

A NATIONAL REVIEW OF BOOKS

BOOKS IN CANADA

THE APPRENTICESHIP OF ADELE WISEMAN



New books by Margaret Atwood, Matt Cohen,
W.O. Mitchell, and Guy Vanderhaeghe
And an interview with David McFadden

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE \$12.95 A YEAR

Volume 13 Number 8

OCTOBER 1984

GREAT CANADIAN BOOKS

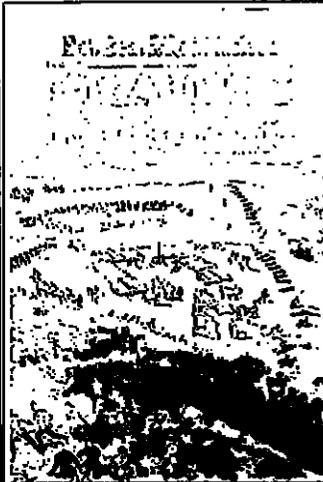
NEW FOR FALL '84 FROM HURTING

Tales from the Canadian Rockies



Edited by Brian Patton

Over 70 contributors, from past to present, recount their experiences—humorous, contemplative, thrilling, and sometimes tragic—set against the spectacular background of North America's premier mountain range. 320 pages, 35 photographs, \$19.95 cloth



Published on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the famous Metis rebellion, this colourful chronicle presents a new comprehensive view of one of Canada's most remarkable historical events. 360 pages, 60 illustrations, \$19.95 cloth

Eric Nicol & Dave More TENNIS It Serves You Right!



When the inimitable team of Nicol and More put their heads together to analyse a sport, the result is sure to be the funniest version of the game ever. 160 pages, 90 hilarious illustrations, \$14.95 cloth

THE BEST OF THE GROUP OF SEVEN



This truly beautiful volume, presenting the origin and significance of the country's best known and most loved group of artists along with 53 superb reproductions of their work is one of the most appealing art books to be published in Canada in many years. 96 pages, 71 illustrations, \$19.95 cloth

WHAT JOBS PAY



Specifically geared to the current Canadian job market, this comprehensive guide to starting level, working, and top level salaries and wages for over 500 occupations, is indispensable for anyone anxious to get ahead in today's tight economy. 432 pages, \$27.95 cloth, \$18.95 paper

CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN PHOTOGRAPHY



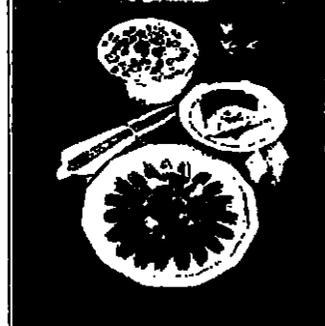
The first book to celebrate the best of the NFB Still Photography Division's massive collection, this stunning anthology contains 140 outstanding images comprising a magnificent tribute to Canada's finest photographers in a deluxe giftbook format. 176 pages, \$29.95 cloth

THE GOLFERS' COOKBOOK



Here are over 300 distinctive dishes collected from golfing enthusiasts and celebrities on greens the nearest thing to golfer's heaven. 336 pages, 16 spectacular full-colour photographs, \$19.95 cloth

Elegant & Easy CHINESE COOKING



One of the world's noble cuisines is placed enticingly within the reach of ordinary cooks. All that is required is a love of Chinese food and basic ingredients and equipment. 248 pages, 83 illustrations, \$14.95 cloth



HURTING PUBLISHERS LTD
10560-105 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5H 2W7

Available at your favourite Bookstore

FEATURES

Voice of the Prophet. Adele Wiseman has spent her career battling stereotypes, but the words have not always come easily. *By Eleanor Wachtel* 8
 A Sense of Embarrassment. Can 'truly monstrous' abuses of human rights really be happening in Canada? *By Paul Wilson*.....14

REVIEWS

Since Daisy Creek, by W.O. Mitchell16
 The Spanish Doctor, by Matt Cohen17
 Real Places and Imaginary Men, by Barry Dempster; A Mouth Organ for Angels, by Robert Gibbs20
 The Galt: A Canadian Odyssey, Volumes 2, by H.B. Timothy21
 Views from the North: An Anthology of Travel Writing, edited by Karen Mulhellen22
 Reminiscences of a Bungle by One of the Bunglers, edited by R.C. Macleod23
 Castles, by Alan Lee and David Day24
 A Place to Stand On: Essays by and about Margaret Laurence, edited by George Woodcock24
 Interlunar, by Margaret Atwood; Luna-Verse, by Catherine Ahearn26
 Celestial Navigation, by Paulette Jiles27
 Mountain Tea, by Peter van Toorn28

DEPARTMENTS

Field Notes
 Mum's the Word, by George Galt 4
 I'll Have the Regular, by Barbara Wade 4
 English, Our English, by Bob Blackburn 7
 Interview with David McFadden, by Gary Draper29

First Novels, by Alberto Manguel31
 Art Books, by Al Purdy32
 CanWit No. 9633
 The Editors Recommend34
 Books Received34

CONTRIBUTORS

Brian Bartlett is a Montreal poet and short-story writer. Bob Blackburn writes frequently about English usage in these pages. For a review of Barry Dempster's *Real Places and Imaginary Men*, see page 20. Gary Draper is a librarian at the University of Waterloo. Judith Fitzgerald's most recent book is *Beneath the Skin of Paradise: The Plaf Poems* (Black Moss Press). George Galt is the author of *Trailing Pythagoras* (Quadrant Editions). Douglas Glover's first novel, *Precious* (Seal Books), was reviewed in our May issue. Drawings by Toronto artist Yasmin Khan appear throughout the magazine. W.P. Kinsella's most recent book is *The Thrill of the Grass* (Penguin). A collection of Gwendolyn MacEwen's poetry, *Magic Animals*, has recently been reissued by Stoddart. Alberto Manguel is the editor of *Black Water: The Anthology of Fantastic Literature* (Lester & Orpen Dennys). Short-story writer Elwin Moore recently has moved from Eganville to Lucknow, Ont. Paul Orenstein's portraits of literary personalities appear frequently in these pages. I.M. Owen is a Toronto editor, translator, and critic. K.G. Probert, a contributing editor of *Books in Canada*, teaches English at the University of Regina. A new collection of Al Purdy's poetry, *Piling Blood*, is to be published shortly by McClelland & Stewart. Eleanor Wachtel is *Books in Canada's* West-Coast contributing editor. Barbara Wade is editor of *Newsweekly*. Toronto translator Paul Wilson spent 10 years teaching English in Czechoslovakia. George Woodcock is the editor of *A Place to Stand On: Essays by and about Margaret Laurence* (NeWest Press).

EDITOR • Michael Smith MANAGING EDITOR • Fraser Sutherland ART DIRECTOR • Mary Lu Toms
 GENERAL MANAGER • Susan Traer ADVERTISING MANAGER (pro tem) • Marg Clarkson
 CIRCULATION MANAGER • Susan Aihoshi CONSULTANTS • Robert Farrelly • Jack Jensen
 CONTRIBUTING EDITORS • Eleanor Wachtel (West Coast) • K.G. Probert (Prairies) • Alberto Manguel • Shirley Knight Morris
 • Paul Wilson • Sheila Fischman (Quebec) • Terry Goldie (East Coast) • D.W. Nichol (Europe)

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., 356 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: \$12.95 a year (\$15.95 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 © 1984. Typesetting by Jay Tee Graphics Ltd.

Home truths: parting words from Mavis Gallant after a year's sojourn in Canada

Mum's the word

LAST SPRING Mavis Gallant and Mordecai Richler gave a reading at the Metropolitan Toronto Library. More than 1,000 people attended. Each writer read a long piece and then Ontario's minister of culture, Susan Fish, made some closing remarks.

"Mordecai and I were very tired," says Gallant. "We'd each read for an hour, and writers don't like to be read to. When the minister got up I didn't know who it was. I thought she was connected to the library. I didn't understand it. She said, 'You've both been decorated.' — I think she meant the Order of Canada or something like that — 'and I have another decoration for you.' We went up, and they were library buttons! The poor woman. I felt sorry for her. I put it in my pocket.

"Then she said, 'All writers wear masks, and here are yours.' They were two enlarged photographs [one of Gallant, one of Richler] on a stick with white ribbon. It was somebody's bright idea. I don't think it was the minister's. They were trying to make those Venetian masks that people held to their faces.

"Someone who was there said to me, 'You looked like two kids sent to the principal to be strapped.' It might have been amusing if it had been a party. But it was a serious reading. I don't like to clown around, and Mordecai certainly doesn't. He suddenly said, 'It's been a long evening,' and climbed down off the platform."

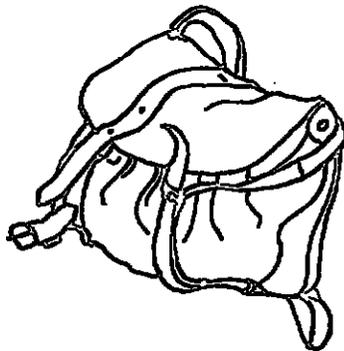
Mavis Gallant does not abide inappropriate platforms — or ill-judged questions. When we arranged our interview she instructed me: "Bring specific questions. I can't go on saying this is a clean city." Interviewed by telephone some years ago from her home in Paris, she had made mincemeat of a hapless CBC-Radio host who asked fluffy questions without much substance or direction. Gallant soon had her interviewer so tongue-tied that their conversation was cut off on the pretext of a bad connection. A Toronto writer who knows her slightly told me, chuckling, "Everyone is afraid of her."

As things turned out, I found that Gallant has a tart, delightful sense of humour. Her testy, reproachful answers

to a couple of my clumsier questions left no permanent damage. But as we sat in the common room of Massey College — where she spent the academic year as the University of Toronto's writer-in-residence — she did have strong feelings about an article in that morning's *Globe and Mail*. It had quoted her as saying "Mom."

"Mum" is what she always says, she pointed out emphatically. "Mom" is American. She added that, of course, Canadian speech has been changed a lot by U.S. television. I had the impression of a careful listener who weighs every word for tone and texture.

I was glad, too, that I wasn't the television interviewer who crossed her path in Winnipeg this winter. "It was live. He asked me if I'd thought of writing inspirational work. I said, 'You haven't read anything of mine, have you? What



am I doing here? This is a complete waste of time.' Then he said, 'Do you think you're too good to write inspirational work? Do you think you're above it?' So I thought it over and, you know, I said, 'Yes. It would be a complete waste of whatever gift I have.' "

Gallant visited Winnipeg on one of many jaunts she made across the country. The job of writer-in-residence was not what she expected. At all hours she found herself preoccupied with her students and their writing to the exclusion of her own. "When I realized I couldn't do any work I went along with the tide and accepted all the things [I was asked to]. I read, literally, all over the country, from British Columbia to the Maritimes. I love travelling around Canada. I could do that indefinitely."

Her students, she says, were charming. She was touched by their confidence

in her ability to help, but disappointed in their technical skills. "When they come out of the Ontario school system, they don't have a grasp of the language. No grammatical structure, no vocabulary, and they can't punctuate. So what you have is a sensibility running all over the place but with nothing to contain it. That was difficult."

She was unfamiliar with amateur writing and had to get used to "that flat tone." Also a surprise was the violence her students wrote into their stories. "Violence between men and women — a sort of middle-class violence that I hadn't expected." And there was a great deal of Tolkien imitation. "I did everything I could to get them out of the nursery."

She describes her experience in Toronto as "an enormous displacement." Anonymous in Paris, she was puzzled by her celebrity here. Sometimes people would do a double-take, in the street and in the subway: people who had been to a reading or seen her picture. Sometimes they stopped to talk. "It was difficult for me to think that I was the object of this."

Was she looking forward to returning to Paris? (After a stay in Montreal she flies back this month.) She was eager, she said, to get a feel for the political scene now that France has a new prime minister. France is where she lives, and I sensed (she did not say this) that she wanted to resume the habitual rhythms of her life there. But Canada is a kind of home for her, too. "I would be a Canadian even if Canada ceased to exist," she once said, "because it is part of being myself." — GEORGE GALT

I'll have the regular

MY COUSIN NIGEL didn't mind the weak beer, he said, as we settled into some chairs in the lounge. It only cost half of what his pint of bitter cost back home. Cars were cheaper to run, as well — not 75 cents a litre for petrol as he and Florence were used to. She and Nigel had come to Canada so he could study on a post-graduate law scholarship.

**3 BOOKS, 3 BUCKS. NO COMMITMENT.
NO OBLIGATION. NO LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP.
NO HARDCOVERS. NO HARDCOVER PRICES.
NO KIDDING.**



Try QPB. You'll find a wealth of reading to choose from at very affordable prices. QPB books are softcover editions in hardcover sizes, durably bound and printed on fine paper. But they cost much less than their hardcover counterparts. More books, fewer bucks. Join QPB.

231. *Twentieth-Century Culture A Biographical Companion.* (Published in Canada as *The Fontana Biographical Companion to Modern Thought.*) Edited by Alan Bullock and R. E. Woodings. QPB Ed: \$18.25

379. *Blaz: Guides* New York. Carol van Presentin Wright. QPB: \$12.95

417. *Hen's Teeth and Horse's Toes* Stephen Jay Gould. Hardcover: \$16.95 QPB Ed: \$10.50

120. *Bronxites* Linda Burum. QPB: \$7.95

255. *Blah! Water: The Book of Fantastic Literature.* Edited by Alberto Manguel. QPB: \$12.95

113. *The Complete Book of Pastry Sweet and Savory.* Bernard Clayton, Jr. QPB: \$10.95

493. *Near Adventures in Science.* WGBH Boston. QPB: \$16.95

507. *Megatrends.* John Naisbitt. Hardcover: \$19.50 QPB Ed: \$8.50

521. *The White-Boned Demon A Biography of Madame Mao Zedong.* Roy Terrell. Hardcover: \$20.95 QPB Ed: \$12.95

535. *A Margret Trio: Margret's Future, Margret in Society, Margret and the Lazy Burglar.* (1 Vol.) Georges Simenon. QPB: \$6.95

264. *Whole Earth Software Catalog.* Stewart Brand. QPB: \$18.75

458. *The Unabridged Edgar Allan Poe* Edgar Allan Poe. QPB: \$11.95

556. *Excellent Women/Jane and Prudence/An Unsuitable Attachment* (1 Vol.) Barbara Pym. QPB Ed: \$17.75

559. *The Name of the Rose* Umberto Eco. Translated from the Italian by William Weaver. Hardcover: \$16.75 QPB: \$10.95

718. *The Neverending Story* Michael Ende. Translated by Ralph Manheim. Hardcover: \$19.50 QPB: \$7.95

355. *The Fine Art of Literary Mayhem: A Lively Account of Famous Writers and Their Feuds.* Mynel Lind. QPB: \$9.95

297. *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant and Morgan's Passing* (2 Vols.) Anne Tyler. QPB Ed: \$15.25

462. *The Paper Men.* William Golding. Hardcover: \$16.75 QPB Ed: \$9.25

235. *Ironweed.* William Kennedy. QPB Ed: \$6.95

248. *James Joyce (New and Revised Edition).* Richard Ellmann. QPB: \$13.95

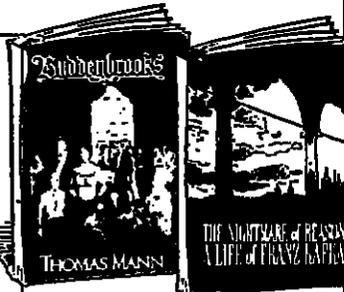
250. *Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior* Judith Martin. Hardcover: \$23.50 QPB: \$11.75

155. *Edisto.* Padgett Powell. Hardcover: \$13.25 QPB Ed: \$7.95

179. *Calvino Set: If on a Winter's Night a Traveler, Invisible Cities, The Baron in the Trees.* (3 Vols., Boxed) Italo Calvino. QPB Ed: \$15.25

197. *The Complete Walker III The Joys and Techniques of Hiking and Backpacking.* Colin Fletcher. QPB: \$12.35

583. *Him with His Foot in His Mouth and Other Stories.* Saul Bellow. Hardcover: \$17.95 QPB Ed: \$11.25



257. *Suddenbrooks.* Thomas Mann. Translated from the German by H. T. Lowe-Porter. QPB: \$7.95

711. *The Nightmare of Reason A Life of Franz Kafka.* Ernst Pawel. Hardcover: \$26.50 QPB Ed: \$14.75

276. *Bridges to Infinity: The Human Side of Mathematics.* Michael Guillen. Hardcover: \$14.75 QPB Ed: \$7.95

294. *The Quiet Road to Death* (Published in Canada as *"Blood on the Happy Highway."*) Sheila Radley. QPB Ed: \$8.75

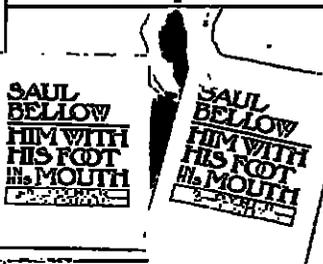
275. *Jane Fonda's Workout Book* Hardcover: \$19.50 QPB: \$10.50

111. *Machine Dreams* Jayne Anne Phillips. Hardcover: \$18.95 QPB Ed: \$10.75

306. *The Color Purple* Alice Walker. Hardcover: \$13.50 QPB Ed: \$8.95

198. *The First Elizabeth* Carolly Erickson. Hardcover: \$20.95 QPB: \$10.50

Compare



Hardcover: \$17.95 QPB Softcover: \$11.25

Let's try each other for 6 months.

Quality Paperback Book Club, 49 Westmore Drive, Rexdale, Ont. M9V 4M3. Please enrol me in QPB and send the 3 choices I've listed below, billing me only \$1 each, plus shipping and handling charges. I understand that I am not required to buy another book. You will send me the QPB Review (if my account is in good standing) for six months. If I have not bought and paid for at least one book in every six-month period, you may cancel my membership. A shipping and handling charge is added to each shipment.

Indicate by number the 3 books or sets you want.

Name _____ 4-16 (Please print clearly) QB 814-10

Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____ Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

All orders subject to approval.

330. *The Poetry of Robert Frost* Edited by Edward Connery Lathem. Hardcover: \$18.95 QPB: \$9.95

Join now. Pick any 3 books or sets for \$1 each—with no obligation to buy another book.

How membership works.

1. You receive the QPB Review 15 times each year (about every 3½ weeks). Each issue reviews a new Selection, plus scores of Alternates.
2. If you want the Selection do nothing. It will be shipped to you automatically. If you want one or more Alternate books—or no book at all—indicate your decision on the Reply Form always enclosed and return it by the date specified.
3. Bonus books for Bonus Points. For each softcover book or set you take (except for the books in this offer), you earn Bonus Points which entitle you to choose any of our softcover books. You pay only shipping and handling charges.
4. Return privilege. If the QPB Review is delayed and you receive the Selection without having had 10 days to notify us, you may return it for credit at our expense.
5. Cancellations. You may cancel membership at any time by notifying QPB. We may cancel your membership if you elect not to buy and pay for at least one book in every six-month period.



The first book club for smart people who aren't rich.

A NEW
BENNY
COOPERMAN
MYSTERY

MURDER SEES THE LIGHT

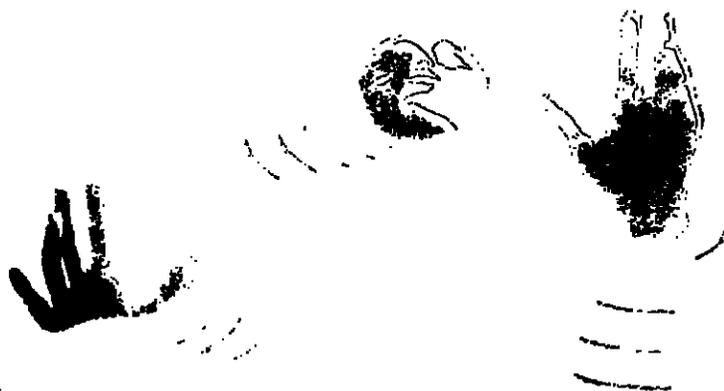
HOWARD ENGEL

Benny Cooperman's idea of untamed nature is a dandelion growing through a crack in the sidewalk — but when he finds himself in Algonquin Park, Benny is plunged into a world of cults, blackflies, and murder.

"Mr. Engel has the tough, cynical private-eye novel, as developed by Chandler and Hammett, down pat . . . Let's hope Benny comes back soon."

— *The New York Times Book Review*

A VIKING CANADA BOOK \$16.95



They were adjusting very well, I thought. I asked him if he thought so too.

"My worst problem has been shopping," he said, running a pale hand through the hair on his forehead. "I can't sort out what people want to sell me."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Florence and I were shopping last Saturday," he explained. "I went to get



a box of detergent. They had regular, large, and king-size. Regular in the super-white brand meant 1.5 litres, and regular in the extra-spring-freshness brand meant two litres. Then I walked down the aisle to buy toothpaste. They gave me the choice of regular or something called wintergreen. What flavour is regular?"

"It's some other sort of mint," I offered. "Something between a breath freshener and a tube of Polyfilla."

"My favourite deodorant brand wasn't even there," he continued, "but they had another kind in regular or unscented. I bought the unscented because I have no idea what regular deodorant would make me smell like. My wife was two aisles over buying feminine napkins, but she couldn't decide between the regular and the deodorant. We're awfully confused by the whole scheme."

"Did you finish your shopping all right?" I asked, swallowing my beer.

"We were very tired, so we went for coffee. Then the lady in the coffee shop asked us if we liked it regular or not. I said I always did. Then I found out that meant I wanted coffee with cream and sugar."

The waiter came over to ask the two of us if we wanted a refill. Nigel shook his head and I requested another beer. "What are you having, regular or light?" he asked solicitously.

"Regular, please," I replied.

"I can't figure out what you Americans — sorry, North Americans — mean when you call something regular," said Nigel. He slid his long form back into the lounge chair. "I assume that when we filled up the car with regular petrol instead of unleaded we were practically poisoning the poor thing."

"Regular is, well . . . it's just a standard," I replied. "I suppose it means the product the company started out with, or the one most people buy."

"The only regulars I know back home are the ones I see in the pub on a Saturday night."

"You do hear of someone being referred to as a regular sort of fellow," I mused.

"Over here that would mean he is medium, or small, or a mystery flavour, smelly, leaded, or far too highly priced."

Visions of people with regular measurements along their bodies (one side in inches, the other in centimetres) bothered me the rest of the evening. I took the problem with me into the office next day and mulled it over. Finally I pulled out the dictionary and flipped it open to the Rs.

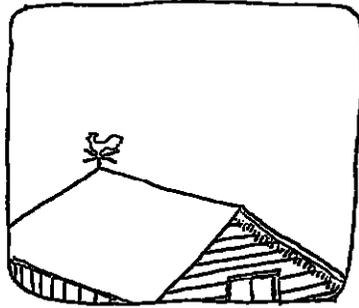
Webster's New Collegiate defines *regular* as, No. 1, "belonging to a religious order," so I moved my finger further down the list of definitions until I came to No. 4: "Constituted, conducted, or done in conformity with established or prescribed usages, rules, or discipline."

That fit, I thought. Regular means majority rule. If you pick up a box of regular-sized detergent in the supermarket, you can feel confident that most of your neighbours had told some eager market researcher they always chose that size.

Normal was offered as a synonym fur-

ther down the page. Webster's emphasized, however, that "*normal* implies lack of deviation from what has been discovered or established as the most usual or expected, while *regular* stresses conformity to a rule, standard, or pattern."

Normal was a more accurate word to



use, then, there being no pattern to Nigel's list of regulars. The only exception would be such a case as the ironically styled "regularly scheduled television program."

I flipped back some 200 pages to *normal*. The synonym was *regular*, it said. Webster's also defined *normal* as "free from mental disorder: sane." That came a little close to irony, too, so I closed the dictionary and settled back to my regular work with a coffee (black, one sugar).

— BARBARA WADE

ENGLISH, OUR ENGLISH

Apples and oranges: like many grammatical curiosities, comparisons pose less a question of right and wrong than one of distinction

By BOB BLACKBURN

A QUESTION I dread hearing is "Which is correct?" It usually means there is tough sledding ahead.

A common example is "Which is correct, *compared with* or *compared to*?" The questioner obviously is seeking a simple answer and is unlikely to pay attention to, let alone remember, the proper reply.

It is, of course, not a question of right and wrong, but one of distinction. It is not terribly difficult. Use *to* only if you wish to suggest or state a similarity. If you compare Smith's writing *to* Hemingway's, you are putting Smith in the same class as Hemingway. But if you compare it *with* Hemingway's, you are making a detailed examination of the

similarities and differences between them. You might then decide that, compared with Hemingway, Smith is an undisciplined writer.

It should be obvious that you can't compare Hemingway either with or to Smith's writing, but it is a terribly common error, not only with *compare*, but with *like*, as in "Like many of us, his vices included smoking." Beware comparing things that are not comparable. You might, however, like to think a bit about whether or not one *incomparable* thing might be compared *to* another. I'll leave that with you.

Compare does provide some right-or-wrong answers for those who like them. As an intransitive verb, it always re-

quires *with*. To say that a girl's looks cannot compare to those of her sister is WRONG. *In comparison to* is NEVER right, although you could say that you, too, had made a comparison of Smith with Hemingway and decided that any comparison of Smith to Hemingway was invalid.

The cliché about "comparing apples and oranges" is wrong. You could compare apples and oranges to tree-borne fruits, or you could compare them with bedroom slippers, but *compare* must have either *with* or *to*; and simply will not do.

SOMEONE ASKED me the other day why I was seeking some bit of arcane information. I started to reply that it was because I am a curious person. This was in writing, so I was able to change *curious* to *inquisitive* when I realized that, in this context, my use of *curious* could mean I am inquisitive (which was what I wanted it to mean), or it could mean I am queer (which was *not* what I wanted it to mean.)

Curious is one of those damnably ambiguous words with which our language is riddled, and it might as well be chucked out. The *OED* is quite blunt about it, calling it "a word which [sic] has been used from time to time with many shades of meaning. . . ."

It started out to mean something like painstaking. Chaucer used it that way, and it retained that meaning for four centuries after him. But even in his own time it was already ambiguous; to some writers it meant nosy. And, some 300 years ago, it began to be used to mean strange.

Of the 18 meanings defined by the *OED*, only two have any currency today, but those two are enough to make it a dangerous word. Although they can be formally distinguished as subjective and objective, they still may cause confusion. The same is true of *curiosity*. You might tell me that your neighbour has a certain curiosity. I would not know whether you meant that he is forever peeping through his or your curtains or that he has a five-legged dog that kills cats.

However, the word may settle down, and we can take comfort from the fact that, thanks to the communications explosion, it no longer is necessary to wait through the centuries for a changed meaning to become established. It is possible that tomorrow night some semi-literate media star will decide that *curious* means polite, and by Christmas that will be its meaning.

That will put *courteous* up for grabs. The sports commentators doubtless will want it, but so will the lawyers. It should be an interesting battle. □

VOICE OF THE PROPHET

A self-proclaimed 'radical individualist,'
Adele Wiseman has spent her career battling stereotypes,
but the words have not come easily

By ELEANOR WACHTEL

AT THE FIRST Vancouver Showcase of Jewish Writers in May, 1984, the keynote speaker is Adele Wiseman. The community centre's auditorium has that look of multi-purpose facility in festival mode: balloons, streamers, and National Book Week posters frame the raised platform that serves as a stage. Rows of small tables that fill the hall are decorated, bohemian coffee house style, with red checked tablecloths, Chianti bottles plugged with candles, and small bowls of mixed nuts. In short, a typical location for a reading in Canada.

Introductions allude to the diverse jobs that are the trademark of the Canadian author, and then settle on the books that have made Wiseman's reputation. *The Sacrifice* not only won the Governor General's Award when it was published in 1956, but became a landmark in CanLit. A decade ago, *Crackpot*, a dense and vital novel about Hoda, the triumphantly fat, Jewish whore of Winnipeg in the 1930s. Finally, in 1978, *Old Woman at Play*, a non-fiction appreciation of Wiseman's mother's prodigious activity in doll-making and a dilation on the nature of creativity.

Greeting the applause, Adele Wiseman stands, scarcely grazing five feet. Short grey hair emerges from a red brimmed felt hat. She wears a grey wool poncho over a red dress with just its collar showing. Glasses hang from a black cord around her neck. Three gold bracelets jangle as she flips the pages of a thick ring-bound notebook.

"I speak as a secular Jew," she says, "and as a radical individualist. I've never had any problems with the Jewish aspect of my life or of my writing. I'm aware of my good luck in happening to be a Canadian and growing up in large part during an era when the impulses of decency were in the ascendant, when I was allowed the freedom to pose the question of what it is to be a Jew and a survivor. To be a Jew in Western society you have to be more aware, more conscious. You have to have one foot on the sidewalk and one foot on the road ready to run. My object in writing has always been to produce a correc-

tive version to what continues to prevail with respect to what Jews are."

She pauses, her face open and warm, ingenuous. "The reason I wanted to be a writer was to save the Jews, of course. Because I learned so much from the stories my parents told me, I figured the only reason people are so bad to us is because they don't know. If I were to explain to them, they would understand, so that by the time my life is finished, everything would be perfect."

Despite this self-proclaimed explanatory agenda, Wiseman



Adele Wiseman

is not a naturalistic or even essentially a realistic writer. She's aware of the sordidness and hypocrisy of life and adept at its depiction, but she tends to present "a vision of what we are, how we evolve, and the ever-present sense of possibility." Her stance is vigilance, not paranoia. She feels at home in the world, in nature; it is society and its man-made dangers that scare her. The standpoint she finds most temperamentally congenial is that of prophet: "It always seemed like the best job; you get to yell a lot." As Cassandra demonstrated, however, it is isolating to stand apart, plucking out the "relevant things" that the rolling world is too preoccupied to stop and recognize. Wiseman

doesn't claim to be saying anything new, just to be one of the few willing, needing to speak out.

OSCAR HAS fleas. So Wiseman has to postpone our lunch-interview in order to pick up her 15-year-old daughter Tamara, affectionate victim of the dog's affliction, from school and take her to the doctor. Wiseman's day started early — actually, it started yesterday. The previous evening at 11 or so, she characteristically went into her study to write. Five lines went through 46 variations and revisions until a final version at 4 a.m. She didn't fall asleep afterwards, and any chance of rest was ended by an early morning telephone call. Then she delivered proofs for the 1985 Canadian Women Writers calen-

dar she's editing, took Tamara to the doctor, and returning home found herself serving lunch to her publisher, who dropped in. Before the day is over she is to attend a Chinese dinner in honour of a scholar and translator of the legend of the monkey king (her totem animal), and eventually return more revised proofs.

Wiseman reschedules our interview, first giving me extensive directions to her Toronto home. If I get anywhere close, I'm sure to recognize what she describes as her "peaceable kingdom," a menagerie of garden statuary that includes a flamingo, tiger, lion, and a pink pig with illuminated eyes perched in a tree. Abandoning these uncertainties, she decides to pick me up in her snappy old yellow Renault.

The house is large and comfortable, with books, photos, and dolls everywhere. (She has saved 300 of her mother's dolls and about 40 button pictures.) The dolls are displayed in a corner cabinet in the dining room, along the stairwell, dancing in Wiseman's small book-lined office (along with two large puppets Tamara made), and stored in the bedroom on a rack under a bedspread drop cloth and in plastic bags in dresser drawers. She shows me an old mustachioed Cossack her mother stitched shortly before she died (in January, 1980). Her mother had asked Dmitry, Adele's husband, to make a hole in the soldier's leather boots so she could affix them. Dmitry was on his way out; when he returned home, it was too late. The Cossack's feet had frozen into red felt.

A wall of the kitchen is posterized with drawings, clippings, snapshots, and memorabilia. At one point Dmitry, in search of a spare microphone for a tape recorder, bursts into the room with a newly found Christmas present, hidden and forgotten last December, unearthed now in his search through a bottom drawer. Adele unwraps a cookie angel with the message: "A muse to amuse." She laughs and goes to hang it in her office window.

We start off in the kitchen so I can be close to the fresh French bread, cold cuts, egg salad, and apple strudel ("home-made — from the store," she tantalizes Tamara). As she speaks, she gathers strudel crumbs into a little pile on the green plastic placemat.

Adele Wiseman, the third of four children, was born in Winnipeg, "on the kitchen table in a small house on Manitoba Avenue," on May 21, 1928. Her parents, immigrants from the Ukraine, worked as tailors so that their children could "be hoisted on bent shoulders to a better life." Like Abraham in *The Sacrifice*, her father had yearned to be a scholar and cantor, but the early death of his father and concomitant family responsibilities precluded that dream. He hated his job and Adele was always sensitive to his sacrifices.

Wiseman grew up in a left-wing milieu in multi-ethnic North Winnipeg. She attended a Communist Yiddish school after regular classes and befriended Zionist socialists. But her parents cautioned her to assess the people involved, not simply swallow their idealistic proposals. From that arises her condemnation of action that violates personal principle for a purported collective good and the emergence of her "radical individualism."

She was miserable for most of her childhood. "Thank goodness they never had the kind of social workers in the schools, the adjustment people that they have now, because I probably would have been sent off someplace. I was not adjusted, and I had every reason not to be. My responses were quite legitimate to the world around me."

There was a real split between the world outside and the inner circle of the home, where she received emotional support, love, and protection. There were her mother's continuous stories about her own family and background, the romance of the *shtetl*, fragments of which are recorded in *Old Woman at Play*. And some of her earliest memories are of waiting for her father to come home from work to tell his

stories, tales that turned out to be renditions of Jules Verne and the 1,001 Nights, because he'd been a voracious reader. To her, it was all part of the folklore; fairy-tales that stopped when he began to work double shifts during the Depression.

The Jewish community Wiseman wishes to celebrate in her work is one that exists in her head, a variant of what she knew as a child. It is a potential as well as a memory, because she admits that life wasn't all sweetness — there were political and religious factions and "some very strange, weird people."

Outside was Manitoba. In a wittily sardonic essay in honour of the province's centennial in 1970, Wiseman wrote about the legacy of her native place.

Everybody knows midwesterners are a friendly, hospitable lot. They're notorious for it. You will find, for instance, that about the only people Manitobans could not stand in those days were those who got there before them: Indians and Metis . . . and the people who got there after them (27 other ethnic groups).

She excoriates those who strung up Riel and destroyed a dream of an alternate Prairie way.

Cold it was, cold within and cold without. Of the two the simple thermometer-measurable cold of the weather was by far the more bearable. Dour and grudging the inner climate; nobody knew you and nobody wanted to know you except your own.

For a long time, Wiseman felt so emotionally raw and vulnerable that she avoided reading anything that might have an unhappy ending. "There was no way I could cope, so the first thing I'd do is turn to the back page. If it was unhappy, I couldn't bear it."

So there was I, overly sensitive, terribly high strung, a regular little bleeder. . . .

[But] before many years had passed I did stop. I determined I was going to become Manitoba's foremost insensitive, indelicate, pushy, loud, offensive lady writer. So well did I hide my delicacy, my sensitivity, my frilly-lashed love of beauty, my whole bag of artistic underwear, that, as with most things I hid when young, I've never been able to find them since.

J'accuse Manitoba of breeding a roseless thorn.

Wiseman judges the Prairie less reprehensible in a physical sense. It shapes, molds, leaves an indelible imprint, but that's the nature of any landscape you grow up with. A Prairie upbringing means living in the sky "with only the soles of your feet glued to the earth."

A friend, poet Miriam Waddington, also Winnipeg-born, argues that growing up on the Prairies can be liberating; there's more psychological space: "whatever you are, there you can be more so." In a sense, Wiseman agrees, but risk accompanies the possibility that the Prairies enhance. "There's no protection against the natural forces," she says. "Your perception of the universe is large and chaotic." In her essay she traces parallels between physical landscape and her temperament as a writer:

I see the landscape of my youth in a certain predilection for epic themes and structures, a certain relentlessness, a stubborn disinclination to compromise, to cooperate even, to accept any other terms than my own. It is difficult to temporize or to evade or to hide when you live in my prairie feelscape. Where is there to go with the whole sky looking? I think also that living in a climate of extremes can give a person a feeling for absolutes. The North Winnipeg I grew up in was the very incubator of conflicting absolutes. I relate my tendency to go for broke, to try to make an equation for the secret of the universe every time I sit down to the typewriter, to my continuing need to make some kind of total sense of the complex environment of the Winnipeg I knew, the Noah's Ark of my childhood, the Tower of Babel of my adolescence.

When she left high school she wanted to revenge herself by exposing the injustices of her childhood. But university infused her with "nobler" ideals, art and literature. Her degree was in English and Psychology. "I became addicted to psych, because as a kid I'd gone to the library looking for books on

sex, and the only sex I could find in the index was under psychology. So I sure got to know a hell of a lot of varieties of sexual behaviour in my search for information." When she realized that the University of Manitoba was a "rat" school, interested in behavioural experiments and not in clinical psychology, she concentrated her attention on English.

At university she met Margaret Laurence, and together they dreamed of becoming great writers. (An imaginative correla-

Although Wiseman was convinced she was a writer, she never wrote much. It had something to do with taking on the universe, and waiting until she could get it right before she committed herself

tive to their early friendship is evoked in part three of Laurence's *The Diviners*). Wiseman showed a short story to her professor, Malcolm Ross, who said it had the bare bones, the sticks, but it needed to be fleshed out. She went away, thought about it, and began a first draft of what became *The Sacrifice*.

Although Wiseman was always convinced she was or would be a writer, she never wrote much. No reams of childish scribbles or youthful stories, no unpublished novels in the shoebox or tossed dramatically into the fire. It had something to do with taking on the universe, and waiting until she could get it right before committing herself to paper. Today she is a slow and, in some sense, inhibited writer. "I read [my manuscript] as I write. If I bore myself or hit wrong notes, I find it absolutely excruciating."

The connection with Margaret Laurence became even stronger when Laurence married a returning serviceman and moved in across the street from the Wiseman family. The year Wiseman graduated, 1949, Laurence left for England, where she worked for a small London employment agency. She managed to direct Wiseman toward a job (which paid room, board, and pocket money) in an East-End settlement house. Wiseman, eager for the experience, had saved up the fare for a one-way passage. "I, with novel begun," she recollected in *Old Woman at Play*, "was about to take the artist's initiation rites of my day, and make my queasy way across the ocean to steep myself in Yurup and Cultsha."

Not long after she arrived, the Laurences departed for Somaliland. Wiseman stayed on for a year, writing "passionate letters home in kitchen Yiddish," enthused by her new adventurous life. Her older sister joined her to hitchhike through Britain, then travel to France, Switzerland, and finally Italy, where Wiseman found work at the overseas school in Rome. There she finished the first draft of *The Sacrifice*.

"I was obsessed with the Holocaust, and still am, basically. When I was 15 or 16, working for the summer in a fruit shop near the market, there was the first murder committed by a Jew in Manitoba. An old man had axed a woman who had apparently led him on. He was someone from our district, a deaf old man, lonely, paying court to a somewhat younger woman. My mother and aunt knew him." That incident triggered her thinking. It was not the action itself but the psychological kernel — the moral implications of behaviour — that fascinated her. "I wanted to find the best possible reason that a good man could have for committing such an atrocity."

Not that it would be straightforward and clean, as she wrote in her diary in Rome, July 18, 1952: "Yesterday I did a lot of writing — ten typed pages. Abraham killed Lalah — it's all

still unreal in my mind, but there, it's done. I really don't want to leave him so. I love Abraham after all this time. One gets so attached that there's almost a physical pull against drawing them to their fate."

When she returned to Winnipeg, she revised *The Sacrifice* while doing such odd jobs as counting insecticide-traumatized bugs in an entomology lab, collating Eaton's catalogues, and working as executive secretary of a ballet company. Finally, subsisting for a period on unemployment insurance, she finished *The Sacrifice*.

IN 1955, F.R. Scott, A.J.M. Smith, and Malcolm Ross persuaded the Ford Foundation to finance a conference on Canadian literature in Kingston, Ont. *Everyone* was there: Irving Layton and Louis Dudek were still buddies, and they brought along Leonard Cohen, who played Spanish Civil War songs on his guitar at the reception at the university vice-president's house. Phyllis Webb had just been "discovered" and was being courted by the senior poets. CBC-Radio producer Robert Weaver entertained the assembled literati at parties in his hotel room. It was the first chance for Wiseman actually to mingle with real published writers. "I'd gone along without any notion of other writers, except for the potential Margaret and myself, and the college chums who were would-be writers. But here was a whole pile of noisy, obstreperous poets."

At an afternoon session with publishers, the distinguished panelists laid out the sorry financial state of the industry in Canada. "They wailed, sobbed, and beat their breasts. I thought, God, the state of fiction — it doesn't sell; my book will never get published." Jack McClelland had met Wiseman when visiting his old professor, Malcolm Ross, in Winnipeg. He had asked to see her novel when it was ready. At the conference, "there was Jack, this good-looking, strawberry-haired young man, joining the chorus. I figured, There isn't any chance, but I'll wait for him outside with the manuscript."

"Jack came skipping out and jumped into a magnificent red convertible — this poverty-stricken publisher — and while I stood there gaping, he took off. As I realized later, there's a difference between private fortune and public difficulty. I was still standing there astonished when Bob Weaver [who'd read a chapter] came out with Kildare Dobbs [then an editor at Macmillan]. So I gave the manuscript to Kildare to read on his holiday. Within two weeks, just before my return to England, Kildare called and said they were taking it. Jack never forgave me for that."

The novel had a remarkable impact. It was one of the first post-war Canadian books published simultaneously in the U.S. Wiseman, all of 28 years old, was garnering rave reviews in *The New York Times* ("wise and wonderful"), the *New Yorker* ("a huge and powerful first novel, so concentrated and so well balanced inside the domestic circle that the time could be now or forty years ago"), the *New Republic* ("brilliant and moving"), the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Saturday Review*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Time*. She won the Governor General's Award. "I didn't even really know what it was. Margaret remembers us saying we'd both win one some day; she may have known a little better than I. We were both very green. I was still immigrant daughter enough not to know what the external rewards are, and for them not to mean that much to me."

The Sacrifice was a novel, wrote Marian Engel, "that convinced those of us who were students at the time that major work could be produced in Canada." It was a landmark in Canadian writing, as Miriam Waddington points out, in its non-stereotyped portrayal of a Jewish family: "This was the first book about Jews in Canada that wasn't chicken soup-y and sentimental, that really showed a very different and a very real kind of Jew that is seldom even now portrayed." Where it was stereotyped, it was from a Jewish rather than gentile per-

spective. Both Waddington and Wiseman were dismayed by post-war Jewish novels that pandered to gentile perceptions and hastened to reassure their hosts that the Jews were as flawed as anyone else, with foul tongues and voracious mothers. "What readers seem to love," Waddington says, "is the kind of Jew that Mordecai Richler gives them."

The Sacrifice was unusual in another respect as well. It bears none of the characteristics we've come to associate with first novels. "It isn't one of those out-of-the-gut, growing-up-in-Canada books," notes another friend, novelist Sylvia Fraser. "And you can trust me when I say that, because that's exactly the kind of first book I wrote. In terms of the many levels, all the humanity that went into that book, the fleshing out of all those characters, it was like her first book was the Bible." The trouble with debuting with the Bible, Fraser continues, "is that it isn't a book that suggests anywhere else to go. It's complete in itself."

Characteristically, Wiseman went her own way. She returned to England and worked part-time at the settlement house again. Then she won a Canada Foundation grant and a Guggenheim fellowship, so she moved to New York and began work on a play, *The Lovebound*, about Jewish refugee ships that had been turned away from Western ports in 1939. Most of these ships were filled with desperate emigrants given exit visas from Germany, cast adrift as a cynical way of testing whether those countries that had protested Germany's treatment of its Jews would actually do anything to help save them.

To her astonishment, no one wanted *The Lovebound*. "It was the beginning of a very important lesson that I'm still learning, that there are some subjects nobody wants to hear about. We have a limited tolerance for discomfort, and art too is allowed to function only within certain boundaries." There is a curious other-worldliness that colours Wiseman's perceptions. *The Lovebound*, as written, was roughly four and a half hours long, and it was gruelling in other respects. Since the play is from the perspective of the victimized Jews, they are portrayed as utterly human, while their captors become caricatures, dehumanized monsters.

"I was stupid too," she admits, meaning naive. "I decided to write a play with the idea that it would function similarly to Greek drama, where people gather to witness something of community importance re-enacted in art form. It wouldn't matter how long it lasted as long as it said what it had to say. I thought, OK, people could break for lunch and come back and continue the experience. Of course there was no such community."

She reflects less ruefully on another of her suppositions. In the early '60s, still in Winnipeg, she figured that since *The Sacrifice* was on university courses, she might land a teaching job. Eventually, she was offered a course at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia) in Montreal and then a full-time job at Macdonald College (an agricultural and educational affiliate of McGill). In 1964 she moved to Montreal and started writing *Crackpot*. When she finished it five years later, she was married, she'd just given birth to Tamara, and her husband was transferred to Toronto, where they've lived ever since.

Thus, for almost two decades after the publication of *The Sacrifice*, she "fit exactly into the coffin called the one-novel writer. I was considered a dead novelist, because I didn't fit pre-set patterns but insisted on writing what no one wanted." When she finally did produce a work that was at least in the expected form — a novel — it was turned down more than 40 times over a five-year period.

Crackpot was criticized for being too long. As her first theatrical endeavour had illustrated, Wiseman doesn't respond well to editing. She won't let anything go out until it's as right as she can make it, and that's it. (She admits this can be a problematic conviction, especially with respect to her plays,

DISPONIBLE PARTOUT!

GUIDE ICEBERG
 par
**UNIVERSITÉS
 ET COLLÈGES CANADIENS**
 David Lewis Williams
 1984-1985

8,95 \$

AVAILABLE
 EVERYWHERE!

ICEBERG GUIDE
 par
**CANADIAN COLLEGES AND
 UNIVERSITIES**
 David Lewis Williams
 1984-1985

\$8.95

because theatre demands a more collective approach.) "Adele has a tremendously strong sense of self, real faith and confidence in what she's doing," says Waddington. "She said, 'If I'd wanted to write a shorter book, I would have.'"

Part of the difficulty was that Wiseman began with the idea of examining the development of two parallel characters, Hoda and her son. Hoda is the proudly obese daughter of physically deformed immigrant parents. Her blind father constantly fills her with stories detailing how he and her hunchback mother saved their village from plague by their redemptive marriage in a graveyard. In Winnipeg, the family is so poor that when her charwoman mother dies, Hoda takes money from schoolboys for sexual treats. So it goes until, utterly unaware she is pregnant, she gives birth one night to a boy whom she deposits, with an ambiguous note implying royal parentage, on the orphanage doorstep.

"One of the things that interested me was what makes a strong human being," says Wiseman. Hoda had "a strong sense of herself because she had a whole myth in which she was of value, whereas the boy, in spite of the fanciful attribution of his paternity, didn't have the emotional confirmation that would have made it believable to him." What happened to the parallel structure, however, was that the reader's interest stayed with the strong character, resulting in a gimp novel. Eventually, inspired by some general advice proffered by Margaret Atwood, Wiseman cut 50 pages, dropping much of the direct text about the son, but retaining him as perceived through other characters.

The book is still big, imaginative, and brilliant. Like *The Sacrifice*, it has a life-affirming ending. Hoda marries a concentration-camp refugee who climbed out of a mass grave, so she finally does get love, acceptance, and a family. "It's not exactly a happy ending," Wiseman maintains, "but a survivor thing. Also a kind of ingathering of history, since they had

both emerged from graves. That's what Jews do: they pick themselves out of the graves and go on."

WITH MARGARET LAURENCE'S intercession, *Crackpot* was published in 1974 by McClelland & Stewart. It had no foreign reprints. "Adele received a lot of criticism over the second book," says Sylvia Fraser, "because it wasn't the first book." Certainly, it marked a distinct change of gears — written in a more experimental, looser style. The use of English in *The Sacrifice* was very correct, classical. Waddington observes how characteristic that is of those raised in Yiddish-speaking households; the English was learned from proper English-speakers, teachers and from books, so that it's very literary. *Crackpot* is much more spontaneous.

It is also in its way a book about growing up female by a woman author, and so a more vulnerable book — more, as Fraser intimates, like a first novel. "It's a fantasy," says Waddington. "It all makes sense if Hoda isn't a prostitute." But precisely by making Hoda a prostitute, the fantasy is undercut. She is an unusual figure. "I often feel as though she's an enlarged version of something in myself," said Wiseman in an interview five years ago, "this great creature struggling to come out of me . . . some aspect of my own psyche."

Reviewing *Crackpot*, Marian Engel wrote: "Wiseman's a strange writer. She doesn't fit in, anymore than Hoda does. She is prolix and life-loving, immensely strong, not like anyone else except in places Bashevis Singer. There's no one in the country to touch her unashamed femininity and Jewishness. It's a very odd combination and it's magical."

The femininity surfaces in Wiseman's red hat or in this wistful and mocking reflection in *Old Woman at Play*:

For alas, I never was one of those special little girls I used to read about with such passionate envy, those star-touched moppets with the natural, spontaneous, untutored gift of unerring response to TRUE BEAUTY . . . I posed breathlessly before sunsets. I sought casement windows (you try, in North Winnipeg) through which to hurl inspired phrases at the dawn. Useless. My stockings sagged. I did not walk in beauty. I was never to be one of those special people, the born elite of the world, with self-cleansing fingernails.

While *Crackpot* was caroming between publishers, Wiseman wrote another play, *Testimonial Dinner*, about three generations of a Jewish immigrant family. Using Louis Riel and John A. Macdonald as exemplars, the play chronicles a struggle between the poetic and the pragmatic, soul and materialism. Cultural integration/assimilation comes to mean abandoning Riel-like ideals and dreams in opting for Macdonald-style rapacity. It's the voice of the prophet again, articulating moral outrage that society isn't as humane as it could be. As with *The Lovebound*, Wiseman hasn't yet found a producer; she published it herself in 1978.

"The kind of world in which a play is possible for me does not perhaps exist," says Wiseman. *Testimonial Dinner* reads like a play to me. I visualize it, but this may simply be theatre of the head. I've come to recognize that I have to do it this way. If it doesn't work, it doesn't work. It was certainly how I had to work out the problems I was dealing with. A novel, for balance and flexibility, has to be filled with cabbages and potatoes, whereas with a play, you can dispense with that."

Getting here writing to work is a central struggle for Wiseman. Although she can function in what seems like chaos — sit at the end of the kitchen table and work if she has to — she can't simply dash off a first draft. "There has to be a sentence or two, a paragraph, a cluster, that feels right or I can't go on. So often what I have is a cluster that feels right from here and a cluster that feels right from there. *Crackpot* was written in a relatively consecutive way the first time around. The stuff that doesn't feel right is the crud off the top of your head. It's what everybody else has written, what everyone else has thought for you. What I always imagined was if you wanted to be a real

A Grand and Fabulous Notion The First Century of Canada's Parks



SID MARTY

Preface by Earle Birney

CELEBRATING THE ONE HUNDREDTH
ANNIVERSARY OF CANADA'S
NATIONAL PARKS

- 24 pages of beautiful colour photographs
- published in conjunction with Parks Canada

For the Camper For the naturalist
For the historian For the Canadian traveller

156 pages, 9 x 9 inches, sewn, over 40 colour photos
100 b & w illustrations \$19.95
NC Press, 31 Portland Street, Toronto, M5V 2V9

writer, you *make things up* — which is nonsense, because people can write very fine books other ways and," she adds in an undertone, "more of them."

Wiseman turns with some excitement to her recent work. The form she's chosen is rhythmic prose, "the last resort of the novelist." Poetry by any other name, but sensitive to critical pigeon-holing of writers ("Miss Wiseman is really more at home with prose," she says in an artificial pitch), she's decided to call it *rhythmic prose*. "There's something wonderful about looking at the world this way," she says, as she embarks on a long work about how we may be "print-outs of a complex mind" . . . "doodles ever incomplete" . . . "crystallized metaphor" . . . "almost mad with unrequited yearning."

"We are very finite and limited structures," she explains. "It strikes me as highly conceivable that there could be other structures with completely different perceptual organization and knowledge. We're limited to what we can perceive. We see extraordinary transformations that we can only describe, not explain. A lot of my rhythmic prose is concerned with this line of speculation, which is apparently unacceptable — for example, that there may be multiple worlds."

It's through writing that revelation comes. The past year, though she has been hectically busy as writer-in-residence at Concordia, has been extremely productive. After her mother died, Wiseman felt she had been released from her "doll period," freed to play, to take risks. She had enjoyed a remarkable relationship with her mother, who was an extraordinary woman. She was dying of cancer as Wiseman was writing *Old Woman at Play*. At one point, when Wiseman read a passage to her friends, her mother said, "See, Adele's making fond of me." Exactly. Similarly, Wiseman has raised her own daughter, as Dickens has it, by hand. She wouldn't work outside the home when Tamara was little, and she took her everywhere. Family responsibilities are real life.

"Adele is a very mysterious person in many ways, although she doesn't appear to be because she has this wonderful warmth and motherly quality," says Mariam Waddington. "But I think the real Adele is a very private person, and probably shared only with her husband and child." And her imagination.

"I'm writing more quickly now, and more sure of what I want to say than for a long time," says Wiseman. "I feel very comfortable with the forms; rhythmic prose coalesces my ideas, something large I want to work on." When she talks about hiding in her study, it's with mischievous delight. "As a kid, I didn't get on that well with other kids. Now I'm playing madly by myself."

A WEEK LATER, it's Wiseman's birthday, and the family is sitting on the back porch, which juts out from the kitchen *sans* railing. They're polishing off a hearty brunch, discussing plans for the rest of the afternoon. The phone rings — Rachel Wyatt wishing Wiseman happy birthday. She numbers many Toronto women writers among her friends — Wyatt, Waddington, Fraser, as well as Joyce Marshall and Helen Weinzweig.

Wiseman is wearing paint-spattered pants, since the festive meal was a break from painting bookshelves that Dmitry has just built. They're in the middle of a clean-up campaign: if they can get enough books off the floors and tables and into bookcases, the house might be just tidy enough for a professional mop squad to come through.

The phone rings again — a nephew calling to join them for supper downtown. The day is getting too complicated . . . arrange a delaying tactic, call back later. Wiseman talks enthusiastically about a big tricycle, complete with a caged basket for Oscar, that Dmitry has fixed up for her to drive.

The family remains the centre of her universe. How's that for a Jewish stereotype? □

From Coast to Coast

A Personal History of Radio in Canada

by Sandy Stewart

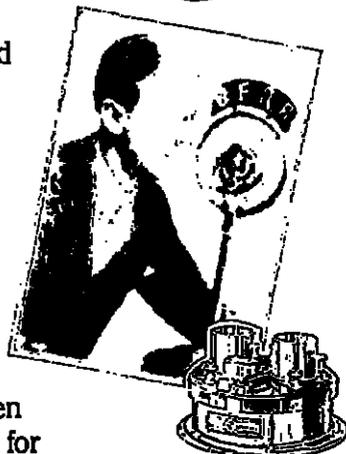


Hundreds of nostalgic pictures illustrate this book which not only fills the reader in on Canada's prestigious radio history, but also takes us on a sentimental tour of our past. Sandy Stewart, a CBC radio and television producer for many years, recounts all the major events in Canadian radio, reveals trade secrets about the radio stars as well as the fun and hazards of early

radio sound effects and production.

Sandy Stewart's broadcasting career began in 1948. He joined CBC Radio in 1952 and spent eight years as a radio producer. In 1962 he transferred to CBC Television and has been an executive producer for the past eighteen years.

Nonfiction/208 pages/8-1/4 x 10-1/4
b/w photos throughout/Index/CIP
ISBN: 0-88794-147-8/\$17.95 hardcover
October release



CBC Enterprises/Les Entreprises Radio-Canada
P.O. Box 500, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1E6
Available to the trade from Macmillan of Canada

A sense of embarrassment

If — as some writers believe — ‘truly monstrous’ abuses of human rights are happening in Canada, what words will they have left if things get worse?

By PAUL WILSON

The *Writer and Human Rights*, edited by the Toronto Arts Group for Human Rights, Lester & Orpen Dennys, 294 pages, \$14.95 paper (ISBN 0 88619 041 7).

THREE YEARS AGO, a group called the Toronto Arts Group for Human Rights organized a congress on the theme of the writer and human rights. About 70 writers, many of them victims of repressive regimes now living in exile in the West, hunkered down in Toronto to talk about what writers ought to do in the face of the vast and frequently diabolical array of measures taken by governments to suppress them.

In addition seven writers, who for obvious reasons could not attend, were given a symbolic presence — a row of seven empty chairs marked with their names: Haroldo Conti of Argentina (disappeared); Ahmed Fouad Negm of Egypt (imprisoned); Vaclav Havel, Czechoslovakia (in prison, later released); Donald Mattera, South Africa (banned, the ban lifted in 1982); Vasily Stus, USSR (labour camp); Yang Ch'ing-Ch'u, Taiwan (prison); Jorge Mario Soza Egana, Chile (internal exile, released just before the conference ended). These writers were all under the patronage of Amnesty International, and they gave the conference a focus and a sense of practical urgency, and prevented it from veering too far away from concern with individual, particular fates.

The *Writer and Human Rights* contains a good cross-section of statements made at the congress. Its main strength is that it reflects the wide variety of opinion that exists among writers on the writer's job in a world where revolution, repression, and censorship are daily realities.

The book's weaknesses reflect weaknesses that, for organizational reasons, were inherent in the conference itself. Many of the contributions are too brief or too shallow to be persuasive. No serious attempt was made to define

human rights, though the field is land-mined with conflicting definitions. And, while there were plenty of controversial statements, there was a remarkable lack of eye-to-eye argument and debate over them.

The only real controversy to break the unnatural calm of the conference had to do with a proposal, eventually defeated, to add two more writers, one from the Soviet Union and one from Cuba, to the symbolic list of seven. But the debate was held *in camera*. No member of the press or public was present, and the editors of this book, true to whatever oath was sworn at the time, include no reference to it. The reader is therefore left to piece together, from the evidence in the book, the kind of arguments that might have gone on had they had the chance to surface.

One of the most important potential arguments in the book is related directly to the *in camera* debate: the reluctance of many intellectuals to be too critical of the Soviet Union and its client states because they believe it would amount to supporting Ronald Reagan.

The problem is raised with admirable persistence by Susan Sontag:

Like many Western intellectuals, I was once convinced of the justice of operating a double standard in certain circumstances — for example Cuba. . . . [But] whatever our criticism of American imperialism and whatever dangers the American military machine poses to the world, we must operate the same kind of judgement everywhere. And by those standards, the situation in communist countries is appalling — much worse, in fact, than many of us were willing to admit. Worse, even, than under most countries called fascist. This is a tremendous revelation . . . and I think it strengthens us: we are now on the right track; we're not applying a double standard any more. Our commitment is to the truth.

Sontag's plain talk is complemented by eloquent contributions from many writers — Natalya Gorbanevskaya, Chuong Tang Nguyen, Stanislaw

Baranczak, Josef Skvorecky and others — who have had direct experience of Soviet-style dictatorship, and these are backed up by sensible statements from Western writers, like Alan Sillitoe and George Woodcock, who have not. Nor is there any lack of slings and arrows flung at the United States. Some of the most persuasive of these come from the Americans themselves, particularly Carole Forché on Central America and Allen Ginsberg on FBI harassment of the underground press in the 1960s and '70s. In such cases it is the concrete evidence these writers offered, rather than their rhetorical abilities, that is most persuasive.

By contrast, some of the Canadian writers seem like voices whining in the wilderness. Too often, they seem animated by a sense of disconnectedness, of irrelevance and frustration at not having more weight in public affairs or at living in a society that, in their opinion, has only token amounts of evil in it. Sometimes contributions are marred by a tone of petulance. Talking about how Canadian artists are controlled through the marketplace and critical opinion, for example, Margaret Atwood grumbles: "Canadian books still account for a mere 25 per cent of the overall book trade and paperback books for under five per cent. Talking about this situation is considered nationalist chauvinism. Nevertheless, I suppose we are lucky to have any per cent at all; they haven't yet sent in the marines, and if they do it won't be over books but oil."

In "Revolutionary Writing in North America," Rick Salutin says: "One of my main senses of living in Canadian society, or Toronto society, is an ongoing sense of embarrassment. And it comes particularly if I imagine anybody looking from the outside (somebody, say, 300, or 500, or a thousand years from now, however long it takes to establish a society which has decent, humane, and rational arrangements for people to live amongst each other), looking back at the way this society has

chosen to live. I'm just horribly embarrassed to be a part of all this. A certain energy comes from that." Salutin is obviously sincere, but I can't help feeling that it's a sad thing for any writer to be able to say about his own society. The real question, of course, is who has failed whom?

Partly, I suspect, to give Canadian writers a chance to demonstrate that they, too, have their crosses to bear, a panel was held on the topic of "repressive tolerance" — a phrase from the '60s that no one seemed able to define. Josef Skvorecky asks how one can be repressive and tolerant at the same time. "The only sense I can think of is that kind of spineless tolerance some people display toward any nonsense or provocative stupidity whatsoever. An encounter with that kind of tolerance is always irritating and therefore, to me, oppressive."

Despite his caveat, however, most Canadian writers on the panel plunged into the breach. Gaston Miron, a Quebec poet, calls tolerance "part of the ideological arsenal of different bourgeoisies," at its "most pernicious" when it tries to co-opt the writer. Even Naim Kattan is unhappy: "The person who tolerates," he says, "considers himself endowed with a certain superiority because he can reject 'otherness.' The very notion of tolerance is an attack on the dignity of men."

In response to such remarks, West German poet and essayist Hans Magnus Enzensberger warns that repressive tolerance is "a dubious concept."

There is a tendency among writers to adopt a whining tone, as if they were the pets of society and should be given some kind of especially delicious dog food all the time. I have noticed this tendency in my own country, and I am violently against it. Our profession is inseparable from certain risks, and as long as these risks do not imply that I go to prison or that I'm persecuted by the police, or that I'm deprived of any means of production, some sense of shame should inhibit us from complaining too loudly.

The confusion about what constitutes "real" repression climaxes in the discussion on censorship. Canada's Ian Adams (author of *S: Portrait of a Spy*) gives a textbook demonstration of how rhetorical overkill can not only distort reality, it can actually eliminate thought. According to Adams, there are several levels on which "successful censorship" exists in Canada. First: "State censorship exists on a massive scale." (I should point out that Adams made these remarks on a panel containing two Czechs, a Russian and an Argentinian, all living in exile, and a South African and a Chilean, both of whom were living at home.) Adams cites two incidents

"successfully" suppressed by this all-pervasive censorship: the death of a former Canadian ambassador, John Watkins, after interrogation by the RCMP, and the use of hallucinogenic drugs in mind-control experiments sponsored by the CIA in the 1960s. Yet both incidents, at the time of the conference, had been written about extensively in the *Globe and Mail*. Yes, they had been covered up for years, but hardly "successfully" repressed.

Another form of censorship, according to Adams, is people's "enormous resistance to information about poverty, injustice, or about the activities of their own secret police. . . . That is a kind of criminal self-censorship that is built into society." In other words, if a writer who serves up the naked truth (even in the form of fiction) is not listened to, people — his readers — are not only to blame, they are in effect guilty of criminal negligence. It is not hard to see where that line of thought leads.

Adams's exaggerated rhetoric is dangerous not merely because it is potentially totalitarian, but because by using up all his linguistic credit and going into what we might call deficit criticism, he has bankrupted his ability to describe

reality — the classic fate of all ideologues. If state censorship in Canada already exists on a "massive" scale, if "truly monstrous" things are going on behind our backs, what will Adams have left to say if things get worse, as they most certainly can?

I dwell on the contributions of some Canadian writers because it raises my hackles to see them picking at their scabs when so much of the world is in a truly disastrous state. Fortunately, their tone does not dominate, and for anyone wishing to know more about the problems facing writers in that world, *The Writer and Human Rights*, even with its limitations, is a valuable book. Among others, there are fine contributions from Nadine Gordimer on South Africa, Jacobo Timerman on Argentina under the junta, Joy Kogawa on the Japanese Canadians, Eduardo Galeano on the imagination and the will to change, and Per Wästberg on the source of a writer's moral authority.

The book is worth getting for another reason, too: all the earnings go to Amnesty International, to help in their work of bringing relief to victims of political repression. And that, in itself, is worth a lot. □

THE FRASER INSTITUTE

TAX FACTS 4

The Canadian Consumer Tax Index and You

Sally Pipes and Michael Walker with Douglas Wills

This fourth edition of the bestselling **TAX FACTS** is a lucid and candid assessment of the Canadian tax structure. It provides a detailed province-by-province analysis of the full extent of the average family's direct and hidden tax burden. This eye-opener of a book should be read and evaluated by Canadians in every walk of life. You cannot afford *not* to know! Available • 190 pages • \$4.95 paper

PROBING LEVIATHAN

An Investigation of Government in the Economy

George Lermer, Thomas J. Courchene, Richard G. Lipsey, Herbert G. Grubel, et al.

These highly readable essays provide not only a clear analysis of how government intervention has spread, but also a call to resist the growing role of government. They reveal the factors in our social system which induce government growth and the harsh economic realities flowing from it.

Available • 263 pages • \$9.95 paper

INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION

Its Place in the Public Policy Agenda

Kristian S. Palda

A thorough examination of the evidence and arguments underlying a federal policy designed to accelerate the pace of Canadian economic growth, by stimulating technological innovation.

Available • 216 pages • \$9.95 paper

The Fraser Institute will celebrate the 10th Anniversary of its founding on October 22, 1984. The Institute, an independent economic research organization and publisher, is dedicated to improving public awareness and understanding of the key economic and social issues facing Canadians.

 Macmillan of Canada
A Division of Gage Publishing

164 Commander Boulevard
Agincourt, Ontario M1S 3C7
(416) 293-8141

Bodily harm

By W.P. KINSELLA

Since *Daisy Creek*, by W.O. Mitchell, Macmillan, 288 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9817 3).

W. O. MITCHELL is the consummate storyteller both in person and on the printed page. The author of *Who Has Seen the Wind* and the *Jake and the Kid* tales has taken some severe chances in his latest novel, *Since Daisy Creek*. Novels about academics are usually not interesting even to other academics, and novels about writers, failed or otherwise, are generally anathema in the book trade. But in spite of the subject matter Mitchell reaches deep into his bag of tricks and produces a lovable central character who is able to carry the show.

Since Daisy Creek is a busy novel. A multitude of things are going on, some hilarious, some heartbreaking, but always entertaining. Colin Dobbs is a feisty English professor at Livingstone University — an ironically named institution bearing a suspicious resemblance to the University of Calgary, where Mitchell has been writer-in-residence. We meet Dobbs at the lowest point of his life; he is in the hospital slowly recovering from being mauled nearly to death by a giant grizzly bear; he is divorced, estranged from his only daughter, and has given up fiction writing in favour of teaching. The grizzly that attacked him at Daisy Creek has disfigured him both physically and emotionally.

He supposed he was beginning to understand how a woman must feel after rape. From now on, asleep or awake, he must live always with apprehension; he could never again hide from himself the possibility of sudden attack. When the grizzly saw up Daisy Creek had taken him into her embrace three months ago, she had educated him in terror. In correcting his foolish innocence she had not quite destroyed him, but she had killed trust for him. He knew now that savagery had no geographic limits, that civilization excused no one from horror.

Enter his daughter, Annie, as stubborn and petulant as her father; she bullies and cajoles him slowly back to the land of the living. Along the way we learn the whys and wherefores of the

disastrous grizzly hunt, and meet an assortment of vividly drawn supporting characters.

There are a number of wonderfully comic sequences, among them a scene where Dobbs is pursued and seduced by an overzealous female colleague, on a bed of term papers on the floor of his office. Dobbs, it turns out, is allergic to the woman's perfume.

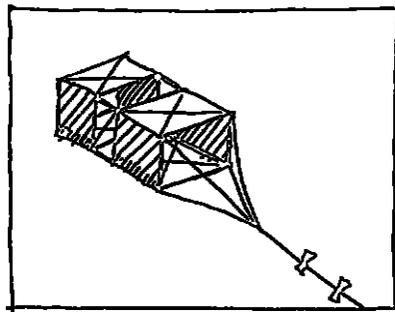
With each sneeze they had moved in short spurts over their bed of mid-term papers until now her head was against the bottom drawer of the filing cabinet, "O to Z." This seemed to increase the thrust power of the sneezes, which now exploded in one long and unbroken chain.

Another concerns a loathsome old dog foisted off on Dobbs by a colleague. The dog electrocutes itself, but like Sorrow in *Hotel New Hampshire*, refuses to be buried, ends up in the family deep freeze, and when discovered by Dobbs's wife becomes the final straw that breaks the frail back of their marriage.

On another occasion he peeks into the room where a psychotic graduate student, appropriately named Slaughter, who "couldn't write home to his mother for money," is to defend his master's thesis, an illiterate novel called *The Red Messiah*:

His eyes had to adjust to the dim light from the candles. A good dozen of them were flickering from the book and magazine shelves and the long table with the cross rising from the centre. It had to be five feet high and the crucified figure was red except for the eagle feather war bonnet on the hanging head. He heard clinking that was coming not from the tape recorder playing the chicken dance, but from the shadows at the far end of the table. Slaughter, in breech clout and porcupine crest, with feathers at his rump and harness bells circling his wrist, elbows and ankles.

The novel is heavily satirical. Mitchell's academics are pious



hypocrites completely out of touch with reality. However, unlike John Metcalf in *General Ludd*, who scourges his academics until they bleed oatmeal, Mitchell treats his almost with kindness, whether it is the petty, incompetent English department head, the university

president who turns out to have a phony degree but is kept on because he is a hell of a fund-raiser, or the white Indian named Whyte, head of Native Studies, who wears braids and buckskins and:

... was zealous about his red mission
... he had fasted, done sweat baths,
and for two months drunk only pure
mountain water from a running stream
— which meant he had picked up giar-
diasis. Colloquial name: beaver-piss
fever.

The novel is full of lovely reversals, subtle and not so subtle revenges, touching reunions, and ribald comedy. It is a novel about the love of fathers and daughters, the disintegration of marriage, the pain and loneliness of divorce. Dobbs has attempted to substitute bear hunting for all that is missing in his life. The later chapters deal with his obsession about recovering the hide of the grizzly that almost killed him. In a particularly poignant scene at a Christmas party, amid quotes from classical literature about the prowess of bears, in front of his jealous and back-biting colleagues, he unwraps the hide and discovers that the taxidermists have replaced the mammoth grizzly carcass with the hide of a fuzzy brown bear. Suddenly the magnitude of Dobbs's injuries are reduced; it is as if he has been mauled by Winnie the Pooh.

There are also digressions into the teaching of creative writing. We get to sit in on writing seminars and hear Dobbs lecture his students, espousing "Mitchell's Messy Method" which W.O. himself teaches at the Banff Centre.

"Now here's an invitation to you that will make it easier for you. Every day for an hour — two — three — try to capture whatever floats to the surface of your consciousness. That's all I'm all asking you to do. It isn't really writing. It's finding. Each of you has a unique, stored past. Until you prospect it you cannot know how artistically valuable it may be."

Of course, not everything works. The many father-daughter scenes pose problems. Not since Hemingway's *Across the River and Into the Trees* have I seen so many pages of pure dialogue without a hint of a *he said* or *she said*. I can't help but wonder if the father-daughter scenes were not once part of a two-character play. Many of these scenes are both repetitious and predictable, and the novel would have been stronger if they had been well-edited.

The closing chapters, which satirize lawyers and the judicial system, and features the laconic Archie Nicotine, Dobbs's Indian guide (who will be familiar to readers of *Vanishing Point*), are the weakest part of the novel. The 50th time Nicotine says "Hey-up," I'd like to stuff a moccasin in his mouth,

and I'm sure many readers will feel the same. This section of the book is often too cute and too dependent on bathroom humour.

But compared to the strengths, the weaknesses are minor. *Since Daisy Creek* is everything we have come to expect of W.O. Mitchell; it is an irreverent, touching, life-affirming novel. □

REVIEW

Past
imperfect

By I.M. OWEN

The Spanish Doctor, by Matt Cohen, McClelland & Stewart, 344 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 2237 9).

MATT COHEN, best known for his tales of contemporary life in an Eastern Ontario village, has changed course drastically, setting his new novel in Castile, Provence, Bologna, and Kiev in the 14th and 15th centuries. To move from one kind of novel to the other requires a special effort on the author's part; even when the necessary research has been done, writing the historical novel brings into play a whole set of previously unused imaginative muscles. And it must be said that Cohen moves stiffly and painfully through *The Spanish Doctor*.

Avram Halevi, his Spanish doctor, seems meant to embody the ambiguities of 14th-century Spain. He was conceived when his Jewish mother was raped by several of the soldiers of Henry of Trastamara during the sack of Toledo after their victory over Pedro the Cruel in 1369. When he was seven, peasants from the surrounding countryside rioting against the Jews forced him, by threatening to murder his mother, to swear fidelity to the Trinity; and from then on he was regarded as a Marrano, a converted Jew. Here my first doubt creeps in: would he have been so regarded? There's no mention of a baptism, or suggestion that he ever went to Mass.

Under the influence of an agnostic Arab physician, Halevi studies medicine and surgery at Montpellier, and returns to Toledo in 1391, just in time for the first great outbreak of anti-Jewish

violence in Castile. He wins the friendship of Juan Velasquez, a wealthy merchant, by performing a successful Caesarean section on his wife. (This is an acceptable invention, I think, though my *Britannica* informs me that the first recorded Caesarean on a living woman was performed in Switzerland about 1500 — by a professional pig-gelder on his own wife. Just thought you'd like to know.) He also becomes the deadly enemy of the merchant's brother, a sadistic cardinal of the Avignon papacy. Returning to Montpellier, partly to evade the marital plans of his first lover Gabriela, a successful businesswoman, he has a happy marriage there to a Jewish convert to Christianity, which ends when Cardinal Velasquez brings about the death of the wife and one of their two children. Later he succeeds in murdering the cardinal in Bologna; after nine years' imprisonment he escapes to Kiev along with Gabriela, her daughter, and his son. Here he turns from scientific rationalism to devout Judaism, and from medicine to commerce.

The events of this novel are sensational, but not nearly as improbable as the events in *Flowers of Darkness*, Cohen's fourth novel about life in Salem, Ont. Yet they carry much less conviction. In a penetrating review of *Flowers of Darkness* (*Books in Canada*, March, 1981) George Woodcock said:

It is all, perhaps, a shade melodramatic. Actuality is never like this.

But is the actual always the real? That, perhaps, is the great question the art of fiction is always set to pose. And the answer lies, surely, in how far we become willing hostages in the country of the mind a novel creates. . . . For it is the consistency of the imaginative construct, rather than its likeness to anything in what we oddly call "real life," that we in fact seek in fiction. And that kind of consistency, it seems to me, Matt Cohen has achieved.

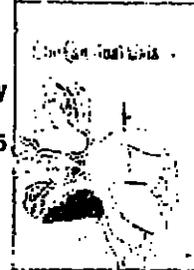
That's superbly right, and it defines precisely what hasn't happened in *The Spanish Doctor*. The author of this book had to imagine a world in which nothing that has happened since 1445 had been heard of; conversely, he had to convey many things, strange to us, that the characters would have taken for granted, as if the reader took them for granted too. The building of this foundation for his "imaginative construct" is not badly done. But the effort is obvious, and it has left him little energy for the creation of characters. The main characters don't sweep us into a conviction that they are living beings. Some of those introduced later — Avram's French wife, their son Joseph, and Gabriela's daughter Sara — do flicker into life sometimes, no doubt because creation began to come more easily after

obelisk
QUALITY PAPERBACKS



Two Serious Ladies
by Jane Bowles
\$9.95

The Cannibal Galaxy
by Cynthia Ozick
\$9.95



Arcadio
by William Goyen
\$9.95

Court of Memory
by James McConkey
\$12.95



A DIFFERENCE OF DESIGN



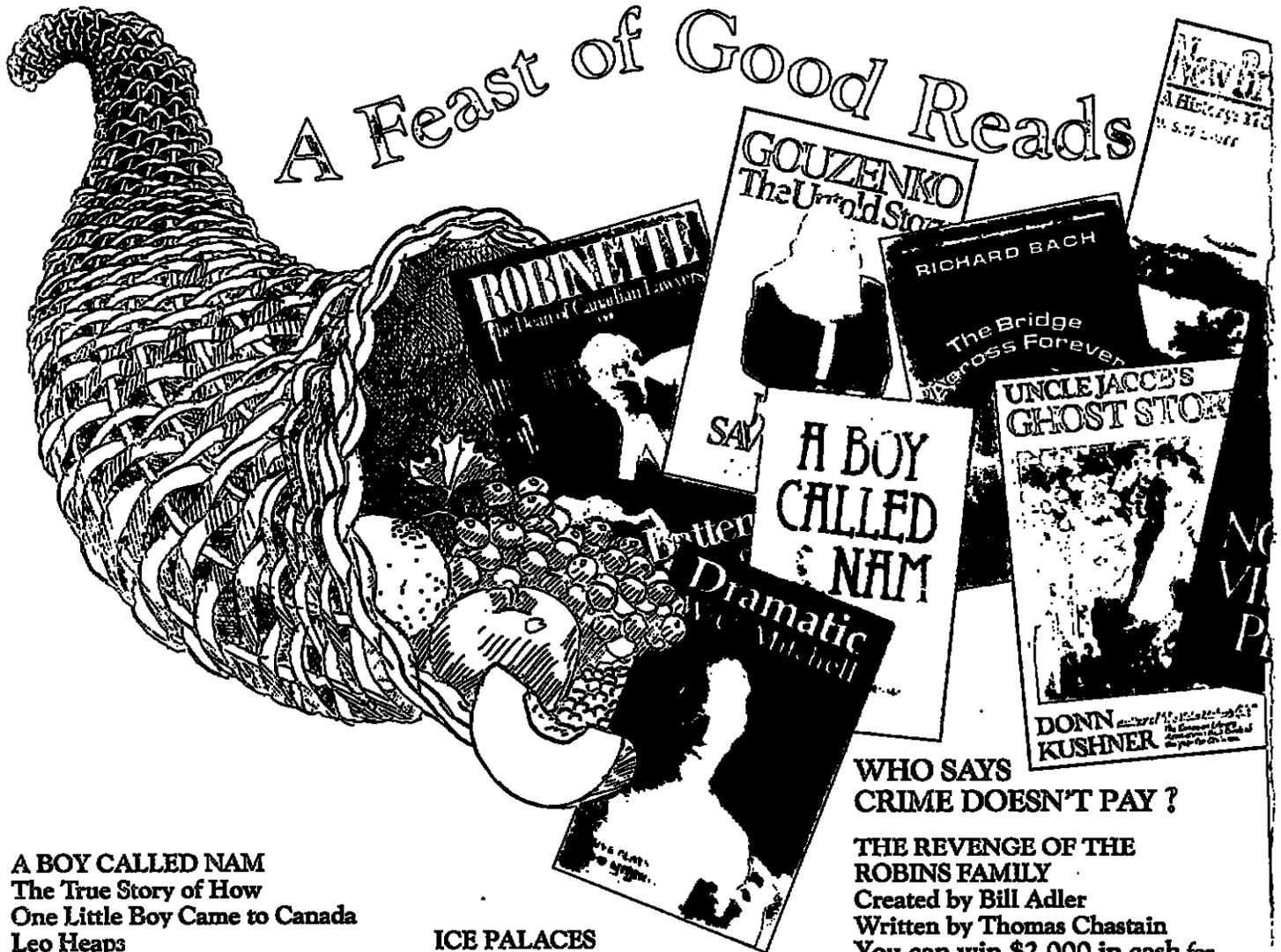
A Difference
of Design
by W.M. Spackman
\$8.50

A Bad Man
by Stanley Elkin
\$12.95



Beaverbooks

A Feast of Good Reads



A BOY CALLED NAM The True Story of How One Little Boy Came to Canada Leo Heaps

In spare and simple prose Leo Heaps tells the epic story of a small boy's courage and survival as one of the Vietnamese boat people. The author met Nam in Macao when he was working with Southeast Asian refugees under the United Nations' sponsorship and was instrumental in bringing the young boy to Canada. **\$14.95 cloth**

UNCLE JACOB'S GHOST STORY Donn Kushner

From the author of the popular children's book, *THE VIOLIN-MAKER'S GIFT*, comes this fresh, original story which touches on the universal themes of truth, friendship, and love. In a tale that ranges from a Polish village under the rule of the Czar to the bustle of Broadway and Times Square at the turn of the century, a young boy learns the true story of his great-uncle Jacob, the family disgrace. **\$14.95 cloth**

ICE PALACES

Fred Anderes and Ann Agranoff
A unique, sumptuously produced art-book that relates the fascinating history of ice castles which were constructed every winter in such cities as Montreal, Quebec City and Ottawa. Illustrated with 100 black & white and 50 colour historic photographs, lithographs and paintings, this is a pioneer study of these ephemeral masterpieces of architectural art. **\$39.95 cloth • \$22.95 paperback**

ROBINETTE

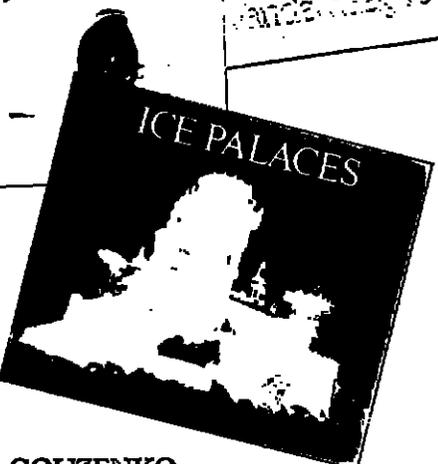
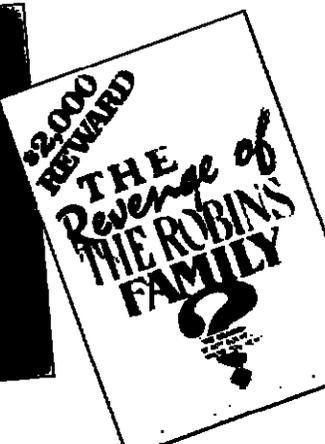
**The Dean of Canadian Lawyers
Jack Batten**
In this fascinating portrait of Canada's most gifted counsel, the author of *IN COURT* and *LAWYERS* provides intriguing insights into Robinette's unique courtroom skills and into the determination and brilliance that have placed him at the top of his profession. It is a book in every way worthy of its subject. **\$19.95 cloth**

WHO SAYS CRIME DOESN'T PAY ?

**THE REVENGE OF THE
ROBINS FAMILY**
Created by Bill Adler
Written by Thomas Chastain
You can win \$2,000 in cash for the best solution to this unusual murder mystery. With this exciting sequel to the bestselling *WHO KILLED THE ROBINS FAMILY?*, Canadian readers will be able to join the fun and the challenge in the search for the answers to the eight murders in this suspense novel. Complete details of the contest rules are in the book. **\$12.95 cloth**

URBAN SCRAWL

**The World As Seen Through the
Bemused Eyes of
ERIKA RITTER**
Social commentary at its most irreverent! These 24 hilarious essays from the author of the smash hit, *Automatic Pilot*, and the creator of "Adult Phenomenon" on CBC's *Stereo Morning*, deal with the flotsam of our daily lives: cellulite, answering machines, the state of being single. The passing scene sparks and sparkles under Ritter's ever-vigilant eyes. **\$17.95 cloth**



MY PRESENT AGE
A Novel

Guy Vanderhaeghe

In 1982 Vanderhaeghe's **MAN DESCENDING** won the Governor General's Award for Fiction. Now the hero of two of the stories in that collection is the protagonist in this impressive first novel. Abandoned by his wife and having quit his job, Ed is determined to simplify his life, but instead his distaste for reality leads him into a web of fantasy and fraud that has tragicomic consequences.

\$19.95 cloth

NOW AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK!

DRAMATIC W.O. MITCHELL
Five Plays

W.O. Mitchell

For the first time W.O. Mitchell's plays have been brought together in one collection. "The plays...read like poignant, captivating short stories...the transition (to the world of the short story writer) is remarkably fascinating, easy, and pleasant." — *Windsor Star*

\$7.95 paperback

A TRIBUTE TO ONE OF CANADA'S GREATEST MUSICIANS!

GLENN GOULD VARIATIONS
By Himself and His Friends

Edited by John McGreevy

When first published in 1983 on the first anniversary of Gould's death, this unusual tribute was praised for its depth of content, its well-chosen photographs and its handsome design. Original essays by a dozen international figures, superb magazine articles about Gould, and several of Gould's own fine essays make up this unique expression of his life and art. "...highly informative, superbly crafted" — *Vancouver Province*

\$16.95 paperback

NEW BRUNSWICK:
A History: 1784-1867

W.S. MacNutt

To mark the 1984 bicentennial of the province of New Brunswick Macmillan of Canada is re-issuing this important history in an attractive paperback format. First published in 1963, it filled a much-felt need for a good general history of the early years of the province and in the intervening years it has not been surpassed. **\$12.95 paperback**

THE BRIDGE ACROSS FOREVER

Richard Bach

From the author of the million dollar bestsellers — **JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL** and **ILLUSIONS**, comes a cosmic love story for our times. Richard Bach found that one brilliant woman to set him free from a self-imposed prison, and he began a transforming journey — a magical discovery of love and immortality. **\$24.95 cloth**

THE TRUE JOY OF POSITIVE LIVING

An Autobiography

Norman Vincent Peale

This inspiring and heartwarming book from the author of **THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING** is enriched with hundreds of true stories and biographical sketches illustrating his theories of confident living and personal effectiveness as well as his buoyant faith in God. **\$20.50 cloth**

THE FAR SIDE GALLERY

Gary Larson

At last, a treasury of the best of the inspired "Far Side" comic panels. Gary Larson's combination of the sophisticated and the outrageous has swept the country. This collection of over 600 panels of macabre delights includes a full-colour insert of best-selling posters and is sure to sate the most bizarre appetites.

\$21.95 cloth • \$11.95 paperback

Available at bookstores across Canada



GOUZENKO
The Untold Story

John Sawatsky

The first inside look at a fascinating enigma from the author of **MEN IN THE SHADOWS** and **FOR SERVICES RENDERED**. Using his amazing investigative techniques, Sawatsky has tracked down and interviewed 150 of the people who came into contact with Gouzenko after his defection including interviews with Gouzenko's wife. In the process of telling their stories, they shatter many legends that have endured for years. **\$19.95 cloth**

Settlements



David Donnell

McClelland and Stewart warmly congratulates

David Donnell, winner of the Governor General's 1983 Poetry Award for his book *Settlements*.

We would also like to congratulate poets Christopher Dewdney, author of *Predators of the Adoration*, and Don McKay, author of *Birding, or Desire*, who were among the finalists.

McClelland and Stewart
The Canadian Publishers

NEW FROM BREAKWATER

Non-fiction

UPON THIS ROCK

The Catholic Church in Newfoundland with a special section on the Pope's visit to that province by Paul O'Neill
\$29.95 cloth

Fiction

MAUD'S HOUSE

Bill Gough's Maud is a character you will never forget
\$9.95 paper

BEOWULF

A brilliant new translation from Gildas Roberts
\$6.95 paper

Short stories

BOUHWOLFEN

another perceptive and funny masterpiece from Al Pittman
\$16.95 cloth



P.O. Box 2189
277 Duckworth Street,
St. John's, Nfld., A1C 6E6

the foundations had been laid.

I wish I knew enough about medieval Spain to judge the accuracy of Cohen's picture. There are questionable details. The characters drink a lot of (certainly anachronistic) tea and (probably anachronistic) brandy. That a young Jewish merchant like Gabriela should be so successful in commerce that a Christian merchant of Toledo would pick her to be his branch manager, first in Barcelona and then in Bologna, seems unlikely; if it did happen, you'd think most people would have found it extraordinary and said so. That educated Christians and Jews should speak as if they worshipped different gods ("Your God or mine?") I find quite unacceptable. But generally Cohen seems to speak with authority, and I don't know enough to challenge it. Just what was the position of Jews in Christian Spain before the outbreak of pogroms in 1391? Passing references in books I have imply that it was comfortable until then; Cohen's picture, according to which it had been uncomfortable for some time, seems more probable. Anyway, he's aroused my curiosity, and I'm grateful for that. □

REVIEW

Pleasant dreams

By ELWIN MOORE

Real Places and Imaginary Men, by Barry Dempster, Oberon Press, 174 pages, \$23.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 524 4) and \$12.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 525 2).

A Mouth Organ for Angels, by Robert Gibbs, Oberon Press, 96 pages, \$17.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 512 0) and \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 513 9).

"ACTUALITY is a running impoverishment of possibility," wrote John Updike, a poet best known for his prose. Now a young Canadian poet, Barry Dempster, and a middle-aged Canadian poet, Robert Gibbs, appear simultaneously with prose works inspired by a conviction identical to Updike's. Both champion the dream against the real — the open, the unknowable, the marvellous, against the closed, the familiar, the mundane. Perhaps poets,

more than most people, hate to see eternity hashed into minutes.

Though Dempster and Gibbs are both partisans of the magical, they use different tactics. Dempster, full of young vigour, confronts. His habit, shown even in his book's title, is to set opposites face to face. The heroes of his eight short stories want and fear transformation. A squeamish Canadian student tries to understand misery, filth, spirituality, death, and river burial in Calcutta. The residents of a slumbering town suffer a vision of the loveliness of butterflies that changes their lives. A man walking home with a bag of Big Macs meets an angel.

Dempster's style is bold, word-happy and idea-happy. His best pieces ("The Hunt," "The Ever-Present Moon," "Barry's Bay") are so superior to the worst ("The Beginning of Klaus Berber") that a reader imagines them written years apart. His language bounds abruptly from the conversational to the highly figurative: "Or maybe it was Barry's Bay. He'd be so open there, so personal, as if by unbuttoning his shirt and breathing wide and deep through his lungs, his heart had ascended both neck and throat and was inflating conversation like a bicycle pump blowing up balloons."

Dempster's dialogue (like Shakespeare's) may seem truer to feelings than to speech. Often he over-writes, hits false notes, or leaves participles dangling like flung spaghetti. Yet his virtues compensate: these include cunning, a lively intelligence, freshness, and the ability to write with affection and force. Above all is his willingness to take risks when dealing with things that matter. His book concludes with this 10-page story: a woman sees, loses sight of, then sees again both the moon and the soul of her lover, a man named Ronald who is driving their car home late at night from a Peterborough-area cottage to a Toronto work week. I like the assurance and arbitrariness with which Dempster relates this fanciful, unfashionable, and suspect event.

Barry Dempster meets reality head-on. Robert Gibbs practises subversion. Gibbs dispatches the possible (in plain-clothes, so to speak) to infiltrate actuality's strongholds. *A Mouth Organ for Angels* tells the fantastic adventures of a black-haired hoyden named Madeline. She loses her parents in the book's first paragraph:

It was Dr. Doris who brought me here to live with Aunt George and Aunt Louisa. That was the day my mother cut off her hair. And painted a clown face on with lipstick. And went out to look for my father. My father she knew very well had gone away to the North. To

work and earn lots of money for us. But she went out that way just the same.

Madeline finds herself in a Saint John boarding house. Its halls and stairways extend uncannily to far streets and an earlier time. Madeline is threatened and befriended, keeps moving, finds her lost dog Gingercat, seeks her home, and encounters a dazzling succession of colourful people exuberantly named: Grover Poppo, Miss Throstle, Mortal Costello, Reverend Mr. Wing Hum (of the Church of Happy Hope), General Upham, Angel Fritch, Morgan Hornbeam, Eels MacGuire. And so on.

In literary terms, Madeline is a descendant of Alice in Wonderland, Huck Finn, Anne of Green Gables, and perhaps even Pippi Longstocking. But I don't think this book succeeds in the difficult feat of appealing to both adult and juvenile readers. It has the feeling of a maze populated by jack-in-the-boxes; it doesn't deepen emotionally; we get more characters, instead of more character. And Madeline's sentence fragments — for Gibbs keeps faithfully to her voice and viewpoint — soon wear on a reader's ears.

But there's much that's charming, including the enormously fat, cider-drinking poet Flowers Coghill (whose name oddly echoes that of Gibbs's fellow New Brunswick poet, Fred Cogswell). Here's a Coghill poem: "Little bird, little bird, why don't you fly?/ Your wings are your own and so is the sky."

"That's real nice," says Madeline, and she's right. □

REVIEW

Out of context

By **GEORGE GALT**

The Galts: A Canadian Odyssey, Volume 2, by H.B. Timothy, McClelland & Stewart, 221 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 8454 4).

ALEXANDER TILLOCH GALT, one of our least understood Confederation politicians, has for some time been a likely candidate for a definitive new biography. Oscar Skelton's *Life and Times* is outdated, both in its prose and perspective. The myth of Sir John A. as

clairvoyant nation-builder has overshadowed the vision and accomplishments of his political contemporaries, and skewed our reading of the period. Galt was certainly Macdonald's intellectual equal or better, and his forecast of Confederation long preceded the first prime minister's. It was Galt who in 1858 made the first detailed proposals of a Canadian federal union.

Hamilton Timothy, whose life of Alexander's father John Galt appeared in 1977, attempts in this new book to do justice to the son. For 20-odd years he has been knocking on Galt doors across the country and squirreling away Galt family papers for what those of us who observed the search thought would be a monumental and exhaustive biography. (A.T. Galt was my great-great uncle, and I remember Timothy making the rounds of Galt family houses in Montreal in the 1960s.) His book puts a cogently argued case for Galt's seminal role in Confederation, but its picture of the man is pale and sketchy.

Timothy has marshalled all the available facts, has culled piles of letters and other documents acquired from A.T.'s descendants, and appears to have consulted every book and archive that so much as mentions the name of Galt, but he has failed to breathe life into his subject. This is in part, I suspect, because his search turned up insufficient material reflecting on his subject's private life outside business and politics, but also because as a biographer he lacks psychological insight and makes little effort to convey what it was like to be inside A.T. Galt's skin. What was everyday life in Sherbrooke and Montreal like for an entrepreneur and politician between 1840 and 1890? What was the shape and feel of A.T. Galt's imposing house on Montreal's Mountain street? (The house was still standing when this book was researched.) How wealthy was he? Where did he rank in the social and economic scheme of things in Montreal during those years of growth unparalleled in the city's history? Largely ignoring these and similar questions, the book is almost entirely bereft of a sense of social context.

Where Timothy succeeds is in elucidating Galt's role in the political process that prepared for a Canadian federation. "There have been many putative Fathers of Confederation," he writes, "but the real Father of Confederation was Alexander Galt." In the sense that Galt pushed for a federation while as late as 1864 Macdonald opposed the idea, and in the sense that the early resolutions drafted by Galt bore a close resemblance to and were clearly blueprints for the final federal structure, Timothy's is a fair assessment. Cartier is on record as crediting Galt with his con-

version to the federal project, and Cartier was the linchpin of the operation. When he joined the pre-Confederation Macdonald-Cartier administration as finance minister, Galt made his acceptance conditional on the government's adoption of his 1858 federal proposals. In all these ways he was the leading mover of the federal idea.

Still, while Galt has been neglected as a prime intellectual and moral force behind the union, he can take only a share of the credit for its political implementation. The messy work of party politics never appealed to him, and while he joined Macdonald's first cabinet (again as finance minister), he preferred to run as an independent rather than advertise himself as a Tory. Unusual in Canadian politics, he was a man of principle who resigned from public office rather than fudge his position. Compromise, however, and not moral rectitude, was the glue that pasted Canada together, which is precisely why Macdonald and not Galt remains the pre-eminent politician of his time.

In mid-career Galt was as energetic and successful as anyone in Canadian public life. He had established himself in the business community as a railway promoter and as commissioner of the British-American Land Company, which opened up Quebec's Eastern Townships, and then had demonstrated a flair for public finance as inspector general (finance minister) of the united Canadas after 1858. His diplomatic skills, exercised on various missions in London and Washington in the 1860s made him the obvious choice as Canada's first resident ambassador abroad. He was appointed high commissioner in London in 1879, a post he held without much personal satisfaction until 1883.

For the last 10 years of his life, Galt, in partnership with his son Elliott, pursued his business interests in southern Alberta. Timothy's book purports to be a joint biography of father and son, but Elliott's life is little more than a brief business history, filling less than two of 12 chapters, of the North-Western Coal and Navigation Company, established by father and son to exploit the coal deposits around Lethbridge. When A.T. Galt died in 1893 the coal business had yet to show much profit, but when his son sold out to the CPR in 1907 he is reputed to have made a pile. Timothy adds nothing specific to this vague reputation of wealth.

There is a distressing antiquated feel to the prose in this book, and to its approach to historiography. A careful reader can only be infuriated by the continual quoting and footnoting of secondary sources, as if the author, lacking his own powers of judgement, had to turn

THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES A HISTORY

Gerald Friesen

Native leaders, European fur traders, immigrant farm families, Alberta oil barons, and political reformers all play a part in this long-awaited history of the prairie west. Friesen covers four centuries of human experience with authority, clarity and unexpected insights into the relations between the prairies' peoples.

\$24.95

University of Toronto Press

every few pages to the likes of W.L. Morton and P.B. Waite for advice. And although it's good to see use made of the papers Timothy has collected — and his service in amassing the documents and re-emphasizing Galt's role cannot be dismissed — of the man behind the politics little has been revealed. □

REVIEW

Pilgrims' progress

By DOUGLAS GLOVER

Views from the North: An Anthology of Travel Writing, edited by Karen Mulhallen, Porcupine's Quill, \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 88984 061 X).

TRAVEL WRITING at its best partakes of the archetypal images of the pilgrimage and the quest. It uses geography as a metaphor for time and the journey as a model of soul-making.

In recent years, Canadians have produced fine examples of the genre. The first that comes to mind is *Days and Nights in Calcutta*, that masterly contrapuntal narration of a trip to India by Clark Blaise and Bharati Mukherjee. Little in *Views from the North* approaches their high level of achievement.

To begin with, the subtitle of this heterogeneous collection of poems, diaries, short stories, essays, and memoirs is misleading. Several of the selections are not travel writing at all. Distinctions can be blurred, definitions stretched. But do we really want to call a story about Robert Browning dying in Venice travel writing? If we do, then librarians will have to start filing *Moby Dick* under Ocean Tours.

Yet, the question of genre aside, there is evidence in this collection of high ambition and a certain dogged competence — even flashes of excitement and perception. Gwendolyn MacEwen has contributed a delightfully chatty vignette about travelling in the Middle East. Her medium of cultural exchange is the sexual misunderstanding. As she stumbles haplessly through the Holy Land, the natives beat her, stone her, and offer dirty weekends in Haifa. The climax of her tale is the sudden apparition of a King Street trolley car in the middle of

Cairo, an image of Toronto the Good shining like the Grail itself in the dust and heat.

Robin Magowan's "Zambia" details the traveller's encounter with a native prostitute. This is a strong, suspenseful, sometimes self-mocking narrative that ends with a surprising and touching denouement. After stealing away from her bed early in the morning, the traveller has a moment of revelation and returns to spend his remaining hours in Lusaka with the girl and her family. In the clash of language, culture, and sex, he has momentarily achieved a species of transcendence. "Not knowing anything and not wishing to: because self-knowledge, whatever the long-term results, pulls you up short," he discovers that "the world has become wild again."

This is the pilgrim's reward, yet it is vouchsafed few of the writers in *Views from the North*. Paulette Jiles comes close in her wry, exuberant poem "Night Flight to Attiwapiskat." Approaching an isolated Cree village in a crippled aircraft, she imagines herself on a voyage toward death, "the rim of the world, where distant lights broke through and something/failed us. Then at the edge when we were stamped/and ready to go through we were turned back." Inevitably, descending out of her dream-quest, the traveller returns to earth, though her memories remain.

Nothing like this happens to Antanas Sileika as he conscientiously follows (backwards) the route taken by medieval Christians on their way to the shrine of Santiago de Compostella. With an umbrella under one arm — he sunburns easily — and an unread copy of *Pilgrim's Progress* under the other, he hunts for revelation in the embrace of an American expatriate anthropologist who gives him a questionnaire to fill out and locks her bedroom door against his advances.

Views from the North is a challenging book — it poses more questions than it answers. What is travel writing? How inclusive should an anthology be? I found myself working back and forth through the text grouping selections for comparison and contrast with sometimes surprising results. For example, place MacEwen and Magowan next to each other and suddenly MacEwen's story becomes a comic feminist critique of the traditional male-oriented journey-quest.

Or read all the diary excerpts together. In general, I consider the diary a debased form of travel writing, sketchy and unshaped. Yet P.K. Page's Brazil journal is exemplary — terse, precise, and authoritative. The remaining selections suffer by comparison, especially Ken Norris's "The Better Part of



"A wild and wonderful book, both witty and acutely intelligent. Zoff is a national treasure."
— Christina McCall.

\$19.95 cloth, 70 pages of photographs

James Lorimer & Company

Heaven," a self-consciously ingenuous account of a ramble through Tonga written in a style pitted with clichés and facile colloquialisms.

Again, juxtapose Roy Kiyooka and Sam Solecki. Both are sons of immigrants who travel with their fathers back to the fatherland. In both cases, the fathers come suddenly and astonishingly alive. Kiyooka describes a wonderful incident in a Japanese eel house where his father drinks himself into triumphant oblivion to appease a local god. Yet it is Solecki who seems most aware of the wondrous complexity of his father's transformation and his own inadequacy, the stranger's loss of self and the reality of the strange.

I can't say that *Views from the North* was put together with the care and attention it deserved. Originally, it appeared as a double issue of *Descant* — one gets the feeling that the subtitle was tacked on as an afterthought, giving a false impression of unity. The book is also badly in need of an introduction organizing its various themes and forms. Even the contributors' notes at the back are incomplete. But read with a certain amount of good will and an ear for unexpected echoes and resonances, it's still worth the price of admission. □

REVIEW

How the West was lost

By GEORGE WOODCOCK

Reminiscences of a Bungle by One of the Bunglers, edited by R.C. Macleod, University of Alberta Press, 324 pages, \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 88864 077 3).

BEING INVOLVED in both, I am amused to discover that the Northwest Rebellion book boom has been even more quickly off the mark than the Orwell boom. The flood of books and articles relating to *Nineteen Eighty-Four* did not seriously begin until fairly late in 1983, but the publishers were already at work in 1983 with items relating to the events of 1885, and the flow is building up in 1984 to what threatens to become a positive spring tide in the anniversary year. New books are planned; hitherto untranslated books like Giraud's massive *Le métis canadien* will be appearing for the

first time in English; works contemporary with the rebellion are being reprinted; and unpublished accounts are being dug out of the archives and presented to the public for the first time.

Reminiscences of a Bungle by One of the Bunglers combines the last two categories. *Reminiscences of a Bungle*, by Lewis Redman Ord, was first published anonymously in 1886. The two items accompanying it, "The Diary of Lieutenant R.S. Cassels" by Richard Scougall Cassels and "Notes on the Suppression of the Northwest Insurrection" by Harold Penryn Rusden, have not been printed before. Together they present a fascinating composite portrait of the kind of men who took part in the expedition that Major-General Frederick Middleton led with such elephantine deliberation in the suppression of two simultaneous risings in 1885, that of the Métis led by Riel and Dumont and that of the Cree Indians led by Poundmaker and Big Bear.

Ord was a surveyor with considerable experience of the West who volunteered to serve in the Surveyor's Intelligence Corps. Rusden, about whom almost nothing is known, seems to have been an Ontarian by origin who was farming in the West when he joined French's Scouts, one of the irregular troops that formed part of Middleton's army. Cassels was a typical Toronto patrician who eventually became one of the leading Canadian corporation lawyers; at the time of the rebellion he was already lieutenant in the elite Toronto militia battalion, the Queen's Own Rifles.

The personalities and backgrounds of the three men, as their narratives reveal them, are strikingly different, but a number of attitudes unite them and perhaps typify most of the men — whether they were city clerks or old western hands — who took part in Middleton's expedition. They were all amateur soldiers, and they were almost all originally from central Canada. This meant that, while they were all imbued with the feeling of late 19th-century Ontarians that they rightfully owned the West and were therefore resolved to deal roughly with the Métis and Indian rebels, they also tended to share that prickly inferiority complex which in those days often separated Canadian Wasps from the British-born. Their attitudes toward Middleton (whose professional caution, aimed at minimizing casualties, often struck them as tortoise-like and cowardly) varied from Ord's open contempt, expressed with bitter sarcasm, to Cassels' gentlemanly disapproval.

He certainly seems to be a poor specimen; hear some very queer things about his deals in horseflesh and furs

and as far as his treatment of some of his officers, that is quite too disgraceful.

All the accounts are interesting in the usual way of soldiers' diaries, seeing the trees very well, not so good on the wood. Rusden, the only private soldier of the three — and obviously, to judge from his spelling and grammar, a poorly educated man — was also the only one to show an understanding that the causes of the rebellion lay as much in the mismanagement of Macdonald's government as in the malice of Riel and his followers. Yet even he shared the negative attitude of the others toward their opponents, so typical of white society at the time that one can hardly pick them out as especially racist. He took part freely in the looting by French's Scouts, Boulton's Scouts, and the other irregular groups, which merely confirmed the Métis view of Canadians as predators seeking to pillage not only their land but everything else they owned, and which laid the basis for continuing interracial resentments.

Reminiscences of a Bungle is as much polemic as it is narrative. Ord sets out to expose Middleton's incompetence and to show how a guerrilla war cannot be fought effectively by British generals with sclerotic brains, but does so rather unconvincingly because of his literary archness; he carried a volume of Shakespeare with him on campaign and rather too freely borrowed its phrasology. Rusden writes a plain and quite vigorous narrative so that he gives a good impression of life in a scout unit that seems to have specialized in pillage and arson. But Cassels kept his diary with the grace of a born travel writer, describing people and landscapes and narrating incident with an ease and a vividness and enough idiosyncrasy to make one regret that when the campaign was over he went back to his cases and did not make his experiences into a book. What is intriguing but fragmentary in the diary might



have been made into the best participant's account of the 1885 rebellion.

Yet the fact that Cassels produced nothing of the kind perhaps indicates fairly clearly the difference between attitudes then, when the rebellion was regarded by white participants as little more than an adventurous episode, and now, when we tend to see it far more from the viewpoint of the Métis and the Indians, as the last act in the tragedy of a people, and therefore as resonating far beyond those few hundred men fighting and sometimes dying on the bullet-bitten hillside of Batoche. □

In high places

By GWENDOLYN MacEWEN

Castles, by Alan Lee and David Day, edited by David Larkin, Bantam Books, illustrated, 190 pages, \$29.95 cloth (ISBN 0 553 05066 4).

ALAN LEE and David Larkin were, together with Brian Froud, the creators of the marvellous volume *Faeries*, and from 1981 to 1983 worked with Canadian poet David Day to produce *Castles*. The book is divided into three sections: "The Age of Myths," "The Age of Romance," and "The Age of Fantasy." The reader is led through Celtic myths, Norse sagas and The Age of Chivalry, right up to Poe and Kafka and the modern fantasy writers Tolkien and Peake.

In the introduction we are reminded that the castle, as well as being the centre of medieval life, was also "the whole world in microcosm. It protected the seat of earthly power, the throne, it contained the symbol of heaven, the chapel, and it threatened with the symbol of Hell, the dungeon." Lee's magnificently evocative drawings and watercolours manage to convey the feeling that his castles and the haunting landscapes that contain them are both the property of the terrestrial world and the world of man's unconscious — just as myth itself is a meld of actual history or natural phenomena with "imagination." His colours, predominantly green and yellow, range in intensity from brooding forest darkness to a stunning emerald light one usually associates with dreams or the sun-drenched fields of enchanted childhood.

David Day's text is wonderfully lucid, revealing the inner workings and the enormous complexities of the myths and fantastic tales that gave rise to the paintings without ever becoming bogged down in the sheer weight of the undertaking (as is often the case when writers of lesser talent attempt retellings of old tales and end up with pages of prose so dense with unreadable and unpronounceable names that the reader closes the book in despair.) On the contrary, Day's prose style is a delight — deceptively simple and beautifully straightforward, with sentences perfectly balanced in length and cadence to accommodate

the thrust of the narrative. In short, pure story-telling at its finest. This should come as no surprise to readers familiar with his poetry or his books *The Tolkien Bestiary* and *The Doomsday Book of Animals*.

I put down *Castles* after an afternoon in which I felt I had been reintroduced to a world I've always known (indeed, a world we all know very well) but one with which it is all too easy to get out of touch. Sunlight, or wind, or water pour through the abandoned rooms in the castles of history or myth or the castles of the mind, and in experiencing this book one can almost hear the seawind whistling around the turrets of some citadel by the sea and the sound of waves crashing against the great rocks on the shore. □

REVIEW

Something missing

By K.G. PROBERT

A Place to Stand On: Essays by and about Margaret Laurence, edited by George Woodcock, NeWest Press, 301 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 920316 66 2).

THE MOST PROFICIENT chronicler of our problematic ancestries, Margaret Laurence is an institution and an academic industry. Perhaps it is appropriate, then, that the industrious institution known as George Woodcock should have been chosen by NeWest Press to assemble this fourth volume in its Western Canadian Literary Documents series. Of course this strategy courts the danger, which the collection does not entirely avoid, of producing a merely comfortable selection of essays rather than a volume of commentaries that will get us thinking in new ways about Laurence's work. NeWest might well reply, however, that its intention is to offer a reliable survey of Laurence criticism — one that reflects her considerable achievements as African writer, critic of African writing, essayist, and creator of Manawaka — and not to produce a guide to potentially challenging insights.

This reasoning would explain the inclusion of nine essays that were also included in W.H. New's *Margaret Laurence: the Writer and Her Critics*

(1977) in McGraw-Hill Ryerson's *Critical Views on Canadian Writers* series. It would also explain the presence of essays such as the uninspired but informative examinations of *The Diviners* by Marcienne Rocard and Michel Fabre. Harder to understand is the reprinting of Laurence's lengthy rave review of Woodcock's own *Gabriel Dumont*. Her last two paragraphs on the Metis hero as an ancestor for all Canadians constitute a commentary on central portions of *The Diviners*, but including the rest of this generous piece comes close to appearing self-serving.

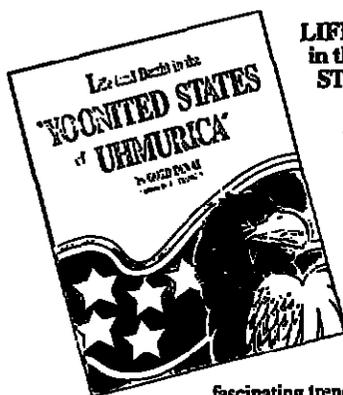
In all, six of Laurence's own essays appear in this volume, including three that were not collected in *Heart of a Stranger* (1976). These three treat the craft of her fiction, and together they demonstrate that Laurence is a terrific writer, but also that she is no critic of technique. We notice this too in the several interviews transcribed in the collection. She is helpful and apparently open when sharing in thematic explanations or revealing morsels of autobiographical interest, but she definitely shies away from discussing the theoretical implications or the finer points of her craft. No one should expect her to be willing to discuss technique in an abstract way, but too many critics, who are well represented in this volume, seem content to follow her lead and to concentrate primarily on thematic features of her work.

The most notable exceptions to this tendency are George Bowering, whose essay on *A Jest of God* is as fresh today as it was 13 years ago, and W.H. New, whose essays on the African stories and *The Stone Angel* could serve as models for the kind of formal Laurence studies whose time has come. Many commentators can tell us that the African writings, like the later work, examine identity, exile, and cultural transformation, but New shows how these themes work on the level of language. His essay on voice and language in *The Stone Angel* is similarly complex and illuminating. Let us hope for more analyses of how Laurence makes her magic work.

Let us hope also for more mature commentary on the relatively neglected *A Bird in the House* and *The Fire-Dwellers*. Even if they are indeed the lesser works that the amount of critical attention paid them would suggest, surely Laurence's central position in our literature will motivate some clever academic to explain why they are less successful or less interesting than the rest of the canon. The distribution of essays in this collection and the entries in the useful bibliography appended to it suggest that few critics have yet attempted to do so. □

BookNews: an advertising feature

NOW AVAILABLE



**LIFE (and Death)
in the "YOONITED
STATES OF UHMURICA"**

Edited by Gord Deval
Cartoons by Ed Franklin

**TRUTH IS STRANGER
THAN FICTION!**

Gord Deval's
collection of news
items indicates the

fascinating trends in the search for the

American dream.

\$29.95 cl. 8-1/2 x 11 224 pp.

Simon & Pierre

P.O. BOX 260 ADEL ADEL ST POSTAL SQN
TORONTO ONT M5R 1G7 CANADA



The Strawberry Connection

Beatrice Ross Buszek

This latest addition to the famous "Connection" cooking series combines flavour, fact and folklore in a celebration of the strawberry.

200 pp. two-colour illus.
throughout, paperback
\$8.95



**NIMBUS
PUBLISHING
LIMITED**

North of America: Images of Canada in the Literature of the United States

1775-1900

ECW

Biophilia

EDWARD O. WILSON

"[This book] focuses on one of our greatest endangered natural resources, biological diversity, upon which man's survival and sense of himself depends. E.O. Wilson renews a sense of wonder down to each micrometer of nature's world... A delightful book."—Michele Perrault, *Sierra Club*

Harvard University Press

79 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138

The Hewed Out Light, Russell Thornton. Love poems expressive of a wide spectrum of human relationships, in words with wings. 100 pp. 1984. \$7.95 pa.; \$18.95 cl.

Canterville, Diane Dawber. Poems of life in rural Ontario but universal in appeal and in language we all understand; tender, ironic, sometimes biting in tone. 100 pp. 1984. \$7.95 pa.; \$18.95 cl.

Borealis Press

9 Ashburn Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K2E 6N4

John Gray's

DAZZLED

is coming
to your favourite
bookstore this October \$18.95 cloth



IRWIN PUBLISHING

Trade Editorial Office:

409 King Street West, Suite 401, Toronto M5V 1K1 (416) 591-1725

Ol' debbil moon

By **BARRY DEMPSTER**

Interlunar, by Margaret Atwood, Oxford, 103 pages, \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 19 540451 3).

Luna-Verse, by Catherine Ahearn, Aya Press, 74 pages, \$7.00 paper (ISBN 0 920544 38 X).

MARGARET ATWOOD is a poet of cold blue shadows. Unlike Atlas, she lifts the world from her shoulders and, as if it were a birdcage, covers it with sheets. "... This darkness/is a place you can enter and be/as safe in as you are anywhere." From Susanna Moodie's grave to the gloomy irony of *You Are Happy*, Atwood has claimed this man-made darkness as her country. Poet-laureate of the dusk, her work has never

been merely a map, but, in turns, a disembodied voice, a text of braille, a self-help book.

In *Interlunar*, her 10th collection of poetry, Atwood is in transition: a hand poised on a light switch, almost frozen there. The title refers to that interval in time between the old and new moon when the moon is invisible. There is an expectation of light here, yet, for the moment, the darkness is a closed closet, the world overwhelmingly blind.

Reminiscent, in both form and tone, of earlier "suites" ("Five Poems For Dolls" from *Two-Headed Poems*; "Songs Of The Transformed" from *You Are Happy*), *Interlunar* begins with "Snake Poems," poems of pause and conjecture, somewhat prosaic, where the real and the legendary collide in the shape of an orbit. As for essence, snakes are murkier than dolls, more frightening than woodland creatures. Unexpectedly, the poems proceed, following the spiral rhythm of thought itself: attitudes shedding their fears and predictabilities ("It's hardly/the devil in your garden"), adjusting into commonsense beliefs ("Between us there is no fellow feeling,/as witness: a snake cannot scream") and then, once again, straying into the fabulous ("... the authorities

are agreed:/God is round"), another twist to our ongoing need for myths. From old wives' tales to brand new fables, Atwood's circles never break.

Snakes, though, are only an introduc-



tion, a technique, like a scary movie score, to set the mood as dark and threatening. *Interlunar* continues with serpent images of shedding and peeling ("soft moon with the rind off"; "sausages on peeled sticks"), the world pared down to its hard black bones. Here Atwood is "waiting to be told what to say", specifically waiting by her father's deathbed, waiting for a nuclear holocaust, waiting with a "... greed for some/stupid absolute", for something to believe in beyond the precarious world. In poems like "The Healer" and "The Saints" powerlessness has replaced Atwood's icy anger, and in a poem on horns, nature is no longer a glimpse of Pan, but a rough place in which to survive. "So far is/where we've gone/and no further" — typically

Treacherous . . . Compelling . . . Intriguing . . . Nailbiting
With Van Rjndt and Jones, We've Got It All This Fall!



LAST MESSAGE TO BERLIN is a World War 2 espionage thriller full of treachery, romance, vengeance and heroism, in which the stakes are millions of pounds sterling in gold — the entire reserves of wartime England, desperately needed to buy arms from America. "An enormously complicated yet coherently plotted novel, this book delivers nonstop excitement and a number of satisfying surprises." — *Publishers Weekly* \$18.95



A riveting novel about world power politics, and the nuclear arsenal that is ready to be unleashed. Dennis Jones introduced his talent last year with *Rubicon One* and confirms it this year with **RUSSIAN SPRING**. "A subject relatively ignored in popular fiction is the internal politics of the Soviet Union. Jones fills that gap skilfully here . . . the book builds to a finely understated and upsetting climax." — *Publishers Weekly* \$18.95



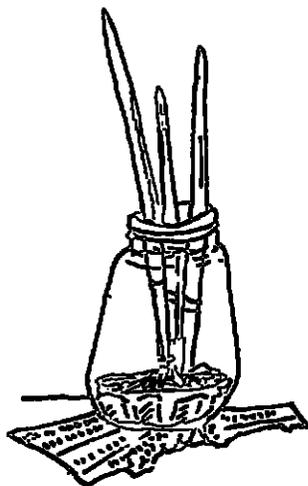
A star reborn

By JUDITH FITZGERALD

Celestial Navigation, by Paulette Jiles, McClelland & Stewart, 137 pages, \$12.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 4421 6).

PAULETTE JILES'S third full-length publication contains much of her first book, *Waterloo Express* (Anansi, 1973), and a substantial selection of new poems. The effect of the juxtaposition is startling, demonstrating as it does that a consistent voice and vision have informed the poet's sensibility over the past decade. If elements of her writing have changed, the direction can only be described as fast-forward.

There are six sections in *Celestial Navigation*. The first, "Waterloo Express," contains 21 poems from the earlier collection. Of these, "Get Up in the Morning" and "Mass" stand out as exceptional examples of Jiles's incisive



abilities. The former, fraught with a delightful system of *double entendre*, turns on its axis and then turns again:

*I get up in the morning and check out
my feelings. . . .*

*Even in this hour full of hushes,
the shadows extending like tape
measures,
the stars, like amnesia, cancel
themselves.*

*I don't think I have ever seen you before
in my life.*

The latter achieves resonance through its dependence on a dislocation of religious imagery:

*I am memorizing my sins,
most of all my memories of him,
of his suffering magnitude
like a crowd of Lutherans in church.
How I used to love it!
I fell in love with the reports,
the promises,
assumptions on my part
on my part
on my most grievous part.*

The second section, "Paper Matches," is the finest one in *Celestial Navigation*. Its 26 poems, including the title one, crackle with immediacy and an energy-charged surface. "Late Night Telephone" is electric; it drips with a taut edge of irony that goes on and on. "Horror Stories" surfaces as an intense and almost humorous examination of women's vicarious impulses:

*Women talk about people dying. We do
this compulsively. . . .*

*All women believe they are
Scheherazade. They believe
they too will or are about to die
in burning buildings. By telling these
tales they
divert. It was other people all along.
Now maybe with the story of the
train wreck you will leave
me alone. Did I say alone,
let me restate that, let me
begin again.*

Celestial Navigation is a collection that derives its dynamic energy from Jiles's skill with language. Whether she focuses on interpersonal relationships or interplanetary movements, all things flourish where she turns her eyes. At her best, there is none better.

It is for precisely this reason that the remaining four sections of *Celestial Navigation* jar slightly. The first two succeed because they contain deftly constructed poems that derive much of their force from an inventive use of imaginative language. Yet, by the third and fourth sections, "Griffon Poems" and "Northern Radio," there is a sense that many of these poems (and prose sections) have come into existence because of Jiles's abilities as a phrase-maker and dislocator. "As The Night Goes" and "Turning Forty," unfortunately, offer much too much of the same. In "Living Alone":

*The earth folds up her grasses.
Sunshine strikes like the appearance of
aliens.*

*The aurora is a piano, playing blues
in green neon. The junked taxi sinks
into the asters. . . .*

Taken collectively, many of these poems might have made the passage from merely competent to truly great if they had been edited more closely. Jiles's dependence on similes becomes, after the first dozen or so poems, downright distracting. Further, her

Atwood, but with a difference: she is nearly patient with our shadows, on the brink of something close to community, of hope.

"The Words Continue Their Journey" and poets vanish ". . . out of sight/. . . out of the sight of each other." In "A Stone" and "The Light" we, the living, are both nowhere and everywhere. "You could be sad because there isn't more,/or happy because there is/at least this much." An interval of darkness has led Atwood to an act of choice. She can almost see in the dark (a talent that was just slightly evident several books ago in poems about her daughter). Her imagery continues to squirm on the page, her voice is still prairie-like and hypnotic, her line-breaks maintain their resemblance to amputated limbs, but something has changed, her soul is flickering. Despite the undeniable darkness, Atwood's heart is visible: a firefly, a lighted window, a flashlight beckoning in a pale hand.

There is no lasting existential darkness in Catherine Ahearn's *Luna-Verse*. In a voice much more florid than Atwood's (referred to in "Love's" as ". . . something between/Renaissance and Surrealism"), Ahearn's rendition of the moon, more conventional than Marge Piercy's "female moon," is big and bright, a site of luminous desire and blinding romance. An imaginary "love-couple," Gerard and Marie Galante, profess their "undying, two-headed, one-bodied love." They act out their passions in this book, "in a buoyant world-apart, in a Luna-Verse." Ahearn's ambition is nothing less than to incarnate love the way the moon embodies light. "The Word as the Paradise of Man/that is what I want to write."

What Ahearn does write is cardinal-crimson, high romance ("O Gerard, warm my will and kiss to cloudlessness the sky of me"), a kind of Gothic of the gods. All breeds of mythic powers are summoned forth: from Pan to Beatrice, from Tarzan to Christ. Belief in love is synonymous with belief in everything. As for style, though, Ahearn is temporal, unable to transcend a certain inclemency of tone ("You opened me like a hot laureate peach"; "Eyes are buttocks kissing un-/Assisted"); the poems tumbling together like bodies in a silent-movie embrace.

Luna-Verse is, then, a matter of taste, for those who prefer their passion grandiose. From soul-mates to infinity ("Where Do I Know You From?"), from desire to destiny ("Coessential Atoms"), the lovers' hearts are shared "so time will not occur." Ahearn's heart is yearning to be timeless too: a full moon in undiminished bloom. □

repeated use of the traditionally slow verbs (to be, to have) points to a laziness in the poems that a poet of Jiles's stature should have abandoned long ago, as in, "November Separates Everything":

*Memory begins with the feet, spreading
like a narcotic or frosibite headwards.
The Lake, like a rainspout, is naked
and close, a million shades
of metal.*

However, these are minor irritations that can be overlooked; on the whole, Jiles effectively marries form and content with unique style. *Celestial Navigation* is an impressive collection of tiny stars that burst into poems. □

REVIEW

Tea for Toorn

By BRIAN BARTLETT

Mountain Tea, by Peter van Toorn, McClelland & Stewart, 143 pages, \$12.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 8714 4).

FEW POETS arrange their poems as cleverly and lovingly as Peter van Toorn does in *Mountain Tea*. There's an amusing moment in this collection when, after almost 20 consecutive sonnets, we turn the page and find:

*There's silence, and there's silence.
And then there's
a stillness to hold it all without noise.
Enough! The crazy fingers of the
wind
just hit the roof and raise the red roof
tiles
one Easter Sunday morning as the wind
walks and lies down and tries to get to
sleep.*

Then comes a 26-line sentence that follows the wind around a city — yet after that, the poem still goes on, trailing the wind for many more turbulent, precise lines. It's as if "Enough!" had meant *Enough sonnets! Now for a change of pace, an explosion.* In a different case, the poet's versatility shows when a nine-part, 90-line poem is followed by a haiku.

Though van Toorn lived his first 10 years in Holland, the Canadian wilderness runs deep in his work. Often, his imagery returns to natural objects; as a new poem says, "Things spread themselves before you when you think there's nothing left./I repeat it like a nursery

rhyme." Even without his titles "Mountain Lotus" and "Mountain Koan," or his translations of Li Po, Giusti, and Issa, we notice his attraction to pre-Christian modes of perception: "One Easter Sunday the wind does not rise/blue in the face as Christ, the rising Jew/but as man of wind, wood, mountain, and dew." Still, van Toorn isn't a naive copier of other cultures, or a poet hooked on one influence — as anyone familiar with his knotted, expansive, idiosyncratic essays knows.

Wind has long been associated with the spirit, the word "spirit" having come from the Latin "spiritus," meaning breath or air. Van Toorn revels in wind imagery in such poems as "Mountain Easter" and "Mountain Storm"; in "Mountain Ear" he calls trees "our livelong, streetlong, earthlong friends,/sharers in our windyness." In his most flamboyant tour-de-force, "In Guildenstern County," wind ("wawa") rushes through the lines, which play an exuberant ragtime in honour of the Canadian landscape while laughing at themselves in vernaculars ("Rap up a storm,/get laid like track") and in grotesque fantasies (enough moose slobber "to humidify Parliament forever").

"In Guildenstern County" is the title poem of van Toorn's previous book, which is generously represented in the first third of *Mountain Tea*. Youthful pyrotechnics, lush sounds, and ornate images were more noticeable then, classical prosody and poise more conspicuous now. But the connections between the older and the newer poems shouldn't be ignored. The newer poems have as much verbal richness as the older poems have masterful control. I only wish the publisher had reprinted "Epic Talk," a long poem with greater bearing on the new work — and a finer poem — than "Swinburne's Garden," in which the pyrotechnics do become too much.

In "Dragonflies, Those Bluejays of the Water" van Toorn spins out dozens of charged, compelling lines on the activities of two mating dragonflies, as if Henri Fabre, having downed a bottle of potent wine, became a poet. Yet among the newer poems, a similar sort of humor, patient meticulousness appears in "Mountain Steppers" and more so in "Mountain Fox," which follows the trail of a fox as "Mountain Easter" follows the trail of wind. Propelled by simple nouns and verbs, displaying van Toorn's love for the Anglo-Saxon roots of our language, this poem dramatizes a voyage that slowly becomes a metaphor for a humble spiritual quest.

The quests in van Toorn's poetry, however, are seldom sombre, and often comic. "Mountain Harp," which depicts a poet typing obsessively and

wondering when he'll achieve freedom through art, ends with a glimpse of a canine poet followed by an Apollonian muse: "You dog, you, scratching keys of mountain kind,/your master-with the harp not far behind." Though "Mountain Ear" finishes with a bit of advice to look up at a star, the perspective is comic — from a bathtub underneath a skylight. And the star is "that poker-faced Dogstar."

For much of the book, new poems alternate with translations from poets as diverse as Rilke, Villon, Goethe, Leopardi, and Gilles Vigneault. Each of the translations, van Toorn says in a note, is a "transformation or transposition, a new work in its own right — like the latest ad lib of a 'standard' in jazz." These are generous achievements, both harmonizing with and renewing the creations of other poets, other cultures. "Mountain Fox," in which a fox's ball of grass and fur (used to get rid of fleas) sinks into a river, is followed by "Mountain Surprise," an adaptation of a haiku from Basho: "You get the fire going,/and I'll show you something new —/a fresh ball of snow!" The "surprise" is partly on the reader, the fox's ball transformed into a snowball.

Art as energy, art as form — van Toorn bridges the differences. His dragonfly poem, ostensibly about the mating of insects, may also express a theory of art:

*Exact, compound — all speed, grace,
and desire —
full of dragon fuel and funky blue
fire,
always forward, never backward, and
no sweat —
a true oneness of parts.*

Not many of these poems suffer from stifling fastidiousness; most of them follow Frost's advice that a poem have a "speaking tone of voice somehow entangled in the words and fastened to the page for the ear of the imagination." Still, a strong belief in poems as perfected monuments can make life difficult for the poet. Writer's cramp, Sisyphus struggles with many drafts, fears of silence — all are dealt with, especially in "Mountain Grease," one of van Toorn's most anguished poems, despite its self-mocking melodrama. True, the gusto of the writing helps lessen the sense of his "bitter ink" — but the pain is there, as it is in lesser degrees in "Mountain Harp," "Mountain Cameo," and "Mountain Moon."

Admiring, moved, greedy readers, haunted by the burden poetry sometimes bears for van Toorn, can only hope that his typewriter — his "bell-twanging letter and ink box" — sings, rings, and twangs out more books as extraordinary as *Mountain Tea*. □

David McFadden

'It's a strange dichotomy that I can't stomach the poetry six months after it's written, but I still have great fondness for stories that go way, way back'

By GARY DRAPER

BORN IN Hamilton, Ont., in 1940, David McFadden has written more than a dozen books of poetry, a selection of which was collected in *My Body Was Eaten By Dogs* (1981), edited by George Bowering. He has also published two novels disguised as travel books, *A Trip Around Lake Erie* and *A Trip Around Lake Huron* (1980), and a collection of short stories, *Animal Spirits* (1983). A new book of poems, *The Art of Darkness*, has recently been published by McClelland & Stewart. A former newspaper reporter, McFadden last year was writer-in-residence at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ont., where he was interviewed by Gary Draper:

Books in Canada: *Do you have an ideal reader in mind when you write?*

David McFadden: I used to think of my ideal reader as being someone exactly like me, my twin soul. That's changing now. On the novel that I'm just finishing up I'm imagining an actively hostile, totally unsympathetic, actively sarcastic person looking over my shoulder and saying, "Bleah! That's Terrible! You nincompoop! You're out-Narcissing Narcissus!" and it's having a good effect on the final revise. I'm talking out a lot of stuff that previously I'd thought was wonderful.

BiC: *You once wrote about Peter Elbow's technique of "freewriting," of getting everything onto the page first; do you do that?*

McFadden: I don't really use his techniques, but I've always liked to write really fast first drafts. I'm a great reviser. I go over a thing and over a thing. I probably think quite a bit about the structure of what it is that I want to do before I do my rapid-fire first draft, because I find that I don't very often

make very many radical changes in the structure of something.

BiC: *Though in a lot of your work you make the reader aware of the writing situation: "Here I am now writing this thing at this moment."*

McFadden: Yeah, everybody does that now. It's getting kind of boring, so I'm getting away from that as much as possible. I hate to bore myself.

BiC: *So you're aware of yourself as a potential reader?*

McFadden: That's always been a big thing with me: how am I going to respond to this 20 years from now? And I

and I find that I'm still quite fond of them. It's a strange dichotomy, that I can't stomach the poetry six months after it's written, but I still have great fondness for stories that go way, way back. Just thinking about it is changing my poetry. Maybe I can find the key that will allow my poetry to have that longer life, so I can read it in 10 years without retching.

BiC: *How is the poetry changing?*

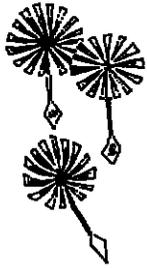
McFadden: It's harder. I'm objectifying more. I've been doing a lot of short, two-stanza poems, anywhere between 18 and 30 lines, with relatively long lines —



David McFadden

find that my fiction has a much longer shelf life than my poetry. When I look at a poem, sometimes six months after it's written, I just can't stand it. But recently I've been giving a lot of readings from *Animal Spirits*, a book of short stories, some of which go way back to the '60s,

five, six stress lines. It's a lot of fun, and I think I'm far from exhausting this form. For a long time I wrote one a day, and I've been writing a couple a week since then. I'm hoping that I might be able to work myself back up to doing one a day again. It's a wonderful exer-



**CANADIAN
LITERATURE**
A quarterly of Criticism and Review

For Subscription,
Back Issue and
Advertising Information:

25th
Anniversary
Year

Business Manager
Canadian Literature
The University
of British Columbia
#223-2029 West Mall
Vancouver, B.C.
Canada V6T 1W5
(604) 228-2780

The Canadian Forum

Cabaret

*an evening of
literary entertainment
performance and music*

Sunday, November 4, 7:30 PM
At Harper's, 38 Lombard Street
Tickets \$10, 364-2431

cise to have a pre-set form, and actually to be alive on a certain day and know that sometime during that day you're going to have to write a poem. It has a wonderful effect on your life. I love it.
BiC: *What are the differences between writing poetry and, say, A Trip Around Lake Erie or A Trip Around Lake Huron?*

McFadden: The differences are quite obvious. In poetry one uses one's body more; poetry is a much more physical art. Blake talked about it. One has to create an intimacy between language and one's biological response. Fiction is a much gentler art, although there are tremendous similarities.

The thing I liked about writing the *Trip* books — and they were a joy to write, they really were — was that I had already determined exactly what form the books would take before I started off on the trip. Planning the trip was the same as planning a book. I took that trip with a notebook, and I was quite aware that that would really alter the trip itself, and it did. I found myself engaged in conversations with people I wouldn't have been talking to if I hadn't been writing the books.

BiC: *You said there are tremendous similarities between writing poetry and writing fiction.*

McFadden: I'm a formalist in everything I write. I've never been enthralled with that famous statement of Creeley's that form is never more than extension of content. I like to have a form — I like to have the bowl before I start arranging flowers in it. So there's a similarity between fiction and poetry: I like to have a sense of the shape of something before I even think of what's going to go into it.

BiC: *Is it a problem for you that so much of your life is reflected in your work?*

McFadden: William Gass says that you can't write a line of fiction without revealing yourself really deeply and very profoundly. But I'm not as much a confessional poet as I seem to be. I tell lots of lies — I make up all kinds of things. The real me doesn't appear. My writing serves a personal mnemonic function: it reminds me of things I didn't write about. I'm always striving for things that don't seem to go together: the personal and the impersonal, the subjective and the objective. My motto as a writer is objectify everything. And that's why I can write about myself without writing about myself.

I could sit down and invent stories forever. But I've just made a choice. It's the old Jungian notion about the unconscious putting you into situations that are good for you. I think we have inside us a kind of incredible and widespread natural wisdom that we don't know any-

thing about but that does arrange our lives in certain ways. And I'm much more interested in that dark, underwater centre, and how it relates to writing, than I am in sitting down and inventing stories, or recalling dramatic events from my childhood.

BiC: *The Trip books shouldn't be read as autobiography, then.*

McFadden: The *Trip* books were parodies, basically. Parodies of the idea of travel books for one thing. The notion that you can take a little 200-mile trip around your house and write a travel book about it is really pretty weird. Most travel books are incredibly pretentious, and I was just trying to say something about that. And they're also parodies of anti-Americanism. I feel a certain amount of anti-Americanism in me as every Canadian does, but I was exaggerating it and parodying it.

I see the *Trip* books as being very funny, and I'm really astounded when people don't see them that way. Coach House Press sent them up to the Leacock Awards, and they sent them back and said, "Next time send us something funny." There's an attitude in Canada that humour has to be light: if it's funny it can't be serious. I don't know, I'm more interested in Rabelais, Lenny Bruce, and even Baudelaire. I guess not many people think of Baudelaire as funny, but I find him a scream.

BiC: *The thing I liked most when I first encountered the two Trip books was the magical kind of world in which they're set: a world of heightened experience, brighter colours, sharper outlines.*

McFadden: When I was a child I saw the world as infinitely paradoxical, ironic, self-contradictory, and mythic. It was a world where other people were gods and goddesses at the same time that they are obviously idiots who did not see the world with any of the splendid sensitivity that I possessed. I have vivid memories of deciding at the age of eight that losing this splendid sensitivity was an inevitable part of growing up, and that if I had to lose it I would at least remember having had it. So I vowed never to forget it, and I never have. In fact I still possess it at times, in fits and starts, and a big part of my life as a writer is involved in trying both to keep that way of being alive as much as possible and to try to recreate its ironies as intensely as possible in my work. I'm not interested in loss of innocence, but in maintaining it and strengthening it even while submitting myself to all the insane moral dilemmas of our age.

BiC: *Do you enjoy writing?*

McFadden: It's paradoxical. I take a very professional attitude toward my writing, but I also take a lot of delight in it. I think it was Mavis Gallant who said

that anyone who says he enjoys writing isn't really a writer. And it's true that there's a lot of agony in writing. But I take a lot of delight in my writing, and when it succeeds it's quite wonderful.

I'm going through a period right now when I'm succeeding very well. That's *my* life. Now, if I could only influence the life of the world, that'd be another story. □

FIRST NOVELS

The hero as idiot: from the quixotic ramblings of a would-be writer to a young woman's quest for comfort and love

By ALBERTO MANGUEL

EVERY HERO is an outcast, and Ed, the hero of Guy Vanderhaeghe's first novel, *My Present Age* (Macmillan, 240 pages, \$19.95 cloth), is no exception. Singled out from the fold, the hero looks at society from a vantage-point, a Darien (as Ed, inspired by Keats, calls it). Ed is fat; Ed is boorish; Ed is a would-be (or rather would-not-be) writer: for a long time he called himself a novelist, then produced a mock-western that he despises, and now lives with the guilt of this *oeuvre manquée*. But above all, Ed is a man with a knightly mission: to rescue a damsel in distress — his wife who, fed up with him, has left.

Everything and everyone conspire against Ed's heroic deed: his downstairs neighbour wants him evicted, accuses him of being a pervert, parks his car in such a way that Ed's mini cannot enter the lot; Ed's college roommate has become Ed's wife's lawyer in their divorce suit; Ed's wife, who once saved him from a band of thugs and who believed in his literary talents, now cannot stand the sight of him and refuses to be rescued. And then there is the Beast: the host of a "public opinion" radio show, upholder of public morality, a dangerously successful bigot. In spite of the world's hostility, like Don Quixote, Ed battles on.

Also like Don Quixote, Ed wants to be the characters of the story-books he still reads. He wants to be Chingachgook; he wants to be Huckleberry Finn. In the end, fiction loses the battle: the Beast's voice continues while Ed's dies out, having spoken about little more than himself for over 200 pages.

Guy Vanderhaeghe (winner of the 1982 Governor General's Award for his collection of short stories, *Man Descending*) has built his novel around (and in the style of) Ed's paranoia: *My Present Age* is the portrait of one man seen by himself in the distorted mirror of

his own mind. Too witty for his contemporaries ("Any idea what genius is? The infinite capacity for taking pains?"), too ill-suited for an acceptable place in this world ("I found myself in the unfamiliar position of having no one to disappoint"), Ed is a hero who is also the village idiot.

Unfortunately this concentration of character works to the novel's disadvantage. In the short stories in which Ed appears (in *Man Descending*) the reader bears well Ed's maddening efforts to impose himself and his views. In the novel the reader reading for the plot finds Ed's efforts trying, his quest interminable, his paranoia unpleasantly disturbing, and soon loses interest in the thinly imagined adventures. Vanderhaeghe's talent lies in the crafting of characters, not in devising the characters' actions, and a novel such as *My Present Age* seems to require a story that would justify Ed's heroics.

SHARON BUTALA'S *Country of the Heart* (Fifth House, 232 pages, \$19.95 cloth, \$9.95 paper) is a love story. A young woman, Lannie, travels to a farm in the country, somewhere in southwest Saskatchewan, to stay with Barney and Iris, the couple who adopted her as a child. It is a journey into what she hopes (but does not dare expect) will be comfort, security, and love, giving her the chance to reflect upon her future. Here at the farm time seems to stop: the twists and changes of Lannie's past (her barely known brother and sister, her unknown father, old and not forgotten loves) are left to the city she feels lies behind her. But changes still occur, nothing pauses: an old man's moving love for her, a pregnancy, the supposed outlet of suicide are milestones in this country of the heart that Lannie has set out to explore, and which she believes she has discovered.

However, the true heroine of Sharon Butala's novel is not the anguished Lannie but 40-year-old Aunt Iris, married to a farmer, feeling secure in her cosy world. It is into Iris's country that Lannie breaks, invading, making Iris a witness of her ordeal, forcing Iris to become wiser in the process, painfully aware of the world outside, "beginning to learn about the largeness of the human heart."

Sharon Butala's writing is straightforward, unadorned, tight-fisted with

metaphors. Her characters are clear-cut, never vague, and if a certain naïveté mars the moment of their awakening (to the world, to other human beings, to their own inner reality) they remain precise and unpretentious. This is the world of a dispassionate D.H. Lawrence, timidly probing the dangerous waters of less conventional forms of love. *Country of the Heart* suggests the mere beginning of what one hopes will be, in future novels, Butala's deeper, more mature voyage of exploration. □

ART BOOKS

Thundering hooves: from one painter's bellowing vision of the buffalo to another man's dream in a Toronto ravine

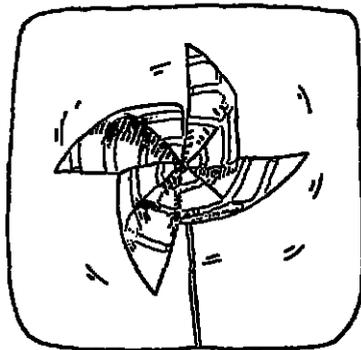
By AL PURDY

FREDERICK VERNER'S favourite subject for paintings was the buffalo. The shaggy beast was practically his trademark. But as Joan Murray points out in *The Last Buffalo: The Story of Frederick Arthur Verner* (Pagurian Press, 192 pages, \$60 cloth), "Probably he never saw one outside captivity." Where did he see them, unless they emerged full-blown from his head in a dream of buffalo? The answer: wild-west shows, photographs, postcards, and zoos. No painter from life was Verner: postcard after buffalo postcard galloped through his brain bellowing and begging, Please paint me. And he did, by God, he did.

Frederick Arthur Verner, "Painter of the Canadian West" (which he didn't visit until 1873 at age 37), was born in 1836 near Oakville, Ont. Young Verner started to dabble in oils early; he won a prize at a provincial exhibition in 1852. Perhaps about the same time, the talented youth also became a photographer. At age 20 he travelled to England, attending an art school there. Two years later, feeling adventurous, he joined the British Army, then went to Italy with the British Legion. Becoming a civilian again, he had shows in New York, then visited Venezuela. Verner moved to England in 1880, returning to Canada only occasionally. One of those visits was his second trip to western Canada in 1888 at age 52.

The above paragraph seems enough potted biography. It's also very nearly all that's known about our hero. Author

Murray's narrative in this lavish book is studded with qualifying phrases like "maybe" and "perhaps." She speculates that he may have been somewhere and might have done this or that. One definite fact does emerge from a cloudy indefinite life: Verner married his Toronto landlady, one Mary Chilcott, in England in 1882. After which presumably happy event, the lady disappeared completely. As a result of this paucity of information, the biographer is driven to describing paintings themselves and their overt influences.



Two influences were Paul Kane and George Catlin. One hesitates to say that Verner copied from those better-known artists, and settles for the softer "imitated."

In any event, I gather from Murray that Verner's reputation is now fairly stratospheric; she even mentions her subject's "genius" at one point in the book. I hadn't noticed any myself: the

paintings seem to me rather superior calendar art. I mean that after the current calendar year you'd throw the paintings away if it wasn't for the money involved.

Maybe that's a little harsh. Perhaps some of the Indian paintings (two feathers apiece for trademark head-dress) are more interesting; maybe some of the buffalo romps on the prairie, when they stampede in painterly fashion with all their tails standing straight upright in curlicues like pigs, dashing across the great lone land to the last buffalo stomp in the sky — some of these just by chance, maybe, perhaps, are worthwhile? In which connection one item in Murray's chronology seems relevant: "1892: Attends Buffalo Bill show in London and draws buffalo."

Some rather interesting questions occur to me as a result of perusing this book. If Murray hadn't informed me several times that Verner painted from photographs and zoo animals, would I then have appreciated the paintings more? I doubt it, at least I hope I doubt it. And is Murray writing about Verner's "genius" with tongue tucked in cheek and a twinkle in at least one eye? Maybe not. Perhaps not. It depends.

Verner died at age 92 in London — full of years and honours, I guess. By that time he had been elected to nearly every elective body extant in the English-speaking world. (The rest didn't matter.) And he painted a great deal, Verner did. Industry in these matters is important. I can just see him in England after a breakfast of two three-minute eggs, huffing and puffing a little, shuffling through his buffalo cards and thinking: "I will now paint a buffalo. Or — maybe not. Perhaps I should wait until after dinner."

Toronto in the 1830s, according to Anna Jameson, was "A little, ill-built town, on low land, at the bottom of a frozen bay." That attractive description appeared only two years after the incorporation of Toronto as a city, and there may have been some truth about it at the time. One hundred and fifty years later, with the publication of *Toronto in Art: 150 Years Through Artists' Eyes*, by Edith G. Firth (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 199 pages, \$50 cloth), both Anna Jameson and her description of Toronto seem irrelevant.

The "ill-built town" is now a sprawling metropolitan centre of more than two million people. And the book about it needs something of a bifocal mind on the part of the reader for adequate evaluation. By which I mean that it's necessary to appreciate both the city itself, and the artistic quality of the paintings. If a few of the paintings have little artistic merit, then the mind swit-

ches entirely to the city. Edith Firth has refrained from comment about the paintings, confining her descriptions to their subject matter. Which leaves a rich feast of judgement and appreciation to the owners of this book. Some 130 artists are included, and 170 paintings, the latter mostly in colour. Author-editor Firth deals with Toronto in five sections, each section for a different time period. The last 50 years or so is the richest and most varied. In fact, some of the paintings are sheer delight.

The Dream of Mayor Crombie in Glenstewart Ravine (1974) by William Kurelek (lamentably only in black and white), is one such picture. It shows Crombie asleep on the grass, while Superman Crombie effortlessly rolls back the Scarborough Expressway; Angel Crombie on white wings halts smoke-stack pollution; and Glad Hander Crombie shakes hands with a housing-project builder. And I, somewhere beyond Kurelek's picture, witnessed television Superstar Crombie on a 1978 talk show, and humbly requested his autograph.

The Board Walk at Toronto Beaches (1974) is another Kurelek gem. Rayka Kupesic's pseudo-primitive of children skating at Nathan Phillips Square, among huge motionless snowflakes, is in the same mythic company. And D. McIntosh Paterson's *Schoolyard at Recess* (1929) shows children playing games, wrestling, shouting, talking, being what children always are, and what I was myself in 1929.

"To Albert Franck," says Harold Town, "the grubby street world of Toronto was as impressive as the pyramids at sunset or Durham Castle in the rain Franck houses were cathedrals of the ordinary . . ." A little overheated, but I can see what he means about Franck. One could say much the same about Lawren Harris's paintings, but add that there was often something unobtrusively distinctive about them, faces left blank in *Winter Afternoon* (1918), trees burdened with sunlit sleeping snow. Even more striking are Carlos Marchiori's coloured buildings, twisting and dancing every which way on *Bloor Street West* (1976).

But a listing of the memorable work here would be as monotonous as this book is not. It makes me remember the horse palace at the Exhibition grounds, when I was a wartime airman there, at No. 1 Manning Pool. And vanished Sunnyside with ferris wheels and roller coasters. And now I will be haunted forever by Mayor Crombie's dream inside my own dreaming and chuckle a little in my sleep

Christopher Moore's *The Loyalists* (Macmillan, 218 pages, \$27.95 cloth)

outlines the American Revolution from beginning to end, but deals principally with the lives and fate of some 50,000 people who remained loyal to the British crown. These people walked, rode horses and wagons, and came by ship-board to Canada before and after the peace of 1783.

About 35,000 of them settled in Nova Scotia and the newly created province of New Brunswick, including 3,500 free black loyalists. (Incidentally, these blacks were treated so badly — land denied them and pledges made to them broken — that some 1,200 fled Canada to a British colony in Sierra Leone.) Of

the remaining 15,000, Governor Frederick Haldimand of Quebec settled 10,000 in Upper Canada, rather than risk friction with the 150,000 native *Canadiens*. These loyalists were placed on lands along the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario. And as it turned out, they were the lucky ones, receiving good and fertile lands for homesteads.

In the Maritimes, where most of the loyalists settled, soil quality of the Nova Scotia, especially, could not support such an influx of newcomers. Many became fishermen or woodsmen. Others drifted away, some returning to the United States when revolutionary pas-

CanWit No. 96

WHAT ON EARTH is an Ipperwash? Or a Comox? We were prompted to wonder by a book recently published in England, *The Meaning of Liff*, by Douglas Adams and John Lloyd, which sets out to give useful definitions for apparently meaningless place-names. (Woking, for example, means standing in the kitchen wondering what you came in here for.) The book provides definitions for only two Canadian places, Vancouver (one of those huge trucks with whirling brushes on the bottom used to clean streets) and Toronto (a generic term for anything that comes out in a gush despite all your efforts to let it out gently — for example, flour into a white sauce or ketchup onto fish). Readers are invited to redress the balance. We'll pay \$25 for the best definitions of typically Canadian phenomena attached to typical Canadian place-names, and \$25 goes to Paul Wilson of Toronto for the idea. Deadline: November 1. Address: CanWit No. 96, *Books in Canada*, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 3X9.

Results of CanWit No. 94

WE WERE BRACED for the worst when we invited readers to compose atrocious first sentences to equally atrocious novels — and we weren't disappointed. The winner is John Vardon of Waterloo, Ont., for the following abomination:

As she watched her ex-husband's head thud woodenly down the unlucky seven steps of her front porch, the indoor-outdoor carpet turning quietly crimson in the senseless sunlight of another heedless dawn, Jessica was seized by the vague realization, growing increas-

ingly less vague as the seconds flew by her soft brown eyes like startled crows from a garbage bin, that today would not be the best time to have her toilet repaired.

Honourable mentions:

The malevolent sea had changed in less than an hour from millpond to maelstrom as the brave little vessel, overpowered by the elements, fought the valiant but hopeless struggle of an unarmed gladiator in a hostile arena, her proud sails disintegrating into a resemblance of sodden paper tissues, masts snapping with as little resistance as canapé sticks at a cocktail party, and unattended wheel spinning helplessly like a weathervane chased by the Furies, while one by one the crew members were seized by the frenzied wind which plucked them overboard with the ease of a vacuum cleaner removing fluff from a living room rug.

— Alec McEwen, Ottawa

Overhead a passing bird expanded its billowy chest in a cheerfully feathered fashion and let forth a song of such golden goodness that Kate, who had been sitting beneath her beloved banana tree with a horse-sized headache, suddenly and all at once felt immeasurably reassured about things.

— Mildred Tremblay, Nanaimo

The wailing Rolls Royce model 467, 2,400-horsepower engines of the Pan American Airlines 747 jumbo flight 359 roared like demented banshees as the gigantic blue-and-white airplane accelerated fleetly up the 2.3 mile long stretch of black asphalt of the Los Angeles International Airport, carrying with it Emerson Hargraves, the internationally acclaimed private investigator.

— Peter E. Dahl, Madoc, Ont.

sions had waned, and some to Upper Canada. Of those who remained, one hopes the experience of the Rev. George Gilmour was not often duplicated:

In May 1787, destitute of bread, meat, and money after all their exertions, and his petitioners being in similar circumstances and unable to pay anything for his salary, he walked thirty miles to Halifax and offered his house, barn, and fifteen acres of cleared land as security for a barrel of pork and a barrel of flour but could not find one person in

CLASSIFIED

Classified rates: \$8 per line (40 characters to the line). Deadline: first of the month for issue dated following month. Address: Books in Canada Classified, 365 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 3X9. Phone: (416) 363-5426.

CASH PAID FOR PENGUIN paperbacks: good condition. Gall Wilson Bookseller, 198 Queen W., Toronto. 598-2024.

"CRAZY" WAY TO LOSE WEIGHT. Maybe it's crazy, but it works! No drugs. No counting calories. Mail only \$2. to: ARVY Box 160-L, Barrington, N.J. 08007-0160

EUROPEAN PUBLISHER seeks to buy small to medium Canadian publishing firm of practical, "how to" books. Write enclosing catalog to Box 15, *Books in Canada*.

MILLION DOLLAR HEALTH SECRET Become an exciting, Sensual, new you! Full Instructions only \$1.00 — Mail now to ERVY Box 160-H, Barrington, N.J. 08007-0160

OLD AND RARE BOOKS. Canadiana Catalogues. Heritage Books, 866 Palmerston Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6G 2S2

QUALITY REMAINDERS from DAEDALUS BOOKS (U.S.A.) now available cheaper in Canada. All titles in stock. Current catalogue & price list \$1.00 (refundable) from MAGNUS BOOKS, 4932-B Sherbrooke St., W., Westmount, Qué. H3Z 1H3

SELL BY PHONE with new automatic system. New solid state electronic system makes selling by telephone big business. Speeds up calling many times, cuts costs, invaluable for getting sales leads, direct selling, fund raising, political canvassing. As automatic as a computer, as personal as the human voice. Simple to operate. For details contact: Box 160-M, Barrington, N.J., 08007-0106

USED LAW BOOKS. 30 day free examination. Write J.L. Heath, 66 Isabella St. #105, Toronto M4X 1N3. 922-0849.

Halifax that would accept this security or grant him relief.

The Loyalists is an impressive book, with many contemporary illustrations. It follows the fortunes of individuals as well as large groups of settlers. These settlers, the loyalists, were responsible for the new provinces of New Brunswick and Upper Canada, (later Ontario). Without them, Canada itself would be much different, might even have failed to survive in face of the nationalistic fervour of the United States, greedy for additional territory ever since its revolutionary beginnings. This country might well have gone the way of Louisiana, northern Mexico, and Hawaii.

I recommend *The Loyalists* highly. □

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

The Engineer of Human Souls, by Josef Skvorecky, translated from the Czech by Paul Wilson, Lester & Orpen Dennys. Exuberantly comic and deeply serious, Skvorecky's formidable, complex novel is a powerful counterblast against tyranny in Europe and simple-mindedness at home.

NON-FICTION

Home Sweet Home: My Canadian Album, by Mordecai Richler, McClelland & Stewart. Though at times his political commentary is careless, Richler's talent for social satire in fiction gives this collection of magazine articles an entertaining edge and unifying tone that most good journalism lacks.

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:

- Amie*, written and illustrated by Terry Stafford, Children's Studio Books.
The Animals Within, by David Day, Penumbra Press.
Arclic Chaser: A History of Whaling in Canada's North, by Daniel Francis, Breakwater.
The Atlantic Anthology, Vol. 1, Prose, edited by Fred Cogswell, Ragweed Press.
Auras, Tendrils, by Ann Fox Chandonnet, Penumbra Press.
Benji Bear's Adventure in the Thunderstorms, by Ingrid Shelton, Kindred Press.
Bloody Baron: Normandy-05 July 1944, by Captain J. Allan Snowle, Boston Mills Press.
The Blue Wall: Street Cops in Canada, by Carsten Stroud, Seal Books.
A Book of Cut Flowers: 1985 Engagement Calendar, Prentice-Hall Canada.
The Boughwollen and Other Stories, by Al Pitman, Breakwater.
A Boy Called Nam, by Leo Heaps, Macmillan.

- A Checklist of Canadian Copyright Deposits in the British Museum, 1895-1923*, Vol. 1: Maps, edited by John R.T. Eitlinger and Patrick B. O'Neill, Dalhousie University, School of Library Service.
Children Who Move, by John A.B. Allan and Penny Bardsley, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.
A Child's Story of Canada, by Karin Moorhouse, Penumbra Press.
The Confessions of Klaus Barbie: The Butcher of Lyon, by Robert Wilson, Arsenal Editions.
Country You Can't Walk In, by M.T. Kelly, Penumbra Press.
Daffodils in Winter: The Life and Letters of Pegi Nicol MacLeod, 1894-1949, edited by Joan Murray, Penumbra.
Dead in the Water, by Ted Wood, Seal Books.
The Devil's Diamond, by Carroll Bishop, Temenos Productions.
The Diabetic's Cookbook, by Roberta Longstaff and Jim Mann, Prentice-Hall Canada.
Downward, by Lesley Choyce, Creative Publishers.
Dramatic W.O. Mitchell: Five Plays, by W.O. Mitchell, Macmillan.
Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume Two, Newfoundland Book Publishers.
50 More Things to Make and Do, by Ernie Coombs and Shelley Tanaka, CBC Enterprises.
Fisherman, by Veronica Ross, Potterfield Press.
Glenn Gould: Variations, Macmillan.
Good Morning Franny, Good Night Franny, by Emily Hearn, illustrated by Mark Thurman, Women's Educational Press.
The Great Brain Robbery, by David J. Bercuson et al., M & S.
The Gulf of St. Lawrence, by Harry Bruce et al., Oxford University Press.
A Hard Man to Beat, by Howard White, Pulp Press.
Higher Perspective, by Harold W.G. Allen, Image.
Ice Palaces, by Fred Anderes and Ann Agronoff, Macmillan.
Impact! A Community Awareness Project, by Patricia Cavill and Karen Labulic, Canadian Library Association.
In Praise of Trees, by Naoko Matsuzawa, Novale Press.
In a Canvas Tent, by Robert MacLean, Sono Nis Press.
The Independence Movement in Quebec 1945 to 1980, by William D. Coleman, U of T.
Introduction to Canadian Amphibians and Reptiles, by Francis R. Cook, National Museum of Natural Sciences.
John Grierson and the National Film Board: The Politics of Wartime Propaganda, by Gary Evans, U of T.
John Turner: The Long Run, by Jack Cahill, M & S.
Keep 'Em Rolling: The Story of Toronto's Spadina Roundhouse, by Ron Watson, Boston Mills Press.
Khronika, by Denise Bertrand, Underwhich Editions.
Locksley: The Story of Robin Hood, by Nicholas Chase, Penguin.
Magic Animals: Selected Poetry of Gwendolyn MacEwen, by Gwendolyn MacEwen, Stoddart.
Moveable Wounds: An Essay in Composition, by Janice Gurney, Art Metropole.
North of America, by James Doyle, ECW Press.
The Northern Imagination, by Allison Mitcham, Penumbra Press (1983).
Not a Sparrow Shall Fall, by Joan P. Glanville, Kindred Press.
On Greta Bridge, by Thomas A. Clark, Underwhich Editions.
Out of the Storm, by Michael Thorpe, Penumbra Press.
Pas de Vingt, by Harold Town and James Strecker, Mosaic Press.
Playing It Safe: Street Smart Activities for Children, by Barbara Hall and Doug Hall, illustrated by Carl Pickering, Methuen.
A Portrait of Angelica and A Letter to My Son, by George Ryga, Turnstone Press.
Practical Handbook of Quebec and Acadian French, by Sinclair Robinson and Donald Smith, Anansi.
The Promised Land, by Pierre Berton, M & S.
Recipes from Pasquale's Kitchen, by Pasquale Carpino, Doubleday.
Remembering Orwell, by Stephen Wadhams, Penguin.
The Revenge of the Robins Family, by Thomas Chastain, Macmillan.
River for My Sidewalk, by Gilean Douglas, Sono Nis Press.
"Say Cheese": Looking at Snapshots in a New Way, by Graham King, Dodd, Mead & Co.
The Socratic Art, by Hugh Hood, Stoddart.
Seasonal by Ron Smith, Sono Nis Press.
The Secret of Willow Castle, by Lyn Cook, illustrated by Judith Goodwin, Camden House.
Seeking a Balance: University of Saskatchewan, 1907-1982, by Michael Hayden, UBC Press.
Shoes & Shift: Stories for Pedestrians, edited by Geoff Hancock, Aya Press.
Sing Me No Love Songs I'll Say You No Prayers, by Leon Rooke, George J. McLeod.
Slicing, Hooking and Cooking, by Jackie Eddy, Raincoast.
Stories from Grandpa's Rocking Chair, by Sarah Kaetler, illustrated by Neil Klassen, Kindred Press.
Tasulon: An International Perspective, edited by Walter Block and Michael Walker, The Fraser Institute.
Tennis: It Serves You Right!, by Eric Nicol and Dave More, Hurig.
Toronto Remembered: A Celebration of the City, by William Kilbourn, Stoddart.
Toronto to 1918: An Illustrated History, by J.M.S. Careless, James Lorimer/National Museum.
True North, Not Strong and Free, by Peter C. Newman, Penguin.
Unearthly Horses, by Patrick Friesen, Turnstone Press.
Who Knows What? Canadian Library-Related Expertise, edited by Susan Klement, Canadian Library Association.
Wild Geese and Other Poems, by Barker Fairley, Penumbra Press.
Wind from Across the River, by Michael Jacot, M & S.
The Winnipeg School of Art: The Early Years, by Marilyn Baker, University of Manitoba Press.

COMING UP IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE OF

BOOKS IN CANADA

MEDIEVAL MAN

Rooted for years in rural Ontario, Matt Cohen's fictional territory now extends its reach to 14th-century Spain

By Joyce Wayne

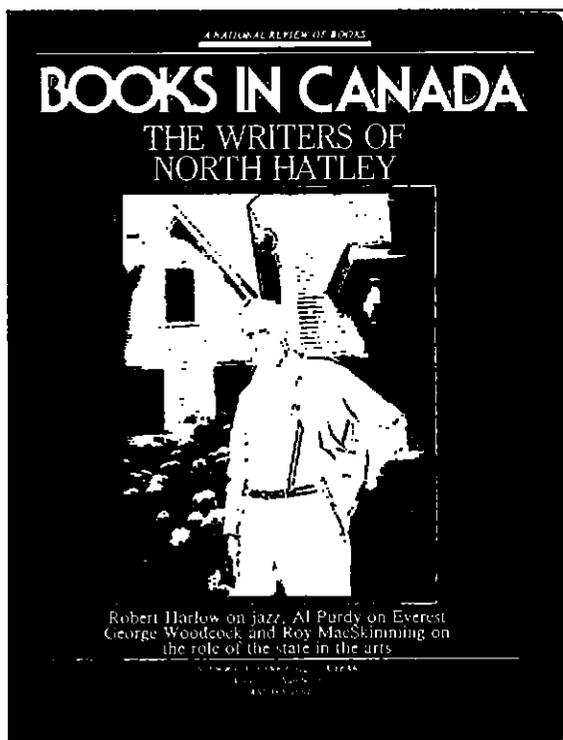
CRITICAL MASS

Bruce W. Powe on Paul Stuewe's *Clearing the Ground: English-Canadian Literature After Survival*

WORDS ON FILM

Fraser Sutherland and Morris Wolfe on the Festival of Festivals

Reviews of new books by Jack Batten, Penny Kemp, W.P. Kinsella, Norman Levine, Alden Nowlan, Leon Rooke, and Michel Tremblay



BOOKS IN CANADA

Available in better
bookstores everywhere
or delivered directly
to your home.

Ten times a year.
Shouldn't you subscribe now?

Yes, I'd like to subscribe to *Books in Canada*

Name _____

Address _____

Postal code _____

Cheque enclosed Bill me

**SUBSCRIPTION PRICE \$12.95 A YEAR
\$15.95 A YEAR OUTSIDE CANADA**

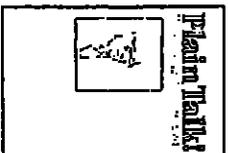
366 Adelaide Street East, Suite 432
Toronto, Ont M5A 3X9

The Second Act

OCTOBER



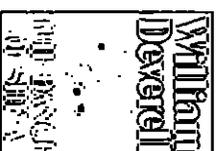
\$19.95



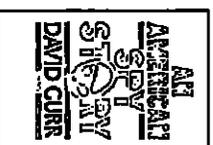
\$24.95



\$49.95



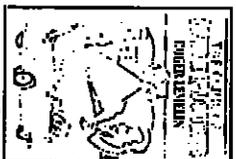
\$19.95



\$18.95



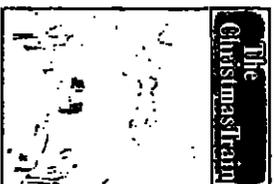
\$19.95



\$19.95



\$16.95pb



\$14.95



\$7.95pb



\$19.95



\$19.95



\$29.95



\$16.95



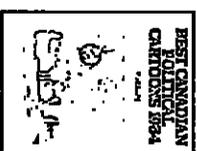
\$24.95



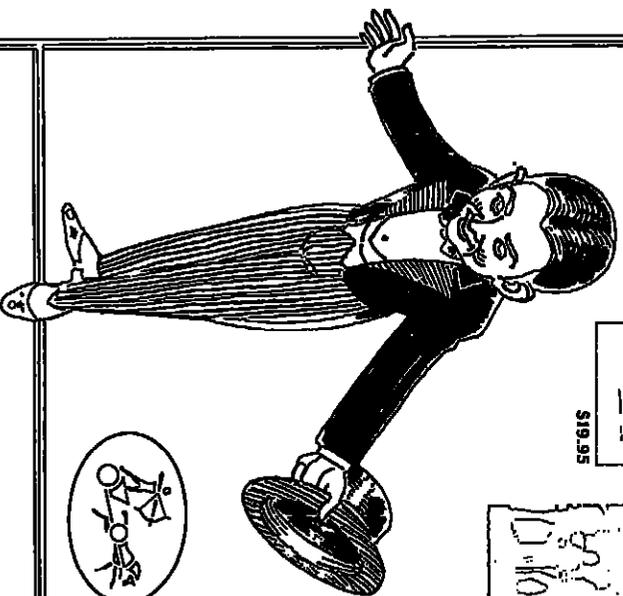
\$99.95



\$12.95pb



\$12.95pb



McClelland and Stewart's
 1700
 G BLAIR LANE
 \$50.00 pre-pub. price
 \$65.00 thereafter



\$19.95

McClelland and Stewart's

Award-Winning Fall List... The Tradition Continues