

nars discussing various social and political processes changing the face of Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Jacob Blevins. *Catullan Consciousness and the Early Modern Lyric in England from Wyatt to Donne*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004. viii + 138 pp. \$79.95. Review by EUGENE D. HILL, MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE.

“Catullan consciousness” could mean very different things. For readers of Celia and Louis Zukofsky’s translation of the Latin poet (1969) it would evoke a close imitation of the very phonic shape of the author—so that, for example, the opening phrase of Catullus 69 (“Noli admirari”) becomes “No lift odd mere horror” and of poem 70 (“Nulli se dicit mulier”) “Newly say dickered my love.” Altogether different is the sense assumed by the phrase in Jacob Blevins’ monograph. For this critic Catullan consciousness does not entail even having read Catullus; Blevins is quite explicit on this point. Rather, the argument is that an awareness of the stances assumed by Catullus in his love poetry, however indirectly derived, helps characterize key poets of the English Renaissance, especially Wyatt, Shakespeare, and Donne, with some attention to other canonical figures (Sidney, Spenser, Herrick and Jonson).

Key terms for Blevins are *disillusionment* and *realism*. He contends that Catullan themes and motifs offered a counterpoint to the idealizing doctrines of Petrarchanism and neo-Platonism. Catullus in his view is a bruised flower of a poet, forever voicing his disillusion at the failure of a beloved to live up to a Roman code of fidelity. The same biographical account is provided for each of the English masters: the failure of the real to live up to the ideal generates verse.

The difficulties here are twofold. None of the readings breaks new interpretive ground. Little is gained from page after page of assertions like (in connection with Wyatt’s “They fle from me”) “Catullus’ lover is also thrown aside by his mistress, and he eventually attempts to overcome his lady’s rejection of him,” and “Catullus’ lover is suggesting that Lesbia will suffer in the manner in which he has been physically and emotionally suffering, and in essence Wyatt’s poet-lover is hoping for the same thing when he says ‘I wold fain knowe what she hath deserved’” (36). No surprises here for students of English literature, and no illumination of the familiar texts discussed. At the

level of generality assumed by such concerns as illusion and reality, duty and disillusion, we are talking novelistically and not about the language and form of poetry.

The second problem is a related one. Blevins's Catullus is not the edgy, cocky, and linguistically experimental master that readers of poetry have long cherished—not least (one may suppose) Renaissance authors whose Latinity generally exceeds ours. Not everything in the amatory verse of the English Renaissance is neo-Platonic idealization or a presumed Petrarchan supineness before the beloved. But who ever thought it was? So to evoke Catullus as the extra factor involved is nugatory—especially when (as Blevins admits) we don't know whether Wyatt or Shakespeare read the Latin master.

Blevins correctly notes that seventeenth-century imitations of Catullus prove most effective precisely in their divergences from the original—in the Jonsonian or Herrickian quality of the English poem. But who doubted this? Readers wanting to get at Catullus but without much Latin should turn to George Goold's version (1983) or Peter Green's very recent rendering—then, of course, to the quirky but immensely instructive volume of the Zukofskys, a little course of aesthetics in its own right.

Johanna Eleonora Petersen. *The Life of Lady Johanna Eleonora Petersen Written by Herself*. Edited and translated by Barbara Becker-Cantarino. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. xxix + 140 pp. + 1 illus. \$18.00. Review by JONATHAN STROM, EMORY UNIVERSITY.

Johanna Eleonora Petersen (1644-1728) was one of the most prominent voices in early Pietism and its most important female figure. Her published exegetical and devotional books won her admiration as well as notoriety for her visions, heterodox ideas, and challenges to gender norms. Her autobiography is one of the earliest of its kind by a German woman and became a model for Pietist autobiography in the eighteenth century. Barbara Becker-Cantarino's fine translation of her *Life* is a welcome addition to the sources on German autobiography and Pietism available in English.

Daughter of an impoverished noble family, von und zu Medlau, Petersen had little formal education and at twelve was sent to serve at court. She found the opulent lifestyle of the higher nobility increasingly at odds with her