

ting Here — wit and imagination

by F.J. Logan

ere: *Stories Selected by Rudy Wiebe* (Edmond Press, 1977), \$2.95

plaint of the case-hardened reviewer was best by Ambrose Bierce a century ago in what the world's shortest book review: "The covers the book," he noted, "are too far apart." Of this volume, however, the opposite complaint is in greatly wishes there were more of it.

what there is, is fine. There are seven stories by women. These stories display a wide range of style, and (though most are slightly marred by which borders on the antic) all display expert craftsmanship. Aritha van Herk's "A of Moderate Temperament," for example, is a low-keyed, understated story of a woman's into the world of the possible. Ms. van pose sparkles with paradox ("Well manicured instance, is a gem) and pays the reader the of excluding everything he can figure is own.

ision and control are, likewise, hallmarks of Rosta's "Hunting Season," a bizarre yarn gens with the protagonist finding footprints, e nearly the size of her hand." For the next we experience a Kafkaesque consideration as quarry, done in terms of the shadowy and nters and the huge but helpless creature. The

pervasive weirdness of the piece is heightened by wealth of sense detail and by the very ordinariness of the dialogue.

"Showdown," by Myrna Kostash, is a masterly portrayal of growing sexual revulsion, a deft blend of bad memories and fine, pure fantasies — fantasies in which the men look but, greatly unlike their fleshy counterparts, do not touch. The story conveys a person's ambivalence at wanting to be desired but hating to be used, and conveys this ambivalence and frustration expertly.

Candas Jane Dorsey's "Columbus Hits the Shoreline Rag" is vintage absurdity, laced with puns and gags and exuberant wit (drinking *palm* wine, requesting her daughter's *hand* in marriage). This is a funny story. We learn, for instance, that nearly everyone in the "space program" is a Caughnawaga Mohawk ("nobody else can stand the heights"), and that the age of discovery is far from over.

Back on the ground, Terese Brasen's "Princess" is a sensitive exploration of the sterility and renunciation of religiosity, a real treat for the multitudes of ex-Catholics which one encounters everywhere. Ms. Brasen can turn a phrase with the best of them ("a butterfly flounced by") but her major concern here is to underscore the difference between the unchecked fecundity of the "garden" and the artificiality, ugliness, and mortal morbidity of Catholicism — the difference between real raspberries and raspberry Jell-o.

Similarly, Caterina Edwards' "Everlasting Life" is peopled with mortuary folk, aged and moribund Catholic women. One, old Margherita, particularly obsessed with death, is the genius of the Sicilian house: "What is right when we spend our time submerged beneath putridness and the blood of our fellow-man?" She wants to know. "Life, you must understand, is not worthy of being lived." There is in this story a certain astringent humor (a kidnapper manages to transform, to his great credit, the ransom money into various properties, real and chattel, including "three hundred and eighty-five sheep."); the main point to the story, however, is the extreme unlikelihood of anyone recovering from anything in such a household — anything that is, except life.

Finally, Elvina Boyko's "The Process" concerns the process of what, for want of a better word, one might call matriarchy; as Ms. Boyko puts it: "Time flips a coin and our mothers become our children." Succeeding generations of women are seen as facets of an essentially integral and underlying personality.

To sum up: The artists and their works are different and unique. Can one generalize about such diversity? A bit: the storiers all show a respect for and command of the language that is truly heartening. Their wit, precision, imagination, and craft all commend these works to the discriminating reader. In this little volume it is as if everything easy and second-rate were pared away, obviating criticism, compelling admiration.

Corriveau on Canadian film

interview by Dave Samuel

Samuel interviewed Marguerite Corriveau in Edmonton last week. Ms. Corriveau is associate producer of the film *Eliza's Horoscope* showing at the Varscona Theatre.

ve discovered from your promotional materials *Eliza's Horoscope* cost \$1,500,000 to make. How go about raising such a sum for a Canadian

We didn't get it all in Canada. We raised about \$1 million from Warner Brother's. Then the was split between the CFDC (Canadian Film Development Corporation) and private investors here

It's interesting to me that you had to raise such a amount of your capital in the States.

There isn't much money around in Canada to movies though. There isn't a lot of capital, there a lot of investors who are interested in film. Most s for Canadian films are too low. Where are you to get the first million? It's hard enough getting

You seem to have had difficulties with distribu- could you outline the sources of them?

Well, for me it's all a process, period. Anything a difficulty, or simply part of a (normal) process. happened was that Warner Bros. would originally distributed the film, except that when they saw the picture they thought that it was a more sized film than they were capable of handling.

What do you mean by specialized?

Well, you saw the film—it could easily be ed as an art film, and they're simply not geared s that. They're geared toward the big commer- ctures that have stars in them, or have a star r. Whatever it is, it's part of a formula. When they lize they just figure they wouldn't be able to te it properly. When we saw that we decided on't we take a chance on doing it ourselves?

Basically, then, it presented a marketing m for Warner Bros.

For them, yes. They've got enormous ments they would just spend an awful lot of and maybe never make it back. They don't know e audience for a film like *Eliza's Horoscope* is, they wouldn't know how to get in touch with that ce.

G: Do you think that Canada in general is a market for films which aren't formulaic or 'name'

To tell you the truth, that could be answered in ys. If it's a non-name film coming out of the ut being distributed by a major (company) then say chances are it's going to do better than a n film would. But a Canadian film has a hard e seen a number of films which were just as ot necessarily great films, but just as good as ming from the States, that didn't stand a chance ng a fraction of what those films were making. *Hard Part Begins*; it's a good example. We saw eatre in Montreal. The sound started going and ut of focus. The manager didn't care. When we ck and told him, he said, "Aw, it's just another n movie."

Do you think the Canadian audience is actually geable enough about films?

The Canadian audience is the biggest importer ican films in the world, so they've seen an awful movies and they should be able to look at). But as far as Canadian films go I don't think



that they're self-confident enough. They're always looking towards the States, always thinking that what comes from there is better, it must be better. A Canadian film that made it in the States would obviously succeed up here. But even then there's a (Canadian) film that opened in the States, did really well, then came up here. The critics blasted it. There's no pride in the fact that things were made here. If everything's destroyed, if everything's killed in the cradle and never given a chance, then nothing is going to grow.

G: Would you say then that you need a certain quantity to produce quality?

C: Yes, you do need quantity and you need acceptance. What we need is to keep a lot of American films out. I'm not going to go pushing this. It's never going to happen—it's a dream, it's too late now. But it's the only way a Canadian film industry would work. If we didn't have American films filling all the theatres you'd still have people wanting to see movies and they'd have to be filled somehow. You're not going to start importing from Europe, you're just going to have the same problem, so obviously the movies would have to be made here, and I guarantee that in five years you'd have terrific films.

G: Would you suggest legislation somewhat like the broadcasting legislation?

C: Yes, I'm not familiar with the details, obviously it worked there. It's not all the answer...I truly believe that it's an impossible answer. Odeon and Famous Players are trying to get around that. They now have some sort of self-imposed quota system—each quarter they have to play a certain number of Canadian films, but you can choose your time for releasing films so obviously they're not releasing the Canadian films at optimum times of the year. They're throwing them away, they throw them into bad periods when nobody goes to see a movie.

G: As a critic I have quite a bit of difficulty with *Eliza's Horoscope* itself. At this point I have to say it's either a bad film or I don't understand it. Would you say that the film is esoteric: is it based upon concepts in Jungian Psychology or astrology, which, if one were familiar with them, would improve a person's appreciation of the film.

C: Yes, but to use the word "based" would imply that the script was written based on those concepts whereas it wasn't. Gordon and I got into Jungian psychology about a year and a half after the picture was finished. It was at that point that we realized that it was a Jungian film, that it was chock-full of Jungian archetypes. I think that the way to see the film is an emotional way. Our experience has been that either very sophisticated people who are in touch with their feelings and emotions or very simple people, who as well live by their feelings and emotions, understand the film. I don't think it's an intellectual film at all. It has nothing to do with what the person's personal background is, nor education nor knowledge. It truly is a psychological phenomena. And I think as well that the film is a more feminine film than what we're used to. I use the word feminine not because it deals with a woman but because of the way it's made: the feelings it deals with. It's an intuitive film, and I think it's a synthetic film. There are things in it whereby if you stop to try and analyze them as they go by you get bogged down. What you have to do is just kind of let it go and, even if you don't understand it, somehow everything makes sense at the end. And in that sense it is for me a synthesis, rather than an analytical approach. And I don't think our society is feminine enough, and I say that both for women and for men, I think it's a value that's been lost. *Eliza's Horoscope* is not part of the logical, rational way of being or thinking, it's part of the other, emotional, intuitive way. I think that if you see the film that way then the whole thing makes sense.