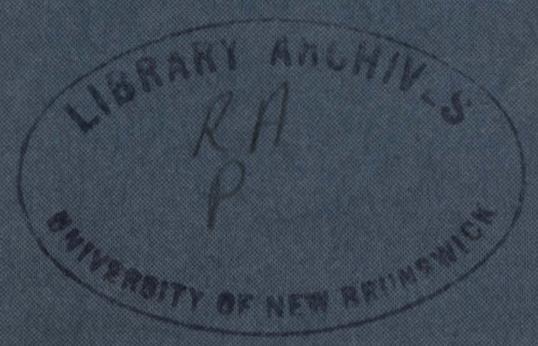
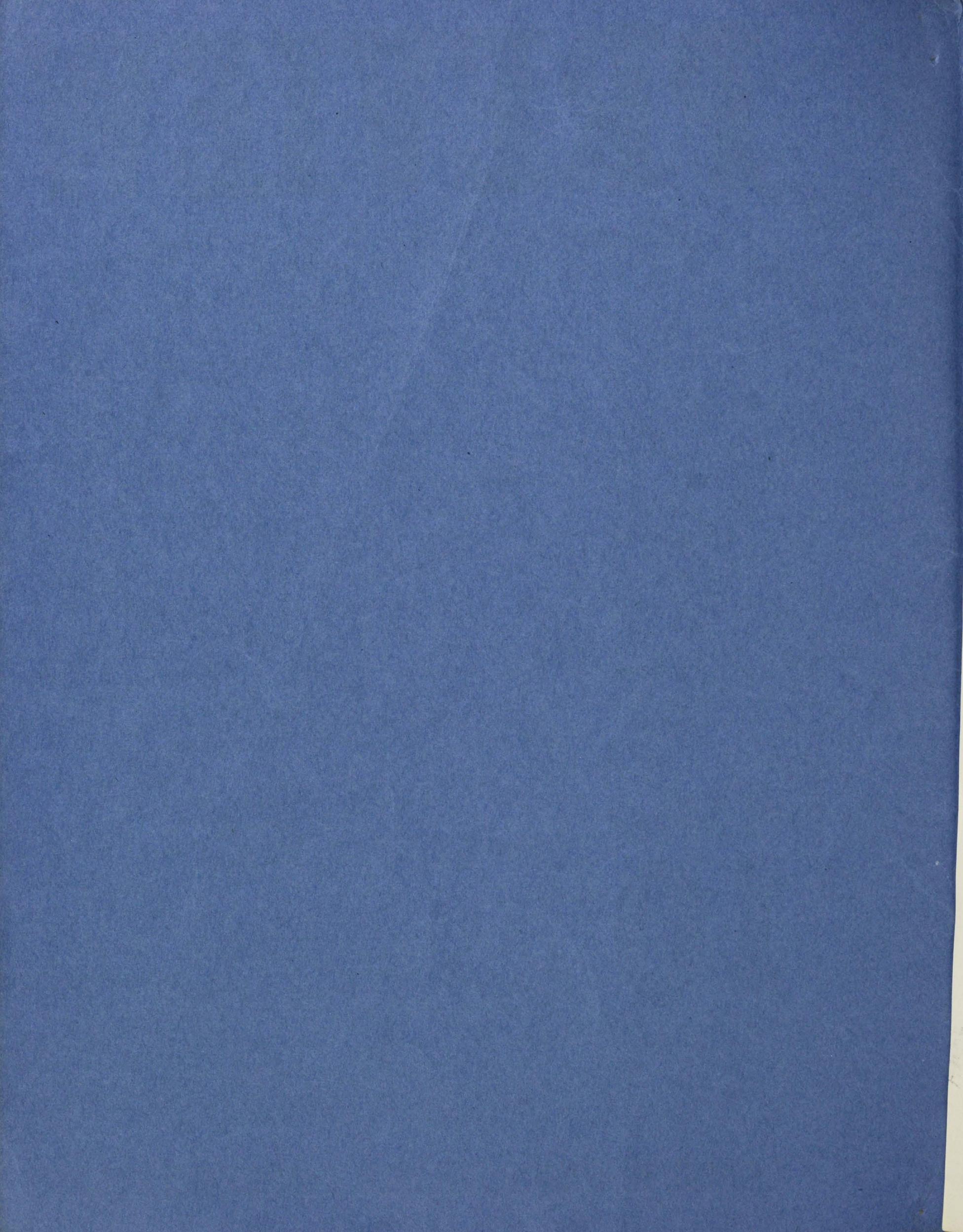


PREVIEW

10



P.K.PAGE N.SHAW B.RUDDICK P.ANDERSON F.R.SCOTT



MONTREAL, CANADA

JANUARY 1943

THE AIRMEN

Then we were drinking, come in from ruin.
Suddenly our oaths were pitched like tents
on the dark hillside--under the goatshair
our whiskey breath moved like lights.
We were all nomads, and each man mindful
of tender flocks, his milkwhite wishes.

Patrick Anderson

WILD DUCK

(for John Crowe Ransome)

Duck that from lightslashed pool went whirring
as anchored toy to acrobat, being shot
tumbled in air, fell feathers in a weight,
was plump and plumage, coloured beyond caring.

Now the long neck gripped in the hunter's hand
begins the swing of Christ against the sky,
now is the time to fondle and inspect
duck derelict, avoid the ruined eyes.

Old Thompson paints next day this corpse with fruit,
makes it immortal, like a man his lover,
with rich impasto. Gives himself away,
a sensual bird who loves his food and pleasure.

Then O it's hanging four days in the dark--
afterwards plucked--corruption's painted it
with pink and green, the pastels of the grave--
a lady artist, flowers in her hat.

Finally bird that once went down on pools
is carved like murder. Cut the strenuous line
of raucous flight. Parcelled in gamey fibres,
the breast goes two ways from the naked bone.

Defend all ducks and girls with irony
lest any see a moral in this bird
which Thompson and the hunter now digest
beside the fire, with smiles and witty words.

Patrick Anderson

DIALECTICS

Dialectic is our love,
study us as things that move,
watch as love to lover fits
the unity of opposites.

Low the moon and shining bright
sees our spiral love invite
kisses to a tenser key,
quantity to quality.

While the houses sink asleep
revolutionary the leap
changes into something new
quantities of me and you.

Then at last, as still as bone,
we are lying, each alone,
'on a higher plane' and sated--
the negation is negated.

Happy on the ample bed
each in each is comforted,
yet as opposites we live
and the merging's relative.

Thus an end to lover's act
viewed as an objective fact--
Dr. Duhring must agree
practice mates with theory.

Patrick Anderson

THE RESIGNATION

In the print room, his nails brown from the developer, his face pear-shaped, pear-coloured, bearing the great bone of nose he had not yet grown to, the kid watched the water dropping into the tank. He turned the tap only a little, seeing aeroplanes flying out of its nozzle and nose diving into the sea.

"Here you, kid, get on with your knitting. This is a rush job."

The kid jumped to his feet with a burst of action, yanked up the brown pants which slipped because he had no hips to hold them and turned on the tap full.

"O.K., kid, O.K. You'd better get over to the dryer and work there."

Through the semi-dark he leapt like a bird--arms outstretched, seeing sky. He held his fingers together so his hands were solid like wings, only allowing his thumbs free as he pulled prints out of the tank and pushed them through the dryer.

The kid worked hard, if slowly, for awhile, the noise of the machines sounding like planes. And then he was pounding Elkin on the back. "Say, didja ever fly?"

"Sure, kid, I fly to work every morning." His voice had reached the turning point, was just about to change to irritation.

The kid's face grew bright--a mask: upward slits for eyes, mouth curled, open. "Do ya?"

"Sure. I stand on the window ledge and shake my tail and wiggle my wings and--"

"Nawww--in a plane, behind the joystick with all them instruments--"

"Look out. The boss!"

The kid's head whirred. Something got loose, slipped, settled in his throat, on his tongue. "What did you do with them specifications, Elkin? Them specifications. How can I run the dryer when it don't dry? There's no heat in it, that's what, no heat. You have to put the things through three times and still they come out wet. Might freeze stiff in this weather in the mails, might freeae stiff."

He looked like a rabbit, his face sweeping away to his ears.

"Alright James, get back to your work." The boss' voice cut the string of words. The kid twittered, moved to the dryer and then felt his arms grow hard, without bends--great strong wings.

"And now, Elkin, about that dryer." But the kid didn't hear what the boss was saying. His hands swooped about in the air, banking, rising. Soon he'd be out of this place, out in the open, away from the dark, from the smell of ammonia, from the rush orders. He darted over to the tank, his hand coming down, curved, on the flat surface of the water.

Everyone in the office knew. He couldn't keep quiet. He told the teletype girl first. "Say, sister, I'm going to be a flyer.

Pretty good, eh? See me sticking around here? Not me. Just wait till I get in one of them planes. Them German's'll start jumpin' then. Know who's about, alright. Wonder why they're alive. But they won't wonder long." He stopped, dreaming. Then speaking low, "But don't say nothing yet, will ya? Keep it kinda secret, eh?"

From desk to desk he went through the white office with its chipping of glass typewriters. "Say, do ya know what? I'm clearing outa this joint. Joining the Air Force."

"Well take my advice, kid, don't talk about it till you're called up. If the boss hears he'll likely fire you before you want to go. Don't say anything to anyone."

"Heck, no. I won't say nothin'."

Blue when he arrived at the enlistment depot he waited hours on a bench. His hat over one eye like a bird, he thought of his mother. Remembered the lamb's kidneys in their great blankets of suet that he had pulled from the dark insides of carcasses when he had worked part time in a butcher's shop; remembered the coldness of meat and the blood always staining his hands and the day when the new assistant had taken the end of his thumb off with the chopper. He felt sick. Memory of the office was secure--the smell of ammonia clean in his horse nostrils. The flat surface of water in the tank was smooth across his twitching face.

Undressed he was like a parsnip; the winged feeling of his arms gone. The rabbit's ribs were thumped; the bent chest measured; his heart exploding like shells all over his flesh, was listened to through a long tube; the rattle in his wrist held down by a swathe of white fingers.

Sitting in the examination room there was too much space above. The papers were handed out. His sepia nails beat on the desk's edge. The pointed tan shoes slipped from side to side as if they had ball-bearing soles. He looked at the figures bending over their desks, up to the high ceiling, opened his paper. Gee! what were all them crazy little drawings doing? This didn't make no sense. He looked again, furtively, at the others. A small guy in a wind breaker had his feet curled round the legs of his chair, his face low over his desk. He looked like a jockey. He was writing. No one noticed that the kid had not yet begun. He looked at his paper again. Them crazy little drawings didn't mean nothing.

He began to write. His writing was small and tight like a scarf knit by a six year old, then his hand jerked and a great loop formed on the page like a dropped stitch.

Everyone asked him at the office. "How did it go, kid?" "Are you in?" "Did you pass?" What did they all have to talk for? Aggressively, elbows bent, he answered them. "How d'ya think I'd know yet? D'ya think they get them papers marked just like that? They was hard papers. Ya can't mark hard papers just like that."

Elkin watched him in the print room. He put the same drawing through the dryer over and over. He didn't talk about aeroplanes now, nor move his arms like wings. Only at night, in bed, just before he slept, his

25

shoulders seemed to swell. By morning he knew; was afraid to look up. Didn't want to see the sky.

"Have you heard yet, kid?" They were at him again. Chattering round him, coloured, bright, laughing, waiting. He was trapped. He pushed his hat back. They almost touched him. He walked through them, talking over his shoulder, swinging, through the white office.

"Not enough education. Enough brains but not enough education. Ya need to be educated to be a pilot." And now he was saying it, saying what he had sworn not to say: "But I'm going to try for ground crew. They're the guys who need brains. Say, do ya think those other guys could fly if it wasn't for ground crew? No, sir. Ya really know a plane if you're ground crew." Twitching he took off his coat, his feet weighted.

It began again then. The dragnet of their eyes outspread as he passed. In the print room Elkin repeated "You get about your work, kid, or you'll be fired before you know it." Elkin's voice started nowhere, ended nowhere.

When the letter came he set fire to it with a match, leaning out of his bedroom window, the cold biting his hands, the match burning them. He stayed there a long time after the flame died, his fingers together as if he still held the letter.

Two days later they asked him. "Any news?" The answer came out of his mouth like a bullet. "Ya. I'm in." They liked the kid, they were glad. They crowded round him. "When are you going to hand in your resignation?" He was somebody else. His voice went up and down. "Oh anytime now, anytime, I guess."

"Do it now. I'll type it for you. What do you want to say?" One of the typists was already rolling paper into her machine. He heard the quick click of her keys.

"Say, what're ya writing?"

"Just the letter head. Now dictate, Squadron Leader."

They waited. He couldn't speak.

"Go on," said the girl at last. "I'll have to start work in a minute."

"You look sick," one of the older girls said. "Are you O.K.?" He nodded.

"Aren't you glad? You sure should be."

"You'd think he was going to his death."

Somebody tittered at the unfortunate remark. They were all suddenly nervous.

"Sure I'm glad," he yelled, not hearing how loud his voice was.

The girl at the machine said, "He's just excited, aren't you, kid. Here, I'll write it for you." She typed rapidly and then read from the paper. "Dear Sir, Please accept my resignation to take effect one week from today. I feel my first duty is to my country and have therefore applied and been accepted by the R.C.A.F." She beckoned him. "Come on now, kid, all you've got to do is sign, or do you want me to do that for you too?" They shoved the letter at him, gave him a pen and he signed, his writing tight and small again with the jerking nervous loops.

"I'll put it in the boss' basket," the typist said and he walked off like one of those wooden figures with the swinging legs that move forward when started down a slope.

Elkin was already at work in the print room when the kid opened the door. "Here, kid, we've got a lot to do today. Get to work at the tank and I mean now." The kid did as he was told, walked to the tank and stood there, looking at the water.

It was some time before Elkin noticed that the kid wasn't working. "Say, what the hell do you think you're doing? I said we had a lot of work and I wasn't fooling. What are you thinking about anyway? Aeroplanes again?"

But the kid wasn't thinking of aeroplanes at all. He was thinking of lamb's kidneys in their blankets of suet inside carcasses, the blood on butchers' hands and the coldness of meat.

P.K. Page.

UNCERTAINTIES.

I send you the message of my odd love
Across a world in which love no longer matters,
I send you the message knowing it will not reach you
But hoping,
Although from the tortuous routes of learning I know better
Know that love travels only along set lines of communication.
In our separate worlds, strange ages, love is a sealed entity,
Not transmittable...
Perplexing
Like searching for the common factor in certain incidents.

For instance
The wind shook mimosa flowers all over my cabin floor
The day war was declared in a remote village in France.
And later the jasmine perfume unearthed from an old trunk
That had been in China once
Given me by a lover long after the love was over.

And the evening at the schoolteacher's
When our hostess was in the garden cutting sprigs of forsythia
The beautiful Norwegian pilot said, thinking of home,
"Mimosa, after a few days the flowers drop and scatter
Over the polished surface of the grand piano."

Perhaps, born into the world strangers,
Crippled by intimate experience, slowed by learning
That comes after instead of before...
We go carefully doing what we once omitted
While maps change and the young quiver with new slogans.

Hardly hoping this small thing will reach you,
Knowing myself a fool to take the trouble,
I send you my love because your sombrero accent
Rolled over my senses like prairie sunshine
Like something from childhood, well known and simple.

Miriam D. Waddington.

REHABILITATION

Some afternoon, dreaming of love,
a pale stenographer will push
the final button and the machine
will run off the great totals
in neat rows of dumb numbers--
for the books.

Historians will reduce it to maps
and fine ordered words to show
how the dead got that way.
And later, it will become a date
with a lot of other dates, memorized
by kids in grade eight.

The little guy in the street
will ask the same answerless questions
and surmise with bookie and grocer
and curse the same goddam things
and buy the inevitable gold brick
from this year's slick son of a bitch.

The hidden profits will stand
majestically on mountainside,
doves strutting in the eaves
while the club-men, below, on the lawn,
sit in the summer sun drinking
the "people's blend".

The journals will note the death
of the last of the old Commandoes.
Some Hallowe'en the medals
will get lost by bell-ringing grandson,
and the memorials be moved uptown
to make way for the era's new
colossal "Speedway".

And hidden in library files,
in the fading rotogravures--
a boy sits in rubble playing
with lathing and bricks--
a fat man in tears watches
a meagre ceremonial--
a peasant woman slumps to her knees
hopeless hands upturned
on the beaten wheat.

Bruce Ruddick.

FALL FAIR

(1).

this is no time for comic mirrors
 at fairs no time for the fascinated stare
 at the highlighted bug-eye or the twig hand
 no time for Puss-in-Boots at the end of a leash
 picking its way among the cattle sheds
 nor is it time for the toying with knives
 under the matted branches in the skulls of passers-by
 while the merry-go-round tosses its bright balloons of tunes
 against the sponge mouths of barkers
 squeezing out murky water of words
 no it is not time for the hands of nervous brightness
 bored by the fat smiles of dahlias in the Flower Show
 hands that are busy in picking-time rampant among
 the grapes not for the sake of pay but that the phallic festival
 may prove an ample treat to the quick eye
 following the antics of the fevered bodies among the mustard-col-
 oured leaves

this is no gambling time either
 the hour not appropriate to the childish hope
 that the wheel may stop at the lucky number
 there is no lucky number there is nothing here
 to dope the ulcerated tooth the child must drag at your skirt
 continue to howl out of pain and rage
 having to bite on the hard crust of his heritage

(2)

when the coloured strings of lights all gone
 the tents pulled down and packed away the crowd
 with its bewildering array of faces featureless
 legs arms swallowed by the thick sprawling lips of the fog
 when there is nothing left for the sick mind to tinker with
 when the blaring fair grounds have returned to an unheard
 thistle-syllabled word beside the mud flats of the end of the town
 when the sprawled letters of gulls
 spell hunger on the thumbbed-over rumpled pages
 of dirty sky and water
 then will the mind translate for itself its trouble
 symbolized by these birds and filled on a healthy diet of
 squeezing out murky water of words nothingness
 after half-cooked hot dogs the bootleg ecstasy
 of the white rubber belly on the far side of the race track
 then but no till then will the loins' knived pain
 beget reality again

Kay Smith

this is no gambling time either
 the hour not appropriate to the childish hope
 that the wheel may stop at the lucky number
 there is no lucky number there is nothing here
 to dope the ulcerated tooth the child must drag at your skirt
 continue to howl out of pain and rage
 having to bite on the hard crust of his heritage

NOTES FROM MY JOURNAL: BAIE ST. PAUL

"Autour de nous des étrangers sont venus qu'il nous plait d'appeler les barbares! ils ont pris presque tout le pouvoir! ils ont acquis presque tout l'argent; mais au pays de Québec. . . rien...n'a...change..." *

The people rock in their chairs, up and down, on porches extending the length of the house, on upper porches, in kitchens reading L'Evenement and L'Action Catholique, in swing chairs painted red and green in their gardens. "Rien ne changera parce que nous sommes un témoignage." The village is very quiet at night. There is no movie house, no bar. Dancing is not permitted. The shadows of leaves sway and blurr on the wall, dapple and sway. As a light cool wind swings the street lamps, they penetrate deep into bedrooms and print themselves there. "De nous-mêmes et de nos destinées nous n'avons compris clairement que ce devoir-la: persister et nous maintenir." The wind, shaking a long line of poplars, brings a whiff of silver fox. The foxes will be stifled in the fall. In each cage there is a painted figure of the Virgin. The foxes always seem to be scared. They weave in and out of their huts. "Ces gens sont d'une race qui ne sait pas mourir." They are expecting the girls home from their annual picnic. The boys, burning scrub on the hill-side, shape the letters J. E. C., Jeunesse Etudiante Catholique, in fire. To the other side of the valley an illuminated cross shines from the Nuns' powerhouse. "...qui ne sait pas mourir." In the asylum all the idiots have been put to bed. The young mongolians weave like plants in the red lamps hanging before the holy pictures. Their skin is milk white, their hair dark and silky and little bubbles form and burst between their lips. The story goes that syphilis was brought to the place when a ship-load of sailors was wrecked there. Some say it was a theatrical company. "Des étrangers sont venus! ils ont pris presque tout le pouvoir..." The Priest with his purple waistband, his deskful of souvenirs given him by American tourists, paces up and down the gallery of his large house. He ponders how to get on with his intolerant vicaires... The people in the rocking-chairs miss nothing of what happens in the street. They watch the artist with long grey hair and a slouchy mountaineer's gait go into his house. The light is still on in the office of M. Gaudois who works for the government and gives farmers exemption from military service. In the hotel they are listening to the news. They get the shortwave German broadcast, then the English. "After the war there must be un bloc Latin..." says the proprietor...

When I think of Baie St. Paul I remember Pierre and his "fiches". Pierre was a nephew of M. Tremblay, the proprietor of our hotel. (In Baie St. Paul nearly everyone is a Tremblay or a Simard) He attended the seminary in Quebec. He used often to go fishing-- I have seen him catch a fair-sized

* These quotations are from "MENAUD MAITRE-DRAVEUR" by Félix-Antoine Savard (Garneau)

4174 34

the waste of bushes behind the house--a cairn of stones with a niche in it and a figure of the Virgin faced by a bench for those who wished to pray and reflect while they were bitten by the mosquitoes. I never inspected the statuette very closely but I shouldn't be surprised if it had been made in Japan. Certainly many of the religious objects on sale in the local store came from across the Pacific--little figures of nuns, for example, with crosses dangling on their stomachs, and crucifixes which could be made to light up a lurid red.

Pierre was in fact a model boy, mechanically minded, good at fishing and very religious. He even sang in the seminary choir. It took us some time to make friends. I was nervous of my French and a bit worried by his perpetual smile and rather over-courtly manners. He no doubt looked upon me as a dangerous foreigner, though being plain "anglais" and not "canadien anglais" was some help with these people who, mentally, make a considerable distinction. (Verbally they refer to all Canadians who speak English, whether they be Poles, Ukrainians or Germans, as "anglais". They think of themselves as "canadiens" and are so distinguished from the "francais de France".)

One evening, however, I watched him fly his aeroplane. We all trouped out, uncle, aunt, cousins and one or two of his friends, to the back of the hotel where there was a wide grassy place bordered on one side by a stream. The Riviere des Gouffres joined this stream at the end of the property. It was a mild grey evening. Pierre, with his large white aeroplane in his hands, related us and the ragged lively scene, the ping-pong table left out in front of the garage and covered with flies, the curved roofs and jutting balconies of houses nearby, the garbage in the stream, to a new, mysterious element, the wind. Where was it coming from? What was it doing? And as we stood there, uncle and aunt beaming, we with a look of intelligent interest on our faces, we participated in the adventurous flight of the aeroplane and in Pierre's achievement. There was something exactly right about it all--the whiteness of the plane, its graceful yet, really, blundering movement--the sense of everything being on a small scale and infused with a warm domestic feeling--which made me wonder whether French Canada was not the perfect place for trying out a model aeroplane.

Afterwards Pierre and I got talking and it was then that he showed me his "fiches". I hadn't the least idea what the word meant but I gathered that they were his proudest possessions. They turned out to be a kind of encyclopedia of Catholic thought: ten or twelve little folders, each in a pale blue or pale pink cover, containing summaries of books in note form. Their scope was quite wide. Art--up to the surrealists. History. Great Men--ranging from Churchill and Mussolini to Cardinal Velleneuve. The History Of Canada.

A day or two later Pierre left the "fiches" with me and I read them under an apple-tree in the garden, while a kingfisher went rattling up and down the stream and a downy woodpecker tapped trunk after trunk. Children from the house next door, where there is a family of twelve, marched past me in the scrub, beating tin cans. I shifted the leaves away from the hot sunlight.

Morals. Here was a challenging title. Le Christ a-t-il un temp-
erament? The writer listed the various kinds of temperament, sanguine,
nervous, bilious, lymphatic, and noticed their qualities good and bad.
Was Christ sanguine or lymphatic? The conclusion, which had in this

form the dogmatism of an Euclidean proof, was that Christ enjoyed the good qualities of all these states but not the bad. Hence he had no temperament. I came next to "Scoutisme et Sacerdoce", followed shortly by "Atheisme Marxiste". Then I found: "Vielles Filles--Opinion De L'Eglise..." Naturally the Church honoured virginity. But, as the writer went on to say, some of the spinsters objected: "Mais j'ai toujours voulu me marier..." Again the answer was Euclidean in its terse severity: "C'est Dieu qui t'a choisie et non toi qui l'as choisi..."

The children marched solemnly past, four little girls and a boy. A child a year. They looked the picture of health until one noticed their bad teeth. And the youngest was bowlegged. They could sing many of the songs from "La Bonne Chanson"--"Le Cordonnier", "Les Cloches des Hameaux"--and they loved to play dancing games. The sound of their parade was soon engulfed in all the other sounds of summer, the saw-mill, the blacksmith's anvil, a dog barking, the scratch of a fox in its cage just behind where I was sitting.

And now I was reading "L'Education de la Modestie": condensation of a Jesuit's book. "Le plus souvent on ne veut pas franchir la limite due peche, mais on prend des libertes dangereuses." One takes dangerous liberties. Here they were in two groups--A and B. Group A consisted of: "Flirt, cocktails, toilettes deshabillantes, baisers furtifs a la suite de milles petites provocations." The last phrase couldn't have been better put, I thought. Group B was concerned with: "Plages, endroits de villeggiature, ou la vertu est en danger par le laisser-aller qui y regne, l'inconscience des coutumes." I thought of La Lumiere, the bathing place just below the nuns' private electric plant, a deep pool in the same stream which ran past our hotel. We used to lie there on the sun-baked rocks. The daughters of the avocat; Pierre; the boy from Quebec who played the saxaphone and talked English with an American accent. Everyone with his locket or cross, the thin gold chain round the sunburnt necks. Certainly the atmosphere seemed liberal enough. But the "inconscience des coutumes!" At St. Urbain my wife had been practically chased out of the place by the Priest for wearing slacks. And when I told this to an elderly Englishman, who had also spent his summer in rural Quebec, he had replied: "Where I was that problem didn't arise. You see, there were no Jews there..."

Fascism and the war seemed a long way off from this pleasant uncared for garden with its maples and goldenrod. I had seldom been so attracted to a place as I was to Baie St. Paul. Its people were kind and hospitable, and I felt that I could understand and sympathise with their grievances and loyalties, just as I could sympathise with the Boers or the Irish. If they were wrong, they were wrong on old historic grounds.

Yet Pierre and his "fiches"-- Was Fascism, mild and domestic and even cosy as yet, so far away after all? Was it, in fact, much farther away than in certain circles of Toronto?

Patrick Anderson.

We wish to thank the Quebec Committee for Allied Victory for their kindness in allowing us to use their mimeograph machine.

Subscriptions (\$1.00 a year) and contributions should be sent to:
Mrs. Kit Shaw, 5593 Cote St. Luke Road, N.D.G., Montreal.

