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# FIRST STATEMENT

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# FIRST STATEMENT Canadian Prose and Poetry

## First Statement Books

A glance at the Canadian poetry of the last twelve months will indicate that we are passing through a period of unusual activity. Mr. Gustafson added another anthology to those of previous years, and Mr. Smith published a comprehensive work entitled *The Book of Canadian Poetry*. Volumes by E. J. Pratt, Dorothy Livesay, A. M. Klein and A. J. M. Smith made their appearance during the spring and summer. These have now been followed by the Collected Poems of Dr. Pratt and by *Flight into Darkness*, a collection of Mr. Gustafson's poetry. It is doubtful if there has ever been a time when so many important books by Canadian poets were published in a single year.

The new volumes make it plain that the modern poetry movement, which had its beginnings in Canada during the thirties, is gathering fresh impetus. To a greater or less extent, all of these poets are occupied with problems of the social kind. All of them are exploring the resources of a style that is, in one case, more direct and vigorous, and, in another case, more complex and analytical than anything we have had in previous Canadian poetry. Other writers will regard the appearance of their work as an encouraging sign that the Canadian audience is at least ready to receive progressive writing.

But there are many new writers in Canada today, producing significant work, who have no opportunity to publish their poetry. It is in order to supply an outlet for them that *First Statement* has decided to publish poetry in book form during the coming year. Each volume will be devoted to the work of a younger writer and will consist of representative selections from his poetry. If finances permit, we hope to extend the scheme later on to include the publication of representative prose.

Work is now going forward on the books of poetry. A selection of important work by Irving Layton will appear during the latter part of January. Poems by Raymond Souster, whom many critics regard as the most promising young poet now writing in Canada, will be published during March. Other names are to be selected and announced at a later date. We will publish at least four, and possibly six, books during the next twelve months.

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# Why George Smokes a Pipe

A SKETCH

JOHN SUTHERLAND

Mr. Jones was anxious to improve his son's morals because he himself had a career of crime that stretched from his very earliest years. At the age of thirteen he had formed a habit of smoking cigarettes in the barn and had deceitfully hidden the fact from his father. In his late teens he had begun playing poker for large sums of money, and had got drunk in hotel rooms where he smashed up all the furniture. But having now put the days of liquor and poker behind him, he was living on a greatly reformed scale, and was determined that his son should never encounter any of the pitfalls that he had. He made George promise never to smoke a cigarette or touch a drop of liquor until he was twenty-one. At the age of twenty-one he would be free to decide the question for himself, and Mr. Jones was nearly certain that a son of his would know the right thing to do. But no matter what his son decided to do, it would be George's responsibility, not his; if George indulged in foolish and expensive habits he would have to pay for them out of his own pocket, not his.

From childhood on his young cousin Bill had always been a great help in bringing George's better instincts to the fore. When, at another time, George had promised his father to take good care of his younger sister because, being a woman, she needed protection from all sorts of things, his cousin was the only one who helped him fulfill his promise. When Bill started pulling his little sister's hair, George was always there to insist on his better behaviour. If necessary, he would fly at him with both fists and give him a bloody nose for not acknowledging the rights of women. On one square plot of grass behind his father's house, shaped like a boxing-ring, he taught him the same lesson in the same way as many as twenty-five times. And he went on defending his sister, and behaving in this highly moral manner, until his cousin grew a bit older and became almost as big as himself.

Up until then George had been using Bill as a guinea-pig in all sorts of experiments. Whenever he wanted to test the power of crime as against the power of morality he let Bill do the job for him. Already he showed his interest in solving philosophical problems and a knowledge of practical methods that might benefit him even now.

It was at his grandfather's house that George came nearest to breaking his promise not to smoke or drink: — so near that he could never recall his grandfather or the house without an impression of something corrupt and evil. Grandfather did not have the same scruples and prejudices as Mr. Jones. Perhaps he was too old to care what happened, and did not think that anything he did now could change the verdict on the Day of Judgement. Or perhaps he was really an immoral sort of person, and did not understand that, when his son improved the family's material position, he would also have to improve its morals. He did not seem to mind a bit when George and Bill, coming to visit him, picked up one of his cigarettes and toyed with the idea of smoking it. He did not even mind when they went still further, and Bill, at George's instigation, lit one of the cigarettes and smoked it a third down in a state of intense nervous excitement. He just chuckled and laughed at the whole thing, as if there were really something satanic about him, or as if idiocy at last blanketed his old age.

He was not even mentioned during the ensuing furore in the Jones family. Bill, who was still too young to know what crime entailed but old enough to have a feeling of guilt, had gone home and explained to his mother exactly what had happened. There followed a series of loud and long arguments lasting over several days, when George was accused of being a corrupter of youth in general and of his cousin in particular. George hotly denied this, because it was absolutely untrue. He had not even touched a cigarette. As soon as Bill had started smoking one he had tried to stop him from going on. He tried to tell Bill what would happen to both of them, but Bill would not listen to him.

This is the nearest that George ever came to breaking his promise not to smoke until he was twenty-one. I only record it because George himself has not a perfectly clear conscience about it. No one whose opinions were unprejudiced would ever dream of saying that he had not lived up to his promise. Only George would feel guilty, because he is too honest about his own motives, and not very fair to himself.

I don't know what happens to people, but it is not very long after they reach twenty-one that they lose the moral fervour and the innocence, of their childhood. It was true that George still had some scruples and prejudices after he reached manhood. At first he could not smoke more than one cigarette or take more than one drink at a time. It took him three or four years before he could get over the idea that there was something immoral about doing these two things; and even now, the gusto with which he does both of them is an indication that he is driven by conscience-pricks. But George is in no way an average individual, and his development has been a very subtle and complex one. He has not so much gone from good to evil as he has gone beyond good and evil. There is no conventional standard that one could judge him by now; and, as he has equally distributed his favors between the good and the bad, perhaps there is no standard at all. He has not only done that which he knew was right, would be to his advantage, and would make him happy; but, in a spirit of genuine tolerance and understanding, has insisted on doing that which was wrong, would work him harm, and would make him unhappy. He is not only one man but two men, and this is another proof of his honesty and moral integrity. Through his transparent flesh, as through the glass at an aquarium, one can see all the stir and activity swimming around inside him. Being, for purposes of honesty, somewhat of an exhibitionist in moral matters, and believing that truth is drawn from the bowels, he suggests a picture of that complex, intricate, and contradictory network within the physical body.

In his effort to be unbiased, he has often let himself be attracted by something that repelled him. He has done that which he hated to do and forgotten that which he liked to do. For instance, I have often heard him say that he ate grape-nuts for cereal at breakfast, not because he enjoyed them, but because they filled him with so much dissatisfaction and distaste. He knew of nothing better to test one's ambition and the power of one's desires, because only by chewing desperately for a five minute period could one eat a single grain of grape-nuts. There is no heroic fact in the whole of history so well able to test one's hardihood and powers of endurance. George is that wise sort of man who always sees the great in the small, and who understands that the whole of life can be summed up in a grain of grape-nuts.

Likewise with his habits of smoking and drinking: he cannot

smoke or drink without suffering from the ingrained lesson of childhood, and from a hidden disturbance of conscience. He smokes cigarettes incessantly, although he is too impartial to know one from the other. He smokes a pipe of tobacco, seven or eight pipefuls at a time, though it makes him terribly ill to do so. He cannot indulge in alcohol without feeling like a ship that is blasted from its course by a bomb. All these physical trials are due to the ingrown trouble planted in his soul.

But George, when he surveys the sorry picture of his career as a pipe-smoker, will often say that it is entirely due to the first time that he smoked. He claims that what happens in one's first experience of a thing determines the future course of one's experience with that thing. A friend of George's had told him that he would bring him a pipe, and he had awaited its arrival as expectantly as the first embrace of a bride. As the particular pipe could not be obtained for several weeks, his excitement mounted all that time, and when it did finally come he laid hold of it with as much eagerness as a drowning man does a life-line. Nor did the pipe disappoint his expectations. To smoke it gave him a wonderful feeling of relief, as if he had arrived in a blissful country where no worries existed. All the harsh edges of the world were smoothed away and the conflict of the sensitive spirit with its surroundings was temporarily stilled. After such a long wait, the effect of the tobacco was so satisfying that George felt he had found the long sought-after touch-stone and that a happy, glorious future was looming before him.

That same day he was going out to dance, but now he no longer dreaded the prospect of it. He was particularly self-conscious about dances, because they demanded a kind of plebian gaiety which was not in his artistic soul, and also because he did not know how to dance. Often, after his clumsy and painful attempts, he had ruefully quoted to his partners that passage from Shakespeare about the man that hath no music in his soul. But now as he sat on the bench in the dance-hall with his pipe going full steam, the circumstances were different. He smoked pipeful after pipeful; perhaps ten or eleven pipes altogether, and it gave him a kind of high and lofty satisfaction. He was hardly distressed at all by his isolated position. He did not think — more than once or twice — that it was necessary to screw up courage to ask someone to dance; and he sat there all alone, scarcely hoping at all that some female who saw him would

understand the beauty that lay beneath his exterior and feel enough pity to show him how to dance. After the friend who had brought the pipe introduced him to a particularly attractive girl, he even went out on the dance-floor. The dancing was a little bit awkward, but that was because he had got so fond of his pipe that he kept smoking it all the time. It was a little bit embarrassing when it slipped out of his mouth and spilled out on the floor, but the dance came to an end just at that minute and only a few people standing around saw what happened. After he sat on the bench and smoked a couple more pipefuls, he put the pipe away in his pocket for a rest.

He put it in his pocket for a rest because he did not want to overdo the thing on the first night. All the time that he had been sitting there, puffing out great puffs of smoke into the air, he had felt like a demon wrapped in a cloud; floating upon a cloud softness, he had looked down with contemplative eye upon the sport of the human beings beneath him. Now, by a curious trick of transposition, he felt as if the cloud were inside him. He even felt it growing and swelling there inside him, and because it had the heaviness of a cloud betokening a storm, portending a deluge, he went to the doorway for air. He went to the doorway and the rain was already falling in the dark night; but he went right through the doorway at a quick trot, although the storm had come. He went running along the road as quickly as he could because he wanted to talk to no one, and there was no point in stopping for the scenery on such a night. He burst through the doorway of his friend's house at full speed, and, closeted in the smallest room in it, he got rid of that swelling cloud which it had taken him a whole day to digest. Never in his life had he felt so lifted up, into such a light-headed air, and never had he been so out of contact with the hard earth. From its beginning to this end, the new pipe had been a thoroughly spiritual experience for him, and, as I have said above, it determined the whole of his future experience with pipe-smoking.

George had made a discovery that was of great future benefit to his writing. As he has often argued, it is in a state of sickness, or at the best of convalescence, that all great art is produced. Accordingly, each morning he fortifies himself with a large supply of tobacco and matches and sits down with his pipe at his writing-table. After about the seventh pipe the thoughts begin to come helter-skelter, and he has to hurry to put them all down. Between

the seventh and ninth pipefuls — when he goes to lie down on the bed — all his best work is done. It is a great race to the moment when the cloud of inspiration, travelling from the seventh pipeful, collides with, and is absorbed by, the cloud of dizziness travelling from the ninth pipeful. In the precious interval before this happens George's creative faculties are working at fever pitch.

Baudelaire, Wilde, De Quincey and some of the old-fashioned writers needed a pipe of opium before they could write. George, living in the enlightened twentieth century, gets along much better on a pipe of tobacco.

## Go to Sleep, World

Go to sleep, world  
 Draw yourself up for the night  
 Like the body of my beloved  
 Curling so sleepily on the sofa  
 With her eyelids closed  
 Like a soft lazy cat  
 Make them all stop, world  
 Make your tiny men  
 Give up their dirty killing for the night  
 And lay them gently down  
 O lay them gently down  
 Their arms are tired with butchering  
 Their trigger-fingers stiff with murder  
 And give them sleep so they may be strong  
 In the morning and the blood run  
 Plentifully O the blood running in little rivers  
 Go to sleep, world —  
 But do not look at my beloved lying there  
 Or I will kill you  
 A little at a time, so the ants may have a chance  
 On your rotten gut.

—RAYMOND SOUSTER

## The Swimmer

The afternoon foreclosing, see  
 The swimmer plunges from his raft,  
 Opening the spray corollas by his act of war—  
 The snake-heads strike  
 Quickly and are silent.

Emerging see how for a moment,  
 A brown weed with marvellous bulbs,  
 He lies imminent upon the water  
 While light and sound come with a sharp passion  
 From the gonad sea around the Poles  
 And break in bright cockle-shells about his ears.

He dives, floats, goes under like a thief  
 Where his blood sings to the tiger shadows  
 In the scentless greenery that leads him home  
 A male salmon down fretted stairways  
 Through underwater slums . . .

Stunned by the memory of lost gills  
 He frames gestures of self-absorption  
 Upon the skull-like beach;  
 Observes with instigated eyes  
 The sun that empties itself upon the water,  
 And the last wave romping in  
 To throw its boyhood upon the marble sand.

—IRVING LAYTON

## Joyce and Mann

—JOHN B. SQUIRE

(This is the first section of an essay on Thomas Mann)

“Who taught us most, shall we honour least” — this seems to be the adopted maxim of a certain class of writers and critics when they think and speak of James Joyce. Some of this group’s most vehement members are modern writers whose professional and spiritual scalping has been most thorough. In their pages,

Ulysses becomes a great tomb, echoing an eerie emptiness; an inspirationless, mechanical monstrosity; and a moral wasteland. At all this I am called to wonder. For there is a twofold implication in their moral criticism: it is intended, not merely for the alleged moral vacuity of the author and the book as a depiction of modern life, but for the degrading effect Joyce has had upon the spiritual side of literature and his public alike. It is with this last-named alleged assault on the public's literary morality, and with Joyce's supposed deleterious effect upon the common mythology of these times that I wish to deal here.

Before we proceed it would be wise to make clear that it is not with the inherent value of the works in question as literature that I intend to concern myself, but with their moral aspect; and of this morality, that part of it which could be described as the works' moral impact upon the reader.

If I were to ask myself, simply, which works in modern literature could the more effectively undermine the sensitive reader spiritually, change him gradually into a hopeless, cynical, self-despairing do-nothing, I would have to answer, not Ulysses, but *The Magic Mountain*; not *A Portrait of the Artist*, but *Buddenbrooks*; not *The Two Gallants*, *A Painful Case*, or *The Dead*, but rather *The Dilettante* or *Death in Venice*. These works of Mann's could easily be the invitation to death (or at least to disease) for such a reader that that casually-begun book of Schopenhauer's was for Thomas Buddenbrook. But just here is the paradox: for Thomas Mann was considered, even at the time *The Magic Mountain* was published, to be one of the finer moral influences of the day. And this is true, but true in such a strange and equivocal way that it is almost a falsehood as well. Apart from that herd of people who subscribed to the belief in Mann's moral stature merely because rumour had it so, his morality was understood as a giant striving, his Jabbok hour, a wrestling in the night with the forces of evil. And this striving was symbolized, at that time, by the preoccupation with death and disease in his works, by the replacement of life and its "normal" values by a descent into the pit of death and its Last Questions.

Before proceeding, let us take a few moments to trace in miniature the climate of the two books, *Ulysses* and *The Magic Mountain*. Stephen of the *Portrait*, and later of *Ulysses*, despite his involved esthetic theories and ambitions — which are quite divorced from the common struggles of men — Stephen, I say,

is human enough, and self-loving enough to *have* ambitions, to want to create something and to desire the satisfaction and happiness of his own soul. His ambition is clear: he wants to forge in the smithy of his soul the uncreated conscience of his race. And the Blooms, Molly and Poldy — what of them? Poldy is middle class, intelligent in a stupid sort of way, he is a little futile, but he does have a certain delicacy of feeling, he does enjoy life and attempt to turn it to his good; and after putting the book aside, one looks back with no little respect on his life and person. Molly — lustful, polygamous, indiscriminate Molly, preoccupied with the appetites of the flesh and with lush memories; ignorant and available to bootblack or tenor; even Molly is able to erect for herself some beauty, some philosophy of life, even if it be one of the sexual life, a pagan morality of her own.

But Mann's figures, from the earliest stories to the *Finis Operis* of the Magic Mountain, are diseased of body or mind or both; hopeless and ambitionless; their human weaknesses in the one sphere giving the lie to their strivings in the other. Vital, inarticulate Peeperkorn lives without direction and dies without direction and dies miserably at his own hand; Castorp, even after he is liberated from the shallowness of "those below", those mixed up in life, even after his scientific and philosophical investigations and his Mediterranean dream, remains rudderless and ineffectual, and is swallowed up, eventually, in war, the supreme folly of the 'flatlands'. That most needful virtue of the human — to be able to build for oneself a creative, conquering philosophy stemming from the depths of self-belief — this virtue is entirely absent in the characters of the works leading up to the Magic Mountain. One and all do they find not only the tasks of life, but its normal pleasures as well, too much for them, and they succumb or forget. The sanatorium is indeed the perfect haven for such a tribe: here they can entertain themselves with the latest 'cures' science has to offer (the while hoping and working for the cure's ineffectiveness); here they can spice it all with the latest and most perfect offering, a weekly lecture in psychoanalytical profundities, a learned discourse (which all are bound to attend) on the conflict of virtue and love, neither of which have any meaning for them in their welcome escape from the life and values of the 'flatlands'. The correspondence with the reality of those years is too perfect — if that is possible. And so psychoanalysis, brought forth and

perfected by Freud in order, as he himself said, to aid man in setting Ego above Id, to help him toward his goal of self-conquest, is perverted and subtly used to stimulate those who have not the spiritual strength to rejuvenate their lost souls, nor even the desire to do so.

In all the creative work of middle-aged Mann, then, — of this man revered throughout the world as moral leader and philosopher — there does not appear one conquering spirit able to meet the challenge of these times; nor even a figure in whom the passion for his life and work, literary or other, matches even remotely the passion felt by Stephen for his own future as writer and esthete, observer and chronicler. But *Ulysses* is a "tomb", its characters "lifeless mechanizations"!

While it is another Mann that we usually meet in his essays and speeches, there, too, does one occasionally come across a phrase or two that seem to have a Spenglerian quality — scars of past skirmishes with death have not altogether healed. As recently as two years ago (1942), prescribing for the life-attitude of the future, he said: ". . . the future belongs to the union of knowledge *and* hope, of profundity *and* courage, of faith and labour in the face of all doubt, and despite all doubt." In the face of all doubt, and despite all doubt — this sounds like a moral that is only able to meet the future by opposing to it some obscure and obstinate pride, not one that meets it with inner conviction and strength. It sounds, remotely to be sure, but still it does sound like these words of Spengler's, the conclusion to his little poem of death, *Man and Technics*: "We are born into this time and must bravely follow the path to the destined end. There is no other way. Our duty is to hold on to the lost position, without hope, without rescue, . . . The honourable end is one thing that *cannot* be taken from a man." Has resolve, intellectual resolve, ever been sufficient strength for a man faced with a future demanding creative response? Do not Mann's own characters testify against it? Doubt? Is it inward or outward — if inward, is it the self-doubt, the all-consuming conviction that they were not of this world, that finished off the Mann figures of the past; and, if outward, are the Castorps of the world strong enough to follow resolve against it? Does not the future that we face today require something more, something younger, more vital, (divorced from doubt: did Joseph have resolve in face of doubt, or did he achieve

from inner belief?)

As we have said, it is usually a different Mann that we meet in the essays and speeches. Certainly in some of them are the most inspiring and deeply hopeful things that have been said in our time. Yet here too we must reserve a criticism: the criticism that Mann's essays are all too often too "creative" in conception, too prone to intellectual and spiritual gymnastics, and thus lacking in the classic clarity which would otherwise be theirs — which *is* actually theirs, but only to be recognized after searching through their style. And we must remember that it is certain that fewer, far fewer minds have been influenced by his essays than by his creative works; also that those creative works up to and including the Magic Mountain — volumes of death and the desire of death, morbid, defeat-filled works as they are — we must remember that these productions are the essence of Mann at this period, the essence of him who has said that a man *is* what he *does*.

Thomas Mann has somewhere expressed surprise at the sale of his books in America and other countries outside the German frontiers — at the reception, in particular, given to *Der Zauberberg*. Yet is it any wonder that such works of neurosis and escape were welcomed into a defeated and deflated postwar world (just as Spengler's masterpiece stimulated greater interest than it otherwise would have). And does not Mann, whose conception of the artist certainly pictures him not only in the role of man-of-letters, but also as spiritual leader, if not in the actual, worldly sense, then surely in a higher, pedagogical manner — does not Mann, then, share in the guilt for the appearance of the savage, barbarian will to destroy that has swept his native land, and to a lesser extent the whole world? Indeed, and admittedly. This is what he wrote to Klaus and Erika Mann some few years ago: "German freedom and the Weimar Republic have been destroyed; we, you and I, are not altogether guiltless in that matter."

Not altogether guiltless. In those terrible years, those post-war years of Germany's bitterness and unconscious feeling of military, and what is worse, of *spiritual* defeat, Mann admits that he was not altogether blameless; not without guilt when German freedom was destroyed to make way for fascism. Might I suggest that perhaps Mann's greatness and his involvement in his art (which was absolute in those days) prevent him, even now, from knowing as deeply as he might just how and to what extent he

is guilty? And here, of course, I do not mean the moral, conscious citizen — who has always been a deep friend of men — not the thoughtful Mann, but the artist-half and its struggles with the world and values, its hatred of flabby virtuousness, and its hunger for knowledge of the perverse and evil as a source of the beautiful and good. For his own creative works are the symbols of his self-knowledge and his wrestlings with evil and the darkness: whatever else they are to others, they are victories to him. And what *are* they to others? Can Mann know how shattering a single reading of the little story *The Dilettante* can be to a confused, sensitive soul? Can his feelings really gauge what the effect was on the sensitive, confused world of the twenties and early thirties of the greater, deeper, (and real) neurosis the *Magic Mountain* depicts? How could he when it is reported that he was confident the Teutonic reader “could and would be guided” by the simple minded, though pleasing Hans and his spiritual peregrinations? For who can say with finality just what lesson is to be learned from Hans, other than that both humourless, fanatic authoritarianism, and vapid, expostulating humanitarianism must be rejected in favour of another and higher ideal? Can Mann have any idea of how few among his readers are capable of grasping the symbolism behind Hans (whether they take him to be ‘simple’, or a genius), and how very many are incapable of feeling his works *as* his struggles — but are able, indeed, only to fall before the spell of the gilded, smiling retreat to disease? How few can do more than fall into the pit he digs, this comfortable “deep dark pit”; how really few know or care that “its nature is to be empty”. And to whom does he speak when, in a later connection, he says: “its power to hold fast is not so great after all”? I greatly fear that Mann’s mighty struggle in these most dangerous times, and the goodness that has arisen from the pit with him, will not be felt and appreciated by the mass of his readers — readers who will have gone to him, not in the spirit of his own descent, but seeking just that which it was his desire to transform into creative, life-giving forces: namely, death and disease. Let us hope it is otherwise.

I do not mean, however, by denying the existence in Mann prior to the Joseph story of a figure capable of meeting the challenge of these times, to imply an acceptance of a similar situation

in the works of Joyce. But then I am not sure a similar situation even exists. For one thing, Joyce never thought of himself as a spiritual leader, and never expressed himself as such; and his idea of the artist and his work are as follows: "The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails. The esthetic image in the dramatic form is life purified in and reprojected from the human imagination." With Joyce there is a denial of all values — those are the words of a modern writer who majors in Joycean criticism. Yet, for my part, I admit that I am filled with respect for Joyce's devotion to his artistic beliefs, inspired by his mastery and language, and warmed by his passion. Is it, then, an "already dead" man, who, "blushing slightly, . . . laid his hand on Lynch's thick tweed sleeve, and said: "We are right, and the others are wrong. To speak of these things and to try to understand their nature and, having understood it, to try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, to press out again, from the gross earth or what it brings forth, from sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our soul, an image of the beauty we have come to understand — that is art."

When it is said of Joyce that he "emerged, took a glance about, and fell back again into the darkness" whence he came, — when this is said, what, pray, is remembered of his struggle with the world, of his escape from the "sow that eats her farrow", and what, above all, is remembered of the debt modern literature and modern philosophy owe this man for his godlike pains with his art, for his recreation of the English language and for novels that stand far above anything else written in English since the beginning of the century? What do these critical modern writers not owe to his perceptions, courage and style — professionally speaking, I mean? It is only necessary to read the pre-Joycean English novel to find out. Let it rest at this: that though Joyce is no lover of man, no ready-made spiritual leader, is he not a more inspiring figure and, yes, even a greater moral example with his abundance of passion for himself and toilsome patience for his work (qualities in great demand among writers now) — is he not more inspiring for these strengths than are those noisy disciples of MAN (writ large and loud), who, more often than not, are no friends of *men*?

## In The Big City

On South and Fourteenth street  
Wind assaulted her  
Dark voices shuttered her  
Chaos threatened her.

Then fear exploded  
Brilliant on trolley tracks  
A motor-cycle leaped  
Against a wall of flame.

A forest of faces grew  
Thick on the edge of night  
Hot smiles crowded her,  
Loose elbows jostled her.

Among faces anonymous  
Was one she recognized  
The hunter loneliness  
Had stalked and followed her.

She turns now and runs  
To buildings to shelter her  
Her feet hold to earth  
The mother who nourished her.

Relentless the hunter  
Through the night follows her  
Hate, his ragged hound,  
Knows love is her camouflage

As furious they stalk the night  
Through the jungle streets,  
Terror spills its stars  
Over her leopard flight

And fear now feels its shape  
Alter with every hour  
Until child of itself in her  
Fear is reborn

New and apart from her.  
At dawn they separate  
Childless in empty streets  
Hunter covers his sightless eyes.

—MIRIAM WADDINGTON

## Frogmore's Fancy

—J.S.GLASSCO

(This is the last of three selections from a novel.)

It was some time before Frogmore could resolve the conflicting sensations of being once more at home.

On his arrival, coming up the long driveway in the midst of a spring twilight, accompanied only by the housekeeper he had engaged in a neighbouring village, he had been suddenly penetrated by an archaic, childhood sense of a finality which was contained in the simple fact of returning home, as if from a day's excursion with his governess; so strong was this, indeed, that for a moment his whole life since he had been away appeared as just such another outing, though unsuccessful and taken alone — an illusion which had recurred, especially at night.

Then, in the daylight, this impression had immediately receded. He had seen that the house was falling to pieces, that the gardens, filling up with brush and saplings, were undermined with huge spongy ant-hills, and that the embankment itself was slipping; the windlestraw, which had fallen aslant from its own weight, now trailed in all directions, clinging to his ankles wherever he walked. Outwardly at least, the boyish world was in ruins.

From a narrow strip of clover and medick, all that was left of the lawns in front of the house, there was however the same view of the lake and distant islands: here he took his seat again — and soon, overcome by the first fine weather of May, Frogmore had merely sunk into a delicious apathy, sitting out-of-doors

all day long, watching the islands as they slowly turned from grey to green.

His weakened condition called, in the first place, for such repose; and for a while, yielding to this physical demand, giving himself up to the delights of an immobile existence, he savoured an experience whose value did not lie any more in its promise, its character of prelude, but in its quality of seeming to be detached from time itself. In this secure passivity, as of one who was safe and adored, he had indulged the illusion of a personal springtime, and when his thoughts began to stir he was content, to begin with, to entertain the fancy that he himself merely echoed a natural concord of youth and fatigue blooming in this ruined place overrun by spring.

This did not last very long. As his strength increased, he discovered that it was his first impression that was returning and becoming confirmed. Now, he began seriously to suspect that his whole youth, his whole life since he had been away, was all so much dead wood.

"Perhaps," he thought, "since leaving this place I have really ceased to live! In any case if my life has any pattern at all the thread must have been dropped here, five years ago, when Miss Marwood left."

The problem of patterns had, in fact, always obsessed him. The conviction, held since infancy, that life was ordered beforehand, that every action must conform to this order or lead to a nightmare of dislocation, had made the slightest decision a painful matter. As a child, he had sought for portents; later, however, he had come to look on each occasion for choice as a move in some everlasting game of chess, where to decide wrongly, though no longer an irreparable mistake, entailed a tiresome process of revision and correction. It was not even a question of ever winning the contest: to hold his own was all he could hope for, and to do this he must divine, day by day, the value for good or ill of every impulse, and its place in a scheme which could only be comprehended in rare moments illumined by a peculiar star.

Often in the past, sensing indefinable disasters ahead, he had checked himself, and by symbolic acts of contrition returned to the point or period of the false step — but never had he thought of morally cancelling so many years as now, when, weighing them carefully, with their curious effect of digression and irrelevance,

he asked himself whether they had not been mistaken — perhaps, indeed, the mistake had lain in his trying so hard to conform to any pattern at all — and whether, in any event, a clean sweep could not be made.

The very possibility immediately recalled the blessed solution of his boyish problems; then, after setting the imaginary, impartial intelligence of a guardian angel in judgment on some piece of his own conduct, and carefully reviewing the evidence — only long before the verdict was reached, hurriedly to appoint a higher tribunal, of angels more ethereal and unbiased, to pass on the judge's fitness itself, and when that was done, to question their jurisdiction in turn, and so on in an infinite process of depersonalisation and appeal — then indeed, after wearing himself out in such a crazy quest for justice, he had suddenly braved the prospect of pain and thrown himself on his governess, renouncing thankfully the office of judgment, resigning the conduct of his conscience into her hands.

Ah, that final delegation of responsibility was, he saw, the prime factor of his early happiness — and now, what more natural than for him to take up where he had left off, where he had ceased to be happy? As the idea of making this clean sweep took shape in his mind, the whole magnificent prospect of another youth opened up, the vision of a veritable *vita nuova* in which he would have another chance.

“Yes,” Frogmore decided suddenly, “I shall make a fresh start.”

Now, he fronted the past and its associations with more confidence. He would not at first, however, visit the old schoolroom or Miss Marwood's quarters; for these places he had an emotion of trepidation and avarice, strong but indefinable, much like what he felt for the box into which he had piled his mother's papers and effects, and which he had never re-opened. But no clear memories attached to the rest of the house, to the rooms of state almost unvisited since his father's death. Wandering through these, noting time's inroads on their luxury — the gilded wallpaper peeling off in strips, the rosin exuded from floors, the furniture-covers eaten through, the tarnish on tassels, the droppings of mice — he came at last to his father's library, a room where he had never been before.

Always attracted by the life in books, Frogmore himself had read widely and at random. He had sought, however, suggestions

and intimations rather than rounded theses or creations of character, and the art that accepted the whole of life, reproduced its rhythm, constructed grandiose syntheses and passed Promethean judgments, was lost on him. What he liked were the books that drew vivid or memorable pictures — whether skilfully or not, or even consciously, did not matter; these he treasured and took to his heart, like a naive collector who had merely so many bare walls to furnish or to cover where they were stained or filled with holes. In effect, Frogmore asked from literature no more than additional materials for another world, which he could assemble himself — and indeed he had always preferred volumes with illustrations.

Here, in the library, was a veritable literary junk-pile, representing the accretion of years and testifying to a taste by turns dull, curious and trifling: — versions of old provincial scandals, whose sneering titles were like a slap in the face; great illustrated Annuals, with special sections for all the family; scores of society novels, with titles in the form of piquant questions; the epic poems of Pollock, Horne, Heavysege and Sir Lewis Morris; a complete series of juveniles and several 'educational' novels by a Mrs. Whitethread; books of farriery and the manège; diatribes against tight-lacing; studies in Pyramidology and Bacoanism; reports of Commissions to investigate jails and asylums; an immense volume in which refutations of Darwinism, prophetic pamphlets and indecent anti-clerical libels were all bound together.

For several days he feasted on these works, each morning carrying three or four books outside to his seat, where he remained during the daylight hours, reading and musing.

But the very luxuriance of the material was cloying. One morning he faced a new significance of all this printed matter. As he looked on the heap of volumes whose boards and leather, so richly tooled and gilded, would outlast any conceivable interest in the texts, and so many with a long list of announcements at the back, giving notice of hundreds more to be had in the same formats, a wave of dejection washed over him. What were they all but a witness of the futility of so much individual labour and vainglory, lost vessels swallowed in the abyss that claims so much of what a period, if it could speak, would really call its own? With a feeling of emptiness and frustration at the idea of such

appalling waste, he turned away from this room full of ghosts, persuaded that his youthful resource of a compromise world of impressions was definitely exhausted.

He resumed his habit of reverie, fixing on the events of his own discarded history, his mistaken years. But in his new, unsettled mood these too struck him as inventions; he found himself surveying his whole past with incredulity. Only infancy and boyhood, the one so wretched, the other so happy, seemed to belong properly to him; but these were *finished*. And the rest passed before him like something else he had read.

The city, his first glimpse of this bygone world, reappeared to him now as it might in one of those series of postcard 'views', folding together like a railway timetable, which were bought by the tourists. Ah, how he had hated it! In all seasons of the year it had depressed him, but especially in winter: then, its likeness to a huge dump was even more striking, its dwellers even more grublike in their lumpy casings of clothes, and their faces, pinched by the cold and the increased bitterness of the struggle for life, assumed so much more of the brute and the machine. This was downtown, of course, in streets dominated by the heartless hypocrisy of office buildings with the shapes of temples. But it was even worse among the elect whose fathers had survived and succeeded, and the picture of the wealthy district in the mountain's lee, with its heavy mansions of grey or yellow stone — each, like an animal, locked in its iron cage of fence — was merged in that of the rigid Sunday-morning faces that had passed in defile before his window, moving slowly churchwards above the narrow icy sidewalk, seen offily between enormous banks of snow piled there at dawn by gangs of destitute men working without mittens, snow which already bore its light dusting of soot and was drilled by the aspersions of dogs. On the whole, he had preferred the slums, where the washing and the billboards at least spoke frankly of the horrors of a life passed under the sway of psalm-singing bankers and industrialists.

For the country, the parvis of this pile of wood and masonry, he recalled only a summer afternoon spent at a golf-club. It had been Sunday, and everyone was there. From his place on the verandah, he had had a superb view of the last three holes, an expanse of green rolling like a sea, dotted with sand-boxes, coloured and numbered flags, entrenchments and contrived traps, all like some enlargement of a perpetual Christmas game. Seated among the

crowd of waiting womenfolk, most of whom were knitting, he had watched the groups of players who appeared over the hill at precise intervals, like the puppets in a shooting-gallery that called, quite simples, for a well-aimed bullet. And all at once he had been seized by such a fury that, even now, the memory of its repression was shot through with a sense of strain — an exasperation from which he escaped, with an irritable movement corresponding to his own translation at the time, to the life in Paris

Now, reviewing his vicious experiences with the phlegm of a police agent, he was no longer even concerned with the train of thought by which his fancy had suddenly taken fire, illuminating a forbidden sexual goal with strange fireworks. The panorama of his half-mistresses unrolled before him with the effect of an ancient news-reel, in which he paused only to note his predilection for costumes, amused by the memory of two women with whom he had gratified this taste for a whole week, and who had attended him in disguises like that of tramway conductresses with low, heavy shoes and huge leather wallets, or of American hospital nurses, their chests creaking in bibs starched to the hardness of pasteboard and their hands reeking of javel-water.

With them, too, the spirit of perverseness had awakened in him when, dressed in a dainty, long-sleeved white muslin party-frock of around the year 1860, he had sat before a candle-lit toilet-table; his companions, disguised in yellow plush breeches and white wigs, had first busied themselves in curling his hair and arranging it *à l'ingénue*, and then put in use a whole array of cosmetics, powdering and rougeing his cheeks, shaping his brows into graceful and precise arcs, painting his mouth and eyelids.

Leaning back in his chair, he had experienced new and troubling sensations as he saw emerge in the glass before him a sweet feminine counterpart of his own face; and when the transformation was complete, he had risen and passed to a sofa facing another great mirror, to take his part in a gallant pantomime.

By such an artifice Frogmore had obtained the exquisite illusion of a sexual duality. The disturbing ambiguity of his desires found expression in a virginal defense and capitulation, in movements of a prudishness that passed into complaisance and ended in abandon; at the same time the girl in the mirror would become, at moments, vividly objective — a real creature whose plight stirred him deeply, and whose reactions he followed with the passionate absorption of the voyeur, cynically spiced by his know-

ledge that her resistance in the first place had been nothing but a sham.

Recalling these amusements, feeling the air of his thoughts growing closer and more perfumed, Frogmore was nevertheless touched with a passing sadness. More than ever, he saw that his approach to life had been wrong, revealing a concern with baroque and irrelevant details rather than any grasp of method or structural proportion, and he deplored the waste of energy, so like that which went into the writing of worthless books.

Now, with a fresh sensitivity to sexual values, directed inwards, he was re-discovering in the convolutions of his own soul the mysterious identity of agent and patient, its capability of being everything, of taking anything — and already the bewildering confusion of velleities had in his own case resolved itself into the working of simple duality. For some time he had been wearing silk stockings and feminine fripperies, indulging the vapid mood fitted to the weakness and indecision of his desires.

He was aware that these re-awakened interests, which had started as a diversion, were becoming a disturbance of his peace of mind. But they had grown from his inertia with an apparent necessity, as if planted by that act of decision by which he had turned his face resolutely to the past. Now, as they were watered and nourished from outside himself by a spring rain which also compelled, in spite of themselves, the resurrection of flowers, weeds and grass, he found he had no choice in the matter at all.

## Words without Music

Their dufflebags sprawl like a murder  
Between the seats. Themselves are bored  
Or boisterous. These are ignorant soldiers  
Believing that when forever the violent die  
The good receive their inexhaustible cow:  
Grade seven and Superman have arranged everything;

The other passengers are unimportant liars,  
 Salesmen, admen, the commercial trivia  
 Blown between the lines of memoranda  
 While across the aisle disposed on thirty beds  
 Are two limp virgins eyes below the navel;  
 Slowly the train curves around rich  
 Suburban Westmount that squats upon a slum  
 Then like a hypodermic plunges past  
 Uniform fenceposts into open country,  
 There's glazed sunlight upon the hard serrated  
 Fields. Air is thin slightly neurasthenic  
 Over the distant indiscriminate trees  
 That posture on hillsides gross and secretive  
 As women staling. Pins withdrawn suddenly  
 Barns collapse like real estate models. The senses  
 Run like swift hares along the fences;  
 These are the fire lands and this a sealed train  
 Of cold excursionists throats buttoned up  
 With yellow timetables. On folded hands  
 The minutes drop like dandruff, the  
 Jetted column survives in a black foetus  
 And the goats leap into our faces shrieking.

—IRVING LAYTON

## Book Reviews

DAY AND NIGHT. Poems by *Dorothy Livesay*. The Ryerson Press, 1944.

This volume contains poems that Dorothy Livesay has written over the past ten years. They are further evidence that she is part of our world that is in the making, a contemporary of the growing number of Canadian poets on whom the impact of the present age is direct and not derivative.

The poet is affected in two ways by this impact — in the form and style of his verse, and in the content or subject matter. The form in *Day and Night* is the varied, free, occasionally sentimental style that we have known in Miss Livesay's writing, a form more suited to her sensitivity and her personal utterances than to the tougher social themes that occupy some of her poems, yet even in

these capable at times of vigorous use. The content shows the breadth of her interest, her concern with universals and world movements as well as with the intensely personal experience. She writes not only of children but of childbirth, not only of Lorca but, in *The Outrider*, of the growth of social consciousness that accompanies the transition of an individual from farm to factory. The latter poem ends with an affirmation that well expresses her faith and understanding:

O new found land! Sudden release of lungs  
 Our own breath blows the world. Our veins unbound  
 Set free the fighting heart. We speak with tongues—  
 This struggle is our miracle new found.

The poem on Lorca stands out, perhaps because Lorca is at the same time the creative artist and the complete symbol of our ideological conflict and he thus enables Miss Livesay to fuse the personal and the social feeling more intensely. Here her delicate touch can express the essence of the tragedy without needing to attempt the bolder and more masculine statement which the themes of *The Outrider* and *Day and Night* seem to require. In these, while the social passion is keenly felt, the vehicle is a little fragile.

The Ryerson Press is to be complimented on the standards achieved in its first three volumes in this series. Birney's *David*, Smith's *New of the Phoenix* and Livesay's *Day and Night* mark the arrival of a new period in Canadian poetry.

F. R. SCOTT.

#### WRITERS IN THIS ISSUE

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