

from him, least of all anything valuable." With the onset of infirmity, Beethoven began to seclude himself from the company of strangers, adding to his image as an isolated genius. But he did not relish solitude. In a letter dated June 29, 1800, he confided to Wegeler: "for almost two years I have avoided all society, because I cannot say to people: I am deaf."

THE HAW LANTERN

by Seamus Heaney
Farrar, 1987
52 pp. \$12.95

In "From the Frontier of Writing," Heaney describes the sensation of driving through a British checkpoint in his native Northern Ireland. He goes on to relate this feeling of exposure, where "everything is pure interrogation," to what he experiences when writing poetry: Struggling with words, he senses the presence of his readers, as unrelentingly watchful as the "posted soldiers flowing and receding/like tree shadows into the polished wind-screen." The feeling of release is not complete; the poet is "arraigned yet freed . . ." when he finishes. Throughout this collection, Ireland's leading bard, one of the foremost poets writing in English today, offers what he calls in the title poem, "The Haw Lantern," a "small light for small people." But if these 31 intimate poems do not blind "with illumination," if they resist the stage of public pronouncement, they achieve exactness, the formally precise expression of home truths. Of his own poetic endeavor, Heaney observes: "I come from scraggy farm and moss/Old patchworks that the pitch and toss/Of history have left dishevelled./But here, for your sake, I have levelled/My cart-track voice to garden tones,/ Cobbled the bog with Cotswold stones . . ."

PRIVATE DOMAIN:

An Autobiography
by Paul Taylor
Knopf, 1987
371 pp. \$22.95

During the 1950s, New York was the center of dance. There, 30 years after Isadora Duncan shocked Paris by appearing ungirt and barefoot, Martha Graham worked out a technique for modern dance. At the same time, choreographer George Balanchine was stretching the vocabulary of traditional ballet while retaining its formal symmetry and rigorous technique.

In 1952 Graham spotted the virtually untrained Taylor at Connecticut College's summer ballet school. Three years later, he joined her company.

Yet Taylor found himself chafing under the restraints imposed by other dancers' styles. In 1961, just nine years after he had started to dance, he formed his own company.

Using ideas picked up from artists Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, his neighbors in New York's Hell's Kitchen, Taylor sought minimalist solutions. His dance would be "unpsychological (no Greek goddesses)... free from the cobwebs of time (no ballet)." His first works used only "natural postures" set to the music of "heartbeats, wind, rain," and his *Duet-Opportunity*—four motionless minutes—enraged New York. Taylor produces his own quirky choreography. Yet his defined lower body movement, his joyous leaps and bounds, may be his most distinctive contribution to modern dance technique.

Science & Technology

SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, AND HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOVIET UNION

by Loren R. Graham
Columbia, 1987
565 pp. \$45

Soviet science, to Western scientists and nonscientists, is *terra incognita*. Because Soviets publish only in Russian-language journals and rarely attend Western meetings, Graham's well-documented overview of the Soviet scientific world—from biology to physics to chemistry—is particularly revealing.

How, asks Graham, a historian at M.I.T., do science and Marxist philosophy co-exist? To the Westerner, the mention of Soviet politics and science in the same breath elicits an almost Pavlovian response: "Lysenko." Combining practical skills in agronomy with political cunning, Trofim Lysenko (1898–1976) managed (with Josef Stalin's backing) to impose on Soviet genetics the theory that *acquired* characteristics are inherited, effectively blocking progress in the field and wrecking the careers of his opponents for almost 30 years. It is a grim story, to say the least.

Graham mentions Lysenko, but he gives far more emphasis to the work of other leading Soviet scientists and their attitudes toward Marxist ideology—from enthusiastic adherence (as in psychologist Lev Vygotsky's theories of language acquisition) to a strict separation of science and philosophy. One prominent "separatist," V. S. Ginzburg, has forcefully criticized the dogmatic Marxist view that time and matter are necessarily infinite. The rejection of closed cosmological mod-