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Editors of this issue: Antanas Klimas, Ignas K. Skrupskelis, Thomas Remeikis

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Imants Ziedonis. *Kurzemite* (Riga: Liesma, 1970), 248 pp.

The romance of travel, the search for one's self, the refusal to settle down spiritually or physically are the central themes to all the creative output of Ziedonis, at thirty-eight a prolific and established Latvian author and translator (Aleksandr Blok, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Ivan Drach). In many of his poems the road plays a significant part. The present book is a penetrating first-person account of a summer-long journey on foot through his beloved Kurzemite — an affectionate form of Kurzeme or Courland. Immediately upon its publication in the literary "thick" journal *Karogs* (*The Banner*, Nos. 1-2, 1969), it proved to be a success in both the local and emigre literary milieu. Ziedonis writes extremely well, in undisciplined style, where epic, lyric and essayistic elements mix seemingly without discrimination. Besides giving many verbal snapshots of the countryside and the encountered people, in a witty, erudite and often amusing way, he discusses topics ranging from his native language to Latvian cultural heritage, from ecology to old rural churches and other historical monuments. Though well within the prevailing ideological limits, at times this work reads like a journalistic chronicle of social horrors, especially those pages where Ziedonis expresses his anger and concern with the abuses of the land, the inhumanity and incompetence of bureaucracy, the spiritual callousness, corruption, bigotry and stupidity of various managers and chairmen, Soviet philistinism and the indifference of *kolkhoz* peasants.

Rolfs Ekmanis  
Arizona State University