

## Storm Warning

**The New Canadian Poets**  
**Almeida Belford Bissett Cook**  
**Cormier Crawford Desjardins**  
**Eibel Fetherling Fleet Fox**  
**Fraser Geddes Gervais Halpern**  
**Helwig Howell Lane Lee**  
**Macdonald McFadden McKinnon**  
**Marshall Marty Phillips**  
**Plourde Suknaski Wayman**  
**Young Zieroth**

**Selected by Al Purdy**

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 The New Canadian Poets  
 Edited by Al Purdy  
 McClelland and Stewart, 1971

Everyone who reads this book must have his or her own favourite. I found mine in Zieroth's "The Hunters of the Deer."

"The ten men will dress in white  
 to match the snow and leave the last  
 farmhouse and the last woman, going  
 north into the country of the deer..."

Of course, one would expect from an anthology of Canadian poet's poems about Canada. And they are there; the most thought-provoking is Dana Fraser's "us in Canada";

cat cums sneekin  
 down the wawk  
 wat  
 or whooom duz  
 cat stalk  
 cat meerlee wants  
 to tawk  
 klaw at the  
 birdnecksdoor

Then there is "1883" by Dennis Lee:

...The British want the country  
 For the Empire and the view.  
 The Yankees want the country for  
 A yankee barbecue ...  
 Mackenzie was a crazy man,  
 He wore his wig askew.  
 He donned three bulky overcoats  
 In case the bullets flew.  
 Mackenzie talked of fighting  
 While the fight went down the drain.  
 But who will speak for Canada?  
 Mackenzie, come again.

But the Canadian viewpoint also allows for some excellent poetry on foreign affairs especially those of our neighbour across the border. However, most of all these are poems by young Canadian poets on a wide variety of subjects, all in some way reflecting the influence of their own environments. (A special matter of pride for UNB students is that a large number of these poems first appeared in the Fiddlehead.)

This book is well worth having, it rewards careful reading of it. In my opinion it is an anthology that should be revised at least every five years, though I am sure that many of these will last far beyond that date. As Purdy so rightly says: "...they reveal what we are thinking and feeling as human beings, not so different now than it ever was or even will be - here in Canada and in the world. Explicitly and implicitly thru them all, runs the flare of being alive."

The poets are Kerrigan Almeida, Ken Belford, Bill Bissett, Gregory Cook, Louis Cormier, Terry Crawford, Phil Desjardins, Deborah Eibel, Doug Fetherling, Brenda Fleet, Gail Fox, Dana Fraser, Gary Geddes, C.H. Gervais, Howard Halpern, David Helwig, Bill Howell, Patrick Lane, Dennis Lee, Bernell Macdonald, David McFadden, Barry McKinnon, Tom Marshall, Sid Marty, David Phillips, Marc Plourde, Andrew Suknaski, Tom Wayman, Ian Young, Dale Zieroth.

One result of reading this book is the urge to read more by these young poets.

by Sheelagh Russell

Storm Warning is an unassuming little paperback which offers hours of enjoyable dabbling and an immeasurable usefulness as a reference work. At last someone has succeeded in bringing together between two covers the work of the best young writers of present-day Canada without attempting to extract from the collection a definition of what makes Canadian literature. The trouble with the latter type of anthology is that one immediately can see the exceptions. Storm Warning deals with the whole as a loosely knit group of divergent ideas and styles.

One refreshing change is the way Purdy has put this book together. Here the authors are presented in alphabetical order, with a short biographical note, for most a photograph, and one or several poems. There is no grouping according to mood, style, geography or whatever. However, if, as I made the mistake of doing, one begins reading continually from the first page, one almost wishes that there were such an arrangement; then the reader could choose his selection of poems at will. The only suggestion I can offer is to read it through once or twice, then return to the poems you have, through familiarity, marked as your special favourites.

Al Purdy's brief introduction is a must; it is fitting that such an established Canadian poet should pave the way for young talent while making no claims for the greatness of his own personal taste. And he lets it be known that this is his own choice, both of artists and works, and also makes the statement that he chose good poems over poets. This point may be debated as I personally could think of several poems in some instances which I could define as "better" than those included. But, as Purdy says, this is a matter of taste.

Also unfortunate was the omission of several good poets, often because of the age limit imposed by the editors. Still, Storm Warning gives adequate, in fact more than adequate representation of the young poets between the ages of twenty and thirty-three, thirty young poets in all. They are poets who, so Purdy says, "will

replace the Birneys and Laytons and Cohens in the near future."

One interesting feature of this book is that, of the thirty poets included, one-fifth are from the Maritimes, in fact two attended UNB and one-tenth either were born or lived for a time in the US. The conclusions which can be drawn are endless.

An indication of the diversity of talent and personality included is the section of photographs and biography at the opening of the anthology. A few of the writers are unaccompanied by photographs. Does this say something for their looks, their laziness or their reluctance to become public property? And the notes range from the standard birth-date, birth-place, has-published account to an almost outright refusal to release any pertinent facts.

But it is the body of the book which affords the most enjoyment. From Kerrigan Almeida's short and tender "Someday Jason" to Dale Zieroth's nostalgic "Across Canada, West from Toronto," each poem adds a piece to that great jigsaw puzzle, Canadian literature. It is fortunate for the existence of the Canadian soul that one piece is always missing. The "Statements" which follow the poems of each poet also give an insight into the workings of artistic inspiration and the artist's environment. Often there is an attempt at a definition of poetry:

"Poetry for me is like a keyhole, something I can drain myself through, really another

world on the other side of the door."

"My poems are an attempt to discover the various kinds of magic people believe in along with the devils that haunt them."

"Poetry is my moment of honesty..."

All different, just as all the poems are different. There are funny little poems, such as Bill Bissett's "mother earth", aware and anxious poems, such as Zieroth's "Poem for a year ago, on the death of Pierre Laporte", or David Helwig's "After the Deaths at Kent State", and lyrics destined to survive, such as "Lines for Ohiyesa, the Sioux", by Gail Fox, one of the four women included in the book.