

BOOKS and REVIEWS

The Day On Fire

By James Ramsey Ullman. 701 pp. Cleveland: The World Publishing Co. \$5.95.

Reviewed by ROBIN BAHR

Arthur Rimbaud was a French poet who died in 1891 at the age of 37. Considered the founder of the symbolist school of French poetry, his writing, if controversial, had an important literary impact. His brief life was appalling, tragic, fascinating.

At 16 he ran away for the first time from his small provincial home town to Paris; living in the streets and begging food, scribbling poetry. Arrested as a vagabond, he was thrown into prison with a sexual pervert who ravaged the young boy. Taken home, he ran away three more times, succeeding on the fourth attempt with the help of Paul Verlaine, an older and established poet.

to whom he had sent his poetry and requested help.

SHORTLY after Rimbaud's arrival, Verlaine left his wife and child and moved in with Rimbaud. Together they wrote feverishly, encouraging each other in their revolutionary poetry, living wildly, and finally, flaunting their homosexual relationship.

With Verlaine's encouragement Rimbaud devised an almost demonic creed to explain and justify their unlimited creative and social rebellion—a systematic derangement of the senses. This was to be accompanied by deliberate and conscientious debauchery, the result being to experience truth. Right and wrong was not important. Only truth mattered, and that could be discovered only by total experience.

The violent relationship between the two men ended when Verlaine, in a fit of jealousy, shot Rimbaud for threatening to leave.

AT 19 Rimbaud returned home an old man, ravaged mentally, emotionally, physically by three years of depravity. At this point he abandoned his poetry and beliefs, and began his endless wanderings to escape the past and fill the inward void.

James Ullman has told this story in "Day on Fire," using as a basis the few known facts of Rimbaud's life—the relationship between Rimbaud and Verlaine, their poetry and its influence, the outline of Rimbaud's 16 years as a wanderer—and fictionalizing the rest.

The most satisfactory part of the book is the description of Rimbaud's travels which took him to almost every corner of the earth—to every European capital, to Java, Sumatra, Cyprus, eventually to Ethiopia, and Abyssinia.

THE AUTHOR'S attempt to pin down and define the violent force driving Rimbaud the man, are less credible, though no less fascinating. His mother, an advocate, iron-willed woman, is seen as a major factor in his demise. The experience with the pervert is seen as the original cause for his own perversions. But both factors are too pat, too simplified to equate with the unparalleled lungings of this madman genius.

As a novelist Ullman has created a fascinating, tortured human being. But as a biographer, Ullman has not satisfactorily recreated or unraveled the mystery of Rimbaud the poet.

Young Mr. Keefe

By Stephen Birmingham. 369 pp. Boston. Little, Brown & Co. \$3.95.

Reviewed by DONALD A. YATES

Stephen Birmingham is a young novelist whose protagonist in his first work is an intelligent, educated American of his own age. James Lyndon Keefe, Jr. comes from successful, moneyed people in the east. But as the novel opens, he is very much alone and confused in San Francisco, contemplating the broken pieces of his marriage.

A young man with sensitivity and a strong moral sense, Jimmy Keefe is a fascinating character to watch as he falls into a complicated friendship with Blazer and Claire Gates, a couple of his own age who have been married less than a year, but whose marriage has already undergone some disenchantments.

Blazer Gates, Jimmy's long-time school chum and roommate, is a fun loving and rather superficial sort of grown-up college boy. His wife, Claire, beginning to tire a bit of her husband's cultivated inanity, makes it clear to Jimmy that she is eager for passion, eager for the thrills of life which she already feels are slipping away from her.

In his relationships with the Gates, Jimmy Keefe finds new tensions brought to bear on his acute agitation over the separation from his wife Helen. Yet, Blazer and Claire represent to Jimmy—alone in California—a way of life which calls strongly, irresistibly. Jimmy goes to it, and, when Blazer is away on one of his frequent trips, he seduces Claire.

THE cast of principal characters is kept small, and author Birmingham handles his young people and their human but interfering families with a carefully controlled sense of the shape and sound of truth. The novel speaks convincingly from life, and it makes a promising first statement from a young writer whose subsequent work will draw serious attention from readers and critics of his generation alike.

The Insolent Chariots

By John Keats. Illustrated by Osborn. 233 pp. New York, 1958. Lippincott. \$3.95.

Reviewed by JAMES J. DOLAN

This book is basically a study of the effect of the automobile, and therefore of Detroit, on contemporary America. It is safe to predict that this work will not be enthusiastically received in Detroit except, perhaps, by Mr. Reuther.

Although labor-management relations have been studiously avoided, this volume will give Mr. Reuther something more gratifying than grounds for a complacent smile.

With a glint of malice, this work is dedicated to the Automobile Manufacturers' association. In a brisk, witty style the author develops the history of the auto and shows how it has changed the face of the nation as well as its living habits.

By a liberal use of quotations from industry representatives, the

author presumes to read the minds of executives, engineers and designers.

USING THE report of the recent Senate hearings, he creates a mythical corporation, General Chryslerford, and a mythical dealer to illustrate merchandising methods, dealer-manufacturer relationships, the establishment of prices and the consequent plight of a defenseless public.

While all this will be recognized as a hazardous leap from the particular to the general, still, it will not make Detroit swell with pride. For whatever the reason, Chrysler Corporation is mentioned only in passing. General Motors is called to task, but it is Ford Motor company that gets particular attention, especially as regards the conception, gestation, birth and predicted demise of the Edsel. The author's basic complaint seems to be that the industry is more concerned with pressuring the public to accept a flimsy product than it is with meeting the current fundamental needs of a nation on wheels.

LEST THE impression be given that this book is entirely abusive, let it be said that the author presents a logical and entirely practical program for the place of the auto in the nation's life. On his

assumption that the industry does possess a basic self-respect and public spiritiveness (however much obscured now), the author calls for a period of profitable introspection to consider all the steps necessary to make our cars safe, truly functional and more of a personal asset.

In this development, Mr. Keats' approach reminds one of Socrates, who used to delight in walking through the marketplace just to be made aware of the many things he didn't need.

It is to be hoped that this book will enjoy a wide circulation for the very simple reason that it is calculated to make the average citizen think, particularly as regards safety. Regardless of the validity of the charges made against the industry, there is much for the average person to ponder about his relationship to his own car, and how and for what he uses it.

Once he reads this book that relationship is bound to change.

Lawrence E. Smith
Landscape Design and Construction
135 N. WOODWARD
to the Wilson Building
Phone MI 4-2933

FOR ANY BOOK REVIEWED IN THIS SECTION
And FOR ANY BOOK ADVERTISED ANYWHERE
Visit or Call
OLD PROF'S COMPLETE BOOK SHOP
4202 N. Woodward Royal Oak
MI 4806 6-9777
9 W. Lawrence Park
Detroit 3-6428

SHIRTS
Luxury Laundered
4 HOUR SERVICE
Birmingham
DRIVE-IN CLEANERS
• WOODWARD AT ADAMS RD.
• WEST MAPLE AT CRANBROOK RD.

MODELS HOBBIES
HO TRAINS
HO'S
MODELS HOBBY SUPPLIES
Hobby Trucks
Hobby Cars
Hobby Boats
Hobby Planes
Hobby Engines
Hobby Tools

Hollywood Adjustable WALKER
RENTAL & SALES
• HOSPITAL BEDS
• BED SIDES
• WHEEL CHAIRS
• WALKERS
• CRUTCHES
MICHIGAN FIRST AID
Invalid needs—sick room supplies
LI 2-2027 JO 4-6847
1621 S. Woodward, R. O.
3 doors north of 10 Mile

Walk with distinction
in the sure knowledge of style in your Noble Manor topcoat
We don't recommend walking over riding but there's no better way to enjoy the comfort and distinctive good looks of your NOBLE MANOR topcoat.
Rare cashmere is blended into a fabric that combines unusual luster and softness.
Camel Navy Grey \$70.00
PECK'S MEN'S WEAR
Open Every Friday Till 9
108 S. Woodward MI 4-7724

All Expenses from Detroit
ONE WEEK
BAHAMA ISLANDS \$181.20
SUN • DEEP-SEA FISHING • LUXURY HOTEL • SWIMMING • FUN
ELKIN TRAVEL BUREAU
296 N. Hunter, Birmingham MI 6-2170



Guaranteed anti-freeze service

Pay for one "PRESTONE"® fill...get refills if needed for nothing!

Don't gamble with fall's first freeze. It could ruin your engine and radiator. Marathon's Guaranteed Anti-freeze Service guards your car from the first fall freeze right through winter.

Guaranteed Anti-freeze Service depends upon, and includes, a complete cooling system inspection before draining and refilling with "Prestone" brand anti-freeze.

You get anti-freeze protection down to the degree of cold you want. And your Marathon dealer guarantees this protection in writing. Under the terms of the guarantee, refills if needed cost you nothing.

Drive in today! Get Marathon Guaranteed Anti-freeze Service for worry-free driving all winter long.

FREE! Get bright red car mufflers to take the chill out of the coming cold (retail value \$1). Get them without paying an extra cent! Just drive in and get Guaranteed Anti-freeze Service. Then give this coupon to your Marathon dealer for your free car mufflers.
Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____
Zip _____

MARATHON Home of **SUPER-M®** and **MILE-maker®** gasolines
TODAY—OIL BUILDS for your TOMORROW
Distributed by the Clark Oil Company: Sold at the following Stations
Woodward & Taunton, Birmingham, Michigan **Maple at Hunter, Birmingham, Michigan**