

A Good Book . . .

. . . is hard to find, which is why some of California's best writers agreed to recommend one or two of their favorites. Herewith, then, are sixteen good books for the holiday shopper—or the holiday reader.

Richard Misrach's *Desert Cantos* (University of New Mexico Press, \$19.95), while less adventuresome than much of today's best photography, reveals a rare understanding of—even a love for—Southern California deserts. Misrach sees their subtlety and fragility, and his

pictures extract a wealth of implications from an otherwise mute landscape.

This year's best balance of scholarly substance and high-fidelity reproduction is a luscious, two-volume set, *Charles Sheeler* (New York Graphic Society, \$95). Volume two is—astoundingly—the first book devoted to Sheeler's photographs, which were important not only as studies for his own paintings and drawings but for their innovative photographic approach to architecture and industry. *Paintings and Drawings* (volume one) puts the photographic work in its proper context, and its text (by Carol Troyen) is a model for art books of thoroughness and clarity. Each of the volumes can be purchased individually. —Charles Desmarais