survival of ordinary American people that allow them to take their destinies in hand and improve themselves on all levels. On the other hand, it puts on trial the corrupting American capitalist system as well as the new rich who, unable to get rid of their alienation, strive at all costs to forge a new existence to have access to the "good society".

Donna Everhart's expression of resilience and survival is intended to be precise, descriptive, and figurative. It particularly reflects the homological relationship between her text and her worldview, hence its humanistic, moral, didactic, and pragmatic orientation. Likewise, Everhart's resilience and survival shine through their unwavering commitment to the fidelity of reality, to plausibility, to the representation of characters, and especially to the psychological motivations that explain their characters, ideas, feelings, actions, and attitudes. Resilience and survival are also demonstrated through a carefully calculated choice of events and spatiotemporal frameworks, of structure, but also of style, which, as a reflection of identity, oscillates between ease of speech, clarity, conciseness, concentration, accuracy, well-chosen turns of phrase, slang, linguistic clumsiness, or pronunciation errors.

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