

Jean L. Kreiling

“Old Sport”

(Jay Gatsby’s name for acquaintances)

Presumptuous or charming? Much too keen
to claim an intimacy that in fact
he had with nobody, or did he mean
no more than breezy, gentlemanly tact?
The moniker suggests a chummy past,
with inside jokes and shared sophistication—
but as a pal Jay Gatsby was miscast,
his act weakened by stilted conversation.
Although he might have meant to strike a pose
that Nick and Tom and Daisy would accept,
they must have sensed what any reader knows:
the nickname, slick and phony, only kept
him far from so-called friends. Whatever game
might save him wasn’t in that specious name.