

# BOOKS *in* CANADA

a national review of books

MARCH, 1976

## IN SEARCH OF HIMSELF

Richard Landon unravels  
FREDERICK PHILIP GROVE

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EARLE BIRNEY explains why  
the Rockies still make him feel  
topsy-turvy



OBERON :  
Paul Stuewe  
talks about the  
little press who could

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An unexpurgated edition of Earle Birney's military picaresque novel *Turvey*, first published in 1949, has recently been issued by McClelland & Stewart. Wendy Campbell is the Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. Jim Christy's one-mm expedition to the Upper Amazon was abruptly terminated by hostile natives; he "or is planning a longitudinal transverse of the Americas from Alaska to the Horn on a motorcycle. Pier Giorgio Di Cicco is a Toronto poet. David Cotter, formerly Kelly Wilde, has been an irregular contributor to these pages. Alexander Craig teaches political science at the University of Western Ontario. Patricia Elliott teaches music-drama at Toronto's Three Schools of Art. Howard Engel is a distinguished CBC-Radio producer. Len Gasparini is one of the most-quoted poetry critics in Canada. Gail Geltner's graphic art has often graced these pages. Marvin Goody combines supply teaching with freelance criticism. Jean Johnston is a Kitchener, Ont., author. Godfrey P. Jordan is a Toronto broadcaster. Richard Landon is currently on a travelling fellowship exploring rare-book collections in California. New Zealand-born Mary Lawson, formerly promotion manager at Clarke Irwin, now tire, in Pickering, Ont. Aviva Layton's *How the Kookaburra Got His Laugh* is reviewed on page 17. Michael O. Nowlan is a freelance reviewer based in Oromocto, N.B. Marilyn Powell is a Toronto writer and broadcaster. Gord Ripley is a librarian and sports fan living in St. Thomas, Ont. Hubert de Santana, Yeats scholar and sometime Dubliner, will shortly be returning to Ireland on an assignment for *Maclean's* magazine. Michael Smith is a short-story writer and critic living in St. Marys, Ont. Paul Stuewe is a frequent contributor of feature articles and the author of our Soft & Recycled column. Phil Surguy is a former columnist for *Vancouver Life* magazine. Moira Thompson is a student of graphic art at Toronto's George Brown College. Brian Vincent reviews regularly for us and for the *Toronto Star*. J. Michael Whittle is a Toronto doctor.



## BOOKS in CANADA

Vol. 5 No. 3

March, 1976

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*Books in Canada* is published 12 times a year, with the assistance of the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council, by Canadian Review of Books Ltd., 366 Adelaide Street East, Suite 432, Toronto, Ont., M5A 1N4. Telephone: (416) 363-5426. Available free in participating bookstores, schools, and libraries. Individual subscription rate: \$9.95 a year (\$15 overseas). Back issues available on microfilm from: McLaren Micropublishing, P.O. Box 972, Station F, Toronto, Ont., M4Y 2N9. The editors cannot be held responsible for unsolicited material. Second Class Mail — Registration No. 2593. Contents © 1976. Printed by Heritage Press Co. Ltd. ISSN 0045-2564

# AND ON THESE ROCKIES...

An old mountain man remembers the grizzly tales  
and vanishing glories of the great high country

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The Rockies, by **Andy Russell, Hurtig, illustrated**,  
160 pages, \$20 cloth.

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By **EARLE BIRNEY**

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**BECAUSE THIS BOOK** has a beautiful jacket and is largish and thinnish and costs \$20, don't assume it's just another display item down at the coffee-table level. Andy Russell, a photographer himself among other things, has maintained the visual promise of his cow in most of the 120 colour photos he presents, and what is rare indeed, has saved nearly one third of his space for a series of his own commentaries, beautifully written, both authoritative and personal, that succeed in uniting the past, the brief human years of exploration, and the new problems of wilderness "preservation" raised by the development of parks.

The "Rockies" of the title are exclusively the Canadian ones, and exclusive even of the much more extensive mountain areas of central and Pacific British Columbia, the Selkirks and Coast Ranges. These still await books worthy of their greatness. Russell has confined himself to what he knows, the comparatively narrow first wave of the Canadian Cordilleras as we approach from the Prairies, the spine of the Great Divide, stretching from the U.S. border between Alberta and British Columbia and up 2,000 miles almost to the Arctic coast of the Yukon. Even this is too much, and Russell has wisely confined himself almost entirely to describing and illustrating the national and provincial park areas of his Rockies, from Waterton on the Montana border to Banff, Kootenay, Yoho, Jasper, Mount Robson and the Yukon's Kluane.

Since I was born in sight of the abrupt Albertan wall of the High Rockies and lived my schooldays and early work-years within their valleys and began climbing up Banff's buttresses from the age of eight, there is an extra satisfaction for me in seeing at last a book that does justice to this country, so famous and yet so superficially known. Russell makes us feel the variety — the minutiae as well as the greatness — the surprising exotic brilliance of flower and bird, the strangeness and delicate strength of the, wild

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*Russell makes us feel the variety... the immensity of the upthrown ocean of rock and ice and the eerie beauties of the waters that are enclosed within them, or fall and foam to any one of the three salt oceans that our land touches.*

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animals, the immensity of the upthrown ocean of rock and ice, and the eerie beauties of the waters that are enclosed within them, or fall and foam to any one of the three salt oceans that our land touches.

And there is still enough of the Westerner in me to be naively gratified that *The Rockies* has been conceived, edited, written, photographed, published, and apparently financed almost entirely by Albertans. One doesn't need

ever to have seen the Rockies to take pleasure in this book, but its essential quality lies in the fact that its contributors, wherever they happen to have been born, have lived many summers if not all their years in our Rockies and have, as Russell says, "taken time to look" — and in his case also to feel and to think.

His commentary reaches back through a billion years and more to the sedimentation, the creation of the strata themselves, then their upheaving by the "crumpling of the rocky plate covering North America," and the slow workings of weather and glaciation that brought the wilderness to its present shape and covering. He then traces, somewhat sketchily, the coming of Indians and, a mere 200 years ago, of whites. It took the latter only one century to destroy forever not only the buffalo but the entire balance of living between men and other life that the Indians had precariously maintained for perhaps two millenia. Thanks to a few ec-

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*My disappearing limbs were close enough, however, to prompt her to rear up her hind legs and strip the dense firbark off that side of the trunk, trying to haul me down.*

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centric pioneers such as Kootenai Brown, with the foresight to see the human values in wilderness preservation, Ottawa was persuaded to set up, beginning in Banff in the 1880s, the present group of national parks in the Rockies.

Russell has, in the last 40 years, ranged through all of them, though the Waterton Park, neat which he was born, is obviously dearest to him. Beginning as a bronco-buster and trapper in the Lethbridge-Pincher Creek area and then as a professional mountain guide, he grew into a naturalist, author and photographer in his own right, and a man with a truly Wordsworthian respect and love for his mountains. "Their colours and their forms," are to him too "an appetite, a feeling and a love." The subjects of his observations, like those of the photographs he has chosen, range from the delicate minutiae of lichen, growing their "rock paintings" across sheer cliffs at the rate of a square inch every 100 years, to the great mammals of the woods and crags. He has learned the importance of each to the ecology of the whole, and apparently to cherish and live in harmony with all life in the Rockies — even with that "epitome of power," the grizzly.

"Never run from a bear," he says; "it only invites pursuit" and the bear can run faster. "Back off diplomatically, always facing the bear, with no sudden motions of panic. A grizzly welcomes the chance to save face" and go his own way. But here, at the risk of diision, I most register disagreement. Perhaps the grizzlies have grown milder in Waterton Park. In the summer of 1951, when Andy Russell was still a six-year-old Prairie boy, I was the rod-and-axeman in a party surveying the first motor mad between Waterton and Cameron Lakes. One sunny August morning I was following the chainman up our slash trail; we happened to be facing a headwind and moving quietly.

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From Collier Macmillan

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Suddenly a bear cub came scampering around a bead in the path a few yards ahead. The chainman was a college freshman from the East. He wanted to see a real live bear close up; so, as the cub turned and fled, he ran after it, disappearing around the corner despite my shouts to stay put. I tore after him, then, still hoping to drag him away before the mother, wherever she was, caught sight of us. I reached the corner just in time to see a huge silvertip, lying in the trail playing with her other cub. flip growling onto all fours and without a second's hesitation charge us. My companion sprang into the underbrush, shedding his chain and bag of stakes, and managed to shinny up an alder a split second before the bear reached its base. She wheeled once around his tree and then saw me and charged again. Meantime, I'd been sprinting downtrail to a hefty twin fir with low branches I'd noticed earlier, heaving away both rod and axe at the start, as mere encumbrances against such a bear. I slid between the two trees and heaved myself up the branches on the far side before she could get at me. My disappearing limbs were close enough, however, to prompt her to rear up on her hind legs and strip the dense firbark off that side of the trunk, trying to haul me down. But she did not linger, rounded her cubs up and went crashing with them straight up to timberline. It was then she was concerned with saving, not her face. If either the chainman or I had stood ground we'd have been dead. Russell does admit that grizzlies are just as individualistic as people, but I think this one merely acted true to grizzly type, or human type, for that matter. She did what any mother would have done in the circumstances, given the claws and the poundage. It was the circumstances that were freakish: a female grizzly, surprised upwind by the sight of a potential enemy apparently charging her cub, simply counterattacked.

I find little else in Russell's text to argue about, but someone has been occasionally careless with the photo captions. The glacier's long "broken line" at the top of the west side of Mount Robson, in Don Beers' magnificent photograph, is not "a serac" but the bergschrund, and the same Photographer's lovely shimmering view from near Sentinel Pass had to be taken in Banff not Jasper Park.

Beers' photos and those of J. A. Kraulis are justifiably given the lion's share of the book's visual sections, accounting for 50 of the 120 photographs. Though both are in a sense amateurs — Beers teaches school in Calgary and Kraulis studies architecture in Montreal — they have spent many summers in the Rockies taking pictures, and they are instinctive artists. The variety and technical skill of Kraulis's studies are amazing, whether his subject is a mushroom or a waterfall, snow on stream-banks or an orchid, a barren skm slope or a tapestried forest floor. Perhaps the finest and certainly the most dramatic study in the book is his telephoto shot of a newborn bii lamb wobbly under the shanks of his mother on a cliff-edge.

Most of the 25 photographers represented in *The Rockies* are Albertan-born or New Canadians who now live and work in the parks. In addition to the author himself, who contributes several fine pictures, including a breath-stopping glimpse of a cascade in a concealed canyon, there are three other Russells in the book, also born in the Pincher Creek area; one of them, Richard of the Canadian Wildlife Service, contributes an effective shot of a forest fire, always a difficult subject. There is a surprising dearth of climbing pictures, especially when one considers what a fine legacy of them now exists from such oldtimers as Byron Harmon. Black-and-white photography deserved to be represented. There is one effective alpinist picture, by the Swiss-

Canadian **Edi Klopfenstein**, a Jasper freelancer, and a good study of alpine marshlands by another emigrant from Switzerland, Hans **Fuhrer of the Yukon Park Service**. **There** is a beautiful and striking shot of an eaglet in its nest, downy-white and **softer** than a dove, by Tom **Willock**, an Albertan government biologist. 'Two of the best **big-mountain studies are** by a U-year-old journalist. **Patrick Morrow**.

The quality of the plates, however, is not always what it should be. Some have chemical spotting, and there is in general too much blue. Moreover, many reproductions are too small to do justice to the grandeur of the subject.

But these are secondary matters, and one returns to **re-read the text**. Russell is speaking to us not only to inform, but to **warn**. "Nature **is** at once powerful and rugged but beautiful and extremely fragile." Life on this **planet** is subject, like the universe itself, to change. Man must, **on** the one hand, protect the rest of life from his **own** destructiveness; but he can sometimes harm by overprotection. If, for example, we douse every grass and **bushfire** in a forested

park. we allow the **scrub** "to grow dangerously high" and if a **fire** gets loose it can leap **from** the scrub over the flame resistant bark of the big **trees** into their crowns, killing everything. **Moreover**, though we create the parks "to ensure the survival of natural beauty for **all** time . . . we love them to death" by **criss-crossing** them with roads that every summer **are** now clogged with cars, buses, trailers. The **mass** of tourists no longer want to ride anything as slow as a horse. The **packtrains** and trail-riders, and their guides and outfitters, the remote **camping** sites of my own childhood, **appear** to be gone forever. They **are** too many of us and we are too greedy, and too **neurotic** with speed; we have not **learned**, as the Indians did, to preserve the wilderness and yet use it. Russell ends with the plea to those "who **profess** to know and love the Rockies" to stop "destroying the life systems that make possible these blessings [with our] demand for more energy, more soft-living amenities"; the wild animals continue to be endangered, and the day still approaches when "the **wilderness lies** gutted and open to the **sun**." □

## MY OBERON! WHAT VISIONS

The story of one small Canadian press that may have been too successful for its own good

By PAUL STUEWB

OTTAWA. "A **PLACE** of chill **fierce** colds, full of rheumatism and damnded snowstorms" for the young Archibald **Lampman**, and the home of bureaucratic mandarins, the Roughriders and a lopsided ratio of women to men in **our** national mythology. The village-cum-city where you can see **Nureyev** at the Arts **Centre** and go crazy trying to find a decent restaurant, where downtown is a confused jumble of construction sites and sparkling skyscrapers that, like New York, will be a great place to live if they ever get it built.

Not a **likely** place for one of **Canada's** most innovative small publishers, you might think, at least until you'd been straightened out by the no-nonsense tones of Oberon **Press's** Anne Hardy. "Fmm the very first days," she **explains**, "**we** received manuscripts **from** West Coast, Maritime, and even Eastern Ontario writers who were unable to find a publisher in Toronto, but were still seeking a national audience rather than a regional **one**. **In** effect, our being in Ottawa has forced us to become a national publisher, and to be continually searching for new markets for our writers." Or, as husband Michael Macklem adds in characteristically epigrammatic fashion, "All mads lead out of Ottawa!"

They certainly do for Anne and **Michael**, who since Oberon's 1967 founding have spent several months of each **year** canvassing bookstores and libraries across the country. Except for Newfoundland, which **they** visit every second year, this annual swing takes them **from** the Maritime6 to the West Coast, and has resulted in what is generally **recognized** as the best distribution network of any small Canadian publisher. Another consequence has been the compilation of Anne Hardy's *Where To Eat in Canada*, whose annually revised editions and healthy sales have made it Oberon's most popular title by the length of several thousand **crumpled** serviettes.

Despite the respect of his peers and a steady increase in both number of titles published and volume of sales, Michael Macklem confesses to being known as "the Cassandra of the book trade." Cassandra, you will recall, was a mythological Ms. cursed with the ability to make accurate predictions that were invariably disbelieved; and several of **Macklem's** forecasts contain disturbing but inarguable truths that rub against the grain of a period of **relative optimism** in the Canadian book-publishing industry.

If, as Macklem admits, "Oberon has survived and done comparatively well," this can only be attributed to the large amount of unpaid effort that he and Anne Hardy have put into it. Macklem estimates that they supply between 50 per cent and 60 per cent of the necessary work for free, and points out that neither he nor Anne Hardy have ever taken



Michael Macklem

out a cent in royalty payments, even though the latter's *Where To Eat in Canada* is Oberon's most profitable title. In this sense, continued success contains the seed of failure: "The real crisis will come when we have to start paying for labour in order to meet the growing demand for our books."

This seeming paradox stems from the peculiar economics of small-press publishing, which Macklem summarizes as, "The more you print, the more you lose." Oberon pays up to 50 per cent of list price to produce its books and sells them to bookstores at 60 per cent of list, which does not provide an adequate margin for royalty payments and overhead, let alone the provident accumulation of capital. "In a way," he muses, "it would be very much to our advantage to print just one copy of each book and sell it to the Canada Council. As things stand at present, in order to succeed you have to be willing to be crucified."

Macklem's pessimism is not assuaged by any great enthusiasm for recent governmental initiatives in the area of assistance to publishers. He agrees that getting Canadian books into Canadian schools would help to improve the situation, but cannot discern that agencies such as the Ontario Learning Materials Development Fund (which is supposed to be encouraging just this sort of thing) have had any impact at all: "The bureaucrats aren't doing enough, although with their limited power and resources I don't know what more they could do."

While Anne Hardy does not quite play Pollyanna to Macklem's Cassandra, she is markedly more optimistic about the positive benefits of self-help organizations such as the Independent Publishers' Association. Unlike such severe critics of the latter as J. Michael Yates (see "So Long Sono Nis?," October issue), she has found the IPA "ex-

tremely useful — indeed, I don't know where we'd be without it." As one example out of many, she cites the IPA's effective representation of Canadian publishers at trade fairs and conferences, which has resulted in substantial orders for Oberon books.

Hardy is also reasonably satisfied with the operation of the bloc-grant system of distributing funds that's now used by the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council. She points out that it seems to favour the smaller publishers — "Oberon's grant is proportionately much larger than McClelland & Stewart's or Clarke Irwin's" — and is certainly an improvement upon the old project-grant method of separate applications for each proposed book. Still, Anne

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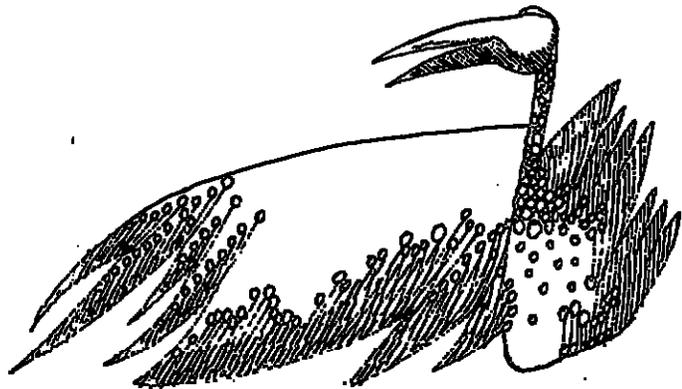
*"The real crisis will come when we have to start paying for labour in order to meet the growing demand for our books."*

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Hardy is hardly sanguine about the realities of the publishing business: "The long hours and low pay are redeemed only by the opportunity to publish books that we believe are worthwhile, and if we weren't able to do that I doubt that we would persevere with Oberon."

This strong commitment to Oberon also extends to the Macklems' 24-year-old son Tim. When the Canada Council decided that recipients of its grants would have to have their books printed in Canada, Oberon appeared to be in trouble; most of its titles had been printed in England, and the greater expense of Canadian publication would result in a significant increase in costs. To the rescue came Tim, who after an apprenticeship with a Toronto printer returned to become the press's typesetter in a printshop situated in the family garage. This also represented another step in Oberon's gradual takeover of the Macklems' home, where bedrooms have been turned into offices and the basement functions as a capacious but crammed-to-bursting warehouse.

The ability to meet new challenges while continuing to issue a steady flow of impressive new titles has given Oberon a catalogue that has few equals among its publishing rivals. A definite orientation towards "experimental" fiction and poetry is tempered by more traditional work from comparatively well-established writers, although even the latter tend to be the critics' darlings rather than the public's. One thing you won't find on Oberon's list is the "non-book," those quaint collections of miscellaneous anecdotes and lavishly produced albums of brownie snapshots that are relentlessly flogged at Christmas time and



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spend the rest of the year holding down the remainder tables.

Fiction, and particularly the short story, has been the speciality of the house, and the New *Canadian Stories* anthologies (published annually since 1971) have drawn an increasingly "heavyweight class" of contributors: the 75 edition includes work by Jane Rule, Leo Simpson, and Joyce Marshall, as well as the usual group of fairly obscure writers. 75 arrived at reviewers' desks in tandem with Norman Levine's *Selected Stories*, and the contrast between the two — 75 is somewhat avant-garde, whereas Levine's *Stories* are much more mainstream in conception — was quite an accurate indication of the range of Oberon's short-fiction offerings. "The Decline of the Short Story" is one of those hardy perennials that editors consider on a slow Thursday in July, but the consistent excellence of such Oberon Collections as John Metcalf's *The Teeth of My Father*, George Bowering's *Flycatcher & Other Stories* and W. D. Valgardson's *God Is Not a Fish Inspector* demonstrate that this judgment would be wildly premature.

It wasn't until I began writing this article that I realized Oberon has also published three of my favourite recent novels. Hugh Hood's *Tile Swing* in *the Garden*, although perhaps more interesting as social history than as a coherent fiction, qualifies as a delightful "good read," and John Sandman's *Fords Eat Chew* and John Mills's *The October Men* deserve to be equally well-known. *Fords Eat Chevs* is a picaresque "on the mad" opus that fashions high comedy from the clash of proletarian, bourgeois, and counter cultures: and *The October Men* is quite simply the most amazing example of the literate "thriller" ever produced in Canada.

Oberon's poetry titles offer a similar mix of the experimental and the traditional, the familiar and the relatively unknown. The innovative work of Bill Bissett (*Medicine My Mouth's On Fire*) and bp nichol (ABC: *The Aleph Beth Book*) complements the unpretentious but solid verse of Raymond Souster (*Selected Poems* and several other titles),

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*The Oberon imprint is about as close to a brand name as there is in Canadian publishing.*

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just as the efforts of such veterans as David Helwig (*The Best Name of Silence; The Sign of the Gunman*) blend nicely with those of such comparative newcomers as Lloyd Abbey (*Flies*) and Stuart MacKinnon (*Skydeck*). Oberon has also begun to concentrate on publishing children's books by Canadian writers, of which Michael Macklem believes there are far too few, and both Ken Tolmie's *A Tale of an Egg* and Mary Alice Downie's and Elizabeth Cleaver's *The Witch of the North* bode well for the success of this venture.

If the above comments sound like a blanket commercial for Oberon Press, that's because I'm tremendously impressed by the overall stature of its books. Although I can come up with the odd exception — I haven't been able to share the general enthusiasm for Don Bailey's novel *In the Belly of the Whole* — the Oberon imprint is about as close to a brand name as there is in Canadian publishing. It hasn't yet managed to do anything about Lampman's "damned snowstorms," but it has taken the chill off our literary climate with a warm Eastern chinook that blows just about everybody good. □

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# AND GREVE HIS HEART

Grove may have come like a shadow but thanks to Pacey's scholarship he didn't so depart

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The Letters of **Frederick Philip Grove**, edited by **Desmond Pacey**, U of T Press, Illustrated, 584 pages, \$25 cloth.

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By **RICHARD LANDON**

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**THIS WELL-PRODUCED**, if slightly daunting, volume is a monument to **the** industrious scholarship, critical acumen and **literary** taste of the late **Desmond Pacey**, who died **after** his editorial tasks were completed but **before** publication. He had pursued the study of Grove and his work for **more** than 30 years — **maintaining**, in the face of some **opposition**, that Grove was a major writer of English literature. His *Frederick Philip Grove* (1945) **was**, and remains still, the standard critical work. Pacey had the advantage of having known Grove personally during the last years of the author's life and had assembled, over a period of many years, 514 letters written by **Grove** between 1913 and his death in 1948.

The **first** date is **significant** because, until very recently, nothing certain was known of Grove's life **before** he settled as a school teacher in Manitoba in 1912. Professor Douglas Spettigue, however, has established, in **Pacey's** words, "beyond a **reasonable** doubt," that Frederick Philip **Grove** of **Winkler, Man. was**, before 1910, Felix **Paul Greve** of Germany. That he was able to disappear successfully **from** one life, reappear in a totally different guise on a **different** continent, and become a famous writer has rendered **Grove**, as a person, an object of considerable fascination, quite apart from his writing. Speculation, and certain **controversial** aspects of this collection of letters, are further compounded by **Grove** having written his autobiography (*In Search of Myself*; 1946), a book now often found on the

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*Speculation, and certain controversial aspects of this collection of letters, are further compounded by Grove having written his autobiography . . . a book now often found on the "Fiction" shelves of book shops.*

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"Fiction" shelves of book shops. **Grove** invented for himself an **aristocratic** background in Sweden with an **Anglo-Swedish** father and a Scottish mother. friendships with **Mallarmé**, Gide, and Stefan George. and **an** early life spent **travelling** through Europe, the Far East, **Africa**, and America. **Felix Paul Greve**, 15 of whose letters are appended to the present collection, was arrested **for** fraud in Bonn in 1903 and spent **several** months in jail. This **presumably** was the principal motive for the abandonment of his career **as** a writer and his country. **Greve** had actually published a considerable number of books, including **translations** of Wilde, Swift, Wells, and **Browning**.

The editor maintains, however, that the obvious discrepancies between what **Grove wrote** about himself and the murky circumstances of his *real early* life do not invalidate *In Search of Myself* as an accurate source of information.

**Pacey** was, of **course**, primarily concerned with Grove's Canadian career and his own record of it. One might hope that the later letters would illuminate or explain events of the earlier period. but that is not the case. Grove **wrote** guardedly even to his wife.

This collection, however, does provide an interesting and accurate view of **Grove** as a personality, a not very **attractive** one at that. Even Pacey admits that **Grove** could be arrogant, snobbish, rude, egotistical. and self-seeking. He

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*He did not possess any apparent sense of humour and the pervasive feeling of the whole collection is one of dark loneliness, frustration, and despair.*

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is particularly so in his letters to publishers. The letters to his **wife** are, however, gentle and compassionate — although not very passionate. To his good friends, such as Watson **Kirkconnell**, he writes **well** of **books** and other writers, **often** with perceptive commentary and occasionally with wit. He did not possess any apparent sense of **humour** and the pervasive feeling of the whole collection is one of dark loneliness, frustration, and despair. His books did not sell particularly well and he was **often** in poor health. The high point of his career was certainly the lecture tours he made in 1928 and 1929 when he became established as a great celebrity. The letters from this **period provide** a **fascinating** account of a forgotten facet of Canadian society, the provision of **culture** to the masses through the touring **lecturer** who would discourse on **topics** ranging **from** the interpretation of Homeric poetry to the gold standard.

Grove **seems** to have **been** a **successful** lecturer; at least significant numbers of people turned out to hear him and according to him, went away entertained and elevated. In Peterborough **in** the middle of **March**, 1928, some 200 people packed the hall and "everybody **from** the **first** word to the last, sat still as a mouse, except when they were applauding." He does **not reveal** the subject of this lecture and indeed, does not **often** discuss what he was actually **talking** about. His audiences **were** not always "wonderful." In **Wolseley, Sask.** only 15 people appeared, among whom, **according to Grove, were** two male infants, two female flappers, **three** "sheiks," "four beef-eaters," and four old ladies "come out of cold storage." His applause consisted of "three distinct claps." In one place he is "travelling in the wake of that vermin Wilson **Macdonald** who peddles his own **wares**. When he enters a town, he brings **trunkfuls** of his books along. When he has spoken, he displays them and rakes in the shekels."

Lecturing was an arduous business **entailing** a tight schedule and great distances. On his first tour **Grove** began on Feb. 27 in Portage La **Prairie**, moved east **through Kee-watin**, Fort William, **Port Arthur**, **Sudbury**, Ottawa, Smith's Falls, **Belleville**, **Bowmanville**, Port Hope, Peterborough. Trenton, Tomato, Hamilton, **Wingham**, **Kitchener**, London, Stratford, Guelph, and finally back to **Winnipeg** and Rapid City on **April** 17, where his health broke

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down. In September he was off again via **Moosomin, Wolseley, Regina, Moose Jaw, Shannavon, Govenlock, Lethbridge, Calgary, Gleichen, Drumheller, Rockyford, Banff, Revelstoke, Kamloops, Vancouver, and Victoria.**

**“My personal tragedy has been that I have, throughout the forty-four years of my life in Canada, lived in exile from the realm of literature. ...”**

He returned through Jasper, Edmonton, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon, arriving home in the middle of November.

There is a good deal of valuable information in this volume concerning Grove's books and the circumstances of their composition and publication. Consider *Her Ways*, published in 1947, he first mentions in 1927 as having been in the works for 20 years. The original draft was apparently finished in 1920 but Grove continued to “nibble at it” for the next 20 years. He was intimately involved in the operations of the curious and ill-fated Graphic Publishers of Ottawa, who published his *A Search for America* in 1927. He left Rapid City, Man., in 1929 to work for the Graphic Publishers and left only when the firm failed financially. In *Search of Myself*, the controversial autobiography, is first mentioned in 1936 in a letter to Lorne Pierce in the sort of terms Grove often employed with publishers: “But one day I wish to write the tragedy of a Canadian writer; the tragedy of the man who has something to say and tries to say it but cannot do so for sheer poverty. My personal tragedy has been that I have, throughout the forty-four years of my life

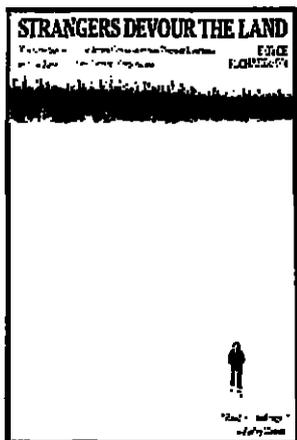
in Canada, lived in exile from the realm of literature. ...” There are a few further references to the book's composition but it seems not to have required “nibbling” and was submitted first to Pierce at Ryerson Press and ultimately to Macmillan, who published it.

The letters in this volume do not form a continuous narrative of and commentary on Grove's Canadian life. There are many gaps in the correspondence. From July 11, 1914, just before Grove got married, until Jan. 29, 1923, no letters survive. The 1923 letter is an odd reply to a doctor who had written to Grove commenting on a passage in *Over Prairie Trails*, and we then skip to 1925. Thus then is practically no information about either *Over Prairie Trails* (1922) or *The Turn of The Year* (1923). The period 1928 to 1930 is very heavily represented, because Grove was writing almost every day to his wife while he was on the lecture circuit and often to friends he had recently met. From then until the end of his life, a more or less continuous correspondence has survived.

This is the first scholarly edition of the letters of a Canadian writer to be published. It has been handled with care and intelligence. The letters are thoroughly annotated and set forth in a readable way that preserves Grove's idiosyncratic manner of writing. One of the editor's great problems was tracing the identity of obscure people Grove met casually and mentioned in passing. He has succeeded beyond any reasonable expectation.

This work clearly demonstrates the value of “collected letters” of literary personages. Much is revealed about a confusing and conflicting personality and his work and, incidentally, about the state of Canadian literature and the society of his time. □

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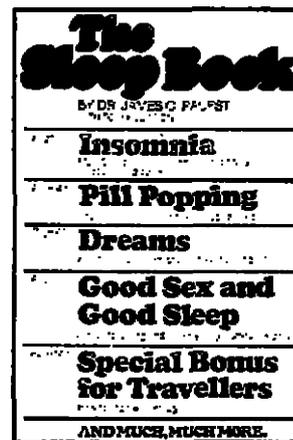
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# Home is the haunter

The Lost **Salt Gift** of Blood, by **Alistair MacLeod**, **McClelland & Stewart**, 192 pages, \$8.95 cloth.

By **MICHAEL SMITH**

**SOMETHING** THAT'S shared by our best short-story writers (Clarke **Blaise** and Alice **Munro**, to name two) is a deep sense of the inherited and **geographic** past that forms their characters. Margaret Laurence has also written of "a collective cultural memory" that her characters may trace through several generations to a much longer legendary past. In short, they appeal to a son of **returning** that is essential, I think, to these stories by **Alistair MacLeod**.

All of **MacLeod's** stories hark to the past, and in several a **return** to old mots is a central theme. Even in "The Vastness of the Dark," a young man recognizes so much of his heritage while leaving home that a contrary sense of returning is the inevitable result. Most often, **this** heritage is the **dirt-poor village** life of Cape **Breton**, a fatal past where horses go **blind from** working in the mines and members of the family commonly die from cave-ins, black lung, or drink. For **MacLeod** it's also a mythical, occasionally **nostalgic** past and a place of dizzying beauty.

In "The **Lost Salt Gift of Blood**," for instance, a young man returns to a Newfoundland **outport** where he stays with the **grandparents** of his illegitimate son and bears how the mother of the little boy died. In "The Road to **Rankin's Point**" another young man returns to his grandmother's **scruffy** farm to face his own fatal illness partly by recalling the **bizarre** early death of his grandfather. In "The **Return**" a 10-year-old boy first discovers his Cape **Breton** forebears in a visit with his island-born father and his **Montreal**-bred mother. "Once you **start** it takes a hold of you," a character in "The Vastness of the Dark" **savs**. "Once you **drink underground water, you will always come back to drink** some more."

In a way that's reminiscent of **Laurence**, **MacLeod** sometimes blends this life of the past with folk lore, as when in "The Road to **Rankin's Point**" the fact of dying is bound to the grandmother's **arthritic** fiddling of "**MacCrimmon's**

Lament." The grandfather had written on a rafter **high** in the ban: "We are the children of our own despair, of Skye and Rum and **Barra** and Tie." In "The Boat" the narrator's father sings **songs** of "**spattered** Highland ancestors" for **American** tourists equipped with tape recorders. In the title story **MacLeod** writes of **outport** superstition and the "bright young graduate students" **come** collecting the songs he transcribes.

Like **Laurence**, **MacLeod** always knows his place among the generations. He has a **shrewd** feeling for relations inside the home. His men — though **scarred**, often brutally, by their work — tend to be the nostalgic ones. impulsive (**like** the father in "In the Fall") and capable of tears. The women are **strong, often** sobering and sometimes sharply critical, though neither partner dominates enough to subvert their bond. **Like** Ernest Becker, **MacLeod** draws a fine ambivalence between fathers and their sons in such stories as "In the Fall," "The Boat," "The Vastness of the Dark," and "The Return."

In "The Boat," for instance, the Father is something of a dreamer, though he seldom sleeps. When he's not fishing he lies on top of his rumpled bed reading and smoking amid a rubble of discarded books and clothes. The mother, 14 years his **junior**, is a fisherman's daughter, bred to **hard** work. Each of their daughters loses interest in chores and turns to the father's

books. Each eventually works for an American restaurant (**not "our people"**), marries and moves away. When the father becomes both old and sick it **falls to the narrator — the only son —** to choose between fishing and school. He's writing now from the vantage of a Midwestern university, after what was evidently his second choice. It's been 10 years since he glanced over his shoulder and realized his father had been swept from their boat.

The personal depth of such stories is underlined, I think, by the **first-person** narrative that **MacLeod** uses in all but one. Most **are** written from the point of view of **youth, and six of the seven** (I'm including the Newfoundland story) are unified by his vivid sense of place. The exception-written in the **third person** and set in the U.S. Midwest-is "**The Golden Gift of Grey**," a story about a high school boy who stays out all night to shoot pool, rather pretentiously titled and weak by comparison with the others.

**MacLeod** sometimes tends to lavish descriptive details up to the point that some things seem too brilliant ever really to be hue. At times for me this almost became as boring as a list. We always **learn** the **colour** of everybody's eyes and **hair**, the **size of** hands and how **many lingers they** lack. We know the furnishings of every room. He writes about "violent lightning" — but what other kind **can** there be? Fewer, **more** suggestive details might have suited me better, though I can't accuse him of

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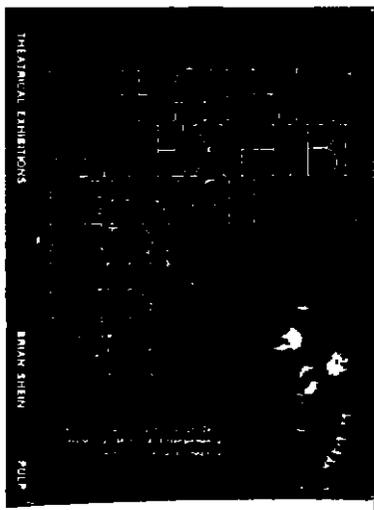
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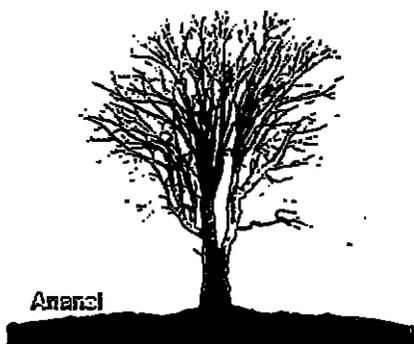
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being just fancy or picturesque. On the contrary, I have to admit that any complaint I can raise is only a quibble from a jealous admirer. □

## Defective story

**Close Doesn't** Count, by John Craig, Macmillan, 176 pages, \$9.95 cloth.

By PHIL SURGUY

WE'LL KNOW FOR sure that the Canadian publishing industry is in a genuinely healthy state when it is able to present us with a substantial body of popular fiction. That is, books intended to be bought and read for recreational reasons, rather than because they are instructive or they offer an opportunity to prove one's loyalty to the country. John Craig is one of the few authors currently producing this kind of fiction, and it is sad to report that he is already behaving like an English book-a-year man who feels he can crank out nearly anything and expect it to sell.

In this, Craig's fifth novel, Joe Belmont, a Toronto detective and his partner, Lieutenant Frank Fenton, go to an abandoned warehouse one night to capture a hoodlum they've been looking for. Joe covers the rear and Frank goes in the front. After a while, Belmont begins to worry about his partner and he creeps into the warehouse. He is shot and the book abruptly jumps six months forward in time.

Belmont now is recuperating from his wound in a cabin near the remote Ontario resort community where Fenton grew up. He is having a pleasant time, but he's curious about the hostility he senses in some of the townspeople. He investigates and learns that, nearly 30 years ago, Fenton's girlfriend was abducted at gunpoint from his car while they were parked in the local lovers' lane. The girl was never found, the abductor was never caught, and the community's outrage came to be focussed on Fenton and anyone who might be his friend.

Of course, Belmont determines to solve the mystery and he more or less does, after a long excursion down a blind alley and several attempts on his life. A careful reader will spot the important clues and figure out the identity of the killer quite easily. Indeed, the reader is almost always several jumps

ahead of Joe Belmont, but not because the author intended him to be.

The basic trouble with the book is that Craig has not bothered to construct the carefully detailed, realistic human and physical background that is perhaps more necessary for the success of a thriller than it is for any other genre of fiction. He is even ignorant of simple police procedures, including the fact that there is no such rank as lieutenant in the Metro Toronto Police. And, worse, he has failed to do anything with the relationship between Belmont and Fenton, which should have been the core of his story. All of the characters are critically undeveloped, and the clutter of information that is brought in at the end only serves to point out the hollowness of what preceded it. In short, the author has only gone through the barest motions of writing a thriller. □

## Brain strain

The Kramer Project, by Robert A. Smith, Doubleday, 250 pages, \$7.95 cloth.

By AVIVA LAYTON

OLD STORY-LINES never die; they don't even fade away. The time-honoured formula of "boy meets girl, boy loses girl" that has had an infinite number of changes rung on it, raises its hoary head again in Robert A. Smith's sci-fi novel. The Kramer Project. Here it emerges as "boy meets computer, boy loves computer, boy freaks out over computer," with the kinky addition of "boy becomes computer."

Time is the present. It is the beginning of summer and somewhere in Toronto Dr. Howard Kramer with his crack team of technicians is slaving over a hot computer. Seems he has discovered a serum that, when injected into a chimp called Jerry, enormously increases his brain capacity. Jerry's alter ego is a complex computer that can identify his brainwaves and translate them into words and actions. The Kramer project is, unfortunately, running out of funds; in fact, it can stay in operation only a matter of days. What is the response from Ottawa to a last-ditch plea for a government subsidy? In the immortal words of the senator addressing the Science Policy Committee: "I've canvassed some of the best minds of the country on the subject-and the

consensus is that **nothing can be done to improve the brain at this time.**" Well, that's Canada for you.

Meanwhile, back in Kiev, those **Russky rats are going all-out to improve the brain.** Seems they've also discovered a brain-expanding serum, but they have progressed to hying it out on a human being and linking him up directly to a computer that can extend his mental capacities to such a degree that the entire American defence system can be rendered **impotent.** Dolly in on Washington where the good old U.S. of A. gets wind of these startling developments. **Panic. No one there is doiig any similar research. But hold on a second.** What about that guy Kramer up them in that always-a-bridesmaid, never-a-bride country? What's it called again? Oh **yes .. Canada.** "Get hold of Kramer." the brass commands. "**Push him hard! Don't get off his ass until he makes us number one.**" So, with moral scruples overcome, Kramer's project moves under the suspect but well-feathered wing of the American **Defence** Department and the race, my friends, is on.

Not a single **cliché** does the author **spare us from** the whole panoply of sci-fi **clichés:** the lightning moves from one scene of operations to another ("**Smolensk August 11th 1800 hours EST**"; "Colorado Springs July **23rd 1700 hours**"); the breathless pieces of information ("It's unbelievable — we're dealing with an entirely new species.. ."). The Americans say such American things as, "If we don't move now, the Russians will take over the whole goddamn **ballgame**"; the **Russians** say such Russian things as, "Put me through to the Kremlin"; the Canadians **don't** say anything much. Such staggering quantities of cigarettes are smoked and coffee drunk that it's a wonder neither side succumbs to lung cancer or the shakes. Somebody's obviously told the author to delineate his characters in bold, clear strokes with the result **that,** with little or no regard for race, **colour,** or creed, they all possess "bushy gny **eyebrows,**" "**weathered faces,**" and "shrewd, **calculating eyes**" (that is when they don't have "large, bulging" ones). They're either "lean and disciplined" or "thin and harried-looking" or "short and **plump.**" And they are, all of **them,** disconcertingly prone to giving "quick smiles" or **making "sham, barking laughs.**"! For the **careful reader, there are** small rewarding gems of unconscious **humour** to be found. One example: "**Peterson is a worried man. He's**

never presided over an international crisis before and it's upsetting him."

**There are** a few moments of pity and **terror,** though- the genuinely moving scenes when we **are** shown the **increasing loneliness and** alienation of the two human' guinea-pigs, Mendov and Goodman, who, since their injections, **can communicate only with each other.** **And the story manages to generate just enough of the I-wonder-what-happens-next tension** to keep the fingers flicking the pages. I must admit, however, that when at the end the computer called Anna triumphs, the thought flashed tbmugh my mind that maybe the whole **thing** was a devilishly subtle allegory on Women's Lib and I'd been missing the **point all along.** □.

## Feud for thought

Death to the **Donnellys,** by Orlo Miller, Macmillan, 256 pages, \$9.95 cloth.

By GODFREY P. JORDAN

**UNSOLVED MYSTERIES** have a great public fascination and appear to be quite popular **at present.** The **best** are **resolved** in the turmoil of **speculation** (a president resigns) or the **cloak-and-dagger** intrigue of greater **forces** at work (FBI-CIA inquiry). Certain cases will remain open-en&d forever; others require intensive research and history in retrospect for a clear determination of **events.**

For the **most part, Canadian history** is a series of **straightforward** accounts. **unpossessed** of plots and conspiracies. It originates in a known, pinpointed area. **Margaret Mead** explains: "Our history is truncated: it starts when somebody gets off the boat." Therefore it is not surprising **that an occurrence** such as the Donnelly massacre is given a peculiar sidelight from our main-stream history records. It is regarded as the bloody climax to a long-standing, imported Irish feud that claimed many **other** victims in earlier **pioneer** times.

Orlo Miller's **latest** novel, *Death to the Donnellys,* attempts to recount the family's last months before their **slaughter** and the futility of the resulting prosecution. This is his second book on the case, his first being a **non-fiction** account of the **events.** Pub-



# THE BULLS OF RONDA

by  
**EUGENE P. BENSON**

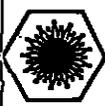
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lished in 1962, *The Donnellys Must Die* presented a sympathetic view of the family as victims, defying their popular conception as arch-villains.

At the core of this novel are the facts as in history: just after midnight on Feb. 4, 1880, five members of one family were murdered in their homes "ear Lucan, Ont. (north of London) by a group of 40 men". Two survivors of the night attack identified six of the murderers. After an intensive police investigation these six were brought to trial. But the jury, frightened of a similar fate, could not agree. At a second trial more than a year after the crimes, a second jury returned a directed verdict of not guilty. Later more concrete evidence appeared implicating a member of the clergy; but the Crown feared reprisals, civil and political, and decided not to proceed with the case.

Miller has approached his subject with a real vengeance. "It's quite apparent in this book: here for once, doing a novel, I can let my bias show unashamed!" To the point of overpowering us, we are reminded again and again of details pertaining to the supposed origin of the feud in Ireland. This root of evil is said to lie in the secret societies of the **auld sod**, pitting Protestant against Catholic. Not in the present. mind you, but in the 18th century.

The reader should become aware of this situation after several recountings early in the novel. But one must patiently wait for it to be explained to reporters, lawyers, and amazingly, to some of the residents of the community. (Seeing barns and houses set on fire with regularity, one would imagine that these neighbours would all be aware of the problem.)

The characters of the book move within an overwhelmingly morbid and doomed setting. Mainly because of the novel's restricted time frame, they function only to bring on the inevitability of fate.

Will Donnelly, one of the intended victims, works earnestly at bringing the guilty to trial. When he senses the counter-forces at work, Will proclaims: "The Irish have had a bellyful of English law but have seen damned little of English justice!" Realizing that the Catholic Church and provincial government together agree not to proceed and prosecute. Will languishes in misery and withdraws, broken with despair.

The tragic figure of Father Connolly emerges as a frustrated and psychotic man, reinforced by alcohol. Miller

leaves no doubt as to the priest's involvement and describes his rectory as having "a dim religious smell of narrow sanctity and old boiled cabbage."

Among the murderous vigilante committee, we are introduced to several Judas-types. We are told that these former friends are the most vehement of enemies but their betrayal is not penetrated. So much is simply stated as fact that it is confusing to recognize their initial motivations.

As a story of post-Confederation life in a growing, brawling township, *Death to the Donnellys* highlights early immigrants and the struggle to sustain a

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*This root of evil is said to lie in the secret societies of the auld sod, pitting Protestant against Catholic. Not in the present, mind you, but in the 18th century.*

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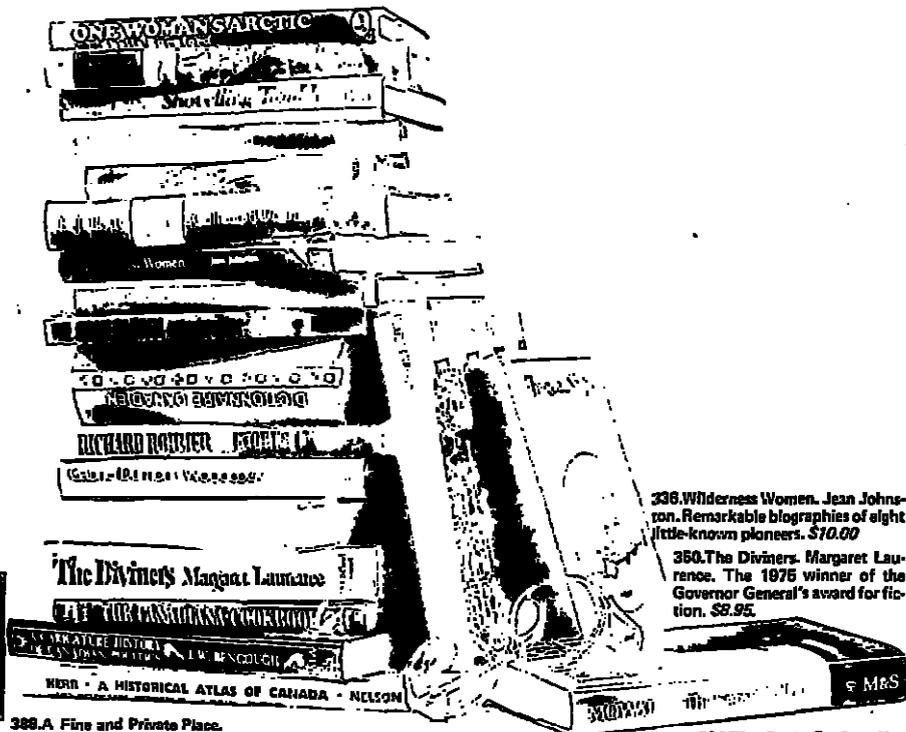
new life. But the unresolved turmoil from overseas permeates all the rural relationships, keeping us conscious of that past. Miller pursues, recounting how history was determined even before the boats arrived.

The book is a fast-moving account, heavy on the foreshadowing and systematic in structure. This is Owing to the novel's treatment-cum-scenario presentation. Miller admits to having constructed the material in this manner, partly out of frustration at seeing numerous attempts fail to adapt his first book to the screen. The film rights for that were sold long ago but have not been acted on. Miller has been prompted to recount his tale dramatically and subsequently call for new tenders.

The Donnelly saga has been under research by Orlo Miller for nearly 40 years. His immersion and conclusions present a reader with an interesting novel of historical conjecture. It works, thanks in part to the speed and brevity of the book but also because of his "crusade for the truth."

The traditional view of the family as "mad dogs who deserved to be slaughtered" was encouraged by Thomas Kelley's *The Black Donnellys*, a pulp novel that has sold nearly one million copies around the world. "When I see a story as damn pat as that, I want to find out, as a newspaperman," said Miller.

Yet many people have regarded that book as the truth of the matter. Not many were willing to question the pa-



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**radox** — seemingly the only occasion in Canadian history where the victims of the tragedy **have** become the villains of the piece and the murderers **regarded** as heroes.

Miller's first book on the matter set **off an** explosion of interest, resulting in musicals, radio plays, magazine articles, **and** the stage productions of James **Reaney's** trilogy of the saga, which recently completed a successful **coast-to-coast** tour.

Gradually, through this **recent** dissemination, the Donnelly reputation is being cleansed **after** generations of **hatred** and lies. "I'm happy to say that I am seeing **the** beginning of a **complete** reversal. Now if I've succeeded on **this**, I shall go to my **grave** delighted — not specifically because the **Donnellys** have bee" vindicated, but because it will be one of the few **cases** in **history** where the popular verdict has been **reversed**. I'd love to see that happen."

Miller may succeed in bringing that about. But he has not produced a great novel. Nor was that his intention. He wanted to make his points as simply as possible and has used **the reliable elements** of story-telling to entertain and educate. □

## Did she or didn't she?

**Belinda: or The Rivals, by A.S.H. (probably Abraham S. Holmes), Anansi, 122 pages, \$2.95 paper.**

By **DAVID COTTER**

**THE COVER** says it all. It's set in shocking pink with a marshmallow-soft, porn-tinted doodle of a bovine beauty in bed, plume in hair, kitty bow about neck, **left** hand resting **on one round** and wonderfully half-naked breast, right hand holding a pink **rose**. The Canadian Coquette.

published in 1843, **Belinda** is of historical **interest** as one of Canada's **first** novels. Its importance may go beyond that, though **not** in the **Sense** suggested by Anansi. The **jacket** blurb bills it as a **picaresque** tale of a wayward coquette who "flirts and **sins** her way along a trail of broken **hearts**, ruining the local me" with **cheerful** hypocrisy." Supposedly the book disappeared **from** print because the good people of

Chatham were scandalized by **the** author's caricatures of them. **Hard** to imagine **that**. At best the characters are thinly drawn, half-realized **types**. **Impossible** to imagine anyone being shocked by the **flirting** and sinnings.

Truthfully, the biggest shock for **me** was **learning at** the end that **Belinda** was pregnant. I couldn't quite picture where it had **happened**, the style is **that spoofy** and coy. **Feeling left out**, I flipped back and forth **looking** for some clue:

**Belinda was one day known to carry a plum pudding to Mack at his lodgings, and to stay long enough to help him eat it.**

**There? Is** that the magic spot? A little later the **narrator** does wax bolder and **admits** to pulling the curtain for fear of spoiling **his** tale. But still, her death-bed **confession** clearly states that **from** the word go, **from the first chapter**, **Belinda** was getting it on! I felt cheated. The introduction had me prepared for Belinda's "cheerful sexuality" and a "outrageous spoof of the sentimental novel of seduction. The general impression I got — if she really did get laid — was that in her simple cheery mind, sex was the price of **flirtation**."

The second time **around**, blurb and **introduction** out of mind, the book was less disappointing. To be sure, the style — spoofishly solemn-tends to wear out its welcome. The comic encounters are too predictable and the **twist** (the **heroine as seducer**) has lost its **novelty**:

Why bother then? Because the **better**, or luckier, spoofs have life and **humour** of their own, **apart from** what they parody. And **in** this case, because the author's **vision** was deeper and **darker** than the blurb suggests. What he set down with the **limited** skill he **possessed** tells us something about where we are now.

Throughout **the novel** the rational, orderly, temperate **ideal worshipped** by the narrator is at the mercy of the slap stick plot invented by the author. In the most heated of arguments Belinda's rivals **exhort** each other: "Be careful that



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you assert nothing which **you** are **not prepared** to substantiate." She joins in the dance with relish, tripping on her **two** feet while rationalizing the chaos she makes. Theodore, the poor dunce who marries the pregnant **Belinda, reasons** while she is dying: "A virtuous woman is a crown to her man; but **'uneasy** lies the head that wears a crown'; my head lies uneasy — **ergo, I wear a crown**; but that **crown** is **Belinda** — ergo, she is a virtuous woman."

The **narrator** joins in the confusion, lamenting that his true **account** is not a novel, **an** orderly affair. He is the voice of **reason**, solemnly asserting the most lunatic goings-on in a sometimes **deliciously** gossipy way. As her victims reason themselves in and out of suicide **in a single** breath, **Belinda** wavers **between** the pleasure of the game, being all **things** to all men, and the urge to be oneself to one man. Still undecided, she has her mind made **up** for her by convention at the end.

Her confession, "delivered in the most thrilling **accents**," could not be blacker in its mock sanctimony. She sounds the gospel note and plays the scene as all want it, seducing **even** in death by reflection. The tears are copious, "**as** if some **patriot** here had fallen."\* She goes to the grave with the last laugh, sending her righteous **destroyers** home thinking that **because** of them she died a better woman. Perhaps a patriot hem did fall. **Even 130** years ago the note was being **sounded**: martyrs wanted full-time; no rogues need apply. □

## Aussie bird gets the wham

**How** the Kookaburra Got His Laugh, by **Aviva Layton, McClelland & Stewart, unpaginated, \$4.95** cloth.

By **MARY LAWSON**

**BOOKS FOR** children don't have to be undying literature. Kids love crazy word combinations, **humour**, a good story. They will even accept a **moralistic** plot, if it's not preachy. Small **children**, above all, love stories tilled with fantasy **and fun**.

**In** Canada they have been short-changed by, their authors **and publishers**. This must be the last major nation to the world that has not developed

a reasonable selection of children's books explaining its environment, its wildlife, and its differing national lifestyles. Little **effort** has been made to rejuvenate classics **from** the past **in** new editions with fresh illustrations.

And now we have a company calling itself "The Canadian **Publisher**" bringing into Canada under its imprint a best-selling Australian book about, of all things, an Australian bird called the kookaburra. Canadian children know little or nothing about the grosbeaks, the loons, **or even** the blue **jays** they see every **day**. So why kookaburras?.

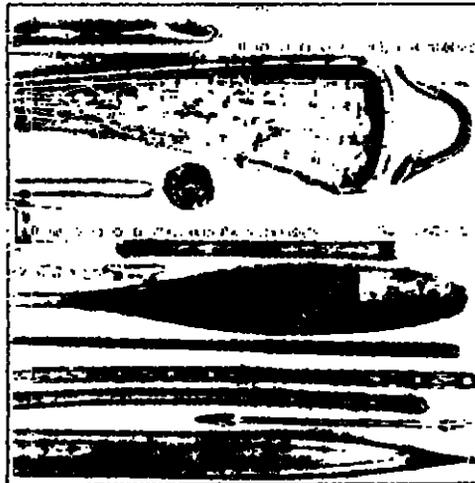
**Aviva Layton**, author of **How the Kookaburra Got His Laugh**, is an expatriate Australian living in Canada. She has had several books for children published by **Angus & Robertson in Australia**, although this is the first to appear in Canada. The book is a **disappointment**. It has pretty, **four-colour pictures** by another Australian, Robert Smith, who most sorely know that the Australian countryside is seldom the emerald **green** he chose for most of his settings. **When** she tries, the author gives **us** beautiful **colour** snapshots of the Australian scene. For instance: "A soft golden haze seemed to be floating over everything." And: "As the branch swayed beneath his weight, soft

puffs of golden-yellow pollen rose gently into the air."

The kookaburra is a drab, **brown bird** with a laugh that sounds more derisive than **good-humoured**. Unhappy with his lot, he **leaves** the Garden of **Eden** in **search of** a new home and, like millions of other emigrants, ends **up** in Australia. There seems to be little or no allegory in his search for a new beginning in a place where he will be accepted for his fine intelligence because he lacks the physical beauty of his other, finer, **feathered friends**. But there is much irony. Australia is renowned for its anti-intellectualism. Eventually the kookaburra wins acceptance from the other animals, but not on his own terms. He wins it because he makes everyone join in his crazy laugh, an allergic reaction to the pollen from the yellow wattle trees.

It is entirely reasonable to expect something better from **Aviva Layton**. She is **an** intelligent, forthright, and gutsy **woman**. Once, when her small son **had been teased** by his classmates she marched into a Toronto school to conduct classes in Hebrew **culture**. The book might have been worthwhile if its kookaburra had been less pompous, more **likeable**, or if **it had** included any real information. □

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# Chips, nuts, and wafers

The Stone Hammer Poems, by Robert Kroetsch, Oolichan Books (Malaspina College, Nanaimo, B.C.), 63 pages, \$3.95 paper.

Pocket Pool, by David Berry, Peppermint Press (284 Stibbard Ave., Tomato). unpaginated, \$5 paper.

Some Breath, by Linda Rogers, Fiddlehead Poetry Books. 84 pages, \$4 paper.

By LEN GASPARINI

ALTHOUGH KNOWN primarily as a novelist of such vigorous works as *The Studhorse Man* and *The Words of My Roaring*. Robert Kroetsch has been steadily pumping out poems for the past 15 years, and his first collection, *The Stone Hammer Poems*, contains all those bc wishes to preserve.

It's been said of Kroetsch that his preoccupation with the need to "uninvent the old mythologies and invent or create a new mythology that is central to his Prairie locale, is a revolutionary act that is key to the revelatory process found in all his writings." This is true *in toto*, but it gives the reader a certain preconception upon approaching Kroetsch's poetry. However, this should not blur the fact of its more prominent aspects: its strength of line and effective use of dramatic detail; and its wise disregard for the fuzziness of abstraction and randomly herded images. Kroetsch's poetic insincer is right on target; he peers through the eye of his own imagination.

A good section of this volume is devoted to paraphrases of Blackfoot Indian legends in "Old Man Stories." These prose bits are extremely droll and indicative of the idolatrous tradition of a culture much older than ours. The other poems bear out Kroetsch's mythopoetic propensities. His long tide poem is a superb example of the fusion of metaphor and self-knowledge:

*The poem  
is the stone  
chipped and hammered  
until it is shaped  
like the stone  
hammer. . . .*

Kroetsch is equally adept with the lyric in evoking the subtle rhythms of mood and place. "Wincer Birds,"

"Spring Harvest," and "October Light" move beyond the limits of impressionism to embrace the more solid footing of the symbolic. His keen sense of the elegiac ranges over several poems, of which "Meditation on Tom Thomson" is the best:

*I know your bent trees and I love your ice  
in spring candled into its green rot  
and I love the way you drowned all alone  
with your canoe and our not even knowing  
the time of day and the grave mystery  
of your genius . . .*

Kroetsch tends to be verbose in many of his poems, but this is probably a habit acquired from writing prose fiction. Nevertheless, *The Stone Hammer Poems* proves that he is a poet of exceptional talent.

David Berry's *Pocket Pool* is a lively collection of satirical and irreverent verse ("Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Giant Condor"), and oriental parables whose titles all begin with the syllable "con." Is there perhaps a conundrum in this? I don't know — but I like my chicken fried right.

*Pocket Pool* is the ideal gift book for disgruntled subway riders bored with their jobs, their lives, and the daily headlines of crime and inflation. I'm not being facetious, nor do I want to convey a frivolous impression that belies the serious nature of Berry's poetry. It is orchestrated with a profound awareness of life's little anomalies, and the comic mask that Berry chooses to confront this *mise en scene* with is a reflection of the human comedy itself. In other words, even the most solemn can be made to look silly. Nothing is sacred in the satirist. In "Judas Iscariot Discovers the Universal Joke" he says:

*I can't say I died laughing but it was the  
nearest thing,  
and don't think crucifixion's worse than a  
perforated ulcer  
or swinging into eternity, with hostile  
witnesses  
and knowing you should have just settled  
for the halo.*

There are many other poems that strip dogma and the Establishment of its absurdity; some are slick, but most of them, like Mozart in the tide poem, go straight for the nuts. Berry's *Pocket Pool* is a bore in one.

*Some Breath* is Linda Rogers' third book of poems. It is also tide number 181 in Fred Cogswell's indefatigable Fiddlehead Poetry Books series.

The poems in this volume are short. I don't think any of them exceed 14 lines. They are composed like delicate cameos of seasonal imagery, wisps of

haiku-like lyricism, and sighs of emotion. Somehow they seem incomplete, lacking in perspective. The only notable features I can see in them are the exclamations in the face of, and in praise of, actuality, what is seen, and what is immediately there. Aside from that, it's like breath on glass. □

## East and West, dead and alive

The Cope Breton Book of the Dead, by Doe Domanski, Anansi, 59 pages, \$7.95 cloth and \$3.95 paper.

Skookum Wawa: Writings of the Canadian Northwest, edited by Gary Geddes, Oxford, 336 pages, \$6.50 paper.

By PIER GIORGIO DI CICCO

FOR ONCE THE jacket blurb comes close to being right. Don Domanski, is a bright young newcomer to Canadian poetry. He is Anansi's pick from the young crop for 1975, and a timely one since he is also featured in McClelland & Stewart's forthcoming *Storm Warning II*.

The poems in his first collection range from the accomplished to those that arc among the tightest and most provocative I've seen in a long time. Nothing tremendous; just consistently good poetry. One wonders where Domanski picks up his surrealist touch. This is what largely accounts for the newness of the work. Certainly there is the conciseness of Atwood here, and the line breaks are reminiscent of Frank Davey. But the surrealism that strikes home like a déjà-vu has no Canadian roots, short of Rosenblatt and Sward. "These are Lucifer's fingers/ five of them/ puffy-white/ sticking out of the floor/each posing as a man/each telling me/ they're only here to help." The poems are brief, usually playing off a specific subject. What dazzles is the turn of phrase or image and the resultant insight. The "Astronaut" travels while "outside, the unkillable blackness/ of God's one pupil/ expands." A "Cat" becomes "the Buddha/ blood stained/ with a perfect conscience."

What wears after a while is the tone — sparse, sometimes laconic; Domanski's tightness begins to defeat itself. If the personal pronoun is used, it comes out as grudging evidence of the risk behind the poems. The title does

nothing to relieve this disembodied quality. **There** is real **commitment** here, and why the author would want to wash his hands of it is beyond me.

If *The Cape Breton Book of the Dead* comes as a surprise, one thing is certain; Domanski won't go out as quickly as he came in. Interestingly, the only other East Coaster to try his hand at surrealism (Mark Strand) turned out to be one of the best poets of the **form** in North America. Domanski could do worse, and his **first** book is **insurance**.

*Skookum Wawa* is an **anthology** of no small **ambition**. The list of **contributors** alone reads like a **Who's Who** of Canadian literature. There are authors such as **Earle Birney** and Malcolm Lowry, as well as a healthy selection of newcomers. In **between** there are such literary standards as Tom **Wayman**, Pat Lane, and **J. Michael Yates**. This handsome volume includes documents, poems, stories, **plays**, reprints from period newspapers, even letters **written** by **fortune-hunters** of the **Klondike**.

Of course any anthology of such comprehensive **sign** is bound to raise a few eyebrows. Quite apart from the **merits** of individual authors, there are some pieces that have no business here at all. I am glad to see native American authors **in** any anthology, even one presenting the Canadian Northwest. But I expect **them** to do a little more than paint the universal majesty of mountains — **notwithstanding** the fortunate fact that mountains can be found in British Columbia.

That much said, this anthology performs a tremendous service to Canada. It is done **elegantly**, with great care, and even affection. Richard Trueman's photographs add dimension to the literature, as do the graphics of galleries, archives, museums, and the art of **Steltzer, Milner, and Pearson**. One of the pleasures of reading the anthology was **rediscovering** the talents of Lane, **Wynand, Safarik, and Yates**. Michael Carmichael's "**Dirty Bob**" was particularly impressive. Emily Carr's story "Sophie" stands out quite **well**, as does George **Ryga's** play on the India **problem** in Canada. The text is riddled with cameo quotes that pace and inform the reader; everything from Stephen **Leacock** to the terse **wit** of Bruce **Hutchison**: "The history of Canada for about 300 years was a struggle to escape **from** the wilderness, and for the last half **century** has been a desperate attempt to escape into it."

All in all, *Skookum Wawa* takes a creditable place in the literary year, and

Geddes again emerges as one of the few good anthologists in the country. From Service's "The Shooting of **Dan McGrew**" to Wayman's loving portrait of modern Vancouver is no small **step**; but the continuity is there. There is George Vancouver's discovery of Point **Grey** beside **Daryl Hine's** poem on Point **Grey** — an historical **liason** that works, however debatable **Daryl Hine's** inclusion may be. If the boundaries of the anthology seem at all arbitrary, what Geddes has managed to include is in fact an utterly thorough portrait of the Canadian Northwest. □

## A freak of genius

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Turns and Other Poems, by **Richard Outram**, Phoenix Living Poets series, Anson-Cartwright Editions, 48 pages, \$4 paper.

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By HUBERT de **SANTANA**

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**RICHARD OUTRAM'S** *Turns* is the second collection of verse by this extravagantly gifted poet. His first book, *Exultate, Jubilate*, was published a decade ago and now is out of print, as well as being **something** of a collector's item.

The present volume was worth waiting for. On the evidence of the poems contained within its four-dozen pages, **Outram** must be **regarded** as a major poet, an artist of international stature. His **lucid**, passionate poems exhibit all the classical virtues: metrical facility, unflagging rhythms, discipline (his **imagery** is pared to the bone), and an uncompromising integrity—moral, intellectual, and artistic.

The most important single poem in this collection is "At the Bijou." A movie is being shown in a den-pit of a cinema (the Bijou of the **title**); from this mundane and unpromising material, **Outram** fashions a great **life-affirming** statement about Western civilization:

*Grotesque figures, vast on the wall,  
Are coupling, keeping in common thrall  
Sensual creatures watching there,  
Coupled in turn: through the darkling air  
Behind them, the burdened dove has  
swerved*

*Before the bonfire unobserved:  
Dropping a broken sprig of light  
On her strewn ledge, she takes to flight:  
Her kindled shadow is seared upon  
The wall both vivid instants, gone  
Unseen: she diminishes into the sun,  
One nest replenished, one just begun.*

**Here** the images on the screen are **related** to those in a famous passage in Plato's *Republic*, where the shadows of **prisoners** are projected on the wall as they sit before a bonfire in a dark cave. Plato **uses** the scene as an illustration of the difference between illusion and **reality**, the shadows being mere **reflections** of ideal **form**, and Nature but a spume that plays upon a ghastly paradigm of things, as Yeats put it.

Within this pagan philosophical **framework** **Outram** introduces the dove of **Christian** mythology, carrying "a broken sprig of light." There is an implication here of an annunciation of some tremendous, terrible new birth. The "burdened dove" is also the dove of peace with its olive branch. She **replenishes her nest and flies into the sun**, the source of light and life. To this is added the dimension of unceasing human fecundity, symbolized by the figures coupling on the wall and inciting the live audience to **similar** sensual activity.

In this poem **Outram** has followed Keats' **precept** and loaded every **rift** of his subject with ore. It would **require** a **separate** essay to do justice to all the disparate elements that **have** gone into the amazing synthesis achieved in this poem: Blake's contraries; Jung's **rhizome** theory of the **growth** of civilization; the cyclic movement of time and history as set out in Yeats and **Spengler**.

Few modern poets have exploited the resources of language as **Outram** has done. He has an exceptionally rich and extensive vocabulary at his command, but he does not scatter words like largesse. He selects and arranges them with the **meticulous** care of a master craftsman; indeed, one has the impression that not so much as a **comma** has been placed without careful consideration.

This makes for a **remarkable concentration** in **Outram's** lines. He packs volumes into them, so that once read or uttered they germinate and expand, haunting the mind with unforgettable resonances and complexities of **meaning**.

Here is how **Outram** expresses his **concern** about animal conservation, and his anger at the imminent **extinction** of **endangered** species. **There is no** noisy tirade about the slaughter of young elephants for their ivory tusks; we **are** told instead:

*Three perfect billiard balls of premium grade  
From one scivello may be turned, no  
more;  
A firm in London, centre for the trade,  
Could reckon thirty thousand in its store.*

What more could be said to shame the reader into an awareness of the loss of life caused by commercial greed? **Understatement** is like a scalpel in **Outram's** hands.

*Turns* is a memorable sequence of poems that should be regarded collectively as one poem. The "turns" are stage acts performed by the sort of creatures insensitively referred to as freaks: Siamese Twins, **Tattooed** Lady, Wild Man, **Contortionist**, Dog Act, Bearded Lady, The **Fattest** Man in the World, Mesmerist, Sword-Swallower. **Knife-Thrower**, Escape **Artist**, **Funambulist**, Midget, Strong Man. Richard **Outram** is obviously pre-occupied with the problem of evil, not as a pathological aberration, but as it is manifested in deliberate cruelty. In the gallery of bizarre characters he has assembled in *Turns*, he has a vehicle for exploring the theme of human cruelty.

These people, particularly the physically deformed, are monstrous jokes of nature, the playthings of God. **Outram** treats them with compassion and understanding, and poignantly exposes the sensibilities locked beneath those tormented exteriors. And by implication it is the supposedly normal, whole in body and spirit, who are the

real freaks, paying money to gaze upon the less fortunate in order to satisfy an impulse of morbid curiosity.

A man who knows as much about reality as **Outram** does would find it insupportable without a healing sense of humour. **Outram's** humour has a chameleon quality; it can be pure delight, as in the poem "Royal Phenomenon"; or it can be honed to a cutting edge, as in "The **Tattooed** Lady."

I want to end with a postscript about the strange publishing history of this brilliant book. After being rejected by four major Canadian publishing houses, the manuscript was taken to London by **Louise Denny**s. There the excellence of the material caused it to be accepted within a day by the respected publishing house of **Chatto and Windus**. Richard **Outram** has the honour to be the first Canadian poet to be included in **Chatto's** Phoenix Living Poets series.

*Turns* is published jointly by **Chatto and Windus** with the **Hogarth Press**, and **Anson-Cartwright**, the newest publishing house in Toronto. Hugh **Anson-Cartwright** looks for quality in a writer's work, rather than that strange chimera known as the Canadian Consciousness. Hats off, gentlemen. We have a major poet in our midst! □

## For reading between the blue lines

**Fischler's Hockey Encyclopedia**, by Stan and Shirley **Fischler**, **Fitzhenry & Whiteside**, illustrated, 628 pages, \$15.95 cloth.

1975 Hockey Annual, by **Brian McFarlane**, **Clarke Irwin**, illustrated, 160 pages, \$6.25 cloth.

Hockey 76, by **Brian McFarlane**, **Methuen**, illustrated, 159 pages, \$5.95 paper.

By GORD RIPLEY

HOCKEY is a fast, exhilarating sport. That's why artist Robert **Markle** gambles his surprised heart against an hour's midnight shinny. That's why skates remain synonymous with the zest of youth. For fans, the game is also sublimation and catharsis, a vicarious experience of popularity, skill, wealth, glory, and the triumph of muscle and rage over wrongdoing. Hockey, pm hockey, is a banquet of dreams, and hockey writers are the caterers.

Ergo, one will expect certain things of hockey journalism. It will be fast-paced, colloquial, inclined to dramatize the heroes, to belittle the goats, to emphasize the battles. Depth and verity may suffer under those twin blunt instruments of sports reporting: the anecdote and the quotation. One expects no corruption, no tarnished halos, lots of down-home humour. Stan and Shirley **Fischler's Hockey Encyclopedia** was cast in this mould, though an informed literary touch and some sensitivity have rendered it solid and readable.

The **Fischlers** have arranged alphabetically some 700 vignettes of better-known players, owners, managers, referees, barns, and awards, dating from the first days of the game. The style is familiar (**Lou Angotti** "gained a solid chunk of fan appreciation in Chicago," though "the honeymoon was short-lived"), while anecdote, legend, and opinion flesh out most of the pieces. They are good bits on stars like "King" **Clancy**, **Syl Apps**, **Bobby Clark**, and **Lou Fontinato**; there are such odd items as the brief portrait of "tragic" **Busher Jackson**, or the **Eddie Shore** check that almost killed **Ace Bailey** in 1933. The words of **Eric Nesterenko**, quoted from Studs

## FRENCH WRITERS OF CANADA

### THE FOREST

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"... the finest novel of the Canadian West is M. **Georges Bugnet's** *The Forest*. a novel of the **Peace** River country where the author lived most of his adult life. **Georges Bugnet**, novelist, dramatist, poet and critic is one of the really important Canadian writers. In him an intellect and spirit of a very high order unite with long experience of life in the wilderness: and the result has been a literary work in which the materials of the frontier have been wrought into designs of lasting beauty... **Bugnet** relates the tragic struggle of a young urban Frenchman and his wife with the formidable nature of primitive Canada.

It is a great and tragic book written out of experience controlled by reflection. We do not have many such books."

E. K. **Brown** in *The Winnipeg Free Press*

translator, **David Carpenter**

Harvest House

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Terkel's *Working*, stand out like raisins in a bowl of Wheaties.

Humour is here predictably forgettable. We are informed that **Lude Check**, who played for Detroit and Chicago during the war years, was a "checker" and "a bit Lode, but never obscene." We are asked to chortle at Ed Van Impe's jock-strap, and at press agents "**Bruno and Blythe**" who in 1926 tried to boost attendance at **Ranger** games by adding Jewish and Italian players to the line-up.

Stan Fischler has written more than 40 books about hockey. He is a good writer; he knows the subject. Perhaps though, he and his wife have relied more on accumulated knowledge and narrative talent than on careful research. Their *Encyclopedia*, though comprehensive, is far from complete; it is fascinating rather than authoritative.

Occasionally names seem to have been included (as in the case of referee Hugh McLean) only because they figure in an incident involving a popular star (in McLean's case, Maurice Richard). Other names, such as Hec Kilrea or Don "The Count" Grosso pop up in the text but are missing from the alphabetical listing. References are incomplete. Only by chance will you look under "Apps, Syl" or "Gardner, 'Ginger'" to discover who played on the DAD line or the Atomic line.

The *Encyclopedia* is short on &tail, long on opinion, and one must search elsewhere for statistics. Nevertheless hockey fans will be buying this book, and hockey fans will find it hard to put down.

Brian McFarlane's boys'-own-annuals of hockey have proven popular in the past. It is easy to see why. The enthusiastic CBC hockey commentator combines short, lucid articles on current heroes with how-to hints, puzzles, cartoons, lots of photographs, and a name more familiar among 14-year-olds than Pierre Trudeau. The tone of the books is indicated by a quote from the Leslie McFarlane tale that appears in the 1975 *Hockey Annual*:

From then on, Tim was solid with the fans. He had a scoring punch. He had speed. He had colour. He had brawn and courage. They took him to their hearts. . .

Everywhere in the 1975 *Annual* (which tells of the '73-'74 season) are inspiration and success: how Dennis Potvin's helmet saved his life; how Swedish hockey stars are making their marks in the NHL; why Stan Mikita is the greatest. Fischler observations, such as the one about Real Chevrefils

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Stanley Milgram, author of  
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being "washed up before his thirtieth birthday," would be most out of place. Reprinted from the Toronto Sun is a fine article by Glen Woodcock, "The Philadelphia Story." Other good pieces feature Alan Eagleson, "Gretzky" (a future Bobby Orr), and a behind-the-scenes view of hockey telecast teams. Girls' hockey is not overlooked.

Methuen has taken over as publisher of the MacFarlane series for 1976 under a new title: *Hockey 76*. Small changes include a paper cover and a slightly less attractive layout. A statistics roundup, which occupied 15 pages in 1976, has been omitted. Fiction, play&coverage, coaching comments, and puzzles are up to former standards. The best article is again a reprint, "Keeping Peace Among the Pros," by Robert Cross, while they are friendly looks at Japanese hockey and at Fred Shero. A stay-in-school pitch is entitled "Stick-handling Through Life."

One wonders for how many more years, and in how many more ways Jim McKenny will be quoted as saying he avoids "the corners." No matter. Hundreds of thousands of rosy-cheeked, star-struck peewees across the land will continue to digest, and if necessary, re-digest the MacFarlane annuals. Hockey is a fast and exhilarating game. □

## A crick in the nik

Games of Fear and Winning, by  
Jack Ludwig, Doubleday, 238 pages,  
\$8.95 cloth.

By JIM CHRISTY

UNTIL I READ this volume, I had thought it impossible to produce a totally worthless book about sports. There may be a dearth of scintillating prose borne of the arena but every sport book seems to have at least one saving grace. A mediocre as-told-to biography will be read avidly for anecdotes by a captive fan; even a frankly imitative volume such as the recent *The Leafs in Autumn* succeeds because of that prime hole card of sportswriters, nostalgia. Sport is popular culture, which is a natural whatever your perspective. You can despise it and condemn it, love and commit yourself to it, or milk it for every last aspect of camp — but you cannot make it boring. Well, maybe you can't. Jack Ludwig, though, has got it down.

The best sportswriting is produced not by stylists but competent journeymen who combine an eye, an ear, and an empathy for the particular milieu with just the proper mixture of cynicism and sentimentality. In short, the writer must be his. By this criteria, Ludwig, to borrow a line from Kenneth Rexroth, is "so square he has to walk around the block to turn over in bed."

What makes Ludwig so unhip is his ridiculous attempt to pose as the opposite. He wants you to think that he's on the inside of the action. His idea of being with-it is to use the line, "The times they are a-changing," only to use it in the context of the swelling of purses on the professional golf tour. Another technique is his obsession with the Yiddish diminutive "nik." He refers to "civilrightsniks," "pendulumniks," "midwayniks," "galleryniks," and so forth.

In case you are not convinced that he's a tout and a back-mom boy, Ludwig at one point offers about 12 hints that he knows Norman Mailer; yet he coyly doesn't mention the man's name.

Ludwig never stops being off the mark. He can refer to the fans of black golfer Lee Elder as "red-necks" and to Frank Sinatra as a "schoolsmarm." He writes that golf has been so far behind baseball in integration because it is a mom conservative sport. The fact is there just haven't been that many black golfers of professional calibre. The obvious mason, which Ludwig doesn't consider, is economic. Somehow it seems more feasible for a black youngster growing up in a ghetto or on a tenant farm to take up baseball or basketball rather than a white middle-class game that requires a significant outlay of cash.

Not content merely to posture and misuse colloquialisms, the author strives to live up to his book-jacket PR by coming up with "original, incisive, witty and often surprising views." These include the unique idea that Derek Sanderson is a product of the media as well as the thought that "the champions of today may be the neurotics of tomorrow."

I wish I could think of a redeeming factor to this book; but there isn't one, be it even ever so slight. From the fake dramatic title on through, it's a waste of time. One could, however, consider Ludwig's gaucherie and ill-considered opinions as relief from a prose style reminiscent of *Nyctol*. Nothing is safe from his drowsy pen, he it Ron Turcotte, Ferguson Jenkins, or the Calgary Stampede. Combine Ludwig with the

somniferous sport of curling, which some perverse editor has actually done, and the effect is one only a duty-bound book reviewer should be expected to survive. At one point in *Games Of Fear and Winning* Ludwig states: "I'm a novelist not a sportswriter." True, certainly: yet he's working on a book about the Olympics. Where are you when we need you, Jack Batten? □

## Pale ghost, pale writer

Ghosts, Pirates and Treasure Trove: **The Phantoms that Haunt New Brunswick**, by Stuart Trueman, McClelland & Stewart, 155 pages, \$7.95 cloth.

By MARVIN GOODY

IF ONE IS to believe the jacket, this book "... should be read, for full effect, at about three a.m. on a windswept rainy night preferably with a dear and trusted friend." We are further promised "hair-raising hoaxes, burning ships, spine-tingling spirits and eerie events that only make sense if you accept the supernatural. . ."

Excepting the burning ships, which are delivered, these quotes are true in somewhat the same sense as a beverage label that declares: "When mixed in a glass of milk, this product makes a drink rich in vitamins, minerals and other essential nutrients." In other words, if you want your hair raised or your spine tingled, you had better look elsewhere unless you are prepared to add that figurative glass of milk.

Stuart Trueman is clearly an indefatigable traveller and collector. Heap appears to have criss-crossed every square yard of New Brunswick and spoken to everyone who had even the ghost of a ghost story to relate. And it's all here — every word of it, I swear. How it is all fitted into 155 pages is a feat of legerdemain I don't pretend to understand. To add to its impressive-ness, he has thrown into the stew lots of snippets of colonial history, and lots and lots of would-be colourful descriptions of his informants, which read as if they were lifted from the society page of a small-town newspaper. Samples:

Serenely poised, soft-spoken, reserved in manner, with her reddish hair softly brushed back, she reminds one of a younger Greer Garson. She is now married

to. . . Hale, hearty, and happy-looking in a flowered sleeveless blouse and rolled-up blue denim pants, Mildred Loner was. . . Addie makes transparent paperweight sea-bottom scenes, Christmas tree ornaments from milkweed pods, many other talented knick-knacks.

Mark Twain made sport of the kind of rural story-telling where the family relationships on both sides for three generations back must be set out, along with a complete catalogue of everyone's personal idiosyncracies, before the story can proceed. It is barely an exaggeration to say that Mr. Trueman does this kind of thing in dead earnest. In a word, he is garrulous. He has collected some worthwhile material, but how he does run on, and on and on and on, with inconsequential detail, tritely told. The interesting bits are swamped and the reader's patience severely tested.

New Brunswickers as presented here come across as both unimaginative and credulous. Many of the accounts remind me of the parlour game where a statement is whispered ear-to-ear around a circle and emerges altered beyond recognition. The author has taken the end result of this process and passed it on to us largely unedited and without critical evaluation. And it is not that he is himself so gullible. Every now and then one sees a hint of amused skepticism in his writing. No, it appears rather that Mr. Trueman, besides being a master of cliché, finds everything about New Brunswick and its inhabitants so utterly fascinating that he assumes that others will be equally enthralled. How else account for the following passage?

One of Canada's most famous weavers, an internationally known designer of tartans, has learned to live with a ghost and like it.

"In fact, she gets a lot of fun out of it." says Miss Lillian Baird, who resides with her and does some weaving. She is a retired public health nurse who taught in Burma and Ceylon for the World Health Organization.

Patricia Jenkins created the Royal Canadian Air Force tartan with its beautiful shades of blue mirroring our skies, also the Beaverbrook tartan, the New Brunswick tartan which was adapted from it, the City of Fredericton tartan, the Highlands of Haliburton tartan, among others. The Scottish Tartans Association elected her an honorary member.

And on and on. But that should be enough to make your hair stand on end. Is M & S in such financial straits that it can no longer afford to employ editors? □

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## Pepys if I a petticoat

The *Diary of Jane Ellis*, edited and with an introduction by Patricia Godsell, Oberon Press, 172 pages, \$11.95 cloth.

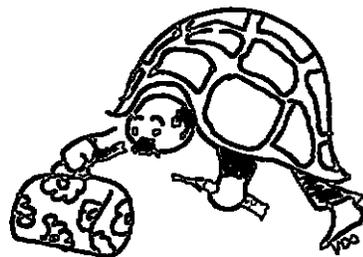
By MARILYN POWELL

**THERE PROBABLY** aren't many of you out there in private life keeping a diary, indulging in the art of the confessional. Even as the epic degenerated into romance, the diary in our time has dwindled. Ask yourself. Is it anything more, these days than a notebook or a adolescent date-book, complete with lock and key? Rarely. And I am not about to tell you that *The Diary of Jane Ellice* is an exception. It may even be an example of the process of decline. The author is an unexceptional Victorian, corseted by notions of breeding and propriety, whose introspection is as circumspect as her imagination.

But... if she is ordinary, the history to which she is peripheral is not. In 1838, she and her husband, Edward Ellice, accompanied to Canada a gentleman of renown on a mission destined to be controversial. After rebellion in Upper and Lower Canada, with full authority in Lower Canada and the aim to devise a government for them both, Lord Durham was on his way to his new post as Governor General. And Edward Ellice, son of a fur trader and Scottish capitalist extraordinary, was on his way too as Durham's private secretary. He took Jane, of course.

Something of Lord Durham's tour, Report, and personal failure is given in an introduction to this book by the editor, Patricia Godsell. It seems he was undone in his attempts to administer in this country by an enemy in his own. Lord Brougham (Broom to be sure) forced his resignation.

That is the background of the *Diary*, and it affects the foreground, though Jane doesn't analyze, synthesize, discuss, or predict politics. Nor does she



anticipate an uprising. When trouble comes in the shape of French Canadian rebels who capture her, cart Edward off, and incarcerate him in another place, she focuses intently on the specific. Will they be released, not why they are being held. Absentee landlords, owners of a seignior, they leave Canada none the wiser in the end. At least, according to Jane.

Oddly, whatever value the *Diary* has occurs because of this insouciance, parochialism — call it what you will. It's typical of 19th-century Britons, out to inhabit but not be changed by the rest of the world. Jane's interest is aroused by imitations of the life she left behind her, particularly if the imitations are gauche. She has an ear for French Canadian and Yankee speech because they sound rude, in both senses.

Well, I found myself wishing her record had flair as well as malice. It doesn't. But it's curious and representative. For more, for depth, for insight, for literature, go to Pepys. What a shame he didn't see Canada. □

## From Dachau to Bordeaux Jail

Morgentaler: The Doctor Who Couldn't Turn Away, by Eleanor Wright Perlina, Gage, 210 pages, \$9.95 cloth.

By WENDY CAMPBELL

HENRY MORGENTALER'S defiance of Canada's schizophrenic abortion law has now not only tested that law but has also effected change in our legal system. Eleanor Wright Perlina met Dr. Morgentaler while researching her previous book, *Abortion in Canada*. Her intimate knowledge of his background and personal philosophy allows her to create a counterpoint to his public image; and her deep involvement in his case gives her book a rich texture, clarifies the issues, and puts Morgentaler's actions in context.

The early part of the book describes Morgentaler's childhood in Lodz, his internment in Auschwitz and Dachau, and his eventual journey to Canada. His arrival in Canada with his wife Eva was the beginning of a new life. He completed his medical studies at l'Université de Montréal and began to practise medicine in the city's east end. His wife Eva clung to the concentration camp experience, reliving it through

writing poems and novels. Henry insisted on living in the present and absorbing himself completely in the problems of his patients. This difference led eventually to the end of the marriage.

Morgentaler underwent analysis and also became involved in the Humanist movement, with its dedication to human dignity, justice, and civil liberties. He began working quietly, urging repeal of Canada's restrictive abortion law. In 1968, through Morgentaler's efforts, the Humanist Association of Canada was formed.

Morgentaler was besieged by requests to terminate unplanned, unwanted pregnancies. He found himself in the position of advocating abortion on request but refusing to do it. Although he realized that by performing abortions he would risk everything he had achieved over the years, he decided in desperation that his medical conscience must come first and the law must be confronted. In 1969, he notified the patients in his general practice that he was going to begin specializing in family planning: fitting IUDs, prescribing oral contraceptives, and performing vasectomies and abortions.

Learning the most effective techniques, he equipped his clinic with the type of vacuum aspirator that was at that time being used successfully in England. (After his acquittal in 1973, he published his findings on the vacuum method in the *Canadian Medical Journal*.)

Dr. Morgentaler admits his clinic made money but points out that any doctor would make the same amount from performing tonsilectomies or any other operation. His expenses were high because he employed the best-available equipment and a highly trained supportive staff so that patients could receive the highest standard of medical care, in comfort and with dignity.

As well as writing articles in *The Humanist in Canada*, he engaged in a long correspondence on the issue of contraception and abortion with Pierre Elliot Trudeau. But the 1969 amendments to the Criminal Code did little more than bring the law almost up to what was then standard practice in a handful of metropolitan hospitals. In January, 1973; the U.S. Supreme Court in the historic Roe vs. Wade decision virtually legalized abortion by qualified medical practitioners. At a Toronto rally in March, 1973, Morgentaler publicly declared that he had performed more than 5,000 abortions in

violation of Section 251 of the Criminal code. "It's time we went after the same rights for women in Canada that their American sisters have received," he declared.

On Mother's Day-May 13, 1973 — Morgentaler appeared on the CTV public-affairs program *W5* and performed a vacuum aspiration abortion, showing a calm and relaxed patient and supportive staff. The program included interviews with other physicians and advocates of repeal. An explosive reaction followed. The CRTC was bombarded with letters and phone calls demanding censure of the network and the stations carrying the program. Opponents of repeal began picketing the clinic on Beaugrande Street and harassing the patients, imploring them not to "murder your baby."

Morgentaler had finally done it. His situation could no longer be ignored; he was arrested in August, 1973, and brought to trial in September.

In 1970, when Morgentaler was first arrested, he had engaged Claude-Armand Sheppard as his lawyer. Sheppard now wanted to delay the trial, hoping for a change in public opinion that would be reflected in the courts. But Morgentaler pressed to get the trial underway. He seemed to relish the confrontation and was elated when proceedings began. One can't help wondering at this point if Morgentaler was exorcising some of his concentration-camp experiences by inviting martyrdom—just as Eva, his wife, attempted to exorcise her experiences with her poetry. The jubilation following his acquittal was quickly dashed; of course, when the Quebec Court of Appeal unanimously reversed the jury's decision and entered a verdict of guilty. The Supreme Court of Canada upheld this reversal. Morgentaler, never convicted by a jury of any crime, was in prison facing insurmountable debts — including legal fees of more than \$100,000.

Sheppard reflects: "From a personal point of view, what happened to me when I listened to the crown witnesses was that I became a convert to Women's Lib. The trial was transformed for me from a fascinating case to a personal cause."

As this is being written, the situation changes daily. First came the announcement that Morgentaler's acquittal on the second charge of performing an illegal abortion was upheld by the Quebec Court of Appeal. Then the Professional Corporation of Physicians of Quebec voted to suspend his licence to practise medicine for one year. Next

## In Praise of Old Women

by Marya Fiamengo

Yes, Tadeusz Rozewicz,  
I too  
prefer old women.  
They bend over graves  
with flowers,  
they wash the limbs  
of the dead,  
they count the beads  
of their rosaries,  
they commit no murders  
they give advice  
or tell fortunes,  
they endure.

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the federal Minister of Justice ordered a new trial on the first charge for which Morgentaler has already spend 10 months in confinement. A bail hearing in Montreal on Jan. 26 resulted in Morgentaler being released on unconditional bail. Last night, I watched Morgentaler walk out of the Palais de Justice, a free man-free at least until March when his new trial begins, or until one or all of the other 10 charges are brought against him. The pending "Morgentaler amendment" to the Criminal Code will ensure that jury verdicts cannot be reversed by higher courts; the Badgley commission will study the effects of the present laws on abortion.

Henry Morgentaler has shaken this country to its very core, mobilizing thousands of people both to defend him and to attack him, polarizing the Canadian public in a way few figures or issues have done before.

It seems that social change must always have its scapegoat. As society moves out of any system of victimization, a single victim often emerges to absorb the general guilt.

Ms. Pelrine's bias on the abortion issue is evident, but her presentation is fair and allows the reader to see the case in perspective and develop an informed opinion.

We're at a crossroads now. Henry, we hope you haven't suffered in vain. □

## Somers is icumen in, Lhude sing Gmu

Contemporary Canadian Composers, edited by Keith MacMillan and John Beckwith, sponsored by The Canadian Music Centre, Oxford, 248 pages, \$14.95 cloth.

Harry Somers, by Brian Cherney, sponsored by The Canadian Music Centre, U of T Press, 185 pages, \$15 cloth.

By PATRICIA ELLIOTT

THE CANADIAN Music Centre is at it again with this dictionary of Canadian composers and the first of their detailed studies of individual Canadian composers. The centre will make a dent in the world, if not in Canada, by, sheer determination and loving dedication to the greatest composers of our time.

The dictionary is an engrossing reference book. It contains 144 entries on the most active and professionally prominent Canadian composers who have produced all or most of their work since 1920, and it adds up to good reading. The editors — Keith MacMillan, executive secretary of the Canadian Music Centre, and John Beckwith, composer and Dean of the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto—tried to serve the need "especially felt by those outside Canada for a compilation that would give a full picture of activities in our creative music, and also a glimpse of styles and trends." They have succeeded. From A to Z, biographies and analyses are written with care and understanding. The bibliographic references for instruments and voices, publishers, recording labels, and so on are listed succinctly. In fact, when I finished the book my head was ringing with pno, vln, canco, Ef, Gmu, and WW72. My eyes were smarting from hpschd, mar, mezz, org. ESO, and my favourite, Grunfarb Qt. All abbreviations are explained; see pages 11 to 24!

Composers write about composers. To quote Udo Kasemets in his essay on R. Murray Schafer:

Schafer's prime concern as music educator is with sounds — all sounds in and out of concert halls, sounds past and present, sounds of nature and sounds of urban development. . . Schafer has composed works that stand out from the general bulk of educational music in that they are unconcerned with dogma, theories, or pills, rather concentrate on the creative, sensory, and emotional aspects of music.

Gustav Ciamaga describes John Beckwith's composition "Canada Dash, Canada Dot" (words by James Reaney) as a "remarkable 'trip' up Toronto's Yonge Street, out of the suburbs, and finishing at the village of Sharon. . . For this writer the Sharon section might be one of the most eloquent moments in Canadian music."

To quote Udo Kasemets again:

Serge Garant feuded openly with fellow-critics and composers and spoke his mind over the airways, always [on] the same subject. . . If there is to be a musical culture in Quebec, or for that matter, in Canada, it must be modelled on examples and standards set by the best anywhere in the world.

John Beckwith writes on Udo Kasemets. Udo Kasemets on Istvan Anhalt, Bruce Mather on John Hawkins, Brian Cherney on Harry Somers . . . and not only composers understand composers. So do high-school

teachers, concert promoters, **professors**, newspaper critics, and orchestra leaders. Lee **Hepner** describes **Harry Freedman** as a "sensitive **colourist**... in an uncanny way he manages to translate the essence of paintings into sound." **Bengt Hambraeus** writes on **Bruce Mather**, **Lyse Richer-Lortie** on **Pierre Mercure** and **Francois Morel**, **Giles Bryant** on **Healey Willan**, to name only a few.

Something wondrous kept catching my eye. Contemporary Canadian poetry is being used **more** and **more** as inspiration, or as actual texts, for many compositions. **Percy Byssbe** and **Byron (Lord)**, weep not more on these **Assimiboian shores!**

I am in **accord** with **Kenneth Winters**, as he **reports** on listening to **Violet Archer's** "Concerto for Piano and Orchestra": "The middle movement is warmer and lovelier than **Archer** usually permits in a serious movement. ... The finale is vigorous **and** free and leaves the listener mildly appalled that a work of **this calibre should** be played so seldom."

But I am mom than "mildly appalled." I am apoplectic! We have been handed excellent books and **catalogues** of Canadian music since 1952, with an

increasing number in the past 12 years, and **Contemporary Canadian Composers** tops them all. So why aren't we hearing our music?

**Brian Chemey**, a member of the Faculty of Music at McGill University, is the author of **Harry Somers**, dedicating the volume to him "on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday."

"Jesus, what a lot of work has gone into this," I kept saying to myself, as I settled (again) to read. The quote is **Tom Hedley's**, as he reviewed **Pierre Berton's** latest delivery. **Brian Chemey** and **Pierre Berton** are somewhat similar - they have all the facts and they put them in. I must bear in mind that **Mr. Chemey** is a teacher of theory and analysis, composition, and 20th-century music history, so **cutting** **Mr. Somers** up and sewing him together again would be a **labour** of love - and **hefty** scissors.

The author explains that he has "concentrated on tracing his [Somers'] development as a composer over the years, selecting a number of works which illustrate various stages of that development. It is to be hoped that this study will prove a framework and point of departure for further exploration of his music." This "study" is mom than

a point of departure: **all** eight sections clarify **Somers** as a sensitive, powerful composer who could have been equally at home as a painter, or a poet... or a performer. A sample of his **calligraphy** is printed in a letter to **Reginald Godden** (describing the lonely simplicity of the piano) and also a one-page untitled graphic composition given as a contribution to a birthday book for **John Weinzweig**. It is dynamic, subtle, sparse and flowing. **One** of **Somers'** sprightly quotes (among many) is: "Whenever I'm introduced to my fellow Canadians as 'Harry Somers the composer,' their first reaction is often one of surprise and politely expressed curiosity. 'I didn't know them were any in Canada.' 'I'm not the only one,' I snarl. It always makes me feel like the great bald eagle, or whooping crane, or any other rare and vanishing species of wild life."

One of the main sections of the book deals with the orchestral works of the late 1950s and early 1960s, another with the vocal works of the 1960s. An entire chapter is devoted to the monumental music drama, **Louis Riel**. **Cherney's** writing is crammed with detailed analysis, comparison of styles, influences of many composers and au-

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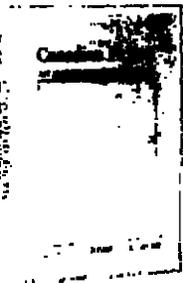
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## CANADIAN FICTION; An Annotated Bibliography

Edited by Margery Fee, Gail Donald and Ruth Cawker

Every novel, short story collection, critical and biographical study by and about Canadian writers published to the end of 1974 (including Quebec novels in translation and out of print titles for in-print authors) is listed with a brief descriptive annotation. Separate sections suggest general reference sources, periodicals, records films and video-tapes, and an invaluable index groups all fiction titles under the major thematic areas of Canadian fiction.

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thors, and "that special 'night music,' jazz," — to clarify the understanding of how everything came together to produce the unique sound, the unique man.

Cherney explains that "this has been a report on Harry Somers in mid-career — a composer of striking originality, imagination, and vitality, who continues to explore new areas of life and art with the same curiosity, open-mindedness, and intellectual vigour evident throughout his career."

And the mystical question remains. Would there be more Canadian composers if learner-dreamers studied only with two or three Weinzwieg-type teachers, if they puffed their magical pipes in repose, strolled slowly alone along September lakes, listened to 'crash-landings of back-legged loons, and pondered the inescapable fact that tired pianists need to have every note written down for them? □

## Never in Wren's day

**Hallowed Walls: Church Architecture of Upper Canada**, by Marion MacRae and Anthony Adamson, Clarke Irwin, illustrated, 304 pages, \$24.95 cloth.

By BRIAN VINTCENT

THE CREATIVE genius of pre-Confederation Upper Canadians did not extend to their churches. This is the conclusion you come to after reading *Hallowed Walls* by Marion MacRae and Anthony Adamson. It's a thoroughly researched companion volume to *The Ancestral Roof*, their study of domestic architecture in Upper Canada. You can't help feeling they found that a more congenial subject. *Hallowed Walls* is written in a tone of repressed impatience that periodically bursts out into veiled expressions of disapproval of Victorian philistinism.

And clearly with good reason, for the history of church architecture in Upper Canada is, on the whole, an unhappy affair. Fashion was everything, so that places of worship were thrown up, burned down, expanded, mutilated and generally treated in barbarous ways with no consideration given to the integrity of architectural style.

Thus a Georgian building, gracious in its repose and modesty, would, by the decision of a congregation dazzled by architects who had more enthusiasm

than skill, but who had also brought over from Europe the latest designs, find itself done over into a gothic fantasy. And while the congregation might have been God-fearing, it was also penny-wise, so that alterations were generally hesitant cosmetic jobs that turned round arches into pointed ones and fiddled with the façade.

But along with their impatience at such unsophisticated pioneer activity, the authors have also made it clear that, admirable or not, this is the way we were and their book is welcome for telling us so.

However, *Hallowed Walls* is not all a story of dismal vandalism and disregard for beauty. The pretentious grandeur and copy-cat style of the big city churches, with each denomination competing for prominence, may do no more than wither our souls into walnuts. But who can resist the appeal of the meeting-houses built with austere simplicity by the Quakers and Mennonites and other rural minorities?

Clearly not Marion MacRae, who writes about these places of worship quietly set down in the middle of a green shade in lyric style. The Sharon Temple of the Children of Peace is the most remarkable of them all. Its airy lightness and loving care for detail make it an architectural gem that invites the soul more effectively than many another more conventionally styled Upper Canadian religious building. Fortunately, it has survived.

As a record of Ontario's old churches, *Hallowed Walls* has great value. It is, however, heavy going and the casual reader will find the names of architects and clergy scattered about in a dizzy profusion difficult to sort out. More anecdotal material would have helped immeasurably — such as the story included about fiery old Daniel Gordon, father of novelist Ralph Connor, who had cowed his congregation into such a state of terror that when one of them died in his pew during the sermon, his neighbours kept him propped upright until Gordon had done fulminating against the Devil.

If the main body of the text is sometimes a muddle, Anthony Adamson's postlude is anything but. In some 20 pages, extensively illustrated, he has placed the churches of Ontario in the stream of European architectural history with such clarity and succinctness that those of us who spent an entire year in a university course studying the development of church architecture from the Roman basilica onwards will wonder why it took so long. □

# McGillivray rides again

Northwest to the Sea: **A Biography of William McGillivray**, by **Marjorie Wilkins Campbell, Clarke Irwin**. 230 pages, \$12.50 cloth.

By **JEAN JOHNSTON**

THIS IS a revision of Marjorie Wilkins Campbell's impressive *McGillivray, Lord of the Northwest*, produced by the same publisher in 1962. The new effort is no meatier, but is considerably tightened up and somewhat shorter. Campbell has little new material, although she lists a few new sources. She does however re-emphasize in persuasive words the exploratory efforts of the Northwest Company, and the great effort to push to the Pacific, and thence to the Orient. Mackenzie, Fraser, and Thompson were Nor'westers.

Campbell has made a great contribution to Canadian history in her discovery and intensive search for the story of the Northwest Company. Her first book on the Nor'westers was published in 1954 and since then she has turned out five more on related themes.

Although *Northwest to the Sea* is packed with interesting 'etails, the style is surprisingly suspenseful and makes good as well as informative reading. We see Lord Selkirk as a slightly mad nobleman with too much money, intent on destroying the Northwest Company. When he captures the Northwest post at Fort William and takes William McGillivray prisoner, the reader's sympathy is entirely with McGillivray. Campbell leaves us with an unanswerable question: if the Northwest Company had got controlling interest in the Hudson's Bay Company, instead of the reverse, how would this have affected the Canadian future?

*Northwest to the Sea* is a better book than *McGillivray, Lord of the Northwest*; but the public should have been warned that the book is a revision and not another new biography, as is implied. Although the latest book has little new material, the subject matter has been rearranged, the emphasis on the Northwest Company's exploring of the West is more effective, and the style is crisper. Unfortunately, the index is still a poor one. Libraries that don't own the first *McGillivray* should be sure to order the new version. □

# Nod as a stranger

The Sleep Book, by James C. Paupst with Toni Robllon, Macmillan; 196 pages, \$5.95 paper.

By J. **MICHAEL WHITLA**

**MOST OF THE** questions about problems of sleep raised by Dr. Paupst are *not* answered here, as promised in the enthusiastic introduction. The authors do provide, however, an informed review in very brief form of a considerable body of research into sleep. A task in writing books of this genre, of course, is to get the reader past the technical subtleties and sophistication to the nub of what is interesting in general. Scepticism about theory sometimes gets lost. A bibliography is provided for the reader who wants to pursue ideas more closely.

In addition to the encapsulated information about sleep as a major process of living, a large part of the book is a manual directed to the troubled sleeper, particularly the insomniac. Dr. Paupst's remedies are as informed as they can be, given the current state of

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the **therapeutic** art, and are at least as good as anybody's. His notions of **individual** rituals of sleep are somewhat idiosyncratic but intriguing.

We are urged to be curious about sleep. **Each** one of us can do an individual **research** project, especially with **one's** dreams. The physiology and psychology are outlined. Then the **reader** is urged to embark on self-analysis. The richness of dream life is there, actively asking for attention. Although a reader's **curiosity** may well be repaid, little **warning** is given of the distortion that **always creeps** into dream **analysis**, most particularly when it is done alone. The reader would be advised not to bother with the appendix called "A Typical Freudian Dictionary of Dreams." Freud and **most** subsequent psychoanalysts found few dream symbols to be amenable to anything like universal interpretation. No dream is ever entirely interpreted, which surely does not lessen the intrigue of a dream.

Perhaps too little advice is given about when the troubled sleeper should seek consultation **from an expert** in sleep and a **psychiatrist**. Most readers, however, are unlikely **to** be reticent, and certainly **their** questions will be **more informed**. □

## IN BRIEF

**LEILA KHALED** has been the leading figure in at least **two** major hijackings — she's the **Palestinian** whose photo (**before** and **after** the plastic **surgery** which enabled her to repeat **her** exploit) has appeared on front pages all over the world. In *My People Shall Live* (NC Press, 229 pages, \$4.95) she tells her **story** to George **Hajjar**, a Canadian of Arab **origin**, who formerly taught at Waterloo, Waterloo Lutheran and **Ryerson**, and now teaches at the University of Kuwait. **Khaled** is a member of the PFLP (Popular **Front** for the **Liberation** of Palestine), and is **almost** as critical of the PLO as she **is** of most Arab **governments**. Yet nothing surpasses **her** hatred for the Israelis (or Zionists) and **their Western** allies, whom she holds **totally** responsible for the expulsion **from their** homeland of the three million **Palestinians** at present living in exile. Canada's official foreign policy **objectives** include **sup-**port of Israel's right to exist and the **Palestinians** tight to have a voice in any Middle East peace settlement. This lively and personal account, naively interspersed with the inevitable **dialec-**

tic and dogma, is of some use not only **to** indicate the background **and** mining of a **totally** committed terrorist guerrilla, but also to give some idea of why **sec-**tors in the Arab world support such activities.

ALEXANDER CRAIG

**THERE IS** nothing for hardcore cheese fetishists in *The Goof: A pretentious novel and an embarrassing exercise in cheese fetishism*, by **Herman Q. Good-** & n (illustrations by Roger **Baker**, Applegarth Follies. \$4.95) and the book **isn't** pretentious at all. It's an amiably told story of a young man's **search** for himself and his place in life during the years following his **depar-**ture from high school. The hero, who coincidentally has the same fist name as **the** author, travels out West. **finds** nothing there, returns to his home **in** London, Ont., hangs out for a while, goes to a friend's shotgun **wedding** in New Brunswick and comes back to live in a tree **fort** with a nice **girl** named **Irene**. Along the way he catches his first glimpses of love and death. All standard stuff. But, although the narrator is as alienated as the **heroes** of first novels usually are, he **also** has a **tremendous** amount of affection **for** his home town



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and genuine compassion for the people in his life, and this is what sets the book well above others of its kind. Teachers who are struggling to find ways to show their students that there is an important and diit connection between fiction and real life might (if they don't work in jurisdictions when words like "prick" impel parents to bum libraries) find *The Goof* a useful first step.

PHIL SURGUY

ST. JOHN'S IS considered by many to be the oldest city in North America. This claim is defended in Paul O'Neill's *The Oldest City: The Story of St. John's, Newfoundland* (Press Porcépic, 432 pages, \$17.95). But *The Oldest City* is much more than a claim to a title. This is a history of the traditions, customs, and people of St. John's. O'Neill's research has taken him to the Channel Islands, Britain, and the United States. His dedication must be praised for this book represents years of painstaking work. The *Oldest City* is Volume I of a two-volume set. We ate told in the publisher's preface that the original manuscript was too long to be published in one book. Yet at the same time we ate warned that "there is a great deal of overlapping." If such is the case, it is most unfortunate a more conscientious pattern of editing was not followed. The first volume covers the city's political history and its colourful people: while the second will cover its social and military history. Yet there is a chapter on "A Military Animal" in Volume 1. This obviously appears redundant. Although the publishers admit the decision was "somewhat arbitrary," they also emphasize "each part can stand alone." Whatever the case, the final evaluation cannot be made until Volume II appears. In the meantime, this volume with its numerous illustrations and solid factual discourse is a most significant reference feat. As a first historical study of St. John's, it will be invaluable to students of history and research. Moreover, it is a fine general-interest book.

MICHAEL O. NOWLAN

JOHN C. MACDONALD's *Just Keep Dancin'* (173 pages, \$5.95) is a surprisingly light piece from Press Porcépic, which up to now has distinguished itself as a high-art, serious-minded grass roots publisher. I suppose what is most bothersome about the book is its sophomore tone, which one might think appropriate for a "last-year at university" plot but which reminds one excruciatingly of the gesture-making "Wow, Pm so

hip" gossip in student unions. Also, that hipness seems so dated and derivative. Richard Farina's *So Far Down It Seems Like Up to Me* is so clearly its American model, now more than 10 years old, that one's appreciation of *Just Keep Dancin's* "Canadian content" is purely on the level of Frye's statement that "writing about kangaroos doesn't make literature Australian." Also, the book's format is grotty, sleazy, and simple-minded — as if the designer felt inspired to parody *Just Keep Dancin'* with English toilet-paper stock and crude illustrations. Now that the fine-art touch of poet-prhtter Tim Inkster has gone from Press Porcépic, is this the standard we can expect? How strange that in the same season Porcépic can also publish in subtle graceful format Dorothy Livesay's latest poetry, *Ice Age*. PS

## NOTES & COMMENTS

IT SHOULD BE the humbling duty of every serious literary critic and review editor to reread once a year the famous unsigned article that appeared in Britain's *Quarterly Review* in the summer of 1833. Dealing with the first proper collection of lyrical poems by a young Cambridge graduate, the critic was mindful of the brutal way the publication had dismissed John Keats some years before and professed himself anxious not to repeat the error. He then proceeded to savage the young poet with a ruthlessness that ma& the attack on Keats seem praise by comparison. The post's name was Alfred Tennyson. Thus did the leading British literary review score a double zero in passing judgement on two of the true poetic geniuses of 19th-century England. And so ate we all fallible.

While admitting that, we must also admit to a growing unease about the tone adopted by some of our correspondents in this and recent issues (see page 33). One reviewer was castigated as a student "with very little qualification and for very little money" forcing "his narrow little mind on your readers." Another, in separate letters, was abused as "an Italian pretzel" and "that throat slasher." A third was ridiculed as "a narrow-minded hayseed."

Now no mortal judgement, especially a judgement about art or literature, is sacrosanct. Anyone can quarrel with it on as many grounds as there are

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pejoratives in the Oxford English Dictionary. That's what the letters column is for. But these were cheap and vicious shots, aimed not at the judgements but at the reputations of the reviewers. They demeaned the shooter more than they did the target.

What prompted them? Something more complicated, we suspect, than the outraged pride of the creative artist (or his mentor). There seems to be in some corners of Canadian letters an imperfect understanding of the role of the reviewer, an ignorance of commonly accepted reviewing practices, and a justifiable fear that the old free-and-queasy rules of the critical game in this country are being tightened up.

Among other things, *Books in Canada* is in the business of trying to improve the standards of popular criticism in Canada. (Academic criticism needs no such encouragement; it is well taken care of by a number of distinguished quarterlies in our midst.) Toward that end, we expect our reviewers to judge Canadian books in the wider context of English-language literature as a whole and our editorial policy attempts to reflect similar international standards. Editorial policies

can never be more than expressions of general ideals and we are the first to **acknowledge that our reach far exceeds our practical grasp**. But since there is **apparently** some confusion about just what we are reaching for, it's worth **repeating** the ideals as we see them.

Let's start with the role of the reviewer. We **think** it was admirably defined by Stephen Jay Gould in a recent issue of the *New York Times Book Review*:

**Reviewing is a nasty business. I would advocate its elimination if I could think of another way to fulfill its necessary function. An author may spend years of loving patience on a project; reviewers often determine its fate in a pitiful fraction of that time. A reviewer has two cardinal responsibilities: to read carefully and dispassionately, and to pass judgment honestly in words that cannot represent more than a highly personal opinion.**

Mr. Gould might have added that the equation of **labour** is often not as **one-sided** as it looks. The reviewer may also have **spent** years—even a lifetime — educating himself or herself to the level of being able to pass **judgement** not only honestly but also with authority.

It follows as the scar the **wound** that review editors have at least three cardinal responsibilities: to find and encourage reviewers who can read carefully and dispassionately; to match a particular book with a reviewer who can judge it **honestly** and with the authority it **requires**; and to **ensure** that the words the **reviewer** uses to express his or her **opinion** are as **clear** and as meaningful as possible.

It does **not** follow that review editors necessarily endorse the reviewers' opinions. Such blanket **endorsement** would be **intellectually absurd** in a publication that reviews as many as 10 titles a month. What we do endorse, wholeheartedly, are not the judgements but the honesty and integrity of the persons making the judgements. In that sense, of course we stand **firmly behind our** reviewers. Each and **every** one of them. **How** could we do otherwise? An attack on their professional reputation is an attack on us.

Needless to say, our confidence in our reviewers extends to letting their printed judgements stand — even though we may personally disagree with them. In **rare** instances, **with** books that **seem** to involve fundamental controversies, we have commissioned and printed *simultaneously two* reviews that (we hope) **express** opposing opinions. But it is not the practice of this or any other responsible **review** publication to insult a reviewer by seeking a second (or third or fourth) opinion at a later date. And if one author were given such special consideration, every author could fairly demand the same treatment.

In a mature and **secure** literary community, it would not be necessary to spell out these obvious points. But Canadian **writers**, alas, seem conditioned to **insecurity**. Too many of them, particularly our **poets**, feel the need to huddle together for warmth in **fractious** and defensive cliques. Too much of what passes for popular **criticism** is simply the buttering up of friends or the skewering of foes. And too often our independent reviewers are caught in the middle of a mud-slinging **match**. If they say what they honestly feel, judge the work and not the author, they **risk being** plastered with the same *ad hominem* abuse that our writers find it natural to hurl among themselves.

As Mr. Gould says, reviewing is a nasty business. But it doesn't **have to be that nasty**. Authors have **the right** to be judged dispassionately. We expect the same courtesy to be accorded **our** reviewers. □

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## THE CAGE...

Sir: Having Followed Martin Vaughn-James' work since his first book and having read with frustration cod anger Aviva Layton's review of his latest and best, *The Cage* (November), I feel that both the review and be, subsequent reply to hi letter (January) reveal far more about Layton's personality and critical abilities than they do about Vaughn-James' disturbing and extremely innovative book.

In his letter, Vaughn-James alludes (not without sarcasm) to Layton's authorship of a children's book. This is not as irrelevant as it may seem. For a careful reading of her review and letter seems to reveal an underlying assumption that art is fantasy (she describes his drawings as "haunting, nightmarish, surrealist," but never in terms of realism or reality), that is, something which remains outside the real order of experience and which can only be ingested on condition that it does not alter the consciousness significantly. The artist, according to this preconception, thus becomes merely a persuader whose task is to convince the Laytons of this world of his particular fantasy, a common practice in the writing of children's books. The opening remarks of her letter are symptomatic of this bias (originally evidenced to her extremely negative attitude toward the text of *The Cage*) — no, I am not persuaded, these "arguments will get him precisely nowhere." Layton censures the text so vehemently no, because of its perhaps controversial style — florid cod in some parts hysterical — (and in my opinion one highly suitable to accompany the images) but because i, fails to sustain a fantasy interpretation of the book. I, succeeds precisely because it is no, self-contained or rational and destroys or contradicts the images at every turn, its stylistic form subjected to the dictates of function.

If Aviva Layton is indeed a "fit and proper person for evaluating 'grown-up' literature," then why when she is challenged as to her critical aesthetic is She still unable to reveal her criteria of evaluation cod merely clothes herself in names, thereby obliging us to accept the assertion that her examination of *The Cage* took place in this elevated atmosphere when in fact there is no such evidence in the original review? And why again does she egotistically insist, in face of the author's correction, that her quotation of the text "accords exactly — word for word" with the original when i, definitely does not (page 53, "freeing the ear," no, "freeing the air")? Furthermore, Layton obsessively reiterates and ridicules the word "gestalt," which doesn't appear anywhere in the text, fly-leaf notes, biography, or Vaughn-James' Inter: contrives to confuse penning with onomatopoeia: and to cap i, all, in her haste to eruditely cite not two but three bi-talented artists, includes incredibly, Apollinaire whose name she cannot spell.

The crux of the matter is simply that Layton is unable to distinguish between objectively presented critical argument and subjective value judgments dressed up as such. Blatantly inadequate to the task of reviewing *The Cage*, she has proven herself equally incapable of replying satisfactorily or honestly to Vaughn-James' letter. An exceptional work of art has been unjustly victimized.

Richard Dawkins  
Unionville, On.,

## ... AND THE OUTRAGE

Sir:

In affording Aviva Layton the opportunity of a simultaneous response to Martin Vaughn-James' critical letter (January), *Books in Canada* has misused the editorial courtesy normally reserved for an exchange of ideas in an open forum. Layton has nothing to offer in such an exchange.

And es if that fact wasn't numbingly obvious from the malicious and inept misrepresentation given as a review of *The Cage* (November), Layton again fills column space with the same sort of shallow crackerbarrel wi, that is everywhere displacing critical insight on literature.

The original review was ignorant, factually wrong, and critically empty. The subsequent letter wilfully misleads, obscures, or ignores the issues Vaughn-James takes up with the review — the text is "ear" not "air"; the catalogue notes for AGO do not constitute a commentary to *The Cage*; reviews written to a hack formula are neither meaningful nor defensible. Again substituting idiosyncrasy for thought, and trivia For argument, Layton discredits both herself and *Books in Canada*.

Cynically, it might be said that this is a small accomplishment. But in the case of *Books in Canada*, at least there is some reason For disappointment. The advocates of mediocrity, the bosses of the new literary industry, cod all the other yahoos that want to see literature remain just another consumer commodity to exploit — all have had more than enough opportunity in your pages to discourage respect for imagination cod its extensions in art. Why fret over "trying to maintain a broad geographic balance" (Notes & Comments, January), when the critical and intellectual balance is so grotesquely overloaded on the side of Layton-like banality? The situation is truly ludicrous, but even the great leveling effect of laughter has been turned to reducing all values to the same level of empty idii:

If *Books in Canada* cannot wholeheartedly endorse Layton, so that such an endorsement becomes the clearly stated editorial policy of the magazine, then i, could at leas, attempt to give Some indication that there is a genuine struggle for balance by running a selection from other independent reviews of *The Cage*.

Rowan Shirkie  
Ottawa

Editor's note: We apologize to Mr. Vaughn-James for substituting "air" for "ear." It appears to have been an editorial error and not Aviva Layton's fault. We make no apologies for affording Ms. Layton the right of reply in the same issue. Mr. Vaughn-James' letter amounted to an attack on her professional honour. If deadlines permit, any contributor so attacked will be afforded the same right. For a discussion of some of the other points raised by Mr. Shirkie, see Notes & Comments (page 31).

## BOYD, THOU EVER BLURT

Sir:

Naturally I wasn't delighted with Bill Boyd's sparky, deprecating review of my book, *The Leafs In Autumn*, in the January issue, and mostly to soothe my sore ego, I'd like to raise a Few items.

Item one: Boyd writes that my book was "rushed into print to catch onto Kahn's sports-tales." Roger Kahn's book, *The Boys of Summer*, was published in the spring of 1972. Mine came out in the fall of 1975. That's rushing into print?

Item two: Boyd scores a lo, of shots off my snobbery. We,, that's no news. I tell everyone

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in the first chapter what a nifty little snob I was in the late 1940s when I sat in the red seals at Maple Leaf Gardens. I've changed since those days. k's Boyd who has the problem -be's a proletarian snob.

Item three: I think Boyd go, a lo, more fun out of the book than he allows himself to admit. After all, look at the number of paragraphs he takes up in his review telling us about his adventures with Kenny Reardon and his ideas about the old Leafs.

Rem four: I'm a better writer than Boyd gives me credit for. I won't bother citing all the authorities who agree with me, people who think I'm a dazzling stylist. Let me just say they're legion and that they're incredibly astute. Some of them have even bought my book.

Jack Batten  
Toronto

## JOUAL OF THEIR SOULS

Sir:

I, is rare that a book is "designated a national embarrassment" by a reviewer. However, *French Canajan, Hé?* by Mark Orkin has succeeded in outraging your reviewer, Richard Lubbock in the January issue of *Books in Canada*, to the extent of exhorting the federal government to "prohibit i, from leaving the country."

I, is difficult to understand why. In *Canajan, Eh?* Orkin drew attention to the way English Canadians actually do speak. In the two years since its publication it has sold over 50,000 copies. In French *Canajan, Hé?* Orkin's target is the "Kay Beckers" and their own particular brand of French. Our first printing of 10,000 copies was sold out within eight weeks after publication; the book sold particularly well in Montreal and Ottawa. In addition, Mark Orkin has appeared on both English- and French-language radio and television programs in these cities (he is bilingual -although according to Orkin this is no longer an issue - since Canadians do no, speak English or French anymore, but Canajan and joul).

So it appears that French Canadians, unlike your reviewer, have welcomed and are enjoying the book in the spirit i, was written: as a satirical tour through the linguistic and social foibles of Francophone Canada.

Malcolm Lester  
Editorial Director  
Lester and Orpen Ltd.  
Toronto

## U OR NON-U? 0 HORRORS!

Sir:

I read Richard Lubbock's review of five books of humour in the January issue with mounting disbelief. Your reviewer seems obsessed with the issue of nationalism. He is so insensitive he misses all the subtleties of Mark Orkin's *French Canajan, Hé?* He fails to mention the 60 drawings (by cartoonist Peter Whalley and designer David Shaw) in *Colombo's Little Book of Canadian Proverbs, Graffiti, Limericks and Other Vital Matters*. Finally, he is sloppy, and has confused me with Lieutenant Colombo. I could continue to list instances of his incompetence, but let me conclude: he hasn't a clue and I have,; a "u."

John Robert Colombo  
Toronto

## BLACK EYE OPENER

Sir:

No, to take more time or attention than has Richard Lubbock in his mention of *The Best of Bob*

Edwards ("Funny we should ask hi," January issue). I would point only to the errors:

1. Edwards settled in a small town outside of Calgary not Edmonton.

2. The Eye Opener was a newspaper not a magazine.

Yes, i, is funny you should ask him.

Torn Williams  
Calgary

# CanWit No.9

GLOOM HAS descended once more on McClarkan & Newspider, the all-Canadian national publisher. A PR consultant has informed the firm that its image is too staid. His recommendation: with-it rejection slips composed in light verse. Can readers help? The usual prize (see below) for the best entry. Address: CanWit No. 9, Books in Canada, Fourth Floor, 366 Adelaide St. East, Toronto M5A 1N4. Deadline: March 31.

## RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 7

IN AN EFFORT to improve this country's sepulchral wit, readers were asked to provide appropriate epitaphs on any prominent Canadian. The winner is Morgan Cicero of Grafton, Ont. He receives a copy of the award-winning art book *John Fillion* by Domthy Cameron and John Reeves (Martlet Press, \$19.50) for these memorial limes:

HERE LIES  
PIERRE BERTON  
WHO NEEDS NO INTRODUCTION

HERE LIES  
JOHN ROBERT COLOMBO  
UNQUOTE

HERE LIES  
GEORGE BOWERING  
PASST AWAY

HERE REPOSES  
ROBERTSON DAVIES  
THE RIGHT SORT OF CHAP

HERE LIES  
RAYMOND SOUSTER  
NEXT WICKET PLEASE

HERE LIES  
IRVING LAYTON  
WHO'S GONE TO BE WITH FRIENDS

HERE LIES  
MORDECAI RICHLER  
SOON TO BE A  
MAIOR MOTION PICTURE

HERE LIES  
FARLEY MOWAT  
REMAINDERED UNTO GOD

here lies  
bp nichol  
dud as  
a o  
c nail  
r

HERE LIES  
HUGH GARNER  
A CRUEL PLOT TWIST

HERE LIES  
MARGARET ATWOOD  
A FICTIONAL CHARACTER

HERE LIES  
A.I.M. SMITH  
WHO WASNT EVEN DEAD

HERE LIES  
DOUG FETHERLING  
G-G-G-GONE!

Honourable mentions:

PETER LOUGHEED  
He, for whom the oil toils  
At last, alas, ran out of gas  
—Alison Weingardt  
St. Albert, Alta.

\* \* \*  
W.A.C. BENNETT  
Here in the sod I still talk to God

JOHN DIBFENBAKER  
Lie fallow Canadians  
—Ian c. Johnson,  
Nanaimo, B.C.

WILLIAM ABBRHARM  
Here lies old Willie Aberhardt  
Who to Alberta gave his heart  
And like the long-awaited fart  
Was slow to come and quick to part  
—Alastair Wade, Anita Penner,  
and Catherine Adams, Ottawa

\* \* \*  
GORDON SINCLAIR  
The Devil you say?

MITCHELL SHARP  
O pass a harp  
To Mitchell Sharp  
And doff your ha:  
Fate knocked hi flat  
—M. I. Young, Sackville, N.B.

\* \* \*  
MORTON SHULMAN  
De Morty nil nisi bonum

WAYNE and SHUSTER  
Ail', what they uster

DAVID LEWIS  
Left forever

GLEN GOULD  
How strangely silent now this  
peaceful Glen,  
Only a distant mumble now and then  
—Marvin Goody, Toronto

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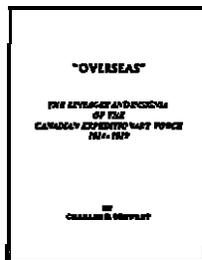


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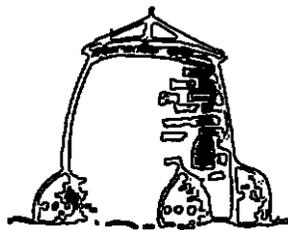
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