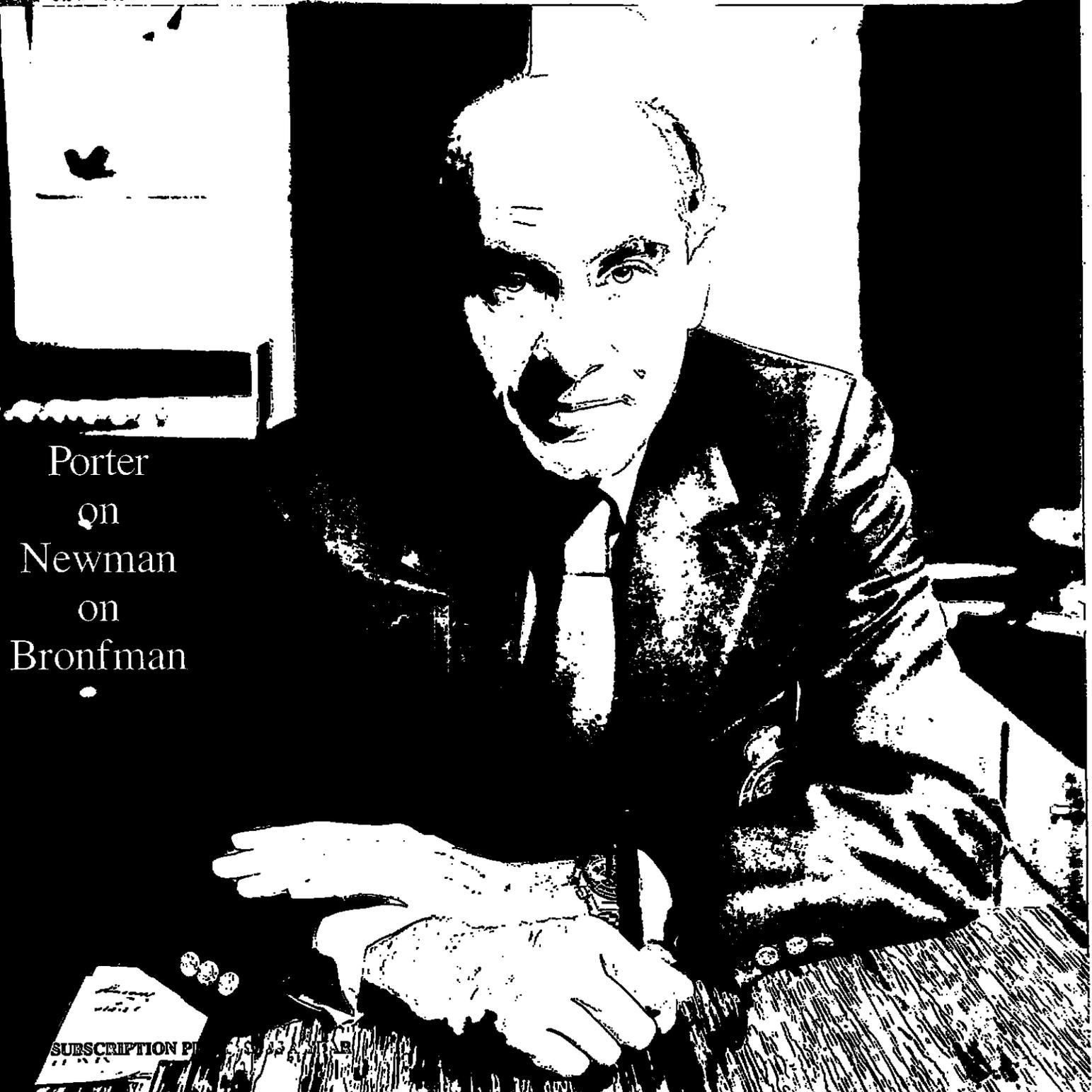


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# BOOKS IN CANADA



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SUBSCRIPTION P... 1978

# BOOKS IN CANADA

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# BETTER DEAD THAN READ? AN OPPOSING VIEW

The former chairman of the Writers' Union argues that the book-banners of Ontario's Huron County, by locking literature away with the truly obscene, are themselves committing nothing less than intellectual blasphemy

by Timothy Findley

**PAUL STUEWE'S REPORT** ("Better Deed Than Read?") in the **October issue** of *Books in Canada*, though **admirable in its concluding passages**, is nonetheless sufficiently **peppered with cant and inaccuracies to warrant a reply**. Most of the **inaccuracies** and pretty **well all of the cant appear** in quotation marks. So **far as the cent is concerned**, **that's entirely appropriate**. But **when it comes to facts**, **Stuewe** has failed to probe the integrity of what he is **quoting** and, **therefore**, leaves his **readers** with a **false impression** of where **matters stand** with **regard to the banning of books in this country**. Throughout the **course** of his **report** he **relies**, for the most part, **on the statements and opinions of two men**. **Only two**. Based on what they have to say, however, he **draws definitive conclusions** that do not **reflect the facts about** what is happening. One of **Stuewe's conclusions**, for **instance**, is that the censorship problem is not **et al** widespread and that wherever it does appear it is **not to be taken seriously**. He **confines his report** to recent events in **Huron County, Ont.**, where the local **Board of Education** has voted to **remove Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*** from the list of books approved for study in high schools. **Stuewe's conclusion?** "If a large number of such communities **acted in concert**, then **the alarm** might well have to be raised. But that isn't **happening** and it isn't likely to **happen**..." **Wrong**. It has happened before. It is still **happening**. And the more we slough it off as being of no **consequence**, the more it is going to happen in the future.

Mister **Stuewe** himself points out that **book banners are** currently herded **et work** in Nova Scotia and New **Brunswick**, although he dismisses them as living "mostly in **rural areas**." As if **that** didn't matter. He also says **that** those of **us** who **are** concerned about this **problem are** looking for "rednecks in the woodpile" and that **we aren't** going to find **them**. I agree. The woodpile is **deserted**. Whatever you went to call whoever **was** in there, they've come **out**. Some people come out of closets. Some come **out of woodpiles**. I wouldn't call them "**redneck**." I wouldn't call them **anything**. I only know that **Huron County** has set a precedent. So did Dade County, Florida, and the results of that single county precedent **have** been **disastrous** for human rights all **across** the U.S. I don't want the same kind of **disaster** to **happen** here — either to people **or** to books. And if you look at the books that keep coming **under fire** in this campaign (and don't fool **yourselves** for one minute that it isn't a campaign), you will find they all have **something** in common: **concern** for people and compassion **for** the human condition. I find that very odd.

**Stuewe's report** is **based**, as I've said, on the **statements and opinions of two men**. Both **are** residents of **Huron County** and both **represent a group** that calls itself **Concerned Citizens**. The **report**

**states** that "the strength of **groups** such as Concerned Citizens lies only in **their shared** perception of a threat to the values of **their** community," and that "there **are no** large foods, no outside **agitators**, no **Canada Council grants** inflating a minority gripe into a **public issue**." **Every** word of this is **inaccurate**. To begin with, the opinions reflected in **the report are** those of the leading spokesman **for** an evangelical **association** that calls itself **Renaissance International**. I refer to the **Reverend Kenneth Campbell**, a **man** who **has** mounted a major campaign **against** books and **education** of this **country**. He voiced these opinions **almost** **word for word over** CBC-Radio only a few months ago. Yet, though his **words are parroted again** and **again** by those dully quoted in **Stuewe's report**, his name is **not** even mentioned. Here, **perhaps**, is why:

While protesting that there **are no large funds** at their disposal, Renaissance International and its **sister citizens' groups** have been able to support their campaign in very high style indeed. **Renaissance** was established with a budget of **\$100,000**. It is registered as a non-profit, charitable **organization** and publishes a magazine called **Encounter**. **You can become a member for \$10, \$100, or \$1,000**. Membership **fees and** subscription fees to the **magazine are all tax-deductible**. **Whenever** Renaissance goes on the **road** it **hires large** and expensive **arenas** and public halls in which to sell its **rhetoric**. Posters and **media advertising announce** its **presence**.

For several months now Campbell has had a persistent American guest **on his platform**. But, of course, who would dare call Anita **Bryant** an "outside **agitator**"? And how **many readers are aware** that the Reverend **Kenneth Campbell**, using Ms. Bryant as his come-on, only this **past summer** set up his **platform** in London.

**If you look at the books that keep coming under fire in this campaign . . . you will find that they all have something in common: concern for people and compassion for the human condition. I find that very odd.**

**Ont.**, From which **place you can** spit into **Huron County**? And **Campbell's target** on the literary **front**? You guessed it: **The Diviners**. **Funny** isn't it, that everywhere that **Kenny** goes, **Margaret Laurence** gets in **trouble**. Of **course**, it's the local citizens' **groups** who do the shooting.

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Lastly, with regard to the phrase about "Canada Council grants inflating a minority gripe." I assume this refers to the fact that The Writers' Union of Canada, a recipient of such grants, has had the audacity to mouth off in opposition to the damage being done in books and writers by the pro-banning campaign. If my assumption is correct, then I can only say that an inflated minority soon becomes a majority. And more power to it. Financial and otherwise. Thornton Wilder wrote a marvellous thing about money in his play *The Matchmaker*: "Money, you should pardon the expression, is like manure. It should be spread around encouraging young things to grow!" However, the way Reverend Campbell is

**Once banned** in schools, books will always be **read** without **respect** for their true qualities. Even now **children riff** lo through the pages of **these** books -wherever they **may find** them — looking for the "**dirty bits.**"

spreading money on this **current campaign** against books and the education system **makes** me **think** that what **he** has in mind is more like encouraging young things to **ossify**.

I come now to an insinuation in the report that has been repeated once too often: namely that in *The Diviners* Margaret Laurence advocates immoral behaviour. Kenneth Campbell has been on about this for long enough. That he has **now** spread his **garbage** into the mouths of his disciples is really very tiresome and childish. This time, the source of the insinuation is a pharmacist in Huron County by the name of Elmer Umbach, who states that "young people get venereal disease because they practise free love the way Margaret Laurence and such writers advocate."

To begin with, if I were Margaret Laurence I'd sue Elmer Umbach for that statement: flat out, no holds barred. Once and for all, let it be said that the only kind of "free love" advocated by Margaret Laurence is compassion. And that is not an opinion. That is a fact. Accusations of the kind levelled by Pharmacist Umbach and Evangelist Campbell are nothing less than tragic blunders of the intellect. In **damning** this book they have slandered and damaged a rare and moving document of human aspirations and a work of art, the sole aim of which is to express the spiritual reconciliation between human beings and life.

As for Pharmacist Umbach, if he were to read the whole of Margaret Laurence's work instead of excerpting only those passages that suit his needs he might find it in himself to stock a little of the compassion she advocates on his shelves. He might even discover that it averts more human ills than the whole amplitude of pharmaceutical prophylactics he now dispenses. When reading this man's blindly obtuse statements ("What I'm saying is a declaration of truth and I am not interested in discussing or dialoguing with you") I wondered if he had not perhaps misunderstood the terms of his profession. As a pharmacist, he is only required to sell prophylactics: he is not required to become one.

The report states that "Concerned Citizens was formed [in Huron County] as a direct result of what was interpreted as an invasion of alien elements with no stake in the community and an obvious vested interest in promoting such books as *The Diviners*." This harks back to an earlier reference in the report to a time when "the Writers' Union sent a delegation to Huron county . . . to defend the books under attack." To begin with, the Writers' Union did not, willy-nilly, send a delegation. One of that union's members, Alice Munro, is a citizen of Huron County and consequently the Writers' Union was already a presence in that area. The truth is that a group of concerned teachers and students invited two other members of the union to bolster their fight against the book banning. And if Alice Munro cannot stand up in her own community (with or without fellow writers by her side) and defend Canadian books — including her own — against discrimination, then the final paragraphs of the report, in which Suewe points out the dangers of censorship and people's innate responsibility to fight it, are meaningless. Furthermore, the whole

accusatory stance that writers only go to bat for books because they have a "vested interest" is just as tiresomely innocent of intelligence as Reverend Campbell's other quotes dotted about the Huronian canon of stock phrases. The only vested interest one writer has in another's work is his investment as a reader in its integrity. Alice Munro doesn't make a cent out of Margaret Laurence's books. And do I really have to point out that Margaret Laurence did not set Foot in Huron County during any of this debate? But Alice Munro did, and she had a vested interest in her own endangered books. Strange, aren't they, these writers: how they want it both ways? Wanting both to write and to be read. And to eat and live in houses and pay bills and stuff like that. Really strange. Stranger still that they believe in the value of their own work.

The whole of this current movement concerned with the censorship and banning of books — whether in schools or libraries or courts of law — is riddled with false moral indignation and fake concern for the hearts and minds of our children. It stems, in my opinion, from a truly evil manipulation of people's genuine fear and uncertainty about the world we live in. And the society we've created. And the children we've borne. The voices that inform the report and give it its tone speak often of their children and of hopes for their moral and spiritual character. Well, those are the same concerns of the books these people want to ban and of the me and women who wrote them. Why are we so afraid of our own children that we want to close their hearts and minds to the fund of compassion they would find in these books? *Who Has Seen the Wind?*, *Lives of Girls and Women*, *The Diviners*. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Huckleberry Finn*. The list goes on and on, and it grows and grows every year. It scares the hell out of me. The Reverend Campbell even speaks of bowdlerizing Shakespeare.

Do we really have to go through all this again? Has nothing been learned? Of course, it has been argued that these books have "only been banned in the high schools. Anyone can read them after that." Wrong. Once banned in schools books "ill always be read without respect for their true qualities. Even now children riddle the pages of these books — wherever they may find them — looking for "the diff bits." This is not the book's fault. Nor the fault of its writer. It is the fault of those who have condemned the book as "obscene" or "pornographic" or "filled with profane language." Literature is being locked away with the truly obscene, as much as to imply that Margaret Laurence is an advocate of "child abuse." And this, of course, is nothing less than intellectual blasphemy.

It is an artist's privilege to see what others cannot see. Sometimes this is not a happy privilege. Sometimes what is seen is very hard to bear, and equally difficult to voice. But if it is the artist's privilege to see, it is also his job to tell what he sees. As W.H. Auden did, looking over his shoulder into Europe in 1939 and writing: "Intellectual disgrace stares from every human face, and the seas of pity lie locked and frozen in each eye."

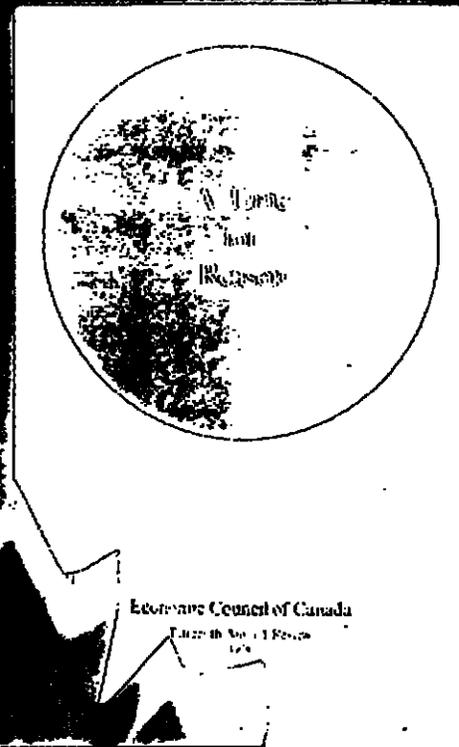
These days, he wouldn't even have to look over his shoulder. But I don't want to close on that note, any more than Auden did. His poem, from which those lines are taken, was about the death of a poet — W.B. Yeats. Its last verse makes a far better epigraph for the idea I have tried to express here, which is the idea that a false issue is being raised by people who, for motives of their own, want to prevent certain books from reaching the minds that most require them, minds that can make the future better than the present and infinitely better than the past. What Auden wrote is as fine a definition of the desired effect of an artist's work as anyone will ever give. And, like it or not Huron County, it applies to Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*:

*In the deserts of the heart,  
Let the healing fountain start,  
In the prison of his days  
Teach the free man how to praise.*

Of course, Auden understood these things. He was censured, Mo. And banned. But he's still in print. □

For further comments on Paul Stuewe's report, see the Letters to the Editor department on page 39.

# Canadian Issues



## The Fifteenth Annual Review: A Time for Reason

"Mixed austerity" is a disturbing term. The Economic Council of Canada applies it to a scenario, developed from an analysis of the federal spending restraint program and present provincial fiscal policies, which features abnormally low real growth output and alarmingly high inflation and unemployment rates. In this publication the members of the Council warn that without measures to stimulate consumption and spending by business, Canada may face the bleak prospects of reduced quality and quantity of goods and services. Accepting that effective budget measures in one area may produce undesirable effects in others, the Council calls for cuts in direct and indirect taxation and the development and implementation of a medium-term industrial strategy. The Council does not provide any easy answers, for there are none, but its recommendations could help government and business make the critical choices Canada needs now in order to ensure a brighter economic outlook in the future. Appendixes. Tables. Charts. Paper-bound. 16.5 cm x 25 cm. 156 pp. EC21-1/1978. \$4.00

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# 'WITHOUT FURTHER ADO...'

Last year there were more than 1,200 poetry readings in Canada. Why?

by Mark Abley

ALL READINGS BEGIN late, but some begin later than others. I remember a solemn occasion in the depths of the Saskatoon Public Library, and a poet, floridly dressed, floridly introduced, clearing his throat importantly. Words were about to burst forth, and the little audience was breathing expectation. when an elderly man in a plaid shirt put his head around the door and said, "Is this the slide-show on house plants?"

There are rules for successful reading, the first of which is to make sure that no gardeners or small children are lurking in the vicinity. A writer may claim he wants "spontaneous responses" to his work, but he rarely does. Mostly he wants to bask in the safe glow of his own artistry. of his very presence, and even if only eight or 10 people trundle down to listen, those eight or 10 become

A reading jumps to life when something goes extremely right or extremely wrong. Contrary to general opinion, the disasters aren't always alcoholic.

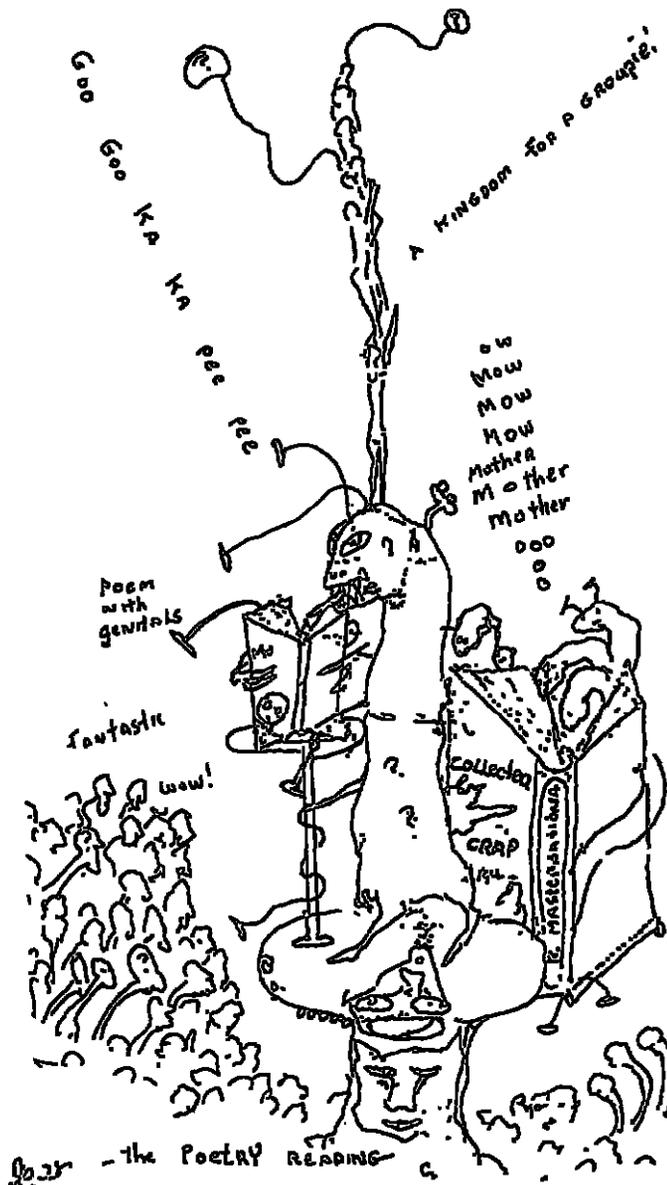
instant aficionados, true believers, members of the elect. But it helps to hold such readings in a pint-sized mom. Dave Godfrey was once billed to read in a Biology Theatre usually given over to diagrams of newts or DNA. Four hundred could have fitted in with ease; four showed up. The embarrassment in such cases is matched only by the uncertainty. Do I soldier on as if the promised multitudes were here. Godfrey must have asked himself; can I pretend I'm as absent as everyone else in this Godforsaken town; or do we adjourn to the pub? The pub won; it generally does.

Authors come and go, but the institution of the public reading lumbers on: a happening at which, now and then, things actually happen. When the Scottish poet W.S. Graham gave an afternoon reading a few years ago at the University of Saskatchewan, he must have been gratified by the size of his audience. Little did he know that it was quite literally captive, being comprised chiefly of engineers and agros compelled to take first-year English and despatched by well-meaning teachers to ogle a foreign writer: At precisely 3:30, the interminable class-hour having finished at last, two thirds of the audience loudly got up and left. Graham was in the middle of a poem. His face is tied to begin with, his anger wondrous to behold.

At boring readings nothing goes wrong, exactly. A writer may, like Rudy Wiebe, be saying with everything except his voice that "If you were really interested you'd be poring wet my books, not staring at my face." A reading jumps to life when something goes extremely right or extremely wrong. Contrary to general opinion, the disasters aren't always alcoholic. I was once at a reading in an ancient British library at which the writer of honour, a blind poet, lost track altogether of the audience and began addressing a book-lined wall. No one had the heart to interrupt and

say, "Excuse me, sir, we're over here now." or perhaps the author wanted to read a few poems at the Reformation sermons? His work is hardly transparent, and I may have missed something important.

If Canadian readings tend toward the horticultural, British ones lean to the haughty-cultural. In 1976 several eminent American



writers toured Britain as part of a bicentennial special — rather like our own Confederation Train — and suffered the indignity of being introduced in Oxford by the local Professor of Poetry, a former Angry Young Man who had wormed his way into the Establishment. He introduced the visitors by remarking that almost all American writing was “facile” and “jejune,” then retired with a wineskin to the back of the hall and snorted loudly through the next two hours. One of the participants, Philip Levine, was understandably nervous: after a reading in Hull a few days beforehand, an English poet had placed the “black linger of death” on him. The British are not always genteel. The Oxford reading was saved by a magnificent performance from Galway Kinnell, who strode to the front, glared at the listeners, and declaimed his poems from memory.

Readings are performances; writers are often bad actors. An author with a halting or pedestrian voice can make a love lyric sound like a laundry list. Actors, of course, are prone to do the reverse, and it's a moot question whether histrionic flamboyance does anything for a text except distort it. William McGonagall, the most sublimely bad poet of all, thought he read his own works quite as magnificently as he wrote them. For the most part, only a compelling performance will overcome the discomforts that accompany readings as inevitably as a bad cough: the chairs as hard as granite, the defunct or perverse microphones, the elderly Coffeemate, the unexplained noises from next door, the missing page at the climax of a story . . .

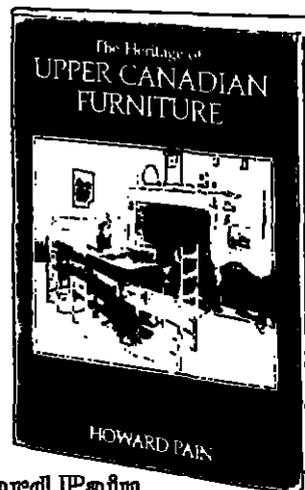
And most of all, the embarrassing questions. But, I suppose, “How do you write?” than “Why do you write?” or, worse still, “Why do you write like that?,” a question I once saw Mordecai Richler duck neatly. Richler “as a good deal smaller than his interrogator, a bulky lady in a canary-yellow pantsuit and a righteous rage. I noticed the same woman a few weeks later when Hugh Hood was in town. Hood (had he been wanted?) read a mild-mannered story or two in which, as I recall, skates were plentiful and profanity absent. The large lady beamed silence at the end, but an intense-looking young man demanded to know the significance of hockey.

Writers are notorious poseurs, and many of them take as good care of their images as of their manuscripts. A while ago I helped to organize a reading by Yevgeny Yevtushenko. Having requested, and received, an outlandish fee, Yevtushenko proved most congenial, and consumed vast quantities of pizza. Just before he “as due to read, however, he suddenly demanded a large glass of milk. Easier said than done, but at last we managed to procure one. The glass stood beside the podium, virtually untouched, for the next 90 minutes, the perfect image of sobriety and innocence. When the reading was over Yevtushenko did not “ant milk. His performance, by the way, had been memorable chiefly for a foot-stomping version of Kipling in Russian. Readings are never predictable.

The quality of a reading may be connoted with the quality of the writing, but there's no necessary correlation. I remember hearing a performance by Margaret Atwood and the late Pat Lowther at which Atwood, her voice flatter than a potato pancake, was completely outshone by Lowther, who “as blessed with a bright, strong voice and a gift for spontaneous warmth. And unless a writer can give of the self in public, why bother with readings at all? Fe” readings have ever moved me so much as one given mainly in Gaelic by a bird-like old gentleman called Sorley MacLean. None of his listeners understood Gaelic, but that scarcely mattered, so powerful was the music of the language and so entrancing the sight of Sorley MacLean, eyes closed, head upraised, his “hole body quivering with the sheer excitement of words.

At moments like that, readings provide an experience as deep as any act of reading. But sometimes as I squirm on an impossible chair, balancing a Styrofoam cup full of a silty, lukewarm, greyish poison, and listening to “something I've never read before in public” (nor ever will again, God willing), I find myself wondering, “Why? why?” Oh, I know it's important to keep the oral tradition alive. I just think I'd rather watch a screenful of rubber-plants. □

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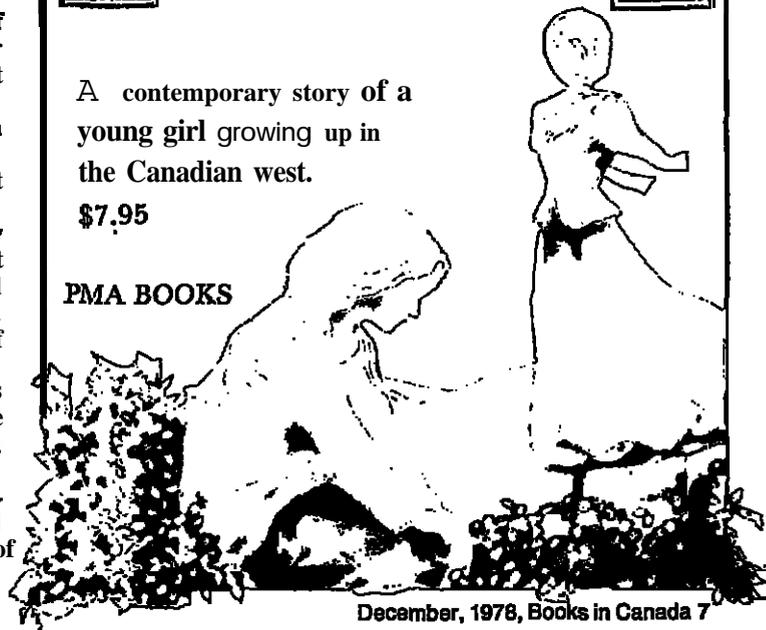
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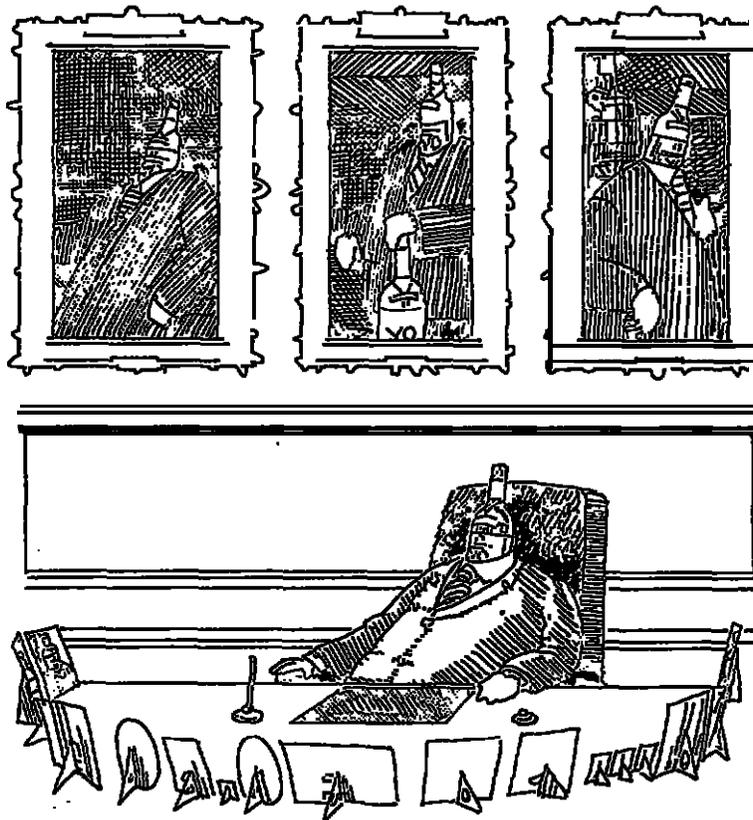
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# Kvetcher in the rye

Poor irascible Mr. Sam. As Newman tells it, Bronfman spent a lifetime learning that liquor isn't quicker when it comes to making it with the Wasp establishment

by John Porter



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**Bronfman Dynasty:** The Rothschilds of the New World, by Peter C. Newman, McClelland & Stewart. 318 pages. 917.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 6758 5).

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**"PEOPLE CHARGE MR. Rockefeller with stealing the money he gave to the church,"** raid the Pastor of the Euclid Avenue Baptist Church in Cleveland, "but he has laid it on the altar and thus sanctified it." Behind most great fortunes there are disreputable beginnings that time obscures as social practices ennoble the descendants of those who founded them. The awesomeness of great wealth as it becomes secure over the generations is a form of what Max Weber, the German sociologist, called familial charisma. Religion — particularly Protestantism — has played an important role in the legitimization of wealth. "Our conception of God," said Bishop Fiske of Massachusetts in 1927. "is that he is a sort of magnified rotarian." The founder of the Rockefeller fortune was a Baptist and found no conflict in reconciling the interests of God and Mammon.

The sanctifying of great wealth did not come easily to Samuel Bronfman, if indeed it came at all during his lifetime. He was a child of immigrants from Russia in the 1890s, when those from Eastern Europe were brought to the Canadian West to endure great hardship; he had only a modest education; he made his money from producing Canadian booze during the period of prohibition in the United States, an activity that required him to operate in the grey zone between the marginally legal and the im-

legal; and he was Jewish, an affiliation that provided no more impediment to serving God and Mammon than Protestant sectarianism, although in North American capitalism Jews were left the border-line zones in which to operate.

Bronfman was caught between the hypocrisy and ambivalence of a society that severely constrained the consumption of alcohol (or, as in the case of the U.S. from which the Bronfman history can never be separated, suppressed it altogether) but which at the same time is prepared to reward those who supply the evil product. In Shaw's Major Barbara the Salvation Army General, after condemning armaments, did accept a large contribution from the munitions manufacturer, Undershaft, and earned the rebuke, "What price salvation now?" Liberal politicians of the day did not seem to mind taking Bronfman's money but they never sanctified it on their political altars with the appropriate social recognition bestowed on other tycoons.

Peter C. Newman in *Bronfman Dynasty: The Rothschilds of the New World*, treats Samuel Bronfman with that mixture of contempt and admiration that has come to characterize the Newman style as he makes his pilgrimage through the lives of Canada's super-rich. His exposé of the rum-running period when Bronfman became the major supplier to American bootleggers is remarkably frank and perhaps even brutal, which is not to say the treatment was undeserved. Bronfman emerges as narcissistic, irascible, forever yelling and swearing and at times tearing telephones away from their moorings.

More pitiable than dramatic was his great striving to be accepted by the Wasp elite of Montreal by being invited onto the boards of their banks, insurance companies, hospitals, and McGill University. But it appears that as long as J. W. McConnell was able to prevent it, which was almost until McConnell died in 1964, the establishment kept him out. Whatever money he placed on their charitable altars, it brought minor honours. Not surprisingly, the Jewish community responded favourably to his benefactions as he increasingly shifted his philanthropy to Jewish causes. He felled to get the Senate appointment he so much wanted and for which he seems to have contributed heavily to the Liberal Petty.

All through the prohibition period the Canadian government did little to interfere with the extensive operations that developed out of the Yorkton Distributing Co. to supply American bootleggers. The Canadian government collected taxes and the Canadian balance of payments no doubt was favourably effected. At Canada's Centennial, Bronfman did receive the Companion of the Order of Canada.

In the first half of the book Mr. Newman tells a good story of the rise of Sam and Harry Bronfman, and to a lesser extent of their brother Allen, from their meagre beginnings to their success in building up the international liquor empire of Distillers Corporation-Seagrams. The foundations of the present Bronfman fortune were their distilleries, hotels, and liquor warehouses in the Prairie communities. Booze has had an interesting place in Canadian history since the French traded brandy to the Indians for

furs, and the **Judicial** Committee of the Privy Council in London gave shape to our constitutional jurisprudence through liquor cases (legal, that is) brought before it.

How the Bronfmans helped America to live through prohibition and how, during much the same period, provincial governments in Canada undertook the socialization of liquor retailing is an interesting part of that particular stream in our history. It was Sam who emerged as the strong man and who was able to manoeuvre himself into personal control of the vast organization that was to run the gamut, from Mumm's champagne in France to the Paul Masson winery in California, with the House of Seagram in the centre. Mr. Newman adds flavour to his account by having interviewed some survivors of those days, many who knew "Mr. Sam" personally, and by having visited some of the communities involved. The reader is easily carried along by the journalistic skills for which the author is so well known.

The second half of the book deals with the "dynasty," that is, with Sam's children. Minda, Phyllis, Edgar, and Charles; with Harry's son Gerald; with Allan's two sons Peter and Mitch; and with Leo Kolber, the life-long friend of the Bronfman family who is the brain behind Cemp Investments Ltd., the Bronfman holding company through which is controlled Seagrams' world-wide organization, a substantial interest in Cadillac Fairview with real estate invest-

ments across Canada, a number of industrial companies, and Western Canadian oil interests. Bronfmans have also owned both the Montreal Expos and the Montreal Canadiens. Considering where Mr. Sam began, he left an impressive economic empire for the "dynasty" to govern.

The second part shows the familiar Newman style with portraits of the second generation against the background of the surroundings that their wealth buys. Most of them continue, through all that mysterious merging and manipulation of modern capitalism, to extend the course of the empire they inherited. On the whole, they are not a very interesting lot. As children they lived in isolation in two huge mansions in Westmount, safeguarded against the envy of the less fortunate, possible kidnappings, and anti-Semitism. The deviants are the most interesting: Phyllis, who became an architect and exercised some aesthetic influence on Seagram buildings and urban development; and Mitch, who operates a private-hire airline and seems to associate with shady characters.

Whether they live in Canada, the U.S. or France, they have no problems with the legitimization of their great wealth. Charles could even turn down an invitation to the McGill board! A fortune that began with booze becomes accepted, in part because attitudes to drinking alcohol have changed, and our governments are partners in the enterprise. Also now the Bronfman busi-

ness interests are diversified. In lime, philanthropic activity and the sheer awe of familial charisma sanctifies all great fortunes.

Devotees of Mr. Newman's journeys to the shrines of the Canadian great and wealthy will not be disappointed. □

## The man who wouldn't be King

**Pearson: His Life and World**, by Robert Bothwell, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, illustrated, 224 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 07 082305 7).

**Lester Pearson and the Dream of Unity**, by Peter Stursberg, Doubleday, illustrated, 460 pages, \$17.95 cloth (ISBN 0 385 13478 9).

By ALASTAIR SWEENEY

IT MUST BE SAID, by way of apology, that these two biographies of Pearson beat little comparison, except as nourishment for the soul. I will not attempt to contrast them, except to say that if much of your daily sustenance comes from ideas off the platter

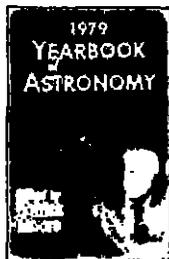


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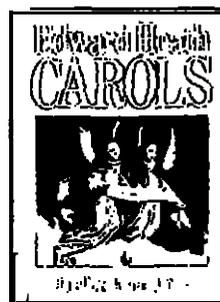
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of the printed page, then be warned: don't be satisfied with a Big Mac and a Coke when, for three dollars more, you can get a dinner of roast beef with fine claret and good companions.

Lester Pearson's friends paid a testimonial to his mixed political abilities by describing him as "a nice Mackenzie King," his enemies as "not the YMCA instructor he pretended to be." He was a tough diplomat who could cajole or bully consensus where there was none and when he wanted action or change he wasn't afraid to stir the pot or open pandora boxes.

The fascinating thing about Lester Pearson is that, while much good was accomplished in social areas and in the attraction of more francophones into the public service, the seeds of our present political and economic crisis were sown in his years as Prime Minister. In fact, it may not be entirely too cruel to describe the Trudeau decade as a kind of footnote to Pearson's "Sixty Days of Decision." In spite of his accomplishments, Pearson created rising expectations that neither Quebec nor the whole of Canada can now either sustain or afford.

Bothwell's Pearson is the fourth of Kaye Lamb's Prime Ministers Series, and I must confess it's great to be able to slip Pearson-in-the-dust jacket in with my Macdonald, Borden, and King. It's a nice book to handle, and it does have pretty pictures; my favourite is one of Barbara Ann Scott, the Ottawa skater, doing a high kick in front of Quebec's Château Frontenac, a snap that Bothwell unearthed in the (you may already have guessed it) Newfoundland Archives. Unfortunately, there's a full-colour Harold Town with fire-hydrant spaceships in a sliced-olive sky facing a murky Jack Shadbolt crucifixion, both stuck in the middle of Pearson's baby pictures, which gives the sort of surreal effect that may or may not have been intended by the designer, but which should leave readers gasping.

Otherwise, the book is disappointing. Perhaps it is the format, perhaps it is the author. I found Bothwell's generalizations a bit annoying ("Canadians thought this," "Canadians did that"), but that's what the 1960s were all about — generalizations. The picture heads could have been more imaginative. Walter Gordon is captioned as a man "whose eighteen months as Minister of Finance produced problems for Pearson." They sure did! I also got a little exasperated when I read for the umpteenth time about W. L. M. King's "phenomenal political skill in handling the potentially divisive issue of conscription." Are they still teaching this interpretation in high schools?

It is a relief therefore to be able to turn to Peter Stursberg's brilliant, exciting, oral-history portrait of the Pearson years. Following after, but much superior to his two-volume treatment of Diefenbaker, this book deals with Pearson's career as Prime Minister: a subsequent volume will concern itself with his activities as a diplomat and world statesman.

10 Books in Canada, December, 1978

Stursberg's book is by end about living, breathing political human beings, and many of those interviewed are still very much in the game. When they speak to the men with the tape recorder they can be cagey or sentimental and run through their patented act. But it is obvious that Stursberg kept at them, and when they do speak their piece — and even at times let their public mask drop — the results are often spectacular. A sampling:

□ Ralph Cowan (a newspaperman and former Liberal MP):

I never knew until I got to Ottawa in 1962 that the Liberal Party is simply run by the Quebec bloc, lock, stock and barrel. I had thought the Liberal Party was a party of conviction from coast to coast, but when you have a solid block of votes like Quebec delivers, and five or six similar seats out of northern New Brunswick, and one you can usually count on out of Manitoba, it's not a national party at all, it's one block securing its will.

□ Douglas Fisher (a newspaperman and former NDP MP):

The Tremblay Report came out I think in 1958, with these recommendations built upon the two-nations theory. And one of the constitutionalists who shot that down — Trudeau was another — was Frank Scott, the great McGill lawyer, constitutionalist, civil liberties man. Read that analysis where he kicked hell out of the Tremblay Report's two-nations theory, this whole idea that we were two nations and that the Confederation was based upon a compact — he just ruined it. They made him one of the B and B commissioners and all of a sudden that became legitimate. Frank Scott wound up being a booster, because of the crisis that was developing. For the compact theory of Confederation and the two founding nations.

□ Maurice Sauvé (economist and former Liberal cabinet minister):

I was totally opposed to the concept of bilingualism and totally opposed to the royal commission. I said it would only clearly establish in a more scientific way the situation of the French Canadians in Canada, it would only give more ammunition to all the people who are opposed to Canada, and it would only help the strong separatist and nationalist element in Quebec with arguments to fight against Canada in favour of isolation in Quebec.

□ Alvin Hamilton (former teacher and Conservative cabinet minister):

The pension plan? I don't think governments should be party to wholesale theft from kids, because you're stealing from one generation to provide the pensions for your own generation, and that's why I didn't vote Fork. . . . Eventually that load gets so heavy on the working population — the load of less and less people working to support more and more people. And this was essentially the cause that broke down the Roman Empire.

□ John Robarts (former Premier of Ontario):

Mike Pearson was basically an international diplomat, and his idea of the right solution

was that everybody went away more or less happy, instead of figuring out whether you had in fact arrived at the right result. . . . I don't know whether it really worked for Canada or not, but history will tell.

Reading this book can be at times like being a fly on the wall in Ottawa's National Press Club washroom. The scandals are all here, right up front. Keith Davey talks about biking Kennedy pollster Lou Harris, and about getting Pearson out of his bow tie. The first stirrings of Government by Symbol Manipulation are seen in all their innocent glory. But there is much here that is excellent and intelligent and good. And Pearson through it all getting this country to run. Shaking-it up a bit. Canada in the 1960s, the sleeping giant beginning to wake up. □

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## Sorting for socialism

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The Autobiography of Joe Davidson, by Joe Davidson with John Deverell, James Lorimer & Co., 224 pages, \$12.00 cloth (ISBN 0 88862 179 5) and \$2.95 paper (ISBN 0 88862 180 9).

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By HOWARD J. FELDMAN

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THE POST OFFICE may be the most despised institution in Canada, and with reason. As a business it loses -big. As a service it is inefficient, destructive, cavalier, and unpredictable in performing the simple duty of delivering our mail. The public charges the unions and their members with breach of trust. Joe Davidson blames bad management, incorrect structure (government bureaucracy instead of crown corporation), and poor labour relations.

Who is Joe Davidson and why has he written his autobiography? He is the former president of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (the inside workers, not the letter carriers who have their own union). His book is not a confession in today's urgently titillating style. Rather, it is the dull story of an exemplary political life with three themes: how personal experience moulded a unionist; how organized labour is vulnerable, despite collective agreements; and how the Post Office runs when it is not falling on its face.

It is easy to see why Davidson's background made him a union man. He was born in Scotland, the son of a coal miner, and the air he breathed in the grimy, sprawling town of his youth was filled with coal dust and socialism. His father's only fringe benefit in working the mines for subsistence wages was a fatal coronary. He died when Joe was only 14, leaving the burden of supporting a whole family on the boy's shoulders. For 27 years Davidson toiled in a

foundry. Then the death of his first wife caused him to seek a new life. In Canada he began again, this time in the Post Office. It was inevitable, with his old-country socialism and his history of bluntly stating his opinions in the factory at the risk of retaliation, that he would rise through the discontented, apolitical tanks to a position of leadership.

The events he witnessed (from union raiding to Post Office poker played with letters! and the people he met, including a cabinet minister sod a resident union loan shark, are described, for the most part, with striking honesty. Davidson concludes that the gains of labour are being constantly eroded and that the workplace will continue to be a place of struggle, not co-operation.

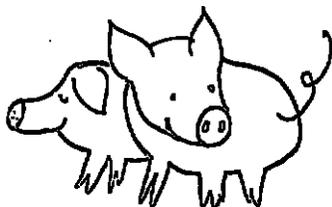
Joe Davidson is an honest, sympathetic figure, a man you would want on your side in a fight. His book, however, as autobiography, is not personal enough, and as a political tract it lacks an analytic framework. But as an introduction to the Post Office it reveals the issues behind grievances and strikes, crucial issues such as automation and casual labour, and the paradox that union leaders have been betrayed both by government management and the wayward membership of the union itself. □

## The man who rose high from the hog

A Canadian Millionaire: The Life and Business Times of Sir Joseph Flavelle, Bart., 1858-1939, by Michael Bliss, Macmillan, 562 pages, \$19.95 cloth. ISBN 0 7705 1657 21.

By ROGER HALL

MOST CANADIANS REMEMBER Sir Joseph Flavelle, if they remember him at all, as a piratical profiteer, a millionaire who made more millions by selling bad meat during the First World War. A few might claim he was a hypocrite as well, preaching a God-fearing, self-sacrificing Methodism while he piled up his ill-gained profits. Only a handful will recall his life as a Canadian version of a Horatio Alger story: "Poor son of Peterborough drunkard he-



comes Baronet." Few still will realize he was one of the pivots of Canadian prosperity at the turn of the century, that he gave most of his fortune away, and that no small slice of the Imperial war effort fell under his influence.

Michael Bliss effectively reminds us of all this — and a good deal more. His biography fits squarely into the Canadian historical tradition of the fulsome life and times. But the practitioners' ranks have been thinning lately, replaced by spare, dull political biographies and specialized professional monographs that, though they frequently break new methodological ground, have little popular appeal. Bliss satisfies both the professional and the serious reader; he also reminds us that history is to be read as well as written.

Bliss's biography of Flavelle is larger than the life of its subject, but Flavelle's "times" never threaten to overcome the substantial thread of his life. Perhaps the chief reason is that Flavelle so perfectly complemented the period in which he lived. Pious, hard-working, shrewd, skilful, he amassed his fortune primarily in the pork business, moving from Peterborough to Toronto and then into the lucrative British market. Early on he realized the importance of diversification and shifted into banking, insurance, department stores and various other businesses. He took his business sense into religion and charity as well, and the Methodist church in Canada and institutions such as the Toronto General Hospital owe much to his efforts. During the Fit World War he served the Empire by becoming chairman of the Imperial Monitions Board, a job for which he was thanked with a baronetcy. Shortly thereafter he was accused of profiteering in meat contracts for the troops and although he was officially cleared of guilt, he became a popular scapegoat and terms of derision and memories of scandal clung to him until he died: "His Lordship," "the Robber Baronet," "Sir Joseph Flavelle, Baconet."

Bliss chronicles all this in an easy, graceful, and aphoristic style. He is an accomplished business historian and has the enviable knack of simplifying complex business affairs without denuding them of their subtleties. He has doubtless learned more about the pork business than he ever wanted to know, but the intimate detail gives his work the immediacy, relevance, and graphic reality that most business histories in this country sadly lack. Since Flavelle's interests took him into so many diverse fields, specialists will no doubt quibble with some of Bliss's opinions and emphases. A labour historian, for example, would probably like more details about Flavelle's unhappy relations with organized labour. But the book is by no means intended solely for scholars. Bliss has tried to make it spirited, to make notes unobtrusive, and to give a broad base to points of historical detail. In short, it deserves a wide readership. □

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## Seven-card stud, everything wild

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The **Wild Frontier: More Tales from the Remarkable Past**, by Piim Berton, McClelland & Stewart, 250 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 1360 4).

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By DONALD SWAINSON

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PIERRE BERTON'S LATEST book on Canadian history, *The Wild Frontier*, consists of seven short studies of men and women whose fame has something to do with the Canadian or Newfoundland frontiers. All of these stories were first "narrated by [Burton] on television in considerably simpler form." Additional research has been undertaken and the result is a series of short, snappy, uncomplicated and essentially unrelated pieces.

Isaac Jogues was a metropolitan French priest who was martyred by the Iroquois in 1646. John Jewitt, an American, was a prisoner of Maquinna, a famous British Columbia Indian chief, from 1803 to 1805. Wilfred Grenfell, an Englishman, founded a world-famous mission in Newfoundland-Labrador in the late 19th

century. Mina Hubbard, who explored a portion of Labrador, was a Canadian whose ties with Canada were tenuous, to put it mildly. Sam Steele was a genuine Canadian of great importance in the history of the North-West Mounted Police, the Prairie provinces, and the Yukon. Cariboo Cameron, from Eastern Ontario, made a fortune in the gold fields of British Columbia and became famous for his bizarre decision to take his wife's body, pickled in alcohol, from the interior of B.C. to Glengary County via the Panama canal. Almighty Voice was a Saskatchewan murderer who has been romanticized by a succession of misguided writers, of whom Pierre Berton is most emphatically not one. Nothing, including Berton's introductory "The legacy of the frontier," ties these people together except for their frontier involvement.

The stories also vary in interest and quality. Jogues and Grenfell, essentially religious men, receive outrageously anachronistic treatment. Berton clearly dislikes and finds incomprehensible their faith and its impact on their motivation. He labours over the fact that other Jesuits were involved in acts of savagery against European religious opponents. "Yet to what degree did their customs differ from similar practices in Renaissance Europe?" asks Mr. Berton. "Pain is pain; horror is horror. Was the mutilation and burning of Spanish heretics, the roasting alive of witches

(common to most European nations) and the public disembowelling of living traitors in England less reprehensible than the gauntlet and the slake of the Iroquois?" F. R. Scott puts it so much better:

*For both the human torture made a feast:  
Then is priest savage, or Red Indian priest?*

The stories of Cameron and Hubbard are little more than interesting vignettes inflated to the requisite 30-odd pages. John Jewitt and Maquinna make good copy, but one is far better advised to read the Carleton Library's recent reprint of *The Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt, Captive Among the Nootka*. Berton's best chapters are about Sam Steele and Almighty Voice. Steele's administration of the Yukon is a fascinating story, as is the tawdry treatment that he received at the hands of his NWMP seniors. Almighty Voice receives the debunking he richly deserves.

This is not a book of scholarship and was not meant to be. It will no doubt appeal to those who believe that Canadian history can be made interesting and unique — that is, just like American history. A merry Christmas sale is predicted. □

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## Divided if uptight we stand

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The Railroad's Not Enough: **Canada Now**, by Heather Menzies, Clark Irwin Ltd., 318 pages, \$11.95, (ISBN 0 7720 1226 1).

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By RONALD ROMPKRY

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A SAD FACT of our national life today is that with our relatively small population strewn across 5,000 miles of continent we tend to preoccupy ourselves with local concerns and rarely encounter Canadians from the disparate parts of the country unless we do so abroad, displaying our maple-leaf pins and greeting our compatriots in New York, Tokyo, or Katmandu like long-lost friends. I have witnessed Westerners effusively addressing Easterners in this way. Under such conditions, British Columbians will shed their self-satisfaction. For the moment in order to embrace Nova Scotians, and people from Ontario will go more than half-way to char up their neighbours from Quebec, particularly when their mobile homes lodge ride by side in St. Petersburg, Florida. (Once I even saw a Newfoundland student from the depths of the bay throw his arm around the neck of a Fellow from St. John's during a cocktail party at the Canadian High Commission in London, though that was many years ago.) when we return to this country, however, our enthusiasm wanes. Those precious moments fade as we take up

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our local preoccupations again. But what are those preoccupations, and how do they separate us? For answers to these long-standing questions, one might look into *The Railroad's Not Enough; Canada Now*, gleanings from interviews Heather Menzies conducted with ordinary Canadians during the past year or so.

From the many interviews she taped during her nine months on the road, Heather Menzies has mainly selected those that focus on the concerns of ordinary people. To emphasize our regional biases, she has ignored provincial boundaries and grouped her subjects under such headings as The East, The West, The North and Native Lands, The French Stronghold and The English Stronghold. It is a useful way of handling the material. Within these groupings she is concerned not so much with specifically "Canadian" problems as with what is troubling individuals in their local environment as they lead their lives of quiet desperation: the young, the old, the poor, the immigrants, the Hutterites, the Indians, the French. Her objective is "to disco& who we are as a people and where we're going as a nation." and her method sometimes brings to the book a sense of the immediate and the actual, a taste of the drama of everyday life, while we listen to the opinions of our fellow citizens we are struck by their circumstances: a woman who has lain side by side with a dying husband in a senior citizens' home; an immigrant who has fled political oppression but who now is being told to school her children in French; an RCMP officer who has played cribbage with a convicted murderer through the bars of a cell while the carpenters audibly constructed a gallows outside.

In a halfway house in northern British Columbia a dispirited woman blurts out, "Sometimes I feel I'm crying." Her statement would have served as an appropriate tide for the book as a whole. Often, as the subjects deliver themselves of their complaints with unrelieved banality, we are forced to question the selection.

Heather Menzies is not surprised to find toward the end of the book that the Canadian people are "frustrated, cynical and apathetic." If that is to be changed, she later urges, we must all "commit ourselves, feel responsible and get involved." And if that is not enough, we are finally challenged to square off against lip-service to the principle of equality of opportunity. The tone of the valedictorian here betrays the fact that the book lacks direction in the first place, and if the reader is confused, he is not helped by the opaque prose style that delivers such simplistic sentiments. Cant words from pop psychology appear repeatedly ("caring," "relate to," "identify with," "put down," "uptight"), and their effect is compounded by an abundance of vague abstractions.

Thus, Joseph Dillon "grew up loud and free on Newfoundland's reality." We also learn that Ontario's symbols "sooth in their endurance." And what are we to make of

such locutions as this: "We tend to notice the dandelion on the lawn, not the blades of grass. But the dandelion sets off the lawn, giving the grass a heightened identity." Later we are instructed in the same vein: "Also, while you might encounter a theme only once in the book in order to avoid repetition, that issue isn't necessarily confined to that particular region." Perhaps all this cannot be blamed on Heather Menzies, who must trust her editors. But which of them is responsible for such spelling lapses as "refridgerator," "raquetball," "portenteously," and "restauranteur," or such solecisms as "trooping of the colours" and misdating the expulsion of the Acadians as "1758"? These may seem to be petty details, but they diminish the grand scheme of discovering who we are as a people and where we're going as a nation. In the rush for immediacy and topicality, careful writing has been neglected.

One of the few useful statements in the book is made by Margaret Laurence, who is quoted as saying: "Personally I have never had the slightest doubt about the Canadian identity. It almost bores me to talk about it." Only when we leave the country, it seems, do we allow our identity to emerge. At home, the task of "identifying" becomes itself one of our main preoccupations. Unfortunately, while Menzies' book makes a novel and sometimes interesting attempt, it does not bring us closer to an answer. 0

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## Sage with a meat axe

Troublemaker! by James H. Gray, Macmillan, illustrated, 256 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7705 1718 8).

By JAMES CARLEY

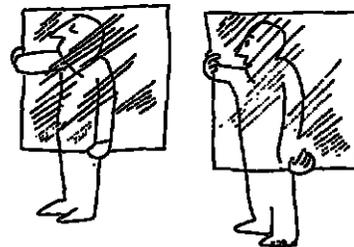
WRITTEN AS A SEQUEL to *The Boy from Winnipeg and The Winter Years*, this third volume of James Gray's autobiography covers the years from 1935 to the mid-1950s, from his hiring by the *Winnipeg Free Press* to the termination of his editorship (and the existence) of the *Western Oil Examiner* in Calgary. Although *Troublemaker!* may seem too insular both in time and space, it is a significant piece of reporting about Canada's cultural history and does give insights into two important decades of our growth; and the post-war generation of Canadians at least should read it in order to obtain a (rather idiosyncratic) view of their country's recent history. But reading *Troublemaker!* is not an exciting experience. The years do not come alive in either a fictional or documentary sense.

Some of the difficulty lies, perhaps, in the format. As Gray says, his is "a highly

personalized account, a personal history in which autobiography is mixed with objective reportage." But neither aspect fully attracts attention. Often the structure is quite confused, alternating from details of personal reminiscence to very general statistics. There is also a tendency to ramble from topic to topic, sometimes without even the warning of a paragraph division. Gray seems to assume that the reader is already well aware of his identity, and often fails to supply enough background to enable us to follow the sequence of events. There is also a careless matching of episodes, as if the chapters had been written separately for different editorial columns. Sometimes Gray goes into great detail over an issue; at other times he skips wildly over the surface just to get to a new point.

There are, of course, redeeming features. The *Winnipeg Free Press* is one of Canada's most important papers, and Gray's inside analysis of the Dufoe years and George Ferguson's succession are excellent. I also found his chapter on Canadian women and the war effort interesting, especially his discussion of Gloria Queen-Hughes work. His descriptions of the Ottawa press gallery and the moribund state of debate in the commons are biting sharp. Also noteworthy are his discussions of the post-war boom in Calgary and Gray's fight for Canadian ownership in the Prairie oil industry. There is no doubt that Gray was very early aware of the dangers involved in the Canadian method, or rather lack of method, in developing our natural resources.

Gray quotes a statement Ferguson made about Gray's faults as a reporter: he has a "tendency to reach for a meat-axe when a bit of tut-tut might have served as well." I agree. So much of this book consists of invective, of attacks on the multitude of bad guys in Winnipeg, Ottawa, and especially south of the border. Gray seems at times to want us to think of him affectionately as a modern Don Quixote, idealistic perhaps, but in pursuit of his vision of a much better world. In fact, he emerges as a sour, opinionated, and often aggressive character, naive in his surprise at the reactions to his waspish editorials. I have become rather tired of the persona of the acerbic old sage of the newspaper editorial. One Gordon Sinclair is enough. Gray's bitterness, and retreat into Western insularity, his repudiation of the post-war years when "of our own volition, we just stood around and frittered away the Canadian dream," is precisely the kind of attitude that is untenable (and in fact dangerous) in the Canada of the late 1970s. □



## When Adam punned and Eve hissed, who was then the chauvinist?

Sex Wars. by Mark M. Orkin. General Publishing. 174 pages. 58.95 paper. (ISBN 0 773604 3).

By KATHERINE KOLLER

RUDY WIEBE once asked a class if humour is possible without the battle between the sexes. The question was greeted with silence. Mark Orkin addresses the same question in his anthology of anecdotes, quotations, facts, fantasy, mythology, and whimsy. His "humorous look at sexism down through history" exposes explosively zany, mildly ridiculous, and outright whacky comedy in some of the world's most sober moments. Like a mad scientist in search of a new laughing potion, Orkin approaches the Bible, classic Greek and Roman history, Scandinavian folklore, re-

ligion, nursery rhymes, fairy tales, Shakespeare, Freud, legal systems, politics, etymology, and psychology.

Orkin's tone is that of a stand-up comedian. He relies on the conversational inflections of the spoken language. He sometimes talks to his audience tongue-in-cheek:

After all, if the Lord had meant woman to be equal, wouldn't He have created her at the same time as man? Instead, He created man first, the lower animals "ext. and woman last of all, from bits of man's bric-a-brac.

Besides assuming a familiarity with his readers, Orkin operates on a nickname basis with some of the great and gallant (and not-so-great and -gallant) characters of history; "Augie" (St. Augustine), "Oed" (Oedipus), "Cindy" (Cinderella), "Cassie" (Cassandra), and "Marty" (Martin Luther) all make guest appearances in the book. Not the least of these is Sigmund Freud:

In a blinding flash our young Sigi took in the whole picture and for the first time saw how Oedipus wrecks even the securest nest.

Orkin's puns are frequent, though sometimes, forced: "Throughout the Middle Ages the days were nasty, brutish and short, and the knights were worse."

Although Orkin's tempo is generally fast and flippant; he slows down to describe particularly glorious moments in the history of sexism. One of these is the birth of the male chauvinist pig:

The sailors wanted pot and B-girls and were in no mood to listen to fancy talk. When one of them slapped [Circe] on the fanny and shouted, "Come on, you old bag, where are the breads?" Circe just waved her magic gizmo and before you could say Liberation, turned them all into swine. And with that the first male chauvinist pigs were born. A herd of them, in fact. They've been coming off the assembly line steadily ever since.

No less dramatic is the moment the campaign for women's liberation first began:

The real trouble came with the realization that Copernicus' theory was not just another Polish joke. Once it was generally accepted, things would "ever be the same again." "The Copernican revolution," it has been said, "dethroned man as the center and lord of Creation." And that was precisely the rub. If man was no longer the center of the universe, then who was? Quick as a flash the answer came back from on high: woman! And with that began the long march toward liberation whose fruits we observe today.

In *Sex Wars* magic is an active ingredient of the mad scientist's solution.

Adam and Eve haunt Orkin's passage through history, recurring often in his otherwise chronological survey of sexism. He also reviews the classic sexist questions from time to time: Do women have souls? Can women possess property? Are women persons? Orkin points out that these queries have echoed through the cloistered halls of the Middle Ages, in the meeting rooms of the Reformation, in the literature of the 18th century, as well as in the courts of Canada:

It all started in 1928 up in Canada, ton8 an outpost of chauvinism lying between those two great bastions of sexism, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. At issue was a clause in the federal constitution that empowered the government to appoint "qualified persons" to the Senate, and the big question was, did that include women?

During his frenzied search for comedy in the battle between the sexes, Orkin allows himself at least one moment of serious comment:

Man it was who invented customs, religions, empires, literature, art — and woman never gave him a" argument. If women slowly acquired rights we should better place me tam I" quotation marks as "rights" — not something to which she was entitled according to her needs and interests, but merely such as me" were disposed to give her from time to time as long as it fitted in with the male scheme of things. Since woman has never bee" in a position to make laws, she has "ever bee" able to change them.

This statement appears near the end of the book, in a section that treats modern and contemporary history. While implying that the war between the sexes is almost over, Orkin's attitude to this is ambivalent. He applauds men's awareness of women's rights, but his humour has dissipated. Once again the question arises: Without the battle, is there humour? The pages at the back of the book, however, are blank. □

## Shaking it smooth

Waiting for the Ice-Cream Man: A Prison Journal, edited by Larry Krotz, photographs by John Paskievich, Converse (87 Isabel St., Winnipeg). 96 pages, \$6.95 paper.

By ELEANOR WACHTEL

THE ONLY TRULY horrible image in this portrait of prison life is that of nostalgia, of jail as "Home Sweet Home." A carefully even-tempered collection of verbal and photographic portraits, it depicts the prison not as cruel and unusual punishment but simply as futile and self-perpetuating.

It's been an easy subject to sensationalize. Everybody from the parliamentary sub-committee on Canadian prisons on down has already proclaimed a "crisis." The penitentiary system is a massive failure that employs as many workers as there are inmates, and suffers an 80 per cent rate of recidivism. An inexorable machine that has nearly tripled its budget in the last decade, it blunders on in pursuit of ill-defined and incompatible goals of rehabilitation, punishment, and deterrence. Inherent contradictions result in excesses of

### EVERYWOMAN'S ALMANAC 1979



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stultification, frustration, and violence. The trouble is that all this is a commonplace now; prison journals are expected to be grim, tedious or shocking. *Waiting for the Ice-Cream Man* has tried to tread the narrow line between excesses to allow the reader a fresh reaction.

The publisher, Converse, is a Winnipeg public-education project of inmates and community professionals concerned with prisons and the criminal-justice system. Converse clearly approves the lack of stridency, the straightforward approach. The mélange of prison writings excerpted from books and magazines — doses of Andreas Schroeder and Don Bailey — is punctuated by stark photographs shot in Manitoba jails. A rather uncomfortable Oscar Wilde, however, leads off with an account — quite out of temper with the rest — of his attempt to make himself worthy of his punishment. The others are less stoic and somewhat grittier. Appended are lists of prison house rules, daily schedules, commissioner's directives, extracts from scholarly papers, and legislative reports: the minutiae of a mundane prison existence.

John Paskievich's photographs are the original element in this book. They take us into the prisons, show us the hard and soft faces, the not unpleasant pastimes, the homely touches that personalize a cell. This is the prison in repose, time heavy, the tattooed arm of the placid smoker — "Born Loser." □

## Decline and fall of almost everything

A Pattern for History, by Arthur M. Lower. McClelland & Stewart, 381 pages, \$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 5374 61).

By DUNCAN MEIKLE

FEW CANADIAN HISTORIANS would attempt such a book as this; it has been a long time since professors were expected to "profess" all periods. In 23 chapters Arthur Lower offers a "valid historical perspective to 2,000 years of Western civilization." He compares the decline of Rome to New York City's financial woes, Diocletian to Andrew Jackson, and the changes in the English language during the Renaissance to the growth of street jargon today. He discusses many of the problems of the historian, including the search for evidence and the delimiting of an historical period, and he shows how difficult it is to solve these problems. *A Pattern for History* is full of ideas, provocative statements, and surprises; how often does an author refer to an obscure Florida newspaper and *The*

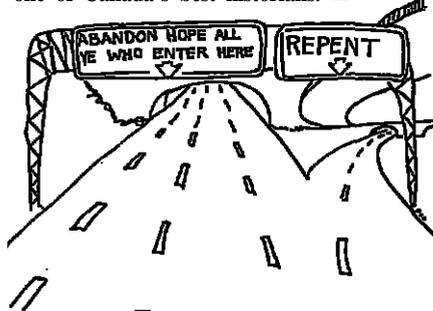
*Memoirs of Field Marshal B.L. Montgomery* in a discussion of Moses?

When dealing with an historian of Lower's stature one is tempted to compare his work to that of Toynbee or Gibbon. Lower is much more concerned with the present and what he sees as questionable values and the decline of morality and order. In a sense this book is not history but a series of personal observations. It is the sort of commentary a professor might put before a class (if he were confident that they could or would master the basics of the course themselves) in an attempt to answer the question, "What does it all mean?"

He describes the cycles through which our civilization has passed and concludes that we are now facing a period of disorder. Lower claims that civilizations or successful and innovative societies are marked at their beginning by enthusiasm and a positive set of values. This emotionalism cools and gives way to rationalism and reason, which try to dissect the original faith. As the faith is questioned, liberty and uncertainty arise, and eventually these develop into anarchy and chaos. Lower calls this pattern the "three-stage evolution from zeal to Intellect to disorder."

What Lower is really saying is that he dislikes certain aspects of the 20th century, such as materialism, modern music, immorality, clothing, and hair styles. His concerns are reflected in the index, which contains some 1,500 entries, from Abelard to Zurich (a refuge for Biblical scholars in the 19th century); almost all of the longer entries refer to religion.

Lower might be forgiven for his pessimism if the book had no other faults, but such is not the case. The idea of a pattern in history is developed in the first half of the book but is not applied to the last few centuries — except indirectly in the concluding chapters. The author soys repeatedly that it is difficult, if not meaningless, to divide history into nice little sections — then proceeds to do so in almost every chapter. He often dismisses a complex subject by calling it "too large a subject to be canvassed here." And within several chapters the narrative jumps about in both time and place, which will leave many readers confused. The discussions of the 14th and 15th centuries touch on events from the 12th through the 16th centuries. Finally, the book has been poorly edited & too many misprints and misplaced commas have been left in. All in all it's a performance that could have been great, but one that will probably detract from the reputation of one of Canada's best historians. □



## New Titles



### Everyman's Heritage:

An Album of Canadian Folk Life

Magnus Einarsson  
National Museum of Man

This is every Canadian's photo album. Nearly 200 black-and-white photographs, selected from collections across Canada, have been arranged to portray an intimate record of Canadian folk life.

177 b/w, October.

\$8.50 soft cover. \$12.50 hard cover. (Bilingual)



### Wild Coffee and

Tea Substitutes of Canada

Adam Szczawinski and Nancy Turner  
National Museum of Natural Sciences

This illustrated book, second in the "Edible Wild Plants of Canada" series, describes twenty-five "drinkable" plants and provides information on their historical and medicinal uses. Easy recipes, presented in mouth-watering detail, provide an excellent introduction to the realm of wild foods cookery.

Also available in French.

108 pp., 13 b/w, 12 ml. October. 16.95.



### The Works of Joseph Légaré 1795-1855

John R Porter and Jean Trudel  
National Gallery of Canada

Légaré was an influential painter and connoisseur who opened Canada's first public gallery in Quebec City in 1833. A model citizen and impassioned patriot, he was jailed for his support of Papineau during the 1837 Rebellion. The book contains all the known works, including those lost or destroyed, of this important Canadian artist.

Also published in French.

162 pp., 228 b w, 8 ml., September. \$29.95.

National Museums of Canada

December, 1978. Books In Canada 15

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## The good smell of old prose

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Rupert Brooke in Canada, edited by Sandra Martin and Roger Hall, Peter Martin Associates, illustrated, 216 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88778 184 5).

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By I. M. OWEN

IN 1913 RUPERT BROOKE, then in his 26th year, was commissioned by the Westminster *Gazette* to write a series of travel pieces about the United States and Canada. Sandra Martin and Roger Hall have now collected the published pieces on Canada and added to them two unfinished drafts and numerous extracts from Brooke's letters to his mother and his friends. The resulting book gives a series of wonderfully clear snapshots of all regions of Canada (except the Maritimes and the North) at what turned out to be the end of an era - the brief pause between the settlement of the Prairies and the outbreak of war.

It has given me a new insight, too. At least I have detected the origin of the established delusion that Western Canadians are warm and friendly in contrast to us dour Easterlings: it comes from the writings of visiting Englishmen. Travelling from east to west, in the early stages of their journeys they are frozen in the attitude in which Brooke portrays himself and his fellow-travellers a steamer going from Prescott to Toronto: "The English sat quite still, looking straight in front of them, thinking of nothiy at all, and hoping that nobody would speak to them." It is only after our Eastern warmth has played on them for some time that the thaw sets in, so that it is completed just at the moment that they hit Winnipeg, and suddenly the people around them seem quite different. Sure enough, Brooke found "the manners of Winnipeg, of the West. . . better than those of the East, mote fticndly, more hearty, more certain to achieve graciousness." (If anybody had been hearty to him in Toronto he would have retreated inside his shell.) In fact, by the time he reached Lake Louise, Bmoke, who at home regarded sex as rather indecent, had warmed up enough to have a brief affair with an American marchesa.

As well as being a promising poet with a good eye for landscape Bmoke was a shrewd political observer. He had the normal biases of his time and class: he was both an ardent imperialist and a Fabian socialist, and he was also, in the nicest possible way, a racist. (Though a racist socialist is a contradiction in terms, a misinterpretation of Darwinism had led many *avant-garde* thinkers, from Ruskin to H. G. Wells, into this ungainly posture.) He felt no malevolence toward other "races":

the French Canadians, "like children in their merry content," were "these admirable people": the Ukrainian immigrants were "brown-eyed and beautiful people"; he simply assumed that it was Canada's destiny to be British and that "that gnat mass of European immigration that Canada is letting so blindly in" was forming "inassimilable lumps."

His comments on the political future are acute, occasionally wrong ("no one of French birth will ever again be Premier of Canada"), more often far-seeing: "the Co-operative movement . . . is becoming powerful. Whether the outcome will be a very desirable rejuvenation of the Liberal Party, or the creation of a third — perhaps Radical-Labour -patty, it is hard to tell. At any rate, the change will come."

He is not quite free from clichés about Canada: his Torontonians say "Wal, Sir" like the stage Americans of the time; in celebrating the beauty of the Rockies he makes the stock reservation that they have no ghosts, forgetting perhaps that in the Saguenay he had found not merely ghosts but devils. In general, though, his eye is clear and his note is true. I am adding this book to my short list of recommendations for people who ask for hooks that will tell them about Canada.

The commentaries provided by the editors are very useful, but, written in haste as they were, they contrast unfortunately in style with Brooke's limpid prose. However, I am reviewing from galley-proofs (a practice I was keen on when I was a publisher and detest now I'm a reviewer) and cherish the hope that a kindly editorial hand may yet, even at this late stage, have smoothed away the syntactical wrinkles. □

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## As purr usual and otherwise

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The Story So Far: 5, edited by Douglas Barbour, Coach House Press, 174 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 88910 104 3).

Interloper, by Brian Purdy, Three Trees Press, 92 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 88823 006 0).

Sixteen Ways to Skin a Cat, by George Szanto, Intermedia Press, 100 pages, \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 88956 030 7).

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By BRIAN BARTLETT

IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE when a Canadian writer kicks at the conventions of realism — just as (to draw from George Szanto's *Sixteen Ways to Skin a Cat*) a cat-skinner might kick at "the way they used to do it . . . with a pointed and sharp knife." Yet the less conventional cat-skinning in *The Story So Far: 5* seems futile rather than bold. One is again reminded of Szanto's skinner, who

says: "I find it more sporting to use scissors. . . Do it properly, and withstyle. What else is there?"

What else is there, indeed? Throughout their fictions David Arnason, Wayne Clifford, and Daphne Marlatt discuss fiction. Arnason, less cleverly than he suspects, also spices his story of a seduction with charts of horse-racing statistics and a quotation on the mating of mare with stallion. Clifford's Daley, brooding in a bathtub, "senses he'll never get the actual into the story. . . And senses it's just this that after all is the story." The self-mocking image of writer as whining Duck (in a story Daley tells his daughter) does not save Clifford himself from tiresome quacking.

Ott the other hand, several of the more conventional pieces in the anthology illustrate what must bore the above writers. Caterina Loverson edges into abortion melodrama. Penny Kemp over-exploits a butterfly metaphor, and Bill Kinsella aims at easy cross-cultural targets. Even Jack Hodgins, the furthest from Clifford in his receptivity to human senses and shades and pulses, stops short of excitement since the pivotal metaphor of his story - the artist as a leper who sees mote than he acts — is hardly fresh. Of the better remaining pieces, Wade Bell's "An Animal Tale" has authentic gangliness, and Stephen Scobie's "Gunfight" is modest but explosive. The cleanest, breeziest story, Kent Thompson's "A Better Gift," is a sly poke at Chekhov and a sly tale of the extremes into which love leads lovers.

In their story collections both Brian Purdy and George Szanto want to skin cats many ways, and both books suffer from strained versatility. Among their realistic stories only Szanto's "The Celebrated Case of Brother Sebastian," though distantly focused, has staying power. Purdy's "Miss Thomas and Miss Findley" is like one of Callaghan's dog-eared formulas, and in "All the World's Crazies" and "A Great Night for Hospitals" it is never clear what place the narrators have in the surrounding whirlpools of events.

Satire and political fantasy do not fare any better with either writer. They are most at home in other sorts of fantasy. Szanto's "The Fly-Swatter," in which a man who has killed 3.5 million flies will not be tempted from his profession by women, is an eerie account of desire finding its way, even if through a winged fly-woman. "The Beginning," in which man rises from the mating of "true gander" with "false gander," amazingly avoids feeling cooked-up and seems to come from a truly primitive place.

In Purdy's "Rent, Please" a tenant's 'nightmarish painting of landlords as skeletons dancing ova the bodies of tenants seizes the attention and stops the tongue of his own landlord. Another story tells of a modern sceptic of Impressionism being transformed in Manet and shaken up forever. Then Purdy, despite immaturity of style, is groping toward a sense of inter-

mingled **life/art** subtler than that in the more self-conscious **Story So Far** writers. While raving something about **art**, he does not let his **own art** consume itself. He knows that a story is never merely its own **subject**: es one of **Szanto's** cat-skimmers says. "First we must catch the cat." □

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## Cosmos derailed near Big Knife; entropy blamed

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What the Crow Said, by Robert Kroetsch, General Publishing, 218 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7736 0067 1).

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By CHRIS SCOTT

TIME AND SPACE ARE OUT of joint in the municipality of Bigknife, Alta. (or it may be Saskatchewan; because of a surveyor's error, no one is really sure). It is April, arguably the **cruelest** month; and **Martin** Lang is in the beer parlour of the Bii Indian Hotel when his daughter Ven is seduced by a swarm of bees, the hymenopterous insects homing on her honeypot while she "closed her eyes to the whine, to the high electric hum of the bees' coming." Dislocations, mostly atmospheric, ensue. The snow does not melt, and **Gus Liebhaber**, compositor for the *Big Indian Signal*, starts to remember the future, particularly **Martin** Lang's death in the blizzard on the night of **June 11**.

How could he forget? Lang diis frozen to a plow tbiu drinking buddies have to hammer hi loose, **breaking legs**). For a time **Martin's** widow Tiddy plays Penelope to the suitors, **eventually** succumbing to big John Skandl, the iceman who has **built a phallic Pharos** out of ice (it catches fire toward the end of the wedding ceremony). John Gustav, the child of their union (or it may be **Liebhaber's** child) cannot cry or speak, but has a crow do his talking for him. When John Gustav tries to imitate the crow's flying, he kills himself. The universe, for sure, is not a reciprocal place, though **Vera's** child, born of the Holy Swarm, is able to forecast the weather.

According to **Father Basil**, whose car has square tires, the world "lacks sufficient centrifugal force to maintain its roundness." Lurking wolves end blue snow are evidence that "we inhabit a strangled universe." To **Gus Liebhaber**, trying to sell his soul to the devil, the world is a vast topographical plot, Gutenberg's unmade bed of movable type. At the graveside of John Skandl, killed in a Piper Cub crash (ice on the wings), **Father Basil** develops "the theory that all inanimate matter evolved out of animate matter, witness the case of John Skandl himself." **Entropy** is the devil that **Liebhaber** cannot find: **Father Basil**

"looked forward to the ideal condition of total inanimateness for the entire universe."

At the **centrepiece** of this novel, so crowded with **cosmo-comic** symbolism that it seems overdrawn, et times **tendentious** (the very names of the characters suggesting their inner realities), there is a card game that lasts for 151 days. The name of the game is schmia (*Schmieregeld* is palm-oil, and the word more genenlly connotes grease or dim); the cause of the game is "the inadequacy of truth." The game variously represents the creation of the world, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion or -fiction, and the Resurrection. One segment is played out in the cellar of the Church of the Final Virgin with a character called Marvin Straw, who introduces himself as the "official hangman for your government." **Straw**, who likes winning, has a hanging in three days, and the players detain him for three days and three nights in order to prevent the execution. The problem is to win enough fmm Strew so that the players can lose it beck to him again. The hangman, perhaps, is **God**; be is also entropy personified. In the cellar of the Church of the Final Virgin the ghost of **Martin** Lang is dealt in, end at his manifestation a comedic apocalypse is visited on the town of Big Indian: "A roaring, a bull sound, the sound of darkness itself. . . . Some thought a pack of wolves was loosed on the town, purely and simply rabies mad, yelping and howling to a final feast."

It is **Father Basil** who, almost es if he were **Kroetsch's** better judgement, keeps exclaiming: "We've got to bust her loose!" This novel never busts loose, though **Kroetsch** has a chance when one of the card players, **Isador** Heck, a man who believes that everything is illusion, is sent to find big John Skandl. Later we learn that Heck has made a living in a circus es a human cannon ball, and has seen the illusory world passing beneath him like a map. After his return, Heck, who now believes that anything that can be imagined is reel, builds a cannon similar to the one used in the circus, intending to "include himself into heaven" es ammunition for **Gus Liebhaber's** "war on the sky." In **Kroetsch's** hands, however, this great mythopoetic idea fails to transcend the humoresque.

The blurb says that **Kroetsch** "makes the farmers of the Alberta-Saskatchewan border into mythical heroes and the Municipality of Bigknife into a microcosm of the universe." **Paramyth** maybe, exposition certainly, this novel left me with that old whet-if feeling. What if a **Günther** Grass or a **Gabriel** Garcia **Márquez** had addressed themselves to a war on the sky? What if **Robert Kroetsch's** editors were worthy of the author's imagination?

*What the Crow Said* uses 12-point type with 13-point leads. That's a lot of white space for a book that looks bigger than it really is. □



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## A 30-year ellipsis

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Christopher Breton, by Selwyn Dewdney, McClelland & Stewart, 376 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 077102698 6).

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By DOUGLAS HILL

**SELWYN DEWDNEY'S** FIRST novel, *Wind Without Rain*, published in 1946 end swept up by the yawning New Canadian Library net in 1974, is not the classic its press releases would have us believe. It fits the mould of the neo-Sinclair (Lewis or Ross) smell-town novel a bit too snugly. Though **Dewdney's** eye and prose are clear, and the carefully observed social context is convincing, the book is squeakily earnest, thoroughly predictable, and pretty boring.

Whet I did find interesting, rereading the novel lately, was to imagine how the protagonist, a high-school teacher with feet and head firmly planted in the realities of pre-war Western Ontario, might have been conceived had the novel been set and written a decade or so later. Then, I thought, the main character's, and the book's, insipid naïveté end blandly overcooked anxieties might have been given freshness, or at least spice, by the preoccupations of the 1950s. A dash of absurdity, a touch of irony, a drop of existentialism — and *voilà!* If not *Lucky Jim*, at least more pungency, less tedium.

Now **Dewdney**, after a long interval filled with book-illustrating, writing (a juvenile, *The Map That Grew*, and work on aboriginal rock art), and pioneering in psychiatric art therapy, has made his own attempt to renovate bis hero. But though the evidence of the author's absorption of and reaction to the changes 30-odd years have made in him and his world is abundant, and command respect, his gifts es a novelist don't match his ambitions.

Whatever else it may be, **Christopher Breton** is a Canadian portrait of the artist es a (disturbed) young man. The reader learns, through a series of flashbacks, how **Chris** end his younger brother, **Hal**, have broken free of their domineering, Bile-quoting father, left their (Northern Ontario?) home and gone to the big city (Toronto?) to attend art school. **Chris** eventually takes off for the woods, **Hal** for business success and marital unhappiness. The book follows **Chris** from the day of his return from the bush for his father's funeral, through his troubled affair and marriage to an Indian woman, up to the moment he holds his infant daughter in his arms for the first time. Along the way a couple of deep secrets are unearthed; the future projected at the end of the novel is St best problematic.

Where in *Wind Without Rain* the

comprehensively realized social environment gave a perspective to the hero. norms by which to measure his innocence or blindness. here the reader must deal with Chris's self-righteous "artistic" sensibility directly. This causes difficulties, chiefly in trying to decide whether Chris is psychotic — schizophrenic — or just weird. His behaviour is strange enough, but since everyone else's, from his point of view (the only one we fully get), is stranger, we're never sure whether his self-doubt and paranoia is to be attributed to the character as created or to Dewdney's failure to give perspective. Nor can we satisfactorily view the reality of Chris's world as completely subjective or interiorized, completely — and thus consistently — in his head.

When Chris finally cracks up these questions are only momentarily answered, though with a violence that sent me flipping back through 300 pages to figure out who had gone astray where. The breakdown is described in scenes of frightening power, but I'd argue that the psychology leading up to it is fragmentary and superficial. Here, as with so much of the book, one appreciates — one must appreciate — the feeling that has gone into the characterization, but must deny the quality of its fictional representation. Art is not life, it's what you do with life. Et cetera.

This criticism is pertinent to other elements of the novel. Ideas, for example, don't inform the action: they come in discussions and speeches, in capital letters, and often float tantalizingly close to banality. Opinions on aesthetics, sociology, politics, are simply thrust forward: they're not illuminated, nor do they provide insights into Chris's "tortured spirit." The plot and structure also present obstacles. There's a tight chronology, and the flashbacks — Chris reads through his father's private files — are fixed in neatly; but this organization seems arbitrary, and doesn't always connect with the book's surfaces. It's hard, especially in the early chapters, to tell what Dewdney is doing, or where he's going.

Equally obstructive of the novel's apparent aims is the style. Dewdney has abandoned the naturalism of the earlier book for bombast, and he's out of his depth: "It was her eyes, however, that told him she was no ordinary woman — dark, direct, and shining with an elusive inns spirit he didn't know how to assess." Seriously out of his depth: "Right now I need a man and you need a woman, lust love me, Chris." These clichés are hardly redeemed by Dewdney's pervasive use of ellipses to suggest . . . profundity.

There seem to be two places to put Christopher Breton. One is with the novels of F.P. Grove and Morley Callaghan (*Fruits of the Earth* or *Such Is My Beloved*, for instance). Dewdney's earnest moralizing and sincere if stylized attempts to depict human passions match him well with this earlier generation. The other place, by the same reasoning, is with novels for ado-

lescents, in which a certain reductiveness is considered proper.

"Honesty" is the best word to describe Christopher Breton, and it's meant as praise. The book cannot hide its sense of experience known and felt, its impulses of joy and pain; the insights of Dewdney's involvement with art therapy are obviously bound up with his conception of the work. Because it attempts much more than *Wind Without Rain*, its weaknesses are more glaring. If I've taken time to detail my objections to these weaknesses, it's because I think honesty and moral significance are not to be dismissed lightly. But technique still counts. □

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## Populist at play, proceed with caution

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The Poets of Canada, edited by John Robert Colombo, Hurtig, 303 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88830 150 2).

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By JOHN AYRE

POETRY ANTHOLOGIES ARE at best chancy. Unless they have a clearly defined purpose — introducing a batch of new poets of providing definitive texts of classics for coursework — they often founder on the subjective tastes and criteria of their editors or public. Every poetry enthusiast has his own anthology already packed in his brain and is bound to quibble with any editor on personal grounds.

I suppose in editing *The Poets of Canada* John Robert Colombo was trying to avoid some of these problems by using the broadest possible criteria to select poems of popular and historical interest as well as the usual *cognoscenti*-koshered stuff. He has sifted through our literature and chosen 200 poets and verse-writers, introducing each with a small biographical sketch. The poems include the political doggerel of Joseph Howe, a song allegedly by Louis Riel (not likely), oldy-goldies such as "The Shooting of Dan McGrew," as well as the weightier efforts of Irving Layton, Al Purdy, and such capable newcomers as Margaret Atwood and Susan Musgrave.

The format is numbingly democratic, the poets arranged in a hierarchy of birthdate. Each poet has only one poem with which to prove himself, and because populist Colombo has also insisted each poem be readily understood and not already commonly anthologized, the serious reader can never be certain, despite Colombo's written guarantee, that this single golden example is indicative of the quality and character of the poet's output.

Which of the criteria outlined in Colombo's preface was behind the selection

of Manuel Betanzos-Santos' cliché-riddled "About Côte des Neiges"?

*My son,  
a city is a large cemetery,  
a very large one,  
full of two faced people, of emptiness  
and bones . . .*

Was this chosen because Betanzos-Santos is an unknown but deserving New Canadian poet? Because Colombo likes this poem and thinks it's good? Because it's really mediocre, but Colombo thinks a popular audience will like it? Or because his other poems are already too anthologized? Obviously the waning criteria create a few bruising experiences for the reader. Layton's moving memory of his mother, "Keine Lazarovitch 1870-1959," for instance, is immediately followed by "The Squid Jiggin' Ground," that sodden seafaring doggerel by A.R. Scammell. Despite the intent of Colombo's book, the Scammell-lovers are still going to be intimidated by Layton, while Layton-lovers are certainly going to be irritated by Scammell.

The quality evens out somewhat toward the end of the book with the younger poets, who oddly enough don't seem to write doggerel. Even here, though, I've read better poems by many of them, and some may stand a trifle condemned simply because their other work is too complicated or already anthologized. I fear that *The Poets of Canada* will become a classical sleeper, bought as a gift book for its title and hardly ever read — a fate that completely sabotages Colombo's intention. □

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## Ugh, hick, and sweet Lilac

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*Moose Meat & Wild Rice*, by Basil Johnston, McClelland & Stewart, 188 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 77104443 7).

*Olde Charlie Farquharson's Testament*, by Don Harron, Gage, 160 pages, \$9.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9900 5).

*Letters from Lilac, 1965-1973*, by Clem Watkins, Jr., edited and selected by George Bain, Macmillan, 59.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7705 1725 0).

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By LOUIS K. MACKENDRICK

MINDFUL OF COMEDY'S potential for exalting its subject and its dependence on sociological particulars, behold:

Basil Johnston's short narratives of life on and about the Moose Meat Point Reserve, though meant to show the "sense of fun and wit" of its Ojibway residents, rather recall the childish habits of Steinbeck's Cannery Row. Working from real incidents, Johnston portrays little more than naiveté and good-heartedness uncom-

plemented by common sense. Characters are often caricatures, and the unhappy result is a reinforcement of Indian stereotypes. These Ojibway are butts, adult but gullible.

It is in the section "Getting Along and Ahead Outside the Reserve" that Johnston appears to best advantage; many of these pieces are satisfactory stories with careful comic development. A mope Indian is taken for a Japanese spy; war veterans must pretend to be Chinese to be served a drink; an Indian corpse troubles municipal, provincial, federal, ecclesiastical, and Ontario Provincial Police authorities. As a whole, however, this uneven collection prompts patronizing amusement, and is less a celebration than a wait for the onset of maturity.

Behind Don Harron's manic rewriting of the Old Testament, Parry Sound Version, one hears the dismaying inhalation that is Farquharson's laugh, but the best laugh is Harron's pious hope that his new book "will encourage young people to go back to the original source." Begging the question of good taste, here are many laughs low. Gustave Doré's splendid illustrations now each include a Charlie figure and such captions as "Solomon's split dec-sizzyun." Charlie's cheeky horseplay with selected books, chapters, and verses makes bold with contemporary interpolations and excruciating puns, as in Add'em's decision "to call his wife Eave, on accounta she was the cause of him being dumped on frum above."

The Farquharson wheezes include many odd lots: holy acrimony, Idle Dollatry, Cheery Bims, Dan Yell, Roof, the Vegetary-Aryan, Dave Id. But, es with earlier releases from Parry Sound's sweated eccentric, the delights here are repetitious and tiring; Harron's wish "to lead readers to a new appreciation of the King James" is as mysterious as all the laws and the "profits." Charlie's unauthorized version provokes no piety, is beyond innuendo, and threatens proper devotions. His readers may well feel uneasy, for it's awkward to laff at the hinderquarters of yer religious inheritance.

In contrast, George Bain's Clem Watkins of Lilac, Sask., has a geniality and control that make *Letters from Lilac* refreshing. Readers of Fotheringham and Lynch will recognize their master's voice. Bain thoughtfully provides comments on Watkin's communications (which first appeared in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*), sketching in political or social history and extolling the superior qualities of his correspondent as men and chronicler with plain-faced hyperbole.

Nearly 50 letters give us the customs and characters of Lilac, Leacock's Mariposa gone West. These include Harry Melfort, MP, of "uniformly execrable" speeches, an imitation of a politician ("Actually, what Harry does most of is be"); Old Bill Williams, "the Prairie tribune," editor of the *Lilac Advance* ("Covers the Prairie Like a Mitten"); the colloquies of the Lilac

Current Affairs end Historical Society; Harry Lem, representative of the UEL (United Ethnics of Lilac); the Round Table Room in the Commercial Hotel (Lilac's Algonquin), where "local sachems" deliberate. Old Bill's comments and editorials are often quoted wholesale, with on-flinching approval: "To take one word away from that would be gelding the lily."

Lilac is the microcosm of Canada in its imitations or duplications of parliamentary decisions and activities at the local level: the unification of the military branches, for instance, becomes Ambfipo, the combined ambulance, fire, and police services. Most letters are a series of one-liners or squibs on set themes, fleetingly reminiscent of the Calgary Eye Opener's acerbic Bob Edwards; there are not many protracted fantasias. Bain's material is topical and occasional, and while not understated, has none of the raucous obviousness associated with more con-fed performances. In comparison with Basil Johnston's ambivalence and Charlie Farquharson's heavy hand, George Bain's good humour and satire is a model of wit, pleasantry, and delight. □

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## Drifters on land and sea

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*Flotsam*, by H. B. Percy, Breakwater Press. 223 pages, \$10.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919948 57 X) and \$5.95 papa (ISBN 0 919948 56 1).

*The Bannanbridge Musicians*, by Raymond Fraser, Breakwater Press. 136 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 919948 324).

By SUSAN IANNUCCI

WE SEEM TO have lost faith, in the last 100 years or so, in the possibility of happy solutions. Two novels from the Maritimes involve quests for spiritual illumination, but the knowledge their narrators gain doesn't alter their lives in the slightest. H.R. Percy's *Flotsam* ends the way it begins, with its hero sailing a small boat alone over the sea to no destination in particular. In Raymond Fraser's *The Bannanbridge Musicians* the narrator discovers, returning home after 15 years, that nothing has changed.

*The Bannanbridge Musicians* is built around a group of characters Fraser first explored in his collection of short stories, *The Black Horse Tavern*. Although the tavern is now called the King George and Danny Sullivan has a new first name, Percy, which he hates so much that he calls himself just "Sully," it's the same crew. The hilarious sequence from *Black Horse* in which Ralph, who drinks anything and who has just downed his mother's Christmas perfume, pictures himself in a posh bar ordering Evening in Paris on the rocks, has

been rewritten and incorporated into the novel. For the rest, life consists of pan-handling, boozing at the King George, and making plans to leave town. At one point Sully and the narrator actually escape to a morning house in Toronto, but after six weeks they crawl back to Bannanbridge, defeated not so much by the world as by their own inertia.

If modern quests have a tendency to peter out rather than conclude, at least human lives still have unmistakable ends. Death hovers behind both these novels. The form of *The Bannanbridge Musicians* is imposed by the death of Sully. It is announced in the first sentence and when it occurs, in a car crash after the first and only engagement of the Bannanbridge musicians' hastily assembled band, we know the novel is over. Similarly in *Flotsam* David Bronson fears he is dying of fencer as he sets out alone in his boat, and indeed the voyage itself probably masks a suicide attempt.

*Flotsam* is jam-packed with villainy, melodrama, and surprise plot twists. The story is told in a series of flashbacks, starting with a gripping account of the wartime torpedoing of Bronson's ship and the deliberate injury inflicted on him by a cowardly superior officer. The novel relies heavily on stereotypes, such as Bronson's fiancée's hostile mother, kindly grandfather, and unfortunate sister who falls in love with him too. Despite the novel's melodramatic excavations of family skeletons, the problems that beset Bronson in middle age are predictable. His sexy Scottish war bride turns into a social-climbing prude, and he is alienated from both his son the hawk and his adopted son the peacenik, as well as from his sexually repassed daughter, a mm. Only the crisis that precipitates his flight is unusual, and quite likely unique in fiction. The integration of the Canadian Armed Forces drives Commander David Bronson, as it did his creator H.R. Percy in real life, to resign from the navy. His public and private lives shattered, Bronson retreats to the only thing he has left, the sea.

Stylistically speaking, the rowdy, irreverent, and frequently vulgar Raymond Fraser is the more exciting writer of the two. But because the lives Fraser describes are so pointless, *The Bannanbridge Musicians* is not as satisfying to read as *Flotsam*. Percy's thoughtful protagonist had more potential, and his failure is more poignant than Sully's accidental death. Except in the chaotic torpedoing scene and a magnificent Conradian evocation of a storm at sea, Percy is not as adept at manipulating prose as his fellow Maritimer, but more vigilant editing (and proofreading!) on the part of his Newfoundland publisher might have helped here. Both writers promise more than they deliver. When Percy finds a more flexible style and Fraser a more challenging subject, perhaps their quests will bring us all spiritual illumination. In the meantime, like David Bronson, we can only drift and dream. □

# Last-minute bets

A look at some late starters in this year's running of the Christmas thoroughbred stakes

by Phil Surguy

HERE ARE 10 art and photography books that weren't ready when *Books in Canada's* gift books supplement in the November issue went to press.

First, the photography.

Iran: Elements of Destiny, designed and photographed by Roloff Beny, editorial direction by Shahrokh Amirarjomand (McClelland & Stewart, \$50), is a companion volume to Betty's *Persia: Bridge of Turquoise*. The book is intended to convey all the beauty and energy of ancient Persia's fusion with the new, technologically hip Iran. The contrast, on facing pages, of the floodlit ruins at Persepolis and a sunset view of four desert oil storage tanks is one of many striking successes. But all too often, one is reminded that this was heavily subsidized by the Iranian government. Too many pages are crammed with unremarkable photos of new buildings, industry, military equipment, and the Shah and his family at work and play. It is soon clear that what for a while keeps promising to be an entertaining book is actually a 392-page pamphlet.

The National Ballet of Canada: A Celebration, with photographs by Ken Bell and a memoir by Celia Franca (University

of Toronto Press, \$24.95) is a brief history of the National Ballet's first 25 years. Celia Franca was the company's founder and first artistic director. Occasionally funny and often sharp-tongued, she tells of their harrowing early days, constantly searching for an audience in a country with little ballet tradition, dancers risking injury — and their careers — by performing on stages that weren't built for ballet, and a perpetual shortage of money. Once a creditor trying to reach the company's comptroller by phone was told, "She just ran round the corner with a rat in her mouth." The celebration, then, is one of survival. Ken Bell has been photographing the National Ballet from the beginning. In his pictures of performances and backstage life the evolution of his technique, coupled with the availability of better camera equipment over the years, provides an appropriate visual parallel to Franca's account of the company's slow progress toward its present artistic success and relative prosperity.

In Summer Places, by Brendan Gill and Dudley Witney (McClelland & Stewart, \$29.95 until Dec. 31, \$35 thereafter), Gill writes, "what they shared above all was a certain intention, which translated itself into

a certain tone: they were to be both carefree and healthgiving." And Dudley Witney, the photographer of *The Barn* and *The Lighthouse*, has captured that tone of sunlight and cool b- perfectly. From the Vanderbilt summer palace on what was once a park of 125,000 acres in North Carolina, to the vacation homes of more ordinary people, such as the cabins on Bowen Island, B.C., the summer places of every major holiday area in Canada and the U.S. are represented here. One might quibble that the book touches too many bases, that as soon as one is engrossed in, say, the crazy wedding cake architecture of the Jersey shore, it's time to hop up to Long Island. Yet, in spite of their crowded itinerary, Gill and Witney have produced a truly enjoyable holiday of a book.

Karsh Canadians by Yousuf Karsh (University of Toronto Press, \$27.50) is a solid volume of 79 portraits taken over 45 years. The earliest are of Sir Robert Borden and Duncan Campbell Scott, the latest is of René Lévesque. The great photograph of Leacock is here. Margaret Laurence sits in her hallway on an antique mirror stand, a smile in her eyes, a finger pressed to her lips. Robertson Davies sits in his library, a smile on his face, a finger pressed to his nose. Dr. Charles Best is in his lab, laughing and doing something with a glass rod and a test tube. And a 1968 portrait is perhaps the most accurate, or prophetic, photograph ever taken of Prime Minister Trudeau.

All but two of the Karsh portraits are of notable Canadians. There are no notables at all in *A Place Not Our Own: North End Winnipeg*, photographs by John Paskievich (Queenston House, \$12.95 paper). At first glance, Paskievich's black-and-white photos resemble the work of Diane Arbus. The people are unusual. Most of them are aware that their picture is being taken. But Paskievich is not a collector of the grotesque. His purple may live in one of the roughest neighbourhoods in the country. Many of them are poor, few are in despair. Yet as many are obviously happy, and most are just going about their business. What Paskievich has done is capture a wonderfully wide range of simul-



Photograph by John Paskievich from *A Place Not Our Own: North End Winnipeg* (see right).

taneously odd and universal human moments — moments that are even more sharply focused for us, not because the people living them are freaks, but because they are human beings who for various reasons are several giant steps outside the middle-class mainstream of Canadian life.

To get right outside the Canadian mainstream for a moment, here's the first of the art books, a big one about Israel: **Promised Land**, paintings by Gordon Wetmore, foreword by Leon Uris, and text by Abba Eban (General Publishing, \$65). The advance publicity declared, "Not since the Bible has there been a book that will mean so much to so many." Moreover, Gordon Wetmore "deeply believes that God has touched his efforts and blessed the *Promised Land* project." Only a churl could quarrel with that. Suffice it to say that Abba Eban is a pretty good writer and that, if you fondly remember the illustrations that went along with your Sunday school Bible stories, you'll love Wetmore's watercolours and drawings.

**Danby: Images of Sport**, text by Hubert de Santana (Macmillan, \$39.95) is a package containing a 64-page book bound in simulated leather and a portfolio of six prints. The prints are copies of the watercolours depicting six Olympic sports that Ken Danby did in 1975 for the National Sport and Recreation Centre: "The

Gymnast," "The High Jumper," "The Diver," "The Sprinter," "The Cyclist" and, the most vivid of the group, "The Sculler." De Santana calls Danby "Canada's finest realist painter." His text begins with a concise explication of how sports have inspired artists ever since the original Olympics. That is followed by a short biography of Danby, a defence of his work, and then a commentary on the watercolours and the studies and research that preceded them. On the back of the package are listed two ways of arranging the prints to achieve maximum balance and unity.

Sam Borenstein, with a biographical sketch by William Kuhns and a critical assessment by Léo Rosshandler (McClelland & Stewart, \$35) is a major effort to bring this Montreal artist the public attention he has always deserved. Borenstein (1908-1969) was born in Lithuania and came to Canada when he was 10. Largely self-taught, enormously influenced by Van Gogh and Soutine, he dedicated his life to painting. Rosshandler argues that he was too bold, too flamboyant, too European and independent to fit easily into the conservative Canadian art world. Even so, his vehement portraits of Laurentian villages seem to be a deliberate, logical development of expressionistic Canadian landscape painting. At the same time,

however, they also seem part of a daredevil attempt to discover how much one can contort and inflate the genre without actually blasting it into the realm of pure abstraction. No wonder he made people nervous.

Peter Mellen's **Landmarks of Canadian Art** (McClelland & Stewart, \$50) is superb, even if it doesn't contain a word about Sam Borenstein. Almost everyone else is here though, from prehistoric Inuit and Indian craftsmen and early French religious artists, right up to the N. E. Thing Company Ltd. The introductions are mercifully brief, and the bulk of the text is where it should be. That is, the discussion of each of the 129 plates is on a facing page and Mellen has whipped up a generous, always interesting mix of quotations, information, commentary, and biography. The cumulative effect of the book is to leave one with a greater appreciation of the artists, such as those in the Group of Seven, who veered away from our long European tradition and began to make art that is a true reflection of this nation.

In **The Tangled Garden: The Art of J. E. H. MacDonald**, by Paul Duval (Prentice-Hall, \$42.50), we have an excellent account of the life and career of one of the Group of Seven's prime movers. Duval's informed text, the superior quality of the reproductions and classy production

### This Year's Holiday Gift Book for All Ages!



## Beauty and the Beast

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values of the book as a whole are a tribute to MacDonald's achievement. In explaining what it meant and felt like to be trying to change the direction of Canadian painting. Duval quotes the artist's recollection of a trip he and Lawren Harris made to Buffalo in 1913 to see an exhibition of Scandinavian paintings: "It seemed an art of the soil and woods and waters and rock and the sky. . . It was not all Parisian or fashionable. The artists seemed to be a lot of men not trying to express themselves so much as trying to express something that took hold of themselves. The painters began with nature rather than with art. They could be understood and enjoyed without metaphysics or the frosty condescensions of super critics on volumes and dimensions and other art paraphernalia. . . . It was this song of praise of their countries that captured our susceptible Canadian souls." Later he universalized his theme and used to exhort his students to "think big. Be generous. Don't fiddle. Enlarge yourselves." A fitting MacDonald epitaph. □

## Bid the souls of orifices sing

*Doors* (ISBN 0 670 28039 9) and *Windows* (ISBN 0 670 77180 5), texts by Val Clery, Macmillan, illustrated. unpaginated, each 99.95 paper.

By AL PURDY

DESPITE THE CYNICISM I felt about these two books, Val Clery's commentary is well-written and entertaining; the photographs are brilliant, clear-cut, and even beautiful at times. Why the cynicism then? Well, I think: What next? After books about fences, barns, cothouses, dog houses, door knockers, alcoves, snuffboxes, bobby pins, paper clips, palaces, temples, and ruins, ruins, what next? Maybe Mackenzie King's fake ruins near Ottawa, in which comparisons are made between them and the shape of King's mental equipment?

Anyway, these coffee-table books are somewhat smaller than usual and, I think, quite fascinating. Doors of past and present, doors from all over the world are pictured. Clery describes their history, origins, and mythology in his text, including appropriate quotes from other writers. The same goes for windows. And since I have sometimes taken long walks in cities just to look at old houses and their windows, by night and day, appreciating coloured glass and shapes of grace, these books are right up my mental alley. I think many people have taken such walks: discovering that the past has such

attraction, especially as they grow older themselves. Trying to discover the mental processes of people who are so various as to have anticipated almost everything you can think and do yourself. (But I refuse to admit they have actually anticipated everything!)

There is, of course, a flashiness and blatancy about pictures of this sort, despite the estimable presence of John de Visser behind one of the cameras. That's why I like the two horses sort of lurking in a barn doorway, or a dog trying (apparently) to ring a doorbell. And so much has been said about the life history written on old women's faces that I'm almost afraid to look like the old one in front of a plain wooden door in Mexico. I've seen her very often. And I have an aesthetic weakness for carved wooden doors; I wish I could afford them. Or the two painted white horses galloping across a rotting barn door. Also, a multi-carved stone door in Bali, which must have occupied many craftsmen for many days.

Val Clery informs us that the sunrise motif and fanlights above doors derive from early pagan solar mythology. I didn't know that, but I'm not surprised. And that the various trappings of Christian religion around doorways (and the human heart?) are all pagan, the earlier makers dispossessed, but their ghosts haunting palimpsests integral to Christian superstition. And for doors opening half-way up a wall, there's a mundane explanation: in some Quebec municipalities, a house was not subject to full taxation until completed. Therefore, a seemingly useless door was evidence that the tax-evading owner intended to add another wing to his house. In early Upper Canada these were called "suicide doors." In medieval times in Europe, the traceries and carvings on and around doors often caricatured some local dignitary. And reversing that: perhaps the carver sometimes depicted his barnmaid lady love as an angel?

Often, in both these books, it's the fringe benefits that supply much of the interest. The dog-or-cat-entrance below house or barn door. Or the huge more-than-human Egyptian god hovering threateningly above a plain doorway, into which a tiny flesh-and-blood human being is entering hurriedly.

The defence symbols against devil and demon are there: horseshoes, stay-the-hell-cut carvings, and so forth. But the earliest cave entrances, whose doors were crude barriers of burning wood, piled brush, or stones, are not; such doors have vanished. In those times men worried about the sabre-tooth tiger and marauding wolves as well as demons escaped from their superstitious minds. The same demons still exist in the modern world: to escape noise-pollution they've returned to our own minds.

The word window derives originally from the old Norse *vindaugs*, meaning "wind-eye." Which means what? Actually

an eye of the wind, or an eye with which the viewer looks at the wind? Or both? And from that perhaps derives our own "eye of the storm," to describe the still centre of a hurricane?

Windows as symbols of our drug addiction to television screens, shaped the same way? But how else could a TV screen be shaped? Fake windows, constructed on blank walls; palmed windows, a *trompe l'oeil* to provide dignity and grace with no other function. And on 18th-century English mansions, bricked-in windows, since George IV taxed windows as the index of wealth in a poverty-stricken era. Shop windows with their displays of opulence and magic, against which a small boy pressing his nose to the glass had no defence as their visions streamed outward without let or hindrance. (Clichés too are windows.)

At Simmons' Drugstore many years ago in Trenton, I used to yearn for the big scarlet and gold *Chums* annuals, which I desired my mother to produce on Christmas as evidence that there was a Santa Claus (which I didn't really believe). Or the windows of St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow with their surround of Hansel and Gretel sugarplum spires, which were my adult reversion to fairy tales in Red Square two years ago. An architect named Barna removed the place from his mind in the 16th century, then Czar Ivan the Terrible blinded him so he couldn't repeat this magic for anyone else.

Next to seeing such windows and doors and mysteries for yourself, I suppose a book is the best thing. On the other hand, windows and doors are all around us, so why not wander the streets and look at them yourself? No ticket necessary. These books show you what you're missing, all over the world. But if you make the voyage yourself, the address will usually be found on the street and house — unlike Clery's books where you have to find the index to find out what part of the world you're wandering in. . . . □

## Sixty ways to keep your dates

By SUSAN AIHOSHI

CALENDARS ONCE SERVED the purely functional purpose, of keeping track of the passage of time. Now they flourish as popular retail commodities, a long way from the promotional calendars once banded cut by the local gas station or corner grocery. Judging from the diversity of calendars available in book stores at this time of year, modern enterprise has capitalized on the calendar's potential for

prominent visual reference. Whatever your tastes and interests, there is a calendar for you.

Among the many new calendars for 1979 are those derived from best selling books. Jill Uris's Ireland Calendar (Bantam, \$5.95), with commentary by Leon Uris, features evocative photos from their book, *Ireland: A Terrible Beauty*. In *The Country Diary Engagement Calendar* (Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 89.50) beauty and practicality combine to produce a date book featuring watercolours and selections of text from naturalist Edith Holden's *Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady*. For readers of the successful series of books based on the life and antics of a Yorkshire veterinarian there's *The James Herriot Calendar* (Bantam, \$5.95), with the delightfully ridiculous paintings of Brian Saunders. Making its second annual appearance is the appealing *Watership Down Calendar* (Avon, \$5.95), with good colour illustrations by Eric Tenney inspired by Richard Adams's bestseller.

Looking at Canadian best sellers, the Tom Thomson Calendar (M & S, \$4.95) was created under the supervision of Harold Town and David P. Silcox, authors of last year's successful *Tom Thomson: The Silence and The Storm*. While *The Dennis Lee and Frank Newfeld Alligator Pie Calendar* (Macmillan, 84.95) is ostensibly

for children, adults with even the smallest sense of humour will find it immensely enjoyable as well, if noting the passing days ever threatens to become a mere mechanical exercise. Excerpts from Lee's popular children's works and new illustrations by Newfeld.

One of the more bizarre calendars is Max Haine's *Calendar of Criminal Capers* (Virgo Press, \$5.95), with lurid illustrations by Andy Donato. For those who may want to commemorate a particularly notorious crime. Not for the squeamish. For the more sedately criminal minded the *Sherlock Holmes Calendar* (Doubleday, \$5.95) is more suitable. Abundant Holmesian data is supplied by Jack Tracy, and some rather sombre illustrations by Phil Thomson and Paul McCaul portray various events from the Conan Doyle stories.

If you or a friend have recently succumbed to the current fitness craze, *The Complete Runner's Day-by-Day Log and Calendar* by James Fixx (Random House, 88.75) provides exhaustive photos and tips, along with substantial space to record whatever athletic feats you may achieve. Also available this year is *The Runner's Handbook and Diary* (Penguin, \$2.95), a basic training record for runners with an exercise chart and useful hints. Holt, Rhinehart and Winston are offering *Eat and Run: Diet, Exercise and Engagement Calendar* (\$7.95).

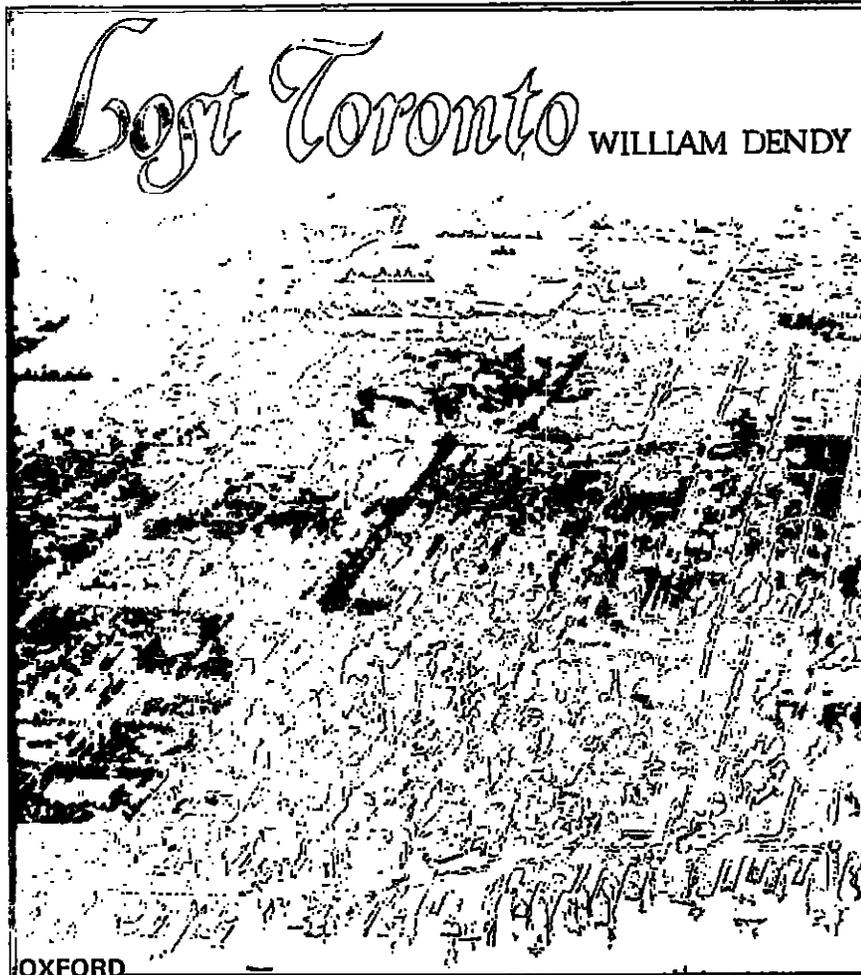
For wilderness and/or photography buffs. *Nature 79* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, \$5.95) offers good value with interesting photos by several Canadian nature photographers, artwork by Glen Loates, and a factual text by Fred Bodsworth. The American Sierra Club competes ably, however, with the striking photos of its series of calendars available through John Wiley and Sons, all at \$5.95 each. I especially liked *The Sierra Club Trail Calendar* with its spectacular wilderness scenes.

New this year for lovers of art nouveau is the classy *In Vogue Calendar* (Penguin, \$5.95), featuring covers of the British *Vogue* magazine during the years 1916 through 1928. For fans of the historical print, *Weatherseed's Daily Appointment Book* (John D. Weatherseed and Associates, \$6.95) offers 45 prints taken from old woodcuts and engravings. With a large and functional date book. A smaller *Daily Engagement Book* is available for \$2.95 without the prints.

Here is a checklist of other calendars available for 1979:

#### MISCELLANEOUS

- Cat Calendar* (Saunders of Toronto, \$6.95). Humorous black-and-white sketches by B. Kliban.
- Trolls' Words of Wisdom Calendar* (Antioch, \$5.95). Annotated troll illustrations.



*Lost Toronto* is a valuable and fascinating portrait of a city that was dominated by richly detailed, often extroverted architecture that expressed its business, public, religious and social life. An architecture that during the sixties fell victim to the wrecker's hammer. William Dendy, a young architectural historian, who has devoted several years to researching the building history of Toronto, has assembled some 140 photographs, drawn from various archives, of nearly 100 demolished or defaced buildings and ruined streetscapes, which he discusses individually in engrossing detail.

224 pp., 132 plates, 32 modern photographs \$19.50

**The Fashion Engagement Book**, compiled by Main Street Press (Methuen, \$7.95). Ken York **Land Marks** (Methuen, \$5.95). An engagement calendar with numerous black-and-white photos of New Yorksites. The Phenomenon Book of **Calendars** (Musson, 59.95). Available in January, it incorporates every known calendar system into one comprehensive reference text and includes a fold-out calendar wall poster for 1979-80.

### TOLKIEN

J.R.R. **Tolkien Calendar** (Methuen, \$6.95). Pictures and sketches from various periods of Tolkien's life. **The Silmarillion Desk Calendar** (Methuen, 57.95). Colourful illustrations from the latest addition to the Tolkien legend. **The Hobbit Calendar** (Methuen, \$5.95). From the 1977 television version of Tolkien's celebrated book. **The Lord of the Rings Movie Calendar** (Methuen, \$6.95). From the soon-to-be-released film.

### ART: FOREIGN

**Treasures of Tutankhamun Calendar** (Ballantine, \$6.50) and **Treasures of Tutankhamun Desk Calendar** (Ballantine, \$7.95). Both feature photos of intriguing Egyptian art and jewellery. **Audubon Birds of America Calendar** (Methuen, \$9.95). Prints by the well-known bird illustrator, suitable for framing. **French Impressionists Engagement Book and Calendar** (Methuen, 57.95). Numerous colour reproductions accompanied by interesting critical commentary. **The Norman Rockwell Engagement Book and Calendar** (Methuen, \$7.95). Amusing and informative details about each of the many paintings featured. **The Norman Rockwell Calendar** (Clarke Irwin, \$5.25). **The Sulmith Wulffing Calendar** (Bantam, \$5.95). Delicate paintings by the German artist. **The Frank Frazetta Calendar** (Bantam, \$5.95). Ugly xi-fi art.

### ART: CANADIAN

**Cape Dorset Calendar** (Van Nostrand Reinhold, \$5.95). Colour reproductions of Inuit prints in the 13th edition of this successful calendar. **Indian Art** (Firefly Books, \$5.95). Paintings and photos of native Indian art in a quality wall calendar. **The McMichael Canadian Collection Calendar** (Clarke Irwin, \$4.50). A desk calendar with regrettably small but vivid reproductions. **Canada** (Tundra Books, \$4.95). A functional wall calendar illustrated with the distinctive art of the late William Kurelek. **Canadian Art Calendar** (National Museums of Canada, 512.5001). A hardcover date book with colour reproductions of Canadian gallery art.

### NATURE

**Canadian Wildflowers and Canadian Birds in the Wild** (Van Nostrand Reinhold, \$5.95 each). Good photos. **The Coastean Society Calendar** (Ballantine, \$5.95). Some interesting and some dull photos of marine life. **The Sea** (Methuen, \$7.95). By Eric and Linda B. Schweikardt. **The Audubon Society Calendar** (Ballantine, 57.50). Quality colour photos of North American birds.

### SCENIC

**Canada Date Book Calendar** (Clarke Irwin, J6.95). Colour photos of scenes across Canada (including a closeup of a hamburger) plus factual information about each province. **Beautiful Canada Calendar** (M & S, \$1.99). Typical Canadian scenes at a modest price. **Pride of the West** (Western Producer Prairie Books, \$2.50). Western Canadian scenes in a functional calendar that spotlights its photos' locations on a map.

### CHILDREN

**The Dick Bruna Calendar** (Methuen, \$5.95). A new calendar for young children and one of the best, featuring Bruna's immensely appealing illustrations. **Calendar for Children** (Doubleday, \$4.95). By Ruthven Tremaine, with colour illustrations, funny sayings, facts and miscellaneous information for the young at heart. **Winnie-the-Pooh Calendar Book** (Clarke Irwin, \$4.50). Illustrated by Ernest Shepard, with excerpts from A. A. Milne's books. 6th edition. **The Beatrix Petter Calendar** (Saunders of Toronto, \$4.95). A children's classic. **The Night-Lite Calendar** (Clarke Irwin, \$5.95). Conceived by Robert Kraus, illustrated by Hilary Knight. It glows in the dark. A **Mickey Mouse Calendar** (\$6.25), also glows in the dark and is also from Clarke Irwin. **The Walt Disney Family Activity Calendar** (Methuen, \$7.95). A wall calendar that folds out so a child's growth can be measured through the year.

### WOMEN

**Herstory: A Canadian Women's Calendar** (Gray's Publishing, \$4.95). An interesting and informative date book peeked with historical photos, facts, quotations, and profiles, and even includes a bibliography. **Everywoman's Almanac** (Women's Press, \$4.95). A more current date book with information about the law, health and women's centres in Canada.

### TELEVISION AND FILM

**The Watership Down Film Calendar** (Penguin, \$5.95). Large colour stills from the movie to be released this Fall. **Star Trek Calendar** (Ballantine, \$5.95). Photos from the television series in a dual Earth and Star-date calendar. **Close Encounters of the Third Kind: UFO Calendar** (Ballantine, \$5.95). **Star Wars Calendar** (Ballantine, \$5.95). Poor quality photos. **The "Grease" Calendar** (Ballantine, \$6.50). Slick and overpriced, but will undoubtedly succeed with the teen crowd. **John Travolta Calendar** (Clarke Irwin, \$6.25). Strictly For fans.

### CRAFTS AND LEISURE

**The Canadian Sailing Calendar** (Clarke Irwin, \$12.95). For the sailing enthusiast, a limited edition well calendar with photos by Frank Rosenbaum. **The Quilt Engagement Calendar** (Clarke Irwin, \$7.50). A functional desk calendar with 58 colour plates of North American quiltwork. **The Fisherman's Diary** (Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch, \$12.95). A hardcover date book with photos, prints and illustrations of fish and fishermen. **The Organic Gardening Pocket Planning Guide and Country Calendar** (Rodale Books, \$4.50). Self-explanatory. □

## Playing for keeps

Growing Up Deed, by **Brenda Rabkin**, McClelland & Stewart, 188 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 7230 9).

The **Magic Bottle**, by Lee Bryant, G.R. Welch, 253 pages, \$5.75 paper (ISBN 0. 919533224 1).

By **CHRISTOPHER HUME**

**DESPITE ITS MORBIDITY** (or possibly because of it), suicide is the object of considerable curiosity. Why do people try to kill themselves? Especially the young? Surely, we ask, with a lifetime stretching ahead of them, suicide must be the last thing to cross their mind?

The answers to such questions are pretty disturbing. Brenda Rabkin has gathered together the thoughts of various young men and women, all of whom have attempted suicide. They tell, in their own words, what it was that drove them to such desperation. Although the stories differ, several elements seem common to each. Above everything else is the breakdown of the family. In the last two decades the suicide rate in Canada among those 15 to 24 has almost tripled. But this, says Rabkin, doesn't even begin to tell the story. "For every adolescent who makes a successful suicide attempt it has been estimated that there are 60 to 100 who try and fail."

The disintegration of the family cannot be held responsible for the entire increase. The most poignant chapters are those on Peter Walker. Peter was 16 when his father found him with the side of his head blown off by a shotgun. His death came as a shock to virtually everyone who knew him. He had appeared to friends and family as a happy, well-adjusted teenager whose future was assured. But Peter, secretly depressed and despairing, felt life to be hopeless. His journal, in which he charted the last two years of his life, begins: "Hello everyone. My name is Peter Walker. I'm presently 15 years old, and I'm dead. Yes deed. I'm trying to figure out how long I've been dead. I think now it's been six or seven years." Later, in a poem he called "The Delicate Balance," he wrote: "Everyone will say, 'Oh, it's such a pity/He had to die like that.' Well folks, I only did what I had to do."

Ultimately Peter's suicide, like all suicides, remains a mystery. Brenda Rabkin has provided a glimpse into some contemporary hearts of darkness, but she has not been able to go beyond description. Each one of us knows, in some way, of society's various failures, of our own failures. *Growing Up Deed* makes the reader aware of all this, but it doesn't explain.

Lee Bryant's book. *The Magic Bottle, is awful.* Her intentions, needless to say, were in no way literary. Bryant's subject is alcoholism, and this is the story of her own long, excruciating struggle with liquor, and of her eventual recovery and conversion. Somewhere along the road, however, booze was replaced with religion, and Bryant now hits the Bible as hard as she once hit the bottle. According to her it can't happen any other way: "Addiction is incurable apart from spiritual conversion. The alcoholic, like everyone; needs the Lord Jesus Christ as her Forever companion." Lee Bryant's preaching works best on the converted. □

## The vertigo mosaic

The **Canadian Ethnic Mosaic: A Quest for Identity**, edited by Leo Driedger, McClelland & Stewart, 352 pages, \$5.95 paper, (ISBN 0 7710 2888 1).

By **AMILCARE A. IANNUCCI**

OVER THE YEARS a major preoccupation of Canadian intellectuals has been how to define the Canadian identity. *The Canadian Ethnic Mosaic* takes up the challenge from the perspective of ethnic studies. "How are the tiles in the mosaic distributed?" "Do the tiles all contribute equally, or are some dominant?" "What are the distinctive features of the ethnic tiles in the total design?" Various aspects of these questions, posed by Driedger in his introduction to the volume, are analyzed in 17 essays, written by specialists representing various disciplines and critical approaches.

The book is divided into live parts. The essays in the first two parts describe the Canadian mosaic by focusing on such issues as the regional distribution and growth of Canada's ethnic populations and the status and power of the various groups within the total society. The papers in the remaining three parts deal with the question of identity: the various groups' perception of themselves in relation to others, their attempt to preserve their cultural and ethnic integrity, and their cultural and institutional contributions to Canada.

What emerges from a reading of these essays is that Canada is a complex society with strong regional, social, cultural, and ethnic identities. Any effort to gloss this reality, to ignore these pronounced differences, is doomed to failure. One example will suffice to illustrate the fragmented and contradictory nature of Canadian society: the antithetical attitude of the two chatter groups — the British and the French — toward the concept of multiculturalism.

English Canada actively promotes multiculturalism; Quebec, on the other

hand, openly shuns the policy. Beyond the immediate political causes there are historical and psychological factors which have led to these divergent views. The English, as one essayist (Breton) points out, realized early on that in order to give Canadian society a definite ethnic (that is, English) character, they had to present themselves, their institutions and values, as "non-ethnic." This of course is nonsense: Toronto's Rosedale is as ethnic as Kensington or Downsview. But the strategy has to a large extent succeeded. Their values and institutions are so firmly entrenched that the English do not perceive multiculturalism as a serious menace to their dominance.

Unlike the English, the French in Canada have always tenaciously affirmed their ethnicity. Now it is a matter of survival: declining birth-rates in French Families and the massive influx of immigrants into Quebec threaten them with genocide. To protect their language and culture, the French in Quebec have had recourse to legislation. Thus, in contrast to the rest of Canada, which boldly proclaims the policy of bilingualism and multiculturalism, Quebec is moving toward unilingualism and uniculturalism. As the St. Léonard school crisis testifies, Quebec's language policy has succeeded in antagonizing not only the English but also the province's other ethnic minorities. To be sure, the source of the tension is linguistic or ethnic in appearance only. The ethnic minorities of Quebec want their children educated in English rather than French because English is the language of power and prestige in Canada. It is at this point that the vertical mosaic intersects the ethnic or "horizontal" mosaic. The result is conflict.

Conflict is a theme that runs through several of the papers in the volume. One essayist (Frideres) even suggests that conflict can and has been used (by Canadian Indians, for example) as a strategy to promote group cohesion and identity. Whatever positive benefits a group can derive from conflict in terms of heightening group consciousness, it is in the wider perspective of Canadian unity a negative and destructive force. Most of the essayists agree that unless all of the parts of the Canadian ethnic mosaic make a genuine effort to co-operate the mosaic risks being shattered.

The volume, which is an outgrowth of a conference on ethnic identity in the Canadian mosaic sponsored by the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association in Winnipeg in 1975, has been intelligently edited by Driedger. Each of the five parts is prefaced by a brief critical introduction, and at the end there is a postscript on ethnic methodology. Despite these obvious concessions to the non-specialist, the book does not make easy reading. Nonetheless, I would recommend it to any intelligent and concerned Canadian who wants to be well-informed about the forces at work within his country. □

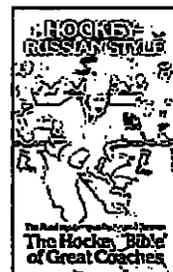


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# Beginners' luck

There are goodies galore in this season's assortment of kids' books. It wasn't always so

produced by Doris Cowan

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE as we understand it — that is, something more than fairy-tales, moral fables, or nursery rhymes — is barely a century old. Lewis Carroll's Alice first tumbled down the rabbit hole only 113 years ago, in 1865. Tom Sawyer sauntered along in 1876. Stevenson published *A Child's Garden of Verses* in 1885. The Victorians were the first modern generation to cultivate rather than repress the imaginations of the young. Their notion that children's literature can exist in its own right, that it can be entertaining as well as instructive, or even entertaining without being instructive at all, was revolutionary in its way as Darwin's thesis or the idea of universal suffrage. The generations that followed have reaped a rich harvest of delight, extending from the egregious Toad to the hapless Pooh to *Alligator Pie*.

And the delights increase year by year. This was not always true in Canada. Many of today's parents grew up during the Second World War, when good children's books of any sort were hard to come by. A new edition of *The Wind in the Willows* would sell out within a few hours. We turned to radio and later to television for our entertainment.

Children's literature went into a sad decline. In the past decade or so, however, there has been a remarkable revival.

Consider the range of the new Canadian children's books reviewed on the following pages. The obsession with cute Indian tales and legends apparent only a few years ago seems to be dying out at last. Kids now can indulge their tastes for romance, adventure, history, poetry, thrillers, science fiction, and science fact much as their parents do. More gratifying still, some of our best writers — Mordecai Richler, Margaret Atwood, Dennis Lee, Marian Engel, Matt Cohen — are beginning to add their contributions to the genre.

Children's periodicals, too, are enjoying a boom. Owl is established and continues to fascinate young readers with its wide variety of topics, including some beautifully drawn or photograph & natural-history features.

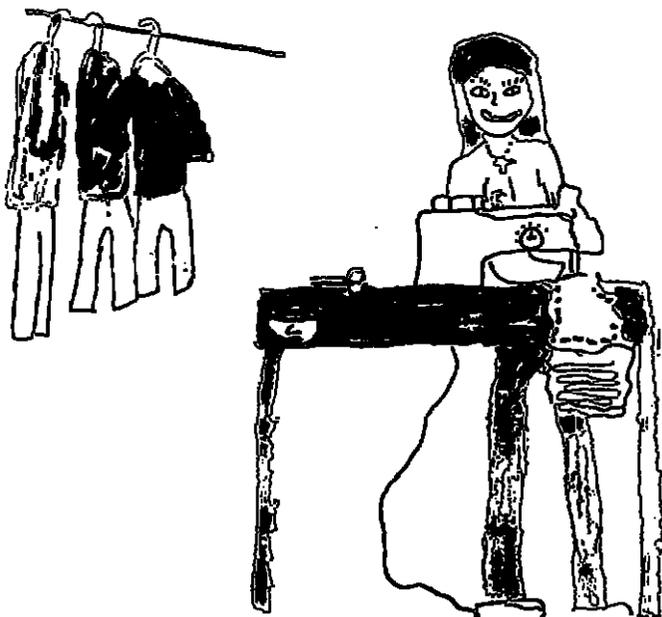
*Ahoy* is also gaining in popularity. Published in Halifax and focusing mainly on East Coast subjects (whales, Atlantic aviation, the uses of sea weeds and mosses), it nevertheless reaches a national audience.

So does *Canadian Children's Magazine*, a quarterly that comes from Victoria. As its name suggests, the magazine takes a slightly more serious and dignified approach to things than the others. Some sample themes: the histories of Canada's various ethnic groups; the thoughts of a child who is dying; relations with parents; and what to do when you grow up. But there are lots of jokes, games, and puzzles as well.

The big news in kids' magazines, though, is that Owl's publishers are hatching a Sister magazine in January called *Chickadee*. It is designed for younger children (four to eight) and exhibits a refreshing confidence in the resurgence of literacy and the retreat of the communications theorists in our schools.

Finally *Magook* will ride again in January, this time as a 32-page monthly. The first four issues of the magazine-book (mag-ook) experiment appeared simultaneously last year and then the venture went back to the drawing board. Aviva Layton's *The Magic Stones* will make up the book section of the January issue. The magazine section will contain, among many other things, a regular article or interview by a young reader.

It's worth noting that the United Nations has declared 1979 the International Year of the Child — completing the change of consciousness the Victorians began a century ago. Literature will play an important role in the proceedings and it looks as though Canada's contribution will be worthy of our aspirations. □



From *Come With Us: Children Speak for Themselves, The Women's Educational Press*. 119 pages, \$5.95 cloth.

## Two hits, one fatal and one annual

**Jumbo: The Biggest Elephant in All the World**, by Florence McLaughlin Burns, Scholastic-TAB Publications. 64 pages, \$1.50 paper.

**Canadian Children's Annual 1979**, edited by Robert F. Neilsen, Potlatch Publications, 174 pages, \$8.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919676 111) and \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 919676 12 1).

**Martin's Starwars**, by Joan Lyngseth, illustrated by Steven Collier, Borealis Press, 69 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 91959489 1).

By BRIAN ARNOTT

THOSE ADULTS — particularly parents — who have never given the idea of children's rights much thought may care to apply the concept to children's literature. The accepted practice defines a children's story as one written for children rather than by children. The main reason is that most book publishers are well past their ninth birthday. This is a regrettable state of affairs, however, since adult writers (unlike the children they write for) seem to possess an overwhelming tendency to see themselves as educators and evangelists. Adult visions prevail, and a simple story often becomes a learning experience. *Sic transit fantasia.*

Two of these books — *Jumbo* and *The Children's Annual* — suffer from differing degrees of this adulteration. *Jumbo* is a more or less factual account of the Great P. T. Barnum pachyderm somewhat glazed with anthropomorphism and sentimentality. In physical form it is a small paperback with the story and contemporary engravings on opposing pages. The tale is straightforward, not without some drama, and the ending is not a happy one. It is obviously meant to be read aloud but at roughly 3,500 words it may be a bit long for the age group to which its writing style would appeal.

By comparison, *The Canadian Children's Annual 1979* is a veritable encyclopaedia with something for everyone: 174 pages; scores of contributors; five dozen separate items including short stories, informative articles, a mini-novel, comics, puzzles, and problems, as well as a large fold-out poster. The book itself is quite colourful and the illustrations range from sophisticated and imaginative (by Steven Toth and Ian Carr *et al.*) to corny and mundane. Fact, fantasy, and adult proselytizing seem to be represented in just about equal measure in the texts, with some stories rather strained ("The Choice"), some

exotic and ironic ("Rip Van Winkle of Old Japan") and some examples of the time worn enforced excitement genre ("Susan Super Sleuth"). There's at least a 50 per cent chance your kid will find something in the *Annual* for him or her.

*Martin's Starwars* on the other hand has a limited appeal. In fact it's difficult to imagine any child maintaining an interest in this story of a young boy's magic spacesuit that is overwritten, patronizing, and very pale by comparison to other recent and more familiar space fantasies. The book is also unattractive in its layout and its drawings are flat and crude. It is by all counts a bad book.

Judging by this sampling, I would conclude that adult writers should reflect more on the traditional aspects of their craft and less upon the presumed tastes and needs of their youthful audience. While it may be true that a large percentage of adult writers were once children themselves, this qualification is no guarantee in itself. □

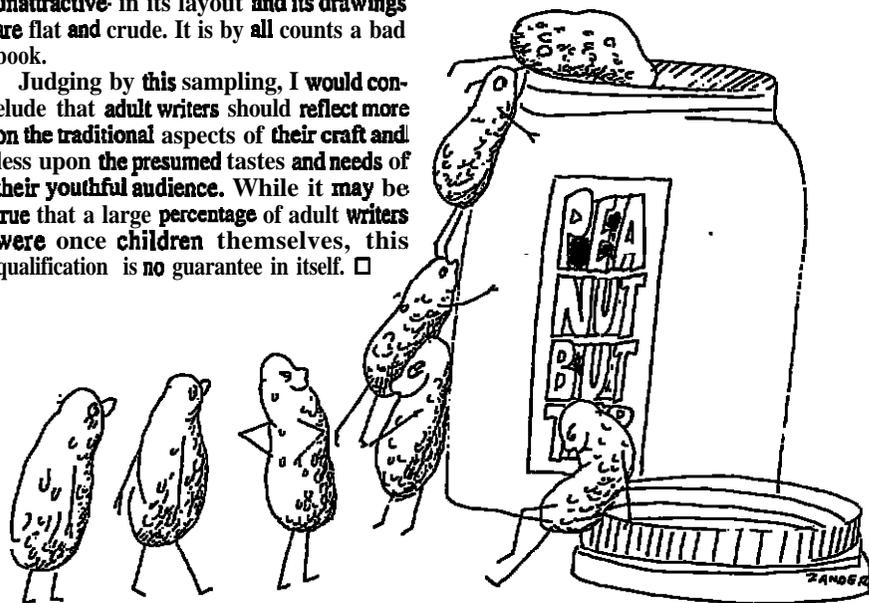


Illustration by Hans Zander from *Kids in the Kitchen*, by Shannon Ferrier, James Lorimer & Co., 32 pages, \$9.95 cloth and \$4.95 paper.

## Fun with words none with plants

**Up in the Tree**, by Margaret Atwood, McClelland & Stewart, unpaginated, \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 0824 4).

**The Leaves of Louise**, by Matt Cohen, McClelland & Stewart, 32 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 2190 9).

By DAVID MACFARLANE

CHILDREN HAVE, among other happy qualities, inscrutable preferences. Sometimes they like things, sometimes they don't. Gift-bearing parents often find that a carefully chosen present is abandoned in favour of the box that contained it. The ugliest rag in a family of dolls is, inevitably, the favourite. Sitting in a closet is, for mysterious reasons, as good a pastime as any. What adult, then, would be so arrogant as to choose a book for a child? More to the point,

who would ever be bold enough to write one?

Innocence is the blissful ignorance of the seamier aspects of human life, and one of the seamiest, enviably avoided by all children, is literary criticism. However, the unfortunate paradox that it is adults who write and then buy books for children makes the task of an adult reviewer at least not entirely irrelevant. How to proceed? Simply. I have my own inscrutable preferences

and, St. Paul to the contrary, I have not quite given up childish things.

I suspect that when Margaret Atwood wrote *Up in the Tree* she began with much the same premise. This delightful book is so full of humour and fun, so intelligent and straightforward in its downright playfulness, it seems safe to say that a child will take the same pleasure in reading as the author did in writing it. It is a dumbly bound and immediately attractive book. Atwood's illustrations and hand-lettered print complement one another perfectly.

Above all it is the verse that makes *Up in the Tree* so irresistible. The rhymes are simple but never humdrum. The rhythms are resonant and assured, repetitive enough to be mnemonic but never, never dull. The poetry fits the story like a sneaker fits a five-year-old's foot. For children who are learning to read, *Up in the Tree* seems a wonderful place to begin having fun with words.

Matt Cohen's *The Leaves of Louise* is intended for older children. Just how much older is a question I had trouble answering. Cohen's prose and Rikki's illustrations demand some sophistication on the part of the reader, but the story itself seems aimed at

a much younger imagination. And this is part of a confusion that pervades the entire book. An eerie, unpleasant tale, *The Leaves of Louise* remains unclear about who will read it and why they will spend time doing so. The most damning praise I can offer is that the absence of any real focus in the story and the abundance of disturbing implications may well serve as a primer to the maelstrom of many a contemporary novel.

Albert — known to his school friends as Albert D. Liar — lives in the attic of his parent's house. His only friend is a plant named Louise, who sings Albert to sleep at night. Of course, no one believes Albert when he says that Louise can sing. He writes a composition to tell his class, but everybody laughs. Eventually Louise flies off with another plant to a jungle planet and Albert buries her empty pot in the garden. Shortly afterward, Louise appears to Albert's classmates. Albert D. Liar becomes plain Albert Smith. *The End.*

The most disturbing thing about the book is that it addresses itself to a child's imagination but does nothing to enlighten or entertain it. A child, for example, can readily understand C.S. Lewis's *Narnia* books but could never have written them; Albert's composition, on the other hand, would probably have contained everything that Cohen's book does.

Children know a great deal about loneliness — we offer our instruction unwittingly. A book on the subject is largely superfluous. And if *The Leaves of Louise* has a subject it is not that of a magical plant. It is the story of a lonely little boy. □

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## Not for Huron County

No Way Back, by Bill Bleeks, Scholastic-TAB Publications, 116 pages, \$1.15 paper.

Exile at the Rocking Seven, by Joan Sherman Weir, Macmillan, 145 pages, \$1.75 paper (ISBN 0 7705 15177).

My Name Is Not Odessa Yarker, by Marian Engel, illustrated by Laszlo Gal. Kids Can Press, unpaginated, 86.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919964 70 2) and \$2.95 paper (ISBN 0 919964 13 3).

The Reunion, by Joan Lingard. Thomas Nelson & Sons; 135 pages, \$7.95 cloth (ISBN 0 24 89733 1).

By ANNE ROCHE

CHILDREN'S BOOKS are written for grown-ups. Into them we pour our hopes for our children and our nostalgia for the lost paradise of childhood. Even though we know that our hopeful advice probably won't be heeded and that childhood's Eden is really quite thronged with serpents, we go on wistfully trying to keep the shades of the prison house from closing about the children, just for a little while longer. So kids literature tends to fall into two main divisions — the *improving*, and the *fantastic*, the former offering the virtues we hope the children will develop, the latter pretending that childhood is an actual, magical fairy state. Often you get a composite, of course, the *improving fantasy*, about little engines that can and will and do, or little rabbits who disobey and end up in pies.

In the last couple of years, however, a new type has been emerging, or rather, a new subdivision of the first type. I call it the *unimproving category*. It goes in for "reelism," scorning as hypocrisy the gentle conventions of traditional children's literature. It talks tough — every spade a bloody shovel. It is concerned with proving that the child's world is every bit as seamy and despairing as the adult world. It introduces "adult" themes into the child's garden of verses, and the snake gets all the best lines.

Bill Bleek's *No Way Back* is a recent contribution to this genre. Since I still subscribe to the gentle conventions, hypocritical or not, I would have disliked the book anyway. But I found it doubly unlikely because it gives yet another stale slice of Prairie naturalism, and I can't stand any more Prairie naturalism. In spite of its "adult" subject matter and crude language, sorely this novel loses its bid to be considered daring and different by its unintelligent use of the most shopworn of Canadian literary situations — the sensitive soul congealed in Prairie ice. It's all there, laid

on with a mow shovel. the wind howling around the snowdrifts, the "grey, defeated house," the sexually repressed clergymen and wife. an alcoholic, a half-wit, a suicide, a misunderstood Indian, the flight to the city, everything, including the reader. "beaten into submission by the 25 below weather." It is, though, brisk and well-written, and the characters are believably worked out. Probably Bill Bleeks and the whole Judy Blume realist school of children's writers are right to assume that today's sophisticated, street-wise teenager will "relate" to *No Way Back*. Probably, too, that won't sway most of the grandmothers, mothers and aunts who buy the bulk of Christmas books. We haven't been coarsened up enough yet, though no doubt we will be. In the meantime we need our illusions. So if you don't care for teenage anti-heroines who use gutter language and accuse clergymen of impotence, this book is not for your Christmas list.

*Exile at the Rocking Seven*, an entry in the *improving column*, also uses a well-tried convention — Shiftless City Boy Becomes a Man in the Great Outdoors. It's a simple, cheerfully written, mildly exciting story about the city slicker who earns the respect of tough ranch hands, does respectably in a rodeo, and gets the pretty girl. The hero, Danny, is 17, but surely this book would appeal to boys several years younger. My 17-year-old would certainly raise pained eyebrows at me if I gave it to him. Try it on you 13- or 14-year-olds. It intends to be very improving: Donne is quoted on our not "being islands, people "fess up" gallantly, there are two misunderstood Indians, and the ranch owner comes on like Pa Cartwright. Mildly recommended.

One must confess that this sort of book seems rather lacking and simple-minded when read immediately after *No Way Back's* maturer excitements. Perhaps that is what is intended by the new school. It certainly presents a dilemma, which is resolved by many writers by a flight into fantasy. That is the route Marian Engel takes in *My Name Is Not Odessa Yarker*, a charmingly and amusingly written fable about the efforts of 10-year-old Geraldine Shingle to divest herself of the comic name foisted on her by her mischievous brother. This is no more about yer average Canajun family than is Bleek's story — mother is a concert cellist, father a lawyer, Rupert plays the piccolo. There is no attempt at realism, though the Toronto 'locations are recognizable both in the story and in the rather lumpish black-and-white, Kurelek-inspired illustrations by Laszlo Gel. I'm delighted to find that the author of *Bear* also cherishes the gentle illusions about children and children's literature. It's a nice little tale, with whimsy supplied strictly for the grownups. children being entirely impervious to the whimsical.

If *No Way Back* is Margaret Laurence for the adolescent, *The Reunion* is For the girl

who's going to grow up to read Harlequins — a perfunctorily written, pedestrian novel about a Scots girl's summer in Canada, with some accurately observed Canadian characters and situations, a Cook's tour of Toronto and environs, a discreet romance, and a touch of that British feeling of superiority about things North American seemingly able to be serenely entertained even by an untravelled, uneducated, working-class Scot. Very mildly recommended.

There's little to rush out for in this group, but it is extremely difficult to write good children's books. Only Farley Mowat really does that consistently in Canada, and unfortunately not very often. That's a pity, because good children's literature gives life-long pleasure, as one discovers the treasures — Tolkien, Stevenson, Lewis, Potter, Mowat — for oneself and then passes them on, or rather, shares them with new delight, with the beloved young people nearest one's heart. □

## From zoology to potology

Snowflake the Polar Bear, Tequila the African Elephant, Brum the Siberian Tiger, and Lobo the Timber Wolf, by Judy Ross, designed by Newton Frank Arthur, D. C. Heath, 16 pages each, each 31.35 paper (ISBN 0 669 00860 6, -8214, -822 2, -823 0).

*Flying Dimitri*, written and illustrated by Blair Drawson, Groundwood Books, 32 pages, \$7.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88899 000 6).

*Two far the Unknown Land*, by Frances Thompson, Borealis Press, 134 pages, \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 919594 80 8).

*The Journey Home*, by Michael J. McCarthy, Macmillan, 146 pages, \$1.95 paper (ISBN 0 7705 1639 4).

By MARK CZARNECKI

ONE OF THE world's finest zoos is located on the outskirts of Toronto, and after extended public grumbling about cost overruns some of its inhabitants are finally being given a good press. *Snowflake the Polar Bear*, *Tequila the African Elephant*, *Brum the Siberian Tiger*, and *Lobo the Timber Wolf* are included in a series of cleverly designed magazine-format books, jointly published by D. C. Heath and the Metro Toronto Zoo, and featuring both colour and black-and-white photographs, many of them taken on location at the zoo. Each book provides easily assimilated information on the animal's habitat, physical characteristics, societal and family behaviour, and the history of its contact with man. A more whimsical section articulates the animal's possible inner dialogue (anti-anthropomorphists will find it yucky, and

kids may too) and each book winds up with a collection of Ripley style believe-it-or-not anecdotes.

It would be difficult to overpraise the graphic beauty of *Flying Dimitri*. Author and illustrator Blair Drawson has a gentle dreamy style that conveys strong emotion with astonishing immediacy. Before going to bed Dimitri fantasizes that he flies to Mars and rescues the Martians' queen from a dragon. She kisses him and he asks her whether she is his mother. The question goes unanswered and he returns to everyday reality. Since there appears to be no mother in Dimitri's household, another level of interpretation for the stay suggests itself to an adult reader. Whether a child of five or six who is not in a similar domestic situation will realize this as well or will even be able to understand Dimitri's feelings and questions is doubtful. However, this possible confusion could easily be explained on first reading, and the pictures will certainly entrance any child no matter how many parents he has.

For an older child, two adventure stories, one historical and one modern. *Two for the Unknown Land* has drawn extensively on sagas recounting the Norse visits to Newfoundland and Labrador around 100 AD. As historical fiction the book is quite fine, and the feel of what daily life might have been like at the time is genuine. A full measure of exciting plot can be found in the sagas of the Atlantic crossing, which Frances Thompson has transformed into a rite of passage. The main boy and girl figures are fully drawn though there is too much adverbial pouting and scowling by the other characters; these may, however, be the residue of the sagas' hortatory epic style.

Fast-paced adventure stories have little time to spare on the pros and cons of victimless crime, and *The Journey Home* is no exception. David is still a young boy when he loses his parents in a car crash. He is mistreated in foster homes, drifts in and out of petty crime, bangs around with Red who smokes dope and breaks in a gas station when his stash is out, so great is "his need for grass." David plays good buddy and goes along with him; they are surprised at the till; Red is shot dead (at a & vice station break-in?) but David escapes to Newfoundland where he is befriended by Silas, an old fisherman, and falls in love with an outport girl. In the end he and Silas foil a dope-smuggling plot masterminded by a bald criminal with half his face "cut away," rings on his fingers, and "a thin black cigar clamped between his teeth." who threatens to kill them both. Oh, the perils of marijuana. Obviously the decision was made to take a hard line here (no point confusing kids at an early age, is there?) and the lack of grey shades will turn off many young readers. Too bad, because the story moves along well despite the stilted dialogue, and David's reactions to his adrenalin-packed life are more profound than one has any right to expect from a story in this genre. □

## KAREN KAIN LADY OF DANCE

by David Street

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## Written on the subway walls

The *Black Tunnel*. by Susan Brown, illustrated by Maureen Shaughnessy, Scholastic-TAB Publications, 171 pages, \$1.15 paper.

*Underground to Canada*. by Barbara Smucker, illustrated by Tom McNeely, Penguin, 142 pages. \$1.95 paper (ISBN 0 14 03112 2).

*Peppy Baker*, by Janet Cmig James. Macmillan, 135 pages, 51.95 paper (ISBN 0 7705,564 91).

By AERON ROVLAND

"TOM KIRBY WAS chicken and everybody knew it." Because of his fear of "dark, closed-in spaces," Tom was unable to complete the initiation into the Cobras, the local boys' club, and was bullied into isolation. *The Black Tunnel* is the story of Tom's 12th summer — the summer he made friends with Andrew MacDonald, founded Fruits of the Earth, Inc., and traversed the Black Tunnel into the Niagara Escarpment to win his battle with fear. It is a battle he has to win, not just to prove his worth to the Cobras, but to prove it to himself. His friendship with Andrew and the myriad of new challenges it precipitates give Tom the impetus he needs, and by the time he overcomes his claustrophobia, the Cobras and their date no longer matter.

Susan Brown writes a fine tale of friendship and adventure, and the young reader will learn much about the Escarpment region, its rock face and vegetation. Although the novel is one of Scholastic's Arrow Level books (written as recreational reading for grades 4 through 6). I think its vocabulary and the complexity of some of the ideas presented will make it of more interest to the older members of this group.

*Underground to Canada* is another fine novel for young readers, the story of two girls' flight from slavery in southern Mississippi to freedom in Canada via the Underground Railroad. Written by Barbara Smucker, a Mennonite who lives and works as librarian in Waterloo, Ont., the book is based largely on actual accounts of the period. Smucker imaginatively weaves her facts into a suspenseful fiction throbbing with the atmosphere of feat and oppression felt by enslaved blacks. The story not only illuminates the courage and strength of the two 13-year-olds, Julilly and Liza, but it also brings to light the heroism and tenacity of purpose of such people as Canadian ornithologist Alexander M. Ross and the American Quaker abolitionist Levi Coffin, who risked their lives helping slaves reach freedom. The book is a passionate tale of

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human dignity that will interest persons of any age.

Although written for older children, *Peppy Baker* is a novel for the much less experienced reader. It is one of many books in Macmillan's Topliner series, books with fast-moving and simply written stories designed to have an immediate and compelling appeal for young people who are normally reluctant readers. It is the story of a 15-year-old Toronto girl, Peppy Baker, whose family has been forced to sell their suburban home and move into a dingy inner-city flat. Peppy's inability to adjust to this move results in an outbreak of open rebellion that lands her in Family Court. The parole to which she is assigned effects a revision of her values and a revitalization of her confidence in herself and her future.

In spite of her compulsion to have everything work out in the end, Janet James's story is sensitive and convincing. The change in Peppy is a realistically gradual one, dispelling the "this will never happen to me" myth and giving the story a wider appeal. □

## Fragments and full-course meals

*Geranimal, Daddy Lion, and Other Stories*, by Francesca Vivenza, Groundwood Books, 33 pages, \$6.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88899 000 6).

*Silly Sally and the Little Pumpkin*, by Frank M. Tierney, illustrations by Wendy Irvine, Borealis Press, 20 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 919594 93 X).

*The Mouse Who Came to Dinner*, by Kenneth Radu, illustrations by Dane Radu, Borealis Press, 39 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 919594 66 2).

*The Gift of the Frost Fairy*, by Sheila J. Bleeks, illustrations by Kelly Clark, Cherry Publishers, 23 pages, \$6.95 cloth (ISBN 0 969484 0 9).

*Rory and the Whooping Crane*, by Heather Kellethals-Stewart, Borealis Press, 66 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 919594 71 9).

By SHELAGH HEWITT

IT'S A PITY that the necessity for cutting back economically has affected the quality of books for children. Of the live books here only *The Gift of the Frost Fairy* seems to have missed the publishers' pinch. It is hard-covered and beautifully illustrated in colour. Since it is now in its second printing, one can only assume that this extravagance in production cost has not affected its market. Excellent children's books can be produced on low budgets.

however. Last year's *Bonnie McSmithers You're Driving me Dithers* by Sue Ann Alderson (Tree Fmg Press) was a fine example of a low-budget book for the pre-schooler that manages to tell a good tale with much style and humour despite its soft cover and black-and-white illustrations.

*Geranimal, Daddy Lion, and Other Stories*, by Francesca Vivenza, is a collection of short fragments for the pre-schooler. In the first the child imagines a tiny animal existing in a geranium pot. In "Summa Window" the child looks out in the evening at the street below her window. The final fragment counts the steps that a child takes from bed to school. The material here is good, the illustrations soft and dreamlike. But the total effect of the book is piecemeal and confusing. Was the decision to combine the fragments the author's or the result of publishers' pinch?

*Silly Sally and the Little Pumpkin* begins well enough with Sally in her kangaroo costume going out on Hallowe'en. She and her friends are returning home across a dark field to empty their palls of candy. Sally trips and discovers a small pumpkin. Abandoning her candy, she takes the pumpkin home only to discover, the next morning, that it has turned into a giant pumpkin filled with enough candy to satisfy everyone in the neighbourhood. The cartoon-like illustrations give the book a cheap quality, and the message is obscure. Is a mountain of candy the ultimate reward for a kind deed? One wishes that Frank Tierney had pushed either the magic or the realism more convincingly.

*The Mouse Who Came to Dinner* is an exciting story. Beau Mouse and Deirdre Hen are good friends, although each despises the other's cooking, after a series of frightening adventures — askitnash with a hungry fox, a terrifying encounter with a beautiful but deadly snake — they continue their friendship, each realizing the value of the other though no more thrilled with the other's cuisine. This is a story well told. The characters are imaginative while still true to their real-life animal characteristics. There is some quite frightening suspense and a real understanding of what friendship can mean. The illustrations, however, are abysmal, except for a splendid drawing of Lady Lissome, the snake.

Heather Kellethals-Stewart has created a very topical short novel in *Rory and the Whooping Crane*. Rory, a young boy on a summer-long expedition to Wood Buffalo Park, scoffs at his father's endeavours to seek out and preserve the nesting grounds of Whooping Cranes. In a dream-inspired fantasy Rory meets all the animals who are extinct or near-extinct and learns through this meeting of the desperate need for wildlife preservation. It is a timely book in an easily digested if somewhat earnest manner. The transitions between reality and fantasy are well handled and should appeal to ages eight through 10. The Format —

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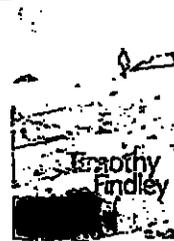
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over-size book with soft cover — seems inappropriate for this age group, and the glossary is a pedantic addition. However, this well-told story should convert any non-sympathetic readers to its cause.

But *The Gift of the Frost Fairy*, my favourite of this group, has no timely message. It is a fairy-tale in which a frost fairy who sees a small child dying manages to give him the Gift of Life . . . a gift that can be given only once by any one fairy to any one human. It is a simple tale, beautifully told by Sheila Bleeks and beautifully illustrated by Kelly Clark. Its style is modern without being contemporary. The author is not afraid to make us both very sad and very happy. It is the kind of book that makes one say, "Ah yes, this is what writing for children is all about." □

## Haida seek and growing up Electrafied

*Mystery at the Edge of Two Worlds*, by Christie Harris, illustrated by Lo" Crockett. McClelland & Stewart, 175 pages, \$8.95 cloth (ISBN 0 77 10 3977 8).

*Hey Dsd!*, by Brian Doyle, Greenwood Books. 121 pages, \$9.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88399005 7) and \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 88899 004 9).

*The Grass Beyond the Door*, by Catherine McVicar, Methuen, 111 pages, \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 458 93220 5).

By SYVALYA ELCHEN

CHRISTIE HARRIS writes stories that marry West Coast native mythology with adventure. Her latest book, *Mystery at the Edge of Two Worlds*, journeys again into the spiritual territory of native lore and laminates the intrigue of a crime mystery with some typically adolescent problems, familial tensions, romance, historical narrative, adventure by the sea, and the rugged beauty of the West Coast. She skilfully juggles most of the expressive elements, with the possible exception of a lengthy historical anecdote tacked on to the end.

Her real accomplishment, however, goes beyond the adventure that her young heroine, Lark, experiences on a trip with her brother to visit their grandmother in Prince Rupert. The true mystery at the edge of two worlds — that graving-up period between the world of childhood and the world of adulthood — is particularly well "solved" by Harris. The lanky, teen-age Lark may sometimes betray her awkward "dole-scence, but her growth in sensitivity and observation and her involvement in a real emotional relationship make her a welcome

candidate for the adult world. What Harris has given us is a genuine Canadian alternative to a Miss *Chatelaine* Nancy Drew who dashes off in her roadster to solve totally manufactured crimes with her professionally ascendant boyfriend. Long live Lark!

While Harris gives us a true-to-life experience of the problems of adolescence, Brian Doyle in *Hey Dad!* attempts a more ambitious and intimate description of a young girl's confusion with the process of growing up. Megan, the heroine, explains: "This is the story of how I hated my Dad for a while for some reason and how I loved him again for some reason and how I almost ruined a nip my family took to the Pacific Ocean and how all of a sudden I got independent for a while that summer when I was 13." In the North American tradition of solving problems by "going West," the author drags us along the Trans-Canada Highway until we reach the Pacific Ocean and can go no farther. Expectedly, here at the end of the line the great unspoken conflict between Megan and her father comes to a head when she asks her otherwise healthy father the unaskable (for some inexplicable reason) question: "Are you going to die?" We are thus given to presume that having come to grips with the idea of dying (even so obliquely) the young heroine will be more equipped to handle the problems of living. In other words, if she can ask this question she has somehow reached the Nirvana of communication with her father and that means she can now ask him anything (which probably means future questions about S-E-X.)

The real problem in this book seems to be Dad, lie is the kind of guy who gets his macho thrills by playing with a policeman's radio transmitter and flasher or by throwing an empty beer bottle at a cloud as the climax of an anti-kids speech which he makes in the pool of a country club on the banks of the North Saskatchewan.

Geared to the just-about-&en group, *i-he Grass Beyond the Door* is a female version of the boy-and-dog story with a considerable amount of Tinkerbelle escapism dusted on for the sake of Catherine McVicar's definition of "beauty." The plot revolves around a little girl, Miranda, who is initiated by her cat, Sinbad, into a series of new experiences in the outside world. The chapter titles — The Garden Witch, Grandma Glass, Grandfather Clock — chart a journey in which Miranda's commonplace country neighbours become extraordinary denizens of a mysterious magic land.

To make the quantum leap from the mundane to the magical, the writer unfortunately burdens her reader with her own overwhelming need to make everything "enchanted" by describing it all with pseudo-poetic preciousness: "The sand dunes -garlands of ground cherries and jackets of juniper. . . Yet always flung

over her days like a scarf were the heat and the blue fringe of water and the white scroll of sand." Inevitably the story becomes reduced to a jerky odyssey oozing with smarmy wonderfulness and capped by the overt comparison of Miranda to Lewis Carroll's Alice. McVicar's book certainly makes one wonder if sometimes weeds in the garden aren't preferable to splendours in the grass. □

## By our animals they do know us

*Great Canadian Animal Stories*, edited by Muriel Whitaker, illustrated by Vlasta van Kampen, Hurtig, 232 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 8830 165 0).

*The Vengeance of Wol*, by Joan Seager, Scholastic-TAB Publications, 144 pages, \$1.15 paper.

*Plato and Company*, by Anne Millyard, illustrated by San Murata, Annick Press, "paginated, 57.95 cloth (ISBN 0 920 23608 1).

By BRYAN NEWSON

CANADIAN LITERATURE abounds in animal stories. They are one of its glories and in the realistic variety pioneered by Charles G. D. Roberts and Ernest Thompson Seton they remain its unique contribution to world literature. The editor of *Great Canadian Animal Stories* avoids a narrow definition of the genre in favour of an over-all look at the astonishing variety of roles animals play in our fiction. The result is an outstanding anthology — carefully conceived, beautifully illustrated, and handsomely produced.

To begin at the end, a comprehensive afterword provides concise, intelligent points of departure for discussion and further reading. This is followed by bill graphical notes on each author indicating major issues and accomplishments in their fiction. The opening story, appropriately, is George Clutesi's retelling of a Tse-shaht legend, "How the Human People Got the First Fire." This tale of beneficent harmony between human beings and animals provides a non-didactic, aboriginal, and lightly ironic perspective on subsequent selections and indicates the editorial thought Muriel Whitaker has put into the whole book. The second entry, "The Springfield Fox," carries us deep into the densest thickets of the indigenous animal story. The opening paragraph demonstrates the remarkable pace of Seton's writing and sets forth most of his major themes:

The hem were disappearing. My uncle was wrathful. He determined to conduct the war himself, and sowed the woods with poison baits, trusting to luck that our own dogs

would not get them. He indulged in contemptuous remarks on my by-gone woodcraft, and went out evenings with a gun and the two dogs, to see what he could destroy.

This excerpt displays many of the unique features of the realistic Canadian animal story: contrasting approaches ("war" or "woodcraft") to nature; human sympathy for and identification with the animal/victim; a constant implied comparison between domestic and wild animals; and, perhaps most important, the attribution to animals, in an otherwise naturalistically described setting, of the faculties of reason, memory, and morality.

In "On the Roof of the World" by Charles G. D. Roberts, Seton's contemporary and admirer, we find these elements again, combined with a rigorous naturalism and a belief in humanity's need to kill for survival. The tale weaves plot and setting together perfectly and shows how the stark Arctic environment forces similar choices on human beings and beasts alike.

More recent writers, Roderick Haig-Brown, Cameron Langford, and Fred Bodsworth, develop the genre in stories that focus almost exclusively on animals, often told from the animal's point of view. In sombre contrast to the sunny legend of human and animal harmony with which it began, the anthology closes with the first chapter of Bodsworth's *The Last of the Curlews* - in which a single, doomed bird represents an entire species.

Rounding out the anthology are Farley Mowat's "Mutt Makes his Mark"; Sheila Burnford's "A Piece of Debris"; Richmond P. Hobson's fine horse story "Nimpo"; and my favourite, Kerry Wood's "The Blind Man and the Bird," a hunting story with the moral clarity of a fable, but far from the old-world didacticism of Aesop or Lafontaine. Finally, George Allan England's 1924 account of the Newfoundland seal hunt, "Baptism of Blood," touches on complex moral issues usually forgotten in the Greenpeace cm.

By contrast, the animals in Joan Seager's *The Vengeance of Wol* provide only peripheral interest in what is essentially a straightforward, good-and-evil adventure story. Wol, the pet owl of the title, at no time acts as a *deus ex machine*, but he does provide a healthy measure of animal interest and an excuse for the introduction of the book's main themes: the need for kindness to animals and for understanding and tolerance among human beings.

*Plato and Company*. Anne Millyard and San Murata's handsome picture book, depicts the highly improbable adventure of Plato, a cat, and the innumerable mice who are his "company." Unfortunately, the book's exceptionally fine illustrations are not matched by an exceptional text. Nevertheless, the book is visually so powerful that it's bound to amuse most beginning readers. All in all, it is a handsome children's book. □

## Gordon and Goliath

This Can't Be Happening at Macdonald Hall!, by Gordon Korman, Scholastic-TAB Publications, 124 pages, El. 15 paper.

Canadian Stories of Action and Adventure, edited by John Stevens and Roget J. Smith, Macmillan, 218 Pages, 84.50 paper (ISBN 0 7705 1688 2).

By DAN HILTS

OF THESE TWO books, *This Can't Be Happening at Macdonald Hall!* is the more interesting if only because the author is a 13-year-old grade eight student who lives in Tomato. *Canadian Stories of Action and Adventure* is a collection of 19 short stories, with excerpts from longer works by established Canadian writers, both living and dead.

*Macdonald Hall* is a funny, fast-paced story of the adventures of two mischievous roommates at a fictional private school near Tomato. They plan and execute various pranks to embarrass the school's headmaster, and are found out. As punishment they are each assigned to separate rooms with roommates they both detest. They "cot secretly and plot to find a way to get back together. Their plans involve more hijinks and, with the help of some girls at a private school across the road, eventually lead to a wildly improbable ending in which they are reunited and made heroes as well.

The boys' guerrilla actions against Authority are written with relish and the plot is strong enough to keep you reading to the end. Some of the characters are well-drawn: one of the boys' new roommates is a rich hypochondriac who keeps a stock-ticker in his closet and regularly cleans the room with alcohol. Korman relies heavily on stereotypes: the headmaster is authoritarian but kindly, with a twinkle in his eye; the headmistress at the girls' school is prone to hysteria and the accidental discharge of firearms. But the story is entertaining and more fun than much of the stuff written for children by adults.

*Canadian Stories of Action and Adventure* contains a good selection of short pieces by well known Canadian authors, including Sinclair Ross, Gregory Clark, Morley Callaghan, Constance Beresford-Howe, Alice Munro, Margaret Laurence, Farley Mowat and Hugh Gamet. Several of the stories stand out. "My Uncle Joe," by James McNamee, the opening section from his novel *Them Damn Canadians Hanged Louis Riel!* is about a young boy who accompanies his uncle from Montana to Canada in the 1880s. Another is "Exiled,"

by Shizuye Takashima, a first-hand account of the relocation of Japanese-Canadians from B.C. to the interior, from the viewpoint of a 14-year-old. "Stranger in Taransay," by Farley Mowat, is the fascinating and apparently true story of a 19th-century Eskimo who, never having seen a white man before, finds himself on an island in the Hebrides. "A Queen in Thebes," by Margaret Laurence, is the story of a mother and son who are the sole survivors of a nuclear holocaust, one of two such stories in this collection. One unusual choice, "Running Away From Home," from the novel *The Book of Eve* by Constance Beresford-Howe is the story not of a childhood experience, but of the escape of a 65-year-old woman from her invalid husband and repressive surroundings.

The editors have avoided any exotic or experimental fiction and have restricted their choices to established authors who, for the most part, write good narratives. The book should appeal to both children and adults, although both the title and cover were chosen, not very well, to appeal to children. □

## Simon says and social studies

A Salmon for Simon, by Betty Waterton, illustrated by Ann Blades, Douglas & McIntyre, unpaginated, \$6.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88894 168 4).

Ms. Beaver Travels East, by Rosemary Allison and Ann Powell. Women's Press, unpaginated, \$2.95 paper (ISBN 0 88961 056 8).

Willie Won't Fly, by Jim Quixley, illustrated by Clarence Barnes. Borealis Press, 51 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 919594816).

Friends, by Betty Worthington, illustrated by Angela Wood, Kids Can Press, unpaginated, 99 cents paper (ISBN 0 919964 12 5).

Mommy works on Dresses, by Louise de Grosbois, Nicole Lacelle, Raymonde Lamotte, and Lire Nantel, translated from the French by Caroline Bayard, Women's Press, unpaginated, \$2.95 paper (ISBN 0 88961 042 8).

La Piñata, by Jacqueline Bouchard, Bibliotheque Nationale du Quebec. UNICEF, unpaginated, \$5.00 cloth.

By JANET AMOS

BETTY WATERTON'S *A Salmon for Simon* is a perfect story for children, moving easily through the "deep secret places" of the imagination. Simon is a little boy who fishes

all summer. Longing and longing to catch a salmon. But he "ever succeeds. Finally, sadly, he wonders whether he will over fish again. Miraculously, an eagle appears and drops a beautiful salmon from the sky. dov:" into a clam hole where it is trapped. unable to swim back to its home in the ocean. Suddenly all Simon's feelings for this wonderful fish change, he begins to dig a channel through the sand to help it swim back to the sea. The story is told in simple, expressive language, full of feeling for the boy, the salmon, and the landscape: there is magic in the way the story is told as well as magic in A"" Blades' beautiful illustrations.

*Ms. Beaver Travels East and Willie Won't Fly* are both tales of adventure in strange new worlds. The first continues the story of Ms. Beaver, who beg"" her journeys in *The Travels of Ms. Beaver* (Women's Press, 1973). It has a comic, positive, bouncy quality, like its ir-repressible heroine who, once more in search of adventure, makes friends with a young unemployed waitress and travels to Herring Cove, Nova Scotia, in a beat-up Volkswagen. Disaster awaits them, for the fishing plant where they hope to work bums down, leaving the whole tow"" employed. Beaver's ingenuity saves the day, the"" her restlessness returns and off she goes to more adventures at sea.

*Willie Won't Fly* is a more internal story, telling how a timid little bird overcomes his private fears in order to overcome real dangers in the outside world. Willie is a problem to his parents: happy and safe in the nest, content to be bullied by his bigger brothers and sisters, and terrified of flying. When he is finally pushed from the nest his fear makes him so tense that he falls to the ground, where he is left to make his own way in the world. With great courage he faces terrible dangers and difficulties, and finally, with the help of a little boy who b&ends him, he learns to fly and to enjoy his new Freedom.

Informative or educational books for children often seem dull or didactic, and the trick of making them interesting depends more on imaginative presentation than on the worthiness of the subject matter. *Mommy Works on Dresses* introduces children to what it is like to work in a clothing factory, and *Friends* shows that children who speak different languages can still play together. While these ideas are both clearly illustrated, neither makes the extra jump of capturing the imagination in a way that will give children a more real sense of the situations.

*Lu Piñata*, a book in French, English, and Spanish about Honduras, tries to make the information it presents interesting by revealing the country and its customs through the eyes of a four-year-old boy from Canada who visits Honduras on his birthday. We learn about the climate, the produce, the poverty, the skills of the

people, and the kinds of games and food that children have at their birthday parties -the piñata of the title is an earthenware jug made to look like an animal and filled with candies: the children break it et the end of the party.

Unfortunately the story is unconvincing because a four-year-old simply does not make the kinds of observations about the world that Vincent makes, and there is no sense of him and his friends as individuals. The narrative remains a thin coating over what is in fact a vry good social study, with informative illustrations and lots of exotic detail. □

## Reach for the tot

The Big Max Series, by Diana Bergelt, Borealis Rear: Adventure in the Forest, 31 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0919594 64 6); Adventure on the Water, 41 pages, \$3.95 paper (ISBN 0 919594 85 9); Adventure at the Ranch, 57 pages, 54.95 paper (ISBN 0 919594 86 7).

The Ostrich Girl, by Ray Prather, John Wiley, 32 pages, \$11.50 cloth (ISBN 0 684 15889 2).

How Trouble Make the Monkey Eat Pepper, by Rita Cox and Roy Crosse, Kids Can Press, 32 pages, \$2.95 paper (ISBN 0 919964 14 1).

### By ALICE LEONARD

TEACHERS, PARENTS, and grandparents will applaud the absolutely irrefragable family presented by Diana Bergelt in The Big Max Series of very short stories for children in the primary grades. There are no descents into authorial moralizing or didactics, yet the principles of good, middle-class behaviour are plain to see: co-operation, common sense, good humour, resourcefulness, willingness to learn — and more. Big Max is a German Shepherd whose world contains no villains. His thoughts are spelled out for us in plain English, and though he is not always the main character he provides a canine commentary on the (always credible) events of the family's holidays. He is a "ice, normal dog, not eve" exceptionally gifted. He does wake the family when their houseboat goes adrift, but generally his activities are barking, singing "Mmmm, mmmm," chasing sticks, reacting to other animals with suitable foolishness, and sleeping through the exciting and educational stories told by Dad. Background information on many topics — artfully presented in stories and conversations as well as through the experiences of the family — ranges from the habits of bears, bats, pack rats, cattle, and salmon.

through boating, horsemanship, and conservation to the Kondike gold rush.

*The Ostrich Girl* and *How Trouble Made the Monkey Ear Pepper* provide more exotic fare. One school of thought has always liked to set stories for children in "a kingdom far away," where strange things happen. The fact that Mr. Prather knows East Africa does not make this a less mythical and magical locale for his fantastic story. Many of the background touches — palms, baobob tress, costumes and village streets — are perfectly real, but to Canadian children they are strange enough to justify the sudden appearance of witches, dwarfs transformed into water-serpents, giants, and talking squirrels. Most children will not be disturbed by the illogicalities, especially those young enough to be read to. The pictures alone will be sufficient delight.

How *Trouble blade the Monkey Eat Pepper* uses the same kind of foreignness as a starting point for fantasy. The setting is Trinidad, and the story is recognizably like many Africa" folk stories in whiich an animal such as a fox, a rabbit, or a lizard has adventures involving human skills or weaknesses. The pivot of the tale is a misunderstanding, and a joke played on the monkey by the unkind (human) shopkeeper. There does not appear to be any moral; the monkey takes "trouble" to be the name of molasses, and when he asks to buy some he is taken at his word. The pictures are once more the best part of the hook. Black-and-white pencil drawings evoke every scene with humour and sympathy. The language is pleasantly simple and the story is a fine bedtimelength. □

## Other children's books received

*The Wind has Wings: Poems from Canada*, compiled by Mary Alice Downie and Barbara Robertson, illustrated by Elizabeth Cleaver, Oxford University Press, 55.95.

*How Summer Came to Canada*, retold by William Toye, illustrated by Elizabeth Cleaver, Oxford University Press, 84.95.

*The Loon's Necklace*, mold by William Toye, illustrated by Elizabeth Cleaver, Oxford University Press, 55.95.

*Cricket Christmas*, by Heather Kellerhals-Stewart, illustrated by Lucya Yarymowich, Borealis Press, \$3.95.

*The Girl Who Could See Amend Corners*, by A. P. Campbell, illustrated by Nell Sonnenmann, Borealis Press, \$3.95.

*The Travels of Ms. Beaver*, by Rosemary Allison and A"" Powell. The Women's Press, 82.95.

*Overnight Adventure*, by Frances Kilbourne, illustrated by A"" Powell. The Women's Press, 57.95.

*The Search*, by John R. Hunt, Macmillan, 01.95.

Ernie, by Robert J. Ireland. Macmillan, 31.95.  
 Spotlight on Liz, by Glenna Davis Sloan,  
 Macmillan, \$1.75.  
 A Children's Calendar 1979, Tundra, 99 cents.  
 The Marrow of the World, by Ruth Nichols,  
 Macmillan, \$3.95.  
 Paulino, by Traute Simons. English version by  
 Ebbitt Cutler. illustrated by Susi Hohdal,  
 Tundra. \$9.95.  
 Sleighs: The Gentle Transportation, by Carlo  
 Italiano, Tundra, \$8.95.  
 When We Lived with Pete, by Stuart Buchan,  
 John Wiley, \$9.95.  
 Vancouver Nightmare, by Eric Wilson, Clarke  
 Irwin, \$7.95.  
 Slave of the Iaidn, by Doria Anderson,  
 Macmillan, \$4.95.  
 A Prairie Boy's Winter and Summer, paintings  
 and story by William Kurelek, Tundra,  
 \$12.95.  
 The Shirt of the Happy Man, a told by Marielle  
 Bertelli, illustrated by Laszlo Gal. Kids Can  
 Press, \$2.95.  
 Alpha-diddle Riddles, by Audrey and Dodie  
 McKim, Scholastic-TAB, 95 cents.  
 Susie-Q, by Eric, Wilson. Scholastic-TAB,  
 \$1.15.  
 Seven Bears, by Charles G.D. Roberts,  
 Scholastic-TAB, \$1.15.  
 Monsieur Musik Alabouche, by Hans Zander,  
 Scholastic-TAB, \$1.50.  
 J'adore les chapeaux!, by Blair Dawson,  
 Scholastic-TAB, \$1.50.  
 Fais quelque chose d'extraordinaire le jour de  
 ton anniversaire, by Blair D&son,  
 Scholastic-TAB, \$1.50.  
 My Mother Made Mel, by Sharon Brain,  
 Scholastic-TAB, \$1.25.  
 Bienvenue chn nous/ Welcome to Our Town,  
 by Guy Bailey, Tundra, \$8.95.  
 Come With Us: Children Speak for Them-  
 selves, Women's Press, \$5.95.  
 The Big Yellow Frog, by David Carefoot,  
 illustrated by Bladyana Krykorkha, Three  
 Trees Press, \$5.95.  
 How Mrs. Claus Saves Christmas, by Bill  
 Templeton, illustrated by Wes Chapman,  
 Collins, \$4.95.  
 Fox Mykyta, by Ivan Franko, illustrated by  
 William Kurelek, Tundra, \$12.95.  
 Abby Hoffman, by Fred McFadden, Fitzhenry  
 & Whiteside, \$8.95.  
 Tim at the Fur Fort, by Hester Burton, Antelope  
 Books, \$3.25. □



## Three modernists in perspective

Ghost in the Wheels: Selected Poems,  
 by Earle Birney, McClelland & Stewart,  
 159 pages, \$4.95 (ISBN 0 7710 1408 2).

Corners in the Glass, by Ralph Gustafson,  
 McClelland & Stewart, 92 pages,  
 \$4.95 (ISBN 0 7710 3705 8).

Smoked Glass, by Alden Nowlan,  
 Clarke Irwin, 71 pages, \$7.95 (ISBN 0  
 77201194X).

By ELI MANDEL

ALTHOUGH IT'S RATHER late in the 1978 season to be looking at 1977 publications, the three books I have before me represent important aspects of modernism in Canadian poetry, and are achievements of such substance that it would be wrong and misleading to bypass them without comment. A selected Earle Birney is an important, if not indeed a central, event in Canadian writing, while new volumes by Ralph Gustafson and Alden Nowlan further clarify and consolidate the reputations of these important poets.

Earle Birney's *Ghost in the Wheels* is his third major collection. It succeeds the earlier *Selected Poems* of 11 years ago and the more substantial *Collected Poems*, a handsome and expensive two-volume boxed set published in 1975 and containing much of Birney's work over his long career, 223 "makings" as Birney likes to call them, some printed there for the first time, others collected from periodicals for the first time. *Ghost in the Wheels* offers some 80 "makings" in paperback, less costly and more accessible than the *Collected*, but nonetheless more than adequately representative of the work of a major poet. As the new selection shows, Birney has not ceased to develop; the last 10 years have been as fruitful as any in his career. His work retains its central rhythms and moves with energy into new areas, attempting new possibilities in form and language, testing against age and experience the capacities of a powerful, intelligent poet, illuminating and courageous as always.

Aside from the astonishing sense of exuberance in a long and distinguished life as a poet, perhaps two other matters are worth reminding ourselves of. One is that as always Birney tends to arrange his work so that it is at once both chronological and thematic in order, the effect pointing to the element of continuity and surprise in his work, always innovative, always testing poetry at its limits where it seeks to renew language. Perhaps it is no accident that the central image is of the climber and the fall. A second matter is the evidence of Birney's continuous process of re-working and

revision. Any selected Birney is in a certain sense 'a new Birney. *Ghost in the Wheels* does more than to quote the cover blurb, fill a long-felt gap in the availability of this major poet's work'; it reminds us again of his presence in our midst, wise and generous and magical, and of how lucky we are to know him and possess his poems.

Ralph Gustafson's *Corners in the Glass* is by my count his 11th book of poetry, his sixth in the last five years. An astonishing development in the work of a poet in his mid-60s. Perhaps thinking of Birney's energy in his 70s, and of such writers as Layton (now more than 65), Gustafson, F. R. Scott (in his 78th year publishing important essays on a lifetime of thought about our constitutional law and a splendid set of translations from the French) and even Purdy now approaching his 60th year, it is time to give some thought to the question of age and poetry in Canada. Gustafson continues to write with his usual intellectual force, a knotted complex poetry of ideas and sensations, phrased in surprisingly abrupt rhythms, a gnarled drama of diction and imagery. Reading *Corners in the Glass* I think not only about how much of the book gives itself either to a seasonal drama (the North Hatley syndrome of garden, flower, bush or snow, treated with melancholy of stoicism) or to the work of artists and musicians. Stars and arpeggios form the subject. Or classic settings: the ruins of Greece revisited. I think too of the complicated use of diction in these poems, noting words and phrases: "Prokynesis," for example, or "cochlear roses," or "civil, ordinary, imbricate," or this collocation:

*Comprehensibles, detachables  
 What's graspable, parbuckles  
 And door-handles, separables,  
 Non-Euclid potterings. . . .*

It's as if language itself is to Gustafson as gnarled and difficult as the sensuous world whose very presence excites, baffles, and irritates the poet. He has his gentle, reflective moments, but for the most part poetry (like painting) is a matter of "the difference between paint and the application," the mess and the craft. It's the "used-up palette" that catches this poet's eye, and of that messed-up craft he has made an intriguing poetry, especially in these later, prolific years.

Gustafson's work reminds us of the extent to which poetry seeks its energy in either the density of diction or the complexity of syntax, an art of language and form. But another poet who like Gustafson has published with energy and frequency of late, Alden Nowlan, is less interested in language than in anecdote, or so it seems from his newest book. *Smoked Glass* is devoted primarily to stories, occasionally in the fantastic vein, more often in ironic revelations of the distortions of life and its expectations. At their best, these little moralities and exempla can be very moving, though never I think as genuinely wise as Nowlan seems to believe they are. Nowlan seeks to tell his story with economy,

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distance, objectivity, the powers and virtues of a good teller of tales. But often, and I say this with some regret, his story collapses for the simple reason that he has not taken sufficient care with the diction or rhythm of the piece. Clearly my preference is for syntactical concern in poetry as opposed to mere anecdotal awareness. And I see my position as a prejudice. Many readers will find in Nowlan's stories something more truly human, more engaging, more appealing than skill or peculiarity of style. For such readers he will remain, in *Smoked Glass* as elsewhere in his work, a poet of considerable presence. □

## Ox-tale dissident

The Musk Ox Passion, by Thomas York, Doubleday, 240 pages, \$8.95 cloth (ISBN 0 385 232319).

By LINDA PYKE

THOMAS YORK's third novel is a skilful, satirical picaresque, dealing with one man's unusual quest. In an editor's note by York the reader is informed of his Arctic "discovery" of the manuscript "Loves and Labours of Blessed Thomas Byrd — By Himself" in the fuselage of a wrecked RCMP plane (remember *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* by William McCullough) and thus the novel proceeds as Byrd's memoir.

Thomas Byrd, an American draft dodger, is 29 and bankrupt in 1973. His wife Madelaine, "Star Spangled Girl," a general's daughter rich in myth and beauty, has left him for pallid Lennie ("If he had to go through Marine Boot Camp before he thought of desertion, he'll probably have to go through a Canadian winter before he thinks of Mexico"). Eventually Madelaine and Lennie do wind up in Mexico — "One place is like another," according to Madelaine — and Byrd in Montreal is ripe .. for musk ox passion.

Thumbing through a Montreal feminist rag, *Macho*, Byrd learns that *Barrengrounds Poetry* is sponsoring a "First Ever Musk-ox Qiviut-pick" in the Arctic. After he applies and is accepted, Byrd researches. Musk oxen, 10,000 strong, are survivors of the last ice age; their only living relative is the Tibetan shaggy yak. Qiviut is their downy underhair, shed annually, cashmere-like and valuable for weaving. Apparently, *Barrengrounds'* hope is to use the qiviut-pick proceeds to finance their bankruptcy. More intriguing to Byrd is the Eskimo belief in qiviut's power as an aphrodisiac. Byrd becomes Jason seeking the Golden Fleece, a saint on a holy quest.

Byrd hitchhikes west, and on the Mackenzie Highway gets a rise with Cap-

tain Arctic, a boisterous Métis civil servant who claims to have sold out the Eskimos. Next, Byrd teams up with Jamessee, a lovable Eskimo with a penchant for vertical sex and Hondas. Together they get themselves into jail and out. In one town Byrd finds himself delivering a sermon to an Eskimo congregation while Jamessee "translates." Adventure follows adventure, and en route Byrd discovers there are plots and counter-plots concerning musk oxen: everyone is after them except *Barrengrounds*, which appears to have opted out. There also is talk of a mysterious redhead living among the primal beasts, and yes, the woman is Madelaine.

Poor Byrd. His grand free gesture is ruined. It's a small world, and Madelaine is as pursued as the musk oxen. Lennie arrives, now impotent and socially diseased; then Madelaine's retired uncle-cum-lover Lieut.-Col. Barnstorm; and inadvertently, but no less doggedly, Byrd. The novel speeds toward Byrd's and Madelaine's meeting, a climax worthy of qiviut powers. However, the idyll cannot last. There is a war to be waged: Byrd and his company of Eskimos and transplanted Americans versus Canadian troops intent on ox-capping.

The *Musk Ox Passion* is thoroughly entertaining — witty, lyrical, sexy, an outrageous and humane novel. □

## Of imagination all compact

The Tightrope Dancer, by Irving Layton, McClelland & Stewart, 112 pages, \$5.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 48718).

Fall by Fury, by Earle Birney, McClelland & Stewart, 96 pages, \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 1430 9).

Being Alive: Poems 1958-1978, by Al Purdy, McClelland & Stewart, 208 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 07710 7207 4).

By LEN GASPARINI

EVERYTHING THAT COULD be said about Irving Layton's poetry has already been said, and what hasn't been said is redundant, so, at the expense of sounding original, reviewing a new book of Layton's poetry is like holding a live heart in one's hand. Apart from its technical finish and imaginative magic of language, it is a sensuous experience that evokes the blood-throb of life.

In his thundering foreword to *The Tightrope Dancer*, Layton says: "The poet is poised on a rope stretched tautly between sex and death. The major poet dances on the



tightrope; the minor poet walks warily across it." If that's the case, Layton does handstands and cartwheels. But he slips and falls occasionally. When he's not bemoaning the plight of the Jews, as he does in so many poems, he can be brilliantly lyrical and inventive. And most of the poems in this new collection celebrate the lyricism of simply being alive on this planet. "Beatitude" sums it up quite philosophically:

*All I require  
for my happiness  
is a pen  
and a sheet of paper  
to put down  
my unhappy reflections  
on men  
and the human condition*

At last, a new book of poems by Earle Birney! His first in five long years. *Fall by Fury* shows the poet at his burning best, especially in the remarkable group of love poems inspired by the woman to whom this volume is dedicated. Each one of these poems is a fused vision that perpetuates the wonder, ache, and joy of love; and reading them is like falling in love all over again. This stanza from "Diving" is a triumph of passionate emotion:

*Loving you is beyond wings  
is to sway with primal weed  
is to dance with fins*

## first impressions

by Sandra Martin

### As the plot thickens, families cook and split, forts fall, and fantasies come true

WHAT THIS COUNTRY needs is a fat, gripping novel written by a Québécois federalist — the kind of book that Herman Wouk or Nicholas Monsarrat or James A. Michener might do — one that is bulging with incestuous and tortured characters, overflowing with sumptuous detail, and held together with an intricate and convoluted plot. Such a novel would do more to plead the federalist cause on a popular level than my number of discovery trains or media campaigns. *Heving Out* (Musson, \$12.95 cloth, 239 Pages). André Bruneau's first novel in English, has all the qualifications except panache, excitement, and that warm encompassing glow that emanates from good potboilers. The book is about Michael Armstrong's search for love, understanding, and bill bucks in what has become an alien world. His personal quest is the vehicle for exploring, from a reactionary perspective, the social and economic evils of Quebec independence, particularly as exhibited in the construction and real estate industries. But the author's stance is too

*in a jay too salt  
for sounding*

Coincidentally, or perhaps intentionally on Bimey's part, the title poem sounds very much like Dylan Thomas's "Fern Hill." It has almost the same rhythmic beat and play of imagery. This isn't to fault Birney, and I'm not nit-picking either. The fact that he can pull it off so well is admirable. *Fall by Fury* is an excellent book, covering a wide range of themes and achieving a veritable Stanislavski school of moods. The years have not dulled Bimey's poetic vision.

*Being Alive* is Al Purdy packing two decades of poem-making into a single book, and thus represents his full weight and stature as a poet. *Being Alive* is Al Purdy very much alive. His poems are entitles in themselves, experiencing the vicissitudes of life and expressing all the affective states of consciousness. Their *Weltanschauung* is compressed into two (immortal, I think) lines from "Married Man's Song": "We live with death but it's life we die with/in the blossoming earth where springs the rose."

This is a great collection, and to belabour it with superlatives is really unnecessary. Any reader familiar with Canadian poetry knows by now that Al Purdy has taken his art to the edge and beyond; and reading these poems that reach back 20 years is like bathing in an afterglow that reveals a vast mirror of truth. Purdy be praised! □

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**PLOOT** is a short form for plutonium, a by-product of nuclear reactors and a key ingredient in atomic bombs. It has other uses: to increase the energy available from uranium by recycling the by-product, to reduce the costs of nuclear power, and to ease radioactive waste-disposal problems. Or so James Judd tells us in **PLOOT** (Borealis Press, 234 pages, \$4.95). This is not a great thriller in the tradition of P. D. James, say, but the technical information is both interesting and well-presented and the idea is quite intriguing. The protagonist is security guard Dennis Houghton — surely one of the dumber sleuths in recent detective fiction. He uncovers a plot to extort \$50 million from the Canadian government by threatening to explode an atomic bomb in a major Canadian city. The plutonium for the bomb has been stolen from Neutron Power Corp., a heavily guarded nuclear install & n located in the wilderness of Northern Ontario. The conspirators — such a novelty these days — ate apolitical: they want money and plenty of it. What Houghton must discover in his slow-footed way is who stole the ploot and how, and where the hell is the bomb? lie does. thanks more to luck and perseverance than intelligence.

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IT IS REMARKABLE that so many contemporary writers are from Winnipeg — everybody from Adele Wiseman to Larry Zolf to Martin Knelman — but what is truly astonishing is their need to write about it and what it was like to grow up there. Winnipeg is a well-spring, a source, in a way that Kingston, or Regina, or the Lakeshore in Montreal could never be. True **Confections** or **How My Family Arranged My Marriage** (Musson, 187 pages, \$12.95) by Sondra Gotlieb is merely the latest in a steady stream of Winnipeg books. What distinguishes Gotlieb's novel is its emphasis on food. "All my family had their food obsessions." Gotlieb says through her narrator Verma. Surely hers must be writing about it. Is it any wonder that a girl who grew up with a father who believed that "the better the cook, the better the person" would become a noted writer on the subject (*The Gourmet's Canada and Cross Canada Cooking*)?

*True Confections* is set in Winnipeg in the 1950s. It is the story of Verne, the only daughter of a Jewish middle-class family with mar in Europe and pretensions in North America. At 16 Vents was "ungifted, plump, and [she] talked back." She wanted to get married — one of the few points on which she and her parents agreed — and *True Confections* is the sometimes amusing, never very serious or profound story of how she achieved her goal. It is inoffensively frothy.

\*\*\*

W. D. FRASER'S Nor'east for Louisbourg (Amethyst Publications, Unit 310, 12

**Crescent Town Road**, Toronto, 230 pages, \$5.95) is an historical romance about a young New England boy named Jonathan Steele who in 1745 volunteered for Colonel William Pepperell's expedition against Louisbourg, the massive French fortress on Cape Breton Island. Louisbourg had been built et enormous expense to protect the colony of New France, to provide a base from which to dominate fishing in the North Atlantic, and to serve as a deterrent to Yankee.<sup>3</sup> thinking of expanding northward from the American colonies. The fortress was besieged twice during the stormy years of French-English conflict until finally levelled by British forces in 1758.

The book covets three decades, 30 years in which Jonathan Steele survives the siege of Louisbourg, becomes a mariner, marries, is accused of murder, and finally rejects the King's shilling in favour of Yankee revolution. It is a melodramatic tale filled with sandpaper-thin characters, but Fraser has a good grasp of 18th-century colonial life and is particularly adept et describing contemporary conditions in New England, Halifax, and the West Indies. Read it for its fact, not its fancy; the first is interesting, the second deadly.

\*\*\*

WHEN GUY LEBLANC was a kid in Bel Etang, Cape Breton he believed implicitly in two things: TV's *The Wonderful World of*

## on the racks

by Paul Stuewe

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## When scalded by potboilers or mired in sandbars, seek relief with Seton

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THE AGE OF the "tie-in" yawns before us as we discern the increasing number of promotions for the soundtrack from the movie of the book you loved as a TV series. And as these things go the Gordon Pinsent — Grahame Woods novelization of the CBC-TV drama *A Gift to Last* (Bantam-Seal, 52.25) isn't bad at all. The classic Victorian triumvirate of repressive father, sensitive son, and worldly but unstable uncle is here firmly grounded in an authentic turn-of-the-century Canadian setting, and although the characters are rather stereotypical the plot does twist and turn to good effect. This sort of book is presumably intended to appeal to people who don't do a great deal of reading, and as such it seems to me to be a successful experiment in transposing images into print. Whether the disco version of the theme song will go "Top Forty" is, however, beyond your present reviewer's competence.

I'm also somewhat at sea es to how to deal with PaperJack's "Original Canadian" titles, since these paperback originals are obviously aimed at the mass market rather than readers of a magazine that pays some attention to traditional literary standards.

*Disney* (which was actually called *Disneyland* in those days) and the National Hockey League. He wanted to live in the first and play in the second. They were not disconnected dreams, for if he were a true Disney creation he would end up playing for the National Hockey League. And conversely, if he made the NHL he would be instantly transported into a fantasy world. The problem for Guy Leblanc was always having to reconcile reality with the dream life he preferred. *Disneyland, Please* (Fitzhenry & Whitwide, 239 pages, \$9.95) by Clive Doucet is the tale of how, thanks to a combination of luck, talent, and hard work, Leblanc almost managed it. From high school — by now his family had moved to Ottawa — he won an athletic scholarship to play football at UCLA and, *voilà*, the California dream enveloped him. He had everything: a nickname (Angie); pod grades; a beautiful blonde folk singer fore lover; and celebrity status, for in his final year he made All American. But Leblanc never felt he belonged and kept worrying about the real world he feared was on the other side of the dream. And eventually the fantasy explodes and Leblanc has to claw his way back to a new and painful reality. Clive Doucet tells his story with a humour and an empathy that are charming and poignant. □

The fairest method, I suppose, is to discuss them in terms of entertainment value. And on these ground Earl Knickerbocker's *The Merger* (\$2.25) serves up enough sex, violence, and high-financial skulduggery to keep one turning the pages while time and landscape pass by. Since that's all it aspires to do, it should be sufficient to note that *The Merger* has a useful function at the same time as it is just about devoid of any intrinsic interest.

A much more competent example of schlock wiring is provided by Lynne Sallot and Tom Peltier's *Bearwalk* (PaperJacks, \$2.50), wherein an ancient Indian curse wreaks havoc among an interesting assortment of characters. The protagonist, unfortunately, is just a bit too patly torn-between-two-worlds (white and Indian) for comfort, but the suspense mounts tepidly through a series of increasingly horrific occurrences. The book also features the most hottest jacket quote of the year, courtesy of Louise O'Neill: "*Bearwalk* is one of the fastest-reading, gripping, and interesting stories I've read lately." I thought it was definitely the novel of the week myself.

This month's literarily respectable content is provided by Margaret Atwood's **Dancing Girls and Other Stories** (Bantam-Seal, \$2.25), an uneven but on the whole impressive collection of short fiction from a writer who becomes more assured with every book. "Under Glass" is a brilliant exploration of the darker side of *Lady Oracle*. and "Rape Fantasies" a smooth blending of realistic detail and imaginative invention with no manufacturer's seams showing. There are a few throwaways and abortive experiments included here, but the numerous successes in *Dancing Girls* demonstrate that Margaret Atwood can do just about anything she wants to in fictional form.

Oonah McFee's *Sandbars* (Signet, \$2.50) won the 1977 Books in Canada Award For *Fit Novels* and I'll be danged, drawn, and quartered if I can see why. The book struck me as being unbearably over-written. rather than the product of some bizarre psychic conjunction whereby the collected works of Thomas Wolfe had been synthesized by John Updike. There are so many perceptions, dreams, abstractions, and sensations packed into the book that there simply isn't room for any imaginative life, and those who have compared it with Rous's *Remembrance of Times Past* have done both writers a disservice. Where Proust painstakingly constructs a social world animated by the development of a sensitive intelligence, McFee crams together enough material for ten thousand lyric poems without any evident concern for either organization or discrimination; and if there is a novel submerged somewhere in *Sandbars*, the author has not been able to bring it out. Although the book may be a success of the season, I have no doubt that in 20 years' time it will be remembered only as a curiosity.

A writer who has worn well over time is the naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton, whose *Animal Tracks & Hunter Signs* (Laurentian Library, 94.95) now is once more in print. Seton was able to communicate his love of the natural world in direct, unaffected prose, and even Fanatical urbanites such as myself enjoy his anecdotal and informative accounts of the mysteries of animal society. *Animal Tracks* is a well-organized and attractively illustrated traversal of its subject, and it's my choice for the ideal relief from both overheated literary sensibilities and unimaginative sub-literary potboilers.

Also in paperback:

#### FICTION

*Jenneth*, by Kathleen Earle (PaperJacks, \$2.50). Passable historical romance for Harlequin graduates.

*A Population of One*, by Constance Beresford-Howe (Signet, 82.25). Young woman discovers freedom, sex, etc., and tells all in an amusing and appealingly offhand manner.

#### NON-FICTION

*Canadian Farm & Home Almanac, 1979* (Almanac Publishing, \$1.25). Tide-tables, mother's prayers and tongue twisters as per usual, and if the weather forecasts are correct

Dec. 1-3 will see "heavy snow through Ontario and east," with "Clearing over prairie provinces and westward."

*Child of the Holocaust*, by Jack Kuper (PaperJacks, \$2.50). A Polish boy's flight from the Nazis, written simply and tellingly with a minimum of dramatization and a maximum of effect.

*On Thin Ice*, by Harry Jelinek, Jr. and Anne Pinchot (PaperJacks, \$2.25). The famous skating family evades the Gestapo and the KGB and arrives safely in Canada. Self-congratulatory in tone, if understandably so. □

## Letters to the Editor

### ON STUEWE AND CENSORSHIP

Sir:

I am getting very tired of pointing this out, but I wonder if Paul Stuewe ("Better Dead Than Read?" October), understands that the "children" being protected from reading *The Diviners* were grade 13 students, 18 or 19 years old, and that in no case were they compelled to read it, the course on which it was offered being optional, and an alternate selection being provided in that course. If I insisted on having a book removed from the curriculum which my own children were in no way being forced to

read, I think I could be fairly accused of interfering with what other people's children could read and study.

Is it so surprising to find that the book-banners are decent, sincere, and godly people? Of course they are. But they aren't the only people living in Huron County. I am a fourth-generation native myself; my ancestors helped to found that very village of Blythe where Mr. Barth has lately come seeking a life of godliness. There are plenty of people here who do not want to be ruled by fundamentalist Christian piety. The school board's vote to remove *The Diviners* was, after all, 9 to 7, and some of those seven supporters spoke strongly and sensibly in its favour.

In speaking of "Concerned Citizens," Paul Stuewe does not mention anywhere its ties to Renaissance Canada, nor does he mention the

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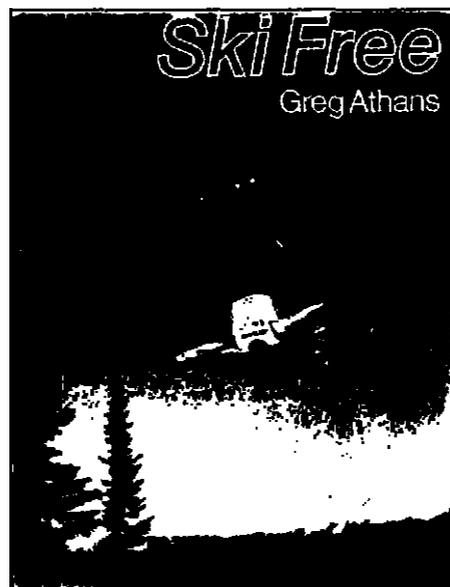
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Clarke  
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support that Renaissance Canada gave to the book-banners at the public meetings in Clinton. This is not 3 grass-roots Huron County movement, but a movement successfully promoted by missionary action.

A few years ago one of my daughters had a teacher who was a fanatical anti-feminist. It never occurred to me to try to get this teacher, or the materials he was using, censored, because it seemed to me quite natural that there should be opinions so different from my own, and healthy for my children to encounter them. So much for "What would you do if your child . . . ? etc." Children hew a reliable resistance to any values bcily over-sold to them. Maybe the real way to raise Puritans would be to put them on a heavy course of de Sde. Genet, Selby, etc.

I think it's condescending to sry that it's okay to have certain kinds of control, even removal of books from distribution, in remote places like Huron County, but very hed to prosecute the editor and publisher of the Toronto Sun. It seems to me all part of the same thing.

Alice Munro  
Clinton, Ont.

Sir:

Re: "Better Dud Than Reed?" my response is that Paul Stuewe has raised some important questions about threats to the freedom of expression in Canada. He depicts the proposed amendments to the Criminal Code, and it's obvious that the substance of those amendments is one of loose generalization; I mean, there are going to be some complex problematics ahead. Don the little second voice on the shoulder of each writer and expositor become more the "national" ghost of taste?

My feeling is that already writers pay too much attention to that mysterious entity, "public taste," as it is. From what Stuewe says of happenings in Huron County and a few other localized spots, one quality comes home resoundingly: \*is thing about morality, setting "sound mom, examples," es Mr. Barth would have it. Has it occurred to anyone that the attack on these books (Margaret Laurence? God!!) is a peculiar hostility to the roots of life?

Those intelligent arguments in Huron County have the eerie sense of favouring the "poor in spirit," and originate — I would think — fmm a bank of religious commandments. Perhaps what I am trying to say is that questions of morality are predominantly smoke screens for whatever are the actual impulses to be restrictive of a plurality of new connections and thought experiments.

So much concentration in these communities on *The Diviners*, when a book like Marian Engel's *Bear* was so obviously shallow and disparaging, though offered up - and especially by the media - es a monument to "furthering the Canadian identity." Can you imagine? And how is that possible, anyway? Oh boy, oh bear! Do we ever hear about bear: "Beer. There. Staring. She stared back." The facts are that Bear is Lou's pet; and Louis, well, a bear-fucker. Yessir, it's right in the book. She swims with that Bear, coddles him, and quick enough he's licking and sucking in the molt sensuous places. But we learn more, and hum Lou herself, when she says that "it was years since she [Lou] had had human contact. . . It was as if men knew that her soul was gangrened." Perhaps readers found the book extremely funny, or even as the Canadian idiom for a devastatingly new dialectic, I don't know. But *Bear* is scrutinized generally as being a landmark, one among many in these recent explorations of psychosexuality.

40 Books in Canada, December, 1978

For sure there are connections between reading and our social behaviour. But as Stuewe says, *what* those connections are and *how* they are established, how they work in and among us, is something into which only a few are beginning to have anything but superficial insights. The examination of our own thinking and attitudes, as well es revelations fertilized by media communications, would seem to be a fairly reasonable starting point.

Something else in his article has caught my attention: Lloyd Barth puts it that, "We've always thought of teachers es 'dedicated, a spiritual word meaning, that they offer themselves up for the good of the children. For us, teachers we right after God, ministers, and parents, and were always pure in thought and action; and teaching was a *profession*, which means to speak out the good that is in you." Now there is something truly suggestive and excessive in these notions; does anyone find them humorous?

Some questions come to mind: first of all, whet happened to the teacher as *human being*, one who can exercise choice, take risks, challenge his or her own limitations, without wondering if they're appearing pure to others? Mr. Barth seems to prescribe a narrow definition of duty when he speaks about teachers. While he is himself confronted with danger and discomfort, he attempts to establish a liaison Where I doubt there can ever be one, especially in the sense that he speaks of.

Morality it merely an interpretation of certain phenomena. We make the mistake of taking these pro-censorship statements *literally*. If someone confuses teaching with a specific sense of dedication, or duty, that is no reason for anyone else to make the same error. For teachers, the demand, if any, seems to be to take a stand beyond good and evil, in that they will leave the illusion of moral judgment to suspension. How else to proceed when moral judgments agree so frequently, so fully, with religious ones in believing in realities which are no realities?

About threats to the community, no doubt such groups as Concerned Citizens see a threat to their values. Shall we say that many of those very values have been successful? And also that there *are* some necessary questions about their benefit or "se to the health of an individual who wants no, the cloistered values of their youth, but instead to expand end grow in new forms, without the sorts of limitations induced by Gods, ministers and parents with doctrines of dedication. . .

On a more practical level perhaps, Stuewe establishes an essential point: much of the opposition to *The Diviners* and similar books (? j is aroused because students are either required or encouraged to read them at school. This is a real part of the problem, yes? One that can be magnified further by the ways in which school boards operate, and the thoroughly *modern* intentions they display.

I'm glad you said il: the moral issues hue are not simple ones. My wife and I await the birth of our lint child; it's now two weeks overdue. We deal with these questions day-to-day, and find the, one must have a sense of proportion, otherwise the more serious threats to liberty go unexplored. I share your concern about the

### CORRECTION

*Images from the Floating World: The Japanese Print, including an Illustrated Dictionary of Ukiyo-e*, By Richard Lane, which was litted in our November supplement on gift books, is published by Longman.

broadening of the legal definition of obscenity.

As Richard Kostelanetz put it in his book, *Tk End of Intelligent Writing* (1973), "the young writers' greatest enemies are, of course, me powers of repression and reaction, but the major antagonist within us is such a limited conception of personal destiny that any sense of collective feeling or interest is inhibited." What you have written is valuable, and brings us round again to examining the forms and implications of art and culture as we presently experience it.

Gordon Moore  
Vancouver, B.C.

Paul Stuewe replier: Ms. Munro's points are generally well taken, although we disagree on matters of emphasis. The question of students being "compelled" to read certain books is not quite es cot and dried es she makes out, since one cannot reasonably expect even mature grade 13 students to either question a teacher's recommendation or to have prior knowledge of a book's contents. If there are "plenty of people here who do not want to be ruled by fundamentalist Christian piety," then the anti-book-banners will prevail; I dkl not predict a victory by one side or the other, but was simply concerned to demonstrate that there was substantial support for the would-be censors. Renaissance Canada may well be involved, but to an outside observer there is certainly much grass-roots pm-censorship feeling within Huron County. And Ms. Munro has seriously misread the article if she believes that it was "condo scending" to book-banning in bet community. I was attempting to point out the relative significance, in social and political terms, of censorship in a rural community and censorship by the state, and I stand on my assertion that the latter is of much greater import to those Canadians who do not live in Huron County.

I appreciated Mr. Moore's letter very much, since it reflects the kii of mental turmoil I experienced in researching the article end hoped to share with others. I was trying to demonstrate that censorship is an Issue on which reasonable people may reasonably disagree, and it is good to know that there are others who would seriously examine their own feelings before taking a partisan position.

### ON COHEN AND AJZENSTAT

Sk:

I'd just like to say that in Sam Ajzenstat's review of Leonard Cohen's new book (October) you have offered us a level of thought and care for language that is (unfortunately) rare in Canadian criticism. Here at last a serious book receives an attention that is equally serious. Thank heaven for such a review, and thank you for finding him.

George Bowering  
Vancouver

### ON MS. SMART'S FATHER

Sir:

It was good to see Eleanor Wachtel's review/profile of Elizabeth Smart in the October *Books in Cam&*. I was glad to see that Ms. Wachtel dii not repeat the misconception that has attached itself to Elizabeth Smart and the knowledge of her work in Canada: that is, that her first book, *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*, was "seized at the border and pulped" by agents of MacKenzie King at the request of h a father, a prominent Ottawa lawyer.

This story was first suggested by George Grant in a letter to the *Globe and Mail* following

articles on Ms. Smart after her second book, *The Assumption of the Rogues and Rascals*, was published in April. It was then picked up as gospel and repeated in numerous book reviews across the country.

In the interests of vindicating Ms. Smart's "kind and just" father (her words), may I take this spore to point out that Dr. Grant's allegation is misplaced. Mr. Smart died in 1944, one year before the book was published.

It may, however, be true that the book was prevented from entering Canada. This was likely due to the actions of Elizabeth Smart's mother, "egging on J. A. Stevenson of the *Times* (London), who was courting her then," soys the author.

Katherine Govier  
Toronto

## ON GAY MILITANCY

Sir,  
John Hofsess's odd article "Gay Abandon," August-September issue) with its guarded tolerance (not acceptance) of gays makes me wonder yet again how long the fear and hatred, conscious and unconscious, of homosexuals, that is the main cause of the suffering we are forced to endure, will continue.

I'm 46 years old, a public gay and very much a supporter of the many fine homosexuals who have led our fight to be treated as equal human beings. I hope I'm one of the "moderate" and "morally creditable persons" John Hofsess suggests not remain silent.

I admired his article some time ago on John Damien in *Weekend Magazine*. But the whole tone of the present piece is another matter. Why does he take away with one hood what he gives with the other?

He praises various aspects of gay liberation. Then he refers to the march against Anita Bryant. He is concerned that a few shouted "Two, four, six, eight — gay is twice as good as straight." It is apparently justified to feel "distaste" for this "clamorous simplemindedness."

I was in that match and I didn't hear that chant although I heard and joined in many others. I wonder, by the way, if those other chants, demanding loot asking for equality were acceptable to nice Wasp sensibilities. Conversely, I wonder if we gays may be permitted to feel a little distaste sometimes at the clamorous simplemindedness of heterosexuals who assert superiority in almost every aspect of their daily lives every day. Is it surprising that a few of us, enraged, should occasionally wish to turn the tables?

This was just one example of his main criticism — our militancy. Why are we militant? Let this older Wasp male homosexual suggest a reason. To me, it's because, like the blacks, from whom I think we've learned a lot, we don't enjoy being treated like, in effect, "niggers." Like them we had to learn to deal with the problem "sing the most effective means possible.

In the past we usually behaved "nicely." I can remember year after year of polite pleading to England earlier this century to get the laws on homosexuality changed moderately. Compare the period since 1969, the beginning of militancy (gay liberation). There has been more acceptance and more advances have been made during these few years than in as many decades before 1969!

It would be easier and pleasanter for us to ask rather than demoeed, but it just doesn't seem to work. And, after all, we're dealing here with basic human rights—not some pleasant extras. That's why militancy.

As regards *The Body Politic* case: certainly, practical politics would suggest not referring to

adult-child relationships for a loo8 time after the horrible Jaques murder. Luckily the very fine workers of *The Body Politic* ate not constrained by such expediency.

"Bow Loving Men Loving Boys" is an hottest article and seriously concerned with an important aspect of human relationships. This subject needs to be examined, especially at present when there is such confusion and hatred in the public's mind because of the murder. Surely we should admire the courage and integrity shown by such on action.

No, the leaders we have in the movement that John Hofsess considers part of a "lunatic fringe" I (and, I think, many others) fully support.

I spoke to gay leaders in Australia recently and have since talked with British gay representatives. They look at the gay liberation movement in this country with admiration. The aid and encouragement that *The Body Politic* has received from all over the world in its fight against harassment is confirmation of this.

Jim Quixley  
Toronto

## ON C. G. D. ROBERTS

Sir:

I am, with the permission of Lady Roberts, collecting the letters of her late husband, Sir Charles G.D. Roberts (1860-1943), for publication.

Roberts was a well-known poet and writer of animal stories, and an avid outdoorsman. He lived at various times in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Toronto and Vancouver, travelled extensively in Canada between 1880 and 1943 on lecture tours and personal visits, and had contacts with persons from all walks of life.

This is my final attempt to collect additional Roberts letters prior to completing the preparation of the existing collection for publication. I should greatly appreciate hearing from any persons holding letters from Sir Charles. I can be contacted at the:

Roberts Letters Project  
c/o Department of English  
University of New Brunswick  
Fredericton, N.B.  
E3B 5A3

Fred Cogswell  
Hoed. Roberts Letters Project  
Fredericton

## CanWit No. 38

*Allis-Chalmers  
doesn't live  
here  
anymore.*

OUR ATTENTION has been drawn to *Chaff*, a new literary/trade periodical with a regional base (Harrow, Man., to be precise) but seeking a national audience. Published one to three times a year, depending on harvest conditions. *Chaff* is primarily concerned with the interaction between literature and farm machinery — a hitherto neglected field. The editors tell us *Chaff* welcomes short poems (maximum 10 lines or 100 silvan syllables) celebrating the magazine's editorial theme and will pay \$25 for the best contribution. Entries from Toronto must be accompanied by notarized proof of a rural

background. Address: CanWit No. 38. Books in Canada, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4. The deadline is Jan. 1, 1979.

## RESULTS OF CANWIT No. 36

READERS WERE ASKED to suggest a Sunday prime-time schedule for CBC-TV as the corporation enters an age of severe austerity. AU entries showed considerable Programming imagination. In the case of many of the runners-up, we had space to print only certain delightful highlights. The winner is Bill Davies of Vancouver, who receives \$25 for devising this fun-filled evening:

- 8:00 OUTER TOUCHSTONE. SF serial. Prairie boy lakes on singlehanded a giant body whirling out cd control across Canada.
- 8:30 DOWN KINESCOPE LANE. Excerpts from *The Plouffes* and *Cross Canada Hit Parade*.
- 9:00 THE NASHIONAL. Improvised by Knowlton Nash (sound only).
- 9:15 FIRESIDE CHAT. No. 427: Dr. Johnson reflects .
- 9:30 WAYNE! Canada's official funnyman remembers...
- 10:00 MUSICAMERA. Oratorio *Per Diem* featuring the CBC □ mss Band and a 1,000-voice choir from the Personnel Dept.
- 10:30 OTTAWA SQUARES. Bilingual quiz show: CRTC vs. CBC.
- 11:00 SIG DEAL. Genial Al Johnson hosts multicultural bingo. Sponsor: CBC Pension Fund.

### Honourable mentions:

- 8:00 LAMONT TILDEN REMEMBERS.
- 9:00 THEWEEKIN REVIEW. Produced by K-Tel.
- 9:05 MILK MAKES IT. Mr. Fix-It and Rex Loring bake a cake.
- 9:20 JOCKS ANONYMOUS. Highlights of the annual CBC-NFB chess tournament. Howie Meeker provides artificial colour.
- 9:30 QUIRKS AND QUACKS. David Suzuki invites some funky friends to a cloning s&on in his basement lab.
- 9:45 MUSIC IN A NUTSHELL. All the great symphonies are reduced to a few familiar bars.
- 10:00 CANADIAN FILM OF THE WEEK. Anne Murray persuades Jim Perry and Leslie Nielson to change banks. —Ron Stoltz, Ottawa

\* \* \*

- 8:00 SING ALONG WITH MICKS. An hours of toe-tapping Gregorian chant.
- 9:00 FRONT PAGE CHALICE. Berton, Sinclair et al. try to stump silversmiths from the Royal Ontario Museum.
- 10:00 STANLEY AND FRIENDS. Stanley Knowles, MP, and friends read selected passages from Hansard.
- 11:00 GOOD NEWS FOR MODERN NAN. *The National* with Charles Templeton.
- 11:30 ANOTHER MARTINI FOR MOTHER CABRINI. Convent soap opera. —Patrick MacAdam, Ottawa

\* \* \*

- 8:00 OURSELVES IN LOVE. Highlights of interviews by, with, and among Bruno Gerussl, Peter Gzowski, Adrienne

- Clarkson. Patrick Watson. Paul Soles, and Danny Finkleman.
- 9:00 **DALTON AND JUDY.** Dalton portrays Irving Layton, while Judy sings "Over the Rainbow."
- 9:30 **THE PETER PRINCIPLE.** Peter Gzowski, Peter Kent, John Peter, and Peter Puck reminisce and do magic tricks.
- 10:00 **CANADIAN LEISURE.** A tour of the singles bars of Brandon, Man. Special guests: Shirley Harmer and a taped 1958 interview with Lorne Greene.
- 10:30 **IN LOVE AGAIN.** The best of this evening's *Ourselves In Love* with analysis and sneering by Ron Collister.  
—Martin Levin, Toronto
- \*\*\*
- 8:00 **WONDERFUL WORLD OF BOOZE** Join CSC cameramen and technicians in a sociable hell-hour. (Picture trouble will last approximately 30 minutes: do not adjust your eel)
- 9:00 **SUPER SPECIAL.** One lull hour of entertaining commercial messages unbroken by sport or drama.  
—Norma Paul, Sackville, N.B.
- \*\*\*
- 9:00 **HISTORY OF CBC** (first of 12 pictorial masterpieces). Tonight: *Test Patterns in Review*.  
—Mrs. Margo Murky, Liverpool, N.S.
- \*\*\*
- 10:00 **THE SHUSTER COMEDY MINUTE** (hell a minute in Newfoundland).
- 11:00 **THE NATIONAL GOES COUNTRY-WIDE** Tommy Hunter sings the latest news.
- 11:30 **GRSATWEATHERFORECASTSOF 1882.**  
—Barry Baldwin, Calgary

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42 Books in Canada. December. 1978

## The editors recommend

THE FOLLOWING books were reviewed in the previous issue of *Books in Canada*. Our recommendations don't necessarily reflect the reviews:

### FICTION

**Stories for Late-Night Drinkers**, by Michel Tremblay, translated from the French by Michael Bullock, Intermedia. Psychological fables about evil from one of our leading playwrights.

**Abra**, by Joan Barfoot, McGraw-Hill Ryerson. A meticulously constructed first novel about a female Grey Owl.

### NON-FICTION

**Beading, Writing, and Riches: Education and the Socio-Economic Order in North America**, edited by Randle Nelson and David Nock, Between the Lines. Serious and intelligent essays on education, a rare And these days.

**Magic Moments from the Movies**, by Elwy Yost, Doubleday. Elwy's magic moments are everybody's magic moments.

**The Other Side of Hugh MacLennan**, edited by Elspeth Cameron. Macmillan. A combination of self-complacency, curiosity, and strong opinion make MacLennan me of the best essayists we have.

**Canada from the Newsstands: A Selection from the Best Canadian Journalism of the Past Thirty Years**, edited by Val Clery, Macmillan. Strong evidence that magazines do the bat job of telling us who we are.

### POETRY

**East end West: Selected Poems of George Faludy**, edited by Job" Robert Colombo, Hounslow Press. Inventiveness and energy from a Hungarian-born cosmopolitan.

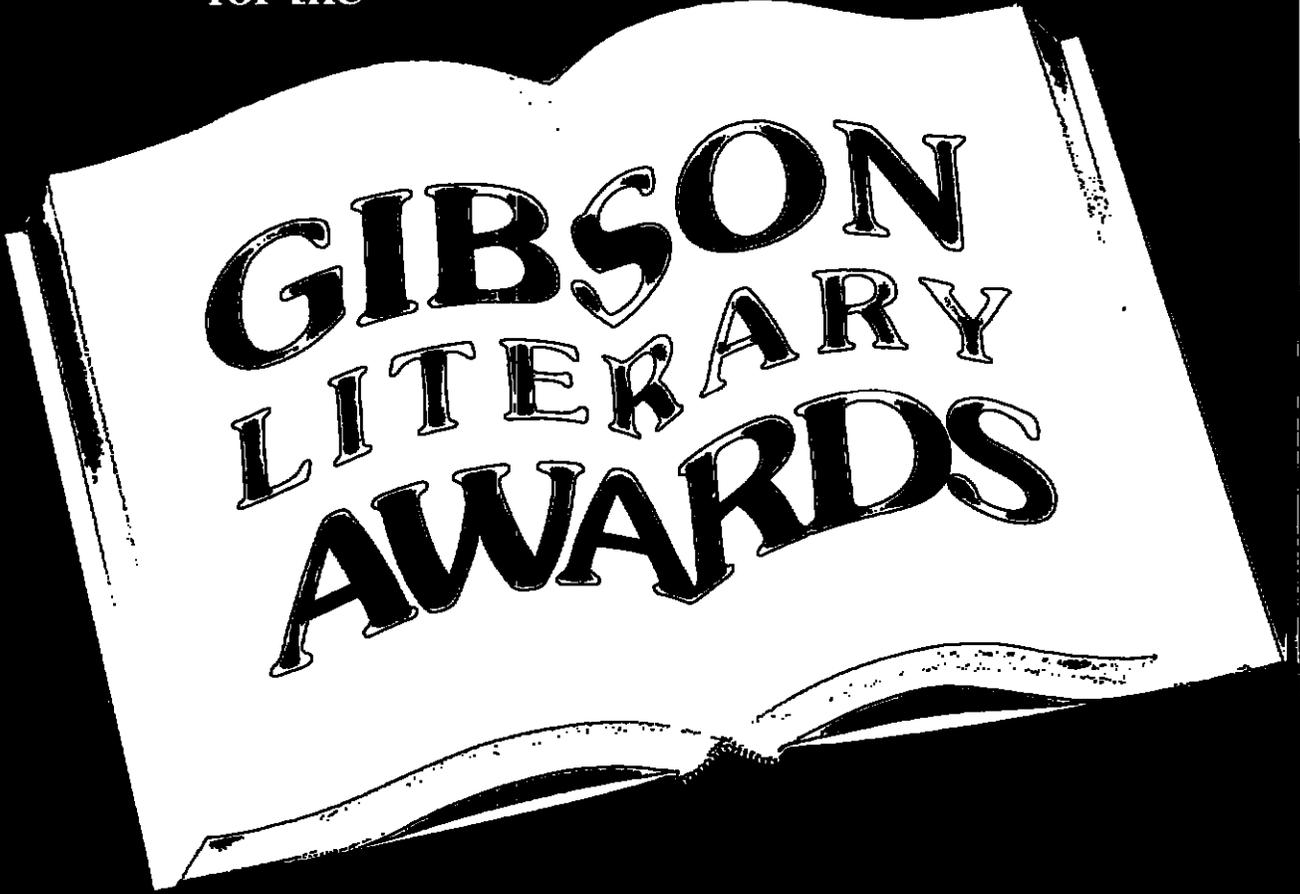
## Books received

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:

- Dominion Day in Jail**, by Chris Falers, Unfinished Monument Press.
- Journal**, by bp Nichol, Coach House.
- The Primitive Gentleman**, by Robert Oldham, published by the author.
- The Hockey Bibliography**, by Douglas J. Thom, OISE.
- The Cultural Connection**, by Bernard Ostry, M & S.
- The Dog Crisis**, by Iris Nowell, M & S.
- Pregnant and Alone**, by Anne Ross, M & S.
- Children on the Edge of Space**, by Mick Burris, Blue Mountain Books.
- Moving Out**, by Andre Bruneau, Musson.
- Women and American Trade Unions**, by James J. Kenneally, Eden Press.
- Daniel Defoe and the Status of Women**, by Shirleene Mason, Eden Press.
- Birth in Four Cultures**, by Brigitte Jordan, Eden Press.
- Northern Translations, Vol. II**, edited by Robert F. Keith and Janet B. Wright, Canadian Arctic Resources Committee.
- Wild Coffee and Tea Substitutes of Canada**, by Nancy J. Turner and Adam Szczawinski, National Museums of Canada.
- European Settlement and Development in North America**, essays edited by James R. Gibson, U of T Press.
- Double Exposure**, by Alden Nowlan, Brunswick Press.
- Winnipeg First Century**, by Ruben Bellan, Queenston House Publishing.

- Prisoner**, by Linda Pyke, Macmillan.
- Triptyque de la Mort**, by François Hébert, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- The Book of Insults**, by Nancy McPhee, Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Women on Women**, edited with an introductory essay by Ann B. Shter, York University.
- Play on the Water**, by Doug Beardley, Press Porcépique.
- The God in the Rattlers**, by Patrick White, Borealis Press.
- The World of Business**, by Terry G. Murphy et al., Wiley.
- Newfoundland Portfolio**, by Ben Hansen, Breakwater Books.
- Ontario Since 1867**, by Joseph Schull, M & S.
- Teaching Your Retarded Child**, by Margaret Anne Johnson, Gage.
- True Confections**, by Sandra Golieb, Musson.
- The Rhyming Horseman of the Qu'Appelle**, by Grant MacEwan, Western Producer Prairie Books.
- Now is a Far Country**, by John V. Hicks, Thisledown Press.
- Canadian Short Stories**, selected by Robert Weaver, Oxford.
- Where to Eat in Calgary and Edmonton**, by Bernice Evans and Judy Schultz.
- A Place Not Our Own**, photographs by John Paskivich, Queenston House.
- Together We Stand**, by Donald G. Swinburne, Gage.
- Ned Heaton**, by Frank Cosentino, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
- Joseph Brant**, by A. Roy Patric, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
- The Last of the Big Game Players**, by Fred Habacht, Vantage Press.
- Dragon Island**, by Jacques Godbout, translated by David Ellis, Musson.
- The Fugitive**, by Marie-Claire Blais, translated by David Lobdell, Oberon Press.
- A Cage of Bone**, by Jean-Guy Carrier, Oberon Press.
- City Boys**, by David Lewis Stein, Oberon Press.
- A Handbook of Business Terminology**, by J. Lyman MacLennan, General.
- The Clawed Wind**, by W. A. Kraft, Vesta Publications.
- Shadows**, by Christine Leclair-Arcand, Vesta Publications.
- Haywire Rainbow**, by Charles Noble, Press Porcépique.
- Gravity**, by Robert Flanagan, Press Porcépique.
- Selected Stories by Hugh Hood**, Oberon Press.
- 78: Best Canadian Stories**, edited by John Metcalf and Clarke Blaise, Oberon Press.
- The Undaunted Pioneer**, by W. J. Bursay, published by the author.
- Successful People Management**, by Ross E. Smith, Financial Post/Macmillan.
- Starting and Managing Your Own Small Business**, by Maurice Archer and Jerry White, Financial Post/Macmillan.
- The Best Modern Canadian Short Stories**, edited by Ivon Owen and Morris Wolfe, Hurig.
- Making Arrangements**, by Robert Harlow, M & S.
- From the Edge of Extinction**, by Darryl Stewari, M & S.
- Love Affair With a Cougar**, by Lyn Hancock, Doubleday.
- Tree of August**, by Mary Di Michele, Three Trees Press.
- Belhune: The Montreal Years**, by Wendell MacLeod, Libbie Park, and Stanley Ryerson, James Lorimer & Co.
- Out of Work**, by Cy Gopick, James Lorimer & Co.
- Industry in Decline**, by Richard Starks, James Lorimer & Co.
- Rising Prices**, by H. Lukin Robinson, James Lorimer & Co.
- Regional Disparities**, by Paul Phillips, James Lorimer & Co.
- The Left-Handed Spirit**, by Ruth Nichols, Macmillan.
- Charcoal's World**, by Hugh A. Dempsey, Western Producer Prairie Books.
- Land of Palm, Land of Promise**, translated by Harry Piniuta, Western Producer Prairie Books.
- Leonard Cohen**, by Stephen Scobie, Douglas & McIntyre.
- Black Gold with Grit**, by J. Joseph Fitzgerald, Gray's Publishing.
- Eight-five Years in Canada**, by S. J. Ferns and H. S. Ferns, Queenston House.
- Od Poems**, by E. F. Dyck, Coteau Books.
- Twenty Mortal Murders**, by Orlo Miller, Macmillan.
- Greetings from Canada**, by Allan Anderson and Betty Tomlinson, Macmillan.
- The Canadian Book of Lists**, by Jeremy Brown and David Ondaatje, Pagurian Press.
- The Wooling of a Lady**, by Steven Benstead, Queenston House.
- Baraka: The Poems of Nellie McClung**, Intermedia Press.
- Who Speaks for the Children?**, by Peter Silverman, Musson.
- Human Settlement Issues, I**, by Len Gertler, University of British Columbia Press.
- The Canadian Ocean Mail Clerk 1860-1887**, by Kenneth S. Mackenzie, National Postal Museum.
- Urban Prospects (revised)**, by John Wolforth and Roger Leigh, M & S.
- Dreamspeaker and Ten Eyes Ki and the Land Claims Question**, by Cass Hubert, Clarke Irwin.
- Remembering Roberts Creek 1889-1988**, by The Roberts Creek Historical Committee, published in association with Harbour Publishing.
- Albino Pheasants**, by Patrick Lane, Harbour Publishing.
- Deep Line**, by Kevin Roberts, Harbour Publishing.
- Endings**, by Hubert Evans, drawings by Robert Jack, Harbour Publishing.
- The Three Lives of Thrasher**, by Anthony Aparkak Thrasher, Griffin House.
- Teaching Drama**, by Greg Bau et al., CommCep Publishing.
- Teaching Short Fiction**, by Bruce Nesbitt and Jack Hodgins, CommCep Publishing.
- Translations I: Short Plays**, edited by Edward Peck, CommCep Publishing.
- Translations II: Short Fiction**, edited by Edward Peck, CommCep Publishing.
- Hijou Tillieum**, by Meguido Zola and Frances Brown, CommCep Publishing.
- Hijou Tumtum**, by Meguido Zola and Frances Brown, CommCep Publishing.
- Hijou Muckamuck**, by Meguido Zola and Frances Brown, CommCep Publishing.
- Hijou Waw-waw**, by Meguido Zola and Frances Brown, CommCep Publishing.
- Four Plays**, by Larry Fineberg, Playwrights Co-op.
- Modern Painting in Canada**, by Terry Fenton and Karen Wilkin, Hurig.

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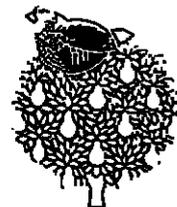
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