

Henry Miller on the joys of picking up the paint brush

PAINT AS YOU LIKE AND DIE HAPPY

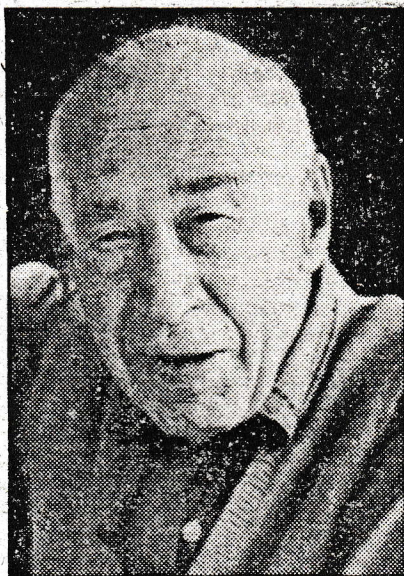
By Henry Miller. Foreword by Lawrence Durrell. Chronicle Books. 144 pages. \$16.95.

By Hunter Drohojowska

Henry Miller, an inspired and compelling author, also turns out to be an avid painter. This book surveys some 40 years of his aquarelles and etchings, from the 1930s to the 1970s, interspersed with delightful essays on painting.

The watercolors, whether portraits, still lifes or landscapes, are random, exuberant compositions of luminous color. As Miller himself admits in his essays, the works demonstrate a merely rudimentary knowledge of technique, yet that scarcely matters. The author used painting in a manner many educated artists cannot, that is, as an elemental connection to the creative process, and a form of release.

The works are evidence of pure emotions, sensed and made visible. This spirit pervades Miller's essays, which are all about the joys of putting brush and color to paper, rather than the intellectual justifications for so doing. In both the



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essays and the paintings one finds equal enthusiasm plus a blend of touching naivete and curiosity with keen qualities of observation.

This is a moving volume by a writer who dedicated the last years of his life, while living here in the Pacific Palisades, to the art of watercolor. ■

Hunter Drohojowska writes for L.A. Weekly and California Living magazine.