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Styron's second major work of fiction, *Set This House on Fire*, is more explicitly and didactically contrived as an existential novel than was *Lie Down in Darkness*. It is written with a highly sensitive, clear control of language, but it remains somehow static, and oddly ineffective by comparison. And its defect is not in the formal structure of the narrative, I think, nor in its insistently philosophical presentation of its subject matter. The book is, to be sure, curiously organized as a series of teasing and tentative minor revelations, a series of slow steps around, rather than toward, the central revelation of the action: Flagg's rape of a young Italian girl and Kinsolving's killing him, in retaliation. In training at Parris Island, South Carolina, Styron proved to be a subpar marksman because of a congenital cataract in his right eye, a condition he did not report when enlisting in the military. Determined to avoid getting discharged, the right-handed Styron learned to shoot his M1 rifle left-handed so he could use his left eye as his shooting eye.