The Grapes of Wrath – Extra Credit

Tom Joad is released from prison after serving four years for manslaughter. He makes his way back home while he meets Jim Casy. They go together to his home only to find out that all the surrounding farms have been left. Most of the people say that everyone left to California to find work. Tom is told that his family is in Tom’s Uncle John’s home. Tom and Jim go there to find Tom’s parents packing to go get a job in California. They make it to California, but the first weeks are horrible. Grandpa dies, the oldest son runs away, etc. They find the camps to be overcrowded. Many of the locals are fearful of the increasing number of migrants. Work is very scarce and the landowners begin to become fearful and do everything it their power to insure that the migrants remain poor and dependent. An argument breaks out in Hooverville, where many of the migrants live, with a police officer and other police offers arrive and threaten to burn Hooverville to the ground.

The Joad family moves to a government run camp which proves to be much better. They find friends and a bit of work. But one day, Tom learns that the police are planning to stage a riot so that the camp will be shutdown. Tom is able to diffuse the danger but has to move to find more employment. He finds work earning him a decent wage, but he is hired only to break a worker’s strike. Tom finds Jim, who has recently been released from jail. Jim has made enemies among the land owners and the police find him and kill him in Tom’s presence. Tom retaliates and kills a police officer.

The family moves to a cotton farm where Tom is told to run away. In the end, the cotton season ends and the family must move once again. They go to a barn where a boy and his starving father are. Mother Joad sends everyone away so that her daugter, Rose of Sharon, may nurse the dying man.