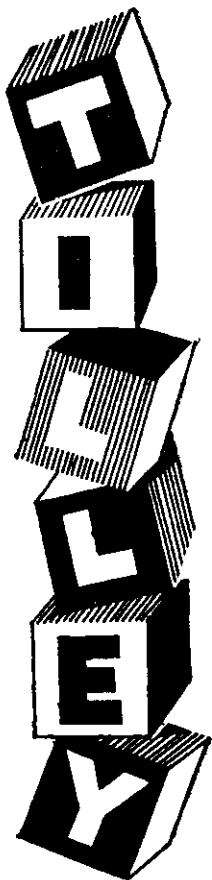


it's as simple as



- • • for the Triumph we feel in producing
- • • for the Interest that's ever increasing
- • • for the Leisure with Tilley when ironing
- • • for the Light from our lamps ever shining
- • • for the Ease of instructions for using
- • • for YOU it's the lamp for your choosing

It's child's play to do a grown-up job
with a Tilley Lamp, Radiator or Iron.

BURN ORDINARY HOUSEHOLD KEROSENE
TILLEY REGD. **LAMPS**

AVAILABLE AT ALL THE BEST STORES

Sole N.Z. Agents: JOHN BUCHANAN & SONS LTD., WELLINGTON, C.I

Rub in
Rub out
PAIN

BALMOSA
For Lumbago, Sciatica, Sprains and
Rheumatism in 3 easy steps.



1. Bathe the part with warm water and dry thoroughly.



FROM ALL CHEMISTS



3. Cover with wool or flannel. This prolongs the effect of Balmosa's soothing warmth.

IODISED BALMOSA

Distributed by **MUIR & NEIL PTY. LTD., AUCKLAND.**

M/3B1

BOOK:

Poetry in New Zealand

NEW ZEALAND POETRY YEARBOOK,
1953, edited by Louis Johnson; A. H. &
A. W. Reed, Wellington, 10 6.

(Reviewed by J. C. Reid)

IN his introduction to this third *Poetry Yearbook*, Louis Johnson defines one of its chief aims as "to stimulate and encourage activity" especially among new writers who "are daring to be themselves" and are moving "in a useful direction from the formalism" of their elders.

It might be argued that New Zealand poets need encouragement less than more vigorous criticism. On the evidence of this volume containing some 46 poems by 24 new poets and 52 by 17 established ones, I find it hard to see in what direction, if any, the first group is moving, and how far formalism has, in fact, been rejected. There are several "Imagist" poems (Fleur Adcock, Jocelyn Henrici, Margaret Pool); some "Georgian" pieces (Barbara Dent, Ngaire Hogan, Bruce Mason), as well as one or two, such as Robert Chapman and Robert Thompson, who, despite "clever" imagery, are almost "Spasmodics" in their imprecise feeling and what Hubert Witheford in his discerning criticism of James K. Baxter calls "lack of definition."

At the same time, some newer poets show up reasonably well, especially, I think, Henry Brennan, Geoff Fuller, Colin Newbury, John Pascoe and C. K. Stead while the "established" poets offer singularly uneven batches. Such longer poems as Baxter's "The Sirens," Brasch's "Letter," Johnson's "A Boy in Winter," Smithyman's "Visions by Mather's Farm," both in their control and richness of feeling rather emphasise the thinness of their or others' briefer pieces. However, I welcomed the less self-conscious tone of W. Hart-Smith's Paul-Bunyanish trio, Basil Dowling's wry "The Early Days" and two pieces by M. K. Joseph.

Where the faults of the newer poets appear to be desiccation of feeling and portentous moralising, those of the older ones seem to be image-stammering and too literary responses. There are certain words which poetry cannot do without; but it is significant that we find in three pages by J. R. Hervey *love* (12 times), *death* (7), *pain* (3), and also the popular *body, bone, flesh, agony and time*; in three pages by Anton Vogt, *seed, womb* (2), *loins, bawdy, impotent, unfleshed, unnatural, hand, heart, head, cruel*, together with *body, bone, flesh, pain, time*; and in a short poem by Robert Thompson *death, love, womb, flesh, limbs, blood, sex*, etc. And so it goes. When such words are facilely manipulated have we anything but a kind of verbal legerdemain, in which there is not only nothing up the poet's sleeve, but nothing in his hands either?

That such faults can be found may, in its way, be a measure of the degree to which Mr. Johnson has fulfilled his aim of giving an annual report on the state of poetry in New Zealand. There is certainly enough interesting verse here to justify the volume. The older poets occasionally speak with authority and some younger ones show symptoms of poetry. Yet, unless selection is made more rigorously and the established poets are prepared more often to offer their best, will it much longer be



J. R. HERVEY

"The older poets occasionally speak with authority"

possible to publish a yearly volume as large as this without helping to perpetuate the idea that the level of New Zealand verse is lower than individual poets' volumes suggest it is?

DOOMSDAY

THE END OF THE WORLD, by Kenneth Heuer; Victor Gollancz, English price 8. 6.

MAN has always been unreasonably interested in the end of the world. Heuer has collected and analysed for our interest the probabilities—collisions with comets, asteroids, stars, or the moon; the explosion of the sun or its death; man's own folly with his new sub-atomic toys. . . . For good measure he begins with a recital of a few of the more recent prophecies of doom, based upon religious inspiration or astrology.

Really important prophecies have placed the end in the year 992 (St. Bernard), 1000, 1186, 1198, 1335, 1524, 1584, and 1588. Nostradamus offers a choice of 1666, 1734, 1886 or 1943. His next preference is for 2038. The belief in Miller's prophecy (1843) seems extraordinary at this distance, but there was a similar panic in many places when the world passed through the tail of Haley's comet in 1910.

From a scientific point of view it's all a matter of odds against. Very roughly, the odds against the world coming to an end this year are something like this: Star collision, two hundred thousand billion to one; Moon collision, fifty thousand million to one; death of the sun, twenty thousand million to one. A collision with a comet would be of merely local importance; we've collided with several already.

The hydrogen bomb, even if it began nuclear chain reactions, could not maintain them, so the mere physical earth will not be itself distributed in fragments like the rings of Saturn by anything we do. But radio-active cobalt could bring about the end of all life on the earth. And that is the end of our world, anyway.

The intrinsic interest of the subject covers most of the shortcomings of Heuer's style. He is sometimes trivial where his subject has its own nobility. And I can find no basis in the book for the unwarranted optimism of the last

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 2, 1954.