



# DYLAN THOMAS

*reading*

A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS IN WALES  
AND FIVE POEMS

Volume 1

CAEDMON TC 1002



## DYLAN THOMAS • Reading, Volume I

Fern Hill • A Child's Christmas in Wales, a story • Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night  
In the White Giant's Thigh • Ballad of the Long-legged Bait • Ceremony after a Fire Raid

Since Dylan Thomas stepped before a microphone to make this recording, five years have passed. Five eventful years have given the record an importance, and an audience, undreamt of by any of us there at the recording session. "A Child's Christmas in Wales," the lovely story Thomas read that day, has become a classic among Christmas tales. The poetry he chose to read is quoted by tens of thousands who would not then have recognized his name. One poem, "Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night," has become significant as a life-cry flung at death — the poet's own. And the poet being dead, the legend of his life has taken on accretions and distortions of a fantastic kind. One intimate journal of these years has already appeared. Others will probably follow. The truth will be confounded and lost until once again Dylan Thomas' poetry is allowed to speak for itself, and for him.

Although this was the first record ever made by Thomas and by Caedmon, and so worthy of solemnity, the choice of contents was a gay and haphazard affair. Poems were discussed over rounds of beer, and dropped in favor of puns and scandal and politics. But as time before the recording session grew short, thoughts of including a prose piece occurred to Dylan. One afternoon — the place a restaurant called The Little Shrimp — the thoughts crystallized. There was a story — the name escaped him — which *Harper's Bazaar* had printed a while back. About Christmas in Wales. Could we get hold of it? The issue finally gotten hold of was the *Bazaar's* sole existing file copy, lent only upon the most solemn oath of return.

But the choice of poems, though discussed over many a table, awaited last-minute inspiration. The recording day was February 22, Washington's Birthday. Dylan, arriving late at Steinway Hall, looked celestially calm, hailed everyone benignly, propelled himself vigorously to the concert hall stage — and discovered that he had forgotten his books. And on a holiday! Fortunately the Gotham Book Mart was open to relieve the emergency, and while part of Caedmon kept Dylan from fidgeting, the other part raced to Gotham and back again. During the interval a few poems had been selected — "Ceremony after a Fire Raid," "Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night," "Fern Hill" — and with hardly a pause or stutter, Dylan recorded these and "A Child's Christmas in Wales." Then, seeming to have run out of ideas, he perched himself on the edge of the stage, and proceeded to look receptive. Someone named "In the White Giant's Thigh" and "Ballad of the Long-legged Bait." Dylan easily agreed, abandoned his stub of a cigarette, and read. The record was finished, and it was good, and after one final play-back as fillip, the whole easy, laughing group adjourned across the street to The Anchor for something in the way of celebration. But no one, and Dylan probably least of all, realized that in one afternoon he had given to the world the best of himself, for all time.

### Other Recordings by Dylan Thomas

#### Volume II

Should Lanterns Shine, Poem on His Birthday, A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London, If I were Tickled by the Rub of Love, And Death Shall Have No Dominion, There Was a Saviour, A Winter's Tale.

TC 1018 \$5.95

#### Volume III

A Few Words of a Kind (a humorous little talk on himself), Over Sir John's Hill, The Hunchback in the Park, On the Marriage of a Virgin, Light Breaks Where No Sun Shines, After the Funeral, In Country Sleep.

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#### Volume IV

A Visit to America, and readings of contemporary British poets.

TC 1061 \$5.95

#### Under Milk Wood

Dylan Thomas and the original Cast—Dion Allen, Allen F. Collins, Roy Poole, Sada Thompson and Nancy Wickwire — in the premiere performance, recorded at the Poetry Center of the YM-YWHA in New York on May 14, 1953.

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