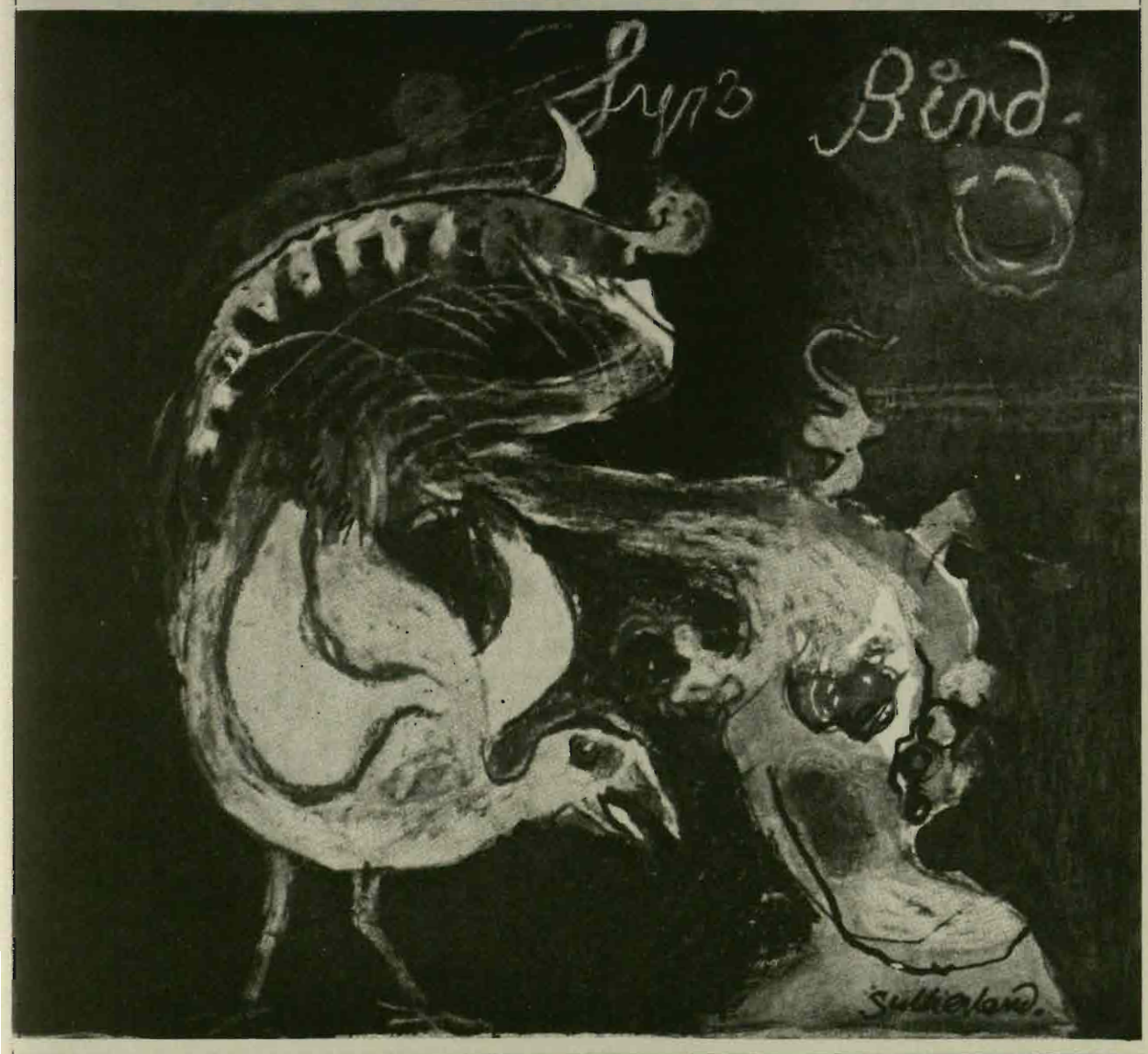
POETRY

LONDON



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NICHOLSON & WATSON

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POETRY LONDON

EDITED BY TAMBIMUTTU

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 9

NINTH LETTER

I edit this magazine since I feel that (1) poetry is more important than individual great poets, (2) the writing of important verse is only possible when the audience for it has been found, (3) the best work is anonymous in character in the sense that it expresses the feelings of a group of people and may have been written by a group of people; a magazine like this which is catholic in viewpoint helps to create a modern anonymous tradition from which the important work of the future may be derived.

From Yeats and Eliot down to the work of the younger poets we have witnessed the search for a tradition. Yeats, who in his early youth had found current religious belief untenable, in gyrating through his winding stair of romantic literature and then mysticism of one kind or another in search for a substitute, has already stated the problem of to-day's poets, each of whom is concerned with creating his own tradition, just as Yeats and Eliot created their myths for the purposes of their poetry.

I feel that the collation of some of these diverse efforts within the covers of one magazine will yield interesting results. In creating an anonymous tradition we have already received encouragement from the critics who declared that the pages of the anthology *Poetry in Wartime* read alike and that any one poem could have been written by another poet, although it was a compilation of the different types of poetry being written to-day. And now we have an anonymous contributor to this issue who writes :

> O anonymity, proudly I bear your name,
> proclaim your youth to me.

It seems to me that a tradition is being born, whatever its character may be, which is apparently taking root, because most of the bad poems we receive are in this modern vein, whereas before the war they were mostly Georgian and traditional.

Poetry began with anonymous people. And so Maurice Carpenter in this issue:

> Here are the roots of songs, deep in the earth,
> Deep in the hearts of Joe, and Jack, and Jill.

But popular poetry can be very bad. It can be slogan poetry when it upsets the sophisticated or sentimental like most jazz lyrics which are one kind of popular poetry to-day. It is the serious poets, like the contributors to PL, whose duty it is to write the anonymous poems of our times by their ability to write simply, directly and in memorable forms, though there is no necessity for anonymity nowadays, when there are so many historians about.

ANONYMOUS

FIRST ODE

My infinite Carpathian love, O grandeur,
I have seen the birds flying with spills in the beak
To light the first fires of Rome, to burn
As Nero burnt all the live love of buildings,
Carrying they go, bearing messages in their beaks,
Fleet as ships sailing thröugh the ethereal
Heavens and over the rocky shores of
Hell, not tarrying, scarlet birds, my love.

O bend to me your not-too-transient head,
My love, and burn me with too lucent flame.
O bend to me the fresh arc of your thighs,
And whisper too adoringly my name.
O saint, drive through the wintry blasts of sorrow
Your warm favours, the certainty of bliss,
Heaven blooming from your alchemies,
Among the flying bricks a white rose.

White ships sailing sail
Not so completely in toil,
My termagant, my inexpressible foil.
Bend to me the corners of your smile.

My infinite Carpathian love is blooming
Alone here among the stone beaks
Of birds like ships sailing over
The unavailing storms: death to the killer,
Peace to heaven, breath to the windy storm,
Their message carrying, not tarrying, not
Less attainable, less happy than my thought
In you, my love, my love.

SECOND ODE

FOR THE SUN

Speak to me now the nightingale, the cuckoo.
Speak to my eyes, the wingbeat of the swallow,
The swift, the tern—vision of flight of childhood,
Between the sands of summer.

O bright, O might of hands
To sift the rays between the fingers, eyes
Alight, alight
And free as the fresh birds
Flying about the eves, of summer words
Empty, but O of songs
Full, full.

Summer, full of an Appallachian fury
I recall your swift and elbowing words, recall
The sweet face of heaven, the bright orb
Of emperor sun. And flaxen-haired the angel
Weeping. Beating of wings, I hear the cuckoo call,
And the nightingale speak, in his beak the sun.

FOURTH ODE

O antique caves, what dead are buried here?
What love drips here in stalagmite fury?
Bears prowl, wolves howl about your hollow sides,
The seas suck in your sands between the tides.
The dead are here carved out in a stone story,
O caves, O antique caves, held frozen in fear.

SIXTH ODE

TO WOMAN

Smouldering beast, the fire is in your eyes:
Deep hang your breasts, drip from your bosom large,
Your legs laid on your shoulders, and your thighs
Fat with the dripping of your bestial urge.

Man stands above you, frozen, with his sword
Stayed in his hand. Marvels at miracles
This armoured thinker, pauses without word
In wonder at the depth of hidden wells

Within your heavy-lidded, gaping eyes.
O woman, woman, gently treat your child.
He is afraid to look, or take his prize,
To climb the heaving mountains of his world.

SEVENTH ODE

O, my possible but impossible, my scarlet bird,
The seasons rock you on their hoary winds,
Blind to your possible impossible
Ascent on scarlet wings of heraldry
    Toward that high peak
    Where Love speaks.

O my most happy and unhappy, my scarlet hope,
Fleeing the infidels of Europe, the hounds
Thick on your heels, their lolling tongues alive
With unimagined possibilities,
    To you I cling,
    Though the fates sing,

Combing their raven hair out in the winds
Of winter solitude, with bodeful eyes
Turned to your lovely body: though they grip
You in their webs, my near-impossible,
    I will believe
    Against my future grief.

Arachne has no web to hold my love.
O my most doubtful and indubitable
You outsoar Snowden's peaks. No man can tell
What storms you overcome, what teams you ride
    Of fierce horses
    To Love's palaces.

When we, after our most imperious trials,
To home ride, among glassy angels,
O grant, proud and scarlet tanager,
My hope, my love, that we shall gaze
    Upon love's face
    In peace.

EIGHTH ODE

Tree of Grief,
In your amber smile
I seek relief
From heart's trials,
O most impossible sheaf of leaves and birds,
Wondering I do honour to you with my words.

Most high and ancient,
Why am I deficient
In the smiles of fortune,
Who never sought to
Rule any nation but my love's own one,
That solitary and boundless kingdom?

Should I envy
A king's favour
Who has palaces
And black horses,
When I ride the billows of delight
Upon my love's own steed, deep through the night?

Tree of words,
I have found
Under your singing birds
Holy ground
Wherein to peg my tent, whereon to raise
The emblem of my love in rocky praise.

TENTH ODE

I saw a bronze God on the mountain
And high priests bearing branches to his side:
They slew a slim girl on the blazing altar,
The smell of blood rose from the mountaintop,
As though her soul curved in the smoke,
Lifting a tower to heaven. O my love,
What portent can this be, what fatal symbol
Of bestiality? A tower to heaven,
Smoke of a girl, the priests' lean, murderous mouths!

ELEVENTH ODE

I

Great car of wrath, ascend, bend the heavens
Low, go brightly as a star, advance
Against the holy wrath of heavenly engines,
Indigenous animal, be cruel
O to be kind be cruel, be as love.

II

Tower of proud dimensions, among dissension
Of clique, of egoist, desist
From faulty climbing: higher
Aspire than we can dream, fired by
The name of poetry.

O anonymity, proudly I bear your name,
Proclaim your youth to me,
Advance in wordy legions among
The disappointed nations
As an angel of song.

O great properties of
Poetry, divine and human love, I see
The phoenix bird is bright
At noon and at midnight,
Flying always ascending towards the light.

CELIA BUCKMASTER

POEM

The world is not more barren than a looking glass
(The lady leaves her loom, the knight rides past)
And even mountains blind as these have words
To wind a story which no love records.
Where once a river ran its course
Five clawed and petrified with thirst
The imprint of a dragon marks the source.

We fly with Pegasus between two dreams;
He in his magic eye and outspread wings
Removes all wickedness of idle hours.
Some tangle among deeds those guilty tares,
Saying among themselves, 'Time travellers
We shall have time.' While others weep
Knowing the desolate place that time completes.

See how the glass breaks in an empty room—
Ah wanton Lady! But that same hungry moon
Leans on a wilderness of sand and dust
To read the story of all Genesis.
Know truth in a blind mountain's face,
And turn to the long evening spires
Where dragons wander dreaming dead sea prayers.

THREE QUEENS FOR ARTHUR WHEN HE DIED

Three queens for Arthur when he died;
The moon holds three
Whose tapering fingers dabble in the tides
And rock the sea.
Between the night and Avalon our world divides.

Accept the image of a rose
In Mary's grief.
All queens hold emblems in the guilty hand
And Her belief
Contains the symbol of the orb, the flower disdained.

Both King and Carpenter reveal the thorn;
Without that crown
The wanton mother of the world, her house of cards,
Comes tumbling down.
She reigns because men's hands know their reward.

MAURICE CARPENTER

THE ROOTS OF SONGS

Magic of words comes deep from the roots of man,
Deep from the marriage of our kind with earth,
Blessing the hunting, propitiating floods,
Singing that spring shall come, a child have birth.

Singing on battlefield of tribe and clan,
Singing the secret struggle of the serf,
Singing rebellion and the rights of man,
Singing of man, bowed down, undaunted, tough.

A poet with muddy boots stumps into court,
Bringing the tang of earth to the tinsel throng,
A peasant girl loved and left by a light lord
And Robin Hood is the burden of his song.

Tom Kyd, Will Shakespeare, young Kit Marlowe too
Roaring in taverns with the common folk,
Send human wholeness walking on the boards
While the gold comes home in English hearts of oak.

Here is the earth then with her golden veins,
Sinews of steel and dormant warmth of coal,
Here is her luxury, her munificence,
Here is the man grown from her to control.

Here are the roots of songs, deep in the earth,
Deep in the hearts of Joe, and Jack, and Jill,
As we step out of the mists of history
Dig down and listen, thrill, and sing your fill.

THREE LYRICS

I. THE SPRING REMAINS

The world was a burst of lilac,
Spring walked in the lanes of my veins,
But the lilac withered and crumpled,
And the Spring, like the future, remains.

The world was a luxury of lilac,
The willows were weeping in the rain,
The beeches were seeping the green gold sunlight,
And the Spring, like the future, remains.

But this Spring is different and its roots are deeper
Than the luxury of lilac in my veins,
The sunlight bites deep into the gold of autumn
And the Spring, like the future, remains.

2. THE QUICK OF THE GREEN

In the soft shoot of lilac, the quick of the green
The world comes up lovely again,
But the black frost cuts to the quick of the green
And the world shrivels in pain.

If the world were cut down to the stump of the tree
And humanity's loveliest flower
Were crushed underfoot, there would still be the root
And the quick of the green would be there.

So my heart shall sing in the quick of the green
As we break through the frost of our pain,
The shoot of the people in unity hardens
And the world comes up lovely again.

3. MOONSTRUCK

Give me the earth my mother my mate,
The Pleiades burn in the night of your hair;
I am a wisp with a wasp of a hunger,
Fold me in flesh and embody me there.

Give me the moon my lover, my light,
Our lunatic dreams need their roots in the earth,
The milky way silvers the silk of your body:
A dream and a dunghill bring poems to birth.

ROBERT CECIL

Fog blurs sound patterns. A dog barks
Tonight at the crossroads; in the dark
Receding steps on asphalt ring;
Far down the line a train shunting.
The rickety trucks clink, clink; points catch
Like a gramophone disk with a scratch.

In this our symphony? Shall we never
Stretch again on our backs in the clover,
Hear larks above and insects drone below,
Or water lapping, clipping canoe's bow?
Musician, is it weakness now to long
For all that kept mind steady and limbs strong?

RICHARD CHURCH

from

TWENTIETH CENTURY PSALTER

THE SEVENTH DAY

Morning

I went heavily through the day,
Hag-ridden slept by night.
The moon sets grim, the sun fell grey,
The stars lost half their light.

Marriage, and all things mutual,
Slow-growing, year by year,
The things that, by their being small,
Escaped the frosts of fear,

Suddenly shrank before the tread
Of the loud beasts of war,
And only by feigning to be dead
Survived to flower once more.

The willow, the ironic quince,
The mind's deep-rooted tree
Have died, but in their rising since,
Have thrice confounded me.

Evening

It is no easy matter, being young
In these unhappy days. A young man looks
To an improbable future. He can choose
Nothing with certainty. His only books
Must be the texts of death; his maps are hung
About the barrack walls to show division

Of lands, which armies win, which armies lose.
His science is in poison and explosive,
His art the sly devices of camouflage
And noisy propaganda, sanctioned fraud.
His hunger must be bitter and corrosive,
Part of his country's lethal equipage.
The only action which he may applaud
Is that which speeds destruction and death-dealing,
And crushes back upon his heart all feeling
For gentleness and privacy of mind.

It is no easy matter, being old
In these bewildered days. The old men find
No comfort in a promissory world
Whose architecture is to follow war.
A State from which Old Adam has been hurled
Reminds the time-sophisticated man
That he has seen this blue-print once before.
He is not interested in the plan.
This dream with which new generations dare
Nourish their hopes, before they set and harden,
Reminds the older man that like Voltaire
He now prefers to cultivate his garden.

Something between the two, present and past,
Maybe shall bring a man peace at the last.

ALEX COMFORT

ELEGY ONE

I believe in winter, in the season of ends.
Quiet the doomed leaf hangs at the bough's tip
teaches the lesson of death in a dead season
here in my brittle year a sober preacher.
O soundless tides, that stream in the wide night
teach us to die without our bitterness
whether in colors like the bragging leaf
or as the squirrel whose eyes the cold closed;
we learn now the lesson of all living is death.
Perpetual death, that falls on the single leaf
perpetual darkness, end of flower and thought

perennial country, where we are going, whither
all winds blow, all lives tend, all leaves fall,
to the blind attic full of broken faces
under the cold and heavy muzzle of the years.
Locked in this truth how youth is frozen—sharp
as the winter's crystals, closing round long reeds.
The condemned cell of the woods lies round our doors,
the trees are bars, and barbs the bramble carries:
then put out hope, and turn to winter truth
learn from the bony trees, the crystals of death
light and sixpointed on the swinging seed
how death in living labors in our bones.

Coming from childhood to the edges of thought
swallows were playmates, and the ferns my friends—
then talking birds brought nestlings, and I named them
would lay my finger on their heads, smooth and round
as the heads of kittens: where the sea crawled idle
and blue as a robe under the cliff's red fin—
bright stones were marvels, and the poppy's flag
crushed in a hairy bud, a scarlet wing,
with woman-smelling sap that stained the hands.
How days were endless, all the winters crisp
with wonders of glass and round redcoated songs
berries like lips, among the marvellous snow—
or looking up, happy and late, to see
the small stars drifting in the sky's green tide.
And after tomorrow a daisychain of days
dawnless, endless, under the kindly hills.

The voices of fishes under the green wave
breastless fishes idle above the idle
ribbons that spring out of the sunken skull
call in our minds. O the false voice of the water
breaks on small islands where the long toothed shells
grow in horned pools, and houses thatched with grass—
'Let us live then over the speaking coral,
uncover cells in every broken pebble,
with apes and pink flamingoes hide the dead
harp of the season, the crystals in the wood.'
To see a spirit in a broken tree
to send our white soul voyaging at night
and the soul of winds in the gall of a cold fish:
simple in ritual, expiating our birth
on a small altar, till the final break of the dark.
Under the wide lagoon, the level water
squadrons of fishes tatter the dead face.

The city summer covers up the face of death
with the voices of children like a fountain rising
the plane tree's body and its shadow of hands
naked like dappled women in the city.
Summer that calls all the false hopes again
the lies of purpose, lies of probable days
in a tarred ship under the lion headlands, when the sea
sang all together; in the tides of barley,
or the slow cattle sailing deep in grass
crossing the poplar fields with prints of ships
idle as clouds or rolling boulders going.
The voices of children like a fountain rising,
the cold bone under the pavement springs in flowers,
the shadows of flying birds fall on the roofs.
O Spring, concealer of the face of dying
sowing the terror of the child's small bone
grown longer with the days, when the laughing mother
measures its length in the first steps and the running,
the clutch of hands, the first walk under the limes.
O growing stone, O sorrowful rock, have mercy
sown now in spring, your life is longer than mine.
The voices of children springing like sunlit water
nobody hears but thinks of the old faces,
waiting on benches for the frost's small bell
And the leaf to flag them into the waiting dark.
Love is not strong to fight with history.
The loved face melts, and under the lover's fingers
quiet the stone lies, the jointed vault of the skull.

Winter passes and quietly I will walk
between spring hedges happy in the grasses
hoping for nothing but the meadow power
now and again to see the red-lipped berries
spring by the rocks on the yew's dark feather:
to follow hopes in the cold buttocks of clouds
the long flocks crossing hills, their shadows flying
on squares of fields and on the upland heather;
to walk in nature without knowledge
the roads magical, coloured stones my playthings
all ricks the wind's gold organs after the year,
the fan of furrows over a black hill,
and love my comfort by the hollow river.
Hope strikes its thorns upon the little bush
and dead leaves' hands crack in the shadow of copses
but childish happy up the river path
from the cropped grass to bony heron pools
where white round stones close mouths, I will walk up
in love and error, hoping like a child
before night falls, long winter breaks my mind.

DORIAN COOKE

SONNET

Remember now the avengers, whilst our days
And wars are dark, and the forgotten streets
Blind with the dead, and cowards sit at the gates.
For these pass by, where burning Lenin lies,
Holy and heathen in his tomb of glass.
From this world's miracles the burden beats
On each requited dusk, on the looked lights
That hide their mischief. Here the gibbet shows
Its rotting wood and iron and rope. The rest
Is all forejudged. Down the exalted hill
Walks Christ the killer from his dreams of blood.
After these angers falls the animal blast,
And, somewhere, first like a tale that old men tell,
Visions are born, and harvests flash and fade.

Middle East, 1943

HERBERT CORBY

MISSING

They told me, when they cut the ready wheat
the hares are suddenly homeless and afraid,
and aimlessly circle the stubble with scared feet
and aimlessly run the stubble with scared feet
finding no homes in sunlight or in shade.
—It's morning, and the Hampdens have returned,
the crews are home, have stretched and laughed and gone:
whence the planes came and the bright neon burned
the sun has ridden the sky and made the dawn.
He walks distraught, circling the landing ground,
waiting the last one in that won't come back,
and like those hares, he wanders round and round,
lost and desolate on the close-cropped track.

TWO SONNETS

I

He was the mutual mother when we cursed
training in blizzards, facing the vicious snow;
Rex, who'd been a laughing fool at first,
tinkling with Chopin, hissing a line from Poe.
He was the careless one, who, at sloping arms
enticed the sergeant to his loudest words,
yet the one who strolled across the forbidden farms,
populous with bulls, to listen to the birds.
The cocky one who wore his cap askew;
who, bayoneting the straw, would apologise,
his eyes aslant: the one who always knew
sly tricks for proving truth in all his lies.
He was our friend, loyal yet fancy-free.
He now lies dead and wrecked in Germany.

II

Jerome again was such another. Once
forming squad he marched onto the sand
returning with smiling eyes, gritty with puns,
saying he'd a sergeant jellyfish in his hand.
On guard he'd start, and make a bayonet poke
low down, and say he'd seen a mouse:
he'd halt the local mayor like a stroke,
present arms to the bland indifferent cows.
In Lancashire we left him. In the town
we'd drunk our healths for this life and the next
and Jerome stood away from us, his frown
judging our aled goodbyes, far-off, perplexed.
Set in his turret he'd seen the whole sky alter,
the Dornier swoop oddly to the sea, and falter.

WRECK

Crippled in this coniferous valley like a crow
shot down in flight, the sombre Messerschmitt
lies stark and dead against the indifferent snow.
The contemptuous winter lays her white on it.
—and thus this metal vulture fell to be
a shattered thing among our English snows,
and wings that bear the mark of Germany
are bent black fins that keep away the crows.

POEM

The pale wild roses star the banks of green
and poignant poppies startle their fields with red,
while peace like sunlight rests on the summer scene,
though lilac that flashed in hedges is dulled and dead:
in the faint sky the singing birds go over,
the sheep are quiet where the quiet grasses are,
I go to the plane among the peaceful clover;
but climbing in the Hampden, shut myself in war.

REPRISAL

They worked all night with cardboard and with wood
to make those dummy planes to hoodwink the foe,
and in the chilly morning solitude
wheeled out the dummies to places they should go
on the dispersal fields, and went away;
the hours passed uneventfully, and even
no reconnaissance planes were overhead that day.
They evacuated in the twilight, just after seven,
and when they'd gone the Germans flew above the drome
and by each plane they dropped a wooden bomb.

KEITH DOUGLAS

THE OFFENSIVE

Written in Egypt shortly before Montgomery's attack

To-night's a moonlit cup
and holds the liquid time
that will run out in flame
in poison we shall sup.

The moon's at home in a passion
of foreboding. Her lord,
the martial sun, abroad
this month will see time fashion

the action we begin
and Time will cage again
the devils we let run
whether we lose or win.

In the month's dregs will
a month hence some descry
the too late prophecy
of what the month lets fall.

This overture of quiet
is a minute to think on
the quiet like a curtain
when the piece is complete.

So in conjecture stands
my starlit body; the mind
mobile as a fox sneaks round
the sleepers waiting for their wounds.

This overture of quiet
is a minute to think on
the quiet like a curtain
when the piece is complete.

ADAM DRINAN

Excerpt from

THE GHOSTS OF THE STRATH

If I were you this day, Mr. Patrick Sellar,
red would be my cheeks as the stone of the villa
you built your female relative from dried blood of clearances;
and yellow would be my cheeks, as plaster of women's tears.

Fine the lupins bloom to your whitewashed cottage.
No more mercy beggable now in your office,
nor a curse heard now in the quiet sycamores
only finch's song and burn's trickle.

But other sounds are heard too, new emotions
about the moneylender who sold his friends to your criminal notions,
fawned upon and doffed to and loathed still
a monstrous statue of a monster on a goat's hill.

And about this statue, set up on Ben a Vraight
still sneering over the domains domineered over by a good marriage
(a landmark well within enemy visibility
but well out of range of spit or other derisibility)

the rumour goes, Mr. Execrable Patrick Sellar
that all of the stone of it, paunch, plaid, plinth and pillar.
(today's joke on the past for the sake of futurity)
is at last to be blown to bits in the national security.

It's men like you two we're at war now to exterminate;
and when this one's by, you'll find us together, determined
to make of you and your breed of butchery and witchery
a fine end to a foul chapter of history.

Then the moor you smothered us with, that very same
moor will cover the monument and you and your shame;
And then, but not before then, it will be silence not hate
that smothers your names.

WREY GARDINER

POEM FOR TAMBI

The hum of feathers falls on a sad ear
Waiting for news of nowhere on the further bank
Of the dull river gliding like a ghost between the trees.
And as the soft wind wings among the plangent strings
Of the gold harp of the high mountains, the tall
Dark enigma passes before the half-seeing eyes.

Climbing the stairs of the old house in the valley
The lover who seeks and has found too often love,
Or the other thing, the heart beat of the animal in the night,
Comes at last into the heavenly room of the mind
Where the uneasy stranger hovers and is gone
Like a night wind among the palms or the reeds.

There he will find no time like a murderer calling
In the bleak storm, or a hangman hastening
To the rich pasture of human misunderstanding
Worked out in blood among the drunk and the fallen,
But the pale vision of the child's eyes, the dream unbroken,
The strange blind faith of the pure, unshaken.

ALUN LEWIS

IN HOSPITAL: POONA

Last night I did not fight for sleep
But lay awake from midnight while the world
Turned its slow features to the moving deep
Of darkness, till I knew that you were furled,

Beloved, in the same watch as I.
And sixty degrees of longitude beside
Vanished as though a swan in ecstasy
Had spanned the distance from your sleeping side.

And like to swan or moon the whole of Wales
Glided within the parish of my care:
I saw the green tide leap on Cardigan,
Your red yacht riding like a legend there.

And the great mountains, Dafydd and Llewelyn,
Plynlimmon, Cader Idris and Eryri
Threshing the darkness back from head and fin,
And also the small nameless mining valley

Whose slopes are scratched with streets and sprawling graves
Dark in the lap of firwoods and great boulders
Where you lay waiting, listening to the waves——
My hot hands touched your still despondent shoulders

——And then ten thousand miles of daylight grew
Between us, and I heard the wild daws crake
In India's starving throat; whereat I knew
The impulse that has bound us, each to each,
Must be a root beyond corruption's reach.
Life is a rod that war and time can break;
But love survives the venom of a snake.

PHILIP O'CONNOR

EXPLANATION OF THE SUN TO A CHILD

You see that light?
Well that's the Sun. S-U-N.
It
Shines
Upon
Nature. It grows you.
It's what we go round,
we wriggle round our middle and go round him.

He's necessary to you.
If you sit in his light you get brown.
He paints you well. He gets flowers good,
he ripes fat fruit, remember him in the Orange Juice.

Don't be silly and shy of him.
He only hurts you if you run away from him.
Everyday you hide from him means a smack in store for you.

He's the most touchy person alive.
Every insult to him gives you a red face. Only
cats get away with that, and he grins at cats who
go in the moon.

He's the pot of all colors. And he's brain,
he knows the Universe, don't you ever forget.

Take your hat off to the sun.
He is One.

KEIDRYCH RHYS

ALARM, ALARM

I remember vapour-trails over Gillingham—wavy
And the monument to the builder of the Japanese navy,
And oil burning in black columns down Thameshaven way;
Queer happenings on Gravesend range; Croydon's day.

Detling divebombed—and Hawkinge—we got two;
I saw convoys screaming up the Channel's blue.
Connect dodged shells a lamp's smashed splendour with
A boy's M.M. earned defending Martlesham Heath.

A plotting board with one-five-o hostile;
The Italian raid; patrolling the beaches, Deal,
Oxney, Shakespeare Cliff and the invasion warning.
From pier-extension to Dovercourt, Felixstowe in Spring!

Joking and blood in a Nissen hut in South Ronaldsay:
The Flow; trips in a drifter to bird-splashed Hoy:
The *Prince of Wales* through an OSDEF telescope;
The leave-boat; a crofter snuffling his stony-crop hope.

Norwich. All this I remember and more oh much more.
Digging planes King's Bench Walk The 'Temple' burning
But nothing nothing that I can compare
To love like a bell through Yarmouth flying!

LOUIS MACNEICE

BOTTLENECK

Never to fight unless from a pure motive
And for a clear end was his unwritten rule
Who had been in books and visions to a progressive school
And dreamt of barricades, yet being observant
Knew that that was not the way things are:
This man would never make a soldier or a servant.

When I saw him last, carving the longshore mist
With an ascetic profile, he was standing
Watching the troopship leave, he did not speak
But from his eyes there peered a furtive footsore envy
Of these who sailed away to make an opposed landing—
So calm because so young, so lethal because so meek.

Where he is now I could not say; he will,
The odds are, always be non-combatant
Being too violent in soul to kill
Anyone but himself, yet in his mind
A crowd of odd components mutter and press
For compromise with fact, longing to be combined
Into a working whole but cannot jostle through
The permanent bottleneck of his highmindedness.

CONVOY

Together, keeping in line, slow as if hypnotised
Across the blackboard sea in sombre echelon
The food-ships draw their wakes. No Euclid could have devised
Neater means to a more essential end—
Unless the chalk breaks off, the convoy is surprised.

The cranks go up and down, the smoke-trails-tendril out,
The precious cargoes creak, the signals clack,
All is under control and nobody need shout,
We are steady as we go, and on our flanks
The little whippet warships romp and scurry about.

This is a bit like us: the individual sets
A course for all his soul's more basic needs
Of love and pride-of-life, but somethimes he forgets
How much their voyage home depends upon pragmatic
And ruthless attitudes—destroyers and corvettes.

NICHOLAS MOORE

NOBILITY AND THE PEAR

I

Time is the earth, and the earth turns in time,
And from the roots the noble tree doth grow.
In time and with the weather it bears fruit,
And golden hang the globes to meet your touch.

Time holds the seed, and brings the fruit to ripeness,
And love comes to its season with the rest,
And then indeed our hearts are bound to time
By infinite branches, tipped with infinite fruit.

This and the noble tree are all we know.
Its leaves glisten and wink with rays of sun,
Its trunk enormous, thick. And all we do
Or dream it watches with its ancient eye:

Nothing passes but in the pear-tree's sight:
Nothing is good but bears a golden fruit.

II

Nobility for wisdom! That is all.
Ennobled by the powers of natural love,
A child can grow a fruitful character,
And act the part of hero well enough.
But how are we to know when heroes err
Or with what crash nobility can fall?

The beast, the pacing horse, all honour wears,
His front magnificent, his skin a-gleam
With sleek beauty and pride, O noble, noble.
The animal is perfect as we dream.
Yet rage can make his dancing terrible
Or fear make madness of him. How he rears

All graces lost in anguish at his wound,
And stamps nobility upon the ground.

III

To take a fruit, a single pear, and draw it—
In the mind's eye our drawings are exact—
What do we know but roundness and the size?
It is an emblem of my love for you.

A single pear, a single pointed pear . . .
What charms, you say, can such an object have,
A mere design upon the mind's blank paper,
Drawn quietly to fit the tender frame.

Yet it is you: and yet it is not you.
Yet it is yours: and yet it is not yours.
Yet it is mine and lovely in my sight,
And in your sight bears strangest elegances.

To take a single, pointed pear, and eat it . . .
My love, what better action can we do?

IV

All perfect fruit are noble as to form,
That most despised of qualities! We owe
Most of our loves and likings to a shape,
The shape a thing takes, or the shape of mind

That looks upon it. Splendours of the view
Are shaped both by the mountains and the valleys
And by the eye of him that looks on them.
And eyes in love look most disquietingly,

Yet at the same time nobly. Noble are
The curls with which the lover's eye adorns
His beauty's head, incomparable maiden:
Noble each quality his looking gives her.

No image is itself noble in essence:
Nobility is an accent of the mind.

V

Yet, when we take the pear for love's own image,
Noble we are . . . and that's a truth to savour!
Nobility is nothing more than love
True to its roots, its speckled origins.

And such a love no scorn or slight can damage,
No rough or rude despising. Lechery
Itself would noble be, did Leda do it,
And were the swan's wings bright and light with love

How then with us? Nobility is being
Noble, and noble is an essence of the mind,
A unity of prospect and of form,
A shaping of the flecked original,

So that instead of black-and-white, we are
Wholly of blackness or of white complete.

VI

Ah, wholly-true and lovely syllable!
Could I but breathe a word into her ear,
Would not she love, as never she before?
And yet within an ear what's there to tell?

All loves are simple as the solid stone,
All loves are deep and glossy as the sea,
All loves are cold as the anatomy,
All loves are full of devils as a crone.

I might indeed breathe out a wickedness
In that one syllable of false perfection:
I might like Babel build my proud erection
But to see winds and seas in their duress

Shatter my tower with true simplicity,
Knowing its sole foundations were a lie.

VII

The pear-tree stands like love against all fear.
The winds may blow upon it: solid rock
It will not give-in to the seas that suck,
Nor vanish like a dream upon the air.
It grows: it spreads its roots: its trunk is there,
Incomparable tower, that none can break.
It flowers, and the flowers fall to make
Way for its final triumph, the final pear.

By this image of pear-tree and of pear
Can we ennoble love? Its natural growth
May serve as precept against our despair,
May show the seasons of our age and youth,
But what in this of our nobility?
The root alone is father to the tree.

VIII

See how the horses triumph by the sea,
Stepping proudly upon the sandy shore.
The sea and horses . . . in their element
All creatures seem more noble than they are.

The little lizard gleams upon his stone,
The red bull stamps magnificent his meadow.
The dog looks happy at his master's feet,
The panther glistens in his native shadow.

If elements are such to make the creature
Noble, what then of us? Have we alone
No place, no element in which we are
Of great nobility? We own

So much, and yet are masters of so little:
What can we do but seek for a new symbol?

IX

Men triumph in the arts of war. Is that,
Brave manikin, the noble thing we seek?

Men triumph in the arts of love. Is that
The subtle symbol that we seek to speak?

Men triumph in the arts of thought. Is that
All the nobility that we can make?

Men triumph in the act of hate. Is that
All men can do to further what they seek?

What do we seek, what symbol are we searching
To make the most of thought and love? What horror
Do we combat in acts of hate and war?
What noble thing is it we seek to find?

Nobility is only in itself:
No fool can find it, but in being noble.

X

Time is the earth and earth turns round in time:
The root supports the nobly growing tree,
And with the weathers fruit begin to fall,
Yellowest pears, sweetest nobility!

We dream, we act, we strive: and life is good
In the revolving earth, where the roots push—
Unseen nobility. And still we love,
And blindly turn our eyes from what we wish.

May the pear-tree be symbol of our hope
That in its seasons wears its right array,
From flower turns to leaf, from leaf to fruit,
Incomparable trunk, and noble root:

O may we learn nobility enough
To take our final pear with proper love!

HERBERT PALMER

AN AWFUL WARNING

He strode proudly through the city as the moon went up the sky;
He was barely five-and-forty and had yellow in his eye.
'The wonder of the people!' men exulted down the street.
And he felt himself a wonder, with the planets at his feet.

He reached the open country as the Sun rose in the East,
And there he saw a small thing that wasn't nice the least,—
A little imp in wasp-skin, cocking up an eye,
Sitting on a toad-stool talking to the sky,—

Who looked at him benignly, who grinned at him and said,
'You mustn't get too bumptious, for you're always in my head.
I'm Hitler and Beelzebub, the hidden and unfurled;
I'm Musso-Umptoweeny, and the blunder of the world'.

BORIS PASTERNAK

IN THE WOOD

The field was clouded with a lilac heat,
the darkness of cathedrals filled the forest.
What in the world remained for him to kiss?
he was all theirs, like soft wax in their fingers.

This is the dream—you do not drink, but dream
you thirst for sleep, that there's a fellow dozing
and through the dream from far beyond the years
that two black suns break through and burn his lashes.

Their beams flowed by. And beetles in their ebb.
The gloss of dragon-flies roamed over cheeks.
The wood was full of tiny scintillations,
As at the clock maker's beneath his tweezers.

It seemed he slumbered to the figures' tick,
While high above his head in harshest amber
they place in ether strictly tested clocks
and regulate them to the change of heat.

The fine adjustments made, the needles shake
and scatter shadow, swing and regulate
the tall mast's gloom, that's climbed into the day's
fatigue and lies across the deep blue dial.

It seemed that joy was old and shed its leaves.
Sunset, it seemed, once more embraced the wood.
But happy people do not watch the clocks;
it seems they only sit in pairs and drink.

(*Translated by J. M. Cohen.*)

VOROBYEV HILLS

(*from Songs in letters to save her from boredom*)

Kisses upon your throat, like water from a jug;
but not for ever flows, not ceaseless summer's spring.
Nor shall we every night raise from the dusty floor
the hurdy-gurdy's roar and stamp and drag our feet.

I've heard about old age. Such terrible forebodings!
Then not a wave will throw its hands up to the sky.
They speak—you don't believe. There's no face in the fields,
There's no heart in the ponds and no god in the wood.

Set your spirit rocking. Splash right through today.
It is the world's midday. Where are your eyes? You see
how thoughts up in the hills have strayed after white bubbles
of woodpeckers and clouds, heat, fircones and pine needles.

Here the town tram stops; the rails are laid no further.
Beyond the pines will serve. Beyond they cannot run.
Beyond then's only Sunday; plucking down the branches
We run about the clearings, and slipping through the grass.

It sifting the midday light, and our Whit Sunday walks,
the wood invites belief the world is always so,
so conceived with thickets, so inspired with meadows,
spilt on us from the clouds, as on a chintz design.

(*Translated by J. M. Cohen.*)

F. T. PRINCE

SOLDIERS BATHING

The sea at evening marbles the warm sand,
And on the level beach I watch the movements of a band
Of soldiers who belong to me. Stripped bare
For bathing in the sea, they shout and laugh in the soft air.

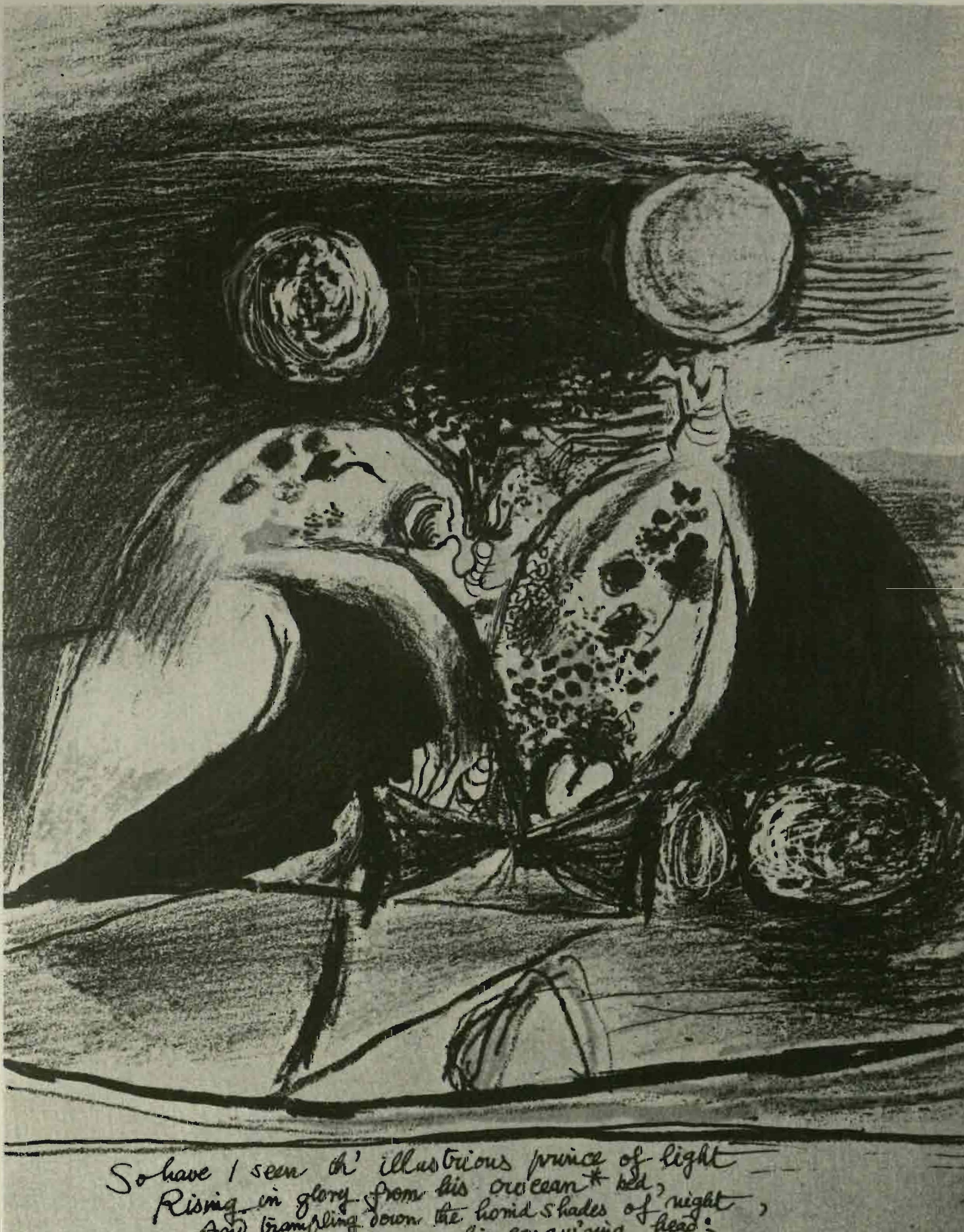
And all is pathos now. The body that was gross
Rank, ravenous disgusting, in the act and in repose,
Its fever, filth and sweat, its bestial strength
And bestial decay, now washed in shadow, grows at length
Fragile and luminous. Poor bare forked animal,
Conscious of his desires and needs and flesh that rise and fall,
Stands in the cool air tasting after toil
The sweetness of his nakedness and lets the sea-waves coil
Their frothy tongues about his feet: forgets
Fear, fear of the war, its terrible pressure that begets
A machinery of death and slavery,
Each being a slave and making slaves of others: finds that he
Remembers lovely freedom in a game,
Mocking himself, and comically mimics fear and shame.

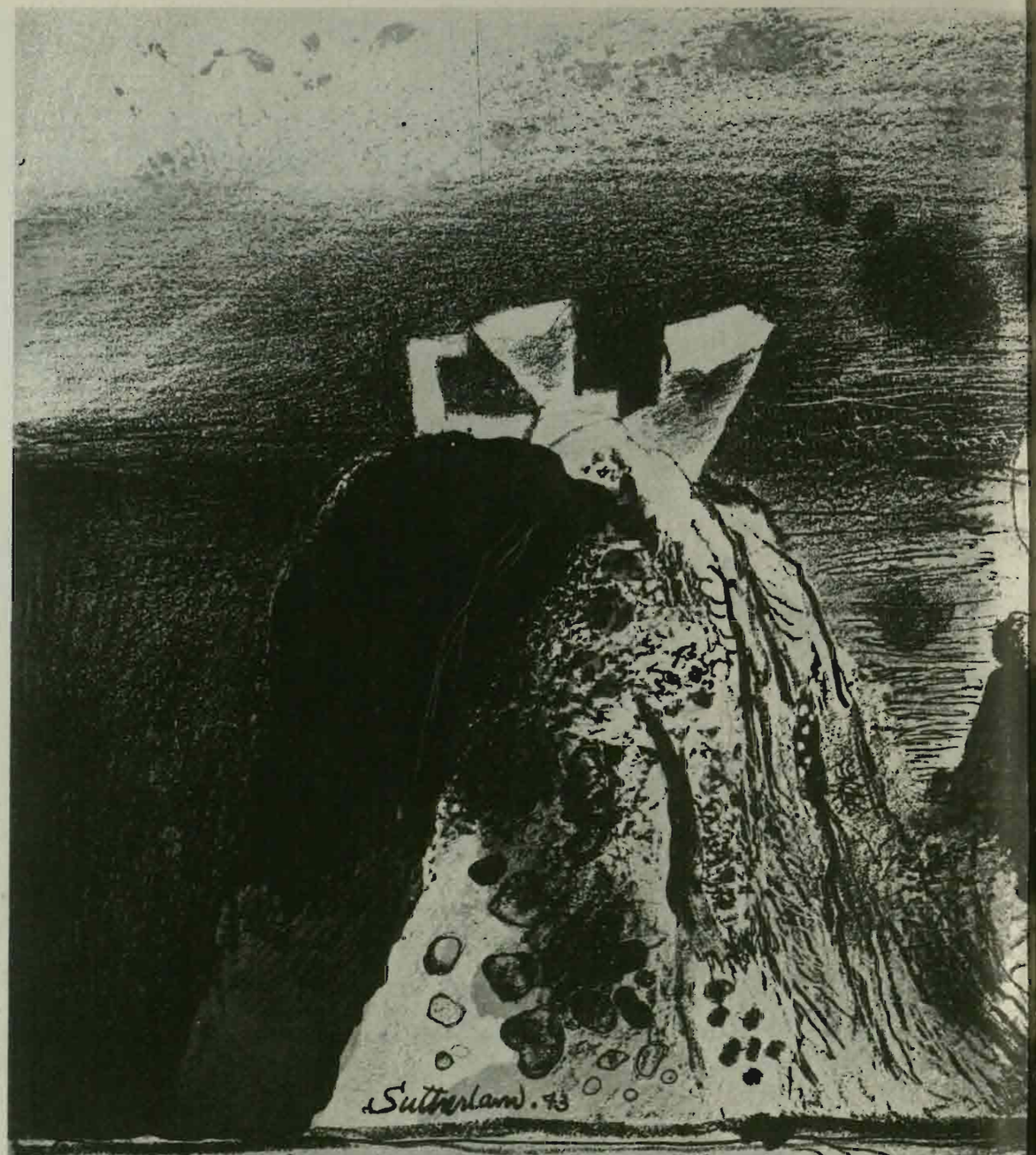
He plays with death and animality:
And reading in the shadows on his pallid flesh I see
The idea of Michelangelo's cartoon
Of soldiers bathing, interrupted before they were half done
By some sortie of the enemy, an episode
Of the Pisan wars with Florence. I remember how he showed
Their powerful limbs that clambered from the water,

Heads turned across their muscular shoulders, burning for the slaughter,
Forgetful of their bodies that are bare
And eager but to buckle on their weapons lying there.

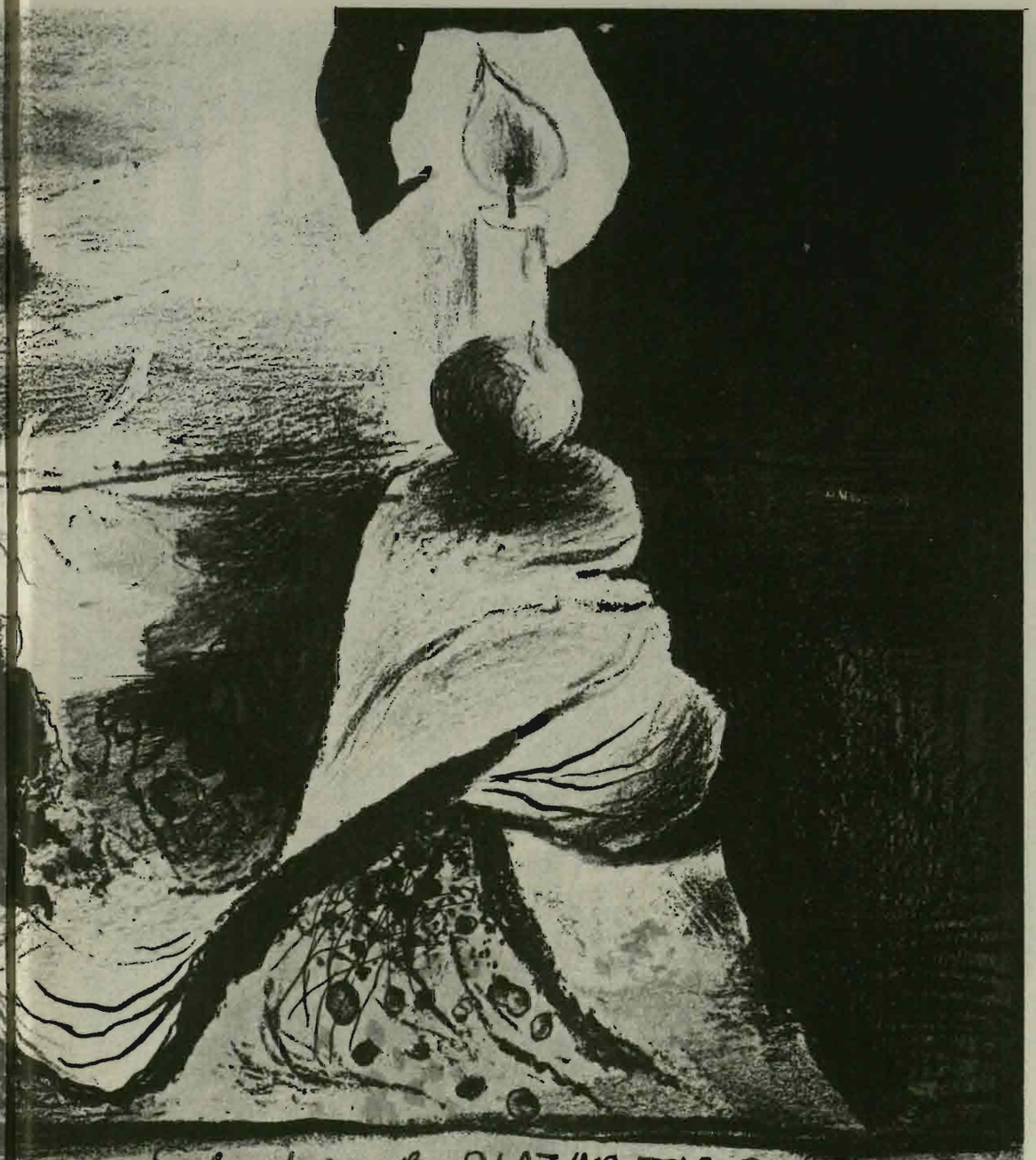
And I think then of the theme another found
When, shadowing men's bodies on a sinister red ground,
A Florentine, Uccello or Pollaiuolo,
Painted a naked battle. Warriors, straddled, hacked the foe,
Dug their fierce toes into the soil and slew
The brother-naked man who lay between their feet and drew
His lips back from his teeth in a grimace.
They were Italians who knew war's sorrow and disgrace
And showed the thing suspended, stripped: a theme
Born out of the experience of that horrible extreme
Beneath a sky where even the air flows
With *lachrymae Christi*. And that rage, that bitterness, those blows,
That hatred of the slain, what could it be
But indirectly or directly a commentary
On the Crucifixion? So the picture burns
With indignation and pity and despair by turns
Because it is the obverse of that scene
Where Christ hangs murdered, stripped, upon the Cross. I mean,
That is the explanation of its rage.

And we too have our bitterness and pity that engage
Blood, spirit in this war. But night begins,
Night of the mind: who nowadays is conscious of our sins?
Though every human deed concerns our blood,
And even we must know what nobody has understood,
That some great love is over all we do,
And that is what has driven us to this fury, since so few
Can suffer all the terror of that love:
The terror of that love has set us spinning in this groove
Greased with our blood.
These wring and dry their hair,
Resume their shirts, forget the fear and shame of being bare:
Because to love is terrible we prefer
The freedom of our crimes. Yet, as I drink the dusky air,
I touch a strange delight that fills me full,
Strange gratitude, as if evil itself were beautiful;
And feel the wound of love, while in the west
I see a streak of red that might have issued from Christ's breast.

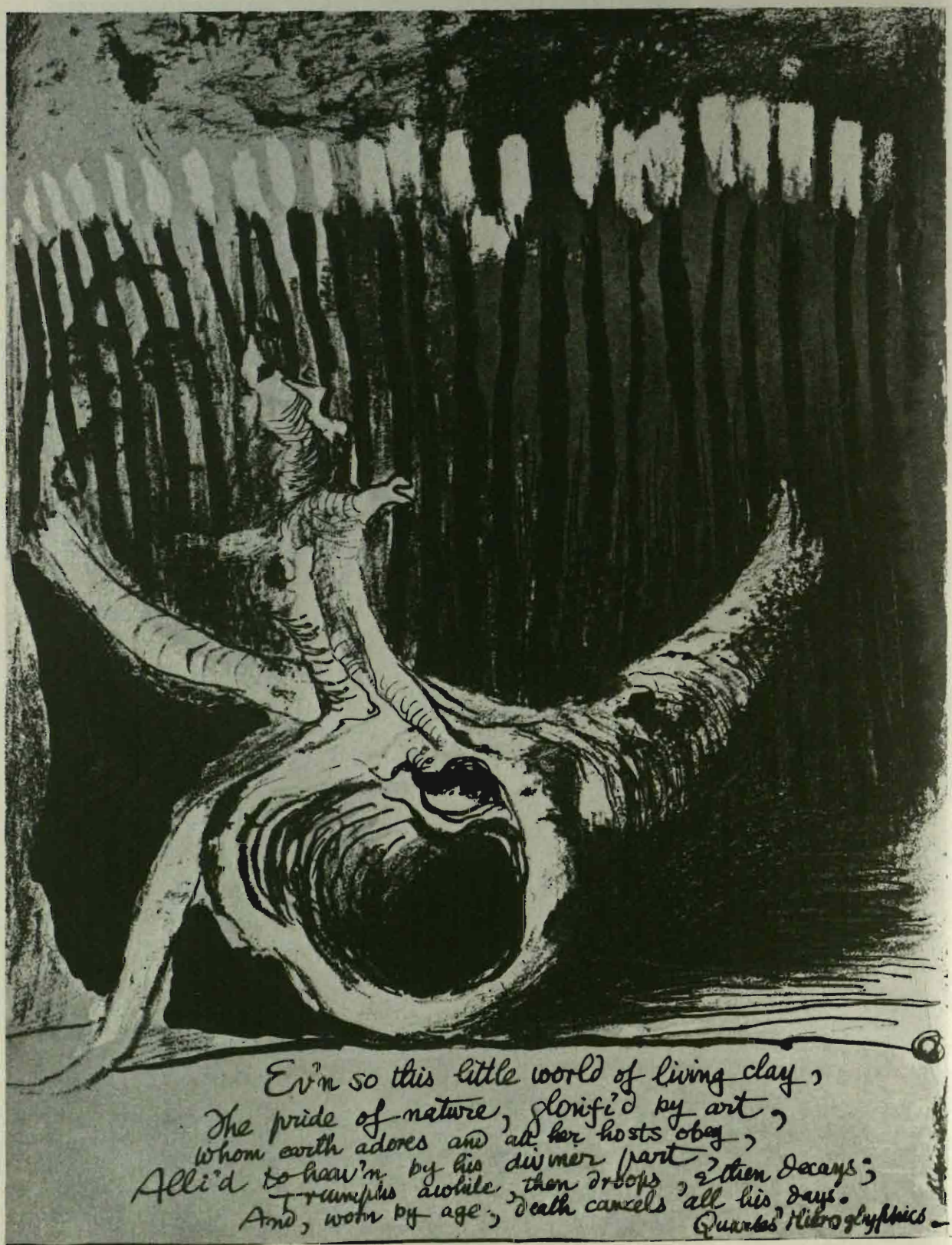

So have I seen th' illustrious prince of light
Rising in glory from his ocean* bed,
And trampling down the horrid shades of night,
Advancing more and more his conqu'ring head;
Pause first, decline, at length begin to shroud
His fainting brows within a cruel black cloud
(* Saffron colour)



So have I seen a well built castle, stand
Upon the tip-toes of a lofty hill,
Whose active power commands both sea & land,
And awes the pride of the bleag'rers will:
At length her aged foundation fails her trust,
And lays her tott'ring ruins in the dust.



So have I seen the BLAZING TAPER shoot
Her golden head into the feeble air;
Whose shadow guilding ray, spread round about,
Makes the foul face of black brow'd darkness fair;
Till at the length her wasting glory fades,
And leaves the night to her invet'rate shades,



Ev'n so this little world of living clay,
The pride of nature, glorifi'd by art,
Whom earth adores and all her hosts obey,
Alli'd to heav'n by his diviner part,
Tramples awhile, then droops, then decays;
And, worn by age, death cancels all his days.

Quarles' Hieroglyphics

FRANCIS SCARFE

AUTUMN EVENING

Evenings like laden fruit trees hang immanent
And the nights of sleepless thinking are more slow
And dark than ignorant fears of childhood
So heavy the days like solid gathering drops
Of damp dripping from rock on stalactite,
Deliberately sad, how shall I bear them longer?

Each hour like incense fragrant, with bare fertility
Of pregnant trees is split with scarlet ripeness
As through the groaning countryside the reapers
Toil at their golden harvests in the sun.
Tired the heads of children loll in their magic dreams.
Leaden the apples fall and wasps sing in the plums,
And berries stare from hedges like dark eyes.

Late in the billets, soldiers in shirt sleeves
Sweat after their beer, mournfully singing
In undertones their wild nostalgic songs
Of sexual longing, but so beautiful on their lips
As their ponderous faces cloud, for each is thinking
Of solitary sleep, and far beyond their arms
A young wife's breasts and honey breathing child.

I love you, comrades, whom sorrow brought together
From every town and village of our land,
From farm and factory, office and sinecure,
Turning your great brown hands to the primal task
Of love and battle, gathered each to other
By a shared language and the mirage of peace.

For each of you knows the sin and horror of war,
Yet loves the little gardens and flowered meadows,
The dirty streets and cosy corners of pubs;
So now we try to forget we are here to kill
And softly sing to ourselves or mis-spell letters
To our future orphans and predestined widows.

You are not foolish nor false, though unreflective,
Who so gladly would slip home in the dense night
Were there not fear and pride and duty to hold you back.
I know you share my misgivings and remorse
But take new strength from you, who have also found
No man in sacrifice shall stand alone
And each in the other's future finds, unknown, his own.

Faroe Islands, 1943.

DYLAN THOMAS

Last night I dived my beggar arm
Days deep in her breast that wore no heart
For me alone but only a rocked drum
Telling the heart I broke of a good habit.

That her loving, unfriendly limbs
Would plunge my betrayal from sheet to sky
So the betrayal might learn in the sun beams
Of the death in a bed in another country.

POEM

Your breath was shed
Invisible to make
About the soiled undead
Night for my sake,

A raining trail
Intangible to them
With biter's tooth and tail
And cobweb drum,

A dark as deep
My love as a round wave
To hide the wolves of sleep
And mask the grave.

HENRY TREECE

POEM 1

The pod bursts open and the seed
Is left for all to see;
So from the mouth breaks forth the word
To all eternity.

The fire that flares upon the hill
Is soon too fierce to hide,
Nor can man now undo the spell
That festers in the word.

Once uttered, sound falls like a germ
Into the womb of life,
To ferment and at last to form
The progeny of grief.

If only love grew through the eyes,
And hate sprang from the hands,
With word we could paint Paradise,
A solitude of sounds.

If only grief lay in a shroud,
And fear danced on a sword,
We could turn back the scarlet tide,
Strike free the trembling word!

POEM 2

Blood in the bud, born of the unicorn,
The Lord's bright, punished bull, lover of flowers,
And stars, shield of the heavenly host, the light
Of faith on faith advancing to despair,
Blood in the bud, I say, nipped like a worm
Between two lovely sticks where boys have passed,
Man's days between the gestures of a God,
Life cut to ribbons with the knives of love—
Blood in the bud is all we can expect.
From dreams spring up the trees of happiness,
The bold roots thrusting through the soil of love,
Fingering the rocks of living with rude hands,

Teasing the rooks of passion with bent boughs;
From dreams explode the birds that should hold hope,
From tiny rooms of anguish painted green
Where mortal man lies sick a century's span
Waiting for godhead and the golden dawn.
From dreams the flowers fall, shorn by the wind
Of winter when the golden hairs are gone,
And swords lie rusted underneath the hedge.
And so I cite the unicorn, that fabled knight
Prancing through woods, a star pierced by his horn
To light his path among the darkening trees,
Symbol of love, of faith, of courage, and of death,
Youth's gallant charger and the school-boy's dream,
Maker of melody, guide to the land of deeds
That burn their way through all creation's book;
Thus youth remembers and will thrust out buds
That, reddened later by the world's sharp lance,
Shrivel and fester in the horn-hung light.

MARTYR

He lay, wrapped in a world of mutilated hands,
Of trees that walked by night and grinning clouds;
To bellowing of bulls, his dream's black cloth
Ripped and let drop a heart stuck full of swords.

He walked, and by his side there strode a shade
Whose tattered hood half-hid a ram's dry skull:
'There is a place set for me at God's side.'
Said Ram, 'A door swings open outside Hell!'

He rose, upon hysteric wreathes of love,
Soared, nailed to an unrelenting beam;
Through airs that tingled with a child's low cries
He glided, gentle as a girl's soft dream

Of hyacinth and marjoram, in bowers
Of vernal holiness, where at a sigh
The leaves bend back like gracious hostesses
To introduce a lover. Golden in glee

He smashed the bowl of bitterness, let spill
His freighted nightmares on the weeping world.
His soul, ecstatic as the chains fell free,
Sped in the likeness of a tiny bird.

PLAINT

The knife that slew me was a word of love,
A rose still rich with poison's syrop, held
For these white lips to kiss, to kiss the hands
That crept from underneath the coat like claws.
I ran in sunshine like a careless child,
Spending the minutes with a child's delight,
Reckless of leaves that fell before my feet,
Blind to the lengthening shadow at my side.
When passion broke and spilled its tired tides
Against the crumbling rock, my heart, I woke
And heard the tiny crying of the drowned,
The helpless years I sacrificed to love.
And then I looked to see the failing hand
Still clutched the crackling rose the worm had found.

JOHN WALLER

SPRING LEGEND

Taken by lilies Hyacinth lies
By the cold water's edge;
And lost in the past
Are all the secrets he held in his eyes,
An elusive ghost.

Luckless and lonely, lover-like and cool,
I remember him well;
And the red anemone
Bringing back the Spring at this time of the year
Blooms dark in his memory.

River still running to crimson flood
Is my thought for spring,
Anxious only to discover
What will the tired summer bring,
Word of living or dead?

The dispassionate guns obliterate the season
Unmerciful to lover and friend;
With particular treason
This time of year
Pursues the youth to a cruel end.

So honour now the less fortunate ones
Who are captured or die
That creation may start—
I know that each year he will fly
Shy as morning through my heart.

Middle East, 1942.

CHARLES WILLIAMS

THE QUEEN'S SERVANT

The lord Kay wrote to the lord Taliessin:
'Now the queen's majesty has need of a maid
for certain works—to read Greek and translate,
to manage the building of rose-gardens, to wait
about her in actions of office; one who knows
the rhythms of ceremony, also of the grand art.
The house of Your Sublimity, besides its name in battle,
sends forth a fame of such knowledgeable creatures; please
the king's poet to sign this warrant I send,
adding what name he choose to bear it back'.

Taliessin sent for one of his proved household,
proper to the summons, near his thought. She came;
he exhibited the warrant, saying: 'Now be free.
The royalties of Logres are not slavishly served,
nor have you deserved these years less of Us
than to go to the queen's meinie'. She said: 'So.
Freedom, I see, is the final task of servitude.
Yet buy, sir, still what was bought in your thought—
myself with a clear sum purchased from the world.
Though I pay the ransom now, it is but with your gold;
hold well now to the purpose of the purchase.
How shall I serve else?' He said: 'The spells
of Merlin were mighty in time, but rhyme trebles
the significance of time. Where once did We buy you?'
She answered: 'In a shire of Caucasia, when my lord,
growing in glory of song, passed from Byzantium
eastward through Caucasia.' He said: 'The lambs
that wander among roses of Caucasia are golden-lamped.
I have seen from its blue skies a flurry of snow

bright as a sudden irrepressible smile
drive across a golden-fleeced landscape'.
'Nay', she said, 'though I was bought there,
have I ever seen such a place? Sir, what shire
is noted for such fair weather?' He answered: 'Read
the maps in Merlin's books or Ours or the one
small title We brought by the Emperor's leave from Byzantium.
Or even learn it a quicker way. Unclothe.
We who bought you furnish you. As was Our thought,
so be the truth, for Our thought was as the truth.
Know by Our sight the Rite that invokes Sarras
lively and lifelong. O We most unworthy!'
She cast her garments from her; shining-naked
and rose-flushed she stood; in that calm air,
fair body and fair soul one organic
whole—so the purchase, so the purpose,
the prayer of Blanchfleur in the convent at Almesbury so
and the benediction (unspoken yet) of Galahad
on all the derivations. The lord Taliessin
said: 'And so, in a high eirenical shire,
are flashing flaunts of snow across azure skies,
golden fleeces, and gardens of deep roses.
There, through the rondures, eyes as quick as clear
see, small but very certain, Byzantium,
or even in a hope the beyond-sea meadows
that, as in a trope of verse, Caucasia shadows.
Uncurtain the roses.' He named a blessing from Merlin,
and she stretched her open hands to the air; there
they were full at once of roses; again and again
she gathered and flung them at Taliessin's feet—
brushing off buds that clung to her, crimson, centifoliæ,
Caucasian roses gently falling in Camelot.
Art-magic spiritual, they neither faded
nor vanished; so holy, over all wizards, was Merlin.
The whole room was shaded crimson from them.
Taliessin lifted his hand; she stayed; he sang
a sweet borrowed craft from Broceliande,
and the room grew full at once of the bleat of lambs.
Visibly forming, there fell on the heaped roses
tangles and curds of golden wool; the air
was moted gold in the rose-tinctured chamber—
as in the land of the Trinity those few
who have seen say that the light is clear or roseal
or golden-cream, each in each and again in each.
Taliessin said: 'Thus the gathering through Broceliande
of the riches of Caucasia; but We—did We not see
a poet in Italy do more for a beggar

by the grace of our Lord; neither wizard nor saint
are We, yet something perhaps—Let the Flesh-taking
aid Us now for the making of Your Excellency's coat,
if it please the Mercy.' Thrice he genuflected,
thrice he murmured inaudible Latin, thrice
with blessed hands he touched the roses and the wool.
The roses climbed round her; shoulder to knee,
they clung and twined and changed to a crimson kirtle.
The wool rose gently on no wind,
and was flung to her shoulders; behind her, woven of itself,
it fell in full folds to a gold-creamed cloak;
hued almost as the soft redeemed flesh
hiding the flush of the rich redeemed blood
in the land of the Trinity, where the Holy Ghost works
creation and sanctification of flesh and blood.
Taliessin fastened the cloak with his own brooch
at her throat; only he drew round her the old
leathern girdle, for a bond and quiet oath
to gather freedom as once she gathered servitude.
Shoes he fetched her from the household's best store,
to wear still the recollection of the Company,
under whatever election she graced them still.
Clothed and brilliant, she faced the king's poet.
He said: 'So bright? yet be seen now in Camelot.'
The colour's height about her a little quenched
its power; she, still drenched by the power,
murmured: 'Let my lord end this hour with a gift
other than the Rite; that the Rite be certain, let
my lord seal me to it and it to me.'
Gravely, considering the work, the king's poet said:
'As the Roman master sets his bondman free?
or the bishop in the Roman rite the instructed neophyte
at his proper confirmation?' She said: 'To choose
were insolence too much and of too strange a kind;
my lord knows my mind.' Her eyes were set
upon him, companion to companion, peer to peer.
He sent his energy wholly into hers.
'Nay,' he said, 'henceforth, in the queen's house,
be but the nothing We made you, making you something.'
Lightly he struck her face; at once the blast
of union struck her heart, the art-magic
blended fast with herself, while all she
burned before him, colour of cloak and kirtle
surpassed in colour of flesh and blood and soul
whole and organic in the divined redemption
after the kind of Christ and the order of Logres.

He said: 'Till death and after,' and she: 'Till death,
and as long as the whole creation has any being,
the derivation is certain, and the doom accomplished.'

In his room at Camelot the king's poet signed
the warrant; he gave it to the queen's free servant,
saying: 'Carry this to the lord Kay, companion.
Be as Ourself in Logres; be as Blanchfleur
under the Protection, and in the Protection prosper.
Depart, with God.' She said: 'Remain, in God.'

FLOWERS

by Kathleen Raine

Certain experiences are absolute in themselves. Truth or illusion, we have from time to time the conviction that certain things exist, in themselves, with the completeness that we seek constantly in all works of art, to imitate. My earliest experience of that entity was of flowers; an experience childish in itself, but worth examining, because the illusion of reality is one that concerns an adult no less than a child, and an artist continually.

Can I convey exactly what, when I first remember them—at three years old, or possibly younger still—flowers were? I was standing looking up at some dark red hollyhocks, growing in front of the wooden fence of my parents' garden, that I had never been beyond. I knew that something was behind the hollyhocks, not only a wooden fence, but a world that went on and on, without ever coming to the end of itself. It was simply the world, and it was there, all of it, no matter what. This knowledge was not at all frightening, for in any case, the world was beyond the hollyhocks, and I in front of them. They were the here and now, the world was everywhere else. But from that world beyond, extending from my flower to everywhere and everything beyond, from the sky and the day, the sunshine flooded, and shone and glittered upon the dark red petals. I have seen that same light since, that was reflected from the glossy ridges of the hollyhock petals, upon many other surfaces; upon the glossy wings of flies; upon the spokes of bicycle wheels, and the windscreen of motor-cars; upon glass dishes on hot days, upon the Thames, crossing the river from Charing Cross, as the train passes the Lion brewery, and the river bursts into view; upon innumerable blades of grass, in the dry summer; upon brass, water, old tins on rubbish-dumps; no matter where, for it is everywhere, the golden light of the sun itself.

So the light shone on the deep red flower petals at which I looked. I was a very small child, but my white starched pinafore and blue hair-ribbons I took for granted, as I did the world that lay beyond the flower. That I, or the world, might be a variable, I did not know, nor did it concern me, for the experience of the flower was a constant, absolute, and complete thing in itself.

The flower was a face, a statement. A statement of what? Only of itself, as music states itself, as a painting states itself. What is a statement, a painting, or a piece of music, *of*? What is a flower *of*? The flower states itself, it is absolute, like Mona Lisa. or the Sphynx, those riddles that are their own answers. Flowers were, for me, a first experience and knowledge of things in themselves perfect, of the faces, one might say with which the world looks at us, and we at the world's face. Those grave, still, smiling faces of nature itself, who does not know them? And yet, in what sense is a flower more an entity than a stem, or a root? Yet they carry conviction, as if they were eternal things.

It is very seldom, indeed, that we witness the change that constantly takes place in the world—seldom see a flower at the moment of opening; the crumpled poppy—but opening in the sun; we seldom are there at the moment when the rose drops its petals with a soft clatter on a table.

Flowers, that last only a few hours, and that every moment are changing, yet possess for us the illusion of entity. If they change, it is while we are not looking, for always they present to us that quiet, grave stillness. Few are the forms and expressions in nature, or in art, in which one can know, with such an absolute conviction, that here nature has opened itself, and exposed its essence to be seen and known. This illusion of the flower, so complete and unfading an image, I had no reason to doubt for many years. Flowers fade, but fade more slowly than attention flags. Some

painters, like Cézanne, have perhaps attended longer than the flower has remained, and seen that *elles se decolorent, les bougresses*—Cézanne said. The painter who stays the course against nature, discovers the deception that nature practises upon us; how the solid world that we see always before our eyes, fades if we look too long. To look too long is to know—man's original sin, and irreparable tragedy—too much. Too much, that is, for paradise.

Knowing too much is always to lose the object; knowledge dissolves contours, but only faith creates them. Knowledge very early destroyed my first illusion of the flower. My flowers and vegetation I encountered for a second time in the school Botany class. Maize-seeds growing pressed against the inside of lamp-glasses, moistened by a backing of clean white blotting-paper, unfolded glistening root-hairs, and swathed shoots. Etiolated pea and bean plants groped for the light in dark cupboards, whitish-yellow and deformed. Pieces of cut potato, blue-black with iodine (proving the presence of starch) lay about on long wooden tables; half-grapes that no one was allowed to eat, and lumpish iris rhizomes, and uprooted celandines, with their tiny delicate tubers, dropped soil on our interleaved Nature Note-books. Carefully we drew to scale, and named the parts—*leaf blade petiole*. We pulled flowers to pieces, and named the sepals, petals, stamens, ovaries, anthers, filaments, honey-glands. 'Sepals' we wrote out on the lined pages of our note-books, 'are modified leaves'. Truth carries its own conviction, and that statement opened a world to me. Sepals are green, and often are like leaves—as in the rose-bud, with its tiny rudimentary blades growing from its tip. Petals, too, are modified leaves. Possible, and wonderful. Hyacinth petals are at first green, and even in the delicate wild-rose, the leaf-like veins are there; an ovary is a folded leaf, with seeds on its margin. True again—the pea-pod with its mid-rib and its green sides—who can doubt? All flowers are leaves, all flesh is grass. The flower, the entity, the face? Vanished quite. A rose is nothing more than a leafy bough, or a long shoot of briar, with its outspread leaves; shortened, and coloured and scented a little. A flower is nothing more, it eludes, and disappears into the green wilderness of vegetation. We pursue it too closely, and it is lost to us.

And what more is a human face? Quadrupeds, birds, fish, even bees and moths, if you like, have faces, but jelly-fish, worms, cowries and sea-urchins, have none, they are featureless and inscrutable shapes; their beauty is of another order, strange to us, more remote than the Buddha. But what, then, is it in the assembly of organs of special sense, at one end of the central nervous system, that makes a face, that has recognisable unity, entity, person? To think too far this way leads to that madness for which there are no faces in the streets; and in the trains and buses, not people, but collections of organs, topping a spine, whose upper bones are stretched and twisted a little—but no faces, any more than on the breast and belly, no more than the fringed circle of the holothurian or the medusa. In this world of disillusion, we must perish of sorrow and uncertainty. It must have happened so to some mad biologist—the damned of science. For too closely and too long, it is dangerous to look at the faces of nature.

Only long after the faces of the world had dissolved for me, did they begin by grace, to return. Not in the flower only, but in the leaf, the root, and the branch, were latent faces. They would glance at me, everywhere, and it was my pleasure to encounter them. To see the shape of the tree in the branched veins of a leaf; or the leaf in the winter contour of the tree. They would appear from the window of a train approaching London; cowls on chimneys bowed like hooded nuns with a world of pathos in their aspect; or an expression of tenderness on a grim wall of brick, where light fell across shadow, breaking the surface into a smile; the simple and desolate face of a cottage in the evening; or the solemn and noble silence of the closed door of a mansion. These apparent entities, are neither good nor evil, neither angelic

nor ghostly; they are the illusions that are natural to us, and essential to life; things in themselves, nature made known, and recognisable; perfect statements, whose truth is not contingent, but absolute. If they are illusions, they are so, as we ourselves are illusions; for on them, we base our concept of reality.

II

I do not write in terms of philosophy, but of an order of truth that concerns the artist and the poet; for the artist is more than any other, concerned with the proper management of illusion. What to do with our illusions. So many there are, so deep they go. The magic in the eye of childhood, that sees and believes; the terror in the bone at night, that fears even what it disbelieves; the love-potion in the blood that creates in men the blindness of poets; the illusions of the mind, the lenses of science, that magnify and diminish time and space, in a series of circles as complex as Dante's, or the Eastern mystic's vision of heaven and hell. A reality that is only and always real and unreal, that is not there at all—how inadequately these categories cover the experiences of the human mind, the human heart, the human being; accustomed in our long past to angels and devils, the illusions of temples and palaces, paintings, music, myths; to courtly love, to the thousand statements of art and philosophy; to a thousand shrines, each with a magic character proper to itself, its own nymph, or saint, or ghost, or scent—its own illusion. What we believe—that depends upon circumstances, on what comes to hand. How we believe—that is an art of civilisation. Culture is a quality of belief, the proper management of that illusion to which the human genius naturally tends. Without the proper understanding of the illusions, some lose their heads, and believe in the solid appearance of the world; some lose their senses, and believe in dreams; some lose their hearts, and see no escape from passionate attachments; some lose all, and for those, the whole world is without worth. For it is to the moments of belief, of acceptance, of credulity, that belongs the only value known to us, the value of life, that gives coherence to a world of whatever nature. It is so very easy to lose our way through the relevant planes of sensation, vision, imagination, passion; for the most potent magic fades, the most cherished illusions passes. It is at the end of such an experience that we best know ourselves, and know what the vision was. It is at that moment that we are most human, at once most wise and most desolate. But in order to emerge, one must enter. Who of our generation has not known the enchantment, the dreams of neurotic knight-errantry, the mysticism of the twentieth century, the pilgrimage into the unconscious, the 'deliberate derangement of the senses' with which we of this generation have explored the night forest of London, and often lost our way in it, deeper and deeper into its wilderness, away from the certainties of civilisation?

Now we must come back, to re-learn the mastery of moments of love, and moments of lucidity—the most real, and the most illusory things. Facts we know enough. We must understand rather the states of mind. It is not enough to have believed once, and been certain once. The complete understanding of the artist, must have known all the certainties; must possess them all, and lose none; know how to take them up, and put them down, with reverence, and without destroying them; not giving ourselves up to any of our beliefs. For if man is anything, he is a spirit more potent, of a nature more lasting and everlasting than any dream of love, or work of art; or than any world that his senses can assert, though the pain of experience be to the very heart and bone. It is love that convinces; those loves that end, only to be complete; are outlived, only to be perfect; finished as a picture, a poem, or a symphony is finished, in order to be whole, in order to begin. Perfected things begin, they do not cease, to exist. It is our perfected illusions that are the foundations of culture.

This war is not the first or the unique

expression of an attempt on the part of our generation to possess what we lack, and to make a barbarous assault on what we want. We have all wanted and been incapable of possessing. Perhaps we must go back to childhood to recollect a time when we knew how to possess the things we loved. Is it not for that lost art that we have all searched, by the light of Freud, the love-story of those early years?

THE GHETTO

excerpt from *The Rosy Crucifixion*

by Henry Miller

Some minutes later, when we sauntered out into the violet light of early evening, I saw the ghetto with new eyes. There are Summer nights in New York when the sky is pure azure, when the buildings are immediate and palpable, not only in their substance but in their architecture. That dirty streaked light which reveals only the ugliness of factories and sordid tenements disappears very often with sunset, the dust settles down, the contours of the buildings become more sharply defined, like the lineaments of an ogre in a calcium spotlight. Pigeons appear in the sky, wheeling above the roof-tops. A cupola bobs up, sometimes out of a Turkish Bath establishment. There is always the stately simplicity of St. Mark's-on-the-Bouwerie, the great foreign square abutting Avenue A, the low Dutch buildings above which the ruddy gasometers loom, the intimate side streets with their incongruous American names, the triangles which bear the stamp of old landmarks, the waterfront with the Brooklyn shore so close that one can almost recognise the people walking on the other side. All the glamour of New York is squeezed into this pullulating area which is marked off by formaldehyde and sweat and tears. Nothing is so familiar, so intimate, so nostalgic to the New Yorker as this district which he spurns and rejects. The whole of New York should have been one vast ghetto: the poison should have been drained off, the misery should have been apportioned, the joy should have been communicated through every vein and artery. The rest of New York is an abstraction; it is cold, calculated, geometrical, rigid as *rigor mortis* and, I might as well add, insane—if one can only stand apart and look at it undauntedly. Only in the beehive can one find the human touch, find that city of sights, sounds, smells which one hunts for in vain beyond the margins of the ghetto. To live outside the pale is to wither and die. What is comfort, what is cleanliness, what is leisure, what is wealth—without participation? Outside the pale there are only dressed-up cadavers. They are wound up each day like alarm clocks; they perform like seals; they die like box office receipts. But in the seething honey-comb there is a growth as of plants, an animal warmth almost suffocating, a vitality which accrues from rubbing and glueing together, a hope which is physical as well as spiritual, a contamination which is dangerous but salutary. Small souls perhaps, burning like tapers, but burning steadily—and capable of throwing portentous shadows on the walls which hem them in.

Walk down any street in the soft violet light. Make the mind blank. A thousand sensations assault you at once from every direction. Here man is still furred and feathered; here cyst and quartz still speak. There are audible, voluble buildings with sheet metal vizors and windows that sweat; places of worship, too, where the children drape themselves about the porticos like contortionists; rolling, ambulant streets where nothing stands still, nothing is fixed,

nothing is comprehensible except through the eyes and mind of a dreamer. Hallucinating streets too, where suddenly all is silence, all is barren, as if after the passing of a plague. Streets that cough, streets that throb like a fevered temple, streets to die on and be left unnoticed. Strange, frangipanic streets, in which attar of roses mingles with the acrid bite of leek and scallion. Slippered streets which echo with the pat and slap of lazy feet. Streets out of Euclid which can be explained only by theorems. . . .

Pervading all, suspended between the layers of the skin like a distillate of ruddy smoke, is the secondary sexual sweat—pubic, Orphic, mammalian—a heavy incense smuggled in by night on soft pads of musk. No one is immune, not even the Mongoloid idiot. It washes over you like the brush and passage of camisoled breasts. In a light rain it makes an invisible ætherial mud. It is of every hour, even when rabbits are boiled to a stew. It glistens in the tubes, the follicles, the papillaries. As the earth slowly wheels the stoops and banisters turn and the children with them; in the murky haze of sultry nights all that is terrene, volupt and fatidical hums like a zither. A heavy wheel plated with fodder and feather-beds, with little sweet-oil lamps and drops of pure animal sweat. All goes round and round, creaking, wobbling, lumbering, whimpering sometimes, but round and round and round. Then, if you become very still, standing on a stoop, for instance, and carefully think no thoughts, a myopic, bestial clarity besets your vision. There is a wheel, there are spokes, and there is a hub. And in the centre of the hub there is—exactly nothing. It is where the grease goes, and the axle. And you are there, in the centre of nothingness, sentient, fully expanded, whirring with the whir of planetary wheels. Everything becomes alive and meaningful, even yesterday's snot which clings to the door-knob. Everything sags and droops, is mossed with wear and care; everything has been looked at thousands of times, rubbed and caressed by the occipital eye.

A man of an olden race standing in a stone trance. He smells the food which his ancestors cooked in the millennary past: the chicken, the liver paste, the stuffed fish, the herrings, the eiderdown ducks; he has lived with them and they have lived in him. Feathers float through the air, the feathers of winged creatures caged in crates—as it was in Ur, in Babylon, in Egypt and Palestine, The same shiny silks, blacks turning green with age: the silks of other times, of other cities, other ghettos, other pogroms. Now and then a coffee grinder or a samovar, a little wooden casket for spices, for the myrrh and aloes of the East. Little strips of carpet—from the souks and bazaars of the Levant; bits of astrakhan, laces, shawls, rubies, and petticoats of flaming, flouncing flamingo. Some bring their birds, their little pets—warm, tender things pulsing with tremulous beat, learning no new language, no new melodies, but pining away, droopy, listless, languishing in their super-heated cages suspended above the fire-escapes. The iron balconies are festooned with meat and bedding, with plants and pets—a crawling still life in which even the rust is rapturously eaten away. With the cool of the evening the young are exposed like egg-plants; they lie back under the stars, lulled to dream by the obscene jabberwocky of the American street. Below, in wooden casks, are the pickles floating in brine. Without the pickle, the pretzel, the Turkish sweets, the ghetto would be without savour. Bread of every variety, with seeds and without. White, black, brown, even grey bread, of all weights, all consistencies. . . .

The ghetto! A marble top with a basket of bread. A bottle of seltzer water, preferably blue. A soup with egg drops. And two men talking. Talking, talking, talking, with burning cigarettes hanging from their blemished lips. Nearby a cellar with music: strange instruments, strange costumes, strange airs. The birds begin to warble, the air becomes over-heated, the bread piles up, the seltzer bottles smoke and sweat. Words are dragged like ermine through the spittled sawdust; growling, guttural dogs paw the air. Spangled women choked with tiaras doze heavily in their richly upholstered caskets of flesh. The magnetic fury of lust

concentrates in dark, mahogany eyes.

In another cellar an old man sits in his overcoat on a pile of wood, counting his coal. He sits in the dark, as he did in Cracow, stroking his beard. His life is all coal and wood, little voyages from darkness to daylight. In his ears is still the ring of hoofs on cobbled streets, the sounds of shrieks and screams, the clatter of sabres, the splash of bullets against a blank wall. In the cinema, in the synagogue, in the coffee-house, wherever one sits, two kinds of music playing—one bitter, one sweet. One sits in the middle of a river called Nostalgia. A river filled with little souvenirs gathered from the wreckage of the world. Souvenirs of the homeless, of birds of refuge building again and again with sticks and twigs. Everywhere broken nests, egg-shells, fledglings with twisted necks and dead eyes staring into space. Nostalgic river dreams under tin copings, under rusty sheds, under capsized boats. A world of mutilated hopes, of strangled aspirations, of bullet-proof starvation. A world where even the warm breath of life has to be smuggled in, where gems big as pigeon's hearts are traded for a yard of space, an ounce of freedom. All is compounded into a familiar liver paste which is swallowed on a tasteless wafer. In one gulp there is swallowed down five five thousand years of bitterness, five thousand years of ashes, five thousand years of broken twigs, smashed egg-shells, strangled fledglings. . . .

In the deep sub-cellar of the human heart dolorous twang of the iron harp rings out.

Build your cities proud and high. Lay your sewers. Span your rivers. Work feverishly. Sleep dreamlessly. Sing madly, like the bulbul. Underneath, below the deepest foundations, there lives another race of men. They are dark, sombre, passionate. They muscle into the bowels of the earth. They wait with a patience which is terrifying. They are scavengers, the devourers, the avengers. They emerge when everything topples into dust. They have one iron note in their guts: Vengeance.

WALTER DE LA MARE

by Herbert Read

To-day, April 25, 1943, when I began to write this little essay on a poet I have always admired, I found, on looking into a reference-book, that by chance it was the poet's seventieth birthday. But for the pre-occupations of war we might all—fellow-poets and writers, statesmen and children—have been celebrating the occasion in a more spectacular fashion. Not that a public address, presented by a frock-coated deputation, would have found much favour with a poet who has always led his life in wise remoteness from our coteries: but we might have found a more appropriate gesture—some collective garland for a poet who, like Shakespeare, had the aptness to be born into a world of blossom.

Walter de la Mare survives from a pre-war world—his most famous and most characteristic volumes were published in 1912 (*The Listeners*), and 1913 (*Peacock Pie*). Who else has survived from this period: from the generation that was formed in the 'nineties, or earlier, and came to maturity before 1914? Abercrombie and Binyon do not seem to me to enter into the question; Edward Thomas and Rupert Brooke were in some sense formed by the war—their best poetry is of the war epoch; Yeats survives as a reconstituted post-war poet. The early Yeats might yield some fruitful comparisons; the author of *A Child's Garden of Verses* some immaterial ones: but for the true measure of our poet we must go back to one who is at first sight and superficially so different—to Thomas Hardy. De la Mare, like Hardy,

belongs to and is the greatest living representative of that specifically English tradition, which is neither Celtic nor Symbolist, but something as autochthonous as the fools and fairies of Shakespeare. But already, perhaps, a distinction can be made—one which brings de la Mare more into line with Shakespeare than with Hardy. Hardy, like Yeats—like so many of the best modern poets—is a regionalist: his work springs from a special soil. But I defy anyone to deduce from de la Mare's poetry that he was born in Kent and spent his youth in London. His world is quite literally a dream-world: it is no local habitation. I cannot see that this is necessarily a failing: I am all in favour, politically speaking, of devolution, regionalism and the parish-pump, but I hold that it is highly civilised to think, and to write, universally. For this does not necessarily imply a lack of that most essential poetic quality, precision. De la Mare has more precision, both of image and expression, than Yeats: in this respect, if in no other, he is the peer of Hardy.

Technically speaking, indeed, he has delicacies and nuances beyond the reach of Hardy's crisp, but coarse, homespun. Hardy never wrote anything so magical as the 'Epitaph' ('Here lies a most beautiful lady . . .'), nor was he capable of the authentic ballad thrill which we get in 'The Listeners.' Both poets indulge in archaicisms which are odd and ungracious to the modern ear—oh's and lo's, unnecessary inversions and, worst of all, the word italicised for an emphasis the rhythm should have conveyed: syntax is often outraged for the sake of a rhyme. Both poets have preserved too many trivia: they make most effect in selected volumes, though more than one selection is possible—indeed, both poets seem to invite us to make our own selection. For a generation so self-consciously technical as the one between the wars these have been portentously exaggerated flaws. They don't seem to matter so much now: the patina of time has crept over them, leaving the form homogeneous.

The comparison with Hardy will reveal a difference of more serious significance. Both porets are what we call objective: they keep their eyes on the object. Both poets are apt to moralise—Hardy habitually. But how differently! The poems are often so parallel in theme and composition that the experiment of confronting them becomes 'exact'—and exacting. Let us take the concluding verse of Hardy's *Darkling Thrush:*

So little cause for carollings
  Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
  Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
  His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
  And I was unaware.

In de la Mare's poem, *The Riddlers*, a blackbird asks the nightingale why, when all other birds are at rest, he delights 'to make music for sorrow's sake,' and after giving the nightingale's reply, the poet muses thus:

Thus, then, these two small birds, perched
  there,
Breathed a strange riddle both did share
Yet neither could expound.
And we—who sing but as we can,
In the small knowledge of a man—
Have we an answer found?
Nay, some are happy whose delight
Is hid even in themselves from sight;
And some win peace who spend
The skill of words to sweeten despair
Of finding consolation where
Life has but one dark end;
Who, in rapt solitude, tell o'er
A tale as lovely as forelore,
Into the midnight air.

There is in both poems the same depreciation of human knowledge as against animal faith; but whereas in de la Mare we have merely the statement of a paradox (consolation in despair), in Hardy we have a suggestion of transcendentalism, a distinctly metaphysical concept of Hope emerging from the bleak wintry landscape and the fin-de-siécle pessimism (the poem was written in December, 1900). To those who think of de la Mare as a poet of childhood

and fairyland, of ghosts and goblins, this may seem to be pressing an unfair point; but actually the amount of would-be philosophical and meditative verse in the *Collected Poems* is considerable: it is summarised in a long concluding poem entitled *Dreams*, whose concluding stanzas give the substance of this insubstantial system of thought:

Starven with cares, like tares in wheat,
Wildered with knowledge, chilled with doubt,
The timeless self in vain must beat
Against its walls to hasten out
Whiter the living waters fount;
And—evil and good no more at strife—
Seek love beneath the tree of life.

When then in memory I look back
To childhood's visioned hours I see
What now my anxious soul doth lack
Is energy in peace to be
At one with nature's mystery:
And Conscience less my mind indicts
For idle days than dreamless nights.

The visionary innocence of childhood and the timeless reality of dreams—these are the two values which Mr. de la Mare has affirmed, not only in his poems, but in his more polemical prose works.* They are the values affirmed by an earlier English poet—William Blake; but de la Mare is curiously unlike Blake, simply because he is not in any strict sense a mystic. For the poet nearest in spirit as in form we must go farther back—to the seventeenth century and to Robert Herrick, a poet we often quote but but don't sufficiently consider. With some allowance for period changes, the furniture of these two minds is almost identical. Now it happens that Herrick has left us, in a short poem in his *Hesperides*, a precise inventory of his subjects:

I sing of *Brooks*, of *Blossomes*, *Birds*, and *Bowers:*
Of *April*, *May*, of *June*, and *July*-flowers
I sing of *May-poles*, *Hock-carts*, *Wassails*, *Wakes*,
Of *Bride-grooms*, *Brides*, and of their *Bridall-cakes.*
I write of *Youth*, of *Love*, and have Acesse
By these, to sing of cleanly *Wantonnesse;*
I sing of *Dewes*, of *Raines*, and piece by piece,
Of *Balme*, of *Oyle*, of *Spice*, and *Ambergreece.*
I sing of *Times trans-shifting;* and I write
How *Roses* first came *Red*, and *Lillies White.*
I write of *Groves*, of *Twilights*, and I sing
The Court of *Mab*, and of the *Faerie-King.*
I write of *Hell*; I sing (and ever shall)
Of *Heaven*, and hope to have it after all.

Walter de la Mare could not write a similar catalogue of his own themes without repeating all but two of these items. The omissions would be significant. There is no wantonness in de la Mare's poetry, cleanly or otherwise: his work is almost completely devoid of eroticism. Even when he treats an erotic theme at second hand, as in his poems on Imogen and Ophelia, the heart is sterilised, the image cold and glassy. The other missing theme is the last named by Herrick. There is a Hell in de la Mare, if only the hell of lost innocence, of ruined minds and haunted places: that sense of terror-in-beauty so well expressed in *The Children of Stare*. But though the poet can write of 'the awful breath of God,' he has been too infected with Hardy's pessimism to sing of Heaven, and to hope to have it after all. In a poem on Thomas Hardy he writes:

'O Master,' I cried in my heart, 'lorn thy tidings, grievous thy song;
Yet thine, too, this solacing music, as we earthfolk stumble along.'

Earthfolk, without any expectation of Heaven—in expressing this state of unbelief de la Mare is true to the mental climate of his own age.

That age, we can claim without self-pity (especially on the threshold of another age) is not one in which poets have found much spiritual sustenance: and if they have been called upon to supply that spirituality, it has not always been to the benefit of their poetry—Hardy is a sufficient illustration of that fact. But as Professor Elton wrote of

* Works which still await an adequate examination in relation to the poems, and to the general theory of poetry. I do not deny that such an examination might discover a more substantial 'philosophy' than I have indicated here.

Herrick: 'A stormy age is incomplete without at least one artist who sits by himself and cares only for his craft.' Walter de la Mare has done that for us. His poetry, as I have already implied, is very uneven. But no poet of our time has written such faultless poems. *All that's past*, *The Linnet*, *An Epitaph*, *Nod*, *The Listeners*, *A Child Asleep*—there are half-a-dozen poems which are perfect—pure poetry of the central pellucid stream. There may be more—I have chosen these at random—but that is enough to float a name for ever above the asphodel.

All the best of Walter de la Mare's poetry is contained in *Collected Poems* (Faber, 1942, 12s. 6d.). *Time Passes and Other Poems* is a selection made by Anne Ridler for the same publisher's Sesame Books (2s. 6d.) *The Listeners and Other Poems*, originally published in 1912, and now reissued by Faber (3s. 6d.), has a unity and charm possessed by no other separate volume of the poet's work.

POINTS OF VIEW

THE GEETĀ

by Stephen Spender

The Geetā, translated by SHREE PUROHIT SWAMI (Faber & Faber), 7s. 6d.

In reviewing this excellent translation of the *Geetā*, I should explain that I know nothing of Indian religion or philosophy, so that I am reviewing it as philosophic poetry. A poet and critic of poetry may have something of interest to say about the Gospel of Krishna, because, as it seems to me, the interest which people take in religion to-day is largely a rediscovery of the poetic and psychological truths expressed in religious systems.

The difficulty of religion to modern minds, is that besides presenting us with profound observations about the situation of human beings in time and space, religions also demand that we should accept dogmas.

The dogmatic seems to be the point at which the prophet of the religion requires that the believer accepts a symbolic truth as literally true. For example, in the *Geetā*, the doctrine of reincarnation is a dogma. The believer is expected to agree that he has already lived several lives, and that he may well live several more until he has attained unity of being with Krishna, who is himself the spirit of eternal being which fills everything.

Now reincarnation seems to me a very reasonable poetic interpretation of life, which draws, like good poetry, on deep, though hidden, sources of human experience. If we view the life of humanity as a single unity in which the whole has immensely more power than any individual, then we can look on the life of each individual as an experiment of the whole life to achieve its aims through the individual. The whole life can only live through individuals. We can therefore say that the life of any individual which has failed to realise the purposes of the whole of life, has to be lived again. Every individual now living devotes his life to repairing mistakes made by his ancestors, and to making mistakes which posterity will, in turn, have to pay for. Saints, philosophers, poets, do sometimes achieve the purposes of the whole life in life, by teaching humanity to become conscious of that intermingling of the hidden roots of life which is so vastly more significant than individual aims. Thus there is truth in saying that a human life which achieves unity with the eternal nature of being is a

problem that has been solved, a life that does not have to be lived again.

It seems to me that we should ask ourselves whether religions state problems, rather than concern ourselves with their literal-minded dogma. The basic truth of religion is that existence is infinite, since we cannot imagine a beginning or an end of the universe. The problem is to relate human life and the lives of human beings to the great I Am of the universe, the continuity of existence which fills everything. Will the eternal life absorb our lives into itself, or will it allow us to continue with, in some form or other, our own individualities? All religions are attempts to answer these questions. Yet I wonder whether the mere fact of the universe existing is not enough for us. Reincarnation is a way of saying that it is. For since a person A is not conscious of being reincarnated as B, when he dies that which says 'I' disappears as completely as his body is dissolved into the earth.

The problem of Krishna is to teach men to live life so as to realise unity of life. 'The sage who realises the unity of life and who worships Me in all beings, lives in Me, whatever may be his lot'. Unity with life is to be achieved by detachment, concentration, purification, meditation and the practise of religious exercises. If this is so, should virtuous men act. This question runs through all the *Geetā* and the answers to it are most interesting and important. Men should act, Krishna says, but in the spirit of sacrifice, and without attachment to the world of action. They should act because inaction is impossible. The refusal to act is merely a move insidious and dangerous kind of action.

'The sage performs his action dispassionately, using his body, mind and intellect, and even his senses, always as a means of purification.

'Having abandoned the fruit of action, he wins eternal peace. Others, unacquainted with spirituality, led by desire and clinging to the benefit which they think will follow their actions, became entangled by them'.

One of the best observations of Krishna is: 'He who can see inaction in action, and action in inaction is the wisest among men . . . Having surrendered all claims to the results of his actions, always contented and independent, in reality he does nothing, even though he is apparently acting'.

Although there is much in the *Geetā* about duty, yet duty is not defined, apart from the duty of 'inaction within action'. Thus King Dhritarashtra is instructed to fight in a wa , because it is his duty to do so. When he objects that in this war he will destroy his friends, corrupt and demoralise the State, and gain no ends which are worth while, Krishna points out that these arguments are false because they mean that he is attached to the ends of action instead of the simple performance of his obligations. The *Geetā* is the most direct and uncompromising repudiation of the current philosophy, preached by Heard and Huxley, that means determine ends. It is remarkable, really, that Huxley and Heard are able to unite their philosophy of non-attachment with their 'Gospel of ends and means. The non-attached man should take no interest in ends. To do so shows anxiety about the results of action in the future, and therefore a preoccupation with action and/or inaction.

'Be not anxious about these armies. The spirit in man is imperishable'.

You must do the duty laid upon you by the world, because even if such a task leads to apparent destruction, the Spirit is indestructible.

Mistakes in the world of human action can be rectified by other human actions, so long as human beings do not become entangled by becoming obsessed on the one hand with action, on the other with inaction. It is as disastrous to look for solutions purely in inaction as in action.

All this seems full of truth and significance to us to-day. Pacifists are in danger of committing themselves to negative action even more disastrously than fighters do to positive action. For the man of conscious and deliberate action is, by the very violence of his life, constantly cutting himself off from the ends of his action, he is forced to think, if he is capable of thought. Thus

it is that so many poets and teachers, especially religious teachers, have led lives of even excessive action. St. Paul, Loyola, St. Francis of Assisii, Tolstoi, in these and many other cases, the process of conversion has been the same: the sudden collapse of a life of action into a blinding vision.

'I will explain the philosophy of Action, by means of which, O Arjuna, thou shalt break through the bondage of all action.

'On this Path, endeavour is never wasted, nor can it ever be repressed. Even a very little of its practice protects one from great danger.

'By its means, the straying intellect becomes steadied in the contemplation of one object only; whereas the minds of the irresolute stray into by-paths innumerable'.

'Perform all thy actions with mind concentrated on the Divine, renouncing attachment and looking upon success and failure with an equal eye. Spirituality implies equanimity'.

The Geeta has much real wisdom to contribute within a fairly small range of human experience. It looks like a miniature carving in ivory beside the tormented Cross of christianity. But the philosophy of action could not be better explained than here, and on the whole it shows that we are justified in not taking a disastrous view of human history. The mistakes of our actions are rectifiable in the world of action. If we do not rectify them, another generation will have to do so. At the same time we are bound to do our best, fighting, planning, making resolutions. But we are not damned by the actions in which we participate, if they are mistaken, nor are we saved by them if they prosper. Society is our duty, but beyond our duty, there lies the greater task of teaching men and women that humanity is greater than individuals, and the eternal continuity of what exists greater than humanity. If we can realise that in our own lives, then we shall be among the wise.

ELIOT

by James Kirkup

Little Gidding, by T. S. ELIOT (Faber & Faber), 1s.

East Coker was a natural sequel to *Burnt Norton*, and *The Dry Salvages* seemed to indicate a culmination in the poet's thought. The final poem of the series is a re-examination of what has been said already in the three previous poems, though the implications of *East Coker* seem, in *Little Gidding*, to predominate.

The 'humility' which was the theme of *East Coker* (and which now seems to have been too conscious for real humility, which might not bear thinking about at all) pervades *Little Gidding*. Here, humility, though never mentioned, is actual humility, a realising of personal limitations, a natural and uncomplaining relaxation of body and gesture into the simplicity of universal amplification.

The process of dying, disintegration and re-integration through death into life and into renewed dying, the *perpetuum mobile* of death, is one which affects all things, and which all things must accept. And this is the only significance in being alive.

> . . . what you thought you came for
> Is only a shell, a husk of meaning
> From which the purpose breaks only when
> it is fulfilled
> If at all.

The question, why should such a process exist, is beyond the scope of the poem, as it is beyond the scope of living things: though it can be answered by the dead, and the answer is given to all who are fulfilled by death:

> And what the dead had no speech for, when
> living,

They can tell you, being dead: the communication
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living.

Death comes through air, fire and water, and through earth; and it is the 'death of hope and despair,' both being invalid before what ultimately denies them. In the impressive dialogue which follows between what may be called the poet's past-self and present-self (though the distinctions of time are too narrow here, at 'the intersection of the timeless moment'), we learn how the more spiritual part of life, our thoughts and theories, are swept away with the body's prolonged withdrawal. The past-self says:

I am not eager to rehearse
My thought and theory which you have forgotten.
These things have served their purpose: let them be.

The word, speech, poetry, are finished and removed, and on their resurrection they, like the physical body, have suffered change and passed into the possession of others:

For last year's words belong to last year's language
And next year's words await another voice.

And so in living, he who is alive is confronted with death in the form of memory; with the places, the objects and the words which were part of a phase in a process, and belonged formerly to a world remote and similar:

But, as the passage now presents no hindrance
To the spirit unappeased and peregrine
Between two worlds become much like each other,
So I find words I never thought to speak
In streets I never thought I should revisit
When I left my body on a distant shore.

And 'as body and soul begin to fall asunder,' the fruits of having lived, the 'crown upon your lifetime's effort,' viewed in the light of necessity, become, with the collapse and scattering of all things done, no more than tasteless shadows; and he who is dying sees for a moment the futility of isolating life from the rest of the process, and is incapable of remedying his own past folly, which he will endorse again and again in the process of existence:

. . . the rending pain of re-enactment
Of all that you have done, and been . . .

The pain for a while is removed and the spirit restored by the 'refining fire' of being dead,

where you must move in measure, like a dancer.

This last passage from the second section of the poem shows us the necessity, in the face of an overwhelming process, for faith of some sort, a faith which exists only in what may be the most insignificant phase of a consummation. Of the faith, if any, we entertain between life and life we can know nothing.

The deathlike condition of indifference exists between attachment to, and detachment from, 'self and from things and from persons.' Yet even love of a country or history or freedom, all of which are never indifferent, are eventually submerged in the indifference of death. It is perhaps here that the humility implicit in the whole poem becomes most clear:

See, now they vanish,
The faces and places, with the self which, as it could, loved them,
To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern.

This humility is essentially optimistic, for it presupposes a condition of simplicity in which the supreme and unfailing process can be accepted:

All shall be well, and
All manner of thing shall be well . . .

for ultimately the faces and places and the self will re-emerge, changed, but restored and unimpaired. And here the poet asks why we should celebrate certain great men 'of peculiar genius' more than those who are actually dying. For all thoughts and theories vanish, all policies and governments and

parties are ultimately nullified and united in a common pattern:

We cannot revive old factions
We cannot restore old policies
Or follow an antique drum.
These men, and those who opposed them
And those whom they opposed
Accept the constitution of silence
And are folded in a single party.

In death, those who were great and fortunate bequeath to us their spirit and their body: the rest leave us the symbol of their defeat, which also has value. And all shall be well, by dying and living, by faith and the refining power of prayer:

By the purification of the motive
In the ground of our beseeching.

There can be no beginning and no ending a far as life is concerned. What are called the beginning and the end are one, separated only by the concessions of time. To call death an end and birth a beginning is to live mistakenly, for in an existence where every action is a step towards death, death is the perpetual starting-point, the birth from which all things proceed:

. . . and that is where we start.
We die with the dying:
See, they depart, and we go with them.
We are born with the dead:
See, they return, and bring us with them.

The passage of time in what is 'a pattern of timeless moments' can only be a sentimental fiction. In pure time, the 'unimaginable Zero summer,'

The moment of the rose and the moment
of the yew-tree
Are of equal duration.

Within and beyond this is the mystical power of Love and the soul to sustain us, as we proceed through boundless explorations and re-discoveries,

When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning.

And it is with humility,

A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)

that we proceed to our consummation,

When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

Mr. Eliot's language, imagery and treatment of his theme are familiar. The dust, ashes, the roses, the children in the apple-tree, the garden and the bird-echo at the end of the poem, from *Burnt Norton:*

Quick now, here, now, always . . .

and, used in a more mystical way, the words fire, flame, rose, tongue, beginning, end; and the dance which in *East Coker* seemed to symbolise death is now the real dance of death. The life-death paradox is one which is especially fitted to the poet's incantational style, and this poem presents us with a true fusion of form and content. As in *East Coker*, the poet attempts a short analysis of the business of writing poetry, and fuses it successfully with the theme of the poem:

(The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together)
Every phrase and every sentence is an end
and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph.

The whole is a deeply musical and studied pattern of words. And as a background to the principal theme, there is a vaguely apocalyptic contemporary landscape:

Water and fire deride
The sacrifice that we denied.
Water and fire shall rot
The marred foundations we forgot,
Of sanctuary and choir.

and:

In the disfigured street
He left me, with a kind of valediction,
And faded on the blowing of the horn.

The meaning of the poem, related to recent events, becomes even more terrible, as we watch helplessly and with the 'conscious

impotence of rage' our own disintegration, and the folly of those who still strive to 'revive old factions,' 'restore old policies or follow an antique drum.' The references to the 'dove,' too, are capable of translation into other terms, as in the lovely fourth part:

> The dove descending breaks the air
> With flame of incandescent terror
> Of which the tongues declare
> The one discharge from sin and error.

and in the lines preceding the dialogue:

> After the dark dove with the flickering tongue
> Had passed below the horizon of his homing. . . .

though to concentrate on one explicit meaning would be to make poetry unsuitable and useless. The association of dove with aeroplane, and the actual statements of collapse in various parts of the poem with contemporary ruins should be no more in the reader's mind than an undercurrent giving strength and direction to the poem's main flow.

RELIGIOUS VERSE

by Henry Treece

An Anthology of Religious Verse. ed. N. Nicholson (Pelican), 6d.

Poetry of the spirit does not come easily to the British, or, if it does, it is quickly hidden. Consequently, I dare bet that nine out of ten readers of poetry would find it hard to name more than two writers of religious verse, now living. Mr. Nicholson's Anthology puts this sad situation to rights, showing us that, no less than the volatile Latin or deep Teuton, there *are* religious poets in Britain, and I am delighted to note that he gives us a Ceylonese, Welshmen, Scotsmen and Irishmen—as well as mere Englishmen.

His selection, from twenty-nine contemporaries, is balanced and satisfying, and includes such poems as T. S. Eliot's noble *Song for Simeon* and *O Light Invisible;* Andrew Young's delightfully pastoral *Christmas Day,*

> 'Last night in the open shippen
> The Infant Jesus lay . . .';

John Short's often-printed, but still exquisitely moving *Carol:*

> 'There was a Boy bedded in bracken
> Like to a sleeping snake all curled he lay . . .';

Tambimuttu's delicate and sensuous *Prayer:*

> 'Let me taste the silence that flows
> Behind your dark eyes . . .';

and Charles Williams' fantastic *Epiphany:*

> 'It was a king of Negro-land, . . .
> Who to the Child kneeled down . . .'

The poems by Anne Ridler are, like all her work, womanly and tender; Hopkins is, as always, Hopkins; and Auden is cleverly restrained.

I am not sure that Chesterton's *Donkey* should be once again flogged along the road of palms, or that *Hymn of the Penitent,* by S. L. Bethell, is really worth inclusion. But those are matters of opinion and not critique. There are names in this book with which I am quite unfamiliar, and there are many old favourites. I have to thank Mr. Nicholson for showing me once again the passionate honesty of George Every, no less than for proving to me, by his own *Carol for Holy Innocents' Day,* that good poems can be written about the war, though they must deal with deeper, more fundamental issues, than war alone.

This is a fine book, and I hope the day will come when it is published in a more durable form.

HENRY TREECE.

THE POEM AS THING

by Francis Scarfe

KEIDRYCH RHYS: *The Van Pool and Other Poems.*
J. F. HENDRY: *The Bombed Happiness.*
ALEX COMFORT: *A Wreath for the Living.*
ALAN ROOK: *Soldiers, This Solitude.*
SIDNEY KEYES: *The Iron Laurel.*
EMANUEL LITVINOFF: *The Untried Soldier.*
JOHN HEATH-STUBBS: *Wounded Thammuz.*
MORWENNA DONNELLY: *Beauty for Ashes.*
(Routledge), 2s. 6d. each.

Since the Great War, or more especially since the fanatical poems of Wilfred Owen and Sassoon, and the decline of the Imagists, the conception of the poem as expression, both personal and topical, has so dominated the younger writers that they have increasingly neglected their role of the Poet as Maker, and the Poem as object. In the meantime it was left to such older poets as Eliot, Graves, Laura Riding, Edith Sitwell, Walter De la Mare to continue the cult of the poem as a beautiful object, and this they did with varying degrees of outcry and success. The young poets of the Auden generation had necessity on their side, and it cannot be said that they merely bowed to necessity. From Dryden to Tennyson the poets had been increasingly driven to take sides, and it was inevitable that the time should come, when opinions grew more diverse and more hotly disputed, when the poet must sacrifice his independence to partisanship if he were to survive, or if he were to make himself felt as a power for good in an evil and chaotic world. Nor can it be said that the poem as object was completely forgotten by the young, for in their most careful and inspired moments such poets as Auden, Macneice, Spender, Day Lewis, produced finely-turned and complete æsthetic objects such as *Spain* and *The Loss of the Nabara.*

But the present War has accentuated the breach between the poem as object and subject. The 'thirties was, in the main, a period in which the latter type predominated, with the result that a conventional idiom had sprung up, and a conventional standard, not particularly high, of what would pass as verse, what would pass as a poem. Purely topical verse, much of it bordering on journalism, was still in its heyday when the war broke out, and it might be said that Auden's *New Year Letter* was its last and finest monument. The war has brought this evolution to a head, and many of us now feel that the topical poem, and the poem of expression, is played out in its conventional form, and must be completely renewed if it is to regain its former power over the heart and imagination. We are longing for a sweeter idiom, for a challenge to our prosaic verse convention of the 'thirties; we are tired of the verse journal and the verse newspaper, and while we look for a revival of lyric, we look most eagerly for poems which are solidly built, beautiful things. Let the poet be as clever, witty, pungent, observant and well-informed as he likes; it still remains his business to *make* something as well as to get something off his mind. If he can do both, so much the better for all.

Fashion dies hard, and of the eight poets here considered, five give their poems a topical title, and the majority are bound to the political causerie of the 'thirties and are only occasionally concerned with the æsthetic claims of the poem.

And strangely enough (though it is perhaps because they are working against the grain, against fashion), though Heath-Stubbs and Miss Donnelly are primarily concerned with the poem as object, they have been the least successful of these poets. It is surely because there is little background of real life or passionate or intellectual experience in their poems. Their writing is sustained, the development logical, their two poems are incredibly ambitious. But *Wounded Thammuz* is only a brilliant pastiche, a compilation of the early Ezra Pound type. Only occasionally, when he speaks with his own voice,

does Heath-Stubbs show his own powers to advantage; as in the passage beginning:

High up above my head I heard the golden plover's
Unearthly fluting, standing in a sad estuary
Where tufted lugworms bubbled, broken shells
Littered the muddy runnels . . .

or the second section of the *Spring Pastoral*. But when he introduces slices of Hamlet among his own writing, the whole fabric sags by comparison. Miss Donnelly sacrifices to the pretty-pretty as a substitute for poetry, and despite occasional passages of original writing, her luscious over-wrought manner suffocates both her meaning and the reader's patience. Both these poems have experimental value, but have fallen short of the poet's overweening ambition.

Rhys, Hendry and Litvinoff write topical verse with considerable energy, but most of their poems are bubbles on the surface of poetry. Rhys has a genuine and likeable talent, which he squanders in shapeless poems, and we are inclined to overlook his carelessness because the talent is real. He is as wilful and skittish as Gavin Ewart, and like him, he proves his sincerity by refusing to be dignified when the occasion demands it. If this continues, he will certainly run the risk of taking up his abode at an inn, and getting no further. The *Letter to My Wife* is moving in spite of its offhand tone, and the *Poem for a Green Envelope* is a triumph in that peculiar type of British irony, in which deep feeling and triviality are inextricably mingled, as in Charles Lamb. Rhys has, to my mind, all the qualities of a first-rate satirical poet, if only he will marshal and discipline them. He has above all that sense of integrity which is indispensable to the satirist:

oh we poets write and write and write until
we write what we don't feel
crusading. It was thus when
we spoke and said what we didn't mean
crudely in the fast wire till nowhere elate
the patterns of our lives converge like Fate.

This is the best possible criticism of the 'war-poets', and they must take it to heart. But the reader may judge for himself whether these lines are poetry, or verse, or anything but impatient outcry. The implications can certainly be applied to Litvinoff and Rook, both of whom are always 'rising to the occasion.' Litvinoff's talent is not specifically poetic, he is more concerned with truth than with beauty, and his poems reach the intellect but leave the senses cold. Rook approaches life with the earnestness of a reporter at an inquest. I have spoken highly of Rook elsewhere, but he cannot indefinitely repeat his success of *Dunkirk Pier* and his other early war-poems, and must develop in other directions. His Oxford poems were unoriginal and he must not return to them either. He has, however, a conscious artistry and sense of form which should preserve him against being merely a poet of the moment.

Hendry and Comfort 'belong' to the Apocalypse, though there is absolutely nothing apocalyptic about their verse. Hendry is a Scots preacher, with a ringing and sometimes terrifying power of eloquence, but he writes best of small and personal themes, excelling in landscape (*The Dead Larch* and *Four Seasons of War*), and introspection (*Two Sonnets on Conscience*). These, rather than his pronouncements on the world at large, make his book worth buying.

Alex Comfort is a quieter poet, less ambitious than the others, but the most satisfying. His *Elegy of a Girl Dead in an Air-Raid* moves the London Blitz to a more universal plane, and is both soundly constructed and well developed. His phrasing, too, is carefully watched and he has a mature feeling for language. But the impressionist poem *France*, and the various *Letters* to friends, show that the topical poem is not really in his line. The same applies to Sidney Keyes, whose poems on the whole are restful and carefully made, though many of them are exercises in the following of Yeats and others. His long doem *The Foreign Gate* gives promise of more strongly-built work to come, and he is, like Comfort, a writer who takes some pains with his work.

The qualities which are to be found in these eight poets, must be seen united in one before we can say that the younger generation has produced a good poet. It is to be hoped that less will be conceded to fashion and the temptations of the moment, and that more attention will be paid to the formal outline and structure of the poem for poetry's sake. If we must continue to hold our little mirrors to history, let us at least remember that poems, if they are to last longer than today's newspaper, must also be beautiful and significant objects.

FRANCIS SCARFE

December 1942

LIFE AND THE POET

by Constance Lane

The book's theme is that the poet must see life with a fresh eye and to enable his fellows to see it.

Spender is clearly the child of well-to-do Liberals, his intellect trained in school ways, his view of religion that of a schoolboy. Now as a man over thirty with experience of communism, the Spanish War, of relations with both men and women, still holding to his poet's task, he feels his way towards interpretations of life made by individual thinkers in the past as well as by communities like nations and churches. Spender makes his own values, he compares what he has found out with the discoveries of other thinkers and of other poets, particularly Shakespeare, Dante, Walt Whitman, and Yeats.

While considering Fascists and capitalists as *ipso facto* damned, he warns Left Wing readers against party propaganda in poetry. For the task of finding a faith he invokes philosophy and religion in a half-hearted way and takes æsthetics rather thanklessly for granted. He appears to look on Christianity as a dogma, but not as an apparatus more or less effective according to how it is used for preventing the 'great concentrations of wealth and energy towards material and unspiritual ends,' which he bitterly denounces. What has been done by Christians in checking this concentration is almost always ignored by communists, their failures heavily and unfairly stressed.

If a lack of spiritual values causes the trouble, as Spender asserts, may not the Marxist doctrine of dialectical materialism have something to do with it? Should Stephen Spender at any time accept any particular form of religion, like Catholicism or Mohammedanism, he would find the ultimate values of which he writes at least defined and embodied in ritual. He might see the gulf bridged between material and spiritual values, he might be, as perhaps Mr. Eliot is, himself a bridge.

Spender indeed writes: 'It is true T. S. Eliot has become reconciled to the Church . . . but then the Church so far as it has living spiritual values is also opposed to Big Business, class interest, propaganda, armaments and all the bric-à-brac of modern industrialism.'

The Poet's case is fairly stated. He sees Left Wing thinkers before the war 'clutching at straws instead of renewing a faith which we might have discovered for ourselves'. The faith he seeks implies virtues like truth in political life, many-sidedness or imagination, and added to this, he sees the need for writers to have leisure for reading and culture as a whole. If Stephen Spender himself converts his theory into practice he seems in a fair way to attain these virtues. He appeals for intellectual curiosity. 'For intellectual curiosity about life is the releasing force which impels writers to write poetry and fiction'. His own adventures drive him to the world of Ideas.

'What decides the nature of political institutions is ultimately values derived from

religion, philosophy, scientific methods and art. We are living in a time of the general breakdown of traditional values. Dictatorships, fascism, commercial individualism are the outward forms of the breakdown of the the traditional values of Christianity."

So, might he have added, is unenlightened communism. But what, one asks, of the building up? Would it not be more true to say, "Dictatorships, fascism, commercial individualism are the outward forms of valueless religion and philosophy, while scientific methods and art are good in themselves, but not sufficient substitutes for religion and philosophy?' It is doubtful if values can ever be merely traditional, in other words, values have to be renewed and not only decade by decade, but day by day, by individuals, in order to persist. In any case value does not belong to time. The poets whom Spender invokes as greatest had, or have, each in a degree the power of evaluating and of creating value.

Spender has much to say about Man's Spirit of good and evil. He speaks of the 'terrible love which can enter into the most obscure, the most debased human motives, disentangle the humanity from the evil object to which it has become attached, and condemn that object while continuing to love humanity. This is the love that burns through the Inferno and the Divine Comedy.' Dante, it seems, understood man's spirit. It is possible that Marx did not fully understand it, indeed that he never pretended to. A Christianity developed to the fullest extent, as in the mind of Dante, might enshrine those spiritual values which Spender is seeking. Walt Whitman is another who, in Stephen Spender's estimation, was not quite up to the job of understanding man's spirit, although he makes a good attempt. Walt Whitman lacks some value or other.

On re-reading *Life and the Poet*, two points stand out, one that true values produce valuable results. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' The other that 'this habit of keeping experiences distinct . . . is a matter of devotion, self-discipline. It is a gift that can be developed'—this is a self-discipline for the sake of an end.

'The modern world,' according to Spender, has nothing to be said for it in any form, but one wonders whether other worlds, or the world at other periods, were so much better. Do not poets always expect everything in youth, so that the hopes of youth find disappointment in early middle age, as have others, and discover a philosophy of some sort in later life?

Stephen Spender, at any rate, still hopes much from communism, as the possible redemption of the modern world, but with less of dialectical materialism and more of something not unlike religion. 'Except ye be as little children,' Spender seems to feel, there will be no Kingdom of Heaven. Poets are to see with the fresh and innocent eye, to translate what they see into poetry, not uninfluenced by the writers of the past, and to be prophets in their generation. Spender may become one.

CONSTANCE LANE.

TWO POETS

by Alex Comfort

Lost Planet, by DOROTHY WELLESLEY (Hogarth), 6s.
40 *Poems*, by JOHN LEHMANN (Hogarth), 3s. 6d.

Influence is almost always a preliminary of poetry. I should imagine that very few writers are able to conceive their work entirely *in vacuo*, and most poets would admit that that train of experiences in most of their poems was originally set off by reading someone else's work. Both the present books carry the subservience to influence rather further—so that the origins are visible as one reads. Accordingly in Dorothy Wellesley's book there are two distinct separable factors, one which she owes to Yeats, and another

which is her own. The middle period of Yeats contributes very nearly the whole of the technical background of the writing, and a considerable part of its conception. To that extent, the author is borrowing a framework to carry her personal contribution to the theme; and this is an entirely legitimate solution, as I conceive it, to the abnormally acute technical problem of form which writers are facing at present.

But contact with the genuine Miss Wellesley, the mind and imagination which the form has been borrowed to sustain, is difficult and somewhat disappointing. Her individual contribution is an adolescent one. That is to say, that where Yeats possessed and exploited a deliberately childlike attitude, one in which all phenomena were capable of symbolism, and all symbols of reality, Miss Wellesley has retained the formal simplicity, but is driven throughout by an obvious and largely conscious impulse towards adultness. For the child-like imaginative approach to succeed it must not be discontented with itself, and it seems to me that Miss Wellesley is discontented. One finds stanzas like this:

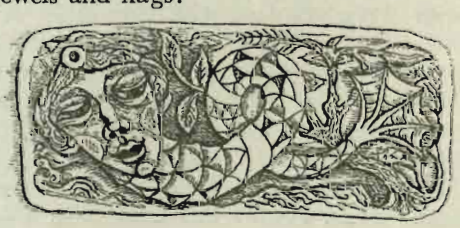
'At Maiden Castle in Dorset
I saw two skeletons revealed.
I do not know if they loved one another
but they lay as lover with lover. . . .'

which suggest to me that the simplicity of vision is maintained far more in the interest of asserting something than as a natural approach. In fact, the something which is being asserted seems to be the revolt of the author's sensibility against a propensity for flummery and for vulgarity of vision which protrudes very much in places:

'The Queen of Sheba is in rags,
I kneel to her with jewels and flags:
From Solomon the Wise come I
To tell her: all is Vanity.'

Accordingly the measure of Miss Wellesley's poetic achievement is the success with which she has disciplined the Georgian element in her vision and asserted something more worth while. The result is often both valid and genuinely beautiful. She has contrived to solve very much the same æsthetic problem which Yeats himself solved, by a close adherence to the forms which Yeats employed. The dedication to Yeats shows that the author knows prefectly well what she is about. The sustained achievement rarely lasts more than a stanza at a time, but it is there, and it is the struggle which commands respect. The last poems in the book do not, on the whole, show a more conclusive defeat of the baroque roses and cherubs than the first, and one hopes, accordingly, that the order is not chronological.

John Lehmann's book, whatever else it may be, shows no sign of struggle. The author is, I suppose, primarily a writer of prose, and he has never consciously made a poetic style for himself, being content to select a manner much as a hermit crab selects a shell. The new war-poems inhabit the shell of Day Lewis for the most part: *The Summer Story* is in the nature of a postscript to *Overtures to Death*. Lehmann is at his best only in subjects that inspire his enthusiasm. In all others he is facile and level, and the poems which do not deal with political upheaval have an aridity which spoils them. It looks as though the only experience into which the author entered fully enough to make it a fit subject for verse was the prospect of revolution. Perhaps, therefore, his best work is to come. The present book is rather disappointing.



CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Eliot, Mr. Orwell and Miss Raine

DEAR SIR,—Mr. Orwell is a dangerous man to admire, and I do so (who can resist his pungent metaphor?) with reservations. His literary function is the valuable one of provocation, but provocation only serves its purpose when it provokes revision of thought—it is useless if it arouses only a violent emotional reaction.

In his criticism of Mr. Eliot's poems in the last issue of POETRY, London, Mr. Orwell displays more honesty than sense, for if he had studied this journal he would have realised that he was falling into the ranks of Eliot enthusiasts. I am not inferring that I disapprove of enthusiasm, which is a positive quality of particular value to a democracy, but I deprecate the tendency of enthusiasts to blind themselves to the shortcomings of their idol and to regard criticism and, even more unfortunately, the merits of another school of thought, as heretical and fit only for oblivion.

If Mr. Orwell was aware of this and wrote his article with explosive intent he gets his answer from Miss Raine.

Poor Miss Raine! In her rush to defend Mr. Eliot she could scarcely contain her fury with Mr. Orwell. She is at a disadvantage, too, in the prose medium and I turned with a sigh from the lucidity of Mr. Orwell to Miss Raine's obscurity of thought. One of the critic's chief tools, said Mr. Eliot, in 1923, is analysis, but Miss Raine reads this as amplification, with little elucidation and with little attempt to justify her statements.

Mr. Orwell's contention is that Mr. Eliot has degenerated from being a great poet of futility to a futile poet. This, surely, is a trifle arbitrary—after all, Mr. Eliot was a great poet before he was an Anglo-Catholic, and he is still an important poet despite himself.

Miss Raine goes to the opposite extreme and attempts to convince us that Mr. Eliot's later work contains a new and important message for our embryo poets. In the 1920's Mr. Eliot was reshaping our poetic heritage and shaping the future. Is it not rather a lot to expect of one man that he should exercise two profound influences during his lifetime? It is a disservice to Mr. Eliot to push his work beyond its natural, and very great, value.

This new influence of which Miss Raine speaks is Mr. Eliot's concern with man's place in eternity; but I think it is more with Mr. Eliot's place in eternity that he is concerned, and his approach is too gloomy and sectarian to have the profundity which commands adherents.

When Miss Raine says: "If poets are 'the unacknowledged legislators of the world' it is by virtue of their poetry and not of their legislation" she is attempting to divide the indivisible. Poetic form is the means toward the philosophic end: if the end is narrow the poetry suffers, and if the poetry is poor the philosophy is cramped. Form and content are one and their division an unnatural distinction of use only to the analyst.

It is also important to remind Miss Raine that it is the philosophy of a poet that regulates the interest he arouses. Rudyard Kipling, Wordsworth's moral poems, and John Donne are sufficient examples.

Miss Raine should not pretend to herself that Mr. Eliot is not tired of his raids upon the inarticulate. We are only undefeated, he says, because we have gone on trying. Mr. Eliot will continue to try because he is afraid of defeat, a fear so potent that it has led him to take out an Anglo-Catholic insurance policy.

I am not decrying Mr. Eliot's work. But poems reflect ourselves and we should be careful that we see a clear reflection and do not regard the mirror as our servant, to tell us only what we wish to hear or to be beaten if we do not approve.

I should like to contrast with the conclusion of the Dry Salvages the following lines from another great poet:

> For, however they dream they are scattered,
> Our bones cannot help reassembling themselves
> Into their philosophic cities to hold
> The knowledge they cannot get out of,
> And neither a Spring nor a War can ever
>
> So condition his ears as to keep the Song
> That is not a sorrow from the invisible twin:
> O what weeps is the love that hears, an
> Accident occurring in his substance.

Yours truly,

IRENE BROWNE.

Mr. Orwell and the later Eliot Poems (P.L. No. 7)

DEAR SIR,—Criticism depends on two things—facts and opinions; and the opinions must be built on the facts or the criticism is invalidated. It must first deal with what a given author wrote in a context conditioning its meaning, and not with what the critic thought he wrote or meant; and secondly it must not advance as factual statements from the works criticised what are only the critic's inferences from those statements. And it seems to me Mr. Orwell sins so badly against these basic principles that this must first be rectified before any adequate reassessment of the three Eliot poems can be attempted.

When Eliot's poetry became increasingly concerned with a spiritual solution of life's problems; when the poet who had cried in desperation,

'If there were only water amongst the rock,'

in *The Waste Land*; who had made his plea for conformity to the Divine Will in *Ash Wednesday* and for 'Light' in *The Rock*; the poet who at last had news 'Of a door that opens at the end of a corridor, Sunlight and singing,' in *The Family Reunion*: when that poet tried to convey something of the tremendous experience not as a theologian or a didactician but as a poet, Mr. Orwell complains of 'A deterioration in Mr. Eliot's subject-matter.'! Miss Raine rightly retorts it is a concern, instead, 'with the greatest issue of all—man's place in eternity.' The point is, the 'deterioration in subject-matter' exists for Mr. Orwell only because it is now something wholly outside the realm which dialectical materialism concedes to be 'real.' But the more important point is Mr. Orwell's remarks on the two quotations he compares—one from *The Dry Salvages*, the other from *Whispers of Immortality*. Of the first, he says it follows a passage in which 'it is explained that scientific research is all nonsense, a childish superstition on the same level as fortune-telling.' Well, here is the passage:—

'To communicate with Mars, converse with spirits,
To report the behaviour of the sea-monster,
Describe the horoscope, haruspicate or scry,
Observe disease in signatures, evoke
Biography from the wrinkles of the palm
And tragedy from fingers; release omens
By sortilege, or tea leaves, riddle the inevitable
With playing cards, fiddle with pentagrams
Or barbituric acids, or dissect
The recurrent image in pre-conscious terrors—
To explore the womb, or tomb, or dreams; all these are usual
Pastimes and drugs, and features of the press:'

and there's precious little ridiculing of 'scientific research' there, though there *is* a salutary warning to those who run amuck in the realms of behaviourist psychology.

Of the second poem he quoted Mr. Orwell insists it voices 'the pagan attitude towards death, the belief in the next world as a shadowy place full of squeaking ghosts envious of the living, the belief that however bad life is, death is worse'; and 'They probably express what Mr. Eliot himself felt about death at that time, at least in certain moods.' To the second of those remarks I answer: Perhaps,—though the stanzas in question have a more than usually objective context; but that if they *do* they represent quite other feelings in Mr. Eliot than Mr. Orwell suggests for: here are two adjoining stanzas:—

'Webster was much possessed by death
And saw the skull beneath the skin;
And breastless creatures under ground
Leaned backward with a lipless grin.

Donne, I suppose, was such another
Who found no substitute for sense;
To seize and clutch and penetrate,
Expert beyond experience.'

These are thoughts, then, concerning John Donne's attitude to death; and no one who has studied the Metaphysical Poets of the seventeenth century, and Donne in particular, can possibly envisage in him 'a pagan attitude towards death,' or the other things cited in the first of the above remarks. The title, of course, emphasises this; and the second half of the poem is a cynical picture of modern decadence with its voluptuous heaven, here and now, of the senses. I should like to add that when Mr. Orwell says: 'I do not think it is questionable the second (*W. of I.*) is superior as verse' to the *D.S.*, he is being unjustifiably dogmatic. They are both fine evocations but of a different poetic order—they cannot really be compared: that I find *The D.S.* a more satisfying *poetic* experience, because it is more subtle and appeals at many different levels of consciousness, is, I realise, only a personal preference.

Again, Mr. Orwell writes of *The Dry Salvages* that in it 'Life has a meaning, but it is not a meaning one is inclined to grow lyrical about.' Isn't that just the tragedy of our modern civilisation, plunged in the hell of a second world-war?

If Mr. Eliot had done no more than epitomise *that* it were something: but he does more—much more. He shows in these three poems, *Burnt Norton* (which came first: Miss Raine is misled by the date of its publication in separate pamphlet form) *East Coker*, and *The Dry Salvages*, man's opportunity of a painful emergence from our contemporary chaos, an escape from time into timelessness (already suggested in *The Family Reunion*), from temporal standards to eternal standards—a repudiation of just those 'rentier values' which he had earlier sketched and satirised. Naturally, Mr. Orwell does not appreciate this kind of poetry or this interpretation of life's 'meaning': there is, indeed, nothing superficially attractive about it; nor, indeed, was there about the *via dolorosa* that led to Calvary—but that also led on to Easter Sunday. Nor to a materialist can the means to the end sound attractive as sketched by Mr. Eliot, but at least he is consistent. Having shown us 'fear in a handful of dust' in *The Waste Land*, he offers us (in *What the Thunder Said*) the peace which surpasseth understanding—but at a price. The price remains the same: it must be by Sympathy, Self-surrender, and Self-control. And in the spheres of such non-materialist values the Church does not demand 'intellectual absurdities of its members' nor is Mr. Eliot 'continually nibbling to make them acceptable to himself.' The Christian viewpoint, without entering here into its more subtle ramifications, is, surely, a belief in a God who created man's intellect; that the part cannot perceive the whole; that the understanding of God by man can be at best now but a 'seeing in a glass, darkly'. In a word, Christianity does not ask intellectual acceptance of doctrines which are *against* reason, but only those *beyond* reason; and the necessary difficulty and abstraction of some of Mr. Eliot's later poetry is just this grappling with, and attempting to clothe in poetic form, these approximations to the unknowable. In the beauty of the words and images, in the occasional haunting melody,—

'And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
And the lotus rose, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of heart of light . . .'

the ineffability of the subject-matter: in all these consists the enduring value of the later poems.

Miss Raine says these poems are 'revolutionary in a sense that transcends the mere use of words'. I would suggest—and have often lectured on the theme—that they are not '*re*volutionary' but '*e*volutionary'; in a word, that there is not, with all deference to Mr. Orwell, 'a certain stage when he [Eliot] feels the need of a purpose . . . which is reactionary and not progressive' but a steady and continual evolution from the Eliot who attained maturity in *The Waste Land*, through *Ash Wednesday* even through something so much a *pièce á these* as *The Rock*, through *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Family Reunion*, on through the three poems we have been considering, and further emphasised and clarified by the newly published *Little Gidding*. It would take much space to illustrate this single line of development, but it can be quite clearly followed if Mr. Orwell will take the trouble; and his reward will be to discover, I think, that it is both spiritual and poetic. For the whole of Mr. Eliot's verse is, in Miss Raine's words on *East Coker*, 'written by a poet who believes man is a spiritual being'. The poetry and the spirituality are one.

Yours sincerely,

HERMAN PESCHMANN.

DEAR SIR,—The October-November number of Poetry (London) is memorable to me for the beauty of Henry Moore's cover and the first printing of W. S. Graham's poems. If the *Third Journey* is one of a series I hope you will publish the others, and if there are any more sonnets as lovely as the *Fourth Sonnet*, I hope you will publish those too. I find him an exciting writer for a number of reasons:

(1) His poems differ from other young poets in that they are all 'looking upward'; gladness, sympathy, love, tolerance and a zeal for life characterise each one; not a grumble, not a judgement among them. He shouts for joy, yet there is no escapism. I find them connected with life; when I read them they are of *my* life and I see it as a richer and more glorious affair.

(2) Although his work is certainly 'Contemporary,' yet he seems to have drawn the best from the whole range of English lyrical poetry rather from one modern group.

(3) The seeming freedom of expression is actually confined within the most formal of rhythmic boundaries (a sort of primal integrity). Perhaps he comes closest to Dylan Thomas in his choice of language, though never in mood.

(4) I like the created grammar, poetry coming from the words and not the idea.

In the *Third Journey* I think he tells us a lot about his feeling towards his makings of poetry. This voyage that he takes into the heart of poetry with himself as a 'Scholar of Seas.'

'My muse is a ship Exalted and rigged on the spray that your world's present. . . .' But I may be wrong. This poem may have meant something quite different to the writer. I don't think it matters. Each line instantly *means* something to me, but on re-reading, the meaning often changes and deepens. What a mistake one would make were one to struggle for the 'right meaning' as 'intended by the author,' for I believe that this author's intention was to send to the readers this gift of the essence of poetry, so rich and so fluid that in every reader it may set into a different mould.

I hope you will publish more.

Yours truly,

JULIAN ORDE.

DEAR SIR,—I was deeply interested in the two 'points of view' on the poetry of T. S. Eliot, which appeared in your October-November, 1942, issue.

I am merely a member of the poetry reading public, an 'ordinary reader.' I know that other ordinary readers have experienced, as I have, both delight and bewilderment in Mr. Eliot's poetry. His 'abbreviation of method' causes the bewilderment. Mr. Eliot says, 'The justification of such abbreviation of method is that the sequence of images coincides and concentrates into one intense impression.'

My leisure is limited and, until recently, was very largely spent in acquiring the training and knowledge which enable me to earn my living. This will be true of most of Mr. Eliot's larger public. My reading has been fairly wide, but excluding my own subject, must be as a drop in the ocean of Mr. Eliot's reading. So, for me, the images do not coincide because some of them fail to appear and the impression is less intense than it should be.

The deficiency is mine, not Mr. Eliot's; but I cannot think that he writes only for a narrowing circle of those sufficiently erudite. He writes for me, too, and I feel the loss of these images as a reader who struggles with a language only partially understood. Professor Pottle has explained that to understand *Ash Wednesday* we must bring to its reading 'an intimate knowledge of the portion of the prophet Joel . . . a great deal more from the Bible and the service books of the Church . . .' and 'recognise . . . that his first line is a literal translation of the first line of a ballata by Guido Calvalcanti and that his fourth line is taken from Shakespeare's twenty-ninth sonnet,' and so on. And Professor Pottle admits that for this he is 'deeply indebted' to an article by Mr. Leonard Unger.

Samuel Johnson wrote: 'By the common sense of readers, uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtlety and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claims to poetical honours.' In relation to music and poetry Aristotle wrote: 'The banqueter will judge the feast better than the cook.' I do not attempt to analyse either of these quotations in relation to the poetry of T. S. Eliot. I am deeply grateful for the lines that go straight home without the aid of even a dictionary: the lines which produce the reaction which led A. E. Houseman to say that poetry seemed to him to be more physical than intellectual—'my skin bristles . . . a shiver down the spine . . . a constriction of the throat and a precipitation of water to the eyes . . .'. Would that Mr. Eliot could be infected with the Shavian habit of writing prefaces! Then might the ordinary reader see the whole 'sequence of images' and realise the 'one intense impression.'

Is the ordinary reader asking too much of Mr. Eliot, or is Mr. Eliot asking too much of the ordinary reader? Must I always wait for the commentator, who follows the poet so tardily?

Yours faithfully,

S. B. HEYS.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

ANONYMOUS: The poems are neither George Barker's nor the editor's. We should like to see more of this poet's work, under his own name.

MAURICE CARPENTER: Contributed to PL 2. His letter printed in the correspondence columns of this number will explain his approach to poetry.

RICHARD CHURCH: Mr. Church's contribution to this number is an extract from his long poem-sequence *Twentieth Century Psalter* which Dent's are issuing.

HERBERT CORBY: Is one of our interesting poetic reporters in the R.A.F. Contributed to *Poetry in Wartime* (Faber.)

KEITH DOUGLAS: Is with the Tank Corps in the Middle East.

WREY GARDINER: Is the director of Grey Walls Press and edits *Poetry Quarterly*.

ALUN LEWIS: Sends us his contribution from India; one book of poems, *Raiders Dawn* (Allen & Unwin).

KEIDRYCH RHYS: Edits *Wales*; *The Van Pool and Other Poems* (Routledge).

LOUIS MACNEICE: *Poems*, *The Earth Compels*, *Autumn Journal*, *Plant and Phantom*, all from Faber.

NICHOLAS MOORE: Author of several books of poems. PL will publish a selection of his work in the Autumn.

BORIS PASTERNAK: One of the Russian Symbolists; at the moment is engaged on translating Shakespeare's plays into Russian; he has just completed *Hamlet*.

F. T. PRINCE: One of the Faber poets, is at present a Captain in the Army.

FRANCIS SCARFE: Author of *Auden and After* is Army Education Officer in the Faroe Islands.

HENRY MILLER: Is half-way through an enormous second volume of *Tropic of Capricorn*; *The Ghetto* is an extract from it. This book and *The Colossus of Maroussi*, so different in style, were concurrent in their progress.

50 sets of the three lithographs by Graham Sutherland in this issue signed by the artist are available at 10/6 a set. Orders should be sent to POETRY (LONDON).

PL No. 10 will be a NEW POETS NO. Contributions from poets who have not previously appeared in PL or whose work has never before been published.

PL No. 12 will be a SONNET NUMBER.

PL No. 13 will be a BOOK NUMBER devoted to POEMS from the SERVICES. Contributions From Home and Overseas.