

light, and often obscene. His writing is an escape --- an escape from a reality he abhors.

"An artist is true only to himself. A -- creative person can't really live in a society."

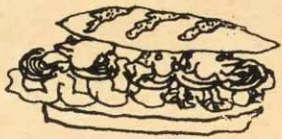
His dislike of societies leads him into a battle against orthodoxy and puts him on the defensive when he encounters poets like Dudek and Stallworthy. Like many contemporary poets Rosenblatt stresses images and language. His is a magical world and societies are evil. "I don't like capitalism or communism. They're both tyrannical and make people into robots. Capitalism ignores; communism jails".

As far as Mr. Rosenblatt is concerned the concept of a distinctive Canadian literature is merely, "...a hang-up of the artist". "We'd rather get after bookstores to sell our goddamn books" although he does not sell his books through the usual channels. "The role of poetry is to make people feel good", not to squabble over whether it is Canadian, American, or British, in its structure and content.

"I can't stand the political ideology; I can't stand social realists; and I hate the goddamn system"

Favorite Canadian Poets:
Milton Acorn
Alan Nowlan

Writing is a disease, we all say that, but the truth is most of use don't have it"



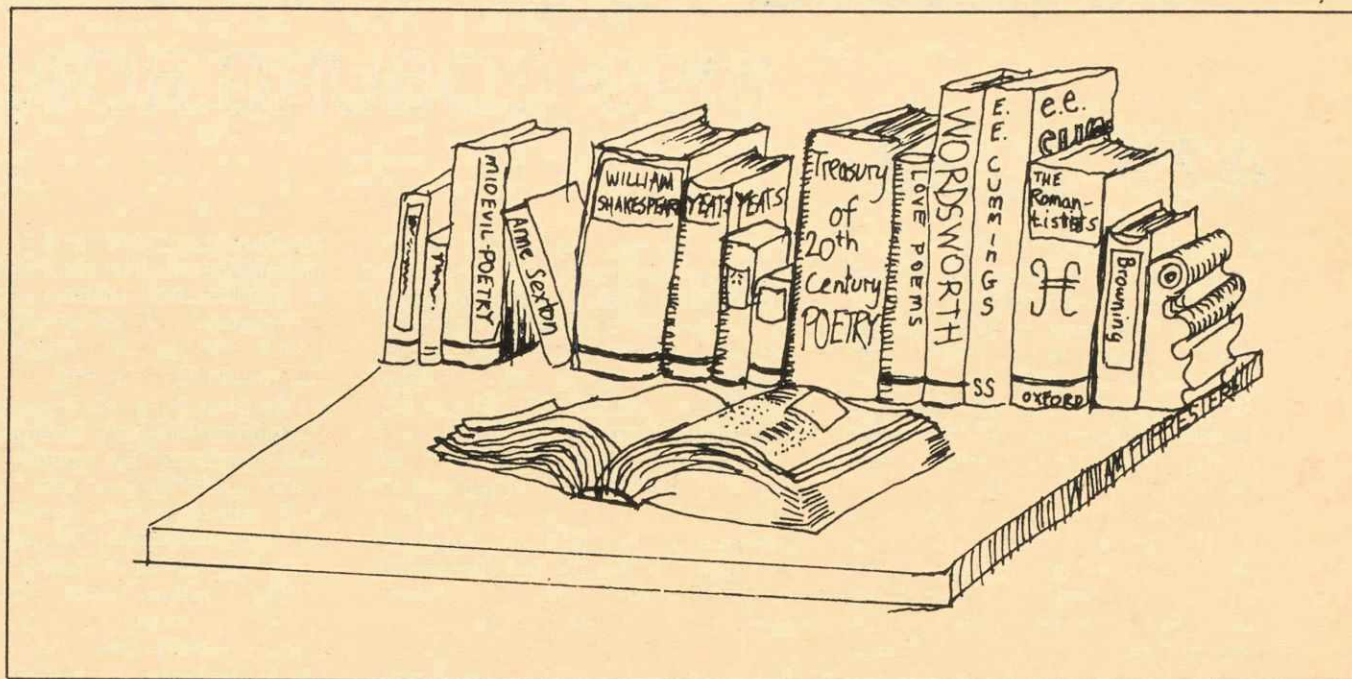
David Helwig--Unwilling Poet

David Helwig, as a person and a poet lies midway between Dudek and Rosenblatt. His beliefs are the outcome of experience and personal desire; unlike Rosenblatt he believes in the system but not with the conviction or to the extent that Dudek does. To Helwig, Canada is a political ideology fighting an economic force.

"Canada does not make sense as a country. Being a Canadian and a poet is a problem"

On the question of a identifiable Canadian literary form, Helwig says, "A Canadian poem is just a poem that was written in Canada". His poetry stresses what he terms physicality. He is more interested in the external world. He readily admits that he wants a response to his poetry but he --- orients his writing to a particular response.

"I don't sit and write a



poem thinking how people are going to respond but if I think no one ain't gonna respond, then I ain't gonna write it"

Helwig admits to not having written poetry seriously within the last two years, instead he has taken to writing fiction. With respect to poetry he feels he has two options; 1. to write purely entertaining poetry or 2. to turn to a new and purer kind of poetry. But before the latter alternative can be achieved Helwig feels he, "...would have to go through some kind of spiritual rebirth".

There were two further aspects of poetry which came up repeatedly during the three days of the conference--they were modern poets and publishing.

It is the beginning of the 60's which marks the dawning of a new poet with a different brand of poetry. Dudek feels the modern poetry represents an undue concern with the poetic process often forgetting the art itself. This preoccupation of the modern poet can only lead, says Dudek to a disintegration of the art. "The new poets are in the position of being epigones". They are merely echoes.

Dudek feels that much of today's poetry, in its over emphasis on process, has become devoid of order. Instead of ideas there are only bare images. Rosenblatt vehemently denies reading from the works of Bill Bisset to bring home his point. There is a very definite sense of order in the modern poet according to Rosenblatt.

Dudek feels that, "The future of any art is the one thing we can never predict", yet he sees a collapse of the modern technological society which will ultimately result in the emergence of a new poetry. He says that the 60's produced an abundance of poets. There

were, "...more and more poets to the point where it wasn't poetry anymore". In his estimation, "We've had a flood".

The situation in the U.S. is somewhat similar. Poetry has moved from the subjective internal view to a more communal one. He feels the modernists are displaced and confused, in their search for form and style they are returning to the orthodox.

One phenomenon which has accompanied the poetry of the 60's is the prevalence of poetry readings. All five poets feel that readings have degenerated into mere performances often bordering on theatrics. The poets conception of the audience has been altered and the contemporary poets are responding to these expectations. The result is not always positive with regard to the art of poetry. Poets like Leonard have moved from the writing aspect of poetry to the performance that a reading today entails.

All five poets point to the better printing methods, improvement in distribution, and the introduction of



the paperback as the revolutionizing factors in the publishing business.

Creeley attributes much of this "publishing revolution" to Coles notes and the paperback. "The 40's and 50's produced an awful constriction on being published. It - never seemed possible that one would have better conditions of publishing".

Coles was to America what the Penguin was to the British. Jon Stallworthy speaks of a healthy publishing economy in the 60's when readings were a nation wide phenomenon, and Penguins gave this movement an added impetus. "In the 60's," says Stallworthy, "you had to be a really bad poet in order not to be published". But inflation has pushed the price of books beyond the average purse and Penguin's and poetry readings are much more scarce. To be published today requires more than luck, money is tight and less books are hitting the market -- more responsibility is falling on those who have to choose.

A publisher for the Oxford University Press himself, and co-editor of an anthology, Stallworthy says that, "hearing the new sound is always very difficult. The most interesting a publisher can do is see a poets work changing".

Louis Dudek is also an editor and founder of Contact Press. He has a special reason for introducing new and young poets to the publishing scene. He cites inflation and the tightening up of the Canada Council as the reasons for the shrinking of the Canadian publishing industry. "It doesn't benefit society that you have 10 or 12 books coming out a month. You don't get geniuses by the score". He feels that the "interest has gone out of Canadian books", because of the trite that has been published.

David Helwig disagrees with Dudek and the others on the unaccessibility of publication to the poet, and admonishes: "It's very easy to get published in Canada".

"In a time of economic crisis and inflation what happens is you either get facism, or communism, or poets". Joe Rosenblatt