EZRA POUND

I

Too often I pooh-poohed his poems
Surveying the inkiness of the globe,
Why should my pen, I thought, dip pity
In praise for another American poking
At European curios
In the backroom of our Serendipity
Shop, gawky stranger from Idaho,
Rough rider with stetson, jaunty pose,
Browning in holster, nudging the elbow
Of Yeats and T. S. Eliot:
Then, slipshod, pushing a Chinese cart
Loot-laden with Oriental art;
Discovering in Provence that Ver
Had shown her greenness to young trouvère
And troubadour? Each poly-canto
Lengthened for ragers who can't toe
The literary line. Impatient
Reformer — public account marked paid —
Behind barbed wire and in asylum,
Still he wrote on, louder in silence,
For how can frankness show the traits
Imperialists denounce in traitors?
Debunker of Swiss bank, usurers,
He counselled poets: 'Use your errors
Wisely, forget the democratic
Let down, the academic tie.'
Safety of the world go bare,
While Spender wrestles with his fire-hose,
In vain, Auden becomes a choir-boy.

II

Rhyme, echo the name of Ezra Pound
Whom the war capitalists impounded.
For miserable years he pounded
The wall of modern verse, expounded
The madness of dollar, franc and pound.
Forget the theories he prepounded,
But praise the language he compounded.
The centuries are in that pound.