

Keith Barnes
27 rue du Rhin
Paris, 19e
France

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Dear Mr. Untermeyer,

I hope you are well, send my warmest wishes to you, and again ask you if you might be able to do me a favor.

It is now 18 months since I completed my second book of poems, THE THICK SKIN, and I have been sending copies of it consistently to every publisher I can think of. The MS is, not only in my opinion but in the opinion of various other people whose judgment I trust, richer and more interesting than BORN TO FLYING GLASS, yet it has been refused by 13 publishers to date, including Harcourt, Brace who, if you remember, published my first book.

I have had a long 'battle' with Dan Wickenden, my present editor at Harcourt, as I did not like the terms in which he chose to reject THE THICK SKIN over a year ago, and I have since made a new version of the MS which I have sent him. He should now be about to take a decision on it with Mr. Jovanovich, and I wondered, even though you have not read my second book, if you would be kind enough to put in a word on behalf of my work with Mr. Jovanovich? If my MS is refused again by Harcourt, I still do not intend to give up and, in such eventuality, will write directly to Mr. Jovanovich, but I feel that, alone, I will not stand much of a chance of ~~changing~~ changing the situation.

The attitude of Harcourt, to the present moment, in view of the fact that Penguin Books has accepted to publish a selection of my work, from both BORN TO FLYING GLASS and the MS they ^(Harcourt) have not accepted (in fact the large part of the selection made by Penguin comes from the MS and not from BFG), is hardly understandable, to me at least. I would think it would be to their advantage, as well as mine, to print my second book, as it will obviously sell more after the Penguin publication, which will, incidentally, be in the Penguin Modern Poets series.

If you would like to assure yourself of the value of my MS, I will willingly send you a copy - a thing which I would have done immediately, except that I have no extra copies here and no mimeo-facilities. If the opinion of William S. Burroughs, to whom I sent a copy of the MS recently, is of value to you, he has written to say the following: "I do like your work. It is finished, professional and distinctive."

I enclose one of the poems from the new MS, and hope you enjoy reading it.

With warmest wishes and respect,

yours ever,

Keith Barnes