

Fall 1975

on Richard Hugo

Rick Newby

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Love of Jimmy and his ink
that mized in my veins so now I bleed burgandy.
And love of peacocks,
their useless feathers,
their thousand ruined eyes.

Edward Harkness will keep on writing love. This chapbook, promising and perfect as it seems, is surely just a note, a lovely example of things to come.

Copperhead chapbooks, if they all look like this, are almost impossible to beat. The printing and choice paper and the sewn wrappers show that, like the poets they print, they are masters.

Robert Wrigley

RAIN FIVE DAYS AND I LOVE IT

Richard Hugo

Graywolf Press

PO Box 142

Port Townsend, Washington 98368, \$2.50 (paper)

More often than not, a chapbook bespeaks a cohesion (of subject and emotional intensity) rarely found in a full-length collection of poems, and this beautifully produced new chapbook by Richard Hugo is no exception. Comprised of eight poems printed on three colors of heavy stock and in three colors of ink, it draws its cohesiveness from a place—the Port Townsend area—and from Hugo's complex attitude toward that place. As he does so frequently and so well, Hugo grounds us in the richness of local detail, and then allows those details to speak. But through some manner of alchemy, the eloquence of things is not separable from the things themselves; in

their very *being*, they cut deep, becoming emblems of the poet's emotional life, moving freely between the imaginative and experiential realms. In "Letter to Wagoner from Port Townsend," Hugo tells his fellow poet, "Here, the grass explodes and trees / rage black green deep as the distance they rage in."

While Hugo's poetry, almost by definition, bursts with emotionality, these poems are most touching because they celebrate, they affirm that place and the life it holds within its boundaries, that "home between the forest and the sea," as Malcolm Lowry puts it, where "ferryboats would pass, ferrying song upstream—" This affirmation finds its center, as it must, in that "crashing source," the sea. The first poem, "Port Townsend, 1974" gives us the seductive call of the sea, that call back to the womb, away from what Beckett calls the "great trouble:"

On this dishonored, this perverted globe
we go back to the sea and the sea opens for us.
It spreads a comforting green we knew when children—



Aches of what we wanted to be and reluctantly are
play out in the wash, wash up the sand and die
and slip back placid to the crashing source.

But Hugo does not simply present us with the primordial image of sea as great equalizer; he knows we still have our lives to live—"The power / to make us better is limited even in the democratic sea." These poems recognize the violence inherent in living one's life, the small slights, the bitternesses engendered, but they still seek the untroubled moments and when they find them, no questions are asked—there is "no real / accounting for calm." Most markedly, this chapbook is filled with the inevitability of hope, the yearning for substance, for value—"Call those high birds hungry and your vision meat." Let Hugo speak his own affirmation, in a language that never hedges and thus rings true:

Discovery of cancer, a broken back, our inability to pass
our final exam—I guess the rain is finally getting me down.
What matter? I plan to spend my life dependent on moon
and tide and the tide is coming, creeping over the rocks,
washing the remains of crippled fish back deep to the source,
renewing the driftwood supply and the promise of all night
fires on the beach, stars and dreams of girls, and that's
as rich as I'll ever get. We are called human. C'iao. Dick.

Graywolf Press is to be commended for the publication of this beautiful chapbook. Not only is the level of craftsmanship remarkable, but there is something magical about an editorial staff with the good sense to give us these poems, poems that cohere not only to each other but to our lives as well.

Rick Newby

. . . AND SOME FICTION

CLASS WARFARE

Selected Fiction by D. M. Fraser

Pulp Press, 1974, \$3.00

"We can justify any apologia simply by calling life a successive rejection of personalities."

Thomas Pynchon

Which stories should we choose to remember and then recount in an ambience already glutted with messages from the dead, silent reproaches and writing on the walls, the consciousness of dreams that have gone awry? Which doors should we put the shoulder to in a display of strength and conviction? Which passageways, with either the suggestion of different scenarios or familiar landmarks that can be seen from a different angle, should we explore?

There is such a thing as heartbreak, and we have all at least once seen the flaming sword, and nothing beyond. And how many of us have lived off the