

Poets Corner

Poems by Miriam Waddington

SAD WINTER IN

I tell myself
I am sad because
it is winter;
but Nelly Sachs
lived through
many such winters
and poured biblical
summer through the
blackest chimneys.

Madame Nathalie
lived through them
too; she comes from
Moscow like my own
grandmother and now
she will visit
Toronto and speak
to us in English.
Will I learn
anything from her?

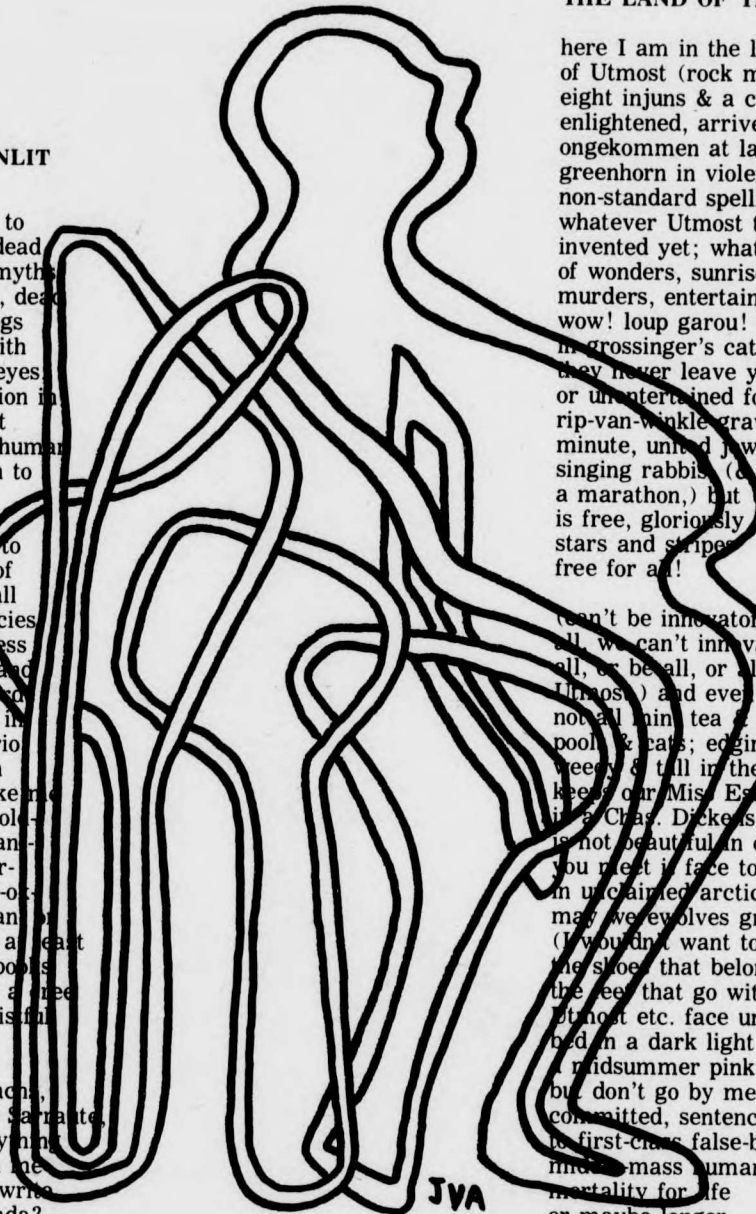
There are many
things I must learn
in order to write
better in Canada.
I must learn to
write & for and
and will for will:
to put : at the
beginning of a line
instead of at the end:
to spell everything
my own swt way just
to prve my indep
endens of all thr
shitty authrty.

THE LAND OF CANLIT

I must learn to
write about dead
horses with myths
in my mouth, dead
birds and frogs
that I shot with
tears in my eyes
and compassion in
my heart just
because I'm human
and was born to
original sin.

I must learn to
sing the j of
penises and all
their frequencies
the gloriousness
of blow jobs and
how avant garde
is everything in
London Ontario
they will then
maybe mistake me
for a 26-year-old
white protestant-
anglo-saxon-or-
duddy-kravitz-or-
type-jew-a man
someone who at least
reads comic books
and was once a free
indian or a wisful
eskimo.

Dear Nelly Sachs,
dear Nathalie Sarraute,
isn't there anything
you can teach me
about how to write
better in Canada?



THE LAND OF THE UTMOST

here I am in the land
of Utmost (rock me daddy
eight injuns & a crowbar)
enlightened, arrivee,
ongekommen at last, a blasted
greenhorn in violence, buggery,
non-standard spelling &
whatever Utmost they haven't
invented yet; what a land (\$) of
wonders, sunrises, student
murders, entertainments!
wow! loup garou! mamma!!!
in grossinger's catskills
they never leave you unfed
or unentertained for one
rip-van-winkle graveyard
minute, unind Jewish appeal,
singing rabbis (and they charge
a marathon,) but Utmost
is free, gloriously
stars and stripes
free for all!

(can't be innovator
all, we can't innovate
all, or be all, or all be
Utmost) and even Utmost is
not all him tea & wild swooning-
pool & cats; edginess grows
weedy & tall in the west, growls,
keeps our Miss Estelle from Pip
in a Char. Dickens grip,
is not beautiful in case
you meet it face to face
in unclaimed arctic space —
may we evolve grunt you grace!
(I wouldn't want to find
the shoes that belong to
the feet that go with that
Utmost etc. face under my
bed in a dark light on
a midsummer pink night)
but don't go by me,
committed, sentenced
to first-class false-brass
mass humanprison
mortality for life
or maybe longer.

POLEMICS

I am not interested
in the polemics of art,
you can keep your cosmic
gossip I don't care if
poetry is dying if the
language is debased if
you stuff people's ears
with bananas and their
mouths with dead elm
trees; to hell with style!
I'm in favor of living,
I reject dying while
I'm still alive I don't
want to analyze the process
of how we disappear from
the world; I care only
how we appear; I want
to build apparitions
a million monuments
to the future completely
uncool, to shout from
the rooftops: history
is not so fleeting!
There were heroes, wars
were halted, men were
healed, children were
born, people sang,
worlds were changed;
I don't want to be ashamed
of the word courage or
choke on the word love
or deny the category
of being human anymore;
I want to say brother and
see when I close my eyes
not ploughs of riot or
fields of burning people
or the bones of smoking
cities; I want to see
vistas of all that is
being made impossible —
civilization.



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