INGENIUM OMNIA VINCIT

*

HUGH MACDIARMID

'The stream has suddenly pushed the papery leaves !
It digs a rustling channel of clear water
On the scarred flank of Ben Bulbin,
The twisted tree is incandescent with flowers.
The swan leaps singing into the cold air . . .'

A. J. M. SMITH

WHAT ARE THE WORDS on that stone? Pilate's words which are the finest rejoinder in all literature to the captious and disputatious: *What I have written I have written.*

Earth has nowhere any grave so deep
As the power of utter withdrawal
Into yourself you had, and Death
no power to restore to life again
like your power, still and forever, to come back
Full of *brio* as if never away
and laughing like a better Lazarus.
(You who knew if Christ had made even one
Joke about sex what vast good He'd have done !)
What is the secret? You never breathed her name
But the old woman in Euboea was your Muse
Whose lesson to man is not to abstract himself
From immersion in present experience.
So out of death arises fresh life, even as Kenelm's corpse
Touched off springs where it rested. So you practised her rites
That ward off the menace of death
And ensure that life be strong and vigorous
And no song ever a swan-song.