

geologist with a second B.A. in the natural sciences from Oxford). "If we did not know," writes American University's Charles R. Larson, "we might conclude from their novels that they were white." Not so with later Indian authors. Thirty years separate *The Surrounded*, by D'Arcy McNickle, a Flathead born in western Montana, and F. Scott Momaday's Pulitzer-prizewinning *House Made of Dawn* (1968). But a strong sense of lost identity unites the two. McNickle's book sometimes echoes white writer-about-Indian-life Oliver LaFarge's *Laughing Boy* (1929). Momaday's work is less derivative and more ambiguous, Larson finds. It blends Navajo traditions with the author's maternal Cherokee and paternal Kiowa inheritance. A Stanford English professor, Momaday sees his "New Indians" as unable to cope with the white man's world. Their own "is dead-ended." Larson's groundbreaking critique of "native American" fiction is not his only contribution to publishing's current list: his own first novel, *The Insect Colony* (Holt), holds up for inspection a group of Peace Corps volunteers in West Africa in the 1960s.

**FAIRY TALES AND
AFTER: From Snow White**

to E. B. White
by Roger Sale
Harvard, 1978
280 pp. \$11
L of C 78-18788
ISBN 0-674-29157-3

In 10 relaxed essays, critic Roger Sale, who teaches English at the University of Washington, explores the literary merits of children's books. Treating authors whose work "contributed to defining . . . what I seem to find most important in life," Sale examines how it is that successful children's literature works on its readers, adults or children. He moves deftly through analysis of such favorites as Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit* ("permeated with need and power that readers can feel without inquiring into its source") and E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web* ("a sweet interlude of a book"). Where biographical material can cast light on a story's construction (as in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* or Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*), it is gracefully provided. Sale carries out the delicate task of exploring how something magical works in literature without exposing that magic as trickery or losing a sense of wonder.