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and REVIEWS

Only in America
 By Harry Golden. Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company. \$4.00.

Reviewed by **TOM PHILLIPS**
 Harry Golden's "Only in America" is one of the most entertaining, interesting and thought-provoking books to arrive at the book stalls in some time.

Golden is the editor of "The Carolina Israelite," one of the last examples of personal journalism left in this country.

This newspaper is a five-column, 6-page monthly publication. To receive the copy to fill his columns, Golden keeps a barrel in his office. When he has the urge to write, he goes and then drops the sheets of writing into the barrel. When the time comes to put out this paper, Golden digs down into the barrel and finds copy.

What does he write about?

CARL SANDBURG, in his foreword to "Only in America," says: "Whatever is human interests Harry Golden. Honest men, crooks, nuckleheads, particularly anybody out of the ordinary, if even half-wit, any of them is in his line. He writes about them." "Only in America" is a collection of Golden's best writings from "The Carolina Israelite."

The book contains a multiplicity of topics, ranging from call girls to homely girls, failures to Shakespeares, cigars to smoking rate.

All of the many writings included in Golden's book are, without exception, witty, thought-provoking and well-written. Slip into any part of this book at random or an example of the most entertaining writing to appear in years.

Darwin's Century
 by Loren Eiseley. 352 pp. New York: Doubleday. \$5.00.

Reviewed by **HERB FISHER**
 The emergence of evolutionary theory from the status of bare hypothesis to irrefutable fact is an exciting tale. Its fulfillment required rejection of the theological notion of creation through successive earthly catastrophes; the idea that all creatures are fixed and incapable of organic change; the notion that all creatures exist according to a pre-ordained scheme of design along a scale of being at the head of which stands immutable man.

And in place of what was rejected, in place of this static view of the species, was finally developed the dynamic view of endless variation, occurring constantly in every part of every species.

How did this magnificent intellectual achievement come about? And what precisely was the role played by Charles Darwin, who combined the talents of a first-rate scholar and a dramatic writer in telling this story.

DARWIN'S genius lay in synthesizing the bits and pieces and fitting them together into a unified body of thought. The parts of the puzzle came from many directions—from the extensive biological observations of outmoded animal structures, from documentation of the ancient existence of extinct animals; from observations of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest; from the discovery of time, virtually endless time, within which the struggle for existence and broad species variations could have gone on.

Darwin added to the accumulated body of thought with his own observations aboard the Beagle and in the Galapagos. Starting with vague doubts as to the permanence of the species, Darwin's own objective observations strengthened these doubts; by synthesis of other contributions with his own experience, the evolutionary hypothesis became a theory crowned

The Palace Guard
 by Donald Braider. 309 pp. New York: Viking Press. \$3.95.

Reviewed by **DICK DAANE**
 After a funeral beginning, Braider uses a series of flashbacks to explain the death of the late Payson Hughes, a writer of fiction good and enough, we are told, to win a Nobel prize a few years before he committed suicide.

Each flashback consists of an interview, letter or some such device involving one of the great hangers-on which surrounds the writer before his death. This group, no one's surprise, is the "Palace Guard."

The reader sees the palace guard chafe through the eyes of a sneaky little rascal of a biographer named Charles Swanson, who is the book's intended prize villain, and who is described by the author as "... a very good, very straightforward and uninteresting writer."

THE READER is given no opportunity to evaluate Swanson's writing, but his approach to his biographical chore is certainly straightforward and uninteresting. This is a little surprising, since the palace guard numbers among its members such seemingly interesting people. There are two or three others, however, who are decent enough to avoid one another most of the time, the one of the mistresses, agents, publishers, and other assorted literary personnel, one of whom writes novels with such dandy titles as "Of Bread and Butter" and "After Birth."

PAYSON HUGHES wrote seven novels before his suicide. His last novel was the prize winner, and it was published six years before his death. During his last six years he devoted his best energies, as he had throughout his life to booze, women, and general bohemianism. Before he won the prize, however, he wrote novels which were published in his last six years he changed only to the extent that the novel he wrote during that period was not published. It was not published because he destroyed it (page-by-page, naturally) before he destroyed himself, which he did because he realized that the palace guard had destroyed him anyhow. So much for the monument.

SOME of the anecdotes in this book are very good reading, but as a novel it lacks movement. It is tied together by a gimmick—the death and flashback—but not by any momentum of its own. Payson Hughes is permitted an observation in a letter to a protegee which seems appropriate.

He says, "... you show a growth of technical proficiency. Granted that much, I must say that out of what you have produced is a series of snapshots, albeit expertly exposed and marvellously printed. It is, however, your demand that I accept the idea that they are not photographs at all but really parts of a large canvas that you have painted for me in your delicate insanity, with your fine imagination. "Well, it ain't no."

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 Wednesday, Dec. 31—Friday, Jan. 2

Only \$95 per couple includes: modern room with bath ... all meals from dinner Wednesday through breakfast Friday ... a gay cocktail party ... a great New Year's Eve celebration ... dancing and entertainment ... pajama party ... superb food and drink ... lotsa fun!

• **SHORT LOST WEEK-END NO. 2**
 Friday, Jan. 2—Sunday, Jan. 4

Only \$101 per couple includes: modern room with bath ... all meals from dinner Friday through breakfast Sunday ... 2 cocktail parties ... hay or sleigh ride ... dancing, entertainment ... a terrific week-end!

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