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# **FIRST STATEMENT**

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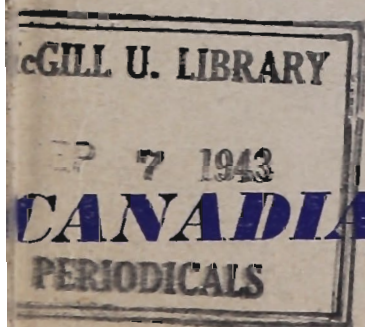
THE OUTRIDER by DOROTHY LIVESAY  
**STORIES** WILLIAM McCONNELL, PATRICK  
WADDINGTON.

**POEMS** RITA ADAMS, IRVING LAYTON.

**ARTICLES CRITICISM & REVIEWS**

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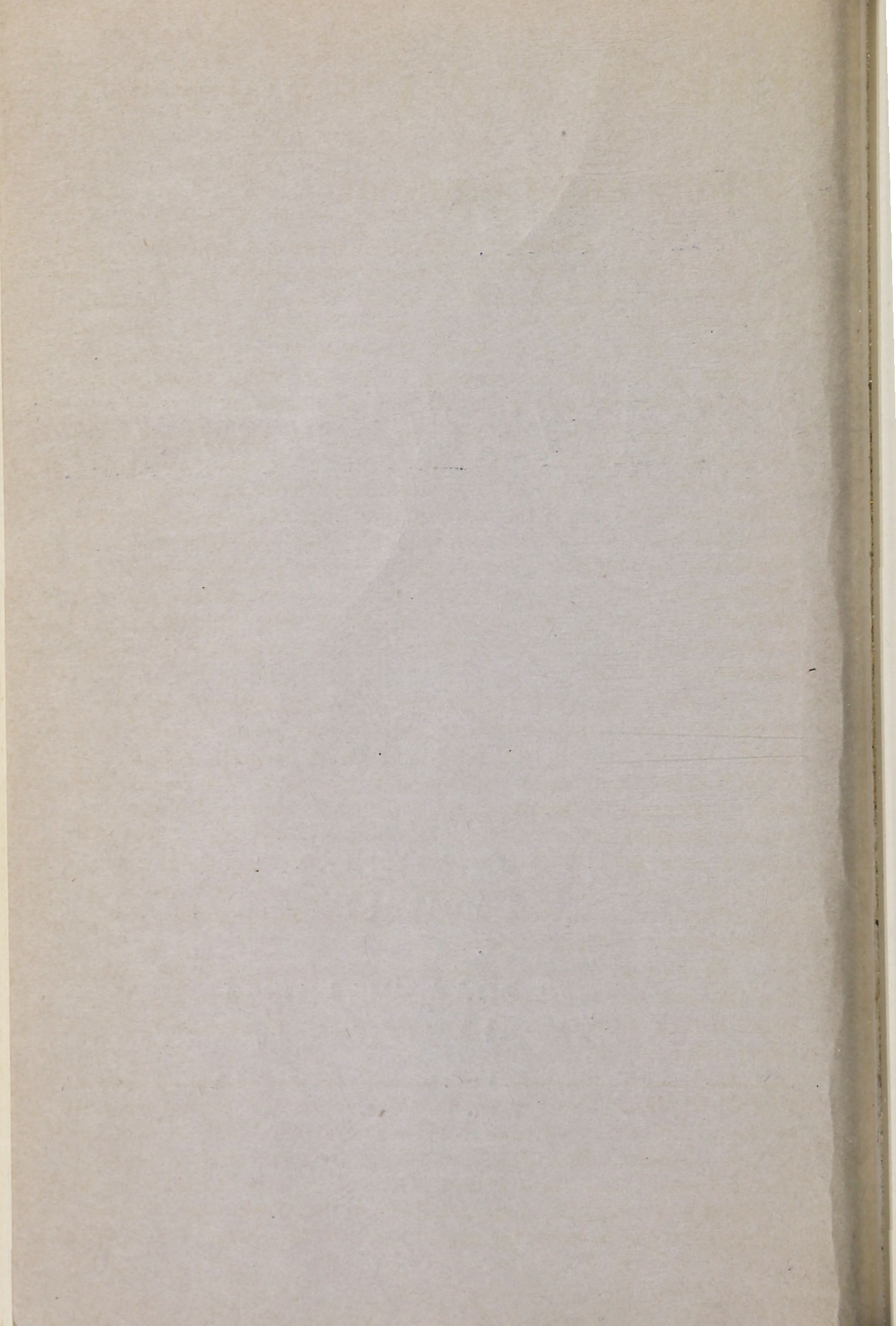
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**CANADIAN PROSE & POETRY**

PERIODICALS







# FIRST STATEMENT

## Letters and Comment

Comment on the prose in the first printed issue was generally favorable. Dorothy Livesay, among others, wrote us that the prose "stood out" which, she remarks, "is saying a lot for any Canadian periodical." But one or two readers objected to the realism of the prose. Why was it necessary, they wanted to know, to portray everyday people in an unromantic environment? Weren't modern writers in Canada too intent on describing prosaic reality?

This objection is an indirect compliment to Anne Marriott and the author of "Dear Mike". Canadian writers in the past have certainly not been distinguished by the ability to depict characters in a realistic environment. It is significant that the commonest type of Canadian novel has been the historical romance, and this type continues to be prominent on publishers' lists. Only recent writers have shown any heart to deal with facts, and a significant work of fiction has still to be produced in Canada. We are truly encouraged when readers feel that stories published in First Statement indicate a trend in Canadian fiction towards realism.

A number of favourable comments were received on the poetry in the first issue, most interesting of which was a note from Dr. E. J. Pratt. His opinion of A. M. Klein's *Hitleriad* is worth quoting: "I think it is trenchant satire. The group of gangsters have been visited with a high explosive heroic couplet." Donald Stewart, a Toronto poet, was on the whole critical of the poems we published. He thought that modern poets were oblivious to form and too concerned about striking off an unusual metaphor. Mr. Stewart's letter suggests to me that an interesting connection could be drawn between the metaphor and some characteristics of modern poetry.

All of these letters have been valuable as a guide to the reader's reaction, and we would like to encourage other persons to write us expressing their viewpoints. Interesting letters will be published in a letter column in future issues.

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# The Boys

—WILLIAM McCONNELL

(Ed. note: "The Boys" is a selection from a novel. Another selection will appear in the October issue.)

Don't imagine that Hans had no company, that he was sodden with himself and his tempered self-felicities. There were boys. And girls. And grown-ups not so unlike children. And they talked and mixed and laughed and played and dependented their activities as much as fitted their natures. Yes. There was even the church. Or hall. For there was no regular minister. It was one of those undenominational affairs that existed from the bounty of three or four oldsters who drained their time and money so that the never-tight group of members could assemble on pretext for anything but pentecostal time. This included Sundays infrequently (the oldsters took exception to one another's interpretations of the holy script) and more often week nights. A slow series of poorly attended prayer meetings punctuated with festival and suppers or anything which might break the social monotony of the village. Summertimes, when cannery hands and rough-voiced fishermen boozed the weekends of stormed weather in the tight-locked cove no thought of observance was made. The inclinations of even the faithful genitors could not withstand the volleying shouts and ribaldry of the chest-muscled men and apron-hammed women. So the boy, as well as drinking in these affairs, or their summer substitutes, impaled himself on the modest group activity of the other lads. Spearing the running salmon by lamplight as they fought the lower rapids of the Kasalano Creek, festooning toilet-paper on fat Mrs. Gooley's verandah, wiener roasts up the cove-point (Pecker Point, to the youngsters and unmarried men), aimless wandering up slopes to lie on their backs and pick the succulent wild blackberries, idly smearing the juice on their intent faces as they constricted mean-



ings from casual talk, sitting on the end of the government wharf, swinging their legs to catch sunbeams as they sang slowly almost without tune the folk-songs of half-a-dozen nations known only for them, forming futile never-lasting groups which fought, mocked, persecuted and lied the other till time's foolishness had run out its sands, and they were all friends, or separate enemies, once again, or idly ignoring one another as they caught up some isolated fetish of activity, or whittled into one another's being with those sudden and quickly broken childhood friendships, caused more by some idle lust for the other's possessions than any real sympathy or understanding. That is the way it went. But punctuated with a highlight.

There was the evening when they bloated their stomachs with half-cooked stew and the Robert's boy became violently ill. They dosed him, in Indian fashion, with a herb brew, which caused the boy's eyes to start in panic as it coursed its nefarious way down his suffering system. They saw him writhe. They counseled, quite impassively, like a group of little witch-doctors, secure in their unbounding confidential ignorance. They tested his heart and thumped his person till he screamed. They counseled the second time. Yes, it was serious. Perhaps the potion pimply Skolsky had manufactured was doing its worst. They tried resuscitation. The poor lad nearly burst his lungs with screams. They gagged him while they tried their knee-pumping the second time. The boy nearly lost consciousness from asphyxiation. They tore out the gag, for the first time allowing fear to transcribe their cocky asserting curiosity. He might have worms, suggested one, because the rest of us are alright. The stew didn't hurt us. They fought fire with fire by dangling glistening coils of writhing earth worms in front of the retching boy's mouth. Finally, in a cheerful desperation, they administered gallons of cold spring water. Forcibly, like their preceding treatments. It stopped the boy's howls (he could have faced strangulation, but nature happily forbade it), made him vomit with voluptuous rapture. Stomach emptied, he was soon running down the mountain-side with his self-confident chums, forgetting in minutes what had been engraved on Hans' mind for life and a possible beyond. Etched there and irretrievably tucked away until another combination of events could call it out to verify some future truth or beauty. Not that he was apart. He was in there like the rest. More so, for his brooding eyes plunged the others into more and wilder experimentation to find a riddle to conquer the existent riddle of knowledge. His shouts were as piercing. His gimleted body-movements were interjections to the turmoil. Yet seldom was he a victim. If fate seemed to in-



dicating this his voice would become shriller, his actions more erratic (and thus less suspect), and his group suggestions weirder and more appetizing to the young mob. Perhaps his reflection of fear satisfied the more leading of the remainder and suggested another, less imaginative victim. Seldom was he a victim.

Or the time they fired the gasoline shed behind Berg's store. They were caught (it was only the boys who would do it) the same night. And publicly thrashed by the angry fishermen, furious at a week's delay in their work with this sudden eruption of the sole supply of fuel for their trollers till the coast boat came with its deck-lashed drums. The village exploded into a witch hunt, as the frightened boys were dragged from random hiding places by the vigilantes. They were cuffed into the glare of the street, in front of the still-burning shed. They were stripped and shoved into the iron circle, and then thrashed and beaten by hard-breathing irate devils, slaving to strike at this insane destruction of community need. Father hit son unrecognized, and laid it on as hard at the next screaming wretch. When the boys were questioned by anxious mothers during the sobbing hours of early-morning, they answered not at all or bewilderment to searching word. 'Why had they done it?' Why? Who could say, let alone the boys. They, too, asked, in a half-mocking whimper. A complex urge towards activity and a desire for flame and noise. 'Why not ask the still smouldering fathers, equally ashamed for their inner flashes of violence?'

Or the communal lapse of conversation, one hot autumn's day, all resting on grey beach-boulder, or gently sifting silvery sand between artist hands. The waves first brought the drowsiness and quieting of words. Then the deliberate, succulent sound of a flicker snapping its beak against a forest stock, leaning its bulked burnt weight against future northern gales. Then the deliberate pearling of laundry clouds into the fantastic shapes of late-afternoon, assuring that conversational prospect of deciding what kind of animals or was it like Mrs. Gamez' drunken flowery face. Then, finally, the whistling up of the tide-changing breeze, fluttering the quiet cove waters into a bespectacled crowd of green men. First one boy, then another, would lower his eyes from sight to sound and lift his heart to far-off lands. "I believe in magic," said the first. "I do, too," affirmed the usual doubter. "And me," "And me," "And me," they affirmed in solemn pact. Their faces mirrored wonder while their quicksilver souls, now confessed with this group affirmation, began to twinkle and roll into their heads little balls of hair-brained suggestions for violent action.

And one winter's evening they were coming down to the village



front from the chapel (earlier spoke), from organized play (church elder's idea, soon to be dropped). Their mentor had left before, weary and hesitant of thought towards success. They felt the mist rising from the sea and smuggled their heads in pea-jackets and wool-covers, bravely rejecting wanted homes, with defiant dragging steps. They passed the first house on the outskirts, Indian, therefore a mark, and cheerfully threw pebbles at the closed inscrutable door. They howled in chorus, then stopped dead, for no answer could or would come from the proscribed place. They huddled closer and kept to the middle of the trail. A light was showing from window of the next place, fisherman, white, therefore wholly approve. They approached the magic circle of habitation, were about to pass on, when a scream, a woman's scream, stuck their heads and brought their frightened faces to knots of wonder.

"What the hell!"

"Gosh! What was that?"

"Shh!"

And the scream broke again, this time from immediately above their steps. They stopped and looked at that now sinister light. They were silent, listening, fearfully eager. The scream broke and was followed by a long moan. They shuddered. There was a thud of a flesh blow. They could hear the rapid imploring of woman to man and the drunken chuckle of rebuttal then the scream again then the groan then the abasing words of appeasement then the blow then the scream then the moan. The horrified boys forgot their scuffle and froze. One, older than the rest, muttered, "Jeez, he's making her!" and they crowded closer to him, as circled truth. He swept them with superior glance and spoke to himself, aloud. "Hear that? Hear that, eh?" Then he laughed and broke their fear. They smutted half-known remarks and stared up at the light, trying to pierce the shade with their spiked eyes. The screams stopped. They could hear whisperings. The window was thrown open and a voice jutted out, "Beat it! Goddam Yuh! Beat it!" They laughed insanely and threw up coarse words. The window opened wider and the light was blotted out. A wet sheet of damp hit their taunting faces. They spluttered. It was a chamberpot. They ran, still shouting their half-known words. When they reached the centre of the village they were crowded around the older boy and plied him with questions. He jeered them back and remained a sooty little king.

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## Advice To A Young Poet

Lest your verse condemn your wit  
Wait for sleep to father it.

Sentence, style, and form abhor,  
Syntax is, at best, a bore

Write obliquely, give no clue,  
Let cacophony ensue.

When you find you cannot pin  
More irrelevances in

Take all the stops and commas out,  
The capitals, and turn about

The stanzas, so the order goes  
From last to first. Do not transpose

The rows of dots, they are required  
To daze the eye when mind is mired.

Your poetry will be no worse  
If single words denote a verse.

You must, according to our time,  
Delete all but the awkward rhyme.

Make sure that you are misconstrued  
By pointing virtues that are lewd;

And turn the lamp of learning low  
Declaiming all you do not know.

Rail at life, and hope in vain;  
Be, I beg you, not too sane.

And if you follow this advice,  
The clever folk, who cut most ice,



Will reckon you in high esteem  
A greater poet than you seem:  
And decades after you are dead  
New texts about you will be read  
By threadbare scholars writing theses  
Upon your themes, in exegesis.

— RITA ADAMS

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## Our Way of Life

— PATRICK WADDINGTON

Two persons in a beer parlour, both of nondescript character, both in a fair state of drunkenness but coherent for all that.— One in the pose of a listener, stooge or feeder, as it were, sat with his head leaning on one hand, smiling gently into the face of his friend, who was pointing remarks at him with his fingers twisted into the shape of a revolver.

"Remember," said the speaker, "there'll always be an—" he paused expectantly.

"An England!" replied the other with enthusiasm.

"No!" the first cried, bringing his hand down hard on the table, which, being of metal, rang loudly. "There'll always be—?"

The other thought for a moment, then gave it up. "All right, what?"

"The Empire! That's what!"

They drank and began again.

"Listen," said the first, again. "What are we fighting for?"

Still smiling, still with his head on one side, the listener was not



daunted.

"For freedom," he said.

"No!"

"For England," he suggested.

"No!"

"I give up."

"We're fighting"—here he stopped and pointed the revolver again — "we're fighting to keep the blasted foreigner in his place! And that goes for this country, too!"

Bolivar, liberator of five republics, once said: "It is impossible to determine with exactitude to what human family we belong." That may be so, Bolivar, but others will do it for you!

Another, more sensational scene, with words and action, as it happened.

Three friends are in a little restaurant, part delicatessen, part soda and sandwich counter, one night. They often stopped there for a snack before going home. They liked the little man who owned the place and was his own sole employee: he was from Galicia. He looked like all immigrants from South-Eastern Europe look to unobservant eyes — dark, submissive, with a timid and uncertain attitude, as if he found the new country and its ways too much for him. Perhaps he had always been like that, however, for he left his native country many years ago and was a citizen now.

His three customers liked him, and in his shy way he liked them, because they were quiet and friendly and did not laugh at his accent. He stayed open all hours but he did not make much money. Perhaps he wasn't anxious to make money either, for he never tried to expand his business or try out new ideas.

Sometimes they asked him if he ever wanted to go back.

"No, no," he would say. "This country better. No trouble here."

"What trouble?"

A vague movement of the hands and a shrug. "Always trouble. You never knew when. Have another nice sandwich?"

On this night he seemed uneasy. The night before a man had started fighting with a soldier and finally both had been taken away by the city police.

"Not the soldier's fault. The man insulted him. I told the police so. That's what I said at the court this morning."

The Galician wiped the counter, shaking his head. His customers



yawned and drank their coffee.

Suddenly the door banged and a man walked in. He was in uniform, with a seargeant's stripes, and wore the armband of the military police. He was a very big man with heavy and scowling features.

"Last night one of our boys was arrested here," he said harshly. "That right?"

"Yes, sir. I'm sorry, I—"

"We found this check in his pocket. Thirty cents. Is it yours?"

"Yes. That's mine."

"Okay. Here's your damn thirty cents. Now receipt the bill. Write 'paid in full' and your name."

"I'm sorry, sir. I can't write English—"

"You damn well write, or I'll twist your bloody neck."

"But, sir—"

The big man swung around. "Hey, you, Bill, Joe, Steve! Come here!" he called.

With a triple banging of the door three men as big and unpleasant as the seargeant, stamped in and grouped themselves around the little Galician. It was ludicrous, crazy, funny. Yet somehow no one laughed.

The seargeant slapped down the paper, leaned over the counter.

"Now, damn you, sign!"

Trembling, the other signed God knows what queer scrawl on the slip, which the seargeant put in his pocket.

"All right. Now listen. If we hear of any more of our boys getting into trouble here, we'll rip the joint apart for you. See?" And to give emphasis to his words, he brought his boot against the flimsy counter. There was a noise of splitting wood.

He turned to go. As he did so, he caught sight of the customers' astounded faces.

"What the hell are you staring at. Eh?"

There was no answer. For a final moment he divided his attention between them and the owner. Then, glancing about him contemptuously—

"And when I think," he said, "that it's for lousy foreigners like you that we're fighting this war for—"

The door banged behind him. The owner, with a stricken face, gathered up his customers' dishes slowly and disappeared through the back. The three men too went out quietly, without a word.



# The Outrider

—DOROTHY LIVESAY

“Swift outrider of lumbering earth”

C. Day Lewis

(For Raymond Knister)

## PROLOGUE

He who was alien has retraced the road  
Unleashed, returns to this familiar earth.  
The gate falls open at his touch, the house  
Receives him without wonder, as an elm  
Accepts her brood of birds. Along his road  
Crows' charivari chattering announce  
His coming to each thronging sentry-post.  
The old man standing with his hayfork high  
Can let it rest, mid-air, and burden fails  
And falls within the sun-dipped gloom of barn.  
The young boy bowed behind the clicking mow  
Feels his spine stiffen as if birds had whirled  
Behind him, or a storm had clapped its clouds.  
A girl, chin pressed upon a broom, will stir  
As a warm wave of wonder sweeps her out  
Whither her musings never leapt before.  
And so it is.

His coming dreamed of long  
In the recesses of thinking, in the hard  
Hills climbed, his face a resting-place.  
In winter warming hands at roaring stove  
His doings slumbering as autumn wood...  
And so it is. Now summer's all swept clean  
He comes with eyes more piercing than before  
And scrapes his boots—— swinging wide the door.



## I

## i

The year we came, it was all stone picking:  
Sun on your fiery back, and the earth  
Grimly hanging on to her own. At the farm's end  
A cedar bog to clear. But in the dry season  
Not enough drink for the cattle.  
The children gathered blueberries, and ate cornmeal  
We danced no festivals.

Children stretched lean to manhood. One day  
Wind prying round, wrenched free the barn  
And lightning had the whole hay crop  
Flaming to heaven. Trying to save the horse  
Arthur was stifled. His black bones  
We buried under the elm.

I stumble around now, trying to see it clearly.  
Incessantly driven to feed our own ones, but friendly  
to neighbours  
Not like the crows, hungry for goslings,  
But sober, sitting down Sunday for rest-time  
Contented with laughter.

I stumble around now, lame old farm dog:  
When I am gone, one less hunger  
And the hay still to be mown.

## ii

The buggy on that whirling autumn day  
Swayed in a rain rut, nearly overturned,  
And you stood by the roadside, brown and gay,  
Black hair drawn tight in pigtails and your eyes  
Searching the sky. Brave was your body then  
And I brought you home to discover the answer to hunger,  
The peace of loving, the stay to restlessness.

Trembling as a birch tree to a boy's swinging  
You were again and again my own small love.  
But love was never enough, though children sprang  
Year after year from your loins—— never enough  
For my yearning though your eyes burned strangely ——  
And earth has kept you far more fierce and safe.



## iii

My mother caught me in her skirts and tossed me high  
High into hay I bounced.  
The straw tickled and a swallow, frightened, flew  
Before my heart could cry.  
I remember this, the startling day of early fear,  
Bird beating me back  
And somehow no way—hard to know why or where  
she was no longer near.  
Brothers would later tease me with a feather tail  
or loose a crow they caught  
And I must swallow the fear with my hunger, to learn  
how the yearned for will fail  
How the expected sunlight will shrivel your pounding heart,  
the seed you plant be killed  
The apple be bitter with worm, but your honesty firm  
seeking another start.

## iv

I grew up one evening, much alone—  
Resolved to plunge. The thing I feared, the crow,  
Was hoarse with calling, whirling, diving down  
And suddenly his urgent social bent  
Was answer to my inwardness. His cry  
Throbbled and echoed in my head, his wings  
Caught all reflections in my mirrored mind.  
I would then follow where his footless tread  
Led on; I would no longer be the beast  
Who ploughed a straight line to the barrier  
And swung back on his steps—my father's son.  
It would take long. But from that summer on  
My heart was set. I raced through swinging air,  
Rumpled my head with laughter in the clouds.

## II

It was different, different  
From the thoughts I had,  
Asphalt and factory walls are not  
Soft ending to a road.



It was different, different  
Standing tight in line  
Forgetting buffeting clouds above  
Trying to look a man.

It was different, different  
To lift the lever arm  
And see farm beasts revolving by  
Their dripping blood still warm.

On lazier afternoons  
Deep in clover scent  
Neither beast nor I could dream  
What the speed-up meant.

A thousand men go home  
And I a thousandth part  
Wedged in a work more sinister  
Than hitching horse and cart.

Dark because you're beaten  
By a boss's mind:  
A single move uneven turned  
Will set you in the wind.

His mercy is a calculation  
Worse than a hurricane—  
Weather you can grumble at  
But men can make you groan.

. . . . .

(Down in the washroom  
leaflets are passed.

'Say Joe, you sure  
got those out fast.'

'Yes. Now's the time  
to give them the gate:  
Speed-up right, here  
is legitimate!'

An old worker stares:  
his wizened face  
Sceptical still—  
Years in the trace.



## First Statement

But young, lean face  
    opposite me  
Reads, and alert  
    watches to see  
Who will respond  
    who's first to talk—  
Our eyes meet, and greet  
    as a key fits a lock.)

. . . .

Early morning  
stirs the street  
men go by  
on urgent feet.

Early morning  
litter still  
in the gutters  
on the sill.

Early morning  
sky shows blue  
men are marching  
two and two.

Men are surging  
past the gate  
where last week no one  
dared be late:

Surging—though  
a siren's shrieks  
warn that someone  
called the dicks. . . .

. . . .

It was different, different  
Because I learned: for this  
You plough the fields and scatter  
The toil of days and years.



You die in harness and are proud  
Of earthen servitude  
While others that live in chains have sought  
To shake the rotting wood

Upheave the very earth, if need  
Insist, banish the fence  
Between a neighbor's grudging hate  
Rise in our own defence

Against the smooth-tongued salesman  
'The cottage built for two'  
The haggling on market days  
Desperate to know

Now winter's service shall be slaved—  
Will this hay last the year—  
Where are the taxes coming from—  
Must we sell the mare?

Cities that sell their toil, must put  
Possessiveness to shame  
And draw you to them in the fight:  
The battle is the same.

The blowing silver barley grain  
And skyline wide, serene—  
These shall be your gift to those  
Who wield the world's machine!

### III

This is your signpost: follow your hands and dig.  
After, the many will have parachutes  
For air delight. Not veering with the crow  
But throbbing, conscious, knowing where to go.  
There's time for flying. Dig up crumbling roots,  
Eradicate the underbrush and twig—  
Pull snapping thistle out and stubborn sloe—  
Those backward ramblers who insist they know.  
Employ your summertime, at union rate:  
Conveying energy on this green belt  
Of earth assembled, swiftly known and felt.  
Faster! Speed-up is here legitimate:



Employ your summer-time, before the thrust  
Of winter wind would harden down the dust.

## EPILOGUE

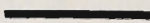
We prayed for miracles: the prairie dry,  
Our bread became a blister in the sun;  
We watched the serene untouchable vault of sky  
—In vain our bitter labour had been done.

We prayed to see the racing clouds at bay  
Rumpled like sheets after a night of joy,  
To stand quite still and let the deluged day  
Of rain's releasing, surge up and destroy.

We prayed for miracles, and had no wands  
Nor wits about us; strained in a pointed prayer  
We were so many windmills without hands  
To whirl and drag the water up to air.

A runner sent ahead, returned with news:  
'There is no milk nor honey flowing there.  
Others allay the thirst with their own blood  
Cool with their sweat, and fertilize despair.'

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.



(Editor's Note— "The Outrider", hitherto unpublished, was written in 1935. It was discussed at length by W. E. Collin in his "White Savannahs".)



# The Role of Prufrock

— JOHN SUTHERLAND

The modern poet is popularly accused of trying to make a display of his powers by talking in a mystifying manner. Of course that has never been his intention. Rather he has placed an exaggerated emphasis on the value of being honest and straightforward. He has wanted to prune away all the 'unessential' details of a poem, leaving only the elements that mattered most in the making of it. His readers may have found him complex, but he has always written in a way implying that he was simple to comprehend. It might be interesting to explore the gap between his intention and his readers' reaction.

There is a close resemblance between the personality of the modern poet and the personality of an individual who is too honest for his own advantage. The honest person says: I don't need to fill in the gaps in my conversation with the usual concessions that are made to diplomacy and tact; I will omit gestures and forms of behaviour that will probably only appeal to you as an effort to deceive you. He may even come to the conclusion that, if he says nothing, and does nothing, he will be as simple, honest, and direct as he could possibly be. Perhaps he takes this attitude: Yes, I grant you that the personality that I present has the impenetrability of a stone wall; but if your intentions are as pure as mine, you will be able to look through the wall and find the soul that lies behind it.

A person with a feeling of inferiority limits his activities on the ground of honesty. And something else happens to him: because he refuses to make his intentions clear he is frequently misunderstood. His confusion about his own purposes results from the confusion he creates in other people's minds. He begins to entertain two ideas about his character: one that is founded on the unflattering opinion that other people are bound to have of him; and another one that provides consolation by putting him in a romantic light.

The role played by Prufrock in T.S.Eliot helps to explain some characteristics of modern poetry. What Prufrock would have said if he had uttered one of his hundred visions would probably have been vague and obscure. Not because he desired to deceive anyone, but because



his knowledge(he would have admitted this himself)was limited, and what he knew could only be given an incomplete expression. Somehow his honesty is the cause of his feeling of inferiority and keeps him playing a subordinate role in society; his honesty would also have obliged him to talk in a vague way about a fragment of a truth. If the "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is an obscure poem; if it is full of knotted expressions and involved images; if its loose, uneven lines seem to be casting uncertain glances at a model of iambic pentameter not too far in the background; that is because Prufrock himself is having such a splendid chance to come to full utterance in this poem. I must be obscure about things, says Prufrock, or how else can I be honest?

There is the same conflict between two poetic styles as there is between two personalities; between an accepted style and an undisciplined one; and between an everyday personality and one that is founded on romantic dreaming. Prufrock thinks of a future where happiness is found in eating a peach or wearing his trousers rolled—daring unconventionalities for this timid soul—but the same Prufrock undoubtedly did have those visions at tea-time. A type in Eliot's poetry, he has the best of intentions but he is caught in the conflicts of a divided personality.

It is plain that Eliot is aware of a fundamental conflict in himself between his real character and an imaginary one. Prufrock, under various pseudonyms, is repeatedly described in other poems; and the style alternates between flights of fancy and sudden drops into realism. The inner division has caused Prufrock—regarded collectively in "The Hollow Men"—to grow cunning and deceitful:

"Let me also wear  
Such deliberate disguises—  
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves  
In a field  
Behaving as the wind behaves"

If the style of "The Hollow Men" pretends to be profound, that is because Prufrock, reincarnated in the set of disguises, would pretend to be profound. If the form of the poem has little meaning, that is because his inner conflict has reduced Prufrock to a nonentity.

All the stages in the development of Eliot's hero are made clear at one point or another in the poems. Beginning as a simple, earnest individual, whose devotion to honesty was perhaps the reason why he was misunderstood, Prufrock grows unhappy and falls victim to visions and self-romanticizing. And the struggle between the everyday self and the imaginary one becomes so extreme that he is driven into



assuming deliberate disguises. Deceit and cunning get into the core of his soul. He is involved with Eliot in a charlatanism that can be described but not corrected.

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- 1943 -

And we, maturing, march each day  
Through insidious streets  
Where hot walls like hot hands  
Crumple the thin, electric petals  
Of sunlight on corroded brick.

Now turn we from the tramcar's logic  
The symmetric hopes snug  
As a commodity on a grocer's shelf;  
We stumble over tombstones in tall grasses;  
Our shod, firm feet obliterate  
The epitaphs to our rescinded selves,  
And like flies thickening, dying  
On cold, autumnal window-sills  
So flutter out finally our fears and irresolutions.

Across roof and river  
The wind's ageless rhetoric  
Acquaints us with new diagrams:  
We watch mutely as sun and space deposit  
The shapes of our fearsome decisions.

—IRVING LAYTON



## Book Reviews

THE NIGHT IS ENDED by J. S. Wallace. Winnipeg, Contemporary Publishers.

If unusual experiences could turn out poets, Mr. Wallace would assuredly be one. He has long held beliefs unpopular with the majority of Canadians, and he has displayed a courage both rare and admirable in willing to suffer for them. As a militant Communist, his views brought him into conflict with the authorities and the latter, presumably acting on the theory that the mysteries of democratic government can best be unravelled inside a jail, promptly proceeded to put him there. It was while serving out his numerous sentences that Mr. Wallace wrote many of the verses appearing in this collection.

Hence, it's all the more surprising that these verses should be so trite, so tepid, and so conventional. If style is the man, the paradox becomes even more bewildering. For where indeed is the indignation, the originality, or the matter-of-fact realism that we have the right to expect from one of Mr. Wallace's views and experiences? Instead, Mr. Wallace quatrains like an inferior, proletarian Eddie Guest about the twilight and rain, love and death and all the other album pieces dear to the heart of a spinsterish, honey-fed romanticism. But perhaps Mr. Wallace has artfully concealed the social revolution in his "Caravans from Persia Out of Samarkand".

Not that Mr. Wallace does not own the privilege to be lush and sentimental and to write bad verses if he so chooses. That much, at least, our democratic form of government will allow him. Nevertheless, one or two poems such as "He Was So Fond" and "Don't Weep for Doris", while they do not justify the publication of a volume, do have something of a punch and indicate a vein which Mr. Wallace might profitably explore.

What the present collection proves is that it is possible to write pretty lyrics during solitary confinement. After all, that is no mean achievement.

I.P.L.

THE INDIAN SPEAKS, by Marius Barbeau and Grace Melvin. Toronto, The MacMillans in Canada. 117 pages. \$3.00.

For those interested in Indian lore, Dr. Barbeau has collected a series of unusual legends, illustrated in black and white by the artist, Grace Melvin, who suggests by sharp contrasts the simple but positive world of the Indian.

R.R.