

J. MEGSON

THE QUAIL MUST DIE

The feeding cattle spread
in Mitchell green and Flinders red.
I help their quest for grassy bed
the very air is rich with quiet and peace.
The horses doze,
and the fragrance of this summers day
commands repose.

And now a quail takes to the air
with customary whirr
of wings that beat
defiantly and proudly in retreat.

I saw the falcon, intent, suspend.
Dismayed I watched this awesome streak descend.
I froze to the frenzied beat of panic stricken wings.
Numbed, I felt the bursting heart within
as blood staining claws take hold, and so
another heart must cease to beat and flow.
Should I snuff the spark from this gift of God
and bring
to a close the sheer unfettered beauty of this rapturous thing?
I say no. Else then the crime will be mine also.
I would have to shoot a thousand crows on distant runs,
who press their foulest crimes on new born lambs and calves, now
the shark in bay and bight,
the wild cat, the slaughterers of the night.
I would have to purge all these, and then
I would have to destroy ten million men.