

A CHRONICLE OF LIVING LITERATURE

AUTUMN STATICS

Mary Graham Lund
and JOHN CIARDI interviewed

JULY-AUG 1960

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JAMES BOYER MAY

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EDITOR

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Edited by JAMES BOYER MAY

A READING EDITION

ABOUT THIS EDITION

This reading edition preserves the issue's poetry, fiction, essays, correspondence, reviews, and other literary writing in their printed order. Advertising, subscription matter, mastheads, the magazine's own contents pages, annual indexes, address lists, and the running trade directory are omitted as reference apparatus.

The text was checked against newly rendered source pages. Poetry lineation, stanza spacing, shaped indents, and hanging continuations for long lines are retained; prose continuations are joined without false paragraph indents. Conjectural readings are enclosed in square brackets, while original spelling and punctuation are otherwise kept.

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AUTUMN STATICS

Mary Graham Lund

A GREAT number of articles in the 'little magazines' of the Fifties stressed the demand of contemporary taste in the arts for the dynamic, the angry, the forceful — one might almost say, the convulsive. Yet, each statue, painting, record, poem is an example of a static metaphysic: each holds the seeds for a new dynamic, a new creation. These are holy germs, carried from brain to hands to the carved marble, the pigmented canvas, the printed page. The completed art product is static. Stasis is a necessary phase of cultural progress.

This quality of stasis in the art form is obvious in sculpture and painting, but has more recently been discovered in literature. Critics may be said to have freed the poem from the psychological and sociological conditions of its origin. Thus autonomous, it can be interpreted, analysed, and criticised. Of all literary forms, lyric poetry possesses stasis most obviously. Long before modern critics viewed the poem as artifact or objet d'art, people spoke of favorite lyrics as 'gems.'

Two modern poets, the German Gottfried Benn and the American James Franklin Lewis, use the terms 'static' and 'stasis' with great frequency. Benn published a book of poems titled STATISCHE GEDICHTE; Lewis titled a poem AUTUMN STATICS, a poem which seems to affirm the nihilism of the early Benn. The critic Max Rychner asserted that Benn had 'expressed to the full, European nihilism and had conquered it through form.' Benn's later poetic work, after a silence of twenty years, Rychner regarded as an about-face; but Benn saw it as a progression. 'One must learn the dialectic of nihilism in order to conquer it,' he averred. The poet must of

necessity serve the immanent; hence, his work is never done.

The creative drive of nihilism was discovered not by Benn, not by Nietzsche, but by Buddha, Benn asserts. Benn's nihilism, and Lewis's, was creative and vulnerable, not an absolute negative. Both poets, in their late work, vehemently denied the existence of absolute truth. But Goethe had done so a hundred years earlier: in his *WESTOESTLICHER DIWAN* he ascribed the greatness of the Persian poet Hafiz to the fact that his work was never complete. For the true poet, a new perspective is forever opening upon new truths, new glories of discovery. The poetaster invents; the poet discovers. What he had left to discover in the Twentieth Century were ruins, fragments; this was the nothing Benn and Lewis saw, not an absolute nothing.

In *AUTUMN STATICS* (*CRESCENDO*, Autumn, 1942), Lewis uses the word 'nothing' eight times in thirty-six lines. Yet, the 'nothing' is always re-usable: clouds scatter to nothings of moisture; fallen leaves mash into a fertile nothing of mould; 'the year is thick with metaphors come down' ready for the poet's use. Where do reality and super-reality hide in the 'lyrical I'? And who is he? In Lewis's poem, he is the schoolboy who wore the walnut-stained fingers to school on Monday, the sower who looked ahead of the planting to the filled ear, the philosopher who read the future in the petit point of the fallen leaves. The abstract is inhuman, or subhuman, weaving itself into nothing. But of that nothing, of chaos, God created the earth and all that is therein; of nothing, the poet, the artist builds a new, a stylised world — the world of art which carries the best of the past in reduced and concentrated form.

'Art,' said the physician-poet Gottfried Benn, 'is antibiotic.' Which means, perhaps, that it is selective; it will not permit a chaotic, unstylised, wild growth to emerge from the nothingness. Not man, but his statue, is eternal. The first step in stylising is consolidation, concentration. James

Franklin Lewis accepted this. In the poem *AUTUMN STATICS*, he recognises that humanity is at a crossroads. The structure, so nobly built, is broken — only fragments left. The danger is that we build again out of this wild chaos, more ‘dishonour rolls . . . of martyrs to themselves,/Who thought with bullet-heads, prayed perfection/By explosion, claimed the earth their mess/Of pottage to be bottled, crated, baled,/And advertised as canned food’ (from *THE GEOGRAPHIC HAND*).

The poet can only ‘ask and answer, ask and answer, hear/With ears and suddenly into the night may see . . .,/Though interrupted by the radio:

its voice running
A bit thick with an eagle-scream,
And the roar of motorized poetry, and a drum
Which patly points the hours with thunder.

Paddle-wheels create the bought applause, Something out of nothing, static laws. A little earthy for poetry, perhaps? But ‘the great lyricists,’ says Gottfried Benn, ‘were always realists—they burdened themselves with reality, which is earthy, building the esoteric and seraphic on the hard realistic foundation’ (quoted by Richard C. Exner in a Research Report submitted to Prof. Townsend of the University of Southern California, p. 140). The quotations from Lewis sound very much like some of Benn’s early poetry, in which he paints what the critic Max Rychner called a ‘dehumanized world, in comparison with which Rimbaud’s Hell is a comfortable place. Here is the destiny which Rilke defined in his eighth *DUINER ELEGIE* as the eternal contradiction of men and things’ (Exner, p. 99). But both the German poet and the American poet were hopeful of the future; both thought that salvation would come through poetry. Benn closes an essay titled *ZUECHTUNG* with a pathetic prophecy: ‘I know this folk will be free and its great spirit will come with words, which will again have sense

values . . .’ (Exner, p. 164). In a poem titled *THE GARDEN OF EPICURUS* (SCORE, pp. 45-46), Lewis addresses a fellow-poet thus: But too susceptible we were to the makings Of memory. And too zealously Did we achieve our hyperclever aim. There was a kink in the plot. Soon came slakings Of no thirst, inventions of mystery, And problems posed, postscriptum for the game. In the green-flanked spring, in the green-flanked spring, come back, Dear friend, to me, when the heat of exposé Leaves only beauty bare, to see, and when, To what you and I have saved from the howling pack An infiltration of vigorous youth will say, ‘It is well in the green-flanked clearing. Plow it, men.’ The ‘vigorous youth’ who will do the plowing are, of course, the poets of the future. In the earlier stanza, he confesses the faults of the poets of the Forties. Cleverness and invention, mere surface qualities of the mind, have no part in the ‘lyrical I’ which Benn describes in his essay, *PROBLEME DER LYRIK* (1957): ‘The lyrical I is an I who has broken through, yet an I at a barred window, an I experienced in flight and doomed to grief. He must await the hour in which he may be aware for an instant, must await the moment of ebullition, of ecstasy, when the concentration of the fragments of reality may be momentarily accomplished, freeing the mind for the poem to create itself — through words.’ (p. 25).

Words, Benn said (and he delivered this essay as a lecture in his seventieth year) have a ‘latent existence’ which focuses in response to an occasion almost like magic, enabling the poet to catch the magic and pass it on. ‘This appears to me,’ said the elderly poet, ‘as the last mystery.’ The elements of poetry, he thinks, come from many lands, from lost worlds — ‘the transcendental reality of the lyric is full of ruins, of fragments . . .’ (p. 27).

The American Lewis would have subscribed to this: in fact, he wrote a poem titled *PRIMITIVISM* that illustrates the German poet’s thesis: ‘Pieces, pieces, pieces,’ he cries, ‘Do

sleuth, my thumb, for the assassinated hollow shells./ For the enamelled telegrams and baked blocks/Inmeshed in the crockery of trackless rocks' (11. 31-34). He discovers 'flicks of mica;' are these 'Einstein's rods and clocks? /Mind-throwers shaping up to a face,/Or only the chaff of rocks?' (11. 82-85). He concludes:

We'll need to take up the old frayed scraps,
And peel and cut and strip and chip
To learn how scraps are made.
And for this no man in his lifetime will be praised,
But only after his face and hand are nameless,
Dissolved into his single relic,
Hardened to the single grain.
Anarchy thus, by bit and bit,
Shall be prepared for the new organization,
Our colored and individual sands
Highlit,
For the fresco of the next creation.
Ah, but the poet cannot wait.
He would use broader terms than tile;
And in this while,
As the world in waste and rubbish drowns,
He would use, would be,
Himself the whole town and tapestry,
While lately the moon browns.
(11. 105-123)

This view of the 'lyrical I' was also Benn's — who said: 'This creation through the word is phenomenological. The only comprehensible element in the process is the "I"' (quoted by Exner, p. 99). 'Nihilism,' he continues, 'is freedom from the yoke of coherence. This is the realm of mystery.'

Benn calls the Twentieth Century poet 'the tragic seer; he must express himself if it costs him his life. And it does . . . Expression is style, and style is negation. . . . Progressive cerebration is the condition of man since Goethe . . . when the center of thinking in the Western World shifted from the

emotional and god-centered to the cerebral and monomaniac — hence nihilism and a feeling of destiny’ (Exner, pp. 102-103).

For Gottfried Benn, ‘nihilism is not a problem but the presupposition of all his artistic endeavors,’ says Exner. In time of trouble, when the spirit has no reality, one clings to things, to fragments of things — hence the poet piles up nouns in a frantic effort toward synthesis. Paul Valéry in *THE ART OF POETRY* (English translation in PANTHEON BOOKS, 1958) discusses this matter of stasis in poetry, which he calls a negation of language: language itself tends to be replaced in poetry by images, relationships, impulses. ‘The moment a phrase asserts itself, by an effect of its own, . . . something happens — We are entering the poetic universe’ (p. 65). It is the poet’s handicap that he possesses no means of communication comparable to the notation of the musical universe. ‘The poet must borrow language, a mixture of completely incoherent auditive and psychic stimuli’ (p. 68). Valéry claims that for 300 years the French have been taught to misunderstand poetry (p. 83), that ‘among the many scholarly works which, for centuries, have been devoted to Poetry, one finds few (or none) which do not imply a negation of its existence’ (p. 87). ‘Art (and particularly poetry),’ he asserts, ‘lives on incoherence’ — the fragmentation of Lewis, the statics of Benn.

Benn devoted his life, says Exner, to an absolute art, which he embodied — to use his own words — as the expression of a ‘monstrous autonomous I.’ Following Nietzsche, he considered art as ‘the last metaphysical reality in Europe.’ For Benn, in Nazi Germany, life was unendurable, art, a refuge.

Lewis, on the other hand, vehemently repudiated the idea of the absolute in art; for him, reality was only a ‘temporary truth;’ art was not a refuge, but a journey of exploration beyond sense and time. The lyric was never for him a

completed action, never wholly transcendent. Often, it was an expression of immanence, of pure emotion or impulse, a little venture in UNREAL ESTATE, as he titled a poem published in THE PRAIRIE SCHOONER, Winter, 1945:

UNREAL ESTATE

What are you blooming for, sunflower,
Where the light grows like grass?
Here in the city wrong with spires
Smudged-over with atrocious century,
What do you mean by these radial faith-markers,
Here where the light grows like grass?
Someone here at night, amid cats and night-wranglings,
When the falling air cooled the cockles of his mind,

HAS PRODDED A GARDEN, ON THIS TILE-STREWN SQUARE,

For the rain to find, faith-handled,
And for the sun later, as safe as trust,
Whose light spreads like grass,
To populate here, with this single guilty fire.
Someone here at night, tired out of cynical futures,
Has poked him a garden, on this time-strewn tile.
What are you blooming for, sunflower,
Wide of face, as though in a spread of acres
Where the yellow light anoints the grass?
Here in the oyster-shell city tolling with spires,
What means your fellow-transcience here,
Mellowed with no years?

*(Permission to reprint poems and quotations granted by Mrs.
James Franklin Lewis.)*

ISSUE P. 6 · SCAN P. 8

TO APPEAR IN TRACE No. 39:

Why & CARDINALS & SAINTS from the significant book on modern writing, by Arlene Zekowski and Stanley Berne; INDEX—1960, with complete alphabetical listing (with addresses) from the year's CHRONICLES; A PARABLE FOR CREATIVE WRITERS . . . , by Marion Montgomery; A CLOSE PROBLEM IN A FAR SCENE, by Stephen Murray-Smith (the Australian ferment).

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Others who feel that Universe Inside Me is something special in this puny time: August Derleth ('provocative and fresh'), David Ray, Lawrence Lipton, Alfred Dorn, James Singer, Kenneth L. Beaudoin ('enjoyed it entirely'), Paul Ritter, A. S. Neill, Millen Brand ('fresh and exciting work'), Robert Bly, James Boyer May, Roy Miller, William Bittner, John Barkley Hart, Alden Nowlan, Tiffany Thayer, James Hiner.

\$2 a copy, postpaid, from Lawrence Barth, 82 W. 12th Street, New York 11, N.Y.

ISSUE P. 7 · SCAN P. 9

TOWARDS PRINT

by the Editor

ANOTHER COURSE FOR ACTION

INDIGNANT opposition, along with endorsement, will greet the advocacy of a course, which — if generally approved for revival — will reform many conditions of which writers have been complaining. The complainers themselves hold the answer; and the suggestion is so elementary and obvious that readers may be unimpressed. Very likely, this is why no one seriously has advanced it.

Brought up in casual conversation with a TRACE subscriber, met for the first time, the proposal suddenly seemed freshly-good. The reaction was somewhat like that from running upon a laid-aside and half-forgotten personal possession of solid substance — say, an old finger-ring — and finding it attractive.

Samuel Karrakis, author of SYMPHONIC PROSE, described his adherence to a policy long abandoned by most 'literary' writers — particularly, by poets. He had snortingly reacted to the Editor's mention of a request from SCOTT, FORESMAN & Co. (educational publishers) for permission to reprint from TRACE 'any selections we might find suitable,' in a book tentatively titled COLLEGE LANGUAGE SKILLS. Plainly, with hope that the text would cost nothing, not mentioning payment, stating: '... we would of course give credit to the source.' (The request remains unanswered.)

Yes, just restoration of a neglected standard procedure, would cure many evils. The obscured, unresolved knot at a writhing centre of arguments over the pricing of literary works in the way prices are set for nourishing beans or infernal automobiles, seldom is touched. Neither by those professing worry over the physical wellbeing of underfed genius, nor by those ardently battling to preserve the Olympian fastness of aesthetics from sacrilegious climbers out of the commercial hacklands.

The real reasons for this should be aired. The former give no account to the social identities of artists (who are also people, joined to society, biologically, politically, and culturally); while the latter refuse to concede that bookkeeping, utilitarian mechanics, and war have been evolved by the same humanity which has developed appreciations for unaccountable beauty, non-utilitarian imagination, and brotherhood.

Such confusion is transcendently philosophical, yet simultaneously of dialectical practicality. To be sure, such twain shall never meet. Still, in either aspect, the contrary concepts are inseparable and mutually comprehensive! Fervid debaters on both sides seem not to suspect that fundamental contradictions are even genetically necessary, and that primordial consciousness came to being from elemental opposition/s.

Paid-art-or-not discussions keep posing questions based on mixed erroneous premises. For instance: the false assumption that payment is literally demanded for a poem; the question whether money can measure the worth of poetry. The money is asked for the author (if not by him), who most likely would vehemently deny an equation of his poem with cash. This sort of stupid rhetoric shows obtuse resistance; surely the 'value' in a writing and the corporeal problems of an individual who has done the writing, are utterly diverse considerations, once the writing has been produced, — fused though they are in the 'reality' of causes-and-effects.

The grounds upon which Mr. Karrakis rests the case for sensible procedure are unassailable. None but the artist himself can establish the requisite price (n.b.—not 'valuation') to be paid him. His intimate circumstances are familiar only to himself; and above everything, he, alone, is privileged to fix the measure of his own esteem. Should potential purchasers disagree with his self-estimate, not

handing him the money, he may then withdraw the work or adjust his price without violating a there-established principle. Insofar as feasible, artists everywhere should endeavour to assert individual standards of worth; and practically, they can do so only in terms current in a world they can't much alter.

The last clause suggests another obfuscated area. Not perceiving that cash sales (even at bargain rates) do not defile aesthetics, many argue that a poet should rather make his living collecting garbage, while giving his poems away. They preposterously assume that such unrealistic conduct exerts corrective influences. Yet, instead of shaming society, this masochistic behaviour lowers all poets in public esteem.

Painters and sculptors long have put price-tags on their creations. Why not writers? Mr. Karrakis said he not only affixes his prices to the first pages of mss., — he has held adamantly to his figures, once set. He fortunately seems able to support his independence. The majority could not; however, this is no proposal of 'holdout' conspiracy. The question is simply whether writers should not stop sending out material without indicating how much they expect to be paid. Or whether they expect to be paid at all!

Small wonder that writers have lost respect in a \$\$-&£ world. And little though money may matter to dedicated authors, who may not be concerned either about what people at large think of them, it has most essentially mattered to them when editors (corrupted by the world view) have become irresponsible in handling their precious mss.

Returning to actual details—in the not-distant past, pay rates of considerable numbers of magazines and book houses at least were known. Writers either could make submissions on the known terms, or negotiate in advance; and beginners usually were instructed to put the words 'offered at your standard rate' beneath wordage estimates. Nearly all professional writers dealt—and still deal—through

agents, the middlemen. As in other spheres, these middlemen have risen in power; and many would blame them for the increased uncertainties of pay rates, even at older houses. But, though literary agents do bargain in terms of commercial expediency—and because of this—their enforceable demands are based upon the reputations of their authors. And the ‘buck’ is passed back again.

Only writers—individually—may reverse the trend toward degradation of the reputation of authorship itself. Individually; because the practice of art is an individual activity, quite unpredictable where numbers are involved, and therefore scarcely amenable to regulation. Organisation has helped little beyond—or rather, precedent to—points where general understandings and adjustments could be reached. These concern matters such as what Mr. Karrakis called ‘expendable’ as against ‘permanent’ sales . . . various serial and reproduction rights . . . all matters where rules may be applied after the fact/s of placement/s.

Since a TRACE appeal, two years ago last February, for some payments, if only nominal, from all magazines, many more writers (in bad taste or not) insist on pay, and more publications have been paying. Among the important subsidiary results has been improved promptness in reports. Editors, on the average, seem to be taking more care with mss. If writers will now indicate at least their expectations of definite payments, there may be an end to long-delayed reports, belated reports of ‘lost’ mss., and definitely an end to ‘acceptances’ later and arbitrarily rescinded. For, simple lack of respect has underlain all this slackness. So long as contributors hold their works of doubtful value, editors will feel privileged to delay decisions, make mere tentative decisions, alter decisions, hold mss. to weigh against other mss. etc. Fixed prices, on the other hand, call upon editors to weigh desirabilities against the prices asked; and in so doing, they may even be led to function as editors should,—

to judge mss. upon the basis of their conceived needs within the frames of the authors' achievements in relation to their creative intentions.

Conditions as they are, writers well may disregard announced rates of pay. For a time, there will be not a few summary rejections. But this will soon change. There may be some changes in editors too, with eliminations of the procrastinators and those not actually functioning as editors, but rather as purposeless (and often faulty) guessers about what will 'please readers.' Particularly—the financial backers of a few publishing ventures might be led to appreciate the need for editors capable of exercising independent judgements. In certain book houses, at present, the so-called editors rely on authors' agents in the way certain medical doctors rely on the recommendations of salesmen for pill-makers. In cases of grave doubt, they have been known to circulate mss. to other writers, to get their reactions! That old story — of which there have been a dozen versions — about the Hollywood cinema offices where the opinions of office boys, receptionists, and corner newspaper hawkers, decided fates of movie scripts, had basis in fact. Mr. Karrakis, who had early Hollywood experience, declared this had not a little to do with the decline of the idea that editors should try to direct and develop public taste, and the popularisation of the notion that editors only need ascertain the prevalent lowest common denominator of the mass-appetites.

And it's not really surprising that a widespread knowledge of this very situation is precisely what causes authors to be reluctant to enter combat on a price-front. Realising that paying-prices are determined in relation to factors often reversing their scales of aesthetic literary values, they shun pay-discussion, fancying that non-commercial attitudes (which are ineffectually-irrelevant, in this aspect) somehow counter the deplorable materialistic social attitudes.

Decreasing communication has been the net result. The exclusive wall between serious and popular writings is more confining than ever.

If every writer reading this — yes, poets too — joins in placing the rate or amount of anticipated payment beneath the word- or line-count in the upper right corner of first pages of mss., immediate benefits in more considerate treatment and longterm benefits in bettered status and real opportunities to combat commercialism, will be won. Although many subsequent parleys may result in giving works away to impoverished little-mag editors and to university editors with inadequate appropriations, these gifts will have been definitely identified by their authors' prices. The many editors whose unappreciative conduct has indicated distorted views, will have been supplied with the specific ££ and \$\$ signs to remind them of their debts to contributors; and where school budgets have been at fault, increased appropriations even may be obtained for increased honorariums.

THE CHRONICLE

In addition to the concluding 1960 CHRONICLE, forthcoming TRACE No. 39 will carry a complete alphabetical index, with addresses, of all extant presses and periodicals mentioned in this feature from, and including, No. 35. Until appearance of THE INTERNATIONAL GUIDE—1961, this list, together with details to be found in the five 1960 issues of TRACE (data on approximately 400 publishing projects, activated and/or altering within that period) will provide the only up-to-date information supplemental to THE INTERNATIONAL GUIDE—1960 and the Presses Directory in TRACE No. 34.

The small AGENDA reported in last issue now appears in larger format (1/- or 20c). April number featured David M. Gordon's THE CYCLOPS — IDEOGRAM. Coming: a recent books survey by several hands; but poetry was announced would account for most of future contents. . . . Illness and financial troubles caused suspension of AMERICAN POETRY PUBLISHER with March issue — a grave loss to the campaign for larger readership in this field. . . . Among publishers of books of modern interest, not listed before, is: ANTHONY BLOND, Ltd. (36 Chester Row, London, S.W.1). . . . In planning stages for October: THE ART FILM (3021 Shrine Pl., No. 35, Los Angeles 7, Calif., U.S.A.). Critics of international reputation have been contacted for literary reviews of experimental cinema. . . . ARTE VENETA is an Italian art annual edited by R. Pallucchini (had not been listed) available in U.S.A. from Wittenborn's (\$18.) and at equivalent exchange from European agencies.

AUDIENCE (95c, new magazine price) sponsors a conference of writers and editors at Rockport, Mass., July 28-30. . . . A new monthly (unseen) is AUDIT (Box 92, Hayes Hall, U. of Buffalo, Buffalo 14, N.Y.)—described as reviving purpose in cultural activities. Editor is Ralph Maud (\$3. per

year). . . . Indicated as: 'Publishing Division of Art Brush Creations,' is BANTLING PRESS (2117 Atwood Ave., Madison, Wis., U.S.A.). . . . BOTTEGHE OSCURE, the multi-lingual semi-annual lushly produced for over twelve years in the street by that name (Rome, Italy) is reported no longer active. . . . The new BREAD AND WINE PRESS (San Francisco) reports discontinuance of public readings, for lack of support; however, BEATITUDE continues. . . . The Hollywood (Calif.) BREAKTHRU has returned at least one formally 'accepted' ms. after lapse of a year, and mail has gone unanswered.

BROADSHEET (Box 6188, Te Aro, Wellington, N.Z.) comes forth with several issues, after a lapse (15c for samples). Editor Brian Bell wrote that the hiatus had been caused by extra heavy demands on his time as radio-announcer. . . . Price of CALAMUS (Penna., U.S.A.) advances to 25c (\$2. per yr.). . . . Le CARRE BLEU, an architectural publication, remains available in a special English edition (late '59). This one is edited in Helsinki, Finland by Aulis Blomstedt (75c via Wittenborn's). . . . A new mag is CHOICE (323 N. Lake St., Madison, Wis.). Editor Ellen Rosser states: 'At present . . . only poetry, especially short, well-constructed lyrics. Longer poems will, however, be considered.' Uses modern, as well as traditional — and translations. Pays in copies (25c or \$1 per yr.).

COASTLINES' special large Los Angeles ('The Non-Existing City') number is out, with an impressive roll of existing writers, just the same. . . . An ambitious project, aimed at national circulation in upper thousands — 'for college students, but not down to them'— is COLLAGE (1822 N. Orleans, Chicago 14, Ill.). This is scheduled monthly, beginning September — and to pay 'good rates.' Editor David Preiss writes of temporary overstock of poetry, but need for nonfiction and graphic art. Art-photography also is solicited. Further general clues to content are found in the subtitle: 'Entertainment and Enlightenment for College Eggheads.'

And in descriptive clauses: 'an attempt to lure college men and women to higher levels . . . no attempt to preach or force culture.' Priced 40c per copy (\$4. per yr.).

CONCERN AND FAROES editors, Peter Dale and Ian Lovelock, advocate poetry 'concerned with today's living and also strong in technical form.' This is a yet-unseen publication (34 Essex St., Oxford, Engl. — 1/6). . . . Meanwhile, CONTEMPORARY FICTION (Milwaukee) definitely seems not reviving.... And COSMOSYNTHESIS (Australia) has not materialised as a magazine (see KALEIDOGRA PH note below), but is the name applied to a new 'down-under' league sponsoring international anthologies.... A query has been directed to CREATIVE PRESS (198 Broadway, New York City).... CRITERION BOOKS has moved (to 6 W. 57th St., New York City 19).... For all artists, as well as practising architects: DESIGN (off Arthur Bunder Rd., Ionic — Colaba, Bombay 5, India) P. Singh, editor, states advance-queries are desired from contributors (Price: 1/6, 75np, or 50c).

DEUCE has turned quarterly (1/-) and now issues from 56A, Balfour Rd., Southall, Middlesex, Engl. (see David Holliday's letter in EW feature).... DIVERSION (Louisville, Ky.) has been reported forwarding mss. to a rewrite agent — one wouldbe contributor complaining he had been solicited to pay for a rewriting!.... Though specialising in historical works, DUFOUR EDITIONS (Philadelphia) lists some literaries for 1960: THE APOTHECARY'S SHOP, D. J. Enright (\$4.50); A TOURIST IN AFRICA, Evelyn Waugh (\$2.50).... An ELEMENT promotion (228 E. Ada, Glendora, Calif.) offers the Jerah Johnson (OLIVANT) translation of LI SAO to patron subscribers paying \$5. or more.... Though ENQUIRY (U. of Nottingham) continues to appear, correspondents complain of late reports and failure to reply to queries.... Described as an 'inter-school literary journal,' the new ESSAI (c/o Mike Beer, 337 N. LaJolla, Los Angeles, Calif.) is an offset publication uniquely featuring work by secondary students in this

vicinity (15c per copy).... Editor Jason Smith now definitely states that EXTANTIS has been suspended.

GALLERY EDITIONS (c/o Isaacs Gallery, 736 Bay St., Toronto, Ont., Can.) is a new cooperative venture. Two books a year are planned, both in hard covers and paperbacked: English and French poetry, by younger as well as established Canadians. The first volume is EYES WITHOUT A FACE, Kenneth McRobbie (\$5. and \$1.50).... A new Japanese quarterly is GRAPHIC DESIGN (Tokyo). English translations are included — and photo-design, along with book-design and the art of engravings (\$3.50 from Wittenborn, in U.S.A.).... GRID (23 Brechin Pl., London, S.W.7), edited by Paul Greene, is dedicated to a Deistic individualual approach to basic social problems (bi-monthly — 10/6 per yr.).... From HAWKSHEAD PRESS (78A Dale Ave., Toronto 5, Ont.) arrives a huge broadsheet of Mike Strong's poetry. A series of five pamphlets, to be edited by John Robert Colombo (\$1 ea.) has been announced — the first to feature Alden Nowlan. A noteworthy feature of the broadsheet: the lines are the equivalent of the average 24-page booklet (50c).

Answering our query (ensuing reports of silence from 'the' HEARSE), E. V. Griffith states: 'As Mark Twain remarked of reports of his death, reports of mine and my sundry projects are "greatly exaggerated".' Though late, HEARSE No. 7 appears soon — plus three chapbooks: THE KING OF MADAGASCAR, Felix Stefanile; OBJECTS, Russell Atkins; THE VIRGIN SHEPHERDER, Mason Jordan Mason. These, in addition to others already announced — and even the long-presaged COFFIN is promised delivery into the lively cemetery of our uncertain world, Mr. Griffith declared. . . . Though complaints of slow reports on mss. at INLAND have been received, this periodical also continues.

An ambitious monthly schedule is set for a new JANUS Magazine (Mem. Student Ctr., The Rice Institute, Houston, Tex.). Edited by Joel S. Hochman, payment 'for the present'

is restricted to copies (advertising is solicited and mag priced 25c). Announcement states desire to 'secure good work from as wide a spectrum of modern intelligences as possible' — poetry, fiction, articles. . . .

A second issue of KALEIDOSCOPE was due from Australia at this writing — to feature seven American poets (P.O. Box 2108s, Elizabeth St., Melbourne, C-1, Victoria). Advertising is solicited at \$10 per page; but an over-supply of mss. is reported. . . .

KLANAK PRESS (now: 374 St. James Crescent, W. Vancouver, B.C., Can.), supported by story-teller William C. McConnell and wife, has sold out the first limited edition of THE QUALITY OF HALVES, by Marya Fiamengo, and has had good sales on a trade fiction collection, KLANAK ISLANDS (\$2.50). More poetry will appear in late summer.

A depressing piece of news — that Gael Turnbull may suspend MIGRANT with No. 8, in September. Details of this project were described in TRACE No. 36; and it's hoped many readers will find 'probable causes' to intercede against this possibility. The editor is now at: 1199 Church St., Ventura, Calif. . . . MILLARD BOOKS (Art Gallery and Lecture Room: 1548 California St., San Francisco 9) has interspersed poetry readings with musical evenings and metaphysical lectures. . . . Seeking 'offbeat' poetry and reviews (but no payment offered), MOMENT has been revealed as a duplicated periodical, for which no formal subscription is fixed (donations to: 4955 Maplewood — Apt 15, Montreal, Quebec, Can.).

Most recent word from Victor Navasky of MONOCLE (Box 1269, New Haven, Conn., U.S.A.) announces a 'presidential' issue, to highlight 'political olympics (fence-straddling, thin-ice skating, etc.)' . . . MOTIF is a new quarterly, edited by Morton D. Elevitch (Drumlin Rd., Rockport, Mass.) and John Scrymgeour (302 E. 56th, New York City). This one offers pay on acceptance for 'literature of personality,' explained to

comprise: 'biography and autobiography, letters, diaries, journals, memoirs . . . also narratives of travel and adventure, observations of nature and society . . . and first-rate humour/satire.' Distribution will be international (7/6 or \$1. the copy). . . . Though final confirmation again is lacking, NEW CHAPTER once more is reported discontinued. . . . And the name of the new MERIDIAN PRESS semi-annual is THE NOBLE SAVAGE (12 E. 22nd St., New York City 10—\$1.50 per copy).

OLIVANT (both press and magazine) has moved to: 116 Alhambra Circle, Coral Gables, Florida. . . . PANTHEON, an international art journal (Nymphenburger Strasse 86, Munich 2, Germany—\$3. and equiv.) carries English and other-language texts, together with full-colour reproductions. . . . Le PETIT SPHINX definitely has disappeared from the Los Angeles (Calif.) coffee-house scene; and queries seem not to have reached the former editors. . . . QUIXOTE suspends—but deliberately for just six months, and thereafter to be QUIXOTE REVIEW as a hardbound book (\$5. for two; Box 536, Cornwall-on-Hudson, N.Y.).

The special Manifesto double issue of NOMAD (\$1. from Box 626, Culver City, Calif.), here just as this CHRONICLE was prepared, will be described by Marvin Bell, who has been invited to comment on the various credos and work samples, in TRACE No. 39. . . . Another special issue is PIVOT (State University, Penna.), in celebration of a 'decade of achievement' as the publication of the English Poetry Workshop under Poet Joseph Grucci. Though limited to class contributions, this magazine has won praise from international critics. . . . POETRY FUND JOURNAL's first issue inadvertently had been noted without the address (572 Wensley Ave., El Centro, Calif.). . . . Among new presses, an appropriate name is that of POETS' AND PAINTERS' PRESS (146 Bridge Arch, Sutton Walk, London, S.E.1).

The REFLECTION, reported last issue, arrived carrying full title: REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND REFLECTION (and priced 35c rather than 25c). Edited by Charles Gaulkin, this turns out to be an unique project which should prove of wide interest and value. It consists of selected reports upon the gists of articles with more than limited significance, in scholarly journals of small circulation. . . . May issue of RIVER was announced 'final.' . . . The famous STORY (founded in 1931, and in limbo since 1942) has been revived by one of the original editors, Whit Burnett, with Hallie Burnett and William Peden (U. of Missouri English Dept.—\$1.). H. E. Bates is noted as contributing editor for Great Britain. . . . Increased literary interest has been discovered in SURVEY (Summit House, 1-2 Langham Pl., London, W.1). 'A quarterly review of cultural and ideological trends in the Soviet bloc,' this periodical was founded in 1955 (free specimen copies available). . . . THREE ARTS QUARTERLY (42 Gloucester Circus, Greenwich, London, S.E.10—3/-) is centred as the title suggests, and supported by the Woodstock Gallery.

Soon after arrival of a stimulating new No. 8 TRANSFER (San Francisco State College) came news of withdrawal of college support, by the Board of Control, followed by the first mass-rally ever staged in the U.S.A. for a strictly-literary magazine (joined by leading faculty members) which, along with other protests, resulted in what appeared would be a reversal of action—with a No. 9 certain to be printed. As in other 'censorship' actions of this sort (recalling BELOIT POETRY JOURNAL and THE CHICAGO REVIEW) condemnatory reference was made to four-letter words, and it was alleged the magazine 'does not accurately represent the college' (something, incidentally, the editors never claimed for it anyway, in the sense inferred by the castigators).

VERNISSAGE is a German-language magazine 'for progressive art,' edited by Alexander Leisberg and Heins Rehn (BadenBaden—50c and equiv.) . . . The revived annual

THE WIND AND THE RAIN, briefly noted in No. 37, is edited by the same Neville Braybrooke (10 Gardnor Rd., N.W.3), who states need for poems to 500 lines, stories, critical articles, to 10,000 words, plays to twenty pages. Each issue will have a section devoted to a special subject (first, Religion & Science), and a section of distinguished juvenilia. Also black-and-white drawings. (Priced \$3. and equiv.) . . . A new press, to be queried, is ZONDERVAN PUBL. HOUSE (Grand Rapids, Mich.).

EDITORS (AND OTHERS) WRITE

/Again, the outstanding communication for this section has taken the form of a brief titled article. The author, Ruth Woodbury Camp, is revealed both as a mature writer and a well-realised personality. She offers some 'loaded' answers to her question :

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WHAT IS A POET?

David Holliday (deuce):

W. L. Garner, K. C. Wilson, R. E. Rhodes (targets):

A poet is a conscience. He suffers for the sins of the world and, humbly, for his own sins and shortcomings. To write a poem is to suffer for ever after because that poem wasn't good enough—and because the improvements which occur to you are chiefly uncertain improvements. This awful malaise occurs in the quick, prolific poet, as well as in that awesome individual who works like the mills of God. How do we arrive at that anomaly, the light or humorous poet? He is wearing his cloak of many colours, his social protective colouring. He finds the image in the glass reassuringly like the image of his neighbor; without this comfort, he could not go on. But, very often, with this talisman, he goes on to be both a light and a serious poet! If you are one of these literary bivalves, you have your own explanation for it—probably in one word. Compensation. Schizoid. Or persona. But the particular word is unimportant; it is merely your appeasement to the neighbors—your password to daily life. What counts is your knowledge that you're doing it because it's you. The tragic and comic masks are equally parts of the world's theatre, and you are a molecule of that theatre, comprised of the two aspects; you are not typecast by your own inhibitions. Once a poet, always a poet? No, it is a slippery ground. On the one hand, you may slide off into such facile verse that only a semi-literate could entertain the thought that you are producing poetry, that you are in any sense an artist. On the other, you may so shun the obvious and the fluent that you become too esoteric for honest understanding on any level, and your verse may cease to sing at all. The middle ground is wide and comprehends much that tends to simple lyricism, much that is mystical. But there are limits. What is a poet? A Voice crying in wilderness and marketplace and stock exchange. A Voice crying above the football fans and the

agonies of jazz. A conscience. What is a poet more? A robin chirping about the rain, an ori ole celebrating spring and domestic ecstasy. A thrush pouring out earth's earthiness in celestial notes. And a hope, and a heart transcending all these. A humanbeing striving to see and be and feel more like its Author. At best inspired, at this lowest point still expressive of humanity. A poet is a magical link, sentient, creative. He links past and present, great and small, humdrum and heaven-hued. There isn't anything he doesn't link. He may be a thinker or a dreamer or a singer; usually he is all three. He lives and translates many lives. His own life mingles with them so that he is more complexly aware of any given moment than his opposite, the extrovert.

'As you will note from the latest issue, this magazine has turned to a quarterly and changed its address; but it still aims at the intelligent non-specialist, and still declines to toe any particular party line. Mind you, that is not to say that we decline to publish opinions; we flourish on them. But, anybody writing a provocative, opinionated article in one issue is likely to have it refuted in the next. Magna est veritas, et praevalebit, so to speak. We have published stories, poems, humour (we think), criticism, politics (including an article on Marxism as the opiate of the unclassed intelligentsia, which I tried to persuade a Marxist friend to answer, without success; he contented himself with calling it "Bellocian"—or perhaps Bellocose would be better,—and a series on the Corporative State); naturally enough, we take no responsibility for anything except the editorials. We can't pay—except by way of a complimentary copy. But we think it's worth doing; if only because we've never seen anything quite like it.

'We have published one book, and hope to get around to publishing others.'

(Editor's note: The closing reference is to a duplicated pamphlet, to be found listed in ADDENDA.)

We need more submissions. We feel that we should be reaching poets from all over the country. And what we are really looking for is the poet who is capable of looking at his own universe and describing it effectively for a reader. The lone writer—particularly the unknown writer—will always be welcome at TARGETS, whatever his style, or beliefs. About the only restriction that we would make here is that—God help us!—none of us can take “Greeting Card” verse, poetic diction, and saccharine meanderings by dear little old grandmother types.

‘Beyond this, I think, understandable restriction, the pages of TARGETS are for the publication of poets. We want no critical articles or reviews or stories. . . . We’re hoping to go to lithograph for the next issue (by the way) and as usual will include some graphic art.’

MARVIN BELL (STATEMENTS)

In a world where persons are undeservedly hungry, perhaps the only justification for publishing a literary magazine is compulsion or a need to distribute certain weights.

It is more important to be moral than capable—and here I set no definitions before those tracts of ethical digestions, only a wish for the exertion, the honesty—and an awareness that there has never been a man who has not felt entirely justified through morality or compulsion.

Knowing full well, then, anyway, that an editor will sound meaningful in unfortunate relation to the comprehensive selection of arbitrary logics with which he justifies his unjustifiable existence, but at least may remain responsible, let me say that statements, like the rest is something like a mirror. The reader will see himself, if unadmittedly, and may critique in regard to a reaction in terms of this reflexion (reactions are common; responses, rare).

To retreat for a moment, then, we must add that something other than acceptance of reflexion is used to determine what is granted publication; and, here, perhaps all which can be said is that a regression to principles of logic of arbitrary existence and selection, combined with momentary insights of comprehensive compassion, serves as well for all. For, any involvement is arbitrary or compulsive (this latter, being unselective, is also arbitrary; it's simply that the former accents a delusion of choice).

'statements pretends to be interested in the quality of mind and man producing a poem (as well): proposes that he has been little who has not lived by his all-too-often solely poetic poses of compassion, perception, understanding, profundity, and even humour; proposes that it is more important to have a sense of the moral than to be a good poet; that good plumbing can be as profound as good poetry;

that little magazines are sometimes so wonderful, are always so meaningful, but on the deficit side: suffer from swollen heads; wearing notes on contributors, and indeed, their contributors, as badges; confusing precision with potential, life with movement; conforming and grouping themselves (and by innocent others); a lack of courage or perceptive exertion; the measuring of meaning by circulation or (for individual poets) the number of poems published (and, so terribly, by the potential return for acceptance by an editor who is also a poet).

‘All this to say that here, as well as in all else, the statement is of itself, and its effect is incidental. But even this moves men to visions of possible progress, and brings art and/to destruction.’

JANE ESTY (Co-Editor, MUTINY – from which experience, she calls this communication her ‘musings’): ‘As an editor, I marvel at the naivete (putting it kindly) of Parm Mayer’s query quoted in TRACE No. 36: “Could TRACE do something to encourage editors . . . to refold poems separately (especially if folded thus and so requested), thereby reducing permanent waves in one or more pages?” I’m afraid that friend Mayer is the sort of writer who hastens grey hairs in my permanent wave, whilst I unwittingly ripple his immortal lines. To people like Parm, I say this: Did you ever edit any publication long enough to know whether you would bother unfolding and later refolding a sheaf of poems, one at a time, to please someone who won’t send an integrated ms.? Have you mentally multiplied this situation by the number of poetry mss. likely to arrive at a magazine in any given month?’

I presume that a poet who submits to my magazine, or any publication of quality, wants some reasonably bright humanbeing to give his work an unbiased verdict. It’s rather arrogant to ask, in addition, that an editor (sic) should read and heed his special “Handle With Care” instructions. Most editors understandably create a self-protective mosquito netting of staff workers who filter out badly-presented mss.

MUTINY, which I edit, is unusual in that one or both of its editors considers every submission. Being a painter and poet, respectively, we prize our time and our vision. We even believe we're as talented as any of our contributors! Thus, we sometimes wonder if plain ordinary courtesy vanished along with man's respect for the moon and stars. It's just impossible to imagine how anyone who is serious about publishing his work can:

'A) Send faint carbon copies

'B) Use typewriter ribbon so old that all a reader can see is the impression made by raised metal striking paper

'C) Send stamps without self-addressed envelope, expecting an overworked and underpaid (or perhaps not-paid) member of the magazine staff to find an envelope of suitable size, address it, and affix the stamps 'D) Fail to furnish change of address to an editor who is considering a ms. mailed from the former address

'E) Write angry character attacks to editors who have commented personally on work, offering the most careful and creative suggestions of which they're capable.

'All these, and many more, have happened at MUTINY. We are eternally amazed.'

(Editorial note: A 100-page No. 3 MUTINY with more than two-dozen contributors, and featuring excerpts from John Tagliabue's Journals along with A Protest on behalf of independent writers by TRACE's Editor, arrived about the time the above was received.)

GUY OWEN

CIARDI ON CAMPUS

On March 11th, John Ciardi arrived on the Stetson University Campus for a series of lectures—just in time for his first talk, after driving through snow and sleet for two days. Four days later, he and his wife, Judith, left in a driving rainstorm. I mention the storms, for they seem symbolic: Ciardi literally took our campus by storm.

Delivering lectures, reading from his latest books of poems (including a new volume of children's poems), talking endlessly with students and faculty, visiting as many as five classes a day, he seemed to have the energy of a whirlwind. His subjects ranged as widely as the interests of his audiences. One lecture was an introduction to modern poetry; another was devoted to the symbolic levels of Dante's *INFERNO*. In 'bull sessions' with students, he praised such young poets as Reed Whittemore and Richard Wilbur, damning, on the other hand, the New Critics and certain academic poets who shall go unnamed. Part of Mr. Ciardi's schedule was to have been a taped interview with *IMPETUS* editors, William Taylor and myself, and I was at first disappointed when a change in plans resulted in its being cancelled at the last moment. But, after looking over the notes I had taken during his four days on campus (he generously took over all my classes in contemporary literature), it occurred to me that most of the questions I had in mind already had been answered in the numerous question-and-answer sessions with students or during our coffee-breaks. In fact, my notes took on added interest; for they revealed the kinds of questions which interest students, as well as teachers of modern poetry.

What follows, then, is an edited and rearranged 'interview.' I am, alas, no Boswell; but I have tried to present, as nearly as possible, the exact words,—though I've nearly always had to shorten Mr. Ciardi's answers. He is not given to glib answers—and besides, he obviously enjoys talking about poetry and poets. When asked what he thought of E. E. Cummings, his answer included a recitation of *MY SWEET OLD ETCETERA*, and after which, he wrote another poem on the blackboard and proceeded to explain it!

Q : Mr. Ciardi, what do you think of the current wedding of jazz and poetry—or is it a real wedding?

A : In the first place, it's nothing new. Kenneth Patchen started it fifteen years ago. It got taken up and now it's become associated with the 'Beats.' It's interesting, but I've never seen a satisfactory relationship worked out. The trouble is, there's seldom really a meaningful relationship between the poem and the music. I went to see my friend Kenneth Rexroth read with a combo. It didn't come off very well. The musicians didn't know the poems. They got loud when they wanted to; then I couldn't hear the words. Patchen has got some exciting effects with poems to be read with jazz accompaniment. But some of the poems, when read alone, don't overwhelm you. No, I'd say that there is no real wedding between jazz and poetry.

Q : What do you think of the Beatniks?

A : The whole beat generation is not a literary movement; it's a fad. I'm already tired of talking about them—and in five years, nobody will be. You can write them off like the red hot papas and the flappers of the Twenties. If you want my final remarks, you can see the recent piece in SATURDAY REVIEW.

Q : You don't think they've produced anything lasting?

A : Look—for five years, this has been the most talked-about so-called literary movement in America. And what has it produced? A half-dozen dull novels by Kerouac and a few good lines by Ginsberg. You call this an intellectual movement?

Q: You don't like Kerouac?

A: Have you tried reading *ON THE ROAD*? I'm reminded of what Hemingway once said to Marlene Dietrich: 'Daughter, there's a difference between motion and movement.' Well, there's more motion and less movement in *ON THE ROAD* than in any novel I know. Do you know how Kerouac writes? He puts a roll of paper in his typewriter in the morning and bangs out eight feet a day. No revision. He says whatever might be cut out would probably be most interesting to his psychiatrist. Well, I'm not his psychiatrist, and I'm not

interested in his precious psyche. When I read a piece of fiction, I expect art, discipline. Mr. Kerouac is just plain dull.

Q: You mentioned Ginsberg?

A: I said he had written a few good lines. But when I read: 'Have I not seen the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving, hysterical' etc, I say: 'No.' Next Question.

Q: Do you think modern poets always know what they mean?

A: I can't answer that. I don't know quite what you mean by 'mean.' Of course, a poem should release meaning; but I wish people would quit approaching poems in terms of meaning. Think of them as interesting places to visit. I've written a book on poetry; I call it HOW A POEM MEANS. It's the how that's important, not the what.

Q: Do you feel that most modern poetry is too difficult?

A: Difficult to whom? If there's no difficulty, there's no fun.

Q: Do you feel that much modern poetry suffers from lack of form?

A: I think readers often label poetry as formless, when there is form, a new kind of form. A painting by Braque is formless to the man who was brought up on the Mona Lisa and demands a Mona Lisa in every new canvas. Every art must have form of some sort, limitations and order imposed upon it. Form consists of rules which the artist sets up for himself in order to make his work orderly and meaningful. You've seen children draw hopscotch lines on the sidewalk and then try to avoid stepping on them. Wouldn't it be easier not to draw the lines in the first place? Without the lines, there would be no game.

Q: There seem to be a lot of little magazines publishing verse today. What is their value?

A: I'd say that they are very significant. They are a kind of meeting-place for young poets, a place where they can knock

heads, see their stuff in print and dish out praise and blame. And young writers need this sort of thing. Think of a log fire: the logs have to be close together, must have contact before there is a real blaze. After that, you can take a log away and it will keep on burning. The little mags provide a showcase for new poetry, so that it may be shown to the public and given its chance to be recognised. Because these magazines are open to new and revolutionary forms and ideas, they are the healthiest ground on which contemporary poetry may flourish.

Q: Would you compare the little mags of today with those of the Twenties?

A: I don't think the little mags of today are quite as lively as the old *BROOM* and *SECESSION* and others like them.

Q: How would you rank the best poets of our time?

A: Do we have to? Ranking poets is a rather futile and dull pastime. If I had to, I'd say that Frost, Yeats, and Eliot are our greatest poets. And I'm not so sure I wouldn't put Wallace Stevens above Eliot.

Q: Do you feel that there will be a school or group of poets springing from Frost?

A: No. There doesn't seem to be in Frost the kind of juice that will generate a new movement. Frost is the master; he just is, and there you have it

Q: Do you think the Eliot-Pound influence is on the wane?

A: Karl Shapiro has an article coming out in the *SATURDAY REVIEW* that will answer that, and no doubt stir up quite a fuss. Eliot has had an overpowering influence, and I blame the universities for this. It's too easy for young instructors to bone up on *THE WASTELAND* or *PRUFROCK*, and dazzle their classes with their brilliance by referring to Sanscrit and half-a-dozen other languages, to *THE GOLDEN BOUGH*, and all sorts of obscure myths. They can leave their students paralysed for twenty-four hours. With Frost, you're on your

own. There are no footnotes, no articles to be read. The teacher has to come to grips with the poem — and that's hard to do. Eliot and the new critics have helped to produce what I call the Brooks and Warren poets. They seem to write poems whose sole purpose is to provide new material for analysis.

Q: Do you note any other influences in our postwar poetry?

A: Well, certainly there are two clear schools. One seems to cluster around William Carlos Williams. You know, 'the broken neon' boys. Another group stems from Wallace Stevens.

Q: What is your favorite poem?

A: I can't answer that really. I have different favorites at different times. Right now, I'd say that Dante's *INFERNO* is my favorite poem.

Q: How long did it take you to translate the *INFERNO*?

A: A long time. I worked at it at the rate of three lines a day.

Q: Are you Catholic?

A: You don't have to be a Catholic to appreciate Dante. No, I belong to the Church of the First Covenant of Damned-if-I will.

Q: What advice do you have for the younger poet?

A: That question always reminds me of what Yeats said. If you are writing poetry because you have something terribly important to say, then I would advise you not to continue. You ought to become a preacher or schoolmaster or buy space in a newspaper. But, if you like to hang around and overhear words whispering to one another, then you might become a poet.

Q: What makes a good poem?

A: The minimum requirement for a good poem is a miracle. It always exceeds what you have any right to expect. That's what Keats meant when he talked about a 'fine

excess.' But, no poem ever survives merely because it's good.
Good is not good enough.

OLIVANT magazine's new issue NOW READY No.7 SHAPE of
the TANGO * by Vincent Benedetto. \$3.00 * Play-themes for
the modern choreographer edited by D. V. Smith, 116

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Mrs. L. RADSLIFF

REPORTS FROM SAN FRANCISCO

THREE LETTERS

(to an editor)

22nd March 1959:

While the images are vivid from last night, I want to tell you that I saw Pierre De Lattre in his mission BREAD AND WINE up a steep hill in San Francisco. The building is on the peak of the hill like the prow of a ship—the ground falling away on either side. Other nearby hills are covered by narrow upthrust houses decorated by stairways. There is a sense of massed humanity which would pass as they'd become people that you knew and liked.

Pierre, as the young folks call him, dresses in a cotton ski-shirt with hood, and wears a cross of St. George, I think. He is blond, slender, with steady eyes (blue) of one who serves. He is easy in his movements. The men who came and went tonight were mostly dark-haired, perhaps a little heavy. Could be heredity or cheap food. I only saw one 'boy,' a rebellious American from Cal. (Cal is, to us, the University.) Many had the look of hungry unloved youth.

As the room filled (its walls were hung with bright pictures and books), a girl was merry with a group of men in one corner, joined by an old man, French I think, whose gesture of hospitality was a few cigarettes on a dish resting near on a low table. A man and woman drifted in—her blue-black hair wild from the wind. She wore a sort of smock—long, of rusty velvet embroidered as are the Russian priests' robes. Her companion was also tall, in worn tweed. They were easy together and walked with grace. They did not stay.

The blond boy from Cal, in his vigour, was in a rage over American women; and seeing an American grandmother, sat with me, pouring it out. I think we arrived at something

besides rage—even as the firm faith of Pierre attracts him. Another who had stopped a moment was a scientist spending his savings to escape the coldness of his field in the warmth of inexpensive living in a foreign country, as it were. (This section is near Chinatown and the Russian colony, etc.) These, I do not think felt I intruded; but the others would not see me as a struggling writer, but as a ‘kept’ American grandmother.

Poetry was in the air—visiting poets on Saturday nights and workshop on Tuesday. Coffee is five cents, if you have it. The only beat-up thing around was a piano, too well used. I suppose there are drunks and men too broken by circumstances to move into new fields, in this group as in any. But who would dare say this one or that is to be disregarded? Here, the Hound of Heaven yaps at all heels, urging them on. May they find faith that goes beyond courage into the creation of beauty.

I shall go once more at least to the workshop, and perhaps I can get something of what they write. I felt as if one spoke: ‘Put off your shoes—this is holy ground’—this land is between the river and the hills called ‘youth.’ I am sure these men were not dirty, as reported—grooming is expensive, and San Francisco winds are cold. I wondered if they were comfortable and where they slept, and if books and an occasional ‘woman’ really met their great need for training in the use of tools of their hoped trade. One man I chatter with writes fantasies—has had one published, I am sure (the dianas are in the kitchen). I met his wife and I hope to again. Charming.

All this whirls around Pierre, who stands easy and steady and a little bothered, by the coffee urn. The poet due to read had failed, and so he is going to read some of his own. Since I could not stay, he let me see some of them; strong—well written, I thought—really wonderful. I suppose there is college somewhere in his past, but that is the least of it. Mrs.

De Lattre has a touch of Jane Adams and a modern ballplayer—the woman for this job. Those I spoke to say she is loved and admired deeply.

So, when you publish Pierre De Lattre, you can see as I saw. 27th June 1959:

Tonight I went again to BREAD AND WINE. Mr. Ferlinghetti was to read his poetry. He runs a bookshop called CITY LIGHTS, and has had two books published. The room was packed: sitting, standing, and sitting on the floor. As people left, he read again: again, the same kind of crowd and others better dressed, older and the same unattractive women, many with titian hair, heavy and often too long. Haircuts cost money. It's sad that women can so easily be unattractive—which is quite unfair. I felt noticeable with my white hair and cane (I still walk with difficulty) and felt as that college boy said: 'A kept grandmother.' The years of effort unseen and the present struggles as a writer equally unseen — the great gulf fixed.

The poems brought laughter — his spoofing and sarcasm and sneers at life and property — short sharp laughter of over-experience. The crowd, young in years but old in the mechanics of living, held few faces that indicated spiritual struggle; and I felt that I could not read these faces — due perhaps to different background or race — but I felt their drive and eagerness and camaraderie. They seemed so old — blank old — and I felt young and alive and eager — which would be a barrier between us.

The poems were honest and strong and had a brisk vividness, but little beauty. There were few demands for courage or revelations of inner joy. One called CHRIST HAD A HEAD ON HIM is to be published by NEW DIRECTIONS. I liked it, not as one likes the stuff De Lattre writes, but because it had something true to say in ordinary words — casual, offhand, as one damns something outstanding.

The room was full of smoke, many drinking coffee, and I felt thin-skinned. Not lacking in courage, but thin-skinned to the crudeness of youth — because we die different deaths for the same good reasons. God would know we were similar, but we cannot see it. De Lattre is beyond all this difference, because he sees men as souls and their adjectives as efforts toward speech.

I looked at these faces and missed starshine, even from the girl in the arms of a man next to me. She was much to him. But what was he to her? No radiance through her obvious ability to dress tastefully and be clean. Is that enough? I wonder! Was it ever? A young Negro near me blushed when I spoke to him, and I felt that here was youth, and the air cleared. Someone was taking pictures and I wondered if my white hair would seem as out of place as perhaps I was — though I was aware of the tide in them of strength unsure as yet of its direction. Dedication was there — but, to what?

I also have had all the problems they face, and with them the responsibility for others; and always for me a way opened to carry on. So I presume it will for them. But not for all. Defeat was visible here and there, and I wondered if it is not the first law of freedom to achieve self-support — because this gives a base to stand on, and only so can there be freedom of action.

July is vacation time, I shall try to go their workshop in the fall. My cocoa is cold, and I must go to bed. The second visit was vivid internally, and remains unresolved.

10th February 1960:

Yesterday, I went again to MISSION BREAD AND WINE. It is difficult to reach, lost in a warren of hill-streets, called the North Beach area. The last hill on Greenwich rises so steeply to Grant that it was my undoing. A vigorous Greek woman gave me a free arm; she had been shopping, and walked slowly with me to the top, leaving me with a smile, at the

door. Some writer let me in to sit a moment and relax. I asked for Mr. De Lattre and was taken to his study.

He invited me in, reluctantly I am sure; for talk is the least of his needs. It was a masculine room; many sorts of drawings and prints on the walls, an old couch, a huge desk in a litter of papers and files and books . . . the floor spotted with the needful for many sorts of activities—perhaps the one safe storage in so crowded a building.

For a moment, it was hard to justify my intrusion. He knew I had a real interest and was aware of the problems. His quiet: ‘This is a mission’ brought all activities into proportion and put the young writers into focus. He said the publicity had been harmful to his work, as he was there to serve the entire neighborhood and not one group. I realised vividly that here was both intelligence and warmth, available to need.

I asked if he thought there were those with real ability, a song to sing. He said there were. He told me the reading of amateur poetry after the Sunday meal had been given up, because those who had least to say said it at length. Saturday nights are still hours for the reading by a visiting writer of note, merit, or reputation. Always, the talk returned to ‘this is a mission’ and in this lies his reluctance to give his history. Perhaps he feels his history is his work.

Reluctantly, I left, thinking of his question: ‘Why not come and help?’ I knew I desired to; but, like the wedding guest, I was married to a situation that it was unwise to uproot. I realised sharply I was too old to follow the golden horn.

Halfway down the hill, I joined in high laughter with a wrinkled, bony Chinese grandmother herding small children uphill. She made nothing of the climb — nor did they . . . Waiting for the bus below the second hill, I sensed his consideration for my intrusion in his request that I submit a poem to the magazine. (Probably BEATITUDE — Editor.)

WHERE TO READ?

asks David Gunston

MOST people who enjoy books have their own favourite reading-places, whether on top of a mountain or in bed; for what the historian Ferrero called 'the insatiable hunger for printed paper and reading matter,' that is such a remarkable feature of human civilisation, has its own particular preferences for places as well as time and diet.

For most people, probably, the best place for a book is the armchair, perhaps by the fire. But the great bookmen have always been nothing if not adventurous. Petrarch could and did read anywhere and everywhere: 'Whether I am being shaved,' he said, 'or having my hair cut, whether I am riding on horseback or taking my meal, I either read myself or get someone to read to me.' At the other end of the scale in adventurousness was Richard Hooker, who was once discovered reading Horace while he tended his own small flock of sheep 'in a common field,' as his servant had gone home to dinner!

Reading in the open air is a delight to many, but few pursue it with the tenacity of G. K. Chesterton, who was once seen on Ilkley Moor, in Yorkshire, on a cold spring day, leaning against a tree so completely absorbed in the pages of his book as to be unaware of the heavy rain falling. The same nonchalant reader himself once recounted how, as he sat reading in a hansom cab in the streets of London, he suddenly noticed something of a commotion among the passers-by. Only then did he discover that, instead of sitting normally on his seat, he was in fact sitting on the road with the cab on top of him, still reading his book!

Books as travelling companions have been recognised by the enlightened long before the arrival of railways and the

railway-station bookstalls such reading supports. J. A. Froude asks: 'What did passengers do on long voyages when there were no novels?' If they could read, it seems they merely took other volumes: Petrarch made sure his little copy of St. Augustine's *CONFESSIONS* accompanied him on every journey he made, long or short.

Dr. Johnson raised a good point about reading on a journey. 'If you are to have but one book with you upon a journey,' he told Boswell, 'let it be a book of science, for when you have read through a book of entertainment, you know it, and it can do no more for you; but a book of science is inexhaustible.' On his famous tour to the Hebrides, he took his own advice, reading on the journey a seemingly unlikely tome as Cocker's *ARITHMETICK*.

Pliny the Elder loved to read whilst on the move, even in his chariot or sedan-chair. Napoleon had a special shelf of books fitted inside his coach, while Sir Julius Caesar, Master of the Rolls during the reign of King James I of England, had constructed the most elaborate travelling library of all, a gigantic moroccocovered box, shaped like a huge volume, and containing the fortyfour classics which he took with him on every voyage.

John Addington Symonds seemed to take a long journey just for the pleasure of getting through a lot of reading: he is recorded as ploughing through Guicciardini's *HISTORY OF ITALY* on a trip from London to Florence, quite regardless of the increasing attractiveness of the scenery through which he passed. This made Maurice Hewlett comment that a man who could do that 'could read Milton on top of a motor bus,' which of course has since been done countless times. For, in the bustle of modern life, a journey, however short, affords an unrivalled opportunity for reading books, and at the same time for reducing that 'limitless tedium' many journeyings represent.

Of almost equal popularity is the practice of reading at meals— a habit surely restricted only by the niceties of manners and family sociability. It has been said, against this much complained-of practice, that eating requires all the attention, that blood drawn by a book to the brain should be allowed to support the process of mastication and digestion, or internal upsets will result. However, many great men have read at table, notably Stevenson, Johnson, Shelley, and Bernard Shaw, who often found the quiet of a prolonged meal the only chance of reading during a busy day.

Some books-with-meals addicts have gone so far as to define appropriate volumes for certain repasts. Charles Lamb always found Milton a ‘good supper book,’ but Leigh Hunt preferred to digest his tea or dinner with the latest booksellers’ catalogues, ticking certain books in ‘the pure imagination of buying them.’ Thomas Campbell said that to read Homer at breakfast each day had become, by long habit, necessary to his existence, while R.L.S. recommends for breakfast reading Aikman’s *ANNALS*; they made him almost forget to drink his tea and eat his egg!

If the book is a good and gripping one, it matters little where it is read. Much worthwhile reading has been done, and in some cases still is done, in prison. According to Sir Edward Cook, only there does one find ‘the acid test of what is readable.’ Paul Verlaine actually taught himself English whilst incarcerated at Mons, and it is said that Napoleon’s greatest joy at St. Helena was always on those days when the ship arrived with fresh books to add to his speedily-devoured library of some 8,000 volumes.

Violent action, even, may not deter the true reader. It is said that Julius Caesar swam a river into battle with a sword in one hand and a book in the other; and many later generals have read in their tents whilst the battle raged outside. Lawrence of Arabia read Aeschylus during desert conflicts in World War I, and the experience of solid reading’s

power to transcend battles and air-raids and bombardments is fresh in many minds today.

Lying on a hearth, swinging idly in a hammock, soaking in the bath, waiting for the dentist, on an elephant's back, surreptitiously during a church service, standing before the bookseller's stall—the born reader reads anywhere, anyhow. But few delights equal the book in bed, which is for most, reading *de luxe*. Sir John Squire once said: 'The bedside book for me is the book that will longest keep me awake,' and many will agree. As Sir William Osler put it: 'With half an hour's reading in bed every night as a steady practice, the busiest man can get a fair education before the plasma sets in the periganglionic spaces of his grey cortex.' It would be interesting to know what proportion of booklovers could echo Arnold Bennett's confession: 'I invariably read in bed of a night.'

THE INTERMITTENT SPOTLIGHT: A LOOK BACK AT SOME LITTLE MAGS

Lawrence Barth

In an introduction to an exhibit of little magazines in Minneapolis in 1958, the Editor of this magazine noted a distinguishing fact of the 'littles': ' . . . they are not burned and thrown or given away. . . . They are treasured as books are treasured.' It's my purpose here to look through an awkward armful of little mags from my shelf, that go back through the past twelve or thirteen years, focusing a spot of attention here and there, as my particular taste or outlook suggest. (I don't expect to do any commenting in depth—to use a glib amorphous phrase; many outstanding poems, stories, and essays will have to go unmentioned, or this article would become a book.) Here are four issues of MATRIX. The first (from 1947, the eleventh year) is well mimeographed on 8½-by-11½ sheets, with a printed cover in a rather 1925ish style. A few names are still familiar: Judson Crews, of the rather strange little NAKED EAR, with its insistence on including with good art, some painted and photographed nudes of outstanding corniness; Charles Bukowski, writing CACOETHES SCRIBENDI, a short story—character sketch, really—about a writer (he continues writing, and SAN FRANCISCO REVIEW last year carried two of his strongest and most needlelike poems, I CANNOT STAND TEARS and 10 LIONS AND THE END OF THE WORLD); and Mason Jordan Mason, that bright crystal of an American talent—who should be presented by one of the famous-name publishers, and who has continued to show his hard and shining colloquial poems in the littles only. Later issues of MATRIX, still mimeographed, appear in smaller format, with imaginative silk-screen covers (S. E. Mackey), until that inevitable issue (Winter, 1951-52) stating: 'It will not be possible for the present publishers to continue' (Nor any other; there were no takers to carry on. Missed opportunity!)* In all the lists of contents I look at, names, names, What happens to all the swarms of names in the little mags—to the

nine-tenths of them which appeared here and there, often enough to become familiar, and then to sink into the black well with their stories, their poetry and ideas? Sometimes there is this blessing: they never wanted strongly enough to be writers and make an impress on their age, and it doesn't hurt them much to say finally: 'It was fun for a while, but not that important to me.' Sometimes, this curse: 'I wanted terribly, violently much, to write, but nature didn't give me enough of what it takes. Better stop than be mediocre.' Sometimes, this: 'I had it — now and then there was outside confirmation of that. But in America you're better off inventing cash registers — that's what America wants.' It's 90 percent true, that last. When someone pulls out that 'No worthwhile writing remains unpublished in America' thing, let's feel free to say: 'You're a liar.' The Great Unmentioned Fact in major publishing continues to be that 'publishable' is defined as 'literarily passable and capable of making a profit.' I see the debasement of literary taste as largely — even primarily — a result of publishers' dependence on the profit motive; even more, perhaps, than from the manufacture of food and clothes, do we need to remove the irrational profit motive from the making and distribution of books. Even within a profit-economy, major publishers will no longer risk money on a high-quality book that is not likely to sell more than a few thousand copies.

**Editor's note: No—not altogether; the first TRACE was mailed with that ensuing final MATRIX, prepared by Mackey, Frank Brookhouser, and J. Moray. While TRACE was not conceived for creative works, as such, it has carried on in behalf of individuated significance; and TOWARDS PRINT (besides magazine listings) continued from its 'parent' magazine . . . And, re the ensuing, more than 'a few names' rose to prominence from early issues. In MATRIX, alone, over twenty years ago, appeared Brookhouser, James Laughlin, August Derleth, William Carlos Williams, Hollis Alpert, Charles Angoff, Morton Fineman, Barbara Howes, Walter Lowenfels, and others—with early Forties issues carrying then-unknowns Robert Tallant, Anais Nin, Philip Talt,*

David Ray, C. Hall Thompson . . .

Cash registers — yes, 90 percent true. But also, thank nature, 10 percent exception: the Americans who think books should serve the heart and brain. While there are exceptions, there's hope — whatever decent and rational things we have in this ragbag human life, started as lonely exceptions.

In 1951, Nos. 3 and 4 of *INTRO* (later to become the arts newspaper *INTRO BULLETIN*) appeared in smaller type than usual 'to present the maximum amount of material at a minimum cost of printing,' Editor Louis Brigante noted. It starts off with *IN ANOTHER DIRECTION*, a long, racing essay-review of three anthologies — a review jammed with haste, errors, abbreviations, sarcasm, indignation, and bangcrash blastings. Several times, I've skimmed through, but never have read this, because it's too much like getting into a cement-mixer (and emerging with something as formless as wet cement). For a long time, because of his style, I imagined the author, M. Elath, was probably the same person as George Legman, who produced that illuminating, searing (and better written) essay, *LOVE AND DEATH*, self-published about ten or twelve years ago. (Isn't it time someone republished this?) Elath later briefly put out a magazine called *COMPOSITIONAL CULTURE* in the U.S.A. at the time when Legman, I'm pretty sure, was living in Paris; so my deduction was apparently made of water.

A CHAPTER FROM LOVE AND DEATH: THE PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF THE COMICS

appears in *NEUROTICA* No. 3 (1948). I have only two issues of this magazine, have often wished I had every issue. Its poems, stories, and essays are variously stimulating, curious, insightful, and far out. Clellon Holmes' analysis,

THE FLIGHT OF THE TALENTED UNTALENTED, is worth reading when one is in (or can induce) a frank, self-facing mood; Kenneth Patchen has a bitter, straightforward poem on the sickness of the human race, THE NEW BEING. Lawrence Durrell has a sort of surrealist-psychological joke called CONON ON MNEMONS. Judith Malina appears as a writer; I've known of her only as an actress and co-producer at THE LIVING THEATRE (she is acting there this minute, two blocks from my New York apartment). This theatre, one of the most stimulating of the off-Broadway houses, incidentally sells some small-press books and magazines in its lobby. Another name, this one in 1950 NEUROTICA, has come up again: Allen Ginsberg, with an amusing SONG: FIE MY FUM, more interesting psychologically than artistically. The first line, 'Pull my daisy,' gave the title to an experimental film in which Ginsberg appeared, shown last fall by the film club Cinema 16.

MINNESOTA QUARTERLY (Winter, 1950) has a Feike Feikima story, a fine study of a piano player by Lloyd Zimpel, THE KID AND THE PIANO, and photographs of clay sculptures on the theme of man's disembowelment of man. (Now, where have I heard of that activity before?) There is also a wonderful burlesque by Bill Hackney, LOVE'S OLD SWEET SA W, biting at the then-popular fictional character, Scattergood Baines.

Here's a curious phenomenon: in HEARSE No. 2 (1957) there's a perceptive story by Harold Witt about the emergence of a lonely woman's latent homosexuality, ODE TO MISS LOWDERMILK. A bell rings; and after searching the bookcase, I find a 1953 DECADE with the same story. What they used to call a 'nice question' arises: how allowable, how ethical is this? HEARSE carries no permission-and-credit line referring to the earlier DECADE, so we have to assume the author never mentioned to the editor its previous appearance. Looking further, I find other examples . . . The pressure on an obscure writer is great to find the largest

audience he can — understandably; and there's nothing wrong with a second appearance of writing that has worth. But frankness and openness of operation are essential; the editor and reader must be told where the first editorial credit lies.

DECADE — How Lee Lukes must have sweated to produce her magazine of good stories — not only with editing, corresponding, encouraging, but also with hand-setting, printing, binding. What a load! But definitely worthwhile — it's people of this kind who can stand up to the Moloch of today's world.

And LITERARY AMATEUR: I remember that I first saw the announcement of it in the NEW YORKER. That very tired magazine had reprinted the AMATEUR's ad because the wording was somewhat flowery, and they felt it made an amusing item. But I looked beyond Editor L. G. Merrell's ad-style, and saw that he had a heart and an anger, those things which even in 1951 were disappearing at an alarming rate in America. Merrell kept the AMATEUR going through four or five issues. He wrote me after it folded: 'LA failed at high tide — and didn't know it! With four numbers, we went almost to a thousand subscribers. And because it was not considerably greater, we felt the thing had flunked. We know different now.' His magazine helped develop some good writers, and encouraged them with cash prizes.

Next, is Jim Singer's EMERGENT (Jan. 1957), with very interesting drawings by deWyane Harrison, and a delightful race-prejudice spoof by William Margolis, involving a Venusian who's looking for an apartment on earth. What a rare, rare thing it is today to find humour on the printed page — humour with an edge. This is almost the only bit I've seen in little magazines since FURIOSO with its Department of Culture and Civilization. In the Summer 1950 issue, this department takes up (besides such footnoted esoterica as Speech Patterns of Tropical Fish) a motion-picture guide that

judges movies for children by the Wiggle Test. In the same issue, a haunting, chilling poem by Weldon Kees, RELATING TO ROBINSON.

Vera Williams (whose covers appear on LIBERATION, that blessedly rational and important magazine) has extremely good drawings in the three or four issues of THE NEEDLE which came out — bitterly satirical drawings of ‘persons being formed by environment,’ ‘the massacre of the children,’ and the like. In No. 2, Gretchen Milne tells of mishearing a song-title, and is stimulated to reflect on human toleration of murderous human institutions: ‘I have a notion that the seal on our doom, if there is one, is compounded partly of the fact that there is no song. I’M GOING TO CUSS YOU TO YOUR FACE, plus the fact that there is one I’VE GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO YOUR FACE.

Somewhere around 1955, I got an idea: Why not a magazine that will reprint regularly (and full-length, of course) some of the best material from the little magazines for people of taste and realistic intelligence, as READER’S DIGEST does for people of no etc.? A year or so later, BEST ARTICLES & STORIES began appearing. The one issue I have shows that perhaps a third of the idea I had in mind reached a press through other, independent channels; it has some worthy reprints, but runs along tracks unlikely to provide stimulating jolts. Its sources include such carefullymiddling magazines as the HUDSON REVIEW, CHRISTIAN CENTURY, SATURDAY REVIEW, and various university quarterlies. Is it possible that some day soon, an editor may put out a selection from the real, the lyrical, the angry, the adventurous of the true little mags?

I mentioned before writers one never hears of again. Where is Faye Riter Kensinger today? In 1950, she had in EPOCH a peculiarly fine short story, A SENSE OF DESTINATION, about an old woman moving up to death. Is she still writing? Has she grown discouraged? It may be she appears now and

again in magazines I can never possibly find time to read. (Maybe the reprint-mag suggested above could help on the time-problem too.)

Of more-recent poetry mags, ODYSSEY brings up the question of typographical errors. Its No. 2 was very irresponsible on that score; but since then, it has improved in accuracy—luckily, for it's too good a magazine to kill itself off with such carelessness. Let's explore this matter a little. Too many editors tend to say 'to hell with proofreading' (even the somewhat posh PARIS REVIEW is very sloppy about it); they seem to feel that accuracy is a trivial demand from overegotistic writers and 'square' readers. This is immature nonsense. Typographical accuracy is part of a device for conveying thoughts, sensations, and feelings from writers' to readers' minds. Anything—even a misplaced comma—that impedes this process, stops its flow, makes it trip, is comparable to forcing a dancer to work on a wobbly stage, or hanging a picture sideways. If errors are all right, then let's go the whole way toward confusion—print magazines on tissue paper in light gray ink, and insert every other page upsidedown. Accurate proofreading against copy, and rereadings by several experienced people, are musts.

We know what's been with CHICAGO REVIEW in the near past: explosions, and the exit of a staff to found BIG TABLE. In the winter of 1950, it was a smaller mag with no professional designer's apparent touch, containing a sensual prose reminiscence of childhood, full of a child's close focus, by Zygmunt Haupt, and among poems, ASH HEAD by Joseph Lobenthal, Jr., a study of an old person, using a Joycean method and almost medieval in tone—very effective. The CHICAGO REVIEW of fall 1955 has (besides the wonderful Walt Kelly line about Americans: 'We have faults which we have hardly used yet') a Henry Miller piece on American writing and the major publishers, LITERATURE AS A DEAD DUCK, worth reading several times.

Here, in my complete file, is the first MISCELLANEOUS MAN (April, 1954), the only mimeographed issue. Interesting and stimulating things here, as always, including an article by the Catholic anarchist Ammon Hennacy, and a stinging Curtis Zahn satire on TIME. It was too bad to see the end, last year, of the M.M., and damned heartening to see the way Bill Margolis and his associates fought off censorship in 1957.

Do you recall the original STORY of Martha Foley and Whit Burnett? I go back now and then to the October 1936 issue, for a story about writers in a class, LOVE OF SOME KIND, by Madeleine Cole; it has a warmth that helps to renew me when I start to say: 'What the hell am I beating my brains out to write for?'

Finally (having skipped enough mags here and there to make a stack two feet high), I take up one probably littleknown even to interested people—SEVENTY-SEVEN, issued by a writing class at Yale. In the Spring 1952 Issue there is an outstanding story by Neil Rolde, COURTYARDS AND CORRIDORS, about the questioning of Nazi prisoners during the war, and going below surface attitudes to point out the truth we need to learn and relearn, that we need to soak in until we have it and use it: man is a biological entity who has made himself emotionally sick, and the sickness is everywhere, crossing every 'dividing' line between military enemies, classes, nationalities, races, religions, and any other group you can think of. Dr. Wilhelm Reich pointed that out superbly in his THE MASS PSYCHOLOGY OF FASCISM (now banned and burned by a department of our government); here in Rolde, we have it again: the sickness in us all is the greatest, the basic enemy.

I said in TRACE in 1953 that many people eventually look for truth, no matter how obscurely it may be published, and that the difference between morale and hopelessness for even a minority of people can mean the difference between life and death for a nation. I still think that's true; but I

believe we can see in 1960, vaguely but with growing clearness, a certain beginning of query on the part of increasing numbers of the American people—and probably the same can be said of the British people. The little magazines have, without question, helped to arouse that groping unease. We should not for a minute overestimate their stimulating power; but to underestimate it would be even less realistic. With that in mind, I'd suggest again some sort of loose (and nonpoliticky!) organisation of little-magazine editors; in addition, a 1960 conference could lead to solving some of their financial and other problems, and to decided strengthening of little magazines as artistic and social stimuli.

SOME ITEMS RECEIVED

by the Editor

A verbal gadget which always conjures (for reasons doubtless layered somewhere in the cryptic unconscious) a kind of misplaced typographical pudendum, is absent from the front of a book likely to excite more attention than others lately described. This is *THE PARTY AT CRANTON*, boldly written by John W. Aldridge and temerously published by DAVID McKAY Co., Inc. (119 W. 40th, New York City 19 — \$3.50).

What's missed is one of those legal-sounding disclaimers that contents portray persons living (or dead — often extra-cautiously added). Of course, such preambles merely are clues to some half-disguised something-or-other about someone-or-other, and weigh little in the scales for an actual defense.

Early commentators may have misunderstood the title of this crazy, clever work of diabolically-humorous integrity. Yes, there is an unsocial 'party;' yet, this word seems better applied to the book's chameleon central character, Arthur Keith Buchanan, whose composite identities are compacted to foil any learned barristers who may be retained. The same ruse (to baffle redfaced prototypes and eager counsel) is employed in other montages limning many additional wellknown persons; also, in super-imposed closeups of several respected institutions. While the fictitious CRANTON REVIEW (the originals of which are outrightly identified, whereas names of actual people are just gingerly propped in for stage effects) is more true than diseased life to these real quarterlies.

Books reviewed here usually are recommended; and this one, decidedly so. But chiefly to those who not only have abundant vocabularies, but have lived through post-grad

life-courses in the ‘elaboratories’ of letters which really are the projected materialisations from eminent psycho-therapists. This is not easy reading, despite the likely lure of a gamut of sexual franknesses. Broad general knowledge is required — plus special knowledge of contemporary fiction, poetry, belles lettres, and the lives of literati — to digest a flow of ready pertinences by no means exclusively centred in the valleys of erotica. And yet, considering all the ingredients, this is a lucid broth; a sprightly individual style will urge readers through pages that brim over with paragraphs of record lengths. And although dialogue is entirely absent, the Editor recalls no other novel which has managed this so unobtrusively — thanks to a shatteringly-funny first-person narration. Talk is often overworked anyway; scores of novels are conversationally overdressed to look scintillating, in fraudulent repartee.

Finally — and this detracts from the whole — the book exhibits a fault less damaging to novels than to plays. However whoppingly brilliant the opening acts of a play, failure in the finale can reduce it beneath mediocrity. This remains a notable novel, though Aldridge does ‘get lost’ in the hurried closing sections of the concluding chapter. The climax — preceding these sections, and spoiled by lack of restraint — already had over-realised the denouement of what long since had been tabbed a tour de force. Yet, saying the worst for its later structure, makes the work no less admirable for superb analytic revelations of today’s educational, literary, and general socio-cultural mess.

- Between books, attention should be drawn to a magazine article comprising an intelligent, comprehensive diagram of this ‘mess.’ Paul Goodman (in Spring DISSENT) provides a stimulating, surprisingly-dispassionate, and methodical survey. His views will be helpful to nearly any ethical or philosophical theories toward social remedies. In

the light of laissez-faire probabilities (see menacing hints in THE NAZIS AS BEATS, by Theodore Price in THE VILLAGE VOICE of 20th April), perceptive persons will be prodded to stiffen against the current patterns of 'double-think.' Goodman's 'HUMAN NATURE' and the Organized System is to be, by the way, the first chapter of the most aptly-titled book of the year: GROWING UP ABSURD. This 'absurdity' is not for light comedy. Nor heavy, either. His central thesis affirms that none of the so-called corrective methods — those already tried or those officially being discussed — even acknowledges the social causes of increasing vice, degeneracy, violent, and signs of impending anarchy. The remarks on juvenile delinquency are invaluable; and his findings on the 'mystique of voluntary poverty' in the ranks of the controversial beats, are as helpful in restricted context as his documented breakdown of the new social (and anti-social) classes.

- Before turning back to new literature, proper, to command a book by a nonagenarian who urgently addresses younger generations; he is Charles T. Sprading, whose double title, POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE FREEDOM and THE STRUGGLE FOR RIGHTS AND FREEDOM (GREENWICH — \$1.95) well describes the content. Much of it is elementary, and Mr. Sprading may misconstrue some historical background; but he jars the reader's realisation of the extent to which present leadership has lost desire to perpetuate conditions encouraging to individuated significances (an ideal already slipping into past-tense). Staggering confusions are unveiled by these writings and others (see the Huxley biography, ensuing). Contrasting definitions are demanded for republics degenerating into demagogic bureaucracies during debates over non-existent human equality and the over-extension of democratic processes. The mob always has been the prime enemy of the liberal independent intelligence which destruction of autocracy was meant to free.

And here are hundred-year-old works of Giuseppe Belli (THE ROMAN SONNETS, etc., translated by Harold Norse with Preface by William Carlos Williams and Introduction by Alberto Moravia — JARGON, \$1.95). These bear conspicuous relevance to the ‘mess’, they obscenely (some will demur) confirm, among other things, that without what is called ‘evil,’ there logically can be no ‘good.’ Such protests of the last century much resemble contemporary rantings against conditions inimical to artists and writers. Yet, these evils are all-essential: without the abuses of the old Church, Belli could not have created these bawdy satires of his early period; without the doom-filled threats of an atomic era of commercial madness, there’d be no young, angry, vulgar verse. No wonder the bearded wandering rebel Norse found delight in rendering this Italian into American idiom.

Williams prefers to overlook that the idiom still draws its strength from the old English and most of its flavour from the Continental classics. Moravia shows broader comprehension of what both originals and translations mean, culturally, stressing that Belli assumed responsibility solely in his art-of-the-moment. Because, later, the Italian denied principles and behaved in manners which proved he held no zeal for reform; he wished his earlier writings destroyed when they lost crucial selfish immediacy and began to embarrass him. Imagining certain reversals of circumstance — our beats probably would deny their protests and abandon ‘holy’ causes for the saving of man (same chiefly having been inferred in the rationalisations of others, at any event).

Getting on with prose, some distinguishing dark nimbus should be conjured from the valley of the shadow for a book declared ‘something monstrous’ by one modern who has herself been condemned and unpublished for more palatable — and justifiable — franknesses. Not wishing to be named in this connexion, she said exactly what this writer feels: that

appearances of such 'sick perverted books' while Henry Miller's *TROPICS* are labeled unprintable, proves Albert Camus correct in asserting the 'absurdity of the world.' Stories of Bruce Brooks (*PILGRIMS IN THE ZOO—BEACON*, \$3.95) were found quite different from the 'robust and healthy' sex of Miller.

Brooks is occasionally effective in memorable shots of 'depressed' socio-psychological situations: deteriorated occurrences in the post-decline of certain strata of Western society. The settings register with authenticity; but the actors are made gruesomely unbelievable—far beyond the dark forecasts of Spengler! Some stories are so distorted by mixed subjectivities that they only should be cited as ultimate examples of what was to have been expected from recent trends toward the end-rot of decadent sensationalism. Here may be the illustrations of the 'last word' to ensue abandonment of purpose in existence; and no dubious excuse of stylistic innovation can be offered to defend writings which imitate fragmented narratives of many others.

These may be misclassified with other and genuine explorations of experience, by writers who have used shock-values with farther-reaching and positive purposes they have not, of course, stated in so many words. But the distinction will be found in the overtones and subtle conveyance of these other also quite 'clinical' author-attitudes. It's not true that, as the *ZOO*'s cover blurb alleges, Brooks is a 'first' in this kind of detachment. There was the recent section of *AUDIENCE* (Spring Issue) titled 'A Study of Violence' and misleadingly tagged work by 'Cambridge anti-realists.' In these—and particularly in the excerpt from a novel by John Hawkes—the personalities of the writers can be sensed as positive; and while readers may become depressed by the 'lostnesses' of the fictional characters, they will not generate nightmares over lost authors as well.

At times, Brooks even exceeds the negative effects of the shock-for-shock's-sake school, and may be perceived suffering from the sickness within himself; and reader-nightmares of schizophrenic terror will ensue, not from his preoccupation with physical dirt, nervous divergent sex, or even sadistic cruelties, but from the evidences that the nihilistic abandonment in his amorphous personae is projected from his own total negation.

- Albert Camus, in his mail interview with the editors of *VENTURE* (Spring/Summer Issue — 95c) just before his death, made several pertinent points in explicating the 'error of modern art.' With regard to existential philosophies, he noted that the so-called exponents of such largely-semantic concepts contradict the premises of their poorly-emulated predecessors; and that most publicised fictionists alleged to be progressing in the traditions of Proust, Joyce, and Kafka, abandon in advance their means (great talents or small) of pursuing significant searches for their 'worlds,' through honest self-contemplation. Means are put ahead of ends, he declared: form ahead of content, and technique ahead of subject-matter.

Without reading the philosophy of Camus, or even his novels, his decided concern with the 'present-I'—never primarily with post-effects—was discoverable in nearly everything he said. And it's interesting to read here that he well-realised how the non-political people, the non-joiners of movements (political or other) are the socially-concerned ones, while the true 'solitaries' of negative bent are trying to avoid social thinking by adopting formulae (particularly fascistic 'solutions'). Corroboration of this in Camus himself has just come to hand in a reprinting of his *REFLECTIONS ON THE GUILLOTINE*, published by *EVER-GREEN REVIEW* (No. 12) as Camus' posthumous contribution to the protest against Caryl Chessman's execution.

- This both returns attention to Aldridge and Goodman and carries forward the proper focus in considering T. H. HUXLEY, Scientist, Humanist and Educator, by Cyril Bibby (Forewords by Sir Julian and Aldous Huxley—published by HORIZON, \$5.). This volume is centred on education; and the next logical question must involve the extent to which society itself has contributed to these unfortunate developments through bad education. And any smart retort that society is composed of individual persons, is a quibbling rebuttal. To be as quibbling as such an hypothetical quibbler: all social activities are predicated by organisations, special ‘wholes’ which immediately supersede participants and prove to be strengthened and maintained solely by regulations and restraints upon individuals.

The life of Huxley provides excellent material to demonstrate the flaws in a great deal of ill-reasoned writing on the indefinable subject: ‘individual-vs.-organisation-man’—as though stating some choice! As though man could be man, without society; when — instead of an impossible either-or — the issue concerns the healthy continuation of resistances, the interplay amongst individuals within their more-or-less always-organised spheres. And the most essential resistances being those to the negative forces of the nuclei of societies and their component organisations.

No better illustrations could be provided than those from the experiences of Huxley, that the advocacy of individuation is not the same as trying to argue the individual completely out of society. Development of Huxley’s character could not have taken place, had there been no organised traditions and actual institutions he joined in order to make effectual resistances. His was the life of an educational organiser who was also a most stubborn individualist. As may be said of other original thinkers, he would have fought the regimenting influences of his own brain-children, had he

lived beyond himself. Bibby supplies a key Huxley quotation: “‘Authorities,’ ‘disciples,’ and ‘schools’ are the curse of science; and do more to interfere with the work of the scientific spirit than all its enemies.’ The same applies to every endeavour, to education generally, and — of more direct interest here — to poetry.

In tracing the maze of Huxley’s activities — apart from showing the values of Huxley’s contributions with historical thoroughness — Bibby piles up the evidence to prove that however necessary formal education may be, it should be under unremitting attacks of men like Huxley. Intelligent readers will be led to observe that there have not been enough Huxleys around for too many years; at least, such men must have been quite generally kept out of positions where they might effectively battle authority-for-sake-of-authority.

At least one of the many causes for the hysteria now breaking through into the literary sphere will be found in the educational situation; this largely explains why even reason itself is coming under attack. And yet, there’s certainly nothing ‘wrong’ in criticising the limited rationality of man — per se. Some religious or mystical ideas may be desirable optimistic counters to some creeping scientific pessimisms? Aldous Huxley would agree (in passing — a new selected collection of the grandson’s essays has just been published by CHATTO & WINDUS); but here, perhaps, the former Huxley would refuse his confirming dissent, in spite of the ways in which the ritualists and formula-men have created conditions leading to books like Aldridge’s, writings like Goodman’s, and to the death-advocating symptoms of social illness found in the stories of Brooks.

AND THE MAJOR NEW POETRY UNDOUBTEDLY IS KENNETH PATCHEN'S

**BECAUSE IT IS, POEMS AND
DRAWINGS (A NEW DIRECTIONS
PAPERBOOK, \$1.25)**

This is to be read — not written about, except in terms of invitation. Patchen's poems here, more than ever before, are their very words. And these obviously happened: that is, the words came to fresh identities in such unique contexts that to attempt describing the humour, the pathos, the irony, or to paraphrase 'messages,' simply would be ridiculous. And of course — the drawings. These positively must be seen, for appreciation, to vision, as well as hear, the Patchenity of Patchen, before reading, while reading, and after reading the magical words.

Under forty-odd titles (with that many drawings), the present states of the world are multi-severally, but by no means indefinitely, explored. Which is to assert that this offering has greater apparent unity in its wholeness than Patchen's other recent books. Every poem (while each quite capably may stand alone) belongs in the completed pattern of the series, every one occupying the place which adds to the book's full realisation. This is just one of several evidences of Patchen's maturity, his 'past-master' control, in contrast to the irresponsible (as regards both form and content) inchoate howls and dispersed insane (when not inane) shrieks and mutterings of many of his contemporaries.

The id est predicated in 'because,' the repeated opening word of each component, requires no Cartesian or dubious existentialistic explication. The socio-philosophical thesis is apparent, beginning from the light (but doublebarreled) first piece: BECAUSE to understand one must begin somewhere. And toward the close, the assertions don more sadly-grave

(while bursting humour, all the same) headpieces: BECAUSE sometimes the handwriting eats away the wall and BECAUSE the whole world was on fire. Fused by genius, the poles of terror and of joy.

BECAUSE everybody's clock keeps a different time should be quoted in toto — and the finale: BECAUSE he liked to be at home. But, back at the book's centre, where outstanding numbers bear less-obvious labels of 'because' — as when predicating 'his sister's' sight of 'Shakespeare in the moon' and he kept imagining a pensive rabbit — is the more typically-'advanced' Patchen (all phases), one called BECAUSE my hands hear the flowers thinking:

I scooped up the moon's footprints but
The ground climbed past with a sky
And a dove and a bent vapor.
The other half of cling together wove by
In the breath of the willows; fall in
Sang eagle ox ferret and emerald arch.
O we, too, must learn to live here;
To use what we are. O fall in now!
For only love is community! Of various likenesses, none
Unless one love! In the lionleaf, the sonshade
Spreading over a father's road! When we love,
God thinks in us. And in that home-going time,
We see with the eyes of grass; and in the trees
Hear our own voices speak! So gently, gently, I say
That sleep is the secret-releasing key to this world.
Our lives are watching us — but not from earth.

And, amongst the other poetry, first honourable mentions belong to a couple of books received long since, but for which space had been found only for listings, in earlier issues. These are: NO OTHER TIME, David Lyttle (GOLDEN QUILL, \$2.75); and A NEW FOLDER (with many drawings which, however, are less stimulating than varied works by forty-three poets of large and small fame), edited by Daisy

Aldan (FOLDER EDITIONS, \$4.50). And one newer book should be named with these, if only for the typography: MORALITIES, poems by Thomas Kinsella (THE DOLMEN PRESS, 7/6 or \$1.10, limited to 500, of which twenty-five are signed, hand coloured, and bound in full buckram, £1 5s. Od. or \$3.60).

David Lyttle's is the first better GOLDEN QUILL book in a long while — attesting purposive individuality and broader background, thought, and technical preparation than nine-out-of-ten better-recognised moderns. Better attention for such knowledgable honesty as shown here, would raise the status of neoteric endeavours generally. Several less-sincere — and really less-experimental and -talented — moderns are in A NEW FOLDER. For, this is a catholic, rather than a discriminating presentation; and mainly noteworthy as a good job of cross-sectioning.

The validities of Lyttle's lines are revealed in his more-frequent integrations, his effective identifications of meaning-plus-personality through words, where these become the very poetry itself. He sometimes does resort to rational invention; but he's rarely caught posturing, and seldom fumbles — obviously because working toward his own individuated style, in whatever well-absorbed traditions. Lyttle doesn't strain for gallery-applause by using modishly-avant mannerisms, many of the extensions of which in others have been as artificial as imitations of Tennyson. Craft is evident here; but Lyttle is more than a craftsman. And when his themes do seem to have predicated poetical exercises, more usually gets into the final products than he'd consciously have intended. The words are what move in such contexts; and — taking the opposite approach — where his initial spontaneities seem to have been allowed to remain, his best talent appears.

Possibly Lyttle indulges too much self-editing, ironing out unique wrinkles that should have been preserved. While one may argue that just such after-care (assuming certain other

poets really are equipped to profit from their own conscious judgements) is what should have been exercised upon many a driveling stream, Lyttle (who is a teacher) could be blocking himself by over-nagging self-criticism. It certainly seems he might relax his discipline at this time — that he might discover less need than he may guess, for monitoring what must be a sufficiently-primed well. Even in loosest moments, it's doubtful that his unconscious would commit atrocities.

In this connection, more than from lack of background training, some of the scattershot postures in *A NEW FOLDER* obviously rise from the insufficient personalities of their writers. In such cases, no added hours of intelligent revision could make the stuff into valid poetry (which isn't 'made' anyway). On the other hand, Lyttle's originality is demonstrable in spite of the resemblances in certain portions of his book to work of several other poets (among these—Harold Witt and Joan Longchamps in U.S.A. . . . British poets Philip Larkin and Bernard Kops) who may or may not be familiar to Lyttle. The samples below carry his own hopeful variety: humour, as well as lyricism; sharply realistic bits, along with abstract realism.

BUTTERFLIES:

All evening long he loves
Her up and down, her hair
Waving like a silk flag
In the red radiant air.
They yawn, and gas the car,
And make the dark wind blow.
They snuggle to themselves,
And plow the bugs like snow.

The first adroitly prepares — out of imaged symbolic
abstractions in the unquoted opening — for the
earthiness of the second. And in THIS MARVELOUS
MISERY, his several qualities and devices are fused:
'And silver crabs/Cuddle in the pits of her limbs/
Greased by the blasting light/ Of this storm.' While
the close of LADY OVERBOARD both shows the fun in
him and introduces one of his seldom-conjured
'references,' in what seems to be a
less-selfconscious flow:

I lie here, and the waters roar,
And embers glisten on her belly,
And she wallows for the shore.
O Botticelli, Botticelli,
She has fallen from the shell.

**THE MECHANIC IS IN QUITE ANOTHER KEY —
THAT OF THE SOCIAL COMMENTATOR (WHICH
LYTTLE ALSO IS):**

He lies
Down on his back
And his eyes
Blur
And glisten
With fabulous speed
As he tinkers
On the belly of his car.
But as he lies
(Lying for years)
His face grows black
And the hands
Get gnarled,
Struggling
With great wrenches
In the misery of gears.

Deliberate allusive transposal ('years' — 'gears') in the second half of this poem, and the 'wrenches' double entendre, to render the rather bathetic resolution more subtle, contrast decidedly with the unforced accomplishment of the first half — illustrating Lyttle's

conscious tampering inclination. And finally—of the book as a whole (for the quotations were not singled out with any eye to the fact they contain repetitions) it must be stated that a present narrowness of imaginative scope is revealed by the many iterations and reused subject matters. This may presage serious limitation of range, despite the variety in types of reactions.

And still, on examining the poetry itself in the typographically-splendid *MORALITIES*, Thomas Kinsella's work is found ringing many more changes, while evidencing practically no individuated originality and an imagination that only seems to be varied. And the scope of his verbal reactions comes from the phrases, metaphors, and similes of dozens of other poets, living and dead. These are not general

resemblances—as with Lyttle—but identifiable specific turns utilised either unconsciously or by purposely juxtaposed contrivance to produce first impressions of versatility. So, Kinsella fails to confirm a purposive endeavour at poetic self-discovery; his oppositions rise from long-familiar fusions, from mere struggles with form, or from cleverly-coupled literary allusions. This supplies slight grounds to anticipate his extended survival or future development into a major poet. To cite excerpts and references would seem wasted space, when any well-read student may identify scores of derivatives, echoes, and borrowed expressions.

Appropriately to be noted here—because of the relationship of the title and the great contrast in the work—is *PIETA* (the *VILLIERS* booklet by Ulric Devaré) given only bare listing recently. This writer, while not extending expression and showing slight verbal imagination (either), has at all events an admirable forthright facility with similes and an unpretentiously-heightened narrational style which somehow carries considerable poetic effect without metaphors and only slight oppositional nuances. His prose also is out of current fashion, as in his new *GUSTAV MAHLER'S SONG OF EARTH*, an appreciation, with introduction by Ernst Toch (a second *VILLIERS* booklet). His offering of this 100th anniversary piece in the old tradition of cerebro-narrational musical interpretation, underwrites his sincerity in the former retelling of the crucifixion story. Leaving poetics and the absence of contemporary technical significance aside, the important contrast lies in his conveyance of a well-defined personality through a quality of essential personal communication, a primary missed in most of what is called poetry today.

An emerald-laden second issue of *THE IRISH BOOK* is in from The National Library of Ireland (Kildare St., Dublin — 3/- or 50c), along with *A GAELIC ALPHABET*, designed and cut

by Michael Biggs, with a note on Irish lettering by Liam Miller (11th part of the DOLMEN CHAPBOOK). The latter puts into symbols, from ailm (the pine-tree) to uath (the white-thorn), mythical traditions; while the former displays in reviews, bibliographical notes, listings, and advertizements, the enduring vitality of a limited culture that continues to enliven international literature through many major English works by Irish authors. From the front page, announcing IRISH PLAYS (PROGRESS HOUSE, 270 N. Circular Rd., Dublin —4/6 in wrappers, 7/6, cloth) to the back-cover's details of lecture for the first Yeats International Summer School at Sligo, it is crammed with data. Among other unusual items noted, is a new English-Irish Dictionary, edited by Dr. Tomás de Bhaldraithe (FOILSEACHAIN RIALTAIS, G.P.O. Arcade, Dublin —15/-).

ISSUE P. 50 · SCAN P. 52

A STARTLING NEW LOOK AT HENRY MILLER

HENRY MILLER: HIS WORLD OF URANIA

by Sydney Omarr

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ISSUE P. 51 · SCAN P. 53
WALTER LOWENFELS

PARAGRAPHS

The danger in a poet trying to be practical isn't that he may fool himself; he may convince others to make fools of themselves also. * * * The last simplicity is not said. It is just smiled. * * * All we are trying to do is to catch up with the composure of Bach, the precision of Leonardo, the anger of Michelangelo, and the rebellion of the angels. * * * When you talk to yourself you really listen. The great game is to hear somebody else. * * * We are living through a new time period. Like an earth fault, a social flaw is being corrected in an upheaval that transforms human values. Some of us will come out of the geological grinder as mincemeat, others as 'new' persons. New in quotes, for it won't seem new at all; just a continuation of the human tradition. It is in this tradition that contemporary poems try to function—break out of the deep-freeze of literary texts to be part of people's lives. * * * The universe is totally different than anything I say. Its difference will be the difference of a poem. I say, find the parallel logic of the world structure through the poem. That will be as close as you can get to the way the whole story feels. * * * I want to live long enough to wipe out the geological sentimentality accumulated during a long life in the Nostalgic Age. * * * I once started to write a book of philosophy. After thirty years, I had two sentences left: 1) The Kingdom of Heaven is not within us; it is within someone else. 2) The spiritual force of the world is the material well-being of every living person.

TWO GUEST REVIEWS

WITH the paperback release of Gregory Corso's *THE HAPPY BIRTHDAY OF DEATH* (NEW DIRECTIONS, \$1.20), readers of the irreverent come closer to a growing realisation: that poetry is dead. Standing apart from quality automation and denouncing elements of such contexts, poetry has relaxed its craftlike grip on structure and leaned more heavily on an inspirational quality of conception. Poets, in the struggle to insist on the separation between Art and other facets of life, have shunned formula-begetting poses and forms and arrived at statements bearing some grammatical claim to a form- or effect-label ("poetry"), but suggesting significance on the basis of uniqueness. The remains, in print, display personalities and selected individualised grammars. And so it is necessary to have Corso's poetry in book form. For, with the exception of the frenetically-sustained *BOMB*, Corso's attitude defines itself in spurts and drags.

Readers of *GASOLINE* will be pleased or dismayed to learn that Corso has not run out of fuel. The resultant combustion kicks and soothes from childhood memories to contemporary hysterical fantasies. 'It is life has flawed my gentle song,' says Corso, who shuttles henceforth between a rock-hard imagery of protest and abstractions of escape and humour.

Corso is a word-flinger, we are told; but insofar as his technique represents rather than determines, his compulsion is conceptually incisive more often than it is technically responsible for illumination. Where wordplay takes over, the poet appears to live in superficial fantasies. Where, however, the poet's preferred intuitive technique is wedded to protest and normally referential emotional chargings, he becomes moral: 'How can I love the Army?/Doves honk it wicked!'

Certainly, there seem to be some of the unfortunate caterings to the mass communication media-fostered Beat label: the vulgarised Zen dialogues/the self-pitying yelps/the insistent pose of misdirection/the enthusiastic discovery of the often obvious/the frenetic catalogues/the refusal to commit (to admit even a compulsive bias). But, where Corso admits himself, this \$1.20 brings revelations of one more verbal personality, some worthwhile social comment and representation, and an example of that general contemporary awareness of words which is turning courageous publishers toward significant (though admittedly imperfectly-crafted) personality-statements, and may yet mean the ironic end of what

**AND FOR EPIGRAMMATIC READERS, A FEW
UNJUSTIFIABLE SELECTIONS:**

Marvin Bell

To lie in bed and be hairless is a blunder only God
could allow
O the fuzzy wuzzy grief!
Of course the unicorn will be killed
Poetry is powerless where there is no Power
All is lamb-agony! The bleat is Law's!
No meaning to life can be found in this holy language
Winter left the wood like a plate of chicken bones.
it's a good feeling I get
a self-sad feeling when I spit blood —
Informer? No — I'm in it
for the excitement
It is not God that has made Power unbearable it is Love

**JAMES JOYCE, UNLIKE CORSO,
BELONGS TO THAT OBSCURITY WHICH
DEMANDS RESEARCH, OFTEN IN THE
NAME OF ASSUMED SIGNIFICANCE AND
EVEN 'CORRECT' RESPONSE. AND
HARRY LEVIN'S JAMES JOYCE
BELONGS TO A DISAPPEARING
TRADITION OF READABLE, EXPANSIVE,
AND HUMBLE SCHOLARSHIP.**

**ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED ONE YEAR
AFTER JOYCE'S DEATH, THE VOLUME
HAS BEEN REISSUED AS A NEW
DIRECTIONS PAPERBACK (\$1.45).**

**THIRTY-ODD REVISIONS, MAINLY
SMALL; A POSTSCRIPT; THE
OUTDATED BIBLIOGRAPHY HAS BEEN
DISCARDED.**

Marvin Bell

Of Joyce, says Levin, 'We must recognise both his striking originality and his deep sense of tradition.' He goes on to place *A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN* in the naturalist tradition, and to call *FINNEGAN'S WAKE* a symbolist experiment. Whether or not this focus on forms stands up, Levin's discussion of ideas and techniques is broad enough to remain the finest general introduction to reading Joyce. He takes for a structure, the normally-emphasised relationships between: (1) Joyce and his fictional counterpart, Stephen Daedalus; (2) Joyce's aesthetic theories and his works, generally defined as successful illustrations of these theories.

There are details to be squabbled over, if one wishes to. The most attacked statement is perhaps: 'ULYSSES is totally lacking in the epic virtues of love, friendship, and magnanimity.' But all this is so much stucco on panels of firm discussion. Levin's book is an old friend, and let no one think this short treatment implies something other than praise for an honoured guide. Buy the book.

Two things stand out in the postscript. The first is the author's justification of, and praise for, Joycean scholarship, which, he tells us, is appearing in book form at the rate of a volume a month.

The second is a welcome slant on the reading of *FINNEGAN'S WAKE* by any mortal man. Here is a scholar of the broad view, a rarity in robes.

Upon reading the postscript, nevertheless, one may perhaps be glad that the new release is essentially as it was when published in 1941. There is a hint of too much willingness to glorify the movement of Joyce's works 'from contraband to scripture,' to believe that the main text of Levin's work would have retained its direct comprehensiveness if rewritten. And it is excellent as it is.

ADDENDA . . .

JUST this; and little of it. Skimpy compressed notes on many matters; and the essential listings. . . . All the seasonal summer conferences and courses—plus several new—have been, are, or will be in session. Readings have been frequent and well-attended nearly everywhere—not a few gaining special attention. Some have been regular stage-productions. For example, William Pillin's poetry readings at Music Inn (Los Angeles) with professional pantomime and dance under direction of Edmund Penney. . . . In Toronto, success of recent CONTACT PRESS readings, supported by the Canada Council, have pointed to further endeavours. . . . The poems-and-drawings idea of A NEW FOLDER (New York City) in late spring, caught national attention; and an addition to the Library of Congress poetry-tapes resulted. . . . Portions of Anais Nin's novels were dramatised at American Arts Theater (L.A., again), this spring. . . . St. Louis saw further experiments in poetry-music, in Garden Clubs Auditorium. . . . Some less-shocking readings gained recent San Francisco attention—those of Jory Sherman. . . . From London and other centres, India, Australia—varied reports, including new radio and television work—not the only 'public-events' uses of poetry in perhaps-irrelevant ways. For instance, University of Akron's Music Festival utilising verse of Louis Gibbons (book noted below).

- Special TRACE interest attends preparation for two coming novels: CONCRETIONS by Arlene Zekowski, and THE DIALOGUES by Stanley Berne. To appear in 1961, Zekowski's will carry thirteen Milton Avery engravings, and Berne's probably will be illustrated by a prominent Frenchman.

- Some things called 'Publiccomments' were asked in a novel promotional contest, with fourteen prizes for criticisms of pre-publication copies of George Abbe's novella, ONE MORE

PURITAN (\$2, via WHETSTONE etc. . . . Kurt Singer (2861 Stanton Rd., Buena Park, Calif.) seeks 'first-rate fiction' for syndicated press service, worldwide, with 130 publications including far-spread magazines. Mr. Singer states TRACE-subscriber submissions will get prompt attention. . . . J. R. G. Adams objects that the FIDDLEHEAD (No. 43) 16th anniversary editorial may be interpreted to say this is a record for all types of Canadian poetry periodicals — though CANADIAN POETRY MAGAZINE has appeared since 1936.

• Books and booklets too late for review (some of them probably to be detailed in No. 39) are: A FAMILY AFFAIR, Edwin Brock (SCORPION, 6/- & signed ed. £1 1s. Od.); HENRY JAMES, Leon Edel. (U. of MINN., 65c — and also 65c rather than \$1, for other pamphlets listed in TRACE 37); RAVE, Royston Ellis (SCORPION, 5/-); DIRECTORY OF PERIODICALS: Publishing Articles in English and American Literature and Language, Donna Gersterberger & George Hendrick (SWALLOW, \$1.75 paperb., \$3.75, hardb.); ANNA LIVIA PLURABELLE, Fred H. Higginson (U. of MINN., \$3.75); THE UNLOOKED-FOR SEASON, Jenny Joseph (SCORPION, 7/6); THE SCRIPTURE OF THE GOLDEN ETERNITY, Jack Kerouac (TOTEM PRESS & CORINTH, 95c); SECOND AVENUE, Frank O'Hara (TOTEM & CORINTH, 95c); A THERAPIST'S VIEW of personal Goals, Carl R. Rogers (PENDLE HILL Pamphlet, 35c); MYTHS & TEXTS, Gary Snyder (TOTEM & CORINTH, \$1.25); LIKE I SAY, Philip Whalen (TOTEM etc., \$1.25); THE BEAT SCENE, ed. Elias Wilentz, photos by Fred McDarragh (CORINTH PRESS, \$1.95 in U.S.—\$2.25 elsewhere.)

Not yet received, but of TRACE interest: THE PHILOSOPHY OF POETRY: the Genius of Lucretius — transl. of H. L. Bergson by Wade Baskin (PHILOSOPHICAL LIBR., \$2.75); LOUIS SULLIVAN AS HE LIVED, Willard Connelly (HORIZON, \$6.50); THE ROSEATE FLAME, Brian Cox (KALEIDOSCOPE, \$1); THE SOUND OF SHADOWS, Elma Wilkins Foster (SWALLOW, New Poetry Series, \$2.); ABRAXAS & Other Poems, Leslie Woolf Hedley (INFERNO, \$1

paperb., \$2, hardb.); FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT: Writings & Buildings, select. by E. Kaufman & B. Raeburn (HORIZON, \$3.95); A WINTER COME, A SUMMER GONE, Howard Moss (SCRIBNER, \$3.50); INTO THE CLEARING, May Miller (CHARIOTEER, \$2.75); IRISH STREET BALLADS, ed. Colin O'Loughlin (CORINTH, \$1.65 paperb., \$3.75 hardb.); SELECTED POEMS, Gil Orlovitz (INFERNO, \$1.75); IMPACT, Ezra Pound (HENRY REGNERY CO., \$5); three 'microcosm' books — CHILDREN'S M., THE BOOK OF . . . , & THE SEA-M.— ed. by Dorothy Una Ratcliffe (NORTHERN BROADSHEET — very ltd. eds. at 2/6, 10/6, 10/6 respectively); CATHEDRAL, Edward A. Richards (CHARIOTEER, \$2.75); ROBERT FROST: The Trial by Existence, Elizabeth S. Sergeant (HENRY HOLT & CO., \$5.); IN DEFENSE OF IGNORANCE, Karl Shapiro (RANDOM HOUSE, \$4.); A FOOL TURNS CLOCKWISE, James L. Weil, arr. by Felix Stefaniele (AMERICAN WEAVE, \$1.); MEMOIRS OF AN INTERGLACIAL AGE, Philip Whalen (AUERHAHN PRESS, \$1.95 paperb., \$4.50 hardb.); THE SHINING BROW — Frank Lloyd Wright, Olgivanna Wright (HORIZON, \$4.50); 'A', Louis Zukofsky (avail. fr. Celia Zukofsky, 135 Willow St., Brooklyn 1, N.Y., \$5).

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