



## REVIEWS

### Prize Stories 1959: The O. Henry Awards

Selected and Edited by Paul Engle, 305 pp. Garden City, New York. Doubleday. \$3.95.

Reviewed by  
ANN JACOBS

Under the auspices of the O. Henry memorial awards, the best American short stories of the year are annually selected from many sources, and published with three chosen as prize winners.

The stories presented here vary in every possible way, including, of course, success. John Cheever writes of suburban life with a warm, sure hand in "The Trouble of Marie Fling."

Jean Stafford draws with her usual polish a retired philosophy professor in "A Reasonable Facsimile." There is a love affair in New York, a heretofore widower in New Hampshire, a cowboy in New Mexico. There is symbolism, adventure, violence and humor.

THOMAS C. Turner's third prize winner, "Something to Explain," is a story that should have been better than it is. The central character is a government employee in Washington who is failing a security check, and must discover the reason. Probing his past for mistakes gives him a clearer understanding of himself and shows him the far-reaching effects government bureaucracy has had on his life.

This outline for a good story gets lost in a disconcerting amount of travel—Georgetown, the Virginia coast, Washington, New York—and a characterization too dependent on superficial detail and not complete enough to arouse the reader's sympathy.

Second prize winner, George P. Elliott, manages extremely well to combine suspense, humor and the fantastic in this story of a man who gets his M.S. in anthropology by living "Among the Dangs." The Dangs, an uncharted South American tribe given to human sacrifice, accept the intruder primarily because he is colored and with his gift for mimicry quickly masters the language.

THE immediate fascination in this encounter between civilized and uncivilized men gains depth and intensity as the anthropologist is initiated into religious rites.

His trance and visions begin as part of a well-remembered act, but the innate primitivism of man nearly succeeds in drawing him back through time and stripping the centuries of civilization from him. Ironic humor runs counterpoint to the serious theme in this excellent play of the primitive against the modern.

The first prize winner fully deserved his award. Peter Taylor stays close to the now-established southern tradition with "Venus Cupid, Folly and Time." Placed in a border town called Mero, conflicts between past and present and between individual characters are presented in a style that hovers between realism and fantasy.

THE story's focus—a party given annually for Mero's adolescent aristocracy by an elderly brother and sister—has all the weird trappings we've come to expect from our southern writers. The old house is decorated with quantities of paper flowers and diffused with seductive sweet odors and strange disturbing lighting.

There are numerous suggestive, if not pornographic objects dart to delight the young party-goers.

and even a suspect sexual relationship between the host and hostess. All this serves not simply to produce a moody sensationalism, but as an effective means for showing a decadent yet gracious past and a righteous yet cruel present.

IF THIS book does indeed represent the best short stories of July 1957 to June 1958, it was a year that did justice to the serious short story—its writers, publishers, and readers. While they are not masterpieces, they are all stories of quality and sincerity that deserve attention and praise.

### A Treasury of Art Masterpieces

Edited by Thomas Craven, 322 pp. New York. Simon and Schuster. \$7.95.

Reviewed by  
SALLY PARSONS

"A Treasury of Art Masterpieces," first published in 1919, has been in a style in most art lovers' libraries. New developments in color printing have now enabled the publishers to reissue for \$7.95 the entire contents of the original 322-page edition.

"Craven would have us look upon his book as a 'museum in book form.' For while painting is one of the most comprehensive and appealing of all art forms, it is also one of the most inaccessible because of the physical difficulty of traveling to far-distant museums and churches to see the original works. Thus, in the late 30's when color printing came of age, Craven

finally found it possible to bring great masterpieces accurately into the home.

THE "TREASURY" has been eagerly sought by the public, and today it still ranks as probably the best one-volume survey of masterpieces in Western painting. Craven's highly readable, lucid style plus the 161 color plates and the 480 black and white reproductions make it a delight for the layman as well as for the more knowledgeable art student.

The masterpieces are grouped by school and arranged in chronological order. First is the Italian school—Giotto and the primitives, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, the Venetian high Renaissance painters—followed by the Flemish, Dutch and German schools. A section is devoted to the three great Spaniards—El Greco, Velasquez, and Goya—and then come a series of paintings from the early French, English and American schools. The remainder of the book deals with modern French art—the currently popular paintings of

### Congregationalists To Hold Meetings For New Members

The Congregational church of Birmingham will hold two preparatory meetings for prospective members March 17th and March 24th. Both meetings will be held in the social hall, and will begin at 8 p.m.

The reception of new members and Communion will be on Maundy Thursday, March 26th at 8 p.m. The Rev. Raymond Fenner, pastor, announces that a Confirmation class will be held each Saturday.

Renoir, Picasso, Cezanne, Braque et al.

WITHOUT doubt this volume is a good buy. One could scarcely find a more pleasant way to effect self-education in the various phases of art history. And a beautifully illustrated art book always makes a welcome gift.

March 12, 1959 THE BIRMINGHAM (MICH.) ECCENTRIC 7-D

at 9:30 a.m. from March 14th through May 23rd, for young people in the 8th grade or above who have not yet joined the church.

Mr. Fenner will conduct the classes and they will be held in the church parlor. All young people who would like to join the church on May 24th are asked to attend the first class on Saturday, March 14th.

### Presbyterian Dinner

Men of all Presbyterian churches in this area are invited to the First Presbyterian Church's Men's Club All Presbyterian Dinner March 18th at 6:45 p.m. Lloyd M. Collins, president of the National Council of United Presbyterian Men, will speak.

Are you in the market for a home? Then read the "Homes for Sale" columns in the Classified Ad section of this week's Birmingham Eccentric.

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