

---

official's lacquered study. By then, a series of interlaced plots and sub-plots has exposed Bely's gloomy notions of Russia, of civilization, and of the human will. Robert A. MacGuire and John E. Malmstad capture Bely's endless plays on words and almost musical use of sound in a new, annotated translation that has all of the texture of the original.

**THE COLLECTED POEMS  
OF THOMAS MERTON**

by Thomas Merton  
New Directions, 1977  
1,046 pp. \$37.50  
L of C 77-9902  
ISBN 0-8112-0643-2

Monk, mystic, poet, and prophet Thomas Merton has been dead for 10 years. Yet reprints and analyses of his literary work appear at an accelerating rate, and nearly 50 theses and doctoral dissertations are now catalogued at Bellarmine College in Louisville, Ky. *The Collected Poems* documents a rare literary voyage. From the comparative simplicity of his 1940 poems through the complexity of *The Geography of Lograire* (1968), it is all here. The Trappist monk's widening Catholicism, his ecumenical insights, his fascination with the Oriental, and his concern, then rage, over the American social and political evolution and nuclear involvement are lightened by an occasional humorous poem evocative of the 1960s: "Never call a babysitter when the revolution/ Is in full swing/Baby has hoisted the black flag and taken over/The telephone company and everything."

**SELECTED LETTERS OF  
CONRAD AIKEN**

edited by Joseph Killorin  
Yale, 1978, 350 pp. \$15  
L of C 77-20620  
ISBN 0-300-02180-1

In his lifetime (1889-1973) Conrad Aiken never quite made it to the top rank of American poets, essayists, or novelists (although his *Selected Poems* won a Pulitzer Prize in 1930). He was, indisputably, a great correspondent. Unlike some other writers, Aiken did not keep carbons of his private letters, feeling that to do so was an invasion of privacy. Fortunately, family members and friends held on to some 3,500 originals. Among the lot selected by editor Killorin are several to or (waspishly) about T. S. Eliot, his Harvard classmate and lifelong friend-rival. A number reveal Aiken's relationship as teacher, admirer, and occasional paid keeper of dipsomaniac genius

Malcolm Lowry (*Under the Volcano*, 1947). Sample advice to Lowry: "Let loose some of your natural joy in swiftness and goodness and love and simplicity . . . . The influence of the Complex Boys, these adolescent audens spenders with all their pretty little dexterities, their negative safety, their indoor marxmanship, has not been good for you."

**ANOTHER WORLD  
1897-1917**

by Anthony Eden  
Doubleday, 1977  
175 pp. \$7.95  
L of C 77-74298  
ISBN 0-385-12719-7

**THE DIARIES OF  
EVELYN WAUGH**

edited by Michael Davie  
Little, Brown, 1977  
818 pp. \$17.50  
L of C 77-16214  
ISBN 0-316-17450-5

**INFANTS OF THE SPRING**

by Anthony Powell  
Holt, 1977, 214 pp. \$10.95  
L of C 77-71357  
ISBN 0-03-020991-9

Good autobiographies and diaries are an art form as revealing as they are dishonest. These three volumes have Oxford in common, as well as a poignant appreciation of privileged life in the dusk of empire. Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon, Foreign Secretary, then (1955-57) Prime Minister of Great Britain, once confessed to Evelyn Waugh that as a boy at school he had sat upon and killed a pet mouse in order to escape punishment. Such stoicism pervades his memoir of upper-crust boyhood before the Great War.

Novelist Evelyn Waugh, with Anthony Powell, knew Eden familiarly as "Jerk." Waugh's attitude is ironic, acerbic, spiteful, but clearly betrays a yearning for the aristocratic decay he condemns. His Oxford diaries are missing (why?), as are those pertaining to his disastrous first marriage. What remains suggests that the comic, manic world of Waugh's novels actually existed: With the Countess of Rosse, in Ireland one day, he came across a turf cabin where a crone sat amid pig dung smoking a pipe and complaining about the leaky roof. "Don't change a thing," advised the Countess. "It's simply you!"

Like Waugh, Anthony Powell (*A Dance to the Music of Time*, 12 collected novels published 1962-76) cherished the niceties of life, including the butler at Oxford's Hypocrites Club: "the ideal Jeevsian manservant . . . full of repartee and gnomic comment." Powell used the "intellectual recession" of his college days to revel with a circle of friends that included Harold Acton, Cyril Connolly, and, later, George Orwell. "Do your trousers strap under the foot?" Orwell asked Powell at their first meeting.

It was indeed spring in another world.