

THERE is a quality in the poetry of Robert Roe that either appeals mightily or leaves the reader in vague puzzlement. I am inclined to think that "Here You Have Me!" (Doran) is an important book. I am inclined to think that Robert Roe and Hervey Allen are the two most important of the younger poets. In "Marines" and in "A Sailor's Notebook" Mr. Roe reproduces with startling beauty the crude dreaming quality of a sailor's imagining. In this section of his book he is reminiscent of Whitman, yet with a vigor and a breadth of imagery that is entirely his own. It is the poetry of ego. It is essentially male; but it is grandiose in conception and execution. There are moments that remind one of the calm strength of Biblical rhythm. For example, "Medallion":

I love the noble and dark
Brown face of God
Who sits composed in his poise
Uttering words like mountains
Pouring phrases like rivers
When, blown by the winds of my soul
I cling like a gnat
In his bristling beard.

He wears the sky on his hair
For a clout
And the sea on his neck
For a scarf
With the loose ends lifting,
Relapsing.

The vigor of life, the joy of love, the tenderness of friendship are in these extraordinary poems. I commend them to you, knowing perfectly well that

many of you will consider them strange and even impossible; but knowing that many others of you will recognize their quality of magnificence.

Surely a quieter book is "Sonnets of the Cross" by Thomas S. Jones, Jr. (London: Society of SS. Peter & Paul). These are sonnets of a variety so fine and so rare that here, too, only the occasional person will recognize it. Reverence is a great gift. Simplicity of phrase which borders on perfection is another. Religious inspiration is still another—and many of these sonnets have them all, and are memorable. The poet's images are quiet; almost, I suppose, trite; yet not trite, because they belong in the mood. I want to quote one poem,

not the best, but one which sings with a rare feeling — "Clonard":

By lost Clonard the river meads still hold
Forgotten dreams, white memories pure
as dew,
Of fragrant days when scholars wandered
through
The marshy grass, and hearts had not grown
old;
Beneath her purple hills a saint once told
A starry tale, a story strange and new
Brought from the dawn-lands — and all
Eiré drew
Around his moat to hear the words of gold.
There stands no cross, or tower, or ancient
wall
Mellow with simple peace men used to
know,
And from the fields no courtly town has
sprung:
Only along green banks the blackbirds call,
Just as they did a thousand years ago
In morning meadows when the world
was young.

—J. F.