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a poetic mixture of

# Majestic and Misogynist

by Heather Levy

Virginia Woolf, in *The Common Reader*, says that everything may be the subject of prose. *The Ecphore '87 Poetry Anthology* proves that all things should not be translated through poetry. The anthology may be divided into five categories: original thought, misogyny, snowshoe maple leaf tobogganing songs, care bear mug liners, and party intellectual froth. Numbers are as subjective as bank balances and equally unreliable, but there is some worth in saying that fif-

teen poems in this anthology are majestic and do have original perspective. Thirty of the poems are of the black turtleneck school; decorative shells and plodding imagery. Thirteen poems speak of love, friendship and the sea in calendar-quality AB/AB schemes. Eleven of the poems scream of Oliver Goldsmith — the trivializing and exploitation of nature that preface right armed struggle.

Seven men have favoured us with their trivializing and exploitative views of women. Some of the most hateful gems include:

*Liquor  
 Opens my mouth  
 And the telephone  
 Brings me  
 A woman*

*She is blonde hair  
 And red lips,  
 A polished fingernail  
 Tapping my shoulder,  
 "I'm going to put my legs  
 there."*

"Mondrian's Aunt" ridicules the elderly and women:

*Then again, Mondrian's Aunt  
 Has even more difficulty  
 in the ladies' room.*

"Dream On, Bitch" rivals Salvador Dali with

*Greetings from the big phallic  
 symbol in the sky*

*You take the high road, and I'll  
 take your sister Ethel.*

The ravings of "F.U.C.K.D.U.", the violence of "Maggie" (*We gave her the knife/... She was a whore...*) may best be dismissed with John Nause's words applied in a larger context:

*The trite image of mankind  
 dwarfed before infinity  
 was almost pleasant to the eye.*

The back cover of the anthology seems to titillate us with the promise of the 'exciting, unjured, unexpurgated, non-hierarchical'. Enquiring minds want to know. Hatred cannot be poetic.

"The BS Poetry Society's mandate is to examine and attempt to alleviate the problems of new writers in Atlantic Canada." My hope is that misogyny will not pass as poetry. I realize that censorship is not the answer but I also have apprehension that destructive words may be marketed in poetry's clothing, that publication is equated with tolerance and even silent approval. We must not give away the ground that we need to stand upon.

The '87 *Ecphore Poetry Anthology* is a useful reflection of the social and literary landscape of Canada. It should not be a surprise, then, to see that there are more submissions by men than women. Unfortunately, our submissions cannot be limited to poetry. It also should not be a surprise to find violence toward women in this free fall of Atlantic thought. It also should not be a surprise to find original flowers in this jagged garden.

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