# FIRST STATEMENT

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EDITORIAL -

We intend first to talk with our horde of critics and try to anticipate a few of their remarks. We do not think it is a sign of vanity to speak of critics as numerous as a horde. Almost everyone is a potential critic of this magazine. Almost everyone would have plenty to say if the magazine ever came to his attention, and the criticism would centre around the truth that such an undertaking was "impractical".

Not only do we anticipate such criticism, but we agree with it, and intend to meet it more than half-way. We want to remove every shred of practicality and make it certain that we have nothing to lose. We are going on a diet of cheap, mimeographed paper, a kind of literary bread and water. We intend asking no charge for the magazine, to prevent the petty hope of making a profit. We are going to rid ourselves of practical encumbrances, to have freedom in which to move.

Someone will say that we will be talking in a vacuum, to ourselves alone, and be making gestures that have references to nothing. It does not seem to us an unreasonable criticism. In the present stage of Canadian literature, a gesture would appear to be important. A display of activity may symbolize a future, and plant a suggestion in someone's mind. The religious ceremonies which thrived many centuries ago must have arisen from a belief in the newness of living and the youth of the race. What had happened seemed rare, and it was not certain that it would happen again. Bread was broken to express the hope that bread would be granted again. We intend to go through the ceremonies, in our Canadian literary youth.

TIME AND MR. AARONSEN - Robert G. Simpson

life began for mister aaronsen in a white and green hamlet wedged between the lapping sea and the echoing crags of the topheavy norwegian coast in winter a barren place with snowy gusts beating down the hollow fjord and icy talons stretching in conflict to the restless eaves but in summer when the pasture-land was green and the ocean still and sparkling in the sun the heart of the village warmed and men thought and dreamed about it as they laboured in their ships in their sturdy ships sliding on a borealis mirror with erl bubbling in the holds and in their minds the treedead winter and the warm green flesh of the village in the summer.

but these things were unknown and impassable to the boy mind and only the green and the rocks and the lacy salt-white edges catlapping at the sand were in it for not even itself as yet unconscious of itself was there but the passing colors and shapes only but in the boy heart stirring were the words of the speechless bridging the broad moon and starlit silence and the sounds in the deafened ears and the sights in the blinded eyes transmitted in the invisible cell dividing and repeating this was the boy his father and his grandfather and leif erikson and vineland and thor and wotan unto the beginning when men came from the sea mere amoeba from the primordial slime

while the warmer waters of the gulf flowed past always and bathed the stubble shore the ancient norsemen trod with windmill arms beginning hesitant and slowly found the old ways coming to them and came confidant and squeezed the waves in their arms never quite but with the urging still in their limbs to be all of it and hold all of it timelessly and all this in the boy.

then to his mind came thoughts and in his heart was a stronger beating the maturer beating of working muscles of sun-wind bronzed skin as the invisible past multiplied in him and he saw with new eyes the hard green hills and rock castles and their salty moats for his eyes his centuries of eyes reflected to him their long progression and he stood alone with himself awaking and saw the stars and the atoms and the past and the present and himself an unplaced thing among them

and this was the time when the land first faded and the other separate loci stood waving on the wharf that grew smaller until it was swallowed by the green hill magnet in his lungs and his magic white carpets spread to the winds and carried him to the blue grey line where he stood naked a part of the frosted whorls at the dipping hull and the leaden skydrifts fast blown across his mastheads and yet their adversary but still behind the westward northward eyes of the moment always before guided him

this was the time when he felt himself not complete the silent grey about him could not still the longing in his loins the seeking inside him for a part of him not there and he flew to the green land where the warm earth could clasp his knees and some other separate thing could press against his chest and for a moment be a part of him but only for a moment and then the starflecked sea void would well about him and he would again be incomplete and watching passionately the stream of shapes and colours flowing by

they were a meaningless cavalcade mere things that he had always seen he and his father and his grandfather and leif

erikson and vineland and thor and wotan but unchanging for he did not see them or smell them or touch them or taste them or hear them but knew their ageless shadows in his mind that probed he knew not why or how beyond the form that clad them

this heaving oak that rolled and swelled beneath him was no ship for ships were something else at all times are temporal things but this was motion free like the birds and the winds and the restless waves this was a bridge from space to space and this was a home fire warm without heat and closely far away a point of light that shrinks the blackness this was a timeless thing that must always be though the sails would change as the men beneath the sails would change from birth to death but life would go on from son to son and on to the millions of generations of sons yet to know it and so motion would go on as real as life and ships an outward manifestation of it would be as important as men

as mr aaronsen watched the white sails were besmoked and gaunt pipes rose to belch forth the blackness of the rotted tree and blind the long hours of stars but boiling wakes scythe-slashed the narrowed sea with the bearded sandglassman at the helm and ports grew huge and dim and shut off the sun from metal vaults with giant eagle claws scratching at cumbered decks like some voracious animal this was all change an instant in slow centuries

but mr aaronsen was changing too for he was growing stronger and more complete and the voices that came to him in the night were softer not so commanding and his heart was content with the full bosomed shape of the present for he was used to it and the days were bright with the prospect of another day still in his mind the brunhilde flame burnt on but not so brightly for it was slowly dying on the timeroad of memory marking the movement of a once that was gone a thousand times but would recur it was the greenskirted shore and the austere headlands of his mistress home calling in his mind calling to him with the lonely wolf cry wherever he was calling to him never beyond hearing

it was his evening and he sat on the wharf that had once grown smaller and had remained always growing smaller until that day and he cooled his feet in the water where first his father and grandfather and leif erikson and vineland and thor and wotan had taught him to feel with his new shining limbs and pink belly the trade routes of the world and his white head watched the day seek a hero death where once he lost the land never found again until the moment after when in nodding sleep his chin dropped to his breast

THE DARK TIDE - Audrey Aikman

She will lie quietly and think no harm,
Lulled in a charm,
Till cool green water washes round her feet:
This, too, is sweet.
In the late evening, while the shadows grow,
She will say only, "Still the tide is slow".

The pale blue water rises by degrees
and covers up her knees:
The sun shall sink a little, without haste:
The ripples reach her waist,
And still she lies alone and takes her ease,
And the sun's rim dips downward to the seas.

Red is the cloud-edge; red as blood the west,
And the wave hides her breast.
Still she lies lonely: colder grows the air,
And the black water lifts her loosened hair
Now is the salt line on her eyelids drawn,
And the dark tide moves onward to the dawn.

GABRIEL - Audrey Aikman

You'll stand like Gabriel and watch me go,
You with your lips that music carved. You'll stand,
My delicate archangel, at the gate of Eden,
Watching me, driven forth with my poor Adam.
I, for his desire, I must go
With this repentant human hand-in-hand:
While you smile pity from the gates of Eden
I must go forth and bear children to Adam!

No, no, no! Not thus, dear Gabriel!
Am I a woman and cannot have your wings?
God will have trouble taming me, I think,
Before I crush this apple to your lips.

ON A STORY PUBLISHED IN PREVIEW MAGAZINE - John Sutherland

This man uses words in the way one uses fists to clip people on the jaw. He is a socialist aching for a revolution, and he has found the perfect art. He thinks it very serviceable, and no doubt it shows tremendous health. After each imaginary despatch of opponents, he wipes grime from himself and makes a grimace. He says: "This is a dirty business; this last paragraph dirties both myself and you; these words are grimy, old

gloves I will throw away after using them. After our state is established I will throw words back in the ditch where I discovered them; though I may, of course, continue, as the Minister of Propaganda, spouting my sooty truths".

But bodies of words are not like water wagons that clean the dust and air of our city streets. They are not like instruments introduced down a man-hole to straighten the tangled working of a sewer. They are not mechanical, not utilitarian, not even a modern convenience. They are not intended always to present the blank, gray facades of factories. They began before such things -- we trust they will continue after them. They did not derive from factories, and even if affected by them, they have a kind of core that remains unchangeable.

Before an artist has any other creed, he has a religious faith towards words. He believes or disbelieves that reality was once a whole, and still retains a measure of this oneness. But he invariably believes in a far-reaching similarity of words. He is not so absolute as to call this "oneness", lest he be asked to produce the Word from which they all derive. But he suspects that some Linnaeus of grammarians could analyse words in species, on a truer basis than ever before.

Sometimes when you meant to pursue and exterminate an insect, you were astonished by its will to resist. You leapt back in fear, thinking you had cornered a small dragon. Very often an artist, seizing on a word, discovers he has baited a scorpion with a ferocity never expected by him. Every word houses powers in itself, far beyond any suggested by its apparent scope and structure. Every word contains what amounts nearly to a godhead. An artist, who has the keenest experience of words, ranks this the important discovery, and knows it to be true.

It happens that words, when touched by a keenly pointed pen, begin to glow. They glow with a brilliance, without being opaque. There are suggestions, hints, glimmerings -- like shadows cast flickering through a glass screen -- of words' endless train, issuing from acore of this one word, dancing down a long corridor from the thronging distance. Words are open doors that connect chambers flowing into one another. Once they display a glowing fang, an intensity of sting, their light subsides and passes to the next sound and meaning. Words are really democratic. They seize on godhead an instant, then give it up to their nearest fellow. In the small kingdom of the tongue or the sheet of paper, there is room for an infinite number of crowned heads. Not all of them appear immediately, or appear on a stated occasion. Some of them, though the scene and characters constantly shift, continue dancing in attendance for the present. But these are almost as important as those in the

forefront. The powers among angels are attended by angels nearly as blessed as themselves. In good art these words suggest the history and background of the tongue. More basic even than the suggestion of linked emotions or ideas, is this suggestion of many words by one word.

But this writer of whom I speak shows in his story neither a conscious nor intuitive perception of this truth about words. His words are pieces of gray slate that drip with a steaming mist. In spite of their apparent lucidity they are mutually obscured and shut out by one another.

Note: The particular occasion for this analysis was a story called "Vi", published in the third issue of Preview Magazine, written by Bruce Ruddick. We do not think that the prose in Preview reaches the high standard of the poetry.

We intend to publish, from time to time, criticisms of the following magazines: Contemporary Verse, Music and the Arts, Canadian Poetry Magazine, and Preview.

From this list we except a magazine like Crucible, which would only serve to develop one's notions of good art by the resistance of contrary standards.

THE BEE -- John Sutherland

The dragon-fly has the hobble of a cripple, flying with the set crookedness of a wobbling wheel, or the bent pin in the knob of an axle. But this bee's flying was more than eccentric, and cut the air to tatters, with a fire's freedom of design. He flew like a 'plane doing stunts when the loops and banks are speeded up by camera. He swept low to meet the flower bed, scraping the white-spread faces, and soaring backwards in a spin. He made brunt, head-on charges, so the stems shook and nearly broke. Seeds in pods shook and rattled. Petals broke and fell about him in a scorching shower that maddened him still more.

Why did he tear, like a murderer, at the flowers' throats? He had endured a hot summer's noon. Summer had stuffed his ears with the cotton batten of silence. In the meadow a snail spent an hour crawling a foot towards him. Small blades of grass had thrust like scissors up his nostrils, until he sensed a heavy operation, and smelt the chloroform. When he butted tall grasses, they bent amd stayed down, with a new non-resistance. His own non-resistance came over him like a cloud. With flying, outspread fingers, it pressed his blinded brows, and thrust him on his back. It wanted to lave him with amooth cloud foam. Summer had offered him a draught of ripeness and silence. But

it seemed to him the brimming cup of death. It had offered him the meadow's mattress of piled straw to lie on. But he felt it being converted to an awful use. He heard the fingers of the scythe, like a twisting rivulet, snaking towards him, forming from the burnt straw a scarecrow shape of death.

He rose up, to be free of the hard collar of the ground, to slip the leash of air. The air whipped across his shoulders in a stream of torn and gashed white ribbons. He tore and burnt, like a white burning eye, like a tiny seed dropped from a white star. At last he flew off through a grove of trees with a boom like the stroke of a woodman's axe.

POEM - P. K. Page

She was dime-dead, a silver thing
passed as a token from hand to hand
and where the spoken word sounded or the leaf
scratched stucco or the boy
slung the strap of his bag on a bony shoulder
and shouted down lighted avenues
she was a shadow.
Under the arc of drawing rooms
or bending on the crooked black arm
she was quick as money
and coveted by private fingers,
fumbled for, clutched, caught and spent
in a second.

It was strange to see her alone,
lying like a wax doll on her bed
moving in a yawn of movement
staring with a flat stare
at a world of air
or caught like a bent pin
on her bedroom chair.

LANDSCAPE OF LOVE - P. K. Page

Where the bog ends, there, where the ground lips, lovely
is love, not lonely.
Land is
love, round with it, where the hand is;
wide with love, cleared scrubland, grain
on a coin,
Oh, the wheatfield, the rock-bound rubble;
the untouched hills
as a thigh smooth;
the meadow.
Not only the poor soil lovely, the outworn prairie,
but the green upspringing,
the lark-land,
the promontory.

A lung-born land this,
a breath spilling,
scanned by the valvular heart,
the field glasses.

This magazine has been produced by five people: John Sutherland, Betty Sutherland, Robert Simpson, Keith Maclellan, and Audrey Aikman.

Contributions should be sent to the editor, John Sutherland, at 1800 Sherbrooke Street, Montreal. Manuscripts that are not accepted will be returned to the authors. We do not pay for contributions.

Suggestions and criticisms will be welcome.