



OUT OF THE WOODS AND INTO BED

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A profile of ANERULE media parish

BOOKS IN CANADA

VOLUMES, NUMBER 10

OCTOBER, 1976

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CALUMNITY JANE

The mass media can't abide lesbian writers—even brilliant ones.' In fact, they would rather break Jane Rule than observe her

by John Hofsess

THE TAXI-DRIVER stops at a large corner property on Vancouver's West Second Avenue, near Sasamat Place, puts his eyes up the stone-sculptured steps, over the landscaped banks of spring flowers and rocks, to the house on top, facing Burrard Inlet, the downtown skyline, and distant mountains, and lets out an awed, envious whistle through his teeth.

"This place must be worth a fortune," he says, distractedly making change, absorbed in converting the flair and charm of the house and grounds into common cash. "Whose is it?"

An honest answer — "Oh, it's just the living quarters of a lesbian writer whose novels don't sell particularly well" — would probably leave him looking as if he'd been slapped across the face with a B.C. salmon. "It's already sold." I tell him, passing along one of few facts about Jane Rule that I knew in advance, from correspondence. He shakes his head as if to say, "Some silver-spoon people have all the luck," and drives off.

At 45, Jane Rule doesn't need to work another day in her life. Her freedom isn't based on head start inheritances, stock-market windfalls, or best-seller success — but on strong-willed prudence. "I realized early," she says, showing me through the house, "that if I was to be vulnerable on one side of my life, I was going to need a good support system. Friends. Family. And above all, never to be in a position where I was financially dependent upon anyone who could arbitrarily take my job away."

She has never had any illusions about the lack of goodwill that every branch of the political and sexual Establishment extends to "divergent thinkers" (as her mother prefers to call gay people). Were it not for such publications as the Toronto *Globe and Mail* and *Books in Canada* (see September, 1975), Jane Rule's reception by the mass media could be described as near-total silence interrupted occasionally by a stab in the back. No major Canadian magazine (*Maclean's*, *Saturday Night*, among others) has reviewed any of her books during the past 12 years, with the exception of a short, positive notice that *Chatelaine* gave her latest, *Lesbian Images*. She is also aware that this year alone, four mass-circulation magazines in Canada (*Saturday Night*, *Weekend*, *The Canadian*, and *Chatelaine*) turned down requests by various writers to do a profile of her, treating her as unimportant or a social pariah.

Yet this is the same writer that Margaret Laurence has called "one of the best writers we have, [whose] work compares very well indeed with the best fiction being written anywhere." Joyce Carol Oates described Rule's first novel, *The Desert of the Heart* (Macmillan, 1964) as "an intelligent and utterly believable novel." Faith Baldwin said of Rule's second novel, *This Is Not For You* (McCall,

1970; Popular Library, 1972) that it was "engrossing, brilliant, few who read it will ever forget it," while Margaret Laurence praised it as "a beautiful, ironic civilized novel, splendidly realized." Her third novel, *Against the Season* (McCall, 1971, Manorhouse paperback, 1975) and a collection of short stories, *Theme For Diverse Instruments* (Talonbooks, 1975) drew similar comments from her peers. Marian Engel said of *Lesbian Images* (Doubleday, 1975; Pocket Book paperback, 1976) that it made her proud to live in a country where such a brilliant and courageous writer could be published. Marie-Claire Blais got in touch with Jane Rule immediately and insisted upon translating the book into French ("You have much more important things to do with your time," Rule told her, and Blais finally settled for writing an introduction "that will be longer than the book!" she ardently promised) for the French edition when published. Margaret Atwood met Jane Rule while studying at the University of British Columbia ("a wonderful person," she told me; "meeting Jane was the highlight



Jane Rule

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of my entire year in Vancouver.") and they have remained warm admirers of each other's work. Rule was given a rough manuscript 'copy of Atwood's new novel, *Lady Oracle*, months before publication ("It'll hit like a bombshell," she predicted. "Canadian literature will never be the same,") and will soon reciprocate with a copy of her own forthcoming novel, *The Young In One*. Another's Arms (Doubleday, January, 1977) when final editing is complete. The silence of the Canadian mass media has not had the power to defeat her — *Lesbian Images*, her psychological study of such writers as Gertrude Stein, Elizabeth Bowen, and Ivy Compton-Burnett among others, has sold 10,000 copies in hardcover. Another 5,000 copies were published

"As it happened, Miss Frum had only read the first two chapters of my book, and it wasn't long before all pretense was dropped and she started asking things like, 'What have you lesbians got against motherhood, anyway?'"

in Britain this spring; and Pocket Books recently published the mass paperback edition. *Themes For Diverse Instruments* sold out its first edition, and another 4,000 were printed in June. Most of her book sales occur in the United States and England, where she is not treated like a scarlet woman.

Her few encounters with radio and television journalists in this country have usually left her quaking between rue and rage. A producer for CBC's *As It Happens* called last fall, when *Lesbian Images* was first published, and persuaded her that Barbara Frum really took a serious interest in Rule's work and would conduct a well-informed and civil interview.

"When the mass media calls, one is expected to be grateful," she says, "One minute they're calling Cairn, then Moscow, and now, by god, they're calling you. Well, as it happened, Miss Frum had only read the first two chapters of my book, and it wasn't long before all pretense was dropped, and she started asking things like, 'What have you lesbians got against motherhood, anyway?' and 'Why are you so hostile?'

"It was later erased from the broadcast tape," Rule says, "I guess my answers weren't exciting enough. I simply told her that I lived in a quiet Vancouver neighbourhood, my hobbies were embroidery and gardening, I love children and regularly look after those of relatives and friends, and I was sorry to hear if any lesbians had ever been rude to her."

Her experience with CTV's *W5* was worse. A representative for the show visited her home and gave her a spiel about a "serious, in-depth study" they planned about "the gay community in Canada." Rule explained that she did not do television interviews -ever — and had no time or interest in going to a studio for a formal chat. The producer countered by asking if she would mind just a bit of informal footage, to be shot around the house. When she said, with no enthusiasm, "Well, possibly..." he opened the door, and whistled down to the road, where a van of TV paparazzi were waiting for a signal to come running up the stairs, with cameras, lights, and cables, all set to zap a real, live lesbian.

"The program," she recalls, "consisted of a rapid-fire, film collage, of which I formed about 60 seconds in total, sandwiched in between such things as advertisements for male models and zippy zoomshots of a drag show, all of it served up with maximum sensationalism and minimal coherence. I demanded, and got, \$100 as a fee to slightly offset the humiliation."

Such incidents do not embitter her. "I feel sorry for anyone who takes the mass media seriously," she says:

"I've known people — **Kate Millett**, for example — who get so confused between their public image and real worth that they don't even know who they are, from one week to the next, until they check out **Time or Newsweek**. I told my editors at **Doubleday**: 'It's my job to write the books, and yours to sell them. I will not be sold by the pound on talk shows. exploited, consumed, and spit out.' "

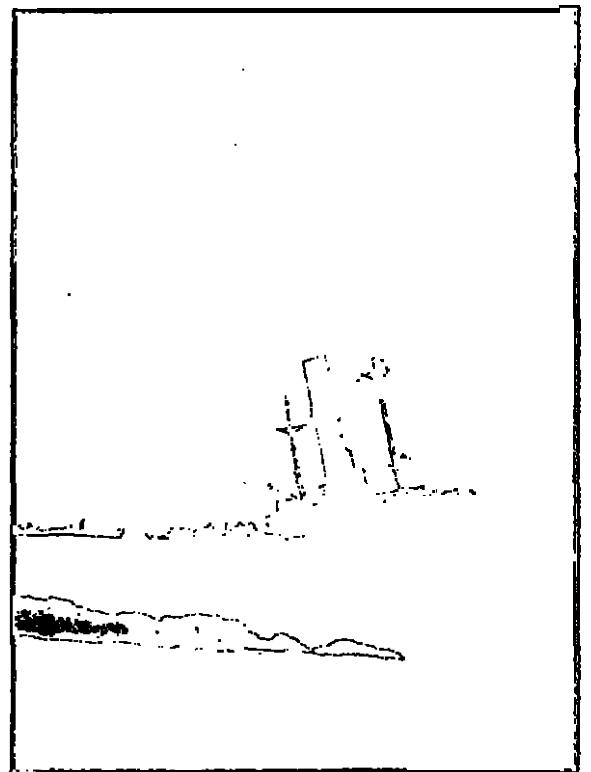
Her sense of self-worth has always been clear and strong. Whenever she has been offered a chance to do articles for the "popular press," even when the money might have been useful, she has unhesitatingly refused. "I can't imagine anything more demoralizing for a writer than to work for people who are professional hypocrites," she says. "I have better things to do with my life than fight battles with well-meaning but essentially cowardly people, who censor stories for ridiculous reasons, or suppress them entirely out of gutlessness. Nothing they can pay me can compensate for the harm that would be done to me as a writer if I accepted such working conditions." She once had a short-story accepted by **Redbook** in which an editor went through the copy and struck out adjectives and passages of exposition, in order to make room for a larger **advertisement** (for vacuum cleaners!) than had been anticipated. From that day on, Rule has had it stipulated in her contracts that no cuts or changes be made without her knowledge and permission. "One has to keep bad editing, and vacuum cleaners, in their place."

"I told my editors at Doubleday: 'It's my job to write the books, and yours to sell them. I will not be sold by the pound on talk shows, exploited, consumed, and spit out.' "

It was in **London**, during the early **1950s**, that she first discovered a country and culture that made her feel at home. She found in the English people a friendliness, a plucky spirit, a sophisticated accommodation of human nature and tolerance for eccentricity, that struck her as being the essence of humanism. But since she held American citizenship at the time (having been born in **Plainfield**, New Jersey) and had only a B.A. in English literature, there was little likelihood of getting employment in teaching, or at the BBC, in any of the lines of work she wanted to do. It was during a chance visit to Vancouver 20 years ago that she found the right mix — a beautiful setting, uncommon people (many of them, like herself, dissatisfied with other places) and plenty of work. For the first eight years she taught full time, saved her earnings, and made careful investments. She had two ambitions. "I would like to be old and wise," she says. "The first will happen inevitably but the second takes some effort. And I would like to have at least 10 years in which to do nothing but write and grow."

That's why the house is sold. Much of the furniture was given away to relatives and friends; the essentials are being shipped to more modest quarters on **Galiano Island**, where Rule hopes finally to get beyond "apprentice works" (as she calls her first four novels), and do the best writing of her life. Genes don't follow the human will, however. Doctors recently diagnosed an arthritic deterioration of her spine that will become increasingly painful and which already prevents her from spending more than an hour or two a day in a sitting position at a desk. "It runs in the family," she says; no point in complaining about nature. As a character in her new novel says: "If there's no solution, it isn't a problem."

"Janie Rule, do you want a scotch? As If I need to ask?" a voice calls out from the kitchen. It's Helen Southoff, Rule's companion for nearly 20 years ("We decided last year to stop saying we don't believe in long-term relationships," Rule says with a laugh); now 60, and glad to be



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retiring early from teaching. She enters the room with a well-known West Coast painter, Elisabeth Hopkins, who is celebrating her 82nd birthday with a great deal of gusto and rhe occasional Cointreau. Role's mother and father are due to arrive shortly from San Francisco to help with the move to Galiano. An overwrought student barges in to say that he thinks his mother has committed suicide but they can't find the body; Role listens with an attitude of compassionate drollery that would fit Alfred Hitchcock. The mail arrives, with what, by now, are common pleas for help ("I've read your novels and I know you'll understand me...") or inarticulate vilifications ("Somebody told me that hate-mail is great archival material," Rule says, "so now I just kiss the envelopes, drop them in a box and say, well, there's money in the bank"). It's a day of busy human involvement — but no television or radio, where you lend an ear and lose your mind; no magazines or newspapers, which gossip, nag, alarm but rarely inform. For Jane Rule, sanity depends upon having a clear, pacific living space.

There is in the life of every reader a special, psychological time to approach certain novels — one might call it the most educative moment — in order to appreciate them fully. The time to read Jane Rule is when one feels *desperately* the need to be with someone straight-out and honest, beyond all the people who are playing games and doing neurotic, destructive numbers on one another.

There may be better stylists. There may be better wordsmiths who can find a more startling phrase. But few writers can equal Jane Rule's illusionless analysis of all the latitudes of love, or surpass her wisdom of the heart.

The only question is: How long does a writer of Jane Rule's stature have to beg for a few crumbs from the Canadian (sexual) Establishment's table? When her sixth book, *The Young In One Another's Arms*, is published later this season, will *Saturday Night*, *Maclean's*, *Weekend*, *Chatelaine*, and the rest finally break the long silence and recognize a writer that Margaret Laurence has called, "One of the very best we have." Or don't the alleged benefits of Hugh Faulkner's Bill C-58, and the political movement of cultural nationalism, extend to a writer who happens to be a lesbian? □

THE PLAINTIFF IN JUNE

*The air darkens. It begins to rain.
Some birds keep at it in the maple tree.*

*Some months ago Stanley Cooperman put
a bullet through his head, rearranging the stars
that used to explode in words.*

*Now he is singing angels in a nether free.
The land is a dull moon, drizzled on.
The trucks go on whizzing, tying cities together
as if some stock-yard meat were the essence
of eighty odd years of staying.*

*I think of you Stanley, and a cup spills in my hand.
a cup of a thousand small songs. that spill and grow
nothing.*

*I want to arrange a dawn for you tomorrow, one you
can talk to, one big enough to persuade you not
to make your body a rain-trough for the stars.
I am putting enough words into that dawn, though you
can't hear it, to keep us covered forever,
like a heart that has not the courage to go naked,
unless it dress in the fire of the tongue
shooting to bring down one heaven after another.*

-Pier Giorgio Di Cicco

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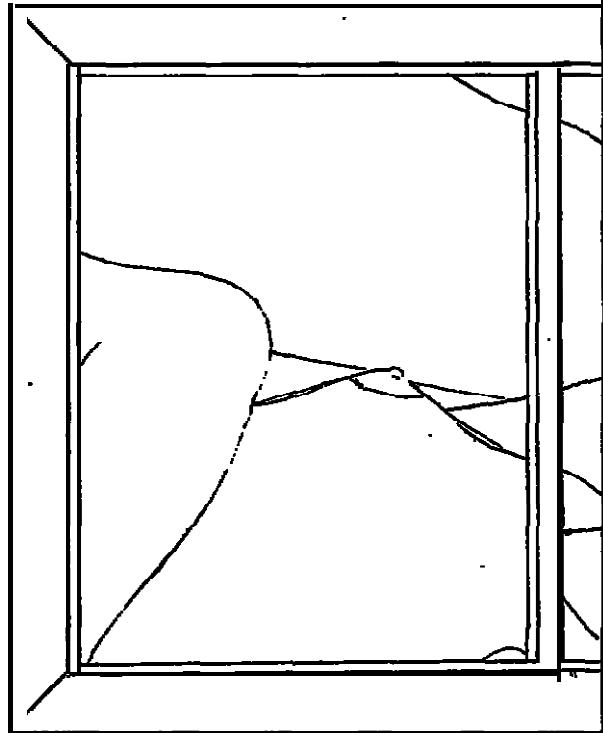
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TOUJOURS LE MOORE

Another dollop of
juicy gossip from the
most worldly of
Canadian writers

by Douglas Marshall

The Doctor's Wife, by Brian Moore. McClelland & Stewart, 286 pages, \$8.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7710-6442-x).



Paddy dear, now didja hear the news that's going around about poor Dr. Redden down at the clinic? Bin working himself to the bone since the Troubles started again. he has. Then to top it off his stuck-up missus ups and leaves him r'other day. Jist like that. Walks oat on Redden and their kid. He'll be, Let's see, 15 now. Quiet, gawky woman, she was. Though there's some that fancie her. Brian Boland for one. The story I hear is that...

MARY McCARTHY once asserted that the main narrative drive of the traditional novel is simply back-fence gossip. An essay by critic John Leonard in the August issue of *Esquire* reaffirms the notion: "This trafficking in tittle-tattle, this romance of the fact, has always been the principal business, the jumping beans, of the novelist." Certainly it has always been the jumping beans of Brian Moore.

Moore is at his best when the gossip is a bubbling pot of *chili con carne* about neighbourhood types who have often intrigued us-the tipsy spinster at the end of the street (*The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*), the manic diaper-service man who quotes Yeats (*The Luck of Ginger Coffey*), the neurotic career woman who weeps on the bus (*I Am Mary Dame*). Last year Moore made one of his periodic trips to a loftier landscape by dreaming up *The Great Victorian Collection*, a romance that stretched the facts too far for easy consumption. But this year he is back at the fence, trafficking in top-grade tittle-tattle about straight sex of the most erotic sort—the awakened appetites of a mature woman who finally meets and couples with her Adonis.

Stripped of its narrative conceits., the plot of *The Doctor's Wife* is basic *Redbook* with a *Cosopolitan* eyeliner. Striking, sensitive, and doubly unfulfilled Sheila Redden is the 37-year-old wife of stolid Kevin, a Belfast surgeon who is about as liberated as a hernia. On her way to Nice, where Kevin plans to join her for a second honeymoon, she stops off, in Paris to spend a night with Peg, an old university chum. Moore, who can pin down a modern airport with a phrase ("Ahead, like wound-up toys, a line of planes crawled toward the takeoff point"), captures the city's eternal romance with impressionistic economy: a glimpse of bright *Cinzano umbrellas*; the whiff of garlic and *Gauloises*. For Sheila, who last saw Paris as a student 20 years before, the sights and smells act as a emotional catalyst. She is haunted by regret for the lost pmmises of that long-ago summer, the adventures and passions she passed up for the bourgeois security of Belfast.

Within a matter of hours she has met Tom Lowry, a tall, dark, Z&year-old American who has been palely loitering around the Left Bank as the well-hung answer for every frustrated matron seeking a second chance. By evoking this decent, cultured, and moderately rich young god from the machinery of Camelot and An *American in Paris*. Moore is clearly risking charges of obscene caricature. But since we mainly see Tom through the besotted eyes of Sheila, the author somehow gets away with it.

Of course, they fall hopelessly in love. Tom pursues Sheila to Nice, where their love is soon consummated -at length. Meanwhile the first of a flurry of long-distance telephone calls has established that the over-worked Kevin will be arriving late and can probably be persuaded not to arrive at all. The various phone conversations between Sheila and Kevin, incidentally, crackle with authenticity. Moore here has produced some of the best domestic dialogue in Canadian literature, neatly conveying the nuances of invisible deceit, the electronic illusion of proximity, the desperate teachings down the line for reassurance, the costly silences. However, there is a minor technical flaw. Any realistic novel that relies so heavily in its plot mechanics on the efficiency of the French and British telephone systems is venturing into science fiction.

Moore handles the sex scenes like a Masters. He believes in showing, not telling. Moreover, he chooses to show by

wiring up his imagination-and ours-in the palpitating erogenous zones of Sheila, which is quite a gamble for a male writer to rake. Does he pull it off? Obviously I'm not of the gender to know for sure. But my hunch is he does.

In any event, just at the stage when the reader's own erogenous zones are beginning to signal that this is vicarious voyeurism. Moore introduces one of his finer conceits. The point of view switches to a minor character who turns out to be an actual voyeur. He is an elderly tourist who keeps stumbling over the groping couple on the bench or spying on them through hotel windows:

Mr. Balcer eyed her figure. I wouldn't mind fucking her myself. I'd like to have her put her hand inside my pants and rub my prick. I was more exciting, somehow, when you thought of some nice-looking respectable lady doing things like that to you.

The cream of the conceit is that Mr. Balcer is a Canadian. Moore's one bow in this novel to his adopted country.

Tom is determined to woo Sheila back to the United States. They return to Paris, where he succeeds in obtaining a temporary entry visa for her. Kevin, now aware that something is up, phones incessantly. But by this time Sheila has come to terms with herself and her new situation. She may or may not go with Tom; she will never go back to her husband and son. Her brother Owen, another Belfast doctor with a nagging wife who is the antithesis of Sheila, arrives in Paris to reason with her. His character is also well-drawn: he is ulcer-ridden, sympathetic, but ultimately weak enough to betray her. "Forget me," she tells him. "I'm like the man in the newspaper story, the ordinary man who goes down to the corner to buy cigarettes and is never heard from again."

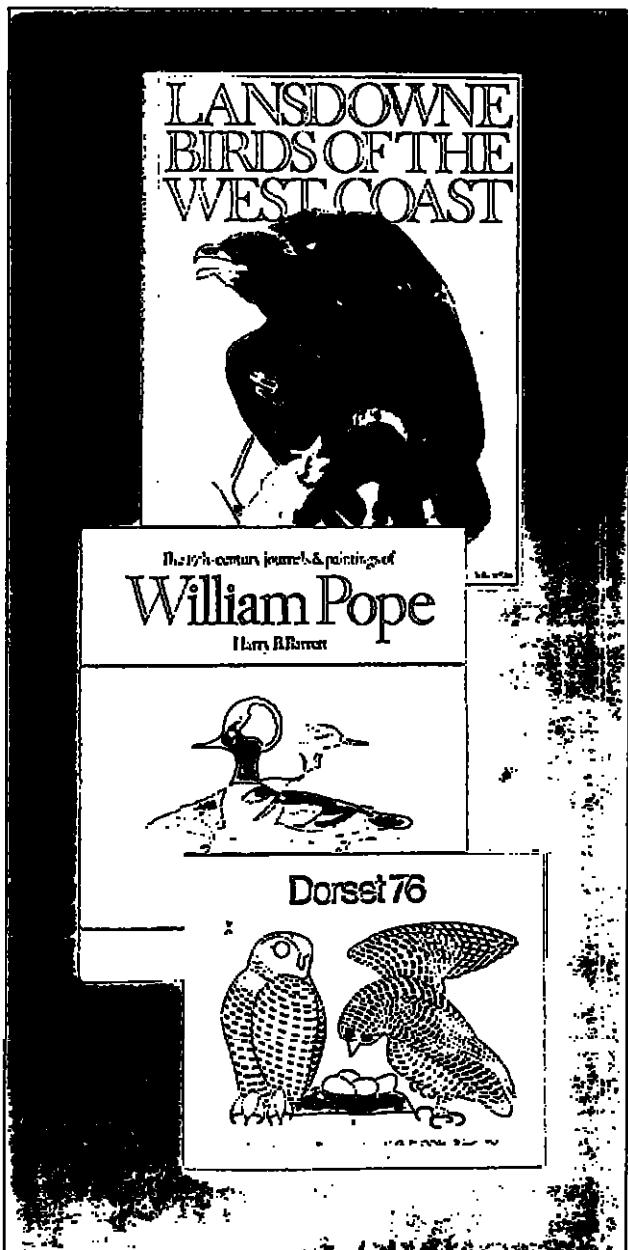
That declaration crops up twice in the novel and is echoed in the final line. It is Moore's only stage direction. Friends and relatives present a variety of rational explanations for Sheila's behaviour: she is depressed by Ulster's civil strife and wants to escape: she's reacting against a strict Catholic upbringing; she's the victim of early menopause or a streak of mental illness in her family. But only block-headed Kevin knows the real reason, even if he can't understand it. He himself finally barges into her Paris hotel room to plead with her and, when that fails, to assault her brutally. (Significantly, this is one sex scene told from the man's point of view.) "You've always been dancing in the dark," Kevin screams:

It's books, of course, that you got all your notions from. No, Fmm life. All those novels and trash that's up there in your room at home. I wonder sometimes if some of these authors who write that stuff shouldn't be prosecuted. Or maybe we should band out prescriptions for books the way we do for drugs. No, to be taken by mouth. No, for people who can't read right from wrong. Yes, because you're no, the heroine of some bloody book.

But she is — and that's the truth of the matter. Human beings do behave like people in books. Given half a chance, they will run away from stagnation and throw up all for love. It happens every day. There's an element of Anthony or Cleopatra in us all. Nature does minor art. Particularly bad art.

Moore is emerging as the most worldly — if least national — of Canadian writers. No thematic hearthstones weigh him down; no log booms of recurring ideas nudge across his streams of consciousness. He travels freely between the continents and between the sexes, eavesdropping on the lives of ordinary mortals and turning it into the stuff that good novels are made of. The poet, contemplating his Grecian urn, is content to be leased out of thought by the questions posed in that cold pastoral. What maidens loth? What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape? The novelist, in contrast, would undertake to tell all.

... she was sitting in a Paris bar, half-crocked y'know, when in walks this long-haired Yank, young enough to be her son almost, and sweeps her off her feet. And off her rocker too, if you ask me. □



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FROM LEFT FIELDING

Wright has produced a boisterous novel about a Canadian who may-or maynot-be the hero of his own life

by Shirley Gibson

Farthing's Fortunes. by Richard B. Wright, Macmillan. 380 pages. \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7705-1433-2).

GETTING TIRED of Canadian novels where the hero heads for the woods, embraces nature, then rummages endlessly through old maps and memories in a desperate search for identity — interrupted only by an Indian, a ghost or, if you're lucky, a bear of the opposite sex? If the answer is yes, *Farthing's Fortunes* is just the book for you. In this novel the hero does have a quest, but it's not identiyy he's after. He wants to come to grips with none other than the red-he&d music-hall beauty, the one and only, the incomparable Sally Butters. And where does his life-long search begin? Where else but in sin city-New York, U.S.A.

At 38, Richard B. Wright has two earlier novels to his credit. *The Weekend Man* published in 1971 and *In the Middle of a Life* in 1973. Both were good books, highly acclaimed, and the second won the Faber fiction award in Britain, but for some reason the author is not well known to his fellow Canadians. This boisterous new book should remedy that.

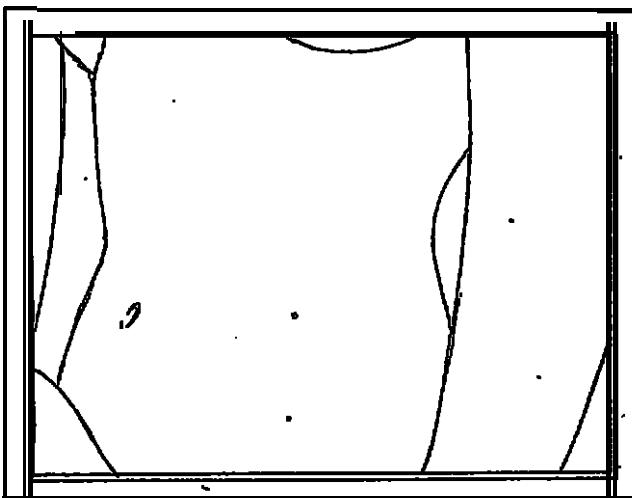
Farthing's Fortunes is an episodic, large-than-life story in the tradition of the picaresque novel. We learn of our hero through an elaborate publisher's foreword, which makes it clear that Wright has done time in one of the older and more gracious publishing houses. When we meet William Farthing, he's a cranky, rye-drinking, 95-year-old inmate of Sunset Manor, a senior-citizens home in Craven, Ont. As he tells it: "I'm not an educated man, mister, but I've been places and seen things that I'll bet most people haven't. I once knew a fellow named Findlater, damnedest character you've ever seen. If you want a story, I can give you a good one." And he does.

It begins in a farmhouse 130 miles northeast of Toronto. The year is 1880 and Bill's mother has just died in giving birth to him. His family thinks it's a bad bargain. "After all, my mother had been useful around the house. She was always cooking meals and sewing on buttons. Or pumping water and gathering firewood. Now she was gone and there I was, crying and messing my pants and making a general nuisance of myself. None of my family was any too bright but they could see the unfairness of this exchange and they resented it. It didn't take me long to learn what a kick in the arse felt like."

His father is a British remittance man, younger son of a sweetmeat manufacturer, a bad poet with passion for Longfellow, an alcoholic, and a man who knows bugger-all about farming. Fortunately, he's "a sweet 'looking man,

and so mannerly," two attributes that he bequeaths to his youngest son. And a good thing too, because in the adventures that befall Bill Farthing, he needs all the help he can get.

In the course of his travels he experiences every affliction and frustration known to man, including the conventional flood, famine, and fire, but always he rises like an albatross from the ashes. His beloved brother kills himself by blowing the top off his head, but even as the flies are gathering, Bill finds sanctuary in the beautiful white bosom of the sweet-smelling, hard-drinking, foul-mouthed, randy Mrs. Fletcher. It's the first step in an odyssey that takes him to tom-of-the-century Toronto where even then "the city appeared to be full of smart alecks who derived particular pleasure from another fellow's predicament." He has the required Horatio Alger encounter with a rich man's crippled daughter, but most important of all, he gets his first glimpse of Sally Butters, the Belle of the Boards, as she steps on stage and renders "Beautiful Dreamer." Bill loses his heart to her irresistible combination of "natural sweet innocence and lurking sexiness" and when she leaves for New York he's hot on her trail.



There, in the bustling, immigrant-crowded city he discovers the irrepressible Cass Findlater. "I suppose on first notice you'd take him for a sharp character and you'd not be too far wrong for he never disguised the opinion that the world was easy pickings for the man with his head screwed on right. How he earned his living was something of a mystery...." Fifty years later, Farthing still doesn't know

how Findlater earns his living but by then they've shared good times and bad as they seek their fortune and Sally Butters.

Heeding the call of the gold rush, they head for the Klondike, where they're in and out of jail, in and out of whorehouses. 'conning everybody as they go. Farthing makes a decision for decency and slips into a marriage that takes five months of cunning to consummate. After the death of his favourite son, he sets sail for England -upstairs with Lady Finchwhistle and downstairs with Alice — then into the British Army just in time for the Battle of the Somme.

By means of a questionable literary device, Farthing is hurled straight from the Great War into the Great Depression — hopping freights, begging at back doors, mixing it up with illegal booze and a lady named Ruby in Marion, Sask. He escapes by cattle car and crosses the wide Missouri to find revival meetings at Flatt's Crossin' and illegal prize-fighting through the exploitation of a simple-minded black boy. Predictably, everything ends in disaster.

By 1933, a little wiser and a lot older, our hero makes his way back to Craven Falls, to big Jessie the lady undertaker and the raising of pigs. All this results in a severe case of St. Anthony's Fire, so he sets out on a final journey to Findlater, drawn by the promise of prosperity and Sally Butters. Does he find the lovely Sally? Does he hear "Beautiful Dreamer" once again? You'll have to read the novel to find out.

That's a brief outline of Wright's plot. *Farthing's Fortunes* is a big book in every sense of the word. Any writer embarking on a picaresque novel has his work cut out: it's a high-wire act calling for nerve and daring and if the author falters for even a second he's in serious danger of falling.

As a comic writer with a wicked ear for dialogue, a sharp eye for the absurd, and an enviable lack of reverence for almost everything, Wright hustles the reader along with ease and assurance. The only slow-downs occur when Wright, the concerned observer, is permitted to take over. From time to time he interrupts his breakneck narrative to give us what amounts to a detailed documentary. Wright has a deep awareness of the ways in which ordinary people suffer and endure and he's used this with powerful effect in his previous work. But in the context of this particular book it creates some problems. A picaresque novel requires that the hero be a rogue, a scoundrel, or at least a half-wit like Nathaniel West's Lemuel Pitkin or the hem of Flann O'Brien's *The Poor Mouth*.

But Bill Farthing is none of these because he's burdened with brains and sensibility. He experiences grief and anger when his brother dies, guilt when he's cuckolding his employer, and despair at the unrelieved misery of the poor. His description of the Battle of the Somme, complete with red poppies, would do justice to Barbusse's *L'Enfer*. He's so outraged by the carnage on the battlefield that he decides to kill General Haig "on the principle that somebody in charge should pay for the day's events." We don't expect principles from rogues and scoundrels, which leads to an interesting question.

Is Will Farthing the hem of the book? The author allows for the possibility that he is not. Is the hem actually Cass Findlater, confidence man and last of the great American entrepreneurs, with Farthing playing the quintessentially Canadian straight-man? The question is left wide open: "There are other readers who may feel that, like his native country, Bill Farthing is destined to play second fiddle, as it were, to his remarkable American companion Findlater. I can only say that each reader must judge for himself whether this is true. But whatever conclusion you arrive at, it remains that Farthing is the one who lives to tell the tale."

Is it possible that Mr. Wright is pulling the collective Canadian leg? And does it really matter if he is? Not in the long run, because it all adds up to an extravagant, robust, highly readable story — full 'o' cock and bull, and some good red herring. □

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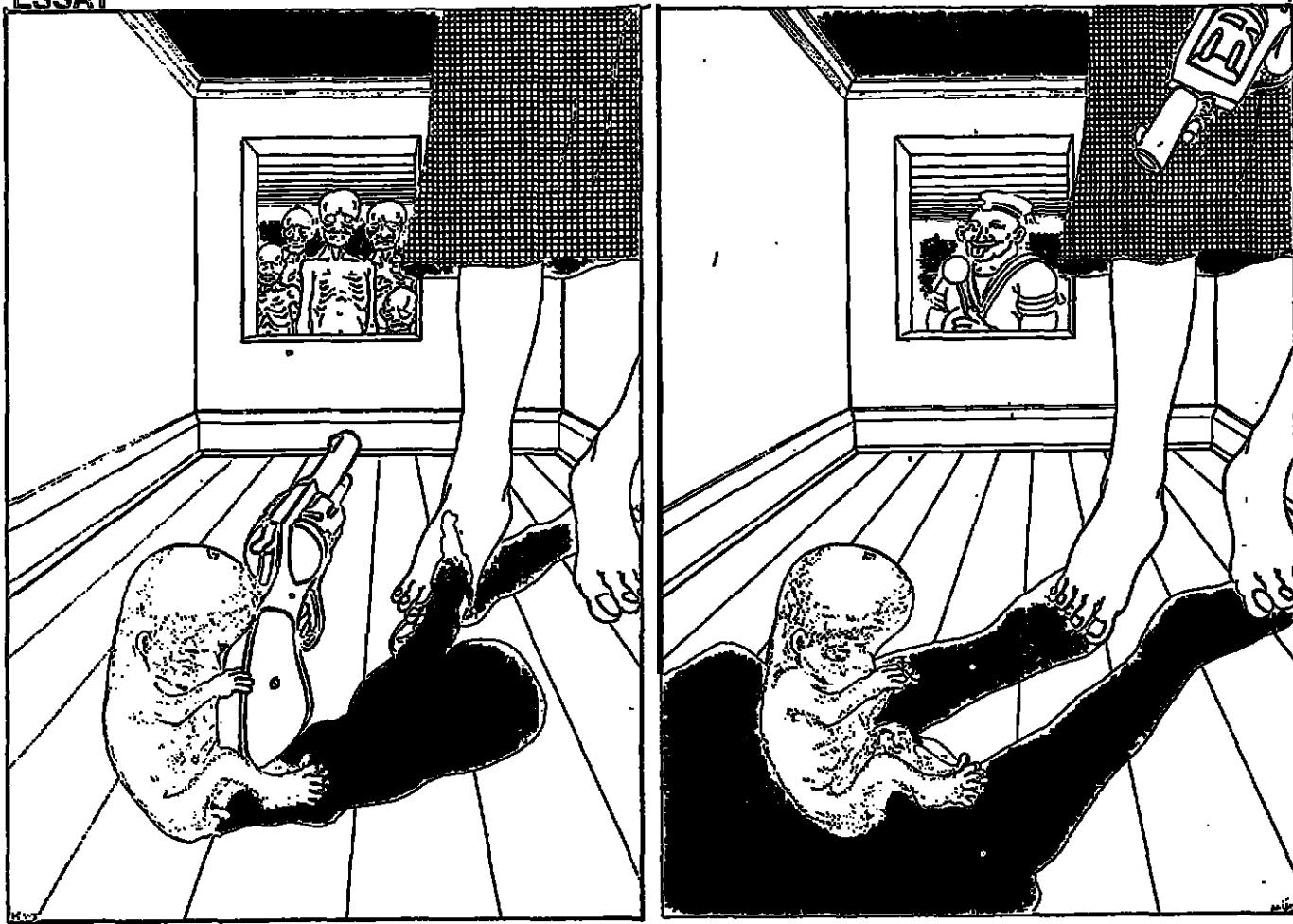
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FOETAL POSITIONS

What the abortion controversy doesn't need right now is a book lacking in moral imagination

by Sam Ajzenstat

Compulsory Parenthood, by Wendell W. Watters, McClelland & Stewart, 304 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7710-8880-9).

MISGIVINGS ABOUT abortion, apart from purely personal ones, can range from medical concern about the physical and psychological safety of the operation and its aftermath, to the more obviously moral problem of whether abortion is a taking of human life. As Canada's hour of decision on abortion law nears, we desperately need a discussion, especially of the moral concerns, honest and wise enough to keep us alive and responsive to the real truths on both sides of the political battle.

Unfortunately, Dr. Wendell Watters' *Compulsory Parenthood* is not it. As long as Dr. Watters, a McMaster University psychiatrist, stays with the medical basics of his own field, he is cogent and convincing, as when he sifts a

veritable mountain of data to show, conclusively, I would say, that an induced abortion is not only safe, physically and mentally, but less likely to involve complications than refusal of abortion. But the book's main quarry is the moral argument and what Watters gives us here can only be described as an elaborate and depressingly shameless snow job.

The main claim of those who want anti-abortion laws of some kind is that a foetus is a form of human life with a consequent, though possibly not absolute, right to protection by law. That this might be so is of real concern not only to male chauvinists and female reactionaries but also to a number of thoughtful women's liberationists who know what it feels like to be categorized as sub-human and are conscientious enough to want to make sure they do not commit the same injustice themselves. But for Watters this very real question is a "pure sham" - a cover for a conspiracy that he spends half the book trying to expose.

The tactic is simple enough: Walters wants to link the call for retention of **anti-abortion** laws nor, as it claims to be, with humanitarian concern for **the foetus**, but with what he calls "**pronatalism**" - a nefarious and at present irrational political program of population growth in the interests of cheap, abundant labour or military manpower. He will then be able to sidestep foetal rights as a red herring and talk about the more comfortably statistical problems of ecology and population instead. The link, as **Walters** knows, is pretty shaky, since current **anti-abortionist** thought recognizes the population crisis; but since it is more plausible the

Walters wants to link the call for retention Of anti-abortion laws ... with what he calls "pronatalism" — a nefarious and at present irrational political program Of population growth in the interests of cheap, abundant labour or military manpower.

further back in history one goes, he embarks on 100 or so pages of guilt by association starting "late in the Pleistocene epoch."

Even as an account of the past, this monumental detour is studded with fallacies and evasions. Most of Walters' data consists of showing that restrictive abortion laws were followed by population increase. Only a sentence or two after he admits that this sort of data "does not prove motive on the part of the lawmakers" but leaves open the possibility of a moral motivation for the laws. **Walters** blandly announces his intention nevertheless to "assume that they were introduced chiefly to stimulate birth rates and population growth." Later, in a particularly revealing passage he admits that the medieval Church had "no doctrine to the effect that increased population was good in itself" and then rakes this as proof of the Church's crafty secrecy — sorely a classic self-parody of the psychiatrist's tendency to take lack of symptoms as proof of the deep-down seriousness of the disease.

The most **Walters** can show is that pronatalists will be against abortion; to conclude from this that all who are against abortion must be pronatalists or that pronatalism rules out having other possibly good reasons is either a mistake in logic or simple sophistry. That it is sophistry is suggested by **Walters'** way of sheering off deviously whenever his narrative stumbles on an anti-abortionist who is also a **anti-natalist**. It just so happens that history's most famous **anti-natalist**, Malthus, was also against abortion. Instead of explaining this embarrassing circumstance, **Walters** slips over to the hostile reception to Malthus by doctors as proof of their pronatalism. Add to this a sometimes crude use of demographic data to suggest that anti-abortion laws always reflect a felt need for higher population along with **Walters'** complete failure to consider seriously the anti-abortionists' own account of what they thought their motives were and one begins to wonder whether he is out to understand or merely to convince with any argument no matter how bad.

But to the criticism that most of his book is irrelevant because current anti-abortionists are not advocates of population increase, **Walters** uses another nice psychiatrist's argument. They may think they are not, but anyone who expresses concern about the status of the foetus shows himself to be under the subconscious grip of an irrational superstitious hangover from the pronatalism of the past kept alive by callous church propagandists. **Walters** is always ready to substitute diagnosis for argument.

Toward the end of the book, **Walters** makes a show of coming to grips with the underlying question about the

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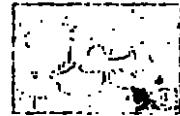


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status of the foetus. On the evidence of this sad few pages Watters' failing is not so much lack of good faith as absence of any moral imagination. Trained, as we are beginning to train everybody, to identify the narrowest perspectives of social science with breadth of mind, Watters simply cannot imagine anyone honestly claiming that a foetus is objectively human or holding a moral principle that is anything but a directly pragmatic response to the social group. Since he is unable to take the opposition seriously, he resorts to conceptual twists that would have to be called dishonest if we assumed he knew what he was doing. So, for example, the claim that a foetus is human life he first twists into the larger claim that it is a "baby" or a "child," which he then denies on the ground that we do not call an acorn an "immature oak tree." He then presumes that this ploy permits him to classify the foetus as merely "potential human life" - a notoriously controversial phrase in current abortion literature. In a similar way, the question of whether foetuses have rights gets buried in the very different admission that they have "value."

But it is in his pontifications on the nature of morality that Watters most obviously serves us the usual thin sociological gruel combining logical positivism and relativism about ethics in general with naive absolutism about his own. While quoting Moritz Schlick, the founding father of logical positivism, to the effect that moral principles reflect nothing but what the particular society thinks useful, he can still condemn absolutist theories for being "used as a justification for human greed and ambition" on his own absolute assumption that we ought all to recognize the evil of such hypocrisy as well as of the greed and ambition it covers for.

In the last chapter Watters turns to the fascinating question of whether the population explosion might justify compulsory abortions and again he loses the chance to deal with

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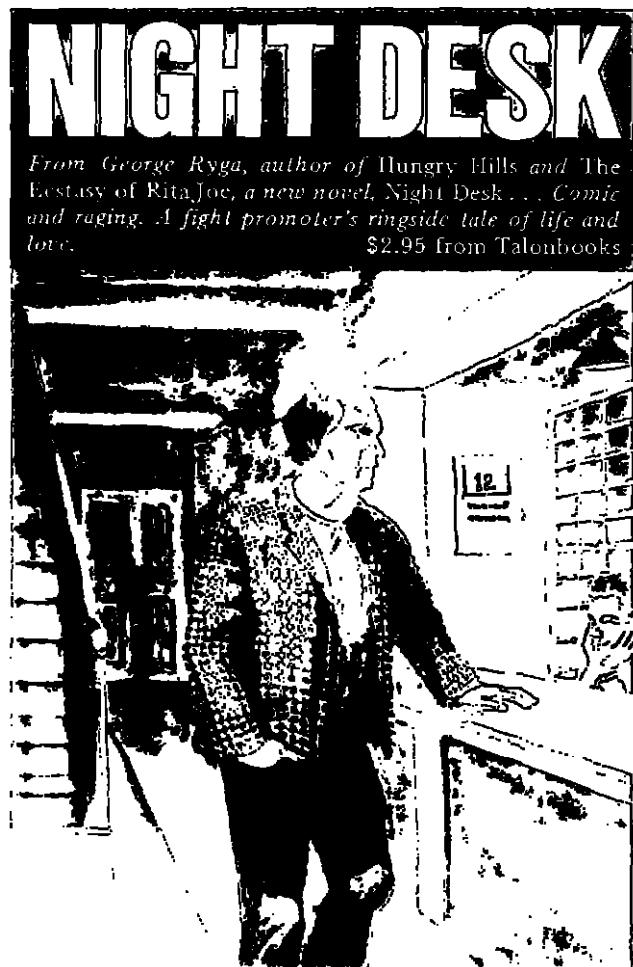
a good question thoughtfully because of his desire to hang something on the enemy. His implausible argument is that a government with anti-abortion laws will find it easier to pass compulsory pro-abortion laws than would a government with nothing at all about abortion on its books. This argument only works on the assumption that legal concern for the foetus is always hypocritical. Even if that were so, a government might not find it so easy to do an about face from pronatalism to anti-natalism as Watters suggests.

Dr. Watters' book is a manual of debaters' points for abortion-law realists that does its best to make the partisans of the foetus look like charlatans or fools. As such it will be extremely welcome to anyone willing to blunt his or her sense of the ambiguity of reality for the sake of a political victory. Others, it may be hoped, will be slightly dubious about the golden future in which the imperative of happiness requires us to abort above all imagination and intellectual honesty. □

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-Donald M. Korte



Truly mad, north by north

by Mark Nichols

Canada North Now, by Farley Mowat, McClelland & Stewart, 192 pages. \$5.95 paper (ISBN O-7710-6596-S).

IT COULD BE argued that Farley Mowat is this country's finest prose writer, not, thank God, because he is an innovator in terms of style but simply because he is someone who has learned to wield the English language superbly well. How many writers bother these days to use the word "scarify" in its original, correct sense, and how many could, casually and somehow without unduly alarming a reader less lettered than he, drop the word "cauled" into a sentence? Mowat's writing is muscular and always lucid and he is a master of descriptive writing, as exemplified by this passage devoted to the Arctic's so-called Barren Lands in his latest book, *Canada North Now*:

Look closer and the void of land and water becomes an intricate mosaic, varied and colorful. The multitude of tundra ponds are shallow and reflect the pale-northern skies in every shade of blue and violet or, discolored by organic stains from the muskeg, they become sepia, burnished copper, burning red or shimmering green.... Viewed by a summer traveller on the ground, the tundra gives a feeling of limitless space, intensified until one wonders if there can be any end to this terrestrial ocean whose waves are the rolling ridges.

Because of his skills, Mowat is always a pleasure to read. The problem is that some readers may recoil from yet another Mowat expedition into the North, a terrain across which he has mushed his literary dog team so many times before. *Canada North Now* recycles a good deal of previously used Mowat material on the Canadian Arctic and vents once again Mowat's well-known rage over what is happening there. In part, the present book is intended as an antidote to Mowat's 1967 *Canada North*, a book that the author now regrets a little because "I laid perhaps too much stress on the land's potential resources in the hope that these might provide an incentive to encourage southerners to settle the North in an enduring manner." Now, nearly a decade later, Mowat finds that Canadians are being hoodwinked into seeing the North as a cornucopia of

riches" that must be removed and carried south as rapidly as possible. Mowat calls the process an "act of ravishment."

Canada North Now is part Arctic primer, part history, part politics and often a horror story. Dividing the North into regions, Mowat relates the story of each from prehistoric times to the present. He has some fascinating odd bits of information to impart along the way: that, for example, the temperature at the North Pole seldom drops below minus-30 degrees Fahrenheit and sometimes during the summer reaches 50 above. Then there is some interest-

into submitting to, if not actually endorsing, the rape of their lands."

The main object of Mowat's fury is resource exploitation in the North, and perhaps above all, the nefarious Mackenzie Valley pipeline scheme. In the case of the latter, Mowat has nothing particularly new to say, but he does a good job of explaining the deception about fossil-fuel reserves in Canada that was perpetrated either by the Government of Canada or by the oil companies or by both in partnership. In this "marvel of chicanery," Canadians were told during the late 1960s that Canadian hydrocarbon reserves were so abundant they ought to be sold as quickly as possible, before the stuff went out of fashion. By 1973, the tune had changed: oil and natural gas was apparently in such desperately short supply in Canada that the exploitation of frontier resources had become practically a life and death necessity, whatever the consequences for the Arctic environment or the peoples struggling to live in it.

Canada North Now is flawed at times by careless repetition; for instance, Mowat twice describes a 1969 incident in Hudson Bay in which a drilling vessel was driven by a storm from the site it was working on, leaving a drill hole that could not be capped for five years (luckily, the drill had not encountered a major oil deposit). More seriously, Mowat in his apparent determination to show that Canadian governments have nothing but evil in their hearts when it comes to northern affairs, is guilty in at least one case of a fairly serious omission. In describing the battle by northern Quebec natives over the massive James Bay hydroelectric project, Mowat charges that "the Quebec government was wholeheartedly supported by the federal government . . . which was most anxious to contain the legitimate demands of the Quebec native peoples." While it may be true that Ottawa was secretly relieved to see the James Bay natives win a pitifully meager settlement, in fairness it should also be acknowledged that Ottawa did give the James Bay natives \$500,000 to take on the Bourassa government in a lengthy court action. When the natives won a short-lived legal victory, Jean Chretien, the



Farley Mowat

ing speculation to the effect that Norse settlers who colonized the land around Ungava Bay as early as 1100 A.D. may have vanished after merging with the local Eskimo culture. The book contains as well an endlessly unfolding catalogue of the atrocities that have been visited upon the animal life of the region, from the destruction of the caribou and seal-harp herds to the "genocide by neglect" that Canada has practised in the past; between 1947 and 1954, according to Mowat, more than 300 Eskimos in the Keewatin district died of starvation. Today's treatment of the Indians and Inuit is only a marginal improvement over that. All the present policies of the North's colonial masters in Ottawa, says Mowat, are predicated on the hope that "assimilation and integration will instil the . . . witless hunger for material wealth in the native peoples . . . and thereby coerce [them]

then federal Minister of Indian Affairs. said that the outcome had provided one of his "few moments of satisfaction" as minister.

But *Canada North Now* is a book of singular power that deserves to be read. It is sad but probably true that the eye of the best-intentioned southern liberal will, after a while, tend to glaze over at the familiar spectacle of a multinational firm plotting some new act of Arctic brigandry, of northern natives feebly protesting, of yet another government commission lumbering into action to adjudicate. Mowat is capable of amusing the reader (or at any rate, this one) to renewed anger. At one point, he deals with white reactions to the Berger commission, which has listened to the pleas of Mackenzie Valley natives just to be left in peace. Here is Calgary's

Mayor Rod Sykes, quoted by Mowat from a *Toronto Globe and Mail* report: "I am amazed that Canadians have tolerated so far and even financed the talk about land claims and compensation claims by people who in many cases would rather talk than work... In the name of freedom of speech and the right to be heard, people whose fundamental interest is self-interest rather than the national interest have exploited the process." In the context of Mowat's book, that alone should be sufficient to put uncommitted Canadians instantly on the side of the natives. Altogether, Mowat's account of our callous and stupid treatment of the North is likely to persuade many of the author's own suspicion that "verily, mankind is mad." □

in the, resignation of Harkness — the final, public blow of a fight that had been reported for months unofficially by reporters in and around Ottawa. People recall specific events: cabinet secrecy and political close-mouthedness seem to have flown out the window with the passage of the years. Through the final months of 1962, there were emotional outbursts by the prime minister during the seemingly interminable, day-in day-out cabinet meetings he called in an effort to come to decisions on touchy matters. Some of these ended with such remarks as, "I'm going to the Governor General. There'll be a new prime minister by nightfall!" And after that, the Chief would sometimes seize his files and storm out of the room.

And so, on the evidence, his cabinet crumbled. Léon Balcer and Paul Martineau came to the conclusion that any attempt to make Diefenbaker understand French Canada was hopeless; the National Defence-oriented members felt he didn't understand their problems — and on, and on.

What is gripping is to read all this in the words of the participants themselves. Stursberg keeps sternly and austere in the background. And here's the only real cavil: he links their reminiscences by sparsely written summaries of political and other events leading up to them, and in my view, they're not extensive enough to give full understanding to readers who have grown up since, or paid little attention to politics at the time. I'm afraid the basic books on the period remain Peter C. Newman's *Renegade in Power* and *Distemper of Our Times*, despite what I regard as over-devotion to the labyrinthine area of federal-provincial relations. Anyone who has read them can take on Stursberg's books not only with full comprehension, but also with delight.

Moreover, there's a lot of new material and insight in these memories. Most people in the parliamentary press gallery knew about the plot by one wing of the cabinet to force Diefenbaker to resign, and to let a caretaker, probably George Nowlan, take over. We haunted the footsteps of George Hees, Léon Balcer, Paul Martineau, Pierre Sévigny, Douglas Harkness, George Nowlan himself. What we didn't know — and didn't report at the time — was the counter-plot, if one can call it that, of the Diefenbaker loyalists. Such men as Donald Fleming, Gordon Churchill, and Alvin Hamilton conferred just as constantly about ways to stem the tide of rebellion that eventually didn't exactly win, but destroyed the Conservatives as a credible government.

There's more, much more, including the story of the 1966 rebellion that forced the leadership convention of

The Chief in extremis

Diefenbaker: Leadership Lost, 1962-1967, by Peter Stursberg. U of T Press. 212 pages, \$15 cloth (ISBN 0-8020-2225-1).

By NORMAN DEPOE

PETER STURSBERG is, as the young might say, "into" oral history — and into it with the professionalism that a long journalistic and broadcasting career would suggest. The technique is becoming more popular; one lets history stand on the words and memories of those who made it, leaving evaluation to the reader.

Stursberg, who has already compiled an earlier volume (*Diefenbaker: Leadership Gained*) bases this one on 120 hours of taped interviews with such people as Donald Fleming, Pierre Sévigny, Howard Green, Douglas Harkness, and other members of the Diefenbaker cabinet; members of his staff; and Liberals Judy LaMarsh and Lucien Cardin. There is, though Stursberg did interview him, nothing of John Diefenbaker himself: commitments by "the Chief" to the publishers of his own memoirs prevented him from releasing that material.

The result of all this interviewing, some involving considerable travel, came to more than one million words in transcript. Getting that mass of basic material down to 201 pages is by itself a tribute to Stursberg's ability as an editor, with a sure-footed knowledge of what story he is trying to tell, sensitive selectivity, and (despite his well-

known personal fondness for John Diefenbaker) rigid impartiality in presenting the memories of friend, more-or-less impartial observer, and outright foe — both within and without the Conservative Party. (The only point where editorial bias might seem to show is in his treatment of the appointment of Mr. Justice Spence of the Supreme Court of Canada to head the inquiry into the Sévigny-Munsinger affair; the weight of the evidence he presents comes down hard against the appointment as a perversion and weakening of the high, impartial purposes of the court by using one of its members for a purpose that seemed to many people — and still seems to have been purely political. The counter-argument — that the purpose was to remove the inquiry from the field of partisanship — is only perfunctorily acknowledged.

What we get then, is a record of the decline and fall of John Diefenbaker, not as he would see it himself, but as it is remembered by those who worked for and against it. And it is fascinating.

After a brief prologue summarizing Diefenbaker's rise and triumph in the huge majority of the 1958 election, we find the Chief in disarray, heading a minority government after the 1962 election. The memories record his, indecisiveness on major issues, the most noteworthy being the struggle between Howard Green of External Affairs and Douglas Harkness of National Defence over the use of nuclear warheads on the token Bomarc missile sites in northern Ontario and Quebec. This culminated

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1967 — though there are two serious omissions. There's nothing from Flora MacDonald or Arthur Maloney. The simple reason for this is that Stursberg asked them for interviews and they turned him down, as did Duff Roblin on the subsequent fight for the leadership.

Still, the book remains a triumph: Stursberg not only had the obvious trust and confidence of the people he did interview; but also his long career, plus later research, taught him the right questions to ask. The answers kept this reader, anyway, up till 3 a.m. until he had read them all. □

Was Newton's apple the core of sexism?

Penelope's Web: Some Perceptions of Women in European and Canadian Society, by N. S. Griffiths. Oxford University Press. 249 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0-19-5402685).

By DORIS COWAN

IN 1971, N.S. Griffiths prepared a series of lectures for CTV's *University of the Air* "to provide some historical framework for a discussion of Canadian feminism." *Penelope's Web* gives us both framework and discussion; its spacious subtitle, *Some Perceptions of Women in European and Canadian Society*, suggests its ambitious range.

Griffiths objects strongly to feminist writing that in its ardour abandons historical accuracy. We have been asked too often to contemplate a vision of "always all-powerful males and always enfeebled women"; the truth, she insists, is much more complex and much less discouraging. "Actual conditions in human communities" must be investigated; Griffiths undertakes to do so; and both as a woman and as a historian she takes her responsibilities seriously, even passionately. Characteristically she speaks of her search for the "least misleading generalization." If all generalizations mislead, the only honourable path open to the conscientious historian is to include, or at least consider, *everything*. This she has tried to do, and since her subject covers four centuries and two continents it is not surprising that in her vehement wish never to deceive, Griffiths sometimes gets *Penelope's Web* a bit tangled.

Her thesis is that the oppression of women has not been an unvarying historical condition: that although ignor-

ant or superstitious prejudice against women has always existed to a greater or lesser degree, it has not always resulted in active discrimination. In the 17th century women came as close as ever they have to an equal partnership with men, Griffiths argues, because in the smaller agriculturally based communities of the time, on both sides of the Atlantic, women's intelligence and energy were needed and consequently respected. In the 18th century, however, restraints on female freedom began to be built into the new, larger, and less flexible social, legal, and economic systems that were gradually being constructed; and by the early 19th century, when these repressive systems came to their full power, the majority of women were persuaded that it was their right and duty to be idle, elegant, and uneducated. But there was resistance: not all women submitted passively. Mary Wollstonecraft's *An Vindication of the Rights Of Women* circulated throughout Europe, and by the beginning of the 20th century women had succeeded in winning back a large measure of their freedom. Griffiths' point, as I understand it, is that totalitarianism is simply the most convenient and efficient way to keep things running smoothly, and that the rulers of Europe and North America had a great deal of business to take care of, what with the expansion of industry, the colonizing of the globe, and the governing of everybody. In the process the rights not only of women were set aside but also those of religious and, political minorities, as well as that great mass of irresponsible citizens who could not be trusted because they owned no property. Griffiths charitably allows that in the beginning at least, these developments were less the result of "malice than muddle-headedness"; that we are dealing here not with "brilliant plots for oppression" but simply with the effects of "lazy minds faced with complex problems." But later on, when she sees discrimination against women becoming institutionalized and ironclad, she is less forgiving.

Certainly the tendency of the powers in society, including the writers of official history, was and continues to be the laughing-off or suppression of exceptions and minorities — such as rebellious women. Even Simone de Beauvoir, accepting "the historical insignificance of woman," could write in *The Second Sex* that "most female heroines are oddities." Griffiths will not have this. Independent and influential women in history may have been outnumbered, but they were not thereby insignificant. An exception is not necessarily a freak; a minority is not just the short bar on the graph: both can have an effect far greater than mere numbers would suggest. And true to her principles, Griffiths gives us par-

ticulars. Hex book is jam-packed with names, faces, and life stories, including a fascinating and detailed account of the life of one Acadian woman, Anne LePrince, who lived from 1713 to 1794 in Acadia, England, and France, and in the end died by the guillotine for helping runaway priest.

Griffiths has put heart and soul and brain into this book, and on the whole she does well by her subject. The trouble, as she herself points out more than once in desperate asides, is that the questions proliferate even as you ask them. It's all just a bit too much for one book. □

IN BRIEF

Surrealism and the Cinema, by Michael Gould, A. S. Barnes & Co., 171 pages, \$9.95 cloth (ISBN 0-498-01498-3). Right at the start, Gould says this is not a comprehensive review of the surrealist movement in cinema: "This is just a selective book about films; a book about art; about perception; revelation; and appreciation." He begins with a long, scattered attempt to define the surrealist sensibility, and then goes on to discuss some of the work of Luis Buñuel, Josef von Sternberg, Alfred Hitchcock, Samuel Fuller, Walt Disney, and Michael Snow. Only the discussion of Michael Snow's *Wavelength* is successful; here the author does indeed communicate a feeling that his subjective perception and appreciation of the various elements in this film resulted in a genuine revelatory experience. The rest of the book, however, resembles the feverish work of a student in an examination hall, who has been ambushed by a question requiring him to write at length about film and surrealism, and who is frantically trying to relate whatever he can remember of anything he's ever seen or read to the topic at hand. The chapter on surrealist sensibility has no unity, focus, or apparent direction. Consequently, the sections dealing with specific films and parts of films have no coherent foundation and one often has to struggle hard to figure out why they have been included — why the author considers them in particular to be surreal experiences, when most of the camera, editing, and dramatic techniques he cites as evidence of their surrealism are common to all genres of film. Mr. Gould is a young graduate of the film department at York University. Although his book isn't very good, it really isn't that much worse than the general run of inadequate film criticism that is being steadily churned out these days, largely to feed the market created by university film programs.

PHIL SURGUY

Runaway horse

The Canadian Connection, by Jean-Pierre Charbonneau. Optimum Publishing. illustrated. 542 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0-08890-040-6).

By HANS JEWINSKI

NAMES IN high places . . . double-crosses . . . gangland killings . . . the mafia . . . the French connection . . . and now the Canadian connection. Buy a copy of *The Canadian Connection* and read all about it.

When you buy your copy, ignore the **introduction**. The editors, for some prissy reason, **want to warn** us about the **literary** shortcomings of this book. Well, nobody needs **to** be warned. By picking up the book and browsing **through the** 542 pages, the reader soon learns what the book is all about. And an apology is nor required.

The **writer** received considerable help from the **RCMP** and is able to take

us to the innermost secrets of the heroin distribution business. There is an entire chapter of tape-recorded conversations showing how heroin dealers cope with money problems, how deals fall through, and how frustrating is the business of setting up a transaction with which everyone is happy. It is an eye-opener to find out how little and how much money is involved on either side of a deal, and it is even more surprising to find out about the difficulties involved in trying to live up to the commitments that have been made.

If there is one fault to the book, it is the sheer **volume** of information. It's too easy to lose track. The following paragraph is not unusual: "The files of the Narcotics Squad revealed a direct link between the **Mastracchio-Soccio** investigation and the arrests by the U.S. Bureau of **Narcotics** in New York. The efforts of the RCMP undercover agent, Hugh Walker, to contact **Frank Sisco** were aimed at exposing the connection between Antoine d'Agostino (**Michel Sisco**) and the **Spirito-Orsini** Mafia group in New York." The fault is not the author's, for it requires 20 pages of index to list all the people involved. The problem is that the book deals with real people, and real people in the heroin business sometimes make only one appearance and then vanish.

Charbonneau usually handles his material well. He gives background information in the French connection and then shows how it all ties into the Canadian connection. **Lucien Rivard** and his friends take up a good portion of the book. Charbonneau also does not hesitate to tell all about those organized people that are (or were) in Ontario and Toronto. The Good when all those official people stated that they did not exist.

There are maps of how heroin is distributed in Canada, charts of how it is derived, and a bibliography of where to read more about it. Oh yes, there are also dozens of photographs of the people and places involved.

Perhaps the only sad note is that although Charbonneau is able to give us a clear picture of the painstaking work required in investigating the Canadian connection, he is unable to bring to life the men who have done that work. He often shows how investigations are begun or lost on the smallest points of fate, but the investigators themselves are never more than stock characters.

And for the contemporary angle, bilingualism also has a role in play in international heroin dealings: "Many deals were made easier by a Montrealer's bilingualism!" □

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Political Corruption In Canada: Cases, Causes and Cures, edited by Kenneth M. Gibbons and Donald C. Rowat. McClelland & Stewart (Carleton Library No. 95). 307 pages, \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0-7710-9795-6).

By ALASTAIR BWEENY

This UNIQUE VOLUME of 26 essays is long overdue, and should be required reading for all politicians at the federal, provincial and municipal levels. As Richard Gwyn has defined it, "democratic government rests ultimately not on the foundation of law or power but on the foundation of trust. This trust requires that justice be done and that it should clearly appear to the public to be done." But this is just one side of the coin: up to the present day, it appears that the other great foundation of democracy has been patronage politics, that the prime means of paying for the whole process, from political picnics to chartered jets to films of the candidate tiding off into the sunset, has been the

sale of "favourable consideration" by government to business.

We all know that somebody has to pay the piper, yet we have become so inured to this not quite blatant hypocrisy that when patronage sometimes surfaces as scandal, we have regarded it as immoral, when all it really was was natural. Pity the poor Quebec architect who recently was turned down when he asked the Income Tax Appeal Board for a rebate on his kickbacks. Shouldn't a little honest graft be deductible as a cost of doing business? Pork-barrel politics is so ingrained in our system that our national psyche is perhaps totally unprepared for the next federal election, when we — the taxpayers — will directly and openly subsidize through Parliament, the candidates who appear before us.

Whether the Election Expenses Act will clean up our political system — a number of rats have already been flushed from the cellar — will depend on a number of factors that this book explores to a greater and a lesser extent. Conflict-of-interest regulations, newspaper patronage and corruption in the public service are fully illustrated, and the general problem itself is well-defined for the student. Where the book falls down, I think, is in not adequately projecting the matter into the future, and in examining the probable net results of the Election Expenses

Act, chief of which will doubtless be a vast increase in the amount of lobbying from firms who can no longer call the tune by their generous contributions to a party's war chest. Personal corruption will probably take over where party corruption left off. *Vide* Sky Shops, as evidence of alleged corruption. The act itself will have to be reviewed constantly to ensure fairness and plug all the loopholes, and it appears that yet another federal-provincial conference will be necessary to standardize legislation among the provinces and the national government, or all hell will break loose.

If we don't want to get into a position where political parties have to maintain Swiss bank accounts, we are going to have to be very careful to keep honesty in the public service at a high level, monitor the corporate contributions of subsidiaries of non-resident companies (*Vide* Lockheed) and above all ensure the passage of a Freedom of Information Act, so that the public can see for itself that the tendering of public business is practiced honestly and of course tendered in the first place (*Vide* Mr. Drapeau's personal Olympic architect).

The best service *Political Corruption in Canada* provides is to demonstrate conclusively that ruling parties must be protected from themselves. Good and economical government depends on it. □

Michael Ondaatje

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It happened one night

A Winter's Tale, by Cassie Brown, Doubleday. 336 pages, \$11.50 cloth (ISBN 0-385-125704).

By DIANE ALLISON

IT HAS ALL the elements of a thriller: suspense, disaster, mystery, and death. And the lurid tale is all the more gripping because it is true. In 1918, the *S.S. Florizel* set sail on a stormy night from St. John's, Nfld., to New York. The sturdy ship and 94 of her passengers never touched shore again. She struck a reef off Cappahayden and split in half.

Cassie Brown unravels this yarn with the vividness of a folklorist re-creating local history. The author has described the physical layout of the ship so thoroughly that one would swear she had been part of the crew. The nautical technicalities are necessary to the story's authenticity but they never impede its dramatic momentum.

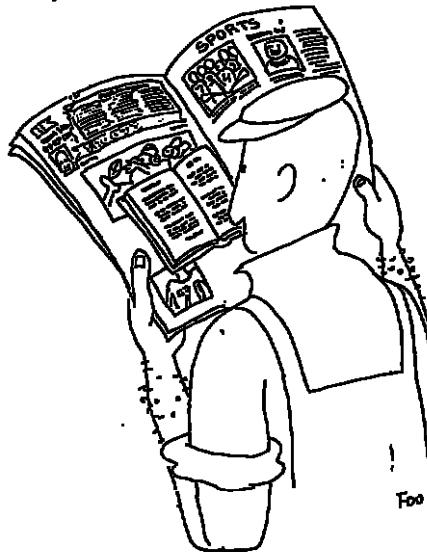
Brown intrigues her readers from the start by volunteering the outcome of her story. She methodically builds up to the

excruciating climax of the disaster. We look for some emotional relief but Brown offers us none. After the shipwreck comes an intensive enquiry into its mysterious cause.

While the story is fact, the ghastly and bizarre events combine to give it a legendary quality. The author plays on this by introducing, in heavy-handed fashion, the presence of capricious Fate. The first line of the story begins: "Fate, the weaver, selected with infinite patience and delicacy a thread here, a thread there, uniting the various strands of life into a pattern of disaster." The events speak for themselves. The artificial intrusion of Fate detracts from the story's credibility.

But overall, the language is simple and direct, yet lyrical. The descriptions of the sea are fresh and intense. They capture the fierceness of the waves as they toy with the *Florizel*: "Great seas rose up and around her, hurled their smoking crests upon her deck in drenching sheets of icy spray."

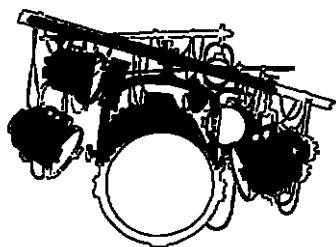
The drama of the story is not only inherent in the action, but in the contrasting descriptions. The initial image of the *Florizel* as an indestructible, stately vessel is shattered by the picture of a "black wall of sea" that "creamed against sofas and tables" and played havoc with the ship's elegant furniture before the eyes of a terrified passenger. "The piano, followed by other furni-



ture, tumbled over the stairs vibrating discordantly, and floated beside her."

The portrayal of the passengers is necessarily superficial because the central character is the *Florizel*. Yet the reader readily identifies with the individuals' lonely and horrifying battle for survival.

A reader can luxuriate in the terrifying thrill of sheer suspense. There's no symbolism to ponder—just a minor bit of history that would have remained buried in documents if Cassie Brown hadn't rescued and revived it. □



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Sundance at Dusk, by Al Purdy, McClelland & Stewart. 111 pages. \$15.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7710-7206-6).

IN WINDSOR this spring Al Purdy (in town for a reading at the new art gallery) and Pat Lane and Sid Marty (in town for a reading at the university) were all sitting blearily on my front porch in the early morning sunshine drinking coffee. We were talking about Purdy's just-published anthology of young poets, *Storm Warning 2*. Lane, Marty, and myself had been included in the first *Storm Warning* (1971), and Purdy, pointing this out, remarked: "You know, I'm sort of a father-figure to you guys."

His comment was greeted with the customary hoots and jeers. But in my case anyway, it's true. So it's from that perspective that I talk about Purdy's marvellous (to me) new collection of poems, *Sundance at Dusk*.

I first heard of Purdy when he came to the University of British Columbia to read in 1965, about the time his *Caribou Horses* was published. After the reading, he came loping into our Senior Poetry Workshop behind Earle Birney, whose class it was. There, Purdy read some more and talked about his poems. Birney's workshop was always exciting and informative, but even so it was obvious that with Purdy something especially interesting was happening with words and ideas.

In the late 1960s, when I was in California, I once had a note from Purdy about two poems of mine that had been published in *Canadian Forum*. This astonished me: I couldn't believe that someone whose work I admired so much would like the poems, let alone take the time to write and tell me so. And these two poems later turned up in an anthology Purdy put together for Ryerson Press, published in 1969. Through a slip-up, I had no idea that my poems were to be included in the book and so the first I knew of it was when the finished collection slid through my mail slot in Colorado where I was then teaching. The book was called *Fifteen Winds*, the title taken from a line in one of my poems.

I could go on and on. But besides Purdy's active support of my work, there is so much in his own writing that I have found useful for my own poetry. And the 57 poems in this recent volume of Purdy's keep on showing me more possibilities.

To begin with, Purdy — like Birney — demonstrates what can be done with the anecdote in poetry. To me, the anecdote is the foundation of literature: two guys sitting having a beer after work and talking. They might talk about the job, about people they know, but they tell each other stories — inci-

dents out of their lives and thoughts. So in "Lament," in *Sundance at Dusk*, Purdy remembers the men of his childhood who used to chew and spit tobacco: "the mighty men/. . . the record setters/. . . the achievers of forty feet at a brass spittoon." The poet's skill is in making his story about these men interesting; we want to hear what he has to say about them.

Part of Purdy's poetic mastery is to merge the anecdote with history. In "Lament," as in many other poems, what is considered is the poet's personal history, which is also the history of a man living now in Southern Ontario, and, so, the history of a place in Southern Ontario. Thus I am given the sense that each anecdote is one of a long line of anecdotes told by a very long line of people — not all of whom lived in Southern Ontario. In the middle of a poem, "Recipe," about how piss-ing out his back door in Ameliasburg all winter had led to a spring "plague/of winged ants lording it at the back-door," suddenly Purdy's poem refers to "the seven Cities of Cibola" and Ponce de Leon. The drift of his tale is that "my urine formula raises/the dead satisfactorily and promptly" and the poet wonders about whether or not his urine could also raise "dinosaur monsters sealed/in silence seventy million years" or even "the planets." Of course the intent here is comic, but the sense of himself standing and talking at the end of so much history, so many lives, is pervasive.

And the lives Purdy thinks of aren't just the human ones. In "Upper Silurian Period" he describes himself as

*sitting with hand resting against my skull
tongue running thoughtfully over bone roof
of mouth while writing this poem*

And he realizes

*— that bone a legacy of dermal bone armour
bequeathed by defensive-minded fish
over 400 millions of years.*

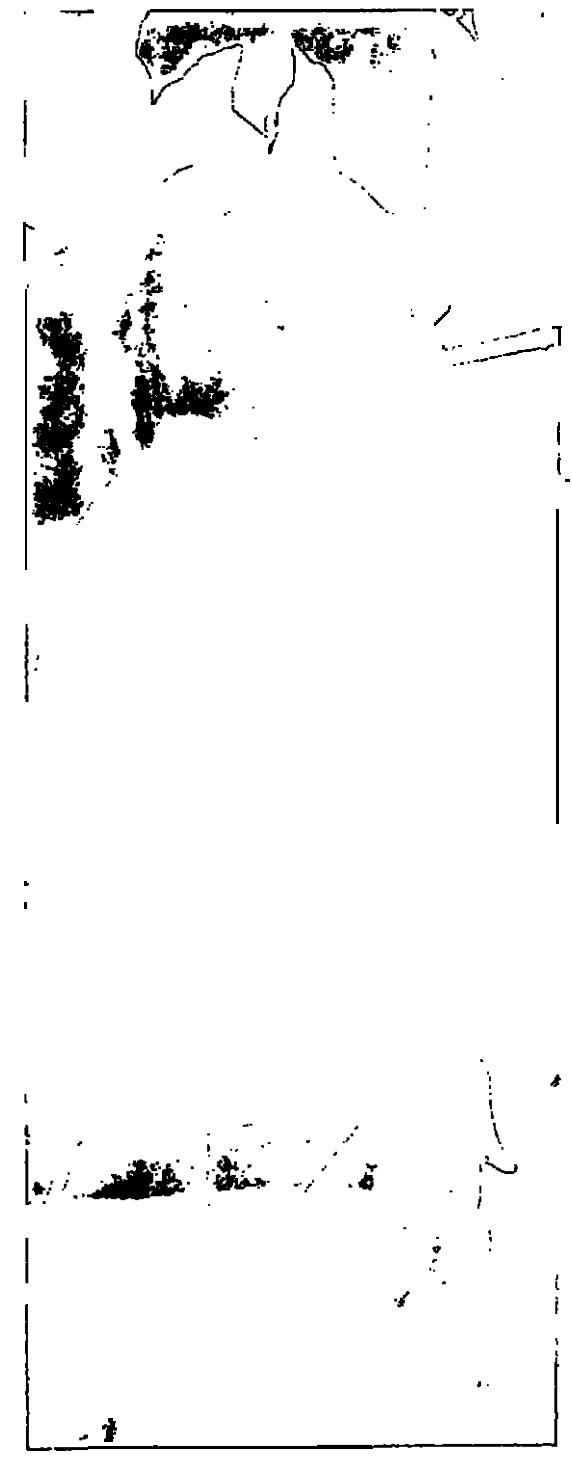
This prehistoric fish is a part of Purdy's story, because it is important to him. As he says in "Jean," a poem remembering other events from his childhood:

*Just because something is gone
doesn't make it a poem
but maybe the reason you remember
does*

So personal memory, and the sense of social and evolutionary history, all add power to Purdy's anecdotes. The West Coast poet Pete Trower calls this Purdy's "cosmic reach." We see it here again in a poem like "Rodeo." The setting is a Chilcotin bar where Purdy is drinking with the Indians who work as cowboys in the B.C. interior. In the midst of the description of the poverty and despair of these lives,

Let's ! for th!

by Tom



Al Purdy

near it big P

Vayman



Purdy reaches out to suggest what is lacking in the scene, what the detail of the anecdote may have obscured:

*I am waiting with Marvin Paul for one
of those
moments when all will be made plain
to me when the calf-ropers build their
loops
and lasso the stars .*

To achieve this wide span — to include so much in his poems — Purdy has opened up the modern poem in English. Much contemporary poetry in the U.S. is better written than his — with tighter use of language, line and image, and with more careful overall construction. But with that care for craft there has been a narrowing of subject matter. So to me Purdy's gift to those of us who come after him has been his springing apart of the poem to allow so many concerns to be considered in a single verse. We in Canada may lack a poet like Robert Bly — a genius both in person and in his work, insisting that English-language poetry deal with the new worlds of Spanish-language surrealism, the three brains of post-reductionist science, and the four mothers of the new feminist culture Bly feels is emerging. But I believe the U.S. lacks a poet like Purdy who, far more slouchy than even Whitman could imagine, has gone forging ahead taking in more and more of life in his poems.

And in *Sundance at Dusk* we have some examples of Purdy at his loosest, his widest-open. "The Children" deals with Indian children

*... scavenging
the garbage dump for food
Churchill housewives throw away*

The poem wanders around to include the Bible, nursery rhymes, and fairy tales, all as part of Purdy's horror that children should have to forage like this to survive. And just when I am thinking to myself that though it is obvious that the situation is something Purdy feels strongly about (and who wouldn't) but that this isn't a very good poem, he says:

*and it isn't true
that Indian kids live like that
and die like that it isn't true
somebody's bound to say
besides it doesn't make a very good poem
and isn't pleasant either I guess
but to hell with poems
to hell with poems*

Another of Purdy's gifts to me has been — both in his life and his poetry — the insistence that a poem is not the beginning and end of existence. There is a very great deal that a poem or a poet cannot do — almost everything, in fact. To me a poem like "The Children" reinforces this idea: it isn't as important that Purdy write a good poem about

starving children in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada, as it is that the children not starve. In a time perhaps over-filled with protest poetry, Purdy's anti-poem here still has the impact needed to make its point.

And yet, in "In the Darkness of Cities" Purdy sees clearly that though a poem likely won't change anything, that is no reason to not write one. In this poem he speaks of the desperate poor in Crete, in Oaxaca, in Singapore and Karachi and the Yucatan. While his poem about them will in no way alleviate their suffering, so a failure to write poems will also in no way alleviate their suffering. So the poet might as well practise the art that brings him joy:

*all these mere words on paper
ring soundlessly in the vacuum of
inattention
I know they mean nothing
as the terrible unaccusing poor know
also
white brightly colored birds
fly in and out from lonely caves of my
imagination*

Purdy's visits to, and poems about, the world beyond Southern Ontario remind us that even poetic fathers have fathers. In Purdy's poems about Latin American and Mediterranean countries he walks about and observes parts of the earth where, poetically, Bimey has gone before. In *Sundance at Dusk*, a poem "Infant Monster" takes us specifically to the world of Bimey's "Bear on the Delhi Road." Though the locale is Turkey rather than India, and the animal whose fate is mixed with a poor man's is a wild boar rather than a bear, the sense of the incident described is similar:

*Down the hot street they go
a little brown pig and an old man
squealing and yanking
with neither being exactly sure
who leads and who follows*

But of course the travel poems in *Sundance at Dusk* are by Purdy, about his discovery. So Purdy's foreign-going poems, including a group here from the Arctic, can be seen as a continuation of his constant wish to describe where he is in the universe and what he thinks about it. As he says in "Turkish Delight":

*... well I have been finding out
for years and years what
it's like to be alive
before it stops*

And before this review stops, I have singled out seven poems in *Sundance at Dusk* that I feel take some of the characteristics of Purdy's poetry that I have been speaking about here and exalt them. These are the seven poems that are lifted out of the general excellence of the book for me and stand as

special representatives of Purdy's sustained, stunning poetic powers. "Preschool" is about a child, Purdy as a child, discovering colour. "Black was first of all... ." Then comes yellow, red, blue, brown, silver, green, orange, until:

*. . . the grey child
went searching for one more colour
beyond blue eyes and brown hair
past the red tremble of leaves in October
and the silver women
the black awaiting us all*

"Deprivations" is about standing looking at fish swimming in a lake, a moment "of childlike rare communion" (as Purdy calls it) with another order of existence. "Stopping Here" is another poem about Purdy as a child, a strange poem about running away from stealing apples and thinking about the rabbits who don't run away fast enough and get shot. And yet the poet feels something in nature is both concerned for him, and uncaring:

*I fell down sometimes and panted
on the earth and sky leaned up
to cover me with feathers
whatever touched me didn't know my name*

"Shall We Gather at the River" tells of a frightening incident when Purdy was 17, running away from the CPR police after being caught riding freights. He is lost in the bush two days and there

*For the last time in my life
I prayed and prayed some more.*

"Alive or Not" is a poem about, or like, a recurring dream. The poet's wife collapses on a street and he runs to catch her before she strikes the pavement. As the poet grows older, he says:

*my speed afoot increases
each time I am running and reach
the place before she falls every time
I am running too fast to stop
I run past her farther and farther
it's almost like a story
as an orchid dies in the Brazilian jungle
and there is a certain amount of horror*

And the same sense of tragic incompleteness occurs in "I Am Searching for You." This is a long poem addressed to two Eskimos missing on the ice that Purdy, as part of the crew of a search plane, is looking for. Purdy describes the details of the missing men, how he came to be in the government plane, the hopelessness of the search:

*because on some night not long delayed
when I have necessity for hope
I hope beforehand someone will be
searching
for me however impossible*

These poems seem to me to be revelations. They are moments when the poet, using all his poetic skills, encompasses his personal past, his sense of

nature and man and the history of each, in order to state accurately what it is like for him to be alive now. And in the seventh of these poems, "Gateway," which closes *Sundance at Dusk*, the poet says he is happy enough to be located now amid the jumble of past and present human and animal existence in "A-burg," to be:

*. . . a man from another time
walking thru the nineteenth-century
village
with a kind of jubilation*

And jubilation is the sort of pleasure I feel, walking through Purdy's world again in this new collection. Does this mean there is nothing in here that I don't like? No, but the poems I find less useful in *Sundance at Dusk* can in no way mar the success of the volume for me. After all, any son can criticize his father. The point of *Sundance at Dusk* for me is that once again we have been given a major collection by a major poet.

Thanks, Dad. □

Poets worthy of their toil

A Government Job At Last: An Anthology of Working Poems, Mainly Canadian, edited by Tom Wayman, MacLeod Books (350 West Pender St., Vancouver) 176 pages, \$3.50 paper.

By AL PURDY

THIS BOOK is an anthology of working poems: which is to say, poems by people who are or were actually toiling at some job or other, including the labour of birth by women. It was obviously an ambitious project for Tom Wayman, given the length of the book. The question immediately arises: Why working poems? I ask it because I've been told (by one Ed Lacey) that such subjects aren't suitable for poetry. Just as George Bowering once mentioned that poems about politics are equally verboten. All I can say in rebuttal is: tell that to Pablo Neruda, Milton Acorn, W. H. Davies, Vladimir Mayakovsky, George Blok, and countless others.

It seems to me that working poems were once written by people who had worked in the past and that's true of a great number of poets in this book. But judging by the authenticity of others, the writers are actually hewers of wood and so forth at the moment. Roosters at universities have occasionally written them too. But the difference in this latter case is that students who are eventual academics know for sure they will eventually escape physical work, and that it's not a lifetime trap. That escape hatch alters the urgency of what they write, I am sure. As well, working and former working poets feel a not-so-subtle disdain for academic poets sometimes, and the latter occasionally envy the authenticity of titers whose work derives directly from their lives.

All of the foregoing misses what's important, which is: Are the poems any good? I happen to think that you can

write poems about anything, anything at all, if you want to and feel strongly enough about your subject. It doesn't matter whether you're once removed or twice removed from work or play or death: the only thing that does matter is excellence.

Which is where I'm at now: Are these working poems any good? Well, I think Pat Lane's lead-off piece, "The Carpenter," is fine, by far the best in the book. It's a big change from Lane's how-awful-life-is vein, and tells of a carpenter who wanted to add floor after floor to the house he was building and just take off into the sky. It should be read, and not quoted from. Jim Green has one about a teacher in a cold one-mom school who chopped up an organ for warmth, not knowing that church services were held at the school on Sundays. Howard White has a grisly little piece about a man burned to near-charcoal, thus preventing the second most-natural function. compelling him to ask for help:

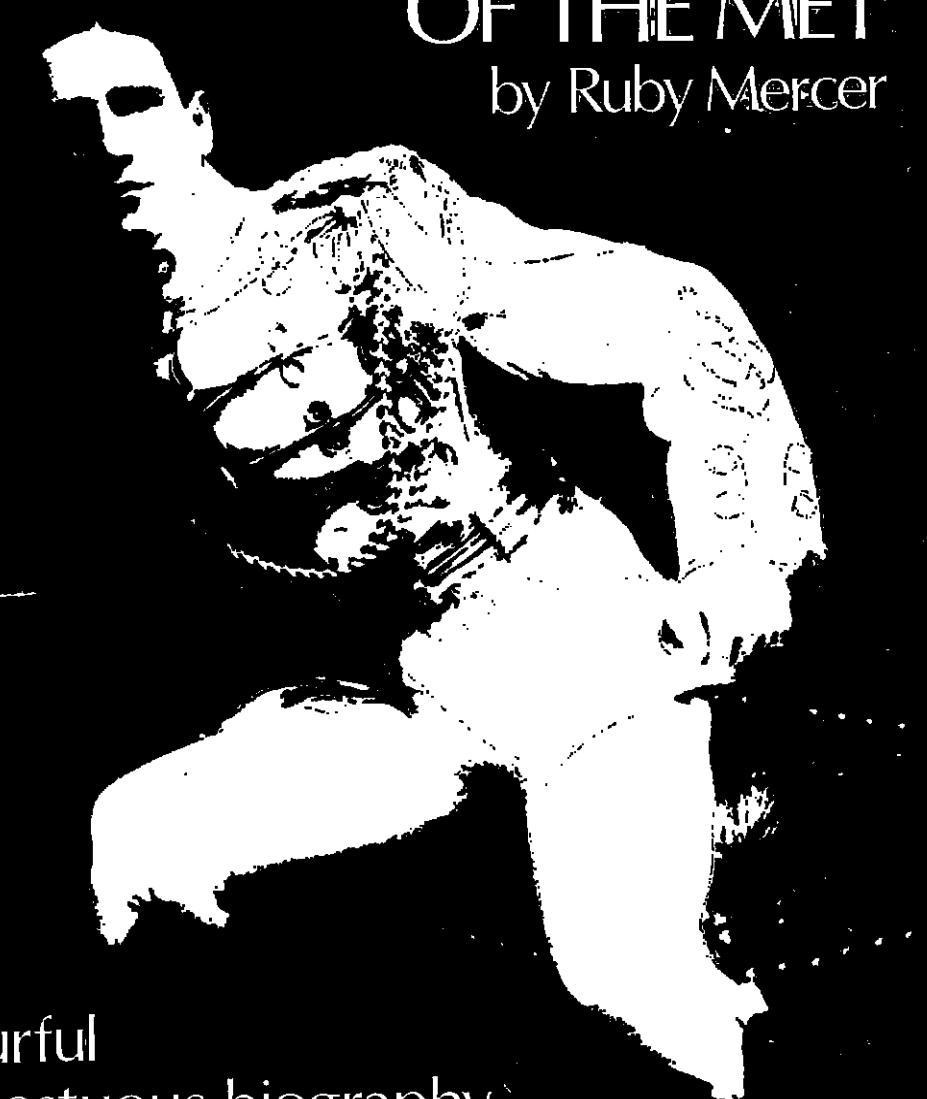
*you stick my pecker over the edge for me
I take a peek at the little twist of ash
where his works useda be-
say, yeah, okay Pal, just say when
but he's already dead*

M. C. Warrior writes about framing doors in a manner that brings to mind Henry Reed's "Naming of Parts." Gwen Hauser has a couple that allow the reader to sniff the unpleasant odour of factories. And Tom Wayman's poems are mostly anecdotal, telling stories someone else told him at work:

*.. . Here's a chainsaw, they tell him,
'Let's see what you can do.'
I don't use a chainsaw, he says, I use
this:
and he holds up a little-bitty axe.
'You can't do anything with that,' they
tell him
and he says: show me a tree you want
cut.
They do, and in three quick blows
the tree creaks, leans, and crashes down.
'My God,' somebody says, 'where did
you learn to fall like that?'*

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by Ruby Mercer



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You know the Sahara Desert? *the little man asks.*
'Sure,' they reply, 'but there aren't any trees there.'
There aren't any now, the little man says.'

Generally speaking, the better-known poets write the best poems, and that's not very surprising. Lane, **Marty, Mouré, Trower**, and **Wayman** himself are best. Ken **Belford**, Eugene **McNamara**, and Gary **Geddes** have written better poems elsewhere. In a book this long you expect some trivia and so-so filler, but this is kept to a minimum. And I wonder about nepotism: I hear **Wayman** is going to review a book of mine, therefore is this a flattering review? And one Alexander **Wayman** is included (born 1911): Is that a relative?

No masterpieces here, although as I look at Lane's "The Carpenter" and think how it pleases me-both For the

poem and For Lane's change of pace — I wonder. But then, I'm sometimes more enthusiastic than a thing deserves, which is **probably** the case here. But Jim Green, **Kirsten Emmott**, Gwen **Hauser**, Howie White, and M. C. Warrior add slightly new voices of **definite** merit. What it amounts to is this: Forgive the filler and enjoy the fine poems. And I think these are fine by any standards. **possibly** even those of **Lacey** and **Bowering**.

And one **point**: in a book like this **you** expect poems about how terrible w&k-ing is, how good (**generally** nostalgically) it is, and at **least** some tinge of communism. The closest thing to communism is **Wayman's** poem about a union; but I see nothing of the **sort** elsewhere. And since I equate communism in some degree to socialism, it seems unlikely that socialist poets will ever form the vanguard of a Canadian **NDP government** □

Showing us their hands

Working in Canada, edited by **Walter Johnson**, Black Rose Books, **162 pages**, 512.95 cloth (**ISBN 0-919618-64-2**) and \$3.95 paper (**ISBN 0-919618-63-4**).

Essays in Canadian Working Class History, edited by **Gregory S. Kealey and Peter Warrian**, McClelland & Stewart, 231 pages, 54.95 paper (**ISBN 0-7710-4477-1**).

By **GEORGE MELNYK**

IT IS DIFFICULT to imagine two more radically different books on the topic of working people in this country than these two. The **first** is written by workers about their daily work experience.. while the other is written by **labour** historians about "the working class." The **first** is written For the most part in the language of everyday speech, while the second is drowned in radical, intellectual, and social-science jargon. The first is accessible to many people, while the other is oriented to professors and university students. In a sense, therefore, these two books represent a class conflict. They are at war with one another.

Walter **Johnson**, the editor of *Working in Canada*, worked For three years in an automobile factory north of **Montreal**. He claims that the articles in this book (one half of which are interviews) are "a penetrating critique of industrial life." They are. The book has photos of people at work. Its authors are rank-and-file post office,

automobile, print shop, lab, and social workers. They tell us how they fight back against the mindless, de-humanizing, authoritarian conditions of work in our society. They tell us about the good and the bad in their unions, in their relationships with each other, in their daily life. They break down the stereotypes of "big labour" or "rednecks." In reading this book, the "working class" becomes a Face, a heart, and a mind. One identifies.

The **Kealey/Warrian** book is a collection of essays by ultra-junior academics completing their doctorates in **labour** history. It is a book about a class, historical events, institutions, and personalities. While *Working in Canada* attacks work in our society and makes the worker a person. **Kealey** and **Warrian** create essays, arguments, statistics, interpretations, explanations, analysis, and theories. *Working in Canada* argues passionately and simply For the worker's daily need For responsibility, dignity, and control. Johnson, in his own essay on autoworkers, states: "In an affluent, highly technological society there is no good reason why workers should remain chained to 19th-century industrial attitudes." Kealey and Warrian focus on the specialized aspects of those 19th-century attitudes.

Their book is itself infected by a present-day **conflict** in academia between the new social-science approach to **historiography** imported into Canada from the United States in the late 1960s and the traditional British style of his-

torical writing. The American approach requires a course in statistics to understand it so that, of these essays, only the traditional ones are readily comprehensible to the educated reader. Johnson's book is dominated by the most articulate and aware workers, who are involved, self-sacrificing, and critical, and more often than not, **anarcho-syndicalists**.

Both books are part of an upsurge in Canadian workers' studies, which divide into three layers. The first level encompasses such books as *A People's History Of Cape Breton Island* and *A People's History of Prince Edward Island*, which are works of popular left-wing propaganda written at a Reader's Digest level. In the middle are books such as Johnson's *Working in Canada or the* anthologies of poems about work collected by the poet Tom Wayman, the most recent being *A Government Job at Last*, which appeal to young radicalized workers with some post-secondary education. Their numbers are growing. At the top are the academic studies such as the Kealey/Warrian book. Books in this category (in spite of the liberal sympathies and sincerity of the writers) tend to work ultimately in the economic self-interest of its aspiring young academic authors. While reading *Working in Canada I got the distinct impression that its authors would certainly lose their jobs if their employers read what they said, while the academics would get a promotion.*

The conflict between the various levels (dare I say classes?) is brought out in the open in the final essay in *Working in Canada written* by Gary Jewell, who attacks the condescension of middle-class radicals toward workers and asserts those workers' ability to state their own needs, problems, and solutions. If *Working in Canada* is making war on the "bosses" then on whom is Essays in Canadian Working Class History making war? On other academics of course. Warrian and Kealey state that their book is "an attempt to bring back ordinary working people from their long exile on the margins of Canadian history" and to show that "the real makers of Canada have been ordinary men and women." Other academics have made the greats the makers of Canada but not this bunch of radical academics. Oh no! They are out to write "a new social history" that gets rid of "labour" history and replaces it with "working-class" history. These fearless word-warriors swap frightful verbal blows on behalf of the working class (and their jobs). As I read about the Orange Order in Toronto and its relationship with the working class or "Brainworkers and the Knights of Labour" or "Working Class Housing in a Small Nineteenth Century Cana-

dian City" or "The Social and Cultural Matrix of an Emerging Labour Movement," I had to keep in mind the wise injunction of the editors who wrote in their introduction: "We need to constantly keep in mind that real people—Canadian working men and women—are the subjects of our study." And indeed that is what I had to do—keep reminding myself.

Both books share two of the same faults. First, they both use the word "Canada" in their titles in an opportunistic and misleading way. Johnson's book is centred on Montreal and Montreal workers without a word from the rest of the country (except Toronto). Kealey and Warrian focus on Ontario, and even though they acknowledge that it is about time Ontario started being treated as a region and not be treated as a synonym for Canada, their publisher McClelland & Stewart, "the Canadian publishers," obviously thought otherwise.

The second flaw is the lack of material from or about women workers. In Johnson's book only two of the 10 articles are by women while in the Kealey/Warrian book women are almost non-existent among the printers, freight-handlers, Knights of Labour, brainworkers (read journalists), and miners that their essays are about. In this day and age, neither attitude is acceptable. □

IN BRIEF

Pass the Poison Separately, by Os-well Blakeston, Catalyst (315 Blantyre Ave., Scarborough, Ont.), 60 pages, \$2.95 paper (ISBN 0-920000-01-0). This sprightly yet sinister travel-mystery spoof is as entertaining as it is offbeat. Charmingly hopeless and hopelessly lost, closet poet Sammy Sweet embarks on a magical mystery tour to a traveller's paradise, X, prized because it is an unknown place. No cameras are allowed there and its name and location are never revealed because "you can't spoil a place if you don't know where it is." Has Sammy merely fallen into a "silly spy story" as he first suspects or is he a doomed patsy for some new kind of literary mystery intended to draw the unsuspecting reader into a futile search for non-existent clues? After escaping from the clutches of his Aunt Amelia (who recognizes his calling as a hermit and offers him a post in her back garden), Sammy stumbles upon the keepers of X, who receive him royally and mistakenly assume he is able to divulge the secret name of the place. The comedy of errors continues until, mercifully, the poison is passed and Sammy expires in Blunderland. Although this appears to be the author's first Canadian title, he has had several books pub-



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MARK WITTEN

Her ninth symphony

The Price of Gold, by Miriam Waddington, Oxford University Press, 112 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 19-5402650).

By CLARE MacCULLOCH

IN A DREAM, Caedmon heard an angel summon him to song: Miriam Waddington admits in the first poem of this new collection that in her dream an old Jewish prophet spoke to her not of words but deeds, and she awoke to the message of love, and so she loved.

This collection, *her ninth symphony*, contains many new poems, reprinted from small and formidable magazines and poetry anthologies, newspapers, and also some heard on CBC broadcasts. Ten of them are reprinted from *Call Them Canadians* (Lorraine Monk's photographic prologue for *Between Friends*); one is reprinted from each of *Say Yes* and *Telescope*, two earlier volumes now out of print.

Waddington's angel, like Caedmon's, brooks no resistance and so she has been loved into poetry for the past 40 years. Her poetry has made her one of the most important, if somewhat under-rated poetic voices of this century, her work spanning periods, influences, developments, trends, and innovations which are impressive and important considerations for our cultural historians. Through it all, Waddington sits a calm centre in a vortex of much hub-bub, the one person who deserves, as Robert Fulford has observed, to be called "the mother" in the contemporary literary family.

The Price of Gold has three movements: "Rivers," "Living Canadian" and "The Cave." The first deals with the "pebbly, dark, mysterious" ramblings of familiar Waddington territory: the past, the influence and friendship of A.M. Klein (with a beautiful tribute to him and a chilling picture of the "madness" when the angels "...emptied out his life" and "would not let him die"), "Little prairie pictures," "Grand Manan sketches" through forests and the metaphors born out of personal "Legends," self-portraits,

pre-liberation, towns visited, people loved, a "Harvest" and finally to a state of quiet.

The second section begins with the poem and the question that defines the central theme of the book: "What is a Canadian?" The poet searches still in people, places, pasts, the ordinary things of daily living, (shopping at Eaton's, a bad Volvo, rooting by Domtar, few friendships, strikes, et cetera), anything to make a signature that is original, Canadian, and delineating. No luck. The titles clearly indicate the constant vacillation: "This year in Jerusalem," "October 1970," "Déjà vu," "How I Spent . . .," "Back at Y&K University!" "In Exile," there-petition of "Putting on and taking off," and finally a return to "Afternoon on Grand Manan." The resting place is the same one discovered in *Driving Home*: home is here: our history is now; we are our past; our legends are ours for the building. We are at once the coal-man and the furnace, the one who feeds to produce a heat that, while it keeps us from freezing in this cold land, does not keep us warm or contented. The feeding must continue, sustaining life and culture, but it does not seem to enrich it. The diet is paltry, an assortment of mediocrity that stretches skin over bone but does not fatten.

The third section is reminiscent of Plato's allegory of the cave; the poet has looked into the brilliant eye of the sun and returned, older and wiser, to tell her chained brothers that the answer lies outside their current reality. Only "The Price of Gold" remains the same; all the rest is sham; love is all that drives wise men; it is the journey not the arrival that matters; death waits just around the corner. The challenge is to run the race anyway, to take the existential leap. Camus has written:

Living with one's passions amounts to living with one's sufferings, which are the counterpoise, the corrective, the balance, and the price. When a man has learned — and not on paper — how to remain alone with his suffering, how to overcome his longing to flee from it, how to overcome the illusion that others may share in it, then he has little left to learn.

It would seem to be a credo for Waddington's current conclusions.

Technically, this is often poetry in a hurry. Some titles betray this: "Before I Go" and "An Unliberated Woman Seen From A Distance." And some lines jar a mite: "the whisper of shape," "white is folded," "a brush of/what is left/when nothing/is left," "Your body/becomes/its own legend/of fire," "giddy / as butterflies/burning/as prairie sunsets." But these are few. There are some fine lines: "You are new as/the uncoiling fern/springtime in a pot/of green paint." "The island/lies in perpetual/August," the Sitvellesque "Even the/rain today/is fully of/quivering/light," and "Love

still. lives/in a place/where the wind stands/and fiddles for/north country dances." Waddington's forte is still those fine opening lines, gripping and imaginative, the sturdy foundations for the concepts and lines that follow them.

Time and circumstance give an urgency to the collection. "I have to hurry/but before I go/I want to give you/he very first words... ." What a rich legacy the angels have prodded Waddington into leaving us. The poems she shams here are underscorings to what she gave us in *Driving Home*; there Waddington admitted that like Margaret Laurence, her message had been spoken and recorded over a lifetime; this latest book is a variation on a theme. The imagery is not always startling but the lines here are thinner, the technique more practised; this is living close to the bone. Haste and familiarity can be forgiven. For my money, *The Price of Gold* is still the best book of poetry published in Canada this year. It has been well worth the waiting. □

Chaos is beaten again

The Rugging and the Moving Times: Poems New and Uncollected, by Earle Bimey, Black Moss Press (R.R. 1, Coatsworth, Ont.), 42 pages. \$3 paper (ISBN 0-88753-004-4).

By GWENDOLYN MacEWEN

THE ONLY PROBLEM with this delightful new book by Bimey is that there's not enough of it. It is quite a slim volume, and I, as a long-standing Bimey fan, would have wished that one of my favourite bards had waited until a longer work was ready. No doubt this is just my greed. Here, in any case, is a taste of the sort of thing Bimey is writing now: a hilarious piece called (believe it or not) "Plastic plinkles for Gaudy' Nite¹⁴ at HMF² College, Yule³ 1966." (complete with head to foot notes); a revised version of the long poem "Interview With Vancouver"; a revision of a series of poems called "Reading the Diary"; a re-arrangement of a work by John Todd entitled "Shotgun marriage without shotguns/the tugging and the moving times"; and finally, a series of six exquisitely delicate love poems ranging from 1973 to 1976.

In a sense, the book is thematically uneven and rather jerky, owing to the fact that Bimey moves from bawdy

satire to social **commentary**, and on to romantic themes with scarcely any transitions. But this is simple because there are not enough poems here to create such transitions — not enough bulk, so to speak. This, however, doesn't really matter, because whichever way you look at it, the Bimey magic is still with us — the crazy, wonderful whimsy, the poignant glimpses into the **darker sides of human nature**, and the tenderness that is love.

On the humorous side there's "Ballad: 3 Nites B4 Xmas":

wuz & nytes b4 xmas & awl thru the yorktail
shoppr
cree kreechur wuz byln returnbl gif kooponz

And from "Reading the Diary," there are lines to remind us of Bimey's lifelong, intense concern for the human condition:

A year of days that stutter out the prose of war
quivers in the rain, work, fug in shelters:

Lastly, the **love** poems entitled "Six for Lun." Here we see again Bimey's continuing sense of awe and wonder at the miracle of love:

behind the clear round
of her windows
through a still possible world
she carries me loving
and safe in herself

I think it is that very "still possible world" that allows Bimey to continue shaping and creating beauty and meaning out of the chaos of our surroundings. His has always been an essentially positive and affirmative vision, and however rough the times, he has always been able to regard humanity with love, and a sort of elfin humour. Although the present book is slim in content, it is thematically rich, and is a must for any reader who has followed Birney's development through the years. □

No Bowering toady he

The Catch, by George Bowering, McClelland & Stewart, 128 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0-7710-1593-3).

By JOE ROSENBLATT

SPEAKING STRICTLY as a toad outside the small pond of Canadian poetry, I can't recollect too many memorable lines or stanzas that I can immediately commit to memory. There are a group of poems that surface like enormous bullfrogs. I can think of Milton Acorn's "The Elephant's Five Pound Brain," P. K. Page's "Stories of Snow," Earle Bimey's "The Bear on the Delhi

Road," E. J. Pratt's "The Prize Cat" and Irving Layton's "The Bull Calf," which despite the cynics, is one of my favourites. I like to keep these poems in special velvet bird cages. I like to display them as models for my creative-writing classes. It's to intimidate them and point out that the great poem borders on the supernatural; and for that reason, the poems are there in the genes. Poetry is a question of genetics. One is born with the disease.

George Bowering's latest volume has little luminescence that would place his poetry above the average lily pad. The beginning of the first long poem in the book, "George, Vancouver," is very awkward. Thematically it's about the explorations of Captain George Vancouver around the inlets, bays and coast line where the city of Vancouver now stands. The poem begins tepidly:

To chart this land
hanging over ten thousand inlets
& a distant mind of as many narrows

an impossible thing —
no music
sounds as many changes with such
common theme.

This neutral tone persists throughout the whole fabric of the poem. I read the poem aloud and found very little music in the build-up of rhythms and their release — that would excite the listener.

To complicate matters, the poet interweaves his own experience while travelling over Captain Vancouver's old, territory and mixes present-day geography with a 17th-century locale. The reader could assume that the explorer has discovered Gastown. This is a possibility in this circuitous poem:

How long, that is
till we have settled
a city
into this rivermouth

one young suicide a day
in Gastown —
the bridges favoured
for boys without wings.

I found the stanza a little confusing: enough to mar the flow. I think that George Bowering is correct when he postures: "I keep losing sight of the subject/Captain Vancouver seems lost in the poem." The poet certainly isn't the captain of his poem. He loses complete control of the helm with:

Born June 22 1757
when the sun is
farthest north
where the sea is,
George Vancouver,
(Was dying in England
when Coleridge began to write
The Rime of the Ancient Mariner)

The above grammatical hamburger throws the brain molecules into the ex-crescent water of the Fraser River.

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There is no concession to lighten the cerebral load a little for the reader. No wonder poetry has become a source of punishment for students who are frightened by what they feel is i&obscenity.

I believe the most interesting part of that ambitious Vancouver poem is when George Bowering discovers reality off Spanish Banks. He ogles the pollution: "I found nothing but condoms, I skinned off here, / or washed up Burrard sewage." His ecological sensibilities are summed up in the last stanza:

*BC government ferries
move between islands with Indian graves.
floating milk cartons behind them.*

The strong point with Bowering is his sense of ecology. I wish he had written an elegy or two about a dead salmon, or an amphibian destroyed by the raw sewage flushed into Neptune's mouth by the civilized city of Vancouver. And speaking of water, I float along to the second part of the Vancouver poem. It has more to do with that great explorer's fellow-travellers and those brave souls who sailed off the Northwest coast of the Americas. The spirit of the poem is taken from the *Journal of Archibald Menzies* in 1792. The poem opens with a vessel entering Jervis Inlet. The positions are given to the very degree and second, for both latitude and longitude. For us landlubbers it might as well all be in Greek. And what adds fog to this opener is that I'm never sure who the narrator is; it could be' one of the two Georges (maybe an existential bullfrog) or some other old salt. and the stanza that follows doesn't blow away the fog:

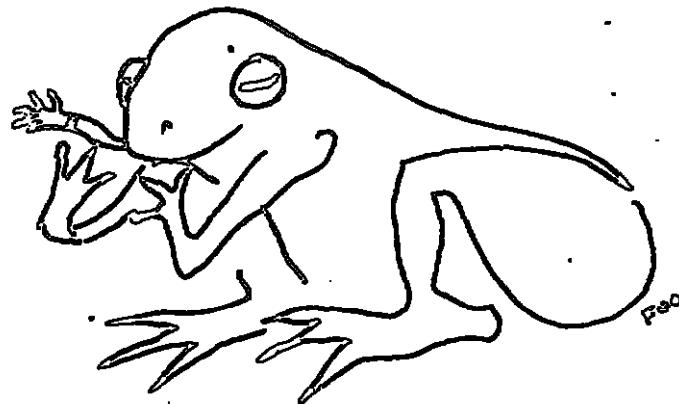
*She lay under me
like a brown
snake of the earth

I wonder about
their children. They must
have them in the long houses.

Hers may be
like the light-eyed
native children of the southern islands.*

The meaning of the passage? I guess it to be that the land is shaped like a brown serpent and that the "children" mentioned are the natives? I'll put it down to poetic licence. However, I'm grateful that the stanza does have an opaque quality. I wish there were more shadows in the poems. It would have given the muse a little more variation.

Finally we arrive at the "Autobiology," the second section of this volume. It deals with the poet growing up in a small town; developing character, identity, loving pets, observing brush fires, masturbating and tasting his spermatozoa (*yuuch* — read the poem, "Come"), discovering sex, and the usual thi that young people do to waste their time.



The end of Joe Rosenblatt

"Autobiology" doesn't tire me as quickly as the first section. I found about a dozen interesting poems that would make a fine entertainment, even if sometime in the future they may miss a serious-poetry anthology ballgame. The tones of "Autobiology" alternate more, which is good for this old amphibian reviewer. I didn't care for the way the poems were structured in enormous paragraphs. They may read well off the page, but on the page they become tedious. Sometimes George Bowering takes up far too much room to make his point. I almost wish that he could be hypnotized by a poltergeist to condense his poems. In the poem, "The Raspberries," the paragraph-like stanzas begin to fail almost immediately.

*When I was thirty, I had free
raspberries in the back yard & I
loved them. In the backyard &
I ate them.
& I ate them in the kitchen out
of an aluminum pot.*

Thank the Lord for ampersands and connectives. The paragraph clouds seem to go on like the Milky Way. His ending to "the raspberry" is disappointing. Its punchline:

*But there is a hole
inside the raspberry & it could
always have a bug in it.*

A weak poem like that makes me feel like a dried up old toad hiding inside a dead tree trunk. It makes my skin crawl. I want to attack a mushy fungus.

There are poems in *The Catch* that work instantly for me. At least they build up a curiosity in my hide and I feel compelled to finish each one knowing that I won't require mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. My favourites are "Polly-wog" (but then I'm a bigot), "The Flying Dream," "Brush Fire," "The Door," and "Growing." I liked these poems because they croaked for me. Their point served by having less glib fat around the frog legs.

I enjoyed reflections such as:

*hills covered by holes dug by dead
miners who named a nearby ghost town
Deadwood where I always
meant to go.*

I believe the poet when he speaks of a brush fire and the town of Greenwood during the Second World War:

*The name of the town was
Greenwood & the war was on, where
cities burned in their cement.*

And since I'm hooked on nostalgia I liked the way the poet vividly recalls his home life in town:

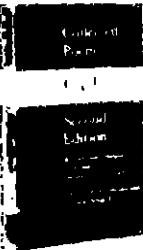
*I ate the
eggs & watched the kittens being
born behind the stove in the
kitchen. In the backyard my
sister was chased into the kitchen
by a rooster. We had written bad
words about her on the shed. Later
I visited & the dog was dead. Later
I visited & the mountain was green
& it was not a mountain.*

I'm neurotic about having great openers in poems and spontaneous endings. It is because these elements carry the poem over the decades: that's why I like the shades of Emily Dickinson: "I had been hungry all the years/My noon had come to dine"; or A.E. Housman's "Could man be drunk for ever/With liquor, love, or fights." I'm afraid I'm totalitarian about my poetic influences: these giants whose shoulders I can stand on.

Years ago I memorized a poem by Milton Acorn, which he had scrawled on the walls of the Village Bookstore in Toronto. I doubt that Milton kept a copy. The poem was untitled.

*I'm a silence so grim
no sparrow can flutter in
with its small music
nor can a child's innocent rhyme
much me
where a wish grinds on bone.*

Yes, I wish we could clone some good Acorns to warn those who stumble in Museland. □



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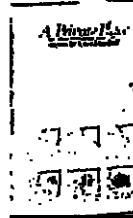
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Jaycee on the cross

The Bad Life, by David Williamson. Queenston House. 174 pages, \$5.95 cloth (ISBN 0-919866-06-9).

By CHRIS SCOTT

THE CLASS STRUCTURE must have been very fluid in the Winnipeg of the mid 1950s, the locale for David Williamson's first novel. "Working class kids can't be artists," cautions Ted Fenwick's father in the opening line of chapter one, but the narrator has other ideas — on life as well as art. Equipped with an arts degree from the University of Manitoba, Ted hankers after the Left Bank existence. By the middle of the second chapter he is on his way "to the top in a stocks and bonds career" (employed with the investment firm of Roderick and Randall — about as unbohemian as you can get), and describes himself and his girlfriend, Nancy Granger, as "middle-class Protestants," their way "clear for

marriage, home, children, and living together happily ever after."

Ted is a Jaycee and a five-pin bowler. He hates Nancy, who calls him "Clark" (Superman in civvies), and their meeting-places (a bowling alley, a restaurant, a night club) bum down: "While, to some, this might indicate that the romance was hot, to me it meant that the relationship was doomed from the start." This kind of humour permeates the novel; it hardly justifies the adjective "rollicking" used in the jacket-blurb.

A fellow Jaycee, Marvin Derby, introduces Ted to the mysteriously named "club," where he meets Eleanor Shingle, who is in spiritual communication with her dead aunt. Together, she and Marvin suggest that the would-be artist might move into a garret "right here in Winnipeg," an idea which suits him fine: "They made my secret dream sound possible . . .!"

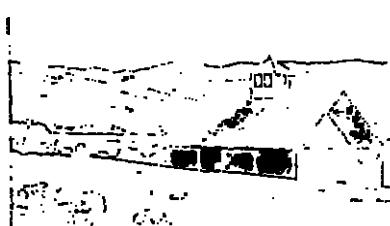
Thence to Winnipeg's North End (and the Red River's Left Bank), where, after throwing in his job, Ted realizes that he is the target of a sinister plot. The "Rebels," led by Henri Tard, are planning to overthrow Winnipeg city council, and need an artist for their revolutionary propaganda. Ted is unhappy about "falling in with beatniks and revolutionary beatniks at that." But he strings along with them until he

is rescued from the farcical consequences of the Tard Rebellion by good old, square Nancy Granger, whom he marries. His artistic apotheosis is a bowling column for a local newspaper: "Complete with sketches I did myself of how to hold the ball, how to stand, how to approach — that sort of thing. I think it helped some people, though my son claims it had nothing to do with his becoming the fine young bowler that he's turned out to be."

David Williamson is amusing on 1950s sex (one girl is pictured as kissing "like an anteater"), a subject on which it would be difficult not to be funny. *The Bad Life* has a definite sense of time and place, and some of its minor characters are well drawn and convincing. Unfortunately, the book as a whole is marred by stylistic infelicities and clichés. "When night fell, my stomach groaned," says Ted after the Rebels' first approach (one wonders what happened when dawn rose); and the text is littered with redundant exclamation marks in an attempt to cheer on the author's laggard prose.

As a memoir of failed rebellion, *The Bad Life* is authentic. Perhaps it is too authentic: as far as the narrator is concerned, one feels that the last 20 years might never have happened. Or, as Henri Tard might have said (he brings the slogan "VIVE LA RIVIERE ROUGE LIBRE" to the Winnipeg Council Chamber): *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.* □

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IN BRIEF

Gardens, by Graham Jackson, Catalyst (315 Blantyre Ave., Scarborough, Ont.) 94 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0-92000-02-9). Of these uneven but sensitively written short stories, there are two in particular that stand out from the rest. The first, "Henrietta and the Green Man," is a writer's gem. Charmingly gruesome, the story is a remarkably understated account of a day in the life of spinster Henrietta Converse, a woman alone (though perhaps not lonely) and most strange. The details of her portrait are suggestive but never apt to reveal too much. Charged with a peculiar intensity, the osmosis between Henrietta and the little green man in the cellar remains to the end a dangling mystery, her secret still intact. Far more typical of the collection, however, is "The Shin Off My Back," a story of love between men and a lyrical celebration of dance and body movement. It is a lush and highly finished piece which succeeds far better than some of the weaker attempts, such as "Vichyssoise" and "I Am Dying, Dying."

MARK WITTEN

Mounties come, you eskar go

Snowman, by Thomas York, Doubleday, 248 pages. \$8.95 cloth (ISBN 0-385-12278-0).

By RICHARD HOWARD

IN THE CANADIAN nature of things, that accomplished barren-grounds starver and black-humorous legendmaker John Homby was bound to strike a fictional spark sooner or later. More than a decade after the painstaking reconstruction work done by George Walley, the story now is blended with a contemporary escape plot in Thomas York's second novel, *Snowman*.

Implicated in the death of a brutally used native girl, two Yellowknife mine-hands go on the lam. Claus and Bard head for Hudson Bay with a load of equipment as impossible as their optimism and find the master himself fishing tranquilly in their path, as if waiting for a pretext. A trek that is an inventory of what the genre has accustomed us to receive as the terror and glory of the Canadian North takes them to their haven in a Barrens enclave along the Thelon River. The real Homby saga tells us that they must perish here — and after a winter of relentless hardship perish they do, one by one.

Homby has been called up to re-enact that last impulse to meld with his elements, transforming his companions' escape from to an escape into — to "cherish" (as Claus somewhat improbably puts it) "what comes closest to annihilating us." For all that he whirs on like a mad toy, Homby's spring was really broken when they found him. York had already summoned the haunting Native woman Arimo (who served the historical Homby) as a miraculous adoring angel rising from the bush to shield the Homby of fiction from murderous official fire on the shore of Great Bear. Her death and defeat, "perfect because without hope," mark the first moment of the novel, extinguish its greatest magic; and seal the other actors' fate.

Mistaken by the search plane for one of the fugitives, Homby is in truth the enemy, the receding elemental North that rejects the absurd rulers of the government high-rise in Yellowknife. For his party, the Thelon is both refuge and death row. The condemned cannot spin back out from this epicentre of the

magical Barrens, its unicorn the musk-ox "that had once mixed their spoor with mastodon and woolly mammoth," axis of a world that would have been blessed under Patriarch Homby and Abbess Arimo. All they achieve is a respite to desecrate the inner shrine.

York's material is rich and his magic is passing potent; but his pitfalls are many. Serving brute nature with a subpoena in aid of an ideal is always risky. Who among us (it is no simple matter of courage) would exchange a Bromo-stocked cubbyhole in that high-rise for Homby's pestiferous winter den dug into an Artillery Lake eskar? And it is too easy, interrogating that witness, to slip into portentousness — just as it is probably too easy for a reviewer to pick on Claus's Barrens climacteric: "The whole land heaved at the vision." Yet so many fusions are being attempted: plot into plot, leaving characters dangling; time into time, sending us fumbling for pencil and paper; level into level, with what sometimes seems a chronic disproportion.

There was a lesson in the performance of York's first novel *We, the Wilderness* (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1963). Here he has been more ambitious, and in again compressing what needs nearer twice this number of pages to combine, substantially aggravated his risk. York has used his own northern experience and sympathy to fashion a tale with genuinely striking moments; a pity, then, that he has chewed his material tuck-hard. □

IN BRIEF

The Squire of Kootenay West, by Maurice Hodgson, Hancock House, 232 pages, \$12.95 (ISBN 0-919654-45-2). Bert Herridge, long-time CCF/NDP Member of Parliament for the rugged B.C. riding of Kootenay-West, remained, throughout his political career, an enigmatic and singular politician. One of the most successful members of the caucus, he was often at odds with his party's hierarchy: a strong supporter of co-operative socialism, he owned a beautiful estate on the shores of the Arrow Lakes. (Hence the title.) Hodgson's biography of Herridge is a careful compilation of solid historical research, amusing personal reminiscence, and sometimes shaky interpretive guess-work. Although the book discusses many of the unique local characteristics of the riding, it is not a narrow, local political history — mainly because Herridge was not a narrow, local politician. Hodgson's accounts of Herridge's involvement with important national issues — the development of both the CCF and NDP parties, his pointed and public investigation of the

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RON WALDIE

Twelve who made a revolution

Double Vision: An Anthology of Twentieth Century Stories in English, selected by Rudy Wiebe, Macmillan, 331 pages. \$5.50 paper (ISBN O-7705-13441).

By MICHAEL THORPE

THIS IS AN admirably designed anthology, catholic in range, the product of an independent and discriminating taste. Introduced with graceful brevity and uncluttered with editorial intrusions. Though intended for students, *Double*

Vision should yield discoveries for the more widely read, not only in its fresh choices but in the ways familiar stories acquire new perspectives of comparison and contrast in the company of those less anthologized.

Rudy Wiebe has selected 12 authors from the crowded British/American/Commonwealth spectrum of English writing: five of these were born before the beginning of the century (Joyce, Mansfield, Faulkner, Hemingway, Nabokov), established reputations before the Second World War, and set standards in this modern form; the remainder — Malamud, Flannery O'Connor, Margaret Laurence, Alice Munro, V.S. Naipaul, Joyce Carol Oates and Clark Blaise — came to prominence in the 1950s and 1960s. It was a good idea to allow each writer two stories — except Hemingway, who is well represented by one long story, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" — rather than multiply authors; also to let each introduce his craft and intentions by means of a substantial extract from an interview or talk. This mode of presentation gives, to borrow Clark Blaise's words, a strong sense of the "moral history" of each writer's landscape, and of the uniqueness of the individual vision — which, presumably, Wiebe's tide implicitly relates to that of the Blakean artist:

For double the vision my eyes do see.
And a double vision is always with me.
With my inward eye 'tis an Old Man grey,
With my outward, a Thistle across my way.

While few in this form can approach Blake's poetic intensity, in its broader sense the allusion aptly embraces these writers' shared concern and skill to make us see truths beneath appearances, to heighten our sense of life's wonder, strangeness, and limitless possibilities. Half the themes are of youth and growing, others centre upon crises of belief or take the reader into an alien consciousness. In each group the reader's insight will be enriched by comparisons and contrasts. Wiebe has allowed him, without editorial prod-
ding, to discover for himself. For example, a comparative study of Joyce's "Araby," Laurence's "The Loons," Munro's "Images," Oates' "How I Contemplated the World from the Detroit House of Correction . . ." and her tour de force "Nightmusic," inspired by the infant Mozart, and Clark. Blaise's "A North American Education" will produce a cross-section of styles covering a half-century's evolution in the art of the short story.

One can always quarrel with an editor's preferences: it seems odd to omit D. H. Lawrence or, among writers outstanding today, Doris Lessing. Might not Marian Engel have appeared

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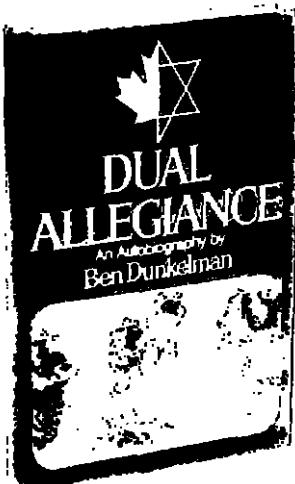
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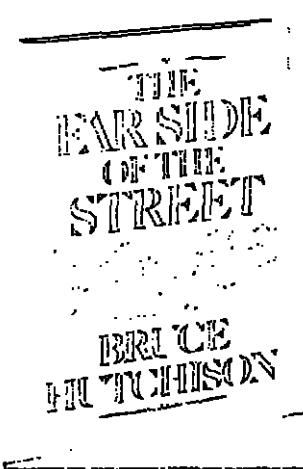
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as a more distinctive Canadian stylist in this company than Alice Munro — and isn't Laurence's "A Gourdful of Glory," though not without her characteristic warmth, one of her less subtle attempts to capture an African consciousness? The two stories by Naipaul are from his disappointing collection A

Flag of the Island. not from Miguel Street; as an introduction to his work, they are relatively slight. But this is to sub-edit: what Mr. Wiebe has done gracefully is to produce a fresh and harmonious collection which bears the stamp of a sensitive writer and an acute critic. □

first impressions

by David Helwig

Somewhere east of Suez, there's a thriller that failed to make it

The Seventh Hexagram, by Ian McLachlan, Macmillan, 256 pages., \$9.95 cloth (ISBN 0-7705-1432-4).

IAN McLACHLAN is English by birth and education, lived for 10 years in Hong Kong, and now teaches at Trent University. His first novel draws heavily on his knowledge of Hong Kong and the complex politics of that curious British protectorate on the fringe of China.

The material of *The Seventh Hexagram* is rich with promise. It opens with gunshots in the night. The central character drives off a sleep, wet mad and is impaled on a branch but survives. He is Joe Stewart, a left-wing Scottish journalist in his 30s who has become involved in political events in Hong Kong, a potential revolution that dies on the brink of success while the Cultural Revolution is exploding just over the border in China.

In the course of the book, McLachlan builds up a detailed portrait of Hong Kong, the rich in their villas on the hills, the poor in their shacks by the water, the soft climate, the beauty, the presence of the Chinese past beside the absurdities of the British colonial present, and it is within this strange ambience that his characters move.

These characters include the exotic Jordan King, an old man who is half English, half Chinese, though born and raised in Africa, and who in his youth worked with Mao Tse-Tung in the early days of the revolution and travelled with him on the Long March through China. Joe Stewart also gets himself involved with two of the central intelligence figures in Hong Kong — Donald Winn, a flagrant and gossipy homosexual working for the British, and Kwan Wing-Leung, a journalist of aristocratic background working for the communist Chinese.

The book is at its best when it is most eventful, least literary. It begins with

the feeling of a political thriller, but the shape of the book is less definite than that, perhaps less satisfying. It is told in various forms of flashback from a present in which Joe Stewart has retired from the pain and complexity of the events in Hong Kong to recuperate in a cabin on a lake in the Cobourg region of Ontario. Some of the narrative is in the first person, some in the third, and toward the end, the switches from one to the other become more rapid. The changes in point of view are likely intended to suggest the disorientation in

Editor's note: This review introduces a regular column by David Helwig dealing with Canadian first novels. Part of the purpose of the column is to provide a consistent critical framework for assessing such works. Mr. Helwig is also a member of this year's panel of judges for the newly founded Books in Canada Award for First Novels (see page 40).

Stewart's mind, but I found the device unconvincing and intrusive, one example of a kind of portentousness that prevents the book from assuming a sharp focus.

It's often a bad sign when a new book frequently brings to mind other similar stories. While reading *The Seventh Hexagram*, I kept thinking of two better books that deal with an Anglo-Saxon outsider in the middle of a violent political situation in a complex and exotic society, Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* and Dave Godfrey's *The New Ancestors*. These two make interesting points of comparison partly because they are so wholly different from each other in their treatment of similar subjects. *The Quiet American* (one of my personal favourites among Greene's novels) is perfectly and

superbly **transparent**. It has all the **well-crafted** simplicity of a commercial thriller **without** ever **sacrificing** emotional truth and ironic insight. *The New Ancestors* is **opaque**, a brilliant verbal contraption that turns constantly **back** inward on **itself**, making no concessions to the **lazy** reader.

(N.B. Dave Godfrey: I sent my **quarter** for the glossary of African words offered in the paperback edition and **never got it.**)

The Seventh Hexagram seems to want to make some **attempt** toward the amplitude of such books as *The New Ancestors*, but the indirections in the narrative **structure**, the **attempts** to deepen the psychological **texture** only weigh the book down.

One night he dreamed he was standing alone in a planetarium with the stars circling up above. He was shouting his own name, but there was no reply; until, looking up, he knew the planetarium was the inside of his own skull. Up there somewhere was the roof, the bone, but he couldn't see it; it seemed transparent, opening outwards onto the whole universe. Stars, planets, galaxies. Then gravity tilted. Terrified, he was spinning into the emptiness, praying for an end to it, a wall to hurl himself against.

Bone breaking. Pain connected.

That sort of passage takes **itself** more seriously than I am prepared to take it. Here and **there** in the book, **there** is plain bad **writing**.

Like a voyeur, I would browse on the swell of her breasts. And she would suddenly feel it and try to switch herself off, but **not too** hard because she wanted it as well.

The two spies, Donald **Winn** and **Kwan**, are **McLachlan's best** creations, good solid functional characters, not unfamiliar. **but** carrying quite enough **interest** and conviction to fill their places in the story. Jordan King is more unusual, but less satisfying. His first-person narratives of the early days with Mao are gripping, but his character never takes on substance. As for **Joe Stewart**, the book's protagonist, he is a bore. I suspect the author knows **this**, but he lacks the art of someone like **Brian Moore** who can make us interested, while reading, in someone we would **not like** or be interested in **were we to meet him**. I did **not** really understand the source or meaning of Joe Stewart's political activity, except in abstract terms. **McLachlan** probably means to show us how abstract convictions become concrete and dangerous and damaging (as the quotation from **Mao Tse-Tung** at the end of the narrative suggests), but he has not made me care about Stewart's development. There is a powerful scene when Jordan King sets on fire the anti-communist broadcaster Kim **Bun**, but the book's climax, in which Jordan finds Joe making love to his wife, shoots the wife, and then is shot by Joe, is quite empty. It doesn't matter.

In general, the sexual relationships in the book are **discontinuous** with the

political themes. Joe's affair with a young Chinese businesswoman called **Mei** inevitably brought to my mind Fowler's relationship with **Phuong** in *The Quiet American*. I am given more detail about Joe and **Mei**, but I understand less.

At its best, *The Seventh Hexagram* offers solidly crafted narrative of exciting events in an unusual locale. But for my money, it would have been better given the shape of a thriller and disciplined to meet the requirements of that form. □

interview

by Terry Kelly

How Austin Clarke found the bigger light was back in Canada after all

AUSTIN CLARKE'S trilogy Of novels about West Indian immigrants in Toronto suggested that the author had, at the very least, an ambivalent attitude toward this cold country. Last year Clarke returned to his native Barbados, apparently for good. Now he is back in Toronto, again apparently for good. Why? To fill out. *Books in Canada* asked freelance journalist Terry Kelly to interview Clarke. The interview took place in the study of Clarke's Toronto home, where he works by fasting a lot and drinking endless cups of tea:

Books in Canada: **Why do you consider Canada your home now?**

Clarke: For the simple reason that I work here and I feel relatively easy. I know the nuances of the society and I'm able to deal with them with more confidence and success than I'm able to deal with the nuances in Barbados, which is a sort of strange ironical statement because I was born in Barbados. But I left Barbados when I was young, I've been here 20 years. What I know of Barbados is really based on memory from 20 years ago.

Now why I think that this is a very interesting question is because the last seven months I was in Barbados I was general manager of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. This means I was in charge of radio and television, a very interesting and powerful job in the country. I was responsible for everything people heard and watched on the government station. Part of the problem I ran into there was I tended sometimes to present the Canadian way of looking at things. It was interesting, and shocking, because it reminded me — well, it certainly instructed me — that in spite of certain personal self-restraining activities or thoughts that I would go through in this country in an effort not to be Canadian, I had in fact become Canadianized to a much larger extent than I had imagined.

BiC: You had lived out of Canada before?

Clarke: I had a diplomatic job in Washington two years ago, but I was commuting from Toronto. I did not consider I'd left Toronto in the sense that I fell I was leaving last August.

BiC: Then you had the feeling of going back for good. Did you undertake this move with a sense of exile or repatriation?



Austin Clarke

Clarke: Today I'd call it exile. Had you talked to me this time last year it would have been repatriation. Now my position was an interesting one in the sense that I went from 20 years in a society in which the mark that I might have made was purely cerebral or intellectual. I left this kind of arrangement and went to Barbados and found myself in an arrangement where it was purely a situation of power. The power was at the highest level, so that in itself was exciting. For the first time I experienced power and privilege. and only after the newness of this had worn off did I find myself looking at the society and myself as an ordinary Barbadian. I was then conscious of all the frustrations of daily life. but these frustrations would never become excessive. For seven months there was always that power.

What was interesting was that some of the intellectuals in Barbados regarded me as an outsider. They were right to some extent, but I don't think basically, or qualitatively, that kind of sentiment could stand up under scrutiny. It was a situation, or it was a sentiment, based I'm sure on some degree of resentment. But those seven months, were more confusing than I can tell you. Much more confusing, much more dramatic than I can tell. It could have been tragic.

BiC: *Would this kind of power have destroyed you as a writer?*

Clarke: I don't think the power could have destroyed my talent. You see I found this power fascinating simply because I was not after it. I was experiencing the power. It is something like when you've written a book, and the book is about your sixth, and for the first time you start making money. You have become a successful writer so far as money is concerned. You enjoy it, and you enjoy it because you may have spent the previous 10 years getting good reviews and no monetary returns. I was in a position to look at this power in a fascinating way. It fascinated me. I think that if I had been a politician I might have got more power. It was like jumping into a lake where the water is cold and feeling the instant effects in the change in temperature. □

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notes and comments

What our readers think and a new novel award

LAST JULY we printed a questionnaire designed to find out more about who our readers are and what they like and dislike about the magazine. The response was a gratifying vote of confidence. More than 300 readers took the trouble to fill in and return the questionnaire and nearly 50 appended letters elaborating on their comments and suggestions. The message that came through loudest and clearest is that our readers basically want more — more reviews, more feature articles and profiles about authors and trade personalities, more regular departments, more special sections, more expansive layouts, and even more advertisements. We have already taken steps to meet as many of these demands as our resources will allow.

First, who are our readers? The survey obviously had only a crude statistical validity. But it seemed to confirm that our readers form the core of the book-reading and book-buying public in Canada. More than 60% of the respondents read more than one book a week and more than 40% buy at least one book a week. The majority are between 20 and 40 years of age and about 60% have a household income of more than \$20,000 a year. The replies came from every English-speaking region of the country and represented occupations as diverse as government ministers, lumberjacks, short-order cooks, seamen and out-of-work actors.

Second, what do these readers see as the main function of *Books in Canada*? The vast majority of respondents, of course, read the magazine because of their interest in literary criticism and are generally happy with what we have been doing. A smaller percentage, many of them librarians and teachers, also view the magazine as a primary source of information about current Canadian books and this group tends to be less happy with our efforts to date in that direction. At least 90% of the respondents find the reviews either sometimes helpful (60%) or very helpful (30%) in choosing the books they buy. About 70% also find the advertisements helpful in choosing new books.

Third, how can the magazine be improved? This was the area where it was most difficult to find a consensus (beyond the general demand for more of everything). Some think the reviews are too long; others think they are too

short. Some say we should be more intellectual and others say we are already too recondite. Some feel our contributors have too much licence to indulge in their own opinions and argue we should concentrate on reviews that are plain, objective summaries of the books; others feel that our contributors should be given even more freedom to apply tough, international standards to Canadian books. Some want more fiction and less non-fiction reviewed; others want less fiction and, in particular, a lot less poetry. In short, some want us to be another *Quill and Quire* and others want us to be *The New York Review of Books*. Evidently we have no alternative for the moment but to continue to muddle along down our established utilitarian path, seeking the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Finally, here is a brief sampling of some of the comments and suggestions we received:

"More reviews by people living outside Toronto and Ontario (although you have improved in this regard in the last year) and more reviews of regionally important books." — Civil servant, Victoria, B.C.

"Write critically about the state of literary criticism and popular reviewing in Canada." — Student, Toronto.

"Wouldn't a more orthodox magazine format (i.e. a cover price and wider distribution through magazine dealers who won't handle 'free' items) lead to a more convenient and wider distribution?" — Academic chemist, Montreal.

"I love your alphabetical notes about contributors. Your beads are sometimes painful (but then one can't take pure pleasure so I'm not even complaining about them)." — Librarian, Ottawa.

"Add articles on the craft of writing or its style. Yours is not quite a mass-circulation magazine, but neither is it a purely academic or industrial one; I suspect you have it in your hands to become a forum for the sifting through of literary wheat and chaff." — Radio announcer, Peterborough, Ont.

"A monthly in-depth review of a Canadian writer — no, just one book, but a very personal study of the person... We need more good Canadian gossip about who should be our 'folk heroes'." — Cultural administrator, Halifax.

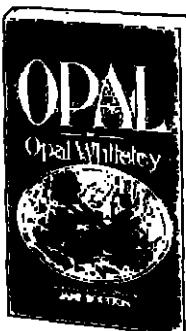
"Since I enjoy your magazine I would have been very glad to answer your questionnaire, but I refuse to mutilate my copy." — Margaret Horning, Brantford, Ont.

"More reviews of scholarly books — and at least one review in each issue about a book on printing." — Retired, Vancouver.

"More articles on small Canadian presses, specialty book shops, out-of-print books and how to find them, and Canadian journals (especially new ones)." — Librarian, Toronto.

"I like it, but find the books seem to be all hardbacks and therefore too expensive — although that's not the fault of the magazine." — Stenographer, Melville, Sask.

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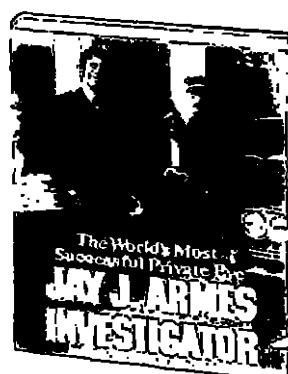
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"Ignore the results of this questionnaire. Only the frustrated, the opinionated, and the bored will answer." — Jack-of-all-trades in small newspaper, Yellowknife, N.W.T.

AS PART OF our general policy to promote and encourage Canadian writing, *Books in Canada* has launched an annual competition to determine the best Canadian first novel in English published in each calendar year. It will be known as The Books in Canada Award for First Novels and carries a prize of \$1,000. The winner for 1976 will be announced next February or March. This year's panel of judges consists of poet/editor Dennis Lee, novelist/poet David Helwig, critic Anne Montagnes, and bookseller David Stimpson, together with the editor and managing editor of *Books in Canada*. As an adjunct to the competition, David Helwig will also be writing a regular critical column devoted exclusively to first novels (see page 36).

* * *

BIRTHS. DEATHS. Our belated congratulations to Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson on the birth of their daughter Eleanor Jess last May. Eleanor's expected appearance, incidentally, delayed by some months the

appearance of Ms. Atwood's new novel, *Lady Oracle*, reviewed in our September issue. Her publishers, M & S, deemed it prudent to wait until the novelist could undertake the arduous task of a cross-country promotion tour ... A cartoon in a recent issue of *The New Yorker* shows a bemused middle-aged couple watching the evening news on TV. The announcer is saying: "And a cultural note. The entire literary world turned out today to pay tribute to the novel, which died last night after a protracted illness." □

Letters to the Editor

PURITY ON THE BEAT

Sir:

I was pleased with my honorable mention in your double-dactyl contest (July issue). I was not pleased, however, with two of the entries which were, in your eyes, winners. Do you understand what a double-dactyl is? May I add that it is not simply throwing six beats into six out of eight times, but follows the following stress pattern: heavy-light-light heavy-light-light or One-two-three, One-two-three. Donald Winkler's "Meekery-mockery" has this in his fourth time: "Can't turn back now 'cause it's." The line is, of course, unreadable if one has any ear at all. (His other examples are good.)

Paul Romney writes the following:
*Mackasey-Jackassy
Post Office policy
Seems to be: "Give them less
But charge them more."*

One is forced to, unnaturally, stress *Seems* and

Give (plus *But*) to have a readable poem. It's hard to believe the same man could show such control in his "Fuddledy-duddledy" effort.

I write this not as sour grapes, but I am concerned that the judges at *Books in Canada* seem to possess no ear for poetic round. Even the example for the double-dactyl contest had, as its second line, "Trudeau and company" which is misleading in that the PM's name is Tru-DEAU, not TRU-deau. And how, horror of horrors, you give the following as a "classic" example of a limerick:

*He was no ball of fire as a duck
When they saw him, his siblings cried
"Yuck."*

The first line is impossible. You should know that all limericks follow this pattern in lines 1, 2, and 5: light-heavy-light, light-heavy-light, light-heavy-(light) — the last beat is sometimes dropped. In any case "There once was a girl from Toronto" or "A coloratura named Cleo" follow the rules perfectly and are highly readable.

Double-dactyls and limericks are two popular forms of verse which emphasize rhythm and which require excellent control of the language (in addition to having something witty to say, of course). I find your haphazard approach to humorous verse to be no laughing matter.

Dan Doyle
Ottawa

Editor's note: We fully sympathize with Mr. Doyle's point and would like to reassure him that, whatever else we lack, we do have an ear. As we noted in the July issue and repeat in this issue, the bulk of the entries for the double-dactyl and limerick contests made us wince. (Why Canadians should be so obviously fond of comic verse and yet so tone-deaf to its form remains a mystery.) However, in the interests of keeping the contests alive, we decided to include entries that at least had the required number of beats, no matter how awkward the stresses. Similar license, incidentally, was granted Mr. Doyle by allowing him "slibbertigibbettes" as his one-word double-dactyl, a neologism that makes about as much sense as "gossippies" would.

COQUETTE ON THE SPIT

Sir:

"I have just bee" sent a cop of your August, 1976, issue, containing Lynn McFadgen's "review" of *Tendencies*, my first collection of poetry. At the risk of sounding disappointed at nothing, I offer the following remarks in the hopes of keeping amateur pieces like Ms. McFadgen's in high-school yearbooks where they belong.

To transmit the type, substance and possible impact of a work are pivotal dudes of the review. There is no substitute for organized critical coverage. Ms. McFadgen is in the dark here. She has no method whatsoever, and would do well to realize that the competent writer is constantly aware of why reviews are written, and to what audience.

She has insulted her reader. Eva the most basic rules of her job have bee" neglected. No attempt has bee" made at disclosing the issues or preoccupations that informed the poems, so there is no way she can tell those who may have been interested how successfully those poems bear relevance to the form and content of good verse. Instead of a controlled analysis, what we get from Ms. McFadgen is the vague and silly: "I don't find that the most compelling way of expressing the thought." Further, she fails to substantiate her asinine claim that the poems are "too personal to be emu-mining for my but the hand that has pennen them and lived them". Really!

Here is a mind capable of grasping only the most accessible poetry. True to form, she continues to reveal the limited scope of her interest by reiterating that the book fails to entertain her. There is nothing wrong with this type of mentality, god knows it's common enough, but it too often short-circuits philosophical poetry, making such poetry appear as if it is written for the sake of obscurity or as a therapeutic form of academic narcissism.

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by Rich Whyte



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At the conclusion of her piece, she tells us that she is aware that entertainment means more to her than just a good laugh. You could thank her for that unique reminder. While I have never met Ms. McFadgen, I'm sure I enjoy *Starsky and Hutch* as much as she does.

More important than all this, however, is the quality of the writing appearing in publications like *Books in Canada*. How you, as editor of "a national review of books," could justify printing nonsense as nasty, coquettish and short as that thoughtlessly compiled by Ms. McFadgen is beyond me. When your contributors express this little respect for the purpose of your magazine, I think you should become aware of it before you go to press, not after.

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CanWit No. 16

WE HAVE FOLLOWED breathlessly, Richard Rohmer from *Ultimatum* through *Exoneration* to *Exodus: U.K.* His fourth political thriller, *Separation*, will be reviewed shortly; it concerns, among other things, Quebec's decision to secede. But down what dark corridor of power will Rohmer ramble next? Readers are invited to supply the title (maximum: two words or five syllables) and plot outline (maximum: 75 words) for Rohmer's

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fifth instalment. The winner will receive \$25. Address: CanWit No. 16, Books in Canada, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4. The deadline is Oct. 29.

RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 14

SOMETHING THERE is about Canadians that does not love the disciplines of metre. Our contest for limericks based on fairy-tales or historical episodes brought a host of entries, but only a dozen or so could be made to scan with any comfort to the ear. The winner is Mary Lile Benham of Winnipeg, who receives \$25 for this neat plot summary:

A winsome young lady named Red
Met a wolf in her grandmother's bed.
A blue cinema script —
But the reader is gyped:
'Twas his rummy the wolf wanted fed.

Honourable mentions:

There was a proud lawyer called Dief
Who ruled a Saskatchewan fief.
By raising his sights
This defender of rights
Became Canada's chief of the beef.
— Gordon Black, Toronto

* * *

He went in to take just a peep
And saw a sweet beauty asleep.
So he gave her a kiss.
And now listen to this,
She jumped up and married the creep!

— Norma Cassidy, Wolfville, N.S.

* * *

Said the wife, "Ask the flounder for
wishes,
Better home, better chairs, better
dishes..."
As her fortune grew higher
She said "... desire
To be God!" Now she's back cleaning
fishes.

— M. Lynch, Toronto

* * *

A statesman called Radical Jack.
Said, "I've thought up a BNA Act."
Lord Melbourne replied:
"You're a thorn in my side:
Take it over, and DON'T BRING
IT BACK."

— Peter Porter, Victoria

* * *

A fair princess in rags, is her claim.
The proud queen isn't buying that game:
A pm is the test,
Which spoils the girl's rest.
But her bruises convince the old dame.

— G. L. MacNab, Ottawa

* * *

A sella named Louis Riel
Thought life as a Métis was hell
"I'll show them," he said.
"A rebellion I'll head."
But it didn't work out very well.

— Edith Akrigg, Vancouver

* * *

King Henry debated with reason
On the eve Annie died for her treason:
"Well I swore in my life
When I took me a wife,
I'd keep her no more than a season."

— William Jones, Toronto

Books received

THE FOLLOWING Canadian books have been received by Books in Canada in recent weeks. Inclusion in this list does not preclude a review or notice in a future issue:

Jehova's Witnesses in Canada, by M. James Penton, Macmillan.

The Legs of the Lame and Other Stories, by Hugh Garner, Borealis Press.

A Visiting Distance, by Patrick Anderson, Borealis Press.

Whistling, by John Trachuk, Borealis Press.

Complete Sonnets of Archibald Lampman, edited by Margaret Coulby Whirridge, Borealis Press.

Some Wild Gypsy, by Brenda Fleet, Borealis Press.

The Complete Family Book of Nutrition and Meal Planning, by W. Herding leRiche, Macmillan.

Ottawa Valley People's Yellow Pages, edited by Jake Brooks, Commoners' Publishing Society Inc.

Auguries: A Continuing Anthology of the Arts, edited by David Conrad, Commoners' Publishing Society Inc.

Stay Slim for Good, by Zalman Amit and E. Ann Sutherland, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

Face to Face: An Anthology of New Brunswick Women's Writers, edited by Alice Vun-Wm. J. Good Publishing Ltd.

Enchanted Summer, by Gabrielle Roy, M & S.

Lifelines: The Stacey Letters (1836-1858), edited by Jane Vansittart, U of T Press.

From Garden to Table: A Complete Guide to Vegetable Growing and Cooking, by Joan Fielden and Stan Larke, M & S.

My Country: The Remarkable Pen, by Pierre Burton, M & S.

The Balkan Range: A Bulgarian Reader, edited by John Robert Colombo and Nikola Roussanoff, Hounslow Press.

Rocky Mountain Wildlife, by Don Blood, Tom W. Hall, and Susan Im Baumgarten, Hancock House.

The Green Tiger, by Enid Mallory, M & S.

The White City, by Tom Marshall, Oberon Press.

76: New Canadian Short Stories, edited by Joan Harcourt and Tom Metcalf, Oberon Press.

Dark Glasses, by Hugh Hood, Oberon Press.

God's Odd Look, by Gail Fox, Oberon Press.

The Railway Game, by I. Lukasiewicz, M & S.

Inflation & Wage Controls, by Cy Gonick, Canadian Dimension.

Farewell, Babylon, by Najm Kattan, M & S.

Canada on Stage 1975, edited by Don Rubin, CTR Publications.

Octomi, by Andrew Suknaski, Thistledown Press.

Canadian Gothic and other poems, by Stanley Cooperman, Intermedia Press.

The Correspondence of Erasmus, Volume 111, translated by R.A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thomson, University of Toronto Press.

Nationalism, Technology and the Future of Canada, edited by Wallace Gagne, Macmillan.

The Canadian Brothers: or, The Prophecy Fulfilled, by John Richardson, U of T Press.

The Limits to Satisfaction: An Essay on the Problem of Needs and Commodities, by William Lewis, U of T Press.

The First Day of Spring: Stories and Other Prose by Raymond Knister, selected and introduced by Peter Stevens, U of T Press.

Prologue to Norman: The Canadian Bethunes, by Mary Larratt Smith, Mosaic Press/Valley Editions.

Frankenstein, by Alden Nowlan and Walter Learning, Clarke Irwin.

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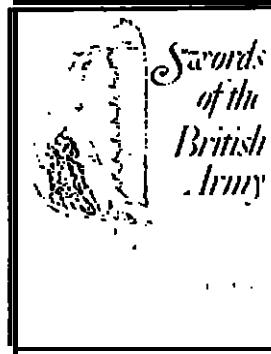


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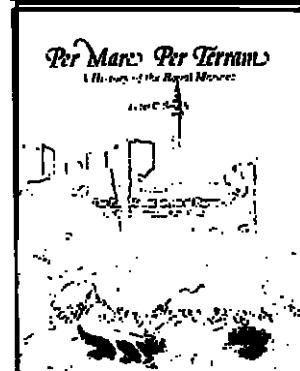
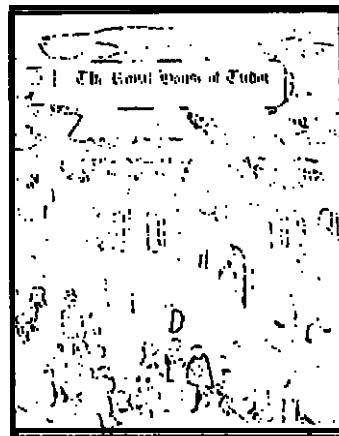
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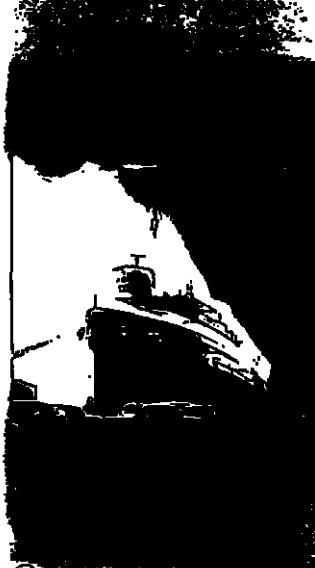
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