

DALORAMA

A
Expensive movie (13)
Had foot problems (8)

G
Comedian (11)
Dal Institution (7)
This tree genus named for Canadian (10)

M
"Anything that can go wrong will." (10)
Rule of conduct (5)

T
His father owned Montreal gas stations (7)

X
Found in the store (4)
Yellow (8)
Bantu language (5)

B
God of wine (7)

H
Half of Hispaniola (5)
Kingly abbreviation (3)

N
50's slang (4)
Lustrous (8)

U
Czar's decree (5)

Y
This poison was used as an aphrodisiac (9)

C
British revolutionary (8)
Couldn't find Nobody (7)
Cause of Scopes Trial (13)
Religious Doctrine (5)
Digestive fluid (5)
Revolution (4)

I
Silly (5)
Dress oneself (5)

O
Held 16th, 17th, & 18th (9)

V
Whirlpool (6)
Painter Van Delft (7)
Scale, calliper, balance, micrometer (7)
Bluish plant (6)

QUIZWORD CLUE: Our Christmas present from the faculty (11)

LAST WEEK'S ANSWER: The Kurdistan

D
CHRYSLIDS' abnormality (7)
Huntress (5)

J
Ark inhabitant (7)

E
Antithesis of devolve (6)

L
Labyrinth (15)

by Chris Hartt

G D L B E C N E I C S E F I L
W N E M D R E N I B M I H O Y
O I U I S A N S P O L C Y C T
N W D X N I A S U H C C A B N
E R N A X A N T H O U S E H A
S A I M X R I O M I H A I T I
P D A N A T A I R E I N R E V
Y S U K A S E M C H Y M E H E
L E A L L E W M O R C O U P D
A L E E S E L L I H C A O A O
C R D N V S U O E R C A N J O
O A U W A L S Y H P R U M N W
P H R S A S O H X E T R O V A
A C T E L O I V E R M E E R R
D E E R C A I R E H T L U A G

Atwood aloof

Life Before Man
Margaret Atwood
McClelland & Stewart
\$12.95

by Heather Myers

Elizabeth
I don't know how I should live.
I don't know how anyone
should live.

Lesje
She flips through the (dress)
racks, looking for something
that might become her,
something she might become.

Nate
He feels his body sagging on
his spine, the flesh drooping
like warm taffy on a sucker
stick.

Self-doubt, self-pity, and a sense of ennui preoccupy Elizabeth, Lesje, and Nate throughout Margaret Atwood's new novel. It is unfortunate then, that one can't share, pity, or at least be amused by their distress, rather than simply bored by it.

As the story begins, Elizabeth is lying in bed listless, depressed after the suicide of her lover Chris. Her husband Nate mopes in the kitchen making her tea and pining for the "olden days" when Elizabeth bought groceries and an extramarital affair was critical enough to warrant a tearful confession and impassioned late night talk.

By the end of the book Nate has apparently fallen in love with Lesje, and with minimal enthusiasm and much hesitation, has left his wife and two children to live with her. Elizabeth recovers enough from her lethargy (she seems incapable of grief) to make childless, unmarried Lesje feel as superfluous as possible and Nate more ineffectual than ever.

Sentimental Nate thinks of Lesje as an exotic planet and

is so insensitive to her loneliness that she finally gets pregnant so that he'll take her seriously. No one is either happier or more miserable than before, because nothing important has changed.

Yet Atwood is occasionally brilliant. The passages describing Lesje's vivid daydream wanderings in prehistory, where "delicate camptosaurus . . . lift their small heads . . . to sniff at the air," are enchanting. Minor characters, like the German Jewish grandmother who has invented her own curses ("Jesus asshole dogpoop, I hope your bum falls off"), are well-drawn. The Canadian in-jokes, Lévesque on television after the PQ victory in 1976 looking "as if someone had simultaneously kissed him and kneed him in the groin," are fun.

But finally, the polished style, the obvious intelligence behind it all only heighten disappointment in the novel as a whole. The three characters on which its impact depends, fail to inspire one way or the other. In the words of Nate's wonderfully down-to-earth mistress after he tells her he understands why she is angry at his desertion, "I don't give a piss."

Atwood can't be blamed for failing to provide characters and plot that satisfy everyone. The point is whether the effect achieved is what she intended. The impression that Atwood expects the cool detachment of *Life Before Man* to amuse without fail, reminds me of a poetry reading she gave in Halifax several years ago. After reading from *Power Politics*,

you fit into me
like a hook into an eye
a fish hook
an open eye
she looked up at the audience expectantly, waiting. But no one laughed.



PROUDLY PRESENTS

THE ANGRY YOUNG DUCKS

Next Week
BUDDY AND THE BOYS!!!