

SMITH, Harry (publisher) - The Smith Poets, The Smith - New York City, N.Y., 1971.

The Smith Poets is a compilation of the work of seven young poets by the publisher and head of the mini-publishing empire, The Smith, in New York City. Harry Smith, Smith, himself a poet, (remember "Summer Woman" from our last edition) has been described as Byronic and Ironic". Actually the philosophy of The Smith, while still contemporary and fresh, is not so far removed from English Romanticism. Romanticism being that philosophy, which sees the individual at the very core of life and experience and values the individual's accuracy in portraying his experience more than any strict adherence to unity or form.

In a most unimitative, unphony way The Smith Philosophy is reminiscent of some of those facets which denoted English Romanticism (the sensibility, involvement with nature, individualism, enthusiasm for the uncivilized or "natural", interest in human rights). Fowler, Schram, Wyatt, and the other poets, as well as Smith himself reflect these facets.

The background of the seven poets is widely various: Gene Fowler, 38 and the oldest of these poets, served time in San Quentin for armed robbery before becoming a gentle philosopher poet at Berkley; Sam Cornish is a Baltimore native involved in social work and publishing his own little magazine; Irene Schramm works as a mother in Greenwich Village; Theodore Sloan a New Yorker who came from Iowa, is a corporation executive who dropped out; Jonathan Morse is a microbiologist in Indianapolis; Karen Swenson is a New Yorker, who contributes to the New Yorker; Charles Wyatt, a Southerner, played in the U.S. Marine Corp Band.

Karen Swenson, one of the Smith Poets, in a short biographical data placed before her poems expresses her philosophy and perhaps a little of what the other poets might also feel: "I write poetry because prose seems to me to be an unnatural method of express. . . I can get reeling drunk on words. . . I think

we take poetry too seriously in America - it must be this way or that way-words are fun, ask any five year old, and poems are like blowing soap bubbles into the sun."

Hart Crane seems to be an influence on the Smith Philosophy, also. Smith, like Crane, writes about mechanization in the twentieth century. Much of Smith's poetry, as well as the compilation of poetry in The Smith Poets , deals with the mechanized,metamorphosed world-depersonalization. Smith is a member of the Anti-Civilization League; social critic, sensitive humanitarian and twentieth century Romantic. His personal philosophy as well as the poetry of the seven young poets in The Smith Poets is sensitive, imagistic, fresh and well worth taking a closer look at.

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