

A NATIONAL REVIEW OF BOOKS

MAY 1988 \$1.95

BOOKS

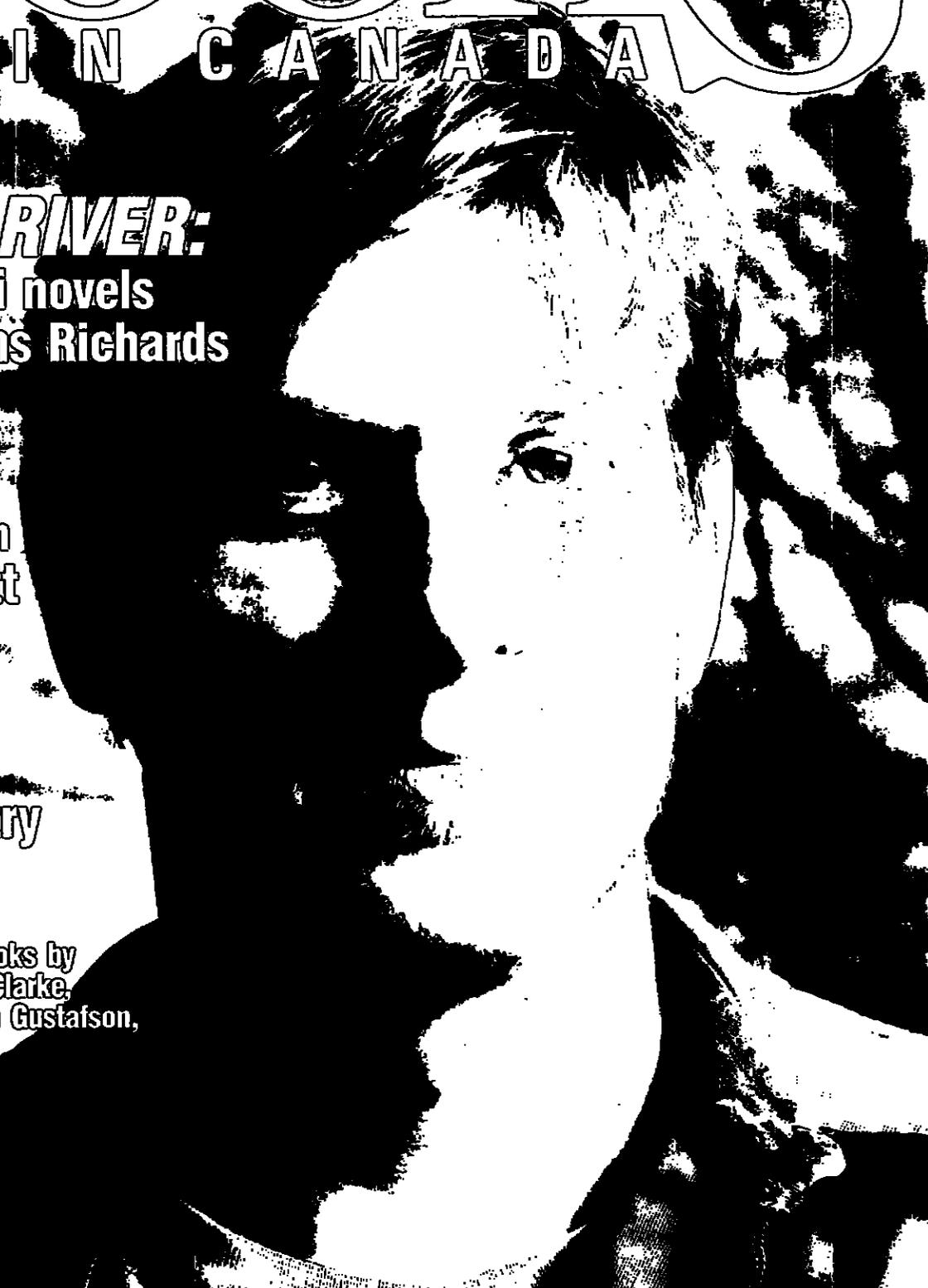
I N C A N A D A

VIOLENT RIVER:
The Miramichi novels
of David Adams Richards

An interview with
Joe Rosenblatt

PASSAGES
New fiction by
Rohinton Mistry

And reviews of new books by
David Stafford, Austin Clarke,
David McFadden, Ralph Gustafson,
and the Clio Collective



FEATURES

PROFILE

Violent River

David Adams *Richards*, novelist, poet, playwright and screenwriter. By *Douglas Glover*

9

WORK IN PROGRESS

Passages

An excerpt from a nets short story by *Rohinton Mistry*

13

INTERVIEW

Qualicum Metaphysics

Joe *Rosenblatt* and the meaning of trout. By *Pleuke Boyce*

17

REPORT

Forget Not My World

The Spirit Sings, the 1988 Winter Olympics, and the Native People's protest. By *John Goddard*

19

REVIEWS

FEATURE REVIEW

Canadian Writers at Work: Interviews with Geoff Hancock;

So To Speak: Interviews with Canadian Writers,

edited by *Peter O'Brien*

21

Brief Reviews

Short notices on recent fiction, non-fiction, and poetry

5

The Silent Game: The Real World of Imaginary Spies,

by *David Stafford*

23

Gypsy Guitar: One Hundred Poems of Romance and Betrayal,

by *David McFadden*

23

Pmud Empires, by Austin Clarke

24

Permugenesis: A Recombinant Text, by Christopher Dewdney;

Coming to Jakarta: A Poem About Terror, by Peter Dale Scott

25

Tesseract, edited by Phyllis Gotlieb and Douglas Barbour

25

Turn Up the Contrast: CBC Television Drama Since 1952,

by *Mary Jane Miller*

26

The Merzbook: Kurt Schwitters Poems, by Colin Morton;

Abraham, by Colin Browne

27

Collected Poems, by Ralph Gustafson

27

Plumets and Other Partialities, by Ralph Gustafson; Winter

Prophecies, by Ralph Gustafson

29

Quebec Women: A History, by the Clio Collective

30

A Public Purpose, by Tom Kent

31

Nights Below Station Street, by David Adams Richards

32

Belonging: A Book For the Questioning Catholic Today,

by *Lucinda Vardey*; **Always on Sunday, by Tom Harpur**

32

English Canadian Theatre, by Eugene Benson and L. W. Conolly

33

Canadian Film, by David Clandfield

34

Lifting the Shadow of War, by Pierre Elliott Trudeau

35

Time Pressure, by Spider Robinson

36

Justice Delayed: Nazi War Criminals in Canada,

by *David Matas with Susan Charendoff*

36

DEPARTMENTS

The Written Word, by I. M. Owen 1

Field Notes: Tkc Laurentians in Peterborough, By John Goddard

Best of the West, by *Ariha van Herk*

3

First Novels, by Douglas Hill 37

Letters 38

Received 39

CanWit No. 129, by Phil Surguy 39

Classified 39

CanLit Acrostic No. 15, by Mary D. Trainer 40

CONTRIBUTORS

B.K. Adams teaches English and history at Upper Canada College, Toronto. **Pleuke Boyce** is a freelance writer in Errington, B.C. Toronto poet **Barbara Carey** has edited an anthology of poetry, *Poets '88*, to be published in the fall by Quarry. **Timothy Chamberlain** teaches English at Seneca College, Toronto. **Sheelagh Conway** is the author of *A Women and Catholicism (PaperJacks)*. **Serf Cowan** is a Toronto freelance writer. Novelist and critic **Brian Fawcett** lives in Vancouver. Montreal poet **Ray Filip** is a frequent contributor to these pages. **D. French** is a writer living in Ottawa. **John Gillbart** is a member of the Shaw Festival company and a professor of French at the University of Toronto. Poet **Susan Glickman's** latest book is *The Power to Move (Vehicule)*. **Douglas Glover's** *The South Will Rise a, Noon* is to be published this month by Penguin. **John Goddard** is a Montreal writer. **Tim Halstrom** is a Toronto artist. **Brian Henry** is a Toronto freelance writer. Novelist and critic **Douglas Hill** lives in Port Kirwan, Nfld. **David Homel** is a Montreal writer, critic and translator. **Wayne Johnston's** new novel *The Time of Their Lives* (Oberon) was reviewed in the April issue. Edmonton writer **Myrna Kostash** is the author of *No Kidding: Inside the World of Teenage Girls (M&S)*. **Brent Ledger** is a Toronto freelance writer. **Linda Leth** is at work on a new book about postwar English fiction in Quebec. Novelist **Jack MacLeod** teaches political economy at the University of Toronto. **Rohinton Mistry** is preparing a new collection of short stories. **Paul Orenstein's** photographs of literary personalities frequently appear in these pages. **I. M. Owen** is a frequent contributor to these pages. **Gerald Pratley** is director of the Ontario Film Institute. **Norman Sneider** is the author of *The Changing of the Guard* (Lester & Orpen Dennys). **Phil Surguy** is a Toronto freelance writer. **Harold Town's** ink scraperboard drawing made for the Margaret Laurence Tribute poster is reproduced on p. 3. **Martin Townsend** is a Toronto freelance writer. **Mary D. Trainer** is a freelance writer and puzzle-maker in Port Coquitlam, B.C. **Ariha van Herk's** latest novel is *No Fixed Address (M&S)*. Poet **Fred Wsh** lives in South Sloman, G.C. **Allan Weiss's** bibliography of Canadian short stories will be published this summer by ECW. **Reg Whitaker** is the author of *Double Standard: The Secret History of Canadian Immigration* (Lester & Orpen Dennys). Poet and bibliographer **Bruce Whiteman** lives in Montreal. **George Woodcock** is at work on a new translation of Marcel Proust's *A la Recherche du temps perdu*

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY
Paul Orenstein

EDITOR: *Doris Cowan*
ADVISORY EDITOR: *Brian Fawcett*
COPY EDITOR: *Alison Reid*
GENERAL MANAGER: *Susan Traer*
CIRCULATION MANAGER: *Susan Aihoshi*
CIRCULATION ASSISTANT *Tracy Shepherd Matheson*
ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER: *Beth Bruder*
CONSULTANTS: *Robert Farrelly; Jack Jensen; Mary Lu Toms; Linda Crawley*
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: *K.G. Probert (Prairies); Eleanor Wachtel; Shirley Knight Morris; Paul Wilson; Ray Filip (Quebec); Terry Goldie (East Coast)*

Books in Canada is published once a year, with the assistance of the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council by the Canadian Review of Books Ltd. 366 Adelaide Street East, Suite 432, Toronto, Ont. M5A 3B9 Telephone (416) 363-5436 Available in selected book stores across Canada. SUBSCRIPTIONS: Individual rates in Canada, one year \$15, two years \$28, libraries and institutions one year \$20, two years \$38. For delivery outside Canada per year additional \$3 surface mail. \$11 a mail to U.S.A., \$15 airmail to other countries. Please direct subscription inquiries to the Circulation Department. Back issues available on microfilm from McLaren 12 2700th St. N.E., P.O. Box 972, Station F, Toronto, Ont. M4V 2K9 Indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index. Member of the CPBA. Material is covered on the understanding that both parties are bound by the terms of the standard PWAC contract. The editors cannot be held responsible for user's own material. Second Class 1121 - Registration No. 2593 Contents © 1998 Typesetting by Jay Tee Graphics Ltd. ISSN 0945-2984

Demonic possessives

If you were introduced to Brian Mulroney and (not being one of his close friends) sought to put him at his ease by asking him where he lived and where he worked, I don't think even he would reply, 'I live on Ottawa's Sussex Drive and my office is in Ottawa's Langevin Block'

By I. M. Owen



IN THE MARCH ISSUE I reviewed a book by C. E. S. Franks. On opening the magazine, I was surprised to see **glaring** at me from the top of a column, the phrase "Franks' book." Had I written **that**? No, my carbon copy revealed. I had written "the book." But if I had felt it necessary in the fourth paragraph of a short review to refresh the reader's memory about whose book I was reviewing, I'd have written *Franks's*. The reason for omitting the *s* after the apostrophe when a word or name ends in *s* is presumably that two sibilants in succession are hard to say. But they're not. We have words like *thesis* and plurals like *fuses*. If we can talk about *keeping up with the Joneses*, surely we can say *Jones's kook* without difficulty. I admit, though, that the final *s* becomes troublesome if it is followed, or its last syllable is preceded, by another sibilant. Thus we say *for goodness' sake*, *for Jesus' sake*. Some authorities say that the final *s* should be dropped after all names derived from ancient Greek and Latin that end in *s*. This is too arbitrary. I think. I have no trouble with *Aeschylus's* or *Augustus's*. But it's true that *Sophocles's* and *Themistocles's* are awkward mouthfuls. Can anyone offer me an all-purpose formula to cover this point? Pending that, we'll just have to go on varying our practice according to what sounds right to us.

The editor has drawn my attention to a curious point. A phrase that we see in the papers with monotonous frequency in connection with appointments made by the federal government is "a close friend of the

prime minister." While acknowledging in passing that a man with so many close friends can't be all bad, I must point out that this isn't idiomatic English. We don't say *a friend of me/you/her/him*; we use *mine/yours/hers/his*. Therefore, we must also say *prime minister's*. The idiom is anomalous, but it's too well established to be abandoned now. It goes tight back to Middle English: the first citation in the *OED* is from 1300 ("aught of his"); Chaucer writes "A Wend of bis that calléd was Pandare"; and the royal accounts for 1502 list "a young horse of the Queen's."

One more possessive matter. In an article in *Maclean's* I find "Peterborough, Ont.'s Trent University . . . Vancouver's Black Rose Fii Productions . . . New York's West 57th Street . . . New York City's Rockefeller Center . . . Trent University's Wernick." There's nothing wrong with these phrases grammatically, of course, but apply the test I suggested in the last issue: would you ever say these things? You wouldn't. So don't write them. If you were introduced to Brian Mulroney and (not being one of his close friends) sought to put him at his ease by asking him where he lived and where he worked, I don't think even he would reply, "I live on Ottawa's Sussex Drive and my office is in Ottawa's Langevin Block." Fowler called this 'S INCONGRUOUS and traced its origin to newspaper headlines:

even ONTARIO'S PRIME MINISTER (so are we chastened!) we can bow down before while he is in capitals; but when he comes amongst us in the ordinary garb of lower-case text, we pluck up heart again & want to kick him.

Ernest Gowers dropped this article from his 1965 revision of *Modern English Usage*, perhaps thinking it a lost cause. But I'll continue to stamp on the usage whenever it flares up in my path. Even if I have to kick David Peterson.

Now a couple of words that have acquired new and unnecessary meanings in recent times:

CAREEN As every experienced reader of

pirate stories knows, this verb means to turn a ship on her side, on dry land, to clean off the barnacles. But it has a new meaning, quite unrelated, and probably attributable to a typesetter's misreading of *career*: as in "The car careened around the bend." It has a line, dashing, piratical feeling, I admit; and as, according to the *OED Supplement*, it first appeared the same year I did, it's probably just as established as I am and will certainly last longer. But it's absurd.

DOCK This really means a body of water between two wharves where a vessel can be moored in safety. A commoner word for this in North America — and it's a nice, expressive word — is *slip*, especially when it's meant to accommodate a boat rather than a ship. (Travis McGee docks his houseboat *The Busted Flush* at Slip F-18, Bahia Mar, Lauderdale.) In ordinary speech, especially among summer cottagers, *dock* has come to mean the wharf itself. This is given as the second meaning by my favourite dictionary, the *American Heritage*, and as the first meaning, astonishingly, by my second favourite, *Collins*. Yet the first volume of the *OED Supplement* (1972) shows no knowledge of it; nor does the current edition of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1982). Last year I copyedit a typescript that was full of docks, and I changed them all to wharves. The author didn't object, and the book sold extremely well, so you see. □

A SOVIET ODYSSEY Suzanne Rosenberg



"Suzanne Rosenberg's book is one of the most remarkable autobiographies of our time. It covers the whole Soviet period, and at levels from the intellectual world to the labour camps.

Above all, it is the most valuable perspective on the whole Soviet phenomenon ever to be published by someone who can rightly be described as both an extraordinary and an ordinary woman."

Robert Conquest

212 pages Clothbound \$24.95

Oxford Canada

TOTAL COVERAGE

Exercise



EXPRES

The Exercise Prescription
Developed by P&BICIPaction
The fitness program for **EVERYONE**.
Newly created for the Canadian
Armed Forces, **EXPRES** brings the
model T of exercise, the **5Bx** plan,
into the computer age. This unique
book offers a complete system of ex-
ercises that you can do with or with-
out equipment. All exercises have
been integrated with a variety of
sports activities from walking and
jogging to swimming and cycling and
are presented simply and clearly with
easy-to-understand charts and illus-
trations. **EXPRES**, It's ALL you need!
09.96 pepper

Business



ANOTHER DAY IN PARADISE:

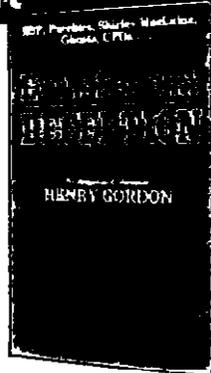
The Real Club Med Story
by Patrick Blednick
A close look at the worldwide va-
cation company that promotes sea,
sun, sports and sex plus all the facts
they don't put in the brochures. It
gives the fascinating backgrounds of
the men who own and run the multi-
million-dollar enterprise and a
behind-the-scenes look at the lives of
the people who work in Club Med
resorts.
\$84.96 cloth

Issues

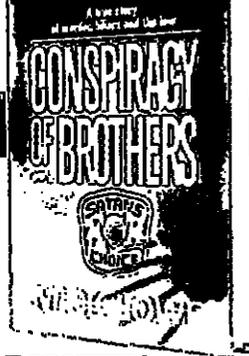


ANATOMY OF A NIGHTMARE: The
Failure of Society in Dealing with
Child Sexual Abuse
by Martyn Kendrick
The first in-depth look at the "epi-
demic" of child abuse trials in the
United States and Canada involving
allegations of satanism, ritual murder
and cannibalism. Kendrick exposes
the roots of the moral and legal
dilemmas, showing the weaknesses of
current investigative procedures.
\$24.95 doth

Occult



EXTRASENSORY DECEPTION:
ESP, Psychics, Shirley MacLaine,
Ghosts, UFO's...
by Henry Gordon
Henry Gordon, magician, lecturer and
veteran debunker of paranormal
phenomenon, details the wacky and
secret methods of nearly every kind
of "psychic" to have surfaced in
North America. Gordon is highly re-
spected in the psychic field and has
written a book to put our minds at
rest.
\$19.95 cloth



CONSPIRACY OF BROTHERS
A True Story of Murder, Bikers
and the Law
by Mick Lowe

On the night of October 18, 1978,
Bill Matiyek was murdered. 10 years
later two questions remain: who
killed Bill Matiyek? And why?

After 3 years of investigating all
the facts, Lowe unleashes the truth
about the world of bikers, lawyers,
police, prisons and parole boards. He
shows how among the brotherhoods,
It was **not the bikers** who were
guilty of conspiracy.
\$27.95 cloth

Health



PAIN - LEARNING TO LIVE WITHOUT IT

by David Corey, Ph.D with
Stan Solomon
A step-by-step therapy for the treat-
ment of chronic pain using a whole
person approach through cog-
nitive/behavioural therapy. Based on
the latest scientific research, this
book is written in everyday language,
with simple, easy-to-understand il-
lustrations.
016.96 Trade paper

Macmillan of Canada

The Laurentians in Peterborough

When Trent University organized a three-day 'Tribute to Margaret Laurence,' their modest fundraiser turned into a national event and attracted four times the number of people expected

"IT WAS AS IF Margaret Laurence herself were looking down on us, saying, 'Gee, the evening is getting too formal. How can I muck it up?'"

John Wadland is talking about the three-day Tribute to Margaret Laurence that he helped organize at Trent University in March, which began as a local fundraiser and became a national event, featuring 14 literary figures and attracting four times the number of people expected.

The point at which Wadland imagines Laurence to have intervened came during the gala dinner Friday night. Three hundred guests paying \$30 each were finishing their kiwi fruit and whipped cream in the Great Hall, anticipating a stroll over to Wenjack Theatre to hear readings by poet Miriam Waddington, novelist Timothy Findley, and short-story writer Alice Munro, with broadcaster Peter Gzowski as master of ceremonies. But nobody had stopped nonpaying fans from entering the theatre; and over dessert news reached Wadland that the theatre was full, an overflow room with closed-circuit television was also full, and a corridor being outfitted with two TV monitors and a few dozen chairs was quickly filling.

Wadland, who is head of Canadian studies at Trent, and fellow organizer Orm Mitchell, head of English, sat stricken. "Then," says Wadland, "some guy who had nothing to do with the event suggested why not have a reading here, too?" As Pierre Berton launched into a scheduled postdinner speech on the evils of anti-porn Bii C-54, whispered consultations began with other writers in the hall. Runners were sent to find books by Robert Kroetsch and W. O. Mitchell, Orm's father. P. K. Page drove downtown to fetch a copy of *Brazilian Journal from the Holiday Inn*. When Wadland tremulously announced a change of programme, the guests shuffled, then applauded, and the evening took on a fresh, impromptu atmosphere. Always one to rise to an occasion, W. O. Mitchell gave a star performance from *The Vanishing Point*, playfully slurring the word *fog*, and tipping dangerously over *forked*, bringing a sense of humour to the C-54 issue — which Berton's speech had utterly lacked.

The weekend continued in the same informal, celebratory spirit. At Wenjack Theatre, someone timed the applause for Alice Munro at four and a half minutes. She agreed to another reading the following night, joined by Waddington and Findley, for the dinner guests who had missed them. Fans also packed a reading Saturday night by P. K. Page, W. O.

Mitchell, and Hugh MacLennan, with literary editor Robert Weaver as moderator. And on Saturday afternoon, people filled the public library for readings by Roo Borson, Adele Wiseman, Robert Kroetsch, and Sylvia Fraser.

Even the black-bordered poster Harold Town had produced for the occasion shaved a young, lively Margaret Laurence who appeared to be still with us.

Organizers at Trent wanted to honour Laurence, acknowledged as one of Canada's greatest writers, because she had lived in the area since 1969, and had a close association with the university until the time of her death in January 1987. She received an honorary degree in 1972, became Trent's first writer-in-residence a year later, and in 1981 was named chancellor. The event was held also to raise money for a writers-in-residence fellowship, to enable promising beginning authors to write at Trent for several months each,



H.K. SCRAPBOARD DRAWING BY HAROLD TOWN

expenses paid. And perhaps organizers wanted to live down Peterborough County's reputation as the place where a few people sensitive to sexual references and sheet language tried (and failed) to ban Laurence's novel *The Diviners* from a grade 12 course at Lakefield

High School.

"The response to this event says to me what I've always known," Wadland said. "Margaret Laurence was a national symbol, a universally respected, admired, and loved woman." — JOHN GODDARD

Best of the West

The Calgary audience for the arts is fiercely critical and powerfully interested. It has not been accorded enough respect

CANADA IS READY to concede that the Olympic Winter Games were a success, arts festival and all. Well, what the hell can we do? — Calgary pulled it off. That has to be admitted, however reluctantly. But while people discuss the athletic events, the ceremonies, the arts festival, there is always an implied judgement of the city: this past season. *Calgarians have been treated to the world media's assessment of their architecture, their weather, their street plan, their dress code, their graveyards, their breakfasting habits, and last but not least, their capacity for culture.*

Watching this process has been fascinating to me. I live in this city because I choose to. I came five years ago, after the boom was over, out of affection rather than for money. And I write about this city; it keeps sneaking into my fiction. I know it intimately, and it would take a lot to lure me away. So these Olympic judgements have, to me, revealed more about the evaluators than about Calgary, which remains somewhat mysterious to the rest of Canada.

Still, the arts festival did reveal a good deal about Calgary's cultural life. First of all, it has one. Olympics or not, no cultureless community could have produced, arranged for, organized, and attended the events of the arts festival. But most important were those who attended: the audience.

One of the earliest events was the international writers' festival and book fair, and in the concluding panel on the future of writing, Robert Kroetsch said, "The future of writing is in the audience. Without audience we are all silenced." Again and again, through films, concerts, plays, that line kept coming back to me. What made the arts festival a heady success was not the organizers or advertising or even the Olympics, but that solid block of people who respond to and support creativity, that fiercely critical and powerfully interested audience, which has not been accorded enough respect. A wag was heard to say, after the Governor General's Awards ceremony, attended by the largest audience the awards have ever seen, "Oh, there are so many people here because Calgarians are so grateful." Exactly the kind of

patronizing reaction that would make any Westerner want to kick the, yes, Eastern speaker in the stomach with a very pointed cowboy boot.

So there was the audience, that unpredictable octopus that comes to listen, watch, heckle, applaud, or get up and walk out. That serves as the real test of any artist's art, of any show's success. And it was as an audience that Calgary revealed itself most interestingly. Although not enough people bought tickets to a "rock spectacular" starring Neil Young and Avograph (the show had to be cancelled), the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra's performance of Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony* was sold out months in advance. The NOVA Corporation underwrote Alberta Theatre Projects to commission five new Canadian plays, performed during January and February. There was a film festival, dance, art, and new music, all of it audience, and audience well.

This audience was not extremely traditional, or terribly easy to please, but it did seem to carry with its critical capacity an overwhelming enthusiasm. I saw no instantaneous standing ovations, but a sense of dear-eyed evaluation, an awareness of the quality of what they were watching and a ability to make tough judgements. That capacity was obvious, perhaps nowhere more obvious than with *The Spirit Sings*. The political protest of the Lubicon Lake Cree has had a powerful effect: the audience was forced to decide whether it would boycott the show; the audience was implicated in its own participation. The very conjunction of the Lubicon protest with the exhibition has rebounded: the audience may have chosen to see the exhibit, but their seeing it has raised support for the Lubicon Lake band.

Obviously, the writers' festival was the most important event for me. The inclusion of a writers' festival was nervy enough; there has never been a literary component to any Olympic Ark Festival, and of course, this one had the task of measuring up to Greg Gatenby's formidable international writers' festival, which takes place in Toronto every fall. Preparations got off to a late start and seemed to be plagued by disorganization and

cancellations, but by the time the festival began, those problems had been mightily overcome.

For a participating writer, a writers' festival is always half nightmare, half dream. There are all those words in the air, books, pages, arguments, ideas, and every time you turn around, another writer. But even in that morass, there were crystalline moments, epiphanies and violations, drunken parties and quiet conferences, dancing in the corridors and brisk walks outside in 20-below-zero weather. I'm short, all the insanities that "lake writers' festivals so fascinating for both writers and audience.

Why does any writer stand up in front of a panel and talk about creative nonfiction or travel writing publishing or mythology? We most like it, or at least we must think that to do it, something

the one occupation secretly admires its audience, to open the separating door between reader and writer. And this titers' festival did that, stunningly.

I think the panel wrote, "Jaan Kaplinski, the Estonian poet, quietly undercut J. Donleavy's supercilious claims about writing for money. Japanese (but born in Canada) poet Kazuko Shiraiishi talked about woman poise word phallus. end

very said "I like country birth." Lawrence Ferlinghetti '60s in Sven's perspective of his poetry. Delblanc and a deep outaught Gu Hua

Chinese writing Blais caught her listener in the trance of a lengthening death. Ryszard Kapuscinski Shahveen the Nassrallah Lebanon Calgary. And publisher Anna Porter defined are to

There was enough enough And by the that shifting audience had recognized a real hem of the page: it was Jaan Kaplinski who earned their writers are as good as their counterparts in of the world confirmed a s Bringhurst's supereading Pindar And th erefused

hotshot American t close and gled McInerney's to value Jay cocaine cleverness Enough is enough. The audience had the same reaction to the American Split Decisions, the closing gala of the film festival. How predictable they be knows more than the — ARITHA VAN HERK

BRIEF REVIEWS

FOLKWAYS

TALES UNTIL DAWN: THE WORLD OF A CAPE BRETON STORY-TELLER

by Joe Neil MacNeil,
translated by John Shaw,
McGill-Queen's University Press,
268 pages, unpriced, paper
(ISBN 0 7735 0560 1).

THIS COLLECTION of Gaelic folk tales, proverbs, games, rhymes, and songs seems designed to be accessible to everyone from the Gaelic scholar to the general reader. The book is an English translation of stories that an old Cape Breton story-teller named Joe Neil MacNeil recited from memory in Gaelic. MacNeil, who lives in Bii Pond, Cape Breton County, told his stories to John Shaw, a specialist in Celtic folklore, who recorded, transcribed, and translated them, taking pains as he says in the book's lengthy introduction, to keep them both entertaining and accurate. MacNeil's stories are not his own. Some of them are many hundreds of years old, others not quite so old, but all have been passed orally from one generation to the next. MacNeil recalls a time, before television and radio, when people gathered in one another's homes for story-telling, a practice, he says, that "united" people and established a community of spirit and tradition that is nowadays all but impossible.

Aside from their doubtless great importance to scholars of Gaelic literature, the stories in *Tales until Dawn* are worth reading for their own sake. The titles alone indicate how entertaining and charming are some of these stories. There is a story called "The Woman Who Was Awarded a Pair of Shoes by the Devil," and a very short story called "The Niit It Rained Porridge," and another called "Angus MacIsaac's Trip to the Moon." One story, "The Death of Diarmaid," tells of how Diarmaid, as he is dying, asks for water, which his mortal enemy, Fionn, goes to fetch. Fionn scoops up water with his hands, and then, remembering how much he hates Diarmaid, opens his hands and lets the

water run out. Feeling regretful, however, he ties to scoop up more, only to find that now his hands cannot hold water. MacNeil ends the story by saying that this is why people today cannot carry water in their hands.

Tales until Dawn can be recommended to anyone interested in Cape Breton Island or in folk tales generally. The translation captures the simplicity of folk tales without making them seem at all cuts or contrived. It is clear that Mr. MacNeil, the story-teller, and Mr. Shaw, the translator, enjoyed their collaboration.

— WAYNE JOHNSTON

SOCIETY

ANOTHER DAY IN PARADISE? THE REAL CLUB MED STORY

by Patrick Blednick,
Macmillan, 204 pages, \$24.95 cloth
(ISBN 07715-9282-5)

THIS IS certainly not a book-length tourist brochure, despite its pretty cover. In *Another Day in Paradise?* Patrick Blednick provides an engrossing account of the Club Méditerranée phenomenon, from its humble origins in 1950 to his personal visit to the Florida "Sandpiper" village in 1987.

One might query whether the subject merits an exhaustive investigation: isn't Blednick taking a deep dive into a rather shallow pool? However, very early we discover that still waters run deep at the Club Med pool. For



example, we are told that in 1977 the club was subject to four armed robberies at various locations, a murder in Corfu, two deaths by misadventure in the Tunisian desert, two arson attacks in an alpine village, and two terrorist bombings in Corsica. Nevertheless, over half a million guests paid for Club Med holidays that year, adding new meaning to the resort's "Hands Up!" theme song.

Blednick even manages to make the complex worldwide financial arrangements of the club interesting, demonstrating a subtle alchemy that transforms dry data into absorbing narrative.

And then there's sex. The author does not allow Club Med's reputation for sexual frolics to become the *raison d'être* of his investigation, yet chapter 17 ("Inside Paradise: The GOs' Story") includes interesting first-person accounts of hanky-panky between the hired help and the guests.

By peering behind the glossy poster or 15-second promotional spot, *Another Day in Paradise?* provides a fascinating account of a company famous for manufacturing dreams.

— TIMOTHY CHAMBERLAIN

FICTION

BRING ME YOUR PASSION

by Don Bailey,
Oberon, 130 pages, \$11.95 paper
(ISBN 0 88750 690 9).

THESE STORIES reflect Don Bailey's long-standing interest in lonely figures trying to make contact. Here, the main focus is on fathers and sons seeking to reach out to their sires or offspring, in memory if not in fact. The stories would be much more effective without the unceasing flow of tears: Bailey is optimistic about the power of love but needs to exercise greater control to keep these stories from becoming maudlin. For a writer who has been publishing since the late 1960s, he shows a surprising tendency towards amateurish writing, as in "The Neutral Enemy":

He hears the laughter. It is a familiar sound. Almost a welcome noise in the void of his isolation. The rumble of mirth fills the room with a physical presence.

He looks in the mirror and sees a youthful, middle-aged man looking back at him. There are no worry lines in his face. Remarkable for a person of 53.

Such unsubtle stream-of-consciousness and characterization are in sharp contrast with his depictions of social outcasts, as in "The River Crests" and "Remembrance Day."

— ALLAN WEISS

A FINE & QUIET PLACE

by Nom Keeling,
Oberon, 96 pages, \$11.95 paper
(ISBN 0 88750 684 4).

NORA KEELING explores themes of isolation and the difficulty of achieving satisfactory relationships with spouses or family members. Her main characters are usually women in relationships that are sick, if not dangerous. Lii the protagonists in her first collection, *The Driver* (1982), those in *A Fine & Quiet Place* undergo terrible suffering (especially miscarriages) without receiving any sympathy or affection from their mates. Their husbands and lovers are almost invariably self-indulgent animals, particularly the unnamed husband in "The Feather Pillow." Keeling's prose is at times annoyingly stilted, as here in "My Father's House":

there was, notwithstanding the material in the basement, only one individual in the great house whose value and richness was beyond question to everyone except for the creature who shared his beneficence.

Even stories that do not portray wealthy, aristocratic characters (such as "Nouvelle") are marred by a grating preciousness of language.

The atmosphere in the collection is bleak and intense. Nora Keeling is not dating or experimental in form, but she is consistent in quality.

— ALLAN WEISS

THE BLOOD GOD

by Joseph MacAnthony,
Grafton Books, 307 pages, \$24.95
cloth (ISBN 0 246 13216 7).

IN AN AMTRAK TRAIN travelling from New York to Montreal, a man nicks himself while shaving. Within minutes he bleeds to death. Acute haemophilia? No, murder.

Stephen Haggerty, a CBC reporter, investigates. The trail leads to Guatemala, a country ruled by a dictator so brutal that the American president has withdrawn military aid. With his two allies, a gay CIA agent and a beautiful woman, Haggerty mixes it up with death squads and Marxist revolutionaries. Along the way he uncovers an international conspiracy to assassinate an important American . . . and so forth.

It's all standard stuff. Haggerty is just one more scared yet sensitive Vietnam vet. (He happens to have served as a journalist, though.) The gay CIA man is a stab at originality but a feeble one: his sexual orientation is revealed by a limp wrist.

There are interesting bits of journalistic realism — not surprising, considering that the author, Joseph MacAnthony, was an investigative reporter himself — but the tidbits about the international blood trade and whatnot are boxed pieces, with no real connection to the main story.

As for suspense, when Haggerty gets himself in a jam, the question is not, How will he get himself out of this one? but, Will he get out exactly the way I expect him to? The answer is usually yes.

MacAnthony puts sentences together well enough, but lacking imagination, he writes by formula. The result steams with insincerity, which may put off even the least discriminating reader. — BRIAN HENRY

THE PRINCE OF STARS

by Ian Dennis,
Macmillan, 221 pages, \$19.95 cloth
(ISBN 0 7715 9645 6).

THE MEDIEVAL Arabian world of Toronto author Ian Dennis seems to be inspired equally by the Thousand and One Nights and the scimitar-swishing matinee entertainments that gave most of us our first introduction to this

exotic fictional locale. An adolescent adventure for adults — part nostalgia, part soap — *The Prince of Stars* also operates as a complex philosophical allegory with much to say about love, death, the meaning of life, the nature of reality, and good and bad government. There's as much popcorn as Plato in the mix, though some may feel it's a little heavy on the latter.

The sequel to the author's 1985 work, *Baghdad*, the book functions fairly well on its own, resuming the story painlessly with a quick synopsis and plenty of action. What's already happened is that in a revolution engineered by the Ripe Fruit Patty the caliph has been murdered, but his wimpy young son and a few followers have escaped down the Tigris with their enemies in hot pursuit. In *The Prince of Stars* the chase continues across the map of a long-ago Middle East, with skirmishes, adventures, and narrow escapes. Along the way the young antihero matures till he is ready to confront the terrible and terribly pedantic Fruit commander, Zardīn-al-Adigrab.

The two warring contingents and the odd assortment of tribes they encounter en route all have one thing in common: a taste for philosophical story-telling. Just about every character has his own Arabian Nights-style tale to interrupt the action with, and these lusty digressions provide the book with its best and wittiest pages.

— MARTIN TOWNSEND

HOCKEY NIGHT IN CANADA

by Diane Schoemperlen,
Quarry Press, 130 pages, \$6.95
paper, (ISBN 0 919627 56 0)

EXPERIMENTATION in writing, as in science, is the exploration of new ways to tackle a given problem, and in *Hockey Night in Canada*, Dī Schoemperlen demonstrates imagination and admirable artistic courage in her techniques. As is her earlier *Frogs & Other Stories* (1986), she writes here almost exclusively about unsatisfying male-female relationships, and Schoemperlen uses novel formal devices to deal with this theme. "This Town," for example, is structured as a kind of mock sociological study,

or anti-tourist guide, sad "A Simple Story" is metafictionally divided into short sections purporting to "describe" every relevant aspect of a single, near-disastrous encounter in an extramarital affair. While such techniques often work, they sometimes seem gimmicky and forced, as is the case with the parentheses — () — punctuating "Live Sentences." The more conventional stories, like the title story and "Crimes of Passion," tend to be clichéd and predictable, the latter work seeming more like a story outline than a story in itself. Schoemperlen's greatest strength lies in the deft drawing of the miniature portraits that are the hallmark of good story writing — like this one from "A Simple Story":

This particular woman, Marilyn, is waiting for him in the lane behind her downtown apartment building, turling her chin into her expensive fur coat, sucking on the collar.

All in all, Schoemperlen attempts to expand the boundaries of short-story form, and succeeds frequently enough to merit serious attention as she fulfils the promise of her earlier work.

— ALLAN WEISS

SCIENCE

AT WORK IN THE FIELDS OF THE BOMB

photographs and text by
Robert Del Tredici,
introduction by Jonathan
Schell,

Douglas & McIntyre, 224 pages,
\$19.95 (ISBN 0-88894-583-3)

WHEN ROBERT OPPENHEIMER watched the first nuclear explosion in New Mexico in 1945, he quoted him the *Bhagavad Gita*: "I am become death, the destroyer of worlds."

According to Robert Del Tredici, author of *At Work in the Fields of the Bomb*, Oppenheimer's statement represents an attitude of "romantic grandeur," a view of nuclear weapons hum the "victor's point of view." Thus, the first half of Tredici's book eschews the traditional images of nuclear disaster. Gone is the spreading mushroom cloud or scarred survivor. Instead, Tredici focuses on the

detailed and banal preparations of the nuclear industry.

However, this approach doesn't really work. After the umpteenth processing-and-assembly plant, the mind becomes numbed to the reality of global destruction; consequently, *At Work in the Fields of the Bomb* loses considerable emotional impact.

Despite this self-imposed handicap, two haunting images do emerge from this text: a half-melted Buddha and a handful of paper cranes folded by a dying girl. These images assume an iconic stature, for in truth, they represent the victim's story.

The latter half of this book contains interviews and "field notes" that successfully portray the surreal Dr. *Strangelove* dimension of the nuclear industry. Yet here again the most compelling text is that which deals with the Japanese survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

At Work in the Fields of the Bomb demonstrates that sometimes a picture isn't worth a thousand words.

— TIMOTHY CHAMBERLAIN

INFINITE IN ALL DIRECTIONS

by Freeman J. Dyson.
Harper & Row (Fitzhenry & Whiteside), 319 pages, \$28.50 cloth
(ISBN 0 66 039081 6).

FREEMAN DYSON'S previous books, *Disturbing the Universe* and *Weapons and Hope*, placed him in the front ranks of those scientists — like Stephen Jay Gould, Carl Sagan, Lewis Thomas, and David Suzuki — who have reached out from the lab to the public audience. The present offering, based on his Gifford Lectures at Aberdeen University, is further proof of Dyson's unique and intelligent voice.

The title reflects the author's temperament as a physicist: against those who postulate a universe ultimately reducible to fundamental law, he sees the universe as infinitely diverse and man's role in it as endlessly diversifying. This predilection for "infinite diversity" underlies his eclectic conversation on a dizzying array of topics and enthusiasms — from desert camels and bombardier beetles to black holes and nuclear disarmament.

ment. Along the way, Dyson spins his pet theories and hypotheses about the origins of life and speculates with tempered optimism about the future and the problems we face.

Inevitably the book is pushed and pulled too often, but it is redeemed by Dyson's constantly engaging presence: science merges with his humane vision of man's power and imagination. Like the perfect guest at a summer cottage, Dyson is endlessly fascinating, congenially eccentric, stylish yet relaxed. As always, he writes with beguiling simplicity and a gift for metaphor.

— B.K. ADAMS

POETRY

HEAVY HORSE JUDGING

by Don Summerhayes,
Thistle-down, 68 pages \$8.95 paper
(ISBN 0 920633 35 8).

I DON'T KNOW anything about heavy horse judging, but I suspect it would focus on solid, down-to-earth qualities — "the merit of serviceable lives," as one poem puts it. Similarly, there are no high-strung thoroughbred airs to Don Summerhayes's *Heavy Horse Judging*. Instead, we are offered a collection of quiet, unpretentious poems, enlivened by flashes of a whimsical imagination and a puckish sense of humor. The poet announces his intentions in the opening poem in characteristically direct fashion:

*Speak the ordinary
words clearly
without insistence*

*choosing to say
some common thing
we have needed to hear
over and over*

Occasionally Summerhayes is lyrical, but his strength lies less in fancy semantic footwork than in an understated style that shares moments of clarity and insight through childhood reminiscences, reflections on travel and on love. He is a very sunny-vised poet — he can, in fact, seem complacent, giving us a benevolent world in which even death appears innocuous: "under the old courthouse lawn/the souls of dead bums/still sleeping it off." *Heavy Horse Judging* is not for

readers who want to be disturbed and provoked by what poetry can ship bare. But its comfortableness and genuine savoring of small moments serve a purpose, too.

— BARBARA CAREY

THE PAST

BANDITS AND PRIVATEERS: CANADA IN THE AGE OF GUNPOWDER

by Harold Horwood
and Ed Butts,
Doubleday Canada, 227 pages,
\$19.95 cloth
(ISBN 0 385 25110 6).

THIS IS A BEDTIME BOOK for the Walter Mittys of the world. Horwood and Butt serve up 16 tales from the shady side of Canada's past — the Age of Gunpowder (a period they date roughly from the days of the fur trade to the eve of the Second World War). The authors divide up the cast of characters into two categories: "gentlemen adventurers" and "rogues." The latter term, however, is far from being solely pejorative, as the group it describes includes the likes of Henry More Smith, a man who "had some attractive qualities and could give the impression of being more imp than scoundrel." In addition to describing con-artistry, vandalism, and legally sanctioned acts of violence, the authors take pains to give their readers a detailed account of the hardware used by, or against, their subjects. Nevertheless, the overall effect of the telling is to sanitize the lives and actions of people discussed.

This collection follows up the authors' 1994 book, *Pi&end Outlaws of Canada*. Together, Horwood and Butt claim, the books make up a two-volume survey of violence in Canada. Although the authors piously conclude that violence is a social problem and that it is to the credit of Canadians that they do not celebrate criminals, their stories are essentially a light-hearted and superficial look at a collection of less than savoury but entertaining characters. This book will help to debunk the myth that Canadian history is boring.

— WAYNE JOHNSTON

EMPIRE OF DUST: SETTLING AND ABANDONING THE PRAIRIE DRY BELT

by David C. Jones,
University of Alberta, 316 pages,
\$24.93 cloth
(ISBN 0 88864 119 2).

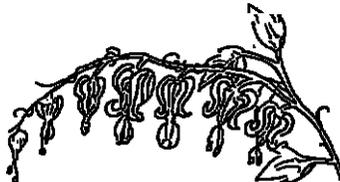
THIS BOOK chronicles the Settlement of the so-called drylands (a euphemism) of southeastern Alberta by would-be wheat farmers after 1909.

More than a history of the ravages wreaked by sun, wind, and drought — this in a land with quicksand for a welcome mat and rattlesnakes for doormen — *Empire of Dust* recalls a man-made disaster to rival those nature already provided.

Lured by a government eager to establish an agricultural heartland and by the boosterism of land speculators and chambers of commerce, thousands of farming families poured into this virtual desert from all over the world, only to lose, within a generation, everything they had. "The bread of the future will come from the desert of the past," the salesmen claimed, but were long gone when the farmers' hopes yielded to despair after the First World War.

Author David C. Jones, a history professor at the University of Calgary, has dug deep in the archives to unearth the painful reality of this significant era. His reconstruction of events has so much of the feel of a literary epic that the reader misses the presence of protagonists; Jones's balanced approach to those who played a part in real life gives us a cast of diverting extras. Perhaps some sense of this absence is behind the author's attention to the town of Carlstadt, Alberta, but this attempt to give focus to the story seems half-hearted and only half succeeds.

A wealth of statistics and period anecdotes makes *Empire of Dust* a most respectable, though occasionally rambling, work of popular history. But it's the author's command of the



story-teller's art that enables him to succeed, in general, in vividly recreating the human drama of those tragic times.

— MARTIN TOWNSEND

OVERLAND TO STARVATION COVE WITH THE INUIT IN SEARCH OF FRANKLIN, 1878-1880

by Heinrich Klutschak,
University of Toronto Press, 261
pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 8020
5762 4).

THIS IS a charming and readable book about how four rank amateurs — a soldier, an artist, a journalist and a fourth man about whom not much is known except that he came from Milwaukee — spent two wildly successful years wandering in the Arctic on a budget of just \$5,000 (those were the days). They survived, discovered new clues to the fate of the lost Franklin Expedition, and completed the longest overland sled journey by white men up to that time.

Heinrich Klutschak (the artist) published his narrative in 1881 in Germany where it was an instant popular success. Now translated into English for the first time by William Barr, who also supplies a concise historical introduction and detailed end notes, it is a Victorian adventure story told with intelligence and brio (a cross between *A Journey to the Centre of the Earth* and *Pickwick Papers*). Who can forget the author's hair-raising dash across the Back River rapids on ice so thin he could poke a stick through it? Or the expedition's harrowing return journey to Hudson Bay with sled dogs dying one by one of starvation?

At the same time, tension between superior Inuit know-how and Klutschak's colonial discourse gives this book a subtext that cannot escape the modern reader. For example, while their Inuit guides construct complex igloos, the whites do low-grade drudge work like chopping water holes in the ice. When the whites finally return to their own world, they find the process of reverse adaptation difficult and painful. Klutschak didn't draw any fresh conclusion from this experience, but his book sends us a different message.

— DOUGLAS GLOVER

**BLACK
ROSE
BOOKS**



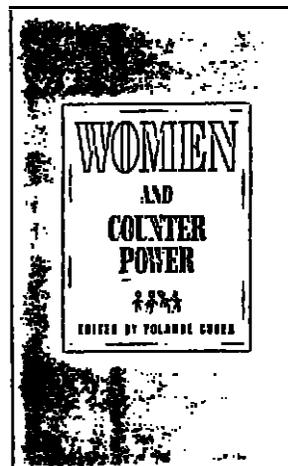
An essential resource for both professional organizers and citizen activists; a practical guide to the strategy, tactics and techniques of community organizing.

Paperback
ISBN: 0-921689-20-9 \$14.95
Hardcover
ISBN: 0-921689-21-7 \$34.95



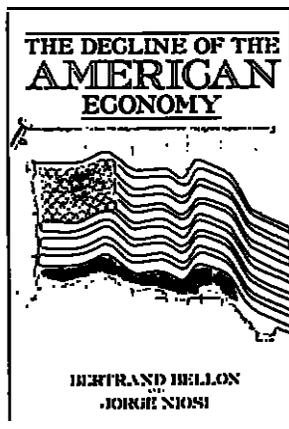
A collection of Canadian scholarly and popular essays exploring some of the basic debates in feminism. Major orthodoxies within academia are questioned and the basis for a distinct feminist approach set out.

Paperback
ISBN: 0-921689-22-5 \$16.95
Hardcover
ISBN: 0-921689-25-X \$29.95



Essays by scholars and activists compare the experiences of women in several countries: a fresh vision of women's emancipation in sweeping international scope.

Paperback
ISBN: 0-921689-10-1 \$19.95
Hardcover
ISBN: 0-921689-11-X \$39.95



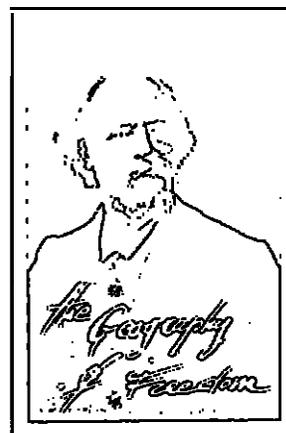
Two well-known economists examine the decline of U.S. industry in the context of the American economy as a whole. They analyze all important indicators, from the introduction of new technologies to military industries, showing the dangers of Free Trade.

Paperback
ISBN: 0-921689-00-4 \$14.95
Hardcover
ISBN: 0-921689-01-2 \$34.95



A comprehensive history of the Québec labour movement dating back to the very origins of the workers' struggle 150 years ago.

Paperback
ISBN: 0-920057-56-4 \$19.95
Hardcover
ISBN: 0-920057-55-1 \$39.95



This biography of Elisee Reclus, the nineteenth-century geographer and anarchist, is both a history of anarchist thought and a portrait of a fascinating and paradoxical man.

Paperback
ISBN: 0-921689-16-0 \$16.95
Hardcover
ISBN: 0-921689-17-9 \$35.95

Order from:
University of Toronto Press
5201 Dufferin St.
Downsview, Ontario M3H 5T8

Violent river

For David Adams Richards, the contrast between the flesh and the spirit, the outer and the inner, is everything. It's the root of both his tragic vision and his comic insight

By Douglas Glover

LIVING IN FREDERICTON, you hear a lot of legends about David Adams Richards. Legends about this nearly illiterate kid hitchhiking down from the Miramichi through storms of sleet to read his fledgling tales at the Tuesday evening literary meetings that used to be held at the University of New Brunswick. Legends about a hard-drinking Newcastle roaring boy with his hair cut long, a ring in his ear, and a chip

on his shoulder. Legends about the "instinctive" writer who slept all day and wrote in a frenzy through the night, torturing grammar, syntax, and spelling in his rush to get words down on paper.

But the real Dave Richards is nothing like that. He is a courteous, reserved, and profoundly decent man who lives with his wife, Peggy, their dog, Grace, and their Maine Coon cat, Theo, in a rented house on St. John Street, right

in the cockpit of Anglo New Brunswick culture, four blocks from the Beaverbrook Art Gallery and the Playhouse Theatre and a two-minute walk from the university. He is 37 now, no longer the boyish 22-year-old who stunned the local literary community with the first masterful pages of *The Coming of Winter*. (UNB academic and poet Bill Bauer still speaks of the "brute excitement" he and his colleagues felt listening week



David Adams Richards

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL ORELSTEIN

after week as Richards road fresh chapters.)

He doesn't have a ring in his ear, and he keeps his hair cut conventionally short. He doesn't drink or smoke. And he gave up chewing Red Man tobacco in February. He writes during the day now because he can't get his dog to sleep days and stay up all night with him. Though he's not gregarious, he loves to talk, loves to reveal his enthusiasms in conversation — for writing, movies, politics, hunting. He has an autodidact's appreciation of books, seems to know chunks of Dostoevsky and Joyce almost by heart. Without missing a beat, he can shift from discussing Keats's "negative capability" to a yarn about how he shot his first moose last year at the edge of a tangled chop-down deep in the northern woods.

The real Dave Richards watches a lot of television — game shows, sports (he's a passionate boxing fan), movies — to relax from his writing. He used to curl; now he and Peggy, who works as an office supervisor for a local film production company, take riding lessons once or twice a week at a stable on the edge of town. Summers, they spend time at a cottage they own on the south shore of the Miramichi just across from Eartibog, the tiny downriver village where Peggy grew up, which forms the fictional backdrop of Richards's second novel, *Blood Ties*. Or Richards will slip away by himself to a hunting and fishing camp he and his brothers share up on the BII Sevogle River near the setting of the marvellous *Lives of Short Duration*.

In the past decade and a half, he has turned out four novels and a story collection, two books of poetry, hvo plays (one based on the life of medieval French poet-thief François Villon), and several screenplays (Capitol Films recently finished shooting Richards's script *Tuesday, Wednesday* and is shopping around for a distributor), enough work, in fact, to fuel a couple of careers, establishing himself firmly as one of the most stubbornly original voices on the Canadian literary scene.

This month McClelland & Stewart will publish Richards's fifth novel, *Nights below Station Street*, the first instalment of a projected trilogy. This is a departure of sorts — all Richards's previous fiction was published by Ottawa's Oberon Press. Now, suddenly, there is excited, hopeful talk of agents and American deals. But it is also a return to the gritty northeastern New Brunswick mill town (unnamed, but like the Newcastle of Richards's birth, a fictional

Newcastle) where he set his first novel, *The Coming of Winter*.

Nights below Station Street is full of the horror, violence, pity, bemused tolerance, and humour that we have come to expect in a David Adams Richards novel. It chronicles the wars of the Walsh family, Joe and Rita and their 15-year-old daughter, Adele, concentrating on Adele and her conflict with Joe, who is an alcoholic trying to reform, hying to atone for the damage he's already done to his family.

Adele is a sweetheart of a girl caught in the Never Never Land of adolescence, confused, rebellious, endearing, and hilarious (unable to decide whether to wear jeans or skirts, spitting in her

**Richards prefers
to call himself a
conservative socialist.**

**'To think that
politics can solve the
problems of the poor
is ridiculous,' he says.
'I've always thought
politics tended towards
the nonsensical.'**

Coke to keep her little sister from drinking it, screaming at Joe because he won't let her rub his sore back). She exaggerates and embellishes on Joe's mistreatment. She looks for guidance to a character named Vera, the Miramichi's version of the New Person, a university graduate who has spent a year at Oxford and speaks with a mid-Atlantic accent. But the truth of Adele's relationship wkh Joe is that they love each other deeply.

"It's a book about the conflict for the hearts and souls of the young," says Richards. "There are a lot of people like Vera who have gone away to university, and come back to Newcastle with an answer for everything. They wear the right clothes and go to the new malls, the new racketball courts and the new curling clubs, and that's all very well. But the one person who is really trying to be a new human being is Joe, who, with no promises, no guarantees, is giving up his old life, his drinking, his drinking friends."

When Richards talks about his writing, he talks about themes and personalities. He shies from discussions of style. He dislikes being asked about influences. "I

don't think of myself in any terms," he says, "except that when I write about Joe Walsh he comes from my fictional world, which is mine and not anybody else's." On one occasion he dealt with the several issues of regionalism, technique, and influence in a single terse sentence: "I think you write like your personality and where you come from."

What animates Dave Richards is the inner life of his characters, their motives, their secrets, thei spiritual aspirations and failures. He has a curious way of talking about them, as if you and he were talking about Joe Walsh down the street and not Joe Walsh in a novel. He uses first names, tells you things about them (traits, habits, events in their lives) that aren't written down in any book (Fredericton poet Robert Gibbs calls this "extending the text").

Bill Bauer remembers an occasion when Richards came for a visit during the writing of his 1986 novel, *Road to the Stilt House*. "Dave came in and sat down, and our son John was here, and Dave exclaimed sorrowfully, apropos of nothing, 'Oh, jeez, poor little Randy. The poor little bugger — he's just sitting on the porch crying his heart out because he flunked his Scout badge.' After he left, John said, 'I didn't know he had any children. Who's this Randy?'"

When I mentioned this, Richards laughed. He says, "I don't know why I do it. It's something that's on my mind. I try to think continually of what impels people like Johu and Karen and Leab and Trenda. They are physical presences. When I think of Trenda (like Randy, a character in *Road to the Stilt House*), I can see exactly what she's wearing and how she would walk into this mom."

He knows his characters through and through, even the minor ones. Writing *Nights below Station Street*, he became so involved with a set of peripheral characters that he finally realized he had a whole other novel on his hands — the second novel of his trilogy, in fact. Richards's characters populate a huge, continuous imaginative world such that people in one book will show up in another. Kevin and Pamela Dulse from *The Coming of Winter*, for example, show up again in *Lives of Short Duration*; Hudson Kopochus, a secondary character in *Lives*, has a whole story devoted to him in *Dancers at Night*. The effect is one of eerie verisimilitude — as if they were all really alive somewhere.

Richards is a passionate moralist (not moralizer, not social critic) who delights in making precise and minute ethical dis-

l a u g h s

inctions. "I am always asking myself," he says, "when presented with a set of difficult choices, how would this character act? What is the proper and correct thing to do, as opposed to the thing that appears proper and correct. ... A lot of *Nights below Station Street* deals with the difference between the veneer of altruism and real altruism, supposed or assumed generosity and true human generosity."

He distrusts middle-class "sophistication" and "gentility," concepts he sees as pregnant with their own sort of violence. "In all instances where you have to be generous, affected or sophisticated people can be generous: but to be generous when it's not expected or when it causes hardship, when it requires the best part of human nature — my characters can be that more quickly."

This distrust reflects Richards's politics, that combination of antiliberal, antiwelfare, pro-working-class sentiments he shares with fellow Easterners like the late Alden Nowlan, Wayne Johnston, and Eric Tretheway, a Nova Scotia writer now teaching in the U.S. Amazingly, he has been called a Marxist, and his first novel, *The Coming of Winter*, was translated into Russian (though he suspects the Soviets corrupted his text into a socialist-realist indictment of Canadian society). But Richards prefers to call himself a "conservative socialist" and to say things like "To think that politics can solve the problems of the poor is ridiculous. I've always thought politics tended towards the nonsensical."

Sometimes he reminds me of Flannery O'Connor (among other similarities, they're both Catholic). Like O'Connor, Richards expresses himself through characters who live at the bottom of the economic ladder, on the periphery of society, an imaginative territory they both see as inhabited by petty crooks, drunks, suicides, and mystics — for what else is George Terri from *Lives of Short Duration*, dancing drunkenly with a pig's head on a pole in the middle of a burning bridge, but an ancient shaman seeking his vision? And they both get comic mileage out of the dash between the spiritual and the mundane — George's vision turns out to be the DTs.

But where O'Connor is dogmatic (God is a character; grace is a plot device), Richards is romantic. His world, his fictive universe, is Catholic only in a deep sense, in the sense that Catholicism is the most pagan of the Christian sects. Life is nasty, brutish, and short; men and women are ruled by the Image of gross

flesh, by fantasy, and by social coercion. But beneath the surface they have souls of essential goodness, yearning to be free, to express themselves in decent, loving acts, in generosity.

Lois had also a tattoo of a tiny rose on her left breast ... this tiny rose signified something pure and life-giving about her, exuded from her a quality of love, though she said she'd gotten the rose tattoo on a \$20 bet with a man, she said, who couldn't hold his own piss.

For Richards, this contrast between the flesh and the spirit, the outer and the inner, is everything. It's the motif of both his tragic vision and his comic insight. And this is what most critics miss — it is a theme that is universal, a theme that has generated all great art since the beginning of the Christian era.

Far from being a bland land of desperate poverty and alienation, the Miramichi River area where Richards grew up is a world of almost surreal and operatic contrasts. It is a country of strange, haunting beauty, river and forest and mist-covered estuary, violated by abmpt, smoking mill plants and port towns.

... the quiet light under the snow-covered spruces, the frozen rock where Hudson Kopochus lay with a bear on his journey to kill a man in 1825, and the children catching the bus for school the next day, the dark-faced displaced French, the stubborn self-destructive Irish, the celtic blood on one of the most violent rivers in the country, "Fuck ya, fuck ya," for "I love you, I love you," or "Help me, help me"

This is Richards's *paysage moralisé*, the country of his imagination.

Richards's grandfather — genes and history tell — was a travelling musician from Wales. The Welsh connection is determinative — music and bombast. Welsh bombast, e.g., Dylan Thomas, fuels Richards's intense hyperh rhetoric the way the tradition of Southern bombast fuelled Faulkner. And he sings. When he was younger, Richards would often preface readings with a cappella folk songs. His grandfather settled in when the e married Richards's grandmother, who worked as a violinist at the Newcastle Opera House. Together they purchased the opera house and played the music to accom-

— silent movies.

After Grandfather Richards died, Richards's grandmother made one of those intuitive decisions that define the

m i n e

Spring Thoughts

A Public Purpose Tom Kent

A Public Purpose is the vigorous Tom Kent's experience as a central figure most of the important governments of the last half century.

"A lot of people have given up on politicians in the last few years. That happens from time to time. Tom Kent's book should remind us that a nation can work together and achieve great things if there is a public purpose."

Jim Coutts, *The Toronto Star*

"an excellent book and a fine contribution to Canadian history."

Walter Gordon, former
Liberal Finance Minister

Cloth 0-7735-0649-7 \$29.95

Water into Wine?

AN INVESTIGATION OF
THE CONCEPT OF MIRACLE

Robert A. H. Larmer

The possible or actual occurrence of miracles has been vigorously debated since the concept was first introduced. In *Water into Wine?* Robert Larmer re-examines significant issues in this cross-disciplinary debate and attacks two basic assumptions governing it.

"a very significant contribution to the ongoing philosophical debate concerning miracles."

Donald Evans,
University of Toronto

Cloth 0-7735-0615-2 \$22.50

McGill-Queen's University Press
Order from University of Toronto Press

FATAL LIGHT

by Richard Currey

FATAL LIGHT

A N O V E L

RICHARD CURREY

A stunning first novel by short story writer and former marine combat medic, Richard Currey, traces a young man's path from a middle-American upbringing to Vietnam and back.

0

"...compact and powerful...an unusual and impressively vivid handling of a familiar theme."

—Kirkus Reviews

"...clearly one of the very best works of fiction to emerge from the Vietnam War... There is so much to say about this book: its exquisite language, its sharp & drawn characters, its breathtaking landscapes, its vivid and compelling narrative."

—Tim O'Brien, author of
Going After Cacciato

0

\$24.95 cloth



Fitzhenry & Whiteside

Publishers of The Funk & Wagnall's
Canadian College Dictionary

else on the North Shore thought talking pictures were a passing fancy, she went ahead and bought a monopoly on talking picture distribution for the area. The move made her a lot of money, and more enemies, but she was a woman of considerable panache, persevering despite threats of violence and arson.

By the time Richards came on the scene, much of his grandmother's fortune had been dissipated, though the extended family still owned hvo Newcastle movie theatres and a drive-in. The future author was raised Catholic, was an altar boy, and went to a parochial school through grade four.

As a rebellious teenager ("I was extremely rebellious then," he said, "not as rebellious as I'd like to have been at the time, but rebellious enough to get in a few fist fights and be thrown out of school on a number of occasions"), he attended Harkins Academy where Max Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook, had gone to school.

When he was 14, Richards read what he calls "my first adult book" — it was Dickens's *Oliver Twist*. That was when he decided to become a writer. You can almost see the impulse unfolding. Richards must have recognized in Dickens a symbolic grammar analogous to his own experience: he must have realized all at once that it was really possible to express that experience in beautiful and exciting ways — the subtle dance of wealth, class, and poverty, the contrast between professional do-gooders and the truly good, the manipulation of youth, the drinking, and the violence.

There is a story from David Adams Richards's childhood that is emblematic. When his mother was seven months pregnant, she accidentally tripped and fell while hanging her laundry out to dry. The baby, David, was born prematurely with a brain haemorrhage. His left side appeared somewhat crippled and, as he grew, he was slow to learn to walk — doctors and family feared he might be retarded.

When he was two and a half years old (this is one of Richards's earliest memories), Mrs. Richards took him on the long train journey to Montreal to visit a specialist. The specialist handed the baby a rubber ball and asked him to give it back. The doctor repeated the manoeuvre, urging the child to perform it "Faster, faster!" In frustration, Richards threw the ball, hitting the doctor on the head. The doctor laughed, saying, "This kld is not retarded."

This anecdote contains the three hallmarks of a David Adams Richards story: horror, violence, and comedy. Through fate or bad luck, the baby is damaged. Society jumps in with a glib assessment; the word retarded is value-loaded, welfare-worker, pseudomedical jargon that dismisses the child, pigeonholes him. It is a type of psychic violence. As Richards says, "It is prior assumption and contempt prior to investigation that destroys people."

The second half of the story, the hip to Montreal, is also exemplary. For it is the pattern of Richards's characters to react to the violence of prior assumption with violence, with drunkenness, or other forms of outrageous behaviour. It is a curious double sign: the violence Richards characters do to correct English, for example, is both an emblem of their debasement, of the place society has put them in, a way of behaving that society expects and allows, and it is also a badge of honour, a symbol of their revolt against "proper" forms of behaviour and speech.

And sometimes the violence is simply causeless and mysterious, at which point it connects with Richards's religious sense, his belief in the fundamental unpredictability, the absolute freedom, of the human spirit.

"Yer sorta religious or what Simon?" Rance said.

"Oh boy — I don't think so — very much."

"Well I just thought all the sties ya told me — about the bears, and running the river — always ended up with 'God bless.'" Rance smiled and looked about.

Simon chuckled.

"I don't know sometimes. Once I bopped a man right over the head for no reason — no-one knows why — I don't know why — but there it is — that's what I'm like."

"Well I'm not going to bother you about it," Rance said.

For Richards's characters are not simply victims. His novels live because they boil with anger, revolt, and humour. His down-and-out working-class types seam always ready to perform the graceful, generous act, or to throw their lives away in some piece of mad, defiant theatre. The best of them have clear ideas of correct behaviour that in many ways are truer than the more sophisticated compromises of middle-class society. "They are doing things, when push comes to shove," says Richards, "that the best part of themselves offers to the world." □

Passages

'Miss Poonegar was now a music teacher. Her speciality was singing: "And I teach religious songs and bhajans only, none of those silly Hindi movie songs.'"

By Rohinton Mistry

ONE AFTERNOON, into the Damania household walked Vera Poonegar, just turned 23 and bursting with life and charm and vivacity that sent Adi's 15-year-old heart aflutter. Her bright blue pleated skirt sheathed her with such sensual precision that none of the pleats unfolded till she sat down: than, accordionlike, they waited to close on cue.

The Damanias were not expecting this visit. In fact, this was the first time Adi had set eyes on her. But when Mrs. Damania was still single and living with her parents in Chikhalwadi, Vera was the neighbour's little daughter who called her Auntie. And when Auntie married and became Mrs. Damania, the little girl next door, perpetually in pigtails and tears, was just six.

Now, 17 years later, Miss Poonegar's blue skirt mercilessly peeled away the inchoate veneer of Adi's maturity. He wished he was wearing long pants. Suddenly feeling less grown-up than he wanted to, he found the childlike bareness of his knees too keen to hear.

"Seventeen years! How time goes!" exclaimed the two women, both happy that the acquaintance had been renewed. And Mrs. Damania sat back to listen to all the news of Chikhalwadi: the Past&as were still feuding with the Katraks as bitterly as the day when the first Pastakia had cursed the first Katrak and wished a string of illnesses upon future generations of Katraks for some matter which was now only dimly remembered. Vie Garda continued to walk her dog, Rexy, where the neighbours objected to his doing his business — this was a new Rexy, of course: the old one had died peacefully at the age of 14, but Villie Garda had suspected a neighbour of poisoning him. And everyone to this day relied on Saloo Fernandes, grey and bent double now, to bring their bottles of Aarey Colony milk from the blue government booth down

the road: hi hump seemed to grow in size with the passing years, but he continued to be the gentle and obedient servant of all. The lanes leading in to Chikhalwadi were still dirt roads, and the monsoon rains transformed them each year into stretches of muck and ooze, the chikhal whii gave the place its name.

"In short, Auntie," she said to Mrs. Damania, "nothing much has changed

since you left 17 years ago."

By and by, it came out that Miss Poonegar was now a music teacher. Her speciality was singing: "And I teach religious songs and bhajans only, none of those silly Hindi movie songs." She admitted, though, that some of the playback singers had beautiful voices and would be great successes at classical singing, if they would give up all the mbbih.



Besides **singing**, Miss Poonegar taught the **harmonium**. To beginners only, she said, because she had never really **learned** the **instrument** beyond the basics, **in** order to **conserve** her time and energy for the voice **with** which she had been gifted: "My father the scoutmaster always says, 'If you can't be a **tree** on the top of the hill, be a **bush** at the foot, in the valley; but be the best **little** bush you can be.'"

Mrs. Damania paused to attempt a synthesis of the **scoutmaster-father's** rhyme, harmonium-playing, and **singing**. Then, **coaxingly**, she asked Miss Poonegar to **sing something for them**. "**In our family, we like all types of good music,**" Mrs. Damania said, "Western classical, **Indian** classical, pop, **film**, everything. Even **jazz**. But you are right that there are a **lot of rubbishy** songs in Hindi movies. Whether it is Beethoven or **Shankar-Jaikishen**, Caruso or **Saigal**, we can enjoy and **appreciate** as long as it is good **music**."

Miss Poonegar cleared her throat. She touched it **at the spot where** her Adam's apple **would** have been if she were a man. "Last week I had a cold." She coughed softly. "Next week I have a recital at Madam Blavatsky Lodge." A short pause intervened before she added, "**I am also a member of the Theosophical Society.**"

Mrs. Damania nodded and said, "Oh."

"That does not mean," said Miss Poonegar, "**that** I do not wear my **sudra** and **kusti** any more, **or** stop going to the **fire-temple**. You see, there is no **contradiction** at all between theosophy and our Avesta. You know what they say, that if **Zarathustra** was **living** today, he **would** also join the Theosophical **Society**." She waited to see if this was going to be challenged, but Mrs. Damania would not be drawn into an **argument**. She took comfort in **the** thought that if her husband was home, he would soon straighten out all the nonsense in this girl's head **without** even **raising** his voice—he knew so much about the Avesta. "You **should** come one day to our meeting, **listen** to some of the lectures," continued Miss Poonegar.

Mrs. Damania nodded again, prepared to **humour** the visitor. To change the subject, she repeated her request. "**Don't** strain too much—just a short **piece**. I **would** love to hear your voice, **that is all**."

Miss Poonegar rubbed her throat briskly. The throat: as those who became acquainted **with** her soon discovered, was an entity separate and **dis-**

tinct, needing pampering and readying, rather in the manner of a pet poodle before a show.

That done, she stared **fixedly** into space. With her head cocked to the left, she cleared her **throat** twice more, sang four **lines** of a **bhajan** caged "**Sita Ram Kahoe, Radhé Shyam Bhajo**" and stopped suddenly, as though having realized that she had **sung** more than was **her original intention**.

"Wonderful! Just wonderful!" exclaimed Mrs. Damania, **clapping** hard. "Sweet as honey **your voice is**. **Like a bulbul**," she added, although she had never **personally** heard the song of that bird. "It is a gift **from God**."

"Gift from God, it is true," said Miss Poonegar. "but with proper training even your **Adi** could sing sweetly. He looks talented."

Mrs. Damania turned to her son, who had sat quietly throughout **Miss Poonegar's** unexpected visit. He had been studying her ankles and slim neck and her **small** but **intriguing** bosom. "Liked it no, **Adi?**" said his mother. "So beautiful!" Turning back to Miss Poonegar, she said, "He does sing a little," and added apologetically. "Mainiy English **film** songs. His **favourite** used to be Cliff Richard. Something about a **summer** vacation."

"**Summer Holiday**," **Adi** muttered under his breath, embarrassed that his mother had got the name wrong. But Miss Poonegar did not know any better.

"It speaks!" she said **teasingly**, which surprised **Adi** and his mother: the professional throat of Miss Poonegar did not seem **capable** of **permitting frivolities to proceed from its confines**. "**So quietly** he has been sitting **all** this time. Shy boy!"

Adi kept up his end of **the** cloth, politely deaf. He had convinced himself that to make his **mother** happy he would accept **the lessons**. And if the promise of pleasure in the **proximity** of those calves and ankles and knees, and a neck so slim, with such downy hair at the nape, and **the** movement of a bosom so compact and yet so perfectly shaped as **it rose and fell with the cadences of "Sita Ram Kahoe, Radhé Shyam Bhajo"**—if that promise of pleasure was **fulfilled**, it would be his good fortune.

mother right now that Vera **Poonegar's** type of music bored him. Two years ago he had joined **the** Boy Scouts because his best friend had. **Six** weeks later he stopped going because they **quarrelled**, and his almost-new uniform, along with half a year's membership dues lay on his conscience till today. He did not want

wasted singing lessons to add to that **burden**.

The **fees** were set at 15 rupees per lesson. It was a special rate for Mrs. Damania, said **the** teacher, out of respect for **their** Chikhalthwadi origins and **ties**.

After Vera Poonegar had **left**, Mrs. Damania became a little worried about the extra sum of money she would have to produce every week. Soaring **ambitions** for her son had **propelled** her blindly into the commitment. Now the weight of second thoughts grounded her.

"What do you think, **Adi?** Can we afford it?" she asked. "We **should** talk to Daddy when he comes home." Panic set in **momentarily**. "Go, go, run **after** her, **call** her back, she will still be at the bus stop." Here was his chance, thought **Adi**. But something stronger than conscience held him back. Meanwhile, route number 122 rumbled by the window, **transporting** the singing teacher back to Chikhalthwadi.

Mrs. **Damania's** doubts vanished with the bus, and the aspirations for her son were on **the** wing again. "It is not that much. We **will** manage. **All I have to do** is sew one more dress each week. And **think** what it means for your **future**."

With a happy heart she picked up her sewing, cast **aside** when the singing teacher had arrived, and made **Adi** hold one end **while** she checked some measurements. "You know," she said, "when you were very **small**, before you even started talking, if classical music was **playing** on the radio you would wave **your arm up and down, and Daddy would** joke that you were going to be a conductor when you grew up." She let the tape measure drop to the table and inserted a pin in the fabric to mark the place. "But I knew that you really had a musical **gift**. If we had money we **would** have started your **training** long ago, **from** the age of **three**, like Mozart. Never mind, you **will still** make us **proud**."

Adi kept up his end of the cloth, politely deaf. He had convinced **himself** that to make his mother happy he **would** accept the lessons. And if the promise of pleasure in the proximity of those **calves and ankles** and knees, and a neck so slim, with such downy **hair** at the nape, and the movement of a bosom so compact and yet so perfectly shaped as **it rose and fell with the cadences of "Sita Ram Kahoe, Radhé Shyam Bhajo"**—if that promise of pleasure was **fulfilled**, it would be his good fortune.

Mr. Damania came home from work, and was **well** pleased with the events of

the day. "Money is not important," k pronounced, "when it comes to developing a God-given talent. Just make sure there is no theosophy nonsense going on when sk teaches singing."

PROMPTLY AT FIVE, Miss Poonegar arrived, beaming professionally. Then she discovered that the Damania did not have a harmonium. "How can I give singing lessons without a harmonium? A3 the singing, all the notes, will be *baysoor*, especially for an untrained voice."

This discordant beginning did not augur well. Mrs. Damania listened anxiously in the next room where sk sat with needle and thread. Sk kd scheduled her sewing so that silence and hand stitching would coincide with the lesson, and not the whirr and clatter of the aged Singer spitting out its noisy rows.

Miss Poonegar asked Adi for an exercise book, and wrote down the scale: *sa ray ga ma pa dha ni sa*, and also in reverse: *sa ni dha pa ma ga ray sa*. Then she sang it. He discovered it was the same as the English do re mi, and was able to repeat it easily enough.

Miss Poonegar grumbled that to produce the notes correctly without a harmonium was impossible for him. She wrote diierent patterns in the exercise book: *sa ray ga, ray ga ma, ga ma pa, ma pa dha, pa dha ni, dha ni sa* and made him sing with her, interrupting often with: "No. no! You are *baysoor* again. Listen pmperry to my voice." Or: "Wait, wait, wait! You are going too fast, listen to the *taal*," and she rapped the teapot even more vigorously. Or: "It is hopeless without a harmonium. What can I do? Your mother is wasting her money like this."

At the end of the hour, when Mrs. Damania with some trepidation entered the room, the teacher held up her hands in a gesture of defeat. "Auntie, you might be feeling that I am being very fussy, but I am a professional. As an artiste, I must have my standards. If Adi gives a concert someday, and people ask, whose pupil, it will be the name of Vera Poonegar that will suffer. Without a harmonium it is impossible. I am sorry."

Mrs. Damania considered the ultimatum silently. She detected what she thought was ambition shining in Adi's face. And on his forehead she saw an imprint of the artistic life giving birth, which could be stillborn for the lack of a harmonium.

She had no way of knowing, but what she really saw was a gleam in his eyes provoked by the nearness of Vera

Poonegar, by the nearness of her supremely confident ankles graced by slim leather sandal straps, the enticing neck caressed by soft poplin. her delicate wrists, one encircled by a watch and the other by a chain laden with Binaca toothpaste charms, and most of all, the neat bosom snuggled by tk same soft poplin that caressed kr neck.

And because Mrs. Damania had no way of knowing any of this, she asked, "A harmonium would cost how much? Nothing fancy - just a beginner's harmonium?"

Miss Poonegar did not answer immediately. Sk narrowed her eyes, pursed her lips, furrowed kr brow, and rubbed kr forehead with her fingers. Finally she spoke: "If you go to buy a harmonium just like that, it will be very expensive."

Mrs. Damania waited anxiously to hear a figure, but none was forthcoming just then.

"It is like this," said Miss Poonegar. "If you go to a music shop they will cheat you because you will not know how to check if the *dhummun* is blowing enough air into the keys, and if the *soor* is correct. Usually, they try to sell you an old one as new, after putting some nice shiny polish on it." And Mrs. Damania waited still to hear that which would decide whether her son was to be a star or not.

"Another of my students is selling kr harmonium," Miss Poonegar said, then added quickly, lest it be construed that she was losing a pupil, "She is buying a more advanced, professional model. Now I was thinking that hers would be perfect for Adi. It is a beginner's instrument, and in very good condition. I could get it for you for a nice price."

Mrs. Damsnia could wait no longer. "How much?"

Miss Poonegar fingered her charm bracelet and meticulously removed the kinks. "Sk was saying that she was not going to let it go for less than 150 rupees," she replied, and watched as the older woman's face sank in disappointment. After a suitable pause, sk administered the antidote: "I think I could make her se5 it for 100. I could tell her that is the best she will get, and I know she will listen to me."

Mrs. Damania looked gratefully at the other, who said, with a small smile and the slightest trace of condescension. "I could do that for you, Auntie. Don't worry."

"But I will have to ash my husband. For bii purchases like this we always talk it over."

Miss Poonegar tried hard to appear unruffled: "If you think you can get one cheaper anywhere else, the same good quality, just go and try, Auntie. But then don't blame me if this one gets sold to someone else."

"No, no, no. Where am I saying that this is not a good price? You are doing so much for us. It is only ..."

Miss Poonegar brought matters to a conclusion: "We will do it like this. Next Thursday I will come here with the harmonium. You have one week to decide. if you say no. I will leave straightaway from here, and you have to pay me only for today's lesson. We will forget everything else."

Mrs. Damania wondered what "everything else" meant as sk bade goodbye to the singing teacher. When Mr. Damania came home from work, they deliberated. The decision was made to spend the money out of the 300 rupees saved in an envelope taped to the underside of the bottom-most she5 of the Godrej steel cupboard for an emergency.

Adi felt very uneasy. It would be a low-down thing not to confess now, before more harm was done. He had known about this envelope since reaching the age of understanding. The money had been used once when his father had fallen off a bus and fractured his hip. And more recently they paid some to tk specialist who came home and removed a fishbone lodged in his mother's throat: the agony was such that she could not await tk less expensive treatment at his dispensary.

Next Thursday, Miss Poonegar said, as she counted away the 100 rupees into her purse, "I knew you would buy it. Adi is too talented. It would be a sin to waste his gift." Sk snapped shut the purse, straightening the little tag with tk initials V.P. that dangled at tk clasp.

The lesson began in earnest, and Mrs. Damania rehned earnestly to her sewing. What had to be spent kd been spent. and now they could look forward to Adi's brilliant future. A mixture of pride and contentment warmed her as the scales ascended and descended in the next mom. Every now and then she tiptoed to the doorway and peeked around it

When half the lesson was over, Miss Poonegar said, "Now we will learn a real song. Do you want a Hindi *bhajan* called 'Darshan doe Ghanshyam' or 'Asho Zarathost Paigamber,' about our prophet?" Adi just shrugged, hut his mother heard in the next room, and stepped in. "I think it is better if we

begin with the Zarathustra song. It will bring good luck."

So the Zarathustra song it was, and Adi made good progress. He rehearsed diligently during the week, seeking perfection, which he could lay at Miss Poonegar's flawless feet the following Thursday. His mother was thrilled by his conscientious practicing. Her hours in the sewing room felt less weary and not as long. She felt gratified that the money was well spent.

In this same mood of joyous fulfilment, she agreed to mother five rupees per lesson when the singing teacher proclaimed that Adi must learn a little harmonium: "The idea is," she explained, "that he must be able to accompany his own singing." The extra five rupees would provide 15 minutes of training. This, too, was a special rate, emphasized the teacher, because of the Chikhalwadi connection and the neigh-

bourly bond that had survived 17 years of separation.

Adi was disappointed. Learning the harmonium would put an end to the accompaniment she pumped out for him. How he enjoyed watching her fingers caressing the keys, caressing the very notes he was singing, and her foot tapping out the beat, the beat her fingers moved to while his throat responded, creating the tempo within which they two worked as one.

But Miss Poonegar had a unique way of teaching the harmonium. Every time his hand faltered at the bellows, or did not work them quite the way she wanted, she grabbed his knee, now regretfully covered with long pants, and swung it inward towards the other, inward and outward, saying, "Dhummun, dhummun! Faster, faster!" pumping away at the knee. The divine pressure created between those swing-

ing limbs was not helping his work at the bellows, and it would be a long time, Adi decided, before he would be willing to master the harmonium.

From that day on, the teacher and her pupil scaled the *sa ray ga* with her hand on his knee, ascending and descending together; they explored the "Raag Bhimpalaas" and "Raag Piloo Mishra" while sharing the metronomic beat of his swinging thigh: they experienced the climax of various devotional songs to the heady rhythm of knees pumping in ecstacy. And Adi's short pants staged a temporary comeback. □

This excerpt is taken from a new short story by Rohinton Mistry, whose Tales from Firozsha Baag (Penguin) was shortlisted for the 1987 Governor General's Award for fiction. Copyright © 1988 by Rohinton Mistry

New and Naked Land

Ronald Rees

For most pioneers, arrival on the prairies was a disturbing experience.

They found a land that was flat, thinly treed, and virtually empty. Prairie art and literature reflected the feelings, nostalgia and regret felt by migrants confronted by the empty plains. As the immigrants adapted to and transformed their environment, so art and literature began to reflect the emergence of new generations born and bred on the prairies. Ronald Rees's thoroughly researched and absorbing study of responses and adaptations to the prairie landscape will interest academics and general readers alike.

\$24.95 hardcover

Western Producer Prairie Books
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Photographing Wildflowers

Craig and Nadine Blacklock
Complete Color Illustrations

Photographing Wildflowers represents the first opportunity to learn from the Blacklocks outside of their sought-after workshops.

The book progresses through the steps of finding a subject, choosing equipment, depth of field and focusing, exposure, the aesthetics of different types of light, ways to control light, and recording information in a way that will help you learn.

A wealth of technical and aesthetic tips on photographing nonflower closeup subjects ranging from mushrooms to ice are included.

This is a book that will gently ease the reader along to a firm grasp of the physics of closeup photography.

\$14.95 paperback

Western Producer Prairie Books
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

A fascinating and meticulously researched history of a puzzling disease...and an absorbing read.
—Kirkus Reviews

FASTING GIRLS

The Emergence of Anorexia Nervosa
as a Modern Disease

Joan Jacobs Brumberg

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
79 Garden St. Cambridge, MA 02138

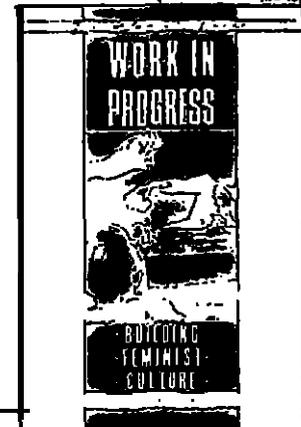
The Women's Press

WORK IN PROGRESS

- BUILDING •
- FEMINIST •
- CULTURE •

EDITED BY RHEA TREGEBOV
\$12.95

- theatre • visual arts •
- writing • video •
- architecture • film •



Qualicum metaphysics

"I don't want to mortify the poor trout by calling them the best-dressed women in the world, but they're all transparent and they wear diamonds and they wear gold and they wear silver"

By Pleuke Boyce

JOE ROSENBLATT is the author of many volumes of poetry, among them *Bumblebee Dithyramb* (Porcépic, 1973), *Virgins & Vampires* (McClelland & Stewart, 1975), and *The Sleeping Lady* (Exile, 1980). In 1976 he won the Governor General's Award for his collection *Top Soil* (Porcépic). Rosenblatt, who was born in 1933 in Toronto and spent most of his life there, moved to Vancouver Island in 1980. He subsequently published one more book of poetry, *Brides of the Stream* (Oolichan, 1984) and a book of prose, *Escape from the Glue Factory*, subtitled *A Memoir of a Paranormal Toronto Childhood in the Late Forties* (Exile, 1985). He has been writer-in-residence at the University of Western Ontario and at the Saskatoon Public Library and spent part of 1987 lecturing and reading in Italy (Rome and Bologna), Sweden, and Finland. He was interviewed at his home in Qualicum Beach by Pleuke Boyce:

Books in Canada: *After you'd moved from Toronto to Vancouver Island, about eight years ago, did the change in locale influence your writing?*

Joe Rosenblatt: Well, up till then, that is, till I moved to Vancouver Island, all those elements of the natural world that I had written about existed to a large extent only in my head and were therefore purely cerebral and imaginary. For example, the eggs I had written about were purely cerebral, although I was dealing with the physical realm, and the bees were cerebral too, although again I was dealing with the physical realm, but they existed only in my imagination. When I moved to the island, what happened was that all of a sudden I was rubbing elbows with Mother Nature. It was quite overwhelming.

So when I wrote about trout fishing,



PHOTOGRAPH BY R. MILLAR

Joe Rosenblatt

fly fishing, as I did in *Brides of the Stream*, in that particular volume it was no longer a cerebral thing. They were physical animals I was writing about, they were there and I could see them perfectly. I could see the mayfly and the trout, and to me the amazing thing about the mayfly and the trout was their total physicality. It was no longer a somewhat abstract or metaphysical concept I was writing about but a reality, which I desk with rather surrealistically, I guess. But that was the main change, at least the most obvious change, as far as my writing was concerned.

BiC: *But surely Toronto isn't completely without any natural life. You must have observed things there too?*

Rosenblatt: Not really. Although I did spend a lot of time in Allan Gardens at one point. But my bumble-bee poems, strangely enough, also came into being

under the influence of the West Coast. I spent some time there in 1968. And I found myself in Kitsilano, in Vancouver, where I'd never been before, and there I saw a flight of bumble-bees attack a hollyhock. And there were a lot of tropical and semitropical plants blooming in Kitsilano at that particular time. I found it all quite amazing, and that's when it all struck home. When I moved back to Toronto, I had all these notes and fragments of poems that became the bumble-bee poems. They were quite symphonic because I'd tried to incorporate the movements of the bees.

But the only place in Toronto where I'd ever observed any natural life was Allan Gardens. It's a conservatory downtown with several tropical greenhouses, and I used to go there quite a lot. Only people at the margin go there, and I regarded it very much as my own domain. I thought I was Rousseau, sketching in *Le Jardin des Plantes* in Paris. Rousseau spent all his life in Paris — he never went to the Belgian Congo or Africa. Africa was all in his head, just as the bees were in my head.

But everything changed when I moved out here. All of a sudden I was right at the centre of the natural world. And I would be writing and fishing, writing and fishing. I've always been a loner, never belonged to any group, literary or otherwise. Here I found myself really isolated. Still, there were compensations. But other things changed as well.

BiC: *What other things?*

Rosenblatt: My drawing, for example. A lot of my drawings used to deal with city life. Drawings of statues and buildings, people, people's faces. In any case, city life stimulated my drawing. When I came out here, I couldn't draw the forest or the ocean or the mountains.

They just leave me cold. So that's one element **that** changed right **there**. And unless I move back into a city, a large urban **centre**, my drawing is simply going to **die**. So **there** has been some good and some bad associated with **this** move.

BiC: *But you've met your fish.* Brides of the Stream **is all about fish and fishing.**

Rosenblatt: Oh, yes, it's **all** about fish and **fishing**, but it's about other **things** as well, of course. For **example**, **there** is the element of reincarnation. One dies, but life **still** goes on in **other** ways. Not **that** I have very strong beliefs about **this**, but when you look at a compost heap! it's quite clear **that nothing simply dies**: it becomes **something** else. And there's my uncle Nathan, who was a fishmonger **in** Toronto. He had a **fish store there from** 1928 to 1966, I **believe**. And he **first** introduced me to **fish**. He had a grotesque way of **dealing with** them: he'd club **them to death** and do **all kinds of horrible things to them**. **This** had nothing to do **with fishing**. Still, they were magic fish to me. And aeons later my uncle Nathan reentered **the stream** of my subconscious in **the Little Qualicum River**. There he was among the trout, **looking up at me**.



DAUGHTERS OF CAPTAIN COOK

A novel by
LINDA SPALDING

A haunting story of age-old mysteries and fresh betrayal, of love and need, set against the fertile beauty of Hawaii.

"The **writing here is among the best you will read this year — the people between the covers are unforgettable and their story is a shocker....**"

—TIMOTHY FINDLEY

INTERVIEW WITH DENNIS

BiC: *What is it, though, that attracts you to write about the lives of small animals?*

Rosenblatt: I couldn't have answered that question a year ago, I don't think. But I can answer it now. Mostly **these animals** are (a) vulnerable, vulnerable to ma" and to the grotesque nature of ma", his **mindless** violation. So in a way I'm **making** a political and ecological statement. In a very **off-centre** way, I suppose. And (b) they're **social** animals — they move either in schools, **like fish**, or in swarms, like bees. They're **very much collectivized**. And they **have** a certain aesthetic quality. Fish, trout **especially**, I see as **the** representatives of the purely feminine principle — now **this** may be looking at it **from** a man's point of view, but it could also be **from** a woman's point of view, or a **theologian's** point of view — it could be **from the** point of view of anyone who **is** interested in aesthetics. The way **they** are arrayed, **these** trout, they're **simply the best-dressed** creatures I know. I don't want to mortify **the** poor trout by **calling** them **the** best-dressed women **in the** world, **but they're all transparent and they wear diamonds and they wear gold and they wear silver**. They're just fascinating. And I've **always** been interested in detail, in my poetry, but in **my** drawings as well.

BiC: *What made you decide to start writing prose?*

Rosenblatt: I have always written prose, **although** it has never been my strong point. I don't see myself ever writing a novel. But as a young ma", a Trotskyite, I used to write for **the Workers' Vanguard**. **This** was in the late '50s. And I've always written book reviews and short prose pieces, essays. I once wrote a piece about Milton Acorn in Stanley Park. And I've written nasty letters to **Books in Canada**.

BiC: *But you've written a whole book of prose — Escape from the Glue Factory. It's also a sort of autobiography. What is that all about?*

Rosenblatt: I'd always wanted to **write** about growing up **in** British Toronto. It's no longer British-dominated now, but it **certainly** was when I was **growing up**. It was horribly Anglo-Saxon and a" excruciatingly **boring** place to be. Anglo-Saxons were **disdainful** of what they called "ethnics" — and you were "ethnic" **if you happened to be a Pole or a Jew or a" Italian**. So I was **raised** under a British system and **taught** about the Battle of **Hastings** in 1066 endlessly, it

seemed. AU the teachers **were Anglo-Saxon**, really tight-assed individuals. God only knows what **they thought** about Jews — **all** the kids at my school were Jewish. And I **couldn't write** about it until 40 years later. I **can** remember **those** teachers: they were failed **British** schoolmasters who had come to the colonies. Toronto, up to **the '50s**, up to **the time the Italians immigrated there en masse**, was a **terrible Anglo-Saxon place with all** those horrible rules, so you felt as if you couldn't do anything. I **decided** to write about it, and it **all** came out **in** a **big**, long stream, with **the most frightful** images. It's **something** I couldn't have dealt with **in** poetry. **The** book I ended up with, **Escape from the Glue Factory**, does have some aspects of poetry to it. It has a piece about a lake, for example. It started out as a" autobiography, but in a sense it isn't true enough — I'm just not a very good **narrator**. And eve" then I was writing about **things** like bullfrogs. But it's **still** autobiographical in that it **has** all my general views about life.

And **those** experiences, **those** horrible experiences, were the basis for it. **Since the" everything has changed**. But one remembers. *I certainly* remember.

BiC: *And you are now working on a sequel?*

Rosenblatt: Yes, I am. It's nearly finished. It's not about **Toronto** but about **Pontypool**, Ontario, where Jewish families would go for **their summer** vacations. It's set in 1950 and is about a **17-year-old** discovering **sexuality**. Falling **in** love with a pond. This is more poetic, I must say. **The pond is** a central metaphor and takes on **different realities** — a poetic pond, a subconscious pond.

BiC: *Gwendolyn MacEwen died just recently and Milton Acorn about two years ago. You were closely associated with them when you started out as a poet.*

Rosenblatt: I met **them** when **they** were married, in 1960 or thereabouts, although I had actually met Milton earlier, in 1958, at a meeting of the **League for Socialist Action**, on Queen Street, and **found** him very sympathetic. But when I met them together I met them as poets, and they **both** became **my** mentors. They were very **encouraging**. I was influenced by both of them, but Gwen's writing style has **influenced** me **the** most. It just happened to be more to my **liking**. When she **died** I was quite **taken** aback — it was a big shock, a great loss. □

Forget not my world

A native woman, Rebecca Belmore, sat for an afternoon behind a picture frame in a Thunder Bay shopping mall with a sign reading "The Spirit Sings, Sponsored by Shell Canada, Artifact # 671B 1988"

BY John Goddard

OLYMPIC GAMES usually begin after a young athlete runs into the stadium with a torch and ignites a giant flame, but organizers for the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary proposed to have native Indians in war-paint ride into the stadium on horses to ignite covered wagons, terrorizing white people posing as early settlers. The spectacle would have "lots of pizzazz," said Bii Sinchcombe, a member of the ideas committee.

The proposal was dropped after Lawrence Courtoreille, vice-president of the Indian Association of Alberta, said, "We'll agree only if the white guys inside the burning wagons are from the organizing committee." But his point — that Indians might feel cheapened at having themselves and their accoutrements paraded about as "pizzazz" for ABC television cameras — was lost on the organizers. They constructed a giant teepee over the Olympic flame, and on opening day they paid a group of local Indians to ride into the stadium wearing feathers. They produced Olympic medals featuring an Indian in a headdress of skis, a ski pole, two types of sleds, a rifle, a speed-skate blade, and a hockey stick. And they staged, as the main attraction of the Olympic Arts Festival, an international exhibition of Indian artefacts called *The Spirit Sings*.

The exhibition, upon which the book of the same title is based, has been the focus of an international protest unlike any other ever mounted in Canada. Groups opposing the show include the (Canadian) Assembly of First Nations, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, the National Congress of American Indians, the Metis Association of Alberta, the Indian Association of Alberta, the (Quebec) Grand Council of the Crees, and 23 museums of ethnology in the United States and Europe.

The protest began two years ago, and the reaction of the staff at Calgary's Glenbow Museum, venue for the exhibition, was to mount the show exactly as planned. The reaction at McClelland & Stewart was to publish the book exactly as planned, pretending that almost everybody opposed to the show supported it. A section near the back thanks many of them for their help. The co-ordinator of *The Spirit Sings* is Julia

Harrison, who says she got the idea for the exhibition during a trip to Europe in 1931. She noticed that North American Indian collections there are much older than those in Canada, dating to the time of first contact between native people and explorers. She had an urge to bring the best of the early works together, she says, but realized the cost would be extraordinary. When Calgary secured the 1988 Winter Olympics, money was suddenly available.

The Glenbow Museum announced the exhibition in the spring of 1936 under the title *Forget Not My World*, and the first person to object to it was Bernard Aminayak, chief of the Lubicon Lake Cree of northern Alberta, who have been saying "Forget not my world" for nearly 50 years. The band was promised a reserve in 1940, the promise was forgotten, and in the mid-1970s the Lubicon hunting-and-trapping grounds were found to be among the richest oil lands in the country. Beginning in 1930, the Alberta government permitted oil companies to invade the area, and implemented programs that sabotaged the band's efforts to assert land rights. At about the time Julia Harrison and six guest curators from across the country started work on the Olympics show, the federal Indian affairs minister of the day, John Munro, was pleading with the Alberta government to show some humanity for the Lubicon people. "The Governments of Canada and Alberta have the responsibility to ensure that every conscientious effort is made to relieve the Band's suffering," Munro wrote to Alberta's then native affairs minister, Milt Pahl. "At the very least, we should be motivated by a sense of social justice and provide a land base for their reserve." Pahl refused.

The Glenbow people renamed the show, but Aminayak still objected and called for a boycott. He wrote to museums in Europe and the United States that had been asked to lend items. In his letters, he explained that the Glenbow Museum was founded by a Calgary oil family, that its board of directors is appointed mostly by the Alberta government, that its list of donors reads like a mini Petroleum Club, and that the official corporate sponsor of *The Spirit Sings* is Shell

A SPECIAL OFFER FOR BOOKS IN CANADA READERS!



Books in Canada presents a unique sweatshirt for the literary crowd.

These easy-care (50% cotton, 50% polyester), one-size shirts are white with a black, mauve and green design and are available only through Books in Canada.

To order for yourself or as gifts for friends, simply fill out the coupon below and return it with your payment today.

YES!

I want _____ sweatshirts @ \$25 each = _____

Plus \$3.00* postage and handling = _____

TOTAL REMITTED _____

*Orders from the USA, please add \$5 for postage and handling. Orders from outside North America please add \$6. All orders will be shipped via surface mail.

Cheques or money orders only, please do not send cash. Make cheques out to Canadian Review of Books Limited.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTAL CODE _____

In Canada allow approximately six weeks for delivery — longer if outside Canada.

Books in Canada
333 Adelaide St. E., Ste. 438
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5A 3G9

Canada Ltd., one of the companies active near Lubicon Lake.

The letters began a debate that climaxed at the 15th assembly of the Ethnological Museum in Buenos Aires in October 1986. When museologists asked Glenbow director Duncan Cameron what was going on, Cameron blew up. "The intended exchange of views," the official newsletter of the meeting reads, "was soon marked by [the Glenbow director's] insulting and insinuating remarks. . . . His uncompromising stand barred every discussion. The Director then left the meeting abruptly."

The assembly passed a resolution saying, "Museums engaged in activities relating to living ethnic groups should, wherever possible, consult with the appropriate members of those groups, and such museums should avoid using ethnic materials in any way which might be detrimental and/or offensive to such groups."

Museum directors started pulling out of *The Spirit Sings*, one by one. Felix Valk, director of the Museum voor Volkenkunde, Rotterdam, wrote the Glenbow saying that exhibition risked being "regarded as a kind of cover-up, a 'ice façade hiding the real world of today's native peoples."

Twenty-three museums pulled out altogether. Harrison and Cameron say the boycott had no effect — they had more than 90 lenders. But the boycott denied them the

rich collection of the Fifth Thule Expedition from the National Museum of Denmark and that of the Roald Amundsen expedition from the University of Oslo. James Smith, curator at the New York Museum of the A&C Indian, says he was asked for 84 items, "some of them very important," and he lent none.

Steve Home, general manager of the *Edmonton Journal*, saw the show and wrote, "It is as though the Berlin Olympics had put on a display of Jewish religious objects to celebrate the diversity and pluralism of German culture." Keith Spicer, editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*, said, "Curators often miss the irony aboriginals see in their work: they are not mainly fostering live art, but showcasing relics — pinning dead butterflies under glass." A native woman named Rebecca Belmore sat for an afternoon behind a picture frame in a Thunder Bay shopping mall with a sign saying, "The Spirit Sings, sponsored by Shell Canada, Artifact #671B 1988."

One of the astonishing aspects of the book is its creators' apparent obliviousness to the controversy. Harrison's introduction includes this remarkable, if awkward, sentence: "Only when we choose to parade images of Indians" a "attempt to portray something unique about being Canadian are native peoples given significant recognition." Her statement exactly sums up why people are protesting against the show.

The book is full of photographs of artefacts that don't appear in the show because of the boycott, and it includes as supporters and contributors every museum and ethnologist who polled out in protest. No editor's note was added before press time, no errata sheet slipped in.

Both Harrison and Cameron write about fulfilling their "social responsibility," and that they hope "to initiate a dialogue with... Canada's native peoples," but the photographs and text bear no apparent relation to any living people. The pictures and descriptions of exotic clothing, tools, and artwork tell of a past, not of a present or future.

And in perhaps the most ironic passage of the book, Harrison writes that the native peoples of Canada were saved from genocide only through the signing of treaties and the granting of reserves. As artefacts began arriving in Calgary for the show, and as the book was going to press, the Lubicon Lake Cree band still had no reserve, and one-third of them were on medication for tuberculosis — a disease that has preceded the demise of aboriginal peoples the world over.

"This book is dedicated to the native people who created the magnificent objects . . . included in the exhibition," the last paragraph of the book reads, in final testimony to the curators' incomprehension. "It is their spirit which continues to sing among the native peoples of Canada today." □



Discover the Sights

THE VICTORY OF GERALDINE GULL
by Joan Clark
The struggle for survival among a community of Swampy Cree on the shore of Hudson Bay provides first-time novelist, Joan Clark with a theme for this compassionate and complex "novel." THE VICTORY OF GERALDINE GULL is a blend of biblical symbolism and native myth and legend offering a message of hope and dignity.

THE PRINCE OF STARS
by Ian Dennis
A colourful tapestry of adventure, mystery, romance and fantasy. THE PRINCE OF STARS is an action packed epic of exotic Arabia at the time of The Thousand and One Nights. Ian Dennis' first book BAGDAD was hailed by the *Toronto Star* as "irresistable"

PROSPERO'S DAUGHTER
by Constance Beresford-Howe
PROSPERO'S DAUGHTER is a wise and touching story about life and art, about reality and illusion, and about the wry great dangers inherent in confusing the two. Constance Beresford-Howe is the admired author of seven novels, among which are: THE BOOK OF EVE, A POPULATION OF ONE, THE MARRIAGE BED and NIGHT STUDIES.

LOVE IN THE TEMPERATE ZONE
by L.B. Wright
A new novel by the award-winning author of THE SUSPECT. This is a delightful story of a divorcee and a widower trying to relearn the forgotten rules of courtship while their parents, friends and children are either breaking every rule or making the rules as they go along.

Each: \$19.95 cloth

The art of conversation

'The blundering, homespun, know-nothing Canadian persona that some of our older writers enjoyed projecting in interviews is, thank heaven, a thing of the past'

By George Woodcock

CANADIAN WRITERS AT WORK: INTERVIEWS WITH GEOFF HANCOCK

Oxford University Press, 312 pages, \$29.95 paper (ISBN 019 540638 9)

SO TO SPEAK: INTERVIEWS WITH CANADIAN WRITERS

edited by Peter O'Brien, Véhicule, 311 pages, \$16.00 paper (ISBN 0 919890 84 9).

READING THROUGH Geoff Hancock's volume of interviews, *Canadian Writers at Work*, I experienced alternating delight and doubt. How interesting all these revelations are! But who

is conning whom? And then, opening the last interview but one, I came to the words of Margaret Atwood: all that I had been thinking was encapsulated there. "Interviews," she says in response to Hancock's first question, "are an art form in themselves. As such, they're fictional and arranged. The illusion that what you're getting is the straight truth from the writer and accurate in every detail is false. . . . Any memory of what you did at the moment of writing is just that, a memory. Like all memories, it's usually a revision, not the unadulterated experience itself. . . . Let's just state at the beginning that interviews as the

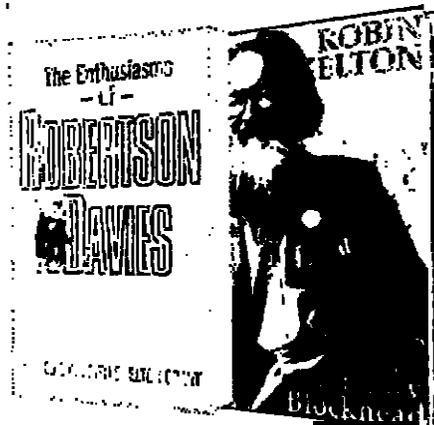
truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, are suspect. They're fictions."

True enough! As an ardent Proustian, I recognize the shaping power of memory. As a writer of autobiography, I recognize how far apart, in the end, the arranged account of one's life stands from the real chaos of existence. And the main difference between autobiography and interview is that between monologue and dialogue. What we get from both — even if that is not what we are seeking — is a fictional arrangement of actuality. Which, in spite of Peggy Atwood, is truth of its own kind, even if it is not wholly literal. And, provided that we relate interviews to the actual writings of the authors involved, as another kind of literary creation, we can gain a great deal from reading them.

Considered in this way, interviews have been among the important documents of Canadian literature over the past 15 years; they have given our writers, who before the late 1960s were a distinctly neglected and submerged fraction of the community, a means to express themselves beyond the confines of their work and to project in public the persona of the creator as well as that of the creation — the fictional character or the poetic voice.

Already there have been a number of notable volumes of this kind: Graeme Gibson's *Eleven Canadian Novelists* in 1973, Donald Cameron's *Interviews with Canadian Novelists* in 1975, and Alan Twigg's *For Openers* in 1981.

and Sounds of Spring...



THE ENTHUSIASMS OF ROBERTSON DAVIES

edited by Judith Skelton Grant
The first collection of the best of Davies' newspaper and magazine articles is now available in trade paperback. Included are sketches of famous people, book reviews, and essays on reading, writing and conversation.

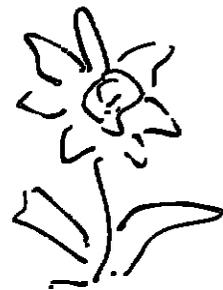
\$14.95 Trade paper



MEMOIRS OF A LITERARY BLOCKHEAD by Robin Skelton

In this light-hearted memoir Skelton recounts meetings and run-ins with Robert Graves, Ezra Pound, Siegfried Sassoon, Thomas Kinsella, Earle Birney, Dorothy Livesay and many others. Poet, playwright, critic and raconteur, Skelton is one of Canada's best and most prolific men of letters.

\$26.95 cloth



MACMILLAN ANTHOLOGY 1

edited by John Metcalf and Leon Rooke

This exciting, vibrant and controversial collection of writing in Canada, includes new works by Sinclair Ross, John Newlove and Jay Scott, as well as the best of Canada's new young writers, Keath Fraser and Diane Schoemperlen. Also appearing in the ANTHOLOGY is a profile of Mavis Gallant by Janice Kulyk Keefer and 8 review of the 1087 publications.

\$14.86 Trade paper

Macmillan of Canada

FALLS THE SHADOW

by
Sharon Kay Penman



The bestselling author of *The Sunne in Splendour* returns with another rich historical narrative: the divine right of Kings' conflict between Henry III and Simon de Montford.

"Penman takes up where she left off in *Here Be Dragons* producing another fat historical novel with lots of intrigue, drama, finely crafted cameos, and sweeping panoramas... admirably well-researched and will keep many readers steadily moving, treating them to some splendid period detail."

—Kirkus Reviews

50,000 print
592 pages, 2 maps and family tree

\$27.95 cloth



Fitzhenry & Whiteside

Publishers of The Punk & Wagnall's
Canadian College Dictionary

Geoff Hancock's *Canadian Writers at Work* follows the example of Gibson and Cameron by sticking to fiction writers, though he includes story-tellers as well as novelists. The other collection I am reviewing, *So to Speak*, follows Twigg's example by recognizing that verse writers can be just as interestingly voluble as prose writers, and its editor, Peter O'Brien, has included a number of poets. The interviews he reproduces were conducted by various people, but all were included in *Rubicon*, one of our best recently founded little magazines. Geoff Hancock's appeared initially in *The Canadian Fiction Magazine*, which he has edited with great skill and discrimination for well over a decade.

If we are prepared to suspect what writers say about themselves and their work as much as in these metafictional days we are automatically suspicious of the narrator in a novel, what can we expect to gain from reading such interviews? How can they interest us if we are bound to distrust them as revelations of the creative process?

They can interest us precisely in the way Atwood suggests, as an art form. Considered in this way they become fascinating, for they reveal the sometimes evasive, sometimes exuberant, sometimes intensely charming, sometimes unexpectedly thoughtful, sometimes expectedly dull everyday personae of writers most of us know mainly through their work.

Here the fact that what one reads are dialogues rather than monologues becomes important, and so does the skill of the interviewer and the kind of rapport he or she establishes with the writer being interviewed. Geoff Hancock is not only a skilled interviewer, he is also a warm and engaging personality, and there are some occasions when the chemistry of minds coming together produces amazing results. His interview with Mavis Gallant — humorous, sophisticated, immensely intelligent and far-ranging — is a masterpiece of conversation on both sides. So, in a less effulgent way, are his talks with Jane Rule and Alice Munro. He draws from Josef Skvorecky not only a splendid statement of the thoughts of a writer in self-exile from Eastern Bumps but also a fine justification of realism as a viable trend in modern fiction.

It was interesting to see the overlap between Hancock's and O'Brien's collections. Five writers were common to the two collections — Atwood, Skvorecky, Gallant, Leon Rooke, and Jack Hodgins — and this may say something about the way literary fashion has moved at the end of the 1980s. The rest of Hancock's interview subjects are already fairly well established — Rule, Munro, Robert Kroetsch, Clark Blaise and Bharati Mukherjee — while, with the exception of Rudy Wiebe, the others in Peter O'Brien's *So to Speak* are lesser known but interesting writers, most of them poets. If quality is anything to go by, we should in the near future be hearing a good deal more about Roo Borson, Peter Van Toorn, Nicole Bros-

sard, Christopher Dewdney, and Erin Mouré. These interviews are really the collection's strength.

For *So to Speak* does lose in comparison with *Canadian Writers at Work*, because there are several interviewers of varying levels of skill. This especially affects the quality of interviews with the established writers, though all is not lost, for at times a different interviewer and different circumstances bring out other aspects of the writer. Mavis Gallant, for example, who was so expansive and genial in her beloved Paris where Geoff Hancock interviewed her, becomes withdrawn and gloomy almost testy when interviewed during her period as writer-in-residence at the University of Toronto, where she found both the company and the surroundings uncongenial. Leon Rooke, on the other hand, adopts a much more jesting persona with Peter O'Brien than with Hancock, and this seems truer to his work.

Mavis Gallant, who was expansive and genial in her beloved Paris, became withdrawn and gloomy, almost testy, when she was interviewed in Toronto

With some of the younger, newer writers, the less professional style of the *So to Speak* interviews seems to work admirably in bringing out their thoughts and natures. I found those with Roo Borson, Peter Van Toorn, and Christopher Dewdney so illuminating in an intellectual way that I immediately took down their books and read them more attentively than I had at first. What impressed me was the broad thoughtfulness, the sensitivity to environment, and the restless though unpretentious erudition of these newer poets. The blunder@, homespun, know-nothing Canadian persona that some of our older writers enjoyed projecting in interviews is, thank heaven, a thing of the past. Writers now are anxious to show that their art cannot be defended by the creator's pretence of ignorance and uncouthness in a world where knowledge is expanding in such extraordinary ways.

And so, even granting that interviews are no more to be taken literally than any other kind of fiction, and that the processes of writing are not so rationally explicable as many writers like to pretend, these interviews are fascinating and immensely valuable for the informal views they give us of creative minds at work, or writers making their public images. As in their written works, so in these interviews — the way novelists and poets speak is always as important as what they say, and perhaps more revealing. □

Now you see me

By I. M. Owen

THE SILENT GAME: THE REAL WORLD OF IMAGINARY SPIES

by David Stafford.

*Lester & Orpen Dennys, 233 pages,
\$14.95 paper (ISBN 0 83619 088 6).*

AS LONG AS there has been organized warfare there have necessarily been spies, but until the 20th century espionage wasn't an organized profession; spies were often gentleman amateurs, carrying on what Kipling called "the Great Game" as a bit of a lark — from Alfred the Great using his musical talent to gain admission to the enemy camp as a strolling harper to Robert Baden-Powell hiking through the Balkans as a butterfly collector, trout fisherman, or landscape painter.

When we read about the activities of real-life spies today, as in Job Sawatsky's *For Service Rendered*, they seem to have an unreal quality, as if they happen in a borderland between fact and fantasy. David Stafford, in this survey of spy fiction, shows that there is a reason for this: the fiction came first, the profession begs as a result of it, and the professional spies were and are devoted readers of the genre. When the CIA proposed to assassinate Castro by offering him an exploding cigar, they had got the idea from an 1899 book by the founder of the spy novel, William Le Queux.

I've never read Le Queux, and, judging from Stafford's account of his novels, that's something to be grateful for. But he had a huge following, especially after he changed the principal enemy in his books from France to Germany. When the British government in 1909 formed the Secret Service Bureau it was in direct response to goods of letters from Le Queux's readers, panicking about the German menace.

Yet Le Queux's heroes remained gentleman amateurs

like Duckworth Drew, a pipe smoking bachelor who from time to time leaves his comfortable Bloomsbury flat to go to the Continent on secret missions for the Foreign Office. Out of this tradition came Richard Hannay and many others. And there remains a touch of it even among the professionals of John le Carré's Circus and Anthony Price's Department of Intelligence Research and Development. George Smiley, though perhaps not quite a gentleman, is essentially a scholar; a good deal of the time he is either actually or ostensibly resigned or retired. I "The Spy Who Came In from the Cold, Leamas is told that Smiley has retired, and anyway disapproves of the proposed operation. It takes an attentive reader to detect that in truth Smiley has devised and is running the whole thing.

Then there's David Audley, the quirky and difficult hero of the novels of Anthony Price — a writer to whom Stafford, to my regret, gives only two sentences. Audley, like Smiley, has a lifelong rival in the KGB. In *For the Good of the State* (1986) this antagonist, Panin, has a rendezvous with Audley in a lonely spot on Exmoor. They have a long conversation, and in this exchange Audley encapsulates the English spy tradition:

"You are clever, David. But you are an amateur."

"No. You've still got it bloody-wrong, Nikolai — the word is 'Gentleman' not 'Amateur!'"

Le Queux let it be understood that in the intervals of writing his 40-odd novels he himself went on glamorous secret missions. This was quite untrue. But the batch of spy writers who followed on the heels of Le Queux and his contemporary E. Phillips Oppenheim, besides being readers of their books, were either in or closely linked with the intelligence services during the war with Germany that Le Queux and Oppenheim had predicted: John Buchan, A. E. W. Mason, Compton Mackenzie — who was later

prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act — and Somerset Maugham — who was compelled to suppress parts of his *Ashenden*. What remained became standard reading for new recruits to the SIS.) Just at the end of the war Valentine Williams, a former war correspondent and Guards officer, started a hugely successful series of novels featuring a villainous and repulsive German spy known as Clubfoot. Among his ardent readers was the boy Kim Philby — whose nickname, of course, was taken from Kipling's boy spy.

And so on it goes, with art imitating life and life retaliating by imitating art right back. Former spies write books, active spies read them attentively. I find it amusing that when *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold* was published to a chorus of praise there were two voices that raised strong objections to it. The dissenting critics were Kim Philby of the KGB and Richard Helms of the CIA. □

No harp music

By Brian Fawcett

GYPSY GUITAR: ONE HUNDRED POEMS OF ROMANCE AND BETRAYAL

by David McFadden,

*Talonbooks, 112 pages, \$10.95
paper (ISBN 0 88922 232 9).*

DAVID MCFADDEN has always been a man more interested in earthly dragons than in the interpretation of heavenly logic. In his introduction to *Gypsy Guitar*, he remarks that the music of any half-drunk gypsy guitarist is "more likely to make your hair stand on end than a host of heavenly harpists." And true to his word, the one hundred poems of romance and betrayal that follow offer up absolutely no harp music. Instead, he has gathered together a "astonishing array of the dragons of earthly love — a backbiting, treacherous, ungodly troupe — and has made them sing

to his unique and wildly inventive accompaniment.

The patron dragon of this book is Baudelaire, a number of whose poems McFadden "translates" through the volume. The mate to this dragon is the absent lover to whom many of the poems are addressed. No doubt she is a real person, but the closest McFadden comes to describing her is as his litter-mate. Those who are interested in gossip will speculate about her identity. They will be missing the point and wasting their time.

Lesser dragons abound. D. H. Lawrence makes an appearance, as do Susan Musgrave, a "umber of Japanese haiku artists, McFadden's parents, a large number of friends and acquaintances, several additional lovers (to throw the gossips off the trail), and a selection of wild and domestic animals, including some recurring elephants. There were quite a few of those, actually.

In "Elephants," McFadden tells of a "encounter with a" elephant at the Granby Zoo:

... when I held out a handful of nuts to the bull elephant he took only half, then slowly backed up so his mate could have the remainder. The eyes of these sad spiritual lovers is leg chains checked to see if I understood and appreciated their little gesture of kindness and love, and I felt I'd been blessed by the Pope. . . And people who live in the vicinity of the Granby Zoo when you get to know them will shyly confide in you that late at night after they turn off the television they lie in bed listening to and feeling the earth and sky quivering and murmuring with the mammoth heartbreaking hour-long orgasms of the elephants.

I record this passage not to say that it is the book's best, but that there are at least several hundred "lore — not necessarily about elephants either — that contain a similar but unique intensity of perception.

Everything McFadden writes is first and finally unpredictable and interesting. From his recent novel, *Canadian Sunset*, to his bizarre pronouncements on coin-

vidence to the notes he leaves on his door. Everything he writes is a trip into a parallel universe, a trip that is invariably both amusing and disturbing at the same time.

Until now, his best books have been the *Trips* books, which recount his summer vacations around Lake Huron and Lake Erie, and can tell you more about covert subtleties of family violence than a school of psychiatrists could in six months. His *Art of Darkness* from several years ago shouldn't be missed either, along with his various collaborations with London, Ontario, artist Greg Curnoe. But *Gypsy Guitar* tops them all.

It's a hefty volume, not at all the flimsy fare of most volumes of Canadian verse. You can read it 50 poems at a time (as I did the first time through) and be transported into McFadden's parallel universe, or you can savour the poems one by one. Most readers, I suspect, will do both. It is an eminently entertaining and readable book, even though McFadden never concedes an inch to the conventional universe

we're all used to being in.

Gypsy Guitar is David McFadden's best book to date. It should be a shoo-in for next year's Governor General's Award and so other prizes we can offer this marvellous writer. □

Cush-cush and casuarina

By Brent Ledger

PROUD EMPIRES

by Austin Clarke,
Viking (Penguin), 224 pages,
\$22.95 cloth
(ISBN 0 670 81756 2).

AUSTIN CLARKE has run for mayor of Toronto, been an adviser to a Barbadian prime minister, worked as a cultural attaché to the Barbadian embassy in Washington, and was until recently a censor for the Ontario Film Review Board, so it's not perhaps surprising that his newest novel, *Proud Empires*, should sketch the sticky web of power.

Nor even that he should do it with such cutting delicacy. Clarke has written 10 other books, one of which, *The Prime Minister*, studied politics and corruption in a west Indian nation.

Perhaps all that's remarkable, really, is his ability to turn a tired fictional formula into something cool and glittering sod strange. Set in Barbados and cast in the form of a novel of adolescence, *Proud Empires* follows the growth of a student named Boy from the age of 13 into early adulthood. But while the structure is familiar the content is not, and it makes for an engrossing read. Partly this is a matter of setting. For a reader sitting in Toronto in March, a Caribbean island covered in casuarina trees and cush-cush grass is so inherently fascinating place. But mostly it's a matter of taste and imagination. Clarke avoids the usual clichés of adolescent fiction, particularly the sexual rite of passage, opting instead for a gradual expansion of Boy's political consciousness.

Boy is a top student at the best college in Barbados, but his real

education doesn't begin until a national election draws nigh, and the corrupt governing party totters on the edge of self-destruction. At first his view is limited to the tailor's shop and the back room of the rum shop where the "big men" of the village gather to exchange gossip and whispers of preferment. He watches as the ignorant tailor, a political innocent named Seabert, discourses on what he calls the philosophy of the common man — English "commonism." And he watches as the men heed the implied threat of the policeman's club.

But as the election beats up and tensions increase, Boy's horizons begin to expand and petty village rivalries give way to larger concerns. He watches as the prime minister feigns grief at a political funeral. And he watches as his uncle, the owner of a plantation, sits in a restaurant and orders one of the perquisites of his position, a steak dripping in blood.

And that perhaps is the biggest failing of the book, for that's all Boy does: he watches. Although

FESTIVAL THEATRE

RICHARD III

A brilliant psychological study of the treacherous King Richard
MAY 0 TO OCT 20

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

The fantastic comedy of the courtship of Kale the Shrew
MAY 7 TO OCT 29

Free 1990 brochure:
Stratford Festival
P.O. Box 520
Stratford, Ontario N5A 6V2
or call 519-271-4040

AVON THEATRE

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

A reflective comedy of a woman's determination to win a man's love
MAY 10 TO OCT 29

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

Friendship and love become rivals in this comedy of betrayal and deception
MAY 17 TO OCT 20



SHAKESPEARE

LIVES

ON ALL 3 STAGES

THE YOUNG COMPANY AT THE THIRD STAGE

TWELFTH NIGHT

Theatrical magk — mistaken identities combine with the mysterious unpredictability of love in a delightful comedy.
MAY 25 TO SEP 3

KING LEAR

One of the greatest of Shakespeare's tragedies — the moving and powerful drama of an old king who divides his kingdom and misjudges the affection of his daughters.
MAY 26 TO SEP 3

BOX OFFICE LINES OPEN!

1-519-273-1600

THIRTY-SIXTH SEASON
STRATFORD FESTIVAL

May 7 to October 30

John Hewille
Artistic Director

Pick up a brochure at your local branch of the Bank of Montreal



he's the **nominal focus** of the book. he **seldom** speaks. Even "lore **puzzling**: for great **important** stretches of the novel Boy simply isn't there, and it's "dear just who the observer is. He's a cipher at the **centre** of a book otherwise tilled with memorable characters: his own **proud** mother, **Sarge** the **brutal** policeman, and **Seabert** the foolish tailor.

The sketchiness of Boy's character and the novel's **shifting point of view** mb the book of **passion**. If the **story** doesn't affect Boy, why **should** the **reader care**? And yet that is probably, in **part**, what Clarke intended. The **distance between author** and subject, hero and events, is no accident but the **result** of **careful calculation**. **Girded** in clinical detachment, **Clarke** dissects desire and violence alike with a **deft, surgical** touch designed to amuse **admiration**, not passion.

By and large, he succeeds. Some of the set pieces — notably Boy's journey to meet his uncle and a ride in the expensive **car** of the island's leading lawyer — are models of **small-scale** drama, and the **prose**, always terse, dry, and witty, **snaps** tight as a **whip** throughout. But it's the **dialogue**, with its distinctive "Baja" **rhythm** and **pronunciation**, that brings Clarke's **characters** to life and gives the book its special stamp. Sharp, **colourful** and pungent, it resembles (oddly enough) the **quirky dialogue** of Ronald **Firbank**, another master of **colloquial** speech. whom otherwise Clarke does not at all resemble.

From the rather tentative note on which **Proud Empires** ends, one assumes Clarke intends a sequel — **sooner**, perhaps, **rather than kiter**, since the book, though new to **Canada**, was published two years ago in England. If so, it **should find** a ready **audience**, primed for more of Clarke's sharp **writing** and observant cynicism. ☐



Events in the atmosphere

By Bruce Whiteman

PERMUGENESIS: A RECOMBINANT TEXT

by Christopher Dewdney, *Nightwood*, 48 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 22271 113 5).

COMING TO JAKARTA: A POEM ABOUT TERROR

by Peter Dale Scott, *McClelland & Stewart*, 160 pages, \$12.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 8012 3).

SINCE 1974, Chris Dewdney has been working on a long poem in prose entitled *A Natural History of Southwestern Ontario*. The first book, which was rejected by a number of Canadian publishers before being accepted by Geoff Young's The Figures Press in Berkeley, California, appeared in 1978 as *Spring Trances in the Control Emerald Night*. Book two, *The Cenozoic Asylum*, was published in Liverpool in 1993. *Permugenes* is book three of this poetic project.

A favourite party game of the Surrealists was the so-called *cadavre exquis*, a kind of grand collaborative drawing in which each participant in turn contributed to a "evolving image without seeing the previous parts of the whole. The result would naturally be a surprising composite of discontinuous pieces.

Dewdney has created the third book of his long work in a somewhat analogous fashion from the texts of books two and three, though he alone is responsible for the result. words, phrases, and images from the two existing texts have been recombined (in a process parallel to a geneticist's work on DNA) to produce *Permugenes*, whose title one might gloss as "creative reworking."

The book is a kind of collage, then, and anyone familiar with the earlier parts of the work will find many familiar things recontextualized.

The language of the poem, like its formal procedure, is reminiscent of surrealism (I think of Max Ernst especially, who also knew something about natural history). The opening paragraph is characteristic:

There is a second order of darkness and lens of distance. Brick walls radiating tangible heat at night flowering in the inky strata of far storms. Limestone corridors of stone the miniature jungle of a rainless summer day in hot August. The fingers on vacant F.M. patios at night Fragonard brain coral. Sun spotted from a starry pasture.

The whole text is permeated with a hothouse eroticism (and I use the word hothouse without derogation); the natural world of insects, plants, and atmospheric events is heavy with copulative energy and presented on a time scale that telescopes all of evolution into a radiant present. "The source a distant thunder in a weird remote control music of the stars. raining intrusions of stone within sky."

One has to give in to the marvellous sexual power of *Permugenes*'s language and not worry too much over the ideational content of sentences like "The body a large yellow ochre terraced reagent command, a reconstruction of the word" or "Staggered grace the distant low fountains of synthetic envelopes." The book's magic works best if, as readers, we accept Dewdney's contention in book one that "We an? strangers here (nocturnal) in the fiction of (absolute) our own hearts."

It is difficult to imagine a poem more dissimilar to *Permugenes* than Peter Dale Scott's *Coming to Jakarta*. Scott's is a book-length autobiographical meditation on the politics of violence. It is "lore than a little reminiscent of both Pound and Williams, the latter in its formal pattern (pseudotriadic stanzas) and the former in its allusiveness (it is replete with citations that are identified in the right-hand margin, and a bibliography is provided). The political material focuses on U.S. involvement in Indonesia (hence the title), but that particular episode in American imperial history is made a" emblem for the larger view in which political manipulation, violence, and economic solipsism. so to speak, are seen to warp the lives of all of us. Interwoven with this aspect of the poem are details from Scott's own life (he is F. R. Scott's son), for he is too wise simply to write an objective indictment. As he

puts it in section three:

To have learnt from terror
to see oneself
as part of the enemy

can be a reassurance
whatever it is
arises within us

and in the closing lines of the book:

let there be the courage
not just to have seen

but to ease into the world
the unreal
breathing within us

Scott manages with remarkable deftness to integrate the world of international political violence with his telling of the growth of a poet's mind. a use Wordsworth's phrase intentionally, as Scott's memories of his childhood have a kind of Wordsworthian aura about them.) This is so despite the opening image in the poem of the three desks in Scott's office at which the various parts of his life take place (reading Virgil, investigating political wrongdoings, and writing poetry). a" image of fragmentation in the poet's life that the book itself belies. It is Virgil's descent into the underworld that Scott chooses to mention, an appropriate image for the voyage his poem takes through the contemporary world of political assassination, totalitarian governments, secret police machinations, and so on. This is material that English-language poetry rarely deals with, and though it has the potential to become a catalogue in which the poetry itself gets forgotten, Scott succeeds remarkably in holding it together by placing himself, ultimately, at the centre. *Coming to Jakarta* records one man's life set in the context of *realpolitik*. It is hard to think of another work like it by a Canadian poet. ☐

Galactic drift

By Bert Cowan

TESSERACTS²

edited by Phyllis Gotlieb and Douglas Barbour, *Press Porcépic*, 296 pages, \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 88878 270 5).

IT IS RIGHT that this anthology should include a story by the winner of the Arthur C. Clarke Award for best science fiction in

1987 — none other than Margaret Atwood for *The Handmaid's Tale*. Her story in this collection — "Freeforall" — is not in my view the best, but it may be the most representative of what is happening both in Canadian science fiction (or science fantasy) and in the genre at large.

In a literary field that is still so controversial, a word on the reviewer's orientation may be in order. Science fiction has changed a lot since I became so addicted, a good 80 years ago, of what was then a brash literary youngster (though with some respectable ancestors) to be found at its best in Hugo Gernsback's *Amazing Stories*. It seems in retrospect to have been concerned mainly with space flight and associated bug-eyed monsters, time travel (not very subtly), and scientific gimmickry, often about the fourth dimension of space. An imaginative story that I can recall was titled "John Jones's Dollar" (author's name forgotten, but no doubt retrievable). It was an exposition of what could happen to one dollar, left undisturbed on deposit at compound interest for decades and maybe centuries. Possibly there was something wrong with the analysis, and probably only an economist could explain what, but it was impressive.

My addiction has become greatly attenuated, in step with the vast expansion and consequent dilution of the genre, but one facet has improved over the years: SF has become more human, if often in opaque ways.

Atwood's story is certainly human; like much of the best in the field, it extrapolates from current situations into the future, in this case the future of sexual diseases like AIDS and herpes and perhaps of others yet unknown. It is always best in this kind of story not to explain too much. Thus, rubber body stockings and turkey basters are mentioned only in passing and without elaboration. Certain venues are also put to good use, one of them an unnamed theme park north of Toronto. The ending is as chilling as they come.

As for the result of this collection, it's a mixture of excellent, good, passable, and some that I found quite unreadable. One mer-

cifully short example of the last is titled "4179," with the subtitle "The Mkuro Cartha's Report from Marduccia and Rahorus from the Files of Alyeric and Fonc." It has characters with such names as Dogon and Janu, and nouns like *kranath* and *tinga* and *varg* and. . . But why go on?

William Gibson's contribution, "The Winter Market," with glimpses of Vancouver a century or so in the future, is a fascinating look at the possibility of a kind of human survival in a computer and what this might cost. Kathryn A. Sinclair's "Raindance" demonstrates that you may not need to dance only for rain. This one, too, is chilling.

Two or three stories are about the end of the world, or some interim stage on the way there. Andrew Weiner's "Distant Signals" holds out the hope, or threat, that there may be a future for today's trashy television programmes long after the terrestrial reruns are over.

There are some examples of poetry, which — like most SF poetry — is best passed by with eyes averted.

The field is one in which individuals' tastes can vary so widely that there may be no point in seizing on one story in this volume as the best; but for me it is "Ashland, Kentucky," by Terence M. Green. Definitely not science fiction, though it does play with time, it is a fantasy, at once charming and unsettling, and something more — a ghost story. That kind of writing is becoming so much a lost art that this story alone is worth the price of the book. □

Networking

By D. French

TURN UP THE CONTRAST: CBC TELEVISION DRAMA SINCE 1952 by Mary Jane Miller, UBC Press, 438 pages, \$34.95
clot h
(ISBN 0 7748 0278 2).

IN HER ANALYSIS of CBC productions from 1952 to 1984, Mary Jane Miir defines as drama "a story in process" and includes "both the predictable 'black hat-white hat' formula action-

adventure show sod the most complex, intellectually challenging and aesthetically beautiful 'single' television film." In short, everything on the box but the "ephemera of sports and news."

A major difficulty with a project of this kind is that before VCRs came into widespread use in the '80s, all television was ephemeral. Even the CBC — and this is the book's most poignant note — has lost whole chapters of its, and Canada's, history. At least a quarter of *Turn Up the Contrast* is devoted to synopses and brief sketches of programmes, delivered by Miller, a professor of dramatic literature at Brock University, in a breezy, conversational style as readable as it is subjective. Her quick judgements are sure to provoke debate of the kind that "This How Has Seven Days" raised in the House of commons. (Were we ever so innocent a country? Are we still?)

From its beginning, the CBC refused to develop a "star" class of performers. Ostensibly, this was to prevent the commensurate salary demands, but one suspects a Canadian modesty at work, combined with a suspicious resentment of tall poppies. The policy may have led to the success of programmes such as "Wojeck," in which the dominant focus was allowed to be the script rather than the personality. Miller contends that this is the CBC's great strength, that it "anthologizes" even the continuing series, creating a reflective and reflexive process for examining regions and issues — in effect, a national theatre.

By contrast, Miller presents the gruelling American schedule as one reason "stars must ride the wave with characters based on their most comfortable personae." Yet Miller notes that Bruno Gemssi in "The Beachcombers" does play a role approximating that of an American star: "If you don't like his particular acting presence, you don't like the series." (Familiarity with that presence creates a fascinated disbelief as one examines the reproduced still of Gemssi as Peer Gynt or reads a textual reference to his Hamlet.)

"The Beachcombers" receives more attention than any other CBC effort. Miller devotes 18 pages to its mythology, from

coming-of-age theme episodes to recurring motifs. More interesting is its inception, described by Miller in what one hopes is a parody of L.A.-speak: "From this general framework came a 'treatment' . . . a concept is expected to be 'fresh' (but recognizable), have the potential for many story lines, and be geared to a specific demographic cross-section. . . ." She concludes that "it is the most successful television series ever made in Canada" and "it's a good face to present to the world."

On reading that Miller watched 40 "Beachcombers" episodes in 10 days, one wonders if she succumbed to what psychologists call "reaction formation." Maybe Gemssi does a good lunch?

Personalities, or a kind of Celebrity Pursuit, are a large part of the book's interest for the nonacademic. Why, one wonders, is Barbara Hamilton a "brilliant comedienne" but Rosemary Radcliffe a "delightful comic actor"? And why does the exquisitely expressive Fii Reid get no adjectives at all? Why is it mentioned that John Vernon achieved less than stardom in the U.S. after leaving "Wojeck," while no note of censure taints a reference to Al Waxman's work on "Cagney and Lacey"?

Turn Up the Contrast is the first of three planned books: the second and third are to be interviews with CBC personnel and accounts of decision-making and the influence of technology. That may explain the exclusion from this volume of the supporting arguments some observations demand.

For example, it is to the CBC's credit that "Take 30" was developed at a time when afternoon viewers were assumed to be "only housewives"; such a far-sighted concept is surely more important than the network's failure to produce a soap opera.

Miller's theory that Canadian series television is most successful when it plays against its own formula is interesting, and probably true, but not supported if "Sidestreets" is perceived as more enjoyable for being more "realistic" than "Harry-O," considering the latter's droll self-consciousness. Close-up shots deserve more attention than a dismissal as "standardized

vocabulary," especially since they have allowed a cult of personality to supersede the necessity for quality scripts. questioning channel-done during claime who commercials can programme, should be aware that one sometimes has to look the Obsession erotica.

Television viewers, i.e. everyone, will find important issues in *Turn Up the Contrast*; t b informed consumer gets the beet value, any product. the b o o k marred by editorial sloppiness. Verbal tics such as "time frame" and "in point of fact" are merely irritating. are the jacket blurb, "an innovative, narrative poem loosely based on the life and art of the renowned modern German collage artist, Kurt Schwitters." The book includes a Schwitters chronology and the poems are presented in chronological order. But it is not necessary to know much about Schwitters in order to read this book. (Morton points out that Schwitters's own "novels and plays subvert the very notion of anyone's 'lifestory.'") Morton so successfully appropriates Schwitters's "T" in these poems that the reader not only learns about the German artist's involvement in Dada and his and his soon's flight from his Nazi homeland, but, more meaningfully, his apprehension of an artistic world.

From aleph to Merz

By Fred Wah

THE MERZBOOK: KURT SCHWITTERS POEMS

by Colin Morton
Quarry Press, 85 pages,
\$10.95 paper
(ISBN 0 919627 46 3).

ABRAHAM

by Colin Browne
Brick Books, 80 pages, \$7.50 paper
(ISBN 0 919626 33 5).

NOTICE THESE ISBNs. But these two books of poetry share something besides a numerical coincidence and their authors' first names. Both collections are powerful illustrations of the range of intellect that occasionally still operates in poetry. They document how the poem can still embody the act of knowing, the



verb of it, the mind as it makes (*poetin*). Thus these two books are delightful in the sheer activity of their poetic sensibilities. They are well worth reading simply because the writers value formal risks, gauge mind-language perception, and incur the extent of current poetic composition.

The Merzbook is, accord& to the jacket blurb, "an innovative, narrative poem loosely based on the life and art of the renowned modern German collage artist, Kurt Schwitters." The book includes a Schwitters chronology and the poems are presented in chronological order. But it is not necessary to know much about Schwitters in order to read this book. (Morton points out that Schwitters's own "novels and plays subvert the very notion of anyone's 'lifestory.'") Morton so successfully appropriates Schwitters's "T" in these poems that the reader not only learns about the German artist's involvement in Dada and his and his soon's flight from his Nazi homeland, but, more meaningfully, his apprehension of an artistic world.

In his appropriation of Schwitters's voice (and others), Morton dramatizes the history and aesthetics that surrounded Schwitters. we learn, for example, of the "Bii of Men":

*And in an instant
what had spun in my head for
days
resolved.
"I call them all merzbilden.
Merz, not schmerz, is the core of
my art."*

we hear Schwitters picking up scraps of garbage for his collages, railing against his detractors, soulfully soliloquizing his "Merzing" of his house ("The Cathedral of Erotic Misery" is quite a beautifully crafted lyric poem). And the book is full of the particulars of image-building. from a scene on a beach to "an egg cup steaming in the sun."

This voicing seems most

accessible in its CBC-poetic-narrative style (selections won third prize in the CBC literary competition), but the book is more than that. The poems are accompanied by several Schwitters collages to help ground all the talk about art. Perhaps most outstanding, however, are Morton's adaptations of several Of Schwitters's sound poems and his translation of "Anna Bloom." These resonate with the range of play and colour of the originals.

Colin Browne's *Abraham* also plays off a persona. But the biblical Abraham is used here in some vast plot of the mind as a device through which a narrative poetic process posits and works out the right questions and maybe the right answers. Browne seeks to reconstruct his own, a family, story through the principle of known particulars. That is, he moves from concretion to concretion and the connections get the mind into shape, into narrative — join the dots. What is intriguing about the way Browne does this is how, because it is an oblique process after all, his poetry becomes such a solid track for the imagination's fragmentations.

The estrangement of the connections in the book is slightly mollified by the glossary. There the reader can see early on the large poetic propositions Browne has chosen to work with. For example, there is the aleph on the cover, which begins a structural run actualized in the alphabetized titles of the poems, the semitic field and hierarchy of names out of Babel, and language as imprinted root of consciousness, to be written, written over, crossed out, even. Such poetry can be heavy going but delightful in its demands on the intellect. The scatter of allusion in the book is primarily Canadian-European, an alphabetting of childhood, the Second World War, the father, boy scouts, cameras, and other "dots." "Jerusalem" gets to Tzuahalem on Vancouver Island:

*Mount Tzuahalem from porch: no
rabbit's foot. Wanting
sublimity. What's grand
looms lowryzied, summons nuke.*

Though the matrix of image and language is based on a compositional stance of negative capability, some of the strongest poems work keenly on a music. There's lots of rhythm in the line.

The ear gets tone led through some of the difficulties the mind encounters: "Trees & adj., noises' noises sequaciously reproduced I then cranked. Hoofs, whoops, tbe like. Local 'colour'. I"

The skill and intense ardour of the mind at work in both of these books is delightful. The least one can learn from poetry that makes sweet music of the intelligence is that we can still measure, have measure. □

Scales of grandeur

By Ray Filip

COLLECTED POEMS

by Ralph Gustafson,
Sono Nis Press, Vol. 1, 213 pages,
\$16.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919203 77 9);
Vol. 2, 249 pages, \$16.95 cloth
(ISBN 0 919203 79 5).

RALPH GUSTAFSON'S *Collected Poems* consist of two handsome volumes, a life's work dedicated to the immensity of a moment. The Gustafson "moment" can be equally attuned to Haydn or hummingbirds, the sea or the key of C. The "all" can take place in Samarkand or on Mount Revelstoke, at William Shakespeare's grave or waiting for forsythias to blossom in March.

Volume 1 covers 30 years of growth from *Flight Into Darkness* (1944) to *Fire On Stone* (1974). The early Gustafson plays the reluctant romantic in *Lyrics Unromantic*, or the Wordsworth of Lake Massawippi in "Rebus?"

*Daffodils stiff against the
amorous wind,
Fooling the bee with sweet
illusion —
God! how the damp earth smells
And Marchwind slaps the cheek
with cold.*

British influences interweave with his Swedish roots.

"From Sweden" sounds reminiscent of the 19th-century visionary poet Gustaf Fröding:

*Far is summer from these snows.
The earth of any need
Is distant now.
Still be thy striving. It is night.
Across the snow a man goes
home —
Whose window burns its simple
light.*

BOOKNEWS

AN ADVERTISING FEATURE

Pioneer Cooking in Ontario

Recipes from Ontario Historical Sites

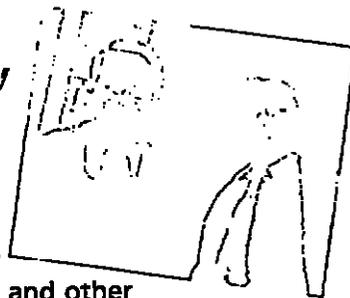
Illustrations by C.W. Jefferys

The original comfort food. Experience the hearty, wholesome fare of our pioneer ancestors. Savour the *Hotch Potch* or *Bubble and Squeak*. Sample the *Syllabub*; nibble a *Snickerdoodle*. Then wash it all down with a *Rum Scrub*. An entertaining look at our culinary past with over 90 original recipes updated for the modern kitchen. 54.95. collbound. 1-55021-015-7

NC PRESS LIMITED (416) 593-6264

The Letters of
Malcolm Lowry
and
Gerald Noxon,
1940-1952

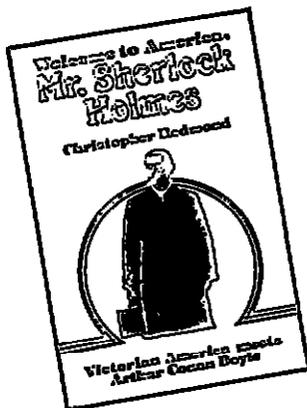
PAUL TIESSEN, ED.
WITH NANCY STROBEL



The letters, cards, and other messages in this correspondence offer a fresh introduction to a certain "Canadian" Lowry. \$27.95

The University of British Columbia Press
303-6644 Memorial Road
Vancouver, British Columbia V6T 1W5

NOW AVAILABLE



Welcome to America,
Mr. Sherlock Holmes

Victorian America meets
Arthur Conan Doyle

by Christopher Redmond

"Top of the line and an absolute
must for any collector."
(Globe and Mail)

An account of Doyle's 1894
lecture tour of America, including
Toronto, told with Redmond's
usual style and wit.

ISBN 0-88924-184-8
235 p. \$19.95 pa.

Simon & Pierre

P.O. BOX 380 ADELAIDE ST. POSTAL STN
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5C 2J4 CANADA

Shaman's
Ground



DON GUTTERIDGE

Shaman's Ground continues the story of Lily Fairchild begun in *St. Virus Dance*, carrying her often tumultuous life into the 20th century, through triumph and tragedy.

512.95

279 pp. paperback

STILL AVAILABLE:
St. Virus Dance \$11.95

DRUMLIN Books

114 Victoria Street
London, Ontario, Canada
N6A 2B5

THE HUMAN SCIENCES

Their Contribution to
Society and Future
Research Needs

edited by
Baha Abu-Laban and
Brendan Gail Rule

The contributors examine the role of the human sciences in modern society and discuss the social, economic, and cultural contributions of continued scholarly research for Canada's institutional and cultural advancement.

\$24.95 paper

The University of Alberta Press
141 Athabasca Hall, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2E8

Fat-Back & Molasses

Edited by Ivan Jespersen

A classic in any company!

Fat-Back & Molasses is a home-spun collection of traditional Newfoundland and Labrador recipes, pleasantly garnished with drawings, anecdotes and other tidbits that are of the essence of traditional Newfoundland culture. A collector's item, conversation piece, and first-rate guide to the old down-home cooking for which Newfoundland is famous. \$6.95

Still going strong after 15 years!
Nearly 100,000 Sold!



JESPERSON PRESS LTD.

25A Faxon St., St. John's, Newfoundland | Canada A1C 3R9 Tel: (709) 763-0633

Gustafson developed a more native sense of neoclassicism with the publication of *Rivers Among Rocks* and *Rocky Mountain Poems* (1960). His language begins to reflect Canadian études and quietude inventively. His concerns with harmony between the temporal and the eternal also find expression in tighter tones such as "Dr. Johnson Kiiks Bishop Berkeley's Shin": "This planet postulates its pun:/God's becoming. The moment's made."

In "Quebec Winterscene," he uses commas, dashes, enjambments, and a deliberate blank space to suggest fragmented solitudes, breaks in continuity between major and minor events, postal delivery and deliverance, suspense and resolution built into the minutest details of the landscape:

*At eight, night now pitch, the train,
Halted for mailsacks at the secung
Lantern — the far horizontals
A moment,
a history happening
The hills — alongside, pants,
monstrous,
Pistons poised.
Then pulls past.*

Ralph Gustafson renders to a caesura the things that are a caesura's, and to God the things that are God's. "In the Yukon" employs the technique to achieve a contrapuntal tension between death and renewal, descending and ascending, the past end the flashing instant:

*In Europe, you can't move
without going down into
history.
Here, all is a beginning.
I saw a salmon jump,
Again and again, against the
current,
The timbered hills a background,
wooded green
Unpushed through; the salmon
jumped, silver.*

Such idyllic dialectics would be mere metaphysical mush were the author not political as well. *Theme And Variations For Sounding Brass* deals with social discord, written by a man turning 60, not 20. Gustafson's outrage is subdued, ornamented with musical terms such as "Nocturne: Prague 1968," "Fantasia on Four Deaths," "Ricercare:

And Still These Deaths Are Ours," "Aubade: Quebec 1970," and "Coda: I think of AU Soft Limbs," but since Gustafson's forte is *being there*, these poems suffer from safe distances, with a TV or newspaper-clipping feel to them — though his heart is in the right place. "The Old Moscow Woman," from *Soviet Poems*, *pr* more sym- first-hand account:

*The street will always be dirty.
Mankind is imperfect.
Politics and bad manners
Leave his detritus
on the perfect peace. . . No
matter the labour.
Snow and death come.
Do they not?
And yet this woman sweeps,
For a few kopeks,
Lentils for her soup,
And is happy.*

Gustafson's senior years continue to be prolific and golden. Verse composed within the past decade, between 1977 and 1965, appears in Volume 2. (Selections from his most recent book, *Winter Prophecies*, are not included.) "Wednesday at North Hatley" is a virtuoso piece. Midweek, Gustafson observes the capricious balance between nature and survival, order and chaos, the silent and the tensile.

*The grosbeak
Fights for seeds, the squirrel
Walks his slender wire.
There is a victory;
The heart endures, the house
Achieves its warmth and where
He needs to, man in woollen
Mitts, in muffler, without
A deathwish, northern,
walks . . . Chance is against
him.
But softly the snow falls.
Touch wood.*

Québécois poets refer to such states as "mysticisme aléatoire." It happens in English too. Expert in the field, Gustafson conducts us through the euphonious glory of the finite and the infinite in "Country Walking." "The Son in the Garden," "Snow, White Birches, Bach," or "The Colour of the Crystal Day." His is a snowy and sunny gravity. His eye for the finer points of aesthetics can see divine fire still alive on the stone of Chartres, or discern earthly evil in "Aspect of a Cut Peach,":

*Rotten weather in Ontario raised
the rarity of that peach. The
skin peeled
Back like a nonpresbyterian
pleasure,
What of the cry of children that
runs off
The guilty blade of silver?
Heaven is doomed
Here. Only in paradise are
peaches
aPrized purely and is pith
succulent.*

Wallace Stevens appears repeatedly, Ghost notes. "Rondo in Triads" resembles Stevens's "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" with lines such as: "Cézanne's apples. Who cares whether/They are sweet or sour? I love? Appleness."

Gustafson's confessional love poems "Rustico Beach" and "The Alcove" have been excluded from this collection for some reason. Love is certainly the grand feeling behind the suite of emotions with which he dignifies creation in all respects. Reading Ralph Gustafson is similar to watching a goldsmith at work, the poem as process, craft, exact, art, life, fullness, being, beauty, moments, mastered. □



Songs and soundings

By Susan Glickman

PLUMMETS AND OTHER PARTIALITIES

by Ralph Gustafson
Sono Nis, \$16.95 paper
(ISBN 0 919203 53 1).

WINTER PROPHECIES

by Ralph Gustafson,
McClelland & Stewart, \$9.95 paper
(ISBN 0 7710 3707 4).

EVER SINCE his retirement from Bishop's University in 1977, Ralph Gustafson has been astoundingly productive, issuing at least a book a year and revising yet again his Penguin anthology of Canadian poetry. The most complete volume of his short stories, *The Vivid Air*, was

published in 1980; this past year we got his *Collected Poems* from Sono Nis, as well as his selected essays in *Plummets and Other Partialities*, from the same press. There have also been two volumes of new work: something mysterious called *Manipulations on Greek Themes*, which I have yet to see, and the graceful *Winter Prophecies*.

In his "Preamble" to *Plummets and Other Partialities*, Gustafson states that "the urgency of the need to bring poetry back from deconstruction to verbal form and music determined the selection" of the essays included. This sets one up to expect a work of literary theory or criticism, something that would be very welcome from a craftsman like Gustafson. Alas, except for some incidental comments in the collected prefaces to the Pelican/Penguin anthologies, and in the essays on Liszt and Wagner, nothing here remotely approaches analysis. Instead, Childs Ralph rides forth heroically to defend those beleaguered vestals, Civility and Grace, from the encroaching powers of darkness. (These powers keep changing their names and faces; I gather that Deconstruction is simply the current guise of the old enemy.) This book is a "Defence of Poetry" in the time-honoured terms of liberal humanism.

The book is tripartite, sonata form if you will, with the theme given in the minor key in part one. "On Poetry," modulating into a major key and a happier tempo in this middle section, "On Music," and returning more quietly, softened by nostalgia, in the last section. "On Circumstance." Although the last, frankly autobiographical, section will probably prove the most useful for literary historians, the middle section provides the best and the most interesting writing. If only the publisher had seen fit to publish a whole book of Gustafson's music criticism! In it, the author's erudition serves the subject under discussion rather than the subject doing the disco&g. His enthusiasm is contagious and his knowledge useful. Not so the first section, which provides uplifting sermons on poetry as "The saving Grace," "A Moral Procedure," "Wit-

ness," and "The Necessary Art." One grows weary of exhortations sprinkled with generous quotations from the author's own poetry.

Winter Prophecies, the latest collection of that author's poetry, is a fine book. As the title suggests, it is written from the stance of age and dignity, a for with Gustafson prepared during much of his writing life and one that well becomes then. Gone are most of

(sorry, I deftness instead are and as well as sunlight on snow. The familiar Gustafson touchstones — Liszt at the Villa d'Este, Italian painting and architecture, cathedrals, topical politics, flowers, and Quebec landscape — all these are still here. But the elegiac tone of the whole renders the high modernist high-handedness appropriate; this man has earned the right now to make these associations. Here, for example, is the delightful "On the Island of Torcello," where a mellow patina of irony softens the erudition, and humanizes it. Although such geniality is uncharacteristic of Gustafson's oeuvre as a whole, it is typical of much of what is best.

Everything is eating everything:

It is not sufficient.
Five pilings on the wharf
Of the lagoon are crusted
green

Where the waters wash — rich
Green, eager for the soft
Edible wood — tastings
Of soft wood; the doge,
Focari, set at table,
Dying of indigestion
At the age of 84 —
And a cappuccino costs
Three thousand lire
At Harry's restaurant
On the island of Torcello
Where the greedy in mosaics
On the west wall of the
cathedral
Boil in copper pots
While Mary on her toes
The other end blesses
The tourists drinking cokes
Under the moulding where
Gabriel
Blows his windy blast.

I am definitely not up to it:
I order a four-minute egg
In Italian at the Osteria
At Ponte del Diavolo
And get four eggs.

This poem is in the book's last section, entitled "Appogiatura," a musical term meaning that grace note played just above or below the primary note — in this case, a playful turning aside from the "serious" themes expressed in the book's earlier sections. These are "Poems for the *Times*" (meditations on violence, themselves too often tortured and obscure), "Twelve Landscapes" (earlier published as a chapbook by Shaw Street Press, the best of these is the only one that isn't a landscape: the exquisite love lyric, "Late February"), and the title section, containing the title poem, "Winter Prophecies." This third section is the most domestic and personal of the group, and is the emotional centre of the book.

Quite a year for Ralph Gustafson. Now how about a selection of critical essays? □



Her side of the story

By Myrna Kostash

QUEBEC WOMEN: A HISTORY

by the Clio Collective:
Micheline Dumont, Micheline Jean, Marie Lavigne, Jennifer Stoddart; translated by Roger Gannon and Rosalind Gill,
The Women's Press, 396 pages,
\$19.95 paper,
(ISBN 0 88961 101 7).

THE CONTEMPORARY women's movement has achieved this much: that history written only from the point of view of upper-class white males in battle and parliament will not do. This is history, and feminist historians, such as the Clio Collective of Montreal (Micheline Dumont, Michèle Jean, Marie Lavigne, Jennifer Stoddart), write to remind us that the "collective history of a whole population" entails a much broader project: the reconstruction of the lives of often nameless

people by inquiring into the facts of everyday life.

In the case of women, this means research into housework, marriage, childbirth, and popular culture. What is women's work? How do women give birth? How do they practise contraception? What is the effect of matrimonial property laws? What is the message of women's magazines?

The Clio Collective has posed and answered these questions (among many others) as they relate to the women of Quebec. Here is fascinating material about household technology, sexual relations, girls' education, convent life, factory work in the long spa of Quebec's history since white settlement in 1617. The revisionist nature of this project is obvious within the first 30 pages. The cult of the saintly Mohawk, Kateri Tekakwitha, for example, can now be seen as the "exaltation of a mythic virginity designed to weaken the resistance of Indians to Christian morality." And the heroic adventure of Madeleine de Verchères (she who held the Iroquois off at the fort) is now to be understood as the uncritical endorsement of "law" concepts of courage.

Because the exploitation of women at the hands of men and their institutions is hardly confined to one society, there is much in the history of Quebec women that echoes universal female experience. Maternity, for example. In 18th-century Quebec, the death rate for women aged 30 to 40 was higher than that for men of the same age group because childbirth was so often fatal to the woman. Women were almost constantly pregnant, a reflection not only of the paucity of information about birth control (infanticide was employed at least as often as coitus interruptus to limit family size) but also of high infant mortality rates. Marie-Anne Barbel, for instance, bore 14 children between 1724 and 1741, only three of whom survived her. By 1940, however, the average Quebec family had three children. And by the 1960s the women of Quebec, like women in all industrialized societies, were the beneficiaries of structural changes in education and the workplace that made large families less attractive and employment outside the home

feasible if not imperative:

Everywhere in Christendom women have suffered the hostility of the Church to their sexual function and expression (a church-sponsored marriage preparation course in the 1940s advised husbands that a woman "may not seek or have her husband seek excitement for her if she has not experienced it" during coitus) and have endured the double whammy of state intervention into sexual relations — the distribution of birth control information, for example, became illegal in 1892 — a process culminating in what the authors refer to as "bio-power": the control and exploitation of the female body by means of the professionalization of hygiene, childbirth, breastfeeding and so on.

That women everywhere have also been ingenious in subverting such control is revealed in the delightful note that, in its 1901 catalogue, Eaton's announced the "Every Woman Marvel Whirling Spray" — a vaginal hygiene product that was also, incidentally, a contraceptive. And it is probable that, as far back as the 18th century, women made their own menstrual tampons.

Everywhere under capitalism women have worked outside the home: in 1825, 27 per cent of Montreal's work force was female (more than half as domestic servants, in conditions of terrible vulnerability to economic exploitation and sexual abuse). And everywhere they have struck back at employers who have refused fair wages and safe working conditions: the first important strike in the textile industry was led by 500 women at the Hudon mills just outside Montreal in 1880. Expressions of solidarity from male workers and male-dominated unions were not always forthcoming, however, and unions routinely negotiated lower wages for women workers. Women were considered unreliable unionists, and no wonder: at the end of the work day they did not hurry off to union meetings but home, to begin another work day.

h&h-vaunted technological innovations were slow to appear in the home or were out of reach of working-class families. A coal-fired stove required five and a half bows of maintenance a day com-

pared to the expensive gas stove's one hour and 40 minutes. The transformation of women from rural producers into urban consumers (and, by extension, into housewives, economically dependent on a man's wage) was another change experienced by Quebec women, and women throughout the industrialized world, at the turn of the century.

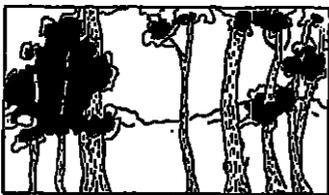
But Quebec is also a specific society and in *Quebec Women* we read of the lives of nuns. For example — by 1900, one woman in 100 over the age of 21 took final vows in Quebec — and how, in the long term, their strategy of an alternative female life freed of sexual and material obligation deflected them from the struggle for higher education and employment for women. We learn of the grip on girls' education of the Church and the domestic science course; it was not until 1908 that girls had access to classical colleges (and through them to the universities) and only after 1961 that girls' colleges were subsidized, although the state had been subsidizing boys' colleges since 1922.

The agricultural crisis that preceded the rebellion of 1837 forced farmers to change their diet and farm women to invent recipes for buckwheat and lentils in place of wheat — the celebrated pea soup dates from this period. As for the uprising itself, although women did not suffer military assault, hundreds lost homes and possessions to the British torch and were left destitute by the death or imprisonment of their husbands.

The intersection of communal and women's interests is a leit-motiv of the development of feminism in Quebec. Upheld as guardians of the language and the faith, Catholic francophone women were torn between their desire for social equality and their religious and nationalist beliefs. Women who worked outside the home were the targets of hostility from the nationalist camp: a threat to the model of the traditional Quebec family, such women were accused of deserting their families and of selfishly sacrificing the interests of the nation to their own needs. Eminent jurists declared the "baby bonus" cheque unconstitutional on the grounds that it limited the

rights of the father! It wasn't until 1975, when, according to the authors, Quebec feminists began to define their own political strategy independently of claims from unions, political parties and *indépendantiste* groups, that feminism in Quebec took on the character of North American feminism in general: autonomous. (The notorious *Front de libération des femmes*, which had denounced nation liberation projects that did not include women's liberation, was born and died within a few months after the October Crisis.)

This is a very attractive book, beautifully laid out and larded with entertaining anecdotes, minibiographies and contemporary documents; as well, each section concludes with a bibliography of further reading, written with the synthesized voice of the four members of the *Collective*. It avoids the polyphony of the anthology (the all too typical text in Canadian women's studies). Like the anthology, unfortunately, while long on analysis, it is short on theory of women's history in the New World. Nevertheless, it may profitably and enjoyably be read by all who want to know what was going on back at the ranch while Champlain fiddled and Hochelaga burned. □



Tom and Mike

BY Jack MacLeod

A-PUBLIC PURPOSE

by Tom Kent,

McGill-Queen's University Press,
446 pages, \$29.95 cloth
(ISBN 0 7735 9649 7).

"OTTAWA MEN were practical. They knew that Victorian family virtues could not have flourished without some occasional discreet prostitution." *A Public Purpose* contains many wry cracks like that. Tom Kent is a staunch defender of old-fashioned politi-

cal rationality. His memoirs are not only "must reading" for political buffs but they are also absorbing, trenchant, fascinating, and offer more flashes of insight than any recent comparable book.

Kent worked with Lester B. Pearson as his right-hand man and principal policy adviser-speechwriter from 1958 to 1965. He was the Liberal insider during the party's bleak years of opposition to Diefenbaker and the surge back to power. "The central fact," he writes, of the Liberal mme-back "... was not to regroup, reorganize and, some time later, determine policies. The main lines of policy came first."

The book is not witty or graceful, and Kent is not entirely an easy man to love. Intensely partisan and no stranger to vanity, he was a strong advocate of medicare without much good to say about the CCF's pioneering achievements in Saskatchewan, and went out of his way to contest a parliamentary seat against Tommy Douglas in B.C. in 1963. Many parts of his account are self-centred and self-serving, and some will smile at his portrayal of himself as a "radical."

However, he builds a detailed, compelling case for the centrality of policy. Unlike John Turner's surly and divided present-day party of drift, the Grits of 1958-63 knew where they were headed and told the electorate what a Liberal government would do. Policy interested and excited people, attracted workers and candidates, generated campaign funds, and sparked participation. Carefully predetermined programmes also led to very considerable accomplishments. Despite stumbling and scandals, the Pearson government delivered. "In a democracy," says Kent, "prime ministers and their principal associates are not entitled to the luxury of learning on the job. They should come to office on the strength of having told the electorate what they aim to achieve."

And achieve they did, in live short years: national medicare, a pension plan, the flag, regional development schemes, and numerous initiatives of "co-operative federalism" or diplomatic federalism (in contrast to the confrontational style of

Trudeau). It's not an unimpressive record.

"It was all done, thanks, essentially, to one man: not L. B. Pearson, but Walter Gordon." Gordon's many admirers will take great joy in this book, and find it an artful counterbalance to Pickersgill's *The Road Back* and Pearson's own charming *Memoirs*. Gordon is shown as a gentleman of honour and conviction and grace.

It was a peculiar and base characteristic of Pearson that he was, at crucial times, disloyal to his friends. This disloyalty, whether caused by weakness or by dithering or by an excessively diplomatic groping for the smooth way out, broke Gordon's political career, killed the "great hearted" Favreau, and turned the gutsy Judy LaMarsh to bitter resentment. The book is extremely revealing of Pearson, and might have been titled *Mike and Me* (if not *Me and Mike*). The Pearson that emerges is complex and by no means a hero to his intellectual valet.

Pearson's reputation for weakness was a reflection of his unsuccessful parliamentary jousts with Diefenbaker, but Mike could be stubborn and prickly, very conscious of making his mark on history. There was the genially diplomatic Pearson, the chuckling self-deprecating Pearson, but also, "... contrary to a wide spread impression, Mike could at times be unscrupulous, with his friends more than his enemies." Kent recalls: "In style he had a disarming modesty... but underneath the pride was strong. He bated being bested by Diefenbaker, as he often was, and failing, as he often did, to impress an audience or to put his views across on television." Of again:

The charm was indeed strong. One could become frustrated and angry, but he was so reasonably willing to listen, to join in criticism of himself or at least in half-recognition of a regrettable error, that it was difficult to be angry for long... Working with Mike Pearson was rather like the kind of love affair in which affection seems to be maintained, for a time, by quarrelling and making up.

A Public Purpose is a fine book, and a valuable one. □

Forest and town

By David Homel

NIGHTS BELOW STATION STREET

by David Adams Richards,
McClelland & Stewart, 284 pages,
\$22.50 cloth
(ISBN 0 7710 7460 31).

IN THE FIRST two pages of David Adams Richards's *Nights below Station Street*, we are treated to the prospect of a giftless Christmas, a battle with the bottle, falling asleep with a lit cigarette, and a grey mill town divided by a half-frozen river. We know we are in for some good old-time naturalism, as if *Emile Zola* had come to New Brunswick in the early 1970s. A kind of *dismal* view of factory-town life, where if anything can possibly go wrong, it will. In this case, "dismal" is reserved for the characters' lives — not the author's writing.

Richards knows his mill town exceedingly well, and those who inhabit it and the way they speak; he knows too the woods just outside it that, presumably, stand for freedom from it. In this world he has set the Walsh family and their friends, members of the underclass lumpenproletariat. Joe Walsh, the father, is a bear of a man whose past boozing have ruined his health and ability to work. His harassed wife, Rita, looks after neighbour children and at times her husband too. Her daughter, Adele, the fruit of a rapid union with another man before her marriage to Joe, is an adolescent with a sharp tongue and nowhere to go, continually insecure, as well she might be, about her family's image in town. Her boyfriend, Ralphie, provides occasional solace, and it seems for a while he might offer a way out. In the end, however, he gets her pregnant. Meanwhile, her younger sister, Milly, is being fed Ritalin for hyperactivity. The Walsh family friends fall into the "with friends like that, who needs enemies?" category. They squabble and make up, they insinuate and start rumours and are anything but helpful when it comes to Joe Walsh's battle with the booze.

Joe's attempts to stay sober form the emotional centre of the book, even if at the beginning we are asked to identify more with Adele's struggles within a family in disarray. Whether the author has intended it or not, Joe Walsh takes over. As he leaves alcohol behind, he discovers that it is the social glue without which his world cannot function. If you are on the wagon, and do not drink, you cannot have the friends you had before. Even as those friends congratulate you for staying sober, they are underhandedly urging you to drink, because it's no fun having someone sober around. As a drunk, Joe mined his back carrying a truck engine across a yard: he went walking barefoot in January and stepped on a broken bottle. Sober, he begins to understand and simplify his endeavour in a hostile to his small society and misunderstood by his wife.

Joe Walsh is not the hem of *Nights below Station Street*; if anything is, it is the neighbourhood, the town, and the wasted nights lived out there. The book develops through juxtaposed portraits: the family, then each of the family members, then the friends and their interactions. That method can become irritating at points: just as we are warming up to Joe's struggles, symbolized by his constant back pain and fight for sobriety, the focus rapidly switches to another figure in the community. Sometimes the juxtapositions are informative; sometimes they are not. At one point a Russian freighter is stuck in the harbour, and an encounter between Myrrha, a Walsh family friend, and a Russian officer is described, but the effect does not go further than that of a vignette. The same goes for the episode of Joe at Alcoholics Anonymous. This author is treading on potentially significant ground, but the juxtaposition technique he uses means he must quickly abandon it. In the end, Richards is true to his title: he is recounting the nights of a street, one by one.

Richards writes in very simple, spare prose. Applied to Joe's quest to simplify his existence, the style is appropriate. When Richards writes, "This business of not drinking was horrible," the baldness of the statement sur-

prises, then moves us. The scenes of understated jealousy (Rita can partake of a certain alcohol-based social life, whereas Joe cannot) are equally effective. Little by little, the novel shapes up as a story of a man trying to leave behind the only world he knows in a confused sort of fashion, and the people in that world who will not let him do it. And perhaps in the end, Joe triumphs, for the book's last scene is set in a snowstorm, in the woods, which is Joe Walsh's element. □



Views of Rome

By Sheelagh Conway

BELONGING: A BOOK FOR THE QUESTIONING CATHOLIC TODAY

by Lucinda Vardey,
Lester & Orpen Dennys, 248 pages,
\$12.95 paper
(ISBN 0-88619-151-3).

ALWAYS ON SUNDAY

by Tom Harpur,
Oxford University Press,
180 pages, \$9.95 paper
(ISBN 19-5406-508).

LUCINDA VARDEY'S *Belonging* is subtitled *A Book for the Questioning Catholic Today*. The title and subtitle are apt for a Catholic who has explored ways of coming to terms with Catholicism in a changing world: Vardey raises all the thorny issues — the ban on contraception, abortion, women priests, premarital sex, and the intolerance of homosexuality. She picks these questions out of the dirty laundry and holds them up for discussion. The voices emerging from the laundromat relate the experiences and feelings of many other Catholics from all walks of life and from around the world, as well as her own.

These questions are not new. They have echoed through the past 20 years for Catholics who hope to balance their deep desire

to belong with their doubts about a Church increasingly entrenched in the status quo of patriarchy and monarchy. Rome and its princes are as solid as the rock of Gibraltar. They refuse to budge. But still the questions continue to be asked, wistfully perhaps, since the passage of time has reduced their momentum and many Catholics have become refugees, renouncing the struggle and leaving the Church to seek dignity and justice elsewhere.

It is easy to be Catholic when one decides, finally, to obey, and obedience is essential to being a good Catholic. So said Pope John Paul II when he spoke to the American people in 1987. How then does the questioning Catholic still survive? "I believe that one has to define one's personal faith and then try to fit that definition into the institution, instead of trying to adopt a preconceived image of what the Church perceives as a good practicing Catholic — or, alternatively, leaving the Church altogether." Sorry, Ms. Vardey, that's not the way Rome sees it. Still, Vardey is pursuing "a sort of Catholic excellence," which she is not finding in the old rigid Church. Later in the book she claims that most Catholics she has spoken with feel that in observing the basic rules of Christianity they must come to terms with the old ways of tradition, and even that the discipline and authority are essential. This reader is confused. But, in all fairness, confusion is inevitable.

As the questions are carefully explored — with one notable exception Vardey has done little to explain the disillusionment of feminists with the Catholic Church. She sprinkles words like *sexism* and *patriarchy* here and there but the issues are not adequately explored. The only reference to feminism is in relation to abortion and a woman's right to choose. Vardey sums up feminism as a movement concerned with self-development and self-sufficiency and chides that there is a fine line between self-sufficiency and selfishness! There is no chapter devoted to the questions of feminists, as one might expect. Instead, approximately one and a half pages are devoted to this pivotal issue, which many feminists believe will

finally bring the Catholic Church to its knees. The only viable way of coming to terms with the patriarchal oppression of the Church for most questioning women is to walk out and exchange "belonging" for dignity and justice. It's a pity Vardey ignored that option.

Tom Harpur's *Always on* sun- & is a potpourri of issues, which he explores with deftness and, in many cases, insight. This book came out of a need to convey to ordinary people spiritual realities in terms they could understand. It is a compilation of the best of Harpur's columns that have appeared in the *Toronto Star* over the past three years.

The essays cover a broad spectrum. They include a discussion of faith, bias in the Bible, the redemption of churches, consumerism, celibacy in the Roman Catholic Church, AIDS and the communion cup, and naturally, the explosive question of the role of women in the church. The reader is anxious to see what he has to say about whether organized religion can redeem itself from irrelevancy and a general lack of vitality in relation

to its flock. He dismisses the Bible-thumpers; they are not the answer. We are relieved. He calls for "outreach" to respond to the spiritual hunger of people today, for the letting go of religious differences in the spirit of ecumenism, and for more meaningful sermons and satisfying experiences at the temple, church, or synagogue. The argument that through such actions religion "light heal the divisions in society is plausible on the surface, but loses force when one considers that it is organized religion that creates a climate of discrimination and alienation in society. Although there are laws in society to prevent discrimination against minorities, organized religion actively perpetuates such discrimination and gets away with it in the name of God and the Bible. Discrimination against women is an example: Harpur appears to have some insight into women's battle for equality and dignity in organized religion, but his thoughts on male divorce-payment defaulters are disappointing. Many of them have been treated unjustly by the

courts, he says. If he talked to any woman who is a single parent living on welfare about that issue he might gain more insight; if he looked at the statistics on the feminization of poverty he might be shocked. And Harpur lauds the movement of some organized religions towards inclusive language, but throughout his book he refers to God in the Generic He. □

Enter the players

By John Gilbert

ENGLISH CANADIAN THEATRE

by Eugene Benson and L. W. Conolly,

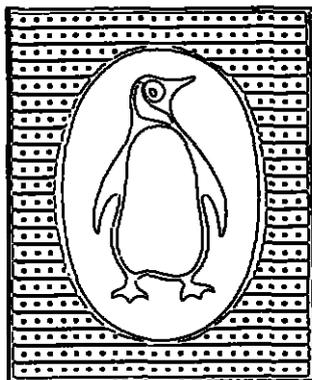
Oxford University Press, 134 pages \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 19 5405838).

THIS NEAT little book appears in the new "Perspectives on Canadian Culture" series. The format is clearly dictated by the series: little more than a hundred pages long, it nonetheless has large ambitions: to be "the first single

study to draw the various discoveries and insights of [recent] scholarship into a single comprehensive survey" and "to combine dramatic criticism and theatre history in such a way as to provide the reader with a" evaluation of Canadian dramatic literature in English as it emerged [...] within the context of performance." This is a tall order, which the book's highly qualified authors make a good stab at fulfilling, but which remains somewhat unmet in the end.

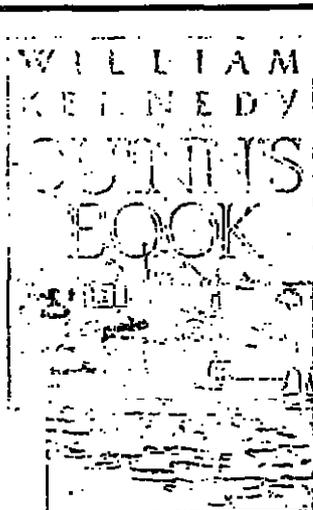
The authors of the book have traced the events and achievements of Canadian theatre along broad "political" lines. The three parts of the survey relate English-Canadian theatre's slow emancipation from the hold of cultural colonialism, its struggle for an identity, and its final emergence into the Elysian fields of self-determination.

Part one, "Colonialism and Theatre in Canada," tells us how in spite of a rich and vigorous indigenous drama the steady encroachment of foreign invaders kept Canada in thrall. This took the form of "occupation" theatre



Muriel Spark

MURDER FROM
KENSINGTON



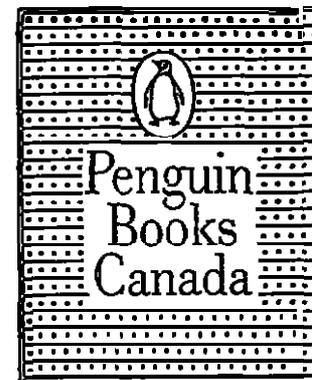
The literary event of the year from the Pulitzer Prize-winner of *Ironweed*.

Quinn's book is the narration by Daniel Quinn, orphan, of his adventure-ridden quest for true love and the answer to the elusive riddle of his own fate. The plot is magical and William Kennedy's language brilliant in this mesmerizing tale.

\$22.95 A Viking U.S. Book

Muriel Spark's delectable, funny and stylish new novel perfectly evokes London in the '50's, and in particular the world of the vanished Kensington bedsiters. It also takes a sly and immensely entertaining dig at the publishing scene. Concise, elegant and ironic, it is classic Muriel Spark.

\$22.95 A Viking Canada Book

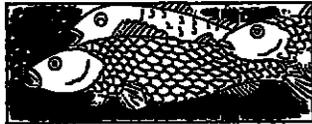


and **drama**: plays imported and performed (sometimes written) by British garrisons in the Maritimes, Ontario and the west. Both the work and the ideas were imported from London, with occasional local forays into satire either political or personal.

Even at this early stage, theatrical activity in Canada was bedevilled by difficulties that are not uncommon in our own time: fervent moral earnestness on the part of audiences, which had an inhibiting effect on the repertoire, and the invasion of foreign professionals, especially American, who were here to "coin money." "Plus ça change. . . ." the authors seem to be telling us, as we continue to combat the same bogeymen in our times.

Play-writing activity, while suggesting the growth of indigenous drama was, with the exception of comedy and farce, largely prolix and unplayable.

Audiences too, after their early rambunctious — even violent — response to theatre, seem to have undergone a progressive taming at the hands of middle-class morality.



Part two, on the emerging Canadian theatrical identity, gives much useful information about the growth of the "little theatre movement" and the crucial role of the Dominion Drama Festival in providing some cohesion to the disparate efforts of early heroes such as Herman Voaden, John Coulter, and Robertson Davies. But as the authors point out, much of the activity remained theatrically conservative and middle class. A fascinating but frustratingly brief section is devoted to the Worked Theatre and the upsurge of political theatre in the '30s: plays dealing with immediate political issues (*Eight Men Speak*, for example, m-authored by four writers and dealing with the imprisonment of eight Canadian Communists) and influenced by Brechtian anti-illusionist techniques. One wonders where the political theatre has disappeared to in our own time.

Part three, which deals with the growth and development of Canadian professional theatre, proves to be something of a *tour de force* in combining information and at least some attempt at brief analyses of the work of major Canadian playwrights like Herbert, Ryga, Reaney, Freeman, Walker, and French. Inevitably it becomes something of a compendium of names, titles, and theatres, and not much depth is reached. How could it be otherwise?

This brief survey, then, remains in the end exactly that. Extremely useful as a quick source of information and as an introduction, it seeks to do too much. Its political subtext, while rightly denouncing "colonization" and the failure of the Stratford and Shaw Festivals to foster Canadian drama, for example, also lapses into liberal nationalism and clichéd assessments (why is the adjective "strident" so often applied to Marxist drama, like Fennario's *Joe Beef?*) that seem at times to be pat-t of the very Canadian self-denial the authors complain about. □

Screen time

By Gerald Pratley

CANADIAN FILM

by David Clandfield

Oxford University Press, 136 pages, \$9.95 paper (ISBN 1 95405 81 1).

IT CANNOT BE argued that this slim yet comprehensive paperback on Canadian films by David Clandfield is of great value to the small library of works on the history of our cinema. It conveys the impression that it was written by someone who has no great interest in Canadian film history, little enthusiasm for it, and not much first-hand knowledge of it either.

This could be explained in part by two factors: first, the book is written as a survey, and like most of such, tends to be rather dry; and second, the subject is viewed from an academic point of view — detached, didactic, sometimes ponderous.

Throughout, it seems, motion pictures are not to be enjoyed along with an understanding of their form and substance; they

A LITERARY HERITAGE

The Letters of Thomas Chandler Haliburton

Richard A. Davies

Creator of Sam Slick, the Yankee pedlar, Haliburton was one of Canada's best known literary pioneers; he was also a lawyer and judge, with outspoken political views. These letters reveal much about the legal and political man as well as the literary figure.

\$40.00

Coming this fall in a new edition

Rockbound

Frank Parker Day

First published in 1923 and reissued in 1973, *Rockbound* is the classic novel of Nova Scotia's Sooth Shore.

'It stands out boldly from the mass of Canadian writing of its time, and is far more deserving of a permanent place in our Literature than are most of our early "classics".'

Harold Horwood,
Journal Of Canadian Fiction.

\$10.95

E.J. Pratt: Complete Poems

PARTS I AND II

Edited by Sandra Djwa and R.G. Moyles

This critical edition is fully annotated and arranged chronologically. It contains every known Poem of Pratt's, including some previously unpublished, as well as his only known verse drama, some miscellaneous ephemera, and a complete bibliography of Pratt's writing prepared by Lila Laakso.

2-volume set: \$75.00

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS

are there to be analysed, dissected, interpreted, and done to death. Their life is systematically drained from them under the relentless demands of structuralist polemics, empiricism, feminism, constructivism, activism, and more. Not that these elements, fortunately, are carried to the extremes that prevail in most academic books on film.

As a survey, it is also written from within the walls of the classroom. The author seldom steps outside, and his knowledge of the real world of filmmaking is obviously limited. This means that while his facts may at times be correct, the interpretation of them is misleading.

One example of this is his description of the British government placing "a quota on foreign films." The quota law was not a restriction as such on foreign films, but a requirement that British cinemas show an annual percentage of British Empire films. When the production of Canadian films made to help fill the quota (by American companies here) came to an end, he says the making of such films had "hindered the development of the Canadian film industry and culture," which, in view of the absence of any significant filmmaking before quota films, was hardly likely. Clandfield is inclined to generalize over other areas in which he is reinterpreting previously written histories.

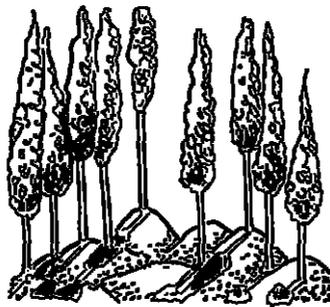
The book deals separately with almost every kind of filmmaking, from the silents to Grierson to television docudramas, with the feature-length films and the experimentalists in between. Trying to put them all into separate compartments creates problems, as the author admits, but on the whole he has brought it off without the seams coming apart.

As the author is an associate professor in the Department of French at New College, University of Toronto, it is not surprising that the emphasis is placed on the cinema of Quebec. While the importance of Quebec films and their superiority over most of our English-language films is not to be denied, it is obvious that he has seen them many times over, with the result that he tends to read the deepest meanings into them.

Politically, his sympathies

appear to lie entirely with Quebec, and those English-language films that are major achievements not receive the same depth of analysis. Here and there, the author permits a quick flash of his personality to appear. We could have done with more.

It is to film students, in the book will without reserve in some of its parts, it will be a boon to them, laying out as it does an encouraging and fairly complete review, in both critical and historical terms, of what has been achieved in this country in spite of the difficulties, past and present, that have made the creation of an indigenous art and business enterprise so frustratingly and painfully hard. □



The wings of the dove

By Norman Snider

LIFTING THE SHADOW OF WAR

by Pierre Elliott Trudeau, edited by C. David Crenna, Hurtig, 150 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88830 300 9).

THE MOST passionately awaited book on both the political and literary scenes in this country is one that in all likelihood will never appear — namely, the memoirs of Pierre Trudeau. After all, as well as holding the limelight as the dominant figure in Canadian politics for the past quarter-century, Trudeau has long been advertised as that rarest of figures: the intellectual in politics. One can only regret that the first-person accounts of his governments will be limited to those of Jean Chrétien, Gérard Pelletier, Keith Davey, and miscellaneous lesser lights, entertaining though they may be. At this point, Trudeau may understandably feel that he owes posterity exactly

nothing: still, he has missed an opportunity to bequeath a human record of the higher politics that might have rivaled those of Ulysses Grant, Henry Adams, or André Malraux.

In the meantime, *Lifting the Shadow of War* is not so much a dramatic return to the printed page by the impassioned essayist of *Cite Libré* as a documentary record of some of the international political battles of a man of action. In his foreword, Trudeau himself warns that this collection of "old prose" — interviews and speeches, mainly concerning his peace initiative of 1983 — is not the sort of writing that "leaps out at you from the page," but may constitute a "useful reference to scholars." Dry as that sounds, *Lifting the Shadow of War* is a book of profound importance.

As Trudeau points out, invocations of the nuclear threat to the human race have become so commonplace as to be boring. Nonetheless, in the early 1980s, he perceived that the renewed Cold War conducted by Ronald Reagan and the successive geriatrics who shuttled back and forth from their hospital beds to the Kremlin was making that uninteresting apocalypse much more likely to take place. Canadians who take an interest in the issue of planetary survival — not nearly as interesting a topic as real-estate values or gourmet cookery, I know — can glean many pertinent lessons, some fairly disturbing, from this book.

The speeches and interviews in *Lifting the Shadow of War* do not contain a heady play of ideas; they are, however, the work of an exceptionally thoughtful politician. Although Trudeau's initiative was dismissed at the time as a cynical electoral ploy to draw attention away from the country's economic problems resulting from the 1981-4-82 recession, his statements on the prevention of thermonuclear disaster are impressive in the balance they strike between realism and optimism — a balance rare in a debate that is understandably tinged with hysteria on both sides.

Trudeau is no garden-variety antinuke activist; he threads a very practical way through the maddening complexities of the nuclear arms issue. Although he

has removed the nuclear capacity of the Canadian NATO troops in Europe, Trudeau consents to testing the cruise missile, in the interests of living up to Canada's responsibilities to the alliance. Repelled by the Reaganite rhetoric of "survivability" and "first strike scenarios," he nonetheless declares the policy of unilateral disarmament "suicidal." If the nuclear threat is to be removed, he realizes that it will be accomplished not in the theatre of street demonstrations but in the councils of state.

Typically, Trudeau seeks to convince in his speeches not through barn-burning rhetoric but through the power of his logic, insight, and historical perspective. (Still, his oratorical skills are considerable; as an interview subject he is a kind of spontaneous dramatist who invents dialogue as he goes.) At the same time, there was a definite element of the quixotic in Trudeau's peace initiative; the reaction, in Washington especially, was one of "cynical amusement" or "amused tolerance." This type of response testifies most disturbingly to the waning influence that a middle power such as Canada can have in a world dominated by twin superpowers. Trudeau's peace initiative was clearly prophetic of the lessening of Cold War tensions begun by the new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev. Coming from a Canadian prime minister, similar proposals had little effect.

What is singular about Trudeau's statements and communications is that they represent a quality seldom found in international politics; in a universe of discourse where the empty pieties of bad faith prevail, they preserve an ironic and sceptical sensibility. For that reason alone, one can only exhort Trudeau to face up to the challenge of leaving a personal record of his public life. □



Where the truth lies

By Linda Leith

TIME PRESSURE

by Spider Robinson

Acc Science Fiction, The Berkeley Publishing Group, 216 pages, \$22.95 cloth (ISBN 0 441 80932 4).

SPIDER ROBINSON'S *Time Pressure* is a counterculture novel in a time warp. The first-person narrator, Sam Meade, is a 1&-gee from the city, living a solitary existence on the North Mountain of Nova Scotia in 1973 when he happens, one winter's evening, to witness the arrival in a blue bobble of a gorgeous naked female time-traveller called Rachel. The fact that Sam, as an avid reader of SF, is fully aware of the hazards of time travel allows Robinson to toy with his readers' expectations.

Sam's ready acceptance of a time-traveller as his guest (and soon his lover) is explained partly by his hippie tolerance and partly by his familiarity with science fiction — there are references to the work of SF writers from Arthur C. Clarke to Poul Anderson and Samuel Delany. But does the narrator — or Robinson — really care whether we believe the story? I" a cavalier prologue to the novel that harks back to so ancient precursor of science fiction, Lucian's *True History*, Robinson writes, "I guarantee that every word of this story is a lie."

The appalling risks of changing the course of history that are always created by time travel allow Robinson to place the whole future of the human race in the balance when Sam wrongheadedly decides he has to kill Rachel. By the time Sam's best friend (from Sunrise, the neighbouring vegetarian hippie commune) has shot him dead, sod k emerges from his own blue bobble just in time to hear the shot, we are not at all surprised to find him attending his own funeral. And why the" balk at his robbing his own grave f" order to salvage a superlative pair of Frye boots? These are literary salami tactics — slice after fine slice — and they work.

Robinson asks us to "keep living as though it matters —

because it *does*." And if you've ever wondered where all the hippies went, he'll tell you: they just changed their appearance, spread out over the planet, and have steadily bee" dismantling people's defensive intolerance of anything new or different. This Utopian view of a '60s paradise not lost — the novel ends with the hippies all living "happily ever after" — insists finally, in an epilogue, on its own veracity: "I guarantee that every word OF this story is the truth."

Robinson, a past winner of Hugo and Nebula awards, uses the conventions of SF intelligently and entertainingly, still, enlightened as he is on almost every other subject. Robinson is oddly blinkered when it comes to women. His female characters intuition, their great tits, and their awesome skills at message, lovemaking, cooking, and child-rearing eclipse their other attributes and abilities. Perhaps Robinson" should add some women writers to his otherwise extensive reading in the genre: Ursula K. LeGuin, Joanna Ross, Marge Piercy, and James Tiptree, Jr.. would do for a start. □



War and forgetfulness

By Reg Whitaker

JUSTICE DELAYED: NAZI WAR CRIMINALS IN CANADA

by David Matas with Susan Charendoff,
*Sumnerhill, 275 pages, \$21.95
cloth (ISBN 0 920197 42 6).*

IN THE SPRING of 1987 the report of the Deschênes Commission of Inquiry on war Criminals was finally released in Ottawa. The report was a waste of time and money: overweight and overpriced, it provided few answers to the questions troubling Canadians about the mass murderers who may have found have" on our shores.

Those interested in how Nazi war criminals slipped into Canada over the past four decades and what should be done about the situation would be advised to leave Deschênes on the shelf and turn to *Justice Delayed*. David Matas, a Winnipeg immigration lawyer who acted as counsel for the League of Human Rights of B'nai B'rith to the commission, has written (with the assistance of Susan Charendoff) the best introduction to the subject yet available. He examines the issue from a legal and ethical point of view, sketches in some historical background, describes the politics that swirled around the commission's inquiries, and assesses its findings and the government's response.

It is not an edifying tale, from anyone's point of view. The crimes in question are appalling, defining the very frontiers of human evil. The indifference, or worse, of official Ottawa over the years to screening out such criminals is a poor reflection indeed upon the political and bureaucratic conscience. Yet the commission "ever addressed the question of why suspected war criminals were allowed entry, contenting itself with recommending mopping-up operations long after the fact. Some of the answers lay in a" excellent historical study done for the commission by Alti Rodal, which was never officially released. Finally declassified in censored form in response to Access to Information requests, the Rodal report informs the early chapters of *Justice Delayed*.

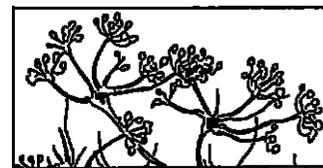
When the official inquiry finally did get under way in early 1965, after 40 years of inaction and obstruction, a new and highly volatile factor was added to the political mix. Suggestions were made that some war criminals might be collaborators from countries occupied by the Nazis (an eminently reasonable proposition based on the facts of history). A "umber of organizations representing ethnic communities from Eastern Europe took this as constituting a" attack on their communities. When the possibility was raised of gathering evidence from the Soviet Union or other East-bloc nations, shrill voices were raised suggesting that this was nothing less than a KGB-

inspired plot — despite the fact that Reagan's America had gathered such evidence and even deported some individuals to face trial in the Soviet bloc. Ancient tensions between Jews and Ukrainians were once again aired, to everyone's discomfort.

Obsessive anti-communism was a major reason why war criminals found it easy to get into the country, since the security officials were too busy hunting Reds to pay much attention to Nazis. Now in the late 1980s, anti-communism was again being invoked as an excuse to continue inaction. Matas deals reasonably and rationally with these issues. Sometimes he seems to be bending over backward, as with his treatment of the Jewish-Ukrainian controversy. Not wishing to exacerbate the conflict that grew up around the commission, Matas may have pulled his punches regarding some of the extreme expressions of opposition to the inquiry.

As a lawyer, Matas is at his best presenting reasoned legal opinions on the various thorny questions surrounding prosecution for crimes committed long ago: extradition, revocation of citizenship, criteria for accepting evidence, retroactivity, and so on. Non-lawyers may occasionally find these arguments heavy going, but they are worth the reader's attention. Matas himself comes down on the side of prosecutions I" Canada. By early 1966, only a single charge has been laid, against a Hungarian collaborator.

Beneath the lawyer's careful hand there is a burning sense of justice unfulfilled. The memory of the victims of Nazi genocide demands that those responsible be brought to court. The interests of humanity demand that such crimes not be seen to go unpunished, as a lesson to the future. Against these claims, so ably presented by Matas, petty bureaucratic excuses and self-interested ethnic attacks seem mea" and narrow indeed. □



Adrift

These three new novels seem *unsure*
of what they want to be

By Douglas Hill



BRYAN MOON'S *Seeds* (Oberon, 160 pages, paper), presents a slight puzzle to the reviewer. The front cover calls the book "Part One of The Grapefruit Tree, A Novel in Four Parts"; the publisher's press release calls it a "first novel, . . . the first part of a quartet of novels." Make up your mind, Oberon. At the risk of offending everyone connected with the venture, I'll discuss *Seeds* now, and deal with the whole project when it's finished (the remaining three parts are promised for 1988).

The novel is set in the small town of Union, in grain elevator country. There, some 20 years ago, 12-year-old Jonathan Corning spends the summer with his maternal grandparents. The spring just previous, in "the city," marked what Jonathan calls "the beginning of the end of my innocence"; Grandfather Caldwell and a few of the more unusual inhabitants of Union complete the boy's initiation into adult experience.

Each of the book's half-dozen episodes is narrated retrospectively; an adult Jonathan interprets the events of that long-ago summer, draws conclusions, speculates about the mysteries that confronted the child. This distance, consistently maintained, gives the novel its ironic flavour and allows Moon to present carefully detailed

scenes that are often extremely funny. It also sets up the book's themes, which have to do with the ways we create the past, and provide ourselves with memories, by telling stories. This is a territory a Canadian reader has visited before, and *Seeds* is on the edge of being a bit too sugary-sweet, but its humour and the sharpness of its insights save it from triteness.

Moon's writing is polished, though some of his dialogue is pretty stiff. (There are a few typographical errors — let us hope that's what they are — that an editor should have caught.) The grandfather, a windy eccentric who does routines and talks nonstop, is a memorable character, and Jonathan himself is generally appealing.

My main reservation about *Seeds* is that there isn't a lot to it; not much happens. What's there is Pleasant enough, but I wish I could be a trifle more enthusiastic about three more volumes of the same.

The Restoration: The R & m-aim Years, by Keith Henderson (DC Books, 200 pages, \$12.95), is also a civilized, literate novel, and also not exactly gripping, not exactly earth-shaking. The year is 1980, the Place is Montreal. The action is politics on the eve of Lévesque's referendum. Henderson's hem. Gilbert Rollins, "pushing thirty, \$380 in the bank and waiting on the Canada council for the next instalment," baa moved back to his native Montreal from Toronto to work on his Ph.D. thesis, so architectural history of the city. What he really wants to do is find some meaning for his life, "get involved" satisfyingly with something, with anything.

Gilbert is quickly enmeshed in the political and emotional snarls of his family and friends, and discovers rather more meaning than he needs. Henderson is adept at satirizing ideologues of every persuasion, domestic or public. Vari-

ous young radicals are fools, bureaucrats are crooks, Giis family are Bunkerque bigots. The skewering is often savagely funny, though at times heavy-handed. There's a conspiracy plot to hold everything together, but it's creaky; there are some slow stretches in the action, chiefly when talkiness obstructs the flow of the action.

Henderson writes gracefully, except for some guey dialogue, and gets off some lines that should draw chuckles. *The Restoration* is intelligent and firmly opinionated, a civilized novel of ideas. There's a potentially rich subject here, which the story does justice to, but it doesn't do much more than that. Like *Seeds*, this is a competent and reasonably attractive book, but it doesn't seem to me a very important one.

That's pretty much my reaction to Max Layton's *Some Kind of Hero* (Mosaic, 260 pages, \$10.95 paper). The novel has plenty of energy, but it loses its focus hum time to time, seems unsure of what it wants to be, and in the end fails to realize its ambitions.

The story takes place in a Van-

couver Island logging camp perhaps 10 years ago. Graham Walker, 33, has dropped out of a couple of careers, seen his marriage dissolve, and generally lost hack of himself. He hopes a spell of hard work in the woods will give him direction, allow him to make a fresh start. He becomes involved with his co-workers and their problems, stumbles into a criminal plot, finds a reserve of honour and heroism, survives but just barely.

Layton is good with the surfaces of this rugged world; he makes sure the reader doesn't miss so many details of the back-breaking and dangerous work, and he doesn't hold back on the profanity or the violence either. His attempts at social comment, however, are perfunctory, and his philosophizing fairly shallow. The narrative voice is uncertain; the prose, all short, choppy sentences, is often quite laboured; the production of the book itself is sloppy. *Some Kind of Hero* doesn't, despite its pretensions, rise much above the level of the comic book. There's a better novel in this material than the one Layton has written. □

DEATH IN PRAGUE

John Reeves

"The claustrophobia of the closed circle of suspects symbolizes the larger claustrophobia of a society where crime can be patriotism and patriotism can be crime. A thrilling and unusual novel from one of Canada's most unusual crime writers."

Josef Skvorecky

"John Reeves has written a gripping and entertaining book...a cracking good tale."

Peter C. Newman

\$19.95

DOUBLEDAY CANADA



NOT QUITE THAT ANCIENT

ALTHOUGH Mark Czarniecki quoted me correctly in his article "The Inputting of Wisdom," I'm not entirely happy with the context in which my deathless words were revived. Czarniecki divided writers into Ancients and Moderns according to whether he thinks they consider computers a source of inspiration or not, and quoted me immediately after introducing the Ancient category.

As a writer who most often uses computers to compose, and is now working on a book about how computers can help writers. I feel a bit anachronistic among the "Ancients." For the sake of clarification: I feel that word-processing technology is a tool that can make the writer — after overcoming the initial "learning hump" of struggling with often badly written documentation and imperfect programs — more productive. Those who invest the time and expense to get the equipment and learn a program

generally find they can spend more time on writing and less on "secretarial" tasks like retyping, indicating revisions, proofing, etc.

Computers can't make one a better writer; hence my remark about Yeats vs. computer-generated poetry. I do, however, anticipate that talented experimental writers will find new ways to combine writing with typographical effects and other computer-assisted forms like graphics and music.

This was written using clumsy old Wordstar via a networked TeleVideo terminal and an Epson printer. So does that make me an Ancient Modern, or a Cybernetic Antique?

John Oughton
Kentville, N.S.

ROLL OVER PUCCINI

I WAS APPALLED by Bert Cowan's inane review of John Murrell's Farther *West and New World in your March* issue. Cowan worries which genre he can slot the plays into, congratulates himself for noticing a couple of references to Puccini, mistakenly chides the playwright for his use of "livid",

and puzzles over Murrell's expressive use of punctuation, consistently avoiding any temptation to interpret and evaluate the subject, style, success and meaning of the work.

Puccini, or open, may be the key to understanding these find plays: Bert Cowan isn't.

— Nigel Hunt
Toronto

Bert Cowan replies:

I THINK the translation of Mr. Hunt's somewhat intemperate outburst most be that his opinion of, in his words, "these fine plays" is higher than he perceives mine to be. He may be right, although I suspect that they received kinder treatment from me than they would from many other critical readers.

I stand by my review, and my objection to the word "livid", which may properly be applied to a bruise, but hardly to a burn. Also, I did not "puzzle over" Murrell's punctuation; I merely expressed astonishment at its pointless exuberance, which could scarcely influence the delivery of any actor worthy of his craft.

POLLS APART

AFTER READING Bob Blackburn's farewell column encouraging readers to object to improper usage of English (March, 1988), I feel inspired to do just that.

The source of my complaint is the same issue of *Books in Canada*. The review of C.E.S. Franks's *The Parliament of Canada* claim that conducting elections with single transferable voting "would at least ensure that each constituency would be represented by the least unwanted of its candidates."

To put it kindly, this is a huge overstatement. It is quite possible for a candidate to win a seat under single transferable voting while being the most unwanted. In an extreme case, a candidate in a particular riding could win 51 per cent of first and second preferences, be completely despised by 49 per cent of voters, and still beat several candidates who would each be acceptable to perhaps 90 per cent of the electorate. Is this riding won by the "least unwanted"? (The writer might have had the approval voting system in mind.)

This mistake would be irritating from anyone reviewing a book about politics.

But there is no excuse at all when the error is made by someone who should be particularly alert to this sort of detail. The guilty author in this case, I.M. Owen, is your magazine's new columnist on English usage.

This only underlines Bob Blackburn's concern about declining standards.

Christopher Page
Port Moody, B.C.

I. M. Owen replies:

SO FAR AS this is a point of usage — rather than an explanation of the Vander Zalm government — I suppose it turns on the meaning of "want" in an electoral context. I think it's legitimate to use it to mean the voter's preference as expressed on the ballot. The other candidates Christopher Page postulates may well be acceptable to 90 per cent of the electorate, but if the 90 per cent don't vote for, them, who's to know?

PROSPERO'S BOOK

MR. WAYNE GRADY'S generous appreciation of Dany Laferrière's novel (March, 1988) concludes with a search for the author's intellectual godfathers. Thus I find myself included in the company of Pierre Vallières, Jacques Renaud, and even James Baldwin.

I would like to decline the role Mr. Grady is eager to have me perform. My 1974 book referred to in his review, *Caliban Without Prospero*, is a critical study of themes in Black American and Quebec literatures. Mr. Laferrière's novel is a fantasy on interracial liaisons in Montreal.

The only connection I can therefore perceive between Mr. Laferrière's book and mine is drawn from their authors' accidental bktp on the same island.

Max Dorsinville
Montreal

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

HEAR, HKAR for Ray Filip's rejoinder to blinkered critics.

I may not agree with everything he says, but I could die laughing whenever he defends his right to say it.

Colin Morton
Ottawa

The Finest in Children's Entertainment on Video.

SHARON, LOIS & BRAM

KIM + JERRY
BRODEY

WOOD
GREEN

SONGS + GAMES
FOR TODDLERS
Featuring Katharine Smilgum

TROUPERS
Featuring Robert Munsch

FOLKA DOT DOOR

ERIC NAGLER

Sandra Beech

Bob Schneider

* BUT, I'M JUST A KID * *

Now finally an alternative to animated cartoons. A human feeling of warmth from music can be felt through this collection of live performance video tapes. Children can be exposed to some of the finest performers in Canada today.

Retailing for under \$15.00



Contact Whitman Golden,
Cambridge, Ontario, N1R 5X2
(519) 623-3590 or (416) 456-0635.

RECEIVED

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

- Affairs of State, by Doris Anderson, Doubleday.
- Ann Historic, by Euphonia Marland, Coach House Press.
- Bad Money, by A.M. Kahl, Seal.
- Bridges of Hope Canadian Voluntary Agencies and the Third World, by Tim Brodhead et al., The North South Institute.
- Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871, by Bruce Curtis, The Athlone Press.
- Building Wealth, by Gordon Pape, Prentice-Hall.
- Bush Workers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario 1900-1989, by Ian Radforth, U of T Press.
- The Celts, by Elona Mallerre, Seal.
- Challenge of Vocabulary Canada, by Ken Weber and Cecile Weber, Globe/Modern Curriculum Press.
- The Child in Time, by Ian McEwan, Lester & Orpen Denon's.
- Conspiracy of Brothers, by Mick Lowe, Macmillan.
- Crisis & War, by Patrick James, McGill-Queens University Press.
- The Digger's Game, by George V. Higgins, Seal.
- E-Mail, by Stephen A. Caswell, Gage.
- Essays in the History of Canadian Medicine, edited by Wendy Mitchinson and Joyce Dickin McGinla, M & S.
- Ethel Wilson: Stories, Essays, Letters, edited by David Stouch, UBC Press.
- The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology, by Dorothy E. Smith, U. of T. Press.
- Extracensory Deception, by Henry Gordon, Macmillan.
- The Future of Social Welfare Systems in Canada and the United Kingdom, edited by Shirley B. Seward, The Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- Gunner Jingo's Jubilee, by Thomas Bland Stranco, University of Alberta Press.
- The Invasion of Canada 1812-1813, by Pierre Berton, Penguin.
- Just a Simple Pharmacist: The Story of Murray Koffler, Builder of the Shoppers Drug Mart Empire, by Frank Rasby, M & S.
- Knocking on the Back Door: Canadian Perspectives on the Political Economy of Free Trade with the United States, edited by Alan M. Maslove and Stanley L. Water, Institute for Research on Public Policy.

- Linguistics, Literary Analysis, and Literary Translation, by Henry G. Schogt, U. of T. Press.
- A Man of Sentiment: The Memoirs of Philippe-Joseph Aubert, de Gaspé, 1786-1871, translated by Jane Brierey, Vehicule Press.
- Mashed Potato Mountain, by Laurel Dee Gugler, illustrated by Leonard Aguanno, Black Moss Press.
- Medical Ethics, Human Choices: A Christian Perspective, edited by John Rogan, Herald Press.
- Michael's Saturday surprise, by Audrey Nelson, Black Moss Press.
- Multiple Sclerosis: The Kinder Side, by Lyn Roldore, Crowsfoot Macdonald Publications.
- Music Directory Canada '88, edited by Ted Burley, CMI Books.
- North American Vineyards, by Barbara Ennsud, Photographs by Charles E. Dorris, Douglas & McIntyre.
- Part of the Land, Part of the Water: A History of the Yukon Indians, by Catharine McClellan, Douglas & McIntyre.
- Petroleum Rent Collection Around the World, by Alexander Kemp, The Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- Privatization: Tactics and Techniques, edited by Michael A. Walker, The Fraser Institute.
- Regions of the Imagination: The Development of British Rural Fiction, by W.J. Keith, U of T Press.
- The Rhythm Being Your Best in Sport and Business, by Richard Lonetio, Doubleday.
- Ritual Abuse: Canada's Most Infamous Trial on Child Abuse, by Kevin Maron, Seal.
- Running in the Family, by Michael Ondaatje, General.
- Selected Organs: Parts of an Autobiography, by J.P. Nichol, Black Moss Press.
- Shaman's Ground, by John Gutierrez, Drumlin Books.
- Share the Flame: The Official Retrospective Book of the Olympic Torch Relay, Whitecap.
- Small Differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, 1815-1922, by Donald Harman Anson, McGill-Queen's.
- The Softwood Lumber Dispute & Canada-U.S. Trade in Natural Resources, by Michael.
- Spirit and Ancestor, by Bill Holm, Douglas & McIntyre.
- Toby: Her Journey from Lodz to Samarkand (and beyond), by Toby Klodawski Flam, Child Thursday Press.
- The Vanishing Race: Selections from Edward S. Curtis' The North American Indian, by M. Gidley, Douglas & McIntyre.
- Why Papa Went Away and other stories, edited by Phyllis Martens, Kindred Press.

CLASSIFIED

Classified rates: \$8 per line (approx. 30 characters to the line). Deadline: first of the month for issues dated following month. Address: Books in Canada Classified, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 3X9. Phone: (416) 363-5426.

AVIATION BOOKS by Don McVicar. For Free catalogue and newsletter write: Ad Astra Books, Box 2087, Dorval, Que. H9S 3K7.

A BOOK SERVICE for day care centres and nursery schools. Children's books and E.C.E. books. For more information call Rainbow Books (416) 223-5217.

TOBY: Her Journey from Lodz to Samarkand (and beyond), by Toby Klodawski flam. Fascinating WWII saga of escape from Warsaw and long journey to Central Asia. \$7.50 + 90¢ postage/handling. Mail orders promptly filled. Available from Child Thursday Press, 29 Sussex Ave., Toronto, Ont. M5S 1J6 (416) 970.2544.

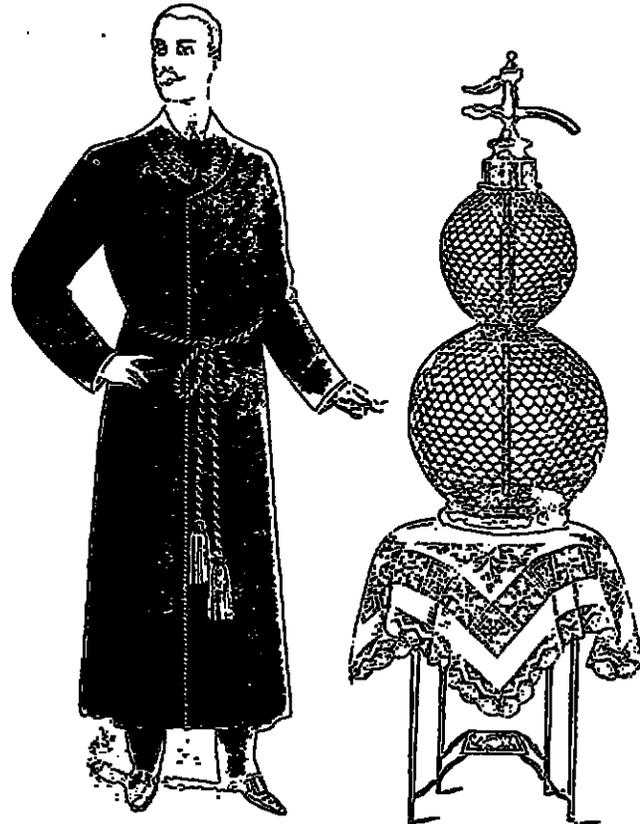
WORD PROCESSING & Typesetting done. Reasonable rates, fast service. Manuscripts to mailing lists. Call Avant Garde Word Processing (416) 691-7988.

THE MARGARET LAURENCE WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE FELLOWSHIP This Fellowship will support annually a promising Canadian writer in the early stages of his or her career, who will take up residence in one of Trent University's colleges. The Fellowship will provide the writer's living expenses and a modest honorarium. Details about the terms of reference and the selection process are available on request. If you wish to donate towards the establishment of the Fellowship, please make cheques payable to the Margaret Laurence Fellowship, Trent University. All donations are tax deductible. Receipts will be mailed. Mail cheques to: The Margaret Laurence Fellowship, Trent University, Peterborough, Ont., Canada K9J 7B8.

CanWit no. 129 By Phil Surguy

WHAT A LIFE!

My father was the soul of hospitality,



IN 1911, E. V. Lucas and George Morrow used hardly 500 words to write an exhaustive autobiography of an upper-class gentleman. They did it by supplementing their prose with pictures clipped from a department store catalogue. The upshot was a minor comic classic called *What a Life!*, which was first published by Methuen and reissued last year by Collins.

The sample page reproduced here is eloquent testimony to the trite but currently & acted truth that one picture is worth 6,000 processed words. So this month we are asking you to get out your scissors and paste and contrive a simple, one-page collage that, with a very brief text, forms a passage from the autobiography of a well-known Canadian literary lady or gent. You are, of course, free to filch illustrations from sources other than department store catalogues. Send entries to CanWit No. 129, *Books in Canada*, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 3X9. The prize is \$25. Deadline, August 1.

RESULTS OF CANWIT No. 127

THERE WERE no results of CanWit no. 127. We received not one letter in response to our call for snippets of prose that might help fill in the gaps in Canada's official literary history. The contriver of no. 127 has lapsed into a funk from which he shows no signs of emerging.

CanLit acrostic no. 15 *By Mary D. Trainer*

1	H	2	F3	S4	P	5	V6	A7	Y8	W9	K10	X11	B12	Z13	E	14	T15	BB	16	G17	I18	AA	19	U															
20	F21	Z	22	M23	S24	Y25	D26	E27	C	28	L29	B30	L31	Z32	Q33	T34	X35	N36	O37	BB38	E39	R																	
40	V	41	X42	W43	B44	P45	Y	46	K47	D	48	L49	O50	R51	H	52	J	53	P54	F55	K56	Y57	X																
58	I	59	P60	C61	AA62	N	63	B84	R85	V	66	H67	W68	F69	Z70	I	71	Q	72	A73	N74	J																	
75	Y	76	F77	B78	P79	I80	K81	L	82	O83	P84	M85	BB86	X87	F88	AA	89	G	90	C91	V92	N93	W																
94	U	95	T96	O97	S	98	M99	Y100	B101	U102	A103	Q104	D105	I106	M	107	V	108	Y	109AA	110	L111	Q	112	Z														
113	K	114	G	115	Y	116	H117	V	118	N119	B120	BB121	K122	X123	G	124	Y	125	T126	S127	I128	R	129	F130	A131	L132	C												
133	X	134	Q	135	M	136	Z	137	O	138	F139	A140	O141	AA142	I	143	Y	144	K145	H146	E147	X	148	T	149	P	150	Y	151	W	152	K							
153	X	154	BB	155	K	156	I	157	S	158	Z	159	L160	A161	I	162	X	163	N	164	T	165	F	166AA	167	I	168	V	169	K	170	Q	171	X					
	172	M	173	B	174	Y	175AA	176	E	177	BB	178	X	179	I	180	J	181	W	182	A	183	L	184	B	185	Z	186	G	187	I	188	X	189	K				
190	BB	191	G	192	M	193	J	194	F	195	C	196	D	197	Y	198	Z	199	P	200	F	201	K	202	J	203	X	204	T	205	BB	206	G	207	H	208	K	209	C
210	M	211	F	212	Q	213	L	214	V	215	BB	216	A	217	P	218	R	219	G	220	Y	221	AA	222	F	223	L	224	M	225	X	226	C	227	J	228	E	229	I

When properly filled in, the letters in the box form a quotation from a Canadian book. Find the letters by solving the clues below and writing the answers in the numbered spaces provided. Then transfer the letters from the spaces to the appropriate squares in the box. The first letters of each answered clue form the name of the author and the title of the book. (Solution next month.)
The solution to Acrostic No. 14 appears below.

- A. Literary journalist and historian 72 216 130 182 102 8 139 160
- B. Cabinet minister's area of responsibility 184 173 100 11 63 29 77 43 119
- C. N.W.T. district 132 27 195 90 209 186 60 226
- D. Hamilton's _____ Wynne Stadium 196 104 47 25
- E. Required 36 176 26 13 146 228
- F. Opposition party questioners: 2 wds. 200 194 165 211 54 2 76 68 129
188 20 87 222
- G. Equivocal 205 114 219 16 89 191 123
- H. Buoyancy, lightness of weight 116 51 145 1 207 66
- I. Tremblay work: 3 wds. 53 167 161 28 17 48 127 229 156
70 142 105 179 187 79
- J. Adapt 52 180 202 227 74 193
- K. Asbestos production centre (hyph. wd.) 46 169 144 201 121 113 55 152 189
9 155 80 209
- L. Basketball move: 2 wds. 223 159 30 110 163 213 191 81
- M. Exalted 224 210 172 98 105 195 84 192 22

- N. Cite 73 35 163 92 118 62
- O. Sail nearer the wind 36 96 137 82
- P. Iroquois communal dwelling 59 78 53 217 149 83 199 4 44
- Q. Even though: 3 wds. 48 134 111 212 71 140 170 103 32
- R. "In Search of Myself" author 39 218 64 50 126
- S. Type of monastery 3 157 126 23 97
- T. Herbaceous plant of nightshade family 164 14 95 125 148 204 33
- U. Peculiar 19 94 101
- V. Science-fiction theme 65 214 107 91 168 40 5 117
- W. Toronto City Hall architect 42 181 8 67 93 151
- X. Knighted music conductor 2 wds. 168 153 34 122 133 41 171 203 10
225 162 86 178 57 147
- Y. Winnipeg intersection: 3 wds. 220 108 197 124 174 24 115 75 7
45 56 99 150 143
- Z. 19th-century CPP contractor 158 112 21 12 69 196 185 196 31
- AA. Striped bass 88 109 18 166 61 141 175 221
- BB. Checked listed items: 2 wds. 215 37 177 205 154 85 180 120 15

SOLUTION TO ACROSTIC NO. 14
 Granted there might be missiles exploding out there, or trouble of some kind or a chemical leak, but it had to be gone by now and how on earth could anybody object, ever, to the inhabitants of Parkview joining each other for some card games or movies or something.
 Paulette Jiles, *The Late Great Human Road Show*, Talonbooks

SUBSCRIBE NOW!



Books in Canada, Canada's national award-winning book review magazine comes to you nine times a year. Each issue is crammed with book reviews, author profiles, interviews, columns, and interesting features on the world of books in Canada.

Subscribe now and **SAVE 15%** on the newsstand price.

A year's subscription to *Books* in Canada costs **\$15.00** and guarantees that each and every issue will be delivered to your door.

Fill in the coupon below, send it to us and we'll rush the next issue of *Books in Canada* to you.

YES

Start my subscription to *Books in Canada* immediately.

Name _____

Address _____

- Cheque enclosed
 Bill me

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE:

Individuals \$15
Institutions \$20

OUTSIDE CANADA:

Individuals \$18
Institutions \$23

366 Adelaide St. East, Suite 432
Toronto, Ont. M5A 3X9

YES

Start my subscription to *Books in Canada* immediately.

Name _____

Address _____

- Cheque enclosed
 Bill me

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE:

Individuals \$15
Institutions \$20

OUTSIDE CANADA:

Individuals \$18
Institutions \$23

366 Adelaide St. East, Suite 432
Toronto, Ont. M5A 3X9

New Art Books from the National Gallery

Degas

"A spectacular confrontation with the artist" is the way art historian Richard Kendall recently described the massive Degas exhibition now showing at the Grand Palais in Paris and opening at Ottawa's new National Gallery June 16. Fresh from the publishers for the Ottawa opening is a full-colour catalogue of some 730 photographs of the work of this great French artist. Organized jointly



by the National Gallery of Canada, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the Réunion des Musées nationaux, Paris, the exhibition is the work of a team of curators (and authors of the book) headed by Canadian scholar and former director of the National Gallery, Jean Sutherland Boggs.

640 pp. \$89.95 cl. est. (ISBN 0-88884-581-2) French edition (ISBN 2-7118-2-146-3)

Degas Pastels

Edgar Degas was one of the most innovative artists of modern times, and his pastel "cuisine", as some critics described his complex technique in this medium, resulted in dazzling and expressive images. Graphic arts conservators Anne F. Maheux and Peter Zegers made a detailed study of Degas's pastels and Maheux has prepared this report of their findings. **Degas Pastels** contains 43 photographs,



half in full colour. The text abounds in descriptions of how Degas built up layer after layer of colour, used a secret fixative formula (still unknown), stumped the pastel with a blunt instrument, burnished the surface, even (according to Renour) put a board over the work and jumped on it to force the colour into the paper.

96 pp. \$19.95 pb. (ISBN 0-88884-547-2) French edition (ISBN 0-88884-548-0)

Canadian Art

Emily Carr's great spirit bird, in her watercolour *Cumshewa* (cover), trumpets the appearance of this long-awaited first volume in the National Gallery's four-volume **Catalogue of its collection of Canadian art** — some 6,700 pieces in all. Volume 1 covers works by artists grouped alphabetically A to F. Each entry starts with a concise, freshly researched biography of the artist. Works are



illustrated by high-quality black-and-white photographs, with titles in English and French, date of execution, inscriptions, dimensions, and the provenance of the piece. This is an essential reference tool for every library. General editors: Charles C. Hill and Pierre B. Landry.

425 pp. \$74.95 cl. (ISBN 0-88884-545-6, ISSN 0826-9726) French edition (ISBN 0-88884-546-4, ISSN 0826-9734)

Retail: Available at your local bookstore

Rideau Chapel

"One of the most beautiful chapels in the land," wrote an anonymous sister of the order of Grey Nuns of the Cross in Ottawa in 1887, and provided the National Gallery with the title of this book on the preservation and recent installation in the Gallery of the interior of her convent chapel. The story of the 11th-hour rescue from demolition of this architectural masterwork, by Canadian architect-priest Georges Bouillon, is told with verve



by Laval University art historian Luc Noppen. Beautifully illustrated, the book contains eight full-colour plates and more than 60 other photographs and architectural drawings.

112 pp. \$15.95 pb. est. (ISBN 0-88884-576-0) French edition (ISBN 0-88884-549-0)

Wholesale: The Canadian Book Marketing Group Limited, 78 Sullivan Street, Toronto M5T 1C1

Inquiries: National Gallery of Canada, Publications Division, Ottawa KIN 9N4