

that this unfinished book (the author died before completing it) never attains.

For example, in 1960 a second edition of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* appeared, doubling the number of photographs from the 1941 first edition of that seminal collaboration between Evans and writer James Agee. In 1966, a major project from the 1930s and 1940s featuring hidden-camera portraits Evans had taken on the New York City subway got an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art and was published as the book *Many Are Called*. In 1971, John Szarkowski curated a major retrospective of Evans's work at the Museum of Modern Art. During these final years, Evans had close friendships with younger photographers such as Szarkowski, Lee Friedlander, Robert Frank, and William Christenberry. The reader longs to hear them talk about their friend.

Mellow is best known for his books *Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein and Company* (1974) and *Nathaniel Hawthorne in His Times* (1980), which won a National Book Award. It may be a little unfair to say that this book seems perfunctory compared to those, given its unfinished state—but perhaps no more unfair than publishing it at all.

I wonder, though, whether Mellow's imagination would ever have caught fire with Evans, a man who was essentially private, solitary, and somewhat dour. Even his best-known photographs, of those Alabama sharecropper families in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, which seem so politically charged at this distance, came much more from a personal aesthetic than any encompassing vision of what the world should be. Evans had first wanted to be a writer; his aesthetic as a photographer was in the plain style of Lincoln or Twain. It was a style that perfectly matched his times, with its urgent program to ennoble the common man. But Evans embodied the style and not the program, which is why he could just as easily ennoble buildings, cars, and graveyards as

those who built and would rest in them.

—Robert Wilson

SURVIVING LITERARY SUICIDE.

By Jeffrey Berman. Univ. of Massachusetts Press. 290 pp. \$60 hardcover, \$18.95 paper

Surviving Literary Suicide is an important book about suicide and the psychological impact of its literary portrayals. A professor of English at the State University of New York at Albany, Berman assigned his graduate students writings about suicide by six authors (Kate Chopin, Ernest Hemingway, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, William Styron, and Virginia Woolf), and had the students keep diaries recording their responses to the works.

Not one to celebrate self-inflicted death, Berman nonetheless captures well, and in detail, the profound despair experienced by the authors. Most powerful for me, though, were the strength, insight, and humanity of the students' responses to what they read. Here, for instance, is one student's outrage at how the cerebral dissections of Plath's life and work overlook her suffering: "I picture them fighting over the souvenirs of her demise . . . and forgetting the person who went through the infernal pain. Readers may reify Plath, and the 'cost' to them is that they forget to be human, forget that their subject of study was also a person whose life hurt so much that she was forced to end it."

Works that glorify suicide may pose risks to readers, but Berman reminds us of the affirmation of life that can come from great literature. One student wrote of how Styron's wonderful, and wonderfully influential, *Darkness Visible* (1990) reached through her own depression: "William Styron, the one who made it through, the one who did not succumb. While I still identify more with Anne Sexton, it is you toward whom I gravitate because you are breathing." Berman has written an excellent book.

—Kay Redfield Jamison

Science & Technology

BRAIN POLICY:

How the New Neuroscience Will Change Our Lives and Our Politics.

By Robert H. Blank. Georgetown Univ. Press. 208 pp. \$60 hardcover, \$21.95 paper

The human brain, the source of political ideas, is increasingly becoming the object of policy, too. According to Blank, a professor of political science at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, the implications