

Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock 'n' Roll Music, by Greil Marcus (Dutton, \$3.50). A remarkable study of "the very idea of America: complicated, dangerous and extreme," as it is manifested in the underlying myths of some carefully selected rock and pre-rock performers. Similar studies could be and have been devoted to other eras in terms of our fiction and poetry, but for the '60s Marcus judges (quite correctly) that our national collective unconscious will be found most fully and conveniently in rock—not only the lyrics, which may be more explicit, but in the musical idioms, which are also a kind of statement. He has wisely avoided the diffuseness which could have been a real danger in such a study by focusing closely on four groups and individuals who represent the most significant tendencies: Sly Stone and his "family," the Band, Randy Newman and Elvis Presley. The result can be read along with the most interesting studies of American literature.