

Welsh Prodigy



WHEN Dylan Thomas (above) died in New York last November at 39, critics on both sides of the Atlantic mourned the passing of "the finest young poet writing in the English language." Four New Zealand poets, two of whom knew Thomas personally, have spoken briefly of their memories and opinions of him in a recorded programme to be heard from 4YC at 7.30 p.m. on Monday, January 25. Denis Glover describes a meeting with him in London during the war; M. K. Joseph surveys his work in poetry and prose; Allen Curnow discusses the man and his work; and James K. Baxter analyses his influence on contemporary poetry.

His amazing command over language was matched by his magnificent ability as a reader of poetry, says Allen Curnow. "There is no other voice, no other reader, to compare with him at his best." He remembers him as a man who would describe himself at one moment as "a twopenny-halfpenny poet," and later refer to his talent as "a God-given gift." James K. Baxter links his name with those of Yeats and Eliot as "poets of the same unmistakable stature." Denis Glover tells how he met Thomas in bomb-battered London, in a Soho pub which was soon afterwards reduced to rubble. Thomas displayed, he says, a Welsh willingness to make conversation on any subject except himself. He had an air of weariness with the literary life of London which he was involved in, but he also had "the poet's eye and the authentic tongue." M. K. Joseph gives some interesting biographical details about Thomas, and describes the development of his poetry from his first volume *18 Poems*, published when he was 19.

Dylan Thomas will be heard later from other YC stations.

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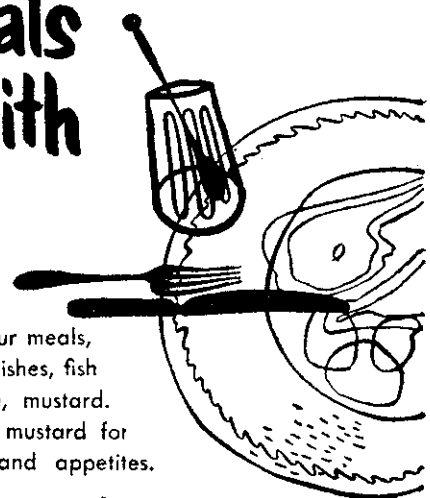
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