

FAWM 2024 – Sherwood Anderson’s “The Egg”

1 **Bidwell (Ohio)** *If correctly told it will centre on the egg.*

Sherwood Anderson grew up in Clyde, Ohio.
His fictional Winesburg is based on Clyde.

My father was, I am sure, intended by nature to be a cheerful, kindly man. Until he was thirty-four years old he worked as a farm-hand for a man named Thomas Butterworth whose place lay near the town of Bidwell, Ohio. He had then a horse of his own and on Saturday evenings drove into town to spend a few hours in social intercourse with other farm-hands. In town he drank several glasses of beer and stood about in Ben Head’s saloon—crowded on Saturday evenings with visiting farm-hands. Songs were sung and glasses thumped on the bar. At ten o’clock father drove home along a lonely country road, made his horse comfortable for the night and himself went to bed, quite happy in his position in life. He had at that time no notion of trying to rise in the world.

Here’s a little story ‘bout a man I know:

He was a simple farmhand in Bidwell, Ohio.

He worked for Thomas Butterworth. He had his own horse.

Saturdays he went to Ben Head’s saloon for social intercourse.

Songs were sung, glasses thumped on the bar.

Several pints of beer would be about par.

At ten o’clock he rode home along a lonely country road,

Made his horse comfortable and laid down his load.

From New Year’s to Christmas, and every week in between –

He was happy and satisfied with his simple routine.

Intended by nature to be a cheerful, kindly man...

Until he was thirty-four years old, when the real story began.

He had at that time no notion to try

To rise in the world to somewhere up high.

After this little prologue, I won’t renege:

When the story is told, it will be about the egg.