

# CURRENT BOOKS

## FELLOWS' CHOICE

*Recent titles selected and reviewed by Fellows of the Wilson Center*

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**THE COLLECTED POEMS  
OF HOWARD NEMEROV**

by Howard Nemerov  
Univ. of Chicago, 1977  
534 pp. \$20  
L of C 77-544  
ISBN 0-226-57258-7

For 30 years Howard Nemerov has been one of America's most consistently graceful formalist poets. This rich collection, which won the National Book Award for Poetry in 1978, gives a clear picture of the scope and moral urgency of his work. Nemerov's attention has always been fixed on the bewildering wealth of America's cultural inheritance and on the ways in which poetry can make our lives not just tolerable but joyful. A poet who has become, in a serious sense, a religious writer, Nemerov has fulfilled a vocation he describes in "The Map Maker on His Art": *My fluent pen/Wanders and cranks as his great river does,/Over the page, making the lonely voyage/Common and human.*

—Frank McConnell ('78)

**THE HORSE OF PRIDE:**

**Life in a Breton Village**  
by Pierre-Jakez Hélias  
Yale, 1978, 378 pp. \$15  
L of C 78-6929  
ISBN 0-300-02036-8

We are engulfed today in a flood of media-made nostalgia—for the corrupt 1920s, the desolate '30s, and more recent uneasy decades. Even the catastrophic years of World War II are made to seem attractive as they recede in time. Professor Hélias's rambling memoir of his Breton childhood (he was born in 1914) is different. The work of an eminent ethnologist, fond, even glowing at times, it has the ring of truth to it. Much that he reports could apply to any self-sufficient rural community a generation or more ago: Anne G. Sneller's elegant *Vanished World*, a 1964 book about upstate New York, immediately came to my mind. But rural Brittany had a special problem. French was a foreign language to many Bretons even in the 1920s. It was rarely heard in Pouldreuzic, Hélias's village (he learned it only in school). Thus, the peasantry about which he writes experienced