230 West 105 Street New York, NY 10025 February 3, 1995

Glenn Horowitz

141 East 44 Street, Suite 808

New York, NY 10017

Dear Glenn,

Delighted to hear you've located such a fine copy of the original edition of Call It Sleep. I hope the following comment will be of use to you:

Well received but soon forgotten after it was published in 1934, Call It Sleep became a surprising and enduring best-seller when it was resurrected in paperback 30 years later. By then the troubled author, who had long been in the grip of a severe writer's block, was supporting his family as a waterfowl farmer in Maine. Liberated and disoriented by his unexpected new fame, he gradually returned to literature, eventually writing a multi-volume autobiographical novel, Mercy of a Rude Stream, which began appearing in 1994 and, after 60 years, picked up his story where Call It Sleep had left off.

More and more, Call It Sleep has become a beloved classic of 20th-century American fiction, at once a shimmeringly subjective modernist novel about a boy growing up in the Lower East Side ghetto at the turn of the century and the great social novel about the inner world of the immigrant experience. Influenced as much by Yiddish melodrama as by the literary experiments of Joyce, Proust, and T.S. Eliot, Call It Sleep is a medley of immigrant languages including a poetically rendered Yiddish, which lyrically conveys the characters' depth of feeling, and the barbarous English with which they negotiate the social reality of the urban streets. But at the heart of the book is an Oedipal triangle worthy of Freud and D.H. Lawrence: the brutal and suspicious father, the sensuous and seductive mother, and the fearfully sensitive boy, full of confused physical and spiritual longings, who will grow up into the consummate artist who writes the novel.

All best,

Morris Dickstein