

aspects in which his hero appears to less advantage." In this sense much Mormon biography has been essentially hagiography.

Without advocating a cynical, materialistic approach to men like Ballard and Roberts, who can never be understood apart from the faith which permeated their lives, I wonder if the time has not arrived that Mormons can view their leaders as human beings. Indeed, realistic biographies of three-dimensional individuals would seem to offer several advantages. They might prevent the trauma which sometimes occurs when we encounter evidence of human frailties which our pasteurized official histories had not prepared us to expect. They might be both more reassuring and more faith-promoting to those of us who, still far from the City of Enoch, experience our own ups and downs. And they might even be read by teen-agers who, fresh from their Salinger, do not respond with much relish to the thin gruel served up in most life stories of Church leaders.



## GOD, MAN, AND ART

*Dale Fletcher*

*Beginnings.* By Carol Lynn Pearson; illustrated by Trevor Southey. Trilogy Arts: Box 843, Provo, Utah. 63 pp. \$2.50. Dale Fletcher contributed to the Art and Belief show in Utah last year and is an instructor in art at Brigham Young University.

If you think you don't like poetry, be prepared for a surprise when you pick up Carol Lynn Pearson's new book, *Beginnings*. I have yet to talk to a person who was not impressed with it, whether they were an authority on writing or the type who would not ordinarily come near a book of poetry. You will be hearing it quoted in Sunday School and Sacrament Meeting soon.

Carol Lynn Wright Pearson is from Provo. She earned a master's degree in drama from Brigham Young University, minoring in English, after which she taught these subjects at Snow College for a year. Wanting to see the world, she took a tour of Europe, followed by a month and a half in Greece, two weeks in Russia, some time in Kenya, Africa, and three and a half months in Israel. When she returned home she wrote articles on Russia and on Israel which were published in a national Jewish monthly. She has received recognition

repeatedly for other of her writing, plays and poems. Now she is working as a script writer for the Brigham Young University Motion Picture Studio.

Her husband, Gerald Pearson, is also a drama major of considerable ability. When the publishing companies in Salt Lake City told them that they would not publish her book ("Poetry won't sell—") Gerald and Carol Lynn borrowed money and published it themselves, adopting the name Trilogy Arts. "Trilogy" refers to God, Man, and Art, according to Gerald. We will be seeing more of that name. In four weeks the first printing of two thousand copies was sold, almost entirely from one outlet, the B.Y.U. Bookstore.

I predict that this book will soon be in the majority of L.D.S. homes as a classic example of something we are going to see more of, *Mormon Art*. I use the term with some misgiving because it invites misunderstanding, but for me it has a particular and serious meaning. The essential ingredients of what I would call Mormon art are the light of the key of knowledge and the application of the law of consecration of talents. Of course, to be art at all presupposes a sensitivity to artistic form. Carol Lynn is a knowledgeable poet, well read and sensitive to good form. She has an admiration for Emily Dickinson and Japanese Haiku; that is, her poems are a bit like mouse traps—of course it doesn't hurt, just the opposite. What I mean is that she likes to use familiar words in surprising ways. For example, I asked her if she was a convert and she said, "Yes, I'm being converted." Her poems have the ping of simple clarity and directness. She traps you into seeing the light. She says, "Poetry should clarify, not obscure life." She reminds one of Keats' description of good poets:

Misers of sound and syllable, no less  
Than Midas of his coinage, let us be  
Jealous of dead leaves in the bay wreath crown;

Her poems are like neat, live buds which unfold into surprising flowers. She uses the key of knowledge as a compositional device to situate a wallop of insight at the right place in the sequence. We see the bud, the petals begin to unfurl, and ah! She does it better in some poems than in others, naturally, but the quality is quite consistent, and she is certainly pursuing a fruitful direction. A good example of one of these unfolding poems is the one entitled "At the Altar."

*At the Altar*

The thought  
Of forever  
Teased my mind  
Like a mountain  
Through a thickly  
Misted view.

But today the  
Veil dissolved  
To show—  
Eternity  
Is you.

It is as if she leads us with a few well chosen words into a situation, an involvement, a picture, a problem, that is a subject; and almost before we realize what happened we are at the end and have tripped some trigger word that allows the light to flood through. At first you feel as if you had read something no more profound than "Roses are red and violets are blue," but as the sense comes through, it becomes clear to you that here is a highly significant insight into the nature of man, woman, marriage, and life after death, and the more you think of it the more wonderful it becomes. Of course, such insights derive from the key of knowledge, which even a Shakespeare didn't have, but Carol Lynn does. That she dares to avail herself of it is what makes her poems unique. And yet she does so with such sincere respect and humility.

The various beginnings with which she deals in the book are birth, baptism, marriage, parenthood, death, and other related events before or after mortality. All these beginnings are illuminated by the one end: not merely to pluck the flower from the crannies as did Tennyson, but to know what God and man is. That is what she has in common with Eliza R. Snow, although they differ in obvious ways. Both realize the import of the key of knowledge—"but until the key of knowledge was restored, I knew not why."

To reveal this import artistically is Carol Lynn's intent:

*The Eleventh Hour*

Had I been born  
 To other centuries—  
 How pleasant  
 To stretch  
 In the sun  
 And choose from  
 All life's  
 Possibilities  
  
 This one,  
 Or that.  
 To prove the  
 Earth is round,  
 Or tame the ocean,  
 To write a dictionary  
 Or expound  
 On Shakespeare's  
 Subtle irony.  
  
 But these are  
 Daytime jobs  
 And,  
 As I was born  
 To time's  
 Saturday night  
 My ordained task  
 Is to kindle  
 The Sabbath light.