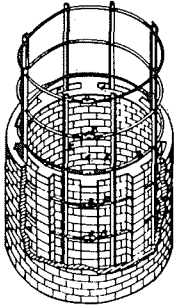


**A CONCRETE ATLANTIS:
U.S. Industrial Building and
European Modern
Architecture**

by Reyner Banham
MIT, 1986
266 pp. \$25



"For a period at the end of the 1970s," observes author Banham, "one could look out over downtown Providence, R.I., from the raised platforms of the train station and see the façade of a new multi-story hotel visually superimposed on that of an old 1920s multi-story factory behind it—and the two façades were almost identical cellular grids of concrete structural members."

It was no coincidence, argues Banham. The great European masters of the modernist International style of architecture, including Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, and Le Corbusier, found direct inspiration in the work of now-forgotten Americans—mostly engineers—who designed industrial buildings at the turn of this century. Pioneers of concrete construction, men such as Ernest Ransome and Lockwood Greene put up "daylight" factories (with ranks of regularly spaced windows) and grain elevators whose use of materials and simplicity of design provided European architects during the 1920s and '30s with a "language of forms" that they in turn applied to nonindustrial buildings. "Let us listen to the counsels of American engineers," declared Le Corbusier. "But let us beware of American architects!"

The ultimate irony is obvious: American architects of the 1960s and '70s, inspired by the International style, created city hotels and office buildings resembling structures that had all but vanished from an older urban industrial landscape.

**THE DANCE OF
THE INTELLECT:
Studies in the poetry
of the Pound tradition**

by Marjorie Perloff
Cambridge, 1986
243 pp. \$24.95

Critics who lament the death of poetry in our age are mistaken, says Perloff, a professor of literature at the University of Southern California. To be sure, a certain type of poem—the Romantic lyric characterized by the agonized voice of its wounded poet-speaker—has reached the end of the line. But, Perloff argues, the verbal intensity and resourcefulness of poetry have simply passed on to nonlyric forms, including encyclopedic and collage poems, prose and performance poems.

Perhaps the last supreme master of the lyric mode was Wallace Stevens (1879–1955), who cleaved to the symbolist faith that "poetry as an imaginative thing consists of more than lies on the surface." Stevens found a devoted following.

But Perloff credits Ezra Pound (1885–1972) with heralding the shift to a harder, more objec-