

A NATIONAL REVIEW OF BOOKS

November 1986 \$1.95

BOOKS

CANADA

BILL REID: A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

The season's gift
books in review

Jack MacLeod on
the state of
political books

Lament for a notion:
the memoirs
of René Lévesque

And introducing our
new CanLit Acrostic



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'We came to eat'

Refugees from post-war Europe, Canada's immigrant writers seek to expand the tradition of 'survival' to include a tradition of 'the journey'

BEAUTIFUL WEATHER, sunshine, and soft breezes graced our stay in Vancouver a few weeks ago for the First National Conference of Italian-Canadian Writers. I had come prepared for rain, the duck head of my compact umbrella thrusting its wooden beak out of my flight bag. I remembered another Italian-Canadian conference in May, 1984, in Rome, where I expected Mediterranean sun, hot and dry, and instead found myself cold and damp, though not miserable. My red leather shoes gave up their soles in watery despair.

The week in Vancouver was very tightly scheduled, but rest assured that there were "a Fascists among us; the papers and panels, scheduled to begin at 9 a.m., began to form and collected a" audience usually sometime after 10. Making my way across town on the Broadway bus, I expected to be late, but found instead a lone and jet-lagged George Amabile patiently and thoughtfully sipping coffee. We all continued to be late, not from lack of enthusiasm but from lack of sleep. The arguing and laughter that marked all the debates continued into the small hours, on the beach or in restaurants and cafés.

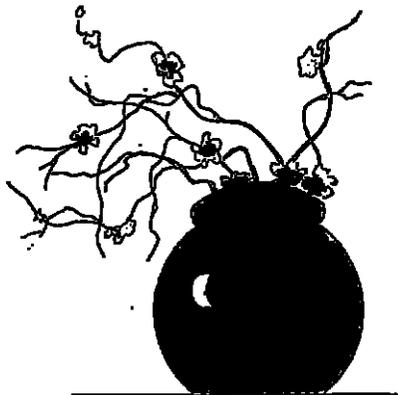
Where did all these Italian-Canadian writers come from? A table was set up featuring the works of the participants. The historical, literary, and critical publications were numerous. The content was diverse. Those who had no particular Italian-Canadian content in their work — and Anglo names like Ken Norris — had come because they identified with a sensibility and a history. (Norris was raised by his Neapolitan mother and grandmother.) Less than 10 years ago Pier Giorgio di Cicco had to search among the very few and unknown in order to collect submissions for his anthology of Italian-Canadian poets, *Roman Candles*. Is Giorgio responsible for this *piccolo rinascimento*?

The multicultural debate often gives me a headache. Yet I know that if you write exclusively about the lives of immigrants you keep yourself marginal to Canadian culture. In a similar way, women who confine themselves to a content that is predominantly and traditionally feminine find themselves in a female literary ghetto.

Why is it a ghetto? (A ghetto is not all bad-it is also a community, a support group, as well as a kind of exile.) Why is the writer marginal? Because the writing is defined as "ethnic" or as "other," and therefore of sociological rather than literary interest.

There was a French term, -"l'imaginaire," that the writers from Quebec, primarily Fulvio Caccia and Antonio D'Alfonso, kept "sing. for which we found no English equivalent. (The discussions went back and forth in three languages, English, French, and Italian.) "L'imaginaire," as I understand it, is cultural "reality," the world as it appears in a novel or play or photograph or TV program — what we understand "life" to be through our arts. What Canada's immigrant writers are doing for the culture is expanding the tradition of "survival" to include a tradition of "the journey." What the women writers of the world are doing is expanding the male thematic tradition of love and death to include birth.

The first time I encountered a description of giving birth in literature was in Doris Lessing's "owl, A Proper Marriage." Georgia O'Keeffe painted, with originality and dating, female shapes, from a" American landscape, not con-



tained in the Western European tradition. A more mundane example from popular culture is a TV program like All in the Family. Before Archie Bunker, as far as television was concerned, all families and neighbourhoods were like *Father Knows Best*: all white and Anglo, and all right and patriarchal at that.

Thank God *l'imaginaire* is changing. Thank God that the lives of the new

settlers to a society, the oppressed or repressed, are gaining some representation in media and the arts. How else not to have their lives diminished? How else to transcend our differences and discover what is truly universal? Such are my thoughts at home after a week of talk, talk, talk, in three different languages.

One evening in Vancouver we saw a performance of Marco Micone's play, *Gens du Silence*, translated as *Voiceless People*, which portrays with compassion the narrowed and often materialistic lives of displaced people:

An immigrant worker is less than a worker. An immigrant father is less than a father. An immigrant husband is less than a husband. My house had to be big to contain all my dreams. It had to be beautiful like Anna on our wedding day. It had to be warm like Nancy when she was still Annunziata.

Recognizing the people in the play, I was moved to tears. The theatre that night allowed me that recognition. I found a kind of catharsis.

So why should you be interested? He's not your father! After a reading in Halifax a young student once told me that he couldn't relate to my poem about giving birth, that I should write about a more universal experience. Is the problem a lack of negative capability, a failure to see how we are related? Are we more ready to pronounce or denounce things as foreign because they are not immediately recognizable as our own? Marco Micone, who is a male, calls himself, and is, a feminist playwright. He pointed out that the photographic show on display in the library where we met was entirely the work, and thus *l'imaginaire*, of me".

Why did we come to this country? Because people in post-war Italy in the south were jobless and landless and hungry. As Marco Micone had said earlier that week, "We came to eat." And we did at the dinner that night as we made our way through the many courses, from antipasto to zuppa inglese. It was a menu so eloquent that Pasquale Verdicchio was moved, with little alteration and some wine, to perform it as a poem. Then we danced to tangos and Madonna. Then we sang around the piano to the playing of Genni Donati Gunna, before we scattered again across the continent.

— MARY DI MICHELE

NEW PUBLICATIONS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA IN SUPPORT OF CANADIAN STUDIES

The National Library of Canada has released two invaluable sources of information on Canadian theses. These books complement the products and specialized services on theses written in Canada, by Canadians or about Canada provided by the National Library: *Canadiana*, the national bibliography, which annually lists current theses; *Canadian Theses*, a listing of theses accepted from 1947 to 1980; *Canadian Theses (Microfiche)*, which lists theses written since 1980; and the Canadian Theses on Microfiche Services, which has made available some 67 000 microfimed theses (about 70% of the theses accepted by universities in Canada).

Doctoral Research on Canada and *Canadians, 1884-1983*, by Jesse J. Dossick, lists doctoral dissertations on Canada or Canadians, written in English or in French, accepted by universities in Canada, the United States and Great Britain, as well as some in Ireland and Australia from 1884 to the spring of 1983. Entries are organized by subject in 29 subdivided sections. An author index follows, including the special numbers of the theses microfilmed by the National Library of Canada. 559 pages. Catalogue number: SN3-223/1986, ISBN 0-660-53227-1. Price: \$38.75 in Canada, \$46.50 elsewhere (prices subject to change without notice).

Theses in Canada: *A Bibliographic Guide*, by Denis Robitaille and Joan Walser, records by subject areas the documentation on theses completed for Canadian universities. It includes bibliographies, theses lists by university, and specialized bibliographies with National Library call numbers, a list of data bases with Canadian theses entries, an author index and a subject index. 72 pages. Catalogue number: SN3-87/1986, ISBN 0-660-53228-X. Price: \$8.50 in Canada, \$40.20 elsewhere (price subject to change without notice).

Both publications available from the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services Canada, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0S9. Telephone: (819) 997-2560.

Those who would like to learn more about the political, cultural, economic and social issues which have been a main priority of the provinces since they joined the Canadian Confederation, will salute the publication of Provincial Commissions and Commissions of Inquiry: *A Selective Bibliography* compiled by Lise Maillet.

This national reference tool is produced by the National Library of Canada in cooperation with the staff of provincial legislative libraries, provincial libraries and archives. It lists most of the commissions set up by provincial Cabinets (excluding departmental commissions) and includes an index to Chairmen and Commissioners and a subject index.

The selective bibliography can be ordered from the Canadian Government Publishing Centre, \$15.00 in Canada or \$48.00 elsewhere. Catalogue number: SN3-219/1985, ISBN 0-660-531222.

The right moves

THERE WERE TWO new screen adaptations of Canadian novels at Tcmntc's Festival of Festivals this fall. *Where the River Runs Black*, a U.S. production based on David Kendall's *Lazaro* (co-winner of the Seal First Novel Award in 1983), is an unconvincing, sentimental fantasy set in Brazil. The cinematography is much given to prettiness, with many starbursts of light piercing the mists of the Amazon jungle. Moments of suspense and crisis are a little too portentously announced by the thundering crescendo of a heartbeat on the soundtrack; the producers are especially proud of their sound system ("recorded completely in digital stereo"). Kendall, while praising the film, has also very gently and diplomatically disowned it — although it was made from his book, he says, it is "their movie."

Leon Marr's *Dancing in the Dark*, based on Joan Barfoot's 1982 novel of the same name, is a different kind of production altogether. It was very well received at the Cannes Film Festival and its two showings during the Toronto festival were sold out. It's an intense, detailed study of a woman whose profoundest dream is just to live "an ordinary life" — the kind of life from which she felt herself excluded as a child and young woman. She achieves it, but to her it seems precarious, a miracle, that she of all people is married to a kind, loving man, that she is "safe." Her feeling for her husband seems to be in large part gratitude.

Edna is an odd mixture of selflessness and inflated pride. Obsessively, she labours to protect her safe harbour by caring for her home and her husband with a driven, unstinting perfectionism. When the film opens, we see her writing in a notebook. She is in a psychiatric hospital, three years after the catastrophic ending of her marriage. Her psychiatrist, she writes, is "ordinary — no match for me... I make vast efforts at perfection. Disaster waits for mistakes." But the disaster has happened.

Reading the novel, one would think it had any cinematic possibilities at all. It is a continuous interior monologue; there are essentially two characters and one event. Marr, who wrote the screenplay and directed the movie, was at first entirely alone in his conviction that a film could be made of it. "Nobody thought it could be done," says Joan Barfoot, "including me. I didn't know anything about film, but it just didn't seem possible. Leon thought otherwise."

Martha Henry's wonderful performance as Edna is, like the film as a whole, remarkably faithful to the original, yet she gives an extra dimension to the character. In the book, Edna is guarded,



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paradoxically both desperately loving and emotionally paralysed. Henry surprises us: the remoteness is there, underneath, but the unexpected element is the genuine sweetness, the charm, of Edna's outward self. She is always tense and fearful, alert to danger, but she is hot calculating.

Barfoot, who had nothing to do with the making of the film, admits to having been "very nervous about how it would turn out — understandably, in view of

what often happens on the trip from page to screen. "I feel protective of Edna, more than any other character I have invented, I think. If anyone tripped to hurt or attack her, I would leap to protect her." But, far from being misunderstood or changed beyond recognition, the book "was all there. It was what I had invented, even down to the smallest details."

Barfoot won the Books i" Canada First

Novel Award for *Abra* in 1978. Her most recent novel, *Duet for Three*, was published in 1985, but it's not getting as much attention these days as *Dancing in the Dark*. (The movie opened in theatres across the country last month.) *Duet for Three* is a finely imagined and effective character study. Would Barfoot like to see it, too, made into a movie? "If Leon did it," she says, "I would."

— DORIS COWAN

ENGLISH. OUR ENGLISH

Charter of wrongs

More troubling than functional illiteracy is the number of 'functionally literate' writers who cannot clearly convey the information they are paid to impart

By Bob Blackburn



HEADLINE in a major weekly newspaper published in the Toronto area told us that "One in four in Metro Toronto are illiterate." The error is repeated in the caption of an adjacent photograph. It also appears in the text of the article, in company with at least a dozen other errors. Here is the opening paragraph:

The statistics are disheartening, scary. One out of four people in Metro over the age of 15 are illiterate. Twenty percent cannot read or write well enough to understand a newspaper, a street sign or fill out a job application.

I guess I am that one. Possibly I can write well enough to understand a newspaper, whatever that means, but I cannot read well enough to understand this one. I don't even understand the 'rithmetic. In my book, one in four are 25 per cent, but since he doesn't say 20 per cent of what, who knows?

Enough of being flippant. There is a terrible irony here. Obviously, the reporter, while he is bemoaning the situation that he is attempting to describe, is unaware that he is writing execrably.

Presumably he is referring to what now is called functional illiteracy, which is a serious enough problem. More troubling, though, is the percentage of professional writers and speakers who, to use the same terminology, could claim to be functionally literate, but who cannot choose words and place them in sentences in a way that clearly and accurately conveys the information they are being paid to impart. That percentage, although I know of no studies to support my guess, must be 75 or higher.

The person who is functionally illiterate, while his inability to comprehend the significance of the letters S-T-O-P on an

octagonal red sign most result in someone's death, is not as great a menace to society as is the paid communicator malingering his contribution to the cataclysmic erosion of English that is accompanying the so-called information explosion.

SPEAKING OF erosion, the lion's sham has come to be used and understood to mean most. The phrase derives from one of Aesop's fables, and was formerly used as a colourful and ironic way of saying all. There is absolutely no point in using it in the sense it has acquired.

This summer, when the University of Toronto's new supercomputer was put into place, a CBC-TV reporter informed us that "scientists will spend a week hooking up reams of wire and cables. . . ." Ream is a unit of measurement of rather



uncertain value, since it has denoted different numbers in different applications. Usually, it meant 20 quires, or 480 sheets, of paper. It was in one of those tables we were required to memorize when I was in school, but it is little used today. To a printer, say, a reel" would not be a great

deal of paper, but to someone writing on it with a quill pen (and to someone reading the result), it would be a lot. Not unreasonably, the plural form came, in colloquial use, to mean a great quantity of written material. It is absurd to use it in reference to what probably is miles of wire. I expect any day to read about someone drinking reams of beer.

A U.S. writer called the 55 m.p.h. speed limit "the most flaunted law in the land." I was about to shrug it off as another example of the common flout/flout confusion, but then reflected that if to flout something is to display it ostentatiously, well, there are those reams of speed-limit signs everywhere you look, and maybe it is the most flaunted law. Somehow, though, I think that the writer was innocent of my such sly wit.

I bate being undermined by my favourite dictionaries. I was going to whine about the use of administrate for administer, but there seems to be reasonable precedent for it. I still think it's an abomination, but will let it slide and go on to complain about a few other things:

There is no such word as ancillary. A person who benefits from something is the beneficiary, not the benefactor. One doesn't answer a how question with because. The reason why and the reason is because are (or should be) unspeakable.

Having been driven right unto distraction by pitchmen offering me things for free, I was pleased to read "piece of promotional material for a magazine that praised me, among other things information on "how to rent the most popular videocassettes free." It was not, however, the absence of the offensive for that made me receptive to the offer, but the desire to have it explained to me how one could possibly rent anything free. □

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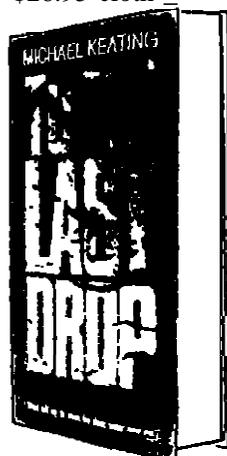
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A book from  MACMILLAN OF CANADA

Gone Indian

Raised 'an average Caucasian,' Bill Reid rediscovered his heritage in a Toronto museum and now is the Haida's foremost artist

By Eve Johnson

SLOUCHED ON A high stool in his studio, Bill Reid makes minute cuts on a tiny boxwood carving of a leaping killer whale. The larger version, 5.5 metres of cast bronze, stands outside the Vancouver Aquarium. From time to time, Reid heaves himself up and lurches over to a workbench for a different tool, his gait made awkward and abrupt by the Parkinson's disease he has been fighting for 13 years.

While he repairs the killer whale's tail, he talks about the idea that sums up his philosophy of art.

"What we think of as joy," he says in the authoritative tones of an ex-CBC staff announcer, "is just avoidance of stress. Holidays, travel, and sex make life pleasant and easy to put up with, but don't do anything to make you feel at home in your world. To produce something,

whether it be a well-educated child or a little killer whale, is an occasion for joy. Joy is a well-made object."

Reid, whose extraordinary artistic career gets its first full-length evaluation this fall in Doris Shadbolt's *Bill Reid* (Douglas & McIntyre, illustrated, 192 pages, \$50.00 cloth), is the man who breathed life back into the corpse of Haida culture. Through his superlatively well-made objects — the myths of bear, eagle, killer whale, dogfish, and raven told in gold and silver on bracelets, pendants, and boxes — Reid has drawn international attention to the art of the Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Haida art died with the master artists of the 19th century.. Reid taught himself the form, then raised the standards from their depths in the 1940s and 1950s. when self-taught carvers made crude totem poles for souvenir shops, to a level of artistry that equals the finest historical examples. And he passed the knowledge along. Robert Davidson, the most talented of a new generation of carvers, created the Three Watchmen pole that stands in Toronto's Royal LePage building. He mastered the art of his ancestors as a youth, in Reid's Vancouver studio.

At 66, this bridge between the Haida artists of the 19th century and their carving great-grandsons is a tall, white-haired man who looks exactly like what he calls himself, "just a middle-class Wasp Canadian." Reid and his third wife Martine, 40, an anthropologist at the University of British Columbia, live a decidedly Wasp life in a large apartment on Point Grey Road, across the street from the ocean in Vancouver's moneyed Kitsilano neighbourhood. They spent August in France and England, where Reid visited his "wonderful in-laws with whom I can't communicate," and "actually got champagned out, almost."

Reid fits smoothly into the most rarefied of Vancouver's many art communities. He has been a friend of Doris Shadbolt and her husband, painter Jack Shadbolt, since the early 1950s, when she worked at the old Vancouver Art Gallery on Georgia Street and Reid had a studio in the building. His current Granville Island studio, a vast warehouse mom in Vancouver's newest fashionable neighbourhood, holds a day model of the sculpture proposed for the new Canadian embassy in Washington. The architect of the embassy, Arthur Erickson, is another long-time friend.

In fact, the country's best-known Haida artist is not legally Haida. His mother married a German-Scots-American, and in the patriarchal eyes of the Canadian law lost her Indian status. In Haida culture, it's the mother's side of the family that passes on the inheritance. Unfortunately, Sophia Reid didn't think Haida culture was worth passing on. Raised in Methodist boarding schools she learned, Reid says, "the major lesson taught to the native peoples of our hemisphere during the fast half of this century — that it was somehow sinful and debased to be an Indian."

So Reid, born in Victoria in 1920, grew up as "an average Caucasian North American." He was 23 when he visited his mother's home village of Skidegate, where he spent a week watching his Haida grandfather, Charles Gladstone, carve. It

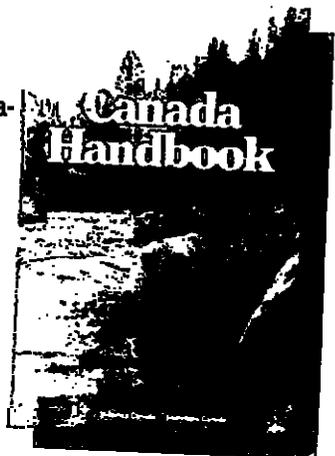
Bill Reid



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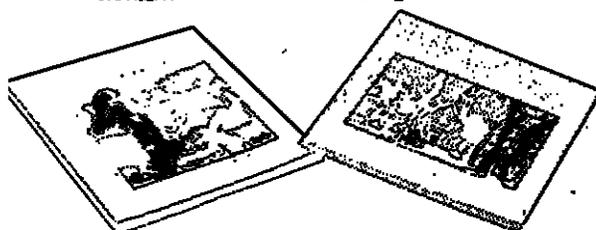


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was a quiet week: Gladstone spoke no English and Reid spoke no Haida.

Reid was in any case occupied by other pursuits. He got his first job as a radio announcer in 1940 "selling soap and playing records." It wasn't until 1948, when he was hired by CBC Toronto, that Reid rediscovered Northwest Coast art through the collection at the Royal Ontario Museum. Working nights at the CBC, he enrolled in the jewellery-making course at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute and set himself the task of continuing the Haida jewellery tradition.

In the early 1950s, no living artist could demonstrate the classical forms, much less explain the principles behind them.

Reid's first piece to be sold was a silver bracelet raffled off for charity in 1951. The woman who won it wanted matching earrings, but balked at the 'excessive' price of \$35. This spring Sotheby's sold a Bill Reid bracelet for \$25,000

For teachers, Reid turned to artifacts, masterpieces of the old culture crowded onto shelves in the basement of the B.C. Provincial Museum. By 1957, when UBC anthropologists asked him to design and carve the Haida project on the cliff behind the current Museum of Anthropology, Reid was a recognized authority. He quit his job at the CBC and spent 3 1/2 years carving house posts, totem poles, and a massive sculpture of Wasco, the sea wolf.

When Reid began the Haida house project, the UBC Museum of Anthropology was stored in the basement of the main library. Now it is an internationally-known showplace for Northwest Coast art, with Reid's massive cedar carving The Ram and the First Men as its centrepiece. For four months this summer, much of the museum's exhibit space was devoted to a retrospective titled Bill Reid: Beyond the Essential Form.

Reid not only resuscitated the form, he built a market for Northwest Coast art that now supports more than 200 full-time artists and craftsmen.

Reid's first piece to be sold was a silver bracelet raffled off for charity in 1951. The woman who won it wanted matching earrings, but balked at what she considered an excessive price of \$35. This spring, Sotheby's sold a Bill Reid bracelet for \$85,000. While he is not entirely happy about "making a lot of other people rich," Reid is far from bitter. "It's gratifying to know that people think that highly of the work," he says.

When Reid began to make Haida jewellery his aim — "aside," he says, "from making money" — was "to bring to the attention of the world the amazing accomplishments of this small group of people whose entire lives seem to have been concerned with an obsessive need to create well-made objects of intense power." As his understanding of ancient Haida art grew, so did his involvement with the people who now live in his mother's village of Skidegate. In 1978, he carved the pole that stands at the front of the Skidegate band council office.

He has joined the fight to save South Moresby Island from logging; he refers to the giant logging company MacMillan Bloedel as "rather difficult squatters to get rid of." He designed the 18-metre Haida canoe for Expo 86 and supervised the carving in a Skidegate carving shed, a project that employed six carvers and raised village pride several notches. Now he would like to start an apprenticeship program in his studio, with perhaps two young carvers at a time, "because we haven't succeeded in getting anything going in the village."

The idea of the well-made object is never far away as he talks. "They're going to be making art in the style of their ancestors," he says. "They might as well do it well." □

Let us now appraise famous men

'Was there ever a pol or a pol's flunkie who did not believe his story was interesting and important, a serious contribution to history? Ah, if only they were right'

By Jack MacLeod

On with the Dance: A New Brunswick Memoir 1935-1960, by Robert A. Tweedie, New Ireland Press, 200 pages. E19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 920483 05 4).

Nobody's Baby: A Woman's **Survival Guide to Politics**, by Sheila Copps. Deneau, MO pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88879 135 6).

Honourable Mentions: The Uncommon Diary of a MP, by Roy MacLaren, Deneau, 250 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88879 136 4).

Close to the **Charisma: My Years Between the Press and Trudeau**, by Patrick Gossage, McClelland & Stewart, 271 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 07710 3396 6).

Both My Houses: **From Politics to Priesthood**, by Sean O'Sullivan with Rod McQueen, Key Porter, 235 pages, \$22.95 cloth (ISBN 1 55013 002 1).

The Road Back: A Liberal t" Oppo. sition, by J.W. Pickersgill, University of Toronto Press, 249 pages, \$29.95 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 2598 6).

The Rainmaker: A Passion for Politics, by Keith Davey, Stoddart, 356 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7737 2090 1).

Whelan: The Ma" i" the **Green Stetson**, by Eugene Whelan with Rick Archbold, Irwin, 307 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7723 1621 9).

A Funny Way to Run a Country, by Charles Lynch, Hurtig, 212 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88838 294 0).

THERE ARE, to twist a phrase, lies, damned lies, and memoirs, and this is particularly true of political memoirs with their inevitable tendency to be self-serving. Great fun, though, if we don't take them too seriously. There are loads of laughs and insights for political junkies in this autumn's harvest of books by our politicians and their hangers-on. These days, if you ever ran for alderman in Guelph or once held a door for Diifen. baker or Trudeau, some zealous publisher is likely to rush forward with yelps of glee, a contract, and promises to make a best-seller out of the pumped-up recollections of your six swell minutes in or near the corridors of power.

Was then ever a pol or a pol's flunkie who did not believe that his story was interesting and important, a serious contribution to history? Ah, if only they were

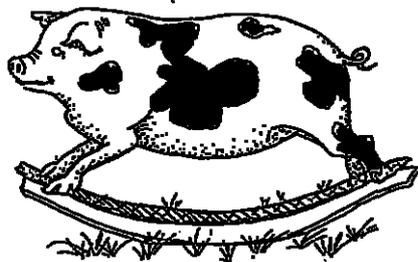
right, but usually they are not.

To his credit, R.A. (Bob) Tweedie, a senior backroom boy who served several premiers of New Brunswick, has no pretensions to grandeur or eve" "setting the record straight." He quotes C.L. Sulzberger as saying:

... I remember how inaccurate diaries can be. Once I played cards with Eisenhower, Harriman, Gruenther and Dan Kimball, U.S. Secretary of the Navy, while all discussed the memoirs of James Forrestal, first Secretary of Defense. They had attended a meeting referred to in the book and each agreed that Forrestal's account was wrong. But when I asked, then, what was the true version, all promptly disagreed among themselves.

Tweedie is one of the better and more mod&of the writers represented here. His reminiscences are considered, gentle, civilized, and sometimes witty. However, after a promising start, which includes a jaunty-account of his drunken Uncle Charlie, *On with the Dance* subsides into local gossip and very, very lengthy stories about the insufferable Lord Beaverbrook. The book trundles, but does not fly.

Tweedie is a veritable Samuel Pepys, however, compared to Sheila Copps. Her Nobody's *Baby* (what a good title!) should have been a" important or at least interesting book. Undeniably we need more women active in our politics, and Copps, a former Ontario MPP and present "rat pack" MP in Ottawa, is a feisty example of a young woman who took the political plunge and stayed afloat. It's if-



fortunate that, after some tiresome banalities ("Women understand the issues. We are concerned about the very existence of our country and our planet"), Copps proceeds to demonstrate that she is shrill, shallow and vulgar. She has nothing to say after chapter 12, but

keeps on scribbling till chapter 20 with all of the warmth and charm of Erik Nielsen in drag. Copps is to (say) Flora Macdonald what Madonna is to Maureen Forrester. The book is embarrassing.

My attention perked up with *Honourable Mentions*, a diary by Roy MacLaren. He is a cultivated man. After schooling at the University of British Columbia and Cambridge, he was a foreign service officer in the Department of External Affairs before becoming a Liberal MP for Etobicoke North in 1979. His narrow partisan mentality is reflected in the accolade he bestows on any adversary he admires (a" infrequent occurrence), David Crombie, for example: "He should have been a Liberal."

MacLaren was parliamentary assistant to Marc Lalonde (he writes interesting inside stuff about the creation of the National Energy Policy) and, although he never became prominent, rose in 1983 to the rank of minister of state for finance, a post he held for less than a year. He does get off a few good lines ("Peckford always seems a half-hour behind"), but he disappoints.

It must be the Mies Van Der Rohe principle, less is more, that deludes MacLaren into believing he has anything important to say. No ordinary chap and no stranger to vanity, he drops casual references to his London tailor, luncheon with "an excellent petit Chablis, properly chilled," and a-cast of hundreds like "Barney, Tony and Alistair," who are identified in ponderous footnotes that should have been in the text. MacLaren is ingenious enough to admit that on the night of Dec. 13, 1979, when Joe Clark's government self-destructed, he was having dinner with Tom d'Aquino, head of the Business Council on National Issues and one of Ottawa's sleekest lobbyists, and returned to d'Aquino's party aftt the vote in the House. You know — just us poobahs, swanning around and being precious.

MacLaren usefully quotes a speech cm Parliament by Michael Pitfield from the plush seats of the Senate.

A question period too largely spent in superficialities and posturing... debates for days on end with hardly anyone listening... committees rarely free from the dictatorship of larger partisan p-p-c

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tions in the House... a ministry that cannot change its mind lest it be accused of collapsing... an Opposition against everything For fear of the government gaining credit For something... The focus is on hatred, on personalities, on imputations of bad faith and bare motivation — rarely on substance... The consequence is that Parliament becomes more and more bound up with itself, less and less relevant to the community.

However, of the nine books considered here, MacLaren's is the most quickly forgettable..

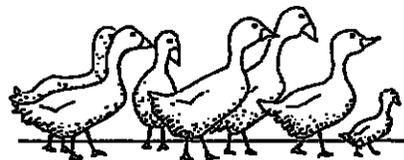
Not much better is *Close to the Charisma* (a dismaying title), the recollections of a sometime press secretary in Trudeau's PMO named Patrick Gossage. Although he does not seem overly cerebral or reflective, he has written an earnest book that offers glimpses of how the news from Ottawa is managed and packaged. He spins extended accounts of how a poor underling gave his "life's blood" to churn out press releases, set up (or prevent) interviews, and arrange for the care and Feeding of the media folks. Tom between conflicting loyalties to the political managers on the one side and the press manages on the other, Gossage seems to have spent most of his time panting for a moment of the PM's attention. He's forever wringing his hands over why his family doesn't comprehend how close he is to the seats of the mighty, or wondering whether he should quit. He should have.

Someone who did quit politics is Sean O'Sullivan. A sycophantic teenaged writer of letters to Diefenbaker and a Hamilton MP at 20, O'Sullivan (not the boxer but the fighter, as he puts it) was an executive assistant to Dief in the old man's declining years. He tells some comic and stunning anecdotes about the Chief, gushes about their "Friendship," but confesses to "... some sadness, for his pettiness, egocentricity, and vindictiveness were upsetting, sometimes even frightening, and his dark side drove people away from him." O'Sullivan was too young to have known Dief at his best, but has no compunction about showing him at his worst as the former PM wobbled into senility. There is a ring of truth to these raspy stories, but with friends like O'Sullivan, Dief didn't need enemies. This author also sings the praises of Richard M. Nixon, so we can easily grasp his values and lofty morality.

Both My Houses is only half about public life. O'Sullivan goes on to tell of his withdrawal from politics, his gallant fight against leukemia, and how he went on to the higher calling of the priesthood. From his elevated spiritual position he makes politics seem like a petty and squalid game. He may be right. But extreme right-wingers are usually cynics, and it does not seem to occur to this

fulminator against red Tories that most of his \$100,000 medical bill during his illness was paid by the public health insurance scheme that came into being largely as a result of the efforts of a clergyman who "descended" into politics, Tommy Douglas. Myopic and strange, this book, but intense and readable.

The most careful, scholarly, and useful of these volumes is *The Road Back* by Jack Pickersgill. Better than his earlier



memoir of the years with St. Laurent, this work takes us on a micro-detailed journey from 1957 to 1963. The result is impressive, heavy.

The Royal Jelly that minor players smear themselves with becomes a simple lubricant Freeing the memory of Newfy Jack. A clever though querulous House Leader for Mike Pearson, Pickersgill rehearse seemingly interminable motions, procedural issues, and wrangles in a precise, slow-paced, informative way. He wades imperiously through reams of material to give his slanted but convincing account of events such as Pearson's ridiculous invitation to Diefenbaker to resign in 1958, changes in the Broadcasting Act, the Newfoundland loggers' strike, and salary raises For Members of Parliament.

Pickersgill is expansive and persuasive in recounting his view of the firing of James Coyne as head of the Bank of Canada. Even more fascinating is his account of how he persuaded Pearson — the Nobel Prize-winner — that the Liberals should advocate acceptance of nuclear arms in the 1963 campaign, and then negotiate Canada out of the deal at a later date. Predictably, he does not trouble to mention that a rising young Quebec academic, writing in *Cité Libre* (April, 1963) called Pearson "the defrocked priest of peace" and damned his "hypocrisy," adding:

I have to point out in the strongest terms the autocracy of the Liberal structure and the cowardice of its members. I have never seen in all my examination of politics so degrading a spectacle as that of all these Liberals turning their coats in unison with their Chief when they saw a chance to take power... The head of the troupe having shown the way, the rest followed with the elegance of animals heading For the trough.

The author of those ringing words was one P.B. Trudeau. Pickersgill has a wonderful memory, but it's highly selective. Still, he has made a serious and con-

sidered contribution to our understanding of the period.

The publication of Senator Keith Davey's *The Rainmaker* was a major media event, with front-page stories and photographs of the author holding his book. Described by no less a authority than the *Globe and Mail's* Geoffrey Stevens as "the preeminent political strategist of his generation." Davey is a" engaging rogue, a jolly jock and back-room boyo who has always been close to the action. Scott Young dubbed him "the rainmaker" when, with his mentor Walter Gordon, Davey led the Grit forces from a minority-government position in 1963 to a minority-government position in 1965. Ideas have never been the Senator's forte, but more than any other person he made pollsters and packaging of politicians for the maw of the media commonplace elements of our campaigns.

Attention has been lavished on him for some naughty comments on John Turner and his advocacy of leadership review. It dues help to sell books and, what the hell, the old Grit machine ain't what she used to be. In fact, despite the myth of Liberal party dominance and invincibility in the long stretch (from 1935 till 1984, with only a six-year pause for Dief, plus the "Joe Who" blip), it isn't clear that the Grit hegemony was based on brains or sense; the Tory tendency to circle the wagons and shoot inwards may have been more important.

The Senator may have been merely the least unsuccessful of the jokey boys who managed campaigns, for there is little evidence here of political subtlety or intellectual acumen. Davey tells breezy stories and relates diverting anecdotes, yet he shamelessly states that patronage has "nothing to do with the way a modern political party builds a machine." Gee whiz. How did he get to the Senate?

For all of the recent hoopla about Davey's reservations concerning the Ted Baxter of Canadian politics, John Turner, he is surprisingly mild in his comments on his leader. He actually praises Turner for having improved recently. Davey has written an entertaining book, but it does not reveal secrets, does not cut dose to any bone, and is in fact remarkably bland.

In retrospect it was surprising to me that my favourite of this season's political memoirs was the unlikely entry of Eugene Whelan. His ghost, Rick Archbold, may have done him proud, as doubtless Rod McQueen did O'Sullivan; by whatever hand, this is a crackling good book. If The *Man in the Green Stetson* reflects a bit of the rube, still Whelan comes through as a tough, direct, likable, and refreshing sort of guy, totally without pretension and proud of the cowshit on his boots. Pickersgill is more informative

and Davey is smoother; but Whelan is much more fun. He calls a spade a goddamn shovel, and Coutts and Pitfield he calls "pipsqueaks."

There are some not very thrilling sections on the Department of Agriculture, but most of the book is riveting. This is the real grain of politics with no chaff. The big gruff ma" from Essex South not only proved to be a vote-getter with staying power (till Turner canned him -and Turner gets sliced here), he also proved that the ordinary voter cares, and cares a lot, about the farm-fish-limber basis of Canada's economy. If the Liberal party had more Whelans and fewer MacLarens, it would be boosted.

Within the party, Whelan admits, he "was a real pain in the ass," perplexing at bat to the Park Plaza hucksters, snorting all the while at "Goldfarb and Gregg and that crowd" taking over Canadian elections and trying to "run the candidates' lives by putting them in nice "eat packages all tied in a bow." A rare Irish mensch, our Gene. His sort is the yeast in the heavy dough of our public life.

I can't resist quoting Whelan on Pickersgill, a passage that describes the sort of thing you'd never guess from the solemnities of *The Road Back*:

I loved to watch Pickersgill in the House. Sometimes he got Pearson into trouble

because he could be devilish as hell. Pickersgill's way of dressing added to his reputation as a crafty figure. . . . He reminded me of Black Bart, a bandit in the silent movies I saw as a kid. . . . He always wore suspenders and he'd hook his thumbs under them and stretch them out so far we were sure they'd break. In the House, when he made a real good hit against Mr. Diefenbaker, or when he asked a real zinger question, he'd snap his braces and slide down under his desk until he'd pretty near disappear under the table he'd get laughing so much — all you could see was his head. You'd wonder if he was going to disappear completely. He was laughing at the Tories and laughing at himself, too.

The straight, salty stuff, eh? Glee..

For sheer rollicking enjoyment Whelan's only equal on the fall list is Charles Lynch's *A Funny Way to Run a Country: Further Memoirs of a Political Voyeur*. Not so much a coherent memoir as a series of jokes, anecdotes, and ribald tales — definitely not a proper Christmas gift for Auntie Maude — Lynch's cornucopia just keeps flowing, and bless him. There are bright and droll stories of Eugene Forsey, Robert Stanfield the unsung comedian, press-gallery dinners, and the old friends such as Matthew Halton and the redoubtable Bruce Phillips. It's simply grand, and I laughed out loud, often. □

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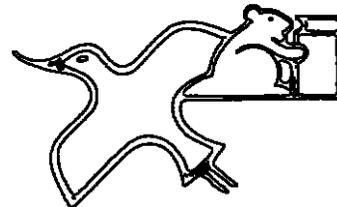
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Lament for a notion

As René Lévesque's memoirs show, his government failed because it worked so well within the system it opposed

By I.M. Owen

Memoirs, by René Lévesque, translated from the French by Philip Stratford, McClelland & Stewart, 352 pages, 324.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 5285 5).

Canada, Quebec, and the Uses of Nationalism, by Ramsay Cook, McClelland & Stewart, 224 pages, 824.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710.2261 1).

A COLLECTION OF essays by Ramsay Cook, mostly about aspects of nationalism in this country, comes appropriately in the same season as a book of reminiscences by the leader of the most striking nationalist movement of our time.

Don't expect Lévesque's book to be like the regular memoirs of the retired politician, equipped with a squad of research assistants and a scholarly ghost. Published in both French and English versions just over a year after he relinquished the tattered remnants of his power to Pierre-Marc Johnson, it's obviously a hasty production. For a complete narrative of his life, his political career, and his government the best source is still Graham Fraser's *PQ*. But Lévesque's book by its very existence becomes at once a necessary part of the whole story; and a lively *obligato* it is.

I'm under a vow that requires me, in reviewing a work translated from French to English, to say something about the quality of the translation. It's hard to do so this time, for two reasons: I am reviewing from uncorrected galley proofs, and the original French isn't available to me. Some passages may owe their obscurity to Lévesque's tendency to ramble, some to the typesetters. But only the translator can be held responsible when we read that Lévesque experienced two major deceptions during the Lesage government, that Jacques Parizeau was invited to give a conference at Banff, and that the first ministers held regular reunions. Since Philip Stratford knows perfectly well that the English for *déception* is "disappointment," for *conférence* is "lecture," and for *réunion* is "meeting," I can only hope that these curious wrinkles will have been smoothed out by the time you see the printed book.

Lévesque begins with his trip abroad last year, after he had left office: to Paris

and London (he prefers the latter), to Scandinavia, Leningrad, Italy, and Egypt - where a Québécoise getting off a cruise ship noticed him and "disdainfully remarked: 'Tiens, tiens! Finally got around to leaving, did you? Bravo!'"

The remark of this "snooty dame" gives him the cue to start his story, and to start it with the end. He dates the beginning of the end from the party convention of June, 1984, where the executive committee incredibly presented, and the delegates predictably passed, a resolution containing the sentence "A vote for a Parti Québécois candidate will mean a vote for Quebec sovereignty." Michel Clair, a lately appointed cabinet minister, earned immortality by remarking that he'd never seen a bunch of turkeys so eager for Christmas; but to everyone's amazement Lévesque didn't explode in rage and walk out. Now he explains (and it's perhaps the one new fact in the book) that this "rotten little sentence," this "complete aberration," derived from something he himself had said in March, when his defeat over the constitution was still rankling. He sets it at the head of his chapter:

No beating about the bush: Quebec or Canada. . . . And anyone incapable of accepting this way of looking at things or of finding it the one appropriate, correct, desirable, in short the only possible perspective, had certainly better cast his vote elsewhere.

Then he says: "Who could have allowed such a presumptuous statement? well, yes, I admit it, those words are mine."

There are two Lévesques, we've often been told. Those words in March, 1984, were spoken by the private one — the solitary, suspicious, vindictive Lévesque who has no close friends. The comments he makes on them now — and most of this book, luckily — are by the familiar public Lévesque, engaging, humorous, and disarmingly frank. (He isn't very unkind about anyone — except Pierre

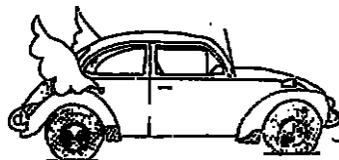
Trudeau, naturally, and, rather surprisingly, the Duke of Edinburgh.)

After tracing the history of his first year in office, he goes right back to his own beginnings. These chapters about his pre-political life are in many ways the best in the book, though not what most readers will pick it up for. His boyhood in the Gaspé, in the very anglophone town of New Carlisle, is described vividly and with a warm nostalgia. This, we feel, was the happy time, which lasted only until his father's early death. He passes rapidly over the subsequent years in Quebec City to go on to his experiences as a war correspondent in Europe, and then to his career in the CBC, including his second stint as a war correspondent, in the Korean war. ("Night on Bald Mountain" is the fitting title of this chapter.)

It's good to have all this. In the glare of his political fame, it's easy to forget that René Lévesque was first famous as a broadcast journalist — the finest in Canada, certainly, and perhaps in the world. The few times I saw him on television I thought he compared well with that other celebrated chain-smoker, Ed Morrow. (By the way, the anti-smoking lobby, quick to remind us that Murrow died of lung cancer, can take no comfort from Lévesque: in 1985, having been forced by his staff to go into hospital for a check-up, he got not only a clean bill of health, but a note appended to it — "lungs like a baby.")

The great significance of his broadcasting career is that his program *Point de Mire* opened windows on the world for the enclosed little society of Duplessis's Quebec, and was a large part of the reason for the great *éclaircissement* that followed. Significant, too, is the fact that Lévesque took, and conveyed, a lively interest in all parts of the world — except the bit of Canada west of the Ottawa River. That indifference remains to him, and accounts for a good deal. A journey of discovery across Canada transformed André Laurendeau's thinking. I wonder what it might have done to Lévesque, and through him to his viewers.

That he was able to do so much through the CBC, a federal institution, might have made him a federalist: But it



was precisely **the** producers' strike of 1959, **and** the denseness of the Diefenbaker government's response to it, that politicized him. His contemporaries **Jean Marchand, Gérard Pelletier, and Trudeau** had been politicized as **anti-Duplessis people**. **Lévesque** had taken little interest in that subject; it **was** **rage** against Ottawa that drove **him** into politics.

On the night of Nov. 15, 1976, seeing **Lévesque's** face on my television screen more clearly than most of the ecstatic crowd in **Paul Sauvé Arena** could see it, I thought that he, almost alone in that auditorium, **realized** that the victory **was** really a defeat. He doesn't admit this in **his** book, but so it proved. If the PQ had **won** only 40 per cent of the seats **with** their 40 per cent of the votes they **would** have been an articulate **and** **powerful** opposition **at** liberty to preach their doctrine while hammering at **a** **weak** **government**. Instead, as a provincial **government** with a majority of seats but no mandate for separation, **they** had to be **part** of the system they opposed.

It only made matters **worse** that in their **first** term **they** were **a** **very** **good** and **effective** **government**, so that **when** the time came for the referendum in 1980 it was obvious that Trudeau had been right — everything Quebec needed to achieve

could be achieved within **Confederation**, **and** most of it had **been**. **They** had made **Quebec** into the society it ought to be, **and** it was **still** part of Canada. **And** one of its **own** was **again** **prime** **minister** of Canada.

Ramsay Cook makes much the same point in the introductory essay to his book:

In Quebec . . . the social transformation that had aroused nationalist fervour had run its course. The Quiet Revolution largely succeeded in its main objective: the modernization of Quebec's public institutions. Many of the individuals who formulated the new values and goals of Quebec society succeeded with their revolution: in politics, the arts, education, the bureaucracy, and even the economy. French had become the dominant language in virtually every aspect of Quebec life and French-speaking Quebecers were no longer largely confined to the lower ranks of the province's economy. Temporarily at least, nationalism as a tool for social promotion could be abandoned.

'The **difficult** and **ambiguous** relationship between nationality and the **nation-state** — the **main** subject of **René Lévesque's** **political** **career** — makes a **recurring** theme in **Cook's** essays. **Should** **all** **nations** — **and** **the** national feelings they

give **rise** **to** — be embodied in **nation-states**? If **nations** are to be **defined** by **language**, they can't be; **as** **Cook** **points** **out**, "if every **linguistic** group **became** a **nation**, there would be **approximately** **8,000** **nations**." —

Nations can exist on two **levels** **at** **least**. **A** **nation-state** **combining** **two** **or** **more** **nations** can itself become a **nationality** without denying the **nationality** of its **components**: Great Britain is a **nation**, undoubtedly, but so **are** **England, Wales, and Scotland**. (**Please** **don't** **bring** **up** **Northern** **Ireland**, I can't cope.)

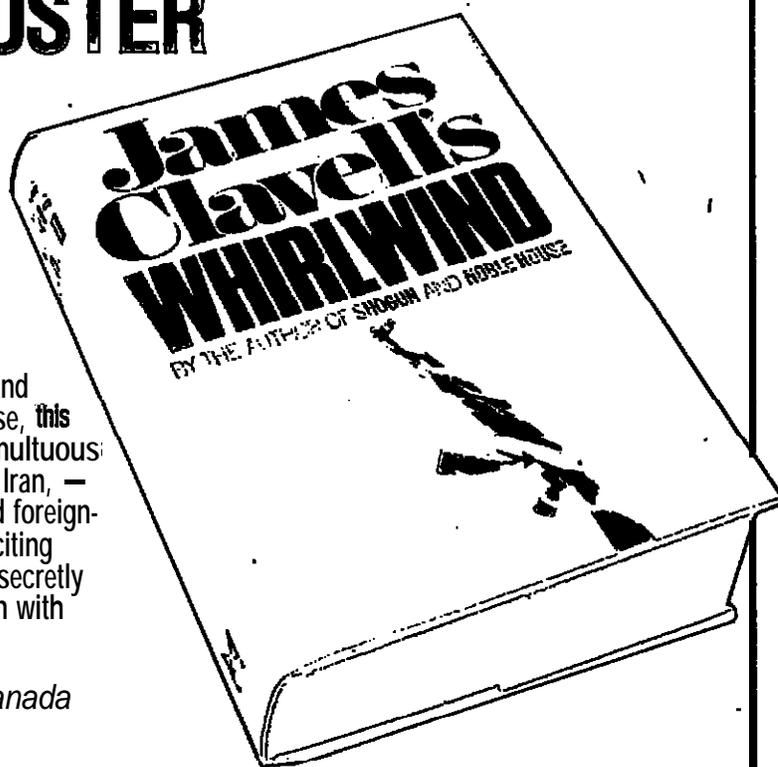
Many other questions besides this — as various as the impact of the **European** **invasion** **on** **the** **Amerindians**, **and** **the** **life** **and** **art** **of** **William** **Kurelek** — **are** **dealt** **with** **in** **Ramsay** **Cook's** **collection**. It's a **valuable** **book**. I wish the publishers had dated each **essay** **and** stated where it was **first** published. It **would** have **been** even **better** if **Cook** could have taken time to rework the whole into one integrated hook. (**Kurelek** might have had **to** be dropped.) That would have **been** a **difficult** task. But it's **surely** in the general interest that **Ramsay** **Cook** **should** be **kept** hard at work. Our precious national **resources** ought to be **exploited** to the **full** — **though** **not** to the point of exhaustion, of course. □

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Art and artifice

The season's gift books span a range of subjects from the science of landscapes to the artistry of microchips

By John Oughton

SOME GIFT BOOKS are more gift than book: large, glossy, they are designed to impress as much as entertain. They're doomed to be admired once and then left to bulk large on a shelf.

The best gift books are those that, like the *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* my parents gave me at the end of high school, have some enduring value. I've concentrated in this review on books that seem good for

more than one-time use, or that at least add something of educational as well as visual value to the crowded gift-book marketplace.

The most original of this year's crop is the *Stoddart Visual Dictionary* (Stoddart, 798 pages, \$29.95 cloth). If you're stuck for the name of an object or part of a system, you can look up a drawing of it and find the names attached. There's useful material for aspiring novelists (the middle band on a 17th-century cannon barrel is the "chase astragal"), practising journalists who have to cover technical subjects, illustrators, students, reference librarians, and that endangered but hardy breed, the general reader. The constituents of a jet plane, a diving suit,

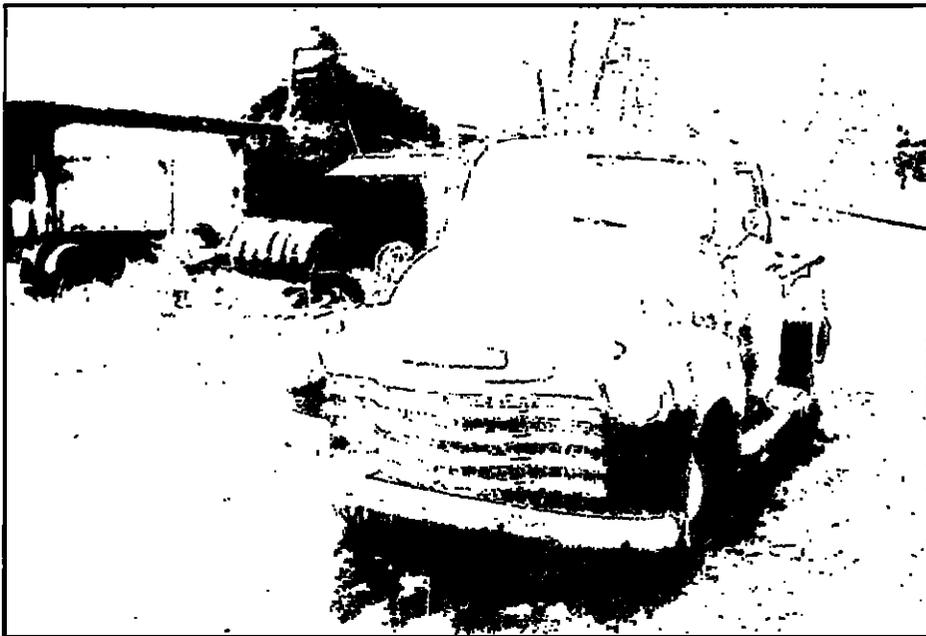
a human ceil, or a lady's undergarments are all detailed here.

The do-it-yourself section may save you from the scorn that hardware clerks reserve for handymen who ask for things-majiggers. One might quibble with a Few of lexicographer Jean-Claude Corbeil's labels (when was the last time you heard a car tachometer called a "revolution counter"?), but on the whole its organization is logical, the drawings are clear, and the information is useful.

In the hands of an artist like Harold Town, the *Visual Dictionary* would provide instant collage material. Town's restless genius has explored many media, but he has a particular gift for collage, as David Burnett's *Town (McClelland & Stewart/Art Gallery of Ontario, 240 pages, \$29.95 paper)* reveals.

Much of Burnett's text is concerned with the critical buffeting Town's reputation has suffered since its peak in the 1960s, when his show at the Laing Gallery was called the Stanley Cup playoffs of Canadian art. The general wisdom among the art establishment seems to be that Town's recent work is shallow, repetitive, and devoid of content. The National Gallery has yet to hold a Town show. The

"Freezing Rain," from People of the Interlake, by Andrew Blicq and Ken Gigliotti (Turnstone Press)



first major retrospective of his work was held by the Windsor Art Gallery in the mid-'70s; this book commemorates the next one. There is a sense of overshadowing about the book, too: this is definitely an economy production, with as many monochrome as colour reproductions, and a paperback binding. Perhaps Canadian artists have to die before they merit the Fuii coffee-table treatment.

Posterity will decide the argument over the lasting value of Town's art, but Town's richness of imagination is as evident here as his command of many media (painting, drawing, sculpture, collage, printmaking). He's also given Canadian art some of its beat one-liners. He said of one exhibition jurist: "I thought he was dead, but of course I had only his pictures to judge by."

One of Town's collages combines microchips with rougher, more primitive Forms. A similar sensibility informs the offbeat *Pebbles to Computers: The Thread* (Oxford, 112 pages, \$24.95 cloth), perhaps the first gift book devoted to computation. Cybernetic pioneer Stafford Beer and photographer Hans Blohm trace the development of computing devices from early pebble and circle systems through Pascal's and Babbage's to modern microcomputers.

Beer argues that the structure and philosophy of computers are mirrored in nature, that a "thread" connects all consciousness. A red thread motif loops through the book, sewing visuals and text to this idea. The photography is crisp, and Beer's thoughts are challenging (although at times a bit tinged with '60s cosmic consciousness). The introduction is by David Suzuki.

Suzuki and Blohm are also co-creators, with writer Marjorie Harris, of the sibling Oxford production *Sciencescape: The Nature of Canada* (unpaginated, \$24.95 cloth). Suzuki describes it as a "collaboration between two kinds of perception, that of the scientist and that of the artist." The concept is intriguing: take impressive landscapes and nature close-ups and add text that comments on them from the viewpoint of science.

This cross-fertilization is rewarding for

the reader: **familiar** Canadian **sights** take on a new meaning **when** we understand **why** the **Rockies** have their shape, or how butterflies migrate. This is a good example of a **gift** book that can buttress the "Ooh!" of admiration **with the "Aha!"** of perception.

Sciencescape delivers a stun **warning** about the fragility of Canadian **nature**, vast though its landscape may be. **This** theme is also **central** to Fred **Bruemmer's Arctic Animals: A Celebration of Survival** (McClelland & Stewart, 160 pages, \$329.95 cloth). **Bruemmer** is **our** best photographer of nature in the North (a story **goes** that a **magazine** once called **him** on the off-chance that he had a photograph of a polar bear **being** milked, and he responded, "Colour or black and white?") but it's not just his sense of **timing** and **composition** that make **this** book a worthy successor to his **earlier** collections. **Bruemmer's** love and respect for the **animals** infuse every frame, and (even though his photography is **much** stronger than his **writing**) **this** is an eloquent **argument** for treading softly **in** any future exploitation of Northern resources. He reminds us what incredible adaptations both the animals **and** the **Inuit** have made to **survive** in the harsh climate.

For a different vision of the same **land**, try **Qilkaaluktut: Images of Inuit Life** (Oxford, unpaginated, \$24.95 cloth), by Baker Lake artist Ruth **Annaqtusi Tuluriak** and writer David F. **Pelly**. The title is a **Inuktitut** word meaning "the sounds of **people** passing by, perhaps outside your **iglu**, heard but not **seen**." **Tuluriak's** playful and **colourful** pencil drawings accompany her stories of the old days before the **Barren Lands Inuit** were **broken** by **starvation** in the 1950s and had to **move** to settlements.

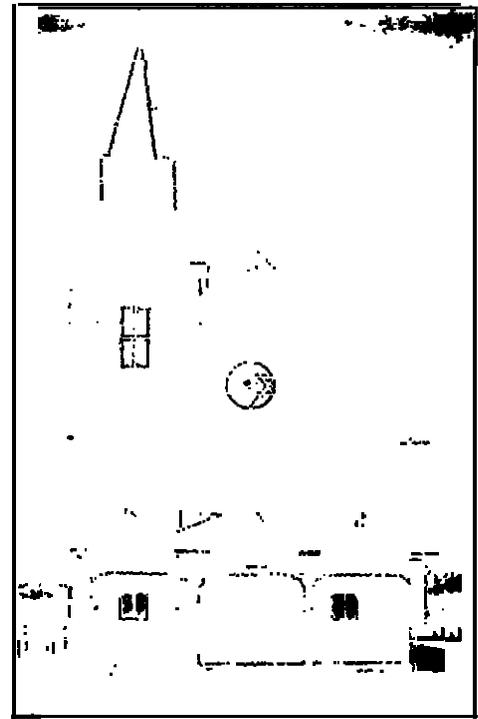
This collection has **more** depth than many books of **Inuit art**, since it **manages** to **convey** something of the culture that **produced** the kayak and the ulu, "when children worked very hard to **learn** things they needed to know in order to **live**."

Her book is a **vivid** reminder of those days.

A very **different** vision appears in **The Ojibway Dream** (Tundra, 48 pages, \$29.95 cloth), a **memorial** to the art of Arthur **Shilling**, who, **only 45**, died from heart **trouble** earlier this year. His richly **hued** portraits have more in common with the **work** of expressionists like **Emil Nolde** than with the stylized work of other native-Canadian painters. The paintings in this **collection** show native **people** in **head-and-shoulders** views against **backgrounds** of flowing, energetic **colours**. The images are set off by **Shilling's** often poetic meditations on art and life: "You could rake the **coals** over my body. Death **will not** put **this** fire out." Although his style **sometimes** strays **into** sentimentality, there is **real** power and vision **in** most of the work reproduced here.

Finally, some of the **more** predictable entries: photo books that celebrate the scenic joys of Canada without **saying** much **new**. The **most** attractive of these is **Trans-Canada Country: A Photographic Journey** (Collins, 208 pages, \$39.95 cloth), by Brian **Milne**, who spent 18 **months** exploring the Trans-Canada Highway and amassing **colour** slides of his **discoveries**. The expected **scenics** are well **represented** but **interest** is added by **Milne's** eye for the other delights of the **road**: old signs, local characters, a mid-night **truck-stop**. The people he photographs have interesting **rather** than **glamorous** faces. **These** touches of reality help temper the shots of **glorious** sunsets **and** tranquil lakes.

Two less imaginative entries in the **coffee-table-concept** sweepstakes are **spin-offs** from Expo 86. **Vancouver: A Year in Motion** (Collins, 208 pages, \$49.95 cloth), by Tom Sutherland and Cindy Bellamy, exposes, **in reproductions** so large that **grain** is often noticeable, the **work** of 50 local **photographers** who shot **their way** through the year leading up to **Expo's** opening day. **There** are some **stunning** pictures here, especially **Albert**



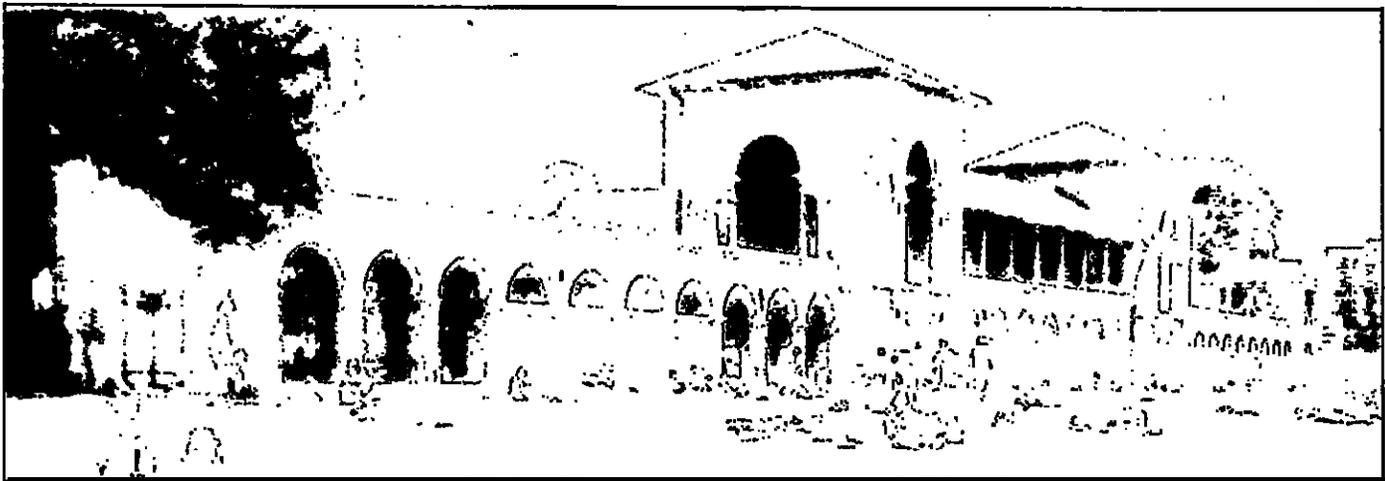
Little Sands United Church, from The Historic Churches of Prince Edward Island, by H.M. Scott Smith (Boston Mills Press)

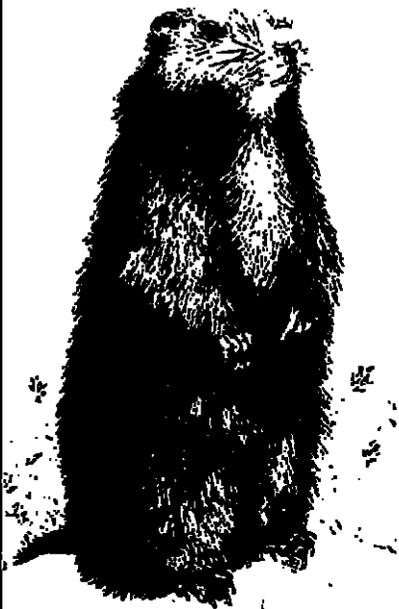
Chin's landscape of a sulphur pile, but a **quick** perusal of **this** book **might** make the **unwary** think that **Vancouver** has **no junkies**, derelicts **or** (for that matter) native people. Presumably **Vancouver** isn't "their" **city**. Nobody here but us happy, well-fed folks who indulge in the odd bit of **eccentricity**.

Not quite **so grandiose** but, just as sunny-natured, **This Is My Home** (Douglas & McIntyre, 128 pages, \$324.95 cloth) took the "day-in-the-life" approach, **with photographers** across Canada mapping local events on Canada Day. The results became both an audio-visual display at **Expo** and a book.

To be fair: **this** **time** does show a wider **variety** of **people** than the **Vancouver** effort. Part of **the** **fascination** in the approach comes from detecting the **similarities** across the country that help

Sunnyside Bathing Pavilion, from Toronto Observed: Its Architecture, Patrons, and History, by William Dendy and William Kilbourn (Oxford)





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support the notion that we are a nation. But the text, with a few exceptions ("Canada is a clumsy country that means well" — Duncan MacPherson) is saccharine. Perhaps love for one's country on Canada Day inevitably comes out sounding like puppy love. □

REVIEW

Sharing the guilt

By Wayne Grady

The Telling of Lies, by Timothy Findley, Penguin, 359 pages, \$18.93 cloth (ISBN 0 670 81206 4).

THIS IS AN odd mystery. No one in it seems to know what's going on, including the people who are supposed to know. It's more like life than a novel, which is in itself disquieting. The events are told — written, actually, in her diary — by 62-year-old Vanessa Van Horne, a n American and one of the principals in the case, who does not really want to know what has happened. She is aided in her reluctant investigations by her nephew, Lawrence Pawley, a doctor, who thinks he knows what is happening but doesn't. And the entire book is interwoven with trails that turn out to lead not to nowhere, exactly, but to a series of somewheres that are as baffling and inconclusive as Vanessa seems to have anticipated they would be.

Formally, the novel is a classic mystery in the English country-mano tradition. A small group of regular guests at the Aurora Sands Hotel (known affectionately as ASH) on the coast of Maine have gathered for their usual summer of lying about on the beach and destroying each others' reputations with gossip and snubs. Vanessa's family has patronized ASH for generations, as have those of her lifelong friends Lily Porter and Meg Riches. Meg's husband Michael has been confined to a wheelchair since his stay in a Montreal hospital a few years before, and Lily has become the companion of Calder Maddox, another regular guest, who is the octogenarian head of a major pharmaceutical company and the inventor of, among other diabolical things, a potent tranquillizer called Maddoxin: as Vanessa writes in her diary (actually, it is a noctuary, since she does most of her note-taking at night), Maddox has given the world "Maddoxin to put them to sleep and Maddoxin to wake them up. And Maddoxin to calm them in between." When Calder Maddox is discovered on the beach, coated in one of

his own lotions, stretched out on a chaise-longue and dead as a mackerel, all hell — in this case in the form of the local siren-loving state troopers backed up by the CIA and several platoons of inept bodyguards, not to mention the president of the United States — breaks, as they say, loose.

The trails along which Vanessa and Lawrence stumble seem promising at first. Though Maddox is an internationally renowned figure, photo on the cover of *Newsweek*, no mention of his death appears in even the local newspapers. Then the parking lot of the neighbouring hotel fills up with limousines, BMWs, and other signs of top-level government officials trying to be inconspicuous. Then our intrepid duo discover Maddox's body (again), some photographs taken by Vanessa at the scene of the crime disappear, various ruffians flashing plastic laminated ID cards begin to question ASH's somewhat somnambulant staff, a guest is kidnapped, other guests attend a dance, Vanessa is kidnapped, Maddox's body is snatched again, and all in all events take on a decidedly ominous rumble.

When the rumble ceases, we are not, as we might expect to be at the end of a mystery, enlightened. For Findley is not concerned here so much with solutions to mysteries as he is with studying the effects of mysteries upon those who are experiencing them, in this case the guests at ASH. "Calder's death," writes Vanessa, "has become a wire around this beach," and *The Telling of Lies* is, in effect, a prison novel, a study of the psychology of the suspects — those secondary and often forgotten victims of crime. They are not quite sure that a crime has been committed, they are told nothing, they are under no overt threat; and yet they know that something has happened, that someone among them is guilty of something.

Viewing the novel as a study of prison mentality explains several otherwise inexplicable elements. One of them is Vanessa's childhood. As a young woman of 15, she had spent part of the war in a Japanese detention camp in Bandung, in Indonesia, where her father, an engineer with a large oil firm, was killed by order of the prison commander, Colonel Norimitsu. Vanessa dedicates her diary to Norimitsu, the man "who, with one hand killed my father and with the other made of my father's grave a garden. Death before life." Garden imagery crops up throughout the novel: Vanessa's profession is that of a garden designer, and her friend's name is Lily and her mother's name was Rose Adella. Vanessa's reminiscences occupy whole chapters and are also vague explorations of the psychology of prisoners, though they are not very successfully integrated into the

fabric of **Findley's** complex plot.

Another oddity is the iceberg that **appears suddenly off the coast of Maine and stays there**, about a mile **offshore** from ASH, **throughout the** entire novel. No one seems to pay much attention to it — sightseers are kept away by the police roadblocks — but there it stays, **like a rather heavy-handed** symbol of the death that visits **Calder Maddox**. **Vanessa** regards it as "a gift: it gives us **all** something legitimate to focus on." But it hovers just outside the novel's **fringe**, never **impinging** on events, floating just beyond the Tantalus grasp of meaning.

The Telling of Lies is, then, an odd mystery. The temptation is to **credit** its inconclusiveness and oddity to its **being** a grab-bag of **discarded Findleyana** over which a tea-mazy of detective fiction has been superimposed. But it is more than that: in its very **inconclusiveness** and oddity is an ideal **simulacrum** of real life, in which threads are taken up and then let fall, trails are **cold** long before they are found, and bodies **come** and **go** with a kind of whimsicality that **endears** them to us as old friends. This is not the deepest of **Findley's novels**; it is certainly his **gentlest**. □

REVIEW

Lost in the chorus

By George Galt

Dvorak in Love, by Josef **Skvorecky**, translated from the Czech by **Paul Wilson, Lester & Orpen Dennys**, 320 pages, 322.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88619 059 2).

THE SIGHTS AND sounds that **inspired** the music of **Antonin Dvorak** are lovingly **rendered** in this historical **novel**, subtitled "a Light-hearted dream." How do the random notes of life modulate into art? **murmurs** the book's **subtext**. The same **question occasionally** honks **loudly** in the teat as well. So **much** good writing laces *Dvorak in Love*, and I have such **enthusiasm** for **Skvorecky's** other fiction that I wish his ambitious new **work could** be praised without reservation. A small readership, those with a strong **interest** in Dvorak and in American musicology, may become infatuated with this story, but I suspect most **people will** find it heavy **going**.

Dvorak was the **first European** composer of stature to live in **America** and absorb American music. Much of the novel's energy arises out of the **Old World/New World** tension that characterized the **expensive pursuit** of

high culture (which meant **European** culture) in the United States beginning in the late 19th century. The story opens with Dvorak's invitation in 1891 to serve as **director of the** National Conservatory of Music. The composer's **Bohemia**, his **New York**, and his sojourn in the Czech immigrant **village** of **Spillville**, Iowa, **comprise** a rotating stags on which the novelist deploys a dozen major characters.

Scenes jump backwards and forwards, ranging from the mid-19th century of Dvorak's youth in Bohemia to the U.S. in **1931**, the year his widow died. It is fashionable to cut **linear** narrative into **surprising pieces** and **rearrange** their sequence; imitating memory, the technique can give **wonderful resonance** to fiction. Yet here the continual temporal shifts feel **more like the work of a coarse Cuisinart** than the delicate play of memory. The **novel has a centre** — Dvorak's life and work — but no **central point of view**. It is **told through the voices** and memories of many characters. **Following them all** and making **sense of** the shredded **time** sequence can be a bumpy ride.

Dvorak was **first** in love with **Josefina Cermakova**, one of his music students, who chose **instead to marry** Count **Kaunitz**. Spumed, the **composer** was then **pursued and snared by Anna**, **Josefina's** **shrewd** sister. **These entanglements are** **powerfully** depicted from the **point of view of each woman**. Another **segment** of the novel that **comes brilliantly alive** is the story of **Franta Valenta**, a Bohemian peasant (**invented? -it doesn't matter**) who **crossed the Atlantic with his family** around 1850, and made his way to **Spillville**. **Skvorecky** conveys a gritty understanding of the **19th-century** immigrant **experience** through this tale, and makes palpable the rough-and-ready **free-for-all** that **greeted newcomers** off the boats.

Less compelling are the monologues of people who **remember** Dvorak in his New York period. Much is made of the **origins** of the New World Symphony, and of Dvorak's **fascination** with and validation of black music. **Skvorecky quotes a prescient** passage: "I am satisfied that the future of music in this country must be founded on what are called Negro melodies." **Interesting**, but many of these **musicological musings** seemed **interminable to me**. There is **too much** straight telling about Dvorak's musical **genius**, his personality, and his accomplishments. In the **end**, although every **other** character in this **novel is pointing a finger** at the composer, he remains curiously **elusive** and unformed.

I began reading *Dvorak in Love* as I put down *The Safety Net* by **Heinrich Böll**, another heavily populated novel told from multiple **points of view**. **Böll suc-**

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ceeds by moving his story inexorably forward, and by giving the reader a stake in knowing how each character perceives the action. Böll's novel about terrorism, everything is connected to everything else, so you crave the multiple viewpoints. By comparison, several of Skvorecky's voices seem gratuitous and cluttering. Böll also had the good sense to include a list of characters for the reader's convenience. *Dvorak in Low* needs a similar mad map.

The novel's prose is dense and rich, and graced in translation by Paul Wilson's fine ear for language. To use a wonderful word from the text, this book works spasmelodically. Parts of it may daunt (or bore) even those familiar with the composer's achievements. But at its best the novel conveys a deeply felt sense of the loves and sorrows that moved the people in this man's life. □

REVIEW

Beautiful losers

By Frank Davey

Century, by Ray Smith, Stoddart, 160 pages, \$12.95 paper (ISBN 0 7737 5076 2).

IN SIX FASCINATING prose texts, Ray Smith attempts to chart the descent of our century from the sophistication and unhappy intelligence of *fin-de-siècle* Paris to the gloomy political and environmental prospects of our own time. Smith's publisher cautiously bills *Century* as a "collection of fiction," but the six texts firmly interlock and in their focus on the ethical failure of the century, on its "waste of humankind" in "a cacophony of strident contention," can be read as constituting a novel in which the century is the unfortunate main character.

The actual leading characters of *Century* are idealists who seek a world in which suffering is relieved and health and beauty are available to everyone. Surrounded by greed, cynicism, famine, and violence, however, they find their idealism painful and in some cases in conflict with their own desires and obsessions.

Bill Seymour, a retired Canadian United Nations official, is so haunted by the suffering of the African poor, which his lifetime of work for international relief agencies was unable to reduce, that he cannot enjoy the small British Columbia garden he has purchased for his final years. His daughter, Jane, "a child of the sixties" who "cared... about the absolute necessity of making the world a better place," has dreams about being seduced by Heinrich Himmler and so blames her-

self for these that she commits suicide. His son Ian and daughter-in-law Stephanie, whose little girl has been killed by a drunk driver, attempt to anesthetize themselves against thinking about life by constant travel.

The turn-of-the-century American art collector, Kenniston Thorson, who may have been the father of Bill Seymour's British wife Gwen, for four decades travels restlessly through Europe in and out of the lives of Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Jane Avril, Alphonse Daudet, Anatole France, Emile Zola, Gabriel Fauré, Arthur Balfour, Frank Harris, Harry Kessler, and Alban Berg, simultaneously enchanted by their talent and wisdom and chagrined by this wisdom's impotence. Gwen's mother, the naive flapper Constance, seeks single-handedly to end the sexual repressions and political divisions of the 19th century by emulating the "holy prostitutes" of the corn god and attempting to make humankind "all one together."

Uniting the individual stories of these assorted idealists are various powerful symbols of 20th-century waste — the child randomly killed by the drunk driver, the "deformed Limbs, the bloated bellies, the swollen joints" of the poor who surround Africa" international hotels, Heinrich Himmler, the addictions to opiates, alcohol, and sex that abound in Kenniston Thorson's Europe.

Century is an engaging book to read, full of surprising narrative turns, witty and intelligent characters, and an impressive command of 20th-century history. The contrast between its own literary beauties and its pessimistic implications echoes the inability of its characters to combine beauty and value. Bill Seymour can create a garden in B.C. but not adequate farmlands in Africa; Thorson's Europe can give the world Toulouse-Lautrec but not avoid the slaughters of Verdun; Ian Seymour can be "entranced by the Dolomites changing colour through the day" yet perceive in life no enduring satisfaction; Gwen's mother can attempt to embrace total sexual freedom as a way to dance history "out of existence because history is nothing but traumas and repressions. . . [by] authority" yet be blind to her own enslavement by drugs, alcohol and compulsive promiscuity.

In *Century* one is thus repeatedly reminded of the limited power of art and



beauty to effect moral change, yet the book paradoxically works to effect such change — at the very least by making its idealists such attractive characters and their stories such intriguing texts. □

REVIEW

The royal treatment

By Roy MacLaren

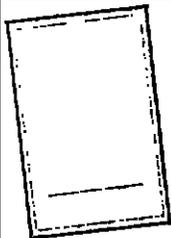
The Imperial Canadian: Vincent Massey in Office, by Claude Bissell, University of Toronto Press. 361 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 5656 3).

THE MANY WHO rejoiced in Claude Bissell's first volume of his biography of Vincent Massey will welcome his second at least as warmly. The *Imperial Canadian* is a notable achievement. Bissell's prose is again consistently lucid and elegant. But it is more than that; it also reflects a social perception that is both rare and acute.

The Young Vincent Massey took us through Massey's earlier life as diplomat and political aspirant, culminating in his presidency of the National Liberal Association. King's successful election campaign in 1935 was in large part designed by Massey. The new prime minister promptly appointed the party president to the coveted post of Canadian high commissioner in London, just the job for such a pronounced Anglophile — and a good place to be rid of an affluent colleague who frequently irritated him. Bissell writes of King's conviction that Massey was everything antithetic to his own values: had not Massey "inherited wealth, a" effete aestheticism, a burning zeal for self-advancement, and a servile attitude toward the English upper classes?" All that and much else contributed to King's continuing dislike of Massey. For the observant Bissell, Massey's undeniable foibles added to the chiaroscuro. They do not detract from the very real regard in which his biographer holds him, a regard particularly evident in this second volume.

The Imperial Canadian begins with the arrival of the 48-year-old Massey in pre-war London, suitably kitted with court dress to play an active role in the British society he so -d. Bissell provides a full and lively account of Massey's pre-war and especially of his wartime years in Britain, delineating en route the high commissioner's role in the creation of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, his enhanced responsibilities as interlocutor between Ottawa and London,

BookNews: an advertising feature



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Norman Ward

Illustrations by Louis de Niverville

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and the **more personal** contribution of the Massey family to Canada's war effort.

Ably supported by **Georges Vanier** and Lester Pearson in the early years of his cherished London appointment. Massey accomplished much, but had hoped to do yet more. He had hoped that **King** would recall him to Ottawa to **fill a major cabinet post**. That Massey never realized such a recurring ambition — and Massey was an intensely ambitious man — has in "o way hindered Bissell in writing what is more than a highly competent and always witty biography of a leading Canadian. In a very real sense, both volumes are also social histories of Canada for the years they encompass, social histories that portray a country in the final stages of chrysalis as it evolved from colony to nation.

Bissell's biography has the rare distinction of being at the same time an elegant and amusing account, replete with illuminating anecdotes, of the official and private lives of the **Masseys** in London and Ottawa, and on quite a different level a perceptive comment on the changing nature of Canada. Massey contributed substantially to this change, pre-eminently in his postwar roles as chairman of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences and as the first Canadian-born governor general. Bissell is especially good on the work of the royal commission, which has left a "indelible mark on" Canada.

As a former president of the University of Toronto, Bissell is also well placed to describe Massey's postwar years as chancellor of the University of Toronto and to note vividly the political machinations evidently inseparable from academic life. It remains, however, Massey's contribution in the arts and in the office of head of state that provide Bissell with the hook on which to hang his sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit, but always incisive review of the changing nature of Canada. The backdrops as much as the centre stage are among the many joys of *The Imperial Canadian*.

Bissell contemplates Massey as a character from a Henry James novel, a revealing insight into both Massey and the Canada he represented. As do so many of the ambiguous characters in James's fiction, Massey "oscillated between Europe and America, between the imperial centre and the dependency that had become independent and assertive." It is the measure of Bissell's achievement that he is always able to keep these two poles clearly defined at the same time to explore and elucidate the whole range of attitudes, emotions, and allegiances that composed the spectrum between them.

Massey was himself a "author of some ability, offering his readers his own particular understanding of the rapidly evol-

ing Canada of his lifetime, but it was for his biographer to give us, in his two splendid volumes, a dear and convincing picture of the unique contribution that Massey made to his homeland (despite his lifelong infatuation with Britain). No one could have done it better than Bissell. □

REVIEW

Beasts of the field

By Ray Filip

Dance with Desire, by Irving Layton, McClelland & Stewart, 162 pages, \$12.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 4987 2).

The Beekeeper's Daughter, by Bruce Hunter, Thistle-down Press, 78 pages, \$20.00 doth (ISBN 0 920633 14 5) and \$8.95 paper (ISBN 0 920633 15 3).

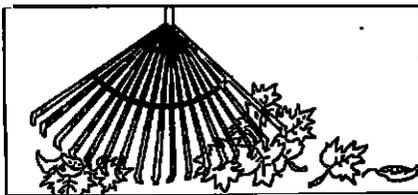
Small Horses and Intimate Beasts, by Michel Garneau, translated from the French by Robert McGee, Véhicule Press, 93 pages, \$8.95 paper (ISBN 0 919890 68 7).

IRVING LAYTON is a seminal figure in Canadian poetry. He happened to be in the tight place at the right time with the right line. Only he could get away with a "undesirable book like *Dance with Desire*, the latest repackaging of love poems from his bedroom assembly line.

Wasp sensibilities stopped being offended by Layton more than 20 years ago. After *A Red Carpet for the Sun*, his craftsmanship went into decline, and he began running on reputation, pumping out quickie poems like nocturnal emissions.

The sincere love poems are the ones that come from his heart, not his crotch. "Blueberry Picking," "Hills and Hills," "Divorce," and "Vikki" are feelingful. But nothing compares, let's say, with the exotic eroticism of Michael Ondaatje's "The Cinnamon Peeler," or the senescent sensuality of Earle Birney's romancing of Wai-lan.

The catalogues, "The Day Aviva Came to Paris," and "With the Money I Spend," or the anaphora in "Farewell" are no longer risqué, just ridiculously long-winded, though "Seduction of and by a Civilized Frenchwoman" is a clever



marathon periodic sentence ending without a period.

Even stylistically, Layton's language is as fresh as a fossil in stone. Extolling Love and Beauty in capital letters went out with the 19th century. Beauty doesn't have a chance with the author's constant intrusions.

We also have to survive through his rhetorical obsession with the stale bagel: "O." "O not remembering her derision of me, I plunge like a corkscrew into her softness. . . . Girl. O girl, let our washed limbs make a perverse Star of David O the fetid dreams of men! . . . O I am not at all what men say I am Did you, O lovely lady, really unhook the interposing bra. . . . Because, O yes, you squeezed back. . . . O the folly a poet will say or do/ when a woman's beauty ravels his senses./ O the squalid comedy of his blinding love."

O, shut up.

The Beekeeper's Daughter, by Bruce Hunter, is a collection of "work" poems that work. The writing is deceptively plain and unobtrusive. Hunter humbly conveys how hard grave-digging and other labour is without unearthing dead ideologies.

He does not deal with death in safe abstractions. You smell the stench of a "exhumed body, coveralls outside the lunch room, 2-4-D and yellow hags of Weed and Feed, and understand the wisdom behind "gravediggers do "ot touch the roses."

Hunter "comes down on the side of the union," but does not succumb to the occupational hazard of playing the hem. Strapped to a safety belt with other chainsawyers, "Always we roughhouse,/ down-playing the soft touch on the lever/ where megatons of hydraulic can kill."

He is a prairie boy and shows us new ways of seeing those common sights: "Everything in this country wind-topped,/ backed against the life./ The cable holding the bar" against it,/ the house leaning and uncle himself."

Relationships are also hard work. Hunter recognizes the masculine end feminine in us all, and the gender-free masks under which good and evil hide: "That serene head staring towards me./ my eyes prisms of water/ in which each ringlet of hair/ becomes a strand in a wig of snakes,/ each with the head of a man./ Nothing evil there,/ simply all the possibilities of belief."

His poor choice of structure, a "itemized list of complaints in "Towards a Definition of Pornography," constricts a potentially powerful poem. But on the whole, *The Beekeeper's Daughter* harvests the best of Hunter's recent work in generous portions, lucid and lovely.

Small Horses & Intimate Beasts, by Michel Garneau, is a giddy yapper of a book. Having bee "imprisoned during the

1970 War Measures Act, Garneau is painfully familiar with the ins and outs of language.

The Chinese say translation is the other side of the tapestry. Interhorseface? Robert McGee, a fine poet in his own right, rides out the prosodic feet with contrapuntal aplomb.

On a bedsheet or on writing paper, the French know how to have fun. Garneau's bestiary of *L'Animalhumain* leaps with unbridled speech. The clip of "et les cheveux les ch'veux les ch'feux" clops into "and the hair hair hairs." Nouns and proper names become verbs: "i greta you i marilyn you/ i say to you lou i say to you laura. . . i am still picking that first flower/ and by giving it to you hand it to eve."

The musicality of Garneau's puns requires a conductor's baton: "en milk neuf vents trente huit." Words are still magical, life is the drug, high on imagination: the pure stuff.

As flyé as Chagall's cows, Garneau whoops and warbles in "to sing at the top of one's lungs while driving": "the fireflies show off their big blue lips/ moose give each other kisses in the creek/ bii beige bulls are covered up with mist/ the bull frogs are horsing around with the bass/ . . . the little birds haul eternity away."

The relation between author, and that peculiar invisible creature, the reader, can be summed up with this stanza: "to be a zebra/ us two/ a doublezebra/ a galloping twosome/ sun lightning."

This bilingual book is a small horsey with room for readers across the country. □

REVIEW

Tainted victory

By Desmond Morton

Vimy, by Pierre Berton, McClelland & Stewart, 336 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 1339 6).

NATIONS, CLAIMED the French historian Ernest Renan, are not created by speaking the same language or even by occupying the same territory. They are made by people who have done great things together in the past and who expect to do great things together in the future.

Even at the time, the Canadians who captured Vimy Ridge in 1917 knew that they had done a great thing. The bodies

of close to 50,000 French and British soldiers who had died in earlier attempts seemed warning enough that the Germans could hold the ridge as long as they chose. For months, through the coldest winter Europe had known in decades, Canadians tunnelled and dragged supplies and raided enemy trenches. Generals and staff officers, who had been salesmen, editors, and professors only a couple of years earlier, plotted and planned. Finally, in the wake of the most effective artillery barrage the war had so far seen, 49 battalions of Canadian infantry walked forward through snow and mud to do the impossible deed.

Vii is the battle Canadians associate with the First World War, as Australians remember Gallipoli or Broodeinde, or the Americans Belleau Wood. It was not the complete, dramatic victory the British would achieve at Messines a few months later, or that Canadians and A-would deliver at Amiens in August, 1918; it was a triumph Canadians needed to share with no one. Never before had all four divisions of the Canadian corps advanced in line on a single objective. In the battalions were French and English, Poles, Germans, Ukrainians, Japanese Canadians, native Canadians and representatives of every other ethnic fragment of the transcontinental Dominion.

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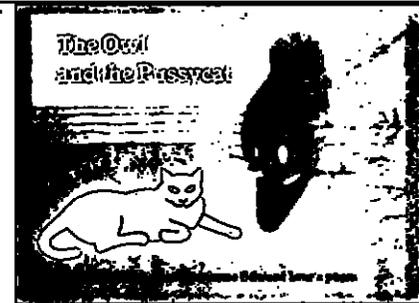
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There are few painless or perfect victories. Of the 38,000 men who advanced on Vimy, close to 10,000 would be dead or wounded. Only three of the four divisions reached their objectives on that cold Easter Monday; not until the fourth day could the 4th Division's Brigadier General Edward Hilliam report from the final German stronghold, "I am King of the Pimple."

Worse; Vimy was not a great thing Canadians had done together. In Montreal that spring, recruiting parties for the Canadian Expeditionary Force were jeered; in most of Canada, they were merely ignored. Replacing the casualties of Vimy forced the conscription crisis of 1917. The scar tissue on the wounds to our national unity is still tender 70 years later.

At the time, the conflict at home was only hinted at to the victors of Vimy, much as soldiers themselves gave their families only rare glimpses of the horrors of their experiences in war. For them, Vimy had an unquestioned national significance. It coincided not only with the new professionalism of the corps and an unfamiliar wealth of shells, guns, and other military material but also with the dominance of the Canadian-born in what had been largely a contingent of British emigrés.

Even before historians suggested that April 9, 1917, was the moment when Canada was transformed from colony to nation, the Canadians at Vimy felt it in their bones. It was a feeling even the frugal, unimaginative government of William Lyon Mackenzie King was forced to respect when, a decade later, it authorized the memorial that now towers over the Douai Plain.

As the faithful chronicler of our national epics; Pierre Berton has turned to Vimy as naturally as he rediscovered the War of 1812, the building of the CPR, and the settlement of the Canadian West. He has brought to the task his usual narrative skill, an enthusiasm for odd characters and bizarre anecdotes and sufficient righteous indignation at war and its horrors to reassure readers who fear the Rambo disease.

Berton's researchers have assembled scores of books and pamphlets by proud participants, and they have mustered a few dozen nonagenarian survivors and grilled them on their memories. The result, proclaims Professor William Kilbourn from the book's back cover, is "one of the most moving accounts of war and battle ever written."

Frankly, in the name of sales or friendship, Kilbourn overreaches himself. There are more accurate and interesting

accounts of the battle, notably by the internationally known but locally ignored Canadian historian, Donald Goodspeed. The enthusiasm of Berton and his researchers reveals an embarrassing shortage of knowledge about the Canadian Expeditionary Force and the First World War. Errors speckle the pages. It would not have detracted from the author's lively prose to recognize that an artillery brigade in 1917 was very different from an infantry brigade, or that the 75th Battalion (now the Toronto Scottish) had nothing much to do with the thriving city that was named Mississauga only in 1987. Lloyd George favoured the Australian, John Monash, over Canada's Arthur Currie as a colonial successor to the generals he despised. The British began the war with two machine guns per battalion, not per division.

Frequent repetition does not guarantee truth. A generation ago, Charles Stacey demolished the beloved Canadian folk-myth that Sam Hughes thumped Lord Kitchener's desk for the sake of preserving a united Canadian contingent. Berton gives this and many other dubious legends a second life.

The unhappy fact is that Vimy is laden with errors and inaccuracies, none of which are needed for a lively narrative. Who cares? Berton, and the friends

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World War II might have ended."
— Peter C. Newman

whose editorial puffs decorate his back cover — Richard Rohmer, Peter Newman, June Callwood — may dismiss such criticisms as the jealousy of academic nit-pickers. The marketplace may give them confidence. In *Vimy*, Pierre Berton has given book-buyers what most of them want: a good read and a help with the Christmas shopping list.

There is no evidence that Berton's readers want accuracy as much as they relish his colourful sermons on human folly and national achievement. They will learn much to excite and inspire them. In turn, the dollars he earns do as much as the rest of Ontario's taxpayers pot together to keep McClelland & Stewart in business.

And someday a better book will be written. □

REVIEW

Loss and profit

By Cathleen Hoskins

Dislocations, by Janette Turner Hospital, McClelland & Stewart. 179 pages, 812.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 4219 1).

JANETTE TURNER HOSPITAL'S first collection of short stories shows how deeply rooted one must be to speak truly of the loss of place. *Hospital's own journey* has taken her from Australia to the United States, England, India, and, since 1971, Canada, and each of these countries has provided material for her writing. But the sense of place in these 14 rich and varied stories is larger than any nation's borders, and the collection is unified by the human connectedness she sees possible despite her characters' wanderings. Sometimes the place left behind is a character's native land, but sometimes, and often more vividly, Hospital writes of losses in psychic space.

In "Golden Girl," for instance, a breathtakingly beautiful and brilliant university student is transfigured by a gruesome fire. The country she must relinquish is that of her own self-image. Through an excruciating physical and psychological journey, she forges a more

selfless bond of friendship with another woman who survived the fire. In "After the Fall," a story with special resonance for anyone who has tried to create in the grasping midst of family demands, an artist, hellbent on capturing the changeable colorations of a dying amaryllis before her children burst in from school, steps dramatically out of her place in time. And "The Inside Story" shows a well-educated, well-meaning English teacher subtly reformed by the classes she gives in the other world of prison Ufe.

Throughout the book Hospital's prose is fluent and apt. Only infrequently does her desire for descriptive precision tempt her into metaphoric overkill. And pacing, so crucial to the art of the short story, is one of her special gifts. She understands and uses well the need for pause, a breathing-space often lost in the short story's demand for compacted action. Though none of these stories extends beyond 15 pages, there are some such as "Happy Diwali," "The Owl-Bander," and most delightfully, "Waiting" (seed story for her first novel, *The Ivory Swing*) — that unfold with a leisure usually found only in longer works of fiction. Others, such as "After the Fall," "The Dark Wood," and "Some Have Called Thee Mighty and Dreadful," pulse with the pared-to-the-essence speed of a thoroughbred.

The linchpin to this collection is that final dislocation we call death. Disease, injury, old age, lost career, lost lovers, children grown distant — all these figure as *petits morts* just this side of the big one. And death itself, whether devastatingly sudden as in "Some Have Called Thee" or drawn out in fits and starts as in "The Dark Wood," is clearly seen by Hospital as a force that reshapes those left behind in the land of the living. The lighter side of death is here too in "Ashes to Ashes," a tender satire on different notions of dying in the East and West, spoiled only by the inclusion of a newspaper clipping that gives away the story.

Named one of Canada's 10 best fiction writers under 45 in a recent promotion campaign, Hospital has collected prize nominations and awards for her three novels, and a story not included in this collection was recently awarded the \$10,000 *Ladies Home Journal* short story prize. What's wonderful about *Dislocations* however, is an abiding sense that fame and fortune have nothing to do with the writing of these stories. With an unerring ear and eye and a generous heart, Hospital writes stories that, though starting from points of loss, add richly to the world at large. Here she accomplishes one of literature's essential tasks: to touch readers with a vision of life enhanced, and send us forth determined, even in tiny ways, to live an ampler life. □



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BRIEF REVIEWS

CRIME

Justice Denied: The Law Versus Donald Marshall, by Michael Harris, Macmillan, 405 pages, \$24.95 cloth (QSBN 0 7715 9690 1).

THIS EXHAUSTIVE investigation of the Donald Marshall case provides a chilling account of **jurisprudence** gone awry. With a **journalistic eye** for detail, Michael Harris constructs a **voluminous** indictment of a tragic miscarriage of justice.

At **first glance**, the facts of the case appear simple. **Sandy Seale**, a black youth, is stabbed to death in a Sidney, N.S., park. His companion, **Donald Marshall**, a **17-year-old Micmac** Indian, is arrested, tried, and convicted of murder. After **11 years** in prison, **continually protesting his innocence**, Marshall is **finally** acquitted and receives \$270,000 in compensation. But **between Marshall's** arrest and eventual acquittal lies a legal **labyrinth** of perjured testimony, **provincial politics**, and plain bad luck — factors, meticulously **chronicled**, that together contributed to Marshall's Kafkaesque ordeal.

Justice Denied is **most successful when analysing** the conflicting testimony **presented at the trial**; it is **less than successful** in its incomplete characterization of Donald Marshall, who remains **soft-spoken** and elusive throughout the story. One **never** experiences that magical literary sensation of having **"known"** the protagonist; hence, **in Justice Denied**, an **essential measure of rapport** with the reader is lost.

Harris does **effectively demonstrate**, however, that two **systems** of law exist in Canada: one for the native community, another for the **white**. The net result of this inequity is injustice, an abstraction made **crushingly concrete** through the author's **investigation**. After reading this book **one** is forced to **reflect**, with **infinite** horror, on **one** inevitable question: how **many times** has the **Marshall** scenario been duplicated in other **courtrooms**?

— TIM CHAMBERLAIN

THE PAST

The Museum Makers: The Story of the Royal Ontario Museum, by Lovat Dickson, Royal Ontario Museum, illustrated, 256 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88854 326 3).

A **HISTORY OF** a public institution, commissioned and published by that institution, excites **no very lively** hopes of either

entertainment or illumination — especially when that institution has often been **racked** by feuds that you'd expect it to want swept under the rug. It's to the credit of the Royal Ontario Museum, and to the enormous credit of **Lovat Dickson**, that **this** isn't that sort of book at all.

Dickson is polite about the **new**, highly **structured design** of the **exhibits** — which I detest **myself** — but does **allow** himself



to indicate that it partly derives from a **1967** conference at which Harley Parker and **Marshall McLuhan** "bad spoken a good deal of nonsense."

The complicated history is told with a clarity I'd have thought **impossible**, and the great figures in it — **C.T. Currelly**, **Bishop White**, **Ted Heinrich**, **Peter Swann** — are given full credit for their achievements without any concealment of their faults.

— I.M. OWEN

Gentlemen sad Jesuits, by Elizabeth Jones, University of Toronto Press, 293 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 2594 3).

ELIZABETH JONES intends this study of early Acadia to be **"popular history, based on careful research . . . for the non-specialist reader."** She **accomplishes her goal**. Gentlemen and **Jesuits** provides a **light** but reliable companion to Marcel **Trudel's** authoritative but gloomy studies of Acadia.

Jones avoids the confusion that often plagues **histories** of the region, doomed by its rich **fisheries** and strategic importance to frequent conquest and reconquest. She **sharpenes the picture by focusing** on a single decade, 1604 to 1614, and 'on the fur-trading settlement at Port Royal on the Bay of Fundy.

Convincing characters carry the tale. A leading colonizer, the **Sieur de Pout&court**, is credibly portrayed as a **down-at-the-heels nobleman** seeking to restore his family's **fortune and honour** by securing the **King's** domain in Acadia. Memorable too is the **scribbling** lawyer **Marc Lescarbot**, who produced North America's **first dramatic production**, **Le Théâtre de Neptune**, replete with sea gods and Indians (who improbably beg the **French** to intro-

duce piety and civilized ways). **Such characters** dominate without distorting, for **French** colonization in Acadia was more dependent on the enthusiasm of various individuals than on any careful court strategy.

Jones is sensitive to the **cultures** she describes. Scenes from **French court**, port, and **tavern** are deftly sketched. She is **particularly good** on the differences in **religious outlook** between **fiery** missionaries and the devout but sophisticated ladies who financed them, **lukewarm** noblemen who suspected the **Jesuits were plotting** to take **over** the world, and the **common folk** who scarcely knew the rudiments of Christianity. Though perhaps not **delving deeply enough** into **Indian culture**, she keeps a **respectful** distance, and takes **European constructions** of Indian behaviour with a grain of salt. The book is accurate, **imaginative**, and **humane**.

— JAN NOEL

The Merchant-Millers of the Humber Valley, by Sidney Thomson Fisher, NC Press, 188 pages, \$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 920053 78 5).

SIDNEY THOMSON FISHER is a skilled and **public-spirited** amateur historian who has based this work on a study he **commissioned** in 1970 from archivist **Norah Storey**. Clearly part of **Fisher's** purpose in **writing** is the greater glory of **his ancestor**, Thomas Fisher, who in 1822 took over the **King's Mill**, near today's Old Mill subway station in Toronto. But **his family pride** is forgivable, for he has **done a** creditable job, **producing** a very readable local **history** that **provides** a satisfying balance of **rigour** with brevity.

Flour and lumber **milling represented** an important industrial **advance** for the **pioneer** economy—what would today be called **"appropriate technology"** — **growing** as it did out of the **existing farming and woodcutting** activities. **Fisher covers** the period from 1792—when Lord **Simcoe** assumed the **Government** of Upper Canada and lobbied **vigorously** for active **Crown** assistance to would-be millers — to the **1860s**, by which time **over-cutting** on the upper **Humber** had lowered water levels so drastically that the river had become **industrially** useless.

Fisher's style **brings** the people and the times to life, unusual in an **economic** history. **Government involvement** in the **"pioneering"** of Upper Canada — in contrast to the wild and woolly U.S. pattern — is shown to have **been a real condition of making a living here immediately after the American Revolution**. Yet, **unex-**

pectedly, the outright lawlessness of early Canadian capitalism (Fisher speaks of "a" undeclared war between lumbermen and settlers") emerges to provide a humanizing underside to one's concept of the young nation's standard business practice.

— JEFF EWENER

POETRY

The **Carpenter of Dreams**, by W.D. Valgardson, Skaldís Press, 70 pages, \$12.00 paper (ISBN 0 9692455 0 5).

W.D. VALGARDSON is best known for his short fiction, though he is also the author of a successful "owl, a previous collection of poetry, and award-winning drama. Regardless of venue, his language is forthright but powerful, his world one of rugged individualism.

The Carpenter of Dreams is consistent with these hallmarks of Valgardson's work. But this volume of poetry also stands as a complete expression of the author's aesthetic credo, because it is entirely his creation. "This is a vanity book. I wrote it, edited it, designed it, and I hired the printer and bookbinder to produce it," Valgardson announces in his preface.

style is clearly his paramount concern. In the title poem (also the finest of the collection) Valgardson admires the almost anachronistic attention to craft expressed by a carpenter who refuses to skimp on materials or cut corners because of haste. The collection itself has a sturdiness of line, a unhurried and meticulous workmanship, and the imagery is measured and true. The poems are also defiantly old-fashioned in their formalism (many use rhyme).

But what really dominates *The Carpenter of Dreams* is the spirit of an uncompromising individualist bent on doing things his way. Most poems are brief and personal — musings on the natural landscape as well as the inner, emotional one. Valgardson uses his considerable craft to tit the world to his own sensibilities, rather than employing his sensibilities to interpret the world.

— BARBARA CAREY

The Brave Never Write Poetry, by Jones, coach House Press, 96 pages, 38.50 paper (ISBN 0 88910 320 8).

THIS, JONES'S FIRST major collection of poetry, is primarily concerned with two subjects: himself (as a young urban failure) and the writing of poetry. In the latter case, Jones's indulgence in writing about writing does not extend to theory, as in post-modernism (which he satirizes in a poem of the same name), but is

merely a manifestation of a troubled mind desperately seeking order through poetic expression. Solipsistic verse is definitely not a new genre, though Jones brings some variety to it in this volume, which includes five photographs of the author and two autobiographical prefaces (one from an earlier chapbook).

Several poem titles reflect the tone of this book: "Benzedrine," "Pointed a Gun at My Head," "Detoxication," and "After 46 Days on the Psycho Ward." Jones's numerous self-deprecating poems are humourless and bathetic because his language rarely circumvents the literal and banal, as in the Hemingwayesque "Steaks":

*I was on my way
home to my apartment where I would
sit &
write the poems of my desperation, of
loneliness,
of my ever-impending suicide. It felt
good
& right somehow.*

In Jones's attempts at satire, as in the "Jack and Jill" poems, there is a obviousness in both the subject of his satire and the manner in which he heats it ("And Jack and Jill lived happily ever after/within the capitalist system") that succinctly illustrates this book's major flaws: unsubtle language, clichés, and tired rhetoric posing as social criticism. The title of this book, therefore, is a misnomer: it takes some courage to call such pseudo-verse poetry.

— FRANK MANLEY

Death Is an Anxious Mother, by Anne Campbell, Thistle-down Press, 64 pages, \$8.95 paper (ISBN 0 920633 09 9).

SOMEHOW IMAGINE Anne Campbell as the sort of writer who carries a notebook with her on shopping expeditions, or keeps it tucked on a kitchen shelf within easy reach, in case some small domestic incident should excite poetic sparks. Campbell is a caring, observant eye. She draws inspiration from the commonplace: the pain of encountering a former lover for the first time after the breakup of the relationship, the simple joy of playing truant from a conference. There is value in poetry that can illuminate daily life; making familiarity breed discovery rather than contempt.

But focusing on the humdrum is risky too, because it may lead to ho-hum poetry. In *Death Is an Anxious Mother*, Campbell's plain, unpretentious style and penchant for life's minutiae often make her poetry seem pedestrian. Most poems in this collection are brief, built around a single impression or experience. They seem spontaneous and immediate, like jottings in a journal. But they often fall

to reach beyond the moment they describe.

Campbell's strength lies in her exuberance, and in her determination to draw conclusions about the human condition from even its humblest manifestations. She has a refreshing respect for the ordinary, in one poem questioning

*Is it true? Am I
ceasing to be
amazed*

The answer to that is no. But too often Campbell's zest for life is communicated through what she says rather than how she says it. The reader thus has to settle for observing the poet's sense of discovery, instead of participating in it.

— BARBARA CAREY

Transit, by Michael Harris, Véhicule Press, 109 pages, \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 919890 69 5).

MICHAEL HARRIS'S new collection of poetry is composed of three sections. The first, "Turning Out the Light," is a long, poignant elegy about the last days of the poet's cancer-stricken brother. The poem is often clinical and matter-of-fact in its objectivity: ". . . the syringe's slim, / savage jab, to push morphine/to the Fringes of the pain. . . ." Some stanzas lapse into wordiness, but they are redeemed by other lines that communicate raw emotion: "When I see his fear, / the measure of my love/is such that I could/not harm. but kill."

The second section, "Deep in Their Room," is perhaps the weakest. It consists of 22 lyrical pieces that celebrate love, aspects of nature, and the mundane pleasures of domesticity. It's not that these thematics are sentimental or unsuitable, but Harris deals with them in stilted, metrical diction, striving to sound overly poetical. "In the Greenhouse" is Uie most successful of the lot.

The book's title section is an impressionistic verse travelogue of Greece and Mexico. There are two dozen poems here, and most of them read like a tourist's itinerary of still lifes; landscapes, and grinning tableaux; in other words, they lack a certain anima or genius loci. Postcards would have sufficed. After Lawrence Durrell one would think that travel poetry was passé, unless it took us to truly remote places of aboriginal customs and cultures, where we could at least learn something about anthropology. We have already been to Greece and Mexico with numerous authors. What about Timbuktu?

All in all, in *Transit* is a tenuous offering. It contains many winding paths, but they lead to the same house in the Forest. A deeper and Orphic route would be more visionary.

— LEN GASPARINI

The **Space a Name Makes**, by Rosemary Sullivan. Black Moss Press, 56 pages, \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 87437 147 4).

I WAS ONCE told that the primary rule for revising a poem is to be ruthless — that whatever seems to stand out as a stunning turn of phrase is probably a wrong turn, and should be excised. Generally, neophyte poets are more susceptible to the pitfalls of self-discipline. But Rosemary Sullivan demonstrates ample restraint in her first collection of poetry, *The Space a Name Makes*. The result is a volume of lean end vigorous work, with the colloquial directness of a documentary film.

Sullivan has the wisdom to use metaphors sparingly, instead relying on the naked power of images themselves. In the opening poem, for instance, "I cut my face/from all the family photos" incisively captures a child's struggle to accept/deny her identity (and ultimately, responsibility).

From her own family circle to the world at large, the poet is concerned with how social processes define (and confine) us. One sequence of poems examines the explicit violence of a destructive relationship. Others focus on the subtler but equally brutalizing effect of alienation end urban loneliness.

Sullivan's message is that we must positively transform the ways in which our lives are organ&d ("The point of the story is to change it"). But this activism is sometimes-undermined by Sullivan's own style. She succumbs to a self-imposed confinement: by exerting too much control, she establishes an emotional distance that keeps the reader at arm's length.

Nevertheless, *The Space a Name Makes* is a promising debut, thoughtfully crafted. Sullivan is a poet who bears watching, particularly if she loosens up a bit. — BARBARA CAREY

Tiger in the Skull, by Douglas Lochhead. Fiddlehead Poetry Books/Goose Lane Editions, 130 pages, 312.95 cloth (ISBN 0 86492 072 5).

THE PUBLISHING of a poet's selected poems provides a moment of literary grace; he is forgiven temporary lapses, failed experiments, harvesting fruit from the wrong tree. Douglas Lochhead's "new end selected poems: spanning 26 years and culled from 13 previous volumes, presents a heterogeneous selection that is both graceful and adventurous. The temper of this book is variety.

Whether using free verse, couplets of regular iambs or prose, Lochhead writes a clipped lyricism; his syntax is always harnessed into noun-verb-noun construc-

tions with only a modicum of adjectival embellishment: "Beyond the arctic limit lasts the heart,/now the clews and cage take flight/but the heart is fire, is fire, in this December." It is a style that features sudden juxtapositions, colloquial intrusions and interesting similes:

*Out of a quick dead sun
a blackbird fly,
sit out a feather-while
on a cherry treetop,
then down down
he drop
to river bank,
where he nose around
like old man on Sunday
outside a big hotel.*

Bii, of every species from vireo to osprey, provide Lochhead with subject, and at times symbol and metaphor. For what he does best: translate the sublime or base activity of the animate world into credible language. As well, the inanimate world — and for Lochhead this usually means the East Coast — is painted in rough strokes: "Now the marsh is ice/in a breaking, hardening hand-hold"; "Everywhere this land/suggests beginnings:/the rude mck still dripping.;" Such a sparse verbal technique also works well when the poet executes human portraiture — in "Uncle Amos" and "Louie" — but seems ill-matched to capture the fainter shadings of the human soul: something Lochhead rarely attempts.

The more experimental pieces-diary entries, found poems, lists and prose poems — are somewhat weaker than the traditional verses: they lack the resilient form that elsewhere in the book effectively shapes Lochhead's lyrical voice.

— FRANK MANLEY

SOCIETY

The **Stroll: Inner-City Subcultures**, by John Davidson as told to Laird Stevens, NC Press, 165 pages, \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 920053 65 3).

THE IMAGE OF Toronto the Good takes a beating in this account of the hookers, tricks, pimps, and speakeasies that make up part of the city's night life. John Davidson's personal anecdotes, from his three years as a cab-driver in the tenderloin district, are interspersed with bits of information on Canadian laws end social attitudes concerning prostitution, the efforts of the police to hamper street prostitution, and descriptions of the business, from street hookers to call girls.

At times, the book is an almost dry account of the job of prostitution. The second chapter describes how the "girls" work the streets, the prices for different sex acts, how the tricks make their approach, end the unwritten but strictly enforced rules of the "game" that is

played among hookers, tricks, and pimps. Another chapter describes the geography of the district, complete with a catalogue of street names, stop signs, and traffic lights. We learn where the experienced hookers stroll, where the youngest girls are found, end the names and locations of the bars, nightclubs, pinball arcades, and doughnut shops frequented by hookers and pimps.

Street talk ("transies," "stroll," "jack up," "tricks," "fix") is fascinating, and the dialogue recounted seems believable. But the narrative tone of the book is uneven end irritating — varying from the hard-boiled ("I don't want to say she was dumb, but she wouldn't have given Binstein much of a run for his money") to psychoanalytical interpretations ("Somewhere she felt empty, but she didn't know how to express this emptiness without loss of ego").

The book largely avoids romanticizing street life, but it is neither compelling nor emotionally involving. Thus it misses the author's goal of inducing compassion for street kids end the lives they lead.

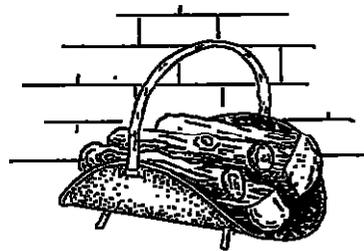
— BARBARA MacKAY

WORK & WORKERS

Hospital: Life sod Death in a Major Medical Centre, by Martin O'Malley, Macmillan, 239 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9896 3).

A HOSPITAL is schizophrenic: on the one hand, it is a place of riveting drama; on the other, it is a shrewd big business whose commodity is lives. Using 2 1/2 years of exhaustive probing at Toronto General Hospital, Martin O'Malley documents this dichotomy with a sensibility bordering on the manipulative and a focus as sharp as the microscope used in microvascular surgery, where "a nerve looks as big as a garden hose."

Reading *Hospital*, one becomes a voyeur. O'Malley offers no escape from a gaping abdominal cavity, the jagged tear on a drunk's wrist, the cancerous lobe of a lung wriggling in a basin. What saves his relentlessly graphic prose from being sensational is his compassion. Even when dealing with such medical dilemmas as the AIDS controversy and the juggling act involved in organ retrieval and exchange, he so intimately portrays the



people involved that their experiences become our own.

Hospital reads like a short-story collection. Although each chapter has its own mesmerizing flow, the book as a whole feels somewhat disjointed. Occasionally, O'Malley repeats explanations from previous sections. However, the blur of technical detail is quickly relieved by the immediacy of a crisis. He does for Toronto General Hospital what one of his brilliant teaching surgeons does to a body: he cuts it open, splays it apart, and then with precision and concern draws us unsettlingly close to the raw, vital innards.

— EVE McBRIDE

WORLD AFFAIRS

Target Nation: Canada and the Western Intelligence Network, by James Littleton, Lester & Orpen Dennys, 228 pages, \$22.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88619 118 1).

WHEN THE DAY'S headlines say "CIA-style spy network urged for Canada," a book examining Canada's role in the so-called "western intelligence network" seems timely and necessary. However, *Target Nation* suffers from one major flaw: most of its material summarizes subjects already covered in other works. For those unfamiliar with the notion that the RCMP or Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) might infringe on individual rights, though, this is a good introductory primer.

The book gives us yet another reminder of how deeply entrenched the U.S. military is in Canada, from Labrador to Nanoose Bay, and points out that in these mutual defence systems the Americans command and Canadians act as deputies. Such information is useful, but unless new insight comes with it, it simply goes over old ground.

Littleton's style is somewhat erratic as well. Some passages read as if taken directly from the script of CRC-Radio's *Ideas*, which formed the basis of the book. These are intended for listeners, not readers, and the approach seems at times condescending. It is this level of study — one would hope we're not so naive that we don't know the meaning of Cold War — that makes the book so frustrating.

There is plenty of reason to be frightened by the activities of our intelligence services, yet the book, for all its doom, does not come to a strong conclusion. We see too much of the past—which in itself is not improper — at the expense of more contemporary analysis.

Near the beginning, Littleton writes that radio programs do not readily translate into books. Perhaps *Target Nation* should have been left in its original form.

— MATTHEW BEHRENS

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by Annette Mitchell

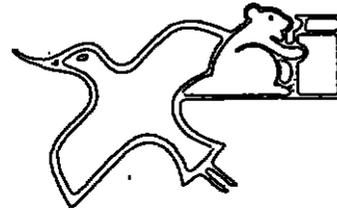
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REVIEW

Soft-boiled on wry

By Michael Richardson

A City Called July, by Howard Engel, Penguin, 284 pages, \$18.95 cloth (ISBN 0 670 81268 4).

WITH **A City Called July**, the fifth in Howard Engel's Benny Cooperman series, Canada's premier private eye has truly arrived. As Benny himself says, "I'm just a beat-up divorce peeper. Except for a few odd cases." It's these odd cases that v/e should give thanks for, though in terms of paying his rent at the less than classy hotel where he resides (the sheets are clean and the rock music stops at midnight). Benny would do better with standard peeper employment.

In this case, Benny's client is Grantham's Jewish community, the B'nai Sholom Congregation. Rabbi Meltzer and the congregation's president approach him to trace one Larry Geller, a lawyer, good-time Charlie and big wheel in the local chapter of B'nai Brith. Geller has disappeared along with \$2-million of the community's money. Although Benny would prefer to leave the job to the boys at Niagara Regional, the rabbi wants a hush-hush private investigation, not wishing his defrauded congregation to appear stupid. Benny is soon up to his neck in shady business, government construction contracts, philanderings, gangsters, and verbal fencing with Geller's family and business associates. There's more than one "wrongful death" (as U.S. lawyers politely euphemize murder), several pickled herrings to throw the reader off the scent, and what Northrop Frye has described as "a sequence of minor adventures leading up to a major or climactic adventure."

There's a Yiddish song I suspect Benny's mother would know entitled "Shein vi di le-vuh-ne," popularized as the "Miami Beach Rumba"; luckily none of that city's vice or style occurs in **A City Called July**. It is absurd to place Engel's work in the tradition of the "hard-boiled" school. Just as the American detective story was an inversion of the formal English detective story, so Bagel has created an inversion of the American product, not just a variation. He spoofs the tradition and the writing of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, but the Cooperman books never become parody. They are fun, yes, but it's Benny's humanity and the skilful telling of the story that make for such a good

read and a believable character.

Benny, unlike the typical American dick, remains if not innocent, untarnished. In this case, he even sends back a bribe that would have kept him in Players cigarettes for some time. He sometimes wonders if getting his nose dammed in doors is really preferable to running a ladies' ready-to-wear like his father. But as long as he's being paid as an investigator, he's prepared "to go on getting my nose slammed. At least it's better than getting shot at in a big city. Here at least you sometimes get asked in for a cup of tea or coffee."

In a hard-boiled story, the detective might observe of a woman that she was the kind that would make a big kick in a stained-glass window. Benny is subtler: "She was wearing flamboyant mourning: black satin, black crepe, black nylons. I wondered if she'd had her Audi painted for the occasion." He's a sentimentalist, and I don't mean in the way that, say, Robert B. Parker's Spenser sheds a tear when he blows someone away. Benny's mind is full of tombstones; he finds himself thinking of a wasp he killed, just because it annoyed him, but his sentiment is genuine.

Benny is, of course, Jewish, and although there have been other Jewish private eyes (notably Harry Kemelman's Rabbi David Small, whose training in the hair-splitting Talmudic logic of pilpul made him an obvious investigator), Benny unlike them is neither orthodox nor kosher. His mother's cooking has led him to enjoy a cone of chips, doused English-style with malt vinegar and raw salt, from the truck on the corner of Andrew and Queen, and bacon at Martha Tracy's rooming house. Like his father, he is not known for joining the congregation of B'nai Sholem (at the corner of Church and Calvin), but when he does, to talk with his clients, an hour in the shul makes him feel the need to turn over a new leaf and quit the chip track — but it's gas rather than God that influences this decision.

On reading some mysteries of recent years one might begin to wonder what the author was actually up to; one receives recipes, lists of books the detective has on his bedside table (Benny has a Ruth Rendell and, according to Mom, has been attempting to read *Crime and Punishment* for 10 years), and even moralistic lecturing about child-rearing and successful relationships. Engel shows no need to lumber Benny with such baggage. As he observed in his essay, "Mystery Writing Considered As One of the Pine Arts" (*Descant*, Winter, 1985-86):

One thing about mysteries, they aren't about anything. They don't tell you how to deal with middle-age crisis or what to do when your husband begins seeing

another woman. . . . Mysteries don't deal with the wide range of middle-class themes that are the stock in trade of middle of the road novels that are called "serious." They have this in common with many of the great classics.

Frank Bushmill, the podiatrist whose office is across the hall, is always recommending the books of Flann O'Brien to Benny, who can't make head or tail of them. I don't know if Engel feels the same way about O'Brien, but certainly James Joyce's words in praise of O'Brien apply equally to him. Joyce said: "A real writer, with the true comic spirit." □

REVIEW

Top of the class

By Phil Surguy

A Single Death, by Eric Wright, Collins, 163 pages, \$19.95 cloth QSNB 0 00 223053).

ERIC WRIGHT is a one-corpse man. That's a compliment, meaning he's a mystery writer whose characters and situations are so good he doesn't need to clutter his books with bodies to maintain the reader's interest.

The term is from Evelyn Waugh's excellent novella, *Work Suspended*. The narrator, a mystery novelist, explains:

.... my book, *Murder at Mountrichard Castle*, was within twenty thousand words of its end. In three weeks I should pack it up for the typist; perhaps sooner, for I had nearly passed that heavy middle period where less conscientious writers introduce their second corpse. I was thirty-four years of age at the time, and a serious writer. I had always been a one-corpse man.

The corpse in *A Single Death* — Wright's fourth novel about Inspector Charlie Salter of the Metropolitan Toronto Police — is the late Nancy Cowell, who was found strangled, possibly raped, three months before the story starts. Among the suspects are the men she met through a newspaper companions ad. But she also availed herself of singles bars; and her in-laws and estranged husband may know more than they are saying about her and the murder. Then again, it may have been a random thing, the work of a weirdo Nancy saw for the first time only moments before he killed her. The investigation is going nowhere.

As usual, the novel is as much about Charlie Salter as it is about the killing and the witnesses and suspects he encounters. Charlie is a working-class boy, guarded,



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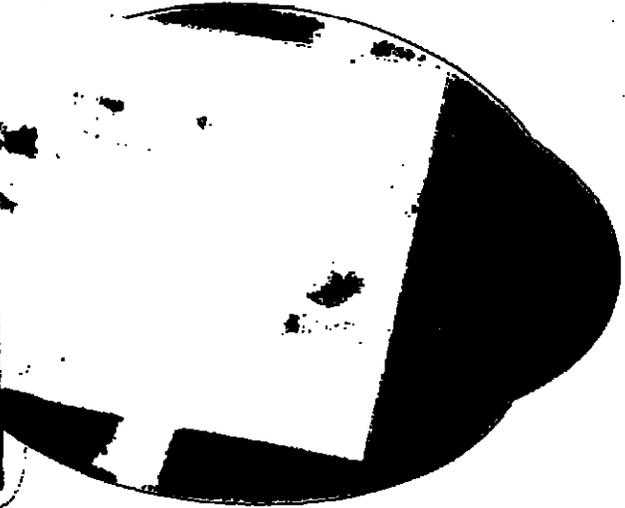
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somewhat self-conscious about his middle-class status, not as free and easy with his emotions as people are supposed to be these days, forever preoccupied with the everyday strains of his largely happy 20-year marriage.

He is pushed into the Nancy Cowell case when Gerry, his first wife, whom he hasn't seen for 25 years, suddenly shows up in his office. Their brief marriage ended in the early 1960s, after she wholeheartedly took to drugs and the rest of that decade's experience, which he saw as a threat to Ids-and beliefs. Now she is a well-connected social activist, threatening to raise hell if, as she suspects, the police don't care what happened to Nancy Cowell and are doing nothing about it.

Charlie is ordered to take over the case. He is to find the killer, if he can, but his primary assignment is to keep Gerry quiet. That is difficult enough. But, being Charlie, he is also forced to sort out what he thinks about women (women in general, as well as the two he married), and it is within this rich context that the mystery unfolds and is resolved. Along the way, there are many fine moments, like the following bit from a conversation between Charlie and the dead woman's young sister-in-law:

She frowned. "Who cares?" she asked.

"Who cares? Nancy had no other relatives, and Victor just wants to forget it."

"My first wife cares," Salter said, and told her the story of his own involvement. He was surprised to find himself telling her this but he needed her confidence if he was to get beyond the routine questions. For her part, she was slightly confused by the sudden intimacy of his reply, and then she smiled, and Salter guessed it had been a pod move.

"That's not the official answer," he concluded.

"I guess not, but it helps to know how the world works, doesn't it? Your first wife must be quite a woman."

Salter said nothing. He had laid himself open and it was ha move.

wright has everything working in this hook, which matches the standard he set with his previous novel, the superb, one-corpse *Death in the Old Country*.

The narrative and dialogue are exceptionally tight and often very funny. The mechanics of the mystery are well maintained throughout. And Charlie's observations of people and society are as sharp as ever and never gratuitous. At one point, his investigation takes him to Winnipeg, and we are given a quick social history of Ukrainian Canadians. It is interesting in itself, but it is not just dumped into the book as a little bonus from the author: it has a direct bearing

on the specifics of the case, and it is also a key part of the overall social chemistry that resulted in the murder.

Wright's great achievement, though, here and in the three previous novels, is his conception and realization of Charlie Salter. Many other mystery writers have told us a lot about their detectives' personal lives, often very successfully. But Wright has done better than any of them. For as Charlie confronts and contemplates his wives, his kids, his relatives, his colleagues, witnesses, suspects, criminals, storekeepers, and himself, we get an unbroken spectrum, not a series of isolated observations and incidents.

The term "hard-boiled" comes to mind. Which is not to say that Charlie at all resembles those fatuous I-walk-in-the-gutter-and-geeit's-neat-kicking-guy&nuts-off hard-boiled dicks of the '30s and '40s. Rather, the hardness is in the steely humanity of Charlie's vision. The Charlie Salter novels are essentially the continuing biography of a man who has the strength and compassion to look hard at the full range of life as it has been handed to him and see what's really there. At home and at work, it's a hard world, and he works hard to understand it and, if he can, make it better.

The emergence of Canadian mystery writers has been getting a lot of ink lately,

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much of it just hype about pale imitations of stuff Yanks and Brits have been doll for years. Eric Wright is unique. He is also one of the most satisfying mystery novelists working anywhere today. □

REVIEW

To see ourselves

By Bruce Whiteman

Encounters and Explorations: Canadian Writers and European Critics, edited by Franz K. Stanzel and Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, Königshausen & Neumann, 158 pages, DM32.00 papa, (ISBN 3 88479 242 3).

Varieties of Exile: The Canadian Experience, by Hallvard Dahlie, University of British Columbia Press, 216 pages, 022.50 cloth (ISBN 0 7748 0252 9).

FROM SEVERAL REPORTS published in the front pages of *Books in Canada* over the last few years, readers will already be aware of the burgeoning European interest in Canadian literature. *Gaining Ground*, edited by Robert Kroetsch and Reingard Nischik and published last year by NeWest Press, includes a 17-page bibliography of books and articles written by European critics on Canadian literary subjects. Universities in England, France, Germany, and Italy have courses on CanLit and associations for Canadianists, and there has been an ever-increasing flow of Canadian writers to those countries to read; to lecture, and to promote their hooks.

Encounters and Explorations comprises a group of papers on Canadian literature given in Tulbingerkogel, Austria, in the late spring of 1984. The collection includes two stories (by Jack Hodgins and Graeme Gibson), two poems (by Doug Barbour and Stephen Scobie), lectures by Margaret Atwood, Fred Cogswell, Rudy Wiebe, and Robertson Davies, and four papers on Canadian fiction by German and Austrian critics, as well as a summary of the inevitable discussion on "The Canadianness of Canadian Literature?" Two of these items — a paper on Hodgins by Waldemar Zacharasiewicz and a speech by Atwood entitled "After Survival" — were not given at the conference but are included for their appropriateness to the subject at hand.

With the exception of Helmuth Bonheim's paper on Frederick Philip Grove and Sinclair Ross, which is adorned with diagrams and seems to me hopelessly plodding and academic, all of the pieces in *Encounters and Explorations*

are worth reading. Atwood makes some blunders in "After Survival" (Austin Clarke's *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack* is not a novel; end) Wiebe has never published a book titled *The Burnt Wood-People*, but her reminiscences of Marian Engel are touching and memorable.

Cogswell's paper on Alden Nowlan is a fine essay and, like all perdurable critical writing, is as much about its author as its subject. Wiebe is eloquent on his Canadian roots. Walter Pache's paper on the Canadian short story confirms what another essay on post-modernism in Canada (published in the Kroetsch and Nischik hook) had mooted: that he is a sensible, well-read, and readable critic. Davies is brief and amusing, if not especially original, on the distinguishing characteristics of Canadian literature, and editor Zacharasiewicz writes intelligently about Hodgins. AU in all, this collection is a fine contribution to the growing body of work about our writers as seen from abroad.

Hallvard Dahlie's *Varieties of Exile* sets out to explore the notion of exile as a theme in Canadian fiction, and Canadian fiction writers themselves as exiles, both immigrants and expatriates. From the 18th century to the 20th, Canadian literature has benefited from an influx of exiles and emigrés, some of whom (such as Frances Rose Brooke and Wyndham Lewis) stayed only a short time but wrote about their Canadian experiences, and some of whom became permanent residents (Susanna Moodie and Joseph Skvorecky, for example). From *Roughing It in the Bush to Self Condemned* (which, as Dahlie points out, bear many striking similarities, unlikely as it may seem at first), and from *The History of Emily Montague* to *The Engineer of Human Souls*, Canadian fiction deals over and over again with a number of exile-related motifs: the contrast in values between Europe and North America, the New World as a paradise, the loneliness of the exile, and so on.

Dahlie explores the work of some 20 writers from this perspective, among others Frederick Niven, Sara Jeannette Duncan, John Glassco, Mavis Gallant, and Norman Levine, in addition to the four already mentioned. It is also refreshing to see thematic criticism take on certain writers who are rarely dealt with (Frederick Niven and Laura Salverson in this case), while retaining some aesthetic judgement and not treating first-rate and fourth-rate merely as fodder for a thesis.

Dahlie is a good reader and a readable writer of prose. He is primarily concerned with exile as a theme and a force, and absent therefore is any consideration of how form and language have been af-

ected by the colonial and post-colonial nature of Canadian writing. But that is to ask for something that Dahlie did not set out to do, and we can be grateful for his unaffected and well-informed approach to a crucial influence on our fiction. (I detected only one serious error, in his apparent ignorance of the real composition history of Glassco's *Memoirs of Montparnasse*). I hope that Dahlie will undertake a companion volume on the exile theme in Canadian poetry. □

REVIEW

Work in progress

By Alberto Manguel

The Play of the Eyes, by Elias Canetti, translated from the German by Ralph Manheim. Farrar Straus & Giroux (Collins), 329 pages, \$27.95 cloth (ISBN 0 374 23434 5).

THIS IS LESS a book in its own right than a chapter in the as yet endless autobiography of an acknowledged master of modern prose fiction: Elias Canetti. It is the third chapter, in fact, written after *The Tongue Set Free* and *The Torch in the Ear*. There is almost no point in reading *The Play of the Eyes* on its own. It begins *in medias res*, as if the author assumes that we, the readers, have just finished the last pages of volume two and are ready to pick up at the point where Canetti has just completed his novel *Auto-da-fé*. "Kant Catches Fire, es the novel was then titled, had left me ravaged" is the first line. Then the reader must decide whether there is any purpose in following Canetti's confessions.

In all probability, the "Dear Reader" of *The Play of the Eyes* whom Canetti has in mind is one familiar with Canetti's life (at least his Austrian childhood and early youth) and certainly his works. Canetti assumes that his reader already knows about his early peregrinations, his Jewish upbringing, the reasons for choosing the German language out of several at his disposal, his first brushes with literature. He further assumes that the reader has read *Auto-da-fé* in its entirety.

Auto-da-fé, his undisputed masterpiece, is a mammoth achievement, and therefore not easily perused. Iris Murdoch, the English novelist who shares with Canetti a relentless intensity of thought, called *Auto-da-fé* "one of the few great novels of our century," but I suspect that in a century that can boast of Kafka, Joyce, and Proust, the adjective "great" is simply Murdoch's way of salaaming her master. "Overwhelming"

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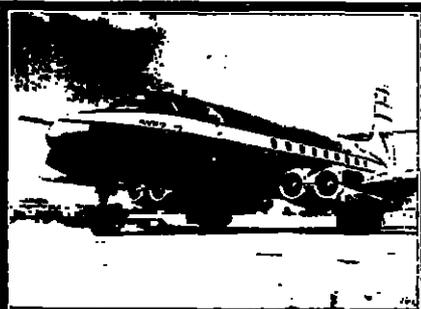
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is, I believe, a more accurate description of Cauetti's earnest plodding through the soul of a self-centred sinologist, the hero of *Auto-da-fé*, who somewhat uncomfortably becomes a symbol for the decline of the intellectual west. Few readers will doubt Canetti's intelligence or ignore his passionate questioning, but few will find the task of reading *Auto-da-fé* from cover to cover entirely pleasurable. A touch of lightness, a touch of humour is lacking; and yet this reading is almost compulsory for anyone intending to take on Canetti's autobiography. Because it is this Canetti, author of *Auto-da-fé*, who stands stalwart at the heart of *The Play of the Eyes*.

This fact brings us to a "interesting paradox. The subject of Cauetti's autobiography is another, an inexperienced Canetti; not today's recognized author, winner of the 1981 Nobel Prize for Literature, but a struggling young man who in the distant past wrote a book so ambitious that it required over 40 years to achieve its solemn celebrity. Canetti the autobiographer can (and does) comment freely on the young author, judging him with all the wisdom and slow pace of hindsight; Canetti the autobiographed lives only in a fictitious first-person singular, uncertain and impatient.

Once, reviewing a book by Tom Wolfe, I came to the conclusion that all fiction is autobiographical. I want to reverse that all-too-obvious statement and suggest that all autobiography is fiction. What I mean is that a writer of autobiographies, choosing to follow a character through a life that happens to be inspired by his own, bestows upon that character characteristics of his own biography in an effort to convince us of the reality of his story. Autobiography is in effect the ultimate method for provoking the suspension of disbelief by using the argument of authority; the authority is the author himself. Elias Canetti is Elias Cauetti's most accomplished character, because even his impossibilities are believable. We have these facts, we say, from the horse's mouth.

And yet "accomplished" does not imply "charming." Reading a "autobiography is in many ways like listening to someone talk about himself as if he were observing his past in a reflection. To engage us, it is important that this person should charm us. We may think him a scoundrel, a liar, a cheat, a teacher of creative writing, but we must like him. I find it hard to like Canetti the character, even if Canetti the author, writing about him, is compelling. For instance: Canetti the character — according to the author's presentation — begins *The Play of the Eyes* deeply anguished because he has reached the end of the master novel he has been writing. On the final pages

of *Auto-da-fé*, the hero Kant dies by fire when he and his beloved books go up in flames. Canetti the character (says Canetti the author) feeds a conflicting tangle of emotions. On the one hand, he is relieved at Kant's death, which brings him, as a novelist, "a sense of liberation"; on the other, he feels that in burning Kant's library he has sacrificed not only Kant's books "but also those of the whole world, for the sinologist's library included everything that was of importance to the world."

I cannot help feeling that Canetti the character is being presumptuous. Whatever Kant's library contained it cannot have contained "everything that was of importance to the world." It could not, for one thing, have contained the works of Elias Canetti. An author may feel toward his created character all the love and admiration that a devoted uncle feels for his favourite nephew (as Canetti the author obviously feels for Canetti the character) but to display this affection in such large letters somehow shows a lack of taste. It reads, in fact, like a case of literary nepotism.

This said. *The Play of the Eyes* (as is the case in the two previous volumes) is full of happy observations and surprising portraits. Here is the beautiful Alma Mahler, the composer's widow and mistress of Liszt, presiding over her salon in Walkyrian splendour, being fashionably anti-Semitic; here is the novelist Franz Werfel, kept by Alma in his study like a pet squirrel; here are the grand old men of Austrian letters, Hermann Broch and Robert Musil, and the mysterious composer Alban Berg. Here is a young man's homage to Georg Büchner, the father of modern German literature. And here, overall, is a sense of a rapidly declining world of artistic genius, the almost mythical Vienna of the 1930s poised on the brink of the Anschluss.

The Play of the Eyes is in fact part of a work in progress. Whether Canetti the author chooses to follow Canetti the character to his death (and thereby leave the work unfinished) or whether he will give him a free-willed end (if flames, perhaps, like that he gave to Kant), we will have to wait until then to recognize the shape of this autobiography. In the meantime, readers are left with a rich, deliberate story in which a wise old man (the author) travels back through time to meet himself when young (the character). There is no dialogue between them, because the young man cannot speak back (this fiction does not allow anachronisms) but in this one-voiced exploration of the senses (the tongue in the first volume, the ears in the second, the eyes in the third) Canetti has begun a vast *Bildungsroman* about one man's learning of the world he lived in. □

REVIEW

Intimations of mortality

By Sparling Mills

Distances, by Robin Skelton, Porcupine's Quill, 77 pages, 57.95 paper (ISBN 0 88984 077 6).

The **Collected Longer Poems 1947-1977**, by Robin Skelton, Sono Nia, 182 pages, 516.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919203 72 8).

THE POEMS IN *Distances* are quiet and delicate, the most important theme being "life's perpetual" — life has no beginning and no end. An offshoot of this theme is the idea of age, as Skelton frequently refers to his 50 years of writing poetry. In "Looking Back" he describes the poet getting old: "age, its failing memory/its tired hand/still tapping out what once/it scribbled fast."

Sometimes, as in "The Performance" he imagines his own death as a play he hasn't seen yet, and admits he wonders if it will end in terror and "a sudden/darkness." In spite of his fear, however, he says he will stumble through this darkness — "home."

Although most of the poems in this collection are near perfection, there are some that display an acrobatic use of words that is unacceptable. One of these is "De Nihilo," in which, in a poem of 20 lines, Skelton employs the word "nothing" 14 times. In "A Fourteenth Way of Looking at a Blackbird" his judgement is much more true. He still is playing around with words, but the concept is clever-although a bit eccentric.

Skelton's most endearing ability is the way in which he finds meaning in the fragile and the small. In "Wasp Nest" the nest becomes "the breast/or belly of some ancient/warrior goddess" or "the bulging head/of some decapitated giant."

The poem in *The Collected Longer Poems 1947-1977* closest to the tone and structure of *Distances* is "Messages." Surprisingly, it is not the most recent, although in the Introduction Skelton indicates that for this collection he has done some further work on it. There are 45 small poems comprising "Messages"; some are almost as small as haiku, with that form's clarity but with an added philosophical layer. An example of this:

When the window is entirely covered in dust

what point is there in talk of falling snow?

The 40th message is important in that it exclaims about love: "What is sacrosanct/about flesh/that it alone cart [make love]?" In *Distances* there is no physical love. In *Collected Longer Poems* there is ambivalence. "The Hold of Our Hands" presents the experience of young lovers, "when the moon burned through our blood." Yet after consummation, the poet discards the imagery of nakedness, and asserts:

you have walked always through my days like trees, and, like the trees, I have heard stillness sound.

"Timelight" continues the light imagery. It begins, "It is a time for change./I move slowly/through dark impulses/towards the light." Also repeated are reflections on age and love, as in "A man turning/to age turns/gently" and "Love,/turning in age,/turns calmly." The poet is listening more, searching for the answers. He believes that "gathered symbols," such as "the paintings, the books, the messages," will "outlast their time": they

... retain their forms in a radiance darker than our eyes, may please: they hold their own identity and messages in a place

beyond all time and place, referring timelight into its eternity.

I felt very close to Skelton when I read these lines, and even more so when he went on to describe his meeting with Ezra Pound in Venice. I too met Pound there, on my way to South Africa in 1971 — just a few months before he died. Skelton sums up his impression of the great poet: "finding in age/a new spring/of clearer water."

Skelton also alludes to Pound in "The Dark Window," a long, complicated war poem. In copious notes at the back of the book, he recalls that "Ezra Pound was imprisoned in a cage by the U.S. Army when captured during the Italian campaign of the second world War" and continues with details of other poets: Byron, Pope, Donne, Keats, Rupert Brooke, Lorca, and more. He seems almost to be identifying with them as contemporaries — as if he knows them personally. At the same time, however, there is a realization that these poets are "accepted" now in their greatness. Does Skelton hope to be in their number? He tells us in "Remembering Sygne" that he tried to portray "a man's passionate imagination." That same force is present in Robin Skelton's own work. □

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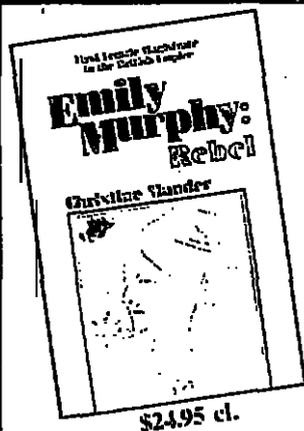
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Small packages

Coffee-table books for children contain some good things: from dreamy, **colourful** fantasies to do-it-yourself ginger ale

By **Mary Ainslie Smith**

SAVE SPACE ON the coffee table this season for some glossy, beautiful, and expensive new children's books. These are art books, meant to be looked at and enjoyed, and then perhaps read. **Rich colours, life, movement, and fantasy are features of the illustrations; the text is more or less incidental.**

Who **Hides in the Park** (Tundra, 36 pages, \$17.95 cloth) presents artist **Warabé Aska's** vision of Vancouver's famous **Stanley Park**. A sequel to **Who Goes to the Park** (1984), which featured Toronto's Hi Park, it was published to coincide with **Expo 86** and to mark the **upcoming 100th anniversary** of Stanley Park, which was opened **officially in 1888**. The book contains 16 full-page paintings, most showing children enjoying the park's many **attractions**, such as the **forest trails**, the beaches, the aquarium, and the lookouts over **the harbour**.

Aska's paintings may not appeal to the literal-minded. He has worked hard to evoke the old legends that live on in the park, once the site of Coast **Salish** settlements. His park is a magic place, where children's imaginations have free rein, where exotic **animals** and **multi-coloured** birds join in their games, and where they can explore secret places to find out who in fact does hide, in the park. The **faces** of old Indian gods and symbols peer out at the children from the **gnarled trunks** of **living trees** as well as from the totem poles on **Brockton Point**. The children's real bodies run, tumble, and frolic on the ground while their dream bodies often float above them to the tops of the giant **fir trees** or over the beaches with the kites. The **colours** are rich, **Aska's use** of blues and greens in particular reflecting the **lushness** of the setting.

The **accompanying** text provides **commentary** and is **presented** in three languages: **English, French, and Aska's native Japanese**. The book also includes at the **end several pages** of factual notes about the **parts** of the park shown in the paintings as well as a detailed map.

The Sparrow's Song, by Ian Wallace (Penguin, 32 pages, \$12.95 cloth), is another book in which the **illustrations** have more to say than the **accompanying** text. The story is simple. A girl, Katie,

finds a baby **sparrow** whose mother has been **shot and killed** by Katie's brother, Charles. Charles, remorseful, helps her **care for it**, and when it is **big** enough, they **set it free**.

The setting is **Niagara Falls in the early 1900s**, and it seems to be the magic, life giving force of the **falls**, a tradition from **native legends**, that keeps the baby **alive** and heals the trouble between Katie and Charles. Wallace's **watercolours** are full of light and soft textures. The children are part of a **romantic, idealized countryside** of luxuriant, flowering plants, **colourful** insects and birds, and **soft mists and clouds**.

There are a few buildings in the landscape, **all blending harmoniously** with their **surroundings**, suggesting a perfect **balance** between **man's** needs and nature. No power **turbines** chum up the water in the Niagara Gorge. Only a ring buoy from the **Maid of the Mist, hanging for some reason on the wall of the children's attic**, and a few subtle guard **ralls** at the **edge** of the cliffs suggest that **there could be such a thing as a tourist**.

Fantasy depicted in art is also an important **element** of **Lindee Climo's Clyde**, (Tundra, 24 pages, 311.95 cloth), but in this book a **accompanying** story plays a major part. **Clyde**, the farm horse, is upset when it appears that he is being replaced by a tractor. He dreams how he **might** change the parts of his body for **various machine parts or parts from other animals** so that he would **still** be **useful** and loved. **Climo's illustrations** take us through **Clyde's various transformations**. **On one page, for example, we see Clyde's head and shoulders attached to the back wheels and controls of a tractor** and to the front **legs** of a cheetah (for speed). Clyde later adds the wings and talons of an eagle and tries out, **among other things**, the bodies of a **fish and frog**.

Of course, by the **end** of the story he **realizes** that these **dream changes** don't **really work for him, and that he can be loved and useful in his own form**. Young children should enjoy the **incongruity** of Clyde's attempts to be something other than what he was **meant** to be, and will perhaps also relate to the fairly obvious **lesson that it is best just to be yourself**.

Tales of a **Gambling Grandma** (Tundra, 32 pages, \$14.95 cloth) is another

story filled with gentle **incongruities**. Artist **Dayal Kaur Khalsa** portrays in words and pictures the story of her grandmother's life as told by grandmother herself. Some of the incidents make wonderful **visual** tall tales. For instance, as a little girl, grandmother escaped from the Cossacks in **Russia** and **travelled**, hidden in a hay wagon pulled by a **tired** white horse, all the way across the **ocean** to America.

As a **young married** woman in a mobster-filled New York, grandmother took up **card** playing as a supplementary means of support for her family. And as a white-haired, plump old lady she continues **winning**, whatever the game and **whatever** the stakes. One **marvellous illustration** shows **grandmother travelling by train** to visit her **son** in California and spending the whole **transcontinental trip** soaking in a hot tub that two porters keep filled with fresh orange juice. In California, the whole visit is **spent** in a two-week-long **poker game** arranged by her son in her **honour**.

These **episodes** are amusing, but the **text and pictures** also clearly portray the tender relationship between the old woman and her **granddaughter**, their **secrets, rituals, excursions**, and the special memories left when grandmother dies.

In **The Cremation of Sam McGee** (Kids Can Press, 32 pages, \$14.95 cloth), Robert W. **Service's** popular and **gruesome** yam in verse provides a splendid **vehicle** for Ted Harrison, who has made much of his reputation as an artist from his **paintings** of the Yukon. His **bright colours and flowing** lines somehow **manage** to suggest both the vibrancy and **rhythm** of northern life as well as the extreme **cold and isolation**. The **marge** of Lake **Lebarge** looks wonderfully austere and haunted, with a **giant, orange sun** hovering over the **Alice May** as she **lies** trapped in fields of blue and white ice. At the **end, Sam**, happy at last "in the heat of the **furnace roar**," **fairly crackles with warmth and colour**.

Notes by Harrison accompany each **illustration, providing** commentary on **Yukon** life: "The **paddle-wheelers** burned wood as a fuel and numerous wood supply **stations** were placed at strategic intervals along the **banks** of the Yukon River. There would be **more** than enough

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around to cremate Sam."

Nicholas Tickle Us QMA, 72 pages, \$14.95 cloth) is a volume of children's verse by Sol Mandlsohn. Some of the verses are silly: "If I owned a pussycat&l would call her **Cleo-patra.**" Others, such as the title verse, are amusing, and the illustrations by Peter Kovalik, many in colour, add visual interest. *Young children should enjoy looking* at such pictures as that of the "baby octopus **dunce**" who lost "four pairs of mittens **all at once.**"

One **Watermelon Seed** (Oxford; 24 pages, \$9.95 cloth) is a counting book also intended for very young children. In the story by Celia Barker Lottridge two

children plant **first one** watermelon seed, the" two pumpkin seeds, **three** eggplants, and so on, light up to 10 corn seeds. When they begin to harvest, they do so in multiples of **10**: 10 watermelons, 20 pumpkins, 30 eggplants, and **finally** thousands of kernels of popcorn. The illustrations by Karen Patkau are more than complementary. They take right over as the dull brow" garden explodes with the lush colours of the leaves, vines, and **ripening** fruit.

A different sort of book is **Foodworks**, (Kids Can Press, 92 pages, \$19.95 cloth, \$9.95 paper) produced by the Ontario Science Centre. But it should stay out on the coffee table too, because both adults

and children will enjoy it. This is a participation hook, crammed full of information on food, its origins, its components, the digestive process, food phobias, and the effects of various foods on different people.

It challenges readers to try such food-related activities as producing bigger burps, sting a hydroponic garden, growing mould on bread, and eating candied wasp eggs. There are suggestions for recipes for children to try on their own for such foods as congee, banana chips, cheese, and ginger ale. Cartoon illustrations by Linda Hendry contribute to the light-hearted tone of this very easy-to-swallow educational package. □

FIRST NOVELS

Life after sex

Two books of differing orientation — one feminist, one homosexual — explore the effects of untimely death on those who are left behind

By Douglas Glover ·

RONA GOM'S *Housebroken* (NeWest Press, 207 pages, \$17.95 cloth, \$7.95 paper) is a feminist parable, a sad, gritty, and uncomfortable (by design) work, a scratching-the-open-sore novel in which the heroine dies (by accident or suicide) before the beginning and the narrative recounts the betrayals, lies, and evasions that killed her.

The plot is part psychoanalysis, part detective story. When the novel opens Susan **Jervis** has just driven her van off the road in the Hope Slough outside Chilliwack and drowned. Her husband Whitman drops a box of her diaries, poems, and stories off with their neighbour, a 45-year-old widow named **Ellen Grey**. Through the rest of the book, **Ellen** delves into the box for Susan's version of the past (thwarted childhood love affair, unhappy marriage, crippling neurosis) while retelling hers (her friendship with the funny, wacky, idealistic Susan, her secret affair with Whitman, her own investigation of Susan's life).

After Susan's death, **Ellen** discovers some grisly truths: Susan knew she was sleeping with Whitman, and her childhood love affair was a fantasy that concealed a *d-life* rape. Susan, it turns out, was a bright and beautiful *bii* in a cage, singing bravely while the bars shrank around her. Her friends and family did nothing to help her escape; indeed, they almost conspired to smother her truth.

The essential idea of *Housebroken* is that society prefers to believe that women are neurotic, irrational beings rather than

deal with the oracular message they carry — the truth of which, often enough, is rape, either as fact or as an image of oppression. (One is reminded of Jeffrey Masson's discovery that Freud ignored the truth of child molesting, preferring to believe that the children he treated bad fantasized their trauma.)

As a work of art, *Housebroken* is a little too partisan, a little too programmatic to be entirely successful. It depends for its impact on the reader's sharing with the author a set of tacit meanings, assumptions, and arguments. ("I know what rape means," says **Ellen** — but she never tells.) **Ellen Grey**, as narrator, carries a tremendous technical load; she is victim and tormentor, participant and interpreter. At the end, her roles swamp her; she preaches at **Whitman** for sins she has herself committed against Susan. Both **Whitman** and **Ellen** are ponderous characters; **Susan** is lively and perks up every page she's allowed to appear on, but **grey Ellen** is the teller of the tale, the editor of Susan's manuscripts, the keeper of her soul.

I" One Out of Four (Coach House Press, 256 pages, \$12.50 paper) Donald **Martin** has managed something I would have thought almost impossible—he has written a dull novel about four homosexual prostitutes turning tricks in Murder City, U.S.A.

The book opens with **Daniel**, a Jewish boy from Montreal, returning to Detroit for the funeral of his friend **Benjamin**, a colleague in prostitution, who has been murdered by their Italian pimp **Tony**. In an elaborate flashback that

takes up most of the book, **Daniel** remembers how he and **Benjamin** and their two friends, **Chuck** and **Bart**, trapped themselves in **Tony's** evil web, how they supported one another, how they tried to escape, and how one by one they were murdered. **Daniel**, the last of the four, finally avenges his friends, taking a taxi around Detroit, stopping along the way to shoot **Tony** and his sadistic cronies to death.

It's not that nothing happens in *One Out of Four*. The novel is full of erections, orgasms, brutal rapes, and gory murders. But the style is lazy, and rarely rises to the level of the prose *0°C* finds in the letters section of *Penthouse*. The promotional material accompanying my review copy says, "One out of Four is a story based on truth." Maybe this is so. But **Martin** has written his book so badly that I don't believe a word of it.

His characters are shallow and predictable, and delineated in the main by their preference for specific sorts of sex (the "simple" Texas hunk who won't be passive, the *fag queen* saving for his sex-change operation, the **Polish** boy *fm*m Cleveland who only likes to be spanked). The plot is full of pastiche and pop-cultural borrowings (a confidence scam by which **Daniel** fakes his own death to escape **Tony**, bloody murders *à la* **ump-teen American** movies since *Taxi Driver*, **Tony's** death out of *Lolita*).

A current best-seller in the U.S., *Less than Zero*, by **Bret Easton Ellis**, though a second-rate book in itself, deals much more stylishly with similar material, and gives a clearer picture of the nexus of

exploited youth, money, drugs, violence, and sex in this strange demimonde. At least Ellis seems to know what he's talk-

ing about; Martin reads as though he made his story up after reading a half-dozen issues of *Honcho*.

Incidentally, Scott Symons writes a gushing preface for one *Out of Four* that diminishes him as a critic. □

INTERVIEW

Susan Kerlake

'For me, rereading a paragraph does not represent a break in the continuum. That's what books do, that's what words are for'

By R.F. Macdonald

BORN IN CHICAGO in 1943, and educated in the United States, Susan Kerlake moved to Canada in 1966. She is the author of two novels, *Middlewatch* (Oberon Press) and *Penumbra* (Aya Press), and has recently completed a third, provisionally titled *Seasoning Fever*. Her collection of short stories, *Book of Fears* (Ragweed Press) was nominated last year for a Governor General's Award. Named one of the IO best young fiction writers in Canada in the Canadian Book Information Centre's 45 Below promotion, Kerlake now lives in Halifax, where she was interviewed by R.F. Macdonald:

Books in Canada: *Who do you read?*

Susan Kerlake: I read things where I'm wowed by the author's sense of imagination. I'm reading Michel Tournier — in translation, I admit-whose imagination is amazing. He uses language really well. There are other people — for example, Toni Morrison, Joyce Carol Oates, Loren Eiseley, and Mark Helprin, whom I adore; everything is there for me in his

Susan Kerlake



writing, the incredible imagination, the way he uses language. And then I've responded to minimalist titers, like Raymond Carver, who are entirely different. You have these blunt one-word sentences and two-line paragraphs, and yet they create an enormous sense of anxiety. I find I don't read a lot of bestsellers, because I find the language boring.

BiC: Have you read H.P. Lovecraft or Stephen King?

Kerlake: I haven't read Lovecraft, but I have read King's *The Shining* and *Pet Semetary*. Those are quite different from what I'm doing, though he's good at creating anxiety. I don't think that my stories create anxiety, although people have told me that they find them disturbing. People try to read them all at once, and they don't realize that it took me two years to write them. They don't create anxiety in me at all. Someone asked me if they were a cathartic experience, but that doesn't happen at all.

BiC: An *they therapeutic*?

Kerlake: No. They became fiction. They weren't a purging experience. When I'm writing them, I'm only interested in the process of writing rather than the experience.

BiC: Your new novel, *Seasoning Fever*, seems more focused than the other two novels, *Middlewatch* and *Penumbra*. Some of this may be because you set it on the Prairies rather than the Atlantic coast.

Kerlake: I needed that kind of environment — I needed an edge. One of the things I had in mind to explore was people's relationship to a land that is totally disinterested in them. Also there was the element of time: people who live in the present and people who live in the future. Matthew, the main character, was very aware of the future through dreams and things — the way things are going to change, the way he wants to change things.

BiC: The two principals, Hannah and Matthew, leave the established society on the East Coast for the new life on the Prairies. They seem to have little room in the ordered life of the East.

Kerlake: Did you notice that Hannah's

mother was a little bit strange, and that Matthew's grandfather was kind of weird? I thought, Clod, this is so contrived! Theo it came to me that this represented the decadence of the East. It was wonderful. It fit perfectly and I hadn't planned it at all.

BiC: The three men in *Seasoning Fever* have differing views of Hannah. She is a different archetype to each of them.

Kerlake: Yes, for me it was very interesting to watch that evolve. To Matthew she was an object of passion and inspiration; he needed her. To Gabriel she was the Earth Mother. To Tully she was the female ideal, standing at the edge of the sea after he had crossed the whole continent, a very romantic image. Tully initially fell in love because she was the older woman, and there were no other women around besides his mother and sister. It was a juvenile romantic vision: "I can still imagine you and take you away from all this. . . ."

BiC: You write with an obvious ear for the way words sound, not just for what they mean. There is some extraordinary language in your novels.

Kerlake: I think this is what I do that is different — I won't say whether that is what I do best. I really like the sounds of words. I haven't read a lot of poetry, but I like what I guess is called "fine wiling." When I'm reading where I'm pulled up short by the language, that for me is a positive experience, not a negative one. I love it. I was reading Joy Kogawa's *Obasan*, and it gave me chills. For me, rereading a particular paragraph does not represent any kind of break in the continuum; that's what books do, that's what words are for. Words can be practical and very straightforward and just give you information, but they also can give you an entirely different experience.

BiC: Many people find your prose very difficult. Your books can't be read quickly.

Kerlake: I've had people say to me, "Your book is really hard to read." I say that they don't have to read it — I'll still be their friend. They say, "No, no, it's worth it. I just have to read it && by sentence." I realize there's a lot of

TOGRAPH BY MICHAEL LAWLER

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL ANDERSON

pressure in our lives, and people often don't have the time they used to. But if they ask me, I tell them to read it some rainy afternoon when they can curl up with a cop of tea, because it seems to be that kind of book. You can't read it while waiting for a bus. 0

LETTERS

Paying the piper

I JUST FINISHED reading Ray Ellenwood's "Paying the Piper" (August/September). I'm writing this as I wipe tears of laughter out of my eyes.

What does it take to make writers learn?

Jeez, were they ever panting to get their hands on all those royalties from public lending rights! And now that the money's really there, they discover the deal's not so sweet after all. Oh, what weeping and wailing!

It's pretty damn foolish to squawk about your virginity after you've fallen all over yourself to jump in bed with the government. I repeat, what does it take to make writers learn? Do they really think they can take government money

and piss on Ottawa's leg at the same time?

Robert Burnham
Socorro, New Mexico

I READ Ray Ellenwood's article, "Paying the Piper," with interest. This is a matter that requires careful attention from all Canadian authors. Two questions that must be asked are "Is \$3-million really appropriate?" and "Who should pay?" surely not the government!

I hope, when compensation is being considered for royalties lost because of library circulation, that an often forgotten group of Canadian authors will be remembered. I mean the writers of university-level textbooks and scholarly monographs, which are normally published in the United States. Their authors, who may create a substantial part of their income from writing, are not found in any list of "Canadian authors," nor are they ever invited to (or informed about) any convention, gathering, or social event involving literary people. Yet successful textbooks must be as carefully crafted and as well written as many novels, and they take a great deal more time to write. They must be published in the U.S. because few Canadian publishers can handle them.

These books are purchased largely by university and institutional libraries. The people who use them pay nothing for

their use, and, in fact, habitually photocopy them for their own or their students' use. Textbooks are indeed purchased by students, but they are sold and resold on the second-hand market, and libraries stock copies of them.

I do hope that those who are dealing with the problem of royalty payment for library use of books will remember the textbook writers. True, writing is often a sideline for them (though not always), but they must take the time for writing from their other career-development activities, so it is a real part of their living. Canadian textbook writers already have a major hurdle to clear: more than 90 per cent of the sales of a successful textbook must be made on U.S. and other foreign markets, so they have to establish an international reputation first. The fact that a number of Canadians have written internationally successful textbooks suggests that this group of authors deserves recognition.

R.G.S.
Wallace, N.S.

Bidwell

CYNICAL SEX

I READ WITH interest Douglas Glow's 70-per-cent fair review of my novella, *Economic Sex* (August-September). However, I did find it ironic that in Glover's opinion the central character

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Sarah bad **not** "earned her perception" and "still has a **lot** of **growing-up** to do."

Surely the end point of Economic **Sex** is that Sarah does not wish any **longer** to **grow up into** the "witty and beautiful" adult world (that **Glover finds** acceptable) where **her** perception and her world understanding must be "**earned**" under the taunting tutelage of superior sex-obsessed cynics **who** pretend to be both "glamorous and illuminating" (also acceptable to **Glover**). The whole point is that **Sarah does** not believe **any more** in this supposedly "superior" system. Sarah's denial and rejection of **these now** unacceptable values represents the **end** of **Economic Sex** both figuratively and literally.

That **Sarah is** bold enough to **pen** anew testament that **rejects** crass-ass consumer greed and **applauds** trembling trust-

between-two **as** the basis for a "acceptable world future ought not to be **so cynically dismissed**. Surely.

Ali-Janna Whyte
Toronto

THE SOCRED MENACE

ALTHOUGH YOUR letters section may not be the **appropriate** place for political debate, the **comments** of Simon Gibson in a letter **in** your August-September issue should not be **allowed** to stand without a response. Gibson asks you not to presume "**that all** B.C. Social Credit supporters are either **non-intellectual** or anti-education." He implies that he is neither. but two sentences **further** he **states** that "I have generally been quite pleased with the **government** of Bill Bennett." This "**emperor's new** clothes" view of the world is a syndrome that apparently **all**

Socred supporters share and **one** which **leaves** those who are not **Socred** supporters **breathless** with amazement and **rage**.

Anyone with measurable vital signs knows that Bill Bennett presided **over** a frontal assault on all **areas** of education **in** B.C., administered **under** guidelines inspired by the works of Lewis **Carroll**. **The Socreds** have taken a chainsaw to elementary and secondary education, reducing **funding** and **slashing programs**, centralizing control **in** Cabinet, and baiting **teachers** and **school boards**. **Community colleges** have suffered even **more** from the same type of treatment. **Universities** have spent the **last five years** trying desperately to salvage **core** programs, retain competent staff, and avoid **sliding below** minimal standards, **all** the while dealing with a Mad Hatter bureaucracy.

BookNews: an advertising feature

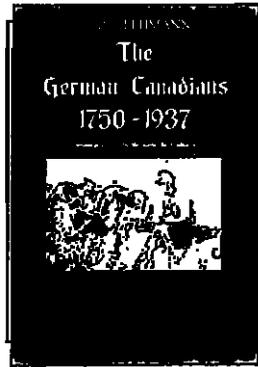
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The Long and the Short and the Tall is an openhearted account of what it was like for a prairie farm boy to move into the all-male environment of wartime airforce life. And the fact is, the experience was not one which bestowed war-hero status on the narrator or resulted in any dramatic battlefield scenes. Collins candidly describes the warmth of friendship, the joy of achieving independence and a sense of self-worth. Readers will find this sincere and sometimes uninhibited story gratifying and poignant.

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If this wreckage is the result of policies supported by people who are not "non-intellectual or anti-education." God help us if people who are non-intellectual or anti-education should ever get their fingers on the trigger.

Don White
Victoria

RECOMMENDED

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

FICTION

Learning By Heart, by Margot Livesey, Penguin. In a strong first collection, Livesey's stories display fresh, clear language, lively images, a sure touch, and some astonishing insights for a writer in her early 30s.

NON-FICTION

Paris Notebooks: Essays and Reviews, by Mavis Gallant. Gallant's journalism — especially her account of the Paris riots of May, 1969 — remind us that she was a reporter for six years before turning her talent to fiction. The apprenticeship has served her well.

POETRY

Candy from Strangers, by Diana Hartog, Coach House Press. To read Hartog's poetry is to be like a child presented with the big box of Crayola crayons: the colours are so beautiful and varied that one is overcome with a giddy sense of wonder.

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:

Albuquerque: Coming Back to the U.S.A., by Margaret Randall, New Star Books.
An Armadillo Is Not a Pillow, by Lois Simmie, illustrated by Anne Simmie, Western Producer Prairie Books.
Armchair Will, by Murray Malcolm, Western Producer Prairie Books.
Autumn Vengeance, Enos Watts, Breakwater.
Babies: Books for Babies from Birth to 12 Months, Tundra Books.
The Bedroom and the State, by Angus McLaren and Ariene Tigar McLaren, M. & S.
Border Crossings: Poems, by Richard Woolfitt, South Western Ontario Poetry.
British Columbia Prehistory, by Knut R. Fladmark, National Museums of Canada.
Prof. en Ghosts, by Roger Moore, Goose Lane Editions.
Canadian Crocodiles: A tale of the Rice Lake Plains, by Catherine Parr Trull, edited by Rupert Schieder, Carleton University Press.
Canadian Story and History 1805-1935, edited by Colin Nicholson and Peter Eastwood, Edinburgh University Centre of Canadian Studies.
Carl: Portrait of a Painter From Letters and Reminiscences, by George Johnston, Peanaubra.
Children Abroad: A Guide for Families Travelling Overseas, by Dr. Joe Losses et al., Deneau.
Children of the Volcano, by Alison Acker, Between the Lines.
Country Winds: Essays on Newfoundland Society in Context, by Rex Clark, Breakwater.
Courts in the Classroom: Education and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, by Michael E. Manley-Casimir and Terri A. Sussel, Detselig.
Culture and Class in Anthropology and History, A Newfoundland Illustration, by Gerald M. Sider, Cambridge University Press.

CANWIT NO. 115

IF XAVIERA HOLLANDER rewrote a novel by Margaret Atwood, she might produce *Bawdily Charm*. If Ned Hanlan rewrote a novel by Mordecai Richler, he might produce *St. Urbain's Oarsman*. And if Wayne Gretzky rewrote a novel by Max Braithwaite, he might produce *Why Teach the Shooter*. Contestants are invited to compose titles of other Canadian books as they might be revised by well-known Canadians living or dead. The prize is \$25. Deadline: January 1. Address: CanWit No. 115, Books in Canada, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 3X9.

Results of CanWit No. 113

OUR REQUEST FOR titles of books in which well-known Canadians attempt to make the best of their shortcomings led to a number of duplications, the most common of which were variations on *Robert Coates's Guide to*

German Nightlife. The winner is Barry Baldwin of Calgary, for a list that includes:

- ☐ *Fifty Great Tuna Recipes*, by John Fraser
- ☐ *Your Family Budget*, by Sinclair Stevens
- ☐ *The Maureen McTeer Name Book*
- ☐ *Never Apologize, Never Explain*, by Erik Nielsen

Honourable mentions:

- ☐ *Treating Scabs and Sore Spots: A Book of Home Remedies*, by Peter Pocklington
- ☐ *Taking Care of Your Grass: Dick's Book of Lawn Management*, by Richard Hatfield
- ☐ *One Hundred Lesson Plans for History Teachers*, by Jim Keejstra
— Michael Montcombroux, Winnipeg
- ☐ *Anyone for Punch? Sondra Goultleb's International Party Recipes*
- ☐ *What Weak Spots?*, by Brian Mulroney
— Doreen Ayre, St. John's, Nfld.

Dictionnaire anglais-français de l'électronique et de l'électrotechnique, by Pierre Renyi & Dominique Amrouil, Editions Renyi.
The Diffusion of Power: Rural Elites in a Bolivian Province, by Jose Havet, University of Ottawa Press.
Diggers, by Paul Stieckland, Kids Can Press.
Directory of Interlibrary Loan Policies & Duplication Services in Canadian Libraries: 4th Edition, National Library of Canada/Canadian Library Association.
Educating Religiously in the Multi-Faith School, by Donald J. Weeren, Detselig.
Essays on Canadian Education, by Nick Kach, et al., Detselig.
Fish Out of Water: The Newfoundland Saltfish Trade 1814-1914, by Shannon Ryan, Breakwater.
From the Fringe, edited by Nancy Bell, NeWest.
Flavours of Nova Scotia, by J.J. Sharp, Breakwater.
First Contact, by Carole Conde and Karl Beveridge, Between the Lines.
The Future of the Oceanus, by Elisabeth Mann Borgese, Harvest House.
The Government Generation: Canadian Intellectuals and the State 1940-1945, by Doug Owsram, U of T Press.
Hammerstroke, by Don Domanski, House of Anansi.
Her Excellency Jeanne Sauvé, by Shirley E. Woods, Macmillan.
In the Village/Dans le village, by Jonathan Leaning, Steel Rail.
Investments in Failure, by Sanford F. Borins with Lee Brown, Methuen.
A Land, A People: Short Stories by Canadian Writers, edited by Michael Nowlan, Breakwater.
Last Chances Summer, by Diana J. Wieler, Western Producer Prairie Books.
The Letter, by W. Gunther Plaut, M & S.
The Look Out Book: A Child's Guide to Street-Safety, by Cindy Blakely and Suzanne Drinkwater, Viking Kestrel.
Many Mirrors, Many Faces, by Shulamit Yefin, South Western Ontario Poetry.
The Metis in the Canadian West, Vol. 1 & 2, by Marcel Giraud, University of Alberta Press.
Money Manager for Canadians, by Henry B. Zimmer, Totem.
"More English than the English": A Very Social History of Victoria, by Terry Reiksten, Orca Book Publishers.
The Newsomongers: How the Media Distort the Political News, by Mary Anne Comber and Robert S. Mayne, M & S.
Night Lights Stories of Aging, edited by Constance Rooke, Oxford University Press.
Northrop Frye on Shakespeare, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
Northwest Territories: Canada's Last Frontier, by Lyn Hancock, Autumn Images.
The Owl and the Pussycat, by Edward Lear, illustrated by Eric Rutherford, Tundra Books.
Part of the Main: An Illustrated History of Newfoundland & Labrador, by Peter Neary and Patrick O'Flaherty, Breakwater.
Pieces of Map, Pieces of Music, by Robert Bringhurst, M & S.
Plan B is Total Panic, by Martin Godfrey, James Lorimer & Co.
The Post Transition Economy, by Brian Mull, Nisbet House.
The Proper Lover, by William Gough, Houslow Press.
Prophecy and Politics, by Grace Halsell, NC Press.

Putting the Cards on the Table ... Free Trade and Western Canadian Industries, Canada West Foundation.
The Queen's Secret, by Charles Templeton, M & S.
Readings in Canadian Library History, edited by Peter F. McNally, Canadian Library Association.
Red Dog & Great White: Inside the America's Cup, by Mark Clark, Byren House Publishing.
Seed Catalogue, by Robert Kroetsch, Turnstone.
Spatsie Nnetokri, by Eric Hill, Breakwater.
Spectator Sports, by Christie Blatchford, Key Porter.
The Status of the Artist, Minister of Supply & Services.
Subject Index to Canadian Poetry in English for Children & Young People, compiled by Kathleen M. Snow et al., Canadian Library Association.
Successfully Single, by Betty Jane Wylie, Key Porter Books.
Tax Facts 5: The Canadian Consumer Tax Index and You, by Sally Pipes and Michael Walker, The Fraser Institute.
Technology, Innovation and Change, edited by Brian Elliott, Edinburgh University, Centre of Canadian Studies.
Telling Tales, by John Fraser, Collins.
Trace: Prairie Writers on Writing, edited by Birk Sproxtion, Turnstone.
Travelling to Find a Remedy, by Claire Harris, Goose Lane Editions.
Tracks, by Paul Stieckland, Kids Can Press.
Undercover for the RCMP, by R.S.S. Wilson, Sono Nis Press.
The Well-Tempered Critic, by Northrop Frye, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
A Woman's Almanac: Voices from Newfoundland, Breakwater.
Yukon Water Doctor, by Monty Alford, Burns & Morton Company.

CLASSIFIED

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

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OLD AND RARE BOOKS. Canadians Catalogues. Heritage Books, 886 Palmerston Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6G 2S2.

CanLit acrostic no. 1

By Mary D. Trainer

	1	L2	O3	W		4	H5	A6	O7	K8	Z		9	U10	J11	Q		12	L13	C14	A15	Y16	F17	AA		18	G	
19	D	20	L21	D		22	V23	S24	H25	R26	W27	X		28	AA29	B30	W31	D		32	U33	O34	L35	I36	Q		37	S
38	V39	F40	K		41	E42	H43	Y44	E45	L		46	J47	P		48	M49	A50	U51	T52	G53	P54	J55	L56	Y57		58	Z
59	P59	F		60	G		61	T62	U63	R64	O65	Y		66	D67	Z68	K		69	AA70	C71	O72	B73	M		74	V75	Z
76	I77	W78	A79	Y80	L81	D82	Y		83	G84	X85	L86	S87	A88	L		89	V90	R		91	E92	I93	L		94	M	
95	95	V97	A98	AA		99	I	100	V101	AA102	Z103	D104	V105	R		106	E107	H108	Z109	M110	D111	Z112	V113	P114	G115		116	N
	116	I117	L118	A119	S		120	K121	T122	W		123	Y124	E125	Q		126	K127	D128	X129	P		130	H131	J		132	I
133	B134	W135	L136	S137	E138	N		139	A140	U141	S142	V143	O		144	K145	AA146	O		147	D148	V149	F150	L151		152	L	
152	C153	V154	H155	V156	S157	O158	AA		159	J160	Y161	T		162	P163	F164	N165	C166	M167	V168	C		169	M170	R		171	U
171	K172	Q173	W		174	B175	Z176	Y177	G178	N179	L180	A		181	K182	L183	Y		184	E185	W186	U187	R		188	T189	U	
190	I191	U192	N		193	Z194	O195	S196	J197	W198	D199	O		200	Q201	Z		202	M203	S204	U205	R206	F207	B		208		

When properly filled in, the letters in the box form a quotation from a Canadian book. Find the letters by solving the clues below and writing the answers in the numbered spaces provided. Then transfer the letters from the spaces to the appropriate squares in the box. The first letters of each answered clue form the name of the author and the title of the book. (solution next month.)

- A. Branch of northeastern Athapaskan language family
14 5 118 97 49 139 180 78 87
- B. Imposition of an assessment
72 133 29 108 207 174
- C. Pale
13 168 70 152 165
- D. Restraining
81 31 21 127 147 110 66 19 103
198
- E. Measured movement
44 124 41 91 184 187
- F. Salad plant
18 205 59 183 39 149
- G. Small fish used as bait
83 60 177 114 52 18
- H. — Sound, home of Tom Thomson Memorial Gallery
130 4 154 107
- I. Cover up defects
180 95 78 116 35 132 89 45 92
- J. A relative by marriage
10 131 159 46 54 166
- K. "___ of the Edmund Fitzgerald" song: 2 wds.
171 144 68 120 7 40 181 128
- L. Proclaimed loudly
88 151 182 85 12 93 1 179 55

- M. NM. site of submarine telegraph cable: 2 wds
117 166 202 109 34 94 135 169 150
80 73 48 20
- N. Hockey's first player agent
138 57 115 178 42 182 24 164
- O. Without premeditation
71 33 194 2 6 64 189 157 146
- P. Uncoil
53 47 162 113 58 129
- Q. Mechanically separate seed from a harvested plant
200 172 36 125 11 143
- R. Quebec novelist Lemelin's famous family
25 105 205 63 170 90 187
- S. Aggressive movement
136 195 37 23 203 119 141 158 85
- T. Popular children's entertainer
161 121 81 51 188
- U. Disposable handbill
189 140 186 62 50 32 9 191 204
- V. Manitoba's flower: 2 wds
22 167 104 38 100 96 148 74 155
89 142 112 153
- w. Canada's third largest island
185 26 184 173 122 77 30 197 3
- X. Single person or thing
84 128 27
- Y. Quebec statue respecting Communist propaganda: 2 wds.
183 49 65 56 160 79 15 176 82
123
- Z. "Early Morning Rain" composer
75 102 111 67 108 8 201 183 175
- AA. Maverick editor of the Calgary Eye-Opener
28 159 69 145 101 17 93



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