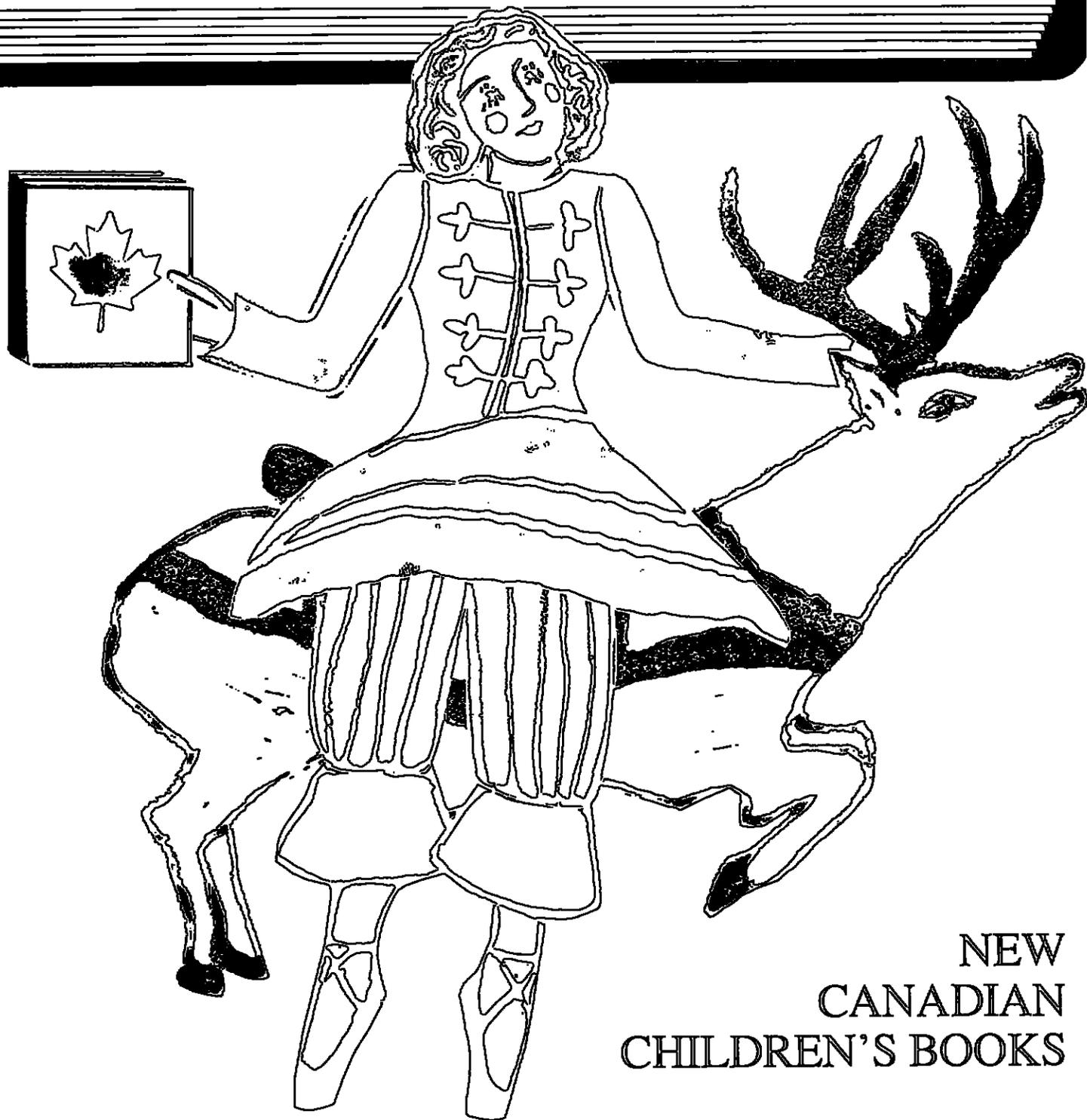


Canadian newspapers:
monopoly journalism
and excessive good taste

Why the Fisher Library
attracts scholar-sleuths
from around the world

How do-gooders tried to
create colonial yeomen
out of Artful Dodgers

BOOKS IN CANADA



NEW
CANADIAN
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The chief glory of every people arises from its authors. — Samuel Johnson

BOOKS IN CANADA

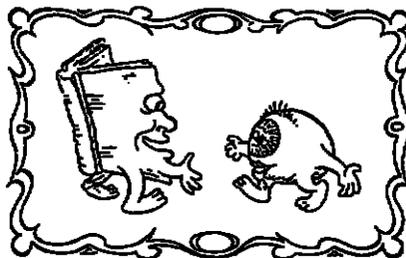
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ARDOUR IN THE CATHEDRAL

If a new Dark Age befalls us, don't worry. The monks in the U of T's Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library are busy acquiring the stuff Enlightenments are made of

by Douglas Marshall

AT THE BEGINNING of Hugh Trevor-Roper's *The Hermit of Peking* (Penguin, 1977), a best-selling biography of Old China Hand and charlatan James Backhouse, the British historian gratefully acknowledges the invaluable assistance of the University of Toronto's Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. Backhouse was an English entrepreneur operating in China during the 20 years before the First World War. Among other things, he conned the Emperor into giving him a down-payment on a fleet of battleships that were never delivered. He had absolutely no links with Canada. He probably didn't even know where Toronto was. So how did much of the research material on which Trevor-Roper based his book wind up in a corner of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library?

The answer lies in the eclectic and voraciously acquisitive nature of the Fisher Library, an attribute that has turned it into a happy hunting ground for academic sleuths and scholar-adventurers from around the world.

It seems that a primary source of information about Backhouse was his crony J. O. P. Bland, *The Times* correspondent in Peking at the time. Bland's letters and papers somehow washed up on the Channel Island of Jersey in the safe keeping of an elderly descendant. A U of T historian, J. N. Cranmer-Byng, stumbled on the Bland papers while visiting Jersey in the mid-1960s and persuaded the owner to donate them to the Fisher, with the library paying only the cost of the shipping. As is often the case with such haphazard acquisitions, the Fisher didn't really know what it had got until Trevor-Roper came sniffing down the trail in 1975. The library was able to send him several dozen microfilm reels relating to Backhouse.

This year the Fisher is celebrating its 25th anniversary with a special exhibition of some of its finer treasures. The exhibition, which will remain open to the public until the end of December, is splendid proof that both the library and Canadians as a whole have a great deal to celebrate.

The Fisher began life in the fall of 1955 as the U of T's Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, under the direction of Marion E. Brown. Her nucleus was a dusty heap of valuable books and important manuscripts that had accumulated in a small cupboard during the preceding 65 years. They had been set aside as a precaution following the disastrous University College fire in 1890. To these were added various key volumes from the stacks of the main university library, which constituted the cores of several special collections. In the relatively short period since then, the library's growth has been extraordinary.

Today the Fisher holds some 200,000 volumes and enough manuscripts to form a stack three quarters of a mile high. The contents range from fragments of Greek papyri written in the valley of the Upper Nile 2,300 years ago to chapbooks of Canadian poetry published last week. Although the collections are

insured against damage for millions of dollars, spread among underwriters across the country, their true value either in the marketplace or to the world of ideas is beyond computation. In the scope and diversity of its interests, the Fisher Library is easily the most exciting intellectual institution ever established in Canada and it has now come of age as a centre of international significance.

Moreover, on a campus not distinguished for its architecture, the Fisher's physical premises match the glory of its contents and the power of its purpose. Since 1973 it has been housed in a graceful hexagonal annex to the U of T's massively ugly Roberts Library complex, otherwise known as Fort Book. The Fisher's softly lit interior, with its reading room and five tiers of galleries, is warm, admirably functional, and at the same time awe-inspiring. This is a humanistic cathedral, an expression of man's



Richard Landon

faith in himself. Here is where the essence of the **past** is made **available** to the present and preserved for the **future**.

Presiding **over** this institution, as its bishop **cum sexton**, is Richard **Landon**, who was **born** 37 years ago in **Armstrong, B.C.**, and holds degrees in English and library **science** from the **University** of British Columbia and **Le&E**. **Landon** has a voice like a fog ham, a **face** that might **have** been hacked **out** of **red cedar** by a **Haida craftsman**, and the son of a **random-access encyclopaedic** mind **we seem** N have stopped breeding since the invention of the

"The ideal is to make available in one place all the books by a particular author or on a particular subject that a scholar needs to pursue research at any level."

computer. He **can name** the present location, **estimate** the probable price, **describe** the binding, and give an **accurate summary** of the **contents** of virtually **every important** book published since **Gutenberg**.

"The cores of the Fisher Library collections," says **Landon**, "were **acquired**, like the British Empire, in a **fit** of absence of mind. Our greatest strengths lie in the broad fields of Canadian **literature** and history, English **literature**, Italian Renaissance **literature**, 17th- and 18th-century philosophy, and the history of science and medicine."

He **stresses** that the Fisher was not conceived as the **traditional** "treasure house" where **precious objects** would merely be **stored** and cared for. "Rather, we set out systematically **to** build **special collections** for research purposes. The ideal is N make available in one **place** all the books by a particular **author** or on a particular subject that a scholar needs to pursue research at any level. In

other words, these **are working** collections, freely open to any serious scholar whether formally connected with the **university** or not."

To show how the concept of a special collection works in practice, **Landon** cites the library's Charles Darwin **collection**. The nucleus, rich in the **separately** published editions of **all** Darwin's books and including **many** of the **works** of his **contemporaries**, was **acquired** in 1967. Since then the collection **has** expanded **organically**: "A **researcher** now has available to him the complete works of Darwin in **all** editions, which **is** important **because** of revisions. He **can also consult most** of the significant works by such **supporters** as **Lyell**, Hooker, Huxley, and Wallace: the works of Darwin's **many** opponents; and the later critical and biographical books that provide much of the context **for Darwin's influence**."

Landon's own job reflects the library's multiplicity of **purpose**. On a typical morning last October a bookseller dropped **into** his office **with** a **manuscript commentary** on the **works** of the 15th-century philosopher **Albertus Magnus**, penned by one **Arnold of Brussels** in 1461. Quickly establishing that the **manuscript** was genuine, **Landon's** next task was to assess its value in **terms** of research. Was this an original **manuscript** or **merely** one of **several** copies? Did it **duplicate** material already held by the Fisher? And even if it did, should he buy it anyway?

"Although our budget **is far** from limitless," says **Landon**, "we **don't turn** down very much. For one thing, it's **seldom easy** N define a duplicate-especially with manuscripts. For another, it's good to **have** duplicates of stuff that's used a lot. But in this case I decided the manuscript properly belonged in the Pontifical Institute of Medieval **Studies**. **so I sent** the bookseller over there and they bought it."

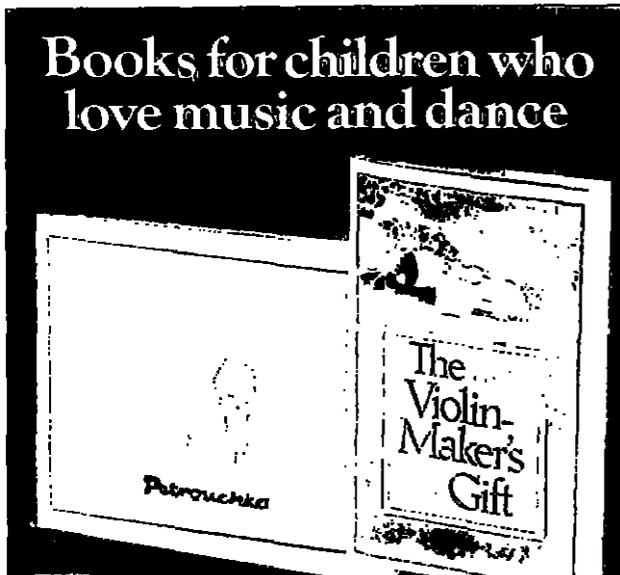
During lunch that day **Landon treated** a faculty club to his **celebrated talk**. "Rare or Medium Rare?", which **illustrates some** of the problems **confronting** book collect&s: "Certain books **are** unquestionably **rare**. For example, as far as we know there **are** only two **extant copies** of the **bad first quarto** of **Hamlet**. Then there **are books** that **turn out** to be not as rare as everybody thought. The limited first edition in **quarto** of **Swinburne's Atalanta in Calydon** is a good example. Only 100 copies were supposed to have been **printed**. But a mildly obsessed **collector** in the United States set **out to prove this wasn't true** and so far has **accumulated** 104 copies.

"Then is no **quarto** copy of that book in the **Fisher**, incidentally, **but** we do have the **first** edition in **octavo**. We also have nine **copies** of the second issue of the **Brontës' poems**, another book **traditionally** considered **rare**."

After lunch, **Landon** gave a scheduled lecture in the undergraduate **course** on 18th-century novels and was able to **show** the class either a **first** edition or a **significant** early edition of **all** the **books** on the reading list. He got back to the Fisher in time to browse through the **latest** batch of dealers **catalogues**. One listed an **obscure** book of **poetry** by **Rho& Sivell** called **Voices from the Range**, published in Calgary in 1912. He promptly picked up the telephone and bought it. "It was the second edition," he **explained**. "We **already** have the **first** edition."

Although he admits that Queen's **University** might wish to **argue** the point, **Landon** is convinced that the Fisher has the **most** extensive **collection** of Canadian literature in the country. "It is **certainly** better than the National Library's collection, which wasn't **started** until 1952. We collect **CanLit** exhaustively and without **discrimination** -good, bad, or indifferent. **If** somebody wanted to give us a complete collection of Harlequin **romances**, we'd gladly **accept** it."

The Fisher **has** also been actively pursuing the papers of **Canadian writers** for a number of years, a **field** in which the **U of T** pioneered. **Despite** stiff competition **from** such **parvenu institutions** as **McMaster**, York, and Calgary, the library now boasts the manuscript collections of **Duncan Campbell Scott**, **Mazo de la Roche**, **A. J. M. Smith**, **Earle Birney**, **Margaret Atwood**, **Raymond Souster**, **Leonard Cohen**, **Ernest Buckler**, **Gwendolyn McEwen**, **Dennis Lee**, **John Newlove**, **Josef Skvorecký**, **Mavis Gallant**, and **William Arthur Deacon**, the Toronto critic who dominated the Canadian **literary scene** between 1920 and 1960.



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MACMILLAN OF CANADA
A Division of Gage Publishing

Deacon's papers, invaluable to students of that era, are currently the subject of a major editorial project.

The fisher's holdings in Canadian history are almost as impressive. They include the journals of such 17th-century explorers as Luke Fox and Thomas James, narratives by Samuel Hearne and Alexander Mackenzie, and the holograph of David Thompson's *Explorations in Western America*. Particular attention has been paid to pamphlets, broadsides, periodicals, and the other ephemera of history, the colourful bits and pieces that can bring the past to life.

On the international side, the library's greatest prize is the Shakespeare collection donated by Dr. Sidney T. Fisher. (The library is named after Fisher's great-grandfather, a Yorkshireman who came to Canada in 1821 and established a thriving business as a merchant miller on the banks of Toronto's Humber River.) Built around copies of the famous four folios, the collection also contains many later editions of the plays and a comprehensive selection of the source books — such as the histories of Hall, Grafton, and Holinshed — believed to have been used by Shakespeare and other Elizabethan dramatists. It is a research resource unique in Canada.

The Shakespeare collection is complemented by another donation from Dr. Fisher — a magnificent collection of drawings and etchings by Wenceslaus Hollar, the "Bohemian gentleman" whose long views of London before and after the great fire of 1666 are masterpieces of historical topography. The Fisher's Hollar collection is the largest in North America and matches these in the British Museum and at Windsor Castle.

If the Fisher is not primarily a treasure house, it nevertheless does have treasures. Among them (and to name only a few) are an 11th-century Greek manuscript of the Gospels; a 1468 edition of Peter Lombard; the *Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1493; a collection of Italian Renaissance literature so extensive that 60 of the plays it contains are no longer available in Italy; first editions of Sir

Francis Bacon's *Novum Organum*, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Newton's *Principia*, Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Rousseau's *Du Contrat Social*, and Voltaire's *Leures Philosophiques*; the aphorisms of Hippocrates in their first printed form; and a typescript of D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*, heavily annotated by the author.

Those exotics aside, perhaps nothing on the Fisher's shelves

"We collect CanLit exhaustively and without discrimination. If somebody wanted to give us a complete set of Harlequin romances, we'd gladly accept it."

More clearly symbolizes that library's enchanting diversity than an 1832 edition of Tennyson's poems in mint condition. As Landon explains, it is not what it seems:

"Several of these books, all in their original wrappers, suddenly surfaced a few years ago. They turn out to be from a pirated edition published in Toronto in 1862. The publisher was J. Dykes Campbell, a British man of letters who was living here at the time. The printer was William Chewett, who curiously enough also happened to be the U of T's first medical graduate. Campbell took a consignment of the books back to England and sold them to Moxon, one of Tennyson's publishers. When Tennyson discovered the piracy, he took legal action and the court ordered the books destroyed. But obviously some smart operator made off with a case of them and it remained hidden for 100 years."

There are 10,000 other tales on the shelves of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, and more awaiting discovery in its stacks. The Fisher is one of the dozen or so institutions in the world charged with keeping a log of the human adventure. Long may it acquire, and may flights of angels guide it on its way. □

Burger's Daughter

by Nadine Gordimer

'A riveting history of South Africa and a penetrating portrait of a courageous woman.'

-The New Yorker.

'Clearly Miss Gordimer is a writer of great talent and courage ...' -Matt Cohen, The Hamilton Spectator.

'... this powerful and complex novel is a celebration of the strength of the human spirit.'

-Margaret Laurence. The Montreal Gazette.

'Nadine Gordimer's vision of South Africa is bleak, lucid, and utterly convincing. *Burger's Daughter* is invaluable—more acute and far-seeing than the dispatches of a hundred visiting journalists or political commentators.' -Maclean's.

Now a Penguin paperback \$3.95



DAILY BUGLES

Canadian newspapers are predictable, genteel, and fond of blowing their own horn — especially in solo performances

by David Cobb

Canadian Newspapers: The Inside Story, edited by Welter Stewart. Hurtig, \$14.95 Cloth (ISBN 0 88830 187 1).

ONCE WORKED for a few months for the *Timmins Daily Press*, and spent all of them wondering what I had done to deserve it. It was Roy Thomson's first paper and an awful one. As is common with the Thomson chain, it was run by the "general manager", that is, the man who particularly ran the advertising side. The editor, a reformed drunk, checked every main news story — every un-main one, too. I'm sure — with the GM, and went home at 3:00 p.m. every day, come hell or high water, to get his dinner ready. Two people stand out in my memory: the police reporter, a Rabelaisian sort who always seemed to have a story in his hip pocket and had once been suspended for having it off with a female employee, on the rim of the copy desk, at two o'clock in the morning; and a 50-ish American, who could singlehandedly have filled the paper every day with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and who, when in the booze (which was often), would pinch the occasional male rump and recount yet again the day as an Associated Press reporter in Washington 15 years earlier when he beat the rest of the world's press on the news of Roosevelt's death by 17 seconds.

All this I mention less because the stories have much merit in themselves (*Canadian Newspapers: The Inside Story* has many that are better) than because, purgatory though I know the time to have been, I look back on it now with something perilously close to affection. That's the main thing about newspaper reporters: they're appalling sentimentalists. Newspaper owners, on the other hand, are not, and it's this conflict that provides much of the fodder for this book. Indeed its one principal lack is a view from the other side of the fence — preferably in the form of an interview at the hands of Walter Stewart, the boozing editor and author of the two most pungent pieces, and preferably with Ken Thomson, current supremo of the Thomson and FP chains.

What the book does supply is 16 pieces by some of the country's best journalists,

providing an almost bottomless fund of good newspaper stories, composed of the usual mix of lurid memory and creative bullshit; a general impression — though there are exceptions, notably Michael Enright's loving and eloquent tribute to the *Globe and Mail* — that journalism, in Stewart's words, is "a suspect craft, dominated by hypocrisy, exaggeration and fakery"; and a fierce regret that things aren't what they used to be, that the world of printouts and silent computer terminals will never measure up to the noisy chaos and battered Underwood uprights of old.

This nostalgia for the heathen pest might be explained by the fact that most of the contributors are 40-ish (some more), many are writing about their days working for their first newspaper, and none of them is working for it any longer. Two of the contributions are disappointing: Harold Horwood's on pre-Thomson life at the St. John's *Evening Telegram*, which comes across as unfortunately self-congratulatory, and Dennis Gruending's on the *Sifters* and the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, which is all over the place and dull to boot.

On the other hand I can't imagine anyone, in or out of journalism, not reading with instruction and pleasure Alden Nowlan's piece on the *Irvings* and the New Brunswick papers, if only because it flies in the face of the usual view that the Irving family's ownership of five of them is a continuing and unmitigated disaster. (The *Saint John Telegraph-Journal*, says Now-



Ian, "now serves its readers as well as any newspaper of comparable circulation in Canada".) Or Glen Allen's tough piece on the Montreal *Gazette* and the late Star:

"The *Gazette* seemed to see its duty, once its hated rival had passed from the scene, in emulating its pretensions, its sanctimony, its navel-gazing, a triumph of mediocrity." Or Stewart's acid analysis of the *Toronto Star*, a paper besotted by market-survey journalism and slavish allegiance to its publisher. Beland Honderich (nobody has yet fully explained how the man who runs the country's largest newspaper and has turned it into the Doily *Bathos* also, in the early 1960s, managed to make it the country's best). Or George Bain's on the generally lousy job our papers do of covering the world: who knows, for instance, that last year the New York Times had as many resident staff correspondents in Africa alone as any Canadian newspaper, or chain, or news agency had in the world? Or Kevin Doyle's passionate tribute to the much-maligned Canadian Press wire service. Or Tom Ardies's outrageous remembrance of characters past at the Vancouver Sun: little more than a string of boozy, blowsy anecdotes recalled by the dappled pool in Palm Springs where he now lives, but quintessential newspaper stories nevertheless. Or, above all, Heather Robertson's piece on the Winnipeg papers, particularly the *Tribune* and its long-time editor Eric Wells, whom many of his employees would have killed for; the best writing in the book, taut, evocative, sinewy.

Robertson's piece, of course, has in part been overtaken — and so has Charles King's on the Ottawa *Journal and Citizen* — by the recent simultaneous closing of the *Journal* (by Thomson) and of the *Tribune* (by Southern). This deal — Thomson now having Winnipeg to himself, Southam Inc. taking Ottawa — had nothing, of course, to do with journalism, and everything to do with the bottom line. Stewart has managed to get a paragraph about it into his introduction, but he must rue his sentence a little later on: "The dominant chains, Southam and PP [now owned by Thomson], have brought new competition to the business." To most journalists competition is all: first-with-the-best is what gets the adrenalin going, the little itchy bead of sweet forming when none was before. But not every

journalist. The late Blair Fraser, the kind of reporter-pundit who is always referred to as distinguished, once told a University Of Toronto audience that competition, *per se*, did not guarantee the improvement of a newspaper's general content: that the New York Times and Globe and Mail are as good as they are because they have no competition. To often, Fraser argued, competition produces a form of Gresham's Law, bad money driving out good: an enlargement in competitive comic pages, perhaps, or in the soft stuff such as Ann Landers or Jeane Dixon, but not an improvement in purring news into newspapers. Who reads that hard stuff anyhow? Who cares? I would argue that more would care if given the choice: it is as hard to believe that the Toronto Star wouldn't be a better paper today if the Telegram were still around as it is to believe that the Free Press and the Citizen are going to move into the broad sunlit uplands of afflicting journalism without the Trib or the Journal.

A few weeks ago Gordon Fisher, president of Southam Inc., took a different tack from Blair Fraser but arrived at the same conclusion. He didn't hold much truck, he explained, with the view that the nation's capital would be less well served now with one paper (his) instead of two. "This way," Fisher said, "the bureaucrats and the MPs will be forced to read other newspapers — from their own constituencies, or the Gazette, perhaps — and thus get a fuller picture of the country." I put it to him that this argument went only so far: taken to its proper dénouement — to make absolutely certain that the bureaucrats and our elected representatives enjoy the fullest of pictures — Fisher should also close the Citizen, thus forcing them to buy the Gazette and the East Snake Bugle. My line of reasoning, alas, was not entertained with the gravity I felt it might have been accorded.

Anyway, Canadian Newspapers has something for everybody, even bromides for the faint of heart. "There are few countries in this imperfect world," trumpets Charles King, "that can boast a press as vigorous, as honest, and with as great a social conscience as Canada's." This is boosterism, impure and simple, and the "few" lets him off the hook anyway. Myself, I don't perceive Canada's papers as any more vigorous than the next country's and certainly no more honest: this book abounds with examples to the contrary, and even King concedes that the Citizen "never seemed to aim for excellence". As for social conscience: what major Canadian paper, except for the Windsor Star for a short time under publisher Mark Farrell (before it became part of the Southam chain), has ever supported the NDP, except on an editorial whim? Our press's besetting sin is predictability: we could do with a lot less good taste (the regular lofty excoriation of the Toronto Sun by other papers is at once typical and alarming), a lot less of the insidious, advertiser-stroking good-news

journalism (which is part of the tipping upbeat mandate of Today, heir to The Canadian and Weekend. Canada's largest magazine and owned by the three wealthiest newspaper corporations in the land).

How sorely we need a Canadian version of Private Eye! How surely we know we'll never get one! □

Vile bodies without wit

The More Loving One, by M. T. Kelly, Black Moss Press, 127 pages, \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 88753 069 9).

By LINDA M. LEITCH

IN JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S *La Nausée*, physical illness, nausea in particular, was used as a rhetorical device designed to represent a fundamental aspect of man's experience of the world. One suspects M.T. Kelly of embarking on a similar course in *The More Loving One*. The characters in this novella and the three short stories accompanying it are perpetually on the verge of vomiting. And no wonder. The world they inhabit is dark, damp, dirty, and most especially, disgusting. Yet where Sartre's Roquentin explores and eventually comes to understand his nausea, Kelly's creations stumble through their rather dreary existences without ever appearing to comprehend, much less overcome, their afflictions.

Much of the book is taken up by "The More Loving One", a novella presented in four parts. John Cooper, a professor with artistic aspirations, is the central figure here, although we also see a lot of Anna Silver, the woman he falls in love with, almost. These two have a lot in common with each other and with the rest of Kelly's gallery of grotesques. Human bodies, including their own, emerge as nothing more than carriers of repugnant and unhealthy odours, oily sweat, discoloured and distended flesh, and various assortments of blisters, bruises, and boils. Small wonder that neither teaches any understanding of the other since the windows of the soul are, to use Kelly's terms, jaundiced and clouded with mucus.

Anna exists in a state of catatonic apathy and so does John, after having left his wife and family to win and eventually lose Anne. At the novella's conclusion, he is somewhat less ambivalent about his desires to escape from and fuse with a woman, but "is unconvincingly mad with intelligence". Yet the problem is not so much that these characters are unconvincing as it is that we simply stop caring about them. While the overall effect is one of a confused but nevertheless forceful vision of human mutability and imperfection, we soon begin to share John and Anna's pathological boredom and, et limes, their nausea.



RICHARD K. NELSON

In the extensive literature on Eskimos there is nothing similar in approach or content to this unique collection of stories of the Tareogmiut, 'people of the sea.' Fiction based on fact, they vividly describe a living culture while exploring the human genius for adapting to challenge and adversity in a land where every moment of life is an utmost expression of that genius.

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It is with the physical background of his fiction that Kelly reveals his strongest talents. Yet his characterizations suffer from the repetitive and often invalid imagery that rarely surprises us with a perceptive insight. Consider a typical comment: "Ronnie looked like a vegetable peel after washing a tomato glistening on a plate. There were little beads of grease dotting his nose. His perspiration was soapy."

In the short stories are three more tales of distorted or ineffective love. Like Anna and John, the individuals we encounter here are physically and emotionally defective, living in a world where even the suggestion of happiness is grimly ironic. Barbara's frustration and rage in "Grief" evolve finally to indifference, and in the face of love she can muster up only a "sweet paralysis". "Darling I have Found Myself in You" presents a rather trite death-bed scene, with the doomed Judith discovering that her fiancé's emotional lethargy pales beside her vision of courage and purity. In "Eloise", the most successful piece in the volume, we find a temporary respite from the dismal vision of the other stories. After a brief and unhappy marriage, Michael does seem to achieve some kind of freedom from his "solitary dread" and the story ends on a more hopeful note.

Ultimately, for all of Kelly's persistence, we are left as untouched as his characters by his disturbing vision. After nausea, it seems, comes indifference. □

Breach of promise

Lawyers. by Jack Batten, Macmillan. 241 pages, \$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9568 9).

By RAE CORELLI

JACK BATTEN HAS BEEN knocking around the world of words for a long time. He has been a newspaper columnist and critic, a magazine writer, an editor, and an author. Before he was any of those things, Batten was a lawyer, a graduate of the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law, whose career inexplicably fizzled out, like a trail in the desert, four years after it began.

"Clearly," says Batten in the prologue to *Lawyers*, his latest book, "something about the practice of law escaped me."

Was he content to say the hell with it and strike off on pursuits literary? Quite the contrary. Batten would have us believe that he spent a significant portion of the ensuing 17 years secretly nagged by his incompatibility with the *Corpus Juris Secundum* until, unable to contain his perplexity any longer, he was driven to try to find out how

and why he missed the boat as a lawyer.

"I was on my way," he exults after a pep talk from Toronto trial lawyer Austin Cooper. "I'd talk to more lawyers. I'd record them in action. All sorts of lawyers. . . Maybe along the way I'd make the connection I failed to find years earlier with the law and its practice. Maybe I'd discover where the dream had vanished. . ."

Batten hit the road, talking to all sorts of lawyers — among them, Ed Ratushny, sometime judicial-selection aide to federal Justice Ministers Otto Lang and Ron Basford; Windsor's hot-shot negligence counsel Martin Wunder; and Toronto criminal lawyer Shelly Altmsn.

What has emerged from all the talk is both disappointing and puzzling: disappointing, because Batten's recounting is indiscriminate and interminable; puzzling, because up to now, he has usually been a perceptive and disciplined craftsman.

Of all the professions, lawyers are probably the most controversial and the least understood. They amuse profound emotion. They wield, in one form or another, enormous power. They are essential to the survival of the social order. They function within a mythology that is ancient, mystical, and expensive.

Yet Batten explores no controversy, examines no emotions, ventures not at all into the mythology. For a man in quest of the reason for his disenchantment, he is

William Golding

rites of passage

The publication last year of *Darkness Visible*, William Golding's first novel for many years, restored, as Frank Tubhy wrote in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 'a living force among us. . . the writing displays in episode after episode, an intensity of vision without parallel in contemporary writing. *Rites of Passage* provides further evidence of the diversity, range and power of his sympathies and imagination.

278 pages Cloth \$14.95

Darkness Visible, Cloth \$13.95

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remarkably benign. What he has settled for is, in essence, a series of conversations with lawyers interspersed with paragraphs such as this:

Steinmetz clearly has the smarts when it comes to entertainment law. He takes a leading role in the Canadian Bar Association's Media and Communications section and his speech at the CBC's [sic] continuing legal education program in April 1978 titled "The Exploitation of Musical Copyright" is considered the last word on the subject.

Even so, *Lawyers* occasionally breaks

free of tedium: an example is the tale of the bank robber who eludes capture despite his choice of getaway vehicles — a black end yellow car with a door wired shut and an automobile that had been ordered repossessed. He was eventually nabbed when he showed up to keep a rendezvous with a friend to whom he had written a letter signed: "Your friendly bank robber."

After 241 pages, Batten claims to have found the answer to the question posed at the beginning. However, he doesn't tell us what it is; the author is content and the reader inherits his perplexity. □

literate people who may find it interesting.

Faced with a book like *Labouring Children* reviewers often play safe by calling it a valuable contribution to our understanding of a hitherto unexplored part of our history and not mentioning that it's also unreadable. *The Little Immigrants* is readable. Like *Reader's Digest*. If some writers go for the jugular end others, like Pan, for the cerebellum, Bagnell goes for the heart strings. The title may make you nervous: the subtitle should increase your unease when you read in *Labouring Children* that fewer than half the children were orphans, end, statistics in hand. Parr would know if anybody does. He turns Parr's bloodless examination into vivid, sometimes florid drama. There are stars, character parts, and bit players. There are heroes, villains, and victims. There are even props, which he uses at the beginning of chapters to set the scene. "The air on that June afternoon around the port of Liverpool was heavy with sweat as men, working hand to hand, finished loading the hold of the steamer *Samaritan*. . . ." The air around the *Samaritan* may have been rank but the port of Liverpool is a little too big for that. He writes as an eyewitness if that trick seems to

tit, and it often does. He gives conversations verbatim end leaves the sources, if any, unacknowledged. His use of case histories is tendentious. In almost all of them the children are lied to, humiliated, beaten, starved, occasionally murdered. Boys are callously overworked, girls are molested. You wonder how much it cost him to include one in which a child works out her indentured time without problems, zips through university, marries well, lives happily ever after, end is profoundly grateful.

But despite its excesses, you can read *The Little Immigrants* without the grim resolve you have to bring to the other book, and without ennui. Bagnell takes the trouble to sketch the personalities of the most important "child-savers". It's true he does it in primary colours, but at least he gives you some idea of what he thinks they were like so that their efforts take on a human dimension that sustains your interest. In Parr's book they're just names — Annie Macpherson, Maria Rye, J. T. Middlemore, Bowman Stephenson, the overbearing and spellbinding Dr. Barnardo, who was by far the most active end influential of them all, and a man called Fegan. Neither author seems to think that lest one was a funny name for someone who collected waifs and strays in the slums of 19th-century London to have.

In the end it doesn't matter if Parr has desiccated a poignant subject or if Bagnell weeps as he writes. There's still an extraordinary book here, waiting for the person who can handle it with the understanding, intelligence, and restraint it deserves. Just so long as Pierre Berton doesn't get wind of it.

Neither author mentions one of the most touching aspects of the entire home-child story: none of the survivors seems to bear a grudge. □

When Britannia shooed the waifs

by Dean Bonney

Labouring Children: British Immigrant Apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924, by Joy Parr, McGill-Queen's University Press, illustrated, 181 pages, 525.95 cloth (ISBN 0 85664 898 1).

The Little Immigrants: The Orphans Who Came to Canada, by Kenneth Bagnell, Macmillan, illustrated, 271 pages, \$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9571 9).

BETWEEN 1869 and 1924 (or the mid-1930s, according to Kenneth Bagnell) 30,000 British children were shipped to Canada. Most were under 14. The boys went to farms, the girls to households, including farm households. The vast majority were slum children. It was presumed that instead of drifting into a life of crime, disease, and an early death, they would become a sturdy yeomanry here. They didn't. Most were undersized and none had seen a farm before. As a rule they loathed the brutal life in rural Canada as much as other farm labourers of the time and like them moved to cities and towns as soon as they had served their terms (they were indentured). They found they had exchanged misery that was at least familiar for mere unhappiness in strange surroundings. Many were neglected. Some were abused. They learned shame here too. It was no disgrace to be a slum child in a slum, but they discovered very soon that there was a stigma attached to being a home child in Canada.

It must be difficult to write a book on a pathetic subject. The boundary between pathos and bathos isn't always visible. What approach are you going to take? Or is it foolish to take an approach at all? Why not follow your instincts? Maybe it's cold-blooded not to see the matter the way politicians see motherhood. Is objectivity

desirable or appropriate or even possible?

There's no sign that such considerations crossed the mind of either of these two authors. Certainly not Joy Parr's. She's an assistant professor of history at Queen's University and she brings to the study the usual battery of scholarly equipment and the usual academic mind-set that tells her that fellow scholars are the only readership worth writing for. Jargon comes to her as naturally as plain English to the rest of us. In slum families, she writes, "calculative considerations were not always paramount", which, translated, means that parents and children usually cared for each other. Six-year-olds "performed important services in the interests of the group", that is, they were put out to work early. She compresses 55 years and many thousands of people into comparatively few pages yet except when she quotes from a letter or reported testimony there's not a human being in sight.

It's not that she's incapable of wit. She has coined, as far as this reader can tell, two mildly sardonic terms that are very useful to her as shorthand — "child-saver" is one and "philanthropic abduction" is another. But these felicities may have been unconscious. What really count for her are such things as bibliographies (it's a selected bibliography and it's remarkably extensive for so brief a book), footnotes (plenty of them, fat ones the annotations of which are sometimes more engrossing than the text), end above all statistical analysis. She's zealous here. Then are tables, graphs, formulae, and an appendix detailing her methods.

It's pointless to complain about the book's inaccessibility or to be surprised at it. Bet it is surprising that it should be offered as a trade title suitable for ordinary

Uncle George's fireside chats

The **World of Canadian Writing: Critiques & Recollections**, by George Woodcock, Douglas & McIntyre, 306 pages, \$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 295 95721 2).

By WAYNE GRADY

ANYONE IN CANADA who can read and write is indebted to George Woodcock for his efforts during the past 30 years to create and maintain in this country a climate in which those two dubious and delicate perennials can flourish. Upon his return to Canada in 1949 — as he describes it in the first essay in this volume — cultural life here resembled what he calls, quoting Auden, "ironic points of light":

There was no University of Victoria yet, though Alan Crawley was editing *Contemporary Verse* from that city, and at the other end of Canada I made contact with John Sutherland who, it now seems incredible to remember, was editing from Montreal one of the other two literary magazines in the country, *Northern Review*; the third, the *Fiddlerhead*, was appearing in Fredericton.

Four years later the situation had actually deteriorated: *Contemporary Verse* had gone belly up, the Montreal movement had degenerated into a thin parody of its earlier self, "it was hard to get verse into print, and even harder with short stories, though Bob Weaver kept the genre alive almost single-handedly through CBC radio. And the facilities for responsible criticism of what did appear were almost nonexistent." It was into this latter breach that, in 1959, under the auspices of the University of British Columbia English department, Woodcock leaped by becoming the founding editor of *Canadian Literature*, a post from which he retired in 1977 to write the bits and pieces of memoir and conversational criticism that for the most part have been gathered together in this anthology.

As is apparent from the passages quoted above, Woodcock's preferred tone when discussing the state of the arts in Canada is something akin to the fireside chat. Woodcock is a kind of social democrat of literature: learned, urbane, feet on the fender, a copy of *Theocritus* in one hand and *Culture and Anarchy* in the other. Woodcock disentangles the verbose conundrums of literary giants and rephrases them into language that any pygmy can understand. He is in this a cross between the two Canadian writers he most admires, Northrop Frye and Roderick Haig-Brown — the first quite content to publish esoteric soliloquies, the second, as Woodcock notes, a

naturalist and essayist who "swerved away from the purely literary essay when he found that the fishing and hunting... provided him with a readership outside the perimeters of the orthodox literary world". It is interesting that Woodcock asked Haig-Brown to contribute the first article to the first issue of *Canadian Literature*, and it is his keen regret that he was unable to persuade Frye to contribute anything of substance.

By and large, Woodcock's is an extremely successful stance, growing inevitably out of the sense of social responsibility exhibited in such books as *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (1962), the Orwell and Dumont biographies, and even — or perhaps especially — *Thomas Merton: Monk and Poet* (1978), because Woodcock is himself a sort of monk and poet, a man of considerable literary refinement who shrank from the "empty forests" of Quebec's north shore and cloistered himself in the topless towers of British Columbia. "Possessing the Land: Notes on Canadian Fiction", which first appeared in David Staines's *The Canadian Imagination*, reads like a more secular chapter from Klink's *Literary History of Canada*, which Frye put into rather austere perspective in his famous concluding essay. It is tempting to see Woodcock, in fact, as a kindly bus-low guide through Frye's private bush garden — and startling to note the sudden, vicious contempt he flings at Marshall McLuhan, whom he savages with such vehemence and cruelty that one suspects a merely personal rather than literary disillusionment.

After the first three generally reminiscent fireside chats, Woodcock gets down to particulars: the next 17 essays each deal with authors who form the individual points of light in Woodcock's complicated constellation. And it must be admitted that his instincts in this regard are unerring. The predictable names are all here — Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood, Morley Callaghan, Earle Bimey. But so are some of the less usual choices one likes to see treated seriously — John Glassco, Pat Lowther, A. M. Klein, Malcolm Lowry, Ethel Wilson, Mavis Gallant.

It is in these personal essays that the volume's — and Woodcock's — true value lies. One might turn to Frye for the non-partisan overview of Canadian literary achievement since our ancestors first sailed into the mouth of the St. Lawrence. But one turns to Woodcock to tell us just who is worth reading and who — by omission — is not. The fact that Woodcock's anarchistic attachments lead him into a few embarrassing excesses (such as his comparison of David Watmough's febrile "monodramas" to the "oral epics" of Homer and to Proust's "cycle on the involuntary memory") ought not to detract from Woodcock's formidable achievement, which is nothing less than the creation of a popular yet responsible tradition of literary criticism in Canada. □

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Another northern journey ends

Aurora: New Canadian Writing 1980, edited by Morris Wolfe. Doubleday, 278 pages. SP.95 paper (ISBN 0 385 15771 1).

By MARK ABLEY

THE DAWN DIDN'T last for long: after the third *Aurora*, there may be no other. "We'd assumed," writes Morris Wolfe in a melancholy preface, "that there was a market for a literary annual in book form, more widely distributed than the 'little mags' whose circulation averages between 1,000 and 1,500." Last year's *Aurora* sold only 1,500 copies, fewer than half the number needed to break even, and although the publisher was willing to keep it going, the editor was not. I sometimes suffer from the dark suspicion that English Canada contains more good writers than good readers these days, and *Aurora*, which has simultaneously provided a painless way for new readers to discover current literature and a sumptuous forum for new writers to publish their work, deserves to live. But so did *Weekend Magazine*, so did the *Winnipeg Tribune*, so did the old Macmillan.

Faced with that knowledge, there's a strong temptation to praise the current volume to the skies, to give it a standing ovation instead of the muted applause it warrants. For in truth, *Aurora 1980* is a disappointment. It includes five or six fine stories (I especially liked the contributions of Guy Vanderhaeghe and W. P. Kinsella) and an exuberant extract from an unfinished novel by the Newfoundland playwright Michael Cook. The passion of Cook's "Island of Fire" points up the molten quality of much of the text. George Woodcock's "The World of Time", a memoir of his English boyhood, is as evocative and thought-provoking as I'd expected. But there are also some damp squibs, and in spite of Wolfe's claim that "the poetry is the best yet". I found many of the poems mediocre or worse. Whether the editor chose the best of a bad bunch of submissions, or whether his ear for poetry is fuzzier than his eye for prose, I don't know.

I wonder in passing whether *Aurora* might have flourished financially if, instead of offering us "New Canadian Writing", it had consisted of "New Western Writing" or "New Atlantic Writing". This year the first item is an edited conversation between Northrop Frye and Robert Fulford (less exciting an entry than the conjunction of such minds should have produced) in which Fulford calls regionalism "a more sophisticated form of culture" than our present condition, and Frye describes it as "a way

of the creative mind escaping from a centralizing uniformity". It may be Wolfe's bad luck to have conceived *Aurora* as a national entity at the very moment when readers are withdrawing from national preoccupations into a concern with local and regional affairs. A reader in Halifax, so, might still be willing to read established writers from elsewhere in the country; but when it comes to the unknowns, he or she will want to read other Nova Scotians, and have little interest in the young writers of Ontario or Alberta. It may be Wolfe's bad judgement, however, that the book gives off a distinct scent of Toronto. More than 60 per cent of its writers live in Southern Ontario, and more than half the writers Wolfe takes a justified pleasure in having introduced are Torontonians. Edmonton is well represented in *Aurora 1980*, but the West Coast, the Maritimes, Quebec, and most of the Prairies are not.

Perhaps, too, *Aurora* embodies a concept that our famous writers mistrust. Inevitably an anthology such as this brings with it a sense of competition, and it's a mean but undeniable pleasure for most of us to turn the pages and find that unknown Miss A has contributed a more imaginative, funny, moving, and memorable item than celebrated Mr. B. To put it another way, the book is likely to sell in the general market (that is, to sell more than 1,500 copies) only if its cover could proclaim the presence of at least two or three of the following: Munro, Laurence, Moore, Atwood, Richler, Callaghan, Layton, Gabrielle Roy, Davies, Purdy, MacLennan, Leonard Cohen. None of them appears in *Aurora 1980*, whose cover advertises the presence of nothing more captivating than Frye and Fulford in conversation. I doubt if the Christmas stockings of Canada will bulge as the result of that!

For *Aurora* to survive as a national annual, I think Wolfe should have made it something more than an inflated literary magazine. He should have included tough-minded articles about Canada, its regions, its writing, its publishing industry; its arts in general. He should have obtained permission to reprint first-class poems from the obscure journals where so many see the light of day. He should have encouraged (if necessary, solicited) contributions from the best writers we have. He should have welcomed the political and the spiritual. He should have made *Aurora* necessary, not just desirable.

This may be asking for miracles. □



I love Lucifer

Michelle Remembers, by Michelle Smith and Lawrence Pazder, Nelson. 310 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 17601460 8).

By BARBARA WADE

NO DOUBT Michelle Smith may actually have been handed over by her mother to a group of Satanists in Victoria, B.C., when she was a small child. No doubt her mind did repress her year-long service with the Satanists until she was 29 and had to see a psychiatrist. Dr. Lawrence Pazder, for strange dreams she was having about spiders crawling out of her hand. But lots of doubt as to whether their mutual interpretation of the experience in this book is anything more than two overworked, vividly Roman Catholic imaginations at work.

Michelle Remembers makes highly compelling reading, if more for its content than its style. The latter suffers through perpetual shifts from third-person narrative (employed to present both Michelle's and Dr. Pazder's points of view) to transcribed tape recordings and chunks of dialogue. The former is the story of a process whereby an incredibly sick group of people tried to turn a young girl into a child of the Devil. They forced her to wear paint and wild costumes, to defecate on a cross, and to watch the dismembering of corpses and live kittens in several graveyard ceremonies. At one point one member of the group even stitched horns and a tail on Michelle's forehead and lower back, although the collection of photographs in the centre of the book contains none of any leftover scars.

The climax of the whole year's service came when, at Satan's Feast of the Beast (a sort of High Holy Day for his followers), the Devil himself appeared at the ceremony to spout epigrammatic poetry at her and to turn her over to her mother once again. It is specifically at this point that the book breaks down. Michelle claims she was protected during her vividly described encounter by the Virgin Mary (whom she called "Ma Mère"), Jesus, and the archangel Michael. She converted to Roman Catholicism during the course of her psychiatric treatment. Her psychiatrist is Catholic. How would he have interpreted the vision had he been, say, Jewish? And what does her vision say for us non-Catholics if it is in fact true?

Of course, in the midst of the reader's horror at what Satanists practise that pesky cynical device known as common sense rouses itself and starts to ask questions: How do the Satanists obtain all those corpses and newborn babies to use in their ceremonies? Who cleats up afterwards? How does a high priest hold a respectable

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job if one of the initiation rites for his position includes cutting off the middle finger of the right hand? And how are Michelle and Dr. Pazder coping with the stress of a cross-country tour to promote the book that includes interviews with magazines like *People* and *Nucleon's*?

This book points out the need for investigation into Satanism as a religious cult along the liner of the People's Temple. If it is as dangerous as portrayed here; it is a social menace. If not, we would rid ourselves of much of the mystique surrounding its "powerful" use of evil. As for Michelle Smith's experience, well, it makes for good reading on a dark and stormy night. □

Transmogrified Sappho and the love-sick six

Intimate Distortions, by Steve McCaffery. The Porcupine's Quill. unpaginated. \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 88984081 4).

The Book of Numbers. by Paul Dutton. The Porcupine's Quill. unpaginated. \$40.00 cloth (ISBN 0 88984019 9).

Blues. Roots. Legends, Shouts & Hollers. by Paul Dutton and P.C. Fencott. Starbome Productions (310 Dupont Street. Toronto M5R 1B9), recording (STB 0180).

By STEPHEN SCOBIE

STEVE McCAFFERY and Paul Dutton are best known as members of the performing group The Four Horsemen, but like the other two members — bp Nichol and Rafael Barreto-Rivera — they are also very fine individual artists, and these varied publications* show them at their best, and at their strangest.

McCaffery is the theorist of the group, but his speculations usually take spectacularly manic forms. His frequent statements and manifestoes are in the ecstatic win, playing with concepts, and with esoteric vocabulary, with fierce abandon. *Intimate Distortions* would seem a strange and daring work from most authors: from McCaffery, it's positively restrained.

The book is based on McCaffery's notion of "translation", by which he simply means the transfer of language from one system or code to another. Often, both odes are in the same language — translating from English into English — hence "homolinguistic translation". To describe the particular mode of translation used in this book, McCaffery adopts the term "allusive referential", coined by the American writer Dick Higgins. Reference from one code to another is effected not directly, by identity of meaning (as in normal translation), but indirectly, by allusion, paraphrase, transformation.

The base text here is Sappho, using principally the Mary Barnard translation. In McCaffery's version, the Sappho texts are metamorphosed -distorted, if you will — into a series of elusive, elliptical, occasionally risqué lyrics, which retain traces of the original without ever fully embracing it, or fully abandoning it. Thus, Barnard's version of Sappho number 64:

Tonight I've watched

*The moon and then
the Pleiades
go down*

*The night is now
half-gone; youth
goes: I am*

In bed alone

This in *Intimate Distortions* emerges as:

*eyes to the sky announcing names
to know by*

*a night before dawn
a boy before a man*

*a bed.
a tone.*

one thought.

some syntax.

(Bliss Carman it isn't.) One can of course extend the system farther, by translating McCaffery's translation, and so on indefinitely. Thus, the Scobie version:

*A morning agreement
consulting the stars:*

*chivalric darkness
guides us at sea.*

*Indefinite trinity, oh
the fisherman's duty*

*adding what's owing
for all we've done wrong.*

It's easy to dismiss this kind of thing as simply an intellectual word-game, doodling with language. Be language is so various and unpredictable that any form of play with it can be important and rewarding. These poems, teasing the edges of meaning, produce not only intellectual fascination but also a strange emotional charge. No matter how arbitrary or impersonal a system for generating texts may be, they will always, as Tristan Tzara predicted, resemble the author. McCaffery's book may be distorted, but it is also intimate. Sappho survives.

Intimate Distortions is beautifully produced by The Porcupine's Quill, with illustrations by Virgil Burnett: *The Book of Numbers* is also a very handsome production, with splendid collages of old wood-block numbers, but it is available only in a limited edition of 200, with deluxe paper and binding, at \$40 a copy. This is all very nice for collectors, and may also produce some much-needed revenue for both publisher and poet, but it's a pity to restrict the circulation so drastically, for the writing is as entertaining and attractive as any that Dutton has done.

* Told partly in concise, irregularly-rhymed lyrics, and partly in convoluted

prose, heavy with repetitions that must, I suppose, be attributed to Gertrude Stein. *The Book of Numbers* can be seen as a "account of the tangled interrelationships between 12 characters, who just happen to be identified by numbers instead of names. (Six is in love with Five, and jealous of Seven, who he believes is also in love with Five: thii is complicated by the facts that Five is a liar, and that Six mistakenly believes that Seven is Eight. . .) The book can be read as a satire on a society obsessed by numbers (credit cards, SIN), which attempts to reduce human characters to quantifiable assets. Or it can be read as a philosophical dance among the numbers as numbers, an arithmetical adagio, a kind of Pythagorean soap opera. The ultimate irony, alas, is that a book so delightfully playful with numbers should find itself so severely restricted by the numbers of its own edition.

Dutton's solo sound poetry can be heard on the record *Blues. Roots. Legends. Shouts & Hollers*. His work occupies one side, while the other features the English poet P. C. Fencott. The album illustrates all the problems of recording a type of work that only truly exists in live performance. The two Dutton tracks, which were recorded before an audience, are clearly superior to the two "studio" tracks: further, with both "Mondrian Boogie Woogie" and "Imp's Rove", there is a need to see the performer as well as hear him. Otherwise, these two pieces come over as skilful but rather sterile exercises in technique. Much the best tracks are "Blue's Reed" — a duo with trumpeter Mike Malone, in which the voice approximates the instrument, and vice versa, in a stunning evocation of the blues — and "Time" — an explosive set of variations on the constituent sounds of the title, recorded at the Blue Mountain Poetry Festival, and modestly if somewhat abruptly cut off before the applause begins. These tracks do capture something of the excitement of Dutton in performance, and it's good to have them, but the record can never be more than a second-best substitute for the real thing.

P.C. Fencott's contributions suffer similar drawbacks. There are a couple of quite witty manipulated texts, but the major work is a very ambitious narrative piece, "The Legends of lack o' Kent," which uses various techniques of found/ sound poetry to recreate an archetypal tale of a quoit match between a man and the Devil. I found that on record it didn't quite hold my attention, and that the narrative was decidedly obscure, but again, I am prepared to believe that it would be much more effective in performance. Perhaps we should regard records of text-sound performances as no more than scores, and "read" them as we would a musical score rather than trying to listen to them as we would to a symphony concert. With these provisos in mind, however, *Blues, Roots, Legends, Shouts & Hollers* can certainly be recommended for all those interested in the state of the art of text-sound. □

History made to scan

Mazinaw, by Stuart MacKinnon, McClelland & Stewart, 82 pages. \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 5802 0).

The **Naming of the Beasts**, by Francis Sparshott, Black Moss Press, 50 pages, 54.95 paper (ISBN 0 88753 055 91).

Settlement Poems 1, by Kristjana Gunnars, Turnstone Press, 62 pages, \$6.00 paper (ISBN 0 8801 032 X).

By ROSALIND EVE CONWAY

THESE THREE collections preserve Canadian history in poetic form. In relating the pioneer past, they attempt to debunk and create myths. Stuart MacKinnon's *Mazinaw* is set in turn-of-the-century northeastern Ontario: Sparshott's "The Lewis Catechist" describes one man's experiences in the early 1820s in the Hudson's Bay Company; and Kristjana Gunnars' *Settlement Poems 1* recounts the mass immigration of Icelanders to Manitoba in the late 19th century.

Mazinaw, MacKinnon's fifth book, is a lucid, evocative blend of Indian myths, woman's suffrage, and socialism. It focuses on the life of Flora MacDonald (1866-1921), suffragette, novelist, spiritualist, and Feminist. This eccentric woman is brought to life: she is neither outlandish nor earnest, but simply seems more modern than her surroundings permit. *Mazinaw* is Algonquin for "picture wiling book," and timeless pictographs of manitous on a rock cliff form the backdrop for an "environmental" theme: man and woman should beat one with nature. This message is made clear by contrasting Flora and her sensitive sister Mary with Billa Flint, the grasping lumber baron who ravaged the land.

Stuart MacKinnon uses a pastiche of genres. There are diary entries, letters, a song, a speech, and lyric poems; some passages are in prose. But throughout *Mazinaw* the language is condensed and powerful. In her letter to her husband Howard Denison, after she leaves him and assumes her grandfather's name, Flora writes,

I hereby renounce your respect,
which I never had; your love,
no more lasting than snow in Hell:
the friendship you're not capable of;
the bed without kindly comforts;
the board you hated to Pay.

This passage illustrates another strength of MacKinnon's work, his ability to capture the voice and feelings of someone who is neither of his sex nor of his time. The descriptions of nature recall the primordial strength of Pratt's "The Great Feud" and

"Towards the Last Spike". The painted cliff and the myths with which the land is imbued convey awe that transcends — in the words of Whitman that ate painted on *Mazinaw* — "the amplitude of time". By the close of the book Flora is also immortalized through MacKinnon's work. She has passed successfully through the Strawberry field that waylays souls; she is herself a manitou through her proximity to the images of the gads.

The *Naming of the Beasts* is Francis Sparshott's third collection. It contains one long narrative poem, "The Lewis Catechist". This edited and re-arranged Found poem is a dark, godless account told by Angus Maciver (1799-1856) who indentured himself to the Hudson's Bay Company for three years and never received "a single penny of wages". Like Bunyan's Christian, Maciver is on a spiritual journey but keeps back-sliding. However, perhaps a more interesting and shocking aspect of the narrative is the treatment of the Lewis men when they came to Canada from England. Forced to work like dogs, they often dragged sleds, and went without shelter and with little food.

The rest of Sparshott's collection is less compelling. Too many poems are "poet" poems in which the writer sits at his desk composing or waiting for inspiration. Frequently the poems are rather cerebral, though not cold, and their language is too formal. By contrast, in others such as "Rural Routes" the language is too bald, too prosaic. This is a disappointment after MacKinnon's fluid, natural language. In several poems Sparshott retells biblical and classical myths in a modern context; these are his more interesting, more effective, poems. *Penitentiary* is a good example:

Forewarned of flame stench and stifled
the unwary damned discover
that Belial may be bribed
that Lucifer buggers the inmates
and turn to each other and scream
this place you know this place
is an Irregular inferno

Settlement Poems 1 is the first of two volumes by Kristjana Gunnars dealing with the immigration of 700 Icelanders a century ago. It is a depressing, pessimistic account. The immigrants' desperation for food is their primary concern: they eat insects, dream about cow's milk, and one third of them die of scurvy. As it was for the Lewis men, so it was for the Icelanders: the promise that brought them here was unfulfilled. Like "freshly killed birds" they are immobilized:

once settled, on our backs
like this we can't fly again
we're mounted into the prairie
pinned by broken promise...

Gunnars tells a rather morbid tale. In *Mazinaw* the myths of the Indians endure, although the land and its inhabitants change. Here the old country does not provide myths, only old wives' tales and ineffective folk remedies: Canada offers very little in exchange. *Settlement Poems 1*

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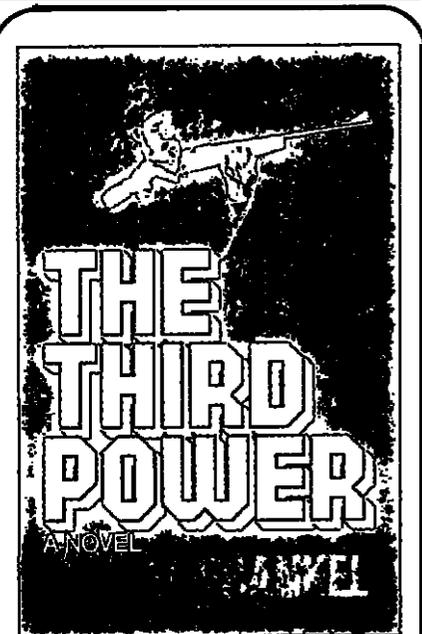


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is not as concise and clear as it might be, and there is a good deal of repetition. For all its tragedy, it is not as moving as Mazinaw, not as memorable. □

Easterly Gaels

Seasonal Bravery, by Des Walsh, Breakwater, 57 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 919948 87 1).

So the Night World Spins: Myth and Music Poems, by Jim Stewart, Breakwater, 60 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 919948 ss XI).

Love from Backfields, by Greg Cook, Breakwater, 64 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 9199-K 89 8).

The Girl in the Brook, by Wayne Wright, Breakwater, 64 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 1319948 90 1).

By FRASER SUTHERLAND

IN A REGION where Alden Nowlan's influence on poets has been pervasive (and largely beneficial), it's still refreshing to find the new Canada's Atlantic Poets Series from Breakwater present four distinctive voices. New Brunswick's Jim Stewart, Nova Scotia's Greg Cook, Newfoundland's Des Walsh, and Prince Edward Island's Wayne Wright appear with short selections in an attractive format: by my count, their books represent three successes and one partial failure.

Oddly, it's the book that Nowlan introduces, *So the Night World Spins*, which falls short. Nowlan unwillingly may have isolated the problem when he says, "Ideally, these poems of Jim Stewart's should be read to the accompaniment of the music that inspired them, preferably as played by the poet himself on the penny-whistle." Pace Nowlan, ideally poems must dance on the page unaccompanied. Paired with music, words may become a poem, but a true poem makes its own music. For me, Stewart's lyrics do not.

The Gaelic sensibility that saturates Stewart's poems beguiles but does not quite convince, and occasionally becomes strained:

*(A stripper is
a brave and naked nun
whose body moves
through absolution).*

("Stripper")

Yet when the poet abandons his bardic stance and attempts self-mockery, this tone also falters:

*The Post Office
is on strike.
Air Canada
is on strike.
The Muses won't negotiate.
I'm going downstairs*

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*for a double scotch.
Canadian literature will have to wait.
("One of Those Nights")*

A partial failure, though. Even insubstantial lyrics contain felicities ("the bird-high/summer"), and Stewart's habit of using Scottish ballads as cues for his poetry give his book unity. One long poem, "Spindrift/The Silkie" goes some way to vindicating Nowlan's claim that he "has transformed the land of his ancestors into a creation myth".

If Stewart spends his lime deep-sea fishing the Great Silkie, Greg Cook could hardly be more earth-bound. From his lair in Wolfville Ridge, N.S., he lopes over rough terrain, sharp eyes lighting the significant detail. Rural Gothic: Purdy, Nowlan, Robert Frost. Smell-town snapshots: The Spoon River Anthology. Cook's *Love from Backfields* suggests such names and themes, but the rhythms are his own. The book creates a constrained violent universe where a pheasant gets stuck in a tar pit, someone rams a getter snake down a shotgun barrel ("Scarce was game..."), and me" come beck wounded from wars. Even a friendly ball game brings calamity:

*I hit a home run once
but the girl cheering on the makeshift bench
ripped the cheek of her pants on a rusty nail
("The Makeshift Bench")*

One might make fun of all this, were not Cook's images so authoritative, his perceptions so sure. "Helen Cloud never leaves her house. I except to hang wash and stab flowerbeds." Of several successes one poem deserves quotation in full:

*Earth winds my study back;
sun watches through my west window
and floods my black ink fountain
earlier each day of winter.
Night inks a farmer's rest.
And my heart spills my ideas
that race off in broken harness
like old Ned's horses in the rain
the day he forgot both their names.
("A Place to Work, a Tim to Quit")*

I don't know if Breakwater intended colour symbolism in giving Des Walsh's *Seasonal Bravery* a black cover, but it's appropriate. Human affections temper the rigour of Cook's backfields, but Walsh locks himself in mortal combat with a beloved adversary. The savage consistency of the book is impressive, though the poems tend to be less individual units than segments of one long epic about temporary triumphs and long-enduring fear. Almost all the poems are addressed or refer to "you" who is not the reader but a woman, half-icon, half-siren. Sometimes there's a truce when Walsh and his- victim? victimizer?- "tit into each other tightly I like a firm handshake". Rhetorical over-reach, flat endings — Walsh is sometimes guilty of both, but the unwavering seriousness of purpose and sustained intensity are remarkable in a young poet, rather as if Yeats, keening for Maud Gonne but stripped of end-rhymes, found heron a rock island celled Newfoundland.

*I carry you always
like a birthmark
or some incurable skin disease
("I Cannot Put You Away")*

Bizarrely constant, Walsh's contending pair struggles for unity. "learning to touch each other/in the privacy of old wombs."

It's not any obvious superiority that makes Wayne Wright's *The Girl in the Brook* my favourite of the quartet, but its courage to take imaginative risks. Also because it turns linguistics into laughter. Wright on the topic of a nbbie

*Sometimes he sleeps in timothy
but it's mostly in some clover
He says Because it's mauver
("Lions for Thomas, Godson")*

Much may be forgiven a poet who can write that, but fortunately there's little to forgive in Wright's startling imagery that seldom fails to be adequate to his emotions.

*And she was a woman
a woman whom someone had unfolded
like a screen in the saffron morning
and breathing theorems of rapture
she received
("For a Woman in Cam Che, Vietnam")*

Though Wright sometimes relies too heavily on a recurring line to link imagistic effects, the effects themselves can turn night into a starburst carnival, as in the long title poem:

*No one but a dipper slept with her,
a dipper of mine.
I kept it in the past of her knees
where the maple propellers compassed
away
and the water striders began and did she
sigh as she watched the Dipper
s k y away the skaters clear to their
listening-houses
hours away: chambers of their own
where the sequins of foam are sewed
together.*

"The Girl in the Brook" possibly is not a great poem, but it is good enough to show us that in its lovely isolation a great poem is its own best performance. □

Sunny side of the drought

Butter Down the Well: Reflections of a Canadian Childhood, by Robert Collies, Western Producer Prairie Books, 120 pages, \$10.95 cloth (ISBN 088833 060 X).

By CHERYL LEMMENS

AT LAST, A remembrance of prairie childhood during the lean, hungry years of the 1920s and 1930s that crackles with vitality and humour. For most of us, reared on such CanLit classics as W.O. Mitchell's *Who Has Seen the Wind* and such poignant short stories as Sinclair Ross's *The Lump at*

Noon, the Depression prairie has loomed large and lonely. And, indeed, it was.

But, like his Saskatchewan home ("The province that was forever being slapped down by dust storms and the Depression, and was Forever stubbornly fighting its way back up again"), Robert Collins's parents and long-toiling neighbours bore their burdens as best they could, and survived with their humour intact.

Collins, an award-winning journalist, describes his boyhood wryly, and with that marvellous, astute clarity so often ascribed to the young. "We boys were dressed on the three-year plan," he notes, recalling clothes he eventually "grew into". But he is quick to point out that, contrary to urban views, people never flaunted their patched denims: new bib overalls were a mark of affluence, something to be coveted.

His observations of life and people have a timeless quality, like the "youths with raging acne, their pompadours Brylcreamed to a blinding gloss and cigarettes pasted to their lower lips", who were still around 20 years later and were resurrected 20 years after that on motion picture and television screens. And, at school, the strap — "The H-bomb of its time" — which was still an institution at the North York elementary school I attended in the late 1960s.

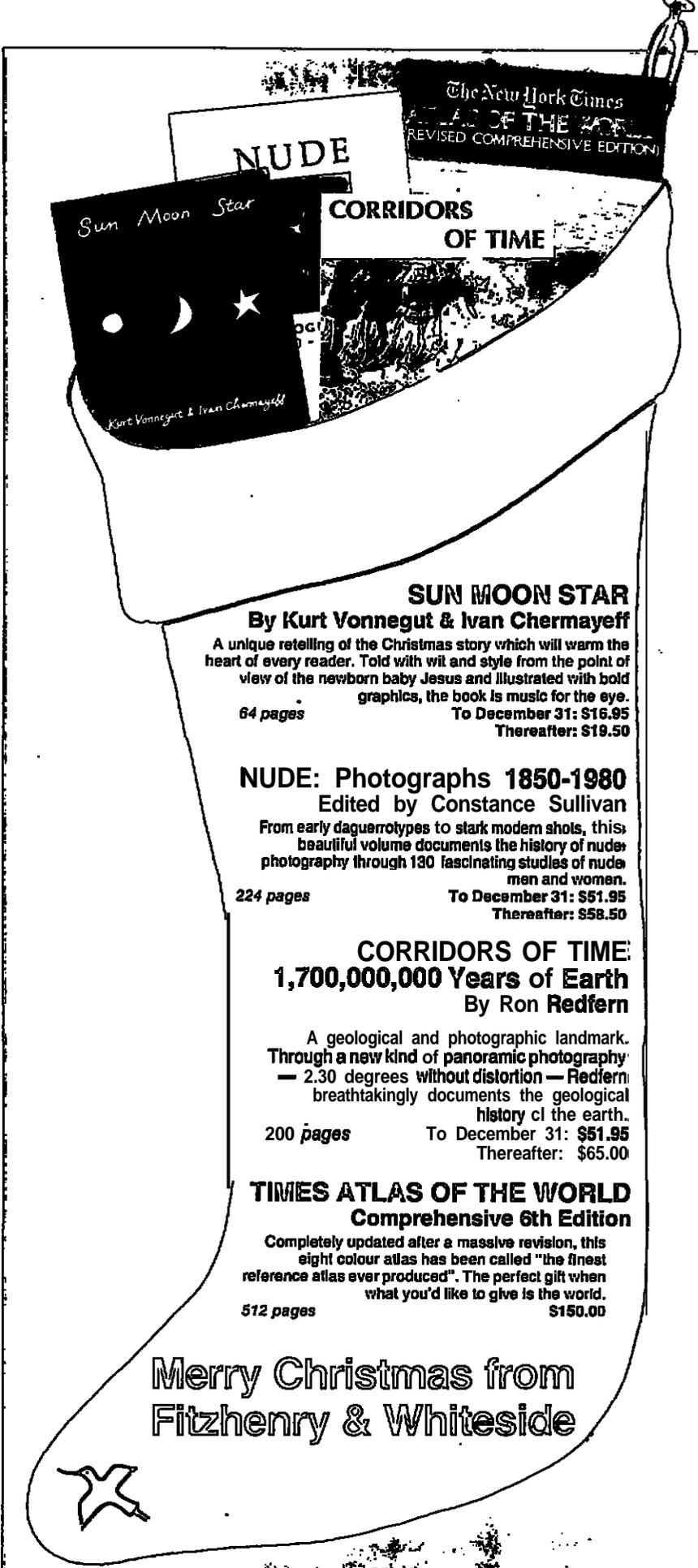
Collins's description of an International Harvester threshing machine gives it the proportions of a monster half-human, half-beast: "[It] was parked in the field, mumbling savagely to itself like some demented dragon. Joined flywheel to flywheel with the tractor by an umbilical cord of leather belt."

A cast of memorable characters supports the narrative, including six-foot-tall, 220-pound Butch Gwin, who never accepted payment for helping the Collins Family when Robert's Father was ill, but who had "carte blanche at our dinner table". Butch's brother, Tony, is equally enormous but equally kind, and Collins recalls with touching humour how he saved Robert's mother from social exile after some visiting workers refused to finish helpings of her pie.

However, the person around whom the back revolves is Robert's Father, Jack, a Feisty Irishman who literally carved out the family's existence on their Saskatchewan farm. A temperamental man whose feuding was almost legendary, Jack Collins never ceased to bitterly bemoan the ruling of the "goddam Liberals", but he worked to support his Family and pay off the mortgage on the farm after striving home from the horrors of the First World War trenches.

Collins describes his Father's exit from the war to end all wars in stark sentences: "He was carried out in September, grossly bloated, probably gassed. After a year in hospitals he was discharged with a 75 per cent disability pension, heart and kidney damage, a spot on his lungs and chronic rheumatism."

But, like Brian O'Lynn, the hero of an old Irish ditty that Collins quotes in his prologue, his Father pushed on. Indeed, in



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the book. Jack Collins becomes a symbol of the struggle to survive. For when he dies so does the way of life that had welded the prairie homesteaders together. In its place is progress, a progress that dictates that one can never go home again. Collins does, six years after his father's death, but finds the house he grew up in empty, abandoned, and dilapidated.

"And yet," he writes at the end, with the dauntless optimism of a Jack Collins or a Brian O'Lynn, "some things never die." His book is ample proof of that. □

Lunar entrapments

Moonwebs: Journey Into the Mind of a Cult, by Josh Freed, Dorset Publishing. 216 pages, 58.95 paper (ISBN 0 88893 020 8).

BY JUDY MARGOLIS

"So whatever you have got, give it to me. I am ready to receive it. And the extra thing you have got is your mind. Give it to me. I am ready to receive it. Because your mind troubles you, give it to me. It won't trouble me. Just give it. And give your egos to me because egos trouble you, but they don't trouble me. Give them to me."

THAT INCANTATION, delivered by Guru Maharaj Ji and quoted in this book, is bizarre and frightening enough. But apparently it's mild compared with the sort of blind obedience demanded by the Moonies, the disciples of Rev. Sun Myung Moon.

The "brainwashing" or indoctrination techniques the Moonies employ are far more sophisticated, subtle, and painstakingly orchestrated than those of most other groups or cults. Ultimately their goal is to induce their recruits to indoctrinate themselves to block out the "treacherous inner voice", those critical faculties of thinking and feeling that, under normal circumstances, would protect an individual from being conned. When these techniques are successful (as they too often are), recruits become their own jailers in effect, self-perpetuating mechanisms completely at the mercy of the group, traitors to the inner voice.

Ironically, as Montreal journalist Josh Freed explains in *Moonwebs*, his personal account of the kidnapping and rescue of his friend Benji Miller from the Moonies, cults seem to offer a "path to self-discovery — but really have violent intent":

They artfully create a therapy-like environment, and use it to confront an individual with powerful inner questions he has not squarely faced before: Who are you? What are you doing with your life? And most importantly... Is this what you really want?

The most powerful weapon in their attempt to blot out identity is an individual's sense of his own unused potential. They offer him one last chance to start all over again.

When the crisis finally does come, and the recruit is on the edge of nervous collapse, the Moonies drive home the most terrifying existential question of all: "If I am not who I think I am, then who am I?" If the individual's sense of identity collapses, the rote-like response invariably is, "I obey, therefore I am."

To an outsider, the whole process is clear-cut and revolves around the tyranny of the group. But to the recruit, the Moonies are harmless, loving, essentially supportive brothers and sisters who are untouched by baser human passions, values, or needs. That their intent is to control and manipulate is unthinkable: it is simply a failure in understanding on the part of the uninitiated; he is still hopelessly egocentric. "He who can control himself can control the world," For only then will he arrive at the Truth.

At this juncture, only weeks or even days into the early stages of the indoctrination, the recruit is radically transformed into a glassy-eyed automaton, devoid of spontaneity, humour and warmth. The "perfect soldier of God" is ready to do the bidding of the Unification Church.

The major questions Freed grapples with in his book are: Why are so many people willing to sacrifice the right to be themselves? Why are there a mushrooming number of cults in North America? How could someone as apparently "normal" as Benji, someone with the same background and values as the author himself, be swayed by the "mystical right wing" teachings of Sun Myung Moon, a self-appointed messiah?

With \$5,000 in funds collected from concerned friends and relatives and fearing that it was now or never if they were to rescue Benji, Freed headed for Boonville (then known to him as the Creative Community Project), the Moonies' San Francisco indoctrination centre. There only two days, he recalls:

I felt every fibre of my person being sucked into this anonymous collectivity. The overload of information and emotion made the pull of the group so strong that at times, inexplicably, I felt like giving in myself, despite what I knew. Maybe the Moonies were right: maybe I was too cynical, too blasé and negative. Maybe I should try letting myself "go with the flow" and see where it went. ...

Tricks he taught himself to preserve his sanity became small victories. He fought them with their own thought-terminating weapon by chanting: "You'll never get me, you'll see, you'll see. You'll never get me, hee hee." On the third day he was given the opportunity either to go on with the training or to leave. He left. Benji would have to be rescued some other way.

Freed and his friends decided to kidnap Benji, and the first half of the book recounts their efforts and eventual success. It's too bad Freed didn't give us more insight into

the deprogramming episode that followed; it smacks of an exorcism in the consummate style of William Friedkin: "Three heavy, measured knocks et the front door." and there stood the deprogrammer, "the devil". His face was pale as chalk, with fresh scars, raw stitches, and a black patch over one eye. The other eye stared out unblinking .. while the mouth leered and whispered: "Ford Greene".

The second half of the book is polemical

in form. Freed examines the pros and cons of deprogramming and theorizes about the "submissive mentality latent in North Americans". His conclusions are thought-provoking and persuasive. Many of us are susceptible to brainwashing he argues, "because we are already so accustomed to being controlled and altered by the forces of authority in our society". that we often lack the "inner resources to resist". Frightening? □

Good oft interned with the bad

by Anthony Firth

Within the Barbed Wire Fence: A Japanese Man's Account of his Internment in Canada. by Takeo Uno Nakano with Leatrice Nakano, U of T Press, 126 pages, \$10.00 cloth (ISBN 0 8020 2382 7).

Deemed Suspect. by Eric Koch, Methuen, 272 pages, 516.95 cloth (ISBN 0 458 94490 4).

THESE BOOKS TREAT the same subject — internment during the Second World War — very differently. As his title suggests, Takeo Uno Nakano gives us a highly personal account of his experience. On the other hand, the book by broadcaster and novelist Eric Koch deals objectively and at length with an embarrassing Allied blunder: the internment in England of several thousand refugees from Germany and Austria, many of them Jewish; the transportation of a large group of them to Canada in the summer of 1940; and the reaction of the Canadian authorities, together with the events and complications that ensued.

Nakano's story is simple and straightforward. He emigrated to Canada as a boy to work on a farm and later got a job at paper mill in Woodfibre, B.C., where he lived happily with his wife and daughter for 20 years. As a result of the popular (and later, official) paranoia about Japanese Canadians that followed Pearl Harbor, he was sent first to a labour gang in the interior of the province and then, after some "misunderstanding" with the authorities, to an internment camp in Ontario — complete with barbed wire and armed guards.

There was considerable friction within the camp between the "gambariyas" or Japanese patriots and those internees who accepted their situation more philosophically. However, both groups were rooting for Japan to win the war. They spent much of their time planning post-war lives that would be financed with compensation

paid to them by the vanquished Canadian government. Nakano was eventually released to help the Canadian war effort by working for Canada Packers. He stayed with that firm until his retirement in 1968.

Nakano is a prize-winning writer of *tanka*, a traditional Japanese verse form, and that could be one of the reasons why I found his book dissatisfying and even contradictory. I am in no position to judge the merits of the poetry, which most lose a lot in translation, but even the prose portions of the narrative seem to lean more toward poetical conceits than toward effective story-telling. I am left with the impression that Nakano was curiously detached from the events around him, including the war, and naive in his assessment of the situation he and his comrades found themselves in.

It is a situation I am well-qualified to judge. I was one of the German refugees interned in England, although I wound up in Australia rather than Canada, and I know what life behind barbed wire is like. Given that experience, I found Nakano's account banal and boring in content and pretentious in style. There have been several excellent books about the shameful way Canada treated its citizens of Japanese descent. This one leaves much to be desired.

I approached Koch's book with some trepidation on two counts. First, it seemed pointless to raise the matter after all this time, particularly since so many of the people involved are dead. Second, I had recently read *The Dunera People* by Bernard Patkin, which purported to be about the internees like myself who were transported to Australia. I considered that book an unmitigated disaster in its biased reporting and shoddy research and feared *Deemed Suspect* would turn out the same.

I'm happy to say I could not have been more wrong. Koch's research is superb and

meticulous and his record of the internment saga is unbiased and complete. I now assume that the reason why 40 years had to pass before the book could be written is that much of the material was not available before.

Koch begins by showing us yet one more aspect of the total confusion that reigned in England during those dark days and the ineptitude of the people who were supposed to be running the war. He has unearthed facts that, thank goodness, we were not aware of at the time. We German refugees were still German enough to believe implicitly that governments and their officials always know what they are doing — a delusion that can be a comfort even when you are at the wrong end of bureaucratic decisions.

But when the story moves to Canada, things get really frightening. The Canadian authorities were unhappy enough about having a strange assortment of German-speaking internees dumped on their doorstep at a time of national crisis. The fact that these people were not Nazis but refugees whose interest in an Allied victory probably exceeded their own seemed to make some officials even more unhappy. And it didn't help that most of the refugees were Jews. In a memo dated Aug. 7, 1940, F. C. Blair, Canada's Director of Immigration, wrote: "We may find that the presence here of so many Jewish people [among the internees] is merely another illustration of their ability to beat others to it."

For the camp guards and commandants, the whole refugee business was a pain in the rear — a complication they neither understood "or wanted to understand. Koch mentions a number of commandants who were exceptions, but their sympathy didn't endear them to their juniors or to their bureaucratic seniors. The prevailing attitude was that the people inside the wire were bad guys and the people outside the wire were good guys. In that context it's worth noting that the people inside the wire included such distinguished future Canadians as the theologian Gregory Baum, Toronto Symphony manager Walter Homburger, philosopher Emil Fackenheim, and Koch himself, as well as a somewhat less distinguished celebrity — atomic physicist and spy Klaus Fuchs.

The main problem with the whole situation was that the internees were refugees before that term became fully understood and acceptable. In those days being a refugee, especially a Jewish refugee from Germany or Austria, was the nearest thing to being a total non-person. We had no rights and, worse, we did not even have the right to ask for rights. The refugees coming into Canada today should recognize that the rights they now enjoy are things that had to be fought for long and hard and should not be taken for granted.

But apart from all that, *Deemed Suspect* is a highly enjoyable book, not least because it is richly spiced with the gallows humour that was so characteristic of the internees and their situation. □

A roundup of new Canadian children's books finds a number of literary lionesses

FEEDING THE CUBS

by May Ainslie Smith

CHILDREN'S BOOKS have a special appeal for many adults — writers, apparently, as well as readers. The list of children's books by writers who have already made their reputations in the adult market continues to grow. There are books this year from Margaret Laurence, Gabrielle Roy, and Margaret Atwood — all of whom have written previously for children — and Susan Musgrave, whose first children's book *Hag Head* (48 pages, 59.95 cloth) is published by Clarke Irwin.

In this Hallowe'en story, *Hag Head*, a witch with suitably horrible companions, leaves her home in the marsh to try to capture a child out trick-or-treating. Young children will likely appreciate the idea behind the story and enjoy the gruesome details describing each evil creature. But as the plot develops, there are too many gruesome details and too many evil creatures, and the story becomes repetitious and draggy. The illustrations by Carol Evans are certainly scary. Contrasting with the children's warm, brightly lit homes are the dark streets where they march in costume carrying their goody bags. But there are so many dark fiends biding behind so many shadowy bushes that it is confusing. It is difficult to match up the creatures mentioned in the text with the creatures in the pictures.

In *The Christmas Birthday Story* (McClelland & Stewart, 32 pages, 59.95 cloth) Margaret Laurence retells the story of Jesus' birth for very young children. Apparently it is the same version she told her own children when they were small. With colourful, stylized illustrations by Helen Lucas, this is an attractive family book.

Gabrielle Roy's *Cliptail* (McClelland & Stewart, unpaginated, \$8.95 paper), illustrated by François Olivier and translated from the French by Alan Brown, is about a cat that gets its name after its tail is gnawed off by an unfriendly dog. In this simple, realistic story Roy emphasizes *Cliptail's* bravery and determination as she attempts to raise her kittens despite opposition both from man and nature. Readers will appreciate the cat's hard-won success by the end of the book.

Anna's Pet, by Margaret Atwood and Joan Barkhouse (James Lorimer & Co., 32 pages, 56.95 cloth), is about a little girl who searches her grandparents' farm for a satisfactory pet — a toad, a worm, a garter snake — and an appropriate place to keep it. The text and Ann Blades's illustrations are perfectly complementary in this gentle story. It should become a favourite with many children.

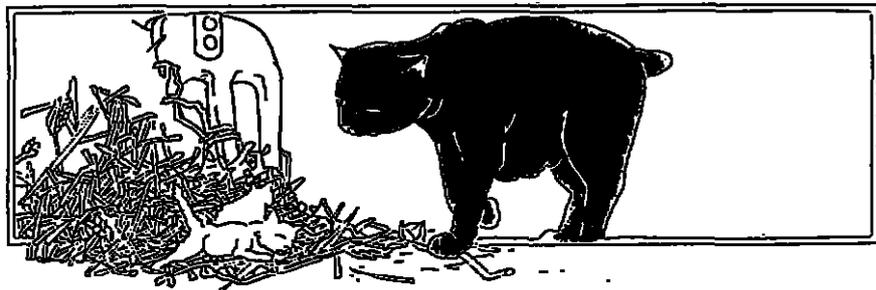
Anna's Per is one of three new titles released by James Lorimer & Co. as part of the Kids of Canada series, intended for children just beginning to read for themselves. *Afraid of the Dark* by Batty Dickson, illustrated by Olena Kassian (32 pages, 56.95 cloth) is an exciting story. When fire breaks out next door, five-year-old Allan overcomes his fear of the dark and saves the life of his friend. *Mike and the Bike* (32 pages, 56.95 cloth) deals with Mike's jealousy and frustration when his neighbour Jenny gets a new bicycle while he can't even ride one yet. This book is illustrated by Leoung O'Young, but — for some reason — no author credit is given. All of the books in the Kids of Canada series are visually attractive and strongly bound. Adults may find the vocabulary and style stilted because it has been controlled to a certain reading level, but the limitations of the vocabulary don't seem to bother children. These are much more entertaining books than many other series for beginning readers.

Several other good series for children have appeared in 1980. The already excellent reputation of *Owl Magazine* will be

enhanced by the quality of their first four True Adventure books: *A Cabin Full of Mice* by Janet Foster, *A Family for Minerva* by Katherine McKeever, *Summer at Bear River* by Fred Bruemmer, and *When the Wolves Sang* by Bill Mason (Greey de Pencier, all 36 pages, 55.95 cloth). These books are small (5 1/2" x 7"), have bright covers, and are filled with excellent colour photographs — a design to appeal to readers from ages six to 10. Each book contains a story about one particular species of animal. And although it is obvious that the writers all share a tremendous sympathy for these animals, the stories are simply and factually told, free from false sentiment or human moralizing.

Another new Owl book is *The Winter Fun Book* (Greey de Pencier, 128 pages, \$6.95 paper), edited by Laima Dingwall and Annabel Slight. It's a sort of enlarged *Owl Magazine*, with stories, puzzles, comics, photographs, and activities designed to make winter enjoyable. It has, for example, a recipe for baked Alaska, and tells how to make a mini solar hand warmer. Children never seem to need much convincing that winter is fun, so perhaps this book's main purpose will be to encourage their parents.

Northern Lights is a new series from PMA Books. Intended for young readers, probably in the six to eight year range, each story concerns the adventures of a child during a specific period of Canadian history. *The Last Ship* by Mary Alice Downie, illustrated by Lissa Calvert (30 pages, 56.95 cloth), has twin protagonists, 10-year-old Madeleine and Charles, who



From *Cliptail*.

live in 17th-century New France. In *The Sky Cimibou* by Mary Hamilton, illustrated by Debi Perna, (32 pages, \$6.95 cloth). Little Partridge is the son of Samuel Hearne's Chipewyan guide to the Coppermine River. And George Rawlyk's *Streets of Gold*. Illustrated by Leung O'Young (32 pages, \$6.95 cloth), presents a Boston boy. If-year-old Jonathan Barble, who lies about his age in order to join the expedition to conquer Louisbourg. Along with interesting subject matter, the straightforward style, colourful illustrations, and small size (5" x 6") of these books should contribute to their appeal for young children.

Cross-country trips are becoming a convention in Canadian children's literature. In *A Trip Across Canada* by Terry Leeder, illustrated by Emma Hesse (Hounslow Press, 48 pages, 99.95 cloth), two children must move with their parents from St. John's to Vancouver. As the family crosses Canada in an unreliable old campervan, the book provides a series of vignettes — one or two per province — of the travellers' impressions of the places they stop. It is an easy-to-read book with attractive illustrations, but it doesn't develop the relationships within the family as they travel together the way Brian Doyle did in *Hey Dad!* (Groundwood, 1978), nor does it create the excitement of a cross-Canada trip as well as Barbara O'Kelly and Beverley Allinson's *"All Aboard!"* (Greene de Pen- & R., 1979).

Hounslow Press has also published John Robert Colombo's *Canadian Colouring Book* (unpaginated, \$3.95 paper). Colombo takes top billing over illustrator Emma Hesse; presumably he selected, arranged, and wrote the captions for her drawings. Children are invited to colour pictures from places across Canada (yes, we have Green Gables, the Calgary Stampede, and totem poles) and events in Canadian history (from Vikings to Anik satellites). This book might encourage a further interest in these aspects of Canadian life, and probably an argument could be made that it is better for Canadian children to colour Bonhomme Carnaval than Mickey Mouse.

Also for young children is a bilingual picture book from Kids Can Press, *The Night Sky/Ciel de Nuit* (32 pages, \$2.95 paper). The English version is a poem written by Katie Hembler when she was in grade three. The accompanying French translation is by Danielle Thaler. Illustrations by Angela Wood suit the imaginative and cheerful text.

I love my cat! / J'aime mon chat! (Kids Can Press, 32 pages, \$2.95 paper) is written by Marion Schaffer and illustrated by Kathy Vanderlinden, the same team that previously produced *I love my plant! / J'aime ma plante!* This book follows the same pattern. As the child learns to care for her cat, she discovers something about the history of cats as par, and her appreciation for her own pet increases.

Annick Press introduced Robert Munsch last year with two books for pre-schoolers. His new book, *The Paper Bag Princess* (32

pages, \$4.95 paper), is for the same audience. Princess Elizabeth's wit and ingenuity help her to rescue Prince Ronald from a fire-breathing dragon. But in a surprise ending, Elizabeth discovers that Ronald isn't worth rescuing and illustrator Michael Martchenko provides an exuberant picture of her dancing off, happy and independent, into the sunset.

In another picture book *From Annick*, Caroline Beech's *Peas Again for Lunch*, illustrated by Gina Calleja (32 pages, \$4.95 paper), young Tom imagines the din consequences of not eating the peas on his plate. And the same company under the Books by Kids imprint has published *Henry Finds a Home* (32 pages, \$4.95 paper), a cheerful little story by 12-year-old Wendy St. Pierre, illustrated by Barbara Eidlitz.

Two attractive small books from Nimbus Publishing are *Christmas with the Rural Mail* and *From Ben Loman to the See* (both unpaginated, \$4.95 paper). They feature paintings by Nova Scotia artist Maud Lewis who, before her death in 1970, painted the rural scenes around her — people, animals, vehicles, farms, and her bows. For each book the accompanying text is a poem by Lance Woolaver, who ties the pictures into a narrative sequence.

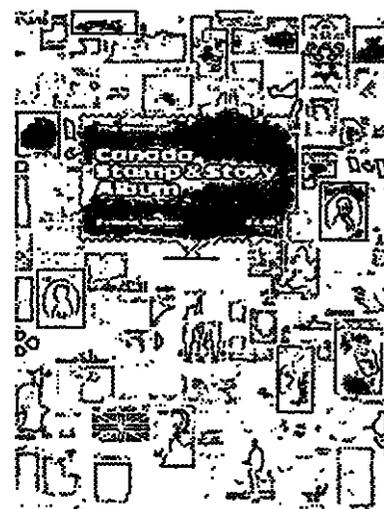
Three Trees Press's *Magician's Musical Pie* (32 pages, \$12.95 cloth, \$6.95 paper) is written by Wence Horai and intended for young children. It has detailed and attractive full-colour illustrations by Lynde Yasui. Two more picture story books from Three Trees are *Quillby*, the Porcupine Who Lost His Quills by George Swede and Anita Krumins, illustrated by Martin Lewis (24 pages, \$3.95 paper), and *Who's Going to Clean Up the Mess* by Anita Krumins, illustrated by Larissa Kuperman (24 pages, \$3.95 paper). In both cases the rather dense illustrations and layout will limit their appeal for children.

A book that certainly will not be short on appeal either for children or for their parents is *McGraw-Hill Ryerson's Elephant Jam* (128 pages, \$11.95 paper), a song and musical activity book from that energetic trio of children's entertainers, Sharon, Lois, and Bnm. The book includes favourite songs from their three children's records with piano arrangements for many of them. There are also new songs and games, instructions for accompanying actions, photographs, drawings, and comments from some of the children who have seen them perform. It is expensive, but most buyers will consider it well worth the price.

Elizabeth Cleaver's most recent picture book *Petrouchka* (Macmillan, 32 pages, \$12.95 cloth) is based on the Stravinsky ballet, the original story having been made up by Stravinsky himself and Alexandre Benois. The book is intended for children ages five to eight who will certainly react to the color and texture of the pictures. But only older children and adults could begin to appreciate the intricacy of Cleaver's colleges and the high quality of her art work.

Also from Macmillan is *The Violin-Maker's Gift* by Donn Kushner,

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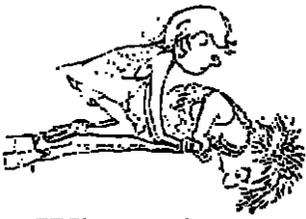


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illustrated by Doug Panton (74 pages, \$8.95 cloth). This is a legend intended for ages eight to 12. Set in the past in the French Pyrenees, it tells the story of a country violin-maker who rescues a magic bird and then slowly learns how they can best help each other. It presents a nice combination of magic and realistic derail.

Intended for approximately the same age range, but set firmly on familiar ground in the familiar present is Eric Wilson's *The Lost Treasure of Casa Loma* (Clarke Irwin, 103 pages, \$10.95 cloth). However, the incredible adventures of Tom Austen, boy detective, will also require a considerable suspension of disbelief from its readers. This is the fourth Tom Austen book and

is set in the Toronto area. Among other things, Tom hunts for stolen diamonds in Casa Loma, unwittingly becomes a smuggler, and is almost swept over Niagara Falls in a small boat. Wilson's story is fast-paced and exciting, and it is easy to see how Tom Austen could become an addiction.

As one would expect, Muriel Whitaker's anthology, *Stories from the Canadian North* (Hurtig, 192 pages, \$12.95 cloth), deals with more realistic adventures. Many stories concern bitter struggles for survival, ending in failure for some. "The Last Journey" by George Whalley synthesizes the story of Edgar Christian, an 18-year-old boy who, with two older companions, starved in death in Northern Canada in

Tomorrow, Stockholm

GORDON KORMAN'S first book, *This can't be happening at Macdonald Hall!*, was written when he was 12. Since then he has written two more Macdonald Hall books, relating the boarding-school adventures of the two young heroes, Bruno and Boots. *Who is Bugs Potter?*, the story of a manic teenage drummer who comes to Toronto to play in a high-school band concert and unintentionally becomes a star on the international rock music scene. These four, all published by Scholastic-TAB and extremely successful with young readers, are available as a boxed set for Christmas. Korman's next book, *I want to go home* (about summer camp) will be published in the spring. The author is also negotiating movie rights for *Macdonald Hall* and *Bugs Potter*, and discussing options for TV series based on his characters.

Heir 17 now, and has an impressive degree of self-assurance, mixed with guardedness and a touch of disdain. He could be 25, except for the eager note that sometimes bursts out in conversation. He is in grade 13 at Thornlea Secondary School in Thornhill, Ont. He says he has "no school spirit whatever", and has never been to a boarding school: "What is there to know, except that you sleep there?"

This can't be happening at Macdonald Hall! originated as a school writing project, and the teacher who assigned it is remembered on the flyleaf. "I dedicated the book to him. But I can't really say we ever got along. He constantly made suggestions and told me how great it would be if I did it differently, which I mostly didn't. He was also an unmarried marriage counsellor."

Had he ever thought of writing before? "No, and it's quite amazing that I got anything done at all, really. I don't usually apply myself very much to school projects. Most of the people in the class were writing pretty obvious things, about paratroopers and sharks and rescues — *Jaws* was big at the time. So I figured I'd do something a little easier. Then I just got carried away."

On impulse he mailed the manuscript to Scholastic, the publisher he represented in the school book club. ("They didn't believe I was 12") but they didn't move fast enough for Gordon. Before the first book had been published, he wrote another one. "I just wanted to see if I could do it again."

He was born in Montreal, an only child, and moved with his family to Toronto when he was seven. His mother contributes a

column to a Montreal weekly; she is the only other writer in the family, though the satirist Mort Sahl is a cousin.

Does he ever think of writing anything based on his real experiences in a suburban Canadian high school? "Not really. It wouldn't be funny. There is a certain sugar saturation in my books. They get less so as I go on, but they're never going to be realistic. *Bugs Potter* is more realistic than the *Macdonald Hall* books, but it's less likely — the story of a rock drummer and nothing in it about drugs. If I wrote anything about real life in a high school it would be full of dope and sex. I don't think people should be forced to read about stuff they have to contend with in reality anyway."

He has no idea what he will write next. "It depends what comes out." Next year, after high school, he hopes to take a film course. He is interested in writing for the movies, and he wants to study all aspects of film-making, technical as well as artistic. He doesn't know what kind of films he wants to make: "Becoming Stanley Kubrick and being deep all the time would be totally different from becoming Mel Brooks and being funny all the time." Although so far he has concentrated on comedy, he says he gets a little bit more philosophical in his next book. "But on much, and I'm very careful not to preach. I'm sure mankind can figure out their own messages."

— DORIS COWAN



Gordon Korman

1926. Frank Rasky's "Mutiny on Hudson Bay" retells in carefully researched detail the tragedy of Henry Hudson. "The Furs" by Yves Thériault shows the anger and frustration caused by the white man's exploitation of the Inuit. The tone of the book is leavened somewhat by the humour in William D. Blankenship's "Trial in the Bank Saloon" and the romance in R. 1. Blunt's "The Voice of the North". But the overall impression is sombre. Readers are more likely to remember such stories as Maurice Metayer's "The Blind Boy and the Loon", which tells of a mother's cruelty to her son and his final revenge, or "Left Behind" by Heluiz Chandler Washburne and Anauta, in which the narrator describes how her two best teen-aged friends were frozen to death. The book contains good introductory notes for each author and the illustrations by Vlasta van Kampen seem especially well suited to these stories. It will provide teen-aged readers with a compelling introduction to some Canadian writers who are particularly associated with the North, such as Farley Mowat and James Houston.

Also for older readers is *The King's Daughter* by Suzanne Mattel (Douglas & McIntyre, 211 pages, \$12.95 cloth and \$5.95 paper). This is another example of historical fiction, based on the 17th-century importation of young women from France to be wives for settlers in the New World. Because their dowry was provided by the King of France, who was anxious to populate New France, they were known as the King's daughters. In this story, Jeanne, an 18-year-old orphan finds herself transplanted within a matter of weeks from the security of a French convent to the Canadian wilderness, where she becomes the wife of a widower with two children. Readers will admire the pluck, energy, and humour with which she adapts to her environment and faces each new danger and adventure. This book was first published in French in 1974 and became a best seller in Quebec. The translation by David Toby Homel and Margaret Rose should make it equally popular in the rest of Canada.

Potlatch Publications' *Canadian Children's Annual*, edited by Robert F. Neilson, is earning its place as an anticipated part of many children's holiday pleasures. The 1981 *Annual* (176 pages, \$9.95 cloth and \$6.95 paper) differs slightly in format from the previous ones. This year fiction and fact are presented in two separate sections, the games and puzzles at the end of the fiction section marking a natural division. The *Annual's* fiction tries to offer something for everyone. There are poems and comics. The short stories deal with the supernatural, animals, adventure, tests of endurance, and relationships among friends and family members. Also Susan Super Sleuth, the perennial girl detective, solves another mystery. But the section devoted to fact is much more entertaining. This year, among other things, there are well-illustrated articles on Incas, volcanoes (including Mount St. Helens), pirates, and

ancient Greek drama. Excellent covers have been a tradition with *The Canadian Children's Annual*. This year the cover illustration is Miyuki Tanobe's "Maple Sugar Time" from her book *Quebec Je T'Aime // Low You* (Tundra Books, 1977). □

Huck Finn in Newfoundland

Far from Shore, by Kevin Major, Clarke Irwin, 176 pages, \$9.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7720 1312 8).

By JANET LUNN

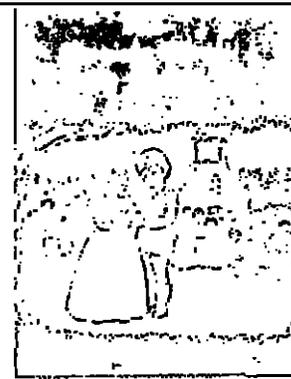
CHRIS SLADE is a teen-aged boy in a small town in Newfoundland. His father is out of work and drinking. His mother takes a job to support the family and falls for her boss. His sister hates everybody. Soap opera? Social worker's case history? No, it's not. The people in it are much too real.

Far from Shore is the story of what happens to a family when the work gives out. It's also the story of Chris, who, despite his strong Newfoundland speech, could be a teen-aged boy anywhere yearning for the security of a solid home, awkwardly pursuing the excitement of sex, stabbing at the adventure and responsibility of manhood. It begins on Christmas Eve when Father stumbles home drunk and crashes into the Christmas tree. Only Jennifer, lost in the self-pity of a broken romance, is entirely without sympathy. Mother is worried sick and Chris, bewildered but not knowing what else to do, shrugs and goes off to the midnight church service because it's his turn to serve communion.

Over the next couple of months things get worse until finally Father takes off for Alberta to find work. Mother gets a job in a fast-food restaurant — and more than a friend in the affectionate, lonely widower who owns it. Jennifer immerses herself in her last year at school. And Chris begins to cave in.

Growing angry and morose, he loses his girlfriend, he fails his year and decides not to go back to school and he picks up with a crowd of older boys who have a car, lots of beer, and dope. The morning the cop comes to charge him with smashing windows in a nearby school he is too hung-over to remember whether he did it or not.

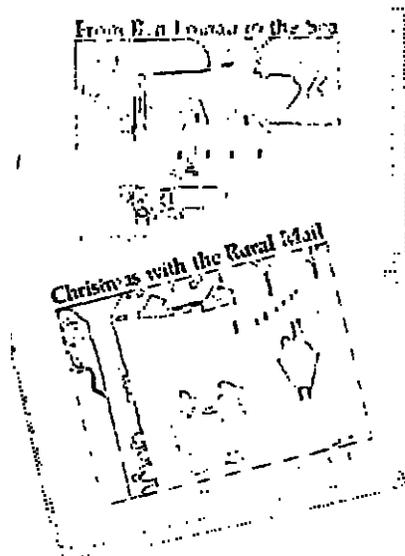
To the rescue comes Rev. Wheaton to offer a job as a junior counsellor at the church camp. Chris's first responsibility there is to cheer up a despondent boy named Morrison. He does a good job of it because he likes the kid. But one night he succumbs to the temptation to smoke up with his room-mate and, early the next morning, tired and still a bit stoned, he takes Morris-



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son out in the canoe too far from shore and nearly drowns them both.

It's a chastened and more thoughtful Chris, and a chastened and more thoughtful mother and father, who face the judge when Chris's case comes up for trial. The book ends with the mother and father reconciled, Jennifer at university and Chris back at school. Father doesn't swear off "drink completely, Jennifer doesn't become a sugar-sweet sister, and Chris sees no blinding light to turn his life around. But it's clear that the Slades are going to go on as a Family and that Chris is ready to face the next crisis with a bit more wisdom than he faced this one with.

The book has flaws. For one thing its structure is awkward and often confusing. It's mild from the points of view of all the major characters. The result is choppy. It's like the kind of television interview show that leaps from subject to subject until you get knots of frustration in your stomach trying to keep everyone straight.

And Major's strength is not story-telling. His plot is trite and the story doesn't flow. Then are, in fact, a couple of abrupt shifts that really jar. The most serious one comes when Chris goes off to camp after his big binge. Like the *deus ex machina* of the Greek dramas Rev. Wheaton appears, plucks Chris out of his tight spot and drops

To draw is to dance

"INNER VOYAGE" and "self-transforming experience" are not expressions that are usually associated with children's books. But as an artist who has found that "the most profound way of expressing myself is through mythological material in picture books". Elizabeth Cleaver uses them readily. In discussing her work. Cleaver draws on a whole battery of interests and techniques, including Jungian psychology, shadow puppetry, myth, legend, music, and dance. Take, for example, the kind of preparation that went into the making of *Petrouchka*, her latest book (reviewed on page 19):

"In *Petrouchka* I have been able to integrate my love for the puppet theatre, ballet music, costume, and stage design. I saw several productions of the ballet, researched the Ballets Russes in New York and Toronto, read books on Russian folk art, studied peasant costumes, carvings, gingerbread figures, and 19th-century Russian peasant woodcuts. I went back to study classical ballet so that I could feel my way into the ballet."

Paradoxically, it is through this meticulous attention to detail that Cleaver creates her highly symbolic and evocative illustrations. The Tsimshian artifacts she used to illustrate *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham* (Oxford, 1969), the ancient Hungarian costumes in *The Miraculous Hind* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973), the dentalium shell necklace, chosen because it most resembled the makings on the loon's feathers, in *The Loon's Necklace* (Oxford, 1977) — all are the product of painstaking research. But they will serve as the basis for "a visual expression of fantasy".

Cleaver's illustrations are collages combining coloured, textured papers (monoprints, which serve as background colours), lino prints (which are the forms and figures), and a variety of materials ranging from cut and torn paper to moss and pine leaves, fabrics, and potato prints. Cleaver traces her love for this technique back to her childhood fascination with cut-out books. In the course of preparing a book she will cut out literally hundreds of figures and rearrange them endlessly before she settles on a definitive composition.

The play aspect of this work is doubled by more abstract problems: how are symbols to be represented? How to represent a dream figure, an image of purification, the idea of the melting away of winter? Here Cleaver

dips deep into her own fascination for myth and legend. Readers are not always sensitive to the many levels of understanding possible in an illustration. "People take children's books too literally. We have to educate them a bit," says Cleaver. "Perhaps graduate courses in children's literature will have an impact at least on some educators."

Cleaver herself is a natural teacher. Sk loves showing how things work — including her own creations. "Students are always astonished at how much work goes into a picture book." At the same time she is always trying to understand her own craft. One step behind the "intuition" that initiates the creative process is the desire to analyze and explain, — "because at some point it is necessary that I not only create but grasp the meaning of what I make."

She is an exacting and self-conscious artist. Born in Montreal, she lives and works there in a long, book-cluttered flat that looks out onto Westmount park. Her living-room is dominated by a gigantic and colourful shadow puppet from Andhra Pradesh and a series of



Elizabeth Cleaver

mounted Turkish Karagöz puppets that she acquired on travels researching shadow puppetry.

Why has Elizabeth Cleaver chosen children's books? Why, she asks in turn, has our society relegated myth and legend to children? Though her illustrations delight children (who love to touch them because of their three-dimensional quality), they are not addressed only to them. "They have to please me first," Sk says.

—SHERRY SIMON

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him into a new milieu -and it might be a whole new story. Neither plot nor character development follow from what has gone before. It's almost as though the author had two plots in mind, couldn't decide which to use, and so used both.

But the weaknesses of plot do not destroy the book. This isn't just another fashionably slick tale of sex, violence, and drugs among young adults. It's an honest and deeply felt story. Kevin Major, himself a Newfoundland big-school teacher, cares so much about his characters that you find yourself at the edge of tears even while you're laughing or shaking your fist in frustration or outrage. And he writes well. His picture of life in Newfoundland is bright and sharp, not, thank God, that salty picaresque pastiche we mainlanders so often get to chuckle indulgently over. His portrait is a gutsy view of people you could really know (and want to). And Chris Slade is one of the most

engaging young men you're apt to meet in modern fiction for the young.

Major's first novel, *Hold Fast* (about an orphaned boy), won the Canada Council award for juvenile fiction for 1978. *Far from Shore* is a more ambitious book. Major tries to explore more fully the relationships in a family. He fails because this is so much Chris's story that we get both too much and too little of the other characters. But even the failure is interesting in that the attempt provides a richness and a roundness not often found in books about kids in high school. Major understands people; he really knows kids. There are times when the teacher in him shows through too clearly but he puts his linger on the raw, heart-breaking quality of the adolescent so perfectly, so delicately, and so without that sense of the adult watching that too often mars work for the young, that young people are bound to respond to him with thanksgiving. □

lamb and cumin and coriander make the whole broiled ones seem like nursery fare. Flemish beef stew with beer is gorgeous and so is chicken with raspberry vinegar.

For the many salt-conscious people, she suggests substituting wine, herbs, mustard or yogurt-and it works. And, in Chinese food, she recommends white wine or gin instead of the ubiquitous soy (and salty) sauce.

Probably because of her years of cooking before TV cameras, Mii Fremes has a vivid and graphic way of describing the preparations for a meal. You can all but see it coming together right off the page. Thii makes her book an especially valuable one for the inexperienced cook. Not to worry, she'll have you by the bend.

Madame Benoit's World of Food (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$17.95, 264 pages) is culled from every continent and from some of the best cooks and chefs in each. It would be a joy to travel with Madame, since she is evidently welcomed with the finest dishes in every corner of every country.

She is well aware that food gets around a lot these days, just like people, so she doesn't hesitate to include, under England, a superb Tomato Salata from one of London's best Italian restaurants. But she restores the balance by telling you all about how to make Bath buns, Chelsea buns, English muffins, and crumpets.

From Ireland, not famous for its cooking, she brings us a really good cauliflower soufflé and a whisky pie. Scandinavia contributes not only its fish and meat recipes but also some excellent breads and cakes, as well as a punch made of beer, ale, gin, and Madeira!

I've made and liked her citrus chicken from France, but liked the Giannino lime broiled chicken from Italy even more. Other lands she covers are Wales, Scotland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece, the Caribbean, and Japan. It's an international tour without leaving your kitchen.

At My Table by Bonnie Stem (Methuen, \$8.95, 99 pages) comes from a sure professional — a columnist, food manager, and cooking teacher. Ms. Stem has studied at famous European cooking schools, but she knows how to translate her experience into simple language and practical recipes, and how to adept old-world skills to modern equipment.

She doesn't expect you to know a lot. She tells you how certain ingredients are supposed to behave and what to do if they don't -even how to cope with runny gelatin and why you'd better store your nuts in the freezer if you get a good buy on a large quantity. Reading her is as comforting as having a smart granny at your elbow when you're doing your first dinner party.

But Ms. Stem has a great flair for flavour too. Take her creamy salad dressing. It's a sort of cross between a vinaigrette and a mayonnaise, perfect for a bacon and spinach salad. Her butterfly leg of lamb has a gala combination of seasonings, among

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Groaning boards and greener fields

by DuBary Campau

BUILT-IN BOOKCASES flanking the fireplace used to indicate that here lived some pretty with-it types. Inherited sets of Thackeray might be snuggled next to the latest Harold Robbins and vacant stretches might be filled with cute paperweights and ceramic figurines, but basically the arrangement was a conspicuous homage to literature.

Today, the with-it types are building their book shelves on either side of the kitchen stove -cuisine is the cultural hallmark — and keeping up with the latest news from the frying-pans and saucepans of the world demands an ever-expanding library.

Busy book stores across Canada stock a minimum of 50 culinary titles, most of which sell out regularly. The authors may not be Cordon Bleu chefs. Far from it. More likely they're bachelor banisters who give you 97 different ways to disguise hamburger, bridge players who know 203 kinds of food that can be eaten at the card table while making a little slam, or a traveller just returned from a bus tour of Italy who has discovered that pasta can be cooked without Hunt's tomato sauce.

But to the joy of those of us who love both to cook and to eat, each season brings some fresh, practical guides to delicious meals.

One of the newest and best of these is Sara Waxman's *The King's Wife's Cookbook* (Thomas Nelson & Sons, \$14.95, 151 pages). Sara does her cooking at home but her range is the world. For instance, she gives recipes for turnovers, perogies, krep-

lachs, ravioli, and wonton-and although they are all little pockets of dough, every one is stuffed and cooked differently.

She tells you how to make Ethiopian Yaltakeka Kiki (it's a spicy vegetable dish) and she also tells you that the nicest welcome-home dinner for travellers is good familiar food — smoky burgers, corn-on-the-cob, and baked Alaska. Her meat and fruit curry is a dream, so are her baby beef Wellingtons. Pepper steak flambé she makes with cheep and tasty flanked steak. Her cheddar cheese puff is a fool-proof soufflé. She gives practical directions for crêpes Suzette and she's a whiz at icing vodka.

Because she cooks for her family, her friends, for birthday parties and celebrity soirées, she knows how to cope with all kinds of occasions and vastly varying appetites. Her book is both titillating and useful-and it's fun to read and to follow.

What's Cooking by Ruth Fremes (Methuen, 510.95, 180 pages) is another book that is both useful and spirited. Miss Fremes is a clever one when it comes to household hints: how to get the most juice out of lemons and limes; how to save eggs, both whole and separated; and how to ice a cake (with a paint brush).

She has a knack for unusual combinations of seasonings; vichyssoise dashed with Tabasco and Worcester sauces may sound a bit too tangy but it creates a whole new soup. Mock lamb chops made with ground

them garlic, lemon, mustard, and rosemary. Chicken in peaches and cream (really) I loved wading about but can hardly believe or would dare to serve. Her crêpes come out perfectly — thin and delicate.

This is a good book for gourmets and terrific for people who don't know how to mm on a hot plate.

Picnics for Lovers by Gabrielle Kirschbaum (Van Nostrand Reinhold, \$12.95, 144 pages) sounds like something dreamed up by Joan Sutton or Merle Shane. Actually it's a delightful selection of menus and recipes that could be enjoyed quite happily by married couples or casual friends. Probably they would appreciate the fresh, interesting combinations of quite simple foods and exotic seasonings even more than lovers, who are apt to be too besotted with each other to care much what they're eating.

The book is charmingly illustrated and designed by Frank Newfeld and Dianne Richardson and is divided into menus appropriate for each season. An elegant but understated suggestion for a summer picnic includes canteloupe soup, cold roasted tarragon chicken, garden vegetables with an herb dip, and fresh strawberries with lemon and • par. For autumn there's a rich and wicked pumpkin soup baked in the pumpkin and made with two kinds of cheese, stock, and whipped cream. Serve along with red and green pepper salad and baked apples.

None of the picnics requires tedious preparation or elaborate service but all are distinguished by contrasting flavours and

textures. That's the mark of a true chef.

After all that ehi-chi noshing, we come down to earth with a bump with **From Prairie Kitchens**, compiled by Emmie Odle (Western Producer Prairie Books, \$9.95, 151 pages), and the deluxe edition of **Amish Cooking** (Personal Library \$15.95, 318 pages). Both of these books are filled with hearty fare.

Prairie Kitchens includes many ethnic recipes: an Acadian *tourtière* made with chicken; Chinese-Canadian chop suey; and a pappy seed chiffon Ukrainian cake. It also has an amazing number of things called salads but which are made with gelatin, marshmallows, and tinned fruits. The casseroles are filling: they're intended on the whole to put left-overs to use and are built around tinned mushroom or celery soup. Children would probably love the food in this book but it might make their teeth fall out since much of it, even including the salad dressings and mayonnaise, is made with extravagant amounts of sugar.

The Amish, too, are hearty eaters and fond of sweets (they put half a cup of sugar in their French dressing). More than 130 pages of this book are devoted to cakes, pies, cookies, desserts, and breads (the breads, especially, sound delicious). The main dishes are generally basic and inexpensive. The most surprising thing to me is that, although many pages are given over to making bologna and sausages, coring meat, canning vegetables, fruits, and chicken, and making cheeses and preserves, the recipes

themselves are filled with rather shoddy, modern short cuts — such as Velveeta cheese, dessert toppings, tinned soups, and the omnipresent fruit gelatins.

If you live in a bog or a patch, here are two books just for you: **The Cranberry Connection** and **The Blueberry Connection**, both by Ruth Ross Buszek (Douglas & McIntyre, \$6.95 each, 211 pages each). They are attractively designed, respectively in red and blue, and are printed in a facsimile of hand lettering.

Judging by the number and variety of recipes, it seems it would be possible to live almost exclusively on those two types of berry. The tables of contents list berry-based or berry-seasoned brunches, entrées, grills, jams and jellies, breads and muffins, salads, snacks, sauces, relishes, drinks (how about a cranberry daiquiri?), and cookies, cakes, and candies. These are specialized books, of course, but either or both of them could add zest and piquancy to your cuisine.

For those who enjoy foraging for their food, there are two new books that will make the hunting more exciting and the cooking more rewarding.

From the National Museum of Natural Sciences comes **Wild Green Vegetables of Canada** by Adam Szczawinski and Nancy J. Turner (\$9.95, 179 pages). It is splendidly illustrated with photographs and drawings that should make it easy to identify the edible plants. And some surprising ones are edible, such as cat-tails, goats' beards, hairy housewort, lambs quarters, and others so exotic one would suppose they would mm up only in a witch's broth.

However, the authors give us practical purposes for them — salads, stews, sandwiches, and in combination with meats and fish. If inflation continues, the woods may be full of hungry people with this book in hand.

AU Good Things Around Us by Pamela Michael and illustrated by Christabel King (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, \$24.50, 240 pages) is both too big to lug into the fields and too handsome to carry into the kitchen. But for natural-food buffs and just plain nature lovers, it is a treasure of information on wild herbs, berries, and other useful plants. And even those who never get closer to nature than an order of wild strawberries in a French restaurant will find the book fascinating.

Certain trends in our life style can be spotted by sampling current books on food. Those directed to a more sophisticated audience increasingly emphasize fruits, vegetables, fish, and the lighter cuts of meat. Compared to the more homespun volumes, they are austere in their use of starch, butter, cream, and sugar. Instead they explore subtle seasonings, fresh contrasts, and natural ingredients.

The books on edible wild plants reflect that trend, discovering for us new flavours and textures that are scanty in calories — an increasingly important factor for sedentary city dwellers who love to eat well but want to stay thin without jogging in the streets. □

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A grand (or three) tribute to A. J. Casson and some scholarly gossip about Van Dyck

BERNIE LOATES has done it again. This time it's a gigantic, entirely gorgeous tribute to A. J. Casson, only living member of the Group of Seven. Actually, that's just the excuse he needed to produce this book, which is itself a work of art. Loates's limited-edition projects have become an expensive but spectacular form of madness. This is what can happen to a man who decides he will make the most beautiful books the world has ever seen. And who's to say he hasn't succeeded?

As an example of the bookmaker's art, **A. J. Casson: A Tribute** by Paul Duval (M.B. Loates publishing, 496 pages, \$27.00) stands tight at the top. It's hard to imagine that a book could be any more magnificently made. In his "publisher's statement", Loates tells us that "only the best materials have been used". The paper is, of course, all hand-made and Casson himself directly supervised the production of "Hazy Midsummer Day", the original lithograph included with the book. Each

volume comes signed by Casson, author Paul Duval, and Loates. All 150 copies have apparently been sold and Loates's agent, Asher Joram, told me one went last fall for \$3,500. That'll make the investors happy.

Kluane: Pinnacle of the Yukon (Doubleday, 175 pages, \$35), edited by John Theberge, is a much less exalted effort. But reading it isn't nearly so difficult; it doesn't weigh as much. The 16 expert contributors discuss everything from moraines to mountaineering. The chapters on glaciers, "nature's sculptures", provide an unexpectedly fascinating opening to Theberge's book. Did you know. For example, that six million square miles of the earth's surface is covered by glaciers and that 80 per cent of all the world's fresh water remains locked in their frozen bulk? The two other sections are devoted to plants, animals, and man. The overall result of this book is a clear and always readable account of how one particular eco-system arranges

itself to survive. *Kluane* is more than a picture book; its story is that of the environment of North America's most impressive mountain ranges.

Meanwhile, **Down to Earth** by Judy Ross, David Allen, and Nina Czegledy-Nagy (Nelson, 167 pages, \$24.95) casts an appreciative and admiring glance at Canadian pottery. The authors have chosen 19 leading potters whose work and techniques are examined in some detail. Each artisan is allowed a page or two to talk on his or her own behalf. The book includes plenty of photographs and should be welcomed by those who love ceramics.

The National Gallery of Canada has a double offering this season. The first, **The Young Van Dyck** (295 pages, \$29.95 cloth and \$19.95 paper), comes from the scholarly pen of Alan McNairn. Sir Anthony Van Dyck, whose name has entered the English language in a number of ways (Vandyke collars, Vandyke brown, Vandyke beards), is universally accepted as one of the three masters of northern European baroque painting. The others, of course, are Rubens and Rembrandt. McNairn contends that "if Rubens' and Van Dyck's works seem at times identical it is at least partly because we are unable to recognize real differences that may upon occasion be quite subtle". Undoubtedly. The book is unlikely to set the average art lover's heart thumping, yet it contains enough information and gossip (mostly historical hearsay) about

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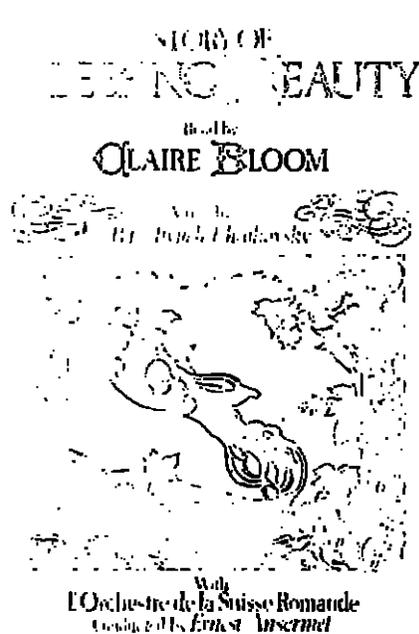
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Van Dyck and his contemporaries that anyone who does sit down with it for an evening will be pleasantly surprised. A large number of the artist's paintings and drawings are included. They alone make McNaim's book a worthwhile purchase.

The National Gallery's second literary opus, **Pluralities** 1980 by Philip Fry, Williard Holmes, Allan MacKay, and Chantal Pontbriand (132 pages, \$19.95) will amuse some, infuriate others, and sit ignored by the majority. It documents the exhibition of the same name held earlier this year. As the title indicates, the contributors to this show cover a lot of artistic ground. At one extreme are Joe Fafard's rather agreeable ceramic portraits of friends, family, cows and "interesting characters around town". At the other, we find the funny, irritating, deliberately non-artistic proclamations of *General Idea*: "We wanted to be famous. We wanted to be glamorous. We wanted to be rich. . . ." Chantal Pontbriand's accompanying essay rises wonderfully to the occasion: "These artists [General Idea] create an uncertainty about the artist as he is generally seen. Skill, uniqueness, and anything in the work relating to craftsmanship in art have been purposely eliminated." *General Idea* may indeed have come up with some good gags but the really great stuff — and it can be hilarious — comes from *Pluralities* 1980 and its four authors.

From humour to houses is a big jump. Nevertheless, we all need a place to live. For those up to their necks in restoring an old house **The Canadian Old House Catalogue** by John Hearn (Van Nostrand, 126 pages, 59.95) might help you out of the mess that is the depressing truth behind renovating. Still, some have more courage and energy than others. For them Hearn has provided an invaluable list of suppliers, services, and products useful in the restoring process. His catalogue will be even more useful than the Yellow Pages.

In **Life in the English Country House** (Penguin, 344 pages, 514.95), Mark Girouard takes a leisurely look at that crumbling Anglo-Saxon institution. The book was a best seller when it appeared in hardback and there's no reason why it shouldn't do better the second time around. A typically lavish, thoroughly entertaining entry from Penguin.

The rich are different from the rest of humanity; they live in nicer homes. I know this because of *Architectural Digest's* new series. The first four titles, **New York Interiors**, **California Interiors**, **Historic Interiors**, and **Traditional Interiors** (Penguin, each 160 pages, \$14.95), edited by Paige Rense, are a detailed photographic account of just this. Naturally, suede-upholstered Louis XV fauteuils aren't to everybody's taste. And it's just as well; arborite is much more practical. (That's the other thing about the rich, they don't always have to worry about being practical.) Anyway, buy these books, take them home, and have a good look around. Then shoot your interior decorator. □

Sneezing through a garden of temptations, from aphrodisiacs to unlimited free beer

LIKE EVE'S APPLE, love potions are supposed to have sinister, almost magical powers to lead their users astray. Because of their sinful reputations, some government agencies (probably the same people who ban drinking beer at the ballpark) insist that aphrodisiacs don't even exist. It's true, says Dr. Raymond Stark, that no drugs are exclusively aphrodisiac, though many have aphrodisiac side-effects because, for instance, they may stimulate the lower spine or irritate the genitals. In *The Book of Aphrodisiacs* (Methuen, illustrated, 195 pages, \$9.95 paper) he catalogues 550 potency aids, natural contraceptives, menstrual medicines, and other sex-related substances — from marijuana (it releases inhibitions) to Spanish fly (a dangerous, potentially fatal irritant) to such arcana as toad venom and stag phallus. But mostly Stark — who has a degree in naturopathy from a university in Las Vegas — is interested in the tonic powers of natural foods. Among other things, he recommends onion juice, which is full of vitamins and minerals, and offers an intriguing recipe for an aphrodisiac made from ordinary tea.

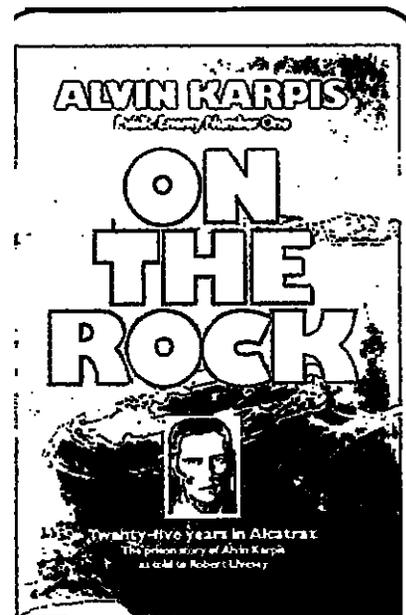
It's a short hop from aphrodisiacs to allergies. The difference is that allergenic substances — such as ragweed pollen and dust — only irritate people who are especially sensitive to them, while aphrodisiacs give everybody a nice little buzz. In *The Allergy Book* (Personal Library, illustrated, 184 pages, \$7.95 paper) Dr. Harsha V. Dehejia explains the causes, symptoms, and treatment of most common allergies, such as hay fever, sinusitis, asthma, and hives. Though he discusses the newest medical remedies, much of his advice is common sense. Hay fever sufferers, for example, should stay indoors during the pollen season, with the air conditioning turned up and the windows shut. As a life-long hay fever victim, a veteran of 20 years of allergy shots ("You must have the injections for at least two years," says Dehejia, consolingly), I've often felt that the months of August and September should just be struck from the calendar. Usually I'm so stoned on antihistamines that I wouldn't notice they were missing.

I'm one of about 100,000 Canadians and one million Americans who are allergic to ragweed, according to *What's the Difference? A Comparison of Canadians and Americans*, by Marietta and Isaac Bickerstaff (Macmillan, illustrated, 228 pages, 56.95 paper). Among the many statistical items they examined, the Bickerstaffs (whose real names are Marietta and Don Evans) discovered, rather predictably, that

the United States has many more murders and accidental shooting deaths than Canada, while the law-abiding Canadians have proportionately more police. But Canada also has about 18,000 more nudists! Their statistics are arranged in question-and-answer style — a format that can be annoyingly coy at times. In answer to "What accounts for the lack of race riots in Canada?" the authors reply that fewer than two per cent of the Canadian population is black, while U.S. blacks represent about 11 per cent of the total. The assumptions implied by this — that the more blacks you have, the more trouble you get; and that all race riots involve blacks — seem alarmingly racist.

The premise behind Kathleen Crowley's *AU the Free Beer You Can Drink: A World Guide to Brewery Tours* (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 134 pages, \$6.95 paper) is that every brewery tour includes plenty of free samples. For instance, a tour of Molson's brewery in Toronto ends in the Anchor Room, where tourists can drink as much draught and bottled beer as they want, until the bar closes after about two hours. (Potato chips, sandwiches, and bottle openers also are free.) Crowley provides maps and listings for breweries in more than 30 countries — not just the popular European brewers, but also such out-of-the-way places as the Boon Rawd Brewery in Bangkok and Cerveceria Backus y Johnston in Lima, Peru. Unfortunately, in Canada tours are only available in five provinces — Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. Worse, the Alberta government restricts tour-goers to one beer apiece.

'Dear Teacher': A Collection of Parents' Letters to their Children's Teachers, compiled by Emile and Diana Lizé (Potlatch, illustrated, unpaginated, \$3.95 paper) pretty well speaks for itself. Most of the letters contain the sort of howlers that mm up in the humour columns of *Reader's Digest* from time to time, though a few border on tragedy. I can't help wondering what life was like for the child whose mother wrote: "I no my dotter dont read much but she aint illiterat. I married her father a week befor she was born." Or: "Mind yore own business, teacher. I can't send all my kids to school every day. I got eight kids and five pairs of shoes and they have to take turns wearing them." But presumably it was just bad spelling, rather than social conditions, that led another mother to write: "Please la Jenny go on Andrew's bus today because I have to babysit my brothel's children."



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I suspect that the Toronto *Star's* Gary Luten, like many other daily columnists, writes about his family when he can't think of anything better to do. But strung end-to-end in *Take My Family ... Please!* (John Wiley & Sons, illustrated, 176 pages, \$9.95 cloth), his columns provide a bittersweet continuity — from his children's whimsical infancy to the pangs of young adulthood. And he does get off some good lines. His two sons, he says, can be "so rotten that when they pick up a toad, the toad gets work". Such ordinary ironies were also the stuff of the late Greg Clark's columns but, unlike Luten, Clark's writing had transcended the bouncy, one-line delivery of newspaper style. His columns — fishing tales, observations on love and aging, and his delight in neighbourhood feuds — all were constructed into homely little essays, just as he must have carefully staged his own activities. The photos that accompany his fourth collection, *A Supersonic Day* (McClelland & Stewart, 159 pages, \$12.95 cloth), show a man to whom costume made

life less a random occurrence than a daily role to play.

In *Black and White and Never Right: A Hockey Referee* (John Wiley & Sons, illustrated, 151 pages, \$12.95 cloth) Vern Buffey collaborates with Robert Soucie and Michael Monty to describe his 25 years as a hockey official, I I of them with the National Hockey League. The result is a flood of anecdotes, most of which show Buffey's admiration for tough guys who stand up for themselves, former NHL president Clarence Campbell, and the drinking prowess of one of his workmates. He doesn't delve into the technicalities of refereeing until near the end when, in addition to explaining some frequently misunderstood rules, he reveals how the officials know when to hold up a televised game for the commercials. The linesmen have electronic pagers hidden in their uniforms. "If you ever see a linesman skating around with his head down by his chest, like he's trying to monitor his own heartbeat, what you are seeing is an official who isn't sure he heard his pager." □

probably a good book to be made out of Paci's experience, but *The Italians* certainly isn't it.

The remainder of this month's fiction aims to entertain rather than enlighten, and does so with varying degrees of success. John Gault's *Teddy* (Seal, \$2.25), the novelization of an original screenplay by Ian A. Stuart, is a neat little horror story about a disturbed boy and his even more disturbing playmates, an unassuming, professional, and thoroughly enjoyable piece of work that tickled both my fancy and the hairs on the back of my neck. Nella Benson's *The Reckless Wager* (Seal, \$1.95) succeeds in a rather different genre by concocting diverting historical romance out of the standard ingredients of a spoiled heiress, amorous he-men, and extreme meteorological occurrences, and those who like their prose either purple or forever amber should be pleased with it. Jim Lotz's *Killing in Klugane* (PaperJacks, \$2.95) is the third in a series of novels set in the far North, and like the others it's reasonably entertaining and benefits from a firm sense of place.

The usual deluge of thrillers exhibits a wider range of authorial competence, with William Deverell's *Needles* (\$2.75, Seal) going to the head of the class by virtue of its vivid Vancouver settings and an exciting courtroom battle. Somewhat more trying are two unbelievable plot twists and a stereotyped oriental villain, but on the whole it's an above-average effort. David Gurr's *Troika* (\$2.50, Seal) makes good use of a cryptic, early Len Deighton-ish style that kept me reading through an unconscionably slow beginning, but it eventually tries for more psychological complexity that it can handle and descends to the merely "promising" level. Both Diane Northfield's *Hostage* (\$1.95, Signet) and Michael Bradley's *The Mantouche Factor* (\$2.50, Signet) can be dismissed without much further ado, which is how they seem to have been written: *Hostage's* shallow characterizations and clichéd prose are extreme even for mass-market fiction; whereas *The Mantouche Factor's* only distinguishing characteristic is a quantity of gore sufficient to attract those who still enjoy slaughtering their own livestock. The only reviewer's quote the publishers could come up with for this turkey is "A Thriller!" — Toronto *Globe & Mail* — and I'll bet you dollars to doughnuts that the original review is both less than laudatory and bereft of the exclamation point. Mark Ronson's *Ghoul* (PaperJacks, \$2.50) is a competently constructed suspenser set against convincing Middle Eastern backgrounds.

Non-fictionally speaking, Farley Mowat's *People of the Deer* (\$2.25, Seal) has been out in paperback before, but in the absence of anything of even remotely comparable interest I'll take its first Seal edition as an excuse for a brief rave. This moving account of the life of the Thalmiut Eskimo has lost none of its impact, and it is still must reading for anyone who wants to comprehend the continuing conflict bet-

on the racks

by Paul Stuewe

How brilliant Atwood and charming Roy move our critic to transports of joie

of a HILF to keep one's cool, one likes to dispense praise carefully and with qualifications, one likes to express oneself as "one" in order to distance the old psyche from anything as unhip as enthusiasm. None of these strategies will suffice, however, when a novel as brilliant as Margaret Atwood's *Life Before Man* (Seal, \$2.95) or as touching as Gabrielle Roy's *Children of My Heart* (Seal, \$2.50) turns up for review, and you'll pardon me if I wax ecstatic for a moment. *Life Before Man* turns some trendy Toronto triangulations into absolutely fascinating fiction, making art out of life with impeccable literary craft and a sensitivity to nuance that defies analysis and richly rewards close reading. Atwood has clearly transcended the thematic preoccupations of *Surfacing* and *Survival* and become one of our very finest writers, and it's a shame that many of her reviewers — unlike the growing numbers of her readers — haven't yet caught up to the exhilarating openness of her recent fiction.

Roy's *Children of My Heart*, translated by Alan Brown, is a tender exploration of the various relationships between a young school-teacher and her diverse pupils, and if it doesn't bring smiles and tears to your visage you're an old Scrooge. It's difficult to avoid using another very uncool word, "charming", when discussing Roy's work, and I see no reason to do so: this is a thoroughly charming novel very much in the tradition of her previous books, which

makes it must reading for anyone interested in the best of Canadian writing.

Brian Moore's *The Mangan Inheritance* (Penguin, \$2.95) takes the compulsive eroticism of *The Doctor's Wife* and the compulsive antiquarianism of *The Great Victorian Collection* and combines them into a fairly successful novel. After a difficult transition from literarily inclined to mass-market-oriented fiction, Moore seems to have his act together: like its immediate predecessors, *The Mangan Inheritance* exhibits large hunks of flat prose that cry out for concision, but for the most part it succeeds in entertaining while flirting with a serious issue or two, which is what it seems to intend.

Honourable intentions are at best a mitigating circumstance in both our judicial and book-reviewing systems, and as a consequence the sincerity and sociological value of F. G. Paci's novel *The Italians* (Signet, \$2.25) do not absolve it from a verdict of first-degree boredom. The trials and tribulations of an Italian immigrant family, particularly when recounted by someone as obviously knowledgeable as Paci, are at least potentially a subject of wide general interest as well as a welcome relief from the Waspish neuroticism of much contemporary writing; but a soap-opera level of characterization combined with acclumsily stage-managed plot makes it impossible to take it seriously as fiction. In the form of memoirs or reportage there's

ween native rights and what we euphemistically describe as "economic development". Read it if you haven't: read it again if you have.

People of the Deer is also about 367 times as exciting as *The First Original Unexpurgated Canadian Book "I Sex and Adventure"* (\$2.95, Signet), perpetrated by Jeremy Brown and Christopher Ondaatje. This is another non-book along the lines of *The Canadian Book of Lists*, meaning that jejune answers ("Does the Pillsbury Doughboy have a high voice because of a war wound?") to dumb questions ("The 10 Questions You'd Most Like Answered About Sex in Advertising") set the tone for an almost completely pointless enterprise. It's cheap-jack productions such as this that

give people the idea that anything Canadian is necessarily boring and inferior, and it's a shame that such rubbish ever sees the light of print. In these circumstances even Tommy Douglas Speaks (\$8.95, Douglas & McIntyre) edited by L. D. Lovick, impresses as a desirable alternative, although its brand of political wit and wisdom isn't really any more uncommon than the House Of which Douglas was for so long an indubitably honourable member. But in politics, if not in literature, good intentions do count for something, and as a memorial of a distinguished career Tommy Douglas Speak demonstrates that at least some of our leaders do compare favourably with the best the world has to offer. □

english, our english

by Bob Blackburn

If you characterize students as revolting, what do you infer at this point in time?

A READER HAS taken me to task for splitting an infinitive in an earlier column. I did, and will again. Most authorities are reasonably flexible on that subject. As a general rule, the split infinitive should be avoided, but not beyond the point at which the avoidance causes awkwardness of expression. To put it another way, if you split an infinitive to conveniently avoid awkwardness of expression, you'll get no flak from me. The purpose of this column is not to perpetuate schoolteachers' bugbears but to encourage users of English to try to say what they mean.

One who did not say what he meant was the wire-service wiper who recently told us that the Canadian proposal for patriation of the constitution would have to be presented to the British Parliament, "which legally must approve the measure". Perhaps most of us know he meant, that the measure, to become law, requires the approval of the British Parliament, but what he sold, in effect, was that the British Parliament is required by law to approve the measure, whether it wants to or not, and that is not true.

Correctness does not always ensure clarity. If a reporter visiting a university campus tells us that the students are revolting, we need to know whether he is stating a fact (they are rebelling) or voicing an opinion (they are disgusting). *Revolting* can mean either, and should be avoided if there is any possibility of misunderstanding. If, however, the reporter intends the second meaning and elaborates by saying they are making him nauseous, he is guilty of an increasingly (and sickeningly) common misuse of *nauseous*, which means nauseating, for *nauseated*. He could just say sick, but he's probably one of those persons who

says presently when he means now.

This fellow (he's on all the newscasts and writes for all the papers) doesn't always say presently when he means now. He would not say at this moment in time, because he knows it's a redundancy (all moments are in time), but he'll take any opportunity to say at this point in time, a phrase he finds satisfyingly pompous. He'll probably soon join the ranks of those who have started to say technological advancements instead of advances. *Advancement* is arguably permissible in that context, but its chief attraction seems to be its extra syllable. No communicator who hopes to be regarded as a pundit can afford to pass up a suitably sesquipedalian substitute for a short word. Consider the respected John Chancellor, who nowadays never says describe when he can say characterize.

* * *

ONE SHOULD BE able to trust those who devise crossword puzzles to be uncommonly painstaking in their use of words. It was, therefore, most distressing to note in a recent, usually respectable, syndicated puzzle the use of imply as a definition for infer, thereby undermining the work of generations of educators who have gone grey (or, in some cases, gray) trying to preserve the distinction by telling students, "I imply; you infer." The inference to be drawn is that the puzzle-maker was using an inferior dictionary. The distinction is not difficult to grasp, and it is a useful and important one, but the misuse of *infer* for *imply* (for some reason more common than the reverse) has become so widespread that some dictionaries have given up on it and simply list the latter as a synonym for the former, without comment. If you have such a dictionary, replace it.

Writers who won't take the trouble to maintain such distinctions are destroying our ability to communicate with each other. A financial-page columnist tells us we will have less dollars to spend next year. Quite possibly next year he will be telling us we will have fewer money to spend the following year. What does he care? He's too busy dreaming up such phrases as negative growth so he won't have to say decline.

Something that is continual either never stops or keeps recurring forever. Something that is continuous goes non-stop from start to finish. This is another distinction the lesser lexicographers are abandoning, and in this case perhaps they're justified by the continual misuse of *continuous* by so many writers.

There remain, however, some frequently ignored distinctions that are worth trying to preserve. There are, we are to" often reminded, writers who need to be often reminded (that, by the way, was not a split infinitive) that while a long drive on a tortuous road can be a torturous experience for a driver, *tortuous* and *torturous* have different meanings, as have *contemptuous* and *contemptible*, *ingenious* and *ingenuous*, *obscure* and *abstruse*, *uninterested* and *disinterested*. These distinctions should be obvious, but I've seen one or both words in each of those pairs misused for the other, in print, within the past week. In view of that, is there any use in arguing about farther and further? □

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Refusing to play safe, Musgrave lets her sensibility spill out. Brace yourselves

The **Charcoal Burners**, by Susan Musgrave (McClelland & Stewart, 234 pages, \$14.95 cloth), has several strong ingredients - gritty realism, dark, intense imagery, suspense, a terrifying conclusion — that mix to produce an exceptional first novel. Musgrave, whose accomplishments in poetry are well-known, has made a remarkable transition to fiction. This is no "pods novel", attenuated and precious or whatever the phrase is supposed to mean, but a fully developed narrative of poetic depth and power.

The central character is Martha Seeweed, —Matty— a young white woman married to, then separated from Dan Seeweed, an Indian from a British Columbia coastal settlement. In the course of the book's five parts, Matty encounters the bizarre implications and extensions of some crucial phenomena of contemporary life — race and sex, religion and cultism, nature and primitivism. Matty is pulled on her journey deeper and deeper into a North American

bean of darkness. She's not et first a particularly appealing heroine. Sometimes vague and scattered, she's apparently indecisive and unformed, yet her susceptibility to circumstances and her helplessness make her victimization all the more believable and appalling.

The plot can be summarized. Matty and Dan live in a logging camp. The first two sections of the novel present, with sharp and biter humour, family funerals, one white, one Indian, and Matty's decision to leave Dan. She heads north with Christian, a friend from university days who plans to borrow a cabin and run a trapline. They never reach their destination, but instead fell in with two communes. One is female, all herbs and astrology; the other is male (the charcoal burners), all violence and unspeakable acts, a son of pseudo-metaphysical motorcycle gang.

The last two sections require a strong stomach for the scenes of shock, eroticism, and grotesque horror. Throughout we get

Matty's dreams, hallucinations, private images and visions, infused with h&growing outrage and despair. The novel will inevitably be compared to *Surfacing* -usefully, I think. Musgrave lacks the austere religious/philosophical/political structure Atwood imposes; Atwood seldom in her prose strikes so deep and so powerfully into the unconscious, into primal fears and longings, into the now lovely, now fetal connections between sex and death.

Musgrave takes chances with her talents here. She refuses to be "safe", choosing instead to let her sensibility spill out. Though I admit to some difficulty in making her total vision, poetic as well as moral, cohere as fully as I'd like, I respect the myths and metaphors of *The Charcoal Burners*, admire its energy of imagination and naturalness of expression. It's a striking fictional debut.

* * *

THEN THERE'S A Giant Among Friends, by Allan Morrison, with Michael MacKenzie (MacKenzie Books, 100 pages, 54.00 paper). Anyone except the authors' families and friends who read the prefatory "summary" and the "preface" to this novel would be out of his mind to go one page farther. I'm paid to take such risks. And I can report that the novel should not be read by anyone except the authors' families and friends.

In a way, that's too bad. The book is warm-hearted, moved by what seems

books you'll love to give . . .



. . . warm . . . lavish . . . funny . . . fascinating . . .

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lease don't misunderstand. As journalists, we respect the pleasure of fermented grain as much as the average person. Some of us, perhaps, a little more than the average person.

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genuine affection for and knowledge of rural Prince Edward Island and nostalgia for simpler times. It's an episodic tale of young love and courtship on the farm, of rackets at dances and cows in wells. All the endings are happy.

But once again good humour and good intentions don't make novels. A *Giant Among Friends* is embarrassingly naive and awkwardly written. The poorly handled dialogue and worse dialect, the numerous typos, and the remarkable squalls of commas make any pleasures here except perverse ones impossible. (For example: "One of the major climatic factors that affected the Island, wY the wind." Same page: "The only part visually distinguishable, were her red cheeks and brown hair cascading over her shoulder, as a plaid scarf dangled in the wind, beneath her hat.") Enough of this. 0

Letters to the Editor

MATRIARCHAL REBUKE

Sic
Gary Draper's review of *Sara Jeannette Duncan: Novelist of Empire* (August-September) would be a useful case study for classes in patriarchal tonalities if we didn't already have plenty, far too many, abundance beyond our most far-fetched imaginings. Simply by using the trivializing term "authoress" in the headline of the review (and if Draper didn't write the head another patriarch

did), referring to the "lady" and then presenting us with a complacent but entirely unsupported value judgement about her work phrased in terms of her person (i.e., "San Jeannette Duncan is a very good tiler... Sk is not a great writer") Draper taps into the vast murky sea of patronizing assumptions about women writers so well documented by Mary Ellmann and scores of others in the past decade. The irony of it all is that Draper works against his own purpose, which, as it turns out in the very last sentence of the review, is to recommend the book as an incentive to read more of Duncan's work.

I suggest that *Books in Canada* adopt a long overdue policy of attending to writers' often unconscious sexism and racism as well as to their adherence to a consistent "style". Perhaps Ellmann's *Thinking About Women* should be used as a manual.

Barbara Halpern Martineau
Toronto

The Editor replies: Great balls of patriarchal fire! Wonder Lady herself would be hard put to find a trace of sexism in the body of Mr. Draper's review. The only personal point he makes about Sara Jeannette Duncan, apart from calling her a lady, is to say she was born in Brantford, Ont. His judgement about her being a good tiler rather than a great one is positively androgynous ink critical neutrality. As for the term "authoress", which we used quite deliberately, Ms. Martineau may kve a point if she is talking about 1980. Margaret Atwood, say, is clearly an author. But in the context of her time and place, Ms. Duncan was equally clearly an authoress. She was not, after all, George Eliot. Finally, while we concede unconscious sexism may sometimes creep into this magazine, and should be deplored when it does, we insist that Ms. Martineau substantiate her all-too-glib charge about racism — conscious or unconscious.

MCCLELLAND AND CLIO

Sir:

While I would not like to insinuate myself into the bitterness latent in Jack McClelland's letter (October) or the jealousy k alleges in C. P. Stacey's review of Pierre Berton's version of the War of 1812, McClelland raises some points that should be addressed.

To suggest that history should not be reserved for historians is to suggest that appendectomies should not k reserved for surgeons. This said, it is necessary to explain why it is left to amateurs of varying degrees of competence to popularize history for tk layman. Tk historians must accept some of the blame. Historians have an unfortunate tendency to discourage stylistic flair in the writings of their fellows, which produces technically solid but very heavy reading. In spite of thii, some gifted historians have managed to produce writings that deserve to k rated as literature without the sacrifice of technical accuracy. What historians cannot overcome is the publishing industry. Historical works by obscure historians can never compete for publication with public figures like Pierre Berton, regardless of the merits their works contain. Historians may k partially to blame, but the dusty closet in which McClelland insists they have hidden the War of 1812 was the creation of publishers who prior self-selling book by popular authors. Historians should and do write history, but ii they cannot reach the Public because of factors beyond their control, they will continue to write For one another in a language and style they all understand.

P. M. Toner
Division of Humanities and Languages
University of New Brunswick
Saint John, N.B.

Sir:

It's oky by me ii Jack McClelland wants to go after *Books in Canada* and C. P. Stacey (Letters, October). But I'm bothered by hi rhetorical (I hope) question: "Did you invite a former Nazi to review *Sophie's Choice*?" And I'm hurt by his answer: "Probably."

I was that reviewer. To set the record straight, and possibly calm my friends who read, I am not now nor have I ever been . . . etc.

Douglas Hill
Port Kirwan, Nfld.

TEMPLETON AND CONNIE

Sir:

This is not a letter of complaint from a wounded author bloodied by a review of his book on your pages. On the contrary, I think that the review of my new novel, *The Third Temptation* (October), by I. M. Owen wY perceptive and astute — a conclusion almost inevitable inasmuch as, by and large, he praised the book.

My reason for writing is to try to nail to the mast some of the notions about me and my career as an evangelist. These notions are, as are many things today, in danger of becoming entrenched. Owen perpetuates them. His memory, he think, conjure.5 pictures in the press of me preaching in a white dinner jacket, and of my then wife, Connie, singing hymns in a tight-fitting evening dress with deep *décolletage*. He also remembers reading, k says, that Youth For Christ, an organization I once beaded, was fascist.

It is hardly a matter of cosmic importance but is me of those bits of information which gets into newspaper morgues and is taken as gospel by subsequent biographers or reviewers and is so

Shadowland

PETER STRAUB

Author of *GHOST STORY*

"It had been trying to come in,
Ordering him to let it enter,
And the terror of
what was about to happen
had jerked him from sleep.
The savage bird outside
had been speaking to him,
commanding him..."



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repeated. Perhaps in your pages it may be laid to rest.

Newspaper photographs have never shown me preaching in a white dinnerjacket simply because I have never owned one. Not did Connie ever wear (on the platform) an evening dress, much less a tight-fitting one with deep *décolletage*. This has often been asserted, most recently by Barbara Amiel in a piece on me in *Maclean's*. I sent a message to Amiel offering to contribute \$100 to her favorite charity for every photo she could turn up in the files of my former wife wearing a dress in any way *décolleté*. No response, of course, because, as not infrequently happens, she had her facts twisted. Moreover, not only was Youth for Christ not fascist, it was carefully apolitical. It was a fundamentalist Christian youth movement in which I was active until, having grown beyond it, I withdrew. It did some good things during the war years.

Charles Templeton
Toronto

IT WAS FUN.. .

Sir:

I agree with I. M. Owen's remarks about errors getting past a book publisher's editorial department (October). Nothing grates me more than factual boo-boos in an otherwise good book. Which reminds me, there is another mistake in Charles Templeton's *The Third Temptation*. The character Howard Rimmington quotes a snatch of song to young Coulter, a song Rimmington claims to be written by Noel Coward: "Birds do it, beer do it/Even educated fleas do it.. ." As far as I know, it was written by Cole Porter.

Sean Ppich
Saskatoon

... BUT JUST ONE ...

Sir:

As encouraged as I was to read Phil Milner's article on David Richards's work (October), I must point out on behalf of all the recluses east of Mont Real, that Newcastle, N.B., is not spelled New Castle.

Caroline Nagle
Ward Chipman Library
University of New Brunswick
Saint John, N.B.

... OF THOSE THINGS

Sir:

There is an error in one of the quotations — the first, actually — included in Russell Hunt's generous and perceptive review of *Deference to Authority* in your October issue. Where I wrote "native people", you printed "active people", which must have seriously misled your readers as to what I could possibly be thinking of. I wish prison inmates in this country were, indeed, active politically, and they do seem to be getting there, but the comment, had I made it, would have been premature.

Edgar Z. Friedenberg
Department of Education
Dalhousie University
Halifax

BROCK'S BATTLE CRY

Sir:

I have read with great interest Col. C. P. Stacey's critical review of Pierre Berton's latest work, *The Invasion of Canada, 1812-13* (August-September). I am, however, deeply distressed to learn that after so much research Pierre Berton did not succeed in bringing to the attention of the reader: the one version of Brock's last words, which alone, to the mind of the we lover of Brockiana,

has the ring of conviction. These words may be found recorded in Mrs. Catharina V.R. Bonney's two-volume set entitled *A Legacy of Historical Gleanings* (Albany, 1875, v. 1, p. 250). They are: "Here is a breast for your Yankee balls, shoot me if you can."

For greater emphasis it may be added that, according to the same source, General Brock "laid his hand on his breast", while speaking these words.

Ludwig Kosche
Ottawa

CanWit No. 58

*Joe and Bill went up the Hill
To read the constitution.
While Joe cried "Struth!" and hit the roof,
Bill gave it absolution.*

READERS ARE INVITED to adapt a traditional nursery rhyme to reflect any aspect of Canada's constitutional crisis. The winner will receive \$25. Address: CanWit No. 58, Books in Canada, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4. The deadline is Jan. 1, 1981.

RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 56

OUR QUEST FOR a set of commandments for CanLit on the Exodus model produced a number of entries that dealt with the sins of society at large but surprisingly few that

offered moral guidance to the literary community in particular. An exception came from Tony Thompson of Kingston, Ont., who receives \$25 for these edicts from the Great Writer in the Sky:

- Thou shalt read no other books save those writ by Canadians.
- Thou shalt not worship idols, especially not the Stone Angel.
- Thou shalt not take the name of Mordecai in vain, lest he afflict you with horsemen and fangs.
- Remember the Land, and keep it a holy Grove with Snow.
- Honour thy Father and thy Mother and thy Uncle Antoine.
- Thou shalt not kill whales, lest Farley Mowat spurn thee.
- Thou shalt not commit adultery, lest thou meetest the Edible Woman.
- Thou shalt not steal thy neighbour's plots.
- Thou shalt not bear false witness to past events, lest thou too meetest the fate that befell John George Diefenbaker.
- Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's property, lest, having waged war on him, thou findest thyself in yet another best seller by Pierre Berton.

Honourable mention:

- We are the Canada Council, who brought thee out of bondage to spontaneous creativity.
- Thou shalt bring no other Rudy Wiebes before us.
- Thou shalt not make unto thee an Edgar Friedenberg image of anything that is in Ottawa above.

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- Thou shalt not take the name of P.E. Trudeau's writings in vain.
- Remember the Pierre Berton days, to keep them wholely.
- Honour Robertson Davies and Margaret Atwood, that the days of literary exports may be long upon this land.
- Thou shalt not commit Aislinary.
- Thou shalt not covet Farley Mowat's tents nor sheds, nor his ox nor his ass.

— Laura A. Kropp
Ottawa

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

Final Things, by Richard Wright, Macmillan. A masterpiece in the word's original sense, Wright's seemingly effortless fourth novel — about a failed, alcoholic journalist in the last few days of his life — will depress just about everyone. But that is clearly what he intends.

NON-FICTION

The Annesley Drawings, edited by Barry Callaghan. Exile Editions. A small-format portfolio of 60 sketches by David Annesley, an uncannily gifted caricaturist who drowned, at age 33, in 1977. Callaghan's introduction is a touching portrait of the artist as an awkward young man.

POETRY

The Elements, by Tom Marshall. Oberon Press. An impressive selection from Marshall's four previous books organized around the classical elements — fire, water, earth, and air — and primarily concerned with the enigmas of history and guilt.

CLASSIFIED

Classified rates: \$6 per line (40 characters to the line). Deadline: first of the month for issue dated following month. Address: Books in Canada Classified, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4. Phone: (416) 363-5426.

THE COOKBOOK of the Mennonites. \$6. D.K. Smdh. 17 Front, Gen. Del., Toronto, Ont.

OLD AND RARE BOOKS. Canadian 6 cent postage. Heritage Books, 3438 6 St. S.W., Calgary, Alberta. T2S 2M4.

OUT OF PRINT BOOKS. Canadian, historical and literary. Catalogues free on request. Huronia-Canadiana Books, Box 665. Alliston, Ont. L0M 1A0.

34 Books in Canada. December. 1980

Books received

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

Abigail McColl and the Mountain Turtle, by Donna Bellavance, Emanation Press.
 The Air Farce Book, by Roger Abbott et al., Collins.
 Alter Sublime, by Christopher Dawdney, Coach House.
 As Far As the Sea Can Eye, by George Swede, York Publishing.
 Atlantic Spectrum '81, edited by Kathie Swenson, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.
 Basic Lessons in English Grammar, by W. F. Westcott, Vesta Publications.
 Beginnings: A Book for Widows, by Betty Jane Wylie, M & S.
 A Bicycle Ride, by Muriel and Ginette Grenier, Academic Press Canada.
 Big Daddy, by Timothy J. Colton, U of T Press.
 Breaking and Entering, by Len Gasparini, Mosaic Press/Valley Editions.
 The Brock Bibliography of Published Canadian Plays in English 1766-1978, edited by Anton Wagner, Playwrights Press.
 Bushed, by Ken Stange, York Publishing.
 Ca Dao Vietnam, edited and translated by John Bolaban, Mosaic Press/Valley Editions.
 Canadian Bread Book, by Janice Murray Gill, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
 The Canadian Novel, Vol. III: Beginnings, edited by John Moss, NC Press.
 The Case of the Missing Heirloom, by George Swede, Three Trees Press.
 Caterbes and Bumblepillars, by Glenn Clever, Borealis Press.
 Catholics and Canadian Socialism, by Gregory Baum, James Lorimer.
 A Celebration of Christmas, edited by Gillian Cooke, Nelson/Canada.
 Champions, by Michael Magee and Pat Bayes, Nelson/Canada.
 Christmas, by Muriel and Ginette Grenier, Academic Press Canada.
 Claude Ryan: A Biography, by Aurelien Leclerc, translated by Colleen Kutz, NC Press.
 The Collected Works of Lionel Douglas, Emanation Press.
 Comma Is Born, by Muriel and Ginette Grenier, Academic Press Canada.
 Comma's First Day at School, by Muriel and Ginette Grenier, Academic Press Canada.
 Common Ground, edited by Marilyn Berge et al., Press Gang.
 Common Sense Revolution, by Allan Elliot, Dreadnaught.
 The Complete Family Book of Nutrition and Meal Planning, by W. Harding LeRiche, Methuen.
 The Coventry Chain: Indian Ceremonial and Trade Silver, by N. Joye Fredericksen and Sandra Gibb, National Museum of Canada.
 A Cure for Comma, by Muriel and Ginette Grenier, Academic Press Canada.
 Daddy's Girl, by Charlotte Vale Allen, M & S.
 The Desperate People, by Farley Mowat, Seal Books.
 Desperate Siege: The Battle of Hong Kong, by Ted Ferguson, Doubleday.
 Down to Earth: Canadian Poets at Work, by Judy Thompson Ross, David Allen & Nina Czegledy-Nagy, Nelson/Canada.
 The Duncan Campbell Scott Symposium, edited by K. P. Sich, University of Ottawa Press.
 Energy and Industry, by Barry Beale, James Lorimer.
 The Enigma of Stonehenge, by John Fowles and Barry Brookoff, Collins.
 Freestyle Skiing, by Randy Wieman, Personal Library.
 From a Coastal Kitchen, by Lee Reid, Hancock House.
 From the Clothesline, by Robert Francis Brown, York Publishing.
 Futurism and Its Place in the Development of Modern Poetry, by Zbigniew Folejewski, University of Ottawa Press.
 A Garden of Love, by Muriel and Ginette Grenier, Academic Press Canada.
 Giants From the Sky, by Judy Stubbs, Borealis Press.
 Halloween, by Muriel and Ginette Grenier, Academic Press Canada.
 The Harrowsmith Reader Volume II, edited by James Lawrence, Camden House.
 Holidays, by Muriel and Ginette Grenier, Academic Press Canada.
 How Parliament Works, by John Bejermi, Borealis Press.
 How to Stop Inflation Without Pain, by Lawrence Lewin, published by the author.
 Images: Contemporary Canadian Realism, selected by Marc and Louise Lipman, Lester & Orpen Dennys.
 The Italians of Montreal, by Bruno Ramirez and Michael Del Balco, Les Editions Courant.
 Jesus, by John, by Paul B. Smith, G.R. Welch.
 The Kidnapping of the President, by Charles Templeton, Seal Books.
 Kids' Plays: Six Canadian Plays for Children, Playwrights Press.
 The Language of Canadian Politics, by John McMenemy, Wiley.
 Larry Richards: Works 1977-1980, Tech-Press.
 The League for Social Reconstruction, by Michiel Horn, U of T Press.

The League of Canadian Poets, published by The League of Canadian Poets.
 A Liberation Album, by David Kaufman and Michiel Horn, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
 Literary Friends, by Wilfrid Eggleston, Borealis Press.
 Long Way From Home, by Myra Kostach, James Lorimer.
 Mr. Davin, M.P., by C. B. Koester, Western Producer Prairie Books.
 Mobility, Elites, and Education in French Society of the Second Empire, by Patrick J. Harrigan, Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
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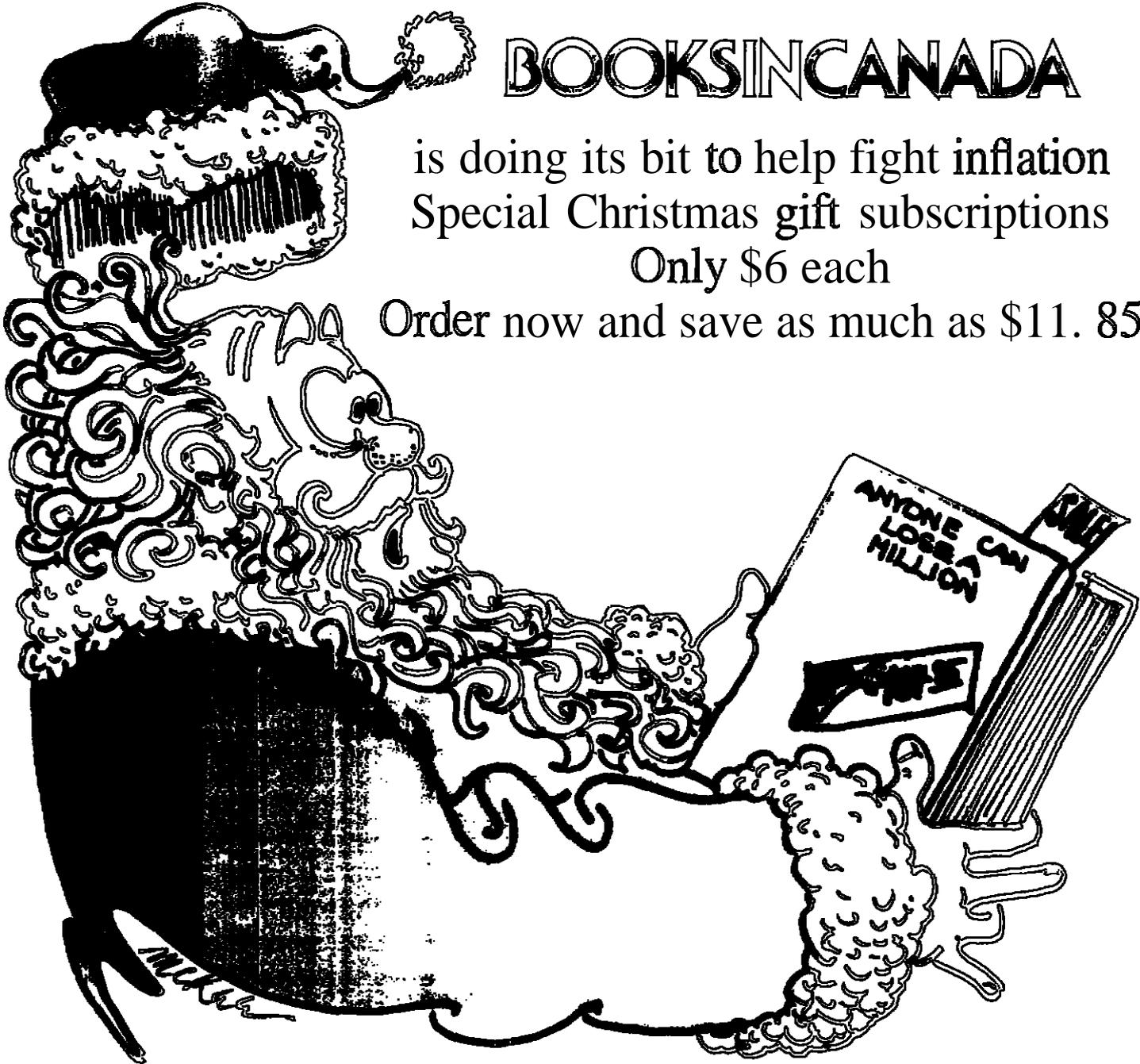
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