

SMITH'S HUNDRED

THIS ISSUE of *Canadian Literature* is in part a celebration occasioned by the publication of the *Collected Poems* of A. J. M. Smith¹, one of Canada's important writers and, since the 1930's, a poet of international repute. It is an act of homage, but just as much a conversation in which various writers, including the poet himself, express their views on his achievement; as becomes evident, it is an achievement by no means confined to the hundred poems which Smith at this time has chosen to represent him. Earle Birney, who has known A. J. M. Smith ever since the early days of the renaissance of Canadian poetry during our generation, speaks of his virtues as a leader in a literary movement and as an anthologist who has used his trade to help shape the Canadian literary consciousness. The distinguished English poet Roy Fuller who, like the editor of this magazine, appeared beside A. J. M. Smith in the English poetry magazines of the 1930's (*New Verse* and *Twentieth Century Verse*), takes up the thread again and examines Smith's poetic achievement as a whole. The critic Milton Wilson, of a younger generation, considers the relation between Smith the critic and Smith the poet. And A. J. M. himself, contributing two new poems, talks of his own work and how it has come into being.

There is little we would add editorially to a group of opinions which appears to us satisfyingly cohesive. But we must at least say that in deciding to pay this kind of tribute to Smith we were moved not merely by our view of the excellence of his poems (here we agree with Roy Fuller that they form one of the distinguished collections of the century), but also by his insistence on high and rigorous standards in appreciating the writers of our country, an insistence which created the situation where a magazine like *Canadian Literature* could not only have a critical function to perform but could also find the means to perform it.

¹ A. J. M. SMITH. *Collected Poems*. Oxford. \$3.25.