

TRACE

A CHRONICLE OF LIVING LITERATURE

More on Poetry and Drama
by Lawrence Lipton

No. 13

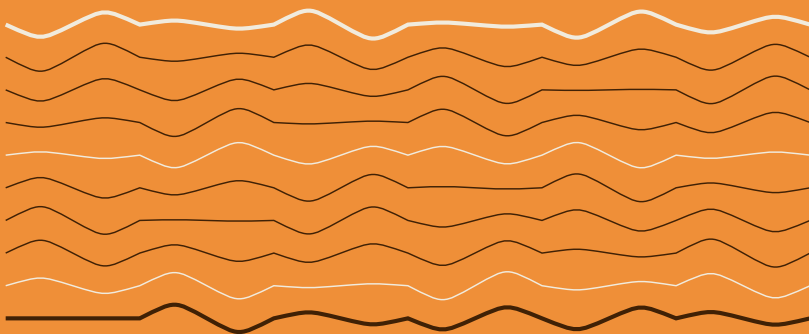
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JAMES BOYER MAY / EDITOR



TRACE

No. 13

Living Literature

Essays & Articles · Poetry · Reviews

August 1955

Edited by James Boyer May

A READING EDITION

ABOUT THIS EDITION

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

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

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TOWARDS PRINT

by the Editor of Trace

The effects of a comprehensive provision of funds for independent small poetry and literary magazines would be farther-reaching than most would on first thought imagine. This would accomplish a good deal more than just ensuring regular appearances of worthwhile periodicals (among which are almost the only media for experimental writings) and mere pay for their contributors. And it's rather astonishing, in the U.S.A. particularly, how little has been done along these lines; for in this country are the large foundations ostensibly in continual search of ways to use money in the development of culture.

To date, help has been given but a tiny percentage of such endeavours, mostly those under school auspices. This has been on isolated determinations of merit, and not from consideration of the elements which certainly should bring aid to most such magazines which have been able to achieve minimum readerships (selective conditions should be very liberal).

In the first place, if undertaken without policy restrictions, invaluable support would be lent the preservation of those long-sung, but less promulgated, ideals of a hoped free democratic society. No need to point that freedom of speech (expressions contra the majority) becomes a minor corrective where, despite technical freedom of press, negligible media of independent publication endure.

Nor does this mean that money should be given political or sectarian publications — just that it then would go to many essentially literary publications which, in choosing material, do not reject what may comprise unorthodox speculations regarding social reform and hoped

advancement. In other words, some of which may from time to time print theoretical material which does not at the given juncture lie within the majority (or even 'loyal opposition') aura of respectability.

In the widespread U.S.A., the impossibility of a cultural centre for personal meetings amongst active creative artists (as London serves England and Paris, France) has been enlarged upon often. But the role of little magazines in providing meeting places in print for hundreds of talented people who otherwise would be in ignorance of one another, may not be appreciated. In truth, this has proven an international service for which little magazines may be thanked, as may be affirmed by glancing over the contents tables of dozens of these published where one would anticipate regionalism — to discover contributors from all quarters of the globe. Each of these little magazines provides means then of mutual influences amongst at least certain far-spread writers.

Next, there's the maybe equally important — and considerably discussed — matter of devising a method of finding out and sustaining those deserving creative members of society, only too many of who presently exist on substandard incomes or sacrifice their energies to routine activities to gain livelihoods. Well — here you have one, allowing judges (the many editors) of virtually every colour of artistic persuasion to assist in disseminating aid to all conceivable varieties of such persons. As things now are, far from being able to pay contributors, numerous publishers barely keep their magazines going. . . . It's assumed — the subject having been written upon frequently — there's no call to introduce evidence that a majority of today's recognised 'greats' were assisted by early little-mag appearances.

Returning to the first prior topic, the counter-influences of these magazines to what have commonly come to be described as fascist tendencies in society will of course be

implemented by sustaining them and enabling them to enlarge readerships. And while some few magazines may possibly be quite intolerant (themselves), all are working toward some change/s and tend generally toward international viewpoints. The original definition of fascism is an advocacy of selfish nationalistic policies and bureaucratic maintenance of an economic and social status quo. So that, while little-mag editors simply are pronounced individualists of wider or narrower literary purposes, they're important constituents of a free society. In scores upon scores of probable instances, writings never may reach any readers whatever, without some such sustenance for their only likely outlets. And contemplating these in general terms of counters to uniformity— aids to numerous different types of creative individuals—the social results would be worth many times the actual count of dollars donated. No more economical way of helping keep liberty secure could be devised; for, in such magazines are found the best independent expressions of contemporary letters—virtually all other periodicals being either specialised or then restricted by the need to cater to the same mass audiences which their advertizements address. Difference, and as such, is intentionally pruned from popular periodicals . . . and comprising factors such as the very language, where never must be used the deviating unfamiliar phrase. And meantime, and in every activity, differentiation continues tantamount to continuing life (and by scientific definition also).

Proceeding to questions involving practicability—the first might be how to determine which magazines are deserving of help. But nearly any magazine of literary intention which survives through a third issue (statistically, the crucial one in these endeavours) is entitled to help proportionate to its obvious success (viz., its paid circulation). Formal applications in the usual manner could be required;

however, the 'sponsors' or references would in many cases have to be less insisted upon (if not waived). Some of these editors lack formal academic qualifications and thus are without the contacts to obtain academic references; and yet, they may—and mainly do—exercise discriminations of a high order in their duties, if not then (at very least) selecting material with some likely-significant purpose. The magazines, as exhibits, might to an extent replace references.

With regard to the foregoing, the big cousins of the small independent magazines, the university quarterlies (several of which now receive foundation grants in addition to at least some school-support) certainly should endorse this idea of help to those periodicals less fortunately situated—and specifically should not withhold approval on any grounds having to do with lack of professorial qualifications in editors.

Older periodicals should be expected to show circulations of not less than several hundred; however, the TRACE confidential survey of 1953 indicated that, with rare exceptions of promotional-minded editors, an actual sale of circa 200 copies by a third issue was about average. In fact, were this higher (and proportionately to whatever is spent for advertisement), few would experience the losses pushing many out of operation at this stage. A low arbitrary requirement as re circulation therefore is recommended.

Another matter would be the specific amount to be made available; but this should be set at a uniform figure on all first applications, with increasing annual appropriations, based on ensuing circulation gains. And some such plan would obviate possible objections that editors might cease struggling to improve and enlarge.

Meantime, this is not to forget that the value of money, as such, never may be fixed by numerical measure, except in specific ratio of so much cash to so much in identical goods.

Thus, beyond the obvious indeterminate nature of benefits to the worthy enterprise, this leads to another angle of support to creative persons (and still leaving out of consideration benefits from support of experimentation essential to cultural vitality). In no other way could so much good be gained by such proportionately small expenditure. Carrying forward another comparison suggested by mention of the inexact value of money except in a given market, should be observed the wide variations in the results from the consumption of the goods money may buy. Precisely as it means literally nothing to refer to printings of words without knowledge of the evocations, it means less than nothing to refer to the feeding of life (including human), unless it is stated whom is being fed to preserve what activities. While surely there is no intention of opposing (far from this) the expenditures of huge sums to alleviate hunger in distant lands, it's hardly conceivable that some have judged plans for aiding creative artists of their own nationalities on per-capita ratebases. Nor does it seem that any could argue against all such projects because of the incontestable fact that a few who may be somewhat undeserving are bound to get shares. The predominately liberal philosophical attitudes of the universities and their rather more fortunate quarterlies should be applied in a concerted effort both on behalf of themselves (many still do not have grants) and all these others, the existences of nearly all of which do help keep literature vigorous.

SOME ITEMS RECEIVED by the Editor

FOR THE LONELIEST OF REASONS, David Kalugin obviously produced the book of that title (VANTAGE PRESS, 120 W. 31st St., New York 1, N.Y., U.S.A., \$2); and this identification and certain self-awareness makes it an honest as well as substantial collection of poems. And the honesty, rather than the methods or any of the numerous considerable achievements of effects, essentially is what gives it value.

Therapeutic to the author, these will likewise prove therapeutic to a percentage of readers who may find help in retaining balance in their unbalancing milieu. Not a great deal more can be asked of any poet. And to point to inapt portions and/or clumsy passages would be unfair, when the whole will be found rewarding by most, and at least some parts should be approved even by stern critics. Admittedly, Kalugin seldom essays higher reaches; most must be judged at the levels at which composed—as free-verse vehicles perhaps of what might otherwise and at an earlier time have turned out clever rhymed commentaries. The book treats old philosophical problems, the loneliness of individual man being one. But pungently examining specific current phenomena, it never becomes abstract. Through lively images, the immemorial isolation of the ever-seeming separate self is depicted, contra existence in a modern city, roaming lost in traffic, or puzzledly sitting before an apartment television. An excellent sense of humour waxes bitter at times, to be sure ; for Kalugin is vitally realistic concerning what is not after all (as may possibly seem at first glimpses) a surface conflict of personality. The fundamental material would make an epic ; except his work is not conceived in epic proportions — it's fragmentary. But this too is appropriate to our times ; and piecemeal may be the only expression possible to a mind so immediately involved.

Kalugin often is angrily confused. And yet, he possesses a saving degree of detachment (at least) sufficient to rescue him from descending to the mad gibberish current amongst poets handling social conflict directly. In an important particular, his very confusion undoubtedly was good — in that it prevented him from writing the sort of 'protest' material spouted tritely from pens of persons less poets than semi-professional exponents of 'isms.'

On the technical side, Kalugin still is in that process of development where he is undertaking different methods, and

by no means always succeeding ; and yet, succeeding often enough that this is not just a striking line here or there, but frequently entire poems. And even his faulty structures are nearly always provocative.

GLEN COFFIELD'S NEW AGE ANTHOLOGY OF POETRY

contains (if in brief selections) an amazingly large percentage of the world's practicing poets, and more representative examples than many a more pretentious collection (\$1 from Box 2386, East Portland Stat., Portland 14, Oreg., U.S.A.). The contents were selected from THE BRIDGE and THE GRUNDTVIG REVIEW, and the book, itself, is an unusual hand-produced job (duplicated, but carefully done on heavy papers). Needless to remark, the work is quite variegated and quality ranges from the possibly-enduring to the semi-trivial. However, Coffield has put together over 120 pieces which somehow combine to produce very entertaining browsing. And representative as it is, almost none falls in the 'difficult' category, but comprises more readable things even of those poets characteristically writing for limited audiences.

Highly readable though this little booklet is (COMPANY OF Two, by Paul Casimir and Derek Parker, DEREK MAGGS, BM/ZDM, London, W.C.1, 2/-), no strong originality is shown and neither of the poets has begun to develop an individual idiom. Although the publisher's foreword states: 'Casimir and Parker do not speak with one voice, nor with monotonously similar voices,' and although — true — the liveliness and richness of their pieces prevent anything resembling monotony, this reader found he could read one and then the other, finding little to distinguish their styles. Both have carefully-plotted musical arrangements, both use frequent classical and literary startingpoints and allusions, both are good competent versifiers in a certain modern manner. Parker manages his contrivances somewhat less obtrudingly than Casimir — in fact, he is the better poet, though younger. And his piece ENCOUNTER provides an exception, one piece which does not cloy just a bit.

Here is a thoughtful man with interesting insights, and one who produces well-tailored verse (Joseph L. Grucci, *TIME OF HAWKS*, \$2.50 from *MAYER PRESS*, 235 Collins Ave., Pittsburgh 6, Pa., U.S.A.) His worthwhile volume also contains some twenty pages of valuable translations from the Spanish — South American, Mexican, and West Indies, with a sizable selection from the Chilean Pablo Neruda.

Grucci's own poetry usually is effective, within its limitations — and not to suggest absence of feeling (for this frequently seems to have been profound), but an inability to relax emotionally. So that nearly all his writing holds a peculiar selfconscious tension. His well-planned structures are almost as if in apology for his rare spontaneities. This reader gained the distinct notion that other freer poems must have predated these writings; for there is no questioning Grucci's sincerity and genuineness, simply that he seems to have gone too far with revisions.

To be more specific—in parts he seems deliberately to have inserted or added the ringing of old familiar phrases which are actually quite unnecessary after the sufficient simplicity of what it can be deduced he first set down. This is quite different from contrivance from the very start, as with superficial poets. He's anything but superficial—but he overworks his verse to where it almost seems such. As with pat ending-tags. And often a line is strong with originality, only to be followed by one which is derivative. Several influences are apparent while, at the core, Grucci has demonstrated that this need not have been and that he might (if he would) speak with his own voice.

This (alleh lulleh cockatoo and other poems by Storm De Hirsch, *BRIGANT PRESS*, 255 E. Houston St., New York City, U.S.A., \$2) is pretty irresponsible stuff, both technically and in underlying thought-structure. What's meant may best be described by quoting the final lines from a piece titled *THE CAVE*: 'Far easier / to fasten mouth / on nipples of the night

/ suck soothing lotus pap / and bar all doors . . . ' Which is exactly what this writer seems to be doing through much of the volume. Here is matter which sounds well on first being read aloud, and might impress many poetry audiences. But it will not stand reexamination. Facility with words and sounds is not enough to make meaningful poetry, not even when handled with considerable originality and peeling often above the echoes of writers past with striking fresh lines. Nor could the exercise of more discipline in the reworking of this material, to reduce said echoes and better focus on the originalities, make fine poetry of this; for not only is the composition careless, but the thinking behind it (if it can be called such) too often is mere drifting of blurred whimsies. The better parts are almost purely descriptive, naturally—that is, those not attempting too much, but held in unity by the direct subject matter. And there's less slackness of contrivance in these, because of course the obvious material makes the obvious handlings all but inevitable, and no confusion of ideas demanding verbal concealment. Nor should be omitted mention of the really clever use of the sort of image shock-treatment found in so much modern writing, poetry and prose—to note that the author's considerable facility with language makes this integral and not 'stuck-on' as with less-accomplished work. The book is worth study for this and other qualities, despite major lacks.

In SATURDAY NIGHT IN THE ACCIDENT WARD by Frank Mundorf (THE AMERICAN PRESS, 489 5th Ave., New York 17, N.Y., U.S.A., \$2.50) we have human interest material depicted at a high journalistic level. Yet, while interestingly, not in fashions comprising many of the qualities of what generally is regarded as poetry. And, in fact, the book is subtitled A Collection of Verse . . . and there is some verse here and there amongst a great many pieces of free lines which do not quite come off as authentic free verse either. In

a liberal sense, the over-all effect of the book is poetical, and for reasons other than technical, such as Mundorf's use of repetition, for instance. One of the reasons is a certain invocatory quality in most these; and another is an intensity and frequent success in imageful condensation. His subjects—death, the favorite—too are poetical. And sadly, still another reason, that in contrast to much lively original expression, there are frequent echoes of poets Mundorf must have admired, not infrequently near-sentimental tritenesses. All of which doesn't mean the book isn't on the whole good—if only for the author's insights of humanity, though he has not (by the manners he has set them down) achieved any verse which deserves to be called excellent.

This is a book of goodish wisdoms and rightly-oblique observations (BOOK OF MOMENTS by Kenneth Burke, HERMES PUBLICATIONS, Los Altos, Calif., U.S.A. \$2.50); however, subtitle, 'poems 1915-54,' is decidedly misleading. For there's simply no poetry in the volume, in which the best five pages are those labelled 'Flowerishes,' typographical hodge-podges both of intense and casual philosophising.

Herein, we also have one musical composition, identified as an 'Imitation Spiritual' — and which label caused this reader to harbour the perhaps-uncharitable thought that the same adjective should be applied to the varied versifications (one in German) comprising a bulk of the pages. And still, in his jacket author's note, Burke has 'regrettably' conceded he is not a 'professional poet.' (And who may be so fortunately identified in this age of no pay for glory?) . . .

Nor should these adverse remarks be interpreted to indicate that BOOK OF MOMENTS is without merit. And surely it has high entertainment value — considerably more than many a more momentous volume (to adopt Burke's trick of playing upon words). Humour isn't lacking — and includes that most proving of types, the self-jibes of Burke at himself, as critic (and in which role he is of course a professional then

— and by the rules governing athletic competition also).

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MORE ON POETRY AND DRAMA

by Lawrence Lipton

Verse in the drama is doomed, Henrik Ibsen said, and 'it is improbable that verse will be employed to any extent worth mentioning in the future.' When he wrote these words, BRAND and PEER GYNT were far behind him, and the prophet of doom had by that time done as much as any man of the Nineteenth Century to make his post-factum prophecy come true. Ibsen came to stand for realism in the theater as Zola stood for realism in the novel. That the real world was not necessarily limited to the visible world was something the literary realist preferred to overlook, although he suspected it, just as the Nineteenth Century scientist preferred to overlook the possibility that a real world, as real as the world of the molecule and the atom, might conceivably exist in the electrical phenomena that he handled every day and which he admittedly could not explain. Clerk-Maxwell's 'demon,' like the ignis fatuus that later turned out to be methane gas, like the laboratory 'ghosts' in the spectrum that we now know to be imperfections in diffraction grating, tended to take on diabolic forms of expression, just as the invisible world, the 'unrealistic' world of the psyche, took Satanic forms in the plays of Wedekind. Eric Bentley remarks, in *THE PLAYWRIGHT AS THINKER*, that 'the distortions and involutions of Wedekind's moral symbols are an early objectification of the same spiritual sickness which later showed itself in surrealism after one fashion, in D. H. Lawrence and Henry Miller, and after a different fashion in Franz Kafka. In all these diverse figures (he goes on to say) there is a deep consciousness of chaos, a longing for the numinous, for that mystic and mysterious part of experience which the modern imagination has so often overlooked.' A spiritual sickness, he might have added, that passed from symptom to neurosis and finally to the psychotic horrors of Berchtesgaden, of Dachau, and, with better intent but with equal horror, to Hiroshima.

For, as Radhakrishnan had said, if we believe absurdities we shall commit atrocities.

It was to save us from such atrocities that poetry was born, as a ritual therapy, within the matrix of the ritual drama. Poetry began as a ritual act, accompanied by music and dance. Primitive man knew a metaphor from an ax-head, make no mistake about that, but in his cosmology he was intelligent—and humble—enough not to make any unbridgeable distinctions between the real and the unreal worlds. He believed with Michael Faraday that ‘nothing is too wonderful to be true.’ When the primitive poets of the ritual drama spoke of water as sacred they meant what I mean when I say that water is wonderful because it is the universal catalyst. Moving yet unmoved, an attribute of God. What he called his gods I call attributes, modes, *res extensa*. For me as for him real-unreal, natural-supernatural is an unthinkable contradiction, since, like life and death, light and darkness, and all the other Opposites, the one cannot exist without the other, and their mutual union, as Carl Jung has pointed out, ‘can only produce a third element which participates in the nature of both’ on ‘another level . . . free from opposites, beyond moral categories.’ On the level of logic and realism it is unthinkable, like growing a black tulip: it wouldn’t be able to absorb sunlight. (In Hell all the flowers are black flowers.) For the poet of the ritual drama, rain was the fructifying semen of the god in coitus with the earth goddess. For me it is something equally wonderful: the hydrologic cycle. Like Goethe (in his maturer years) I ‘go to the mothers’ to redress the balance of the psyche; the quest of the *Mater Gloriosa*, the leitmotiv of Wagner as of Goethe (Faust’s Helen, Wagner’s *Sentü* in *THE FLYING DUTCHMAN*). Having found once more that ‘dark knowledge that we once have known,’ that something lost and longed for—Eric Bentley’s numinous and mysterious part of existence—a sense of wholeness is restored to life as well as to poetry and

drama.

In over-emphasizing the masculine quality of reason we have failed to cultivate the feminine qualities that open the mind's eye to the invisible world. Over-specialisation of reason has given us the tools — and the weapons — of steel, steam, electricity, and atomic power. In smashing the atom we have cut the uncuttable, thus violating Democritus' grammar as well as his theory. We are faced with the mystery of the nucleus at the heart of matter, where, as in the invisible world, we must look for the still center, moving yet unmoved. Between the particle and the wave, between the negative and the positive, falls the Shadow, to paraphrase T. S. Eliot's vapory Christian gnosticism. Gautama Buddha and Albert Einstein meet under the Bodhi tree — or beside the atomic pile.

To find the still center of the psyche we must take our point for a fresh departure at that moment in history when the lesion, the split between reason and imagination, took place. I think this lesion occurred when man imposed upon the bones of the earth* the violence of fire. Echoes of this event are audible in the ritual drama, in narrative form, in the biblical story of Eden, but it is best preserved in the Promethean myths and is still recognisable in the fragments that have survived of the Eleusinian mystery dramas. Prometheus is bound by Zeus for the same reason that the serpent (and with him Adam and Eve) are expelled from Eden by Jahve. Hephaestus says to Prometheus: 'Thou, a god, not fearing the wrath of the gods, hast given to mortal men honor beyond their due.' Zeus removes him from the company of men, to whom he has given the arts of working metals with fire. Says Hephaestus: 'No human voice will reach thee here, nor any form of man be seen.' Again, Persephone (like Eve) is tempted by 'the red fruit' offered her by Pluto in Hades. Hell is matter, just as earthly life is matter; both are the opposite of heaven, the invisible world of

the spirit. In the esoteric doctrine of all religions Hell (Tartarus, Hades, Sheol) was secretly understood as the sojourn of the soul in the world of matter. In Hindu terminology, man bound upon the Wheel. Katabasis was the 'descent into hell,' matter, just as anabasis was equated with rebirth, the ascent in spirit. These myths record the split, the lesion, that marked the emergence of the age of metals and the resultant urbanism which further estranged man from the worship of the Earth Mother and her heavenly counterpart the White Goddess, and threw reason and imagination out of balance.

**Prostitution was punished by death by stoning, because it violated the Earth Mother (the stones were her bones), and bypassed the ritual hierogamy.*

To redress the balance and knit conscious with unconscious once again into an integrated whole (in the sense of Carl Jung's 'individuation') ritual drama provided a form of words, music, and dance designed to remind man of his animal beginnings (hence the animal masks), his kinship with the earth, animate and inanimate, and, on the other hand, his potential god-likeness, symbolized by the more abstract language of word, music, and dance. Ritual rebirth symbolised the healing of the lesion. In Wedekind's plays the animal masks are there, but they are diabolified like Baudelaire's fleurs du mal. 'What do you see in comedies and tragedies? (the realistic drama),' he asks in the prologue to *ERDGEIST*; and answers, 'Domestic animals . . . the true animal, the fine wild animal, that, ladies, you see only at my place.' Like 'K' in Kafka's *THE CASTLE*, he was trying to re-establish contact with 'the Man upstairs,' to use a current tin-pan alley vulgarity. That he mistook Satan for God is only what is to be expected in an age that has dethroned God and set up in his place an inflated humanistic idol, Economic Man, 'crowing on the chopping-block of time.'† To find the pure head-springs of the poetic drama the poets will

have to go for their anthropology to R. R. Marett and Lévy-Bruhl, not to Tylor and Frazer; to Jung, not to Freud, for their psychology; to the poet-prophets and the teachings of the Essene brotherhood, not to the Sadducee 'humanists' and

†See my RAINBOW AT MIDNIGHT, page 55. Recently published by The Golden Quill Press, Francetown, New Hampshire; a Book Club for Poetry selection. the quisling Herods who 'rationalized' the numinous elements of Hebrew religion and collaborated with the Roman weaponsworshippers to bring the Essene-oriented John to the beheading block and Yeshua bar Yoseph to the cross. (See THE SCROLLS FROM THE DEAD SEA, by Edmund Wilson, in THE NEW YORKER, May 14, 1955, and compare Part 3 of RAINBOW AT MIDNIGHT where the scene of The Great Good Place is laid in an Essene-like monastery in the wilderness.) The miseducated literate reader who lives in a universityfurnished mind amid the now rapidly tarnishing gadgets of the New Criticism will find this emphasis upon the romantic tradition offensive to his caustic-antiseptic neo-classical taste. The prophetic rhapsody has no more place in the classroom than it has in the cathedral; it lacks the politely urbane cynicism of the University Wits and the polished, house-broken religiosity of the churches. As they said of Dylan Thomas' first poems, it 'makes a muss.' Yet it is only in a disaffiliated fresh approach to poetry, freed from the 'schools,' and in a dedicated independent poverty,† that the poet of today will find a point of departure for the poetry and poetic drama of the future, Henrik Ibsen notwithstanding. After he had written his last play, WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN, Ibsen wrote to a friend, 'I cannot say yet whether or not I shall write another drama, but if I (do) . . . if I make my appearance again, it would be with new weapons and in new armour.' Are we to see in this wistful remark a hint that he came to agree at the last with Georg Brandes

that in Ibsen, the realist prose dramatist, the world had lost a great poet? Herford thought so, for Ibsen had confessed to him years before that he hoped to make his last work a drama in verse, thus nullifying his own prophecy. If he did not already recognise a turn in the literary weather in the work of his own contemporary, Frank Wedekind, he would, had he

†This subject is the theme of my essay, *THE WORLD BEHIND THE BILLBOARDS*, in a forthcoming issue of *THE LONDON MAGAZINE*. lived a little longer, seen in Yeats, Maeterlinck, Pirandello, and in Strindberg's attempts to recreate high tragedy, the beginnings of a whole change of climate. Perhaps it is just as well that he did not live to see Ibsenism peter out into Pinero and the proliferation of Wedekind's 'domestic animals' in the domestic dramas of the Broadway theater. Strindberg's influence and the Abbey Theater (with an assist from Sophocles) sparked the later plays of Eugene O'Neill, but it was not until the full impact of Jung and the new anthropology made itself felt in literary circles that symbolism in poetry began to displace an imagism that had already been abandoned as sterile picture-writing, without passion or significant content.

The new symbolism stems not from the diabolism that the French symbolists stumbled into in their revolt against bourgeois realism (and which drove most of them to the bottle and the needle and some of them to the madhouse), but from the symbolism of the primitive ritual drama, the Greek mystery plays, and the Hebrew prophets (whose method Moulton called 'emblemism') and its modern expressions in Kafka, Kierkegaard, Jung, Martin Buber, and Eric Gutkind. In poetry it has already achieved sufficient strength and stature to challenge neoclassicism and the New Criticism. In drama it is as yet only a newly-awakened voice, feebly raised against the commercialised realistic stage of one half of the world and the officially politicised stage of the

other half — and a pity on both their houses, for the truth is not in them, nor any hope of salvation, or even bare survival. In the poisonous smoke of the mushroom cloud it is only a voice crying in the wilderness, as the voice of Essenism was in the Dead Sea wilderness — but how terrible is a wilderness and no voice crying!

EDITORS WRITE

Fred Cogswell: 'The greatest problem which the editors of THE FIDDLEHEAD confront at the moment is the vast number of competently executed publishable verse which they receive, in relation to the space available for printing. If we were to wait for only outstanding poems, we would have difficulty meeting our schedule; consequently, we have to accept verse which is sincere and of good workmanship. In doing so, I am convinced that we often reject every bit as good poetry as we accept. The same problem exists for other magazines—as in trying to pick out the best ten poems in little magazines in the past year, I found four or five outstanding poems; then had to select the rest from a mass of good verse of about equal merit. Poetry today, like education, has reacted to the general democracy of the west in that the general level of execution has so raised that it is difficult—more difficult than at any time in the past—to detect outstanding work.'

Anonymous (but asking response to SATIRE, 11636 E. Bryant Rd., El Monte, Calif., U.S.A.): 'There is today in the U.S. no magazine, little, slick, literary, or otherwise devoted to literature of satire and humour. We have behind us a great tradition of written humour, but what do we have ahead? Is this an unfilled need? I am a poverty-stricken elephant salesman who has a couple of ideas on the subject, and would like to hear from interested editors, publishers, printers, writers, and subscribers. A lock of my hair free with each reply.'

David Kalugin (who may become an editor) writes under title: OF COURSE YOU SEE WHAT I MEAN, MAN . . .

'When the yawn no longer hides what I mean, the feeling Spring gets really bored with the syntaxed properties of the perfect English even as a consequence threatens my good,

good goodness . . . and look here now . . . and how do you suppose any good prose earns a reputation if not by following the grammared hardheads (exclamation pointed, you bet, Sir!) to the letter of success.'

ADDENDA

Although deficient co-operation to date makes it seem that the Small Presses Directory for October TRACE will be far from comprehensive, the material which has been assembled is extremely interesting and will provide an unique guide to writers and others interested in precise information about such presses. And with this beginning, with an initial index and as much direct data as can be obtained, those presses which have not co-operated should do so and readers supply additional addresses, so that the 1956 Directory may then provide a large percentage of the data for this little-known field.

As to the doubled price for October TRACE (which still, however, will be supplied all paid subscribers at the old rate)—experience of four years has been that Directory issues are not only a great deal of work, but actually are then sold at a loss; for hundreds have bought Directory issues only, at the low single-copy price, which was at the minimum which might have been maintained had everyone purchased on a five-copy basis. After just about paying for itself for three years, TRACE dropped into the red, and subscriptions now must be increased and Directory issues priced higher than others.

An effort to stimulate interest in French-Canadian poets (most hitherto unavailable in English) has been announced by Gael Turnbull. Mimeographed pamphlets, with the French texts and English translations on opposite facing pages, have been prepared in attractive coloured formats. These may be had without charge (though contributions are solicited, and to cover postage) from Raymond Souster, 28 Mayfield Ave., Toronto 3, Ont., Can. Selections ready are by Saint-Denys-Garneau, Roland Giguère, and Paul-Marie Lapointe.

Reminder of the past in U.S.A. little-mag history is supplied by an announcement of a clearance of old issues by the Carl-Ed Art Supply Co., 475 6th Ave., New York City, with such names from the Nineties as THE OPTIMIST, THE CORNHILL BOOKLET, QUARTIER LATIN, ALKAHEST, THE LOTUS, CHAPTERS; and many others.

Details are as yet lacking here in re a new periodical for serious writers, CREATIVE WRITER, 318 E. 12th, Kansas City 6, Mo., U.S.A. Editor is Phillip Marsden and first issue is scheduled for summer.

New books of probable interest include: THE LESS DECEIVED, Poems by Philip Larkin (from George Hartley, 253 Hull Rd., Hessle, East Yorks, Engl., 6/-, \$2 postfree, U.S.A.) ; THE FLIGHT OF MR. SUN by John Barkley Hart and TIDES AND OTHER POEMS by E. E. Walters (both from EREWHON PRESS, 1600 W. Broadway, Louisville 3, Ky., U.S.A., \$1.75 paperbound and \$3.50 cloth) ; SELECTED POEMS, 1949-55 by James Boyer May (INFERNO PRESS, Box 5030, San Francisco, Calif., U.S.A., \$2) ; RAINBOW AT MIDNIGHT by Lawrence Lipton (GOLDEN QUILL PRESS, Francetown, N.H., U.S.A., \$2) ; THE PRECISIONS by Cid Corman (A Vagrom Chapbook, SPARROW PRESS, 111-13 38th Ave., Corona 68, N.Y., U.S.A.) ; FIRE AND THE WHEEL by Eleanor Clinton (GREENWICH BOOK PUBLISHERS, Inc., 489 5th Ave., New York, N.Y., U.S.A., \$2.50) . . . A truly amazing list of projected and published works, all duplicated, yet tastefully prepared, appears from Glen Coffield, Box 2386, E. Portland Stat., Portland 14, Oreg., U.S.A.

The annual sonnet contest of the Poets' Club of Chicago remains open until the 15th of September. Address Miss Isabelle Gillespie Young, 848 Sunnyside Ave., Chicago 40, Ill., U.S.A., for details.

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