

country. He examines the two types of settlement in Maryland—the rural groups in the western counties which were assimilated relatively early; and the urban groups in and around Baltimore, which, for a variety of factors, walled themselves in in a kind of Little Germany. *COMMON GROUND* readers will remember some of the Baltimore material published in its Spring 1947 issue.

One-Way Ticket is Langston Hughes' latest volume of verse (illustrated by Jacob Lawrence. Knopf. \$2.75), dealing with racial themes not included in last year's volume, *Fields of Wonder*. Here is the familiar lyric simplicity, the humor, the tenderness characteristic of Mr. Hughes' work; here, too, are poems of social protest, short and sharp and stinging:

"I do not need my freedom when I'm
dead,
I cannot live on tomorrow's bread."

The Poetry of the Negro: 1746-1949, edited by Arna Bontemps and Langston Hughes (Doubleday. \$5), is an extremely

useful and interesting anthology. While the great bulk of the poems are by Negroes in the United States, the volume ranges beyond this country to reflect the "Negro's experience in the Western world" and therefore includes a section by poets of the Caribbean countries. A third section is made up of poems by non-Negroes. No folk material is included; and it is interesting to observe (though it should occasion no comment) how completely poetry by American Negroes reflects the same traditional literary influences as American poetry in general.

Race and Region, a bibliography compiled by Edgar T. Thompson and Alma Macy Thompson (University of North Carolina Press. \$5), lists and describes about 2,000 book and periodical titles on the subject of race generally and Negro-white relations in America in particular. Titles are classified in various categories: The Negro in the American Economy, Race Conflict, Institutions, The Negro in Literature and in the Arts, etc.

M. M. A.

CURRENT FICTION

REVIEWS BY EDDIE SHIMANO

A rarity in these days of meretricious book-promotion schemes, a book that deservedly merits an award, is Bucklin Moon's *Without Magnolias* (Doubleday. \$3), winner of the George Washington Carver Award for outstanding writing by or about American Negroes. The novel was completed under a Julius Rosenwald Fellowship. Its difference from other novels about Negroes is that Mr. Moon writes about people; this is not a "cause" polemic thinly disguised as a novel by the use of stereotype-caricatures who flit lifelessly through its pages. Here you meet a group of people, each of whom is an individual, and live with them

and feel with them through the tortuous paths they travel in their groping for understanding of their position as Negroes in a small Florida town. Because the story is told without anger, the author's compassion becomes ours, and especially is this so in the case of the president of the college for Negroes, whom some of us would call an Uncle Tom. Whether an Uncle Tom is a despicable character by volition or an unwitting (and sometimes unwilling) victim of Jim Crow is a question which is not easily answered. *Without Magnolias* with its deep feeling with, and understanding of, people shows how difficult it is.

Perhaps the following two books should be read together, for they are both about "passing," a problem which may concern only a few of us directly but should interest many of us. Without doubt, it is a pregnant question for many Negroes, who, through acceptance as "white," could escape the indignities suffered by their fellows of darker hue. In *Alien Land* by Willard Savoy (Dutton. \$3) and *Southbound* by Barbara Anderson (Farrar, Straus. \$3), two different backgrounds are posed—and two diametrically opposed answers reached. The explanation for this may lie in the different racial backgrounds of the authors, but certainly both are honest books—Mr. Savoy writing with subjective anger and Mrs. Anderson with objective sympathy.

Two other books which might also be paired are Robert Mende's *Spit and the Stars* (Rinehart. \$3.50) and David Dortort's *The Post of Honor* (Whittlesey. \$3), for they are both about Brooklyn (and, like most novels about Brooklyn, about the underprivileged). The latter is notable for its gripping description of action—violence on a picket line, attempted arson of a synagogue—but it falters badly in a morass of non sequiturs in the area of abstract ideas and motivation. The former, on the other hand, while lacking in the quality of the writing, totals up better although it is the oft-done story of the growth of a child to manhood.

For a complete change of pace, read *Yokohama, California* by Toshio Mori (Caxton. \$3), a Nisei whose "Lil' Yokohama," included in the book, first appeared in *COMMON GROUND*. First scheduled for publication in 1941, only two or three new stories have been added to the original collection. It seems a pity that publication was postponed, for in 1942 the book would have had a greater

significance and importance in many ways. Today the stories seem dated though they should have been in the book, for the Japanese Americans cannot be thought of without thoughts of the evacuation. It will be worth waiting to read Mr. Mori's novel on that strange experience, for he spent three years in that half-prison, half-free, life, working as project historian.

A novel of the North Carolina mountains is *Little Squire Jim* by Robert K. Marshall (Duell, Sloan and Pearce. \$2.75), himself a twelfth-generation native of the mountains bordering Virginia. The story has a basis in reality and is developed with imagination and fancy, so that it has all the elements of a pleasant folk tale.

Another book in which reality and fantasy mix is *The Freebooters* by Robert Wernick (Scribner's. \$3), but this is a bitter story about three soldiers in the war, attached to a unit whose ostensible duties are not its actual one. What happens to one of the three, John Black, a Negro, makes angry reading.

Robert, the American soldier in *The Girl on the Via Flaminia* by Alfred Hayes (Harper. \$2.50), is any American soldier fed up with the cheating, drinking, whoring, gambling life of the "conquistadori" in Italy. He just wants a girl to come home to, and he finds Lisa. But Lisa hates the conquerors, and in this compassionate story the author seems to say that we can never buy acceptance with chocolate bars. The problem of what we are to use to supplement our largesse of material goods to people of other lands may perhaps be the same in our relations with Americans of minority groups.

The Evening and the Morning by Virginia Sorenson (Harcourt, Brace. \$3) is about a Mormon daughter of Scotch-Irish immigrants and her small rebellion against the strictness of a Mormon com-

munity. *The Spear Penny* by Dorothy Davis Willette (Coward-McCann. \$3), set in Wales and America of the middle 1800s, has the same insufferable heroine of popular "historical" best-sellers. Audie Murphy's *To Hell and Back* (Holt. \$3), while not fiction, reads like a novel, and is memorable for warm-hearted description of the many men of different backgrounds who fought alongside the baby-faced most-decorated GI of the war. Using

the actual records of a murder trial, Frances Gaither's *Double Muscadine* (Macmillan. \$3.50) sheds a great deal of light on the mores and the attitudes of people in a slave society, our South before the Civil War. *For Us the Living* by Haakon Chevalier (Knopf. \$3.50) is a broad novel about the social struggles in California, not excluding any of the minorities, from the time of the depression up to Pearl Harbor.

BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

REVIEWS BY M. MARGARET ANDERSON

In *Son of the Valley* (Morrow. \$2.50. 12-16), John R. Tunis tells the story of the Heiskells, displaced from the Tennessee farm their ancestors had settled in colonial times because it was in an area to be flooded by TVA. True, TVA settled them on another farm; but hostility to the government and the discouraging and back-breaking labor of farming the new eroded acres, no better than those they had left, came near to disintegrating the family. After his father left home under the strain, 16-year-old Johnny had to shoulder the family responsibility. How he was won over gradually to better farming practices by the county farm agent, how conservation measures and co-operation brought back fertility to the land and happiness and the beginning of prosperity to the Heiskells is Mr. Tunis' story. The theme of co-operation runs throughout. When Johnny had his first glimpse of the stupendous TVA dam before they were moved off their farm, he saw lettered on the hillside above the swarming men and machines at work: "Teamwork builds dams." "Co-operation brings results." At the end of the story, when he is looking proudly at his acres, he is thinking, "We did it. . . . We all

did it together. The people did it, not the government; the folks here on this hillside. Hold on now, said Johnny to himself. Isn't the people the same thing as the government in this country?"

Hit and Run, by Duane Decker (M. S. Mill and William Morrow. \$2.50. Older boys), is a fast-moving baseball yarn. Chip Fiske, whose half-pint size counts against him with the fans who like them big and hard-hitting, and Kennie Willard, a Negro, are newcomers to the Big League Blue Sox. Good player though he is, Chip is an individualist who has not learned control under wisecracks and heckling, who has not learned to subordinate his personal "chip" to the good of the team. How Kennie, the first Negro in the League, wields the Blue Sox into a winning unit once he is given his chance to play (under insults and heckling far tougher than Chip had endured) is an eye opener to Chip and his teammates.

The Rocky Summer by Lee Kingman (Houghton Mifflin. \$2.50. 8-12) concerns a family of Finnish Americans in the granite industry of Cape Ann. The family is warmly presented, and the children's scrapes and excitements are