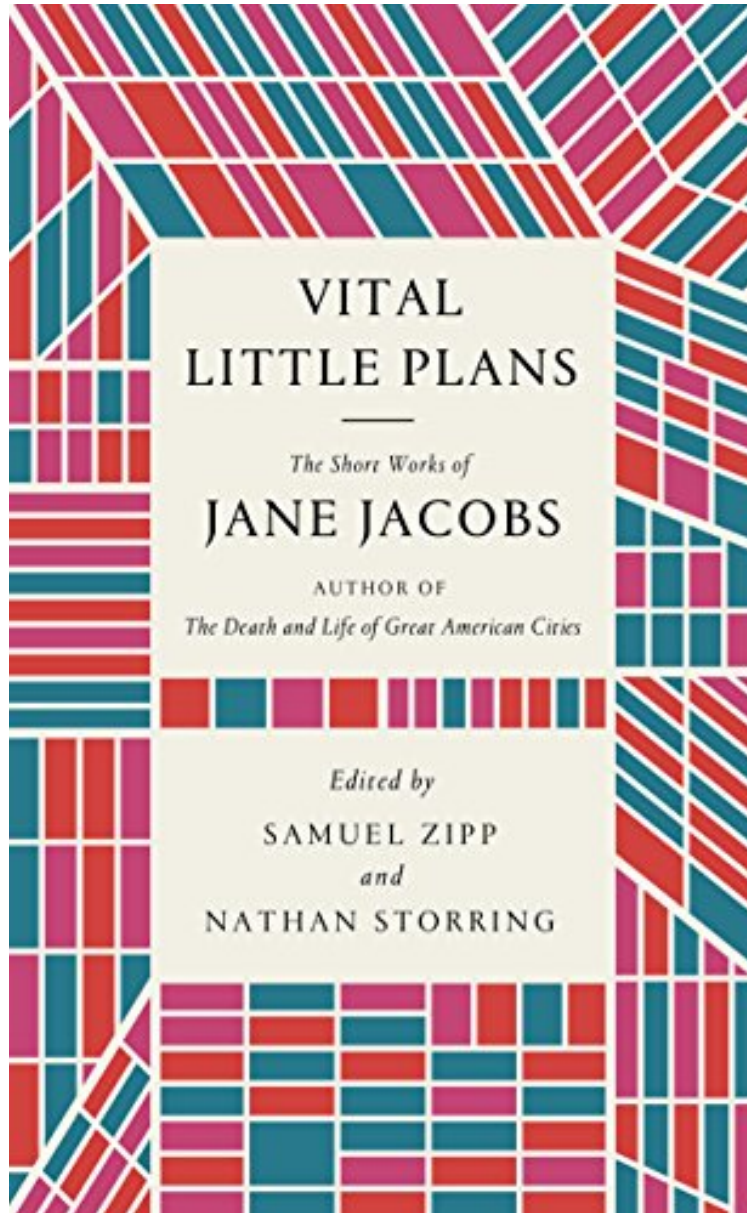


(Ebook pdf) Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs

## Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs

*Jane Jacobs*

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**Jane Jacobs : Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vital Little Plans: The Short Works of Jane Jacobs:

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I ordered the kindle version and it seems like sentences or paragraphs have been duplicatedBy Chuck SatchwillA prominent advocate for "plans by the many, not by the few". I ordered the kindle version and it seems like sentences or paragraphs have been duplicated. Probably some more

editing will be necessary since Jane never had to tendency to say the same things over and over. 1 of 4 people found the following review helpful. great read. By Liona Rowangot here quick. great read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. sometimes great, sometimes outdated. By Michael Lewyn This book is a collection of small essays by (and interviews of) Jane Jacobs. Mostly her observations are as insightful as always. For example: \*She wrote about the negative side effects of federal grants for capital spending. These grants encouraged construction, but didn't always support maintenance. As a result, local governments are stuck with infrastructure that they can't easily afford to maintain. (If you are more interested in this topic I suggest [strongtowns.org](http://strongtowns.org)) \*She was especially critical of highway spending because of the negative side effects of urban expressways that are unrelated to maintenance. More highway spending meant more automobile use, which meant higher health care costs due to auto crashes. And more car use also means more traffic violations, imposing costs on the court system and police. Land used for expressways is land that cannot be used for housing or commerce, thus impoverishing urban property tax bases. \*She wrote about the absurdity of bike-phobia based on safety concerns, by pointing out that indoor substitutes for bikes (such as stationary bicycles and similar exercise machines) led to 18,000 accidents per year requiring hospital emergency treatment. On the other hand, some of her ideas seem a bit outdated. She was writing when even dense cities like New York had plenty of underutilized land, so she was perfectly willing to support broad neighborhood powers to limit new development. We now know that this sort of neighborhood veto may preserve beautiful places, but also limits the amount of housing - something that was not a huge problem in the 1970s (when there was very little demand for city life) but is a much bigger problem today.

A career-spanning selection of previously uncollected writings and talks by the legendary author and activist No one did more to change how we look at cities than Jane Jacobs, the visionary urbanist and economic thinker whose 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* started a global conversation that remains profoundly relevant more than half a century later. *Vital Little Plans* is an essential companion to *Death and Life* and Jacobs's other books on urbanism, economics, politics, and ethics. It offers readers a unique survey of her entire career in forty short pieces that have never been collected in a single volume, from charming and incisive urban vignettes from the 1930s to the raw materials of her two unfinished books of the 2000s, together with introductions and annotations by editors Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storrington. Readers will find classics here, including Jacobs's breakout article "Downtown Is for People," as well as lesser-known gems like her speech at the inaugural Earth Day and a host of other rare or previously unavailable essays, articles, speeches, interviews, and lectures. Some pieces shed light on the development of her most famous insights, while others explore topics rarely dissected in her major works, from globalization to feminism to universal health care. With this book, published in Jacobs's centenary year, contemporary readers—whether well versed in her ideas or new to her writing—are finally able to appreciate the full scope of her remarkable voice and vision. At a time when urban life is booming and people all over the world are moving to cities, the words of Jane Jacobs have never been more significant. *Vital Little Plans* weaves a lifetime of ideas from the most prominent urbanist of the twentieth century into a book that's indispensable to life in the twenty-first. Praise for *Vital Little Plans*: Jacobs's work . . . was a singularly accurate prediction of the future we live in. —The New Republic "Innsp; Vital Little Plans, a new collection of the short writings and speeches of Jane Jacobs, one of the most influential thinkers on the built environment, editors Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storrington have done readers a great service." —The Huffington Post "A wonderful new anthology that captures [Jacobs's] confident prose and her empathetic, patient eye for the way humans live and work together." —The Globe and Mail "A timely reminder] of the clarity and originality of [Jane Jacobs's] thought." —Toronto Star "Innsp; [Vital Little Plans] comes to the foreground for [Jane Jacobs's] centennial, and in a time when more of Jacobs's prescient wisdom is needed." —Metropolis "Innsp; [Jacobs] changed the debate on urban planning. . . . As [Vital Little Plans] shows, she never stopped refining her observations about how cities thrived." —Minneapolis Star Tribune "Innsp; [Jane Jacobs] was one of three people I have met in a lifetime of meeting people who had an aura of sainthood about them. . . . The ability to radiate certainty without condescension, to be both very sure and very simple, is a potent one, and witnessing it in life explains a lot in history that might otherwise be inexplicable." —Adam Gopnik, The New Yorker "A rich, provocative, and insightful collection." —Reason

"Innsp; Vital Little Plans, a new collection of the short writings and speeches of Jane Jacobs, one of the most influential thinkers on the built environment, editors Samuel Zipp and Nathan Storrington have done readers a great service. They've brought together the best of this brilliant autodidact's compelling arguments for why planners and designers must never forget the importance of small-scale diversity given it results in interesting cities created, first and foremost, for people." —The Huffington Post "The editors' introduction is a feast of details and insights. One learns not only about Jacobs and where she stood vis-a-vis this or that critique of her own work, but also about the contexts (cities, the natural world) within which her contributions played out. . . . The way in

which the editors have organized this trove of short pieces works beautifully. . . . [The] sections underline her consistent commitments, and give us nearly a century of urban history.”—Times Literary Supplement

“Jacobs’s work . . . was a singularly accurate prediction of the future we live in.”—The New Republic

“A wonderful new anthology that captures [Jacobs’s] confident prose and her empathetic, patient eye for the way humans live and work together.”—The Globe and Mail

“[A timely reminder] of the clarity and originality of [Jane Jacobs’s] thought.”—Toronto Star

“[Vital Little Plans] comes to the foreground for [Jane Jacobs’s] centennial, and in a time when more of Jacobs’s prescient wisdom is needed.”—Metropolis

“[Jacobs] hammered out the precepts of successful cities in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, and changed the debate on urban planning. . . . As [Vital Little Plans] shows, she never stopped refining her observations about how cities thrived.”—Minneapolis Star Tribune

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“[Jane Jacobs] was one of three people I have met in a lifetime of meeting people who had an aura of sainthood about them. . . . The ability to radiate certainty without condescension, to be both very sure and very simple, is a potent one, and witnessing it in life explains a lot in history that might otherwise be inexplicable—for instance, how a sixteen-year-old girl could lead the French Army to victory. Jane Jacobs’s aura was so powerful that it made her, precisely, the St. Joan of the small scale. Her name still summons an entire city vision.”—Adam Gopnik, *The New Yorker*

“Jacobs has not only bequeathed us a legacy of great ideas; she can also serve as an exemplar of how to approach our own formidable problems, in urban planning and beyond. To follow her lead is to look closely to determine what works and what doesn’t. It is to nurture a multitude of little plans and, not least, to do all we can to stop big plans based on bad ideas.”—The Nation

“Vital Little Plans gathers an excellent range of Jacobs’s thinking for both new readers and those who haven’t picked her up since being assigned *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in college. . . . These short essays and lectures present a startling breadth of ideas, and an unflagging advocacy not just for the built environment, but for the human struggles within it.”—Los Angeles of Books

“Rather than coming off as a collection of rarities (although almost every reader will discover something new here), Vital Little Plans feels more like a greatest hits collection. By spanning the chronology of her career, the book illustrates the evolution of Jacobs’s career in ways that any one of her books cannot. While passages from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* will remain compulsory for planning and design students for at least another century, Vital Little Plans offers new lessons in how an intellectual project can evolve given changes in time and place. In this era of innovation and political turmoil, lessons in how to improve and shift one’s thinking might be the most important of all.”—Planetizen

“Jane Jacobs saw the city like no other, and her observational genius, practical wisdom, and moral courage are on full display here, making this brilliantly curated book essential reading. With our cities facing unprecedented sustainability and affordability challenges, we need to listen to Jacobs more than ever.”—Matthew Desmond, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Evicted*

“In these stirring pages, Jane Jacobs shows herself once more to have been the keenest observer of the urban condition. Her vision of people-focused cities that are places, and not merely spaces, remains both prescient and relevant for planners, policy makers, and ordinary people today.”—Janette Sadik-Khan, Bloomberg Associates, former NYC transportation commissioner

“It’s one thing to bring important ideas to the world, quite another to do it with such wit and subtlety. This volume reminds us what a crackling great writer Jane Jacobs was.”—James Howard Kunstler, author of *The Geography of Nowhere*

“This might be the very best of Jane Jacobs’s books. The articles and speeches collected here are terrific summaries of her thoughts about the marvelous complexities of cities and how we might respond to city challenges to our best advantage.”—John Sewell, former mayor of Toronto

“Vital Little Plans is an immensely important retrospective of Jane Jacobs’s articles and speeches. Her belief in the power of residents to make cities economically, environmentally, and socially successful shines through, as does her disdain for those who would build cities for cars, not people.”—David Miller, president and CEO of WWF-Canada and former mayor of Toronto

“This wonderful volume opens the door to the vital world of Jane Jacobs, in which we are challenged to bring complexity and intimacy into harmony with one another. A book to get your blood running and ideas soaring!”—Mindy Thompson Fullilove, author of *Urban Alchemy*

“It takes an anthology like this to capture the breadth of her work. Jacobs had no time for orthodoxy and wasn’t afraid to change her views, many of which will surprise her fans, critics, and everyone who thinks they know what Jane Jacobs thought, and what she would have done.”—Shawn Micallef, author, columnist, Spacing Magazine editor

“We know Jane Jacobs wrote brilliant books, and it would be a crime to let her equally brilliant smaller writings, speeches and interviews be lost. This collection is more than the sum of its parts, and is a great book to have at your fingertips.”—Brent Toderian, city planner urbanist, TODERIAN UrbanWORKS, and former Vancouver chief planner

“This remarkable compendium of Jane Jacobs’s writing covers a period which begins long before the publication of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* in 1961 and ends long after. Following the thread we see how, piece by piece, she expanded her range into the next ring of connected ideas,

periodically consolidating them in a book or an article, edging ever closer to a kind of unified theory linking ecology, economy, ethics and social mores and their manifestations in real places. Like her fundamental observation about the city itself, her work was never finished.

—Ken Greenberg, urban designer and author of *Walking Home*

“Oh no! I picked up this book to blurb it—thought I could just skim it and dash something off—but Jacobs has got me hooked again.”

—I’m too busy reading to tell you why this collection is Jacobs at her best, but it is.

—Don’t cheat yourself of the pleasure that lies between these covers.

—Jeff Speck, author of *Walkable City*

“An essential read for those wanting to understand the contradiction and chaos of a woman whose legacy is that we must all think for ourselves. We are lucky, with this volume, to witness her voice transforming and her ideas taking shape. The editors have brilliantly selected and sequenced her writing so that we can plainly see how she wrestles with, and problem solves around, messy and complex systems. Many of us have only scratched the surface with Jacobs, ending our love affair with her work at a time when she’s just begun to connect the dots. Reading through the entire pilgrimage makes the calls to action more vivid and more urgent than ever before.”

—Denise Pinto, executive director, *Jane’s Walk*

“The well-chosen selection begins in 1935 and 1937, with two articles for *Vogue*, each offering a lively, affectionate portrait of the diamond district and wholesale flower markets . . . [and spans] Jacobs’s career as an astute, opinionated commentator on city life. . . . A timely volume that supports Jacobs’s aim to stir up some independent thinking urgently needed as a wake-up call for America.”

—Kirkus

“About the Author Jane Jacobs was an urban writer and activist most famously known for her community-center approach to urban planning. Some of her well-known writings include *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*, and *The Nature of Economies*. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

chapter 1 While Arranging Verses for a Book

New York Herald Tribune, January 22, 1935

I should approach these sheets with reverent eye, Thinking, with mental halo, how I sought The perfect word to clothe the perfect thought, The phrase to bring a tear, a smile, a sigh. Or, failing that, I think at least I ought To sweat again on seeing fragile verse I brought into the world with groan and curse, Whose every rippling foot was ripped and fought, Or think of how it should have been, and moan, And wish for the effects I seem to miss, But all the things I think I think are flat, The words and sheets have memories of their own: I ate brown sugar while I thought of this, And my nose tickled when I worked on that.

Diamonds in the Tough

*Vogue*, October 15, 1936

“Everything comes to the Bowery, if you wait long enough,” say the dealers in the diamond center between Hester and Canal Streets, one of the largest and strangest jewel exchanges in the world. There, seventy percent of the unredeemed jewelry pawned in the country is bought and sold. Through this single block of shops, a glittering island in the most squalid section of New York City, has passed every sort of quaint and lavish jewelry, the most extraordinary pieces in the world—shy; crown jewels of royalty, seal-shy; rings of lords, love-shy; tokens of courtiers, and unsophisticated lockets of children. No one seems to know why this location was chosen or why the district continues here. Twenty-shy; five years ago, the first of the merchants settled in this incongruous setting for no reason now remembered. It is adjacent to no allied centers; it exists by itself, across the street from the entrance to the Manhattan Bridge, surrounded by the almost legendary Bowery life. None of the dealers rents a whole shop. Each has a counter in a store with a dozen or so other dealers. The more affluent ones also rent little partitioned spaces in the show-shy; windows and put up such signs as all articles here may be purchased only at third counter to left. No effort is made for artistic or dramatic displays, but some bizarre effects are unwittingly obtained by festooning quantities of jewelry haphazardly over little statuettes that seem to bear no relation to the other merchandise. A plaster goat, probably of bock-shy; beer ancestry, has several rings suspended from one horn, a necklace rakishly wrapped around the other, a watch over his tail, and assorted trinkets along his back. King Arthur, already burdened with his armor, supports several necklaces about his shoulders, a wristwatch around his waist and a lavalier from his visor. In the showcases, there is no black velvet, no particular gem placed to catch the eye, but row on row of gleaming diamonds and shining gold, or sometimes just a jumble of rings and watches and bracelets. Frequently bold, definite-shy; looking prices are marked on the jewels, but these represent chiefly a starting-shy; point for dickering. The specialty of the district is diamonds, of course, but every other sort of jewelry and precious metal work is also traded in. Probably the most magnificent article now in the district is a samovar, said to have been made about three hundred years ago for the Czar of Russia. Seventy-shy; six pounds of solid silver, finer than sterling, with an intricate gold inlay pattern! It was bought from a pawn shop where it had been left by gypsies. No one knows where the gypsies got it. Some of the jewelry sold in the Bowery is new, but most of it comes through the three large auction houses on the block between Hester and Canal Streets. It is sent there by pawnbrokers after the twelve months stipulated by law—shy; and one month of grace—shy; have elapsed from the time it was pawned. Except in the summer, sales are held nearly every day. The jewelry to be sold is put on display for the dealers to examine and to make notations of its value. These notations are all in codes of a primitive sort, letters representing numbers, and each dealer keeps his a secret. The notes are to remind the dealer in the excitement of the sale what, in a cooler moment, he considered paying. The auction proceedings are baffling to an outsider. They are completely silent. All the dealers able to touch the auctioneer crowd around him, and the rest sit on two benches facing him. The auctioneer indicates a figure to begin the bidding, and the dealers raise it silently. Those near the auctioneer squeeze his arm, nudge his ribs, or

press his foot, and those on the benches wink, hold up their fingers, rub their elbows, or make any other noticeable gesture. With half their minds, they seem to be making bids, and, with the other half, they are figuring out their neighbors' bids. It is all done quickly; in a moment the jewel is awarded to the highest bidder, and everyone seems satisfied. It looks extremely haphazard, a cross between hocus-pocus and mind reading. Some of the gems that reach the Bowery are reset there, particularly those with settings that are more valuable for bullion than for their workmanship. One dealer has used forty-eight rubies, once belonging to the Romanoffs, to make a bracelet, a small diamond between each ruby. In the center is a diamond-studded plaque that snaps open to reveal a tiny watch. One of the oldest articles is not really a jewel at all, but a fifteenth-century etching-plate made in Vienna, a portrait of the Pope. In addition to its antiquity, it has a peculiarity. The eyeballs seem to move, not merely to follow the observer as they do in many pictures, but actually to shift from side to side. An example of early American metal work is a stiff little silver statuette of an Indian holding an eagle. In position and general appearance, he is a miniature cigar-store Indian. From time to time, a "poison ring" with a secret cavity and sometimes a sharp little prong to give a lethal prick, reaches the Bowery. These are usually melted down because, although people like to look at them, they don't buy them. Initial rings, however, are not often melted. Eventually someone with similar initials finds the ring irresistible. All sorts of wedding rings reach the dealers. One early French engagement ring has no gems, but is a cluster of gold lovers' knots that shake with a sweet jingle. One of the few pieces whose complete history is known is a watch, made in England and bought one hundred and forty-four years ago by a Vermont college professor. The face is so clear and so beautiful and the engraving on the edges so artful that at first there seems to be no crystal covering it. The professor used it only a few years and then put it in a vault to be kept for his son. Somehow, it was forgotten until long after the son had died, and it has never been used since. A graceful little French clock, one hundred years old, rests on two Ionic pillars, and on a rail at the base of the pillars sits a laughing ivory cupid. A bracelet made about the same time in France has six sections, each with a peasant figure in exquisite mosaic of brilliant colors. On a large cameo necklace is the profile of a lady with an identical cameo on her necklace, and on that cameo, microscopic but clear, another necklace with a cameo. Is it a likeness of the lady who wore it so that she could complete the sequence of ladies with their portraits on their necklace? With how much fantasy and imagination were these jewels made, with how much love were they given, and with how much sentiment were they treasured? Maybe there was bitterness, too. At any rate, loved or hated, here they all are on the Bowery, waiting to be sold, to begin another cycle that will doubtless return them once more to the Bowery. Many of the jewels have come back again and again. The most frequent repeater is a man's enameled fob-watch, which is intricately designed and valuable, but it is also massive and pink in color, and seems to be the first thing its owners pawn. The dealers say it is hardly possible for jewels to stay in a family more than a few generations. Estates must be settled, or money is needed, or the old jewels are traded for more modern ones. Nearly every day, the gems of royal and of famous people pass through the exchange and are sold for their intrinsic worth, with little regard for sentiment. The only jewels with associations that seemed to have impressed the dealers in recent years were those of Rudolph Valentino and Texas Guinan. Occasionally, someone, usually a lady, attempts to redeem an article just after it has gone to the auction rooms. It is traced to the dealer who almost invariably has sold it, for the turnover in the exchange is fast. Sometimes, it must be traced through several subsequent buyers before the woman retrieves it. There has never been a robbery in the center, probably because of the precautions taken. No jewels are left in the show windows overnight, or even in the showcases inside the stores. Upstairs, in small light rooms over the stores, diamonds are cut and polished and set or reset, and silver is buffed. The doors and vestibules to the rooms are barred, and there is no superfluous furniture, just the tools and tables where the workmen sit with hammocks to catch the chips and dust of diamonds and metal. Silver is polished against a cloth-covered revolving wheel. There is a pleasant acrid odor of burning cloth, caused by the friction, and infinitesimal bits of metal are sent like dust through the room. All the sweepings are carefully saved to be refined, and the silver recovered. The walls and ceiling are brushed, and the old oilcloth coverings and work clothes of the men are burned to extract the silver dust. Even the water in which the workmen wash their hands is saved. A small room where silver is polished may yield to a refiner hundreds of dollars' worth of metal a year. Outside on the Bowery, the lusty, tumultuous life of the Lower East Side converges. The "El" roars, trucks rumble, Chinamen from Mott Street mince by, snatches from foreign tongues are caught and lost in a reek of exotic and forbidding odors. Absorbed in the raucous chaos, the visitor forgets the cool diamonds and the metal until, a few blocks away, he sees the glittering gold-leaf roof of the new building at Foley Square. Flowers Come to Town Vogue, February 15, 1937 All the ingredients of a lavender-and-old-lace story, with a rip-roaring, contrasting background, are in New York's wholesale flower district, centered around Twenty-Eighth Street and Sixth Avenue. Under the melodramatic roar of the "El," encircled by hash-houses and Turkish baths, are the shops of hard-boiled, stalwart men, who shyly admit that they are dottles for love, sentiment, and romance. Apprentices, dodging among the hand-carts that are forever rushing to or from the fur and garment districts, dream of the time when they will have their own commission houses. Greeks and Koreans, confessing that they have the hearts of children, build little Japanese gardens. Greenhouse owners declare that they would not sell—at any price—the flowers which grow in their own

backyards. A dealer plans how to improve the business that grandfather started. And orchids in milk-shy;bottles nod at field-shy;flowers in buckets.Early in the morning, the market opens. From five orsq;clock on, boxes and hampers of flowers are brought into the district and unloaded. Most of them, from Long Island, Connecticut, and New Jersey, arrive in the city via truck, but those from Florida, California, and Canada come by fast express, and those from South America and Holland by ship. Occasionally, a shipment of gardenias is flown from California by airplane.For most of the morning, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of cut flowers and blossoming shrubs fill the shops and overflow onto the sidewalk. Their damp, sweet perfume, blowing across the pavement, filters from hampers and crates piled beside doorways.By noon, most of the flowers have been taken away by retail florists or peddlers, and, in the early afternoon, the rest are put in storage or sent to other markets. Then the cool, sweet-shy;smelling shops have an empty, leisurely air. A few buckets of peonies and lilacs splash against the dark walls, and the proprietors and workers, sitting on the high, metal-shy;topped tables, their feet dangling, smoke and talk.The wholesale market started about fifty-shy;five years ago, well within the memory of the older dealers. At that time, most of the growers lived on Long Island and brought their flowers over in market-shy;baskets every morning. They were met by the retail florists at the ferry landing at Thirty-shy;Fourth Street and the East River.As competition sharpened, the growers appeared earlier and earlier in the morning, andmdash;shy;in order to get the choicest flowersmdash;shy;the florists also appeared earlier and earlier, until the first sales were made in the middle of the night!Near the docks was a place called Dannrsquo;s Restaurant, run by a horse-shy;car conductor and kept open all night for the patronage of other conductors. Flower buyers and sellers began to drift in there to conclude their dickering, until finally they used it to house a fairly well-shy;organized market. The first rule adopted was that no one could take the cover off his basket until a gong rang at six orsq;clock.In a few years, some of the growers started a competing market at Twenty-shy;Third Street. Then, both groups leased a building at Twenty-shy;Sixth Street and Sixth Avenue. The New York Cut Flower Association was formed and located on the second floor of the building. Other growers took the third floor.Before the growers brought their flowers to Thirty-shy;Fourth Street, retail florists had to go to the country themselvesmdash;shy;to buy, if they could, what their customers wanted. Sometimes they didnrquo;t succeed and had to substitute sentiment. One early florist, commissioned to get nineteen pink roses for a girlrsquo;s birthday, could find among all the near-shy;by growers only eighteen blossoms and one very tight little bud. So, with this bouquet, he sent a card: ldquo;For eighteen happy years and one to come.rdq;Two actresses and an actormdash;shy;Lotta Crabtree, Clara Morris, and Lester Wallackmdash;shy;financed what is now the oldest floral house in Manhattan and established it in the lobby of the old Wallack Theatre in the Bowery, where it became the favorite flower shop of a generation of theatrical people. At first, its most popular flowers, and sometimes the only ones in stock, were pond-shy;lilies, picked by Mr. Le Moulton, the proprietor, in Washington Heights and Westchester. This shop (like, perhaps, a third of the wholesale houses) is managed by the grandson of the founder. Most of the other dealers are former employees or sons of employees of these first flower merchants and played among the roses and cornflowers and daffodils before they were old enough to help.