

competence here. At least four times in "The Undersea Farmer" we find finished poems of considerable merit—"The Sport of Boys," "Indian Summer," "The Lost Girl," and the title poem itself—and many of the others have passages of memorable force. The technique is aware and skilled; the structure—"The Lost Girl" is a good example—is subtly designed and harmoniously realized; the poems—the best ones—are passionate *saying*.

The faults are solecism (Miss Howes is even capable of writing, "Some morning I will be old"), syntactical confusion, and, more seriously, a kind of jeweled preciousness of diction not far removed from archness. But these are remediable defects, irritating only in that they interrupt enjoyment of so much that is good. "The Undersea Farmer" represents the emergence of a limited but highly gifted poet.

## *The Crow*

By Louis Kent

(*The crow, black not from grief.*—Anglo-Saxon riddle.)

**T**HE crow flies up, the crow black not from grief  
Yellow eyed over waves of tossing leaf,  
Yellow beaked over nestling trees, this thief

Whose yellow eye jeweled the winter gray,  
Whose lean ellipsis pointed winter's day  
And winter nights returning passed his way—

Night could not darken darker than in him,  
At daybreak, poised on the bare, brittle limb  
Red suns were blotted from the morning rim,

And sucked of light those cold suns could not die,  
Round, red and tired that went down the sky,  
All burial turned in his enduring eye—

Now under seas of leaf who thrusts his wedge  
Of faultless black along the wavering edge  
Of fields and flicks the trembling sparrow hedge;

Who moors his raft among the paler seas  
That pour through the frail fingers of the trees,  
And nests alone the swaying distances:

Now swift and fierce out of the froth of leaf  
Against the cruising gray-eyed hawk, thieves' thief,  
The crow flies up, the crow black not from grief.

## *Compulsive Scholar, Extraordinary Latinist*

By Merrill Moore

**H**E was always very careful about his dative,  
He was careful about his ablative absolute,  
He spoke in Latin more carefully than a native;  
He said very little that anyone could refute.

He was in fact a very careful man  
Or had been so at least since we had known him,  
He was careful when he walked and when he ran,  
He gave us little reason to disown him.

He was so careful, careful about what he ate,  
He was very careful about what he wore.  
He was careful not to argue or debate,  
He was careful not to be timid or a bore.

He was very careful about what he did.  
He never told us what his caution hid.

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# the Phoenix Nest

## THE DARK PEOPLE

THEY are the traveling tent-folk, here and gone.  
Like Buttadeus they have wandered far;  
From the five-waters-land in the world dawn  
Trailing through Egypt under a falling star;  
Tsingani of Persia, nomads of the Nile,  
Those of the dark blood known in Muscovy  
With their wild music, voices cleansed of guile  
Varying, blending a melodious glee  
Strangely alluring; these the ocean-tossed,  
Sailing the broad black water to the isles,  
Vivid at English fairs, whose palms were crossed  
With silver, those with daggers in their smiles,  
At pub or course to toss the cannikin  
Or whistle a piebald from a farmer's field,  
Their tawny women to *pen dukkerin*  
Or proffer shawls and trinkets well-concealed.  
They are God's cuckoos tolling in the grove,  
The chaffering roguish birds whose souls are free,  
Such thieving ones as bark-brown dryads love,  
Scattering the patteran of Romany;  
The Petulengros, Lovells fabulous,  
Coopers and Hernes, Stanleys and Scottish Faas;  
Anselo, Ursula, Tawno, Pyramus,  
By dingle fires, on beds beneath the stars.  
The van, the grazing *gry*, the tinker's trade,  
The sorcerized cat-gut whipping fiddle-chords;  
Bees in the marigold, saints in masquerade,  
Horse-tamers, Pharaonic overlords  
As were no Pharaohs of red desert noon!  
Sunset and sealine all about the earth  
From Northern Lights to Mountains of the Moon  
Have known their clatter, melody, and mirth.

These the Word Master kenned, the Romany *rye*,  
The philologue (and poor philogynist!)  
Who fought the Flaming Tinman, and made sigh  
Tall golden Isopel he never kissed.  
He knew them in all humors. Tan and van  
Were open to him. Many a bird-peaked eye  
Gleamed with the hope his greeting "Sarishan!"  
Meant "parl o pani, av' kushto mir' akai!"\*  
Carew, the cozener, was once their king.  
Among their fires trod Wortley Montagu.  
Bulwer abode their tents with youth at spring.  
Their Romany *jib* Leland and Kester knew;  
For Cairo's Rhagarin, who cast the shell  
Of auspice, kinned the Indiana *chai*.  
*Apray the rom!* Cry on Boro Duvel,  
Lord of the Road! The world is rolling by . . .

Leaves on the pale weir-water drift to shade;  
Brown faces pass, white teeth and glittering smiles.  
Now a great orange moon surmounts the glade  
Lighting the *gorgio* to more dusty miles;  
Yet still the Magyar music that can swell  
Where singers to the marvelous *czardas* move  
Borne to ethereal heights or howling hell,  
Makes all the night vibrate with gypsy love . . .

Bear-wards from Syria pass; then Kingston Fair  
With thimberlig and drums and shouts and flags,

\* "Come over the waters, O love wherever you are!"

Cocoanut-shies, baskets and foreign  
ware,  
Seems all about the traveler. He lags,  
He kneels beside a rill to gulp with  
thirst  
The clear leaf-shadowed water. Still  
he sees  
Hop-poles in Kent, races on Molesey  
Hurst,

The scarf of some yet young Meg Merrilies.  
The dark men have enthralled him, and their maids  
Whose bell-like voices call from van and tan.  
The moors, the furze, the hills, the moonlit shades  
Throb forest yearning of the wild tzigane.  
Far down the road the Egyptian pantherine  
Writes in the dust. Her golden earrings gleam.  
Even where ocean foams upon the dene  
He hears the chuckling of a woodland stream.  
Gramarye of all nature fills his mind.  
The wandering ones have cast the ancient spell.  
Till many a long dark league be left behind  
The man goes charm-struck, though the end be well.

\* \* \*

The Beechhurst Press of 296 Broadway, New York City, has brought out the geo-metric verse of Gerald Lynton Kaufman, many of whose poems appeared in *SRL*. Mr. Kaufman has called them "poetry forms in mathematics written mostly for fanatics," and the way he lettered them shows his skill at the draughting-board, which is natural as he is an architect. He is also a magician and a puzzle-maker! He wrote a book on puzzles back in 1940, and he edited a syndicated daily newspaper puzzle feature. He has been an active member of the Society of American Magicians for twenty years. "Geo-metric Verse" is worth your buck and a half because it's like nothing you ever saw before (unless you saw it in *SRL*!), and when you brace up to a "Squarody" or a "Zerode" you believe in the magician status!

\* \* \*

I've been sent a tear-sheet from *Science* for January 28, 1949, which prints in full, in its Comments and Communications, an editorial by S. Kaftanov, Minister of the Higher Education in the USSR, published in its entirety from *Izvestia*, September 8, 1948. It publishes it, *Science* does, "in the belief that it has high informational value for scientists in America." It has, and for all of us. It is in support of the Michurin biological theory and against the Mendel-Morgan school of thought. If anybody wants scientific theory advanced in this unscientific fashion, with a thorough mental purge of the opposition going along with it, so that everyone will think entirely alike, this is the stuff for them. I can just hear the steady tread of "Left, left, left!" (Well, how could I put a "right" in?) Lysenko forever! Thanks to the Bolshevik Party, and, personally, to Comrade Stalin, ways for the further triumphant march of the most progressive Michurin biological science are now clear. The scientists of our colleges will apply, from now on, all their energy to the propaganda of Michurin's biology and to the support of undivided rule of Michurin's biological doctrine in our higher institutions of learning.

You think I'm kidding? No, I'm quoting direct. Those last two sentences are the peroration of the editorial (beginning with "Thanks to the Bolshevik Party . . ."). All I say is, you'd better not be a "deviationist" if you're a Soviet scientist!

It really seems unbelievable in this Einsteinian day and generation!

—WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

*The Saturday Review*