



# Whither Thou Goest, I Will Go

*Naomi Dathan*

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## **Whither Thou Goest, I Will Go** Naomi Dathan

Jem Perkins has it all – money, a fine house, a handsome husband, and a new baby boy. But when her family fortunes turn, Jem's husband Seth leads her to a new home: a sod house on a Nebraska homestead.

It is a season of growth for Jem as she reluctantly confronts her new realities: back-breaking labor, dangerous illness, and mind-numbing isolation. She learns to embrace her new role as a capable woman and marriage partner and discovers an awareness of God's hand in her life.

Then, on January 12, 1888, the history-making Children's Blizzard sweeps across the land, ushering in a season of hardship she never expected. Can Jem's confidence, marriage, and new-found faith weather the storm?

## **Whither Thou Goest, I Will Go Details**

Date : Published by Kirkdale Press (first published 2011)

ISBN :

Author : Naomi Dathan

Format : Nook

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Christian Fiction, Romance, Christian Romance, Fiction

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## From Reader Review Whither Thou Goest, I Will Go for online ebook

### Cindy says

I really enjoyed this book. I love how the author took a real (unfamiliar) historical event and wrapped a heartwarming, emotional, encouraging, tearful love story around it. Will be reading this one again and again!

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### Susan Humeston says

I just finished reading, "Whither Thou Goest, I Will Go" by Naomi Dathan, literally in one sitting. I could not put the story down. I have to confess that I have read a lot of Christian novels in which the characters were wooden, their lives just so much unbelievable froth, but this book is nothing like those.

The author did her homework on the Blizzard of 1888 in the Midwest and, even though these are Christians who are going through this disaster, they are not totally spared for the sake of a comfortable story. I cannot give the ending away, but it is realistic and beautiful at the same time, a real true-to-life ending for a real Christian family. Of course, I don't know if the author actually based the story on real people or her own ancestors, but I wouldn't be surprised if that were the case.

The characters have depth and complexity and the well known story of pioneer life on the Great Plains in the late 1800's is fascinating no matter how many times I've read about it. The story's main plot line is the killer Blizzard 1888, but after the first chapter opens on the midst of the Blizzard, Ms. Dathan takes you back in time to the beginning of the marriage of our heroine and her husband. She tells you about our heroine's life before moving to the Great Plains, the vastly different society she was born into and her expectations of what her future holds for her with her new husband.

I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves history. The Christian theme is not forced or phony and by recommending this story to anyone, I mean whether Christian or non Christian. The majority of the people that lived on the Plains at that time were devout believers, no matter their denomination, and a story without that aspect would be false.

I very much enjoyed (and was on the edge of my seat) Ms. Dathan's book and will be looking up more titles by her.

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### Tima says

Jemima and Seth, with their son Charlie, leave the comforts of home to settle on a Nebraska farm. Jem left a spoiled young lady. But prairie life has a way maturing people very quickly. Jem has to choose whether she's going to stick by her husband and go where he goes, or choose to go home to her dad.

This book was very well written, although heartbreaking at times. It's so easy to sit in my comfortable chair and read about the harshness of life in the 1800s. But to imagine losing a loved one because of a storm or having to choose whether to stay at the farm or move back to town that has nothing for you. Many people

chose to stay, but quite a few just couldn't handle the stresses and constant worry.

The slight negatives - Jem's complaining and Seth's unbending and refusing to discuss things really got on my nerves. Although I'm sure it's a true rendition of many marriages it was grating.

It's a good book and I'll certainly be checking out the authors other books.

I received this book free of charge from Logos in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Natalie says**

This was my first time ever reading an e-book. (I usually read regular books.) I did not mind the format on the computer or downloading the software.. I plan on using the bibla software again for my bible study.

This book was very enjoyable. I read this book in a day and a half. The characters were believable and interesting. Particularly the Perkins family, (Jem, Seth and Charley)

This book is about the struggle of the Perkins family when, because of bad circumstances, they move to the Nebraska frontier to start a new life. At first the wife, Jem, is extremely upset to have to move and start a new life. Growing up she was very spoiled by her father. Eventually she learns how to be a "frontier wife." Not without some struggle. At first Seth has to force and fight with Jem to take over household duties. The description of Jem and Seth's marriage and the trials they have in their relationship was very realistic. It showed how a young married couple needed to learn to bond with each other, and their child, in order to face the obstacles of living on the frontier.

The book has religion and bible verses, but it does not shove the Christian faith down your throat. The book does not paint a rosy picture of life that if you believe in God you will always have a happy life. The characters in this book have their share of hardships, but they use their faith to get through them and survive.

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### **Beckie says**

I received "Whither Thou Goest, I will Go" by Naomi Dathan for free from <http://www.librarything.com/>. I picked this book for one reason: some of it takes place in Kansas. Since I am from Kansas, I usually read books with Kansas as the location since most authors do not find Kansas interesting enough to write about. This is an incredibly good book. I loved this. It starts in St. Paul shortly after the Civil War with Seth, an army officer, and Jem, a spoiled daddy's girl. Daddy calls all the shots in this marriage, including how to raise Charley, Jem and Seth's son. He bought their house, gives Jem an allowance, hires their help, everything. When her father gets caught with his hands in the Army's cookie jar, Seth and Jem must sell the house and move. Seth decides they are going to Kansas. He actually winds up in Nebraska because the house is across the state line. They move and start a new life. One that Seth thinks he will control and start to call the shots. God has other plans.

Jem is a wonderful fictional character. She is soooo dramatic and funny. She cracks me up even when she is being horrible. Against her will, she toughens up and matures into a valuable woman. Her character alone is reason enough to hope for this book to be a series. The end will stun you. The only thing I did not like was the format. I hadn't read carefully enough to see that the format was for an i-pad. I have a kindle. I do have an android so I could read it that way and also online through <http://www.biblia.com/>. The author sets up an account for you all you need to do is supply a password and read. Still, would rather a mobi format. Love this! 5 Stars.

## Heather says

This story offers a glimpse into how hard life was (and still is to a great degree) in the west, and brings to light the story of the Children's Blizzard, which took place in January 1888.

Hot, scorching summers and brutal and unpredictable winters, the land is unforgiving and only the most stalwart individuals can survive. What chance do a couple of city folk stand?

Seth is a good man, brave and strong. Fair and ethical. He's been a good provider for his family, a good father to his son, if a bit estranged from his wife.

Jemima has been raised a spoiled daughter and is now a somewhat indulged wife.

Jem and Seth married "liking" one another, "lusting" after one another, and perhaps even "loving" one another, but they didn't really know one another and weren't friends. Seth is with the military and has been gone traveling much of their marriage. Jem has been coddled and indulged by her father, who lives nearby and gave Seth and Jem the house that they live in with their infant son Charley.

Life takes a turn, and Seth chooses to move the family out West to become homesteaders in Nebraska. They know that life will be tough, but Seth seems to underestimate just how hard things can get.

In the beginning, Jem is spoiled, selfish and annoying. She isn't very likable by any means, often using tears to get her way with the men in her life. But the more that life throws at the family, the more Jem rises to the occasion.

My greatest disappointment with this story and the characters was Seth. I was disappointed that he only saw Jem for who she had been, and did not acknowledge the amazing woman that she had become. She showed herself in many circumstances to perhaps be even stronger and tougher than Seth.

My final word: This was a lovely story, and it really held me throughout. I kept wondering what was going to happen next? Would they survive the West? Would they find their way back to each other? Would life cast them a lifeline? I've been interested in the past with the Children's Blizzard, and this was a nice introduction to it. Tragic and stirring, leading you through the story with little drops of hope like Gretel's trail of breadcrumbs, I would recommend this to anyone who enjoys a moving story that can touch your soul.

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## Brenda says

The author pulled me into this story with the first few pages of the book. She started the book out in Jan 1888 giving us a glimpse of something that happened, something that propelled me to read the book as quickly as I could to figure out the why and how of what she described in the opening pages. Once she gives us a glimpse of Jan 1888 then she takes us back seventeen months to allow us to see how a family goes from living the life of luxury to becoming homesteaders living in a Soddy.

Jem Perkins was used to living a life of ease. She had always had someone to take care of her every need. When she married her husband Seth her father even provided a nice house for them. Seth who was in the Army learns something about Jem's father, something that might land him in jail, and costs Seth his position in the army. Seth knows that Jem's father will have to sell everything to make amends for what he has done

which means Jem and Seth will no longer have a place to live, so Seth takes their savings and decides they will become homesteaders out west. Jem, who had never cooked or kept house now has to become a pioneer lady and learn to do all these things. Can Jem every manage?

I really loved this story. I loved seeing Jem grow and change. She was such a remarkable person, and withstood many trials. Her faith became a real part of her life. I liked Seth's character as well, but often felt like he was a bit hard on Jem. The author left a few loose ends with this story, which really has me hoping for a sequel.

Fans of historical fiction are going to devour this story. Amazing characters, and a fast moving plot filled with the ups and downs of homesteading life was very touching and emotionally moving. Add to this an inspirational message of perseverance and it makes for a story that I just couldn't stop reading. I will certainly be watching for more from this author!

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### **Maureen Timerman says**

Once I started this book I could not put it down...it is a very fast lingering read. It is a well researched based on fact book...so you better have the tissues ready.

The story starts at the beginning of the Perkins marriage, Jemima, Seth and baby Charlie. Life is good for Jem, she has it all a beautiful baby, a handsome husband, a great home and servants. Her father has set her up by giving them their house. She is a spoiled woman, very unprepared for what is about to happen to her. Because of some scandal involving Jem's father, Seth has left the military and is moving his his family to the prairie of Nebraska. They stop for the winter in Kansas and stay with his old friend William and his wife Susan and their family. What a shock for Jem...she is rude and quite unaccepting of her circumstances. She is literally forced into accepting the role of a wife on the prairie. You will feel sorry for her...she sure hadn't planned on a life of this nature.

Actually it turned into a good lesson for Jem, and helps prepare her for what is to to come. I loved the faith shown in this book. Hard to accept all that happens here, but you see God helping them. You will get lost here, and am glad to know that some of my questions are going to be answered in the next book..or two??

I received this book from First Wild Card Tours and the author Naomi Dathan, and was not required to give a positive review.

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### **John Taylor says**

Whither Thou Goest, I Will Go, a new novel by Naomi Dathan recently released by Kirkdale Press, has a wonderful plotline focused on an emotional, historical event, the Children's Blizzard of 1888.

The story begins with horrible images from that dark, cold night, then shifts backward to focus on young mother, Jem Perkins, who lives a wonderful upscale, and slightly spoiled, life in the city of St. Paul, Minnesota, semi-supported by the wealth of her father, retired Colonel John Wilkinson, enjoying her infant son, while servants support her lifestyle and her husband, Lieutenant Seth Perkins travels the country on behalf of the U.S. Army.

Everything is about to change however, as Jem's wonderful life, and her marriage, is changed and tested by circumstances that lead her family to a sod house on the western Nebraska plains. Through a variety of challenges, Jem, Seth, and their son Charley learn what it is to chart their own course, in the midst of a harsh environment that isn't easily shaped by their plans.

While I loved the plotline, which was part of the book's strength, because it is based on actual historical events, which are both emotional and horrible, I wasn't as enamored with the characters. Jem, Seth, and Charley seemed to be caricatures of the historical western family. The surrounding characters didn't build enough of an atmosphere around these main characters to make me care about them, care about what happens to them through all of the events and challenges they face on the plains.

Whither Thou Goest, I Will Go is a good book, with a great plot, but in my opinion, weakened by underdeveloped characters that didn't seem real enough to me.

Dathan, Naomi. Whither Thou Goest, I Will Go. Bellingham, WA: Kirkdale Press (<http://kirkdalepress.com>), 2011.

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### **Carrie Schmidt (Reading is My SuperPower) says**

There are no easy answers to the questions which are cried out to God from lives beaten down by the harshness of a Nebraskan prairie. Naomi Dathan doesn't presume to give any in Whither Thou Goest I Will Go. Instead, she paints a compelling and authentic picture of a marriage, a family, a community of neighbors, a faith – all struggling to survive as nature does its worst. Some survive intact. None come through it unscathed. Inspiring character growth, poignant history, and the reminder that God provides (even if His provision doesn't look like we think it should). Fans of Janette Oke and Jane Kirkpatrick will also enjoy Whither Thou Goest I Will Go.

(I received a copy of this book in exchange for only my honest review.)

Read my full review at Reading Is My SuperPower

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### **Oma says**

This is the story of a young couple and their struggle to farm in Nebraska. Jemima is a spoiled young woman who eventually learns to be a good farm wife and partner to her husband, Seth. Seth learns of Jem's father's theft and is troubled by Jem's loyalty to her father. They have a serious communication problem which doesn't totally get resolved, though they are working towards it at the end of the book. There are many difficulties they must confront and a tragedy to deal with. There is a theme of Christianity and trust in God in the book. As another early reviewer pointed out, the Bible quote from which the title comes refers to a mother-in law's relationship with her daughter-in-law, and so was not quite a good one to use, though the author was trying to identify the wife's submission to her husband. This submission without any input was a part of the problem in the book. The content was appropriate for a teen audience. This was an Early Review book.

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### **Faye says**

Whither Thou Goest, I Will Go tells the tale of a young couple, and their son who head out west to start a brand new life, living life on the prairie. They face trials and hardship that try and test their marriage.

I was surprised by how well written this book was. And I liked how the homesteading life was depicted as raw and rough, with countless everyday challenges to face. The pace was swift, and it was not easy to put down, but at times I got really frustrated with the characters and how they treated each other. The way the character interacted ran hot and cold during the duration of the book, and showed the gradual change inside the characters' hearts. Even though I could see that they were going through a rough time adjusting to prairie life, and their struggles were huge, I soon grew weary of Seth and Jem's indifference to each other.

By the end I appreciated Jem's change from a pampered soldier's wife, to a determined pioneer woman who embodies one of the many faces of the women who thrived out west.

Overall, Wither Thou Goest, I Will Go is a the tale of a strong pioneer woman, who finds herself, and perseveres through her faith in God. There are beautiful moments that will make you smile, and others that tell the of the harsh unforgiving side of the prairie that broke many spirits. This is a tale of wounds and healing, of hardship and love.

Final Rating: 4 out of 5

I received this book from the publisher through First WILD Card Blog Tours, in return for an honest review.

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## **Prairie Sky Book Reviews says**

“For everything there is a season. A season for joy. A season for sorrow. A season for testing.” With these words written on the back cover of a real-event-based novel, readers can be fairly certain that it will not be a happy, carefree story, but rather one of hardship and overcoming. “Whither Thou Goest I Will Go” was written by Naomi Dathan and published by Kirkdale Press in 2016. As the author explains in a note to her readers, the novel is based on the infamous blizzard of January 12, 1888, that swept across the great plains with no warning. It’s name? The Children’s Blizzard. An estimated 1000 people spent that night lost on the open prairie. Many of them perished. Many were children.

At the beginning of the story, I honestly didn’t know what to think about almost every aspect. The writing was plain and sometimes inappropriate, I despised nearly every character, the setting felt shallow, and the storyline started slow! As time went on, however, the uncomplicated writing style felt more natural and fitting for the story. Growing and developing rapidly, the protagonist underwent an astounding transformation into a likable and truly heroic woman. Because the setting changed from a city to the plains of Nebraska, this element also seemed to come alive. Finally, the storyline that once seemed so slow picked up speed until it was impossible to put down the book! Without question, I am glad I continued on after a less-

than-desirable beginning...

I grew up reading the “Little House on the Prairie” books by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Later, I discovered “Let the Hurricane Roar” by Laura’s daughter, Rose Wilder Lane. Reading about the harsh life on the prairie always fascinated me, and created in my imagination an admiration for the pioneers who lived it. “Whither Thou Goest I Will Go” is written in much the same style as Wilder’s final book in her classic series, and Lane’s most famous novel. The simple, unembellished yet skillful writing style, the story of hardship and heartache, and the pioneering spirit of “Whither Thou Goest I Will Go” all very much echoes those timeless stories written many years ago. If you enjoy classic pioneering stories about a lifestyle so foreign to us today, and if you don’t mind a tragic and perhaps unforeseen twist at the end, don’t hesitate to give “Whither Thou Goest I Will Go” a try.

I received a copy of this book from Kirkdale Press, in exchange for an honest review. All opinions expressed are my own.

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### **Jenny Eykamp says**

I also. Read this book in one very enjoyable sitting. The characters were very real and without long drawn out description I had a good visual image of thier surrounding. No matter what the year in history people are people and I cannot read books that donot have good characters, that is what makes a story believable I had heard of the " Children's Blizzard" but this book brought tears to my eyes thinking of these children lost scared in pain and most of them knowing that they quite possibly would not survive. Most historical novels of this time are not written from the females perspective, and this in its self added an extra perception for me that I could almost identifie with as I live in rural Australia on a farm but with all the modern convienences. The relationship with God was heartwarming, not based on modern church traditions but a personal and private speaking terms with an understanding God. I loved this book and look forward to reading more by this author.

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### **Sarah Bailey says**

Wow! This book blew me away – I couldn’t stop reading it and read it in one day! I love history but this book, even though it’s a work of fiction, made the history jump from the pages and it was so enjoyable. I’ve heard of sod houses in other books I’ve read and my mind often wonders do the bugs fall in, what about rain, snow? Naomi seems to have done her research, and I could picture the mud covering everything as the rains poured non stop for days, I could smell the mildew coming from the quilts, books, all their possessions. I could feel the heat of the prairie as Jem and her husband, Seth work to build a working farm.

This book would even be great for an older child (I would let my soon to be 10 year old read it) who may be studying this period in history – homesteading, blizzards, prairie life, etc. The character’s all come to life and the reader can feel the toiling and back breaking work that goes on and the heart break that comes with the life of homesteading. My only complaint would be the fact that the story ended to abruptly, I would have loved to read more about the Perkins family and their neighbors, see the fruit of their labors, hopefully there will be a sequel coming soon.

Special thanks to Ryan Rotz, Publicist, Kirkdale Press for sending me a review copy

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