

sized publications are to preserve the little magazine tradition. Forty years ago new experimental poets like Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, Eliot and Pound were finding an outlet for their work in *Poetry* and other publications. Ernest Hemingway made his first appearance in a short-lived periodical called *The Double Dealer*. Such little magazines made it possible for these then obscure artists to get their work published, even if popular acclaim was distinguished chiefly by its absence.

The editor of the new pocket magazine has an open field and a reading public that now numbers in the hundreds of thousands. He is unhindered by advertising, an old bugaboo of magazine publishing, as witnessed by

The New Yorker, where, as Cyril Connolly has observed, really disturbing literature cannot live alongside the perfume and cosmetic ads. In spite of my rather harsh criticism, I would say that on the whole the new magazines are off to an auspicious start. Some pieces of astonishing banality have gotten by, a few gorillas have wandered splay-foot through the grasses, but experimentation implies occasional failure. Nor is it always possible to distinguish between new writers of talent and integrity and the skilful literary poseur. It can certainly be said that, compared to our slick commercial magazines, the new venture has so far been a remarkable testimony to the vitality of contemporary American literature.

She then batted out a batch of statistics: Each of the first four volumes of "New World Writing" had had an average printing of about 150,000. #1 had had a second run—25,000. After its appearance in April 1952 about 200 manuscripts, mostly fiction and poetry, began coming in. Much of it had been passed along by agents, but writers weren't at all bashful about sending in their own work themselves. As for payment, "New World Writing" computes its checks on a basis of two-and-a-half cents a word on a printing of 100,000. Additional payment is made for everything over that number.

"New World Writing's" aspirations turned out to be pretty much shared by "discovery." Vance Bourjaily, editor of "discovery No. 2" (he and John W. Aldridge launched "discovery" last February, but Aldridge later dropped out), said it was his paperback's goal to fulfill at last the terms of the American writer's idea of a magazine: large audience, fair pay, and the freedom to write as he pleased. No. 1, he reported, had a printing of 150,000; it appeared early last year. It sold, as they say, like hot cakes; six weeks later a second run of 50,000 was scattered around the country. Mail sacks began piling up outside his door. "Poetry, stories, articles, everything!" he recalled. "We even got a piece called 'Is Rigor Mortis Really the End?' Couldn't use it," he muttered.

LIKE any self-respecting editor, Bourjaily had a batch of statistics of his own at his finger-tips. "Discovery No. 2" had a run of 200,000; No. 3, which appeared a few weeks back, also ran in an edition of 200,000. No. 4 is scheduled for next fall. "Discovery" pays three cents a word, with extra royalties thrown in if the sale should go over the 200,000-mark. To date, the biggest check has gone to

William Styron for his "Long March": it came to \$725. The average check, by contrast, is approximately \$120. Poetry is worth fifty cents a line. "discovery," buying for one issue at a time, would like to keep its manuscript costs to \$2,500, but

Bourjaily said he was prepared to spend another \$500. His story of "discovery" was full of applause for Pocket Books, his publisher, for the absolutely free hand it had given him.

At Avon, which has been working hand-in-hand with the *Partisan Review* on its two anthologies ("Modern Writing" and "Stories in the Modern Manner"), there was a good deal of jubilation. Editor-in-Chief Charles R. Byrne divulged that sales were good,

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No Market for Rigor Mortis

Behind the paperbound anthologies with their "little-magazine" contents, which have found a far larger public than any little magazine has ever been able to reach, lies an interesting story of adventurous young editors and publishing houses employing enterprising new methods. Bernard Kalb reports on them in the article below.

By Bernard Kalb

JUST about the most exuberant, exhilarating, and enthusiastic editorial offices around New York City these days are inhabited by Arabel J. Porter, Vance Bourjaily, William Phillips, Philip Rahv, Don M. Wolfe, and Fernando Puma, who, among them, have been pretty much responsible for the appearance of "New World Writing," "discovery," "Modern Writing," "New Voices," "7 Arts," and "Stories in the Modern Manner" from the *Partisan Review*. Much of their conversation is a nice cross-fertilization of optimism and statistics; a global check the other morning disclosed that their anthologies—paperbacks, they sell for thirty-five or fifty cents apiece—are doing splendidly. Further, their mail is getting heavier and heavier; it seems that every time a new collection of new writing turns up on the racks of the country's 100,000 outlets, manuscripts begin falling like confetti on the New American Library, Pocket Books, Permabooks, and Avon, which, among them, have published all these titles.

The other day Mrs. Porter, a chatty,

cheerful woman who described herself as the senior editor of the "New World Writing" project, reminisced about the birth of #1. (There are now four volumes in all, with a fifth due next month.) She began by saying something about the spirit, the purpose, and the goal of her collections, then stopped short when she found herself loosely paraphrasing the preface to #1. Businesslike, she excavated a copy of the book from the manuscripts on her desk and read from the preface itself.

"Ours," she began, "is not a capricious project, but the result of long and earnest urging by American book publishers and book readers ever since 'Penguin New Writing,' edited by John Lehmann, ceased publication in England. The New American Library was once closely identified with 'Penguin New Writing,' and therefore feels qualified, with the blessing of John Lehmann, to re-create, in an American frame of reference, a counterpart of that international publication." She went on to note that one of "New World Writing's" purposes was to provide a kind of showcase for new, genuine, promising, vigorous talent—no more, no less. Moreover, by publishing their works, she added, writers who had never been heard of before would find themselves side by side with writers who had, like Christopher Isherwood, Tennessee Williams, and Rolfe Humphries, all of whom appear in #1. "It's a sort of vicarious literary salon," Mrs. Porter concluded, again immersed in the preface.



The Literary Tumbleweed

From the twenty-odd Western stories issued thus far this year, Seth Agnew picks half a dozen he believes offer entertainment of a superior order.

By Seth M. Agnew

AS A MATTER of fact, back when the American West was new, they frequently did go "that-a-way," with the posse hot after them. They did stand off whooping hordes of Indians; and they did mete out a rough-and-ready justice with flaming Colts. Cattle spread across the grasslands, later to be driven back by the fences of homesteaders and farmers. Cities and towns were born, some to flourish, some to wither into ghosts as suddenly as they once had boomed. The Indians, once rulers of the land, were bullied, cajoled, and tricked into reservations. People starved, people were scalped; people made fortunes, people went broke; there were violence and hardship and courage in the face of them.

The writers of Western fiction are, for the most part, frankly writing stories of adventure and action. And of these commodities they find a rich source in settlement of the West. Increasingly, however, it is their pride to write with authenticity, to create characters and situations which truly reflect the old West. The Western story of today may deal with the chase and with gunplay and with violence, but it is a story well told, against a background carefully researched for detail and accuracy.

The first three months of this year, for example, have produced some twenty-five or thirty new books of Western fiction, and I would draw your attention to some half dozen of them as being good specimens of top-notch Western writing—in fact, as being good specimens of tautly-written adventure fiction no matter what the setting.

The Western town in its mushroom growth was likely to suffer more than its share of growing pains. This was the land where the law of the courts was spread pretty thin, and it was often up to the town to make and enforce whatever law there was. "Midnight Creek," by A. M. Bell (Crowell, \$2.75), tells of the vigilance committee which was formed to bring order to the mining town of Emma in

the Territory of Idaho. A refreshing note in Mr. Bell's story is that the citizenry who form the committee are ordinary townsfolk, farmers, and miners who do what they must, finding the violence with which they must fight violence only slightly less distasteful than the crimes they are suppressing.

Perhaps because the short story is usually concerned more with incident than with fully developed plot, some of the best Western fiction is to be found in this field. Scott Meredith has put together an anthology of eleven Western short stories which have appeared in recent years, "The Bar 3 Roundup of Best Western Stories" (Dutton, \$2.95). Here are represented such master storytellers as Ernest Haycox, Noel Loomis, Dorothy M. Johnson, Jack Schaefer, writing of cavalry, of Indians, of homesteading, of gunfighting. There is no lack of action in these stories; but there is also no lack of the convincing detail which makes the reader feel that "this is how it must have been—this is how it was."

A fine, tough story of cattle and of the men who worked them is Clay Fisher's "The Tall Men" (Houghton, Mifflin: clothbound, \$2.50, and Ballantine: paperbound, 35¢). This is a tale of an epic drive of 3,000 head of Texas cattle north and across the plains and mountains to Montana. The time: the 1860's; the obstacles: Indians, rustlers, weather, the land itself. Mr. Fisher's tall men are the Texan cowhands who took the herd through; in his telling they are both tall and alive.

Nearly everyone has heard the bal-

lad of "the dirty little coward who shot Mr. Howard." Frank Gruber's "The Bitter Sage" (Rinehart, \$2.50) imagines one Wes Tancred similarly tagged by a popular ballad for his killing of Sam Older, bandit and murderer, late of Quantrill's Guerillas. In point of fact, Tancred killed Older in a fair fight. He tries vainly to escape his reputation until at last he stands his ground in lawless Sage City, and with some fast and violent action restores the town and the name of Tancred to respectability. In Tancred's story Mr. Gruber has a novel twist which he has worked out with skill.

AFTER the Civil War many men, both of the North and of the South, turned their eyes to the new land of adventure and opportunity in the West. "Ride the Dark Hills," by W. Edmunds Claussen (Dodd, Mead, \$2.50), tells of a New Orleans gambler who followed the cards and his luck to a mountain ranch in Arizona. To hold his newly-won land, he must fight off both miners and rival cattlemen. Here, perhaps, is more standard fare in Western fiction; but here, too, there is a feeling of the lusty, brawling frontier where a man had often to fight to hold his own.

"Tough Hand," by Wayne D. Overholser (Macmillan, \$2.75), is a hard-hitting novel of range-grabbing and of the smoldering feuds of the big cattle owners. More than is usual in Western writing, Mr. Overholser has given his characters emotions and passions, fear, greed, cowardice. With thorough, sometimes brutal, efficiency Jim Sullivan cleans up the town of Bakeoven and the Rampart Valley. The rights and wrongs of the struggle are balanced by half-rights and half-wrongs.

These are brief notes; there are other stories, some of them perhaps just as good. But if you're looking for a good tale of action and adventure, try one of these.



—From "Hear the Train Blow."

"Prelude to Pay Day"—"violence only slightly less distasteful."