

**LOW-COST, ENERGY-EFFICIENT SHELTER**

Edited by Eugene Eccli  
(Rodale Press, \$10.95 hardcover,  
\$5.95 paperback)

Recently, it seems, science fiction novels about a world with limited sources of energy have filled the racks at the local bookstores. Some of them may remain fiction for only a short time before the terrible messages they contain become a harsh reality. Friends in Florida indicate that a *monthly* electric bill of more than \$100 is not uncommon now, and that more increases are in sight.

Luckily, we have people like Eugene Eccli looking out for the rest of us. *Low-Cost, Energy-Efficient Shelter* has answers for questions most people don't know to ask, and well-articulated plans that may well help to prevent the world described in those sci-fi novels (or, at least, provide alternate lifestyles if their themes do come to pass).

This book may have a built-in problem, however. Unless you have experienced do-it-yourself home repairs or are in a fairly active search for a home, to be either custom-built or remodeled, you may not be able to give appropriate importance to some of the points Mr. Eccli and his team of authors present. No criticism, just a word of caution...

One real stumbling block for the reader who would really like to use the ideas presented is that, for most of us with limited time, knowledge, and mobility, the theory is great but you can't get there from here. The authors write about ideal situations which are hard to come by in this area of the country and timetables that few who work steadily could maintain. You *know* that they're right, but you can't prove it.

Back to the positive side, Mr. Eccli presents so many thought-provoking tips and ideas which can be readily adapted to existing home plans that the ideals outlined can remain as goals and the book will lose none of its value. And the book does have value, now more than ever.

Larry Green

**MYSTERY TRAIN**

by Greil Marcus  
(Dutton, \$3.50)

Greil Marcus is simply the best rock critic in the field. Excluding Robert Cristgau, Dave Marsh, and the high seriousness of Jon Landau, the rest are mere journalists and pretenders. Named after one of Elvis' earliest Sun sides, *Mystery Train* is a book evocative of its title, a trip into the American psyche to discover the underlining forces that made the United States produce rock 'n' roll.

Marcus, politically astute, sees himself as an American first, foremost and despite any criticism of the political character of our country. We are all subject to the American Dream, both wooed and cheated by it, basking in its promise and suffering when it cannot satisfy the longings that it forces upon us. It is in this environment, he says, that America has given birth to jazz, blues and rock 'n' roll.

*Train's* basic tenet is that the appeal of rock is something central in the American soul. Marcus traces that nebulous entity through the commonalities in performers as diverse as the great blues artist Robert Johnson and novelty performer Harmonica Frank, both precursors of the rock sensibility. The Band, Canadians with a love for America's music, are seen as spiritual countrymen able to look at our values with a different perspective. Sly Stone risks his popularity with *There's A Riot Goin' On*, as he tries to carve out his own version of America and his role as a black

man. Throughout, *Mystery Train* focuses on performers who have strived through the risk that demands of their audience or wishes for success have forced upon them. Marcus also manages to capture the uncomfortable magic of moments that the Band's Robbie Robertson sums up when he says that "music should never be harmless."

The book's concepts and motifs slip together, building to a crescendo in the long closing section on Elvis Presley, the book's epic hero. For Elvis to have achieved his astounding success, while simultaneously possessing such artistic inconsistency causes his sacrifices, played out against the white South, to take on a particularly uncomfortable character. Marcus cuts through the paradox to paint a truly disturbing picture of the King in the section entitled "Presliad."

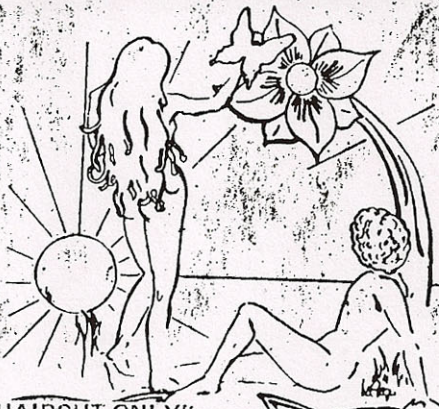
*Mystery Train* is amazing, deep in thought, yet nursed by a love for rock 'n' roll which tempers its complexity with a powerful feel for the music. Pirandello once remarked that critics have a responsibility to their craft which pushes their responsibilities as men into the background. *Mystery Train* brings those bonds together in the finest book on rock 'n' roll to date.

Lawrence Keenan

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