
edged—may be more *excusable* than others, but only those deceptive practices which can be openly debated and consented to in advance are *justifiable* in a democracy.”

Arts & Letters

**THE PAINTINGS OF
CHARLES BIRD KING
(1785–1862)**

by Andrew J. Cosentino
Smithsonian, 1977
214 pp. \$22.50
L of C 77-608258
ISBN 0-87474-366-2

Charles Bird King is remembered today for his series of 130 portraits of American Indians, with and without their war paint. These sophisticated, ethnologically accurate studies, commissioned by the Department of War, were done mostly in Washington, D.C. as various tribal delegations visited to press their claims against the U.S. government or be feted by their White Fathers. Most of the paintings were destroyed in a fire at the Smithsonian in 1865, three years after the artist's death. Fortunately for posterity, King himself had made replicas of many, and others were preserved in lithograph copies. They were shown in a 1977–78 exhibition organized by the National Collection of Fine Arts. The show also included—and this book presents—King's *other* portraits (Mrs. John Quincy Adams at her harp, Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, President James Monroe comfortably disposed in the East Room) with some romantic landscapes of Harper's Ferry, W. Va., and the environs of Milan, Italy.

PETERSBURG

by Andrei Bely
Indiana Univ. Press, 1978
356 pp. \$17.50
L of C 77-74442
ISBN 0-253-34410-7

The “greatest masterpieces of the 20th century,” wrote Vladimir Nabokov, “are, in this order, Joyce's *Ulysses*; Kafka's *Transformation*; Bely's *Petersburg*; and the first half of Proust's fairy tale *In Search of Lost Time*.” Until now, English readers had no way of judging for themselves why Nabokov accorded so high an honor to Andrei Bely's forgotten 1916 novel—in which the central figure is the city of Petersburg as perceived during the ticking of an anarchist's bomb. The bomb, secreted in a sardine tin and intended for a high czarist official by none other than his own son, eventually explodes in the