

Isabel Miller (Alma Routsong)

Collection of Lesbian Novels Inscribed by Alma Routsong to her Partner and Muse

1969-1996

\$9500



A collection of six Inscribed books by Alma Routsong, the real name of author Isabel Miller, from the library of Elizabeth Deran, her partner and the motivating force in her life, along with Deran's copy of her final book published shortly before Routsong's death in the fall of 1996. Most notable is an first edition of the self-published lesbian classic *A Place for Us* (1969), later published by McGraw-Hill under the title *Patience and Sarah* (1972), which was selected by the American Library Association as the winner of its first Gay Book Award (now called the Stonewall Book Award). The group of books also contains two copies of *Patience and Sarah*, the first hardcover edition and first French edition; as well as three Naiad Press first editions: *The Love of a Good Women*, *A Dooryard Full of Flowers*, and the Dedication Copy of *Side by Side*. Overall near fine with light wear to the dust jackets and wrappers.

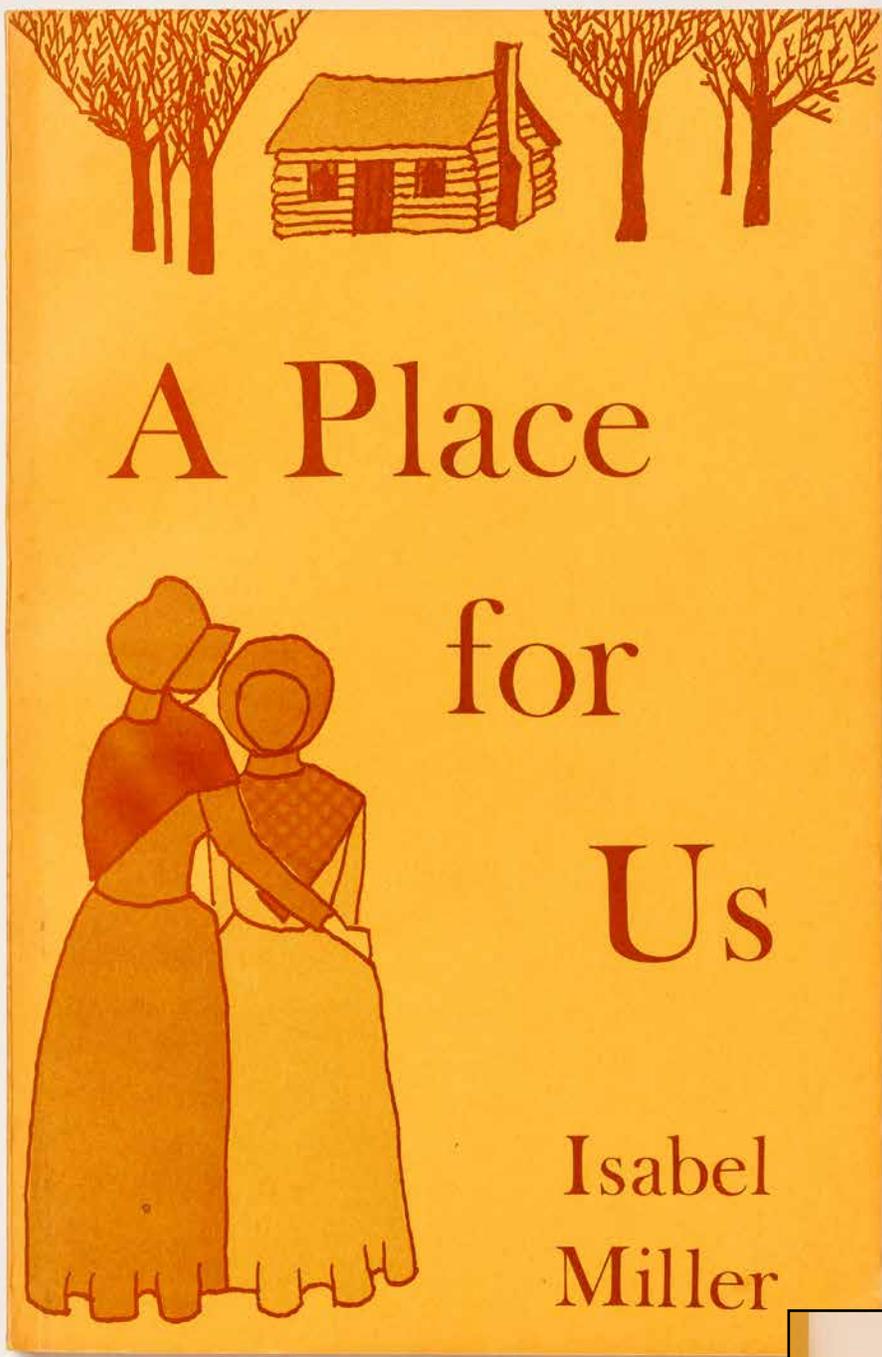
Routsong (1924-1996) was born in Traverse City, Michigan and graduated from Michigan State in 1949, following service in the U.S. Navy WAVE program during the war. She married and published two mainstream books in the 1950s before meeting Elizabeth Deran at a church function in 1962. The friendship quickly blossomed into a romantic one and Routsong left her husband a year later. Deran, originally from Fresno, California, lived and worked in Washington, DC for the Treasury Department, but when the nature of her relationship with Routsong became known, she was forced out and the pair relocated to the more accepting community of Greenwich Village in New York City.

It was a chance visit by the couple to a museum in Greene County, New York that led Routsong to discover the story of the 1820s folk painter Mary Ann Willson and her live-in companion Florence Brundage. It was this relationship that became the basis for her novel *A Place for Us*. Written in 1967, but passed over by publishers despite positive reviews for her mainstream books 10 years before, Routsong self-published 1,000 copies of the book with Deran under the Bleeker Street Press imprint, named after the couple's apartment on Bleeker Street in the West Village. The two sold the book outside of meetings of the New York chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis and around the Village. The book's popularity attracted the attention of McGraw-Hill who published the novel under its now better-known title, *Patience and Sarah*. Deran's copy of *A Place for Us* is **Inscribed** on the title page simply: "To darling Betty without whom ... [A Place for Us] Alma."

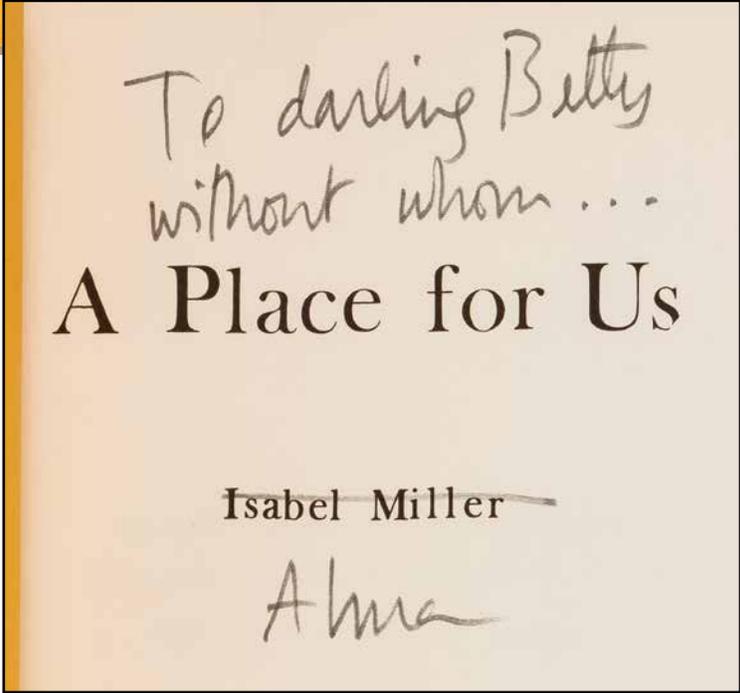
Routsong and Deran would drift apart over the next decade, in no small part due to Routsong's alcoholism. By the early 1980s Routsong had stopped drinking and was living in Poughkeepsie, New York not far from Deran. Though the women each had new partners, their connection was undeniable and they quickly rekindled their friendship. It was with Deran's support that Routsong finished *A Place of Us* back in the late-1960s and upon her return to Routsong's life she again provided the encouragement necessary for Routsong to complete four more novels, all of which are included in this group: *The Love of Good Women* (1986), *Side By Side* (1990), *A Dooryard Full of Flowers* (1993), and *Laurel* (1996). All of the books except *Laurel* are inscribed to Deran, but none is more revealing about her importance to Routsong and her writing than the **Inscription** found in *The Love of the Good Women*: "To Elisabeth Deran, my friend and gadfly, who pulled the last half of this book out of me three pages at a time, thereby saving the first half as well, with love and thank. Alma October 7, 1986."

A wonderful collection of books by an important and pioneering lesbian writer, **Inscribed** to her first partner, lifelong friend, and the guiding force behind Routsong's literary career.

Books:



1. *A Place for Us*. New York: Bleecker Street Press (1969). True first edition. Paperback original. Perfectbound in illustrated wrappers. Fine. Inscribed in pencil just above the title: "To darling Betty without whom ... [printed title] Alma." Reprinted as *Patience and Sarah*."





2. *Patience and Sarah*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company (1972). First edition, thus. Fine in fine dustwrapper. **Inscribed:** "to Betty Deran with love and gratitude Alma January 18, 1972." Winner of the first Stonewall Book Award.

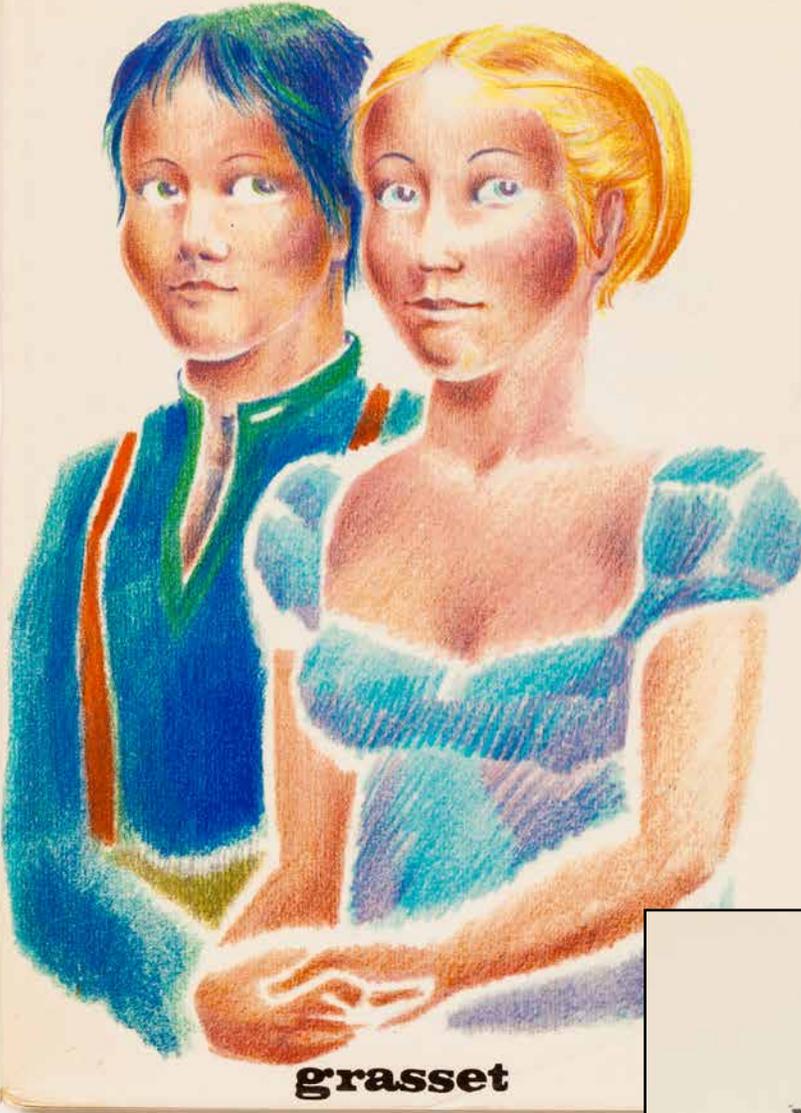
to Betty Deran
with love and gratitude



Alma

January 18, 1972

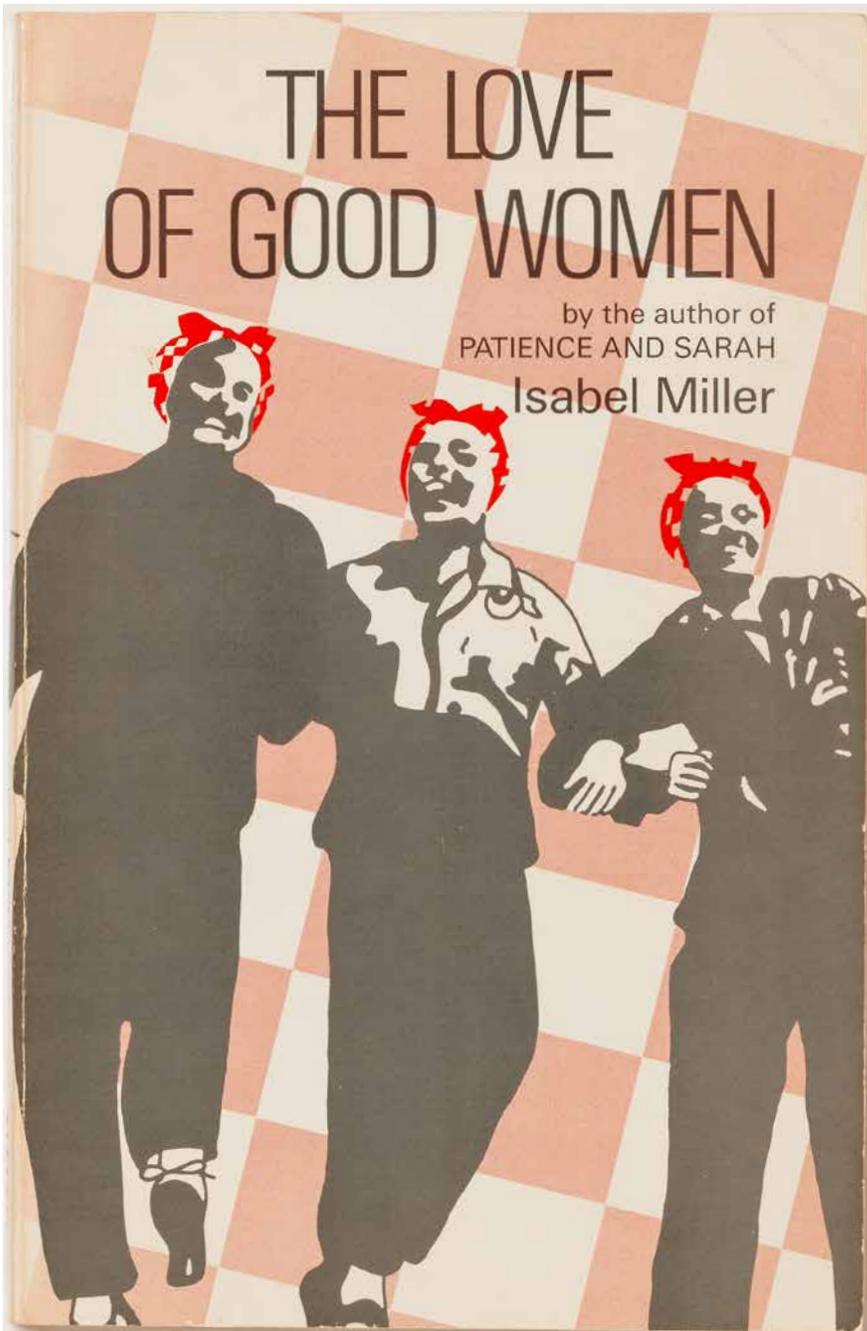
Isabel Miller
Patience & Sarah
roman



3. *Patience et Sarah*. Paris: Bernard Grasset 1973. First French edition. Perfectbound in wrappers with French flaps. Fine with owner's stamp of a literary agent on first page and in near fine glossy illustrated dustwrapper with a crease, and wear to the crown and topedge. **Inscribed:** "To Betty Deranian. The onlie begetter of this insuing novel, with love from Alma Routsong January 23, 1977."

CHARLOTTE SHEEDY,
LITERARY AGENT
145 W. 85 STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10024

To Betty Deranian, the
onlie begetter of this
insuing novel, with love
from Alma Routsong
January 23, 1977



4. *The Love of Good Women*. (Tallahassee, Florida): The Naiad Press 1986. First edition. Paperback original. Perfectbound in wrappers. Fine. **Inscribed:** "To Elisabeth Deran, my friend and gadfly, who pulled the last half of this book out of me three pages at a time, thereby saving the first half as well, with love and thanks. Alma October 7, 1986." The inscription is written below the captioned author photo, in which Miller has crossed out her pen name and written in ink above it her real name, Alma Routsong.



Photo by Julie Weber

Alma Routsong

~~Isabel Miller~~, author of *Patience and Sarah* and *The Love of Good Women*.

To Elisabeth Deran, my friend and gadfly, who pulled the last half of this book out of me three pages at a time, thereby saving the first half as well, with love and thanks. Alma
October 7, 1986

SIDE by SIDE

ISABEL MILLER

by the beloved author of "Patience and Sarah"

5. *Said by Side*. (Tallahassee, Florida): The Naiad Press 1990. First edition. Paperback original. Perfectbound in wrappers. Fine. **Inscribed:** "to Elisabeth Deran, my dear Betty, with love and Thanks, November 5, 1990. Alma Routsong."

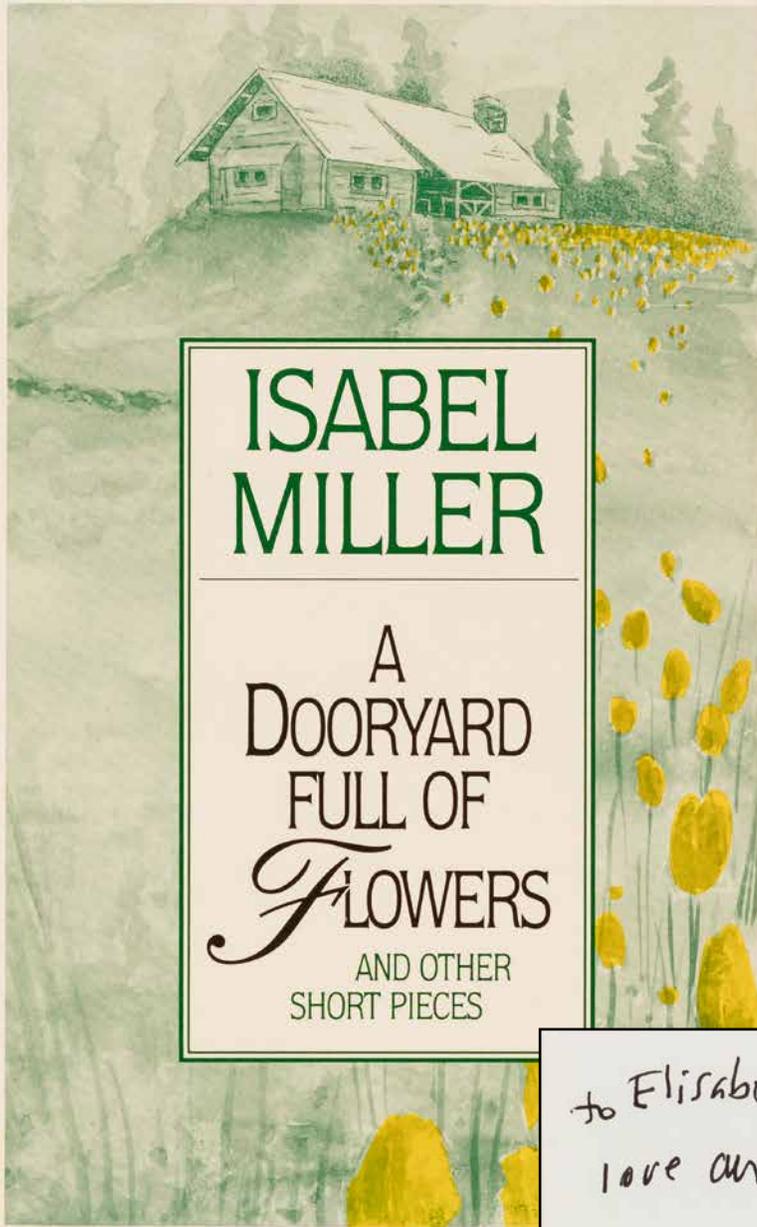
*to Elisabeth Deran, my dear Betty, with
love and Thanks, November 5, 1990*

*To Miss Willson and Miss Brundige,
in the hope that
you will accept this as the book
you asked me for;
to Julie, for making me calm enough
to write;
to Elisabeth, for not letting me be
too calm;
to Natalie, Joyce, Charlotte, Louise,
Glenna, and Meg, because you didn't
give up on my education;
to Billie, for being bountiful with
your hard-won lore.*

SIDE
by
SIDE
ISABEL MILLER

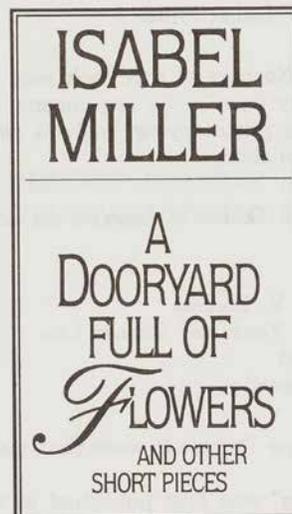
Alma Routsong

FROM THE AUTHOR OF PATIENCE & SARAH



6. *A Dooryard Full of Flowers and Other Short Pieces*. (Tallahassee, Florida): The Naiad Press 1993. First edition. Paperback original. Perfectbound in wrappers. Fine. **Inscribed:** "to Elisabeth Deran, my gadfly, with love and Thanks from Isabel Miller May 14, 1993."

to Elisabeth Deran, my gadfly, with
love and Thanks from Isabel Miller
May 14, 1993



LAUREL



ISABEL MILLER

7. *Laurel*. (Tallahassee, Florida):
The Naiad Press 1996. First edition.
Paperback original. Perfectbound in
wrappers. Fine. Author note reads:
“This is Isabel Miller’s last book. She
died at her home in upstate New
York, surrounded by loving friends
and family on October 3, 1996, a
few days before *Laurel* went to press.”
[BTC#422709]

About the Author

This is Isabel Miller’s last book. She died at her home in upstate New York, surrounded by loving friends and family on October 3, 1996, a few days before *Laurel* went to press.