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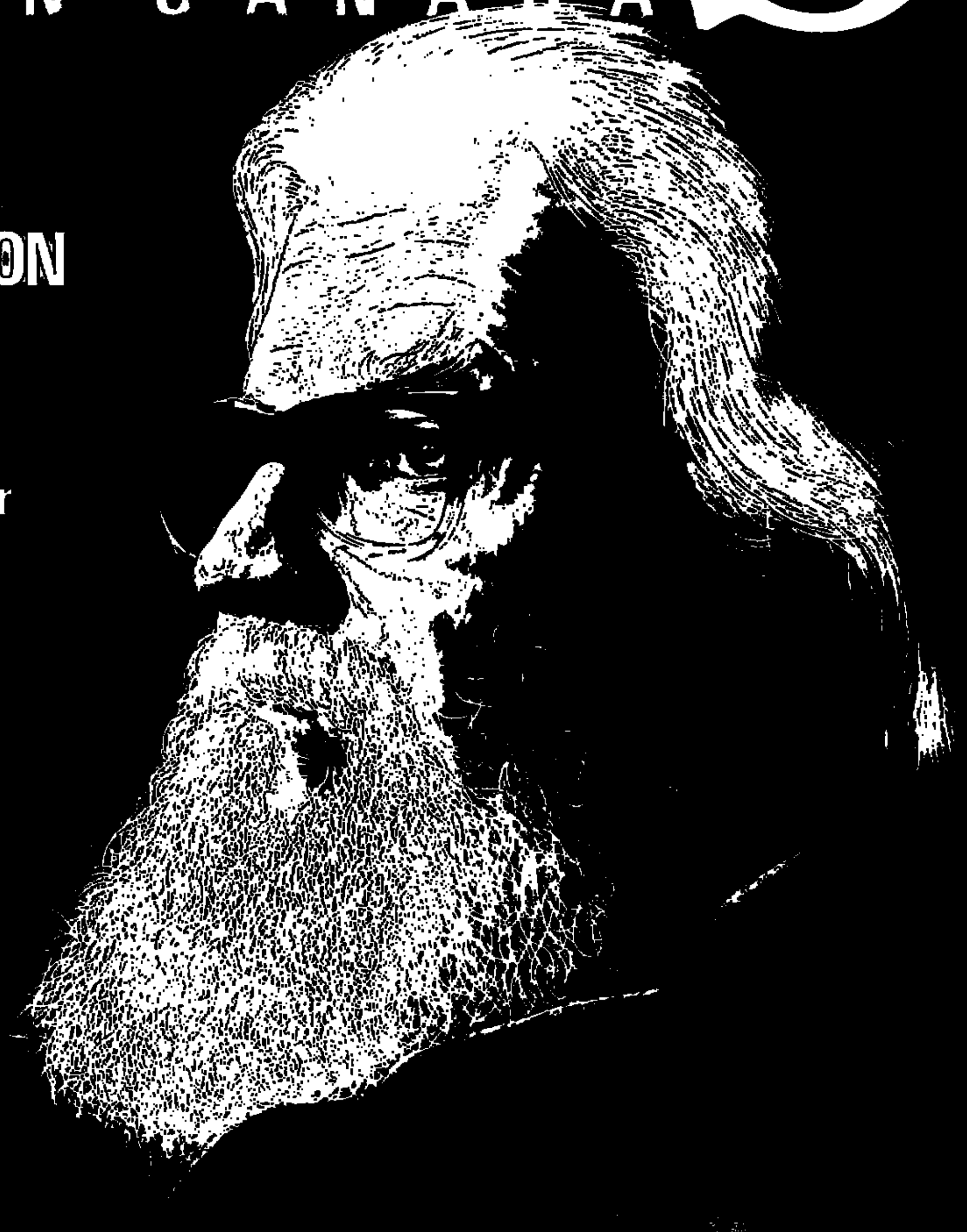

CONSOLATION AND EXALTATION

A review essay on Robertson Davies's *The Lyre of Orpheus* by Janice Kulyk Keefer

An excerpt from a novel in progress by Jack Hodgins

An interview with June Callwood
and reviews of new books by Mavis Gallant, Paul Kennedy,
Bharati Mukherjee, Robert Harlow, and Basil H. Johnston

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THE WRITTEN WORD

Common senses

Sense is one of the impressive-sounding words we throw in when we don't want to stop to think what exactly it is that we mean

By I. **M. Owen**

SENSE: Helmut Kallmann. our leading music historian. writes to me about

> the current fashion of using *sense* as a noun meaning opinion. interpretation, guess, hunch. etc. It turns up in interviews and news commentaries with alarming frequency, for example *What is your sense of Mr. Turner's prospects?* or *My sense of the latest developments is ....* Does this meaning of *sense* belong in the same category as *careen* and *dock* or is it legitimate?

In the seven and a half columns of the *OED* devoted to the noun *sense* there are 30 distinct meanings given, several of which tit in with this use: C. S. Lewis. in *Studies in Words*, boils the 30 down to two categories:

> (a) ordinary intelligence ... and (b) perception by sight. hearing, taste, smell or touch, which I shall call *aesthesis*. . We bad all been told to 'have sense'. or asked why we 'had not more sense' years before we ever heard sense used to mean aesthesis. The aesthesis meaning belongs to a comparatively late. bookish, and abstract stratum of our vocabulary.

He goes on to show that this bifurcation of meaning happened in classical Latin. so that it was well established long before the word came into English.

What Dr. Kallmann is talking about is the metaphorical use of the *aesthesis* meaning it's legitimate. but I quite agree with him that it's over-used. It's one of the impressive-sounding words we throw in when we don't want to stop to think what exactly it is that we mean — forgivable, though not admirable, in impromptu speech in interviews. but quite inexcusable in writing. I am working just now on a manuscript whose author says that a certain poet *makes the sound of words echo the sense of meaning.* That is, he did say so. 1 promise you he won't in the published book.

How heartening it is that one whose native language is German has such a fine feeling for (sense of?) English style.

MISSPELLINGS AND *PRONUNCIATION:* A reader reports having seen in a single issue of the *Toronto Star* the spellings *accidently*, *tempermental*, and *mischevious*. All these errors relate to pronunciation. in different ways.

Every word of more than one syllable has one heavily stressed syllable in English (unlike French, where the syllables are stressed equally — that's why spoken French seems to us as if it runs the words together). A consequence is that in longer words some unstressed syllables disappear in speech. We all say *accidently*, with the stress on *dent. Then* why not spell it that way? Because it's the adverb formed from the adjective *accidental*. I recently saw. in a proof, the word *publically*, which is glaringly wrong because the adjective is *public*, not *publical*.

In *temperamental*, most of us suppress the second syllable and say *tempramental*. The writer who spells the word *tempermental* quite possibly says it that way -and may even have a vague idea that it is made up of *temper* in its incongruous sense of *irritability* and *mental* in its still more incongruous sense *insane*.

As for *mischevious*, the writer probably pronounces it that way as a result of misreadingit in childhood. I've often heard both *mischevious* and *grevious* in actual speech.

LEGENDARY: His *attention to detail and passion for authenticity are legendary* (Peter Goddard on Robert De Nim in the *Toronto Star*). It must have been striking the first time a writer used *legendary* as a more emphatic way of saying *famous*. But the usage spread rapidly through the English-writing world and is now so standard on the entertainment and sports pages that it's no longer striking. and might as well be abandoned: especially since it has a possible ambiguity built in: the main modem meaning of *legend* is a traditional story that is probably untrue. It wasn't always so, of course: *legendum* in Latin means *thing that ought to be read*, and the word was first used in English as the title of a collection of lives of the saints. The modern meaning arrived early in the 17th century as a natural result of the Reformation (lives of the saints were a pack of lies) and of exploration. which revealed that the peoples of the New World also had traditional tales with religous connotations (unChristian and therefore untrue).

POSSESSIVES: Lamont Tilden, the retired CBC announcer, sends a helpful answer to my question in the May column about the possessives of words and names ending ins. He has given me a copy of a memorandum he sent to announcers in 1975 in his capacity as bmadcast language counsellor to the CBC:

> The rules which come closest to satisfying the needs of CBC broadcasters in 1975 (you may disagree in some of the details) are to be found in *Modern En&h.* by Lazarus, McLeish, and Smith, published by Grosset and Dunlap, NewYork:
> To form the possessive of MUM. observe the following rules:
>
> FOR THE PLURAL
> 1) If the noun does not end in *s*, add 's.
> Mm: men's children: children's
> 2) If the noun ends in *s*, add ' only.
> Joneses: Joneses' girls: girls'
> citizens: citizens'
>
> FOR THE SINGULAR
> 3) If the noun does not end in an *s* or *z* sound. add 's.
> cat: cat's child: child's
> 4) If the noun ends in an *s* or *z* sound,
> a) and it has only one syllable; add 's
> James: Jams's boss: boss s
> b) has two or more syllables. and the accent is on the last syllable. add 's.
> Hortense: Hortense's
> c) has two or more syllables. and the last syllable is preceded by an *s* or *z* sound. add ' only.
> Moses: Moses' Jesus: Jesus'
> d) has two or more syllables. and the last syllable is not preceded by an *s* or *z* sound, add 's.
> Thomas: Thomas's
> Dickens: Dickens's
> 5) If the noun ends in an *ez* sound, and the accent is on the penultimate syllable. add ' only.
> Achilles: Achilles'
> Archimedes: Archimedes'
>
> But what do we do with Brahms' Lullaby? Brahms's? Certainly not.

This seems to me a satisfactory set of rules — and personally *I* have no trouble at all with *Brahms's. My* thanks to Lamont Tilden. I wish he was. still bmadcast language counsellor. Every day I hear solecisms committed on CBC radio newscasts. The bii ones, like the excellent "The World at Six.' aren't too bad. But often one of the five-minute ones scattered through the day sounds as if it's being read from a sixth carbon. in a bad light. by a reader who has something else on his mind.0

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John E. Zucchi

Italians began migrating to Toronto in large numbers toward the end of the nineteenth century. Many of these immigrants were peasants who arrived in the new world with only a vague sense of nationality. In Italy, their identity had been primarily connected with the villages that were their homes and only secondarily with regions and country. In Toronto, as in other North American cities, a more emphatic sense of Italian nationalism developed.

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Brian Jenkins

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FIELD NOTES

Mordecai then and now

During the question period, Richler continued to be amusing and friendly. There might be a simple explanation: perhaps he had just got up on the right side of the bed that morning. Or perhaps he was mellowing.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL ORENSTEIN

Mordecai Richl

THE QUESTION-AND-ANSWER period was going well when a woman. one of nearly300 psychiatrists who had come to hear Mordecai Richler's lecture on the idiosyncrasies of the Canadian character. asked the novelist best known for his gruff public persona and caustic tongue. "Could you give us some of your thoughts on the psychiatric profession?"

The audience became quiet almost immediately. Looking around the large auditorium, I noticed there were several people smirking with anticipation. Apparently even professionals, trained to be sensitive and subtle. can ask dumb questions.

After a brief pause. Richler leaned over the lectern and said. "None that I'd like to express here."

His unwillingness to respond was a snub. of course. but for Richler a gentle one. Good sports up to a point. the audience laughed and applauded. Still. for anyone familiar with Richler's writing or his enduring reputation for sarcastic replies. there was also the suspicion that that wouldn't be the end of it. Even as the morning's evidence mounted. it was hard to accept the fact that Richler had mellowed.

Last spring the American Psychiatric Association held its 141st annual convention in Montreal. Some 13.000 psychiatrists — almost all of them American. all of them proudly wearing their identification badges — clogged the city's downtown streets. hotels, and restaurants. Long before it concluded. the six-day convention was deemed a success. Tourism officials estimated that the APA convention would pump about $52 million into the Montreal economy.

When the psychiatrists weren t participating in the APA golf tournament or doubling their cholesterol count on French cuisine. they were attending workshops on the latest treatments for paranoia and panic disorders. Feeling confident. the organizers had planned to inject a little local colour and culture into the final day and bad invited Richler to speak. Amusing. charming. and informative. he had been the perfect guest for almost an hour. Suddenly. though. a week of good will was in jeopardy.

Particularly since the moderator. a local psychiatrist who should have known better. was encouraging Richler to get in touch with his true feelings about the psychiatric profession. "Oh. c'mon." he urged. Meanwhile. the original questioner pressed her point. She asked Richler about his portrait of Dr. Jonathan Cape in his last novel.

Richler had not been kind toshrinks in *Joshua Then and Now*. Richler's fictional hem Joshua Shapiro had described psychiatry as "a suspect trade." Joshua had also called his childhood acquaintance Cape. a.k.a. Yossel Kugelman. esteemed author of *My Kind, Your Kind. Mankind*, "a prick and a faker." More recently. in his monthly column, "Books and Things." for *Gentleman's Quarterly*, Richler had occasionally used the space to call the occasional clinical psychiatrist "a pretentious twit."

This, of course. was the moment I had been anticipating. Now,, it seamed clear that CanLit's most accomplished satirist and distinguished curmudgeon was going to tell the audience of American shrinks precisely what he thought of them. They were. after all. asking for it. As Richler leaned away from the microphone and cleared histhroat. I turned to a fresh page in my note pad....

WHEN I learned that Richler would be speaking at the APA convention it seemed inevitable that someone would be offended. Throughout his career he has managed to outrage a wide range of people — from orthodox Jews who accused him of being an anti-Semite to Edmontonians who became apoplectic when Richler called their city "a used-building lot" in a story he'd written about Wayne Gretzky for *The New York Times*.

But his APA lecture. innocuously titled "Canadian Conundrums." was easygoing, not provocative: lull of clever anecdotes and reasonable insights. He hadn't insulted anyone either. except the Scots whom he'd called "the most inept and cautious capitalists in the West" and Mazo de la Roche whom he'd labeled "dispensable." Wearing a rumpled brown suit. his eyeglasses perched precariously at the end of his nose, Richler looked dishevelled, but no more than usual. Oblivious to the No Smoking signs surrounding him, he happily puffed away on a cigarillo. No one objected.

On the sobject of growing up Canadian. Richler was self-deprecating and nostalgic: "My generation was led to believe that the world was elsewhere. You just did your apprenticeship here and then set out for golden cities like Paris. London or New York.... Home was a good neighbourhood

but suburban. even bush."

Attuned to his audience. Richler also indulged in some self-analysis: "In college a guidance counsellor asked me what I wanted to do, and I said I wanted to be a writer. At the time, that seemed to mean putting picayune Canada and all it stood for behind me. That was foolishness. of course. It was arrogant and pompous. and I would carry my cherished Canada with me everywhere.

Sandwiched between a workshop on AIDS education and an update on Alzheimer's disease. Richlw's anecdotes about Lyndon Johnson's forgetting Lester Pearson's name provided welcome comic relief. His remarks about American ignorance of Canada were. for the most part, good-natured. He warned Americans that In their preoccupation with the Red Menace to the east they had overlooked the White Menace to the north.

"Canadians are sneaky-smart. We luxuriate in self-pity. whining about being take" over by Americans. but we are. in fact. infiltrating U.S. society. . . Your cultural debt to Canada includes Harlequin romances. Saul Bellow. Louis B. Mayer. Mary Pickford. Superman. and eve" Rambo — the invention of David Morrell. a professor at the University of Waterloo."

Declaring his impatience with "theshrill and militant nationalists" in this country who automatically lash out at all things America". Richler had unmistakably ambassadorial moments. "It is a futile exercise. We will go on being culturally intertwined for years. What we must do is reject the shoddy and embrace the excellent wherever it springs from...."

During the question period. Richler continued to be amusing and friendly. Whether he was describing the implications of separatism to a curious New Yorker or speaking calmly about free trade. he was a model of patience and accommodation. There might be a simple explanation: perhaps he had just got up on the right side of the bed that morning. Or perhaps he was mellowing. I was reluctantly considering that possibility when Jonathan Cape was mentioned..

Now. the question on the floor was rephrased but still unanswered: "Perhaps you could describe the character for the people in the audience who haven't read your novel? the female psychiatrist asked. refusing to take no comment for an answer.

Richler adjusted the microphone and cleared his throat.... "No. I couldn't do that." he said demurely.

According to the psychiatrist from Philadelphia who was sitting next to me. Richler was not expressing his hostility. "You see, he's repressing."

You don't know the half of it. I said to myself. -JOELYANOFSKY

The lord mayor and the garbage truck

Anthony *Burgess*

FOR A SECOND Greg Gatenby's glasses go blank in thespotlight as he stares up at the 2,800 people who. by coming out on this spring night to listen to Anthony Burgess and Robertson Davies, have made Harbourfront's reading series manager the most successful literary impresario"" the continent. Gatenby himself is aware of this. Not eve" in New York. he announces. can they get nearly three thousand people out just to hear two novelists read. Not used to beating New York at anything except garbage collection. the audience of Torontonians responds with delighted applause.

No one will ever know if either writer could have filled Massey Hall by himself (Arthur Miller drew three-quarters capacity last winter). but together they obviously make a" irresistible drawing card. Burgess, as everyone has heard. has been tooting Davies for a Nobel prize. and Davies has been hiihly complimentary in return. The two have appeared so often together in the last few days of saturation publicity that it's becoming easy to think of them as a unit. rather like Tyson and Spinks — *before* their title bout.

Statistically, too. thematch-"phasalotof balance. Both Davies and Burgess are in their early 70s. Both were late bloomers who didn t hit their literary stride until middle age Both are read around the world. though Brgess is undoubtedly better known. thanks to his vaster output. his TV appearances and to Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*. baaed on a novel Burgess now says he regrets writing. And finally. both writers have the power to draw not just a big crowd. but a quality crowd. Margaret Atwood and Graeme Gibson are here So are Charles Templeton, Anna and Julian Porter. Adrienne Clarkson. and Al Eagle son. Al Eagleson? The eyes. followed a little later by the mind. do a double-take. Yup. it's him. The hatchet-faced unofficial czar of Canadian hockey is evidently a literary groupie.

The introductions are over and the local favourite strides out at last. to warm applause. Erect. silver-bearded. blue-suited. Robertson Davies resembles the ideal Victorian grandfather: a bluff. jaunty figure who looks as if he should be walking with a cane (he frequently does). But as he arranges his papers he momentarily reveals something else: an almost elfin quickness. a flash of the George Bernard Shaw of the newsreels. mischievous. almost sly. For a moment he is not a big man at all. but an elf hiding in a big man's body.

And his voice. He has an old-fashioned actor's voice and more of an English accent. it will seem. than Burgess. Peering through his reading glasses he reads a longish. well-modulated introduction. He will read. he say. from his unpublished novel. *The Lyre of Orpheus* — specifically a passage in which a talented young graduate student, nicknamed Schnak. conducts the premiere of her reconstruction of an unfinished opera by E.T.A. Hoffmann. 'Arthur of Britain, or The Magnanimous Cuckold." The performance will be witnessed by a committee of academics, who will decide if the work is good enough to earn Schnak a degree.

The comic tale begins well. with some Keystone-Cop antics as the examining committee takes a mini-bus to the theatre. Davies wrings most of his humour from his bmad lampoon of the committee chairman. a pompous American with a lot of musical theory in his head and a metronome for a heart. Massey Hall is soon jovial. Al Eagleson is grinning as broadly as if he'd just pot one over on the Soviets.

But then Davies does something very common among those enjoying themselves behind lecterns. He goes on too long. He goes on for an hour and a half — at least half an hour longer than the spirited posturing and dialoguing of his caricatures is really good for. When he finally packs up his papers and leaves (with a last. distinguished wave to the upper balconies) the applause that follows him is still warm — hut far fmm unrestrained.

Now it is the Englishman's turn. Burgess comes out looking vaguely unkempt.-the boyish mop of hair falling into his eyes. the face more rumpled than the suit. At his lapel. a tuft of emerald handkerchief stands up like a flame.

He begins with an aphorism. in a mice that could cut coal: "We used to have a saying in my native Manchester 'after the lord mayor's coach comes the municipal garbage truck.'" The remark — which cuts more ways than one — brings the house down. After Davies's rather airy humour,

then is a sense of being back on good old earth again.

He reads. first. a passage from The *Pianoplayers*, a recent novel that contains some of the funniest writing he's ever done. The scene concerns a drunken piano-player accompanying a silent movie about the life of Christ. Near the end of the irreverent performance, with Christ rising triumphantly from the grave, he breaks into a rousing rendition of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow." Al Eagleson is laughing so hard he's crying.

The next piece is not as funny. but it's even more involving — an unpublished short story in which Shakespeare goes to Spain as part of the English ambassador's entourage. There he meets Cervantes. The author of *Don Quixote* is famous but poor. the bitter inhabitant of a dirt-floored room. The conversation of the two titans of world literature has undertones of a tack-alley brawl. for neither will recognize the supremacy of the other. Indeed. neither has even read the other. The tale allows Burgess to set up a wonderful debate on the relative merits of comedy and tragedy. drama and the novel. But what is most Impressive is how trenchantly relevant he makes it all seem. Davies writes of the 20th century and somehow manages to sound comfortably Victorian, rather as if the atomic bomb had never been invented. Burgess. on the other hand. writes of the 17th century. but in his pithiness. his sense of the bleakness underlying so much of life, he sounds completely modern.

Burgess reads on. with shimmying body English and exploding consonants. Not even the appearance on his jaw of two lengthening fangs of spittle — eventually cleared away by the green handkerchief — can break the spell in which most of the audience is evidently held. When he finishes his last selection — fmm his translation of *Cyrano de Bergerac* for the Royal Shakespeare Company — the applause is thunderous. There are cries of "Bravo!" from the balconies.

The municipal garbage truck has cleaned up. -JOHN BEMROSE

World's women

THE THIRD International Feminist Book Fair. which was held at the Université de Montréal last June 14 to 19, was no surprise party. Carefully planned and brilliantly organized by Diana Bronson and Ariane Brunet. the fair brought together 212 literary women from all over the world in an extraordinary celebration of women's writing. The first such gathering took place in London in 1984 and the second in Oslo in 1986. but the Montreal fair was the largest to date and the first to present a significant number of Latin American and North American Native women writers. After two days of pub lishers' trade meetings and workshops. the fair opened its doors to the public for four days of public events: readings. panels, book launchings. performances, art exhibits and sales of books displayed by the 275 participating publishers and distributors.

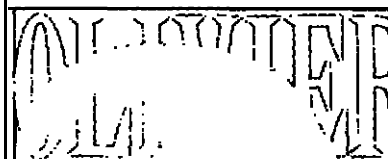
Yet there was an atmosphere of surprise about it as well-worn feminist paths ("Sexual Politics and Power," "Beyond Patriarchal Language." "Literature and Empowerment." and so on) were explored anew by writers from a staggering diversity of backgrounds and points of view. How many of us associate German literature with black writers? Katharina Oguntaye is a 29-year-old third-generation black woman fmm West Germany who recently edited a collection of work by Afro-German women.

How many of us associate Canadian literature for that matter. with work by Native women, immigrants and visible minorities? It was not only the visitors fmm overseas who had their understanding of Canadian writing enlarged by participation of such women -and also by the increasingly powerful links between English-Canadian and Quebec women writers.

In addition to the writers at the fair whose names are known-they include Alicia Partnoy, who "disappeared" in Argentina for three years, Irish writer Nell McCafferty. Italian novelist and playwright Dacia Maraini, Janette Turner Hospital. Dorothy Livesay, Marie-Claire Blais, and Nicole Brossard, who was president of the fair — the sessions introduced so many writers unfamiliar to most of the audience thar there was no knowing what to expect. Ellen K. Kuzwayo brought a message of solidarity to the book fair from the women of South Africa and turned a panel on "Memories of Age" into a discussion of political action. New Zealand shaman. scholar and editor Cathie Dunsford introduced herself in the staccato Maori language before going on the deplore the concentration of participants from the northern hemisphere and to promise a different kind of fair altogether if it is ever held in the Pacific islands: it would take place out of doors and there would be lots of good fresh fruit to eat. "God knows it wouldn't be inside a university."

There were some other complaints too — about slow book sales. about how few famous writers had agreed to attend, and about the scattering of sessions fmm one end of the vast university campus to the other. Inevitably. too, there were divisions among more and less radical feminisms. But there was astonishment at the skills of the translators, some of whom were called on to pm vide a simultaneous translation of poetry (French, English and Spanish were the languages of the fair) and excitement over the explosiveness of the sessions. For the participants it was a matchless opportunity to meet other writers and to hear what they had to say, and to marvel at the energy, commitment, and accomplishment they displayed. — LINDA LEITH

IN THE LIMELIGHT



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BRIEF REVIEWS

PRELUDE

by D. M. Fraser

Pulp Press, 222 pages, $12.95
(ISBN 0 88978 185 0)

D.M. FRASER died in 1985, not yet 40 years of age. Pulp Press. with whom he had been associated for many years, is paying tribute to him by publishing his ml- lected works in two volumes. The 22 stories collected in *Prelude*, including most of Fraser's previously published works as well as a number of his unpublished shorter works. are clearly the work of a brilliant mind.

One of the litmus tests of a writer's talent is surely in his or her choice of names. Adam couldn't have taken greater care naming the creatures in the Garden of Eden than Fraser has taken naming his characters. From Dumbo Nelson in the story by the same name. to "Janey and Ambrose and Spiffy and 'I'" who begin "Masterpiece Avenue," the names resonate. as does the imagery, which is often unexpected but always perfect.

At once cerebral and sensual. these stories are narrated by a variety of voices all. without exception, strong. articulate. and highly original. They are informed by the author's sharp sense of irony, his political sensibility. and his irreverent sense of humour. The stories share a common energy, an energy that might be fueled by anger or sorrow but which nevertheless is released into Fraser's fiction with a sense of joy.

—BARBARA NOVAK

MOVEMENT IN SLOW TIME

by Ann Rosenberg

Coach House/Underwhich, 218 pages, $12.95 paper
(ISBN 0 88910 348 8, Coach House)
(ISBN 0 88658 062 5, Underwhich)

ANN ROSENBERG'S *Movement in Slow Time* is built of prose, poetry. art criticism. social criticism and traditional tales of lovers. Photographs. sketches. reproductions of paintings and graphs tell a story of unrequited love. The action of the story takes place in a single day. in Vancouver. and traces — without linear narrative — a woman's movements through the city and her ruminations about lovers past and present. It is loosely structured by the works of Dante, images of the wolf and leopard. lovers' stories (Francesca and Paolo, Cassandra and Giovanni). and an analysis of paintings by Ingres, Giotto, Botticelli, and Bosch.

It is difficult to make words and pictures fit together in a way that detracts from neither. In a chapter titled "The Garden of Earthly Delights," Rosenberg begins with Bosch's painting of the same name. She creates a dialogue between Adam and Eve that is as yet unspoken, and thus spins a narrative line into the primarily visual medium of the painting. Here, words and visual representation enrich and enliven each other.

Pictures can also startle and amuse: Rosenberg is most successful when she is most playful. She describes her heroine's rebellion against her oppressive husband and suddenly startles us with a photograph of a woman wearing garish leopard-skin stockings.

Movement in Slow Time is both playful and ironic. I'm not sure that the words and pictures always make a seamless whole. but Rosenberg may not have intended them to. I bke the book's experiments. and I like its tone.

—KIM ECKLIN

YES, MAMA

by Helen Forrester

Collins, 362 pages, $24.95 cloth
(ISBN 0 00 223241 3)

THIS ROOK is an immense catalogue of clichés, containing every possible stereotype of late. Victorian melodrama. Mama gives birth to an illegitimate daughter and her brutish husband never forgives her. Mama quietly decays in her mom. while the spunky maid fmm downstairs becomes a surrogate mother to her neglected child. The maid's equally spunky bmther emigrates to the colonies (Canada). does well. fights in the First World War. loses an arm. and marries the neglected daughter. And so it goes. *ad nauseam.*

In *Yes, Mama*, author Helen Forrester attempts to chronicle the shifting of British class barriers between 1886 and the Great War; however, such an endeavour requires a deft touch sadly lacking in this novel. Transparent characters are clumsily manipulated like marionettes, while the author under- - the social problems of the day in a terminally pedantic manner. The net result is a cartoon version of "Upstairs, Downstairs." complete with exaggerated dialect and a thoroughly predictable plot.

Yes, Mama is formula fiction. and its ingredients need a good checking over for freshness: the expiry date has long since passed on this product.

—TIMOTHY CHAMBERLAIN

THE MYSTERIES OF PITTSBURGH

by Michael Chabon

Macmillan (William Morrow & Co.), 297 pages, $24.95 cloth
(ISBN 0 688 07632 7)

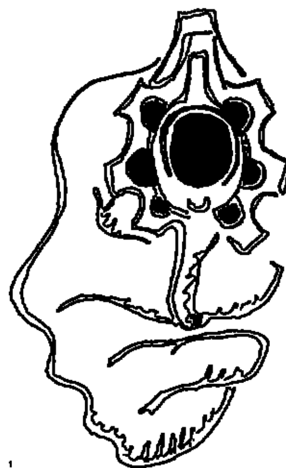
ART BECHSTEIN is the son of Joe the Egg, a gangster who wants something better for his son. What Art wants is Phlox. who works in the library of the college he's just graduated from. his previous girlfriend having left taking the Joni Mitchell albums. After witnessing a disturbing example of "how people can be perfectly frank all over the sidewalk" Art meets Arthur Lacomte, who drags him to a party. and drags up the sexual preference Art thought he'd laid to rest in adolescence. Arthur also works at the library and Art is quickly linked with Phlox. She s the girl of his dreams. although a French major (which leads to the study of French literature. "potentially one of the most destructive forces known to mankind?.

Arthur also introduces Art to Cleveland, whose girlfriend is taken to New Mexico by her parents, who then tell Cleveland she died of dysentery. Hating had a few rough knocks as a child -he blinded his sister hi mother committed. suicide; his father is "the scariest queer in the world" — Cleveland is evil incarnate. And he wants to meet Joe the Egg and get a promotion to big-time gangsterism.

Art's summer Job is at a bookstore "organized as though the management had hoped to sell luncheon meat or lawn-care products but had somehow been tricked by an unscrupulous wholesaler."

As bizarre as those elements are. *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh* is finally a love stmy. Reminiscent of James Kirkwood's *There Must Be A Pony*, the novel is well-paced. insightful. and highly recommended.

—D. FRENCH



THE OPENING EYB

by Nancy Bauer

Oberon, 160 pages, $12.95 paper
(ISBN 0 88750 694 1)

NANCY BAUER'S new book. *The Opening Eye*, presents itself as a New Age novel redolent of the incense-oil of pup philosophy and the human potential movement. Don't be fooled. Bauer has made of those unlikely materials a gripping and powerful tale.

The story is presented through the journal entries and written assignments of the seven principal characters — instructor and students in a "creativity" course. Suspense comes quickly. Will this collocation of odd sorts fly apart like an overwound clock? Will the skeletons in their closets cost someone's sanity, career. or life?

Bauer's use of mosaic narrative follows no preordained pattern. blurring the line between "fiction" and "reality." Pace and focus are unpredictable. One person's publ: question is answered in another's private journal. Esoteric memories fulfil a formal assignment. A page of anonymous stream-of-consciousness rips sensually through a sequence of philosophical considerations.

Without the reader's being quite aware of it. these disparate characters become a community -something the instructor personally hopes for but professionally considers impossible The solitary. fragmented voices gradually blend into an avowedly collective one. finally. an omniscient narration emerges from the collective consciousness of the characters — an echo of Virginia Woolf's accomplishment in *The Waves.*

Technical quibbles can be raised. How does the blind man write his journal? Why is the writing often stilted? Is coincidence overplayed? But Bauer's instinct for story-telling and gift of insight override the reader's disbelief-and cynicism.

Nancy Bauer has produced a novel that should extend her reputation well beyond Canada's eastern shores —a fictive enactment of the possibility of personal renewal and establishment of community in a world inimical to both.

-GEORGE PAVERLE

THE PARADISE EATER

by John Ralston Saul

Random House, 320 pages, $22.95 cloth (ISBN 0394 22027 7)

I WANTED to read this hook to figure out the fuss over John Ralston Saul — why he's being compared to Graham Greene and Conrad. It turns out that Saul really is a contemporary master. *The trouble is that it* ain't writing he's good at. He's a master at market targeting.

Oh. sure. he writes well. most of the time. *The Paradise Eaters* is loaded with medium-grain detail about the Third World that appears to be fine-grain. because few readers will haw the inclination to authenticate it. The photograph of the author on the inside jacket punctuates that. The photo has Saul posed in what looks like a Third World bomb-shelter, and there are a couple of Soviet AK47 assault rifles just above his head. The message is dear and very stylish — this guy knows what he's talking about. But for all that. it's just good marketing. Saul isn't Graham Greene and he sure as hell isn't Conrad.

Conrad offered the world a glimpse of Western imperialism's dark side before most people suspected one existed. Greene wrote about imperialism's decay before anyone knew it was in a state of dewy. But this' is 1988. Imperialism has been universalized, and every. body knows how it operates: dogs crawling over dogs to eat other dogs. It s value-free, extranational, and the spoils go to those with thequickest wits and the fewest moral strictures — regardless of race. colour, and creed.

Saul's portrait of a cynical, middle-aged, gonorrhoea-infected former Journalist living on the edge of the geopolitical cesspool in Bangkok is closer to Harlequin's Mack Bolan and the "Live Large" slogans of macho entrepreneurialism than it is to Joseph Conrad. He's entertaining. sure. but the social utility and artistic insight of his writing will chiefly be to would. be drug dealers looking for a tourist guide into the heaven/hell nexus of pure opportunity. I'd rather stay at home with a good book. — BRIAN FAWCETT

TBE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF SLUGGER McBATT

by W.P. Kinsella

Collins, 180 pages, $9.95 paper (ISBN 0 00 223281 2)

IF WAR is too serious a matter to be left to the generals. then it's equally true that baseball is too mystical a game to be left to the sports writers and broadcasters: they are too down-to-earth to be aware of all that may be going on in more empyrean domains.

The sport needs theattention of story tellers and dreamers. Witness the achievements of James Thurber. the popularity this summer of thefilm "Bull Durham" and the Toronto revival of the musical comedy "Damn Yankees." Kinsella works in this vain to compelling effect. Consider, for instance what might happen if a team mascot, like the Blue Jays' B.J. Birdie, was actually a visitor from outer space trying to fit into an alien environment. which is the case in "Report Concerning the Death of the Seattle Albatross." What happens is tragedy — the only clearcut one in this collection. though most of the pieces are tinged with darkness.

One is a ghost story titled "Frank Pierce, Iowa" about a town that disappears "like Brigadoon into the haze of a sultry summer noon." after the groundskeeper announces that it won't be necessary to mow the baseball diamond, because the game will not be played that day. Then there is the affair of the 94-year-old man. a light-skinned person who claims to have been the first black player in a major league: his story can't be confirmed because this was before the days of "The Baseball Encyclopedia."

The most moving story is "K Mart" — a nostalgic tale of youth and romance and later death. and a baseball field in a small town in Illinois. The beginning time was the late '40s. In the present. a sprawling K Mart covers the area — backstop and home plate in women's wear. and left field in the furniture department. The store becomes the scene of a manic and blackly hilarious ball game

Rewarding and entertaining stuff-but as World Series time approaches. we must hand the game back to the media types and wish the players "test of lock. fellas: good spitting and keep the *bubble gum popping!*"

—BERT COWAN

THE PAST

A MAN OF SENTIMENT: THE MEMOIRS OF PHILIPPE-JOSEPH AUBERT DE GASPE

translated by Jane Brierley

Vehicule, 486 pages, $15.95 paper (ISBN 0 919890 73 3)

THE 1866 MEMOIRS of French. Canadian seigneur Philippe. Joseph Aubert de Gaspé, A *Man of Sentiment*, now fluently trans. lated by Jane Brierley, may be too leisurely for modem tastes. How many will find time for his loving descriptions of long forgotten characters. wandering Recollet friars, and Huron checker champions circa 1800?

Those with patience can mine treasure here. Quebec had fallen to the British only a quarter. century before de Gaspé's birth. and the book yields insight into relations between conquerors and conquered. Ambitious sons of both groups attended the same schools. articled in the same law firms, and fought off American invaders in 1776 and 1812 (though English prejudice continued to decry the French as disloyal). While lauding English friends, de Gaspé is fiercely loyal to his own people. Despite his conservative views (the jury system is too democratic. women unfailingly angelic). he has only praise for rebel leader Louis-Joseph Papineau — a school-mate of his.

Another rich vein here is the progression fmm the relatively static, hierarchical, debauched society of de Gaspé's 18th-century boyhood to the reforming. enterprising bustle of the 19th. Da Gaspé, whose *habitants* began to grumble and whose fortunes took a plunge. seems rather like the first steamboats on the St. Lawrence, whose inexperienced pilots alternately cut the engines too far from shore or crashed into it. This scribbling *seigneur* jerked and rolled into the 19th century. Among those content with the quiet pleasure of gazing down the river to long ago, however. he might find harbour eve" now. -JAN NOEL

LISTEN WHILE I TELL YOU: A STORY OF THE JEWS OF ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

by Alison Kahn

Institute of Social and Economic Research, 26.5 *pages, $23.95 cloth (ISBN* 0 *919666* 66 *8)*

THE JEWS who came to St. John's, Newfoundland. around the turn of the century found a rigidly classbound society with a few Protestant families at the too and a lot of Catholic families at the bottom — a primitive society in which there was little room for social movement. Newfoundland's economy depended on fishing (about which the Jews knew nothing). and the fishery was controlled by Pmtestant merchants. not by the fisher-

men themselves. The merchants advanced goods to the fishermen in the spring, the fishermen paid for the goods out of the fish they caught in the fall: and the price of fish was set by the merchants. So that the flow of money was all one way: a few merchants profited, and the great body of fishermen was always in debt. This system turned Newfoundland into a company town. and as in all company towns in Canada there was social stasis, economic stagnation. and a kind of fascinated. unthinking acceptance of the class structure in which one grew up.

In this new world. the Jewish immigrants had little mom to move. And within three generations, the small community that grew up in St. John's had expired. The story of that community's flourishing and fading — as brief as the life cycle of a lupin -is found in *Listen While I Tell You*, an oral history that collects the remembrances of the St. John's Jew. It is a depressing book, not because the speakers are depressing ("Are you Protestant Jews or Catholic Jews?" two of them remember being asked), but because of what it implies about the economic and social sterility of Canada's tenth province — BRUCE SERAFIN

NATURE

LOVE OF LOONS

by Kate Crowley and Mike Link, photography by Peter Roberts

Key Porter, 96 pages, $17.95 paper (ISBN 0 55013 063 3)

THIS IS A beautiful book with thick. glossy pages and outstanding colour photography. It is also practical, combining a wealth of information with a feelingfor nature to enhance our knowledge and appreciation of this ancient bird, which evolved 70 million years ago.

In an early chapter. the authors trace the evolution of the loon. discuss some of the American naturalists who have studied it and capture the magic of the mythology that has arisen around this shy bird with its melancholy cry. Later chapters deal with the biology and behaviour of the loon. including its calls. breeding habits, the rearing of its young. its flocking behaviour, and its migration (which still raises questions science can't answer). Like many other species the loon is threatened by man whose encroaching civilization puts pressure on its nesting sites and pollutes its environment with acid rain and other poisons. If people can hurt the bird. they can also help it. We read of wildlife rehabilitation centres, of the loon hatched at the Minnesota Zoo and of the Loon Lady of Ten Mile Lake who nursed the injured Looney back to health. Ultimately. thequestion is posed: will we love the loon enough to make the necessary sacrifices for it to survive so that our grandchildren may learn "how it feels to hear the distant wail that echoes from shore to shore"?

Most of the loon organizations listed near the back of the bmk are American. but there's an extensive bibliography for those wishing to learn more about this unique bird.

— CLAIRE BROWNSCOMBE.

SOCIETY

HASTINGS AND MAIN: STORIES FROM AN INNER-CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD

compiled by **Laurel Kimbley, edited by Jo-Anne Canning-Dew**

New Star Books, 160 pages, $9.95 paper (ISBN 0 919573 71 1)

AT THE CENTRE of Vancouver's downtown east end is the intersection of Main and Hasting Streets. an area once known as Skid Road. Since 1903. newcomers have found comradeship and solace at what is now the Carnegie Community Centre: *Hastings and Main* is a product of the centre.

Interviewer Laurel Kimbley (a long-time resident of the area) who compiled the 20 residents' stories. notes that "many of them feel their lives aren't worth much, so having something in print form was a great source of pride."

Most of the speakers focus on their own experiences. which. however personal. stress a basic human need for diiity. East-end resident Katherine Kosta says. "I do not call it Skid Road. I call it the élite district."

Strongly recurring themes — individuals' battles again4 loneliness, booze. and harsh economic times — pervade this book. But *Hastings and Main* is not simply an exhausting stream of hard-luck stories: black humour and astute judgements of human nature and the establishment balance the interviews. At times the storytellers depict a frightening view of a society that can cruelly silence its unwanted members. Kosta describes a voluntary stay at a "bughouse": "A sixteen-year-old sat beside me, she was just a kid. She was normal to my thoughts and feeling . but the moment she went and got a goddamn shock treatment in her coconut, she came out a donkey."

In coming to terms with himself. Moses Jimmy seeks "powerful colours . . . colours of vision." In an area so often unjustly maligned as a hopelessly grey void. visionary colours are an inspiring change. — MATHEW COPAS

AN ERROR IN JUDGEMENT: THE POLITICS OF MEDICAL CARE IN AN INDIAN/WHITE COMMUNITY

by Dara Culhane Speck

Talonbooks, 281 pages, $14.95 paper (ISBN 0 88922 246 0)

IN 1959. a small child named Renée Smith died of an undiagnosed ruptured appendix in Alert Bay. British Colombia. Her Native community charged that the town's white physician was alcoholic. Over two tumultous years the isolated people of Alert Bay took on the local hospital, the College of Physicians and Surgeons. and provincial and federal ministries of health.

The author of *An Error in Judgement* is a white woman and a member (by marriage) of the Nimpkinh Indian Band of Alert Bay. She describes the community's two-year struggle: how old loyalties and feuds emerged and the mistrust of outsiders was heightened. Her own position in the community. as a white woman who was perceived as talking too much. became increasingly difficult as the inquiry proceeded.

This is the story of a group of people who banded together to assert their rights and their wishes in a system that was fundamentally hostile to them. They won. and they got a community health centre of their own. But the heart of An *Error in Judgement* is the painful meeting of races on a personal level. Dara Culhane Speck has had the courage to tell the story as she lived it, with great respect for the people who lived it with her.

— KIM ECKLIN

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Consolation and exaltation

For those seeking entertaining answers to perplexing questions, Robertson Davies is a godsend, if not the Holy Trinity itself. But those who hold (with Chekhov) that the aim of literature is not to provide solutions but to ask the necessary questions may be less receptive to his narratives

By Janice Kulyk Keefer

ROBERTSON DAVIES is a hugely successful ..internationally acclaimed novelist who has man. aged. in a thoroughly postmodernist era. to write according totheletterof Horace's law — that art should entertain and instruct. On the strengthof *What's Bred in the Bone*. *The New York Review of Books* designated Davies as a latter-day Thomas Mann. Perhaps we should thinkdhim instead as a combination of Wilkie Collins and George Meredith: a master narrator and idea man. sustaining our delighted attention through the most fiendishly contrived of plots. while at the same time initiating us into the saving graces of a comprehensive world view that we might characterize as Jungo-Rabelaisian. To compare Davies to the Victorians rather than to the Moderns is appropriate enough. given his affection for 19th-century melodrama and his transmutation of one of the most popular forms of Victorian narrative: the three-decker novel. The Lyre of Orpheus (Macmillnn. 480 pages. $24.95 cloth) is. of course. the successor to *What's Bred in the Bone*. which itself succeeded *The Rebel Angels*.

Robertson Davies probably wouldn't give a fig for the art offictionastaught by one of his *bêtes noires*, Henry James. In the present context. it may behelpful to recall T.S. Eliot's famous. or notorious. remark that James had a mind "too fine to be violated by an idea." Compared toJames, Robertson Davies might be described as the victim of an intellectual gang rape. The thought-systems to which his latest three-decker is bound include alchemy, "paleo-psychology," Jungian archetypes, Paracelsian scatology. medieval and Renaissance iconography. Rabelaisian carni- [illegible] and Arthurian myth. For those seeking entertaining answers to perplexing questions, Robertson Davies will be a godsend. if not the Holy Trinity itself. Those. however. who believe in Keats's idea of negativecapability. who hold with Chekhov that the aim of literature is not to provide solutions hut rather to ask the necessary questions. or who agree with Milan Kundera that the novel's *sine qua non* is the "wisdom of uncertainty" may be less receptive to Davies's narratives. Yes. they tickle the mental equivalent of the funny bone. but is that what literary art is supposed to do?

It's a question to which I'll return. For the moment. let's at least concede that Davies is this country's foremost talking head: so much of his novels consists of stretches of dialogue or disquisition in which whole swarms of ideas are marvellously teased out or batted about. Given the conversational bent of Davies's fiction. I wasn't surprised, this spring. to walk into Foyles. the London booksellers. and find *The Diary* and *The Tabletalk of Samuel Marchbanks* shelved under Autobiography/Memoir. And given the ingenious convolutions of Davies's plots. I was looking forward to *The Lyre of Orpheus* in the way one looks forward to the reconstitution of the lady who's been cut into several parts in the course of a magic show. Just how was Davies going to recombine into a convincing whole those ideas and the characters they inhabited in parts one and two of his trilogy? What would he make of Maria. Darcourt. and Arthur Comish now that he'd polished off Parlabane. the life and soul of *Rebel Angels*. and the enigmatic Francis Comish. whose curious genesis and fortunes as an artist had made [illegible] unusually [illegible] pelling? But before considering *The Lyre of Orpheus*. it might be just as well to recapitulate.

The Rebel Angels relates the curious events that occur on the return to the Fold of Spook College of an unusually gifted and embarrassing lamb. The re-emergence of John Parlabane. a homosexual. defrocked monk-scholar, a demonic present-day Rabelais. coincides with the death of the fabulously wealthy recluse and art collector, Francis Cornish. whose nephew Arthur (a tycoon with taste! eventually wins the hand of the divinely beautiful and brainy Maria Magdalena Theotoky. a graduate student who sports large diamond solitaires and a lavishly ethnic background. Maria's mother. Madame Laoutaro. a gypsy con-*artiste* and Maria's uncle Yerko are Davies's correctives to thedominant WASPish cast of characters; the gypsies supply heaps of chthonic energy and humour by such antics as farting. feasting. and making love potions out of used menstrual tampons. The novel ends with a death or two as well as a wedding: both Parlabane and his egregious employer. Urky McVarish. meet appropriately nasty ends. It also concludes with manuscripts: Maria is given the rare Rabelais text McVarish had appropriated — it will provide her with fodder For a doctoral dissertation. And Parlabane leaves his friends with the unpublishable novel of his life and times. a novel of which more will be heard in *The Lyre of Orpheus*.

IF *The Rebel Angels gives us* protagonists who "people the universities and have established what Paracelsus calls The Second Paradise of Learning." *What's Bred in the Bone gives us* the real right thing. Once again. the *novel* has to

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do with a manuscript, the "Life of Francis Cornish," commissioned by the newly formed Cornish Foundation, and entrusted to that consummate observer and *homme moyen sensuel, haut intellectuel,* Simon Darcourt. When Darcourt fails to uncover essential information about Francis Cornish's childhood and family background, the Recording Angel jumps in to close the gap, with a little help from a friend worth knowing, Cornish's personal *daimon*, or "manifestation of the artistic conscience." Together, these two help us not only to the key to the mystery of Francis Cornish, but also to some of the best fiction Davies has produced.

In his account of Francis Cornish's family and particularly his childhood and early apprenticeship to art in Blairlogie, Ontario, a raw yet repressive lumber town at the end of the railway line, Davies finally delivers what was in such short supply in *Rebel Angels* — felt reality, a fictive world made up of more than just arcanely chattering tongues. The development of Francis Cornish's career, and of his soul, no less, demands that he leave Blairlogie behind for those haunts of which Davies is enamoured — the haunts of the academic and social aristocracy, in this case Oxford and a Bavarian castle. Yet while Davies gives us our money's worth of carefully researched, vividly remembered detail about Corpus Christi College and Schloss Düsterstein, the chapters in which these appear don't ring quite as rich or real as do the Blairlogie ones. The novel's slight falling-off in the quality of its fictive world is matched by an oddly disappointing dénouement. Once Francis has completed the allegorical painting that puts the various parts of his psyche and experience together, there's nothing to be done except for him to live out the rest of his life and accomplish what has become his overmastering ambition: not to die stupid. In the last 40-odd pages of the novel, Cornish assists in the sorting out of pilfered paintings immediately after the war, falls platonically in love with the overweening Alwyn Ross, collects *objets d'art* and finds himself unable to paint — not because he lacks the skill or desire, but because it's become imprudent for him to paint in the old-master style he'd perfected during the war. Yet Davies insists that the seeming failure of Cornish's final years makes possible the revelation he's given at the hour of his death. The revelation is that "his life had not been such a formless muddle, not quite such a rum start, as he had come to believe." Rather, it has led him to understand, at the very end, the true nature and origin of love, and to enter at last that "abode of [the] spirit" that Davies describes as the "realm of the Mothers," that deep darkness so playfully articulated in *The Rebel Angels* via Clement Hollier's paleo-psychology and Madame Laoutaro's tarot pack and *bomari*.

Francis Cornish describes himself as having "drifted into a world where religion, but not orthodoxy, is the fountain of everything that makes sense" (*What's Bred in the Bone*). In the terms of Cornish's personal allegory, half alchemical, half Celtic myth (Tristan and Iseult and King Mark) the male part of the psyche must be united with the female for the psyche to be whole at last. Just as one acknowledges the binary nature of being, so one must embrace both darkness and light, that figure of Fraude in the Bronzino allegory that becomes Francis's favourite painting: "Fraude not simply as a cheat, but as a figure from the deep world of the Mothers, whence came all beauty, and also all that was fearful to timid souls seeking only the light, and determined that Love must be solely a thing of light."

Cornish's revelation doesn't entirely convince, largely because Davies's references to the Mothers seem coy rather than cathartic; perhaps one needs to have spent many years attending Jungian study groups to nod assent. Nevertheless, *What's Bred in the Bone* is a remarkable achievement: if there is a grammar of money, as Davies has Francis Cornish assert, there must also be a grammar of ingenuity, and in this field we must admit Davies to be a master, synthesizing every scrap of information he's amassed on any one of a hundred subjects to create the labyrinthine fictive world of *What's Bred in the Bone*. Unfortunately, Davies's ingenuity comes a cropper in *The Lyre of Orpheus*, which doesn't so much open the door to the Underworld, as Davies would have it do, as it attempts to present the world of the rich and cultured as the best of all possible overworlds, one in which an ultra-successful businessman can not only operate as an artist in money, without bemiring himself in right-wing politics or corporate sleaze, but can also attain undoubted magnanimity of soul.

The central problem of *The Lyre of Orpheus* is thus the choice of hero: Arthur Cornish, who wants so badly to be a patron of the arts. Compared to Henry James's Adam Verver, the aesthete millionaire of *The Golden Bowl*, Arthur is a veritable Boy Scout: the suffering and knowledge imputed to him and his wife, the same beautiful Maria who has shed braininess for wisdom, and ditched graduate school to become the perfect wife and eventually mother, fail to move or convince the reader. This is partly because of the allegorical vehicle that Davies uses in this novel — the myth of Arthur, cuckolded by Lancelot, but still intent on creating a code of chivalry. In Davies's version,

the Bound Table becomes a mystical form of Canada Council in which questing artists will apply for lavish grants to go off chasing after their chosen grails. The trouble is that the Arthurian romance is common-or-garden fare compared to Rabelais, Paracelsus, Bronzino, and the Mothers: how can we not know well before the characters do that Maria will be seduced by her Lancelot? Most of us have at least heard our Lerner and Loewe, if not read our Malory; most of us will also know that when adult males get mumps so badly that, as Davies puts it, theirballs swell to the size of grapefruits, infertility will be the result. Yet Davies seems to think that Maria's adultery and Arthur's infertility will strike the reader as enormous and persuasive surprises rather than wrenchings of the narrative to fit the overly schematic plot he's designed.

This plot hinges on yet another manuscript — a musical one, this time. "Arthur of Britain, or the Magnanimous Cuckold" is an unfinished opera by E.T.A. Hoffmann, who is himself resurrected from thelimboofartisticincomple tion through the efforts of the Comish Foundation. The device of having the dead artist observe the general goings-on of the novel and supply us with masses of musicological information does not work nearly as well as having the Recording Angel-Daimon duo fill us in on Francis Cornish's life, partly because Hoffmann, or ETAH, as he's called, reveals so little about any of the characters of *Lyre*. And among these characters are the deadest Davies has ever penned: Wally Crottel, the illegitimate son of Parlabane, who attempts to blackmail Maria to obtain the manuscript of his father's novel, and Al and "Sweetness," a penniless, opportunist graduate student and his stupendously thick, extremely pregnant wife. They would seem to represent the lower orders: Wally's supposed to convulse us with laughter by hi confusion of *organism* for *orgasm*; Al and Sweetness are everything Arthur and Maria are not — poor, insensitive, ungainly, unlucky, the perpetrators of one gaffe after another. There are other clichéd characters in the novel — Schnak, the scruffy genius-cum-music student who's seduced by Dr. Gunilla Dahl Soot, a Swedish-Lesbian equivalent of Nadia Bouianger, but at least they serve some narrative purpose and provide some amusing dialogue.

In the end, Arthur Cornish does manage to mount "Arthur of Britain": Hoffmann's opera, aided by a libretto compiled by the Indefatigable Simon Darcourt, is presented as an aesthetic and allegorical success. The same can't be said for *The Lyre of Orpheus*, which collapses under the weight of the handicaps Davies burdens it with. Not only can we not care much for the trials and tribs of Arthur and Maria, but we can't summon much interest in Darcourt's pursuit of the biographer's grail — if we've read *What's Bred in the Bone*, we already know everything Darcourt's made to discover about Francis Cornish. Even the brief re-emergence of Madame Laoutaro and Yerko doesn't help much: relegated to the basement of the apartment tower in whose penthouse Arthur and Maria suffer and attain true wisdom, they serve as superfluous a function as Wally, Al, and Sweetness. The gypsy element, Davies underlines, is there to remind us that the whole man must be in touchwith his roots as well as his crown, the underworld of the Mothers, as well as the celestiai reaches. Yet in the world inhabited by Davies's chosen characters, a world that can only function by the exclusion or deformation of "sociologically pitiable" characters who might challenge the authority and authenticity of Arthur's magnanimity, the tree of life turns into an ultra-expensive house plant, "seeking only the light, and determined that Love must be solely a thing of light."

It would be pleasing to think that the Conrad Blacks and K.C. Irvings of this country might read *The Lyre of Orpheus* and suffer a species of conversion politics, immediately rushing out to found or endow this ballet company, that symphony orchestra. If so, then Davies's artistic failure with this particular layer of his three-decker would not seem quite such a bad thing To be sure, there is an abundance of witty, erudite table talk in *The Lyre of Orpheus*, and some splendid scenes, such as the actual staging of Hoffman& opera. But as far as the art of fiction is concerned, there is something substantially wrong. As Davies has Darcourt quote from Browning: "...Art remains the one way possible/Of speaking truth, to mouths like mine, at least." Yet does Davies offer us truth or just wishful thinking? There is a shape and meaning to everything, he assures us: nothing's random or contingent — otherwise, things would be too dark altogether. Dark they certainly were for the "hundreds of thousands" who died in the Second World War, but as far as Davies is concerned, they are "victims of the world's cruel stupidity," a stupidity that never seems to affect the destinies of his heroes.

> ***There is a shape and meaning to everything, he assures us; nothing's random or contingent. The "hundreds of thousands" who died in the Second World War, as far as Davies is concerned, are "victims of the world's crud stupidity," but that stupidity never seems to affect the destinies of his heroes.***

Davies quotes some words of Picasso's in *What 5 Bred in the Bone*: "I have not the courage to think of myself as an artist in the great and ancient sense of the term. . I am only a public entertainer who has understood his times and exploited as best he could tbe imbecility, the vanity, the cupidity of his contemporaries." Public entertainer Davies certainly is, and it is to his credit that he has tried not to exploit but to improve his times by offering his readers an imaginatively rendered schema whereby they may save or heal themselves as individuals in a destructive, not to say catastrophic, age. "Consolation and exaltation" are the aims of art. Davies has Francis Garnish argue. Yet as Harold Bloom reminds us in, a recent review of Kermode and Alter's *Literary Guide to the Bible*, "any strong literary work necessarily is also an achieved anxiety . . . a way of mastering our anxieties, not by dismissing them, but by giving a precise shape, color, and dimension to what it is that we most fear." The *Lyre of Orpheus gives* an unconvincing shape to what we most want — for the jumbled pieces of our lives to come beautifully and meaningfully together, for there to be a great and marvellous pattern to, and destination in, our lives. When Davies relaxes his schema and trusts his tale to tell itself according to the dictates of "felt reality," as in *What's Bred in the Bone*, we feel he *is* indeed speaking that ambiguous, uncertain truth offered us by the art of fiction. Yet when he binds his narrative to an iron schema, what emerges is something very far removed from Orpheus's lyre, something more like that "lie in the soul" to which Katherine Mansfield referred when she castigated Virginia Woolf's early novel, *Night and Day*, for not incorporating the "tragic knowledge" that the Great War had brought. The knowledge that *The Lyre of Orpheus offers us* neither exalts nor consoles — it disappoints and, however entertainingly, deceives.◻

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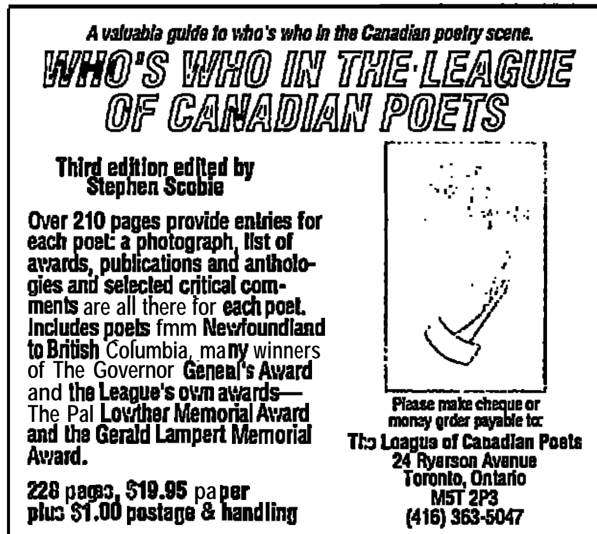

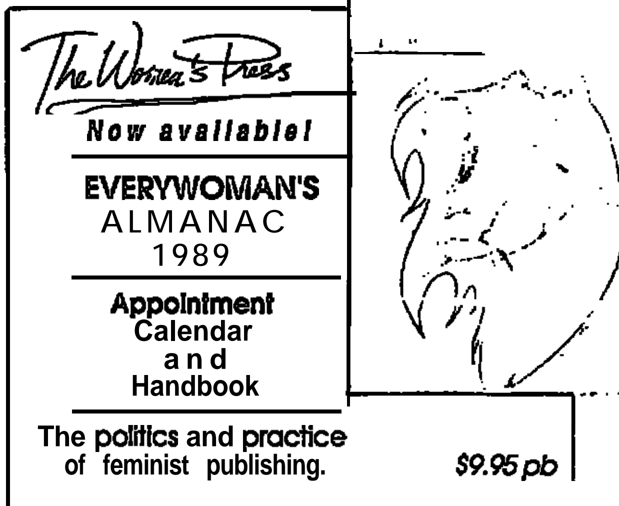

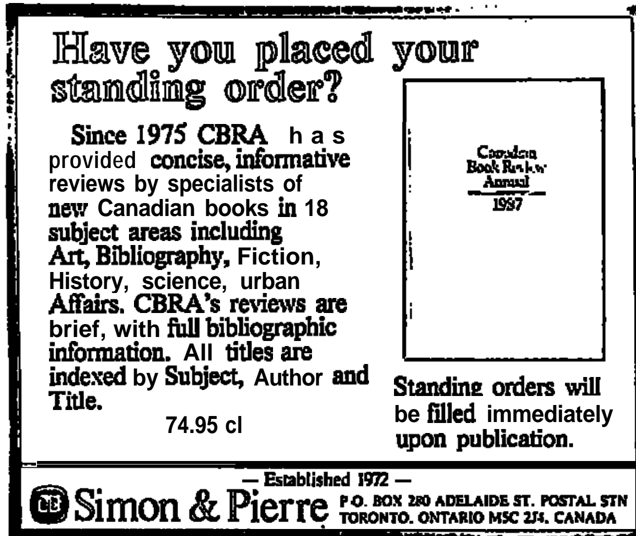

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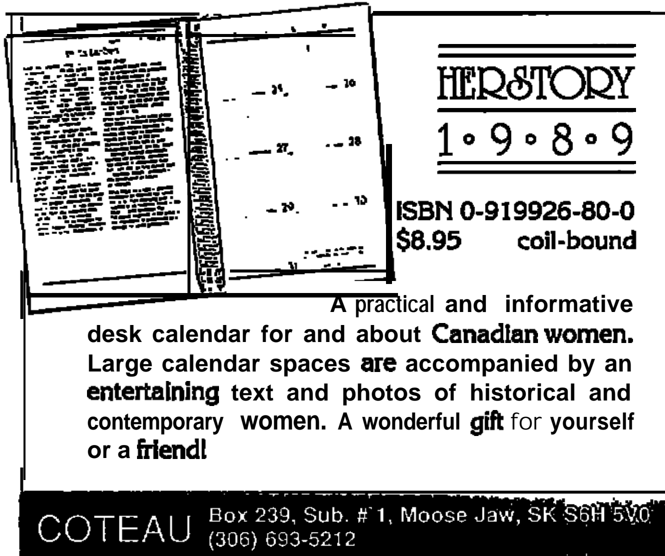

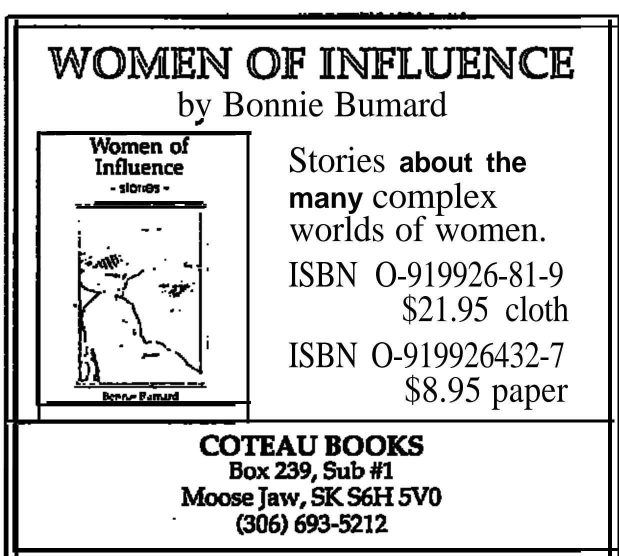

WORK IN PROGRESS

Loved forever

Mr. Sumner's troublesome gravestone, and the arrival of a mysterious widow in our remote corner of the Empire. 'A powerful uneasiness swept through him, a-s though she were someone from a dark, forgotten dream '

By Jack Hodgins

ONCE CLEO had been fetched from Bray's Livery, horse and rider turned away from the turbulent noise of the harbour, where a good deal of cargo was being unloaded off a barque from San Francisco. and set off towards the cemetery. Logan Sumner was not an expert rider. often forgetting that even the most sympathetic horse occasionally expected instructions. Knowing all her master's shortcomings only too well. the chestnut mare trotted forward over the street in the patient manner of a resigned but cheerful servant. "Look here." she might have been saying to those who gossiped on the front step of Barr's confectionery and to those who stood smoking their pipes beside the hanging row of naked carcasses in Caesar's Market. "once again I've been called on to take care of this man. with his long bony legs angled into my belly, and his small round spectacles slipping down his nose, and his limp pale hair in need of cutting. and his forlorn eyes of a deserted orphan gazing far ahead as though it had never occurred to him that he has a responsibility to take charge of his own horse." For a while their progress was followed by incurious stares from members of the chain gang who were taking their time to repair the rots and mud-holes in the road — themselves watched from one side by an armed guard who appeared to be nearly asleep against a stone-block wall and on the other side by a row of inquisitive girls along the fence of St. Anne's Academy, apparently unaware of the impatient commands shouted by an aged nun fmm an open window behind them.

At the far end of a row of tall narrow wooden houses behind picket fences, he stopped at his own white bay-windowed home just long enough to collect a bouquet of sweet peas and English daisies from his house servant. Chew Lee. who'd cut them and kept them in water. convinced that Sumner was incapable of doing even that domestic task as well as he could himself. "You too crumsy. Chew more quick with knife!" Chew Lee had been hired and trained by Sumner's bride in the earliest days of their short marriage. and Sumner had never been able to bring himself to dismiss him for his incurable tendency to treat his employer as sometimes an incompetent child and sometimes a barely tolerated visitor in his own quiet mistress-abandoned house. Far easier to pretend one hadn't noticed and just get on with life.

Once they had reached the cemetery. Sumner left Cleo to graze on the grass near the gate while he walked in through the first clearing in the still largely uncut forest. past the white marble of Maii Pearce's gabled stone and the granite mausoleum of the MacKenzie family — tidy, fenced-in histories. Sunlight. slanting down through a stand of evergreens.

ILLUSTRATON BY BERNICE EISENSTEIN

spread broken patterns over the place of quiet sorrows but fell directly 'on the letters carved into the glittering face of his own two adjacent stones beneath the holly tree.

His wife's stone had of course remained unaltered in the five years since it had been erected: a simple record of her name, Julia Morrison Sumner, the dates of her birth and death (1853-1875), and the words LOVED FOREVER. Beside it, his own stone had originally been as simple as hers: HUSBAND OF JULIA, INCONSOLABLE. Though his purchase of the second stone was considered by some to be an eccentric and even morbid act, acquaintances were willing to understand this as the gesture of a young husband grief-stricken by the tragic ending of a happy marriage after less than a year. The pair of matching headstones let it be known that he had not himself entirely survived that overturned boat.

Within six months after the funeral he had already discovered that the original words were inadequate. Still wild with grief. he ordered the reluctant Schlegg to inscribe a small comma after the INCONSOLABLE and to add, after it: CURSING GOD. AND UNABLE TO FIND ANY MEANING IN LIFE. He was a very young man then, willing to risk the anger of the churches which had divided this enormous new cemetery into little sectarian villages of the dead. Also. he could not have yessed that very shortly, when the town had entered a brief period of apparent growth and his business had begun to prosper. his heart would occasionally find itself singingsongs that were not entirely sad. Peter Schlegg's task the next time was to add in slightly smaller letters below the original inscription: BUT PREPARED. ALWAYS. TO GIVE THANKS FOR NEW HOPE. But even hope, like building booms. can come and go. A year later. he filled in the letters of ALWAYS with mortar and replaced the word with OFTEN, reflecting the less intemperate attitude Sumner had achieved as heap proached his thirtieth year. Business had slowed. his life was still empty of anything beyond his work — no successes had been large enough to encourage a resurrection of his early dreams of designing splendid buildings that would last forever. no real adventures had caught him up and tossed him amund. no new love had come along to grab hold of his heart and make him stop mourning that poor girl who lay beneath the holly.

But this was before he'd been captured hy the challenging eyes and fragrant long white fingers of Adelina Horncastle, at this moment seated beside her mother in the court room, observing her father's antics and thinking at least a little, he dared to hope. of him.

Despite his objections, old Peter Schlegg bad succeeded in recording this latest change in attitude After GOD. which was already an insertion. he had inscribed a small wedge, as requested. and had found just enough room above to add the further interjection: BUT ALSO PRAISING HIM FOR HIS TENDER MERCIES. Sumner felt certain that his lost Julia would not be unhappy about this renewed interest in life. God, too. he was sure. would approve.

A slight movement caught his eye — not far away, something which might have been a long thick snake hung down fmm the higher branches of a fir. Of course there were no large tree snakes on this island, or any dangerous snakes at all. and hiieyequickly travelled upward. expecting to discover that he was looking at the tail of some large animal — one of the tawny panthers which inhabit the mountains north of town. for instance. But he found. instead, that this was a half-uncoiled whip of the sort used by horsemen to direct the traffic of cattle. and that it was attached to the waist of a largely obscured man who sat high in the boughs, close against the thick trunk. This was a long, extremely thin, angular figure, with a dark complexion. He saw a large black hat with a wide brim, a pair of huge boots, a long hide-coloured drape of weather-proof coat. The stranger appared to be unaware of Sumner's presence, interested in something at a distance across the cleared portion of the cemetery.

The heavy boughs of cedar and Douglas fiigently rose and fell in a breeze which had come up from the direction of the strait; oak leaves shuddered, and strained: wheels of arbutus leaves fluttered, bobbed, turned themselves inside out like weak umbrellas; bushes of ocean spray seemed to swell up fmm inside, to till with air. to shift, nod, deflate. and to swell up again, their creamy flower panicles floating and drifting like foam upon the heaving surfaces. The entire cemetery seemed in gentle turmoil. And here was someone who seemed to have appeared from nowhere, a woman in a black dress who stood in an expanse of grass beyond the cluster of high white sculpted Church of England monuments. looking steadily at him while she removed a glove, one finger after the other.

Suddenly the air was split by a long horrendous wail. and a child. two children, ran out from behind a tree to throw themselves at her. She greeted them with a roll of hearty laughter. Holding on to either outstretched hand, the children began to run, forcing her to turn like the pivot-post of a carousel. Faster and faster thechildren ran, until it seemed that she was in command, not they, and their feet left the ground — they dipped and rose in' a great wide circle -all three of them uttering a sound which seemed to combine both terror and hilarity. Then soddenly the woman stopped, staggered. tried to steady herself as her children had quickly done. then fell back onto the grass with her arms laid out wide and continued to laugh at the sky. Most peculiar behaviour in a widow. he thought — since there could be little doubt that this was a widow who'd come to visit a husband's grave. When both children threw themselves in a heap upon her to make a wrestlingmatch of this, one couldn't help but wonder at the manner in which some poor husband and father was mourned.

Perhaps his disapproval could be seen at even that distance. The children discovered that they did not have the cemetery to themselves. The laughter stopped. The little boy and girl stood up and awkwardly brushed themselves off. The woman lay silently gazing up at the sky for a few moments, then stirred and allowed the children to assist her to her feet. All three of them slapped at her skirts, and brushed grass from her sleeves, before she began to make her way in Sumner's direction. The children followed, still beating the back of her dress. then ran off and disappeared hehind'a stand of wind-stirred cedars near the fence.

"We've shocked you!" she cried. She sounded quite pleased to think so.

As she approached. across the buttercup grass and past trees as stirred upand uneasy as sea. he saw that she was at least a decade older than he — a tall, erect woman, dressed in a black walking dress, with a tiny black hat of a rather masculine style riding high on a complicated mound of coppery hair. This was no one he remembered seeing before, and yet a powerful uneasiness swept thmogh him — a surge of fear, even -as though she were someone he ought to have recognized from a dark. forgotten dream.

"I came in search of my brother's grave. who died while I was still crossing the ocean. What you've just witnessed is the joy of three people set free after too many weeks on a ship."

Now that she had stepped up quite close, Sumner could see that her eyes were the red-brown colour of fox fur, and that the pale hand which held her gloves was freckled. as if she'd been sprinkled with the dust from old brick. There was something foreign in the sound to her words — Anglo-Irish perhaps, but slightly altered in a way he could not identify. None of this explained the fragile honeycomb of ice crystals which had formed amund the muscles of his chest and down through both his arms.

"A long journey from...?"

"Perhaps you were acquainted with my brother. Mr. William MacGregor, who owned the Bottomless Saloon on Johnson Street."

Sumner had had only a nodding acquaintance with this gentleman, though he knew the location of his business -a source of ear-splitting roars and vociferous argument whenever you passed by its open door. "His is not a premise I patronize — though I am well enough acquainted with a few of its 50 competitors."

"Some of his friends may be known to you then. whose names have appeared in his letters. A certain Mr. Hatch was mentioned often."

"A quarrelsome man. I am sorry to tell you. At this moment he is before a magistrate, suing for slander and assault."

"And a Mr. Horncastle."

Adelina's father! Perhaps this woman could read his thoughts. Did the blood rush to his face? "I think not. madam. There has always been great rivalry amongst the saloonkeepers in town. and I am sorry to report that your brother was amongst those who chose to treat Mr. Horncastle as an enemy. They're envious of his success, and often circulate slanderous rumours and publish libellous documents. It is unlikely the two men ever exchanged more than a few words. except for insults."

This was too vehement a denial by far! He was left stuttering and stumbling for words to bring about an end before he should find himself relating the entire history of his friend's difficulties with rivals, while this woman marvelled that her innocent questions had generated such a torrent. Already she appeared amused enough to have guessed the presence of an Addie Horncastle somewhere in the picture.

"Then perhaps I'm mistaken alto gether and my brother wrote letters tilled with fictions." This possibility did not appear to concern her. "Perhaps you have plans for those flowers?"

Until now, he had forgotten Chew Lee's bouquet of sweet peas, still in his hand. Flustered, unwilling to do any of this before a witness whose presence disturbed him in such an inexplicable way, he nevertheless knelt before his wife's grave and lifted the jar mntaining the blackened corpses of old flowers. A small envelope lay beneath it. Inside, above his signature on a folded piece of paper, Peter Schlegg had recorded the cost of his labour — hardly his usual practice. He had also printed the words: "And I also PRAISE HIM, that I've run out of space at last!" At the bottom *of* the paper, this peculiar man had then appended a hastily scribbled postscript. 'Don't come to me when you decide to start adding your nonsense to the backside of this poor-man's little stone."

Sumner's neck burned. He quickly folded up the piece of paper and closed his hand around it. Had his habit of making changes seemed so obviously the actions of a madman or a fool? Perhaps people. even strangers, had stopped here, attracted by the crowded confusion of chiselled phrases on his headstone, and joked with one another about the survivor who could not decide once and for all how he felt about things. He saw them inventing possible new adjustments: "Erase everythingand replace it with *On* the *other hand. That* would say it all!" Now that the terrible seeds of doubt had been sown. he even imagined his wife laughing: "Again? If I had lived he would *have driven me crazy with his indecision.* Why doesn't he give that poor block of granite a rest?

He would not, of course, let the woman see what was written on this paper in his hand. He looked about him: a multitude of silent stones, all speaking precisely the same message that had been put on them in the beginning. Permanent histories. He should throw the tombstone into the sea where no one could see it, and where the persistent waves could begin the slow task of wearing the inscriptions away. But what if he were seen doing this and arrested? What if a swimmer should find it? It would be raised and put on public display, with all its legible words reproduced in the newsoaqer for families to chuckle over at dinner. He would have no choice but to throw himself into theses as well. and hope to be more quickly erased fmm a life exposed to mockery.

She seemed to know. A smile began to playaround the edges of her mouth as she read the confusion of words on Sumner's headstone. "A passionate man. I should think, though wondrously erratic."

"Or confounded. A lunatic. perhaps."

"At any rate, I hope this will not become the fashion." The smile became laughter — she displayed a wide mouthful of teeth. "Suppose we were all required to run to the graveyard with a chisel every time we changed our opinion of life? I would have worn these legs off long ago, and emptied several quarries!"

"Of course I intended nothing like this at the beginning. How was I to know that everything would eventually prove to be inadequate?" The tremor in his voice might have been fmm thechillwhichhad settled in from the moment she stepped across *the grass to join* him. or from this new sense of his own exposed madness.

"There you have it — the very problem. I hate to see *anything* set in stone! Even paper is too permanent for my tastes. I'd rather flow through life like a river, leaving nothing behind."

As if to live up to her own ideal, she moved on across the grass without taking her leave. without encouraging the exchange of names. without satisfying his curiosity about her place of origin, and without giving him any indication of why she should have raised up this dark frightening echo within him of a forgotten dream. A black parasol sprang open, and at the same moment the two small children hurled themselves at her from behind the trees, each grasping a hand to accompany her past grazing Cleo and out into the street.

Sumner had altogether forgotten about the man in the tree, who dropped to the earth now without a sound and moved off in the direction of the gate, obviously intending to follow the woman and her children. Were they aware of his presence? He was so long and thin as to seem fashioned from wire — or perhaps (he was of a darkened complexion) from fire scorched roots and vines, sinuous things of the earth. With the large fingers of his nearer hand clasped to the coiled whip which slapped against his thigh — the long hide-coloured coat pushed hack to snap at the heels of his boots -he stmde across the grass with unnaturally long steps. and looked at Sumner for less than a moment from beneath a level bar of dark continuous brow, apparently without the smallest flicker of interest.

As soon as the *stranger* had diiappeared, Sumner resolved to forget them both. And to leave as soon as possible this place of former quiet and peaceful sorrows which had suddenly decided to mock him. to fill him with this panic He would seek out the caretakers and arrange for the stone to be removed and somehow destroyed — smashed *into* gravel, perhaps, by prisoners bmught out fmm the gaol. (What did he care if drunkards and petty thieves should have a good laugh at *his expense?* He had laughed often enough at theirs.) Though he was anxious to get back to the Barracks as fast as possible. in order to join the Horncastle family before they went home for their midday meal. he would first pay Peter Schlegg a final visit. Rather than leave the double plot with just the single stone, he would order a new stone erected where the old one had been. thii one blank and pure as a fresh piece of vellum paper, to be left in that state until the day that someone else would be required to write his story on it. □

This excerpt is from a novel in progress by Jack Hodgins, set in Victoria, Australia, and San Francisco in 1881-82. Still untitled, it is scheduled for publication by McClelland and Stewart in the fall of 1989.

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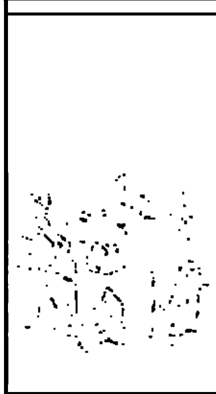

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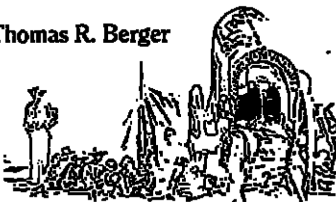

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In 1987 scientists from Russia, Eastern and Western Europe, the United States, and Canada gathered in Calgary to focus their attention on the impact of sudden climate change. Rapid climate change, however caused, may well destroy both advanced and simple societies. Indeed experts warn that complex societies such as ours are the *most* vulnerable. Lydia Dotto, noted science writer, has synthesized their findings about climate change, emphasizing the gravity of the situation we now face.

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'We were a village, a new kind of village. Seeing people being bona and dying not trying to do things by yourself — not trying to have a baby by yourself or care for a dying person by yourself, but just spreading it out — that's the most important thing I know'

By John Oughton

SHE IS THE AUTHOR of more than 20 books. including *A Portrait of Canada*, *Emotions*, and *Twelve Weeks in Spring* (an account of how some 60 friends helped cancer victim Margaret Frazer die comfortably at home). the ghostwriter of celebrities' autobiographies. and a writer for the *Globe and Mail* for 45 years. yet June Callwood is almost as celebrated for her compassion for tbe disadvantaged and her involvement in social causes. She's known for being arrested in 1968 for telling protesters how to lay police brutality charges, and more recently for being made an Officer of the Order of Canada. One concern has been giving comfort to people in need: she helped found Dii House. a youth hostel in Toronto's Yorkville area: Nellie's, a home for women in crisis: Jessie's Centre for teenage parents; and she is now president of Casey House. a hospice for AIDS victims. The latter facility is named after her son. who was killed in 1962 by a drunk driver. She and her husband. sportswriter Trent Frayne, have three other children.

Jim: A Life with AIDS (to be published in October by Lester & Orpen Dennys) is a biography of Jim St. James. He is a Canadian Jehovah's Witness and homosexual who has lived more than four years after being diagnosed. at 29. as having AIDS. One of the first known AIDS victims in Toronto, he became a popular AIDS spokesman and interview subject for journalists. A *Toronto Star* article about him that used his real name upset his small-town Ontario family, and his mother and sister obeyed a ruling by Jehovah's Witness elders to disown him. The winner of a Theatre Ontario award for best actor in an amateur theatrical production. he helped found the first Toronto AIDS support group — and has outlived many friends who contracted AIDS later than he did.

June Callwood

BiC: *Jim seems an unusual combination of things: he's remained a devout Jehovah's Witness, though his church has shunned him and estranged his mother and sister from him. He came out of the closet and won an award as an amateur actor, and yet seems a very private person. How close do you think you got to the real Jim St. James?*

Callwood: I don't know. He dissembles a lot. He's lived through so many levels of performance. He's a complex. thoughtful. intelligent person who's most uncomfortable letting anyone really close to him. The games of maintaining his distance have always worked.

BiC: *Was your family concerned for your health when you began this project?*

Callwood: Oh. no. I met Jim long after I'd met a lot of people with AIDS. when I began working on the hospice committee. We had two men on the committee who had AIDS, and both of them died. Through them I must have known at least a dozen men with advanced cases of AIDS before I met Jim. so the family was well educated about AIDS.

BiC: *How is Jim St. James doing now?*

Callwood: He doesn't look very good to me. He has Kaposi's sarcoma [a skin cancer rare in North America except among AIDS victims] all over his left arm and leg. But he's still Mr. Blight Eyes, raring to go.

BiC: *What effect do you hope this book will have on readers?*

Callwood: Two things. and I wouldn't put them in any order. The extraordinary amount of mail I got about *Twelve Weeks in Spring* seems to indicate that, after reading it, some people were able to deal differently with their fears about their own death or the death of someone near them. Margaret Frazer couldn't have hoped for a better outcome from that book. I hope this new book will make AIDS less alien. I think people believe the myths, and panic. bemuse they think AIDS is such a strange disease. The world has had fatal diseases before. This book should help people to accept the reality of AIDS: it's not a very communicable disease and is transmitted in very specific ways. which a person can avoid.

The other thing I hope for, which I didn't foresee, is a better comprehension of gay lifestyle. by people who are heterosexual. The first time I started to hang out in the gay community-and that's literally what I do. sometimes there are fundraisers in gay bars or a drag queen show or whatever. and I go to all that stuff — I was startled. I had never seen men kiss one another with passion. I hadn't seen men dance together. Theo I thought. "Yes. of course. They love one another. Why wouldn't they want to dance together?" I suddenly clicked that it was just like heterosexual behaviour — but they were the same sex. That was the only difference.

BiC: *Was it the same sort of role-playing as you see between men and women?*

Callwood: Exactly. As you would in any society as beleaguered as this one is, I see a lot more tenderness. More than you see in many heterosexual communities and a lot more support and courage. It's like being in a war, and it's bringing out the best in people. The more I was around.

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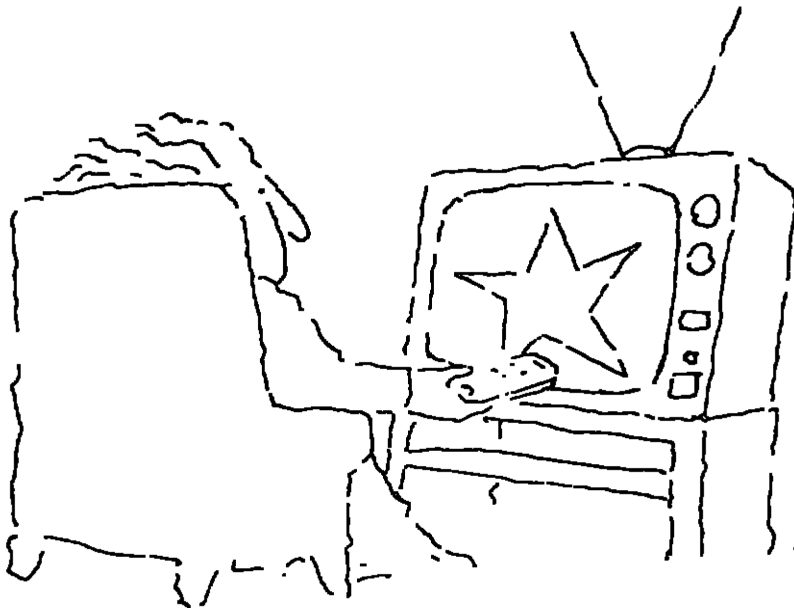

Canada

the more normal everything looked. And the book is where I arrived at. at the realization that there's no judgement call to be made about which sex you happen to be attracted tb. The way you behave is not related to whether you're in a same-sex couple or a male-female couple. By the time I started the book I took that so much for granted that I didn't even deal with it.

BiC: *Was it harder for you to deal with the question of religion? I understand from* Twelve Weeks in Spring *that you're not a formally religious person, in the sense of belonging to a church. You wrote that people are closest to the divine when they are kind to each other.*

Callwood: When people make a real connection — even a small thing. like the way someone holds a door for the person behind him or her — those little impersonal. or personal. things seem to me divine. if God is goodness. The expression of that kind of goodness. which is not looking for anything in return. is divine.

BiC: *In* Jim *there's a tremendous tension between what he thinks his church and Jehovah want him to do. and what his own drives and preferences are.*

Callwood: I had some sympathy. I was raised a Catholic. For a time in my life I fell totally under the spell of that religion: when I was a year in a convent. I felt tbe mysticism. the incense. the marrying Christ seemed like a heavenly idea. I appreciate the ecstasy of the bizarre religious experience. so I was respectful of him .. but I felt discouraged that someone could be trapped in such a puritan faith. and a" intelligent person so mutilated spiritually by trying to find God. If there is a God. God could certainly not have intended that *that* was the way to worship.

So Jim sort of came to the same conclusion, but also didn't. He's still very much a Jehovah's Witness. He's just interpreted God's understanding of his sexual preference in a way that allows him not to go crazy.

BE: *And his mother and sister are still alienated from him because of the church elders' ruling [that they must disown him]?*

Callwood: That's still the most painful thing in his life. His mother and sister have had no contact whatsoever with him since he appeared in the *Toronto Star.* I said earlier how much he dissembles, and how hard it is for him to deal with his real' feelings. But on the subject of his mother and sister. he just cracks wide open and cries. That's the deepest hurt he can feel.

BE: *You seem. both in this and in your previous book, to have a growing concern for palliative care. Did* Twelve Weeks in Spring *encourage other people to consider that approach?*

Callwood: *Yes.* I was told by the presi-

dent of the Canadian Medical Association that it changed his attitudeabout palliative care and that he'd established a sub committee of the CMA as a result of it. In fact. we're all in great demand to go and talk to nurses and doctorsand health people and home-visit people. The hospice movement, I think, was accelerated by the success of that book.

BiC: *What have you learned about the process of dying?*

Callwood: Dying is very much likebeing born. Dying people need to be held. to be soothed. to be sung to. to be rocked. It's quite clear to me that the circle comes around. If you nurture them as you would a baby. you've got it right.

BiC: *The press release from your publisher says you've written about 20 books. What is the actual number?*

Callwood: I think it's a lot more. but I quit counting. I don't really count the ghosted ones. You do forget them, except for the few that were a lot of fun to do.

BiC: *Which of the ghosted ones were the most fun?*

Callwood: Oh. Bob White and Barbara Walters. They had somewhat the Same quality of being absolutely honest, no mucking around or performing for you. I didn't mean that tn cast a reflection on Jim. He's a special situation. But almost everyone is a performance. We all protect ourselves that way. Bob White and Barbara Walters just don't have time for that — especially Bob.

BiC: *Which of your own books are you most proud of?*

Callwood: I think parts of the *Emotions* book. parts of the history of Canada book. *Twelve Weeks* turned out to be, ironically, the easiest book I ever wrote and the one that has had the most impact. Somewhere along the way. when Margaret was in the process [of dying]. she said. "I hope someone's going to write about this." I took it to mean "You. kid." So with that permission. I began making notes each day. whatever Iheardabwt or saw. And then everybody else's memories were so intense at that time that it was very easy to put it together.

BiC: *Now that you've finished* Jim, *is there another book you're working on?*

Callwood: No. I don't know if I want to write any more. I sure didn't want to write that book. And when I finished, I thought "I'm getting to be the specialist in necrophilia or something."

BiC: *Did Jim come to you and appeal to you to write his story?*

Callwood: Insisted, insisted, insisted. I said, "Sure. I'll do it." but I kept thinking he was going to dir: I didn't think I'd be held toaccount. I was absolutely appalled when he succeeded in selling the idea to Lester & Orpen Dennys. I told Malcolm [Lester] "I'll write it if I have to. but I hope I don't have to." So I've never gone into a book less willingly.

BiC: *Fifty years from now, someone's writing a social history of important Canadian women, and there's a short entry on you. How would you like to be remembered?*

Callwood: That I was raised in a village. I lived in a French-Canadian village, Belle River, near Windsor. until I was ten years old. There were maybe three or four hundred people at most, and of course everybody knew me. I couldn't be lost. I couldn't fall down where there wouldn't be an adult to pick me up. Everyone was taken care of by everybody else. What we dii for Margaret was tribal. We were a village. a new kind of village. Seeing people being born and dying, being able to touch them and share it, not trying to do it by yourself, not trying to have a baby by yourself. or take care of a dying person by yourself. but just spreading it out. That's the most important thing I know.

BiC: *You're currently the secretary of the English Canada sector of PEN International. What does that involvement mean to you?*

Callwood: Oh. I like doing that. I went to the New York conference where Norman Mailer made such a splendid fool of himself. and I also went to one in San Marino. It's wonderful hobnobbing with international writers. and the issues are all lovely clean-cut ones and so easy to defend: free speech, and getting writers out of prison. writers who are in prison for their view. Last night there was a PEN meeting and Timothy Findley and I sat and had a glass of wine and talked about who we were going to invite to the International Congress in Toronto in 1990. It's so different from the social field. where you can't fix things. Casey House doesn't save a single life. You can't saveanybody. So it's nice to get w ere that isn't the issue. where it's more ideas.

BiC: *How did you feel becoming an Officer of the Order of Canada?*

Callwood: I've got the pin for it in my purse. and I'll tell you why. I went to Albert Reichmann today to ask him for some money for Jessie's Centre. It needs a lot of money. So I sat in his office wearing the Order of Canada. That's what it's designed for. moments like that. And when I got up to go. he said "What is your name?" So I knew that. even with the Order of Canada. he saw me out of courtesy. He didn't have the least idea who I was. I thought. I've wasted this Order of Canada. [Ontario Attorney-General] Ian Smn. who's made me a Bencher of the Law Society of Upper Canada. introduced me at something or other the other day. He said that it was widely rumoured that I'd become part of the Establishment because of all of this. But then he said. "'Don't anybody believe it." □

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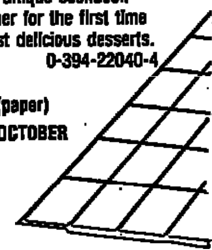

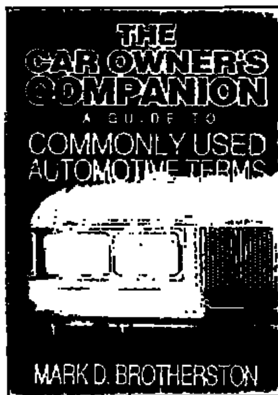

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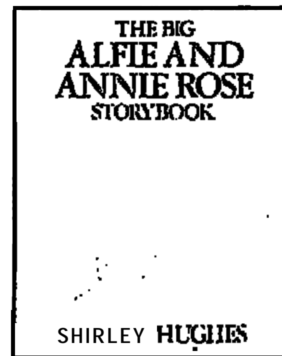

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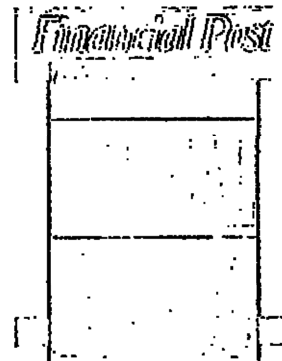

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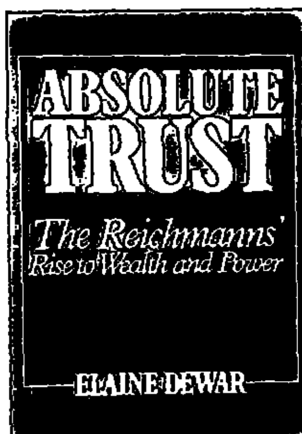

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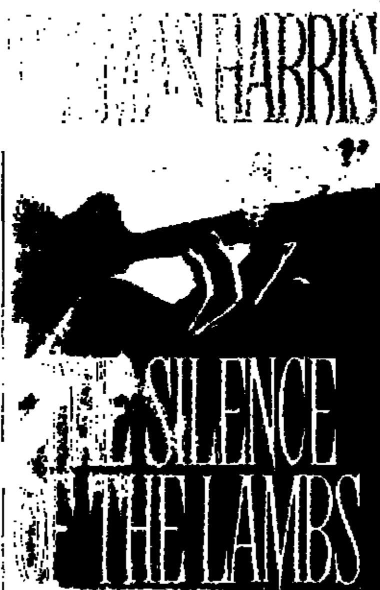

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FEATURE REVIEWS

Strange magic

Mavis Gallant doesn't seek to explain the inexplicable. It happens, and she shows it happening

By I. M. Owen

IN TRANSIT
by Mavis Gallant
Viking (Penguin), 263 pages, $24.95 cloth
(ISBN 0 670 82169 1)

THIS IS astounding: 19 stories by Mavis Gallant. evidently dating from the 1950s and 1960s, most of them of the usual high quality, now collected for the first time. Their theme is her constant one: people displaced from their natural habitat, not exactly fish out of water — because they usually survive after a fashion -but fresh-water fish who find themselves at sea, or ocean fish penned in lakes. Here are some Englishwomen in Spain:

> Although they spoke of married sons and of nephews involved in distinguished London careers, their immediate affections were expended on yappy little beasts like Mrs Parster's Bobby who prowled around the bridge table begging for the sugar lodged al the bottom of the gin-and-lime glasses. It was because of the dogs, newcomers were told, that these ladies lived in Spain. They had left England years before because of the climate, had prolonged their absence because of the war. of Labour, of the income tax; now, released from at least two of these excuses, they remembered their dogs and vowed never to return to the British Isles until the brutal six-month quarantine law was altered or removed.

One of the most memorable stories in the 1979 collection *From the Fifteenth District* is "The Four Seasons." set in the English colony on the Italian Riviera during the 12 months that ended with Italy's declaration of war on Britain. The story in this collection called "In Italy," is almost a sequel to that, showing the colony reconstituted after the war. seedier than ever. It's about Stella. who is displaced not only geographically but in generation and class: she is 30 years younger than her husband and 10 months younger than her stepdaughter Peggy: the daughter of a self-made businessman, she has married into the penniless upper class. ("A common little baggage.." Peggy was overheard saying at the wedding.) And for her there's no way out.

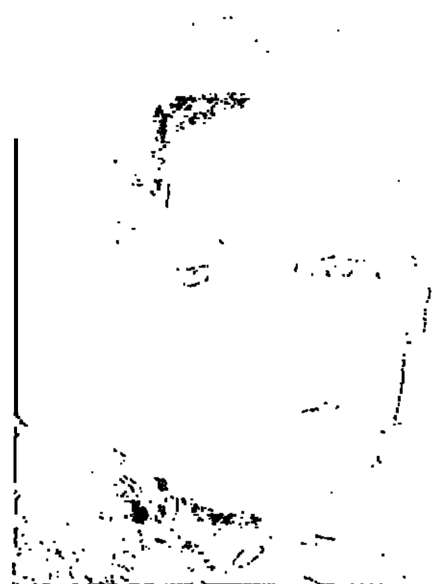
> "I should have been you, and you should have been me," Peggy said. "I love Italy and I can cope with Henry. He was a good parent, before he went sour. You should have married Nigel — or *a* Nigel."

The crushing immorality of this blanked out Stella's power of speech. It had been suggested that she ought to marry her stepdaughter's husband — something like that. There was something good about being shocked. It placed her. It reaffirmed her sense of being morally right where Henry and his kind were morally wrong. She thought: I am Henry's wife, and I am the mistress of this house.

"I mean." said Peggy, "that sometimes people get dropped in the wrong pockets by mistake."

"Well." said Stella. "that is life. That's the way things are. You don't get dropped, you choose. And then you have to stick to it. that's all. At least, that's what I think."

"Poor little Stella." Peggy said.


Mavis Gallant

Or take the multipledisplacements in the opening of "Careless Talk":

> Their language — English — drew them together. So did their condition in a world they believed intended for men. They were Iris Drouin, the London girl inexplicably married to a French farmer (inexplicably only because other people's desires are so strange), and Mary Olcott, her summer neighbour and friend. On a June night Mary had suddenly appeared in the Drouins' kitchen doorway while the family were at their meal. She was Irish and twenty-seven, with the manner of a Frenchwoman of forty — foxy and Parisian in her country clothes. She was a shade too sure of herself; it went down badly in this corner of Burgundy, where summer visitors were disliked.

"Other people's desires are so strange." That's perhaps the key to Mavis Gallant's strange magic. She doesn't seek to explain the inexplicable: it happens, and she shows it happening. In the story "In Transit." a young Frenchman who understands English perfectly observes an elderly American couple in the Helsinki airport:

> The man had the habit of rending signs nut loud. though perhaps he did it only to madden his wife. He read the signs over the three doors leading out to the field: "'Oslo.' 'Amsterdam.' 'Copenhagen.' I don't see 'Stockholm.'"
>
> She replied. "What I wonder is what I have been to you all these years."
>
> . . . The man was examining timetables and tickets. all the while muttering "Stockholm. Stockholm." while the woman looked away. She had removed her glasses and was wiping her eyes. How did she arrive at that question hew. in Helsinki Airport. and how can he answer? It has to be answered in a word: everything/nothing....
>
> "In the next world we will choose differently". he man said. "At least I know you will."

Mavis Gallant is at her very best in long short stories. novellas or near-novellas. whereas the stories here range from short to very short. Perhaps that's why they haven't been collected before. But most of them have the same remarkable density as her longer works. and exhibit the same mastery of exposition. Where lesser writers would start their stories by setting forth the situation and people necessary for our comprehension. she starts *in media res* get always manages. deftly and unobtrusively. to feed us the information we need exactly when we need it. never before. She's a glorious writer. □

The sun also sets

In the coming U.S. presidential elections we're certain to hear much rhetoric about rebuilding America to keep it strong. Will rhetoric overcome history? Stay tuned for the debâcle.

By J. L. Granatstein

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by Paul Kennedy
Little, Brown, 677 pages, $34.95 (ISBN 0 394 54674 1)

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CANADA IN THE EUROPEAN AGE 1453-1919
by R.T. Naylor
New Star, 617 pages, $19.95 paper (ISBN 0 919573 69 X)

ONLY RARELY does a book by a historian become an international bestseller. And only once in a generation does such a book become the subject of a public debate. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* has already been the subject of articles and television shows, and Paul Kennedy, its young author, has become a hot academic property. Kennedy. born in England in 1945, went to Yale University in 1983. Well known as a historian of international relations, he has now become a major public figure in his new country.

What's more. his book deserves the interest it has received. *Rise and Fall* is a superbly researched book. one that sweeps over five centuries of history with a sure hand. Kennedy has a marvellous knack for producing little set-piece accounts that illuminate a whole field of history in a few pages His succinct reasons for the failure of Mussolini's Italy to become a major military power in the 1930s, for example. are as clear as anything elucidated in a full-length book. His charts are a gold mine (I have already pilfered them extensively). and they are clear

Paul Kennedy

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enough that even a casual reader will find them helpful. Kennedy is a synthesizer without peer; something that only a historian who has read everything and thought long and hard about it can be.

His book has achieved notice because of the way he traces the rise and collapse of empires. The Spaniards rise and fall, the Dutch rise and fall. the French rise and fall. the British rise and fall. and the Americans rise and . It is that implicit question and its obvious answer that made the United States sit up and read Kennedy. Although other books have foreseen the inevitable slide of the United States toward the status of a second-rate power. Kennedy's was the first to provoke a debate. Why? The reasons are unclear. except that Kennedy's book has the weight of five centuries of history behind its apparent inevitability.

Kennedy also, as his subtitle suggests, has posited a theory for the fall of past empires. Military spending can become insupportable. he suggests. even for the richest powers. Moreover. the economic (to say nothing of the human) costs of defending a far-flung empire can become unbearable. even for the richest of societies.

> ***Laxer compares* the *July 4, 1986, celebrations* in New *York City to fhe Diamond Jubilee of* Victoria *in London in 1897.* Britain *had* already *passed her peak, 'while the devotees of Empire Sang* its *praises. So too,* he suggests, *had* America *begun its* inevitable *slide while the fireworks saluted the* centennial *of* the Statue *of Liberty***

Most Americans, of course, do not believe they control an empire. But every American, faced with a $250-billion-a-year defence budget and with the casualty lists that regularly come in from Lebanon, Grenada, or the Persian Gulf. can appreciate the burdens of being a great power.

Kennedy does not say that the United States is doomed to collapse. His last chapters are admittedly prophecy. and he understands that historians are not usually successful seers. He looks at the Soviet Union's intractable problems, at the European Community% difficulties in coordinating policy. at the inevitable ascendancy of China and Japan. and at the United States. The U.S. is saddled with a huge debt, the ultimate legacy of Ronald Reagan. but that does not mean doom, although it certainly means a future of grinding interest payments. America is too big and too cohesive to fall apart completely as some other empires have done. he says, though he may underestimate the centrifugal effect within the United States of widening class and racial divisions. Instead. Kennedy sees America's power declining in relative terms, and he predicts that the United States "will still be a very significant Power in a multipolar world. simply because of its size." That cool judgement. undoubtedly. will not be exactly reassuring to Americans. We are certain to hear much rhetoric in the coming presidential election about the necessity of rebuilding America to keep it strong, and Kennedy will be to blame for much of this. Will rhetoric overcome history? Stay tuned for the debâcle.

In their own ways. Canadian. authors James Laxer and R.T. Naylor are writing about aspects of the same subject of rise and fall. Canada scarcely figures in Kennedy's book, moving onto his pages only in passing. In Naylor's volume. a huge. sprawling em nomic history. we can see the French and British clashing over the resources of Canada. we can see the rising American empire looking to the north. and we can also find Canadian businessmen trying to amass the capital with which they can become even more powerful. By applying Naylor's detail to Kennedy's broad brush strokes, the reader can make some sense of events: But while historians hare generally hailed Kennedy for his research. Naylor's work has tended to be controversial in 'the extreme. The fact that this book, the subject of a major fiiht within Ottawa's granting agencies. has taken a decade to appear points to the dissatisfaction with his interpretation of the past in the mainstreams of academe.

Laxer's book is in many ways a complement to the last chapters of Kennedy. The York University political scientist has been' moving towards the political centre in recent years. and this slim study is a combination of current history and prophecy. Laxer too sees the Japanese and Chinese as rapidly increasing in economic importance. he too points to the Soviet difficulties. and like Kennedy he sees the Americans in difficulty because of their huge debts. In a striking image. Laxer compares the July 4.19%. celebrations in New York City to the Diamond Jubilee of Vitoria in London in 1897. Britain had already passed her peak. while the devotees of Empire sang its praises. So too. he suggests. had America begun its inevitable slide while the tire works saluted the centennial of the Statue of Liberty.

What makes Laxer interesting to a Canadian audience. however. is that he tries to fit Canada into his picture. Not surprisingly. we are laggards. technologically weak. still trading away our resources, and almost certain to see living standards decline over the next decade. Laxer predicts that by 2000 Europe and Japan will have a higher living standard than North America. In Laxer's bleak context. just as in Kennedy's, Canadian-American free trade looks increasingly like the huddling together of the losers. alone and afraid in a world that they could have. and should have. made. □

Out of the many

By Helen Porter

THE MIDDLEMAN AND OTHER STORIES
by Bharati Mukherjee
Viking (Penguin), 224 pages, $22.95 cloth (ISBN 0 670 81893 3)

> After lunch. a policeman I have gotten to know quite well catches hold of me. He says he thinks he has a match for Vinod. I explain what a good swimmer Vinod is.... The face on the photo is of a boy much like Vinod: the same intelligent eyes. the same thick brows dipping into a V. But this boy's features. even his cheeks are puffier, wider, mushier....
> "No." My gaze is pulled by other pictures....
> The nun assigned to console me rubs the first picture with a fingertip. "When they've been in the water for awhile. love. they look a little heavier."

THE ABOVE IS from "The Management of Grief," the cooeluding story in Bharati Mukherjee's new collection. and by far the best. Shaila, an East Indian woman living in Toronto, has lost her husband and two young sons in the Air India crash. The story follows her from the time she first hears the news to her harrowing visit to the site of the crash in Ireland. from her interaction with other mourners to a final acceptance of what has happened. Never over-written, always almost unbearably believable, 'The Management of Grief" is Mukherjee at her unsparing best.

Another story that works. or almost works, is "Buried Lives." Mr. N.K.S. Venkatesan. a 49 year-old Tamil schoolteacher in Trincomalee. Sri Lanka. "was not a political man." Nevertheless, after a series of bizarre incidents, he finds himself in Hamburg. an illegal transient who believes he is on his way to Canada. Before leaving Sri Lanka he had sent off applications to eight American universities. taking great care with his covering letters: "I sink my teeth into fiction by great Englishmen such as GA. Henty and A.E.W. Mason . . . . I ask myself, Hath not a Tamil eyes, heart, ears. nose. throat. to adapt the words of tbe greatest Briton." Some months later he receives. rubber-banded together. eight letters of rejection. This story ends strangely. but its wry humour points up the plight of people like Mr. Venkatesan. He emerges as a real person. onc of the few in the book I could empathize with.

Unfortunately. most of the other characters in the collection are pieces of wood. Alfie Judah in the title story, Blanquita and Griff in "Fighting for the Rebound" Jeb and Jonda in "Loose Ends" never really get off the paper. Ms. Mukherjee's characters come from Italy and the Philippines. Trinidad and Afghanistan. Cuba and Vietnam as well as India and Sri Lanka. most of them have come to America. Alongwith their American counterparts they speak in a would-be with-it manner that reminded me of the way certain clergymen talked in the '60s when they were trying too hard to be buddies with the young.

The author has a habit of turning nouns into verbs. In 'The Middleman" Maria "corkscrews to her feet" and "snakes her long. strong torso." In "Loose Ends" "the jailbait" has a braid that "snakes all the way down to her knees." (The word *jailbait* appears three times in two pages). In "Fighting for the Rebound" "Marcos [the cat] leaps off the sexy. shallow shelf of her left hip" — this fmm an Atlanta stockbroker. And so it goes.

Perhaps Bharati Mukherjee has something profound to say in all of those stories. If so. I'm afraid I've missed it in many of them. Along with the two I referred to earlier. I also liked "A Wife's Story." which begins with an Indian woman's reaction to a playwright's brutal "humour." II ends with her sharing with her husband. who is visiting her in America where she is studying special education, the pretence that nothing has changed. "Fathering," the story of a Vietnamese child named Eng who comes to the United States to live with her father. is moving also but. like some of the other stories. appears contrived.

I have enjoyed and appreciated Bharati Mukherjee's work in the past, especially her first novel *The Tiger's Daughter*, recently rereleased by Penguin. This new collection is largely disappointing. ❑

Family secrets

By Joel Yanofsky

TBETREEOFLIFE
by Fredelle Bruser Maynard
Viking (Penguin), 245 pages, $22.95 cloth (ISBN 0 670 81023 1)

IT'S EASY to lx skeptical about memoirs these days. Everyone seems to be writing them — from political flunkies to simple-minded pop stars. After all. doesn't everyone have a story to tell? (Of course.) And isn't everyone's story worth telling? (Of course not.)

Troth may be stranger than fiction. but it is seldom as well written or — stranger still -as honest. It does. however. seem to be more popular. Publishers like it better. readers tmst it more. and authors are just happy to get the chance to reveal their side of things, trash their enemies. and put the right spin on their own dubious motives. Autobiography is. as one critic said. an unrivalled vehicle for telling the truth about other people.

Fredelle Bruser Maynard's second book of memoirs is the exception to the contemporary rule. *The Tree of Life* is an uncompromising account of the author's ambivalent and conplicated relationships with her mother. older sister. husband. and two daughters. It is candid. touching and. most important of all. well told.

Although Maynard picks up the story of her life where she left off in *Raisins and Almonds* — about growing up Jewish in Winnipeg — the tone of the two books could hardly be more different: "If *Raisins and Almonds* is a sundial book ('I count only the happy hours'). *The Tree of Life* is chiaroscuro, less lyrical and less blithe." Maynard says in her introduction. "This account is tougher. coming as it does out of an attempt to make sense of my adult life."

Maynard is probably best known for the informative articles she has sold to magazines like *Chatelaine* and *Family Circle*. A freelance writer. broadcaster. and lecturer. she has bad a successful career making sense out of relevant issues like child development and family relationships Making sense of her own life. however. has proved to be a lot more demanding, and ultimately a lot more interesting.

There are no opinions solicited fmm experts here, no list of five easy steps to a perfect marriage Instead. there's just Maynard's brave efforts to come to terms with her past, even if that means breaking a family code that stubbornly claims: "We have no failures in our family. Everything's under control." For most of her life. it was a code Maynard honoured. Secrets were kept secret.

"In the first book I wrote about our family. [my sister. Celia] scarcely appears." Maynard confesses. 'Casual friends asked. 'Didn't you have a sister!' and I'd say. 'We're not close.' The truth was, I could not let that genie out of the bottle." Here. though, it is released and the tangled triangle of resentment, affection, and guilt that existed between Fredelle, the favoured child. and Celia. the disinherited child. is dealt with.

Another family secret that is revealed in *The Tree of Life* is the story of Maynard's mainly disastrous 25-year marriage. Fredelle Bruser was 20 when she met Max Maynard. She was an over achiever. a superstudent whose accomplishments included mmmitting Silas *Marner* to mem-"ry. He was a professor. older and divorced -a dashing. charismatic figure who seamed destined to bean important painter. "Had I set out to invent an ideal lover. a man of my drama. I could hardly have done better."

There were things about Max. however. that a naive. "clever little Jewish girl" from Winnipeg could not be expected to understand. Beneath the surface sophistication and charm, Max was a man who was desperately disappointed in himself. He was also an alcoholic, and that was something his young wife was not prepared to accept: "Alcoholics were Bowery bums. derelicts who slept in the streets.... They were not. could not possibly be. college professors."

Eventually. Maynard accepted the facts about her marriage. She also accepted the fact that she was trapped in a small college town in New Hampshire. with a Ph.D., no job prospects. and two young daughters. Sometimes. coping seemed impossible. "When our pediatrician told me to add egg yolk to the baby's diet. I remember wailing. 'I don't have time.'" But she did cope. And after her children were grown she divorced Max.

Although there was a time when Maynard felt only rage towards her husband, she recounts the story of her failed marriage without bitterness or blame. Hindsight is not always accurate — especially in memoirs -and passing judgement on the past is too easy and too dishonest. Maynard avoids that trap. And so when her daughter asks the inevitable question — how could you have married him? — Maynard recalls the man who taught her to see the trees and the sky differently and gives the inevitable answer. "How could I have not?"

For all its focus on dark secrets and disappointing truths, *The Tree of Life* is never maudlin or melodramatic. It is, as the title suggests, a book full of hope and resilience. In the chapter "Kaddish for my Mother." Maynard says goodbye to her mother with a mixture of frankness and tenderness. "I came to envy daughters less loved than I, less sacrificed for." she confesses early in the chapter, but she concludes with a poignant portrait of the quintessential Jewish mother:

> "There is nothing you could do. dear," my mother said. "that would make me turn against you." I pushed a little. What if I had killed someone? She considered that carefully. "I would know that you must have had a very good reason."

Maynard was a precocious child. Her first poems were published in a local newspaper when she was five. She is in her 60s now, but not much has changed. She is still precocious. Irony remains her natural mode. and her prose shines with wit. wonder, and a compassionate instinct for the truth about human beings. □

The people's Ed

By Desmond Morton

ED BROADBENT: THE PURSUIT OF POWER
by Judy Steed
Viking (Penguin), 347 pages, $24.95 cloth (ISBN 0 670 82255 8)

ONE OF THE mysteries of the 1980s is why so many Canadians like Ed Broadbent. Since 1980, when the NDP leader's popularity surpassed the competition, Broadbent's approval ratings have remained impressively high, even when the NDP was in the public dump.

In a conservative decade. captivated by business success and private wealth. both the NDP and its leader should be hopelessly out of fashion. Broadbent may have integrity and compassion, but so did David Lewis. Tommy Douglas. and the CCF's M. J. Coldwell. What is there about Broadbent that seems to give him a special rapport with voters who otherwise regard politicians with contempt?

Until 1987, when Broadbent's popularity helped to pull the New Democrats into the top spot in the national polls, Judy Steed took no more interest in Broadbent than might be expected of a national reporter for the *Globe and Mail*. The daughter of a Diefenbaker Tory and a skeptical Scot. Steed, had no inherited sympathy for left-wing politicians. Journalistic curiosity, not sympathy. led her to seek a publisher's contract, a year's leave of absence and more than ZOO interviews with family. friends. mentors. and enemies. The resulting book may embarrass Broadbent, but it should do little to undermine his following.

A private person. secretive about his family and personal life, Broadbent may cringe at Steed's revelations about his broken first marriage or his alcoholic father. but historians will welcome more proof for the biographical rule that Canadian politicians have strong, protective mothers. Very few of them. however, have been drawn as deeply into academic life and into a personal search for political first principles. At the University of Toronto during some of its golden years. Ed Broadbent worked under Brough Mae pherson to develop the political creed — a tough synthesis of personal freedom and social justice — that has guided him ever since.

That background may have seemed irrelevant in 1966 when he ran in Oshawa — as second-best substitute for former MP and columnist Doug Fisher. Ten years away from the auto workers of Oshawa led him to preach on John Stuart Mill. with near-fatal consequences. Intellectual arrogance turned his 1971 bid for the NDP leadership from a defeat intu a deserved humiliation.

Yet Broadbent, as Steed insists, has always had the power to forget humiliation and to learn from mistakes. He has also teen lucky in his mentors. Abe Taylor, a strong-minded Oshawa unionist. found that Broadtent was an unbeatable politician at a dance, on the street. and above all around a kitchen table. In Parliament, David Lewis forgave his antics and taught Broadbent all he had time to teach before his own defeat in 1974. A year later, after an apparent shoo-in for the NDP leadership turned into a hard contest with Rosemary Brown. Broadbent learned to take feminist issues seriously.

Broadbent's harshest experience came after the 1980 election when most of his caucus came from western Canada. Faced with Pierre Elliott Trudeau's insistence on patriating the constitution and imposing a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Broadbent did what he could to shape the measures and then 'promptly endorsed them. Both, after all. were longstanding NDP policy. He was battered by western NDPers, hostile to any Trudeau initiative, and furious that their own party might be an ally. Four years of self-destruction by 1964 had dropped the NDP to a mere 9 per cent in the polls. certain oblivion. Yet Broadbent survived, absorbed the blows, endured the desertion of his closest adviser. Jim Laxer, and in September 1984 led the NDP to its best showing ever. 20 per cent of the vote against a Mulroney landslide

Steed's picture of Ed Broadbent is more than a caricature of an intellectual who can sing like Johnnie Ray. discuss Reich and Thurow, and play painless practical jokes. After a year of study, Steed found a man at peace with himself. morally tough. and intellectually robust. Broadbent coexists with strong wills, including that of hi wife, Lucille. As a devout NDPer. she has wondered at the morality of pm-wing power; 20 years of political experience have persuaded Ed Broadbent that it would be immoral for his kind of social democrat to do otherwise. She now agrees. He may make it.

Ed Broadbent is the first NDP leader to be born in Canada. Intellect and principles have helped him survive. but Steed found the roots of his political appeal in Oshawa where uncles, a brother, and his father claimed 150 years of service at "the Motors," the bii GM complex. In Oshawa. she found. people speak their minds. save their praise. and don't care what Toronto thinks. A lot of Canadians feel that way. So does Ed Broadbent. □

Cries and whispers

By Sharon Thesen

ANIMAL UPROAR
by bill bissett
Talon, 128 pages, $8.95 (ISBN 0 88922 247 9)

JOURNEY/JOURNEE
by Anne Szumigalski and Terrence Heath
Red Deer College, 47 pages, $8.95 paper (ISBN 0 88995 029 6)

BILL BISSETT'S latest collection of poems is a substantial and exuberant addition to the poetry of song and celebration that, despite the turn to the processes of writerly *mentation* currently touted as correct poetics fin which the writer is invulnerable to the effects upon his or her ardent soul of a gentle waterfall in the Skootamata River or even a Chrysler plant baking in the sun. in other words. a poetics of Least Embarrassment). survives in anthologies such as *Technicians of the Sacred* and in the verse of Blake, Keats, D. H. Lawrence. Walt Whitman, and Michael McClure. McClure, who declares himself a "mammal patriot," would find camaraderie not only with bissett's sensibility but also with his idiosyncratic phonics. While McClure builds shapes. sounds and emphasis with his carefully constructed stanzas and capitalized words, the words are at least recognizable at first sight. In bissett's work, however. the reader is disabused of any expectation of conventional spelling and must instead enter bissett's system in order to read the

poems. The experience of being herded into a private (and somewhat arbitrary) orthographical system can often be irritating — I nearly went *blind* reading this book — but at other moments it's transporting one experiences directly the *otherness* of poetic utterance, both its weird handicaps and its extraordinary freedom in relation to ordinary, that is to say bureaucratic, ways of speaking and writing. In addition to the homemade phonetics of bissett's written language, at which one soon becomes adept, willing even to act as translator to imagined "then just picking up the book, e.g., "n for yr unsd angrs" land for your unsaid angers): "yunyun" (union); "ium cm ths wun" (I am on this one); "th yew s" (the U.S.), and so forth, the book includes several "sound poems," transcriptions of what, in performance, would be "rattle song": bissett's long, chanting pieces that include howls, yips, moans, and words, and usually involve a narrative of sexual union or union with nature. These I think are the least successful poems in the book: they look, and read, as a spill of comicbook ejaculations across the page and afford, at least to this reader, little sense of the real sound of the pieces.

Apart from these problems, *Animal Uproar* contains much of interest, value, and beauty. The musicality of bissett's line and the passion of his commitment to a world of peace, love, and freedom (and so pure and intelligent is this passion that it stands as reproach to our own endemic cynicism) make for poems that, though sometimes too long, are never dull or repetitious. Some of his images are lovely: "our spirit animals leep from us th/ horses sending beems rockits thru th skies leev us/ for a whil to sleep inside th gauz uv our dreams! n our reel/ n temporaree arms." *Animal Uproar* speaks for the animal world both inside and outside us, asks for greater respect for it, celebrates its actual and mythic existence, and decries its disappearance into what bissett calls "th deth bizness." I'm glad for bissett's view of things. Many of the poems are accompanied by drawings, also by the author. These drawings express great tenderness and have a slightly Byzantine aspect.

Journey/Journée by Anne Szumigalski and Terrence Heath is also an illustrated book (the beautifully detailed illustrations are by Jim Westergard), expanding the collaborative effort of the writing to include visual art as well. The poems establish a conversation about the vicissitudes of life in general, in terms of the rather overworked metaphor of life as a journey *and* as a temporary, day-by-day, moment-by-moment sojourn. The particulars of the poems deal with aloneness, foreign places, political atrocities, the meaning of home, the nature of photography, the relationships between woman, nature and language. But for all their variety and interest, the poems lack the vitality of bissett's voice, and in many instances, the strength of their own. A major problem in this book is that the voices of the two poets are not equally matched: the often superb poems of Szumigalski do not find an equally interesting echo or provocation in Heath's, which are often flattened by the deadness of his line. Compare Szumigalski's

From the first day I knew
I must begin
To talk to myself, for fear of
forgetting
The sound, the use of words,
For fear that for me they would
become
Mere bird-scratches on paper,
Botanist's Latin on a page of notes

with Heath's

I thought I would find you
as a young girl
Running with grubby white
sandals down the road,
Your pigtails bound in thin
ribbons,
But you are nowhere here,
not anywhere hr.

The authors point out that the book contains poems written separately from this particular project but included because of uncanny correspondences: yet throughout this book one wonders what the focus or purpose of it really is. The poems are sufficiently unalike to disturb a potential harmony, and sufficiently alike to cancel a potentially contrapuntal effect. The bilingual title creates expectations of bilingual poems, but no such poems appear, nor do many poems deal with dailiness as subject matter (as distinct from context). However, although the reader can never quite find a sure listening-post inside the conversation *Journey/Journée* creates, the book contains a number of fine individual poems by both writers. Szumigalski's poems about the natural world and its relation to the intimacies of her own life are fresh and beautifully crafted: and Heath finds his strongest ground when he deals with the mysteries of the relationship between photography and landscape, photographs and history. The book is beautifully presented as part of the Writing West series and it won the Silver Medal in the National Magazine Awards when it was first published in the arts magazine *Border Crossings*. Perhaps a more careful editing would have benefited the manuscript for its publication as a book. □

Messages

By Christopher Wiseman

K. IN LOVE
by Don Coles
Véhicule/Signal Editions, 69 pages, $9.95 paper (ISBN 0 919890 83 0)

THOSE WHO have admired Don Coles's increasingly powerful poetry in his first four books may well feel an initial disappointment when they look at his fifth. They will immediately miss what they have come to value in this poet's work — the provocative examination of continuities and ruptures in time: the consolations and truncations of hope: the disturbing, uncomfortable thing that stretch the past out and away.

And they will miss some characteristic Coles techniques, too — the way the smile or ache of content is embodied in the subtle wit of the syntax, the tense and active convolutions that wrap around and explore movement of feeling and create a density incorporating the weight of loss and the knowledge of time's doing. It is a voice and a content that the poet has been refining for years, and the result has been, especially in *Anniversaries, The Prinzhorn Collection*, and *Landslides*, a full and distinctive tension between content, image, and syntax.

In *K. in Love*, Coles has abandoned his intensities of syntax, stanza, and image, the warm and winding shapes: much of his range. And he has take" a big chance by trying a collection of untitled, unnumbered lyrics, usually from five to eight lines long, deriving from his reading of Franz Kafka's letters and journals on the subject of the great writer's "love." Some of Kafka is directly incorporated into the poems, but Coles has added much, and, after the initial surprise, this book will be seen as an important and fine addition to his oeuvre.

The risk is obvious. Losing most of his technical supports, his heavy artillery, the poet is left depending on sabotage, subtlety, and occasional sniping — in this case, poetically, relying almost exclusively on voice, as the narrator muses aloud for us to overhear. If that voice were to waver, to seem inauthentic, trite, over-insistent or sentimental, the sequence would collapse. It does not collapse: far from it. As the protagonist tries to come to terms with his own reactions to the woman, to the relationship, to his own jittery, skittish state as lover/writer, we are forced to go with him, get to know him, witness and weigh his strengths and weaknesses, his reactions. And he is well worth knowing, there in the *Sturm und Drang* of the whole mess love brings, its comedies and jealousies, its sustenance and delight, its uneasy doubts and mild wondering passion, as he tries to keep his suddenly threatened dignity and stability, to give without compromise, to learn how to receive.

We are forced, by the persuasive voice, very close to this man. In that strange human place where love, longing, and the heart cross and utter what words can be found, we listen as he pulls and pushes towards a" understanding of love that will include all his moods and tell him why he feels angry, lustful, weary, broken, lonely, self-mocking, delighted, funny, changed.'

And always the key is voice. These little songs, fragments, jottings, and epiphanies sustain themselves and make a whole We come to trust the voice and its so-honest owner, and we come to *like* him. For he is, damn him, maddeningly likable in his sheer simplicity and childlike need.

Not every poem works. Some are too flat, some oversimple to the point of obviousness. But most, because of their cadences

and modulations, their honest humanity, contain Fine and unforgettable pleasures, not least in the way the writer and lover relate:

Here come my latest marks
on a page
Looking up at you. So frail —
How can I expect them to
accomplish anything?
Nothing alive is so weak.
Your opening the envelope has
Dazed them, it's because of
The light flooding in
At least wait till they recover.

So K./Coles on a love letter. One might cavil at a couple of line breaks, but this will give some small idea of what this sequence is up to, though quoting anything out of context is unfair to these poems.

The creation of this personal special Kafka shows Don Coles's confidence as a poet, his power, and his daring. It may not be the "old" Don Coles, or the Kafka we thought we knew, for that matter, but this is lyric poetry that, in its own beautiFully controlled way, is satisfying and moving. □

Those true tones

By Louis K. MacKendrick

THE SAXOPHONE WINTER
by Robert Harlow
Douglas & McIntyre, 361 pages, $14.95 paper (ISBN 8894 589 2)

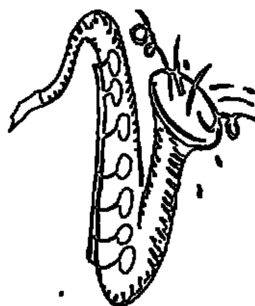
FROM 1936 until 1941, Robert Harlow played the alto saxophone in a small Prince George band; in the late '40s at UBC, he formed a short-lived big band. An early story, 'The Sound of a Horn," featured theinstrument, and in his novel *Felice* (1985) Polish jazz musicians are emblematic of freedom. *The Saxophone Winter* thus has real bases in Harlow's experience

The novel's winter is that of 193839, in Long River, B.C. Christopher Waterton, just 14 and in grade nine, suffers and triumphs through such situations as First love with the attendant disarray, glories, and complications, ski jumping, harsh and sympathetic teachers, ostracism by his peers, his father's running educational and commercial conflict with the mayor, errors of the heart, skating, secrets about others' relationships, gossip, a winter carnival, injustice and misunderstanding, a wise mother "always full of messages," dances, a completely understanding elderly adult, and more. Further, he begins to develop some competence and confidence on the alto saxophone, as the lessons of art and craft tear on his life.

Harlow's teen-agers, the bulk of hi cast, are not Fumbling, inarticulate, embarrassing gawks; they are sensible, intelligent individuals, with range, depth, and substance. They are not miniaturized adults, not children, but simply, believably, teenagers of their time, perhaps the First real ones in the Canadian novel, and the entirety of their lives is both understood and shown in the round. Sensation, not sensationalism.

There is Christopher's closest friend, Fielder, an extravagant creature of ultimates, always in overdrive, a lord of misrule suddenly humanized and reduced through the discovery of his sister's blindness. There is John Purvis, a sad, sick, isolated figure treated without pathos, a victim of physical and social accident. And there is Christopher's Emily Gordon, the dentist's daughter, with whom he shares love, an intensity of Feeling, a correspondence, good humour, as they try to make "a small country of their own." Ultimately Christopher resists Full physical intimacy with Emily at the most confused time of his winter, when his world is full of threat, unfairness, and ambiguous values. He becomes teribly aware of consequences. Only the most carping readers will see this coupe as preternaturally wise and mature in their dealings, or as too grown up and articulate For their youth.

Barlow's previous six novels have always had a strong, even heavy-handed metaphorical dimension; they have dealt em phatically with ideas and concepts. Here such attractions are understated, uncomplicated, and perfectly accommodated to the story and the relative sophistication of its agents. What the novel deals with is people's need for "a kind of future for them. selves," a safe place. Christopher's Father believes that "you should have to be able to do everything For yourself inside your own world." The relationship of private and public worlds is here, as are accident or contingency, the logic behind improvisation, belonging and apartness, dictatorship and the "show of power," and warfare. As Christopher's teacher Gabe Sommerville (one of several oracular but nonetheless human adults in the novel) observes, "No saxophone can be built to make true notes top to bottom, so you got to blow those true tones yourself." Harlow's motifs are clear, sensible, and unforced: his pacing is unhurried: his language rarely demonstrative. As always, he takes great care with physical placement, as well as with intermittent reminders of the era's popular tunes and of the war in Europe. *The Saxophone Winter* is certainly his most accessible fiction, with a smoothness and balance that are remarkable. Everything is in complement: this is Harlow's most completely realized novel. □



Wolf at the door

By Lawrence Jackson

WILD FURBEARER MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION IN NORTH AMERICA
edited by Milan Novak, James Baker, Martyn Obbard, and Bruce Malloch
Ontario Trappers Association, 1,150 pages, $75.00 cloth (ISBN 0 7743 9365 3)

THIS IS a monumental book, of specialized appeal but surely of great value in its own market. It is a thorough, virtually encyclopedic study of the North American fur industry, from the archaeological evidence of its beginnings to a look at the animal-rights movement that seeks its end.

One wry note in the latter: Europe, which is both our chief Fur market and the sits of much of the anti-trapping agitation, has little recent experience of trapping because most of its Fur-bearing animals have been eliminated. This lack cd direct experience makes many Europeans hard to reason with, the author of this chapter observes.

The second section, an exploration of the nature of trapping today, begins with the memories of a man whose career spans most of this century and ends with a thoughtful essay on the future of the trade.

A section on management principles and techniques includes a Fascinating paper on "the prudent predator," of which man, we hope, is one. This makes the case that predators tend to harvest their prey in ways that ensure the survival of the prey species. This is particularly true of social creatures, like wolves, which have a long-term stake in defined hunting territories.

By Far the largest section details the biology, management, and conservation of individual species. This is 450 pages of fine detail, most of it in the flat, careful language of science. Intriguing Facts reward the browsing layman. Least weasels, for example, have such a high metabolism that they must consume nearly half their weight in mice each day.

A section on pelts includes a long chapter on fur grading, with 849 watercolour illustrations. Here, the complexity of the detail is astonishing. Auction houses sort pelts by a dozen or more regions of origin and a similar number of grades, all described here.. Experienced mink graders can recognize pelts from six different areas of Ontario alone. Colour shades of ranch mink include Lavender, Blush, Blue Pearl, and at least 15 others.

A chapter on trapping methods includes line drawings of "sets" For different species. Many involve techniques to hasten death and minimize suffering, an objective that has clearly preoccupied theindustry for some time.

One of the final chapters documents Fur catches in North America for as Far back as numbers are available. The authors counter cries of impending extinction with evidence that, the current catch of most species is larger than at any time in the past 300 years. Overtrapping did seriously deplete many species by the fast turn of the century, but nearly all have recovered. Where they have not, as with grizzlies, wolves, mountain lions, and the black-footed Ferret, the problem is chiefly a loss of habitat. Here the trapper and his quarry share the same jeopardy.

This is a partisan book, but

one loaded with documentation and written with considerable authority. For those who still have open minds on the animal-rights issue. it is a massively comprehensive reference. For those to whom trapping is patently evil. it will make no difference whatever. ❑

Trans continental

By Terry Goldie

VOLKSWAGEN BLUES

by Jacques Poulin, translated by Sheila Fischman

McClelland & Stewart, 213 pages, $22.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 7158 2)

JACQUES POULIN'S prose. in French. is inspired by the stripped-down English of American writers, especially Hemingway. Throughout his new novel, the hero is called "the man" and his friend "the girl," but the nuances of his homage are more extensive: "The Volks was very old and covered with rust. but the motor ran well. It was a rebuilt motor. The girl was young." The translator. Sheila Fischman, has succeeded in returning the language to its home.

The reflections on language throughout the book do present some problems. The hem's pen name. Jack Waterman. jars in French but not in English. As Jack wanders through the United States he constantly reacts to the idiomatic differences of English and French. in speech, signs. and songs: people who speak French turn up in the strangest places. The explanations fur this expansive francophonia might be accepted as convention in the original but seem laboured in translation.

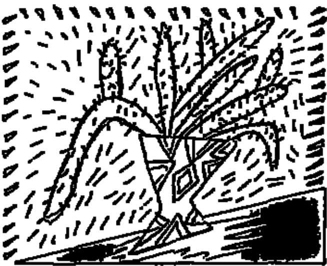
Still. the wider French fact is also the central statementof the novel: beneath this stridently English-speaking continent there is a bubbling resonance of the old French presence. Jack sets off in a Volkswagen van to search America for his brother. Théo, who was lost back in the days of hippie perambulations. His only clue is an old postcard from Théo that includes a passage from Jacques Cartier, so he decides to follow the trails of French explorers. His companion. a Métis girl he meets in a campsite, is called "La Grands Sauterelle" (the big grasshopper).

Ear;) in the novel Jack says, "Everything I know, or just about. I've learned from books." This could be said of *Volkswagen Blues*, constantly responding to literary allusions. such as Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, the quest myth of the beat generation (by an author lately reborn as a Franco-American). A more logical connection. however. is unmentioned: *Don Quixote*. Jack. morequixotic in character than Kerouac's hero: is also like the Spanish knight in his devotion to mythic patterns. Even the van. stereotypical steed of the '60s freak. is a bit like Quixote's Rosinante: faithful, but not too able. Jack and Quixote both encounter many mysterious. romantic figures.

"La Grande Sauterelle" is partly faithful Métis guide, partly the sexually attractive Indian maiden. temptress of the North American wilderness. She is also the female to the hero's male. the initiated to his outsider. the young to his middle@. even the mechanic to his writer. In terms of legend. ary patterns, she is the spiritual teacher. Good Deeds to his Everyman or Hopeful to his Christian. When his map. reading fails him. she keeps him on the one true Oregon Trail. At the Continental Divide it is she who recognizes the need for an epphanic sexual union although, like many picaresque heroes. he fails to perform as al. legory dictates.

This all should be a lot of fun, as the blurbs, such as "one of the best novels of the 1980s," suggest. But it isn't. The publisher's handout states that Poulin's writing is "unadorned. almost documentary in its immediacy. almost scientific in its dispassionate description of events." Instead, this lack of adornment makes it less a novel than a map or index.

Every page of the book tells the reader to look somewhere else. First in American literature — if not Kerouac or Hemingway, then Saul Bellow or Lawrence Ferlinghetti (both of whom make cameo appearances in the novel). Second. in tales of the French explorers, if not Cartier then LaSalle or Jolliet. Third. in an American atlas. to follow the Oregon trail.



Poulin seems aware of this, as the characters obsessively return to libraries and museums in search of some source to "borrow," which they might return later. But as in the case of the novel. they borrow only surfaces. It seems as though Poulin thinks cartography can replace cultural geography — as if a Texaco mad map describes the United states.

There are no doubt others more in tune with this book than I am. I find the Hemingway. esque tone almost ludicrous at times, but then I find Hemingway just as bad. Yet I still enjoy rereading *On the Road*, no matter how dated it seems. And there is certainly room for a similar book about the Quebecois finding the soul of America and his own American roots. This isn't it. ❑

The spider and the fly

By Pat McKeown

LA BUSE ET L'ARAIGNEE

by Jean-Yves Soucy

Editions Les Herbes Rouges, 214 pages, $16.95 paper (ISBN 2 920051 39 3)

LE FOU DU PERE

by Robert Lalonde

Boréal, 152 pages, $13.95 paper (ISBN 2 89052 223 7)

LES NOCES DE SARAH

by Simone Piuze

Editions de l'Hexagone, 458 pages, $19.95 paper (ISBN 2 89006 288 0)

UN BON PETIT SOLDAT

by Madeleine Vaillancourt

Editions Libre Expression, 223 pages, $14.95 paper (ISBN 2 89111 345 4)

BAIE DES ANGES

by Serge Viau

Boréal, 222 pages, $14.95 paper (ISBN 2 89052 230 X)

TWO RECENT RELEASES from Quebec deal intensely with parent-child relationships. but that theme is all these books have in common. Jean-Yves Soucy's latest work, La *Buse et l'Araignée*, is not really a novel, but two novellas describing the pathological love of a child for the mother. The 10-year-old narrator of *La Buse* pictures herself as a buzzard as she seduces old men in the park. Her first victim was her father: how she sent him to prison by deflowering herself makes for chilling reading. Once the child has her mother to herself. her behaviour degenerates. Little is left to the imagination in this short work. The sexual explicitness shocks. coming fmm a child, but there is no satisfactory explanation of the source of her knowledge. and by the end of the story the language has become a little tire some. The sick child is such a monster that it is impossible to feel sympathy for her. and we are left wondering why she is so perverted.

The second novella is the spider's story. A 15-year-old boy tells how he seduced his mother after his father's death. The author skilfully manipulates the language to reflect hi "arm tor's changing roles: the style is smooth and subtle as the boy escorts his mother on a European tour, flattering and cajoling her like a suitor. not a son. The approach is cruder and more explicit as the teenager gains sexual prowess by seducing other, needy. older women. As in *La Buse*, the child in *L'Araignée* successfully monopolizes the maternal affections. but because only the obsession is described. we are left wondering how the toy's Oedipal feelings took over his personality.

In *Le Fou du père*, by Robert Lalonde, a young man returns to northern Quebec to try to break down the barriers between himself and his father. barriers erected years ago when the older man lost his job. his pride, and almost his family. The son's efforts to communicate with his silent father lead him on a troubling journey of self-discovery. Lalonde writes a sinewy yet lyrical prose that sometimes approaches poetry. The style is wonderful to read but at times is not earthy enough for the subject: the closeness father and son first achieve is physical and is not well described in such high-flown language. But the author succeeds admirably in evoking the Quebec wilderness. and proves himself a master at describing shades of feeling, as the isolation in which father and son are living begins to penetrate the young man's city skin. There is a hint of a political dimension in the story of one man's destruction by the decisions of an absentee boss, and in the description of the economic death of the narrator's birthplace. Lalonde has also mov-

ingly portrayed the dead wife and mother. who remains a haunting presence. If then is one weakness in the novel, it is in the scarcity of detail of the family's life together long ago. This work is a new look at an old theme, but leaves us wanting more.

Simone Piuze's second novel. *Les Noces de Sarah*. paints an authentic picture of life in the hippie world of Quebec in 1973. Sarah Beshner, a 27-year-old journalist. moves from bed to bed in her quest for the perfect man to replace her father who abandoned her years ago. Sarah's relationship with Philippe lies at the heart of the novel. but she is so needy that she is compelled to make almost every man she meets love her. While on a trip to France. she seduces a couple of men. becomes pregnant, and. rejecting an abortion, finds herself. In an awkward epilogue, after a novel written entirely in the first person, we learn from some all-seeing editor that Sarah is now living in San Diego, and that despite her knowledge that her world could collapse at any time. she is happy. This trite and trendy thought ends a long novel whose central character and narrator cannot sustain the work. It is not just that Sarah is hard to like. but that we don't believe in her: for example. she is labelled an ambitious journalist but only sits down to write when the rent is due. While her often banal emotional life comes under endless scrutiny. Sarah rarely pauses to explore what makes her professional self tick. In the end. Sarah remains flat.

Madeleine Vaillancourt's latest novel. *Un Bon petit soldat*, is very entertaining: a rare qualitr. It mixes an attractive her&w. exciting international locations (and Ottawa). and a complicated plot to produce a suspenseful work that's fun to read. Twelve people from the Deslys family die in one year: could this he coincidence. or is there some sinister plot afoot? The family in question believes itself tn be directly descended from Louis XVI. who died on the guillotine: some members of the family have set themselves up an the Separatist-Monarchist Party of Quebec. complete with titles. Vaillancourt has created a host nf colourful characters who capture our interest with their vividness if not with tbedepthof their personalities. The novel's main weakness is its sentimental ending: why does pregnancy so often recommend itself to women in fiction facing a life crisis?

In *Baie des Anges*, by Serge Viau, the narrator is a hard-drinking womanizer. escaping the city to spend a few weeks with friends in a small tourist town where he is asked to solve the mystery of the disappearance of 12 young girls. Leo escapes the urban life only to confront the self ha has avoided. Most of the story is told through an alcoholic haze, so we never learn where paranoia ends and reality begins. There are some interesting germs of thought in the novel: on the realities of isolated country life, on what makes a psychopath. on sexuality, but Leo is not thevehicle for their development. And while there are some well-drawn portraits (of the small-town businessman. the corrupt mayor. the obese police chief), the work cannot make up its mind whether to be a psychological novel harbouring a mystery, or a mystery novel with a psychological twist: as a result, *Baie des Anges* does neither well. □

Street poetry

By Ward McBurney

MALIGNANT HUMOURS
by Crad Kilodney
Black Moss, 96 pages, $12.95 paper (ISBN 0 88753 170 9)

I CHEWED MRS. EWING'S RAW GUTS AND OTHER STORIES BY CRAD KILODNEY
Charnel House, 54 pages, $4.00 paper (ISBN 0 920973 08 6)

NICE STORIES FOR CANADIANS
Charnel House, 52 pages, $4.00 paper (ISBN 0 920973 09 4)

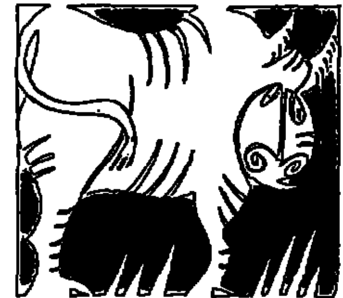
CRAD KILODNEY'S most startling fiction may be himself. The cover of *Malignant Humours*, a collection of Kilodney stories from out-of-print editions. shows him on a street corner with a book in his hand and a sign on his winter-coated chest: "Rotten Canadian Literature $4.00 (cheap)." Not infrequently. the narrator of Kilodney's stories is an author who sells his work on the streets. or whose name -as in "The Last Interview of Crad Kilodney" — coincides with the *actual* author's, In one of his many incarnations. this author-narrator writes on an application to an unidentified arts council: "How many of you people would have the nerve to stand behind your own work with your own money and your own body as I do mine?" The cry of this street-bound literature-vendor is eloquent and compelling, but more often than not he vanishes, and in his place are fictive worlds based on a satirical orchestration of oral and written rhetorical forms, articulate and inarticulate voices. and improbable — one is tempted to say dangerous -juxtapositions. such as a cardinal who. after murdering a parishioner in West Quaco, wipes the blood from his hands with a pre-moistened towelette from Kentucky Fried Chicken.

The titles of Kilodney's three new books (two of which, *Nice Stories for Canadians*, and *I Chewed Mrs. Ewing's Raw Guts*, are put out by his own imprint. Charnel House), and the titles of the stories within them. such as "Advanced Oboe Problems." "Teleological — with Chicken Meat," or "No Chekhovat Yorkdale" are at once absurd and to the point. Kilodney proves himself to be a master of deadpan impossibilities.

His bold addresses to the reader are reminiscent of Lawrence Sterne, and like Sterne, Kilodney's work breaks into shards of lyricism that the stupefied reader seldom anticipates. The force of his satiric vision is in his polemic against rhetoric-awn as his fiction makes fantastical use of it. His profuse. jarring. sometimes dislocating imagery is his most dazzling talent. but his humour can also be insidiously effective. as in this inter view between a high-school student and "Crad Kilodney":

> "How do you. like, get your shit together to write a story?"
> "No problem. I just wait for inspiration."
> "How long does it usually take you to write a story. on the average?"
> Kilodney stubbed out his cigarette and lit another.
> "An hour."
> "Basic&. like. what is the message in your writing?"
> "What do you think?"
> "I was going to writs that it's that the whole world is just crazy, like, with people acting crazy all the time. tight?"
> "Uh, huh."
> "So, should I put that?"
> "Sure."

In this way Kilodney demonstrates our idea of him without letting us know that he invented it. He likewise sustains his work against possible detractions by weaving them into his texts. Thus. the criticisms printed on the back cow of his own books, 'Your writing is not only unhealthy for yourself but also for society." or "I hops you freeze to death ' serve only to enrich Kilodney's fictional self. whose voice springs fmm the borderline between life and art.0



Prison mail

BY Cary Fagan

LETTERS TO OLGA: JUNE 1979–SEPTEMBER 1982
by Vaclav Havel,
translated by Paul Wilson
Knopf (Random House), 397 pages, $35.50 cloth (ISBN 0 394 54795 m

IN THE 20th century a powerful literary tradition has had unfortunate occasion to flourish. In fiction. poetry. memoir, diary, or letters a writer struggles against the mechanistic cruelty of thestate. left wing or right, to maintain his dignity. his freedom, his love-in short. his humanity.

Vaclav Havel, the Czech playwright and political activist. was arrested in 1977 for membership in the human rights groups Charter 77 and the Committee to Defend the Unjustly Prosecuted. During almost four years in prison Havel worked at hard physical labour and suffered a plethora of physical complaints, most painfully a case of hemorrhoids that eventually required an operation. But as ha told his wife. Olga (the only person he was allowed to write to). he entered prison with an almost euphoric desire for a "self-reconstitution" that would bring a new "inner freedom." He planned to study German and English, write a play. and overcome the humourless self-obsession that had fallen on him

in past years. Not surprisingly, these plans proved too ambitious. Pain and fatigue. and lack of time. solitude. and intellectual stimulation all conspired against him.

What became the centre of his existence was the weekly letter to Olga and. slowly. the working out of a remarkable personal philosophy. Havel was restricted in his writing: he was not permitted to cross out or underline, describe prison life. or make jokes (given the seriousness of his "crime." the authorities insisted that he appear to be penitent). These restrictions are told not by Havel, but by his translator. Paul Wilson. whose penetrating introduction portrays a civilized and moral man determined to suffer the consequences of hi choices.

The letters do have a form and a sort of intellectual plot. They begin with Havel's obsessive requests for detailed information from Olga in an attempt to maintain a relationship with the outside. Some of the early letters have a patronizing tone. even when Havel writes that "this temporary emancipation from my domination is allowing you to develop your personality." Eut the strength of the relationship was never in doubt.

After Havel was transferred to Hermanice prison, his meditative letters began. Some were rejected by the censors, and Havel had to develop a style that was convoluted and peppered with abstract terminology. But despite some tiresome repetitions as Havel was working out his ideas. the letters reveal an astonishingly positive system of belief. Havel employs the jargon of existentialism and phenomenology, yet he holds not to a philosophy but to a faith. In essence he came to believe that thecrisis of modern man's identity arises from his separation from immortal Being. Man can define himself and see beyond the material world to Being only through a sense of responsibility. Havel's imprisonment. then. became a realization of his self.

The letters on other subjects do come as a relief from the ab stract letters. There is a lovely dissertation on the significance of tea in prison. John Lennon's murder is called "the death of the century." Olga's Visits are prepared for in letters before and analysed after. And Havel, deprived of visual beauty. tells how a banal television film can move him to tears.

Given his renown as a playwright. Havel's comments on the theatre are mildly disappointing. (Of course the difficulties under which Havel wrote must be remembered.) This ab surdist's ideas are not always radical: every good play must have structure: the audience cannot respond to something too removed fmm its range of experience. He notes (and theatregoers in the West can relate) that the social and communal quality of the theatre is too often merely a formal exercise. Nevertheless. be believes in the effect that even a small production can have on society. with the same faith that draws him to the notion of eternal Being.

To Westerners. Eastern European dissidents can sometimes seem uncomfortably conservative. No doubt that has to do with the difference in our cultures, but it is also a natural result of the dissident's attempt at preservation: under certain conditions traditional values become radical. *Letters lo Olga* gives us a welcome rewriting of the end of Orwell's *Nineteen-Eighty-Four.* It shows us that even one person. by remaining fully human. can rob his persecutors and achieve a very real victory. □

In youth is pleasure

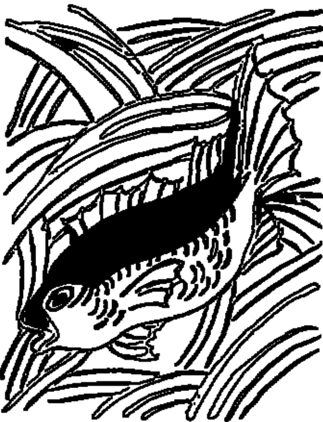
By John Goddard

INDIAN SCHOOL DAYS

by Basil H. Johnston

Key Porter, 256 pages, $24.95 cloth (ISBN 1 55013 072 2)

HUNGER WAS a frequent cause of complaint among the boys of St. Peter Claver's Indian Residential School. recalls Basil Johnston in his bittersweet childhood memoir. *Indian School Days.*



The diet revolved around bread. lard, barley soup, and porridge referred to as "sad ol' mush." But Johnston also remembers there being almost no *sickness at* the school. and that everybody seemed to be growing at a normal late.

"Food, or the lack of it. was something that the boys could point to,..." he writes. "However, it was more than a full stomach that the boys craved." They hankered for love and compassion.

Johnston was one of five children in an Ojibway family living at Cape Cmker. Ontario. on the spit dividing Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. In 1939, when he was 10, an Indian agent came to take Johnston and his sister Gladys to boarding schools on the north shore of Lake Huron. at Spanish. Gladys was sick with poison ivy. so the agent arbitrarily took another sister, Marilyn. to fill his quota. She was four years old.

When Johnston's mother and grandmother protested, screaming "No! She's too young," the agent replied sadistically, "If you don't want to let her go. we'll take the whole family." On the ferry from Tobermory, he ordered the two children not to move, distrusting Johnston's claim that he needed to use the toilet.

It was a cruel beginning to a long. sad period of his life. but Johnston portrays his years at the school with sensitivity and humour. He describes in detail the daily routine. the yearly round. the mishaps, the hiih jinks, the tiny joys

He mentions that the priests shaved the boys' heads, gave each a number. and beat anybody caught speaking a native language. but he does not dwell on such indignities. More painful to him was the intense loneliness of Christmas Day. the sadness of seeing *the youngest* boys hugging their toy cars and boats instead of playing with them. and the anguish of saying goodbye to most of the boys on the last day of June when he had to stay for the summer.

St. Peter Claver's was one of 76 Indian residential schools operating in Canada in the 1940s, with a combined enrolment of about 8,000 pupils. Paid for by the Indian Affairs Department and run by religious orders. the schools ostensibly served to lead the Indians out of a life of "poverty. dirt and ignorance." The quickest way out. authorities believed. was assimilation into the "Canadian way of life."

To what degree Johnston was assimilated is hard to judge. At one point he was allowed to return to Cape Cmker to hunt and trap. and unsuccessfully tried to skin a squirrel by reading instructions from a book. "Maybe it would be better to go back to school." he decided, returning to finish grade 12. and delivering a valedictory address that began. "We have been encouraged by our teachers who always had our interests at heart . . ." Johnston sounds brainwashed. yet the jacket flap says he still speaks and writes Ojibway. and lectures on Indian ethnology at the Royal Ontario Museum.

Johnston never fully explains his family circumstances. He doesn't say why he couldn't go home for the summer, and never tells what happened to his sister Marilyn. He never suggests a better upbringing might have been open to him., and he does not pass judgement on the system he painfully endured.□

A trip to the dark side

By Brian Fawcett

CITIZEN COHN

by Nicholas **von Hoffman**

Doubleday, 483 pages, $27.95 cloth (ISBN 0 385 23690 5)

ROY COHN. for those who don't recognize the name. was Joe McCarthy's chief counsel during the U.S. Senate witch-hunt hearings in the early 1950s. He, died of AIDS in July 1986. at the age of 69. Those are the high points in a life so enmired in slime. scum. double-crosses, influence-peddling, extortion. sexual perversion. anti-Semitism. bigotry. conflict-of-interest. et cetera, et cetera, that

one simply runs out of adjectives to describe how awful he was. It's a terrible thing to even think, but at several points in the book I caught myself wish. ing that Cohn's mother had put a pillow over his face and smothered him at birth. If she'd known what he was to be and do, she probably would have.

Nicholas von Hoffman's biography is presented — probably unintentionally — as a multiple mystery story. I'll name the major mysteries of the book, and then deal with them in order: 1) Why did Roy Cohn become so powerful, and why did he retain that power? 2) Why was he allowed to get away with the things he did? 3) Why was this book written?

First of all. Roy Cohn was an immensely powerful and influential figure in American life from the 1950s on. The list of his friends. associates, and clients is a genuine "Who's Who" of the political centre and right in the U.S., and includes Joe McCarthy, J. Edgar Hoover, Cardinal Spellman, Barbara Walters (all of whom may have slept with Cohn), Richard Nixon, Lee Iacocca, the Reagans, Donald Trump, Walter Winchell, George Steinbrenner, William F. Buckley, Rupert Murdoch, and various underworld figures. His enemies, likewise, are a lesser but still prestigious group, headed by Robert F. Kennedy, Drew Pearson, Art Buchwald, and Dashiell Hammett. most of whom learned to dislike Cohn during the McCarthy era. The enemy list is long, but it isn't as long as it should have been. There is a third, asterisked list of those who should have despised Cohn but chose to go to his panics instead. This list includes Norman Mailer, who was sometimes referred to as Cohn's "house communist," and *New York Times* language columnist William Safire, who was a life. long friend and defender. Some of the other people who fell into this category will astonish you.

Perhaps the secret of Cohn's power is revealed by his relationship with McCarthy, and by why Cohn didn't fall with him. McCarthy, along with a couple of other minor luminaries from his witch-hunt — Richard Nixon and Robert Kennedy — wanted public power. That involves living in the public eye, being elected to office, and wielding direct political power under the Constitution. Cohn demonstrably couldn't have cared less about that kind of power because the kind he sought wasn't public. He bailed out of the McCarthy slimebucket shortly before it became clear that McCarthy was about to drown in it. Cohn's game was influence — the back-mom. under-the-table trading of favours for favours. It is arguable that no one in modern American history was his equal at it.

Cohn wasn't particular about what kind of influence he had or how he obtained it, *as* long as it enabled him to play out his erratic skein of fantasies about himselfand make others squirm (with terror or pleasure) under his thumb. He was ferociously homophobic even though he was a practising homosexual, and he was notably anti-Semitic despite being a Jew himself. He was a misogynist who carried on a 30-year (probably platonic) relationship with media queen bee Barbara Walters. And despite repeated outbursts of xenophobic racist patriotism, he defended a series of Mafiosi in the courts and partied with them afterward. why? Because it allowed him to wield influence on both sides of the fence.

Cohn retained his power the same way — by playing both sides and by making a virtue of never turning down an opportunity, however short-term it might be. Every subset of his life — and the subsets were legion — was operated as a pyramid scheme. Many of them collapsed under him, but he operated so many that there was always another he could catch and cling to. In the end, it was his sexuality that got him, but it could have been any one of his other entanglements: he died owing $7 million, and he was disbarred a few months before his death — but 400 people still came to his memorial service.

Explaining why he was allowed to get away with what he did is slightly more difficult, but the answer is no doubt tied up in the multi&red power structure he built around him. Von Hoffman implies that the reason McCarthy defended him beyond the point of rational self-interest was that Cohn had been sleeping with him. Why he wasn't prosecuted for the myriad legal indiscretions and outright felonies he mmmitted as a lawyer probably had something to do with the fact that he had something on nearly everyone. But in the end, such explanations don't wash unless one admits that the power structure of American life is a sewer of malfeasance and lies so thick that nothing in it is clean. And that isn't a pleasant thought.

The final mystery, of course, has to do with why the book was written at all. The list of von Hoffman's other books, which includes several collaborations with political cartoonist Gary Trudeau, indicates that he's got a sense of humour. But there's not a single thing that's funny in *Citizen Cohn*, and there's no political vision either.

Von Hoffman is something of an oral historian, and the text is loaded to the rafters with ungrammatical quotes that frequently make the speakers sound idiotic, almost as if he's attempting to bring them down by their vocabularies and cracked syntax alone. but that was not, apparently, his intention: throughout the volume he refers to Cohn by his first name-Roy did this, Roy felt that. As literary devices go, it's truly grating and the result is a book that is riddled with an ugly ambiguity. From its first chapter, a description of Cohn's last months that includesa painfully graphic description of what it's like to die of AIDS, it tries to come on as a folksy, eye-witness apology for a supercreep. It's an apology I can't accept.

On the positive side — just barely — von Hoffman has given us an unintentional trip M the dark side of modem *American* life. As readers we're probably supposed to feel sorry for poor Roy Cohn because he died of AIDS. but I didn't feel a thing except relief that he's gone. And I'll remain nervous about his life — and what it tells us about the American political mainstream — for some time to come.0

The world according to Mr. Big

By Sandra Rabinovitch

NEWEST PLAYS BY WOMEN

edited by Diane Bessai and Don Kerr

NeWest Press, 251 pages, $9.95 paper (ISBN 0 920 897 14 2)

THIS ATTRACTIVE volume — seventh in the NeWest Prairie Play Series — features four plays by women in what's described as "the first regional collection of its kind." As editor Diane Bessai explains in the introduction, "The plays chosen, although not always prairie in subject, are in some manner the result of that association, and are in some manner regional."

This double banner of "women's plays" and regionalism at first seems rather arbitrary, since any thematic links between the works themselves are tenuous at best. The playwrights range fmm established to emerging; the plays, from intimate to epic, eccentric to prosaic. Some are important and lasting works: others, disappointingly, are not. But these four plays do comment on each other in unexpected ways, and there are discoveries to be made in the relationship between them, beyond the individual rewards of the works themselves.

Sham" Pollock's *Whiskey Six Cadenza* happens to be the last play in the collection, but it's by far the most ambitious and impressive of the four. Set during Prohibition in the fictional mining town of Blairmore, in Alberta s Crowsnest Pass, the play examines the issue of free choice through the personal conflicts of a polarized community. The charismatic Mr. Big, rumrunner and proprietor of the Alberta Hotel, is a powerful force in the

community: he draws young Johnny Farley, the last hope of a struggling mining family, into his world of extravagant promise. The play is rich in stage spectacle: Pollock makes striking use of the theatre space and of language itself. Mr. Big indulges in imaginative and verbal flights that set the tone for the piece; in his own words. "I've mastered the art a seein' the multiple realities a the universe. and more than that. I have embraced them, though they he almost als conflicting. but equally true..." The brightness of Mr. Big's vision — and of Johnny's expectations — collides with the darker reality of themineandof Big's relationship with his sen daughter." Leah. Originally produced at Theatre Calgary in 1983 *Whiskey Six* was nominated for the 1987 ernor-General's Award ch Pollock has won twice iously) and ranks among playwright's most memorable works.

inna M. Glass's *Play Mem*et in Saskatoon some forty years ago, is also evocative in its sense of period and place — and equally convincing in its exploration of smalltown social tensions. It draws its intimacy and' honesty from private sources; as Bessai explains. this is an "autobiographical' reconstruction" of the playwright's own memories In matter.06fact direct address to the audience. the adult Jean presents us with a" excruciatingly detailed record of a youth suffered in a household as tilled with love as it was, finally, with bitterness. At the centre of this play, too, is a powerful paternal figure: Cam MacMillan., Jean's irascible alcoholic father; like Mr. Big, a man of great presence and great passions. Destroyed by the betrayal of his team of salesmen. the once successful Cam in turn destroys hisfamily. This is a story of addiction and co-addiction, but it's 'a personal story above all, one that both condemns and forgives. Straightforward. poignant and unexpectedly funny. it focuses more on the complexity of love than on its abuse.

Wendy Lill's *The Occupation of Heather Rose*, first produced in 19%. also was nominated for this year's Governor-General's Award. It's a neatly crafted monologue, a confessional mix of social drama and psychological study that subtly implicates us in its burden of guilt. Heather Rose. an inexperienced young nurse sent by Northern Medical Services to the desolate fictional town of Snake Lake, opens the play by asking herself. "I wonder if I still look the same." She weaves a chilling tale of innocence lost: bureaucratic frustrations and the desperation of the remote native community gradually eat away at her idealism. so that finally she is reduced, like those she's expected to serve, to a being concerned only with survival. At the beginning of the second act, Heather Rose apologizes for her story: "It's all still a bit romanticized, polished up. I haven't got to the heart of this." If we never quite get to the heart of Heather Rose's "occupation" — her transformation feels a bit delib erate — the piece is compelling nevertheless, with all the impact of the best short fiction.

The terrain explored in Pamela Boyd's *Inside Out* is much more familiar than the nostalgic worlds created by Glass and Pollock or the hostile northern landscape of *Heather Rose*. The play. a contemporary "slice of life" is set in the kitchen of Ellen Ross — mother. wife and would-be-screenwriter-and follow her through the interminable daily routine of caring for her toddler while struggling to maintain some reality for herself outside the home. What distinguishes this play from numerous other works on the themeofdomestic oppression is its immediacy and humour, as well as its inventive use of a life-size, flexible puppet. with caricature face. to represent the ever demanding child. This play suffers. though, by contrast to the others in the collection, for its ironies and frustrations, however accurately and comically observed, are predictable ones. *Inside Out* is more conventionally a women's play than the others. and it's very much rooted in the everyday. with none of the fantastic imagery of *Whiskey Sir*. the psychological horror of *Heather Rose* or the imaginative reshaping of experience in *Play Memory*.

The uneven selection of plays in this volume may not add up to a satisfying picture of 1980s prairie theatre. The works themselves. however. should interest a wide audience. There is much to enjoy in these four plays, much to learn about drama and about life.0

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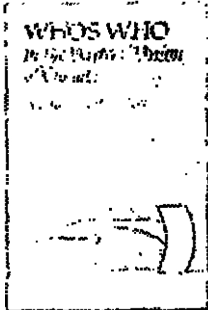

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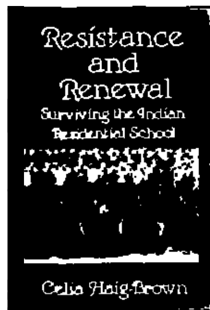

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FIRST NOVELS

From St. John's to Casaquemada

Lives of girls and women in Newfoundland, and an ambitious, compelling tale of a fictional West Indian island

By Douglas Hill

TO BEGIN. a pir of novels set in Newfoundland. Both The *Corrigan Women*. by M.T. Dohaney (Ragweed. 192 pages. $12.95 paper) and *January, February, June or July*. by Helen Fogwell Porter (Breakwater, 199 pages, $14.95 paper) present pictures of matriarchal families. The former traces the fortunes of a grandmother. mother. and daughter fmm just before the First World War to the present: the latter zeroes in on a few months (in 1981) in the life of a young girl in a family somewhat short on me".

Dohaney's trio. Bertha. Tessie, and Cannel. live in a coastal town small enough to contain livestock but important enough to hap a bank. Bertha goes there as a servant to the well-to-do Corrigan family in 1914. She becomes pregnant (she is raped by one of her employer's sons). and through some unusual turns of fate ends up with the Corrigan property. She raises her daughter with no help fmm her nominal husband. the other Corrigan son; the daughter also is a single parent, the granddaughter simply single, neither of them by choice.

As a study in independence and fortitude. indeed survival. *The Corrigan Women* is at least adequate. The story moves along energetically. even when it's on fairly familiar ground. Dohaney's writing is serviceable; though her saga could be considered feminist, it never preaches at the reader. This is a modest novel, occasionally moving, occasionally puzzling in its treatment of sexuality and violence. more successful in illuminating the inner lives of burdened women than in giving a strong sense of lime or place.

Porter's novel manages to do both the inside and the outside, and do each admirably. Her heroine. 15-year-old Heather Novak, is a fully realized character, exactly right for what Porter intends; her lower-middle-class St. John's in the 1980s is an accurate portrait of a unique, slightly anachronistic culture.

Heather's father was an American serviceman stationed in Newfoundland: the marriage produced three daughters and ended when Heather was three Her mother and grandmother and her sisters and girlfriends have bean the important figures in Heather's life. until she meets an attractive 18-year-old who mill soon be leaving for Alberta to seek work. She falls for him, hard: her discovery of love and sex is unhip and affecting. On the surface a "strange quiet girl who went along with everything." Heather soon finds she has some tough decisions to make. With little to rely on but her intuition. shaped by movies. soaps and song lyrics. and the novels of L.M. Montgomery, she muddles through. Porter keeps to Heather's paint of view scrupulously, and handles some difficult narrative challenges with apparent effortlessness.

Anthropologists down the line who want to know what it was like to be close to the poverty line in St. John's in the early 1980s

need look no farther than Porter's novel. It's packed — but packed smoothly and casually — with local identity: churches and schools. shops and parks, strange words (*scrawb, sook, galch, firk*), cadences and expressions, the rituals and rhythms of inner-city people who. if they don't have money, at least know who they are and are comfortable with the fact. Porter has chosen to work the territory she knows: she makes a number of quiet. unspectacular fictional moves with precision and confidence. Does this sound like a juvenile. a novel for "young adults"? It isn't. *January, February, June or July* is a carefully balanced, unpretentious novel *about an* appealing young person, but it's an adult novel all the way, and a polished one.

The late Alden Nowlan wrote his first novel in 1960, submitted it to one publisher, unsuccessfolly. and never tried again. Now Goose Lane Editions makes The Wanton Troopers (171 pages. $22.95 cloth. $12.95 paper) available at last. It's a curious book. with an old-fashioned feeling about it: it has the intensity. as well as the claustrophobia. of a work such as *Sons and Lovers* or, *much* closer to home. *Each Man 5 Son.*

Certainly there are other resemblances to those novels. Nowlan writes of a dreamy, romantic young boy's troubled relations with his brutish father and repressed mother: the setting is backwoods Nova Scotia in the late 1930s, a saw mill town where poverty breeds mean-spiritedness. Kevin O'Brien is 11, insulted and strapped by hi father, kept off balance by his mother. bullied and humiliated by his schoolmates. He escapes his sufferings with fantasies concocted from history books, radio serials. and the Bible. Them's the danger of stereotypes in a fictional world such as this. and Nowlan doesn't always escape the traps.

But to complain that the novel is too stylized, too predictable, not realistic enough, is to miss Nowlan's point, I think. From his dedication (to his parents "in forgiveness") to the last chapter's agonized jumble of Kevin's memories. associations and laments ("He wished he could crawl into the earth like a worm and hide there in the darkness where nothing could reach him"). Nowlan seems to be writing out of a store of personal experience, seems to be exorcising personal ghosts. Whether he is or not. psychological authenticity is what matters here. and in his portrait of Kevin. Nowlan touches some deep troths about what it means to be an abused. bewildered. terrified child.

The writing is mildly uneven. At its best, it gives details you can taste and smell. pain you can feel. but there is some weaker prose — stiff or clumsy sentences. stagy dialogue — mixed in. (I caught nearly a score of typographical blunders: this surely is a disservice to Nowlan's reputation.) *The Wanton Troopers* is an interesting novel. It seems most valuable not for its intrinsic fictional merits, or lack thereof. but for the evidence it gives of the author himself. of the physical and emotional worlds he lived or imagined, survived. and turned into poems and stories.

Neil Bissoondath's A Casual Brutality (Macmillan: 376 pages. $22.95) more than meets the expectations raised by the stories in his tine 1936 collection. *Digging up the Mountains. This* novel is ambitious in scope, expertly crafted, and above all rich with the authority of lives and events that seem only too real. Powerful is a word over-used by publicists and promoters of fiction; in this case it's wholly appropriate.

Raj Ramsingh is a doctor. born into a large middle-class Hindu family in a small town on the fictional West Indian island of Casaquemada. Educated at the University of Toronto. he marries and begins his medical practice in that city. After a few years. for reasons he cannot quite articulate. he returns to Casaquemada, a country now in a turmoil of corruption and violence, and opens an office there. Whq the novel begins, he's in the island's airport, waiting to escape. This time he will not be back.

Bissoondath paints on a big canvas. filling it with people and action. He's extremely good at characterization: the minor as well as the major figures of his story linger in the reader's mind. He handles a complex chronological structure (flashbacks long and short. fmm the near or distant past, punctuating an increasingly frenetic present) with ease. And his use of Raj as a relentlessly self-referential first-person narrator maintains a consistent, engaged point of view while at the same time providing glimpses of a complicated character whose emotional objectivity — a detachment. a "refusal

Neil Bissoondath

to entertain the uncomfortable" — may not be the strength he thinks it is.

The writing in A *Casual Brutality is* formal. exact, supple. The dialogue is strong and natural; sentences of exposition demand to be read aloud. more than once. There are a few places where Bissoondath might have exercised a bit more restraint with the adjectives or pruned back a set-piece of descriptive prose; nobody will ever mistake him for Hemingway. But while he's willing to use words lavishly. he's never just a showy writer either; his details are precise.

> At five o'clock in the morning. when the world is without light and movement is muted. there is no colour. The sky. a dark grey softened by whispers of translucence, appears stained with the merged darknesses of trees. houses. lamp-posts.

This is confident prose; think how easy it would be to overwrite that scene.

Bissoondath is a superb tale-spinner: the novel is always engrossing, and towards the end, with Casaquemada falling apart. it builds force like the political thriller it partly is. It's also an examination of the demands of family, country, and profession. and a dissection of an unhappy marriage. Raj is caught at every point between conflicting demands: withdrawal and involvement. security and risk. cynicism and hope. Bissoondath's themes — racial prejudice. political and domestic morality, dream and delusion — are important. and he discusses them intelligently. *A Casual Brutality* is not a happy book: there's too much pain and death in it. But it overflows with vitality, with the joy of writing committed to belief and vision. □

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CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Play scripts with pictures

Reading aloud to children can be a test of adult acting skill

By Andrew Vaisius

AFTER WORKING in a daycare for a number of years. I've decided that preschool books are best thought of as play scripts with pictures. and that their value and essence lies in being read aloud. (Even when children sit with picture books. flipping through the pages. they mimic adults by rendering their version of the story aloud.) The reader becomes an actor. and the force of the book derives from the interpretation and the scenery. i.e.. the pictures. I contend that the most repetitious and boring tale. given an engaged reading. will not fail to enchant children.

Mashed Potato Mountain. written by Laurel Dee Gugler and illustrated by Leonard Aguanno (Black Moss. $5.95 paper). is the story of a suppertime fantasy. The text is simple and allows for generous interpretation of voice and emphasis. My only complaint is with the size of the bowl of ice cream in the concluding illustration: easily larger than the dish for the main course. So much for nutrition. Michael's Saturday Surprise. written and illustrated by Audrey Nelson (Black Moss. 24 pages. $595 paper) is a handsomely illustrated tale of a younger brother's success at angling. Nelson steers clear of boredom and moralizing. relying on fun and a forward-moving story. After repeated failures Michael hooks a huge salmon not by hard labour — he's a dreamer — but because he attends todetail. It's a story that holds up to repeated readings.

Midnight Visit at Molly's House. written and illustrated by Jirina Marton (Annick. 28 pages. $12.95 cloth). is illustrated vividly. as was her part of the collaboration with Allen Morgan in *Nicole's Boat*, but here the story line is dull and uninspiring. The moon comes down for a closer look at Molly's house. and floats from room to mom until nearly daybreak. In the morning Molly wonders if she had a dream about the moon. I'd call this. at best. a low-key story for docile children up way past their bedtime. A Promise Is A Promise. story by Robert Munsch and Michael Kusugak and art by Vladyana Krykorka (Annick. 32 pages. $12.95 cloth). is a rather long tale for preschoolers. It's about the imaginary Qallupilluit. who grab children when they get too near the cracks in the sea ice. All?- caught by the Qallupil- ;%% makes a foolish promise to gain her freedom. Her family extricates her and her siblings from a difficult situation by tricking the Qallupilluit. As with most Munsch stories this one lends itself to dramatic reading. suspense, and fun. but begins to sound too formulaic upon subsequent readings. **Duck** by David Lloyd and illustrated by Charlotte Voake (Annick. 28 pages. 89.95 cloth) is everything a kid's book should be: straightforward. simple. aesthetically appealing. Tim is learning to name things. and Granny is his guide. 'There was a time. long ago. when Tim called all ammals duck." He finally gets duck labelled properly when Granny takes him to a pond. Then he goes astray with vehicles, calling all of them *truck*. Granny says nothing. until she points Out a veritable truck. This development disturbs Tim. and he says nothing for some time — not a word. until Granny takes him to the pond again and the duck greets him with "Quack!" Miraculously Tim can name again. Look closely at the adult-child relationship in this book and it will speak profoundly of child psychology to you. The book is child-centred. Granny aids Tim: she doesn't do it for him. (If I'm not mistaken this is a reissue of a much smaller-sized British edition.)

The following books are juvenile novels: two have illustrations. but they are more for adornment than exposition. In these barks imagination must be fired by the printed word and the young reader's interpretation.

The most ambitious in scope, but not the most satisfying. is False Face. by Welwyn Wilton Katz (Groundwood, 155 pages. $12.95 cloth). Katz treats a variety of themes from environ. mental destruction to sacred Native tribal rites. all revolving around the heroine's discovery of a miniature false face in a bog near her home. She then discovers its powers and the powers of its larger twin mask. taken from a dead man's face. This is the only book of the four written in the omniscient voice. and the only book that tends to be overwritten. Katz overloads the reader with descriptions seemingly lifted out of pulp fiction. Lines like "His cheekbones were sharp as axe heads" will not challenge serious young people to eschew video for the printed page. Nonetheless. the story is solid. the action fluent. and the climax exciting.

Left Behind in Squabble Bay, by Jack Hodgins (McClelland and Stewart.. 128 pages. $14.95 cloth). is lean. artful fiction written with subtle tonal nuance and pacing. Squabble Bay, on the British Columbia coast, has the grimmest population this side of a Tory caucus — except for the budding cartoonist Alex McGuire: Frantic Freda. who owns four coin-operated clothes dryers for drying the seaweed she markets as fertilizer; the Top Banana. a drop-out bathtubracing champion: and the Duchess-in-exile. who lends a bit of proper royal nonsense to the book. The plot hangs in the background like clothes on a line. while the more engrossing proclamations of the characters stand out front and centre. Alex's aunt subscribes to the discipline of Natural Consequence for inappropriate behaviour. To wit: 'The purpose of Natural Consequence as far as Alex could tell. was to make sure that Alex was the only one who suffered." It's the wonderfu youthful glimpses of adult li fe that motivate this book. It is marvellously written and upbeat without being cute.

Mondays Will Never Be the Same. by Martin Elmer. translated fmm the Danish by Kenneth Tindall and Shelley Tanaka (Groundwood. 111 pages. $8.95 paper). reads like adult fiction for kids. Within the first few pages the precocious narrator. Daniel. announces. 'Politics doesn't interest me much. I'd approve of enlightened despotism. however. After all. it put an end to slavery."

A page later he proclaims. "Ours is an era in which people are proud of machines that think. and suspicious of any student who tries to do like wise." Daniel wants to get his single zoologist father married again. and he is himself passionately in love. as only a schoolboy can be. with his dog's veterinarian (she later marries the father). The book is brimful of teenage wisdom and world view: to any doubters to the existence of those. I strongly recommend this slice of Daniel Rehsel's life.

Moses. Me and Murder. by Ann Walsh (Pacific Educational Press. 128 pages). is historical fiction based on a true event — the murder of Charles Blessing. a miner in the Cariboo. sop posedly by one James Barry. the proverbial loner. The story unfolds with the regional scenes and times of the Cariboo Gold Rush as background. There is decidedly more fiction here than history. and the young narrator. Tad. is not inclined to insight. although he does have his moments: "I don't normally ask a lot of questions. especially not of adults. They give you such strange answers if they don't like what you're asking.' It's a good enough read to warrant a recommendation. □

NO JOKE

IN REPLY to the letter-writers (June-July) who took exception to my article "Author and Critic" (April): I once wrote an article about a vegetarian driving across Canada in search of the perfect hamburger. Shortly after receiving numerous nasty letters, the magazine collapsed. Once again I find myself responsible for the possible demise of a perfectly respectable magazine. Creditors of *Books in Canada*, please take note: the undersigned solemnly promises never again to tell or publish a joke in a public place. especially the place of a discerning and educated public with the wit and intelligence to realize that behind the apparent innocence of an apparent joke lies a savage attack on the very foundations of civilized thought.

I remain. chastised but sincere. your obedient etc....

Matt Cohen
Toronto

CLEARING IN THE WEST

AS A CALGARIAN I enjoyed Aritha Van Herk's "Best of the West." However. she did not do the cause of Canadian unity any good by being slightly unfair. The Governor General's Awards ceremony may have been perceived by one or two arrogant easterners with condescension. but easterner M.T. Kelly gave a moving speech about the West and he seemed "grateful" to be in Calgary.

Sara Johnson
Calgary

THE PEACE OF MUSEUMS

JOHN GODDARD has once again displayed his keen sense of the ironic and identified the disregard that white institutions have for the First People of this land ("Forget not my world." May).

In this case, the Glenbow Museum's exhibition, *The Spirit Sings*, once again tried to cash in on the feathery past of the Native cultures. and at the same time expresses its 'sincere" efforts in trying to educate the public by displaying bits and pieces of cultures that are trying desperately to survive. Or. in some cases. have not *survived*. Surely the Glenbow could have done more for the Native peoples than give them a paragraph at the end of their expensive catalogue. dedicating the book to the Native people who created the objects displayed.

It is apparent that the Glenbow's relationship with oil company sponsors such as Shell is mutually beneficial. Oil and gas companies that extract natural resources from Lubicon land and other native lands are quite content to exterminate the people that need the land (not the oil) for survival. and thus create more exhibits for future museum shows. But museums. and indeed all people, have a responsibility to make sure that the Indigenous peoples of this world are free to pursue the kind of life *they* wish to pursue. and if the museum curators are interested in maintaining cultures. then they must use their influence to involve those about whom they write and teach and display.

Elli Jilek
Aboriginal Rigbts Support
Group of the Committee
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Calgary

TRADE WINDS

RE YOUR June-July issue. shame on you for prostituting yourselves to the "Canadian corporate quislings" fan epithet mined by Farley Mowat) and their lackeys. I am referring to the hysterical full-page advertisement of the book entitled *Free Trade, Free Canada*, extolling the wonders of the FTA.

Also. I take exception to some of Barry Lesser's conclusions in his review of *Free Trade: The Real Story*. I have thoroughly studied the agreement firsthand. and I simply don't buy the argument that the FTA provides an effective remedy against US protectionism. We still do lack secure access to US markets!

Besides, the trade aspect of the deal is relatively unimportant, and much of U.S.-Canada trade is already "free." What really counts are the provisions concerning services. investment and culture: the United States could retaliate against any sector of our economy in the event a future Canadian cultural policy initiative displeases it. (Suppose *Books in Canada* were no longer able to accept subsidies from government sources, for example?)

It should be reiterated that no other free trade agreement in the world includes services. (70 percent of our labour force is employed in services.) There is a long list of services — including computer services and health institutions management — and professions that are affected. and it is this very crucial aspect of the FTA that tends to be conveniently forgotten by the protagonists of the deal.

Finally. the FTA or the *status quo* are not the only options available. It is precisely because the FTA is far from being the best option that its protagonists invariably fail to make a good case for the deal. Silly rhetoric notwithstanding. there are plenty of rational arguments that could be marshalled against the senseless. headlong plunge into this very. very dubious venture.

K.J. Cottam
Nepean. Ont.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING PUBLISHED

A THOUSAND THANKS to Mary di Michele for her article "A Small Circle" (April).

I am currently winding up a stint as writer-in-residence at the Kitchener (Ontario) Public Library and I'm still astonished fit takes a long time for some of us) by the numbers of determined-tobe-published writers who read nothing but street signs and the occasional issue of *TV Guide*.

The first I remember was a woman who brought me a collection of her own "Indian legends."

"Are you familiar with traditional legends!" I asked. (I was fairly new at this.)

"Oh. no. I don't want my work to be coloured by anyone else's ideas. This is my gem."

The ones who come back and back with more and more writing are like that woman. They don't read and don't want to. don't listen and don't want to. But they want to be heard. and. oh. how they want to be published!

They come with 600-page manuscripts and two questions: How do I make sure no one will steal my work? and Who do you know who will publish it? Many of them think of these questions all on their own but many of them. I am discovering. get them from the Canadian Authors' Association where. it seems. when it comes to writing. marketing is the first principle. The second is "Write for children. children's writing sells the best."

There are other writers who come to see me. talented. hardworking writers who read. less talented but equally hardworking writers who read. writers with very little talent who have important. painful stories to tell. or family histories and stories they want to write only for their children and grandchildren. and one perfectly lovely. insouciant young woman with a high stack of sentimental verse. Her lifetime ambition. she told me. was to write for Hallmark greeting cards.

Such people make a job like this interesting. But those others...

Janet Lunn
Kitchener. Ont.

OUR MISTAKE

BY ALL that is sacred, please let your readers know that the admonition "touch wood" attached to end of my poem "Wednesday at North Hatley" (May) is an atrocity not of my doing. It belongs to the prose comment of the reviewer Ray Filip, not to the poem.

And now that I have gone this far in writing to you, dear editor, may I ask whether Milton was present when the bloody Piemontese pushed the mother and child over the cliffs and whether Ezra Pound was in the World War I trenches? If not, why do I have to go down with the torpedoed *Athenia* in the Atlantic to write a poem about my drowned friend S.S. Robertson? Poetry refuses to suffer from a "safe distance."

Ralph Gustafson
North Hatley. Que.

CanWit no. 131

By Barry Baldwin

THE MOST POPULAR and most repeated competition in the British weekly *The New Statesman* invites competitors to provide misleading information for tourists. with Gerald Hoffnung's "Try the famous echo in the British Museum Reading Room" the most celebrated prizewinner.

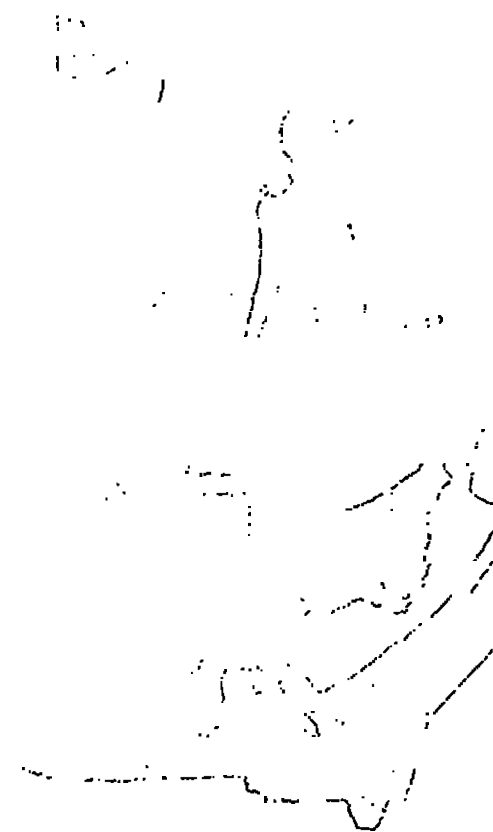
It is high time that Canadians were given a similar opportunity. Competitors are therefore invited to supply misleading information for visitors to Canada. which would prove highly embarrassing or dangerous. For example: Canadians everywhere. especially in the West. are proud of being bilingual. and insist cm speaking French to French visitors. *Or:* Cay visitors to Ottawa will recognize fellow-spirits by their red coats and prominent hang-outs outside major public buildings.

Competitors are limited to six entries. in either English or French — please note for future reference that CanWit is open to both official languages.

The *prize* is $25 and the deadline is *October 1.*

RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 130

Readers were invited to get out their scissors and paste and devise an amusing collage illustrating a passage from the autobiography of a well-known Canadian literary figure. Lois Grant of Calgary receives $25 for the following winning entry. The inspiration is from Gabrielle Roy's autobiography. *Enchantment and Sorrow.* "*Summer came.* Maman had always greeted it with a delightful array of flowers attractively planted around the white-columned veranda and in horders and circular beds in the lawn."



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THE OEPARTMENT OF CREATIVE WRITING invites applications for a tenure-track appointment in nonfiction at the junior assistant professor level beginning July 1. 1939. M.A. (or equivalent) and solid record of publication required; teaching experience at the university level desirable. The successful applicant will teach introductory and advanced undergraduate *courses* in the *writing* of *nonfic*lion. including biography, travel, history. and social analysis. and will assist in the development of this new area in the department. Familiarity with microcomputers and desk-top publishing Will be an asset.

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RECEIVED

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Academic Year Abroad 1988/89. edited by Edrice Marguerite Howard. Institute of International Education

An Act of Faith: The Early Years of Regina College. by James M Pitsula. Canadian Plains Research Centre

An Affair with my City: Selected Works by **Max Goldin.** edited by Eileen Pruden and Garfield McRae. Manitoba Branch Canadian Authors Assoc.

After the Rebellion: The Later Years of William Lyon Mackenzie. by Lillian F Gates. Dundurn Press

AIDS: What every responsible Canadian should know. by James D Greig. Summerhill Press Cdn Pub Health Assoc

Akin to Anne: Tales of Other Orphans. by L.M Montgomery M & S

The Ariel Letter. by Nicole Brossard. The Women's Press

Army Without Banners. by John Reames Western Producer Prairie Books

Assessing the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. edited by Murray G Smith and Frank Stone Institute for Research on Public Policy

Austria in WW II: An Anglo-American Dilemma by Robert H Keyserlingk. McGill-Queen's

Barbecuing Atlantic Seafood. by Julie V. Watson. Nimbus

Bernard Meyer's East Coast Cuisine. by Bernard Meyer Formac

The Best of Children's Choices: Favorite Canadian Children's Books. compiled by Lenore Nilson. Citizens' Committee on Children

The Best of Helen Creighton. by Helen Creighton selected and introduced by Rosemary Bauchman. Lancelot Press.

Between Anxiety and Hope: The Poetry and Writing of Czeslaw Milosz. edited by Edward Mozejko University of Alberta Press.

Beyond Heroes: A Sport History of Nova Scotia. Vols 1 & 2 by A.J "Sandy" Young. Lancelot Press

Beyond the Bottom Line. by Timothy W. Plumptre. Institute for Research on Public Policy

Biased Analogies by Shaunt Basmajian. Anthos Books

A Bittersweet Land by Herman Ganzevoort. M & S

Bloodshift. by Garfield Reeves-Stevens. McClelland-Bantam

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Business and Politics: A Study of Collective Action. by William D. Coleman. McGill-Queen's

Can You Resist the Glamour of Pearls. by

Celia Brayfield. Penguin
Canada and the New Internationalism. edited by John Holmes and John Kirton. Canadian Institute of International Affairs.
Canada's Gigantic! Photographs of Giant Things. by Henri Robideau, text by Peter Day. Summerhill
The Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement: The Global Impact. edited by Jeffrey J. Schott and Murray G. Smith. Institute for Research on Public Policy.
The Canadian Buyer's Guide to Life Insurance. by William McLeod. Prentice-Hall.
Canadian By Choice. by Trudy Duivenvoorden Mitic. Lancelot Press.
Canadian High-Tech in a New World Economy. by David W. Conklin and France St-Hilaire. Institute for Research on Public Policy.
The Canadian Small Business Survival Guide. by Benjamin Gallander. Hounslow.
Canadian Women: A History. by Prentice, Bourne, Cuthbert Brandt, Light, Mitchinson, and Black. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Canada.
Catherine Finds Her Balance and Other Stories. by Kit Hood and Linda Schuyler with Eve Jennings. Lorimer.
Changing Patterns: Women in Canada. edited by Sandra Burt *et al*. M & S.
The Changing Shape of Government in the Asia-Pacific Region. edited by John W. Langford and K. Lorne Brownsey. Institute for Research on Public Policy.
China's Foreign Trade. edited by Zhang Peiji and Ralph W. Huenemann. Oolichan.
The Church Under Fire: Studies in Revelation. by David Ewert. Kindred Press.
Circling North. by Charles Lillard. Sono Nis.
"Coming Canadians:" An Introduction to a History of Canada's Peoples. by Jean R. Burnet with Howard Palmer. M & S.
The Company Store. by Sheldon Currie. Oberon.
The Complete House Detective: An Ontario House and Its History. by Donalda Badone. Boston Mills.
Constitution, Government, and Society in Canada. by Alan C. Cairns. M & S.
Cooking Collection: Canadian Feasts from Land and Sea. Federated Women's Institutes of Canada.
Crang Plays the Ace. by Jack Batten. Seal.
Criticism & Creativity: Essays on Literature. by P. M. Robertson. Quarry.
The Crosskiller. by Marcel Montecino. Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
Dairy Delicious: The Sour Cream/Yogurt/Buttermilk Cookbook. by Louise Bailey and Madeline Wright. Dairy Delicious Publishing.
A Dancing Star. by Doug Beardsley. The Hedown Press.
Data and Acta: Aspects of Life-Writing. edited by Evelyn J. Hinz. Mosaic.
The Dead Pull Hitter. by Alison Gordon. M & S.
Death on the Ice: The Great Newfoundland Sealing Disaster of 1914. by Cassie Brown with Harold Horwood. Doubleday.
The Decline of the American Economy. by Bertrand Bellon and Jorge Niosi. Black Rose.
Dedications. by Dennis Cooley. Thistledown.
Desireless. by Thomas York. Viking (Penguin).
Diplomacy of Fear: Canada and the Cold War, 1941-1948. by Denis Smith. U of T Press.
Don't: A Woman's Word. by Elly Danica. Gynergy Books.
Double Negative. by Daphne Marlatt & Betsy Warland. Ragweed.
The Drawing Board. by Ruth Taylor. The Muses' Company/La Compagnie des Muses.
Edible Wild Plants of Nova Scotia. by Heather MacLeod and Barbara MacDonald. Nimbus.
Elaborate Beasts. by Bonnie Bishop. Red Deer College Press.
Endangered Species. by David Waltner-Toews. Turnstone.
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Escape From Vietnam: The Story of Doan. by Doan, translated by Carmen Landry. Optimum Publishing International.
Eyestone: Stories. by D. R. MacDonald. Penguin (Pengun).
A Fate Worse than Debt. by Susan George. Pelican (Penguin).
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Foreign Object. by Ron Base. Seal.
The Free Trade Deal. edited by Duncan Cameron. Lorimer.
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Gaslights, Epidemics, and Vagabond Cows: Charlottetown in the Victorian Era. edited by Douglas Baldwin and Thomas Spira. Ragweed.
Genethics: The Ethics of Engineering Life. by David Suzuki and Peter Knudtson. Stoddart.
Georgian Halifax. by Elizabeth Pacey. Lancelot Press.
Ghost Stories and Legends of Prince Edward Island. collected by Julie V. Watson. Hounslow.
The Gold Hunter's Guide to Nova Scotia. by Tony Bishop. Nimbus.
A Good Year for Murder. by A.E. Eddenden. Academy Chicago Publishers. (U.S.)
Great Heart: The History of a Labrador Adventure. by James West Davidson and John Rugge. Viking (Penguin).
The Greek Poetess and Other Writings. by Ara Baliozian. Impressions.
Gros Morne: A Living Landscape. by Pat McLeod. Breakwater.
Healing Yourself: Understanding How Your Mind Can Heal Your Body. by Sheila Pennington. McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
Hello Out There!: Canada's new music in the world, 1950-85. edited by John Beckwith and Dorith R. Cooper. Institute for Canadian Music.
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Hey! What About Me? Activities for Disabled Children. by Carol Wilcox (with Les Peake). Doubleday
Hiccup Champion of the World. by Ken Roberts, art by VictoR GAD. Douglas & McIntyre.
Hiram and Jenny. by Richard Outram. The Porcupine's Quill.
Home Country: People, Places, and Power Politics. by Peter C. Newman. M & S.
How To. by Endre Farkas. The Muses' Company/La Compagnie des Muses.
How the Devil Got His Cat. by Mary Alice Downie, illustrated by Jillian Hulme Gilliland. Quarry.
I Love My Dad. by Caroline Bell. Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
In Pursuit of Peace and Western Security. by William A.R. Campbell and Richard K. Melchin. Canadian Conservative Centre.
Inn & Out: Misadventures of a Nova Scotia Innkeeper. by Marian "Penny" Gott. Nimbus.
James Bond in John Gardner's Scorpius. by John Gardner. Stoddart.
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The Jesse James Poems. by Paulette Jiles. Polestar.
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The Light of Imagination: Mavis Gallant's Fiction. by Neil K. Besner. UBC Press.
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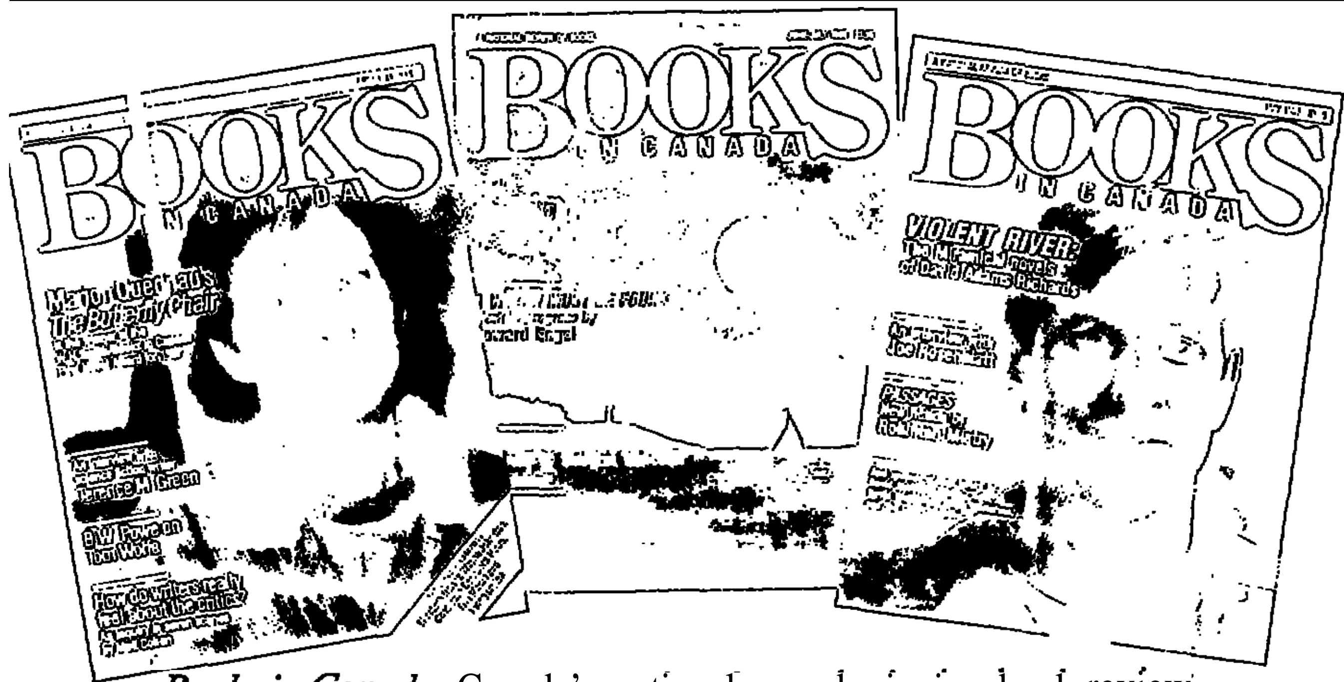

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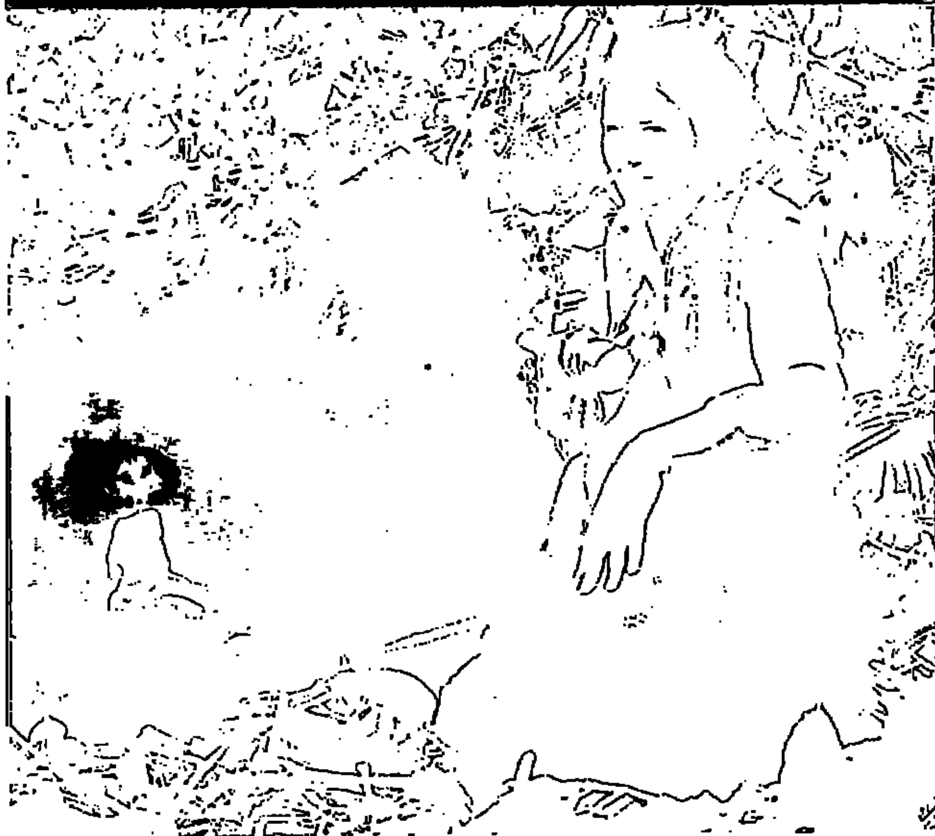

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