

# Poets Corner

Poem By Gwen Matheson

Canada, my country,  
who are those that are selling you  
down the river?  
Who are those that in secret  
long most for the day of your death?

Multifarious in their maneuvering,  
subtle even to themselves,  
they are not easily detected.

They are not John Wayne with napalm,  
or the bloated British diplomat,  
or the mealy-mouthed Canadian politician,  
stereotyped villains of melodrama,  
eager to foreclose the mortgage.

It is easy to point out the caricature:  
The honest American imperialist,  
preaching the wage-freeze and the oil deal.  
Or telling his students their good fortune  
in having "a swinger from the West Coast",  
glad to escape the fate of distant brothers  
flashing their winning G.I. grins,  
coming with gifts of candy or of death  
to another kind of native.  
Or the treacherous batch of Canadian bankers,  
sneaking down to New York,  
begging for the faster take-over  
of their country,  
fearing the deprivation of their greed.

No, they are more complex  
and more ambiguous,  
not so naive and far more dangerous  
(especially when being well-meaning).

They hide the gleam of the Imperial Eagle  
behind academic spectacles or a beard,  
bestowing the condescending pat on the head,  
damning with faint praise,  
admiring our "nineteenth-century" niceness,  
bringing the "wave of the future"  
as a gift,  
a means of "liberation".

They muffle the dying roar  
of the broken-down British lion  
behind a real or phony Oxford accent,  
bowing in solemn reverence to the Bard,  
reserving to themselves exclusive right  
of cultural ex-communication.

They avoid too much clarity of speech,  
labelling it crude and naive,  
preferring the indirect approach,  
obscurity and obfuscation.  
They sit in faculty lounges or charming apartments,  
discussing on the different kinds of wine  
with inflections of Cornell or Cambridge  
(They don't like Canadian wine except maybe  
Bright's).

They are our own Canadian administrators,  
fatherly and all-knowing,  
The vanguard of a servile continentalism,  
unctuously babbling of "excellence"  
and "universal scholarship",  
fastidious to avoid "discrimination",  
unless it be against their fellow countrymen  
("provincial" and second-rate").

They are your friendly neighbourhood coloniser,  
or the pillars of colonial elite society.  
From whichever side of the border,  
united in the death grip of colonialism,  
that looks sometimes so much like copulation.

They sit on Boards and Senates.  
They are the brilliant young executives  
in climbing corporations.  
They are the old men with sclerotic minds  
and suet in their souls.  
They are the fawning women,  
"girl Fridays" of the conquering crusades.  
They are the ones who officiate  
at graduation ceremonies,  
attend church or synagogue,  
or maintain a correct intellectual agnosticism.

They edit little magazines,  
bowing to the Mecca of Black Mountain,  
publishing "pure" prose and poetry  
in the great bland tradition,  
meaningless and seldom memorable.

They sponsor events on Canadian culture,  
giving the natives, white or red or black,  
(often their own countrymen)  
a chance to perform their little war dances.

They give lectures in Canadian art,  
dealing in calculated implication,  
patronizing with academic "expertise"  
the "lesser branch" of the "North American" tradition,  
putting the proper smear on the Group of Seven  
(Vulture-like they scent the life-blood and the pulse).

They give lectures on Canadian literature,  
tracing the dead hand of Olson or of Creeley,  
or else performing most brilliantly  
when dealing with our young iconoclasts,  
imported brands of spiritual anarchy,  
displaying their desperate fear of belief.

They are the masters of a special jargon,  
admirers of their own expressed idealism.  
Dropping phrases like "international"  
they are the prosperous pimps for their country.  
Using the all-embracing term "North American"  
they are her lustful and poorly paying clients.  
At the sacred sound of "universal",  
their mouths moisten and their eyes shine.  
Living in past dreams of Mill or Acton,  
they treat Canadian nationalism as a joke  
(somewhat on a par with Women's Liberation).

Do they honestly know what they're doing?  
How do they feel when they look in the mirror?  
Do they wake up sometimes at five in the morning  
and find cold truth in their beds?  
(Do they get up and put it out with the cat?)

They are as normal as Pierre Trudeau  
(just married to prove it!),  
as Harold Wilson or Lieutenant Caley.  
Good husbands and devoted wives,  
and loving parents,  
bright bachelors and mini-skirted girls,  
peacefully earning their livings,  
conscientiously and with competence.

Americans,  
they see themselves as the last hope  
of Manifest Destiny  
(albeit under new and different names),  
the American Dream  
"dead in New York but still alive in Toronto".  
(Some really wish for our land's independence,  
but sigh. Alas, they don't see how,  
consoling themselves with the tax exemption.)

Canada, my country,  
it is these who quietly sanction the ultimate sell-out.  
It is these who secretly long for the date of your death.

## STUDENTS INTERESTED IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

SUPPLEMENTARY CALENDAR  
WILL BE AVAILABLE  
ON  
APRIL 26  
IN  
S657 ROSS



*Be my guest*

enjoy a complimentary  
• BIG MAC • FRENCH FRIES  
• MILK SHAKE  
at any Canadian McDONALD'S  
Restaurant

**REE-To Pant World  
Customers... Both  
Guys And Dolls**



shirts, sweaters,  
tops & belts  
to match.

**PANT WORLD**  
1043 STEELES AVE.  
(JUST WEST OF BATHURST)  
THE CONCOURSE  
TELEPHONE · 630-0550