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The Poet's Worth

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nered. One is received into a house with many a bow and word of greeting. Guest and host alike in a very natural fashion vie in showing deference to each other. Even in business and in offices this trait of gentility is to be found. In his dealings with others it is the concern of the Javanese never to give the slightest offense.

The Indonesians have many excellent qualities and a culture all their own. They are trying their best to preserve these, guarding them from being overwhelmed by Western influences. They easily outdo the Philippines in censorship of movies and the type of advertisement that gets into their papers. Their youngsters here are much better protected. Again, I believe this care comes from their religiousness and from a deep sense of the sacred.

As a young nation Indonesia is faced with many problems. We may compare Indonesia to a youngster coming into his adolescence. This "youngster" nation is conscious of new life, new powers. It is drawn by forces and attractions from the outside. Yet it has a history behind it which it cannot completely ignore. I suppose that is the challenge to the leaders of the country today: to see Indonesia through these difficult years to political, social and economic maturity.

Many times I have used the word Indonesia. But really I use it as one who has seen Indonesia only from the island of Java. One who gives impressions about the Philippines from his stay on Luzon will not necessarily say things that are unqualifiedly true of Mindanao, Sumatra, Kalimantan (Borneo), Bali, Flores, and Celebes are bound to show a different face.

JOSE BLANCO

The Poet's Worth

The poet brings to us the touch of the intangibles, the poet brings to us the breath of freedom and the benison of truthful eyes when we look at men and things. Yet in our age, which is surely aching for such gifts, the poet is dishonored by being praised — and unread.

Yet he alone can make us see clearly because freshly. Scholars with their university degrees are and should be respected. But the men of learning, one comes to see, gather and inspect and moderate and refine *old* thoughts, but seldom furnish startling *new* ones. Each scholar, however original, must needs be original in a scholarly way. He is held within bounds by the sea to which he belongs; his greatest advance can only be the latest mark of the spent wave on the beach, an infinitesimal farther lapping. What if the whole direction of the wave be wrong? What if the march of modern thought's tide have, by some cataclysm, been whirled around and the advance, looked at

from above, be in fact a diversion? Scholars as scholars are not trained to handle this. The sea does not sanction autonomy, the scholar's environment inhibits him from the antic act of turning, just this once, all his own field's precious crop upside down to see what's underneath. Only the poet can and does do this.

This upsetting of attitudes is what we today, swathed in dear and tawdry values, greatly need. The values which we are living by are being cautiously measured and solemnly pronounced upon by the sociologist and so forth, but they are not being uprooted. They will, if ever, be uprooted only by those who cherish them, and we (who are the ones) shall do it only when so shaken by realization of our morass that we can do no other. But who is shaken by a report, in high jargon, of society's upward trend in population and downward in spirit? Only the poet can so shake enough individuals to shake a world. And we do not read poetry.

The trouble is we cannot read poetry. The poet speaks a different language from the argot of our golden ghetto. We are held tight in a round of office, home and recreation, in all of which areas we are kept frantically busy doing the consecrated things of office, home and recreation. The spaces in between—field, mountain, forest, even garden—are things to get around and through and then "get on with it," not things to saunter over and relish. The time in between... but there isn't any. The poet speaks the language of the spaces in between and the time in between, and "the fellow's a damn foreigner."

What we like are the cartoons in *THE NEW YORKER*, the front cover of *THE SATURDAY EVENING POST*; these, and written pieces of the same sort, are the closest we get to poetry. But these, even though satirical, still canonize the living we are actually doing; the "boff" is recognition. This is not bad, but it is not enough. We need to get out of "the enormous room" sometime and breathe other air. If we don't, we are likely to suffocate in our own self-assuredness. Outside are the poets.

Poets are curses on this lovely earth.
The way they talk is dreadful, being true.
I brim with joy not to be their fellow;
Or perhaps with rue.

Poets are generally not gentlemen of girth:
They plot regicide (and guess who's king).
Orators frown, view with alarm and bellow;
Poets sing.

Poets soar; but walk only upon their hands.
Thus they will be alert, in positions of grace,
Whenever the fissioned world is torn astray
And turns its face.

Poets will then run freely over the shattered lands,
Glad to move and be, upright, just like the many.
People will listen to them then, hooray!
If there are any.

H. B. FURAY

Report on Spain

What is happening in Spain? That's the first question a Spaniard hears once he crosses the Pyrenees. For many people Spain is, to the life, the mythical country in which dictatorship, a secret police, bullfights, a strange tradition and the official Catholic Faith amalgamate to produce something bizarre and out of this world.

The truest answer to this question is also the simplest. What is happening in Spain? Nothing; nothing is happening in Spain that does not and could not happen in any other European country. Spain has peculiar economic, social and political problems, granted; so does every other European country. Spain has its own geographical and historical context, in which alone its problems can be understood, granted; what nation does not?

But the myth? Could we forget it for the moment? Instead, could we take a straightforward look at what the various Spanish social classes are and do today? The myth is made up mostly of misinformation. Perhaps a little information will balance the scales.

THE PEASANTS. Spain is still a country with a basic agricultural economy. Until a few years ago the tillers of the soil, the *peones*, outnumbered every other class. Now, with the push for industrialization, there are more industrial workers. But the number of peasants is still very great.

The life of the peasantry is hard but it has its compensations. They live close to sun and soil and have a hard, earthy wisdom that has made them, in the past, the spine of the country. Work is seasonal—planting and harvesting time—and pay is low; but the cost of living in country towns is low, too. It is a peaceful life and its tempo gives time for a very sound moral and intellectual growth. Of the old-style peasant one could say: this is what he will think, this is what he will say, this is what he will do. Not that he was a pawn; he was nobody's man but his own, at least in spirit. What he stood for he stood for firmly and, to some extent, predictably.

Today, the young people are leaving the land and going to the city. Higher salaries, machine-made entertainment, these are siren calls. Unfortunately the average young peasant has no special skill