

facetiousness so characteristic of him when he was most serious, 'Oh, I know I'm no bargain. At best I can only offer you,' he said lightly, 'a second-hand life.'" Winifred thinks: "All wrong, Harry. All wrong, my dear friend. Mine is the second-hand life—used, shopworn, tarnished—maybe even, according to some people's lights, rotten. But yours—yours is a life lived at second-hand—life seen through a plate-glass window: safe, untouched, bloodless, bloodless." It is better, she believes, to have lived recklessly, impulsively or even compulsively, than not to have lived at all.

As I began by suggesting, comparisons may be odious, but they can be useful. Not long ago (SR, June 17) I expressed some misgivings about Philip Roth's study of an American female, *When She Was Good*. His Lucy Nelson, I felt, was a dull girl, and her life, as set forth by him, had little of the significance he attributed to it. Winifred Grainger, like most of the other sinful women in literature, is at least interesting. (As Fanny Brice said in her burlesque of the death scene in *Camille*, "I've been a wicked, wicked woman, Armand—but awful good company.") As for her significance, Jackson wisely does not fret himself about that. Even the small-town hypocrisy that her candor exposes is something he describes without indignation. As he makes clear, Winifred can accept herself for what she is, and he believes that the reader should do no less. She may not go down in literary history as one of the great sinners, but she is worth reading about—and thinking about, too.

—GRANVILLE HICKS.

FRASER YOUNG LITERARY CRYPT No. 1253

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 1253 will be found in the next issue.

MLQAK GFM LP FY FHXP-
FLIP FY FM JMSMDSZPA HJPYZ.

—WSM BJLLFXA

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 1252
America had often been discovered before, but it had always been hushed up.

—OSCAR WILDE.

LETTERS TO THE Book Review Editor



Direct Marketing

DAVID DEMPSEY'S ARTICLE "You Too Can Buy By Mail" [SR, July 15] is a shimmering gem, of sorts, and should be read by every thoughtful person. Such a perfect blend of ignorance and arrogance is rarely seen these days, at least beyond the sophomore year.

For example, he might have questioned the candor (or the competence) of his publishing friend who said, "It's our unpopular titles that we peddle by mail. Our successful books go through the stores." In a recent, Fortieth Anniversary Report of the Book-of-the-Month Club, Harry Scherman notes, conservatively I think, that of the 200 million books the club has sold in its history, more than 180 million would never have been sold at all had their sale depended upon conventional bookstore distribution methods! (And by the way, those 200 million books, sold entirely by direct mail and mail-order advertising, include among them thirty-seven Pulitzer Prize-winners and fifteen Nobel Prize-winners, not to mention lesser awards, accolades and commendations.)

Americans are not, and have never been, buyers of books from bookstores in large numbers, except for the occasional big best-seller. Indeed, the entire industry has been concerned for more than forty years with the relative inefficiency of bookstores as a means of marketing books in this country. So-called "quality" paperbacks seemed to help, for a time at least, but the plain truth is that direct mail and mail-order sales of books, of all kinds, has helped more than any other single factor to promote an interest in books and reading in this country and, as a by-product, to bolster frequently sagging bookstore sales. . . .

Direct marketing is today the fastest growing sales and advertising medium in the country. Why? Because it recognizes a consumer need and the mobile, expanding nature of our society—and offers genuine value per dollar spent. It is not perfect, it has its heroes and its villains like any other business. But, whatever its faults and virtues, it is certainly deserving of more than the glib, intellectually pretentious smart aleck treatment accorded it by Mr. Dempsey in his article.

ANTHONY ARAU.

New York, N.Y.

Too Tolerant?

I AM AMAZED at your show of toleration, nay, your naïveté, in publishing the letter of a certain Fotis Lampropoulos from Athens, Greece [SR, July 22]. You ought to know that no letter inimical to, or even faintly critical of, the present régime could go out of Greece, or any letter in defense of Andreas Papandreu, for that matter. It should have been obvious to you that Fotis

Lampropoulos in writing his letter to you was offering a service to the junta ruling Greece now. Well, he was lucky enough to achieve his aim, thanks to your ostentatious broadmindedness. . . .

Robert J. Clements should tell Mr. F. L. that Andreas Papandreu had opposed and fought Fascism before the other Greeks did, when he opposed and fought the Greek brand of Fascism of General Metaxas and suffered imprisonment and beating when still in his teens and had to leave Greece.

PAUL NORD.

New York, N.Y.

Swedish Sex Code

HURRAH FOR THE "GROWN-UPS" who are finally growing up! *Sex and Society in Sweden* [SR, July 29] may not have the perfect answers to the problems dealing with sex but the Swedes at least have started thinking and doing something. Today's young people have just plain outgrown the antiquated moral ideals. They realize that the double standard is utterly ridiculous and that matters of this sort should be dealt with on a personal basis since no "code" can be right for all. There is no longer any reason, or so they think, to worry about pregnancy and venereal diseases.

These ideas of theirs are good, but they can never be put to work until sex education becomes, as it is in Sweden, compulsory from the first grade on up. People will then know what they are doing, why they are doing it, and what the consequences might be. Keep working, Sweden!

JUDITH SPANGENBERG.

Philadelphia, Pa.

Ex-Mrs.

PROFESSOR BILL READ'S REVIEW of *Selected Letters of Dylan Thomas* [SR, July 22] is just fine, but please tell him that Pamela Hansford Johnson is correctly known as Lady Snow, not as Mrs. SNOW.

HORACE S. PECK.

New York, N.Y.

Wrong

I WAS WRONG IN STATING [SR, July 22] that the Wilson Follett edition of *The Works of Stephen Crane* is out of print. It has been reissued by Russell & Russell, twelve volumes in six, at \$75.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

Grafton, N.Y.

ORVILLE PRESCOTT refers to Thaddeus Stevens [SR, July 8] as "the radical Senator of the Reconstruction period." Stevens was never a Senator but one of the leaders in the House of Representatives.

BERNARD SINSHEIMER.

Boulogne, France

Endowing the Arts

LATE this year Farrar, Straus & Giroux will publish the first of a yearly anthology of material selected from American literary and "little" magazines. Ordinarily, this would not be cause for comment—anthologies come and go and, as publishing ventures, suffer a high incidence of remaindering. But in this instance something new has been added: government money.

The National Council for the Arts (a subsidiary of the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities) has appropriated \$55,000 for the project, \$45,000 of which will be divided among the writers represented and the magazines in which their work originally appeared. Another \$10,000 has been set aside to reimburse the publisher if the work loses money. To our knowledge, this is the first time that a book of general interest has been openly subsidized by the taxpayer. The government has long provided subvention to the scholar in the form of fellowships and grants, which at least indirectly benefits publishers. But the novelist, poet, and short-story writer have been expected to scrounge elsewhere. Now the Arts Council will be doing what the big foundations—Ford and Guggenheim, for example—have long done with private money.

Paying the writer to be creative, so to speak, puts the government squarely on the side of letters, although one hopes not too squarely. The value of the Council's program of assistance to writers will be measured, in part at least, by the freedom that goes with it. We are reassured in this respect to discover that both Allen Ginsberg and LeRoi Jones are represented in the anthology. Out of 600 magazines examined by editor George Plimpton and a staff of nine "judges"—the tonnage almost buckled the floor of Plimpton's apartment—thirty-one survived the winnowing, to produce forty-nine selections. There are few surprises, and this may simply confirm what an outsider has always suspected: the best noncommercial creative writing in this country appears in a handful of university-affiliated quarterlies and an even smaller number of underground "little" magazines.

If nothing else, the Council will bring some of these latter publications above-ground, rewarding them in the bargain. Each contributor gets up to \$1,000, and the magazine in which his work appeared as much as \$500 for the reprint rights. (This is close to overkill; the go-

ing rate for "permissions" in the commercial anthology field is about \$50.) The publisher, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, will rotate with six other firms in future years, and all will be indemnified against loss.

But what really encourages publishers is the knowledge that the government is at last committing itself to massive support of the literary arts, and that there is more money where this came from—more, no doubt, than there is first-rate talent to give it to. The Council's funding for the current year is about \$600,000 of which \$220,000 has been earmarked for individual grants to writers. Miss Carolyn Kizer, the director of literary programs, and herself a poet of no mean order, has declared that the Council's purpose is to reach writers who are not already part of the "Eastern Seaboard Literary Grants and Gravy Society," and to this end all of the twenty-two poets, novelists, and biographers who have been cut in for \$10,000 each were invited to apply for assistance. (Others were also called, but not chosen.) In all but three cases the money will be used to complete a work in progress. The exceptions are travel grants. Jeremy Larner traveled to Hollywood; Harry H. Pearson, Jr., traveled down the Buffalo River in Arkansas, and Mona Van Duyn traveled to New Orleans.

Five of the recipients are poets. Did someone remark, "Isn't a poet with \$10,000 in his jeans a contradiction in terms?" In these times, no. The grants are intended to free a writer from having to hold down a regular job. "The money is given to buy time," Miss Kizer says. It will supplement advance royalties on books that are already under contract, and best of all it can be tax-free.

An enterprise more directly related to publishing is a \$90,000 project to help the small, independent press do what the big publisher doesn't do—that is, print fine books. For "small" read "one-man operation," and for "independent" read "impoverished." There are some forty to forty-five such presses in this country, and to qualify for a Council

grant they must have a nonprofit, tax-exempt status—not difficult when one considers that poetry comprises much of their output. If you are going to lose money anyway, you might as well be experimental. Of the eleven presses selected for grants, all "have established notable records in advancing the cause of the unknown, obscure or difficult writer . . . at great personal sacrifice and unselfish devotion to American letters," in the words of a staff memorandum.

If this sounds like a citation for bravery in wartime, it is not far wrong. Quality book design and fine printing are neglected arts in the commercial publishing world; the Council's decision to help these publishers remain small and independent but a little less broke is to be commended.

ON ANOTHER front, the Council has turned over a matching grant of \$70,000 to the American Academy of Poets, to smuggle poets into high schools for readings. This program, which met with staggering success last year when it was begun on a pilot basis in New York City, Detroit, and Pittsburgh, will now move on to Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and a number of smaller cities in the Southwest. Its purpose is to expose English teachers and their students to live poets, and poets to a live, if captive, audience—children "whose creative expression has largely been muffled, and whose problems of English communication are severe . . ." Already some of the participating cities are angling for repeat performances, and an old myth has been laid to rest. Modern poetry does make sense when you hear it, and it can be enjoyed. The Academy has decided that you don't blow the poet out of doors; you blow him into the classroom with travel money and a per diem.

The Council's current program has been rounded out with grants for "distinguished service" to five well-known older writers; a matching grant of \$50,000 to the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines, and a wild-card project in which Negro and white poets, traveling in pairs like the Shore Patrol, visit Southern colleges to arouse student interest in American literature.

One can, of course, take the Council's money or leave it; most writers prefer to take it. Yet the awards are not beyond criticism. My own opinion is that a disproportionate amount of the budget has gone to poetry, that Literature is in danger of being spelled with a capital L, that there is no provision for the writer who has not already made something of a name for himself, and that a few of the grantees are being helped simply out of charity. But what matters is that a fire has been lit. Publishers and the public will ultimately benefit.

—DAVID DEMPSEY.

