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Hugh Garner (1913-1979): An appreciation of his life and work
New fall fiction and a roundup of educational texts
Gary Geddes presents an epic defence of the long poem

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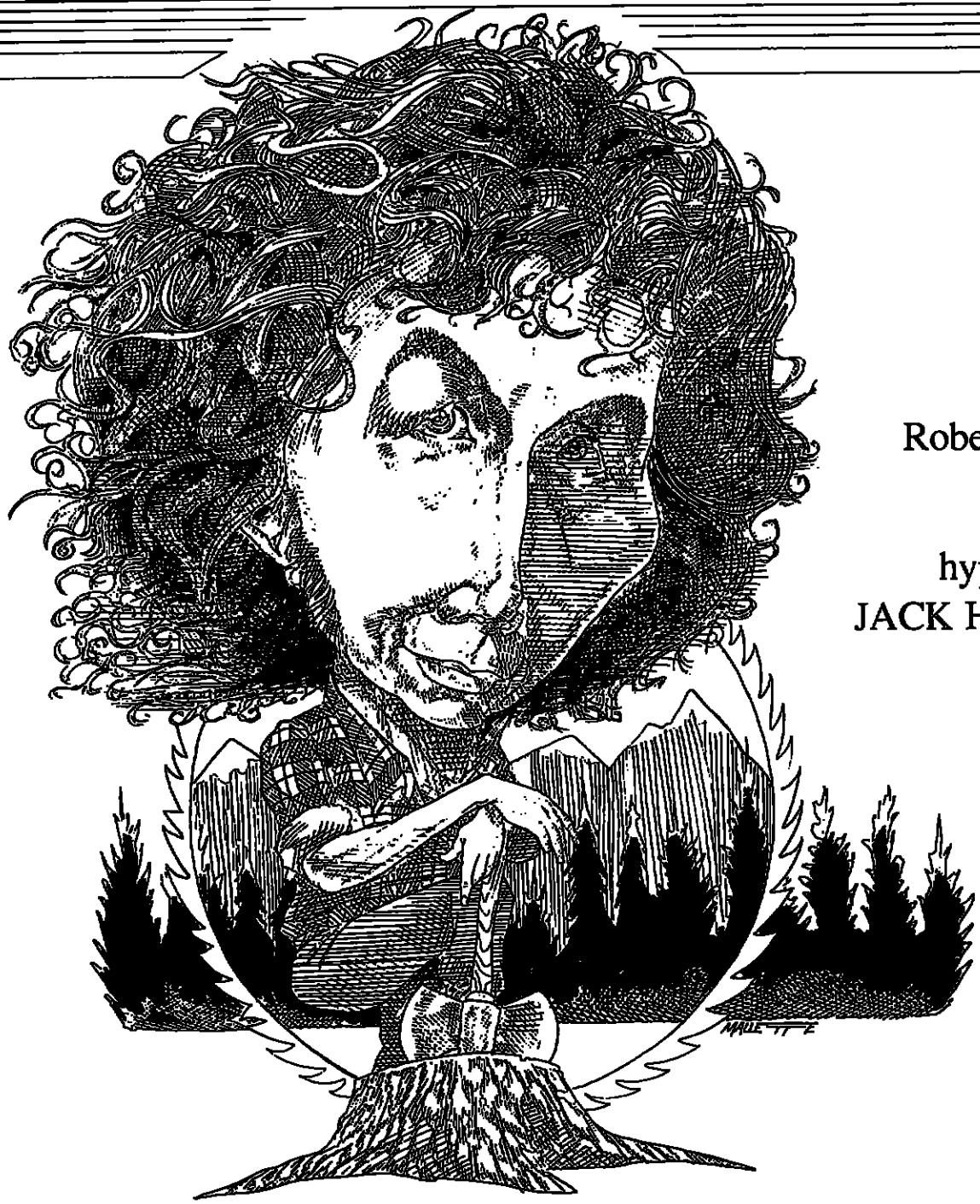

Robert Harlow
on the
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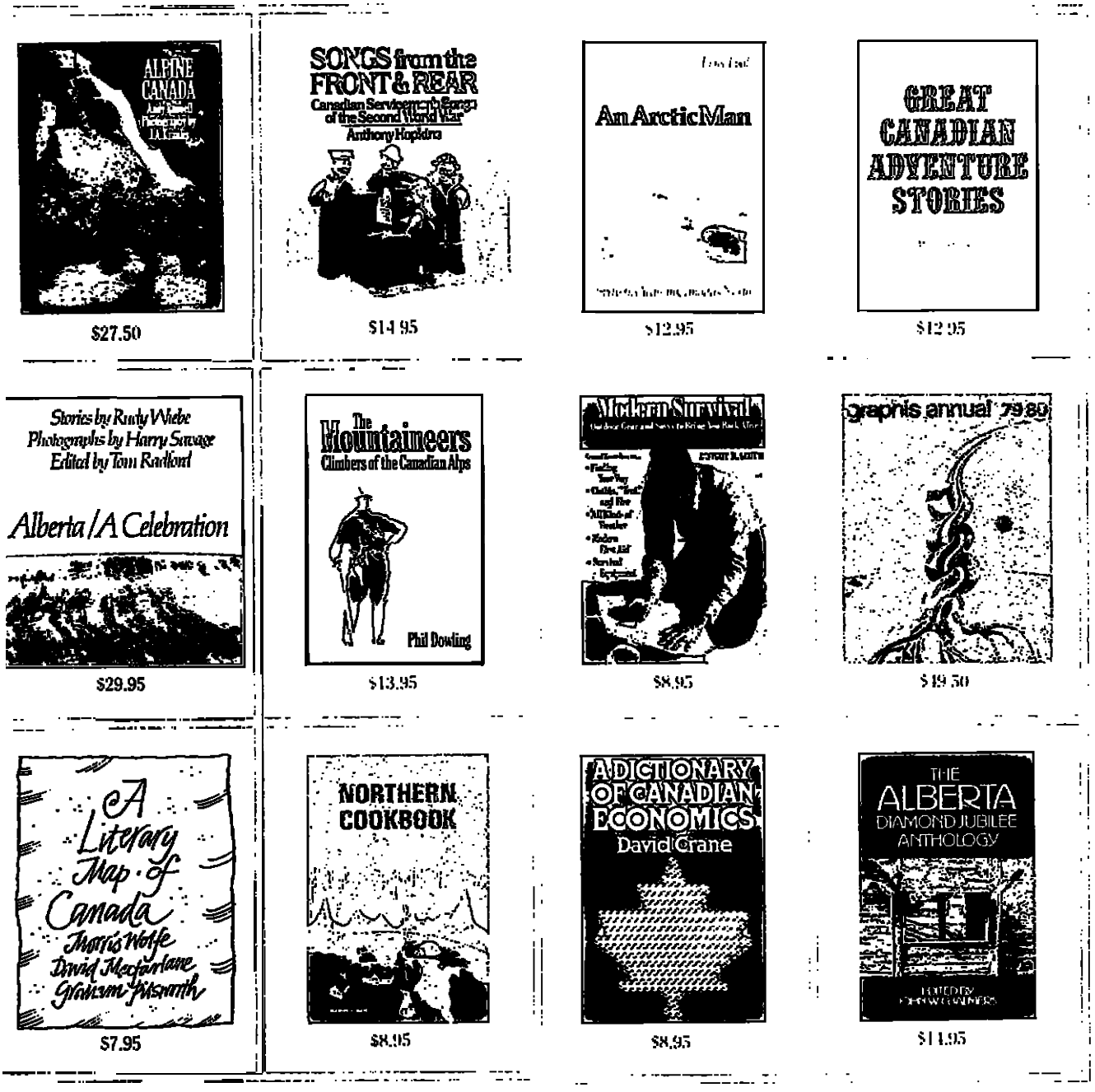

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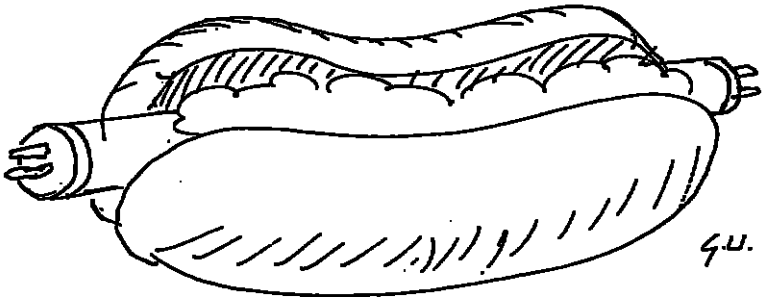

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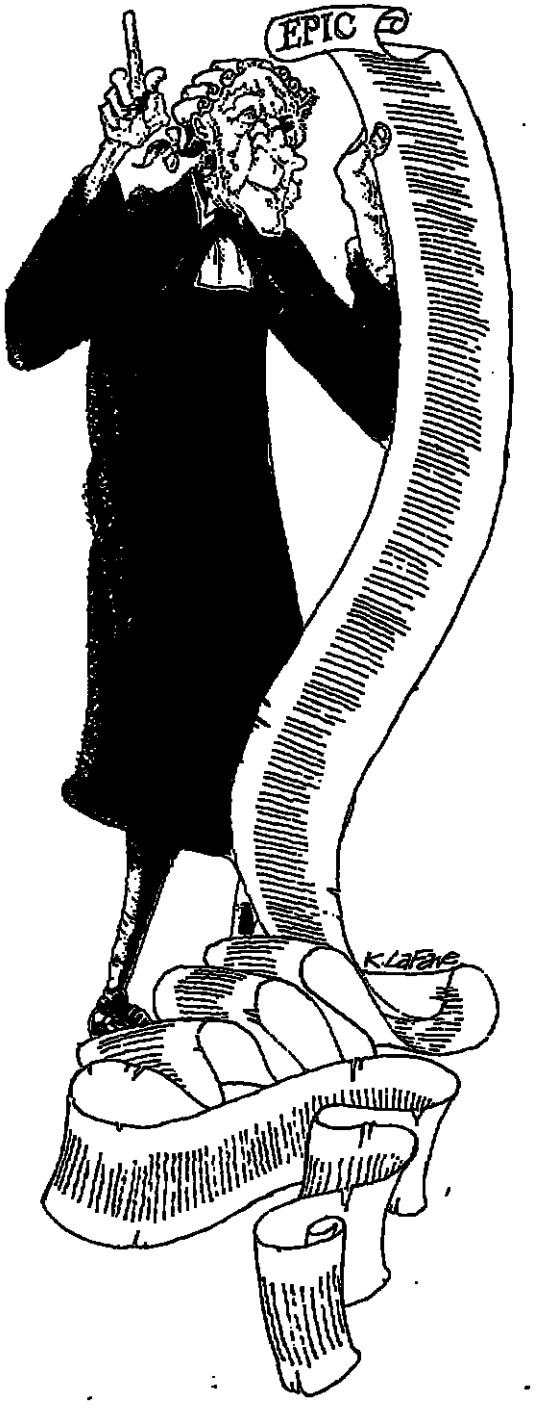
MAKE ARS LONGER

Despite Poe's anal-retentive theory, there's a case for the long-distance poem as a form peculiarly suited to our age

by Gay Geddes



WHEN APPOLONIUS of Rhodes wrote the *Argonautica* in 3,834 lines, his friend Callimachus is said to have remarked that a long hook is a great evil. I don't know what his observation did to their friendship: but I do know, judging fmm the low status long poems enjoy today. that Callimachus' sentiment would find plenty of support among poets and critics.

I might as well confess at the outset that, like Appolonius, I prefer a great evil in poetry to a minor good. Sometimes the literary sprinter strikes me as an aberration: the intense white heat at which he bums must finally consume him. But tbe long-distance poet bums long and gives heat far into the night; his art, his endurance. brings to mind that great distance runner, Geoffrey Chaucer. who spoke of poetry as the "craft so long to lerne."

I *don't want to run this* metaphor *into* the ground, *or divide the* poetic world into hares and tortoises, with tlte critics placing all their bets on the flashy, hyper-kinetic leapers who are doomed to pass out by the roadside. while the stodgy, persistent plodders trudge weak-eyed and earnest towards the finish line. The scenario isn't that far-fetched. We need all kinds of poets. tbe long-winded and those whose breath comes in short pants. What I want to do is make a case for the long poem, in all its manifestations, as a form not only worthy of serious attention by poets, critics. and anthologists, but also as a form peculiarly suited. to our age.

Then's no shortage of long poems around. A host of names readily comes to mind: Crane, Eliot, Williams. David Jones, Neruda, Yevtushenko, Berryman, Lowell, Atwood. Ondaatje, Bimey, Livesay, Dudek, and Gutteridge, to name only a few. Yet. &spite this abundance, little attention has been given to study of the contemporary long poem or narrative. If one thinks of poetry in terms of its reductive and. expansive extremes, It becomes perfectly obvious that the reductive impulse predominates in this century: the single image. the epigram, the final death-bedcouplet that will put the lid on. once and for all, clearly bold more sway in the critics' minds than does a musing narrative or a vast, sprawling epic. There's something faintly indecent and embarrassing about the long poem, as if it couldn't quite get its act together, as if the poet had run out of ink in his blue pen. The long poem -let's *face* it -reeks of impurity and excess.

Much of the blame for this situation belongs on the shoulders of Edgar Allan Poe. a short-story writer in poet's clothing. Poe claimed in 1848. in a lecture entitled "The Poetic Principle," that "a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase 'a long poem' is simply a flat contradiction in terms." Poe argues that it is impossible to sustain the "elevating" effects of true poetry to any great length; after a time the poem lapses and ceases to be poetry. Thus he calls *Paradise Lost not a* unified whole. but a "series of minor poems" strung together; *The Iliad. he says,* is constructed on "an imperfect sense of art." Poe goes on to prophesy that "no very long poem will ever be popular again." insisting that value in poetry has nothing to do with "sustained effort" and that a work of art should be praised for the impression it makes rather than for its bulk. "The fact is." Poe concludes, "perseverance is one thing and genius quite another."

Poe's anal-retentive theory of poetry deserves special recogni-

tion, perhaps a chair of poetry et Upper Rubber Boot College, which we could call the Poe Chair. The truth is that pee was essentially a prose writer with his heed in the poetic till, robbing poetry for the sake of his own vested Interests in another form. He loved narrative; his problem was that he did not know how to make narrative work within the bounds of his own narrow conception of poetry. Hi theories of composition did wonders for the short story, bet nothing for the future of poetry.

Poe had obviously read his Longinus on the sublime In art, where the view is expressed that "when a work is long, sleep eventually creeps over it." Poe was not alone in his age in preferring the lyric. Coleridge. es David Lodge reminds us in *The Language of Fiction.* distinguished between lyric end "mere narrative," where "the style should be simpler." For poets such as Valèry and Mallarmé, narrative would be like walking, always with an end in view, while the lyric would be akin to dance, en end in itself. Such purist analogies distort the issue. Poe's prescriptive criteria may have provided a useful counterbalance or antidote to the discursive end didactic excesses of his age, but they also lent themselves too readily to the emasculating or neutering of poetry as a vital, all-encompassing literary form — one which has every bit es much power as the novel or drama to move audiences, to transmit important cultural information, to analyze the human condition. to exploit end preserve the dialect of the tribe. and to provide some much-needed entertainment along the way.

pee anticipated the temper of the modem period in painting, sculpture, and literature, which is so well expressed in Ezra Pound's "A Retrospect" in 1917:

> As to tbe twentieth-century poetry, and poetry which I expect to see written during tbe next decade or so, it will, I think, move against poppy-cod:.-it will be harder and saner, it will be what Mr. Hewlitt calls "nearer the bone.." It will be as much like granite as it can be. its force will lie in its truth, its interpretive power (of course, poetic force does always rest there); I mean it will not try to seem forcible by rhetorical din, and luxurious riot. We will have fewer painted adjectives impeding the shock and stroke of It. At least for myself, I want it so, austere, direct, free from emotional slither.

Out of these reductive extremes has come a wonderful clarity and precision, a new focus on the image end its power to evoke and recall; a healthy suspicion of adjectives end their power to blur our perceptions if used carelessly end to excess; and a concentration on verbs end nouns to provide movement end concreteness in a poem. The imagist movement also produced some remarkable short poems; bat its most important legacy consists in having provided a built-in editor. or laxative, for the century.

However, an enormous price has been paid. The imagists and, to a lesser extent. the symbolists, as a result of the reductive extremes to which they went. may have rendered poetry of interest to an increasingly smeller audience. Poetry was once a feast for the ear, the eye. and the mind; it was a source of story. character, theme. anything from the seeking of cities to the seduction of innocence. from divine thoughts to obscene gestures. Dryden once said of Chaucer, "Here is God's plenty"; I suspect that he would ask of modem end post-modem poetry, "*Where* is God's plenty?"

The subjectivity end minimalism that characterize so much of our poetry is no longer acceptable. There's no reason for the poet to stop at the verbal snapshot, when he could aim for a verbal approximation of the wondrous sweep and Illusion of the moving-picture. It's time we stopped perpetrating the notion that poetry must be reduced to its bare essentials (or inessentials), which may be no more than a few feint scratches on the page and a few adjustments of the typewriter carriage as proof of life.

I am reminded of a comment by the French novelist Patrick Grainville whose book L-s *Flambouyants,* though turned down es excessive by the literary publisher Gallimard, subsequently won the Prix Goncourt. Asked whet he was trying to achieve in this novel, in an age that valued economy end restraint, Grainville replied:

> A baroque adventure novel, flamboyant, superbaroque. I'm not afraid of bad taste. It emanates a kind of jubilation, surprise and delight in style you don't get from good taste. Sometimes I leek at my excesses and I say to myself, why not? Literature is made from gifts, not refusals.

Poetry, too, is **made** from **gifts,** not **refusals.** Its **existence** in **the** life of our **society** depends upon its **ability** to **absorb** end **assimilate** new materiels (linguistic **and otherwise),** to **take** upon itself **the** widest possible **range** of **information,** idea. event. theme. **Technically,** the **poet cannot afford to** give up **any** of **the resources at his** disposal. As D. G. **James has said,** "The imagination of the greet **poet** et **least** never rests fmm **this momentous labour which endeavours** to encompass **the** whole of life, end to achieve a **comprehensive** unity of imaginative pattern."

Writing in defence of Pound's **long poems, particularly the *Cantos*, Scottish poet** Hugh **MacDiarmid** claimed not only **that** Pound's **primary** poetic impulse **was** expansive, but **also** Let Pound **knew** enough about life **and** about **art** to be **both** singer ***and sage.*** The **three qualities** he attributed to Pound were **(1) robustness** of **thought, (2)** felicity **of expression, and (3) comprehensiveness** of point of view. In **an age** of unprecedented **change such** es our owe. **MacDiarmid says,** we **can** only rejoice **in a poet** who **still** has the power of **synthesis.** In Pound, he concludes, *'stress is **laid** on the **fact that** we **are** living in a great **quantitative rather than a qualitative age** end **that** the only form adequate to **the classless** society is **the epic** --not like epics **of the past, except** in scale, but embodying **a knowledge of the *modem world*** end **all** its **possibilities,** not in **bits** end pieces, but **in the** round."

I believe **that the long** poem is not only **fundamental** to **our age,** but **also that** it is **the fundamental** proving ground for the poet. After **a** while **the mature** poet longs for **a larger canvas,** for which he needn't have recourse to Prose or **drama.** This ought to **come as a breath** of fresh **air** to poets end **readers** who feel **that poetry has** become too minimal, or **that** critics **are waxing** more **and** more eloquent about less **and** less. **(Is there a link between the tremendous growth of criticism and the near-death of poetry as a** form of **arcana?)** Some years ego Northrop **Frye** expressed **the** hope **that** poets **would "maintain en interest in narrative form. For the lyric, if cultivated too exclusively, tends to become too entangled with the printed page; in an age when new contacts between a poet and** his public **are opening** up **through radio,** the **narrative, a** form **peculiarly adapted** for public **reading, may** play **an important role** in **re-awakening a** public respect for end response to **poetry."** Add to thii the **fact** of television, **an** explosion in audio-visual media, **and government-supported readings, and** you **can** see **that** conditions **are certainly favourable** for **lifting** poetry **from its** second-class **academic** status **and from** the obscurity of **the** printed **page** into the public **arena.**

Eliot has gone es **far as anyone** in replying. by **way** of **both practice** and precept. **to** Poe's **theory that a** long poem **must** inevitably bog down in its own juices. In his **essay** on **the music** of poetry, he says that "in **a** poem of **any** length. **there** must be **transitions between passages** of greeter end **less** intensity, to give **a** rhythm of fluctuating emotion essential to the musical **structure** of the whole; and the **passages** of less intensity will be. in relation **to** the level on which the **total** poem operates. **prosaic** -so that, in the sense implied by **that context,** it **may** be **said that** no poet **can** write a poem of amplitude **unless** he is **a master** of **the prosaic."**

Even William **Carlos Williams,** who led **a** renewed **attack on the narrative** in **this** century. found that he could not resist **the lure** of **the** long poem. In the Prologue to ***Kora in Hell*, he** insisted **that** "the world of **action** is **a** world of **stones,"** that "nothing **can** be imputed by action." **He** succumbed, finally. to the long poem, with its fragments of anecdote, image. idea. document. The expensive impulse **reclaimed him. after a brief period es an imagist, because he had fallen in love with history** end **with place, two subjects that do not always lend themselves readily to the lyric, the image, and the epigram. He needed a much larger canvas on which to explore the multi-faceted character end history of Peterson, New Jersey, so be began to experiment with a special kind of brokenness of form that would be consistent with the non-rational, non-linear nature of experience es he saw it. To replace plot in his fragmented end logically discontinuous poetic world. he juxtaposed fragments of verse** with anecdotes end excerpts from historical documents, **rationalizing his poetic long-windedness in this way: 'The virtue of strength lies not in the grossness of the fibn**

but in the fibre itself. Thus a poem is tough by no quality it borrows from a logical recital of events nor from the event itself, but solely from that attenuated power which draws perhaps many broken things into a dance giving them thus a full being." The fragmented epic or collage. for Williams, brings about a marriage of heaven and hell. a marriage of the epic and the image.

That is the long and short of it. One may ask, then. why critics and teachers end anthologists continue to give so little attention to this important form. Perhaps one answer lies in our limited acquaintance with our own literary history. Margaret Atwood suggests in *Survival* that "pert of the delight of reading Canadian poetry chronologically is watching the gradual emergence of a language appropriate to its objects." What she does not say, however, is that this language is most obviously forthcoming not in the lyrics, but in the long poems, the narratives in particular. This is borne cot if one looks even briefly at the most familiar examples.

The best passage in Joseph Howe's "Acedia" is the section on the Indian massacre. Although it is highly stylized in terms of both language and rhythm, Howe manages to peck in a good deal of information about the life and lore of Acedia. He begins with an abundance of generalized words and abstractions, such es Love, Ambition. Commerce, Hate. Revenge. that are standard 13th-century fare; but es soon as he becomes immersed in the details of the massacre something amazing happens to his poem. It becomes incredibly dense and concrete. ceases to be a period-piece written in a quasi-historical vein and becomes, instead. an engaging narrative. Syntax alters perceptibly, so that fact and feeling can be stuffed into the lines. producing a truly variable rhythm that is sometimes careeningly fast, sometimes disturbingly slow, as the materials dictate.

Charles Sangster's poems are mostly sweetness and light, full of abstractions and outmoded poetic diction, clichéd sentiments that have little to do with genuine poetry or genuine feeling. However, when he puts his hand to narrative. he is almost able to escape those aspects of his inherited tradition that are an encumbrance. He continues to indulge in cliché and drop classical allusions as if they were silver dollars to help him find his way beck out of the Canadian wilderness: he is still drawn to Nymphs and Gnomes, Zephyrs. Bowers. end Ambuscades. all capitalized and stamped by the Department of Trade & Immigration for use in the colony. But — and this is important — his narratives are suffused with a powerful erotic energy that spills out in terms of both music and image. Though he is not what we would call now a "wild enthusiast" this own term for himself), Sangster is nevertheless at his wildest in the narrative poem. The long poem is his St. Lawrence, his Saguenay.

Charles Mair experiments in "Tecumseh" with a variety of voices. but Brock and Lefroy make comments that are virtually indistinguishable in terms of diction end syntax. Where Mair's originality lies. I believe, is in drawing the particulars of scene. Listen to this brief passage:

> *The gopher, on his little earthwork stood*
> *With folded arms, unconscious of the fate*
> *That wheeled in narrowing circles overhead:*
> *And the poor mouse, on heedless nibbling bent,*
> *Marked not the silent coiling of the snake.*

Not exactly D. H. Lawrence or Robert Frost, but the carefully chosen details derive from close observation of the physical world Mair inhabits.

Lest I be accused, like Mair's mouse. of being "on heedless nibbling bent," let me wind down this discussion by saying that there is something unpretentious about the narrative. something that encourages the poet not to strain for superficial effects. It is a form that can handle the myths that surround us. the events that have happened or ought to have happened to our tribe, the analysis of deep-seated cultural anxieties and aspirations. The logical conclusion of all of this is that poets should look more seriously at the narrative and that the media. the publishing industry. and the academy in tbii country ought to explore the many possibilities of the form by way of new courses, collections, studies, and broadcasts. □

IN MEMORIAM

And may there be no moaning at the bar as an old pro puts out to sea

by Barry Morgan

THE WAY THE media mated Hugh Gamer during the last few years was reminiscent of a performing bear being baited in a mediaeval village square. At the poke of a "touch-tone" in the hands of a researcher, Gamer would shamble forth to snarl and strike to the glee of the pop-eyed villagers. Everyone knew he would react to the goad; what most did not know was that Gamer was wise to what was going on and did not give a damn. In his rasping growl the most scurrilous observations about the poseurs of the Canadian literary scene were guaranteed to elicit smiles of shocked delight.

Hugh Garner, who died June 30 at tbe age of 66. saw too much life not to leaven all his observations with humour. That is not to say that he dill not have hates. He did. But they were all summarized in his term as "stupid." "Stupid" to Gamer war a well-developed talent For not seeing the obvious. He encountered a lot of such talented people.

Publishing was a favourite target. "Whew do they find those skid-row bums?" he asked. referring to editors. But to keep that remark in perspective one must add that. because of the amount of work he sold over three decades, he probably dealt with more editors than any writer this country has produced.

In the days when Gamer was beginning to write — an earlier sporadic start in 1936 had resulted in a short piece that sold to *The Canadian Forum,* but there was no repeat business-this country was very short on writers Fmm poor. Prostestant, urban backgrounds. (A situation that persisted till well into the established days of Hugh Gamer.) Originally. Gamer stepped into the publishing world as a copy-boy on the Toronto *Star,* which set his first standards For work and payment. It is Fair to draw parallels of Gamer with such names as Daniel Defoe. Charles Dickens. and William Saroyan; all were men who basically wrote For money. all indulged in what is termed "hack" writing. Pot a different ray and without a pejorative connotation. they wrote on assignment something that an editor wanted. In any other line of endeavour this is usually referred to as "good business." Garner saw the intrinsic common sense in this because lie had already worked in more than a score of businesses. He also had to earn a living, and he spent a lot of time as a beginning writer doing short pieces because they paid Faster.

Garner's reputation was never that of a wunderkind. He was 36 before recognition began to come. By that time he was a neat and meticulous worker. It was a source of pride that he always submitted clean typescripts. It was Garner's belief that anything less might inter& with an editor's concentration on the story, and that in itself might pm a sale In jeopardy. a chance he could not afford to take. Missed deadlines also had no place in his scheme of things. Editors might have many reasons For feelings of disquiet at the arrival of Garner but excuses For unfinished work were not among them.

Relations with other writers never figured large in Gamer's approach to his profession. He viewed other writers as mostly petty, spiteful. and mildly malevolent. He Found that he could keep them at a comfortable distance with an occasional application of churlishness.

IF Hugh Gamer could be said to be a Follower. his leaders were few — John O'Hara, Hemingway, and John Dos Passos. And he was very selective about the things

he learned fmm them. They were elements that fitted his own firm concept of craftsmanship. His youth and early working life had given him a great respect for the craftsman in any trade and this coloured his approach to writing. Gamer described himself as an "inspirational" writer: "It was Norman Mailer who made some crack about guys who sit down and just thump the typewriter every day. He called it 'writing words.' I don't do that. I need an inspiration." And during his late 30s those inspirations came thick and fast. In 1951 he wrote and sold 17 short stories.

Gamer was a loner. It was part of his life-style. Perhaps it dated back to the time in his teens when he and a friend had set off fmm Toronto to go on the bum through the United States, only to have his friend turned back at the border. Hugh went on alone. He made friends wherever be stopped but he always left them where he found them. Later as a writer he drank and caroused with friends but always went back to aloneness when it was time for work. He knew be couldn't handle booze but he kept trying. He claimed that the navy started his drinking career, but the symptoms were far more reminiscent of hobo-jungle "piss-ups" than they were of a dally tot of rum and irregular leaves ashore..

There was nearly always a lot of Garner in the protagonists of his stories. This did not concern him greatly until he came to write his autobiography, One *Damn Thing After Another* (1973). "Hell, I saw that I'd written so much about me that there didn't seem enough other stuff to make a book," be said. It did not work out that way. The Gamer who emerged provided the plinth to support the entire body of his work.

Hugh Garner was the offspring of a millhand with a knack for the tenor horn (along with a taste for the ladies) and Annie Gamer. a strong-willed Yorkshire girl who. upon being abandoned in Toronto with two small sons, put the horn-player out of her mind and got on with the job of keeping herself and raising her boys. The truculent determination that marked so much of Hugh's life undoubtedly came undiluted from Annie.

He was always associated professionally with the Cabbagetown district of Toronto, even though he only lived there for a couple of years while a small boy. His youth, though, was spent in much of downtown Tomato at a time when most of the children in the city would qualify as "street-kids." Toronto was that kind of place. Hugh ranged from Carlton Street to the harbour and from Broadview to Spadina. At that time Garner did not view himself as a deprived child ("Kids don't know they're poor") and I" fact through all the years that followed, even when he was broke, the only result of deprivation was to reinforce his sense of independence. This working-class ethic remained a constant factor in Gamer's entire life. from the tobacco fields' of Southwestern Ontario to the battlefields of Spain and editorial offices in Toronto.

The public view of Hugh Garner is that he was abrasive. But put into the context of his background, his attitudes and outspokenness reflect nothing more than the manner of the average working man of his day. His development and maturing also followed a well-marked path. I" his youth he became a socialist radical and then gradually he moved right towards conservatism. "A provincial square!" is how he described himself.

Hugh Gamer "ever thought of himself as a writer in terms of "importance," "significance." or "pioneering," bat he did have enormous respect for his craft. (He also thought highly of cabinetmakers, some journalists. Robert Weaver. Jack Kent Cooke, and a number of assorted misfits.) He recognized that he owed his talent the best break he could give it, and he sweated prodigiously to get that break into all of his pages.

But the fact remains that he liked and enjoyed what he did and it shows clearly in all his 100 short stories, 17 books, 439 articles, and eve" thmagh his television dramas. He positively delighted in telling stories. Gamer considered himself a" ordinary honest man, and as such he was always unfashionable. But it is not fashion that keeps him cropping up in anthologies published all over the world: it is simply good stales. well told. As Hugh Gamer used to growl: "What the hell else is there?" □

Spruce affectations

Innocence is Jack Hodgins's vision, hyperbole his vehicle as he spins new myths about the giants of the rain forest

by Robert Harlow

The Resurrection of Joseph Bourne, by Jack Hodgins, Macmillan, 272 Pages. $12.95 **cloth (ISBN 0** 7705 **1717 X).**

JACK HODGINS is an author whose mind has an innocent eye. You might say that it launders everything that comes into view. The world it sees is one we're familiar with — full of fears, ambitions, sicknesses, oppressions, obsessions, degradations, tragedies, and disasters — but we see them from that distance innocence keeps-must keep — if it is tc remain unadulterated by any head-on reactions to the evils around us.

Joseph Bourne, for instance; he is another of Hodgins's rain-forest giants — a facet of that consciousness that makes his books about Vancouver Island a delight to read. Early in the novel, while we are being introduced tc Port Annie where the story is set, Joseph Bourne cackles, chuckles, slaps his thigh and thinks:

> How many fools in the town ever suspected what was hidden in the air they breathed? Dregs, dregs, they'd scooped themselves up off the bottom of other places and coming here had thought they'd returned to life. Ex-convicts, failed husbands. misfits, broken-down whores, terrified perverts; he laughed at them all. They all had the habit of checking over their shoulders. they all hid in the cupped safety of that curved mountain. they were all doomed as he was. Doomed and scared.

There is no sting in this talk; there are no echoes of Zola, Dreiser, or even Dickens. The information Hodgins gathers from his universe is different absolutely from the kind gleaned by those old masters. We are not far into *The **Resurrection** of **Joesph Bourne*** before we begin tc understand that Bourne's world *requires* artlessness and naiveté if it is to be created at all. because it is a world that is fey and magic. where "hoping is not considered a crime." and people dc what they must to support that wishful picturing of life that belongs tc an only-slightly-beleagured innocent eye.

Joseph Bourne — like Donal Kineally in Hodgins's *The **Invention of** The World* — lives beyond ordinary life. We learn that he has came tc Port Annie on the north-west coast of Vancouver Island to escape fmm himself, hib past, his name, his talent as a poet and as a healer. Be lives in a shack on The Flats among some refugees hum the 1960s, and he survives by doing an interview show on the town's tiny radio station. He is, we are told, bitter, a recluse, a person everyone in town thinks of as ugly, senile, "a creep." He dresses in rags and wears a plastic cape against the drizzling rain that never stops in that western outport.

But even here he is pursued by his fate. A tidal wave has broken over the town just before the story begins, and a Peruvian freighter is swept in on it. A passenger who comes ashore is the exquisite Raimey, from Jamaica, whose walk is so provocative that adult males faint at the sight of it. The Peruvian freighter leaves. evidently unharmed by its adventure, but Raimey stays on. Bourne must meet her on his interview show. She has been sent by his great love and larger-than-life Jamaican wife, and as they talk he realizes this. He chokes, faints, dies. But back at his shack on The Flats, he is resurrected by Raimey. His past is returned tc him. The town doesn't know what tc make of it.

Meanwhile, other plots are thickening,

Jack Hodgins

other information is dispensed. Angela Turner comes to find the wave has deposited a Peruvian sailor quite literally in her bed. It is the happiest moment of her life, and she indulges it to the point of pregnancy. Larry Bowman, the librarian, is made mad by the lowly Raimey and pursues her. This turns cut. however, tc be only a growth experience, because in the end he is mated tc Angela. Mayor Weins is desperate for fame and fortune for Port Annie and will ky any scheme tc bring in tourists and their dollars, including courting real estate developers and importing the world's largest cactus from Arizona — which swells up under Port Annie's constant rain and dies.

Jenny Chambers, the ex-stripper, who has been living with Slim Potts (thus they are called the Chamber-Pats) decides to stage her own wedding. Mr. Manku, the" East Indian gentleman, learns how to float face down in the recreation centre pool in order tc underline his newly acquired Canadian citizenship, and Preserved Crabbe, from The Flats, runs off after another man's wife for no apparent reason anyone can see. And over in the beer parlour, called the Kick-and-Kill, Christie. a native Indian. tells bald-headed Peter about the birth of Fat Annie Fartenburg, who founded the town and now lives invisible and enormous in a mom above the Kick-and-Kill: a whale was stranded on the beach and over night turned into Fat Annie. who tied some sticks together and breathed life into them, thus creating her husband, Deiter Fartenburg (who says the white man can't have myths too?).

There is no edge tc any of tbii lovely nonsense. It is true that there is a knowing voice that breaks through occasionally. which is nothing if not editorial, and which forces us to think the author is intruding tc keep chaos from taking over. Hyperbole, in fact, is Jack Hodgins's vehicle, and it is a dangerous technique. because if it doesn't have its own controls built into it, it often becomes a faulty substitute for real imagination. Sadly. the controls are not always there, and we too often have to witness tbe author leaping in tc settle things down. The result is that there is a lack of good

old-fashioned motivation and a subsequent dearth of consequences to many of the events that are chronicled. Occurrences tend to be related and don't often happen to people who are really *engagé*.

The substitution of the tall tale for human interaction causes people's human concerns to be kept et a distance. and with a cast of characters numbering at least 25, the reader is faced with the kind of omniscient story-telling that leaps from mind to mind in order to keep everyone alive and on stage. There is. in the end, a sense that the characters each possess a number of pieces of the jigsaw. and come forward with them when they are needed, rather than when their personal stories might demand it. What we are left with, then, is the big picture, one that is. like Bourne and Fat Annie, not quite life-like.

But Hodgins is not simply a mythmaker or a beerhall tall-tale teller (although he is, God knows, both thesethings-and should the birthrate decline to the point where he can no longer teach high school, he could find employment in any Vancouver Island pub as a professional liar who will take on all comers, as wrestlers once did at county fairs). He is also a fabler who cannot resist his people. no matter how much myth he wants to make or how much hope and sentimental philosophy he wants to voice. The story of Mr. Manku's learning to float goes to the heart of one of the concerns of the book: belonging. And stripper Jenny Chambers's obsession with becoming acceptable nearly steals the book.

In the end, we must say that ibis is the author's book rather thee the characters'. After all the stories are told, after flood and death and resurrection, after war and an epic poem, after miracles, after Bourne is gone to become again a media event and Annie has shrivelled from myth to *modicum*, after *the* mountain has collapsed and the hippies on The Flats have fed the dispossessed townfolk, and after the townfolk have failed to understand Bourne's miracles, Larry Bowman. the librarian, muses:

> Did our cave-dwelling grandparents fight this herd to resist standing upright? . . Or hate the man who did it first end showed them how it was done? Did they panic when heir began to thin on their shoulders; did they fight the beginnings of speech? Or was it possible that crouched in their dark caves they would he disappointed to see how we still object to whatever would take us higher?

The innocent eye is taken over for a moment by the knowing voice beginning to struggle toward some answers that will include Fat Annie, Boume, Jenny, Angela. the Mayor; the real estate developer, Preserved Crabbe, and the disaster-wracked town itself. Nothing definitive occurs. The novel's not that big or that efficient, but it's a good book, the kind that has energy and spirit and the essence of that life yearned for in everything Jack Hodgins writes. □

To be, and not to be

Hamlet's Twin. by Hubert Aquin, translated from the French by Sheila Fischman, McClelland & Stewart, 208 pages, $12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 0800 7).

By WAYNE GRADY

HUBERT AQUIN shot himself on March IS. 1977. on the grounds of the Villa Maria convent in Montreal, where his first wife had once been a student. His suicide, the successful culmination of years of preparations, rehearsals, false alarms, was a kind of triumph; the perfect synthesis of innocent love and violent death. of romanticism and nihilism, that was the core of hi four novels, hi political convictions, and his stance against the world. Intellectually, Aquin refuted Camus' refutation of suicide, end looked beck to Kierkegaard's meticulous delineation of despair. *Neige noir, Aquin's last book (published in* 1974. now translated as *Hamlet's* Twin by Sheila Fischman), begins with a quotation hum Kierkegaard: "I must now both be and not be," the perfect synthesis of Hamlet's

soliloquized dilemma and the core of Aquin's novel. The Kierkegaard quotation is. inexplicably. omitted from the translation.

Hamlet's Twin is a novel. but it is written in the form of a screenplay (Aquin was a producer for both Radio-Canada and the National Film Board in Montreal).: There are thus three levels of narrative: dialogue. stage directions. and the director's parenthetical notes. It is the "discontinuity" between these three levels that gives the novel its peculiar tension and structure. Aqoin warns us early that continuity. "a sequence without ellipses, leaps or jolts. without cots or lateral excursus," is false: "In fact. the course of life is chaotic and unpredictable." But we are also told that "discontinuity presupposes continuity." The novel is about opposites (hence its French title) that are the same (hence its English title).

Nicholas Vanesse, the protagonist who is also the antagonist. is a Montreal actor whose final role is that of Fortinbras in a CBC production of *Hamlet*. Fortinbras, it will be remembered, is the Prince of Norway, with Laertes one of the two other vengeful sons in the play. but the only one of the three who does not die (which makes him. according to Nicholas, "worse than a ghost"). As the successful pretender to the throne of Denmark. Fortinbras is also "a potential ally of Claudius murderer," and, presumably. of Hamlet's father's murderer. that is. of Claudius himself (one of the delights of *Hamlet* is its infinite variety).

In fact, Nicholas has found evidence in the Ur-Hamlet of Saxo Grammaticus that Fortinbras was actually Hamlet's twin brother Amlethe, who WY thought to have perished during a sea crossing. Of course, in real life there is no twin brother in Saxo, hot such literary fireworks are typical of Aquin's feverish intellectualism. The French title, *Neige noir*, is taken from one of the paradoxes of Anaxagoras (as Patricia Smart has noted elsewhere) and is echoed in Juvenal's *rara avis*, the black swan, which is also the title of a novel by Thomas Mann. At one point the producer's notes refer to the 85th poem of Catullus, which begins *Odi et amo* ("I hate and I love"), and so on.

After the play is taped Nicholas quits acting and takes his wife Sylvie on a belated honeymoon to Norway, Fortinbras' adopted homeland. The voyage both is and isn't symbolical: it is "a drifting nuptial ceremany" (page 26: "The plane trip represents the quest for the absolute": page 67: "... it is not the quest for the absolute"). but their arrival in Norway does throw time out of joint. They quarrel (the French word *contretemps* here is superb) before setting out on a chartered boat trip to Spitsbergen, inside the Arctic Circle, where the sun stays pot all day (and time. therefore, stops: like Fortinbras, time "is perennial. never 'killed"). That night Sylvie falls or jumps or is thrown into a crevasse and *is* killed. The film script gives all three scenes -not so that we may enjoy the luxury of choice. but because all three versions happen simultaneously and are equally true. Perfect synthesis.

Hamlet's Twin is not flawless. The characters are sometimes motivated thematically but not emotionally (does Sylvie dii because Nicholas' inability to love her demands it. or because she is Ophelia?). Sometimes they are not motivated at all (Michel Lewandowski, who is a bore and whose relationship to the cast I'll leave the reader to work out, sheds hardly a tear when he learns of Sylvie's triple death). And the final scene, which I suspect was meant to be disturbing. is merely perplexing. But these lapses. which would cripple a lesser novel. are quibbles when stacked up against Aquin's extraordinary energy and insight. Hamlet's *Twin* is unquestionably the master work of a brilliant, complex, and tortured mind, and our first and proper response to it is awe. Hubert Aqoin made his quietus in the shaded sanctuary of the Villa Maria -a nunnery-on the Ides of March. The rest is silence. □

Tunneling toward a national dream

by Stephen Scobie

Harsh and Lovely Lend: The Major Canadian Poets and the Making of a Canadian Tradition, by Tom Marshall. University of British Columbia Press, 184 pages, $18.95 cloth (ISBN 0 77480107 7).

IT'S EASY To define the Canadianness of Canadian literary critics: they're obsessed with trying to define the Canadianness of Canadian literature. And they're all in love with a theory.

Ever since Northrop Frye's remark about a garrison culture war elevated into The Garrison Culture Theory, we have had a series of critics trying to fit poems and novels onto the Procrustean bed of one scheme or another: Margaret Atwood's clever but reductive aphorisms on victims and survival; the suicidal metaphysics of Dennis Lee's savage fields: Robin Mathews' paranoid nationalism.

Tom Marshall's contribution to this continuing chimera is. by comparison. a modest and sensible one. His book's subtitle is careful to specify "a" Canadian tradition rather than "the" Canadian tradition. (There are of course those wiio would call this equivocation itself "typically Canadian.") He is far less dogmatic than either Atwood or Mathews. and more careful in the allowances he makes for other perspectives, alternative interpretations.

Nevertheless, Harsh *and Lovely Land*, for all its virtues, is at times an intensely annoying book. It is probably impossible to maintain throughout a complete volume the kind of careful balance indicated by the subtitle. But Marshall cannot entirely avoid phrases like "the Canadian mainstream" or "not crucial to our native development." with all the dire consequences they imply for authors unfortunate enough to be deemed beyond these particular pales. Writing of Michael Ondaatje's choice of "American historical-legendary protagonists." Marshall finds it necessary to remark: "It is. no doubt, of significance here that Ondaatje is not a native Canadian." But a few pages later, no "significance" is attached to native Canadian Gwendolyn MacEwen's choice of an Egyp tian "historical-legendary protagonist."

Marshall is reduced to extraordinary contortions when he tries to explain why Canadian poets shouldn't pay any attention to anybody except other Canadian poets. This may be potting it unfairly, but what other conclusion can we draw from his dismissal of all the "new sophistication and technical intelligence" the modemists derived from Found and Eliot es being merely "of some value.. of some use," or from hi judgement that to read Found in the 1920s, or Olson in the 1960s. was to be "colonized"? What weary old nonsense! Canadian writers do not exist in isolation: we share a language and a heritage with the writers of Britain and America. For a poet to attempt to ignore the advances and discoveries being made' by the best of his contemporaries is not in any sense a virtue: it is merely stupidity.

Marshall's critique of Black Mountain poets. hampered as it is by his realization that people like Daphne Marlatt are in fact "very striking" writers. eventually boils down to a complaint that Warren Tallman is too dogmatic in some of his critical statements, and that "American [that is. bed] individualism . becomes messianic proselytizing." If poetic movements were to be damned for the dogmatism of their manifestoes, then who should 'scape whipping? And if messianic proselytizing is "American." then what nationality are Robin Mathews and Irving Layton?

This kind of overt racism is all the mote annoying because it is so infrequent: for the

greatest part of the book, Marshall is much more sensible and perceptive. (He does, however. slip into an equally stereotyped and dangerous use of "male" nnd "female" in relation to types of thought and response that are apparently supposed to be typically one or the other.)

Harsh and Lowly Land sets out to trace certain patterns in Canadian poetry, as they have developed chronologically. Its form thus sits a little uneasily between that of a history and that of a thematic study. Marshall takes as his central theme the encounter with the vastness of the "harsh and lovely" Canadian landscape, and the necessary expansiveness, in time as well as in space. that it engenders: an openness of mind. an acceptance of Heraclitean flux. a multiple perspective of vision. The definitive examples of these tendencies are to be Found in the poetry of Al Purdy and Margaret Avison; controlling images are those of the mountaineer and the swimmer. and the acceptance of opposites in necessary balance summed up by Sheila Watson's "double hook." All this is indeed present in Canadian poetry, and Marshall writes about it well, though he is occasionally hampered by the fact that he can devote only a few pages to each poet. and so his generalizations have to be taken on faith rather tban demonstrated by extensive close reading of the poems.

(At this point it might be noted that the book is seriously deficient in references to the sources of the texts; a reader who wishes to check the original context of the quota is not even told which of a poet's publications the poem comes from, far less which page it's on. Harsh *and* Lovely *Land* may be directed as muck to the general reader as to the academic market, though at its price that seem* unlikely, but in a major publication From a university press, this kick of documentation is disgraceful.)

The general lines of Marshall's argument are persuasive. but at various points I find myself resisting it, mainly an the grounds that at best it is only *a* Canadian tradition. and so cannot adequately account for some very fine poets. In any such study, the emphasis must obviously be on the poets who fit the pattern, and even though Marshall expresses genuine admiration for the writers whom he neglects, he still neglects them. Thus. Duncan Campbell Scott is seen as "the but and most important" of the Confederation poets. on the grounds tbat "he goes further technically. emotionally, and intellectually towards an idiom that can embody the Canadian situation." Now, if this were true (which I don't For one moment accept), it might indeed make Scott the most "important" of the group; it would not necessarily make him the best. (That title, in my view, belongs securely to Lampman.) Similarly, as much as I admire the best work of Klein, Birney and Layton, I do not see why they are worthy of a chapter apiece while' Dorothy Livesay, whom I would hold to be a finer poet than any of them, must make do with three pages.

Or take the case of Phyllis Webb: Myshall comments. quite rightly. on the "immaculate clarity" and profundity of her bleak vision; he describes her poems as "both witty and passionate," and speaks of their "fine formal control"; he says of her "Naked Poems," again quite correctly, that they are "perhaps tbe most beautiful love poems to have been written in Canada . . and certainly the most successful 'minimal poems that have been produced." A major poet, you might well conclude. Yet all tbae quotes come from the single *paragraph* devoted to Webb at the end of a catch-all chapter absurdly entitled "Poets or a Certain Age." Marshall has no higher compliments to pay to Purdy or to Avison -yet Purdy and Avison are evoked, continually, as the standards by which the relevance of other Canadian writers is to be judged. Webb is never mentioned again.

There is something wrong, surely, with the method that can produce such an anomalous result. I don't think that the fault lies with Tom Marshall's critical capacities — in the all-too-rare readings of individual poems in depth, such as the fine account of Layton's "A Tall Man Executes a Jig." he demonstrates an alert and sympathetic intelligence — but rather with the whole project of trying to classify either "the" or "a" Canadian tradition. It's a Fool's game. It can only result in narrowness and distortion,

whether spectacularly, es in Lee or Mathews, or more subtly and even intelligently. as in Marshall. Canadian writing is too diverse to be contained by any thematic, formalistic. or nationalistic strait-jacket. Do we really have to go on worrying about this topic? Can we not just accept that Canadian literature is what is written in Canada; that Glassco is as much a part of it as Wiebe; that McCaffery is as "central" as Purdy?

At his best. Marshall himself accepts the limitations of his own Project. The book's final sentences read: "Both Canada and her poetry are multidimensional, as reality is. I like it that way." I like it that way too, and I wish that *Harsh and Lovely Land* had reflected such an approach more wholeheartedly than, alas, it does. □

Two steps forward, three steps back

by I. M. Owen

Reservoir Ravine. by Hugh Hood. Oberon Press, 238 pages, $17.50 cloth (ISBN 0 88730 297 0) and $1.95 paper (ISBN 0 887.50 298 9).

THIS IS Part Three of *The New Age,* Hugh *Hood's* projected cycle of 12 novels. The first, *The Swing in the Garden.* deals with the childhood of Melt Goderich, from 1930 to 1939. In the second, A New *Athens,* Goderich is in his 20s and 30s. Reservoir *Ravine* takes us back to the 1920s. before he was born. Thus. though the label Pert Three implies that the author intends il lo be read third, it seems more like a prologue. And it's the only one *of* the three published pelts that doesn't quite stand on its own as a novel. Which is all right, really, if you are prepared to commit yourself lo reading tbe entire work — a course I strongly recommend, with tbe caveat that it included a commitment to slay alive for another 21 years. (The grave's a fine end private nook. but none. I think. there reads a book.)

So far as there is a story it tells of the meeting. courtship, and marriage of Malt Goderich's parents, and their life together in an apartment on the top floor of a house on Summerhill Gardens in Toronto. until just before Matt's bii. It proceeds episodically; each episode, in Hood's instructive manner, tells us about an aspect of life in Toronto in the 1920s. The publisher's blurb says that "for anybody now in their forties, Reservoir *Ravine* will be full of memories." This is odd. since nobody now under the age *of* 50 was alive before Sept. 1929.

Perhaps that's why the instructive passages, interesting though they are. seem a little *too* instructive sometimes. don't always get transmuted into art, es the similar passages in *The Swing in the Garden* do. Besides the structural inconvenience of having a first-person narrator who wasn't born when the events he narrates look piece, there is the difficulty that the author himself was born only in 1928 and has no memory of those times either. The information is too evidently the product of careful research; tbe nostalgia is second-hand. This doesn't diminish lbe book's historical interest. It does, I think, help to account for a certain lack of novelistic quality.

In the first chapter we meet Malt's mother. Isabelle (Ishy) Archambault. at the age of 17. We learn the mote she has hitherto taken to walk from her house on Sackville Sheet to school et St. Joseph's Convent, and the different one she now uses to get to University College. We also learn a lot about women's fashions, starting with tbe advent of the bra; Hood effectively makes the point, without spelling it out, that this seemed almost es liberating then es its rejection seemed 40 years later. Two chapters on, Ishy gives herself a boyish bob, witb careful study of the fashion magazines, in order to smuggle herself into an all-male debate at Hart House, at which Lord Balfour is the guest speaker.

Hood doesn't hesitate to give speaking parts to real people. In the second chapter Andrew Goderich is being hired es a lecturer in ethics at University College by the eminent philosopher G.S. Brett. Thii must be the first time I've met in a work of fiction, under his real name, a person I knew in real life. An odd sensation.

Ishy works during the summers et the head office of a book, which gives us an opportunity to learn a good deal about tbe position of women in offices et the time. It also leads to a tine and unforgettable moment. The bank fails, for reasons that are scrupulously detailed, and its banknotes most be burned. Here is the climax of the scene:

> A kind of mad revel now ensued. Staid and distinguished ancient gentlemen seized heavy bricks of worthless money and heaved them through the doors, and a strange fire flared in the middle of conventional flames. The bills were of different colours depending on their denominations, a conventional arrangement of many currencies. The dyes used in the different-coloured bills were produced from a variety of chemicals, largely consisting of metallic salts, of sodium. caesium and magnesium salts, chiefly, and these burnt with striking, vivid, highly distinct colours, exotic poisonous-looking greens, lovely deep blues, a kind of heavenly cherry tone. I sometimes alarming spurts of magnesium white. And there came to be a dancing kaleidoscopic whirl of distinct colours, always changing yet basically the same five or six intense tones. moving in the burning gases.

That's Hood at ids best. Another tine moment is one that could have come from a personal memory, and I'm sore it did: a scene inside tbe icehouse of lhe Lake Simcoe Ice and Fuel Company just es tbe July son strikes down through the skylight:

> The entire icehouse filled with radiance and the blue-grey walls leaped tam colours. High up above in the loft, wails of rainbow seemed to lean over them; they were imprisoned in a diamond in tbc sun.

The chapters progress in sequence steadily through the 1920s, with two exceptions. *One,* the second-last chapter, takes place in 1979. Malt is walking in tbe reservoir park north of Summerhill Gardens, reflecting on the events of the book; he meets one of the main characters, and discusses those events with ha. This works well, and provides a needed bridge to the rest of the cycle. The other interruption, halfway through the book, is more puzzling. Hal Forbes, Ishy's unsuccessful suitor. soddenly becomes the narrator, and tells us about hi youth in Winnipeg and his experiences in the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919. I don't know why the author did this. No doubt he wanted to write about the Winnipeg General Strike. and wanting is usually a good reasbn for doing; but he seems to have pot it in the wrong hook.

The principal characters, Ishy and Andrew, are thoroughly engaging. Hood has the secret of presenting married love with a warmth, joy, and wit that make it altogether delightful. As indeed it is. no matter what they tell you.

Now that them are three books in the series. it's time to say something about the cover design of the paperback edition. When the first one came out it was possible to suppose that the omission of thd title from the spine was an unlucky accident that would be -ted in tbe first reprint. Now that I have three books lined up on the shelf, each saying nothing but "A NOVEL BY HUGH HOOD," it's clear that this is wilful perversity.

And that there are the pictures that appear on these covers and are repeated on the title pages. *The Swing in the Garden* is about tbe *1930s.* centred *on* a house built, the text clearly states, "at the tag-end of the twenties." Again, it might have been a mere slip that the cover picture was a drawing by Lawren Harris, done I should think about 1910, of a house in tbe style of the 1850s or 1860s. That tbe book happens to contain a passage denigrating tbe work of Lawren Harris adds a certain piquancy to the choice.

The picture on A New *Athens* is not totally inappropriate to a book that has much

to say about pioneer settlement: it's a picture of a stump fence. But it's a stiff, boring drawing by C.W. Jefferys, and I'd guess that he's not one of Hood's favourite artists either.

Reservoir Ravine has a description of a voyage from Toronto to Prescott, in 1925, on the S.S. *Toronto.* a comfortable and rather *ostentatious* five-decker with ample staterooms. The cover picture must be intended to refer to this: but it's a photograph of the *Wenonah, the tiny* two-decker day-cruiser that was the first steamer launched on the Muskoka Lakes (which are not mentioned in the book) — in 1866. As neither Hugh Hood nor his publisher could possibly make such an error, this too must be wilful perversity. But why? □

Toujours gaie, toujours emnuyeuse

Nights in the Underground, by Marie-Claire Blais, translated Fmm the French by Ray Ellenwood, Musson, 199 pages, $8.95 paper (ISBN 0 7737 1031 0).

By ALAN BROWN

SODOM AN" GOMORRAH, reduced to the dimensions of a colonial beer parlour, scarcely merit the visit of a revenging angel, let "lone a sympathetic semi-divinity such as the author of *Nights in the Underground.* In the books the Underground is a lesbian bar, christened by Marie-Claire Blais to stand in a symbolic way. one supposes, for the real or imagined clandestinity of the movement. Her novel's heroine, Geneviève Aurès, is a Quebec sculptress in and out of Montreal and Paris. I" Paris she has a straw-man lover, Jean, who keeps telling her that she likes women too much. The narrative tends to support his contention.

The coat-hanger quotation at the book's beginning is Fmm Vita Sackville-West:

> I believe that then the psychology of people like myself will be a matter of interest, and I believe it will be recognized that more people of my type do exist than under the present-day system of hypocrisy is commonly admitted. 1 am not saying that such personalities, and the connections which result from them. will not be deplored as they are now: but I do believe that their greater prevalence, and the spirit of candour which one hopes will spread with the progress of the world, will lead to their recognition. .

There is more than a much of propaganda in the quotation. and in the novel. The degree to which V. Sackville-West's prophecy has come true might not satisfy her entirely, but it tends to make the propaganda aspect of Nights in *the Underground* a little gratuitous. The interest of a book about this particular underground must, accordingly, lie not so much in the "psychology of people like myself' — which is astonishingly like anyone else's psychology — as in the quality of the characters depicted and the artistic value of depicting them at all.

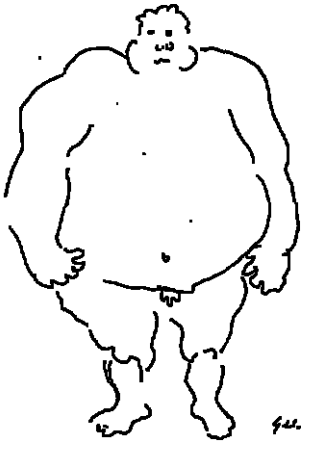
Unfortunately, a beer parlour For women is no more likely a setting For dazzling revelation than a beer parlour for machos or a gay bar For me" or a singles bar For swinging heteros. Bar chat is notoriously not as bright as alcohol, loneliness, and desire make it seem to the participants. The chatter in the Underground is so good-natured and dull that one wonders how someone as really bright as Blais could bother to be its chronicler.

The explanation may lie in our era of single-issue politics and ever-narrowing identities, within which the simple' consciousness of being human is felt to be increasingly inadequate, and fulfilment is sought through all kinds of self-subdivision and specialization.

The camaraderie of the women is touching; and their Falling in and out of love, their jealousies. their generosity, and — above all — their solidarity, are made poignant by the chronic impermanence of their relations with each other. One has the nagging suspicion that Blais would like to limit touching and poignant relationships to the special group she is dealing with here:

> Geneviève had been through the silence of more than one city in Europe after nights in ban We this. moving like a prowler, uneasy and defenseless, holding close to deserted walls, down quiet. frozen streets which would suddenly be invaded by the silhouette of a mm and his shadow. a man wandering aimlessly or aiming to find a woman for his sexual hunger.

It is not conducive to clarity, either in a work of art or in a gentle polemic like this book. to find the male written off as a predator, while his (supposed) essence, virility, is the quality most prized in women. But why should one demand clarity when confronted by the ancient practice of inventing reasons for feeling and doing what is, in any case, going to go on being, done and felt? We're not onto anything fresh and new in this book, nothing containing promise, but merely another limited version of the repetitive friction of promiscuity available to us all and chosen by many.



The major pitfall of advocacy in a" art form is that art loses out. A related effect is that irony and humour (sense of proportion, sense of the ridiculous) also tend to fall by the wayside.

Proust describes his homosexuals with mischief and malice, with the result that they take their place in his art without distortion, assuming no more importance than was theirs in the world his work reflected. The underground of Marie-Claire Blais has a good deal of somewhat desperate jollity in it. but is as devoid of humour as it is of a general context in the straight world, Her characters make passing references to their occupations "above ground" — they are doctors, sculptresses, working girls — but these jobs are relegated to a kind of off-stage unreality. The real world is in the lesbian bar and its nocturnal offshoots. Imagine a novel by Roust confied to the encounters among Morel, Charlus, Jupien, and the lii or Vinteuil's daughter and her friends, with the action limited to Jupien's sinister male brothel and the cast expanded only to include a Few sailors and soldiers preying on the more aristocratic clientele. . . .

Ray Ellenwood's translation reads well and solves most of its problems elegantly. □

Guilt-edged threads amid the grey

Sophie's Choice, by William Styron, Random House. 515 pages, $16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 39446109 6).

By DOUGLAS HILL

THIS IS William Styron's fifth novel since 1951, hi first in 12 years. With the exception of *The Long March* (1953), all his books have been "big"; their size alone has spoken, with visible self-consciousness, of an assumed profundity of theme and confidence of execution. Even without Styron's comments over the years, Few of which could be called self-effacing (they appear *chiefly in the* controversy over *The Confessions of Nat Turner.* but the present evidence indicates he's still at it). these books would have announced themselves as weighty. ambitious. significant. *Sophie's Choice* is as good. in its way. as Lie *Down in Darkness. It* shares — refines or elaborates, one might say — the weaknesses (and strengths) of that genuinely remarkable first novel, even if it does not advertise them so

assertively as *Nat Turner* or *Set This House on Fire*.

Styron's control of form in *Sophie's Choice* is nearly as impressive as the sweeping, rhythmic architecture of *Lie Down in Darkness*, though not quite so obtrusive or schematic. There is the same slowly moving present-time, the same deepening, circling. encroaching past. This would seem to be Styron's natural structure — the other two major works employ it — and here it works masterfully. As a narrative convention it's absolutely convincing.

The setting of the action is Brooklyn, the time is summer. 1947. The story is retrospective in two ways: the narrator is looking back from a distance of 30 years, at his youthful enthusiasm and confusion; each of the three main characters — Southern Protestant, New York Jew, Polish Catholic — has his own unique shaping history, personal and cultural, to bring forward.

It's as character studies. portraits in the full Jamesian sense. that the book works best; the delineations are complex and rich, vital sod moving. The role of the narrator (called only Stiogo) is central to this: he must be simultaneously observer, confessor. sod catalyst as the incandescent nod explosive relation between his new-found friends. Nathan Landau and Sophie Zawistowska. flares toward disaster.

Nathan is mad, a certified paranoid schizophrenic the whirlwind of whose insanest episodes is intensified by amphetamines. He is also fascinating to Stingo. who finds him "beguiling. generous, life-enhancing." a glamorous pmphet-hem rushing headlong at doom. To this Ahab Stingo can at best play Ishmael — can try to survive to tell the tale.

Sophie is more complicated — though no less damaged or capable of damage — because of the moments of mind-numbing troth in her past that she attempts to evade or obliterate, both in her own memory and in her revelations to Stingo. She is a survivor of Auschwitz; no embroidery upon that awesome fact is needed here, except to note that Styron has done his homework — in Weil, Arendt, Bettelheim, Steiner. and wherever else — thoroughly, and handled his psychology, most of the time. subtly

enough. Sophie's "choice," toward which the novel slowly moves, is almost literally heart-breaking.

Stingo is a young writer whose career is (and will be. the reader soon realizes) congruent with Styron's. He is an ex-marine, a former *manuscript* reader for McGraw-Hill, a displaced Virginian beginning lo write the homage to his roots that will be his *Lie Down in Darkness*. He exists, in 1947, in a state of perpetual celibate wonder, a turmoil of artistic, emotional, and sexual tumescence.

In fictional autobiography. or any other kind. the voice — the tone or distance — established bv the speaker is crucial. Styron is most successful when his irony is v&king. as with Stingo's evocation of his amatory fumblings or of his boyish optimism that dusts the streets of post-War Flatbush in a sunlit haze. He's less attractive when earnestness takes over, and a need to preach and explain makes Stiogo — then and now — sound priggish, makes the reader hear in Stingo's voice Styron's undistanced self-righteous urge to justify snd defend his own insights and accomplishments.

Styron has always written a rich, flowing, florid. cadenced prose, courtly and convoluted; he's a sort of Tidewater Faulkner, with his King James in one hand and his Browne and Burton in the other. In *Sophie's Choice*, when he's not working — often beautifully — with place or memory or emotion. his style tends to the simply verbose, to the sententious and pompous. Most of the book — exposition and argument primarily — is downright slack. enfeebled by superfluous words and phrases, by a ponderous dalliance in qualifications and explanation:

This is a novel with an enormous and potentially unmanageable theme, layers of guilt and anguish and hope wrapped about a core of racial annihilation and survival, of absolute evil and tenacious innocence. The narrative structure keeps these larger historical issues — principally theological and philosophical as Styron views them — in place. while at the same time it opens expansively and often lyrically into the human feelings that underlie them. Both Sophie and Stingo are caught in the trap that awaits the liberal sensibility: they must choose among what appear to them to be ambiguities. shades of grey. (It's black and white for Nathan, but then he's truly crazy. Some choice.)

Perhaps a liberal — like Stingo. like Styron — is the last person from whom to anticipate a concise or cogent analysis of ambiguity and its dilemmas. Paralyzed as he is by ambivalences in all directions. the liberal can simply. by his explanations piled upon equivocations piled upon excuses. reveal himself. Thus Stiogo. I can understand *Sophie's Choice* this way, as a double- or triple-barrelled case-study of the phenomenon *of* choice, of liberal Angst. Still I'd be happier if, good as so much of the book is. then were a bit less of it. □

IN BRIEF

A Bend In the River, by V. S. Naipaul, Collins (Knopf), 278 pages. 511.95 cloth (ISBN 0 394 50573 5). *Ex Africa semper aliquid novi. Or. to* modify the elder Pliny's 2,000-year-old truism, there is always some new way of looking at Africa. English literature by whites has produced no great African novel, certainly nothing to compare with the imperial glitter of *Kim or* the psychological power of A *Passage to India.* The best candidate, Hear: *of Darkness,* chokes on its own verbal foliage. The rest is trashy adventure (Haggard. Hemingway. Buchan), black comedy (Waugh, and now Updike), historical guilt and anguish (Paton, Lessing, Jacobson), or that curious by-product of CUSO and emerging conscience, the Canadian-identity novel set in Africa (Laurence, Godfrey, Thomas). Authentic black African literature is only just beginning to reach these parts. Which leaves us with the brown African perspective brought to bear by Naipaul in *A Bend in the River, namely how Africa looks* and feels today to tbe long-established Asian trading and business families (more like clans) caught in the crunch between the departing whites and the ascendant blacks.

With the superb *Guerrillas* (1975), set in his native Caribbean, Naipaul established himself as a pathologist of the often pathetic aspirations of the post-colonial Third

BEST BET BEST SELLERS FOR

Who but Monty Python's Flying Circus could conceive of such an irreverant and irrelevant tale as The Life of Brian (October 1979 — $8.95 pb.): the trials and tribulations of a poor slob whose life during the first century AD (and during the last century BC) has been brought ignobly to the screen. And now, The Life of Brian is a book, or really two books-in-one: the complete and illustrated script *and* a compendium of the usual python nonsense — letters from Elizabeth R.. quizzes. useless lists of pointless information and much, much more. Coincidentally, both the film and the book of Brian's life are called The Life of Brian.

No other art form is so pervasive. so universal or so significant in the development of Western society as music. It is to the glory of this art that Yehudi Menuhin and Curtis Davis have dedicated The Music of Man (September 1979 — $19.95 he.).

Designed to accompany and enhance the CBC television series of the same name, The Music of Man explores the role of music fmm its primitive i&innings to today's electronic wizardry. And, in the tradition of The *Ascent* of Man and Civilization. The Music of Man places its subject in a meaningful historical and social context. The book is profusely illustrated throughout, includes a general index and a comprehensive list of illustrations with captions.

The Music of Man is an eight-part television series hosted by Yehudi Menuhin and co-produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Ontario Educational Communications Authority and the Mississippi Authority for Educational Television. The series commences on October 24. 1979 on the CBC TV network in Canada.

The Art of Norval Morrisseau (October 1979 — $50.00 he.) is a superlative publication dedicated to the work and the life of Canada's foremost native Indian painter. Universally acknowledged as the principal artist of the Woodland Indian school. Norval Morrisseau is painting visions and images never recorded before. His visual language is central to the whole Woodland movement and his symbolism has become its trademark.

Norval Morrisseau is unsurpassed in his technique as well as his reputation. Since his debut in 1962, the work of Norval Monisseau has captured the imaginations of Indian artists. the art community and the public. His art has created an audience hungry for the dramatic images. bold designs, and striking colours that make a 'Morrisseau' instantly recognizable. This book explores the genius of Norval Morrisseau and the influences of the Ojibway legends and tradition on his work.

This is the story of Morrisseau as recorded by writer/broadcaster Lister Sinclair; as experienced by the artist's long-time agent and champion, Jack Pollock; and finally, in an autobiographical segment that is at once the most revealing and the most ambiguous, as seen by the artist himself. Above all, it is Morrisseau's art that makes this book a masterpiece. Almost 130 five-colour reproductions and numerous black-and-white illustrations. with extensive captions, present the development of the power and the genius of Norval Morrisseau.

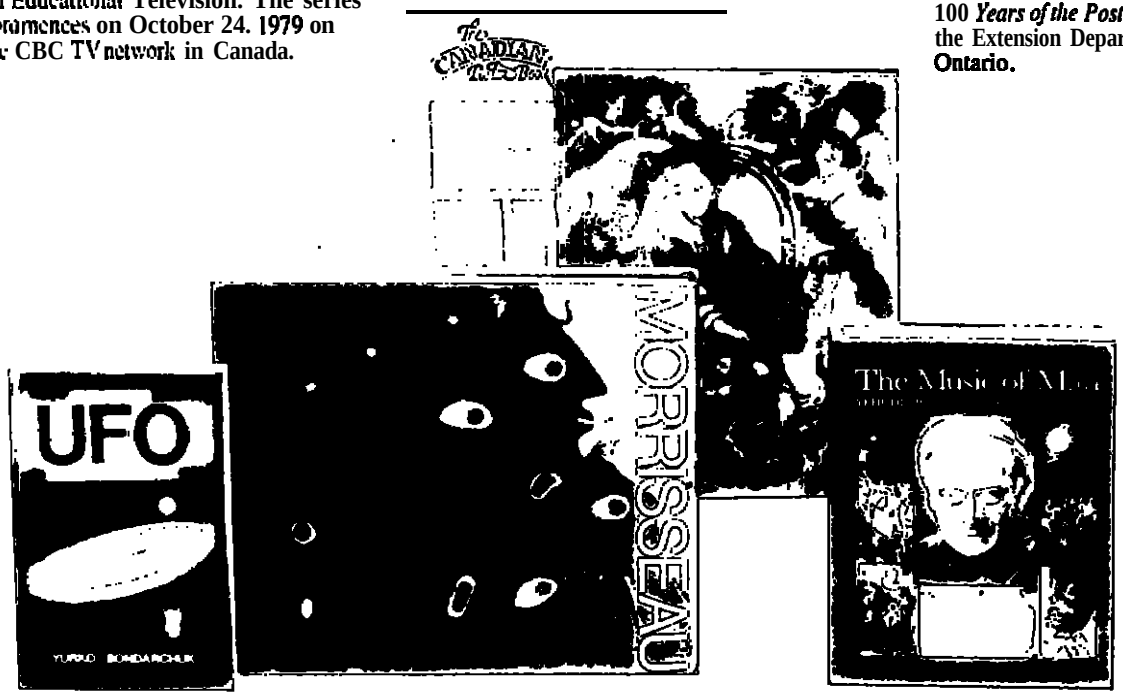
On March 11, 1978 two Montreal area residents sighted and photographed a dome-shaped, luminous object Roaring soundlessly above a frozen lake near the Baskatong Reservoir. The photographs were examined by a photomicroscope that revealed absolute authenticity with no signs of falsification or artificial manipulation.

This incident, and hundreds more. make up a substantial body of evidence that suggests irrefutably the existence of unidentified flying objects. In UFO: Sightings, Landings and Abductions — The Documented Evidence (October 1979 — S8.95 pb.), writer / broadcaster Yurko Bondarchuk draws together over sixty well-documented, factual and evidence-packed cases of sightings. Along with 100 photographs and drawings. UFO: Sightings, Landings and Abductions — The Documented Evidence is the most in-depth and comprehensive pmbe of the UFO phenomenon in Canada and the northern United States.

After long neglect. the poster's status as perhaps the most public, and hence popular. of the visual arts is finally being recognized, along with the discovery of its aesthetic merits. It is to the art of commercial, editorial and industrial posters in this country that The Canadian Poster Book: 100 Years of the Poster in Canada (September. 1979 — $14.95 pb. I $35.00 he.) is directed.

This large format book features over 300 illustrations, many in full colour and many full page. Robert Stacey's text examines the development. both thematically and chronologically. of the poster in Canada.

The author is a consultant to the touring exhibit 100 *Years of the Poster in Canada* organized by the Extension Department of the Art Gallery of Ontario.



METHUEN PUBLICATIONS

YOUR BOOK SHELF THIS FALL

Once upon a time in a faraway place ..." With these familiar words, the enchanting tale of The Twelve Dancing Princesses (October 1979 — 610.95) begins. This classic 17th century story has been re-created through the sensitive adaptation of author Janet Lunn and the sumptuous illustrations of award-winning artist Laszlo Gel. The story of a magical land, beautiful princesses and a sinister spell brings to tha young reader the delight, the wonder and the irresistible appeal of faraway places, long ego.

Janet Lunn is a reviewer. critic and editorial consultant for books for young readers. She is also author of *Double Spell*. Artist Laszlo Gel is the recipient of the I.O.D.E. Book Award for 1978 for his illustrations for *Why the Man in the Moon is Happy; My Name is not Odessa Yorker*; and *The Shirt of the Happy Man*.

The whimsical drawings and painting, the beautifully intricate designs and symbols created by J.R.R. Tolkien have long been favourites of Tolkien fans across tbe world. Although many have appeared in calenders. on cards and a few in illustrated volumes of his work, The Illustrations of J.R.R. Tolkien (October 1979 — $35.00) brings together the best of Tolkien's art work in a handsome. slip-cased volume that features 43 pages of full colour and numerous black-and-white illustrations. Accompanied by an introduction by tbe author / artist's son, Christopher. this bock will be a welcome addition to the ever-popular Tolkien collection.

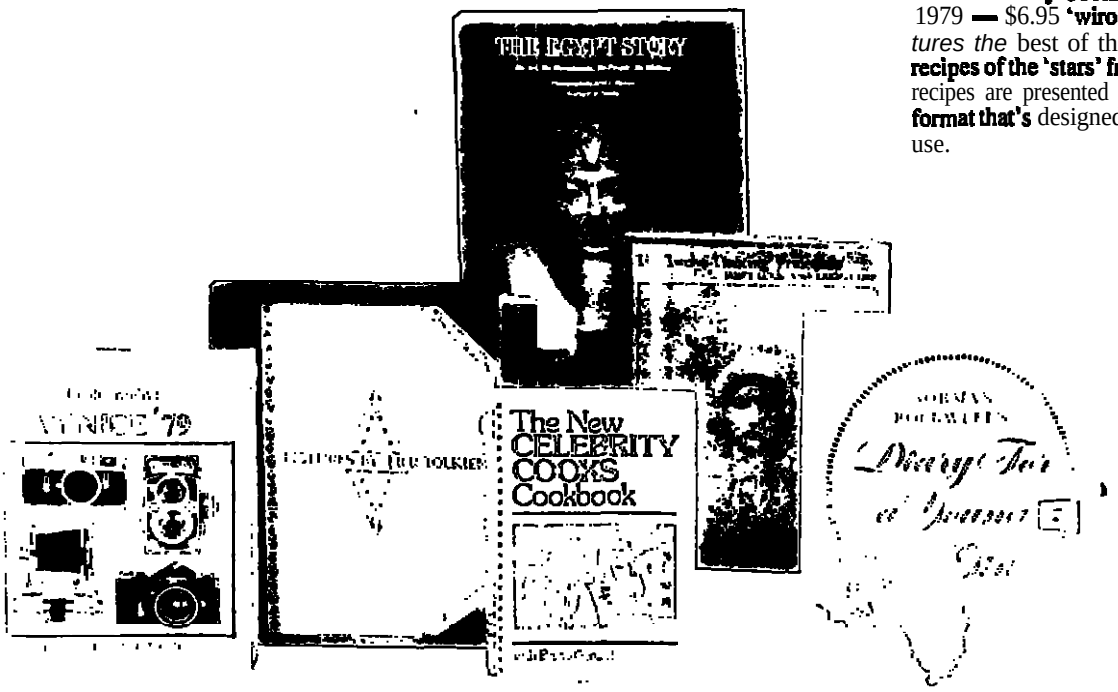
Just before Christmas 1978, Norman Rockwell's Diary for a Young Girl ($19.50 hc) arrived in the bookstores. An instant success, this exquisite and unique package combines a personal, undated diary with a separately bound volume of verse by George Mendoza lavishly illustrated with Rockwell paintings. The two parts are encased in a lockable portfolio that makes this the perfect gift for the young lady on anyone's gift list. And now, a companion volume, Norman Rockwell's Scrapbook For a Young Boy ($23.95 hc) (*not illustrated*) is available for Christmas '79. As well es a volume of Rockwell drawings and Mendoza verse chosen to convey the joys and trials of boyhood, the scrapbook contains a blank notebook for jotting down thoughts and recording events, a special pocket to store secret "treasure"; a space for photos plus lists of information cc things from rivers to reptiles that every boy should know. The portfolio comes with a carrying handle and is lockable.

Martin Gray is a survivor of public and private holocausts. A child of the Warsaw ghetto, he lost hi entire family to the gas chambers and battlefields of World Wet II. Not many years later, his wife sod four children perished in a forest fire. Gray faced *these* and other disasters without ever losing faith in the intrinsic goodness of life. His is an inspiring story of a man whose confidence carried hint through tragedy to hope and renewal. The sensitive narrative of author David Douglas Duncan is accompanied by dozens of evocative photographs that make The Fragile Miracle of Martin Gray (October 1979 — $8.95 hc) an exquisite testament to the indomitable spirit of mankind. (not *illustrated*)

One of the most comprehensive photographic portraits of ancient and contemporary Egypt ever published. The Egypt Story: Its Art, Its Monuments, Its People, Its History 650.00 hc) offers a fascinating panorama of a land and its people that has never been matched in scope, interpretive power or visual beauty. The text by P. Ii. Newby and the photographs of Fred 1. Maroon capture the full breadth of the Egyptian experience — from pyramids to skyscrapers, from pharaohs to fellaheen. The book features over 200 photographs, most in full colour.

In June 1979 the most prestigious and ambitious congress devoted to tbe art of tbe photographer will commence in Venice, Italy. Twenty-five major photographic exhibitions will be on display in museums and galleries throughout the city. Photography: Venice '79 (October 1979 — $32.95 hc), in a series of twenty-four fully illustrated essays by major writers, provides a panoramic view of the significant photographic trends. influences and issues of the 20th century. The book, edited by Daniela Palazzoli, features almost five hundred photographs which include works by Stieglitz, Weston, Arbus and others.

Since 1974, Bruno Gerussi has invited countless Canadian and international personalities into his television studio — not to showoffthe talents that made them famous, but tc explore their culinary artistry to tbe delight of thousands of viewers daily across Canada. The New Celebrity Cooks Cookbook (September 1979 — $6.95 'wiro' bound paperback) features the best of the personal and favourite recipes of the 'stars' from past shows. Over 150 recipes are presented in a beautiful. two-colour format that's designed for easy and convenient use.



METHUEN
PUBLICATIONS

World. He continues that analysis here in a novel that is both richer and more impersonal. The story is told through Salim, a young East African Muslim who wants to stay in Africa when independence forces a" Asian diaspora. While friends and relatives flee to Canada and Europe. Salim buys an abandoned trading business in an isolated town far up what is obviously the Congo. During the next few years, as he drifts along in the young nation's slow-moving currents of decay, corruption, and confusion, punctuated by rapids of rebellion, Salim is transformed from propertied *patron* to bankrupt prisoner. Naipaul, tends to overwork his symbols — the weed in the river. for example, like the grass tires in Guerrillas — but the subtle nuances by which he conveys the sinister shifts in real power are gripping. Although Africa rejects Salim in the end, Naipaul implies that once again something new-and raw and powerful — is coming out of Africa. And he does not judge it. □

— DOUGLAS MARSHALL

A running gag into the ice bucket

Me Bondy, You Cissie, by Donald Jack, Doubleday, **264 pages,** 59.95 cloth **(ISBN 0 385 14396 6).**

By **IAN** YOUNG

CANADA IS, as far as I know, the **only country** in which **an** august **panel** assembles itself each year in **solemn conclave** to **dispense an award for** the best **humorous** tome published in the previous 12 months. **Presumably** the present volume **will** be **one** of those **up** for **consideration** at the **next** assembly: the word **"misadventures"** in the promotional copy indicates that this **is** to be judged **as a** work of **humour.**

Few forms of art **are as** nation-bound **as humour, as** I **discovered a** long time ago when I made the mistake of giving **an** amusing Irish story to **a** Welsh **acquaintance. I am** a **Londoner** and **my** sense of **humour** runs **more to** *Private Eye*. **Monty** Python, **Geoffrey Willans,** and **Ronald Searle** than **to** Wayne and **Shuster or** Eric **Nicol.** At one time, I **even** assumed that Canadians merely affected to find **Canadian humour funny as a** patriotic gesture, good **for the national morale, much as the English pretend** that **Prince** Charles is **sexy** and witty. But one **day,** I found myself alone with **a** man who assured me with seeming sincerity **that** he found *King of* ***Kensington*** and *The* ***Trouble With Tracy*** **funny** and **delightful. No members** of the CRTC **or** the Mounted Police could have been listening in **on our conversation, and he had no reason to lie to** me. (I had played **him** my **favourite Peter** Sellers **record. He had trouble** understanding the words.)

So I must accept that the appreciation is **genuine,** and **I am** told that Donald Jack is **a** respected contributor **to** the national **mirth.** His **book about Toronto radio station** CFRB is apparently **full** of laughs and tbe **three earlier volumes in** his **(by** now) **tetralogy** about Bartholomew Bandy received polite reviews. He **may even,** for **all** I know. be **a** bit British; his, **novel** is **sprinkled** with **English bits of business and** his hem **is given to calling people "old bean." Nevertheless, his humour** seems to me of **a particularly Canadian** sort, and not my cup of tea.

Here is the plot, more or less: the hero, Bartholomew Bandy, a First World War air ace finds himself in Russia in 1919, where he is **briefly incarcerated** by the GPU (there was **no GPU in** 1919, it **was the Cheka until** 1922, but **this** is **humour, not history). He is** In off fmm being **shot** by **Trotsky, whose** cabbage **pastries** he **steals,** and ends **up** on **a** boat to America **where** he **meets** his **new** girlfriend, Cissie **Chaffington, the six-foot-**two daughter of **a newspaper** magnate. After **inadvertantlv delivering a** bomb **to** the **Ottawa parliamentary offices of Prime** Minister **Arthur Meighen,** Bandy **repairs** to Great Neck where he evolves a scheme to **start an airplane compagv. This eventually** leads him 6 **disaster when** he ruins **a film,** The ***Young*** King *Arthur.* **being produced by** his **girlfriend's** father. His **ex, from** Russia, **with whom he bud enjoyed a form of** Bolshevik **marriage** involving **a certificate** for the **sale** of some **fertilizer,** shows up unexpectedly. **complicating** his domestic **arrangements until Cissie** throws the **ex out (literally, onto** the **street).** The **book** at **this** point comes **to a halt, providing, as Bandy is still** alive. no guarantee that the **series** is over.

The story moves **along well** enough, but **is little more than a peg to hang the shreds of humour** on. No joke, however **clichéd or feeble,** is **ever** resisted. If a **girl** has been to finishing school, "it **had not** quite finished **her off" and when she dumps food all over a** ship's captain, he admits "she's **certainly finished off my uniform," and so on.**

Persons having food **or** drink chucked **over** them are **a customary source of amusement:** the novel opens with not one **but two** such **occurrences.** Still, this **sort** of **fun** is not so **bleak** as the **frequent vomitings.** lack seems to enjoy **ending his** chapters by **having** someone **throw** up **where** he shouldn't — into **a** champagne **bucket in one instance (are you laughing?) or over** someone's **shiny shoes** in **another. Some readers** will enjoy this.

There are **cameo** appearances by **a** number of **funny people** — Alexander **Woolcott,** Robert **Benchley,** Dorothy Parker, and W.C. Fields -but they do **or** say nothing remarkable. Why **are they** here?

Jack presumably wrote this book at his **leisure, yet even a** daily newspaper **funny**man like Gary **Lautens produces** a piece now and again with more point and **wit,'and more** of **a** chuckle, than this **rather** lengthy book. It is **true** the work is good-natured enough on the whole, and unlike many books by **professional purveyors** of fun, there is nothing that is **really** offensive, **nasty, mean-minded or cruel** (though the repeated **vomitings** are **a** bit **unpleasant). Nor,** however. is there much that is really amusing. **It** is the sort of book **one would** expect to find in **a** hospital **library,** and can quite safely be given to invalids.

Though **Jack** and Bandy ate not to **my** taste. I have no doubt **there** are those who **will** relish **them.** Having to review **a book** like this is **apt to make one feel superior and** redundant at the **same** time, **like Hilaire Belloc** when **he was** chairing **a certain** public debate. "These gentlemen," he told the audience, **"are here** to speak **to** you. **You** are **here** to listen. And I am here **to** sneer." □

While some will weep

You'll Hear Me Laughing, by R. L. Gordon, **Fitzhenry** and Whiteside, **220 pages, $10.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88902 423 5).**

BY JEFF MILLER

IF WHEN R. L. **Gordon** sits **down to write** he **strives for** communion with **an** ideal reader, **surely** he's thiing of **one** of his **former pupils** at (the dust-jacket says) Winnipeg's St. John's **Ravenscourt School** for Boys. Surely, **at least, no one beyond an immature 14-year-old** is likely to react with anything but **a wince** to such deformities of sensibility **as** the muddy **water-buffalo** simile.

Contrary, one assumes. to his expensive boarding-school **education,** debonair **young hero Tim Deverall** is **eavesdropping** on **a couple** *of* **uncouth delegates** to **a** convention of **falconists, when** he suddenly **feels** misty: **"It** would **be nice, he** reflected, **to be able to submerge** oneself in the warm, **uncritical, outgoing comradeship** of **Falconry** the way **a** water **buffalo** submerges itself **in warm** mud."

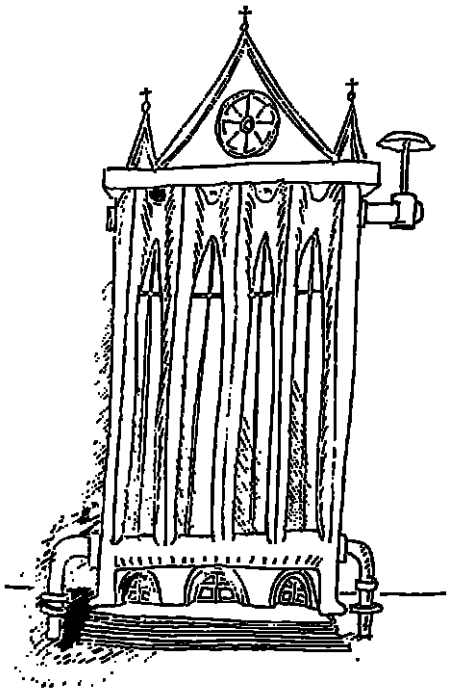
Whoa! Though this **comes hard** on the **frozen-cod** simile (in which Tim's chic, **"tall** and **graceful"** and otherwise **adjectivally blessed "*grande dame*" of a mother is "as *uncommunicative* as a frozen** cod which **looks** but does not speak"). it's still **pretty damned** unnerving.

Some 112 agonizing **pages** later. **two pages from** the book's merciful. sherry-**soaked** end, we find Tim again **reflecting** in his **imitable** fashion on his loneliness: **"Tim was** alone **now,** and until this **moment** he had never quite **realized** how **very** much his parents **had** meant **to him. It had been quoted** too often, but, like **Everest,** they **were** there." Of **course, thanks to** the **rose-plant** simile, **we already** know that in many ways "Tim's loneliness **was** his own

fault. Ever since he could remember. he had gone his separate way.. .. He cultivated effortless superiority the way a gardener cultivates a rose plant."

If you spend more than a couple of minutes puzzling "uncritical comradeship" or "effortless superiority," you're taking greater pains over this book than its author has. Everything about it is presumptuous. Elegant clothes are "creations," hair is "almost to" carefully styled." complexions are "healthy," journalists are as predictably shoddy as is the syntax describing them ("A small group of unshaven reporters and cameramen stood around in baggy pants and frayed jackets"). This, as Truman Capote says. is not writing; this. at best, is typing.

I suppose You'll *Hear Me Laughing* is here and there meant to be a comedy of manners. But like much of Gordon's work (with the possible exception of *The Jesus Roy.* which has its moments. and which, significantly, is about a troubled adolescent), the writing is flat and ingenuous,



particularly where it has pretensions to seriousness. There is a mawkishly mismanaged "theme" that love conquers all.

The book itself seems merely affected. It doesn't bite. it gems. There isn't one sincere or gritty observation — to the effect of ""thing but inadvertent self-parody. Eve" when Gordon means to leer a little, he rounds monastic: " 'Her dancing was only good enough to show off her perfect legs, her lovely firm breasts. her enticing bottom. and the toss of her fine head. She wasn't merely sexy; she was sex.' "

Hubba-hubba. One thinks not of flesh and blood and desire. but of silly drugstore or bus-depot pulp. passed feverishly around the dorm and read. by flashlight. under the bedclothes. □

On the road to nowhere

The Rope-Dancer, by Wilfrid Lemoine, translated from the French by David Lobdell. Oberon Press, 143 pages, $15.00 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 301 2) and $6.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 302 0).

By DAVID TOBY HOMEL

A TIGHT-ROPE walker keeps as in suspense because of the tension of it all: will he or won't he fall? But we're starved of this *engaging vicarious* danger in Lemoine's *Rope-Dancer*. This short tale from the 1960s offers us a self-obsessed hero for whom the most indulgent of readers would be at pains to drum up any feeling. Unfortunately, the author chooses to follow the hem's point of view to the letter. and he proves the old axiom that reading about boring people is boring.

The *Rope-Dancer* begins at a good clip as the hero, Sébastien, speeds his sports car along what's apparently the autoroute between Montreal and Quebec City. He meets a woman, Clo, at a roadside restaurant and a" affair of sorts begins. They don't get along, of course, though the reasons are "ever specified — Sébastien claims he feels judged and "nailed down" — and this gives rise to memories of his mother, Blanche, and his psychiatrist, Doctor Lanzman.

A black man, Johnny, comes on the scene with predictable results. Sébastien wants to kill Clo hut is unable to pull the trigger; she leaves him instead. He ends up hitting the road and hears a news bulletin "a the car radio: federal installations are being bombed in Quebec; revolt is in the air.

But the ending is inconclusive. It's hard to imagine him either joining the revolt or reuniting with Clo in the heat of the uprising. Instead. the familiar icon of the mad takes over. After a brush with collectivity in the form of a radio broadcast, Sébastien hits the gas pedal and heads toward the sunset.

The *Rope-Dancer gives* the feeling that the action is happening a" place. with the drifting. stateless characters that this lack of setting fosters. This approach produces books that are often tiresome to read and self-defeating. It's no secret by now that attempting to place the story totally in the character's mind, to the detriment of the world he finds himself in, leads to a dead end both fictionally end politically speaking.

There's a pettiness to the novel's tone, probably arising from the hero's insistent examinstio" of his own personality. Lemoine wants to record the "subconversation" under the words perhaps, but Sébastien's interior monologues are painful to read. Sébastien complains that Clo is

"judging" him and "taking him apart," but we have to take his word for it since few of her actions we documented.

It's common when reviewing translated corks to comment on the effort of the translator. Here. though, the question isn't his skill. which is solid enough. but rather. why translate in the first place? Simply because the book was available isn't reason enough. especially when there are quality Quebec novels waiting to be put into English. Not only is translating well the translator's duty, but he also has to make a judicious choice of what works will best speak for the literature he's representing. □

Non-beauty and the bistro

Pocketman, by Don Bell. Dorset, 180 pages, $10.95 cloth (ISBN 088893 004 6).

By DONALD JACK

THE POCKETMAN of Don Bell's celebration of downtown Montreal's racy, multi-race bistro crowd is a literate drifter, his pockets packed with *pensées*, and his mouth with insights and abuse. He is gently crazed:

> "Maybe I *should* have *had* myself committed:' Pocketman remarked.. . "Well, there's the psychiatric wing of London's Victoria Hospital. That would be nice because it's close to home. Of course. the Clarke Institute in Toronto has a tine reputation, and I've met a few people who spent time at the Allan Memorial in Montreal-they spoke very highly of it. I'd just have to shop around a bit."

Attired in grimy tweed and infested beard, walking, fakir-like, over the bed of nails in his laceless shoes. Pocketman drifts down Montreal streets. through railroad stations. longing for sex and attention, coming to fitful rest in favourite bats. greeted with crude appreciation by his admirers. painters. writers. strippers, mediums. mystics. who wouldn't want to be seen anywhere else with the roaring-drunk. lascivious, missing-dentured wreck, in case they were thought to be on the skids as well.

lie paws women, the closest he can get to them. but sidles dose enough to the others, through flashes of originality: "Pocketman at the bar, clutching the zinc railing, 'his eyes blazing. claiming with great sincerity and undying conviction that he can *out-transcendentalize* anybody in the Bistro. . ." He lives a half-starved life of drunken excess, freedom from organization. *mal mots*, occasionally justifying the legend his friends are striving to buildup for him. When asked if he is in his tight mind he replies. "I don't have a right mind."

"Oh, I'm sorry," somebody says to him, "I thought you were somebody else." "I [illegible]." Pocketman replies. For the most part, though, he is just being drunk and vulgar. Bet different.

I guess that Pocketman fascinates the author end the other characters in his book so much because. in a society stifled by its homogeneity, the bearded drifter is unwilling or unable to be fettered by conformity, social, ethical, or professional. It is one of the immaturities of our North American society that intense individualism does not seem able to flourish within that society, as it would if we were sufficiently confident of our own values, but has to express itself outside as a pariah. Nevertheless. we feel grateful for the Pocketmen of the age, for reminding us that we add up to something more than a social security number.

Much of the joy of good reading is derived from the skill with which an author joins up his various sequences. Don Bell dodges this difficult art by writing the book as a series of anecdotes. Many of them are fun to read. especially the story of how Pocketman lands up in the drunk tank. and while making his telephone call (to the bistro rather than to a lawyer) he discovers that he does not know which jail he is in. He keeps turning away fmm the telephone to holler to the guards and other inmates, " 'Does anyone here know what jail we're in?' Silence . . 'This is getting me mad.' Pocketman told us. 'They lock you up, but they don't tell you where they've locked you up in.' " □

Chills and fever

Icequake, by Crawford Kilian, Douglas & McIntyre, 229 pages, $1 1.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88894 23 1 1).

The Brood, by Richard Starks, Virgo Press, 1 9 1 pages, $2.25 paper (ISBN 0 920528 06 6).

By PHIL SURGUY

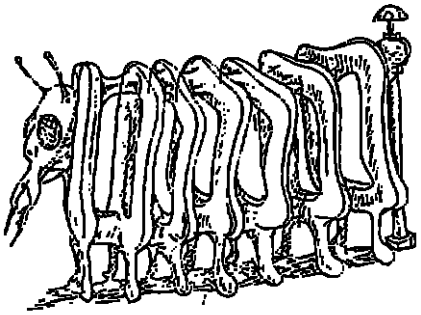
AT THE END OF Crawford Kilian's first novel. an entertaining science-fiction thriller celled *The Empire of Time.* the hero is all set to journey "downtime" to live near the South Pole in the lush days before primal Antarctica broke up end the continental plates began moseying toward their present positions. Kilian, who teaches English at Capilano College in North Vancouver. is also the author of a CBC-Radio adaptation of James De Mille's A *Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*, a utopian satire set et the South Pole. *Icequake*, *then*, is his third work in which the antarctic plays a wonderous if not magical role (his other works include two children's books and Co *and Do Some Great* Thing: *the 'Black Pioneers of British Columbia).*

Icequake is set in 1985. end largely concerns the population of a Commonwealth research station on the vast Ross Ice Shelf and how it reacts to a number of natural catastrophes. A series of massive earthquakes sends the antarctic glaciers — trillions of tons of ice -surging into the water out to sea, the ice begins to cool the oceans, raises the sea level by several metres — which destroys or severely damages every deep-sea port in the world — and starts to cool the atmosphere by reflecting back sunlight that is normally absorbed by water. The world economy is wrecked and a new ice age is inevitable and irreversible.

Kilian has imagined his global disaster thoroughly and authentically. Unfortunately, he hasn't imagined his people with nearly es much enthusiasm. With a few unremarkable exceptions. none of the awful things that happen here happen to anyone in particular. Nearly 30 people are introduced in the first two chapters or so, but none of them ever comes to life as a complete character. In fact, at times the novel resembles a Donald Barthelme story, as various voices attached to vaguely familiar names like Colin and Max end Penny and Herm and Hugh and Howie discuss the end of the world. With *The Empire of Time*, Kilian proved that he is more than capable of meshing interesting people end an interesting plot. In writing *Icequake*, though, it's obvious that the science and logistics involved were more important to him than the people, and the result isn't very satisfying. A sequel. celled *Aftershock*, *is* reportedly in the works.

The Brood is a so-called novelization of a recent horror flick by Toronto writer-director David Cronenberg. The horror is provided by a Psychologist whose efforts to help a woman realize her deepest hostilities and hatreds are so successful that she begins giving birth to evil little children-like manifestations of her rottenest feelings. Then. whenever she thinks nasty thoughts about someone. the little devils track that person down and viciously kill him other.

Novelization is something of a misnomer. *The Brood* came *to a* theatre near me and then went before I could compare the printed version with the one on the screen. but it's a safe guess that the book is simply a quick prose treatment of the screenplay. So quick, in fact, that it can be read in less than in an hour. though it's herd to imagine why anyone would want to bother. There is really nothing here. Perhaps the main reason for publishing books of this sort is that they are a dandy way for producers to get miniature movie posters onto the nation's news-stands. □



Peripheral to the cores

If Canada is a fractured and layered society on the fringe of world culture, how can education produce a national identity? Perhaps by recalling Ryerson's dictum: borrow and Canadianiie

by Lorne R. Hill

Fragile Federation: Social Change in Canada, by L.R. **Marsden and** E.B. **Harvey,** McGraw-Hill **Ryerson,** 242 pages. 57.95 **paper (ISBN** 0 07 OS2325 1).

Sociological Theories of **Education,** by Raymond Murphy. McGraw-Hill **Ryerson, 232 pages,** $6.95 paper **(ISBN** 0 07 **082364 4).**

Egerton Ryerson and His Times, edited by Neil McDonald and **Alf** Cbaiton, **Macmillan,** 320 Pages. $14.95 cloth **(ISBN 0** 7705 1706 **4) and** $8.95 **paper (ISBN 0** 7705 **1707 2).**

They Came from Abroad: The **Immigrant as Teacher** in **Ontario,** by G.W. **Bancroft,** Guidance **Centre,** University of Toronto. **114** pages, $5.95 paper GSBN 0 77130067 **0).**

A Canadian is a DP with seniority.
— Dave Broadfoot

CANADIANS HAVE NO vision of greatness, no identifiable national culture. no nation-building policy. no strong central government, no control over our destiny, and apparently no choice in the foreseeable future. Americans dominate our economy; multiculturalism remains a political necessity: regional outlooks abound. while provincial rights. French-English relations, and labour disputes make daily headlines. Canada is a fractured, layered, and exposed society, an outpost of Europe, a residue of empires. a frontier of the highly developed nations. a vulnerable and immature society. As L.R. Marsden and E.B. Harvey note:

> We have asserted over and over again ... that the fundamental nature of social change in Canada, in our past, in our present, and, indeed, in our future, must be understood in terms of our relationship, first as a peripheral country to the core capitalist nations of the world systems.

Canada is tied to foreign countries by historic and contemporary links. It is difficult to resolve our conflicts since we constantly trip over the wires that bind us to big decisions made elsewhere. How can we have a nation-building policy when our economy is integrated into outside economies? And how can we develop a national identity when Canada is beset by three "dynamic forces of social change" — class, religion. sod culture? The country is so regionally divided that our leaders must spend an immense amount of energy just to create a consensus by which to govern. Ethnically. Canada is still run by the Anglo upper class while the rest practise multiculturalism and quarrel over language rights as a defence for ethnicity. Consequently, the creation of a national culture is a distant possibility.

Unlike the U.S., Canada's conflicts are entrenched in our bedrock institutions — the federal constitution. the educational systems, languages, and symbols — the very institutions used by Americans to destroy social differences. So education is not an independent source that can lead to permanent or lasting change. As long as Canada is an exposed. fractured, and layered society, education can not produce a national identity. So, at any rate, runs the argument.

It is a little surprising, then, that Raymond Murphy offers the beginnings of a Canadian theory of education. He argues that Canadian sociologists of education use and adapt ideas produced in tbe so-called core countries but as yet have not produced any "distinctive Canadian versions of the [foreign] theoretical perspectives." He contends that an examination of our part con help to explain, among other things. how the American economic boom of the 1960s challenged élitism in Canadian education.

In the old élite system, with its early streaming, the slow student was provided with much more realistic goals and mold feel some satisfaction in achievement. But in the American process — based on the democratic notion of open competition — the slow student competes with the bright for the big prizes. The dull kid can't win. He becomes unhappy. and is branded a loser.

Education still acts as a social-sorting device. but in more subtle ways. The student's socio-economic background is crucial, so the schools most become more attuned to the cultural baggage their students bring with them. This implies that a national curriculum might be a serious disadvantage for many Canadian students.

So Canadians borrowed educational ideas hum a core country but not to our unblemished advantage. How should we react to this? Egerton Ryerson, the architect of Ontario's school system (which was used as a model by the Western provinces) was not adverse to borrowing tiom foreign sources. An essay by Neil McDonald in this tine collection of essays on the history of education points out that Ryerson advocated selecting the best European practices and Canadianizing them. hoping to avoid the poisons of American republicanism.

In 1876, at a world-wide educational festival in Philadelphia. Ontario's display took all the prizes. and did so again in Paris, London. and Chicago. Ryerson's system was hailed as "ideal" "almost perfect," and "brilliant." "Ontario [had] tbe best schools in the world." The education minister was overcome with smugness: "I think we have gone about as far as we need to go. All we need to do is to maintain the efficiency of the teaching profession." So Ontario stopped borrowing. Its educational system closed itself off and did not adjust to the new, complex. urban-induskial society

that was inheriting the world. Chauvinism led to stagnation. But Ryerson had been right in this respect: we must borrow and Canadianize.

What does "Canadianize" mean in education? An American educator recently claimed there was a universal pedagogical culture. Language aside. teachers are interchangeable. They all use recitation as the basic method — that is, either the teacher tells the class or the teacher asks the class questions so the class will tell the teacher. Core countries seem to use both types of recitation, but developing countries usually stress the teacher-telling type with minimal elaboration. This presents problems lo some immigrant teachers.

G.W. Bancroft has found that immigrant teachers have varying degrees of difficulty adjusting to the Ontario education system. Those from non-core countries have problems with language, prejudice, standards, and methods. Worse, they now find themselves trying to transmit an almost alien "Canadian" culture. Non-core teachers are strongly represented in maths and sciences, but weakly in the social sciences and humanities. As administrators, non-core teachers are virtually non-existent. So education in Ontario is replenished in part from without. And lo Canadianize seems lo mean, at least in part. the learning of both new content and a new technique, a questioning technique that is tied to Western culture. But if there is a uniquely Canadian teaching method it still lurks in the undergrowth.

Canada imports educational theories. systems, ideas, teachers, and methods. Ryerson, a founding father of education in Canada, adapted European institutions to perfect a provincial system. The provinces import teachers and the teachers borrow methods from a great international pool. But education cannot produce any basic change in the structure of Canada. because education only reflects the deeper forces that divide the nation. and even these forces have foreign roots. To which national élite can we look for an East-West, sea-to-sea bedrock upon which lo build an explanation of who we are? At what cost do we reject this 19th-century idea and merely celebrate out differences? We don't even have a national university.

Briefly noted:

CANADIAN HISTORY

Henry Pellatt, 'by David Flint, Fitzhenry & Whilesida, 64 pgoes. $3.00. Intermediate-Senior. This obese boor made and lost a fortune as a business buccaneer in Toronto at the turn of the century. Everything he did was in bad taste (Casa Loma) and nothing he did was important.

Kale Aitken, by Jean Cochrane, Fitzhenry & Whiteside. 64 pages, 53.00. Intermediate-Senior. "The World's Busiest Woman." "The Chatter Queen of Canada," radio's answer to the Ladies' *Home Journal*, "Mrs. A." enjoyed greater popularity than any woman in Canada during the 1940s and '50s. Her stories, news, and recipes brought the big world to the kitchens of house-bound women. Jean Cochrane's biography illustrates how during the dismal conditions of the Depression and Second World War spirits could be raised by what critics fell was a daily dose of drivel. Kate had the last word: "I'd rather be a Pollyanna than a cynic."

Canadian History Before Confederation: Essays and Interpretations, edited by J. M. Bumsted; and Canadian History Since Confederation: Essays and Interpretations, edited by Bruce Hodgins and Robert Page, Second Edition, Irwin-Dorsey, 512.00 each. Senior-University.

Riel's People: How the Métis Lived, by Maria Campbell; and People of The Trail: How The Northern Forest Indians Lived, by Robin and Jillian Ridington, in How They Lived in Canada Series, Douglas & McIntyre, 46 pages, $6.95 each. In *Riel's People* the author has drawn on her own background to tell the story of the metis. A large book with large print and excellent visuals, tbii is the best short account for junior-intermediate students. *People of the Trail* describes the culture of the nomadic forest Indians. "the first and the last native North-Americans to meet (white) people." The last chapter raises the question of this people's survival in the white world of non-renewable resources. The series has became quite successful internationally as an introduction to the lifestyles of North America's native peoples.

The Structure of Canadian History, by J.L. Finlay and D.N. Sprague, Prentice-Hall, 361 pages, *$9.95.* Senior-University. A well-written interpretation from Manitoba whose boldly stated points of view on every major historical issue are quite useful in stimulating class discussions.

The Confederation Generation, by Mary Fallis Jones, school edition, Royal Ontario Museum, 55.35. The ROM's education department has been reorganized in recent years to the immense benefit of millions of school visitors. This latest contribution, pre-tested by high-school students, is , collection of visuals with captions and documents, bound as a book and with a 16-page addendum of student activities.

The Canadian Scrapbook Series, edited by D.M. Santor, Prentice-Hall, in six volumes plus teachers' guides, 48 pages each, $41.00 per set of 10 of each title. Intermediate Level. Excellent collages surveying Canada's history from Confederation to the Second World War, with the emphasis on socio-economic developments. Although the volumes appear to be for slower students because of the visual stimulation and large topical format, caution is advised. Students must work with *primary* sources, and the questioning hierarchy is quite sophisticated. The teacher's dilemma is whether to buy a text or this series.

CANADIAN STUDIES

Canada Today, by D.J. McDevitt, A.L. Scully, and C.F. Smith. Prentice-Hall, 502 pages, 910.15 "et. Teacher's Guide $6.00. Intermediate. History texts have changed over the last 20 years. They used to be wholly factual with no teacher's guide included. Today some contain largely fictional accounts end appear to be a collection of thick lesson plans. One might jump to the conclusion that modem texts have little regard for historical accuracy and the intelligence of the teacher. That would be a misreading. Such texts have the student in mind and will bend any way in the service of his learning. *Canada Today* is such a book. cutely designed but overly long. Best used as , teacher's guide with suggestions for motivating discussion.

Last Hired, First Fired: Women and the Canadian Work Force, by Patricia Connelly, The Women's Press, 122 pages. A feminist Marxist tract that assumes that Marxism is scientific and that women are enslaved by male capitalists as an institutionalized inactive reserve army of labour. Check with Oscar Wilde — "The tragedy Of women is that they are condemned to be their mothers. Tbe tragedy of men is that we marry them" — and the writings of Nancy Friday.

Multiculturalism, Bilingualism and Canadian Institutions, edited by K.A. McLeod, Guidance Centre, University of Toronto, 125 pages. A collection of 15 papers parented at a conference for the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews in cooperation with the University of Manitoba.

Seeing Ourselves: Films for Canadian Studies, by J.E. Page. NFB, 210 pages. 53.95. This catalogue draws together 135 NFB and CBC films and divides them into 11 thematic groups, which are cross-referenced and further subdivided into , number of topics. All films are then listed in alphabetical order, with detailed synopses. Especially valuable are indications of the appropriate educational levels. Highly recommended.

CANADIAN LITERATURE

Journeys I, Journeys II, by Jim French; and Rites of Passage, by Doe Gutteridge in the Casebooks in Canadian Literature Series, McClelland & Stewart, 112 pages, S3.95 each. Intermediate-Senior. The central theme of these three texts is the maturation of the individual, the family, society. and race until students by the senior level can see these developments as universal rituals.

Childhood and Youth in Canadian Literature, edited by M.G. Hesse, Macmillan, 122 pages, 53.W. Tbe most recent addition to the Themes in Canadian Literature Series is a collection of poems and prose presenting a variety or perspectives on the imagination of youth and the rebelliousness of adolescence.

Yesterstories 1, 2, and 3, by Elma Schemenauer, Globe/Modern Curriculum Press, 128 pages each. Ghosts, a hermit, mystery ships. buried treasure, a mermaid in Lake Superior, and camels in the Cariboo — 24 stories from the Canadian past in fact and legend. Each story is followed by , review quiz. mitten assignments, motivating vocabulary, and role-playing exercises. Also useful in Canadian Studies programs.

Susan Super Sleuth, by William Ettridge, Potlatch/Macmillan, 52.95. Intermediate. After five years of appearing in the *Canadian Children's Annual,* Canada's foremost girl detective begin, ha own series with this collection of four new adventures.

EDUCATION

Teachers' Heritage: An Introduction to the Study of Education, by Andrew F. skinner. Guidance Centre, University of Toronto, 270 pages, $9.95. University. The fundamental issues in education remain the same today as in Aristotle's time. The uncertainty and confusion about what students should learn are as great as ever. So why should teachers inquire into what authorities have said about education? To gain a perspective on the current issues, a perspective that is of practical value in the classroom. Andrew Skinner surveys the problems and solutions, recommending that every teacher develop a philosophy Of education to give direction to hi, career.

Survival Manual For Nursing Students, by W.H. Pivar, W.B. Saunders. 180 pages, $7.15. Plan your career, work hard, stay off drugs, prepare for exams, keep solvent, and then find a job.

How To Give an Effective Seminar: *A* **Handbook for Students. and Professionals,** by Walter Watson, Luis Pardo, and Vladislav Tomovic, General, 158 pages, $5.95. Tbii helpful addition to the small literature on seminar techniques highlights the use of visual aids, seminar control methods, group interaction, and the handling of discussions. It is recommended for teachers, all university students and senior high-school classrooms. See especially Chapter 8.

Teachers Without Classrooms: A Career Planning Guide for Teachers Leaving the Profession, by J.T. Price and L. *M.* Cash, Guidance Centre, University of Toronto, 21 pages. "School boards are going to have to release experienced teachers with permanent teaching certificates. For this reason all teachers, and especially those

with low tenue, should be giving thought *now* to possible career alternatives." What lo loo!: for and how lo do il.

Graphics Simplified: How **to Plan** and **Prepare Effective Charts, Graphs, Illustrations, and Other Visual Aids,** by A.J. **MacGregor, University** of **Toronto Press, 64 pages,** S2.38. **For authors, lecturers, and teachers who use or should use visual aids. Ideas can** be **adapted** for **blackboard or overhead projectors.**

GOVERNMENT AND LAW

Government and You. by **Charles Kahn** end **Richard Howard, McClelland & Stewart, 144 pages,** $4.95. **Intermediate. A useful introduction to encourage and instruct the young to be active citizens. This** text **contains games, case studies, examples, and projects while avoiding arid historical descriptions.** Of special **interest are the sections on the civil service, government hearings, and international agreements. It can be either a text or a support** book.

Canadian Family Law, M.C. **Kronby, General, 206 pages, $5.95. For teachers** of **Family** Studier. **Man in Society,** or **Law** courses.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Beyond **Belief: Books** 1 **and 2,** by Derby. **Johnson, McKellar, and Patterson, Clarke** Irwin. 48 **pages** each.

Hiyou Tillicum, Hiyou Tumtum, Hiyou Wawwaw and Hiyou Muckamuck, edited by **M. Zola and F.** Brown, **Commcept. 250 pages each, $7.65 each.** The **first** four volume8 **in a Canadian language arts program are anthologies** for the **junior-intermediate** level.

Kids In the Kitchen: 16 Yummy Metric Recipes for Children, by Shannon Ferrier, James Lorimer, 32 **pages, $4.95. Take a shot** of **health** food, **add a dash** of **ethnic flavour** end **a pinch** of **grandma's pantry, stir** well. **and blend into family studies or multicultural courses. Ideally serves** smell **groups** of **little** people who **are learning to** reed by following **instructions.**

Marco and **Michela;** About **Nellie and Me; Cedric and the North End Kids; The** Golden **Hawks; and What's a Friend,** general editor Peter **Carver, James Lorimer, 64 pages, $2.50 each. Junior. This** Where We Live **Series has been** heralded es **the inner-city replacement** for **the** old **suburban** Dick **and Jane fantasy.** These **are real kids** with **grimy faces and** faded **bluejeans who fool around, get into trouble,** light, **and live with broken homes, racism, and** poverty. They tell **it** like **it** is. for **some** of us.

Writing Clear English: A Manual **for Cdlege Students,** by **Price,** Noble, **Coleman, and Mallinson, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, $4.95, 150 pages.**

Spelling Across the **Curriculum: A Student Handbook,** by R.J. **Ireland, Macmillan, 172 pages,** S3.95. **Secondary. Contains exercises on difficult** words **in many** subjects.

New **Paperbacks** for Young **Adults:** A **Thematic Guide,** by Fey **Blostein, Ontario Library Association,** 128 **pages, $1.95. Arranged by the themes of *Right* Now. Nor *Right Now,* and *Now and Then* and then** by topic **and** ego level. Catchy **annotations.**

The Uses of **Language,** by **H.P. Guth, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, First Canadian Edition, 526 pages, $13.53. Secondary.**

McGraw-Hill Handbook of **English,** by **Harry Shaw, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Third Canadian Edition, 551 pages.**

Harbrace College Handbook, by **J.C. Hodges and** M.B. **Whitten, Longman, Canadian Edition, 480 pages, $8.50.**

Writings on **Canadian English: 1792-1975, An Annotated Bibliography,** by W.S. **Avis and** A.M. **Kinloch, Fitzhenry & Whiteside. Linguistics. The characteristics of the English Canadian language, with the 723 sources cited and described in this expanded version of a 1965 publication.**

English Skills: A Functional Approach, by **Joanne** Reid **and Marlene Lindstrom-Rogers, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 322 pages,** S7.95. A **non-traditional approach, stresslog meaning and relationships rather than formal grammar.**

FRENCH LANGUAGE ARTS

Vive Le Francais, byG.R. **McConnell,** R.G. **Collins and** R. **Porter, Addison-Wesley, 192 pages. The third level of this fine series** now is available. **See *Books in Canada* March,** 1979, **for details.**

Conversation et Methodologie de **la Conversation,** by **Suzanne Hecht** end **Eric** James. **Guidance Centre, University** of **Toronto, 18 pages,** $3.90. A **teacher's guide** lo **conversational French.**

GEOGRAPHY

Canada: **A Regional Analysis, by** D. **F. and** R. **G. Putnam,** Dem. Revised **Metric Edilion. 405 pages, $11.50. Senior.** Completely mired end **updated** lo **reflect the Canada** of **the 1970s.** A **new chapter allows for a national examination of current issues.**

Map Concepts and **Skills: General Series** No. **1-4 and Topographic** Map **Series** No.

I-14, by A. R. Grime. Clarke Irwin, 11-page pamphlets, $6.00 a set. Junior-Intermediate.

DRAMATIC ARTS

Dramatic Arts. by D.W. Booth and C. J. Lundy, Guidance Centre, University of Toronto. 52 pages, $1.75. A pamphlet in the Student. Subject. and Careers Series for young people requiring information about possible vocations.

Plays On A Comic Theme, edited by Cy Groves, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 137 pages, $5.59. Includes *Butterflies are Free, A Thousand Clowns,* and *Rinse the Blood Off My Toga.* With questions and activities.

ECONOMICS

Macroeconomics: Basic Concepts, **Questions and Answers** and **Microeconomics: Basic Concepts, Questions** and **Answers,** by B. J. James, Butterworths, 98 pages each. College-University.

Urban Transportation **Economics,** by M. W. Frankena, Butterworths, 142 pages. Initial volume in Urban Economics Series.

MISCELLANY

Family Violence: An **International** and Interdisciplinary Study, edited by 1. M. Eekelaar and S.N. Katz. Butterworths, 572 pager. University. There are some Canadian articles in this international collection that aims to expose and publicize the evils of beating up one's mate or children.

Issues In Canadian Business, by R. W. Sexty. Prentice-Hall. 430 pages. S16.95. College-University. An introductory text for business courses that deals with the Canadian business system, the human resources, marketing practices, the use of technology. financial institutions, and environmental concerns.

Good **Day Care: Fighting** For It, Getting It. **Keeping It,** edited by K. G. Boss. The Women's Press, 224 pages. Government cutbacks in education and social services make this an essential handbook for parents and educators interested in day-care. Two good bibliographies are included.

OTHER TEXTS RECEIVED

Basic Accounting, by D'Amico & Obenauer, Pitman
Canadian College Typing (Basic Skill Course & Career Course), by Uhelacker *et al*., Copp Clark Pitman.
The Canadian Landscape: Map and Air Photo Interpretation, by Blair & Simpson, Copp Clark Pitman.
Concepts and Challenges in Science (Vol. 1,2,3), by Alan Winkler *et al*., Macmillan.
Economic Analysis and Canadian Policy, by David Stager, Butterworth
Inquiries Into Biology: Continuity of Life, by Lang *et al*., Macmillan
Investigative Science Series, by J.G. Hand *et al*., Macmillan Includes. *Character Concepts, Forensic Services and Criminology, The Investigative Cycle - Chemistry, Physical Analysis - Issues, Skills and Techniques, Basic Management*
L'Italia Racconta, by Anthony Mollica and Angela Converti, Copp Clark Pitman
Macroeconomic Foundations: An Intermediate Text, by L. P. Sydor *et al*., Methuen.
Mathematics Alive 3, by John Carter *et al*., Copp Clark
Mathematical Pursuits Four, by Robert Wigle *et al*., Macmillan
Math 1st4, by Frank Ebos & Bob Tuck, Nelson.
Penny Dreadfuls Series, by Beverley Allinson and Barbara O'Kelly, Methuen Includes: *The Hardcastle Legacy, The Phantom Sailors, The Secret Formula, The West Wood Monster*
People, Power and Process: Sociology For Canadians, by A. Hamilton and C.J. Richardson, McGraw-Hill Ryerson
Physical Geography, by James A. Smythe *et al*., Macmillan
RCMP vs The People, by Edward Mann and John Alan Lee, General Publishing.
Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts, by Sidney Greidanus, Wedge
Working For Canadians: A Study of Local, Provincial and Federal Government, by Edward Marchand, Prentice-Hall
Youth Hotline: Answers to Questions Kids are Afraid to Ask, by Graham Cotter *et al*., Musson

Through a glass darkly

Bright **Glass** of Memory, by Douglas **LePan,** McGraw-Hill **Ryerson,** 245 pages, **$15.95** cloth (**ISBN** 0 07 OS2945 41.

By J.A.S. EVANS

BY **ANY STANDARD, academic** or otherwise. Douglas **LePan has had a** distinguished career. lie **has** won Governor General's **awards** both es a poet **and a** novelist; he has been **on** the faculty of **Harvard; has** been **an** enlisted men in the Canadian **army** in Italy **during** the Second World **War; a member** of the **Canadian** diplomatic **corps** in the years following the **war,** when Canadians thought **they mattered** in foreign affairs; **end. a** professor both **at** Queen's and the **University of Toronto.** For what it is **worth,** he has had a stint in university administration, and now occupies **a** berth et the Mount Olympus known es Massey College. There has **been** a marriage. two sons. and **one** divorce. lie has lived **a** fuller life **than** most men **can hope to do. Yet,** I read ***Bright*** Class ***of*** Memory with a **certain sense** of disappointment. and **a** touch of melancholy.

The disappointment **arose partly** from the **preface,** where **LePan** explains that he is addressing these memoirs to his **sons. Fathers writing** for their **sons** may be didactic. or **self-revelatory** or both; **LePan** clearly **had** no wish to be the **first, and** little **capacity** to be' the second. The **most self-**revelatory **passage** in the book is **a** footnote telling the reader that **one** of the **portrait** sketches **that Wyndham** Lewis **drew of him,** while he was in **Toronto** during **the war,** now is in the possession of his divorced wife. The memoirs **concern** Gen. A.G.L. **McNaughton,** to whom **LePan reported** when he **was** in **charge** of education for **the** Canadian **army** overseas. **T.S.Eliot,** who read. **but** did not publish. **LePan's** early poems; and his **activities** in the Foreign Service after the **war. LePan** is the observer throughout it **all;** he **never obtrudes.**

The melancholy **arose** from the subjects **of the memoirs. LePan describes** the **generation** who **made our** world, or to **be exact,** who tried. and failed to **make** it. **for** he has helped **confirm** my **own** suspicion **that these** men were swept along by events they could not control. **Gen. McNaughton's career** is a **case** of study of **what** happens toe man who defends **Canadian** interests too stubbornly. **LePan's** analysis of the monetary crises following the **war demonstrates** that the **Canadian government** tried hard to avoid the situation in which the country **now** finds itself: totally dependent **on** the U.S. **market** for **exports,** and without **any alternative** but **to** follow the **ups** and **downs** of the U.S. economy. But there **was** no choice; the

collapse of Britain as a major trading partner led inexorably to a client-state economy.

Nowhere is this helplessness more apparent than in LePan's memoir on Lord Keynes. In the aftermath of the war, LePan attended a meeting chaired by Keynes where the subject was Britain's port-war monetary policy. Keynes outlined the problems, and set forth the various policies that might be adopted, with labels such as "Temptation," "Justice," and so c". "Temptation" was the policy that would be easiest to sell to the United States, and would provide the best short-run solution; but in the long run *it* would lead to bankruptcy. Yet a few months later, "Temptation" was the policy that Britain followed, or something very much like it. and Keynes defended it in the House of Lords.

LePan concludes with an essay on the beginnings cf the Colombo Plan, in which he participated. It was the first comprehensive effort to attack the poverty *of* the Third World. That is also with us; only cur optimism has changed. □

Stalking the sacred asparagus

sunblue, by Margaret Aviscn, Lancelot Press (Hansport, N.S.), *105* pages. 53.95 paper (ISBN 0 88999 088 3).

By ALBERT MORITZ

MARGARET AVISON'S new bock. dominated by the Christian commitment that was already evident in *The Dumbfounding* (1966), contains work that In style is her thorniest and most idiosyncratic to date. Almost wholly absent now is the Miltonic directness and power she could sometimes achieve. especially in the first of her three volumes of poetry. *Winter Sun* (1960). In its place is a further development of the crabbed and compacted diction, the convulsive syntax. and fragmented lines that *The Dumbfounding* introduced in such poems as "Black-White under Green." "Controversy," and many others.

Is Avison consciously adopting a tradition for herself, that now her poems in style and cadences so often resemble those of three popular religious poets: George Herbert, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Emily Dickinson (only *sometimes* "religious")? With them she shares a stand-offishness from the literary mainstream of her time, and several basic features cf vision and verse. Like them, she is a meticulous observer of minute aspects of the natural world, and is bold in creating a quirky language that manifests the uniqueness. the ever-newness to each individual believer of a meaning often facilely dismissed as "orthodox".

sunblue's greatest strength lies in Avison's ability to discover the outlines of her belief in the things around her: winter snow and spring blossoming, industrial jetsam along a highway, two computer programmers talking as they walk in the rain. a city park. "The Engineer and tbe Asparagus" makes an enchanting metaphorical leap of the "metaphysical" sort from asparagus to a dentist's drill. Asparagus grows slowly, inexorably, but we wound ourselves with our tools and then "shell over sore decay spots and retract." Aviscn in the ancient Christian manner reads a symbolic cc "sacramental" meaning in such facts:

Put down the dental floss, the number ten iron,
the gear knob, the wire-clippers, the periscope and fins.
Just put down, for a minute, the obsolete stencil-stylus, the ink-pad-stamp, the farmyard
gaspump feed-line.

Down tools. And in
abashed intervals
let us abound
asparagus-like
(straight up through the driveway concrete!)

Usually the basic point expressed here is more explicitly linked to Christianity. In a thousand things, from the humble asparagus to cuter space and the "sunblue" that lies between them, Avison finds an irresistible power of life and purity that always tends to break through mankind's bricked-up. paved-over society and senses. For her it is a sign and manifestation of the working of the most ancient and most real fact, which showed itself at a specific point in human history: "Nothing is made/except by the only unpretentious, Jesus Christ, the Lord."

There are enough good poems in *sunblue* to make it very rewarding reading, but it seems both more inconsistent and more restricted than *Winter Sun* and *The Dumbfounding*. There are no extended works such as "The Agnes ClevesPapers" and "The Earth that Falls Away" of the two earlier books, and few of the poems here are dense enough to be considered master lyrics that intensely concentrate basic concerns.

Avison's new style becomes at times too compressed for the rather slender and familiar points that some of the poems make, and her love of neologisms (especially of new compound words) becomes a distracting mannerism in several places. The serenity that breathes through much of *sunblue* seems, unfortunately, to be linked to the reduced fervour and scope of the poetry, and also to an occasional cuteness and whimsy that intrudes. In addition, there are some poems on doctrinal or biblical themes which are merely assertive: "To Emmaus," for instance, is only an undis-

tinguished recapitulation of a haunting New Testament incident.

But what is most prominent in *sunblue* is effective lyric expression of earned faith that loves the world and hopes for its redemption from pollution and viciousness, but reposes really in another sphere. Avison's faith is expressed in natural images and thus implies the salvation of the natural world. But in fact her language has become allegorical: it resolutely points now to the invisible, to the moral and supernatural realm, and accepts the contingency of temporal life with calm, and even joy. If Avison's poetry has developed in this volume, it has done so by becoming *essentially* Christian. rejecting the secular poet's sole dependence upon earthly reality and affirming quietly that we will live even when all we know passes away. □

Heaven won't protect the working girl

The Secret **Oppression:** Sexual Harassment of Working **Women,** by Constance **Backhouse** and **Leah** Cohen, **Macmillan, 208 pages, $12.95** cloth **(ISBN** 0 *no5* **1789** 7).

Ey ELEANOR **WACHTEL**

THE JOKE goes **like** this:

Man: If I gave you **a** million dollars, would you go to bed with me?

Woman: Well, ye-es. For **a** million dollars I guess I would.

Man: For half a million?

woman: Yes.

Man: How **'bout tonight for a hundred bucks?**

Woman (bridling): Certainly not! what do you think I am, a common whore?

Man: We've already established that; we've just been **talking** terms.

If you find **that** story **a** barrel of laughs, tbis **book:** is mandatory reading. The assumption **that** every woman **has** her price. and being ha superior **at work** entitles you to **a** cut rate-this is at the root of sexual **harassment.** And reading it **would** be **a** double penance because this well-meting **book, *The Secret*** Oppression **(a title that too much suggests the plight of psoriasis sufferers). is not** only **dry but redundant.** Joint authorship shouldn't mean that everything **has** to bc stated **twice;** here, **points** are made **three,** four. **and** more times.

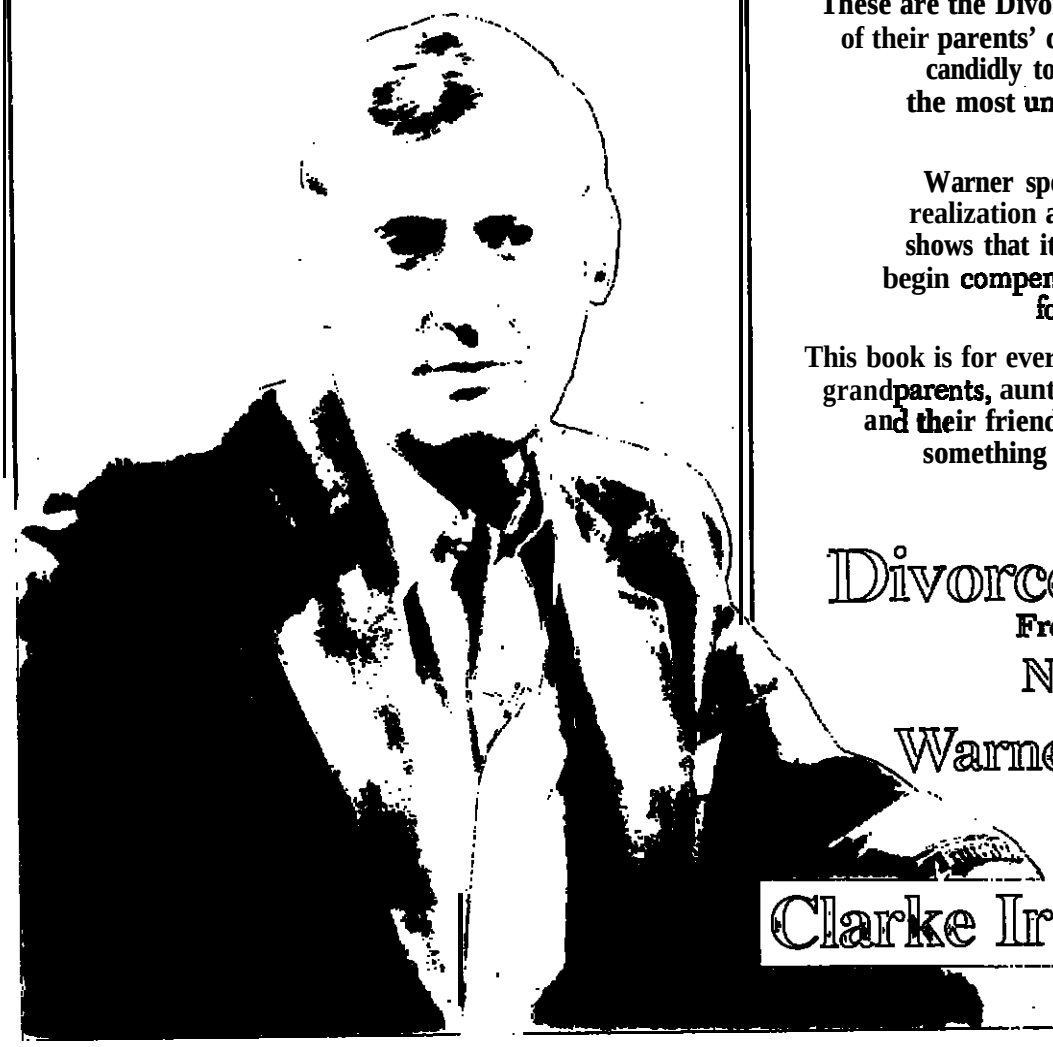
What it **boils down** to **is:** [I) sexual harassment, defined as "any sexually oriented practice **that** endangers **a** woman's **job, that undermines her job performance,** and threatens **her economic** livelihood," **is rampant, cutting across the lines of class, colour, age, size, and** shape; **(2)** this is **reported** by **many women workers,** and **recognized by women personnel managers;** (3) **it is rejected** or **trivialized** by **almost all men; and (4)** as **things** stand, **there is little one can do about it. The most effective redress is group,** collective, or union action **(although** unions also **countenance** it). **The Criminal** Code of Canada protects only **pure-hearted virgins** under **21 from intercourse with** their **bosses,** and then only while **witnesses (corroborative** evidence) **are present.**

Sexual **harassment** on the **job is where rape was five years ago-a fledgling issue creeping at the edges of** public **consciousness.** Indeed it is a bii of much **the same** feather. Like **rape,** sexual harassment **is** a matter of **power not desire, bullying not loving. Any man can be a harasser. invoking perverts is a mistake. And no one is immune. A woman construction worker was both physically mauled and received threatening** telephone calls. **Even a** human **rights** commission officer was abused by **her** director, the **very person** whose job is to **protect women from** sex discrimination. Many victims quit or **are** fired after they've rejected advances; **the** onus is on the morality of the **woman rather** than the reprehensible **actions of the man.**

But **sexual** harassment, unlike rape, **is a difficult subject to be taken seriously. The very fact of its being so widespread a practice — the authors claim nine out of 10 working women have experienced it — enables people to dismiss it as** "normal." **an occupational hazard. It's women** crying wolf. incapable of **distinguishing between a pleasant (consensual) office romance and (coercive)** sexual **harassment.**

Our society has been talking about "war" between the sexes for centuries; strange then that we don't believe it. Commonplace issuer have to be **exposed, "discovered,"** before we admit **to them.** Sexual **harassment is coming out, this year's shamefaced debutante. In the U.S., questionnaires and articles in *Redbook* and *Ms.*** elicited **big responses; two organizations** have been **formed specifically** to deal with it; **and some legal** actions have been initiated **through the Civil Rights Act of 1964.**

Witb this the first Canadian book on the subject, **Backhouse** and Cohen present **10-point** action plans for management, unions. and legislative changes, **as** well as advice **regarding** personal solutions. The authors **are** serious and **earnest; writing** for tbe **committed but with an eye to the scoffers. A textbook to be** promoted at **managerial hustings, this one is for the gift list. Send it (to someone who should read it) wrapped in a** plain **brown** wrapper. □



Angry
Hurt
Rejected
Bewildered
Manipulated
Lied to
Cheated
Embittered
Wary

These are the Divorced Kids. Victims of their parents' divorce, they speak candidly to Warner Troyer in the most unforgettable book of the season.

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Divorced Kids

From the author of
No Safe Place

Warner Troyer

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Clarke Irwin

How do I love me? Let me count the ways

How I Overcame My Fear of Whores, Royalty, Gays, Teachers, Hippies, **Psychiatrists, Athletes, Transvestites, Clergymen,** police, **Children, Bullies, Politicians,** Nuns. **Grandparents, Doctors, Celebrities,** Gurus, **Judges, Artists,** Critics. **Mothers,** Fathers, **Publishers and Myself, by Justin Thomas, McClelland & Stewart, 244** pages, **$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 8555 9).**

By DEAN **BONNEY**

IT'S ALWAYS convenient if the book to be reviewed is easy to categorize. This is an inconvenient book.

It's another born-again book, but what the author has triumphed over isn't alcoholism, drug addiction, rootlessness, irreligion. or a disabling disease, but the conviction. well-founded it turns out, that people Just don't like him. His discovery goes like this: if almost everybody dislikes me and always has, it's *their* fault. This is a solution much favoured by psychotherapists. One remembers the wretched Marilyn Monroe not long before she killed herself telling a repotter, "If people don't take me seriously as an actress. it's their problem." Or something like that.

It's also a piece of promotion for an organization the author has founded. complete with buttons. seminars, and a sales force, that offers something called The Label Liberation Experience ("What it is! What it can do for you! How you, too can change your *life!*" says the brochure sent with the review copy).

It's also a long appreciation of a one-man show he devised that caused a furor when he presented it in Toronto, New York. London, and Paris.

It's also an account of how be arrived at his life-preserver philwphy. lie now is prepared to share it with the world, the world having to pay by going to see the show, enrolling in the seminars, and buying this book. which is high-priced for a very ordinary paperback.

Thomas's development is difficult to follow and his ideas are difficult m understand because be writes badly, is incapable of consecutive thought, and like most pretentious people has a taste for words and ideas that seem weighty, presumably because they provide the best cover. lie says, for example. that he was often engaged in "Research." It's never made clear exactly what this research was; k's enough that we know he's a serious person.

But the scraps of autobiography scattered like afterthoughts in this humourless narrative aren't difficult to understand. They're often enlightening and sometimes funny. He tells us how he was once Stanley. the" became Adam, and now is Justin. Ha tells us how he found a new father — Mr. Thomas. a rich Englishman who kept him for some years — who was much nicer to him than his natural father. lie gives us the highlights of his sex life. These are strangely irrelevant in spite of his efforts to load them with significance. Aside from periods of compulsive masturbation, tbey are mostly homosexual, with a few heterosexual experiments.

He says be has supernatural powers. These were demonstrated when he located some lost keys on a beach by asking the sand where they were. lie mentions his experiences with hallucinatory drugs. These also seem irrelevant, but not to the author: they produced behaviour that proved to him he's more sensitive than anyone he knows or has ever heard of.

He tells how he discovered the benefits of submitting to hysterical impulses. This is always discomfitting to others, but worth it. He weeps and screams whenever he feels like it. No repression. Thus, in a rage be covered the walls of his father's apartment with scatological drawings. His father's reaction isn't reported, but the author found it therapeutic.

You finish How I Overcame .. confused and impatient, but reassured by at least one certainty. Justin Thomas is beyond any reader's (let alone reviewer's) judgement. By his own effort and at the cost of considerable anguish be's risen above what his mother, father, other relatives, classmates, ex-friends. ex-associates, ex-lovers have been telling him all his life: that they don't like to have him around. •i

Stars and strikes forever

Canadian Workers, American Unions, by **Jack Scott,** New **Star Books, 242 pages, $13.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919888 82 8) and $6.50 paper (ISBN 0 919888 81 X).**

By DAN HILTS

CANADA IS unique in the industrialized world. Most of its manufacturing and resource industries are owned and managed outside the country, a situation that has been widely discussed and well documented in recent years. Foreign ownership is cited as a major factor in stifling native initiative and inhibiting Canadian industrial development because it keeps us as suppliers of raw materials that are processed by someone else's technology and skilled labour.

There is however, another unique aspect of the Canadian economy and one which affects many people directly. More than 1.5

million Canadian workers belong to unions with headquarters in the United States — more than 60 per cent of the organized workers in the manufacturing and resource industries.

Canadian Workers, American Unions is the second volume of *Trade Unions and Imperialism in America. The* first, *Yankee Unions, Go Home!*, is a history of the role of American unions in Latin America. The current book is a Marxist history of organized labour in Canada. It begins with the influence of British unions and their subsequent replacement by American unions, primarily the American Federation of Labor under Samual Gompers. Scott shows how a nascent Canadian labour movement was frustrated and outmanoeuvered by the AFL-, which often sided with the anti-union governments and business interests and exacerbated internal *union* disputes to bring about U.S. domination.

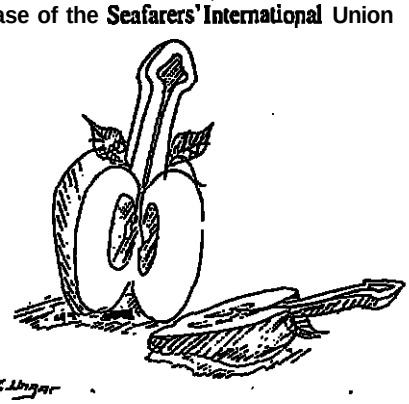
What resulted was a union movement controlled by the craft unions — "the aristocracy of labour" -skilled tradesmen such as plumbers and electricians. who are well pid and conservative in outlook, and who adopted the American philmophy of business unionism. an acceptance of the economic and political *status quo*. In the U.S. they supported American imperialism at the turn of the century, have solidly backed their government's various military campaigns, and have placed little emphasis on social issues or on direct political action.

Branch-plant unionism has led to some unusual situations in Canada. During the First World War, when unions in Canada generally opposed conscription, Gompers came and bought Canadian war bonds far the AFL, exhorted Canadians to do their duty by supporting the war effort, and denounced the shirkers in Quebec. Later. during the Winnipeg General Strike. the AFL offered to mediate, but instead made deals with local businessmen and politicians and recruited strike-breakers.

There are also numerous examples of actions taken by American unions that have been inimical to the Canadian membership. There is a net outflow in the U.S. of about $80 million a year in union dues to help pay for such things as lobbyists in Washington to promote restrictions on imports from Canada.

The book covers other interesting ground: Western radicalism. anti-communism in the AFL, and the infamous case of the Seafarers' International Union and Hal Banks. What detracts from the book for the reader looking for information rather than polemic is the strident Marxist rhetoric. Tbe material itself is interesting but the author has so many scores to settle that hi name-calling too often gets in the way. For those with a less intimate knowledge of union history than the author, the many initials to abbreviate union names. some of them extinct for decades, can be confining.

A less doctrinaire history is Robert Laxer's *Canada's Unions,* which is more coherent and better organized but still maintains a fine moral outrage. Both books conclude that there is ample evidence, past and present, of the ability of Canadians to organize a national union movement. The rise of large public service unions. particularly the Canadian Union of Public Employees is one sign that American hegemony may be coming to an end. Scott's book represents a contribution to an area of Canadian life that has received far too little attention. □



Yo ho ho and a bottle of Liebfraumilch

Treasure Island. by Jean Howarth. Dorset, 196 pages, $11.95 cloth (ISBN 0 888 93 0137).

By DORIS COWAN

THE CONTENTS OF this book were originally published as a column on the editorial page of the Toronto *Globe and Mail*,. where its Tuesday and Friday episodes regularly transported urbanites to a bucolic seacoast utopia peopled with comic and romantic islanders. It's the sort of writing that tries, in its inspired moments. to make its readers laugh and cry at the same time. I'm afraid that in such passages it only made me sigh and wince at the same lime.

Howarth writes in a style that is reminiscent of the slick and tidy format of fiction for adolescents. It's folksy, but in a modern idiom, and has been adapted to an anecdotal *form to* suit the purposes of a daily paper. She begins with a little scene-setting, then gradually builds up, with short, crisp phrases. to a punchline or pay-off at the end, with the last sentence usually forming its own paragraph: the typographic equivalent of deadpan delivery. The twist at the end is just as often intended to pierce the reader's heart as make him laugh. but the glibness of the writing, has the irritating effect of making the emotions of the characters seem false even when the events of the story are convincing and well-observed. There's a persistent emphasis on correct behaviour, on laudable compassion and tolerance, that gives the writing a know-all lone and a

smugness about human values amounting to sentimentality — in spite of its determination (again suggesting fiction aimed at teenagers) never to be uncool. The stiff-upper-lip style has its own hearts and flowers. It works indirectly, but it can produce as concentrated an overdose of saccharin as more obvious tear-jerking techniques.

The best serious stories in the collection are the ones about animals and birds, the eagles, osprey, deer. and raccoons of the island Howarth calls Madronna. Her human characters are less successful. Her codgers are too crusty, ha termagants too secretly softhearted, the one Indian youth just too brilliant and wise and heroic. Though to give her her due. I must add that she appears to have made a genuine effort to round out their personalities by giving them faults. They are allowed malice, for its comic effect and as an index of truth, but she can't help implying rather heavily that this only makes them more lovable. For me, it's all just a bit too milky with human kindness. □

on the racks

by **Paul Stuewe**

Sex and death, from the jogging paths of puritan Ontario to Cold War Europe

THE NARRATOR of Marian Engel's The Glassy Sea (Seal. $2.25) is a spiritually troubled woman reacting against her puritanical Ontario upbringing. and the novel's first few pages suggest and we are about to experience an awkward synthesis between the excessive mythification of *Bear* and the obsessive introspection of *Sarah Bastard's Notebook*. Quickly, however, the book settles down into an engrossing account of a life lived with the need to seek trial and 'resilience to accept error, while smoothly integrating intellectual and emotional content in a way that seemed to elude Engel in her earlier work. If you've been put off by reviewers' overestimations of her previous books, I think you'll be pleasantly surprised by the confident authority with which she confers new life upon some familiar plot material in *The Glassy Sea*.

'The same cannot be said of Sylvia Fraser's A Casual Affair (Signet. $2.25), which makes an unappetizing hash out of *the* world's most interesting subject. The plot is basically Barbie Doll meets Clint Eastwood, and it's narrated in a relentlessly purple prose that won't let up even for a description of an apartment building that "smouldered as a copper obelisk against the light-polluted sky." Along about the time that one of the characters began to feel "a deep and dangerous yearning." I began to fondly recall the days when adultery was an exciting fictional option rather than the quickest way to get men and women onto a first-name basis. With regard to A *Casual Affair*, *I* recommend total abstinence.

Not so for Doctors Beryl and Noam Chemick, whose In Touch: Putting Sex Back Into Love and Marriage (Signet, $2.25) describes the treatment of a sexually frustrated couple. The Chernicks emphasize the concepts of communicating and relating in a manner similar to that of other "human potential" practitioners, and it's easy to see that their approach will help many of us to become sexually responsive as well as sexually active. Those who still aren't as active as they'd like to be may be turned on by Jack Batten's The Complete Jogger (PaperJacks, $1.95), which among other things argues that jogging assists physical performance in all areas. Personally, I doubt that anything that gets you out of a warm bed at a unnatural hour EM do anything for you when you get back into it, but Batten's book is so sensitive in other respects that we'll give him the benefit of tbe doubt. And if you've had it witb sex. death is always a last resort, particularly when it's as chillingly plausible as Red McClement's timely exposé of danger on our airways. Jet Roulette (PaperJacks, $2.50).

For the maximum in sex and death, of course, there's no beating contemporary mysteries and thrillers, or even somewhat older ones such as Hugh Gamer's Stone Cold Dead (PaperJacks, $2.50), published in 1970 as *The* Sin *Sniper*. This early Inspector McDumont opus features the usual wooden dialogue and tedious descriptions of Toronto neighbourhoods, but some mild suspense is generated as the Inspector is clearly more suited to death in Cabbagetown then to *Death in Don Mills*.

The assassination of a Quebec premier gets Gordon Pape and Tony Aspler's Chain Reaction (Seal. $2.25) off to a good start, but it's strictly unbelievable political yak-yak thereafter; as Mao Tse-tung said about waging guerilla warfare. the proper technique is "talk talk, fight. fight," in the indicated proportions. Imprint (Signet, $2.50) demonstrates that Michael Bradley can construct a competent, fast-paced thriller, although his book is marred by the sort of gratuitous viciousness that seems to have

become *de rigueur* among contemporary thriller writers.

Moving on tc the Eggplant that Ate Alberta Department. we have Dewitt S. Copp's A Different Kind of Rain (PaperJacks, $2.95). in which mysterious green precipitation threatens ecological disaster. It's very well done in a rat-a-tat fashion that overcame my reservation about green nin as a major-league menace. Second World War buffs will probably enjoy Walter Kanitz's Close Call (PaperJacks, 52.50). an eventful on-the-run-in-Nazi-Europe suspenser, and cold warriors may chill to Ernest Wiens's Phoenix (PaperJacks, $2.50). a better-than-average spy thriller that evokes tbe Greene-Le Carré tradition without quite managing tc enter into it. Some hits, some misses. eyes celled on account of strain. □

the browser

by Michael Smith

Pausing at some filling stations along the dusty road to self-help

LEAD OFF WITH a funny story, advises The Speaker's Book by Walter Kanitz (McClelland & Stewart, 222 pages, $6.95 paper), so I turned tc the index for help. Of the 23 entries for "Bock," I came up with these ringers:

> The public library of Neuburg, Germany, added a book to its list titled *A Better Memory in* Three *Weeks*. The first reader to borrow the book forgot to bring it back and had to be fined.
>
> ...
>
> Eighteen-year-old Jim Cuddles of Liverpool MI charged with the theft of a book from a bookstore. When the magistrate was told tha title of the book, he acquitted Jim. All youngsters should read it, he said. The tide: *How To Get Rid of Your Bad Manners*.

No kidding, those were among the best bock stories I could find in this compendium of "1,001 anecdotes that are as fascinating, as funny. and as unpredictable as life itself." These, along with a handful of pages of conventional advice on public speaking. purport tc provide fodder for after-dinner speakers, clergymen, teachers, students, lawyers, disc jockeys, salesmen, writers, and, uh, columnists. Actually. readers will recognize such entries -in 23 categories, from Animals tc Women — as newspaper-style tillers: the kind of inconsequential. mildly amusing stuff that wire services demand from their foreign bureaus just tc make sun their correspondents haven't bogged off to bask on a beach somewhere.

I thought I had progressed much farther along the road tc self-help when I came across George M. Bowman's Clock Wise: Make Every Minute Count (G.R. Welch, 127 pages, $7.15 cloth). As it turns out, Bowman, a former president of the *Christian* Writers of Canada. works on the theory that a more organized life means greater opportunities for Christian stewardship (since God. at the time of Creation. allotted all of us a certain amount of time on earth to glorify Him). In what amounts to 15 sermonettes on his subject, Bowman has a scriptural text *for just about* everything. Sample (in "Write Your Way tc More Time"): "lie that hath knowledge spareth his words...." *(Proverbs 17:27). I'm* not disputing Bowman's personal beliefs. but I'm not sure I need a biblical precedent tc convince me tc clean off my desk. A kick in the arse would dc.

To me, a much more useful book is Robert Appel's The Used Car Believer's Book (Dorset, illustrated. 209 pages, $7.95 paper). For years consumer advocate Phil Edmonston of the Automobile Pmtection Association has been telling people tc buy second-hand cars and save ail the needless expense lost in depreciation on a new car. Appel. a lawyer who worked with Edmonston, has expanded this caveat into an entertaining book full of tips that I found handier than tbe title suggests. I've never owned a used car, but I do have a considerabie share in (of all things) an elderly second-hand farm tractor, the maintenance on which usually seems to be left to me. I've always wanted to know how I could accurately adjust the engine timing without buying a relatively expensive timing light (a procedure mechanics don't recommend, but possible, nevertheless). This bock taught me tbe trick.

Summer after summer *a woman* I know. who lives in Dresden, Ont.. has had trouble contacting the right official tc enter her show ponies at the fair in the small town where I live. (All anyone ever sent her were entry forms for quilts and homemade pies, for which she's not tbe least bit equipped.) Now. in Country Fairs of Ontario by Grace Deutsch (Totem, illustrated, 144 pages. $4.95 paper), I've found help for her. too. In addition to listing the dates and specialties of more than 200 rural fairs. the book includes a directory of fair secretaries from Aberfoyle to Zurich. And when my friend comes tc the fair. assuming she doesn't park her pickup in our yard. she could put up at one of the comfy-sounding homes listed in Country Bed and Breakfast Places in Canada by John Thompson (Deneau & Greenberg, illustrated, 210 pages, 85.95 paper). Thompson's guide offers accommodation from Heart's Delight, Nfld., tc Vaseaux Lake, B.C., at prices from $12 to $32 a night for bed and breakfast for two. Not bad.

There are lots of rural characters-in Short Stories About Saskatchewan by Leslie A. Dybvig (3405 25th Avenue, Regina. Sask. S4S IL7, 153 pages. $3.00 paper). some of which have appeared in *The Western Producer* and on CBC-Radio. The 23 rather brief stories tend tc rely on moral messages and unforeseen explanations — such as a hired man's complicated confession in "The Quiet Conscience" — that clean up all the tag ends in a blaze of understanding. Also of regional interest is the splendidly produced Georgina: A Type Study of Early Settlement and Church Building In Upper Canada. It's a facsimile edition of a bock written in 1939 by Francis Paget Hett to raise funds for tbe centenary of St. George's Church and the Sibbald Memorial Church that replaced it on the south shore of Lake Simcce. Tbe author acknowledges help from Stephen Leacock, whose family was part of the congregation.

A central congregation to the development of Jewry in Toronto was Holy Blossom synagogue. founded in 1856, whose history is included in Stephen A. Speisman's exhaustive The Jews of To-

onto: A **History** to **1937 (McClelland & Stewart,** illustrated, 380 pages, **$19.95 cloth). Speisman** covers. among **other things,** the **anti-Semitism practised** by **individuals,** groups of thugs. **and** the **newspapers** (which regularly **pointed out** if anybody **appearing** in **court** was a Jew), culminating **in** the **pro-Nazi** Swastika **Club** whose **activities prompted a near riot at Balmy Beach in the 1930s.** Fascist organizations such **as** the **Western** Guard still **exist (and** have **branched out to persecute** Tomato's Asia" community), **but in general public ridicule** of Jews **seems to** have **swung in the opposite direction.** I also looked **up** "Religion" in **Kanitz's** *The Speaker's Book.* **Of 36 entries** in that chapter. **every** one was about **Christians.** □

interview

by Albert Moritz

The private life of Don Coles, unprolific poet: things that matter are closest to home

POET DON COLES is a careful craftsman whose total work to date is contained in two brief but widely acclaimed volumes: ***Sometimes All Over*** **(1975)** and ***Anniversaries*** (1979). **Born in Woodstock,** Ont., he graduated **from Victoria** College, University of Toronto, and afterwards Nok a" **M.A.** at Cambridge **University.** There followed **12** years **in Europe,** years that **Coles** describes as occupied with "a little translating, **learning** languages, **some writing, a lot** of moving around." **After living** in Scandinavia, Italy, Germany, and **Switzerland,** he returned to Canada in **1965** and **since** then has taught humanities **and creative** writing at York University. He is married to the **former Hiedi Golnitz, and** they have two **children.** Albert **Moritz interviewed Coles** at his home **in** a quiet wooded **neighbourhood of north-central** Tomato:

Books **In** Canada: Your ***poetry pointedly avoids the violent, bizarre, or far-away and concentrates on a questioning of common experiences.***

Coles: I think that a **problem** with a lot of contemporary poetry is that the images are there, images that are harrowing **and fracturing,** but too often they are **gratuitously** introduced **and** offer nothing **to** the reader. We have so many poets who rely on the violent image as if that's the only way they can break through the reader's complacency. Television and the **Peckinpah-style** movie play a **role** here. **I** don't know if people who watch those things **read** poetry. But they and some **of the** poets **seem** to be conditioning the **audience** not to be able to **respond** to anything but these **enormous bloodlettings.** Bat in fact, most of us **in our** lives aie constantly offered experiences that can **sensitize** es, that can illuminate **areas** of life **for us.** But if all we're **taught** to notice is these Jo-called **archetypal** things. the" the rest of it will pass us by. It **seems to me a more difficult, more important endeavour to** make the apparently more minor **— but truly** richer **—** episodes **of** a human life vivid and **meaningful.**

BiC: ***Do you look at your poetry as developing through the years to accomplish a coherent project? Or do you simply*** write ***poems as they come and leave it to the unity of your life to organize them?***

Colas: It's **more** the latter. But I do **perceive** and attempt to encourage a **certain direction in** my work. You'll notice in **some** of **my poems I deal with a tendency I** see **in** myself to look **towards** far-off, **romantic** experience and neglect what is **more familiar, closer** to **home,** and really deeper, more important. I want **to resist** that. It's **pretty** commonplace **for younger poets** to be attracted away **from** their own life, which they may perceive as not especially significant in early years, towards **concepts** like eternity, **which** EM obviously **inflate** right beyond **any** useful **purpose.**

BiC: ***Your*** poems **focus** ***explicitly upon the brood. traditional lyric themes: time,*** aging. ***growth, love. death.***

Cola: It **seems to me** that **there's very** little **else to write about. Verv little else reaches** the same **bedrock** of human significance as matters **that** relate N **time,** to whatever fragments of wisdom one **acquires** in **the course** of living. It comes to us in **little** flashes, I **think:** quick responses to a snatch **of conversation, a line in a book, a person or** object. That **is the origin** of **many** of my poems. Now, whether **you** get beyond a **stock** response **to** this momentary glimpse is

Don Coles

another matter, and that's what the poem attempts to do. It attempts to understand what really matters about that momentary illumination, and not simply to oneself.

BIC: *But that sounds as if there is something of a coherent project In your poetry.*

Coles: Well, insofar as I regard the poem as an investigation into tbe nature of one's responses, emotions. You have to probe them and discover whet is reel, deep, valuable, and what is merely a meretricious, programmed, stock response. Ideally, the poem should record and even help create the responses that are really human. The crucial word is honesty. It's very easy to move toward the striking image, the vivid metaphor, and anyone with facility In tbs language will be tempted to do so et the expense of the investigation of whatever set the poem in motion. So the crunch is, will one take the easy route, or will one persevere end come up with something truer?

BIC: *Many observers say that the universal, human experiences that you deal with now are being threatened. The natural world may be destroyed and people regimented until they are incapable of experiencing on any level traditionally recognized as human.*

Coles: That doesn't mean very much to me. The related subjects-technology. pollution. propaganda -don't appeal to me as themes. If that's the direction we're really moving. it leaves no distance for poetry, for the poet, to travel In. I think that whatever the changes in our external circumstances and whatever threats technology poses, whet we have is our human life. We continue to be born, to grow older, to have disappointments and momentary fulfilmeets end joys. Those may be "traditional" themes, but nothing else offers the same inexhaustible distance In which one can travel.

BIC: *Do you think poetry will continue its decline in popularity and impact in a world where it's mom and more difficult for the person to be alone and enter into himself?*

Coles: Well. again. I would hope not. McLuhan told us a decade ago that print was obsolete, that the only kind of experience people would accept was the instantaneous surround of the electronic media. But that's dearly wrong. The fact is that one can have a complete moment of understanding still — and even in dealing with print. A lyric poem exists on a page, one reads it in a linear progression, sure enough, one word after another. But one then contains the poem in tbe mind and can have a total response to it.

BIC: In *contrast to many poets,* you have brought *out* only *two smallish books and have not participated much in magazines. What's your attitude toward a "career" In poetry?*

Coles: I don't feel comfortable with the idea of the poet as a public personality. It may be an old-fashioned view, but I would rather tha tbe poétry find its own way In the world thee that I get Involved in the PR apparatus and tbe teadings. It's much as Philip Larkin has done. who I gather has given one public reading in his life, and now, by the age of 60 or so, has brought out four or five books. That's the image of the poet I feel much closer to, rather than tbe fellow who is constantly travelling about the country giving readings, attending congresses, and mingling witb lots of other poets — the person who is egregiously present.

BIC: You *mention Larkin.* Could *you comment* on *your influences,* or *the poetic tradition you recognize?*

Coles: Direct influences start with Thomas Hardy, whose Collected *Poems* I've been reading over in the last few years. And then it comes from Hardy to Larkin to some younger British poets like Douglas Donne. My worldview is not Larkin's, but tbe craft emphasis in him is something I've learned a lot from.

BIC: *As you indicate, form seems a matter of conscious work In your poems, not something which Is simply allowed to develop "organically."*

Coles: *Yes.* I feel that almost any poem can be Improved by work. To take rhyme, for instance. W's something I would like to become mote proficient in the use of. As long es one doesn't distort tbs honesty and investigation of the poem by going for rhymes end other formal elements. almost any poem is given added life and impact by their presence. But one has to be careful not to lose the honesty of the investigation. □

by Douglas Hill

On being a woman: an evil eye on the '60s and a grocery list of household scraps

TWO FIRST NOVELS by women on the subject of being a woman. One is good, the other awful.

Victoria Branden's Mrs. Job (Clarke Irwin, 238 pages. 516.50 cloth) carries a sneaky punch. At first I found its mannerisms — the precious archness. the anglophile ambience (though it's set in Ontario and the States) — easy to resist. The overlapping resonances of the Church of England. the U of T's Trinity College. and British situation comedy can be irritating, especially when nothing particularly interesting seems to be happening. But the novel catches hold es it becomes increasingly, subtly weirder, and gains a stature considerably more solid then the merely diversionary.

The plot of *Mrs.* Job is somewhat herd to describe: there's a heroine. Meredith Doyle. a teacher now in her early 40s; her long-dead bish lover. Nicholas: their son Nicky, a mixed-up. estranged teenager: assorted neurotic and unhappy friends. Lurking et the edges of the chronicle of Meredith's attempts to put end keep her life together is Nicholas's wife. Bridgie, who is nuts. possesses a genuine evil eye, and can do psychokinesis.

What develops es the story meanders along — I should note that Branden manages characterization and narrative structure with enviable sureness — is a study of the effects nf 1960s sexual and marital liberation upon that generation slightly too old — or too self-conscious -to be comfortable with it. Meredith. with her unashamedly traditional sexual politics end loyalties. has bpn freed only to guilt and confusion; Bridgie is the *agent of her distress*, a sort of avenging devil of puritanism.

Branden writes a tough. tonic prose that reminded me of Maria" Engel's. She invents comic fantasy worthy of Michael Inner. and can sustain manic incident like Mordecai Richler. Enough. She's et least an original: *Mrs.* Job is intelligent, funny. understated. and its insights seem thoroughly wise.

* * *

THIS COLUMN HAS bee" chastised in the pest for being dismissive rather than instructive in its judgements. Neighbours, by Laurali Wright (Macmillan, 258 pages, $12.95 cloth), is the sort of book that deserves a quick howl of protest, but I will try to be helpful and describe a couple of its more alarming features.

The novel is set in Calgary, and examines, with truly remarkable shallowness. the lives of three women. Betty, Sheila, and Bertha, the (next-door) *neighbours* of the title. Betty, who lives in the middle, is suffering from severe depression, and is unable to care for herself, her house, or her family; Sheila cannot deal with her husband's infidelity; Bathe is old and crippled, and unwilling to give up the independence of her own home.

There are possibilities in each and all of these situations. of course. Wright's achievement is to make you wish someone else had taken a crack et them.

The prose is so dreadfully pallid that I assumed it had to be deliberate. a" attempt to render realistically the horrors of Betty's inability to conceptualize or cope with her psychotic disorientation. What else can one make of "Feelings jangled around inside her"? Or "She'd lost her sexuality. she'd know" it for months now. It had oozed out of her end vanished"? But es point-of-view starts to careen from character to character, it becomes evident that this is the author's own studied style; everything is detailed. and all the characters speak, in the same relentlessly stiff declarative sentences, now end the" ungrammatical, almost always hopelessly unidiomatic:

objects *fascinate* Wright; itemization is one of her charms. But none of it is made to matter. The symbolic weight of things — food, dress. household equipment. dirt — *could* become significant. but Wright never makes it reveal the consciousness of the beholder, never establishes a connection between mind and world. Insight here is on the level of the grocery list.

Neighbours takes the idea of the minimal in fiction to new lows. The plot is nothing, *character and* psychology *are zilch. That* leaves nothing. The book won the fourth Search-for-a-New-Albena-Novelist Competition. Spare me — spare us all — the runners-up. □

Notes and comments

WE HAVE OFTEN argued that no literature can long survive without regular transfusions of serious fiction. By that token. CanLit is in line fettle. Any fall season that promises new works fmm such proven literary writers as Margaret Atwood. Margaret Laurence. Audrey Thomas, Brian Moore, Jack Hodgins, Hugh Hood, David Helwig. Mavis Gallant, Don Bailey. Peter Such, Harold Horwood, James Houston, Niam Kattan, and Marie-Claire Blais (again) must be counted es heroic in terms of production alone. As for quality. . well. we'll see.

Reviews of Hodgins's *The Resurrection of Joseph Bourne* (Macmillan) and Hood's *Reservoir Ravine* (Oberon) appear elsewhere in this issue. along with a review of Donald Jack's latest Bartholemew Bandy adventure *Me Bandy, You Cissie* (Doubleday).

Future issues will contain critical verdicts on an exceptionally strong fiction list fmm McClelland & Stewart. Among the titles: Atwood's fourth novel, *Life Before Man*, which explores a marital crisis: Moore's *The Mangan Inheritance*, described in the M & S catalogue es "a search for roots and a splendid evocation of the mist-drenched Irish landscape and its colourful denizens" (denizens?); Kattan's *Paris Interlude*, a sequel to Farewell. *Babylon*; Blair' A *Literary Affair*, concerning a young (male) Quebec writer's experiences among. the literary denizens of Paris; Houston's The *Spirit Wrestler*, an Eskimo saga about the denizens of the North; and Laurence's The *Olden Days Coat*, a Christmas story for children touted as yet another *instant* classic.

Apart fmm the Hodgins, Macmillan's entries include: Gallant's *From the Fifteenth District*. a novella and eight short stories forming what might be called an *arrondissement* with destiny; Such's *Dolphin's Wake*, a thriller set in Greece during the days of the Colonels; and W.G. Hardy's *The Bloodied Toga*. a Cæsarian *sequel to Tbe Scarlet Mantle*.

Talonbooks will bring out the new Thomas, which is celled *Latakia* and concerns a *ménage à trois*, as well as Ken Mitchell's new novel, *The Con Man*. Oberon has Helwig's *Jennifer*, the story oh divorced women of 40. end Bailey's *Tbe Sorry Papers, a new ret* of short storks. Horwood's *Only the Gods Speak*. a collection of mostly new stories, is published by Breakwater.

The biggie from General Publishing is Richard Rohmer's newest energy-crisis opus *Bolls*. a *testy* title that already has our head writers worked up. It might be read in conjunction · with the PaperJack entry A *Woman Alone* by former nun Mary Shaver. A new thriller by Ian Adams. *End Game in Paris*. will come from Doubleday. which is also publishing the second issue of *Aurora*, the annual anthology of new writing edited by Morris Wolfe. Thomas Nelson enters the list with *Beyond the Dark River*. a science-fiction epic by Monica Hughes. Coach *House* is publishing *Four Stories* (all hitherto out of print) by Sheila Watson. end Deneau & Greenberg have *Thin Ice*, a collection of stories by Norman Levine.

Finally. word comes from Montreal that Mordecai Richler has just completed a major new novel that will likely appear in the spring. And after that. the fall again... Can CanLit keep up this heroic pace?

Just watch it. □

Exciting New Fiction

September

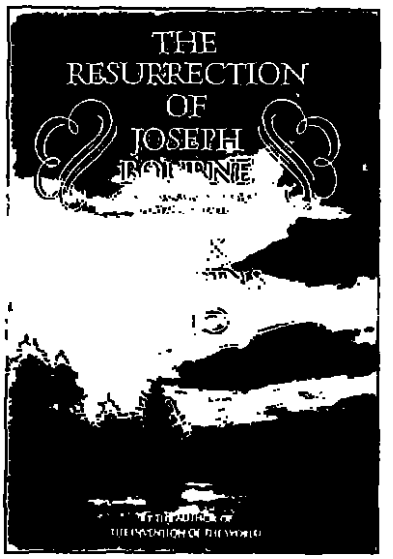
DOLPHIN'S WAKE
Peter Such

Dolphin's *Wake* is a **fascinating adventure novel — the** story of **strong-willed,** passionate people **dedicated** to the **overthrow** of Greece's junta regime. **When** Arthur **and** Elizabeth. a British couple **living** in **Greece,** respond to **an appeal to help rescue an old friend imprisoned by** the junta. they are soon **involved** in danger, violence and murder. **What** began as **a favour** to old Wends. ends up **as a** nightmare of **political and sexual** obsession in **which** they stand to lose **each** other and their lives. **$12.95**

September

FROM THE FIFTEENTH DISTRICT
A Novella and Eight **Short Stories**
Mavis Gallant

This superb collection is the **first work by** this **acclaimed** Canadian **writer** to be **published** by **a** Canadian house. **"... a** terrifyingly good writer." **Margaret** Atwood. **$12.95**



October

THE RESURRECTION OF JOSEPH BOURNE
Or, A Word or Two About **Those Port** Annie **Miracles**
Jack Hodgins

Here *is another* delightful, freewheeling novel by the author of SPIT DELANEY'S **ISLAND** and THE INVENTION OF THE WORLD. Vancouver Island **is** the setting for this **miraculously** inventive, wise and **funny novel.**

Jacl: Hodgins won the Gibson Literary Award for the Best Canadian First Novel of **1977. $12.95**

November

THE BLOODIED TOGA
W. G. Hardy

Night raids end massacres. intrigue, torture, and sex. the clash of sword **on** shield — all stud this memorable book that **centres** on the assassination of Julius Caesar. **$14.95**

Macmillan The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited
70 **Bond** Street, Toronto **M5B 1X3**

Letters to the Editor

b.b. SHOTS

Sir:

Sometimes it seems as if the Canada Council is damned if it does (give grants) and damned if it doesn't. A few years ago. as Eleanor Wachtel told your readers in the June-July issue. the Council was vehemently attacked for having made grants to bill bissett. Now it is under attack for precisely the opposite reason.

At the time of the anti-bissett fever. the Council's chairman publicly defended bissett's awards. The basis of the chairman's defense was that $1 grants to individuals are awarded by competition, through the recommendations of juries of artists who are completely independent of the Council. If the Council defended the competitive rankings established by those juries. it also stands by the advice of other juries, composed of equally accomplished writers. who have recommended otherwise. The competition for grants is extremely heavy. and juries are forced to make difficult choices. Many deserving applicants must be unsuccessful, even if their applications have prevailed in other competitions.

The Council's juries are chosen from a long list of potential assessors, all hiihly knowledgeable in the arts. The assessors' list is approved by an independent body. the Advisory Arts Panel; the list changes annually, and so da individual juries. Thus an applicant refused by one jury has a chance wkh another the next time around. When, in addition, the competition facing him may well be different.

In short, *in the* arts as in scholarship or sport, no competitor is likely to win every time, against every field, on every day.

Mario Lavoie
Chief. Information Service
The Canada Council
Ottawa

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Sir:

The courageous tale of b.b., another oppressed, maligned, and impoverished poet "fighting for his artistic life" in the face of a claimed conspiracy to destroy artistic freedom, indeed art, in this country failed. somehow, to arouse the intended indignation and admiration.

Bissett's adolescent insistence on a revision of English syntax and spelling as a statement of unqualified independence is hardly consistent with his fury over Big Daddy's reluctance to compliantly fork over yet another gratuitous stipend.

Nor do such ludicrous rationalizations as, "if government support is cut. there is *de facto* censorship," or the suggestion that parliamentary control of *government expenditure constitutes* "state-sanctioned art" disguise the real issue:

The piper, those who pay, and the calling of the tune.

Eric Rossitee
Orillia, Ont.

CUR!

Sir:

What, pray tell, is a Nazi Shepherd (review of *The* Dog *Crisis by* W. *A.* Marsano, *May)?*

Isn't that carrying the "if-it's-German-it-must-be-Nazi" mentality a little far?

The German Shepherd or the Alsatian (which is derived from a French province) has been around somewhat longer than the Nazi era.

Nazi measles. anyone?

K. Pohle
Lethbridge, Alta.

Editor's note: Similarly from Joseph McGowan of Ottawa.

THE GRIPES OF BATH

Sir:

At the risk of musing Bernie's (w)Rath, I don't agree that the net price agreement for books Will save Canadian literature and the independent booksellers (interview by Geoff Hancock, June-July).

To the Canadian reader. it will look like just another assault upon his/her pocket and his/her intelligence.

Over six years ago, I carried out a survey of bookselling in Canada for Be Canadian Broadcasting Association. At that time, the warning signs were plain. What struck me were the tensions between the different sections of the book world — between the trade and the college booksellers. and between those who sold hooks on a businesslike basis, and those who had got into bookselling because it was a "nice" activity.

The only salvation for the independent bookseller — as for any small business in this day and age — is to offer a quality service. Bill Roberts and Bill Duthie are successful booksellers becasue they know books. and they care about people. Only too often those selling books in the independent stores give the impression that they know little about books, and that they couldn't care less about buyers.

In some bmk stores in Canada. I've left without buying a book and been sorry to do so. In others. I've bought a book from sales staff whom I seem to be inconveniencing, and sworn never to buy another one.

I'm struck by Path's explanation of the net price agreement: "It's a m-operative venture among the publishers. the booksellers, and the government." That's not co-operation — that's collusion! Don't the reader and book buyer get involved? Book buyers read the books they buy — it's a pity that booksellers don't read the books they sell. They'd soon come to understand how people behave when such devices as net price agreements are brought in. The day that happens, my book buying will be done in Britain. the U.S., and the chains.

Jim Lotz
Halifax

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Sir:

We found the interview with Bernie Rath (June-July) very disconcerting. His lack of basic information is painful.

The implication In this interview is that Southam Coles make a IO to 20 per cent markup on new books. Thii is precisely the kind of *delusion that they* are trying *to* convey. In fact, J surveyed a typical Southam Coles store and found that only two titles, namely Margaret Trudeau's book and the new Morty Shulman were discounted. (Almost every book store I know of was also discounting the Trudeau book.) The rest of Southam Coles's meagre new titles were at full price.

Also by implication, Mt. Rath states that only W. H. Smith provide special order service. This is not true. Classic always have provided this service and almost all of our stores have all the tools necessary to perform thii function.

Another statement I would Iii cleated up is: What does Geoff Hancock mean by "single membership in CBA"? We pay the top rate of $350 annually. The sole reason for belonging is to support md show our solidarity wkh all booksellers.

Louis Melzack
Resident. Classic Bookshops (International) Lad.
Rexdale, Ont.

Editor's note: It seems to us self-evident that *"single membership" simply means* that Classic pay one rate — the top one — as a chain. In other words, individual stores in the chain don't pay individual rates.

THE AXEMAN COMETH

Sir:

I find it odd that A. F. Moritz should start hi hatchet job on Susan Musgrave's book, A *Man to Marry*, A *Man* to *Bury* (April) by quoting Northrop Frye. I CM only presume this means that Moritz has read Frye and paid him lip service whenever it was convenient. However, it is also obvious that Moritz has not paid much attention to Frye, or else is very forgetful. As Frye has said "somewhere" (after Moritz's studious manner), criticism has only to do with recognition, not *rejection. Rejection,* as *Moritz has proved in* many reviews, is the only thing he is capable of, and his exceptional kindness to Don Coles's poetry in the same issue seems tantamount to a kiss of death for the poor gentleman.

Moritz's bitchy and snickering manner is all too symptomatic of what is wrong with so many

reviewers today who prefer to sneer because they lack the ability to formulate and analyze poetry for its own worth. This not only includes all those who are eager to build a socko reputation for themselves as gunslingers but those who. hoping for tenure, will write anything to ensure that they are noticed. Publish or perish, indeed.

Moritz's ignorance of Musgrave's title poem was only fully revealed on a recent mdii interview when she related how the piece was a conscious imitation of Stevie Smith. Having read the pieces of poetic imitation that Moritz himself scribbles. I guess he will not dispute the convention here. Of course, imitating Smith is not imitating Virgil or Auden, and the fact that Smith was a member of the Royal Society of Literature, and praised on both sides of the Atlantic by such notables as Sylvia Plath cod Robert Lowell, will not change Moritz's mind about either ha or Musgrave.

As to his feeble cliché about the "fashionable pessimism and violence," I would suggest that he read a bit of literature — starting with Homer, Sophocles, and the Virgil be imitates, then go on to *Genesis*. the *Book of Job*, Beowulf, Dante, the Shakespearean tragedies, cod the Revenge tragedies, to see how long this "fashion" has prevailed.

Kevin Irie
Toronto

o

Sii:

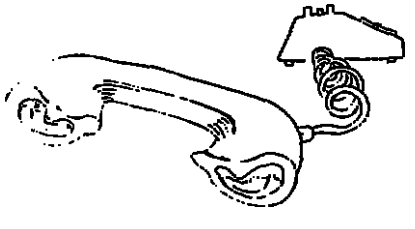
Please pardon this "restless alien" for popping into your world for a minute. A. F. Moritz is to be admired for taking such a short stab at a "tumultuous" book (review of Somebody *Told Me I Look Like Everyman*, May). But labeling this writer as "bitter" or "nervous" or "hyperactive" makes a body feel like a lemon twist. I can grin. but I can't bear it. To belittle a well thought out sestina such as "Scow White cod the Group of Sewn" as "withering chunks of frenetic and aggrieved wit" is like calling the Canadian railroad a catwalk.

I look at my B.A. in English (McGill. '73). plus my Diploma in Education (McGill, '75), and wonder what your reviewer meant by "unschooled" poet? Consider that one publisher rejected the original manuscript of *Somebody Told Me I Look Like Everyman* as being "too slick." I assure you, many "trained" minds assisted me in the task of proofreading. Need I remind *Books* in *Canada* that, in your January, 1979, issue, Louis Dudek certified me as the most underrated poet in Canada?

I have deliberately shunned the academic route in order to rough it on the strength of my pen. It makes one feel like a true poet. Not a "wounded outsider," but a fulfilled insider. I can't see myself amongst the insecure rounded weekend warriors who try to mix teaching with writing..

So as any high-school student will tell you, dear reviewer. next time you accuse an author of "slips" *in* grammar, please provide at least ccc example. Or else you are a very unschooled reviewer.

Raymond Filip
Montreal



FLIN FLON DIARY

Sir:

In response to Joan Haggerty's "Sentimental Journeys" (June-July), It has been going on for some time now. this search for national identity via culture, especially literature. Too long, perhaps. Because we have been navel-gazing so long, our literature still lacks the breadth cod depth which fiction that has cc international appeal does have. Okay, we should cot write about South Carolina and magnolia blossoms, but neither should we restrict ourselves only to personal experiences. The recording and accounting of personal experience is not literature unless it is focused bv some kind of reflective perspective, unless it is given a conscious direction rather than simply being a purging of memories and feelings. Our literature lacks a certain substance called *thinking*. *A* narrative of personal experience does not incorporate any great thought. Quite frankly, I do not want to write or read about girls eating homemade doughnuts in a booth in Flin Flon. No one does, except those girls in Flin Flon. Are we writing diaries here, or are we going to mckc an attempt at writing fiction that approaches the level of art?

D.K. Martens
Toronto

OLD SCHOOL TIES

Sir:

In your Mcy issue. Michael Thorpe argues that John McCrae (of Flanders Fields fame) may be *viewed* as "Canadian" because he went to "McGill (not Oxford)." The argument is no less strong if the facts are correct: he graduated from University College. Toronto, in 1894, and took his medial degrees at the same university, Toronto, not McGill. M.B. in 1898 and M.D. in 1910.

Humphrey Milnes
Archivist, University College
University of Toronto
Toronto

RESURRECTING GRANDPA

Sir:

I cm another reader who cannot agree that *Colombo's Books of Canada is* full of "recycled" material ("The Browser," April).

I have not seen my grandfather's poetry (including "The Parson at the Hockey Mitch") in print since hir (William MacKeracher's) original editions.

Moreover, the biographical note added information of which even I was unaware.

W. W. Jones
Brantford, Ont.

KISSING FRENCH

Sir:

Phil Surguy's interview with William French (May) presented an adulatory portrait of the Toronto *Globe and Mail* reviewer rather than any illuminating discussion or probing forum. Once again sycophancy and complacency are the order on the Canadian literary scene.

Moreover, lest Mt. French wax too self-congratulatory about the *Globe* book page, he should be apprised that the London *Free Press* also offers a weekly look at new books, and that this book page compares quite favourably with that of the *Globe*.

Patricia Bishop
London, Ont.

The editors recommend

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

FICTION

Zinger and Me, by Jack MacLeod, McClelland & Stewart. A punny epistolary novel that will keep the faculty club in fits, although non-academics may find the zing tends to zag.

NON-FICTION

At The Mermaid Ion: Wilfred Campbell, Archibald Lampman, Duncan Campbell Scott In The Globe 1892-93, introduction by Barrie Davis. U of T Press. The trio's literarv criticism stands up surprisingly well after 90 years cod makes today's round at the inn look like pale ale.

POETRY

There's a Trick with a Knife I'm Learning to Do, by Michael Ondaatje, McClelland & Stewart. A spare, taut collection of Ondaatje's best work.

CanWit No. 45

- Don't run until you see the whites of their eyes.

—William Lyon Mackenzie, 1837

- Quebec expects every man to vote his OUI.

—René Lévesque, 1979

ABOVE ARE TWO examples of Canadian quotations that *didn't* make it *into* Colombo's dictionary. There should be plenty of others. We'll pay $25 for the wittiest. Address: CanWit No. 45, *Books in Canada*, 366 Adelaide Street East. Toronto M5A IN4. The deadline is Oct. I.

RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 43

CONTESTANTS WERE asked to update familiar proverbs and adages to bring them more into line with this age of permissiveness and bafflegab. The winner is John W. Borthwick of Burlington. Ont., who receives $25 for these new saws:

- A Rolling Stone gathers convictions.
- Eat. drink. and be merry, for medicare will pay your bills.
- People who live in glass houses don't use oil.
- Two is company; three's the product.
- A fool and his money buy lottery tickets.
- One man's meat is too expensive.

Honourable mentions:

- Write a better *Mousetrap* and the world will beat a path to your theatre.
- Politics estrange bedfellow.

—Joan McGrath, Toronto

o Any airport in a hijacking.
—Catherine M. Taylor, Larry's River, N.S.

o One man's flesh is another's mercury.
—Elsa Pagowski, Hamilton, Ont.

o You can offer a person a job but you can't make him work.
—Helen Cooper, Queensville, Ont.

o Don't count your nukes before they've cracked.
—Mark Comish, Wawa, Ont.

o A Ms is as good as a male.
—Barbara War, Hamilton, Ont.

o Chaste makes waste.
-Sandy MacKay, London, Ont.

o A patch on your jeans saves 20 bucks.
—Lesley A. Shaw, Brentwood Bay, B.C.

Books received

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

"All Aboard": A Cross-Canada Adventure, by Barbara O'Reilly and Beverley Allinson, OWL & Greey de Pencier.
Andre Tom Macgregor, by Betty Wilson, Macmillan-NAL.
Annie Hodulik and Achille Frechette, by James Doyle, U of T Press.
Anti-Nuclear: Transition to Sustainability, by Fred Knelman, Mosaic.
Arms & Politics: 1958-1978, by Robin Ranger, Macmillan.
Assumption of St. Helena, by Sten Forshufvud & Ben Weider, Mitchell Press.

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EMIGRANT. latest novel of Stephen Gill. $3.00 Vesta Publications, Box 1641. Cornwall, Ont. K6H 5V6.

LISTS mailed on request. Out-of-print search service. Robert Duncan Books, 1390 Sherbrooke #24, Montreal, H3G 1J9.

OUT OF PRINT BOOKS — Canadian. Historical and Literary. Catalogues free on request. Huronia-Canadiana Books, Box 685, Alliston, Ont. LOM 1A0.

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Atlantic Canada, by Sherman Hines, Clarke Irwin.
Atlas of British Columbia, by A.L. Farley. UBC Press.
Baby Grand, by Guy Birchard. Brick/Naim.
The Baby Street-Car, by Helen Hayk. Three Trees Press.
Beyond the Labyrinth, by Christopher Wiseman, Sono Nis Press.
The Blacksmith of Fullbrook, by Audrey Armstrong. Musson.
A Bloody War, by Hal Lawrence, Macmillan.
Boiler Room Suite, by Rex Deverell. Talonbooks.
Book of Life of Doukhobors, edited by Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich, translated version, privately published.
The Boundaries of the Canadian Confederation, by Norman L. Nicholson. Macmillan.
Brave New Wave, edited by Jack David, Black Moss.
Business and Social Reform in the Thirties, by Alvin Finkel, James Lorimer.
Canadian Book of Lists, by Jeremy Brown and David Ondaatje, Macmillan-NAL.
The Canadian Woman's Guide to Money, by Monica Townson and Frederick Stapenhurst, McGraw-Hill Ryerson
Canadians All: 2, by Terry Angus and Shirley White, Methuen.
A Chain of Words, Irene N. Watts. Talonbooks.
The Chaldean Inscription, by R. Murray Schafer. Underwhich.
The Challenge of Squatter Settlements, by Harry A. Anthony. UBS Press.
Charlie White's Fishing Log Book, by Charlie White. Saltaire.
Child of the Canadian Forest, by Rene Bonnardel, Burke Books.
China: The Revolution is Dead — Long Live The Revolution, Black Rose.
A Collection of Canadian Plays, Vol. 5., edited by Rolf Kalman, Basset Books.
Concepts in Clothing, by Judy Lynn Gaef and Joan Buescher Strom, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
Cordial But Not Cosy, by Sonja Sinclair, M & S.
Courtship, Marriage and The Family in Canada, edited by G.N. Ramu. Macmillan.
Creature Comforts, by Jean Ward-Harris, Collins.
Crossroads I: Canadian Stories, Poems and Songs, Edited by William Roswell *et al.*, Van Nostrand Reinhold.
"Dangerous Foreigners": European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932, by Donald Avery. M & S.
Deathwatch on Skidegate Narrows and Other Poems, by Sean Virgo, Sono Nis.
Debates and Controversies from This Magazine, edited by Daniel Drache. M & S.
Decades of Caring, by Helen Caister Robinson. Dundurn Press.
Diamond Hitch: The Early Outfitters and Guides of Banff and Jasper, by E. J. Hart, Summerthought.
A Directory of Canadian Theatre Schools, Canadian Theatre Review Publications.
Discover Nova Scotia, by John Dunsworth *et al.*, Tall Ships Art Productions.
The Doctor and the Law, by H. E. Emson, Macmillan.
Does Canada Need A New Electoral System?, by William P. Irvine, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen's University.
Double Exposure, by Dorothy Grant. Consolidated Amethyst Communications.
Drug Alert!: A Provocative Look at Street Drugs, by Marilee Weisman. Wiley.
Drunken Jonah, by Dermot McCarthy. Sesame Press.
Endless Jigsaw, by George Swede. Three Trees Press.
Faces and Places Along the Railway, by Elizabeth A. Willmot, Gage.
The Fiddlehead Republic, by Nicholas Catanoy. Hounslow Press.
First Ghost to Canada, by Kenneth McRobbie. Turnstone Press.
Following The Red Path, by Vern Harper, NC Press.
Francis Bigot, by John Coulter, Hounslow Press.
The Future of Canadian Architecture, by Anthony Jackson. Nova Scotia Technical College Press.
The Future of Social Security in Canada, Canadian Council on Social Development.
Gaelic Songs in Nova Scotia, by Helen Creighton and Calum MacLeod, National Museum Publications.
La GRC et La Gestion de la Sécurité Nationale, by Richard French et André Beliveau, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
Getting Into Medical School, by Donald J. Solomon, W.B. Saunders.
God's Country: Charismatic Renewal, by Al Reimers, G.R. Welch.
Gothic Dreams, by Robert C. Tuck, Dundurn Press.
The Growth of Public Employment in Canada, by Richard M. Bird *et al.*, Institute of Research on Public Policy.
Heracles, by Dennis Foon. Talonbooks.
Here It Has Rained, by Rafael Barreto-Rivera, Underwhich.
Heritage Fights Back, by Marc Denhez, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
Holes in Space, by R.A.D. Ford. Hounslow Press.
The Home Children, edited by Phyllis Harrison, Watson & Dwyer.
How to Win an Election, by Anthony Gargrave and Raymond Hull, Macmillan.
Hotel California, by Bruce Young. The Good Earth.
Ignace, by Elinor Barr and Betty Dyck, Prairie Publishing Co.
The Illustrated Universe, by Rikki, Aya Press.
I Love My Plant/J'Aime Ma Plante!, by Marion Schaffer. Kids Can Press.
Immigration: The Destruction of English Canada, by Doug Collins. BMG Publishing.
Instants, by Marco Fraticelli, Guernica Editions.
Inuit Summer, by Allison Mitcham, Porcupine's Quill.
In Whose Interests, by Patricia Marchak. M & S.
Is The Canadian Economy Closing Down?, by Fred Caloren *et al.*, Black Rose.
It's Your Money, edited by J. Christopher and Brain E. Anderson. Methuen.
The Jewish Emergence from Powerlessness, by Yehuda Bauer. U of T Press.
The Jimmy Trilogy, by Jacques Poulin. Anansi.
John Bracken: A Political Biography, by John Kendle. U of T Press.
Kampuchea Will Win, by The Canadian Communist League. The Forge.
The Last Puzzle, by Ronald Ruskin, M & S-Bantam.
Laurier: His Life and World, by Richard Clippingdale. McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
The Ledger, by Robert Kroetsch, Brick/Naim.
The Legislative Process in Canada: The Need for Reform, edited by Neilson & MacPherson. Institute for Research on Public Policy.
Like a Weaver's Shuttle: A History of the Halifax-Dartmouth Ferries, by Joan and Lewis Payzant, Nimbus
Looking at Indian Art of the Northwest Coast, by Hilary Stewart. Douglas & McIntyre.
Macdonald of Kingston, by Donald Swainson. Thomas Nelson.
Madame Benoit's Lamb Cookbook, by Madame Jehane Benoit. McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
A Man Without Passion, by Florence Evans, Clarke Irwin.
Men, by Elizabeth Woods, Fiddlehead Poetry Books.
Mrs. Poppy's Great Idea!, by Darlene Wolk. Kids Can Press.
A New Mythos: The Novel of the Artist as Heroine 1877-1977, by Grace Stewart. Eden.
A New Romance, by David McFadden, Cross Country.
No, by George Young, published by the author.
No Longer Two People, by Lorna Uher and Patrick Lane. Turnstone Press.
The North Runner, by R.D. Lawrence. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
Norwegian Resistance 1940-1945, by Tore Gjelsvik. McGill-Queen's.
Nothing Too Good for a Cowboy, by Richmond P. Hobson Jr., M & S.
Only the Gods Speak, by Harold Horwood. Breakwater Books.
Operation Fish, by Alfred Draper. General.
Pages From The Past: Essays on Saskatchewan History, edited by D.H. Bocking. Western Producer Prairie Books.
Perceptions of Apartheid, by Ernie Regehr. Between The Lines.
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Policeman, by Claude L. Vincent, Gage.
Political Participation in Canada, by William Mishler, Macmillan.
Prairie Capitalism: Power and Influence in the New West, by John Richards and Larry Pratt, M & S.
The Province of Northern Ontario, by Gordon Brock, Highway Book Shop.
Queror, by Antonio D'Alfonso, Guernica Editions.
The Race for Unlimited Energy, by Gordon N. Patterson, Institute for Aerospace Studies U of T.
Raft Baby, by Dennis Foon. Talonbooks.
The RCMP vs The People, by Edward Mann and John A. Lee, General.
Rejoice in the Lord, by Bruce MacDougall, G.R. Welch.
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La Sagouine, by Antonine Maillet, Simon & Pierre.
The Salish People Vol. 1-4, edited by Ralph Maud, Talonbooks.
Scarecrow, by Rosalind MacPhee, Fiddlehead Poetry Books.
Seasons of the Eskimo, by Fred Bruemmer, M & S.
Selected Poems, by Alexandre L. Amprimoz, Hounslow Press.
The Shattered Illusion, by John Kolasky, PMA.
Society and Politics in Alberta, edited by Carlo Caldarola, Methuen.
Sociological Theories of Education, by Raymond Murphy, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
Sociologie et Sociétés, by Marcel Rioux, University of Montreal Press.
Something About Silence, by Marg Yeo, Hounslow Press.
Sound Poetry A Catalogue, edited by Steve McCaffery and bp Nichol, Underwhich.
Sourcebook On Canadian Women, by Philomena Hauck, Canadian Library Association.
The Sparrow Hawk, by Roger T. Williams, Virgo.
Spiralling, by Eldon Garnett, Impulse Magazine.
Split Rock, by Carolyn Zonailo, Caitlin Press.
Spratt, by Joe Wiesenfeld, Talonbooks.
The State and Enterprise, by Tom Traves, U of T Press.
Succession and Other Poems, by Robert Eady, Golden Dog Press.
Sucking the Breath of Texts, Wooing the Sky, by Wayne Oakley, Prospero.
The Superbureaucrats, by Colin Campbell and George Szablowski, Macmillan.
The Surprise Sandwich: Poems for Children, by Red Lane, Black Moss Press.
Swimming at Twelve Mile, by J.D. Carpenter, Penumbra.
The Tangent Factor, by Lawrence Sanders, Totem.
There Go The Cars, by John Pass, Sesame Press.
There Were No Signs, by Irving Layton, etchings by Aligi Sassu, Madison Gallery, Toronto.
Thunderbird, by Colin Patridge, Catalyst Press (Victoria).
Tomorrow Is School and I'm Sick to the Heart Thinking About It, by Don Sawyer, Douglas & McIntyre.
The Trade Unions and The State, by Walter Johnson, Black Rose.
Trees, Shrubs & Flowers to know in Ontario, McKay and Catling, J.M. Dent.
The Trudeau Decade, edited by Rick Butler and Jean-Guy Carrier, Doubleday.
Unfulfilled Union: Canadian Federalism and National Unity, by Garth Stevenson, Macmillan.
Various Titles, by Clifton Whiten, Sandpiper.
Walks, by Christian Bruyere, Talonbooks.
Windrush Love Poems, by Bluebell S. Phillips, Vesta.
Winter Flowers, by Janis Rapoport, Hounslow Press.
The Working Mother's Complete Handbook, by Gloria Norris and JoAnn Miller, Clarke Irwin.
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