

cial work turned to good account in a new field of expression. Sometimes he would get discouraged, as most artists do. I remember one night he threw his sketch box as far as he could into the bush and said he was through with painting and in the morning we hunted it all up and took it over to Bud Callighan, the warden, to be repaired; there was a hook missing so Callighan cut one out of a piece of zinc. We kept painting until the gay colors were gone and there were only bare trees and then back to Toronto to work in the studio.

I left Toronto the end of 1914 and never saw Thomson again. He could not afford to keep on the studio alone and moved into an old tumble-down carpenter's shack back of the building, which he fixed up and made snug, and there most of his canvases were painted. Besides his canvases, there are between two and three hundred of the little panels, out-of-door studies, vivid records of all kinds of weather and changing seasons. Most of Thomson's slender income came from these little sketches. He asked \$25 for them and if it had not been for his good friend, the Doctor, he would not have kept

going. Now collectors offer ten times that price for a Thomson sketch and there are none to be had.

People used to say there is nothing to paint in this country—the north land is a dreary, monotonous waste, and yet out of one little section of it Thomson found riches undreamed of. Not knowing all the rules and conventions regarding what is paintable he found it all paintable, muskegs, burnt trees, drowned land, long chutes, beaver dams, northern lights, the flight of wild geese, intimate studies of leaves and flowers, creeks and wild rivers and placid lakes. His great love was autumn and early spring. In the summer he would often work as a guide or spend his time fishing. I remember him telling me about one party he took out. They let him do all the cooking and cleaning up and carry all the stuff over the portages while they stood round smoking cigarettes; he took them as far as he could in a day and, as Thomson told it, "When they woke up in the morning, they had no guide". He made his own fishing tackle with great ingenuity and with his rare intuition and much patience it was seldom he returned empty-handed.

**O**N THE top of a hill overlooking Canoe Lake, where he was drowned in 1917, there is a cairn. It was built by J. W. Beatty, who carried all the stones up from the bottom of the hill to build it. J.E.H. MacDonald composed and designed the bronze tablet on it.

The shack where Tom Thomson painted his canvases fell into disrepair, the wall caved in, the roof leaked and it seemed as though it would have to be torn down, when a prospector with the same careless, friendly outlook on life as Thomson had, found it, and now it is snug and tight again and Keith McIver and his dog, Brownie, live in it when the northland is too deep in snow for them to prospect.

Dr. James MacCallum is our guest of honour tonight. Years ago when the artist's friends were few and the Canadian art movement was a subject for ridicule or abuse he showed his faith in us, and above all in Tom Thomson. Without that never-failing belief in the genius of Thomson there would have been no 'West Wind' or 'Northern River' or all those precious records the artist made in his brief and amazing career.

## The Wood

In the preceding article A. Y. Jackson has described something of the development of a distinctively Canadian school of art. It has taken longer for Canada's writers to learn to speak from a clearly independent stance, but *The Times Literary Supplement* has said that Canadian literature is now entering its Elizabethan Age. However that statement may be interpreted it is obvious that the literary scene in Canada has never been as vital as it is today. In future issues *Canada* will carry both examples and critical assessments of this vitality. Below is a poem by a writer from Vancouver, a city in the vanguard of the current renaissance.

No.

I said before there are  
no roads in this wood,  
And as for its being yellow,  
or green,

I just don't know.

Yes, this is the wood,  
and we are in it  
aren't we?

Yes, some think they know,  
and rush to find . . .

But why trees and no flowers,  
or why trees so tall and dark.  
I just don't know.

Samuel Siwel