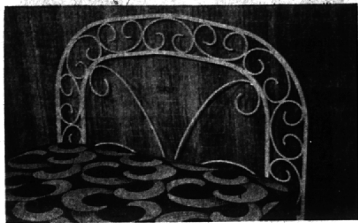


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**BOOKS and REVIEWS**

**My Brother's Keeper**

By Stanislaus Joyce, 259 pp. New York: The Viking Press, \$5.

Reviewed by JOSEPHINE MASON

Professor Stanislaus Joyce, who died in Trieste in 1965, was a younger brother of James Joyce and purportedly wrote "My Brother's Keeper" as an account of his influence on his elder brother. This book is based on the diary Stanislaus kept all his life. Apparently these memoirs were meant to include a later period in the author's life when he lived with James in Trieste and was influential in curbing James' excessive drinking. Professor Joyce's death, however, left the journal unfinished. Accordingly, this is not so much a story of James Joyce and his relationship to Stanislaus as it is a unique biography of the Joyce family.

THE JOURNAL begins in the 1880's and ends abruptly in 1902 when James was twenty-two and already an ex-patriot. It deals with the years before he considered becoming a novelist; his ambition then was to write poetry. Stanislaus, in these early years, was his brother's friend and confidant, though in temperament the brothers could not have been more different. Jim, as he was known, was unpredictable, changeable, interested only in literature which he considered Ibsen, Carlyle and Maugham but not Scott or Dickens. Often he read his brother's diary

uninvited and used many of the incidents and persons described in his later writing. He had a prodigious memory, was a brilliant student, and considered himself a genius.

STANISLAUS admitted he was a patient plodder who followed Jim in nearly all matters. Jim sometimes compared him to a big dog or a sluggish arctic bear whose scaly hide occasionally showed a glimmer of light. In the early days of the Joyce family when they lived at Bray, a suburb of Dublin, the senior Joyce was a well-to-do gentleman, able to support his family in middle class comfort. He had a gift for gab, a fine tenor voice, but nothing else according to Stanislaus, whose hatred for his father colored his whole life.

As the Joyce family dwindled, the senior Joyce spent more and more time in the pubs. We follow the gradual impoverishment and degradation, the moving from one home to another, each meaner and poorer, John Joyce's increasing brutality to his family, culminating in Mrs. Joyce's death, a scene of high tragedy.

PROFESSOR Joyce had a gift for language. The sketches of the family, their friends and companions are done with humor and insight. Although the author attempts to stay in the background, his own ideas of people and his almost obsessive prejudices (his almost obsessive dislike for the Jesuits and Ireland itself) have a way of overshadowing his main character.

It is significant that both brothers shared a distrust and dislike for their native land, leaving it as young men for the more cosmopolitan life of the continent. However, Ireland was still a part of them, evidenced by James' novels and short stories and Stanislaus' one book. The critics could write of nothing but home.

**Black As Night**

By Daniel D. Nern, 261 pp. Boston. Beacon Press, \$3.95.

Reviewed by MARY H. SCHMIDT

This book's author, a neighbor of ours, is an angry man. He's most angry at the south, but he's angry at Detroit, too.

Nern, a white insurance salesman who lives in Oak Park, tells of a family of negroes and their differing reactions to the "white justice" that doesn't follow rape of the daughter by three white men. The mother turns to voodoo; one twin son turns to hate; the other twin's character deepens as he assumes care of his violent brother; the sister retreats from unbearable shame into blindness.

Daniel Nern as he assumes care of his violent brother; the sister retreats from unbearable shame into blindness.

THE FAMILY'S flight from Georgia to Detroit is humorless,



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rough, sordid. With their arrival in the "promised land" the tone of the book changes. Scenes showing the southern Negroes gasping at northern ways—Negro men with white girls, driving lavender cars and entering white burlesque shows—are convincingly and sympathetically drawn. Then come the race riots and the family's realization that there is no solution—'If you' shake catch on fire and they ain't no water around,' just throw your clothes out the window an' let you' shake burn down.'

NERN was born in Chicago, moved to Detroit, and attended a southern military academy before moving back to Michigan. He calls his first novel "a story of human misery, hatred, poverty and love—a story of human beings who just happen to be black."



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