

of the Golden Bough, convergent myth being interpreted as undermining rather than as adumbrating Christian mysteries. Thus, while seeing Piero's *Madonnas* and his *Risen Christ* as worshipful images (p. 10), he yet takes the subject of his iconography to be 'the country God . . . worshipped ever since man first knew that seed is not dead in the Winter earth' (p. 40), and so must needs be content with the despairing trust that 'this unquestioning sense . . . of the returning seasons and of the miraculous . . . may yet save Western man from the consequences of materialism' (pp. 54-55).

DESMOND CHUTE

WINGED CHARIOT. By Walter de la Mare. (Faber and Faber; 10s. 6d.)

Time, said the philosopher, does not exist in itself: it is supplied by the mind from its own inward resources. Time, said the poet, bears all its sons away and they are forgotten; it is a dream that dies with waking: but these are similes, not definitions. Time is a more impossible concept than either Space of Matter: these two can be partially defined in relation to one another, and no one has ever personified either of them. We do not say *Mother Space* or *Sister Matter*, only *Father Time*. Eternity, which has no end and no beginning, can be thought of, its graph is the circle, but Time—?

Walter de la Mare, who has never shown cowardice in facing mystery, has in one long, intricate, elaborately annotated poem, ransacked those inward resources and, from them, spun webs of memory and distilled an ichor sometimes bitter, sometimes of a searching sweetness that has been for him and maybe for some of us a dew that can clear the eyes till almost we see—

*Now—with its whole penumbra clear to him,
Abject with misery or with bliss a brim.*

Throughout the poem the pendulum of the clock that ticks a varying rhythm in the verse, swings between misery and bliss through a cloud-rift of insight with its reiterated admissions that—

*Time has enigma been since time began
The subtlest of confusions known to man.*

The riddle, though it may not be answered, offers its strange facets to annotation:

*Time real, time rare; time wildfire fleet, time tame;
Time telepathic, out of space and aim;
Time starry; lunatic; ice-head; of flame
Dew transient, yet immortally the same.*

Though the writer makes no direct reference to it, the fable of the bird which came through open windows from the night to pass over a hall of feasting, haunts the poem with birds:

*Seagulls in their idling squadrons; . . . An old sly close-fisted cockatoo; . . .
The cocks, craned up to crow; . . . Autumnal jackdaws, meal-dusty
polls, . . . Glossed plumage, speedwell eye.*

and all the old man's memories of childhood are strewn with wild flowers on the ground beneath their flight.

The technique of this latest of Mr de la Mare's poems is austere with very little variation of its stanza. An insistence of reiterated rhyme-sounds drum into the reader's consciousness a sometimes terrifying, echo of the wheels of that winged chariot from which the book takes its name. Here and there his familiar magic re-asserts itself in the unrelenting march of its verse. An enchanted page is given to an hour-glass:

A subtler language stirs in whispering sands.

An almost-lyric tells of the long dream that marched through the short moment that did not suffice a candle in which to cool after its flame had been blown out. There is, too, a poignant tale of how a small boy sat through a desperate twilight believing that his mother had forgotten to fetch him home from a neighbour's house; there are sudden isolated images:—

*As seems the moon when clouds in legion be
'Gainst the wild wind to race, till suddenly
Her full effulgence floods a tranquil sky*

The whole poem is a distillation of things seen and remembered and made significant as only Mr de la Mare can make them. Time here is weighed and questioned and, though even this poet cannot reduce it to a definition, he has thrown his dart at him and left our sense of time enlarged.

NAOMI ROYDE SMITH

THE POETRY OF EZRA POUND. By Hugh Kenner. (Faber and Faber; 25s.)

Pound is to Eliot as Aristotle is to Plato; they are not in competition, whatever their partisans may claim. T.S.E.'s champions, given the initial fillip of their poet's own notes to *The Waste Land*, have been so efficient and assiduous in their exposition of his works that, by comparison, what with the apparent difficulties of the texts, and the economics, and the politics, E.P.'s exegetes have been left standing. At last we have, in Dr Kenner of the University of California, a man scholarly enough, clear-sighted enough and young enough, to achieve the prodigious task of bringing the poetry of E.P. into focus. First examining the underlying poetic principles, proceeding to a masterly appreciation of *Homage to Sextus Propertius* and *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, and then to analysis of the *Cantos*—a thing of the past one hopes the