

hyperbolic gale," "History camped here awhile," "Sensitive, frail, memento-mori trees"); I see I have noted 14 or 15 of his poems for one good reason or another. Yes, looking through the book again, I think he could have ditched most of his religious verse. But read "Quail" and "Kingfisher" and "Absolom to Samson" for a taste of his quality. Or this short, bare, traditional statement called "Mortal Love":

*How frail is mortal love  
With nought to oppose it:  
The ghost of a word or a whim  
Quite overthrows it.  
But see, when sorrow and pain  
Stand up to prove it,  
Not they with their batteries  
Nor death, can move it.*

If you can do that sort of thing without being sentimental, you have at least something of what it takes. Or is it too simple, too traditional? I don't think so.

I UNDERSTAND that Mr. Baxter is a very young man, and a poetry-lover. Indeed he seems to have made a meal of English poetry, and speaks with all the assurance of a young Keats. Very often he gets away with it. He has an astonishing maturity—astonishing maturity that is as a writer of verse; his technique is quite unusual; he can do the second-hand literary tapestry and unicorn stuff with success; he can do other exercises that are brilliant and beautiful ("Eagle," "Death of a Swan"); he is brave enough to use the second person singular ("Dost see?"); he brings off his internal rhymes nicely. But he has the defects of his qualities. His mind roams all over the place, and finding a stimulus everywhere, tends so to overcrowd his images that sometimes he becomes incoherent. He tends to have favourite images—clouds (baroque clouds, uncontentplative clouds, rhetorical clouds), Beauty, Man, Spirit, the Southern Alps avalanches, tigers. I think he'll have to boil hard and scrape the scum off his jam. But it promises, so far as I can see, to be good jam. Time will show. This also shows (Mr. Baxter shoots a rabbit):

*I see the rifle raised,  
I see the jewel of sun  
That over the muzzle blazed  
Move slowly up the gun. . . .  
There the scum has gone.*

MR. GLOVER. I have a great respect for Mr. Glover, for more than one reason, and his selection of ten years' verse increases it. I am also delighted to find that Mr. Glover, whom I have always rather feared as a singularly tough and hard-boiled guy, can write the most dreadful doggerel and not recognise it as such. I refer to his 12 lines entitled "Threnody." Curious to find that (p. 12) cheek by jowl with his "Captain Sinclair" (p. 13); it just proves that even the hard-boiled guys have hearts. Well, you can now see Mr. Glover's development laid out plain, from the days when he mopped up Auden and Day Lewis and went in for left-wing moralising; to the last four poems in this book, which are poems, and passionate with a good and controlled passion. Not that I want to run down the left-wing moralising. It was among the best of its kind that we got in the thirties, and it stands up pretty well to the passage of a decade. I shall be interested to see where Mr. Glover goes from here. He has tried most of the tricks, done the usual exercises, gone all

proletarian, spoken with a public voice, been witty and moderately profane, used his conceits with discretion, been descriptive, denunciatory, and ironical. Thank God, he has never left us in any doubt of his meaning, even if once or twice he has been all too obvious; thank God, he has generally been adult. And now, again, where will he go next. I'd rather like him to write his autobiography—in his mature verse. Sometimes I have thought his mind a fundamentally prose one—a first-rate prose one, a very enviable mind indeed. But try "Sailor's Leave," and see if you think so. I forbear quoting from Mr. Glover. Even if you haven't read him before, you can safely plunge in without feeling the water with your toe.

MR. OST'S *Three Essays on Czech Poets* has a very nice cover. As we know nothing about Czech poets in this country these outline accounts of Jaroslav Vrchlicky, F. X. Salda and Peter Bezruc have their interest—the interest of the subject matter. Beyond that I cannot conscientiously go. The English language is a difficult one to write, even for those born to it, and Mr. Ost, or the P.P.S., his publishers, would have been wise to have got someone to knock his prose into shape before it was printed. I'm sorry.

WELL, one has persevered. One has travelled. One has come out on the other side. Perhaps one can now feel less blasted.

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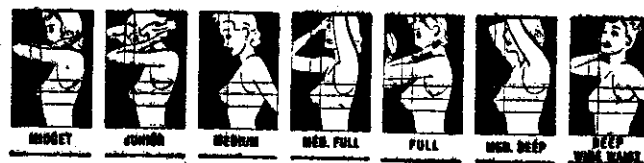
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