

How last May's  
federal election  
strikes Camp

Jack Hodgins wonders  
why foreigners can't  
buy Canadian books

Hugh Hood's puckish  
poke at hockey  
knights in Canada

# BOOKS IN CANADA



Anatomy  
of a  
libel action:  
DID THE  
KGB PENETRATE  
THE RCMP?

# BOOKS IN CANADA

## FEATURES

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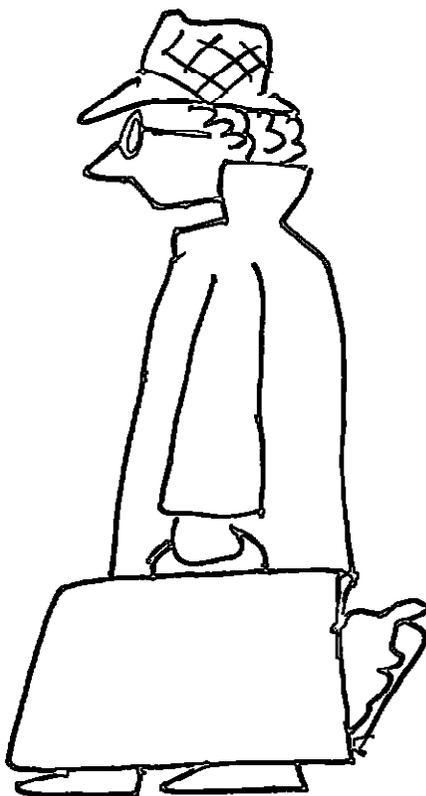
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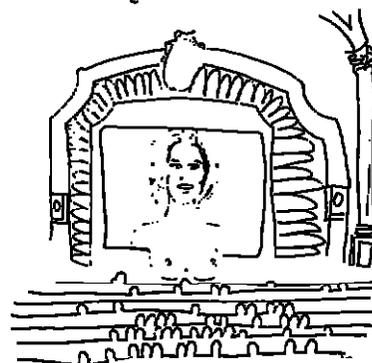
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# SUIT AND DAGGER

Was fiction truth in Ian Adams's 1977 novel? A Toronto libel action raises some penetrating questions about the RCMP — and about suppression of free speech in Cana'da

by Gerard McNeil

THE MOST INTRIGUING espionage story in Canada since Igor Gouzenko fled the Soviet embassy is seeping out of a libel action in Toronto. At its core are a trio of related questions that, while not the issue of the action, compel attention: Did a Soviet KGB agent run the RCMP Security Service counter-intelligence unit until he was discovered by the CIA? Was this spy turned into a CIA agent, again without RCMP knowledge? And is this the same agent that an American journalist has hinted was the Canadian "fifth man" in the notorious spy ring involving Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean, Kim Philby, and the recently unmasked — and unknighthed — Anthony Blunt?

The \$2.2 million libel suit concerns the book *S, Portrait of a Spy* by Toronto novelist Ian Adams, published by Gage in 1977. In the novel, the fictional S retired to Australia but is returned to Ottawa and given "the Belfast treatment" in a fruitless attempt to get him to reveal his true identity.

Adams and Gage are being sued by Leslie James Bennett, who left the RCMP Security Service in 1972 after heading the SS counter-espionage unit for many years and went to Australia. Bennett admits his loyalty was questioned before he left but denies he was ever a double agent and says in effect that Adams has accused him of treason by casting S in his image.

Although *S, Portrait of a Spy* sold 15,000 copies in 40 days (including 3,100 copies in French), the book has virtually been suppressed since the action began. About 900 copies are still locked in Gage's warehouse. A paperback publisher bid 512,000 and 10 per cent royalties — both high figures — but withdrew when Gage said the publisher would have to assume some of the liability should Bennett win. Negotiations for movie rights also collapsed after the lawsuit was launched.

Adams, a former magazine journalist, was born a minister's son in the Belgian Congo 42 years ago. His career included a distinguished stint at *Maclean's* in the mid-1960s during which he visited Vietnam and produced an award-winning feature series on the war. His second spy novel, *End Game in Paris*, was published by Doubleday last fall (see *Books in Canada*, October). Earlier he wrote a book on poverty in Canada. His books have a hard edge that make the comfortable nervous. Reviewers have tended to concentrate on the literary merits rather than on what is being said. However, what Adams is saying would be considered gripping in any other Western country:

"In 25 years the RCMP has caught only one illegal — one real spy." an Adams character says in *S*. "Not a bell of a lot to brag about, is it?" This is a factual statement.

Other characters in *S* include one Hazelton, a Toronto tabloid publisher — "tits and crime" — who as a Canadian newspaper correspondent in Moscow spirited the wife of a KGB colonel to Beirut, whence she was taken to Canada and given asylum. This was done with S's aid but S's object was to plant a KGB agent,

masquerading as a legitimate defector, in Washington.

This parallels a sensational 1950s case in which Peter Worthington, now editor-in-chief of the *Toronto Sun*, a tabloid newspaper, spirited Olga Farmakovsky, wife of a Soviet military intelligence colonel, from Moscow to Beirut and, with Bennett's aid, got her asylum in Canada. She still lives in Toronto.

Bennett in his lawsuit says Hazelton is recognizable as Worthington. In fact, in a six-day discovery examination last February in which both Adams and Bennett took the stand, just about every character in the book was linked to someone real: a

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**Like the fictional S, Bennett met Philby in the late 1940s when they served together in Istanbul, but he says he didn't know Philby well.**

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CIA agent in Ottawa who choked to death in his kitchen one morning; an arms dealer who died in Montreal; a solicitor-general who resembled Jean-Pierre Goyer; and so on.

The Security Service gave Bennett a medical disability pension on July 28, 1972, within five months after grilling him suddenly about his loyalty. He had joined the SS in 1954 after 14 years with British intelligence. A year later the suspicions that led to his departure surfaced in a *Toronto Star* story by the late Tom Hazlitt, one of the persons to whom S was dedicated by Adams. Hazlitt flew to Johannesburg to interview Bennett, then ran his denial that he had been a spy. Bennett also was questioned by Barbara Frum on CBC-Radio's *As It Happens*.

Solicitor-General Francis Fox said at the time that no evidence had been produced that Bennett had been anything other than a loyal civil servant. The story faded, with no further explanation as to why Bennett was out on his ear without ceremony a few months after the grilling with a \$7,000-a-year pension and no prospects.

The story resurfaced in November, 1977, with the publication of *S, Portrait of a Spy*. It had barely hit the book stores when Worthington identified S as Bennett in a *Sun* story that quickly gave the book notoriety. It began selling heavily.

At the same time, Worthington got in touch with Bennett to tell him he might have a case for libel. Worthington suggested that Bennett hire prominent Toronto lawyer Julian Porter, who represented Worthington in another case. Worthington apparently didn't tell Bennett that he himself had identified Bennett as S on the day the book was published, touching off a storm of publicity that otherwise might not have occurred. For Worthington was perhaps the only newspaperman alive who could have made this connection.

The result was the libel suit in which Bennett denied that he was

"the Canadian Philby" — one of the mysterious insiders whose tips may have led Burgess and Maclean to flee to Moscow in the 1950s. Like the fictional S, Bennett met Philby in the late 1940s when they served together in Istanbul, but he says he didn't know Philby well.

The defendants are not basing their case on the traditional libel defences of truth or fair comment. They argue primarily that the characters are fictional, and secondarily that Bennett was "under a cloud" when he left Canada and had no reputation to lose.

The discovery examination was a preliminary to a jury trial that, unless the suit is settled otherwise (and there are no signs yet it will be), will go before the Ontario Supreme Court this year. The actual examination was held in camera and was thus closed to reporters, but the transcript itself is available and can be quoted in news stories. Despite its fascinating focus, it was virtually ignored by the Toronto media. (As we went to press, the *Globe and Mail* published a belated report on the testimony without mentioning Adams, his novel, or the alleged libel.) Yet the transcript reads like an exciting book, the subject has national and international significance, and the characters are probably as interesting a crowd as any parcel of fact or fiction produced in the 1970s.

One purpose of a discovery examination is to separate serious from spurious litigants by giving everyone a clear picture of what they can expect — high legal costs and a possible period on the witness stand.

To continue the suit, Bennett was required in June to put up \$10,000 in cash in case he loses. He had to mortgage his Australian home to do this. It was done under court order after Paul Copeland, Adam's lawyer, estimated that his bill, if there is a trial, will be \$58,000. Copeland even sought to find out whether the survivor rights to Bennett's pension can be assigned to pay legal bills. They can't be. All this may sound harsh, but it is a standard defence move to test the will of the plaintiff.

Gage has libel insurance of \$500,000. Adams has had to dip into his own pocket to pay Copeland more than \$3,000, and he may face a jail term if the trial takes place. He refused during questioning last February to divulge his RCMP sources. They themselves could be jailed under the RCMP Act or the Official Secrets Act for talking to him. And Potter, Bennett's lawyer, has moved to have him required to answer. If he doesn't, he could be jailed for contempt of court.

This suit could also test the Official Secrets Act if the defence calls RCMP witnesses to the stand, as it says it will. Copeland is regarded in official Ottawa as a "radical" lawyer, and the RCMP may be reluctant to answer his questions even if part of the trial has to be held behind closed doors to satisfy the secrets act. Bennett



Ian Adams

himself refused to reply to some questions because he is still bound by not only the Canadian but also the British secrets acts.

Even the lawyers are unusually interesting in this case. Copeland could have been the model for the star in *And Justice For AU*. The "system" doesn't lie him, and a couple of years ago federal officials gave reporters in Ottawa and Montreal copies of his correspondence with federal prisoners. Official Ottawa was saying, then that outsiders were plotting with prisoners to overthrow the penal system. This was patent nonsense, given the content of the letters. But it does reflect the official view of Copeland. Potter on the other hand is an establishment man who last year represented pin-striped defendants in the dredging case. He has acted for McClelland & Stewart and he is a stalwart of the Conservative party. Both are shrewd, skillful lawyers, perhaps the only thing they have in common.

Copeland was quick in examination to make the Porter-Worthington connection. Bennett testified that he was upset at the linking of his name to that of S but he had to admit that the first such link was made not by Adams but by Worthington in the *Sun*:

"I take it you have not commenced legal action against either the *Toronto Sun* or Worthington?" Copeland asked.

"Right," replied Bennett.

Had Bennett been aware that he was hiring Worthington's lawyer?

"Now, yes," the transcript records Bennett as replying.

"Is anyone supporting you financially?"

"Well, my fiancée, Mrs. Davidson."

"Anyone else?"

"NO."

These questions evidently were aimed at making sure that the suit wasn't being financed by Worthington.

The novel was dedicated to T. H. (Hazlitt), D. V. (who Porter suggested might be Vaughan MacKenzie, an ex-Mountie Bennett described as an alcoholic nursing "venom" towards the force), and L. J. B., who everyone assumed must be Bennett. But Adams said he had known Bennett, a man he had never met or talked to, only as Jim Bennett and the L. J. B. in the dedication actually was Louise Jenou Blais, who he described as a personal friend and the model for another character.

This led naturally to another question: Was Bennett the Jim Bennett to whom John le Carré dedicated his spy novel *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*? Bennett said he didn't know, never having met le Carré. Circles within circles.

Copeland also focused on Bennett's relationship with Worthington and other reporters. Bennett confirmed that he helped Worthington spirit Olga out of Moscow after satisfying superiors that Olga was not a KGB plant. He says he also leaked a spy story to Worthington in 1969 to expose the activities of a Soviet journalist and a Soviet diplomat in Canada. He indicated that other SS men "used" other reporters in this way, and in turn were given information by the reporters. Most reporters won't touch the Security Service with a 10-foot pole because its tips can't be checked or corroborated. They can't even be attributed to the RCMP. Furthermore, the price of such tips often is a request by the RCMP to do something in return. The net effect is to compromise the reporter.

Despite the Official Secrets Act, Bennett did give more information about the Security Service than it has ever given about itself, even to members of Parliament. He testified that when he joined it had about 75 men and when he left in 1972 it had 400 or 500. The RCMP has always refused to tell parliamentary committees how many Mounties were in the Security Service. Adam's 1977 estimate of 1,800 was taken as gospel in Ottawa and has been the unofficial figure.

Bennett also testified that when he joined the RCMP in 1954 Operation Featherbed, growing out of the Gouzenko case nine years before, was already under way. It was still going when he left the counter-espionage unit in 1970, with four men assigned to it.

Leaks about Featherbed in the last couple of years have suggested that it was a compilation of files on Pierre Elliott Trudeau and associates who have risen to high government positions de-

spite backgrounds that ordinarily would have excluded them as security risks. Bennett refused to say what Featherbed is all about. But he confirmed that he had described as "laughable" a report that it included an investigation of Trudeau. He denied an untrue Conservative MP Tom Cossitt's allegation that he was allowed to

**It was Bennett who established a procedure known as "positive vetting" to check periodically those with high security clearances. . . . Bennett himself was not vetted until October, 1971.**

resign on condition that he not reveal the content of the Featherbed file. And he denied Worthington's contention in the Sun that his interrogation was halted from on high when he began to get into Featherbed.

(An RCMP character in S says the prime minister told his solicitor-general to shred the Featherbed file but the solicitor-general hung on to a copy to blackmail the prime minister. Bennett alleges that Trudeau is identifiable as the prime minister in S and Jean-Pierre Goyer as the solicitor-general.)

Bennett's RCMP career ended abruptly when he came to work on March 13, 1972, and was called to the office of John Starnes, then director-general of the SS. Starnes told him, according to Bennett, that his loyalty was in question. Bennett was then, by his own account, taken to a "safe house" — an apartment unassociated with the RCMP and therefore unlikely to be bugged — and grilled during working hours for four days by Assistant Commissioner Murray Sexsmith, Starnes's deputy, and a Staff Sgt. MacEwan. Bennett said the interrogation placed him in "limbo." He didn't work again for the RCMP, and within a month he began assembling the papers needed for a medical discharge, telling RCMP doctors he was "burned out."

He left the force in 1972 without prospects. His marriage had collapsed earlier that summer, and his wife and two children had gone to live in Melbourne, Australia, 2,000 miles away from the Perth, Australia, suburb where he now lives. He had been the equivalent of a superintendent, earning \$22,000 a year and about to get a promotion, but the early retirement left him with an initial pension of \$7,000 a year.

Senior RCMP men normally retire in their early 50s and then prosper, taking police jobs with corporations or other governments. Bennett sent a number of letters to conferees in various countries, but nothing turned up. He went briefly to South Africa, then to Australia, seeking a climate compatible with his asthma and allergies. He can't work now, he says. He is 59 years old and supports his 82-year-old father and a 37-year-old woman disabled by leukemia. He also pays his wife \$50 a month for child support from a pension that has grown to \$10,000 a year. His only income is from the pension, his only asset the house he had to mortgage to continue the lawsuit.

In Adams's book, the CIA got wind of S when a Soviet agent named Nosenko defected in the 1960s. The CIA turned S into a CIA man. One Nosenko actually did defect to the U.S. in the 1960s, apparently giving a good deal of information about KGB agents in North America.

Bennett admits that it would have been almost impossible for the RCMP to investigate him without his knowledge when he was with the RCMP, he concedes that such an investigation might have started when he was transferred in 1970 from counter-intelligence to the Watcher Service, the RCMP bugging and surveillance unit. It was Bennett who established a procedure known as "positive vetting" to check periodically those with high security clearances because, as he put it, "circumstances change, people's ideas change, their financial circumstances change."

Bennett himself was not vetted until October, 1971, and it was then the RCMP learned of his family background. He had come from a coal-mining family in Wales in which an uncle had been a

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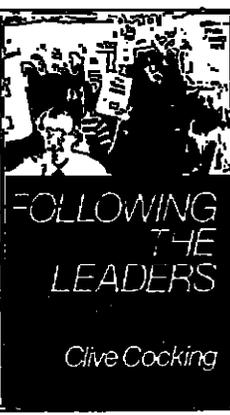
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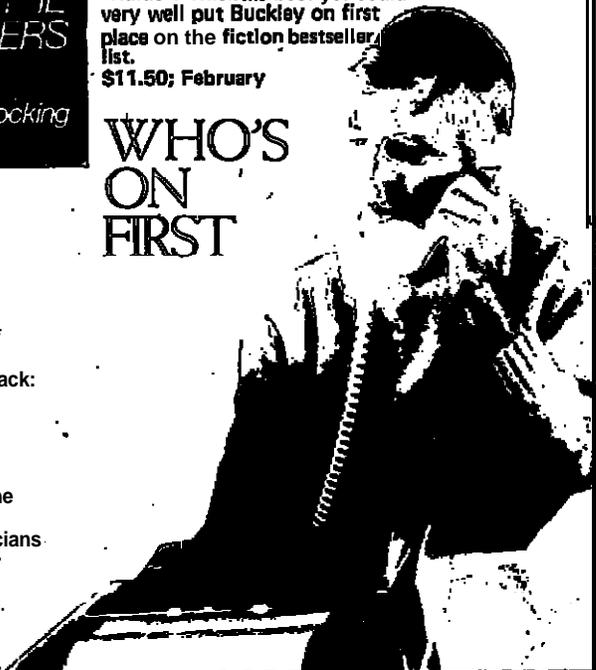


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**WHO'S ON FIRST**



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Communist and most members were solidly Labour Petty. Bennett said it hadn't occurred to him to tell the Mounties this earlier, because he had been with British intelligence for 14 years. But backgrounds more innocent than this have ruined careers in Canada, as more than one person could have told Bennett. Within five months, he was being grilled.

He says the interrogation focused on his family background and on eight "misfires" — cases that had gone sour — that occurred while he ran the RCMP's Russian Intelligence Desk from 1955 to 1970. He said a couple strongly resemble ones set out by Adams in *S*. One was the Worthington-Olga case. Another involved a cue against a Czech diplomat that was wrecked when *S* assigned an alcoholic, debt-ridden Mountie to it. According to the book, the Mountie was bought off and the Czech escaped. Bennett didn't go into the details of the real case.

Copeland asked Bennett about the Great Homosexual Hunt in Ottawa in the early 1960s. Dozens of careers were belted, unknown to their principals, by RCMP reports that they were homosexuals and thus security risks. Bennett says the RCMP simply supplied the reports and government departments made the decisions. But many department chiefs found it safer to blackball gay

employees rather than invite the possibility of becoming RCMP security risks themselves by refusing to do so.

The Bennett lawsuit is clearly a landmark test for free speech in Canada. Will it become impossible to publish even fiction about the Security Service? If the Adams book is suppressed, what will be the effect in general on fiction in this country? Will authors be forced to publish their books in the United States if they bear the least resemblance to reality? And, hardly an afterthought, will people like Bennett be given fairer treatment by government?

A CIA character in Adams's latest espionage novel, *End Game in Paris*, may help answer these questions. As he puts it: "You [Canadians] should be careful of how end whom you write about. Because it's a very strange country that you have chosen to live in: no constitution, no laws that guarantee freedom of speech, not even a law that guarantees freedom of assembly. I'll bet you didn't know that the Canadian criminal code was originally designed by a couple of English bureaucrats for India, but the Indians wouldn't have it, said it was too oppressive. So I guess it was just dumped on the next colony in line, Canada. Looks like nobody protested. Good luck." □

## ESSAY

# EXTERNAL DESPAIRS

From Japan to Norway, there's a growing interest abroad in CanLit. Now, if we could only send them some books . . .

by Jack Hodgins

FOR A WHILE it looked as if Canadian writers, in a secret assembly that had deliberately excluded me, had all decided to leave home. I didn't mind reading about Dorothy Livesay in Bulgaria. I was pleased to hear that Graeme Gibson had gone off to work in Scotland, and I was happy to learn that Alice Munro was touring the entire continent of Australia. But when I heard that Rudy Wiebe was in Hawaii, and that Andreas Schroeder was packing for Germany, and that Michael Ondaatje was planning another trip to Sri Lanka I started to feel left out of a secret evening. *You're a writer, eh?* I imagined people saying. *Well then, what are you doing in Canada? You can't be mush or somebody would have sent you somewhere else by now.* "Well," I'd answer with a knowing air, "someone has to stay home and wire."

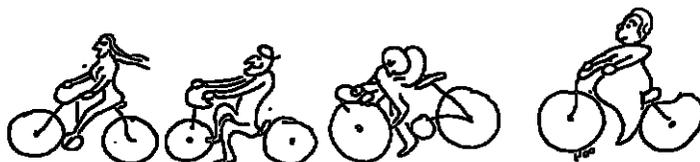
Don't misunderstand. When my country finally called I was willing enough to serve. "A phone call from External Affairs?" I panted after the secretary who'd dragged me out of the classroom. "Anywhere they want me to go I'll go! Anywhere!"

Anywhere turned out to be Japan. My assignment, should I accept it, was to attend an August conference in Tokyo, celebrating 50 years of diplomatic relations between our countries. Others would be going — geographers, historians, political scientists — but my job while there was to see if there was any interest in Canadian literature. And to whip some up if there wasn't.

The prospect of serving my country was so overwhelming that I left my passport behind on Vancouver Island, and held up the whole operation for 24 hours while I returned to get it. Nothing to worry about. I was assured by Ambassador Rankin at the embassy residence in Tokyo; a dumb mistake like that was no less than he'd expected when he heard they were sending him a writer. I promised I would remember to take off my shoes in doorways; I would learn how to conduct myself in a Japanese common bath; I would even (with effort) manage to manipulate chopsticks without spilling too much of the seaweed or the purple squid down my front.

During the three-day conference in the hill town of Hachioji, on the outskirts of Tokyo, surrounded by a million cicadas singing their hearts out in the steam-bath humidity, I listened to speaker after speaker from both countries tell us (in two languages) that we still don't know one another very well after all these years. While my beautiful young translator fanned herself in such a way that most of the moving air would benefit me (was I beginning to understand the real reason for all that literary travel?) I heard again and again that our two countries see one another only through the eyes of the United States, and that we must make an attempt to see one another more clearly.

One way to do this, of course, is by reading one another's literature. At that conference, and later in Tokyo, I spoke to



university students and professors, to high-school students and teachers, to a major Japanese novelist and to the editors of magazines published in both English and Japanese. The response was encouraging — not only, "Why didn't you mention *Anne of Green Gables* in your talk?" but also genuine interest in the writers I'd been praising: Alice Munro, Roch Carrier, Earle Birney, Margaret Laurence, Patrick Lane, and others. Even willingness to accept my claim that these writers could stand without shame beside the best from any country, including their own. Tokyo book stores, I could foresee, would be astounded by the number of people snatching Canadian books off their shelves. Courses in Canadian literature would spring up in every university. The Canada Council would be forced to add Japan to its reading tours program. Who knew what I may have started here? My confidence grew, in the days following the conference, when one man travelled all the way from Kyoto just to ask me a few questions about Stephen Leacock. It soared when a television reporter got all the way home to Hiroshima and phoned my hotel room in order to finish a conversation that had been interrupted. A lady engineering professor wanted to know what Phyllis Webb looked like. I was asked if Alice Munro could possibly be persuaded to visit Japan. Of course she could, I was tempted to say; with all the enthusiasm I'd encountered it wouldn't be long before the whole lot of us would be moving over. There are 120 million people in Japan, where the literacy rate is nearly 100 per cent. The Japanese are known as avid readers. Think of the royalty cheques I was helping to put into the pockets of our writers!

There was only one small hitch, I was soon to discover. When the stampede thundered down the streets and into the giant book stores of Tokyo, they wouldn't be able to find a Canadian book. There aren't any. Those few who have read us have been to Canada and done their buying here. Virtually no Canadian books in English or French are distributed in Japan. Only a few (Ken Adachi, Farley Mowat, James Houston) have been translated. Bernard Harder, a Canadian who teaches English at Japan's International Christian University, told me that when he decided it was time to bring a little

Canadian literature into his courses, he scoured every book store in the city and came up with nothing at all. He appealed to the embassy and was told that it wasn't their business to get into book-selling. He wrote directly to the major publishers in Canada and was told that

**When David Staines wanted to start a course in Canadian literature at Harvard a few years ago, it took so long to get the books that he came home to get them himself.**

they didn't have the right to distribute in Japan. When he finally got his books it was from a private organization. Now, with \$100 worth of books, he figures he's got the largest collection of Canadian writing in the whole of Japan.

One evening in the fashionable nightclub district of Rapponegy, I came across an enormous display window facing a busy intersection. In it, against a blown-up photo of autumn leaves, was a brightly-lit, giant advertisement for Harlequin Romances. I didn't even blush, I whipped out my camera and took a picture. After eight days in Tokyo with my eyes wide open this was the first evidence I'd encountered of a Canadian publisher attempting to reach the people I'd met. Perhaps this was the only Canadian publisher who believed it had a product worth selling to the Japanese.

Discouraged? You bet I was. When I left, the ambassador was perhaps relieved that I hadn't caused an international embarrassment. The embassy staff was grateful that I hadn't got lost or refused to attend any of the functions they'd arranged for me, and as far as External Affairs was concerned I'd done the job I'd been sent to do. But you can't send a writer to a country with 120 million readers unable to read his books and expect him not to ask questions when he gets home. For starters I wanted to know if this sort of situation exists in other countries. Is there some sort of complicated copyright

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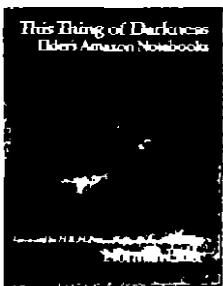


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Dr. Unger is Assistant Professor of Dermatology at The University of Toronto; Sidney Katz is a well-known Toronto journalist. \$12.95

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law stopping our work from getting abroad? Are our publishers lazy, or do they simply reflect a generally felt Canadian suspicion that we couldn't possibly have writers of our own who could be enjoyed and valued by foreigners?

Well, we can read in *Saturday Night* that an encouraging amount of our literature is being read with enthusiasm in Italy. And Josef Jurcovic of the Academic Relations Division of External Affairs says several American professors of literature in Germany, searching for something new and interesting to do, have begun Canadian literature courses in universities there. Yet the fact remains that others have found in too many other countries the same kind of thing that I found in Japan. When Alice Munro visited Australia as the prize-winning guest of the Australian government (a tour that cost her host a great deal of money and put demands on her time and energy comparable to the demands put on touring royalty), the only copies of her books available were a few paperbacks imported from England. Interviewers, who couldn't get their hands on her books, asked her to talk about women's legislation in Canada. When David Stainer wanted to start a course in Canadian literature at Harvard a few years ago, it took so long to get the books that he came home to get them himself. Was it worth the effort? "You get 50 students all excited about, say, Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel*, and when they go to any one of the 10 excellent book stores within a block or two of the campus, they can't find a Canadian book of any kind in order to pursue their interest." Later, on a lecture tour of Norway, Staines found the situation wasn't any different there. A student at the University of Oslo, who'd evidently read North American book reviews, wanted him to talk about Marian Engel. But there were no books by Marian Engel or any other Canadian writer in the book stores.

Nor is this situation likely to change very much, says Ann Wall, the president of House of Anansi Press and chairperson of the Association of Canadian Publishers, until a few things change at home first. While she has discovered in the course of her own work that it is very difficult to get American publishers interested in co-publishing serious fiction and poetry (on the grounds that it's

either too literary or too Canadian) and equally difficult to get review space in American journals, and while she knows that publishers in Britain are so interested in a book that hasn't gained acceptance in the U.S., she feels that one important reason so little has happened has something to do with the confusing division of responsibility at the government level. Areas of the book trade that are seen to be of a clearly commercial nature can expect to be looked after by Industry, Trade & Commerce, while areas considered to be of a "cultural or literary nature" are dependent on External Affairs.

To help the situation a little, the ACP has put together an information kit that they hope External Affairs will distribute abroad. External Affairs, of course, already buys and sends out collections of books to our embassies all over the world, and has included in it widely distributed Canadian bibliography booklet a list of the 12 book stores in Canada willing to sell books directly to customers in other countries. In October, however, Alla Saruchanian, of the Gorky Institute in the Moscow Academy of Arts and Sciences, visited Canada. Her institute translates foreign works into Russian, and her mission here, she told me was to find out what "cent works of Canadian fiction should be added to their program. Had she heard of us through External Affairs? No. "We just looked around the world," she said. "and discovered we'd neglected Canada."

Perhaps other countries will look around the world and notice us. Perhaps Naim Kattan's plan for Canada Council support for foreign translations of Canadian books will attract attention. In the meantime, it seems to me the solution to the problem is perfectly obvious. All those writers flitting off to other countries will just have to take crates of books along with them, as well as a portable stall to set up on street corners, a sandwich board, and a microphone with a set of speakers. A colourful jester's costume will help, so that people will know that they're looking at a fool. After all, that's more or less the way things were done in the Middle Ages. The way things were done, that is, before the invention of the printing press. □

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# Prince Valium comes to power

by J. L. Granatstein

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**Points of Departure**, by Dalton Camp, Deneau & Greenberg, 259 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 38879 020 1).

THE ELECTION campaign of 1979 was the longest and duller in living memory. Pierre Trudeau lurched through the interminable weeks of campaigning as if he had ceased caring about the result, as if the gloss (and several thicknesses of skin) had been removed by 11 years of power and the published inanities of his estranged wife. Joe Clark moved disjunctedly across the land, burbling "Thank you, thank you, thank you very much" from Comer Brook to Fort McMurray with the sincerity of a displaced Rotarian. And all the while his advisers prayed that he would make no gaffe and blow the victory they knew was theirs. Not an inspiring affair, not at all.

But that dreary campaign has produced in Dalton Camp's *Points of Departure* one of the best books on contemporary Canadian politics in a long, long time. This is an introspective, ruminative book, one based on brief periods with the Clark and Trudeau campaigns, but supplemented and given perspective by Camp's long service in the Tory backrooms. It is, despite some idiosyncratic flourishes (such as Camp's foolish decision to write in the third person à la Norman Mailer and to call himself "the varlet"), a beautifully written piece, one that tells us as much about the author as it does about two of the three leading campaigners.

Nor is this a book of ephemera that will drift away on the breeze. Camp is an historian *manqué*, the author of an incomplete autobiography whose first volume is unquestionably one of our best political memoirs. And in *Points of Departure*, he dips into his filing cabinets to produce some history, notably some memoranda based on quite incredible conversations with John Diefenbaker in the 1960s, and a series of letters from Joe Clark from the same period when he was president of the Progressive Conservative students' federation. The Dief memos, given Camp's later role in deposing the Chief, have to be read with a few grains of salt at the ready, but despite that caution they capture the bigotry and paranoia of the most unpleasant politician of our time. (And how fortunate Clark is to be freed of that incubus!)

The Clark letters, however, are revealing and important. The young Joe was in his

early 20s, a struggling graduate student who already showed much of the drive that would propel him into power. Clark was earnest, oh so earnest; he was intelligent and concerned, hardworking at his job; he was sympathetic to French Canadians; and he had enough sense to seem to support Camp's efforts to save his party while at the same time not being obvious at all in so doing. He was clearly a "wimp" even then, the kind of Mr. Gradgrind who goes through school without ever getting the girl, content to muddle after campus political office. And yet, flashes of wit and even self-deprecation show through the earnestness, as well as some good sense at a time when few of the Tory elders were showing any.

Those early traits are still present in Clark, as Camp's look at him during the 1979 campaign makes apparent. Camp can quote the media's private assessments of Clark as a nerd, a wimp, and a jerk, but he can be both tougher and shrewder than that:

[Clark's] new-found self-possession was the hard-earned profit of a fierce discipline. If he were still uncertain or afraid, and sensibly aware of the risks in him of spontaneity, he had learned to hide it. Instead, he had developed a knack of apparent spontaneity, injecting himself into situations for which he had carefully researched himself. All the while the media had been mocking him, they had also instructed him. He had not only matured in the campaign, but surmounted his inexperience and naïveté; only after he had become prime minister would others notice it.

Camp then goes on to suggest that the media contempt for Clark was less personal than generational, a feeling that no contemporary of theirs could ever be exceptional enough to aspire to national leadership. That too is an insight.

Joe Clark, I fear, may be the new Mackenzie King. The gracelessness, the lack of presence, the all-consuming ambition and earnestness smack of nothing so much as the old master in his first few years of power. We may have Clark with us for a long time, and *Points of Departure* will be essential reading on the making of the man.

Essential too on the unmaking of Trudeau. Camp is no admirer of the fallen leader, although he does own him respect for his intellect and abilities. He is simply devastating in his look at the Trudeau entourage during the last weeks of power — Coutts and Co. keeping up their spirits and placing foolish even-money bets on the

outcome, all the while watching the leader's drear performance with tears in their eyes. And he is harsh but not cruel on Trudeau himself — his spaced-out appearance, his lack of interest in the struggle or in the people around him. Many on the Liberal tour, Camp suggests, attributed this to "Margaret, a spectral presence of uncertain dimension, and her book, evoking a most vivid imagery, which bore heavily on the passenger up hunt. Yes, the varlet reckoned, we are doubtless travelling with a neutered man." Ouch.

Camp's splendid book on the emergence of Joe Clark (the new Prince Valium) is not as solemn as this book review paints it. He can be devastatingly witty — Vincent Massey was the "first Governor General to lack a peerage or royal connections, and the last to look as though he had them" — or sum up character in a line or two as in his appraisals of George Hees, Flora MacDonald, and particularly Peter Newman. He can also dissect issues with a phrase. Camp's analysis of the failure of Trudeau federalism is superb: "The government of Canada had lost its constituency; furthermore, it had lost public sympathy and support for the idea of federalism, and public endorsement would await only the national leader or the party promising less of it." That sums up the Trudeau decade perfectly.

This is a brilliant, funny book, a shrewd assessment of the present unhappy state of the nation. Read it, and laugh through the tears; and remember it when it's time to write the history of the 1970s and 1980s. □

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It's an  
ill wind . . .

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**Hurricane Hazel**, by Betty Kennedy, Macmillan, illustrated, 224 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7705 18214).

By ALLAN EDMONDS

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HAVING AT ONE time or another made most of the mistakes a writer can make, I confess that what follows is to some extent a case of the pot calling the kettle black. This book is about a hurricane named before feminists got to the U.S. Meteorological Service. More precisely, it is a book about how the last gasp of this weather disturbance spent itself in and around Toronto on Oct. 15 and 16, 1954.

Of necessity, such must be a book of reportage, at endeavour in which I claim some expertise. Any piece of reportage must, almost from the opening words, answer the reader's implicit question: "Why should I bother reading this?" So it's fair to pose the question about *Hurricane Hazel*.

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Is it newsy? Well, not exactly. But it might be classified as pop history, and we need as much of that as we can get. Besides, it was published a quarter-century after Hazel hit, so why not a book, given our obsession with anniversaries and the fact that a name as marketable as Betty Kennedy decided it was timely?

Is it necessary? That's carping, since need is not a factor in most Canadian publishing ventures.

Desirable? Well, if you were involved it might be, and Ms. Kennedy sometimes seems to have included the names of the entire population of Temnte extant at the time.

Is it exciting? Dramatic? Revealing? Now here's the rub. In some ways, reporter Kennedy is guilty of massive, mind-swamping over-achievement. The research is awesome. But sadly, Ms. Kennedy has committed the sin familiar to all reporters: she has fallen in love with every fact and quote and anecdote she so painstakingly gathered. So much in love that she couldn't bear to discard one tiny detail. She wants to share them all.

Hazel was a hurricane that wasn't quite because its winds had fallen marginally below the mandatory 73 mph by the time it reached Canada. And the book is a drama that isn't quite because it doesn't deal with what it's really all about for the first two chapters, or around 9,500 words.

Instead Ms. Kennedy offers a brief and slightly suspect, or at least simplistic, scientific explanation for hurricanes, and then sets about burying the reader in material designed to place dear old Hazel "in context." Thus the gentle obeisance to science tells us that hurricanes generally move west at first, "gradually curving to the right" as they enter temperate latitudes. I can just see the sailors' plot now: "Go up towards Greenland and tie the first right at St. Lucia, second left at the third lighthouse on the left past Havana, and to hell with the Coriolis effect."

Then the "context." So that we fully comprehend what Hazel was all about, Ms. Kennedy sets the scene of 1954 by telling us that singer Rosemary Clooney wouldn't sing a song called "C-monna My House" because it was suggestive; that in 1800 two men were horsewhipped in Temnte for "having indulged in trade as a private enterprise"; that Canada's first subway was opened in Temnte that April and was 4.6 miles long; that the French lost their battle against freedom fighters in Indochina; that top movies included *White Christmas*; that Leo Durocher's New York Giants won the world series; that the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed school segregation; that taxes on a four-door sedan were \$362 "as compared with \$61 in 1939." The woman even lists newspaper prices, family shopping budgets, and the cost of Persian Lamb coats (\$387, if you cared).

There's everything there including the kitchen sink, all meticulously researched; every precious, darling little fact in its place, and a place for every fact. Except that 10 Books in Canada, January, 1980

almost none of it has to do with hurricanes or the impact of tropical Hazel on a snowbelt city.

When we do reach the drama (in Chapter 5, about 16,000 words in) we begin to find the measure in human terms of what was, albeit locally, a major catastrophe. Again, Ms. Kennedy has done an awesome job of research. Anecdote upon anecdote, personal experience upon family recollection, she builds up a story of a night of horror and chaos for those involved. But where disasters are concerned, 'twas ever thus, and after a while one story of floodwater carrying off a house complete with occupants begins to sound much like another. It is for this reason that in fiction (or perhaps in

this case the CBC film-of-the-book), the writer focuses on one identifiable set of characters and their specific experience.

However worthy the intent, Ms. Kennedy leaves the reader exhausted by endlessly repetitive detail. For my part I felt like Dorothy Porker who, seeking information for a short *New Yorker* piece on snakes, was sent a truckload of reference books by the New York zoo. She then wrote: "I am in the position of knowing entirely too much about snakes."

Ms. Parker, however, did not commit the sin of telling her readers entirely too much about snakes. The dog is, after all, supposed to wag the tale. □

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## Rock and role in the outports

by Anne Roche

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"Tomorrow is school and I'm sick to the heart thinking about it", by Don Sawyer, Douglas & McIntyre, 205 pages, \$10.50 cloth (ISBN 0 88894228 1).

FOR HUNDREDS OF years, visitors to Newfoundland have written appalled accounts of the brutality of life there. And Newfoundlanders always feel irritated and betrayed as the newcomers, who lap up the warm comic kindness of the topside of Newfoundland life, are shocked by the elemental unromantic ruthlessness just underneath. This recent contribution to the literature will annoy Newfoundlanders, especially the inhabitants of the thinly disguised "Hoberly Cove" on the north-eastern coast of Newfoundland, but I can't imagine it having much impact on anyone else.

It is the autobiographical account of the culture shock suffered by a not very interesting but very well-meaning young draft-avoiding American employed by a desperate school board to teach in a Protestant outport near Gander. Though Don Sawyer's account never rises above the level of a competent report (his style irredeemably flattened by his degree in "Communication Arts"?), it must be said that it has the virtues of a good report.

He is painstakingly accurate about the difficult physical conditions of life in a Newfoundland outport - the weather, the isolation, the primitive sanitation, the dreadful doctors, the stupid absentee bureaucracy, the economic hopelessness. I can vouch for his accuracy, since I taught in a Newfoundland outport myself. His his-

tory, what there is of it, is sound, and manners and dialogue are well observed. His analysis of the deficiencies of the present system of education in Newfoundland is reasoned and non-judgemental, and it would be difficult to disagree with his criticisms or with his conclusion that the system needs radical change.

Newfoundland's educational system today is much like Ontario's 20 years ago, rigidly structured, with external exams, few vocational options, an accepted high drop-cut rate, an accepted elitism. It has lasted longer in Newfoundland because it is more complicatedly rooted in the fabric of society. Newfoundland was settled along religious lines. Hoberly Cove is an English Protestant outport, its decayed Methodism raided in this century by the more vigorous and exotic Salvation Army, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Pentecostals. I taught in an outport where everyone was Catholic and Irish.

This religious alignment still holds in outport Newfoundland, though not so completely as in my father's day when, on the Catholic Southern Shore, "we used to catch a Protestant and show him in a cage at the garden party on Lady Day" to people who had never seen one. It was one of the conditions of Confederation that Newfoundland should have a denominational system of education, funded by the government but run by the five major Church groups. This has now become two - Catholic and Integrated (Protestant), but Church influence is still strong.

In colonial Newfoundland, your religion was your culture and the style of the

Catholic outpost was and still is profoundly different from that of a Protestant outpost such as Hoberly Cove — more singing, dancing, drinking, and fighting in the former, and rather more world-mindedness, the backwash from a still vibrant universal religious culture. In both, religion allowed the transcendence of ills otherwise insupportable. Seen in the light of eternity even the Water street merchants lost some of their sting. The 20th century has assaulted Newfoundland in a haphazard, unselective way that actually makes life seem even more irrational than it did in the island's past. When this older, more serene pre-industrial religious world-view unified and harmonized existence, Newfoundland now, at the frayed and unbeautiful edge of North American civilization is a less c&r-ent and integrated community than it was as a neglected British outpost with functioning traditional assumptions.

It is the breakdown of the religious, hierarchical world-view that has made Newfoundland's educational system obsolete. Both Sawyer and the Hoberly Cove parents recognize this fact; though he can articulate what has happened and key cannot, they realize at once that they are on different sides of an unbridgeable divide. It is impossible that key should understand each other, and inevitable that he should consider them repressed and reactionary bigots, for he is as dogmatically committed to democracy and egalitarianism and sexual self-fulfilment as they are to believing in the

resurrection and keeping the Lord's Day holy. He is the first missionary of secular modernism to reach Hoberly Cove and he has the same certainty and zeal as the Protestant fundamentalist missionaries who converted it 50 years ago. And he has the same success. American, secular, anti-traditional, egalitarian, deracinated, self-absorbed, he instantly wins the teenagers, as uprooted and existentialist as himself. They already belonged to his world. The world of their parents is dead.

In the 1960s, the West adjusted its ideas about universal education to fit its now entirely secularized and democratized world view. To have standards, success and failure, is to admit the possibility of a vertical, hierarchical arrangement in society, and that now is heretical. But what to do with The Kids during those long compulsory years in school? Mr. Sawyer did nothing more radical than to get his class to vote on procedure, pass around a sex manual, and look at local headstones. Yet he has hit on the only pragmatic solution — teach The Kids how to make it into the New Class. It's not a matter of what you don't know but how you feel about your ignorance. Here's Sawyer defending his practice of passing everyone, even the illiterate: "How do people learn to compete effectively in a competitive society, by experiencing success or failure? Does a person who comes out of school feeling that he is capable and successful, or a person who leaves feeling he is a failure and incompe-

tent stand a better chance of making it in society?" It's an updated version of teaching the right accent.

Mr. Sawyer is obviously a nice man and a good teacher. It is to his credit that he rejected the hypocrisy of judging his pupils by standards whose justifying values have long since disappeared. Very successful in the operation of the New Class machinery himself (he's now a missionary to native teachers in Salmon Arm, B.C.) he is generous enough to want to share the gravy. □

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## The joy of missionary positions

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McClure: *Years of Challenge*, by Monroe Scott, Canec, 295 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919000 13 4).

By MARCY KAHAN

THE SECOND VOLUME of Munroe Scott's biography of Robert McClure provides a detailed account of the missionary doctor's post-war career. Scott has travelled extensively in pursuit of information about McClure's years in the Gaza Strip



OXFORD  
DICTIONARY OF  
QUOTATIONS  
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This is the first substantial revision of this *Dictionary* since its original publication in 1941. After nearly forty years not all the quotations then included pass the tests of familiarity, relevance or general appeal. This new edition retains about two-thirds of its predecessor, but the passages that have been dropped have made room for thousands of new quotations drawn from authors and works that have become well known since 1941 or that were under-represented in the original *Dictionary*.

19 211560X 928 pp 533.06

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

(1951-1953); in Ratlam, India (1954-1967); in Sarawak, among the former head-hunters of Borneo, (1972-1974); in Per" (1975-1976); St. Vincent (1976); and Zaire (1977). The result is a well-researched, frequently fascinating book about an extraordinary man.

Scott has done a good job of arranging his material into short, bright chapters full of memorable anecdotes, lie sets up a story well, and creates a lively gallery of minor characters: Mustapha the gentle avenger; the mistrustful Sheik with the broken kneecap; Manohar Nagpal, the resourceful Indian pacifist.

The narrative is at its weakest and most self-conscious in its attempts at lyrical description. Such passages read like an exotic horticultural catalogue:

It was twilight and a gentle breeze was beginning to stir the red flowers of the jacaranda trees. Blue and white morning glory were softly folding their petals for the night. The scent of oleander drifted across the garden. From three nearby minarets the muezzins were calling the faithful to prayer, their voices intertwining on the air like verbal vines.

These effusions of purple prose are fortunately rare. Most of the narrative contains a wealth of incidental information on medical procedures, Third World politics, and comparative religion. The reader is provided with noteworthy insights into the Arab and Indian temperaments; with information concerning vasectomies and more ingenious methods of birth control; with a brief treatise on the treatment of leprosy; with capsule histories of post-war political developments. At times, Scott's comprehensiveness becomes boring — I learned everything I never wanted to know about the organization of mission hospitals in Asia — but for the most part the facts are focused and humanized by the enigmatic character of McClure.

McClure is best described as a compassionate fanatic, a man who delighted in his capacity for Spartan selflessness. Despite physical hardship and bureaucratic muddles, McClure was exuberantly committed to his work in the operating rooms and laboratories of remote lands. As Scott makes clear, his attachment to medical science was almost mystical: "Religion, philosophy, and science met at the point of focus beneath the lens of the microscope." In India, he was known both as "Dada" McClure — variously translated as grandfather, boss, and bully — and as a *Karma Yogi*, "the embodiment of personal action devoid of personal desire."

Even more interesting than McClure's adventures abroad is his ambiguous relationship to his native country. As Scott observes, McClure's enthusiasm for Canada was bounded only by his own unwillingness to live here. His year of private practice in Toronto in 1949 was a disaster: Canadians were plagued with stomach ulcers, weight problems, and mental depression — the inevitable side-effects

of an unnecessarily affluent society. As the first lay moderator of the United Church, from 1968-1971, McClure informed his countrymen that affluence did not make for happiness; that Canadian doctors were overpaid and insufficiently dedicated; and that Church members were niggardly in their charitable contributions. Such pronouncements were not merely the work of a conscientious devil's advocate; McClure possessed a sincere appreciation of other cultures, a genuine acquaintance with other worlds:

He felt Canadians had a lot to learn from Confucian courtesy, from Japanese self-discipline, from Arab generosity, from Chinese resiliency, from Hindu forgiveness, from Moslem devotion, from Parsee honesty.

Scott begins this biography intending to eschew hagiography: "One can grow in deepening admiration for the man without being impeded by undue reverence." Yet he concludes the book with an account of a public tribute to McClure from members of the Ontario Legislature — whose flaccid encomiums are quoted at length. It is ironic to reflect that it was doubtless such vapid oratory that prompted McClure to retreat to tropical climes, with scalpel and microscope. □

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## To place the red knights in check

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**Nobody Said No: The Real Story About How the Mounties Always Gut Their Man**, by Jeff Sallot, James Lorimer & Co., 224 pages, \$15.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88862 286 4).

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By GERARD McNEIL

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THE MOST DANGEROUS thing you are likely to run into on a Canadian street is a policeman. Those armed strangers are virtually ungoverned by the laws they are sworn to uphold. In the last year they have probably accounted for more shooting deaths in Toronto than the rest of the city's population combined. But there have been no trials. There rarely are. The police are beginning to resemble the knights Barbara Tuchman wrote about in *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century*:

Chivalry, the dominant political idea of the ruling class, left as great a gap between ideal and practice as religion. The ideal was a vision of order maintained by the warrior class and formulated in the image of the Round Table, nature's perfect shape. King Arthur's knights adventured for the right against dragons, enchanters, and wicked men establishing order in a wild world. So their living counterparts were supposed, in theory, to serve as defenders of the Faith,

upholders of justice, champions of the oppressed. In practice, they were themselves the oppressors, and by the 14th century the violence and lawlessness of men of the sword had become a major agency of disorder. When the gap between ideal and real becomes too wide, the system breaks down. . . .

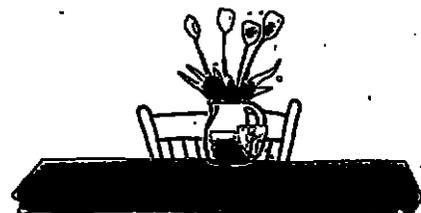
The RCMP are sworn to "uphold the right" but again, the gap between ideal and real appears. In this decade, the Mounties have burned a bum, stolen dynamite, issued an inflammatory communique attributed to terrorists, broken into homes and offices to steal private documents that had nothing to do with criminal behaviour, and made a shambles of the confidentiality provisions of the post office, income tax, and social insurance laws. They have become, as Jeff Sallot puts it, "a lawless police force that was beyond control."

Sallot, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1971 for his reporting of the Kent State incident in Ohio, drew most of the material in *Nobody Said No* from transcripts of evidence given a federal royal commission under Mr. Justice David C. McDonald. Since transferred by the *Toronto Globe and Mail* to Edmonton, Sallot covered the first year of the McDonald hearings for the paper. He gives the commission high marks for the job it has done but he warns that unless the commission comes down hard on the transgressors, it will be giving police a green light to continue breaking the law.

"The McDonald Commission could... become the first clear and authoritative voice in years to inform the RCMP that the rule of law still applies in Canada," Sallot says. If the RCMP view ("You people are too stupid to know what's good for you") prevails, the victim will be democracy in Canada. He suggests that the Mounties get back to "investigating real crimes, defined by our lawmakers."

His assessment of the RCMP scandals is that they are worse than Watergate in some ways. "The Watergate break-in was conducted by a small group of political loyalists. In Canada we had numerous break-ins and other illegal acts conducted by all levels of the national police force."

The debates on all this will take place in the 1980s. Politicians are convinced that the general public believes in the police, a conviction that can only lead to more bad law, and more subversion of good law. In this context, *Nobody Said No* has an educational function. It is required reading for anyone who hopes to continue living in a democracy. □



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## Jock and Jill on ice

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**Scoring: The Art of Hockey**, by Hugh Hood and Seymour Segal, Oberon Press, 59 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 313 7).

By **CHRISTOPHER HUME**

**THE TEAMS LINE UP** at the blue line, sticks, pens, and paint brushes at the ready. The puck is dropped and the match begins. **CanLit recuts Hockey Niiht in Canada and the game will never be the same.**

Writer Hugh Hood and painter Seymour Segal combine here **two on one** ("one" being the reader) and attempt to turn hockey into a metaphor for sex. The object of both is, of course, to score. The stick/penis lights to get the puck/sperm into the net/womb, so far so good. But things never being as simple as they seem we are left with the mystery of the goalie. "The goalie," the reader discovers, "enacts the most feminine role in all contact sport." Why? Because he's protecting the net/womb, naturally. But there's more:

The goalie's pads resemble the pads of fat on a woman's body which help to cradle and protect the womb. The goalie's movements are affected by the huge leg-guards in such a way as to make the legs move with a feminine gait. But the goalie is nevertheless a man . . . We are left with a paradox.

That's not all we're left with. The overwhelming question remains unanswered (perhaps because it was never asked in the first place). Namely, "Which came first, the penis or the puck?" In at least one case — my own — there is absolutely no doubt; but then, I don't play hockey. Hood's answer is a little more hesitant:

We guess that the penis came first, and continues to come first in the sense that it directs the occasions of fecundity. If it — or something like it — doesn't go in, no goal, no baby.

Does this mean it's incestuous to score on your own team? Has anyone yet considered the implications of the netminder who just recently scored a goal, the first in NHL history? And what about rebounds?

The purpose of Hood's text is to prepare the reader for a series of 18 paintings by Montreal artist Seymour Segal. Like Hood, Segal has at times been a dedicated amateur hockey player and sportsman. In fact the two met during a game of touch football back in 1965. Hood has been an admirer and champion of Segal's work ever since. And surely anyone who plays hockey add paints can't be all bad? No, but his paintings can be, and indeed are.

Segal's hockey is a ritual enacted in the

recesses of the deepest and darkest dreams. Figures float weightless and lifeless absorbed in a competition so weird and ambiguous that only the subconscious can keep score. Segal's canvases have an undeniable ability to disturb but finally end up trapped in their own imagery. The thought of a goalie playing with leg pads and exposed genitals would make most men wince. That sort of contact is agony, pure and simple. In another painting the goalie, still wearing mask and pads, attempts love-making with a female figure dressed in skates. How awkward, and really, how ridiculous. Somewhere between the dream (or nightmare) and the reality the images have lost any potency. We can perhaps glimpse what the artist originally had in mind and ate all the more aware, therefore, of how he has failed.

And so the game finishes, 59 pages later, the reader having been thoroughly trounced. Oh well, there's always golf. □

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## Lonely walks and short stops

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**79: Best Canadian Stories**, edited by Clark Blaise and John Metcalf, Oberon Press, 139 pages, \$15 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 314 4) and \$6.95 paper, (ISBN 0 88750 315 2).

**Great Canadian Sports Stories**, edited by George Bowering, Oberon Press, 147 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 319 5) and \$5.95 paper (ISBN 088750 320 9).

By **BARRY DICKIE**

**EDITORS BLAISE and Metcalf encountered the "usual problem" when selecting 10 winners for this year's annual Best Canadian stories: too many of me entries deserved to win. Well, I don't know. For the most part, their book does qualify 1979 as a good year for the short story. "The Van" by Mike Mason is a powerful tale about going nowhere; a brief, lonely walk through the skull of that stone-faced punk whose eyes you always avoid. Mason's language is crude and elegant; his is the strongest and most original prose in the book.**

Another story with strong possibilities is Shirley Mann Gibson's "Stone-Cutter". It's a young girl's account of discovering the depths of her father's cruelty. Unfortunately, the story is marred by an awkward ending: the child narrator is suddenly replaced by a third-person nobody who isn't half the story-teller the child was. Whatever logic prompted this change of narrator only dilutes the ending. Her last line — "Grief has come into her life" — is a rather soppy wrap-up of a story that promised much more.



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There are other stories in the anthology that are excellent in their own way. "Getting the Hang of It" by Terence Byrnes is sad and tender. Mavis Gallant's "With a Capital T" is funny, witty, and touching. Most of the stories were previously published in periodicals or magazines. The finest characterization, however, appears in one of the new stories, "Friendship and Property" by Leon Rooke. Its villain, Leopold, is the sleaziest bastard I've come across in quite a while — a brilliant portrait.

And then there are a couple of duds. "Pushing 50" by Eugene McNamara and "The Story Of Alton Pinney" by Greg Hollingshead are classic examples of writers writing themselves out of a story. McNamara's story, with all its wife-swapping, hip dialogue, and dramatic death should be padded some more and put on the novels' rack at Loblaws. Hollingshead starts with an interesting enough situation but ruins it with his squeaky, adolescent voice. Instead of letting his characters (narrator included) relax and be themselves, he tries to pump the story up with his own giggly enthusiasm and discredits anything genuine that might have filtered through.

With those two exceptions, I didn't find much to sneer at or groan over. The book covers a broad range of styles and subjects. The editors' mention of "modern realism" and "post-modernism" (whatever they are) should be disregarded. There is nothing high-brow or academic about this collection. They are just stories, mostly good ones, a few superb ones.

George Bowering almost apologizes for what he fears is a narrowness in *Great Canadian Sports Stories* — a narrowness caused by the scarcity of women writing sports fiction. Ironically, the subject of women, men, and romantic love is more competently handled in this book of "sports" fiction than it is in the '79 anthology. "A Game With Adonis" by Barry Grills is the only story in either book that deals directly with the exquisite torment of being in love, and it succeeds so well the reader squirms in self-recognition. Another of the stories, "A Hook Into the Rough" by David Helwig, portrays a middle-aged woman on the prowl at a golf course.

It's also ironic that there is more experimental writing in this sports collection. Dave Godfrey and Matt Cohen both try their hand at it and both fail. A story without a story, unless it is masterfully written, is bound to be trite and boring. "The Roller Rink" by Andreas Schroeder (also included in this sports collection) is an example of how to do it properly: the monotony of skating around a roller rink is so charged with inspired prose that it becomes an exercise in celestial magic.

The book does contain a few old, traditional sports stories which, I suppose, had to be included. For a younger audience they might be fine, but I found them stale and moralistic.

Other stories have sport-like titles that don't do justice to their authors' scope. Clark Blaise's "I'm Dreaming of Rocket

Richard" is an unforgettable tear-jerker that should be compared with Byrnes's work in the '79 anthology; together these two stories draw the perfect line between French and English Canada. "The Drubbing of Nesterenko" by Hanford Woods should be required reading for anyone who does or does not watch professional hockey and thinks he knows why. Wood's probing into the psyches of John Ferguson and Eric Nesterenko succinctly captures what all those well-paid sportscasters are trying to garble about. And his treatment of the very real agony a sports nut endures elevates the game to the level it deserves but no longer occupies.

The cover of *Great Canadian Sports Stories* is an insult to the stories it contains; it's a cheap newsprint affair meant to simulate a sports column. With such tantalizing names as Punch Imlach and Harold Ballard popping out at you, it's sure to ward off many a serious reader. And that is a pity. □

## Accent on the soul

The Jimmy Trilogy, by Jacques Poulin, translated from the French by Sheila Fischman, House of Anansi, 250 pages, \$8.95 paper (ISBN 0 88784 074 4).

By WAYNE GRADY

IN 1973 SHEILA Fischman wrote in the *Supplement to the Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature* that Jacques Poulin (1937-) was "a very important, unjustly neglected young writer." Now she herself has helped to correct that imbalance by translating Poulin's first three novels — *My Horse for a Kingdom* (1967), *Jimmy* (1969), and *The Heart of the Blue Whale* (1971) — and presenting them in a single volume as a trilogy. And she would seem to have proven her point: *The Jimmy Trilogy* is a clear indication that Jacques Poulin is a fine Quebec writer of whom English readers now can sit up and take notice.

What distinguishes Poulin — and indeed all the best Quebec novelists, among them Hubert Aquin, Roch Carrier, Jaques Godbout, Anne Hébert — is that he has a soul as well as a brain, and that he is concerned about the health of his soul more than about his sanity, and I mean this without the obvious reference to Catholicism. Poulin has struggled to combine philosophical enquiry with the more ordinary kinds of inquisitiveness, and the result is a series of novels with the grace and style of poetry as well as the more immediate impact of expository prose.

Of the three novels, *Jimmy* (which is also its French title) is central in more than just

the literal sense (a tribute to Fischman's deep insight into the inner workings of the books as much as into their skin of language). First of all it is one of a very few novels told through a child's point of view that can hold an adult's attention. Jimmy is a precocious, Salinger-like 11-year-old who lives with his parents in a cottage on a beach near Quebec City. Papou, his papa, works in the psychiatric ward of Quebec's Hôtel-Dieu (French writers are so lucky: imagine having a culture with such built-in symbolism as a hospital called Hôtel-Dieu). Mamie, Jimmy's mama, has a miscarriage that affects her mind, making her more child-like in some ways than Jimmy, and Papou retreats to his attic study to write a book about Hemingway (and here's an intriguing sign: Papa Hemingway is cropping up in Quebec literature in some of the oddest ways; he's also in Godbout's *Dragon Island*).

Jimmy, as a result, is left almost entirely alone, except for the old English commodore in the next cottage, and as his child's natural fantasy-world (TV-inspired, for the most part) gradually melds with the mundane, the prose takes on an eerie quality that is both recognizably innocent and deeply disturbing. In the end, when Jimmy imagines that the cottage has broken away from its pilings and its English neighbours to float down the St. Lawrence with Jimmy at its helm, the fantasy assumes a political dimension that, in 1969, is also foreboding.

The first novel, *My Horse for a Kingdom*, is little more than a 50-page short story, but its reverberations with the other two novels inflate it to something approaching a novella. Pierre Delisle is Jimmy grown up — there is much talk of his "carapace," his tough outer shell that corresponds to the stone walls of Old Quebec City. Pierre is an anarchist, but only in a quasi-political sense: ridding Quebec of foreign domination is merely a metaphor for cleansing his own soul. When he plants a bomb on a statue of an English soldier near the Portes St. Louis he is himself wounded in the explosion, and becomes the central image of the third novel — a wounded bird in the cage that is Quebec City.

The main character in the final third of the trilogy, *The Heart of the Blue Whale*, is Noël, a 30-year-old writer who, while working on a novel about a boy named Jimmy, has had a heart transplant. His new heart — the wounded bird within the rib cage — is both tender (the donor was a 15-year-old girl killed in a motorcycle accident) and an image of the death that lurks in us all. The metaphor is borrowed from a poem by Saint-Denys Garneau, "Cage d'oiseau," which begins (in F. R. Scott's translation):

*I am a bird cage  
A cage of bone  
With a bird*

*The bird in the cage of bone  
Is death building its nest*

But it doesn't stop there, for these novels are essentially revolutionary, as this passage

from *The Heart of the Blue Whale* attests:

I closed my eyes to forget the Americans. I saw the walls of Old Quebec. On rue des Remparts, at the level of the former Grand Séminaire, someone has written on the grey wall — once in red and once in black — REVOLUTION. I like it when people write on walls, on houses, on sidewalks, in the street, everywhere. In any case, I like words. What escaped me was the relationships between things. Léo Ferré said that poets wrote out their rebellion with the claws of birds; there was a new thing living in my chest, a thing Saint-Denys Garneau had described as a bird; Goethe said that ideas have doves' claws.

In short, Jacques Poulin emerges from Quebec in much the same way that Mikhail Bulgakov, (whom he resembles, and who, by the way, wrote a novel called *Heart of a Dog* in 1925) once emerged from the Soviet Union: a profoundly contemplative and analytical novelist, whose control of language, imagery, and theme makes him, as Sheila Fischman observed, a major writer. He is, moreover, necessary to anyone interested in the soul of Quebec. □

## The suspense is killing her

*Tales of Solitude*, by Yvette Naubert, translated from the French by Margaret Rose, Intermedia, 120 pages, \$13.95 cloth (ISBN 88956 075 7).

By JEFF MILLER

THE EPIGRAPH to Yvette Naubert's most recent collection of "contes de la solitude" proclaims:

All human beings, sooner or later must face their destiny. Past and present combine to form a terrifying question. The future depends on the answer. In this crucial moment your whole existence is at stake.

In other words, Naubert sets out to convey her wonder about *la vie quotidienne* — or rather how the thin ice of it quivers over a more insistent natural/supernatural order — by resorting to a neo-Freudian determinism and, thereby, to the conventions of the suspense genre.

The setting for the 12 unevenly translated pieces ("He could hear the echo of Francine's tears . . .") seems to be not French Canada but the Unconscious. All deal with precognition, discovery, and catharsis; two are confessions, and many have the quality of meditation. In three there are suicides, and altogether there are six murders.

The suspense genre, insisting as it does on its own mechanics, resists Naubert's clearly literary ambitions. By definition, there is not much breathing room; idea and rhythm dominate exposition. (For the same



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reasons. I suppose, there is not one good detective novel that is great literature.) A wealthy middle-aged lawyer whose diseased heart has been replaced by that of a 20-year-old mechanic finds himself desperately attached to the donor's horrified wife. In "Obedience," a psychiatrist is driven mad by what can best be called the punctual tardiness of his patient — she is consistently, faithfully, 10 minutes late, no matter the doctor's commands and schemes. A policeman shoots a bystander during a robbery and then tries himself for murder when the courts won't. The voyage of The Eagle to the moon inspires an earthbound mathematician to make his own Zen-like metaphysical journey of discovery to the moonlit mysteries surrounding his birth.

Short, deliberate, entertaining, and thin, these are accounts more than stories, good working drafts, seemingly edited before they were fleshed out. "Obedience" is the only selection that seems just right, and it is precisely Naubert's deliberate, spare method that makes it so — darkly amusing instead of trite. A carefully furrowed brow seems to be hovering over the others, as though the author damn well intends to be bemused. □

## Visions of a high clean style

The Gods, by Dennis Lee, McClelland & Stewart, 63 pages, \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 5214 6).

By ALBERT MORITZ

THIS NEW VOLUME of poems is a thought-provoking statement about the interaction between poet and contemporary society from one of the most familiar names in Canadian writing today, Dennis Lee. In *The Gods* we meet again the author of the 1972 Governor General's Award winner, *Civil Elegies*, and of such recent work as "The Death of Harold Ladoo," a version of which is included here.

Lee's successful career in writing poetry for children is also reflected in *The Gods* in two interesting ways. First, Lee includes a number of rhymed lyrics whose language and meter are akin to his verse for children. More than this surface likeness, however, Lee brings from his other writing a desire to make poetry accessible to a wider audience than it usually commands and a determination to address subjects immediately relevant to his contemporaries.

The blend of verbal styles and the variety of themes explored in *The Gods* reflect Lee's often-voiced concern about producing a vital, commanding poetic language. In the title poem, "The Gods," he says:

*and least of all can I fathom, you powers  
I  
seek and no doubt cheaply arouse and  
who are you?  
how I am to salute you, nor how contend  
with your being  
for I do not aim to make prize-hungry words  
(and stay back!) I want  
the world to be real and  
it will not,  
for to secular men there is not given the  
glory of tongues,*

Lee's work touches on the traditions of poetry as literature, on the familiar modern artistic complaint that art is wholly isolated from the rest of society, but more to break down the barriers that would isolate art from life than to affirm or consolidate the separation. Lee's experience with popular culture unites with a strongly rhetorical sense of the poet's responsibilities, already present in *Civil Elegies*, to encourage him to a search for a language appropriate to our milieu.

*I sit  
bemused by the sound of the words.  
For a man no longer moves  
through coiled ejaculations of  
meaning;  
we dwell within  
taxonomies, equations, paradigms  
which deaden the world and now in  
our  
heads, though less in our inconsistent  
lives,  
the tickle of cosmos is gone.*

("The Gods")

Confronted by death, Lee questions the relevance of poetry: "Why should I tell it like a poem? Why not speak the truth?" ("The Death of Harold Ladoo"), but he does not call for an abandonment of the tradition, or of eloquent speech; rather, he argues that poetry must continue to be made, even "in times of death," to keep alive the hope of power in words.

*And also to honour the gods in their former  
selves,  
albeit obscurely, at a distance, unable  
to speak the older tongue; and to wait  
till their fury is spent and they call on us  
again  
for passionate awe in our lives, and a high  
clean style.*

("The Death of Harold Ladoo")

Lee places the poet in society in two distinct ways. First, there are the poems of personal experience (many of them relating deep personal joy and love, such as "Yip Yip" or "After Dinner Music") and social commentary, including "When I Went Up to Rosedale." Second, he discusses the work of the poet, the task of understanding and creativity, whose practice he reflects on through his experiences in the Toronto literary community. This theme dominates the most important work in the collection, both the lengthy elegy, "The Death of

Harold Ladoo," and poems from the first section of the book, such as "Not Abstract Harmonies But" and "The Gods."

Lee's harshest criticism is reserved for poetry that remains at a distance from life:

*and often we made  
brave lives ourselves — yet all of it was  
abstract!  
For it served the one forbidden  
god — denial of here and now,  
and — I honour high abstraction but never  
stop being  
various, earth and companions! and  
gritty, and here and till we can  
cherish what surrounds us, loathe it and  
cherish it we will only  
oppress it with our heady perfect  
systems.*

("Not Abstract Harmonies But")

The poet must engage with the present, never seeking to escape the lessons of tradition, but determining that somehow the truth of harmony and the complexity of experience might form a single whole:

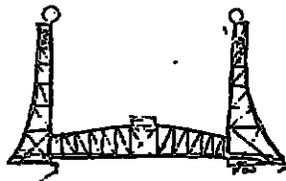
*Not abstract harmonies but, rather,  
that  
each thing gropes to be itself in time and  
what is lovely  
is how, once brought to a pitch it holds &  
presides  
in the hum of its own galvanic being.*

("Not Abstract Harmonies But")

The reach that Lee envisions for the poet and his language is an awesome one, comprehending the past and the rich, undigested welter of the present. The vision of *The Gods* is to awaken men again to this hope for understanding, a hope perhaps never realized but always fruitful in men's lives. The flaw in Lee's approach to his subject is not on the level of thought or insight, so much as on the level of verbal dexterity. The evident effort to bridge the gap between poetry's traditional audience and a wider readership seems to have brought forth more a variety of separate styles than a single, consistent verbal manner. The danger in this variety is that poems accessible to the wider readership, such as "1838," lack qualities that would draw the attention of persons in command of poetic tradition, while "Not Abstract Harmonies But," for instance, is too complex and challenging to be readily accessible to this wider readership Lee would like to reach.

Where Lee seeks verbal complexity and innovation, his efforts to break down conventions of "poetic" language sometimes stumble in the task of melding a new syntax and vocabulary. The confrontation of traditional phrases with idiomatic expressions and "poetic" words with slang sometimes explodes into new meaning, but sometimes it just flattens into prosaic narrative, or wanders off in a confusion of directions, as in these lines from "Not Abstract Harmonies But":

*I speak of full coherence  
in hope alone; I am not that  
quicken'd auender, and have no mind  
meanwhile to  
loll in a camouflage of blissed-out  
stupor,  
while bodies are tortured or starve.*



Or these few lines from "The Death of Harold Ladoo":

*You soaked up love like a sponge, cajoling  
hundreds of hours, and bread, and  
fine-tuned publication  
and then accepted them all with a nice  
indifference.  
as though they were barely enough. You  
had us taped, you knew white  
liberals inside out: how to  
quilt us; which buttons to push; how hard;  
how long.*

When Lee catches the rhythm of speech, whether formal or slang, as in "After Dinner Music" or in much of "The Death of Harold Ladoo," a satisfying blend of words and high thoughts is made. Where this is absent, Lee leaves us still with a sense of an expansion of frontiers, an unwillingness to be satisfied with old categories, which makes *The Gods* an important document for Canadian poetry today. □

## Myth factory's night-watchman

*Letters*, by John Barth, Academic Press, 772 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 399 12425 X).

By DOUGLAS HILL

AMBROSE MENSCH (of *Lost in the Funhouse*) writing: "On May 12, 1940, when I was ten, I found a note in a bottle along the Choptank River shore just downstream from where I write this: half a sheet of coarse ruled stuff, torn from a tablet and folded thrice; on a top line was penned in deep red ink TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: on the next-to-bottom, YOURS TRULY. The lines between were blank — a blank I've been trying now for 29 years to fill!" More than a clever conceit, these words are as crucial to a grasp of the design of Barth's career as to an understanding of his intention in *Letters* to pull all the strands of his work together. But they're also a moving cry from the story-teller's heart. From *The Sot-Weed Factor* on, Barth's prose has worked a double magic: in the midst of all the encyclopedic devisings — the games, the puzzles, the genealogies, the Rabelaisian word-play — occur moments that evoke a response to beauty lost and longed-for. *Letters* gives both sides of Barth's genius full exposure; it's a sort of monumental family album of its artistic imagination.

This is Barth's Bicentennial tribute, with a vengeance. Its intuitive underpinnings and fully half its recorded action come to us courtesy of the myth factory of American history, from that vast underground warehouse of information and supposition about the Colonies, the Revolution, and the War of 1812 for which Barth has appointed

himself night-watchman. Motives, not results, consume him — deception, intrigue, the elaboration of fantastic but just plausible what-ifs. And the parallels that history drops: if one dared speak of the book's plot, it would be to remark how it embraces, among other delights, the bizarre and labyrinthine fomenting of a Second American Revolution, one that will be literary as well as political, that will create a New Novel and a New America.

Barth insists that his book is "regressively traditional," that it is "not obscure, difficult, or dense in the Modernist fashion." Perhaps. Certainly its experimental qualities are nurtured, as he repeatedly warns, less by meta-fiction's hypotheses than by the solid conventions of the frame-tale and the epistolary novel, by an art that imitates not life but the documents of life — letters, journals, records, print-outs. If it isn't difficult, *Letters* is undeniably complex: the title itself refers most handily to the scheme of interlocked communications among the novel's seven letter-writers, six of whom were born in and depend for much of their substance upon Barth's earlier books (the seventh is "The Author"); it also reflects a sometimes bewildering devotion to the alphabet itself, to systems of notation, codes, and anagrams, as well as a concern for "letters" in the sense of "humane."

Like Jacob Horner (of *The End of the Road*), Barth seems to have accepted the task of re-dreaming history. His capacity for

invention is limitless, wondrous; it's impossible to summarize the lunatic range to which his wilder inspirations transport him, or the provocative sophistication of his more serious analyses. Let him describe his investigations into "the fictive life of real people and the factual life of fictional characters": "several narratives will become one; like waves of a rising tide, the plot will surge forward, recede, surge farther forward, recede less far, et cetera to its climax and dénouement." True — and all managed with dazzling verbal ingenuity and alluring rhythm. I don't normally (I think) move my lips when I read; again and again *Letters* had me rehearsing its line aloud to myself.

For anyone receptive to Barth in any of his narrative guises, this is a book to get lost in. Whether it will convert strangers is harder to predict. Its great length alone is bound to cause resistance, but I'd have to defend all those pages — and they're big pages with small print — even as I recuperate from eyestrain and exhaustion. *Letters* truly offers an old-fashioned experience of the novel, convincingly up-dated — of "the Novel, with its great galumphing grace, amazing as a whale!" Though a committed reader may feel his attention wander or his energy flag, I don't think that's Barth's fault except insofar as he's guilty of a demanding, uncompromising talent. Who, after all, leaps *Shandy* (or *Clarissa*, more to the point) at a single bound? □

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## Amaz'd the gazing rustics rang'd around

The Queen Comes to Minnicog, by  
James Bacque, Gage, 177 pages, \$9.95  
cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9488 7).

By JEFF MILLER

Art and Ossie lead the people of Minnicog with wit and humour through the Queen's amazing visit, when she makes a speech entirely in French, and also manage to handle the disastrous day of the Fall Fowl Fair and Turkey Tussle when the visiting German Ambassador is nearly killed. Art, Ossie and the rest of Minnicog then marshal their forces to handle the riot when the young men from the Indian reserve hijack the men's room at the Hotel Champlain (120,000 gallons), a book-burning in front of the public library, arranged by the publisher in the hope of promotable slander; and finally, they engineer a stunning conclusion to the campaign to save the town's hospital (known as The General Passion).

I TAKE THAT from the jacket of *The Queen Comes To Minnicog*, a collection of short stories about the little Ontario town of Minnicoganshene by James Bacque. Normally, this would not be the fairest way to summarize a book's contents. But, except for the wit and humour, the amazing and stunning parts, the blurb does the job accurately and overall displays more patience with the task than I can muster.

To my mind, small towns are on average as quaint as lynch mobs, so maybe I'm no fit judge of reputedly witty, humorous, amazing, and stunning fiction about them. What amazes and stuns me is, contrarily, the sort of folksy morality that prevented my wife, even in young adulthood, from watching the animals on her father's farm give birth. But perhaps this does not amaze and stun you, let alone the Periodical Distributors of Canada, who accorded a runner-up prize to this book's title story, perhaps on the basis that it tries moderately hard with minimal success to be charming; or *Chatelaine*, whose Annual Fiction Award went to the consummately insipid book-burning selection; or Don Harron, who on the cover barefacedly compares Mr. Bacque to Leacock; or even, indeed, the Canada Council, who with our tear-sodden tax money encouraged Mr. Bacque in this effort that, like Mrs. Punck in *Reuben, Reuben*, is so rich in limitations.

Does all this mean that a country gets the literature it deserves? For alas, the object of such Establishment ballyhoo (of which, it must be said, Mr. Bacque is victim as well as beneficiary), is De Vriesian in blurb only, and no amount of PR will flesh it into a Canadian *Reuben, Reuben* or *I Hear America Swinging*. The author's legendary

intentions verge on insult, to his reader and subject alike:

"... Clerk?" said Ossie. "Say that word again."

"Sesquicentennial," said Fred DuCharmant.

"Sesxycentennial then," said Ossie . . .

"Now Samuel de Champlain, he came by here in . . ." said Fred.

"Samuel do who?" said Roy, opening the window to get some warm air in the warm room.

"Champagne," said Ossie with a grin. "Famous French explorer."

Note especially the word play. And here's some social comment, which, incidentally, has a ring to it we usually associate with Mr. Harron:

First to speak up was Darcy Bellehumeur, who was just back from a three-week church-sponsored tour of the Holy Land and full of it. "Now the Indians here they're all screwed up," he said, "Just like the Ay-rabs over to Palestine, they got the kosher shock. And the Israileys has got no peace, out in the country they're all ganged up living in what they call them crevices and getting bombed every day. . . .

When Mr. Bacque gets wore-out with such charm, there is often a bureaucrat in his path. Presuming the reader's accord that Canada's professional public servants are mostly anglophone city-slickers with hearts of polyvinyl chloride, he has no qualms about fabricating them of straw — even christens one such poor sod Frank Fraud. Mr. Bacque does not tell us in which ministry Frank Fraud works, but we can safely assume that he does not sign cheques at the Canada Council. □

## IN BRIEF

**The Right Stuff**, by Tom Wolfe, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 436 pages, \$17.50 cloth (ISBN 0 347 25032 4). Tom Wolfe pioneered the book-length magazine article in 1965 with *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby*, and since then has peppered the landscape with books about various-coloured whatnots that seem to occupy crucial positions in the front line of American popular culture. His could be called a worm's-eye view of history, except that Wolfe seldom forgets that he is writing only journalism, and journalists have no business writing history. In his book about the early days of manned spaceflight (roughly from Chuck Yeager's first breaking of "the sound barrier" in 1948 to the spate of hair-raising orbital flights by the Project Mercury boys — John Glenn, Scot Carpenter, Wally Schirra, *et al.* — of the early 1960s) Wolfe refrains from assessing the significance of the space program to American or world history, and concentrates instead on the psychological make-up of the test pilots and astronauts — those with "the right stuff" — who took part in the various missions. When Gordon Cooper was about to blast off on his record-setting 22 orbits in 1962, Wolfe

writes, "untold millions were by their radios or in front of their TV sets ... wondering, as always: My God, what goes through a man's mind at a moment like this! Scarcely able to believe it themselves, NASA never supplied the answer." Wolfe does.

— WAYNE GRADY

## The great Elizabethan collection

*The Virgin in the Garden*, by A. S. Byatt, Clarke Irwin, 428 pages, \$20.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7011 2261 7).

By ILA GOODY

IF BRIAN MOORE had not already called one of his novels *The Great Victorian Collection*, it might have served as an appropriate title for A. S. Byatt's most recent book. For *The Virgin in the Garden* is a strikingly Victorian novel about modern British culture. With its multiple plots, elaborate descriptive detail, and reassuringly omniscient narration, Byatt's third novel recalls the plenitude and range of much 19th-century fiction. Just as George Eliot in *Middlemarch* traced the territory of English provincial life 40 years before she wrote, depicting obliquely through rural perspectives a moment of national crisis, so Byatt maps and explores social transitions at the time of the coronation of Elizabeth II as they are reflected in a Yorkshire production of a verse play, *Astraea*, about the first Elizabeth.

Byatt's social map, despite its breadth of view, is in many ways patently selective. Although her general theme is the chaos of modern British culture and the problem of a declining public purpose, politics and business are clearly not her principal concern. Instead she centres her examination on fluctuating styles in language and communication; evanescent fashions in theatre, education, and religion; and the pervasive consciousness of an inescapable and at times daunting English literary and artistic tradition.

All the principal figures in Byatt's narrative attempt with varying degrees of success to achieve a coherent form of life in an age that seems to have lost its centrality of culture. Wedderburn (a delicious Pauline pun) uses his voguish 1950s drama to release himself from the limitations of provincial society into the apparently more central yet equally ephemeral world of London television. The angular, sexually teasing schoolgirl who is Wedderburn's choice for the role of the young Elizabeth — one of several "virgins in the garden" — is deflected after the end of the play into a

marginal semi-academic career that will never gratify her theatrical aspirations.

However, the triumph of the novel is its portrayal of the psychological breakdown of a visionary boy who begins with a genuinely Wordsworthian ability to "see into the life of things," which he perceives as geometrical forms in an imaginary landscape. The loss of this gift exposes him to a course of dangerous, semi-mystical sacrifices conducted by a cosmologically crazed science master, culminating in the master's insane, abortive attempt at ritual self-mutilation, and in the student's horrified transformation into an "idiot boy."

Yet for all its compelling vividness and concentrated analysis of modern British civilization, *The Virgin in the Garden* is less impressive than it might have been. Fashions in memory banks disappear, reflects one of Byatt's characters; but the narrative is just such a bank of details and elaborate catalogues, which slow the action to a virtual pageant of static scenes. Why, one wonders, did Byatt make her patterns so difficult to perceive and her map veer off into a series of apparent detours? Possibly, one suspects, from unwillingness to have readers confront directly a world of bleak psychological suffering and vulnerability — an exposure Byatt's more prolific sister, Margaret Drabble, has never resisted in her less ornate novels of current English life. Even so, the brilliance of Byatt's depiction of loss and social fragmentation is unmistakable, a "treasure-house of details" about the quest for a cultural whole. □

## More gush than guts

*Selected Poems*, by Alexandre L. Amprimoz, Hounslow Press, 79 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 88882 036 4).

*Winter Flowers*, by Janis Rapoport, Hounslow Press, 87 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 88882 028 3).

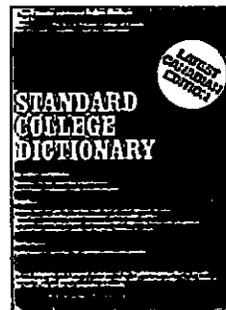
*Holes in Space*, by R. A. D. Ford, Hounslow Press, 60 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 88882 038 0).

By MICHAEL TOPA

THREE RECENT offerings from Hounslow Press seem, at best, to be failed enterprises. Except for *Selected Poems*, the design work on these books by Michael Horum is somewhat bleak and unappealing. Unfortunately, it sets a tone for what resides under their covers.

Alexandre L. Amprimoz, a self-proclaimed Renaissance man and cultured spirit, is widely published in several languages. Aesthetically, his *Selected Poems* is cluttered and marred by running poems together on the page; hence the reader is left little time or space to reflect upon their

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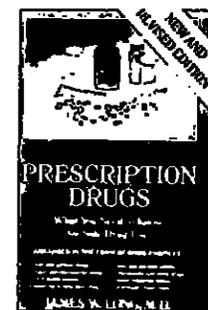
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content. More often than not, this book reveals an educated mind enamoured with its own cleverness, and, at times, Amprimoz's academic, professorial distance can be a bit standoffish. In "The Defence of the Heretic," a bad poem, he writes:

*Only the man tailored by Homeric solitude  
Can castily sculpt the page  
Only the man sculpted by Latin hours  
Can tailor poems with earth and aching  
bones*

One only wishes there was, in fact, more presence of aching bones or "gut" reality in this work. In fairness to Amprimoz, when he confines himself to a Neruda-like mode of simplicity, he can approach real eloquence, as in the poem "Mirrors" with perhaps the best lines in the book:

*Thighs, lips, breasts  
I have no memory  
for things that cannot shine.*

The poems "In the Air" and "Vignette I-C" are also quite good. This book suffers from a lack of things that shine; instead, pretentiousness is rampant.

Janis Rapoport is an editor, poet, and playwright. *Winter Flowers*, her fourth book and first full-length collection, troubles me. The title itself aptly indicates the two paradoxical modes of expression that mark her work. She seems to vacillate between a cold, intellectual imagery (akin to Atwood's) and a facile expression of maudlin sentiment. Most of these poems are conventional, unsurprising offerings about relationships, love, family, and children that often drift into a kind of banal prose. Her shorter poems seem the most successful. "Resolution," an excellent poem, tight

in thought and imagery, startles and resonates in its vicious simplicity, similarly in "Chastity Belt, Model 1978" she writes Some splendid lines that jar:

*Trust only reversed images,  
negativel fantasies.  
Keep the photographs  
forever in their snapped but undeveloped  
yellow box.  
Hammer the camera's lens with a chisel,  
chisel tie wires that lead from the dark.*

*holes in space* is R. A. D. Ford's third collection. Ford, our ambassador to Russia since 1964, won the Governor General's Award for his first book of poetry, *A Window on the North* (1956). Ford tends to write a formal verse that is well-tailored and shows to good effect in poems such as "The Revisionist" and "A World Explained." However, in many of his poems there is much dross (vague phraseology) that needs jettisoning. His title poem seems emblematic of what is best and worst in his writing.

*Look, I see holes in space.  
And a tenderness  
Polished with silence.*

*A bird singing like an  
Orean at vespers  
Supplies the counterpoint.*

*Your eyes become empty  
With dreaming  
And I can see space between them.*

It is readily obvious that the second stanza succeeds, whereas the others consist of nebulous gush. The best poems in the book are not Ford's original work but his translations. The poem by Apollinaire and several by Voznesensky are marvelous, perhaps even worth the purchase price of \$4.95. I was left hungering for more. □

## on the racks

by Paul Stuewe

## Gentle readers, please be upstanding for Southwestern Ontario's 'Mozart of prose'

IT'S NOT EASY to convey the excellence of Alice Munro's *Who Do You Think You Are?* (Signet, \$2.25) in a phrase, but let's try "absolutely marvelous." This is a novel that uses a variety of well-assimilated literary techniques to create a stunning portrait of a young woman's coming-of-age, with the total control of material and resources suggesting a comparison with Mozart's later Symphonies. Munro's writing is similarly subtly rhythmic, dynamically varied, and threaded with engrossing themes. To put it more simply and humbly, this is a book that makes your reviewer painfully aware of his inability to describe its virtues in prose of comparable quality; he can only recommend it as a literary experience of the first order.

A woman who abandons husband, children, and a middle-class lifestyle to do her 20 Books in Canada, January, 1980

own thing is the protagonist of Joan Barfoot's *Abra* (Signet, \$2.25), and her serious treatment of a not-unfamiliar contemporary situation earned my respect if not my affection. The subject is one that obviously engages the author's thought and experience in the deepest possible way, but putting it in the form of a novel has not worked well: the dialogue and interior monologue are stiff and unconvincing; and the action proceeds through a series of stereotyped scenes that seem to have been imposed rather than organically nurtured. In the absence of literary graces one concentrates on the theme of woman's liberation, and finds a number of intelligent reflections that might have made a superior non-fiction book; but as a novel it's a disappointing example of how a strong thesis doesn't necessarily make for powerful fiction.

Max Braithwaite can do humorous Prairie realism as well as anyone, but his *Lusty Winter* (Seal, \$2.25) is a sour sex-and-violence opus that alternates between bumbling low comedy and unconvincing attempts at dramatic tragedy. Here Braithwaite has essayed the injection of steaming passions and suchlike into the lives of his familiar marginal misfits, and the result is an uneasy mixture of basically uncongenial materials. Less ambitious, and as a consequence more successful, is Orlo Miller's *Death of the Donnelly's* (Signet, \$2.25), a competent historical novel of sectarian feuding in 19th-century Ontario. The background of the conflict isn't well defined, but events move along smartly, the writing is functional, and all in all it's a tolerable read.

There's enough material for several eventful novels in Peter C. Newman's *Bronfman Dynasty* (Seal, \$2.95), a well-researched history of the family whose financial and other exploits continue to intrigue us all. R's far superior M the disorganized ramblings of *The Canadian Establishment*, where the attempt to be authoritative chilled Newman's natural light touch; hence the dramatic possibilities of a plethora of ripping yarns are effectively realized in a volume of engaging social history.

Margaret Trudeau's friend Andy Warhol once predicted that in the future everyone will be famous for 15 minutes, and one can only regret that he underestimated. Beyond Reason (Pocket Books, \$2.95) left me thoroughly boggled by its candid display of a mind that never seems to have been tethered to anything, while dreading the doubtlessly impending sequel to what can only be described as the quintessence of the prêt-à-porter attitude to existence. Margaret Trudeau would certainly benefit from a reading of Kit Coleman: Queen of Hearts (PaperJacks, \$2.75), Ted Ferguson's selection of journalistic musings from one of our first woman reporters. Coleman was a witty, sharp-tongued chronicler of the turn-of-the-century "new woman," basically pro-feminist but not afraid to chide pretension and foolishness wherever they appeared, and her writing has aged very well.

Other recent non-fiction titles include Jack Birnbaum's *Cry Anger* (PaperJacks, \$2.75), a common-sensical guide to combating depression and hostility in the Games People Play and I'm OK. You're OK manner; and *Ro Hockey NHL 79/80* (PaperJacks, \$4.95), Jim Proudfoot's annual compendium of stats and chats concerning the nation's second favorite indoor diversion (the first is making fudge). The War Department offers Fred McClement's *Guns in Paradise* (PaperJacks, \$2.95), a strategically unsound but tactically vivid account of the career of the First World War German surface raider *Emden*; and John Mellor's *Dieppe — Canada's Forgotten Heroes* (Signet, \$2.50), an overly anecdotal narrative that hugely ignores evidence that the

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mid as conceived couldn't be anything other than the bloody balls-up it in fact became. Someday someone will write a good book on Dieppe balancing the undeniable heroism of the assaulting troops with an

awareness of the equally undeniable stupidity of their military and political superiors, although we'll probably have to wait until the memoirs and/or demise of the latter permit a "now it can be told" treatment. □

## the browser

by Michael Smith

Once more into the lists, dear friends,  
with map in hand and a song in our heart

JAMES REANEY, the poet, once perplexed a graduate student I knew by assigning him to draw a map of Canadian literature. Did Reaney mean a *real* map, my friend wondered, or something impressionistic with, say, Alice Munro's Wingham, Ont., and Margaret Laurence's Neepawa, Man. (or should he call it Manawaka?) disproportionately large? The same sort of problems must have bothered Morris Wolfe, Graham Pilsword, and David Macfarlane, the compilers of *A Literary Map of Canada* (Hurtig, \$7.95), the original version of which was yanked by the publisher apparently because it paid too little attention to exactness of geography and too much to the imbalances of CanLit where, quite naturally, some regions dominate the others. The current revised edition manages to locate

indigenous writers and their works just about everywhere except on Anticosti Island.

Imbalances still do exist on the map, but they've been more strategically arrayed. Readers won't immediately notice the differences between the literary counterparts of villages, towns, and major capitals — the difference between a hamlet and a *Hamlet* — because the print is equal for all the entries. As a result, Margaret Atwood's short story, "Polarities" (a village), and Robert Kroetsch's adventurous novel, *The Studhorse Man* (metropolitan sprawl), are displayed equally in the vicinity of Edmonton. Distinctions like these tend to disappear under extreme compression, of course, and as miniaturists Wolfe and crew have carried the non-book to its natural extreme.

They've reduced Canadian literature to a single large-format page.

In somewhat the same way, John Robert Colombo's omnivorous compulsion to collect and classify seems to keep him from distinguishing between the significant and the light-weight. Hence, in addition to Canadian superheroes, monsters, and psychic phenomena, Colombo's *Book of Marvels* (NC Press, 21s pages, \$9.95 paper) includes entries for things as diverse as the fanciful creatures in Dennis Lee's children's poems and the Pogue carburetor (200 miles to the gallon!). In one remarkable entry about LSD Colombo traces the origins of the Imagist movement to the Canadian Prairies and notes that a Saskatoon psychiatrist, Humphry Osmond, coined the word "psychedelic." There's also a section on Big Joe Mufferaw, a rather commercialized rival to Paul Bunyan, whose woodland adventures are retold by Bernie Bedore in *Tall Tales of Joe Mufferaw* (Consolidated Amethyst Communications, illustrated, 64 pages, \$6.95 paper).

Forget about the "adventure" part of *The First Original Unexpurgated Canadian Book of Sex and Adventure* by Jeremy Brown and Christopher Ondaatje (Pagurian Press, illustrated, 285 pages, \$14.95 cloth, \$5.95 paper). Sex is the only thing this book is about, but don't expect anything randy, either. After all, anybody reduced to flaccidly assembling lisk on the subject ("Five Ridiculous Attempts to Feature Sex in Canadian Periodic&," "Seven

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Great Sensual Quotations on Sport," etc., etc.) is bound to be a bore. Apart from a couple of startling realist paintings ("Refrigerator" by Alex Colville, for one), the contents fail to raise so much as a smirk. The "Private Lives" chapter in the same publisher's *Complete Book of Movie Lists* by Nicholas Van Daalen (illustrated, 287 pages, \$14.95 cloth, \$5.95 paper) is much more scandalous, though badly written and not always accurate. On page 36, for instance, Clara Bow is reported to have dallied with the entire UCLA football team, while on page 15 the team she took on is said to have been from the University of Southern California and to have included an undergraduate star who later changed his name to John Wayne.

Another book of lists, of sorts, is *Farewell to the '70s: A Canadian Salute to a Confusing Decade*, edited by Anna Porter and Marjorie Harris (Thomas Nelson & Sons, illustrated, 255 pages, \$14.95 cloth). It's a hardcover magazine, really, and — like much that is wrong with Canadian journalism — suffers from being too superficial, predictable, and self-serving. For example, the assertion by David Nichol, president of Loblaw's Ltd., that "no-name products and no-frills merchandising . . . will revolutionize your way of life in the 1980s" will astonish nobody, considering the source. Nor will Murray Soupcoff's *Canada 1984: The Year in Review*, illustrated by Isaac Bickerstaff (Lester & Orpen Dennys, 153 pages, \$9.95 cloth) which, as intended, shows plenty about the way we were thinking in the '70s. Soupcoff's satirical premise — tomorrow's news today — is neither new nor easy to sustain throughout a whole book: and, God knows, the reference to George Orwell, which is irrelevant to the text, has already been done to death. He also picks some easy targets, such as Margaret Trudeau (natch). But, if nothing else, at least he tries to make it all seem funny.

There's a desperate humour behind the lyrics in *Songs from the Front and Rear: Canadian Servicemen's Songs of the Second World War* by Anthony Hopkins (Hurtig, illustrated, 192 pages, \$18.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper). Not surprisingly, the book carries a disclaimer that ethnic and racial references and particularly the language don't represent "the views, preferences, attitudes or usages of the editor, publisher, or any of the contributors." (One song alone, "Sing Us Another One," has 25 venereal limericks for verses.) Though the struggles of pioneering loggers and settlers were every bit as real, the sentiments are gentler in *Songs of the Pacific Northwest* (Hancock House, illustrated, 176 pages, \$19.95 cloth), a collection by Philip J. Thomas of British Columbia folk songs from the early fur-trading days to modern times.

Finally, optimists who are interested in freelance journalism might take a look at *Words for Sale*, edited for the Periodical Writers Association of Canada by Eve Drobot and Hal Tennant (Macmillan, 189

pages, \$8.95 paper). As with many how-to books, this one leans toward the upbeat aspects of magazine writing ("How you can make money in the fast-growing Canadian magazine market"), and plays down the depressing financial climate for freelancers. It regularly refers, for instance, to *Weekend Magazine*, which — if only because it

appeared every week — was for years one of the mainstays of Canadian freelance writing. Between the time the book was written and the time it was published *Weekend* supposedly merged with *The Canadian*, and in the process died. Hard times. □

## interview

by Judith Alldritt

### Novelist Marion Rippon says it takes a heap of living to make a writer ripe

IN THE PAST 10 years, Canadian novelist Marion Rippon has written five mystery novels for the Doubleday Crime Club series and won for herself an audience of devoted readers in the United States and, more recently, Canada. Her two most recent books were *The Ninth Tenacle* and *Lucien's Tombs*. She was born in Drumheller, Alta. in 1921 and began writing at the age of 45. At that time, she had already raised three children and had worked for several years as a psychiatric nurse in Canada and in hospitals overseas. Her stories are all set in France, where she lived from 1958 to 1962, and concern the adventures of a kindly old policeman named Gendarme Ygrec. Recently, Marion Rippon underwent open heart surgery and now is recuperating at her home in Victoria, B.C. Judith Alldritt visited her there to ask about her work:

**Books in Canada:** *The people in your stories often have strange, fatal quirks of personality that make them memorable as characters, like the fat woman in your first book, The Hands of Solange. Was she modelled on a real person that you've known?*

**Rippon:** Well, Solange was, in fact, modelled on a woman that I once saw in France, but I didn't dream that she would develop in the way that she did. Originally, she was

supposed to be hateful and hard and dreadful, but then I got to feeling so sorry for her that in the end she was just pitiful. And this has happened in most of my books because I never plan my plots. I start with a general idea and once my characters begin to develop, or I begin to care about them, then they sort of take over. They will do some things and not others. So I can't really plan because I don't know exactly what's going to happen until I get to know the people in the story.

**BiC:** *What kind of general idea do you start with?*

**Rippon:** In each of my books, I started with a theory about a certain kind of person and what he or she would do in a given situation. In *The Hands of Solange*, for instance, my idea was: Here is an ugly, gross woman who hates herself. The only thing beautiful about her are her hands. What would happen to her if her hands were destroyed? That's what the story was about, and the mystery was really secondary. It's that way in all the stories, I think. The readers know long before the end who the murderer is, but they are still interested in what happens to the person who does these things. What effect does it have on him and what effect does it have on the people whose lives he touches?

**BiC:** *Your stories have frequent suspenseful interruptions in the action. Do you go back and erase parts or make holes in the story so the reader will be left wondering what happened next?*

**Rippon:** No. I usually start writing late at night, after about 11 o'clock when I know I won't be interrupted, and I write about a person or two or three people in a certain situation until I run out of ideas. Then I start with a new situation until I'm all written out again. Quite often a lot of time will go by, and I still have no idea what happened after I left a situation. And then it will come to me, or I will sit down and say, "Now come on, Marion, you've got to finish this one sometime. What is going to happen?" And that's when it's really work. But finally the words begin to roll and things begin to take place, and then I'm almost saying to myself, "Why, of course! I should have known that all along."



Marion Rippon

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**BiC:** Do you revise very much?

**Rippon:** I write longhand in spiral notebooks, and I leave the opposite page blank so I can fill in as I go along. Then I type it out very roughly on yellow paper, and it's from this first typing that I really do my cleaning up. Then I retype it on white paper so I won't get the drafts mixed up. I get a typist to do my final copy because she can do it in six weeks whereas it would take me six months. I'm not a very good typist.

**BiC:** Do you do much research?

**Rippon:** I suppose you could call it research. I have friends who are doctors and they help me with technical matters, so all that is completely accurate. Also, the psychiatrist that I worked for in Halifax now is retired in Victoria, and he reads all my books and tells me whether or not the characters follow properly the type of mental instability they're supposed to have. So I do that much.

**BiC:** You were a psychiatric nurse before you started writing. Do you think it takes a special psychological insight to write about crime?

**Rippon:** I think it does if you want to be honest. You can't just make up sick minds or troubled minds. And if you're going to write about characters that other people are going to care about, you have to be terribly truthful. That's why I know that as a 20-year-old girl I would have been wasting my time writing. I hadn't lived enough or seen enough people. I hadn't felt things myself or cried enough or loved enough or taken time to be observant. It takes years of growing up of one's own personality to write honestly.

**BiC:** Why did you choose to write mysteries?

**Rippon:** Well, I had always read a lot, including mysteries, and been very critical of other people's writing: So I wanted to write something good, but I also wanted to write something that would sell. Since I wasn't interested in sex and violence, that left mysteries. And I appear to have chosen well because mysteries seem to be what I do best.

**BiC:** You say you don't like violence, and yet there is violence in your own books. How do you explain that?

**Rippon:** I think it must be that I am interested in what you might call emotional violence. Solange, for instance, did dreadful things, but it was because of the way she was treated as a child: She wanted to love and she wanted someone to love her, but things always prevented it and that destroyed her emotional balance. Now there's a little bit of that in everybody, so when someone like her does something violent, we can see that there's a reason for it, and that makes us more understanding about ourselves and about others.

**BiC:** Is this humanizing function a conscious purpose in your writing?

**Rippon:** No, it's just something that comes out, perhaps because I really do care about that kind of person. I get very involved with some of my characters, and I feel awfully

sad when something bad happens to them. But there's nothing I can do about it. Things happen and I can't change them, even though sometimes I'd like to. That sounds kind of crazy, I know, but it's really true. □

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## Letters to the Editor

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### DEPRECATING DAULT

sir:

*Books In Canada* served neither itself nor Canadian photography well by asking Gary Michael Dault to review a group of photography books (November) that anybody (having read anything on photography by Dault) would know in advance that he would automatically dislike. By selecting a person known for his decided visual tastes and biases, *Books in Canada* seemed set on achieving a general slaughter. Criticism is one thing; deliberate butchery is quite another.

Gary Michael Dault seems to be the rather typical Canadian photography/art critic, having produced, apparently, no photographs of his own that he is willing or able to show the public. But he can write up a nasty storm for a little money. Dault is a "word man," much given to coining esoteric phrases such as "expressive revisionings" that sound nice, but which suggest a latent contempt for the intelligence of ordinary people (of which he is probably one).

Dault quite obviously knows next to nothing about the broad scope of Canadian photography today — amateur or professional — and strikes me as being uninterested in learning. For example, Dault says of Freeman Patterson's book that "it's impossible to imagine who the book is for." Other Canadians are not quite so dense, having cleared the warehouse of 22,000 copies in two months. A second printing of an additional 32,000 copies will be ready by Dec. 1.

Dault mistakes his own inability to relate to certain subject matter with a photographer's treatment of that subject matter. No doubt Sherman Hines could try forever to produce a shot of mist at Peggy's Cove without pleasing Dault, and Janis Kraulis could roam the Rockies endlessly in a vain search for the elusive mountain dawn or clump of alpine flowers that would satisfy Dault. To Dault, these things are clichés, *per se*. If you've seen one image of Peggy's Cove, you've seen them all. Dault also assumes, mistakenly, that when a photographer makes pictures of or writes about beautiful things that the photographer necessarily has a warped view of reality, that he is unable to face the brutalities of life, and is either a sentimentalist or a romanticist. For example, Dault's silly comment that Sheehy's *Ireland* contains no photos of exploding automobiles. Talk about clichés! This sort of chauvinistic criticism long predates the Founding of Peggy's Cove. But, I suppose, there will always be writers willing to tell photographers what they *should* have photographed; too bad more photographers don't tell writers what they should have written. Perhaps I may suggest to Dault that he at least do his research a little more carefully; for example, Dault roundly criticizes Patterson for his writing about "beauty," but Patterson never writes about the subject, not in Dault's terms, anyway.

Don't remove Dault from your list of reviewers. He has some talent. Merely direct his

attention toward books for which he has some potential sympathy. Then, if he's critical, he may at least be fair. Surely, a good critic of rock music would normally be somebody with some knowledge of and sympathy for rock. *Books in Canada* should endeavour to uphold this minimum standard of criticism.

Jean Isaacs  
Director, National Association  
For Photographic Art  
Rothsay, N.B.

## MOCKING MAILLARD

Sir:

Back in what may prove to have been the good old days, the CanLit Establishment seemed pleased merely to dictate the permissible content of Canadian books. Authors could write about: geese, beavers, whales and other forms of Canadian wildlife; the lifestyles of Inuit and Amerindian hunters; the relationships of largely emuit-ridden people in downtown Toronto (or Montreal); and, of course, that ever-popular saga of boys/girls growing up on the prairies (preferably during the Depression).

Some of us, however, felt the obligation to write about things that seemed a trifle more relevant to the Canadian reality of the 1970's... and even to write things that weren't "Canadian" at all, but were just as relevant to a Spaniard, Greek, or Briton as to one of our own countrymen.

Some of us who took that course have earned a measure of success and recognition outside of Canada. It seems that this success has stimulated the CanLit Establishment to go one more step toward dictating and defining what is acceptably "Canadian." Keith Maillard's article (December) advocates that not only Canadian content but also Canadian style should be demanded of publishers and authors who would receive support from the Canada Council.

I don't know anything about the specific CanLit authors that Maillard cites as being acceptable examples of Canadian style. They may be very good writers. However, the little CanLit that I have read compels the personal conclusion that this preferred Canadian style consists of turgidity mated uncomfortably to self-consciousness, pretension to irrelevancy. I call it CanCrap. A lot of people must feel like I do because CanLit is generally published in small quantity and generally not judged relevant enough to the human condition to earn reprint abroad.

Ordinarily, sentiments like those expressed by Maillard would terrify me as examples of growing propaganda and mind control.

But then I remember. And shrug. There's a big world out there. Maillard, *Books in Canada*, and CanLit have little to do with that real world. And then, even if Maillard reveals a penchant for propagandizing and mind control worthy of Bii Brother, well, does he have the power to do a damned thing? Given the guttiness and drive of the CanLit Establishment I cheer myself with Ringo's wry comment about the mad scientist in the Beatles movie *Help!*: "If he had a government grant, he could rule the world." No potential for terror, merely the guarantee of backwater pathos.

Michael Bradley  
Halifax

## OF 'THEE' HE SINGS

Sir:

On reading the headline ("Between me and thou"), page 15, November, I feel impelled to say. "Hail to thee blithe spirit! Bird thou never

wert" — nor grammarian either, it appears.

Swinburne said, "I am I and thou art thou," and for those of his generation he need not have added, "and thee is not thou," for all knew in those days that "thou" is nominative and "thee" is objective or accusative case.

Perhaps, dear editor, you believe with Shelley that "Between me and thee what difference?" bet between "thee" and "thou" there is a vest difference.

In other words, you should not have made a play on the quotation, "the Other as Thou", but rather on "Look Man, I Love You."

Erwin E. Kreutzweiser  
Toronto

## 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

*Paris Interlude*, by Naim Kattan, translated from the French by Sheila Fischman, McClelland & Stewart. A hard, clear novel about the romantic passions of a young Iraqi Jew in Paris, written in a deliberately passionless tone.

*Thin Ice*, by Norman Levine, Deneau & Greenbag. A collection of 12 stories, more journalistic than literary, that flirt with banality yet compel attention because of their fine, ironic style.

### NON-FICTION

*The Rock Observed: Studies in the Literature of Newfoundland*, by Patrick O'Flaherty, U of T Press. Not a full-scale literary history but rather a somewhat idiosyncratic view of how the written word has shaped an essentially oral culture.

### POETRY

*Dark Times*, by Wacław Iwaniuk, Hounslow Press. Lessons in how to cope with catastrophe from a Polish poet who has lived in Canada since 1948.

## CanWit No. 49

*Dear God! the very houses seem asleep  
And all that mighty heart is lying still!*

IS THERE NO end to the pretensions of Toronto? Local snobs are beginning to refer to the city as the Little Apple and trendy columnists define the district once known as Old York as the Lower East Side. Next the boosters will be demanding a sonnet celebrating the virtues of the city once known by all and sundry (at least beyond its borders) as Hogtown. Well, why not? We'll pay \$25 for the most unflattering sonnet on Toronto

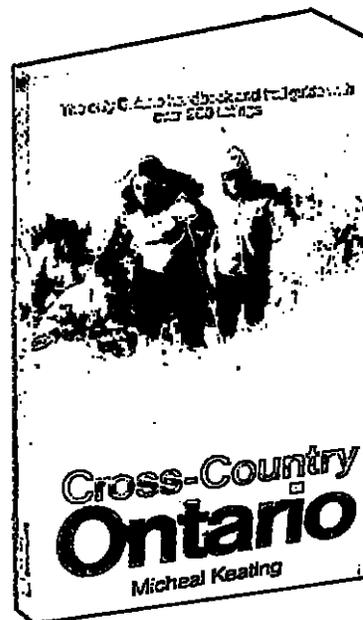
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we receive by Jan. 31. The sonnets may be Wordsworthian (see the final lines of "Westminster Bridge" above) or Shakespearean in form. Address: CanWit No. 49, *Books in Canada*, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 1N4.

#### RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 47

DISAPPOINTED BY many of the neologisms found in Bill Sherk's book *Brave New Words* (Doubleday), we suggested the CanWit crew could do better. And our confidence was justified. The winners are Janet and Barry Baldwin of Calgary, who receive \$25 for these bright and happy coinings:

- Sexplex (a low-rise brothel).
- Khomeinigrits (Iranian soul food).
- Cheapendale (tatty antiques).
- Bulgury (assault committed with a poisoned umbrella).
- Condominium (cheap co-op housing).
- Symphomaniac (woman who gets off on large orchestras).
- Barofer (one who deals in ornate stock certificates).
- Cuisintart (a cooker-hooker).
- Florablunder (fragrant Canadian foreign-policy initiative).

#### Honourable mentions:

- Beditate (to lie there and think).
- Twice-cream (a double-scoop cone).
- Goditorium (church hall).
- Messellany (messy miscellany).
- Gloomatism (psychosomatic aches and pains).
- Debreviate (write out in full).
- Wedicare (marital counselling).
- Neuralgebra (misery resulting from math homework).
- Flattery-operated (just press the button).

—Helen G. Buckler, Wolfville, N.S.

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- Dicism (one way to make up your mind).
- Pornotentate (head of a dirty-picture empire).
- Clonered (packed with dullards).

## 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.

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- Mewtation (kitten that doesn't look like any breed we know).
- Jogularity (dumb jokes about runners).

—Joan McGrath, Toronto

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- Officialdumb (a government agency).
- Barkathon (a canine concert).
- Femagogue (a women's lib fanatic).
- Dollardrum (an economic recession).

—W. Ritchie Benedict, Calgary

\*\*\*

- Fauxpastination (the art of putting one's foot in one's mouth).
- Intimale (a boyfriend).
- Ramrude (a pushy obnoxious person).

—H. J. Gard, Toronto

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- Embyronic (most poetry by Irving Layton).
- Beigeoisie (a middle class with a Florida tan).

—John Harris, Prince George, B.C.

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- Satisfaction (half a loaf).
- Courkroom (a closed courtroom).

—LeRoy Gorman, Napanee, Ont.

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- Contraseptum (a new birth-control nasal spray, occasionally cut with cocaine).

—Ian C. Johnston, Nanaimo, B.C.

## Books received

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

- The Adventures of Nanubush: Ohjway Indian Stories*, told by Sam Snake et al. Doubleday.
- The Arrow*, by James Dow, James Lorimer.
- Burgaling for Cities*, by Lionel D. Feldman and Katherine A. Graham, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- Bussett*, by Maggie Siggins, James Lorimer.
- Bob Blair's Pipeline*, by Francois Bregha, James Lorimer.
- Boomtime*, by James H. Gray, Western Producer Prairie Books.
- The Bread Ovens of Quebec*, by Lise Bolly and Jean-Francois Blanchette, National Museums of Canada.
- The Bridge, That Summer*, by A. E. Arnstetter, Turnstone Press.
- Canadians All 3*, by Charles Kahn and Maureen Kahn, Methuen.
- The Canadian Dictionary for Children*, edited by Lawrence Haskett, Collier Macmillan.
- The Case of the Moonlit Gold Dust*, by George Swede, Three Trees Press.
- Children's Choices of Canadian Books, Vol. 1*, edited by Margaret Caughey, Citizens' Committee on Children.
- Cigarette Pack Art*, by Chris Mullen, Totem.
- The Confident Years: Canada in the 1920's Teacher's Guide*, by Robert J. Bondy and William C. Matys, Prentice-Hall of Canada.
- Conquer We Must*, by Kathleen Auld Trull, Vesta Publications.
- Cross-Country Ontario*, by Michael Keating, Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- A Disciplined Intelligence*, by A. B. McKillop, McGill-Queen's University Press.
- The Douglas Convolution*, by Edward Llewellyn, New American Library.
- Energy Policy: The Global Challenge*, edited by Peter N. Nemetz, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- English-Canadian Furniture of the Georgian Period*, by Donald Blake Webster, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- The Enthusiasm of Robertson Davies*, edited by Judith Skelton Grant, M & S.
- Exile in the Wilderness*, by Jean Murray Cole, Burns & MacEachern.
- Federalism and the Regulatory Process*, by Richard J. Schultz, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- The Fire Sweeper*, retold by William Toye, illustrated by Elizabeth Cleaver, Oxford University Press.
- A Flight of Average Persons*, by Helen Foyrakenko, New Star Books.
- A Flock of Blackbirds*, by Margaret Saunders, Unfinished Monument Press.
- The Forests Which Shaped Them*, by Mary Ashworth, New Star Books.

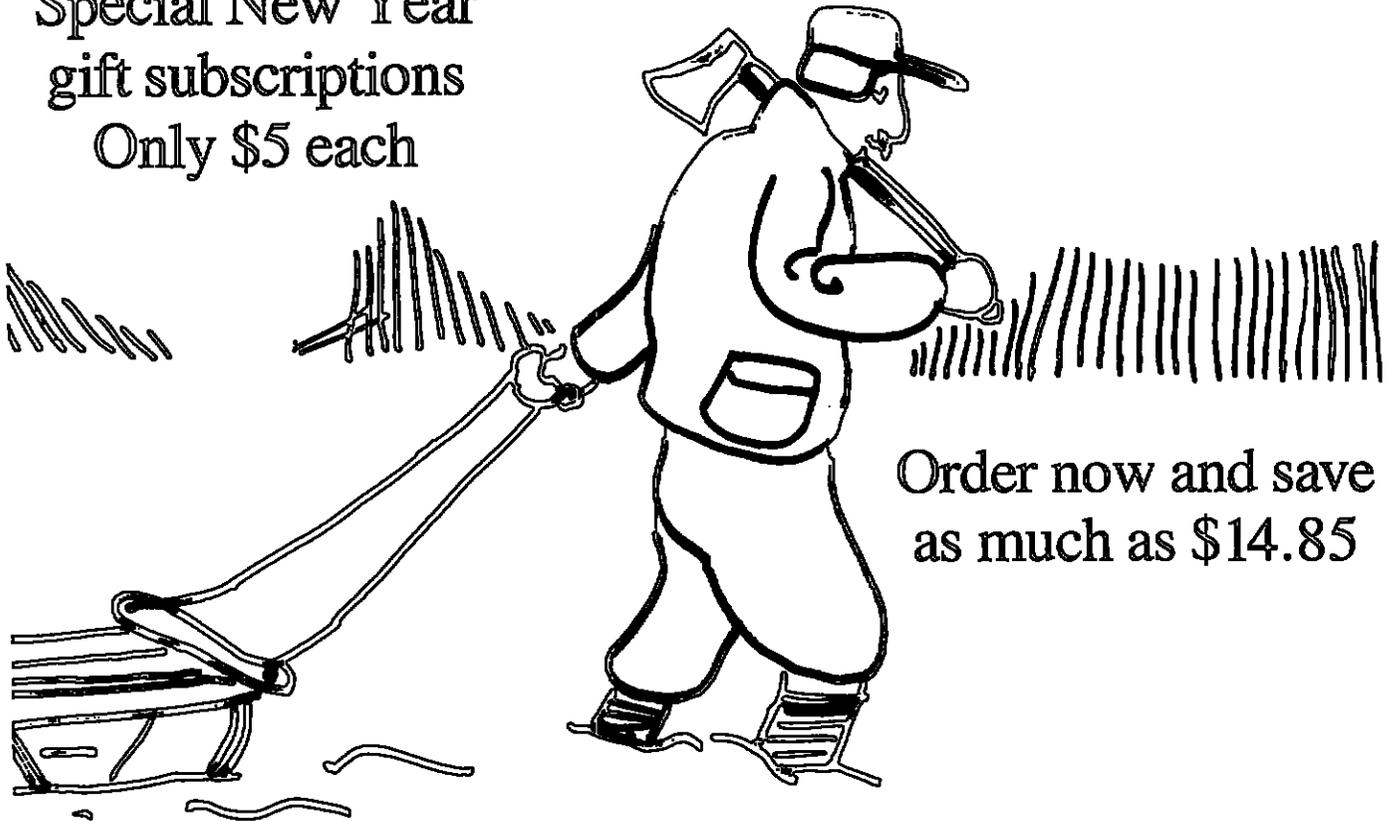
- The Front Page Challenge Quiz Book*, by Charles Weir, Thomas Nelson & Sons.
- Fur Trade Cance Routes of Canada*, by Eric W. Morse, U of T Press.
- Games Like Fossengilla*, by Elizabeth Harper, Fiddlehead.
- Go-Boyl*, by Roger Caron, Thomas Nelson & Sons.
- Graduations of Grandeur*, by Ralph Gustafson, Sono Nis Press.
- The Great Lakes*, by Walter M. Tovell, Royal Ontario Museum.
- Guns in Paradise*, by Fred McClement, PaperJacks.
- Gutenberg 2*, by Dave Godfrey and Douglas Parkhill, Press Porcépé.
- Handy Things to Have Around the House*, by Loris S. Russell, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Have Them Build A Tower Together*, by Jacques Hebert, translated by Sheila Fischman, M & S.
- The Hechlers*, by Peter Desbarats and Terry Mosher, M & S.
- Hoorny for Today!*, by Fran Newman and Claudette Boulanger, North Winds Press.
- How to Invest in Gold*, by Peter C. Cavelti, Maximus Press.
- In Due Season*, by Christine van der Mark, New Star Books.
- An Introduction to Ontario Fossils*, by Janet Waddington, Royal Ontario Museum.
- Inventions*, by Bruce Whiteman, Three Trees Press.
- Jeanie's Magic Boots*, by Brenda Bellingham, Tree Frog Press.
- Last Year in Paradise*, by Roger Moore, Fiddlehead.
- Lone Travellers*, by Don Polson, Fiddlehead.
- The Long Poem Anthology*, edited by Michael Ondaatje, Coach House Press.
- Making Connections*, by Wada Rowland, Gage.
- The Man with the Styrofoam Head*, by Gregory Grace, Turnstone Press.
- The Measure of Canadian Society*, by John Porter, Gage.
- Members of An Art Dealer*, by G. Blair Laing, M & S.
- Les Micro-Esclaves vers une Bio-Industrie Canadienne*, by Pierre Sormay, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- Mr. Brown and His Magic Mustache*, by Monica Tap, illustrated by Martha Jablonski-Jones, Tree Frog Press.
- Modern Survival*, by Dwight R. Schoh, Hurdig.
- Mother's Game Fishing*, by Norma Dillon, Turnstone Press.
- Moving Island*, by Diana Hayes, Fiddlehead.
- Ms Moffat*, by Ned Brown, PaperJacks.
- Murmurs*, by M. Rasha, Vesta Publications.
- Northern Cookbook*, edited by Eleanor Ellis, Hantig.
- Northern Survival*, by Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
- The Nuclear Book*, by David Peat, Deneau & Greenberg.
- The Ordinary Bath*, by Dennis Lee, illustrated by John McKee, M & S.
- Our Nell*, by Candace Savage, Western Producer Prairie Books.
- Performance by Artists*, edited by A. A. Bronson and Peggy Gale, Art Metropole.
- Perrilla in the Perilous Forest*, by Muriel Whitaker and Jetako Ironside, Oberon Press.
- The Protected Place*, by Gilean Douglas, Gray's Publishing.
- Remembering the Future*, by Jim Christoff, published by the author.
- The Right Honourable John George Diefenbaker*, by Carolyn Weir, Macmillan.
- Sandy Macleuzle, Why Look So Glim?*, by Gordon Henderson and Pic, Deneau & Greenberg.
- Shakespeare and the Flying Bed*, by Mark Cote, Magook with M & S.
- The Shlyn Dance*, by Nirmala Singh, Vesta Publications.
- Shawwop Stories*, edited by Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy, Commcept Publishing.
- The Siege of Quebec*, by John Knox, Pendragon House.
- The Sinking Ark*, by Norman Myers, Pergamon Press.
- Solplan 3: Solar Greenhouses for Canada*, by Richard Kadulski et al, The Drawing-Room Graphic Services Ltd.
- Soundings*, by Hart Broudy, Press Porcépé.
- Squatter's Rights*, by Fred Boule, Oberon Press.
- Stephanie*, by Jean Austin-Leigh, A Room of One's Own Press.
- The Struma Incident*, by Michael Solomon, M & S.
- Sunflakes & Snowshoes*, by Fran Newman and Claudette Boulanger, North Winds Press.
- Syntax of Ferment*, by Liliane Welch, Fiddlehead.
- Their Town: The Media, The Media and the Party Machine*, edited by Bill Freeman and Marsha Hewitt, James Lorimer.
- This Body That I Live In*, by Anne Le Dressay, Turnstone Press.
- To Say the Least: Canadian Poets from A to Z*, edited by F. K. Page, Press Porcépé.
- The Toronto Maple Leafs 1979/1980*, by Stan Obodiac, M & S.
- Tomorrow Will Be Sunday*, by Harold Horwood, PaperJacks.
- Two Nations*, by Richard G. Craig and Randy J. Noonan, New Star Books.
- Underdevelopment and Social Movements in Atlantic Canada*, edited by Robert J. Brym and R. James Sacoman, New Hogtown Press.
- Unlock Your Mind and Be Free!*, by Edgar A. Barnett, Dominic Press Ltd.
- Upper Canada Colleges: 1829-1979*, by Richard B. Howard, Macmillan.
- The Villars-Monnering Papers*, by Ian Shibley, Catalyst.
- We Stand Together*, by Gloria Menzro, James Lorimer.
- What Now??? I Just Wrote a Song!!! The Song Trust*.
- When the Dogs Bark At Night*, by Valerie Reed, Turnstone Press.
- Where to Eat in Calgary & Edmonton 1979/80*, by Bernice Evans and Judy Schultz, Oberon Press.
- Who's Who in Canadian Finance*, edited by Evelyn J.C. Davidson, Trans-Canada Press.
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# 130 Canadian Publishers want you to know what they're up to

That's why they're members of the Canadian Book Information Centre — and that's why you should get to know us.

## Who we are . . .

The Canadian Book Information Centre is a nation-wide trade association of 130 Canadian-owned publishing houses. The Centre has one purpose — to promote Canadian writing and publishing.

Our members represent a broad cross section of publishing in Canada from small regional presses to the large national houses whose titles number in the thousands.

Funded by two levels of government and by the publishers themselves, the CBIC works from three offices across Canada — Vancouver, Halifax and Toronto.

## What we do . . .

The CBIC provides services both to the publishers of Canadian books and to their customers.

Promotion activities include more than 150 displays each year, the sponsoring of seminars and workshops about Canadian books, the publication of annotated catalogues and title checklists and the maintenance of three permanent book displays housing a total of 3,600 titles.

For publishers, the CBIC researches promotion ideas, produces a Media Handbook listing Canada's print and electronic media and acts as a liaison between producer and consumer.

In short, the CBIC keeps lines of communication open between all facets of the Canadian book industry.

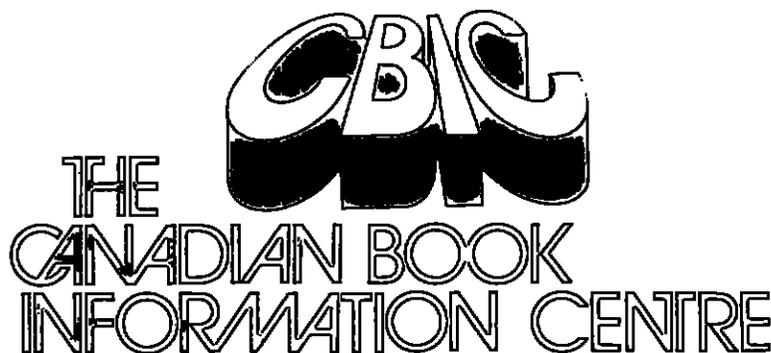
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