

his back and his nose rides the dream world like a keel." Salter, whose novels *Light Years* and *A Sport and a Pastime* are greatly admired by a devoted following for their craftsmanship and subtlety, deals in polished surfaces and dark undercurrents, some darker than we may be looking for.

The spirit rises at paragraphs about travelers in Europe that begin: "They had breakfast together in hotels with the sound of workmen chipping at the stone of the fountain outside," but two of the travelers, yuppie New York lawyers, callously contribute to the delinquency of an Italian schoolgirl. There is a deep sadness to most of these stories, an emptiness to most of these lives, but the author leaves us less depressed than haunted. The title story is extraordinarily touching. A ghost? story won't let go. A European film actor whose lack of real talent is about to catch up with him inspires memorable prose: "Tinted posters of him would pull from the sides of buildings. . . . He would smile across the alleys into the sour darkness."

North Point \$14.95

A Month by the Lake and Other Stories, by H. E. Bates

The author of 25 novels, almost as many collections of short stories, as well as essays, plays, and an engaging autobiography, the English writer, H. E. Bates, died in 1974 without ever having built the public following on this side of the Atlantic which his talent deserved. The present collection of 17 reissued stories is a welcome step forward to broaden his reputation. Readers new to Bates may share with his longtime supporters the pleasure they have in his genius for precise description, in his economy of plot and phrase, and in his gift to turn a simple and conventional incident, through a miracle of dialogue, into a remarkable encounter. Never false, never given to cheap effect, never overstated, Bates' style is distinguished among modern writers. These vignettes of the lives of ordinary people, each of whom is

shown in some way to be extraordinary, provide an attractive introduction to the work of a master craftsman.

New Directions \$17.95

The Cold Smell of Sacred Stone, by George C. Chesbro.

This is a unique spy thriller in that the triteness on the dust jacket ("dauntless dwarf detective"; "pulse-pounding suspenseful adventure"; "fate worse than death"; "deranged killer"; "special hatred"; "keep his head"; "losing his love"; "mortal jeopardy"; "win back his soul"; "super-secret facility"; "deadly secret"; "perform miracles"; "unsuspecting power"; "sinister intrigue"; ad nauseum) is exceeded only by the literary quality of the text.

Atheneum \$16.95

Blood and Sable, by Carol J. Kane.

The collapse of the Russian Empire and the Revolutions of 1917 will long provide grist for the historical novelist's mill, and until a better one comes along, all will be measured against *Dr. Zhivago*. Ms. Kane makes a game try here in this first novel, and some readers will find Princess Anya Sviridova a delightful heroine. Torn between an American diplomat and a fanatical Bolshevik peasant (yes, peasant), struggling to survive in a mad world, the princess moves toward a melodramatic destiny. All quite overblown, of course—in the way of all *Zhivago*'s imitators.

McGraw-Hill \$17.95

Heaven's Prisoners, by James Lee Burke.

Elmore Leonard, scoot to the side; Detroit, pay homage to Cajun country. Dave Robicheaux is on the loose again, fighting some of the baddies who got away in *The Neon Rain*, and before the rainy season the bayous will run red. Robicheaux and his second wife are minding their own business when a whole shrimpboat-load of drug-trafficking and Contra-aid shenanigans literally falls out of the sky on them. James Lee Burke tells as exciting a story as