

Contemporary
One-Act Plays
 From Nine Countries

Edited by PERCIVAL WILDE

13 plays never before published in America—7 plays never previously published—by 16 playwrights who have won international recognition.

You may derive an idea of the calibre of the plays in this book from the fact that it marks the first appearance between book covers of

PAUL GREEN'S

Hymn to the Rising Sun

This is a chain-gang play, openly propagandist. The author would like to have it read, or witnessed, by Southern legislators. It is, however, too artistically conceived to preach a moral. The language is remarkable. The whole play is the truth—struck out with a nine-pound hammer.

After witnessing the premiere of "Hymn to the Rising Sun", Robert Garland wrote of it: "It lingers like a nightmare in the mind. An unsparing flashlight of a Southern chain gang, it is a terrifying picture. A hand-picked audience received the offering with revolutionary rapture. Nor could you blame it!"

Although many professors will welcome this book for class use it is designed primarily for the adult reading public. The plays are wholly unexpurgated, for it is the Editor's conviction that a play which has literary distinction has the right to be placed in the hands of the mature reader without first undergoing a process of emasculation.

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The  PHOENIX NEST

CONTEMPORARY POETRY: BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THIS "Nest" really should be written from Phoenix, Arizona, I suppose—to be true to its departmental title; but, as a matter of fact, it is being written in Dallas, Texas. That very good poet, Edward Doro, is presumably holding down Phoenix, for I had a letter from him from that place toward the end of March, which reached me on tour. He says he'll be back in New York in May—but I'll probably be back myself by the time you are reading this.

You see, I've been on a lecturing—or, rather, a talking and reading trip—beginning with Minneapolis and to end with William Allen White's old home town, Emporia, Kansas. I've done nine engagements now and have four more to go. Of books of poems for "home work," I've had along Siegfried Sassoon's "Vigils," Archibald MacLeish's "Public Speech," James Daly's "One Season Shattered," and Jean Starr Untermeyer's "Winged Child." I'll report on them next time.

Meanwhile, a little agenda. What Edward Doro wrote me about was his receiving a Guggenheim fellowship, for which I am very glad. And I was glad to see by the newspapers that the two young radical Kenneths—Fearing and Patchen—had also received like awards. They are young poets worth encouraging.

About March 20th, Town & Country (The Stuyvesant Company, 572 Madison Avenue, New York) requested me, through its managing editor, J. Bryan, III, to inform favored contributors to the Saturday Review that it was at present on the lookout for short verse. The standard is going to be high, so not everybody can crash the gate.

I wish to say to Lefa Morse Eddy that I'll read her latest book of poems in her trilogy, entitled "Sarah," when I get back, and also read the copy of the *Lantern* she says she has sent me, containing her "Eve." I wish to thank Celya Cendow for sending to me, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, her little book on life, love, and politics, "Off the Record." For the matter of that I wish to thank Tulsa, Oklahoma, for being so Oklahoman, for giving me a fine Spring morning one Saturday, and for having such an attractive bookstore. More than that I wish to thank it for one of the pleasantest Friday evenings I have known—with a charming hostess, an eminent architect and his most intelligent wife, and a golf-player also of eminence. I had forgot all about Washington Irving's "Captain Bonneville," till I was shown the shaft to him in Tulsa, with quotations on it from "A Tour on the Prairies," and I had not realized that the city hardly antedates the time of the Renaissance in American poetry back in 1913. It seems to me a most engaging city now—all that marred my brief Oklahoman stay was missing seeing my old friend-by-correspondence, Welborn Hope, the very good poet who lives at Ada. My first sight of the oil-derricks outside Oklahoma City was a thrill. The plenitude of fresh air

and blue sky of that part of the West was intoxicating.

If this seems to slight what had gone before, I certainly do not mean it so. In Minneapolis, in St. Louis, in Evanston, in Des Moines, the ladies of the Women's Clubs (it was the Contemporary Club in St. Louis—both women and men) were extremely kind and agreeable—and in Winona (Minnesota), Fayetteville (Arkansas), and Denton (Texas), the institutions of learning accorded me treatment that would have been merited only by a far more eminent figure. In fact—to put it briefly—I've had a "swell" time all along the line.

Of course I saw the adventurous Sage of the Ozarks, Charles J. Finger, in Fayetteville, and passed some delightful hours at Gayeta Lodge. His youngest daughter is an unusually talented artist. She is one of his five children. She explained to me that of course there had had to be five! He is a man of such wealth of experience and so independent a point of view that an hour of talk with him is exhilarating.

I wish I could thank here by name all those who made so salubrious my visit to various cities. I must forego that pleasure. In Chicago, by great good luck, I crossed the hawse of old Quercus, that sea-going oaktree, and discovered—to my pleasant surprise—that I had not forgotten how to step a stately minuet, after certain cups had been clinked to absent—and present—friends.

My most recent experience, in Denton, still delights me. The honors go to a small cat who entered the auditorium sedately, passed along the front row, ascended to the stage, entered from the wings, took a bow, moved down to get a closer view of me, descended from the stage, and made a graceful and dignified exit, after having "stolen the show." In her honor I then read a small poem dedicated to Bast, the cat-headed goddess of Egypt. I shall long cherish the memory of that Texan kitten!

At this point the Baker Hotel has got me to sign their guest-book. I was overcome to note that the latest signature just written in it was that of Nazimova. She is here, of course, in Dallas, with her company in "Ghosts." I shall never forget the performance last Christmas night in New York!

P. S. Since writing the above I have finished my tour with Wacahachie, Texas; Fort Worth; and Emporia, Kansas. Most pleasant are my memories of all those places. I saw some fine horse-racing at Arlington Downs and was most kindly entertained by Mrs. William Allen White in Emporia—to say nothing of the hospitality of Miss Elizabeth Miller and her brother in Fort Worth, and other kind friends. In Emporia I saw Brock Pemberton welcomed royally by his home town and witnessed a very good performance of "Personal Appearance." Now no more for today!

The European and Africa

THE RAPE OF AFRICA. By Lamar Middleton. New York: Random House. 1936. \$3.

Reviewed by JULIAN W. FEISS

MR. MIDDLETON has here written a most entertaining story of the "back stage" diplomacy which resulted in the division of Africa into modern European colonies. Unfortunately, his book is so entertaining that it ceases to be history and since he writes with a definite bias, it cannot be considered an impartial presentation. Furthermore, it contains numerous errors of fact as well as errors in name.

We read of the late King Leopold's sly hypocrisy regarding the Congo Free State, the conspiracies of English "Empire Builders," and the colossal comedy of the Congress at Berlin in 1885 and later the Brussels Conference of 1890—conferences at which European diplomats traded African territories in the manner of a schoolboy bartering for his postage stamp collection. We see England, France, Germany, Portugal, Belgium, and Italy squabbling over prostrate Africa. Henry M. Stanley appears as a fool and dupe of crowned heads. Cecil Rhodes becomes a grasping imperialist and Dr. Jamison his tool. The explorer De Brazza who se-

cured the French Congo for the tricolor appears as a mere claim-staker. As we read through the list of explorers and colonizers we conclude that the story of the partition of Africa is a terrible indictment of the white races; a story of plunder, enslavement, and slaughter.

One might have considerable sympathy with this viewpoint if it were entirely true. Unfortunately Mr. Middleton has chosen to present only one side of the story, and no student of African affairs can accept his thesis without modifications, even though recognizing that evils existed in the past and still exist today. Not every move made by Europeans in Africa was wrong or unethical. After all there were, and still are, many Robert Moffets, David Livingstones, George Grenfells, and François Coillards, men who devoted their lives to the physical and mental betterment of their Negro charges.

Prior to the arrival of the European, Africa festered in the backwash of time and civilization. Unlike the islands of the South Seas, it was never an earthly paradise where man lived in harmony with his surroundings and at peace with his neighbors. Slave raiding, intertribal warfare, disease, famine, and all the horrors of black superstition, including ordeal by

fire and poison, infanticide and murder by witch-doctors, were everyday features of African life. These evils would still sweep the continent were it not for the check placed upon the native by European colonial administrations, missionaries, and medical men.

Granted that mistakes were made, that some missionaries were tactless and ignorant, granted that native rulers were seduced by rum and trinkets, granted that in far too many cases natives were shot down with Maxim guns and finally—greatest crime of all—African levies were used to fight Europe's battles of 1914-1918; in spite of all this the native today is infinitely more secure and enjoys far more liberty than he did prior to the arrival of the white man. It is perfectly true that the native working in the mines of Northern Rhodesia may receive in pay only about sixteen shillings per month, but Mr. Middleton forgets that prior to 1900 this same native would be working as a slave to King Lewanika for eight months of the year.

"The Rape of Africa" reflects disillusionment following the aftermath of World War and Mr. Middleton, being a newspaper man, appears very cynical as regards all motives underlying the partition of Africa. However a half century ago many Europeans and Americans were convinced that they had much to offer "Darkest Africa" and even today this spirit has not entirely died.

JAMAICA INN

A wild, swift romance of the Cornish moors, a tapestry of high adventure—for readers of every age and every taste, for readers who remember Donn Byrne and Stevenson and Jeffery Farnol's *The Broad Highway*. As sheer entertainment we recommend it without qualification. Just out. *Second large edition* \$2.50.

by Daphne du Maurier

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN