

'Sumus' offers art, vitality

by Jack Hicks
Special to the DTH

Editor's note: Jack Hicks, a grad student in English, is Poetry Editor of the "Carolina Quarterly."

"SUMUS" is out, on sale, and this December, 1970 issue is a beautifully conceived and executed magazine, worth much more than the cost and time you'll spend to read it. "SUMUS," the title, announces itself clearly, Latin for "we are," but it can also be read as an English shortening of "the sum of us." "Us" being a sizeable tribe of young writers, mainly poets, whose diverse talents have established themselves on this campus over the last two years, through a series of appearances in national publications, through the Pitcher Poetry Series Pamphlets and now through this handsome magazine.

The design and printing of this magazine are remarkable. Printed and bound on YMCA equipment, at best adequate, the issue is visually attractive and pretty much free from typos. The graphics are carefully chosen, often matched with facing poems, and the photographs serve especially well. Robert Lucas' opening photo, a study in textures of a weathered and ancient door: knob, hinge, and panel, works to introduce the volume, to open it to the reader. And it serves also to set the prevailing interests of the artists and writers: in individual, beautiful objects, in single human gestures, in lone human beings, the gardens and toads in their lives.

Which is to say you'll find few protest poems in here, little shufflings of commas and typography that always seems to mark "avant garde" writing, no academic patchworks of allusion or myth, no meditations on history or time, nothing that might be sung by Grace Slick or Jagger. What you will find are poems submerged in the concrete and particular, poems concerned with the magic that is in and comes out of—well, for example, pianos. Philip Dacey's "The Piano" treats the thing almost like a totem, if not an animal parent, certainly a mechanical pal, and promises, in poetry of wry humor that locks home; "I'll take you everywhere, piano, I'll coddle your keys, you'll be first in the van, thick, quilted pads almost made you sick." And out of nowhere, the subject of Richard Garcia's poetry: or dust of stones, as in Joel Belland's "The Cow's Progress," in which a common stone yields its "brown organic/contentment silence." S.M.

Lovett's small poem is perhaps the most intense illustration of the poetry that tries to coax the magic out of basic, familiar forms, here is the Sun, as he concludes, "the sun loves/those who know/the book of sunsets/the energy and the eye."

Charlie Baker, among others, writes well about a man and the strength of his memories, which are rich and persuasive. And Bob Hefner, in what may well be the strongest poem in the magazine, writes of the way in which a hunter freezes a series of movements, gestures, lives, with "The curving branch of trigger, snapping in the wind."

The two stories, the better one being Paul Bennett's "Before the Lake Is Frozen Over," are also reduced in scope to gain in intensity. I must warm delicate readers that sex, although decently and attractively dealt with, is present in both stories and a number of the poems. Sex between one or more sexes, so watch out.

This is a memorable volume, full of vitality, strong experiences, controlled language, smiles, and solid aesthetic pleasures. When you've gone through it a few times, you can come pretty close to Andrew Glaze's vision in "Stranger":

Soon, now, soon, it will come.
The one city with the one house,
With a bell and a knocker that ring.
I will ring.
A whole city will say hello.
Open the door. Go in. Walk around. Stay a while.

Announcements

To commemorate the 200th birthday of Ludwig van Beethoven and the 59th birthday of Cab Calloway, live jazz-rock will be performed tonight at 8 in the Hill Hall auditorium by the Jazz Lab Band. Thrills, chills, etc.

Muki Tzur, author of "Israeli Soldiers Speak" will speak on "Kibbutz: The Utopian Revolution" tonight at 8:30 in 431 Greenlaw. Sponsored by the UNC Hillel Foundation.

There will be a meeting of the Young Republicans Club in the Student Union at 8 tonight. The meeting will be for those members who wish to take an active part in student politics on campus and possibly run for some office in the spring.

LOST: A pair of wire rimmed glasses in a hard, black case. If found contact Tom Corbin, 942-3321.



Franco tightens hold on Basques

MADRID—Generalissimo Francisco Franco's government tightened its hold on Spain Tuesday in apparent anticipation of harsh sentences for 16 Basque nationalists on trial for murder and other terrorist acts.

Sources close to the lawyers defending the Basques said the five-man court martial sitting in Burgos had granted at least two of the prosecution's request for six death sentences.

Similar reports were heard from sources close to the government who also indicated announcement of the verdict and that sentence was imminent.

Nixon plans cabinet meetings

WASHINGTON—Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird Tuesday hinted for the first time that the United States might resume bombing of North Vietnam if Hanoi does not begin bargaining in good faith at the Paris peace talks.

At the same time, he reiterated that the United States would stick to its announced plans to cut American forces in South Vietnam to 284,000 by May 1.

Douglas impeachment doubtful

WASHINGTON—A special House subcommittee rejected Tuesday demands for impeachment proceedings against Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas but its 924-page report only fueled the controversy over the 72-year-old court liberal.

The report by a five-man judiciary subcommittee said an eight-month investigation turned up no evidence that Douglas misused his office, advocated revolution, associated with underworld characters or committed other breaches of the law or judicial ethics cited by his critics.

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