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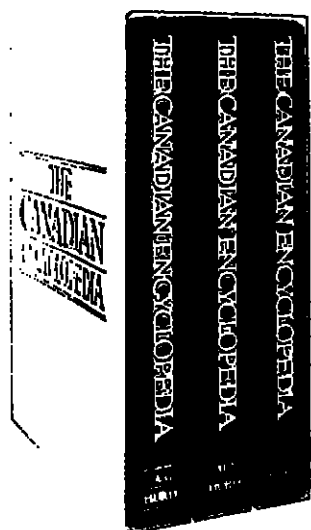
# EARLE BIRNEY AT 80



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And the class acts of David Fennario

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## Class acts: David Fennario moves his show from the mainstream to the waterfront

### Baron of Beef

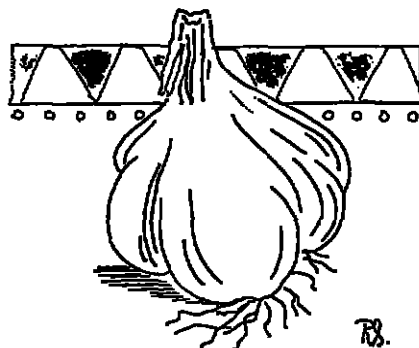
AROUND 1877, at the time of the Lachine Canal Strike, when Irish workers got tired of building an English waterway for pennies a day, Joe Beef was a tavern-keeper on the Montreal waterfront, in the territory that David Fennario has turned into his literary turf. Legend has it that Beef fed a thousand strikers and their families and kept them alive to finish the strike, serving up drinks for flagging spirits. Now Joe Beef is a character in a play by the same name written and directed by Fennario. Beef welcomes Montreal history into his drinking establishment, from captains of industry like MacTavish and McGill (as in University) to the *habitants* and the Micks. His tavern is the scene of Montreal history — and class conflict history — as Fennario sees it.

Last March, Squire Beef set up shop on Verdun Avenue, in the school and day-care centre called Saint Willibrord's, in the Montreal neighbourhood called Verdun. Not far away flows the Lachine Canal, scene of that strike, where today Montrealers of all classes ride bicycles in summer and cross-country ski in winter. Beef is the emcee of Fennario's play; he delivers the message and tells the working-class audience "not to be afraid to throw the first punch." They applaud. The people sitting on hard folding chairs in Saint Willibrord's are applauding their friends on the stage. It's community theatre.

Uptown on Pine Avenue, in the Casse-Croûte Suzy, a snackbar whose interior strangely resembles one of Fennario's kitchen-sink sets (don't order the club sandwich, you'll be sorry), Fennario and associate John Salmela tell the story: Fennario didn't mind the success of *Balconville* and the other plays, but he felt that middle-class actors couldn't interpret his material the way it was supposed to be interpreted, and that working-class audiences could never pay their way into a mainstream theatre to see a play written about them. (*Joe Beef* costs \$3.00 to get into.) Middle-class actors, according to Fennario, could sing the songs and say the lines, but they didn't understand the meaning. The working class are natural actors, he says;

they use their bodies more, and they've been acting all their lives anyway. His job was to instil the discipline of learning lines and showing up at rehearsal, and to do that he drew from the intense community spirit of Verdun, embodied in the figure of Joe Beef.

Complete with Robber Barons doing a soft shoe in white tie and tails, *Joe Beef* is a review of class and social conflict: the French explorers against the Indians, the priests against the farmers, the English against the French, the Scots against the Irish immigrants. The actors who carry the message are a cross-section of Verdun life: there are a lot of unemployed (a couple of weeks before the show opened, the unemployed took over the local UIC office to protest unfair treatment, a spontaneous theatrical event), some teachers, a few housewives, some guys that work on the boats, and a secretary. One actress dropped out of the cast because she got a job. Their style of acting, the murky lighting, and the agitprop writing tends to drive mainstream critics crazy. At one point one of the actors, lifting a Molson's, about to launch into a speech, forgot his lines and stared balefully at the bottle with an "Aw, shit!" But the show has



an energy, and when great big Georges Bériault, who plays Joe Beef, talks about not being afraid to throw the first punch at the end of the play, by Jesus, you believe him. He believes in what he's saying with a sincerity that would embarrass most theatre-goers because, that's the point, he isn't acting.

"Fifteen years ago," Fennario says, "it was radical or — stupid word — progressive to do a play about where you lived." But now Canadiana isn't

enough: "you have to talk about how and why we're living the way we're living." That's the mission of the Black Rock group, and the play *Joe Beef* is just one part of it. Black Rock includes a women's group, a theatre troupe, photo exhibits, political *soirées* (Bernadette Devlin was scheduled later in March). There is a real black rock too. In the 1850s the Irish workers building the Victoria Bridge over the St. Lawrence — the longest bridge in the world at the time — dragged a rock out of the water and set it over the unmarked grave of the immigrants who died a decade earlier of ship fever. The memorial still stands today, though now it's in the middle of a highway leading up to the bridge.

Black Rock is looking for autonomy: the group is in the market to buy its own building, start its own theatre, and if one of its plays "goes uptown" — to the Centaur, presumably, where Fennario has done well — it will be in co-production. Part of this movement is the book project. This spring, 2,000 copies of *Blue Mondays*, written by Fennario with poems by Daniel Adams and illustrations by Sheila Salmela, will come out, the first book from Black Rock Creations. It's about life in the factories in the Point, about what happens when the factories close, about the fact that "dying is easier but some of us shit-disturbers born down there in the Point Saint-Charles-Verdun ghetto have decided to form something called the Black Rock Group, basing ourselves on the last hope that what's left of the Anglo community can be salvaged and made useful to itself despite itself . . ."

Part of that job is to fight against the idea that all Anglos are rich, that they all support the Liberals, and that all are in dire conflict with the French. In fact, if anyone has lost out in the French-English skirmishing always present but sharper since 1976, it's the working-class Anglo communities. With typical "make-the-best-of-a-bad-thing" irony, Black Rock hosted a cultural *soirée des maudits blokes* and took off from it to contact French-speaking groups in the community. *Joe Beef* is a bilingual play, but not the kind of bilingualism that the B & B Commission had in mind. If any-

thing, it proves that in Montreal no language is safe, *shit de marde!*

Fennario's *Beef* takes us up only to the 1950s, before the turning point that was the Lachine Canal Strike. But the Rock plans to bring Montreal history up to date with *Beef, Part II*, to be played out sometime this summer or fall. *Beef I* took almost a year to get on stage from the time of first rehearsal, and at that rate we might not get up to the 20th century for quite some time. As the house lights come up, barkeep Beef barks, "Will the last one out close the fucking door?!" But with the Verdun group's agitprop energy, people are bound to come swinging their way through Joe Beef's tavern doors again soon.

— DAVID HOMEL

## Let it be

THE DEATH KNELL sounded on Jan. 4 for one of Canada's most innovative schools of writing by way of a press release from the B.C. ministry of education. The closure of David Thompson University Centre — the first such closure by a provincial government — is effective May 1. The public outcry started in the town of Nelson in the southeastern corner of B.C., where the campus, formerly Notre Dame University, has existed for more than three decades, but the reaction has been far from merely local. As the West Kootenay Valley residents, DTUC faculty, and its 500 students began organizing protests, letters of support poured in from writers, artists, and educators from across Canada.

In a letter to Premier Bill Bennett, Clark Blaise, writer-in-residence at the school in 1933, called the impending closure a cultural tragedy:

I have the fear that DTUC is being closed *because* it is small and remote (if it were bloated and wasteful it would have developed a stronger sense of self-preservation); this adds irony to tragedy, and the result, I fear, will be cynical surrender. Someone must stand up for quality against the simplistic appeals of cost-efficiency; what DTUC has done with a minimum of cost and maximum of tolerance, labour, and some discomfort, merits your praise, not closure. Excellence has been achieved at DTUC, believe me; I urge you in the name of the future to let it be. Let it survive.

Founded in 1979 by poet and teacher Fred Wah, the school of writing offered students intensive workshops in poetry, prose, journalism, and script-writing, taught by a faculty of writers and

writers-in-residence and many more visiting writers. The full-time faculty has included Tom Wayman, David McFadden, Margaret Hollingsworth, John Newlove, Colin Browne, Séan Virgo, Paulette Jiles, Fraser Sutherland, Lorraine Johnson, and Patrick Walsh. The writers-in-residence for 1983-84 were Clark Blaise and Audrey Thomas. The school had become a favourite stopping place for writers on cross-Canada reading tours, located as it is mid-way between Vancouver and Calgary. Blaise says in his letter:

The uniqueness of the Writing programme at DTUC, beyond the small class size and the excellent teaching, is the concept of an integrated approach to writing. The so-called "creative" writer (poet or novelist) is writing "commercially" (doing reviews, editing magazines, writing publicity releases, newspaper and radio features) from the beginning. This is done nowhere else . . . In three months at Nelson, I received more work from my students than I have anywhere, wrote more of my own fiction than I have during any teaching job, met with four active circles of non-enrolled "community" writers, attended more student readings than I ever have, and made friends with more students — more varieties of students — than I ever have.

This year two of its students, Diana Hartog and Ernst Havemann, won second-place prizes for poetry and short fiction respectively in the CBC Literary Contest. "We were just starting to build a national constituency," says Colin Browne. "We have attracted faculty and students from the Maritimes, Quebec, and Ontario. We were just beginning to come into our own, to reach our potential here as a truly national school."

Already suffering a 27-per-cent unemployment rate, the town of Nelson has united to try to save its second largest payroll. A DTUC Action Committee storefront opened on the main street to coordinate a massive petition campaign and fund-raising effort. A media centre, spearheaded by Tom Wayman, now is run by students who prepare publicity releases and feature articles to press their case. Theatre and writing students collaborated to create an agitkit that they performed locally and toured in the Lower Mainland and Victoria.

Dr. Marian Muth, head of the university board, climbed onto a cross outside the provincial legislature and stayed there for hours to draw attention to what she terms the "crucifixion of education, in B.C." In early February the Western Front in Vancouver sponsored an evening of protest and celebration when more than 20 writers gave readings. In late February 300 faculty, students, and community supporters

travelled in a convoy for 700 km to stage simultaneous teach-ins on the legislature lawn in Victoria and in Robson Square in Vancouver.

While DTUC committees are looking at alternate funding sources, and possible affiliation with other North American universities, the eventual destiny of the school of writing is uncertain. Fred Wah and Colin Browne both maintain that *Writing* magazine will continue to publish work by established and new Canadian and international writers. The first issue, edited by David McFadden, appeared in 1980, and in 1981 *Writing* received second prize for poetry from the National Magazine Awards.

There is no doubt in many minds that the decision to close David Thompson University Centre is a mistake. The Centre costs \$3.4-million annually, just over one per cent of the total post-secondary budget in B.C. There is concern about the allocation of federal transfer funds for higher education in B.C., which comprises 76¢ of every \$1 in the provincial education budget.

Meanwhile, George Orwell's words are celebrated by writing students at DTUC: "Language creates thought; thought creates action."

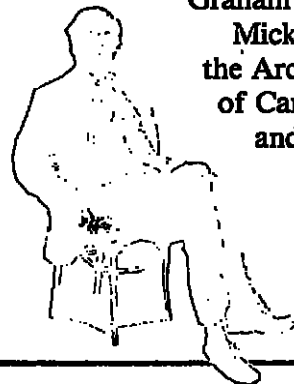
— CAROLINE H. WOODWARD

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Megatrends: the unbearable paradox is that the harder a writer tries to express himself precisely, the more likely he is to be misunderstood

By BOB BLACKBURN

I DON'T KNOW how old the line is, but the first time I heard it, it was spoken by Liberace on television's *Tonight Show*, perhaps 20 or more years ago. The host (Johnny Carson or Jack Paar; I don't remember) had asked if Liberace had been troubled by some particularly scathing reviews of one of his concerts, and he said that, yes, he had been terribly upset.

"I cried all the way to the bank," he said.

To me, and to the studio audience, that was a delicious line. I don't suppose it was original then, but it was new to me, and that's what counts. And it did become an instant cliché, but in a peculiar way. In no time at all, everyone was saying, "I *laughed* all the way to the bank." There's nothing funny about that.

When I was a lad we used to say, "I couldn't care less." That somehow was a more emphatic statement than "I don't care." It was a useful bit of vernacular. Today's uninterested kids (and their parents, I guess) say, "I *could* care less." If that means anything at all, it certainly doesn't mean what they're trying to say.

I don't know whether it's stupidity or perversity or a combination of the two that causes this sort of indifference to the meaning of words in catchphrases. I don't understand people who apparently think they're quoting Shakespeare to good effect when they pluck out of context such phrases as "The play's the thing," or "Now is the winter of our discontent," and mouth them as though they mean something apt.

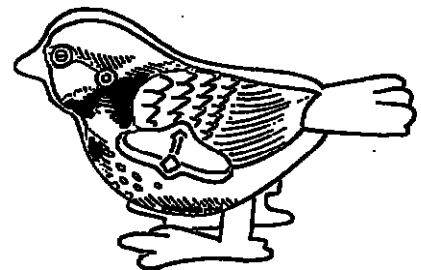
I was about to say that these are things that try my temper, and the thought came to mind that *temper* is a word ready to be added to the endangered species list. I hear people say, "He has quite a temper." I don't know what that means. I usually assume they mean he is quick to fly off the handle, but that's not what they're saying. If they're saying anything, it's that he has a good temper.

The noun has a convoluted history that makes tedious reading in the *OED*, but, in the sense I'm talking about, what is important is the connotation of a balanced and salubrious mixture of

qualities that leads to, among other things, resilience. So to lose one's temper is to become unbalanced. To have a bad temper is to be inclined that way.

Somehow, *temper* is becoming synonymous with *bad temper*. Instead of saying that someone has lost his temper, we may say that he's "showing his temper," and that is quite the opposite of what we mean. A person who loses his temper behaves badly, but a person who shows his temper behaves well. But a *show of temper* now seems to mean a show of *bad temper*.

So it goes, with one word or expression after another. It's bad for everyone, but, if I may be permitted a slight show of self-pity, it's miserable for anyone who tries to communicate, especially by way of the mass media, for a living. The unbearable paradox is that the harder a writer tries to express himself with precision, the more likely he is to be misunderstood. If he seeks and finds the word that has the exact shade of meaning he wants to convey, there is an excellent chance that the word by now will have been so widely misused by his colleagues



that he'll be lucky if one reader in a thousand grasps the nuance, and if one in 10 has even the vaguest idea what he means.

In such circumstances, it's all too easy (believe me) to lapse into sloppiness, and that certainly doesn't help matters at all.

In *Megatrends*, John Naisbitt tells us cheerfully that we are rapidly changing from a manufacturing society to an information society. That is unquestionably the most frightening prediction of the year. Certainly we have the technology to make the transition in the next couple of decades.

But will we have the words? □

# A.K.A. EARLE BIRNEY

At 80, Earle Birney has pursued a career that spans five continents — as poet, teacher, and (under various aliases) socialist operative

By FRASER SUTHERLAND

*Major*, n. & a. 1. (poet.) The fanciful name Earle Birney assigned to the month of May in two poem-calendars he invented — e.g. Birney was born on 13 Major 1904; (mil.) the rank Birney attained in the Canadian Army during World War II. 2. a. Birney's status as a modern Canadian poet. (L, compar. of *magnus* great.)

EARLE BIRNEY, almost 80, didn't want to talk about the past. Certainly the immediate past had been harrowing. It was mid-March, and he had just returned from reading his poems to the students of Memorial University in St. John's. Aboard the plane — the smallest Eastern Provincial Airways could muster — Birney had endured gale-force bumps, closed airports, and hermetically sealed food lockers. Buffeted by blizzards, under house arrest in Halifax and Moncton airports, he had fallen back on EPA's free liquor and the work he had brought along.

A veteran of travels to poetry readings on five continents, Birney *always* takes work along, in this case prose manuscripts by Sid Marty and Peter Trower. Marty's is a history of Banff National Park, Trower's an account of a bank robber named Herb Wilson — "a very successful criminal but a pathological liar." Birney would find time to comment on both books.

Later, safely returned to Toronto and his 22nd-storey apartment (Birney has always been fascinated by heights), he will speak of the collection of Chaucer essays University of Toronto Press may publish, and the volume of radio dramas, edited by Howard Fink, that will be issued this summer by Quarry Press in conjunction with the Upper Canada Writers' Workshop in Kingston.

That is the future; the present is in the top two drawers of a black metal filing cabinet filled with overstuffed binders. In them are at least eight works in progress. Undismayed, Birney recites the topics, among them:

□ First priority: a new selection of poems.

□ The successor to *Spreading Time: Remarks on Canadian Writing and Writers: Book 1, 1904-1949* (1980). The new book, three-quarters completed, would take his life up to the present.

□ A volume of literary reminiscences called *Dylan Thomas and Malcolm Lowry in Canada*. Birney had been Thomas's Vancouver host ("There were problems because I was looking after him, but I loved the guy") and Lowry's friend and editor.

□ Three volumes of conversations with Leon Trotsky.

□ Autobiographical works about: his parents and grandparents; childhood in the foothills of the Rockies; Banff, 1911-24; "coming of age in Erickson, B.C."; Waterton Lake Park; undergraduate days at the University of British Columbia; Toronto, 1926-27, 1932-33, 1936-42; "my American period," 1927-34.

□ A long poem about Arctic exploration.

Even in a country known for the long working careers of its poets (F.R. Scott, Ron Everson, Dorothy Livesay, to name a few), Birney is remarkable. Looking 20 years younger than his age, he has recovered splendidly from the fall from a tree in 1975 that pulled his hip out of its socket and fractured his pelvis in

four places. Although one foot is still partly paralyzed, giving him a rolling cowboy's gait when he walks, he remains a man in transit not traction.

Prior to the Newfoundland visit, he had conducted a week-long residency in Fairbanks, Alaska, including readings in the Bear Gallery and in a restaurant at Mile 265.5 Richardson Highway. The cold had hit minus-60 degrees. . . .

ON THE FLOOR of a farmhouse in the Rocky Mountain foothills, a small boy is playing with an alphabet of building blocks. He also plays with a stencil set, for among his father's many jobs has been that of signpainter. The words begin.



Earle Birney

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The boy's mother, a Shetlands girl named Martha Robertson, had immigrated to Canada and become a waitress in a miners' hotel in Halcyon Hot Springs, B.C. She met and married Will Birney, the son of a small-town Ontario butcher, who had run away from home to seek fortune in the West. The fortune never came for Will Birney, successively a cow-puncher, brakeman, prospector, paper-hanger, soldier, and fruit farmer. The alphabetical boy also followed a wavering vocational trail: by the time words graduated him from the University of British Columbia in 1926, he had been a Calgary *Eye-Opener* newsboy, surveyor's chain-and-rod man, farm labourer, axeman, swamp oiler, bank clerk, door-to-door subscription salesman, mountain guide, house-painter, and weekly newspaper managing editor, paying tuition, helping his parents.

From that point, though, the words prevailed: at first, the words of classroom and doctoral thesis, then the words of 1930s political dialectic, finally words for their own sake — the shape and sound of them, and how, reduced to the letter and phoneme, they could become "alphabeings," "jukollages," "pnomes" to "dismember things like the kooks of the monk and who wrote them." From his study of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English, especially Chaucer, he acquired a "word-board," took up "kennings," figurative substitutions for the ordinary word, appropriated heavy and secondary stresses for his lines. Just as the mountains of his Albertan and British Columbian youth prefigured the rise and fall of accents, so personal experience was sooner or later translated into poetry.

From 1926 until 1941 Birney was a graduate student or teacher at the Universities of Toronto, British Columbia, London, California, and Utah, earning "a lousy living as an academic, in between Depression layoffs." In Toronto he met poets like Raymond Knister, Roy Daniells, Robert Finch, A.G. Bailey, E.J. Pratt, "a cherubic yet very intelligent undergraduate" named Northrop Frye, and took Pelham Edgar's seminar on the modern novel. He was literary editor of the *Canadian Forum*, and used to encounter Sir Charles G.D. Roberts in the King Cole Room, the basement beer parlour of the Park Plaza Hotel:

*Gentle he was but with a roving eye.  
He could be witty, but would never try  
to damn another writer in our land,  
though cause might be that most of them be panned.*

("Prolog Without Tales")

Throughout these years, politics was inescapable. From the start, Birney had been no friend of the privileged. In *The Cow Jumped Over the Moon* (1972) he tells of his first revolutionary act, at age 12, when he became founding editor "of a realistic underground school paper. Handwritten and illustrated, it existed in three copies — I had two assistant editors — and was rented, not sold. Our lady teacher intercepted a copy and passed it on to the principal who agreed with her judgement that it was pornographic. This certainly described our intention, and in that respect we were successful communicators, but in 1916 our sole reward was the cat-of-nine tails."

But it was not until 1932 that he became captivated by Leon Trotsky's thought, as outlined in Trotsky's *What Next for Germany?* and *Literature and Revolution*. Trotsky urged that Marxists of all types should ally against fascism. In an unpublished tribute Birney would later comment, "No one in our time, I think, so perfectly blended the gifts of the artist and of the man of action into a memorable whole."

The fortified Birney — a former Presbyterian Sunday school teacher — set to work. At Utah he founded a Marxist study club on the Mormon campus and in 1933 made a "political marriage of convenience," later annulled, with a socialist organizer named Sylvia Johnstone. In Vancouver, working under various aliases, he circulated socialist publica-



tions, and in London he worked for the Independent Labour Party, even travelling to Norway to interview the man who had made him a communist. Trotsky was just as impressive in person as in print. Recalling him, Birney now says that "once in a while one's aware of being in the presence of genius."

By 1941 Trotsky had been assassinated in Mexico, the war was on, and Birney had a new wife — Esther, whom he had met in England — and a son. Esther was Jewish, and had Polish relatives. Birney joined the Canadian Army. He spent the last two war years in Europe as major-in-charge of personnel selection in the North West Theatre. Birney's letter home was "This Page My Pigeon." This "homer"

*Says that your voice still waters my memory  
your eyes are leads to the wide light  
that will be Swears you are part of the rightness  
of hills the saneness of music and hemlocks*

He ended the war as an invalid, laid low by a combination of dysentery and diphtheria.

Birney returned to Montreal to become supervisor of the Central European section in the CBC's international service. "I'd work a nine- or 10-hour day, take a streetcar across the city, and flake out." Relief came fortuitously when he encountered Larry MacKenzie, the new president of UBC, while on a train to Ottawa. Hiring Birney as a professor of medieval studies, MacKenzie offered him a comparable salary, more vacation time, and the chance to teach what was probably the first creative writing course in Canada.

It was 1946. Among the few poets writing seriously in Canada, Birney was established as a voice that could not be ignored:

*On Sundance we tried from the col and the going was hard.  
The air howled from our feet to the smudged rocks  
And the papery lake below. At an outrust we baulked  
Till David clung with his left to a dint in the scarp. . .*

("David")

He had won the Governor General's Award for *David and Other Poems* (1942) and for *Now Is Time* (1945). "David" was to become required reading in many schools, earning him and his publishers \$3,500 in anthology rights by 1972, and inspiring an oratorio by Lorne Betts. Birney would even receive the compliment of a parody called "Saul," by a high-school student named Tom Franck. In "Saul" Franck had retold the story so that the fatally injured title character "now wants to be saved for a wheelchair; any way that he can stay alive is okay by him." But Bobbie insists that Saul will be happier if he gets shoved off Mount Finger, and cheerfully proceeds to do him the favour.

But all this was in the future. For now, Birney had to contend with the first of what he calls "literalati" — a UBC freshman who was overheard bitterly complaining about having been put in Birney's section: "He's the sonofabitch who pushed his best friend off a cliff."

He also had a new chore: E.J. Pratt had enticed him into talking on what he would come to regard as the "poetasters" and "stuffed owls" associated with the *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, a publication of the Canadian Authors Association. Appointed editor, he found the magazine to be "a refuge for rhymed and sentimental drivel foisted on it by dues-paying members of the CAA." Although Birney transformed the magazine and swelled its circulation by publishing the new work of poets like Raymond Souster, A.M. Klein, Ralph Gustafson, and Louis Dudek, the "old guard" back in Toronto were busy objecting and obstructing. Meanwhile in Vancouver a "suburban reporter phoned me for an interview about Hen No. 2, the famous egg-laying champion at the UBC agricultural farm, in the belief that I was editing the *Canadian Poultry Magazine*."

Some idea of Birney's life at the time may be found in a letter he wrote to Patrick Waddington:

I am dictating in the Camp while bulldozers rip out the forest that begins fifty yards away over a sea of mud, and our ramshackle hut trembles periodically from the dynamite blasts of a stumping crew. After supper I will nip out to drag alder trunks and roots to my backdoor sawhorse — food for the Winnipeg heater, our only source of warmth against Vancouver's raw November. Then I will settle down to marking my weekly batch of a hundred freshman and sophomore "themes."

Undeclared by onerous living conditions, he finally succumbed in 1948 to the bumbling and malice in Toronto,

### Undeclared by onerous living conditions, he finally succumbed to the bumbling and malice in Toronto

resigning his editorial post and his membership in the CAA.

At the same time, Birney ploughed on with his own work: *The Strait of Anian* (1948) and his first novel, *Turvey: A Military Picaresque* (1949; revised in 1976). A manual of military misadventure, *Turvey* (later made into a successful musical at the Charlottetown Festival) drew on Birney's wartime experience in making thousands of personality assessments. Private Thomas Leadbeater Turvey and his desperate quest to join the Kootenay Highlanders was the happy product. Still fresh and funny today, it had been an easy book to write: "Once I got my characters and my style going it just flowed. I wrote it in a summer."

His other novel, *Down the Long Table* (1955), laboriously recreates a more distant past, the politics of the Depression. Using the framing device of a McCarthy-like U.S. Congressional hearing, Birney takes Gordon Saunders, teacher and socialist operative, through a turmoil of political debates and unhappy love affairs. Much evident is Birney's intense interest in collage — in this case cut-outs of newspaper headlines and reports — and in colloquial varieties of accent and diction. Birney today admits that the "structure is not very strong," but the book, like *Turvey*, remains in print.

Writing, editing, travelling around the world in the 1950s, Birney was also a harried teacher, taking four undergraduate and two graduate courses, and running a creative writing program that had steadily grown until it became virtually a sub-department of its own. Inevitable bureaucratic tensions arose, and by 1962 "the situation had become impossible — I was being sabotaged." A new English department head attempted to scrap the writing courses; Birney fought back — and won. A separate creative writing department was set up in 1963, and the magazine *Prism International* established. Two years later Birney left UBC: "I took stock of myself and decided I'd be a lot happier writing." Apart from stints as writer-in-residence at various universities and a year at the University of California at Irvine, he had left academe forever.

Not long after his poetic achievement was consolidated into *Collected Poems* (1975), ably edited by John Newlove, important changes were happening in his private life: he had divorced Esther and was living happily with the Toronto lawyer Wai-lan Low.

*but when warm winds come  
we must stir from this trance  
she will lift living arms  
to the sun's dance*

*i will slide then  
in a soft caress  
and my falling will end  
somewhere in her roots*

*may my waters then*

# BBC

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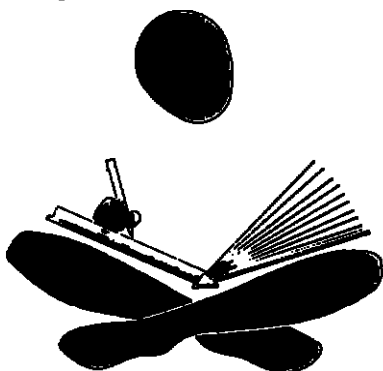
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*bring her strength only  
help her hold trim  
and evergreen her being  
with suns and winds  
and o many and many  
and happiest years*

("She Is")

By now Birney's ideas about the reading and writing of poetry had been encapsulated in two short books, *The Creative Writer* (1966) and *The Cow Jumped Over the Moon*. (Writing is "made out of a need to record, and a hope of sharing.") Books began to appear almost yearly, including *Big Bird in the Bush* (1978), a selection of short fiction. He was the subject of a National Film Board portrait, two collections of critical pieces, an annotated bibliography, and biographical/critical monographs by Frank Davey, Richard Robillard, and Peter Aichinger. Stylistically, he mostly abandoned traditional punctuation and ventured into audio-visual territory: concrete poetry, a three-disc recording with the percussion group Nexus (1982), and performed his poem "To Swindon from London by Britrail" on an NFB short, *Aloud Bagatelle* (1983), directed by Donald McWilliams. Always, he turned fresh attention to the language, landscapes, and mores of those near and far, often with satirical mimicry, consistently with alert invention and in forms that ranged from long dramatic monologues to compressed lyrics.

Certainly his influence on Canadian writing was permanent, and not simply because his former students include George Bowering, Phyllis Webb, and Jack Hodgins. Birney was the first Canadian poet to fully explore the linguistic resources of the separate substantial English word, and thus could be said to have sired a generation of poets fascinated by the sounds and shapes of language. Like the "Oldster" he wrote about in 1953:

*... crows slow to whatever  
grandsons of green were long ago  
wrung and flung from the root and fruit of him*

Simultaneously his public readings managed to combine the personas of Grand Old Man and Audacious Stripling.

Through the years, Birney was not without his (usually affectionate) detractors, who chuckled at what they perceived as Canada Council-funded tourism, showboating trendiness, and adamant refusal to observe what they considered to be the right way to act one's age. If he were aware of such gibes, Birney ignored them. He was too busy.

"YOU DON'T WANT to know about the present, you're only interested in the past," Earle Birney sadly remarks to the tactless interviewer who'd been peppering him with questions about Trotskyists, marriages, and academic guerrilla warfare. A denial follows, and the next moment the two of them are hurrying past the piano and the flowering plants, on into the tiny room in which he writes. As a base camp for assaults on print, Toronto is unavoidable: "Where else in Canada can you make a living?" From the desk and bookshelves he unearths a clutch of brochures about writing workshops, press releases (one tells us that "David" is "the haunting narrative of deep friendship, love and death, set in the Canadian Rockies"), and critical studies about him (he likes Aichinger's best). He finds a foothold and yanks open the top drawer of the filing cabinet, passing off a compliment about his hardiness — "I've been very lucky with my genes, I guess."

The thick binders overflow the drawer. Why does he travel so much when all these avid ghosts await his attention at home? "Just bad habits. I'm really trying to cut down on the travel. I get lazier as I get older. It's much easier to travel and take notes and toss things out than to sit at this damned desk and finish." He hauls out another drawer. The cabinet contains 80 years of his past, but the words are present and ongoing. □

# Sleight of heart

More than just a farmer who happened to write,  
Ernest Buckler (1908-1984) was the author of one of the  
pinnacles of Canadian literary achievement

By H.R. PERCY

It is only this sleight of heart that can  
unlock "ago" like the master key of  
dream.

— *Oxbells and Fireflies*

THE COVER OF *Books in Canada* once depicted Ernest Buckler with a straw in his mouth. It drew little more than a smile from the man whose most quoted line is, "What I happen to be is a farmer who writes, not a writer who farms." What the straw symbolized for him was not something ludicrously bucolic but the way of life he had recognized, with rare percipience in so young a word-dreamer, as the only one in which his literary aspirations could take root and flourish. His remark was no mock-modest conceit. He saw that the grist for his literary mill lay right there in the Annapolis Valley where he had been formed, among earthy scenes and "real" people. If he was to render that fast-vanishing life with the uncompromising precision that was its due, he must be in direct and constant contact with it. If he was to write, he had to farm "the family fields that knew him thoroughly." To know him in those last years when he could do neither was to know a man adrift in time.

The man who could earn a B.A. in mathematics from Dalhousie and an M.A. in philosophy from the University of Toronto by the time he was 22 assuredly had no straw in his mouth. But six years of city life and city grubbing were enough to convince him that anything he might write there would be facile and, ultimately, worthless. So for another six years he wrested three hours from the peremptory farm day and produced, word by hard-won word, the novel that by anyone's reckoning must be one of the highest pinnacles of Canadian literary achievement: *The Mountain and the Valley*.

Two years into this self-imposed solitude he received, from his first sale to *Esquire*, what he once described to me as "that assurance a writer needs, from time to time, that someone is alive out

there, and listening." His journalism and radio writing, over the years, was a sort of radar to bring back those heartening echoes while he wrought, in spider-like solitude, the exquisite webs of his major works. In the United States critical acclaim for *The Mountain and the Valley* was "all anyone could ask for," and sales were gratifying. In Canada, although most critics were kind, Buckler "detected no brush-fire of popular enthusiasm." And "all the yachts you could build with your Canadian royalties you could sail in your bathtub."

Both from critical and popular points of view his second novel, when it emerged after nine more years of this meticulous crafting, was something of a disappointment. It did not find a U.S. publisher, and one Canadian critic



Ernest Buckler

found it "so bad that it is difficult, if not impossible, to take seriously." But seen as a nexus, as evidence of an ongoing and necessary change in the creative metabolism between Buckler's two masterpieces, *The Cruellest Month* (1963) must be taken very seriously in-

deed. Buckler emerged from this transition freed from the tyranny of "story line," able to refine without constraint the pure gold of his remembrance.

His next book, *Oxbells and Fireflies* (1968), a fictional memoir, may not have the narrative momentum of *The Mountain and the Valley*, but in its masterly evocation of those small insights and vanishing moments that make up a man's life it is a work of comparable genius, and surely will endure as long. The earlier book had a tragic cast, and the remembered tone of the later one is sombre, but it recaptures life's amusing moments with a touch equally sure. It reveals also the whimsically witty Buckler his friends sometimes saw, who over the years wrote the limericks and short jocular pieces that so disconcerted the critics when published as *Whirligig* in 1978.

I have forgotten, now, by what pretext I gained entry to that old house on the bend through Centrelea (one of those "born houses, not mere happenstances of board and mortar"). To the kitchen, first, where he sought to overcome the awkwardness by feeding logs into the stove, filling an ancient kettle, and fussing with tea; to the parlour, later, where the long past proclaimed itself, through modest heirlooms and family portraits, in spite of the books piled knee-high everywhere and his favourite records lounging about like the friends they were. We seldom aspired to intellectual talk, but we edged toward a pleasurable rapport, visit by visit (I came bearing gifts of my wife's home-baked bread that were always acceptable tender for a glowing memory or two), until we were able to sit together in silence while Mahalia Jackson raised the ancient roof — the ultimate acceptance.

The old house was "an ark of all it had ever seen," and he stuck to it like a hermit crab. But I found the bait to lure him forth. "Al Purdy's here," I called to say. "Why don't you come for dinner?" No, he was no good in company — would only sit like a bump on a log,

etc. "Well, Ernie, call back if you change your mind." He did. No better talk ever passed across our table before or since, or across the fireside after. Maybe the booze helped a little. And late into the night, back in that parlour where "generations of memory were stored," the three of us did silent homage to Mahalia.

Booze. The anchorite's Circe. But he cast her off, at the doctor's urging. A hollow triumph, perhaps. For now he was face-to-face with what he had once called "the seldom-realized tragedy of the old." At last even the house, the ark of memory, must be relinquished. Perhaps the memories were portable, for through the door of his small room in Mountain Lea Lodge you would see him sitting pensive. And at least he had two charming sisters at hand to share them with. But when you announced yourself the old shy smile would leap up, and he would be amicably there with you in the present. With, usually, the definitive word for any friend you brought along. "You're a formidable woman," was his opener for Marian Engel.

Honours sat lightly on Ernest Buckler. The honorary degrees, the medals, the many awards, the Order of Canada. And if in those last bereft years he saw gathering about him the "faceless smoke of mortality," he bore it with the calm nobility of one who has done, to the full stretch of his faculties, what he saw waiting for him to do. Few, few indeed, have done it better. □

## REVIEW

# Smaller than life

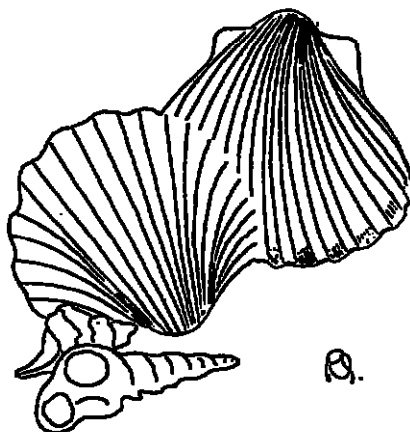
By GARY DRAPER

Remembering Leacock, by Allan Anderson, Deneau Publishers, illustrated, 229 pages, \$24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88879 093 7).

ALLAN ANDERSON'S *Remembering Leacock* is an oral history of the Great Humourist, much as if he were an event, like the Great War or the Great Depression. It thus labours under three difficulties.

First, it has the apparently inevitable weaknesses of all such anthologies of tape-recorded memoirs. Chronology is

largely abandoned in favour of a thematic arrangement, so that no meaningful structure emerges. The subject may be seen in retirement at the close of one chapter, and just on the threshold of his career at the opening of the next.



Moreover, the subject has been stored, over the years, in fallible memories, and therefore often simplified, softened by the loss of details, or simply misremembered. Besides, many of the anecdotes are very short, and sometimes uneasily related to each other, so that there is no narrative momentum, but a continual starting and stopping like a car that won't kick into third gear.

Second, the oral reconstruction of a person has some peculiar drawbacks of its own. An event — the Depression, say — may with some justification be seen as the sum of the experiences of its participants. A person, on the other hand, is no such thing. The speakers recorded here did not *experience* the subject of this book, but only *encountered* him. In other words, stories of breadlines and hobo jungles may tell us a good deal about the Depression; but stories of working in the garden at Brewery Bay don't tell us very much about Stephen Leacock. As Fred Stone says in his remembrance of Leacock the teacher, "It was impossible to retell any part of a Leacock lecture and make it sound funny."

And third, Leacock is a Presence in our national mythology, and as such is overpraised and at the same time, I think, undervalued. He has been eulogized and embalmed in that deadly epithet "kindly." *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* has achieved so completely the status of a classic that it can be safely praised and left unread. Indeed, one speaker in this collection says, "I read more out of a feeling of loyalty to Leacock, because you hear so much about him." Leacock deserves better: not mere acclaim, or adulation, but scrutiny and understanding. Memory and the anecdotal form have conspired

here to perpetuate a series of cartoon Leacocks: the genial humourist, the tippler, the irascible employer, the professor who dressed like a bum.

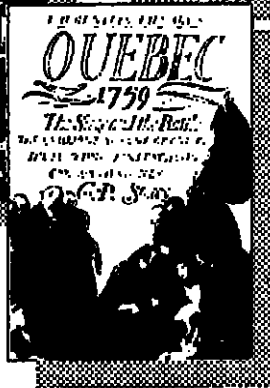
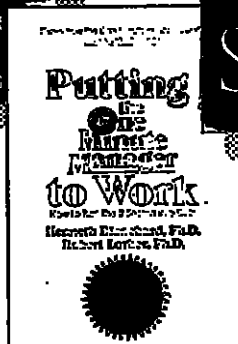
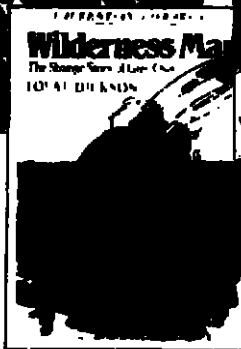
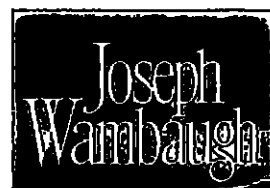
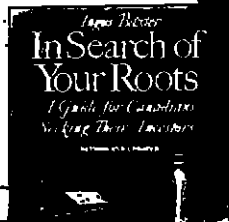
It is apparent that a good deal of labour, affection, and ingenuity have gone into this project. More, unfortunately, has been needed. The book as it stands could still use a tactful, ruthless editor, and a conscientious proofreader. If the peripheral and the second-hand and the merely vague had been omitted, the collection would be much smaller but stronger. The little titles for each entry ("His Gentle Humour," "Boat Bungle," "He Taught Her Greek") might better have been omitted, though the reader quickly learns to ignore them. (The list of headings at the back of the book, arranged by speaker, might have been of some use had they been attached to page numbers.) A scramble of some sort in the chapter "Boozing and Boat-ing on Old Brewery Bay" has caused the wrong ending to be tacked on to about half a dozen of the stories. And surely someone at Deneau must know that the word (it appears often enough among these pages) is "humorous," not "humourous."

The book is not without merit. There is a very good selection of photographs that suggest the tone of places like Old Brewery Bay and the University Club. There is much among the stories that is new, and there are traits and episodes seen from a fresh or unusual angle. There is enough contradiction among the stories to tell against the one-dimensional figure that most of them, taken singly, portray. The complexity, and the mystery, of Leacock's character are thus at least implied, if not explored. Moreover, a few of the story-tellers have the rare ability to select and shape what they have to say: in other words, to be interesting. Senator Eugene Forsey is one of the best. And there are some stories here that are good enough that they *ought* to be true, whether they are or not. Anderson tells one of them:

There's another version of Leacock's guerrilla warfare with the American customs. He was scheduled to address a gathering in Buffalo, but was stopped at the border by a customs officer who told him he could not enter the States with a flask of liquor. Leacock sent a curt wire to the sponsors of the lecture which read, "No hooch, no spooch." Apparently the Buffalo people had enough clout to get Leacock and his flask into the States because the speech was duly delivered.

Finally, there are some snippets of letters and essays by Leacock himself: the real thing.

Certainly there are bits and pieces here, odd details and remembered incidents, that will add a good deal of fla-



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your to a more substantial work, to the authoritative critical biography that Leacock deserves. This book is not (to borrow the title of an earlier collection) a Feast of Stephen. But it will serve to whet the appetites of those of us for whom a taste of Leacock — however thinly spread — is better than no Leacock at all. □

## REVIEW

# Double jeopardy

By JACK BATTEN

*The Trials of Israel Lipski*, by Martin Friedland, Macmillan, 219 pages, \$17.95 cloth (ISBN 0 333 35795 7).

NOTE THE PLURAL — trials — in the title of this wonderfully engrossing account of a 19th-century English murder case. Israel Lipski's first trial, specific and conventional, took place at Old Bailey on a Friday and Saturday in late July of 1887 and ended with his conviction. His second trial, wide-ranging and unusual, covered the following four weeks and raged in public, in the press, and in high places. It concluded with a flurry of events that were as sensational as the finale to any piece of superior crime fiction.

The facts of the murder itself had more than a hint of Conan Doyle to them. Lipski was a young and penniless Jewish immigrant from Poland who lived in a boarding house in London's east end. The victim, also young, Jewish, and penniless, was a pregnant woman named Miriam Angel who boarded in the same house, though it doesn't appear that Lipski and Angel were acquainted. Angel's body was found in her room. Nitric acid, which she had swallowed, or which someone had forced down her throat, was the agent of her death. The door to the room was locked, from the inside by all signs, and under Angel's bed, apparently unconscious with a small quantity of nitric acid in his throat, was Lipski. The police revived him and laid a charge of murder.

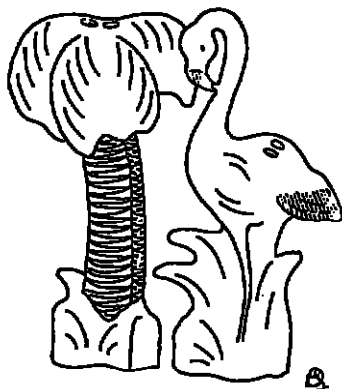
Lipski had an explanation. He claimed that two workmen, whom he identified, were responsible for the

crime. He interrupted them while they were assaulting and robbing Angel, and they turned on him, pouring acid into his mouth and flinging him under Angel's bed. Alas, Lipski's story was never sufficiently put to the jury that tried him. Nor were other points favourable to his defence pressed in court. The omissions weren't Lipski's fault. It was his defence counsel who was responsible for the tragic goofs.

The counsel, inexperienced in criminal work, had come into the case at the last minute to replace a veteran criminal barrister who was burdened by a severe hangover on the two days of the trial. The replacement blundered in several ways, most notably in failing to pursue Lipski's accusations against the two workmen, both of whom were called as crown witnesses, and in failing to bring out evidence that it was possible to manipulate the lock on Angel's door from the outside. And Lipski's defence wasn't helped by the presiding judge, who instructed the jury in terms that encouraged a guilty verdict. Not surprisingly, the jury took precisely eight minutes to convict.

While Lipski waited on the hangman, his solicitor worked diligently to win a reprieve. He bombarded the Home Secretary with persuasive new evidence. *The Pall Mall Gazette*, a flash and trash newspaper, took up Lipski's cause, and so did a handful of opposition MPs. Queen Victoria brought her concern into the act, anti-Semitism entered the debate, and for a few shaky days it appeared that the stability of the government was threatened by the uproar over the wretched Lipski.

To discover the dramatic ending to this second trial of Israel Lipski, the one that took place outside the courtroom, a reader can turn to two sources. He can read the book, which, thanks to the author, Prof. Martin Friedland of the University of Toronto Law School,



boasts lucid prose and satisfyingly thorough research. Or he might peek at the British reviews, which appeared earlier this year when the book was pub-

lished in England, and which are uniform in giving away the surprise ending to Lipski's strange story.

British reviewers, it seems, go about their business in a different style from their North American counterparts. Typically, John Mortimer's long, chatty, and laudatory notice in the *Sunday Times* casually drops into its second paragraph the astounding details of Lipski's ultimate fate. Now, is that fair? Would Mortimer care to read a review that blew the conclusion to one of his Rumpole tales? Hardly. It's bad form — and the principle remains the same even though Mortimer writes fiction and Friedland is dealing in non-fiction. Both have one element in common: much of the thrill in sorting through the mystery, real or fictional, comes with the twists and turns in its resolution. And in the Lipski case, the twists and turns are staggering. □

## REVIEW

# Witness to the persecution

By SHERIE POSESORSKI

*An Interrupted Life*, by Etty Hillesum, translated from the Dutch by Arno Pomerans, Lester & Orpen Dennys, 226 pages, \$17.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88619 039 8).

TWO DIARIES BY two dark-eyed, dark-haired, young Jewish women record their daily lives during the Nazi occupation of Holland in 1941. As the Dutch Jews were marked by yellow Stars of David, quartered in ghettos, and shipped off to Auschwitz, Anne Frank noted the domestic disputes of the Frank family, hidden away in an attic. The Franks waited, enchanted by the evil spells of the Nazis, for a fairy-tale rescue and resolution.

Etty Hillesum, 27 years old, sat at her desk on the other side of Amsterdam, writing in her small, hard-to-decipher handwriting: "What is at stake is our impending destruction and annihilation. We can have no more illusions about life . . . . My personal fate is not the issue. . . . If I have one duty in these times, it is to bear witness." She refused offers from friends to help her into hiding. Instead, she volunteered to

accompany the Jews sent to Westerbork, a transit camp, and spent a year traveling freely between Amsterdam and the camp hospital. In September, 1943, Ety, her father Dr. L. Hillesum, her mother Rebecca, and her brother Mischa were all transported to Auschwitz, where they were to die.

Surviving through hiding or seeking has become a critical question for scholars re-examining the nature of survival in the Second World War. At one pole, Terrence Des Pres (in *The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps*) espouses surviving at any cost, in any form. In opposition to him, Bruno Bettelheim contends in his essay, "The Ignored Lesson of Anne Frank," that "those who faced up to the announced intentions of the Nazis prepared for the worst as a real and imminent possibility. It meant risking one's life for a self-chosen purpose, but, in doing so, creating, at least, a small chance for saving one's life, or those of others." The fate of the Franks demonstrates, according to Bettelheim, the danger of retreating deep into a private world, passive, frozen, and inactive on one's own behalf.

The selections from the eight notebook diaries of Ety Hillesum, written from 1941 to 1943, are a remarkably moving account of the other form of survival. Hillesum believed that "it is wrong to live only with external truths, for then one is apt to end up behaving like an ostrich. To live fully outwardly and inwardly, one can not ignore external reality."

Hillesum was born in 1914 into a family of educated, assimilated Jews. By 1939 she had taken a degree in law, studied the works of Freud and Jung, and was learning several Slavic languages (her father was a professor of Slavic languages at the University of Amsterdam). Her lifestyle was bohemian. She lived in a commune with two men — a father and son who were her lovers, at different times — and three other women. On the first page of her diary, she notes with self satisfaction that she considers herself an accomplished lover. A considerable amount of her diary, initially, is occupied with erotic fantasies about Julius Spier (S. in the diaries), a portly, eccentric, 54-year-old psychochirologist (palm reader) who began his sessions with a wrestling match between himself and the patient.

As the diaries progress, however, we witness the evolution of Hillesum from a woman locked in the plastic bubble of her own consciousness, to one who breaks free of her autistic existence as she comes to identify with the common fate of her people, the Jews. Her consciousness becomes a blend of Dostoev-

sky's underground man and Henry James's John Marcher (in the short story "The Beast in the Jungle"). Like the underground man, she records the barometric readings of her body's aches and pains, and her own moods and depressions, all of which is rendered with the fine gradations of a Jamesian consciousness. Like Marcher, she lives in a state of perpetual anticipation: "I had the feeling that nothing I did was the real thing," she writes, "that it was all a preparation for something else, something greater, more genuine."

Her private life circles around two obsessions: her writing and her sessions with S. Although she feverishly declares that writing is her "real talent," she oscillates between moments of exalted faith in her ability and her sense of herself as a miserable, deluded creature. Her writing is intense, saturated with breathless rushes of acute ideas and perceptions.

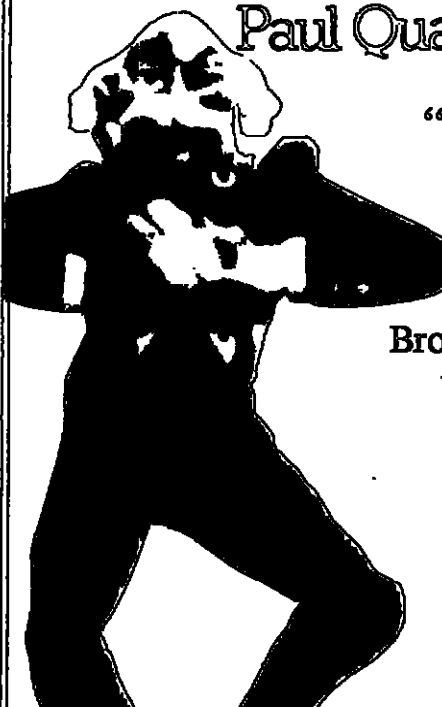
The tension that exists in her relationship to her writing carries over into her sexual tension toward S. Their first session ends in a wrestling match in which she floors him. Initially, he refuses to consummate the relationship, being rather preoccupied with the activities of his wife and mistress. The affair develops into a caring, intellectual, and

sexual companionship, however, that ends only with his death.

Both her writing and her sessions aid her in her search for meaning. Kneeling on a coconut mat in her bathroom, she addresses the God in herself. In these litanies her thoughts are grasped, counted like rosary beads, giving her strength. She finally breaks out of her isolated, private concerns on the night of the decree of the yellow star, when she feels strong enough to accept the fate of being a Jew.

Hillesum's work for the Jewish Council exempted her from deportation, but the situation disgusted her, and eventually she volunteered to work in Westerbork. "Nothing can atone for one section of the Jewish population helping transport the majority out of the country," she writes. "We go too far in fearing for our unhappy bodies while our forgotten spirit shrivels up in some corner." The horror of the camp is documented in her letters to friends. But her faith grows stronger. "I want to be there," she writes, "right in the thick of what people call horror, and still say life is beautiful." The last image of her is recounted in a letter by her friend Jpoie, who watched Hillesum board the train for Auschwitz, grasping a Bible in one hand and Tolstoy in the other. □

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# Second coming

Renewed interest in R.C. Hutchinson (1907-1975)  
is surprising: his novels are decent, erudite, curious,  
delightful, and essentially Christian

By M.B. THOMPSON

WITH THREE of his 17 novels currently available in Penguin — *Testament* (1930), *Rising* (1976), and *The Unforgotten Prisoner* (1933) — and three more in Zenith — *Recollection of a Journey* (1952), *A Child Possessed* (1964), and *Johanna at Daybreak* (1969) — R.C. Hutchinson, who died in 1975 at the age of 68, is having a reappraisal surprisingly soon after his death. Or not, perhaps, so surprisingly. Hutchinson, self-excluded from the literary tounries of his own time, was usually included in the roll of once and future Great English Novelists anyway, and the fashion of his armour has come in again.

It is a champion's armour. The favour he wears is God's, the jousting-ground the world, and the outcome a damn close-run thing — a rising, though, not a fall, what he himself described as "a transcendent, indestructible belief in an ultimate goodness lying beyond the harshness of human experience."

This harshness in its most appalling 20th-century manifestations is the matter of Hutchinson's spotty oeuvre. From his dreadful first novel, *Thou Hast a Devil* (1930), to his unfinished masterpiece, *Rising*, he grappled squarely with the public and private horrors of our century, setting novels in post-1918 Germany, revolutionary Russia, London slums, concentration camps (Nazi and Soviet), German-occupied Poland, a Displaced Persons' home in Holland, post-1945 Yugoslavia, a wretched imaginary South American state, as well as hospitals, country houses, Geneva, Marseille, and — an unwonted Trinitarian-esque excursus for such a grave author — a ghastly girls' public school.

In these milleus Hutchinson does not play out dreary autobiographicalized dramas, that infantile neo-Romantic practice taken by too many to be the business of fiction, but the eternal struggle of good and evil in an actual world. His novels are a decent, intelligent writer's tentative answers to the impossible question of moral conduct in that world's hideous circumstances.

For many readers the rub is that Hutchinson, from first to last, approaches the world from a Christian standpoint. There seems to have been little wrestling with angels. His world is God's world, tortured, unjust, chaotic, but one in which "we accept the fact of evil, which we can't explain. Surely we've got to accept the mystery of goodness too." And the key is that offered by all enduring religious philosophies: abnegation of self, acceptance of all that is, love even for the palpably unlovable. Stepan in *A Child Possessed* remembers of his gulag days: "I found myself crying with pity for one of the guards, a big ugly bastard who'd done me out of a day's rations. That seemed so senseless that I had to look outside myself for the reason. And then I saw quite plainly that the goodness of God can only work by means of His creatures, it uses even the degenerate and feeble, it can find a passage through every human absurdity and every corruption."

Hutchinson's protagonists do not scant the atrocities and retreat into sterile mysticism or monastic complacency. As the displaced amnesiac narrator Johanna puts it in *Johanna at Daybreak*, "When you cease to talk to fellow-creatures you put between yourself and any imaginable God a boundless and impenetrable silence." From earliest to latest Hutchinson compels recognition of human community. "Is there," asks the Gandhian Khamhaiv in *Thou Hast a Devil*, "any other morality that will put the world right but that of thinking last of ourselves?" The question is echoed by Prior Ambrosius in *Rising*: "When I see men acting selflessly, I realize afresh the one thing that makes sense of living."

There is no denying "the core of loneliness that all men carry" any more than the core of evil, but "supreme love would pass right through the sordid outskirts, it would go hunting for the small and lonely creature who's kept a prisoner inside." Love, in short, sometimes

charitable, sometimes erotic, mystical, unprovoked, selfless, is the necessary human condition. Reconcilable are even the Nazis of *The Fire and the Wood* (1940), the cruelties of the revolutionaries in *Testament*, Sabino's monstrosities in *Rising*, no less than the shabbinesses of *Shining Scabbard* (1936), or of Vincent's life in the dingy, uncaring Belgian town in *Image of My Father* (1961).

Hutchinson perhaps harps a little much on "the need to suffer," parades an almost suspect relish for the pain of it all. "The human claim to a portion of divinity," he believes, "rests safely on the capacity of men to suffer, on the genius by which they transcend their suffering." We re-enact Christ to fan into flame our divine spark. Hutchinson turns the fact of blind pain into our chiefest glory, though with characteristic fairness he gives a good gallop to the *advocati diaboli*, those who fight through to God and those who don't: Radznowski in *Recollection of a Journey* (1952), Lenin in *Testament*, Elizabeth in *Elephant and Castle* (1949), Patricio in *Rising*, Siegfried in *March the Ninth* (1957), and again Prior Ambrosius: "Often I've felt as you do now — it seemed irrational to go on living in a world of such monstrous evil, such universal suffering. I wanted to run away, to shut my eyes and ears for ever."

Ambrosius, crucial spokesman as he is for Hutchinson's fundamental view, is a bit of a *sapiens ex machina*, a species a mite too intrusive throughout the corpus: Dahlmayer in *The Fire and the Wood*, Mijnheer Dekker, Oestmann and Szamuely in *Johanna*, Lawyer Duveau in *Image of My Father*, even Miss Thompson in *The Answering Glory* (1932). Often enough the wise who have seen it all are doctors, reminding us that Hutchinson is not indifferent to either pole of Father Diego's lifelong concerns in *Rising*: "pain, bodily and mental pain, pain and healing." For it is "the formidable journey towards wholeness"



that most of Hutchinson's people undertake, integration of the satanic and divine within the self ("One's bitterest hatred is kept, I suppose, for those who manifest the evil latent in one's own blood"), reconciliation of the good and evil in the existing given world.

It is no surprise that the likes of Philip Toynbee were nauseated by Hutchinson's fiction. The tough-won affirmations, rooted finally in Christian belief but spun from harrowing engagement with the worst that man can do to man, are kin to an English fictional tradition regarded by modern critics as a cadet branch, though it includes sprigs as green as Chesterton and Cannan, Charles Morgan, Maurice Baring, Rose Macaulay, and, in our own day, Greene, Pym, and Piers Paul Read. (Hutchinson had his own views on his compeers: speaking well in a letter to his close friend Martyn Skinner of Elizabeth Bowen and Elizabeth Taylor, he glances at "the muzzy girls, La Murdoch and La Spark.") Though Anglican, Hutchinson is not unlike an unsentimental or grown-up Brideshead Waugh. Though not Catholic, he is a Bernanos with a wider focus, Claudel without the guff, Mauriac less hell-wise, perhaps, and less hell-bent.

Plot tended to hornswoggle him as a craftsman, though he manages it. His main characters sometimes sag under the weight they carry, but droves of lesser ones are dazzlingly done. That shrewd judge Rupert Hart-Davis wrote of Hutchinson that "he was a creative writer if ever there was one," and we are shortchanging ourselves if we do not read him. He is a master of description, of the "stir and smell of foreign harbours in the half light of dank morning," an exact limner of dockyards, railway stations, urban night-scapes, countryside, cafés and restaurants, devastated villages, rural England, cells, cities, bustle and desolation in a dozen variations of a score of countries. His phrasemaking is a logophile's paradise: "the snores of Herr Barthol like gumboots dragged out of liquid mud," "a man who looked like a hungry civet," "the riotous cantillation of birds," "faces like butter soaking into toast." A recherché vocabulary also shows up: "sciurine," "urcolate," "stercoral," "anhelose," "ultracrepidarian," "smeech." This opulence is, alas, balanced by the multiple appearance in every novel of the dreaded "grave" and "gravely," despite which Hutchinson is riotously capable of slapstick, as in the prize pig scenes in *Origins of Cathleen* (1971) and St Trinian's clone in *The Answering Glory*.

Is a case to be made for rereading Hutchinson as more than a minor

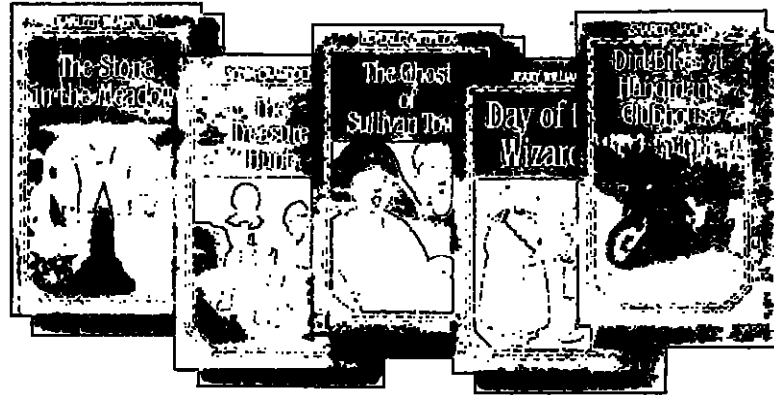
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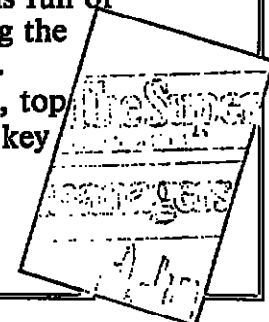
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forgettable hack, or are we advocating a justly buried dud? Ray Hutchinson, urbane, very English, Anglican, clubmanesque (shades of what Conrad so desperately wanted to be), upperlipish, ordinary, decent, erudite, curious about all God's handiwork (Matt in *One Light Burning*, as Hutchinson might well have noted of himself, "was happy if at the end of an hour he had learnt a new Norwegian oath or the Estonian term for a running bowline"), paddled unfashionably against the stream. Financial recognition was scant during his lifetime, critical reward came late with a W.H. Smith prize for *A Child Possessed* in 1966. Hutchinson is a substantial, "traditional" novelist with an enormous amount to say, and usually he doesn't just say it but *shows*. His prose style is a continual delight, the variety of his output astounding. One more time, Israel needs to reappraise its gods.

*Rising* is his masterpiece, and Penguin chose well to reissue it. *The Unforgotten Prisoner* is a more contentious item, immensely ambitious but replete with all of Hutchinson's worst faults: perhaps after all a truly characteristic book. *Testament* will surprise and impress readers, and *Recollection of a Journey* is grim reading but probably Hutchinson's other masterpiece. The Zenith trio are also excellently chosen. In effect we have a great, unexamined *oeuvre* of 17 novels, one that will surprise, delight, and linger in that part of the mind where good and important books go to roost. □

## REVIEW

# Pleasant dreams

By KEITH GAREBIAN

*The Honey Drum: Seven Tales from Arab Lands*, by Gwendolyn MacEwen, Mosaic Press, 77 pages, \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 86962 227 2).

FOLK TALES are more often than not dreams that explain themselves. Although they are not without their real strangeness of character, event, and morality, they are presented as simple (but not simplistic) guides to a wise life. "The great instrument of moral good,"

Shelley said, "is the imagination." And folk tales, though made elegant or terrifying by imagery and emblem, are the language of the inner self carried from enigma to resolution. Aesop's fables, where animals play the most significant roles, are virtually vindications of rightness or goodness. Grimm's fairy tales, despite the nightmare moments, are wish-fulfilment fantasies of common folk. African and Indian folk tales are frequently extensions of religion. But whatever their genesis or nature, folk tales have a universal appeal and several uses of enchantment.

In *The Honey Drum* Gwendolyn MacEwen has drawn upon oral and written resources and her own poetic sensibility to present a charming string of stories as simple as they are elegant, as sensuous as they are ominous, as fantastical as they are psychologically credible. One of the tales is an adaptation of a story in the Koran; another has the texture of *The Thousand and One Nights*; two are original pieces; and the others are flexible adaptations rather than literal translations.

The moral element is everywhere. False charity is led to its own shameful ruin. Greedy ambition is destroyed. And, finally, as is characteristic of folk tales anywhere, religious creed is the inviolate essence.

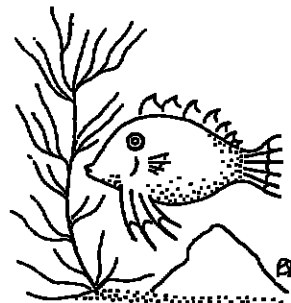
The last story, "Four Ways To Fortune," uses the time-honoured device of comparison and contrast as it follows the fates of four companions — sons of a king, nobleman, merchant, and common labourer. This is, perhaps, the most allegorical tale in the collection as each youth, dedicated to a particular ideal, discovers the scope and limitation of human action. Predictably, intelligence, beauty, and labour are not enough to bring man goodness or save him from evil. Only Allah's will is the true power of fortune. Yet in the telling, this tale has charming delicacy and poise, and does not oppress by its moral pressure.

Indeed, one of the strongest attractions in the book is MacEwen's style. Here is the opening of the title-story:

One day all the important men in the great city of Antar met to discuss what sort of gift they might give to their good king Ali, for he had been sad for a long time, thinking that his people had forgotten him. Now it was a very hot day and the elders of the city sat sipping lemonade through long straws and letting servants fan them with great fans of ostrich feathers, and it was a long time before anyone came up with an idea. Finally one old man spoke up. "Noble sheikhs," said he, "I think the greatest gift we could give our king would be a horse, black as the night, with hooves swift as lightning and eyes bright as stars. What say you to this?"

The hard *gs* suggest the guttural sounds of Arabic, and the insistent but well-placed alliterative patterns distance the prose from demotic English. Moreover, there is a fine poetic sensitivity that is felt through the powerfully sensuous imagery of the horse, and a playful satiric spirit that glows without becoming a glaring distraction.

MacEwen mirrors the Oriental penchant for sensuousness, paradox, and



tribal wisdom. At the same time her phrasing is elegant without being shallow:

"Help me, Wise One!" he cried, "I've gone blind!"

"In the most beautiful flower there is always a thorn," said Salah. "And he who desires more than he needs will feel the thorn."

MacEwen retraces the configurations of folk tradition without editorial alteration, but her greatest success is with stories that reflect her own preoccupations with enigma, metamorphosis, and the subconscious. In "The Ghoul" (her own creation) she narrates a tale of horror and supernatural evil mystery as a sheikh's son is led into the most dangerous part of a desert by a ghoul disguised as the boy's own sister. Here what fantasists would call "the language of the night" develops a symbolic dream story. The ghoul is an evil secret that confronts the lad, but it may also truly be his anima.

In "The Sleepers" MacEwen is in her element of sacred mystery, magic spell, and the incredible occurrence, and in "The Black Goat" (the second of her own creations) she demonstrates her artful simplicity and exquisite control of tone and language. Here the plain and the beautiful work side-by-side. Key words are repeated with variations, as the narrator is an observer in responsive assessment of the unfolding tale. Moreover, the similes are perfectly attuned to the tonal chords and sense of strangeness and mystery. It is such grace, poise, and purity of prose that distinguish MacEwen's collection, and make of *The Honey Drum* an exciting entertainment for children and adults alike. □

# King of the road

By JUDITH FITZGERALD

*Travelin Light*, by Jim Christy, Simon & Pierre, 164 pages, \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 83924 119 8).

WITH THE publication of *Travelin Light*, his sixth book, Jim Christy amply demonstrates his abilities as a writer. That, unfortunately, is all he does.

*Travelin Light* contains 12 prose narratives that many among us would simply be content to refer to as short stories. Not Christy. For reasons known only to him, Christy prefers to call them "encounters." Encounters? Certainly they involve one human being (the narrator) encountering other human beings (or characters), but there is little in *Travelin Light* to suggest a redefinition of a perfectly respectable genre that has proven adequate for many of Christy's contemporaries. There is no *nouvelle* narrative mode at work in the pages of *Travelin Light*; in fact, there is little at work at all.

At the centre of each "encounter" is a narrator far more interested in self-promotion than in encountering any of the subsequent minor characters. Strictly speaking, there are no minor characters in *Travelin Light*; there are only foils that serve further to corroborate the narrator's overwhelming belief in himself as a superior human being mistakenly caught in the detritus of humanity.

The collection opens with "Passing Through," a narrative that introduces Superior Human Being as a profound thinker: "My last thought was that I was going to sleep in the middle of the god-damn Amazon." Much of this first encounter involves the narrator's voyage toward this thought. Francisco, as handy a foil as any for Superior Human Being's conceits, is a supposed "very bad man" whom the narrator proves to be otherwise: "The more I stared back, the more I saw. There was sadness there and recognition. There was also contempt, as if he, too, had seen into the heart of things and found evil."

Shades of *Heart of Darkness*? Not quite. Perhaps the Congo and Amazon Rivers can be compared, but Conrad's narrator has little in common with

Christy's, primarily because Superior Human Being is first and foremost pre-occupied with not-so-subtly pointing out that "he, too, had seen into the heart of things and found evil."

After two short days — remember, this is fiction — Francisco, clearly overwhelmed by the narrator's illuminating analyses of human nature, speaks the unspeakable and tells him the sorry story of his life. After four short days, Francisco and Superior Human Being go on a trip, a metaphoric voyage as it were, complete with drugs. The outcome of the journey implicitly suggests that Superior Human Being (unlike those before him) is a man in a million, and worthy of the "secrets of the universe," which Francisco inadvertently reveals to him through an Ararracu Indian initiation ceremony. Superior Human Being, no slouch, experiences a moment of enlightenment akin to a Joycean epiphany:

I saw clearly the direction of this path I was on, and had found intuitively when I was thirteen years old, like a dog on a scent. It was my own and unalterable. God, it was all laid out, through folly and detritus, vanity and longing.

Here is a narrator who takes himself seriously. The remaining 11 encounters, following as they do on the heels of this particularly penetrating insight, offer more (and generally less) of the same.

Of the dozen encounters, only "To Hell with This Cockeyed World" succeeds, primarily because it is the only instance where the focus of the narrative moves away from Superior Human Being. Instead, the narrator refrains from philosophizing and allows his fellow-character room to move within the confines of Christy's narrative structure.

Charlie Leeds, a gifted jazz musician, writer (the text includes samples of his work), and heroin addict, is the only memorable character to rise out of a mass of cliché-ridden sentiments and situations. The encounter is a moving, poignant, and occasionally humorous account of the forces at work against Charlie Leeds. Christy allows Leeds his rights as a character, and in so doing raises some pertinent, if not ironic, questions concerning Western society's treatment of diseases of addiction.

Though Christy writes well within the boundaries of traditional narrative prose, there is little to admire in *Travelin Light*'s attention to form or structure. More often than not, form itself yields to mere formulization, and structure follows accordingly: Narrator recalls/encounters/uncovers an unsavoury/sexy/pitiful down-and-outer/broad/rapist and gets to know/feel/understand said character; narrator allows himself the fatuity/luxury/vanity of addressing issues of a

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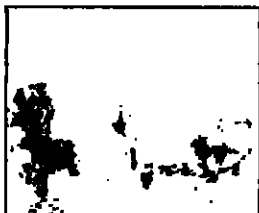
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sweeping universal nature; finally, narrator attempts/jostles/struggles to draw attention to himself against a long list of serious losers.

Christy's purpose in all this is never entirely clear. If he is presenting autobiography in these encounters, some of them contain more than a hint of fictionalization (unless, of course, he possesses a perfect memory for meaningless conversation). On the other hand, if he is presenting fiction in these encounters, some of them contain more than a hint of the autobiographical.

Finally, with no structural or formal innovation, it is difficult to understand the *raison d'être* for this book. Stories of bumming around last-class surely have already been definitively written. With its overwritten emphasis on echoes of the 1960s (including even the title itself), *Travelin Light* does not manage to become even a bad version of *On the Road* for the '60s.

Hence the overall effect of this collection is, at best, unsettling. What is the author trying to do in these encounters, and why hasn't he succeeded? Further, why does the intended irony of the narratives serve only to point out a further irony — namely, that the narrator himself becomes the object of ridicule? With gems such as "If Mack ever did cry he did it on his own time and never bothered anyone else about it" rolling off the narrator's tongue, what glib role does Superior Human Being pretend to play? By the end of the collection, it is all too clear that the narrator is completely wrapped up in a painful and embarrassing attempt to mythologize only himself.

It is always regrettable when a writer of talent squanders his gifts on forget-

table material. Sadly, that is exactly what Jim Christy ends up doing in *Travelin Light*. □

## REVIEW

# Primal screech

By TERRY GOLDIE

**Fun on the Rock: Toward a Theory of Newfoundland Humour**, by Herbert Lench Pottle, Breakwater Books, 158 pages, \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 919519 06 7).

**Forty-Eight Days Adrift**, by Captain Job Barbour, Breakwater Books, 220 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919519 33 4).

MOST MAINLANDERS probably think of Breakwater in one of two ways. Either it is a local literary press, publisher of some interesting anthologies and various works by such writers as Harold Horwood, Al Pittman, and Michael Cook, or else it is a source of big books on Newfoundlandia, the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* and the illustrated history of Newfoundland, *Part of the Main*. But within Newfoundland it has a far more diffuse presence. As well as being a dispenser of Newfoundlandia for the outer market, it is a dis-

perser of all things for the inner. This extends from strictly educational texts to a number of works of, as they say, "local" interest.

Herbert Pottle's book is very much one of these. The sub-title, "Toward a Theory of Newfoundland Humour," suggests a somewhat scholarly work, and the syntax suggests something at least mildly adventurous and speculative — "toward" rather than just "a." Instead, *Fun on the Rock* is the work of an amateur explorer.

Such semi-learned treatises on the Newfoundland whatever are a great tradition in this province, as seen in the books of Joey Smallwood. Pottle's references to learned French works on humour and his various footnotes provide scholarly pretensions, but they can't hide a decidedly hither-and-yon approach. The world is Pottle's oyster (or perhaps lobster, to give it a more local flavour), and he traverses it as he wills. He compares Newfoundland humour with that of Brazil, Malaysia, Tanzania, and Spain, with no substantial examples, and no sources. Although I know very little about what produces laughter in these places, I am willing to take his judgements on faith, but I don't know why they're here.

Pottle has a clearly stated thesis, that Newfoundland humour is shaped by local opinions on major institutions, from religion to government. Still, neither his thesis nor anything else provides a structure or limits for his study. A number of the jokes that he identifies as indigenous can be found in a multitude of sources, including some of the dumb Newfy variety, which can be changed elsewhere for Polack, Paki, Wog, Frog, or whatever your mirthful

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## Prisoners of the heart

By JOHN PARR

Three Times Five: Short Stories by Beverly Harris, Gloria Sawai, and Fred Stenson, edited by Douglas Barbour, NeWest Press, 164 pages, \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 0 920316 84 0) and \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 920316 86 7).

SOMEHOW OR OTHER a whole decade has slipped by since Calgarian Fred Stenson brought out his first novel, *Lonesome Hero*, a delightfully comic depiction of a J.D. Salinger-ish young man, and a book that won two awards: finalist in the first Search-for-a-New-Alberta-Novelist competition and the Canadian Authors Association silver medal for fiction. Alas, no further novels have appeared, suggesting that Stenson possibly has been resorting to silence, exile, and cunning. However, attentive fans will have observed that he has published a number of short stories over the years in such magazines as *Saturday Night* and *Chatelaine*. *Three Times Five* presents five of Stenson's stories, as well as five apiece from his fellow (if that's the term) Alberta writers Beverly Harris and Gloria Sawai.

The book's editor, Douglas Barbour, says that the three offer "a perspective uniquely western Canadian. These three writers... find the ground of their imaginations in that space where prairie first begins to rise to mountains, in the parklands and foothills of Alberta. From that ground, however, their imaginations soar in space and time..." One is reminded here of Laurie Ricou's defining phrase for western Canadian writing: vertical man, horizontal world (as opposed, no doubt, to the writing of the eastern big cities: vertical world, horizontal man).

Beverly Harris's characteristic theme seems to be that of woman as emotional prisoner — or maybe that should be person as prisoner, since in a couple of the stories men are the captives. In "Light" a woman is held prisoner by her loyalty to a wasting-away husband; still, she does escape from time to time in an adulterous relationship with a man who, in turn, remains in bondage to his mother. "Queenie" is about a woman who deliberately seeks out a prison by taking up residence in a glass-enclosed

brand of racism. Pottle shows no awareness of contemporary work on humour, which tends to concentrate on the performing context of the joke-teller and the structure of the joke. Thus he is unable to recognize that different subjects can produce the same joke.

So, a bad book right? Not really, primarily because of its somewhat idiosyncratic source. Pottle, a Newfoundland bayman who went to Canada to get his PhD and became an important civil servant in both Canada and Newfoundland, now is in his late 70s. The first result of a retirement period of reflection was *Dawn Without Light* (Breakwater, 1979), an account of his experience as a provincial cabinet minister under Smallwood. Now he has decided to turn his literary talents to something slightly further afield. But only slightly. Like many Newfoundlanders with PhDs, he has used much of his spare time in analyzing what Ray Guy has called with a grimace, "The Happy Province."

Whether or not it should be, it is. An outsider who had lived here for many years once said to me, "Newfoundlanders have no sense of irony." I looked at her aghast. I could only assume she was being ironic.

Pottle's book has a number of good insights about the opposition involved in this obsessively ironic temperament, but they are loosely strewn. What he needed was an editor in possession of a fluid word processor. Then extraneous Brazilians could be assimilated or deported, and a number of other infelicitous remarks, such as a weak wisecrack about Speedy Muffler (presented twice), could also be done away with. The answer of course is that a book like this needs the kind of editing it would get only from a publisher who wouldn't think of publishing it. How's that for a Catch-22? Still, it's a book that should exist.

As should *Forty-Eight Days Adrift*. This is one of those works defined by experience. On a simple trip up the coast from St. John's, Job Barbour's ship was beset by a series of storms. The result was that instead of one day to Bonavista Bay it was 48 days to Scotland.

Nowadays this would be one of those "as told to" pieces with the sickly hand of a ghost-writer spread across every page. Barbour's book, first published in 1932, reads as though straight from the skipper's mouth.

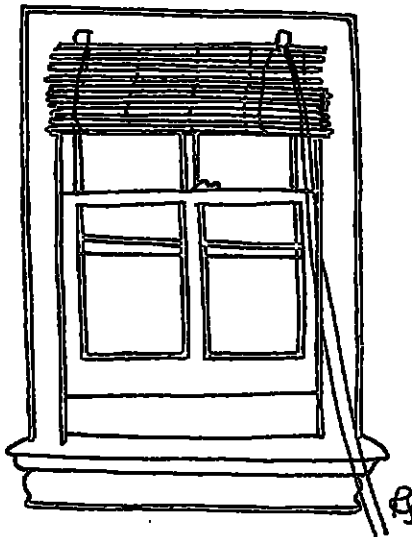
The photograph in the front suggests a small man with a great sense of moral purpose. This is reflected throughout his travail, as he emphasizes the facts, position of the ship, injuries to crew, food that was eaten, etc. The only subjectivity is records of his brief prayers.

When Barbour decides to use a figure of speech, however, it is usually a telling one, as when he describes the first devastating storm: "Like living demons hungry for our lives the seas rushed over our bulwarks and swept the deck fore and aft." He did all he could to protect passengers and crew from these sea-borne devils, but he drew the line at abandoning ship: "If she were leaking it would be a different thing, but a man is a traitor to a ship that holds a sound hull and does not leak, if he leaves her."

In a strange way, the greatest appeal of the book is in the last third. Here Barbour ingenuously gives much more of his character, as he describes the various Scots who rescued him: "They say the Scots are mean, but I cannot see it. I can only speak as I find." In a similarly sententious comment, one Scot is called "a very fine, good-living man."

Barbour is a sea-faring type. At various times in his book he reflects on poetry, on the sentimental homilies in his cabin, and on his own character, as when he states, "I have never tasted any liquor in my life." And his character is his book's, learned in the ways of the sea yet unsophisticated in the ways of the world, with strong moral values and strong yet understated feelings: "My mother was waiting for me at the door of my home, and over the dramatic scene of our meeting I prefer to draw a veil and leave it to the imagination of my readers, especially to the mothers who read this book."

Two works with a strong sense of Newfoundland from amateur writers, who have written in love of their sub-



jects. Pottle's is damaged by its amateurism, and by the lack of an appropriate professional to trim and dress it. On the other hand, Barbour's book would have suffered from such attention. It lives and breathes through its quirks and idiosyncrasies. □

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university information booth. Then in "The Day They Set Out" a man takes to his bed at age 28 and remains there for the next 30 years.

Harris sets most of her stories in some unnamed city, whereas Gloria Sawai often places hers in the town of Stone Creek, Sask., but their concerns are similar. In Sawai's stories, as with Harris, there is the sense of prison-like confinement. What really constitutes prison walls for the natives of Stone Creek, or some of them anyway, is the emotional repression brought on by excessive religious faith. In "Mother's Day" an 11-year-old girl, guilt-ridden over her emerging sexuality, vents her frustrations on a stray kitten, which she destroys, literally, with a rock.

This mixture of religion and sex appears also in a fantasy story that is almost fully described by its title: "The Day I Sat with Jesus on the Sun Deck and a Wind Came Up and Blew My Kimono Open and He Saw My Breasts." Actually, though, not much happens other than a parting kiss and the flicking of a nipple.

The theme of the prairies as a prison can also be seen in the work of Fred Stenson, except that his characters are never glum victims but more like zestful

escaped convicts — usually from Buffalo Flats, Alta. In "Lover" a young woman teacher flees — temporarily anyway, during summer vacation — small-town confinement to visit Greece and seek out somebody to fill the title role.

Stenson evidently regards women as much more purposeful than men, whom he customarily presents as comically maladjusted. "Teeth" features an NHL player (formerly of Buffalo Flats) who is not so much concerned with scoring spectacular goals as with avoiding any action that might break up his full set of molars, canines, and incisors.

"Ariene" concerns an adolescent love affair (one night of love, to be more precise) between a young Indian girl and a young white boy, who relates their experience humorously and tenderly in the form of a short story for a university creative writing class. Despite the tremendous feeling conveyed, though, the story receives a humble B-minus: "Your use of the vernacular is a little extreme, but there is an occasional attraction in the grassroots rhythm."

This is an absorbing collection of short stories, full of dramatic and thematic interest, serving as an excellent introduction to Harris and Sawai and re-introduction to Stenson. A-plus. □

## Following the leaguers

By RICK BOULTON

**But I Loved It Plenty Well**, by Allen Abel, Collins, 211 pages, \$17.95 cloth (ISBN 0 00 217121 X).

IT SEEMS THAT Allen Abel has run out of appropriate athletes to write about and strange pockets of the world to discover. Abel, a gifted and "different" sports columnist with the *Globe and Mail* from 1977 to 1983, has since been named that paper's Peking correspondent, meaning he will no longer be poking around sports events all over the globe, writing 26 weeks of the year from the road.

*But I Loved It Plenty Well* is a collection of 57 of his finest columns and essays, all but one having first appeared in the *Globe* during six years on the sports beat in which he received general acclaim (*Saturday Night* called him Canada's best sports writer) and a National Newspaper Award for a typical wide-ranging series (included here) on the Soviets' scientific and psychological approach to sports training.

Abel's strength and appeal is that he sneaks off searching for stories in places where other sports writers won't go, or wouldn't even think to go. Thus, in "No Cheering in This Palace," we spend Easter Sunday at a sparsely attended local boxing tournament in Moscow, sitting next to a fighter's fiancée who fears for her Alexei in the ring and dreams only of visiting Paris. In "Living It Up in Baseball's Bushes" we're on a bus coasting through central Montana with the lowly Medicine Hat Blue Jays of the Pioneer Rookie Baseball League as Abel chronicles the uphill battles of young dreamers infected with the baseball bug: a deaf-mute outfielder, a bonus baby who's diabetic, a griper with genuine talent who has a chance to make it. (Perhaps prophetically, the bus crashes, though no one is hurt.)

In "Sweet Lou's Life: A Story of Survival," we're whisked off to a high-school auditorium in the black Los Angeles neighbourhood of Watts as Abel presents us with the case of much-battered ex-baseballer Lou Johnson, a former dope addict turned community relations officer who lectures the kids on the dangers of alcohol and drugs: "Once a World Series hero, once a Toronto

"... these are real Canadians and this is what war is like . . ." — Douglas Fisher, Nationally Syndicated Political Columnist



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Fred Cederberg, at 18, enlisted in the 5th Canadian Armored Division in 1941. Men whose ages ranged from 16 to 36 trained at Camp Borden before heading to England then on to Italy where they faced the formidable task of liberating a country from the grasp of troops of the German 10th Army.

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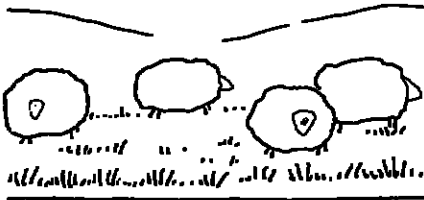
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Maple Leaf, once a desperate, suicidal dope addict who had played and lived too high, he takes the insults in stride and launches an earnest lecture on the evils of alcohol and drugs." Lou's message to the kids: "I'm not supposed to be here today. I'm supposed to be dead."

Abel is impersonal. Hardly ever an "I." All he wants is the opportunity to hang out for a few hours with his subject. And given the normal restrictions of a five-day-a-week, 800-word column in which he sometimes has little room to manoeuvre (his five o'clock afternoon deadline was one of the earliest among North American dailies), you have to admire a good many of his pieces for their insight and enthusiasm. Not only does he seem to care passionately about the people he writes about, but he has a way of writing a column that makes it appeal to people who may not necessarily be interested in that particular sport. I don't happen to care much for tennis, but a piece on "Nasty" Nastase, the shaggy-haired Romanian with a famous temper, hooked me. Abel trekked along to an autograph session in a downtown Toronto department store and filed a piece that is typically whimsical and enlightening and demonstrates Nastase's



schizophrenic personality: equal parts charm and repulsion.

Most of Abel's pieces succeed largely because he stays out of them, and lets the subject in question reveal himself, for better or worse. He keeps his eye open for vignettes, often comical, that offer insight into the way a subject thinks and operates. In the funniest piece, Abel takes us along as the Soviet hockey nationals attend a Monday night National Football League game, viewing the frenzied action from the sidelines of the Minneapolis Metrodome with a mixture of amazement and amusement. The Soviet coach, watching raptly from the end of the Dallas Cowboys' bench, asks Abel: "These women cheerleaders — are they wayward?"

There are touching pieces on a Florida over-75 softball team (one of the outfielders is 97), a visit with disabled jockey Ron Turcotte, and a look at Hockey Night in Puerto Rico (roller hockey played on concrete). A soccer profile of a crazed Turk playing for the Toronto

Blizzard who is in constant trouble with the referees is a small jewel.

Then there are the longer nostalgia pieces in which Abel, given more elbow-room, excels: an essay on the passion for baseball in the Dominican Republic is genuinely moving. In it, an old man working in the sugar cane fields, whose son played in baseball's major leagues, recalls his passion for baseball and a failed try at boxing with a comment that provides the book's title: "I never made no speed at it, but I loved it plenty well."

Abel's preferences are baseball and boxing, sports he obviously considers more amenable to his approach. By my count, the book has 17 pieces on baseball, seven on hockey (though several only peripherally), six on boxing, six on Olympic or Commonwealth Games athletes/events, five travel essays that barely touch on sport, and a grand total of one about the Canadian Football League (professional wrestling gets two). Of the remaining 15 generally unclassifiable events, there are stories about a high diver who is a human torch, a tarot reader named Mildred, handguns in Florida, the rodeo, a long-distance snowmobiler, Evel Knievel, Jackrabbit Johansen, and Minnesota Fats.

The most unrewarding aspect of the book, especially for hard-core fans, is the lack of good hockey stories. The best two of a poorly selected bunch are a look at superstar Wayne Gretzky and his views on the media, and a sampling of life in the bushes in the brawling Eastern Hockey League. Abel's assignments get him into the working arenas and living rooms of some interesting people, but too many of them are from the distant past — for example, a visit with Depression-era star Gordie Drillon, the last Toronto Maple Leaf to win — more than 45 years ago — a scoring title. All very readable, but either Abel or his publisher blows it by not including any current Leafs. Hockey players, many of them young, small-town, media-wary, and the focus of ferocious public attention, need to be handled with a social worker's gentle skill — Abel's trademark. But the best of his personable, good-hearted hockey profiles simply aren't in the book.

There are two oddities about this anthology, neither of which can be laid at Abel's feet. The first is a ridiculous foreword by Maple Leaf owner Harold Ballard that seems to have been ghost-written. (When questioned about this, Maple Leaf Gardens publicist Stan Obodiac told me that "Ballard writes his own stuff, absolutely," but he let it slip in the same conversation that "I haven't got my copy yet — can you get it for me? After all, I helped with the

introduction.") A minor quibble perhaps, but whoever wrote the introduction certainly didn't read the book, or any part of it.

The second oddity is that Abel's book was panned by his employer, or to be more precise, a freelance reviewer assigned by the *Globe*, who called it "... hard-pressed to compete with the work of his big-time competitors ..." with "no new ideas, no controversy ..." precious little humour, sarcasm or overstatement ..." Adding that "many of these little stories are genuinely dull," the reviewer amazingly concluded that Abel is "... still a year or two away from the major leagues." The review probably amused Abel more than it distressed him, since he has pointed out on several occasions that sports writers have a very low priority at the *Globe*. (The book-review section keeps misspelling his name.)

A kinder comment raised by the book's appearance might have been this: how on earth did Abel manage to get it on the market? Precious few sports writers in this country see their work collected in hardcover (magazine writer Earl McRae, who has been anthologized twice, is one exception I can think of), and even fewer make any money from such collections. (McRae says he hardly made a dime.)

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**REVIEW**

**Lost in  
the maze**

By **BRIAN L. FLACK**

*A Place to Die*, by George Bowering, Oberon Press, 127 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 476 0) and \$9.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 477 9).

GEORGE BOWERING has a reputation for stories and poems that delicately straddle the fine line between the bizarre and the absurd. This is not a criticism of his intentions or the degree of success he achieves; it is simply a statement of fact. Because he has consistently flirted with (even courted) excellence, Bowering has been rewarded with a mittful of Governor General's Awards — each deserved for a variety of reasons. The interesting element is that there are a *number* of reasons for his success: constant innovation, clarity of thought, dedication to the imaginative, and structural sophistication.


There is, however, a great problem inherent in the process of continual trail-breaking that must be carefully addressed and requires total authorial vigilance. Once set astray from the intended and narrowly defined goal, there is every possibility that the adventurer will fall into a pattern of aimless circling, perhaps even crossing and recrossing already travelled paths. Bowering has victimized himself in this manner in his collection of short stories, *A Place to Die*. This is not to say the stories are uninteresting or even failed. Most are not. In fact, one or two of them are almost superb.

"A Short Story" strings together a series of "mini-chapters" (titled "Setting," "Characters," "Point of View," and so forth) to describe a country girl-turned-city prostitute's return to her family home and the subsequent disaster that a release of years of accumulated rage and frustration can engender.

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"35 Years of Service to Canadians"

Structurally spare yet rich in imagery, the story stands out from the others because it evokes, with considerable feeling and sensibility, a woman's need to assert herself in an environment almost crippling in its severity.

"Old Bottles" is another story that rises from the torpor that characterizes a great part of the collection. It examines, from a safe distance, the case of a retired man who methodically sets out to replace every edifice on his property (hedge, garage, house, etc.) with replicas fashioned from empty bottles. The exercise obscures a peculiar unworldliness enjoyed by the man, an apartness that defines his existence and protects him until it is discovered that his reclusive wife has been dead for some time. At that point community sentiment toward him changes. Then, as though he were defeated spiritually by the reality of his wife's death, he ceases his bottle building and begins his own descent toward death. Once he expires, his creation, like all truly imaginative things, is destroyed by an uncomprehending world — bulldozed into nothingness by blind authority. All that remains for his efforts are the recollections of the woman who lives across the street.

These stories aside, most seem repetitive of intent, structurally cloying, and absurd. "Arbre de Décision," a multi-narrative exercise in reader confusion that uses the telephone as an image for imprecise and gratuitous communication, begins and ends nowhere. Hard to follow and punctuated by transitions between the real and the imaginary, it makes one wonder whether some integral detail was overlooked on the way through. "The Clam Digger" begins like a fairy tale (a young man is carried on the back of an enchanted turtle to a deep-sea kingdom where he is installed as a prince with no limits on his self-indulgence), but degenerates into a trite moral tale that reaffirms Thomas Wolfe's souring dictum: you can't go home again.

Readers may also be annoyed by Bowering's stylized use of structural devices: "and" is replaced by ampersands; "through" becomes "thru"; the apostrophe is dismissed from contractions. These, as always, remain minimally effective tools. Tired is a charitable way to describe them.

At his best Bowering exhibits a skill for penetrating and manipulating the stylistic nuances that make literature enriching, but in *A Place to Die* there is little evidence of this rare quality. On the one hand, the prose seems hurried and often poorly thought out, creating both sense and interpretation difficulties. On the other, Bowering seems to be making a valiant attempt to lure us into linguistic

and structural mazes that promise uniqueness but do not deliver. In the few stories that are free of these weaknesses, one is aware of the authorial control and

intricate levels of meaning that characterize Bowering's usual virtuosity. It is unfortunate there is such a dearth of that expertise. □

## INTERVIEW

Characters have lives beyond fiction,  
says Elizabeth Spencer. 'They are all living  
somewhere outside the book'

By LUCILLE KING-EDWARDS

BORN IN Carrollton, Mississippi, and educated at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Elizabeth Spencer lived until the early 1950s in the southern United States, where she wrote her first two novels, *Fire in the Morning* (1948) and *This Crooked Way* (1952). They were followed by *The Voice at the Back Door* (1956), *The Light in the Piazza* (1960), *The Snare* (1972), *The Stories of Elizabeth Spencer* (1981), and most recently *The Salt Line* (Doubleday), which is set in the Gulf Coast region familiar to her youth. In 1953 Spencer travelled on a Guggenheim Fellowship to Italy, where she stayed for several years before moving with her husband to Canada. She now lives in Montreal, where she was interviewed by Lucille King-Edwards:

**Books in Canada:** *When you were first writing who would you say were the people who encouraged you?*

Elizabeth Spencer: My major professor at this little school I went to in Mississippi, a man who died recently, had graduated from Vanderbilt, and he not



Elizabeth Spencer

only encouraged my work, but he was a grand person. He was a good lecturer and appreciator of literature and students. He thought Vanderbilt would be a good place for me. When I was at Vanderbilt there was a professor widely

known in the South, Donald Davidson, a poet, and one of the original Vanderbilt group that were first called the Fugitives, and then the Agrarians. He had worked closely with Robert Penn Warren, Allen Tate, and John Crowe Ransom, big names in American literature. He was like a mentor in that I worked closely with him in class and then later referred things to him, but his whole way of approaching literature was through his own ideas, which were very strongly and firmly held. If you disagreed with him it was more or less a personal issue. The man and the idea were one. Of course, I didn't keep on with them later on, but my discipleship was sincere at the time. You have to break away from people who are in a position of mental domination.

**BiC:** *What about other writers? Do we or don't we want to talk about William Faulkner?*

Spencer: I think that the trouble with me and William Faulkner was that I admired him tremendously as a writer, but I didn't discover him very early. His works weren't very widely read in Mississippi while they were being written, because even the very literate people in Mississippi, who read a great deal and could maybe even speak Latin and read Greek, thought that William Faulkner was betraying the South, that he wrote about a very dark underside of human experience. They took this as a reflection on the South, and they consigned him to being a man who had a beautiful writing style but used unworthy subjects. So I came to reading William Faulkner rather late. I resented discovering such a powerful writer just at the time when I was about to embark on writing myself.

But the good side of that was that many of the influences that were most profound were already formed, people like Thomas Hardy, and the really strong early modern writers. The Hardy

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influence was not so much a stylistic one, but the fact that he was writing about country life. Another thing was that the architectural plans of his novels are so strong that I think anybody could learn a lot from them. They were built a block at a time. If you're writing, the structure of a Hardy novel is very beautiful.

**BiC:** *What were the attitudes of the people writing in the South at that time?*

**Spencer:** Well, I think southerners had the reputation of being anti-intellectual. That's hard to explain, except that southerners have always lived traditionally. There's a pattern that's supposed to be excellent, and you follow that. But to be an intellectual I suppose that not only do you read, and make yourself aware of everything that's going on in the intellectual world, but you expose yourself to ideas that might change you. Now if you believe in an idea, that's dangerous to a traditionalist. He's supposed to take inherited ideas. You're supposed to know what Jesus said in the Gospels, but don't start giving everything away to the poor. It's all right to be a Sunday painter; it's all right to learn to play the piano and enchant or delight other people; but don't start taking all this seriously. Even being a concert artist wouldn't be so bad, but being a writer was being a little bit more. Southerners wanted their literature, but they wanted somebody else to write it, 'somebody who lived safely in New England or England, because if you're going to write literature in a place, you're going to have to examine that place.

**BiC:** *Do you feel that your early books are influenced by a sense of finding out these things or a sense of transition from your own background?*

**Spencer:** I think in *The Voice at the Back Door* I began to examine the whole black-white situation in the South for the first time in my life, really. I was brought up with the traditional attitude that blacks were an inferior race that we somehow, through considerable fault of our own, had inherited, but we had to deal with them as best we could, because they would never be our equals. Now, this was really what I was brought up to think. Later on I began to examine this. Then it became a matter of conscience that I as a writer had to examine it in fiction just to rid my soul of those questions, and so it was an act of self-purification.

**BiC:** *Not long ago I heard Cleanth Brooks speak on the sense of place in the Southern novel. You were in the audience, and he gave you a nod in that respect.*

**Spencer:** I'm apparently very sensitive to environment. I'm very superstitious; I believe in place spirits. Where it comes

from I don't know. Maybe it comes from the thoughts and experiences of the people who live there, or maybe, if you want to get like Borges about it, it might come from the spirits of the place that influence the thoughts of the people in the place. I think there's a kind of environmental spirit in different places. Certain places seem to focus a stronger sense of that.

**BiC:** *You write about people who have a sense of belonging, but you also have a fair number of mavericks, and displaced people in all of your books.*

**Spencer:** I always had a certain amount of tension personally, because my environment was a very strict traditional one. On the other hand, I remark that a lot of people in small-town environments didn't exactly fit in, and often they became reclusive. Maybe small-town life breeds that sort of life, because people know so much about each other.

**BiC:** *I was also thinking of people in your stories who seem quite rootless, for example Mavis in *The Salt Line*.*

**Spencer:** I've talked about that in other interviews, and I don't know why it is, but waif-like females somehow get into my fiction. You think of a waif as being a child, but some people are waifs all their lives. I don't know how to explain that. Maybe I'm a bit of a waif myself.

**BiC:** *One of the things that fascinates me about your women characters is their toughness. For example, in "Ship Island" Nancy, the main character, has really nothing to back her up except herself, yet she is able to get on with her life. This kind of character keeps reappearing.*

**Spencer:** She really does. I don't guess it's myself. It must partake of some part of myself. A whole lot of things started with that one story, "Ship Island." That was the germinal story for me. It brought me away from looking at the South in ingrown terms, just family and pattern, because there are people who can't have those things, and they've got to survive some way.

**BiC:** *You also have a tremendous range when it comes to the treatment of society in your novels. Either side of the tracks seems to be available to you for material.*

**Spencer:** A lot of people remark on that, because I was brought up in a very pretty way. But still it was a small town, and I was sent to school there instead of being sent off to a private school. My father was a farmer and businessman there, and he thought it would indicate that he was being snobbish toward the people he had to deal with if he sent me off to a private school. So I stuck it out for 12 years of high school in that town. I don't say stuck it out, because I didn't know anything else. In those schools you

would have children who came in from the country, and that was a time of poverty — I mean the 1930s — and some people didn't have clothes on under their overcoats in cold weather; some people scarcely had shoes. When there were dances in town everybody in the world would come. There would be boys from bootlegging families, and they were inevitably very attractive. I suppose my family were glad when I went off to school.

EW: Because of the point of view in the novel, it is often these people who speak for themselves. I would think that would require a certain intimacy with their way of life.

Spencer: I don't know how I know those things. I have a feeling that things would have happened that way, and that someone would say that, that the room looked like this, and the weather was like this, and nothing will shake me from that knowledge, even though it never happened. I enjoyed writing a whole segment of *The Salt Line* that takes place in a city I don't know, with people I never have seen or heard of.

EW: Speaking of *The Salt Line*, I found it to fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. Would you care to comment on the construction of the novel?

Spencer: It first came to me out of the image of that part of Mississippi that I love so much, seeing it a year after Hurricane Camille happened. That part of the coast was simply devastated. The whole seawall had been smashed, and chunks of cement were all over the place still. And reading about it revealed more harrowing things. Those images stuck in my mind.

All that happened just at the conclusion of the 1960s — well, you know what the 1960s brought. It brought an enormous lot of turmoil to the United States. The thing that gave the story life was that *that* was like a storm, too. I knew a lot of people who were affected by it, especially on college campuses, so it's no accident that my main character is an ex-college professor who was involved in the tumult of the '60s.

But I wanted a story of resurrection, of a place coming back to life, and a man coming back to life. You know why the place has to come back to life — it was hit by a hurricane — but why was the man having to come back to life? Well, there was a hurricane in his life that destroyed him. Those two things worked together in the novel. If you're reviving yourself after something, what is it you're reviving yourself from? You've got to tell the reader that somewhere. I tell it in bits and pieces as the need arises.

EW: There is a certain up-in-the-air quality about many of your stories. One

feels there is definitely life after an Elizabeth Spencer short story or novel. Spencer: The way I feel about characters in books is that they are all living somewhere outside the book. They're doing a lot of things all of the time that I'm not putting in the book. Ford Madox Ford said, "Let us assume that your char-

acters got up, ate breakfast, had lunch, and dinner, and went to bed." But of course you don't have to tell all that. They are always living outside the book and continue to live unless they're killed off in the course of the book. The act of art is simply pulling forward something for the reader to share. □

## FIRST NOVELS

### Temps perdu: from the destructive march of history on the unspoiled prairie to a quest for self-knowledge in 'old' Quebec

By PAUL WILSON

FOR CANADIAN readers, there is an interesting twist in *The Questing Beast*, by Richard Hébert (McClelland & Stewart, 363 pages, \$19.95 cloth). Here, suddenly, is a novel written by an American in which Canada — Quebec, to be specific — figures as the "old country," the source of that precious mother lode known as identity.

The emotional impulse behind this book is a classic one: the son's quest for self-knowledge through seeking to discover the father. Like the author, the novel's hero André was born and raised in the United States. His parents, however, are emigrants from Quebec, a place André has never been. Once, when he is a teenager, his father asks him to go to Quebec with him, hoping that this father-and-son excursion will bring them closer together. The boy cruelly refuses, and the father goes back to Thetford Mines alone. There he dies, leaving André stricken with guilt. "From that moment on," he says, "I began creating myself and my father out of the potsherds and driftwood left in my memory by the man he must have been. We are all of us sons of the fathers we create."

So saying, André proceeds to "create" his spiritual and biological patrimony. The narrative is divided between the present, in which André, now an artist scratching out a living in the art department of a daily newspaper, tries to juggle his relationships with two utterly different women, and the past, in which he reconstructs the story of his father's life. In the end, André finally does go to Quebec, where he discovers a startling truth about his father and therefore about himself. He settles down, appropriately, in Thetford Mines, managing the patriarchal home-

stead and tending the grave he believes belongs to his mother.

Hébert, a former journalist and filmmaker, has devoted the last decade of his life to creative writing. Although this is his first novel, it is not his first book, and his voice is already a mature and distinctive one. Part of it is that Hébert sometimes expresses himself in the slightly unusual language often used by unilingual children from bilingual households. But he also has a strong imaginative grasp of his material, not only of the characters, but also of the places and circumstances they inhabit. The main personalities in his story, particularly the father, Napoléon, are complex and unpredictable figures.

The picture of Quebec society that emerges is neither ideological nor romantic, but rather represents the view of a writer who is primarily interested in individuals. This is not to say that Hébert is not politically astute, but because he is not embroiled in the questions that used to concern Quebec writers, his sense of politics is not tied to any self-serving interpretation of that province's history. His depiction of Thetford Mines, for example, is particularly vivid. Perhaps this is because Hébert was once an urban affairs analyst, but whatever the reason for it, he is able to represent with admirable conciseness the human dimensions of the town's politics and history, while not forgetting the lethal environment that asbestos mining created for its workers.

André's women — one a chaste and silent muse and the other a scatter-brained nymphomaniac — are less completely drawn, and a great deal about them, and about André's relationship to them, remains unexamined. Perhaps this

is deliberate. Hébert knows that both work and sex are part of life, but the quasi-Marxist, quasi-Freudian view that work and sex provide the key to understanding the universe is evidently not for him.

*Perdue: or How the West Was Lost*, by Saskatchewan playwright and composer Geoffrey Ursell (Macmillan, 206 pages, \$14.95 cloth), is an unusual novel that is both maddening and fascinating. It is maddening because it presents a fore-shortened, emblematic interpretation of history that cries out for elaboration and argument while admitting none to take place. And it is fascinating because its ambition is so large: to create a Western mythos that is genuinely native, in which those who are born here — Indian and white — are able to find common ground in a natural unity of consciousness.

Part allegory and part tall tale, the novel has the sweep of an epic and the brief, bright intensity of a prophecy. The vision of history it presents is not new: the settlement of the Canadian West is a compressed survey of Western civilization, which is seen as a violent, disruptive force akin to rape that inevitably destroys nature and turns men into corrupt fools. Like all self-styled

agents of history-as-inevitability, the men of progress are seen manipulating history in their favour while piously claiming to be doing no more than what they must. The only real inevitability, of course, is that this view of history, wherever it becomes operative, always reduces richness, diversity, and beauty to the uniformity of dust.

Perdue — the lost boy — is a silent witness to all this devastation. He is raised on the prairie by a monosyllabic Brit landowner called Sir and his wife, Gal Sal, and watches as man and nature contend with the titanic forces that each hurls at the other. The buffalo are wiped out, snow storms bury the house, the land is plowed (harrow blades slice like razors into the earth's flesh), hail and locusts destroy the crops, the CPR is railroaded through, the Indians are robbed and then exterminated, governments and cities established and world was fought, oil and potash are ripped out of the earth — all within the tiny perimeter of the boy's horizon. There is, of course, nothing he can do about it.

Suddenly an Indian giant appears, with the size and strength of three men. He uses his superhuman power to haul the stone to build the houses of government and law, helping to create the very institutions that enslave him. Perdue is

fascinated by him, but the giant is killed in a freak whirlwind. Perdue takes in an orphaned Indian girl, and together they watch the destructive march of history from the safe haven of their garden. When they are old enough, they become lovers and have a child. In a moving apocalypse, the three of them are rescued from the dread Windigo (who in Ojibwa legend, at least, is a Faustian figure of elemental evil) by the reincarnated Giant (who may be Missahba, the Ojibwa saviour) and restored to a regenerated land dominated by "the pungent whirlwind of scent, the marvellous smell of wild, unbroken prairie."

Ursell's writing is compressed, vivid, and poetic, and is equally at home in passages of realism or revelation. There is a sense of risk in the book, of skating on ice that at any moment could crack and collapse. White artists who try to move imaginatively into what they believe to be a native consciousness often end up floundering in guilt and self-loathing. Ursell manages to hold his guilt at arm's length, largely by keeping Perdue innocent of the chief original sin of our time: he does not identify with civilization, and is therefore able to mingle his own native-born consciousness with that of the Indians. Without this strongly imagined native metaphysics, and without the author's talent for keeping his allegory light-hearted, *Perdue* might easily have become just another effort to leaven the gospel of guilt with the bogus yeast of a cribbed mythology. As it stands now, though, *Perdue* presents us with a tale whose ambition is still somewhat greater than its achievement.

*Precious*, by Douglas H. Glover (Seal Books, 200 pages, \$3.50 paper), is a cracking good novel of crime and detection that has everything one wants in a literary entertainment: pace, verve, snappy dialogue, witty, intelligent narration, and, of course, mystery and suspense based on a strong story and convincing characterizations.

The hero, Moss Elliot, known as "Precious," is an investigative reporter who has seen enough of the world to have had most of his illusions and ideals abraded away. Like so many others in his hard-boiled literary clan, he is given to smart metaphors, blunt-nosed philosophizing, booze, and women, and he handles them all with more flair than tact. Arriving broke back in Toronto after bribing his way out of a Greek jail, he takes a job editing the women's section of a small-town daily, a job that is considerably less difficult than keeping sober. An eager young journalist gets Precious entangled in a murder mystery, and incidentally in the sweet wiles of the

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\$21.50

victim's lonely step-daughter. His attempts to unravel the case draw him further and further into a web of deceit, intrigue, and municipal corruption that, à la Dashiell Hammett, remains undisturbed after the murderer has been brought to justice.

One of the book's many virtues is its strong sense of place, something that a good crime story, especially one that takes a wider sense of society and corruption as its background, can't get

along without. The cops, the burnt-out reporters, the housewives and hockey players, the bars, arenas, editorial offices, and back streets of "Ockenden" on Lake Ontario seem as real, even beneath the veneer of smart hyperbole, as the characters and the streets of Chandler's Los Angeles. *Precious* is a terrific beginning. In Elliot Moss, Glover has come up with a character and a voice that I certainly hope we hear more from. □

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS

### Cautionary tales: whether dining with a sloppy rabbit or hated relatives, it usually pays to mind your manners

By MARY AINSLIE SMITH

ANNICK PRESS began publishing in 1976, and today it is hard to imagine raising a pre-schooler in this country without access to the help of these bright, happy books. There may be a tendency to equate Annick with Robert Munsch and Michael Martchenko, its best-known writer/illustrator team. But although the quality is at times uneven, Annick has become a source of encouragement for many writers and illustrators of Canadian children's books. This season, six new titles display the work of six different authors and five artists in a very attractive way. (All six books are 32 pages, \$10.95 cloth and \$4.95 paper.)

Two of the new titles are for very young children, part of the Annick Toddler Series. One of these — the best of all six — is *When You Were Little and I Was Big*, by Priscilla Galloway. On the first page a little girl, standing on her mother's lap, says, "Mummy, I'm going to tell you a story about when you were little and I was big." Then very clever art work by Heather Collins shows us just how that would be. Each left-hand page has the text, presenting the various situations. Each right-hand page is a full-colour illustration, showing the imaginary role reversals. "When you were little and I was big, I took you to work with me." Or, "When you were little and I was big, I played doctor with you, and I played dolls with you, and I played trucks, all day long." And most poignant: "When you were little and I was big, you cried and cried when Daddy had to go away. I hugged you tight."

This story portrays a warm and loving

relationship between a parent and a child, but it also gives voice to some of the injustices a small child might feel. "When you were little and I was big, I didn't take away your gum when you unrolled all the toilet paper . . . I let you stay up late and watch TV — on Saturday night . . . I never got mad when you woke up early and wanted to get in bed with me."

*The Rude Visitors*, by Gail Chislett, illustrated by Barbara Di Lella, is another picture book that makes a wonderful appeal to a toddler's imagination. Here is one of several situations, complete with consequences and logical explanation: "Bram was sitting in his high chair eating lunch when a big white rabbit jumped over the table and knocked his glass of milk onto the floor. 'Rabbit did it,' said Bram. 'Darn rabbit,' said Mom." A hippopotamus, a cow, and an elephant also cause trouble for Bram during his day and then join him in his crib at nap time for a marvellous dream.

Barbara Di Lella also illustrated *It's a Good Thing*, by Joan Buchanan, one of four Annick books intended for children from four to seven years old. The two girls in this story, Marie and her little sister Elizabeth, are apparently children from perhaps a hundred years ago, dressed in long skirts, pinafores, and high-buttoned boots. These costumes are appropriate because this is essentially an old-fashioned cautionary tale. The children, out for a walk, learn that watch can be dangerous if you don't watch where you are going, if you day-dream too much, if you let your imagination

carry you away, or if you are not aware of your limitations. But fortunately, being sisters, they look after each other and help when necessary. Di Lella's illustrations are warm and vivid — both girls have hair with lovely shades of red, and they walk through a glowing autumn landscape. The pictures add considerable subtlety and depth to a rather slender story.

Shirley Day has written and illustrated *Waldo's Back Yard*, her second children's book for Annick, following *Ruthie's Big Tree* two years ago. The two stories are very similar, both concerning a grouchy neighbour threatening a children's play area. In this story, Mr. Tester does not like what he sees next door in Waldo's yard. Waldo has a race-track, a lion trap, forts, trenches, and a half-built tree house instead of neat grass and garden. Mr. Tester also objects, probably justifiably, to Waldo and his friend Elizabeth wearing a path across his lawn as they go to each other's houses. When Mr. Tester suffers some sort of sudden illness — we are led to believe that this has been brought on by his bad temper — Elizabeth has the presence of mind to telephone for help. And when he gets out of the hospital, Mr. Tester is a totally changed man and even plays hide-and-seek with the children in Waldo's backyard. If only all neighbourhood conflicts could be solved so completely and satisfactorily.

*Dinner at Auntie Rose's*, by Janet Munsil, describes six-year-old Lucy's ordeal when she has to go with her family to dinner at her aunt and uncle's. This she hates because she has to wear her good dress, mind her manners, hear her relatives talk about her, and play nicely with her cousin Jeremy. Illustrations by Scot Ritchie, especially the cover picture of Lucy at her aunt's front door, a "sincere" fixed smile on her face, set the humorous tone for the story, a promising first book for Munsil, who is currently a high-school student.

*Barnaby and Mr. Ling*, by Allen Morgan, illustrated by Franklin Hammond, takes children away from a world of problems with neighbours and relatives to a whimsical, imaginary world where Barnaby, a circus elephant, becomes good friends with Mr. Ling, the peanut man. Neither is happy at the circus, and so they run away together and work toward fulfilling their dreams of perfect happiness. They build a house "under the tallest tree in a very secret place in the woods where no one ever walked." Who wouldn't find such a haven appealing?

*Kids Can Press* has a very topical spring title, *The Maple Syrup Book*, by Marilyn Linton, illustrated by Lesley Fairfield (48 pages, \$8.95 paper). Maple

syrup is a big topic for school research projects, and this book provides information on all aspects, from a scientific explanation for why sap runs, to an Iroquois legend about the first use of this product. The book outlines the history of maple syrup making and describes the process in a modern sugar bush. There are riddles, games, and quizzes as well as suggestions for such activities as doing a bark: rubbing or concocting treats like maple-flavoured popcorn balls. There is even an endorsement on the book's back cover by that famous Canadian, Pierre Erable.

Two stories from James Lorimer, *My Father's Ghost*, by Barry Dickson, and *The Friendship Solution*, by Aristides Yerou with Cathleen Hoskins, are bound into one volume (107 pages, \$12.95 cloth, \$5.95 paper), and have in common their setting in the Greek community in Toronto. *My Father's Ghost* is an improbable story about the reunion of twin brothers, 12-year-old Nicky's father and uncle. Each had presumed the other killed many years earlier during the wartime occupation of their village in Greece. When coincidentally they both turn up in Toronto, Nicky plays a major part in bringing them together again.

*The Friendship Solution* is a much more plausible story, and better presented, although its basic conflict is less dramatic. Aleka, a new girl to the neighbourhood, is anxious to make friends. But when she is asked to pass tests to prove her value as a friend, she finds she is also testing her own maturity and common sense. An interesting and important part of this story is Aleka's Greek background. She was born in Canada and is, of course, Canadian, but her special heritage clearly provides her with a sense of security and belonging that gives orientation to her feelings and actions. Barbara Di Lella has done black-and-white illustrations for both stories.

The heroine of Sarah Jane of Silver Islet, by Elizabeth Kouhi, illustrated by Jeanette Lightwood (Queenston House, 144 pages, \$10.95 cloth, \$6.95 paper), is also a new arrival. The setting is the 1870s in Silver Islet Landing, a small community on the north shore of Lake Superior, where Sarah Jane's father has found work in a silver mine. Sarah Jane feels very much a stranger. Shy and awkward at 13, more interested in books than in pretty clothes or needlework, she feels totally alienated from the other girls in her new school and longs to be back home in Montreal. A family crisis, the death of her little sister, brings her much closer to her parents, and ultimately helps her to see what Silver Islet Landing can offer her. Kouhi has taken

great care with her description of life in this isolated and rather bleak mining town, conveying also the strong sense of community feeling that existed there, and the beauty of the physical surroundings. The story is rather slow moving, but is a worthwhile and sensitive portrayal of Sarah Jane's increasing awareness of her own abilities and potential. □

## LETTERS

### Troubled waters

YOUR REVIEWER (February) wouldn't know a metaphysical poem from a Bromo Seltzer tablet fizzling in a urinal. The deathless prose of Peter O'Brien is unintentionally amusing. In *Brides of the Stream*, my latest volume, Uncle Nathan, a departed fishmonger, is reincarnated as a cut-throat trout, and this is made evident at the very beginning of the book in a poem titled "Blind Date." It is there that Nathan's spirit moves in on a minnow. Your reviewer would have it otherwise. He states that "the reader follows a man/fish, sometimes called Uncle Nathan, in and out of the Little Qualicum on Vancouver Island."

From the above one can conjure up images of aquaman, scaly, shimmering, and generally suffering from some advanced form of fishy dermatitis. O'Brien's formulation on Nathan's troutly reincarnation is as *consistent* as his sloppy cribbing of the information on the book's dust-jacket. It is not a long prose poem as O'Brien would have your readers believe. Had he read the dust-jacket carefully he might have discovered that the author had intended his book to be "a long poem that deals thematically with questions of theology, sexuality, the sacred and profane. . . ."

O'Brien says my poems are overly philosophical, overly complicated, and I can sympathize with his plight. His commentary reveals an individual of diminutive depth on matters of the muse. I can see others of his stripe attacking Wallace Stevens's *Blue Guitar* as "convoluted," "overly philosophical" . . . even "muddy." Your reviewer goes on to attack my *musings*. From O'Brien's lips, musing takes on the sound and connotation of some poetic streptococcus. Musings, or reflections, were good enough for Isaac Walton, Roderick Haig-Brown, W.B.

Yeats, and other "sentimentalists" who, when they viewed a clean river pregnant with trout, saw eternity in the spawning, death, rebirth, and continuity of those magic waters.

I guess the ultimate in stupidity is O'Brien's concern that the poems don't go far enough. They are not "bursting with metaphor." My reply would be that if bullshit were music we'd have a brass band. If an 88-page poem is not stretching that piscatorial hide then I'll drop my salmon line down a sewer and see if I can hook onto immortality somewhere in that honest, luminous methane.

O'Brien's glib comments are insulting to the Steelhead tribe. Quicker than you could say aquaman, Nathan would have turned your reviewer into a capon for blighting his brides. Nathan loved trout.

Joe Rosenblatt  
Qualicum Beach, B.C.

*Peter O'Brien replies:* I very much enjoyed Joe Rosenblatt's letter. There are, however, a few fishy problems: (a) What does "Nathan's spirit moves in on a minnow" mean? (b) Despite misquoting me in his first paragraph, Rosenblatt can't imagine what a "man/fish" might be. I suggest he reread his own poems or even the two long passages I quote in my review. (c) My "cribbing" is not "sloppy": had Rosenblatt read the entire blurb he would have seen the words "this beautiful, often metaphysical prose/poem"; I merely left out the gushy adjectives. (d) The fact that I am 5' 3½" ("diminutive") has nothing to do with the argument. (e) I do not attack all musing, I attack *naïve* musing. (f) Yeats never saw a clean river in his life. (g) The ultimate tragedy is that Rosenblatt mistakes the phrase "far enough" for "long enough." I would argue that Archibald Lampman's "The Story of an Affinity" (all 62 pages of it) has not been pushed far enough, and that Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" (all 14 words of it) has been pushed as far as it will go. It's got nothing to do with length, and everything to do with substance, metaphysical or not.

#### Kinsella's complaint

I HOPE Bill Kinsella's remarks (February) on the deficiencies of his reading tour hosts were more therapeutic for the writer than entertaining for this reader. It escapes me why *Books in Canada* should dignify such a piece of self-indulgence.

I find it ironic that a writer whose readings rely substantially on his stories of Indians should complain of such hardships as lack of indoor plumbing. Does he realize how many Indians are



without such amenities? Or perhaps he doesn't think any of them will read *Boofs in Canada*.

I have lived 10 years on Indian reserves, and can understand better after reading his article why Kinsella gives them such a wide berth.

Francis Mansbridge  
Cranbrook, B.C.

MY HEART BLEEDS for Bill Kinsella. I suggest that he pack his lunch and sleep in his car.

Lois Simmie  
Saskatoon

### Poetic injustice

WHAT HAS come over Irving Layton lately? In his interview in your magazine (March) he offers the viewpoint that poetry has now been given over to the hands of the film-makers; that traditional poetry, the kind of stuff that appears on a page, has run dry, lost its audience. And he seems upset by this! This is like a hunter complaining there is no more game left in the woods.

I, too, am one of those who lost all interest in poetry. Why? Because I foolishly listened to my teachers and to the media who hailed Layton as one of Canada's "major" and "dynamic" poets. Eagerly, yes, eagerly, buying an opus by Layton, I found it filled with the sort of doggerel and slapdash egotistical doodles that made me think, *If this is poetry, I don't want it!* Examples abound in Layton's volumes, and I don't know who should be scolded for it. Layton himself has already publicly acknowledged in print that he *knows* when he is producing doggerel, so no one need tell him. The question is, why does he let it appear in public? Lax attitudes like that do no justice to poetry at all. And shame on his publishers — M & S and Mosaic — for letting such excesses appear on the page simply because Layton is a major poet. He is turning into the Michael Cimino of poetry, except in his case he is grinding out one *Heaven's Gate* after another — and getting away with it. At least the Hollywood studios have put Cimino's grandiose schemes on hold.

If Layton wants the public to get interested in poetry again, I suggest that, like a good physician, he should heal himself. Be ruthless in your judgement about yourself! Only *poetry* in your books from now on. Until I see some standards applied to poetry, I will stick to the movies. (And please don't give me the argument that everything a poet produces is important to the appreciation and understanding of his work — film directors don't impose all their takes on us; they know *something* has to land on

the editor's floor, even if it's from their "final" filmed opus.) If Layton thinks he can serve his self-indulgences to us the way he has managed to serve it over the years to the media, he is mistaken.

Darlene Coates  
Toronto

### CANWIT NO. 93

She stood eyeing me from a couple of paces across the tarmac, a slightly frightened, dark-haired beauty who, despite her confusion, still radiated the dizzying heat of her youth. She had eyes deeper than Harrington Lake and full, crushed-looking lips as red as the rose in my lapel. She had discoed all night, and now she was exhausted, giddy, wild, and defiant. I lunged forward, and shoved her roughly toward the Ambassador's jet.

NOW THAT his nibs has retired from office, we understand he plans to compose his political memoirs. Trouble is, he isn't quite sure what form they should take. Above is a snippet — retrieved from the PMO paper-shredder — from his spy thriller *You Only Live Forever*, but we are told he is also experimenting with

autobiography, diary entries, drama, and (ulp!) even verse. We'll pay \$25 for the best excerpt in any form (but no longer than 150 words) received before June 1. Address: CanWit No. 93, *Books in Canada*, 366 Adelaide Street East, Toronto M5A 3X9.

### Results of CanWit No. 91

JUDGING BY their responses, our readers find little to laugh at amid the jargon that the computer culture has inflicted on us. Whatever the case, the winner is Michael J. Keaschuk of Herbert, Sask., who provides literary translations for the following examples of computeres:

- Data Analyst: book reviewer
- Interfacing: reading
- Word processor: publisher
- Floppy: paperback

### Honourable mentions:

- Linear interfacing: writing
- Multivalent simulation situation: plagiarism
- Interspatial irregularities: poetry
- Afactual synchrony: novel  
— Barry Baldwin, Calgary
- Replicatoner: printer
- Tome-leaser: librarian  
— F.D. Weir, Coboconk, Ont.

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## THE EDITORS RECOMMEND

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

### FICTION

**The Salt Line**, by Elizabeth Spencer, Doubleday. Set on Mississippi's Gulf Coast, recently devastated by a killer hurricane, Spencer's abundant novel is a dance of interlocking lives that, in one form or another, demonstrates the need to rebuild, come to terms with old ghosts, set the past to order.

### NON-FICTION

**The Strangest Dream: Canadian Communists, the Spy Trials, and the Cold War**, by Merrily Weisbord, Lester & Orpen Dennys. Weisbord, whose own roots lie in the 1930s communist movement, rejects the notion that history should somehow be "objective." She draws us so well into the lives of the men and women who experienced it that, for a while, she makes us share their dream.

### POETRY

**The Visitation**, by A.F. Moritz, Aya Press. Moritz's first major collection reveals a gifted poet with an unerring sense of art and craft. When he pares down an almost-too-rich allusion system, the results are straightforward poems that speak eloquently, with a startling lyrical grace.

### 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:

**Acne: Advice on Clearing Your Skin**, by Ronald Marks, Prentice-Hall.  
**Advocate of Compassion: Stanley Knowles in the Political Process**, by Gerry Harrop, Lancolet Press.  
**The Analytic Encounter**, by Mario Jacoby, Inner City Books.  
**And the Children Played**, by Patricia Joudry, Tundra.  
**An Angel in the Works**, by Robert Hillis, Collichan Books.  
**Arm Disarm for Peace**, edited by Waris Shere, Hyperion Press.  
**Bumiling: A Biography**, by Michael Bliss, M & S.  
**Bedside Reading**, by Adrian Raside, Moxton.  
**The Box of Daylight: Northwest Coast Indian Art**, by Bill Holm, Douglas & McIntyre.  
**Brian and the Boys: A Story of Gang Rape**, by Maggie Sigman, James Lorimer.  
**Business Cycles in Canada**, by Maurice Lamontagne, James Lorimer.  
**Call Book Yesterday**, by Sam Woods, Lester & Orpen Dennys.  
**Call It a Day**, by Eugene McNamara, blwointment.  
**The Canadian Fish Cook Book**, by A. Jan Howarth, Douglas & McIntyre.  
**Canadian Government and Politics in Comparative Perspective (2nd edition)**, by Earl H. Fry, University Press of America (U.S.).  
**The Cape Breton Collection**, edited by Lesley Choyce, Potteryfield Press.  
**The Catching Poems**, by David Helwig, Oberon.  
**China Rose**, by Marsha Canham, Avon.  
**The Creation of Consciousness: Jung's Myth for Modern Man**, by Edward F. Edinger, Inner City Books.  
**Day of the Wizard**, by Jerry Williams, Gage.  
**Deep Streets**, by Judy McGillivray, Vestal.  
**Difficult Loves**, by Italo Calvino, Lester & Orpen Dennys.  
**Dimensions of Moral Education**, by Robert E. Carter, U of T Press.

**Directions: A Community Guidance Resource Book**, by Marvin Collins et al., The Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.  
**Dirty Blues at Hangman's Clubhouse**, by Sharon Simon, Gage.  
**Divisions**, by Stephen Morrissey, Coach House.  
**Domination**, by Robert E. Wall, Seal.  
**Economic Recovery for Canada: A Policy Framework**, by John Cornwall and Wendy Maclean, James Lorimer.  
**Elizabeth Sturges**, by Isabel Huggan, Oberon.  
**The Father**, by F.G. Paci, Oberon.  
**The Figure in Film**, by N. Roy Clifton, Pendragon House.  
**Fire Before Dark**, by George McWhirter, Oberon.  
**Focus on The Power of Britain's Organized Labour**, by Lord Bauer and John Burton, The Fraser Institute.  
**From Prairie Roots**, by Garry Fairbairn, Western Producer Prairie Books.  
**The Gaiter: A Canadian Odyssey, Volume 2**, by H.B. Timothy, M & S.  
**The Ghost of Sullivan Town**, by Beverly Spencer, Gage.  
**The Goddam Gypsy**, by Ronald Lee, Tundra.  
**The Greeks Had a Word for It**, by B.C. Taylor, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.  
**Guide to Provincial Library Agencies in Canada**, by Carolyn Robertson, National Library of Canada.  
**Heart's Garden**, by Leroy Gorman, Guernica Editions.  
**How Food Was Given: An Okanagan Legend**, illustrated by Ken Edwards, Theytus Books.  
**How Names Were Given: An Okanagan Legend**, illustrated by Ken Edwards, Theytus Books.  
**Ice Runway**, by Roy Mason, Douglas & McIntyre.  
**In Search of Your Roots**, by Angus Baxter, Macmillan.  
**Index to Federal Programs and Services 1984**, Supply and Services Canada.  
**Industry in the Wilderness**, by Frank Rasky, Dundurn.  
**It's a Good Thing**, by Joan Buchanan, illustrated by Barbara Di Lella, Annick.  
**It's Your Future: The Canadian Guide to Estate Planning**, by Arthur B.C. Drache, M & S.  
**James FitzGibbon: Defender of Upper Canada**, by Ruth McKenzie, Dundurn.  
**John Walden Meyers: Loyalist Spy**, by Mary Beacock Fryer, Dundurn.  
**The Kids from B.A.D.**, by Allen Morgan, Scholastic-TAB.  
**The Lost Sunrise**, by Norman Carleton and Verna Kidd, Jove (U.S.).  
**Love is a Long Shot**, by Ted Allan, M & S.  
**A Majority of One**, by Lewis St. George Stubbs, Queenston House.  
**A Minor Operation**, by Phil Hall, blwointment.  
**Miss P. and Me**, by Florence McNeil, Scholastic-TAB.  
**Moonlighting With Your Personal Computer**, by Robert J. Waxman, Prentice-Hall.  
**Motivation: Implications for Coaching and Teaching**, by Albert V. Carron, Sports Dynamics.  
**Multicultural Early Childhood Education**, edited by Keith A. McLeod, Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, U of T.  
**Musings on Medicine**, by Gordon Hunter Grant, Stanton & MacDougall.  
**Necessary Suffer**, by Mary di Michele, Oberon.  
**Neakna and Chemak: An Okanagan Legend**, illustrated by Ken Edwards, Theytus Books.  
**Night Tides**, by George Swede, South Western Ontario Poetry.  
**1984 Canadian Business Guide to Microcomputers**, by Robert G. Parker, Prentice-Hall.  
**Odyssey Northwest**, by Gerald St. Maur, Boreal Institute for Northern Studies.  
**One Bird — One Coo — One Flight: Homage to Emily Dickinson**, by Roger White, Naturegraph (U.S.).  
**The Original Guide to Office Pools**, by Jamie Wayne, Doubleday.  
**Overcoming Dyslexia**, by Veva Hornsby, Prentice-Hall.  
**The Pleasure: Computer Contact With a Two-Dimensional World**, by A.K. Dewdney, M & S.  
**Planning and the Economy**, by H.G. Thorburn, James Lorimer.  
**The Pelles Chronicles**, by Philip Kamlin and Peter Goddard, Moxton.  
**Park College**, by Crad Kidney, Coach House Press.  
**Queen City**, by Raymond Souster, photography by Bill Brooks, Oberon.  
**The Real Jewish World**, by Stuart E. Rosenberg, Clarke Irwin.  
**Recesses in the Heart**, by Bruce Whiteman, blwointment.  
**Reminiscences of a Bungler by One of the Bunglers**, edited by R.C. MacLeod, University of Alberta Press.  
**The Season of My Youth**, by Dave McIntosh, General.  
**Sources of French Canadian Children's and Young People's Books**, compiled by Irene E. Aubrey, Supply and Services Canada.  
**Stepfamilies: Making Them Work**, by Erna Paris, Avon.  
**The Stone in the Meadow**, by Karleen Bradford, Gage.  
**Storytellers' Encore: More Canadian Stories to Tell to Children**, compiled by Irene Aubrey et al., Canadian Library Association.  
**Toronto: The City of Neighbourhoods**, by Marjorie Harris.  
**Too Many Blackbirds**, by Ken Ledbetter, Stoddart.  
**Tourists From Algol**, by Tom Henighan, Golden Dog Press.  
**Trade Unions and Society**, by John T. Addison and John Burton, The Fraser Institute.  
**The Treasure Hunt**, by Sonia Craddock, Gage.  
**"Turn Out the Stars Before Leaving" The Story of Canada's Theatres**, by John C. Lindsay, Boston Mills Press.  
**The Unfinished Anthology, Vol. 1**, edited by Chris Paters, Unfinished Monument Press.  
**Union List of Serials in the Social Sciences and Humanities held by Canadian Libraries**, National Library of Canada.  
**Victims: The Orphans of Justice**, by Jerry Americk, Seal.  
**Where There's a Will . . .**, by Edward Phillips, M & S.  
**Whirlwinds**, by Ken Norris, Guernica.  
**Who is My Mother?**, by Clare Marcus, Macmillan.  
**Winston Churchill: A Brief Life**, by Piers Brendon, Stoddart.

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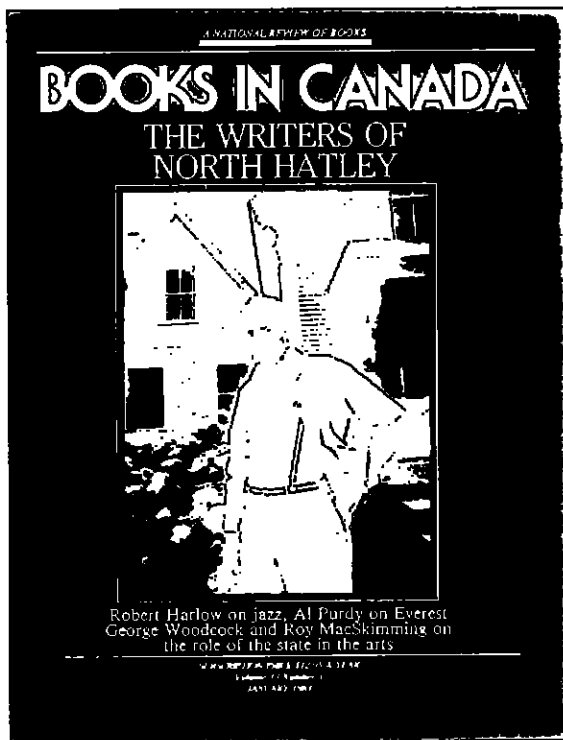
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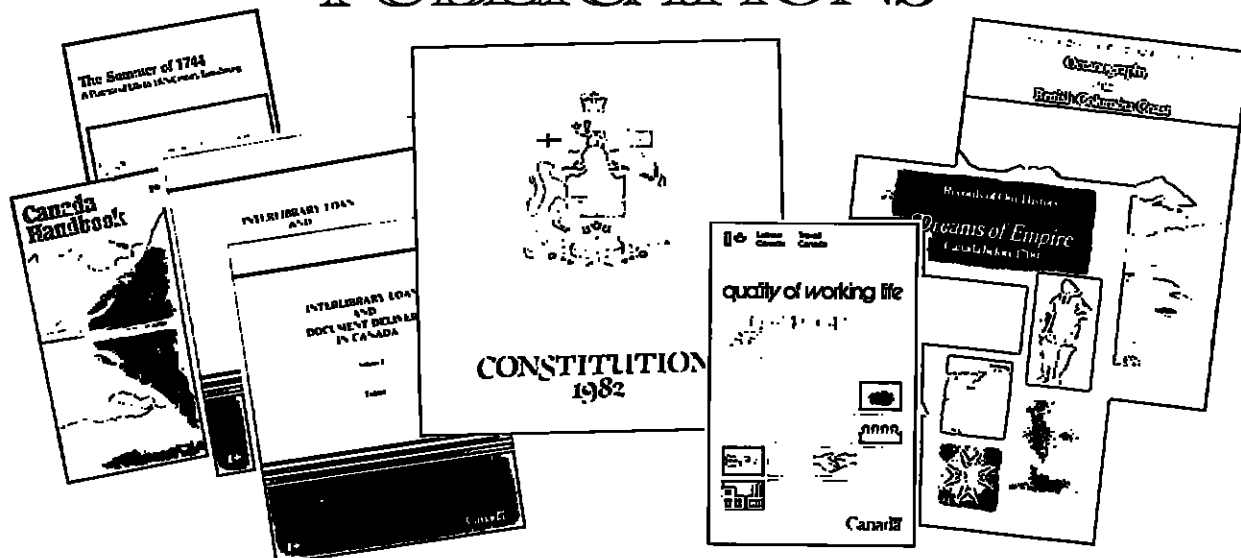
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