VOICES

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Spring

VOICES

MARGINALIA

The present collection attempts to be more of a brief anthology than a project submitted to and selected into an issue. I sought out material from names well-known in Canada and not well-known. I regret not being able to represent two or three of the former; and I have undoubtedly missed the two or three good, but unpublished poets. Yet I think the collection gives a just account of immediate Canadian work.

Canadian poetry should be better known. It is vigorous, it is experienced, very often indigenous. It has integrity. It has also had to be self-reliant. Canada is a northern and pioneering country, and has been too unrealistic to pay much attention to its poetry. It drove a golden spike into the railroad tie common to the Pacific and the Atlantic, but it is not so ceremonious with those who are articulate about the meaning. Canada has needed a Sibelius to her Finland, or an Undset to her Norway, or a Frost to her New England. Canada has needed a "genius" to compel. Suddenly there would have been an acquiescence to her constant good.

But the genius will deliver himself despite the fact that Canada produces 78% of the world's asbestos. And the poet readily concedes that the pulp-and-paper mill has its uses. The fundamental is that there be poetry. A poem is less important these days than the production of a Liberty ship. But lest we are left with the ship and not the liberty, it is a good thing for a country to launch a poet once in a while. Perhaps Shelley was right. Perhaps press-correspondents and

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poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world. Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt frequently round out their peroration with a punch from Clough or Longfellow. Poets in the thirties were frequently demonstrating the way the world spins—and without taking the last train out of Berlin. As legislators, they could not have done worse. It is to be hoped, when the rehabilitation comes, that there will be an advance on the category arrived at after the last war: poets, parrot-breeders, and silhouette-cutters.

Canadian poetry has a place in the importance of poetry. World-anthologists, English treasurers, might well look into Lampman, or Cameron, or Pratt. Corralists of the modern might well collect one or two of the names in this round-up. Canadian poetry has momentum, and left to its self-dependence has never been static. In this time of the breaking of nations, there are more vigorous proofs than ever of its vitality. But extra-mural recognition means acceleration, and that has irreplaceable benefits.

Lately, there have been most heartening signs that Canadian poetry has broken through the tariff-walls of the forty-ninth parallel. I am very grateful to Mr. Vinal for allowing it to invade his periodical.

I have displayed the commodity in chronological order and hope it proves memorable.

—RALPH GUSTAFSON.

1943.
New York City.

POEMS

NOT HERE COMES SPRING

For Poland 1941

Oh, not this year comes spring
To the darkened lands,
Gutted with fire, laid waste
By ravaging hands.

Not this year, not here,
Comes the glad rebirth
Of mating blooms and wings
And pregnant earth.

Not here will fields be sweet
With summer's breath—
Watered are they with blood,
Deep-sown with death.

These fields—no sound they hear
Save woman's weeping
And children's starving cries
And anguish unsleeping.

Oh, bitter the harvest here
(Far off, but fated)
Of hate that will not be assuaged
Till vengeance be sated—

Till comes at length the hour
(Too long delayed)
When the grim score shall be,
To the last tear, paid.

AS DOWN THE WOODLAND WAYS

As down the woodland ways I went
  With every wind asleep
I felt the surge of endless life
  About my footsteps creep.

I felt the urge of quickening mould
  That had been once a flower
Mount with the sap to bloom again
  At its appointed hour.

I saw gray stumps go crumbling down
  In sodden, grim decay,
To soar in pillared green again
  On some remoter day.

I saw crushed beetles, mangled grubs,
  All crawling, perished things,
Whirl up in air, an ecstasy
  Of many-coloured wings.

Through weed and world, through worm and star,
  The sequence ran the same—
Death but the travail-pang of life,
  Destruction but a name.

—CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

A DREAM

Lovely Amanda running through the cool
Shadows upon the path under the elm,
Ran all unconscious through the fatal pool,
Ran, on and on, up to her mother's bed,
Spoke strange, wild, witless words and then fell dead.

The neighbours gathered from the countryside,
And far-off people trooped to share the pride
Of grief for perished beauty,
Mourning Amanda with her lovely name.

(That and her beauty were inherited,
The old wise women said).
All tried to say Amanda with the grace
Of the rich curves that trembled in her face;
But only the strange mourners that were ghosts
Who were not of our country and our tongue—
The melancholy shadow-host
With smouldering-colour-garments, old and young,
Could mourn Amanda with the murmured stress
Of Amanda's loveliness.

But all their grief seemed hollow in my ears,
Their tears were icy to my blistering tears,
Their pain was dull to my heart-agony;
This agony, these tears
Have robbed me of ten years,

For I had known and warned them of the spell—
There in the towering elm above the way
The concentrated evil lay;
A copper disc deep-dented with a charm
Nailed in the sapling tree
By that wild wanderer from the haunted sea
Amanda's evil ancestor.
Brown was he and adorned from foot to head
With silver-gold and crimson—
(The old wise women said).
The copper disc with the malignant charm
That held him safe over the desperate seas,
Through all his wandering villainies,
Corroded as the tree grew straight
And drew the poison up beneath the bark,
Dripping its distillation on the grass
And on the path, and who would pass
Might take the vapour-liquid on her shoe.
And as Amanda grew I watched the spell
Gather around her beauty.
Amanda wonder-love of all the world,
I warned them of the deathly pool,
Of the hid, festering malice at the core

And of Amanda's danger from the curse
Of her wild ancestor.
They thought me but a fool—
So, I would speak no more.

But I alone had kept safe in my head
The words like moans Amanda said
When she fell dead.
In after years beneath the fatal tree
I met a stranger casually,
As one might meet a friend after a day—
Brown as a walnut, gold rings in his ears,

Silver on both his wrists,
Crimson bound round his head.
I was compelled to say
Amanda, and I spoke the words she said.
The stranger from the haunted seas
Broke into sudden ecstasies;
Tears hard as pearls stood in his eyes;
"Amanda Wonder Love of all the World—
"The words she moaned,
"Pity—have pity—Jesu save me, save."
He spoke, and failed as if a fire
Had died and gone to ashes,
Hung for a moment spectral-gray
A shadow on the air
Then was not anywhere;
And the tree wraithlike, withered away.

As you must see—
Those blistering tears,
That deep heart-agony
Have robbed me of ten years.

Now that Amanda's dead and the spell has won
The tree has vanished from its roots of mist;
On the clean path falls ever the sweet sun
And maids may run or linger as they list.

—DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT.

NORTHERN NIGHT

Bitter the cold! The boughs crack; the gaunt bole
  Strains and aches. On the horizon drear
  Meagre estrays of ragged cloud appear
And fade. A strident crow screams from the knoll.
The sun's disc droops, and twilight—ghostly troll—
  Etches the stretched-out shadows starkly clear
  A timeless moment, while the withdrawn austere
Canadian plain puts on her silver stole.

Now the huge mantle of the night is cast
  Over the frozen forest, the still lake:
Darkness is all, save that within the vast
  Vault of the firmament the planets make
An interspacial glitter, which the glassed
  Snowdrifts reflect from every naked brake.

—GEORGE HERBERT CLARKE.

WILD SWAN

The pool lay black within the silent wood,
Like polished onyx in an inlaid frame
Of silver birches, mountain ash like flame,
And dark green spruces. Strangely mute you stood,
Slender and youthful, the swift-coursing blood
Tinging your cheeks. Across the dark pool's breast
A wild swan glided from its hidden nest
And floated in the shadows. From that flood
Of infinite beauty, like a soul parched and dry,
I drank—woods mirrored in the pool, wild swan,
And youth's brave, eager turning to the dawn
Of beckoning life. Then came a startled cry
Of sudden wonder from your lips, as on
White flashing wings the swan rose to the sky.

—F. O. CALL.

DIVINE HOSTLER

The Music tends white horses in the sky—
Piled clouds—what tossing manes, wild, light and free—
While tiny lambs with their gay glinting hooves,
And wet black noses—punctuation points
In the calm sonnet of a summer day—
Seem suddenly aware of creamy colts!
But this is winter time in miracle,
With a strange freshness from cold fallow fields.

Old clocks strike through a melody of Time.
The house is quiet. All the clocks cry "One"!
How marvellous the gifts of Ear and Eye!
Past, Present, and Future shine within an Hour
For human hearts in lives bound taut and clean
By a mysterious firm-knotted Fate.
Bridling the hearts, the lambs, the Time-worn clocks,
The Music tends white horses in the sky.

—LOUISE MOREY BOWMAN.

THE TRUANT

"What have you there?" the great Panjandrum said
To the Master of the Revels who had led
A bucking truant with a stiff backbone
Close to the foot of the Almighty's throne.

"Right Reverend, most adored,
And universally acknowledged Lord!
This creature has presumed to classify
Himself—a biped, rational, six feet high
And two feet wide; weighs fourteen stone;
Is guilty of a multitude of sins.
He has abjured his choric origins,
And like an undomesticated slattern,
Walks with tangential step unknown
Within the weave of the atomic pattern.
He has developed concepts, grins

Obscenely at your Royal bulletins,
Possesses what he calls a will
Which challenges your power to kill."

"What is his pedigree?"

"The base is guaranteed, your Majesty—
Calcium, carbon, phosphorus, vapour
And other fundamentals spun
From the umbilicus of the sun,
And yet he says he will not caper
Around your throne, nor toe the rules
For the ballet of the fiery molecules."

"His concepts and denials—scrap them, burn them—
To the chemists with them promptly."

"Sire,
The stuff is not amenable to fire.
Nothing but their own kind can overturn them.
The chemists have sent back the same old story—
'With our extreme gelatinous apology,
We beg to inform your Imperial Majesty,
Unto whom be dominion and power and glory,
There still remains that strange precipitate
Which has the quality to resist
Our oldest and most trusted catalyst.
It is a substance we cannot cremate
By temperatures known to our Laboratory.' "

And the great Panjandrum's face grew dark—
"I'll put those chemists to their annual purge,
And I myself shall be the thaumaturge
To find the nature of this fellow's spark.
Come, bring him nearer by yon halter rope:
I'll analyze him with the cosmoscope."

Pulled forward with his neck awry,
The little fellow six feet short,
Aware he was about to die,
Committed grave contempt of court
By answering with a flinchless stare
The Awful Presence seated there.

The ALL HIGH swore until his face was black.
He called him a coprophagite,
A genus *homo,* egomaniac,
Third cousin to the family of worms,
A sporozoan from the ooze of night,
Spawn of a spavined troglodyte:
He swore by all the catalogue of terms
Known since the slang of carboniferous Time.
He said that he could trace him back
To pollywogs and earwigs in the slime,
And in his shrillest tenor he began
Reciting his indictment of the man,
Until he closed upon this capital crime—
"You are accused of singing out of key,
(A foul unmitigated dissonance)
Of shuffling in the measures of the dance,
Then walking out with that defiant, free
Toss of your head, banging the doors,
Leaving a stench upon the jacinth floors.
You have fallen like a curse
On the mechanics of my Universe.

"Herewith I measure out your penalty—
Hearken while you hear, look while you see:
I send you now upon your homeward route
Where you shall find
Humiliation for your pride of mind.
I shall make deaf the ear, and dim the eye,
Put palsy in your touch, make mute
Your speech, intoxicate your cells and dry
Your blood and marrow, shoot
Arthritic needles through your cartilage,
And having parched you with old age,
I'll pass you wormwise through the mire;
And when your rebel will
Is mouldered, all desire
Shrivelled, all your concepts broken,
Backward in dust I'll blow you till
You join my spiral festival of fire.

Go, Master of the Revels—I have spoken."

And the little genus *homo,* six feet high,
Standing erect, countered with this reply—
"You dumb, insouciant invertebrate,
You rule a lower than a feudal state—
A realm of flunkey decimals that run,
Return; return and run; again return,
Each group around its little sun,
And every sun a satellite.
There they go by day and night,
Nothing to do but run and burn,
Taking turn and turn about,
Light-year in and light-year out,
Dancing, dancing in quadrillions,
Never leaving their pavilions.

"Your astronomical conceit
Of bulk and power is anserine.
Your ignorance so thick,
You did not know your own arithmetic.
We flung the graphs about your flying feet;
We measured your diameter—
Merely a line
Of zeros prefaced by an integer.
Before we came
You had no name.
You did not know direction or your pace;
We taught you all you ever knew
Of motion, time and space.
We healed you of your vertigo
And put you in our kindergarten show,
Perambulated you through prisms, drew
Your *mumu's* through the Milky Way,
Lassoed your comets when they ran astray,
Yoked Leo, Taurus, and your team of Bears
To pull our kiddy cars of inverse squares.

"Boast not about your harmony,
Your perfect curves, your rings
Of *pure and endless light*—'Twas we

Who pinned upon your Seraphim their wings,
And when your brassy heavens rang
With joy that morning while the planets sang
Their choruses of archangelic lore,
'Twas we who ordered the notes upon their score
Out of our winds and string.
Yes! all your shapely forms
Are ours—parabolas of silver light,
Those blueprints of your spiral stairs
From nadir depth to zenith height,
Coronas, rainbows after storms,
Auroras on your eastern tapestries
And constellations over western seas.

"And when, one day, grown conscious of your age,
While pondering an eolith,
We turned a human page
And blotted out a cosmic myth
With all its baby symbols to explain
The sunlight in Apollo's eyes,
Our rising pulses and the birth of pain,
Fear, and that fern-and-fungus breath
Stalking our nostrils to our caves of death—
That day we learned how to anatomize
Your body, calibrate your size
And set a mirror up before your face
To show you what you really were—a rain
Of dull Lucretian atoms crowding space,
A series of concentric waves which any fool
Might make by dropping stones within a pool,
Or an exploding bomb forever in flight
Bursting like hell through Chaos and Old Night.

"You oldest of the hierarchs
Composed of electronic sparks,
We grant you speed,
We grant you power, and fire
That ends in ash, but we concede
To you no pain nor joy nor love nor hate,
No final tableau of desire,
No causes won or lost, no free

Adventure at the outposts—only
The degradation of your energy
When at some late
Slow number of your dance your sergeant-major Fate
Will catch you blind and groping and will send
You reeling on that long and lonely
Lockstep of your wave-lengths towards your end.

"We who have met
With stubborn calm the dawn's hot fusillades;
Who have seen the forehead sweat
Under the tug of pulleys on the joints,
Under the liquidating tally
Of the cat-and-truncheon bastinades;
Who have taught our souls to rally
To mountain horns and the sea's rockets
When the needle ran demented through the points;
We who have learned to clench
Our fists and raise our lightless sockets
To morning skies after the midnight raids,
Yet cocked our ears to bugles on the barricades,
And in cathedral rubble found a way to quench
A dying thirst within a Galilean valley—
No! by the Rood, we will not join your ballet."

AUTOPSY ON A SADIST

The microscope was at a loss to tell
The composition of his brain and glands—
Why blood should be like catnip to his smell,
And paws be given him instead of hands.

What toxins in a mammal's milk could serve
To manufacture luxuries out of pains,
Anaesthetize the sympathetic nerve
Or turn to sleet the fluids of his veins?

Much less could it explain those pointed ears
That caught the raptures of a werewolf's howl,
The allegretto strains in human tears,
The hallelujahs in a tiger's growl.

—E. J. PRATT.

Thief unaware of thieving,
Touch can be caught believing
That giving is receiving
And that receiving giving.

Philandering taste deserts
The rule with which it flirts;
Your treason is my reason,
My poison is your raisin.

The nostril scarcely knows
One from another rose,
Nor what abject cement
Solders wearer and scent.

Since exodus from Eden
The five have not been maiden
And hug the very faults
Their unguessed angel halts.

RAIN AROUND A LIBRARY

Outside the windows of the periodical
Section, rain lets eye after methodical
Eye fall on the iterative point of grass
To find what source the sharp allusion has.

Inside, collective care of research is showered
On the blind page's face, less overpowered
Than harnessed vision poring over it spurred
By rainbowed pupils of a storming word.

Between that rain of glances and glancing rain,
Shelved aspidistra scrolls await, unseen,
Perfunctory attention from a wash-room tumbler,
Precipitation metaphorically humbler.

—ROBERT FINCH.

FAR WEST

Among the cigarettes and the peppermint creams
Came the flowers of fingers, luxurious and bland,
Incredibly blossoming in the little breast.
And in the Far West
The tremendous cowboys in goatskin pants
Shot up the town of her ignorant wish.

In the gunflash she saw the long light shake
Across the lake, repeating that poem
At Finsbury Park.
But the echo was drowned in the roll of the trams—
Anyway, who would have heard? Not a soul!
Not one noble and toxic like Buffalo Bill.

In the holy name *bang! bang!* the flowers came
With the marvellous touch of fingers
Gentler than the fuzzy goats
Moving up and down up and down as if in ecstasy
As the cowboys rode their girl-sleek horses
Over the barbarous hills of California.

POOR INNOCENT

It is a gentle natural (Is it I?) who
Visits timidly the big world of
The heart, and stares a little while at love
As at a plaited and ringleted paleblue
Seascape, whence escapes a new, untrue,
Refracted light, a shade or two above
The infra fringe beyond which does he move
He moves unsurely in an air askew.

This pretty simpleton, myself or not,
Squints at the filagree of wind and wave,
Scanning the frothing for the Lord knows what—
The foam-born rising, maybe, nude and swell,
Or—
Back to your kennel, varlet! Fool, you rave!
Unbind that seaweed, throw away that shell!

—A. J. M. SMITH.

WITHDRAWAL FROM CRETE

Doggedly,
Inch by bitter inch bought dear with blood—
They are withdrawing towards the dark wood,
And beyond, the height; and beyond the height, the sea.

What night is come
Upon the pleasant island once ashine
With fruited fig, sad olive and green vine?
How is the grove laid waste, its singers dumb!

Here where in shade
The neatherd tuned his pipe while all the rocks
Were whitened with the fleeces of his flocks—
Here hell is opened and the dead are laid.

Here where a breath
Would scatter oleander-flower and wake
The sleeping silver of a little lake—
Here lie the shattered wings of the fleet of death.

God be your speed,
Good gentlemen of Britain gallantly
Fighting your rearguard action to the sea!
God send you ships in your so-desperate need.

And we, your kin—
Let us be strong and stronger yet who see
Ruin come even unto Arcady,
The hollow cities falling from within.

Now let the past
Open our purblind eyes: let us be sure
That to be innocent's not to be secure
And to be weak is to be lost at last.

Though the sea burn
And the highest hill be levelled with the plain
And the heaped bones of the dead be dust again—
We will return, O Crete, we will return.

White shall they gleam,
The tall refashioned cities in a day
When we'll remember anguish passed away
As a dream and the dark shadow of a dream.

—AUDREY ALEXANDRA BROWN.

DISCOURSE ON METHOD

More generations seek St. Brendan's isle,
where flowered dream matures the seeded hope
in soil made over-fine, than vie to grope
through labyrinths to truth set free from guile.
The smile of god breaks forth a twisted smile
as soaring dreams snap out like bubbled soap.
Then erstwhile seekers hang about and mope,
skinned clean of animation this long while.

When all is said, and each has had his say,
there's none deny the mole his sense to creep
by fractions upwards to the light of day.
He keeps his gains and has no need to weep.
And so I will not dream beyond the bay
to rise blind-eyed and fuddled out of sleep.

THANKS FOR A DROWNED ISLAND

Into the flooding tide
to seek the consolation of the waters,
to find the depths a life of blessed peace
after the sable ride:

I would lie in the sea
and light not cease,
nor water gather stagnant in the grave,
nor rampant furies of the land and air
gibber about the tomb;
where tides hold concourse with the fragile weed
while broad shapes loom,
gather in groups to feed,
shining and indistinct against the green sea grass,

and with a casual flick of the tail dart home
moving cold currents to a body's need,
sending the deep sea echo of a wave
washing about the entrance to a cave:

there to grow strength of body, faith of mind,
accustomed to the water's way
and understanding of its kind
there
in the green sea day.

—A. G. BAILEY.

WAR IDYLL

Parting

When the fierce chemistry of a kiss assails the pulse,
and the heart valves faint
under love's drug,
Humour, the Alchemist,
pours his effervescent potion
in antidote.

Interval

Minutes tarry the hours
when at the day's end
no embrace beckons.

The bed is narrow that once was wide.
And sleep sinks into the eyes
as sunset into a sea of troubled waters.

The Sigh

Make of the mind a desert,
horizon-walled, sky-ceilinged,
and sweep it with an April wind
till every tree and living thing were bare.

Then in that sandy solitude
sit, chin-cupped,
and trace a sigh that would startle the unsuspecting stars.

Separation

Herein lies the living death:
the void between the lips' last grace
and the coming cry of greeting—
between the hand's breath on the hair,
and the slow surge of warmth through the marble limbs.
Each drooping hour, grayed to the pallor of death,
is crucified on the cross of separation.

But Beloved, halleluias raise,
for herein also lie the light of hope,
the promised glory of the resurrection.

—CAROL COATES.

LIVES OF THE POETS

Rake's Progress

Villon at thirty could repent
A lifetime riotously spent,
And paid for, as the record shows,
Usuriously through the nose.

Atheist's Tragedy

Kit Marlowe missed his chance to die
On Tyburn in a hempen tie,
Or perish like his Jew of Malta
In quantities of scalding water.

The Bride Wore Red

Gay Thomas Nashe, whose cloak of scarlet
Warmed in its time more than one harlot,
Wrote off his *Dildo* with regret
That he and she had ever met.

Salvationist

Christopher Smart took deadly potions
Of gin and God till zany notions
Took him to Bedlam, where he died,
Praying for all the fools outside.

Fin de Siècle

Rimbaud, already on the wane,
Embraced the trousers of Verlaine;
Spent his short season deep in Hades,
Then stopped for tea with certain ladies.

Sepulture d'un Poète Maudit

Baudelaire, idol of the French,
Lived with a poxy colored wench,
Then died of hashish and remorse.
Paretic? Naturally. Of course.

—LEO KENNEDY

EPITHALAMIUM IN TIME OF WAR

Now is the time in valiant days
When break we from the warring heart's
Huge anger. Across the watery ways,
The quadrant of the globe's quick girth—
Though guns in monstrous utterance phrase
Their grim denials—summer starts,
March bursts the answering hawthorn-sprays,
The crocus green from English earth,
Gladdened are simple birds who sing
Remembered joy, tomorrow's mirth,
And all that gentle love shall bring.

Of man's dictation cite the deed
Or writ or reach to clamp a root,
Or lien a leaf, stop sunward weed;
With scarlet wax and taper seal,
With signet hold the hinge of tide—
Manacle morning, make mandrake mute!
On June clap gyves and dungeon seed!
What cumbrous Caesar can repeal
Golgotha's grass? Watch where a wing,
A whorl, make use of wind and wheel
That code and key and clavis bring.

How shall the heart be less than leaf
Whose signature makes mock of mouths?
Of more than grasses man though brief
The bravery of his summer's term.
Will Godhood brook the snaffle of
A straw? O we shall muster deaths
And with the paradox of love
Loose hate, ally the wooing worm:
Precepts borrow from the king
Sucked in a cabbage, with Pharaoh's sperm
Shall found a line of radish. Bring,

Then, bud and bomb before this Foe
And let him contemplate his guts.

But now, where birch and maple grow,
Comes spring to parallel the thorn
And England's pledge in bosky blow
Where Nightingale her honey puts.
The month's last ravelin of snow
Is white in woods; beneath the horn
Of moon the icicle goes; birds sing;
And every fraise and freshet torn
With gash and gold that meltings bring.

Together, a string of ancient crows
Plunge from their limb—roaring, the plane
Takes drunkenly the field and goes
Gale-hardy, skygallant hanger in blue.
In darkened foundries burst hot snows;
Acres harvest heavy grain.
The pampering crane at wharf-edge stows
Its hate. At every chimney, clue
And crest of iron answer cling.
And men, where lately poppies grew,
This, and gentle love shall bring—

For steel and stop, our loves design:
In factories death is packed with palms
Not harsh to bread and blessèd wine.
(Say with what blueprint, ward and wit
Shall fist find faith, where Fear confine,
Hard Charon quit with easy alms?)
Behold, where drums the day's decline,
The Sabbath's seven candles lit.
No cap nor clock nor reckoning,
No fuse but love shall hallow it,
No boulder but its Easter bring.

And so to martial hills and holms
Where Magog holds a town in fee,
Love's hater, index, darling comes.
Out of the monster cannon's seed,
The armoured epoch's gravid wombs
Make paradox, from spike and tree
Glad words, read April palindromes!

Assert the seasons of your need,
For in the compass of this ring
The future's corners are decreed,
God's golden inch, His scaffolding.

Then take this dear this double love
Whose loop and lunge on heaven's bollards
Bind. All love shall Harbour have
Whose silken nets its fathoms find.
Nor fear, O let no lover grieve:
Against the veer and vertical
Of God the world's vast corners cleave,
Our pitch and parallel is lined.
Listen! a thrush declaring spring!
Saint Francis walks among mankind.
One golden round! God's mastering.

Now is the holy time, sweet noon.
Within this chapel's candled dusk
Does love lack loss, place glory on.
Gain gladness! Against these eastward two,
Take angles, sights, high orthogon;
Mortally, measure against, risk,
Arrive at, solve, survey His sun!
God's binder goes. Golden through
His gates they come! Now belfry, ring!
Love, them, each living thing, renew!
To her, to him, His blessings bring!

—RALPH GUSTAFSON.

SUMMER'S JOE

He unlocked an apple first, then lifted the latch
of the ancestral tree,
whistled amongst the tall corn gaily
like a scythe of birds:
on the shore the lion waves lay down on their paws
and above the trodden sand
a storm of gulls made sadness as white
as April does;
he climbed the stalled peak above the hush
of the slimmed sea,
the lark went up on his stalk and the gorse
had a fry of bees—
O sign me into your water, he cried,
to the cool annul,
write me into your smooth bible
he called to the lake,
unwind me on your reel, he said
to the road of go,
slow me into a grey rock!
but the answer was No, Joe.
He called to the hunting morning then
to shoot his blood,
he asked the seamstress of the woods
to stitch his manhood,
he stripped to show his flesh, his flesh
was white as snow—
give me ecstasy of total love!
but the answer was No, Joe.

Then dropped by wind at the starting-point
he was damned by stone,
he was left with the grocer's salt of love
in the place of boards;
swallows passed him and sparrows shot
above his head,
light left in a sail for the farthest south,

eyes fell from a kite;
while the natural lechers in their pool
pulled down the shades
fireflies with their pouting milk
perplexed the roads—
when night's a journey land's in doubt,
flesh is a traveller,
ho for the lantern of yourself,
ho for the clock!
In the always-easy bed he found
the lazy chart,
in the uncharted land he saw
the heart's riot,
wrestling weak angels then he climbed
gristle and bone
until on top of himself he saw
that he was still alone:
O God from my Italian pride
deliver me now,
and from my terrible steepness!
but the answer was No Joe
the answer was No.

Then sudden in the scope of sea
with the delight of found
he saw his treasure island,
he saw his milkwhite fathom.
To every spar and nerve he set
his orchard sails
and in the fleet of love his eyes
were sea-blue admirals,
while at his telescope of brass
she lulled her palms,
lay level to his pride, lay still
to his rocked rigging. . . .
O secret in that heart of a place
a bird looks out,
pivots the forest on its nest, its eye
the germ of light—
no join was seen between flesh and flesh,

between hair and grass,
loving themselves the world they loved
with a mirror's process;
leaving their fear in another place,
their clock in a pool,
it seemed that the earth had made of them
its capital
for the deputies of leaves and waves
the motes of wit,
a parliament of the water-jet
and a sun-up senate.
He turned towards his love and said,
Love, tell me now
is not our love perpetual?
but she said No Joe.
Is not our ecstasy for life
with a hey-nonny-no?
and she replied from a long way off
and her answer was No.
I call you by our bed of love
couple, roll and hairy-ho!
she answered: While we loved these died,
with no again, a feast of No.

NIGHT OUT

Where old men mumble in decrepitude
or fallen over tables lay their loose cheeks
on grained pine wet with beer that spills and drips for them:
in taverns easy as swing doors
off the disastrous streets where grinding gas
and shouting newsboys stuff the unseen hole
of the unfillable and ultimate zero—

enter, brims snapped over coalhole eyes,
ties neatly done as counterfeit
and smoke inhaled into theatre red lungs

which move the furry pectorals below
aerex pindot and stripe,
then pouted out from powerful gargoyle lips
the adult signatures deforming in the air:
pants hitched, brought forward
the tentatives and knots and pans
of hands, the shoulders hunched
to bury them on the shining wooden moon
of an evening's pleasure.

slid in the wet, glasses to grasp
or stroke reflectively
as possessed treasures in crystal houses,
whose tight-rope rims flecked with foam
summon the balled delicacy of the forefinger
while grosser bottoms reassure with winks—
the smelling glass tossed like a virgin
tips to a sailor tongue and is recessed
into the important belly happily straddled
as another more successful sex
whose intuitions climb up behind the eyes like marshlights.

By mirrors' long friendly vows
and amongst soldiers opaque with purpose
drinking gymnastically on death's edge:
in liquidities of sense
and sudden manstorming laughter with reddening eyes
the evening opens to an endless prospect
of male and easy city the Isle of Dogs
whose nagging police though there are blurred
whose estuary longings
sum, and almost solve themselves.

Through epics of deserted streets
below sharp rooves soured with dawn
transformed identities:

staggering at crossroads and blown apart
down avenues emptied of love
where workers prepare their logical breakfasts.

SACKING

This brown stuff has its personal smell:
a drag of it would make the night of meat,
yet would not do for a princess's coat or a bandage.

Bulbs like this kind of dark:
though it is not the velvet thieves slit,
it is the coarse that children fix in a tent .

It makes potatoes hobble, and coal—
and its rough weather hides in a barn
like the lost covers of furious skulls.

—PATRICK ANDERSON.

YOU IN THE FEATHERY GRASS

You in the feathery grass, dropping the nubbled berry
into the thick bowl, you who linger in country roads
with naked feet knowing the heat and texture of the steaming dust,
you, woman, standing in the doorway filling with twilight,
feeling a soft head on your breast, a harder pushing against your thigh,
you, hired boy, sitting on a snake fence in the summer moonlight,
thinking of the crazy fiddle under the hanging lamps,
the city guys with the laughter in their eyes like dry sticks burning,
thinking of the musty sweetness of hay in barns,
with knotted breath thinking of the bodies of women;

and you, moving on the wild March sky
as on cloud driven mornings since time began to form
in your boy's mind, moving on the plunging sky
with the long sweeping rhythm of a scythe through tall grasses,
hoping behind the closed face for warm days soon and sowing,
feeling against the blunt hand familiar hardness of seed
like hail falling on the ready ground;

you, all of you who know affinity with the dust, speak it soon,
scatter the seed of your knowing quickly,
reckon it up in debits and credits,
have it written in the yellowing account book on the kitchen mantle,
before dust chokes the single outline,
blurs the individual mouth.

LET US REMEMBER

Out of us who have become rock,
the sweet marrow of delight frozen with the blood,
let a thought be struck of those who in their lives
flowed as rivers,
who went up and down the tortured land
of their defeats with a tall sun rolling in each hand,

let us remember out of their journeying
the forward face stubborn against the broken hope,
the shack laid low that was their home in the wilderness,
already soaring in their minds from stern foundations,
where children stand gathering light in their eyes
and the warm but thorned and not too easy promise of the rose.

—KAY SMITH.

PLAQUE

Under the viaduct, by the hot canal
While horse and cop clomped overhead and the barges
Were lifted in Lock 6, he was conceived
Oh no more wondrously than any bulb or grub.
Fed while the 8.04 speckled the breast,
And commuters' shadows streaked across the oilcloth
He flourished like corn or crow.
Where cats scamper and horse cavorts
He learned to stand and spit at the passing cars—
Triumph of the cortex over the natural response.
Spent four years learning to hate.
At ten was adopted by a fine big firm.
At fifteen was a pin-boy at Mike's.
At twenty fronted for a bookie's.
Was drafted and prepared to make the world safe
For Belmont and Narraganset and the boys at Mike's.
Staggered and hit the curb.
Was sent back via Postal Telegraph.
The lady who answered couldn't read
And the dark words finally
Sputtered under a frying pan.

Oh lament your strong and white winged heroes.
Here no bronze nor crepe marks.
The passing freight flutters the laundry hung out like cliches.

—BRUCE RUDDICK.

THE STENOGRAPHERS

After the brief bivouac of Sunday
their eyes, in the forced march of Monday to Saturday
hoist the white flag, flutter in the snowstorm of paper,
haul it down and crack in the midsun of temper.

In the pause between the first draft and the carbon
they glimpse the smooth hours when they were children—
the ride in the ice-cart, the iceman's name,
the end of the route, and the long walk home.

Remember the sea where floats at high tide
where sea marrows growing on the scatter-green vine
or spools of grey toffee, or wasps nests on water;
remember the sand and the leaves of the country.

Bell rings and they go and the voice draws their pencil
like a sledge across snow; when its runners are frozen
rope snaps and the voice then is pulling no burden
but runs like a dog on the winter of paper.

Their climates are winter and summer—no wind
for the kites of their hearts—no wind for a flight;
a breeze at the most, to tumble them over
and leave them like rubbish—the boy-friends of blood.

In the inch of the noon as they move they are stagnant.
The terrible calm of the noon is their anguish;
the lip of the counter, the shape of the straws
like icicles breaking their tongues are invaders.

Their beds are their oceans—salt water of weeping
the waves that they know—the tide before sleep;
and fighting to drown they assemble their sheep
in columns and watch them leap desks for their fences
and stare at them with their own mirror-worn faces.

In the felt of the morning, the calico minded,
sufficiently starched, insert papers, hit keys,
efficient and sure as their adding machines;
yet they weep in the vault, they are taut as net curtains
stretched upon frames. In their eyes I have seen
the pin-men of madness in marathon trim
race round the track of the stadium pupil.

ISOLATIONIST

When the many move
the man
in the cubicle of content
cowers, suddenly discovered, suddenly rent
by the reality of crowds.
He has trained the climbing vine,
written "roses" on his ledger,
lived like a saint and finds himself a leper.

Immaculate of belief and violent on Mondays,
thinking no evil and thanking no second party
he has leaned in the evenings on the low-lipped window
and learned of his saintliness from outlines of lovers.

Now lovers leap the sash and the many winnow
his penny bank of wisdom and set it swirling
down the unclogged drain in the hidden scullery.
People take sudden shape and are suddenly human,
smash walls, uproot chairs and juggle cutlery
while he sits with gloved hands in a buttoned confusion.

—P. K. PAGE.

POEM

Last night, when fevered minutes
  At length lay exhausted
And the quiet time began its
Deliberate contriving,
Determined on giving
  To the fret it had ousted
A new sort of living,

I, ambushed within your
  Disguising covert,
Became the reviewer
Of actions and motives,
Feeling assertive
  But secretly cowered
And mentally furtive.

As if our Duality
  Had eclipsed my Self,
And by some agility
Kept acres pressed
For our interest
  Into the sweet gulf
Of your lips and breast.

Then, dearest, you were asleep,
  And I was free to become
Faithless, or to weep
At misery, or contemplate;
To murder or create,
  Or even to succumb
To a bourgeois fate.

That is, when we're beyond
  Temptation, we may attempt,
Like the tempted don
Or the selfhanged student,
A new excitant,
  For the moment exempt
From ties and imprudent.

But the only attractive
  Prospect was outlined
In the perspective
Of our two eyes' vision,
As it brought Reason
  Further inland
To its right position.

That was what I, beneath
  Your web of travelled hair
Over my eyes, and the path
Your hand made down my face,
Thought as I felt the space
  Widen between what we were
And what will replace.

For in this revolt
  The rebels have fled
Before the assault;
And we stand silent
Knowing the excellent
  Journey travelled
To a fertile island.

LOVESONG SCORED FOR TWO TROMBONES

Dearest, twenty winds across the
North and South ice-twisted poles
Come with tales to shock Demosthe-
nes and other learned schools.
Baruch Despinoza fostered
Philosophic formulae,
Seeing everything sequestered
In or near the upper sky.
Saying that a nice distinction
May exist between the two,
Yet united is the eternal
With the temporally true.
That is, things which evanesce can
Be related to a norm
Fixed, Essential, as a dress is
Made to fit a woman's form.

God must not be thought as distant
Like the sibilant in space
Waiting till a near assistant
Learns the facts of our disgrace;
He's the rare or pure abstraction,
Half of our dichotomy,
Not the overwhelming fraction;
(half is quite a lot to me)
So I find it very easy
Like explaining speed of light
Crystallizing any theory
Of Love's motions and its might.
Love is not a maudlin feeling;
Love is half my bank account;
Makes my stock admire the ceiling,
Flaps the tickertape about.
Though the norm is more efficient
As a referee than Love
If it is the *Ding an Sich* and
You are just the relative,
How can I relate my knowledge
To a thing I only feel,
When dear, it is to your beauty
Norms and essences appeal?
I to gain validity, shall
Ignore acts of God and wars
Crossing seas to you, like Herschel,
With a pocketful of stars.

—RONALD HAMBLETON.

WILD NIGHT

Let us meet somewhere in the cold-blowing tumbling night,
A trembling veil of snow laid on our eyes.

And there will be two of us inside the warm soft house
Of your fur coat, and lost in a voyaging kiss
We'll laugh returning to find our lips sealed
Tightly, and something whispering within us, knowingly,
Only great fires in the blood will thaw your mouths,
And nothing else will do, nothing else will do.

THE HUNTER

I carry the groundhog along by the tail
All the way back to the farm, with the blood
Dripping out of his mouth a couple of drops at a time
Leaving a perfect trail for anyone to follow.

The half-wit hired-man is blasting imaginary rabbits
Somewhere on our left, and we walk through fields steaming after rain
Jumping the mud, and I watch the swing of your girl's hips in the cotton dress
Ahead of me, the proud way your hand carries the gun, and remembering how you held it

Up to the hog caught in the trap and blew his head in,
Wonder what fate you have in store for me.

ERSATZ

Kiss her, kiss her, kiss her a thousand times,
Over and over rub your cheek to her cheek and feel it burn you, hot as the lips of flame,
Finger her breasts almost savagely, till they seem to grow in your hands,

Then for a moment body to body still and
Eyes in the dark watching the snow's gleam
Under the streetlight there beyond the window

Wonder why it is not the same, why it is no good, no good at all,

No good at all, and how long, you, can you go on fooling yourself about the others,
How long before the emptiness will go, or will it always go on killing and aching and crying silently here in the darkness.

—RAYMOND SOUSTER.

LADY REMINGTON

Lie down beside her, soldier,
And do but use her well,
And she can ease your passion
With cries and powder smell.
Be reckless in your loving;
Her grace makes no one poor,
For only bullets issue
From such an iron whore.

PROVIDENCE

With careful fragments do we build lives
Unknowing, when the wind moves nearer,
How a certain governance contrives
The show before a comic mirror.

Wherein atoms become skyscrapers,
The fool's tower is flung to the skies.
There, even a minuscule capers
And the meanest pauper a prince dies.

But the silent wind matures, or slow
Or swift, and loudly will the glass break:
That we may not hear before we go
The bitter comment that the stars make.

—IRVING LAYTON.

REVIEWS

KALEIDOSCOPE

STEEP ACRES, *by Daniel Smythe. Anderson House, Washington, D. C. $1.50.*
RIND OF EARTH, *by August Derleth. James A. Decker. $2.00.*
THE LINCOLN LYRICS, *by John Malcolm Brinnin. New Directions. $1.00.*
NOTES TOWARD A SUPREME FICTION, *by Wallace Stevens. The Cunningham Press, Cummingham, Mass. (Limited Edition.)*

It would be difficult to imagine that four such widely different books of verse could be fitted into a pattern, and yet it is so in this instance. Readers of current poetry are, of course, familiar with the poets represented. All have contributed to current magazines. All, except one, have previously published one or more books of verse. Daniel Smythe's first book is, in a sense, the beginning of the curious pattern that these volumes form. That is, Mr. Smythe's poetry is the simplest in form, the most unpretentious in content. His material is the natural world of farm and country, and those who people it. The world he sees *is*; he asks no more of it and only in oddly naive moments does he permit himself to speculate on its interior meanings.

His best poems are moving by their simplicity and honesty; his talent is the rare one of being able to say the commonplace with freshness and vigor. For instance, in writing of a rain storm:

I struck out into it; above me the cloud was grey shadow.
I splashed the water that once was in the air.
Think of it! All the brooks that have found the meadow,
Above my head in the darkness—they had been there. . . .

of people:

I am bounded by people like rivers of earth,
Pressed by undercurrents that do not come to the sunlight.
People are everything I see; they are a world. . . .

It seems to me Mr. Smythe is less successful when he writes of the city, as a visitor, or of the sea; the love poems have the nostalgic over-

tone of a shy and sensitive mind. *Steep Acres* is a good first book not only in itself but in what it promises for the future.

Mr. Derleth, surely one of the most prolific of the younger American writers, dashes off historical novels, murder mysteries and volumes of verse with bewildering rapidity. It is not strange then that his work should emerge uneven and often, seemingly without direction. He, too, is fundamentally a nature poet, though with him it is merely a point of departure. He speaks on many subjects, if, with not the voice of an angel, at least with boundless emphasis. Unlike Mr. Smythe, Derleth's poetry is urban in quality; there is a glint of chrome on it even among the birds and butterflies. When he does write of the city, trains or the radio, he is the complete modern. In another sense he has something in common with Mr. Smythe; he does not judge. He is the recorder; his poetry is the poetry in the happening, in the thing that is the poem.

With Mr. Brinnin's *Lincoln Lyrics,* the pattern moves through the area of poetry of emotion to that of the intellect. Here nature is used, too, but as an undercurrent to the theme—the essential struggle of man through tragedy to victory. Mr. Brinnin's poetry is sharp and incisive; he knows where he is going, what effects he wants to achieve, and he gets results which are impressive. His theme is the betrayal of the Lincoln legend which at the time of the writing of the poem (1939) seemed more likely than it does now. Nevertheless, *The Lincoln Lyrics* can still be read with profit, the dangers are not over, the ship is not safely warped; moreover, there are many things to admire in the poems themselves.

Thus we arrive at the completion of the pattern—examples of poetry from the simplest to the most complex form—with *Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction* by the prolific Mr. Stevens. I am not sure where the present volume stands; possibly somewhere between *The Man With the Blue Guitar* and the recently published *Parts of a World.* Mr. Stevens is obviously one of the most gifted poets now writing in the English language. He is certainly one of the most wilful and difficult. Moreover, I suspect him of being somewhat of a humbug. If I understand Mr. Stevens' purpose, and if I do it is purely by sleight of mind, he is out to prove that poetry has no relation to the world but is a necessary part of living nonetheless. The present volume is divided into three sections entitled: *It must be abstract; It must*

change; It must give pleasure. Of course, the title itself is indicative of the theme: poetry must be the great fiction:

The poem refreshes life so that we share,
For a moment, the first idea. It satisfies
Belief in an immaculate beginning

And sends us, winged by an unconscious will,
To an immaculate end. . . .

Disregarding Mr. Stevens' objective and its relation to the book, the last poem in the present volume seems to me to be about the finest I have come across since the holocaust began. To this extent I can agree with his theses; it certainly made me share "For a moment, the first idea." It deserves to be quoted in full:

Soldier, there is a war between the mind
And sky, between thought and day and night. It is
For that the poet is always in the sun,

Patches the moon together in his room
To his Virgilian cadences, up down,
Up down. It is a war that never ends.

Yet it depends on yours. The two are one.
They are a plural, a right and left, a pair,
Two parallels that meet if only in

The meeting of their shadows or that meet
In a book in a barrack, a letter from Malay.
But your war ends. And after it you return

With six meats and twelve wines or else without
To walk another room. Monsieur and comrade,
The soldier is poor without the poet's lines,

His petty syllabi, the sounds that stick,
Inevitably modulating, in the blood.
And war for war, each has its gallant kind.

How simply the fictive hero becomes the real;
How gladly with proper words the soldier dies,
If he must, or lives on the bread of faithful speech.

—JOHN RITCHEY.

FOUR POETS

BROWNSTONE ECLOGUES, *by Conrad Aiken. Duell Sloan & Pearce, New York. $2.00.*
THIS IS MY BELOVED, *by Walter Benton. Knopf, New York. $2.00*
DINNER PARTY, *by Jessica Nelson North. Prairie Press, Muscatine, Ia. $2.00.*
SELECTED POEMS OLD & NEW, *by Danford Barney. Fine Editions Press, New York. $2.00*

His publishers insist that *Brownstone Eclogues* "reveals a new Conrad Aiken, a poet who, at the very height of his powers, has changed his style and entered upon a more objective and realistic phase, while at the same time he carries further the strong note of affirmation which characterized" his earlier work. It is true that the poet of *The Census-Takers,* with its

Stranger, did you ever play ball in a vacant lot?
Will you lend us the loan of a match? or spare us a dime?
Did you hear of the murder? Would you like us to show you the spot?
Or like us to re-enact—on the spot—the crime?

* * * * * * *

Did you ever play blind-man's buff in the bat-flit light?
Stranger, whose heart did you break? and what else did you do?—
The census-takers are coming to ask you tonight;
The truth will be hurrying home, and it's time you knew.

is a far cry from the poet of *Preludes for Memnon* (1931), but there is nothing more than a normal poetic growth in evidence, unless it is a leaning towards the ideologies and language of his younger contemporaries.

Aiken's preceding book of love sonnets, *And in the Human Heart,* I found interesting enough to read once carefully; I read *Brownstone Eclogues* three times with increasing delight. Such a poem as the long *Blues for Ruby Matrix,* with its occasional reminding of *The Coming Forth by Day of Osris Jones,* is as good as anything Conrad Aiken has done, and the vivid imagery of such poems as *Doctors' Row, The Nameless Ones, Hatteras Calling, The Habeas Corpus Blues, How to Accompany the Moon Without Walking, All Death All Love,* and *The Census-Takers* is remarkably memorable.

Despite its color, *The Poet in Granada* seems the least successful of the poems in this book; but even this has much to offer the reader.

In this volume Aiken is most successful in his selection of word and phrase to bring home the human experience about which he elects to write; perhaps in no other of his volumes is his range as wide as in this one, and perhaps nowhere else, save in *Osiris Jones,* is Aiken as vivid. He has given over a little of his lyricism, something of the sensuous imagery of his earlier work for a sharper line, a richer and more varied experience, and an occasionally magnificent singing stanza that it is an experience to read and remember.

Put beside *Brownstone Eclogues,* Walter Benton's first slim collection, beautifully presented by Knopf's Mr. Dwiggins, suffers. It is a diary of "love and passion," very erotic, with far less love than passion, but it would be a mistake to think of it as in any sense of the word pornographic. The jacket is covered with hosannahs by Louis Untermeyer, William Rose Benét, John Hall Wheelock, Van Wyck Brooks, Kenneth Fearing, Horace Gregory, and William Carlos Williams—and that, I maintain, is a prize assortment—all praising the book for something or other, but none apparently aware of the fact that poems of pure passion such as these suffer for the lack of everything else. Mr. Benton does a very good job for as far as he has gone; but he hasn't gone very far. The pleasures of sex are all very well for a handful of poems, but the intimations of love are too few, and the emphasis on possession too strong. Mr. Benton's diary of passion is all breasts, thighs, woo-woo, orgasms, and a curious little phrase currently in popular slang use of which Mr. Benton could not have been aware: "making honey." There is in short too much "ripe melon meat" and not enough of "shellfish and saltsticks."

Jessica Nelson North, now back in active service on the staff of *Poetry,* has published no volume of poetry since 1928 (*The Long Leash*), and therefore doubtless a good many readers turned to her *Dinner Party,* another beautifully presented book, to find there the expected felicitous line and phrase, the well-turned poems, in short, which she has always written. That is not to say that Miss North's poetry is great poetry or even that it will last for any time at all, but certainly it is among the most readable poetry of our time. Consider, for instance, the precise delight of such a poem as *The Music Lesson*—

> *This is the house where I come every week*
> *To play my lessons, I am twelve years old.*

The music teacher has a puckered cheek.
He marks cadenza with a lean forefinger
And spreads his hands wide for fortissimo.
I am twelve years old.
I can play "Indian Summer" in three flats.

This is the house. The narrow walk is wet
With last night's rain under the hydrangeas.
And all the hedge-rows whisper, "Margaret."
"Margaret is late," the little scarf-flowers say.
"She is late today."

Or the grave, measured beauty of *From a Train Window,* which ends:

Stay in your sunlit pasture, little feet,
For trains are often tardier than thought,
And roads unravelled are not half so sweet,
And worlds too well explored must come to naught.
People who ride on trains must ride away.
We are the prisoners who cannot stay.

Miss North divides her poems into those "About Women,"—"And Men," "And Life and Death." *Dinner Party* is a smooth, effortless performance, bright and pleasant, and a book that will give pleasure to most lovers of poetry.

Like all books from the Fine Editions Press, Danford Barney's *Selected Poems Old & New* is beautifully printed. After reading it with care, it is inevitable that one should reflect that it is a pity these formats of Gustav Davidson's could not be spent upon better content. That is not to say that Mr. Barney is a bad poet; he is not; it is simply that after reading this selection and putting it down, there is very very little that remains—no lines, no brilliant image, nothing. It may be my lack, for, apart from Mr. Barney's delusion that assonance is rhyme from time to time, there is nothing much wrong with his poetry, unless it is possible to say of it that it is negative. In the Foreword, Francis H. Bangs ("one of America's outstanding scholars in the histories of literature and philosophy"—sic) writes that Mr. Barney "makes no presumptuous pronouncements, and builds a philosophy upon no premature conclusions." That in its own way is a

dreadful indictment, and Mr. Barney ought to object; but precisely what his grounds for objection would be is not apparent from the pages of this collection. Yet, it is hardly fair to indict this book because it is competent, even able, not mediocre, but hardly distinguished; it is in many ways a pleasing selection, and yet it is not satisfying. Color is lacking, there is nothing positive here, and fundamentally Mr. Barney does not seem to have anything resembling a living philosophy.

—AUGUST DERLETH.

THREE MEN

PERSON, PLACE AND THING, *by Karl Jay Shapiro. Reynal & Hitchcock. $2.00.*
LOT'S WIFE, *by Max Eastman. Harper & Brothers. $2.00.*
WAR SONGS, *by Struthers Burt. Charles Scribner's Sons. $1.25.*

Inasmuch as Karl Jay Shapiro is in the armed services of his country somewhere in the South Pacific, the publication of his first book of poems confers upon him an honorary degree *in absentia.* The simile is not inept because the poems were selected and seen through the press by friendly deputies who have included some poems written on a troop-ship and a few forwarded from his post of duty. Honorary degrees imply that the recipient has accomplished something worthy of recognition, and in this case Mr. Shapiro has in three years made his way into literary magazines, the *Five Young American Poets* of New Directions, and four American anthologies.

Conning the collected poems for the reason behind his rapid emergence, one finds it in a keenness of perception expressed in the dual forms of vivid imagery and satiric wit. As a spokesman for his generation, he has no truck with illusions, either of the senses or the mind, nor with mystifications, whether in *weltpolitik* or the quarrels of racial superiority. One cannot call him disillusioned, for underneath both his light banter and his bitter excoriation there lies belief in a moral structure of society. He is too sharp a critic of hypocrisies and deceits to be without faith in honesty and truth; no man becomes impassioned in denunciation unless he glows with the white heat of righteous wrath.

For those who like comparisons, one can say that Mr. Shapiro resembles Juvenal in the sting of his satire and the tang of his epithets. Space does not allow reprinting of one of the best of his scornful

pieces, *Washington Cathedral,* but the quality of his style can be shown in

NECROPOLIS

Even in death they prosper; even in the death
Where lust lies senseless and pride fallow
The mouldering owners of rents and labor
Prosper and improve the high hill.

For theirs is the stone whose name is deepest cut;
Theirs the facsimile temple, theirs
The iron acanthus and the hackneyed Latin,
The boxwood rows and all the birds.

And even in death the poor are thickly herded
In intimate congestion under streets and alleys.
Look at the standard sculptures, the cheap
Synonymous slabs, the machined crosses.

Yes, even in death the cities are unplanned,
The heirs govern from the old centers;
They will not remove. And the ludicrous angels,
Remains of the poor, will never fly
But only multiply in the green grass.

Mr. Shapiro's writing has intense vitality manifested through pungency of phrase, accuracy of observation, sensitiveness in the handling of form and a verbal heat that fuses his lines. His is no delicate carving of intaglios nor composing of shimmering music, but a swift, sure and direct attack upon shams and pretences. His work is crammed with promise of growing power in the use of words.

If Max Eastman, as his publishers assert on the dust-jacket of *Lot's Wife,* visited Palestine in order to supply his imagination with the material to make the old tale live, the journey did not have as happy results as George Moore's in *The Brook Kerith.* The local color found in this ironical narrative poem could have been derived from travel books and the paintings of Tissot, while the vocabulary is a queer mixture of *Genesis* and American slang. He pictures Lot as a Hill Billy, who, by force of his violent nature, had established himself as

the boss of Sodom, and maintained his rule until the citizenry turned against him in the affair of the visiting angels.

Like a huge reptile the mob lurched toward Lot.
"You stinking immigrant!" "You grease-ball clown!"
"You interloping migratory bum!"
"Who set you up to boss this modern town?"
"Where did you get that bung-hole accent from?"

* * * * * * *

Such were the belly words that made Lot blench.
He could not fade now—he must take the rap.

In Mr. Eastman's version, Sodom was set on fire not by Jahveh's thunderbolts but by Lot's henchmen, and the disobedient, backward-looking wife was slain by her husband, who carved her name on a pillar of salt.

One wonders what motivated Mr. Eastman to write this curious farrago of old and new in a manner that creates chronological confusion by references to *Napoleon's piles* and *plumbing thirty centuries away*. His realistic humor has a faint resemblance to Byron's *Don Juan* and his phrases now and then remind one of Swift's smutty poems. Perhaps the poem is only a relaxation from his concern about Marxism, the metaphysics of art and the ontology of laughter.

Struthers Burt's *War Songs* are surely the diversions of a man of letters who shows in them no traces of the excellent qualities of his prose fiction. Only his signature confers any validity upon verses that could have been written as well by Tom, Dick or Harry. He uses the stock materials of patriotic appeal to our history and our democratic diversity, and only once does he break into irony in a poem with the refrain: *We are wonderful, we are wise, we have killed our young men marvellously for years.*

—RAY C. B. BROWN.

CHARMED WHITE WORDS

THE EAGLE SONNETS, *by Clement Wood. Horizon House, New York, $1.50.*
ROCK AND CUMULUS, *by Richard Leon Spain. The League to Support Poetry, N. Y. $1.50.*
FRAGILE ARMOR, *by Frances Angevine Gray. The Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.*
MIRROR OF THE HEART, *by Bayka Russell. Henry Harrison, New York. $1.50.*

Inside the jacket of *The Eagle Sonnets* we read that Clement Wood is the author of four score published volumes, that he has been awarded more poetry prizes than any poet in America, and that these sonnets are already an intrinsic part of American literature. On the front of the jacket we learn that this volume is being "prominently mentioned for the Pulitzer prize." On the back, among the encomiums of noted writers, we read that these are "the greatest sonnets since Shakespeare." I think that such blurbing does disservice to poetry. Surely, if these are the greatest sonnets since Shakespeare, then the Sonnet has been in the doldrums for over three centuries.

There are 165 sonnets in this volume. Some of them are completely successful, some fail, some are successful in part. Had the poet himself been satisfied to present, say, 65 of his sonnets—his chiselled best—we might have here a really exciting and significant collection. The best of the sonnets are in the initial long group which gives its name to the volume. The poet has been probing his soul; he has been meditating, not too profoundly for the average reader, upon the mysteries of time and space, life and death,—and as a whole these meditations bear poetry's pure and lovely signature. But too many of the sonnets are flawed, like vases from the potter's wheel, by a cheap line here or there, or purple sediment in the glaze. In the sequence entitled *The Eagle's Mate* passages such as

> *O sweet and doubly sweet and triply sweet*
> *to know your dear is in her lover's arms,*
> *letting his ardent longing sup complete*
> *upon the last of her incredible charms . . .*

occur far too often, and unfortunately invite the audience to laugh in the wrong place. It is odd that a poet of Clement Wood's long experience should remain deficient in that quality which for want of a better word we must call "taste." But the fellow *can* write! As witness

this sonnet (No. 17), which all poets, whatever their genre, will appreciate:

We are as well at ease as fishes, set
to walk through desert sands; as well at ease
as water ordered to be no longer wet,
or granite boulders told to climb up trees.
We spend our hours mining, from the hidden deep
within us, stony apteryx's wings,
and crystals quarried from the crags of sleep,
and other harsh and delicate-glimmering things.
And then we cart them and we peddle them
to those who traffic only in black bread,
and have no stomach for a bitter gem
sprung of the dark heart, not of the light head.
So must we mine, and market—lucid task
of those who cannot give what stomachs ask.

Richard Leon Spain's first volume, *Rock and Cumulus,* enters modestly upon the scene, accompanied by no fanfare. Yet a genuine poet emerges from these pages, a "born poet," one is tempted to say, for not one of his poems is a "made" poem; they all come into being simply and naturally, and they possess that quality of inevitability, which is so rare in contemporary poetry. A young Ozark farmer, Mr. Spain in his poetry is often uncannily mature. Some of his most moving poems are about men and women who are old, sad, undaunted. "Man sees a dream's death every way he turns" he states calmly. But "Shall he not also find, before the wraith/A hope in living wood, and in the stone/A standing power by which to gauge his own?"

Richard Spain's is essentially the lyric gift, and condensing it still further, the gift of the pastoral lyric, subjectified. I challenge anyone to forget this poem of his, *The Shepherd and the Poet*:

Now is the hour when swallows
Flock to the rooftree's comb
And the kind shepherd follows
The tired sheep home—
Idling down the old lanes
Through daisies, while upon
A thousand window panes
Idles the level sun.

Out of far fields of sky
The poet brings his flock
Of white, charmed words, the shy
Sheep that past thorn and rock
Move down his thoughts' long wending—
Both belled and those that pass
With a mute thunder, bending
No starry grass.

Poetry like this is the most effective antidote for headline poisoning. I recommend it to practically everybody. By the way, the volume is illustrated by the author, but candidly, this reviewer thinks Mr. Spain is a far better artist making poems than he is making pictures.

Fragile Armor, by Frances Angevine Gray, is an attractive, silver-jacketed little volume of poems which have appeared in periodicals and poetry journals. It is refreshingly free of the defects of the typical "first" volume. It is objective poetry, mostly, but it has a certain subjective delicacy which is very pleasing. There are several sonnets. *Full Moon* is a charming one. But of all her poems those few on the Finger Lakes country appeal to me most strongly. This, for instance, from *Keuka*:

Lake of wind-silvered willows, of bright wind-troubled waters,
Not for naught did the Iroquois name you Keuka,
Canoe-Landing.
Where once war-canoes glided down these narrow valleys,
On this Indian lake white men first tried the hydroplane,
Giant bird, settling down on these waves like the wild duck,
Like the gray sea-gull.
Waters not sung by poets or mapped by historians . . .

Keuka waters have at last been sung by one poet!

In *Mirror of the Heart,* by Bayka Russell, we have sonnets again, though there are several lyrics in the section called *Garlands for Euterpe,* and at the end of the book two Odes, one addressed to an Alligator, and one to the other extreme, a Chinese Lacquer-Lady. These Odes disarm the sternest critic! In the first one the poet addresses "thy leathery ugliness" and says

Unliked, unloved, and yet I envy thee
Thy calm indifference to the world's praise
Or blame . . .

To the Chinese Lacquer-Lady, watching with a "beatless heart" her "covered warrior on his gold-draped horse," she sends "my unknown book of quiet songs and sonnets." In this dulcet and almost naïve humility lies the charm of Bayka Russell's book. Her poetry is very feminine in essence. True, she can write a smooth sonnet of classic persuasion, such as the one entitled *On Reading Homer.* And sonnets like *Raider's Moon,* with its excellent beginning "How sad to dread the moonlight—" are timely. But for the most part the fabric of her poems is woven of love and nostalgia—love lost but unforgettable, nostalgia for the lost days, the lost cities. Mrs. Russell has known intimately and loved well that Paris we all mourn. She is a cosmopolite, but one with a winning simplicity; she is a sophisticate, but one without hardness. Anyone who reads her poems will read the woman in the poems, and will find her warm, honest, and appealing.

In summing up, we are reminded by T. S. Eliot that *significant* emotion has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet. "The emotion of art is impersonal." The reader who is looking for the intellectual stimulus of Eliot's "impersonal art" will keep right on looking after he has finished reading the poetry under discussion in this review. This Pegasus is a horse of another color.

—STARR NELSON.

"THE COMMON ADVENTURE"

AN ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY LATIN-AMERICAN POETRY: ANTOLOGIA DE LA POESIÁ AMERICANA CONTEMPORÁNEA, *edited by Dudley Fitts. Norfolk. New Directions. 1942.*

Unless the complete title of this anthology is given as above, its scope is not indicated. It is not merely the only comprehensive and really contemporary anthology of the work of the poets of the other American republics in English translation: it is also the only comprehensive and really contemporary anthology of their original poems. Those who have spent time, ink, postage and prayer in the vain effort to obtain the books of our neighbor poets as published—

or even long after publication—will know how much they have to be grateful for in this volume, comfortable to the eye and to the hand, that includes representative poems in Spanish, Portuguese, or French from twenty republics and Puerto Rico; the original in every instance facing a literal translation often in itself authentic poetry.

There is no other helplessness quite like that of a poet at the mercy of a translator. He is open to misinterpretation as regards idea and misrepresentation as regards style. His caustic wit may become a horrid archness and his lyric grace a grotesque caper. He may even—how frequently it happens!—fall into the hands of the enthusiast who loves his work this side idolatry but, unfortunately, is imperfectly acquainted with his language. Mr. Fitts, than whom no one is better aware of all this, states in the Preface the intention followed throughout; to stay "as close to the original as possible, line for line and sometime word for word." It can be said of this anthology that no poet's meaning has been distorted; that no translator has made use of an original poem merely as a base from which to take off on flights of his own; and that the editor has brought to the task a comprehending knowledge of the languages and the literatures represented, a taste both catholic and eclectic, and his own proved skill as translator from classic and romantic tongues.

An anthology that presents so extensive and diversified a panorama cannot keep a uniform level of excellence. We could hardly expect 21 Nerudas or Carrera Andrades—we may well be thankful for one of each. Not every country has a poetry so forceful in expression as Mexico's, so rich on the tongue as Brazil's, so exotically rhythmic as Cuba's. But every country has its own flavor, its own earth and sky, and its own outlook on the world; and some acquaintance with these we acquire.

There are certain words that artists today in the other American republics—painters as well as writers—like to employ as expressive of their own characteristic qualities. One of these words is *fusion*: the blending of European and indigeneous elements into something American that is both but neither. Another is *tellurian*: the feel of American earth. A third is *universal,* "but not the universalism suppressing particularities; a new integrating universalism preserving variety within the human unity." But the word used most significantly, most frequently, most inclusively, and with the most quickened values, is *American.* The sense of America as an environment of

the human spirit and of American as a way of life and art recur constantly. "This is the contribution of the new American," Carrera Andrade has declared: "to have discovered man's terrestrial root; to have initiated a kind of poetic realism as against metaphysical fogs and romantic mists. . . . This human and terrestrial obsession is America's contribution to universal poetry." And again: " 'The earth, that is sufficient.' In this line of Whitman's is the key to all American poetry, North and South."

The conscious movements following Modernism that are the historical stages by which this sense of America—this passionate continental conviction—has been arrived at are well-documented by the Anthology in their various formulae of Creationism, Nativism, Afro-Antilleanism ("black poetry for dancing as contradistinct to Vachel Lindsay's black poetry to be chanted"), Indigenism, Costumbrism, proletarian poetry, war poetry—the label, after all, is without permanent significance. The poet's awareness of himself as a responsible part of his world, and of his art as tool and weapon, are manifested repeatedly: "The human, the immediate, at last exercise their power."

One would like to cite names and text at length. Pablo Neruda (Chile) has given a new vocabulary not to Spanish but to poetry, or —again to quote Carrera Andrade—"does not so much 'invent' as remove the mask from reality, announcing its secret name and secret mission." Jorge Carrera Andrade (Ecuador) himself discerns and imparts the "freshness deep down things" as no other poet since Hopkins, and with a variety of method and a universality of interest and experience far beyond Hopkins' range. Ronald de Carvalho (Brazil) is sonorously Whitmanic and Sandburgian: Jacques Roumain (Haiti) deftly lyric and jeering. Through the dizzying rhythms of Luis Palés Matos (Puerto Rico), the tomtom's staccato is insistent. César Vallejo (Peru) breaks a proud and angry heart over the rigors of man's fate. It is a new world that we enter on with these poets; a new world but not a strange one: our own New World. Because they share our common adventure of the artist in America, we find in what heartening measure their poetry is likewise ours.

—MUNA LEE.

LETTER TO AUSTRALIA

PERSON, PLACE AND THING, *by Karl Jay Shapiro. Reynal and Hitchcock. $2.00.*
THE TEETH OF THE LION, *by Kenneth Patchen. New Directions. $1.00.*
PASSAGES OF REFUGE, *by Selwyn S. Schwartz. Press of James A. Decker. $2.50.*

Dear Karl: In the last note I had from you, you wrote: "Hope you'll keep me posted on the reviews if you see any." I'm glad to say that I didn't have to look very hard. Your reviewers, in fact, comprise a little who's who in current writing. Even if I had no particular interests in new poetry, I don't believe that I would be unaware that a book entitled *Person, Place and Thing* had been published. A week after it appeared, for instance, it was included in the *New Republic's* end-of-the-year list of "One Hundred Notable Books: 1942" which had in all less than a dozen poetry titles. Somebody said something once about publishing a book of poems being like dropping a pebble in Grand Canyon and listening for the reverberations. (Remember the publishing of what you called your "first seed catalog" in 1935?) This time, you should be able to hear the reverberations all the way to Australia.

The *New York Times Book Review* paid its respects in one of those squibs which they usually reserve for the author of a comfortably selling novel: "Karl Shapiro would be one soldier who can't complain about the Army's interrupting his peace-time career," they wrote. "For some time now he has been in Australia, and the following things have happened to his poetry: Included in four anthologies of American literature; accepted by *Harper's* magazine; won *Poetry* magazine's Levinson Prize for 1942; become a book entitled *Person, Place and Thing* published by Reynal and Hitchcock." In a review in the *Times* several weeks later, Peter Monro Jack wrote: "Mr. Shapiro's poems have been much praised and publicized and with a good deal of justice. . . . He has a very sure and sharp and ready mind, and he writes directly. He cuts through verbiage like a pioneer." Mr. Jack pays tribute to your Swiftian satire, but wonders if "the matter is worth while." And again, "whether his material is always worthy of his writing is another question. He seems to have a grudge, perhaps a hidden contempt for his 'person, place and thing.' This comes out most strongly in his poems about Virginia, where he went to the University and where he may not have been happy."

I don't have to tell you that I believe you have devoted your sat-

ire to worthy subjects. What worthier subjects for satire are there than false pride and bigotry and intolerance? And when you attack their presence in an institution like Mr. Jefferson's University, where they can prevent it from being the educational force for democracy which was the founder's dream, yours is no schoolboy's grudge. And I can testify to cause for attack, although I suppose it is clear, since you left the University of Virginia after six months and I stayed on for six years, that I succumbed somewhat to the

mannered brick
Where boxwood and magnolia brood
And columns with imperious stance
Like rows of ante-bellum girls.

But I am getting away from the reviews. Peter de Vries wrote the criticism for *Book Week,* the new Sunday book review section of the *Chicago Sun.* "The most important newcomer since Louis MacNeice" is his judgment. Unlike Mr. Jack, Mr. de Vries feels that the Virginia pieces are the best of the collection. In his opinion, the poem *Alexandria* which begins

The thin Potomac scarcely moves
But to divide Virginia from today

is the one poem in which "his humane resentment emerges most eloquently" and is "certainly the most representative of that antiseptic realism, that glib, astringent idiom for which in a few years he has become so widely known, shooting from obscurity to acclaim." Mr. de Vries differs with Mr. Jack also on the worth of the short lyrics. Mr. Jack wrote in passing, "There are some worthless religious lyrics." Mr. de Vries writes, "Shapiro is capable also of lyric tenderness . . . what impresses you is the wide variety of form and theme." I don't know by what standard the lyrics seem "worthless" to Mr. Jack. For me, I wish there were more of them. I especially regret the omission from the volume of the lyric *Going to the War* which appeared in *Poetry* last year, the one which concluded:

Great is the journey, deep and slow;
The sea moves with your breath.

With neither joy nor grief I go
To meet my life or death.

Delmore Schwartz wrote the review in the *Nation*. He feels that "the feat is that of taking the style of Auden and transforming it with an American subject matter" although he concedes you "remarkable and original gifts." Chief among these, in his opinion, is the power of observation, observation of the particular person, place and thing. But Mr. Schwartz fears that there is a danger of your shying away from abstractions and a tendency on your part to "rely too much on dramatic observation, organized merely as a succession of items, to solve all problems and provide the insight which the subject requires." Still he feels that this "is a book which everyone interested in modern poetry ought to read."

Selden Rodman was enthusiastic in a review in the *New Republic*. "As a member of the generation that grew up between the wars, I can't help taking a certain collective pride in the poems of Karl Shapiro," he wrote. "They would be good poems in any generation, but for mine they express with such unusual accuracy and poignancy a set of hitherto faintly articulated attitudes that they arrive as a kind of culmination."

The book has not yet been reviewed in *Poetry* and I am looking forward to the criticism of it there. I am sure that the editors who first published many of the poems which appear in the volume will see that it is reviewed by someone whose opinions will be of considerable interest.

In running through the volume myself, I have been struck again with the full body of work which you have written all within a period of two or three years. So far as I can tell, about the earliest of your poems included here is *Property* which was published in Jack Conroy's *New Anvil* in December 1939. And it has, it seems to me, only a foreshadowing of the qualities which distinguish most of the fifty or sixty poems which make up *Person, Place and Thing*. You have written remarkable poetry in the past two years; if you maintain the stride you have set, you will be one of the notable of our generation.

I have at hand two other volumes which were published about the same time as yours. They are *Passages of Refuge* by Selwyn S.

Schwartz and *The Teeth of the Lion* by Kenneth Patchen. The Patchen book is a little sampler of new work published in the New Directions Poet of the Month series—which, incidentally, is now the Poet of the Year to avoid offense to the Book of the Month Club. There are a dozen and a half of Patchen's poems and two pages which look like a typesetter's nightmare. (The printer's note says that the book was designed in collaboration with the author.) There is little in these poems that you are not already familiar with from *Before the Brave* and *First Will & Testament.* (Have you seen a copy of *The Dark Kingdom* by now?) There is the usual juxtaposition of violence and tenderness, with a preponderance of violence to the extent that you can be very violent in the neat confines of one of the New Directions thirty-two page brochures. I am not always sure just what Patchen is saying, but his language usually holds my attention anyway.

I don't know if you have seen any of the work of Selwyn Schwartz. *Passages of Refuge* is his second book of verse published during 1942 at the Press of James A. Decker. The first was *The Poet in Blue Minor,* which had an introduction by David Daiches. Schwartz's work seems to me just as chaotic as Patchen's without Patchen's compensations. Throughout the forty-odd poems of *Passages of Refuge* there are single lines which are arresting, as:

The train sings the truth of childhood

and

The wind scribbles on the wintry door.

There are groups of lines which cohere and are effective:

Wisdom retiring between pebbles and bullets:
You are the naked excellence of possession.
And sleep, like a bride, has no anger,
The color of silence effectually resolved.

But for the most part his writing is less disciplined, and at times it seems wholly disorganized. The last lines of Part III of the title poem present a fair sample of much of the work:

It's no use, a militant morning profluent,
and Job rides again in an ambulance
while
the Legion personically connects on draped
platforms
his great tradition . . . and God sits
a Dupont
at Lincoln track . . . you ain't supposed to
have tears in war times . . . or somethin' . . .

This, it seems to me, is wanting both on the level of communication and on the level of the peculiar intensity of language which is poetry. Selwyn Schwartz is able to write poetry, but in *Passages of Refuge* he has been content to write too little of it.

—COLEMAN ROSENBERGER.

BRIEFS

WAKE ISLAND. *By Muriel Rukeyser.* Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc. 16 pp. Price 50 cents.

Good poets who pick, in the wake of history, the heroic materials still foaming on the surface, do so at the risk of their reputations. Miss Rukeyser's is not enhanced by this legal product, nor is the pamphlet particularly inspiring despite the inspiring stand of our Marines at Wake Island. It is neither fact nor good fish.

CROOKED ECLIPSES. *By Ruth G. Van Horn.* Allan Swallow. Gunnison, Colorado, 23 pp. Price, 75 cents.

Some excellent poems, particularly the first two—"Here in the Soft Room Not Yet Is the Time" and "Murdock Speaks to the Draft Board." Good lyrical irony of our contemporary ironies. Miss Van Horn is best at themes not lying about in nature; rather in man's humanity, such as it is, to man.

THREE LYRIC POETS. (*Alice Moser; Tom H. McNeal; Byron Herbert Reece.*) The Press of James A. Decker. Prairie City, Ill. 78 pp. (No price marked.)

Containing an introduction by Allan Swallow are these lyrics, the best of which is contributed by Byron Herbert Reece. An argument is listed by Mr. Swallow anent the failure of the pure lyric to get recognition in modern poetry. But who said that modern poetry has been recognized? The fact that many books of poetry are issued means nothing when poetry itself is not in the conscious life of the people. Mr. Reece is compact, small and frail; whereas the other contributors have acquired verse routines.

A WREATH OF CHRISTMAS POEMS. *The Poet of the Month. New Directions.* Norfolk, Conn. 36 pp. Price, $1.00.

This book can still be offered as a

belated Xmas bromide on the joys that encompass us at December 25th in any year. The Fourth Eclogue of Virgil, translated by James Laughlin, is pithy—as pity for our times—must be. Poems by Chaucer, Dante, Mr. Anonymous, Southwell, Lope De Vega, Ben Johnson, George Wither, Robert Herrick, John Milton, Whittier, C. Rossett, and five moderns, of which T. (very stern) Eliot and the complex and confused K. Patchen, are among.

SOME ODES OF PINDAR. *Translated by Richard Lattimore. The Poet of the Month. New Directions.* Norfolk, Conn. 30 pp. Price, $1.00.

For those who like translations in modern dress of ancient classics, these odes to athletic events, to Greek heroes, to all, sundry, and everything, including love, will find this their own white meat—*sans* fowl and fish, but full of poetry. Mr. Lattimore sets this translation for the ear, and the tenses of the senses. A beautiful printing of Pindaric beauties.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN PROSE AND POETRY—1942. *Number 7. Edited by James Laughlin. New Directions.* Norfolk, Conn. 494 pp. Price, $3.50.

To be issued now and then, whenever Mr. Laughlin gathers together 400 pages of stuff and such. In his introduction Mr. Laughlin worries that Culture will go by the board while we go about the bloody business of winning this, the last war. The best in this issue is the vitriolic study, Blackout in the Cathedral, by Georg Mann. Poems are by Richard Eberhart, Eve Merriam, Marcia Nardi, John Russell McCarthy, Hugh Argraves, and others. The best of all in this volume is "Homage to Ford Madox Ford," a symposium by our best minds, including that of the professional rascal, Ezra Pound, on Ford's value to literature.

THERE IS NO NIGHT. *By David Russell.* The Kaleidograph Press. Price, $1.50. 87 pp.

Mr. Russell writes in archaic patterns about our modern violence. His instincts are healthy even though surrounded by cliche atmospheres and sentimental phrasing. Mostly of the newspaper variety when said papers benumb one with bald prose and bad thinking. A mild antidote in verse when it is not worse, this.

SELECTED POEMS. *By Ralph Cheney.* Carlton Publishing Co., San Antonio, Texas. 39 pp. (No Price Listed) Edited by Lucia Trent.

Some selected poems; simple, pleasant, dull, properly in order—and above all—badly printed and sadly bound. The non-proper poems, like *Legions of the Black Sheep, You Cannot Kill the Troubadours,* and *Dark Encounter,* are the best.

LAMENT AND PROPHECY. *By Ruth Forbes Sherry. Allan Swallow, Publisher.* Gunnison, Colorado. 10 page pamphlet. (No Price Listed).

Some poems in skeptical appraisal, betwixt and *tween* heavenly metaphors of praise and bitterness; oratorical and shrill, with occasional brilliance of phrase in this sparse booklet.

MOTLEY'S THE ONLY WEAR. *By Tom H. McNeal.* The Kaleidograph Press. 83 pp. Price $1.50.

And so it is! The tatters of the *subject,* Death. Some light, and some weighed less. The Kaleidograph Press is evidently not as distinguished as the Press of Decker. 250,000 poets write like this, but only 10,000 print them in books. Even less in it than is suggested by the title!

LAMENT FOR THE CHIEFTAINS. *By Martha Bacon.* Coward McCann. 54 pp. Price, $1.75.

Conservative and fair in delicacy and

structure, and better when Miss Bacon (daughter of Leonard Bacon) decreases her "story" effect and increases her lyrical means. More than promising—if less than an accomplishment.

THREE NEW POETS. *Roy McFadden, Alex Comfort and Ian Serraillier.* Grey Walls Press. Billericay, Essex, England. Price 2/6 Net.

Of the new group of British poets, Mr. Comfort is succinct, contemplative of war and a keen craftsman. Definitive of values, he expresses them as poetic coin. In Roy McFadden there is the echo of Treece and Dylan Thomas, suggestions of derivations in imagery. Ian Serraillier is given to imagery in nature, the hard accents and terse associations making transitions to and from the mind and eye. Mr. Comfort has more range and more grasp of social documents than the other two.

POEMS. *By John Berryman.* The Poet of the Month. New Directions. Price 50 cents.

Mostly cerebral and intellectual pieces, with touches of political irony current a few years ago. Good reading for the poet who likes poetic poetry.

FROM PALESTRIAN TO GERSHWIN. *By Gertrude Huntington McGiffert.* G. P. Putman's Sons. 191 pp. Price $2.50.

In appreciation and praise of all and every composer since Palestrina. And to each, the rise and fall of adjectives and rioting pulsations—and many many cliches. A good book for the musicologist seeking a poetical image for tomorrow's concert and commentary.

LAND WORKERS. *By John Masefield.* The Macmillan Company. 12 pp. A pamphlet. Price, 90 cents.

A "vision of the pastoral" as seen by the current Poet Laureate; and as such, by commission. England needs workers in the fields—but this will help neither the workers, the sowers, the soldiers, or the possible readers. But then the damage to Masefield's reputation was done long, long ago.

H. R.

W. B. YEATS 1865-1939. *By Joseph Hone.* The Macmillan Co., $6.00.

Like most authorized biographies, Mr. Hone's account of his friend's career and cantilations suffers from suppressions, and delicately skirts things essential to a full understanding of the poet's complex nature. The valuable parts of the book are the extracts from letters, notebooks and diaries: these illuminate Yeats' early ideology and supplement his own self-revelations in the autobiographies. While one is disappointed at not learning more from a friend of thirty years' standing, the book is a *must* for all admirers of the poet and will retain that position until an unauthorized biography appears.

R. C. B. B.

AMERICAN WRITING: 1942. *Edited by Alan Swallow. James A. Decker Press.*

This first annual anthology, edited by Mr. Swallow, is too limited in scope to include sufficient of the worthy material available. Allowing for this handicap, there is still much commendable work on view. The section devoted to poetry shows particular taste and catholicity. At the back of the volume there is a listing of American non-commercial magazines which have welcomed the product of new writers—a useful feature. It is to be hoped that this anthology is the first of an equally meritorious series.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Patrick Anderson born in Surrey, England; educated at Sherborne school, Oxford and Columbia Universities. Is a teacher, now living in Montreal.

A. G. Bailey born in Quebec City 1905; educated at New Brunswick, Toronto and London Universities. Now professor of history and instructor in anthropology in the University of New Brunswick.

Louise Morey Bowman born in Sherbrooke, Quebec, 1882. Has published three volumes of poetry: *Moonlight and Common Day* (1922), *Dream Tapestries* (1924), and *Characters in Cadence* (1938).

Audrey Alexandra Brown born in Nanaimo, B. C., in 1904. Has published *A Dryad in Nanaimo* (1931) and *The Tree of Resurrection* (1937).

Frank Oliver Call was born in 1878 in West Brome, Quebec; educated at Bishop's University, Marburg and McGill. Has published several volumes of verse. Now professor of modern languages at Bishop's University.

George Herbert Clarke born in Kent 1873. Now professor of English at Queen's University. Has edited *The New Treasury of War Poetry* which is due this spring.

Carol Coates born in Tokyo 1906. Graduate of the University of British Columbia. Influenced most by oriental poetry. Two books: *Fancy Free* 1939, *Poems* 1942.

Robert Finch born on Long Island 1900, educated in Toronto and Paris. Now assistant professor of French in University College, Toronto.

Ralph Gustafson born 1909 at Lime Ridge, Quebec. Educated at Bishop's University and Oxford. Has published *Alfred the Great, Lyrics Unromantic*; compiled the Penguin Books' *Anthology of Canadian Poetry*. Now with the British Information Services.

Ronald Hambleton born 25 years ago on a pier in the south of England. Now living in Toronto. Has had poems in the *Forum, Partisan Review,* etc.

Leo Kennedy born in Liverpool in 1907, educated in Montreal, now living in Chicago, has published *The Shrouding* 1933. Was a contributor to *New Provinces,* and has appeared in many periodicals.

Irving Layton is at present at Pettawawa, a member of the Canadian Officers' Training Corps. Has appeared in *First Statement* and *Forum.*

P. K. Page born in England in 1916, now living in Montreal. Is one of the *Preview* group, and has appeared in *Contemporary Verse, Forum,* etc.

E. J. Pratt born in Newfoundland, 1883; now professor of English at University of Toronto. Has published many volumes of poetry and appeared in leading periodicals. Editor of the *Canadian Poetry Magazine.*

Sir Charles G. D. Roberts' distinguished career encompasses Canadian literature from shortly after Confederation to the present day. The Dean of Canadian Letters, he has achieved an international reputation as a poet, and as a writer of stories of nature. His *Selected Poems* was published in 1936.

Bruce Ruddick. Born 1915 in Montreal. Has been a Bachelor of Science in Zoology, a spieler on a rubbernecker, is now in third year medicine at McGill.

Duncan Campbell Scott was born in Ottawa 1862 and has had a long and distinguished career in the Department of Indian Affairs and as a poet. A volume of collected poems appeared in 1926.

F. R. Scott was born 1899 in Quebec City, educated at Bishop's University, Oxford and McGill. Is now professor of civil law at McGill. Co-editor of *New Provinces* and of *Preview.*

A. J. M. Smith born in Montreal 1902, now professor of English at Michigan State College. Has published in *The Dial, New Verse, Poetry, Vice Versa,* etc. Has edited *Book of Canadian Poetry* to appear this spring.

Kay Smith was born in Saint John, N. B., in 1911, went to Mount Allison Uni-

versity. Now teaching in Saint John Vocational School, English and Dramatics. Active in the Little Theatre.

Raymond Souster, born in Toronto 22 years ago and has lived there since. Joined RCAF in 1941. Poems and some stories in many little mags.

Of this month's reviewers, all but Muna Lee have appeared previously. Muna Lee is on leave from the University of Puerto Rico for service during the present emergency in the Department of State. Her published books include *Sea Change* (Macmillan); 5 mystery novels written in collaboration with Maurice Guinness under the pen-name Newton Gayle.

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