

Books, etc.

or, Quiet Flows the Donnelly

WHIRLPOOL, by Diane Giguère. McClelland & Stewart, \$2.50

With all the talk floating around the campus about all literature being song or poetry, this is a timely book to read. If ever a poetic novel was written, this is it.

Diane Giguère is an attractive young (thirty years old) brunette, an actress-turned-writer who was born and raised in Montreal. She is presently working as an announcer for the CBC.

Somewhere in this prosaic background must lie some poetic secret, for Miss Giguère's prose style is one of the most original to be found in current writing.

The story centers around a young girl who is studying drama, as Miss Giguère did, at the Conservatory in Montreal. She takes a holiday in St. Croix, an idyllic little island in the Caribbean, and has a sexual affair with Yves, who is an older and a married man. The affair ends temporarily at the end of our young heroine's holiday, but resumes when both parties concerned are back in Montreal.

These are the bare facts of the story; in fact, not much more elaboration can be made on the plot. This is a novel in which absolutely nothing happens, except in the mind of the narrator. As I read through the book I found myself losing track of the point in time and the events in the world outside the narrator's thoughts; as it turned out, the novel didn't suffer a bit because of this.

Miss Giguère has taken the simple plot as a framework for her prose style. It is a dreamy, almost tropical style, (if style can be described in such terms), laced with figures of speech of every kind. This is essentially a novel of description: descriptions of St. Croix, descriptions of the few other people who come into the story, but most of all descriptions of the narrator's self.

Hardly a sentence passes without a metaphor or a simile: I picked one page at random and counted no less than eighteen figures of speech in twice as many lines. One loses oneself in this delicate embroidery of poetic insight.

But perhaps this is a fault when carried to such extremes. I think Miss Giguère did want this novel to go somewhere; she wanted something really significant to happen. Perhaps if one were to read the novel three or four times it would make a great deal more sense, but it's simply not the type of novel that one would want to read more than once. It makes a lovely sound, and for this reason it is worth reading; but the vast amounts of florid purple prose in it make it something of a chore to read for the sake of understanding what happens in it.

I might take this opportunity to deplore the absurdly high prices that McClelland & Stewart charges for its wares. *Whirlpool* costs \$2.50 in softback; it is only seventy-eight pages long, and much of that consists of blank pages. The paper quality is not particularly good, nor is the binding.

I appreciate the fact that current fiction is bound to be a little more expensive than old stuff—but \$2.50 for a tiny paperback that doesn't afford an hour's reading? Really!

Perhaps M & S feel that we Canadians ought to be happy to subsidize a truly Canadian authorship by paying through the nose for it. This is hardly a valid philosophy. If M & S were to cut their prices in half they would be sure to sell twice as many books, and have twice as many Canadians reading the literature of their country.

M & S have a fairly good monopoly on authors like Diane Giguère, Leonard Cohen, and most of the other rising Canadian talents. These talents ought to be made a little more available to the reading public.

Mod scene

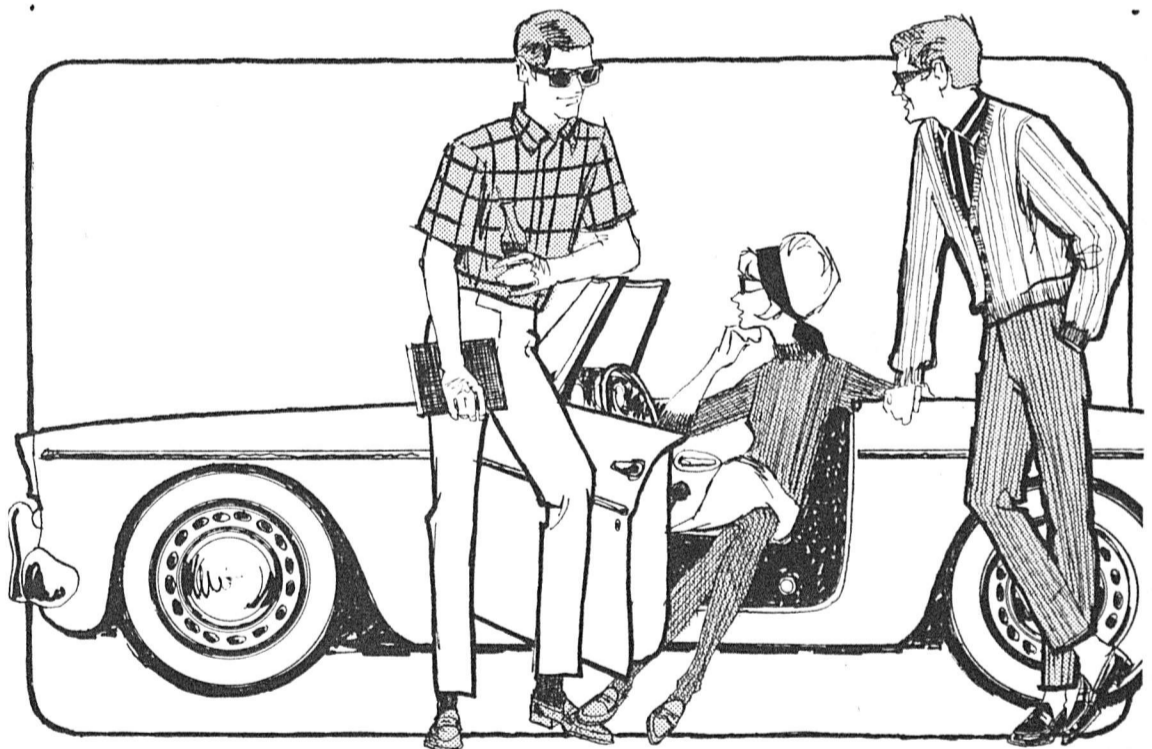
from C-6

So there was this guy playing the "1812 Overture" on an electric banjo. And then there was this chick singing "I'm a boy." And to end it all a lead singer disappeared in a cloud of blue smoke with a severely burned hand. A great dance, but is it art?

This was an orgasmic evening in which every sense was assailed by two groups that barred no holds. Ears were bombarded by the non-stop musical barrage. Eyes dazzled by five startlingly coloured suits from the *Move* and full crimson Guards regalia from the *Sands*. Nostrils stifled by thunderflashes and smoke bombs. And libidos aroused by groupies, not so much in skirts as pelvis helmets.



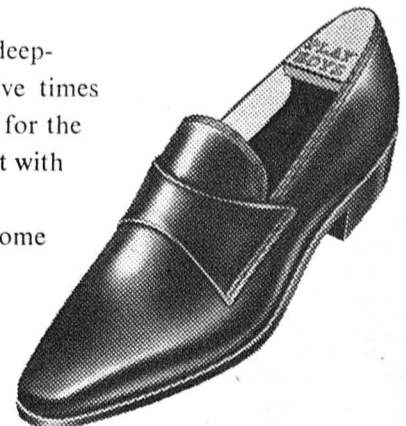
MY GOODNESS, WHAT DO THOSE LITTLE DOTS MEAN?—If anyone should know, it's Arthur Fiedler, usually conductor for the Boston Pops, who is in town this weekend for two concerts with the Edmonton Symphony at Jubilee Auditorium.



For Mod men

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