

d i s t r a c t i o n s

Tommy Travels

A Deaf, Dumb and Blind Travel Guide
For The Debutante Traveler
by Murray Thorpe

Desert and Temperate Rainforest in Canada



From tundra to desert and rain forest, the variety of habitats in Canada is wide, just like the expanse of the country itself. "Desert in Canada?" you may ask. Yes, the Okanagan valley which runs North/South in the Southern part of B.C. is a desert with cacti and rattlers. This is a large fruit-growing and wine-producing area of B.C., only because the irrigation necessary to sustain the orchards and vineyards pushes the desert up the mountainside. I have

often had to remove cacti from my shoes after a hike up above the orchards but I have never seen a rattler. The amount of people now living in the Okanagan has had a detrimental effect on the rattler and sightings are rare.

When I hear rain forest, I used to think of the Amazon. However, now, I also think of the West Coast of Vancouver Island and of Pacific Rim National Park. This park contains a temperate rain forest and is near Tofino which is the Pacific terminus of the Trans Canada



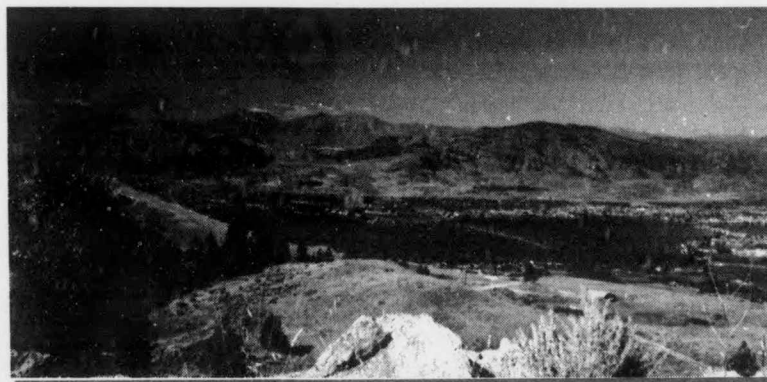
Highway.

Entering the park, I am reminded that these lands once belonged to the Hesquiat Indian Band with the presence of a totem pole. Like a book, each pole has a story.

Examining the totem pole, one can see various carvings for which explanations are given on the placard. At the top is the thunderbird which is typical of the West Coast Indians; below which is a mask representing the youngest son. The sea serpent helps the thunderbird get his son home and the grizzly bear gives the son inner-strength to complete the test of

harpoon a whale but cannot bring the leviathan into submission. The youngest son and his crew get towed out to sea and get stranded on an island.

The whale, which is apparently still harpooned and attached to the boat, eventually decides to tow the crew back towards the shore. The whale then dies from exhaustion (the harpoon probably



Above Osoyoos in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia

manhood. The whale is a sign of the hunt and a source of food. At the bottom, the owl represents the wisdom achieved by the boy as he has completed his test of manhood.

The story written on the placard states that, in the Hesquiat band, the youngest son is not allowed to go on a whale hunt until he has achieved manhood. Feeling that the time is right, the son organizes his own whaling party and heads out with his crew of five men. Before long, they

does not help) and the boy tows the whale the remaining distance into shore where he is proclaimed the greatest hunter. The boy has become a man.

Leaving the totem pole area, I headed to Long Beach where I set up camp on the beach and watched the sun go down. I think I still have some sand in my tent from that day.

The next day, I spent hiking around the park following some short trails such as the temperate rain forest loop. The forest



A Banana Slug is a key player in the rain forest life cycle



The Dense Rain Forest crowds in on a path

is dense with plant life striving to reach the sun in this darkened world. The mosses and ferns growing in the trees all fight for the limited light.

Along the trail, there were several signs explaining the various aspects of life in the temperate rain forest. The canopy overhead traps the energy of the sun which eventually gets passed on to the life below. Mushrooms, fungi and Indian pipes grow on logs, helping to break them down. The banana slugs feed on the mushrooms while ants and beetles work on the logs.

Trees sometimes can be seen to have grown in a straight line.

It was interesting to note why trees sometimes can be seen to have grown in a straight line. The seedlings that are produced by the mature trees have to struggle for survival on the darkened floor of the temperate rain forest. However,

WE DO NOT INHERIT THE EARTH
FROM OUR GRANDPARENTS, WE
BORROW IT FROM OUR
CHILDREN!

It was also along this trail that I saw a sign that means a lot to me. This sign had written on it, "We do not inherit the earth from our grandparents, we borrow it from our children!"

Knowing how fragile our environment can be, it is good to know that the government sets aside land for our parks.



The Pacific Terminus of the Trans Canada Highway

The Ghetto Poet

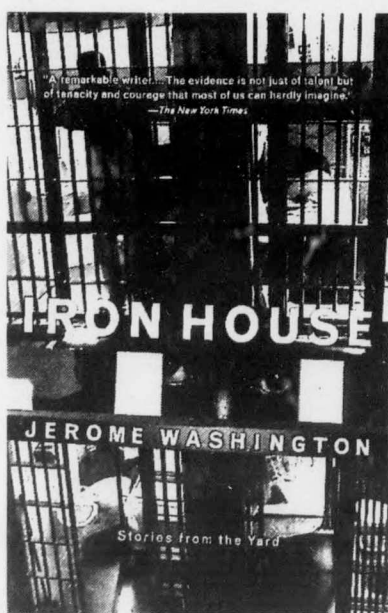
In a place where the streets are carved with potential life...
Anger is always followed by the echo...

There is never logic, only new age humanity.

He follows the precise path from block to block seeking what all people seek to find, forgetting that he is not a real person.

Strangers listen to his jive while continuous lives feed his passion for words.

by Andy D.



Iron House: Stories From the Yard
by Jerome Washington
(Vintage/Random House)

In the preface to *Iron House*, Jerome Washington notes: "In prison, life is

hard-edged and authority is capricious, thoughts are contraband and writing is a deadly, serious business." *Iron House* is a testament to the creative perseverance that enables prisoners to outlive the human ruin that degrading institutions leave in their wake.

Washington wrote most of *Iron House* during 15 years of incarceration in Attica, a notoriously brutal prison where 43 people died in a riot the year before Washington was sent there. (The charges against him were eventually dismissed.) Washington also won a First Amendment case defending his right, and the right of other prisoners to write. *Iron House* clearly reveals why the powers-that-be fought to prevent him from exercising this right. Washington exposes the depravity of systematic dehumanization as it exists in America's prisons.

Iron House is a searingly honest record of how prisoners struggle to keep their individuality and their dignity; a struggle that often crushes

them. Washington preserves the identities constructed by prisoners in Attica, composing a series of sketches of individual prisoners. "Juanito: The Song of Life" records how a prisoner "endured his ground" as guards murdered him, "jackals—caricatures of men—cheered and stamped their jackboots..." Juanito's song, "Better it is to die in laughter than in tears to live," came and went as a lone voice in a prison ruled by fear and violence.

Washington diligently records the strength of spirit possessed by prisoners who adapt to the corrupt environment of the iron house and survive it. More than this, Washington uncovers the irrationality and desperation in American society's practice of producing and condoning such institutions.

by Mimi Cormier

photos by Warren Watson
Artwork by Nina Botten
on pages 20 and 21.

WHERE IN THE WORLD
DEADLINE IS APRIL 1 @ 5:00pm.
Bring the entry form on page 17 of issue 21 to
room 35 of the SUB.
For another look at the pictures see the bulletin
board outside room 35.