

### *Quiet Versifiers*

HERVEY ALLEN'S impressive ballad "The Blindman" has been reprinted in a special limited edition (Yale). It remains one of the most striking of our war poems—terrifying in its simple beauty, in its strange significance.

Over against this rugged book, Harold Vinal's "Voyage" (Vinal) comes as a mellow contrast. I had not realized until I read this collection of Mr. Vinal's lyrics what a felicitous versifier he is. His tradition is that of the Greeks, he has a fine ear for delicate rhythms, and his sense of beauty is constant. I am going to quote one sonnet:

#### SEA WOMEN

Women there are who love the sea like men  
Though they are closed in houses day by  
day:

They want to take a vessel down a bay;  
They want to go back to the sea again.  
And though they spend their lives in a dull  
town,

Wearing their days out with the same  
routine,

Their eyes are hungry for a Barquentine  
A vessel or a slow tide going down.

Only the cries of children prick their ears,  
The noise of wagons passing up a street;  
Never the lap of water under piers,  
Never the moan of gulls or the wind's beat.  
So they live out their lives behind a door,  
Wanting to take to sea and leave the shore.

Katherine Mansfield's poems are not great poems; but they are the fine record of the softer side of a fine personality, and as such they will be read by many who hold dear the memory of this extraordinary, gifted woman. A genre picture like "Night-Scented Stock" shows the Katherine Mansfield of the stories and sketches, while the "Child Verses" have an unusual combination of humor and naïve fantasy. "A Few Rules for Beginners" is surely most poignant:

Babies must not eat the coal  
And they must not make grimaces,  
Nor in party dresses roll  
And must never black their faces.

They must learn that pointing's rude,  
They must sit quite still at table,  
And must always eat the food  
Put before them—if they're able.

If they fall, they must not cry,  
Though it's known how painful this is;  
No—there's always Mother by  
Who will comfort them with kisses.