FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Young Adult Fiction

The Tempering
Gloria Skurzynski
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> *From the moment of his birth he'd heard the throb of the mills. It was as much*
> *a part of him as the sound of his heart beating beneath his skin.*

The Tempering is the story of one young man's transition from schoolboy to workingman, but it echoes the lives of so many others who worked the steel mills before World War I. Based on the accounts of her father, Skurzynski weaves the strong will to work and love of family that typified life in the steel towns with clear descriptions of the long hours, low pay, and unhealthy environment endured by both workers and their families.

Karl Kerner is a boy poised on the edge of his sixteenth birthday, a day he must reach before he'll be allowed to quit school and go to work in the mills. He longs to be a man and be given "man's work" in the mills, but a young teacher comes into his life with other plans. Karl is drawn to her as she begins her struggle to convince the boys of the town to stay in school and out of the dangerous mills.

Through depictions of Karl's own family and those of his friends, the hardships and joys of living in this historical period are given breadth and color. The reader is pulled into the social dynamics and struggles of the people who live in Canaan, breathing the steel dust and marching to the rhythm of the mills. Families endure the deaths of children from diseases that have yet to be controlled, and men lose life and limb in the hot mills, not only from the dangerous work involved, but also from their untamed co-workers. Through it all, though, families stay together and neighbors help one another, despite any differences that come and go between them.

This book would be useful in a middle school history class to facilitate discussions of the working conditions inherent in many industries at the turn of the twentieth century. It is also exciting for any young person interested in historical stories. As one of the Golden Triangle

Books, the University of Pittsburgh Press will dedicate a Website to The Tempering that will include links to other sites discussing the subjects covered in the book and lesson plans for teachers.

Christine Canfield