these. For example, Paton's essay "Who Is Really to Blame for the Crime Wave in South Africa" (1945) contains "the essential themes" of what was to become *Cry, The Beloved Country* (1948; p. 30). Later he finds that Paton's drawing "on incidents and persons from actual life . . . adds an air of authenticity in the novel's [*Towards the Mountain*] social settings" (p. 32). Because of this concern for the actual, Callan is not at his best as a literary critic. While examining *Too Late The Phalarope* he claims that the phalarope bird is a real one, which is true enough: "it is an actual bird about whose habits old Jacob . . . knew more than 'The Englishman' who wrote the book." But he draws the conclusion that, therefore, "the book of birds . . . is not a symbol in any exact sense. Neither is the phalarope a symbol" (p. 46). Yet the novel itself clearly defines the symbolic level of this actual bird; while Pieter and his father are watching for the phalarope, the father says, "This phalarope that no one has ever seen, is clearly a very shy bird." Then Tante Sophie elaborates, "So I sat and looked at them both, and knew that my brother was looking for no phalarope, but for something that he has lost, twenty, thirty years ago" (pp. 133-34). The book's title certainly emphasizes this symbolic sense of the bird, the point of mutual contact of father and son that came too late. Callan's near-critical approach that does not fully address the novel critically, just as he touches on, yet does not pursue, the Old Testament-New Testament parallels and relationships in *Too Late*, is a difficult issue in the book and an unnecessary limitation to its scope.

Having said these things, however, about the limits of the book, what it does provide is of real value: certainly Paton's use of his own father as a model for Jacob Van Vlanderen of *Too Late*, of the connection of that bird book with an actual one by the English ornithologist Austin Roberts, of his own passion for birds and flowers are important issues in understanding the novel or more substantially what he was doing in the novel and how he developed such a sustained sense of lived life which creates much of the power one feels reading his fiction. Studying Paton at this late point in his career allows Callan to see central themes in his work which become persuasively clear, such as his "interest in the dilemma of a man with strong principles in an office of public trust" (p. 100), a dilemma personal for Paton and one which informs his fiction as well as his biography of Hofmeyr, as Paton himself indicates: " . . .the good private individual must behave somewhat differently when a public man . . . If you are going into politics and accept a position of power you must trim your sails . . ." (quoted p. 100). Another major theme in Paton's life work is akin to that tension between one's inner and outer life: the "ways in which utopian *apartheid*" of the "Christian rulers of Afrikanerdom" "constitutes a challenge to Christian principles" (p. 118). This subject was central in much of Paton's later work, such as his autobiography *Towards the Mountain* (with its metaphorical link with the racist mountain of American black writing) as well as those works which had to deal explicitly with the inexorable encroachment of *apartheid*, such as the biographies of Jan Hofmeyr and Geoffrey Clayton. As we read of Paton's struggles with oppression, we may remind ourselves of other South-African writers both white like Athol Fugard and black like Dennis Brutus, who have in different ways created for us images of their inhuman world.

One would hope, as a result of his well-researched familiarity with the details of Paton's life and works, that Callan would undertake at a proper time the full biography of this important and fascinating man and writer. Callan's engagement with his subject has mellowed since the first edition, and the reader discovers an image of the man struggling, not a massive hero but a very human person with a gift for fiction. Callan has cut this study down, shorter in fact by eleven pages than the original, by excising such pads as the discussion of the art of biography in the chapter on *Hofmeyr*, so one's overall understanding of Paton is enlarged, enriched, and balanced. The publisher has improved the print and layout of this edition so as to make it a satisfyingly readable volume.

## Keki Daruwalla
## *SWORD & ABYSS*
## New Delhi: Vikas, 1979. Pp. 137. Rs. 25.00
## Reviewed by Bibhu Padhi

*Sword & Abyss* is the first collection of short stories from someone who has already given us three admirable collections of poetry. The introduction to Daruwalla's poems in the anthology *Ten Twentieth Century Indian Poets* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1976), declared the nature of his poetry by quoting his own words: "I am not an urban writer and my poems

are rooted in the rural landscape. My poetry is earthy, and I like to consciously keep it that way, shunning sophistication . . ." The same words could be used to describe most of his stories in this collection. They are earthy and without sophistication. But they display a remarkably tender and intimate tone—something that has grown out of the suffering and happiness of the innocent rural folk. They have a simplicity and a strangeness about them—a haunting quality that disturbs us even while we are paying attention to their realistic details. In all the stories, the emphasis is always on the people and the community, on what it is like to be a part of that community which is so cruelly custom-bound and superstitious, so vividly Indian.

The half-hallucinatory, half-real transformation of a loving stranger into a tree with flowers; a shaman's intensely visionary enactment of his own waiting future through a participation in the sensuous exuberance of a tribal-communal dance; the ending of long and tortuous years of drought and disillusionment of a land, a people through the person of a "beloved" who is smuggled, against enormously active obstacles, across the "salt desert" of a country's borders: these are some of the themes on which these stories are founded. What is really important to note, however, is not the themes themselves but the particular emotions or feelings which they hold and arouse in the reader.

Daruwalla's fifteen stories in this collection, like his own poems, are full of the northern hills, rivers, and the deep forests within which light plays so beautifully with the shadows. Most of these stories, but especially "The Tree," "Shaman," "Sword & Abyss," and "Love Across the Salt Desert," possess a quality of mystery whose most memorable aspects are explored only within darkness and night. Daruwalla's language has been able to handle in a luminous, all-seeing way, a world of dark, nocturnal forms. It is replete with metaphors, similes, and various other kinds of figurative activities. The stories themselves are a mixture of dreams, visions, nightmares, uncanny evocations of ancient Indian beliefs, of flashbacks and flashforwards; so that it becomes difficult for the reader to find in them a sure line of narrative. On the other hand, there is a certain drifting, wind-borne quality about them—something, in other words, that refuses to concentrate on any one character or object. What we find in these stories is the poet walking intimately hand-in-hand with the storyteller.

Daruwalla is one of contemporary India's best poets. *Sword & Abyss* would only show his readers how beautifully he has used his experience as a poet in storytelling.