POET

My desk is silted with papers.
Write to the Minister.
Protest torture of political prisoners.
Save the forests.
Protest the pollution of estuaries.
Demand no high-rise in this area.

in Politics

The highroad led
widening, to this city . . .
The rules you keep here are the traffi c rules.
You can't break these:
areas of plate glass ice
would show, hot blood glitter
on neon roads under the stop-and-go lights,
the ambulances come screaming . . .

There's one chance only
to turn the other way.
She is here manipulating poetic
counters to illustrate an idea,
rather than involving us with
a unique sensuous experience,
which would have made a real poem.

About half of these poems are,
rightly, very angry (some of them
have a Robinson Jeffers' misanthropy about them). They are
angry about exploitation — the
exploitation of people and of nature,
to make a profit, which is
always justified by referring to the
Standard of Living (although
concern is really for maintaining the
difference in standards of living).
But this underlying theme isn't
concentrated on; the protest is
diffused into issues.

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The poems I enjoyed most in
this book are those like Twenty-Five Years (all of the well-known
excellence in this). The Marks,
Counting By Sevens, Moving South: personal poems. And there
is in the political poem Eve Scolds
so much wisdom, so much playful
intelligence that it escapes my
criticisms. One is also affected by
passages from other poems; this
was for me the most effective of all.

Whatever we sang, dead politics
died; the ruined rivers died,
the forests died.

This is the tone in which one
hopes she will protest. It does
matter greatly that the voice of
one of our most talented and re-
spected writers should be heard
in such a cause.