

Editorial: Hard Times

If there is an American Poetical Association, it has not issued the following statement:

There is presently a 'job crisis' in the poetical profession. The American Poetical Association believes that persons contemplating the production of poetical works should be aware of this fact. Over the past several years, population trends have produced an exceptionally large number of persons preferring rhyme to reason at the same time that the rate of decrease of public literacy has been accelerating. Moreover, government support of the arts has slackened. Unless there are sharp cuts in production, the supply of sonnets and villanelles will continue to outstrip demand well into the next millennium. Therefore, authors considering the writing of verse should realise that present publication conditions are very different from those obtaining only a few centuries ago. Most publishers no longer offer warehouserom to 'slim volumes', and even the 'little magazines' are finding more fashionable and profitable ways of filling odd corners.

We feel under an obligation to bring these facts to your attention. We should point out, however, that the situation in poetry is not unique. A comparable shift is going on in most of the arts: actually, the situation in some other fields is worse, and may remain so. We are distributing this statement not in order to discourage genuinely inspired young persons from setting out for Parnassus, but simply in order to urge them to consider carefully the chances in present circumstances that any Muses are still living there. They should gather the fullest possible information on the matter and make realistic plans. The manufacture of laurel crowns was one of the first victims of the recession in world trade.

There is an American Philosophical Association, and it has issued a document whose terms need only the mutation of a few *mutanda* to yield the two paragraphs printed above.

Is there an American Mystical Association?