POETRY

(LONDON)

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HERBERT READ: A SALUTE

PIERRE JEAN JOUVE

TWO POEMS BY **WALTER DE LA MARE** ● ON A WEDDING ANNIVERSARY BY **DYLAN THOMAS** A WARTIME DAWN BY **DAVID GASCOYNE** ● TWO WAR POEMS BY **GEORGE SCURFIELD** ● THE DYKE-BUILDER BY **HENRY TREECE** ● IN A TIME OF CRISIS BY **LAWRENCE DURRELL** ● RICHARD EBERHART BY **NICHOLAS MOORE** ● EAST COKER BY **JAMES H. KIRKUP** ● EN PARTANT POUR SYRIE BY **G. S. FRASER** ● FOUR LYRICS BY **TAMBIMUTTU** ● ALSO POEMS BY **ANNE RIDLER, GAVIN EWART, PETER J. LITTLE, G. S. FRASER, JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN, J. C. HALL and NICHOLAS MOORE.**

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Fourth Letter

In this number we publish an important statement by Pierre Jean Jouve,* on poets, poetry, and the nature of creative thought, in the light of modern psychology and "meta-psychology." Thank you, David, for placing it at my disposal.

It is a piece of writing that has undergone the act of sublimation, in the Freudian sense, and in the sense that Jouve uses the word; the description is therefore real and accurate to a very high degree. It may seem wordy, in parts, to the frivolously rational—"frivolous," because that is Jouve's own adjective for the so-called intelligent, who are always prepared to ignore anything that might offend them—the nakedness of Jouve's sword-thrusts should set every crusty, "rational" head thinking.

The theme of the article is, in essence, the same as our First and Third Letters: Jouve asks, after our knowledge through modern psychology of the complicated nature of Man's subconscious (Man's problem now seems to him forever insoluble), "how can it be that Man has succeeded in setting up rational consciousness against forces so determined and redoubtable?" And he goes on to say: "In revealing the demonic life of the instincts, modern psychology, the aim of which is to revolutionize a diseased civilization, brings to light at the same time a new and sounder Reason"; which is a fact we have emphasized often, although only a Jouve's or an Y Gasset's genius can embody it in a set of ideas, as moving and as compelling.

"We represent an insoluble *conflict* between two lines, of which one indicates the natural warmth of the creature, the other, the rational development of the person." From this conflict, a disturbance may at any moment break out, and proceed to endanger the inner life. How true this is of to-day! Culture in the West has become separated from the vitality which created it, and while it has been refined to the last degree, spontaneous life itself has undergone a corresponding depreciation (Jouve says the same thing in his paragraph on Catastrophe; cf. also Ortega Y Gasset's *The Modern Theme* and our Third Letter). We are all in great spiritual danger, and the poets, who should be fighting to preserve the living values, or creating them, have embraced the corpse, which only leads to general decay and ruin. Poetry is an act of revolution against this sense of Catastrophe, as Jouve calls it, and to-day we are in need of more imagination, and less stolidity—imagination triumphed over mummified routine and "rational stolidity" in France.

In time of war, man descends into his

* *Translated by David Gascoyne.*

fundamental and real self and discovers what are the real and unreal values in life, and as a consequence, we find that people in London, nowadays, enjoy themselves or "let themselves go," in a way that seemed wrong to them before. We therefore say: we can now profitably give the imagination free rein and not fear doing the wrong thing, because the intellect is always there to help the imagination, and would not deteriorate, as we seem to fear, if we lived better and more fully. The imagination freely released will take its own shape and attain its *symbol* (Jouve), wholly real, and in art, will become the agent of increased communication. Therefore, poets to-day may profitably throw overboard the intellectual catechisms about poetic attitude of the many pre-war literary cliques, who lived in a dead world, among books and theories, "embracing the corpse." No doubt, a few lasting poems have been written, but only in a half-alive way, and the products are not of the kind that will bear comparison with the work of a Yeats or a Blake. But that was not their fault. New feelings had to be expressed (Man became increasingly aware of the unconscious pulse) and theirs was the initial stage of the expression, with its theories and movements, and no really first-rate poems. The surrealist movement was the most important, and the only one properly belonging to the age, and would have done more for the health of modern verse had it possessed more poets of major importance. Perhaps the most imaginative of the pre-war poets like Spender, Dylan Thomas, Barker, David Gascoyne among others (and they are all in the first stages of their poetic expression) will constitute the important poets of the future. And we must remember that the old poetic attitude, implied not so much in the individual poems, but believed in by a majority of the poets, and publicized by the Objective Reporters of the nineteen-thirties, is dead, once and for all—at least until such another age, when its culture, along with its art, has become ritualised and a-vital once more.

To return to Jouve's article: when he speaks of man achieving "conscious thought," he is referring evidently to creative thought; the whole essay is addressed to writers, poets chiefly, although its implications affect people in all walks of life.

Thought in the poet is the "bloody sweat" of *sublimation*—which function "by transferring energy into a given tendency, can cause the latter to cease to resemble what it was to begin with, yet without thereby severing it from its origin; to become increasingly free from the determination of necessity, and thus able to rise to higher levels." This is his definition of poetic thought, and if we accepted its truth, we would not have such a high opinion of poets like Auden whose writing does not show, to any great extent, this act of sublimation. His purely intellectual qualities are admirable and he has written excellent poems, but he has not lived enough, in spite of his many travels, and his psychological make-up lacks depth (experience-through-life) which is only symtomatic of the age. He is now reported to be feeling after a sort of personal mysticism, which seems to indicate that he has realized his former limitations and is now moving on to a more valid attitude towards life and poetry. Auden represents, to us, Jouve's *super-ego* (archaic repressive force) and with his suave, clever tricks, in themselves products of a decaying civilization, and aided by that knack of his for self-advertisement, had built himself a reputation bigger than the less pushy Spender, who may be said to represent the erotic basis constituting the id from which all true poetry springs. This is also the case with music. The singer Schubert's place in music is seldom questioned,

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ON A WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

At last, in a wrong rain,
The cold, original voices of the air
Cry, burning, into the crowd,
And the hermit, imagined music sings
Unheard through the street of the flares;

The told birds fly again
From every true or crater-carrying cloud
Riding the risk of the night,
And every starfall question with their wings,
Whether it be death or light;

The sky is torn across
This ragged anniversary of two
Who moved for three years in tune
Through the singing wards of the marriage house
And the long walks of their vows.

Now their love lies a loss
And Love and his patients roar on a chain;
The sun's brought down with a shout.
Three years dive headlong, and the mice run out
To see the raiding moon.

DYLAN THOMAS

TINTERN ABBEY

A frozen music; this gray ruinous stone,
Which mid the drifting mist lours cold and dark;
Yet whispers of Man—noble—long ages gone;
Ay, every weed in its cranny mutters, Hark!

WALTER DE LA MARE

A FACE

That mute small face, but twelve hours here,
Maps secrets stranger than the sea's;
Hieroglyphics as austere
But older far than Rameses'.

WALTER DE LA MARE

TO MY SISTER

Because I know the sweetness of your heart,
Because I see you as my nursery love
And as a student of dramatic art
Whose letters lend me hope and power to live,
Because I feel that serious little girl,
Pulsating often with a social throb,
Is basic in your character and will,
Learning to dance or looking for a job,
Because you are the happiest of my family
About whom complexes rage not so fast,
Almost immune to guilt or moral homily,
Because you are the youngest and the last
I wish that you at least survive this war—
I wish you this—but wish you so much more.

GAVIN EWART

THE BOFORS A.A. GUN

Such marvellous ways to kill a man!
An "instrument of precision," a beauty,
The well-oiled shining marvel of our day
Points an accusing finger at the sky.
—But suddenly, traversing, elevating madly
It plunges into action, more than eager
For the steel blood of those romantic birds
That threaten all the towns and roads.
O, that man's ingenuity, in this so subtle,
In such harmonious synchronization of parts,
Should against man be turned and be complaisant,
The pheasant-shooter be himself the pheasant!

GAVIN EWART

TWO WAR POEMS

I *SONG AND DANCE*

In the sweet morning over the Kentish hills
comes the sergeant's voice
crying, like a cow in the wilderness—
Bring back, oh bring back,
my baby to me.

Over the hills and into the Kentish river
the sergeant's voice carries
making the blackberries
drop from their branches
and the leaves fade,
fade, fade, my little green jade.

Who sadly spoilt the flow
of the sergeant's beautiful voice
made soldiers fall to vice
and some women to folly.

Into the ruins of a darkened tower
the silence of evening is creeping,
while soldiers in the countryside
are weeping, quietly, softly weeping
—Bring back, oh bring back
my baby to me.

GEORGE SCURFIELD

II

Look at the sloping shaping hill
Of huts, trenchscars, and mud
camouflage acts and the scent of blood,
says the soldier
—staring out of the window.
Look at the grey gangrene of the grass
the trapeze of the trees
the becastled river and the maze
of sandbags and wire
—staring out of the window.

The steam rises out of the stupid ground
covering over the history of shouts
the whistle of the wind over the huts—
Sleep soon—
—staring out of the window.

GEORGE SCURFIELD

BRISTOL CHANNEL: AUTUMN 1940

After the hoof-clatter of soldiers' boots has passed
I sit alone, and gaze upon the darkening sea:
The drab clay of khaki that engulfs my soul,
Forgotten, merges with the sand beneath my feet,
And in the midst of war, I am at peace.

Slow now is the rythm of the evening,
The ceaseless surge breaks softly on the beach,
The distant lighthouse gleams a while, is dark, then gleams again,
And so into the night will gleam and darken,
Calm and unhurried as it did at peace.

The evening has forgotten war and so can I,
Lulled by the stillness of the moment's calm:
Yet night by night this sleeping shore has known
The mournful wail of sirens and the thud of bombs,
The strange yellow sun-set of the guns
Which comes and goes as no known sun-set can;
And this night's calm will too be split and broken
And I shall remember then that peace is far away.

PETER J. LITTLE

THE DYKE-BUILDER

On the seventh day the storm lay dead,
The god who built the dyke strolled out to see
Blind men, blind windows, widows and the daft,
And the cracked shore carpeted with gulls.

On the ninth day no sunset red
Daubed the damp stubble: peacock blue, bright harmony
Of gold and purple laced the sky, and soft,
Ripe as a plum with joy danced the quick girls.

But on the eleventh day the dead
Looked from their priest-holes, seeing only sea,
And the green shark-cradles with their swift
Cruel fingers setting the ocean's curls.

HENRY TREECE

SQUIRT FOR A TUDOR COMIC

(With directions, as for a consort of whistles)

. . . So, in receipt of victuals am I their fool,
Crack-pate clack-dish maker of their mirth;
My dole, a leaden angel sweated in their poke,
Guerdon of leper—if he be but blind!
And in the other balance, their receipt,
A knight of wit sups nightly at their board,
Bawding his tempered tongue for their delight,
Risking their tempers' nay-word in his jests.
A wretch, whose meagre spoils spoil better self,
Gelded from truth to gild their garden hours,
To paint more gaudy their bedizened gourds,
And glut their gluttony with glozing words!

But I'll not grave this motley in my heart,
This pied-motley at a rotten court,
Rotten as medlar (there I go again!),
Meddler with my tongue (Oh damn! The rot
Has like a stinking caterpillar stung
Its fungus barbs inside my very bone!)
I'll not, I'll not, I'll not, I'll not, I'll not!!

(Oh fie! Here comes milady in her shift—
Those eyes, those lips, those paps, that swelling—ah!)

For sure, your Grace, yes, by my life, for sure:
It shall be done, my lady, as you say.
Adieu, adieu!

Oh, damned wretch! Oh dog!

HENRY TREECE

LAMENT

Down by the drumming autumn of the river
Is a griever's evening, cracker of crazy leaves,
Is fire-snap, whip-snap, is bright weather dancing:
Is a swan-reft river, inconsolably grieves.

Is suave his image high from drowning river,
High from these nodding branches and green pools,
This swan, whom waters of my desolation
Would sully sky for, but this not consoles.

Would say these waters do like salt sea lap
For a smooth rock, that is ribs and is lips;
Is a salt-crusted autumn, with salt-crisp leaves
Are sea that crackles and loops and whips.

Say autumn and ocean, swan and rock, are all
But other truths for other images:
My swan or rock whom broke my truth against
I must pursue my water's truth, he says.

Now lap and ebb on this receding shore
Whose grains no grip have, nor no surging breast
For to arrest my tide or breast my river:
To me it was never given, ever, to have rest.

G. S. FRASER

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Winter and aseptic snow, the last
Expected gestures of the natural year
Entrap the hemisphere;
In chambers and gaudy clubs, the cries
Of celebrants release
A rich hysteria of girls, the thin
And wine-propped arms of men,
While Sadness falls, a season of cold rain,
Since all pretense is down—
The shrill romantic protests have been made,
The ravaged called unfortunate, the victors mad.

That deathly epic and its legends weigh
Too mightily; the gay night is outfaced
From bleeding east to west;
A lover may not look but in his eyes
The wretched story blurs;
And yet, among the antique ruins, I trace
One luminous whole house,
A tower personal and proudly built;
Its metals will not melt
Nor may the fierce designs of time unloose
Its proven pillars, its enchanted peace.

Our years were young, our only crisis, love;
Desire with his scissors sharp went out
To find a grove, and cut
A tree of flowers for the double bed,
(White lilacs for your head!)
And in the slums a hundred footsteps down
The negro lights were gone,
The city skimmed on wet and summer streets;
While windy curtains put
A trelliswork across your ashen eyes,
The porcelain-colored dawn flood-lit your face.

Like figures on a frieze, our partings meant
A stony history must be survived,
The disparate heart must live
Unfriended till the stone-traced pageant move;
Here was such reach of love
Would have commanded, in some other guise,
Treaties of strict peace,
Would have converted hangmen from their plans,
Deployed the raiding planes,
Put Christ in capitols and in the churches Marx,
Rung in an Easter for the orthodox.

JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN

POEM

Now that you lie
  In London afar,
  And may sleep longer
  Though lonelier,
For I shall not wake you
  With a nightmare,
Heaven plant such peace in us
As if no parting stretched between us.

The world revolves
  And is evil;
God's image is
  Wormeaten by the devil;
May the good angel
  Have no rival
By our beds, and we lie curled
At the sound unmoving heart of the world.

In our good nights
  When we were together,
We made, in that stillness
  Where we loved each other,
A new being, of both
  Yet above either:
So, when I cannot share your sleep,
Into this being, half yours, I creep.

ANNE RIDLER

IN A TIME OF CRISIS

(For Nancy)

My love on Wednesday letting fall her body,
From upright walking won by weariness,
As on a bed of flesh by ounces counted out,
Softer than snuff or snow came where my body was.

So in the aboriginal waterways of the mind,
No words being spoken by a familiar girl,
One may have a clear apprehension of ghostly matters,
Audible, as perhaps in a sea-shell's helix.

The Gulf Stream can rub soft music from a pebble,
Like quiet rehearsal of the words "Kneel Down";
And cool on the inner corridors of the ear
Can blow on memory and conscience like a sin.

The inner man is surely the native of God,
And his wife a brilliant novice of nature.
The woman walks in the dark like a swinging lantern,
A white spark blown between points of pain.

We do not speak, embracing with the blood,
The tolling heart marking its measures in darkness
Like the scratch of a match, or the fire-stone
Struck to a spark in the dark by a colder one.

So lying close, an enchanted boy may hear,
Soon from Tokio the crass drum sounding:
From the hero's hearth the merry crotchet of war.
Flame shall swallow the lady.

Tall men shall come to cool the royal bush,
And over the grey waters the bugler's octaves
Publish aloud a new resurrection of terror.
Many shall give suck at the bomb's cold nipple.

We are the tiny lords and ladies in waiting,
Kneel on a sharp equator between possible climates;
For us they reserve the monarch's humiliations,
To be pricked in the heart by a queen's golden pin.

Empty your hearts—or fill from a purer source,
That what is in a man can weep, having eyes,
That what is Truth can speak from the responsible dust,
And O the rose be in the middle of the great world.

LAWRENCE DURRELL, 1939

A WARTIME DAWN

Dulled by the slow glare of the yellow bulb;
As far from sleep still as at any hour
Since distant midnight; with a hollow skull
In which white vapours seem to reel
Among limp muddles of old thought; till eyes
Collapse into themselves like clams in mud. . . .
Hand paws the wall to reach the chilly switch;
Then nerve-shot darkness gradually shakes
Throughout the room. *Lie still.* . . . Limbs twitch;
Relapse to immobility's faint ache. And time
A while relaxes; space turns wholly black.

But deep in the velvet crater of the ear
A chip of sound abruptly irritates.
A second, a third chirp; and then another far
Emphatic trill and chirrup shrills in answer; notes
From all directions round pluck at the strings
Of hearing with frail finely-sharpened claws.
And in an instant, every wakened bird
Across surrounding miles of air
Outside, is sowing like a scintillating sand
Its throat's incessantly replenished store
Of tuneless singsong, timeless, aimless, blind.

Draw now with prickling hand the curtains back;
Unpin the blackout-cloth; let in
Grim crack-of-dawn's first glimmer through the glass.
All's yet half-sunk in Yesterday's stale death,
Obscurely still beneath a moist-tinged blank
Sky like the inside of a deaf-mute's mouth. . . .
Nearest within the window's sight, ash-pale
Against a cinder-coloured wall, the white
Pear-blossom hovers like a stare; rain-wet
The further housetops weakly shine; and there,
Beyond, hangs flaccidly a lone barrage-balloon.

An incommunicable desolation weighs
Like depths of stagnant water on this break of day.—
Long meditation without thought.—Until a breeze
From some pure Nowhere straying, stirs
A pang of poignant odour from the earth, an unheard sigh
Pregnant with sap's sweet tang and raw soil's fine
Aroma, smell of stone, and acrid breath
Of gravel puddles. While the brooding green
Of nearby gardens' grass and trees, and quiet flat
Blue leaves, the distant lilac mirages, are made
Clear by increasing daylight, and intensified.

Now head sinks into pillows in retreat
Before this morning's hovering advance;
(Behind loose lids, in sleep's warm porch, half hears
White hollow clink of bottles,—dragging crunch
Of milk-cart wheels,—and presently a snatch
Of windy whistling as the newsboy's bike winds near,
Distributing to neighbours' peaceful steps
Reports of last-night's battles); at last sleeps.
While early guns on Norway's bitter coast
Where faceless troops are landing, renew fire:
And one more day of War starts everywhere.

April, 1940 DAVID GASCOYNE

WALKING AT WHITSUN

La fontaine n'a pas tari
Pas plus que l'or de la paille ne s'est terni
Regardons l'abeille
Et ne songeons pas à l'avenir . . .

(APOLLINAIRE)

. . . Then let the cloth across my back grow warm
Beneath such comforting strong rays! new leaf
Flow everywhere, translucently profuse,
And flagrant weed be tall, the banks of lanes
Sprawl dazed with swarming lion-petalled suns,
As with largesse of pollen-coloured wealth
The meadows; and across these vibrant lands
Of Summer-afternoon through which I stroll
Let rapidly gold glazes slide and chase
Away such shades as chill the hillside trees
And make remindful mind turn cold. . . .

The eyes
Of thought stare elsewhere, as though skewer-fixed
To an imagined sky's immense collapse;
Nor can, borne undistracted through this scene
Of festive plant and basking pastorale,
The mind find any calm or light within
The bone walls of the skull; for at its ear
Resound recurrent thunderings of dark
Smoke-towered waves rearing sheer tons to strike
Down through To-day's last dyke. Day-long
That far thick roar of fear thuds, on-and-on,
Beneath the floor of sense, and makes
All carefree quodlibet of leaves and larks
And fragile tympani of insects sound
Like Chinese music, mindlessly remote,
Drawing across both sight and thought like gauze
Its unreality's taut haze.

But light!
O cleanse with widespread flood of rays the brain's
Oppressively still sickroom, wherein brood
Hot festering obsessions; and absolve
My introspection's mirror of such stains
As blot its true reflection of the world!
Let streams of sweetest air dissolve the blight
And poison of the News, which every hour
Contaminates the æther.

I will pass
On far beyond the village, out of sight
Of human habitation for a while.

Grass has an everlasting pristine smell.
On high, sublime in his bronze ark, the sun
Goes cruising across seas of silken sky.
In fields atop the hillside, chestnut-trees
Display the splendour of their branches piled
With blazing candle burdens.—Such a May
As this might never come again. . . . .

I tread
The white dust of a weed-bright lane: alone
Upon Time-Present's tranquil outmost rim,
Seeing the sunlight through a lens of dread,
While anguish makes the English landscape seem
Inhuman as the jungle, and unreal
Its peace. And meditating as I pace
The afternoon away, upon the smile
(Like that worn by the dead) which Nature wears
In ignorance of our unnatural tears,
From time to time I think: How such a sun
Must glitter on their helmets! How bright-red
Against this sky's clear screen must ruins burn. . . .

How sharply their invading steel must shine!

DAVID GASCOYNE

INVOCATION TO LUKSHMI*

Where the Woman droops by the catastrophe
The sun hangs beads and the traffic flows
On. She is melting.

She the mother of us all, the golden
Six-handed mother is melting
Flowing into the sand.

Hold us in your liquid tears
And let us grow like the bulrush
Speared to the sky

—The vast tent. Hung with stars
Dust, jewels, the splendid gape
Of the disrobing morning.

* Hindu Deity.

The statues on the beach are flesh and blood
Nerved to their sex
And changing hours.

Weep big eye into the round
Of the hollow day.

The rains will come with the stinging thorn
And the ninth-month wave
Hurled to the heart

Of the mud-house. Wet, dry, round
We shall be washed
With the morning

And cockburst. Weep Mother into the lake
Into the pool, the sound, the flowers
The chaos of hours.

Bind us in the pool of tears
With the splendid rose
Of the morning.

Mixed to the roots, the fire, the rain,
The falling dust;

Heavy with your proffered tears
O make us grow.

TAMBIMUTTU

DEITY

Mysterious ayoha, ayoha
Without lips, hearts or membranes
On the high mountain tops:
Eating your passion smoothly

Like oil, nuts, grapes, oranges.
The heart is a gape the breezes enter
With the running water and the beat of tides
On barren shore, the winding

Burning stair of white sand to somewhere.
Fill the valleys with song and smother
The hearts, lakes, stars with diamonds
—Old is your sacred song.

TAMBIMUTTU

The white magic in us all,
The storm-ships of the heart, majestic
In the bowls of the blue sky;

Lifts us to the dizzy mountain tops
Hung with fire and song;
Lets fall the rose-blown heart

Into the river below, below
Wreathed in death's sleep
And the veils of December days.

Blow, blow O miracle, O song
Into the dividing darkness, the unknown places
The tombs without faces,

Without limbs, bricks or bones.
Hearts in the belfry ring out to the moon
And the glad days beat on a window of stars.

Hold us with the white dreams of the Possessed,
The Beautiful, the Beloved,
And curve these boats to the hidden and distant shores.

TAMBIMUTTU

PRAYER

Let me taste the silence that flows
Behind your dark eyes, O Nirvana.
The bird is heavy on the hill
And the silence fills

Its black vessels of sound.
The ladder is broken to your rooms
And two hands are flowers
Falling, falling

With the beat of the sea.
Crush the petals on the dust
And pitch the blood
    On the running wind

On the running sand.
The world is vast
And you are watching, watching
Through the split in the leaves—

Drown my soul, down
Down into the night without desire—
Where the reflections are no more, no more
And rooms are broken into vast spaces.

TAMBIMUTTU

POEM

With the ill wreaths that time has given you, go, my darling
Who sail like a ship on my tongue.

Time has given me words, as though I were an alder
By Cagney's Pond, to weep that the waters are slipping, shuffling

With foam on my tongue like a mad man
Through the sluices and the docks.

I have a lazy hand like a duck's
To tickle the waters and test the pride of your fingers that

Round me twist. The ship is yours and the sail,
So I know you, my darling, for the two islands,

Shell again, as I shall often, the sheets and the slip from your breasts,
Finger there, and love, O and here

Is the long-tongued ship of my poem,
The poem like a daisy chain, and going through bridges.

NICHOLAS MOORE

A WISH IN SEASON (for KAY BOYLE)

For every berry I make a wish,
For every wish I make a promise,
But where are the berries on the bough,
In bombed Coventry now
Or in the other places?
For every wish I make a mock of these faces.

For every wish I make a promise:
Look at the golden light on the hills.
(Look at the people still in the hedges,
Taking a rest, taking a rest)
In London now at night
The Thames is alight.
For every wish I make a mock of these faces.

Promises, promises
On the high politicians' lips.
Christmas this winter will be cold,
But gay for me with a kiss on the lips,
For a wife that is not old,
For reasonable promises.
But for every wish I make a mock of these faces.

For every wish I make a mock,
For every winter is cold.
Crawling through mud or alive in water
Here are the young and the old,
Lost not by bombs but by promises.
For every wish these faces stand and smile.

I wish you a merry Christmas with these things.

NICHOLAS MOORE

JOURNEY TO LONDON

From the Welsh wick aflame in the globe of winter
I came across England to love and anger,
Came from that mountainous indifference
To where my hopes are, your lips, our danger.

Riding the three ranges, the high midland
Where history piled stone on stone together
Furnishing from grey stone our politics
And the dull principles that slay my brother,

Riding the three ranges, I left England
In the rage of sunset and all Oxfordshire
To the cold glory of its toppling spire,
Came down to darkness and a city's fear.

O London, from the pellucid flame of Wales,
I your citizen and twenty others
Crossed from the Chiltern daylight into darkness,
The night that drowns our enemies and lovers,

Journeyed from grey stone to bombs exploding
Our politics and prayers, to a new anger
Striking from grief this poetry. We came
To the heart of love, to the heart of danger.

J. C. HALL

HERBERT READ—A SALUTE*

"I salute him as a poet, a critic, a scholar, a philosopher, a prose-writer of distinction" (Geoffrey Faber).

I

I believe Herbert Read to be one of the most important men-of-letters now writing. His output has been large and varied; perfect of its order, on a plane accessible to all with eyes to see and hearts to feel; its splendid scholarship tempered by a humanism absent from the work of any other writer since T. E. Hulme.

I also believe Herbert Read to be one of the most neglected major poets of my time: that is, a poet who has not been recognized at all proportionately to the magnitude of his work, and for reasons which are, in themselves, a tribute to his ability.

In a review of Read's *Poems*, 1914–35, Michael Roberts once wrote:

> The voice is never raised, there is no overstatement, no collapse into a false rhetoric, and there is a curious austerity in the imagery, an absence of harsh contours and strong lights. There is an exultation, the delight of the eye in watching a quick movement without any wish to take part in it. . . . The same detachment reappears in the war poems. . .

Roberts goes on to express the suspicion that Read's poetry is little known, owing to the fact that his other literary activities have given the poems the semblance of by-products.

Well, the same might be said of Belloc or Eliot, and I wouldn't believe it in any of these cases. Herbert Read's poems are *known*, if only because of their appearance in every sane literary magazine: but they are not "popular" for the very reason for which Roberts extols them. They have no overstatement, false rhetoric, strong lights and dazzling colours, but instead, austerity, quiet exultation, detachment. Above all, to quote Sir Henry Newbolt, they have "a surgery hardly to be endured."

But there are other reasons for this "unpopularity," perhaps the chief of which is Read's ability to recapture the mental and emotional states of childhood. He shows the world as it was when you were nine, before other people did something to you and made you what you are. As before your old schoolmaster, it seems there are few secrets; it is impossible to escape by parading your manhood.

> To the fresh wet fields
> and the white
> froth of flowers
> came the wild errant
> swallows with a scream.
>
> (*April*)

That is not only what a child must see, but what a child's tongue and mouth do when he is thinking about what he sees.

No words of mine can make clearer the insight which causes Read to write:

> The farm is distant from the high-road
> half a mile;
>
> The child of the farm
> does not realise it for several years;
>
> (*Childhood*)

if the reader does not come up, with a nostalgic jar, against his own childhood space—fantasies—then he shouldn't be reading poetry at all.

Again, Read has an "advantage" over most readers: he has *been*, *known*, *felt* so much. He is too near perfection:

> Earth is machine and works to plan,
> Winnowing space and time;
> The ethic mind is engine too,
> Accelerating in the void.

After spending a paragraph in "translating" this passage ("A Critique of Poetry"), Michael Roberts comments:

> It has taken us seventy words to say what Mr. Read said in ten, and even if his writing might seem obscure to some readers, it is entirely unambiguous. He says exactly what he means, and either you understand it or you do not. You cannot misconstrue it.

* This is the abbreviated version of a longer article.

As I have said, I believe that piece of writing to be near perfection; so near, that our eyes are blinded to its *poetry*, and can only marvel at its *exactness*, at the incisive power which can perform such an act of cosmic surgery.

Two examples from Read's early work will further illustrate this almost incredible use of the *mot juste*:

> The dark steep roofs chisel
> The infinity of the sky:
> But the white moonlit gables
> Resemble
> Still hands at prayer.
>
> (*Night*)

Here is the *true* language of common speech. (And could a more *exact* word than "chisel" have entered any poet's head!)

If "infinity" is vague—so is the concept it describes; the width and emptiness of the sky are in that word. The last three lines show Read, the Humanist,—and those who know Dürer's *Hands* will see how exact the image is —in that quiet exultation with which the poet leads us to the spectacle of prayer, to whatever God it may be.

> Shrill green weeds
> float on the black pond.
> A rising fish
> ripples the still water
> And disturbs my soul.
>
> (*The Pond*)

Once more, the Imagist ingredients—and notice the pictorial reality of green on black; but the mood is antithetical to that of "*Night*": the weed is *shrill*, the soul *disturbed*, the water *ripples* and the fish rises. In nineteen words we learn the difference between static and dynamic.

Yet the war-poems are the most remarkable. There is infinite compassion, pathos and horror, but above all a detachment almost unbelievable in one so physically and mentally implicated in the job of war.

There is no bitterness, no cynicism ("It is not my business as a poet to condemn war. I only wish to present the universal aspects of a particular event"); and so, as in *The Happy Warrior*, with unerring skill, "he cuts away from fighting all the virtues by which sane and honourable war survived so long" (Sir H. Newbolt).

> I saw him stab
> And stab again
> A well-killed Boche.
> This is the happy warrior . . .

In *Liedholz* there is a quiet, restrained humour; in *Fear*, the restraint is altogether of a stronger kind:

> All goes well
> So long as you tune the instrument
> To simulate composure.
> (So you will become
> A gallant gentleman.)

And who would deprecate its irony?

In conclusion, I would comment on the breadth of vision, the compassion and the sensibility of a man who can give us, in one group of poems, a picture of two lovers riding home late, with such tenderness and truth:

> their heads resting
> two heavy fruits
> on the plaited
> basket of their limbs,

the sensuous beauty of "September Fires," one of the most perfect lyrical poems of the century; and the wild, almost despairing splendour of "Cranach":

> But once upon a time
> the oakleaves and the wild boars
> Antonio Antonio
> the old wound is bleeding.

where, in four lines, the superbly chosen allusive and emotive images evoke all the power, the pathos and the magic of the fairy-tale, the ballad, the Provencal Romance and the Elizabethan tragedy. Here is the passion of parted friends and lovers, the purification of their pain; the dull ache of living, and of dying . . .

II

Even a brief essay such as this would not be complete without mention of Read's longer poems, and the general formal theory which underlies them. Recently Read told me, "They are an attempt to do something which is extremely difficult and yet not to be shirked . . . the search for a form which is not merely a continuation of the same kind of thing more or less indefinitely (blank verse, rhymed couplets, etc.), or an addition of identical units (your own sonnet sequences), but a poem on the analogy of the quartet in music, with separate movements, forms within the form, diversity within unity."*

In *The End of a War*, an 18-page poem in three sections, I see the analogy which the poet suggests. Its preceding *argument*, a noble piece of prose in its own rights, tells how, on November 10, 1918, British soldiers were betrayed by a dying German officer into entering a fortified village. Over a hundred were killed before the place was taken and a corporal returned to bayonet the wounded German. The mutilated body of a French girl was discovered, but the British officer, seeing that nothing could be done, fell into an exhausted sleep, and did not wake until the next day, November 11, 1918.

The poem does not retell this story, but as dialogue and meditation, isolates certain emotional and philosophical focal-points which share something of music's abstract qualities, maintaining the illusion of a quartet, where each section is a Movement, and each sequence of ideas a motif. The first Movement (Meditation of the Dying German Officer) has a quiet strength, displaying apparent treachery on a plane where it ceases to be reprehensible, and assumes instead a high moral purpose. There is a magnificent stoicism in the German's renunciation as the bayonet descends:

> Now Chaos intervenes
> and I leave not gladly but with harsh disdain
> a world too strong in folly for the bliss of dreams.

It is impossible to condemn the pride of this officer's words on his Fatherland:

> This is a tangible trust. To make it secure
> against the tempests of inferior minds
> to build it in our blood, to make our lives
> a tribute to its beauty—there is no higher aim.

The *tempo* is everywhere unhurried, the *motifs* clear and balanced. "His face did not flinch as the bayonet descended." There is no *ritenuto*, only a measured and dignified *diminuendo* . . . "I die, but death was destined," says the stabbed officer.

The second Movement (Dialogue between the body and the soul of the murdered girl) is in contrast; a two-part invention, its speeds are naturally varied, moving at the paces of objective narrative, philosophy and emotional experience. Only where the speed is greatest does the volume increase, as in:

> *Soul*: The mind grew tense.
> *Body*: My wild flesh was caught
> in the cog and gear of hate.

Elsewhere, the sad voices are not raised. A deed has been done that cannot be undone. Soul and body are aware of the crime's finality, of the futility of grief and theatrical despair.

It is the source of some sadness to me that the movement closes:

> Those who die for a cause die comforted and coy;
> believing their cause God's cause they die with joy.

where the strength of the thought is dissipated by the banality of the couplet.

After these two Movements, the waking English officer seems like a child, and his Meditation to proceed at a child's irregular and arbitrary pace, but always ecstatically:

> Look: I am alive, alive, alive !

There is all childhood in that "Look!", and in the repetition of "alive" is the sobbing

* See also "Ode Without Rhetoric," *Kingdom Come*, 1940.

thankfulness of the young spirit which finds the nightmare has passed. At any time this would be a fine poem: to-day, dramatic irony makes it a great one.

This is the final Movement of the "quartet," and preserving the philosophical balance of the whole, it ends appropriately in the major. Once more there is apparent a quiet exultation:

> in light celestial
> infinite and still
> eternal
> bright.

There is poise, dignified retardation, a compassionate *tierce de Picardie*, and then peace.

That this poem, if only because of its ambition, has its faults may not be denied:

> banned from Heaven by light electric,
> the world's pallid sphere

do not ring true to me.

Nor can I adjust my reactions to such abrupt transitions as:

> The bells of hell ring ting-a-ling
> For you but not for me . . .

Good "character," perhaps (it is the British officer speaking), but lacking that detachment which makes Read quote: "To-day it is from afar that we look at life, death is near us, and perhaps nearer still is eternity."

Small things, though, if we consider that in a sane world "The End of a War" would mean the end of all wars.

But Read's poetry isn't "popular." It is far too serious, far too true. If all his poems were on the level of the comic one which says:

> Yarrol ! Yarrol ! I cried exultingly:
> Passing dogs lifted wet noses . . .

things might be different! Some years ago, in *New Verse*, Read said: "All art . . . is entirely useless. Conceivably my poetry makes life tolerable to me, and there are a few, a very few, people who find enjoyment in it." All I can say is, So much the worse for the others!

III

Read's criticism has many of the qualities which I have noted in his poetry, breadth, clarity, tolerance, and above all, validity, with little of that diffuseness which is often the main distinction between a writer's poems and his prose.

Where else, in one man's work, could one find a statement on Picasso, and on art beyond Picasso, which has the *cogency* of: "After creating abstract art, the pure tectonics of form and colour, he moved to the opposite pole and created surréalisme, a form of art that denies art. His faith is, that what he creates out of love . . . will be found beautiful. . . . It is a dangerous creed . . . but I do not know whether more charlatans can shelter under such a doctrine than gather under the classical porticos of academic competence. Mediocrity is no more tolerable for being tidy."

The *tolerance* of his remarks on Toulouse-Lautrec: "He came out into the world, but chiefly into the underworld. But this he did in a mood not precisely immoral or immodest. . . . This was his chosen milieu, where he found a certain . . . gaiety and lack of affectation, all of which appealed to his spirit."

The technical *wisdom* of: "Klee recognises in painting only the essential categories, line, colour and surface—and he does not hesitate to employ any means to produce effects of line, colour and surface. . . . If it suits the artistic purpose, why not . . . paint with oils on paper and with water-colours on canvas . . .? So long as the resulting effect is an artistic one, there is no reason beyond a timid academic tradition why the work of art should not be produced by any material the artist can find to produce the effect he requires."

Or the *exactness*, *le mot juste*, of his assessment of Patmore: "This intellectual arrogance represents a certain settling of his fluent

feminine personality, the psychological condition of his poetic force, along firm lines of masculine character inhibitive to this force. . ."

Over all is Read's balance, his mellow judgment, courage and sense of reality; qualities which mark him as a Teacher whose opinions must always command respect, if not compliance, because of their obvious sincerity.

That he has faults must be accepted, as we accept the fact that he is a very distinguished artist; and one may find faults of a sort, according to the canons of one's times and milieu, in any other distinguished artist, for, where there are no faults, perfection loses its value, its very existence. The poet, for example, might object that the technical surgery has been overdone, that to cut down to the bone of a poem is an act of cruelty rather than one of artistry. He might cite as clinical exhibits, such poems as "Melville" and "Flight," forgetting that these poems form a relatively small portion of Read's work, forgetting the undoubtedly salutary effect of these poems on the lavishness which resulted both from Georgianism and Hopkinsitis.

The art-critic might accuse Read of a different sort of "fault": that of following too many gods, that of being only too ready to fling himself into the fight, for any attractive idea. But such a critic would be denying Read his very nature (his "lability," as he explains it in "Annals of Innocence and Experience"), his tolerance and breadth, overlooking that generous vitality which others are too self-conscious to display in public. Such a critic would never understand Read's self-elucidatory words on another poet: He is "humble before the elemental tragedy of life."

I admire the brave humility with which he lends his name to the small magazines, *Poetry (London)*, *Seven*, *Kingdom Come*, etc.; for the Quixote in him which writes prefaces to limited editions. Above all, I respect the cordiality and forbearance which allows him to answer an importunate critic in these words: "In the past two or three years, Mr. Hugh Gordon Porteus has pursued me with an analytical criticism which I take in the best possible part. Though I think at times he has misrepresented me, the fault may have been mine, because I am conscious that occasionally, for the sake of a fine phrase, or an effective generalisation, I am apt to jump at an idea which I have not carefully related to what is fundamental in my theories."

Read once said of Picasso, "Here is a genius too violent to be constrained within the categories of one art." Substitute *fertile* for *violent*, and the words might be applied to himself, and in these few pages I cannot even hope to have done justice to that genius, or to that man—the soldier, professor, publisher, editor, philosopher, pottery-poetry-art-stained-glass expert. I shall not have understood this ripeness, this versatility until I have lived very much longer, and have thought very much more clearly and intensely—perhaps never.

But I would end this salute with Janet Adam Smith's words: "The reason I find poems by Herbert Read . . . so satisfying is that they seem to show a greater wisdom, a deeper feeling, and a wider experience at the fifth reading than at the first."

I would merely add, this judgment is true not only of Herbert Read's poems, but of everything else he has written.

HENRY TREECE

THE UNCONSCIOUS : SPIRITUALITY : CATASTROPHE

We have to-day in our possession the knowledge of thousands of worlds (to conceal which was until recently man's most constant effort) within the world of Man; knowledge of the thousands of strata in the psychic geology of that terrible being who obstinately—marvellously, perhaps (although never succeeding conclusively)—emerges by degrees out of black muddy depths and the womb's blood. Channels and passageways have sprung open within him with a complexity and a rapidity that are almost frightening. This being, Man, is not, as was formerly supposed, a personage attired in suit or uniform; rather is he as it were a dolorous abyss, closed in, yet almost open—a colony of insatiable, seldom contented forces, circling clumsily around like a swarm of crabs and ever on the alert against attack. And further, in Man's heart and in the womb of his intelligence we are now able to perceive so many suckers and voracious mouths, so much cherished or abominated faecal matter, so cannibalistic an appetite, and incestuous fantasies so strange and so tenacious, and withal so strong a rooted tendency towards the obscene, and such prodigious accumulations of magical virtue—finally, so monstrous a Desire, alternating with so implacable an executioner—that the problem of Man seems from henceforth destined to remain forever insoluble; for after having asked ourselves how it can be possible for these depths to remain ever hidden from view, and how it can have been possible for Man to continue for so long to ignore them, we come to ask: how can it be that Man has succeeded in setting up rational consciousness against forces so determined and redoubtable? Though the world be shaken by the most violent denials, modern man nevertheless has discovered the unconscious and its structure; in it he has seen the erotic instinct and the death instinct inextricably locked together; and the face of the world of the Fault, which is to say of the world of Man, has been permanently altered by this discovery. The relationship between guilt—the fundamental feeling in all men's hearts—and the initial inter-union of the two chief instincts, can from now on be unlinked no more. Never again can we forget that we represent an insoluble *conflict* between two lines, of which one indicates the natural warmth of the creature, the other, the rational development of the person; or that there must ever remain the possibility that starting from this conflict an intimate disturbance may at any moment break out (for great were the efforts that had to be expended before we were able to succeed in resisting animal determination) and proceed to endanger the inner life. Incalculable is the extension of our sense of the tragic that is brought us by metapsychology, and even more incalculable the extension of the knowledge gained by that eye which gazes into our secret parts—which eye is none other than our own.

No longer is it to our astonishment that we are able to pass, by means of this eye, down pipes and cylinders, through unexplored ruins and vaults; able to see the face change its flesh, and destiny assume another name, desire enter the category of natural causes, and death go about its secret work. Whatever takes place between the leaden and mysterious figures who people the region of our origins, does so instantaneously, with terrible intensity, irrevocably and forever. The universe, in the person of Mr. Smith, is that power which seeks to become steadily balanced until the moment comes for it to give way to its own breakdown and abandon him. The gods and all the myths form a part of his reality and they also help to build up his gigantic palace of cards. The inhuman density of all this would be enough to make his head burst open (to *alienate* him from himself) were he

not of a *frivolous* (or if you prefer, intelligent) disposition, and always prepared not to see anything such as might offend him. Yet still does man goad himself onwards into battle, on into the abyss, and under certain unusual circumstances, he does achieve conscious thought. If he can manage to avoid being reduced to a sort of death by the preliminary workings of the psychic mechanism, he is able to think. It is at this point that a miracle, never so far from man as to be beyond his reach, begins to take place. Here we assist at the mystery of *sublimation*, to employ the word to which Freud has assigned so dynamic a significance. This function, by transferring energy into a given tendency, can cause the latter to cease to resemble what it was to begin with, yet without thereby severing it from its origin; to become increasingly free from the determination of necessity, and thus able to rise to higher levels. The libido would appear to be capable of vast transformations, both of quantity and of kind; capable also even of *inventing* its own particular quality, and finally, of transcending itself. This theory is a quite satisfactory one, and I cannot see that the "soul" of man is in any way diminished by it. To the contrary, in fact. (Man to-day is greater, did he but realize it, than during the Middle Ages or the sixteenth century, both of which were periods when he held quite a high opinion of himself; just because to-day, having been injured through his narcissism, he could if he wished have access to hitherto unforeseen reserves of power.) In revealing the demonic life of the instincts, modern psychology, the aim of which is to revolutionize a diseased civilization, brings to light at the same time a new and sounder Reason.

The notion has already been put forward that it might be possible for a certain type of mind (the mystic) to maintain a fundamental relationship and agreement between the super-ego (archaic repressive force) and that more universal underlying erotic basis constituting the id (individual not-self); so that the war waged, on the level of the unconscious, by this type's super-ego against the erotic not-self, would no longer be liable to produce illness or misadventure, as often happens in ordinary cases, but would lead to an unlimited, all-round increase of *depth*. This theory, on account of its dialectical implications, seems to me to be of the highest importance. If it is true, it would appear to follow that there can also exist a psychological type capable of deriving secret power from the universal unconscious (more remote than the individual unconscious), with which, by employing certain forms of discipline, this type may establish communication, and from which they may receive as much as they contribute to it—a process of exchange that can hardly be regarded as being of any but a spiritual nature. Since we must now consider the human psychic mechanism to be all-inclusive in its formation, we might almost conjecture, although still far from knowing what it is that separates the most universal unconscious tendencies from what are regarded as the loftiest spiritual impulses—a certain eroticism, as has been and will again be frequently remarked, impregnates the sublime acts of the saints—that the series of the phenomena is circular, and that in the case of the specially privileged type, the lowest manifestations of the subject's nature are as though joined by an immediate inner connection to the most lofty.

Something of this sort is to be affirmed, at any rate, concerning that more humble thing which is Poetry. The poets who since Rimbaud have striven to free poetry from the restriction of the rational are well aware (even though some of them may not fully realize it) that in the unconscious (or rather, in thought controlled as much as possible by the influence of the unconscious) they have at once discovered a new Pierian spring, and re-discovered therein the old, and that through

this discovery they have approached a goal such as the world never saw before. We are, as Freud has said, masses of unconsciousness no more than faintly illuminated on the surface by the light of day; and this was said before Freud by the poets: Lautréamont, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, not forgetting Baudelaire. At the present stage of its development, poetry is in possession of a number of ways of attaining to the *symbol*—which, no longer controlled by the intellect, rises up by itself, redoubtable and wholly real. It is like a substance discharging force. And as the sensibility becomes accustomed, through training, to proceed from the phrase to the line of verse and from the commonplace word to the magic word, the quest for formal adequacy becomes inseparable from the quest for buried treasure. So may Poetry continue to advance "*dans l'absurde*," as they say!

This whole marvellous edifice is being shaken, as it happens, by another movement which we have begun to understand as being of unconscious origin and which is called Catastrophe. It would appear that the human soul is undergoing a fundamental upheaval, which may be destined to alter all appearances, to destroy both good and evil, and perhaps to make an end of man even while showing him the truth. At this very hour, civilization is faced with the possibility of the direst of catastrophes; a catastrophe all the more menacing in that its first and last cause lies within man's own inner depths, mysterious in their action and governed by an independent logic; moreover, man is now as never before aware of the pulse of Death within him. The psycho-neurosis of the world has reached so advanced a stage that we can but fear the possibility of an act of suicide. Human society is reminded of the condition in which it found itself in the time of St. John, or round about the year 1000; it awaits the end, hoping it will come soon. It should hardly be necessary to prove that the creator of living values (the poet) must be against catastrophe; the use the poet makes of the death-instinct is so entirely the contrary of that which catastrophe would make of it; and in a sense, poetry is the very life of the great Eros, surviving death *through* death. I have no faith in such poetry as chooses, by reason of unconscious processes, to continue embracing the corpse; corpses can bring about no action, no revolution. God is life; and if finally death should have to become integrated with the world or with God, may such a thing never occur through that "sense of the corpse" which man from the moment of his birth—such is the extraordinary fact—carries about with him wherever he goes, and which acts in him as a diabolical power engendering sin and guilt. And yet, for all we know, this diabolical power and the guilt which it involves may constitute the principal factors of human emancipation. . . . Be that as it may, we find ourselves to-day heavy laden with the accumulated weight of instruments of Destruction; the noisome iniquities of its nations make of Europe "the great harlot . . . seated upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. . . ." " 'Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is brought to nought.' " We sense distinctly that it is a question not so much of imminent revolution as of sheer destruction, cultivation of a culpable object for our hatred, and regression.

Revolution, like the religious act, has need of love. Poetry is an inward vehicle of this love. We who are poets, therefore, must labour to bring forth, out of such base or precious substances as are derived from man's humble, beautiful erotic force, the "*bloody sweat*" of sublimation.

PIERRE JEAN JOUVE (1933)
(*Translated by David Gascoyne*)

ELIOT

East Coker. By T. S. Eliot. (Faber and Faber.) 1*s*.

Mr. Eliot is the only great English poet living. That is, the only poet who in years to come will be read even when it is fashionable to ignore him. Among the likeable set of brilliant hoaxers and endearing cleversides who have succeeded in charming and bewildering the distracted *entre deux guerres* audience, he alone stands out, with Lawrence, as a genuine poet, one of major importance.

His early satirical verse, even in its most frivolous and disconcerting moments, hints at the qualities and the philosophy which distinguish his latest poem. In "East Coker" we find again the metaphysical anguish of the early poems, the obsession with death and the vision of existence as a state in which death is life and life death:

> Earth feet, loam feet, lifted in country mirth
> Mirth of those long since under earth
> Nourishing the corn.

The grimness and grinning of Webster are still there, only the lines are longer, the vision mellower and the accent less despairing. Man and beast, rotting victims on the treadmill of birth, copulation and death, are levelled to a common dust:

> The time of the coupling of man and woman
> And that of beasts . . .
> . . . Dung and death.

And again:

> Old fires to ashes, and ashes to the earth
> Which is already flesh, fur and faeces,
> Bone of man and beast, cornstalk and leaf.

Matter exists whether it is dead or living, and must triumph. But the implied protest of the early poems and of the "Waste Land" is not to be found in "East Coker." Instead there is, not ennui or lassitude in the face of the inevitable, but a wise humility. The prospect of dying inspires no fear, no raptures, but a calm resignation, comparable to the *Gelassenheit* of the aged Goethe and the visionary humility of Rilke in the *Duineser Elegien*. Mr. Eliot is not the first to have realised that life is not all life, and death not all death, and that existence does not merely consist of one state following on the other, but that both states are one.

> And what there is to conquer
> In strength and submission, has already been discovered
> Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope
> To emulate . . .

This humility which the poet endeavours to attain is an attitude devoid of any conscious nobility, but which is essentially noble. It is a religious or Christian humility, the fruit of patience. We are reminded of the significant line in "What the Thunder Said":

> He who was living is now dead
> We who were living are now dying
> With a little patience.

We begin to see that the stage of humility is an organic development out of an initial despair and an acquired patience. Humility is the keynote of the poem. Only humility can make endurable a vision of unending existence in which "here and now cease to matter." We are reminded again of the lines in "The Burial of the Dead":

> I was neither
> Living nor dead, and I knew nothing.

And the conclusion drawn by the poet, the germ of the poem:

> The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
> Is the wisdom of humility; humility is endless.

"East Coker" impresses us by that quality which we have come to expect of Mr. Eliot—beauty of language, of which the most dominant characteristic is a hypnotic repetetiveness:

> O dark dark dark. They all go into the dark,
> The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant . . .

These are Miltonic echoes, recalling the dark of "Samson Agonistes." And near the beginning of the poem:

> . . . there is a time for building
> And a time for living and for generation
> And a time for the wind to break the loosened pane
> And to shake the wainscot where the field-mouse trots
> And to shake the tattered arras woven with a silent motto.

In parts the intricate weaving and commingling of sounds and the knitting of line into line, expressive of the merged state of life and death, is effected by a frequent use of the present participle:

> . . . Keeping time,
> Keeping the rhythm in their dancing
> As in their living in the living seasons
> The time of the seasons and the constellations
> The time of milking and the time of harvest
> The time of the coupling of man and woman
> And that of beasts. Feet rising and falling.
> Eating and drinking. Dung and death.

The above passage is also a good example of the chasteness of Mr. Eliot's vocabulary. And then we see at the conclusion of the third section of the poem how well the death-life paradox adapts itself again to poetically impressive treatment:

> In order to arrive at what you are not
> You must go through the way in which you are not.
> And what you do not know is the only thing you know
> And what you own is what you do not own
> And where you are is where you are not.

It is this essentially simple nature of thought and language which surprises and satisfies. Here and there, standing out from the serious, almost monotone background of the poem with a lucid sweetness, are controlled lyrical or elegiac passages:

> Whisper of running streams, and winter lightning,
> The wild thyme unseen and the wild strawberry,
> The laughter in the garden, echoed ecstasy . . .

In "East Coker," Mr. Eliot has written a poem of major importance, moving, serious, sincere, and above all, poetical. It reveals, as "Ash Wednesday" and "Burnt Norton" revealed to us, the most precious and enduring aspect of his genius. It is the poetry of a mature mind, showing depth of understanding and much humanity, as well as a perfection of the most appealing quality in Mr. Eliot's technique, a reverent and impressive use of words.

He brings us a sure proof of the true nature of poetry, for which, at present especially, we are grateful.

JAMES H. KIRKUP

EBERHART

Song and Idea. By RICHARD EBERHART. (Chatto and Windus.) 6*s*.

Richard Eberhart is an important American poet, as important, I think, as Auden or Spender, but, though he was a member of the New Signatures group, too, their fame has rather eclipsed his; Auden with his flair for self-advertisement, Spender with his honest and troubled political searchings. For Eberhart is not in any way an exhibitionist, nor politically minded—he is in no way a political poet—and he also happens to write very bad prose, or did, when he was at Cambridge. But he is a serious and self-conscious writer, sometimes awkwardly self-conscious, but always serious. He is preoccupied with ideas about the sensual and the intellectual; the titles of his volumes tell, first *A Bravery Of Earth*, next *Reading the Spirit*, and finally the new book, *Song and Idea*. Michael Roberts, arch-introducer, in his preface to the second one talks of his originality, and claims that he is not influenced to any degree by his contemporaries. *Song and Idea* on the other hand, shows the influence of Auden, whom he has recently met, and certainly of the American modern poetic

tradition, Eliot, Aiken, and perhaps Wallace Stevens. But, as Mr. Roberts pointed out, the chief influence is still Blake. But he is a Blake without so great or elaborate a system of belief. Blake resolved doubts, and postulated a definite conclusion. He was interested in a moral and social, a political, revolution. Eberhart deals with the conflict between "spirit" and "intellect" without finally resolving his doubts, and comes only to tentative conclusions. He has none of the same fiery confidence. This is one weakness in his poetry. Another is his excessive preoccupation with age and decay, now less obvious than in *Reading the Spirit*. In a poem "For Blake" he concludes:

> And when the Eternal Snake
> Shall hurtle prophesies
> There'll be a burning Lake
> Extending treacheries.

It ends on a note of defeat. This poem is a bad one, with vivid images and language drawn from Blake, including "Human Miseries," thus, in capitals. It is little more than a dexterous exercise. So, too, in a poem addressed to Auden, "Realm":

> (Goodness is impersonality
> Evil is personality
> Desire is impotent
> Serenity is potent . . .)

he borrows the metre (even the particular lack of punctuation) from Auden, and makes nothing new of it, save that he includes a few Blakean phrases, "A smile and leer are bad/ Fame and shame are worse." It descends from Auden to Blake. "So to think not feel/ Is the realm of the real" is the conclusion. Mr. Eberhart is better when he is feeling. But even there he is fallible. "And I have sifted earthly things/In a region strange of airy love. . . ." This is from a perfectly serious, but very sentimental, poem to his mother. It is rather like Keats, very romantic, very "young." In a poem, a longer one, called "A Meditation," he is old. It is disillusioned and doubtful, and has a Yeatsian refrain: "Life blows like the wind away." It is reminiscent also of early Eliot (in mood) and Aiken (in technique). But from these extracts, and in spite of his highly organised imitative faculty, I think his seriousness and command of words is, nevertheless, apparent. It is simply that this command is at times lacking, or does not serve sufficiently. He is too consciously striving to be "inspired." "If I could only live at the pitch that is near madness," he says.

But, in spite of his failures, I think Richard Eberhart is a good poet, and worth criticising. He is on the way to assimilating many influences, many of which react badly on his work (e.g. Auden), but, many well. One of his best poems is "The Virgin."

> I will not think of her in her coffin
> With worm's teeth needling a death's head
> In her red, and white, and soft cheek;
> Her resilient hair, crushed dead,
> That only the boy winds fingered.
> The virginal nipples pinched by stones.

It reminds me of Dylan Thomas' poem, For Ann Jones: a similar quiet, but strong, evocative language. Another I like in this volume is "Rumination," in which he meditates on his grandfather and his childhood, and his father. It is simpler and less consciously Blakean than a lot of others:

> And while I crushed the cider from the apples,
> Drinking the great mellow bloom of delight,
> I tasted on my lips the first word of death.
> I saw my grandfather cold worlds away.

It is with death he is most at home. I do not think, as the publishers suggest, that this is an advance on his previous books: I don't think it contains as many good poems. But he has published a very promising section of a "Poem in Construction" in *Poetry* (*Chicago*) last June, which, I hope, shows the way in which he will move.

NICHOLAS MOORE

CAMBRIDGE POETRY 1940

"En Partant pour Syrie . . . "

Poets of To-morrow. Vol. II, Cambridge Poetry, 1940. (Hogarth Press.) 6*s*.

It's interesting to write a book review (probably my last for the duration) in a Y.M.C.A. in Woking, with the wireless going, and knowing that next week I'll be somewhere at sea, moving towards some other continent. In a way, it's also unfair; one is more preoccupied with things like deficiencies in kit (where shall I get a button brush?), routine worries (will it be possible to slip up to London, without a pass, to-morrow afternoon?), tender personal cares (shall I be able to 'phone my mother and sister for the last time, to-morrow?—ought I to have come to some arrangement with M.J.?)

So, in a mood like this, one looks through a book for something that echoes a personal mood—some echo of that past, which I share in a sense with all the young men in this book, but of which the last year has so completely, for me, altered the perspective. Myself at St. Andrews at seventeen,

> Queer morals in the red pyjamas, a thin body
> With unacknowledged hopes, the pencil powerful
> As the muscles aren't, three weeks dirt
> Clogging the pores, toe-nails uncut still.
>
> Child's mind in a youth's body in the grey trousers,
> Loins capable of copulation. . . .

an accurate and unexhilarating poem by Stephen Coates. Or because Nicholas Moore is my friend, and writes wonderful letters, I turn to the poems by him, and think, he is too fluent, too glib, the right word and cadence come too easily, and then suddenly (in a poem called "Proud As a Hawk"):

> Man is my interest and my love: my work
> To write and speak for him and, though I lack
> The art to do it, gently to tell his story.

And I am ashamed because of his dignity, his modesty, the simple and coherent personality that gives mobility to an easy style: or I come on a description of a shy and affectionate man on the street, afraid to meet eyes:

> For one walks now among enemies
> Always in defence against the expected slight,
> The look that is not held and the unreceptive hand.
> Yet still, the smile moves, the eye softens,
> And one lights one's face to meet a friend.

and am astonished by his penetration, thinking, "It is myself, miserable in my first months at St. Andrews or in the army; and it is true that in the end one meets a receptive face. . . ."

And Maurice Craig reminds me that I too, at his age, was obsessed by Yeats,—the pride, the rigid gestures, the magnificent and deliberate emptiness—I too wished to be like:

> demoniac Mozart,
> Who likewise, late in the night
> Wrote without a heart.

and I notice how well he does all Yeats' tricks, the false rhymes, the studied colloquialisms, the roundabout magniloquence:

> The dramatist's an actor in a part
> Cast by his own or someone else's mind.

the curtness:

> But that her lover, wearing it, was dead.

and then in a poem which is all pastiche, I come upon something which is good and is not Yeats:

> That shower drove down upon me
> like rain on a ploughed field,
> The water stirred the brown earth up:
> what could I do but yield ?
> I ate the orchard-apples
> but now the fruit's all gone.
> The willow-trees by the river-side
> my heart is set upon.

I think it is strange that nobody has ever hit on it before—something so splendidly obvious as, "What could I do but yield?"

What else? As a whole, the book, in a barrack room, as one sits with stiff crouched legs on blankets, smoking the last of too many Woodbines, seems a little protected, fantastic,

unreal: I come on an attempt at folk-song by George Scurfield, and puzzle stupidly over the lines:

> What can the future hold, asks the soldier man,
> Saluting his sergeant on the bath room floor,

Surely, he knows you don't salute sergeants? And:

> The angry shadows show the corners of their eyes,
> Full of puss and dirt and leavings of the night,

Doesn't he mean *pus*? The tired mind captious! I feel vaguely irritated by a sort of unresolved preciousness, an unrelated embedding of ornament, in E. V. Swart—God and Homer:

> Who now are stellate among the immaculate dead,

I puzzle for some conceit in:

> Our negative eyes show seeds of no flower,

some connection between "negative" and "seeds," some fact about chemistry or photography, and then realise it doesn't have to be there. . . .

I think probably the three most promising poets in this collection (aside from Nicholas, who has probably passed the stage of being promising) are Gervase Stewart, Mark Holloway, and Terence Tiller. In Stewart, notice an occasional image, the spirits hiding in a woman's breasts:

> Whose silver hammers aim their little blows
> To smash the fragile bulbs within my blood.

as frightening, in its way, as his neat, cruel, smirking little poem, "Alone," about a small boy who surveys his probable future, on the run:

> From pimpled youth parading promenade
> To raw recruit parading with a gun.

decides to commit suicide in a watering can, and is found by a too sinisterly plausible sister,

> with some scorn
> She looked at him, shrugged shoulders, turned around
> And ran to tell the family in the lounge,
> The verdict was quite properly, "Found drowned."

Mark Holloway is equally morbid (I have read a very beautiful serious erotic poem by him in *Cambridge Front*, but it is not included here); but accomplished; about prostitution:

> hang his raincoat on a lust
> If his pass-book pleases,

or unemployed men's fantasies:

> Oh, give me, oh give me a fruit machine
> And the girl on the corner shall be my queen;
> But give me, but give me a football pool
> And she shall go dressed in satin and tulle;

or merely gay and silly:

> Ou sont les neiges de yesteryear,
> The dodo, the yak and the stuffed polar bear ?

Tiller (maybe I'll meet him in Egypt) has a coherent—to me unattractive—philosophy, a time philosophy:

> We shall have been the enmity, the feeling
> of death; and one by one the planets falling.

and the most completed style of any poet in this collection. How good is:

> The grecian tulip and the gothic rose

How genuinely moving (even if, perhaps, so very accomplished it is, written "without a heart"):

> The greyhound with the kind
> sensitive head and the soft eyes goes blind
> or mad, dies. The wind means all it cries.
> Love, it is time we listened to that wind.

He is always beautifully formal, in the style of that "grecian tulip" and "gothic rose"; always heraldic:

> the drowned recalls
> no dolphin, he does not fear the trident.

or:

> there are green shields before the sun;
> over the king and the king's hound
> the everlasting sand is sown.

Ibo sitientes ad Afras, so you can't expect me to appreciate, quite, the heavily sarcastic piece of some Christian pacifist about a drowned soldier, though I note, and wonder if it is

conscious, his hostile use of all the appropriate *cliches*:

> And friend or foe this tall lad went
> Down to green eye and supple fin
> And we who raise the monument
> In London or Berlin
>
> Inscribe thereon "To save his age
> He spent the youth we made him give—
> Give thanks. Perhaps your sons will live
> To share his privilege."

I think that is a little cheap, somehow, and, if I were to die in this war, I would rather choose as a memorial that verse of John Cornford's—wasn't he a Cambridge man, too?

> And if bad luck should lay my strength
> Into the shallow grave,
> Remember all the good you can:
> Don't forget my love.

Oh, and I almost forgot, there are two nice nature poems, in the manner of Hopkins,—very much "in the manner of,"—by Jock Moreton. Such enthusiasm, about swifts and salmon and what not, strikes me, to be honest, as a little factitious, but then so it does in Hopkins. . . .

Yes, it's a good, promising book, but perhaps there's not in it anywhere what I wanted; perhaps in these days, rather specially, one has to be one's own poet.

G. S. FRASER

Annals of Innocence and Experience. (Faber.) 10*s.* 6*d.*

35 *Poems*, Sesame Books. (Faber.) 2*s.* 6*d.*
By HERBERT READ.

I can recall no British author whose writing is less decorative than that of Herbert Read. His are invariably the simplest, clearest words—the *right* words—whose presence immediately evokes character, scene and incident, without delay or impediment, moving together quietly and without effort (free of the theatrical turbulence of some, or the syntactical gymnastics of other, literary schools) to form some of the purest, most sensitive, prose, or poetry, that has been written during this century. His selection of scene and incident are as restrained and inevitable as that of his words; and there lie the strength and the charm of *Annals of Innocence and Experience.*

The first section of this book, "The Innocent Eye," brings to us the sensory and emotional delights which Read knew, as a child on a remote Yorkshire farm—the smells of leather-soap and cow-sheds, the taste of pork-crackling, the sights of stack-yard and orchard—in an exquisitely modulated prose, a medium to which all things seem possible, from a description of a garden-privy:

> Its friendliness, its invitation to sociability, was further emphasised by its furniture of two seats, and there we could sit side by side, the needs of our bodies relieved in no furtive secrecy, but in unabashed naturalness.

To that of a cow being milked:

> The warm needle stream of milk hissed into the gleaming pails. At first it sang against the hollow tin drum of the base, but as the pail filled it murmured with a frothy surr-surr.

Here is childhood finely captured for all time, without a trace of sentimentality, for, as Read says:

> Pity and even terror, are emotions which develop when we are no longer innocent, and the sentimental adult who induces such emotions in the child is possibly breaking through defences which nature has wisely put round the tender mind.

Such a book can never again be done in English.

The later sections of the book outline with the same economy and balance the author's life from school and university to the Great War, and thence to the present time, halting here and there to comment on and explain such movements as Imagism or Surrealism, the philosophies of Bergson, Freud and Kierkegaard, such political systems as Marxism and Anarchism, and everywhere showing that

critical awareness which can be seen in such passages as:

> For me, Blake is absolute. Shakespeare is richer, Milton is more sonorous, Hopkins is more sensuous . . . but Blake has no need of qualifying epithets; he is simply poetic, in imagination and expression.

Or:

> A personality . . . is distinguished by immediacy by what I would call lability, or the capacity to change without loss of integrity . . . and in Hamlet, Shakespeare depicted the type in all its mutability. . . . Character is only attained by limitation.

And this last quotation is illuminating, not only of mankind in general, but of Read himself, and his critics would do well to consider its implications before condemning the intellectual mobility of one of the most finely balanced artists of this age.

35 *Poems* is a selection from Read's earlier work, with six additional poems; it is comprehensive, including the delicate imagist "Eclogues," the splendidly lyrical "September Fires," the metaphysical "Beata l'Alma," and the compassionate "To a Conscript of 1940," which appeared recently in *The Listener*:

> . . . The world was not renewed.
> There was hope in the homestead and anger in the streets
> But the old world was restored and we returned
> To the dreary field and workshop, and the immemorial feud
> Of rich and poor. Our victory was our defeat.

So speaks Read himself, as an old soldier to a new, displaying with an almost classical detachment and permanence the disease and the cure, not only of the world of 1918 but also that of 1940. And it is this quality of *permanence*, alike of matter and manner—both firm and unidiosyncratic while preserving an acute and delicate sensibility—that makes Herbert Read a writer to look up to in this time of disruption and impermanence, and one to respect for his balance, a quality which shall be as important in literature as in politics in the reformation to come.

HENRY TREECE

FOURTH LETTER—*Continued from page* 90.

but great controversies will rage over the chatterbox Hindemith. Without attempting to evaluate the work of either Spender or Auden, all we can say is that good poetry is written when a balance has been achieved between the super-ego and the erotic not-self, under which conditions Jouve conceives an all-round increase of *depth* to take place in the artist. We should remember, that since poetry is a way of feeling from which action should spring, it is depth that the poet should seek. A phrase like "Here on this accurate conspicuous point" springs from the super-ego, and says nothing beyond the fact that the writer thinks he is a very clever person. But the simple phrase—"Their lips still touched with fire" has depth, because it makes a persistent demand on our consciousness to *feel* its meaning, and so to speak, sets in motion the overtones of thought, making it more real, communicable, and better poetry.

The writer also conceives of the existence of a psychological type capable of deriving secret power from "*the universal unconscious*," and these types, in his opinion, say and write the most significant things. His thesis is no doubt borne out by the work of Baudelaire, St. J. Perse, Rimbaud, Eluard Lorca and others. Sensitivity to the *universal unconscious* presumably results in incantatory rhythms (the music of the spheres), and a powerful and evocative association of images; thought is subservient to and regulated by these two basic essentials of poetry, or perhaps, thought that springs under the control of the subconscious is more wholly real and moving. A good poem is seldom a *conscious* product. Poets of the wit, even though they are interesting, do not seem to us to show an understanding of the real nature of poetry. Poetry emphasizes living values, and to be wholly alive has to reckon with all the units of the

hidden, subconscious world, which is not achieved consciously, but automatically, by inducing a special state in one. I suppose this is implied in the idea of inspiration.

The pleasure derived from a poem is very complex in nature; it appeals to various elements of the subconscious: the sex libido, the womb complex, etc. Information on this subject is to be found in the section on Unconscious Symbolism in Language and Art, in Groddeck's *Exploring the Unconscious*.

Therefore, since we find that the appeal of poetry is, like music, founded on the erotic part of our nature, its criticism in the fashionable, lop-sided intellectual manner is not only profitless, but uninteresting, or rather, interesting only to hangers-on of the poetic world. We believe that every man is a poet. In the ultimate sense—as opposed to the special meaning given to the word by Freud, you cannot teach psycho-analysis, because it is inborn in everybody, being as common an attribute as seeing and hearing. It is the same with poetry. You cannot teach people to appreciate a poem by presenting them with a purely intellectual criticism of it—the uses of this method are strictly limited. But an emotive, psychological appreciation may, on the other hand, awaken echoes in a reader's subconscious, enabling him to get a better understanding of the poem.

Poetry and music can only be successfully criticized on a psychological basis—O for a Primer of Psychology for the Better Criticism of Poetry!

If we start to-day to regard poems psychologically, cease to look at them with the intellect only, and make real wholehearted enjoyment the only criterion of the goodness of a poem, we shall render a great service to ourselves and society, and the change brought about in our natures will render us more fit for life and its better organization.

In time of war, as we have already said, man discovers his real nature, and after abandoning the ennervating fairy castles that he has inhabited in his time of ease and decay, and harmful detachment from life, learns how to live all over again, emphasizing not his one-time intellectual abstractions, but the concrete realities of life.

In this war, therefore, we may expect to find poets who speak straight from the shoulder, without having recourse to the formidable array of technical innovations and conceits that present-day verse is an heir to. The intellect will lead us, in certain phases of development, to give it sole entertainment. But the intellect is only a tiny fraction of the world that is man, which contains other forces that must be reckoned with; the imagination must now, perforce, come into its own.

This is our point of view and we hope that it will be acceptable to many. The truth, as we conceive it, is immanently our own, and we have no wish to make it binding on everybody, because everyone invents his own truths, and we don't ask people to deceive themselves in the way we show them while reserving for ourselves the right to deceive ourselves in our own way. Each man may, in Chestov's phrase, "deceive himself just as he pleases!"

CORRESPONDENCE

(Contributions are invited for this "free-for-all" feature.)

SING, BROTHER, SING !

DEAR EDITOR,—What is the matter with the young poets ? They seem to be ill, wallowing in the vomit of self-pity. Just listen to their weary moaning, their rotting masochism, their sterile onanism, their defeated cries of "Death, where is they sting-a-ling-a-ling ?"—"Where shall we hide but in the wound ?"—"Too late now to retaliate"—"Beloved enemy, preparer of my death"—"Do I make my disasters clear ?"—"I, the poet, mad with my own misery"—"I with the stigmata and scars, Nailed on a crucifix of stars"—"I have tasted my quantum of misfortune"—on and on and on, without hope or passion or even bitter hatred. I am bored with this confessional writing, interesting possibly to the poet himself and to his friends, but not to me.

What do they want these lost souls, staggering in a waste land towards an oasis where the well has dried up ? What is the trouble with them, for the question is not what is wrong with modern poetry but what is wrong with modern poets ? I think the answer is simple. Being sensitive souls, their impulses are even more confused by circumstances than those of other people. Confused feelings lead to confused thoughts and in creation only to a chaos of confusion worse confounded. They have lost contact with the feeling for simple primitive realities—food, warmth, shelter, procreation, the fight against foes who wish to enslave. After these things and not before, come personal liberty, music, lying in the sun, dreaming of "birds in the wind's singing" and of things "more distant and more solemn than a fading star."

But you are up against it now, my boy-ohs ! You hate war ? You want "talk and ease" and "time to do as you please" ? Alright ! So do I. But how are you going to get these things ? Hitler won't understand you. He won't give you what you want. Nor will Montagu Norman. They both want to organise poverty in a world of vast potential wealth. They want to give you Work with a capital W.

Where is the poet who will sing hopeful songs of reality, of the new debt-free world, where you and I have "time to do as we please," where Work and Money and the "Masses" are not top-dog gods ? Where is the poet who has the simplicity and honesty to sing of simple things, who is not afriad of being criticised as naive, who can love, and hate, and fight with primitive conviction for primitive necessities, who knows, not merely with his thoughts but with his feelings also that most personal misery is the result of the social-economic disease, who knows that the sun, streaming down upon the earth, free of charge, gives him life and not bankers' dead figures written down in books. If that poet exists he alone will survive, as a poet, the coming chaos, for the primitive realities are alone "eternal."

"Leave us alone !" the poets cry. "We arn't interested in politics," though pretending a "parlor pink," "vaguely left" conviction. "We want to write about our own miseries and our own souls that Freud has made so complex." Very well ! but don't expect anyone to read what you write. I prefer John Gilpin doggerel to your esoteric snobbery. Politics deal with food in your belly without which you would not even have the vitality to tap at your typewriter.

I preach you a new morality and a new philosophy, and the oldest. It is—*that the object of life is to live and to live as splendidly as you know how.* Here is a philosophy to sing about and to fight for. What more do you want ? What more *can* you want ? What other basis for true lyricism can there be but a rich and virile paganism ?

Let's face it ! There will be no creative leisure now for a long time, no more "free hots," no more dividends to live on, no more hope now of drawing the blinds across the shattered window panes and playing Chopin in the firelight. Come alive, poet, and sing, brother, sing bravely of the New World that is coming. I want:

> "To hear the lark begin his flight,
> And singing startle the dull night,
> From his watch-tower in the skies,
> Till the dappled dawn doth rise,
> Then to com in spight of sorrow."

ERIC S. DE MARÉ, A.R.I.B.A.

DEAR SIR,—I enjoyed No. 3 very much, and your Third Letter. I am glad that you deplore the lack of emotional and spiritual depth in most modern verse. You do not, however, touch on what seems to me one of the main reasons for this: the poet's forgetfulness of the essentially solitary nature of his calling. It is very significant that Mass Observation was so strongly supported by the New Verse clique ! Heaven knows what Rilke—claimed by them as one of their chief influences would have thought of this movement: he who advised his Young Poet to be alone, get close to nature, and "tell as if you were the first man alive what it is that you see, learn, love and lose (I am quoting from memory). . . ."

Yours truly,

N. K. CRUIKSHANK

NEWS NOTES

Wales, which used to erupt sporadically from that country, and was a medium for its most important writers, is now being issued as a war-time broadsheet, price 1d. Keidrych Rhys, the Editor, is in the London Welsh, and No. 1 which is on sale now contains poems by William Empson, Ll. Wyn Griffith, Glyn Jones, Davies Aberpennar and others. Communications should be sent to Lynette Roberts, Ty Gwyn, Llanybri, Carmarthen.

J. C. Hall is running a series of lectures at Dick Sheppard Centre, 52, Queensway, W.2. Forthcoming lectures include V. S. Pritchett on "The Short Story" (18th Jan.); Walter de la Mare on "Lewis Carroll" (25th Jan.); Lord Ponsonby on "The English Diarists" (1st Feb.); Herbert Read on "Anarchism and the Artist" (8th Feb.). Doors open at 2.30. Admission 1s. or 5s. for six lectures.

"*Resurgam*" *Younger Poets* is a series of shilling broadsheets issued by the Favil Press, 152, Kensington High Street, W.8. These broadsheets are, in effect, 6-page booklets as they are folded twice over. The names issued so far include Peter Baker, Patricia Ledward and Bertram Warr. The sheets carry introductions by the authors and Peter Baker says in his: "No true poetry comes solely out of the poet's conscious mind; it is the outflow from the subconscious, or supernatural, part of man, which is an infinite store of experiences and emotions. . . . Poetry must be universal. It should be in touch with the world and with mankind. Auden, Day Lewis, MacNeice have realised this, but they have mistaken the trappings and external characteristics of our twentieth century civilization for eternal elements of human existence. However, the immortal part of us remains the same. Despite central heating, and multiple stores, despite the reduction of human life to codes and systems . . . Love, Beauty and Truth still remain the undying elements of the human soul, and of poetry."[1] These broadsheets should appeal to a very wide public, and one thing is certain about the poets—that they are all serious about their art, and that they are poets. Patricia Ledward writes beautifully, and musically.

Why don't the other publishers follow this good example?

We gratefully acknowledge the following donations to the POETRY FUND received during the last two months :

Mrs. E. C. Jack	..	..	£1
Mrs. J. C. Hall	..	..	10s.

[1] This piece of writing may be imperfect, considered intellectually, but to those who have studied the symbolism behind words, its meaning should be very clear and didactic.

CONTRIBUTORS

GEORGE SCURFIELD: has appeared previously in Cambridge magazines; Editor of *Cambridge Front*; in the Army.

JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN: a student at the University of Michigan; was awarded the Jeanette Sewell Davis Prize for 1939 by *Poetry* (*Chicago*).

PETER J. LITTLE: a private in the Army; first appearance.

DAVID GASCOYNE: young English philosopher and poet; at nineteen wrote *A Short Survey of Surrealism*, published by Cobden-Sanderson; one of the most promising of the younger poets.

LAWRENCE DURRELL: author of *The Black Book*, now in Greece; was co-Editor of *Delta*.

PIERRE JEAN JOUVE: well-known French poet; known in England chiefly through the efforts of his friend and translator, David Gascoyne.

HENRY TREECE: young critic and poet; second book of poems, *Towards a Personal Armageddon*, recently published in America by the James A. Decker Press.

NICHOLAS MOORE: edited *Seven*, and co-edited several other magazines; has appeared in *Poets of To-morrow*, Vol. II (Hogarth Press).

ANNE RIDLER: as Anne Bradby, edited for the World's Classics (O.U.P.), the second volume of *Shakespeare Criticism*; first appeared in *Delta* and *Seven*; has since published *Poems* with the O.U.P.

J. C. HALL: has appeared previously in undergraduate magazines.

GAVIN EWART: first book of poems published by The Fortune Press; now Private No. 6146621 in the R.A.

G. S. FRASER: of whose poetry our readers will see more; has had poems and reviews in *Seven*; now on his way to join the Far Eastern Army.

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