

Poetry in Paperback

BY JACK HIRSCHMAN

• The most important, i.e., necessary, volume of poetry to appear in America by an American poet during the past year is Robert Creeley's "For Love" (Scribner's). The beauty of it lies in the fact that, whatever the kultur-mongering, the poetry speaks through.

The volume, despite its paperback edition, is rare, as is all poetry that passes beyond mere competency and/or intelligence into human vision. Creeley is one of the very few truly excellent poets writing in this country and, in his mid-30s, is hardly finished.

Of the world of translation. I would recommend Pablo Neruda's "Residence on Earth." There was a great critical to-do when Ben Bellitt's translations of that, and other poems of Neruda's, appeared this year, but accurate eyes very quickly pointed out that Bellitt's translations were in fact inept and shoddy.

The most genuine set of translations of this Chilean poet, who is perhaps the most global and prodigious poet now living, were done by an American poet, Clayton Eshleman, published in Japan and available (\$1.50) through City Lights Books, Columbus & Broadway, San Francisco.

City Lights, moreover, in its Pocket Poets Series, has brought out selected poems of Malcolm Lowry, the author of "Under the Volcano" and other prose masterworks—an important addition to the Lowry canon, apart from their worth as language in the hands and in the mouth.

And focusing now on local, if disparate, writings: there is the first volume of Gene Frumkin, formerly editor of Coastlines magazine, called "The Hawk and the Lizard" (Allan Swallow: 75 cents). Lush in imagery, this very early work of a poet slowly but surely maturing, already shows the signs, as in the musical "Variations on the Taste of Dried Apricots": An ear/heard on the lips:/the sound/is soft and round.

And then there is the third book of Charles Bukowski, "It Catches My Heart in Its Hands," out this month from the Loujon Press (618 Rue Ursulines, New Orleans 16: \$2). Bukowski writes in a loose-lined, high-noon drawl that is insistently autobiographical, now comical, now angry and, at times, coming to marvelous shape out in the dead empty streets of Los Angeles.

Finally, notice should be given of the re-emergence of Press Baza, an avant-garde paperback house at 3803 Sunset Blvd. Coordinated by printer Bob Alexander and writer John Fies, Press Baza, dormant since 1956, comes to life again on July 25 with the publication of "Black Pilgrimage" by Cameron (\$4.50), a long poem—with graphic work by the poet—done in the tradition of fine-press paperback design. Baza will focus essentially on the works of poets not yet widely known, such as Zack Walsh and Paolo Lionni, as well as on broadsides and pamphlets significant of the times.

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