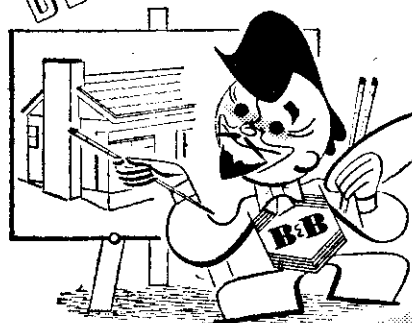


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## RADIO REVIEW

# Without the Sting

THE first talk by Robert Allender in a new 1YC series *Land Of Our Living* promised well for a fresh and lively appraisal of aspects of New Zealand life, free from the clichés of the travelogue, and salted with agreeable wit. Mr. Allender, who shares 1YA's fine *Film Review* session with Wynne Colgan, often presents these reviews in slightly too acid a tone which, at first hearing, anyhow, makes them sound more thoroughly destructive than in fact they are. But, while the same pungency of phrase and sharpness of observation were to be found in his description of a laboriously slow journey on the Main Trunk line, his tone was mellow, and the humour more genial. I suppose one may dislike fourth-rate country hotels as much as fourth-rate films, but regard the one with a tolerance impossible to extend to the other. At all events, Mr. Allender's shrewd and entertaining word-pictures of the Main Trunk few through-travellers ever see was delightfully urbane and pointed with a wit too seldom exercised by New Zealanders at the expense of their own institutions and "facilities."

## Self-Portrait

PORTRAIT OF A NOTABLE NEW ZEALANDER — NGAIO MARSH, scheduled for 1YA's *Feminine Viewpoint* recently, sounded pretty formidable. I imagined the usual hagiographical solemnity—where and when our heroine was born, her early mentors, "influences," struggles to break into the literary world, her first success, triumphant career—and all the familiar rest of it. But, to my pleasure, Miss Marsh herself was allowed to draw her own portrait, and a thoroughly delightful job she made of it. The pertinent questions put to her elicited a flood of information about her

methods of writing detective novels, her love for the theatre, how she came to be bitten again by the stage-bug, and much else of a personal nature, all, as one would expect of her, crisp, assured and animated. Here was more of the true flavour of a personality than any indirect or more formal method could possibly have given. I was especially interested to hear Miss Marsh say that she now never read other detective-stories lest she found that her new ideas had been anticipated. Having noticed how her ideas have sometimes been used by others, I imagine that not every such writer is quite so scrupulous — or so strong-willed.

—J.C.R.

## On the Doorstep

ONE cannot expect to find a pattern behind our literary programmes as a whole—programme officers must to some extent, like listeners, take what comes. Even so, 2YC's programme *Fifteen at the Fair* seemed more of a founding on the doorstep than usual. I picked it up because I like much of Browning and it sounded gay. Unwrapped, it consisted of three parts—a scarcely optimistic introduction which went out of its way to apologise for the work and actually mentioned that Stopford Brooke had thought it not worth the poet's time, and the Prologue and Epilogue, read in a businesslike manner by Philip Smithells. Piqued by my lack of response I reached for my Browning (*Poetical Works*, not avowedly complete but not labelled *Selected*) in search of the poem itself, but it wasn't there. Actually you wouldn't mind so much being left with the baby. But to be fobbed off with something that's only a bundle!

## Dramatic Criticism

BOOK SHOP and the fortnightly *Arts Review* last Friday set me thinking about the relative responsibilities of reviewers. That interesting and easy discussion between Messrs. Patience and Barry Martin on the current Architectural Centre's exhibition, for example. The critics were enthusiastic; had they been critical, the exhibition was at any rate still there to speak for itself. The

## POEM AT THE BUS DEPOT

HERE at the depot where bus-engines grumble,  
shaking the glass of timetables, and we wait,  
out of our depth in latesummer waves of heat;  
even here where the moments melt between us  
until it will be time to go,  
I catch one cringing breath of Autumn  
stirring like a mouse in gutters of thirsty dust,  
and know that here is the first snapped strand  
in a heat-haze fabric woven of burning suns,  
first seed of a blight that will clatter leaves  
over dismal pavements,  
leave windows streaming as the Autumn bus departs.

Here at the depot where I wade in tides of love,  
feeling the warm minutes melting behind your eyes,  
the moments pinned on smiles;  
even here where my words are a fabric of hope,  
I catch one falling glance  
like the shadow of a single cloud on sunlit hills,  
and know that here the first thread breaks  
within the Summer mind,  
that pavements of hope find dismal ends with time,  
streaming to the eyes of a later season's rain  
as your bus departs.

What kills is this knowledge of change,  
the measure of loss in timetabled, nervous hours,  
and the geometrical shadows of an ordered day.

—C. K. Stead