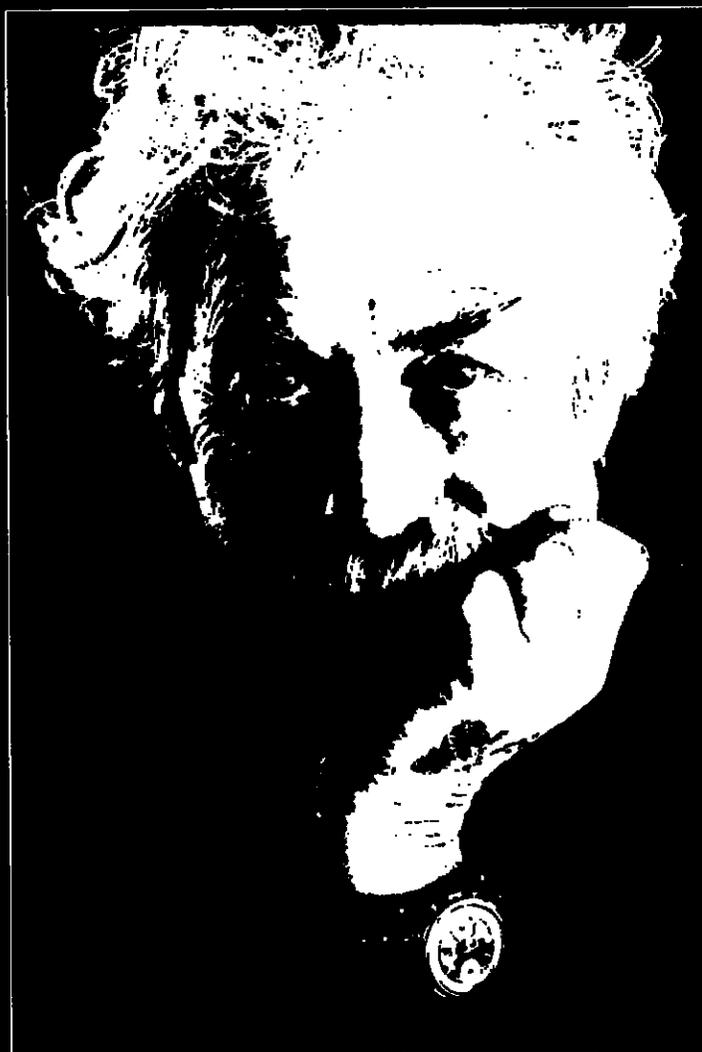


A NATIONAL REVIEW OF BOOKS

BOOKS IN CANADA

W.O. MITCHELL'S SECOND WIND



The search for Cornelius Krieghoff's grave
An overview of the season's art and gift books
Plus reviews of new books by Leon Rooke,
Kildare Dobbs, and Robin Skelton

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE \$9.95 A YEAR
Volume 10 Number 9
NOVEMBER 1981

BOOKS IN CANADA

FEATURES

Life Ain't Art. The false, folksy image of W.O. Mitchell. *By Wayne Grady*.....3
 Jake and the Id. W.O. Mitchell's sombre new novel, *How I Spent My Summer Holidays*. *By George Woodcock*6
 The Inner Voice. *Stephen Scobie* reviews two recent books by Leon Rooke8
 In the Gap. The quiet but dated wealth of Robin Skelton's *Collected Shorter Poems*. A review by *Toma Moon*.....10
 The Krieghoff Plot. *Eugene McNamara* dances on the gravesite of our pioneer painter12
 Polar Passion. An overview of the season's best art and gift books. *By Christopher Hume*.....14

REVIEWS

Pride and Fall: A Novella and Six Stories, by Kildare Dobbs16
 The Marriage Bed, by Constance Beresford-Howe.....18
 Vanishing Spaces: Memoirs of Louis Goulet, by Guillaume Charette.....19
 An Arctic Man: Sixty-Five Years in Canada's North, by Ernie Lyall; Great Bear: A Journey Remembered,
 by Frederick B. Watt; Expeditions to Nowhere, by Paddy Sherman20
 Loitering With Intent, by Muriel Spark.....22
 Eastern Sure, and Re-inventing the Wheel, by Lesley Choyce24
 The Victors and the Vanquished, by Earl McRae25
 Patton's Gap, by Richard Rohmer.....26
 A Woman With a Purpose: The Diaries of Elizabeth Smith, 1872-1884, edited by Veronica Strong-Boag.....28

DEPARTMENTS

On/Off/Set, by David Macfarlane28	English, Our English, by Bob Blackburn37
First Impressions, by Douglas Hill30	Interview with John Moss, by Geoff Hancock38
The Browser, by Morris Wolfe31	Letters.....39
On the Racks, by Anne Collins33	CanWit No. 6741
In Translation, by Paul Stuewe34	The Editors Recommend.....42
	Books Received42

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Books in Canada is published 10 times a year, with the assistance of the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council, by the Canadian Review of Books Ltd., 366 Adelaide Street East, Suite 432, Toronto, Ont. M5A 3X9. Telephone: (416) 363-5426. Available to the public free in subscribing book stores, schools, and libraries. Individual subscription rate: \$9.95 a year (\$15 overseas). Back issues available on microfilm from: McLaren Micropublishing, P.O. Box 972, Station F, Toronto, Ont. M4Y 2N9. Indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index, Member of the CPPA. Member of the Bulk Distribution Audit Division of CCAB. Material is commissioned on the understanding that both parties are bound by the terms of the standard PWAC contract. The editors cannot be held responsible for unsolicited material. Second Class Mail — Registration No. 2593. Contents © 1981. Typesetting by Jay Tee Graphics Ltd.

ISSN 0045-2564

LIFE AIN'T ART

Behind the folksy image W.O. Mitchell contrives on the lecture circuit lies a highly structured and sophisticated mind

By WAYNE GRADY

THE GRANGE IS an elegantly restored Georgian mansion attached to the Art Gallery of Ontario. It's open to the public every day but Monday, when it is closed for cleaning. On this particular Monday it has been lent to *Maclean's* as the location for a cover photograph featuring Margaret Atwood, Robertson Davies, Timothy Findley, and W.O. Mitchell. The four novelists are huddled together around an 18th-century brass newel post, just as their new novels will by now be propped up cheek-by-jowl in the windows of the nation's book stores. As Margaret Atwood — the youngest of the group (she turns 42 this month) — wryly observes, the caption of the photo could be, "Canadian literature comes of age."

"Ah," says Findley, "but what age?"

W.O. Mitchell is too busy sneezing to contribute to the repartee. "Godammit," he says softly, and sneezes again. "There must be something in this dusty old dump that I'm allergic to." He wipes his eyes with a wrinkled handkerchief and glares around the foyer. "I'll bet it's the horsehair in that rotten sofa over there."

"Careful now, Bill," chimes in Robertson Davies. "You're talking about my favourite period."

"Oh Christ!" Mitchell replies, sneezing. "You realize, don't you," he says, turning to the photographer, "that I've been standing on this one leg for half an hour? It's killing me."

"And I," adds Davies, "am being gouged to death by this newel post you have me leaning on."

Atwood, sitting comfortably on a Regency chair at the foot of the stairs, looks up at them and smiles. "We all have to suffer for art," she says.

"Damn right," says Mitchell. The photographer asks them once again to squeeze together more closely. Robertson Davies and Mitchell in the back row oblige, and Mitchell sneezes twice, "Jesus Christ, Rob," he says to the former Master of Massey College. "It's not the bloody horsehair after all — I'm allergic to your whiskers."

SUCH "IRREVERENCE," as he himself later calls it, comes naturally to Mitchell. Most of his writing has been an attempt to recreate that precise moment when innocence becomes experience, to recapture a genuine inquisitiveness about the world that goes beyond simple disrespect. There's a lot of Mitchell in Brian O'Connell, the young hero of *Who Has Seen the Wind*, who one day goes to Knox Presbyterian church to get God after his cantankerous grandmother, and who startles the minister's wife by complaining about "the goddam-drought." Like Brian O'Connell, Mitchell is not driven by a desire to shock, but by a need to know.

Mitchell was born in Weyburn, Sask., on March 13, 1914. His mother had been a nurse in New York, where one of her patients was Mark Twain — Mitchell, in fact, has been known to claim that Mark Twain might even be his father, but since Twain died in 1910 it isn't likely. His real father was Ormond S. Mitchell, the Weyburn druggist, who had helped pay his way through the University of Toronto by giving poetry recitals. William Ormond was the second of four sons; the father died when William was five. When he was 12 his mother moved him and his two younger brothers to St. Petersburg, Florida, but William returned to Weyburn each summer and finished his high school there.

Because of a tubercular arm he was kept out of sports until his late teens, but he then became an accomplished springboard diver and gymnast. These, he says, taught him two things. The first was grace: "I had a grade 11

teacher use the word 'grace,'" he told an interviewer in 1971. "I said, 'What is it?' 'You dive, don't you?' she said. 'Is it easy?' And I said, 'No, it isn't easy. You whip the board two hours a day trying to get your height, trying to improve your hurdle, get your tuck, get a better entry, everything, day after day after day.' 'Yes,' she said, 'but it looks easy. Isn't that what grace is . . . ?'" The second lesson was how to be a good Existentialist: "All I'm saying finally," he told another inter-



PHOTOGRAPHS, INCLUDING COVER, BY JOHN DEEVES

viewer recently, "is that what I have to settle for, having been a springboard diver — and being aware of balance — and an acrobat, and a clown: there is no absolute victory or answer. You simply have to be a good balancer."

In 1931 he entered pre-med at the University of Manitoba, then switched to philosophy under R.C. Lodge, who had taught Marshall McLuhan and later wrote *The Philosophy of Plato* (1956). Lodge taught Mitchell to think of himself as "a Platonist with Presbyterian overtones," which might have been good for philosophy (in which he won a gold medal) but was terrible for literature: as an undergraduate he wrote a Kafka-esque novel about a man who turned into a goldfish and blew bubbles in Morse code.

After three years of university he set off on a Greek tramp steamer to tour England and France — the trip demonstrates Mitchell's penchant for flamboyant disaster. On the boat over he was seasick. Two hours after going ashore in London he was drugged and robbed by a dockside landlady. In Paris, which he invaded on a beat-up old motorbike, he was arrested for running over a gendarme. In Soissons he was in turn run over by a revengeful streetcar. When he ran out of money he got a job riding behind the cyclists in the Tour de France, throwing leaflets to the crowd advertising a brand of athletic supporter. At Biarritz, the smartest of France's Atlantic resorts, he entertained the guests at the Hotel de Palais with a dangerous high-diving act. Back in Paris he helped an Austrian organ-grinder's monkey pass a tin cup. His mother sent him the fare home. While in Seattle, waiting for a job on a ship that would take him to South America, he took a course on short-story writing and drama at the University of Washington that knocked all thoughts of trapped goldfish out

of his head: "They taught me that successful writers write about people and places they know."

In 1940 Mitchell enrolled at the University of Alberta to complete his B.A. In order to eat he took up various odd jobs: high diver at a carnival show; seller of classified ads for the Calgary *Herald*; of oil-well royalties; of encyclopedias door-to-door. While selling a set to Reverend S.N. Hirtle, a Baptist minister, he asked the minister's daughter Merna for a date. Two years later he graduated, sold his first Jake and the Kid story to *Maclean's* ("You Gotta Teeter"), married Merna, and landed a job as a teacher in Castor, Alta.

By 1944 their first son, Ormond, had arrived and the Mitchells settled in High River, about 40 miles south of Calgary. Mitchell taught for a while and wrote more Jake and the Kid stories and, in 1947, *Who Has Seen the Wind* was published by Macmillan (Wallace Stegner at *Atlantic Monthly* had read it first and liked it; Stegner's own novel about life in Saskatchewan during the 1918 influenza epidemic, *On a Darkling Plain*, had appeared in 1940). *Who Has Seen the Wind* earned \$14,000 in royalties in its first year; Mitchell quit teaching and built the home in High River that he and his growing family (Hugh was born in 1946, and Willa would be born in 1955) would occupy until Mitchell became the University of Calgary's first writer-in-residence in 1968.

During the 1950s — after serving as *Maclean's* fiction editor in Toronto from 1948-51 — Mitchell wrote two failed novels: *The Alien* and *Roses Are Difficult Here*. It wasn't exactly a barren period for him. The CBC was running the Jake and the Kid stories, with John Drainie as Jake and Billy-Mae Richards as the Kid, from 1948 to 1958. When Gordon Sinclair suggested in the Toronto *Star* that even that display of creativity was "drying up," Mitchell wrote a war correspondent named St. Clair Jordan into the next episode who was too weak-kneed to stop a runaway horse. *The Alien* was published piecemeal in *Maclean's*, won that magazine's \$5,000 fiction award in 1953, and was later expanded and turned into *The Vanishing Point* (1973). But neither it nor *Roses Are Difficult Here* ought to be considered part of the Mitchell canon. "In both cases," says Mitchell, "they were what frightens a writer most. The time when a piece of art is under its most hazard — a sculptor told me this — is when, too quickly, too easily, it happens too beautifully. I wrote both those novels in under two years, and it is Romantic horseshit the idea that creativity is the spontaneous bubbling up of a nightingale's song — dirty rotten crap. It isn't. Oh, you might wish it could happen that way, that it didn't take time and there weren't selection and deletion and false starts and covering up your tracks. I could not write a novel in under three years and I'm probably closer to four."

After 13 of the Jake and the Kid stories were published as a book in 1961 Mitchell's writing life seems to have found a smoother track. *Jake and the Kid* won the Stephen Leacock Award the following year, and *The Kite* — not a blockbuster but not, technically, a failure either — also came out in 1962. Edward McCourt noted that "emphasis on the anecdote at the expense of the overall design is Mitchell's greatest weakness," but also that parts of the novel "are as fine as anything he has written." Michael Hornyanski, reviewing *The Kite* in *Tamarack*, said it was a better novel than Brian Moore's *An Answer From Limbo*, which came out the same year.

In 1968 Mitchell became the University of Calgary's first artist-in-residence, and from then until 1973 he taught creative writing ("Next to writing," he says, "I love teaching best"). The University of Saskatchewan awarded him an LL.D. in 1972, and the following year both the University of Ottawa and the University of Brandon gave him a D.Litt. Two other events of significance in 1973: he was made an Officer of the Order of Canada, and *The Vanishing Point* was published.

According to Mitchell, *The Vanishing Point* is "a dreadfully

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serious novel, and very carefully thought out." As Carlyle Sinclair, the white teacher in the novel, comes to accept the ways of the Indians as well as his love for Victoria Rider, who has run away from a hospital, the cyclical theme becomes apparent: "Man," he says, "either in historical perspective or in a cultural family or as an individual, periodically seems to be in danger of destruction, when he seems to have nothing to do but be hopeless and despair. I use the analogy of the vanishing point because it is an artificial convention — it does not in fact exist, if one keeps travelling through."

This is a less pessimistic — less existential — view than the one that informed *The Kite*, in which Daddy Sherry's philosophy is ultimately fatalistic. "He is saying we're all dropped from a height . . . and we're all falling together, and we're all going to end up as strawberry jam on a pavement below. But, in the meantime, you say to the next guy, 'Hey, hey! Watch! I can do a one-and-a-half, I can do a full-gainer, I can do a full-twist, I can do a backwards-spring-forward-cutaway!' And that's what you can do, and a lot of it is style." *The Vanishing Point* is more optimistic but fared no better with the critics.

In fact, as a novelist Mitchell has never really recovered from the drought of the 1950s. He is still thought of, unfairly, as "the folksy old Foothills fart," as he puts it, who wrote *Who Has Seen the Wind* and those regional tales we used to listen to on the radio. *Who Has Seen the Wind* has become the best-selling novel in Canadian history — it passed *Maria Chapdelaine* years ago — and yet since then he has had to depend on teaching, his highly successful stage plays, and the lecture circuit for his income. "It's easier to make a living in Canada today as a stage playwright than as a novelist," he says. "Look: — I will have four different productions of plays this year: Theatre 2000 in Ottawa, Theatre Calgary, the MTC, and the Citadel in Edmonton. The last three will gross between \$150,000 and \$175,000, and the playwright's royalty is 10 per cent. Three times \$15,000 is a hell of a lot of dough, I think." *Back to Beulah*, Mitchell's 1973 play that won that year's Chalmers Award, has had 14 productions and is being filmed this spring. The stage version of *The Kite* was originally produced by Theatre Calgary, went to Toronto for the 1981 Theatre Festival, and the Citadel is now proposing to take it to the Ford Theatre in Washington and then on to Broadway.

In a way, Mitchell has encouraged the folksy old Foothills fart image, the country philosopher à la Twain, Leacock, or Robert Frost. In 1958 Mackenzie Porter described Mitchell in a *Maclean's* profile as the severe owner of "a fierce military mustache . . . a stentorian voice, an aromatic pipe, and a taste for thick tweeds, knitted ties, and Edwardian waistcoats." Today he looks more like Mark Twain as Mitchell's mother might have known him: long, white, fly-away hair that frames his bright, watery, penetrating eyes; a soft-spoken manner; a bushy mustache yellowed from years of Garden Mint snuff. His speech has the country-store thump of Leacock in it: "I quit smoking 25 years ago," he says. "I chewed for two years, and now I take snuff. I love tobacco in any way, shape, or form. If there was a nicotine suppository I'd go that way too." When he played Leacock on Patrick Watson's television program *The Titans* recently, he didn't need much makeup — he looked more like Leacock playing W.O. Mitchell. The resemblance, in fact, is more than skin deep. Compare Mitchell's statement — "I can't think of two things that affected me more, gut and cerebral, than *Alice in Wonderland* and William Blake" — with Leacock's: "Personally, I would sooner have written *Alice in Wonderland* than the whole *Encyclopaedia Britannica*."

THE FOLKSY IMAGE may work on the lecture circuit, but it is essentially contrived. As the gold medal in philosophy suggests, Mitchell is a highly structured and sophisticated thinker, and it was not out of a desire to appear camp that the prestigious

Banff School of Fine Arts hired him five years ago to restructure and revive its creative writing program. Before that he had been writer-in-residence at the University of Toronto (he lived in Massey College, where, presumably, he was regularly irreverent to Robertson Davies), and for the past three winters has been writer-in-residence at the University of Windsor. All this in spite of the fact that he believes writers are born, not taught: "You don't teach writing," he says. "All you can do is walk with the writer. You issue them an invitation to write every day, every week, every month, but you don't ask them to do the impossible, something a professional writer can't do, such as give out four good short stories before Christmas. My idea is that you start much further upstream: a writer must begin by prospecting the past. Whatever flows to the top of consciousness, get it down — no questions, no criticism, no concern about succeed or fail, just start finding. After they find this stored past, this lumber, it may suggest or constellate the creative leap 'What if . . . ?' And if God intended them to be writers they will have had a special listening-spectator quality; there will be an infinite amount of stored material. And through this I can then illustrate every craft point you want: point of view, dialogue, characterization, everything."

In other words, the first duty of the writer is to capture — or recapture — life. But that is only the first step. "There are really two hurdles," Mitchell says. "One hurdle is to plug into and find and work out of life — and not dish off and contrive and carpenter from the top of your head. The second hurdle is more difficult, and most writers never make it. I call this hurdle, 'Life Ain't Art' — at Banff one year they printed up W.O. Mitchell T-shirts with 'Life Ain't Art' written on them, because I say it so often. What it means, in effect, is that 'Now, kid, the magician doesn't take a live rabbit by magic out of a hat, and there would be a hell of a lot of blood and guts around if he really did saw that lady in half. Now you have to go to the illusion of life.'"

Mitchell's new novel, *How I Spent My Summer Holidays*, is a perfect illustration of this esthetic. In it he returns to his mythical reconstruction of Weyburn with the story of two boys, Hughie and Peter, who with the help of an adult, King Motherwell, hide an escaped lunatic in a cave they have dug out on the prairie. Although the novel grew out of Mitchell's Leacockian persona, it goes far beyond it very quickly. "After *The Vanishing Point*," Mitchell says about the novel's genesis, "I went to work on a novel to be set within a fictional university, to involve thematically a study of corruption. I worked on it for two years, had a stack of papers that high" — he holds his hand about a foot above his teacup — "then this thing simply thrust itself in the way. What happened was that I had written a lot of pieces and didn't know what to do with them, so they ended up being performance pieces for a one-man show or an address at a conference or something. Then Doug Gibson at Macmillan thought I should put them together to make a book, something like *W.O. Mitchell In Concert*." When Mitchell began to assemble the material, however, something like that second hurdle took over, and he began to see the miscellany in terms of a novel. "I had a thing about a boy digging a cave and blowing up his grandfather, and that boy becoming a psychiatrist, and as I looked at that it sort of teed me off — I got to thinking how an important part of our community was the Weyburn Mental Hospital, and there was a guy called Bill the Barber, whom I call Bill the Shepherder, who was an escape artist, and so I got to where everything was the truth and also was a more creative, more dramatic lie."

Doug Gibson is close to the truth when he says that "if *Who Has Seen the Wind* is Mitchell's *Tom Sawyer*, then *How I Spent My Summer Holidays* is his *Huckleberry Finn*." What Lionel Trilling has said about the two Twain novels is equally true of the two Mitchell novels: "*Tom Sawyer* has the truth of honesty . . . *Huckleberry Finn* has this kind of truth too, but

it also has the truth of moral passion; it deals directly with the virtue and depravity of man's heart." Mitchell's novel, however, places more emphasis on the depravity than on the virtue. For Hughie and Peter there is no final arrival at the mouth of the great river, as there is for Tom and Huck; there is only death and deceit and the grim solace of a grain of innocence rescued from the carnage of experience.

IN THE DINING ROOM of the Hampton Court Hotel, where Mitchell and his wife invariably stay when they're in Toronto, Mitchell orders a bacon and tomato sandwich and tea. The waitress knows him well ("I could never get in trouble here if I came without Merna"), and she brings a second pot of hot water with the tea. Mitchell half-fills his cup with water and tops it up with tea, sloshing much of it into the saucer as he does so. This he casually dumps on to the carpeted floor. While in Toronto working for *Maclean's* in the late '40s he acquired a reputation for eccentricity and a loathing of big cities, but these days he seems to have mellowed.

"I never really minded cities," he says. (He is still sneezing.

This time there is a strong smell of epoxy cement in the hotel: it must be that; it couldn't be the snuff.) "I work out of my own geography, and in Toronto I discovered there was a nice detachment. It was bracing to talk craft, as we did here and didn't in High River too much. But after a while we realized we had come to know an awful lot of talker-composers, talker-painters, talker-writers. If you go into a community of 2,000 in the foothills, it's no good talking about your art, nor could you go around in a beret and a cummerbund and drink absinthe and smoke dope and call yourself an artist. They'd think you were an idiot."

So he returned to the Foothills to write, passing up the instant salaries and the easy commerce with other writers (he was the first editor to publish writers as diverse as Ray Bradbury and Ernest Buckler) in order to keep in contact with something more vital: the ability to create eternity out of his own geography of prairie and sky and wind. It is his need to *know* that ultimately must be satisfied. "I believe with Socrates," he says, raising a pinch of Garden Mint to his right nostril, "that the unexamined life is not worth living." □

FEATURE REVIEW

Jake and the id

As sombre as his earlier work was sunlit,
W.O. Mitchell's new novel is
permeated by an alarming sense of evil

By **GEORGE WOODCOCK**

How I Spent My Summer Holidays,
by W.O. Mitchell, Macmillan, 256
pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9599 9).

W.O. MITCHELL IS one of those writers, rather common in Canada, who have gained a considerable repute on the basis of a comparatively small amount of work. Not that Mitchell had been other than industrious, but much of his writing was consumed by the ephemeral medium of radio, for which in the 1950s he wrote more than 300 scripts in his *Jake and the Kid* series, whose only lasting remnant has been a relatively brief volume of short stories. Essentially, as a writer, Mitchell has been judged on the basis of his three novels, and two of these, *The Kite*, and *The Vanishing Point*, have generally and I think justifiably been regarded as less effective than his first novel, *Who Has Seen the Wind*.

Who Has Seen the Wind had a double appeal. It could be read as a documentary novel about prairie life at a time

when Canadians were seeking to establish through fiction some sense of the way physical and cultural elements interacted in their country's life. It appeared (in 1947) during the same decade as Sinclair Ross's *As for Me and My House* and Hugh MacLennan's *Barometer Rising*, but Mitchell has always seemed to me less interested and therefore less penetrating in his vision of Canadian social realities in his time than either Ross or MacLennan.

I suspect this feeling of shallowness, combined with a kind of softness in the writing and imagery (in spite of the passages in which the cruelty of existence was rather self-consciously displayed), was due to the other aspect of *Who Has Seen the Wind*: the story of a boy growing up, learning his way into maturity. Here the predilection of the early Mitchell for seeing life as a mixture of comedy and melodrama betrayed him, so that, as Hugo McPherson once remarked, the growing and experiencing boy, Brian O'Connell, "learns less how to face life than to avoid it by making it

a fantasy of humour characters." The real reason for the success of *Who Has Seen the Wind* was, as McPherson also pointed out, the "charm of Mitchell's recreation of boyhood." And the tone the book assumes in one's memory is indeed predominantly that of charm, a quality as elusive as the wind stirring in the tall prairie grasses and, as far as fiction is concerned, a secondary quality.

Whatever its weaknesses, *Who Has Seen the Wind* was so much better than his other two novels that one was always tempted to see Mitchell, like Sinclair Ross (in whose work a similar disparity occurs), as essentially a one-book man. I suspect that after *How I Spent My Summer Holidays* we shall be more inclined to see him as a two-book man.

In a superficial way, *How I Spent My Summer Holidays* resembles *Who Has Seen the Wind*, since it concerns the way a boy learns about life's realities in a small prairie town. But from that point onward the resemblances begin to thin out, for the humour in *How I Spent My Summer Holidays* is bitter and sardonic,

and there is little charm in either the characters or the experiences through which Hugh, the central character and narrator, encounters life. For the realities he meets are a more sombre company than those of *Who Has Seen the Wind*; they are death, insanity, and sex in its evil aspect.

The village of my prairie boyhood [Hugh tells us] was not really one unified community; it contained several societies distinct within the larger constellation. The largest and most dominant was adult of course, but our child society was real and separate, and we tried to keep it for our own. The other ones were slightly removed from the town itself: the Mental Hospital sodality to the east, and the one to the northwest that celebrated life out at Sadie Rossdance's three little cottages. That comes to four. I cannot recall any great flow of understanding among them.

There may not be a flow of understanding, but there is a flow of action, and the dark little worlds of the Mental Hospital and Sadie Rossdance's rural bordello impinge on the lives of the boys whose favourite occupation is to dig caves in which they can secrete themselves from the world.

A cave that Hugh and his friend Peter

have dug in the open prairie is pre-empted by an inarticulate and violent escaped lunatic, Bill the Shepherder, and the boys enter into a conspiracy with King Motherwell, the local bootlegger,



poolroom keeper, and general enemy of society, to feed and conceal Bill from the pursuit headed by the coyote-hunting Inspector Kydd of the RCMP. There are many alarms when discovery seems near, and Sadie's whores and the harmless lunatics who are allowed to wander the countryside provide darkly humorous

diversions. Then, one day when the hunt seems to be closing in, Hugh goes to the cave and finds a body partly eaten by coyotes that he thinks is Bill the Shepherder. It is in fact King's wife Bella, a beautiful graduate of Sadie Rossdance's cottages. Soon afterward the Shepherder's body is found in the river, and it is assumed that he killed Bella in a fit of violence and that King, who had begun to behave very strangely, killed him in revenge. King is tried, found guilty but insane, and finally hangs himself in the Mental Hospital.

The Mental Hospital is one pole of the novel, the fate that haunts the minds of the boys like a punishment. But Sadie Rossdance's brothel is the other pole, for sex as evil threads through the whole novel, and sex as good never appears. Bill the Shepherder is a tertiary syphilitic; Bella, when King takes her out of the brothel and marries her, brings the gift of venereal disease, which may explain his eventual madness; the grotesque lesbian figure of Mrs. Inspector Kydd strides through the novel with her riding crop, violently assaulting Hugh's mother and pursuing an affair with Bella. It is when King finds that Bella has been slipping back to Sadie

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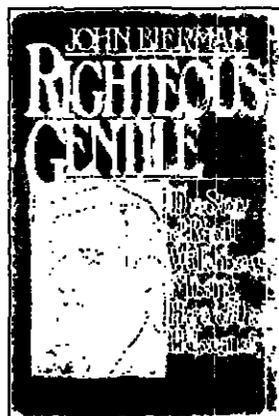
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Rosdance's, and Hugh tells him that she has accepted an expensive dress from Mrs. Inspector Kydd, that he — and not Bill the Shepherd — kills Bella and stuffs her body into the cave. Long afterward, when he returns to the village as an adult, Hugh realizes how he was

drawn into this pattern of evil.

How I Spent My Summer Holidays is a novel as sombre as *Who Has Seen the Wind* is sunlit; it is the dark side of Mitchell's moon. Melodrama flourishes, and many of the characters are two-dimensional Hallowe'en cutouts, but an

alarming sense of the reality and proximity of evil permeates the book. This is not a great novel, not even in every respect a good novel, but it compels one's attention with a vision that seems to have stepped straight out of the Puritan nightmare. □

FEATURE REVIEW

The inner voice

Whooping and hollering, cajoling or complaining, Leon Rooke's characters are victims of their own extravagant rhetoric

By **STEPHEN SCOBIE**

Death Suite, by Leon Rooke, ECW Press, 175 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 920302 01 X).

The Magician in Love, by Leon Rooke, Aya Press, 93 pages, \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 920544 23 1).

LEON ROOKE HAS been publishing fiction since 1963, but it's only in the last couple of years that he has really made his mark in Canada. In 1980 Oberon Press could cheerfully describe *Cry Evil* as his second book of stories, when in fact it was his fifth. His novel *Fat Woman* (also 1980) attracted a good deal of attention, and was on the short list for both the *Books in Canada* First Novel Award and the Governor General's Award. Several critics raised the objection that *Fat Woman* wasn't large enough (sic) to be a novel — though that is irrelevant to the terms of the Governor General's Award, which is for "fiction," and irrelevant too, it could be argued, to a true estimation of the book's worth. Call it a short novel, or a long short-story, or a medium-sized novella, or anything you like, it's still a remarkable piece of writing, and it deserved the recognition it received.

Now the prolific Mr. Rooke gives us his third and fourth books in just over a year: *The Magician in Love*, another long narrative of debatable classification, and *Death Suite*, a new collection of stories, in which — so the problematically purple cover promises us — "deep feeling and wild imagination, the familiar and extraordinary, walk side by side." Indeed, one feature of Rooke's fiction has been the way the ordinary

lives of ordinary people coexist with the most extravagant and bizarre events and are presented in exuberantly experimental forms. One recent reviewer has gone so far as to suggest that Rooke "uses novel forms to cover a lack of real substance in his work."

Such a comment is, of course, distressingly naive in its simplistic division of form and content. It would be more profitable to suggest that Rooke's form is his content: that the wildness, the exuberance, the grotesqueness, and the sudden tonal shifts from fantasy to the catching and placing of realistic detail in the context of humdrum existence, are all as relevant thematically as they are dazzling technically. One key to such an approach is Rooke's insistence on *voice*.

It was this aspect of his work that, unsurprisingly, endeared him to Robert Kroetsch, the only one of *Books in Canada's* panel of judges to pick *Fat Woman* as his winner for the First Novel Award. "I put the five books back on the shelf," Kroetsch wrote, "and asked myself which I would reread. I chose *Fat Woman*, surely because of Rooke's ear for language. I began, again, to enter that fully realized world of appetite and speech." Anyone who has heard Rooke reading his own work could easily testify to the completeness of this entry into a world of speech. Whooping and hollering, cajoling or complaining, Rooke's characters meet the world at an interface of language; their perception is their rhetoric.

One of Rooke's central themes, then, is the way people become trapped in their rhetoric. Perception as speech and

speech as perception form a vicious circle of solipsism: Ella Mae, the fat woman, is trapped not only in the folds of her flesh but in the linguistic strategies of her 170-page inner monologue. Similarly, in *Death Suite*, we find Mama Tuddi, the TV faith-healer-cum-Double-Ola-salesperson, caught inside a miasma of fundamentalist sales talk that cannot be pierced even by the realities of death or the challenge of a rival rhetoric. Or Rebecca, in "Lady Godiva's Horse," whose rhetoric of semi-denigration turns her life into a series of self-fulfilling prophecies of doom, and for whom every sexual experience, rewarding or unrewarding, is blandly flattened out into "exquisite." Then there is the eponymous heroine of "Sixteen-Year-Old Susan March Confesses to the Innocent Murder of All the Devious Strangers Who Would Drag Her Down": the narrative voice here is not just a fancy way of dressing up a conventional story of murder and seduction; the voice is the story, the story is Susan's obsessive internal dialogue with the projected presence of the father who deserted her, the absent male who must be affirmed and denied, fantasized and rejected, slept with and drowned.

In *The Magician in Love*, the rhetoric takes slightly different forms. The story is a fable, and the voice is not so much a character's as it is the author's, relating the story in a style that keeps realism at arm's length while never quite abandoning it, and maintains a tone of witty, slightly puzzled detachment. The Magician's love for his mistress, Beabontha, is based upon a rhetoric of illusion —

fruit appears on the branches of the dead trees, rivals who shake hands are left holding flowers — and when it collapses it destroys not only the characters but the whole social fabric surrounding them. Yet what else is there, in fiction, except illusion? "Fact," the Magician claims (in a "diatribe" that sends his audience to sleep), "is illusion honed down to a condition we might call restrained." And illusion itself, to complete once more the solipsistic circle, "is perception in reverse."

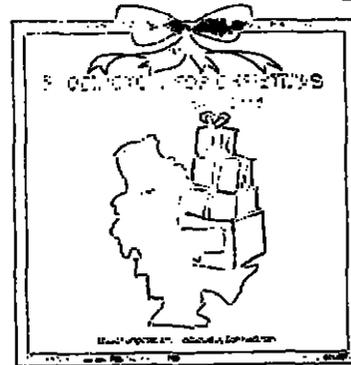
Rooke's art is one of performance, of impersonation, and the virtuoso brilliance of his writing (which may appear suspect in the drab world of many Canadian novels and critics) is again thematically essential, not merely entertaining and decorative, in two ways. First, he must depend upon the inventiveness and energy of the writing in order to enter into each of these "fully realized world[s] of appetite and speech"; his characters are themselves virtuosos of illusion and self-deception, and he must match their technique in order to portray them. But second, by playing the role of impersonator, or ventriloquist, for so many *different* voices, Rooke draws attention to his own "performing self" (in Richard Poirier's phrase), the author distinct from his creations. "A good ventriloquist," writes the Magician, "must first decide what it is he wants to say" (my emphasis). So Rooke's performance also contains an edge of irony; implicit in the tone is the awareness that holds back from these realized worlds that makes us see how hollow and desperate they are.

Consider a sentence like this, from *Death Suite*: "My Dream Girl, he say to friends, she like this: and he slice his hands through the air like what he really want is a Coca-Cola bottle." The observation is exact, as is the colloquial tone of speech; the gesture is convincing, but so is the author's irony, the unstated comment on the confusion of ideals. In Susan March's monologue, a powerboat explosion is described thus: "then in the darkness the sudden meliorative burst of flames and noise and shattered fragments rising in the smooth darkness looping into sky and falling in thinnest silence with no more mark on the water's roof than the summer rain." The sinister beauty of the image ("water's roof"), and the gravity of the unusual adjective "meliorative" are not just instances of "fine writing": they are exact representations of Susan's morbid consciousness, and of Rooke's ironic awareness of that consciousness.

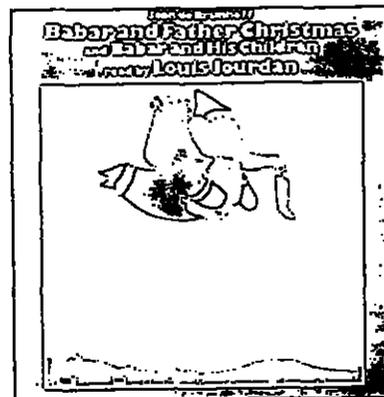
One final instance of Rooke's gifts for the unexpected observation and the memorable turn of phrase: "A small

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Sony radio with digital clock was on its back . . . leafing through the minutes ever so slowly, as if it could not find the time it was looking for." Leon Rooke, it

seems safe to say, has found his time. The publication of these two books, together with the forthcoming special issue of *Canadian Fiction Magazine*

devoted to his work, should establish him as one of the major and authentic voices in contemporary Canadian writing. □

FEATURE REVIEW

In the gap

Robin Skelton is of an age that believed poetry should feed us, not fly at us bringing blood. His work is filled with a sense of quiet wealth

By TOMA MOON

The *Collected Shorter Poems, 1947-1977*, by Robin Skelton, Sono Nis Press, 352 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919462 79 0).

BORN IN YORKSHIRE in 1925, Robin Skelton came to Canada at the age of 37 to accept a post as a professor of English at the University of Victoria. He taught in that department until 1973 when he became the founding chairman of the university's department of creative writing. Since 1971 he has been sole editor of the *Malahat Review*, an international literary journal which he co-founded with John Peter in 1967; the head of Sono Nis Press, and next year will take office as the president of the Canadian League of Poets in Toronto.

Functioning in his early days in Victoria as what he terms a "one-man literary movement," Skelton has in the intervening years acted as godfather-cum-midwife to the phenomenon that has been called the West Coast Renaissance — discovering, teaching, encouraging, supporting, and publishing an astonishing number of gifted poets, writers, and artists on this coast. At the same time he has produced nearly 65 books and pamphlets, including critical editions, anthologies, symposia, criticism, local history, and 27 books and chap-books of his own poetry.

The Collected Shorter Poems covers 30 years and represents what Skelton wishes "to be known as the canon of my work" for that period, omitting his satirical verse, translations, longer poems, and the work of the pseudonymous Georges Zuk. The collection has been grouped thematically rather than chronologically under such headings as

"Happenings," "In Cornwall," "Bestiary" and "Amores": an unfortunate decision, which despite the index in which all poems are dated, obscures the sense of poetic development that is surely one of the most interesting and important functions of such a collection.

As a poet, Skelton can perhaps best be described as belonging to a class of educated Englishmen to whom the language was a thing long ago tamed, rendered a sophisticated and complex structure on which men could depend to express all possible ideas and emotions. After the Second World War, when things fell apart, many writers began to use English as though they felt this inheritance had been devalued, as though they suspected it was the wrong currency for their needs. The traditional richness of expression in English poetry began to fall in on itself, its vocabulary shrinking in an effort to rid itself of artifice. The class of men who still used the language with confidence shrank proportionately; they came to be termed "academic."

Skelton is of that generation. His poetry seems imbued with a sense of quiet wealth, a palpable enjoyment of the richness possible in the full play of language, and an unabashed fascination with rare and unusual words. There is, however, little ostentation, that inappropriate showiness that has made "academic" a bad word among poets. He does not leave the silverware on the floor so that it must be tripped over, robbed of reference to its real function. But neither does he leave it in the basement like some neo-primitive, ashamed of it or puzzled about what the purpose of it might once have been. In spirit, Skelton is of an age that believed poetry should feed us, that our inherited knives

and forks should carry food to our mouths, not fly at us, gouging, blinding, bringing blood. And not sitting unused while we attempt an exotic or previously unheard-of method for feeding ourselves.

So much for the generation gap. Skelton's delight in mouth music, and our growing appreciation of spoken poetry, should close the ranks. The sounds compacted into such lines as these from "As I Remember It":

*on its ledge
a jam jar and five rusty nails a nudge
would always lose upon the stamped
clay floor
among the shavings*

or these from "Virginia Road Revisited":

*hunched by the stuttering
broken columned gas
that itched our ankles*

will no longer seem a threat to a poem's stark purity of diction, but can be enjoyed as accomplished manipulations of texture and melody.

There is, however, an attendant problem: "One can easily become so conscious of technique that . . . one can be prevented from exploring original perceptions," as Skelton remarks in his excellent book, *The Practice of Poetry*, one of five he has written on theory and practice. There is perhaps no other practising poet who knows more about poetic technique than Skelton. While reading his poems I am reminded of an afternoon at a country fair when I watched an artist sketch a living likeness of my sister in a few quick strokes — then proceed to dull and finally lose it as she turned the sketch into a conventional portrait. At the time I couldn't understand why she had not stopped at the

sketch; later I wondered whether it was her own preconception of what a portrait should be, or whether she simply distrusted her audience's capacity to recognize the power of her insight.

Whether or not there are poets who are born and poets who are made, it is certainly true of *poems*: some are *fit* and some are *naquit*. Some represent almost unrevised versions of what the poet is "given," poems that simply insist on being recorded. Others are painstakingly made, built up around an idea or an event. Though it may be Romantic to insist that a "given" or inspired poem is always superior to a made poem, there exists a large grey area between; into which overworked poems are liable to sink, having had the freshness of their idea too heavily overlaid with technique.

Many of the poems in this volume have their dates in parentheses in the index to indicate that they were first drafted in that year but may not have been completed for some years after. It is in these poems that care and passion, inspiration and technique, seem most often at odds. As a whole, the collection is remarkable in that there seems no one instance where the force of what is being expressed overwhelms the craft neces-

sary to describe it. There are, however, cases in which the subject seems overwhelmed, made to seem finally inadequate to the richness and care with which it is clothed. If form can define content, it can also limit it. At worst, something very basic goes missing. We are left gazing in admiration at the Emperor's clothes, unable to discover the little naked Emperor inside them.

The inside front cover tells us that "many of the poems have been revised for this edition." The desire to perfect, to make consistent, is perhaps understandable in compiling such a definitive version of one's work. Still one wonders whether the curious flatness of tone and the almost visible distrust of his readers' intelligence in the sometimes heavy-handed underlining of a poem's meaning has been the result of too much reworking. By the time a poem has been "completed," we miss the feeling of awe, of exultation, that so clearly acted as a catalyst to many of these fine poems. It is as if the poet has grown too familiar with his subject, is too sure of it, and passes his ease and familiarity on to the reader. At these points Skelton's assurance with the language jockeys oddly serene on the backs of some

profound events and questions.

But the best of Skelton's work fulfils the promise of "Overture,"

Listen

This is desperate.

*I am trapped in memory's riot,
carried through
everything that
bones lay claim to.*

Many of the best poems are impossible to quote from, however; their complex music attends the trance-like fall of a single idea through layers of sensual imagery, powerfully evoking both the content and process of memory. But here is the first verse of "Song of Honour (for Herbert Read)":

The inventor of

barbed wire was

thinking of cattle.

My brother lay there

tripes skinned out

like silk.

And if some others seem rather far removed from "riot" and "bones" and desperation, it is perhaps only a reflection of Skelton's control over the language, a control that seems, at times almost despite himself, greater than this desperation, and a little too cunning for the trap, capable of quelling the riot of inspiration and making it sing. □

the best in poetry.

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from OXFORD

THE KRIEGHOFF PLOT

Which way to the grave
of Canada's pioneer artist? And what
do you do when you find it?

By *EUGENE McNAMARA*

WHAT DOES CORNELIUS KRIEGHOFF, the famous Canadian painter, have in common with a private detective, a great architect, two prize fighters, a baseball magnate, a spy, and a half-dozen millionaires? Nothing in this life, but they share something of the next. They are all buried in the same cemetery.

The private detective is Allan Pinkerton, who founded the agency that boasted that it never slept. The spy was one of his agents, who worked for the Union during the Civil War and who had been captured and hanged by the Confederates. One of the prize fighters is Robert Fitzsimmons, who held three world championships simultaneously. The other fighter is Jack Johnson, the first black world heavyweight champion, whose reign set racist promoters scouring the world looking for a "white hope."

But I'm getting ahead of my story. It really begins with one of my browsing visits to a book store. I was looking through a coffee table art book, *Cornelius Krieghoff* (1971) by Hughes de Jouvancourt, when I came on this seemingly innocent passage:

On 3th March, 1872 at 721, West Jackson Street, the heart of the pioneer of Canadian painting suddenly stopped beating. Seated at his work table, Krieghoff died while writing to Budden, the friend who had understood, encouraged and helped him along the hard road to self-fulfilment. Dr. W. Wagner signed the death certificate and Cornelius Krieghoff was buried at Gracehead, one of the Chicago cemeteries.

Gracehead? Now, I've lived in Chicago and know it fairly well, and to my knowledge there is no cemetery called Gracehead in or near the city. There's a Graceland Cemetery, which has been there since 1860. Reverent students of architecture have been making pilgrimages to Graceland for years to study Louis Sullivan's Getty Tomb, and Sullivan himself is buried there, as is Daniel Burnham, whose Chicago Plan is still admired as a pioneering triumph of urban forethought. Other resident architects include John Williard Root and Mies Van der Rohe. You can arrange a tour with the Chicago School of Architecture. Otherwise the pamphlet provided at Graceland's office will help you find your way. Neither mentions Krieghoff.

How did Krieghoff find his way to Graceland anyhow? Although hard information on certain aspects of Krieghoff's

life is difficult to come by, the dates and places of his birth and death are firm enough. He was born on June 19, 1815, in Amsterdam and died March 5, 1872, in Chicago. In between, he emigrated from Holland to the United States, where he served in the U.S. Army during the Seminole War of 1837. In 1839 he married Emilie Gauthier in New York City. She was from Quebec. Their first child, a boy, died in 1841. During the next 15 years they moved back and forth across the border: to Montreal, Rochester, Toronto, Longueuil, back to Montreal, and then to Quebec City. There is no record of their daughter Emilie's birth, but she was described as being just "of age"

when she married Hamilton Burnett in 1862, which would put her birth date somewhere around 1841.

All of this sounds clear enough, even if a bit busy. But the various accounts begin to seem surreal: Krieghoff went to Chicago in 1867 to be with his daughter who was living there with her husband; it wasn't Burnett, who is supposed to have died soon after the marriage, so it must have been a second husband. Emilie moved to Chicago to be with her husband. Emilie followed her husband to Chicago. Emilie went to Chicago to be with her lover, a certain Count de Wendt. Emilie married a Russian count and they lived in Chicago. Louise followed the Count de Wendt to Europe. *Louise?*

Certain facts, however, are clear. Krieghoff's daughter was living in Chicago in the late 1860s, perhaps in some sort of domestic arrangement with someone, perhaps a Russian, perhaps a count; and Krieghoff went to live with or near them. And it was there that he died.

The obscurities in Krieghoff's biography are balanced by almost unanimous agreement on his artistic career. Critics hold that the work he did in the 1850s and early 1860s in Quebec was his best. After 1864 his work declined in output as well as élan. On a brief visit back to Quebec in 1871, inspired by the renewed contact with his beloved adopted land, he did three large works (*New Year's Day Parade*, *Winter Scene: The Blacksmith's Shop* and *Chez Jolifou*). Nothing much else survives of this last period. He and his wife were apparently separated. His daughter had a life of her own. The only positive thing about this dismal last period was that he missed



the Great Chicago Fire because he was out of town in 1871.

J. Russell Harper, however, in *Kriehoff* (1979), holds that Kriehoff's wife found him dead. Harper cites evidence from a letter of John Budden's, the Quebec art dealer who was Kriehoff's best friend. What does this do to the theory of the lonely artist in exile, bereft of wife? Harper also points out that there is no de Wendt listed in the Chicago directory of 1872, but that there is a listing for "E. Burnett," who might be Kriehoff's daughter. Certainly it was Emilie Burnett who died in Denver, Colorado, in 1929. Harper, by the way, has the name of the cemetery right and also the accurate date of death: Graceland, March 5, 1872.

What happened to Emilie in the period 1872 to her death in 1929 is blank. How did she end up in Denver? How did her mother find her and live with her there until her own death in 1905? Nobody seems to know.

WITH THE STORY so full of fuzziness I wouldn't have been surprised to find that Kriehoff was not buried in Graceland at all. But I was determined to see for myself. So, on a blistering day in August, six of us pulled into the sombre gateway at the corner of Irving Park Road and North Clark Street. I went to what looked like the office and found that it was locked up and that it wasn't the office anyway. The real office was over by the greenhouse. Happily, it was air-conditioned and thorough. It took about 30 seconds to check the records for one Cornelius Kriehoff who died March 5, 1872, and was interred March 6, 1872, in grave plot number two, lot 178, Resubsection "G." That much was simple. The clerk came out of her glassed-in space to show me Resubsection "G" on a large wall map. It was across the road from Section "H," which lies along the fence bordering North Clark Street, a quiet row of modest houses that used to belong to German immigrants when Graceland began its funereal history. Sections "G" and "H" were laid out in a northwesterly direction. All I had to do was find Section "H" and then cross the road. I never thought to ask why it was Section "H" and what *re sub* meant.

The swift success we had experienced in the office had made me overconfident. When we had driven almost all the way to the north wall and found the Getty Tomb and the Potter Palmer plot and the Ryerson plot (he of big steel) and the McCormick plot (they of the reaper) and the Armour plot (they of meat) and Louis Sullivan's tomb, but not Resubsection "G," I began to lose heart. Walking around a cemetery on a Chicago summer day, especially one that contains 109 acres of graves, mausoleums, headstones, obelisks, Celtic crosses, statues, Greco-Roman temples, a lagoon, Doric columns, all the panoply of Victorian mourning, is like visiting an overlarge un-air-conditioned museum without a guidebook.

Looking out over a brick wall topped with strands of barbed wire I could see a quiet tree-lined street and a neighbourhood bar. A dim interior, smelling faintly of malt. No one there would know anything about Kriehoff.

We made a few more false starts and a complete circuit of the grounds back to the gate and had another look at the map. Off we went again and there was Resubsection "G." One of Chicago's best loved mayors, Carter Harrison, is buried in this area, so we determined to use his tomb as a rallying point. We set off in six directions. One hour later, dizzy from the intense sun, mouth parched, and still no Kriehoff grave. The books had spoken of his diminished last years, of his broken heart and poor health and the general feeling of exile: it wouldn't be surprising if there were no stone or marker. But the burial record showed him situated between one Matilda Hanson, who joined him in 1902, and a certain Hugo Dahl, who was buried in 1916. So if either one of them had a marked stone, or if Maria Nordstrom, Christina Nordstrom, and Amanda Carlson — less proximate neighbours — had a stone, I could

cipher out the location of Kriehoff's grave.

It was, as I have said, a *very* hot afternoon in August. All my companions were scattered across the landscape, bent and peering at the obdurate ground. I came upon a cemetery worker who was snipping the grass on the borders of a perpetual care lot. He spoke only Spanish. We smiled anyhow, nodding, glad to be alive. By now I had made two complete circuits of Resubsection "G." I looked at the map again. Wait a minute. What if the path shown on the big map in the office,

'I hadn't been prepared for the eerie
feeling of strange certitude that
settled in me as my eyes first fell
on the name raised on the stone'

drawn back in 1916, was now bordered by newer graves that of course would not be shown on the map? I walked quickly back up to the top of "G," but this time started two graves in from the road, where an unmarked stretch of grass separated those graves from another double line. I moved along the line of graves, looking down at the map and at the stones. And then there it was. A stone, eroded by more than 100 years of windy city weathering, the sort of stone that, perhaps, a Russian count might have chosen for a dead artist. I could just make out the words in the slanting, late afternoon sun, raised on a romantically styled scroll rolled open and draped over the top of the shaft. A Russian count, or a sympathetic daughter, or, indeed, a mourning wife might have thought it appropriate.

I hadn't really been prepared for a headstone. And I hadn't really been prepared for the eerie feeling of strange certitude that settled in me as my eyes first fell on the name raised on the stone. It was this cold certainty, mingled with the feelings of exaltation and satisfaction all explorers must feel, that made me shout and jump up and down like a fool. Schliemann at Troy, and whoever it was that found the source of the Nile, Hudson, Frobisher, all those fillers-in of the blank spaces on maps: they had nothing on me.

I may have yelled *Eldorado* or *Eureka* or something as banal as *Over here!* but whatever it was, it brought my companions over to share in the moment of discovery. There was a lot of pointing around and retracking and describing the Poesque *method* of the search and some anecdotes of their own various adventures. We took pictures. We took note of Hugo Dahl's stone, firmly where it was supposed to be. I went over to the wall across the road to see the closest side street: Berteau. Never heard of it. I walked back to the grave. Over there about 100 yards was our car, where we had started some hours before. We had gone in a great circle, and had been so close.

My son Christopher took a picture of me standing next to the stone. I tried to think of something appropriate to do. Say a prayer? Pronounce greetings from Canada over the plot? I poked my finger into the grave and dug out a bit of earth. I put the earth into an envelope from the motel. My wife said we should have brought some flowers. She always thinks of those right things to do. I plucked a flower from an arrangement on a nearby grave and laid it before Kriehoff's stone. A small white blossom on the grave.

After a while we moved off toward the car. The envelope with the earth from the grave was carefully folded in my shirt pocket. Dust from the foreign grave of the painter. The exiled painter. The self-exiled artist. Broken heart. All sorts of sententious thoughts were going through my mind, and as I write this I am thinking of the envelope of earth that is in my bedside table drawer. I have to keep moving it when I'm looking for something. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

One of our party knew of a good German restaurant close

by. Just as I had imagined earlier, it was dim and cool and malt-smelling inside. The waitresses weren't busy. Lunch was over and it was that no-time of the afternoon when it is too early for dinner and too late for a snack. The waitresses were wearing dirndls — yes, actual dirndls — and were having coffee with each other at the back, under a schnitzelbank song poster.

We had Dortmunder beer, and the conversation around me went on about the other people buried in Graceland, about Medill (the original publisher of the *Chicago Tribune*) and

Kinzie (one of the city's pioneers), and how George Pullman (he of the sleeping car) was so terrified that the workers he had zealously oppressed in life would steal his body that he arranged beforehand for tons of concrete and iron rails to surround his lead-lined coffin. I kept trying to insert the *Discovery* for a time, and then fell wisely silent. Instead, I told the waitress that we had been to Graceland. She said she had never been there. Cemeteries depressed her. She had seen enough of death in Germany during the last war. I didn't tell her about Krieghoff. We ordered more Dortmunder. □

FEATURE REVIEW

Polar passion

With some notable exceptions,
the season's art and gift books reflect
a love affair with the Arctic

By CHRISTOPHER HUME

THESE THINGS SEEM to go in cycles, and this time around it's the Far North that's getting all the attention. As regions go, the Arctic is particularly photogenic. Or perhaps it just attracts top-notch photographers. In any case, armchair travellers are in for some real treats this winter.

The best of the lot is Fritz Muller's *The Living Arctic* (Methuen, 282 pages, \$35.00 cloth). Muller, who died last year at the age of 54, was a Swiss-born geologist whose passion for the Arctic lasted a lifetime. He served as chairman of the International Commission on Snow and Ice, was professor of glaciology at McGill, and spent many years in the Canadian Arctic where he established a base camp on Axel Heiberg Island. His concern is born of deep love and vast knowledge.

For most of the year the Arctic is a frozen, snow-covered wasteland. Not until the spring — with sunshine 24 hours a day — does it come alive. Bears, caribou, foxes, hares, muskoxen, and man all thrive in the Arctic's delicate environment, which now is being seriously threatened. Muller writes the tragic story of "the irremediable damage that has already taken place" and the "serious threat to the ecological balance in the Arctic represented by risk-happy oil companies and the American frontier philosophy . . ."

The Living Arctic will change southerners' perceptions of this mysterious corner of the planet. Those

of us who picture the Arctic as a cold, monotonous desert, devoid of life, will be stunned by the diversity of form and activity. The photographs buzz with the same energy they depict. The colours are vivid and warm. The waters of the Arctic alternate between an almost tropical turquoise and a deep ocean blue. The sun is everywhere. So too is life. Whether close-up or panoramic, the pictures are spectacular.

Columbia Icefield: A Solitude of Ice (Altitude Publishing, 103 pages, \$29.95 cloth) offers readers a thorough and spectacular look at one of Canada's most impressive geological features. Written by Bart Robinson and photographed by Don Harmon, *Columbia Icefield* is all about glaciers and, as Mark Twain observed in *A Tramp Abroad*, "A man who keeps company with glaciers comes to feel tolerably insignificant by and by." The book, although a small one, captures the grandeur of these ancient, slow-moving rivers of ice. Writers, scholars, and even the odd poet have devoted much effort in an attempt to come up with the right adjective to describe the nature of glacier ice. Their choices — viscous, plastic, elastic, malleable, ductile — are all apt, but I like Robinson's definition best: "Sedimentary in origin, metamorphosed by pressure, glacier ice is essentially rock with a low melting point."

Harmon's photographs would undoubtedly be much happier in a larger format. Glaciers, after all, only reveal

themselves completely in pictures taken from helicopters, airplanes, and mountain-tops. The opening shot, taken from high up, very neatly sets the perspective and tricks the eye in doing so; a couple of specks — about the size of malnourished fleas — stand somewhere near the bottom of an expanse of bluish white. Only after reading the caption does the image emerge: "Two climbers on the southern flank of Snow Dome."

From somewhere out of left (or right?) field comes *Light in the Wilderness* (Oxford, 48 pages, \$9.95 cloth), a volume of photographs by Paul von Baich. It just might be the first Canadian wilderness book designed for the Moral Majority. Each photograph is matched with a passage from the Psalms or the Book of Isaiah. On one page we see a man standing in shallow water about to lift out his canoe. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him," reads the caption. The pictures, all taken in the Yukon and Northwest Territories, range from the ordinary to the corny, with the odd inspirational sunset added for reassurance.

With photographs by Mia and Klaus and a short text by Hugh MacLennan, *Quebec* (McClelland & Stewart, unpaginated, \$70.00 cloth) is as Canadian as sugar pie and apathy. Essentially a romantic look at the land, the book is divided into four sections, one for each season. Winter seems to have brought out the best of Mia and Klaus's con-

siderable talents. The three views of Montmorency Falls, especially that of the Sugarloaf, are reminiscent of a painting by Krieghoff. There is another rather exceptional shot — a small one — of an Inuit building an igloo. Hard at work in the middle of nowhere, he presents a study in concentration. It is a strange but powerful image.

To read George Calef's *Caribou and the Barren Lands* (Firefly Books, 176 pages, \$34.95 cloth) is to enter into the epic world of the Canadian tundra. For eons, vast herds of caribou have roamed this flat, stunted, rock-strewn land, gathering by the thousands every spring, to begin the trek to their calving grounds. During the month or two it takes them to cross the hundreds of miles, some will be killed by wolves, others will succumb to the cold; man, armed with modern weapons, will take the largest toll. Herds that numbered 250,000 just a decade ago now are down to 30,000 members.

"Caribou do not simply move north onto the tundra," writes Calef. "Rather, they return to specific places each spring to bear their calves." The force that drives them — whether migration is learned or instinctive — remains a mystery. It may be hard for us to believe that immense numbers of animals manage to stay alive in these barren lands where the temperature often drops to 40 below, but they thrive. "Shaped by the snows of millennia they are completely at home in the country of winter."

Thomas Frederiksen's *Eskimo Diary* translated by Jack Jensen (Nelson, 151 pages, \$16.95 cloth) is a book like no other I have seen. The author was born 42 years ago in the tiny village of Iginiarfik on the west coast of Greenland. From his earliest days he kept an illustrated diary in which he recorded the Inuit way of life. Brought up to be a hunter, Frederiksen came of age at a time when old ways were quickly disappearing. His journal contains constant references to a previous era when seal, reindeer, whales, and fish were plentiful. His drawings are simple, straightforward renderings of day-to-day life. The language, sometimes moving, sometimes very flat, communicates effectively and economically. By the way, anyone capable of reading Greenlandic will be able to read the diary as Frederiksen wrote it; each page is reproduced in its entirety.

Oxford University Press's *Regional Portrait Series* continues with two new titles. *Niagara* (Oxford, unpaginated, \$15.95 cloth) by Peter Fowler offers a cleaned-up look at the honeymoon capital of the world. Gone is the sleaze

of this tacky tourist trap. The book confirms the power of the camera to do whatever it wants with reality.

Manitoba (Oxford, unpaginated, \$15.95 cloth), with photographs by Robert Taylor and an introduction by Fred McGuiness, goes well beyond the standard view of prairie flatness. Taylor wants us to know that Manitoba is a land of rivers, lakes, and trees. Through his photographs, Manitoba emerges as an area of great natural and cultural diversity.

BY NOW, the transformation of the work of art into a commodity is almost complete. It can only be a matter of time before art becomes the proper subject for business writers. I look forward to the day when I can open the Toronto *Globe and Mail's* Report on Business and see how my contemporary Canadian print portfolio fared that week. Already one New York bank has an art consultant on staff to help clients invest wisely, and earlier this fall I received a pamphlet inviting me — for a mere \$200 — to an "intensive" one-day seminar on art investment.

Glen Warner's *Building a Print Collection: A Guide to Buying Original Prints and Photographs* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 192 pages, \$9.95 paper) will undoubtedly become a handy item for the would-be collector. The author's message — buyer beware — is not as pretty as the art we hope will make us rich. He stresses the likelihood of the inexperienced collector getting ripped off. The most useful chapters are those detailing the differences between prints and reproductions. Failure to distinguish one from the other is a major source of trouble and disappointment. And, one supposes, cost.

What the book doesn't discuss is the notion of acquiring art for profit, though Warner does point out that "more often than not, prints that are purchased solely for their outstanding aesthetic appeal turn out to be the best investments in the long run." Some collectors do make huge sums by buying and selling paintings, but if you want to make money you're better advised to put your cash in the bank, where it will collect interest. Smart collectors only buy art they really like. The real pay-off comes in having something on the wall that is always a pleasure to look at.

The leading art book of 1981 is Gary Michael Dault's *Barker Fairley Portraits* (Methuen, unpaginated, \$35.00 cloth). A man of tremendous talent and energy, the 94-year-old Fairley has excelled as a scholar, poet, and painter. His book consists of 51 portraits with personal comments for each. Dault's extended

introduction provides a loving appreciation of the man and his art.

Although Fairley never painted a dot until he was 44, he had been a serious art critic and early champion of the Group of Seven. When he did begin he found he already had a style. Certainly he is not overly burdened with theoretical baggage. "I know I'm not doing professional portraits," says Fairley, "and I'm not after a likeness merely. I've often failed miserably to get a likeness . . . What I'm seeking is an aspect of the face. Something by which a face becomes humane and reflects on humanity. When it does happen that way, it happens because of the visual freedom I give myself."

Dault's description of having his portrait done by Barker Fairley is one of the most illuminating passages of his introduction: "To be painted by Barker Fairley is to be subjected to the kind of scrutiny you never forget." There are also 150 limited editions of the Fairley book, by the way, each boxed, leather volume costs \$1,000 and contains a signed and numbered lithograph.

Alex Colville: *Diary of a War Artist* (Nimbus Publishing, 159 pages, \$29.95 cloth), compiled by Graham Metson and Cheryl Lean, is an important glimpse at Colville's early career as an official artist during the Second World War. It's not hard to see some of the qualities that now are considered so distinctly his: the exactness, the stillness, and the remarkable sense of composition. "I wasn't a mature artist. I was a young, bright person. I had been a good student, and I was technically competent. I considered my job essentially to record." The war, he says "had a profound influence on me. The parallel I would make would be for a novelist to be a police reporter doing factual reporting, physical, sordid, and concrete rather than philosophical or abstract."

When one sees the sketches Colville made of the dead it's not hard to understand what he was talking about. His paintings are quick, accurate, dispassionate statements of horror: "On the first day [at Belsen] I made a drawing of some women, dead from starvation and typhus . . . While I drew, the group of bodies was added to as more people died . . . There must have been 35,000 bodies in the place."

Critics like to refer to Canadian painter Ivan Eyre as a "visual philosopher." His works occupy a unique position in the artistic landscape: their calm, quiet, and ordered lines give them an other-worldliness not usually found in these parts. George Woodcock's *Ivan Eyre* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 160 pages, \$40.00 cloth) is the first full treatment of

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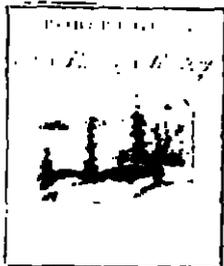
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this intriguing artist. "The quality that to me seems constant in the paintings which are included in this volume," writes Woodcock, "is the sense of epiphany." It is an interesting observation, one that might perhaps be at odds with the apparent intellectuality of Eyre's work. His fantasy takes a precise, highly organized form that might lead viewers to overlook his mysticism. As Woodcock says, "He does not work from photographs. Instead he works from the vision within." (The publishers are also preparing a \$500 limited edition of this book, which includes a silk-screen by Eyre.)

Shortly before his death in 1977, William Kurelek completed the 26 paintings in *The Polish Canadians* (Tundra, 56 pages, \$19.95 cloth, \$24.95 after Dec. 31). Together they comprise a history of Polish settlement in Canada. It is the kind of visual exercise Kurelek delighted in. The canvases are vintage Kurelek; heavy-handed but absolutely sincere.

The weightiest volume of the year comes from Bogomila Welsh-Ovcharov, the brains and driving force behind the acclaimed van Gogh exhibition held early in 1981 at the Art Gallery of Ontario. Vincent van Gogh and the *Birth of Cloisonism* (Art Gallery of Ontario, 380 pages, \$45.00 cloth) is, ironically, not much of a book visually. As a companion to the exhibition, however, it is indispensable. Although it will never be the best-seller Irving Stone's *Lust for Life* was, Welsh-Ovcharov's gigantic tome will undoubtedly contribute much to the general awareness of this tormented artist.

Another major exhibition held recently at the Art Gallery of Ontario consisted of primitive sculpture from Africa. It is very successfully catalogued in William Fagg's *African Majesty* (Art Gallery of Ontario, 152 pages, \$22.95 paper). Needless to say, the exhibition it documents was not as significant as the van Gogh show, but as a book I think it is much better. Perhaps sculpture of this kind — stylized yet simple — lends itself particularly well to being photographed. It's too bad there isn't a bit more colour; if the colour shot on the back of the dust-jacket is any indication, we're missing a lot by seeing them only in black-and-white.

Joseph Bradshaw Thorne. Is there one amongst us who has ever heard the name? He lived as he died, in obscurity, but those who did have the good fortune to meet up with him never forgot. He was, we are told, "a peculiar man (peculiar in both senses of the word: odd, weird, loony, out of whack, one bubble

off level, and, at the same time, worthy, unique, special)." His grandson, Mark Cumming, gives us selected excerpts from Thorne's life in *The Group of One* (Cumming Publishers, 48 pages, \$15.00 cloth). The chief glory of Cumming's small volume is the 14 colour reproductions of his grandfather's paintings. They must be seen to be believed. Everything about them is completely wrong, yet they are masterpieces of artistic peculiarity.

Toni Onley: *A Silent Thunder* (Prentice-Hall, 144 pages, \$40.00 cloth), by Roger Boulet, is an examination of Onley's watercolours. What makes this man's art unusual in Canada is the heavy Japanese influence on both how and what he paints. "The technique," writes Boulet, "is not self-indulgent virtuosity for its own sake, but is dictated by the harmonies found in nature. These harmonies are arranged by the artist in a spirit of empathy with the landscape, its seasons and changes, life cycles and rhythms. It is English watercolour transformed by a meeting with the Orient . . ." Some of the paintings work better than others, though I must confess that many struck me as rather dull. They leave the eye hungry and unsatisfied. □

REVIEW

Pride and prejudice

By GEOFF HANCOCK

Pride and Fall: A Novella and Six Stories, by Kildare Dobbs, Clarke Irwin, 192 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7720 1368 3).

KILDARE DOBBS'S *Pride and Fall* is almost a lesson in the kind of book Canadian literature has reacted against over the past two decades. Dobbs leaps from clichéd situation to stereotyped character like an antelope, and his stiff-upper-lip Britishisms provide all the reasons why writers have worked so hard to develop a distinctive Canadian voice. (Since much of the book is set in Africa, it's also easy to see the relics of ideas, characters, and attitudes the African

writers react against as well.) Dobbs goes after some essential truths about men and women in the fading days of the British Empire, but just as he gets close, he veers away.

The title story, "Pride and Fall," is set in British East Africa in 1951, but it is not a story about the problems of British domination or cultures in conflict. Instead, Dobbs concentrates on naked self-interest in colonial rule. The main character is St. John Russell, junior district officer in charge of a prison. By temperament not suited to the army, he's repulsed by the system of "Mflame Kingy Georgy." Yet even as he bends the elaborate rules — as do all other levels of military management when it suits their purpose — he is also constrained by them. A little dishonesty goes a long way, and Dobbs makes it clear how officials can maintain their pride by manipulating the regulations.

Russell assists a government scout in obtaining a licence after he is caught poaching an elephant for ivory. But Russell's senior officer, looking for an excuse to raise salaries, arrests him. Meanwhile, as the British officials act out their petty corruptions, the Africans seek self-rule and independence.

It's not always clear which side Dobbs is on. He satirizes Russell's senior officer, L.R. Quilke (he's unhappily married to an amputee and farts whenever she tells him how unhappy she is), and makes the British governor of the colony into a clown in full dress regalia (he holds a sword in one hand and his "vice-regal organ" in the other while he urinates). At the same time Dobbs looks back to an era when Britannia ruled the waves and the currents of African self-rule could be easily ignored as petty ripples. In spite of corruption and stupidity, British colonialism changed much of the world, and Dobbs seems still on the side of the British army.

He is *in* Africa, but not *of* it. He gives no hint of the scope of social protest, or the sophistication of the African people and how they intended to deal with the problems of their underdeveloped nations. The Mau-Mau uprising of 1951 is nothing more than a distant irritant. As for African politicians, Quilke tells the governor there aren't any. To which he replies, "Find some. Or invent some. At once," and suggests Quilke start with anybody he doesn't like. The Foreign Office, after all, is filled with colonial knights who will draw their pay and pensions no matter what happens.

Dobbs's view of Africans is just as narrow. Colonialism shattered native social structures, destroyed families, left individuals disillusioned. But the characters here are almost simple-

minded. Women are scarcely more than prostitutes. Men believe in witch-doctors and spirits in the shape of crocodiles. These Africans see in independence only big cars, bottled beer, and store-bought suits. The modern way of thinking comes from "vitamins" that will give them power.

The real issues of self-rule are treated lightly. An old man says that at least the British are better than the Germans. The British gave them roads and schools. The young man listening finds this of some interest. He then takes "strong medicine" for "black magic," and the native dance celebrating their independence becomes a drunken orgy. Nowhere does Dobbs point out the excesses in the African character that led to the brutal regimes of Idi Amin and other African dictators (although they may have taken a few lessons from the British soldiers in these stories, who aren't above flogging a man to death, or such other forms of torture as plucking out a man's pubic hairs one by one.)

Africa does strange things to the characters in the other stories. A man almost cheerfully tolerates infidelity in "A Question of Motives," and offers to sleep on the sofa when he comes home and finds another man, suspected of murder, in bed with his wife. A woman married to a forestry officer pursues a priest with unbridled lust in "A Mem-sahib's Confession." At times the situation becomes unnaturally contrived. A leopard breaks into the woman's house the very night the priest's dog follows her home; he comes to the rescue when he hears the animal's frantic barking. Of course, their infidelity begins that night. Days later the priest leaves, guilt-ridden and remorseful. The cuckolded husband returns home to find his wife indifferent to him. "Aren't I enough?" he wonders.

These characters are low on passion; they fumble, they bumble, they accept. At best they have no anger, but simply tolerate life's burdens. At worst, they become stereotypes such as the Arab and Indian minorities who think of money and deceit as they sip tea and exchange platitudes.

Dobbs comes close to the African point of view in "Yusef and Maria." Like many of his stories, this one is set in a prison. Maria, wife of the prison officer, is described as "a sex-bomb," and is indeed a groupie for all the bachelors in the neighbourhood. When her affections are spurned she begins sexually provoking the houseboys and a prisoner named Yusef. For him, "love and sexuality were expressions of liberty"; finally, to protect his integrity, he murders her. This is the strongest story in the collection because Dobbs uses

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language to liberate the energy of Africa, and puts some dramatic pressure on the dialogue and pacing into the narrative. This character maintains his pride; his fall is into grace.

Two stories are not set in the prison that is Africa, and these demonstrate the weaknesses of the collection. "The Happy Warrior" is about a young sailor who admires a naval captain. The captain's main joy in life, he says, is killing people. He means it, too, and has a soldier shot for treason for wearing an enemy uniform while escaping from a prison camp. The narrator is filled with "shame" at this disillusionment. But no more. No indignation, not even self-righteousness. Just shame.

"A Wedding" is an eloquent look at Ireland in the 1930s, when the Victorian Age was truly over (though many of the characters were still hanging on to it). Told from the point of view of two small boys, the story is about an elaborate wedding, a baroque conclusion to days that are past. (Almost as an afterthought, the narrator notes that the groom has been murdered.) The story veers very far from the truth of the situation, just as Dobbs relishes the details of air circuses, swimsuits, and nail polish. Pride, in this case, means holding on to

a scrapbook while remaining totally out of date. The same may be said of the book. □

REVIEW

Glory be to the mother

By VICTORIA BRANDEN

The Marriage Bed, by Constance Beresford-Howe, Macmillan, 240 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9554 9).

I MUST ADMIT that when I began to read *The Marriage Bed* and learned that the heroine was a young, pregnant mother of two who had just been deserted by her husband, my heart sank. I have been

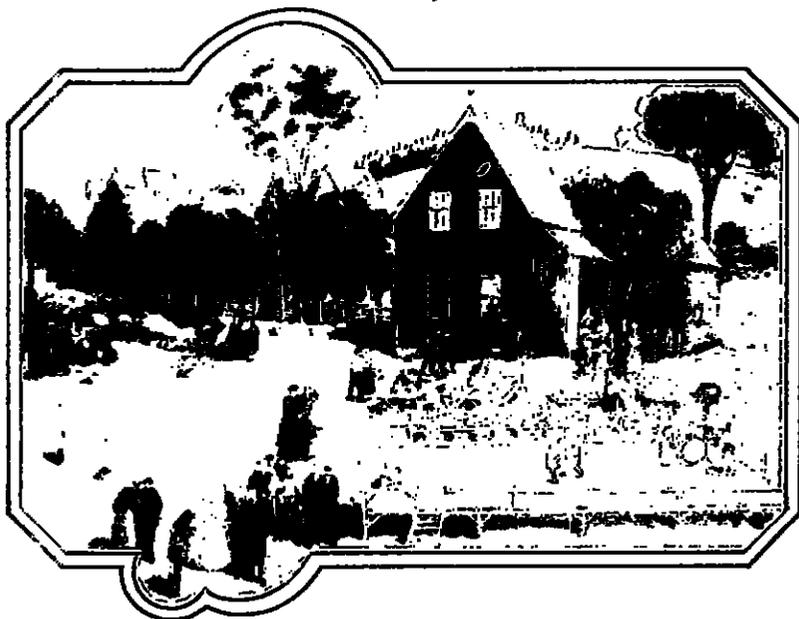
here before, I murmured, chanting snatches from "but I can't remember/Where or when . . ."

Well, great news. Constance Beresford-Howe's new book is a charmer, and her best so far. I suppose it's a "woman's novel," whatever that means, because its appeal is certainly to the female reader. But I have come to associate that term with a kind of whining self-pity and a destructive, crypto-lesbian, man-hatred that is distinctly unappealing. Beresford-Howe's heroine is likeable, and I identified with her effortlessly from the beginning. She is also literate, and to my great relief has a sufficiently resourceful vocabulary that her conversation is not confined entirely to four-letter obscenities. I find this is a nice change.

Anne is an English girl whose early life is a rootless one, moving from one seaside town to another with her pretty, dizzy mother Billie, who rather reminds one of the Bolter in Nancy Mitford's sagas. Young Anne spots, a splendid older man whom she plans to marry in order to finance a university education; Max is responsive, but his eye is on Billie, whom he marries instead. Anne is always a little in love with Max, but — again surprise! — it's a nice honest love. Some of our current best-selling authors would succumb to the temptation of a gory incest passage, but not Beresford-Howe. Anne meets her future husband, Ross, at university. She has planned a career in science, and Ross is studying law, but their well-plotted future is sabotaged by Anne's remarkable ineptitude with birth control (which becomes a sort of minor theme and a great source of wry comedy throughout the book). She produces first Martha, an interestingly fiendish child, then Hugh, wistful and colicky, much persecuted by his sister. After a slipped IUD she is in production again, and the book paces along with her pregnancy: "Believe it or not, you're at it again, Mrs. G. But how you've managed it I'll never know," says the gynecologist. "And poor old Ross had to sit down with his head between his knees. . . ."

The third pregnancy is too much for Ross. He moves out of his home and into a sort of communal rooming-house with his very young secretary, a white rat called Larene. He comes home and helps with the work and the kids; Anne, missing him (vulnerable, loving, strong, weak) decides to employ seduction to win him back. She is still not too far advanced in her pregnancy, and Ross is unable to resist her wiles. Except that, with the overpowering fatigue of pregnancy, she goes to sleep in the middle of their love-making: "The play

THE POLISH CANADIANS



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that failed, I thought, lumbering up the basement steps with the laundry basket."

For all her sense of humour, Anne is trapped in the classic female dilemma: children, housework, the old soul-deadening routine against which the modern woman has so passionately rebelled. Everyone tries to save her: a doctor-friend whose own marriage is on the rocks suggests divorces all round, and a new start for Anne with him. A girlfriend phones with the offer of a dream job. Finally her beloved step-father (remember Max?) arrives with a nearly irresistible offer — a live-in housekeeper, a holiday in Santa Lucia, then a return to college to work on a doctorate. She turns them all down.

"... get this straight. I like being at home with my children. I'm not a victim or a martyr... For the next five years at least, these kids are going to need me here, and here is where I'm going to be. Full time. So will you get it through your head, I'm not some poor victim in chains... My kids are not going to wander the streets with a door-key round their necks. They are not going to be entertained by the neighbourhood flasher while I'm somewhere being liberated."

In the end, she wins her husband back by an ingenious device that I think I'll leave for you to find out for yourself; it's too bad to spoil it.

Throughout the book there are reflections on the subject of freedom, specifically women's freedom, and Anne concludes that it is an illusion. Not exactly an original or revolutionary discovery, perhaps, but one that (in the current literary climate) can stand repeating: no one is free, man or woman, ever. And although *The Marriage Bed* is perhaps not a source of hilarious belly-laughs, there is a continuous gentle humour that I find delightful. It's also an advance on Beresford-Howe's earlier novels, *The Book of Eva* and *A Population of One*. Although I enjoyed both books, they seemed to me to be so low-key, emotionally, that I found it easy to put them down and forget them. *The Marriage Bed* grips you; it's the sort of book you read through at a single sitting.

Before reading *The Marriage Bed* I had picked up *Kin-Flicks* by Lisa Alther, which I thought started promisingly: "My family were into death." And for a brief time it was very funny. But after 500 pages or so of jerking off in the school dark-room, of hideous contortions in the trunk of a car, etc., I did not feel amused or stimulated or excited, but rather as if I had been bludgeoned repeatedly by some blunt instrument. And I was glad that I hadn't read the

book when I was at an impressionable age, since it made sex seem so nasty and painful and humiliating that I'm sure I would have been put off it for life.

If *Kin-Flicks* is literature, where can it possibly go from here? Perhaps *The Marriage Bed* is the beginning of a new trend. If it is, I'll be grateful. □

REVIEW

Home on the range

By **STEPHEN DALE**

Vanishing Spaces: Memoirs of Louis Goulet, by Guillaume Charette, translated from the French by Ray Ellenwood, Editions Bois-Brules (Winnipeg), 177 pages, unpriced, paper (ISBN 0 919143 20 2).

THE YEAR WAS 1865, and it seemed as if the prosperous and relaxed life of the prairie Metis would never end. Great oceans of buffalo rippled across the uncultivated plains, stalked by caravans of Metis hunters whose treks led them across borders to their wintering-over spots and into numerous adventures. Flocks of passenger pigeons still blackened the sky. And the Metis were pretty much their own masters — reliant upon their own small communities for support and survival, and free from the influence of an alien constitution and its red-cloaked enforcers.

In a decade all of this would be different: the buffalo would be reduced to a rarely-sighted curiosity; the passenger pigeon would be extinct; and the Metis would have exchanged their footloose lifestyle and social sovereignty for a corner of the Canadian dream. The change was so quick that in just a few hunting seasons their way of life almost completely disappeared. In a few years more the Metis became a people without a past, losing memory of their colourful roots.

Guillaume Charette came across the old Metis adventurer Louis Goulet just into this century, and "[reaping] bundles of stenographic notes" was able to compile the stories recently published in English as *Vanishing Spaces*. There's

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everything here to help reconstruct a lost world in all its dimensions. *Vanishing Spaces* is at once a feeling account of some important passages in Canadian history, a curious compilation of the details of everyday Metis life, and a humorous, lyrical, and entertaining work of literature.

The cover of the book suggests a pulp western, and in some respects, that's not far off. There are vigorous adventure episodes, by far the most lucid of which is the siege of Fort Pitt by the Sioux who, desperate for survival, killed the priests and traders and sometimes ate their hearts. The threat of death hung over Goulet too, but the tables finally turned, and he found his way to the safety of a British prison. Six-foot-two, 220 pounds, and reputedly the victor in a bare-fisted match against boxing champ John L. Sullivan in a Montana bar, Goulet in such escapades resembles a French-speaking John Wayne. Except that when the going got rough our hero, by his own admission, has been known to burst into tears.

Beyond the personal colour, *Vanishing Spaces* provides an enrapturing picture of the old Metis lifestyle. Goulet meticulously relates the details of their traditional existence: how they built their homes, what their furniture was like, how they dressed, and what kind of food they ate. "Anyone who's never tasted the indescribable soup made from *feuille de buffalo*, or a stew of buffalo meatballs, has never lived," Goulet tells us. He goes on to explain that "The *feuille* is an internal part of the buffalo's esophagus used to make soup that could tease the most demanding palate in a way never to be forgotten."

The most engrossing revelation is Louis Goulet's interpretation of the Metis religious experience. Their reliance upon the land, and blood ties to the Indians, determined an intuitive, visionary sense that sometimes crossed over into the superstitious. Yet the Metis were also resolutely Catholic, with a firm faith in Christ, a rigid sense of morality, and an austere, authoritarian notion of justice.

As for politics, this book is steeped in it, though not in an ideological, formalized sense. Goulet speaks of Louis Riel, whom he met a number of times, more as a man than a political figure. He describes Riel as strong, honest, and clever, with a mystical sort of presence that almost pre-determined martyrdom. There is never any question in Goulet's mind about the legitimacy of the Metis rebellion: they felt a concerted and unyielding encroachment that had to be dealt with. Goulet remembers of his childhood days:

The old-timers seemed to feel a strange mood in the air. Newcomers, especially the ones from Ontario, were eagerly sowing racial and religious conflict, banding together to sow the seeds of discord in the Red River Settlement. These *émigrés* from Ontario, all of them Orangemen, looked like their one dream in life was to make war on the Hudson's Bay Company, the Catholic Church, and anyone who spoke French. In a word, as my father put it, the devil was in the woodpile. The latest arrivals were looking to be masters of everything, everywhere.

Vanishing Spaces addresses some major historical questions with a strong sense of personality and poetic fluency. This book provides an entertaining understanding of Metis ways by reincarnating the past. □

REVIEW

Cold comforts

By FRANK RASKY

An Arctic Man. Sixty-Five Years in Canada's North, by Ernie Lyall, Hurtig, illustrated, 239 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88830 168 5).

Great Bear: A Journey Remembered, by Frederick B. Watt, Outcrop Ltd. (Box 1114, Yellowknife, N.W.T. X0E 1H0), illustrated, 231 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919315 06 3).

Expeditions to Nowhere, by Paddy Sherman, McClelland & Stewart, 226 pages, \$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 8144 8).

ON THE FIRST page of his book, Ernie Lyall quotes an old Arctic saying: "If you come up here from the south and you stop over at some place in the north for an hour, you can write an article for a newspaper. If you stay overnight, you can write a big article for a magazine. And if you stay for three days, you're an expert and you can write a whole book."

Unlike these outsiders, says Lyall, "I've spent all my life *living* on the *inside* of what these other people have been looking at and writing about. The main reason I decided to do a book about my life is that I finally got fed up with all the baloney in so many books written about the north."

Nobody could accuse Lyall of dispensing northern baloney. His *An Arctic*

Man is certainly the best of the three autobiographical books under review here. It may well be the best insider's account of what it's like to endure — and enjoy — day-by-day life in the Canadian north. It ranks with Gontran De Pocin's 1941 classic, *Kabloona* (the Inuit word for white man).

What makes Lyall's book so exceptional is its Inuit orientation. He is, in fact, a white man, born 71 years ago in Labrador, one of the 19 children of a Scottish Hudson's Bay Company cooper. But to all intents and purposes Lyall is an Inuit. He is married to an Inuit. He is fluent in the Inuit tongue. And he is the only white man to be given an official Inuit disc number by the Canadian government, because for so many years he trapped and hunted and lived off the land like an Inuit.

Most important, he thinks like an Inuit. He's unlike other white men — Peter Freuchen, the Danish explorer-novelist, for instance — who've married an Inuit and then written romanticized fiction about their experiences. Lyall is unique in the sense that he comes as close as possible to expressing the Inuit viewpoint without fancy embellishments. In the eastern Arctic settlement of Spence Bay, where he still lives after serving as a Bay trader, Mountie interpreter, and justice of the peace, he dictated his memoirs into a tape recorder. His editors have wisely refrained from prettifying his rough-hewn language.

He speaks forthrightly about the bigotry of most white people, including his own parents, who regard the Inuit as smelly inferiors. He debunks popular stereotypes held about the north, pointing out that polar bears tend to be timid, whales stupid, and husky dogs are never urged forward with a cry of "Mush!" In Inuit fashion, his humour is usually expressed with deadpan understatement. He describes wryly the battle for Inuit souls conducted by feuding Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries. And he tells a delightful story about the shaman at Spence Bay, revered for his witch doctoring and command over the spirit world. The old man was hardly impressed when informed about the first white man landing on the moon. "We've been sending people to the moon for years and years," he said.

Lyall is at his funniest and most devastating in a chapter devoted to Farley Mowat. He lists point by point the alleged inaccuracies and confected melodrama he claims to have found in Mowat's *The Snow Walker*. Though depicted as a hero in the book, Lyall refuses to swallow Mowat's assertion that Lyall dreamed of escaping from the grim hazards of life in the north coun-

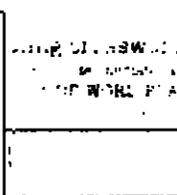
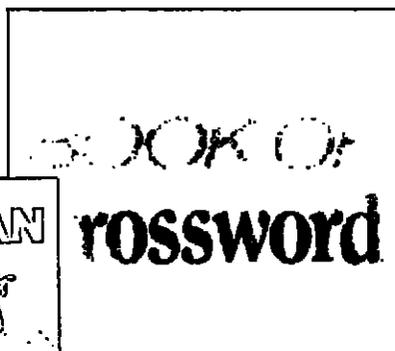
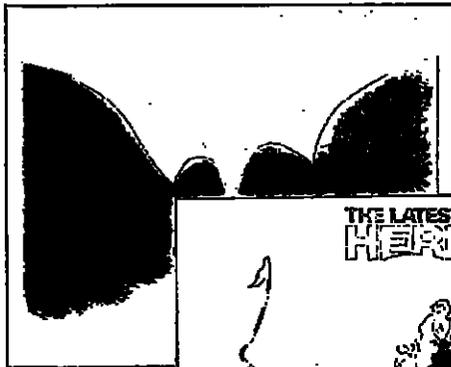
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try. "Baloney!" he says. "There wasn't anything to 'escape' from. This was the place where I'd chosen to hunt and trap and live with my wife and family, and these people certainly were my people."

Frederick B. Watt is neither a lover of the north country nor a purveyor of baloney. He is an 80-year-old former journalist, now retired from a government public relations job in Ottawa and living in balmy Victoria. *Great Bear* chronicles a six-month adventure he experienced a half-century ago. He had become a prospector during the Depression, lured to the western Arctic by Gilbert LaBine's discovery of pitchblende. It's a rattling good adventure story, reminiscent of Humphrey Bogart's vain pursuit of wealth in *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*, but it's more than just a yarn. It's also a sensitive examination of cabin fever, the straining of the nerves that may induce a prospector to kill his partner for whistling the same tune over and over.

It's a measure of Watt's journalistic powers that he makes you feel both the beauty and the terror of that frozen terrain on the outer fringes of the treeless Barren Grounds. You get a vivid picture of Watt and his partner Ernie Beck

struggling for survival in a land where it took three days to dynamite one prospector's grave in the permafrost, where another slashed off his own toe with a razor blade when gangrene had set in, where the mosquitoes were so bloated with their blood the insects "hung like clusters of red grapes," where the black flies bit so remorselessly that Watt's eyes were puffed up as though beaten physically. He admits he wept in agony.

Paddy Sherman's *Expeditions to Nowhere* is fittingly titled. Sherman, publisher of the Vancouver *Province*, catalogues his mountain-climbing exploits in six regions of the world, including his ascent of Mount Centennial in the Yukon and Mount McKinley in Alaska. We learn a great deal about the heights of the peaks he scaled, and, to give him credit, he has a modest way of turning mountains into molehills. But spiritually he does indeed go nowhere in this disappointingly discursive book. It reads like a rich man's self-indulgent account of "How I spent my summer vacation," punctuated with such lofty sentiments as: "We found satisfaction in having met the mountain on its own terms, penetrating its defences with a few classic tools." □

REVIEW

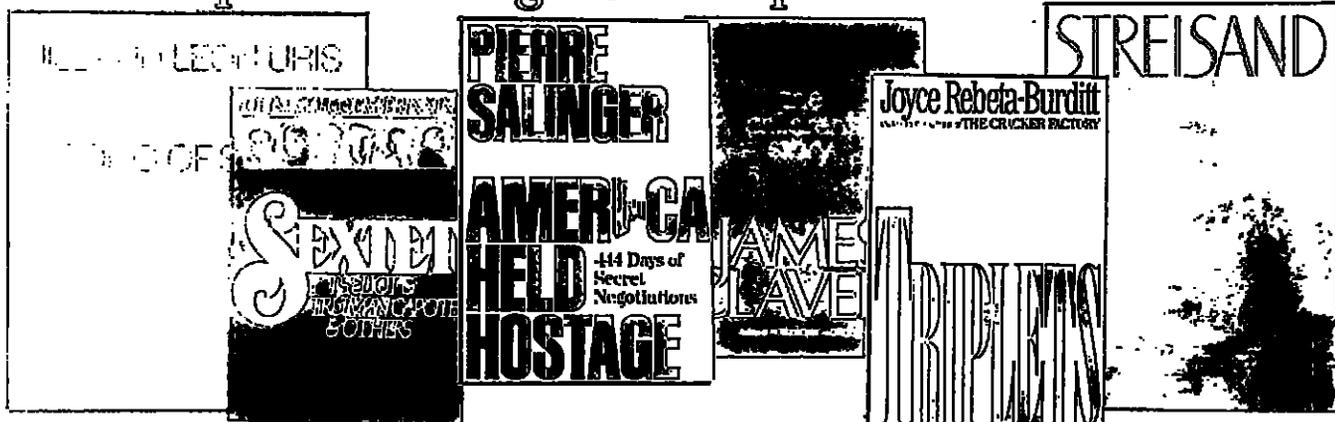
Stranger than fiction

By ILA GOODY

Loitering With Intent, by Muriel Spark, The Bodley Head (Clarke Irwin), 222 pages, \$17.95 cloth (ISBN 0 370 30900 6).

A GREAT ARTIST invents a type, observed Oscar Wilde in *The Decay of Lying*, and life, like an enterprising publisher, tries to copy it. Wilde's maxim is the key assumption underlying the plot of Muriel Spark's latest pseudo-thriller. In *Loitering With Intent*, Fleur Talbot, a jaunty, successful novelist in her prime, recounts the uncanny events surrounding her efforts many years before to complete and publish her first novel of intrigue. In order to support herself, the young Fleur helps Sir Quentin Oliver write the autobiographies

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of a group of genteel eccentrics. As she becomes familiar with the character of her employer, however, she realizes that he is the exact embodiment of Warrender Chase, the villain of her novel.

Like his literary prototype, Sir Quentin is a sado-puritan who collects about himself a group of fools in whom he plants a destructive sense of spiritual guilt. Even more remarkable than Fleur's anticipation of his maniacal character, however, is the foreshadowing of events from her fictional narrative to actuality — beginning with the suicide of one of the crazed disciples ("the Greek girl" in the novel, Lady Bernice in its echo) and culminating in the death of Warrender/Quentin himself in a car crash. Although the correspondence between fiction and reality seems initially to be the result of Sir Quentin's theft and deliberate imitation of *Warrender Chase*, Fleur recognizes with increasing horror that the actualization of its plot will inevitably go beyond not only his, but even her own control. From one point of view *Loitering With Intent* is a celebration of the magic of creation and the power of the artist. From another it is a reminder of the impotence of the writer to call back her myth once it has been set in motion.

The dominant mood, however, of both Fleur and her own creator — they clearly

overlap in this portrait of the artist as a young woman — is more comic than admonitory. Comic partly in the sense of a Christian divine comedy. Sir Quentin, the manipulator of fools, is himself a fool, duped by a plot emanating as much from a transcendent Designer as from a merely human artificer. Like Spark herself, Fleur is a Catholic novelist whose fictions, however bizarre, illustrate her belief in a supernaturally ordered progress of events.

Comic also in the sense of joy. In part a spoof of the unfailing good humour of pulpy girl detectives, Fleur's joy is also, more seriously, the sign of her spiritual election and the quality linking her with the great craftsman, Cellini, whose ebullient autobiography forms the model for her own. (By contrast, the autobiographies of Sir Quentin's crank group are travesties of the most self-indulgent, paranoid parts of Newman's *Apologia*.) One of the most delightful qualities of Spark's novels has consistently been her buoyantly self-possessed and somewhat tart tone of voice. She gives this voice to Fleur:

I wasn't writing poetry and prose so that the reader would think me a nice person, but in order that my sets of words should convey ideas of truth and wonder, as indeed they did to myself as

I was composing them. I see no reason to keep silent about my enjoyment of the sound of my own voice as I work.

The phrase she borrows from the conclusion of Cellini's exuberant confession "... by God's grace, I am now going on my way rejoicing," forms a refrain as well for her own progress through the narrative, and a motto for her life in art.

Fleur is also very much in the line of the great Spark heroines — Jean Brodie, the Abbess of Crewe, Maggie Radcliffe, Elsa Hazlett — all highly energetic, full of personal magnetism and, within their limited territories, ruthless. Where Fleur "loiters with intent" at Sir Quentin's to see the outcome of "her" plot, she comes uncomfortably close to his own semi-criminal voyeurism, if not to his actual chicanery. Character, says Spark, is contradictory; and not least paradoxical is Fleur's own slightly malicious virtue.

The brilliance of *Loitering With Intent* lies in the convergence of this dynamic, iridescent heroine-narrator with the flickering double-plot that she both instigates and resolves. Like Cellini, Muriel Spark has wrought in the fullness of her career a work of elegance, truth, and vitality. Whether by divine or merely human grace, she is justified in going on her way rejoicing. □

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Yellowfish

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REVIEW

Cod's little acre

By JOHN PARR

Eastern Sure, by Lesley Choyce, Nimbus Publishing Ltd., 123 pages, \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 920852 08 4).

Re-inventing the Wheel, by Lesley Choyce, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 52 pages, \$4.50 paper (ISBN 0 920110 93 2).

THROUGH SOME peculiarity in cultural perception, Canadian male fiction writers have tended recently to seek inspiration from the work of William Faulkner rather than patriotically following along in the footsteps of, say, Morley Callaghan and Raymond Knister. However, if this trend of journeying to the South for literary pointers is going to continue, one should mention that the Faulkner school of writing is not the

only source of instruction below the Mason-Dixon line. A few lessons from Erskine Caldwell could offer further enrichment of our literature, namely in the lively and often humorous depiction of external activities as opposed to the Faulknerian exploration of internal matters.

And this is where the short story writer and poet Lesley Choyce comes in. Of course, it could be that Choyce has never read a word by or about Erskine Caldwell, in which case this review will have to come to a shuddering stop. Well, no, not really. The point is that Choyce, somehow or other, has managed to take command of the Caldwell idiom (minus the usual ribald qualities), transposing it from rural Georgia to rural Nova Scotia. A somewhat odd achievement in that Choyce is from New Jersey. Still, since he has taken up permanent residence here — East Lawrenceville, N.S. — he can be regarded as a full-fledged contributor to CanLit, a welcome recruit to that fairly sizeable group, the CanAm division (Carol Shields, Kent Thompson, Elizabeth Spencer, to name a few).

In a foreword to *Eastern Sure*, Fraser Sutherland defines the essence of Choyce's fiction. "Against a background of physical and social decay, Choyce's people try to find points of stasis and constancy." Very well put, an excellent insight into the preoccupations of this new author, who has recently published both a short-story collection, *Eastern Sure* (11 stories), and a book of poetry, *Re-inventing the Wheel*.

The most striking of the stories are "The Return of Hanford McDermid," "The Public Good," and "Finishing Touch," all of which illustrate Choyce's theme in a buoyant, often folksy manner. In "The Return of Hanford McDermid," the title character, evidently feeling he is re-entering a Garden of Eden, abandons a promising academic career in New York to come back to his Maritimes home town. Alas, he encounters serpents in the form of a couple of redneck ex-schoolmates who strongly resent Hanford's having joyfully given up a life of big-city permissive sexuality. "The Public Good" concerns a couple of old codgers, Russ and Walt, who attempt to prevent the construction of a highway through their expropriated land. Even after their deaths, Russ and Walt seemingly continue to conspire against the objectionable road, which somehow becomes littered with screws and nails. "Finishing Touch" is about the writing difficulties of a character named Ralph. Ralph had written story after story, each of which stopped abruptly with the introduction of a romantic dream woman. Finally Ralph managed to complete a story

featuring a harridan version of this idealized figure. Since then Ralph has never written another word.

Choyce's poems are related thematically to the short stories in that they also deal with physical and social decay, or more precisely, loss: the loss of girlfriends, one's own life, and even the loss of hair (the result of too much education). One's preference, though, is for Choyce's prose. As a fiction writer Choyce is much more lively and inventive than Choyce the poet, probably because the disasters of others interest him far more than do his own woes and anxieties, the usual subject matter of the poems. Poetry for Choyce is usually a solemn matter; however, the best of his stories bring out a sardonic, playful humour. Quite delightful. □

REVIEW

Following the leaguers

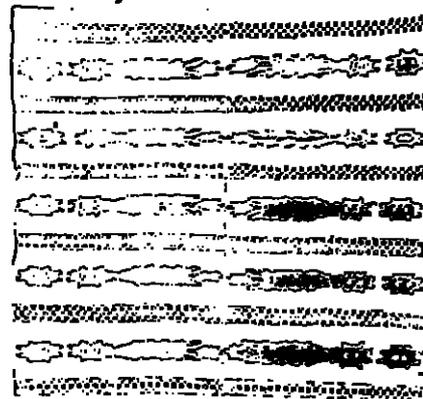
By JOHN T.D. KEYES

The Victors and the Vanquished, by Earl McRae, Amberley House, 219 pages, \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 471 79913 0).

IF EARL MCRAE ever finds himself running out of appropriate athletes to write about, he would do well to visit Yugoslavia for at least a pep talk with Vienko Bogatej, the skier whose spectacular fall in 1970 is still used by ABC's *Wide World of Sports* to illustrate "the agony of defeat." But since McRae, currently sports editor at *Today* magazine, is a writer of first-class profiles, the odds are high that he would also return with another good one — specifically, one having to do with a fine athlete who trained and trained, only to be remembered for one disastrous tumble.

Such irony has been McRae's bailiwick for more than a decade, so much so that this collection of 20 stories (previously published in *Today*, *The Canadian*, *Sport*, and *Atlantic Insight*) even has an ironic title: some of his subjects could have been victors had it not been for some unfair break; some are victors who can see the end coming, or whose current success has been somehow besmirched; and others were victors, but are now vanquished.

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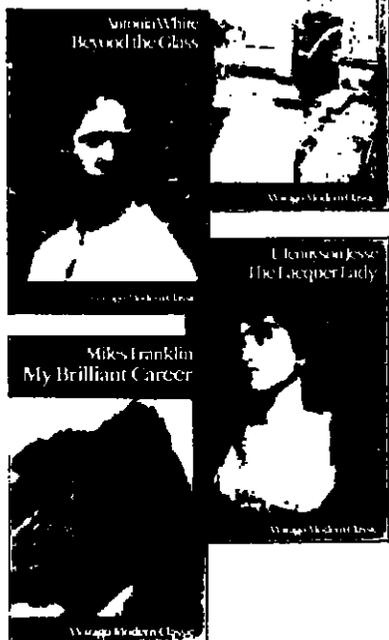
(Queen's Quarterly)

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MY BRILLIANT CAREER

Miles Franklin

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Already available:

FROST IN MAY/Antonia White/\$5.95

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THE UNLIT LAMP/Radclyffe Hall/\$6.95

THE JUDGE/Rebecca West/\$6.95

**LESTER
& ORPEN
DENNY'S**
PUBLISHERS

Thus, in "Cursed to Be a Canadian" (1975), we read of college quarterback Bill Robinson, whose justifiable ambition to play in the CFL was thwarted by a rule that virtually compels teams to favour American quarterbacks over homegrown ones. In "Hands of Death" (1980), Canadian lightweight boxing champion Gaëtan Hart, who last year pounded two opponents into coma (one subsequently died), has good reason for not fully savouring his victory: according to McRae, Hart may have won with illegally taped hands. And in "Coke on Ice" (winner of a 1978 National Magazine Award), McRae presents the case of hockey player Don Murdoch, suspended by the NHL after pleading guilty to possession of cocaine: "His face, once cherubic, is pale and drawn and his eyes, once lively and full of challenge, are cold and wounded." Later, the message: "He played a fool's game and lost and he's paying the price. But he does ask for forgiveness."

All McRae seems to ask for (or need) is the opportunity to play fly-on-the-wall. And given sometimes only a few hours with his subject, he is able to inspire considerable candour. His pre- and post-interview research is obviously extensive, and his best stories succeed largely because he stays out of them and lets the man in question reveal himself.

With two exceptions — and two distinctly different effects. Faced with the journalist's nightmare — "The guy doesn't want to talk!" — McRae is forced to be front and centre, cajoling, pestering, doing the best he can with secondary sources. As a result the profiles of baseball player Dave Kingman, tennis star Rod Laver, and hockey general manager Ted Lindsay remain blow-by-blow accounts of the fight for an interview — let alone the good quotes and subtle gestures. Admirable jobs all, but less than McRae must have wanted.

But then there are the stories in which he must actually *play* with his man — moments captured with a deftness George Plimpton should emulate. In 1974's "Showdown at the Icehaus," for example, there's a mid-ice confrontation with Houston Aero Gordie Howe:

He swings behind his net and heads out; rolling the puck gently on the blade of his stick, head up, shoulders hunched, faster, faster, swift, leaping strides, veering to the left then to the right like some big ship in a storm, closer, closer, bigger, bigger until, with terrifying suddenness, *he's right in front of me! Huge! Awesome! Looming! I feel so fragile! So delicate! So helpless! I feel as if I'm going to be killed!* I shut my eyes, turn my head away, cringe in fear and poke at the puck. There's nothing there! Only air! I fall down, sprawling. Howe

is at the other end, drifting around the net, the puck on his stick.

So much for notions of playing with Howe; McRae shows that you get played *with*. Lastly, in a gentler — though parallel — vein, he travels to Kansas in search of Hal Patterson, the long-retired CFL star whom young Earl had enshrined in his boyhood scrapbook. "For years," writes McRae, "the memory of him has haunted me and the desire, the *need*, to find him, to meet him, to know him and to understand him has possessed me in ways I cannot explain. To me, and to many who once had the privilege of seeing him, he was the most gifted, the most glorious athlete of his time, an artist without equal." And McRae does get close to understanding Patterson; as close as any writer is likely to get. Then he throws Patterson one last pass.

All 20 men are or were heroes to somebody. Ultimately, the key to each story is the angle with which McRae made contact with that heroism, and while not all of them could have been as brilliantly conceived as the Patterson piece was, they're no less fascinating: goalie Mike Palmateer seen through his superstitious need for pre-game popcorn; footballer Angelo Mosca now on the wrestling circuit; retired boxer Archie Moore on an Eastern Canada lecture tour promoting goodness and godliness.

But the most recent piece — that on Gaëtan Hart — indicates that McRae is committed to less adulatory companion pieces. His conclusions were the product of clear-headed, cold investigation. One byproduct of this is that people become wary of talking to you — and that's tough when what you want is the chance to hang out and watch and listen. It's nothing that McRae doesn't already know. Odds are he won't be vanquished. □

REVIEW

**Dissension in
the ranks**

By J.A.S. EVANS

Patton's Gap, by Richard Rohmer, General Publishing, 239 pages, \$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7736 0093 0).

D-DAY TOOK PLACE 37 years ago, and the

names of its architects, Eisenhower, Omar Bradley, Bernard Law Montgomery, and George Patton Jr., are no longer in the forefront of our minds. But we are still living with the consequences of the Second World War, and so if Richard Rohmer's *Patton's Gap* hardly deserves the adjective "timely," it is not unimportant. In 1944, while Major-General Richard Rohmer's career as a novelist was still a pipe-dream of the future, he was a reconnaissance pilot with the Royal Canadian Air Force, flying a Mustang I with cameras mounted in its belly over the sector of the Normandy landings. *Patton's Gap* is half memoir and half detective-story. It covers the first 10 weeks or so of the invasion with anecdotes and assorted bits of history, and the problem it examines is, who was responsible for the Falaise Gap, through which the German Army escaped across the Seine River?

The scenario was this: The British, Canadian and American forces hit Normandy on June 6, 1944. The British and Canadians under General Montgomery, who was commander of all the invasion forces including the Americans, took Bayeux, and advanced on Caen where they ran into fierce resistance. To the west of the British, the Americans

under Omar Bradley drove across the Cherbourg peninsula and before three weeks were out, took Cherbourg itself, thus giving the Allies a safe harbour. Montgomery captured Caen on July 9, but his advance was slow, and not only Eisenhower but the press as well were voicing criticisms that cut his very sensitive ego cruelly.

Then, at St. Lô, the U.S. First Army under Bradley broke through, surged through Brittany and swung east to encircle the Germans from the south. The German counterattack was foolish and desperate, but the orders came directly from Hitler, and the commander on the spot, Field Marshal von Kluge, had no choice but to obey. He attempted to cut the American line at Mortain, and when he failed, he then had to withdraw his army across the Seine, out from the jaws of the two armies that menaced him with a pincer movement, the British and Canadians on the north, and the Americans and Free French on the south.

On Aug. 12, General George Patton reached Argentan on the south jaw of the pincer and went no further. On the north, the First Canadian and Second British Armies struggled to take Falaise. Twelve miles lay between Falaise and Argentan, and through this gap the

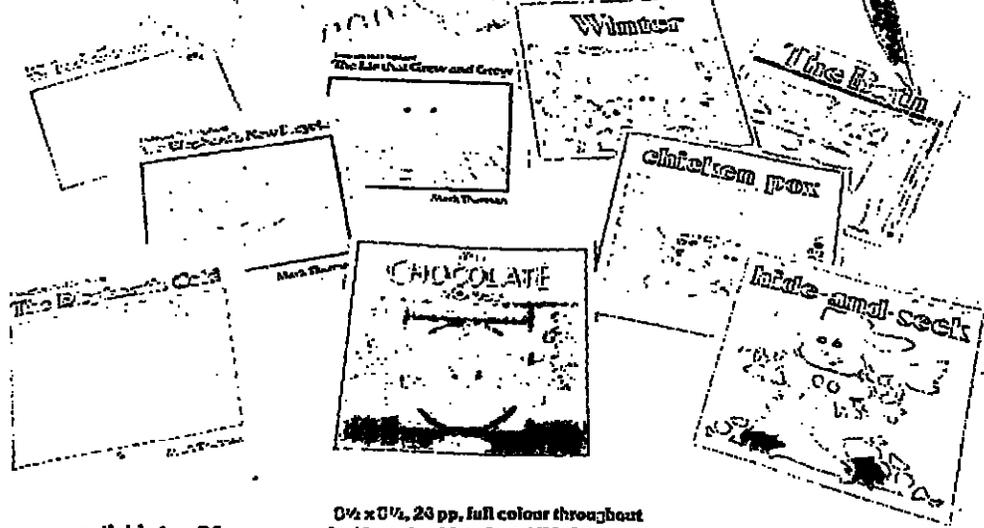
German Seventh Army was desperately trying to escape. The British and Canadians could not move to close the gap in time (the South Saskatchewan took Falaise only on Aug. 17) but on the southern jaw of the pincer, Patton could. But the territory beyond Argentan was in the British sector of the front, and Bradley would not give Patton leave to advance until Montgomery gave the word. So Patton waited, and the Falaise gap stayed open for a week, during which much of the German Seventh Army escaped. Montgomery never did link up with the Americans at Argentan. At the last minute he decided to move to Chambois further east, leaving both Eisenhower and Omar Bradley dismayed. "Monty's tactic mystified me," Bradley was to write in his memoirs. *A Soldier's Story*.

Rohmer has little to add to the question of why the Falaise Gap occurred, except for some notes from Forrest Pogue, director of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Historical Research Foundation at the Smithsonian, who interviewed various generals after the war. The verdict is what we already knew. Montgomery was responsible for the Gap and the escape of the German Seventh Army. His motives lay somewhere deep in his

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psyche and he now is dead. But the Gap was a blunder that prolonged the war and had an effect on the map of post-war Europe. Monty's mystifying tactics are best explained from this distance as the result of American insensitivity rubbing against prickly British pride, and the enemy was the beneficiary. □

REVIEW

The training of a shrew

By *DuBARRY CAMPAU*

A Woman With a Purpose: The Diaries of Elizabeth Smith, 1872-1884, edited by Veronica Strong-Boag; University of Toronto Press, 336 pages, \$25.00 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 2360 6) and \$10.00 paper (ISBN 0 8020 6397 7).

TODAY'S MORE EARNEST, liberated women will read with amazement the confidences Miss Smith made to her diary more than 100 years ago. She was a bright, evidently attractive girl from a prosperous rural family who was determined to get an education, which she certainly needed, and ultimately to become a doctor of medicine, an almost terrifyingly difficult goal at that period. But all of this seriousness of purpose was mingled with flirtations, romances, and a busy social life.

If any woman still needs encouragement to head for a professional career this diary should provide it, and that in itself gives it good value. But read as a social document of the Victorian era in Canada, it is fascinating in itself.

The early pages, started when she was 13, describe a home life filled with chores and intermittent schooling. Although in her foreword Miss Strong-Boag refers to Miss Smith as having had a governess, that woman's effectiveness as a teacher seems dubious as the pages are filled with grammatical and spelling solecisms: "Pa was to Hamilton today..."; "Talking M and I along..."; "servents"; "estsoters." Despite these and other lapses she became a country school teacher when she was 19, and then makes many references to "learning her pupils grammar and spelling."

For several years she alternated teaching and being taught. She attended

normal schools in Hamilton and Ottawa, passing successively higher examinations, and financed her own education by months of work in one-room schoolhouses in rural Ontario. How she made her momentous decision to enter Queen's University's medical school is never made clear — perhaps it had been in her mind for so long she felt no need to explain it to herself.

Inevitably, the handful of women who in those days insisted on going into this almost totally male field were not welcomed. They were necessarily given separate (and rather sketchy) classes in all of the areas then considered delicate. Deliberate efforts to shock and embarrass them were frequent not only by the male students but also by some of the professors. And she felt, as many women do today, that she had to be better than the men in order to have any standing at all. This led to her efforts to have exclusively women's medical schools created in Canada. Unhappily, this smacks today of the "separate but

equal" philosophy used in the education of blacks in the southern United States.

The diary ends at her completion of medical school, but in her introduction Miss Strong-Boag describes Smith's life from then on. She married a civil servant, Adam Shortt, gave up her practice (which had barely got underway), had children, and devoted the rest of her life to women's causes, losing her merriness and becoming something of a termagant suffragette. Yet, in giving up her career for marriage and motherhood, she must have seemed at that time an example of the waste of an education on a woman.

But the diaries are far from an uninterrupted saga of how one woman fought at the barricades for freedom. They give a vivid picture of the society and customs of the time—and of Miss Smith's delicious revelling in the attentions of her beaux, her devotion to her women friends, and the all-pervading miasma of Protestant piety that made her dismiss a suitor because of his rather mild religious doubts. □

ON/OFF/SET

Although the voices vary, one thing links Canada's female poets: the high quality of their publications

By *DAVID MACFARLANE*

THE FLOURISHING of Canadian poetry, and especially of Canadian poetry written by women, is documented, naturally enough, in the nation's small presses and magazines. The voices are various: gentle and warm, scathing and bitter, caustic and ironical. It is difficult, probably even wrong, to search out the generalities that link one poet to another. One connection, however, that is not so very difficult to see is the sharing of a few recent publications of a high standard of quality.

Roo Borson is a poet of such grace, simplicity, and delightful language that one wonders why her name is not better known than it is. She has come the route of most of our poets: *Malahat Review*, *Matrix*, *Prism*, *Canadian Forum*, *Canadian Literature*, and Bob Weaver. Two of her books — *Rain* (Penumbra Press, 41 pages, \$5.95 paper) and *In the Smoky Light of the Fields* (Three Trees Press, 48 pages, \$3.95 paper) — are written with a straightforward and clear style that still retains the poetry's elegance

and complexity. By no means the best poem in *Rain*, Borson's portrait of Vancouver, is perhaps most illustrative of the economy and clarity of her writing: "and the sailboats wobbling in the harbour/ the freighters come to collect wheat/ their shadows colliding/ where the herds of rain/ balk at the mountains."

Although both collections are the kind of books that first welcome, then draw a reader into them, there are two verses from "The View from Owl's Head," the first poem of *In the Smoky Light of Fields*, that I have not been able to get out of my mind since I read them:

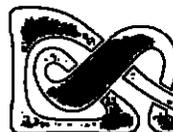
*A hillside bricked with maples,
a cloud caught like a shirt
on the one low mountain
and the mountain
balled up with roads
tunnelling under champagne birches.*

*With the eyes of children squirrels wait
in the wily bodies of old acrobats
to grab the polished food
from the grass and bounce away.*



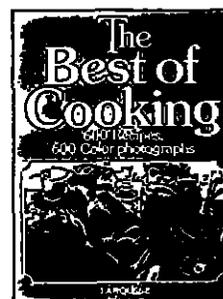
GIFTS TO LAST

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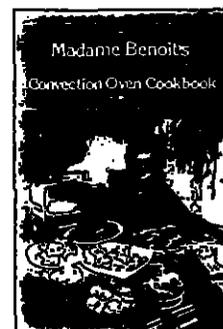
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The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor
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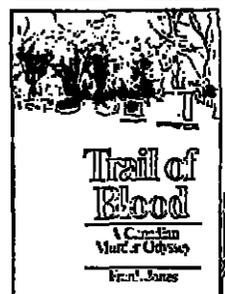
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TRAIL OF BLOOD
Frank Jones
 This collection of 22 stories takes us on a cross-Canada odyssey of violent death, immersing us in the periods and settings of infamous murder cases. *18 pages of photographs* \$15.95

THE LIFE OF OUR LORD
Charles Dickens
 A simple, beautiful retelling of the life of Jesus, written by Dickens for his own children. The book is enhanced by religious engravings from the Victorian era. *Illustrated.* \$12.95



Press Porcépic remains a model of what small presses are all about, and it continues its laudable policy of trying to publish at least one literary work each year by a new and little-known author. *One-Eyed Moon Maps* (73 pages, unpriced, paper) by Kristjana Gunnars is a haunting, mysterious and, above all, artful combination of Icelandic and Norse myth — Gunnars was born in 1943 in Reykjavik — with modern observation and introspection. The language, not very surprisingly, is rich and strange:

*my one eye doesn't see
the ruin of the other*

*depressions full of lava
like a many-shaded mesa
smooth & dark
i can't sleep with this
outlook passing below
with an eagle's large wings*

It is a difficult book at times, dense with mythology and unfamiliar names, and illustrated with runic symbols. But Iceland — like the poems of our unknown poets — exists somewhere in Canada's peripheral vision. One can only be thankful that there are publishers and authors who continue to force us to look farther out of the corner of our eye. □

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Sex and dirt and violence: from hustling South Philadelphia's streets to hunting dragons off the coast of B.C.

By DOUGLAS HILL

IN *Streethearts* (Simon & Pierre, 197 pages, \$14.95 cloth), Jim Christy affec-

tionately recreates a rough-and-tumble childhood in South Philadelphia's

Italian ghetto. Though the novel is set lavishly in the early 1950s, it's not just a period piece; without appearing to strain, Christy makes the concerns his young hero faces both timeless and immediate.

Characters are the best part of the book: Gene Castellano himself (a precocious hustler and pubescent crook), his schoolmates, his small-time-politico father and the relatives and pals around him, the girls and women who initiate Gene into sexual knowledge. An accomplished writer in several modes, Christy has a talent for precise and evocative description — for the details of scene and incident that capture a street-wise boy's escapades, daydreams, and fears. Gene is the narrator; he has a tough, funny, ironic voice that only occasionally hits a stylistic wrong note.

Streethearts delivers the textures of a time and place gone by: "the red brick tenements, the cars squeezed at the curb, the telephone poles drooping their wires, the trash cans spilling crap onto the sidewalks, the neon glowing in bars. The fights, the hanging out, the singing on the corner, the jive and the bullshit. Downtown, tenderloin, honky tonks, Dolores and her long legs, Liberty strutting down Tenth Street, cabs honking, Frankie, Baseball George, all day at the movies, stickball . . ." And surrounding all of this the potent energy released by rock and roll in its Philadelphia infancy.

This is a book for grownups, certainly, even if it chooses to deal more with surfaces than depths, chooses to let youthful experience speak for itself rather than explain it in adult terms or force insights upon it. Still it has more to say to kids about the ethics of growing up than any 10 or 20 advertised "juveniles" that come through the slot. But it's got sex and dirt and violence and confusion? Sure. And better yet, it doesn't have the answers, doesn't offer formulas or platitudes.

* * *

Dragonhunt, by Frances Duncan (The Women's Press, 108 pages, \$5.95 paper), is experimental in form and content and generates considerable psychological force. As an exercise it's stimulating; readers will have to decide if the ultimate meanings of the story justify its difficult private imagery.

The novel gives a version of the St. George myth, translated to the B.C. coast. When we meet Bernice Carswell, a "middle-thickened, fortyish woman with a port wine stain on her right cheek" who lives in a homemade log cabin on the beach, she's digging clams in order to insert plastic pearls within their shells and return them to the sand.

Spring Moon

A Novel of China

by Bette Bao Lord

The story of *Spring Moon*, daughter of a mandarin family, spans the turbulent years in China's history from 1892 to 1972. The vivid characters mirror the changing panorama of Chinese life. Her privileged childhood, her illegitimate child, her marriage to a stranger and the rebellion of her children shape *Spring Moon* into the proud matriarch of five generations.

\$18.95

Mao

A Biography
by Ross Terrill

Highly readable and impressively researched, this is the definitive biographical and political study of Mao Zedong, the man who changed the face of China. Working from Chinese documentary sources, Terrill examines Mao's family background, his rebellion, his rise to power and his many love affairs.

Paper: \$9.50

Fitzhenry & Whiteside

Sir George Werthy, a 700-year-old itinerant knife-sharpener and dragon-slayer, enters her life, kills her pet goat and apologizes, and together they set off on a quest to Galiano Island, each of them in search of the insight that will bring healing and wholeness.

Duncan intersperses bits of straightforward though not always realistic narrative with passages of surreal, hallucinatory image and incident. These have the vividness and logic of dreams, and eventually come to form consistent personal and natural patterns. The symbolism of the novel is often bizarre, but Duncan's clear prose casts a disturbing spell. By the end, I think, the novel's complex metaphors complete themselves. It's a hard book not to reread immediately, to see how the author's pulled it together.

* * *

A Feast With Two Backs (Oberon, 95 pages, \$13.95 cloth, \$6.95 paper) contains works of nearly equal length by Mike Mason and T.F. Rigelhof. They're called novels, a claim about as puzzling as the book's title.

Mason's contribution, "The Beautiful Uncut Hair of Graves," is an unpretentious story, set in small-town Manitoba,

centred upon the death of a young Indian girl who has gone astray and drowned in one of the local nuisance ground's bog-holes. Through the response of various townspeople to the accident, and to the three-month-long drought that parches their days and souls, Mason derives some thoughtful though not particularly startling perceptions about death and life. These are registered chiefly in the troubled sensitivity of a 16-year-old girl who works part-time for the weekly newspaper.

Rigelhof, in "Hans Denck, Cobbler," tells a deeper tale, a religious fable that brings an East European shtetl atmosphere to modern-day Regina. He's done well with a rich, suggestive form, and gathers the many threads of his story together competently. His eponymous hero, through events too complicated to summarize, surmounts a number of obstacles with his simple yet profound faith and achieves the sort of triumph one associates with the characters of Singer or Malamud.

Both these pieces are satisfying, without serious flaws, and undoubtedly show promise. On the evidence it's impossible to tell if we can look forward to a full-scale novel from either writer, or what its quality might be. □

THE BROWSER

Harold Innis goes to Russia, the Kent Commission goes to great lengths, and our columnist goes to lunch

By MORRIS WOLFE

THE DRAWING THAT accompanies this column is by Jean-Marc Phaneuf, from The Royal Commission on Newspapers (Supply and Services, 296 pages, \$10.00 paper). If you're at all interested in the media in Canada, it's instructive to compare the actual Kent Report with the document that was savaged by Canadian newspapers. The actual report is a handsome, well-written document that thoughtfully explores some difficult questions. The report even anticipates the smokescreen criticism it received. It comments, for example: "In a country that has allowed so many newspapers to be owned by a few conglomerates, freedom of the press means, in itself, only that enormous influence without responsibility is conferred on a handful of people. For the heads of such organi-

zations to justify their position by appealing to the principle of the freedom of the press is offensive to intellectual honesty." At another point, the report reminds us that the Davey Committee had said in 1970 that the newsrooms of most Canadian newspapers were bone-yards of broken dreams. "Our investigations," says Kent, "lead us to think that there are now fewer dreams to break. Some of the cynicism is the deeper one of not having had dreams. Journalists' confidence in their publishers is thin or worse." Ignore the recommendations and spend a couple of hours going through the rest of the report. It's well worth the trouble.

* * *

THE BEST PUBLISHING NEWS I've heard this month is that Guy Vanderhaeghe,

NEW BOOKS FROM THE FRASER INSTITUTE

Pricing Canadian Oil and Gas:

The Impact of Price Regulation on the Canadian Petroleum Industry by Basil Kalyman and David Quinn Energy Market Series 2 A look at how the prices for Canada's oil and gas are set, especially in light of recent government regulation, and a thorough examination of the effects of this procedure. September \$9.95 paper

Reaction:

Capital Gains Taxation in Canada by Michael Walker and Michael Walker Series 2 An assessment of the government's recent review of the state of capital gains taxes in Canada — a possible forerunner to an increase in capital gains taxes for us all. September \$7.95 paper

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The Canadian Consumer Tax Index and You Third Edition by Sally Pipes and Michael Walker with David Gill An analysis of how much tax you really pay — a province-by-province look at the full extent of the family's direct and hidden tax burden — a burden that has increased more significantly than any others. October \$4.95 paper

Taxation:

An International Perspective Edited by Michael Walker and Walter Block Internationally-known economists from nine countries examine in detail the impact of their tax system on the economy of their country and how it affects economic and social behaviour — including the "underground economy" created as citizens attempt to avoid or evade taxation. November \$14.95 paper

The Egg Marketing Board

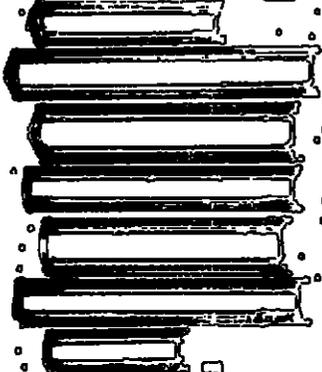
A Case Study of Monopoly and Its Social Costs by Thomas E. Borchert with Gary W. Dorosh Two noted economists provide a classic analysis of the economics, structure and impact of marketing boards. previously listed July \$3.95 paper

Minority Rights & Wrongs:

An Economic and Social Perspective on Discrimination and Equal Opportunity by Gary Becker, Thomas Sowell, and Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. A look at the "affirmative action programs" designed to deal with racial and sexual discrimination, prejudice, and minority income differentials. previously listed August \$9.95 paper

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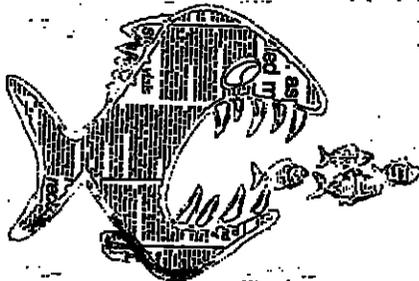
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**Alberta
CULTURE**
Film and Literary Arts

the fine young short-story writer from Saskatoon, has been signed by Macmillan, who are bringing out a collection of his short stories in the spring. They've also taken an option on his first novel. That news, combined with Macmillan's strong fall list, suggests that those of us who feared the Gage takeover of Macmillan represented another nail in the coffin of serious publishing in Canada may well have been wrong. I hope we were. Two new stories by Vanderhaeghe have appeared in the past little while: "Sam, Soren & Ed" in the *Journal of Canadian Fiction* (No. 31/32) and "He Scores; He Shoots" in *Matrix* (Summer, 1981).

* * *

I ASKED THE cab driver if he was enjoying the Pearl Buck novel, *The Good Earth*, that was on the seat beside him. He wasn't reading it for pleasure, he said. He's an unemployed Ph.D. and has decided to become the first Canadian to win the Nobel Prize for literature. Therefore, he was systematically reading everyone who'd won the award. (If you



can do market research for everything else, why not the Nobel Prize too?) Pearl Buck, he said, won even though she used the word "vast" much too often. He'd already counted 49 "vasts" in *The Good Earth*. I wish him well.

* * *

LYNN HARRINGTON'S *Syllables of Recorded Time* (Simon & Pierre, 319 pages, \$14.95 paper) is an over-priced, badly written history of the Canadian Authors' Association. Harrington, herself a long-time member of the CAA, demonstrates on every page the earnest, windy humourlessness the association is famous for. Old battles with the *Canadian Forum*, F.R. Scott, and others are trotted out as if they'd happened yesterday. The *Forum's* criticisms of the CAA's mindless boosterism in the 1920s, we're told, "wounded deeply, and the scar tissue still throbs."

* * *

THE HAROLD INNIS FOUNDATION has published the first volume of a series that promises to be of considerable interest — *Innis on Russia: The Russian Diary and Other Writings*, by Harold Innis, edited with a preface by William

Christian (Innis College, University of Toronto, MSS 1J5, 90 pages, \$5.00 paper). In June, 1945, at the end of the war, Innis got on a plane for the first time and flew to the Soviet Union. *Innis on Russia* includes a diary he kept during the trip and two papers he subsequently wrote based on it. The diary is full of fascinating asides about the world as seen from a plane and about the gossip he was picking up in Russia: "Claim syphilis and anti-Semitism increased with contact of troops with territories formerly occupied by Germans." The Cold War had already begun in June 1945. "Canada," Innis told his diary, "might play role of small bird which picks the teeth of the crocodile and in compensation gives warning of danger."

* * *

ANYONE DOING primary research will find it useful to consult the Directory of Canadian Archives (Association of Canadian Archivists, R349, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa K1A 0N3, 130 pages, \$8.00 paper). The directory offers the most complete listing there is of archives in Canada (English and French), the nature of their holdings, and whom to write or phone for information.

* * *

GREGORY CLARK was never my cup of tea; I found him too cute most of the time. So I didn't expect much when I turned to *The Life & Times of Greg Clark: Canada's Favorite Storyteller*, by Jock Carroll (Doubleday, 360 pages, \$19.95 cloth). But the book includes a few examples of Clark at his best — especially "Mrs. L. Bruce — A Love Story." And although I was bored by many of the rambling anecdotes about Clark and his cronies, the book is of some interest as social history — it's a bit like focusing on the background of someone else's family photographs.

* * *

LONG-TIME READERS of this column may recall a perceptive little book on numerology by Ann Forhmzway: *Your Destiny Is in Your Name*. She pointed out that people named Morris are "advanced" souls who "have had every experience there is to be had and [have] come back by choice, out of love for mankind." Ms. Forhmzway now has published a less perceptive companion volume, *Your Destiny Is In Your Name 2* (PaperJacks, 171 pages, \$2.95 paper). Of the number 11 (me) she now writes: "Others see you having a far-seeing mind if you are using this vibration positively . . . If you are not . . . they will see you as being reclusive, despondent and very much out to lunch." □

Schemes and variations: from Trotsky's hand in the Halifax explosion to pity for an aging Peter Pan

By ANNE COLLINS

ONE OF THE JOYS of writing a paperback column is that snatching at the chance to have the last word is not considered rude. Case in point: Ian McLachlan's *Helen* in *Exile* (Seal, \$3.25). Reviews of it were mixed, ambivalent. The *Books in Canada* reviewer greatly admired McLachlan's ambition, but couldn't help feeling that such ambition was unseemly in a second-time novelist. He confessed to finding the novel so unsuccessful it took him a month to read it.

I gulped it in one night. I found McLachlan's reach exhilarating because as far as I was concerned he grasped what he grabbed for. In a symmetry that never becomes stifling he arranges the stories of three generations of women, whose names are variations of Helen,

reacting to crisis times in their own particular countries: Helens, the grandmother, to the burning of Smyrna by the Turks; H  l  ne, her daughter, as a leader of the French Resistance; the youngest, Helen, sleepwalking toward terrorism in Montreal during the October Crisis.

What made the first reviewers uncomfortable, I think, was their belief that McLachlan was saying that one situation was as dangerous, as cataclysmic, as the other — that Quebec in 1970 was as much a battlefield as France in 1944. In terms of women's souls perhaps he is. But McLachlan uses H  l  ne's black-and-white experience of war to highlight the grey mud of the modern Helen's. Helen is not nearly as noble; their experiences don't equate. Helen doesn't know

what to fight. She is a painter so she fights her art in that familiar 20th-century battle to lose control, to give up attempting to order experience. H  l  ne believes that if you can't have joy at least you can try for order. Each is a successful embodiment of her times.

Each woman hates her mother. All, except Helen, despise their daughters — again revealing symmetry. Granted it's a superficial pleasure, but it did please me that McLachlan was able to disappear so completely into these women. It's the first women's novel I've read that was written by a man.

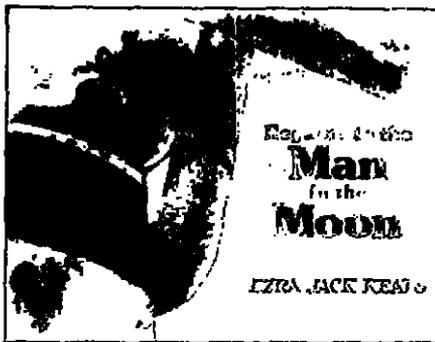
The moon must influence paperback publishing; it seems to flow in thematic tides. Embattlement, imprisonment, and heroics are big this month. If you want to relive yet again the exploits of Ken Taylor and his merry band of "exfiltrators" as they spirit six American embassy personnel out of Tehran, *The Canadian Caper* (PaperJacks, \$3.50) is for you. Jean Pelletier, who broke the story in *La Presse*, has joined forces with Claude Adams, and they add the buzz of suspense to a story whose conclusion is foregone. No mean feat.

Taylor, I accept, is a hero. Somehow, though, I'm not persuaded that Pelletier is. The book tries its best to Woodward

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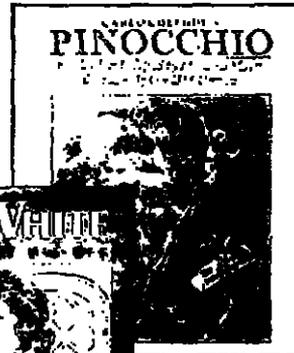
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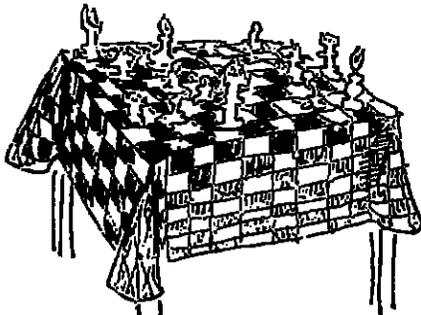
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or Bernstein him in its account of his scooping to conquer. Rather self-righteously and in the third person, too:

In many respects, Pelletier was an old-fashioned journalist, preferring the traditional style of reporting to the modern orthodoxy of the "new journalism" with its upfront biases and first-person posturing. Only rarely did he inject his own strong political views into his dispatches and, even then, not at the expense of the facts.

The story of Pelletier's story doesn't



hold its own against Pelletier's story, if you know what I mean. This is opinion, mind you, not fact.

The epigraph of *The Sixth of December* (PaperJacks, \$3.50), an original paperback thriller by one of PaperJacks' regulars, Jim Lotz, is from Leon Trotsky: "... all through history, mind limps after reality." In this case fiction limps along with it. There is good research and the germs of a sufficiently paranoid plot here, involving Trotsky in the massive explosion in Halifax during the First World War. But: "Women cried, and men looked at each other in that dreadful moment before death descended on the city."

Manuel Alvarez's account of his 40-year search for the Canadian who saved his 12-year-old life in the Spanish Civil War has been well-praised. The paperback edition of *The Tall Soldier* (Virgo, \$3.50) is, of course, just as good and has an extra attraction — an afterword on the mystery of Rosita's lost suitcase. I'm not going to reveal the details here, but I wouldn't be surprised to see treasure-hungry Canadians descend on the Catalan town of Corbera with jackhammers, à la *Masquerade*.

The obscuring movements of his hands are more obvious these days, but the great magician Pierre Elliott Trudeau still makes fascinating reading. Richard Gwyn's book-length profile, *The Northern Magus* (PaperJacks, \$3.95) is so thorough and thoughtful that you can forgive Gwyn such excesses of imagery as his frequent likening of the prime minister to Peter Pan.

All the rocks of our common perceptions of Trudeau — his arrogance, intelligence, reserve — have been flipped over and had their undersides examined

by Gwyn. Trudeau is admirable, unlikeable; he courts ambiguity. In spite of his political record, remarkable for tenacity more than achievement, Trudeau keeps us interested. We may feel like the injured party in this 13-year-old love affair; Gwyn leads us into the uncomfortable realization that Trudeau is disappointed too. He thought we were thinking beings like himself, able to put down our emotions and pursue a logical course for the betterment of all. *La raison avant la passion*. He thought that he could create a benign, logical, problem-solving bureaucracy; he produced a monstrous, politicized civil service and discovered that there are no solutions for many problems. Worse, that voters are not reasonable. Such disenchantment left him imperious and us disgruntled, if not rebellious.

Jesuit-trained, a bit of a schoolyard bully, Trudeau does not like to lose. He has excellent tools for winning, but no scruples about throwing out the rules of fair play if those tools fail him. Gwyn says that only one person has ever been able to hold him to a draw — Margaret. She doesn't play fair either, and the ulti-

mate victory is surely hers:

Not long ago, she got under his armour with a slash that was murderous because, as he told friends afterwards, there was simply nothing he could say in reply. "I'll win in the end," Margaret told him, "because I'm going to live longer. When the boys are grown up, I'll still be around."

Read *The Northern Magus*, if only for the brief experience of an unaccustomed emotion regarding Trudeau: pity.

Other titles out this month that I suppose will tantalize somebody: Rudy Wiebe trots out a version of the manhunt for Albert Johnson, cliché fading into mythology in *The Mad Trapper* (Seal, \$2.75). Another most-wanted Canadian, the late Alvin Karpis, had to leave the country to get famous as U.S. Public Enemy Number One. He would probably rather not remember Alcatraz as told to Robert Livesey in *On the Rock* (PaperJacks, \$2.95). And Dave McIntosh remembers 41 trips aboard a *Mosquito* in *Terror in the Starboard Seat* (PaperJacks, \$2.95). It was the Second World War — to win you had to be able to fly anything. □

IN TRANSLATION

Foreign correspondence: from a masterly resurrection of the prose poem to a date with the hangwoman

By PAUL STUEWE

THE MULTICULTURAL NATURE of the Canadian mosaic is constantly being enriched by new arrivals, and one of the latest groups to offer a literary contribution is Ediciones Cordillera (155-3275 McCarthy Road, Ottawa, K1V 9N1), a Chilean-exile press that has recently issued two notable bilingual (Spanish-English) poetry titles. Jorge Etcheverry's *El Evasionista/The Escape Artist* (translated by Christina Shantz, \$5.00 paper) is a selection of the author's work from 1968 to 1980 that exhibits an impressive mastery of the prose poem, a form largely ignored in English-language writing but whose development by Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and such recent practitioners as Octavio Paz has made it central to Latin-based literatures.

Prose poetry is easy to write and very hard to write well, since the intrinsic requirements of each of its well-established parents are easily evaded by

a facile transition into the other: typically, one gets either a febrile burst of poetic prose or an inanimate chunk of prosaic poetry. Etcheverry's work transcends such difficulties by relating a more or less linear narrative in language alert to associations of sound and sense, and the kind of results he achieves will be suggested by "Fragment 5:"

*Somehow
when we finish making love, the only
thing left to do is
to resume our previous attitude
and take flight from the balcony of the
building*

*The wise man traces circles upon
drawing paper
and makes the cats miaow from all the
roofs of the night
when they perceive our dangerous
proximity to the moon*

*So I am dedicating a few words to you.
Listen: I do not
leave your bed with my hands in my
pockets, whistling.*

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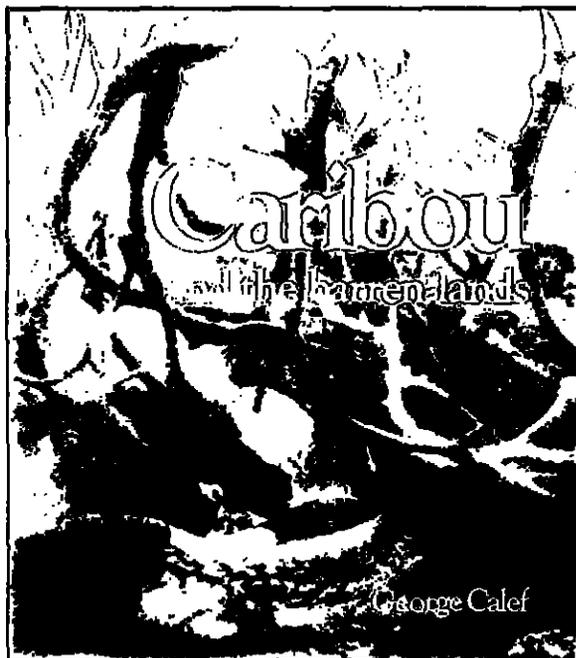
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neither do I go up the chimney like soft
white steam.
I do not dwell in a dark corner of your
room. I would not
fall into the error of attributing to you
metaphysical
properties. Now that the angels are
crestfallen and
it is time for many imprecisions.

This is a marvellous book, one that I've already reread with great pleasure, and I can't recommend it too highly.

Naim Nomez's *Historias del Reino Vigilado/Stories of a Guarded Kingdom* (translated by Christina Shantz, \$5.50 paper) gathers together poems from 1964-1990 of a more overtly political character, and relies heavily upon a vocabulary of Marxist and New Left terms that occasionally impresses as jargon rather than evocative language. This is irritating because Nomez is clearly not a mindless ideologue pasting together rhetorical banalities, but a thoughtful and passionate writer who undoubtedly opts for the easy phrase out of impatience to express himself rather than an inability to think of anything else. This minor annoyance aside, the poems in *Stories of a Guarded Kingdom* are direct and affecting reports from a sensibility committed to changing the

world as well as depicting and interpreting it. They reward close reading.

Etcheverry and Nomez also appear in *Canadian Fiction Magazine's* "A Special Issue of Fiction in Translation from the Unofficial Languages of Canada" (No. 36/37, \$7.50 paper), a more diffuse expression of the multicultural fact that haphazardly presents a wide variety of material exhibiting a corresponding range of literary competence. The cumulative effect of all these short and often excerpted pieces is something like rapidly changing stations on a short-wave radio, as the quick succession of different voices and cultures creates intellectual overload rather than dawning comprehension. Amid this Babelian uproar the contributions of Josef Skvorecky, Chava Rosenfarb, Leandro Urbina and Chen Jo-Hsi do manage to convey an impression of individual identity, but otherwise this is an anthology best sampled either in small doses or for primarily sociological reasons.

Pavel Kohout is a Czechoslovakian emigré whose books and plays have attracted a certain cult following, but his new novel *The Hangwoman* (Academic Press, translated by Kaca Polackova-

Henly, \$19.95 cloth) should earn him a much larger audience. The book proceeds by slowly and painstakingly working out an idea that if baldly stated would simply alienate most readers, but as Kohout craftily develops it the unthinkable becomes a perverse but acceptable subject for serious fiction. Much of one's enjoyment stems from curiosity as to just how far the author will carry out the logic of his premises, and so I'm going to play mystery-reviewer coy and not let them out of the bag; but if you're in the mood for an exceptionally stimulating and often shocking novel, I suggest an early appointment with *The Hangwoman*.

One of the dangers of reading only foreign books, like seeing only foreign films, is that we can easily develop an exaggerated notion of the uniform excellence of other literatures. The reason for this, of course, is that most of the time we experience only the high points of alien cultures, since the inferior material has been largely filtered out by processes of discriminating selection. Thus it is in a sense refreshing to realize that Japan has produced not only Lady Murasaki and Yukio Mishima, but also the turgid historical fiction of Eiji Yoshikawa's

The Institute on: Regulation

The author argues that regulatory tribunals do not offer adequate opportunities for consumer groups to participate in the regulatory decision-making process. He recommends procedural changes that would ensure that all concerned parties are allowed a voice before those tribunals.

Consumers and the Regulators: Intervention in the Federal Regulatory Process, T. Gregory Kane, pp. 128, \$10.95

In the face of double digit inflation, soaring wage increases and a high unemployment rate, wage and price controls were legislated into existence in October, 1975. Using both interviews and econometrics, this study provides a definitive account of the effectiveness of the controls program.

Wage Controls in Canada, 1975-1978: A Study in Public Decision Making, A. Maslove and G. Swimmer, pp. 182, \$11.95

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Mucashi (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, translated by Charles S. Terry, \$24.45 cloth), a book as long as *Gone With the Wind*, much less skilfully narrated, and on the whole about as much fun as going on a raw-fish diet.

Shogun certainly has a lot to answer for, but it may be partially redeemed if all its sword-and-samurai stuff sparks some interest in *The Catch and Other War Stories* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, various translators, \$6.75 paper), four tales of postwar Japanese life by Kenzaburo Oe, Haruo Umezaki, Tamiki Hara, and Fumiko Hayashi. With the

possible exception of Oe, all will be unfamiliar to Western readers, but the high level of literary craft shown here demonstrates that all merit serious consideration. The stories themselves share the downbeat, existentialist mood of much postwar Japanese writing, engaging in the kinds of fundamental examinations of self and society possible only in a defeated but still proud nation, and they provide an unusually candid glimpse into the interior of an unusually reticent culture. No swords, I'm afraid, but certainly a high grade of literary sorcery for the discriminating reader. □

ENGLISH, OUR ENGLISH

Is it that that ought to be used in place of which, which is a word that is used far too often? It's hard to say

By **BOB BLACKBURN**

HOPEFULLY, I AM going to try to get to the end of this column without making any mistakes, although the odds are against me. I have seldom been able to write more than a few paragraphs without wrongly substituting *which* for *that*. Maybe if I talk about it . . .

The rule, if you can believe most authorities, is simple. The relative pronoun *that* is defining or restrictive; *which* is non-defining or non-restrictive, and that's that.

It's good to know that this rule that can be so simply stated will solve this problem, which has been bothering me for years. It's also good to know that this rule, which can be so simply stated, will solve this problem that has been bothering me for years.

What I would *really* like to know is why, if it's so damned simple, the article devoted to the question is, at five pages, one of the longest (and most confusing) in Fowler's *Modern English Usage*.

Fowler does say, succinctly, that "if writers would agree to regard *that* as the defining relative pronoun, and *which* as the non-defining, there would be much gain both in lucidity and in ease." But he admits that this is not the practice "either of most or of the best writers." He also admits that the rule is not always easy for others to follow. (One gets the impression that *nothing* is too difficult for Fowler.)

My own difficulty with *that* and *which* is aggravated by the fact that I am stuck with one of those spurious rules that

plague us all. Some long-forgotten mentor evidently impressed upon my mind the fallacy that says that *that* is a colloquial relative that should be replaced by *which* in written English.

The fallacy, Fowler says, stems from the fact that *which* is more often demanded by the complex constructions of written sentences than by the simple ones of everyday speech, and, observing the frequent written use of *which*, many people conclude, wrongly, that it is the preferred form of *that*. "This false inference," he says, "tends to verify itself by persuading the writers who follow rules of thumb actually to change the original *that* of their thoughts into a *which* for presentation in print."

That last is an ungenerous remark. A person who has had a wrong precept drilled into him at an early age, and who has tried without total success to uproot it, should not be accused of "following" rules of thumb, dammit. Even in writing the above paragraphs I caught myself several times starting a defining clause with *which*. As the watchful editors of this magazine could tell you, it's a lapse which [*sic*] frequently defies my best efforts at vigilance.

Furthermore, Fowler (would that you were still with us), given the complexity of the various problems that *that* poses, upon which you expatiate so volubly, and considering how much more difficult it all becomes if that other tricky relative, *who*, is brought into the discussion, is it not possible that your simple

rule, quoted above, could be said to be one of thumb? Put which in your pipe and smoke it!

I can only conclude by saying (correctly) that the habit of misusing *which*, which is a bad one, is a habit that I will try to break.

MORE THAN 24 hours after the Supreme Court decision on the constitution was published, a reporter informed us that "it's hard to say who was the clear winner here." I made a note of it, but I remain uncertain whether it was the result of plain stupidity or of sloppy writing. It was obvious, seconds after Chief Justice Laskin began speaking, that the very essence of the news story was that there was no clear winner (between the contending provincial governments on the one side and the federal government on the other). I refuse to believe that any professional journalist could have failed, by the following afternoon, to grasp that fact. It *must* have been sloppy writing, spawned by the currently endemic journalistic addiction to circumlocution.

"It's hard to say" is one of the many cop-out phrases favoured by journalists who cannot bring themselves to say "I don't know." Such dodges, used too

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often, become catch-phrases that tend to be thrown into use even when inappropriate. Probably what the reporter was trying to say was that the story was confusing because, while there was no clear winner, both sides were claiming victory. That could be said in a dozen ways; she chose none of them.

Or perhaps she was trying to say that eventually one side might prove to have won out, but it was not yet clear to her

which side that would be.

What she did tell us, in effect, was that there was a clear winner, but she didn't know who it was, and that's nonsense.

Such terrible writing by so-called professionals is so common today that one is tempted to console oneself with the thought that an occasional misuse of *which* isn't important.

But it is. □

INTERVIEW

In the past, says John Moss, our critics mapped the perimeters of the garrison. Now it is time to break them down

By GEOFF HANCOCK

JOHN MOSS, founder and for five years managing editor of the *Journal of Canadian Fiction*, is one of the most prominent younger critics to emerge out of the 1970s. In such books as *Patterns of Isolation* and *Sex and Violence in the Canadian Novel* (both McClelland & Stewart), his writing has occasionally tended as much toward popular commentary as scholarly reserve. He has also edited two volumes of essays originally published in *JCF*, *Here and Now* and *Beginnings* (NC Press), and a new book of his criticism, *A Reader's Guide to the Canadian Novel*, has recently been published by M&S. Geoff Hancock met him in Toronto, where they discussed the changing role of the Canadian literary critic:

Books in Canada: *What is the experience of a work of art?*

Moss: I see a work of art as a living organism that stands quite apart from the person who made it. The creator doesn't fully understand what he or she has done. The art works simultaneously on emotional, intellectual, and perhaps spiritual levels. The critical function then is to analyze but also to synthesize. The critic does not perform an autopsy, leaving behind rough stitches on the corpse; it's delicate surgery on a living organism.

BiC: *Are critics expected to change literature? Or just interpret it?*

Moss: Neither, exclusively. The critic who sets out to change literature is being arrogant. Interpretation is too limited. A critic's primary function is to illuminate. I try to approach each work on its

own terms. Perhaps its historical context is important, or its social context, or its use of language, or the shaping of time, or ideas, or its characters — its insights into individual behaviour or universal behaviour; or even my own response. I am increasingly opposed to critical "ics" and "isms." Structuralism. Thematics. I'm concerned with the work of art,



John Moss

itself, how it functions. I suppose I'd describe myself as a "functionalist" critic — though I'd rather have no label at all. Certainly not the "thematic" label. I suppose like a lot of others I'm reacting against Canadian criticism of the past 15 years or so.

BiC: *Who might those critics be?*

Moss: Myself, among others. The so-called post-Frygian school. Northrop Frye, one of our most cosmopolitan and sophisticated thinkers, in fact, gave rise to a very parochial school of criticism, of which I've reluctantly been a part. I

PHOTOGRAPH BY VIRGINIA MOSS

think it was historically necessary to have Margaret Atwood, Doug Jones, Eli Mandel, myself, and others, writing the kinds of criticism we were, that was so often labelled "thematic." I prefer to call it "systems" criticism. It looked for systems to give coherence to the literature as a whole. Canadian literature seemed no longer a matter of a few good works. It was exciting and dynamic. It coincided with the new concept of nationalism as synonymous with sovereignty. Suddenly, literature seemed an expression of our national consciousness, the national imagination, national experience.

Now, we've always had a tendency toward systems: the CBC, the CPR. Frye put his finger on this — Frye's influence on Canadian criticism, on me anyway, had less to do with his own criticism, which obviously I admire, than with his cultural generalizations, which made me feel good. Frye and the whole tenor of the 1970s led me to write systems criticism in spite of myself. I tried very hard to be a functionalist, but everything kept relating to the larger argument. To sex and violence, to isolation, regional consciousness, irony. It was historically necessary to go through this, to establish contexts and connections. In retrospect it seems like we were defining the perimeters of the garrison. Now it's time to break them down. I would think there's no better person for the critic to emulate today in Canada than George Woodcock. Not that I agree with everything he does or says. But he's eclectic and urbane. That is the basis of what I see as good criticism for the 1980s.

EC: *But now there's a gap between the "public critic" as Woodcock defines himself, and the academic critic.*

Moss: That's probably a good thing. They have different functions. The one's a mediator between literature and public consciousness; the other mediates between the literature and time. I suppose the true academic is the one who does the dirty work — but someone's got to do it. The textual stuff. Determining the authentic edition of *Wacousta*. Writing the critical biographies of Ralph Connor and Agnes May Fleming. I see myself caught between the two functions, actually. Not trying to reduce the gap but trying to bridge it.

EC: *Are certain functions of criticism in Canada being neglected?*

Moss: Yes. Critical evaluation is ignored. Continuity with the larger world is ignored. Word choice and syntax are ignored. Style and technique. Time. Ideas. Our fear of evaluation is our greatest weakness. I don't mean, "I like this/I don't like that." That's

simply opinion. But we must be critical. What's right with a work, and why. We must break away from the non-evaluative systems approach of the past decade. We must come to terms with Mavis Gallant. Elizabeth Smart. John Metcalf. People whose work doesn't fit into so-called CanLit. It makes me want to throw up, the term CanLit! We must somehow open up these closed systems. Run through titles of critical books published in the last decade. It's appalling! *Survival; The Bush Garden; Patterns of Isolation; Articulating West; The Haunted Wilderness; Savage Fields; Sex and Violence in the Canadian Novel; Vertical Man, Horizontal World; Our Nature, Our Voices; Harsh and Lovely Land; The Canadian Imagination*. All these bloody generalizations born out of this need to systematize and generalize. It was an appropriate response — post-coital ruminations after the centenary ecstasies. We're past that now.

BIC: *Is criticism somehow to make a gesture to the future then? Or is it bound to the past?*

Moss: Criticism is a process of perpetual *déjà vu*. Once things have been made, the critic tries to discover their inevitability. Criticism is not prophetic. Critics speak for their own time and place. The literature if it's any good transcends. I do think the past is important, but we are continually redefining the past. I agree with T.S. Eliot that each new work of art, if it is art, affects everything that has ever been written. The beauty of working with literature, with the arts, is that the past refuses to be a stable commodity, a dead thing, artifact.

BIC: *Is there a danger in Canadian criticism, as George Eliot suggested, that too many footnotes might run away with the brain?*

Moss: Yes. But I don't believe in naiveté either. A good work will sustain endless critical exploration, and the exploration will endlessly illuminate the work.

BIC: *What are you doing with Beginnings and Here and Now?*

Moss: These anthologies are anti-systematic. I've purposely brought together a variety of critical approaches: personal responses by writers like Northrop Frye and Thomas Raddall, an essay by George Woodcock on the history of ideas, scholarly essays, interpretive and evaluative essays, etc. There's far more scope here than in an academic journal. I've had the freedom to pick and choose according to different criteria — determined by the literature itself, not some other thing. In *A Reader's Guide to the Canadian Novel* I've been anti-systematic with my own critical writing to the extent that separate essays I've written expressly for

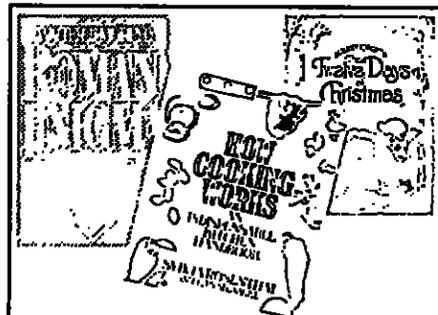
the book on more than 200 Canadian novels are assembled alphabetically — as in an encyclopedia. Perhaps that is the ultimate in what Atwood describes as the synthetic Canadian habit of mind — the ultimate in synthesis is surely the encyclopedia. □

LETTERS

Atlantic advocates

Sir:

I was disappointed to see that your reviewer, Doug Watling, took such a pre-20th-century stance in reviewing *Visions from the Edge* (August-September), a science-fiction and fantasy anthology that I co-edited with John Bell. For me, Watling's approach represents the very worst of the shackled mentality that has fought to keep Cana-



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dian literature "in its place" over the years. Why is he so hung up on categories and restrictions attached to one genre or another? Why the interest in limiting, rather than freeing-up, the imagination? (A friend of mine insists it has something to do with toilet training, an oversimplification, I'm sure . . . but if true, I'd be the first to offer a free supply of laxatives.)

Watling remains overly concerned with *who* is truly Atlantic Canadian, worrying over the authors' "various terms of residency and a hodgepodge of backgrounds and influences." One assumes he is referring to writers such as Elizabeth Mann Borgese, daughter of Thomas Mann, who settled in Nova Scotia, wrote a considerable number of science-fiction stories for international magazines, and established herself as a leading figure in international ocean law. Apparently, by Watling's standards, international credentials automatically bar a writer from attachment to a region. Our intention as editors was, in part, to show that this edge of Canada has a strong tradition of speculative literature that focuses on the world and the future.

In fact, Watling ignores a very significant work by Laurence Manning, a Saint John, N.B., native who in 1934 published an extraordinary story of vision that is set 500 million years in the future. "The Living Galaxy" is a "hard science" story that truly stretches the limits of man's ability to predict where science is going. For my money, it's one of the best to come out of the '30s or any other time period and it follows Sturgeon's SF dictum very nicely, thank you.

But sadly, Mr. Watling has been thumbing his textbooks for too many years, underlining with black magic marker every time he comes across a statement of definition. After slicing off major portions of our book that he feels are outside the realm of fantasy (mystical tales and ghost stories) he asserts his position in acceptance of Roberts's contribution to the book. Check it out: "I find Sir Charles G.D. Roberts's 'The Stone Dog' closer to true fantasy simply because its setting remains unidentifiable and elusive." (And my typesetter was sure the story concerned a man who was smoking dope in a marsh near Fredericton somewhere around the turn of the century.)

Rigid definition of genre has always caused disastrous decay in the development of any field, and I'd be really pleased to find a reviewer who took the book by the teeth, gnawed on it a bit, digested the good and the bad, and wrote about the *experiences* provided by

the authors. I feel that some of the experiences provided in *Visions from the Edge* are nothing short of spectacular, and it was the effort of a very small, poverty-stricken, but joyous publisher to show an unexplored tradition of literature in Atlantic Canada.

Lesley Choyce
East Lawrencetown, N.S.

Sir:

Your August-September issue is a distressing compendium of error.

Bob Blackburn tells us that "to founder" is "to run aground." The correct expression for running aground is "stranding" or "being stranded"; a gentle stranding is known as "taking the ground," although, as Joseph Conrad noted, the feeling is more as if the ground has taken hold of the ship. The Concise Oxford and waterfront usage agree that "to founder" means "to fill and sink," which is just about the exact opposite of stranding and an even more alarming experience.

Then Billy Valgardson generates a graceful essay from the misguided notion that learning can be accomplished by people other than the learner. Valgardson's approach will certainly teach students obedience to authority, during the course of which they may or may not be terrified into reading and writing. But the real problem is motivation, as Valgardson tacitly recognizes when he says that "the school's function is to assist the student in developing skills." If the student is not already actively engaged in developing skills, after all, it follows that he cannot be assisted. The will to learn flows from the learner's own needs and wishes; indeed, as John Holt and others have repeatedly demonstrated, motivation is more often destroyed than created by schools, set curricula, and determined educators. If God is not a fish inspector, he is not an educator either. I hope Valgardson will read Holt's *How Children Fail* and *Freedom and Beyond*, particularly, and then try again. He's right about the importance of literacy but wrong about the means of achieving it.

Next, Wayne Grady asserts that "in Cape Breton the Scots are dour Calvinists," and Hugh MacLennan only partially corrects him. Calvinists? Two-thirds of Cape Bretoners are Catholics, b'ys, and Capers are famous from here to Fort MacMurray as fun-loving hell-raisers. After 10 years here, I find Cape Breton the most tolerant, convivial community I have ever known, and I cannot really imagine living permanently any-

where else. Of course we do have enclaves of the uptight and upright, and MacLennan's people seem to have inhabited one such enclave. Sixty years ago, when MacLennan lived here, stern moralists may have been influential — but in those days the old whiff of Calvinism was discernible even in sinful Toronto.

Finally, Dawne Smith tells us that William Hamilton's "eloquent praise" of Cape Breton "is often excessive." This is quite impossible. Praise of Cape Breton can never be excessive.

Silver Donald Cameron
D'Escousse, N.S.

Juan Butler

Sir:

I thought that Barry Dickie's tribute to Juan Butler's work (August-September) was both apt and just, but I'd like to add a few personal recollections.

The last time I saw Juan Butler it was the fall of 1974, when he unexpectedly turned up at my Montreal rooming-house, a kitten nestled under his arm. He was moving back to Toronto to enter a CBC drama course and wanted a home for the kitten, but since my landlady didn't permit pets — of the four-legged type, at least — I couldn't take it, and that introduced a first small sour note into our acquaintance. Not long before, he'd given me a copy of *Canadian Healing Oil*, and I used to read it on my hospital shift like a kind of amulet.

When I knew Butler in Montreal he was in good shape. He had a walk-up apartment on Dorchester at St. Lawrence, was happily married to a beautiful Ethiopian girl, and seemed to be working well. The drama course appeared to be a bit of a break for him, and when he dropped from sight afterward I just assumed that he'd been quietly absorbed into the CBC behemoth. It was shocking to learn of his death.

I first met him when *Northern Journey 3* (1973) published "The Happy Gang Rides Again," Butler's attack on the Group of Seven and the London School of painters: "no combination of Dada-cum-pop and parochial egotism, however humorous, can serve as a valid substitute for authentic national culture and artistic innovation. A culture must be based on a feeling, not of geography, but of national community." Butler was a loner, an English/Spanish outsider who brought to his new country an intensity quite alien to the mild Canadian sensibilities around him. He had strong, even rigid opinions, but he had earned the right to have them.

Extremely handsome, physically beautiful in fact, he had about him — despite the forceful opinions — an extraordinary sweetness. And, my God, he had talent. At some point the pressure of his psychological afflictions broke him, but the talent recorded his gallant struggle with it. It's an inhumane thing to say, but, viewing Butler's life as that of artist-as-martyr, perhaps it was better that he ended his working life as he did, maintaining his talent at flash-point rather than dampening it with lesser work. His novels are like no others in Canadian literature, though *Cabbagetown Diary* has an affinity with Hugh Garner, and *Canadian Healing Oil* with Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers* — of course *Healing Oil* is incomparably better.

When he lived in rooms on Madison in Toronto he used to organize his novels by sifting through dozens of separate little piles of manuscript, finding the thread that would bind the fragments. It's a pathetic waste that the thread gathered and tightened into a noose.

Fraser Sutherland
Scotsburn, N.S.

Brief encounter

Sir:

In a brief review of my new paperback, *Good Words, Well Spoken* (August-September) the word "pathology" is applied to the description of sound production. Since pathology is the study of diseased or abnormal things, and the description of voice production in *Good Words* is about the development of the healthy voice, would you publish this response to avoid misunderstanding on the part of your readers?

Esmé Crampton
Toronto

CANWIT NO. 67

NOW THAT mid-term papers have been handed in, marked, and fought over, professors and publishers and even some students have recognized the need for a definitive reference book for aspiring essayists. Our old friends at McClarkan & Newspider have accordingly contracted the CanWit editors to compile a new, updated version of the *Glossary of Literary Terms*, incorporating contemporary definitions of all the standby chestnuts of academic criticism. We've put our heads together and come up with two:

Novel: The early draft of a film script.

Couplet: A brief, but poetic, encounter.

We'll pay \$25 for the best list of literary definitions that we receive before Nov. 20. Address: CanWit No. 67, *Books in Canada*, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4.

Results of CanWit No. 65

PERHAPS THE FULL moon had something to do with it, but our request for typographically mangled titles brought a landslide of entries. Trouble is, many of the contestants had the same books in mind. The commonest recurring titles were *Roughing It in the Bus* (Susanna Moodie's account of life in a busy transit system), *St. Urbain's Hoseman* (Mordecai Richler's profile of a Montreal fireman), *The National Dram* (Pierre Berton's book about the Bronfman family), and *Who Has Seen the Win* (W.O. Mitchell on the Toronto Blue Jays). The winner was Ed Prato of Vancouver, for a somewhat salacious list that includes:

- Coming Through Laughter:* Michael Ondaatje meets the Happy Hooker
- The Circe Game:* A new collaboration by Margaret Atwood and Aritha van Herk
- The Sweet Second Summer of Kitty Alone:* Matt Cohen's touching novel about a middle-aged woman who discovers the joys of onanism
- A Game of Ouch:* Hugh Hood turns his attention to the Toronto Argonauts
- The Emperor of Ice-Ream:* Brian Moore's shivering novel of forbidden lust in the Norse settlements of Vinland.

Honorable mentions:

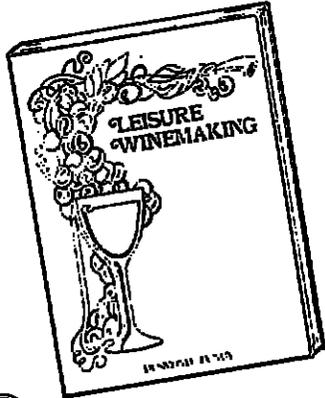
- Close to the Un Again:* Morley Callaghan reports on the resurgence of Kik Cola
- Sunshine Ketches of a Little Town:* Stephen Leacock's story of the fleet in a Nova Scotian village
- Master of the Ill:* F.P. Grove's tale of an accomplished surgeon
- The Great Canadian Noel:* Harry J. Boyle's Christmas book
— Michael P.J. Kennedy, Saskatoon
- Bra:* Joan Barfoot's uplifting saga of a woman who abandons husband and children in her drive to the top of the lingerie business
- By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wet:* Elizabeth Smart's uncomfortable and urgently needed survey of the sanitary facilities in public buildings
- The Secret World of O:* Pierre Berton's underground sequel to the erotic classic
— Claire L. Mackay, Toronto
- The Mountain and the Alley:* Ernest Buckler moves to Montreal to write a tough urban novel
- Where Is the Voice Oming From?:* Rudy Wiebe brings Buddhism to the Prairies
— Brian Bartlett, Montreal

- And No Birds Sag:* Farley Mowat's exercise book for overweight canaries
— Neil Querengesser, Calgary
- Not Her Country:* Al Purdy rejects the monarchy in Canada
— Mrs. G. Munro, Humboldt, Sask.
- The Kidnapping of the Resident:* A consumer's guide to rent control, by Charles Templeton
— Jean Dodd, Willowdale, Ont.
- My Grandmother's Itchen:* Mme. Benoit's grandmother gets poison ivy
— Miriam Flam, Winnipeg
- The Tory Girl:* L.M. Montgomery's biography of Flora MacDonald
— P. Colleen Archer, Omeme, Ont.
- Voices in Tim:* Hugh MacLennan's story of a young schizophrenic
- A Mixture of Rail Ties:* Robertson Davies's parody of a book by Pierre Berton
— G.H. Koch, Toronto
- The Regimen:* Farley Mowat's diet book
- The Cockmaker:* Early Canadian porn by Thomas Haliburton
— Barry Baldwin, Calgary
- Tempest Tot:* Robertson Davies's biography of Prospero's grandchild
— Lillian J. Rouse, Toronto

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□ *Hoeless Joe Jackson Comes to Iowa:* W.P. Kinsella writes of an itinerant farm worker who reports to work without the tools of his trade
— W.P. Kinsella, Calgary

THE EDITORS RECOMMEND

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

FICTION

Bodily Harm, by Margaret Atwood, McClelland & Stewart. Despite some thin characterization and aphoristic dialogue, Atwood's new novel about Caribbean and internal turmoil employs her usual brilliant imagery and explores some powerful metaphors. By far the bleakest of her novels.

The Rebel Angels, by Robertson Davies, Macmillan. Davies brings together a large gathering of disparate people and does that rare but magical thing: allows them just to talk. The result is a rich and surprisingly eventful novel, rumoured to be the first of another Davies trilogy.

Home Truths: Selected Canadian Stories, by Mavis Gallant, Macmillan. Seventeen short stories spanning Gallant's career from the late 1940s to her most recent

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ANTIQUÉ MAPS OF CANADA and North America for the collector and investor. For list write: North by West/Five, Box 11538, Main P.O., Edmonton, Alta. T5J 3K7.

OLD AND RARE BOOKS. Canadiana catalogues. Heritage Books, 3438 6 St. S.W., Calgary, Alberta T2S 2M4.

THE LETTERS OF CANADIAN WRITERS. Susanna Moodie (1803-1885) and Catherine Parr Traill (1802-1899), are being collected for publication. Mrs. Moodie and Mrs. Traill corresponded with friends and publishers in Canada, England, and the north eastern United States from the 1830s until their respective deaths. Any information pertaining to their letters, lives, or publications will be gratefully received in care of Sheree-Lee Powsey, Lady Eaton College, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario K9J 7B8.

Linnet Muir series. All take place in Canada or involve Canadians overseas, and all demonstrate Gallant's uncompromising insight into the national character — if there is such a thing.

The Barclay Family Theatre, by Jack Hodgins, Macmillan. Hodgins's second collection of short stories, all of which trace the many invasions of the seven Barclay sisters into other people's lives. Their interconnectedness gives the book a unity of theme, and Hodgins's humour and compassion inform it with a truly Chaucerian warmth.

POETRY

Land of the Peace, by Leona Gom, Turnstone Press. Realistic, anecdotal, and restrained poems that explore not only the Peace River country of northern Alberta, but also the scenes and themes of childhood. Her concern is more with truth than with poetics, but there is no doubt that these are real poems.

NON-FICTION

A Man of Influence: Norman A. Robertson and Canadian Statecraft, 1929-1968, by J.L. Granatstein, Deneau Publishers. A solid study of "the model civil servant" who during the Second World War was one of the most influential men in Ottawa. Much light is shed not only on the personality of Robertson, but also on the role personality can play in political decision-making.

BOOKS RECEIVED

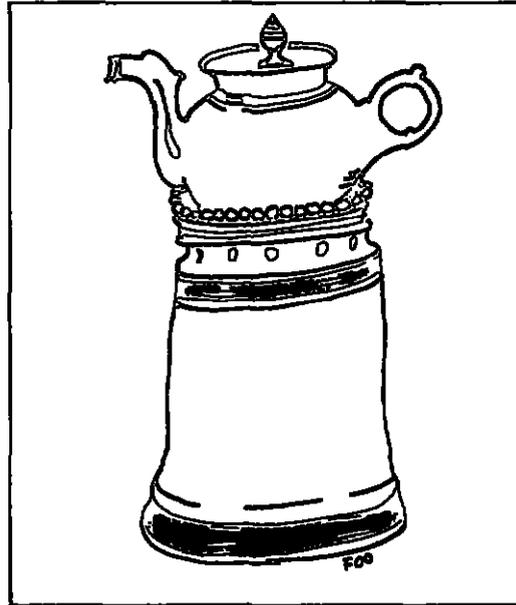
THE FOLLOWING Canadian books have been received by *Books in Canada* in recent weeks. Inclusion in this list does not preclude a review or notice in a future issue:

Altering the Images: Canada and the North-South Dialogue, Parliamentary Task Force on North-South Relations, Personal Library.
Atlantic Spectrum '82, edited by Leslie McKillop, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.
Banarado Children in Canada, by Gail H. Corbett, Woodland Publishing.
The Beast in the Bag & Wild West Circus, by Isabelle Foord, Playwrights Canada (1977).
Best Canadian Short Stories, edited by John Stevens, Seal.
The Bill Said Hello/You'll Never Be the Same, by Georgette Guay, Playwrights Canada (1979).
The Canadian Summer: The Memoirs of James Alan Roberts, University of Toronto Bookroom.
The Cariboo Mission, by Margaret Whitehead, Sono Nis Press.
C.G. Jung and Paul Tillich: The Psyche as Sacrament, by John P. Dourley, Inner City Books.
The Choice Is Yours, by Gerald P. Turner and Joseph Mapo, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
Clifford Sifton, Volume 1: The Young Napoleon, 1861-1900, University of British Columbia Press.
Coast to Coast Fever, edited by Arthur McGregor, OFC Publications.
Cries From the Corridor, by Peter McLaren, PaperJacks.
Crime and Criminal Justice in Europe and Canada, edited by Louis A. Knafie, Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
A Curious Cage, by Peggy Abkhazi, Sono Nis Press.
Daddy's Girl, by Charlotte Vale Allen, Seal.
Dead Man Tears, by Joel Newman, General.
A Different Kettle of Fish: The Book Room.
Directory of Canadian Plays and Playwrights, Playwrights Canada.

Double Spell, by Janet Linn, PMA.
Dragons on Your Doorstep, by Bembo Davies and Connie Kaldor, Playwrights Canada.
Dreaming Backwards: The Selected Poetry of Eli Mandel, General.
81: Best Canadian Stories, edited by John Metcalf and Leon Rooke, Oberon.
Escape From Canada, by John Melady, Macmillan.
Eskimo Diary, by Thomas Frederiksen, Nelson.
Fox of a Thousand Faces, by John Gounod Campbell, Playwrights Canada (1980).
Francis Fonge, Etudes Françaises, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
Giants of Canada's Ottawa Valley, by Joan Finnigan, General Store Publishing House.
God's Eye, by George McWhirter, Oberon.
Gold! Gold!, A Beginner's Handbook: How to Prospect for Gold, by Joseph F. Petralia, Hancock House (1980).
The Group of One: Joseph Brudshaw Thorne, by Mark Cumming, Cumming Publishers.
Guide to Indian Herbs, by Raymond Stark, Hancock House.
Guide to Northeastern Wild Edibles, by E. Barrie Kavasch, Hancock House.
House of Lions, by Antony Renshaw, PaperJacks.
The Human Element, edited by David Helwig, Oberon.
The Idea of Canada and the Crisis of Community, by Leslie Armour, Steel Ball.
It's Real, by Bill Frankard, G.R. Welch.
Jacob Two-Two, by Peg McKelvey et al., Playwrights Canada.
Kassin, by Dennis Adair and Janet Rosenstock, Avon.
Living Together, by Lynn Fels, Personal Library.
The Looking Glass #3, Everyday Publications (1975).
Maple Leaf Gardens: Fifty Years of History, by Stan Obodias, Van Nostrand Reinhold.
Maximilian Beetle, by Larry Zacharko, Playwrights Canada (1979).
Men of Property, by Susan Goldenberg, Personal Library.
Metals Makers of History, by Grant MacEwan, Western Producer Prairie Books.
Monster: An Autobiography, by Brian Brett, White Rhino Press.
New Bodies: A Collection of Science Fiction, Emanation Press.
Ontario Spectrum '82, edited by Daryl Cook et al., Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.
Pickles and Puppets, by Noreen Young and Juli Voyer, Playwrights Canada (1979).
Plein and her Pink Pig, by Margaret Jean Tuimings, Everyday Publications (1971).
The Politics of Racism, by Ann Gomer Sunahara, James Lorimer.
The Princess, The Hockey Player, Magic and Ghosts, edited by Muriel Whitaker, Hurdy.
Reflections, Everyday Publications (1980).
Roadside Wildflowers of the Northwest, by J.E. Underhill, Hancock House.
Rooibog: Contemporary B.C. Writing, edited by John Harris, Reptorial Press.
Science: The Nature of Things, by Alan Longfield, Oxford.
Sea Leopards, by Craig Thomas, Nelson.
The Second Book of Isults, by Nancy McPhee, Van Nostrand Reinhold.
Second Impressions, edited by John Metcalf, Oberon.
The Serpent's Coil, by Farley Mowat, Seal Books.
Siliches in Time, by Arnold Smith, General.
A Taste of Earth, a Taste of Flame, by Daniel Sloate, Guernica Editions.
Teaching With the Overhead Projector, by George R. Hauser and Russell J. Jones, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.
The Third Temptation, by Charles Templeton, Seal Books.
Trapper, by Thomas York, Doubleday.
Triad, by Richard Rohmer, General.
Unfinished Business, by W. Gunther Plaut, Lester & Orpen Dennys.
The Yallant Tailor, by Noreen Young, Playwrights Canada (1980).
Victory in Normandy, by David Belchem, Clarke Irwin.
Vision of An Ordered Land, by James G. MacGregor, Western Producer Prairie Books.
The Visiting King, by Franklin D. Taylor, Everyday Publications (1978).
Western Spectrum '82, edited by G.R. Sankey, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.
Whatever Happened to Wenceslaus?, by Jan Drabek, PMA.
Why Don't You Listen to What I'm Not Saying?, by Judith Milstein Katz, Doubleday.
Wood and Water: The Common-Sense Canoe Book, by Lee Keating, Nimbus.



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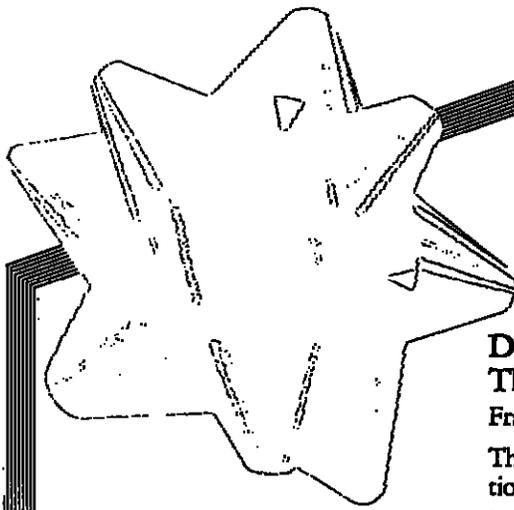
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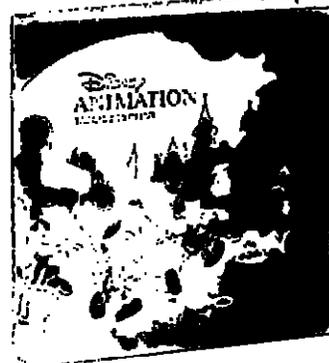
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