

A NATIONAL REVIEW OF BOOKS

# BOOKS IN CANADA

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Gwendolyn MacEwen on Don Domanski  
I.M. Owen on Richard B. Wright

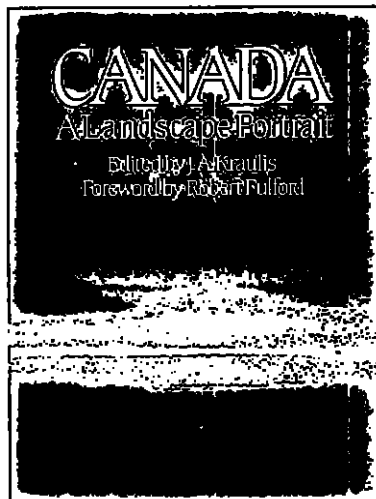
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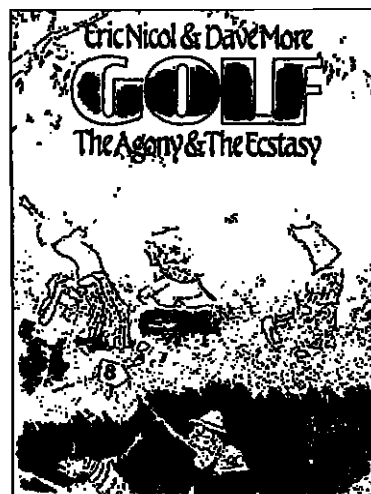


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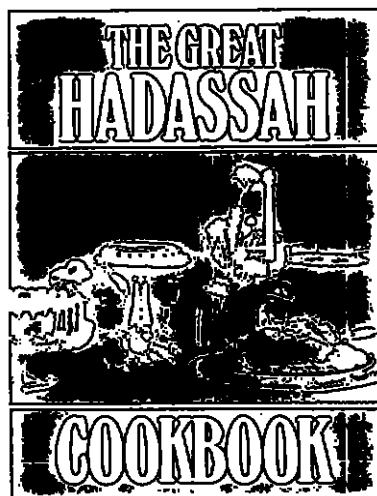


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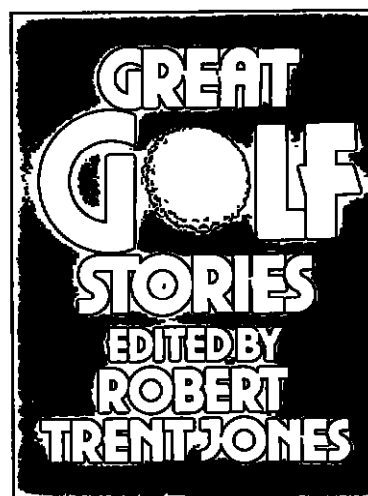


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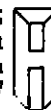
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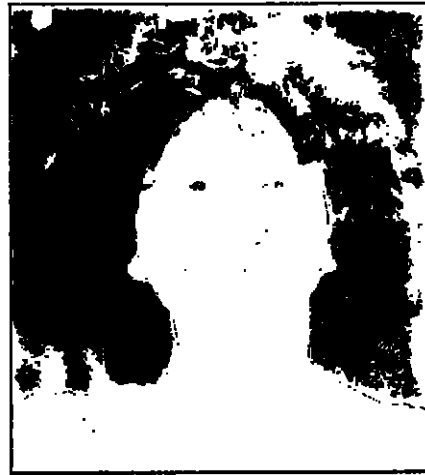
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# A palace besieged: one man's campaign to preserve 'the Himalaya of book stores'

## Battle of the books

FOR THE PAST 10 years Pierre-Roger Nadeau has spent most weeknights and every Sunday engaging in illegal activities, and charges have been laid against him 17 times. Each time, the portly, mustachioed gentleman from Old Montreal dons a tie and goes to court to plead his case. Usually a mistrial is declared, as either the clerk or the police officer fails to show up. The exercise, intended to unnerve Nadeau, has only served to strengthen his resolve.

Since 1972 Nadeau has been owner, animator, purchasing agent, guiding spirit, and defence advocate of Montreal's Palais du Livre (The Book Palace). On McGill Street, in the 150-year-old commercial section of Montreal near the port, the Palais du Livre is a book store "*pas comme les autres*." It is a six-storey bargain house that resonates with energy and vitality. Its atmosphere is a cross between Shakespeare & Co. and Toronto's Honest Ed's. The four million volumes on the shelves are backed by another 10 million volumes in three Montreal warehouses, and cover every field from literature to science to magazines to children's books.

Nadeau's style is unabashedly eclectic. The six storeys of his emporium are adorned with sculpture, paintings, and brightly coloured tapestries. On Sundays there are classical concerts on the main floor, and several corners under the wooden arches are reserved for discussion and reading. There are tables and chairs and unlimited free coffee (which costs Nadeau \$150 a week). The combination of low book prices and pressure-free browsing in a congenial atmosphere has gained Nadeau quite a following, and 35,000 customers have signed the petition at the front desk of the store demanding that the Palais du Livre be allowed to continue operating as it does.

The Montreal authorities are concerned about the fact that Nadeau ignores provincial closing-hours, which oblige stores to close at 6 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 10 p.m. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and to close all day Sundays. A limited number

of retail outlets, including florists and *tabagies*, are allowed to open on Sunday, but the list does not extend to book stores.

Nadeau finds this restriction on book-selling unrealistic and arbitrary. So he has ignored it: the Palais du Livre is open seven days a week from 10 to 10.

"Look," says Nadeau, leaning heavily on a pile of French magazines, "the Palais du Livre is *packed* on weeknights and Sundays. These are the busiest hours. If you are a working person how are you ever going to get free time during the week to go book-browsing? If it didn't correspond to this need, why do you think I'd fight like crazy to stay open?"

If doubters of Nadeau's faith reply that he has tapped a gusher and is refusing to drop such a rich market, they are ignoring the fact that Nadeau already



Pierre-Roger Nadeau

has an easy loophole at his disposal. "If I agreed to sell cigarettes at the counter," he says, "I could get a licence as a *tabagie* and stay open 24 hours a day. There are already two book stores on Sainte Catherine that have done that. One of them has expanded three times and still has the same number of cigarettes on sale."

Nadeau refuses to do this, arguing that it would put mere objects (cigarettes)

on the same level with spiritual works (books). So for 10 years he has worked 84 hours a week in order to be on hand at the store if legal problems arose. His print and radio ads have been devalued by 40 per cent since he cannot precisely announce his store hours — "Open almost all the time," he is forced to say, or "We only close to sleep." Most of all, Nadeau has been discouraged at having bookselling, the "dissemination of experience and thought," limited by law.

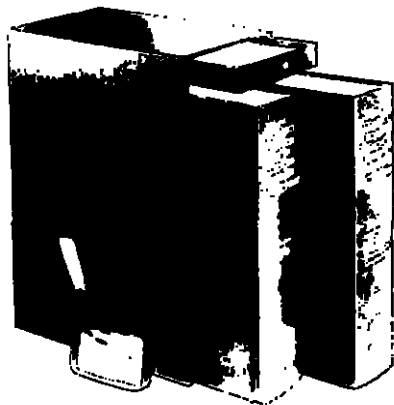
So on Oct. 3, at midnight, Nadeau is closing the Palais du Livre. Backed by the Quebec Booksellers Association, he is taking his case to Quebec City and the Montreal media. He wants the law on store hours changed.

Recently, on a busy Sunday afternoon, Nadeau took me through some of the outer reaches of the Palais du Livre. He pointed up to the skylight on the sixth floor, with its 20-panel version of Sistine Chapel ceiling. The 20-foot-high chrome and aluminum sculpture dominating the periodicals section, he said, symbolized man and woman and their flowing interaction with culture. Standing in the middle of the fifth floor (which, he hopes, will one day house his 1.5 million volumes of English and foreign-language literature) he waved his arm in a broad arc to indicate the path of a room-wide plexiglas rainbow that will be installed if he wins his case. It will stand over a perpetually flowing pond and waterfall. "The rainbow will be lit by coloured gases, and will symbolize the need for all languages to unite," he says.

The Palais du Livre is not only great fun, it's also a very serious book store. A purchase is made every 13 minutes. Nadeau's policy has been to buy everything that has a cover. "We buy books of any age, in any language, by the single copy, the carload, the boatload, or the ton. Earlier this summer we bought 160,000 children's books, 35,000 American encyclopedias, and 22 tons of crossword puzzles. Most of that has been sold." By Nadeau's estimate only Fowler's in London and Barnes & Noble in New York sell higher volumes of discount books. Paris critic and essayist Bernard Clavel, in an article in a French literary magazine in May, breathlessly

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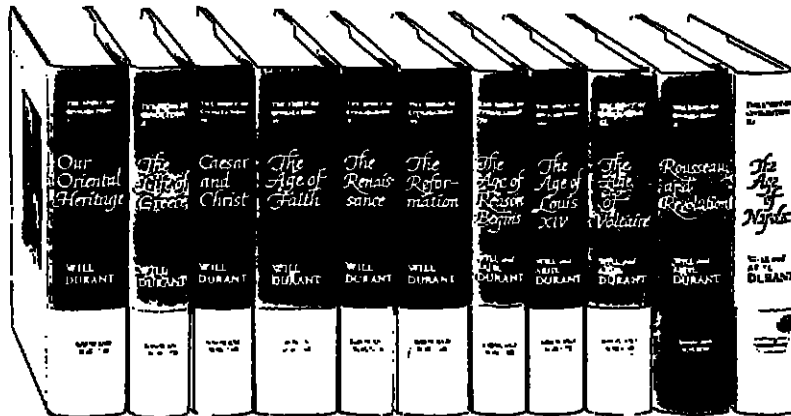
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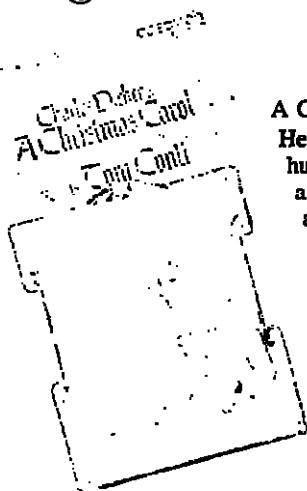
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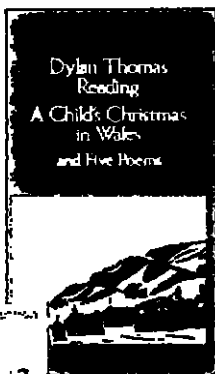


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described the Palais du Livre as "the Himalaya of book stores."

Nadeau can count on solid support from the public in his upcoming political battle, but Quebec's literary community is somewhat more circumspect. Some professional writers, such as Jacques Ferron, resent seeing their recent work on the discount rack. Others, like Yves Theriault and Quebec cabinet minister Gerald Godin, have pledged full support to Nadeau's cause.

But whatever the outcome of the Palais du Livre battle, Nadeau's fervour about bookselling will be hard to dampen. "People say I'm crazy," he reflects. "They're right — I'm crazy about books and bookselling. After all, a book is not like a table or an ashtray. A book has a soul." — DAVID WINCH

**Sex, silk, and swash**

"WE WERE SO glad to get the St. Regis!" said pink-clad Kathryn Falk, editor of *Romantic Times* and co-organizer, with Long Island University, of the First Romantic Book Lovers Conference. No wonder. The St. Regis is — with restraint — the Barbara Cartland of New York's hotels.

The 300 delegates met in an overheated pink ballroom festooned with chandeliers and draped with deep pink velvet curtains. They went to pink-carpeted rooms for workshops (which included, for the dozen or so husbands among them, "How to Manage Your Wife's Romantic Writing Career"). They "networked" in publishers' pink-panelled hospitality suites and sipped sweet wine. As the day wore on, they accumulated handouts of new paperbacks and "tip sheets" — publishers' guidelines to the new sub-categories that are offshoots of the stereotyped romantic novel.

Officially a salute to the genre, the conference was also a serious recruiting drive. New romances appear at a rate of more than 100 a month. Not only are they a "fast read," but a "fast publish" and a "fast write," too. Some writers can produce a book a month, because the "category romances" (such as Harlequins) average only 200 pages. But the historicals — known in the trade as "bodice-rippers" or "sex, silk, swords, and swash" — are triple that length and have to be true to their period, which can mean months of research. The same few writers with their many pseudonyms

can't keep up with the demand, and publishers are looking for new talent.

"Romance is the glue that holds everything together," says Kathryn Falk, whose *Romantic Times*, a 32-page tabloid barely a year old, boasts a subscription list of more than 12,000 and a bi-monthly printing of 50,000. Buyers the world over seem to agree. In 1980 alone, the guaranteed special effects of romantic fiction — escapist settings, idealized love, "issues" but not problems, sensual titillation, and a happy ending — accounted for upwards of \$200 million of U.S. paperback publishers' annual sales.

The explosion began back in 1949 when romance migrated from England to Canada, and Harlequin Books was established in Winnipeg as a reprint house for Mills and Boon's escapist stories. But lately the Americans have taken to romance the way they took to hockey: with enthusiasm, proliferation, and profit. Regular publishing houses, such as Avon Books, have added booming romance lines. Every time a canny editor thinks of a new sub-category to add to the traditional narrow confines of the genre (Gothic, regency, historical, or contemporary), sales have multiplied.

Nowadays the romance recognizes that women do live to be older than 21, don't have to be helpless, and — *pace* Barbara Cartland — live past their first kiss. The romance now can raise a woman's expectations about power. ("Please, *no more governesses!*" one editor begged.) The heroine can be older than the hero. She can survive a broken heart — or marriage — and live to love again. And for teenagers all too aware of the realities of families split by divorce, "Young Adult" romances offer the "post-problem" novel.

The major growth areas are in teenage romances and (for North American readers, not yet the rest of the world) the post-sexual-revolution romance. The names of the new lines tell readers what to expect. Jove Books publishes "A Second Chance at Love." New this summer from Simon & Schuster/Pocket Books is "Silhouette Desire." And Dell's "Candlelight Ecstasy" series, if not explicitly sexual, is very, very sensual.

The conference honoured the development of sensuality with three awards: to Rosemary Rogers for being the "first romance writer to open the bedroom door" (with *Sweet, Savage Love*); to Dell Ecstasy writer Alice Morgan for the "aphrodisiac quality" of her books; and to Avon's art director, Barbara Bertoli, for developing highly evocative cover art for romance books. The cover has become an important sales instrument and a key to the degree of sexuality

inside. (Are the man's hands above or below the woman's waist?) Bertoli said her test for great cover art was whether it made her swoon: "As the romance got more erotic, it became apparent that women have a deep-seated, seething sexuality, and want to read about it."

As one critic put it, paperback

romances are "books that raise a hickey by the power of suggestion," but with sales like these, who needs critical approval? The final sign of success comes not in book reviews but parodies. Watch for Cat Book Romances. Their *Wild and Savage Heathcliff* is to be published later this year. — ELEANOR GUNN

## ENGLISH, OUR ENGLISH

To sum up: a stern lecture comprising various alternatives to foolish pedantry as the contractions become more frequent

By BOB BLACKBURN

A PIECE I wrote, criticizing broadcasters' English, for a "mass-circulation" magazine inspired some pedant to write me a letter informing me that contractions have no place in written English. I'm grateful to him. His stupid statement rankled, and led me into an orgy of lucubration.

Why, I wondered, did God give us the apostrophe? Surely it was not simply to denote possession, which is almost a dirty word in most religions. The apostrophe indicates the genitive, and serves no other purpose, save to indicate contractions.

Why did I immediately dismiss the man as a pedant? He did have a point. I do not believe contractions belong in formal English, but they're indispensable to a writer who's trying to communicate with a large body of readers

of contractions as a stylistic device.

I wonder if it is fear of pedants that drives so many writers and editors to use apostrophes where they do not belong. There is no shortage of apostrophes, and if they cannot — sorry, if they can not — be used to indicate contractions, what is to be done with them? Many editors feel they should be used before an *s* to indicate a plural, as in *1980's*, or *Emmy's* or the *Jones's*. They are wrong. Many other stray apostrophes end up being used to create such abominations as *their's*, *her's*, *our's*, and the ubiquitous *it's*. (*Its*, of course, is the correct spelling of the possessive; *it's* is the correct way to write the contraction of *it is*. But I have forgotten — we must not write contractions.)

I used *end up* in the preceding paragraph just to irritate another correspondent, who chided me about it once before. *Up* is an idiomatic but unnecessary tail for *end* in the above use, but, to cite an example from Theodore Bernstein's *The Careful Writer*, try taking the *up* away from the statement, "If a boy cheats in school he will end up a criminal."

Bernstein goes on at some length about verb tails, but his basic advice is to think about it. In some cases — *simmer down*, *head off*, *single out* — the tail is obviously necessary. To check on something is the same as to check it — in one sense of *check*. But the word also means to stop, and if the context permits possible misunderstanding, the tail should be kept. There is no need for the tails in *head up* or *win out*, but *hurry up* and *slow down* are so well-established in our idiom that it seems a bit prissy to cut off their tails.

It might be useful to offer a definition



through the popular press of the 1980s. Only a pedant would deny a columnist who is trying to establish a "personal" communication with his readers the use

ILLUSTRATION BY JON McKEE

of *pedant*. Mine is not, as one reader suggested, "anyone who disagrees with me," but rather "a person who narrowly insists on rigid adherence to arbitrary (and often trivial) rules." Certainly anyone who would not permit the printing of any but formal English is a pedant.

Two writers, Edwin Newman and William Safire, have done enormous service to the (perhaps lost) cause of literacy by writing books, columns, and essays on English usage in a relatively informal, almost chatty, style (which includes the use of contractions). To their names I might add that of the critic John Simon, were it not for the fact that, although he does use contractions, he sometimes slips into something very like pedantry. Oh, well, let's let him in anyway.

The point is that these writers would have no chance of reaching more than a tiny fraction of the people who have enjoyed and learned from their work if they were to heed my correspondent's dictum. Pedants, on the other hand, are by definition bad teachers.

FREQUENTLY I become annoyed by vogue words, but find it difficult to mount a reasonable attack against their

use. One such is *intuit*, which is all the rage these days. I had assumed it was a back formation from *intuition*, like *burgle* or *enthuse* or *liaise*, but it doesn't qualify as a true one. It came on the scene in the mid-1800s, about a century after *Intuition* acquired its present meaning, but it was legitimately derived from the same Latin verb meaning to look. *Intuition* earlier meant contemplation or inspection; now it means the knowing or learning of something without the conscious use of reasoning. To *intuit* is to know or learn in this way, and there isn't



a damn thing wrong with it except that it's overused as an elegant variation for *sense*, which is a much less jarring word.

A CBC MUSICOLOGIST (that's the FM equivalent of a disc-jockey) was talking about a jazz musician who was given to "indulging in such excessive behaviour as dressing sartorially." Now, if *dressing sartorially* means anything at all, it means wearing clothes. If that, in the

musicological world, is regarded as excessive behaviour, I think I'll go back to AM.

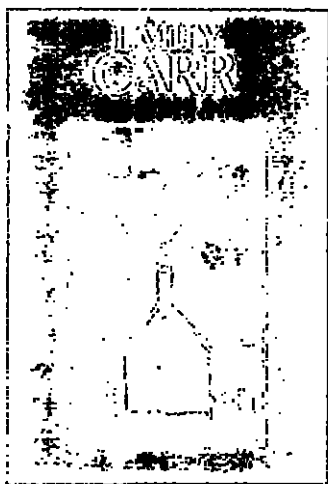
"COMPRISED" is frequently misused, even by good and careful writers. I discovered years ago a very simple way to avoid using it wrongly: Avoid it. If you must use it, remember that the whole comprises the parts, and never say "comprised of." (I have even seen it written that "the whole is compromised of the parts.") The error that inspired this little lecture (yes, a lecture may be written) was committed by the erudite Yehudi Menuhin in his *Music of Man* TV series. He said: "The city states of which Italy was then comprised . . ." I wouldn't expect a musicologist to think of it, but a musician should have known that the word he wanted was *composed*. He could have said: "The city states that Italy then comprised . . ." But I don't know why he would want to. There are many alternatives to using *comprised*, and all of them are easier than running to the dictionary.

And, speaking of alternatives, the adjective *alternate* means occurring by turns, or every other. It is not an acceptable alternative for the adjective *alternative*. □

# EMILY CARR

A BIOGRAPHY

BY MARIA TIPPETT



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The fox farmer's daughter has become perhaps our most accomplished fiction writer, but Alice Munro's success still fuels Wingham's ire

By JOYCE WAYNE

IN THE TITLE STORY to Alice Munro's new book, *The Moons of Jupiter*, her narrator observes that "fame must be striven for, then apologized for. Getting or not getting it, you will be to blame." Now, in Toronto, sitting at a rickety, hand-painted card table in a borrowed apartment at the corner of Queen and Bathurst, Alice Munro confides that her character's statement "is straight out of my background. In fact, it's the definitive line about my life as a writer. The way I was brought up is that you might try hard to get good marks in school, but you must never, never, ever ask for one word of praise."

Praised, however, she has been. In contrast to the comments of her family and neighbours in Wingham, Ont., critics and readers from Canada, the U.S., and Britain have greeted her first four books — *Dance of the Happy Shades* (1968), *Lives of Girls and Women* (1971), *Something I've Been Meaning to Tell You* (1974), and *Who Do You Think You Are?* (1978) — with ebullient reviews and more than respectable sales. *Who Do You Think You Are?* sold more than 10,000 copies in Canada alone. Munro has won the Governor General's Award for fiction twice (in 1968 and 1978), and in accordance with her first-refusal contract with the *New Yorker*, her stories are regularly snatched up for wide circulation throughout North America. She is arguably

*Alice Munro* Canada's most extraordinary and accomplished fiction writer. She is like a character from Leacock who grows sophisticated, but never abandons her rural roots. She is the canny, country lass who, against all odds, makes good.

In Huron County, however, her success is considered to be the fruits of an overly ambitious, disrespectful girl. Her success is her sin. She has repeatedly done what well-bred girls from the country never do: she has told all, laid the entire deck of cards about her fictional town of Jubilee, Hanratty, or Logan smack on the table for everyone, everywhere, to see. In a sense, she has become the teller of forbidden secrets, the country gossip tattling her tales to city folk. In Wingham, Munro's fiction is strictly equated with autobiography and her characters are considered representations of recognizable local inhabitants. And although for thousands of readers Munro's exquisitely detailed stories are gems to savour and remember,

for Winghamites each new episode is like an arrow aimed straight at the heart.

Last December an editorial in the Wingham *Advance-Times* took Munro to task for a story that appeared in *Today* magazine in which she was quoted as saying that she "lived outside the whole social structure because we didn't live in the town and we didn't live in the country. We lived in this kind of ghetto where all the bootleggers and prostitutes and hangers-on lived . . . . It was a community of outcasts. I had that feeling about myself." The *Advance-Times* retorted with great

wounded pride, saying: "Sadly enough Wingham people have never had much chance to enjoy the excellence of [Munro's] writing ability because we have repeatedly been made the butt of soured and cruel introspection on the part of a gifted writer." The editorial went on to deny that bootleggers and prostitutes had ever lived in Wingham, and ended by saying, "It seems that something less than greatness impells her to return again and again to a time and place in her life where bitterness warped her personality."

This exchange between the official voice of Wingham and Alice Munro is both the heart-break and the strength of her writer's life. On one side Munro insists that her family, neighbours, and friends do not serve as models for her stories.

On the other side is Wingham, just as adamantly arguing that they do.

Above the rising, raucous sounds of screeching tires and blaring horns and the great Queen Street trolleys lumbering and wheezing past her window, Munro asserts once again that she writes about a landscape of her mind that came out of Huron County. It is essentially the same disclaimer with which she prefaced *Lives of Girls and Women*: "This novel is autobiographical in form but not in fact." Across the card table she is firm: "I was telling the truth, I meant what I said, the incidents did not take place." Yet the battle between Munro and Wingham rages on. It is as if she can't live with Wingham and she can't live without it. Huron County is her source.

THERE IS NO OTHER way of explaining why she returned to Huron County in 1976, after 25 years away, to marry Gerald

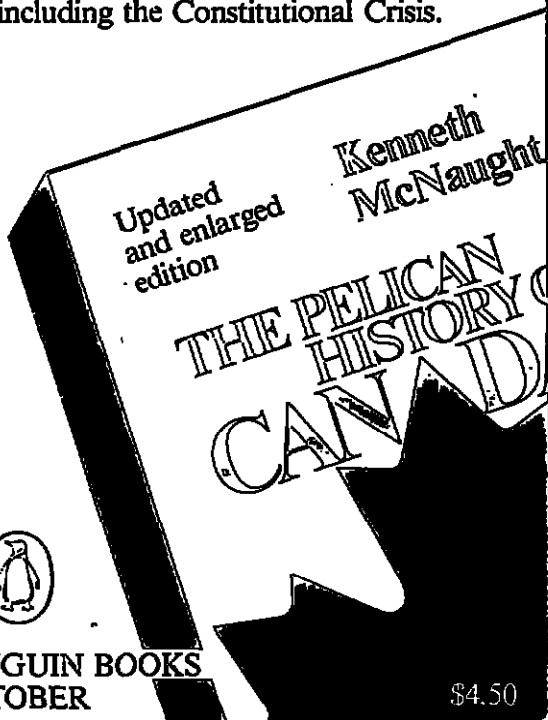


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Fremlin, a man from the county. "In some way, it was inevitable that I marry a man from home," she says dreamily. They live on the outskirts of Clinton, a town of 3,200 only 40 kilometres south of Wingham, and Munro remains very much the outsider, belonging neither to town nor country, a short-story writer stuck in the middle of the proper, hardworking, dollars-and-sense, God-fearing folk of southwestern Ontario.

Since the *Advance-Times* editorial, she has been even less popular than usual in Wingham. "I wouldn't even go there now," she says belligerently, sounding a little like the Dolly Parton of Huron County. "One of the letters to me from a person in Wingham actually said, 'Who do you think you are?'" She laughs, but the humour is bittersweet.

Even for sophisticated readers of her fiction, the temptation is strong to turn Del Jordan of *Lives of Girls and Women*, Rose of *Who Do You Think You Are?*, and the narrator of *The Moons of Jupiter* into Alice Munro. There is a searching, confessional tone to her writing that makes it difficult to discount the myriad similarities between Munro's protagonists and herself. It is a quality of writing that grips the imagination in a way that is not readily apparent in some of Canada's other major writers, such as Marian Engel, Margaret Atwood, or even Margaret Laurence.

When I finally blurt out that as far as I'm concerned Del and Rose are Alice Munro, she says straightforwardly, "Yes, that's me. The incidents may not be true, but the core is true."

ALTHOUGH HURON COUNTY is only 200 kilometres from the grey asphalt and industrial smog of Toronto, it is like another world. The quality of the lush green landscape can only be described as luminescent. The farms are manicured, prosperous. The square, yellow brick houses are adorned with gingerbread and hollyhocks and phlox. Everything seems held in suspended animation in the dazzling light. This is Alice Munro country, where the famous epilogue to *Lives of Girls and Women* takes on a new, concrete meaning, one rooted in the landscape. Although Del Jordan would leave Huron County, she could not face losing it, forgetting it. As Del says, "And no list could hold what I wanted, for what I wanted was every last thing, every layer of speech and thought, stroke of light on bark or walls, every smell, pothole, pain, crack, delusion, held still and held together — radiant, everlasting." Alice Munro has devoted her entire life to this task.

The population of Wingham is 3,000. The main street is like a hundred main streets in a hundred small Ontario towns: the barbership, the hardware store, the dress shop. Inside Good's Coffee Shop, country and western music crackles on the radio and bounces off the blond wood panelling, the stained arborite counters, the worn vinyl stools. Hanging on the walls are black rugs with appliquéd fluffy white-and-pink poodles and kittens. The rugs are for sale. Above the clock, moose antlers are mounted.

"Where do youse come from?" asks the waitress, after staring for a while. When I answer Toronto she waits a full minute, then says tentatively, "Do you know where Shaw Street is in Toronto? My husband has a first cousin who lives there. If you should run into him his name is Farady."

When I mention Alice Munro she turns sour and shuts up as tight as a steel door.

Down the street from Good's is the park, which sports a bust of W.T. "Doc" Cruickshank, Wingham's favourite son. Doc launched CKNX radio station in the 1930s, and now the town boasts an AM, FM, and TV station, the smallest community in North America to support all three. The station is the town's pride and joy.

In *Lives of Girls and Women*, Ada Jordan's boarder Fern Dogherty dates Art Chamberlain, the announcer at the radio station. Later, Chamberlain lures a pubescent Del to a deserted country road and expqses himself to her.

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Not surprisingly, Munro's most accomplished stories often deal with her own sense of guilt about writing about Huron County. In the story "Who Do You Think You Are?" Rose says, "The thing she was ashamed of . . . was that she might have been paying attention to the wrong things, reporting antics, when there was always something further, a tone, a depth, a light that she couldn't get and wouldn't get."

Munro prefers to put on a brave face, and talks almost light-heartedly about what she calls "the heart-break of my writing." Because her goal is to capture every detail of life wherever she is, to freeze the people and landscape in the time of her choice, she is always left with the nagging doubt that she may be misrepresenting them, cheating them. She admits that she can understand the point of view of the people who write complaining letters to her. "Why should one misfit have the power to re-invent their lives?" And because the people of Wingham stand with their backs turned against her, she may never have the chance to explain.

MUNRO STARTED WRITING when she was 11 and continued all through high school. "It was what I was always doing whenever I had any time," she says. In high school she wrote part of a novel and many, many short stories. At 18 she entered the school of journalism at the University of Western Ontario on a scholarship. She wanted to be a fiction writer, she says, but she couldn't possibly have declared that to anybody, so she used journalism as a smokescreen. At the time, her father's fox-farming operation was foundering and her mother was chronically ill with Parkinson's disease. "As long as I didn't ask for support and stayed out of trouble, I was allowed to attend university."

Her first story to appear in print was "The Dimensions of a Shadow," which was published in the university's literary magazine, *Folio*, in April, 1950. Munro describes the story humorously: "It was about a teacher, an elderly, dried-up spinster of 33 who becomes infatuated with a boy in her class." The story, like many of her best, is about a taboo. "It was a weird story with some swearing in it, and so it introduced me to the world right away — to my parents, to the people of Wingham, and to the family of the boy I was to marry — as a not very desirable person."

She left university and married Jim Munro anyway. They lit out for Vancouver. Alice was 20, Jim was 22. Those who knew the Munros in the West say they had never met two people as opposite as Jim and Alice: he all prim and proper, the son of an established Oakville family; Alice exactly the opposite, from a dirt-poor fox farm in Huron County.

But running away to the West was an adventure, she says. "We were very young; we had no idea what to expect." She bore two children in quick succession, Sheila and Jenny. (A third baby died at birth.) Ten years later she gave birth to another daughter, Andrea.

During the early years of child rearing, Munro never stopped writing. "I even made up a story during my first labour. I'll always remember that. The mistake I made was that lying there in labour I made a story about something completely different. I wasn't daring to come near my own experience." The other problem was that she was writing in almost total isolation from a literary community. She was still striving to adhere to what she now calls "the gospel of housewifery."

Throughout the '50s she published sporadically, selling a few stories to Robert Weaver at the CBC, who encouraged her to keep writing. *The Moons of Jupiter* is dedicated to Weaver because, apart from her husband, he was the only one during that period who had faith in her writing. Then in 1961, after Jenny was sent off to school and, as she says, there were no more excuses, she hit a terrible dry patch. "I was 30 and I hadn't written anything much. I hadn't fulfilled my ambition at all." During that year she had an office away from home

and she sat in it for eight months staring at the wall. It was the psychological and physical low point of her life.

The writing block became total and severe. She couldn't write anything, and yet she wasn't able to give it up. Finally in 1963 Jim Munro left his job at Eaton's in Vancouver, and together they established Munro's Book Shop in Victoria. For Alice, reams of hard, ordinary work took her mind off the problem of not writing, and one day, in her spare time, she just sat down and wrote a story, "The Red Dress, 1946." From that point on, her career began to take off, and by 1968 she had published *Dance of the Happy Shades* and won the Governor General's Award for her first book.

In 1972, after the publication of *Lives of Girls and Women*, Munro and her husband separated. Alice took their two

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Munro's debut was 'a weird story with some swearing in it,' she says, 'and so it introduced me to the world — to my parents, to the people of Wingham — as a not very desirable person'

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youngest daughters and headed back east, where she taught at York University in Toronto. Being on her own with two children was not particularly easy, and in 1976 she returned to Huron County and married Gerald Fremlin.

Unlike some writers who talk freely about their private lives, Munro is close-mouthed. She insists that everything important about her life can be found in her books. "I have done some pretty daring things in my fiction," she says. "In the writing you have to let go completely or there is no point at all in doing it." She stresses that in real life she is not particularly daring or revealing.

This dichotomy between the adventurous, confessional writer and the reticent, retiring woman is explored in *The Moons of Jupiter*, especially in the lead story of the collection, "Chaddeleys and Flemings." In the story, the narrator contrasts the two sides of her family: the Chaddeleys, her mother's energetic, anxious, and optimistic cousins, and her father's sisters, the Flemings, six maiden aunts who live in the family's ancient farm house on the highest point of land in the county. The narrator's mother (who resembles Ada Jordan) refers to the Flemings as leftovers belonging to another generation. The Fleming sisters, Munro writes, "would have noticed that some people, their neighbours even, were spending money, on tractors and combines and milking machines as well as cars and houses, and I think this must have seemed to them a sign of an alarming, not enviable, lack of propriety and self control. They would pity people for it, in a way, the same way they might pity girls who ran around to dances, and smoke and flirt and get married." And as the dusty, humid afternoon heat begins to envelop the flat at Queen and Bathurst, Munro reflects that "there is a good deal of my father's family in me."

Although her mother can't see it, the narrator in the story discovers something profound in the Flemings, a clue to her own nature: "They looked like me," she says. "I didn't know it at the time and wouldn't have wanted to. But suppose I stopped doing anything to my hair, now, stopped wearing makeup and plucking my eyebrows, put on a shapeless print dress and apron and stood around hanging my head and hugging my elbows. Yes."

Although *The Moons of Jupiter* is set in the same imaginative landscape as Munro's previous books, the tone is altered, it is more quietly introspective, more melancholy, more questioning. Munro is constantly pitting the Chaddeley and Fleming temperaments against each other, contrasting those

who see "life all in terms of change and possibility" with those who live in stasis, resisting all change. More often than not she identifies herself lining up with the Flemings, and therefore with the conservative rural heritage she remembers as Huron County, where many residents are quick to point out that if you take chances, if you live a life of ambition and great hope, surely it will catch up with you. As Del Jordan says in *Lives of Girls and Women*, "We could not get away from the Jubilee belief that there are great supernatural dangers attached to boasting or having high hopes of yourself." And now, many years later, Munro seems hell-bent on acknowledging those dangers.

She has been back home in Huron County for six years, and the experience has not left her untouched. "I suppose," she says, "that for the characters in my books who do believe in change and possibilities, their physical strength runs out and they are battered by the people around them. This is exactly what happened to my mother."

In the tug-of-war between Alice Munro and Huron County, the county just might be gaining the upper hand. Coming home has made her think more deeply about who she is and

what is important to her. The anger at the guilt and blame she must assume for her success is still there, the desire to escape to this borrowed flat in Toronto is still strong ("I feel like a normal person here," she says), but in *The Moons of Jupiter* Munro is less concerned with her rebellion than with what she is discovering about her beginnings.

"Some core of you never changes," she says above the roar of the rush-hour traffic. "All the things in our lives that we think are so important might not be, because eventually you discover that you are left with the same person ticking away, the same person as when you were five years old, responding to very simple things.

"It is as if we have two lives. Of course we take the life of action because everybody does, but there is another life, steady and continuous that goes on at another level." It is the kind of statement any resident of Huron County, looking out over the enduring, silent splendour of the landscape, could fully endorse. Alice Munro is finding out that, in an essential way, she will always be the girl who was born and raised in Huron County, and for the first time in her life she is not finding it unpleasant. □

#### FEATURE REVIEW

## A house of her own

Alice Munro's short stories are enclosed spaces filled with emotional furniture, where characters' lives bounce back and forth in time

By WAYNE GRADY

*The Moons of Jupiter*, by Alice Munro, Macmillan, 256 pages, \$17.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9725 8).

SINCE THE APPEARANCE in 1968 of her first collection of short stories, *Dance of the Happy Shades*, Alice Munro's method has been to put down in a story everything she knows or remembers about her subject, so that by the end of the story the reader feels he knows as much about her characters as Munro does herself. The first satisfaction is one of completeness; all the truth that matters, we feel, is there, and we are allowed to either accept Munro's sometimes harsh judgement of her characters or, perhaps better, come to our own conclusions.

In the first story in this collection — actually two separate stories linked by a common title, "Chaddeleys and Flemings" — Munro gives us almost all of her narrator's experience of the two sides of her family, her mother's cousins ("Connection") and her father's sisters ("A Stone in the Field"). These, by the way, are two of the three stories with-

drawn at the last moment by Munro from her previous collection, *Who Do You Think You Are?* — the title story, "The Moons of Jupiter," is the third — so we can give her nameless narrator in this book a name: Janet Fleming. By the end of the two linked stories the reader is allowed to believe he knows as much as he needs to know about the cousins and the sisters, and Janet's insistence that the cousins were for her "a connection with the real, and prodigal, and dangerous, world," while the aunts were a closer, more important bond with her innermost self, can be taken at face value or discarded as so much adolescent hysteria.

Few of Munro's stories contain the kind of searing vision, the intellectual insight, that we associate with a writer like Mavis Gallant. Her stories are not intellectual at all, though they are full of intelligence and an emotional intensity camouflaged by a deliberate naivety. Writing in a recent anthology edited by John Metcalf (*Making It New*), Munro compares the structure of her stories to that of a house: "Everybody knows

what a house does, how it encloses space and makes connections between one enclosed space and another and presents what is outside in a new way . . . . So when I write a story I want to make a certain kind of structure, and I know the feeling I want to get from being inside that structure." She admits to tripping over that word "feeling," perhaps thinking of Elizabeth Bowen's stricture that "the short story is a matter of vision, rather than of feeling." But Munro is not like Bowen either: one line of descent might go from Katherine Mansfield to Bowen to Mavis Gallant; Munro's goes back through Eudora Welty and Sherwood Anderson to Gogol and, eventually, to Chaucer and Boccaccio. Their concerns are for the individual seeking a *harmony*, not a dissonance, with society.

Once her "enclosed space" is established, Munro turns her attention to capturing the "feeling" within it. She does this by filling her house with all the emotional furniture it will hold — remembered events, snippets of conversations, floral sofas, antique sideboards,

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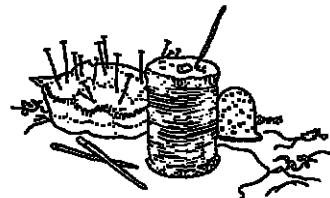
and porcelain elephants. Then she moves her stories back and forth in time, beginning in straight narratives, leaping forward 20 years, then back apparently to where it started, and finally ending a few days ago with the event that triggered the memory in the first place. A typical device appears in "A Stone in the Field": "When my father was in hospital for the last time he became very good-humoured and loquacious under the influence of the pills they were giving him, and he talked to me about his life and his family." Most other short-story writers would use that as the first line of a certain kind of story; with Munro it introduces the final section, which in itself is not so much a dénouement as an inevitable gathering of force. But the device serves its purpose: we know in advance what the father will say, and we can concentrate instead on his (and Munro's) method of narration. We get a keener sense of character, which for Munro is always the main purpose of anecdote. In the title story, the last in the book, Munro returns to Janet's father during his last stay in hospital, and it's significant that he never once talks about his life and his family — that anecdote is over, and now Munro is concerned with a different aspect of his character, a different contribution to Janet's own character.

For if Munro's most important element is character, her most important character is always the narrator — whether the young girl in rural Ontario or the young girl grown up in Vancouver or Toronto. Her central characters are always women, and usually women in some sort of conflict with what they have been taught about men. In "The Turkey Season," Herb Abbott is the kindly, taciturn foreman at the Turkey Barn, where the narrator, a girl of 14, has taken a job as a gutter for the Christmas season. She falls in love with Herb, but is troubled like the others by Herb's indifference to anything but his work. "They wondered about him. What they wondered was: How can a man want so little? No wife, no family, no house." Like the narrator, Herb is an outsider who has been accepted temporarily into a group; he is on a form of probation. But the narrator's chief interest in Herb is as an extension of herself: "I don't want to go into the question of whether Herb was homosexual or not," says the narrator, "because the definition is of no use to me." No use to *her*?

Munro's women have been taught to look for two kinds of love: "There's the intelligent sort of love that makes an intelligent choice," says the narrator in "Hard-Luck Stories." "That's the kind you're supposed to get married on. Then there's the kind that's anything but intel-

ligent, that's like possession. And that's the one, that's the one, everybody really values." The conflict between these two kinds of love, expressed in terms of relationships with two kinds of men, provides the underriding conflict for the stories. If by settling for one kind, do you disqualify yourself for the other? And how do you prepare yourself, how do you make yourself receptive to either kind? Are there also two kinds of women? In "Chaddeleys and Flemings" it is clear that the Chaddeley cousins are suited to the second kind of love — the wild, romping, disregarding kind — and the Flemings have spent their lives grooming themselves, unsuccessfully, for the first. And in "The Turkey Season" the differences are stated more explicitly: "Some women make it clear that what they do to keep themselves up is for the sake of sex, for men. Others . . . make the job out to be a kind of housekeeping, whose very difficulties they pride themselves on." Chaddeleys and Flemings again, the warring halves of one central character.

But it is a central character who is intimately involved with society: almost all the stories in this collection deal with groups of people. Family, most often ("Connections," "A Stone in the Field," "Accident," "The Moons of Jupiter," "Visitors"), but also guests — at a tourist home ("Dulse") or a garden party ("Labor Day Dinner") or a retirement home ("Mrs. Cross and Mrs. Pitt") — or workers at a factory ("The Turkey Season"). These groups are seen through the eyes of the central character, filtered through her continuous concern for her own developing personality, but they are the constant presence through which the central character's perceptions weave and dodge like a blind man trying to find his way through an unfamiliar house. For Munro, society is the constant, unalterable fact: it can be enriched or depleted by an individual's consciousness, but it cannot be destroyed. Definitions (of love, of homosexuality) come and go,



but the group from which the individual takes these definitions — whether it is called Jubilee or Dalgleish or Logan, Ont. — will hardly notice the change. Making a record of these shifts in social values is the job of the writer, however; it can be an exasperating and thankless task, and at the same time a source of great satisfaction. □

# Black man's burden

Written on prison toilet paper, Ngugi wa Thiong'o's fifth novel bitterly prolongs his cry against the white invaders and the new black bourgeoisie

By RUPERT SCHIEDER

*Devil on the Cross*, by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Heinemann (Book Society of Canada), 254 pages, \$8.95 paper (ISBN 0 435 90200 8).

THE EDUCATION OF Ngugi wa Thiong'o might have qualified him for the comparatively comfortable milieu of what he calls "the black intellectuals, the black bourgeoisie." Born in 1938 in a village near Limuru, not far from Nairobi, Kenya, he progressed from the local Gikuyu and missionary schools to Makerere University College in Uganda, Leeds University in England, and later Northwestern University in the U.S. His early insights into the oppressive conditions of post-independence Kenya, however, were reinforced by the economic and political doctrines he adopted in the revolutionary atmosphere of Leeds, and in 1969 he resigned from his teaching post at University College, Nairobi, in protest against the government's curtailing academic freedom. The following year he dropped his Christian name "James," taking instead his Gikuyu name.

Despite his graduate studies, a new teaching post at the University of Nairobi, and frequent attendance at conferences in Africa and abroad, Ngugi's publication by 1977 was quite considerable: three plays — *The Black Hermit* (1962), *This Time Tomorrow* (1970), and *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* with Micere Githae Mugo (1970) — *Homecoming*, a collection of essays (1972); *Secret Lives*, short stories (1975); and four novels: *Weep Not, Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1965), *A Grain of Wheat* (1967), and *Petals of Blood* (1977). About 1973 Ngugi said that his writings formed his "creative autobiography over the last 12 years and touch on ideas and moods affecting me over the same period. My writing is really an attempt to understand myself, and my situation in society and in history." He might make this statement today, for with the publication of *Devil on the Cross*, his fifth novel, his work continues to represent the different

stages of his biography. In an Author's Note to *Homecoming*, Ngugi states his aims as an African writer:

Literature is, of course, primarily concerned with what any political and economic arrangement does to the spirit and values governing human relationships. Nobody who has passed through the major cities of Europe and America, where Capitalism is in full bloom, can ever wish the same fate on Africa as far as human relationships are concerned . . . . The writer cannot be exempted from the task of exposing the distorted values governing such a jungle precisely because this distorts human relationships.

Five years later, in 1977, he said: "All writers can do is really try to point out where things are wrong. But fiction should be firmly on the side of the oppressed. Fiction should firmly embody the aspirations and hopes of the majority — of the peasants and workers."

Ngugi's subject-matter ranges from traditional life in the ridges and villages, disrupted by the missionaries and white traders, the colonial period, the early nationalist rebellions, the Mau Mau revolt in the 1950s, the State of Emergency, to the present. Whereas the early novels are set in the periods before and during the Mau Mau, *A Grain of Wheat* considers the later days leading up to the 1963 Independence celebrations. *Petals of Blood* covers the following years, with flashbacks to earlier events. In the prefatory note to *A Grain of Wheat* he says: "the situation and the problems are real — sometimes too painfully real for the peasants who fought the British yet who now see all that they fought for put on one side." Devoted to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, an adaptation of Marxist doctrines to the African situation, Ngugi sees the problem of the land, taken from its rightful owners — the peasants — by the white invaders and now in the hands of the even more culpable new black bourgeoisie, as crucial. Both novels conclude with possibilities for a future based on a unified

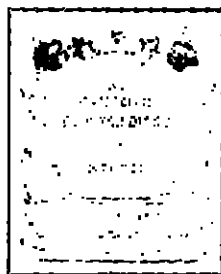
battle against the strangling network of corrupt black politicians and profiteers. "The system and its gods and its angels had to be fought consciously, consistently, and resolutely by all the working people" (*Petals of Blood*).

These aims and this subject-matter are embodied in fairly conventional techniques. Ngugi acknowledged his debt to Lawrence and Conrad (the influence of the latter, especially in the approach to character and the handling of time, is evident in both novels), but he is not a deliberately "modern" novelist. The angle of narration, switching from omniscient narrator to the view of one of the villagers, serves his purposes well; for Ngugi's deepest concern is with the distorting effects of "political and economic arrangements" on his peasants and workers. This shifting point of view enables him to relate the inner to the outer, to trace the motives and decisions that lead or fail to lead to committed action. One of the virtues of the two novels is the surprisingly sympathetic understanding of nearly all elements of the population: peasants and workers, collaborators, politicians, profiteers, the Indian traders, even some of the domineering whites. The central characters suffer from their constant mistakes and betrayals, and grow aware of the need for expiation, sacrifice, and commitment. The psychological realism is matched by the delineation of social and economic conditions.

What strikes the Western reader, unfamiliar with Third-World fiction, as innovative is Ngugi's structural use of patterned ritualistic forms: anecdotes, legend, myth, song, incantation, dance, parables, related to both the Gikuyu religion and Christianity. Connected with this is the choice necessary for the African writer of the language in which he will write. Ngugi told an interviewer in 1977 that it was in the course of writing *Petals of Blood* that he came to be "more and more disillusioned with the use of foreign languages to express Kenya's soul or to express the social conditions in Kenya." Earlier he said, "I



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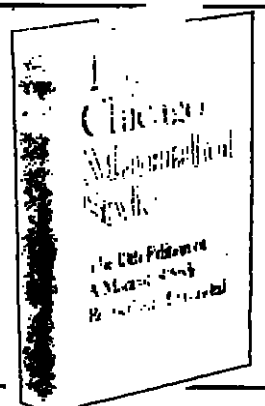
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have reached a point of crisis. I don't know whether it is worth any longer writing in English . . . The problem is this — I know whom I write about. But whom do I write for?"

This private point of view developed in 1977 into a public gesture. He produced, with Ngugi wa Mirii, a play, *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)* in Gikuyu in his village and then in Limuru. The authorities evidently shared his view of the crucial importance of the language question: he was detained without trial for a year in a maximum security prison for unspecified dangerous "activities and utterances." Incarceration and the loss of his university appointment appear only to have intensified his activity against the successors of Kenyatta, his former hero. Five works have been published in the last two years: his Gikuyu play; *Citaani Mutharaba-Ini; Detained, a Prison Diary; Writers in Politics*, a collection of addresses and essays much more radical than those in *Homecoming*; and now *Devil on the Cross*, written originally in Gikuyu on prison toilet paper, confiscated by the authorities, and now available in his own English translation.

The dedication "to all Kenyans struggling against the neo-colonial stage of imperialism" suggests that the novel is not aimed at a Western audience with preconceived ideas about the novel form. Since the African novel began to be conscious of itself only in the 1950s, it had no traditions. Writers had only the techniques of European and American models before them. There is no reason now to expect them to be confined to Western traditional, modern, or post-modern patterns. Ngugi continues to use ritualistic oral techniques and adds others that are more familiar to us in certain kinds of performance arts. He tries to bind these heterogeneous materials together by using a narrator, a Gicaandi Player, who sees himself as inspired. Unfortunately, he disappears for such long sections that the Western reader is left with a narrative loaded with unmotivated clichés both of writing and construction. To the parables, song, and incantation of the earlier works are added long digressions, set speeches, overextended parody and burlesque, and large blocks of too-obvious allegory, and the work ends with a wild coincidence and a murder suitable to melodrama.

As in *Petals of Blood*, the village of Limorog is the chief setting, but here the mixture of realism and caricature is ineffectual. The rich social texture of the earlier fiction has been sacrificed for satirical effect. The closely examined, mixed characters have been replaced by evil grotesques, often with labels that

recall Bunyan, and colourless heroes and heroines, mouth-pieces for different social, economic, and political positions. Details recurrent in the earlier novels, such as the English nasal speech, the Mercedes-Benz as the sign of corruption, have become fixations here. The voice, not that of the narrator but of the novelist, preaching economics and committed, unified battle that will surely bring about change, has become bitter and shrill. The aims and themes that he managed successfully to embody in the earlier fiction have been projected on to a bare-boned structure that is an unsatisfying mixture of realism and fantasy. The reader who is still unfamiliar with Ngugi's important work will do much better to turn first to *A Grain of Wheat* and then continue with *Petals of Blood*. Fortunately, almost all of his works are available in Canada in paperback. □

#### REVIEW

## Nothing to it

By I.M. OWEN

*The Teacher's Daughter*, by Richard B. Wright, Macmillan, 272 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9718 5).

JANICE HARPER (Jan to her family and Harper to her friends) is a high-school English teacher in her middle 30s. It's the beginning of the school year. She has just had a summer romance with a book salesman — charming, merry, and cultivated, like all his kind. (Richard Wright was once a book salesman. So was I, come to think of it.) He has now returned to his wife. Harper meets a handsome slob named James Hicks, a semi-educated ex-convict who drives one of those macho cars — a Trans Am with an eagle painted on the hood, fake leopard upholstery, and a pair of velour dice dangling from the rear-view mirror. These two have an affair, which ends disastrously in the winter.

Wright tells this simple story with a narrative technique under perfect control, alternating between Harper's point of view and Hicks's. Though the foreground action occupies less than six months, considerable depth of field is given by the use of flashbacks. In this

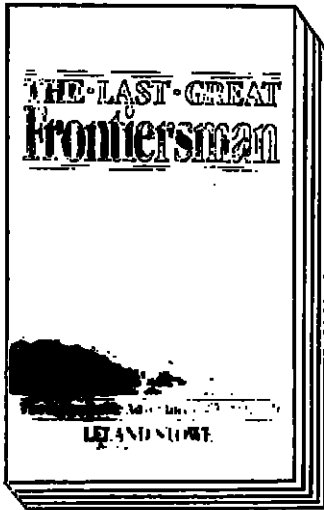
the book is similar to Wright's *In the Middle of a Life*, but this time he has hit on a new technique, simple and obvious enough in itself, but handled with astonishing and unobtrusive deftness: the foreground action is narrated in the historic present, the flashbacks in the past tense. The historic-present passages are principally in the third person, but slip neatly into the first person at appropriate moments.

You'd think that this masterly handling of tenses and persons would be accompanied by an equally skilful choice of words. It isn't. In this respect he writes as carelessly as most of us talk impromptu, in a slapdash way for which there's not much excuse when we write — especially if there's an editor standing by, ready to save us from ourselves. The kind of thing I mean is "I've never seen him cook anything in his life" — at this point she has known him for less than two months of his life. And when Harper doesn't want to hear the telephone ring she pulls the jack from the wall, which seems an unnecessarily drastic alternative to pulling the cord from the jack.

When Hicks says "anyways," Harper priggishly thinks "you'll have to start taking that 's' off anyway, Mr. Hicks, if you want to stick around this fussy old English teacher." Well, "anyways" seems to me a perfectly logical and acceptable variant, which can't be said for "for God sakes," which is this fussy old English teacher's second-favourite interjection. Her top favourite, by the way, is "ye gods," which seems out of period. As so often, I wonder where the editor was when all this was going on. Out to lunch?

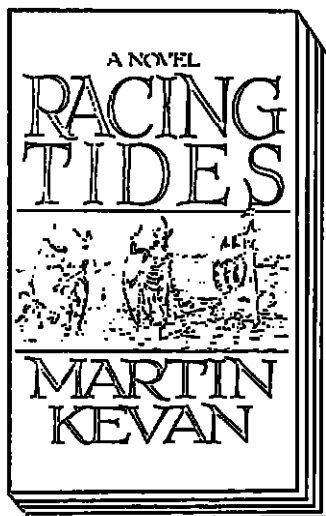
The minor characters are well done, especially Harper's two school friends: the flamboyant Maxine, who is doing well as head buyer for a Montreal department store and is happy in her new-found lesbianism; and the dreary Ruth, conscientious wife and mother, devotee of good causes and health foods.

So there's a lot of excellence in the novel. But after two readings I still don't know why Wright bothered to tell this story. Setting aside *Farthing's Fortunes*, an exuberant picaresque romp that's in a different category altogether, his other books are about situations and emotions that matter. The trouble with this one isn't just that Harper and Hicks are both rather uninteresting people. Graham Greene in *The Heart of the Matter* made a powerful novel out of three thoroughly boring people: Scobie, interested in nothing but his police routine; his phony literary wife; and his empty-headed 19-year-old lover, who becomes animated only when she talks about her



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school netball team. *The Heart of the Matter* gets its power from Greene's religious conviction — there is special providence in the fall of a sparrow, and these three birdbrains are as important to God as you and I are. But no such significance elevates *The Teacher's Daughter*. It's simply a story about a pointless and loveless affair. Harper has nothing in common with Hicks, only an itch for intercourse with him. And when she achieves that ambition she goes frigid. Hicks has a little more motive, in his half-baked and easily deflected aspirations to improve himself intellectually. But the tale doesn't justify the reader's expenditure of time or the author's expenditure of talent. □

## REVIEW

# Echoes from the underground

By PAUL WILSON

*Slammer*, by Al Neil, Pulp Press, 120 pages, \$5.95 paper (ISBN 0 88978 111 7).

*Riffs*, by Douglas MacLaurin, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 144 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 07 548455 2).

AL NEIL is a Vancouver artist and jazz musician who has a scattered underground following across the country but has seldom, if ever, penetrated popular awareness to any great extent. This is partly because he performs so infrequently, and partly because his records and books are published and distributed in such small quantities. Yet if there is an avant-garde tradition in this country at all, Neil surely belongs right at the centre of it. He is a living medium, transmitting the standard influences (Bud Powell, Charlie Parker, Harry Partch) through his own quirky sensibility into the ambiance of the damp Pacific coast, where granola and Kelowna Red seem to co-exist in equal and vast amounts.

As well as playing the piano and giving multi-media performances, Neil also writes prose. His first novel *Changes* (written in the late 1950s and early '60s and published by Coach House in 1975) is a remarkable chronicle of the artist as junkie. In a class with Charlie Mingus's

*Beneath the Underdog* and Art Pepper's *Straight Life*, *Changes* bounces all over the map, pontificating with shrewd humour and insight on music, life, and art, and manages to defy a lot of the minor conventions of literature while honouring the major one — telling the truth.

In *Slammer* Neil, long since cured of his addiction, has settled into the short-story format to relate scenes and episodes from his bizarre life that range from wry accounts of frustrating love affairs to personal reminiscences of the Liberation of Paris in 1944. Many of his escapades involve close encounters with officers of the law (hence the title), but whether he is describing preparations for a concert in the Paris Museum of Modern Art ("7 Rue Nesle") or sitting out a 14-day sentence in Oakalla prison ("October Days on the Alouette"), the stories and their many digressions are all held together by a magical sense of the man's own serene and accepting presence.

Ideally, one should hear Neil himself read these stories during one of his performances. Weaving about good-naturedly before the microphone and laughing unto himself, he reads them in bleary tones with a simple and disarming directness. It is then you realize that Neil's writing is an extension of his voice, his eye and his ear, for he sees and notes detail with the attention of a visual artist, and records the cadences of thoughts and impressions with the timing of a musician.

To be fair, Neil's writing is not polished, and while his stories are exquisite in their own way, they are not jewels of the art, at least not in the conventional sense. There are passages of eloquence and beauty that would stand with any good writing of this century, and there are passages that cry out for the blue pencil. Not surprisingly, his prose reflects the way he plays the piano, dippy-doodling in and out of many different styles and conventions. But all this is simply to remind you that you are reading an artifact that has all the roughness and charm of the man himself. For the truth Neil is conveying, unpolished eloquence seems the only appropriate vehicle.

As he once said, "If you believe in something, if you're honest, there comes the necessary struggle and fight for the right to do it. Your work seems to be like an offering up to the audience of the truths of your life, presented in an entertaining way." He was talking about his music, but it sums up perfectly the spirit of *Slammer*. Hats off to Pulp Press for bringing it out.

Although billed as a novel, *Riffs* is really a series of portraits, sketched with

boundless energy, of exotic human types who for different reasons are on the skids and have nothing but petty crime, booze, and drugs, and the illusions those things bolster, to ease the pain of their exclusion from normal life. The book might well have been subtitled "Down and Out on Queen and Jarvis," for Douglas MacLaurin is, or was, a denizen of the world he depicts. In his persona as narrator, he runs a downtown Toronto street mission catering to society's permanent drop-outs who, ironically, always appear on the verge of straightening out but never quite manage it.

As a first-time author, MacLaurin is overflowing with impressions and experiences. His style has a breezy, knowledgeable air to it and the book is abubble with unusual similes and down-and-outer's argot. One result, however, is that clarity is frequently sacrificed for colour, and as the book wears on the trade-off becomes less and less appealing. There is no doubt that this human underworld lying just beneath the surface of respectable society is something both rich and strange, but too often — I hate to say it — MacLaurin's relentless pyrotechnics fail to illuminate any more than the surface of his characters. It is rather like trying to light a scene with Roman candles instead of spotlights.

The point at which all this becomes quite evident is when MacLaurin describes his own horrifying stay in the asylum at 999 Queen Street West. Suddenly, the flow of smartass metaphor dries up and the prose becomes taut, direct and lucid, as though the immediacy of personal experience demanded a starker, unadorned language. An alert editor should have realized that here was a direction in which MacLaurin might have been guided, to the general advantage of the whole book.

As it stands now, *Riffs* leaves one with the memory of a few vivid portraits, a handful of tragi-comic incidents, but very little deeper sense of the characters or even of the narrator himself, except as someone who has demonstrated, more convincingly than necessary, that he was just one of the boys.

Perhaps the time has come, especially where new authors are concerned, to learn from the experience of the Canadian theatre, where the towering personalities of the past decade have been the directors who work tirelessly with playwrights and actors to shape the material into pieces that communicate fully and vividly to audiences. The editor is no less important to good writing than the director is to good theatre, and *Riffs* is a perfect example of

a potentially good book that has had the misfortune to be published while still in the workshop stage. □

## REVIEW

# Look back in madness

By JUDY STOFFMAN

*Dancing in the Dark*, by Joan Barfoot, Macmillan, 192 pages, \$17.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7715 9723 1).

MADNESS IS A useful literary device. The structure of *Dancing in the Dark*, like that of *Catcher in the Rye* and Walker Percy's *Lancelot*, is a flashback told by an inmate in a mental hospital to explain how the narrator has come to be there and force the reader to accept the logic of the narrator's supposedly crazed behaviour. In this case the story is told



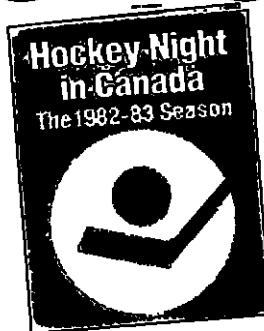
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by Edna Cormick, a 43-year-old "perfect wife," who has carved up her husband of 20 years with her sharpest kitchen knife after having discovered that he was fooling around with his secretary.

The unsophisticated Edna is baffled by this infidelity. Didn't she wash and iron each of his shirts just as soon as he took it off? Didn't she make sure there were never any crumbs in the toaster or dirty dishes in the sink? Didn't she bathe and slip into something pretty just before Harry came home from the office each day? She picks apart the seams of their married life hoping to discover the answer to the question: why did Harry do it? The reader discerns no mystery here. Harry probably strayed because (1) he felt like it; (2) after 20 years, he needed a change; (3) fearful of aging, he craved reassurance of his attractiveness to women; and (4) because his wife was a crashing bore, a clinging vine with no opinions, convictions, no friends, and no interests in anything besides smudge-free mirrors and dust-free windowsills. But these answers never occur to poor Edna. To her Harry is simply a traitor, an ingrate, and worse still, a bad investment.

"Listen, people invest in the stock

market, in real estate, in gold," Edna tells us, after describing how she and Harry met and fell in love at university.

They put their money, what is valuable to them, into something from which they believe they can expect a reasonable return. They give up, perhaps immediate rewards for the prospect of something better in the future. People make investments all the time. I, too. I took the only thing I had, my sole possession, myself, whatever that might have turned out to be, and invested it in Harry . . . A blue chip stock, my life with Harry should have been.

Plainly anyone who holds such a mercenary idea of human relations deserves whatever she has coming.

We close *Lancelot* and *Catcher in the Rye* applauding the integrity of the protagonists; it is not they but the world that is deranged. Such is not the case with *Dancing in the Dark*. Edna's extreme dependency, the vacuity of her life, her vengefulness, her depersonalized way of relating to everyone are clearly pathological. Because she is abnormal, she cannot be made to exemplify the typical "oppressed homemaker," although I suspect she was intended to. In an unconvincing conclusion, Edna dances and whirls her way around her hospital room, resolving "to

sketch a whole new Edna, the singer and the dancer, the free woman in a narrow corridor, alone in a small white bed." But it is difficult to believe in this suddenly liberated Edna when the entire book has elaborated her need for confinement, rules, secure limits. "If I thought of freedom," she has told us earlier, "I saw chaos; a great black catastrophic pit in which anything could happen." In the end Edna still seems mad as a hatter.

There is no doubt that Joan Barfoot, a journalist from London, Ont., can write. *Books in Canada* chose her book, *Abra*, as the best first novel of 1978 and in this, her second novel, there is hardly a sentence that doesn't work. Yet reading *Dancing in the Dark* has a dispiriting effect, like seeing decorated coconuts or painted rocks in beach-resort gift shops — craftsmanship wasted on unworthy materials. □

## REVIEW

# No place like home

By RACHEL WYATT

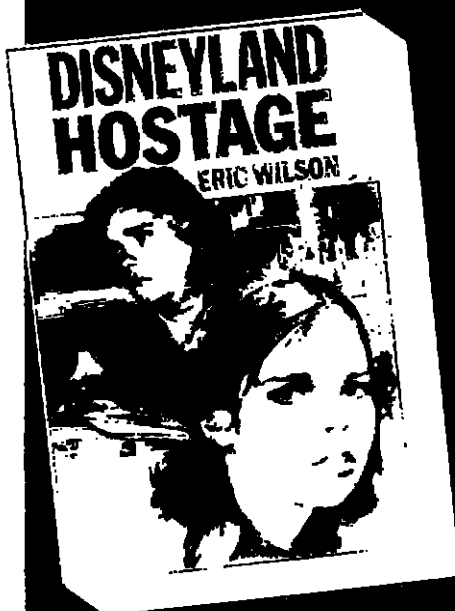
**The Embroidered Tent: Five Gentlewomen in Early Canada**, by Marian Fowler, House of Anansi, 218 pages, \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 88784 091 4).

GENTLEWOMEN THEY MIGHT have been, but they were not all gentle women. They came to the new world with their sketch books and pencils, their needles and fine thread, their china dishes and fur tippets, their minds set in another culture and their antennae waving in the air. Those who returned home were changed; those who stayed changed the places where they were. A weak husband faded like drapes in the strong sunlight.

In *The Embroidered Tent*, Marian Fowler has done much more than pick out in bright colours a picture of five of these women and their times and adventures. She has shown how, in coming to Canada, they were freed from old ties of gentility and neat lives and were able to discover their own true strength and individuality. In the new world they became new women. They found not only different geography and different

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By ERIC WILSON



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people but different selves as well.

It took courage in those days to cross the Atlantic in a fragile and crowded vessel and to land in a largely uninhabited place like Canada. Parts of its landscape were no more welcoming than the surface of the moon. It was a far cry from being set down in the anglicized enclaves of British India, and a further cry from remaining at home in that finely layered society where everyone knew his place — and yours. Such a move certainly jars the sensibilities. There are those who can mould their impressions of a new place into any desired shape and are amazed by nothing: "Isn't this like home," you hear them say as they stand beside the Taj Mahal. "How like the Lake District this is," they cry from the shores of Lake Superior. Indeed many do, as Horace said, "change their climate not their soul, who run beyond the sea." But Horace did not know these particular ladies who were, in their different ways, quite ready to have their souls changed.

Before we left England 25 years ago we were warned by an elderly gentleman not to make the journey to this country because, "after all, it isn't England." We were not deterred, and arrived in chilly November to find all the people in Toronto out to welcome not us but a man they called Santa Claus instead of

Father Christmas. The winter cold and icy streets alarmed us. In spring, the mud in our subdivision did its best to swallow our children (one of Tony's wellington boots lies beneath the foundations of Eaton's in Don Mills). But the five women in Fowler's book had made their mark. We had never, in all our lives, seen so many pictures of our reigning monarch and her mate. They were everywhere, in schools and banks and halls. We were expected to sing the national anthem at the beginning of every meeting and we soon began to know all the words. For a brief time we thought the old man was wrong; this was England.

It was, as we soon learned, a surface similarity. There was a gloss of English manners assumed by some, despised by others. Soon we were plunged into a wilderness of different customs, other rituals. For those earlier invaders, though, it was true wilderness.

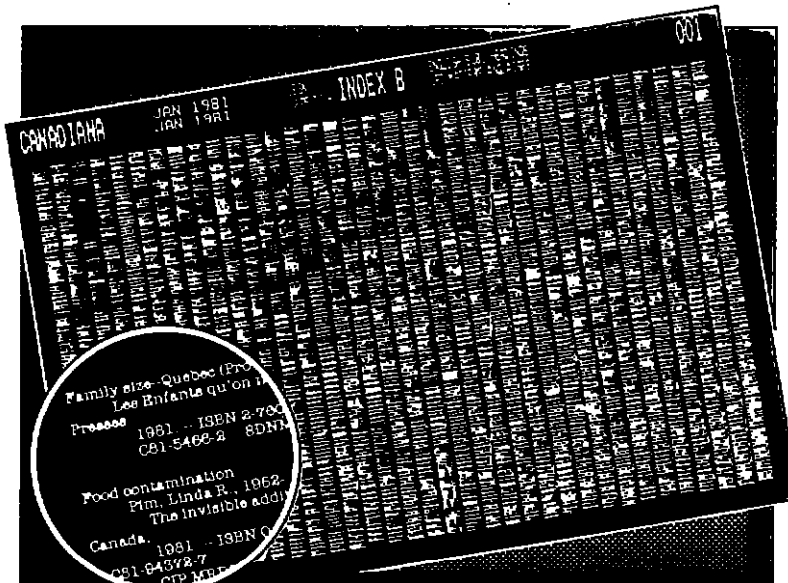
Wilderness encroached and Nature was indeed raw for Susanna Moodie. But she was a survivor. She survived and survived. And if, at times, she exaggerated her hardships in writing about them, she should be forgiven. Even reduced by half, her daily trials and the conditions of her earlier years here were enough to send many a later immigrant running back home yelling

for mother. In her surviving, she became a writer and a hard-working pioneer woman able to make do with whatever came to hand. Had she stayed at home she might have led a suffragette group or fought against child labour; then again she might have learned how to do the finest feather stitch in three counties. It is much harder to break out of those binding ties when you are there, at home, living among all those affectionate people who have known you since you were born.

Anna Jameson is another kettle of fish altogether. Had she gone to Africa she would have found Livingstone. Had she sailed up the Amazon and met with cannibals and crocodiles, she would have come back to tell her friends about it. She was the Intrepid Explorer in skirts. Even her marriage is undertaken in a spirit of "because it is there," rather than the usual meeting of two minds and/or bodies. Fowler has drawn a particularly vivid portrait of this early feminist who was so admirably undeterred either by convention or white water.

Catharine Parr Trail almost embroidered herself into a corner. At first it seemed as though she had merely set her easel down in another place and continued, as at home, to draw anything that flew or trotted or even grew in her path. But the new country did affect her.

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The treasure trove of flora and fauna she discovered brought her fame, a little fortune, and a secure place in our history.

Of the two real and high-born ladies who came to Canada on official business with their husbands, Lady Dufferin was the least likely occupant of the tent, and it is only through Fowler's generosity that she is allowed in at all. She was a perfect lady who always did what was expected of her, who observed the natives and their ways from a distance, and who rarely let her mask slip or forgot her lines. She and Mrs. Simcoe both brought with them many of the comforts of home, but Mrs. Simcoe learned to delight in the wilder places she visited and chose at times to have dinner alone in her tent instead of with her husband in their residence. Those little escapes were probably all the advantage that the wilderness could offer a woman in her position.

In any sort of embroidery details are important, and Fowler has found many to delight the reader. Consider Lady Dufferin amusing herself on board ship by bathing and feeding beavers that were kept in a barrel. And Catharine Parr Traill glancing at her husband a little sharply, perhaps, as she writes to a friend "the overwhelming difficulties of our situation have paralysed my dear husband; he cannot think, he can only feel."

The reader might not always agree with the parallels Fowler draws between her heroines and others in fiction or real life, but her carefully annotated book is thought-provoking and always enjoyable. □

### REVIEW

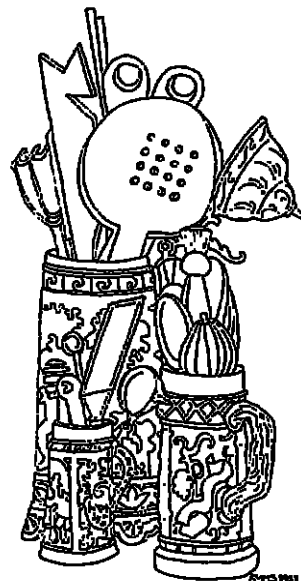
## A comedy of errors

By **KEITH GAREBIAN**

A *Stratford Tempest*, by Martin Knelman, McClelland & Stewart, 240 pages, \$18.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 4542 5).

THE STRATFORD FESTIVAL seems to bring out the worst prejudices in Canadians. The late Nathan Cohen detested it for being "so goyish," but it is difficult to understand what he meant by that. Some Stratford residents have felt the

need to suffer art only because of the big business it brings to the town. And the nationalists across the country have had a robust time attacking the importation of English artistic directors, designers, actors, and administrators. When Sir Tyrone Guthrie headed the first season



in 1953 there was no vociferous protest at his being a foreigner. Yet by 1973, when Robin Phillips inherited the role of artistic director, the nationalists were in full hue and cry. And in 1981, when the Stratford board of directors stirred up a tempest by their bungling in choosing a successor to Phillips, farce became the particular cachet of the Festival.

Martin Knelman, theatre critic for *Saturday Night*, has chosen to chronicle the débâcle of 1981 as a blow-by-blow mix-up of confused motives, paranoid contretemps, and ghastly miscalculations, where almost every participant comes off badly. What begins "partly a gleeful farce about a group of rustics, not unlike those in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, who had stumbled into something big," becomes *Carry On Goofing* as far as the board is concerned and a *Hamlet* of black comedy, as far as Phillips and his successor, John Hirsch, are involved. The cast of characters is large; stars have their eye-catching turns; the plot thickens; the mood changes from farce to cloak-and-dagger intrigue; complications often end in whispers; and the dénouement is only partially effected. Yet the entire chronicle suffers from a tedium that comes from Knelman's rehearsals of trivia and gossip, and from a structure and level of analysis that can, even with the greatest charity, not be considered better than sloppy.

Nevertheless, several revelations are significant. Those who have always thought of Phillips as a subtle villain will

find that he is a Hamlet figure in this tragicomic tale — a moody, powerful, inspired prince of theatre, whose inward strengths of will and purpose surpass his external image (in the eyes of his critics) as a delicate, paranoid, crafty over-reacher. Hume Cronyn, who was the one to introduce John Dexter and Peter Stevens into the anarchic plot, is perceived as an elderly, earnest, well-intentioned Polonius, caught in intrigues beyond his scope or control. The short-lived "Gang of Four" appointed to succeed Phillips (Martha Henry, Urjo Kareda, Peter Moss, Pam Brighton) become the violated victims of poisonous conflicts generated by the board who batten, like the courtiers of Elsinore, on insensitivity, brutality, arrogance, and pure misjudgement. There are two representations of Fortinbras: Dexter and Hirsch, each waiting his turn to usurp authority, with Dexter woefully unaware of the politics or mood of Canadian nationalism and Hirsch trying his best to seem patriotically selfless in his ambition. Something is decidedly rotten in the state of the Festival, and when Hirsch finally takes his place on the perilous throne, to the sound of fire from Toronto, New York, and London, the

ghost of Phillips stalks the Stratford countryside, warning: "Remember me!"

But I am colouring the tale with my own melodramatic parody. Knelman's book is relatively stolid, painstakingly researched in certain areas (it quotes from diaries of Kareda and Dexter, and from long, boring documents), and devoted with equal passion to flimsy trivia and dense cultural politics. It is often objective to a fault, forgetting that in theatre politics, bland neutrality is not necessarily a sign of honour or perspective. But this is not to say that Knelman forever holds his peace: his own prejudices glint at times in many dark areas. For instance, he considers Jean Gascon's exit in 1973 a "clearly" necessary thing, but doesn't make clear why it was necessary or necessarily clear. When he says that Stratford "had developed a tradition of searching for the tyrannical genius from England who could make something magical happen," he is either fatuous or facetious, depending on the proportion of his impudence and irony. He transforms Phillips from "tyrannical genius" to a lover, "who, skilful at wooing," conquers the company totally. Much later, he alludes to the "disintegrating relationship" between Phillips

and Kareda without ever describing either the relationship or its disintegration.

Knelman is good about details surrounding the fateful meeting that culminated in the ignominious dismissal of the Gang of Four and the announcement of Dexter's appointment. He is excellent in sketching the political and psychic tensions in board members Barbara Ivey, Robert Hicks, and Julian Porter; and later, once Hirsch emerges into the limelight, Knelman certainly captures his exasperation and paranoia. But his book is an extended magazine piece — an amplification of the one he did for *Saturday Night*, which, for all its excellence, should have been left alone. As it is, the book rehearses too many overly familiar scenes, adds little that is new or genuinely significant, fails to provide an in-depth assessment of Phillips's tenure (comments on Phillips's productions are generally skimmed milk), and merely lends justification to Hirsch's view that Canadians are far too often obsessed with negative aspects of the past. The most devastating argument against the book, however, is probably the hole left in it by Robin Phillips's reluctance to provide his own detailed version of the Stratford



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tempest. The Hamlet of the muddled piece refuses to soliloquize — even from the wings. □

## REVIEW

# A rose is not a rose

By GWENDOLYN  
MacEWEN

War in an Empty House, by Don Domanski, House of Anansi, 70 pages, \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 88784 094 9).

THIS IS Don Domanski's third collection of poems, after *The Cape Breton Book of the Dead*, and *Heaven*, and once again he is generating the kind of quiet power that made his first collections so distinctive, so unlike much of the poetry

written in Canada today. Domanski has found his voice; it is calm, provocative, and sure. He doesn't have to scramble through either the self-doubt or the self-indulgence that mars the work of many young poets; instead he leads us by the hand through his beautiful and frightening world of dream and bodily sensation, and his particular kind of surrealism is more poignant and haunting than ever. A sense of loss and intense loneliness pervades the poems, yet his overall vision is in no way bleak. He leads us through a landscape where "every word is a coliseum or a shoreline of broken figures" — a landscape at once known and unknown to us, always rearranging its parts, always remaining the same.

Two prose poems, "Sub Rosa" and "The Cities," each in six parts, are among the best pieces in the book. "A rose is not a rose, but always a war. War in an empty house," Domanski writes. But the house, like the landscape, is not empty; each image, animate or inanimate, that fills it is placed to satisfy a pattern that the inner logic of the poem dictates for its particular moment only. Thus we have a series of verbal collages to help us explore this place, which is dream yet more than dream. (It's interesting to note that Domanski himself created the collage that is the cover

design for the book, although this is nowhere mentioned).

A group of five short poems, entitled "God," "Devil," "Archangel," "Prophet," and "Martyr," are slighter in design, but beautifully crafted. The Archangel is

*an owl that suffers  
from nightfall*

*from the silence  
surrounding  
a sheet of white paper  
in an adjoining room.*

Occasionally these "verbal collages" become overloaded, with images overlapping one another and creating some confusion as in "Hierology," where too many things happen to the idea of a shoe. Just when we think we've got it under control and "the shoelace lies on the temple roof," we read on to find that even the shoelace is "a snake who has eaten the moon" — and so on. I find this sort of thing delightfully exhausting, but am eager to get on to other poems that quietly and firmly compel me to examine their inner components one by one — a bent nail, a torn glove, a sack full of kittens, or a paper ship. Even something like "the black fragrance of a train" remains in memory long after one has put down this book, so powerful and compelling are the



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images, held in marvellous suspension.

Domanski lives in Nova Scotia, and the sea is everywhere in these poems, flowing, like time, in and around the lines, swirling through the "empty" house, leaving nothing alone.

*Once again the downstairs was alone with the sea. Every night the unmapped waters would move from room to room with the dark chemic push of a heart. Outside it was always dry land and the looming trees.*

It is eternal recurrence, the rhythm of a heartbeat, the endless beginning. "Out to sea past the farthest point of land comes an elemental song from you," he writes in "One for an Apparition," and in "Hierology" he tells us that "women are just water/and men are only the distant shore where everyone/eventually goes to die." We are reminded again of the "shoreline of broken figures" in

"Sub Rosa," and of an elusive quality in all of these poems that lends them their grace and strength — a quality of healing, not unlike the healing power of the sea itself. Domanski's is a vision that encompasses life and death without useless rage or intellectual bleakness, but with an acceptance that is both passionate and articulate. Anything but passive, these poems are yibrant and alive, and have a stature and dignity difficult to define. We are led with splendid ease through the coliseum, along the shoreline, upstairs and downstairs in the "empty" house, knowing all the time that there is nothing at all easy in such a procedure. A voice as calm and sure as Domanski's is the result of a considerable respect for the craft of poetry and for language itself, combined with a formidable talent. This is one of the best books of poetry I've seen in ages. □

## INTERVIEW

Bill Glasco surveys the challenges and frustrations of 10 years as the 'father of Canadian theatre'

By DONALD MARTIN

BILL GLASCO was born in 1935 in Quebec City, but by his second birthday had already lived in Montreal and then settled in Toronto. His first experience in theatre was "in somebody else's basement" at the age of eight. After studies

at Princeton, Oxford, and the University of Toronto he received a Ph.D. in English, but didn't see himself as a scholar, so he spent two years at New York University's School of the Arts. In 1972 he founded Toronto's Tarragon Theatre, where he worked with such playwrights as David French, David Freeman, James Reaney, and Tom Walmsley, and introduced English Canada to the work of Michel Tremblay. After 10 years as artistic director he recently resigned from Tarragon and was succeeded by Urjo Kareeda. He talked with Donald Martin in Toronto about his career:

**Books in Canada: How do you react to being called the "father of Canadian theatre"?**

Glasco: It makes me laugh, quite simply because I know there's so much yet to be done. I know that I've done a good thing and done it well, but not without a lot of dissatisfaction in the way I've done it. I don't mind being called the father of Canadian theatre as long as it doesn't mean no one's going to ask me to work, and think I'm dead — you know. I think other people are just as important for



PHOTOGRAPH BY NIR BERENJET

Bill Glasco

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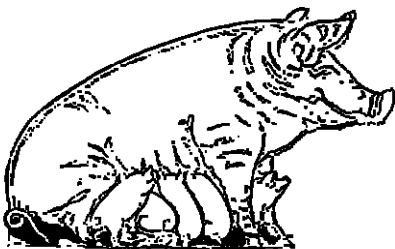
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what they've done, like Ken Gass, who was a great force; Paul Thompson for the way he developed "the collective" and for spotting and developing new talent; Martin Kinch, and, of course, George Luscombe. I think we did it all together. I did a certain thing with it which helped give it credibility — that was my part. But I wasn't at the grass roots level of it. The Tarragon Theatre gave Canadian theatre credibility because we had a lot of successes and our production values were high, so people learned to trust us.

**BiC:** How would you describe the state of Canadian theatre now? Is it very different from that of the 1970s?

**Glassco:** Yes, it is. It's suffering from the uncertainty that the whole world is suffering, the sense of malaise, of "where do we go from here?" or "is it worth doing anything at all . . . Are we all going to be dead tomorrow?" To be more precise, are we going to fold tomorrow? Are we going to be able to afford to go on doing theatre? Theatres are therefore forced to do small-cast plays, to do successful plays that are not Canadian or successful plays that are Canadian but not necessarily good. It takes away the adventure of going for broke, it removes the risk-taking from theatre. Theatre therefore tends to atrophy and get stale, and who wants that?

**BiC:** What effects do you see such commercial hits as Peter Colley's *I'll Be Back Before Midnight* or Allan Stratton's *Nurse Jane Goes To Hawaii* having on the Canadian theatre scene?

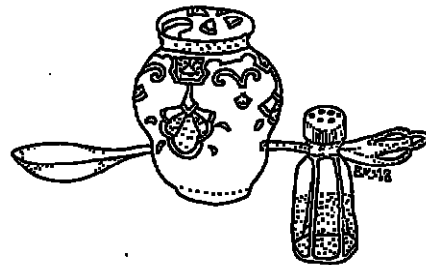
**Glassco:** I think they've had a positive effect. Why shouldn't playwrights make money? It then gives them the licence to try something more difficult, more demanding. I don't think Allan Stratton has sold out for a minute. If he makes all his plays commercial, that's fine — he's still a part of our theatre community. If he did remain commercial, however, he might not necessarily be a playwright I'd be too interested in. Writing a successful Canadian play is a perfectly honourable thing to do. Some people's impulse is to write just that way; some people want to do more difficult things. Either way, the most important factor is to follow your impulse. Good writers don't want to rest on their laurels. They don't repeat themselves. Unfortunately, we live in a country where most people are not particularly interested in a writer's development.

**BiC:** Does that anger you?

**Glassco:** No, but it's frustrating, especially when the yardstick is always success and so infrequently the growth or, indeed, the courage of the writer.

**BiC:** If you were asked to list the most promising playwrights for the 1980s in

this country, whom would you choose?  
**Glassco:** I find that question very difficult to answer. A career is hard to spot in the theatre. Erika Ritter has a promising future, no question of that. I think Tom Walmsley is enormously talented; I



think he's got to want to keep on writing plays and that depends on the encouragement and feedback he gets. I think Judith Thompson is extraordinary. I'll probably discover more writers now that I have time to take a closer look at new works again.

**BiC:** Do you see yourself as a dramaturge?

**Glassco:** No, no. . . . People see me that way but I don't. I see myself as a director whose good work is done in rehearsal, not beforehand. I've assisted David French in his plays, also David Freeman and Margaret Hollingsworth, but what I very much like doing is working with a translator. In the case of *Le Temps d'une Vie* and *The Celestial Bicycle* I worked with Sheila Fischman. That's enormously satisfying because I can teach Sheila things about how to write for the stage, how to translate for the theatre. I don't tell her what to write; I just tell her what won't work onstage. I enjoy working with language, the actual text, not developing the play.

**BiC:** Has the French-Canadian theatre had an effect on that of English Canada?

**Glassco:** Yes, just as the Quiet Revolution had an enormous impact on what's happened to us culturally. Quebec theatre could have played an even greater role in our cultural development, but not enough of it has been done. And, of course, it hasn't gone the other way at all — Quebec doesn't translate English plays into French, with very few exceptions. On the whole, they're not interested, and I can't blame them. Why should they be? In theory, though, it would be nice if they were.

**BiC:** Would you like to work in French-Canadian theatre?

**Glassco:** Absolutely. I'd like to be able to cross that barrier. We'll see. . . . It'll either happen for me soon, or it won't.

**BiC:** You are largely responsible for Toronto's evolution into a vital Canadian cultural centre in the 1970s. Does that "centre" still exist?

**Glasseo:** I don't think it's as attractive a cultural centre anymore for me, personally. I despair at seeing so much dinner theatre, so much easy and comfortable entertainment. I think if people want just that, why in the hell don't they go and work in the movies? If they're going to work in the theatre, they're there to challenge an audience somehow. That's what theatre is all about. And if they don't do that, I don't know why they're in the theatre — because they can make a lot more money in another medium. I feel Toronto has "gone for the bucks" a little bit more than I would like to see. Of course I think people in theatre should make money, but I regret the loss of true experimentation. I regret that, with the climate of the times, a theatre like Tarragon can't take more chances. We don't have the money. And Toronto has lost some of its innocence; we're getting blasé about our talent here. That's unpleasant and unattractive, because, though we're so blasé, we're still extremely provincial in some ways.

**BiC:** Does it bother you that upon announcing your departure from the

*Tarragon Theatre last year you were not besieged with offers to work elsewhere? Does it make you bitter?*

**Glasseo:** I'm not bitter at all. It amuses me a bit. But it's something I expect because I think you have to hustle; you have to tell people you're available. I've ignored very good people myself. The reasons why are complicated. You often don't know why you overlook people. I mean, how often did I ask John Hirsch to work for me at the Tarragon? Once or twice. Why so few? Well, I was a bit intimidated, wasn't I? Something to do with that. People might even be intimidated by me — who knows?

**BiC:** Are you retiring?

**Glasseo:** Of course not. I've got a lot of work to do. I just don't know what the priorities are at this point. I've no ambitions for television, film, or radio — it's theatre for me. It's not unlikely that I'll start another theatre eventually, because I believe you can't make any significant impact on theatre in Canada unless you do run a theatre. I sure as hell don't want to be at the mercy of others forever. □

#### PAPERBACKS

The guns of autumn: cancer in the Caribbean, fascism in wartime Austria, and excrement in academe

By ANNE COLLINS

THIS MONTH I HAVE voted myself the luxury of reviewing the three heaviest guns of last fall's season at one time: Margaret Atwood's *Bodily Harm* (Seal, \$3.95), *Famous Last Words*, by Timothy Findley (Penguin, \$4.95), and Robertson Davies's *The Rebel Angels* (Penguin, \$7.95). This is a treat (for me at least) not only because of the quality of the writers, but also because I can remember, vividly, a time when such a task would have been impossible. Proving that the Canadian paperback industry has grown large enough and efficient enough (maybe even profitable enough) to get the country's greatest hits to the racks before the first big buzz of excitement over the books fades to indifference.

*Bodily Harm* was the only one of the three I bought in hardcover and when I first read it (last fall amid reverberations from glowing reviews) I was more oppressed than impressed. Cancer in the Caribbean Basin, I thought, how trendy.

But it always seems to take me two runs at Atwood's prose to sort out the easy wisecracks and humour from the violent images and her incredible poet's ability with metaphor, to get used to her voice, to let her take control. The second time through *Bodily Harm* I succumbed — entirely.

Rennie Wilford, a Toronto journalist who specializes in describing stylish surfaces and gets a kick out of creating fake trends, is in a queer but recognizable condition. A small, sharp, benevolent knife wielded by a nice doctor has rescued her from cancer, but has also cut a large chunk out of her own surface, her femaleness, i.e. her breast. Surfaces are important to a person like Rennie; surface tension is what holds her together. She has jettisoned her past (small-town decent but unlikable southern Ontario); her present is uncomfortable if not horrifying (her lover has an aversion to the missing piece; Rennie comes home to find the police and

# JACK HIGGINS

AUTHOR OF THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

## Touch the Devil



This brilliant new novel details the further exploits of the charming and deadly Liam Devlin, the lone survivor of the carnage at the end of *The Eagle Has Landed*.

The cast of characters includes the international terrorist Frank Barry, who killed not for cause or money, but for kicks. Barry had to be stopped, but to the harassed British Intelligence Service the only man who could do the job was rotting in a French jail. Thus Devlin was winked reluctantly from retirement to extricate his oldest friend from imprisonment, and the hunt was on...

\$17.95

# MANTISSA



## JOHN FOWLES

Bringing us once again into the company of one of the world's greatest contemporary storytellers, *Mantissa* is an original and tragic tale of the sufferings wreaked on a deeply serious novelist by his shamelessly uncooperative muse. Never mind that the source of Fowles' inspiration is given to distractions, sulks, and even worse problems with memory than her victim. What he must ultimately confront is that most outrageous demand: equal pay for equal work.

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Collins Publishers

evidence that an intruder had the urge to mutilate her further); her future (made mortal) doesn't seem to exist. Self-disgust in limbo:

Rennie felt suspended; she was waiting all the time, for something to happen. Maybe I'm an event freak, she thought. The people she knew . . . would have regarded it all as an experience. Experiences were like other collectables, you kept adding them to your set. Then you traded them with your friends. Show and tell.

She can remember how she used to behave, but not how it applies now that she is cancerous, now that surfaces have bloody undersides.

People in this condition usually try to get away, so Rennie bargains a travel piece out of a local magazine and flies to the Caribbean island of St. Antoine, where Atwood slides Rennie's disconnected self into a Graham Greene situation. The island is a former British protectorate shambling its way toward its first post-independence election under showers of misplaced foreign aid from Canada and greedy though amateurish corruption. Rennie is told by Dr. Minnow, opposition candidate for president and the only person in the book devoted to the good of the people, to drop her "sweet Canadian" glasses and look at the island, and then write what she sees.

But Rennie is incapable of looking. She slips into the centre of the eventual tiny revolution by accident, by demands made on her niceness and her own disbelieving detachment.

Atwood is trying to crack Rennie out of the sweet Canadian bubble, where



good people can be good because there are few other demands on them, to connect her to the outside world and then back to herself. ("Pretend you're really here," Rennie thinks as she sits in a post-revolution island jail. "Now: what would you do?") The power of the scene in which Rennie finally realizes she is where she is and reaches out her own (she thought useless) hands to comfort and hold onto Lora, her badly beaten jail-mate, is the sum of all the metaphors of disconnection in the book. Useless

hands, empty hands, hands that touch but don't feel. Atwood's considerable power as a poet is here perfectly aimed to punch home her novelist's intention.

Timothy Findley's *Famous Last Words* is, on the other hand, all dressed up with no place to go. It is thoughtful and beautifully written. For instance, this scene in a Spanish field in 1937, after bombers have passed over leaving bombs behind:

For a moment, I remember, there was not a trace of sound or movement. Then all at once the fields stood up. Or so it seemed. And the dead were left where they were, face down and immovable as rocks, while those of us who had survived turned back towards the road and simply walked away. This is all I recall . . . Certainly, no one looked at the sky. The sky was now a traitor; part of the conspiracy against us. It could deliver death without a warning, and it shamed us not to know how to save ourselves or where to hide. I had never felt this humiliation before — which is to say, the indignity of being terrorized by something you had trusted all your life.

As elements the book contains a fleshed-out Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, his progenitor Ezra Pound, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, the Second World War, the murder of Sir Harry Oakes, von Ribbentrop, a deserted Austrian hotel in dead winter where Mauberley holes up to scratch in silver pencil his true confessions on the wall, and the forces of international fascism. I think it is this last element that tilts the book in the wrong direction, turns it into a thriller masquerading as something else. As simply a thriller *Famous Last Words* is excellent: subtly rendered permutations of good and evil against an overwhelming world-wide conspiracy theory. But as something else, I'm never sure why the major character, Mauberley, chooses all the strange paths he does: chastity, fascism, Wallis Simpson, writer's block, even Ezra Pound. A novel can quite successfully leave your intellect puzzling over why its characters do what they do, but it should never leave your gut in the same condition. Still, *Famous Last Words* is a performance well worth attending for its sheer reach and its beautiful pieces.

You can see the bones of *Rebel Angels* standing out all over, smugly pick out all the patterns and what principle each of the major characters stands for and who resolves what in whom, but the transparency of the plot simply doesn't matter. Watching Robertson Davies at play with his beloved notion of the university, his talent for murder mystery, and the arcane, irreverent, and sometimes profound bits and pieces of knowledge he has gathered, is watching both entertainer and entertainment at its best.



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Among the things you'll know more about when the book is over: Rabelais, the theories of Paracelsus, filth therapy, the Apocrypha, gypsies, and excrement. "I walked on toward Ploughwright, thinking about faeces . . . in the Middle Ages, how concerned people who lived

close to the world of nature were with the faeces of animals. And what a variety of names they had for them: the Crotels of a Hare, the Friants of a Boar, the Spraints of an Otter, the Werderobe of a Badger, the Waggying of a Fox, the Fumets of a Deer." Etcetera. □

### THE BROWSER

Grave consequences: a social history of death, the death of Trudeau's Canada, and a literary magazine dies a temporary death

By MORRIS WOLFE

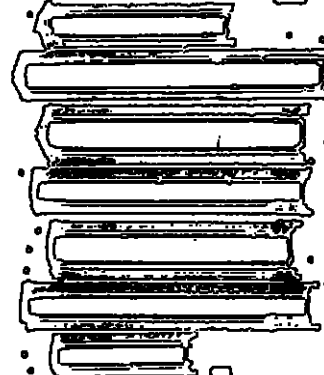
HERE'S YET ANOTHER example (#632, if you're keeping track) to prove that Americans value civil liberties more than Canadians. American librarians have been up in arms, individually and collectively, over the past three or four years fighting attempts by moral majoritarians and others to keep specific books and writers off their shelves. (It helps their cause, of course, when parents in Fairfax County, Virginia, try to keep students at a school named after Mark Twain from reading *Huckleberry Finn*. That's the kind of item guaranteed to make the front page of the *New York Times*.) Canadian librarians, on the other hand, afraid, no doubt, of being accused of having civil libertarian tendencies, have recently published a mealy-mouthed pamphlet on the subject, *Not in Our Schools?!!! School Book Censorship in Canada: A Discussion Guide* by Judith Dick (Canadian Library Association, 151 Sparks Street, Ottawa, 86 pages, \$15.00 paper). Ms. Dick concludes with this 140-word-long sentence, which says everything and nothing at the same time: "As parents and educators of children, we must encourage a search for the truth of life (even if it means examining critically some areas in our own lives), demonstrate our knowledge of what's right with our actions even in crisis situations, take an honourable approach to children and young people in appreciating the pure and lovely (by giving them the example of our own appreciation for such things), place an emphasis on works of good repute (neither ignoring nor overstressing their shortcomings), applaud excellence (wherever it manifests itself), help children to recognize and understand those things worthy of praise, (and identify those things unworthy of praise),

and, all of us, parents, educators and children, must think on these things, calmly, and in the sincere desire to understand ourselves, those around us and ultimately the meaning of our place in the cosmos."

TWENTY YEARS AGO, French cultural historian Philippe Ariès published his excellent history of childhood, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*. In that book he suggested that childhood was a comparatively recent invention that reflected not an increase but a diminution of individualism in society. Now Ariès has written a fascinating history of death, *The Hour of Our Death* (Vintage, 651 pages, \$12.95 paper). We learn, for example, that until the late 18th century, at least to judge by funerary practices, Western society was indifferent toward the dead. Bodies were simply piled up in anonymous graves. Then a piety was invented which, says Ariès, "became so popular and so widespread in the Romantic era that it was believed to have existed from the beginning of time." Ariès's discussion ranges over all aspects of death, from its neurophysiology to its metaphysics, without ever becoming less than readable.

"LIKE QUEBEC . . . the Canadian hinterlands should make it clear that separation is an option they will not hesitate to follow if the attempt continues to force upon the country a system weighted . . . in favour of the centre." Those are the words not of some crazy western separatist but of George Woodcock, at the conclusion of *Confederation Betrayed: The Case Against Trudeau's Canada* (Harbour Publishing, 212 pages, \$8.95 paper), a book that received far too little

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place at  
the top



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\$1500  
for the  
winner!

#### 1982 Alberta Culture Non-Fiction Award

Ann Gomer Sunahara's *Politics of Racism*, Ted Ferguson's *Desperate Siege*, James H. Gray's *Boomtime*, Sid Marty's *Men for the Mountains*. These works — just four of eight which have won Alberta Culture Non-Fiction Awards — demonstrate the range, talent and strength of Alberta's non-fiction writers.

Past winners of the prestigious award have earned a place at the top.

Once again, Alberta Culture invites submissions for the award and prize of \$1,500. To be considered, entries must have been published in the English language anywhere in the world, and must be at least 50,000 words in length. Authors must be Canadian citizens or landed immigrants who have lived in Alberta for a minimum of 12 of the past 18 months.

Submission, with two copies of the book, may be made by publishers, agents, authors, friends or family of authors.

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attention when it appeared last year. Given the growth of western separatism in recent months — including the election of a separatist MLA and the conversion of the leader of B.C.'s Conservative Party — editorial writers might be well advised to take a second look at Woodcock's description of "Westland," a separate country that would be made up of the four western provinces and the two northern territories. My own guess, for what it's worth, is that the West or Quebec will eventually separate. Only then will centralists like Trudeau finally be prepared to negotiate a looser kind of confederation.

ACCORDING TO WOODCOCK, one thing all Canadians, eastern and western, share is an "historic disinclination" to join the U.S. Wallace Stegner disagrees in a recently published collection of essays, *One Way to Spell Man* (Doubleday, 177 pages, \$19.50 cloth). In "The Provincial Consciousness," an interesting piece originally published in *The University of Toronto Quarterly* in the mid-1970s, he implies that when regionalism finally asserts itself politically, the importance of the 49th parallel will disappear. "It doesn't much matter," he writes, "whether the West means Canadian or American. I don't see much difference." He goes on to suggest that William Kurelek's *A Prairie Boy's Winter* says as much to a George McGovern about South Dakota, say, as it does to a Canadian about Saskatchewan. In the same essay Stegner says, "It could be provocatively asserted, and plausibly defended, that Canada in 1974 is somewhere around the stage of self-definition and literary accomplishment reached by the U.S.A. about 1837" — i.e. when Emerson, in a famous address, declared America's cultural independence from Europe. There are several other fine essays in this collection. I particularly recommend "To a Young Writer."

LACK OF ADEQUATE daycare means that thousands of women, most of them immigrants, are forced to turn to industrial home sewing as a way of earning a living. They make uniforms, clothes, and toys on their own sewing machines in their own homes for far less than minimum wages. Manufacturers, of course, find this an ideal way of reducing overhead. The Seam Allowance: Industrial Home Sewing in Canada by Laura C. Johnson (The Women's Press, 135 pages, \$7.95 paper) documents this abuse in an attractively produced, impressively researched book.

THE CURRENT ISSUE of *The Malahat Review* (#62) is the last to appear under

the editorship of Robin Skelton. Indeed, it may be the last issue ever. The magazine is suspending publication for at least a year; if it reappears, it will be in a very different form. My favourite piece in #62 is a lengthy memoir by British poet and essayist Ruthven Todd. He tells of his days as an art dealer's assistant. When a customer told him he was only interested in buying signed Picassos, Todd promptly went to the back room and signed a couple of inferior ones and sold them for as much as he would have charged for the beautiful unsigned drawings the customer had rejected. Ruthven also tells of meeting Auden for the first time at a cocktail party. Auden turned to him and asked, "Are you happy?" "From the way he asked it," says Ruthven, "from something in the tone of his voice, I realized that this was not just an idle cocktail-party question concerning my state of mind at that moment . . . Auden really wanted to know whether I was, indeed, happy — happy to be alive and happy in

everything I did and in everything around me."

A PERSONAL NOTE. For three years I edited the annual literary anthology *Aurora*. I suspended publication after the 1980 edition because the book wasn't selling. But I continued to believe in many of the writers who appeared in *Aurora*. Recently, out of a feeling of obligation to them, I attempted to launch a small subscription press, Trove Books. We proposed to publish our first two titles this fall for \$15. No one involved in Trove would be paid. All money would go to cover printing and promotional costs. We needed approximately 400 subscribers to begin. But it's no go. There was more mail from people who had manuscripts to be read or who were looking for paid work in publishing ("Attention: Personnel Manager, Trove Books") than from would-be subscribers. It seems there are now more writers and editors out there than there are readers. □

#### FIRST NOVELS

Thrilling times with Dan and the b'ys down on the wharf, where something strangely fishy is afoot

By PHIL SURGUY

The *Second Trap* (Breakwater Books, 232 pages, \$8.95 paper), by Douglas Hill — the reviewer who's usually to be found having a go at first novels in this part of the magazine — is a pretty good thriller. The setting is an outport called Molly's Cove, and the story is told by Dan Harris, a young sociologist who goes there to study the kinship patterns of the residents. He starts out as a dispassionate observer but quickly becomes so enamoured of the hard-drinking, tale-spinning, independent Newfoundlanders that he lets the thesis that he is supposed to be writing slide. He's content simply to be living among these people, getting to know and be accepted by them, and as his knowledge of their community grows he gradually uncovers a plot to destroy it. The owner of the local fish-packing plant is trying to drive everyone away so he can have a free hand with his drug-smuggling operation.

Hill's description of the community is first rate. He has a very good ear for the cadence and spirit of outport speech,

and as long as we're out fishing or sitting around drinking and chatting with the b'ys everything is fine. However, there is a serious conceptual problem that begins to devour the book about halfway through: rather than being an organic flaw in the community that Douglas Hill has so skilfully created, the villainy that Dan Harris uncovers is no more than a pulpy, far-fetched invention imposed on the story by the author. Only in one scene, a superb account of a search for a man who is mysteriously missing, do the mechanics of the plot coincide with the rhythms of the community.

The latter part of the novel is straight adventure writing, as good as any you'll find on the market today, disturbing only in that it doesn't really complement the exuberant promise of the first part. Still, *The Second Trap* is a good read and when it is on target a notable one, in that it gives us a very close look at one of the very few places that are left in Canada where the people have yet to be homogenized by television and the school system. □

## New Fall Books from Doubleday



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**THE SECRET LIFE OF THE UNBORN CHILD** by Thomas Verny, M.D., with John Kelly. By Toronto psychiatrist Dr. Thomas Verny, this fascinating and controversial book demonstrates that the fetus is an experiencing, remembering being who responds to and is deeply influenced by his environment. Remarkable case studies illustrate that our personalities can be shaped in part before birth. A bestseller in hardcover, now a trade paperback. October; \$8.95.

**THE FAVORITE** by L.R. Wright. "A beautifully written novel, THE FAVORITE probes the seasons of life and death, love and joy, within one very real family. Doubleday has a winner..." *Jacqueline Briskin, author.* "...a lovely book and a wise one." *Publisher's Weekly.* August; \$19.95

**THE OTHER MRS. DIEFENBAKER: A Biography of Edna May Drower** by Simma Holt. A sensitive and revealing biography of John Diefenbaker's first wife. The most astonishing book ever written about the private life of a Canadian public figure. September; \$22.95; photo section.

**THE PRESIDENTS AND THE PRIME MINISTERS** by Lawrence Martin. How the U.S. really treats Canada when heads of state meet. A true—and amazing—story of how Canada and its leaders have been overlooked, disregarded, and even shoved against the office wall. October; \$19.95; photo section.

**SIGNING ON: The Birth of Radio in Canada** by Bill McNeil and Morris Wolfe. An oral history of Canadian radio from 1919 to the advent of television in 1952, this lavishly illustrated book contains almost 150 interviews from both listeners and broadcasters. October; \$19.95 pb; \$29.95 hb; over 400 b&w illustrations and photos, many never before published.

**FOR SERVICES RENDERED: Leslie James Bennett and the RCMP Security Service** by John Sawatsky. The best-selling author of *Men in the Shadows* turns his investigative eye on the counter-espionage cases led by Bennett during his eighteen years as head of the Russian desk (1954-1972). Guaranteed to be one of the year's most-talked about books. October; \$22.95; photo section.

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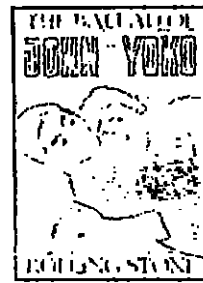
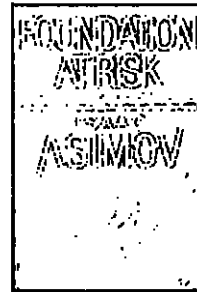
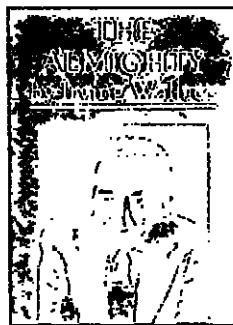
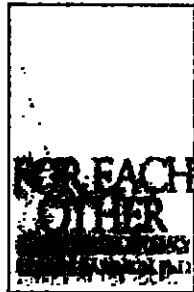
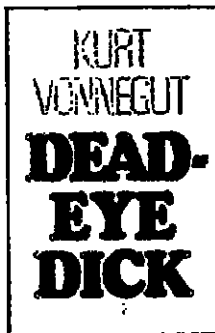
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Firing broadsides: from a lyrically  
witty spiritual guidebook to stark moments  
of almost Zen-like brutality

By DOUGLAS BARBOUR

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S *Island Magazine* has begun its Island Writing Series with four pamphlets by Canadian writers John Marshall, Daphne Marlatt, bp Nichol, and Fred Wah. Beautifully printed, on heavy paper, in editions of 500 copies, they are a bargain at \$4.00 each, testifying as they do to the variety and vitality of Canadian poetry today.

John Marshall's *Given Islands* is "the opening sequence of a longer 'work-in-progress'"; in it he signals his growing independence from his poetic teachers. Marshall's first two books were well-crafted and superior efforts for a young poet, but his influences were occasionally too plainly heard. In *Given Islands* the voice is clearly secure, at home ranging lightly over geological, archeological, historical, mythical, and literary space. Wit and erudition, insight and inscape, flash but never at the expense of the accumulative movement of the poem.

The islands of the title are, of course, the islands off Canada's West Coast, where the Haida and other tribes once lived and carved their icons in wood and stone, where the explorers sailed, and where artists and poets have sought somehow to render their place as Marshall now seeks to as well. Each lyric segment of the poem is part of a slowly growing chain of islanded perceptions about this space and all it contains in time and story. The second one, for example, beautifully links nature perceived and nature revealed in mythic dream and artistic act:

*out of shadow-rain*

*the forest,  
the eyes are  
deer, licking  
sandstone*

*& petroglyphs  
are basalt  
the animals  
which eat*

*parental materials,  
eat*

*the stars*

The eventual completed work bids fair to become a welcome addition to the ranks of the long poem in Canada. Meanwhile, *Given Islands* reveals a

young poet coming fully into his own.

here & there is Daphne Marlatt's record of a few weeks in the Kootenays in the summer of 1980. Typically, it is charged with the overwhelming desire to notate acts of perception as they happen. Thus each prose-poem is a complex articulation of moments of sensual intake accumulated in the rhythm of the perceiver's movement through time and space.

Marlatt's poetic has never been easy, it is true; but equally, it's not really difficult. There is a stark simplicity, and almost Zen-like innocent brutality to her work, which insists simply on articulating as clearly as possible the perceptual intake of a well-read, well-trained, whole personality. In a sense, then, the pieces of *here & there* are fragments of an autobiography, but they do not partake of gossip: the attempt is to render a felt life as it is lived, not to drop names or talk about people.

Things seen, things heard, things felt, indeed all that might impinge on any of the senses, enter the flow of the writing. Interestingly, but not strangely, ideas enter top. A guru of sorts was there; his thoughts and others' thoughts about him form one strand of inquiry in this sequence. Desire, and how people try to deal with it — a topic naturally tied to Eastern mystic teachings — also enters the net of discourse.

*here & there* offers another example of why many critics consider Daphne Marlatt one of our most interesting writers. Her sensitivity to the life of language as well as the life of the heart and mind shines through the pieces in this book as it does through her other works. This is a valuable addition to an already major oeuvre.

bp Nichol's work, especially the on-going long poem *The Martyrology*, is also, among many other things, autobiographical, the work and the working out of a life. Briefly: the birthdeath cycle from *The Book of Hours* is a self-contained excerpt from "a work which, in its entirety, appears as (will appear as) the second part of *The Martyrology Book VI*."

*The Book of Hours* is a typical Nichol effort, in which formal and technical



exploration is the foreground while content, the autobiographical story, is assumed, and occupies the background. As Nichol has said, he feels no need to worry about content because it's always there: therefore he will practise with, explore the possibilities of, form. In *The Book of Hours* the major formal requirement is that each poem be written in a certain hour, eventually providing 24 parts to the book. As he says in a note to this four-poem cycle, however, he has now written two poems in the same hour by mistake, so the eventual volume will be a long day's journey indeed.

The four poems in *Briefly* were written during the period when Nichol and his wife were expecting and then lost their first child. The pain of this experience is clearly articulated throughout. More than that, however, these poems manifest love and fear, joy and suffering, and perhaps most important, spiritual searching and growth. With his continually maturing awareness of language as a much more multiplex matrix of signs than we usually recognize it to be, Nichol keeps discovering new messages in old words and phrases, and the energy of his performance as he does so is exhilarating. I believe *The Martyrology* to be perhaps the most important ongoing writing of our time; *Briefly* offers further substantiation to this belief.

Fred Wah is perhaps the least known of the poets who are still, and foolishly, seen as a monolithic entity: the *TISH* group. The recent publication of *Breathin' My Name with a Sigh* (Talonbooks) should bring him some of the recognition he deserves, but he is not yet as appreciated as he should be. *Owners Manual* offers a lovely sample of his lyric wit. It manages to be simultaneously a parody of the thousands of How-To manuals which offer to teach us the mechanics of everything from Rubik's Cube to sex and/or relationships, and a spiritual guide book as enlighteningly exasperating and profound as any Zen or Taoist sage sayings.

A kind of clipped and cryptic musicality has always been one of Wah's strong points. Blessed with an exquisite sense of rhythm, he has always been able to articulate the lyric cry we associate with song. In *Owners Manual* that lyric cry is present still, but it is subtly subverted toward koan by the spiritual striving the poems slyly insist upon. They are directions, but to what? "How to Be Something" captures perfectly the wit and the spirit of these poems (the fact that it is also funny is very much to the point):

*Dream about it  
get the head back  
into the body into*

*remembering  
skin  
imprint of shape  
into inside  
and look at yourself  
saying "mmm"*  
remember  
don't move  
let yourself be caught  
catch yourself  
move  
very fast  
as fast as you can  
as you can.

There are more pamphlets planned in the Island Writing Series. British poet Tim Longville has contributed an interesting sequence. Phyllis Webb's stunning series of anti-ghazals, a long poem by Michael Ondaatje, and Frank Davey's brilliant essay on the long poem in Canada are just a few of the works in the works. □

## CANWIT NO. 76

### Duddy II

At 55, Duddy finds his ulcer prevents him from eating smoked meat, and while his libido lingers, his potency is on the wane. Now the city's most influential land developer, he has begun assembling a massive project to redevelop the Main, but his plans are threatened by his ambivalent relationship with the Girl Wonder, a feminist mob leader who, we discover, is conspiring to keep the Montreal Expos from winning the National League pennant. Nevertheless, for his service on the Royal Commissions on Multiculturalism and the Taxicab Industry, he is still a strong contender for an appointment to the Senate.

SEQUELS ARE nothing new to Hollywood or Canadian writing, for that matter (goodness knows, Robertson Davies has made an industry of them), but we were particularly intrigued by news of *Psycho II*, a sequel to the Alfred Hitchcock thriller, to be set some 20 years after the original. Contestants are invited to compose plot summaries (maximum 100 words) for sequels to Canadian novels that pick up events many years later. The prize is \$25. Deadline: November 1. Address: CanWit No. 76, *Books in Canada*, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 3X9.

### Results of CanWit No. 74

WHEN WE ASKED readers to suggest appropriate occupations for well-known Canadians on the basis of their names, we expected the usual number of (somewhat insulting) suggestions for our current prime minister. Sure enough,



Phil Kamin, rock photographer, and Peter Goddard, rock critic, present the Stones live on stage for you. The 80 full-color plus 40 black-and-white photographs and lively text, capture the incredible energy of the Stones and offer insight into why they are the greatest rock 'n' roll band ever. Full color poster included in the book.

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*Admiral* is the second in Pope's series about seventeenth-century buccaneers. In *Admiral* Spain's decree continues: no peace beyond the line — and Yorke and Whetstone find scores more buccaneers joining the profitable raids on the Spaniards. Dudley Pope's descriptions of life three centuries ago are stunning and there is plenty of powder and shot to satisfy the armchair pirate . . .

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Mr. Trudeau's name cropped up in many entries, along with such other duplications as Bobby Orr the miner, Bobby Hull the shipbuilder, and Allan Fotheringham the hog-breeder. The winner is R.D. Leachman of Fredericton, who added a few typographical innovations to create a list that includes:

- Bill Hutt: quarterback
- Knowlton N°A°S°H: army dentist
- Ray Hnatyshyn!?: computer programmer

#### Honourable mentions:

- Charles Lynch: executioner
- Lloyd Axworthy: executioner
- Michael Warren: rabbit farmer
- Michael Bliss: marriage counsellor  
— Jim Chaplin, Toronto

- Dalton Camp: interior decorator
- Margaret Atwood: camp counsellor
- Grant Devine: priest
- Bruno Gerussi: soccer player  
— Barry Baldwin, Calgary

- Max Aitken: physician
- Kildare Dobbs: painter  
— F.K. Donnelly, Saint John, N.B.

- Bruce Kidd: goatherd
- Ken Read: librarian
- David Suzuki: motorcycle mechanic
- Bobby Pulford: tow truck operator  
— Frank Cummins, Morrin, Alta.

## CLASSIFIED

Classified rates: \$8 per line (40 characters to the line). Deadline: first of the month for issue dated following month. Address: Books in Canada Classified, 388 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 3X9. Phone: (416) 363-5426.

THE LUNATIC GAZETTE invites prose & poetry submissions. \$50 prose; \$5 poem + ann. competitions & lotteries for subscribers & publ. writers. P.O. Box 1614, Guelph, Ont.

OLD AND RARE BOOKS. Canadiana catalogues. Heritage Books, 3438 6 St. S.W., Calgary, Alberta T2S 2M4.

OUT-OF-PRINT CANADIANA — history, biography, literature. Books, pamphlets, periodicals. Catalogues free on request. Huronia Canadiana Books, Box 685, Alliston, Ont. L0M 1A0.

PUBLISHERS: writer w/ bold view of arts & funding has Can-Cult script for school market: Michael Bartholomew 613-224-5485.

SPOTLIGHT ON DRAMA ed. Constance Brissenden — an invaluable new resource guide to Canadian plays. 400 annotated plays, indexed by title and author, paperback, \$6.95, Writers' Development Trust, 24 Ryerson Ave., Toronto, Ont. M5T 2P3 868-6910.

- Karen Kain: geriatric nurse
- Dan Heap: garbageman  
— Mike Schultz, Acton, Ont.
- Jane Rule: queen  
— Mary Lile Benham, Winnipeg
- George Bowering: jeweller  
— Bill Schermsbrucker, Vancouver
- Dave Broadfoot: snowshoe maker  
— David D. Harvey, Ottawa

### THE EDITORS RECOMMEND

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

#### FICTION

*Foreign Bodies*, by Rachel Wyatt, House of Anansi. Wyatt continues her inquiry into the war between the sexes in her story of two innocents from Yorkshire on a visit to Toronto, but she also sacrifices the brittle, sarcastic fun of her previous two novels for a more complex satirical examination of relations between nations, cultures, and races.

#### NON-FICTION

*The Murder of Napoleon*, by Ben Weider and David Hapgood, Methuen. The talents of a Canadian Bonaparte buff, an American journalist, and an obsessive Swedish dentist combine to unravel the 161-year-old riddle of Napoleon's death (was it cancer, or was it murder?) in a style more reminiscent of English whodunits than a lesson in history.

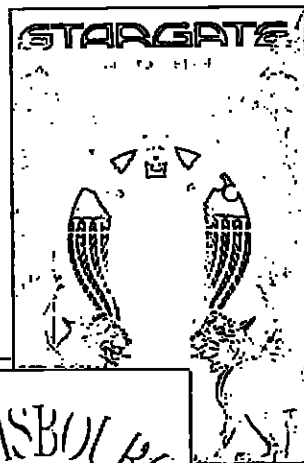
### BOOKS RECEIVED

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

*Accordion Lessons*, by Ray Serwilo, Paip Press.  
*Acrobats*, by Paul Savoie, Aya Press.  
*A Bibliovect Guide to the Literature in English and Theoretical Syntax*, compl. by Lawrence R. Smith & Gail G. Johnson, Information Reduction Research (1981).  
*Biology of Ourselves*, by Gordon S. Berry, John Wiley & Sons.  
*Black and White Keys*, by Hugh Hood, ECW Press.  
*Canada: A Symphony in Color*, by Grace Deutsch and Avonhia Swan, Collins.  
*Canada's Flowers: History of the Corvettes of Canada*, by Thomas G. Lynch, Nimbus.  
*A Canadian Country Diary and Recipe Book*, by Ruth Mason, Hounslow Press.  
*The Canadian Kennel Club Book of Dogs*, General Publishing.  
*The Canadian Rodeo Book*, by Claire Eamer and Thirza Jones, Western Producer Prairie Books.

*Chester's Barn*, by Linds Climo, Tundra.  
*Continuation I*, by Louis Dudek, Véhicule Press.  
*Controlling Inflation*, by Clarence L. Barber et al., James Lorimer.  
*Controlling Interest: The Canadian Gas and Oil Scales*, by David Crane, M & S.  
*Creative Parenting*, by William Sears, Optimum.  
*Dance Resources in Canadian Libraries*, by Clifford Collier and Pierre Guilmette, National Library of Canada.  
*A Day to Remember*, by Trevor Hall, Collins.  
*Death and Dying*, edited by Evelyn J. Hinz, *Mosaic* (University of Manitoba).  
*Diana: Princess of Wales*, by Nicholas Courtney, John Wiley & Sons.  
*Electrons British Columbia*, by T. Patrick Boyle, Lion's Gate Press.  
*Essentially Canadian: The Life and Fiction of Alan Sullivan 1868-1947*, by Gordon D. McLeod, Wilfrid Laurier University Press.  
*Everyone's Guide to Basic Banking*, by H. Mills, Somenos Publications.  
*An Explorer's Guide: British Columbia*, by Harry P. McKeever, Chronicle Books.  
*Famous Players*, by Greg Hollingshead, Coach House Press.  
*Fiscal Decree*, by George Jonas, Seal.  
*Finders, Keepers: A Photographic Survey of Saskatchewan Museums*, Saskatchewan Museums Association.  
*Fitness Fun*, by Lesley Parsonson, Western Producer Prairie Books.  
*Flaunting It! A Decade of Gay Journalism from The Body Politic*, ed. by Ed Jackson and Stan Persky, Plnk Triangle / New Star Books.  
*FLN Propaganda*, by Jacques Ellul, translated by Randal Martin, By Books.  
*Fuzzly!*, by James H. Boren, Wiley.  
*Glass in Canada: The First One Hundred Years*, by Gerald Stevens, Methuen.  
*Golf: The Agony & The Ecstasy*, by Eric Nicol & Dave More, Hurig.  
*Holiday of Darkness*, by Norman S. Ender, John Wiley and Sons.  
*Inognito*, by David Young, Coach House.  
*The Island*, by Lionel Stevenson, Ragweed Press.  
*J'Accuse*, by Graham Greene, Lester & Orpen Denny.  
*Leading Constitutional Decisions (Third edition)*, by Peter H. Russell, Carleton University Press.  
*Lost Language*, by Maxine Gadd, Coach House Press.  
*Louisbourg Portraits*, by Christopher Moore, Macmillan.  
*Mementoes in Canada 1920-1940*, by Frank H. Epp, Macmillan.  
*The Mulberry Men*, by David Solway, Véhicule Press.  
*The New Canadian Constitution*, by David Milne, James Lorimer.  
*Night Drop at Ede*, by John Windsor, Collins.  
*None is Too Many*, by Irving Abella and Harold Troper, Lester & Orpen Denny.  
*Not in Our Schools?!*, by Judith Dick, Canadian Library Association.  
*The Olson Murders*, by Jon Ferry and Damlan Inwood, Cameo Books.  
*On Target*, by John Holmes, New American Library.  
*On the Edge of the Eastern Ocean*, by Pam Hall, GLC Publishers.  
*Oscar Wilde in Canada*, by Kevin O'Brien, Personal Library.  
*Out on the Shelf: Gay and Lesbian Fiction*, Canadian Library Association.  
*A Peculiar Kind of Politics*, by Desmond Morton, U of T Press.  
*Principles of Engineering Economic Analysis*, by Andrew J. Szonyi et al., John Wiley & Sons.  
*Printed Matter*, by Colin Morton, Sideral Press.  
*Quill*, by Donna E. Smyth, The Women's Press.  
*Rainbow Fact Book of Science*, edited by Michael W. Dempsey, John Wiley.  
*The Ransom Game*, by Howard Engel, Seal.  
*Red Ochre and Oatflour*, by Isabelle Eaglesham, published by the author (1980).  
*Remembering History*, by Rhea Tregebov, Guernica Editions.  
*Science in Society: Its Freedom and Regulation*, edited by Fraser Homer-Dixon and Anne T. Perkins, CSP Publications.  
*The Seam Allowance: Industrial Home Sewing in Canada*, by Laura C. Johnson with Robert E. Johnson, The Women's Press.  
*Selected Poems*, by David Solway, Véhicule Press.  
*Shattered Songs*, by Arnold Itwaru, Aya Press.  
*The Skull Beneath the Skin*, by P.D. James, Lester & Orpen Denny.  
*Spirit of Place: Lucy Maud Montgomery and Prince Edward Island*, by Francis W.P. Bolger et al., Oxford.  
*Stargate*, by Pauline Gedge, Macmillan.  
*Start With \$1000*, by J.J. Brown and Jerry Ackerman, Macmillan.  
*Taking Stock: The Calgary Conference on the Canadian Novel*, edited by Charles Steele, ECW Press.  
*There's a Leak in My Litterbox*, by Gary Dunford, Best-sellers.  
*Thundergate*, by Dennis Adair and Janet Rosenstock, Avon.  
*Tiger Webs*, by G.N. Gabbard, illustrated by L. Dickson, published by the author and artist.  
*To Sleep, To Love*, by Ken Norris, Guernica Editions.  
*Use and Abuse of Diagnostic Services*, by Orling C. MacIntosh, Eden Press.  
*The Weather Book*, by Ralph Hardy et al., John Wiley & Sons.  
*The Welland Canals*, by John N. Jackson and Fred A. Addis, Welland Canals Foundation.  
*What Every Librarian Should Know About On-Line Searching*, by Brian B. Wilks, Canadian Library Association.  
*The Worm Rattles Its Pod*, by Cathy Ford, Véhicule Press (1981).  
*A World of Differences: Gender Roles in Perspective*, by Esther R. Greenglass, John Wiley and Sons.

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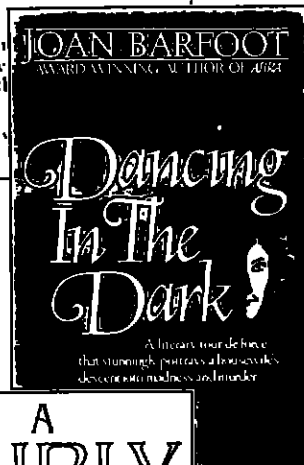
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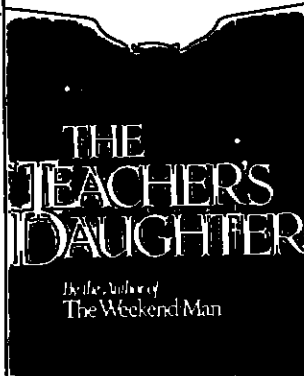


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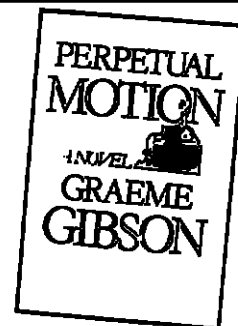
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