

## arts

## Earthy poet reads

by Beno John

Acclaimed Canadian poet Al Purdy gave a reading to a packed house at the Humanities Centre on Wednesday. Purdy read from his large collection of published works, including his latest book *Sundance at Dusk*.

Purdy has established himself as a poet and is able to make a living from his writing. But he admitted that his income is supplemented for the large part by the articles he does for *Macleans* and *The Canadian Magazine*, as well as the numerous readings that he still gives, although he stated, "I used to do more condensed, more readable poetry before."

Purdy, a grade ten dropout, has written poetry from the age of thirteen, and has spend a great part of his life in the work force which included a stint with the airforce (although he admits that

he never got off the ground due to the fact that his blood pressure would shoot up whenever he took the physicals). Purdy had more trouble with the airforce, finding himself demoted to corporal from sergeant, and then demoted from corporal - or as he states in a poem about the experience "- demoted, demoted, demoted till I was saluting civilians."

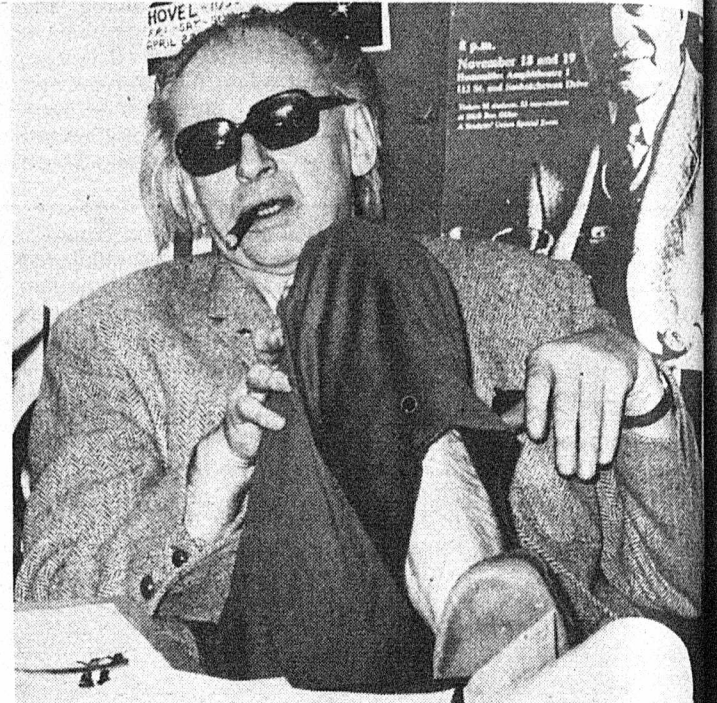
In addition to his books of poetry, Purdy has also edited books of poetry, most notably *The New Romans* which sold about 25 thousand copies in Canada. The book was the first of its kind in its strong anti-American, nationalistic tone, and included works of the likes of Layton, Bowering and Birney. Purdy has also edited two collections of poems by young Canadian 'unknowns' called *Storm Warning* (I and II). Although the task was satisfying for him, "I found myself scanning about 50

thousand poems." It is in the young poets that Purdy sees promise for Canadian poetry, "the older poets are predictable, you know what to expect from Layton or Birney - they won't come up with anything that different from what they've done already and I guess that applies to me as well. We've all peaked already."

When asked why little poetry by women was included in *Storm Warning* Purdy answered "Women poets in this country don't seem to be as good as men - don't ask me why. But women do better than men when it comes to prose writing."

Purdy also read from an unpublished collection of poems titled *Moths and the Iron Curtain* which was inspired by his recent tour of the USSR as part of a cultural exchange program. He met with Soviet artists and poets including Andrei Vozneskensky, who Purdy considers one of the best living poets. The tour also resulted in a magazine piece for a Soviet literary magazine on young Canadian poets.

Purdy on the whole seems satisfied with the current Canadian literary scene, which in his



Al Purdy

photo Don Trucke

words "has witnessed an explosion of writing in the last fifteen years, because we have lost our self-conscious attitude about our writing."

The most interesting thing about Purdy and his poetry is the

basic earthiness which comes through. His non-serious attitude towards life was summarized in a comment about his '68 *Galaxy*. "The body doesn't work and the motor doesn't work - like a forty-year old virgin."

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## dirty liner

by Gordon Turtle

The time has come. After days of soul-searching, I have decided to reconsider the content and aims of this column.

This decision was sparked by two factors; Michaleen Marte's letter in last Thursday's *Gateway* and comments I have recieved from my "friends" (I know they really hate me, I saw *The Tenant*.)

I certainly appreciate Ms. Marte's letter, and am exceedingly happy to see that someone thinks my column warrants the ink. Aside from the fact that the powers-that-be managed to misconstrue her entire letter in order to get the big pun into the letter's headline, I will humbly take Ms. Marte's comments as a vote of confidence.

There does, however, remain the problem of those who feel the column has not lived up to their expectations. I was prepared for the eventuality that those who like and agree with what I say will think the column and my writing are good, and those who disagree will think the column and writing are bad.

But, hell, guys, nostalgia is nostalgic! I certainly do not want my column to end up appearing like Erma Bombeck, nor do I feel it is proper to wax eloquently on Jean Harlow, (forever 22 and forever smiling). This column is for those whome the name Rita Tushingham means what Judy Garland means to my father.

With these goals in mind, I

have decided to become a more informative, and a little whimsical. But my feelings will not be totally ignored, nor will I neglect to focus on items of personalities of personal interest. For example, I liked Don Shebib's *Second Wind*, (and *Cahiers du Cinéma* damned!0 for personal reasons; certainly not because it's a great movie.

It is also important to remember that in 1966 I was 17 years old. So, my impressions of my first viewing of *The Collector* (1965) are somewhat more developed now than they were when I first saw the flick. I can therefore, deal with what the movie meant to to me as a 17 year old, but rather, I hope to relate to my readers what I thought of 1965, and the state of movies in 1965, through retrospect, and personal experience.

With these points in mind, my column's "new look" will begin next Thursday, with the first of a two-part discussion of the movies of Paul Almond. Almond is a French-Canadian director who is most famous for his trilogy of flicks including *Isabel*, *Act of the Heart*, and *Journey*. I hope to use this discussion of Almond as a beginning of a personal study of a number of Canadian directors such as Don Shebib, Gilles Caron, and of course, Claude Jutra.

Music is the big thing in this column though, and, yes, Marte, Terence Stamp gets the ink soon.

Week four of the Great Trivia Contest:

1. How many sides did the original cover of *Through the Past Darkly* have?
2. What was the Guess Who's first hit single?
3. What was Faye Dunaway's first feature film?

Send your answers to the Gateway office, rm 282, SUB

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