

that is not bolted down to the tarmac.

Mr. Bates's strength lies notoriously in his evocations of the countryside, his careful building-up of all the sights and sounds, the changes of weather and season, that constitute a particular environment. In this field, indeed, it would be hard to find his superior. When he switches his cameras and microphones on to human beings, one becomes aware of blurring and attenuation. The trouble with *The Feast of July*, a tale of a betrayed girl and her relations with the various members of the family who befriend her, is just that not enough happens most of the time, and if human relations are to be investigated they had better manifest themselves in what happens between characters. And yet one cannot reject a novel that does one part of its job so well, that depicts country scenes so attractively and precisely.

The basic situation of *A Summer Night* goes a little further