

ployment insurance. They do not easily assimilate into German society; but neither is there much room for them in the shriveled peasant economy of southern Italy, where most of them originate. Journalist Cornelisen, author of *Women of the Shadows* (1976), spent a year interviewing peasant emigrants from the poverty-ridden town of Torregreca. In Offenback, West Germany, she found Anna, a department-store clerk, and Franco, a mason, basking in their material comforts—"indirect lighting, velvet upholstery"—but lonely. There is no close-knit Italian community in Offenback (nor in most German cities). And the German government's position is plain: Germany is "not a country of immigration." Citizenship is kept "carefully out of reach"; there is little attempt to bridge the language gap. Most of Cornelisen's subjects talk of returning to their birthplace as well-to-do gentry. Although he has lived in Germany since 1965, Gaetano, who is not yet 50 and who still speaks little German, is one such dreamer. "No man," he says, "wants to die a stranger among strangers." But Torregreca's population has decreased by half over the last decade. Gaetano may go home, but he will not find much to keep him there.

**LIFE CHANCES:
Approaches to Social and
Political Theory**
by Ralf Dahrendorf
Univ. of Chicago, 1980
173 pp. \$15

"The case for inequality"—or, as Dahrendorf, director of the London School of Economics, sees it, for liberty—is argued in this difficult but lively philosophical treatise. "Hope springs from differences rather than sameness, and liberty from inequality rather than equality," Dahrendorf reflects. Progress is born of each individual's drive to improve his position in life. Existing inequalities—a boss with a higher salary, a neighbor with a bigger house—show it can be done. As Western governments shift their sights from equality of opportunity to equality of results, they will cease to be a force for change and betterment in the lives of their citizens. Dahrendorf would promote "differentiation rather than integration in education, tax relief rather than further relief of income differentials,

success in industry rather than subsidies for those in trouble, incentives for individual mobility, geographical and otherwise."

Arts & Letters

**THE LETTERS OF
GUSTAV FLAUBERT**

edited by Francis
Steegmüller
Harvard, 1980
250 pp. \$12.50

"May I die like a dog rather than hurry by a single sentence that isn't ripe!" Not only sentences obsessed French novelist Gustav Flaubert (1821-80). Words were his passion. The author of *Madame Bovary* did not believe in synonyms; he would anguish for hours searching for "*le seul mot juste*," the only right word. Most of the letters collected in this first of two volumes are opinionated discourses on art and writing. The majority were addressed to Louise Colet, a minor poet and Flaubert's ever-nagging Parisian mistress. He steadfastly refused to marry the woman, preferring instead to live in the country and write. His goal: prose as "rhythmic as verse, precise as the language of the sciences, undulant, deep-voiced as a cello, tipped with flame." Flaubert is often described by critics as the father of the modern realistic novel. "An author in his book must be like God in his universe, present everywhere and visible nowhere," he proclaimed. Yet, he professed to being "a rabid old Romantic," who found literature's "most beautiful works . . . motionless as cliffs, stormy as the ocean, leafy, green and murmurous as forests, forlorn as the desert, blue as the sky." He corresponded at night; by day, he was himself creating just such works of literature.

**PART OF NATURE, PART
OF US: Modern American
Poets**

by Helen Vendler
Harvard, 1980
376 pp. \$15

Wallace Stevens said of the poet: *As part of nature he is part of us. / His rarities are ours: may they be fit, / And reconcile us to ourselves in those / True reconcilings, dark, pacific words.* In some 30 crisp essays that originally appeared in publications ranging from the *Southern Review* and *Parnassus* to the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker*, Vendler, a Harvard pro-