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CANADIAN LITERATURE

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A SPECIAL MALCOLM LOWRY ISSUE

Poems and Letters

BY MALCOLM LOWRY

Articles and Notes

BY CONRAD AIKEN, ROBERT B. HEILMAN,
EARLE BIRNEY, MAX-POL FOUCHET,
DOWNIE KIRK, GEORGE WOODCOCK

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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

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contributors

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CONRAD AIKEN is well-known as a poet and novelist. He influenced Malcolm Lowry considerably in the formative stages of his career, so that Lowry's first novel, *Ultramarine,* can only be thoroughly understood if it is read in conjunction with Aiken's *Blue Voyage.*

DOWNIE KIRK, who carried out his academic studies in Canada and at the Sorbonne, is Head of the Department of Languages at Gladstone High School in Vancouver. He was Malcolm Lowry's neighbour at Dollarton in British Columbia, and was for many years his close friend.

MALCOLM LOWRY, around whom so much of this issue revolves, was born in England in 1909 and died there in 1957. Up to the present he has been known principally for his novel, *Under the Volcano,* but the forthcoming appearance of much hitherto unpublished work will certainly present a larger picture of his literary genius. Further details on Lowry's life occur in various places through the following pages.

ROBERT B. HEILMAN is Head of the Department of English at the University of Washington. His most important critical works, *The Great Stage,* and *Magic in the Web,* have been valuable contributions to Shakespearian criticism. He contributes regularly to the Sewanee Review and other literary journals.

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EARLE BIRNEY, CHESTER DUNCAN and GERARD BESSETTE have all appeared previously in *Canadian Literature* and need no further introduction.

UNDER SEYMOUR MOUNTAIN

George Woodcock

MALCOLM LOWRY was born in England in 1909. He died there in 1957. And during the restless life that stretched between those poles of destiny he wandered over a great portion of the earth—the Far East, the United States, much of Europe, and, of course, Mexico, the setting of his now belatedly celebrated novel, *Under the Volcano.* But almost a third of his life—and the most productive third so far as his writing was concerned—he spent in Canada. He came to Vancouver just before the war, in 1939, and the next year settled in a squatter's cabin on the foreshore of Burrard Inlet at Dollarton, a settlement under the shadow of the mountains, a few miles east of Vancouver. There, with time off for trips back to Mexico and Europe and Eastern Canada, he lived until 1954, when he left for Sicily and, finally, England.

It was at Dollarton, and at Niagara-on-the-Lake, that Lowry finished the last, published version of *Under the Volcano.* It was at Dollarton also that he wrote the stories which are now being published as the first new volume of his work to appear since his death—*Hear Us Oh Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place.*[1] He worked at the same time on at least two novels about Mexico, *La Mordida* and *Dark as the Grave,* of which, so far as I know, only fragments remain among the great mass of manuscript material that has recently been assembled at the University of British Columbia.[2] Among that material is also—apart from enough poems to make a considerable volume—the almost completed manuscript of a novel, *October Ferry to Gabriola,* which is set in British Columbia, and which also will be published as soon as the editing is complete.

[1] *Hear Us Oh Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place.* Longmans, Green. $4.50.

[2] This is now being edited by Malcolm Lowry's widow, Margerie Bonner Lowry, and Earle Birney, whose assistance in preparing this issue of *Canadian Literature* I wish at this point gratefully to acknowledge.

I do not think there is much doubt that Lowry has one foot well in the realm that is appropriate to *Canadian Literature*. It is not merely that on Canadian soil he produced the final, magnificent version of what many critics regard as the best novel written in our land; nor is it merely that much of his later work was set in Canada. We do not, after all, regard D. H. Lawrence as anything but an English writer, though he wrote many of his books abroad and set them in foreign countries. Try as he might to escape from his past, Lawrence remained the travelling Englishman, refracting all he saw through a personal and alien eye; his best writing on other lands was prompted by the lyrical observations of an outsider, and when he tried to enter into the heart of Mexico and portray it from within, he produced that literary monstrosity, *The Plumed Serpent*.

Lowry's relationship to his adopted home was quite different. We read the poems he wrote on Burrard Inlet; we read the three Canadian stories in *Hear Us Oh Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place*—"The Bravest Boat", "Gin and Golden Rod", and particularly "The Forest Path to the Spring". And we realise that he is not in fact writing about Canada as a transient outsider. He is writing about it as a man who over fifteen years lived himself into the environment that centred upon his fragile home where the Pacific tides lapped and sucked under the floorboards, and who identified himself with that environment—despite trials of flesh and spirit—as passionately as those other strangers who have rendered so well the essence of their particular corners of Canada, Grove and Haig-Brown. If Mexico stirred him through that combination of antagonism and attraction which so many Europeans feel there, Canada—or at least that fragment of it which stretches out from Burrard Inlet to embrace the Gulf of Georgia—stirred him through a sympathy that led towards total involvement.

It is for this reason, perhaps, that in his Canadian stories the Websterian hell of *Under the Volcano* never comes to view, though one gets a whiff of the sulphur in "Gin and Goldenrod". No man goes down to destruction under Seymour Mountain, and along the beaches of Dollarton the phantoms with death's-head faces do not sing in the voices of demons as they did for Consul Firmin. On the contrary, here, in this closely and lovingly described land-and-inletscape, there is a sense of redemption; in "The Forest Path to the Spring" the mountain lion who sits in a tree over the path and embodies destruction runs away from the narrator's steady eye, and what the latter remembers about his trips to the spring—what he remembers most vividly—is the almost mystical experience of joy that at times seemed to carry him in a rhapsodic instant from the life-giving source back to the door of his cabin. Here, as in *Under the Volcano*, the self is immersed.

But in the novel it drowns in the whirlpool of self-negation, whereas in "The Forest Path to the Spring" it bathes in a universal calm, the calm of a world of nature as sympathetic as ever Wordsworth wrote of, with which it identifies and from which it returns with joy enriched. It seems to me that it is in this almost rhapsodic identification with place that we find our best reason to claim much of what Lowry wrote for the literature of Canada. For it is not a sense of place that derives from mere observation, like that conveyed by a sensitive and competent travel writer; it is rather the sense of place that derives from a mental naturalisation which adds to a native's sense of identity the wonder of newness a native can never experience fully after childhood.

The stories in *Hear Us Oh Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place* are all worth reading for themselves; some of the non-Canadian examples, while they do not attain the intensity of feeling of "The Forest Path to the Spring", are interesting for their experimental exploration of the problems of conveying multiple levels of meaning. "Through the Panama" is an example; the narrator, a transmuted Lowry figure, voyages to Europe by freighter, but his journey is also that of a modern Ancient Mariner, with the albatross of literary creation and its attendant curse hung around his neck as he considers his novels about novelists who are his own mirror images. For Lowry belonged in the early twentieth century cosmopolitan tradition that seemed to reach an end about the time of his death—the tradition of Proust and Gide, which came to the conclusion, inevitable after a century of introspection, that the proper study of the writer is the writer's mind.

But all these stories are also part of a great continuum, a vast Work in Progress that filled Lowry's life and was never completed—perhaps never could be completed. In this sense Lowry was of the Proustian rather than of the Gidian tradition. The Gidians write many separate studies of experience, all related, but each self-contained; when one novel is finished a phase of investigation is ended, its record is terminated as quickly as possible, and then the writer is on to the next experience and the next novel. But the Proustians, and Lowry among them, conceive all their work as one great inter-related pattern on whose parts they work continuously and simultaneously. Proust could never leave the one great work of his life alone; he worked backwards and forwards over his manuscript, and only publication ever gave a final form to any of its parts; only death, one can be sure, put a period to the work itself, coming by coincidence at the point when Proust had reached the end of his original plan. So it was with Lowry. He worked on several novels, on stories and poems, all at the same time, and his

revisions were multiple to the point of Flaubertian obsession. For this reason he spent many years over each novel, writing on others at the same time; his actually completed works are few out of all proportion to those he sketched out and started. Another decade of work might—and equally well might not—have presented us with a masterpiece in its own very different way rivalling *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu,* perhaps even in one direction exceeding it, since Lowry possessed no cork-lined room and revised and added to his Work in Progress as the result, not of remembering a past now dead, but of experiencing and incorporating a lived present.

As it is, when *October Ferry to Gabriola* is published and the devoted labours of Lowry's editors have salvaged all that is publishable in fragmentary form from the other portions of the great cycle, we shall perhaps begin to see, at least in massive outlines, the modern Divine Comedy of which *Under the Volcano,* for all its portentous self-sufficiency, was intended only as a part.

THE POSSESSED ARTIST
AND THE AILING SOUL

Robert B. Heilman

TO HAVE BEEN AN ORIGINAL ADMIRER of Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano,* and to remain an admirer for almost a decade and a half, is very much like belonging to a semi-secret order with a somewhat odd, quite small, but widely dispersed membership. It is a very loose order, without adopted procedure and certainly without program. Membership is conferred by taste, not sought by will or exercised through evangelical rigor. Members become known to each other only when they discover each other by accident. The big point is that such discoveries do continue to be made, year after year, in more than one part of the English-reading world. Yet they are an insistent trickle rather than a growing stream that could be converted into a literary power system. Whoever has read Lowry has been unforgettably impressed, but readers have been, it appears, strangely few. The slender society of those who esteem him, whatever the strength of their convictions, have been given to contemplation rather than to promotion or even public debate: he remains a private possession rather than a public figure—far less established in a literary niche than, say, either Nathanael West or Djuna Barnes, whom in some way he brings to mind and who hardly have a greater claim upon our respect. Perhaps the disinclination of Lowry admirers to shout from the housetops is related to a certain meticulousness in their literary judgment: they customarily speak of *Under the Volcano* as a distinguished "minor" work or as a "minor classic". This reserve is understandable; despite the often kaleidoscopic movement of both outer and inner landscape, there is some limitedness of scope, some incompleteness of human range, some circumscribing of consciousness that is felt partly in the fewness of the dramatis personae and partly in the enclosing illness of the protagonist (though in saying this last, one must always be mindful that the ailing soul may have extraordinary visions). But the use of "minor" is not an inadvertent disparagement: it is an honorable

by-product of that need to place which is felt only when the novel in question arouses the conviction that it is not an entertainment of the year but a work of art that will be valid for many other years.

If a historian leafed through the journals of 1947 and noted the new novels reviewed, he would not find another one written in English, I surmise, that has achieved a more durable quiet esteem than *Under the Volcano* (I exclude Mann's *Doctor Faustus,* to which I shall return later). It has survived in a "population" where the normal death rate is close to 100%. A minor irony: it has survived its own publishing house. It has survived, as we have noted, an apparent smallness of canvas, and it has also survived a quite opposite difficulty: a fecundity of suggestive detail that tends to over-stimulate the imagination, that is, to set it off in more ways than can be decently encompassed within an overall design. Something survives beyond the sense of chaos that the fecundity is in danger of creating, beyond an impression of a tropical creative richness (this in itself, of course, is not to be disparaged, even when it is imperfectly controlled). What survives, again, is something beyond the quality usually called "intensity," though the stresses that Lowry images, luxuriantly and often fantastically, do induce the severe tautness that marks some kinds of aesthetic experience. Intensity is really a secondary virtue; it can be attached to superficial forms of action (of the order of fisticuffs, for instance), just as more profound experience can be transmitted in relatively un-taut moods such as the contemplative. The criterion is not the presence of intensity but the depth of the concern—the spiritual burden—that intensity accompanies. The less substantial the matter, the more the hard and gemlike flame will resemble ordinary flushed cheeks and fever that can be aspirined away. The fire in *Under the Volcano* is not easily put out.

The sense of a largeness that somehow bursts out of the evident constriction, the fertility that borders on the excessive and the frenzied, the intensity that is not a surrogate for magnanimity, and finally an apprehension of reality so vivid that it seems to slide over into madness—these are symptoms of the work of the "possessed" artist. If he has not quite achieved majority, Lowry belongs to the possessed novelists, among whom the great figures are Dostoevsky and Melville and, some of the time, Dickens. They may be distinguished from the "self-possessed" artists: Thackeray and Trollope and, to snatch an example from current fashion, C. P. Snow. Or, since Lowry's theme is human disaster, a grievous, driving, frenetic disaster, let us take for contrast Hardy, who seems calmly to organize and impose disaster as if he were seated at some cosmic control panel. In an older writer like Hawthorne or a modern one like R. P. Warren, there is somewhat of

a conflict, or even an alternation, of possession and self-possession, of an unbridled urgency and a controlling will. The possessed artist is in the tradition of Plato's Ion, and at the risk of too neat a polarity, it may be hazarded that the self-possessed artist has ties with Aristotle's Poetics: rational analysability of form appears to imply rational creatability of form. It is not altogether a parody to picture the self-possessed artist, deep browed at his drawing board, coolly planning plot and catharsis. In C. P. Snow the key line, a recurrent one, is surely, "May I have a word with you, Lewis?" "A word"—a council—a plan—logos and logistics: life is ordered, or, if it does not wholly accede to the order designed for it, what dissidence there is is reflected, not in unruly surges of action that in their way elude the author and his decorous creatures, but through the rational comment of observers. Things never get out of hand; no wild dogs tug at the trainer's leash. Perhaps the ultimate figure in the world of self-possession is Arnold Bennett: one of his major aims seems to have been to keep his characters down, to remain the unyielding bailiff on his huge Five Towns estate. Was not this—that he would never "let go"—a subtle ingredient in what Virginia Woolf had against him? That, really, he saw Mrs. Brown only in terms of attributes that were at his beck and call? Bennett illustrates the intimate relationship, the virtual identity, between self-possession and the rigorous domination of character and scene (or at least the air of this). In some way his sense of security seems to have been involved in his paternal tyranny: for his creatures, no out of bounds, no fractiousness, no unpredicted courses, no iddish cutting loose. And if V. S. Pritchett is right, Bennett suffered accordingly: his self-possession was close to suicidal.

SUCH COMPARISONS help us to place Lowry. In sum: the self-possessed artist—the one who uses his materials as an instrument. The possessed artist—the materials appear to use him as an instrument, finding in him, as it were, a channel to the objective existence of art, sacrificing a minimum of their autonomy to his hand, which partly directs and shapes rather than wholly controls. This is how it is with Lowry. If *Under the Volcano* is a more talented book than any one of the outstanding C. P. Snow novels and is still less well known, it is in part that the work of the self-possessed artist is more accessible, less threatening, farther away from anguish; even in Hardy the inimical and the destructive are in an odd way almost sterilized because for the most part they originate in an outer world that is unyielding or uncontrollable only by fits and

starts, rather than in an inner realm of constants where catastrophe is always latent (Sue Bridehead is a rare exception). Snow works in a wider and more accommodating territory, Lowry in a very much more dangerous terrain. Possessed work may open up any depth before one, any abyss in other personalities or in one's own. It does not primarily contemplate, though it does not ignore, the ailing world, which is generally reparable in Snow, or traditionally irreparable in naturalist fiction. Rather its theme is the ailing soul. It is an ancient theme whose history concerns us here only in that in our day the theme is used with extraordinary frequency. Whether it is that illness is especially attractive to us because we find in it a novel window to reality, or an apparently better window to reality, than the less clinical ones that we have principally relied on; or that the culture is sick, as some critics aver with almost tedious constancy, and that as a consequence we must, to avoid self-deception and serve truth, contemplate only sickness—these differing conclusions are arguable.

In the contemporary use of illness, at any rate, we find quite different perspectives. In *Sound and Fury* there are various ailing souls: through them we have a complex view of decadence and of a contrasting vitality. In Robbe-Grillet's *Voyeur* clinical disorder of personality is itself the aesthetic object: despite all that has been said about Robbe-Grillet's innovations in the vision of reality, the final effect is one of a disturbingly ingenious tour de force. In *Magic Mountain* the ailment of the soul is intricately intertwined with that of the body; a host of theoretical salvations are examined, and the final note is one of hope through a surprisingly simple practical therapy. But in *Doctor Faustus* there is a more fundamental and violent illness of soul, a counterpart of a more fundamental and violent illness of body, one that is in effect chosen; we see a sick person and a sick era, sick thought that is a culmination of a tradition; yet a tradition in which the paradoxical affiliation of the destructive and the creative is terrifying.

Doctor Faustus offers some instructive parallels with *Under the Volcano*: both works belong to 1947; both recount the spiritual illness of a man that is in some way akin to the illness of an age; both glance at the politics of the troubled 1930's, but both are artistically mature enough to resist the temptations always offered by the political theme—the polemic tone, the shrill "J'accuse." Instead they contemplate the failures of spirit of which the political disorders are a symptom. They do this differently. Though both draw on the Faustian theme, Lowry introduces it less directly than suggestively, as one strand in a mythic fabric of considerable richness. Mann, by now an old hand at mythic reconstructions, revives Faustus in the grand manner. The mode of evil is affirmative: demonic posses-

sion, a rush into destruction in a wild flare of self-consuming, power-seizing creativity. In demonic possession there is a hypertrophy of ego; Lowry's hero, on the contrary, suffers from a kind of undergrowth of soul. One leaps on life rapaciously; the other falls short of the quality that makes life possible. Both the rape and the agonizing insufficiency are done with hair-raising immediacy. But Mann's style is heroic, whereas Lowry's stage is domestic. Geoffrey Firmin (the infirm Geoffrey) is more of a private figure than Adrian Leverkühn; his life has less amplitude in itself; in the concrete elements of it there is not the constant pressure toward epical-allegorical aggrandizement. But this is a statement of a difference, not of a deficiency. Both novelists are possessed; both seem to be the instruments of a vision whose autarchy they do not impair as they assist its emergence into public form. This is true of Mann, despite his usual heavy component of expository pages; it is true of Lowry, despite some artifice and frigidity in the narrative arrangements.

If Lowry's work is, compared with Mann's, "domestic", nevertheless the implied analogy with domestic tragedy is slight at best. To make one important contrast: Lowry has a range of tone that household drama never had. In fact, even in the orbit of possessed artists, his range is unusual: in recording a disaster of personality that is on the very edge of the tragic, he has an extravagant comic sense that creates an almost unique tension among moods. Desperation, the ludicrous, nightmare, the vulgar, the appalling, the fantastic, the nonsensical, and the painfully pathetic coexist in an incongruous melange that is still a unity. The serious historian of the ailing soul may achieve the bizarre, but he rarely works through humor or finds the Lowry fusion of the ridiculous and the ghastly. With Lowry, the grotesque seems always about to trip up the catastrophic, the silly to spike the portentous, the idiotic to collapse the mad. When evil is present, it is more likely to be nasty than sinister. The assailing demons tend to be mean little gremlins; in a way, Geoffrey's disaster is the triumph of meanness, not as a case-history of an eccentric flop, but as a universal image of man in the smallness to which he is always liable. This can take on its own dreadfulness, partly because petty vice contains echoes of major failures, partly because nemesis is not trivial, and partly because there is always maintained a touching nostalgia for a large and noble selfhood. In *Lady Windermere's Fan* there is a very bad line about man's being in the gutter but looking at the stars; it is bad because the play contains no vestige of real gutters or real stars, so that words alone are being exploited. But these antithetical images could be used of *Under the Volcano* without bathos, for it contains some of the more plausible gutters in modern fiction

while portraying the survival, even in them, of a dim and struggling consciousness of other worlds. Lowry is quite lucid about what is sickness and what is health, rather more so, indeed, than another possessed novelist usually credited with expertise in these polar states, D. H. Lawrence.

LOWRY DOES NOT MANAGE the cosmic texture of events that we find in *Doctor Faustus,* but there is an extraordinary texture of symbol and allusion. It is doubtless natural for the possessed novelist to call on many of the resources of poetry. The self-possessed novelist is not necessarily prosaic or shallow or one-dimensional, witness Henry James; but in the main we image him as forging steadily or deliberately ahead, on the direct prose route to his end. The possessed writer has an air of battling, not quite successfully, with a multitude of urgencies that come at him from all sides and fling off again on their own, not always forced into a common direction. If the overt action of *Under the Volcano* is slight, the metaphorical action is intense. Numerous objects, properties, occurrences, and even ideas, recollections, and observations not only exist in their own right but also work figuratively or symbolically. The nexuses are imaginative rather than casual, or logical, or chronological; hiatuses compel a high attention; dextrous leaps are called for. In such a sense the novel is "poetic," not in the sense that a mistily atavistic syntax and a solemn iambic hauteur, as often in the self-conscious experimental theatre, pass for poetic.

The "story," as I have said, is slight: Yvonne, the wife of alcoholic Geoffrey Firmin, returns, after a year's separation, to her husband in Mexico. The events all take place on the day of her return. Geoffrey's passing desires to pull out with Yvonne are overcome by a far more urgent passion for alcohol. A French movie-producer, former lover of Yvonne, is with them for a while and incredulously lectures Geoffrey. Geoffrey's brother Hugh, ex-reporter and sailor, now about to run arms to the Spanish loyalists, in love with Yvonne, spends the day with them. The chief event is an outing by bus—Lowry's own wayward bus ("making its erratic journey"), which stops for a while near a wounded Indian left by the roadside but leaves without anybody's having done anything. Late in the day Geoffrey, who has constantly been getting separated from Hugh and Yvonne, outrageously abuses Yvonne and runs into the woods near Popocatepetl. Yvonne and Hugh pursue. Yvonne and Geoffrey lose their lives by means symbolically associated with the episode of the unattended roadside Indian.

Hugh makes his boat for Spain: this we have learned from a retrospective prologue—the contents of which are certain words and thoughts of the French movie-man a year after the day of the main story. This prologue is supposed to introduce all the main themes; but there is too much there to assimilate, especially since most of the material is not dramatized. It is a cold beginning, and then one has to keep going back to it as to a table of contents—which is not the kind of re-reading that a concentrated book may legitimately demand. Further, on technical matters: the retrospects on which a one-day story must rely tend to be flaccid in style (Hugh's) or foggy in detail (Yvonne's); and coincidence has a fairly large hand in things. But, once into the story, one is less aware of these things than of the imaginative richness. The minds of the characters are sensitive recording instruments, tenacious alike of facts and of their suggestive value. The book is a cornucopia of images; both the psychic and the outer world have a tangibility which a thoughtless slice of realism could never produce; humor and horror are never alleged but are moulded into a hard and yet resilient narrative substance. Always one is driven to follow through on the evocations that trail off behind the foreground facts.

So, besides reading the story as story, we are always aware of a multitude of implications which, in their continual impingement upon us, remind us of the recurrent images of Shakespeare. The action takes place in November, on the Day of the Dead; Geoffrey feels his "soul dying"; a funeral takes place; burial customs, the shipping of a corpse are discussed; an earlier child of Yvonne's is dead; Geoffrey thinks he is seeing a dead man; a cantina is called La Sepultura; Geoffrey recalls Dr. Faustus's death; a dead dog is seen in a ravine; a dying Indian is found by the roadside. Always there are vultures, pariah dogs, the noise of target practice. There are a decaying hotel, a reference to the House of Usher, the ruins of the palace of Maximilian and Carlotta. Geoffrey's soul appears to him "a town ravaged and stricken"; an imaginary "little town by the sea" burns up. Frustrations and failures are everywhere—engagements are missed, the light fails in a cinema. Always we are reminded of the barranca or ravine, near the town—a fearful abyss. Once it is called "Malebolge"; there are various allusions to Dante's *Inferno;* Geoffrey feels he is in hell, quotes Dante on sin, looks at Cocteau's *La Machine Infernale,* takes a ride in a Maquina Infernal, calls ironically-defiantly, "I love hell"; at the end he is in a bar "under the volcano". "It was not for nothing the ancients had placed Tartarus under Mt. Aetna . . . ." There are continual references to Marlowe's Faustus, who could not pray for grace, just as Geoffrey cannot feel a love that might break his love for alcohol,

or rather, symbolize a saving attitude; as in the Faustus play, *soul* is a recurrent word. There is an Eden-Paradise theme: a public sign becomes a motif in itself, being repeated at the end of the story: "Do you enjoy this garden, which is yours? Keep your children from destroying it!" Geoffrey once mistranslates the second sentence: "We evict those who destroy." Geoffrey's own garden, once beautiful, has become a jungle; he hides bottles in the shrubbery; and once he sees a snake there.

The lavish use of such rich resources reveals the possessed artist. They might serve, perhaps, only to create a vivid sequence of impressions, feelings, and moods. But Lowry is possessed by more than sensations and multiple associations; there is a swirl of passionate thoughts and ideas as well as passions; thought and feeling are fused, and always impressions and moods seem the threshold to meanings that must be entered. It seems to me that he seizes instinctively upon materials that have both sensory and suprasensory values. How present the central conception—that of the ailing soul? There are endless symbols for ill-being, from having cancer to taking dope. But Geoffrey's tremendous drinking is exactly the right one, or by art is made to seem the right one. In greater or lesser extent it is widely shared, or at least is related to widely practiced habits; it is known to be a pathological state; it may be fatal, but also it can be cured. It lacks the ultimate sinisterness of dope, the irresistibility of cancer; hence it is more flexible, more translatable. And Lowry slowly makes us feel, behind the brilliantly presented facts of the alcoholic life, a set of meanings that make the events profoundly revelatory: drinking as an escape, an evasion of responsibility, a separation from life, a self-worship, a denial of love, a hatred of the living with a faith. (There is an always pressing guilt theme: Geoffrey, who was a naval officer in World War I, is a kind of sinning Ancient Mariner, caught by Life-in-Death, loathing his slimy creatures, born of the d.t.'s, whom he cannot expiatorily bless but must keep trying to drink away). The horror of Geoffrey's existence is always in the forefront of our consciousness, as it should be; but in the horror is involved an awareness of the dissolution of the old order, of the "drunken madly revolving world," of which Hugh says, "Good god, if our civilization were to sober up for a couple of days, it'd die of remorse on the third." At the end Geoffrey, unable by act of will to seize upon the disinterested aid of two old Mexicans, is the victim of local fascists: fascism preys upon a world that has already tossed away its own soul.

The episode which most successfully unifies the different levels of meaning is that of the Indian left wounded by the roadside. He is robbed by a Spanish

"pelado," a symbol of "the exploitation of everybody by everybody else." Here we have echoes of the Spanish Conquest and a symbol of aggression generally. Yvonne can't stand the sight of blood: it is her flaw, her way of acquiescing in the *de facto*. Geoffrey finds rules against doing anything; everyone feels that "it wasn't one's own business, but someone else's." It is modern irresponsibility and selfishness; the reader is prepared also to think of the "non-intervention" policy by the refrain which echoes throughout the book, "they are losing on the Ebro." But above all this is the story of the Good Samaritan—only there is no Samaritan. Devil take the least of these. (Geoffrey's ship, a gunboat disguised as a merchantman, has been named the "Samaritan"—a comment upon modern Samaritanism.)

Hugh, held back by Geoffrey, is almost the Good Samaritan—Hugh who is going to run arms to Spain. To Geoffrey and Yvonne, he is "romantic"; doubtless he is, and he has his own kind of guilt; but at least he insists on action, disinterested action. Here we come to what is apparently the basic theme of the book: man, in the words of a proverb repeated chorally, cannot live without love. Lowry flirts with the danger of the topical: the Spanish war might give the novel the air of a political tract. But ultimately, I think, the author does succeed in keeping the political phenomena on the periphery of the spiritual substance, using them for dramatic amplification of his metaphysic. It would be possible to read Geoffrey, always impersonally called the Consul, as dying capitalism, as laissez faire, or as sterile learning, like the speaker in Tennyson's *Palace of Art*. But such readings, though they are partly true, too narrowly circumscribe the total human situation with which Lowry is concerned.

THE CONSUL'S CLIMACTIC ACTS of hate are a world's confession. Yvonne thinks of the need "of finding some faith," perhaps in "unselfish love." Whence love is to be derived, or how sanctioned and disciplined, is a question which the symbols do not fully answer. Yet it is the effect of Lowry's allusions—Dante, Faustus—to push the imagination toward a final reality that transcends all historical presents, however much each present may comment upon and even modify it. Most of all this effect is secured by his constant allusion to Christian myth and history—the crucifixion, Golgotha, the last supper, original sin. Lowry is hardly writing a Christian allegory; indeed, some of the Christian echoes are decidedly ironic. But his whole complex of image and symbol is such as to direct

a dissolving order, in search of a creative affirmation, toward that union of the personal and the universal which is the religious.

The two extremes which are the technical dangers of this kind of work are the tightly bound allegory, in which a system of abstract equivalents for all the concrete materials of the story constricts the imaginative experience, and a loose impressionism, in which a mass of suggestive enterprises sets off so many associations, echoes, and conjectures that the imaginative experience becomes crowded and finally diffuse. It is the latter risk that Lowry runs. For the present account, to avoid excessive length, consistently oversimplifies the ingredients that it deals with, and it fails to deal with many other ingredients—for instance, the guitar motif, the cockfight motif, the theme of mystics and mysteries, the recurrent use of Indians, horses, the movie *The Hands of Orlac,* etc. Lowry has an immensely rich and vigorous imagination, and he never corks his cornucopia of evocative images and symbols. Some disciplinary rejections, some diffidence in setting afloat upon the imagination every boat that he finds upon a crowded shore, would have reduced the distractedness to which the reader is occasionally liable and would have concentrated and shaped the author's effect more clearly. This is to say, perhaps, that the possessed artist might at times borrow a little from the soul of the self-possessed artist. But if one might wish for a more ordered synthesis of parts, one would never want a diminution of the power in Lowry's possessed art. There is great life in what he has written—in his solid world of inner and outer objects in which the characters are dismayed and imprisoned as in Kafka's tales; and in the implicit coalescence of many levels of meaning that we find in Hermann Broch. Such a multivalued poetic fiction, with its picture of the ailing soul, its sense of horrifying dissolution, and its submerged, uncertain vision of a hard new birth off in clouded time, is apparently the especial labor of the artistic conscience at our turn of an epoch.

POEMS BY MALCOLM LOWRY

Prefaced by
Earle Birney

SCATTERED THROUGH THE MASS of typescript and manuscript left by Malcolm Lowry at his death, and now housed in the Special Collections section of the University of British Columbia Library, are various drafts or fragments of poems. A few of these, as the bibliography in this issue shows, were published during his lifetime, but about 150 were unknown. With the help of his widow, Mrs. Margerie Lowry, I have edited a selection of these with a view to their eventual publication as a book. The group printed below has been chosen from this work.

Since Lowry seldom dated poems, and habitually revised them, accumulating drafts indefinitely (as with most of his prose) it is not easy to arrange the present group in order of composition. From internal evidence, however, and from details supplied by Mrs. Lowry, it would appear that most of them were composed over the years between 1940 and 1954 when the Lowrys lived on the Dollarton beach, just beyond the upper harbour of Vancouver, except for three which may date, in their original conception, from the middle Thirties, when Lowry lived in Mexico.

Of these three, "Autopsy"* (which exists, untitled, in one incomplete manuscript only), is of peculiar interest for the references it makes to incidents in his early years, incidents which he seldom openly referred to, but which appear to have been traumatic, and to recur in the prose in various symbolic disguises. According to Mrs. Lowry, his parents placed Malcolm in a boarding school at seven, where he was subjected to harsh discipline. He developed a disfiguring eye ailment, which was allowed to go without adequate treatment until he was in danger of blindness, and it was necessary for him to undergo an operation and

* Titles marked in this way have been added by Mrs. Lowry and Dr. Birney to poems untitled by the author. ED.

prolonged hospitalization. Lowry felt that both his parents and the school authorities were blameable for the aggravation of his condition, and he recalled also with bitterness that his ailment handicapped him in school sports and made him the butt of schoolmates. The phrase "crucified at eleven" may refer to the time when, at his father's insistence, he joined a Wolf Cub pack and underwent some form of sadistic bullying from older members. The reference to Clare, in the conclusion, I take to be to the "Summer Images" of John Clare in which that poet describes a snail as a "Frail brother of the morn, / That from the tiny bents and misted leaves / Withdraws his timid horn, / And fearful vision weaves."

"In Tempest's Tavern"*, also from the Mexican period, is one of a group Lowry called "Songs for Second Childhood". I should guess that the Dowson reference is to the opening section of Ernest Dowson's "Serephita". The Wordsworth reference is not so easy to place, though he may have had "Resolution and Independence" in mind, or the "Sonnet Composed during a Storm," or any of several passages in Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journals*. Lowry read fairly widely in nineteenth century poetry.

The title of the other poem dating from the Mexican period, "Lupus in Fabula"*, I have transferred from another poem to which it became accidentally attached and which it does not fit (see Bibliography). The wolf became a complex symbol in Lowry's work, first of the cruelty of nature and of the "natural" man—I suspect the origin of this in the Wolf Cub experience—and later, by an interesting reversal, of the plight of all lonely creatures who cannot exist in modern society and are persecuted to extinction, including himself. "Tortu", according to the Consul in *Under the Volcano,* is a sort of Land of Cockaygne containing "the ideal University", where "not even athletics is allowed to interfere with the business of . . . drinking" (p. 56). I would suppose that Lowry picked up the name when he visited Haiti in the forties, and that it was therefore not in the original draft. The nearest I can find to a Tortu is the Ile de la Tortue (Turtle Island) off the Haiti coast.

In 1942, *Under the Volcano* made an unsuccessful round of the publishers and was returned to Lowry by his agent with advice as to revision. According to Mrs. Lowry he at once set about rewriting it, while continuing to compose poems, including the "Joseph Conrad" published below. I do not know if Lowry was referring to a specific Conrad passage, but the opening lines seem to echo a sentence in *Typhoon*. Jukes, during the storm, is "harassed by the necessity of exerting a wrestling effort against a force trying to tear him away from his hold" —but Jukes is clinging to a stanchion, unable to get down to his bunk. In general

the imagery and thought of the poem recalls Lowry's own *Ultramarine,* rather than anything of Conrad (even the famous preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*), and the title may have been, as Mrs. Lowry suspects, rather casually added.

In the summer of 1944, when the revision of the *Volcano* was almost complete, the squatter's shack in which the Lowrys were living burned to the ground; fortunately the *Volcano* manuscripts were rescued, but another unfinished novel, "In Ballast to the White Sea", was destroyed with all its notes. This is the event which prompted "Lament" (though the manuscripts reveal that he continued to revise this poem up to his death in 1957). With the help of neighbors, the Lowrys rebuilt their cabin, the *Volcano* was successfully revised, and, in 1946, accepted. "Strange Type"* was written in that year, when he was correcting proofs, and "After Publication . . ."* a year later, when he was already tasting the bittersweet of success.

The many painstaking redrafts of "Hypocrisy" suggest that it was a poem he considered important, but with which he was not satisfied. It probably refers to certain unhappy experiences he underwent when he first came to British Columbia and lived unwillingly in Vancouver until he could find a home on the beach.

"The Dodder" reflects the beginning of Lowry's interest in the natural world about him at Dollarton, though that interest was still, at this stage, a rather bookish one. In an endeavour to learn how to identify the local flowers he began reading *Studies of Plant Life in Canada,* a work by an amateur nineteenth-century botanist living at Katchewanook, near Stoney Lake, in eastern Ontario. Lowry's description of the dodder, and the other flower names and epithets in this poem, follow closely Mrs. Traill even though she is noting species which do not grow around Dollarton, or indeed in western Canada. Later, under his wife's tutelage, he grew more accurate in his botanizing. The poem is nevertheless revealing and moving for its symbolic application of Mrs. Traill's remarks to his feeling of dependence upon his wife and their life of "exiled passion" on the Dollarton beach. The general idea of the poem seems to me reminiscent of a sonnet of Conrad Aiken, the sixteenth in *And in the Human Heart,* (1940), a presentation copy of which was in Lowry's library on the beach. There are at least twenty-five drafts of this poem in the U.B.C. collection.

A LAMENT - JUNE 1944

Our house is dead
It burned to the ground
On a morning in June
With a wind from the Sound.
The fire that fed
On our marriage bed
Left a bottle of gin.
Black under the moon
Our house is dead.
We shall build it again
But our home is gone.
And the world burns on.

IN TEMPEST'S TAVERN

Another than Wordsworth dropped his live work
To listen to the wind's shriek of uprooted trees,
And vessel's smashed backs under portentous seas
Scrabbling with sharks as Rydal hives with bees,
The *Ohio* smoking in Frisco on a sharp pen
Of rock, lightning a leash snarled by force
At the bounding neck of God's mad dog, the dark;
The universe snapping like hounds at some dread groom.
I believe that Wordsworth thought of the calm . . .
But to another, blessing chaos, since it must drown
In hurled gules of conflict's flesh, his own strike
Of the hour, his own grief, no peaceful lake
Lights by storm's flash. Such is the nature of his doom
That like some infant Aeolus Dowson in tempest's tavern,
He claps for better thunder, wilder typhoon.

AFTER PUBLICATION OF "UNDER THE VOLCANO"

Success is like some horrible disaster
Worse than your house burning, the sounds of ruination
As the roof tree falls following each other faster
While you stand, the helpless witness of your damnation[.]

Fame like a drunkard consumes the house of the soul
Exposing that you have worked for only this—
Ah, that I had never suffered this treacherous kiss
And had been left in darkness forever to founder and fail[.]

HYPOCRISY

I sing the joy of poverty not such
As war insults with ruin of its own
Evil. But as the soul computes when much
Of its domain is lost. Here is a town
Of which one's sudden mayoralty
Prize of long kinship with disaster
Qualifies,—to readjust the dead.
Ideas stampede here, where are encamped
The hypocrite, the undertaker—yet, lo,
They are pitiable, and in different guise,
With hanging heads, melancholy.
And shall I tell them every one
Of the good of the soul scrubbed to the bone,
The walls bare of learning as the trees
Of leaves; and the sea—beyond—less bounded
For being innocent of ships.
What voices have they now, what forms of hopes?
What is the reckoning for having cheated death?
The Cross knows what I'll not say, that last never[.]
But no one shall heed my song, nor have they ever.

LUPUS IN FABULA

Wolf, wolf, cried the boy in the fable,
Who plagued the shepherds and the sheep alike,
To return, laughing softly, to the stable,
And fold away the hours with reed or fiddle,
Bleating in music for deceived shepherd's sake.
There was no wolf then. But at night one struck;
Long famished in iron hills she saw her table
Spread whitely on the green plains of Tortu.
Wolf, cried the boy. But now no herdsmen came.
Wolf, wolf, returned the wolf, her icy heart aflame . . .
So wolf and child were well met. But I say to you
That, slept they once on never so proud an Alp,—
It is the poor wolf now who cries for help.

THE DODDER

The early flowered everlasting,
The hooded violet, the branching white
Wood-violet, brooding in the May night
Send petals forth even in Spring's wasting,
—Sped by the monkish cellarage-tasting
Of cowled cuckoo-pint, jack-in-the-pulpit!—
All of these, where there was but one poet,
In Katchewanook, lacked no contrasting.
If I seek that which, poor, leafless, rootless,
Twined with goldenrod in ill-repute lives,
It is, for exiled passion's sake, comfort
Here, on Stony Lake: nor is it fruitless
What faithful coils are goldener than leaves
To share, what blossoms parasites support.

AUTOPSY

An autopsy on this childhood then reveals:
That he was flayed at seven, crucified at eleven.
And he was blind as well, and jeered at
For his blindness. Small wonder that the man
Is embittered and full of hate, but wait.
All this time, and always lost, he struggled.
In pain he prayed that none other
In the world should suffer so. Christ's
Life compared with his, was full of tumult,
Praise, excitement, final triumph.
For him were no hosannas. He writes them now.
Matriculated into life by this, remembering how
This laggard self was last in the school Marathon,
Or that he was last, last in everything,
Devoid of all save wandering attention—
Wandering is the word defines our man—
But turned, to discover Clare in the poor snail,
And weave a fearful vision of his own.

STRANGE TYPE

I wrote: in the dark cavern of our birth.
The printer had it tavern, which seems better:
But herein lies the subject of our mirth,
Since on the next page death appears as dearth.
So it may be that God's word was distraction,
Which to our strange type appears destruction,
Which is bitter.

JOSEPH CONRAD

This wrestling, as of seamen with a storm
Which flies to leeward—while they, united
In that chaos, turn, each on his nighted
Bunk, to dream of chaos again, or home—
The poet himself, struggling with the form
Of his coiled work, knows; having requited
Sea-weariness with purpose, invited
What derricks of the soul plunge in his room.
Yet some mariner's ferment in his blood
—Though truant heart will hear the iron travail
And song of ships that ride their easting down—
Sustains him to subdue or be subdued.
In sleep all night he grapples with a sail!
But words beyond the life of ships dream on.

NO SE PUEDE . . .

Max-Pol Fouchet

C'EST EN 1947 que Stephen Spender me pressa de lire *Under the Volcano*. Il venait lui-même de découvrir le livre au cours d'un voyage aérien, entre New York et Paris. Je relate cette circonstance, et pour remercier le poète, et parce que j'éprouve toujours le sentiment de révélation que j'eus dès lors. Aujourd'hui, après une nouvelle lecture, la sixième, ce sentiment est le même, sans altération. Depuis Joyce, depuis les grands Faulkner, rien d'aussi important, rien qui aille plus loin et plus profond ne nous a été offert par la littérature étrangère. *Au-dessous du Volcan* est l'un des rares livres que notre temps imposera à l'avenir, quand le tri s'effectuera des fausses et des vraies valeurs, quand la balle sera séparée de l'épi. Je plains ceux qui ne sauront pas le reconnaître. Ici se fait le point de la critique.

Dans ce livre, non plus que dans *Ulysse* ou le *Bruit et la Fureur,* on n'entre aisément, il est vrai. Les amateurs de non-résistance doivent demeurer sur la berge. D'ailleurs, l'œuvre confie sa garde à un premier chapitre cerbériforme! Quarante pages sans fissures, sans complaisance, sans appeau, sans attrape-lecteur, où se déploie toute la thématique de l'auteur. Premier chapitre qui est, au demeurant, le dernier. Là se résume, dans la conscience d'un personnage, avec des écarts divers, un drame accompli dont la marche nous sera révélée par la suite.

Nous voici dans une tragédie encore bouillante, et nous ignorons son développement. Nous sommes au faîte, non au fait. Après, seulement après, on s'acclimate, on respire; le mouvement vous entraîne. Nous nous permettons donc de donner ce conseil au lecteur de bonne volonté; il lira le chapitre initial sans se laisser rebuter, puis, après connaissance du reste, il reviendra à son point de départ, et il s'apercevra que ce début est, en soi, une merveille d'écriture inspirée.

Défaut de composition? Non pas. Procédé trop intentionnel? Encore moins. Il s'agit de quelques autres choses. De musique, d'abord, si l'on veut. Ce premier

chapitre, purgatoire des impatients, équivaut à un prélude; les leitmotive s'y font entendre, sans qu'on sache encore à quel événement précis les rattacher. L'œuvre de Malcolm Lowry, en effet, ressemble à une symphonie dont les motifs, par leur récurrence, assurent l'unité tonale, se reprennent en modulations, s'organisent parfois en contrepoint. C'est aussi un poème, où ces thèmes tiennent lieu de rimes, d'assonnances. Pourtant on n'explique pas ce livre en le comparant à la musique, à la poesie. Il s'explique en fonction du temps qui est le sien. Nous sommes ici dans un univers de retour cyclique. Tout événement s'y retrouve, s'y redit parce qu'il correspond à un archétype absolu, le reprend, le reproduit, le résonne. Dans le décor de l'intrigue, l'un des éléments principaux est une grande roue foraine: elle tourne, toujours présente, dans un sens ou dans l'autre, entraînant dans sa giration des cabines qu'elle ramène à leur position d'origine. Clair symbole d'un temps de retour éternel, qui ne va pas d'un départ à une arrivée, mais qui, se mouvant sur lui-même, se retrouve sans cesse. Cette conception donne au livre son allure de "révolution" constante. Les thèmes se redisent. Et la tragédie recommence la tragédie.

Cet univers de la répétition est celui d'un âge d'or. L'homme y serait soustrait au devenir, il y parviendrait à l'extase, à la paix sacrale. Que l'action du livre se passe au Mexique ne relève pas du hasard: elle s'accorde parfaitement aux anciennes cosmologies. Mais les personnages, eux, vivent dans une durée qui est celle du péché: ils ont derrière eux la faute commise; en eux et devant eux le châtiment, l'Enfer. Qui sont-ils, ces personnages? D'abord, Geoffrey Firmin, le consul déchu, alcoolique et *savant*. Il n'ignore ni la Cabbale, ni les sciences traditionnelles, ni la littérature, dans la mesure où cette dernière suit la voie royale des mystères. L'alcool pour lui n'est pas un vice, mais une passion de l'âme, un moyen de la connaissance. L'éthylisme de Geoffrey atteint ce dérèglement des sens, par lequel, aux termes de Rimbaud, on se fait voyant.

LE CONSUL A UNE FEMME, Yvonne. Elle l'a quitté; il ne l'a pas retenue. Yvonne revient. Il souhaitait qu'elle revînt. Il l'aime. Elle l'aime. Pourtant les deux amants ne peuvent se rejoindre. Une malédiction les sépare. Un interdit pèse sur leur amour. Pour être ainsi chatiés, quelle faute ont-ils commise? Ils s'aimaient, oui, mais ils n'ont su défendre leur sentiment, le prouver, l'assumer. Ils se sont abandonnés l'un l'autre, Yvonne a laissé Geoffrey à l'alcool,

Geoffrey ne s'est pas opposé au départ d'Yvonne. Ils ont détruit le jardin d'Eden qui était leur. Désormais ils ne peuvent y revenir. C'est la loi, et leurs supplications se heurtent à son inflexibilité. "Nous pourrions être heureux tous les deux", dit vainement Yvonne, et Geoffrey: "Ah! qui sait pourquoi l'homme s'est vu offrir l'amour?" Ils connaissent le verdict. Et ils n'ignorent pas où ils se trouvent: "Le nom de ce pays est enfer", s'écrie le consul. Au-dessous du volcan! Ce n'était pas sans raison que les Anciens avaient placé le Tartare sous le mont Etna, et au-dedans, le monstre Typhée aux cent têtes, aux yeux et à la voix relativement terrifiants. Rarement un livre a montré des cœurs plus lacérés, plus désespérés. Jamais l'impossibilité du couple ne fut exprimée de la sorte.

No se peude vivir sin amar. Cette inscription s'étale sur un mur de Quauhnahuac, la petite ville mexicaine que dépeint le livre. Etre sans amour, c'est donc être mort. Et, au vrai, le consul et sa femme n'appartiennent plus au monde, le monde ne leur appartient plus. Geoffrey, le kabbaliste, comprend les raisons d'un tel abandon. La conception ésotérique de la Totalité le lui explique: Dieu étant le mâle, l'univers étant la femelle, le Tout se compose de leur union, le chaos et le néant, de leur désunion, et les créatures mortelles aboutiront à la Totalité ou au chaos, selon qu'elles obéiront à l'amour.

Yvonne ne possède pas de telles connaissances. C'est d'instinct qu'elle interprète la ruine du paradis perdu. Elle rêve de le rétablir ailleurs. Dans quelque ferme lointaine, elle retrouverait sa foi, elle sauverait Geoffrey de l'alcoolisme. Sauver Geoffrey? *Sauver?* Voilà qui nous conduit plus loin. Le manquement à la loi se révèle soudain plus grave, il ne se limite plus à l'affrontement de deux protagonistes, il s'élargit à l'humanité même.

Sur Yvonne, sur Geoffrey, pèse cette conséquence de la faute: l'abandon du prochain. Geoffrey sait qu'il se dérobe sans cesse devant la misère du monde, qu'il invente des prétextes pour s'y soustraire. Ils sont, l'un et l'autre, Geoffrey et Yvonne conscients de leur égoïsme. Mais il y a plus: un remords tenaille le consul: il n'a pas su empêcher, pendant la guerre, que des prisonniers ennemis fussent massacrés par l'équipage de son bateau, et l'on se demande même s'il est innocent de ce crime . . . Quoi qu'il en soit, un chapitre entier développe le thème de la responsabilité envers autrui. Quelque Indien agonise au bord de la route, assassiné par un de ses frères de race. Yvonne se détourne du moribond, elle ne peut "supporter la vue du sang". Geoffrey, lui, demande à Hugh, son demi-frère, de ne pas intervenir, d'attendre l'arrivée de la police. Ne voit-on pas que ces pages se rattachent à la parabole du Bon Samaritain? Comment s'appelait, justement, le navire meurtrier que commandait le consul? Le *Samaritain*. Le propos est net.

Le thème de la charité, non respectée, corollaire du manquement à l'amour, devient l'une des obsessions majeures du livre.

La mort du consul répétera la mort de l'Indien. Lui aussi mourra, abandonné sur la route. Mais non sans avoir reçu une ultime leçon. Un misérable, le vieux joueur de violon, se penchera vers lui et l'appellera *compañero* . . . A cette parole de compassion le consul éprouvera une ultime joie, "cela le rendit heureux". Et Malcolm Lowry ajoute: "Maintenant, il était le mourant sur le bord d'un chemin, où ne s'arrêterait aucun bon samaritain." Ainsi se ferme le cycle. La loi est irrémissible.

Ce sujet doit pourtant sa valeur au contexte qui le vet, le multiplie, l'exhausse. Ce livre ne se situe pas sur les deux seuls plans du roman et de la connaissance, il pose encore des problèmes de langage et d'écriture. On assiste, en le lisant, à un maniement prodigieux de vocables, à des coulées verbales de souvenirs, de citations, de surgissements de la mémoire et de la culture. Les péripéties de l'écriture valent celles de l'intrigue. On voudrait isoler des paragraphes, des pages, les retenir pour leur lyrisme particulier et cependant ils sont entraînés dans le mouvement général. Souvent, les personnages du livre levent les yeux vers le ciel mexicain, contemplent les démarches stellaires, le déploiement des galaxies, l'infinie fête foraine où de grandes roues déploient leur giration dans l'espace. C'est à cet ordre cosmique que le livre fait penser, avec ses thèmes qui paraissent, disparaissent, reparaissent comme les astres. Le cerveau humain épouse ici l'image de l'univers. Il tourne autour du soleil central de la connaissance et de l'amour. Effet de l'alcool? Soit. Dans le vin, la vérité. Mais ce vin est celui des mystiques.

MALCOLM LOWRY
A Note

Conrad Aiken

MY OPINION OF MALCOLM LOWRY as a writer is of course already on record, in the "blurb" which I was asked to write for *Under the Volcano* when it first appeared. More extensively, it can be found in the portrait of Lowry—on the whole, pretty accurate—in *Ushant,* my autobiography, where he appears as Hambo. In the last section of this is a fragment of imaginary dialogue between us which was actually written at Cuernavaca in 1937, when I was staying with him, and which, allowing for the necessary "heightening", is very close to the mark. It will suggest, I think, something of the remarkable spiritual and aesthetic and psychological symbiosis that grew up between us immediately after our first meeting in 1929. He had read my novel *Blue Voyage,* and wrote me about it to Rye, Sussex, where he assumed I was still living; and he asked me to lunch with him, either in London or Cambridge, where he was to matriculate in September. On finding that I was in the *other* Cambridge—on the Charles River—he at once inquired whether I would consider taking him on as a pupil, the terms to be arranged. The terms were arranged, he set sail on a freighter from Liverpool to Bermuda, on another from Bermuda to Boston, and arrived one day in July on my doorstep in Plympton Street, Cambridge, next door to the Grolier Bookshop, with a taropatch in one hand and a small battered suitcase in the other.

The suitcase contained an exercise book (and not much else) in which was as much as he had then written of his first novel, *Ultramarine;* and it was on this, as I have described at length in *Ushant,* that we were to work all that wonderful summer. *Blue Voyage* he knew better than I did—he knew it by heart. Its influence on him was profound and permanent, and was evident even in that

first title—he was delighted with my suggestion that he might well have taken the next step and called the book *Purple Passage.* But though the influence was to continue even into the later work, a matter that was frequently and amusedly discussed between us, and was also to comprise a great deal that was said by me in conversation, it was much more complicated than that. The fact is that we were uncannily alike in almost everything, found instantly that we spoke the same language, were astonishingly *en rapport;* and it was therefore the most natural thing in the world that a year later, when difficulties arose between him and his father, I was able to act as mediator (I had by then returned to Rye), and, as a result of this, for the next three years, in *loco parentis.* I became his father.

Time and space were to interrupt this quite marvellous relationship, but never to change it. *Tout passe, l'amitié reste.* His first letter to me had begun: "I have lived only nineteen years, most of them badly." Would he have thought that he lived the *rest* of his short life badly? No, I don't think so. The work speaks for him, and he knew that it was superb.

MORE THAN MUSIC

Glimpses of Malcolm Lowry

Downie Kirk

Sir, more than kisses, letters mingle souls;
For, thus friends absent speak.
JOHN DONNE

IT WOULD TAKE a symposium of the friends with whom Malcolm Lowry corresponded to describe him adequately from his letters. Yet, one correspondent, basing his impressions upon letters which were written during the decade that was the most productive period of his literary career, can still give a significant view of the man and the artist. One naturally wonders, of course, what right one really has to quote from the private letters of an author; one is sharply reminded of Heine's remark: "To publish even one line of an author which he himself has not intended for the public at large—especially letters which are addressed to private persons—is to commit a despicable act of felony."

But in the case of Malcolm Lowry one may perhaps be pardoned, for obviously some of the care that made him revise almost every paragraph he wrote, went into the composition of his letters, although it is doubtful that he wrote them with a view to publication. In fact, it is their very naturalness that makes them valuable. He obviously wrote many of them under pressure, at a time when he was absorbed in the composition of his novels and his poetry; for he makes frequent references to the long stretches of strain caused by his creative work, in the midst of which he would write a letter in reply to an invitation to spend an evening of complete relaxation from his creative endeavours.

> When I'm working at very high intensity [he says on one occasion] the writing of even the smallest note often takes an incredibly long time—an occupational psychological aberration of some sort doubtless due in turn to the fact that the narcissistic care which one sometimes expends on prose makes a fellow forget a

letter should be spontaneous and to hell with the semicolons, since your friend doesn't want to look at them anyway but is simply interested in hearing from you.

Joseph Conrad once said that he could compare the strain of writing *Nostromo* only to the everlasting sombre stress of the westward winter passage around Cape Horn. So it must have been with Malcolm Lowry; for he drove himself mercilessly to produce his works: with him there was a passionate necessity to reflect and to distill in its purest form something within him that would not give him peace. And many of the letters—"the only true heart-talkers," as someone has said—are as revelatory of Lowry as his autobiographical fiction. The expression of his thought is neither cryptic nor obscure. His commentary on life and literature is all the more precious because it is good vivid talk by the Lowry whom not many could listen to with complete comprehension for any length of time because of the abstruseness of his references and the broad leaps in his thoughts. He was, of course, shy, and although he was dying to communicate, he often remained silent; when he did open his mouth, it was to release a flood of words that dazzled you with its brilliance but frequently left you bewildered about its meaning.

We are now aware of Malcolm Lowry as an outstanding novelist, as a distinguished short-story writer and as a considerable poet, but his power as a critic is practically unknown. His book reviews and literary criticisms, although not numerous, are penetrating. His letters, moreover, reveal him as a sensitive critic of literature, politics, music, art and philosophy; in them he discusses with acute perception and in clear style a wide range of unusual subjects.

In one letter he tells about reading José Ortega y Gasset—especially his wonderful lecture on Goethe, and his *Towards a Philosophy of History.* In the latter work the Spanish philosopher suggests that human life in its most human dimension is like a work of fiction, that man is a sort of novelist of himself, who conceives the fanciful figure of a personage with its unreal occupations and then, for the sake of converting it into reality, does all the things he does. Lowry says this idea recommends itself to him because he feels that man is a kind of novelist of himself. He thinks, too, that there is something valuable from a philosophic point of view in trying to put down what actually takes place in a novelist's mind when he conceives what he conceives to be the fanciful figure of a personage.

> The part that never gets written, with which is included the true impulses that made him a novelist or dramatist in the first place, and the modifications of life around him through his own eyes as those impulses were realized, would be the true drama, and I hope to finish something of this sort one day.

At this point he inserts a long parenthesis in minute handwriting in the margin

of his typed letter, which I quote in full, because its remarks on Pirandello exhibit the honesty, fairness and insight of his literary criticism:

> This would be not unlike Pirandello who—I quote from an article in *The Partisan Review*—"inverts the convention of modern realism, instead of pretending that the stage is not a stage at all, but the familiar parlor, he pretends that the familiar parlor is not real as a photograph *but a stage* containing many realities." This is Shakespeare's speech come true. My feeling is that Pirandello may not have wholly appreciated how close to truth his view of human life might be, as a consequence of which the realities of "Six Characters in Search of an Author," say, do not measure up to the profundity of the view, though I have not studied him sufficiently, and the accepted critical opinion upon Pirandello is apparently faulty.

Lowry continues his analysis of Ortega's *Towards a Philosophy of History* by stating that although Ortega is not concerned in this work, at any rate, with fiction, it is the thesis upon which he bases his view of history—namely, that man is what has happened to him. This thought interests Lowry because it is a philosophy that begins with one's existence, links up with Heidegger and Kierkegaard, and hence with Existentialism. Writing in June, 1950, he notes that Existentialism has already become a music hall joke in France and that it contains an element of despair that is absent in Ortega. Sartre's Existentialism, as far as he can understand it, strikes him as "a sort of reach-me-down or second-hand philosophy", changed dramatically to fit the anguish of the French in their struggle against the German occupation. In conclusion, however, he says:

> Even so, it's refreshing to read a philosophy that gives value to the drama of life itself, of the dramatic value of your own life at the very moment you are reading.

Commenting on Ortega's thought that the snob is hostile to liberalism, with the hostility of a deaf man for words, that liberty has always been understood in Europe as the freedom to be one's real self and that it is not surprising that a man who knows that he has no mission to fulfil should want to be rid of it, Lowry says that this idea at first sight appeared to him, among other things, one of the most convincing arguments against communism that he had ever read in such a short space, but that on second thought he realized it was only a statement in defence of the old school of liberalism, and he states that such a school could not exist without the possibility of free discussion of revolutionary tenets, including even those contained in communism for that matter, or without the right to practical absorption of revolutionary tenets where desirable.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION in the world looked grim to Lowry in 1950, although it did not seem to him half so hopeless as it had done in 1939 or even in 1938. In one letter, for instance, he writes: "Sometimes I get the impression that not even the people who are actually in the process of making history know in the least what is *really* going on. Or if they do, it seems appalling that they should be in the position that they are." As for the eventual outcome of the present human predicament, he felt that mankind, striving toward a rebirth, would probably achieve a better world in the not too-distant future. He was familiar, of course, with the pessimistic picture drawn by Orwell in his *1984,* as he often talked about the novel; but he was more hopeful than Orwell, and although he was painfully aware that man, if he did not take care, might destroy himself—as we might infer from *Under the Volcano*—he felt that the revolutionary forces of our time would change for the better the present shocking situation in world politics. He says, optimistically, that "anything that is a revolution must keep moving or it doesn't revolute: by its nature it contains within it the seeds of its own destruction; so by 1989, say, everything ought to be hunky-dory, all of which certainly doesn't make it any easier to live in 1950."

Elsewhere Lowry discusses at length religion, witchcraft and Voodooism—subjects in which he took an intense interest. Referring to *Mythologie Vodou,* a book on witchcraft, by his Haitian friend, Milo Marcelin, he takes exception to a review of it in *Time* magazine; he explains that it is a book not about Voodoo chiefly but about witchcraft, and that there is a difference, although it is not perhaps apparent to the layman.

Lowry points out that Voodoo is essentially a religion to be regarded with reverence, since it is without question a matter-transcending religion based upon the actual existence of the supernatural—a fact that is fundamental to man himself, compared with which most other religions are simply techniques to hide that fact or at least to keep the supernatural at relatively safe distances. He feels that only the Negroes are powerful enough or holy enough to be able to handle it, and that even they of course abuse it. He thinks, furthermore, that the white man should regard with awe the great dignity and discipline that is behind Voodooism at its highest, its conception of God and the meaning it gives to life—and this he says is the religion of a race that we so often glibly think of as inferior, or comprising medicine men, or the powers of darkness, etc. He appeals for greater understanding of the coloured people with words that are as timely today as when he wrote them ten years ago:

Heart of Darkness indeed! Joseph Conrad should have been to Haiti. What he failed to understand was that the savages of the Congo had, to some extent, *subdued* the dark forces that are in nature by creating their religion in the first place in order to subdue them, that that, in its way, was a civilizing almost a pragmatic process . . . It is clear that Comrade Joseph did not allow himself to be corrupted by any savages though; he stayed in Polish aloofness on board in company with some *a priori* ideas.

Lowry himself felt that in his rich and varied life there had been many communications between his mind and others by means outside the channels of sense, and he was so convinced of the existence of thought transference that he could not dismiss it as mere coincidence. The subject of telepathy occurs often in his letters. Once a "mysterious" crossing of our letters (this resulted in much confusion and the resort to telegrams) caused him to write:

I am being so supermeticulous about what is more or less spontaneous because I perceive, having been reading *Bergson,* that the difficulties on one plane of communication and the too great facilities on another (if telepathic ones can be called such) might have led you into some inconvenience, than which little is worse on Saturday afternoon . . .

MALCOLM LOWRY was blessed with a keen sense of humour, though critics seem to have overlooked this priceless quality in his writings. He once said that he intended to write a book dealing with the peculiar punishment that is meted out to people who lack the sense of humour to write books like *Under the Volcano.* He was, in fact, a very witty person, and his wit could not help overflowing into his letters. It usually appears in a tone of good-natured banter. Commenting on the reception *Under the Volcano* received in France, he writes facetiously:

Finally, I thought that you would be tickled to know, *The Volcano* has made a hit in France, where it is coming out three times in the next month: first in a classic series, then *Correa,* and it is also being serialized in the Paris daily newspaper, *Combat.* They have decided that it is the writing on the wall, that your amigo is everything from the *Four Quartets* (which he has never read) to Joyce (whom he dislikes)—finally relate him to the Jewish prophetic Zohar (of which he knows nothing)—they have some other comments, too, about Macbeth, but that is nothing to what someone is just going to say in Victoria, over the C.B.C., where they have decided that the Consul is really Moby Dick, masquerading as

the unconscious aspect of the Cadborosaurus in the Book of Jonah, or words to that effect.

A knowledgeable devotee of the cinematographic art, Lowry once said that if *Under the Volcano* were filmed in his lifetime, he would insist on helping to direct it, and in his letters he makes many interesting references to films. He tells, for instance, of going to see the film *The Hairy Ape,* which he had heard was good; he considered it *djevelsk* (Scandinavian for devilish) in the worst sense, although the suspense was subtly increased by the accident of the lights failing for an hour right in the middle of the showing. He recalls that people looked very sinister and strange standing about in the foyer, and he made a note that he ought to use this in a book; then he remembered that he had done so in *Under the Volcano.* In another letter he says that he went to see the old silent film *Intolerance,* played straight through without any music at all, which he considered a great mistake, as Griffith wrote his own score. "Very few silent films," he remarks, "will stand being played like that, without music, which I think is interesting. *The Passion of Joan of Arc* is an exception."

With regard to C. F. Ramuz's novel, *When the Mountain Fell,* Lowry makes some enlightening remarks on the author's style, in which he detects the influence of the movies. From his reading of Clifton Fadiman's remarks printed on the cover of *When the Mountain Fell,* he had gained the impression that Ramuz's style was being approached in an odd way, that it was supposed to be natural—that is, artless, unsophisticated, stark, stern, unintellectual, above all uninfluenced. He says he cannot see how a style, no matter how arrived at—often he imagines largely by cutting—can hope fundamentally to be much more than simply appropriate, in the fullest sense, to what the author is writing about. He says also that he did not find Ramuz' style particularly simple and that he can detect many sophisticated influences including avant-garde cinema. But as far as he is concerned the story is none the worse for that. His concluding remarks on style are illuminating:

> Just the same one is all in favour of a clear, pure, concrete style, and one with the utmost of simplicity, etc. But if one has arrived at that position, it is unlikely that the style has been uninfluenced. Doubtless one has to pass through a maximum of influences before achieving a style at all. It is difficult to see how a style like Ramuz, even if it achieves great clarity, can be called unsophisticated. Anyhow his simplicity, such as it is, strikes me as having cost a great intellectual effort.

Lowry's life-long interest in style, as well as his deep love of language and his ready championship of the outcast, mark him as a kindred spirit of the great Aus-

trian critic and poet Karl Kraus, who, like Lowry, concerned himself throughout his life with literary style and poetics, carried on an unending campaign against inaccurate and slovenly use of language, and fought against injustice, corruption and hyprocricy wherever he found them. Lowry doubtless knew the work of Kraus, because he was steeped in the writings of the authors of Central Europe. He often spoke in admiration of Kraus's compatriot and contemporary—Hermann Broch. But he talked most about the German-Jewish novelist, Franz Kafka, who like himself was definitely influenced by the *cabala* and the works of Sören Kierkegaard. There is much of Kafka's philosophical and religious symbolism—as well as traces of his compact, intense and closely reasoned style—in *Under the Volcano.* In his conversations Lowry made frequent references to *The Trial* and *The Castle,* and in one letter he writes that he appreciates a Kafka-like scrupulousness on my part, but hastens to remind me that "Kafka believed that while the demand on the part of the divine powers for absolute righteousness even in the smallest matters was unconditional, human effort, even at its highest, was always in the wrong."

Lowry had great sympathy for the younger authors who were struggling for recognition and was most generous in assisting them. When he reviewed their work, he made his criticism in the spirit of kindness, but he could be caustic, as when he reviewed Thomas Merton's *The Seven Story Mountain.* He considered it a very questionable book—a paradox, in fact; for Merton had gone into a Trappist monastery pretending to give up *everything* and yet went on writing books. But even in Merton's book Lowry recognized a kind of sincerity or dedication and felt that the book was important enough at this point in history to be considered on another plane altogether. He ends his entertaining review with a timely, striking thought: "That a Monastery *might,* in essence, be the capital of the world at this juncture is a possibility which not even Nietzsche were he alive would care to question—or would he?"

No account of Malcolm Lowry's life and work at Dollarton could be complete without mention of his love of British Columbia and especially the country closely surrounding his shack on Burrard Inlet. His descriptions of it permeate his fiction and the abundance of feeling he had for the place overflows into his letters. The fear that he might be evicted from his beloved house on the beach caused him much anxiety which he expresses in his letters. Nor did these feelings end on his departing to Europe in 1954. From Ripe, near Lewes, in Sussex, he wrote in April, 1956: "Though we like this place quite a bit, please don't think we have abandoned Dollarton; we have not and think of it constantly." And finally, about

seven months before his untimely death, he wrote these nostalgic words: "I am writing like mad on *October Ferry to Gabriola* . . . It is better than the *Volcano,* a veritable symphony of longing for the beach. We hope to return D.V., meantime think of you often and are often homesick."

Reading Lowry's letters again was a great pleasure for me. The immense vitality, the exuberant humour, the depth of thought and the broad humanity expressed on almost every page, often in the richest of poetic imagery, gave me moments of sheer delight. As a tribute to Malcolm Lowry—the man and the artist, I should like to quote, in closing, from a poem of his friend, Conrad Aiken, for whom he had the greatest admiration and who in turn cherished him as if he were his own son:

> Music I heard with you was more than music,
> And bread I broke with you was more than bread.

LETTERS FROM MALCOLM LOWRY

These two letters have been chosen because they show Malcolm Lowry discussing literary problems and their relation to the life he was constantly trying to transmute into the substance of his books. Mr. Albert Erskine, recipient of the first, was at that time editor for Reynal & Hitchcock, who published *Under the Volcano* for the first time in the United States. He is now managing editor of Random House. Mr. David Markson, recipient of the second, is a young American writer, now in Mexico City on a fellowship from the Centro Mexicano de Escritores, who first established contact with Malcolm Lowry when he wrote a thesis on *Under the Volcano* for his M.A. degree at Columbia University.

To Albert Erskine

UNDATED.

Dear Albert,

Your letter arrived without hitch . . . Meantime quam celerime my feelings and prejudices—which I hope will dispel *some* doubts—in regard to fiction about writings and writers as such:

Your feelings and prejudices are shared by me, almost unqualifiedly, on the most general plane, as indeed probably by most other writers, though one reason I feel that most other writers share them is that they have been taught since they began writing that *all* editors and producers have these same feelings and prejudices, so what's the use of writing about writers etc (even though they, the writers, somehow persist in doing so in one disguise or another) when they would be rejected etc etc? . . .

But I don't believe the general public shares the prejudice, for there is an artist, a poet in every man, hence he is a creature easy for anyone to identify themselves with: and his struggles are likely to be universal, even on the lowest plane . . . My own prejudice and feeling remain on this plane no different in essence let

alone from your good self's but from those adumbrated by wordy old Bernard de Voto in his truly horrendous excellent little bits about Mark Twain and his malicious bits about Tom Wolfe.

But I note that even Bernard de Voto had to interpolate that "he was a 'good Joycean'—he hoped—and where on this line of his argument the Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man would come in, I simply don't know. But with me the Portrait of the Artist has always partly failed (while one recognizes its—ha ha—importance of course) for not dissimilar reasons to those that made Wolfe fail with de Voto . . .

So I daresay I am even 'left' of de Voto on the subject, and as a consequence even more prejudiced than yourself and / or most editors or writers against such writing and on that point that does in the end perhaps begin to involve the whole of autobiographical fiction and much beside—particularly it would seem to depend upon the technique—moreover what if one should give a real turn of the screw to a subject that is so often treated halfheartedly? I think unquestionably what one is after is a new form, a new approach to reality itself; though I would submit also in tangential passing that I don't think those works that treat of the matter tragically or philosophically rather than romantically have suffered in acclaim by reason of this theme—Tchekov's The Seagull is a case—perhaps irrelevant—that comes to mind, and Six Characters.

Of course you can say that these are single works, but in fact virtually the entire basis of Pirandello's work involves a not dissimilar theme (in this case that art, the theatre, is somehow realer than life). My reasoning may seem slightly cockeyed here or irrelevant again but I know what I mean. Nine out of ten people who saw The Seagull would scarcely remember that it is almost entirely about writing and writers or art in one way and other—what they would take to heart is that a talent not put to proper use and directed can destroy its owner, and apply that melancholy truth to their own talent, whatever it might be.

But I digress. The real protagonist of the Voyage is not so much a man or a writer as the unconscious—or man's unconscious—and at present it's a little difficult for me to see how I can swing what seems to me the superb irony of Wilderness living in Laruelle's house and the death of 'Vigil' unless Wilderness has written, so to speak, the Volcano. Apart from this, though, both Dark as the Grave and La Mordida[1]—especially the latter—should exist as powerful novels

[1] "Dark as the Grave" and "La Mordida" were never-completed novels about Mexico which Lowry intended to form part of a sequence centring on *Under the Volcano.* —ED.

in themselves, if done aright, without obtrusive reference to writers or writing. There are emotional and sexual and alcoholic and even political dramas which overshadow these matters, albeit I would lose what seems to me one of the most potentially masterful scenes, i.e. when Wilderness has his novel accepted in Laruelle's house while technically under arrest, if Wilderness hasn't written the Volc.

Even so Wilderness is not, in the ordinary sense in which one encounters novelists or the author in novels, a novelist. He simply doesn't know what he is. He is a sort of underground man. Also he is Ortega's fellow, making up his life as he goes along, and trying to find his vocation. In this regard some of the notes to the Path to the Spring[2], though chaotic, may prove helpful re the treatment I propose. According to Ortega, the best image for man himself *is* a novelist, and it is in this way that I'd prefer you to look at him. He is not going to be the self-conscious author himself of so many novels, if that was what you are rightly afraid of, even though I have to make him responsible for the Volc. Moreover he is disinterested in literature, uncultured, incredibly unobservant, in many respects ignorant, without faith in himself, and lacking nearly all the qualities you normally associate with a novelist or a writer. As I've said he doesn't even think he's a novelist himself. The Volcano—which 'Laruelle' doesn't think much of at first—appears less as a novel than as a sort of mighty if preposterous moral deed of some obscene sort, testifying to an underlying toughness of fibre or staying power in his character rather than to any particular aesthetic ability of the usual kind. His very methods of writing are absurd and he sees practically nothing at all, save through his wife's eyes, though he gradually comes to *see*. I believe this can make him a very original character, both human and pathetically inhuman at once. I must approve of him as a doppelgänger and am reluctant to turn him into a steeplejack, a cartoonist or a billiard marker, though he can be all those too, for all it matters. What does he know? What he suspects is that he's not a writer so much as being *written*—this is where the terror comes in. (It came in, just then.) His tragedy or his faith or whatever is less that of Faust than that of Aylmar, the water diviner—whose story should be told briefly somewhere or other—a character of the Middle Ages who, with his wand, was used by the French authorities to track down murderers, half fake—because his talent kept failing at embarrassing moments, wouldn't work at all under certain conditions yet he had to pretend it *was* working, half genius, because he nearly always got

[2] This is "The Forest Path to the Spring" which appears in the collection of stories, *Hear Us Oh Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place*. ED.

his man—a sort of latter day underground Aylmar, looking for himself or his soul. I'm damned if I don't think him an original fellow, not to be confused with the ordinary novelist, and I would have told you all this already, had Hear Us only gone to you and not to Giroux. (Magic didn't seem to be working very well then, or maybe it'll turn out it was working overtime and was just a bit too subtle for one.) . . .

MALCOLM

To David Markson

UNDATED
(POSTMARKED MAY 20, 1954
DOLLARTON, B.C.)

Dear old Dave,

Hold that note, Roland. Blow that horn. For one thing 3000 bucks is 3000 bucks, so why not think in terms of what it could represent—I don't mean necessarily, though the speculation be inescapable on this particular morning, how many bottles of Jack Daniels Tennessee Sour Mash Whiskey it will beget—but rather a passage to more than India, Italy, or the Whirling Cyclades: at least Europe. So if the opus bores and disgusts you anyway, why not make a good job of it and make the corrections—insert more cock, so to say—your paper-back-publisher desires, and if possible, and himself not bankrupt, collect. I will provide you with a title: No Barricado for a Belly. And a pseudonym: Sigbjorn X. Ghostkeeper. Or perhaps Thomas of Erceldoune . . . This would be a palpable hit (even if the book isn't) for you, I mean should it chance to help produce the environment where you can better write what you want. For to judge from your recent letters, especially your last, it would seem that New York is not proving altogether the right place. To say the least. In my own experience—odi et amo—that particular city—it favours brief and furious outbursts, but not the long haul. Moreover for all its drama and existential fury, or perhaps because of it, it's a city where it can be remarkably hard—or so it seems to me—to get on the right side of one's despair; once having got on the wrong side of it, that is; even hangovers don't seem the same in New York as anywhere else, though to be sure they may not last so long, the deceitful medicament being more easily at hand; which only makes it worse in the end. Not that one can't learn a great deal from hangovers: everything, in fact, save how not to get one next time, but that one can too easily find oneself slipping into the state of mind in that city—

or so it seems to me—where to be slightly tight or hungover seems one's natural state, the only way to maintain one's balance and one's harmony with the place: and the bad thing about this is not the tightness so much, which as you say can be highly enjoyable . . . but that that state of mind is really as eminently rational as it is—or can be—dangerous; an uncomfortable combination. I hope I don't seem to preach. Mens sano in corpore sano, was all I was talking about. I don't say one can't keep fit (whatever that may mean) in New York, but after a while, does one really want to? Perhaps you rightly, as you said, consider yourself a creature of the city: as once I did: maybe though you reckon without some of your unconscious needs, nay, the absolute necessities, of that creature, such as a few stars, ruins, deserts, cathedrals, seas, forests, ducks, ships, (even if the thought of them be loathsome) uncharted waters and undreamed shores, even indeed other cities. And above all perhaps a swim when you want it: or don't you want it? In any case, you have us both feeling somewhat anxious about you; your letters get blacker and blacker—no matter that they may have cheered this benighted author up during what seemed an acutely ultimate indigo period, and no matter that the blacker they get, the more entertaining they are: that has been my and our benefit, (which reminds me I would like at this moment, with yourself, to have a game of tennis). My advantage, your altruistic and far-sighted empathy: what the hell,—I haven't given you much return. And it occurs to me, as you see, sprouting parental whiskers at this point, that, somehow or other, your providence or yourself may be making a bad job for you, of what used to be called: "withdrawal and return." Unless sexually, of course,—but that ain't all, Jules Romains to the contrary; and I don't see even so how even that could be solved, far less fundamentally, unless you are slightly more, as the lady spiritualist observed to us, "En Rappo with the Angelitic Host."

Joking and obscenities aside, however, I even sometimes think, in my darker moments, that the poor bloody-minded old Volcano may have had a malign influence on your good self; it hurts somewhat too much to suggest you throw that God damn book out of the window and me with it, even if that were sound advice, which I'm not sure it is, and anyhow I would no doubt hotly protest: not all fathers were made for their own patricide and I never heard of Abraham asking Isaac to sacrifice him, not willingly anyhow: but keeping that work as a symbol for the moment of something or other, you ought to try somehow to transcend it, let it at least be useful to you, since it was apparently intended for you, or its author will feel he has lived in vain. I'm not sure what I mean. But no matter, to come back to the subject, you speak of the work you've done recently

not merely as bad but as though you loathed the thought of it. As for that, even if so, it can't be as bad as parts of what I've been recently writing myself: and you seem blissfully to have forgotten why you wrote the book. Quite apart from the fact that it seems to me something of a feat to write any book these days, however bad, the basic idea of writing the thing in the first place must have been founded on some deep need or you wouldn't have done it. So, I repeat, you ought to follow it up. If New York hasn't stimulated you yet into doing the kind of work you fundamentally want to do there's no need to rush to the conclusion that the fault is all Dave Markson's. It could be that you need (quite apart no doubt as sailors say, from a good strong woman) complementary factors to be found only in Europe. You can get to Europe cheaply & swiftly from New York, live there much more cheaply, and your 3000 bucks would go a long way. If—as circumstances seem to be pointing at this moment—we ourselves are going there, probably to Sicily (just to vary the volcanoes—the Volcano is coming out in Italian by the way this fall, as I think I mentioned) we could even dwell near one another, apply mutual cataplasms upon work in progress or regress. The idea is not a bad one . . .

Mexico is the most Christ-awful place in the world in which to be in any form of distress, a sort of Moloch that feasts on suffering souls, in fact: moreover, if you are known to take a drink, the bastardos will count every one you have, and wait around to trip you up. Gringo-baiting is their national sport: even bull-fighting takes second place. All in all a good place to stay out of: (even though one dreams, quixotically of returning one day—a death-wish, from my point of view, if ever there was one.) But then, of course, again, all might go merry as a marriage bell. Or rather merry if not quite as a marriage bell. And it's unquestionably a beautiful and interesting country, which you may take as the understatement of the year. The people are of course swell too: both outside and behind bars, in both senses. Only I feel that the custodian does not correspond . . . But, if for none of the foregoing reasons, a trip there for you at this period might enormously aggravate your problems, without perhaps solving any . . . However all this may be, though, your state of mind distresses us both, as I say. I came across the phrase the other day, in reference to Kafka, "the lost art of being unhappy." It would seem that, so far as you and I are concerned, the art is not perhaps so lost after all. I suppose it is idle to say—and sounds phoney—that a certain amount of despair is actually necessary for people of our peculiar temperament: it doesn't make it any the easier to suffer. Margie suspects me sometimes of suffering sometimes without there being any proper 'objective correlative' for

it: as I her: but one overlooks the fact that the mostly hellish kind of suffering of all can be simply because of that lack—the Waste Land type. Or one may suffer because one *can't* suffer, because after all to suffer is to be alive. Because I'm twice as old as you I'm not going to go it on these lines and end up by saying that when you've reached my age and transcended what I've transcended—or worse, not transcended—then you can begin to speak; you don't need to be old to suffer any more than you do to drink. Melville, at 14, speaking through Redburn, woke up to find the mildew on his soul . . .

I suspect you, though,—or at this moment—of undergoing a more special and inexplicable kind of blues. The way you write, it's almost as though you were implying, though quite without self-pity, "But nobody cares what the hell happens to me": or rather, "Perhaps all too many people care but I don't care a damn that *they* care." Well, this letter should certainly set your mind at rest immediately on the point that at least two people whom you really do care if they care care. Possibly this was not at all the feeling or the point and I am just projecting an emotion on to you I have sometimes felt myself, in my case largely a familial one; none of my own brothers— though they expressed themselves pleased to hear of its success in the U.S.—has ever said a word, intelligent or otherwise, about the Volcano; my mother kept Ultramarine locked up in a drawer (which was perhaps the best place for it) which perhaps is irrelevant too.

—But a truce to all this. I have just now received your next letter of the 13th, which renders much of this letter superfluous. We're both very glad indeed you're taking the line you are. Your terms by the way—the two $1500—are exactly what I received for the Volcano—or as Aiken termed it, Under the Malcamo or Poppagetsthebotl. I'm beginning to think your book must be good, not at all as you say it is. Don't try *proving* you have any talent though, etc.; that way you can overreach yourself. But you can set your mind at rest: you have: lots of it, I can spot it a mile off, being myself a talent-scout of no mean ability. But it may take you some time to find your stride, there's lots of time too, all too much time, even, though you may not think it . . .

There's nothing but a sort of heartbreak here: we love the place too much, and that's to be, alack, in the devil's clutches. It's true *we* haven't been evicted yet, but all the people up to the lighthouse have been served with eviction notices, and even in tonight's paper there's a heartless piece: "Speedy Eviction of Squatters Sought. District Clerk Fred Saunders said legal action is being hampered by the slow process of catching up with the transient beachcomber owners of 'dilapidated makeshift shacks' in the area where Municipal officials plan to de-

velop the park's beach facilities." Etc. But before I begin to grow too lachrymose about this I ought to say we ought to be thankful for the line of demarcation of the evictions *does* end at the lighthouse: we have had similar scares before, and weathered them, and it is in every way possible, since there seems a special providence about the place that we still could be here ten years from now. So we're not leaving with the object of the parting being irrevocable: indeed it had been in our mind as a counter-suggestion to offer you the house in our absence, for that would least save you rent, and it can be a wonderful and healthy life, but it is no doubt far too far and unfeasible, and together with any happiness you might only inherit the anxiety too; Vancouver is culturally as dead as the dodo, and by no stretch of the imagination could it supply you with what Europe would at this stage; moreover the abomination of desolation is already sitting in the holy place and at night the glare of new oil refineries compose a veritable City of Dis. Nonetheless I cannot bring myself to say we are leaving for good: we would, to tell the truth, have been going to Europe anyhow for a while—this life is too hard on Margie as a constant thing and this continual Under-the-Volcano-my aspens all are felled-all-all-are felled feeling is so lousy it could even drive one cuckoo, I feel, in the end. So we aim not to think about this too much, enjoy what good luck we have while we have it and leave the place beautiful and in good repair and in some safe hands (if you don't want it, which you probably wouldn't anyhow and certainly won't if [they] give you your advance and you can finagle, as we hope, your European trip) with some remote but optimistic idea of eventual return . . .

I still have no exact idea when we're coming to New York, but we'll give you the exact date in plenty of time: we're hoping you'll meet us as the airport. We haven't heard from the Italian Consulate about the ship yet. We hope to sail in September for various reasons, one being that it's cheaper. Thank you for offering to put us up in N.Y. if you're there: but for god's sake don't let us put you to any trouble or anyone else out—we look forward much to seeing you there; if not, to rejoining you somewhere beyond the Pillars of Hercules.

All the very best love from us both.

MALCOLM

chronicle

PLAYWRIGHTS IN VANCOUVER

Peter Haworth

IT WAS RECENTLY SUGGESTED in this magazine that the best dramatic writing in Canada seems to be for radio and television. This is certainly true in Vancouver, and the reasons are obvious. We have no professional theatre here and although there have been sporadic attempts to create one, none of these enterprises has survived more than a few years. Despite all its enthusiasm and talent the amateur theatre can seldom offer ideal conditions for production. Then, too, in the past our best directors and actors—those people who would be working in a professional theatre if we had one— have been unwilling to attempt new plays, and working with people of lesser competence and experience can be not only discouraging but actually harmful for the writer.

In the last few years, however, conditions in amateur theatre have improved considerably. The possibility of a new play being competently produced and acted is much greater than it was. This is shown particularly in the productions which have been given by the Frederick Wood Theatre and the Vancouver Little Theatre Association. Between them these two organizations have presented at least eight new plays within the space of a year. I shall be discussing six of them.

Last season in the Frederick Wood Theatre, Donald Soule directed a producttion of his own play, *The Dinosaur's Wedding.* The title suggests comic possibilities which are realized delightfully both in the plot and the characterization. But it also suggests a more serious theme which the author ignores. The play deals with people who cling to ideas and codes of conduct as outmoded as the dinosaur. Even though these conventions are meaningless and unrelated to their own real feelings and emotions, they continue to live by them. Now, people who live in the past may be funny, but they are frequently pathetic as well. Mr. Soule gives us only one side of the picture. Yet the richness of comedy lies in the kind

of complexity he misses. What could be more ridiculous than Anouilh's Leocadia throwing her scarf around her neck with an extravagant gesture and accidentally hanging herself? Yet that moment remembered from the past, like the whole of Anouilh's play, is a strange mixture of the absurd and the touching. By contrast *The Dinosaur's Wedding* seems to move in only one dimension. Mr. Soule might well say that he had no intention of writing this other kind of play. Perhaps so, but, to me, his characters and his situations all promise something which is never realized.

What about the play he did write? There is certainly a good deal of excellent comic invention and wit. The characters, even if they are somewhat stereotyped, have charm, and at times the play is extremely funny. But Mr. Soule is like a composer who over-orchestrates. *The Dinosaur's Wedding* is far too long and far too wordy; the genuine wit and charm are constantly clouded by the ponderousness of the writing.

The Dinosaur's Wedding was a full length three-act comedy. Most of our local writers have preferred to write one-act plays, possibly because they are more practicable for production but also, I am afraid, because it seems easier. In actual fact there are as few good one-act plays as there are good half-hour radio plays. This was made abundantly clear a few weeks ago when the Vancouver Little Theatre Association presented three original plays in workship productions.

The first play, *The Prisoner* by Milton Frieman, was little more than an anecdote, and its treatment of a serious problem—the effect on a marriage of a parent living in the same house—seemed to be completely on the surface. The last play, *Othello Refinished* by Ralph Kendall, was a clever if mistaken attempt to write a new ending for Shakespeare's tragedy. This kind of thing can only be justified if it throws some new light on the original play and its characters; Mr. Kendall never gave us the expected revelation. The second play, Timmie Timms' *Day Before Yesterday,* began brilliantly, and its first ten minutes raised high hopes. This in itself is an achievement, for the opening of a one-act play is always difficult. In a full length play an author can build up his dramatic world slowly by detail and elaboration. The audience has time to become familiar with this world and the people who inhabit it. In a one-act play he has no time for elaboration. It must hold us immediately, and this is just where the opening of *Day Before Yesterday* succeeded. Miss Timms created her world with swift, sure strokes; her characters were real human beings who existed in time and place, and her dialogue was easy and natural, and at times very amusing. If only the play had continued on this level! Unfortunately it did not. For some strange reason Miss

Timms decided to become serious. All the vitality, the naturalness and the ease disappeared. Instead, we were subjected to a good deal of ponderous soul-searching and moralizing. Here was a writer with a genuine flair for comedy who suddenly felt the need to preach.

Of all the new plays I have seen in the last year, the most interesting were two written by Ray Hull: *The Quality of Mercy* and *Bless This House*. *The Quality of Mercy* is a play about Capital Punishment, and like most plays on this subject it is wholeheartedly biased. One has the feeling that Mr. Hull was angry when he wrote it, and while one can sympathize with his point of view, it is apparent that his lack of detachment has prevented him from writing a completely successful play. He, too, has an unfortunate tendency to preach, or rather to harangue. During the course of the play, either directly or by implication, he has a great deal to say about the place of the individual in society, the dangers of regimentation, the inequality of law and the corruption of government. Indeed, he has so much to say that it was the image of the soap-box rather than the scaffold which loomed behind most of his play. Each character in turn became a mouthpiece for Mr. Hull's criticism of government or society, and as a result it was extremely difficult to believe in them as human beings. The young idealistic hero corrupted by politics appeared nothing more than a cipher, the villainous prime minister was only a target set up for Mr. Hull's critical guns, the two condemned men—the young man who escapes and the old man who dies—were nothing more than symbols of the inequality of justice. Only the old man who presents the attitude of the opposition, of those who support Capital Punishment, seemed to exist in his own right; it was as if, in his attempt to grasp a point of view different from his own, Mr. Hull had been forced to understand another human being. What distinguishes *The Quality of Mercy,* however, is the force and conviction with which all these ideas are expressed. With all its tub thumping there is a hard integrity behind this play which one can only respect.

Mr. Hull's other play, *Bless This House,* is a comedy, and on the whole it is considerably more successful than *The Quality of Mercy.* The subject is a strike in a brothel, and Mr. Hull exploits the possibilities of this situation in a way that reminds me of Jules Dassen's film *Never on Sunday.* It is, of course, a splendid opportunity to attack the moral hypocrisy of society, and he makes the most of it, but without rancour. The play has a good humour, a tolerance and moderation which were lacking in *The Quality of Mercy.* The characters are at last completely believable. Mr. Hull seems to like people even when he ridicules them, and this warmth of feeling runs strongly through the play. Mr. Hull seems to me

a dramatist of great promise, and I hope that soon he will turn his gifts to the writing of a full length play. The results could be fascinating.

The field of radio drama is not, unfortunately, part of my subject, but as I mentioned earlier some of our most significant writing has been done for this medium, and I must at least mention the work of Mrs. Betty Lambert. Here is a writer of passionate imagination, of subtle and varied style. Her two radio plays, *The Best Room in the House* and *The Good of the Sun,* are bitter and dark, often tragic in implication, and the world she creates is her own, a world one can immediately recognize. As far as I know she has never written for the stage and the possibility of a three-act play from her pen is an exciting one.

Our main need is still a professional theatre, a place where the talents of writers like those I have mentioned can develop and expand. Our drama up to now has shown promise rather than fulfilment. A professional theatre could turn this promise into a solid achievement.

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review articles

FOLK SONG AS HISTORY

Chester Duncan

EDITH FOWKE, ALAN MILLS AND HELMUT BLUME. *Canada's Story in Song.* W. G. Gage. $5.00.

WHAT ANDREW FLETCHER said some centuries ago about the relative historical value of songs and laws ("If a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of a nation") may be mostly romantic nonsense, but it does suggest a charming way of taking the interpretation of the history of our country out of the hands of the grim lawyers who now run things, and giving a chance to the artists. It may be true that without these songs everything would have turned out pretty much as it did, but if they are not the "unacknowledged legislators" of Shelley's essay, folk artists certainly throw a memorable light on what has happened. They also make it bearable. The only thing they cannot quite manage in this case is to eliminate from their songs some of the less attractive qualities of the Canadians who have sung or heard them. But folksongs are a rather frank expression of the national character. In reading this excellent book, the purely musical person will be frequently disappointed by Canadian reliance on the tunes of others, by banality, and by a kind of harsh, raw quality that echoes our crassness and our superficiality—not always, by the way, our strength. But the "purely musical person" is not the best reader of the book, in the sense that "purity" of this kind is certain not to learn much about Canada. It might learn a great deal about Germany. However, taken with a casual curiosity and in the spirit of an amateurism in which we are all just Canadians, the book is satisfying. It is the only collection of folksongs I know in which the editors approach their task with an air of perfect naturalness. There are no wild claims or intense persuasions. All is calm; all is bright. The text is uniformly interesting.

As Edith Fowke says in her introduction: "Our object was to choose the songs that most clearly reflect some aspect of our national development." And so the reader must not expect all his favorite numbers here, but he gets quite enough interesting pieces for one book. He also gets an opportunity for some notes towards a definition of folksong. The book assumes, for instance (1) that a folk-melody can be by Alan Mills; (2) that a Canadian folksong can be imported; (3) that a folk-melody can

be adapted with impunity; and (4) that anything widely enough sung, even a national anthem, is folk.

One thing our social history proves is that folksongs cannot be expected to improve as a country grows older. Certainly the early ones in Canada, including the Indian folksongs here, are very appealing, and the early French-Canadian folksongs have a grace and gentility which the West beat out of everybody. What also seems evident is that the songs which the English settlers already knew and brought to bear on important new Canadian situations often have a blatancy and vulgarity which the French adaptations avoided by natural good taste. Nevertheless, when pork, beans, and hard tack introduce a rasping vitality into the middle of the book one is not just frightened, but caught up, and all one's social instincts (few as they are) are apt to respond to its pioneer intensity. Living in our various air-conditioned nightmares, we are apt to forget how compellingly brave and independent the Alberta Homesteader, say, could be.

Unfortunately, it's the general *spirit* of a frontier power that is apparent in Western songs at the turn of the century, and the verbal detail does not help as much as it should. The lyrics are often amusingly realistic and biting, but it is obvious that Canada is still waiting for a Carl Sandburg who could give this material poetic life. Clearly, at the moment there are far too many dear old ladies and city-slick, meanly arrogant young men in our company of poets to do anything so primitive well.

There are two shadows in the later pages. The old theory that hardship and disappointment stimulate artistic activity receives a prairie jolt in the kind of vocal expression that came out of the Depression. We never had it so bad and yet, if it were left to our songs, this traumatic experience would die with us. And secondly, Mrs. Fowke tells us: "The coming of radio, television, and records has almost brought to an end the kind of song-making and singing that produced most of the songs in this book." She goes on: "However, in the future certain Canadian events will undoubtedly inspire composers to write songs in the folk idiom." I hope so, against hope, though I cannot see the serious Canadian composers I know anything about doing it without a lot of self-conscious flopping and the calling up of strange little chamber forces of 13 players. None of them is simple and direct and unfussed like Bartok. So, lots of things have happened and will happen that no one will sing about, though many, frustrated by civilization, will wish to do so.

Speaking of musicians, one can imagine no better choice than Helmut Blume to do just the kind of arrangements that this book's purpose demands. He is not always interested by the material. Some of the settings seem unnecessarily four-part square, dully competent, or non-committal. Some of the cumulative ones lack sweep. But the majority have character, fluidity, and witty ease. Most arrangers of folksongs are broken-down organists and educators who have never forgotten their examinations in 18th century harmony and counterpoint. But here a pianist is in charge, one who knows what tasteful and limpid simplicity can do for simple (yet usually not delicate) materials. The songs are never over-marked. Mr. Blume has borne in mind the kind of person who will read the book with his fingers, and so what the

piano plays is the song. It is a triumph under these conditions that the accompaniments, in most cases, give us an undisturbed and unequivocal view of the songs. They are not just retiring and "correct". They are innocent and enthusiastic.

In addition to its content, *Canada's Story in Song* has a very handsome appearance. Music and script are cleanly printed. The cover sets an amusing precedent, and the illustrations, drawn by Leo Rampen, are clever, funny, and beautiful.

A PORTRAIT IN SNAPSHOTS

Alan Thomas

Maclean's Canada, ed. Leslie Hannon. McClelland & Stewart $8.50.

THE ITCH FOR PERMANENCE is irresistible apparently. A sizeable proportion of the all-Canadian books recently published is composed of the writings of newspapermen and journalists nervous about the planned obsolescence of their chosen medium. Harold Innis observes that many American writers of the first half of the century sharpened their tools in journalism because there was no protection for American books against the dumping practices of British publishers. Canada can surely be having no better fate, though the book trade so far seems the only cultural industry to escape the tender solicitude of a Royal Commission. Yet there is a difference in the collection under review. Almost all the writers have reputations independent of magazine publishing; some of them even independent of writing. So the point must be other than simply to rescue good and deserving writing from the obscurity of library files and microfilm. It must be to make a point either about Canada, the accepted and noble intent, or about *Maclean's Magazine,* and presumably in these times of adversity to imply something about the relation between the two.

We know for sure very little about this relationship. Is there, has there been another Canadian magazine from which as good a collection of general writing could be taken? Memory fails to uncover one with as rich a treasury of files. Is this collection truly representative of *Maclean's* over the period? Or were these the good deeds that the magazine undertook while purveying a good deal of the formula material that appears to sell a magazine? Do the readers of *Maclean's* really want to know what Ernest Buckler, or Stephen Leacock, or Hugh MacLennan have to say? Or are they being treated to culture in short bursts? If the readers are avid fans for this material then we can relax some of our fears about the integrity of the country. If not, then perhaps this should be

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viewed as worthwhile education needing subsidy.

Anyway the title is an apt one; this is Maclean's Canada, and no one else's. The book itself is handsomely bound, almost a text book, which may prove a drawback, but does suggest one important use for it; it ought to be in every school library, and some of the first class historical-descriptive writing ought to be incorporated in school readers. The picture layout and typography are handsome, stylish, and just rakish enough to be contemporary and bold, without being either brassy or cheap. Oddly enough, the contemporaneity of the layout and the pictures, with the exception of "The Priceless Notman Discovery", contrasts sharply with the writing which is at its best when it concerns the past, and becomes strident and anecdotal when it deals with the present. Bruce Hutchison's "Southern Ontario Baffles Me" is representative both in title and in content of the apparent discomfort and mystification all Canadians but the moralists feel with the present. And if you are interested in any signs of the future, then this collection has not the slightest trace of it. It used to be said that all Canadian history stopped in 1867. Apparently it stops about every decade or so, though it reaches back in this book, on occasion, a hundred million years.

Finally, and understandably enough, the style of this collection of journal articles, written so as to sustain a short but skittish span of interest, is annoying if taken in too large doses. The constant sure-fire beginning, the reporting style lengthened into observation, all those techniques designed to trap a casual reader amid graphic blandishments, are not suited for continued reading. But they have their advantages. This is one of the few books one feels no guilt about reading from any point to any point, and backwards if one prefers. The editor is to be congratulated for not trying to make such material more significant than it is by spurious grouping.

In its own way some of the material is first-rate. In particular I enjoyed the geographical-historical writing which seems as apt and appropriate in style, form, and disposition as the landscapes the Group of Seven did in their time. Having first painted the wilderness which creeps into all our lives one way or another, we now are beginning to be able to write about it and its impact on our civilization. The outstanding examples of this are Marjorie Wilkins Campbell's "The Mysterious Kingdom of the Saguenay", Berton's "How the Klondike Rush Began" and Bodsworth's "How the Prairies were Made". One longs for a decent reputable guide book for motorists in Canada that would be based on writing of this sort. Michelin and Baedeker have probably taught more history than all the schools put together, and we might do the same. As one approaches the present, the events seem to become more and more trivial; until we reach the epic of Marilyn Bell which I at least would rather forget. The fiction is mixed, with one outstanding story, Ernest Buckler's "The Quarrel", which offers a degree of integrity and a lack of self-consciousness that one does not often associate with Canadian short stories.

The book is called a "Portrait of Canada", and presumably is meant within the limits of metaphor to be seen at one glance. At least, in the somewhat over-enthusiastic words of the editor it is

to be looked at until "the threads of the Canadian fabric will be woven through this book into a truthful and deeply textured tapestry, and that it might help to correct some of the regrettable misconceptions of Canada held both at home and abroad." Well, does it? It all depends on what view anyone at home or abroad may hold. Certainly it is easy to pick holes in a volume that hopes to catch all or even a representative slice of one's own country in a single glance. But suppose we take it on its own terms, as a selection of notable Canadian writers, found unawares (since not all of them intended their work to be seen book-naked) writing about their own country? What sort of country does it present? At its worst the portrait shows a country without humour (the Leacock inclusion is certainly the least funny of his pieces I've ever encountered, and the other humourists are either smart or cute), a country without any political concerns whatever, except sentimental historical ones, and finally a country which, in the words of Adlai Stevenson, appears to have been carried "kicking and screaming into the Twentieth Century". At its best, it presents a country achieving a feel for its own territory, a country with a surprisingly delicate sensitivity for a variety of human relationships, a country of exceptional modesty almost embarrassed about acknowledging a hero, a country determined to make the best of what it finds, but not very confident of doing much on its own.

None of these things is of course completely true or false. But for me Canada is a country of great if quiet humour, though little of it is suitable for writing, and a country of steadfast if not glorious political concern. In his story "The Quarrel", Buckler says that in imagining things you always imagine yourself in the centre of them, a condition you never quite achieve when they happen. You do not achieve it either when you try to make them explicit, and one is forced to wonder whether the best of the writing in this book is not reduced in significance by being caught in the act of trying. As a collection, the book is enjoyable casual reading; as something more it slips away, making one as uncomfortable as does the spurious photograph on the back cover.

I rather wish the editor had not only provided more information about the basis of his choice, but—more important—had dated the portrait. Certainly the writing is about all periods in Canada's history, even the remotest ones, but it has been done and published during a specific and, I dare say, soon to be identified and labelled period in our history. Since the ascendance of Sputnik II indicated that our ebullient and friendly neighbour to the South is not master of the world, we have felt very much alone. I doubt if we will ever write about ourselves again in the manner of this collection.

UN GRAND POETE

Gerard Bessette

RINA LASNIER. *Mémoire sans Jours.* Les Editions de l'Atelier. 1960.
Miroirs. Les Editions de l'Atelier, 1960.

MADEMOISELLE RINA LASNIER vient de nous donner son meilleur recueil de poésie.

Avant toutefois d'analyser le groupe de poèmes qui constituent la valeur de *Mémoire sans jours,* disons un mot des pièces médiocres, plutôt nombreuses, qui déparent le recueil.

Il y a d'abord les poèmes qui figurent sous le titre général de "Le Christ aux outrages". Ils rappellent fâcheusement *Madones Canadiennes* et *Le Chant de la Montée,* dans lesquels la poétesse nous avait chanté en un style farci d'images conventionnelles la vie de Rachel et les vertus de la Vierge. Je ne blâme pas Rina Lasnier d'avoir échoué dans ces tentatives. Rien n'est plus difficile que de renouveler des sujets séculaires qui ont pu fleurir à une époque de foi collective intense comme le moyen âge, mais qui, au XXe siècle, requièrent le talent cosmique d'un Claudel ou la fraîcheur d'imagination d'un Péguy pour nous toucher poétiquement.

Rina Lasnier n'est guère plus heureuse dans la section intitulé "Petit Bestiaire familier" où elle nous sert un mélange indigeste de descriptions réalistes et de religiosité:

> Culs-de-jatte assoupis sur leurs moignons,
> [il s'agit de carcasses d'automobiles]
> Amputés des vols et des élans voyageurs,
> Refuge des chats, des lapins et des oignons,
> Arches de Noé de nos jardins potagers
> (p. 134)

Il est toujours dangereux de vouloir édifier un symbole à partir de données essentiellement prosaïques. Sur le plan de la logique, on aboutit à un échec analogue quand on essaye de tirer une conclusion générale de prémisses particulières. L'image ne colle plus à sa base; elle flotte, désincarnée, dans le vide: cela devient une fantaisie nouménale ou du bel esprit.

Il est également inutile de nous arrêter à "Silves". Quoique à un moindre degré, les poèmes de cette section souffrent des mêmes défauts que "Petit Bestiaire . . ." et que "Le Christ aux outrages".

Au contraire, "Malemer" et "Poèmes haïtiens", que l'auteur a placés au début de son recueil, comptent parmi les plus beaux poèmes de notre littérature. Non seulement éclipsent-ils le reste de *Mémoire sans jours,* mais ils laissent loin derrière eux les meilleures pièces d'*Escales* et de *Présence de l'absence.*

"Malemer" est, en effet, un poème symbolique dans le vrai sense du terme, un poème qui, sans jamais sombrer dans une obscurité absolue, dans un chaos indifférencié à la façon de la plupart de nos poétereaux contemporains, suggère plusieurs "solutions" sans en imposer aucune. La mer profonde, c'est le sein maternel, le principe de la vie, le sub-

conscient, la poétesse elle-même, etc; mais, à la surface, dans le déroulement de ses vagues, c'est aussi l'ensemble du monde extérieur avec ses multiples séductions, c'est le danger de se laisser emporter par le verbalisme, de disperser en vocables superficiels l'unicité inexprimable de toute conscience, etc., etc. Il faudrait une exégèse à la Noulet ou à la Madaule pour rendre pleinement justice à ce poème polyphonique.

Moins vastes, moins cosmiques que "Malemer", les "Poèmes haïtiens" compensent leur relative minceur par un rythme plus pulsatif, par des images plus immédiates, et par un primitivisme sauvage et touffu. Il m'est impossible de juger le degré d'originalité de ces poèmes, car je n'ai pas lu les ouvrages de Louis Maximilien et de Jacques Roumain que Rina Lasnier, avec une admirable honnêteté intellectuelle, mentionne au bas des pages comme sources d'inspiration.

Pour donner une idée de la beauté de "Poèmes haïtiens", je citerai quelques lignes de "Ountougni" (il s'agit d'une batterie de tambours vaudouesque):

> Sur la peau tendue du silence, ountogni,
> pulsion solitaire sans paix ni appel, . . .
> socle du son insulaire au centre de la solennité,
> passe rocailleuse dans la liquidité d'une fête.
>
> Secret serein de la durée par le bris sonore du temps,
> insistance horizontale de la corde raide tendue aux dieux,
> sommation sans surcharge de signes, d'exil ou de transes;
> mailles du filet neuf aux genoux écartés du tambourineur,
> et sous ses paumes, étoffe vaste de l'ombre indivise;
> césures blanches avant le coloris impur du chant,
> os dur du son sans oscillations de plumages;
> voix égale des morts sans écho sépulcral,
> sonorité du sang lié au sang, levée processionelle de la négritude. (p. 23).

Que faut-il penser du métier, de la technique de Rina Lasnier?—Tout comme pour la valeur et la qualité de ses poèmes, quelques distinctions s'imposent. Dans les rares pièces comme "Chansons" où elle emploi la versification classique (sauf pour la rime), elle réussit fort bien:

> Lève du coffre de velours
> Lève ta viole sous ta main
> Murmure d'amante ou d'amour
> A coeur battant dès le matin (p. 48)

Au contraire, quand ses "vers" ne font que se rapprocher de la prosodie traditionnelle sans tenir compte du nombre de pieds ni de la césure, Rina Lasnier produit des textes bâtards, illisibles à haute voix:

> Quand nous cherchons une foi vulnérée,
> Quand nous cherchons, plus humbre que l'espérance,
> Le tison d'une fois trois fois humiliée,
> C'est Pierre . . . et sa face fait pénitence.
>
> C'est lui, coq rouge et credo de la lumière,
> Et le soleil bondit pour une autre évidence,
> C'est lui le pas infaillible de la croissance
> Et la tête du blé honore la poussière. (p. 38)

Heureusement, ce qu'elle pratique la plupart du temps, c'est le vers libre, sorte de verset claudélien où les "rimes" et les assonances irrégulières sont étayées par de nombreuses allitérations et par une gamme subtile de sons vocaliques. Voici un extrait de "Malemer";

> Malemer, aveugle-née du mal de la lumière—comment sais-tu ta nuit sinon par l'oeil circulaire et sans repos de paupière?
>
> pierrerie myriadaire de l'œil jamais clos —malemer, tu es une tapisserie de regards te crucifiant sur ton mal;

> comment saurais-tu ta lumière noire et sans intimité—sinon par le poème hermétique de tes tribus poissonneuses?
>
> ô rime puérile des étages du son—voici l'assonance sinueuse et la parité vivante,
>
> voici l'opacité ocellée par l'œil et l'écaille —voici la nuit veillée par l'insomnie et l'étincelle . . . (pp. 16-17).

On peut fort bien se passer de régularité et de rime classique quand on les remplace par un si souple et si subtil éventail d'assonances et d'allitérations.

Je devais aussi parler dans cet article de *Miroirs,* ce recueil de "proses" paru en même temps que *Mémoire sans jours.* Mais à quoi bon? A quoi bon éreinter un écrivain de talent, peut-être de génie, comme Mlle Lasnier parce qu'elle a commis un livre médiocre, presque nul?

Il est vrai que les trois premières "proses", qui notent les impressions d'enfance d'une fillette du nom de Messalée, secrètent une poésie mineure, un peu mièvre, susceptible de charmer les adolescentes et les romantiques attardés. Mais le reste est nul.

Voulez-vous une élucubration sur la neige? La voici:

> La neige ne raisonne pas car elle est pure voyance; elle regarde sans juger et sans connaître . . . La neige a des yeux pour voir car elle n'a pas péché contre la lumière, mais elle ne dit rien de ce qu'elle a vu en haut ni de ce qu'elle découvre en bas . . .

Préférez-vous un étrange extrait de la vie de la Vierge?

> Approchez-vous, moinillons et enfants de choeur qui ébranlez la Trinité à coups de clochettes; et vous, ma soeur sacristine qui pleurez vos burettes cassées, approchez.

Il serait cruel d'en citer davantage. Ces enfantillages sont d'autant plus pénibles qu'ils veulent exprimer des sujets augustes, sacrés pour la plupart des lecteurs. Mais ce n'est malheureusement pas avec de bonnes intentions que l'on fait nécessairement de la bonne littérature. Autrement Nérée Beauchemin, Pamphyle Lemay et William Chapman seraient les princes de notre poésie.

Arrêtons-nous ici, et concluons en distant que, grâce aux vingt premières pages de *Mémoire sans jours,* Rina Lasnier se révèle peut-être le plus grand poète du Canada français contemporain.

books in review

POLAR DREAM WORLD

FARLEY MOWAT. *Ordeal by Ice.* McClelland & Stewart. $6.00.

IT IS NO SURPRISE to find Farley Mowat dreaming of the place where the North and the sea merge in an unholy mess of floating ice constituting, as he says with obvious relish, "one of the most implacably hostile environments to be found anywhere on earth". Having first led us in person through the Barrens and out onto the Atlantic, he then sent us with Hearne down to the Arctic shore; and now, continuing his literary detour, he thrusts us up among the islands of the High Arctic by means of an anthology of excerpts from the journals of a dozen polar voyagers—to give us a picture of the grandeur of men's striving over the centuries for a passage through the archipelago. He promises a companion anthology later on, revealing the human side of another phase of Arctic history, the quest of the North Pole. And in case anyone wonders whether we shall ever get the author of *The People of the Deer* and *The Grey Seas Under* away from this vicarious adventuring and back among the great elements where he belongs, we have a further announcement from Mowat: he has bought himself a Newfoundland schooner and plans in due course to retrace the routes of the men who describe their Arctic experiences in *Ordeal by Ice.*

A close study of polar writings is standard procedure for intending Arctic voyagers, and Mowat also shares with earlier explorers the problem of keeping his sponsors happy while he prepares. In choosing what to offer us from the vast polar library he decided to use only the most revealing human documents and to ignore the author's fame or success as a criterion for selection. The human side of the story was what he was after, he says. To convey it, he settled on passages dealing with the exploits of Frobisher, Hudson, Munck, James, Ross, Osborn, M'Clintock, and Hall; and for variety he brought in a few lesser items, notably a welcome excerpt from William Scoresby, the senior.

The explorers speak eloquently through Mowat's artfully edited and abridged versions of their journals and, sure enough, the effect builds up steadily until we do indeed feel, as Mowat hoped we would, that we have gained some idea of what it must have meant to go looking for the Northwest Passage. The impact does not depend on our historical knowledge; the excerpts are arranged chronologically but, quite naturally in view of the editor's purpose and method, they are in no sense historically representative.

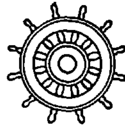
Strange that Mowat felt he needed to impose upon his impressive montage, depicting men in assorted awkward positions grappling with the polar elements, a frame of historical commentary offering far more information than we need to get the message Mowat drew from his reading of polar literature, and which it is his main purpose to relay to us. The frame is constructed of prologue, connecting comments, and epilogue which amount to a complete account of explor-

ation in the region and period covered by the narrative excerpts. And it is not only unnecessarily elaborate but distinctly ill-fitting, for Mowat tends to rearrange the facts to justify his selections and omissions and it is quite often a somewhat garbled version of the history that we get.

Ensnared by this format, Mowat had somehow to get past Baffin, no doubt because Baffin's narrative is rather dull stuff; in doing so he disposes of Baffin disparagingly whereas more careful study would have compelled him to pay tribute to a figure of prime appeal and importance. The great Parry gets very unfair treatment in deference to Ross, a minor name by comparison but a man who had an experience and who wrote a narrative which Mowat thought useful for his book.

Surely any attempt at historical justification for the selections and omissions in an anthology of this type is risky. The confusion is compounded by Mowat's weird view of the polar ice, not as the obstacle to commerce and science which it was, but as a dragon to be engaged for honour's sake. So the editor's concern with historical detail becomes even harder to fathom.

In Mowat's fanciful game we have the floating pack-ice on one side, and on the other side the men in ships whose role is to shatter the ice wherever it may be found, and thereby "to conquer the resident defender" of the north pole region. The game began in ancient times when men first tried to drive ships into the ice and, Mowat says: "The epilogue to the long story of men against the ice is still



Northwest By Sea

BY ERNEST S. DODGE

A history of the search for the Northwest Passage, which includes accounts of the voyages of Foxe, Cabot, Frobisher, Hudson, Cook, Parry, Franklin and others.

The author has drawn upon all available sources, including Stefansson's private research material.

Quotations from contemporary logs and explorers' reports heighten this story of endurance, courage and suffering.

$6.50

OXFORD

unfinished. The challenge still remains. Nor will this epic story be concluded by the exploits of submarines or aircraft, travelling far below or high above the field of battle. It will be completed, in the end, by those who first began the struggle—by men in ships."

Further, we are told that Nansen in the "Fram" "cheated the polar pack" by drifting straight across it "without engaging in open battle"; and the voyage of the "Nautilus" beneath the pack was "a gratifying technical achievement" but had "little in common with the achievements of those many men who had for so long striven with the ice on its own chosen battlefield"—the surface of the ocean. A certain amount of this sort of romantic nonsense can be great fun in its place, in a book of this kind, if intelligently relieved at the proper moment. But Mowat fails to do this in *Ordeal by Ice*. He leaves us in his Wagnerian dream-world, to struggle home as best we can. His unsparing fantasy curtails the value of his book to Canadian readers, for it obscures the historic victory over the polar ice which is actually being achieved in our generation by men who have at last figured out how to 'defeat' the Arctic—by befriending it.

T. C. FAIRLEY

OUTSIDE AFRICA

MARGARET LAURENCE. *This Side Jordan*. McClelland & Stewart. cloth, $4.00; paper, $2.50.

MARGARET LAURENCE is a Canadian from Manitoba who now lives in British Columbia. With her husband, a civil engineer, she has visited many parts of Africa. And not just the locale, but the subject of all her fiction—or at all events as much of it as I've seen—is Africa.

Set in Accra, capital of the Gold Coast during the period of its transition to "Free-dom" and the state of Ghana, *This Side Jordan* is an accomplished piece of writing. Terse, vivid and serious, it is constructed with scrupulous care. Mrs. Laurence has looked closely at Ghana with a sharp and discerning eye. Her concern is with the colour bar; her conclusions are unexceptionable. Why then is the whole question, as put by her, ever so slightly boring?

I think it may be because her novel, as fiction, is disappointing. Not that she hasn't heeded Henry James' injunction to dramatize. She dramatizes strenuously. The trouble is more radical. The whole novel seems to be an effort of the will rather than of imagination. Parts of it sound like film documentary: "Africa has danced pain and love since the first man was born from its red soil. But the ancient drums could no longer summon the people who danced here. The high-life was their music. For they, too, were modern. They, too, were new." "Africa", "the ancient drums", "the people"—these are the abstractions of social science.

So too, I think, are most of Mrs. Laurence's characters. Johnny Kestoe, for instance, with his carefully significant English background, his love-hate for Africans, never quite comes to life. Nathaniel, the central figure, is a failed-matric black school-teacher torn between tribalism and Christianity—the familiar man of two worlds. The warring elements in his soul are neatly distinguished, and recorded as separate streams of consciousness. Much research has gone into these interior monologues and the only

thing wrong is that we can't believe them. Educated Africans are mixed up all right—though hardly more than the rest of us—but surely not so tidily mixed up.

Nathaniel comes not from life but from books. As Joyce Cary's Mister Johnson we believed in him: as Elspeth Huxley's Benjamin (in *The Walled City*) we thought him a puppet. Mrs. Huxley is an African expert fed on White Papers and bred on white supremacy. She *needs* a black puppet to stick pins in. Mrs. Laurence has no such excuse. Joyce Cary, more generous, was able to imagine his way into Africans by a simple trick of seeing them as the Donegal peasants he had known intimately as a child, which is why Mister Johnson is real. Which is what Mrs. Laurence's Nathaniel isn't. In his more convincing moments he seems, like all her Africans, if anything Canadian—just about as far from African as we can get. Here he is with his wife.

> "I am not the right wife for you," Aya cried. "Why did you not marry someone who could read?"
> He took her hands in his and held them tightly, so she would not think the same question had ever occurred to him.
> "You are beautiful" he said.
> She clung to him.

Passages of this kind have a queer ring—they don't sound from the imagination. Study and research have told the writer that marriages between illiterate wife and educated husband are a Problem. She transcribes this general conclusion as action. It comes from *Châtelaine*: these people don't need Free-dom; they need a marriage counsellor.

The same sort of thing happens at the climax of the story. It arrives with stark obstetrical detail in a maternity hospital, with the simultaneous births of Nathaniel's daughter and Johnny Kestoe's son. The two married couples, black in one ward, white in another, but both under the same roof, achieve their togethernesses separately. In their female functions all women are equal. "All same like Queen Victoria" as Bombay pimps assure one. The new generation arrives in all the messy pangs of labour, the uncontrollable mystery on the colonial floor. For hospital read Ghana, for birthpangs read birthpangs: the figure is trite, the allegory too willed.

Despite her skill, Mrs. Laurence's book seems condescending; it appears to have been done from the outside. It reminds me of something James Eayrs said to the liberals at Kingston late in 1960, that Canada isn't particularly well qualified for the role of African busybody. We solved our own Aboriginal problem all right—a Final Solution. But it takes real concern—even the deadly concern of Mister Johnson's executioner—to enter into the soul of Africa.

KILDARE DOBBS

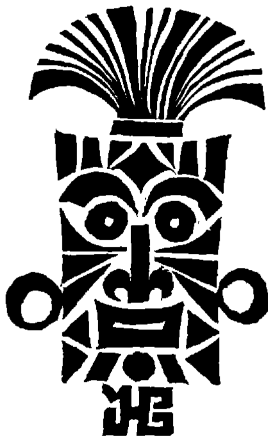
CONSERVATIVE ENIGMA

ROGER GRAHAM: *Arthur Meighen: Volume I, The Door of Opportunity.* Clarke, Irwin. $7.50.

THE CONTRAST between the private and the public images of Arthur Meighen presents a fascinating puzzle. Those who knew him have never been able to understand why so many Canadians thought him "a cold stick". The simplicity of private tastes, the sharpness of intellect, and the liveliness in conversation which endeared him to his friends are clear in

this account of the first forty-six years of Meighen's life. So are the powers of logical analysis and the eloquence which made him one of our most brilliant public speakers. The book also shows that Meighen's verbal agility was not always an asset. Too often he failed to be content with the defeat of his opponents; some inner necessity compelled him to pursue them with ridicule and scorn until they were demolished. This quality, and the envy and mistrust which his intellectual capacities often aroused, helps to explain why even some of his cabinet colleagues felt lukewarm and were reluctant to accept him as leader of the Conservative party.

Although he died only last year, Meighen is for most Canadians today a shadowy figure, significant chiefly because his weaknesses were part of Mackenzie King's success. Inevitably, the hostility between King and Meighen is a recurring theme in this volume, although on the evidence presented here it is hard to see why it was as bitter in these early years as the author claims. Dr. Graham's evidence makes it easy to believe that Meighen was King's superior in his grasp of the intricacies of the business world and of legal and political theory, and there are several revealing comparisons of Meighen's consistently disciplined and elegant use of the English language with King's verbose and woolly orations. By any standard, Meighen was emotionally healthier than King. In Meighen there was none of the acute personal insecurity, which, combined with the Calvinist heritage both men shared, produced in King excessive moral conflict and the need to be justified in decisions great and small before God and his mother. "The incredible Canadian" is more interesting, but Meighen is the more attractive person.



The author's impressive literary skills and the value of Mr. Meighen's cooperation in the preparation of the book are most in evidence in the early chapters. The atmosphere of high seriousness in the western Ontario farm family of Ulster Presbyterian origins where Meighen grew up is recreated well, as is the picture of the hard-working, aloof university student, and the ambitious young lawyer in Portage la Prairie. Desire for recognition and a general interest in public affairs led him into politics; apparently his adherence to the Conservative party was due mainly to family tradition.

Dr. Graham explodes the popular legend that Meighen was a docile servant of big business. In the best discussion yet published of the political ramifications of railway problems during World War I he shows that as the chief architect of the Canadian National Railways system Meighen espoused public ownership for reasons of practical necessity and not on principle; this did not prevent the most violent opponents of nationalization from seeing him as "the embodiment of socialism". Although Dr. Graham rescues

Meighen from charges of "High Toryism" his attempt to present him as a *liberal* Conservative is unconvincing. It is difficult to make a case for the essentially liberal spirit of one of the earliest and most vigorous supporters of the highly illiberal Wartime Elections Act of 1917. Meighen described this measure to suspend the franchise of males of enemy alien birth or language naturalized after 1902 and to give it to female relatives of men overseas as "a splendid stroke". His rôle in the passing of the War Measures Act of 1914 and the hurried and drastic amendments to the Criminal Code during the Winnipeg strike of 1919 adds to one's doubt about his liberalism. Surely a political leader genuinely rooted in the British parliamentary tradition should at least have suffered some agony in coming to decisions involving fundamental liberties.

At some points the story seems to have been streamlined too much in an endeavour to appeal to that general audience among whom Dr. Graham wishes to see Meighen honoured. Thus, it is tantalizing to read that one faction of the Conservative party opposed conscription in 1917 without being told which members held that view; and a more detailed account of precisely when and why Meighen himself became convinced of the necessity for conscription would have been welcome. The author admits that many Conservatives looked on Union Government as an escape from sole responsibility for the enforcement of conscription, but he perhaps underestimates the political motives behind the wartime coalition. These are minor complaints. This book lives up to the currently high standard of political biography in Canada, and readers will look forward to Volume II, and especially to the great encounter between Meighen and King in the constitutional crisis of 1926.

MARGARET PRANG

ON THE SIDE OF LIFE

PATRICIA BLONDAL. A Candle to Light the *Sun*. McClelland & Stewart. $5.00.

PATRICIA BLONDAL'S NOVEL, published a year after her death, is hardly the kind of book to appeal to the orthodox professional critics whose touchstone is cosmopolitanism. Nor will it appeal much to the other group—the regional ones who like to put their little white hands over their bleeding Ontario hearts and cry "Beast!" (short for Original Sin).

As a critic who belongs neither to the academic nor the bleeding hearts school of thought I cannot give this book my whole-hearted approval either. Yet I feel it is a very important novel because it points a direction and shows which way our literary icebergs are drifting. It indicates what in our Canadian life has been submerged and is at last ready to be revealed.

E. K. Brown once remarked that ". . . it is almost impossible to persuade Canadians that an imaginative representation of the group in which they live could clarify for the reader his own nature and those of his associates." *A Candle to Light the Sun* is such an imaginative record of life in a small Manitoba town, Mouse Bluffs (Souris). In intention and conception it is a big sweeping book. It tries to say that ordinary small town Canadians are not ordinary at all, but immensely individual,

unbelievably subtle, curiously warped, madly proud, utterly perplexed. The shifting external events around these small town lives only serve to reveal the inner tragedies, heroisms and fantasies. They are played out through illness and death, love and hate, seduction and friendship.

This approach avoids the fallacy of original sin (which is very stylish), and skirts—not always successfully—the romantic assumption of original good. The truth is that man is in no way original. Nothing human is ever really lost; it only changes. This, it seems to me, is what Mrs. Blondal is writing about.

But her writing still falls very short of her life view, to say nothing of her literary goal. Her story reads everywhere like the sprawling incoherent first draft of a very promising novel. It is full of untidiness and over-writing such as this description of the prairie: "It wants no plow, no pansies or nasturtiums or anything else we give. It wants the wandering feet and the quick gun and the lone blanket against the wind of night. The bright green of home stirred in a quiet corner of her brain. Never enough."

The plot, which I won't summarize, is intricate to the point of confusion. It cries out to be taken hold of, to be restructured, to be held to limits. But the author wants desperately to tell us all, all, all. She doesn't want us to miss one detail. She is passionate, dreamy, completely devoted to and unseparated from her material. No writer can afford this much self-indulgence.

Even in art love is not enough. We feel the tremendous push and force of life in this story, but after a while we get tired of listening to so much. But there is still a more serious defect in this novel, and that is Mrs. Blondal's failure to make what is for every writer a very fundamental choice. Will her concern be primarily with *interpreting* the life she describes, or will it be primarily with entertaining the reader—with seeing him through a long winter evening on the Canadian frontier? The choice does make a difference. Contrary to what practical people will tell you, Shakespeare did not become great because he wrote for money.

Then there is the problem of character. Again, the characters are hurriedly sketched, but seldom are these sketches worked up into real portraits. They are merely elaborated and move rather mechanically within a psychological framework of cause and effect. Life for the Phoebes of this world is not as simple as Mrs. Blondal would have us believe. A little innocent perversion (such as the town clerk's fetishism) and prostitution on the side are not so casual, even on the prairies.

But these are all weaknesses of a beginning writer. Mrs. Blondal has written a generous and affirmative book on the side of life. Such a spirit is rare in our world. The greatest novelists have seemed only to touch the surface of the life they wrote about, yet underneath one felt the movement of all the unseen processes drawing sustenance from some primary self-renewing source. I don't know if Patricia Blondal actually had this kind of connection with her medium, or whether she could ever have achieved it, but I am certain that she wrote out of an awareness that it existed.

MIRIAM WADDINGTON

LA LIBERTE DE CONSCIENCE

GERARD BESSETTE. *Le libraire.* René Julliard, Paris.

LORSQU'UNE jeune littérature est en pleine évolution, toute œuvre qui constitue une innovation par rapport à un passé récent revêt une importance particulière. *Le libraire,* roman de Gérard Bessette, me paraît se détacher de la production courante et justifie, de ce fait, qu'on s'interroge sur sa signification.

De quoi s'agit-il dans *Le libraire?* Simplement du problème de la liberté de conscience. Pour traiter cette question en romancier, Gérard Bessette a fait preuve d'originalité en trouvant le ton juste. Pour avoir méconnu les lois du genre, Jean-Charles Harvey, à la génération précédente, n'avait jamais écrit que des romans médiocres. En effet, en voulant dénoncer les abus de pouvoir dont le Canadien-français peut être victime, Harvey avait donné dans le réquisitoire, qui convient mal au roman. Conscient de la difficulté, Gérard Bessette a préféré une objectivité teintée d'ironie et parfois un humour noir assez inattendu,—je n'en vois pas d'autre exemple dans le roman canadien-français,—qui rendent attachante la lecture du *Libraire.*

Le narrateur, qui sera le héros du roman, trouve un emploi chez Léon, libraire à Saint-Joachin. Cette petite ville à l'orthographe fantaisiste, peut être considérée comme le prototype de la ville de province canadienne-française. Simple prétexte que cette affabulation, qui doit nous conduire à l'essentiel: la découverte d'une censure occulte, irrespectueuse des libraires autant que des lecteurs. Au fur et à mesure que nous assistons à la mise en marche de la puissance répressive que représente l'intervention directe de M. le Curé, une seconde aventure—amoureuse celle-là—se déroulera jusqu'à son dénouement peu banal. Ce second thème s'assortit parfaitement au premier, puisque Hervé (le narrateur) brave une autre censure, celle que le milieu canadien-français oppose aux amours dites illégitimes. Ce ne sera ni par passion, ni par intérêt que cet amoureux hors série en viendra à partager son lit avec Rose, dont il est le locataire. C'est plutôt par indifférence. La profession de foi amoureuse de Hervé mérite d'être citée:

> Comme je l'ai indiqué, les petits ébats amoureux qui ont suivi la soirée de cinéma ne m'avaient pas déplu. Evidemment, je ne suis plus très jeune. Je n'ai plus l'allant d'autrefois — qui n'a d'ailleurs jamais été bien spectaculaire. Peu importe. J'étais en somme satisfait. Je tenais la preuve que j'étais encore (si l'on peut dire) viril. Ce n'est pas, je le sais bien, un talent exceptionnel, mais c'est quelque chose. Toutefois, je ne tenais pas à répéter l'expérience. Du moins, pas de longtemps. Aussi fus-je désagréablement surpris le dimanche suivant—tôt le matin: j'étais encore au lit—de voir entrer Rose dans ma chambre. Elle était, comme on dit, en simple appareil: un kimono vert à ramages, transparent, qu'elle quitta aussitôt pour se glisser entre les draps, près de moi. En un sens, c'était gentil. Je ne le nie pas. Je ne suis pas un sauvage . . .
>
> Ensuite, j'ai dû m'exécuter. Au début, j'ai cru que je ne pourrais pas. La migraine me vrillait les tempes et je n'avais pas encore avalé mon sel *Safe-All.* De plus, j'ai découvert que Rose avait un bourrelet de graisse, une espèce de pneu dans la région de l'épigastre. En tout cas, tel que je suis, je ne devrais pas chicaner sur un bourrelet de graisse. Mais c'était plus fort que moi. Il me fascinait. Pour faire diversion, je me suis mis à parler des films que nous avions vus ensemble. Malgré sa surprise, Rose a répondu d'un ton assez naturel. Elle ne manque pas de tact. Ensuite, de fil en aiguille, j'ai oublié le bourrelet et

j'ai pu m'exécuter. Ce fut une heureuse surprise. Je ne suis pas trop rouillé.

Le sang-froid avec lequel Hervé aborde la sensualité caractérise aussi sa conduite devant l'enquête de M. le Curé. Dans l'un comme dans l'autre cas, nous avons affaire, semble nous dire Bessette, à deux activités des plus banales: la vente de livres et l'accouplement. Ces deux aspects de la vie ressortissent à la vie privée. Toute immixtion est à proscrire. Le romancier, en choisissant comme livre délictueux *L'essai sur les moeurs* de Voltaire—livre bien inoffensif—souligne indirectement tout ce que la censure a d'envahissant et d'injustifié.

Hervé finira par fuir Saint-Joachin, sans revoir Rose—à quoi bon?—et sans manquer de rouler le libraire, Léon. A Montréal, où il trouvera refuge, il lui sera loisible de se distraire "même le dimanche".

Cet excellent petit roman, dont les quelques lignes qui précèdent ne donnent qu'une idée bien approximative, ne ressemble en rien à *La bagarre* (1958). Bessette a donc échappé à un des dangers les plus redoutables qui attendent tout romancier: écrire un second roman qui ne soit qu'une version édulcorée du premier. Parmi ses autres titres, rappelons que Gérard Bessette s'est fait le remarquable critique que l'on sait de la poésie canadienne-française et qu'il s'est essayé aussi à la poésie. Pour toutes ces raisons, j'incline à penser que l'essai, genre peu pratiqué parmi les meilleurs auteurs canadiens, pourrait bien être une destination légitime pour un écrivain à qui presque tout, jusqu'ici, a réussi. Certaines faiblesses du *Libraire* ne font que renforcer cette supposition. En voulant arriver à un compromis entre une langue très écrite et la langue populaire, le romancier n'a pas toujours obtenu le style qui eût convenu au journal de Hervé Jodoin. Le lecteur se défend difficilement contre l'impression que quelques répétitions malencontreuses (après avoir bu le contenu d'une "flasque", Hervé se sent flasque (!); Rose avoue à son amant que la vie n'est pas rose) et nombre de locutions curieuses ou simplement incorrectes, s'expliquent plus par l'inadvertence de Bessette que par celle de Hervé. Car pour l'auteur de la prose raffinée des *Images en poésie canadienne-française,* il ne peut s'agir que d'un certain inconfort, occasionné par une formule littéraire ne répondant qu'imparfaitement à ses dons. C'est pourquoi j'en conclus, que si Bessette, tout rempli d'idées et de virtualités comme il est, se remettait à écrire selon ce que je devine être son goût à lui, c'est-à-dire en ayant recours à une prose savante et suggestive tout à la fois, il lui serait dès lors possible de faire passer dans une série d'essais toute son ironie et tout son très grand talent.

GERARD TOUGAS

MUSIC IN CANADA

HELMUT KALLMANN. *A History of Music in Canada 1534-1914*. University of Toronto Press. $6.50.

MR. KALLMAN'S *History of Music in Canada* is a substantial piece of research. Not so long ago it would not have been possible to do it—music history being so little regarded—and it would certainly not have seemed worth doing. It should remain a valuable reference work since it gathers so much information into 270 pages; I doubt if there is anyone in Canada to challenge Mr. Kallman's

command of his subject. If the book stimulates further research, it may be superseded, for such is the irony of the pioneer's role. But it will not be necessary, I imagine, for anyone else to do this particular job again for a long while.

There is, however, another job to be done. This book might have done it, and certainly it could not be done without the research that was entailed in its making. The job is to write a lively essay on the same subject for the general reader. Only intermittently does Mr. Kallman's book become that. That it can engage the mind in this stimulating way, particularly in the first few chapters, shows that the task is possible, that our musical history is not really so dull. The narrative momentum of Mr. Kallman's beginning gradually disappears under too much detail. The mid-nineteenth century is less picturesque, granted; yet the trouble for the reader is that there were too many records, too many slight events to be listed or names to be mentioned. Mr. Kallman's book becomes one to be referred to rather than to read with lively enthusiasm, and this must be reckoned its principal limitation.

Certain things come out of Mr. Kallman's survey that should make us stop to think. In spite of broadcasting, the phonograph and the ease of physical communication, our public concert life in the main cities does not differ much from that of a hundred years ago. Our institutions change little in their fundamental character. In some respects we are less fortunate. There are fewer public performances of opera than there were seventy years ago. The chamber music of Haydn and Mozart reached Canada half a dozen years after it was composed; the time lag for Tippett or Dallapiccola is much longer.

Musical life in Canada was also more strongly rooted before 1850 than it has even been since. Standards may have been naive and provincial, but people were less inhibited by the fact, and musical activity did reflect the society in which it existed. Music was in a real sense an activity of that culture. One hundred years later we are trying to win back some of that rootedness (without the provincialism, we hope) in the face of "big name" values, box office and the international celebrity circuit.

Mr. Kallman brings out the bare, persisting elements of music in Canada; as old as European settlement itself and never lost in the much more anonymous urban culture superimposed in the past century. These elements were folk music, regimental bands and church music. The folk music survived in isolation, the most submerged by urban culture, to be rediscovered by twentieth-century collectors. The regimental bands became our instrumental tradition and were eventually metamorphosed into our symphony orchestras. The churches became the repositories of two contradictory traditions. The Catholic French Canadian community seems never to have thought that good music and right worship were

incompatible. It may have frowned once or twice at the music of secular entertainments; it never equated plainness with godliness. Protestantism became puritan quite quickly. Then came the reaction to raise the standards of church music. Music could be seen as a dangerously sybaritic influence upon a wholesome community or as a civilizing force on a rough, even barbaric frontier. It depended on which way you held the mirror. The oratorio society, adapted from the English, was the perfect compromise. The rare exception was such a community as that of the Children of Peace at Hope, Ontario. This Protestant splinter sect built its community, like the American Moravians, on worship and music equally. One may marvel at the standards apparently achieved in a community of three hundred; one should marvel more at the way music penetrated to the heart of this culture, sank its roots deep and produced so splendid a flower.

There are some great performers in this history, recognized abroad rather than in Canada; there are some able pioneers; there are no composers of reputation. Yet Mr. Kallman teases the mind as much with some of these composers as he does with the story of the Children of Peace or the rapidity with which operas and oratorios achieved performance in Canada. Someone should go through those surviving scores and perform and broadcast the best of them. We ought to have the chance to hear our musical history (once anyway) as well as read about it. We probably will not find a Berwald or an Ives, but we might not be ashamed of what we do discover. Mr. Kallman's book reminds us that we must not neglect our past for fear of seeming provincial.

PETER GARVIE

LE COMBAT SINGULIER

ADRIEN THERIO. *La Soif et le Mirage.* Le Cercle du livre de France. (Collection Nouvelle-France).

IL Y A une jeune génération intellectuelle canadienne-française qui s'affronte avec l'Amérique, mesure le vide que creuse au lieu de le combler technique et confort, et qui défie ce monde:

> Dans quelques années, si vous n'y prenez garde, vous ne pourrez plus vivre votre vie. La civilisation américaine vous la présentera sur un plateau doré. Tant pis pour vous si vous devenez jamais américain, ou alors vous serez un hors-la-loi.

Un jeune professeur universitaire originaire du Québec passe un an dans ce décor rose et doré, tente, sans résultats une prise de contact au moins avec trois spécimens de la société de Bowlingville (Middletown, U.S.A.), d'abord un de ses étudiants, adolescent rêveur, perdu; y risque sa paix et sa vertu avec une demoiselle naturellement appétissante, la soeur de ce dernier, tandis que, de son côté, sa logeuse, mûrissante et d'autant plus aggressive, entreprend systématiquement de se l'approprier corps et âme, pour se convaincre que, Lancelot, non, Galaad comme devant, il peut rentrer intouché venir se ragenouiller au banc d'œuvre de ses pères dans l'âpre mais intègre Québec natal.

Il est pourtant aimé de ses voisins du sud ce bien fier Québecois, pas au point de les faire se hausser à son idéal apparemment raffiné et austère dont il ne nous détaille d'ailleurs pas les valeurs, mais à la mesure et ressemblance de ceux qui l'aiment. Il est aimé par sa "landlady" d'abord, organisant pour lui,

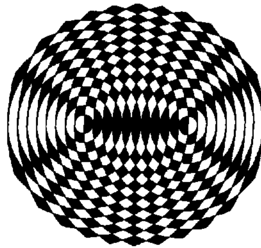
comme un potlatche, son confort matériel: un tapis moelleux, un tourne-disques, des petits plats, une télévision lui sont successivement offerts, pour, en échange, l'avoir de plus en plus à elle au point de le poursuivre un soir d'étourdissement à l'alcool jusque sur son lit où le malheureux n'en peut mais. Il est aimé par Bill, l'un de ses élèves, tendre, rêveur, artiste, enfant qu'une civilisation mécanicienne, un père bovin et une mère rêvant d'en faire un ingénieur, empêchent de fleurir. Petit Meaulnes déjà maladif, il fait penser au *Voyageur sur la terre* de Julien Green. Il est aimé, finalement, notre professeur, par la soeur de Bill, dont le premier, il s'était entiché, qu'il rejettera.

La soif et le mirage est strictment modelé sur le moule du roman psychologique français. C'est un exercice de style classique, un petit drame racinien à quatre personnages.

> Je n'avais pris aucun intérêt aux élèves, même s'ils me montraient beaucoup de sympathie . . .
> . . . je me sentais perdu au milieu de ce monde étudiant . . .
> A certains moments, je me demandais ce que je représentais au milieu de ce monde américain . . .

Tout ceci sur un air, parfois, de Benjamin Constant ou de Fromentin. Mais est-ce parce que trop de romanciers, trop de traductions d'œuvres américaines nous ont habitué au réalisme graisseux des personnages de roman yankee? Les dialogues trop corrects jurent, en particulier, dans la bouche de Miss Morgan, la logeuse.

Est-ce sa vision de l'Amérique que M.



The Tamarack Review

ISSUE 19 (Spring 1961) contains a group of poems by MALCOLM LOWRY with an introduction by EARLE BIRNEY; stories by DAVID LEWIS STEIN and DAVE GODFREY; A Dialogue on Riddles by FRANCIS SPARSHOTT; and articles on Camus by ROBERT MCCORMACK and on Graham Greene by PHILIP STRATFORD.

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THE TAMARACK REVIEW, BOX 157, POSTAL STATION K, TORONTO

Adrien Therio veut nous livrer dans cet amas de chair féminine encore bien sanglée, mais menacée de ménopause, qui n'a pas la volonté de maigrir, jette ses derniers feux irisés par l'alcool, mémère à toutou, déjà—"qu'on prend comme un ami quand il ne reste plus personne"—pitoyable, pathétique. C'est le meilleur personnage de Thério. De l'autre côté, la jeune Amérique: amibe spirituelle. Un gars qui, au désespoir de ne savoir à qui vouer son amour: à son professeur, à quelque petite amie, à son enfance, rentre— apparemment il se suicide—dans le sein de la nature.

La soif est ce besoin d'amour, cette part d'humain que toutes les facilités, le confort américains sont impuissants à donner à ces êtres parce que—bien qu'anglo-saxon—ils ont une âme et un cœur. Cette soif notre héros n'en n'est pas exempt lui-même puisqu'il tente de l'étancher aux fontaines du désir.

Pour la femme mûrissante qui supplée à l'affection humaine par la bière, le wisky et son toutou, pour le jouvenceau qui va se perdre corps et âme dans la nature, pour sa soeur qui ne sait pas non plus ce qu'elle veut en tâtant aveuglément et de façon machiavélique à la fois de cet éternel masculin, pour le héros lui-même qui passe au milieu de cette société vide, la tentative devient un triste mirage, se solde par un échec complet.

Plus que l'immaturité intellectuelle américaine, Adrien Thério éclaire ici l'opposition entre le génie de deux races: la sensibilité du tempérament latin qui lui permet de jouir de la vie en puisant à ses sources intimes, face au vide d'une société matérialiste.

A quand le roman où le même jeune universitaire des Laurentides viendra dans l'ouest se mesurer avec une société qui revendique le même nom de canadienne? Le challenge en serait d'autant plus passionnant, et l'issue trop probablement la même, mais canadiens français et canadiens anglais pourraient livrer un combat singulier à armes égales sur le plan psychologique. Cette génération, ce livre le prouve, devrait dépasser le thème suranné de *Two Solitudes*.

ROLAND BONVALET

MYTHS AND SOURCES

ELLA ELIZABETH CLARK. *Indian Legends of Canada.* McClelland & Stewart. $4.50.

MISS CLARK has put together a source book of stories, myths and legends of the various Indian tribes of Canada, particularly for the use of teachers in schools, and for family readings.

What can the teacher or the general reader derive from this collection? As tales (of the beginnings of the world, of origins of animal and landscape features, of the explanations of tribal custom) they are so bare that they could hardly hold the attention of any beyond the very young. It is only when the stories are seen as clues to understanding the local culture that they take on meaning. Miss Clark has tried to select those tales that "reveal the every day life, the beliefs and the ceremonials of the early Americans" and to that end she has excluded those that treat of "brutal or erotic themes". However, even with these worthy aims, the tales are too brief and too simplified to give more than the baldest indications of the variations and meanings of tribal life. To bring out any richness and complexity of the many

Indian cultures, the teacher herself must be very knowledgeable.

Tribes which are represented by stories and legends comprise the whole range of geographic distribution: The Eastern Woodlands area, including all of the Iroquois League, the tribes around the Great Lakes, the Plains and Plateau, and the North West Coast. These are all distinctive cultures, with widely different economies, social structures, arts, motives, histories; a few legends can only blur the differences in tribal life. Miss Clark has provided an introductory paragraph to most of the stories, orienting them geographically and in time.

The sources to which Miss Clark has turned for her materials are twofold. She has recounted tales from anthropologists who have worked within the culture, and who have presented myths and legends as reflections of cultural values and as clues to culture history. But their stories have been pared to the outline of simple plot and uncomplicated character, and lose their special character. Other sources used by Miss Clark are the accounts by travellers, local historians and settlers, who have had varying backgrounds for understanding what they saw and heard of native life.

Miss Clark obviously has a feeling of sympathy for the dignity and imagination of the Indian, and her language is straightforward and direct, such as could be read aloud by teacher, parent, or student, without coyness or embarrassment. Her recounting of the vision quest and some other personal histories in the third section of the book, will be successful in involving the sympathies of many readers.

Perhaps if these stories, myths and legends, can be used as part of a more knowledgeable approach to the studies of tribal cultures across Canada, then they can be useful. Since publication of this book was aided by a grant from the Canada Council, one suspects that the grant was made with this belief: that the Indian cultures are different, rich, diverse, and a concern with these qualities will be rewarding to the student and the teacher.

AUDREY HAWTHORN

CHRONICLE AND CREATION

E. M. GRANGER BENNETT. *Short of the Glory.* Ryerson Press, $4.95.

ELIZABETH BENNETT'S historical novel, winner of the Ryerson Fiction Award for 1960, is better history than it is a novel, for it is closer to a chronicle in its confined and rather unimaginative telling than it is to creative fiction. The background is New France of the 1690's, when the colony hung in the balance between French and English in the long drawn-out struggle for the fur trade. In this dark moment of history with its cross-currents and sudden terrors, Mrs. Bennett has set her re-telling of the story of Abigail Davis, an English girl captured by Indians, ransomed by the French, and living as both prisoner and friend in the household of the Intendant de Champigny. It is within this ambiguous position, and from the conflict between the god-fearing daughter of the Puritan clergyman and the pleasure-loving, deeply Catholic French, that the main impetus of the story develops. Abigail is constantly on guard against the alien and seductive society into which she has been thrust, her wariness alerted by the deepening division between French

and English. Her difficulties are resolved in the traditional fashion of the teen-aged novel (and *Short of the Glory* is written primarily for the teen-aged girl) when she loves and marries one of the enemy, a young French *voyageur.*

The central conflict is real enough—that of the captive among alien peoples—but the flat style and presentation generate little interest in the theme. Mrs. Bennett is a researcher rather than a novelist; she presents the daily minutiae of the threatened colony undoubtedly based on authentic records—the bustle, the preparations, the comings and goings—but she is not skilled at dialogue or at psychological interpretation and realization. She re-creates many historical personages—La Hontan, Madeleine de Verchères, the merchant La Ber and his famous daughter, the mysterious recluse—but they remain in the shadows. The mercurial and enigmatic La Hontan is an example of Mrs. Bennett's presentation; here was a curious historical figure, both hero and rascal, visionary and prevaricator, but Mrs. Bennett is able to re-create only a romanticized figure with little conviction or depth of characterization. Authority and investigation are sound in *Short of the Glory,* but creativity is wanting.

JOAN SELBY

CANADIAN INCIDENTS

KERRY WOOD. *The Queen's Cowboy.* Macmillan. $2.50.

JOSEPH SCHULL. *Battle for the Rock.* Macmillan. $2.50.

TWO NEW TITLES, *Queen's Cowboy* and *Battle for the Rock,* have been added to the familiar series, Great Stories of Canada. Let no one boggle at the nickname "Queen's Cowboy"—it refers to Colonel James Macleod, the man who led a tiny band of law enforcement officers into the heart of the Blackfoot domain. He emerges from Mr. Wood's pen loved by his friends, respected by his enemies, and human enough to turn a garden hose on his five children lined up for inspection, dressed in their Sunday best.

A look at James Macleod's record of achievement goes a long way towards squelching our suspicions of his biographer's insistent admiration. Not only did this Commissioner of the North West Mounted Police succeed in subduing the whisky trade, winning the regard of the formidable Chief Crowfoot, and preventing full-scale war between the Blackfoot and the refugee Sioux, but he also died a poor man.

The opening pages of the book illustrate a problem facing the author of a short biography for children: how to catch and hold interest in an adult subject. Mr. Wood has employed what I like to call the "cherry tree method"; thus on page two we see the tiny James catching fish and talking scones on the Isle of Skye. But by page 21, when the story really begins, he is 20 years older, articling for an Ontario barrister named Cupid. It is too contrived. The book suffers generally from such choppy narration; it is a patchwork of data stitched together by a loving, but uneven hand.

Joseph Schull's *Battle for the Rock* is the story of Wolfe and Montcalm. Unlike Wood, who champions a hero relatively unsung, Schull seeks to scatter the romantic fuzz surrounding the best known of all Canadian stories. He takes the Tolstoyan view of history. For example, if a sleepy French officer had not forgotten that a much needed provisions

convoy had been cancelled, the British troops would never have been able to effect a landing at the tiny cove of Foulon, joined by a steep goat trail to the plain above.

Schull's approach to the soldiers themselves is subjective. We see Wolfe dying, his mind hidden from his officers, his thoughts alternately resolute and self-accusatory. Montcalm is a gallant man beset by the pettiness of his civilian associates—not even at the last does he learn that the French Ministry has ordered Vaudreuil to surrender all military command to the General.

Above all, it is Schull's command of words that makes *Battle for the Rock* live for us.

> The days of the saints and glory-hunters were gone, they had been long gone before he came. These were the days of twilight and the dregs. This was the land of hard and dirty fingers, clutching at furs, clutching at the King's gold. The land of Bigot and manageable men . . . . . He had not been one of them, this general. He had not smiled, he had not been managed. He had seen the shadow of the English lengthening over the land; it had not changed him.

Yet if the author's skill with language and psychological penetration is his greatest strength, it may also prove to be the weakness of the book. Too advanced for all but the most mature child, will it also be passed over by the adult as a juvenile?

PATRICIA BARCLAY

INVERTED MIRROR

NANSI SWAYZE. *The Man Hunters.* Clarke, Irwin. $2.50.

NANSI SWAYZE, in *The Man Hunters,* has written of Anthropologists Diamond Jenness, Marius Barbeau, and William J. Wintemberg. The book is intended for young people from ten to sixteen years of age. The stories on Jenness and Barbeau start off at a pedestrian pace in high-buttoned boots. Irrelevant incidents are told in the precious manner of a doting aunt, and one wonders whether the main purpose of the book is to introduce, to educate, or to entertain.

If its purpose is introduction, this happens in the case of Wintemberg, the man whose personality comes through most strongly; he died in 1941, and the only works by or about him, are contained in the Canadian Geological Survey Bulletins, which are not available for circulation.

If the purpose is education, then a sore posterior from riding with stirrups too long is given as much space as an anthropological find. And an educational purpose is in any case marred by the stilted tone of many passages. "The half-breed *undertook* to find [Jenness] a horse . . ." "Unfortunately the stirrups of the saddle he *produced* were too long . . ." For a ten-year-old, you find, you buy, you borrow, or you steal, or you make. But you do not "undertake," and "produce."

The Jenness biography starts with a pifflingly irrelevant incident, and much later makes the brief statement that ". . . Jenness's careful studies saved the histories of many Canadian tribes from extinction." This is an intimate study of Doctor Diamond Jenness, yet one of the proudest statements that could be made of any man anywhere, is slipped in like a sentence from a school text.

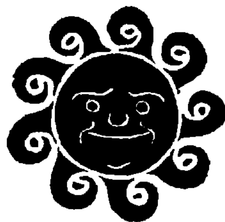
If the purpose of the book is to entertain, then its beginning is hidden in the preface—the discovery of an important grave. "Perhaps it is a burial with a row

of delicate beads around the neck of the skeleton. As soon as he sees that he is on the verge of an important find he becomes extremely careful. Once he gets down to the actual uncovering of the bones he must drop his trowel and use a spoon, an artist's paintbrush, or a dentist's pick. He is careful to expose as much as possible of the burial while still leaving it in place." Farther on, Swayze says that an archæologist is a "detective of the past." This is the writing that will make a twelve-year-old sneak a book to bed to read when the lights should be out.

There is an ambiguous treatment of the Bœthuk extinction. There is the use of "however," "indeed," and "of course," so often that circling them has given the book a polka dot effect. Worn phrases are used until their coming begins to be anticipated.

But there are other things too. There is a scholarly integrity. There is clear, plain speaking about the way the Whites in Hazelton treated the Indians. Basically there is a great deal about three wonderful men. With the Anthropologists, we are man in search of himself. For when the answer comes, it is with a flash of self recognition. It is an inversion of the native peering into his first mirror.

EDITH LAMBERT SHARP



DELICATE DESTRUCTION

NORMAN WARD. *Mice in the Beer.* (Illustrated by Louis de Niverville). Longmans, Green.

PIERRE BERTON. *Adventures of a Columnist.* McClelland & Stewart. $5.00.

THESE ARE two books of journalism; nevertheless, it is not fair to compare them too closely. Mr. Ward is a university professor who ventures into journalism from time to time. Mr. Berton is (among other things) a daily columnist. The roles are just not comparable, nor are their products.

Mr. Ward writes in a familiar genre: the quiet, literate whimsy which sets chuckles rolling silently in the mind where they build up a head of laughter which must ultimately burst forth. This kind of writing has been going on in Canada for generations until there is, I think, a definite school of a Canadianized humorous understatement that differs subtly from the Englishman's, which is more likely to have its base in actuality.

At any rate I could hardly imagine anyone but a Canadian quietly saying, as Mr. Ward does, that "One of the most thought-provoking spectacles to be seen in this country is that of a mouse in a beer bottle." Or: "One of the more provocative aspects of living in the multi-lingual culture of western Canada is that when, for instance, a man speaks of smutty wit, you are never sure whether he is talking of some celebrated passage from Sigmund Freud, or of a diseased cereal grain."

Mr. Ward slips occasionally from his general level of excellence and, too often, I think, he cheats by starting out

on one topic and allowing his whimsical explorations to lead him astray into quite another. This habit leads to a kind of split-level essay, but the form provides too slight a foundation for such building.

However, Mr. Ward mixes an urbane maturity with an irreverent approach to such Canadian shrines as the Canada Year Book, General Wolfe (the donkless hero), the Civil Service, Orangemen and Robert Burns. He avoids a certain undergraduate, recanted Scotch-Presbyterian over-concern with sex that marks some other practitioners of this form.

Louis de Niverville's illustrations provide a delightful counterpoint to Mr. Ward's delicate destruction.

Pierre Berton, by contrast, lays about with a two-handed club, smashing at some things that may matter somewhat and at others that certainly don't; even when he is being funny, he forgets to put down his heavy weapon, which is not lightened by any originality.

This is partly the result of his book's being a collection of daily newspaper pieces. Read as they were first published, one at a time, many of them might be effective. Certainly the verse "Requiem for a Fourteen-Year-Old" awaiting execution (or typical last-minute reprieve) for murder fully merits preservation as a powerful piece of public agitation cast in a striking form.

But, on the whole, Berton's pieces are not written to last. Several of them are exposés of tricky salesmanship, which may have had pertinence when first published but which fall flat in a collected volume. Even his Moscow copy is not very exciting, and his serious pieces tend to wallow in syrupy memories of the good old days.

DONALD STAINSBY

THE GENTLE CRAFT OF GHOSTING

EVAN DAVIES AND ALED VAUGHAN. *Beyond the Old Bone Trail.* British Book Service. $3.75.

DONALDA MCKILLOP COPELAND AND EUGENIE LOUISE MYLES. *Remember, Nurse.* Ryerson Press. $4.50.

SARA VEFFER AND RAY SONIN. *Hidden for 1,000 Days.* Ryerson Press. $3.95.

THE GHOST has always been a marginal member of the community of letters, putting on paper other men's thoughts, giving a shape to other men's incoherencies. Of all types of writer he has sinned most against the cult of originality that has dominated the arts since the Romantics.

Yet there have been respectable literary ghosts. Hazlitt spectred creditably for Holcroft and Northcote. And if Plato had not assiduously pursued the phantom craft, we should know little of what Socrates had to say.

Moreover, though the ghost, who expresses others rather than himself, is rarely an artist, he is often a good craftsman; in fact, the craft he follows is a demanding one if it is to be carried out successfully. The ghost may not actually make the dumb speak, but he does transmute the spoken word into that very different medium, the written word, and where he is a good ghost he does this while retaining the authentic tone of the man he is impersonating, while avoiding the attribution of a literary slant to an unliterary mind.

So much in defence of the ghost's craft. The three examples of it which I am considering demonstrate the kind of book which the ghost is usually expected to summon up. It is that curious phe-

nomenon, a piece of writing proceeding from an urge other than the urge to write. People who employ ghosts have usually had some special experience, or think they have lived an ordinary experience in some special way, and feel the desire to commemorate it. In naiver ages they might have painted awkward little *ex votos*, or dedicated shrines; in our age of plentiful paper they respond readily to the demon who whispers, "You should write a book about it!" So they call on the ghost—or the ghost calls on them.

At one time ghosts were discreetly anonymous; it was almost a rule of the craft. Now even ghosts demand their place in the sun, unless they are those very superior spectres who write the speeches of American Presidents; all the writers who have put their actual fingers to the keys on the books I am reviewing have announced their names, and not always wisely.

Beyond the Old Bone Trail is undoubtedly the best of the three books; it might have been a very ordinary tale if it had not been ghosted with exceptional ability. A young Welshman, fresh from the Cardigan countryside, took up a homestead on the Saskatchewan prairies in 1905. Everything that is told on his behalf—the hardships and rare perils, the disappointments and slight success—happened to thousands of other people at that time. It is the character of Evan Davies, the old Welshman telling his tale back in Wales fifty years after, that gives the peculiar flavour to the book—his character and his peculiar sense of the significant details of that life lived so long ago. These have been well caught by Aled Vaughan, who actually wrote the text; through his prose one can hear the lilt of a garrulous old Welshman telling his tale, and Mr. Vaughan has been wise enough to preserve not only Evan Davies' accuracies of observation and memory, but also his delightful lapses into credulity. The whole man comes alive in fragments like this:

> The timber wolf could be a dangerous joker though. Fortunately its natural habitat was further north, in the timber country; only the odd one ventured as far south as Saskatoon, and then only in the depth of winter. It is closely related to the bear family, and will attack humans when angered. When attacking, it hugs its assailant with its front paws while dancing around on its hind legs, and its grasp is so strong that eventually the ribs are crushed and the victim is squeezed to death—a most sinister kind of embrace.

Beyond the Old Bone Trail is a readable book, and an interesting document, since, if it produces no new historical facts about the settlement of the prairies, it certainly gives an insight into the kind of men who carried out the settlement.

Remember, Nurse and *Hidden for 1,000 Days* are both written—or written up—with a kind of breathless sensationalism which is evidently thought appropriate to unusual experiences. In the first of them a nurse describes through her literary medium a period of work among the Southampton Island Eskimos. She evidently used her eyes and ears to some account, and many of the observations she makes on Eskimo life show a real sense of the tragic disintegration of a primitive society under the malign impact of North American civilisation. But her own petty, everyday doings intrude far too much.

Hidden for 1,000 Days is the least readable of all. This is at least partly because its story—that of a Jewish family who hide for three years in Nazi-ruled

Holland—parallels so closely the story of Anne Frank that one cannot help comparing the two. The Frank diary fascinated not because it recorded a particular instance of a general tragedy, but rather because it evoked a particular personality reacting to the tragedy. The heroine of *Hidden for 1,000 Days,* the mother of the fugitive family, was clearly a courageous and resourceful woman, and her adventures were so strange that one sometimes pauses to reflect that here is a detail no novelist would dare to write down because it is indeed stranger than fiction. Yet somehow in the indirect process of communication all flavour of personality has gone out of the account. We know what the family does in its series of rooms; we know because we are told about it, not because we are made to feel it. We do not live in the minds of the sufferers, nor they in ours. And so the adventure, robbed of the presence it should have created, becomes a cage without a bird—or perhaps with only the ghost of a bird.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

GERMANY TODAY

EDGAR MCINNIS, RICHARD HISCOCKS AND ROBERT SPENCER. *The Shaping of Postwar Germany.* Dent. $3.50.

THREE CANADIAN SCHOLARS, from the Universities of York, Manitoba and Toronto, have combined to write a short study of certain important aspects of Germany since 1945. Professor McInnis, formerly President of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, opens with a study of the policies of the Allied Powers during and after the war which led to the present "settlement"; Professor Hiscocks gives a brief comparison of the two governments in West and East Germany, and Professor Spencer contributes an excellently documented chapter on Berlin which describes the situation of recurrent crisis up to the beginning of 1960. Finally Professor McInnis sums up the alternative policies which could determine the future of Germany.

This study is published under the auspices of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs and can be fully recommended as part of the service of that Institute in informing the Canadian public about world affairs. It would be a most suitable book for use by interested study groups. Despite the lack of a bibliography, there are full notes through which reference is made to larger studies in this field, such as Professor Hiscocks' own "Democracy in Western Germany" or John Mander's "Berlin: The Eagle and the Bear". It is to be hoped that this short introductory outline will induce many readers to delve into the deep issues and complexities of the German problem.

JOHN S. CONWAY

SHORT NOTICES

SEVERAL IMPORTANT reprints of Canadian books have recently become available. Perhaps the most valuable of them all is George G. F. Stanley's *The Birth of Western Canada* (University of Toronto Press: $6.95). This is the classic history of the Riel rebellions; it was published in 1936, but during the blitz of 1940 all the available stock was destroyed when Longman Green's warehouse burnt down. Since then it has been a rarity, and its return to print—still the best

book on its subject—is much to be welcomed. Macmillans have just brought out in paper covers two Canadian novels which have become regional minor classics; they are W. O. Mitchell's *Who Has Seen the Wind* ($1.50), whose evocation of the aura of a prairie small-town still remains very convincing, and Ethel Wilson's *The Innocent Traveller* ($1.75). And Apollo Editions, distributed by McClelland & Stewart, have issued paperback editions of two Canadian books, the appallingly titled but reasonably well-selected anthology, *Laugh with Leacock* ($2.25), and N. J. Berrill's *Man's Emerging Mind* ($2.25), one of the more civilised attempts by a scientist to weld human history into the evolutionary pattern.

* * *

Publishing fashion in Canada is beginning to run towards house histories of companies and corporations. In *For the Years to Come* (Longmans Green. $5.75), John F. Thompson and Norman Beasley reconstruct the story of International Nickel of Canada; in *The Elements Combined* (Clark, Irwin. $6.50) William Kilbourn tells that of the Steel Company of Canada. It is not easy to make a readable narrative about the prosaic facts of industrial development, but Professor Kilbourn, in his scholarly study of the development of a business corporation within a changing society, has succeeded in making *The Elements Combined* a book that can be read with interest by others than specialists. *For the Years to Come* rarely flutters from the ground.

* * *

Undoubtedly the most pleasing curiosity among recently published books is the reprint of *Cursory Observations made in Quebec in the Year 1811* by "Jeremy Cockloft the Elder" (Oxford, $3.00). This caustic commentary on the capital of Lower Canada a century and a half ago is admirably designed by Leslie Smart, and is worthy of a place on any bibliophile's shelf.

G. W.

THE LOWRY COLLECTION

The literary manuscripts of Malcolm Lowry have recently been acquired by the Special Collections Division of the University of British Columbia Library. In order to provide ideal conditions for the future study of Lowry and his works, the Library asks the generous assistance of all those who may be able to help in obtaining originals or copies of additional writings by or about Lowry, correspondence to or from Lowry, reminiscences of Lowry, photographs of Lowry.

BASIL STUART-STUBBS,
Special Collections,
The Library, University
of British Columbia,
Vancouver 8, B.C.

MALCOLM LOWRY (1909-1957)

THIS IS A FIRST bibliography of works by and about Clarence Malcolm Lowry, who wrote occasionally under the name of Malcolm Boden Lowry, but generally as Malcolm Lowry. Although it is fairly complete in respect to Malcolm Lowry's own writings (Part I), it is very incomplete in respect to published comment on his work and life (Part II, to appear in our Summer issue). Information of the latter nature has been prepared mainly from a scrapbook of cuttings (in the Lowry papers), which lacks notices in foreign languages other than French, and is incomplete in source information for many of the items it does contain. In the short period since this bibliography was begun (Nov., 1960), it has not been possible to check or complete all the dates by reference to the original publications. It is my hope that addenda to this bibliography will be published from time to time, when opportunities will also occur to correct errors. In the meantime, I would be grateful to receive any information helpful to the purposes of revision and extension.

Abbreviations in general follow the MLA Style Sheet, but the following should also be noted: n, number of journal; TS, typescript; UBCC, University of British Columbia Collection of Malcolm Lowry's papers (see headnote to IH); Volc., *Under the Volcano* (page numbers in cross-references are to the first New York edition, IB2), w. words. Place of publication of French language journals is given only for those published elsewhere than Paris. In the case of poetry, the first line, except when it duplicates the title, is quoted after the date.

E.B., UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, MAY 1, 1961.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY PREPARED BY EARLE BIRNEY
WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF MARGERIE LOWRY

PART I

Works by Malcolm Lowry

A: SHORT STORIES AND NOVELLAS

1. Port Swettenham. *Experiment* (Trinity Coll., Cambridge) n.5: 22-26, Feb 1930. First known publ. work, later rewritten into chap. 5 of *Ultramarine*, p 215-221 (see IB1). One of group of sea stories. including next three items, based on diary of voyage made as bosun's boy, 1927-8, on freighter to Asia. Written Cambridge 1928-9.
2. Punctum Indifferens Skibet Gaar Videre. *Experiment* n.7 [Winter 1930-1?]. I have not been able to check this issue but a copy exists in Brit. Mus. Title listed in "Index of British Short Stories" for 1931. appended to E. J. O'Brien's *Best British Short Stories of 1931*. Last three words of title (Norweg.: "the ship sails on") is title of novel by Nordahl Grieg which Lowry read in English tr. before going to Cambridge, and greatly admired; see IG11.
3. Seductio ad absurdum. *Best British Short Stories of 1931*. N.Y., Dodd, Mead, 1931, p 89-107. Earlier, shorter version of chap. 4 of *Ultramarine*. O'Brien credits to *Experiment* but without giving date. According to its editor, Gerald Noxon, this journal ran for 8 issues; story is not in first 6, the only ones to which I have had access; it is either in n.8, which not even Brit. Mus. lists, or it is same story as IA2 under new title.
4. On Board the "West Hardaway." *Story* 3:12-22, Oct 1933. According to Contributor Notes in this issue, this is Lowry's "first appearance in America." Another expanded version of incident used in IA1 and in *Ultramarine* 215-222 (cp. also 28-32, 64-65, 133-134). Given 3-star listing by E. J. O'Brien in his "Index of Distinctive Short Stories" for 1933, appended to his *Best* [American] *Short Stories for 1934*.
5. Hotel Room in Chartres. *Story* 5:53-58, Sep 1934. Probably written in France, 1934, during first marriage. Given 2-star listing by E. J. O'Brien, *Best* [American] *Short Stories for 1935*.
6. Economic Conference. *Arena* (London) n.2:49-57 [Autumn 1949]. A short story described in Contributor Notes as "a passage from an unpublished pre-war novel." Mrs. Lowry believes it was written in the Cambridge years and given at that time to a friend and fellow-undergraduate, John Davenport, later editor of *Arena*. Lowry did not pursue the novel and had forgotten the existence of this piece, which was publ. without his permission, after success of *Volc*.
7. Strange Comfort Afforded by the Profession. *New World Writing* 3:331-344, 1953. Written from notes made on visiting Richmond, Va., and Rome, 1947-48.
8. Brave petit bateau. *Les Lettres Nouvelles* 1:1067-84, Nov. 1953. French tr. of next item [by Clarisse Francillon?].
9. The Bravest Boat. *Partisan Review* 21: 275-288, May 1954. Written Dollarton c1950, after Lowry read news-story in a Vancouver paper. Listed among "Distinc-

tive Short Stories in American Magazines . . . Foreign Authors . . . 1954" appended to *Best American Short Stories 1954*, ed. Martha Foley, N.Y., Houghton-Mifflin, 1955, p 401.

10. I vantaggi del mestiere. *Carosello di narratori Inglesi*, ed. Giorgio Monicelli. Milan, Aldo Martello n.d. [1954?], p 275-294. Italian tr. of IA7 by Monicelli.
11. Étrange réconfort. *Les Lettres Nouvelles* 3:193-209, Sep 1955. French tr., by Roger Giroux, of IA7.
12. [Reprint of IA7] *Canadian Anthology*, ed. C. F. Klinck & R. E. Watters. Toronto, Gage, [1955], p 410-421.
13. Le Caustic Lunaire, *Esprit* (Paris) 24: 211-224, Feb. 1956; 340-355, Mar 1956; 525-543, Apr 1956. French tr., serialized in 3 nos., by Michèle d'Astorg & Clarisse Francillon, of first version of a novella titled (in unpublished English original) "The Last Address." For later versions, see IG2.
14. [Reprint of IA9]. *British Columbia: A Centennial Anthology*, ed. R. E. Watters. Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1958, p 185-197.
15. Present Estate of Pompeii. *Partisan Review* 26:175-199, Spring 1959. Written Dollarton, 1950s, from notes made in Italy, 1948. Listed in "Distinctive Short Stories in American Magazines 1959. II Foreign Authors," appended to *Best American Short Stories 1960*, ed. Martha Foley & David Burnett. N.Y., Houghton Mifflin, 1960, p 388.
16. Through the Panama. *Paris Review* n.23: 87-161, Spring 1960. Illus. J. F. Ulysse. Novella written Dollarton, 1950s, from notes made during voyage from Vancouver to Rotterdam via Panama Canal, 1947-8.
17. La Traversée du Panama / Extrait du Journal de Sigbjörn Wilderness. *Les Lettres Nouvelles* n.s.5:109-183, Jul-Aug 1960. French tr., by Clarisse Francillon, of IA16. This issue is entirely devoted to work by or about Lowry. For remainder of contents see IA18, C24-31, E1-10; II Aiv11-13-20-32; II B20.
18. Pompéi, Aujourd'hui. See IA17 p 26-58. Tr. by Francillon of IA15.
19. [Reprint of IA9] *Canadian Short Stories*, ed. Robert Weaver, Toronto, etc., Oxford U.P., World's Classics, 1960, p 228-48.
20. Elefante e Colossco. *Quaderni Milanesi*. n.1, 1960. Italian trans, of IA23a by Giorgio Monicelli.
21. [Untitled extract from IA22 consisting of last 800 w, beginning "The wash from the invisible freighter . . ."]. *Vancouver Sun*, Jack Scott's column, 16 Mar 1961.
22. The Forest Path to the Spring. *New World Writing*, Spring 1961. Long short-story written Dollarton, 1950s.
23. *Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place*, N.Y., Lippincott, May, 1961. A first collection of Lowry's stories and novellas, ed. by Margerie Lowry. Frontispiece: photostat of words and music, in Lowry's hand, of a Manx fishermen's hymn whose opening line supplies book's title. Lowry planned book and chose title before he left Dollarton 1954. Contents: IA7-9-16-15-22, & two unpubl. short stories:
    (a) Elephant and Colosseum. Written Dollarton 1950s from notes, Italy, 1948.
    (a) Gin and Goldenrod. Written Dollarton 1950s and set in that area.

B: NOVELS

1. *Ultramarine*. London, Cape, [June?] 1933. 276 p. Dedic.: "To Thomas Forman and Elizabeth Cheyne." Mrs. Lowry understands this novel was originally written at Cambridge in 1930, accepted by Chatto & Windus, but lost by them and re-written in 1931 from notes retrieved by his room-mate, Martin Case, from a wastebasket. The stories listed as IA1-3 may be versions of the earlier draft.
2. *Under the Volcano*. N.Y., Reynal & Hitchcock, [Feb] 1947. 375 p. Dedic.: "To Margerie Lowry, my wife." Begun as a short story, c1936, Cuernavaca, Mexico (see IG6). First draft as novel completed Mexico 1938, rewritten Hollywood 1939, rejected by several publishers 1940, rewritten Dollarton 1941-4, completed Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., Xmas 1944.
3. *Under the Volcano*. London, Cape, [July] 1947. 395 p.
4. *Under Vulkanen*. Copenhagen, Gyldendal, 1949. 316 p. Danish tr. of IB2 by Vibeke Bloch.

5. *Under Vulkanen*. Oslo, Gyldendal Norsk, 1949. 440 p. Norwegian tr. of IB2 by Peter Magnus. Forord by Sigurd Hoel, 4 unnumbered pages.
6. Au-dessous du volcan. *Mercure de France* 307:272-312, 1 Oct 1949. French tr. of chap. 1 of IB2, by Stéphen Rorce, assisted by Clarisse Francillon & author.
7. *Au-dessous du volcan*. Paris, Club français du livre, 1949. 363 p. plus unpaginated Préface (7 p; see IIAiv29), Postface by Max-Pol Fouchet (8 p; see IIAiv19), & Dedic.: "A Margerie, ma femme. / et à Philippe Thoby-Marcelin, mon ami." Subscribers' edition. Tr. by Stéphen Rorce & Clarisse Francillon.
8. *Au-dessous du volcan*. Paris, Corrêa, 10 May 1950. Trade ed. of IB7. Revised tr. by Stéphen Spriel with the collaboration of Clarisse Francillon & the author.
9. *Unter dem Vulkan*. Stuttgart, Ernst Klett, 1951. 393 p. Dedic.: "Für meine Frau Margerie / und für Downie Kirk." German tr. of IB2 by Clemens ten Holder.
10. *Under the Volcano*. N.Y., Vintage; Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1958. 377 p. Paperback reprint of IB2
11. *Au-dessous du volcan*. Paris. Le club francais du livre, 3 Feb 1959. 424 p. plus unpaginated Préface & Postface (as in IB7) and unpaginated Avant-propos (9 p.) by Max Nadeau; see IIAiv33. New ed. of IB7, "traduction revue par leurs auteurs." Photogravure studies of author, front.
12. *Au-dessous du volcan*. Paris, Corrêa, 1960. Trade ed. of IB11.
13. *Sotto il volcano*. Milan, Feltrenelli, March 1961, 459 p. Italian tr. of IB2 by Giorgio Monicelli.

C: POETRY

1. In Memoriam: Ingvald Bjorndal and his Comrade. *Atlantic Monthly* 168: 501, Oct 1941. "While we sail and laugh, joke and fight, comes death." Probably his first publ. poem; sonnet, Dollarton, dated "November 25, 1940." A melody which he composed for this poem and sang to guitar accompaniment was apparently not recorded. A French tr. signed "Phito" (i.e. Philippe Thoby-Marcelin—see IG15) exists in UBCC, titled Une Bouteille à la Mer. Based on news-item.
2. Sestina in a Cantina. *Canadian Poetry Magazine* (Vancouver) 11:24-27, Sep 1947. "Watching this dawn's mnemonic of old dawning." Double sestina, Dollarton. MS in UBCC is dated "Sept. 1943." Opening has parallel in *Volc.* 35.
3. Salmon drowns eagle. *Contemporary Verse* (Caulfield, B.C.) n.21:3, 1947. "The golden eagle swooped out of the sky." Dollarton 1942-3. Based on story told him by "Old Sam," a Dollarton squatter. Lowry retells the fable in IA22.
4. Glaucous-winged Gull. C3 p 4. "The hook-nosed angel with spring plumage." Alternate opening, draft in UBCC, is "The angel that walks like a sailor." There are echoes of *Ultramarine* 18, & *Volc.* 151.
5. Stoker Tom's Ukulele. C3 p 4. "Tom left his seabag behind and this uke." Sonnet, Dollarton, early 1940s. Cp. *Volc.* 155.
6. Indian Arm. *Canadian Poetry Magazine* 11:25, Dec 1947. "Mill-wheel reflections of sun on water." Terza rima, Dollarton, 1940s. Some phrases later echoed in Through the Panama (IA16) 92, Cp. *Volc.* 38, 112 & esp. 270.
7. Old Freighter in an Old Port. C6 p 24. "It had no name and we docked at midnight." Sonnet, Dollarton, 1941-2. Many phrases are echoes of On Board the "West Hardaway" (IA4) 16 & *Ultramarine* 37.
8. Port Moody. C6 p 25. "Over the mauve there is smoke like a swan." Sonnet, Dollarton, mid 1940s. Phrases parallel *Volc.* 37, 75, 124, & recur in IA22.
9. [Poem]. *Contemporary Verse* n.24:6, Spring 1948. "These animals that follow us in dream." Several drafts, from Cuernavaca c1936 to Dollarton c1942. Of various titles latest is prob. Xocxitepec (for Xocitepec, a village nr Cuernavaca?) Cp. *Volc.* 36, 88-89, 240.
10. Sunrise. *Outposts* (London), n.10: 7, Summer 1948. Spec. Canadian n., ed. Earle Birney. First of only two Lowry poems yet publ. in Britain. Opening (cp. *Volc.* 122) may show influence of Conrad Aiken's The Kid (*Coll. Poems,* 1953, esp. p 845). Sonnet.
11. [Cain Shall Not Slay Abel Today on Our Good Ground]. *A Book of Canadian Poetry,* ed. A. J. M. Smith, 2nd (rev.) ed. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago P.; To-

ronto: Gage; London: Cambridge Univ. P., 1948, p 372-373. Mexico, 1936-8. An unpubl. revision exists in UBCC titled A Poem of God's Mercy. This & following 6 poems are retained in Smith's 3rd (rev.) ed., 1957, with same pagination.

12. [King Lear Blinded Oedipus in a Dream]. Smith p 373-374. Mexico 1936-8; rev. Dollarton 1941-2. One of group titled Moon in Scandinavia.

13. [The World of Ghosts Moves Closer Every Hour]. Smith p 374. Mexico 1936-8. A later version is in MS in UBCC.

14. Lupus in Fabula. Smith p 374-375. "Those animals that follow us in dream." A later but not final draft of IC9. This title has since been transferred to another poem for which it is more apt. See this issue.

15. [He Plays the Piano with a Razor]. Smith p 375. Irreg. sonnet, Mexico 1936-8. One of group called Songs for Second Childhood.

16. & 17 [Reprints of IC 1, 3]. Smith p 372, 371-372.

18. The Canadian Turned Back at the Border. *Arena* (London) n.2:58-60 [Autumn 1949]. "A singing smell of tar, of the highway." Elaborately rhymed, 8 10-line stanzas. Vancouver & Dollarton, 1939-40.

19. [Reprint of IC3, slightly rev.] *Twentieth Century Canadian Poetry,* ed. Earle Birney, Toronto: Ryerson, 1953. p 25 (notes, p 137-138).

20 & 21 [Reprints of IC11 & 14]. *Penguin Book of Canadian Verse,* ed. Ralph Gustafson. London, Penguin, 1959, p 163, 164.

22. [The Flowering Past]. *N.Y. Times* Sunday 11 Oct 1959, sec 4, p 10E. "There is no poetry when you live there." Sonnet, Dollarton c1950.

23. [No Still Path]. *N.Y. Times* 1 Dec 1959, sec L, p 38. "Alas, there is no still path in my soul." Sonnet, Dollarton, late 1940s.

24. Le Vendredi-Saint De M. Lowry Sous Un Véritable Cactus. *Les Lettres Nouvelles,* n.s.5:89, Jul-Aug 1960. This & next 7 entries record tr. into French by Jean Follain for special Lowry n. (IA17). Dollarton, early 1950s; see IC39.

25. Réveil. IC24 p 90. Dollarton, early 1950s. See IC40.

26. Harpies. IC24 p 90. Unpubl. original has same title. Dollarton 1943.

27. Nulle Poésie. IC24 p 91. See IC22.

28. Pas Le Temps De S'Arrêter Ni Réflécher. IC24 p 91. Quatrains, Dollarton 1940s. See IC58.

29. Hommes A Vestes Battantes. IC24 p 92. Unpublished original titled Men with Coats Thrashing. "Our lives we do not weep." Dollarton?

30. Prière Pour L'Année Nouvelle. IC24 p 92-93. Unpubl. original has many titles, latest: Prayer from the Wicket Gate for Forty-One Doors for Forty-Two. "A trillion moons the thimbleberries: coral." Sonnet to Conrad Aiken, New Year's Day 1942.

31. L'Ukulele De Tom Le Chauffeur. IC24 p 93. See IC5.

32-35. [Reprints of IC3, 1, 9, 11]. *Oxford Book of Canadian Verse,* ed. A. J. M. Smith. Toronto, London, N.Y.: Oxford Univ.P., 1960, p 249, 250, 251, 251-252.

36. Imprisoned In A Liverpool Of Self. *Contact* (San Francisco) n.9:83, Feb 1961. Rime royal, Dollarton, late 1940s. (This issue prints also the next 8 items).

37. In The Oaxaca Gaol, IC36 p 84. "I have known a city of dreadful night." Oaxaca, Mexico, 1936. Lowry wrote this after he had been arrested and held for breach of a passport regulation.

38. Don't Have One For The Road. IC36 p 85. "Moons I have lost and suns unwept and gone." Dollarton, late 1940s. Some phrases are echoed in IA22.

39. Mr. Lowry's Derivative Good Friday Under A Real Cactus. IC36 p 85. "Because I am a fraud." See IC24.
40. Eye-Opener. IC36 p 85. "How like a man, is Man, who rises late." See IC25.
41. [The Pilgrim]. IC36 p 87. "A pilgrim passes through the town at night." Sonnet, Dollarton, late 1940s.
42-44. [Reprints of IC4, 22, 7]. IC36 p 84-86.
45. Alternative. *Tamarack Review* (Toronto) n.19, Spring 1961. "Rather than that, I'd go down to the bar." One of a group titled The Cantinas. (This isue prints also the next 17 items).
46. Because of No Moment. IC45. "And now I brood on what I think I know." Dollarton, early 1940s. One of a group titled Songs from the Beach, or Eridanus.
47. Blepharipappus Glandulosus or White Tidy-Tips. IC45. "I prayed to say a word as simple." Dollarton. Cp. *Volc.* 207. One of a group titled Nursery Rhymes.
48. [Blank Sonnet]. IC45. "There is a tide in the affairs of men." One of a group titled The Comedian.
49. Christ Walks in this Infernal District Too. IC45. "Beneath the Malebolge lies Hastings Street." Vancouver, c1939-40.
50. Epitaph. IC45. "Malcolm Lowry." Mexico.
51. The dead man sat in the sun. IC45. Mexico.
52. Draft Board. IC45. "Back broad and straight from crop to hooks." Dollarton, wartime.
53. [Fragment]. IC45. "A wounded voice over the telephone." Mexico 1936-8. Cp. lines 11-12 with *Volc.* 186.
54. The Dollarton Bus Stop. IC45. "I fear it much as I fear death." Four-beat "sonnet", Dollarton.
55. Jokes in the Galley. IC45. "There is no pity at sea." Rondelet, Dollarton. One of a group titled The Roar of the Sea and the Darkness. Cp. theme with *Ultramarine;* see also *Volc.* 167.
56. Lines on the Poet being Informed that his Epic about the Philistines etc. Needed Cutting. IC45. "David." Dollarton, 1946, while revising *Volc.*
57. Note for a Poem. IC45. "Study the irregular verb." Couplet, Oaxaca, 1945.
58. No Time to Stop and Think. IC45. "The only hope is the next drink." Triolet. See IC28.
59. The Paths of Wolves. IC45. "So he would rather have written those lines." Sonnet, Dollarton.
60. Semicolon Technique. IC45. "Christ I am tired of fruit in poetry." Prob. Dollarton, early 1950s; cp. a passage in Lowry's "Letter" on Conrad Aiken (ID4) p 83.
61. Vigil Forget. IC45. "Vigil Forget went ten miles in a camion." Mexico. One typescript in UBCC is dated, in author's hand, 1936.
62. [The Volcano is dark]. IC45. Mexico. Cp. *Volc.* 323-324.

63.-71. Nine new poems in this issue of *Canadian Literature,* with prefatory note.

D: ARTICLES AND REVIEWS

1. [Review of *Turvey,* novel by Earle Birney]. *Thunderbird* (University of British Columbia) 5:24-26, Dec. 1949; 1300 w.
2. Garden of Etla. *United Nations World* (N.Y.) June 1950, p 45-47; 2300 w. General article on Mexico, Dollarton.
3. [Advance rev. of *A Long Day's Dying,* novel by Frederick Buechner]. Back of jacket, N.Y., Knopf, 1950; 125 w. Dollarton.
4. A Letter. *Wake* (N.Y.) n.11:80-89, 1952; 4500 w. Essay in praise of Conrad Aiken, in form of letter dated "Dollarton, B.C. / Canada / Nov 28, 1951," & written esp. for this "Conrad Aiken number."
5. [Advance rev. of *Masters of the Dew,* novel by Jacques Romain (Hayti) in tr. of Langston Hughes & Mercer Cook]. Back of jacket. N.Y.; 400 w. Dollarton.
6. Préface. Signed "Malcolm Lowry" but written by Clarisse Francillon; see IIAiv29.

E: LETTERS

THE FOLLOWING letters appeared, in the French translation of Clarisse Francillon, in the Malcolm Lowry Special Edition of *Les Lettres Nouvelles,* IA17.

1. To Clarisse Francillon, p 206. Undated. [1953?]. Begins "Carissima Clarisse / Le nouveau libre . . ." Vancouver.
2. To Albert Erskine [ed., Reynal & Hitchcock edition of *Volc.*], p 184-186. Dated "Dollarton, 15 juillet 46."
3. To Albert Erskine, p 186-188. Dated "Haïti, janvier 47."
4. To Albert Erskine, p 188-189. Dated "Dollarton, Nov. 7, 1949."
5. To Albert Erskine, p 189-193. Undated. Begins "Cher Albert, / Votre lettre est arrivée sans anicroche . . ."
6. To Albert Erskine, p 193-194. Dated "Dollarton, Canada, Octobre."
7. To David Markson [American writer, friend, author of unpub. academic thesis on *Volc.*], p 194-197. Dated "5 février 1954." Dollarton.
8. To David Markson, p 198-202. Dated "10 mai 1954 . . . Dollarton."
9. To David Markson, p 203-204. Extract, undated. [About 24 May 1954].
10. To David Markson, p 204-205. Dated "Chateau d'Otrante. / Mardi, Novembre." Dollarton, 1953.

F: RADIO ADAPTATIONS

THE FOLLOWING are radio adaptations of *Under the Volcano* made by other writers.

1. Studio One, Columbia Broadcasting System, 29 Apr 1947, 9:30-10:30 p.m., New York City. Writer-Director: Fletcher Markle. Producer: Robert J. Landry. Script Editor: Gerald Noxon. Original music: Alexander Semmler. Consul: Everett Sloane. Yvonne: Anne Burr. Hugh: Hedley Rainnie. Narrator: Joe de Santis. (For reviews see IIAv).
2. German language adaptation. Berlin [1951?] Consul: Peter Lorre. Further information desired.

G: UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL

IN FEBRUARY, 1961, the University of British Columbia Library purchased, and established in its Special Collections, the posthumous papers of Malcolm Lowry in the possession of his widow, Mrs. Margerie Lowry. In addition to extensive manuscript and typescript holdings of the many drafts of *Under the Volcano* and of the published novellas, short stories and poems, and most of the printed material by and about Malcolm Lowry, this connection contains the following unpublished work:

1. "October Ferry to Gabriola". Novel. Dollarton, c1949-54. Set on B.C. coast. Complete first draft, incomplete subsequent draftings & notes. Temporarily on loan to Mrs. Lowry for preliminary editing for publ.
2. "Lunar Caustic." Novella. Complete first draft titled "The Last Address" (publ. only in Fr. tr.; see IA13), New York 1934-5. Set in Bellevue Psychiatric Hospital. Complete second draft, titled "Swinging the Maelstrom." Mexico & Dollarton. Incomplete third draft, titled "Lunar Caustic." TS of editing from these drafts by Margerie Lowry & Earle Birney for publ., 66 p.
3. "Dark as the Grave Wherein my Friend is Laid." Novel, Mexican setting. Dollarton 1950s. Incomplete drafts.
4. "La Mordida." Novel, Mexican setting. Dollarton, from late 1940s. Incomplete drafts.
5. "In Ballast to the White Sea." Novel based on voyage to Norway c1930. Two MS notebooks, early 1930s, and charred fragment of final copy. Remainder destroyed when Lowry beach house burned, 1944.
6. "Under the Volcano." Short story. Original version, dealing with central incident in chap. 8 of novel. Cuernavaca c1936.

7. "Enter One in Sumptuous Armour." Short story. Draft, revision, & notes for further revision. Original c 1930; notes much later. Set in English public school.
8. "June 30th 1934!" Short story. TS carbon with MS revisions. Prob. begun 1934, France. Set in train, France.
9. "In the Black Hills." Short story. TS draft & 2 revisions, plus MS additions. Western U.S. setting. Probably early.
10. "The Lighthouse Invites the Storm." Collected poems, about 1000 pages MS & TS. Some in unique copies, others with many revisions, extending from c1930 to time of death. A selection, preserving the title, has been edited (180 p TS) by Earle Birney & Margerie Lowry, for publ. Some of these have recently been publ. serially (see IC36-41, 45-62, & poems in this issue of *Canadian Literature*).
11. "The Ship Sails On." Stage dramatization of Nordahl Grieg's novel. (See IA2). Several incomplete drafts.
12. "Tender is the Night." Screen adaptation of Scott Fitzgerald's novel. Working copy and final draft.
13. "Moby Dick." Radio dramatization of Melville's novel. Drafts & final copy.
14. "Halt! I Protest." Essay on philosophy of freedom. Incomplete.
15. [Critique of novel by Philippe Thoby-Marcelin & Pierre Marcelin, *The Pencil of God* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951; tr. Leonard Thomas)]. MS notes, 80 p, incomplete.
16. [Notebooks & journals, MS, several hundred p.]
17. [Letters to Lowry and drafts of letters from him, unsorted].
18. [Unsorted miscellaneous material].

THE SECOND PART of the Bibliography of Malcolm Lowry, prepared by Earle Birney and Margerie Lowry, will be published in our next (Summer) issue. It will be concerned with writings of various kinds *about* Lowry.

The Summer issue will also include a further piece by Malcolm Lowry himself for which space could not be found in this issue; it is the Preface he wrote for the French edition of *Under the Volcano,* which has never before appeared in English.

The Summer issue will otherwise be devoted largely to studies of Canadian poetry, and will include—among other items—essays on the Confederation Poets, on Emile Nelligan and on Phyllis Webb.

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