Some interesting parts of Straniero's book include a discussion of a book written by a Dominican priest in 1604 who referred to speculation that part of the Ten Tribes of Israel had immigrated to America and were later discovered by Columbus; his comparison of Joseph Smith with Don Bosco, the founder of the Salesian Order who is a canonized saint of the Catholic church; and his mention that Emilio Salgari, a popular Italian writer of romance novels (whom Straniero compares to Arthur Conan Doyle), began to write a romance novel about the Mormons prior to his death in 1911.

Straniero's book also contains a bibliography of about 150 books, most of which are about Mormonism and very few of which would be considered anti-Mormon, and an appendix which lists the text from seven sections of the Doctrine and Covenants; two chapters from the Book of Abraham; ten chapters from the Book of Mormon; Church statistics for 1989; and a brief history of Mormonism in Italy which discusses the nineteenth-century mission of Lorenzo Snow and the conversion of Vincenzo Di Francesca, one of the first Italian converts to Mormonism in the twentieth century.

Introvigne's and Straniero's books represent a budding of the study and publication of Mormon history in Italy and demonstrate that serious authors in that country are beginning to study scholarly material published in the United States about Mormonism in a responsible manner. Mormonism is becoming a subject worthy of serious study rather than the predictable target of sectarian and biased attacks. While these books may not be recommended reading for prospective converts, or general Church membership (like many books published in English about the Church by non-Mormons or by Mormon scholars), they are unique in a country which has no history of religious pluralism.

Songs of the Old/Oldsongs

Only Morning in Her Shoes: Poems about Old Women edited by Leatrice Lifshitz (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1990), 183 pp., $12.95.

Reviewed by Karen Marguerite Moloney, lecturer, UCLA Writing Programs, Los Angeles, California.

AS LEATRICE LIFSHITZ EXPLAINS in her introduction, this unusual collection of verse represents "an attempt to return old women to the circle, to the continuum of women and of life" (p. viii), and its rich and convincing characterizations succeed ably in doing so. Lifshitz writes also of her desire "to invade the stereotype of the old woman and expose it as the one-dimensional caricature that it is" (p. vii); in these pages again a goal easily, skillfully achieved. In 141 poems, divided thematically into ten roughly twenty-page "chapters," we meet a compelling cross-section of women in a variety of vivid settings. In "Grandmother's House: The Baba Yaga," a vital grandmother vigorously brushes a granddaughter's hair (p. 5); in "Maudie," an avid hobbyist sits on the porch swing, "her Remember the Alamo stamp / blue and quivering / underneath her magnifying glass" (p. 6); in "Flexible Flyer," an eighty-seven-year-old sledder speeds downhill (p. 40); and in "Old Age Must Be Like This," a woman alone and ill "turns the electric blanket higher / wonders who will feed her birds—" (p. 134). The pages turn, and the women we meet grow more feeble: a leaky bladder steals self-respect, a broken hip mocks one's mobility and sense of freedom, senility ravages another's mind. Altogether slower of step, they are irrepressible nonetheless:

> Delight in her voice
> at ninety-five she's made a trip
> of five hundred miles.
> (p. 37)

Highly individualized, flesh-and-blood

women—anything but cardboard stereotypes, anything but women easy to forget.

Last May my ninety-year-old Aunt Cathryn flew from Omaha to Los Angeles to visit my mother—and make a first trip to Disneyland. Though my friends expressed wonder at her vigor, for me it is simply another anecdote among many attesting to the vigor and longevity of my maternal line. I come from a family of old women. Our champion, Great-great-grandma Catharina, received a gold cup from the Kaiser on her hundredth birthday and lived still another three years. Though her record holds, my great aunts, in their eighties and nineties when I was a child, were serious contenders, and my grandmother survived to one week short of ninety-nine—a card-playing, zestful matriarch who still walked to market and the post office in her small Nebraska town. Old age in my family has rarely meant defeat, rarely inspired the general horror with which most of us regard aging. Even so, I recall my seven-year-old distaste as I came upon my grandmother pulling off a blouse: goodness but she was old and wrinkled. Old age frightens us, reminds us forcefully of our own mortality, and often as not, reveals our inadequacy in its face. How indeed should we respond, act around an old woman? And how do we regard our own graying, slowing, and increasing frailty? This book gives us some ideas.

The poems in the anthology have been lovingly collected and arranged. One particularly nice touch is Lifshitz's decision to introduce each section with haiku; and the selections she has made are among the best modern haiku I have read—humorous, as in Carrow De Vries'

> Old woman so fat,
> if she had wheels
> she'd be an omnibus;

poignant, as in Evelyn Bradley's

> Grandmother's quilt
> still hanging on the clothesline
> long after sunset;

even harrowing, as in Francine Porad's

> echoing
> cry of an old woman
> m a m a.
> (pp. 81, 157, 137)

But the excellent haiku, samples of which moved even an introduction-to-literature class swelled by requirement-filling economics majors at their lackadaisical, spring-quarter worst, are only one of the book's attractions.

The poems, more than half published here for the first time and taken from a variety of sources, are relatively recent work. The "oldest" previously published (and dated) poem appeared in 1968; a dozen were published in the 1970s; and the remainder have appeared in scattered collections and poetry journals since 1980. Few have been anthologized elsewhere. These then are "new" poems, and it is unlikely even a poetry aficionado would have encountered many of them before, and certainly not in anything like their current rich clusterings. In this way, discovering the collection becomes all the more startling a pleasure: so many good, unfamiliar poems introduced in one convenient place. Their very quality does, however, make me wish that the book included more detailed notes on the contributors. I want to know more about many of these poets, I want to read more of their work, and Lifshitz could have made it easier for me to track them down. I also wish that the table of contents listed each of the poems by title; it would save me unnecessary hunting trying to locate that particular poem I want to share with someone, or that I simply wish to savor again by rereading.

And these are poems that can be shared and reread. The poets among us may wish for more variety of form in a collection of this length, but the free verse that represents the anthology's bulk (offset only by three sonnets, one unrhymed; four other rhymed poems; and the haiku) commands a wonderful range of approach. The ten chapter titles indicate additional range—as well as suggesting poignant images in and of themselves:

"her eyes still greet me," "with the children raised and gone," "fighting the wind," "she tunes in on crickets," "nana used to say," "two canes—out of step," "an empty cup," "autumn nightfall," "nursing-home hall," and "the sound of foghorns." And the language in these poems is convincing and accessible, often colloquial: few would find the poems obscure. Most memorable, though are the images delineated so forcefully, and on nearly every page: "Mist curls at / her swollen ankles / like a lap dog / she ignores," writes William Pitt Root of the cursing, clever, classically marginal bus passenger in "Passing Go" (p. 90); "I am hanging / my body on a line with clothespins, // it is an old bag, a broken- down / dreamskin, a dilapidated girdle / pickled grey with washing," chants Rachel Loden's liberating narrator in "The Stripper" (p. 132); while "The old woman plays in a shapeless black coat, / button missing, she skips through the orchard," in her delight delighting us all in Virginia Barrett's "Autumn Poet" (p. 76). Such images multiply over and over, and though they evoke responses varying from pleasure to disgust, depending to a large degree upon the viewer's own comfort with the life processes portrayed, they are always arresting.

But it is the women themselves who stay with us long after the book is on its shelf. American mostly, they are also Ukrainian, Irish, French, Jewish, Eskimo, Vietnamese, Armenian; individualized portraits in the main, they are also representative crones, earth mothers; mainly seen through a variety of others' eyes—a daughter's, a son's, a grandchild's, a great-grandchild's, a neighbor's, a friend's, an observer's—we also see her through her own eyes, the lens my personal favorite perhaps. At least I continue to be overcome by one particular dramatic monologue, Geraldine C. Little's "Mary Ludwig in Old Age (Whom history knows as Molly Pitcher" (p. 115–17). Molly is as real to me here as the old women in my own family, women with particular frailties, particular memories, yet it is the quality of resonant imagination in the poem to which I respond most strongly. What indeed happened to Molly after the revolution? An encyclopedia quickly provides the facts; Geraldine Little provides the life. And this Molly does live. Yes, she remembers the war—"Maggots in boyish flesh move through my dreams"—and "makes no apology" that she "aimed to kill." But what she prefers to remember are her years as a new bride: "I / am as young as you are, just married. I see / the beautiful arc of his body over me, hear // lovewords no lady should know, that I *loved*." Indeed, rather than recollect the sweating, "blackened limbs" of the boys to whom she ferried water, she "would like to think only of how it was when he came / to [her] first in the high hard bed, how his hand / round a cup of tea in the kitchen was tawny, and kind." In this poem, Molly is real, she is earthy, she is wise—all the more the heroine for having shed some of her myth.

Only Morning in Her Shoes is a myth-shedding, stereotype-shattering book. Though it holds no *special* appeal for Mormon readers (aside from its publication by a Utah press and three poems by Dixie Partridge), it should nonetheless *appeal* to them very much: all of us, after all, come from a family of old women.

Penetrating the Heart of Mormonism

The Memory of Earth: Homecoming by Orson Scott Card (New York: Tor Books, scheduled for 1991 release).

Reviewed by Michael R. Collings, professor of English, Humanities Division, Pepperdine University.

THE MEMORY OF EARTH begins the five-volume story of the Oversoul, the master computer of the planet Harmony. For forty million years, the Oversoul has preserved peace among humans exiled into space by a nuclear holocaust on Earth.