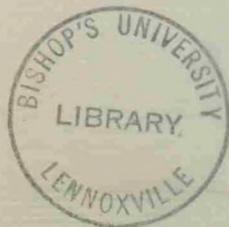
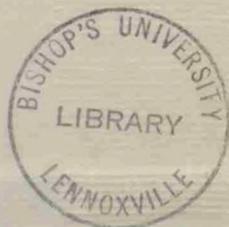


ships





As a result of problems of finance and of length, the publication and release of this issue of the **NEW MITRE** has been delayed until now. The editor sincerely apologizes for this excessive and extraordinary lateness. It is hoped that the material herein will provide a small compensation to those who have been either upset or bewildered by the situation. And to the people who contributed material and, in darkness, have been forced to wait to see their work in print: thank you for contributing, and a special apology.

Richard Price

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*This issue of the NEW MITRE is dedicated to the memory of*

DR. RODERICK P. THALER

*and*

THE REV. SIDNEY JELlicoe

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## THE OLD MEN

Whirling eddies of November leaves  
whisper about their feet.  
They shuffle through them  
alone  
go towards empty flats  
with their beer.  
Sometimes they meet,  
chat in lobbies  
then take the elevator,  
the old men.

lynn pageau

## AFTER THE SNOW STORM

Whipped by a riotous wind,  
shoals and eddies edge a wild, frozen sea:  
delicate curves of light and dark  
revealed by bright sun.  
A bird hops the crest of a frozen wave.

A hard, white expanse  
exhibits a line of dark trees  
sharp against a brisk sky:  
snow-blown fields  
after a wind-blown storm.

dedicated to Claudette

lynn pageau

## WINTER

It was a hard winter.  
Ice froze in troughs and under eaves.  
Mysteries moved  
in the still of the trees  
and the straw barns,  
and the owls kept the cold  
in their icicle-omened feathers.

There, the man kneeled on stone  
and called the flame of love  
but the fire broke hard  
by the iron wood,  
and all the clear birds of the wood  
listened at his stone, cold gate.

His skull was full  
of the flurry of wings, of birds  
splitting the air like flames.

On the floor among ice,  
he called out to the birds  
and the beasts  
in the slow fire of the woods.  
Branches snapped in their sleeves  
and cast white shadows  
on the woolly cabin roof.

Inside,  
his dream was born in pain.

A prayer:  
to the flying birds  
and curling fire smoke,  
to the breath in the wind  
and the shadow under snow,  
to the warm blood huddling  
under the window skin.

Then, in a heave of light,  
the snow brought forth miracles of snow.  
Ghosts walked the white paths

and snow drifts flamed  
in the night.

Then the prayer was answered  
in her presence  
and the beasts  
moaned in their shivering stalls.  
Over iron hay and stone  
she stepped  
to where she melted into words  
by his side.  
In the slow, cold fire  
she melted.

The night settled its weight  
on stone and ice,  
and his breath was as pale  
as the ghost of snow.  
Cold  
shivered under the eaves.

And a single set of footprints  
marked out a crazy path  
over a season's horizon.

The birds and the beasts  
froze solid  
in the ashes of the wood.

douglas buchanan

## CAMPING

Carefully  
we move through the trees,  
taking care where we step.  
Around our heads  
branches play cruel, grasping  
games, revealed  
even through the skin of leaves.  
In these parts,  
the trees become

coldly aware  
at dusk.

I could tell you more  
but the fire gives out.  
I hear the sound  
of approaching birds.  
They have beaked thoughts.

I will withdraw  
to my nylon stockade  
and hope that the coming  
storm  
deals only in rain.

douglas buchanan

## THE END

Buzz of flies  
in this room  
make it late afternoon.  
The sun begins to warm  
a uniformly cold day  
but the shadows are already long.

In the woods  
is silence.  
Lone geese pass overhead  
avoiding the building.  
You can almost hear  
the leaves turning red  
yellow and brown.

If one was to write  
would that be the only important thing?  
The shadows are already long.

douglas buchanan

## RETURN

The sun rising  
out of broken, white  
eggshells,  
climbing over the dusty ledge  
into the window;  
leaving the table covered  
with crumbs  
like a violent relief:  
sunscape.

The clock ticking  
at time,  
cats rustling softly  
over the dirty floor.

The room  
as you left it.

The sun rising,  
the preparation of food  
(through engorgement  
to excretion)  
processes to complete.

The knock on the door.

Spilled coffee  
dripping  
onto the dirty floor,  
the cats crouching in fear  
in the dusty corners.

I advance to the door,  
revenge  
in my hands;  
but your face  
is obscured  
by the sun.

douglas buchanan

## I FRAGMENTI

I was so happy when you said that you write poetry.  
It made you seem a little more like me,  
And that is something that I at last can deal with.

• • •

The shadows creeping stealthily across the wall  
Tell me that you should have been here long ago.

• • •

I awoke from my daydreaming to find the day gone,  
The sun cut loose, drifting, floating away,  
Sliding down its color-river,  
Sinking slowly behind a great wall of dark trees.  
My coffee grown cold, scraps of song scrawled here and there,  
Lay forgotten as I sat and wondered—  
Will I ever see you again?

• • •

The houses crouch contentedly on the hillside;  
Yellow squares mark habitation.  
I like to peek inside the uncurtained windows  
As I saunter past.

joan hanson

## RAINY SPRING WALK

the wet road reflected  
tender-leafed trees,  
fluffy bloated clouds  
and a  
red-breasted robin  
with a worm  
dangling.

i stepped on them.

brenda hartwell

## NIHILIST

I am a passing cloud  
to You the Sun

I will take the blame  
for rain

You will take the credit  
for flowers  
and every  
sun tan  
in Miami.

ian stephens

Saturday Eventide  
and I'm missing the cast party  
and the dancing  
kisses  
beer, wine, etc.

joints of marihuana  
Drugs  
and kicking greasers  
outa ma way  
and with this blond baby  
sharing my armpit

a cigarette dangles from her lips  
she's tough  
she's with the boss

ian stephens

Really don't feel like a million  
dollars            today  
                      tonight  
                      New Year's Eve

alone

watching Guy Lombardo  
usher in another  
                  and another  
                  and another

all over again.

ian stephens

Oh yes  
  it wasn't too long far back in time  
  
when in the dark we traded cold kisses  
  in the snow

below zero  
  drunk  
          knowing  
we're through

ian stephens





## QUESTION

If I approached you  
and told you how often  
my nightlamp has been  
asking about you

Or how intensely  
it pleads to become acquainted  
with your tiny inquisitive breasts  
and taut pompous buttocks

Or how urgently  
it awaits the opportunity  
to absorb your conversation  
as well as your silence

Would you imagine  
that a complex scheme was being enacted  
with you as an unfortunate element  
in its shrewd machinery

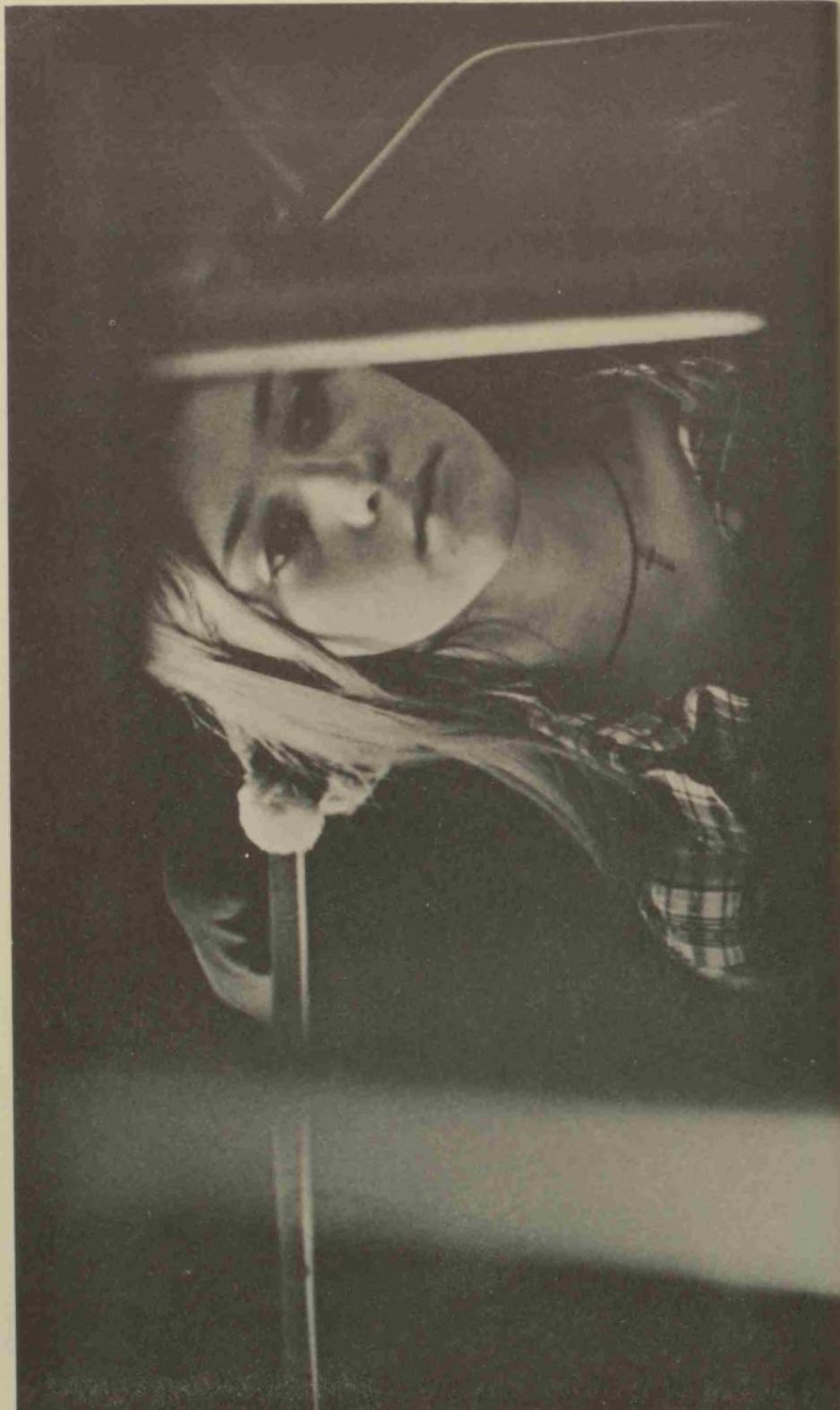
Or would you admit  
that you are sitting single  
in a black and hollow room  
shaking

scott lawrence

## NIGHT POEM

A symphony of nightbugs  
chanting anthems to a  
Silence  
that satisfied lovers  
protect  
like a tear

scott lawrence



## FIRST ENCOUNTER: FACE TO FACE

You flatter me terribly.  
You open your stable,  
Bring out a horse —  
Black, three heads,  
Big as a dragon —  
Say: Ride! Ride this  
Twice around the field  
And my orchard is yours.  
We don't even know names;  
I have still just arrived;  
And I think there is some mistake.  
You see, dear lady, I'm working,  
Working my way up North,  
Building fences, building walls  
Of invisible stone and brick.

richard price

## A POEM FOR LONELY HOUSEWIVES

the day you prayed against  
has come to the door  
a little man capped  
with a memory for you, lady  
the wind sucks at your eyes  
pulls at your ragged hair  
your shoes fill with water  
rise now I tell you  
go on down to the station  
catch a ride to the coast  
where the ocean slobbers  
and roars for your soul  
like Leviathan drunk  
on a Friday night  
get along to the coast  
to the beaches, to the waves

where your body will turn  
rise and spread  
a flower on a wave crest  
again and again  
till you're a carpet  
and cover the water  
can be walked on

richard price

### THIS DEATH

This ugly whispered death, when  
agile Narcissus, like an animal in heat,  
rolls over, curls up  
and rapes himself.  
The head of the flower,  
flushed in his thirsting mouth,  
sucked off, then swallowed.  
The sickness of his beauty, the creamy petals  
turning in his stomach, like worms  
knotted, convulsed,  
biting themselves,  
tail to mouth,  
in a final quiet agony  
of passion.

No cry, no sudden gasp of release,  
in the night no heavenly flame  
(green, red, or blue):  
no disturbance, no complaints —  
this death  
but a smeared dirty picture,  
a thin cold shadow  
passing slow across  
dark curdling waters,  
(in memory) a mirror  
in a dry and empty room.

richard price

### STYLE

Is it sincerity  
that makes me write,  
I still love you?

Grew tall toward  
the sun, with the light  
reached for  
a noticeable life.  
Along came the long raw cough,  
the wind, the careless music of the rain,  
snap the stem.

Fallen in the garden,  
in the long grass I prow! —  
a bit angry, a bit confused —  
yellow eyes that follow  
the dim light about shadows,  
the moaning dancers in the clearing;  
they can't stand still.  
They grow, circling myself:  
wider, wilder  
days, months, murked in revolution.  
Spittle turns to wine/slow time.

But now for truth, really  
I'm into the vase.  
I pose, dying —  
too much water and green glass;  
petals on the windowsill,  
words on your lip;  
you stand beside  
the big piano, singing  
(there is a tapping of feet),  
and if there is no sincerity,  
there is style,  
and your two famous tits,  
perfect and white,  
in movement now under cloth.

richard price

## THE PALE POET DESPAIRS

I read too many books  
Dream of statues  
Unveiled in the damp air  
I journey out for breakfast  
In the grey light of morning  
Drizzle falls, the wet pavements  
Reflect the angles  
Of taxis, raised boots, women  
And there is no further description  
Only the blur  
The movements, which are  
The problems of translation  
Of capturing that which is  
Alive, not static, not brittle  
The problems of holding the living  
The changing, with words  
I admit to defeat  
I give up  
And later, in darkness, dryness  
(After choosing a phrase)  
Beat flesh against stone

richard price

## TO A YOUNG BOY

To a young boy  
a church is full of death;  
even the Thanksgiving apples look stolen.  
Games and days are waiting —  
the shape of the hand  
touching finger to finger  
another hand.  
But in the later beginning  
there shall be seeds of the end.  
Adam able to use  
water as a mirror  
speaks calmly from the lonely shore:

I am something else again  
in this world of  
attractive birds and rocks.  
You are mine  
little sister,  
and it'll be fine  
for a world and a time,  
drinking red wine  
from belly to mouth,  
stumbling upwards, passing out.

richard price

## IT'S JULY

*sometimes you act just like a child*

The pressures of the passing summer:  
The twisting heat, the garden burned,  
Dead plants, cracked earth,  
But the last flower  
I saved, I ate it, and now  
You say you don't love me.

I redden my eyes, cry, Devil!  
Only last month you promised  
Forever; we danced as clouds  
Gather round the sun, like the rain,  
My fingers moved through the forests  
Of your body, urging up roses.

The shudder and the struggle  
Of the lumbering skies, the dry lightning,  
The heat, the heavy thunder  
Groping, rolling among the darkened hills.  
A boy, out late and alone,  
Arms around a tree, sags,  
Vomits up beer and petals.

richard price

## LI PO AT HOME

hushed on the shaded bank  
from beneath the branches  
of one tree  
he could see the still reflections  
of many trees

there is no wind on the river of tears

and at night, slipping through  
his slender gathering fingers,  
the moon among clouds and stones:  
a delicate pearly fish  
unobtainable  
floating free in the cool endless waters

there is no wind on the river of tears  
there is no sound but weeping

richard price

## EVENING WATCH

for Margaret Atwood

The dark shadows, the trees  
Blur, and tangle around  
their eager resourceless fingers.  
I see them moving up the valleys,  
Rivers, moving through these northern hills.  
Loads of bargains held over shoulders,  
Terminal stains on their hands and teeth —  
Picking berries, honouring the past.  
Susanna, I think they will harm us;  
I think they want to trade memories:  
Our forests their fields.  
In a week they'll be found,  
Our seeds — O Susanna remember  
Once they were free.

Let us wait back in the cabin,  
Write poems of fire,  
Hide all the trees.  
Susanna recall  
Once we were free,  
But now like flags,  
Drum beats, frothing waters,  
The saliva of wolves  
On the door...

richard price

## US POETS

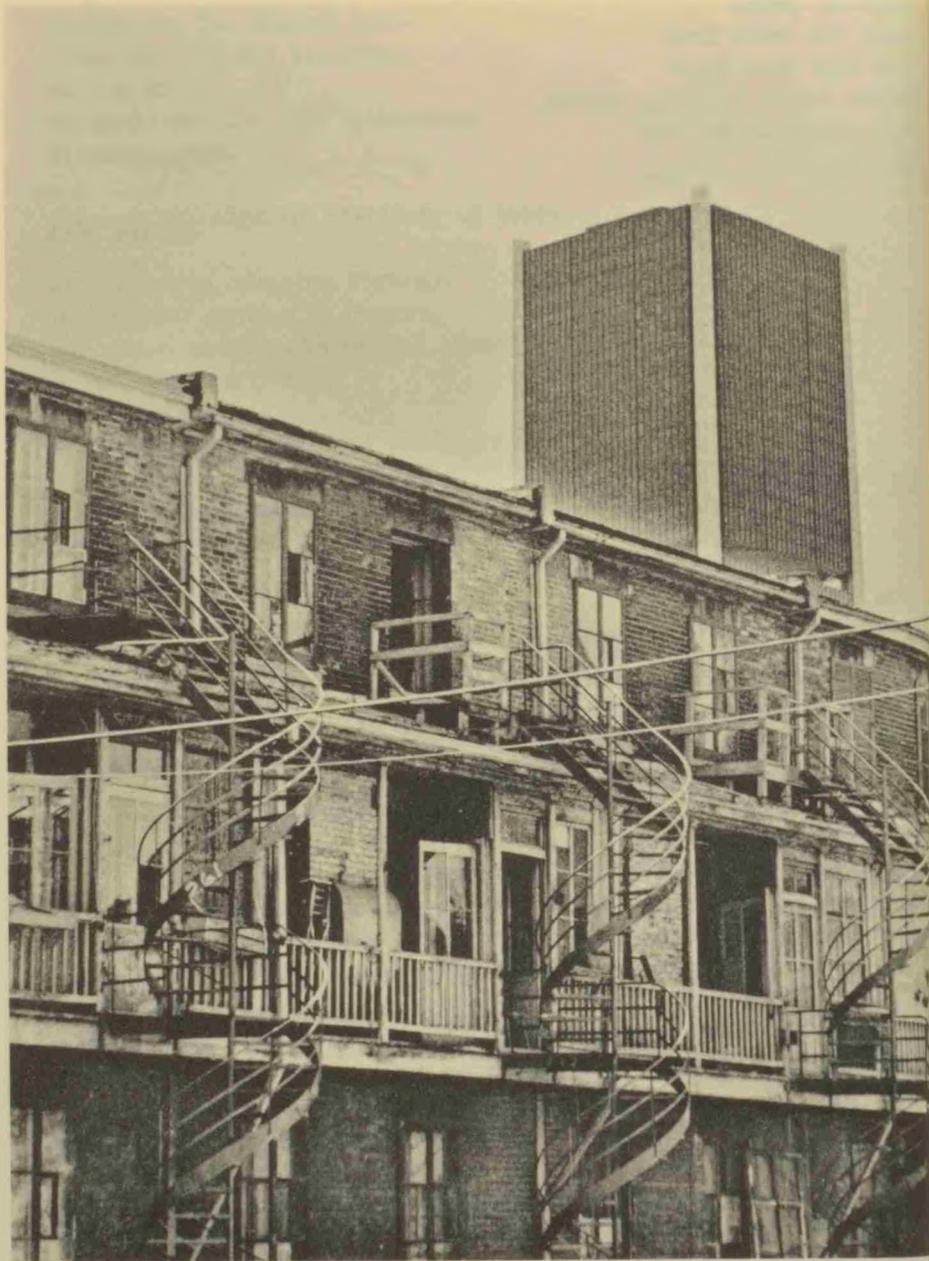
for S. L.

... o never can we forget,  
as we stare upon the drifting snow  
during the talk of poetry and cheap wine,  
and try to think about immortal paintings  
of roses, birds, and nudes descending

the deal gone down  
that beautiful soft fire, the unfolding  
embrace of love, come to a wintry end:  
the silence of the glossy snapshots  
curling in the drawer, the puzzling faces  
fastened to reclining bodies  
or centered in the sunny garden,  
their features angular and sharp  
but their expressions now indefinite

and on the way home  
past the river, full of ice, mumbling,  
when the sign says DONT WALK  
we crawl

richard price



robert macpherson

## THIN BOYS

to William Burroughs

I, the poet, warrior  
in prison drag  
I, the poet, warrior  
worn photo grey and seedy  
now hunched cold  
alone in the morning  
prepare the day in notes  
messages for thin boys  
legs of gazelles, hands of flame  
they are my thin boys  
will do my will  
sometimes  
dressed in tight pants  
black shirts, smiles  
curling on their lips  
do my will sometimes  
other times found standing  
in the city, pawing at the heart  
its life hung out on corners:  
dry saliva at their feet  
the wind knotted in their hair  
their words quick and rough  
blurred through cigarette smoke  
their eyes fingers sliding up  
past perfect knees in nylon —  
go by!  
they are *my* thin boys  
knives in the night  
for money for words  
they are my action  
they are my violence  
they are my thin boys  
I, the poet, warrior  
in prison drag

richard price

## ONCE AGAIN ON A FRIDAY NIGHT

What we need are some women.  
Mmmm, you're right, I said.  
So on with the tight coats,  
The swaggering boots, the smiles,  
And out the door, down the stairs,  
Onto the boogie-woogie street  
To walk slow with a swing,  
Cool as rocknroll Joes  
For an hour or more,  
And not a thing,  
But a cold-fingered dollar  
Spent quickly on a magazine.

richard price

## LUNCHLASSNIGHT

Hot tongue sandwich  
Two slices of ryed lip  
Lotsa saliva  
To go

richard price

Beware of bargains and high walls  
— Jericho fell for a song.

james messenger

## THE SPURIOUS COONERIST

ronald reeve

The Reverend William Archibald Spooner (1844-1930) of New College, Oxford, is remembered today by the peculiarity that made his every utterance an eagerly awaited occasion. "Kingquering congs their titles take," said he, announcing a hymn in the college chapel (the only "spoonerism" accepted as authentic by *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*). Two other remarks often attributed to him are, however, almost as well-known: "As the weather is clamp and dammy the meeting will be hauled in the hell below;" and again, referring to the need to refinish the chapel pews: "Let us refurbish these beery wenches."

Pronouncements such as these are symptomatic of a fairly common disruption of the motor mechanics of speech in certain types of people. Not all of its victims are Anglican clergymen, though I well remember another with whom I once worked who frequently reduced his congregation to helpless laughter with such utterances as, "They shall mount up with ings as weagles (said with great feeling after a pregnant pause); and again, "It is easier for a camel to go through the knee of an idol than for a rich man to enter the Gingdom of Cod."

A characteristic of this affliction is the lack of awareness on the spoonerist's part that he has, in fact, transposed his consonants, or even, in the more advanced cases, misplaced whole syllables. Like the inveterate despoiler of correct spelling, who cannot see that what he has written is not only wrong, but *looks* wrong, the spoonerist does not *hear* his furious crazes. He is convinced that the mounds he sakes correspond to the thinks he things — that the audness is in the minds of his odditors. Hence he is typically surprised at their gitters and tiggles, and demands a rimple season for it. "Are you trying to fee bunny?" he asks. "I have woken spell; perhaps you have bird hadly?"

Such is the unlotty hap of the spurious coonerist, who will idly observe that, as it is roaring with pain, he will mutton up his back, care a wap, and chance wetting get — then wonder why we lore with rafter.

One can only hope that when he really needs assistance he will have the sense to ask for a helping hand rather than a pat on the back!

## THADDEUS

david o'rouke

In his room there is a bed, and Thaddeus spends much of his time sleeping on it. The bookcase was painted brown on the occasion of his fourteenth birthday. It looks nice, because it matches the desk. On the mirror there remain obvious traces of CREST, PEP-SODENT and GILLETTE FOAMY. In the morning Thaddeus has been known to go at his face with more or less reckless abandon. His 1964 baseball trophy is tired and dusty.

Thaddeus has his graduation picture on one wall. Nearby, his old football sweater (#64) spreads its arms simply because Thaddeus has nailed it that way. The mosquitoes sneak into his room late at night. They hide in old #64 until Thaddeus falls asleep. There they make their plans and decide on which of his ears they will attack. Thaddeus finds summer nights a pain in the ass.

On another wall there has been pasted a tiny piece of paper which yet remains a little crinkled. She gave it to him one day in the cafeteria. She had been crying that morning and Thaddeus had wanted to put his arms around her. The paper read: I LOVE YOU, THADDEUS . . . TRULY, JUDE.

Jesus hangs above the bed. St. Joseph is resting on a shelf. They love children, it rained this afternoon, and Thaddeus' mother still goes to Mass on Good Friday.

Last night Thaddeus went to a party, which, for him, is rare. Parkin was there and by ten o'clock he was up to his old tricks. He was wearing a lady's nightgown and a pot on his head. Parkin was a good friend and so Thaddeus mentioned to him that he was making a fool of himself. Parkin answered that the thing was you had to screw the system. They're laughing at me, he said, but I'm laughing at them. Parkin could dance well too.

For that matter, most everyone at the party could dance well except Thaddeus, who liked parties so that he could leave early. When he wasn't leaving early, he would wander about with a little too much wine in his glass to be socially acceptable and do imitations of Hollywood stars and sports celebrities. He wasn't very good at it and so usually people guessed the wrong stars and celebrities. Thaddeus would always pretend that they had guessed correctly and then head for the bar to put too much wine in his glass.

Most of the guests at the party were drinking alcohol. Although Parkin was twenty-one years old, he loved it when people drank too much and got sick. A veteran party-goer, he would linger by the washroom for the better part of the evening. At this party, though, some of the younger guests were sitting on the floor and smoking marijuana. Thaddeus walked over and asked them why they were sitting on the floor with so many chairs about. They told Thaddeus they were smoking marijuana. Thaddeus told Parkin and Parkin laughed at them. It was a good time.

John was at the party too. Everyone had been asking where John was until he finally arrived without his date. Everyone then began asking where John's date was, but John wouldn't tell. He felt badly and preferred to sulk. Thaddeus hated people who sulked.

Fred and Alice spent the party on the couch. They were in love and spent every party on the couch. Thaddeus hated Fred and Alice too, because they looked like such a good couple. They would be married in another year and Fred would have a good job and be making good money. Alice would spend her days cleaning the house and organizing discussion groups among the wives in the neighbourhood. Their holidays would be spent in Florida, or at a ski lodge when the kids got old enough.

Around eleven o'clock the hostess finally asked Thaddeus how he was doing. Thaddeus made a John Wayne grimace and said he wasn't doing too badly. Thaddeus was in love with the hostess, but the hostess seemed to be in love with her boyfriend who was going to be a doctor. The doctor was with John, but he couldn't get him to stop sulking. Parkin was there as well, but Parkin was laughing.

The hostess was very pretty and her outward appearance had not changed much from that day in the cafeteria. Thaddeus was not a good skier and did not know how to drive a car and always put too much wine in his glass. Thaddeus was a little afraid that the hostess would notice these things, although there was a time when it didn't matter. Then she was Jude, but now she was the hostess and she was leaving to put on another record.

Thaddeus looked at the dancers. He was not good at dancing because the entire concept was insane. Why anyone would want to dance, except if they enjoyed sweating, was beyond comprehension. It defied logic. It was almost un-American. Thaddeus tried to tell the party-goers this, but they preferred his imitations. He even used little words, yet it never worked.

Around eleven-thirty, Olive said, "Four summers ago our country-place was smack in the wilderness. Smack in the wilderness. And now do you know what it's like?". Everyone was silent,

except Parkin, who thought it was funny because it was common knowledge that Olive was a loser and would cry at anything after a few drinks. But Thaddeus hated Olive because she always called him Thaddy, and so he answered out loud, "A Howard Johnson's Drive-In". Olive started crying and Parkin started laughing and John stopped sulking and Fred and Alice looked up from the couch and the doctor gulped under his turtleneck. For a moment the hostess who used to be Jude looked at Thaddeus the way she used to, but it was only for a moment and then she began serving drinks again.

Thaddeus spent the rest of the evening with a girl named Claire who wrote high school poetry about leaves buried in a blanket of snow. They fell asleep in the bathtub when Claire had finally stopped talking about the beauty of nature.

Thaddeus' thoughts drifted back to his room. He used to hide his vegetables all around the house. Some of them he hid in a drawer behind his LIQUID TIP marking pen. Now a TIME magazine, pictures of Fidel Castro, and an unfinished novel live there.

He had always dreamed of being someone famous so that children could study him in their readers every day. He was going to be Eldridge Cleaver, The Lennon Sisters, Winston Churchill and Ernest Hemingway. Maybe Leonard Cohen too. He was going to be all of these people and then quite a bit more.

The radio is playing and Thaddeus is left alone with Bing Crosby. He hates making his bed so he lets his mother do it. She listens to the talk-shows and likes phoning in.

Thaddeus hates talk-shows.

## HE SMILED

peace in viet nam (with honor)  
i read it to frank  
who smiled  
as men sometimes do

i have never described frank  
well here goes  
he is a not so tall man with dark curly hair  
who is not a negro

although he would like to be  
a member of some minority group  
i don't know why  
never did  
never will  
some of his habits annoy me  
done on purpose (i'm  
sure) to drive me insane

this morning  
while we were brushing our teeth  
we looked at our reflection in the mirror  
and i said peace in viet nam (with honor)  
frank sensed with honor  
was in parenthesis although i had said  
nothing to indicate this (he is so  
bright) told me the times  
they are a changin'  
but not really  
he (as though in on  
some cosmic joke) said  
i was only twenty years old

david o'rourke

## BLUE SKY

drinking and play  
ing the tv on in  
the bar i met a  
philosopher with  
chess books so  
we played a few  
games to waste  
the while away

to waste  
the while away  
we wasted the  
while away

the sky being  
blue the bar  
offered a way  
to stay within  
we thought we  
were within  
thinking we  
had found a way

thinking we  
had found a way  
we wasted the  
while away

david o'rourke

## CONFRONTATION

(a fill in the blanks poem)

the radical                    ists held out  
though outnumbered  
the fascist                    ists bombed from a blue sky  
and tanks crawled the streets

the radical                    ists fought on  
to erase                        ist propaganda  
the fascist                    ists replied with censorship  
to make  
the country  
safe from the                ists  
for the                        ist way of life

it was over after many lifetimes  
the                                ists had scored a total victory  
under an empty blue sky  
the                                ist workers returned to their factories  
and talked excitedly  
of the revolution

david o'rourke

## WHEN

when the irresistible force  
meets  
the immovable object

a loud "bang" will be heard

politicians  
will negotiate  
& advocate

a return  
to cease-fire lines

china will boycott the conference

canada  
will play the role  
of peace-maker

bringing  
the good  
& the bad

together

canadian nationalists will have orgasms

it will be in all the papers  
"AGREEMENT REACHED

forces to be made  
less irresistible

objects  
less immovable"

in the yukon  
there will be a man  
and a lake  
like a mirror

he will be fishing  
wondering  
or making love to his woman

dauid o'rourke

## MY FATHER

like my father  
i could never understand  
people who laugh and sing  
abstract innocence in time of war

reality  
is the morning newspaper  
he used to say  
the americans are loud  
and  
what's on wide world of sports  
today

after supper each night  
he would fall asleep  
a one-way telescreen blaring  
in the parlor

dauid o'rourke

## BUTCH CASSIDY

with muscles like chicago  
and a laugh like the rockies

ahead (alogcabin)  
where dreams are

hitching on a highway  
of now to yes or even

hoppin freights (clackety  
—clackety-clack) to where

ever sunshine children  
and good trout fishin is

he pauses (lighting a  
cigarette) in the darkness

dauid o'rourke

## MALCOLM X

the room was oppressive  
smoke  
tales of lsd

i talked about you  
lecturing  
to a virgin audience

they listened politely  
almost attentively  
taking drags with ease

your life  
your politics  
your death

blackness  
power  
and zootsuit

the discussion  
progressed  
to near dope busts

sunshine  
moonshine  
shoeshine

i said  
malcolm x used to shine shoes  
it was off the topic

there's frost on the window  
off the topic

it snowed today  
off the topic

are you alive  
off the topic

## PHONECALL

david o'rouke

The telephone is ringing so I have to leave my room and go into the kitchen where our telephone is located. My dog follows me into the kitchen. My dog follows me everywhere. What a pain in the ass that Frank can be sometimes.

"Hello," I say.

The voice that answers me is that of an old man who is, apparently, in heat. He is breathing in spasms and tells me how much he loves me. I say I'm sorry, but that he must have the wrong number. He says he knows it's me, Tony, and that he's going to come over and eat me cause he's been watching the way my body moves for a long time and he likes what he sees.

I say, "Please don't do that, mister, please don't do that!" Then I remember my name is David, not Tony, and I tell this to the man. The man lets fly a long list of obscenities and says he's going to let me go this one time. I reply, "Wait a minute," and then give him the telephone number of a guy whom I hate because he is noble, true-blue, and can get you that first down when you need it. Moreover, this kid looks like Audie Murphy. I give the man this fellow's phone number and tell him it's Tony's. The man blows a kiss and hangs up.

My dog is now barking because he wasn't in on the phonecall. I explain the situation to him and we both get a laugh. He is happy now. I pick up a jar of NESCAFE INSTANT COFFEE and throw it. My dog chases it. I throw sticks, milk bottle, cups — you name it, I throw it — and my dog, Frank, will chase it. Such are Frank's brains.

david o'rouke

## NOTIME

were there no clocks  
sun moon stars  
calendars seasons  
day and night  
there would be notime  
or time enough

and then i'd  
spin a tale  
until you were  
dizzy on your  
knees crying

why not spend our notime  
twogether sailing  
across a mythic sea  
to islands  
hitherto unknown

time ends fantasies  
life  
dreams (vision  
ary and other  
wise) and yet

you tell me your time  
is reserved  
a parking place  
and i wonder if  
at notime you would be  
happier (that is  
to say) realizing  
sunrise is only an obscene  
reminder of old  
age

david o'rourke

## SAILBOAT

You have your sailboat now  
and the feeling you once knew  
or thought you understood  
and called various names  
one being dependence  
is behind you  
like a distant shoreline

But a word about the wind  
on occasion it will caress your sails  
and lead you to a wasteland  
an island without animals or vegetation  
or it may seduce you to a mirage  
and tempt you with native fruit  
that does not exist  
but has satisfied many  
There will be times when you will grow  
to hate the wind  
as it rips a sail  
or leaves you in a whirlpool  
facing a tropic storm without protection  
And you will cry  
and curse the gods  
and the day you put out to sea  
but these things are good  
They will tell you where you have been  
and remind you of where you want to go

For you will discover  
that you are the wind  
breathing life into your craft  
setting your own direction  
when it is most needed  
You are the energy  
that can snap a tall pine  
to the ground  
or lull a child to sleep  
with music soothing to the soul  
The freedom that you now know  
is a force no wise man can deny  
and a love that no sailor is able to resist

Those who cling the land  
cannot forsee the wonders  
you are about to behold

David O'Rourke

Hesitant footsteps  
A fork in the road  
Flanked by twin moonbeams imprisoned  
In ribbons of steel. Letting  
The quixotic windmill of mind  
Whirl itself out. The forest beckons  
Murmuring soft secrets  
Moonlight muffled pines  
Behind the shadows scurry  
Echo of squirrel or whisper  
Unknown and un-nameable. Furtively  
Meandering back to moonbeams  
Fleeing on twin rails  
To a rising sun.

Andrew Bank

I heard Bob Dylan tell  
Me on underground radio  
The Pepsi and Honda ads  
To send my cheque  
Or chargex number  
And get a special  
Album of protest  
Songs that moved  
Our generation.  
A true collector's item  
The perfect find  
Or gift to store away  
For town house bedecked  
With Braques and Klees  
And souvenirs of Marrakech  
Katmandu, St. Moritz  
And places in between.  
Music to search by,  
Sipping Brandy Alexandre  
And that still unwritten novel.

Andrew Bank

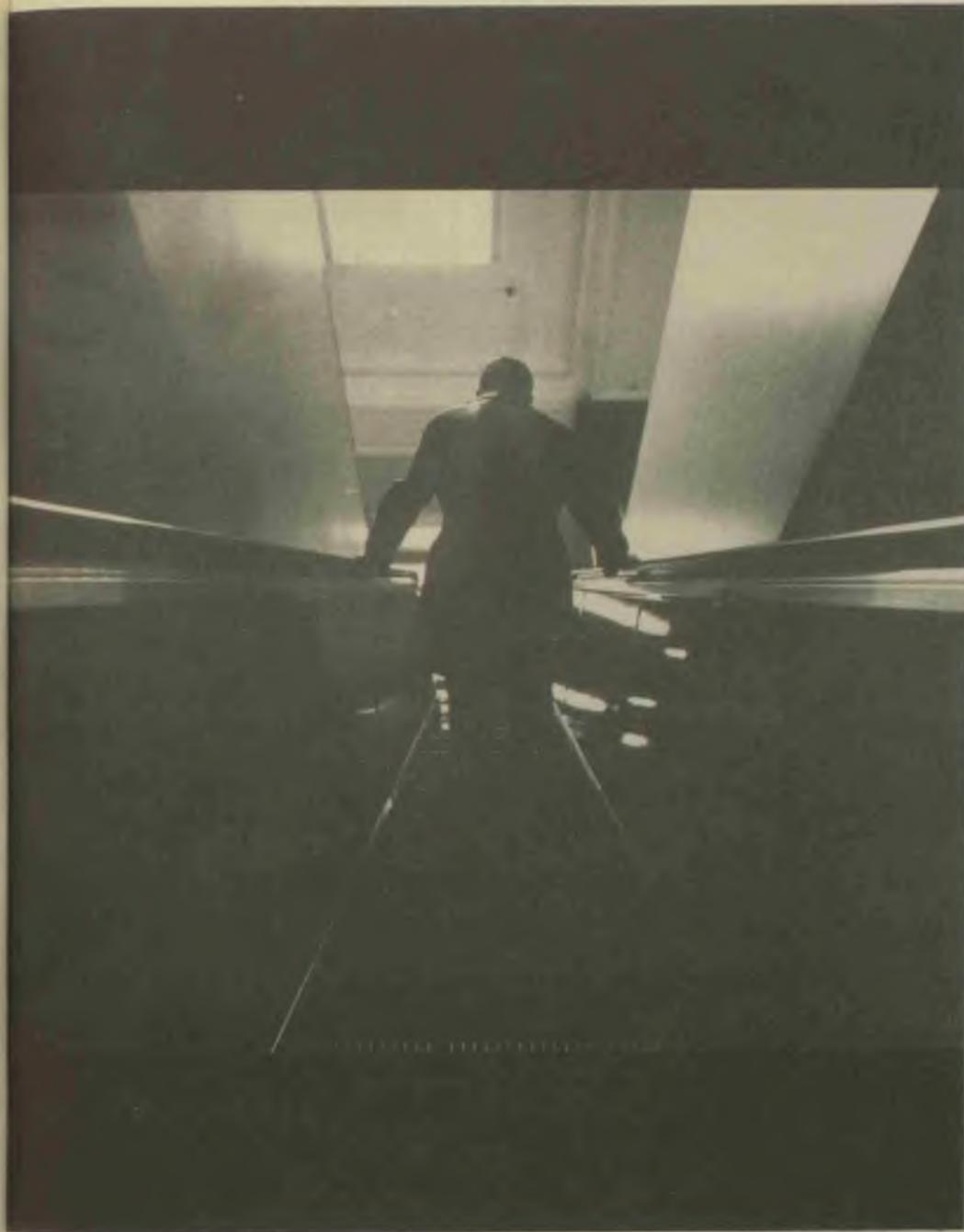
**SI ES QUES**

If only  
in his lonely  
**DESPERATION**  
a pen  
could have served  
as lips  
letters  
as words  
pages  
as love

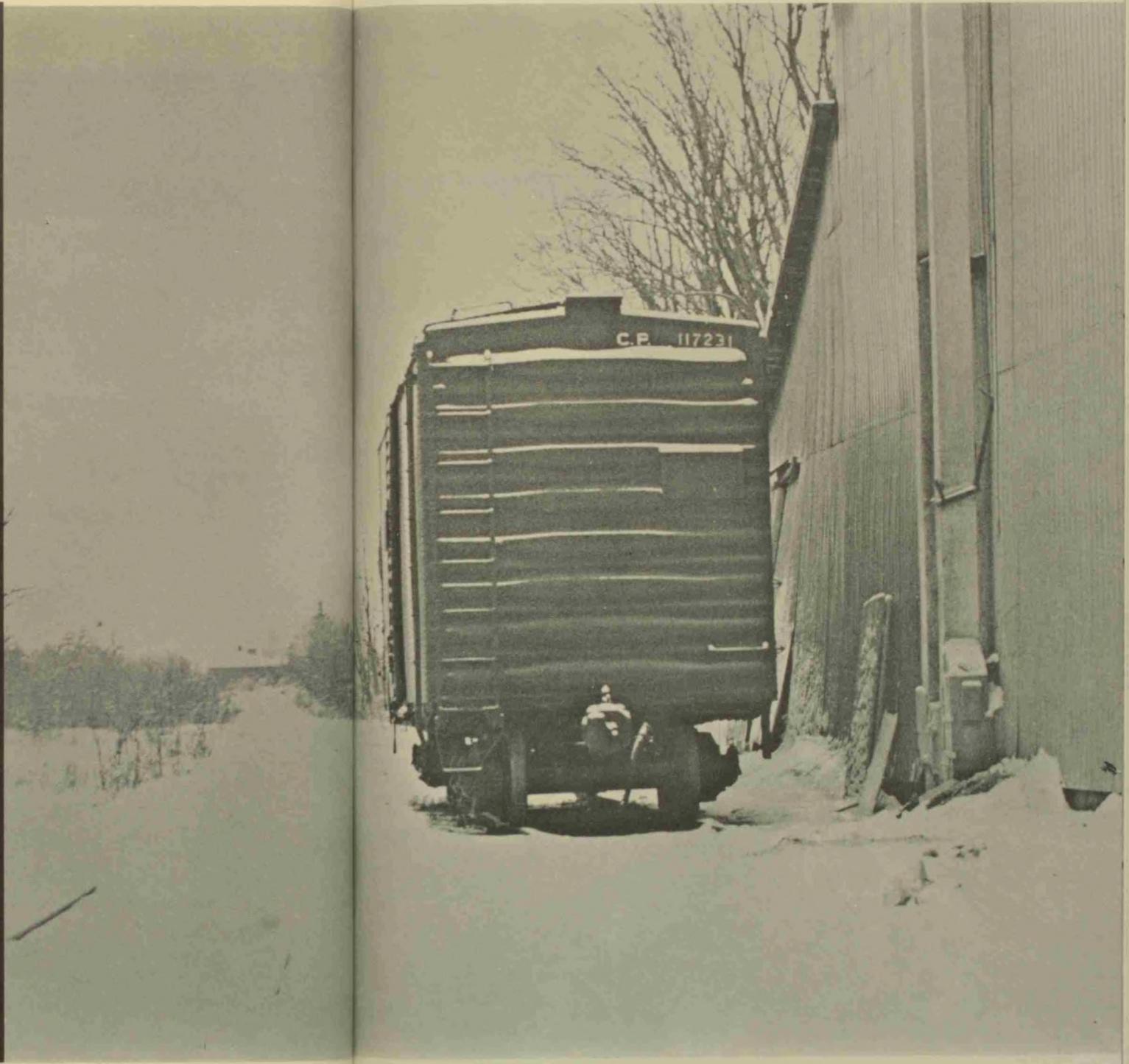
**LOST**  
would have been  
a matter of  
miles  
between two  
(So many damned  
if onlies)

now only one.

**herbert bailey**



**robert macpherson**





both photographs: robert macpherson





cathy echen

## THIS IS MADNESS

This is madness: snow on the roof  
knee-deep  
and on the garden chairs

year after year

this repetition

with the closed  
summer houses like a frieze  
and silence

water broken by the wind  
in solemn hills

One hankers after blood

until the news  
throws shadows of that desert flower  
across the screen

an anger  
muttering with guns

Here we are  
retainers in an old  
garden (fish

stare from their element  
at snow)

who hardly care  
as they grow white themselves

or notice the repose  
in winter's repetition, living  
quietly with death

a few small animals, a few  
small birds

doug jones

27/10/73

sudden above trees  
they come

I panic, counting now

the gulls  
from grubbing fields

dark heads dried  
blood-colour turning  
in the last sun

up there

they are beaked fish, prey  
predators  
moving toward

open water

wave after wave, some  
two hundred, then  
empty sky

an eye, emptied  
among bare branches  
garden

full of dead leaves

doug jones

## I REMEMBERED YOU WHILE AWAY

In Ogilvy's  
lavender-gray matrons  
poise petitely  
like stoutly obsolete manikins  
their bosoms  
settling heftily  
on acrylic counter-tops  
abreast specimen bottles  
of Chanel No. 5

All don stratified rouge  
over doughy jowls that dangle  
in harmony  
with tarnished neck-tethers  
(annexed  
to sterling spectacles)

They analyze  
(with anal eyes)  
your insecure approach  
and click their mildewy tongues  
at your selective taste

I chose this scent for you  
but God knows  
I abhor purchasing perfume

nelson gonyer

## AFTER BATH

Rising  
from the steam

dripping  
the oil-sweetened  
drops of refreshment

she is clean

With a dark towel  
she pats away  
the beaded residue  
of her bath  
and smooths baby powder  
into thighs  
pink  
from the subtle burn  
of hot water

But it is a transient burn

and as she reaches me  
her skin has redeemed  
its ivory tone

Now  
so beautiful  
so fragrant  
so pure  
she must not be touched

nelson gonyer

## UNION JACK

Is it purely color and design  
that are indicative  
or the way it trembles  
in some foreign breeze  
like a tropical bird  
flying headlong  
into a coolly symbolic draft  
while I witness the gaudiness of it all  
on a portable panasonic  
and sip on a glass of iced tea

Perhaps it's the manner  
in which it hovers  
on a French Canadian wall  
of my girlfriend's apartment

and staves off  
at least one FLEUR DE LIS stare per day  
while on the chesterfield below  
we scald and drown  
any visiting criticism  
with hot tea

Ma Julie est Française

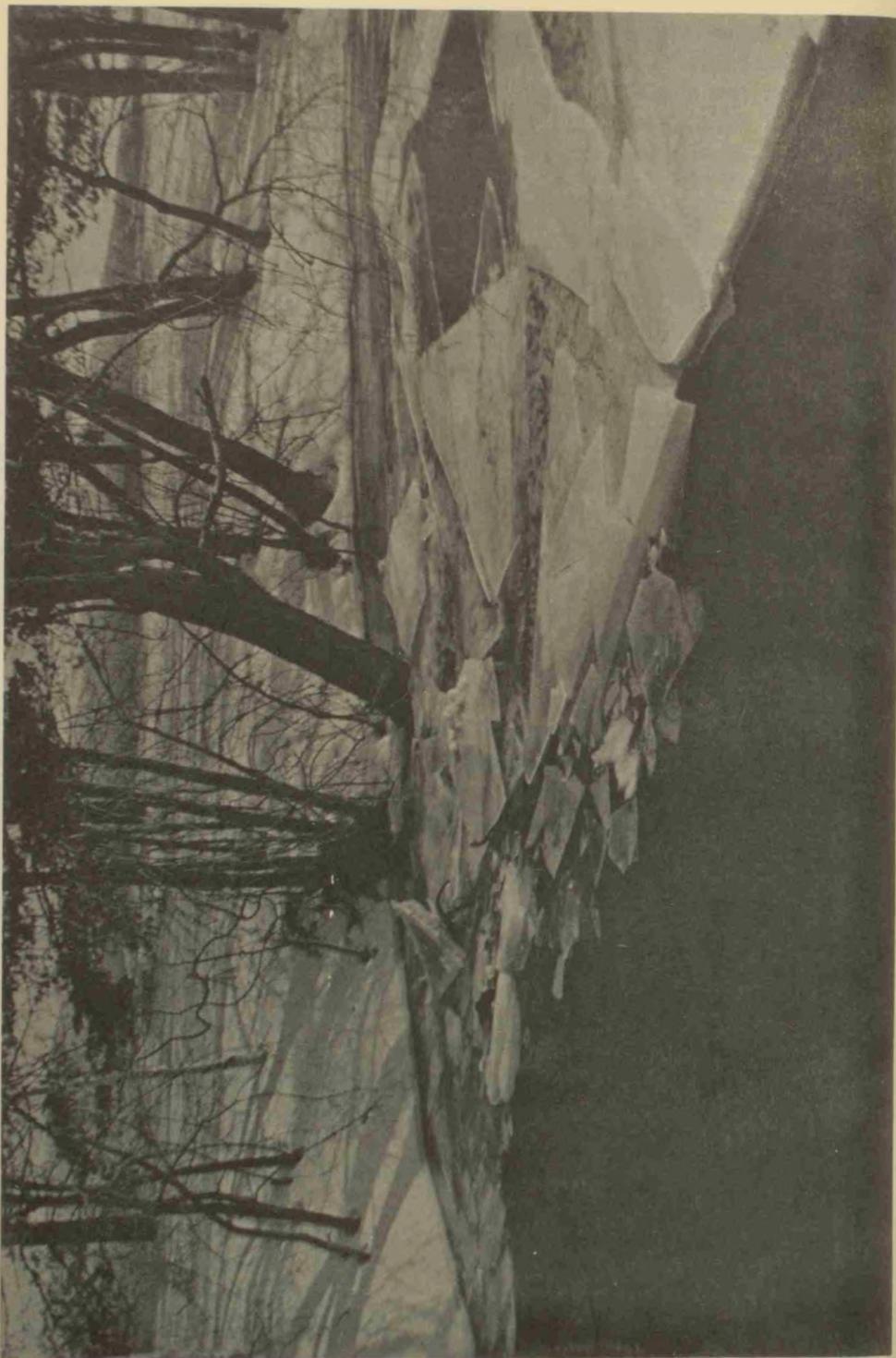
Someday  
I will lift the millstone  
of color and design  
from her petite shoulders

nelson gonyer

## FOLLOWING YOUR...

Following your relentless argument  
the words that — in themselves  
nonsensical — fall like snow  
on warm pavement melting  
flake by flake on touch  
i occasionally pause to wipe  
the verbal sludge off your lips  
and store it for later use  
and you say communication  
is a disorderly thing that  
defies logic — what matter  
the word? what the letter?  
but i say that a base  
is needed and footscrapers  
at the door of conversation  
the duality mustn't  
run parallel never reaching  
the terms must correspond  
universal or not at all

malcolm curtis



## UNTITLED

Ice, your frosty white coolness  
Floats nicely on the humours,  
Melting down into water,  
The water you cool is nice.

john hanson

## AUTUMN WIND

I. naked to the wind,  
hollowing  
out the debris,  
watching my leaves  
fill up someone else's ditch.

lying here,  
liking my rawness,  
I want to walk home  
with twigs in my hair.

II. the rough bark  
scratched my cheek.  
I laughed,  
and rubbed it with my hands;  
rolling at its roots,  
crushing its leaves,  
feeling the ridges  
and hugging the firmness

letting the wind  
claw my heart.

eva baldwin

## CAUGHT

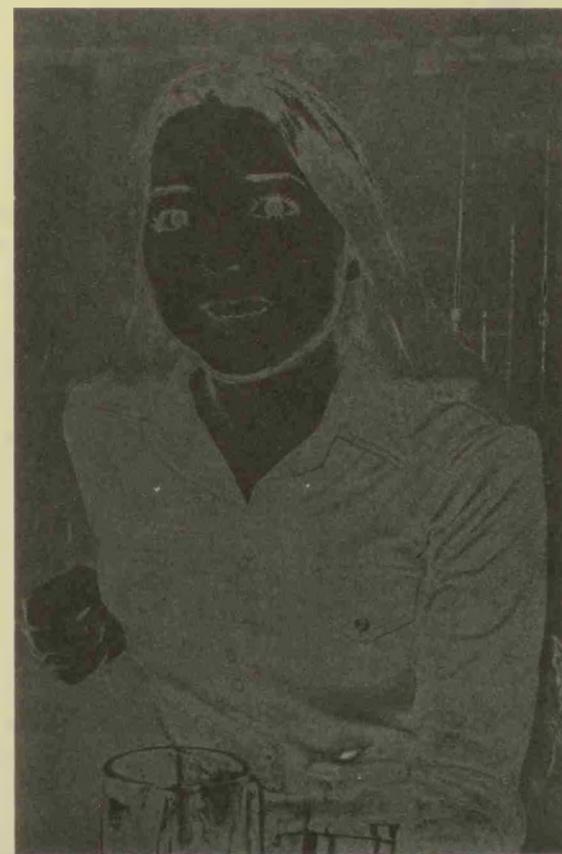
she vowed  
she'd write  
the great Canadian novel.  
she spends  
her mornings  
(Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays)  
in the lecture hall,  
her afternoons  
sitting  
in a door-opened room  
(hoping no one  
will take the invitation  
seriously).  
her nights,  
pen in hand,  
fumbling with naked images.

eva baldwin

## EXPECTANT

butterflies drawn  
not yet from the cocoon  
red  
wide  
wings that soar  
a flight that leans  
on intemperate birth  
salient wounds shall show

leah bradshaw



stephen cunnane



susan kayser

White swans  
flickering their wings  
in the pearl sky,  
crying the winter's approach.

catherine isely

fairy tale roses, sweet lullabies  
a dream you once cherished  
with the sun on your smile.

a tangerine lady  
sits by your side, laughing the wind away.

wait for me.

catherine isely

Comme un moulin dans ma tête,  
Comme une chanson dans le vent,  
Comme une fleur toute en fête  
à la venue du printemps.  
je te regarde, je te vois  
Comme un oiseau dans le ciel  
volant les quatres vents.

catherine isely

## I AM MASTER . . .

i am master of my demons  
forging, forging

travelling  
with heroes, dragons  
dreaming storm and cloud  
over chasms of shining water  
ships with pale sails  
imagining shade and shadow  
among trees, ruined cloisters  
feeling heavy red carpets and curtains  
of silence  
within moonlit chapels

words are hammer and anvil  
to try ideas from cold pools  
fed by mist and bells of experience

i am master of my demons  
magician, thief  
sneaking into spirit and soul  
to snatch them by surprise  
hold captive  
whip, violate

there is no key  
for the locked labyrinth

i am master of my demons  
forging, forging  
tireless, driven by perception  
always closer  
lands of fire and desolation  
lands of ashes, lands of impotence  
on flat, empty shores  
waiting for the slow sea  
to stop moving

alan s. atkinson

## BLUES FROM THE COUNTRY

for D.S.A.

### I

darkness unfolds outside  
brighter flames inside  
reflect like dancers on the wall  
only four-thirty  
it comes early, the sun's daily death  
in the dark months  
forests camouflage themselves with a windy sigh

here quietness destroys useless conversation  
only wood, crackling, praises the sky  
a sacrifice to benevolent solitude

and the land empties  
abandoned nests  
houses and fields deserted

### II

darkness crashes in from the street  
trying uselessly to muffle the screams of rush hour  
last flickers of light  
filter through smoke and grimy glass  
then the tired lamp-lighter  
outside wet streaked windows  
marks the beginning of a different life  
remarking the hour he would frown

like Sisyphus the city does not rest  
must push the boulders of pride, power, delusion

i see more and more  
reach gladly to help

. . . sodom and gomorrah snicker in the side-lines

III

*Streets that follow like a tedious argument*

T. S. Eliot

the sidewalk i pace is dirty  
windblown with wrappers and yesterday's headlines  
bus sign stands like a wilted flower  
choked with dust  
sagging, after the rapacious hands of young boys  
attempted to uproot it

dawn crawls weakly over the horizon  
greeted by the sneers and curses of city workers

the bus i wait for  
produces itself condescendingly  
(later it will be more impatient)  
driver almost smiling

we move too slowly  
through the lifeless acropolis

IV

*I recognised a silence like that which  
pervades a church after a service*

James Joyce

dawn barrels in over the horizon  
light, laughing, rolls down hills and fields  
houses and trees appear naked  
holding their long shadows on the ground

later when the sun has bent its way  
into the sky  
i walk with a cigarette  
down dusty roads  
from a hill the scattered forests  
shadows of great birds  
are still in the heat

alone, i am master  
throwing curses that turn my enemies to salt  
then soon there is nothing to defend

bards have spoken  
like a child, astonished at his first spanking  
i will not speak or weep, only wonder

breezes blow the dust of the road  
about my feet  
distant clouds cry out for home

alan s. atkinson

THE STREET'S YOUNG MAN

for R.P.

smiling  
into the dark he goes  
knocking garbage cans  
down corridors  
pipes and wires  
hurrying  
worn shoes scraping  
shadow twisting  
on buildings and pavement  
smiling  
into the window he looks  
hands rubbing glass  
then on, hurrying  
past the drunks  
empty sacks  
in front of Harry's Bar and Grill  
grabbing cold lamp-posts  
for support  
fixed in the cone of light  
smiling  
into the gutter he steps  
then on, hurrying

alan s. atkinson

## COUNTRY CATHEDRAL

rock and dirt floors  
not marble or tile  
a hay loft  
not an organ gallery

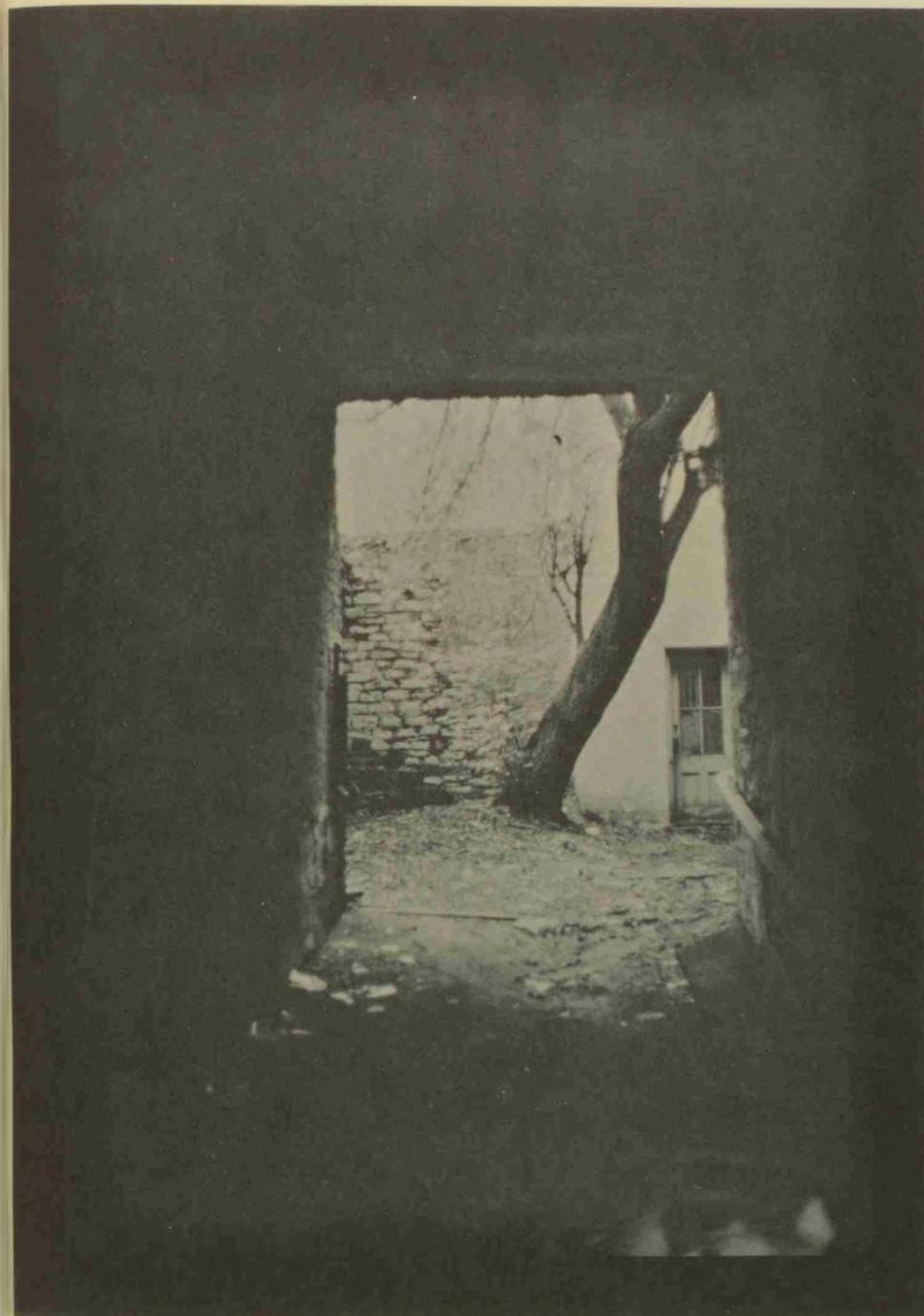
this roof vaulting overhead  
has certain magnificence  
a window high up  
(quite square, without stained glass)  
admits a beam of light  
to filter through dust,  
stillness

no sound but wind  
curling about cracked boards  
creaking of weathered beams  
disturbs empty silence

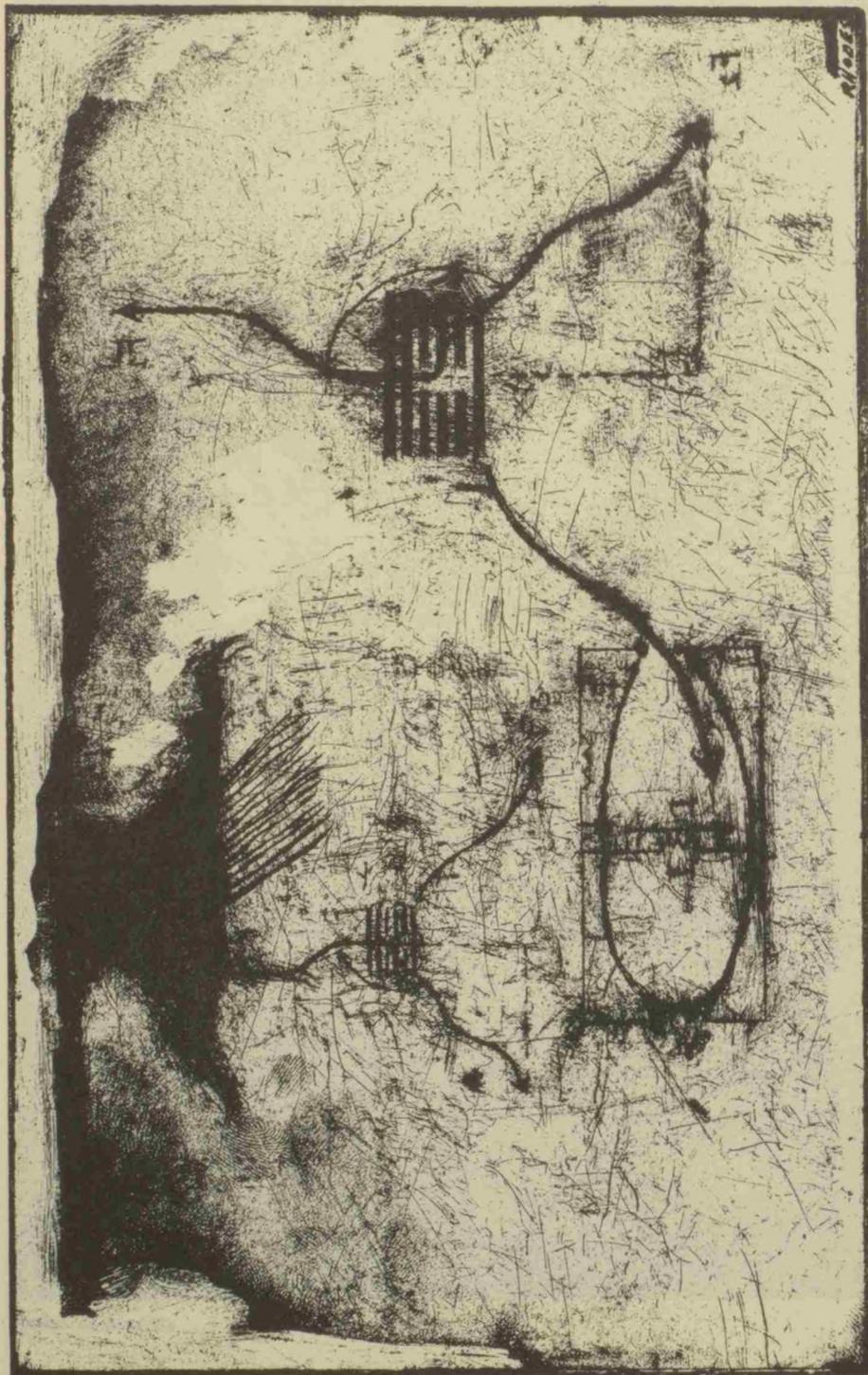
the rectors are porcupines  
who eat portions of the walls  
being unable to take collection  
no saints relics  
a horned skull in one corner  
martyred for a farmer's belly

in later times  
no pompous plaques will state  
"Norman" or "Gothic"  
white snow  
will drift among the ruins  
wind will swing doors  
on sighing hinges,  
sing through broken walls  
a spectre  
moaning through a home long dead

alan s. atkinson



catherine isley



rick rhodes

## A VISION OF LEAVING

door almost closed  
light enters  
one sharp path  
dividing darkness in the room

when it closes  
walls of blindness  
fall, drown  
Egyptians of dreams  
washed up on red shores

slaves of pyramids  
cry from windows  
cry lead us away  
from sand to water  
shadow to light

old men  
in narrow streets below  
sigh wisely

get up boys  
time to raise some dust  
kick stone, spear, sword  
trample on the ground  
time to gather food  
bread and wine  
behind broken chariots

the door is locked  
windows are too dirty to see  
torches have been put out  
long ago  
by priests in soft robes, painted tombs  
where dreams lie dead

alan s. atkinson

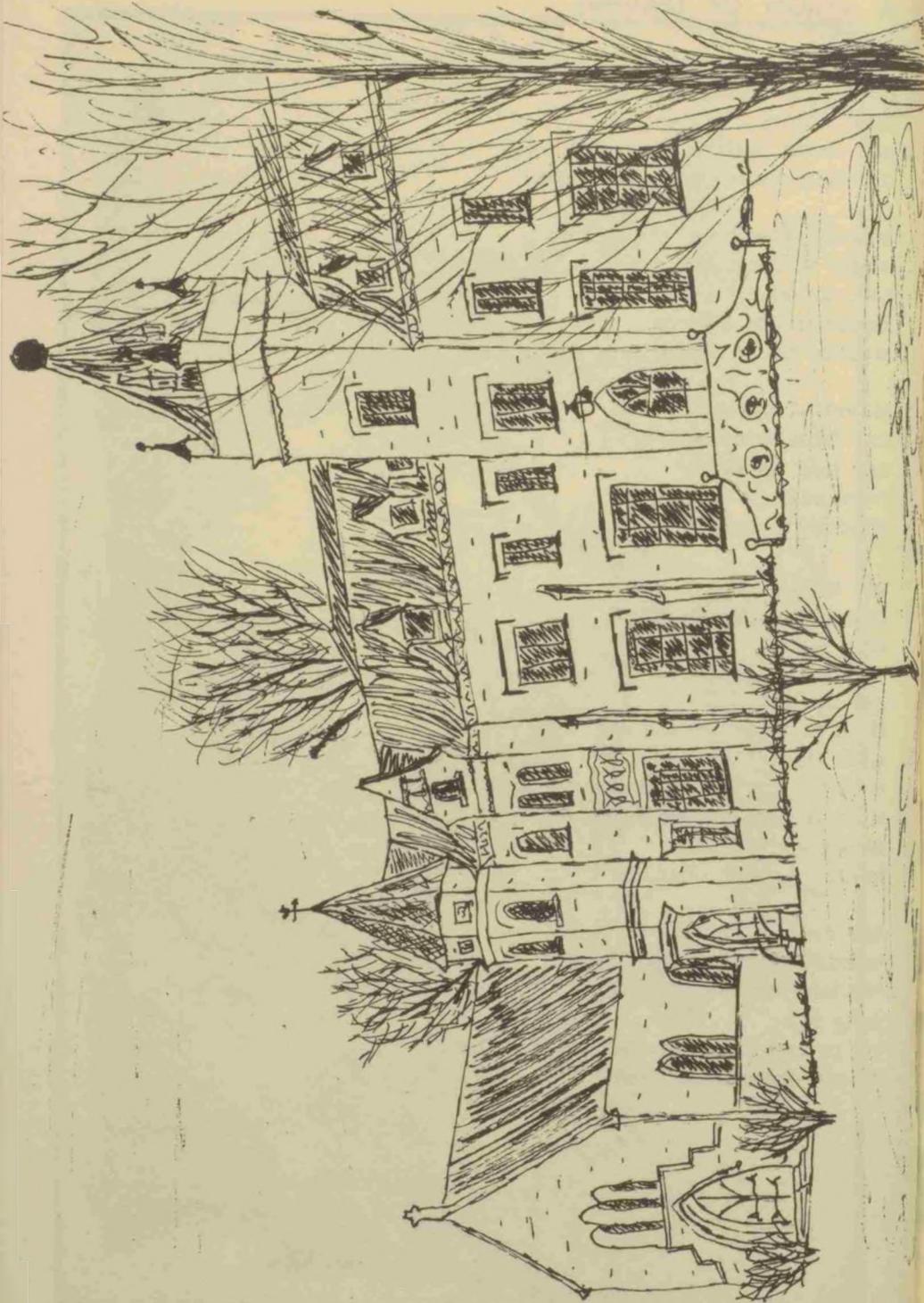
## A NEST OF ANGLOPHONE BIRDS

ralph gustafson

As soon as I got out of being solemn in my younger age, I looked upon my native neck-of-the-woods as a nest of singing birds. I still do. Poets are everywhere in the Eastern Townships. Unlike the phoenix bird, of which there is only one rising out of its own ashes into the freshness of youth once every five hundred years, a veritable flock of warblers (and some crows) nest in these acres south of the St. Lawrence River. Their utterances are heard continuously through the generations, especially in the summertime when their tail-feathers are not clipped and chilled by the snow and ice of this southern Quebec winter.

As a neophyte, how I longed to be thought one of this valour of warbling authors indigenous to the summer waters and winter snowdrifts of the Eastern Townships. I had already started a five-part novel and an epic poem before I had been launched out of the Sherbrooke High School. But it was to Bishop's University in Lennoxville that I lifted my aspiring eyes. And to Bishop's I went. I pitched headmost into what I thought must be the Athens of the north. Here was Frank Oliver Call the poet, and W. O. Raymond, the editor of a book of Swinburne's poems, and who, later, was to send my first effusions to Robert Bridges, the then Poet Laureate, in England, and who was to drop dead almost immediately after reading them. To Bishop's came old Canon Scott the poet in his Episcopal gaiters; and here came the eminent visitor from afar. In my freshman year came Alfred Noyes the poet, eminent then and forgotten now. I was of two minds that we treated him fairly. Dr. A. H. McGreer, then Principal of Bishop's University, had to keep apologizing to the poet — not that Noyes was to be forgotten but at that moment he was too well remembered: in the hollow pilasters around Convocation Hall alarm-clocks were studiously placed to go off at two-minute intervals. Go off they did. Noyes no sooner got another start on the stanzas of "Come Down to Kew in Lilac Time" than his attention was unmelodiously yanked back to the Eastern Townships. I was truly amongst a nest of singing birds.

The creative core of the Eastern Townships is Bishop's University, but the whole environment is alive with grosbeaks and downy woodpeckers. We here are in the know; those outside little realize what tremendous Townships ferment goes on, especially



around the hospitable shores of Lake Massawippi. Artistic activity is thought to be the monopoly of Montreal or Toronto or Vancouver. Not a bit of it. We have a formidable rivalry of festivals, novelists, and a mess of poets. If you want to increase the value of your library, come to the Townships and have your North Hatley book inscribed by its author. I offered to be accomodating just that way the other day to my class of students in Canadian Literature. The going price of the book of mine I brought, so I read in a Toronto catalogue, is \$29.50. I offered to the class to sign it at the reduced price of a flat \$29.00 since the jacket was worn. The class is still thinking twice about it.

I have counted no less than eleven writers domiciled at once in North Hatley — that is, eleven in summer. Most clear out before the pipes freeze. I myself stay. This year I have only had to wrap hot cloths around the pipes to my upstairs bathroom.

It is not difficult to discover the basic reason why the Townships hold and attract writers and make them fall in love with what they offer. The reason is simple: beauty. This stretch of lakes and rivers and hills and valleys is incomparably beautiful. I wish we could keep quiet about it and so preserve the Townships as they are. We can't, of course. Beauty, like murder, will out. And I suppose what I am saying is that the Townships should be kept consonant with a boy's memory of them. I can remember putting on skis and exploring the woods immediately back of Ontario Street in Sherbrooke; later on, you could get a nice fistful of mayflowers and Indian ghost-pipes there. At the moment the area is covered with basements and asphalt. As a good citizen should, I climbed Mount Orford, that highest beauty east of the Rocky Mountains, not by shifting gears, but by instinct. And that vanished wooden covered bridge over the Massawippi River just outside Bishop's University that I was exalted by and wrote a poem about. Over the entrance to the bridge was a sign: WALK OR PAY TWO DOLLARS. That puzzled me. Then I was struck by what rhythm can do; four iambic feet in sequence the length of the bridge might have sunk it. Yet I am still puzzled: to whom did you pay your two dollars, especially if it was thirty below? You pay your money now, of course, to the Quebec Government. I wish it was still two dollars. . . . I remember putting a short log across my chest, and under the instruction of my piano teacher, Miss Laura Rugg, learning to do a commendable breast stroke in Lake Massawippi. Now, I don't dare risk taking a gulp of its water without first consulting the chemistry department of Bishop's University.

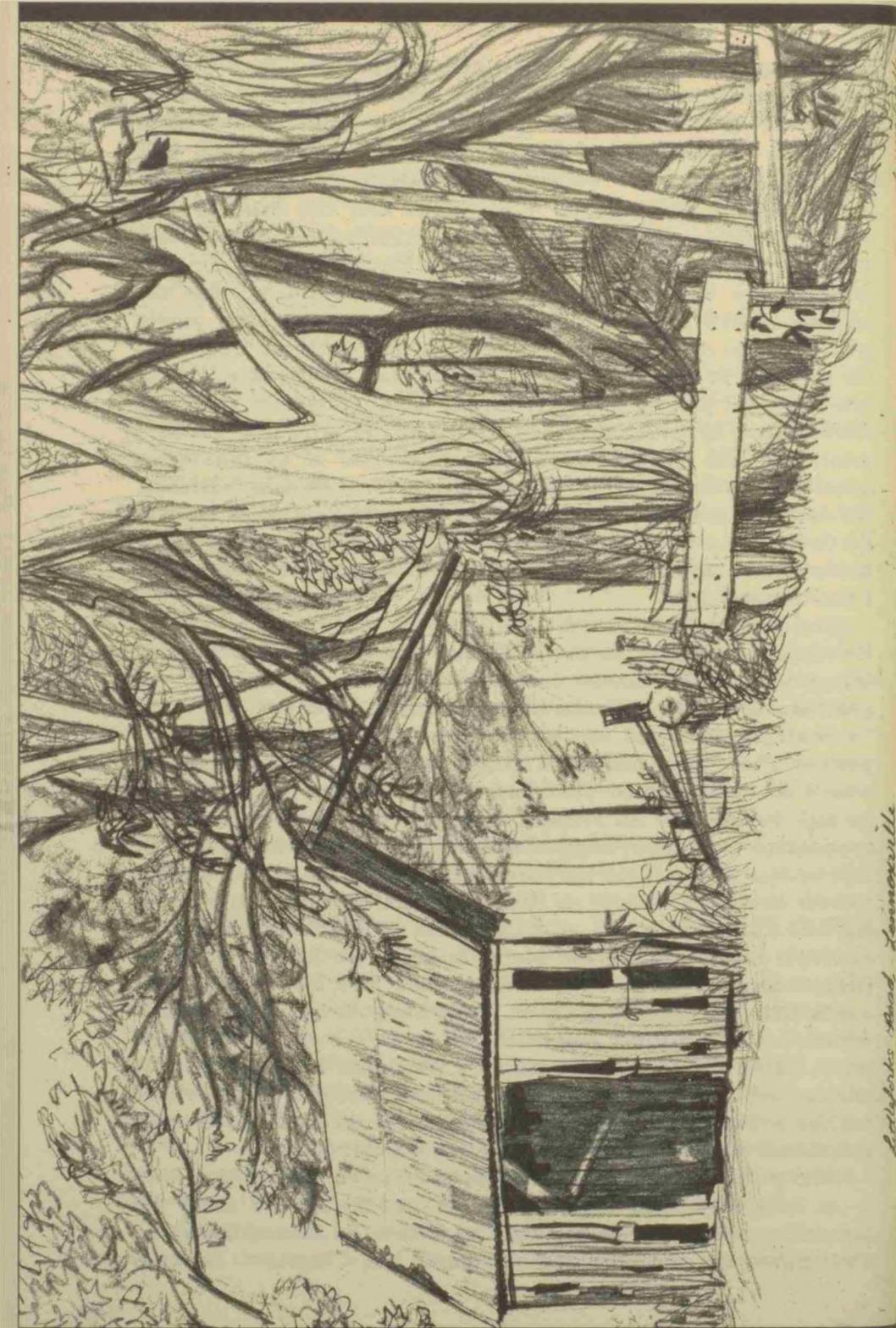
And with it all, so abidingly beautiful are the Eastern Townships that they still make claims against the rest of the world. We

haven't got Chartres Cathedral here, the marble temples of Greece, or the music of Bali. We have our own kind of beauty. The beauty is natural, the beauty of the place still has solitude, and quite frequently the sunsets and stars send you crazy. I am told that the dawn also does. No wonder the intelligent like the place.

The first real live author I remember was the sister of Ned Adams. Ned was an eccentric around Sherbrooke in the early Twenties; never was he seen without muffler, rubbers and umbrella. His sister was Kathleen Adams of New York City; she had written a girl's book. Ned used to come into my father's photography studio on Wellington Street with unpredictable frequency. On the basis of this, my mother one day blackmailed Miss Adams into our front parlour on Wolfe Street, where Montcalm runs into Wolfe. Here, in living presence, was a writer who had got into print! She was made to read the first chapter of an unfinished novel of mine written at the age of fourteen. Its title was *Westward Ho! with Columbus*. Was it good? Of course it was good. So was the lavish tea my mother pressed on her. I look back on that book as the best I never wrote. How Kathleen Adams looks back on it, I don't know.

Her brother Ned brought me in touch with another author. He was the friend of the son of Minnie Hollowell Bowen of lower Queen Street. Mrs. Bowen used to read me her poems — to my great embarrassment. Poems about the "Red Flower of Life" and "Adoration" make me restless. But the afternoons were not all poetry. There was prose too. The house Mrs. Bowen lived in wasn't a bow-and-arrow shot from legend. At the lonely pine on its rock in the river St. Francis, at the foot of Queen Street, great happenings took place; happenings that had to do with unrequited love or war dances. I am not sure which. But I was willing enough to hear about that as long as it was in prose; and the battle of the Big and Little Forks, the original names of Sherbrooke and Lennoxville; and the struggle of Major Rodgers, the Ranger, with the fierce Abenakis. To go back to unrequited love, not a quarter of a mile from my boyhood home on Wolfe Street is the gorge through which the Magog River roars. Its cliff is the Lovers' Leap of the story. Below the Leap is the canyon's whirlpool. It is obvious how one can get carried away. Legend, fact, and beauty are everywhere for the writer in the Eastern Townships. Drama, and the scene to put it in. I don't know why I wrote about Columbus.

And politics are round about everyone. The right kind of politics — at least they were then. My father used to tell me about the loved figure of a local book called *The Grand Old Man of Dudswell*. The grand old man was the Reverend Mr. Chapman. He rode



Ledyards Road Lemoville

around in a two-seater Concord buggy drawn by a white horse named Dolly. In that fashion he went visiting parishioners. Often, coming from Marbleton to Lime Ridge where my father was living — not too far down the valley of the St. Francis from the covered bridge I spoke of — the Reverend Mr. Chapman of Anglican fame had with him on the two-seater the Methodist minister and the Roman Catholic, Father Plamandeu, both also big in the seat. I still think that is the way to get there.

My father also told me about Dr. Drummond — William Henry Drummond of you-can't-get-drowned-on-Lac-St. Pierre-so-long-you-stay-on-shore fame. As a telegraphist helping support his mother and four children, he worked at Bord-à-Plouffe, a little village on the Rivière des Prairies. Having got a little ahead financially, Drummond came to Bishop's University, where he graduated in medicine in 1884. He established a practice at Stornoway, a village near Lake Megantic; then at Knowlton. At all these places he learned about the small farmers of Quebec, the *habitants*, and their qualities of simplicity, kindness, hospitality and humour. He put this into verse.

Drummond's reputation as a poet has declined. Protests are lodged that he sentimentalized and patronized the *habitant*; that he showed in his verse only the pleasanter side of the *habitant's* life; that he used a broken English never uttered by a Frenchman in heaven or Ottawa. Others say he wrote what he heard. Louis Frechette, the distinguished French-Canadian poet at the turn of the century, introduced Drummond's first book with warm sympathy. We are told that the *habitants* themselves admired the poems.

Whatever the limitations we may put to his poems, we must admit they are pretty well equalized by their tone of warmth and affection, never a condescension — a friendship between the two cultures that in my experience has never been fatally distorted or disproven. I gathered in some valuable affection when as a boy I listened to the Sherbrooke man famous for his recitations of "Johnny Corteau" and "Leetle Bateese." He used to recite Dr. Drummond's poems in the Chautauqua tent put up every summer on the Parade Grounds down Queen Street. Now, I am told by a Bishop's graduate who gets his name in print that I have a "garrison mentality." I am besieged. Affection is out-of-date; is synonymous with condescension.

The first Bishop's graduate and Eastern Townships poet of renown is Dr. Drummond. The second, and one I knew, is a poet now unhappily forgotten. He too wrote of the French Canadian of the Eastern Townships. He was born in West Brome in 1878 and

his name is Frank Oliver Call. Fortunately for me and for many others at Bishop's, he was on the faculty in the Twenties and Thirties. When I became an undergraduate Dr. Call was Professor of English Literature. He gave us lectures on modern poetry. The outstanding worth of Bishop's is its individual warmth. Here was I, knowing nothing, and there I was, in the space of a year, sitting in Dr. Call's living room having tea with the poet and talking over my own verse. You won't find the equivalent of that happening at any of our multi-universities of ten thousand registration, a freshman talking as a personality to a friend on the faculty. Now, they pay \$20,000 to a writer-in-residence who doesn't want to be one.

In my turn, during my first year at Bishop's, I learned from Dr. Call not only that Tennyson wrote poetry, but that Vachel Lindsay did, while beating a drum. The tea and biscuits were good too. They were eaten in the rooms at the end of the corridor of the New Arts Building; rooms, I suppose, rightly gone now. But I don't know why the authorities had to destroy Dr. Call's garden of flowers that stretched colour from the Principal's old office to what is now the threshold of the Library. I suppose flowers interfere with the grass.

In my final year I ended up with an entire chapter of mine in Dr. Call's book called "The Spell of Acadia," published by L. C. Page of Boston in 1930. I had been to the Magdalen Islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Dr. Call hadn't. So he put my piece of prose in his book and inscribed a copy thanking me for "my assistance in the preparation of this book." Imagine what that did to an aspiring writer! That is what can happen here at Bishop's.

F. O. Call's is a poetry simply uttered — the simplicity made possible by a fine command of a formal technique. It is not what we call "modern", but that needn't be held against it. His *Blue Homespun* is an affectionate account of the Quebec scene and of the Quebecois. The tradition runs straight through from Dr. Drummond, Dr. Call, to A. M. Klein, to John Glassco — from Stornoway through Lennoxville to Foster. Pleasure is still to be got from Call's book:

#### LA TERRE

When Jo was young he used to hate the land;  
And though he struggled hard and tried to wrest  
A living from it, still he schemed and planned  
To seek the distant town where men were dressed  
In better stuff than homespun. Years have passed,  
And now St. Jean seems very far away,

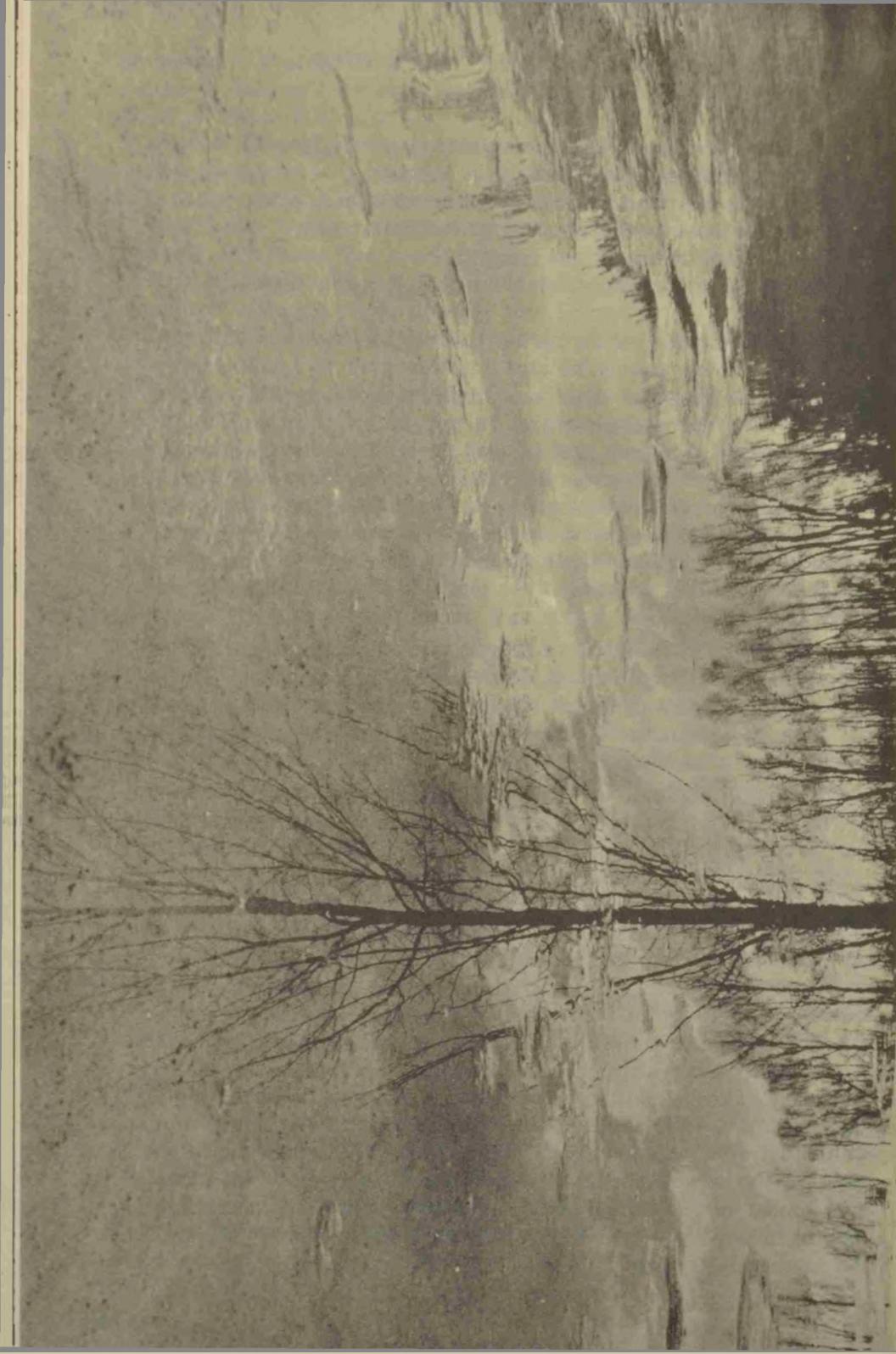
For chains he would not shatter hold him fast  
In golden bondage to the loam and clay.

His fields are something more than clay and loam  
To yield a living, bring him gain or loss,  
Now he is old; and from his whitewashed home  
He looks towards the churchyard with its cross,  
Then at his fruitful acres lying there  
Between, and murmurs low, "La bonne, bonne terre!"

Dr. Call did not only show me his paintings and garden and how I could improve my poems; he also introduced me to Louise Morey Bowman. Mrs. Bowman was born in Sherbrooke in 1882; began writing there; ultimately came to be praised by the then-famous Amy Lowell of American and Imagist fame. Ezra Pound came to mock Amy's poetic images as Amygisms. Louise Morey Bowman's work has passed out of favour. Well, we'll leave it at that; we mustn't set up the Eastern Townships and make a list of people merely published to fit in them. There is sadness, isn't there, going back to a reputation now faded. For *every* thing, all the goodness of the flower fadeth, as Isaiah said a few years ago.

But not quite, I think. Art has a way of surprising Time. After all, Isaiah and his cliché about Time are still remembered! So are other writers whose power of words has overcome the arrogance of Time and outrun the clocks. We are not yet through with the Townships.

I think of a graduate of this University, born in Quebec City in 1861 but whose formative years — those years which are never got over — were lived at Bishop's. A few will remember this man as Canon Scott — Frederick George Scott. As an undergraduate I twice won a poetry prize which Canon Scott had set up. This apparently condemned me to listen to all his latest poems as well as his old ones whenever he visited Bishop's. He had a discouragingly long memory. I used to get cornered in the gymnasium. Canon Scott would take off his clerical half-coat and, on a wooden chair leaned back against the wall, in his bib and gaiters, recite his verses at me. The poems were virtuous; against the flesh. The flesh is ephemeral, I know; but, at that time, I wasn't interested in the information. I stuck the poems out, though; no conspicuous squirming. Now, of course, I realize that old Canon Scott was choosing the wrong poems of his; those in the pulpit. He should have nailed my attention with something within my experience and not in heaven — a road out at Lime Ridge, say, and "the creak of a lumberman's sleigh."



Up there is the throne of the Triune God  
And the worshipping multitudes,  
And here is the long winter road  
And the silent woods.

But I want to come to F. G. Scott's son, F. R. Scott. Here we are on terrestrial ground. Frank Scott too is a graduate of Bishop's University and as much a poet produced by the Townships' landscape and its spiritual climate as anyone who has lived continuously in them. Frank Scott is, of course, our foremost constitutional lawyer, a founder of the C.C.F. party, member of the Bicultural Commission and all the rest of it. I like to think of him as the defender of Lady Chatterley. But at the heart of him is something other than the lawyer. To know him is to see him exploring the countryside around the several Hatleys; to examine the success of his wood-chopping and bird-feeding and to follow the barometer-reading inside and out on the verandah to his summer place at North Hatley. Best of all, know him at his camp on a steep hillside up Lake Massawippi. The camp is always on the point of descending into the lake. That's the place where he wants his ashes scattered. He can't leave Massawippi. His poem, "Lakeshore", is not specifically of this exact spot. But it is as fixed in this region as any piece of writing good enough to have the vision to transcend its parish. The poem could as well start in Lake Massawippi as it actually ends at the resting place of Noah and his ark. Read it. It is here to stay.

And there is A. J. M. Smith, born in Montreal, an undergraduate with Frank Scott at McGill, a close friend of Frank's and mine, and at present living in Michigan; and one who can't get the love of the Eastern Townships out of his blood and doesn't want to; who, significantly, has just bought a house in Georgeville near where he lives half-a-year on that next lake, Lake Memphramagog. You only have to sit out on his verandah and look up at the enclosing trees or tear up and down Memphramagog in his motor boat to know that he shapes experience with what the landscape and the inscape of this district give to him. He has got a jack-pine in his front yard too and writes of the unfathomable mystery of this land. Read his "Birches at Drummond Point:"

Leaning over the lake  
slim white birches  
curved by the south-west wind  
offer a silent rebuke  
or seem to



photo credit: robert macpherson

When the sun glints  
on their leaves  
    dark green or light green  
they seem to be flashing  
a message

When a breeze  
    makes them rustle  
I listen:

What do they say?  
    or seem to?

From Drummond Point move further westward. There, this side of Brome Lake, at Foster, lives John Glassco, poet and memoirist and friend of all lake-dwelling poets. Who in Canada has written better of Paris? All right. Paris is not in the Eastern Townships. Let me put it another and more pertinent way: Who has written more graceful and engaging prose than John Glassco has in his *Memoirs of Montparnasse*? The answer to that one is: no one. And if you won't find anything of the Eastern Townships in *Memoirs of Montparnasse*, go to the poems; what you will find there is some of the most accurate definitions of the Townships that have been set down. His poems are the whole art of memory — of his point of sky at Shefford and Brome: the entailed farm, the gentleman's farm, the rural mail, the abandoned buildings — all the spiritual climate of the region.

And nearby is that other understander of Quebec-Canada, Hugh MacLennan, who lives as much time as he can growing his roses at North Hatley and walking for his international mail at the town's little square of a post-office. I realize Hugh MacLennan goes off to Grenoble or where-was-it? to write a novel; or writes in his inhabited Montreal. But who knows, including Hugh himself, what tranquillity and possibility of soul the Eastern Townships provide so that he can do it? Every summer he is back in the region of the river he writes about, the St. Francis,

“river of the Eastern Townships with their deep  
volcanic lakes and rolling hills like the Scottish  
lowlands,”

as he puts it.

And down the hill from him is that other man and scholar who knows Quebec like the palm of his hand: Ronald Sutherland, interpreter of the literature of one tongue of Canada to the other, a native of Montreal, the scene of his novel, *Lark des Neiges*, but a

liver and lover of the shores of the Massawippi.

And down the street from Ronald Sutherland lives D. G. Jones. What a huddle of happenings and raft of writers these Counties cuddle! Jones was born up there in some place called Ontario. But here he is, down here between the St. Lawrence and the Vermont border writing as clear and delicate lyrics out of the sensation of the district's lakes and hills as can be had anywhere in Canada. Jones stays all winter, washing his car next to my front door so that the salt won't eat through his fenders. Is our cold as Mrs. Moodie and Atwood would have it?

It was thirty degrees below zero that morning,  
and it would have been much colder if the therm-  
ometer had been longer.

Or is snow the precursor to a green *Annunciation*, as Doug Jones has it?

Snow has come back to make of weeds  
A window-shopper's garden, frail  
Eastern Flowers for unbelievers.

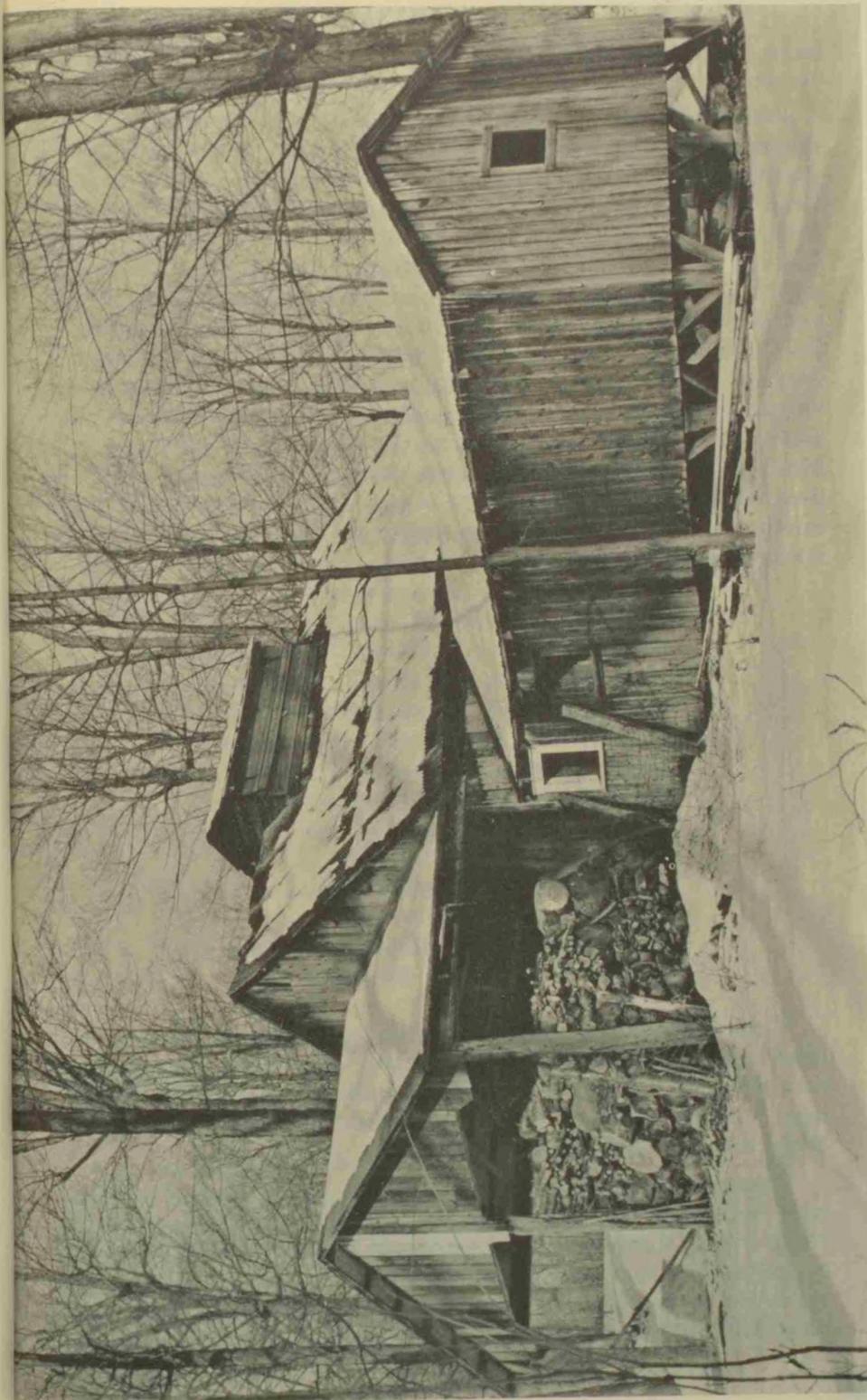
But the sun is not the same, nor the hills.  
And the silence when I stop the car  
Is not the same, is a silence made

For a few birds, their thin  
Aerial music. This is the coin  
Flung against the brazen tower.

It is the confidence within (not  
Of what endures) of what will be.  
Distant. It transforms

This window to a world. Again.  
The air is not just air, it is an arctic  
Confidence of flowers.

"A confidence of flowers." I believe there is something in these Eastern Townships that maintains, sustains, the affirmative spirit. We are not much urbanized; I don't think we want to be; we can get to Montreal and satisfy any urban desire easily enough. We are not computerized; we are not found important enough for it yet. We have our statistics; but they really aren't lived by, at least not too mathematically. We have our vulgar fractions as any place has. But this is what is important, we have the still rustic solitude without too much rock and roil and piped-in Musak; above all, we



cathy echenberg



With rain all day), across the land  
And lake and hedge cedar-green  
Gold struck and I thought: So,  
Eternity tumbles, birch, maple,  
Once valid gold since spring  
Was pledged — yet, burned through the mist,  
There is the sun, there is the sun.  
Affirmation for the moment,  
A fallen leaf (Akhnaten exiled  
Gods until there was only worshipped  
Sun; let sun burst and  
We too worship). Only a moment —  
But for that time world was bronze,  
Leaves fell without their season,  
Gold struck the edges of  
The cornice, marvel was as it was.

ralph gustafson

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The fumble does it.  
One whack  
And that is that. Muck  
Around divine  
Forearm hairs  
For a suitable place  
To drill for blood,  
Proboscis knocks  
A hair and that's enough:  
Down comes Thunder,  
Life's knocked flat.  
Trying  
For sustenance or love,  
Plant four feet firmly,  
Slide it in,  
Suck and get the  
Hell out.  
Don't sing before you do it.

ralph gustafson

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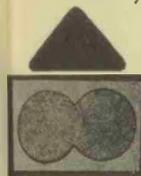
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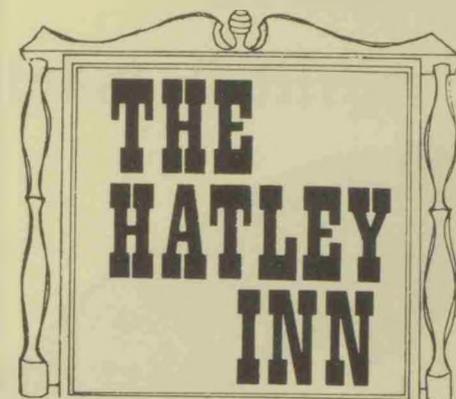
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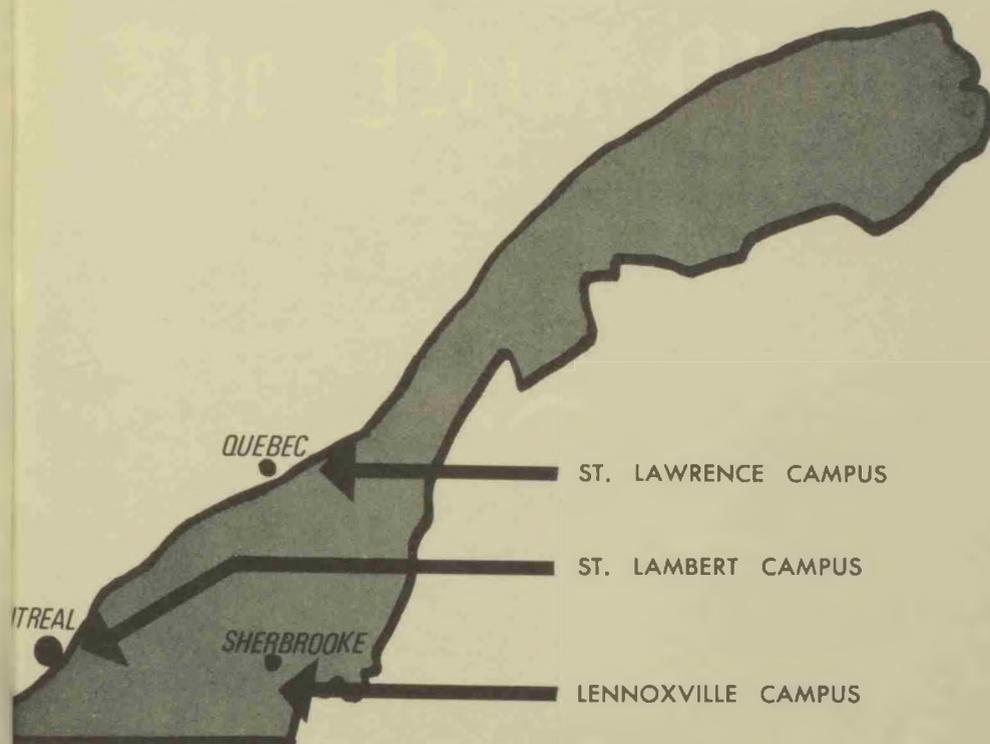
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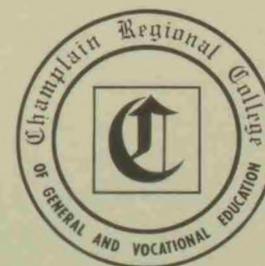
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