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NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY



The Jinn that Can't be Put Back in the Bottle

DOROTHY NICHOLS

The Italians Reform their Land Tenure System

VINCENT R. TORTORA

A STORY BY CLARICE LISPECTOR

DRAWINGS BY PATRICIA SMITH

75 cents

WINTER 1956-57

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from
*Flute of the
Smoking Mirror*

Head-Notes

"I THINK that all writing is a disease. You can't stop it." So says 73-year-old physician and newly-named fellow of the Academy of American Poets, WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS in his notes to his translation of *Sappho*, the first of Poems in Folio. Presenting twelve poems a year in gloriously printed frammable size for \$6.00, Poems in Folio, Box 448, San Francisco, seeks "Larger audiences for contemporary poetry," believing that "the ideal reading experience should be visual and oral as well as poetic." The dozen poets, to include Auden, Cummings, Frost, Jeffers, also will read for LP recording.

The *Sappho*, printed by Grabhorn on handmade paper, holds a clue to the poetic experience: "Straightway, a delicate fire runs in my limbs; my eyes are blinded and my ears thunder."

With keen regard for effective presentation, CLARK MILLS, of Voyages Press, 35 West 75th Street, New York, has undertaken an ambitious program: "to publish original work in English as well as new translations of important, relatively unknown material . . . to include work from the Slavic and Oriental languages." Three brochures released are W. H. Auden's *The Old Man's Road*; a translation by Louise Varèse of the

Polish classic under the title *ADAM MICKIEWICZ, The Great Improvisation*; and the exceedingly interesting *Twenty Poems*, by Cecil Hemley, its frontispiece a Kahlil Gibran drawing. Mr. Mills is editor of *Adam Mickiewicz, 1798-1855, Selected Poems* (Noonday Press, New York). Mills' introduction and Jan Lechon's Critical Appreciation in this book give insight to Polish literature little known to Americans.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES for poets to see their work in print are an encouraging sign. This spring witnesses the first issue of *Poetry Broadside*, a quarterly which opens with verse by 1957 Yale Younger Poet, JAMES WRIGHT, and other poets from England, Canada, and the U. S. ALAN SWALLOW of Denver writes the feature article. Home port for the magazine is 62 West 93rd Street, New York City. A series of Poets and Painters is inaugurated by MUTINY PRESS, Box 41 Village Station, New York, with its first quarterly booklet, *Seven Spiders* — poems by Jane Esty, drawings by Paul Lett.

Under the caption *A Short Guide to Literary Criticism in Our Time*, SAMUEL YELLEN writes:

Beats there a heart that has not stirred
To *Logos*, the Greek word for word!
It makes the critical circles buzz,
That's what the Greek word *Logos* does.

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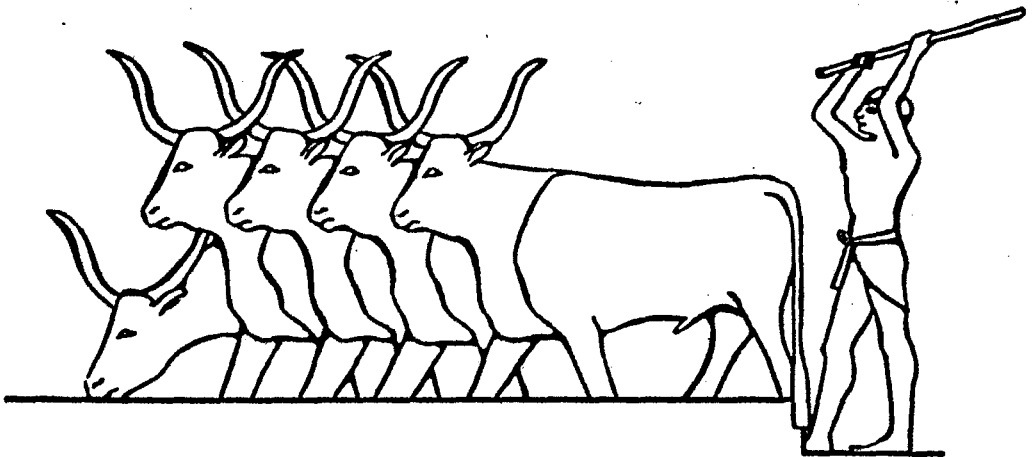
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PATRICIA SMITH



DRAWINGS BY PATRICIA SMITH

Dorothy Nichols

THE JINN THAT CAN'T BE PUT BACK IN THE BOTTLE

EGYPT has had a revolution, not only the political overturn that sent Farouk into exile, but a deeper revolution, a stirring in the ancient villages. I saw evidences of a change beginning that is more significant than the transformation of monarchy into republic, for whether Egypt becomes a democracy, a military dictatorship, a pawn of great powers or a self-governing nation, this change, once begun, will go on. It is a possible barrier against communism, probably the only barrier, for part of communism's appeal is to offer apparent participation to the oppressed.

The anonymous, faceless mass of the world's oppressed areas is shaping into individual human beings with rights and responsibilities; in Egypt the drama is enacted against a recorded history of the Egyptian peasant's five thousand years of submission. Once given a taste of being individuals, self-governing, men can never be changed back again. The Jinn, when Solomon's seal is broken, swells as big as a cloud, and this is a Jinn that cannot be put back in the bottle.

I am not referring to the showpieces, the model villages, change imposed from above, but to a Rural Social Center in a village not altered essentially since the days of the Pharaohs. Egypt's program of Rural Social Centers is not a product of the republic, but was put into government action a dozen years ago by Dr. Ahmed Hussein, present ambassador to the United States. In 1953, however, the hopeful year after the revolution, when I was in Egypt, the program was benefiting from government attention — which was new. The Arab League recommended the

system for the Middle East, with leaders to be trained in Cairo's School for Social Work.

But if, like a visiting celebrity, I had been taken by government officials to see one of the new centers, I would not have noticed the germ of social revolution; the effect might even have been depressing.

We came to one of these centers in the hot, silent hours of the siesta: a group of white stucco buildings, reminding me of Southern California mission style, already looking bare and run-down. We were shown a maternity clinic with bathing places, and wards in which beds and cradles were covered by mosquito nets; rather gray and dingy, but it was a hospital.

The main building provided a consulting room for the resident doctor, a chemist's laboratory, a crafts shop where men were weaving, a social hall with platform and benches. One of the American Point IV women said she had attended a recent meeting here of seventy-five village women. These Biblical, black-robed women served on committees. Another Solomon's seal has been broken and let loose a Jinna, the women.

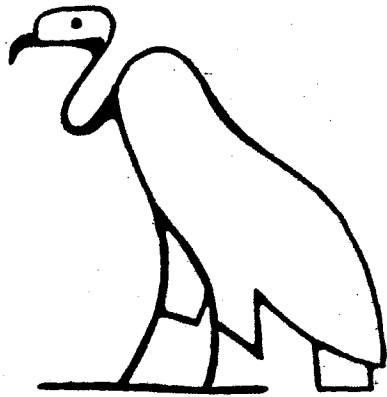
Egypt has 161 such centers under the Fellah Department of Social Affairs. The goal was 1200, which as an ideal, would be only one doctor, one pharmacist, one public health nurse, one welfare director for each 10,000 people. It is less than a drop in the bucket of disease, poverty, pollution and ignorance in a country whose living standard is the lowest in the world. Under Nasser even this program has been cut; armament, it was decided, comes before social progress.

The initial idea for the rural centers came from an American. After Egypt's revolution, when the United States was interested in helping Egypt to help itself, Point IV was working to improve agriculture, chickens and stock, to develop a cheap and better adobe that would not disintegrate in rain; in the installation of bore-hole, or augur-type latrines for 60,000 rural homes. Point IV furnished advisers on child health and nursing and home economics.

I was fortunate enough to go with the Point IV women on one of their trips, and see a center still housed in a village, not set apart in separate new buildings, so that it revealed the impact of change on village life.

Egypt is an agricultural country, yet it has a population of two thousand to the square mile. From an airplane you see Egypt as it is, the richly green but narrow strip along the Nile, closed in on each side by wide, gold-colored desert wastes. The villages are small brown squares and circles scattered among green and yellow fields. Villages, they are called, but seven to fourteen thousand people may be packed into one of them, crowded as city slums. Originally walled in as a protection against marauding Arabs, by law they remain huddled to leave as much cultivable land as possible. They burn, they are rebuilt on the heaped-up ruins.

From the roads of the Delta you can see Egyptian villages that look like romantic French paintings of the early 1900's: a green canal in the dark shade of palms; tall, earth-colored houses; women in graceful robes and veils, wearing heavy wedding anklets, walking with jars on their heads, like a Bible illustration.



You can smell the village as soon as you see it. The canal is polluted. In medieval Egypt, famine and plague thinned the populace with brutal regularity. Now plague is controlled, the people are merely sickly; nobody starves, they just go hungry all the time. The rural people, the fellaheen, are worse off economically and in health than they were a generation ago, something shocking to Americans who think of time in terms of progress.

The modern distress in Egypt was not an industrial revolution in coal mines and factories; it came with control of the Nile. When the Aswan dam was built in 1902, thousands of years of alternate flood and dry land came to an end. Crops were no longer dependent on the annual overflow; the dam made possible continuous irrigation. The immediate effect of this "improvement," which increased production, was to increase the labor of the fellaheen and spread disease among them, for they were never out of polluted mud.

We drove out from Cairo to Om Khinan, where, in a hot, treeless open space, there was hardly room to manoeuver our station wagon, for it was not a plaza or town square; the Egyptian village is a huddled mass. . . . Narrow, twisting lanes between close-pressing house walls of plastered adobe: "clay, straw, dung and Nile water" smeared over a frame of maize stalks and reeds, . . . flat roof terraces of plastered mud and cinders laid on thatch and mats, terraces that look as if they were sprouting, for brush fuel is stored on the roof. . . . Through open doorways a glimpse of dim, cellar-like rooms, earth-floored. The only light for the houses comes through the doorways, except for loopholes, once used to shoot through. There is no wood in Egypt for window frames.

Old women squat on the ground; the only place to sit is the *mastaba*, the earthen bench in the room that opens on the street. Two can sleep on the brick oven, in the room that serves for cooking and sleeping, which has not even a platform to keep the people up off the dirt.

A kerosene-burning primus stove, a mattress instead of the usual straw mat, are luxuries. A village bride's betrothal gift, a wooden chest, is the only cupboard. "If they even had a peg to hang a clean galabiya on!" An American public welfare consultant with Point IV, had it in mind as a project — in rural Egypt a clothes peg is an undertaking.

Beyond a dark, narrow passage, a high-walled courtyard the size of a room, is in the glare of the desert sun, or half-shadowed by thatch; it is the stable where the *gamoosa* (water buffalo) and donkey live. Pigeons are kept in wall niches, thin chickens are everywhere, and flies and fleas. If an American pueblo had a slum district, that would be an Egyptian village.

There are no toilets, outside or in; there are latrines for men only in the mosques. Women generally use the roof or the stable, children the street. An American social worker — who had seen conditions in Turkey and Persia, and the slums of Washington, D. C. — after visiting her first Egyptian village near Tanta in the Delta, woke up in the night screaming.

In Om Khinan we were greeted by young Mr. Fuad, the earnest, pleasant director of the village Center. He took us to see the clinic, for this was the doctor's day in Om Khinan; here he came only four times a week. The school girls were being examined for bilharzia, the snail larvae that enter the body through the soles of the feet. In the street the galabiyas of the men, the long skirts of the women, their dresses covered with black veils, touch the ground and there is never enough rain to wash away the dirt. When a desert downpour does come it turns the village into a quagmire. The women watched us curiously under black veils bound around the head, the loose end held in the teeth; they carry a baby astride the shoulder. They were friendly; mothers smiled at the American women and showed off very new babies, brushing the flies from their faces.

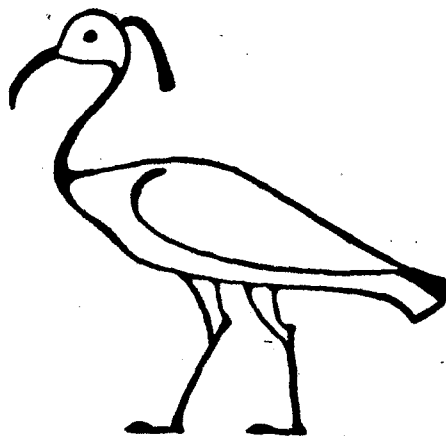
The clinic was set back from the street, behind a courtyard surrounded by a low wall, and scantily shaded by a pergola. Indoors,

the floor was nearly covered with jars for urinalysis for bilharzia. Among the fellaheen, tuberculosis, syphilis, malaria are common, eye diseases prevalent. Ankylostomiasis infects nearly ninety percent (original estimates were forty percent, but the Rockefeller study found it almost universal); the doctor produced a jar of worms that looked like spaghetti, taken from one man's stomach.

The day was getting hotter, the smell stronger of camel, goat, dogs and chickens, as the close-packed crowd of women and girls flocked down the dusty lane from the clinic to the dispensary, where they pushed papers the doctor had given them through a barred window and received their free medicines from the chemist. His laboratory was a cave of a room with a long table where his big jars stood.

We went up an outside staircase of sloping, worn adobes, to see rooms with a bed, a chair, a table, where the Center's director and chemist lived. The flat roof terrace would be blazing hot in summer; there was no heat for winter, which gets desert-cold in Egypt.

The *hakima*, the health and welfare nurse, had no better quarters. She was away inoculating, and we climbed a ladder-like stair



to her bare room, which had the luxury of an armchair in a dust cover. A curtained corner served for closet, and on the clothesline a single clean sweater was hung up to dry. There was a treatment room for women downstairs, above it, a room with a wardrobe cupboard and an ancient Singer sewing machine as equipment for sewing classes.

The "social hall," an earth-floored cavern, opened at the rear into a courtyard that served as playground. Fellaheen children work from the age of five, as soon as they are old enough to herd goats and sheep, but here was a ping-pong table where two boys were playing. At a low table a little boy sat showing his baby sister a picture book; she put her face down on both her arms, overcome with shyness, and no persuasion of her brother could get her to look up.

Mr. Fuad led us down a lane as narrow as the twisting passages of a bazaar, to his office, a cool dim room in the adobe, that had a window in it, and chairs and a big table. Charts hung on the wall. He served strong Egyptian coffee in European demitasse cups, while he explained the organization of the Center.

The impulse for a Rural Social Center must come from the village, not from Cairo. Om Khinan had raised the 1600 Egyptian pounds in cash (almost \$4500) required by the government before it gives grants in aid: 10,000 Egyptian pounds the first year, 3000 for equipment and operating expenses, 1,000 for committees. But there had been a delay in getting title to the land, the reason that the work of the Center was still scattered through the village.

The lists of committees had a familiar sound but the words took on a different meaning in the village setting: "Agriculture and Economics," "Alms and Charity," "Family Reconciliation," (the village had had only a few cases in this department). Under "Health and Cleanliness" a campaign was on to keep dung piles off the street, to persuade people to wear shoes or clogs that would raise them out of polluted dirt. "Education and Culture" — Mr. Fuad said lectures had not been too successful, but films

had been shown, and there had been a theatrical performance. He showed us the village library, several shelves of paper-covered Arabic books. Yes, Mr. Fuad had a library card system for taking books out.

He told us how Om Khinan's Center rose out of a feud with the Omda. The Egyptian village is medieval: the office of Omda ('umdah), the Mayor, who has some power and privileges, belongs traditionally to a landowning family, or is fought over by rival families. As I understood the story in Mr. Fuad's heavily accented English, the Omda was supposed to have used the people's ration books during the War, and they had retaliated with a boycott, refusing to sell, or even to speak to him. In this smouldering and deadlocked state of affairs, the Omda heard of the social centers, investigated the program, and suggested that the village apply. Now, Mr. Fuad said with satisfaction, the Omda is the first to arrive at meetings; his name, as the richest, heads the subscription lists. He is a reformed Omda.

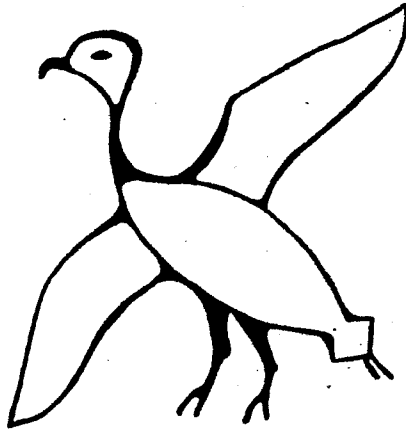
An old man came in to Mr. Fuad's office and sat patiently, the dignity of age enhanced by a galabiya down to his heels, his head wrapped in a long white cloth around a brown skullcap. He waited, not expecting or demanding attention, but the young director excused himself to go outside and speak with him. On his return, Mr. Fuad told us the fellah with the wrinkled brown face, was a member of the Council.

Village Centers are not run by officials from Cairo. All the village men who have contributed to the Center are members of an Assembly that elects the Council. The Council is the governing body and meets each month; it appoints the committees.

"He is a poor man," Mr. Fuad said, "but he has turned into one of our best leaders."

A leader! For more than five thousand years the Egyptian peasant has been told by the government what he can plant, when, and how much; he has been impressed to work on the canal levee, or to fight locusts and cotton worms, or foreign enemies. He has never been an individual, even as a farmer.

The Nile, that made possible the earliest high civilization in the world, kept the Egyptian in bondage. In a valley dominated by a great river, where crops depend on flooding, and canals and dikes have to be maintained, some kind of control is forced on man. Out of the need of control, where water is shared, ancient kingdoms evolved with an organization capable of building the pyramids; but the other side of the picture is that such massive control came from above and was absolute.



The tiller of the soil in ancient and in medieval Egypt was treated — often brutally mistreated — as an underdog. His only escape was to stop producing, and then, in resultant famine, conditions would be eased enough to get him back to work. He had no mountain canyon to retreat into, no way to develop any independence even in local government.

And here, in Mr. Fuad's office, a fellah, at the first opportunity since the Coptic uprisings of the eighth century, was showing leadership.

When nationalism replaces feudalism it is in part a sense of belonging to a country instead of being ranked in castes, or grouped by religions. Egyptian nationalism showed on the out-

side at once as assertion and saber-rattling over the Suez and the Sudan, but within, it was a developing unity. When I was in Egypt, General Naguib was making specific efforts to give Copts, Protestant Christians, Jews, minority sects, the feeling that they were Egyptians. One result of unity is that the fellaheen, too, must be treated as citizens, which is something new, even to Egyptians.

We were taken to call on the Omda, a young man in handsome dark galabiya with a fine brown wool scarf wound around his head. We stepped directly from the street into a large room with Oriental rugs on the floor, the guest house, which it is an obligation of his position to provide. Bottle tops flew as servants rushed about opening Coca-Colas. We admired his rugs and marble-topped tables, the colored photographs of a Khedive, and of a grandfather, in large gold frames.

Main Street was a little wider than the side lanes, with shops open to the street, like caves in a wall. A tailor at his sewing machine good-naturedly held up the pieces of the galabiya he was making to show us the pattern. Beyond the shoemaker's a roll of chicken wire was displayed. Weavers, sitting in a dusky shop where a window let in a single shaft of light onto the loom, were making wool rugs in brown and gray, and they worked swiftly, tapping the wool down with a heavy brush. Under the loom, in cool dusk, three little boys were winding wool, orphans, partly supported by the government. Other boys were at work in a craft shop weaving chairs, bright color mixed with the green palm fiber that smelled like sweet grass.

At the end of Main Street was a nursery school, whose rent is paid by the alumnae of the American College for Girls, in Cairo. Almsgiving has always been a virtue in Egypt, but it is a new thing for city women to make bean bags and stuff cloth animals and sew layettes for the children of the poor.

In the kitchen a woman wearing a white head veil over her black draperies, was stirring big kettles of soup. There was a water pump in the entrance passage and a bore-hole latrine out

behind the building. The room upstairs had windows, little green chairs and tables, and pictures; the diningroom was painted blue.

The children, in yellow pinafores, with a handkerchief pinned to the front, crowded around us, shaking hands, saying, "Saida, saidal" They were dusty, as their sandpile is the brown Egyptian dirt. Their equipment for play was not lavish: two rope swings, a few balls and beanbags. There was just one toy, a tiny red car.

It is natural that American women, helping in the training programs of the Centers, should suggest women's participation. While the Egyptian fellaha may be married at sixteen, easily divorced, bear eight or ten children, walk behind her husband with a baby astride her shoulder and a basket on her head, she has rights. She keeps her own wedding furniture, can go home to her father if divorced, and take her dowry (paid by the groom) with her; she rules the household, and when she goes to market, keeps the money.

In Om Khinan, fifty village women had recently gone to Cairo in two bus loads — not with their husbands, not to consult a doctor — but just to see the sights and visit the Museum. A small revolution was in that bus trip.

Not all the stirring in the villages is confined to the Rural Centers. One of the American social workers had been out visiting a librarian to observe a mission project in literacy. When you spend the night in a village you sleep on a board with a thin pad. An American nursing adviser told me she did not mind the beds, nor the food, nor the primitive facilities; she only minded having no light to read by at night after the day's work.

The reading project was in a village with three Christian churches and one mosque. The librarian had started classes with the help of the minister and three Egyptian girl volunteers. The people met for a social hour with singing, then reading, and when they finished the first primer they received awards — pictures of Naguib and Jesus. At the end of the first six primers they were given simple books to read. The project was begun for

adults but the children had joined in, and a rich man who had opposed the project, after attending one meeting, came back next night and began teaching a child.

The Omda offered land for a community Center when the American woman suggested the need. The villagers inquired eagerly about the American Technical Cooperation Office's traveling film unit. They wanted to learn more about the mud brick project, too, so they could have a model house.

Where are the leaders for the village program to come from? When we saw the hardships of Mr. Fuad's quarters, we asked if it was not difficult to find young men to serve in the villages. But he had answered, with pride, that it was, since to qualify for such a good position he must first be a graduate of an agricultural school and then spend four months in social service.

The Rural Center plan was not to send city people out from Cairo, but to find leadership in the villages. My brother, who was then director of Point IV in Egypt, was invited to the graduation exercises at Bey el Arah, a school where boys from sixty villages were being trained as leaders.

Under the hot sun in an open square with a basketball court, boys in shorts and yellow and red blouses were doing exhibition tumbling to loud, amplified music of drum, violins and accordion. The music was two-part; when the violins felt the need of variety, one of them would stop playing the tune and pluck the rhythm along with the drum. The boys salaamed, shouting the revolutionary slogan: "Unity, Discipline, Work."

The boys were touchingly proud, dedicated to a cause, as they showed their school exhibit: weaving, dyeing, carpentry, compositions, health charts, health instruction conveyed in original cartoons, a model of a house which they were building full-size outdoors. In art they make their own designs, paint and model what they see, and their work had its own vigor. Father Habib Ayrou, who has made a life study of the fellaheen, speaks of them as "quick in childhood but stagnating after fifteen." Perhaps now they would have reason to go on.

THE JINN

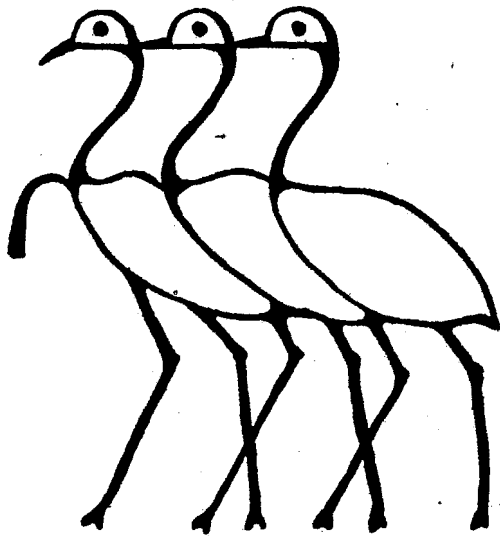
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And here at last were the wooden pegs to hang things on. And tables and chairs. We sat on stools at a little red table just high enough above the floor to be out of the dirt.

A city Egyptian in business suit, red tarbush on his head, amber prayer beads in hand, protested as the instructor showed a palm-fiber chair: "But they don't use chairs," — "they" being the poor, the fellaheen, another race.

"Because they never have, must they always go without?" And quickly, before argument, the instructor went on to show how the chair was cheap, the material accessible, the boys trained to teach the people how to make it themselves. A bit impressed, the visitor conceded, well, if it was cheap and they could make it themselves —.

It was just a dawning possibility that the fellaheen might get up off the ground.



NMQ Poetry Selections

THE NIGHT THE SOLSTICE GOT IN

On autumn's breast we suckle
harvest in a saffron season;
drowsed in insular jubilation,
we retire on eve of solstice as
spring's faded race cowers
without unction or mourner
before guileless sweeps of wind
on a chance deed of murder.

.
I wonder we did not hear them,
a pane away, sifted in rustling agony
through the night; we, wrapt in
blank sleep's complicity, heard no
shriek nor murmurous rattle;
while brittle choir keened quiet anthems
to sap's paroxsym, secular
fantasies warmed us under an artifice of heat.

We waked chaste, to find us
defiled by the old earthen crime,
and nude-limbed trunks serene in
mounds of careless dead; in witless rage,
our eyes would not meet; whom
to beseech, and how rebel?
For weeks, we tiptoed uneasily on
the yellow, subtle-veined corpses.

GROVER LEWIS

DROPS OF SEA, XXV

New Mexico Quarterly, Vol. 26 [1956], Iss. 4, Art. 1

This is the sea . . .
And sleeping shoulders of power,
And rippling flanks of power;
And bird forms reflect in its silver skin.

This is pastel morning of soft wind.
This is placid fury of prehistory.
This is exile from subtle hate of culture.
This is the naked, the lonely, the terrible with awe.

Marsh grasses gently wave the venturer back.
Curls of foam hardened into driftwood
Look wry warning to the venturer.

If one go back by the causeways,
Passing the little store proud with tin badges,
Crossing the drawbridge tense on marrowy swivel,
Splitting the village squat in languid smoke,
Skimming the hillsides pocked with portraits of
commerce—

If one return on purring metaphor
Of Paleozoic monster-power so smooth it hardly purrs;
If one retreat crestfallen
Fearing his self-exile was cowardice,

Screaming silently new doubt
Lest he defiled societal crime too much—
If one turn back . . .
He will come to a fork among structures
Leading to a spire and a tower.

He will choose theologian standing beneath rose window
Waiting with the cheer of an upright coffin;
Or choose psychiatrist ambushed at clinic arch
With the promise of a miseracord in jeweled hilt.

They speak primly of abandonments:

Repent. Come unto the fold of the Lord . . .

Confess. Dissolve abnormal consternation . . .

But they are saying:

"Repent logic and mumble platitudes . . ."

"Confess insight and throttle rebellion . . ."

Barren dunes implore the venturer back.

Dramatic palm leaves wave the venturer back.

For this is the naked, the lonely, the terrible with awe.

But one in exile clings to his prints on the sand.

Surfbathers take the causeways back

To stonescape crystallized in ethic sloth.

LEGARDE S. DOUGHTY

RECEIVE HER GENTLY, THERE IS MUCH TO LEARN

Receive her gently, there is much to learn
In years that will dissolve like snails to clay:
You shall become each other, turn by turn.

The dark dark roots are where the trees sojourn,
Make you no feast of proverbs, love her way:
Receive her gently, there is much to learn.

Divided from each other being born,
Attend her wisely, for she moves to stay:
You shall become each other, turn by turn.

Deny the showboat and the apple worm;
Be in each other, let the horses neigh:
Receive her gently, there is much to learn.

New Mexico Quarterly, Vol. 26 [1956], Iss. 4, Art. 1
Not wood, touch time: not have but wishing warn:
Neither witches nor dead mouths prophesy.
You shall become each other, turn by turn.

Then learn to flower and to feed like corn:
Seed each in other in the sweet delay.
You shall become each other, turn by turn.
Receive her gently, there is much to learn.

ALLEN KANFER

SONG WILL NOT POUR

We drown, who breathe river:
Song will not pour
Through the dredged sluice,
Across the mud floor.

Perhaps if we listened
For snow at the crest,
For forest falling,
For ebb of ice—
But could we dam beaver
Or scatter
The rubble of mice?

Perhaps if we trapped it,
Chained dogs in the narrows,
And slept fully clothed at floodwatermark—
But could we schedule
The jam at the pebble,
And the oarlock
From Porlock
Across the wet dark?

ALBERTA T. TURNER

THE BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

(The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: 937 A.D.)

- This was the year when Athelstan, king
 Of Wessex, prince among earls and patron
 Of heroes, and his noble brother, Edmund,
 Hacked a lifelong glory from a battle
 5 Near Brunanberg. They shattered the phalanx,
 Their swords splintered the linden shields,
 And the sons of Edward followed their father,
 Proved the blood they had tested in battle
 Before, defending their land and their homes
 10 Against every invader. The enemy ran,
 All the Scotch and the ship-borne Vikings,
 Ran or drowned in blood, dropped
 To a land-locked fate as the glorious sun
 Went gliding over the earth like a candle
 15 In God's broad palm, blowing sublimely
 Across the sky and dipping calmly
 To darkness and night. The dead lay piled
 Where the spears had left them, Vikings and Scots,
 Tired, now, of the struggle and wanting
 20 Only to rest. All the battle
 Became the Wessex cavalry endlessly
 Hunting a broken enemy, their honed
 And sparkling blades striking home
 In fugitives' backs. No Mercian refused
 25 To aim his sword at any man
 Who'd shared a sail with Anlaf, shipped
 Himself across a stormy sea
 To a bloody port. Five young princes
 Pitched their beds on the battle-ground
 30 And would never awake, and seven of Anlaf's
 Earls, and a host of invaders, Viking
 And Scotch. Anlaf himself fought

- His way to the prow of a ship, he
 And a tiny band, forced to flee;
 35 They pressed to sea on a dull brown tide
 That floated the king to safety. Nor
 Did the old one, Constantine, trailing
 Defeat behind him all the way north,
 Find exultation following his steps
 40 Or boasts on his lips; he left his kinsmen
 And friends scattered over the field,
 Butchered to silence, and abandoned his son
 On the heaps of the slain, an untried soldier
 Cut into failure. No, the crafty
 45 Grey-beard had no need to be vain, and no more
 Had Anlaf: watching their wreck of an army
 Nothing welled up into laughter
 Or pride that they and theirs were England's
 Best for the job of battle, the crashing
 50 Of standards, the thrust of spears, the cut
 And slash of dagger and sword; they felt
 No pleasure at having frolicked with Edward's
 Sons. They fled in their mail-clad ships,
 The blood-stained Northmen, over a deep and noisy
 55 Sea to Dublin, back again
 To Ireland, ashamed, disgraced. But those ashes
 Of defeat were the sweetest taste of victory
 In the brothers' mouths, Wessex king
 And Wessex prince, returning home
 60 Together. They left a gift of dismembered
 Corpses to the horny beak of the black-plumaged
 Raven, and the grey-feathered eagle, splashed white
 On his tail, to the greedy war-hawk' and the grey-flanked
 Forest wolf, a feast of carcasses
 65 For lovers of carrion meat. No carnage
 Had ever been bloodier, in any battle
 Fought anywhere on this island, say the books
 Of the old philosophers, not since the Angles
 And Saxons arrived in England out of

- 70 The East, brave men trying a broad
And dangerous sea, daring warriors
Who swept away the Britons, seized
The land and made it theirs alone.

Translated by BURTON RAFFEL

AS WE ALL MUST

Now I lay me down
under the great long sun
and vastly span this day's dying with dreams
unfastened from a well of mindsight,
star sighted through space, envisioned aims,
fast empty dreams.
I will love in each brief spasm;
your caramel girl, wilderness, and neap-tides,
the lily's cheek and the wet city mile;
I will know the drum's sheer blast
and the prayed word a fugitive,
and my lingering
will find me death.
All this great day the flies will come
and the webs will be filled
and the noon will shiver in its zenith
reflecting me and morning. Out upon the plain
a tree will die, finding the dry
syllogistic consequence of dawn
enribboned in its boughs;
then will a hot wind blow to turn it gray.
Having known the world this day's man
will turn upon his pedestal with broken arms,
unlettered by everything but time, unmartyred,
unloved, and embrace these passing things.

R. S. BRYDEN

Vincent R. Tortora

THE ITALIANS REFORM THEIR LAND TENURE SYSTEM

THE DAY was warm, but windy. Sandy soil, whipped up along a picturesque expanse of rolling terrain, pelted us us sharply. A rather elderly, trim man with elegant bearing and custom-made clothes spoke above the drone of several large machines at work pulling up tree-stumps and large rocks, leveling the land, plowing the fields and mixing cement. Pointing to the skeletal forms of a cluster of buildings being constructed about a half mile away, he said, "In that very spot there used to be a wonderful grove where for generations my family went hunting for foxes."

Waving his hand in front of him in an 180-degree arc, he continued, "In fact, all this land used to belong to me. It was in my family almost from the Middle Ages." He put his hands into his trouser pockets rather abruptly, paced a few feet away, cleared his throat and said: "Land is important here in Italy. We cherish the land. It gives us a sense of security. . . . It gives us . . . status."

"Now, this land belongs to me no longer. It has been taken by the Government. As you see, they are breaking it up into plots for the people without land."

INDEED, more than 3,200 other landowners in many sections of Italy have given up portions of their land totalling about two and one-half million acres under laws passed by the Italian Government in 1948 and 1950. This initiated the largest concerted land-reform program ever undertaken by a Western nation. Most of the two and one-half million acres were then developed and reclaimed through removal of stumps and stones, irrigation, deep-plowing, contour plowing, terracing, intensive fertilization

or whatever was needed; divided into plots ranging from 5 to 123 acres; and furnished with compact houses, barns, livestock and equipment. To date, close to two million acres have already been purchased by about two hundred thousand families of unlanded agricultural workers and very small landowners.

The great Roman poet, Horace, saw fit to chide some of the more avaricious landowners of his day by saying, "Nature has appointed neither him nor me, nor anyone, lord of the land in perpetuity." And the Roman historian, Pliny, called the large Roman estates the "ruination of Italy." Since then, a succession of great leaders, writers and philosophers have expressed the admonition to society that all men are entitled to land of their own. In the comparatively recent era, Pope Leo XIII said, "Every man by his nature has the right to possess his own property."

And yet, in Italy—an overwhelmingly agricultural country—before the land-reform program was initiated, all fifty-five million acres of the privately owned arable land were divided among nine and one-half million proprietors in an acutely inequitable manner. Small proprietors, numbering about nine million, owned properties ranging from half an acre to sixty acres (the average farm in the U. S. is 242 acres), representing about thirty-four percent of the total. Large proprietors and corporations owned the rest. A group of about five hundred of the largest proprietors owned close to 2,225,000 acres, or about four percent of the total. To make the contrast in classes of land tenure all the more sharp, it must be noted that at least four million other families classified as farmers did not own a square inch of land. They subsisted entirely by renting (*affittuari*) small bits of land from the large proprietors, share-cropping (*mezzadri*), or laboring (*braccianti* and *boari*) on large farms. The most intense poverty in this, one of the poorest countries of Europe, existed and still exists among the *braccianti*.

For the most part, the large landowner of Italy has been, in the composite words of generations of Italian poets and writers, exceedingly "selfish," "unyielding" and "harsh." Modern writers

like Silone and Levi express frequent wonderment that the peasants have not risen up against them time and time again. Indeed, several years ago a band of unlanded and hungry peasants of Calabria physically assaulted land (belonging to a large proprietor) that had lain fallow for several generations and made abortive attempts to cultivate it with makeshift hoes and plows. Weakened by years of malnutrition, they lacked the strength to continue the revolt when police and soldiers descended on them. With unconcealed bitterness, they returned to their squalor.

AS SOON AS the Italian Monarchy was rejected by the people in the Plebiscite of June, 1946, it became quite clear that the large landed estate (*Latifondo*) was the next institution of long-standing to go. The *Latifondi*, after all, were the product of a monarchical, and before that feudal, government. Almost all the large landowners, or *latifondisti*, were titled barons, counts and dukes. The very life blood of their social position and wealth was their land. Yet, they took very poor care of the land. It was the rare case in which the huge expanses of the *Latifondi* were used efficiently and intelligently. More often, they were allowed to be exhausted by un-caring tenant farmers, eroded by the wind and waters or left fallow for years on end so they might be used for game preserves.

Living close to these millions of acres of relatively unproductive terrain were millions of people whose standard of living ranked among the lowest in the West.

Hence, when the Constitution of the Italian Republic was drafted and put into effect in 1948, it contained a definite reference to land tenure and promised wide-scale reformation of the large estates.

A little less than two months after the adoption of the new Constitution, Law No. 114 was passed by the Italian Parliament led by the Christian Democrat Party. Its purpose was to encourage unlanded farm workers to buy from the large proprietors the land on which they were working. In effect, the law granted

all small buyers of property the right to low-interest loans, major tax exemptions and assistance in paying interest on mortgages. Moreover, it set up revolving funds to help the new landowners form cooperatives and carry out development and reclamation programs to increase the productivity of their land.

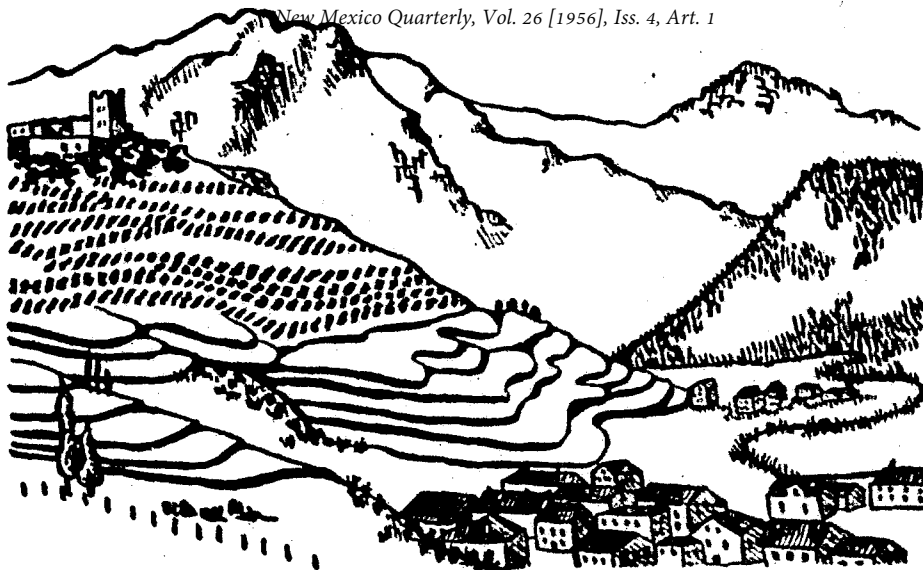
To date, through this manner of voluntary land reform, close to 900,000 acres have passed into the hands of more than 130,000 small farmers with provisions for thousands more to follow.

But, as was to be expected, not all the large proprietors were willing to sell their land. By 1950, it was evident that Law No. 114 would not radically change the Italian land tenure picture. It was, therefore, necessary to draft two new laws, the Sila Law and the Stralcio (Extract) Law, to provide for the compulsory expropriation of land from large proprietors. Also included in the laws were provisions for extensive works on the expropriated or reclaimed land and its assignation to unlanded farm workers and very small landowners.

The Sila Law was named for and dealt with the large plateau area in Calabria, at the base of the toe of the Italian boot. The Stralcio Law dealt with four other rather large specific areas in North, Central and South Italy and the Islands of Elba and Sardinia. Sicily, being semi-autonomous, passed its own similar laws.

The over-all area on which reform took place totals almost twenty million acres. But, only one and one-half million acres were actually expropriated insofar as much was exempt. Exempt land included that held by small owners; that owned by national, provincial or municipal governments; that housing or belonging to social, charitable or public betterment agencies; and, church property. Also exempt from expropriation were organic and efficiently run farms of any size that were practicing intensive cultivation and providing work possibilities and living conditions at least forty percent above the average of the area; and, farms devoted to the raising of prize livestock.

All other lands of a given owner or group of owners—in pasture, orchard, woodland, cultivation or lying fallow—were sub-



ject to expropriation if they were in excess of 750 acres in the Sila region, or, if they did not yield at least fifty dollars an acre per year in the rest of Italy.

The actual mechanics of expropriation were quite complex. Taken into consideration first of all was the income per acre of land as related to the income of the total land holdings of the particular proprietor. The result of this calculation was applied to a schedule made up according to the average production per acre in the entire area. The amount of expropriable land was then computed from another schedule.

The schedules were so formulated as to reward with a comparatively small percentage of expropriation those proprietors who had been getting good to excellent production from their land and to penalize with great expropriation those who had permitted their land to remain poorly exploited or unexploited.

In setting the amount of indemnities to be paid for expropriated lands, the Italian Government shrewdly went back to the musty, yellowed tax declarations submitted by the landowners in 1937. This was one of the years that the owners had made their own appraisals of the value of the property and paid taxes accordingly. Since few had appraised their land at its full value, the Italian Government, in one swoop, saved itself in-

demnities and administered a sharp rebuke to the Italian moneyed class for its traditional evasion of taxes. Indemnities were paid in Government Bonds at five percent which may not be redeemed for twenty-five years.

THE LAND REFORM LAWS were not easily passed through the Italian legislature. There was a great deal of opposition in the beginning and it continues to this day. The landowner class, representing a formidable factor in Italy, can bring enormous pressure to bear on its behalf. When the Sila and the Stralcio laws were being debated in the Parliament, politically powerful spokesmen for the large proprietors argued long and hard against them. As a result, a number of concessions were written into the laws. Such concessions concerned the amount and type of property to be expropriated, arrangements for heirs, and subsidies for self-development projects. Some observers contend that compromises of this type had the effect of watering down, to some degree, what might otherwise have been very effective programs.

To this day, there is pressure on the predominantly Christian Democrat Government to decelerate these programs. Part comes from the Liberal Party which, unlike that in the U. S., is oriented toward the political right and gets its support largely from landowners. It forms part of the four-party coalition, headed by the Christian Democrats, which governs Italy by a tenuous majority.

The major forces working toward the destruction or discredit of the Land Reform are the Fascist-Monarchist Coalition on the one hand and the Communist-Socialist on the other. The former contends that the Italian peasant is basically ignorant, disorganized and unfit for autonomy and that farmland suffers enormously when put in such hands. The latter contends that the peasants are all that the Fascists deny; yet, they just lack opportunity and advantage under the effete government program of Land Reform. Both extremist groups expend vast energies in attempts to weaken Land Reform and, thereby, embarrass the Christian Democrat Government.

Any lethargy or deceleration the Land Reform Programs may have suffered under previous Prime Ministers, however, is more than compensated for in the zeal of the Prime Minister, Antonio Segni. It was Segni who originally drafted the reform laws and set a fine voluntary example by breaking up his modest holdings on Sardinia in favor of the peasants who were working them. Prime Minister Segni defines land reform as a means to "elevate the farmer to the likeness of a man, enable him to regain his human dignity and give him a better, more secure and tranquil future."

All the land covered by Land Reform Laws had to be expropriated by the end of 1952. From then on, the Sila Law allowed four more years for development and reassignment of the land and the Stralcio Law, eight years.

Once the large tracts of land left the hands of the large proprietors, groups of surveyors, sociologists, agronomists and the like took over. These men and women were, almost without exception, exceedingly dedicated and sincere. A young woman sociologist who was working about twelve hours a day to expedite the development of land in the Maremma section north of Rome took a weekend off to marry a medical student in Florence. On Monday morning, after the wedding, she took her new husband to the Maremma district, showed him around, explained the project, put him back on a train for Florence and bade him go home and wait until she was finished with her job.

THE WHOLE PROGRAM for the reform, reclamation and restoration of Italy's surface is huge. By the early 1960's, the government expects to spend about six billion dollars to convert nonproductive and semiproductive acreage into farmland that will support tens of thousands of new landowner families. This figure, almost representing the total Italian budget for two years at the present rate of expenditure, will attempt to extract the utmost output and work possibilities from the tragically inadequate land. Some of the funds will come from various other sources including private investors, the World Bank and foreign

countries. The U. S. and Germany have been, and are expected to continue to be, the largest foreign contributors. Yet, foreign help is minute when contrasted to the total figure.

The Land Reform programs alone are envisaged to cost about one billion dollars. The other five billion are being spent on a wide variety of projects. A good portion of the land on which work is being done already belongs to small holders and will not be reformed.

One of the major types of land development involves reclaiming it from the swamps, lakes, lagoons and dried up river beds which abound in the lowlands. Well over three million new acres have been added to the productive surface area this way. More good, fertile farm land is behind dykes in the Bradano and Agri River Basin and in the Po River Delta than in the Zuider Zee area of Holland.

That land which is desert or near-desert is developed and restored by tearing up useless scrub growth, deep-plowing the infertile ground, putting in irrigation systems and setting up programs of extensive fertilization. Hilly terrain is expertly contour-plowed to retain the maximum precious topsoil. Very steep hills are picturesquely terraced by a succession of stone walls buttressing steps of soil extending almost to the very top. Land reclaimed from mountains, deserts or below sea-level is assigned to small farmers much the same as that expropriated from the large proprietors.

An English newspaperman noted: "These industrious people seem to till the soil with a needle and thread."

The enormous Fund for Southern Italy, or *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* (*Mezzogiorno* means midday, where the sun is highest) is by far the most courageous of the land development projects. It is well on its way to expending two billion dollars for the improvement of the terribly underdeveloped South (the general area south of a line running from a few miles below Rome on the west coast roughly toward the northeast, ending about 100 miles above Rome on the east coast; and islands of Sicily and Sardinia).

Two billion dollars is about one-fifth of the entire annual income of the twenty million people who live in that area. The *Cassa* works hand in glove with Land Reform programs.

In addition to work on the land and road and aquaduct building, the *Cassa* is concerning itself with building first-rate accommodations to attract tourists to this beautiful and interesting part of Italy. A sad paucity of tourist revenue has hitherto flowed into Calabria, Lucania, Puglia and Sardinia.

In the Land Reform programs, after land has been reclaimed from below sea-level, mountains or deserts, or expropriated from the large proprietors, it is divided up into small plots, furnished with houses, barns, silos and miscellaneous farm equipment, and sold to unlanded farmers in the area on thirty year terms. Interest rates are nominal. The cost to the farmer never exceeds two-thirds of the government expense in developing or transforming the land. In the case of land that has been expropriated, the assignee pays the indemnity due the former owner. For the first two years no interest is due and the principal payments are kept extremely low. Frequently, direct government contributions or subsidies ease the burden placed on the shoulders of the new assignee.

The task of determining which of the many deserving families should be assigned the all-too-insufficient land involves two major considerations: the number of Working Units the family possesses, and the closeness of the family to the land that has been reformed. Unlanded families having over the minimum Working Units whose members worked the land before it was reformed are given preference. (If the land has been reclaimed, the poorest families living closest are given preference.) That land which is left unassigned is awarded to those families who already own very small plots in order to bring their total holdings to at least five acres.

The Working Units of a family indicate the work potential of its members. An able-bodied man between nineteen and fifty counts as one Unit and the rest of the family is graded downward

according to their ability to work the land. For example, a woman over sixty counts as one-tenth of a Working Unit and a woman between nineteen and forty-five, six-tenths. The size of the plot assigned to each family, moreover, is proportionate to its number of Working Units.

In an area of average fertility, the largest family plot is seldom more than fifteen acres.

Though the Italian Government makes every provision to ease the transition of the families from unlanded peasantry to small proprietorship—ranging from establishing guarantees, affording grace periods and setting up cooperatives and numerous local courses in agriculture—it must be severe if they default in payment or fail perceptibly to improve the land. In such cases, the first assignee loses the plot and one of the numerous families on the waiting list gets it. Furthermore, all payments on the principal are refunded and an allowance made for any improvements to the land.

THE MAJOR OBJECTIONS to Land Reform, other than those expressed by land owners and their spokesmen, are as follows: That such redistribution of the land is tantamount to Communism or, at least, extreme Socialism; that the government remains breathing over the shoulder of the small farmer during the thirty years it takes him to pay off his debt; that Land Reform has failed to have the desired effect of dissuading new owners from political extremism; and that nowhere near enough is being done compared to the urgent need.

The accusation that the program of reforming land is "creeping socialism" was most summarily dismissed by Pope Pius XII in September, 1953, when he said: "Christian principles governing the institution of private property do not give the present owners of such land an absolute right against all others to whatever is surplus above their own needs, whether the land is used or not. In such cases, acquisition on just terms in order to settle new farmers is not a 'Socialist' measure. It is precisely the oppo-

site, being aimed at the extension of private ownership, at the creation of a class of working proprietors which are the very antithesis of 'Socialism'."

One of the most articulate admonitions against the perceptible tendency of the Italian Government to inject itself massively into the lives of the new landowners comes from one of the "universal men" of this generation—author, painter and political philosopher, Carlo Levi. He spent several years among the poor, unlanded people of South Italy more or less in exile during the Mussolini regime and has come to know them well. He cautions: "They [the new owners] are afraid the Government will make them pay for their newly acquired land with some of their even more precious liberty."

True enough, the countless "do's" and "don't's" the government imposes on new land owners smack very sharply of bureaucratic state paternalism. Many of the farmers complain bitterly that the government trusts them enough to give them land, yet doesn't trust them enough to work it. Feverish efforts are now in progress among Land Reform authorities to withdraw increasingly from the picture and permit the farmers to exercise their individuality and sovereignty. An Italian newspaper man has remarked: "A man who feels himself continually directed by an overly paternalistic government will never mature politically. Hence, the farmer will continue to support the extremist parties until he is made to feel like a sovereign man with valid opinions and views."

Commenting further, Carlo Levi idealizes: "The Reform will be truly successful only if it is a *peasant* reform; that is, if it gives the peasants a feeling of quiet pride and assurance that, with the government's help, but with their own free will, resources and courage, they are on their way to achieving their own destiny—a new, freer and more human way of life than they have ever known before."

In South Italy, it would appear from over-all statistics that the Communists on the one hand and the neo-Fascists on the

other are gaining votes; yet, a detailed inspection of the actual areas where Land Reform programs have been carried out indicates just the opposite trend. Actually, in most regions where land was reformed effectively and efficiently and enough time passed for the new owners to get the "feel" of ownership, the Communists and their Socialist allies, as well as the extreme Rightists, have suffered markedly. Moreover, the Christian Democrats have gained.

The essential catalyst in the process of political conversion would seem to be *time*. A new owner needs *time* to establish his self-confidence, to recognize his place in the society and to assume a sense of responsibility in the prevailing system. All these factors combine to dull the edge of his extremism.

In a number of communes of Southern Italy like Cerignola, Lavello and Irsina, where the programs have been completed for several years, the Communist Bloc, which garnered over fifty-five percent of the popular vote in the 1948 elections, lost on the average of seven percent in the 1953 elections. The Christian Democrats, who sponsored and put the Land Reform programs into effect, gained the seven percent. It is estimated that at present the average of Communist losses approaches ten percent.

THOUGH well over a million people have been resettled and the productivity of millions of acres greatly increased, the fact remains that millions of families still want for land and millions of acres still go begging for reform. But the expense to reform the entire Italic boot would indeed be astronomical.

And, even if all the land in Italy were reformed, millions of people would remain landless. In a country where 410 persons live on every square mile (U. S., 55), the problem of equitable land distribution seems insoluble.

The hope for Italy, over and above land reform and development programs, would seem to lie in the marked acceleration of industrial expansion. In this, the year that the Sila Reform Pro-

gram in Calabria ends, it is most satisfying to note that crop production is up thirty to sixty percent of what it was before Reform and that this area, long one of the most desperately impoverished and demoralized of Italy, is beginning to develop a climate of comparative vigor and hope that will eventually make the establishment of large industry possible and gradually raise the economic and social level to that of Northern Italy and the rest of Europe. In 1960, when the much more extensive Stralcio Land Reform program ends, it is only to be hoped that the results will be proportionately dramatic.

METAL HARVEST

Within this fruit the seed, the pulp, the rind
 Join to globe an orange in the mind.
 About this fruit have lip and tongue and cheek
 Pressed a mold of round and firm and sweet.
 Unbroken the sense, continuous the shell:
 Orange at eye announces sweet to smell,
 Tang to tongue, resilience to finger,
 Till separate oranges to *orange* swell
 And juices tasted, unconsumed shall linger.

Only one in a million million trees
 Drops the hard joke or the soft disease,
 When eye, perceiving but the usual facts,
 Betrays the lip to lard, the tooth to wax;
 Or when fingers, rounding on known ease
 Of firm, cool, globe-skinned juices, squeeze
 The metal harvest of Hesperides.

ALBERTA T. TURNER

Clarice Lispector

LOVE

ALITTLE TIRED, her purchases bulging in the new net bag, Ana climbed into the streetcar. She put her bag on her lap and the car began to move. Then, seeking comfort, she leaned back against her seat and gave a sigh of half satisfaction.

Ana's children were good, a real and juicy thing. They grew, they took their daily baths, went to school, each day claiming more wildly for themselves more attention and fuller moments. Her kitchen at last was spacious, although the old stove would pop once in a while. In their cooperative apartment, which they were paying for little by little, summer was hard. But the wind waving the curtains Ana herself had made reminded her that if she wished, she could stop and wipe the sweat, looking at the calm horizon like a farmer. Like a farmer she had planted the seeds she had at hand, not others, just those. And trees were growing: her quick chat with the milkman grew, the water filling the tank grew, the children grew, the table with food grew, her husband coming home each night with the papers and smiling with hunger, the annoying singing of the servants in the building grew. To everything Ana quietly gave her small strong hand, her current of life.

It was true that at a certain hour in the afternoon something became dangerous. At a certain afternoon hour the trees she had planted laughed at her. At this hour, when nothing seemed to need her strength any more, she would become restless. And yet one could say that she was feeling more solid than ever, her body was stouter, and one should see the firm way she had when cutting blouses for the children, the big scissors clapping over the material. Her vaguely artistic tendency had years ago finally guided her toward making from each day something fruitful and beautiful; with time, her taste for the decorative had developed



and supplanted her inner disorder. She seemed to have discovered that everything could be improved, one could give to each thing an harmonious appearance; life could be made by the hand of man.

At bottom, Ana had always had the need to feel the firm root of things. And this, perplexingly, home had given her. By twisted roads she had fallen into a woman's destiny, with the surprise of fitting it as if she herself had invented it. The man she had married was a real man, the children she had were real children. And now her past youth seemed to her as strange as an illness of life. From it she had gradually emerged to discover that one could live without happiness: abolishing the idea of happiness, she had found a legion of persons, until then invisible to her, persons

who lived as one works — with persistence, continuity, gladness. What had happened to Ana before she had her home was now forever out of her grasp: that troubled exaltation that so many times came mixed with unbearable happiness. Instead of that, she had created something finally understandable — an adult's life. This was what she had wanted and had chosen.

The only precaution she still had to take was in that dangerous afternoon hour, when the empty house did not need her any more, when the sun was high, when each member of her family was out. Then, looking at the well dusted furniture, her heart would still shrink a little in amazement. But in her present life there was no place for tenderness at her own astonishment: she would suffocate the astonishment with the same skill that dealing with the housework had taught her. At this dangerous hour she would carefully go shopping or would take things to be mended — taking care of her home and of her family, whether they needed it or not. When she was back it would finally be the end of the afternoon and the children home from school would claim her. And then evening would come, with its quiet vibration. In the morning she would wake up already under the halo of her calm duties: she would find the furniture dusty again as if it had come back to her in repentance. As to herself, Ana was now obscurely a part of the world's black sweet roots. And she nourished life anonymously. It was good that way. This was what she had wanted and had chosen.

Now, going home, she was seated in the open streetcar with her purchases. The car swayed on the tracks, entering wide streets. Soon a humid wind began to blow, announcing to her more than the end of the afternoon — the end of the unsteady hour. Ana took a deep breath, and a great acceptance gave to her face the expression of a woman's face.

The streetcar slowed, stopped, went on. She still had time to rest before reaching home. The streetcar stopped; new passengers were coming in. It was at this moment that she saw the man halted on the platform.

LOVE

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The difference between him and the other men standing there was that he was really stopped. Standing on the platform and waiting for another streetcar, he held his hands slightly forward. He was blind.

What else was there about him that made Ana sit upright in distrust? Something disquieting was happening. Then she saw it: the blind man was chewing gum. . . . A blind man was chewing gum.

Ana still had time to remember for a fleeting moment that her brothers were coming for dinner — her heart was already beating, violent, enormous. Leaning forward she stared deeply at the blind man, as one does to those who cannot look back. He chewed gum in his darkness. Without suffering, with his eyes wide open, he chewed. The movement of mastication made him seem to smile and suddenly cease smiling, then smile again and then stop smiling. As if the blind man had insulted her, Ana stared at him. And whoever had looked at her face at this moment would have had the impression of a woman in hate. But she went on looking at him, bending towards him still more. Then the streetcar gave an unexpected jerk, throwing her suddenly backwards, the heavy knitted bag fell from her lap out of the car — Ana screamed, the conductor gave the signal to stop before he himself knew what was happening, the car stopped, the passengers looked around astonished.

Incapable of moving to recover her purchases, Ana remained seated, pale, erect. An expression, gone from her face a long time ago, returned to it with effort, still uncertain, still uncomprehensible. Someone, laughing, picked up her bag. But the eggs had broken in their carton. Yellow sticky yolks seeped through the fibers of her bag. The blind man on the platform stopped his chewing and stretched out insecure hands, trying vainly to touch whatever was happening. She threw out the eggs from the bag, and, amidst the smiles of the passengers, the conductor again signaled, and the streetcar again jolted on.

In a few moments no one was looking at her any more. The

streetcar rattled on and the blind man chewing gum on the platform remained behind forever. But the evil was done.

The net bag was rough to her fingers, not intimate as when she had knit it. The net bag had lost its meaning, and to find herself seated in a streetcar was a broken thread; she did not know what to do with the purchases on her lap. Like once interrupted music, the world had again begun around her. The evil was done. Why? Had she forgotten that there were the blind? Compassion suffocated her, Ana was breathing heavily. Even the familiar things which had been there before the blind man now seemed on their guard, they had in them something hostile, perishable. The world was again a malaise. Several years had suddenly decayed, yellow yolks were dripping. To Ana, now expelled from her own days, it seemed that the persons in the streets were endangered, that they were tightrope walkers on the surface of darkness — and for a moment the absence of meaning left them so free that they didn't know where to go. To be aware of an absence of law was so sudden to Ana that she grasped the seat in front of her as if she might fall from the streetcar, as if things might quietly change themselves into something they were not.

What years ago she used to call crisis had finally come. She immediately recognized it by the intense pleasure she now had in looking at everything around her, alarmed, suffering. The heat became sultrier, things had gained strength and high-pitched voices. On the street a revolution seemed on the verge of erupting, the gutters were dry, the air dusty. A blind man chewing gum had plunged the world into dark greediness. In each strong person she could feel the absence of pity for the blind man, and people scared her with their vigor. Seated next to Ana was a woman in blue, with a face. Ana turned her eyes quickly from the face. But on the sidewalk she saw a mother angrily pushing her son! Two lovers interlaced their fingers, smiling. . . And the blind man? Ana had fallen into an extremely painful goodness.

She, who had appeased life so well. She, who had taken so

much care that it would not explode. She, who gave to everything a serene understanding, and kept one person distinct from another, clothing was made very clearly to be worn, the evening's movie could be chosen from the newspaper — everything had been done so that one day would be followed by another. And a blind man chewing gum had torn all that into pieces. And through pity Ana saw a life full to the mouth of sweet nausea.

ONLY then did she notice that she was far beyond the street where she was supposed to stop. In her weakness everything jolted her like a shock. She descended from the streetcar with weak knees, looked around gripping the egg-stained net. For a moment she could not figure out where she was. It seemed she had jumped out from the streetcar into the middle of a night.

It was a long street, bordered by high dark walls. Her heart beat with fear, she tried vainly to recognize her surroundings, while the life she had discovered continued to pulsate, and a wind, more tepid and more mysterious, touched her face. She stood still, facing the wall. Finally she was able to orient herself. Walking a little farther she crossed the gates of the Botanical Garden.

She walked heavily down the central avenue among the palm trees. No one was in the Garden. She put her packages on the ground, took a seat on the bench in a by-pass. There she remained. The vastness of the Garden seemed to calm her, the silence slowed her breathing. She slept inside herself. In the distance she saw the central avenue where the afternoon was clear and round. But the dimness of the branches covered the by-pass.

Surrounding her there were serene murmurs, smell of trees, small surprises among the ferns. The whole Garden was crushed by the hurried moments of the late afternoon. From where came the half-dream by which she was surrounded? as by a hum of bees and birds. Everything was strange, too soft, too great.

A light intimate movement startled her. She turned her eyes quickly. Nothing seemed to have moved. But in the central ave-

nue a powerful cat was standing immobile. Its hair was soft. In a slow silent walk the cat disappeared again.

Unquiet, Ana looked around. The branches were swinging, the shadows hesitated on the ground. A sparrow fluttered on the earth. And suddenly ill at ease, Ana seemed to have fallen into an ambush. In the Garden a secret work was being done which only now she was beginning to be aware of.

On the trees the fruit was black, sweet as honey. On the ground were the dry cores of fruit, full of convolutions like small rotten brains. Her bench was stained with purple juices. With intense suavity the waters ran. On the trunk of a tree clung the luxurious legs of a spider. The rawness of the world was a quiet rawness. The murder was deep. And death was not what we thought it was.

But as dreamy as it was, it was a world to be eaten with teeth, a world of gigantic dahlias and tulips. The trunks of the trees were run over by leafy parasitic plants, their embrace was smooth, glued. As if in an aversion which would precede a final surrender — it was fascinating, the woman felt a sickness, and it was fascinating. The trees were heavy with fruit, the world was so rich it rotted. When Ana remembered there were children and grown-up men with hunger, the nausea rose to her throat as if she were pregnant and forsaken. But the Garden had another moral. Now that the blind man had guided her to it she shivered on her first steps into that glittering somber world where water lilies floated monstrosly. The small flowers scattered in the turf did not seem to her just pink and yellow, but scarlet and the color of bad gold. The putrefaction was deep, perfumed. . . And yet she saw all those heavy things while at the same time her head was surrounded by a swarm of insects, sent by the world's most delicate life. The breeze insinuated itself among the flowers. Ana could guess, more than feel, their too-sweet smell. . . . The Garden was so beautiful that Ana feared Hell.

It was almost evening now and everything seemed full, heavy, — a squirrel flew in the shadows. Under her feet the earth was

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flabby, Ana smelled it with delight. It was fascinating and she felt ill.

But when she remembered her children, before whom she was now guilty, she stood up with an outcry of grief. She caught her package quickly, went up the darkening pass, reached the avenue. She was almost running — while she felt around her the whole Garden with its superb impersonality. She shook the closed gates, grasping the rough sticks of the wooden gate. The guard appeared, surprised at having overlooked her.

UNTIL she reached the door of her building she seemed on the brink of a disaster. She ran to the elevator, clutching her bag, her soul beating in her breast — what was happening to her? Her pity for the blind man was as violent as an anguish — yes, but the world seemed to belong to her, dirty, perishable, but hers. She opened the door of her home. The living room was large, rectangular, the doorknobs shone clean, the glass in the window shone, the lamp shone — what kind of new earth was this one? And for a moment the healthy life she had lived until then seemed to her a morally mad life. The little boy who ran to her was a long-legged being with a face like hers, he ran and embraced her. She hugged him tightly, astonished. She sheltered herself in him. Because life was in danger. She loved the world, loved what had been created — she loved it with disgust. With the same fascination she had always felt for oysters: with that vague feeling of repugnance that the approaching of a raw truth aroused in her, warning her. She embraced her son, almost crushing him. As if she was now aware of an evil — but which evil: the blind man or the beautiful Botanical Garden? — as if she were now aware of an evil, she clung to the boy, whom she loved above all else. She had been struck by the demon of faith. "Life is horrible," she said to the boy, softly, hungrily. What would happen if she would follow the call of the blind man? She would have to go alone. . . . There were poor and rich who needed her. Or was she the one who needed them . . .? "I'm afraid," she said.

She felt the child's fragile bones in her arms, heard his frightened weeping. "Mother," he called. She released him, looked at his face, her heart shriveled: "Don't let mother forget you," she said. As soon as the child felt free from her embrace, he escaped and ran to the door of the room where, feeling more secure, he stared at her. It was the worst look she had ever received. Blood rushed to her face, warming it in shame.

She slumped into a chair, her fingers still enmeshed in the net. Of what was she ashamed?

There was no way of not facing it. The perfect days she had been forging had now broken through their crust and water was escaping. She was now in front of the oyster. And there was no way of avoiding the sight of it. Of what was she ashamed? She was ashamed because it was not pity any more, it had not been just pity: her heart was full with the worst will to live.

She no longer knew whether she was on the side of the blind man or on the side of the dense plants in the Garden. The blind man was fading little by little, and in torture she seemed to have joined those who had blinded him. This had been revealed to her by the quiet Botanical Garden. With horror she discovered that she belonged to the strong part of the world — and what name should be given to her violent compassion? She would have to kiss the leper because she would never be just his sister. "A blind man brought out the worst in me," she thought astonished. She felt excluded because she knew that no poor man could drink water from her burning passionate hands. Ah! it was easier to be a saint than a person! But, God — she pleaded — wasn't it real the mercy that had stirred in her heart the deepest waters? Yes, but it was the mercy of a lion.

Humiliated she knew the blind man would prefer a poorer love. And, shivering, she also knew why. Life in the Botanical Garden was calling her as the werewolf is called by moonlight. "Oh, but I love the blind man!" she thought with wet eyes, trying to defend herself. And yet it was not with that kind of feeling that one would go to a church. "I'm afraid," she said alone in the

living room. She got up and went to the kitchen to help the cook prepare dinner.

But life chilled her skin in a cold wave. She heard the school bell, constant and far away. She saw the small horror of the spider web leading to a spider underneath the stove. As she took a vase to change its water — there it was, the horror of the flower delivering itself, languid and disgusting, to her hands. The same secret work of the Garden was also being done there in the kitchen. Near the waste can she stepped on an ant. The small murder of an ant. Its corpse trembled. She heard water dripping, dripping into the quiet water of the tank. And there were the big summer bugs. The horror of the expressionless bugs. All around her there was a silent slow insistent life. Horror, horror. She walked from one side of the kitchen to the other, cutting the meat, mixing the cream. Around her head, around the light, circled the mosquitoes of a summer evening. An evening in which pity was as crude as an evil love. Between her breasts sweat drained slowly, faith weakened her, the heat from the stove glazed her eyes.

Then her husband came, came her brothers, came their wives, came their children.

They ate with the windows wide open, there on the ninth floor. An airplane trembled, menacing in the heat of the sky. Although she had used few eggs, the dinner was good. The children stayed awake, playing with their cousins on the carpet. Since it was summer it would be useless to force them to go to bed. Ana was slightly pale and laughed softly with the others.

After dinner, finally, the first breeze entered through the windows. They were sitting around the table. Tired from the day, happy not to disagree for a while, so willing not to see any flaws. They laughed at everything, with their good human hearts. The children gathered admirably around them. And as one would do with a fleeing butterfly, Ana imprisoned that instant between her fingers before it escaped from her forever.

Afterwards, when everybody was gone and the children were

put to bed, she was a rough silent woman staring out the window. The city was asleep and hot. Would it ever fit again into her days, what the blind man had unchained in her? How many years would pass before she would grow old again? She knew that whatever her move, she would step over one of the children. But with the cruelty of a lover, she seemed to accept that from a flower a mosquito could fly out, that water lilies would float on the darkness of the lake. The blind man swung among the fruits of the Botanical Garden.

There was a sharp explosion from the kitchen. "If it came from the stove, the house is on fire!" she thought running to the kitchen and suddenly facing her husband who was standing before the spilt coffee.

"What was that?" she shouted, quivering all over.

At first he was frightened by his wife's panic. But then he laughed, understanding.

"It was nothing," he said, "I'm clumsy, that's all . . ." He seemed tired, with shadows under his eyes.

But at the strange look on Ana's face, he looked at her more closely. Then he drew her to him, in a light caress.

"I don't want anything ever to happen to you, nothing, ever!" she said.

"At least allow me a little accident at the stove," he replied smiling.

She remained without strength in his arms. This same afternoon something calm had been broken forever, and yet there was a sad humorous tone in the house. "It's time to sleep," he said, "it's late." In a gesture that was not customary to him but seemed quite natural he took his wife's hand, leading her without looking back, pulling her away from the danger of living.

The vertiginous goodness was ended.

And, if today she had crossed love and its hell, here she was now combing her hair before the mirror, for an instant without any world in her heart. Before getting into bed, as if putting out a candle, she blew out the small flame of the day.



Lawrence Willson

THE "BODY ELECTRIC" MEETS THE GENTEEL TRADITION

INTO THE sheltered quietude of the nineteenth century suddenly occurred Walt Whitman, shouting across the rooftops of the world:

Give me now libidinous joys only!
Give me the drench of my passions! Give me
 life coarse and rank! . . .
I am for those who believe in loose delights—
 I share the midnight orgies of young men . . .
The echoes ring with our indecent calls;
I take for my love some prostitute—I pick out
 some low person for my dearest friend,
He shall be lawless, rude, illiterate!

And genteel New England was quite naturally, quite unavoidably, shocked. Never before had it come into public contact with

a "body electric." The principal functions of the well-bred writer a century ago, says Granville Hicks,

were to entertain and flatter [his] readers and to protect conventional morality. [He] preserved [them] from sordid contacts with the facts of [existence and] somehow made those facts vanish and the real world yield to a world of respectable, sentimental, lily-white ladies and gentlemen.

Yet here into their discreet parlors strode a hulking "self-conscious semi-hobo," "stripping off his clothes in half animal and half religious frenzy," exposing his "heroic nudity" for all to see.

After a moment of numb and embarrassed silence, the dams of reserve broke. "Bombast, egotism, vulgarity, and nonsense!" cried the Boston *Intelligencer*. "Impious libidinousness. . . . Ithyphallic audacity!" cried the more articulate *Christian Examiner*. "Here seem to be all sorts of leaves except fig leaves," murmured urbane Wendell Phillips. Charles Eliot Norton sat down at once and wrote to James Russell Lowell, vacationing in Germany:

The book is such, indeed, that one cannot leave it about for chance readers, and would be sorry to know that any woman had looked into it past the title-page.

Although Whitman did not see this letter—or one which Lowell wrote eight years later to an indignant clergyman bent on protecting the morals of Harvard College:

[*Leaves of Grass*] is a book I never looked into farther than to satisfy myself that it was a solemn humbug. . . . I am obliged to you . . . for calling to my attention a part of this book of which I knew nothing, and I will take care to keep it out of the way of the students.

—he got the general idea of New England's reaction from the reviews in the journals, and his natural suspicion of the Brahmins,

as well as his boastfully self-conscious barbarism, made him sure that the opposition to his writing was, in their polite circle, complete.

After the first blast of criticism, Whitman was sure that every bouquet from Boston had sharp thorns concealed in it. Carefully non-respectable himself, he proclaimed distrust of the respectability of the Cambridge poets. "The great *cramper* of the Bostonian," he wrote to Abby Price, "is . . . the old idea of *respectability*, how the rest do and what they will say." Carefully disreputable in appearance, he was contemptuous of their expensive, well-pressed trousers: "The cultivated people, the well-dressed people . . . always seem a trifle overdone—spoiled in the finish." He was suspicious of their education, and quite sure that they would use it to make a fool of him. "After all," he said, "the best things escape . . . the universities."

More than anything else, Whitman resented the success of the New England writers, success gained by following principles of politeness and art which were abhorrent to him; and he resented the wealth and ease which had come to them. It is perhaps too much to say that he was jealous of Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, and their brethren, who lived in what a later poet has called "furnished souls," but one can detect in his many utterances about them a certain naive envy, stemming, possibly, from a subconscious conviction of inferiority such as Thoreau felt when he moved in the sacred precincts of Emerson.

Longfellow, even though Whitman included him among the "mighty four" of American poetry, was also "essentially the scholar, translator, borrower—adapter and adopter," without any native flavor. His verses had "the air of finest . . . plush and rosewood." Whitman scoffed at the professor's "silver inkstand and scented satin paper." Longfellow was no "camerado," no "revolutionaire." And his companion "collegers," rich, polished, European, were no better. Although "chirpy" little Dr. Holmes preferred to keep quiet in public about *Leaves of Grass*, he nevertheless got short shrift from Walt: "A considerable man of

his kind . . . [but] alien to our ideals." As for Lowell: "When I look about my world he is not in sight."

Whittier, perhaps because he was poor and a Quaker Abolitionist and not a Harvard professor, merited more attention. Not all of it, of course, was favorable. "Whittier stands," said Walt,

for morality . . . filter'd through a Puritanical . . . filter . . . [He is] not universal and composite enough . . . for ideal Americanism [He is] not equi-large with the newer meanings of civilization.

Still, Whitman trusted Whittier's integrity and gave him a surprising word of approval: "He has too much respect for himself—for his Puritan conscience—[to commit himself to my work]." Whittier was also included among the "mighty four," but Walt was unquestionably right when he exclaimed, "We would not travel well harnessed to the same rig."

The tone of such remonstrances would suggest that Whitman was proof against any critical strictures from New England, but the frequency with which he uttered them, early and late, goes far to demonstrate the contrary fact. Deny it though he did, Whitman was addressing Boston and Cambridge, the capital of American letters and the citadel of "taste"; he wanted more than anything else in 1855 to be accepted as one of this noble brotherhood of bards. And actually—although, again, he would not admit it—he was accorded greater sympathy in Boston and Cambridge than anywhere else in the country during his lifetime. He was accepted with some perfectly natural reservations: after all, he was only a beginner, and a decidedly strange one; some of whose poems, said Dr. Holmes privately, "are among the most cynical instances of indecent exposure I recollect, outside of what is sold as obscene literature." Men of broader sophistication than Dr. Holmes were repelled by the "indecent" of *Leaves of Grass*, and many of them refused, as the men of Boston did not, to treat Whitman's art seriously. He, himself, of course, assisted the point of view of the Philistines by declaring that literature

is not art. When young Henry James advised him, "You must respect the public which you address; for it has taste if you have not," he replied, "James is only feathers to me." The tone of personal injury is obvious. He wanted to be accepted completely, tumultuously, affectionately. He wanted Lowell, Holmes, Whittier, and Longfellow to come trooping to Long Island, to take him by the hand, to kiss him tenderly, to be his comrades. When they persisted in being either silent or judicious, he was hurt.

Whitman was determined to discover antagonism in Boston, and he did, often where none was. His misguided friends encouraged the illusion. William Sloane Kennedy, writing from there in 1884, lamented, "I find a solid line of enemies to you." That was simply untrue. It was in Boston that Whitman found his first commercial publisher, in 1860; in the same year even *The Atlantic Monthly*, under the aegis of the presumably unfriendly Lowell, accepted, paid for, and printed his "Bardic Symbols." Eighteen years earlier, his "Angel of Tears" had appeared in *The Boston Miscellany*. It was in Boston that the first Whitman Club was proposed. It was from Boston that he heard, seven years before Kennedy's libel, the judgment of G. P. Lathrop: "I have not for a moment flagged in the belief that [Whitman] is our greatest poet, altogether, and beyond any measurement." One of the most ironical facts in Whitman's career is that the very "scholar swells" to whom he so violently objected were in large part responsible for his eventual fame.

One year after Kennedy wrote that Boston was full of enemies, a horse and carriage were presented to Whitman, purchased with New England money. Both Holmes and Whittier contributed. To be sure, both men were quick to deny that their assistance indicated approval of Whitman's poetry; it was simply a tribute to the humanity of one who had rendered service to the wounded soldiers during the Civil War. Whittier wrote to the editor of the *Transcript*:

I should be extremely sorry to have a simple act of humanity on

my part towards a suffering man regarded as sanctioning or excusing anything in his writings of an evil tendency. . . . Dr. Holmes . . . wishes me to say that his gift, like my own, was solely an act of kindness to a disabled author, implying no approval of his writings.

And Holmes wrote to Whittier, "I said to myself just what you said to yourself—he served well in the cause of humanity and I do not begrudge him a ten dollar bill." But their generosity, whatever its motive, belies Whitman's suspicion that the New England poets cherished a "radical aversion" to him.

In 1887 a Bostonian raised eight hundred dollars and sent it to Whitman so that he could build himself a cottage at Timber Creek. Forty-four Bostonians contributed, including William Dean Howells, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and Charles Eliot Norton. In the same year a Bostonian persuaded a Boston Congressman to attempt to secure a government pension for Walt. In 1881 he had been invited to Boston to deliver his Lincoln lecture before the St. Botolph Club. When he delivered it again, in New York, in 1887, Lowell and Norton made a special trip to hear it. William Ellery Channing addressed him in ringing verse:

Brave be thy heart, O sailor of the world! . . .
Ride in the heavenly boat and touch near stars.

New England was kind to him, generous to him, but in her own way—and so the old tale was repeated again and again and again: "The people are undemonstrative, exclusive, and their blood chills me." He could never forget that the "preachers of Boston," provoked by their "wormy anti-naturalism and asceticism," had once been responsible for the suppression of his *Leaves*.

But to return to 1855. If Boston, the stronghold of American song, failed to appreciate *Leaves of Grass*, there was still an appeal to the stronghold of American thought, Concord. That appeal did not fail. Suddenly there came to Brooklyn from the greatest man of them all, the famous acknowledgment of "the wonderful gift."

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I find it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed. . . . I find incomparable things said incomparably well. . . . I greet you at the beginning of a great career.

Here was appreciation—and what appreciation!—here was acceptance; here were respect and honor. Here was even a hope of manly love, since Emerson expressed a desire to meet the joyful purveyor of such “free and brave thought.” He did not question why Emerson had written; it was enough that he had.

Other people, however, even before they knew of the letter, began to explain *Leaves of Grass* as a rhythmical re-hash of Emersonian transcendentalism. “Mr. Whitman has been . . . milking the New England transcendentalists. Most of his poetry is an echo of Emerson . . . minus his music and his wit,” wrote Clarence Cook.

Thus began a battle that even today is waged with some fervor by students of American letters. Was Emerson Whitman’s master? Did *Leaves of Grass* sprout from *Nature* and *Essays* or is it rather, as Bliss Perry called it, “the reflection of an inner illumination, of a mystical sense of union with the world. . . a child of passion?” The answers are equivocal. In 1856 Whitman answered Emerson’s letter thus:

DEAR FRIEND AND MASTER . . . Others may line out the lines, build cities, work mines, break up farms; it is yours to have been the original true Captain who put to sea, intuitive, positive, rendering the first report. . . . Receive, dear Master, these statements and assurances through me, for all the young men, and for an earnest that we know none before you.

The intermediate question then arises: did Whitman simply dash this letter off in the heat of ecstatic gratitude, as the disciples insist, or did he actually mean what he said? Did he mean that he had read Emerson’s essays only after he received the letter of 1855, or that his original gift of the book was a token of gratitude for original inspiration?

In 1867, John Burroughs, "camerado," stoutly declared in his book, *Notes on Walt Whitman*, that Walt did not read a line of Emerson until after the publication of the *Leaves*. The testimony is somewhat weakened, however, by the circumstances that Walt himself was actually the author of that book. In 1887, Whitman declared to Kennedy:

The fact happens to be positively that I had *not* [read Emerson before 1855]. . . . I found and find everything in the common concrete . . . in the average. . . . This . . . is certainly not *Emersonian*.

Yet J. T. Trowbridge says that Whitman told him in 1860 that his acquaintance with Emerson's writings began in 1854, when he read particularly *Nature*, "Spiritual Laws," "The Over-Soul," and "Self-Reliance." "He freely admitted," continues Trowbridge,

that he could never have written his poems if he had not first "come to himself," and that Emerson helped him to "find himself". . . . He used this . . . expression: "I was simmering, simmering, simmering; Emerson brought me to a boil."

We have also the declaration of Moncure Conway, who visited Whitman at Emerson's request in September 1855 and wrote immediately: "He seemed very eager to hear . . . about you. . . . He had once seen you and heard you in the lecture room."

At any rate, certain indisputable facts remain: that in one of Whitman's early notebooks, written probably about 1850, when Emerson lectured in Brooklyn, appears a poem which begins:

And there, tall and slender, stands Ralph Waldo
Emerson, of New England, at the lecturer's
desk, lecturing;

that in 1847 Whitman published a short article, quoting from Emerson's "Spiritual Laws," in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*; and that his early commonplace books contain frequent sentences from Emerson's essays.

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Whether like Emerson or from Emerson, Whitman had received in some way—from books or from nature or from the sudden lighting of a tongue of fire—an intense emotional experience which transcended all his past and ordinary living, and his soul perceived its mystical and wondrous union with the over-soul. All things became on the instant good, beautiful, divine:

I hear and behold God in every object. . . .
I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the
 journey-work of the stars,
And a pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of
 sand, and the egg of a wren.

Ugliness and evil ceased to have any real existence. "Evil," said Emerson, "is merely privative, not absolute." And echo answered, "Wickedness is most likely the absence of freedom and health in the soul." Each placed sublime faith in nature; each insisted on living in the present; each relied on his intuition for final justification.

Emerson had issued a call for a truly American poet, a "kingly bard," who would

 smite the chords rudely and hard,
As with hammer or with mace;
That they may render back
Artful thunder, which conveys
Secrets of the solar track,
Sparks of the supersolar blaze.

Whitman clearly answered that call. The need to answer it had been a part of his transcendental illumination. Emerson had said, "The poets are . . . liberating gods. . . . They are free and they make free." Whitman agreed: "The great translator and joiner is the poet. He has the divine grammar of all tongues."

With these exalted convictions of cosmic unity, self-reliance, and the higher nobility of the poet, Whitman shared completely

—perhaps even absurdly—Emerson's buoyant and often superficial optimism. The Everlasting Yea reached the ultimate in him. Nobody save a jealously devoted Traubel or O'Connor, or Whitman himself, "gossiping in the candlelight of old age," can fail to detect a master's voice in the utterance of the Brooklyn Bard between 1847 and 1860.

There were differences between the two, of course. A casual glance at the 1855 Preface to *Leaves of Grass* is enough to indicate that part of Whitman's message which neither stemmed from Concord nor found any real acceptance there. Said the poet:

This is what you shall do . . . give alms to every one that asks . . . devote your income and labor to others . . . your very flesh shall be a great poem.

Emerson could not say these things. "They are not my poor," was his bland comment on charity. He was no philanthropist, no humanitarian. Nor could he listen with any sympathy to Whitman's "prophetical screams" about "alliance, en-masse, solidarity, ensemble, cohesion, adhesiveness." Such words meant little in Concord. And at the concluding sentence—"Your very *flesh* shall be a great poem"—Emerson and Whitman definitely parted company. The whole point of Emerson's transcendentalism was to escape the demands of the body; his emphasis was entirely upon the communion of the individual *soul* with the infinite. Whitman's transcendentalism must take into account the man of flesh; "I am the poet of the Body," he wrote. The exaltation of the objective was his, the praise of manly affections, the gospel of physical comradeship.

Emerson was not the only Orphic seer in Concord in 1855, of course. There were also Alcott and Thoreau. Emerson handed *Leaves of Grass* over to them, and they found in it the words of light and truth which they had so often heard. They also, naturally, found the same basis for disapproval. Alcott was the first to waver, for he could, says Mr. Canby, "sniff idealism even fur-

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ther than communities, and [he] was never put off by an ego." Within a few years he was writing to Whitman:

I write without compliment or reserve to the . . . American Columbus, whose sagacity has . . . sounded adventurously the sea of our Social Chaos and anchored his thought securely in soil of the newly discovered Atlantides about which Grecian Plato died dreaming. . . . Think of the progress out of the twilight since your star dawned upon our hazy horizon.

Alcott, like Whitman, depended on comradeship; he, more than any other of the Concordians, could understand Whitman's emphasis on manly affections, and he won the poet's immediate regard by addressing him as "Walt." Within a year after his introduction to *Leaves of Grass*, he went to Brooklyn to see the author—and he took Henry Thoreau with him, as well as a Mrs. Tyndall (whom Thoreau disliked), a "solid walrus of a woman spread full many a rood abroad." Whitman the person was "a revelation and a delight" to Alcott: "Walt, the satyr, the Bacchus, the very god Pan." He was slightly concerned about Whitman's egotism, "incapable of omitting, or suffering any one long to omit, noting Walt Whitman in his discourse," but that was possibly because he too wanted to monopolize the conversation. Said Whitman, "Yes, he talked, and I listened."

But it was Alcott's companion who interested Whitman most. He entered the house and went straight to Louisa Whitman's kitchen, where she was baking. There was so little fuss of "politeness" about him that it was natural to believe that a convert had been found to the great brotherhood. Whitman soon discovered, however, that he was a harder nut than he looked. During the visit of two hours, Thoreau said little; but that little seemed to belie the initial impression. The visitor gave a wry account to Harrison Blake:

I did not get far in conversation with him,—two more being present,—and among the few things which I chanced to say, I remember that

one was in answer to him as representing America, that I did not think much of America or of politics . . . which may have been somewhat of a damper to him.

No doubt it was, but actually Thoreau's sympathies were not far from Whitman's. Both men were rebels against restraint and convention, against the current shibboleth that dollars measure success; both cherished the dream of an individualism which would set the emotions free and enable one to scorn "respectability"; for both the chief issue was how to live, not how to get a living. On contemporary life they were in such complete agreement that Thoreau might easily have written into *Walden* this sentence from Whitman's Preface of 1855:

Beyond the independence of . . . a few clapboards around and shingles overhead on a lot of American soil . . . and the easy dollars that supply the year's plain clothing and meals, the melancholy . . . abandonment of such a great being as man is, to the toss and pallor of years of money-making . . . and all the loss of the bloom and odor of the earth . . . is the great fraud upon modern civilization.

Emerson said to Whitman, "Henry carried your book around Concord like a red flag—defiantly, challenging the plentiful current opposition there." Obviously, however, Thoreau could not subscribe to Whitman's society of lovers. He was as far from becoming a camerado as was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. He said, indeed:

He does not celebrate love at all. It is as if the beasts spoke. I think that men have not been ashamed of themselves without reason.

But he also said, with far more penetration and far broader human sympathy than Alcott and perhaps even Emerson:

As for its sensuality—and it may turn out to be less sensual than it appears—I do not so much wish that those parts were not written, as that men and women were so pure that they could read them without

harm. . . . Whitman can communicate to us no experience, and if we are shocked, whose experience is it that we are reminded of? On the whole, [*Leaves of Grass*] sounds to me very brave and American.

Thoreau was willing to accept Whitman, and he was not disturbed by the fact that they heard the rumbles of somewhat different drums. "He is one tribe, I am another, and we are not at war," he said. In the end Whitman doubted whether Thoreau might not rise in fame above Emerson in American thought and letters.

My prejudices . . . are all with Emerson: but Thoreau . . . looms up bigger and bigger. . . . One thing . . . keeps him very close to me . . . his lawlessness—his dissent—his going his own absolute road let hell blaze all it chooses.

"My prejudices are all with Emerson," he said, because, after all that relationship was almost beyond a doubt the most important thing in Whitman's career. He could forget what the Boston critics thought of his book, what Longfellow and Lowell and Whittier thought. It did not really matter what Alcott and Thoreau thought, except insofar as they were close to the fount of all wisdom. It was Emerson, Emerson alone, who counted. From the moment in July 1855 when the great letter arrived—probably from a moment long before that—his one aim was to please Emerson, to win him for a friend, a camerado. "I greet you at the beginning of a great career!" That was the most important message Whitman ever received.

Unfortunately, Whitman wanted the world to know of his triumph. He rushed the letter into print on October 10, 1855, in the *New York Daily Tribune*. He published it again in 1856, in the second edition of the *Leaves*; more than that, he extracted a sentence from it and printed it in gold letters on the spine of the volume. Why not? "I supposed the letter was meant to be blazoned," he explained later. "I regarded it as the chart of an emperor."

The world was interested, but it was also shocked. And Emerson was shocked. "Impossible!" he exclaimed when he heard of it:

Dear, dear! that was very wrong . . . indeed. That was a private letter. . . . Had I intended it for publication I should have enlarged the but very much.

When next he encouraged a person to read *Leaves of Grass*, he said that "the inside was worthy of attention even though it came from one capable of so misusing the cover." And his friend noted, "At no other time had I seen a cloud of dissatisfaction darken that serene countenance."

That was the first of various misunderstandings which interrupted the friendship of the two men; like all of them, it was brought about by Walt's clumsiness, his lack of tact, his inability to comprehend that he and Emerson were fundamentally of as different temperament as he and the Cambridge professors were. A man who admitted that "the most important formative element" in his education was a cartload of sentimental novels; who loved crowds and noisy gaiety, frequenting "races . . . auction rooms, weddings and clambakes"; who rode on Broadway coaches beside the driver, declaiming poetry; who proclaimed to the world that he was "turbulent, fleshy, sensual, eating, drinking and breeding," could have little of satisfactory companionship to offer an austere ascetic and idealist.

The misuse of his letter offended Emerson, but it did not alienate him completely. The two men met occasionally in New York, and when Whitman went to Boston in 1860, Emerson hastened to call on him. (According to F. B. Sanborn, Emerson could not invite Whitman to Concord because at that time no decent woman there—"neither Sophia Thoreau nor Mrs. Alcott nor . . . I am told, Mrs. Emerson"—would have permitted the author of *Leaves of Grass* to enter her house.) It was a cold day in March, but they walked on the Common for two hours, because Emerson had something important to say. He wanted to

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state certain objections to "The Children of Adam" poems which were about to appear in the new edition of the *Leaves*. As Whitman told the story to Horace Traubel:

Emerson's objections to the outcast passages . . . were neither moral nor literary, but were given with an eye to my worldly success. He . . . said the American people should know the book: yes, would know it but for its sex handicap. . . . he did not see that if I . . . cut sex out I might just as well . . . cut everything out.

He stated the case—"all that could be said"—and then demanded, "What have you to say to such things?" Whitman answered, "Only that while I can't answer them all, I feel more settled than ever to adhere to my own theory and exemplify it." There was no more said and they went off to the American House to dinner.

But Emerson's criticism rankled; and as the years passed, a strain was placed on the loyalties of both by gossiping friends and enemies. T. W. Higginson reported, for example, that Emerson, "in my hearing," objected to Whitman's "proclamations of utter nudity" as "priapism." It is difficult, however, to believe that Emerson could have made this statement and remained Whitman's friend and supporter in the years that followed; but he did remain so. During the Civil War he was responsible for sending large amounts of money to Washington to assist Whitman in his work among the wounded. In 1862, at Whitman's request, he wrote letters of recommendation for him to Charles Sumner, Salmon P. Chase, and Seward. In 1863 there were more letters. In 1868, again at Whitman's request, he wrote to James T. Fields, urging acceptance for *The Atlantic Monthly* of an essay by the poet. In the same year he was advising Emma Lazarus to read *Leaves of Grass*. And in 1869 he included Whitman in the series of "Mr. Emerson's Readings in Prose and Verse from His Favorite Authors" in Concord.

It is very possible that Whitman rose in Emerson's regard when he refused to expurgate his book in 1860. That refusal proved him a man of principle, even though the principle might

be a foolish one; he was really only following Emerson's advice: "Shun expurgated editions of any one, even Aphra Bene or Francois Villon."

Whatever Emerson's real attitude toward Whitman may have been after 1870, Whitman did not help matters. In his garrulous old age, he began to question Emerson's sincerity as he had questioned the sincerity of the Cambridge professors. He remembered that *Parnassus* had appeared in 1875 without a Leaf of Grass in it. He announced to an early biographer, "I never cared so much for E.'s writings, prose or poems." He read them over again with "a feeling that the book is a little, just a little, antique." He wrote a short criticism, which is in many respects sound, but which was conceived in malice:

These pages are perhaps too perfect. . . . Though the author has much to say of freedom and wildness and simplicity and spontaneity, no performance was ever more based on artificial scholarships and decorums at third or fourth removes, (he calls it culture). . . . Cold and bloodless intellectuality dominates him. . . . His final influence is to make his students cease to worship anything—almost cease to believe in anything, outside of themselves. . . . [He will not be sought] when one needs the impalpably soothing and vitalizing influences of abysmic Nature.

The real excuse for the essay, however, was that it provided him an opportunity to deny yet once again that Emerson was his master.

Whitman found easily enough the "differences" he was looking for. Why did he look for them? Because he felt that he had been snubbed as a person. When the letter of 1855 arrived, he apparently expected to receive an adulatory message from Emerson every day thereafter. When none came, he was hurt. The critics thrust their knives into him and then rubbed salt in the wounds; still no word came. Walt was puzzled, angry, offended—as a child is. "It is to be remembered," he said, "that for years there I was alone, isolated, friendless—the burden, like the

handle of the pitcher, all on one side." He did not stop to think that Emerson's letter indicated merely a friendly interest—a friendly interest of a purely platonic nature, moreover—in a young writer of unusual ability. Whitman was too much an egoist to see that. If he wanted to be "pals" with Emerson—to use a word that he surely would have used had he known it—he saw no reason why that was not possible. Emerson nervously inquired, "Mr. Whitman, your love is very comprehensive. . . . Don't you fear now and then that your freedom, your ease, your nonchalance . . . may be misunderstood?" That was too subtle for Walt. Besides, that "Mr. Whitman" constituted a snub. He wanted to be called "Walt" as Thoreau was called "Henry." Once or twice Emerson got as far as to drop the "Mr." but, said Whitman, "he looked a bit uncertain after he had done so as if possibly he might have taken too much liberty."

They were all . . . much alike—Emerson, Alcott, Thoreau . . . they all had the same manner—a sort of aloofness: as though they meant me to see they were willing to come only so far: that coming an inch beyond that would mean disaster to us all. . . . It [was] . . . an acquirement: [and] because of it they . . . Emerson himself . . . compare unfavorably with the urchins on the street.

So, in his declining years, after Emerson was long dead, the foolish, vain, envious, uncomprehending, childish old man prattled on, craving above all things love—love—love. He thought constantly about Emerson, and asked himself—along with everybody else—the same questions he had asked in the hospitals during the war:

How would all this have looked to Emerson,—how would he be affected . . . how would he act, feel, seem, under these conditions? Would he keep that calm and sweet exterior?

For Whitman loved Emerson—and when he discovered that Emerson had no intention of becoming his camerado, after the

fashion of Traubel, Harned, and Peter Doyle, he was piqued. The personal, the emotional: they provided the only standards by which Whitman could judge any human relationship. But there was no physiological side to transcendental affection. If Whitman read Thoreau and Emerson on the subject of friendship, he either did not understand a word they wrote, or else he thought they were joking. He did not perceive that Emerson was the exact prototype of the live-oak he saw in Louisiana; and that all his own relationship to the sage, the explanation of all his puzzlement and hurt, were expressed better than anywhere else in his own lines:

All alone stood it . . .

Without any companion it grew there . . .

And its look . . . unbending . . . made me think of myself . . .

I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves,

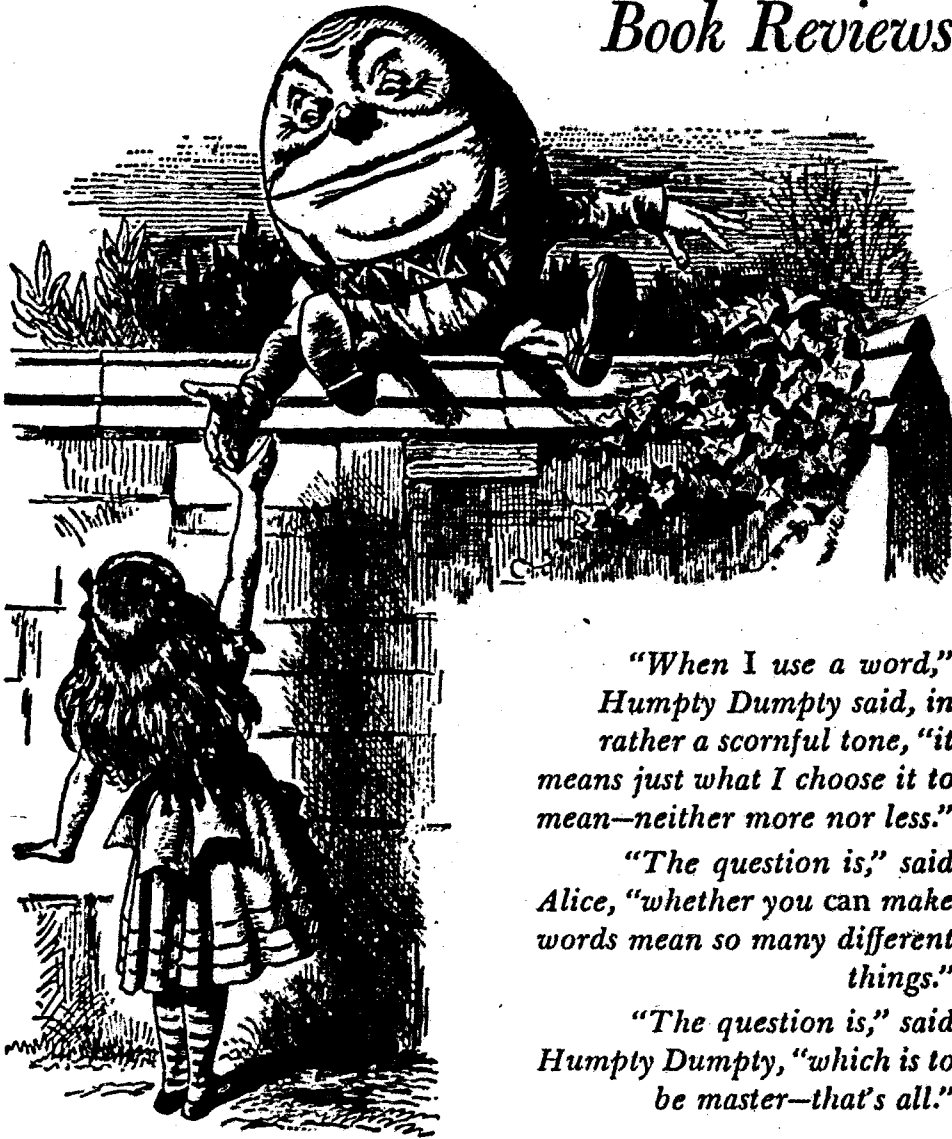
standing alone there, without its friend, its

lover near—for I knew I could not;

And I broke off a twig . . .

And brought it away.

Book Reviews



*"When I use a word,"
Humpty Dumpty said, in
rather a scornful tone, "it
means just what I choose it to
mean—neither more nor less."*

*"The question is," said
Alice, "whether you can make
words mean so many different
things."*

*"The question is," said
Humpty Dumpty, "which is to
be master—that's all."*

GRAMMARIAN'S RENASCENCE

American English in Its Cultural Setting, by Donald J. Lloyd and Harry R. Warfel. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956. 586 pp. \$6.00.
Patterns of English, by Paul Roberts. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1956. 320 pp. \$3.25.

SINCE the early Thirties—and particularly since World War II—the exhaustive investigations of linguistic scientists into the nature

and functions of American English have fed ammunition and hope to the liberal cause of students and teachers of our language. The ammunition came piecemeal in the form of scholarly support for the *descriptive* grammarians who held that the traditional *prescriptive*, Latin-oriented approach to our language was misleading, unrealistic, and stifling. The hope was that from the research carried on at language study centers and by individual scholars throughout the country a new system would evolve—a system which, because it derived entirely from scientific analysis of what our language is and how it works, would enable teacher, student, and general public alike to understand and utilize grammar as a functional property of the language, rather than, as has been usual in the past, the other way around.

With the publication of Donald J. Lloyd and Harry R. Warfel's *American English in Its Cultural Setting* and Paul Roberts' *Patterns of English*, a crisis in the achievement of that hope has been met and passed. The writers of these books are not linguistic scientists. They are professors of English who have carefully digested and systematized the findings of linguistic science. Their books are meant not for the specialist but for the student in high school or college and for the general reader as well. They have brought the new look in American linguistics into the marketplace, where, inevitably, the test of its validity and its value must be made.

The innovations made manifest in these books can be generalized in two observations: first, that American English derives its special vitality largely from its inventiveness and flexibility *in use*; and, second, that meaning and order within this general flexibility depend upon structural patterns and a system of signals which introduce and relate them.

The first of these observations, a contribution chiefly of the semanticists, has already had considerable revolutionary effect on the concept of "good" English in America. Since it focuses on the social and practical nature of communication, it features pragmatic evaluations of language in action and identifies "correct" usage with whatever utterance is on a specific occasion and for a specific purpose the most appropriate and effective. To follow this view is to develop a versatility in usage commensurate not with a static, generalized decalogue of diction but with the range of occasions for which we need to use language effectively. The study of language, then, becomes a highly relative matter, concerned with what is acceptable usage rather

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than what we have been told arbitrarily (or even logically) *should be* acceptable. Effective expression may be illuminated by a knowledge of what has been appropriate in the past, but it is not necessarily consistent with that knowledge. American English, particularly as it operates through the various levels of usage active in our culture, will not submit to any restrictions that deny its dynamic need to change and its users' right to adapt it to individual purpose.

This concept has already affected our approach to language. The newer editions of grammars and writer's handbooks demonstrate the gradual accession of academic authority to this view, and the flurry in recent years of popular magazine articles and books on the subject, however they may distort the theory, indicates the general interest of the public in democratic standards of diction and usage. Perhaps the surest sign of currency is the new network television program, "The Last Word," on which moderator Dr. Bergen Evans (elsewhere glorified as the authority who supervises the questions that pay contestants up to \$64,000) personifies, along with a panel of articulate experts, the legitimacy of divided usage.

The first of our general observations, then, although relatively new, is being absorbed and applied in American English. For the system of structures and patterns which serve all users of the language as common ground for meaning, however, there has been until now no effective means of reaching beyond the linguistic scientist and those professionally interested in the fragmentary and esoteric records of his research. Because they introduce an orderly description of the structure of American English in terms that can be taught, understood, and utilized by anyone sensitive to his language, *American English in Its Cultural Setting* and *Patterns of English* are genuine milestones in our linguistic progress. Through inductive analysis of basic sentence patterns they blueprint the structural detail of our language as it actually exists and functions. By contrast, we can see that traditional grammar has given us, at best, a somewhat unrealistic picture of modern English—an architect's drawing before construction begins, always idealized and somehow different than the structure we know and live with when the plan has materialized.

To discuss the revelations of structural linguistics here without reproducing the whole complicated system would be difficult and probably vain. There can be no simple formula for anything as complex as language, and it should be observed at once that the methods set forth in these books do not simplify the language. In-

deed, they raise an almost unending series of new complexities. But because they offer a system of analysis which is entirely consistent with the language we use, they make sense and invite application in a way that traditional grammar never has. To put it another way, they allow us to study our language as a living image in a mirror rather than as a posed representation in a tintype.

A central fact in structural linguistics is that we don't derive a pattern of expression from the meaning we wish to convey. We derive the meaning from the pattern. From this point of departure the whole analysis of structures in English follows. Let's try one sample of the technique:

The stable elements of English are the relatively few so-called "structure words," which, for the sake of simplicity here, we can identify as those which do not function as any one of the four great word-classes, or as Roberts refers to them, "form classes," i.e. nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. So essential is the effect of these structure words in signalling meaning that we invest meaning in their constructions even when the other words are themselves meaningless. Consider this sentence from *Patterns of English*:

When the sloopy wamtupper had eviptally loofed the strambix,
the rallopash scomed up his fibbles and skorked.

Nonsense? Not altogether. We actually know a good deal about and from this sentence, and, as Roberts points out, we recognize and "understand" all the form classes without recourse to any knowledge outside the sentence itself. Lloyd and Warfel make the same point about the vital systems of signalling meaning within the structure of the sentence by reproducing Lewis Carroll's familiar verses from "Jabberwocky." And anyone who has ever strained for comprehension while listening to a double-talk artist, knowing that there is no meaning intended but unable to resist the compulsion to make meaning, has a personal illustration. Roberts completes his demonstration by reversing the process in a sentence that uses real words for the form classes and nonsense syllables for the structure words:

Gork dol beautiful lady splage finally found bine purse, goop
minister wrote flio ting words queel smiled.

But a sampling of method, however intriguing, will not suffice. The

system must be encountered whole in one, or preferably both, of these challenging books.

Although the authors draw on the same sources and present comparable systems, the two volumes are far from identical. Individually each is complete and self-contained, but together they are complementary and double-barreled. One is aimed broadly at the general adult reader and the college student, while the other, prefaced by a forty-page teacher's guide, is written specifically for use in the high-school classroom.

American English in Its Cultural Setting is intended, in the words of its preface, as "a comprehensive display of English in relation to the society that uses it, in relation to language learning, and in relation to the individual whose force in society and whose very sense of well-being is tied to his understanding of English and the effectiveness of his reading and writing." Professors Lloyd and Warfel "have tried to bring the commonplaces of advanced study of language within the range of any person with the equivalent of a high-school education," and in the non-technical discussions of the history, sociology, and responsibilities of language that precede and follow their structural analysis of English, they have succeeded admirably. Although the organization of this general material is rather hectic, the writing is lively and clear, proceeding often through appropriate and imaginative analogies that strip away popular misconceptions about language in a most direct and effective manner.

The heart of the volume, however, is its exposition of English structure. This is the crucial concern of the book, and it's all there: the revelation, the insight, the consistency, the reality—the anatomy of English. And yet, perhaps because of the somewhat disjointed arrangement of parts or the struggle between the new linguistic terminology and the conventional glossary of grammar, perhaps because of the bulk and redundancy of examples in the text or the lack of summary plateaus where the reader-initiate can rest and catch his breath—perhaps because of all these things, Lloyd and Warfel's exposition is not fully satisfactory—however revealing, valid, and exciting. The reader who encounters his first taste of structural linguistics in *American English in Its Cultural Setting* is apt to respond as did a certain jazz musician to the highly advanced and experimental musical concepts of the jazz pianist and teacher, Lennie Tristano. The musician sat absorbed in concentration through a whole series of Tristano's recordings. After the last record, he stared

off into a corner of the room. "Man," he said, finally, "he's got a thing goin', man. But, it's not the *thing*."

Paul Roberts' *Patterns of English*, on the other hand, has the advantage of a narrower purpose and a more specific audience. As a tool for introducing the structural analysis of English to the student, it could hardly be better fashioned—at least at this initial stage of the new era in language study. It is written in a purposeful but bright style, and it offers frequent review and summary sections to help the student consolidate one set of basic observations before he plunges into the increasing complexities of the next. Its exercises are imaginative and generous. The sequence of sections follows the expanding application of principles logically and coherently. For the classroom and probably, because of its limited coverage and tight rein on its subject, for any reader interested in its revelations, it is an excellent introduction.

These books will be controversial, to be sure. Any innovation incites controversy. But the sensible approach to the language they present to the public is bound to affect the teaching and the learning of English and to a considerable extent the general cultural awareness of our language, and through it, of ourselves. There will be many similar books to follow. The concepts and methods must now be tested and matured.

In a way, we have turned a cultural corner that architecture rounded some years ago. We have discovered that, like our buildings, our language demands utility first of all, that its forms are determined by its functions. With the same raw materials that we have been using for generations, we can now conceive and utilize the structural relationships between our language and our lives.

EDWARD LUEDERS

The Art of Sculpture, by Herbert Read, New York: Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series XXXV, 1956. 152 pp. \$7.50.

THIS HANDSOME BOOK, in its slip cover of blue, quarto format, printed in large clear type on paper of first quality and illustrated with 224 gravure plates of sculpture from ancient times to the present (many of the photographs having been expressly taken for the volume by the British photographer, F. L. Kenett), looks very promising indeed to the reader.

In the preface to the text, Sir Herbert Read purposes to give an

aesthetic of the Art of Sculpture. He tells us that the first outline of this book was delivered as the Fierens Fine Art Lectures at the University of Hull, in the 1951-52 session, but upon being invited to give the Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art he expanded the previous four to six lectures, as he felt he had not adequately covered the subject. Thus these six lectures form the basis of the text of *The Art of Sculpture*. Bearing the titles: I. The Monument and the Amulet, II. The Image of Man, III. The Discovery of Space, IV. The Realization of Mass, V. The Illusion of Movement, and VI. The Impact of Light, these lectures reflect the author's diligent efforts to rescue the discipline of aesthetics from the vicissitudes it has suffered, viz., of having been turned into almost everything lately, with emphasis on scientific trends, except an attempt to understand the nature and significance of a work of art. The aestheticians, many of them eloquent theorists, have ranged widely in treacherous fields, and Sir Herbert Read, who writes on the visual arts, literature, and education, is no exception. The titles alone of some of his previous books confirm his wide interests: *The Meaning of Art*, *Education through Art*, *The Grass Roots of Art*, *the Philosophy of Modern Art*, *Art and Society*, *Art and Industry*, *the Nature of Literature*, and *This Way, Delight*, a recent collection of selected readings of modern poets, for children. Professor of Fine Art at Edinburgh University, President of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, and of the Society of Education in Art, and associated with the Victoria and Albert Museum, Sir Herbert, although pre-eminently an aesthetician, must certainly be considered an Art Authority, also.

And yet, as good as the photographs are; as numerous and scholarly the footnotes; the references to John Ruskin, Hegel, Worringer, and the currently much-quoted Simone Weil; the grand generalizations; in spite of the delicate sensitivity, the ornamental and sometimes abstruse language—all of these may not compensate a reader for the lack of real insight and the limited understanding he will find in *The Art of Sculpture*. As a sculptor I am obliged to question and disagree with some of its claims, and be suspicious of many of its statements, such as, "The separation of the arts in our modern industrial civilization is inevitable and consequently such arts as sculpture and painting must evolve their own aesthetics."—or—"An awareness of the essential nature of the art of sculpture has never until our own time been so clearly held and so clearly expressed." This statement is never substantiated. And the graphic character of

contemporary sculpture, especially wire-sculpture, is never explained. Also the rather unique notions about the origin of the art of sculpture seem to stem from misconceptions; at any rate they are not in conformity with the findings of modern archeology. The author suffers from the same limitation so many popularizers of the arts are subject to—the utter lack of any personal, practical experience in the field of art.

JOHN TATSCHL



American Heritage. The Magazine of History. Sponsored by American Association for State & Local History and Society of American Historians. New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., published every two months. Single copies \$2.95, annual subscription \$12.00.

PRESENT SUBSCRIBERS in good standing: 40,000. Subscribers required to break even: 60,000.

Such were the terms employed by Publisher James Parton to hopeful founding members about to offer the first issue of the renovated *American Heritage* magazine to the public. Now, after little more than two years of publication, pleased readers were informed that the Heritage is sustained by more than 185,000 subscriptions. Here are all the marks of a success story.

Admittedly, these figures do not yet prove that American history of itself is popular reading. They do indicate by now, however, that history has allure when presented in a colorful format, understandably written, with an underlying purpose of general interest. The practical appeal of this neat, hard-backed magazine cuts loose from the academic trend by offering history in a manner which touches the self-esteem of the reader, making of him an integral product, active participator and undertaker of his past in America. All that this implies is carefully produced with a keen sense for historicity under the surveillance of Editor Bruce Catton.

The format has the modern eye-appeal of *Life* or *Time*; Parton has been a staff member of both. The illustrations are extravagant and mostly in color. Old and new prints, paintings, photographs, and maps have been borrowed from museums and private collectors to elaborate the host of objects and persons enhancing the articles. Countless oddments—a carved panel from Lincoln's private railroad car, an Apache chief's autobiography painted on skin, patent drawings, rebuses, paintings both primitive and professional, Victorian printers' bric-a-brac—all sum up our ancestors in a delightfully intimate way.

The previous *American Heritage* was published by Earle Newton of the Vermont Historical Society. Sponsored by the American Association for State and Local History and the Society of American Historians, the present editors diverge most markedly in that they have barred all advertising. Perhaps, there are fewer articles devoted to the folklore category and, as yet, no one issue has been dedicated to a particular region in the same manner that the older *Heritage* sponsored Texas, the Mohawk Country, or the Susquehanna River. Rather, the editors have solicited a wide variety of subjects of broad interest in deference to Catton's conviction that history is the story of the people. And to make this story comprehensible, he admonishes historians to borrow the art of the written word from the novelist.

The emphasis is: What did men *do* there? Not all these activities can be covered within six limited magazines per year but new slants and observations are made by specialized authors—most of them classifiable as professional historians.

As listed in *Heritage* thus far, the contents of our American past read like an adventurous novel: Armies and army life, personalities, songs, lovers, cities, historic literature, ship-lore, architecture as well as architects, the far West and buffalo hunts, settlers, early American gadgets, presidents, policy makers, outlaws, and valentines. For lovers of swindlers is the fabulous diamond fraud sleuthed by Clarence King in 1872. A rascally pair had thoroughly convinced countless gullible people back East, including Charles Tiffany of New York and Baron Ferdinand Rothschild of London, that a mountain located somewhere in Utah was covered with already cut, precious gems. Historian Dorothy Bobbe sheds light on the sober personality of Alexander Hamilton in her article describing his boyhood in the West Indies. Anthropologist Oliver La Farge thoughtfully examines the historically established myths with which Europeans veiled the

American Indian. There is an eye-witness account of the hanging of John Brown. There are many stories about the sea and ships.

Mr. Catton believes this seeming hodgepodge reveals itself to us in patterns, sometimes apparent and sometimes beyond us. "The final truth of history is an evasive and many sided thing. It is what really happened, and it is what men have thought happened; it is what men did, and the emotions that moved them while they were doing it; it is the hard facts that lie under the gloss of romance, and it is also the gloss itself—for the act of dreaming can be as important as the thing dreamed of. It is infinitely complex, a house of many mansions, something that never quite becomes fixed."

Taking the matter of ships and sea, no American is ever very far removed from them. Except for the full-blooded Indians, Catton says, all of us came here and carry with us a racial memory of the wonder and peril of the empty sea. This has given rise in Americans to the feeling that all certitude has been left behind and that what lies ahead is incredible wonder and the bright chance of a new world. Because of these circumstances we still worship success and have a deep horror of failure. We have not yet convinced ourselves that failure can be anything but personal. Dreams not only come true, they must come true if the dreamer has the right stuff in him. According to Catton, one of the by-products of this optimism is that Americans can never be wholly objective about war.

The over-all concept involves the frontier thesis contemplated by Frederick Jackson Turner and his followers since the turn of the century but, admirably, Bruce Catton has taken steps to bring this history to the American public more on its own terms. What is history, anyway—a recital of names and dates with which we might analyze economic forces and political trends, or a simple attempt to introduce the past to the present in understandable human terms? The answer, he considers, is probably both, but it must be remarked that professionals have left the second field wide open and that amateurs occasionally come in and do a job that might otherwise be ignored altogether.

WARD ALAN MINGE

Chapman's Homer, edited by Allardyce Nicoll. New York: Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series XLI, 1956. 2 vols., 740 pp. \$10.00.

CHAPMAN'S HOMER speaks for itself, but the new edition put out by Mr. Nicoll for Pantheon rejoices the eyes as well as the mind. It is

beautifully designed and beautifully printed, as well as being beautifully thought out. The introduction, notes, commentaries, and glossaries are of interest to the layman and adequate for the scholar, and the two volumes include the lesser Homeric, and Chapman's dedication poems. All the difficulties of Chapman's spelling and punctuation have been dealt with so as to give the least trouble to the reader. The essentially modern dress makes the poem more readable and offers fewer distractions.

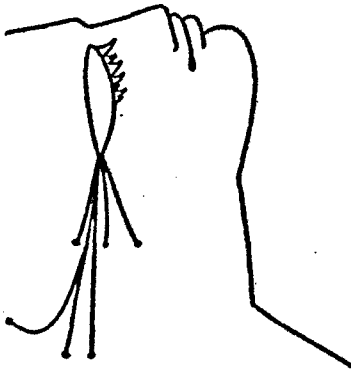
While delighting in the book one cannot help wishing what Chapman (who said of an earlier edition, "only the extreame false printing troubles my conscience") would feel "On First Looking into [this] Chapman's Homer."

VIRGINIA MANIERRE

The Journals of Jean Cocteau, edited and translated with an introduction by Wallace Fowlie. New York: Criterion Books, 1956. 250 pp. \$6.00.

THE OCCASION of Jean Cocteau's election to the French Academy (1955) has meant an increase of interest in his work, in this country. Actually, this kind of interest most concerns publishers and their use of such events to provide "times" for concern with the writing of this or that man. This is a perfectly reasonable exploitation of a circumstance perhaps, but it can often lead to hasty thinking, editing, translating—and so on. The occasion forgotten, the book shows its gaps and awkwardnesses; and ends by disobliging the very man it assertedly hoped to honor.

The present book is an "occasion" book. Mr. Fowlie's introduction is twenty-nine pages long almost in defense of his uneasiness. He was given a sizable task, clearly. I am by no means as familiar with the material as he must be; but I am aware that it must have been very difficult to select things out of it—it does not break open into pieces, but is a texture of attention, endlessly reforming. At times Mr. Fowlie can only shout his goodwill ("Membership in the Académie Française will hardly slow him [Cocteau] down!"). But his translation is readable, and given his word—"A fairly literal translation seemed often to serve Cocteau better than an effort to recast the original in order to find a style and phrasing more native to English . . ."—we will have to trust him, and also thank him, because no one has as yet done more, or as much.



JEAN COCTEAU

THIS BRINGS us, then, to Cocteau—not fatuously, please, because I have taken pains, or have tried to, to separate him from his translator, and particularly, from the “occasion” behind the translator—forever to be suspected. As Mr. Fowlie suggests (p.3), Jean Cocteau is not a widely read writer, although many people know his name, and sense a half-glamour in it, for reasons they themselves continue to produce. He has, however, been recognized by his contemporaries for many years. The first sections of the book describe his relationships with Satie, Max Jacob, Stravinsky, Raymond Radiguet, Pablo Picasso, Maritain, Proust, Diaghilev, Appollinaire. In the American context, Ezra Pound mentions him several times in *Guide To Kulchur*, once as follows: “To establish some table of values as among men I have seen and talked with . . . Gaudier had and Cocteau has genius . . . By genius I mean an inevitable swiftness and rightness in a given field. The trouvaille. The direct simplicity in seizing the effective means.”

What is his writing like, then? I would like to know too. I have seen three of his movies, including *Beauty and The Beast*; know nothing of his poetry; read *Opium* when younger with great care (and wonder—it was not at all what I expected, and was very strictly written); and began *Thomas the Imposter* (remembering the kaleidoscoping of short scene-images, with which it begins); and read with what French I had, *Journal d'un Inconnu*, what I could of it—excited to find the mind so capable of balance and continuance. Cocteau writes:

On Words

I attach no importance to what people call style and that by which they think they recognize a writer. I want to be recognized by my ideas, or better, by my bearing. I make every effort to be heard as briefly as possible. I have noticed, when a story does captivate the reader's mind, that he was reading too fast, and gliding down the slope. That is why, in the book, I skirt around the writing which forces me not to glide in a straight line, but to start over again, to reread the sentences in order not to lose the thread.

When I read a book, I marvel at the number of words I find in it and I

dream of using them. I note them down. But in my work it is impossible. I limit myself to my own vocabulary. I cannot go beyond it, and it is so restricted that the work becomes a puzzle.

I wonder, at each line, whether I shall go on, whether the combination of the few words I use, always the same ones, will not end up by blocking the way and forcing me to silence. It would be beneficial for everyone, but words are like figures or letters in the alphabet. They are able to reorganize differently and perpetually at the bottom of the kaleidoscope.

I said I was jealous of the words of other writers. It is because they are not mine. Each writer has a bag of them, as in a lotto set, with which he has to win. Except for the style I dislike—Flaubert is the leading example—too rich in words—the style I like, Montaigne, Racine, Chateaubriand, Stendhal, does not spend too many words. It would take no time to count them . . .

The sections into which the book is divided show a preoccupation with personalities, not Cocteau's nor perhaps even Mr. Fowlie's, obliged as he was by the concerns evident. Sections I (Childhood and Early Influences) and III (Testimonials) contain the bulk of it; and Sections II (The Writer's Character) and VI (Aesthetics) seem the most purposefully free, and useful. But what use we are intent upon, is what we must of course decide.

A use of words is a definition of words. This is not new, but worth, like they say, the repeating, always. The structure of language is at stake, so to speak.

There is also the question of "authorities," concerning which Robert Duncan, an American poet who has read Cocteau's work with care, writes:

. . . What Joyce sees as "conscience" because he is guilt and sin centered, Pound sees as sensibility or Ibsen sees as awareness or Dante sees as Grace. Cocteau in *Journal d'un Inconnu* voices an aspect of the problem. It is here in the terms of the economy of fame. The work, as it is realized, is a flowering; and like all flowerings—the author here no more intending than a plant intends—an attraction; its emanations draw and repel, its colors exhibit or conceal. No matter! a host arrives, or hosts depart, of all sorts. This clustering about an emanation is its fame in which sometimes the plant can survive; thru which at times the plant comes even to flourish or, as in the relation of certain plants thru their flowerings with bees, to depend; or it may perish. All artists draw a sap out of solitude. The work of art flowers forth, ripens, and falls away from a vitality drawn out of a privacy, a secret source of the artist in the fields of time and space . . .

The relation of a poem to what the world calls events is similar. The "world" cannot view a poem as an event in itself, and seeks to translate as if the poem were referring to "real life". Yet for the poet, the reality of time and space which is realized in making, in a poem, is the real life. [From an unpublished *Notebook*.]

The attempt to wrench segments from any completed work (happily called a *book*), to reassort, re-time, re-affix, etc.,—is not easily defensible. Most reasonably, it would be the act of the man who wrote the book or books. In this case, it is not. In twenty years there have been five books by Cocteau published; two were translated by the British poet and playwright, Ronald Duncan, one by the British novelist, Rosamond Lehmann. The fourth is a retranslation of the same novel translated by Miss Lehmann (no translator given), published in this country. And the fifth is the present book. I think we had better go back, and start over.

ROBERT CREELEY

New England Saints, by Austin Warren. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1956. 192 pp. \$3.75.

The Scientific Thought of Henry Adams, by Henry Wasser. Thessaloniki: privately printed, 1956. 127 pp.

"THE CHARACTERISTICS of the New England character and mind have remained conspicuously constant from the seventeenth century to the present," Austin Warren begins a chapter on Puritan poets. That "character is lean and angular, firm and steadfast but ungracious." In his *New England Saints*, Warren portrays individual New Englanders from Anne Bradstreet (that "Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America") to the arch-anti-romanticist Irving Babbitt—and so illuminates their angular acting out of passionately held conviction that their works and ideas, as well, emerge the clearer in context. Warren starts his discussion of Emerson, for example, with the problem of why the resignation from "hieratic tenure," why the discontent with preaching to audiences only passively receptive to what after all they took for granted from a preacher (and resentful if he sought new ways to conceive and express man's responsibility); Warren's Emerson emerges as "itinerant prophet" who could win his fellow townsmen's admiration for working "as hard and honestly as they." Warren's Henry James Sr., similarly, acting out his rejection of mere moralism by separating himself " 'but by a pane of glass . . . from the general human condition he was so devoutly concerned with,' " is in his lonely course the more sternly dedicated to the proposition that "I live only in my race, and consequently *will* to surrender myself to my fellows, and lose myself in the Lord." And Warren's Charles Eliot Norton, though his slight hopes for American democracy lie only in American universities which are somehow to accomplish the

miraculous, and though his own thinking stops "at the first wind," still is the "true gentleman" who remembers that he himself "is not 'self-made,' that all he is he owes," and that one cannot expect such steadfast "humility" from "those who 'rise.'"

One could wish that Warren might have classified Henry Adams too as a New England "saint," and so given him like treatment. Henry Wasser's *The Scientific Thought of Henry Adams* is a book remarkable in that it was apparently written without reference to the extensive Adams literature of the last ten years and yet manages to suggest what even W. H. Jordy apparently overlooked: that Adams resorted to science not for the sake of measurement or precision but for a language in which to put persuasively his devastating concepts of degradation. As Emerson in the ministry, so Adams in even the soberest of New England journalism had discovered that audiences can nod sage agreement and then casually forget the words of those they naturally expect to try to frighten them. If Wasser could have put his lucid account of Adams' "second law of thermodynamics" into social context, could have shown that Adams was no mere historian of decline but an "itinerant prophet" calling for ever new cores of being to replace those of his great-grandfather's touchstones which has been dissipated, his would indeed be an account of Adams' "science" which would reflect Adams' thought. But perhaps to ask so much of Wasser is to ask that he join to his own clear powers of analysis, the imagination of a Warren.

ROBERT BUNKER

The Persimmon Tree: New Pastoral and Lyrical Poems, by Peter Viereck. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956. 80 pp. \$3.00.

HERE IS THE familiar-by-now difficulty: poems that make great demands on our attention (consequently our time) and on a way of responding to language that we have lost facility in giving. Some readers will call it "obscure poetry," since to first glances its language is tortured, its meaning hidden. Other readers will take an interest in its puzzle aspect, and go far beyond Viereck's slight and simple foot-noting. The primary trouble is its silence, spread black on white. Someone with a good voice and intelligence for its subtle kind of rhetoric should read it aloud to us in a quiet room, over and over until we respond to its kind of teasing of mind and feeling. Then we might achieve the ancient poetic gestalt inhibited in us by the point-

blank hammering and over-simplification of contemporary daily language. What is wrong with us is suggested by Viereck in "At the River Charles". We

. . . would abscond to the safe silence
That hides in the heart of the traffic bustle,
The cowardice of action, action.

Always these poems tease us to reflection, often to paradox, frequently to irony. They force us to be qualitative, even about superficially simple sense impressions. They allude to history, and far place, and myth. Sometimes they are prefaced by epigraphs. They unashamedly embrace tradition, admitting to being pastoral and lyrical, ode, paean, threnode. They are full of rhyme, even to the point of making difficult, strained rhyme carry a theme (love) that is counter to one's associations with the rhyme sound, as in "III. Threnode."

Bitter your cheek-lines, and I love you bitter.
No words intenser stare than rhyme with "bitter."
No tone more musical than "bitterness."

Almost unbearably there follow "skitter," "fritter," "litter," "splitter," "fitter," "quit her," and so on, but they are so outrageously ironic that they succeed.

The point is that this poetry almost determinedly uses tradition. It is aristocratic, urbane, scholarly. It tempts rebellion by the free verse or Philistine snob in us, or the feeling that life cannot be contained at all in such discipline. We get that piling up of paradoxical juxtapositions of words that has become so familiar in modern poetry, until we want to cry "tour de force." In the "ode" part of "To Womanly Beauty in Motion," we get within three lines "mobile pause," "indolent cascades," "frieze of marble quicksand," and "gentleness of storm." We begin to feel that this is the poetry of intellect, the inevitable outcome of the philosophical, bookish man turned to play with words. If we know of Viereck's support, in his prose works, of a new conservatism, and of his dislike for democratic leveling, we are even tempted to smear him with charges of Pound's obscurantist excesses and political associations. But this would be to forget to listen to the poetry, which emerges as clear intelligence and integrity with words, unfaltering play of imagination with place, person, time, and values, and no little feeling.

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Yet it may be that a certain price has been paid for these qualities, in Viereck, Eliot, and others. A certain unselfconsciousness has been lost, and a certain contact with anonymous readers, who after all should not be prejudged, and certainly should not all be college students and teachers, or certainly not all engaged in graduate study. At times Viereck is concerned with the poetic process itself, as in "To the Creative Imagination." This concern with the process, while it may paradoxically make a poem, is more concerned with process than result. It may intervene in the poems not devoted to the problems of art, but rather to what might be called "direct experience." It is as if such poets can sometimes only tell us what a poem should be, or what it can do, and similarly in the area of direct experience only talk *about* an experience, rather than create full empathy. In other words, we sometimes get only *intellectual* experiences. Sometimes one feels a hang-fire effect caused by the intervening intellect and the conscious paradox. A good way to start an argument about this would be to say that the poetry of Dylan Thomas does not suffer in this way, and that consequently it is superior poetry for those who do not fully share the intellectual circle in which alone much other modern poetry can operate full force.

E. W. TEDLOCK, JR.

Prize Stories 1957: The O. Henry Awards, selected and edited by Paul Engle, assisted by Constance Urdang. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1957. 312 pp. \$3.95.

The Best American Short Stories 1956 and the Yearbook of the American Short Story, edited by Martha Foley. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956. 368 pp. \$4.00.

THE ANNUAL Martha Foley anthology and the yearly O. Henry Collection are volumes of top-drawer stories, always received with a great deal of enthusiasm by readers eager to see what the editors have retrieved from the "slush piles" of the many, many magazines whose stories must be considered.

The thirty-seventh volume of O. Henry prize stories contains twenty stories selected by editor Paul Engle, head of Iowa's writing workshop. The three cash prizes Mr. Engle has this year awarded to Flannery O'Connor, Herbert Gold, and George P. Elliott.

Miss O'Connor, a former student of Engle's, has contributed a fantastic, Eudora Welty-ish story, with all of the irony of truth, the

permanence of the fact that things change, in it. Titled "Greenleaf," the narrative tells of Mrs. May, a lady of the old guard, who determines to kill a stray bull that has invaded her pastures. But it is the bull, a symbol of sloth breeding with pure stock, which kills Mrs. May by goring her "so that she seemed . . . to be bent over whispering some last discovery into the animal's ear."

The reader cannot fail to be impressed by the number of stories which have race or religious intolerance as a theme. Herbert Gold's "Encounter in Haiti" is actually an encounter in hate. "Things Changed" by Betty Sunwall is the story of a Negro boy's efforts to explain the importance of his degree in sociology to a drunken white man, and how his parents intercede for him, "Mr. Jud, Mr. Jud—a big fine boy like you—you ain't gonna hit a poor little nigger ain't got good sense!"

One of the finest examples of craftsmanship is Cynthia Marshall Rich's "My Sister's Marriage" which was a winner in *Mademoiselle's* 1955 short-story contest. Almost as if by inadvertence, the narrator reveals her selfishness and the paradoxical, ladylike inhumanity of her hate for her sister.

The ten "old" writers (Jean Stafford, William Faulkner, John Cheever, Irwin Shaw, Mary McCarthy, et al) are balanced by ten "new" and/or young writers. An excellent equilibrium is maintained; the stories for the most part have sound bases in equally valid experiences. (One would perhaps find fault with Nolan Miller's "A New Life," a story as stale as the characters and the so-called "new life" itself.)

Miss Foley, the veritable Louella Parsons of the story world, raps the knuckles of the editors of some of the large-circulation magazines for their continued selection of unrealistic stories. Her introduction remarks caustically upon the "division in some editorial minds between honesty in articles and honesty in fiction."

The Flannery O'Connor story in this anthology is "The Artificial Nigger," an ingratiating, kind of watermelon story, sweetened by the Southern dialect and Miss O'Connor's descriptions. There is regional richness also in William Eastlake's "The Quiet Chimneys," a deer-hunting and Indian story which takes place around the author's home in Cuba, New Mexico.

Miss Foley is not infallible; she has an eye for the well-made story and every once in a while the machinery shows. Some of the stories are so manipulated that one can see the knobs which turn them.

(Robert M. Coates' "In a Foreign City," for example.) But one must be grateful to Miss Foley and Mr. Engle for resurrecting a number of stories from the "little" magazines, for encouraging young writers, for taking the pulse of the literary mainstream, and for casting around in it to find, if not the best, at least some of the better, stories that appeared in the United States during 1956-57.

Steinbeck and His Critics, a record of 25 years, by E. W. Tedlock, Jr., and C. V. Wicker. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1957. 352 pp. \$6.00.

THE SCOPE of this anthology is certainly everything that a casual reader might reasonably infer from its title. A host of critics is represented in a collection of articles spanning a quarter-century; many essays and chapters on Steinbeck which do not appear here are nevertheless commented upon in the editors' introduction; and a portion of the essence of Steinbeck the man is set forth in the form of several observations on his craft by his own hand, some of them previously unpublished.

Editors Tedlock and Wicker have made judicious and representative choices in the previously published essays on Steinbeck which make up the greater part of their book, and in addition they have enlisted the aid of young Steinbeck specialist Peter Lisca, who has written a Steinbeck literary biography in essay form to open the collection. Lisca also contributes fresh and valuable essays on *The Pearl* and *The Wayward Bus*. Other new names appear also alongside those of such old critical hands as Joseph Warren Beach and Frederic I. Carpenter. Marxist, Catholic, and New Critical essays help to round out a just representation of approaches to the Steinbeck problem by various critical schools. Some of these essays will be new to many readers because they were originally printed in out-of-the-way places; *Steinbeck and His Critics* has performed a service in reviving them.

In their introduction, the editors offer a comprehensive map of Steinbeck's Mercator-like route from critical rain squall to high-pressure area and back again—an advance in which Steinbeck has steadfastly refused to follow the more direct great circle route of readily discernible development which lends itself to cool-headed analysis and to a broader agreement among critics. Tedlock and Wicker accomplish their survey by supplying brief summaries, in-

dications of critical direction, and often personal evaluations of much Steinbeck material excluded from their book as well as of that to be found in it. They treat, among the excluded material, sections from such books as Geismar's *Writers in Crisis*, Stovall's *American Idealism*, and Hoffman's *The Modern Novel in America*.

If the reader, upon meeting an obscure or hard-headed selection in this book, may occasionally feel himself aboard a wayward bus of contemporary criticism, he can find quick consolation in the ease with which he will be able to find Steinbeck's own blasts at critics but a few pages away; and he will be reassured as well by the editors' own observation:

Another of our beliefs is that some critics take their own craft too seriously. They seem not only to lack a sense of humor but even the common awareness that readers can delight in a story without feeling that the author must settle world or cosmic affairs as they themselves would. Some critics even lack the respect that discursive, logical men ought to have for the imaginative man who provides them with their fodder. They seem unaware of the difference and difficulty of his problems. It is probably on this ground that much of Steinbeck's disgust with critics is based. He may justly feel that to become involved with their personal concepts of higher truth would be to abandon art for polemics or appeasement. To say this is neither to eulogize Steinbeck nor to deny that much helpful and perceptive criticism has appeared.

In his autobiography, jazz guitarist Eddie Condon tells of a conversation he once had with his friend John Steinbeck, a sturdy supporter of Dixieland jazz. Steinbeck was trying to argue Condon into switching from his guitar to a real American folk instrument, the banjo. "Banjos went out with button shoes, John," Condon told him. "Button shoes are coming back, Eddie," said Steinbeck. Though button shoes and banjos have failed, after all, to come back, their advocate has not, and criticism may surely look forward to the closer examination of Steinbeck's artistic achievement which is strongly indicated by Tedlock and Wicker's definitive collection of Steinbeck criticism to 1955.

HUGH L. SMITH JR.

Stories, by Jean Stafford, John Cheever, Daniel Fuchs, and William Maxwell. New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1956. 309 pp. \$3.95.

THE CONFINES of suburbia expand themselves in this collection of fifteen stories by four writers whose stories aid and abet each other.

Jean Stafford, John Cheever, Daniel Fuchs, and William Maxwell have selected stories they have written which "they think most highly of," intending to cooperate, not compete, with each other. For, say the authors, "to make sense out of life is an exertion of uncommon cooperativeness."

Jean Stafford has contributed five stories. "The Liberation" is the old story of the captive maiden trapped in a backwater existence; the story of the quick and the dead; the story of how the dead triumph, their dark, bucolic portraits leaning "forward from the walls in their insculptured, brassy frames."

It is difficult to take Miss Stafford seriously when she turns her hand to "Maggie Meriwether's Rich Experience." The flip, raconteurish Maggie Meriwether is a Little Miss Muffett, and the spider does not want the curds and whey when she has left them. It is razor-sharp, inimitable Stafford in many ways, but lamentably, often razor-thin.

John Cheever writes deft psychoanalytic stories which sunder the suburbanites where they wake or sleep. "The Country Husband" is the story of Francis Weed. Immaculately self-centered and interdependent, all the Weeds everywhere flourish and deceive themselves, but only by deception can they live. Keen observation perks up the stories; one is moved to copy such sentences as: "The sleeping-car compartments, with their soiled bed linen, trailed through the fresh morning like a string of rooming-house windows."

"The Day the Pig Fell Into the Well" is the story of the Nudd family who related significancies to insignificancies, and John Cheever tells it with superb control, compressing the pertinent events in the lives of the Nudds into the brevity that shortens the longest life.

It is quite honest to say of Daniel Fuchs and William Maxwell that their stories do not possess the polish of the writers who precede them in the book. But there is much that is good and much to be gained by reading "Man in the Middle of the Ocean," by Mr. Fuchs, or "The French Scarecrow," by Mr. Maxwell. Perhaps the frenetic qualities of frustration and boredom are prolonged, but the pulse of the idiom is recognizable as the American heartbeat.

There is great value in this volume of stories chosen for themselves, and subaltern short-story writers, eager to discern a pattern in *New Yorker* stories, will find it in this book. Exurbia or suburbia—to taste.

RAMONA MAHER MARTINEZ

The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology, by Paul Radin. With Commentaries by C. G. Jung and Karl Kerényi. New York: Philosophical Library, 1956. 211 pp. \$6.00.

THE WINNEBAGO TRICKSTER cycle forms the basis of Dr. Radin's searching analysis of one of the most fascinating mythic characters we may encounter not only among the American Indians but also among ethnic groups the world over.

Trickster, which actually means the Cunning One, is usually the Foolish One, who, instead of tricking others, is, most of the time being tricked by the trickeries of the world. He is an archaic survival of a past hardly remembered. But as everything primordial he is also timeless and therefore even quite contemporary. Restless, aimless and amorphous, he moves about his world, uncertainly driven on by hunger and sex. Voracious and uncontrolled he seldom succeeds in satisfying these drives. He is neither animal, nor man, nor divinity. But as his consciousness begins to dominate the vast and undefined mass of his subconsciousness, Trickster begins to play the roles sometimes of Beast, sometimes of Man, sometimes of Creator. Almost in spite of himself, he turns into the Maker of Society and at the same time into the great fiend of Society. For like Trickster himself, Society not only creates and protects, but it also destroys. One moment the benefactor, the next the buffoon: Trickster will never lose the most superior of all his gifts—the ability to laugh at himself.

In accustomed scholarly thoroughness, Paul Radin compares the basic Trickster-cycle with other cycles and then proceeds to analyze both with imagination and restraint, as to subject, form, and distribution of this mythic complex.

The central question which Dr. Radin attempts to answer is this. Is the concept of the trickster a disintegration from a loftier concept, from a primeval creator or divine culture-hero? Or did the Foolish One stand at the beginning of all times, and did he in the end grow and merge into the idea of the Great Benefactor? Rather tentatively, Radin comes to the conclusion that the cycle in its oldest form began with the account of a nondescript person, obsessed by an uncontrollable urge to wander, by hunger and by sexuality. Later on, incidents related to an entirely different supernatural being have been incorporated. Thus, in the opinion of Radin, the Trickster stands in the beginning, and the Creator at the end of the development.

Unfortunately, Radin does not touch upon the Katcinas of the

western Pueblos or the Koshares and Chiffonetas of the Eastern Pueblos. In origin and purpose, in paradox of behavior and of character, these Koshares strongly resemble the various Trickster-types. For they are spirits of the dead, who combine the divine with the burlesque, the gesture of blessing with the lash of the whip, consolation with ridicule, decay with fertility. Paradox is deeply embedded in human nature, and overlap of contrasts must not always be explained by two divers developments which finally merge. In passing, it may be noted that C. G. Jung's contribution at the very end of the book does not enhance its scholarly value. Having read, apart from the Winnebago Trickster cycle, apparently only Baudelier's *Delightmakers*, his comparisons with European oddities appear far-fetched and scientifically unacceptable. He bunches together areas and items which, in a different setting, had a totally different meaning. The functional obscenities of the Trickster have little in common with the repulsive obscenities of a few aberrant medieval clerics.

Be that as it may, Radin's presentation of the Trickster tales provides, in most parts, refreshing reading, apart from their anthropological significance. Trickster is immortal, and he seems to be right with us, laughing homERICALLY at our own cultural antics.

MARGOT ASTROV

In Defense of the Earth, by Kenneth Rexroth. New York: New Directions, 1956. 93 pp. \$3.00.

IN DEFENSE OF THE EARTH is the first more or less substantial collection of Kenneth Rexroth's poems since the publication of his *The Dragon And The Unicorn*. The latter was a long philosophical travel-poem, so that the book I am reviewing more literally goes back to *The Signature Of All Things* (1949), and is (as that book was) an accumulation of poems and translations of varying length and determination.

Many of these poems deal with similar locations and events, seeking over and over again for the changing forms of an unchanging significance in stars, insects, mountains and daughters. They do not of course try to answer, "Why am I here?" "Why is it out there?"—but to snare the fact that is the only answer, the only meaning of present or presence . . . [Foreword by Kenneth Rexroth to *In Defense of the Earth*.]

Reading a book, or reviewing it,—one comes to ask, what does the book have, for its ideas; and, how clearly are those ideas made evident? Rexroth's title demonstrates the area of his concern, large though it surely is, and open as well to the pitfalls of an over-zealous generality. But one can, as he does, begin there.

The opening poems are for his wife, Marthe, and his daughter, Mary. Those for his wife have, among them, some of the book's best writing.

. . . What do I know now,
Of myself, of the others?
Blood flows out to the fleeing
Nebulae, and flows back, red
With all the worn space of space,
Old with all the time of time.
It is my blood. I cannot
Taste in it as it leaves me
More of myself than on its
Return . . .

This is the first idea. It is as well a broadening, in effect a deepening, of something, such as:

. . . Just born to die
Nobody will ever know anything about it
And I have nothing more at all to say.

Which is taken from *The Art Of Worldly Wisdom* (1949), a book which marked the last large instance of Rexroth's experimentation in poems akin (as he notes) to those of Stein, Lowenfels, Arensberg, and Louis Zukofsky. After that time he made clear his intention to write in more "common" forms, and to give up at least the intensity of his concern to that point with syntactical formation, personally based. Perhaps my own statement here is unclear, but what was meant seems simply this: he became concerned with a poetry which people, in a half-hoped for generality, might be able to read, as put against that which apparently they could not—or at least this was not to be the concern of the writer.

This is the second idea, clear in this book—that people, who are being loved, attacked, or subjected to the varying attitudes of the writer, be obliged to hear that concern. The poem *Thou Shalt Not Kill* (for the memory of Dylan Thomas, who was himself proposed as a 'common' voice) speaks like this:

I want to run into the street,
Shouting, "Remember Vanzetti!"
I want to pour gasoline down your chimneys.

BOOK REVIEWS

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I want to blow up your galleries.
 I want to burn down your editorial offices.
 I want to slit the bellies of your frigid women.
 I want to sink your sailboats and launches.
 I want to strangle your children at their finger paintings.
 I want to poison your Afghans and poodles.
 He is dead, the drunken little cherub.
 He is dead,
 The effulgent tub thumper.
 He is Dead . . .

But—one knows what one 'speaks', or else not. Put too blandly, such address is perhaps only equalled by the equal exhortations, to buy this bread, that butter, and to eat it all. More reasonably—the 'addition of 'launches' to 'sailboats' belies the echoing tiredness of the man writing, it may be with the whole 'idea'.

More quietly (less 'common'):

What can you say in a poem?
 Past forty, you've said it all.
 The dwarf black oak grows out of
 The cliff below my feet. It
 May be two hundred years old,
 Yet its trunk is no bigger
 Than my wrist, its crown does not
 Come to my shoulder . . .

I read the book making notes, so that I should not be overly embarrassed, coming to write of it. Which was my dilemma, but these poems are marked as follows: *Seven Poems For Marthe, My Wife* ('Positions of love—physical—loneliness. Images of possible loss—flat line. Praise.');

The Mirror In The Woods ('Good—fairy-story quality. Mirror.');

For Eli Jacobsen ('Good—old-timers, liberals, workers—the good old days—won't come again. Courage—makes taste & feelings better. Ok.');

Time Is The Mercy Of Eternity ('Philosophical—"on poetry". Up in the mts. Images of moments: description. Clear. Alone. All strips away to "knowledge".), etc., etc.

Perception, inside or out, is 'earth', equally to be defended. In the 'Japanese Translations' at the book's end, there is this one (by Ishikawa Takuboku):

I do not know why
 But it is as though
 There were a cliff
 Inside my head
 From which, every day,
 Clods of earth fall.

ROBERT CREELEY

PAPER-BOUND

The Age of Adventure, selected with introduction and interpretive commentary by Giorgio de Santillana. New York: New American Library, Mentor, 1956. 283 pp. \$.50. A selection from writers and philosophers of the Renaissance has been enhanced by an introduction and commentary by Giorgio de Santillana under whose poetic and imaginative guidance the layman may approach the Renaissance with a sympathetic knowledge which gives life and meaning to this creative and turbulent epoch.

Religious Verse, edited by Horace Gregory and Marya Zaturenska, New York: New American Library, Mentor, 1957. 238 pp. \$.50. Of all the religious verse that has been written in the English language only a small percentage may be called great poetry. With sensitive taste the editors have made a selection encompassing differences in time, temperament, and emphasis.

Anastasia, by Marcelle Maurette. New York: New American Library, Signet, 1956. 126 pp. \$.35. The possible survival of the Grand Duchess Anastasia Nicolaevna is the subject of a romantic comedy in which the playwright manages to produce "that voluntary suspension of disbelief" which frees the reader to enjoy a situation enchanting in the best Cinderella tradition.

The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden, by Louis I. Bredvold. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956. 185 pp. \$1.25. A detailed and lucid account of the intellectual currents which stirred the minds of Dryden and his contemporaries. This scholarly piece of work conveys the seventeenth century's unconscious assumptions and attitudes, thus giving a distinctive flavor to the variety of problems with which the thoughtful men of the period were dealing.

The Discovery of the Great West: La Salle, by Francis Parkman, edited by William R. Taylor. New York: Rinehart and Co., 1956. 354 pp. A well-designed, clearly printed volume, based on Parkman's revised edition of 1879, outlining La Salle's career and explorations.

New World Writing, No. 10, New York: New American Library, Mentor, 1956. 288 pp. \$.50. This tenth anniversary collection includes some "firsts" in fiction, undergraduate poetry, four critical articles, fiction and drama by such writers as Shirley Ann Grau, and Samuel Beckett. Intriguing drawings by Abraham Rattner.

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**SCHEDULED FOR THE SPRING
NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY:**

RAMÓN SENDER, eminent Spanish novelist, presents a haunting story of Spanish life: *The Clouds Did Not Pass*.

EDWARD P. DOZIER, of Northwestern University, writes about *Rio Grande Pueblo Patterns of Ceremonialism*, based on his paper given at the American Anthropological Association's annual meeting.

In *The Man Who Reads*, **DR. JOHN LONGHURST** offers a chilling case-study from the records of the Spanish Inquisition that matches any modern human drama.

POEMS by Horace Hamilton, Ken Eisler, Gemma d'Auria, and others.

REVIEWS. **WILLIAM PEDEN**, contributor to *New York Times* and *Saturday Review*, examines new books on James Joyce. **JOHN ADAIR**, anthropologist, reviews Oliver LaFarge's *Pictorial History of the American Indian*. **E. ROELKER CURTIS** analyzes a book on bullfighting. **BERTHA DUTTON**, of the Museum of New Mexico, discusses Gladwin's *History of the Ancient Southwest*.

THE SPRING ISSUE will reflect a more markedly Southwestern flavor in response to the interests of the large population of newcomers to the area who are eager for increased understanding of the Southwest, its contemporary attitudes, and its cultural background.

CONTRIBUTORS

Wife of a Brazilian diplomat posted in Washington, **CLARICE LISPECTOR** was at one time a newspaper-woman for Rio de Janeiro dailies and weeklies. A novel (her fourth) and a collection of short stories (her second) are in the hands of a publishing firm in Rio de Janeiro.

DOROTHY NICHOLS adapted "The Jinn That Can't Be Put Back in the Bottle" from the last chapters of her book on Egypt, *The River and the Desert*.

VINCENT R. TORTORA has done graduate work in Political Science at universities in Italy and Austria. He lectures and writes extensively on world affairs for informed journals of national circulation.

In our Spring, 1956, issue, **LAWRENCE WILLSON** introduced Shakespeare and the Genteel Tradition to American letters; in this issue the Genteel Tradition meets that old electric body, Walt Whitman.

POETS

BURTON RAFFEL has transliterated a volume of poems from the Old English. His translations of modern Indonesian verse have appeared in *Atlantic Monthly* and elsewhere.

Poet, essayist, short-story writer, critic and novelist, **LEGARDE S. DOUGHTY** is a full-time proofreader for several Atlanta newspapers. One of his stories was reprinted in 1954's *Best American Short Stories*.

GROVER LEWIS is a student at North Texas State College where his first play is being produced by the Laboratory Theater.

ALBERTA TUCKER TURNER teaches English on a part-time basis at Oberlin College. Her poems have appeared in *Harper's*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Antioch Review*.

ALLEN KANFER has published poetry in numerous quarterly and literary journals. A novel is in progress and a poem in *Harper's Bazaar* is forthcoming.

R. S. BRYDEN lists his occupation as poet and/or painter, his preoccupation as survival, and his livelihood as housepainting.

REVIEWERS

Two of our reviewers, EDWARD LUEDERS and E. W. TEDLOCK, JR., are members of the UNM English Department.

HUGH L. SMITH, JR. is Assistant Professor of English at Long Beach State College. He has published poetry, a number of reviews, and articles on jazz.

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RAMONA MAHER MARTINEZ is on the staff of the UNM Press.

ROBERT BUNKER is the author of *Other Men's Skies* (see NMQ, Summer '56), released this winter by Indiana University Press.

Ex-editor of the *Black Mountain Review*, ROBERT CREELEY has published poetry in *Accent* and stories in *Kenyon Review*.

MARGOT ASTROV is editor and compiler of an anthology of Indian poetry, *The Winged Serpent*.

ART, literary, and professional talent thrive in the intellectual climate of Corrales, New Mexico; and from there we have corralled the Assistant Editor, two reviewers, and an illustrator. VIRGINIA MANIERRE's article on Thomas Mann appeared in the *Autumn Quarterly*. WARD ALAN MINGE received the M.A. degree from Mexico City College and at present is a historian for the National Defense.

ARTIST

The cover symbol and drawings highlighting the story, "Love," and the articles on Egypt, Italy and Walt Whitman are the work of PATRICIA SMITH, sculptor and former pupil of José DeCreeft.



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