

New from the poets

nd is Rising. By Viola Wendt.
oll College Press. \$4.50.

oy, River Town, River. By
s Halla. Wolfsang Publica-
6930 Washington. Racine.

e With the Tsar, and Other
ns. By Susan Firer. Illustrated
ynne Srba. New Rivers Press.
ll Press Distribution, 1636
an View Ave., Kensington,
\$3.

l Poet. By Mark E. Temme.
ance and Co., Ardmore, Pa.
5.

TER THERESE LENTFOEHR

WENDT'S second collec-
poems is arranged in four sec-
Seasons and Synopses," "On
of Poetry," "Transcriptions
ms" and "Fragments from a
Life." The titles indicate the
and variety of her writing,
s alive with life's mysteries
btleties and ambiguities.
ocuses sharply and tenderly
and fauna, having a special
hy for insects: "the
hrusts his ancient stridence
un," and the "toad . . . flicks
aic tongue/slowly under the
" while in the flower king-
e hears "the jack-in-the-
reaching some extra-canon-
i."

ocial interest is the final sec-
en the poet takes her cue
rary classics, such as Lucre-
e Rerum Natura," T. S.
Love Song of J. Alfred Pruf-
Emperor Hadrian's words to
Anima vagula blandula (lit-
wandering, charming). She
r poem, "A Woman to Her
ith
merry one
olemn one
st
est
ill be severed from whom
Time runs out of breath?"

are poems of a sensitive poet
ar touched with the wisdom
memorable experiences. A
well as intellectual feast.
quotation from Elliot, "the

river is a strong brown god," Chris
Halla, a native of Butte des Morts,
Wis., writes of his close acquaintan-
ceship with rivers and speaks of
them with nostalgia and charm.

"Born to the river/and the river
town" he tells of his returning, as he
"hovers between/the now and
then/speaking at once to the
river/and the ghosts of the river
town." His insights are deep, as the
line-patterns of his poems follow the
rhythms of the river, the river-queen,
the river-girls, the island, the boys
fishing in the Fox, "our backs to Feb-
ruary."

This poet knows what poetry is —
not a word out of place, not a word
too much in these eight exquisite lyr-
ics. This is a rare, if slight, collection.
The poet relives in retrospect his
boyhood experiences, which will
equate with those of other Wiscon-
sinites.

Susan Firer's 96 very personal
poems have an earthy charm and an
ineluctable cosmic dimension into
which a reader enters with delight.
In fantasy she recreates the past, as
in her book's title-poem "My Life
with the Tsar," or can come as close
to fact as "A Milwaukee Warehouse
Fire" when "children cried to stay up
& out, and men looking from tavern
windows/remembered things they'd
never known."

Especially pleasing are the poems
that deal with everyday life as in
"The Lady of the House,"

"who is a miracle with a straw
broom
a wonder at clean clothes
and so with cooking . . . the doctor
of these walls
rubbing Vicks in little chests
door slammed fingers and
sick stomachs —
a doctor who can fill her own
prescriptions
being the pharmacist also."

In a supple, very free verse, of
which she is in beautiful command,
Miss Firer will never bore, but al-
ways charm. She is a poet to be reck-
oned with.

In "Minstrel Poet," Mark Temme's
third collection, he has partially
abandoned the didactic tone of his
earlier verse and moves with ease

into a lyric mode. This is all to the
good, as he seems to be finding his
true voice in the meditative lyric
keyed to nature.

"I lie back in the field
Amid the dandelions and grass,
I spend the rest of my day that
way

Just thinking of how good it is to
be alive."

Of the poems of distinctive locale,
one of the best recalls how, walking
after a light snowfall, he is reminded
of an identical snowfall in the past:

"I still see the image
Red berries on a shrub . . . dusted
white with snow
One January in Mee-Kwon Park,
Mequon."

His sensitivity to external nature
and his Thoreau-like communing with
it are positive facets in this late col-
lection.

The reviewer, a widely published
poet, lives in Racine, Wis.

The Milwaukee Journal