

'American Smartass':  
the commercial style  
that's killing CanLit

New fiction from  
Kattan, Levine, and  
Duncan Campbell Scott

George Bowering on  
the birth of the  
Brown Mountain Poets

# BOOKS IN CANADA

Kids! Connect the dots  
and discover a  
FAMOUS  
CANADIAN  
AUTHOR  
(Hint on p. 15)



# BOOKS IN CANADA

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What is merely style in New York has become the rule in Canada. 'American Smartass,' says our critic, means

# WRITING FOR THE YANKEE DOLLAR

by Keith Maillard

IN THE LAST YEAR I've read unpublished novels by Joan Haggerty, Frances Duncan, Robert Harlow, and Susan Kerslake; Duncan and Harlow have read unpublished works of mine. Now, novelists tend to be solitary, secretive, and touchy types and do not ordinarily circulate their work in manuscript through a *samizdat* circle. We much prefer to read each other between bound covers. But, as everyone must have noticed by now, a chill is settling into the Canadian publishing industry, and many of us have begun to feel that we're being treated like Soviet dissidents in a benign way, of course, a Canadian way. We're not about to be shipped off to a gulag in the Keewatin Barrens to meditate on our sin of writing against the trend of current fashion; our punishment is simply that we won't be published.

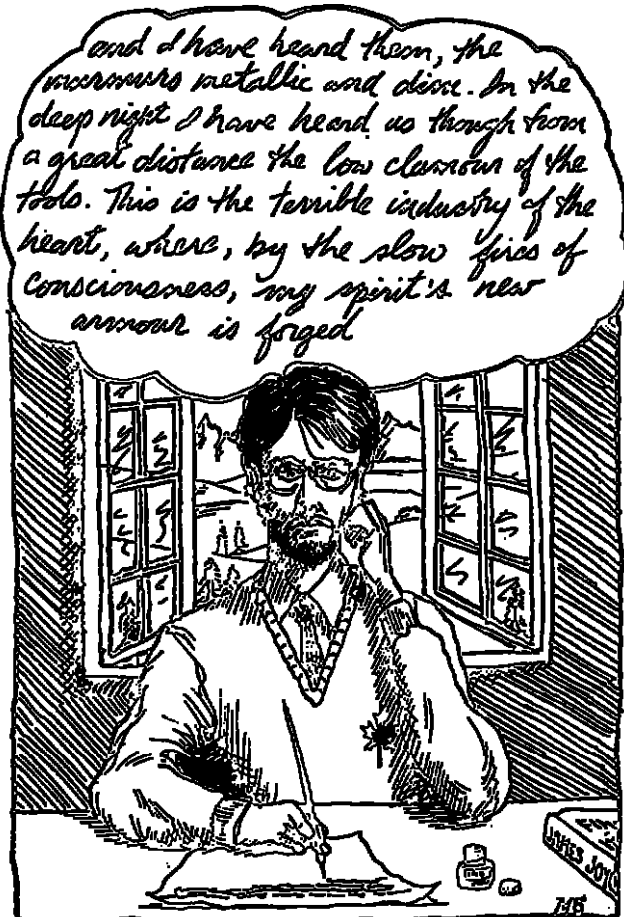
Joan Haggerty's complex and multi-layered *Daughters of the Moon* has come to be regarded as something of a feminist classic, but her second novel has been rejected with methodical regularity. Editors have been upset by the surreal fracturings that are so integral to Haggerty's style, and don't know what to make of women who turn into birds or contemporary characters who pmejet beneath them, like shadows, archetypal characters as old as myth. Frances Duncan's novella, *Dragonhunt*, reworks the St. George legend in a British Columbia setting. It is precisely the sort of book that small Canadian houses were publishing a few years ago—daring, experimental, and emphatically non-commercial—but so far she hasn't been able to place it. Kerslake's second novel develops the lyrical, personal style of *Middlewatch*; it remains unsold. Robert Harlow, despite the four published novels to his credit (and the late '81 book rejected by McClelland & Stewart. (So much for the popular notion that once you're in the M&S fold, you're there forever.) *Lover*, the story of a middle-aged Vancouver man on a sexual odyssey, is told with wit, subtlety, and enormous technical expertise; it's a novel of ideas and contains, to my mind, some of Harlow's best writing.

I believe that all of the novels I read in manuscript deserve to be published. That's not to say that some of them don't require reworking and editing, but there's not a lemon in the bunch. And as different as these writers are from each other, one thing they have in common—the reason they haven't been published and the reason that dozens of other good Canadian writers aren't being published—is that they aren't working in a style I've decided is 80 label, with tongue slightly in cheek, "American Smartass."

The received style from New York City, the style that has dominated fiction in the United States since the late 1960s, American Smartass comes in two major modes: the naturalistic and the satiric. In the naturalistic mode, the style is as laconic and filled with gory details as a police report: strong emotions are never stated but left between the lines. The satiric mode works by

exaggeration, pushing current situations and stereotypes to absurdity. But in whichever mode, American Smartass is a dead-pan, flat style—wry, ironic, and cynical, with bleak jokes shared between the writer and reader at the expense of the characters. As with any other style, there's nothing wrong with American Smartass *per se*. It can be used for serious literary work or for commercial pot boilers. It can be written well or written badly. When done for children, American Smartass generates the New York teenage problem novel. When done for adults, it's the "good read."

Two taxis were coming down the steep street. They both slopped in front of the Bal. A crowd of young men, some in jerseys and some in their shin-sleeves, got out. I could see their hands and newly washed, wavy hair in the light from the door. The policeman standing by the door looked at me and smiled. They came in. As they in, under



the only way to compete with Americans is to become as American as possible. In television this mentality produces disco shows aping American models. In cinema it makes feature films from which every Canadian reference is carefully expunged. In the book industry it publishes thrillers, pulp fiction, and "literary" novels written in varieties of American Smartass. In April, Jack McClelland told Martin Dewey of the *Globe and Mail* that M & S will be undergoing "a change of personality," by which he meant that

**Any Canadian house that wants to go totally commercial (that is, American) doesn't deserve to be helped by Canada Council funding. . . .**

they would be getting out of the unprofitable business of publishing non-commercial literature. "We won't give up our interest in serious Canadian writing," he assured us, "but there will be a steady movement towards more commercial fiction." "In other words," Dewey comments, "McClelland & Stewart is slowly moving toward a category of books known in the trade as popcorn." American Smartass.

In all cases these ventures are assisted by public funds. The Canada Council's block grants to publishers were intended as wed money to assist in the publication of strong, indigenous Canadian voices, and I don't care how many first novels any given house has on its fall list. What I want to know is how many of them are written in any other style than American Smartass. Any Canadian house that wants to go totally commercial (that is, American) doesn't deserve to be helped by Canada Council funding any more than Doubleday Canada does.

To move from the general back to the specific: of the novelists on my personal *sami-zdat* circle. Susan Kerslake writes in a style most thoroughly against the grain of American Smartass, so much so that it's inconceivable that her first novel, *Middlewatch* (Oberon, 1976), could have been published anywhere but in Canada at a time when the small houses were still in a position to take risks. The writing was intensely lyrical, in love with the English language, and sought not the most concise way of saying something, but the most beautiful. The novel was neither naturalistic nor satiric, but rather mythic and allegorical. The story was not a currently fashionable one: in a remote Atlantic village, a school teacher attempts to nurse back to health a young girl who has been cruelly abused.

We all know by now how scenes of sexual violence are done in American Smartass:

"I just fucked you pretty good, didn't I?"

You fucked yourself better, you pig.

"You were okay."

"Fuck you," he said. "I ain't going nowhere."

"What are you talking about?" It came out in a scream although she hadn't meant it to. She was really frightened now. She could see she might have to get him out by force and she didn't know how she'd do it. "Where do you think you are?"

"I'm right here," he said. "and I'm staying until I get some sleep."

She pushed at him but he was like a mass of stone, there was no way she could ever get him out.

—Judith Rossner, *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*

Compare Kerslake's treatment:

. . . Her eyes are open, wide, uncommonly wide. . . . He yanks the curtain from its nail and though she is all alone somewhere, he covers her nakedness, her hands like dried leaves, curled, her hip bones, her thighs curled black and blue, wet and bruise. His fingers smooth and fumble at her tom smock, finding a shred of tie to knot at her breast, to cover the bird-cage bones, the pints of some sort of blows, animal prints running on the bridges of her ribs. Still she does not move, acknowledge him.

. . . She remains there, eyes open again and vacant. He moves to the end of the bed, first to one post and then to the other, cutting the rope knots tied first to her ankles, then around the posts. It has worn not at all in the wood, but around her ankles, draining white and cold, are raw sores, burned beneath the bleached skin, down to where there is still blood. She doesn't seem to watch or feel his hands

around her bones, trying gently to put her legs together. Her feet are filthy in his soiled hands.

The stylistic difference is enormous. As chillingly effective as Rossner's book is, Kerslake's is the more resonant; by the care of her language, by presenting the event in retrospect rather than in the midst of it, Kerslake makes any sense of titillation impossible and leaves only the horror.

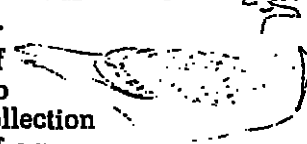
American Smartass has become a safe style: a writer can hide behind it, risking nothing at all. But Kerslake writes in polar opposition to such irony and cynicism. Her style is continually endangered by its own conviction. *Middlewatch* is a novel drawn on a tightrope: one missed step and Kerslake would have fallen into the Gothic or the maudlin. It's a testimony to her craftsmanship that she never slipped once. Of the dozen and a half reviews *Middlewatch* received most were favourable, many enthusiastic. David Williamson (in the *Winnipeg Free Press*) called it "one of the best Canadian novels of the year" (he was right); *Books in Canada* considered it for their award for the best first novel of the year. And then what? Well, the times were changing. Kerslake's second novel, *Penumbra*, is the natural development of her uncompromisingly personal v&e. Its a firmly regional book with the sell air of the *Maritimes* blowing through every page. I found passages in it as good as anything I've ever read. *Penumbra* has been rejected by Oberon, Breakwater, Lester & Orpen Denry, Macmillan, Coach House, and McClelland & Stewart.

If the small Canadian houses go under or are frightened away from unconventional fiction; if the big houses become so Americanized that American Smartass is the only literary style they will consider (and I believe that both things are happening), then many Canadian writers will be forced to bypass the Canadian publishing industry altogether and might just lock out in the huge, quirky New York market. Those we will love will be the writers with the most vulnerable style's, writers like Susan Kerslake. And if our novelists with personal visions, regional inflections and unconventional styles cannot be published in Canada, they won't be published anywhere. □

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# TISH TECTONICS

Being a nostalgic history of how the bare hills around Oliver and Osoyoos gave birth to the Brown Mountain Poets

by George Bowering

AS MANY READERS may be tired of hearing, I was born and brought up in the Okanagan Valley. The more I read Canadian literature, the more I am convinced that being shaped in the Okanagan has to be a disadvantage for a Canadian writer. As I was growing up I learned every day that what seemed to me a pretty normal place to live was for outsiders a kind of Eden, a sun-washed vacation land of desert lakes, generous fruit trees, and top-notch baseball. Hence I was late to discover that I had missed out on the most valuable experience for a Canadian writer—harsh, unforgiving Nature.

Even people from the Coast spilled into the Okanagan Valley, gladly throwing off their clothes, because in that northernmost tip of the Great Sonora Desert it does not min. With the artificially greened Valley campsites and auto courts filled with aliens, we Okanagan kids just naturally took to the hills. The hills around Oliver and Osoyoos are bare and brown. We thought of ourselves as the Brown Mountain Boys. Later, when we were too old to play cowboys, we started taking our Mammoth Scribblers up the hills with us, where we would light a sagebrush campfire, and write poems as the sky darkened. We called ourselves the Brown Mountain Poets.



The Brown Mountain Poets of Oliver and Osoyoos were unusually loyal to one another, but after high school, some of us stayed in the Valley to become packing house managers, while the rest went to various colleges and universities. Most went to colleges in the United States, of course. We had always found the Okanagan Valley, which extended southward almost to Wenatchee, Washington, more a fact than the 49th parallel. I bought my Mammoth Scribblers down there because they were cheaper than the Jumbo Scribblers at the Rexall in Oliver.

At the University of British Columbia, fellow Brown Mountaineer Willy T. and I discovered that there were other young poets who had come down from the hills to pursue their craft at the Creative Writing Department. Inevitably we felt that the desert-valley kids shared an ethogeography that fed our imaginations in a way that Creative Writing 102, with its chimera of a "Canadian tradition," never could.

It was the Penticton Brown Mountain poet, Frank D., a stutterer and writer of very short lines, who told me that "form is never more than an extension of content." I suppose it was foreordained that Eastern critics should read that last word as content, but Frank had said content. Form is never more than an extension of content. It was after he told me this while we were smoking Camels at Locarno Beach, that I had the inspiration for these much-anthologized lines (1961):

*Looking at the sea  
it is a line  
of unbroken brown mountains...*

It was not long till Brown Mountain led to the founding of *Tish* magazine. I have in the past decade heard many fanciful ideas about the origin of the name. I even read that one Ontario journalist-poet said that it was "Shit" spelled backward. I would like to argue that it is "Hsit" spelled backward. The real truth is that the name was suggested to us by Mary Roberts Ripchart, who was, in 1961, giving us a series of lectures on Percussive Verse in Warren Tallman's living mom. The title owes its source to the fact that the funds required to launch the magazine, to buy office furniture, a press, and so on, was gathered from various friends in Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, who wanted to see poetry get started in Canada. (We did not know that there were poets trying to do the same thing in Montreal and Fredericton.)

The name of the magazine was really an acronym, standing for Truth Is Sure Heavy, the title of a 1961 poem by the Okanagan Falls Brown Mountain poet, Fred W. That poem contains some lines that will be found in our textbooks a century from now:

*colored pictures  
of all things to em: yucky  
postcards  
And words words words  
all over Brown Mountain.*

And so Topsy grew. And so did Mopsy, Flopsy, and Cottontail.

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# Far from the eyes of night

by Stephen Scobie

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**Paris Interlude**, by Naim Kattan, translated from the French by Sheila Fischman, McClelland & Stewart, 208 pages 512.95 cloth (ISBN 0 77104471 2).

IT IS UNFAIR, always, to hold a writer responsible for the blurb on the dust-jacket of his book. But I find that in approaching Naim Kattan's *Paris Interlude* I must first of all say what it is *not* — and it is not what the dust-jacket says it is.

"Lusty and lyrical" are the adjectives used, as if Kattan's book-the story of a young Iraqi Jew living as a student in Paris in 1948, and of the three women he loves — were cast in the same mould as Leonard Cohen's *The Favourite Game*. But in fact, although the young hero spends a good deal of his time in bed, the novel never dwells upon the "lusty" details; about the closest we get to erotic description are such terse sentences as, "AU night we caressed, making love frenetically." The women are scarcely described at all. Just the barest details of their physical appearance are sketched in: "Long blonde hair falling to her shoulders. Bright eyes, green or blue, a small mouth and a long chin."

Similarly, there is no attempt to present lyrical evocations of the physical settings of the action. Paris, Milan, Edinburgh: they are among the most beautiful cities in Europe, but you wouldn't know it from Kattan's descriptions, or rather lack of descriptions. If you want a "lyrical" description of Paris, go to John Glassco's *Memoirs of Montparnasse*, not to *Paris Interlude*.

I do not necessarily intend these comments as criticisms of Kattan's book. They would be criticisms only if he had intended to be "lusty and lyrical." for then he would have failed. But there is no evidence that he ever intended any such thing. Indeed, the avoidance of evocative detail is so systematic that it can only be seen as deliberate and conscious.

The dust-jacket is also less than accurate in the idea it gives the prospective reader of the plot of the novel. "Problems arise," it tells us, "when he tells each [of the three women], in all sincerity, 'I love you more than anyone.' The result, not surprisingly, is that each demands the hapless young romantic marry her." Well, the hem is not

"hapless," nor do the women "demand" any such thing; the "problems" never come to a head; the three women never meet, there are no dramatic confrontations, no elaborate plot complications ensue.

The point I am trying to make is that Kattan, setting out to write a novel on the essentially conventional theme of a young man facing profound choices about the future of his personal life and career, has deliberately avoided almost all of the conventional ways of dealing with the theme. Greatly to his credit, he has not written the novel that might have been expected from the situation, the novel that, evidently, the blurb-writer assumed he had written. He has not written a nostalgic "od about a vanished golden age of lusty youth in lyrical cities: nor has he written a" ironical comedy about a naive young romantic entangled in conflicting affairs and divided loyalties.

Rather, the distinguishing mark of *Paris Interlude* is its neutral, objective tone. The descriptions are brief and factual; the dialogue is terse, realistic, often banal, never pretentious. The young man, Méir ("all of the characters in this book are fictitious" and any resemblance between the names Méir and Naim is purely coincidental), is neither nostalgically indulged nor cynically excoriated. The readers are left to make their own judgements about his relative innocence or maturity, to what degree his self-centredness is necessary for his survival or to what degree it is a defence against emotional involvements and responsibilities. The temptations in writing this kind of novel are for the author to try to excuse or justify his younger self, or else to be heavily ironical and superior, to demonstrate how foolish that young man was and how wise he has now become. The great strength of Kattan's novel is that he avoids both of these temptations. Méir is allowed to emerge freely, on his own account, without undue interference from Naim.

The method has its weaknesses, of course. The average reader may well feel starved for details. I think we would like to know more about the way Paris looked, sounded, felt, and tasted in 1948. The political background — the dilemma of a young Jew who is also a" Arab, at the time of the first establishment of the state of

Israel — is fascinating, far too fascinating to remain as background. The brief appearances of famous writers such as Gide and Camus (and of not-so-famous writers, such as Lewis Spence) do little to satisfy our surely legitimate curiosity.

The women also remain as incomplete characters. There is some attempt to distinguish them in terms of their national backgrounds — Polish, Dutch, French — but they all share the characteristics of being docile, adoring, and obedient. "Whatever you want, Méir," says Anne at one point — and that just about sums up all three of them. When the time comes for two of them to fade out of the picture, they do so quietly, conveniently, and without bothering the hem with any reproaches.

The strengths and weaknesses of the book are bound up with each other. The objectivity of tone, which provides such a clear, unbiased look at Méir's character, also tends to deprive the other characters of emotional depth. But it would clearly have been a mistake for Kattan to attempt to present his story any other way: Méir is not a Leonard Cohen character, nor does he view Paris through a sensibility like John Glassco's. This hard, dear, limited narration carries its own authority, its own authenticity. *Paris Interlude* may not be lusty or lyrical, but it is truthful. □

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## An ice place to visit

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**Thin Ice**, by Normal Levine, Deneau & Greenberg, 137 pages, 510.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88879 016 3).

By MICHAEL SMITH

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NORMAN LEVINE is an expatriate writer who, since the late 1940s, has viewed Canada from the perspective of a seaside town in Cornwall, England. When he comes home — not least in his "on-fiction" book, *Canada Made Me*, a bitter commentary on the Canada of the mid-'50s — he comes as a visitor. Of the 12 stories in this collection (his fourth), half are about visits to Canada, and a seventh (titled, naturally, "A Visit") is about the narrator's Canadian relatives visiting him. In several others he gathers, almost at random, the histories of various characters who happen to bump into the narrator as they casually visit back and forth.

Unlike many short-short writers, Levine wastes little energy on staging, — the creation of clever, "memorable" characters, or a narrative persons independent from himself. Rather, the narrator and writer are identical, at least superficially: a Canadian Jew who grew up in Ottawa, served: in the RCAF, graduated from McGill, and soon moved abroad. The

What started in 1961 as a small regional poetry movement is now a seemingly unstoppable raid on the Canadian poetry sensibility. The original Brown Mountain Poets (or at least the Vancouver ones) are now in positions of power in many Canadian universities, and some of us serve on Canada Council committees. In every way we can we try to mould the poetic minds of young writers, including those brought up in the snow belt. There are second-generation Brown Mountain poets who have never seen the South Okanagan, though many make pilgrimages there. The students of Summerland Brown Mountain poet Lionel K. receive three university credits for a field trip to Omak, Washington, where they must write 100 poems with short lines in imitation of Mr. K., whose only instruction to them is that "one perception must immediately and directly lead to a further perception." It was Mr. K. who gave Brown Mountain (and Canada) perhaps its most moving strophes (1961):

*The light foot hears you and the  
brightness begins,  
god-step at the margins of thought,  
quick adulterous tread at the crest  
della montagna bruna. . . .*

There have been, of course, pockets of resistance to the hegemony from the hills. Every year there is a Great Canadian Poetry Weekend organized by the Collingwood Garrison Poets, and deliberately positioned at Blue Mountain, Ont. Hoping to even things out, another Eastern group has started a publishing house called, significantly, Valley Editions. Fighting for their survival, the Toronto Nancy Poets have formed a cohesive guard under the motto: "The Wilderness is Too Scary."

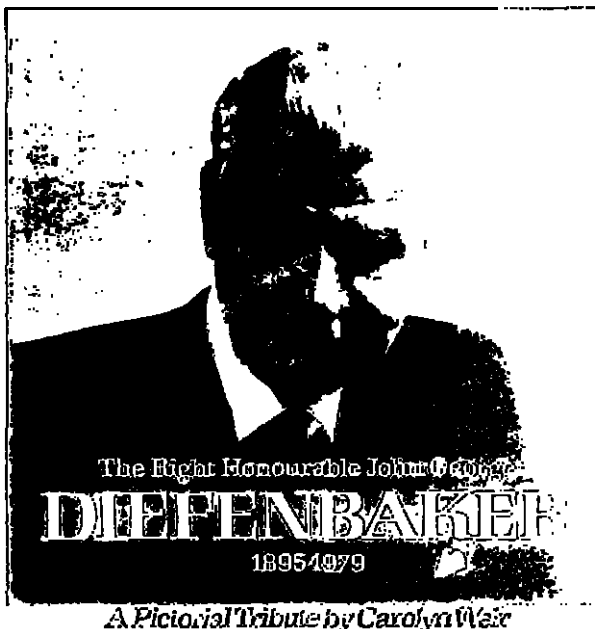
But we with our roots in the sands of the Okanagan Valley say to all of them, we will bury you. And day by day, poem by poem, we continue to build our enormous Brown Mountain. □



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The Right Honourable John George  
DIEFENBAKER  
1895-1979

A Pictorial Tribute  
by Carolyn Weir



When John Diefenbaker died on August 16th, 1979, an entire nation mourned his passing. The official funeral in Ottawa was attended by political friend and foe alike, and countries across the world sent representatives to mourn the passing of Canada's thirteenth Prime Minister. As the funeral train moved westward toward his chosen resting place at Saskatoon the common people of Canada paid their tribute.

As a Permanent reminder of John Diefenbaker's career, Olive Diefenbaker's daughter, Carolyn Weir, has produced this pictorial tribute. In the pages of this book you will find 160 photographs — some well-known, some from private family albums — that trace the life of the boy from the prairies who rose to the country's highest office, and to a special place in the hearts of all Canadians. John Diefenbaker's own distinctive words accompany the photographs and help to make this an historic volume that deserves a place in every Canadian home.

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premise behind most of his stories is equally simple: the writer forays out — sometimes overseas, sometimes just for a walk—then returns to write down what he has learned. Often, when people find out he's a writer, they want to tell him things. "You wouldn't believe the things that have happened to me," says a man in "By a Frozen River"; it's a common refrain.

Compared to traditional notions about how a short story should be structured, this journalistic deliberation creates stories that are nearly formless, flirting with the mundane. No twist of the tale. No plot. No passion. Very little sex. As its title suggests, "A Writer's Story" is a blueprint for Levine's *modus operandi*. The writer and his wife move to the seaside. He goes for visits to two elderly people who reminisce about their pasts. The man has known D. H. Lawrence; the woman has many local ironies to tell. Then the man has a fall, and must go to live with his daughter. "We won't see him again," the old woman says. The writer and his wife move back to London. And that's it.

Yet Levine's stories manage to transcend banality, partly because he forces his readers to respond to them by implication, rather than telling us what to think. Even when, in "Grace & Faigel," the writer appears to be on the verge of an extra-marital affair, he hardly reveals what he's thinking about. There's no suggestion that the possibility of an affair is anything he has ever considered before. Nor any second thoughts, except for the remark that he's avoiding talking too

much about his wife. As a result, the narrator is often in danger of seeming a cold fish, though in his spare reporting of events Levine successfully balances the cynical with the humane. When, as readers, our judgement waivers, he skewers us with irony:

"Next time you're here," he said, "I'll take you out to see my plant. It's in the country. I built it all myself — the machinery — the conveyor belts — the whole process."

We got back into his car. "The government health inspector is after me," he said mischievously. And grinned. "I'm a polluter."  
I like Harvey. I like his style.

The visitation theme is sustained most strongly in such stories, as "In Lower Town" and "Champagne Barn," in which the writer returns to the Ouawa of his youth; in "A Visit" and "Class of 1949," in which visitors from the past turn up at his home; and in "By a Frozen River" and "The Girl Next Door," in which the writer deliberately checks into lodgings in Canada and the lives of the inhabitants of adjoining moms. Similarly, in the title story, he finds himself storm-stayed and broke in a small New Brunswick town, reliving the poverty-inspired artifice he had to practise as a young writer in order to survive. And in "We All Begin in a Little Magazine" he rediscovers, rather guiltily, the dependence many fledgling writers invest in the benevolent editors of small magazines, beyond which few will ever progress.

By the time these stories were written, Levine's writer-narrator has become quite a success. Journalists travel to the seaside to interview him, and his presence commands whole pages in the Ottawa papers when he returns for a visit. "You're fame-us," says a retarded nephew in one story. "Me see you on TV." That's slightly more popular attention than Levine himself seems to enjoy in Canada, but he does deserve it. As the man says, I like his style. □

## When they were one and twenty

The Ghost Writer, by Philip Roth, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 180 pages. \$11.95 cloth (ISBN 0 374 16189 5).

By DOUGLAS HILL

MALAMUD, IRVING, STYRON — Dubin, Garp, Stingo. And now Philip Roth with Nathan Zuckerman. It's novels-about-novelists time again: the wheel of American fiction lurches forward another quarter-turn into the past. All of these books, in one way or another, show a concern with the beginnings of their protagonists' career; perhaps the apprenticeships they focus on, and the 1940s and 1950s that foster them, are

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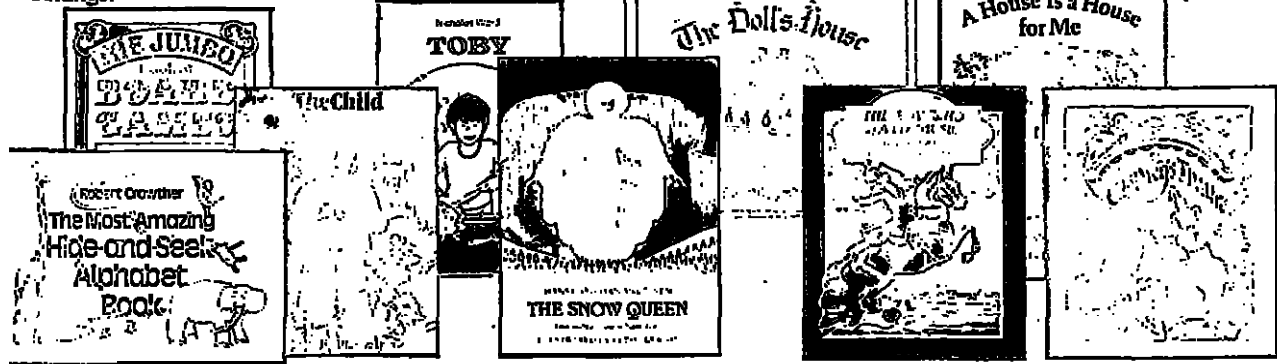
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# PRISONER OF DESIRE

britt hagarty



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especially appealing to their creators now as projections of a moment — the last? — when it was possible to imagine becoming “just” a writer, not a personage, not a property. The novels offer an air of nostalgia, of remembered innocence and idealism, that can't be explained by the chronological age of the fictional character (or author) alone.

Nathan is 23, with four stories published and a Fellowship to a writers' colony, when he goes to visit the eminent E. I. Lonoff (six hooks, 'a National Book Award for fiction politely declined) at his farmhouse in the Berkshires. Nathan is self-consciously in search of a spiritual Father; he admits his biological Father is perfectly adequate biologically, and when we meet him later Nathan presents him, deftly, as sensitive and humane in ways we are not prepared for, but, as the son says, “he was a foot doctor and not an artist.” Nathan is by turns cocky and inept, pompous and shy, with an ego whose imagination of its own triumphs and inadequacies is capable of Portnoy-like arpeggios of excess.

Lonoff himself is a remarkable, serious work of invention, the casual resemblances to Malamud and Singer notwithstanding. He lives with his wife of 35 years (the children are grown and gone); she's reached a breaking-point of sorts in her marriage to “this man with no illusions.” His character, as husband and story-teller, combines “sympathy and pitilessness”; he's the Russian-American heir of Hawthorne and James, Gogol and Chekhov.

The choice Nathan decides he must make is between art and Family, but he's honest enough not to be arbitrary about the demands and loyalties of either. He comes to Lonoff for guidance and validation; he gets intelligence, understanding, and praise, but hardly a role-model. There's another guest, though—a mysterious young woman from one of Lonoff's writing classes at the nearby college. Amy Belleite's status in the household— is she daughter, friend, mistress?— leads Nathan into almost compulsive speculation: at one point he lets Fancy fly and imagines a startling history for her that momentarily renders his own conflict mundane and immature.

Roth's prose is a delight. The sentences are long, complicated, and lucid, Jamesian in their knack of striking the ironic pivot that turns expository attack to burlesque retreat. Clauses and phrases leap from ambush to chew up all sorts of experience and bear it away, growling resonantly.

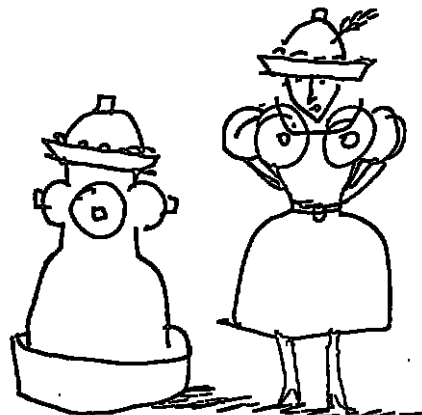
With all its stylistic brilliance, *The Ghost Writer* isn't as flamboyant as the more notorious of Roth's novels, but it's taut with controlled energy. The restraint extends to the book's length — it seems too short — and to its habit of reducing explanation to the essentials. Indeed, as Roth risks the compression and economy of the folk-tale, as he chooses to compose variations rather than a symphony, one occasionally wishes For the expansiveness of a more circumstantial, more cohesive narrative.

Roth's last two novels, *The Professor of Desire* and *My Life as a Man*, gave evidence of strength renewed after the letdown following *Portnoy*. *The Ghost Writer* sustains that fictional health; I think it's a small, dark, dating success, not quite perfect, not quite fully satisfying. Why say more? Roth doesn't. □

## IN BRIEF

Untitled Novel, ca. 1905, by Duncan Campbell Scott, **Penumbra Press**, 327 pages, \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 920806 04 X-1. As was the case with the publication of F. P. Grove's *The Master Mason's House* in 1975, the appearance of a posthumous novel by a well-known writer can be an unexpected and triumphant occasion, the result of much patient scholarship and diligent editing, and a cue for the reassessment of the writer's reputation. No such triumph should accompany the appearance of this top-heavy tome written and apparently rejected by Scott 10 years after his brilliant book of short stories, *The Village of Viper*. Scott was an accomplished poet and the Father of the modern Canadian short story, but he was no novelist. This untitled and unedited manuscript has no structure other than the day-to-day demands of the narrative (a sure sign that this is a first draft), only superficial character development (stated but not explained), and the faintest echo of the style that informed his earlier stories. As for theme, the book's “editor,” John Flood, points in his afterword to the development in Scott's women from innocence into worldliness: “They provide the framework for romance, which is ultimately destroyed, and then replace it with a framework for realism.” Perhaps, if so, one wishes the frameworks had had more competent canvases stretched over them. And because of the total absence of any editor's — or even proofreader's — hand, the most dedicated would-be reader will be inclined to give it up in frustration. A few scholars will quibble about Flood's arbitrary assignation of the manuscript to 1905, but otherwise the book deserves the fate Scott himself must have wished for it: oblivion.

— WAYNE GRADY



# Three on a see-saw

by I. M. Owen

**Latakia**, by Audrey Thomas. Talonbooks. 176 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 33922 167 7).

THE AMERICAN-BORN CANADIAN WRITER Audrey Thomas has written a novel about an American-born Canadian writer named Rachel who is wiling an autobiographical novel. The danger of getting trapped in an infinite regression (like the Quaker and his cats) is avoided by giving the novel — Audrey Thomas's, not Rachel's — the form of a monologue in which Rachel imagines herself talking to her recent lover, a younger writer named Michael who has now returned to his wife, about their life together. The narrative keeps shifting in time and place, at random and without warning: sometimes the scene is in Crete where Rachel is now living, sometimes in Vancouver where the affair started, sometimes on a freighter in the Atlantic or the Mediterranean, sometimes in New York, Montreal, Las Palmas, Rome, Latakia, or Athens. That's the way our private thoughts work, of course. But when we want to interest someone else in our experiences we generally try to arrange the events in a logical sequence. And one of the objects of a novel is to interest someone else in a story.

When Margaret Laurence plays about with the time-sequence in *The Diviners* there's a point to it, but *The Diviners* is a large and complex story. *Latakia* isn't. Rachel meets Michael and falls in love with him. He leaves his wife Hester to live with her. They travel together; he keeps in touch with Hester; they try a *ménage à trois* that fails: he ends up back with Hester. These three are the only characters; there are other figures, but they are not much more than stage props. Most of them are Greeks; Rachel can speak some Greek (very badly, to judge by her often inaccurate transliterations of Greek words and names) but not enough to enable her to see more than the surface of the people's lives. Hers is a tourist's eye view: she can speak of "a Greek, nurtured on centuries of worship of physical perfection, especially in the male," as if there had been no intervening centuries of well-wrapped Eastern Orthodoxy and Islamic domination between Praxiteles and the present.

But then Rachel and Michael don't do much thinking, except about themselves. "I thought you were the biggest egotist I had

ever met," she says; "you thought the same of me." They were both right. The reader wonders what the novels of such people would be like, and Rachel supplies the answer: "I can write about other people, I just don't choose to." She implies that Michael wouldn't be able to if he chose.

Even their thinking about themselves seems pretty narrowly confined to their sexual encounters, which are remarkably frequent and evidently varied. Rachel doesn't go in for explicit descriptions, except of what the newspapers primly call "oral sex" (a phrase that always suggests to me a lot of talk and no action); but it's clear that the two of them have heard the tidings of Comfort about joy. Michael's characteristic term is "doing dirty things."

Rachel is obsessively in love with this repellent person — so obsessively that doubts don't seem to enter her mind even when early in their liaison he calls her seven-year-old daughter "you little fucking bitch." As for Michael, his obsession is with the satisfaction of having two women in love with him. (Hester is mostly off stage, and there's little to explain what's going on in her mind.)

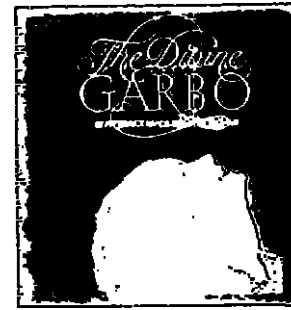
Occasionally Rachel tries to derive from her abject condition a significant feminist statement:

"I had never loved anyone, physically, the way that I loved you. When you touched me, my flesh smoked. That was the great power you had over me. For the first time in my life, I really understood the politics of male chauvinism, the conscious (or often unconscious) use of the power bestowed by genitals and the System.

That's simply silly. Rachel has had to wait until the age of 38 to experience a feeling that's familiar, sorely, to most males. So if it has to do with the politics of sexual chauvinism, women most have been in charge of the world all along, after all.

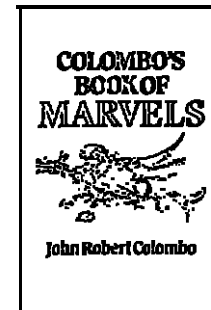
Each episode, it should be said, is shrewdly observed and written with style and wit. Audrey Thomas is a very good writer. I just wish she had emulated Mavis Gallant, who sometimes writes a novel and then pares it down until it emerges as a short story. *Latakia* could have made a striking short story. By stretching it out over 176 pages and then shuffling the pages into a random order, the author hasn't done her small subject a bit of good. □

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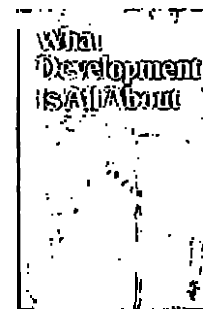
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# Small wonders

A report card on the year's selection of children's books, from fear of the dark to terror in the Ukraine

by Mary Ainslie Smith

IN THEIR APPROACH to books, children are unlikely to be influenced by feelings of nationalism. Their parents, who hold the money, may have reasons to buy Canadian, but to catch and hold children's readership, Canadian books have to compete with a broad range of imports from the United States and Europe, many of them extremely attractive as well as reasonably priced. Some of this year's Canadian children's books should certainly hold their own, while others probably won't make much of a dent on the market.

Books for very young children most, in many ways, present the greatest challenge. It is so important that they be visually appealing, as well as fun to listen to. It is a real bonus when such books can also remain entertaining for the dolls who may have to read them aloud dozens and dozens of times. Three books from Annick Press satisfy these criteria. Two of them, *The Dark* and *Mud Fuddle* (each 32 pages, \$6.95 cloth) are the first of a series of stories by Robert N. Munsch, who originally told them to the children in the day-care centre where he once worked. The heroine of both stories, Julie Ann, encounters rather threatening situations — first a monster. The Dark, that grows ever larger by swallowing shadows, then a mud puddle that attacks her whenever she steps outside. Julie Ann deals with these problems with great resourcefulness and humour, and Sami Suomalainen's cheerful illustrations present her as a stocky, gap-toothed, and very likeable little kid. Munsch claims to have another story in the series that he knows will never find a publisher: it's called *The Fair*.

Annick's third title, *Up in Bubbles* (48 pages, 96.95 cloth), written and illustrated by Barbara Salsberg, is a beautiful and intriguing story telling how adventures with pink bubble gum change the lives of little Ellen McGrood and her unhappy father for the better. Both the illustrations and the text are so subtle that the book contains much more than its 48 pages would suggest. The three Annick books are very sturdily put together with hardcovers and sewn binding, worth having for young children whose enthusiasm for a favourite story can be very wearing.

Also intended for preschoolers, or for very young readers are *I love my plant! / J'aime ma plante!* by Marion Schaeffer, illustrated by Kathy Vanderlinden (Kids Can Press, 32 pages, \$2.95 paper) which has a French/English text and *The Recyclers* by Frances Kilbourne, illustrated by Ann Powell (The Women's Press, 32 pages, \$9.50 cloth, 54.95 paper) which has no text at all but presents its story through pictures. Both are attractive and contain a worthwhile message.

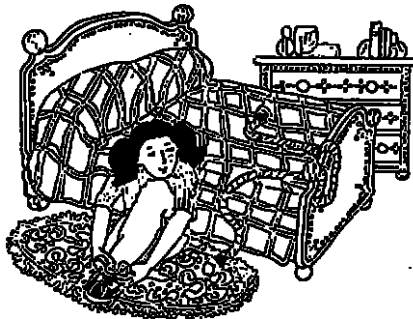
Frank Tierney has written another of his Silly Sally series, this time *Silly Sally in the Tire* and Mrs. Corrigan, illustrated by Wendy Irvine (Borealis, 24 pages, \$4.95 paper). Sally's current adventure is, in fact, quite silly, as well as rather hard on her neighbour, Mrs. Corrigan. She is understandably upset when Sally, playing with a spare tire, bowls her off her feet. Even the happy ending does not justify the price for this small book.

*Cookies for Luke* (Cherry Publishers, 17 pages, \$6.95 paper) is an ambitious attempt by Sheila J. Bleeks to show how Christopher, a five-year-old, comes to terms with the death of his best friend Luke. (Is that short for leukemia?) Illustrations by Kelly Clark include one of Christopher standing, hat in hand, in front of Luke's open, flower-banked coffin. But Christopher is only five after all, and the ending, although apparently meant to be up-beat and hopeful, suggests that he still doesn't have a very clear idea at all about what has happened to

Luke. A book that could actually help children deal with the death of someone close to them would be very welcome, but *Cookies for Luke* isn't it.

*Kids of Canada* is a new series of books designed by James Lorimer & Co. for children ages five and up to read for themselves. Three of the eight books in this series have been released this fall. Leading off is Margaret Laurence's *Six Darn Cows* (reviewed on page 15). The other two, *Hockey Showdown* by Bruce Kidd, illustrated by Leung O'Young, and *The Pillow* by Rosemary Allison, illustrated by Charles Hilder (both 32 pages, 56.95 cloth), present successful blends of an important concept with an entertaining story. In *Hockey Showdown*, young Domingos is in trouble with his cranky neighbour, who threatens to call the police if the kids keep playing hockey in the vacant lot next to his house. *Deus ex machina* in the form of Ken Dryden arrives to restore neighbourhood harmony and to give tips on tact and co-operation as well as goal-tending. Well, if you're about six years old, you'll love it. *The Pillow* tells the story of Angelina, newly arrived from Italy and homesick. School, where everyone speaks a language she can't understand, is difficult, but by the end of the story she begins to see a solution to her problems. These stories have been written carefully to encourage young readers — the vocabulary and the sentence structures are simple, but not simple-minded. They should be popular books.

The Lorimer series emphasizes recognizable Canadian settings, and specific settings become increasingly important in stories intended for children in the junior grades of school. In *Borrowed Black* by Ellen Bryan Obed, illustrated by Hope Yandell (Breakwater, 32 pages, \$6.95 cloth), the setting, the wild and isolated shore of Labrador, is supremely important. *Borrowed Black* is a sinister creature who disrupts life along the shore by stealing and then breaking the moon. The story is told in rather emphatic rhyme, the text hand-lettered in heavy black italic script; these, with the dark and somewhat grotesque illustrations, reinforce the atmosphere suggested by the setting.



From the Canadian Children's Annual 1980.

A more benign atmosphere pervades *Linger* by the Era (Brunswick Press, 32 pages, \$4.95 paper). Frances Itani has written not a story, but a description from the children's point of view of a day in a family's summer vacation by the sea. It is hard to specify what age group the delicate illustrations by Molly Lamb Bobak would most appeal to, but they are very evocative of sun, sand, wind, and water.

*West Coast Chinese Boy* (Tundra, 64 pages, \$12.95 cloth) again depends on a specific setting. Sing Lim grew up in Vancouver's Chinatown and his text and illustrations successfully recreate his family's life there in the 1920s. He tells some amazing and terrible things with a very understated delivery:

When I was nine years old, my father sent me to work for the summer on a farm. The summer heat was awful. Our bunkhouse was an oven. We worked from 6:30 in the mornings to 7:30 at night every day except Sunday when we finished at noon.

*The Twelve Dancing Princesses* (Methuen, 32 pages, \$10.95 cloth) will also appeal to more than children. The old French tale, retold by Janet Lunn, is a complicated story — psychologists who probe old fairy tales would have a wonderful time exploring what this one says about human nature. But, more important, it has all the ingredients of a good fairy story — romance, suspense, courage, treachery, enchantment, and, of course, a happy

ending. The illustrations by Laszlo Gal make this a high quality gift book.

*From Tale to Tale* by Tibor Kovalik (Mosaic Press/Valley Editions, 55 pages, \$10.95 cloth) is a mixture of folk and fairy tales from 10 different ethnic communities in Canada. It is an interesting idea for a book. The stories come from such diverse sources as the Dominican Republic, French Canada, China, and India. Some read like direct translations from their original languages; unfortunately almost no acknowledgements are included to help interested readers locate more stories from the same sources.

Animal stories always form part of any list of books for children. The Metropolitan Toronto Zoo has added four more titles to its series of booklets about its popular occupants. This year we have *Mias the Orangutan*; *Dassen the Penguin*, *Khan the Camel*, and *Falstaff the Hippopotamus*, by Judy Ross (D. C. Heath, each 16 pages, \$1.35 paper). These attractive booklets are for people who really want information about the animals. A clear, factual text gives the animal's vital statistics, details of its habitat, history, and personality. Colour photographs make each booklet well worth the price.

Vesta Press also offers two animal books for children: *Fun and Pheasants* by Olive Mound (40 pages, \$3.00 paper), stories about life on a game farm; and *Corey* by Norma West Linder (91 pages, \$10.00

cloth, \$5.00 paper), a dog's place in a family told from the dog's point of view.

Kati Rckai writes animal stories of a different sort. *The Adventures of Mickey, Taggy, Puppo and Cica*, and how they discover Toronto (Canadian Stage and Arts Publications, 1974) was the first in a series of guidebooks for children. Since then, the four anthropomorphic friends (three dogs and a cat) have discovered Ottawa and the Thousand Islands, in English, French, and Braille. This year they discover Montreal (102 pages, 53.50 paper) and Budapest (148 pages, \$3.50 paper). Illustrations in all the books are by Elise Kane. These books present great quantities of information about restaurants, parks, museums, and other tourist attractions, rather thinly coated with the animal's reactions to what they see.

For children with a real interest in other parts of the world, much more important things could be learned from reading books such as *Children of Lapland*, written and illustrated by Bodil Hagbrink, translated by George Simpson (26 pages, \$12.95 cloth). Originally published by Bonnier of Sweden; this is Tundra's 1979 choice for its collection of Children's Books as Works of Art. Wonderfully detailed illustrations are complemented by a text describing the Lapp people's everyday life. Lapp children race reindeer-drawn sledges, drive snowmobiles to church, and trek north every year with their families to their reindeer herds' sum-

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mer pastures near the Arctic Ocean. These are real adventures.

The Canadian Children's Annual 1980, edited by Robert F. Neilson (Potlatch, 176 pages. \$9.95 cloth. \$6.95 paper) offers generous servings of adventure as we have come to expect in this its sixth year of publication. It includes true life adventure stories, articles, fiction, poetry, comics, puzzles, and this year a special nod to King Tut. Kids will love the photograph of the mummy. With 50 entries listed in the table of contents, it's hardly surprising that the quality is somewhat uneven—the articles on caves, for instance, are better presented than the ones on balloons and blimps — and nothing in the book is as good as D.P. Brown's cover painting, "Young Canadian." But the Annual is fun to read and deserves its increasingly large market.

A spin-off from the Canadian Children's Annual is Susan Super Sleuth, by William Ettridge (Potlatch, 120 pages. \$2.95 paper). Susan's regular appearances in the Annual were so popular that Ettridge has combined four stories (three of them new, one revised) into a honk for fans of teenaged detectives. Susan's teenaged male counterpart is Tom Austen. Eric Wilson has written a third book in the series of Tom's adventures. Terror in Winnipeg (Clarke Irwin, 103 pages. \$3.95 cloth), in which Tom deals with kidnapping, extortion, industrial pollution, Minamata disease, and attempted political assassination. Needless to say, plot credibility hardly matters.



From West Coast Chinese Boy.

Adventure stories have always enjoyed a strong tradition in Canadian writing. Great Canadian Adventure Stories, edited by Muriel Whitaker (Hurtig, 224 pages, \$12.95 cloth) collects 15 adventure stories whose authors range chronologically from R. M. Ballantyne to Rudy Wiebe. Some of these stories will be familiar, even to many young readers. There is W.O. Mitchell's "A Voice for Christmas," one of the Jake and the Kid stories; Stephen Leacock's "The Marine Excursion of the Knights of Pythias," and Will R. Bird's "Movies Come to Gull Point" — all regulars in school anthologies. But Whitaker has also included stories from adventure writers less well-known today: Roderick Haig-Brown's "Starbuck Valley Winter" and Ballantyne's "Fort Chimo" provided least

historical interest in their approach to adventure. Traditional Canadian adventure situations are included: Indian battles (Wiebe's "Along the Red Deer and the South Saskatchewan"), moving west (Bruce Hutchison's "The Overlanders"), the gold rush (Pierre Berton's "How the Klondike Rush Began" and Jack London's "Trust"). There are also survival stories, compelling tales of personal endurance, such as Leland Stowe's "The Year of Disaster" about pioneer rancher Ralph Edwards, and Wilfred Grenfell's own account, "Adrift on an Ice-pan." Ethel Wilson's "Mrs. Golightly and the First Convention" challenges the stereotype of what an adventure comprises. Dramatic illustrations by Vlasta von Kampen, an excellent introduction and good biographical notes make this a handsome book that would be very useful as a teaching anthology.

Larger Than Life by Janet Lunn (Press Porcépic, 78 pages. \$5.95 paper), a collection of true stories about Canadian heroes, seems also to be intended as a sort of school anthology, this time for younger readers. There are 10 stories, some about heroes already well-known — Madeleine de Verchères, Alexander Mackenzie, Gabriel Dumont. Some others are not so nationally famous—for example, Comelia de Grassi and Maria Wail. All these stories deal with people who were truly brave and who deserve to have their stories told, but the book gives them rather superficial treatment. Dialogue is placed in the mouths of the characters — to make history more readable? — but the background to their deeds and their significance for us are sketchily dealt with. Each gets about half a dozen pages of text and one illustration by Emma Hesse, giving young readers merely an introduction to these Canadian heroes.

In contrast, Barbara Smucker's presentation of the heroism in another part of our history is thoroughly researched and excellently developed. Days of Terror (Clarke Irwin, 152 pages. \$8.95 cloth) is fiction, telling the story of Peter Neufeld, a Mennonite boy living in the Ukraine during the Russian Revolution. But the horrors that eventually led his family to emigrate to Canada with so many other Mennonites in that period are straight history. Smucker does not hesitate to describe unpleasant reality — children die from malnutrition: lice-covered, plague-ridden revolutionaries biller themselves in the Mennonite homes. But the strength and courage of the characters — particularly Peter's father and grandfather — and the warmth of their family relationships make it a very moving hook to read. When those members of the Neufeld family who were allowed to emigrate are finally reunited in Canada, Smucker evokes feelings even stronger than those felt when the two girls in her Underground 10 Canada (Clarke Irwin, 1977) reached their freedom. One feeling is pride that such people made Canada their home. Encouraging kids to read Canadian writing of this sort could have all kinds of benefits. □

## Andy wants an orangutan for Christmas



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get a  
Polar Bear  
as well!



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## Laurentian play-pens

**The Olden Days Coat**, by Margaret Laurence. illustrations by Muriel Wood, McClelland & Stewart, unpaginated, 56.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 4744 4).

**Six Darn Cows**, by Margaret Laurence. illustrations by Ann Blades. James Lorimer & Co., 32 pages, 56.95 cloth (ISBN 0 69362 247 3).

By SANDRA MARTIN

BACK IN 1974, when *The Diviners* was published, Margaret Laurence was widely quoted as saying she had forsaken, if not fiction itself, then certainly the imaginary town of Manawaka. Since then, Laurence's *Diviners* has won the Governor General's Award and heaps of praise from critics and fans — and piles of 'abuse from tormented souls who found it obscene. The latter experience must have been traumatic for Laurence, but here she is back on the lists with not one but two new pieces of fiction. That each is a children's book might bear symbolic witness to her feelings about Canadian adults, at least as a reading public.

The first book, *The Olden Days Coat*, is designed for children aged about 10 and is the story of a little girl named Sal who for the first time is spending Christmas at her grandmother's rather than at her parents' house. She is resentful, sullen, and determined to be bored. Then, poking about in her grandmother's shed, she finds "an olden days coat," one of those navy blue woollen affairs with a red sash that I can barely remember from my own childhood. She slips it on and is transported back to a time when the coat was new. Clearly the coat once belonged to Sal's grandmother and it is the vehicle for Sal to experience her grandmother's world of long ago and to learn to appreciate the older woman as a



Margaret Laurence

person with needs and feelings.

Laurence handles the story with delicacy and tact and provided we accept the old gimmick of the time warp, it all works very well and is both satisfying and entertaining. She writes simply, but richly. she never condescends, and she has a most uncanny ability to make us hear the voices of her characters. And so even in this rather ordinary little tale, with its dreadfully awkward title, we feel enormous empathy with little Sal and her grandmother.

The illustrations by Muriel Wood are well-researched and executed, but static and sombre. They remind me of Christmas cards, the ones that belong on top of a Victrola — nice, idealized rural scenes in which everything is covered in snow.

The other book, *Six Darn Cows*, is aimed at a younger audience — children who have just learned to read and is part of James Lorimer's new Kids of Canada series. The illustrations by Ann Blades are excellent, with strong shapes and colours, but Laurence's story, while adequate for somebody else, is quite dreadful for a writer of her talents and stature. It reads as though she had been commissioned to write something to accompany Blades's drawings. It is neither compelling nor convincing, two qualities that I always associate with Margaret Laurence.

The story involves two farm kids, Jen and Tod Bean, whose responsibility 'it is to round up the family's six black-and-white cows and drive them into the barn for milking at the end of each day. One afternoon the kids set out reluctantly to find the cows and discover that somebody — almost certainly one of them — has left the gate to the field open and the cows have wandered away and are lost, no doubt in the deep and scary dark woods. Sure enough, that's where those six dam cows have gone, but Jen and Tod, with the help of their faithful dog Zip, brave their fears (and the woods) and find the cows and drive them home: On the way they learn RESPONSIBILITY and young readers presumably learn what it is to be poor and live on a farm.

As the world knows, children's books are expensive to produce. The market is small, the cost of four-colour art is prohibitive, and good paper and binding m-e both necessary and dear. These two books are only the latest in a series of experiments to produce goad books for a tricky market. Some compromises were inevitable, but was it really necessary to make *The Olden Days Coat* a paperback with a dust-jacket? The jacket doesn't fit the book and slips and slides around in the most annoying fashion whenever you turn a page. Surely it would have been better to upgrade the design on the cover and dispense with the jacket entirely. *Six Darn Cows* has a hard cover, but the binding seems guaranteed to fall apart after only a few readings and the design does not do justice to Ann Blades's illustrations. It is a shame, for in children's literature, one really must judge books by their covers. □

# Tundra

Sing Lim



West Coast Chinese Boy

*West Coast Chinese Boy* by Sing Lim Vancouver's Chinatown in the early 1920s is re-created in this unique and fascinating book by artist Sing Lim who describes his childhood there in 22 paintings, 100 drawings and charming text. Here are exotic rituals, tong meetings, grand funerals, baby's headshave, feasts and daily happenings. 64 pages 12.95

## Children of Lapland



*Children of Lapland* by Bodil Hagbrink The 1979 choice for *The Tundra Collection of Children's Books as Works of Art From Around the World*. 28 pages 12.95

## THE GLORY BOYS



*The Glory Boys* by Mickey and Keir Cutl A giant comic book on the *Canadiens* hockey team. The *Montreal Gazette* ran 20 of the strips. 48 pages 3.5

Tundra Books are distributed by Collins Publishers, 100 Leasmill Ro. Don Mills, Ontario, M3B 2T5

December, 1979 Books in Canada

# Last of the heavy brigade

by Dan Hilts

HERE IS A supplement to last month's special section on Christmas gift books. Among the late arrivals reviewed below are several important Canadian art books.

The first is Doris Shadbolt's *The Art of Emily Carr* (Clarke Irwin/Douglas & McIntyre, \$39.95) a large, beautifully produced volume that contains more than 200 reproductions of the artist's drawings, charcoals and paintings. They are arranged chronologically and they document the development of Carr's talent as well as the distinct changes in her approach at various stages in her life. The text incorporates passages from Carr's writing and analyzes her style and technique. The picture captions are the only weakness in the book: they are too brief. Most of the information is at the back of the book, which means too much

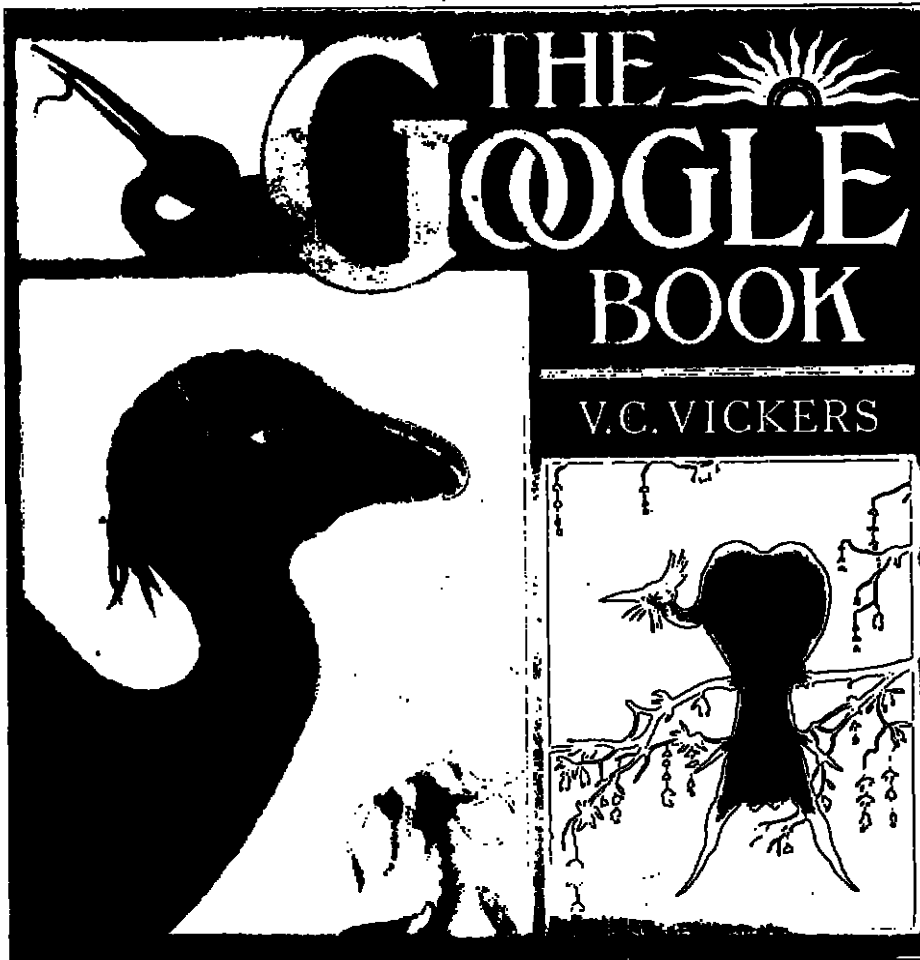
flipping back and forth. However, nothing can detract from the magnificent colour plates and the impact of Carr's art.

While it is tempting to consider it a companion volume to the above, Maria Tippet's *Emily Carr: A Biography* (Oxford University Press, \$16.95) stands on its own as an honest, well-researched examination of the artist's life. Although Carr disliked talking about herself or her work, she wrote several autobiographical books, one of which, *Klee Wyck*, won the Governor General's Award in 1941. Tippet draws on this material and incorporates information obtained from diaries, newspapers, and interviews. She tempers Carr's tendency to distortion, self-dramatization, and sentimentality with common sense while remaining sympathetic to her subject.

One of the myths she corrects, one that Can and the Group of Seven encouraged, was the image of lonely pioneers battling against scorn and convention to bring modern art to Canada. It was more a case of getting Canadians interested in any art. The indifference to her work on the West Coast contributed to a 14-year dry spell that didn't end until she made contact with the Group of Seven, particularly Lawren Harris. It was during these years, the late 1920s, that she created her best-known work, blending her spiritual and artistic beliefs to great effect.

A similar spiritual element in a different form is very much present in *The Art of Norval Morrisseau* (Methuen, \$50.00, special edition \$1000.00) The visions that this artist-shaman transfers to the canvas in bright solid colours flow from Christian and Ojibway sources and are lavishly reproduced. His agent, Jack Pollock, who has helped Morrisseau gain critical attention and a wide audience, has written a candid account of their relationship. In addition, Morrisseau talks about the continuity between his life and his art and supplies fragments of Ojibway myth to accompany the paintings.

An art book that doesn't commit you to the work of just one artist, *Twenty/Twenty* (Lester & Orpen Dennys, \$14.95) offers 20 paintings by 20 Canadian artists. Bruce St. Clair, Jack Bush, Alex Colville, and Louis de Niverville are among those represented and although the reproductions are fairly



## What's a GOOGLE?

He lives far, far away in a land to which only children can go. It is a wonderful land of funny flowers and birds. At night the Google crawls out of the pool in which he lives and silently prowls around for food. The bird; try to avoid the Google because they do not like him, and he frightens them; but some he can never catch especially those with a red beak. In this book you will find pictures of Google birds, some though ugly are very nice, others, though pretty, are very nasty. But what is a Google? For that surprise you will have to wait Until you see the end of the book.

48 pp., 22 illustrations in full colour; poems on facing pages  
Clothbound \$9.95

OXFORD

large, they're not really big enough for framing as the cover suggests.

Posters have never been counted as fine art, probably because they're too pushy. The artist is expected to subdue his self-expression, and use words that will sell something. Robert Stacey collected a large number of posters for an exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario, and out of this grew **The Canadian Poster Book** (Methuen, \$12.95) with a wide selection spanning 100 years of Canadian history lie has also written an informative and critical text about this special branch of commercial art.

Halfway between nature studies and art, **Mr. Jackson's Mushrooms** (National Gallery of Canada, \$35.00) is a collection of carefully drawn mushrooms by H.A.C. Jackson (A. Y.'s older brother). Accompanying the watercolours is the combination of notes and diary he wrote between 1931 and 1954 on his field trips near Montreal. He was a naturalist and a meticulous amateur mycologist, respected and encouraged by professional botanists.

A revised edition of **Native Trees of Canada** (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, \$16.95 cloth, \$9.95 paper) is an indispensable guide for tree lovers.

Picture books about Canada are pretty standard fare at Christmas and a safe way of fulfilling your gift-giving obligations. To see **Our World** (GLC Publishers, \$29.25) is illustrated with competent colour photographs of the West Coast by Catherine Young. There is an introductory essay by Margaret Atwood, and quotations from Henry Thoreau accompany each photograph. The text is set in large type, a transparent strategy to till space. So is Atwood's introduction, which begins: "Writing an introduction to a book of photographs is probably an exercise in futility . . ." No argument. A similar book, with smaller type, **Seasons of Canada** (Hounslow Press, \$14.95) is illustrated with colour photographs taken across the country during the four seasons.

As a spinoff from the film series commissioned by Imperial Oil and shown on television, **The Newcomers** (McClelland & Stewart, \$24.95) is a curious hybrid that only half works. Sewn immigrant groups are covered in separate sections, beginning with the native peoples and ending with the Italians. The short stories are the strongest part of the book. Alice Munro's contribution on the Irish stands out, as does George Ryga's "Visit From the Pension Lady" in the Ukrainian section.

A fine collection of old photographs has been assembled in **Journeys to the Far West**, James Lorimer & Co., \$22.95) by Edward Cavell, curator of photography at Banff's Archives of the Canadian Rockies. It covers the period 1858-85 and the photographs are enhanced by well-chosen excerpts from contemporary journals and diaries. Another excellent selection of beautifully reproduced old photographs has been published in **Canadian Photography 1639-1920** (Coach House Press, \$27.50). The text, which traces the development of

photography in Canada, is well-written and informative. Highly recommended for anyone with an interest in either photography or history.

Bird fanciers are also book lovers, judging by the number of volumes published on the subject. **The Nesting Season** (Penguin, \$40.00) comments on the nesting habits of birds. It's illustrated with colour and black-and-white photographs.

On the other hand, **Wake of the Whale** (Clarke Irwin, \$39.95) is full of large, beautiful photographs of whales, seals, walrus, and dolphins from the Arctic to the Antarctic. The book produced by The Friends of the Earth, and both text and pictures plead eloquently for wildlife conservation.

Dragons have long held the human imagination in a powerful grip. Almost every culture has some kind of fire-breathing flying reptile in its repertoire of myths. A fanciful approach to the subject is taken by Peter Dickinson in **The Flight of Dragons** (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, \$19.95). This sustained, mock-serious, romantic fantasy based on historical accounts includes a careful explanation of how they flew, how their fiery breath was generated, and why they preferred to dismember and dine upon well-born young maidens. Colourful illustrations by Wayne Anderson are well integrated with the text.

A more serious approach to the subject is undertaken by Peter Hogarth and Val Clery in **Dragons** (Penguin, \$19.95). With the aid

of many black-and-white and colour illustrations, the book examines dragon legends and how they have been adopted by different cultures throughout history.

The decline in dragons is no doubt caused by the competition for airspace from man-made machines, many of which appear in **Aviation in Canada** (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$29.95). More than 350 photographs show a wide variety of airplanes used in Canada as well as a disconcerting number of accidents. The text gives a good account of Canadian aviation history.

It's doubtful that Antony Armstrong Jones would have achieved much more than a local reputation without his royal connection. **Snowdon: A Photographic Autobiography** (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, \$38.95) contains a large number of pictures, mostly black-and-white, on a wide range of subjects: Fashion, weddings, writers, theatre, and a few famous royal faces. The most interesting aspect of his life is carefully avoided.

Loving treatment is also apparent in **Noël Coward and His Friends** (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$23.50). It's a scrapbook of baby pictures, newspaper clippings, theatre reviews, and memorabilia from his archives.

Books that are spinoffs from films or TV series are not often successful but **Connections** (Gage, \$19.95) is a noteworthy exception. The title refers to the often coincidental links between ideas that lead to advances in technology. The book covers a wide variety of inventions and innovations



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## ALL ABOARD!

A cross-Canada adventure

Barbara O'Kelly and  
Beverley Allinson

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by Dara Rowland

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throughout history from Egyptian agriculture to nuclear fission. A great deal of interesting information is clearly presented with many excellent technical drawings and illustrations.

The *World of Baroque & Classical Musical Instruments* (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$28.95) is a well-written, nicely illustrated survey of musical instruments familiar to Bach, Mozart, Hayden, and Beethoven.

Opera and ballet fans are a particularly zealous lot but even their enthusiasm will be tested by *The Bolshoi* (Gage, \$38.95). Translated from the Russian and the Italian, the introduction by Leonid Brezhnev is one of the highlights of the book. The colour photographs of the opera and ballet were taken under the most unfavourable circumstances during performances and are generally of poor quality, although there are plenty of them.

Modelled on a similar book on English royalty, *The Lives of the Kings and Queens of France* (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$24.50) by the Duc De Castries, gives a brief biography of French monarchs from the fifth century to 1848. Well illustrated.

Another book about royalty, *Queen Victoria's Sketchbook* (Gage, \$19.95) is a biography illustrated with her sketches and water-colours, which aren't bad, but it's lucky she didn't have to make a living at it.

At the other end of the social scale, *The English Pub* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, \$11.50) is a celebration of English pubs, beer, barmaids, and greasy pork pies with bits of history and social commentary thrown in.

The work of 140 American cartoonists on one subject is collected in *Animals Animals Animals* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, \$15.95). They run the gamut from cute to funny. □

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## The Canadian way to flip through 1980

By SUSAN AIHOSHI

THIS YEAR'S review of calendars focuses entirely on Canadian material. Canadian calendars face stiff competition from imports in terms of volume and variety but not in terms of quality. This country's publishers are producing some excellent calendars that offer better value for money than many of the foreign publications flooding the market.

For example, lopping the list in the art-calendar category is the *Masterpieces of Canadian Art Calendar* (McClelland & Stewart, \$5.95), a well-chosen and interesting 18 Boats in Canada, December, 1978

ing selection of works by 12 different artists. As well as works by such established figures as Emily Carr, Paul Kane, Cornelius Krieghoff, and Fred Varley, there are paintings by lesser-known artists that cast a fascinating historical light on Canada's early years. "A Meeting of the School Trustees" by Robert Harris, which highlights the month of September, portrays a group of austere clad male trustees soberly confronting the lone female teacher in what appears to be a one-room schoolhouse. The calendar is well-reproduced, gives a brief biographical outline for each artist, and comes gift boxed. At \$5.95, an unbeatable bargain.

For fans of native art, the *Indian Art Calendar* (Firefly, \$6.50, boxed) offers a variety of paintings and *objets d'art*. Most striking among the featured works is one by James Simon, "Spirit of the Muskie," a ferocious painting of a fish in provocative green hues pictured for the month of July. Also available is the *Cape Dorset Calendar* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, \$5.95, boxed), the annual selection of art work produced by the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative. Their usual high quality and good selection still applies this year.

Canadian art invariably brings to mind the Group of Seven, and this year the McMichael Canadian Collection in conjunction with Coles Publishing has produced the Diamond Jubilee edition of *The Group of Seven Calendar* (\$4.98). Fitted with a rather slick and glossy cover and unboxed, this wall calendar contains a standard selection of works including an Eskimo sculpture and a West Coast Indian mask. Much better value is *The McMichael Canadian Collection Desk Calendar* (McMichael Canadian Collection, Kleinburg, Ont., \$2.95), which necessarily has smaller and therefore unframable prints, but being boxed is better gift-giving value for your money. And if you're willing to spend a bit more, the *Tom Thomson Calendar* (McClelland & Stewart, \$5.95, boxed) will be sure to please anyone who enjoys the Group's style. The calendar features reproductions from the original separations used in the award-winning *Tom Thomson: The Silence and the Storm*. The quality of the prints is undeniably good and they are suitable for framing if so desired.

This year's art calendars include an unusual and not unexpected entry, *Cornelius Krieghoff* (Hallmark, \$5.95, boxed). Twelve different paintings by this popular early Canadian artist are featured in large prints. It's about time such a calendar was available, and interestingly enough it comes from a greeting-card manufacturer rather than a book publisher. Perhaps not so strange, when you consider the many Christmas cards sporting Krieghoff's works.

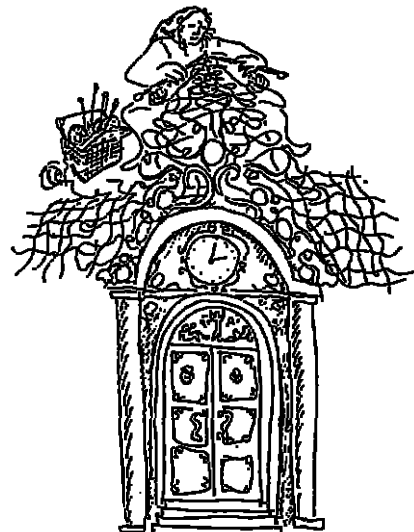
It would no doubt offend many a Canadian aesthete to include *Harlequin Salutes: A Calendar featuring Harlequin Romantic Art* (Harlequin, \$3.95) in our art calendar category. However, not only is

Harlequin a genuine Canadian publisher and a successful one at that, but the artist Will Davies who painted the featured covers from the Harlequin Presents Series is Canadian as well. The portions of verse that accompany each romantic scenario are, alas, English: Ben Jonson, John Clare, and Will Shakespeare ("Shell I compare thee to a summer's day?"). Irving Layton, it seems, hasn't got what it takes. This is an ideal calendar gift for any Harlequin-addicted maiden aunt, mother, or grandmother you may have on your Christmas shopping list.

The *William Kurelek Calendar* (Tundra, \$6.95) features 12 different paintings by the controversial artist. The colours of his works are often primary and bright. And despite (or perhaps because of) the religious overtones, the prints have an enigmatic and childlike appeal. The *Quebec Calendar* by Miyuki Tanobe (Tundra, \$6.95), also has this enigmatic quality. Because of the distinct locale of Tanobe's paintings and the voluminous detail of everyday urban québécois life, this calendar makes a good gift choice for children. It is a pleasant alternative to many of the silly and garish children's cartoon-type calendars originating mainly in the United States.

The best-known Canadian children's calendar is still, of course, the Dennis Lee and Frank Newfeld *Alligator Pie Calendar* (Macmillan, \$5.95). Full of zany poetry and memorable events, the calendar features the antics of the insane Uncle Bumper — sure to delight most children and some adults you may know. Also suitable for children is the *Canadian Animals Calendar* (Hounslow, \$4.95), which contains 12 different photos of various native fauna and a brief description of each that could have been a bit longer and more informative.

Scenic views of Canadian wildlife and landscape are depicted in *Canadian Nature* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, \$5.95, boxed). Although the choice of photographs is not as outstanding as last year's, the photos are still interesting and one of "Lightning at Knife Lake" is spectacular. Van Nostrand



Reinhold also offer their **Canadian Birds in the Wild Calendar** (\$5.95, boxed) and **Canadian Wildflowers** (\$5.95, boxed), both good value with an interesting selection of photographs in a practical diary format.

The Beautiful Canada Calendar (McClelland & Stewart, \$2.50), while belonging to the plebian scenic-calendar genre, is no, to be sneered at. The photographs are well-chosen and interesting of their kind, and the calendar is much better quality than similar stuff offered in souvenir shops. And for those who may require a little something extra in their scenic calendars, Collier Macmillan offer Edna McCann's Canadian Heritage Calendar (\$4.95), complete with inspirational quotations for each month. The quotations may no, necessarily be inspiring, but some of the photographs surprisingly are. Again, good value for the religious aunt on your list.

Finally, for your favourite career woman, **Everywoman's Almanac** (Women's Press, \$4.95) in a practical and useful gift. Pocket-sized and well-bound, it can be taken everywhere and is packed with informative and entertaining facts and illustrations.

A variety of other Canadian calendars are available in the book stores, some with local distribution only. Search them out, they're nearly always as good if not better than their imported counterparts and have the practical advantage of noting Canadian holidays! □

## Where have all the flours gone?

By DuBARRY CAMPAU

IF NO ONE gets in ahead of me, I am hoping to write a few cookbooks myself. What I have in mind, for example, is "150 New Ways to Prepare Parsley" or "Traditional Canadian Dishes for the August Civic Holiday."

At the moment, however, I'm busy catching up on the volumes already in print — more of them, I'm sure, than there are novels. If people really are using all of the recipes they buy, who are all of those men, women, and children standing in line at restaurants? Oh, Mama's 'homemade Tzechuan dinner didn't turn out too well? Oh, perhaps it took the man-about-town so long to find a tin of truffles it was too late to add them to his very own avocado dip.

Anyway, for those of you who honestly do like to spend a whole year over a hot stove, here come plenty of books on how to do it.

Let's start, elegantly, with **The New York Times 60-Minute Gourmet** by Pierre Franey (Fitzhenry & Whiteside., \$13.95). I try to dress quite smartly when preparing any of these dishes; you simply can't make any of them properly if your hair is still in curlers and you're wearing ill-filling slacks.

My own favourite among the many delicacies, outlined is uncooked tomato sauce, so hard to come by, so simple to make and so delicious it should sweep those acidic, gooey, Neopolitan horrors from the tables of the world. The most refreshing whole section is the one on fish — grilled, poached, or lightly sautéed but each treated with respect for the delicacy of its flavour and texture.

The 60-minute feature of the book is honest but it is possible to cut even, that amount of time by doing some of the preparation the day before and pulling it together with a flourish just before the guests arrive. To discover an utterly new flavour in chicken, try the Poulet Grillé à la Moutarde!

The Christmas Cookbook by Rose Murray (James Lorimer, \$12.95 cloth) is a joy. Just a fast flip through it would have Scmoge's mouth watering. For one thing, Miss Murray seems to believe firmly in real ingredients honestly dealt, by. Traditional dishes are featured and she's no calorie counter. My favourite among the many Fruit cakes is made with bananas and orange extract, as well as candied fruit, dates.

## A CANADIAN CHRISTMAS COLLECTION

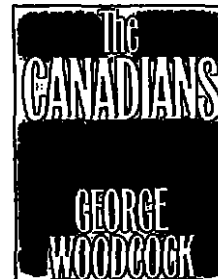


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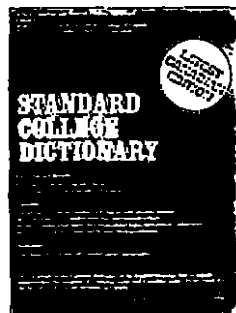
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pineapple, walnuts, and spices.

Her old-fashioned pound cake is flavoured with brandy and her mincemeat trifle is made with brandy, real custard, sherry, heavy cream, and angelica. A lovely bit for the tired cook is **Forgotten Meringues**. You put them in a hot oven, turn off the heat and leave them all night. **Apple snow** made with apple brandy, is tart and airy.

For those who really get into the holiday spirit there are such extra yummiest as popcorn balls and chocolate dipped fondants.

A change from left-over goose and turkey can be found with her recipe for a six-layer meat pie (Acadian origin) made with a mixture of meats or fowl or game. Herb bread, seasoned and flavoured with marjoram, thyme, mustard, and poppy seeds, would be just as good on Victoria Day.

It cheered me to see that her recipe for scalloped oysters, traditional Christmas Eve dish in French Canada, was identical to the one we always used in our family, but I was disappointed that nowhere did she include **Potout au Palates**, a potato, cheese and onion pie we served with it.

As a change of pace, let's look at Doreen Wayne's **The Healthy Gourmet** (General Publishing, \$12.95) — low-calorie, low-cholesterol, low-cost cookery. It's nothing like as austere as it sounds. Her directions for cooking vegetables get the very best out of them and she combines many of them interestingly and tastefully. Her vegetable main courses are hearty enough to make you overlook the total absence of veal, pork, or beef in the book (although she does admit fish and chicken).

She uses nuts in many ways and is careful to explain just how to prepare them. Grains, too, turn up in unexpected places, as in **bouillabaisse** (any grain) and barley for chicken stuffing. This is not one of those tiresome "health food" cookbooks. Instead, it's filled with dishes to delight any gourmet, including those whose entire interest in food is how it tastes.

After reading **The New Celebrity Cooks Cookbook**, with Bruno Gerussi (Methuen, \$6.95), I understood instantly why one sees so many famous people eating at the better restaurants: they're not silly enough to stay home and eat what they can make. For utter simplicity, my favourite recipe was Craig Russell's: four ripe pears and one and a half pints of whipping cream whipped. That really says it all.

Kay Starr offers a turkey stuffing that combines, among other, many other things, corn bread, pecans, a large bag of potato chips, and apple butter. (I hope I haven't spoiled Christmas for you.)

Scatman Crothers fancies salmon empanadas made with tinned salmon, one egg, flour, and bread crumbs. That's it. Barbara Frum offers a frozen coffee pie that sounds rich and gooey, using nuts, marshmallow, eggs, instant coffee, rum, chocolate, and lots of whipped cream. Eartha Kitt has a trick for turning a perfectly good roast of beef into a dubious stew by cooking it with water and Scotch broth.

David Broadfoot wins the cook-off as far as I'm concerned with a pleasant plan for combining filets of sole with shrimps, frozen spinach, garlic, and lemon. But he chickens out when it comes to the **Hollandaise** sauce and suggests a six-ounce jet (available at every supermarket).

Celebrities should learn to stay in their places at restaurant tables where they can get a good meal and we can all watch them eat it.

I don't know where **Madame Benoit** is doing her marketing these days, but if it's at any of the butcher shops I know, she couldn't have been so cruel as to write **The Lamb Cookbook** (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$9.95). The last leg of lamb I know of personally cost just over \$50, or \$7 a pound (I didn't buy it. Are you daft?).

However, if you still raise your own sheep, you'll find this a valuable volume. Too many people have no imagination when it comes to this versatile and delicious meat; once they've gone the mast-and-chop route they're through. But not the **Queen of Canadian Cooks**.

She ranges from an Arabian recipe — lamb shoulder, cinnamon, cumin, coriander, lemon, fresh mint, and potatoes, to Texan **Lamb Stew** — with another lamb shoulder, thyme, pepper, oil, consommé, celery, onions, green pepper, an orange, an apple, and brandy or rye. Nothing dull about those dishes. Surprisingly, there is **Hawaiian lamb** that doesn't include pineapple; instead there is garlic, honey, orange juice, and soy sauce.

There's a fine sounding English mixed grill (chops, kidneys, sausages, mushrooms, tomatoes, and bacon) but she includes a quarter of a teaspoon of Sugar and doesn't say what to do with it. It's such a tiny bit I suppose you could sprinkle it anywhere, but knowing Madame's fine hand, I'm sure she meant it to go on the tomatoes.

And at these prices, would you believe that she ruthlessly minces lamb and makes **Lamburgers** of it? Also something called **Cocktail Marbles**, with garlic, soy, and plum sauces. I'm saving this book against the day I win a lottery, when I can really enjoy the many pleasures lamb can bring.

**The Canadian Mennonite Cookbook** (McLeod Publishing, \$7.95) is well-produced, it has a spiral binding, excellent illustrations, and tabs for the easy location of categories. However, it has only a small section devoted to Mennonite cooking itself and that is heavily loaded with pies, breads, cakes, cookies, and crullers. There are a few soups, two minced-beef dishes, one chicken pot pie, and a variety of scrambled eggs heavily laced with flour. Although they sell the best geese in the world, there is no mention of them in the book. Do they sell them all?

One good, and easy, recipe I tried is **Fruit Crumb cake**, which I made with fresh peaches. With a dab of ice cream or whipped cream, this makes a pleasant dessert. Most of the baked goods are probably splendid if you go in a lot for that

sort of thing (I don't) but one thing that put me off some of them is an ingredient called baking ammonia. I asked for it several places but luckily they didn't have it as I suspect I don't really want it.

Even the body of the book is heavy with breads and cakes and their kinfolk, as well as icings and sweet sauces. The jams and jellies, for those who have the patience and big enough kitchens, sound good, as do the pickles and relishes.

**Goulashes**, cabbage rolls, and several mince-meat casseroles are hearty and well-seasoned, but both the meat and salmon loaves seem uninspired if adequate.

Most surprising was the abundance of rather tacky short cuts that are included — tins of mushroom or celery soup, onion soup mix, gelatine in pumpkin pie, Dream Whip, tinned pees, and tomatoes. And most of the salads are the sweet horrors laden with marshmallows and tinned pineapple that have been banished from even the women's magazines. A French dressing calls for a tin of tomato soup and all of the plain salad dressings call for flour and sugar.

This is neither traditional nor current Canadian cooking but some children, at a certain age, adore this kind of food and if you can afford the dentist bills you might give it to them.

*Bon appétit* and a Happy Christmas. □

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## Who are the masters now?

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**Schools in Jeopardy: Collective Bargaining in Education**, by Peter Hennessy, McClelland & Stewart, 205 pages, \$8.95 paper (ISBN 077104067 9).

By **DUNCAN MEIKLE**

ONCE UPON A TIME, teachers were expected to be dedicated servants to the cause of education. They were underpaid and often cowed by bigoted or arbitrary school boards. In the past 25 years, however, there have been many changes. A shortage of teachers, a brief economic boom, a faith (probably misplaced) that education was the answer to man's hopes and fears, and a dash of militancy all combined to produce effective teachers' organizations. We have not yet seen fully what will happen when, with a temporary decline in enrolment, a strong profession collides with governments that have decided education should have a lower funding priority.

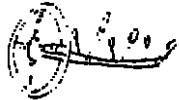
Peter Hennessy, a member of the Faculty of Education at Queen's University, is concerned with the trend toward antagonistic or adversary relations in negotiations between teachers and boards. In his analysis of the tactics, the facts behind the propaganda, and even some of the expense

accounts of the negotiators, be shows that both teachers and boards can lose sight of their common interest in quality education, that both have resorted to "con jobs" and "Him flam" in public statements, and that things may get worse. He says that strikes, work to rule campaigns and lockouts lower teacher morale, ruin the students' trust in teachers and bring into question the professionalism and integrity of teachers.

Although both sides are accused of manipulating facts in order to secure the "best" settlement, the main villains are the Ontario government and Bill 100 (The School Boards and Teachers Collective Negotiations Act, 1975). The Davis government has stepped away from its proper role of balancing demands in a world of finite resources and Bill 100 has established a framework of laws that set teachers and their federations against the taxpayers and their elected trustees. Each side sees the other as the enemy. In the strikes that have occurred in Ontario in the past few years, both teachers and boards have played by the rules but the rules are stupid and destructive. What Hennessy would like to see is a return to the "high road": less militancy among teachers, more leadership from the Minister of Education, better communications between the affected parties to help identify common values and aims, and a return to a professional integrity and credibility in teachers' publications and policies.

The emphasis on the teachers' point of view leaves the book open to criticism. For example, there was more to the Lanark County confrontation of 1976 than working to rule; a student walkout, a citizens' committee, and confusion over the provincial funds available to the board were all relevant factors. There is little mention of recent developments within trustees' organizations, such as coordinated bargaining and research facilities and guidelines for &lc-bound boards. The definitions of professionalism and the "lower middle class" status of teachers are restricted by the author's point of view. And the absence of references in the text, suggestions for further reading, and an index will cause considerable frustration for anyone wishing to pursue the points raised.

On the other hand, Hennessy provides a needed service. He speaks for teachers who might be reluctant to oppose the hard-line positions of their negotiators. He points out that the student has a stake in these matters that is often forgotten. (He also says that most students will suffer more from the decline of morale in the school than from an unexpected break from formal classes.) This book gives a quick review of the development of teachers' federations and the major confrontations in Ontario over the last few years. It contains useful insights and reveals the need for more information about collective bargaining in education. B minus. □



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## Publish and bedimmed

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Press Gang: Post-War Life in the World of Canadian Newspapers, by James B. Lamb, Macmillan, 204 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7705 1814 1).

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By GERARD McNEIL

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THIS BOOK is being promoted by Macmillan as the warm, affectionate recollections of a man who spent more than 25 years in the newspaper business. To a large extent it is just that. James B. Lamb regales a reader with the kind of stories reporters and editors love to tell one another, over and over again. Among them: the Toronto Globe and Mail publisher who asked aspiring reporters about their sex lives; the spinster who airbrushed the testicles of prize bulls; the udders of prize cows, in photos in the Woodstock Sentinel-Review's annual dairy edition; and the head-and-shoulders photographs used time and again to save money, so that "nobody ever aged in the Times-Herald. . ."

But Press Gang is more than just a charming collection of anecdotes about newspaper eccentrics. It is also an angry description of what has happened to journalism in Canada since the Second World War, when Lamb left the navy to join the Sentinel-Review as a cob reporter. He went from Woodstock to the Moose Jaw Times-Herald, and when the Times-Herald was bought by Roy Thomson, was given a \$20 pay cut and told by Thomson to learn something about advertising. He did, and in 1950 was appointed publisher of another Thomson acquisition, the Orillia Packer and Times. He retired in 1971, disgusted by an attempt to squeeze more profit from the Packer and Times at the expense of its paper boys. Thomson by then owned more than 30 Canadian dailies and had scared other publishers into building chains to protect themselves against Thomson intrusions.

By 1971, says Lamb, the Thomson group was "the greatest money-making organization in the country outside the Mint." "The id& of this newspaper colossus wrestling some grubby-faced kid for another half-cent of his meagre earnings struck me as enormously funny," Lamb says of the proposal. "but my central office counterparts were both insistent and serious, and the meeting blew up in an outburst of bad temper and worse language. all of it, I am sorry to say, on my part."

By then, he says, "Thomson newspapers were almost interchangeable; one had to read the masthead banners to tell them apart." Even the comics and features were packaged in Toronto and sent out to the

publishers. A publisher who wanted to run a feature from outside the package would be asked bluntly: "How many new readers will it add?"

Most of the energy of these newspapers went into meeting monthly profit quotes set in Toronto. Reporters spent so much time writing boilerplate for special editions aimed at gaining advertising that they had little left for actual reporting. All newspapermen know what the Peterborough Examiner was under Robertson Davies, and what it has become as a Thomson clone. Some of the Thomson dailies stopped running editorials altogether. Writes Lamb, in a sort of obituary:

The dramatic change in newspaper operation, from local and individual ownership to group control from a central city, was largely paralleled by what was happening in other fields of small-city business. Orillia was again typical of most Canadian small towns. In 1950 all of the dozen principal industrial plants in town were owned and operated by Orillians, and with the exception of three food chain outlets, so were all the retail stores along its busy main street. Yet within a decade, every one of the main industries had been taken over by outside groups, many of them enormous and most of them American, while hardly a retail store remained under individual ownership. My fellow Rotarians, who had once been merchants and proprietors of local businesses with deep roots in the community, were replaced by hustling young men from Toronto or its suburbs who were running an Orillia outlet for one of the big chains, and who hoped to move on to a bigger store just as soon as possible. The improved efficiency of the chain was paid for in the loss of local character.

Roy Thomson, made Lord Thomson of Fleet, was, according to Lamb, an exceptional man, "a kind of genius." "Yet his genius lay primarily in a kind of greed: a greed so obsessive, insatiable, and rarefied as to be exalted almost above the material into the spiritual sphere. His lust for wealth, and his gusto for the interminable manoeuvrings necessary to acquire it never flagged with advancing years or palled with satiation. . ."

The old man died and was succeeded by his son Ken, who tried to put a little more emphasis on news, and "platoons of flunkies," who redoubled the emphasis on profits. (Legend has it that women workers at one Thomson plant were told to use less toilet paper.)

Coming as it does from a rock-ribbed Rotarian who feels Trudeau "seized power" and appears baffled by the rights movement (such as it is), Lamb's criticism of the press and the Thomson newspapers is interesting. If an old-time conservative like Lamb feels that the newspaper chains have gone too far, how might the rest of us feel?

I liked the author after reading Press Gang. When he finds his old corvette Camrose in a Hamilton wrecking yard after the war, it is clear he left his heart in the navy. His reminiscences about newspapers are amusing. But there are jarring ethnic references throughout the book that should

have been edited out. Of what relevance is it that a building-owner Thomson negotiated with in Toronto was Jewish? And in his last chapter, an editorial howl. Lamb says the 1970s: "Socially and politically, minorities were 'in' and the tail wagged the dog; ideally to be a young black French-speaking lesbian anarchist rated one as Numero Uno in the New Canada."

Perhaps observations like that are inevitable from a person who led so comfortable a life with the Thomson chain. The Lamb family enjoyed a large, idyllic home on the shore of Lake Couchiching. If the Thomson organization squeezed nickels from its paper boys, it lavished them on its publishers and columnists. When he became disillusioned, Lamb was able to retire early and comfortably on his Thomson pension. He and his wife spend their winters in Spain and Portugal, their summers in a big house overlooking the Bras d'Or Lakes in Cape Breton. *Press Gang* is Lamb's second book since retirement. The tint was *The Corvette Navy*, in which he recounted his wartime experience on the *Camrose* and other navy ships. □

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## Knowing a hawk from a handwash

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**Paper Juggernaut: Big Government Gone Mad**, by Walter Stewart. McClelland & Stewart. 207 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 8310 8306 81).

By DENNIS OLSEN

THIS BOOK HAS A catchy but misleading title. It would be more accurately called the Pickering Airport Fiasco. There are two short chapters concerning that while elephant, Mirabel; the rest of the book deals primarily with Pickering, the Toronto airport-to-be that has been shelved. It is not a book that examines in a general way the inner workings of federal and provincial bureaucracies in Canada, although it does suggest that Canadians because they are divided or apathetic are often prostrate before the state machine. It is not even an attack on the bigness of today's government, which Stewart recognizes is probably necessary for the range and kind of services most Canadians want from government.

Journalist Stewart has managed to uncover many confidential government papers, reports, and memos and to dig up a welter of facts from government announcements and from newspapers. He puts all this together in an interesting and highly readable way to give us a picture of the seeming *ad hoc* confusion that surrounds government's role in these large airport construction projects. The fragmented system of federal and provincial jurisdictions,

the high turnover of knowledgeable ministers duped by their bureaucratic experts, the use and counter-use of outside consulting firms (homegrown and American), the seeming impossibility of predicting future air passenger numbers, particularly evident after rising energy costs had curbed the escalating curve of passenger increase; all this is there and more. Many readers will enjoy, or be enraged by, the inside dope; cost estimate reports of \$5 billion for Pickering were concealed while the public pronouncements were for a cost of only \$288 million: the bureaucrats in typical "cover-your-ass" style "were so anxious for an airport that they had prepared papers to seize the land of all three (proposed) sites" for Pickering.

As contemporary historical journalism, the book is eminently readable with a handy chronology of all the relevant government moves reaching back to 1961. Unfortunately Stewart says, "I don't like footnotes," and further, "some sources must be kept confidential," so that, although there is some guide to the more public sources he used, much of his evidence base is unavailable. Researchers should note that the book is not indexed.

Stewart believes our salvation lies in tough freedom-of-information legislation. The fiascos of Mirabel and Pickering would not have happened if "the background papers had been made public at the time." In Canada, he says, government "secrecy is a national fetish." All this is true but one wonders if there is not more. What is missing is an explanation and investigation based on the idea that there are real vested economic interests, both inside and outside governments, that want these mammoth construction projects built. Stewart writes: "In this whole damn story nothing was done because everybody in authority truly believed it should be done, it all happened by ghastly accident." Was it all just a ghastly accident, has big government gone mad? It's doubtful.

The old hypothesis of political patronage needs to be examined more closely. Contractors, developers and land speculators want and need this kind of government project. There is also the important role of high-wage construction employment with its economic spinoffs for the local economy, especially in areas of high unemployment. On the other hand, politicians and political parties need money for their elections. As any businessman seeking government contracts in Ottawa or a provincial capital knows, somehow (and it is always difficult to research) "one hand washes the other" and the state largesse continues to flow while the bagmen fill the party coffers.

Why should we let our political leaders escape accountability and responsibility by saying government is crazy or that it was all a ghastly accident? Was it an accident when "Ontario rushed eight different Cabinet Ministers through the North Pickering Project in a period of forty-three months"? These cabinet ministers were not shuffled

and appointed by Ontario but by the Premier of Ontario. One wonders why.

Reading between the lines of Stewart's book one detects a theme that the rapid turnover of ministers and the fact that so many appear to be amateurs compared to their bureaucratic experts is useful for avoiding public accountability for both politician and bureaucrat. As long as there are no clear cabinet decisions in a policy area, bureaucrats can claim that it is the politicians' responsibility to initiate policy, while the "new" ministers can claim they haven't had time to familiarize themselves with the portfolio and past policy in the area. On top of this, one level of government can foist responsibility off on the other. It all seems rather haphazard and chaotic but it has been going on too long in Canadian governments to be totally accidental. The RCMP hearings showed us that cabinet ministers often deliberately don't want to know officially what their administrators are up to—especially if patronage or something shady is involved.

Big government may seem like a juggernaut but once one examines it more closely and critically with an issue such as Pickering, one finds not a machine but a morass of evaded responsibility and buck-passing, a web of alliances and tacit understandings. It's not a paper juggernaut, only a paper tiger. □

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## Hear it for the auditors

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**Cordial But Not Cosy: A History of the Office of Auditor General**, by Sonja Sinclair. McClelland & Stewart, 208 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 8157 X).

By MARTIN PETER

THE OFFICE OF Auditor General, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1978, has come to occupy a special place in Canada's popular mythology as the champion of the little man against the scourge of ever bigger, more expensive government. Many commemorative volumes about good causes amount to little more than exercises in the art of eulogy, but happily Sonja Sinclair's book does not fall into this category. Rather, what she provides us with is a measured, critical discussion of the office's achievements and failures.

To some extent the subtitle is misleading, since the focus is very much on the past 20 years, while the period before only occupies about one third of the entire text. Her decision to concentrate on the contemporary era seems justified, however, in view of its significance and of her success in interviewing a number of the key figures. Though this is not a scholarly work (nor was

it intended to be), it has value for all those interested in the problems of accountability and financial control in modern government.

The title refers to the view of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants that the relationship between the Auditor General and governmental agencies he audits should be "cordial but not cosy." Attaining a workable balance between responsibility to Parliament and co-operation with the executive has been a problem since 1870. But the Auditor General's role has also changed in response to the expansion of government, new techniques of financial control, and the differing backgrounds and outlooks of the auditors themselves.

The leading figures appear to fall into one of two groups: combative showmen such as the first appointee, J. L. McDougall, and his spiritual heir of the 1960s and early 1970s, Maxwell Henderson; and lower-profile professionals such as Watson Sellar (1940-59) and the present incumbent, James Macdonell. Sinclair's major theme is that the accomplishments of the latter group outweigh those of the former. Thus while Henderson's horror stories of government bungling (as in the famous case of the Bonaventure refit) may have made the headlines, they could and did divert attention and energy away from more deep seated problems. Sellar and Macdonell, on the other hand, were less interested in controversy than in working behind the scenes to modernize the government's whole approach to financial management.

Indeed, Macdonell is shown as virtually revolutionizing the Auditor General's function since 1973 by his unrelenting pressure, often in face of fierce resistance, for the adoption of "value-for-money auditing." The Auditor General Act of 1977, the appointment of a Comptroller General the following year, and the establishment of a project to study procedures in cost effectiveness — these things may not have attracted much public attention, but the author argues persuasively for their significance.

Macdonell's strengths are frequently commented on, including his ability to recruit talent from the accountancy and consulting professions. But his shortcomings are not ignored either, notably his inclination on occasion to seek too "cosy" a relationship with government. Similarly, the treatment of Henderson, while critical, is never hostile. The comparison between Henderson and Macdonell would have carried more weight, however, if the account of the former's activities (coveting two chapters) had been as full as that of the latter's (covering half the book). The writing is generally effective and the thornier aspects of the subject are clearly explained. There are occasions, though, where the author's enthusiasm leads her to abandon her detached prose style for a rather more breathless one.

Aside from learning a good deal about bureaucratic infighting and the world of the professional auditor, we are also provided

with some interesting material about the episodes involving Polysar and Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., and about the less well known Canadian contribution to the proceedings of the United Nations Board of Auditors. On balance, *Cordial But Not Cosy* may be recommended as an informative, fair-minded, and entertaining study of an important aspect of Canada's public life. □

## Little victims

Divorced Kids, by Warner Troyer, Clarke Irwin, 175 pages, \$10.95 cloth (ISBN 07720 1222 9).

By DEAN BONNEY

ON A FLIGHT from New York to Toronto. Warner Troyer met a little girl going to pay her regular visit to her divorced mother. Her worldliness struck him. Nothing surprised her and she knew more about jet planes and airports than most adults. This book evolved from that encounter. It's an arrangement, with commentary, of excerpts from hundreds of interviews he taped with the offspring of divorced parents, located the interviewees (he doesn't say how) in Canada, the U.S., and Britain. They ranged in age from five to 50-plus, but most were under 20. He brought to the work decades of experience not only in investigative journalism, but also in matrimonial failure and absentee fatherhood (two marriages, eight children).

It's not an ambitious book. Aside from drawing on his memory, Troyer limited himself to taping the interviews, having them transcribed, culling them up (and sometimes altering them for various reasons, as he explains in the introduction), and reassembling them. He did no research, hence there's no bibliography. But somebody did a certain amount of research for him. She's mentioned under "Acknowledgements."

The sections are organized in a straightforward if arbitrary way: break-up, losing a parent, special days, money, self-reliance, spying, lovers and step-parents, and so forth. The author's method is also straightforward. He makes a few generalizations, uses a selection of excerpts to bear them out, then lays down a series of deductions, usually self-evident, but usually sensible too, mixed with pieces of advice and recollections of his own shortcomings as a father with visiting privileges. The urgent hindsight of the reformed child-neglector can be oppressive, but by and large these personal interjections are restrained. They're even welcome, because the interviewees are apt to be incoherent and

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because their anonymity has been so carefully maintained that much of their individuality has gone with it. An exception is 14-year-old Barry, living, truculently, with his mother and two younger sisters: "Why did they get married in the first place if they didn't like each other? They sure didn't do us any bii favours. I think she's tired of me a lot, and mad at me: but how does she think I feel?" Few of the others are capable of expressing themselves so trenchantly.

If many of Troyer's findings are obvious, others are unexpected enough to be interesting. For example, a recurring source of bitterness among the children are pets lost, given away, or put down during the upheaval of a divorce. A divorced mother may feel the reduction in her income keenly, her children seldom do. Nor do they resent her taking a job that deprives them of her care for most of the day. Girls in their late teen just embarking on their first serious love affair are more profoundly wounded by their parents' divorce than other offspring. Always the victims, children are also almost always burdened with guilt. It could be their fault. They're never quite sue.

This is an honest, compassionate, unpretentious book, but for all its virtues it illustrates a well-known dictum: what is impressive in one medium may be less effective in another. Warner Troyer doesn't come across on the primed page the way he does on television. You pay attention to the reasoned performer on the screen because his words are reinforced by gestures, intonation, apparent intelligence even when he's reaching for his fifth cigarette, and a cynical laugh. Print somehow diminishes his ideas.

Also, I'd say he didn't spend much time putting this book together. He's a busy man. No doubt he has to be: his support payments — a subject mentioned often enough in the book — are probably large. His writing is so slipshod you sometimes have to reread a sentence. This saps the force of his arguments and makes a brief book seem too long. He misuses the word "substantive" (as do many other reporters these days), uses "evidence" as a verb, modifies absolutes ("the most essential," "the most crucial"), and either can't recognize or doesn't mind tautologies ("final conclusion") and contradictions ("living alone" with someone). Busy as he is, he still finds time to teach graduate journalism students at Western how to write. □



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## What did you do in the great split, daddy?

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**Single Father's Handbook**, by Richard Gatley and David Koulack, Anchor Books, 196 pages, \$6.50 paper (ISBN 0 385 13653 6).

By SHEREE HAUGHIAN

THE QUALITY OF mercy can become very strained when it comes to reviewing the self-helps and how-tos, but the rules of benevolent living decree that we must dig out a place in our hearts for books that shoot for nothing less than human happiness. Concern about style and diction seems effete and pedantic, Samuel Johnson carping at William Blake. The important thing is capturing The New Vision.

Separated fathers writing for a swelling brotherhood are, presumably: especially exempt from arrogant squibs. Disregard the fact that the authors of *Single Father's Handbook* talk about "kids" with the same frequency as other writers employ indefinite articles. Consider this effort by two Winnipeg psychologists as a refreshingly moral postlude to the Me decade. Cut off the oozing, rancid flesh of bad prose and suck the Sweet juices of responsible parenthood from the marrow.

The problem surfaces when you realize that Gatley and Koulack aren't concerned with single fathers going it alone. The ambitious, full-time custodians who juggle diaper pails with jobs at IBM. They're discussing "visitation rights" — at the least a few minutes, at the most a few days.

Although the importance of paternal contact at any time should not be belittled; the reader perceives that the authors have not been totally Open and Honest with the book-buying public. And isn't that precisely what the self-helps tell us we always should be?

At least that's the value code the authors my they espouse. When the "kids" start to suspect a snake in the garden, "tell them as simply as possible." Tell them what? "After critical examination, your mother and I feel...?" Or, "Quite frankly, my dears, we loathe each other?" When you're patching up shattered psyches, generalities won't do.

There are other omissions just too annoying to blink away. There is no discussion, for instance, of the ordeal of meshing old paternity with the offspring of a new association, probably because Gatley and Koulack (We are, therefore we know) haven't been through it yet.

The authors may have been content to leave some ragged edges around torn relationships, but they have bothered to

include a section on cocking what any reasonably astute two-year-old would rightfully call junk food. One would assume that a person who still has enough emotional energy to purchase this book would also be capable of investing in a cookbook, preferably mm that doesn't advocate sizzling french fries without the aid of a wire basket or baking soda. The Gullible Gourmet may end up with more than a burned-out marriage.

This handbook, designed to be so positively Brave New World, is positively dreadful. There is only one bright prospect. The authors' legacy to despairing daddies could be elixir to a dying marriage. The alternative to staying together is not a very agreeable one. Imagine having to receive a copy of this at your good-riddance party. □

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## Primal screech

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**The Rock Observed: Studies in the Literature of Newfoundland**, by Patrick O'Flaherty, University of Toronto Press, 222 pages, \$15.00 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 2351 7).

By RONALD ROMPKY

CLIMB THE STAIRS at the headquarters of Breakwater Books in St. John's and you will hear an unmistakable sound. It is not the creak of floorboards but the hum of industry. Breakwater Books is an astonishing success. Though one of the newest publishing houses in Canada, it has rapidly established an outlet for Newfoundland writers and focused nationalistic feeling — perhaps encouraging thereby the idea that the current enthusiasm for Newfoundland writing is something new. At the same time, studies of earlier writing are scarce, giving way to the more urgent interests of geographers, linguists, and folklorists. But the bulky literature of Newfoundland and Labrador, a literature dating from the 16th century, can be ignored no longer, and Patrick O'Flaherty's brief examination is about to introduce readers to a new aspect of Canadian literary history.

As the self-deprecating title implies, *The Rock Observed* is not a literary history of Newfoundland. It lacks the scope of a full-scale history and the detachment of historical criticism: for in tone and emphasis the book is an idiosyncratic statement about how Newfoundlanders view themselves and how they are perceived by outsiders. To begin with, the text is substantively the script for O'Flaherty's stimulating educational TV series, *Newfoundland and Her Writers*, a course of study produced by Memorial University for off-campus students. Then the lecturer canvasses an even

wider assortment of books with a sometimes vehement and cranky tone, and develops a fellow Feeling For his countrymen with minks, arched eyebrows, and asides. It is theatrical and polemical and reminiscent of O'Flaherty's prickly reviews of Newfoundland books in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* (*Books in Canada*, October, 1977). Arriving at the present "studies" bereft of the speaker's artifice and the journalist's sense of immediacy, he sets out to examine Newfoundland writing not as the conventional "tradition" or "evolutionary process" beloved of academics but as a set of "responses" to life in Newfoundland and Labrador. "IF it lacks the symmetry and universality of great art," he writes, "It is none the less important in what it reveals."

Predictably, we find that a strong native literature did not begin to thrive until the end of the 19th century. Before that, the argument runs, books about Newfoundland minored the ambitions and attitudes of their writers and largely distorted the Facts because the writers were first of all explorers, promoters, missionaries, adventurers, romantics, politicians, and soldiers seeking the bubble reputation. Consequently, the myths that contribute to the Newfoundlander's self-image began to form, among them the heroic status of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, the notion that the fishing admirals discouraged settlement, the anticipation of vast mineral wealth and the sobriquet "Britain's Oldest Colony." For a more accurate rendering of Newfoundland life, we must turn to the 20th century.

The latter part OF the book examines the more self-conscious writers of the 20th century, particularly those associated with outbursts of nationalistic feeling. The number of writers and local magazines is surprising. E. J. Pratt occupies a place to himself, though the treatment he receives here tells us more about the assumptions of the book than about Pratt, a poet venerated by Newfoundland schoolteachers for decades and apparently threatened with the loss of his native status because he made his reputation "away." Clyde Rose, president of Breakwater Books, called Pratt "a Toronto poet" in the introduction to *Baffles of Wind and Tide* (1974). O'Flaherty also dismisses Pratt as an expatriate, one who skipped off to Ontario "once he got the chance," exhibited no real interest in culture back home, allied himself with no local writers, and spent his spare time entertaining after-dinner audiences with tales of heroic fishermen laced with the mimicry of outport speech. Portrayed this way, Pratt could almost be imagined (were he alive today) departing the government wharf in, say, Moreton's Harbour (where he taught) waving an American Express card and cautioning: "Doan't, Fer de luvva God, leave home wit' out it."

Pratt is praised no more than such "local" writers as Isabella Rogerson, F. B. Wood, or R. G. McDonald. Denounced for their failure to deal fairly with authentic Newfoundland life are such better-known writers as Margaret Duley (too citified),

Harold Horwood (too romantic), Percy lanes (too gloomy), and Farley Mowat (too sentimental). *Sympathy with local character knowledge of local life* (chiefly in the outports) serves to measure such writers as if these were their principal concerns. Where they fall short, more modest ones such as Ted Russell, Arthur Scammell, and Ron Pollett are praised for their understanding of the "outporter." Yet with its lucid prose and ample reference material the book does succeed, as no other book has done, in demonstrating the ways the written word has shaped an essentially oral culture. Without doubt it will stir interest in this rich body of material even if O'Flaherty's rigidity and *saeva indignatio* will sometimes leave the reader wondering where criticism leaves off and polemic begins. □

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## Beavers in space

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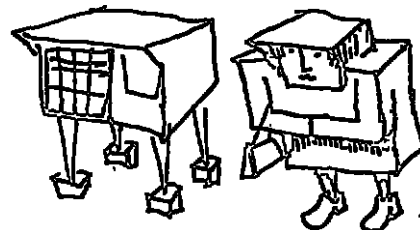
**Other Canadas: An Anthology of Science Fiction and Fantasy**, edited by John Robert Colombo, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$15.95 cloth (ISBN 0 07 082952 7).

By GARY DRAPER

SOMEBODY MUST have asked John Robert Colombo once, "What do you get when you cross CanLit with SF?" *Other Canadas* is his answer. Canadian literature and SF & F both exist, to a degree, in literary ghettos. Both are plagued by questions of definition: Is Malcolm Lowry In or Out? Is Stanislaw Lam SF or F? Moreover, both are too often snubbed (or patronized) for reasons that have little to do with the quality of individual works, by people who wouldn't touch the stuff (or who never read anything else).

This book is big enough, in both the number of selections and the kinds of work it includes, to interest those in either camp or, best of all, in neither. As Colombo says, with the modesty of a snake-oil salesman, the book contains "excerpts from four novels, seventeen short stories, twenty-seven poems by thirteen poets, two critical articles, one prophetic essay, a film script, and? brief annotated bibliography." Whew!

Inevitably, no reader will be pleased with everything here. Too much of it is merely adequate, and there are a few things that just



don't bear reprinting. The excerpt from Cyrano's trip to the moon, which finds him setting down in New France might just as well be set in Pago Pago. Some of the conventional SF does not rise above its conventions. And the excerpt from Stephen Leacock's *Afternoons in Utopia* should not have been disinterred.

But the best pieces justify the collection. Near the top of my list of favourites are Hugh Hood's "After the Sins" and Margaret Laurence's "A Queen in Thebes." Sharply different from each other in focus and in tone, both stories ring changes on what might be called the Big Bang theory of the end of the world, an SF theme that has been (forgive me) just about done to death. Stephen Scobie's "The Philosopher's Stone," set in the future and on another planet, has all the conventional trappings. But the characters and the situation in which they find themselves have an emotional resonance that is mm: this is not merely very good SF, it's a very good story, a perfect place for non-SF readers to sled.

I thought science-fiction poetry couldn't be written until I read Gwendolyn MacEwen's "Armies of the Moon." Imagine Ray Bradbury's *Martian Chronicles* distilled into 23 lines and you'll have some idea of it. Alden Nowlan's "Plot For a Science-Fiction Novel" is a different matter altogether:

*Scientists from another galaxy  
capture an earthling  
and decide after examining him  
that he is a machine designed  
for the manufacture  
of shit.*

Algernon Blackwood's flesh-crawler, "The Wendigo," summons up a monster that is both creepy physically and credible psychologically. The story benefits from appearing in company with George Bowering's poem, "Windigo," and Margaret Atwood's discussion of the apparition in her fine essay, "Canadian Monsters." But why isn't one native version of the legend included here?

There are editorial slips (Hugh Hood's "After the Sirens" appears in the acknowledgements as "Plying a Red Kite." Spider Robinson's "No Renewal" is called "New Renewal" in the table of contents) that raise questions about the care that's been taken in getting the information down. And in his introductions to the stories the editor sometimes talks too much. The reader's gradual discovery of the kind of world he's entering is one of the pleasures of the fantastic. On one occasion (in his preface to H. A. Hargreaves's "Infinite Variation"), Colombo hints broadly of the central idea and actually gives away the ending.

Still, despite its faults, which are at least partly the inevitable faults of any anthology, the book contains a few real gems that benefit from the reflection they cast on each other. So I'm grateful to Colombo for showing what you get when you cross CanLit with SF. It may be ScantiFiction but at least it's Canadood. □



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## Of dories and grey

*Salt Water, Fresh Water*, by Allan Anderson. Macmillan, illustrated. 304 pages, \$15.95 cloth (ISBN 9 7705 1819 2).

*Standing into Danger*, by Cassie Brown. Doubleday. 408 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 395 13681 4).

By RUTH OLSON LATTA

ASPECTS OF LIFE on the sea are dealt with by both of these works, and both are histories, though they differ in approach. Another similarity is that neither manages to avoid cliché.

Allan Anderson has followed in the oral-history tradition of Barry Broadfoot and Heather Robertson. He taped interviews with more than 100 Canadians who make a living from our lakes and oceans. The result is a companion volume to *Remembering the Farm* (1977), a compilation of interviews with workers on the land.

Those who have a romantic idea of the hard-working, gnarled fisherman, proud of his skills, with a deep respect for the sea, will have the stereotype confirmed in *Salt Water, Fresh Water*. The vast number of transcribed anecdotes have been organized under such predictable chapter headings as "The Old Days," "Hard Work, Long Hours," and "Accidents." One accident description is horrifying, two are depressing, three in succession constitute overkill.

Since the numerous contributors are not identified, at times the book seems to be one man's endless tale of triumph over adversity. Folkiness and praise for poverty and honest toil abound. What a relief it is to find in the chapter "Partners to the Men" that at least some fishermen's wives are not paragons of virtue:

I know of two different situations where the men will move right in with the wife, and the fisherman will go to sea, bring home the money, just drink it up and have a big party while he's on land, and they seem to accept it.

Anderson does not deal with anything political, such as the organization of workers in fishery-related occupations, or the impact of recent government policy on the fishing industry. The book ends with a sigh for the good old days. Apparently a man requires a dory, not a trawler, in order to feel true kinship with the sea. Many oral histories are rife with nostalgia for deprivation and hardship, and Anderson's is no exception.

Newfoundland native Cassie Brown, who was interviewed by Anderson for his book, has written a history of a sea disaster in February, 1942. *Standing into Danger* deals with the wreck of the U.S. destroyer 26 Books in Canada, December, 1978

Truxtun end of the supply ship *Pollux* off the south coast of Newfoundland. Brown interviewed survivors but also used official documents, so that she plays the role of narrator, not of collector. She avoids the oral historian's danger of tedium, with long quotations following one after another. Unfortunately, Brown played story-teller only to the point of using dialogue.

The commanders of the destroyer U.S.S. *Wilkes*, the flagship escorting the *Pollux*, were held responsible for the deaths of the 203 sailors. A court of inquiry was ended after only 18 days because the naval personnel involved had more pressing wartime duties. Six officers were recommended for court martial but only two were tried; it was decided by the authorities that "radical administration short of court martial proceedings would permit the best overall effort." Radical administration mined the careers of two lieutenants, Smyth and Grindley; court martial might have cleared them.

Brown says her original intention was to document the dramatic rescue conducted by the Newfoundland community who sighted the wrecks, but that further research interested her in the injustices and inadequacies of the inquiry. These different foci divide the reader's interest. She might have made Smyth and Grindley her protagonists, giving them personalities as well as words to speak, and making the account more like a good adventure novel. *Standing into Danger*, by emphasizing the roles of many people in the drama rather than a few key figures, fails to be very exciting, and remains merely a regional, specialized historical account of interest to the ones involved. \*

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## Lessons of catastrophe

*Dark Times*, by Waclaw Iwaniuk, Hounslow Press, 109 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 88882037 2).

By ALBERT MORITZ

WITH PUBLICATION of *Dark Times*, the first full-length collection in English of the poems of Waclaw Iwaniuk, a Polish poet who has lived in Canada since 1948, Hounslow Press continues its valuable work of making available through translation Canadian poets writing in non-official languages. The book also contains essays on the poet's career and on the production of this new translation. Principal translator Jagna Boraks suggests that Iwaniuk's special importance is as a spokesman for the Canadian immigrant isolated from his new country, especially by unfamiliarity with English.

Certainly, Iwaniuk often frames his

poems around his reactions to unfamiliar customs and institutions of Canadian life. But he is at his most effective not in his appeals for integration in a new country, but rather in his searing memories of the land from which he is a refugee. His most powerful criticism of his adopted country is not resentment at rejection of himself or other immigrants, but rather worry at the New World's complacent indifference to the lesson that the refugee's story of war and suffering can teach about human history.

His appeal is universal rather than personal, for all places and times, not only for 20th-century Canada. As Iwaniuk says, "Truth needs no territory. I was not born here. It was not bequeathed this parcel of land yet my voice quivers as I speak of it."

Iwaniuk urges that the new land must learn from the old or face the same sufferings. The immigrant, though a stranger, carries with him the valuable lesson of catastrophe: "Next to us lived different people. They were kind but not for our times. Quiet and sober-minded, busy with themselves. They knew nothing and wanted to hear nothing about us. . . / We might have explained everything to them; / The chaos which still reigned, / The elements which were not clearly outlined. / The quiver that shook all foundations. . ." The immigrant knows that populations are wiped out, countries destroyed, culture erased:

*I had a city,  
they took it away.*

*I built a new one, hidden, unapproachable:  
There will be no trespassers,  
Merchants will not bargain at its gates in discord.*

*No telegrams will fly into the world from here.*

*Nor will politicians make useless speeches.*

*We, not the priests,*

*Will ignite the lamps in the temple.*

...

*Wisdom learned from ashes*

*Teaches only how to die.*

*Now I must do everything in advance  
For tomorrow.*

The lesson is a memory of irreparable, eternal loss: "All that is mine, the earth took away." "Death, as I remember, has reached me/in the Bay of Narvik under torrent of bombs." The cry is repeated over and over: "I saw all this." But harsher than the memories themselves is the fear that the memories may have no effect on the present and the future: "What is salvation if those who survived/hurry to be devoured again by night?"

The energy of this poetry springs from the conviction that what the poet has known is of essential significance, and that the poet must somehow touch those who "hurry to be devoured again" with a realization of the dangers of indifference. Iwaniuk's poetry, despite its author's personal suffering, is alive with reverence for the word: "I believe so much in what I say/that I am

ready to pass any test./Words, once written, will last,/shine or stain./cure or poison future generations." The criticism of poetry that occurs often in *Dark Times* is directed not at language itself but at writers whose "words/no longer touch the truth./They clang like brass cymbals/they shed tears over Troy/they glorify the moon's image/as though they had no other obligations." The discouragement Iwaniuk sometimes registers with his own achievements, the worry that art may fail, does not cancel for him the importance of his struggle. His art is truly human, even at its darkest end most embittered. It is human because it sets itself the task of loving and preserving humanity, not the self alone, and defending it in the unblinking consciousness of true terror and absurdity.

On the debit side, a few of the translations in *Dark Times* are, in lines and passages, stilted and uncolloquial. On other occasions, the poet's clarity of vision and verbal skill seem to flatten into sentimental reportage: and there are instances in which the usually well modulated remembrances and meditations collapse into the mechanical, ineffective stridency of protest poetry. The listing of horrors to make a point dissipates some of the poetry's charge in "Genealogy" and "Strange Yet Not So Strange At All," for instance.

But there are in this collection only rare false notes. On the whole, Iwaniuk's hard struggle "to write a poem/to express full truth in plain words" is not only a bravely-articulated ideal but a fully achieved accomplishment. □

## On the road to Shihchiachuang

**Beyond the Crimson Morning: Reflections from a Journey Through Contemporary China**, by George Ryga. **Double-day**, illustrated, 216 pages, \$11.50 cloth (ISBN 0 385 15223 X).

By BARBARA NOVAK

WHEN PLAYWRIGHT/NOVELIST George Ryga made his first trip to China in 1976, as leader of a 24-member delegation — "a worker's group from Canada" — the number of tourists visiting China was still no more than a trickle. In view of the fact that as many as 200,000 tourists are expected to flood into China this year, Ryga's perspective is of historical value already.

But it puzzles me that, although he travelled there a second time in 1977, Ryga chose not to compare his two trips. Instead, he presents only his initial impressions, even though major events took place in China between his first trip and his second — the death of Chairman Mao, the

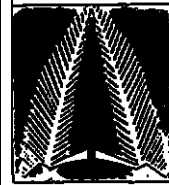
imprisonment of the Gang of Four and the further "opening to the West." He relates in detail, for example, a discussion with one of his guides about the absence of great works of literature in the Peking Hotel book store. But by his return the following year, Chinese translations of foreign authors had begun to appear. I am surprised that he fails to comment upon this and other cultural developments. Many of the questions Ryga raises most have been answered during his second trip. Perhaps he prefers the questions to the answers.

His impressions of the country and its politics alternate throughout with impressions of his travelling companions. His brief, thumbnail descriptions make them seem much like characters introduced in a script. Randy, for example, is an "intense and fierce television writer, encumbered with photographic and recording gear." "Ol' Bill," Ryga's roommate for the tour, receives the most sympathetic sketch: "He was retired, his wife deceased, his children grown up and gone away. He had been a miner, mill worker, fisherman." An author's note claims, however, that the names and the characterizations of people on the journey have been fictionalized. The question arises: Why did he devote so much space to interactions between what amount to fictional characters?

Bess, the "young and attractive bank teller and amateur pianist with an unsettling crudity in her mannerisms and pitch of voice," receives special fictional treatment. Ryga rounds out her character by projecting an image of her in middle age, with her face "now puffed into obesity, the body swollen and settled into clothing cut more severely. The anxious shrillness now constant in her voice. . . . Her lips now thickened, falsely moistened with coloured glycerine rather than the normal juices of a healthy body." He then imagines a scene with this future Bess, who "grins, and with a sweeping, hateful motion polls the edge of her skirt up to reveal a pudgy thigh end tightly fitting underpants over a bulging crotch. A wasted, loveless body, which now rises from the chair and advances on me screaming: 'This is all I am and was — you and other men saw only this in me — nothing more!'" Ryga, no doubt, intended to transform poor Bess into a symbol of his wasted, loveless country, but I found it jarring in the context of a travel book.

Interspersed among accounts of visits to Shanghai, Peking, Shihchiachuang, An-yang, Changsha, and Canton, are flashbacks to trips Ryga has made to Bulgaria, Mexico, California, and England, and memories of his youth in Albena. These are by far the most successful passages in the book, and a pleasant change from the carefully worded recapitulations of political and ideological exchanges with his guides, and the detail of the on-going friction among the fictionalized members of his delegation.

Not surprisingly, *Beyond the Crimson Morning* reveals more about its author than it does about China. He has chosen to frame his reflections within a brief account of



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community political struggles with which he was involved in Vancouver before departing. Clearly, his journey had a tremendous impact on the way in which he views himself and the culture in which he lives. The book reflects his effort to come to terms with his experiences and in doing so he expresses his deep concern for the social, cultural, and political health of his country. Bet, as he said to his wife when he phoned her from Hong Kong immediately before his return to Canada, "I think there is hope for us all. . . ." □

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## Theirs is just to do and die

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*Dying for a Living*, by Lloyd Tataryn, Deneau & Greenberg, 249 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 66879 018 X).

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By GORDON MORASH

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I OFTEN THINK back to the summer I was between high school and university. I had to get a job, my family not being particularly excited about handing out free money. The place was a desk factory; the name's not really important, but the conditions were. My closest friend and I were both employed there and his job was to soak the oil off sheets of steel by dipping them in a solvent bath. He wasn't given a mask for this and at lunch time, when baloney sandwiches and black fingerprints on white bread were the order of the day, he often ate outside — regardless of the weather. He didn't do it for the scenery, but to be able to stand up after the half-hour break and walk back to the solvent tank without keeling over on the way.

This was the same place that nearly cost me the tip of my middle finger on my left hand. Some machine that bit off the edge of a piece of steel tried to do the same thing with my hand. No one in the plant knew first aid, and management's stop-gap measure was to proffer a wee dram of rum on the way to Emergency.

As I said, the name's not really important in this story, nor I suppose are these two scenes when you consider the hazards that can be found in other work places across the country. In *Dying for a Living*, the game changes slightly; Lloyd Tataryn goes so far as to name several companies, management representatives, and many doctors in an even-minded explanation of what he calls "the politics of industrial death." He's justified in naming names because the end result of many work days has been more than just a cut finger, or a summer of wooziness. Tataryn is concerned with cancer and arsenic poisoning as they are caused by Canada's asbestos, uranium and gold mining companies in Quebec's The-

ford Mines, Ontario's Elliot Lake, and Yellowknife, N.W.T. He's concerned because the incidence of disease goes beyond a simple mismanagement of resources affecting workers only. Tataryn contends the situation is compounded by spin-off effects on the mining towns that result in sickness for non-workers and by test results fudged by doctors in the employ of the mining companies. Truth then, at least as far as the industry is concerned, is a bendable thing.

He also takes a swipe at standards and shows them to be part of that bendable truth, so that it is uncertain as to who is benefitting from their we:

Since exposure to carcinogens involves some risk, it has been suggested that the concept of "safe" levels be replaced by that of a "socially acceptable level of risk." But once the concept of "acceptable" risk is raised, the question becomes "acceptable" to whom? From whose viewpoint is "acceptability" to be judged — from its creators, its victims, from experts or governments or the community at large?

Tataryn, a former miner and now a CBC documentary producer, clearly has the right



to be outraged. Yet his rhetoric is not from the *National Enquirer*. There's no flailing madly or tilling at windmills here. His is the voice of reason and if there's any negative comment to be made, it's that he has not forgotten his radio and television methods enough. This is a book, not a program and there's just too much of the book that is made up of snippets more suitable to on-air listening than in-chair reading. □

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## first impressions

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by Douglas Hill

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## Shuffling toward the apocolypse with a hasty headmaster and a discount sleuth

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*Obsession*, by Elizabeth Boyle (York Publishing & Rioting, 190 pages, 54.50 paper), is fun and has a cheerful ineptitude that draws attention away from some serious flaws. The novel looks homemade, a crazy-quilt of plot scraps and local colours stitched haphazardly together: the effect depends as much upon the audience's supply of good will (not, in my case, begrudged) as the author's.

Though the book is offered as an "entertainment," it's not exactly unrelieved light reading, unless murder, kidnapping, and religious fanaticism is your idea of a chuckle. The story itself begs a summary: it's set mostly in New Brunswick; it centres upon an innocent narrator caught in a web of gratuitous deception and violence, and upon the bargain-basement private detective who tries to help her sort things out. It displays the kind of offbeat, down-home characters you've always known were lurking behind the hedges of those shady towns; around Moncton, the kind who get their kicks from seasoning carburetors with sand or fiddleheads with rat poison.

Love conquers almost all in *Obsession* — all except the awkward dialogue, the typos, and the disproportion of explanation to drama, of tell to show. With more care,

perhaps with a firmer editorial hand, this could have been the sort of disarming, serio-comic, thriller-fantasy that Michael Innes regularly produces. As it is, the novel is not quite sophisticated enough to establish a wholly consistent tone, not quite naive enough to pass as folk art.

\* \* \*

There are no surprises in Mary Ann Seitz's *Shelterbelt* (Prairie Books, 218 pages, 512.95 cloth), only the sensitively written, fast-paced story of a young Polish-Ukrainian girl's childhood and adolescence on the Saskatchewan prairie. Seitz's method is total immersion in circumstance and detail; fortunately her documentary approach leaves room for an intense if narrow range of feelings that sound authentic.

The emphasis is on Francie Polanski's early years, and here the novel is at its most naturalistically effective. An only daughter with eight brothers, Francie grows up amid the casual violence of rural Depression poverty and endures the expected crises and torments of family, friends, and school. Later, when she leaves the farm for convent, teachers' college, and one-mom school, the record seems less personally felt, more perfunctory.

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ANANSI

There are limits to what a book like this can accomplish. The story's been told before, many times, and the scope afforded by the genre isn't great. Accomplished as Seitz is, her novel doesn't transcend its familiar materials.

\* \* \*

In *A Man Without Passion* (Clarke Irwin, 194 pages, \$13.95 cloth), Florence Evans introduces one of the nastier narrators in recent fiction. Hugh Hectory, the Canadian-born headmaster of a primary school in Oxfordshire, is a damaged man. He directs his staff, end counsels his students and their parents, with a cold viciousness that would be hilarious if it weren't horrifying. He considers he has "a soul permanently in abeyance," a career caught in "the pitiless grip of continuity." But even venom cannot annihilate hope and memory, and events pest and present well up to force a startling conclusion, redemptive from a Christian as well as a psychological perspective.

The novel effectively weaves flashback into the drab compulsive tidiness of the narrator's days. Structure mirrors mind: "Time," Hectory says, "has now started 10 becks up for me and the pest is slowly crushing me against the iron railings of the present." There is pain in his early life — emotional squalor, madness, trauma — and Hectory must face up to the limits of his responsibility for what he has tried to ignore.

A circumstantially excessive ending somewhat unbalances the tight rhythms. Evans initially establishes, and at times one feels she works the virulence a bit hard. But the mastery of tone carries it off; the voice of Hugh Hectory is as tightly controlled as Dunstan Ramsay's or Hager Shipley's, and

the sense of emotional deprivation is similar. It's a rare pleasure to find a first novel that can stand, if it needs to, so firmly on its stylistic merits alone.

\* \* \*

*The Wave*, by Christopher Hyde (McClelland & Stewart, 226 pages, \$12.95, cloth), is a super-heated disaster-thriller in the apocalyptic mode. Pure diversion (despite the front cover's earnest claim that it's "a warning end a novel"), it offers enough plausible timeliness and carefully orchestrated suspense to be thoroughly scary and worth a couple of hours' anxiety from all but the most skeptical reader.

The plot has to do with dams on the Columbia River, earthslides, flood, nuclear accident, and high- and low-level espionage. Sin & the author, we are told, worked for the CBC as a researcher, we assume his facts are accurate. The conspiracy he weaves is international and intricate, and though some of its loose threads are better not picked at, the whole thing feels authentic, imaginable.

*The Wave* does not have a single character, action, or piece of dialogue that is not a stereotype; movies, books, and TV stamp out this stuff like fast-food. You simply have to try to forget — as author and publisher apparently did — that certain novels of Desmond Bagley and Hammond Innes, or *The China Syndrome*, or *The Six Million Dollar Man* exist; today's Big Mac experiences must not be dulled by close comparison with yesterday's. Life like this — without sensory continuity — is hardly the ideal, I suppose, but Hyde knows what he's doing. Give him 20 pages, disdain it or not, and he'll have you munching away to the end. □

## the browser

by Michael Smith

## When men were made of iron and the law by Steele, the village smith was king

UNLIKE THEIR counterparts in the American West, few Canadian lawmen are remembered as individual heroes, largely because the North-West Mounted Police emphasized discipline and service rather than High Noon bravado. The formula that combined military organization with law enforcement was embodied in the kind of man whose life is skilfully reported in Robert Stewart's *Sam Steele: Lion of the Frontier* (Doubleday, illustrated, 303 pages, \$12.50 cloth). Born in Ontario in 1851, Steele enlisted in the militia at 14 (he lied about his age), and first travelled west during the Riel Rebellion. He joined the

NWMP upon its creation in 1873, and served through the great buffalo famine and consequent Indian unrest, the construction of the CPR, and as chief law officer in Dawson City during the Klondike gold rush of the late 1890s. His long and stormy career spanned events and personalities dramatized (sometimes overdramatized) in such books as the prairie novels of Rudy Wiebe and Hem Batton's popular histories.

Yet despite his dedication to drill and discipline, Steele never reached the heights of power to which he certainly aspired. He lost his post in Dawson City where he not

only enforced but *made* the law — because of his uncompromising attacks on government corruption. Because of his political clumsiness he never became commissioner of the force — passed over repeatedly in favour of less qualified men. A lifelong imperialist, he was commander of Lord Strathcona's Horse in the Boer War. then returned to Africa he help his friend, Robert Baden-Powell, to organize the first South African Constabulary. patterned after the NWAJP. But during the First World War his failure at playing politics lost him the commend of Canadian troops in England. and he died an embittered man during the flu epidemic of 1918-1919. Though many things. from schools to mountains, bear his name in memoriam. Steele's roost visible contribution is a footnote to history. It was he who introduced the flat-brimmed Stetson hats which, along with the crimson tunic of Imperial Britain, are the trademark of the RCMP today.

Another pioneer horseman is 85-year-old Walter Cameron. whose oral reminiscences are recorded in a brief, large-print book, *The Blacksmith of Fallbrook*, by Audrey Armstrong (Musson, illustrated, 96 pages, \$6.95 paper). Cameron, who is also an adept woodcarver, has spent his life working in the smithy that his father took over in Lanark County, Ont., in 1888, and the book is a mixture of folklore, local history, and chat about himself. Naturally, Cameron's favourite carvings are of horses (for which he fashions tiny steel shoes) and a miniature replica of his own shop and forge, right down to the cobwebs. Reclaims that, in his prime, he could lift 1100 pounds, and is particularly proud of his ability at shoeing even the spookiest of horses. But he was not entirely fearless: "Never was afraid of a horse," he admits, "but I would never go among a bunch of cows for a million dollars a minute."

When it comes to wild animals, people fall into two camps: hunters and the rest. *Outdoors West: Wildlife Adventure Stories*, edited by Ian Bickle (Western Producer Prairie Books, illustrated, 152 pages, \$7.95 paper), is for the hunters. In most cases, the adventure in these excerpts from *Fish and Game Sportsman* means the shooting of passing ducks, geese, magpies, gophers, moose, or whatever, though some — such as George Daviduk's story of an unexpected fight with a grizzly — do qualify as the genuine article. The oft-cited contest between man and nature is enunciated here by Ken Doolittle of Radisson, Sask.:

The margin of victory for the farmer over the environment was always narrow, and some were defeated and left. If it was necessary to kill birds and animals in order to live or to protect crops and livestock, we killed them by any possible means with little thought of right or wrong, but were not unnecessarily cruel.

Such arguments falter, of course, when applied to trophy hunting, especially considering that beef can be acquired more

cheaply (and with much less hardship) than moosemeat, say, or mountain sheep, and that the main prize in the package is the animal's severed head.

Specking for the non-violent side is Rps H. Baker's *Reflections of a Bid Watcher* (Lancelot Press, Box 425, Hantsport, N.S., illustrated, 258 pages, \$7.95 paper), a collection of inoffensive, bird-oriented anecdotes of the sort that are often found in the outdoors columns of Canadian newspapers — more to do with observing bird behaviour than the extending of encyclopaedic "life lists." Many of the birds are common species (lots that I see in my part of Ontario), and only the most committed amateurs will find their interest sustained by a book of this length. Similarly, *Seeds, Soil and Sunshine* (Lancelot Press, illustrated, 88 pages, \$4.00 paper) is a collection of gardening columns by Mary Dauphinee, who offers practical, simple advice about flowers and bulbs, not vegetables. Her observations on compost piles didn't add to my fascination with the subject. (I favour spoiled hay and chicken manure, for those who care.)

*What Will They Think of Next?*, edited by Michael Spivak (McClelland & Stewart, illustrated, 127 pages, \$7.95 paper) failed to satisfy another of my curiosities. It explains a bit of the physics involved when a baseball pitcher throws a knuckle ball, but doesn't tell me — they never do — how I could throw one. Nor anything about sliders, curves, forkballs, screwballs — all that fascinating stuff. The book, a compendium of quick, glib science items such as four-legged chickens (for the drumsticks) and birth control for mice, is a spin-off from the television show of the same name (Spivak is its producer). Like television, it devotes far too much attention to the visual dimension and too damn little to the text.

Last month I revealed in this space (in my review of *The Laughter Book* by Doug Long and Bryan M. Knight) that I apparently have a strange proclivity toward scatological jokes and one-uppers. Since then, I've discovered a book that confirms my predilections absolutely. It's Ben Wicks' *Book of Losers* (McClelland & Stewart, illustrated, 127 pages, \$9.95 cloth), a collection of true anecdotes, mainly from newspapers and magazines, that conform to Wicks's conception of the loser in us all. A sample:

A New York artist named Neke Carson paints portraits with his rear end. Carson inserts a paintbrush in his rectum, squats in a kneeling position, and puts his head between his legs. He recently used the technique, which he calls "Rectal Realism," to do a portrait of Andy Warhol. The drawing was executed with a pink felt-tip pen, which has a special rubberized shaft to facilitate penetration. Observers who saw the finished product described it as surprisingly realistic. "Boy, can that asshole paint," said one of Warhol's associates.

I can hardly contain myself. □

## NEW FOR CHRISTMAS

### TESTIMONY

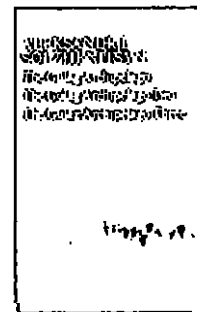
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## How children's artist Ann Blades sharpened her style from doodling to primitive dash

CHILDREN'S BOOK illustrator Ann Blades started winning awards nine years ago when her first work, *Mary of Mile 18* (Tundra), was named Book of the Year by the Canadian Association of Children's Librarians. I, subsequently received the German and Austrian National Book Award. Last year, she illustrated Betty Waterton's *A Salmon for Simon* (Douglas & McIntyre), which won both the Canada Council's and the Children's Librarians' Illustration Awards. Fame leads to many commissions. The 32-year-old Vancouver native has completed sets of water-colours for Margaret Laurence's *Six Dam Cows* (reviewed on page 151) and two books to be published next year. Margaret Atwood and Joyce Kilmer's *Anna's Pet* (James Lorimer), and Betty Waterton's *Petranella* (Douglas & McIntyre). To supplement, her income, Blades spends her summers as a relief nurse in a city hospital surgical ward. Eleanor Wachtel met her at her home in White Rock, B.C., overlooking a grey expanse of beach and the misty outline of the Gulf Islands.



### McClure

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If you enjoyed *McClure: The China Years*, another treat is in store! Price: \$14.95.

Order from your book store.

**Books in Canada:** *When did you start drawing?*

Blades: It wasn't until I was 11 years old, when I spent a year at a grammar school in England. They had a competition during the Christmas holidays and I won it with a water-colour painting. They encouraged me and it just kept up from that time, as a hobby, primarily with water-colours, but without any formal art training.

**BiC:** *How did Mary of Mile 18 come to be written?*

Blades: When I was 19, I taught grades one to three at Mile 18, a small farming community just off the Alaska Highway, 50 miles outside of Fort St. John in northern B.C. It was a real shock to be thrown out into the bush with 22 kids and three grades after one year of teacher training with almost no classroom experience. I started the drawings during the Easter holidays. I was just beside myself because I hadn't gone out of Mile 18 the whole year and there was absolutely no social outlet for me at all. The men in the community could go hunting together, while the women stayed indoors and did their housewife things. I had nothing in common with 45-year-old housewives. So really it was something to occupy my time. That was the main thing. It was also prompted by the fact that there were no books, well-few books that were suitable for kids in a rural setting. So many books that are published in Toronto or New York are intended for urban kids and have very little meaning in Mile 18.

**BiC:** *Do you work from sketches?*

Blades: I sketched Mary. They didn't know I was doing the book and neither did I. I just knew I had to sketch her. I took photographs too, and partly it was just from memory. I did the story and one set of illustrations while I was at Mile 18, but I did the illustrations that appear in the book the following year when I was teaching on a northern Indian reserve at Taché. And at Taché I didn't sketch anything; I just used photographs when afterwards I wrote and illustrated *A Boy of Taché* [Tundra].

**BiC:** *What's the relationship between picture and text? Which do you do first?*

Blades: I do the text first, but I'm inclined not to polish it sufficiently before I do the illustrations. I think it's because I want to get on to the painting because that's the part I like.

**BiC:** *Do you prefer writing the story yourself?*

Blades: Yes. I prefer a book that's totally my own. But I also like illustrating for other people. With the Margaret Laurence book, I always had to forge, whose story it was because I admire her so much I found I was very hypercritical of my own paintings. She didn't see them until they all were completed.

**BiC:** *While you're working on a book, do you like to interact with the writer?*

Blades: No. I find it really hard when people tell me what they want, I don't want to get to the point of being a technician where somebody says to me "I want this character to look like this," and then I do it. I'd rather create it myself and then get approval or disapproval. Until the Lorimer books I never did a storyboard or anything; I just did one illustration at a time. Then, when I had to do these complete sets of drawings I found that I like working that way — doing a quick storyboard and spacing out the close-ups and distant shots, the different angles.

**BiC:** *How would you describe your style of painting?*

Blades: It started out being primitive and naive — that's how others described it. And when I look back I wish that I could still paint that way because it was so spontaneous. Like the Mile 18 paintings — I just dashed them off. I struggled at them, but I wasn't at all self-conscious, I didn't have anything inside me saying this has got to be good.

**BiC:** *How has your style changed?*

Blades: The lines are cleaner, not so rough. But I still do it exactly the same way. I still do skies the same: I wet the paper, plop the paint on, hold the paper up and the paint



Ann Blades

drips down. I do it, the same way; it just comes out differently.

**BiC:** *What elements are important to you — realism, colour, whimsy, detail?*

Blades: Balance, positioning of different people, the colour and the feeling. I would say the feeling is definitely the most important. In *A Salmon for Simon*, for instance, I wanted you to feel what it was like to be on

the West Coast, and also to experience how that little kid was feeling about the fish.

**EC:** Are you interested in children's books in general?

**Blades:** I don't really look at them. When I was teaching I used to read them to the kids all the time, and that was advantageous because you could find out what kids liked and didn't like. In a lot of ways, though, I think I'm still quite childlike. I'd enjoy going out to play with a bunch of kids, climbing trees, more than I would going to a cocktail party. □

## Letters to the Editor

### LUDWIG'S RECEPTION

Sir:

I was delighted that *Books in Canada* was — at last — willing to recognize the existence of Ludwig Zeller. Albert Moritz' article in the October issue is to be commended!

But let me tell you the story behind Ludwig Zeller's obscurity in Canada and why *Books in Canada* is partly responsible.

In 1975 I was introduced to a man who had poems and who spent his time creating the most extraordinary collages I had ever seen. He was living in a high-rise apartment building in Oakville, Ont. His warmth of character, his marvellous dancing eyes, and the fact that he spoke hardly my English but I was able to understand everything he said to me. All mid me that this was an extraordinary talent.

Mosaic Press then committed itself to publishing Ludwig Zeller's first book in Canada: *When the Animal Risks from Deep the Head Explodes*, a collection of 15 poems and accompanying collages, published in three languages — the original Spanish with an English and French translation. If other countries this sort of project would have been important. Alas, not in Canada! Yes, the book did win a Design Canada Award for excellence of design in 1977.

Now for the facts: While *Books in Canada* and 70 other newspapers and literary journals across the country received review copies, only one — *Malahat Review* — noted this publication. The book was not reviewed seriously in a single newspaper, journal, or magazine in Canada. Second fact: Mosaic Press sold 40 copies of this award-winning book in Canada. The remaining 700 copies of the total run of 800 copies were sold in the United States, Western Europe, South America, and even in Japan. The book was sold out in 13 months. Third fact: Mosaic Press is now in the process of publishing Ludwig Zeller's collected Canadian poems with accompanying collages. Prediction: we will be able to sell 49 copies in Canada, we will not get reviewed in the Canadian literary journals. The reason? The collection will not be called *Beer*, or *Moose*, or *Goose*, or something typically Canadian. This new book will be design-award quality — of course, one wouldn't expect anything less from this major poet/artist.

What is the moral of this story? If you are Mosaic Press, Canadian publishers, then you find a great talent such as Ludwig Zeller and you continue to publish him knowing full well that *Books in Canada* and other so-called reviewing outlets will never review his books unless he starts writing about geese, moose, porcupines,

etc. If you are Ludwig Zeller, then you continue to develop your talent, enjoy the clean Canadian air, obtain a Canadian passport, but never, never, never expect the recognition you deserve in this country. After all, your name, your background, your immense talent is alien to this society. If you are *Books in Canada*, then you succumb to Albert Moritz's pleading that you publish his piece on Ludwig Zeller, because it is nice to expose something alien once in a while. But you make sure that you never review his books when they come out. That would be treating him as a serious poet/artist. Anally, if you are one of the growing number of rue-book collectors or dealers in Canada, I would advise you to snap up as many copies of the Zeller books as you can lay your hands on. They are bound to increase in price over the next 20 years.

Howard Aster  
Editor, Mosaic Press  
Oakville, Ont.

### JUSTIN'S SERVICE

sic

Reference Dean Bonney's review of *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*, appearing in your August-September issue.

The Label Liberation Experience is a non-profit corporation researching and communicating the causes of personal and social conflicts that seem to arise out of social, ethnic, racial, or national labels, symbols, classifications, or nomenclature.

No sales force exists. The service is as free to any individual for the asking as it is to organizations like the United Nations, the British Council, or the Canadian Mental Health Association, who agree with the value of Label Liberation — Libération de Préjugé, seeing people as persons first, beyond prejudgements. (After all, isn't this function as seed and catalyst a key to clarity and healing?)

The experience has been sponsored since the late 1960s by a small private trust. The button I'M A PERSON FIRST (blank) SECOND was requested for all Mental Health delegates when I was invited to be their guest dinner speaker 5, their annual convention. This service was provided at no charge, although when asked to speak to them a second time, which entailed out-of-town travel, I did accept the honorarium they provided.

Mr. Bonney assumed that my motivation for founding Label Liberation and writing the book was monetary, and based on ego. Perhaps the following information — deleted from the last chapter of my book by McClelland & Stewart — will indicate my priorities and values. Six years ago a powerful and responsible publishing house contracted to publish the book, knowing I was a true story about the search for truth, clarity, and a place beyond distortion. The book was to end with a description of the one-person play I wrote and performed in at London's Roundhouse in 1971 in aid of the British Mental Health Association, where I unmasked as the joker in life's card game, inviting the audience to also remove the public-private split — to stop acting and see that beyond winning and losing, each one of us is a joker with 52 cards within. However, at an editorial meeting my (then) publisher informed me they were planning a massive campaign to turn me into an internationally sought-after guru; that they were adding certain untrue sexual episodes; and that they were going to insert that a big producer found me and backed the London

play, which they said "would impress the reader." Actually, the play was done on a shoe-string. The whole point of the play and book was to communicate a place beyond putting anyone "up or down. When I refused to make these compromises, the contract, which included a projected motion picture, was cancelled.

Mr. Bonney began his review with, "It's always convenient if the book to be reviewed is easy to categorize. This is an inconvenient book." He's right about this. Life often has 5 inconvenient experiences. The challenge is to survive and transmute them.

Justin Thomas  
Toronto, Ont.

## CanWit No. 48

Bye, bye, Miss Canadian Pie.  
Drove my Skidoo to the Rideau  
But the Rideau was dry.  
Them bons vivants were drinking  
Molson's and rye,  
Singing, this will be the day that  
Idle.

RUMOUR HAS IT that the CRTC, not satisfied with the present content regulations for broadcasting, is planning even tougher measures. The commission will insist that the lyrics of foreign songs heard on our air waves be Canadianized as far as possible, thus providing regular work for the League of Canadian Poets. We'll pay \$25 for the most haunting Canadian version of any popular song — going back to "Green-sleeves." Address: CanWit No. 48, Book 5 in Canada, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4. The deadline is Jan. 1.

### RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 46

CONTESTANTS WERE asked to compile a recommended reading list for Statesmanship 100, the freshman course Joe Clark is currently enrolled in (or was as we went to press). There were a fair number of duplications, with *Great Expectations* and *Alice in Wonderland* cropping up most often. The winner, by a hair, is Susan Milovanovic of Scarborough, Ont., who receives \$25 for recommending these appropriate titles:

- Who's Who in Canada*
- When in Doubt, Mumble*
- Never Cry Wolf*
- How to Lie with Statistics*
- Beyond Reason*
- The Mountains and Law Enforcement*
- Much Ado About Nothing*
- How To Win Friends and Influence People*
- The Power and the Tories*

### Honourable mentions:

- Playing the Jesus Game*
- Against a League of Liars*
- Survival*
- Dear Enemies*
- In Search of Myself*
- New Wind in a Dry Land*
- The Tightrope Walker*
- Changing Place*
- Superman*

— Ross Cumming, Stratford, Ont.



- *The Newcomers*
- *A Child Growing Up*
- *Years of Challenge*
- *The Roots of Disunity*
- *A Mixture of Frailties*
- *The Great Fight*
- *So Far So Good*
- *As for Me and My House*  
— Alice Cumming, Stratford, Ont.

- *Power Politics*
- *The Sorry Papers*
- *The Mandarins*
- *Conundrum*
- *Dining Out in Ottawa, Hull, and Environs, 1980*
- *Le Français vivant*  
— Linda Pyke, Toronto

- *Cabinet Gems: Cut and Polished*
- *Sometimes a Great Notion*
- *Semi Tough*
- *Lost in the Fun House*
- *When I Say No I Feel Guilty*
- *The Empty Mirror*
- *Natural Gas*  
— Ian C. Johnston, Nanaimo, B.C.

- *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*
- *Scraples*
- *From Here to Eternity*  
— Mike Shultz, Gormley, Ont.

- *How to Get What You Really Want*
- *Fools Die*
- *Growing Up at 38*  
— Dick Jones, Toronto

- *Alberta: A Celebration*
- *A Choice of Enemies*
- *Coming Through Slaughter*  
— Renata Borysewicz, Ottawa

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- *All Quiet on the Western Front*  
— A. Molgat, Ottawa
- *Illusions*
- *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Energy But Were Too Weak to Ask*  
— W. Ritchie Benedict, Calgary

- *The Wordsmith*
- *The Good Shepherd*
- *Childhood's End*  
— Brian McCullough, Ottawa
- *Dictionary for Dreamers*
- *Of Mice and Men*
- *1984*  
— Edward S. Franchuk  
San Miguel, The Azores

## The editors recommend

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

### FICTION

*The Hockey Sweater and Other Stories*, by Roch Carrier, translated from the French by Sheila Fischman. House of Anansi. A collection of 20 charming *contes* or light-hearted fables about childhood and adolescence in small-town Quebec.

### NON-FICTION

*The Gold Diggers* of 1929, by Doug Fetherling, Macmillan. A sound and detailed account, written by a journalist for laymen, of the reasons why Wall Street laid an egg 50 years ago and the immediate effects on the capitalist world.

## 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:

- Abra*, by Joan Barfoot, Signal.
- All Men Are Not Alike*, by Joan Suttan, M & S.
- The American Nightmares: Essays on the Horror Film*, by Andrew Britton et al. Festival of Festivals, Toronto (Canadian Film Institute).
- An Arctic Man*, by Ernie Lyall, Hurtig.
- The Atlas of Canada and the World*, prepared by Harold Follard, QLC Publishers.
- Aviation in Canada*, by Larry Milberry, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- A Balancing Act*, by Florence McNeil, M & S.
- Benjamin Baltaly*, by Andrew Birrell, Coach House.
- The Blue-Eyed Sheik*, by Peter Foster, Collins.
- Bronfman Dynasty*, by Peter C. Newman, Seal.
- Buried Child & Other Plays*, by Sam Shepard, Talonbooks.
- A Burning in My Bones*, by Clarence D. Wiseman, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Canada 1984: The Year in Review*, by Murray Souppcoff, illustrated by Isaac Bickerstaff, Lester & Orpen Denny.

Canadian Halku Anthology, edited by George Swede, Three Trees Press.

- A Child Growing Up*, by David Kemp, Simon & Pierre.
- Developing Language Skills 12*, by C.E. Poits and J.G. Nichols, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Diamonds & Pebbles*, by Eleanor Miller, Vesta.
- Dieppe — Canada's Forgotten Heroes*, by John Meller, Signal.
- Dieppe 1942: Echoes of Disaster*, by William Whitehead, Thomas Nelson & Sons.
- Early Ontario Pottery: Their Craft and Trade*, by David L. Newlands, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- The Earth is One Body*, by David Walter-Towes, Turnstone Press.
- Explorations in Prairie Justice Research*, by Dorothy Hepworth, Canadian Plains Research Centre.
- Farewell to the 70's*, edited by Anna Porter and Majorie Harris, Thomas Nelson & Sons.
- First Born*, the London Poets Workshop.
- The First Original Unexpurgated Canadian Book of Sex and Adventure*, by Jeremy Brown and Christopher Quatjatje, Pagurian.
- Fischbach etc.*, by Basil Mogridge, Prospero Books.
- Flight Deck: Memoirs of an Airline Pilot*, by George Lothian, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Foundations of Mathematics for Today and Tomorrow*, by Dino Danti et al., McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Foundations of Mathematics for Tomorrow*, by Dino Danti et al., McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- God's Galloping Girl*, edited by W. L. Morton, UBC Press.
- The Grand Trunk*, by Joseph Needham, U of T Press.

*Great Canadian Adventure Stories*, edited by Muriel Whitaker, illustrated by Vlasta van Kampen, Hurtig.

- Halku*, by Claire Pratt, Halku Society of Canada.
- The Heart is Altered*, by Allan Safarik, Blackfish Press.
- Heart's Frame*, by Cyril Dabydeen, Vesta.
- Helping the Retarded Child in the Elementary School Years*, by John B. Fotheringham & Joan Morris, Guidance Centre, Toronto.
- Homesteads*, by Margaret McBurney and Mary Byers, U of T Press.

*Inheritance*, by John & Monica Ladell, Macmillan.

- John Bracken: A Political Biography*, by John Kendle, University of Toronto Press.
- Lady Rancher*, by Gertrude Minor Roger, Hancock House.
- A Literary Affair*, by Marie-Claire Blais, translated by Sheila Fischman, M & S.
- Lusty Winter*, by Max Braithwaite, Seal.
- Mackerel*, by Israel Horowitz, Talonbooks.
- Malby's Scarf*, by Eliza Hawkins, Sono Nis Press.
- Mantouche Fractor*, by Michael Bradley, Dorset.
- Marry Harry*, by Leslie E. Wismer, Vesta.
- The Mind of Norman Bethune*, by Roderick Stewart, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
- A Mirror of Our Dreams: Children and the Theatre in Canada*, by Joyce Doolittle & Zina Barmie, Talonbooks.

*More than Patriotism*, by Kathryn M. Bindon, Thomas Nelson & Sons.

*Morels and Maple Syrup*, second edition, by Norma West Linder, Vesta.

*The New Celebrity Cookbook with Bruno Grussli*, Methuen.

*New Society? New Education?*, by Harry Wagschall, H. G. Press.

*The Newcomers*, edited by Charles E. Isreal, M & S.

*Niagara: The Eternal Circus*, by Gordon Donaldson, Doubleday.

*O Time In Your Flight*, by Hubert Evans, Harbour Publishing.

*Outdoors*, by Greg Clark and Jimmie Frise, Collins.

*Preparing Your Income Tax Returns*, by R. A. Lachance and G. D. Enks, CCH Canadian.

*Price Watch's Smart Shopper Handbook*, by Marilyn Anderson, Gecy & Packer Books.

*The Queen comes to Milan*, by James Bacque, Gage.

*River Race*, by Tony German, PMA.

*The Sad Phoenixian*, by Robert Kroetsch, Coach House.

*Seasons of Canada*, by Val Clery, photography by Bill Brooks, Hounslow Press.

*Seeds of the Earth*, by P.R. Mooney, Canadian Council for International Co-operation.

*Seeing Ourselves: Films for Canadian Studies*, prepared by James E. Page, National Film Board.

*Selected Drawings & Verse*, by Florence Vale, Aya Press.

*Sequences*, by Ralph Gustafson, Black Moss Press.

*The Shaping of Peace: Canada and the Search for World Order 1943-1957 Vol. 1*, by John W. Holmes, U of T Press.

*Songs from the Front & Rear*, by Anthony Hopkins, Hurtig.

*Songs of the Pacific Northwest*, by Phillip J. Thomas, Hancock House.

*The South & the West*, by John H. Luiman, Corporation of the City of London.

*The Star Husband*, by Jane Mobley, illustrated by Anna Vojtech, Doubleday.

*The Stole Strain in American Literature*, edited by Duane J. Macmillan, U of T Press.

*Tall Tales and True Tales from Down East*, by Stuart Trueman, M & S.

*Thoughts and Afterthoughts*, by Albert W. J. Harper, published by the author.

*UFO Sightings, Landings and Abductions*, by Yurko Bondarchuk, Methuen.

*The Union Nationale*, by Herbert F. Quinn, U of T Press.

*The Upper Canada Trail 1834-1872*, by Douglas McCalla, U of T.

*Use of Plants*, by Charlotte Erichsen-Brown, Breezy Creek Press.

*What To Do Until the Music Teacher Comes*, by Louise Glat, illustrated by Kity Cockburn, Berandol Music Ltd.

*Who Do You Think You Are?*, by Alice Munro, Signal.

*Women's Work*, by Joan Mason Hurley, A Room of One's Own Press.

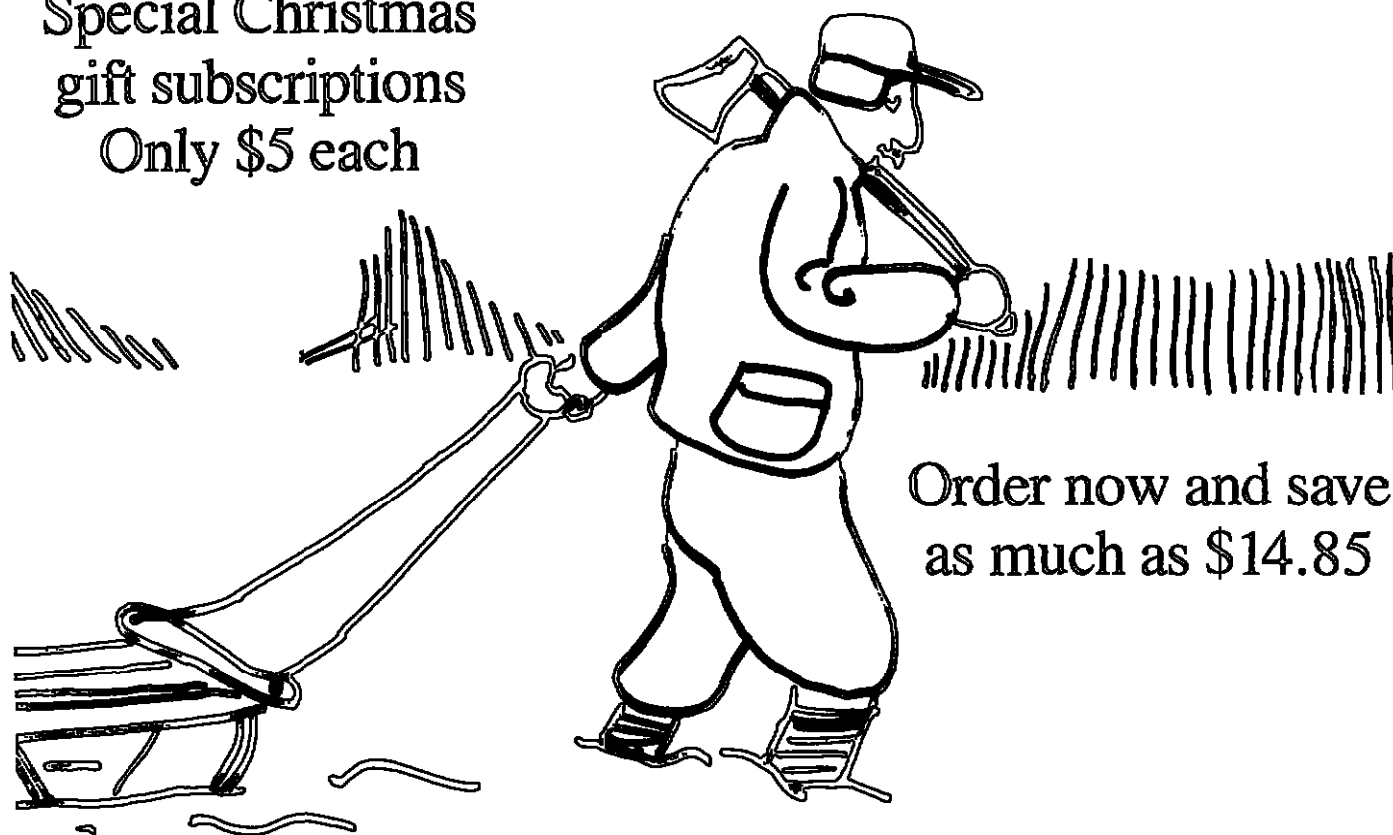
*The Wordless Poem*, by Eric Amann, Halku Society of Canada.

*Words for Sale*, edited by Eve Drobot and Hal Teanant, Macmillan.

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