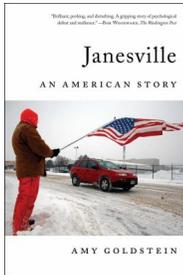# Books by the Stack

Janesville: An American Story by Amy Goldstein

A Washington Post reporter provides an intimate account of the fallout from the closing of a General Motors' assembly plant in Janesville, Wisconsin and a larger story of the hollowing of the American middle class.

Why you'll like it: *Business and economics. Society and culture. Sobering.*

About the Author: Amy Goldstein has been a staff writer for thirty years at The Washington Post, where much of her work has focused on social policy. Among her awards, she shared the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for national reporting. She has been a fellow at Harvard University at the Nieman Foundation for Journalism and at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. She lives in Washington, DC.

Questions for Discussion

1. What did you think of the book? Did you like it? Love it? Hate it? What made you lean that way?

2. What did you expect before picking up this book? How were your expectations met or missed?

3. What was your favorite aspect of the book?

4. What was your least favorite aspect of the book?

5. Which person's story did you find the most compelling? The most interesting? Why?

6. Which person's story did you find you didn't care for? Why?

7. What was the hardest part of this story for you to read, process, and accept as truth?

8. Janesville: An American Story is just one more book of the many coming out these past few years discussing the evisceration of the working class in the United States. Why do you think we're seeing this trend? Have you read other books which focus on this topic? (e.g. Hillbilly Elegy by J.D. Vance, Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates, Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City by Matthew Desmond – featuring Milwaukee; Han to Mouth: Living in Bootstrap America by Linda Tirado)

9. What does this book bring to the national conversation about the American working class?

10. When did you begin to notice the "two Janesvilles"? Before or after Goldstein pointed it out? Why is this important to our story?

11. What did you think about how the story ended? Does it stand alone without the Epilogue? What do you think of the Epilogue? Was it needed?

12. Goldstein is a journalist for The Washington Post. Do you believe Goldstein was able to tell an impartial, unbiased story in this book? Why or why not? And is that an appropriate way to tell this story?

13. Goldstein is on records as writing this book because in late 2009, as the Great Recession was "ending", she saw a lot of writing about whether the country's economic policies were working or about voter anger and anxiety, but nothing which married the two. She set out to take a close-up look at what losing that much work meant to a community and the people who make it up. Do you think this book achieved that mission?

(*Questions provided by deathbytsudoku)*

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