

one-line toasts, and by including longer narratives, Jackson greatly extends the scope of and enriches the scholarship of the toast and its teller. A bonus is in store for the reader: Bruce Jackson presents his material without overburdening the reader with a lot of jargon and pseudo-erudition regarding behavior or its modification, mind-sets and fixations.

Review Editor's note: Get Your Ass in the Water and Swim Like Me is accompanied by a cassette tape of significant toasts which Jackson discusses in the book. This serves as an excellent teaching tool.

The History of Street Literature. By Leslie Shepard.  
Pp. 238, illustrations, appendix, glossary, bibliography, index of names.  
Detroit: Singing Tree Press, 1973. \$11.00.

Reviewed by Charles E. Martin

Street literature has often been regarded--rightly or wrongly--as one of the transitional bridges between the oral transmission of ballads, folktales, legends, proverbs, riddles, and superstitions and their later incorporations into published works. Leslie Shepard's The History of Street Literature is an excellent introduction to and survey of the sub-literary forms of expression in England from the 16th through the 19th centuries.

Books, for the most part, were written and printed for the upper classes up until the late 1800s. Cost was more a factor in keeping standard forms of literature out of the hands of the general populace than was literacy, since it has been estimated that between one-third and one-half of London was literate as far back as the Elizabethan period. The rest of the populace could hear news read aloud and ballads sung in the streets. Street literature evolved out of the desire of the lower classes for topical and traditional reading matter and the early broadside proclamations, which were "the official notices of new laws, intrigues, battles, and peace treaties" tacked to road posts and magistrates' doors. English broadside ballads appeared soon after in the 16th century and were prose, verse or woodcut pictures, or any combination of the three, printed on a large uncut sheet of paper or pamphlet made by some simple folding. Broadside sellers, or hawkers, walked through the streets singing the printed versions of traditional ballads or newly composed ones commemorating the latest news or rumor. News ballads usually contained lurid headlines like: LAMENTATION & CONFESSION OF J.R. JEFFERY, WHO NOW LIES UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH, FOR THE WILFUL MURDER OF HIS LITTLE BOY (1866), or, GOOD SIR, YOU WRONG YOUR BRITCHES (1625). Broadside woodcuts lining the streets fastened to walls and fences along with illustrated handbills and lottery posters served as a poor man's art gallery.

Religious and political pamphlets gave England's poor both topical news and issues. Chapbooks (eight to thirty-two page unstitched, uncut booklets) retold old romances, ancient battles, and superstitions.

Mr. Shepard wishes that we realize the sheer mass of this sub-literature (there were two and one-half million broadsides sold on the subject of James Bloomfield Rush's execution in 1849 alone), and its influence. Although unreliable factually, street literature played a significant enough part in England's social, cultural, and political thought for over 400 years that it can be used as a reliable gauge in understanding the society of its readers.

Additionally, The History of Street Literature explores the men and the methods of printing the various forms of "non-books." Publishers, for example, were said to have printed "the exact likeness of the murderer, taken right at the bar of the Old Bailey," when, in fact, they had been using the same woodcut for over 40 years. We are familiarized with the difficulties publishers encountered with the monopolistic practices of printing guilds and the punishments they endured because of official censorship, such as the loss of one's ears for publishing "sedicious and schlanderous Writings, Rimes, Ballades, Letters, Papers, and Bookes" during the reign of Queen Mary.

The influence of street literature is briefly explored in modern advertising and ballad scholarship, and there is a hurried examination of sub-literary survivals in Puerto Rico, Northern Ireland, and Northeastern Brazil. But it is during his chapter on survivals that Mr. Shepard drifts from his subject and begins to lecture us on the sins of modern civilization, left-wing radicalism, pop music, and society's certain Armageddon. One can only wonder why Mr. Shepard would allow such an interesting book to disintegrate into such senselessness.

The History of Street Literature contains about 80 pages of illustrative examples of the various forms of street literature, a glossary of terms, and an extensive bibliography. The price of eleven dollars seems somewhat high.

Prefaces. By J. Frank Dobie.

Pp. ix + 204.

Boston: Little, Brown, 1975. \$7.95 cloth.

Reviewed by Bruce A. Rosenberg

When J. Frank Dobie wrote, he opened a door to the reader through which he passed into a world of honesty, integrity, and decency; it is a world of the rocking chair on the front porch--casual, deliberate, forthright, homey--and of the prairie and its cattle, horses, and men. It is a world of insiders and outsiders with little common ground. As Dobie wrote of Cunninghame Graham, "he opens a window . . . but he never belonged, intimately and profoundly, to the pampas." W. H. Hudson, on the other hand, "opens a door and the reader passes through it." Frederic Remington (from upstate New York) portrayed soldiers merely as "clever imitations of Kipling's," while Andy Adams had "a sympathy for the land and for the cattle and horses and men of the land."