

tailed analysis of the Social Security Act and the "philosophical illusion" upon which the Welfare State is based. He concludes with an evaluation of the "evils that follow from infractions of rules and disciplines" and makes a theological case against the constitutionality of the welfare society launched in the nineteen thirties.

To ignore the lesson set forth in Macey's book and to alter the scheme of our governmental system as the Supreme Court did in 1936 reduces our Constitution to a blank sheet of paper. As James J. Kilpatrick wrote about the *Butler* logic:

It arrogates to judges and to congressmen the bumptious authority claimed by Humpty-Dumpty, to whom words meant what he chose them to mean, and neither more or less. If all powers were delegated to the central government, then none remained exclusively with the States; the bulk of the Constitution is mere surplusage, and the Tenth Amendment is a fraud; the authors of *The Federalist* were masters of deceit, and the written English language is become the babble of idiots.

Reviewed by CHARLES G. DOUGLAS III

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### *The Child's-Eye View*

**The Burning Bush**, by Robert Drake,  
*Nashville & London: Aurora Publishers, Inc., 1975. 170 pp. \$5.95.*

IN *The Burning Bush*, as in his two previous collections of short stories, *Amazing Grace* and *The Single Heart*, Robert Drake brings us more memories of his native Tennessee. Of the twenty-five stories in the present collection, four have appeared in magazines.

The perfect pitch and the faultless ear are here again as are the great titles: "Honk if You Love Jesus," "This is the Sweetest One of All Right Here," "What Would You Do in Real Life?," "A Peacock on a Sparrow's Back," "Wake Up So I Can Tell You Who's Dead." The old women are back, widows and spinsters ruminating and remembering, "eating everything that'll lie still" and calling everybody "Honey," not because they can't remember their first names "but because it just seems to make everything around you work smoother." Some of them run off at the mouth a bit too much; some have started saying an occasional "hell" and "goddam" and are "still able to kick, though perhaps not very high." All of these ladies are an integral part of Robert Drake's life and his writing. But it is the evocations of his own childhood, rather than the chronicles of the geriatric set, that to this reader are his finer stories.

Though surrounded by love and a staggering number of family grown-ups (they had fourteen Christmas dinners every year, one for each aunt and uncle) the narrator of these stories is often a silent, lonesome little boy. An only child, born to parents no longer young, he is a listener, with a need for dreams that even the Silver Screen cannot supply. "Mild Turbulence" is the author's sensitive testimony to this fact. In "The Dream House," a four year old boy, having witnessed a wedding ceremony, adopts the newlyweds as his very own, his dream couple. A flower girl who defaults at the ceremony quite puts him out. "I would have given a great deal to have walked down that aisle, to have been part of that drama," he says, and we believe him. When the couple has a child, it becomes the boy's, though he is only a few years older, and he follows it about the street. Almost by intention, as he grows older he avoids direct contact with the couple or with their dream house in order to keep the dream intact and untarnished. This is a haunting, lovely story.

In "What Papa Said, or Sleeping Under

Two Blankets Every Night," the small boy whose father decrees that going away for vacations is all foolishness (it's much nicer at home) spends the hot summers burning up alive, having malaria, and envying the lucky ones who write back from the mountains and the seashore. But he respects his father's views and listens to and enjoys his jokes. "If you sing at the dinner table all your children will be born naked." "How much did he leave when he died? He left everything!" He has his own jokes and fun. In "A Killing Frost," after viewing a Negro baptizing ceremony (more joyful than its white counterpart) he discovers a new posture in which to swallow the hated cocoa-quinine. The cocoa, designed to sweeten the dosage, does not fool him at all and he considers it a cheat like the watered-down versions of the classics, "specially arranged for small hands," he has to endure in his music lessons.

For Robert Drake is a musician. His piano lessons go way back to when it was sissy for boys to take them, and were paid for by his grandfather's Confederate Veteran's pension, a distinction few can claim. In this collection of stories, as in his other two, the author is much concerned with the excitement and the love of music. The story "I Did Not Go On With My Music" is told from a spinster's point of view (she had "such a sweet touch") but we suspect that it is Robert Drake himself who became a listener instead of a performer, and it's a pity, considering his promising start under the Confederate Veteran's sponsorship. Another story "Where Did the Music Go?" is one of the best pieces in this book.

The author is "very much at home in the world, though not necessarily worldly" and everyday questions engage his interest, and so ours. What is the difference between travel and transit? Between *seeing* someone every day and in *visiting* with them? What do you do in real life as compared to

that in the academic world? What do you want written on your tombstone (besides the bare facts)? In "The Burning Bush," the lead story of this collection, he examines the age-old question—Can you really go back home—to the South? In "What Papa Said, or Sleeping Under Two Blankets Every Night," the envious small boy becomes the travelled author who asks, "Do we not make our own traps we are caught in?" Are not the two-blanket-sleepers slaves who *have* to travel so they can write home and brag about the two blankets? Have not the papa-saiders, the stay-at-homers, chained themselves to the same terrain forever? Would the two blankets *ever* fit Papa's fourposter?

Religion, as well as music, has a strong claim on the author. He treats the subject not only seriously but at times with wry humor. ("One has got to be a sort of fool to believe in the Christian gospel, anyway.") To his descriptive list of denominations he has added "rank Campbellite" but he also poses, through his old women's voices and through his own, some imponderables. What is love? Is it more than young love, mother love, baby love? Where does God really come into the act? And finally Can these bones live?

Death appears often in these pages and titles: "I've been Dying All My Life; How about You?" (As a child the author lived on the road to the cemetery and watched all the funeral processions go by.) "You're Not Going to Die Till Your Time Comes," "The Death in the Dream," "O, What a One to be Dead With," and "Christmas Sorrows, Christmas Joys." But there's much fun and life here, too.

There is no back, no pretense, no floss to these stories of Robert Drake. Many of them have a simple wisdom. They make up a very readable and enjoyable book.

Reviewed by ALMA STONE