

est. Hollander will at least give a quick gloss for poems such as "Xenophanes," telling us which pre-Socratic fancy he invented that Emerson will filigree; Bloom and Kane have better things to do.

Still, Emerson is rarely all that recondite. He knew his audience, which was, then as now, that part of the middle class that believed upward mobility was not incompatible with spiritual aspirations; that looked to poetry for affirmations not to be found in church, even affirmations as broad as this:

One thing is forever good;
That one thing is Success,—
Dear to the Eumenides,
And to all the heavenly brood.
Who bides at home, nor looks abroad,
Carries the eagles, and masters the
sword.

At such moments, Emerson's grandiloquence verges on that of Sousa or Streisand, and one must be susceptible to both veins of populist sentiment to enjoy him properly. Much the same can be said for the poems that John Hollander has assembled for his anthology of nineteenth-century American poetry. Poetry was a popular art in the nineteenth century, and Hollander has shown a generous, un-snobbish appreciation of that fact. The sixth poet on the contents page is Clement ("Twas the night before Christmas") Moore, and the seventh is Francis ("O! say can you see") Scott Key. Among the many old chestnuts to be found here, which a purer, more academic taste would have debarred, are "The [Old, Oaken] Bucket," "Home, Sweet Home!," "Dixie's Land," "[We] Three Kings of Orient," four song lyrics by Stephen Foster, four poems by James Whitcomb Riley (including "Little Orphant Annie") and two by Eugene Field. Hollander's rule would seem to be that if a poem has won a secure place in Bartlett's, it deserves a place in his pages.

And he's right, in practice as well as principle. The book has much of the fascination of a large museum, where a new curator has rehung familiar pictures alongside work that has spent decades in the deepest sub-basement. Not every resurrection is an aesthetic triumph, but what a larger past they all add up to! Here is "Judith," a protofeminist effusion by Adah Isaacs Menken, the first woman to be a disciple of Whitman:

Stand back!
I am no Magdalene waiting to kiss the
hem of your garment.
It is mid-day.
See ye not what is written on my
forehead?

I am Judith!
I wait for the head of my Holofernes!
Ere the last tremble of the conscious
death-agony shall have shuddered, I
will show it to ye with the long black
hair clinging to the glazed eyes, and
the great mouth opened in search of
voice, and the strong throat all hot
and reeking with blood, that will
thrill me with wild unspeakable joy
as it courses down my bare body and
dabbles my cold feet!

There is only a single specimen of La Menken, but it's more than she's had for a century, and the same is true for some dozen of Hollander's resurrectees—

hymn-writers and topographers of the newly opened continent, patriotic balladeers and Jamesian expatriates cooing sonnets over statues in the Vatican.

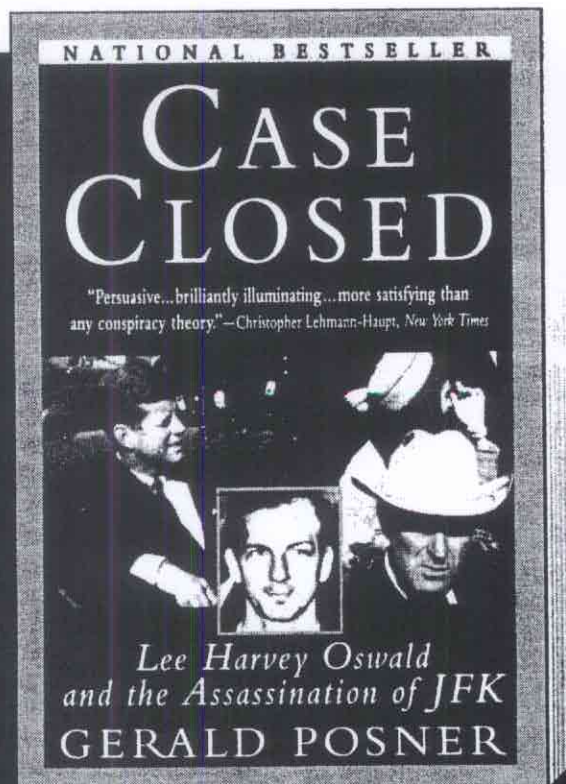
And then there are the roomsful and galleries of Old Masters: Emily Dickinson is accorded ninety pages, William Cullen Bryant fifty-two, Melville eighty-six, Whitman 220, Longfellow eighty, Emerson ninety-six and Whittier fifty-six. And given Hollander's perfect pitch in these matters, all of them are as good as one remembers, or better.

Does one remember? I am 54 and went to a parochial grade school in rural Min-

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