

Moore, Bates and Steinbeck both return to earlier eras of theirs. *The Fear of July* is set in the late-nineteenth-century Midlands with an accurate working-class background. Its heroine, Bella Ford, after being betrayed by her lover, finds refuge with a family of shoemakers, but has to endure more severe trials. The detail is painstaking, with every earwig-bone and crescent starkly noted, but Bella never quite comes to life. With *Sweet Thursday* Mr. Steinbeck is