

“sink like a smudge pot / dry rot / stink clot / rotted through the brain cells / my hell / oh well . . .” I do draw the line at gratuitous exercises like “Trip-dream:” “all purgation purple / oozing orange / my mind / a vermilion varminatry / vacuum / vile and viscous.”

Ms. Boyd is experimental and creative; I hope in the future that she tries harder to penetrate the surfaces.

Emma Lou Thayne’s book has been selling well. One friend said, “I bought it because I can understand it. The ideas are good.” It’s the same old plague. We do not always understand that an inspiring subject does not a poem make, nor does simple sincerity, not even just deep feeling. If the poet’s voice is not distinctively his own, sounding through the craft, the reader would do better to invest in sermons.

I believe that Ms. Thayne’s book is successful not simply because the emotions are those many of us share, but because her *motions* are well-realized. The quiet voice, the exact phrase combine to make us aware of the art, deeply aware of the images. There is in her work, too, the underlying paradox of life, as in “Heretic:” “Indulge / my searching / my unsteady voice: / You share / the blame; / it’s You / who gave me / choice.” And “The Middle” which is described as a “brink place” and a “safe place” “where one unbalanced move / could catapult determined limbo / into living.”

There is a nice attention to detail, a variety of forms, which do not call attention to themselves. She experiments some by arranging short poems to fill a whole page, uses large spaces between words, in the manner of James Dickey, none of which can be shown here. The sonnet is well-represented too.

Her feeling for nature is evident in such poems as “Pruning the Sage,” and in a group about Lake Powell, showing a penchant for Western scenery which she manages to internalize. The simple cutting of sage from a privet reveals the terror of a snake, finally put to rout by “four violets in bloom.”

The book ends with a long poem describing the death of a seventeen-year-old boy, sustained by dialogue between students who knew him. The young survivors’ first brush with death emerges as “caves too deep to look at in the sun.” It is a narrative poem which builds to a climax.

Ms. Thayne’s faith in God and in life lives in these poems, but she never preaches. She simply “shows” us her heart, which is how all good poetry should serve the faithful.

## Lives to Inspire

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*No More Strangers.* By Hartman and Connie Rector. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1971. 168 pp. \$3.50. *Win If You Will.* By Paul H. Dunn. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1972. 257 pp. \$4.50.

Both of these books are composed of a number of short autobiographical accounts of L.D.S. Church members who have achieved success in important personal quests. *Win If You Will*, like a series of good Priest’s Quorum Meet-

Some books belong to all times and places. They are the rivers, mountains, seas and continents of our intellectual and moral world. They tell us where we are and how far we have still to go. They are, in short, our landmarks.

—Maynard Mack

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ings, presents outstanding athletes, scientists, businessmen and others who describe the self-discipline, persistence and allegiance to Gospel principles that led them to secular success. *No More Strangers* is like a Fast and Testimony Meeting in which a number of converts describe their spiritual path to the Kingdom.

In both works, the autobiographies included are of persons who fit the objectives of the book and who have a special appeal to Church members. The two books make a solid contribution towards overcoming the rather narrow focus on the Church elite that has characterized the writing of most L.D.S. authors. While none of the autobiographers included are common men or women, as demonstrated by the depth of talent and motivation they have manifested, neither are most of them General Authorities, descendents of Hyrum Smith, or even descendants of the Pioneer Band of 1847. Furthermore, these individuals with few exceptions emerge as believable people who have dealt successfully with disbelief, failure and even acclaim.

Another common strength is the autobiographical format of the two books. Such an approach risks degenerating into apology, giving too little credit to other persons, or omitting important detail. The two books were not entirely free from these and similar problems, but most of the respondents were markedly successful in presenting cogent, well written narratives that packed a great deal of detail into a short space.

Quite successful in achieving their general objectives, both books have weaknesses. *Win If You Will*, though slightly the stronger in regards to overall quality, has the more noticeable deficiencies. In presenting heroes for young people to use as examples, Elder Dunn selects six athletes, three scientists, two businessmen, one military hero and a token educator. The emphasis upon athletes perpetuates a type that has been overworked already. Furthermore, since the book is dedicated to the youth of the Church in general, it should have been possible to find at least a token female worthy of adulation. The message of the title *Win If You Will* is somewhat misleading also. Despite the modest assurances of thirteen gifted persons that anyone can succeed since they did, there is a strong likelihood that most children born with cerebral