

Books, etc.

or, Quiet Flows the Donnelly

PUNCTURE A POEM FOR CHRISTMAS—The sport of poem-puncturing probably dates back to Homer. The Goliards, a bunch of medieval rascalions, are among the earliest recorded practitioners of the art. They did a few neat things like substituting the word *bibemus* (let us drink) for *eromus* (let us pray) in the Mass.

Poem-puncturing, however, did not develop into the fine art that it is today until the coming of Richard Armour's rather aptly titled book, *Punctured Poems*.

Armour's method of puncturing consists of taking the first line of a well-known poem and adding to it a completely logical and even more completely laughable second line. He ends up with something like this:

*When I have fears that I may cease to be,
I'm glad that I'll have lots of company.*

The sport has now been taken up by irreverent pseudo-poets of a baser sort. An anonymous (for obvious reasons) member of the English department has come up with the following gem:

*How do I love thee? Let me count the ways:
One, two, three . . .*

An innovation can be made on the standard two-line form of the punctured poem—the first line only of a given poem can be mutilated beyond recognition. Thus a familiar middle English lyric can be rendered so:

Adam's lay ybottled, ybottled in a bond.

It should be apparent by now that poem-puncturing is destined to become an even more popular sport than Haiku. It is every bit as demanding a mental exercise and is certainly a great deal more fun.

I suggest that we aspiring puncturers band together and pool our creative resources in a vast and ambitious Centennial project: an International Poem-Puncturing Festival. Perhaps we can collect our masterpieces in a deluxe gift edition to be published by McClelland & Stewart.

Get to work today. Puncture a few poems, and when they are completely deflated send them along to me.

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IN A SERIOUS VEIN (or, the Gloomy Vampire)—Ryerson Press has just brought out a new anthology of Canadian short stories: *Modern Canadian Stories*, edited by Giose Rimanelli and Roberto Ruberto (believe it or not). It retails at \$7.95.

It looks like a worthwhile collection, including such notables as Mazo de la Roche, Ethel Wilson (not our Ethel Wilson—Vancouver's), U of A's Henry Kriesel (not to be confused with Henry Beissel), and, of course, the old reliables like Stephen Leacock, Morley Callaghan, and Hugh MacLennan. Twenty-three authors are represented with thirty-one stories, some of which are of about the same calibre as those which keep popping up in high school readers, but most of which are made of better stuff.

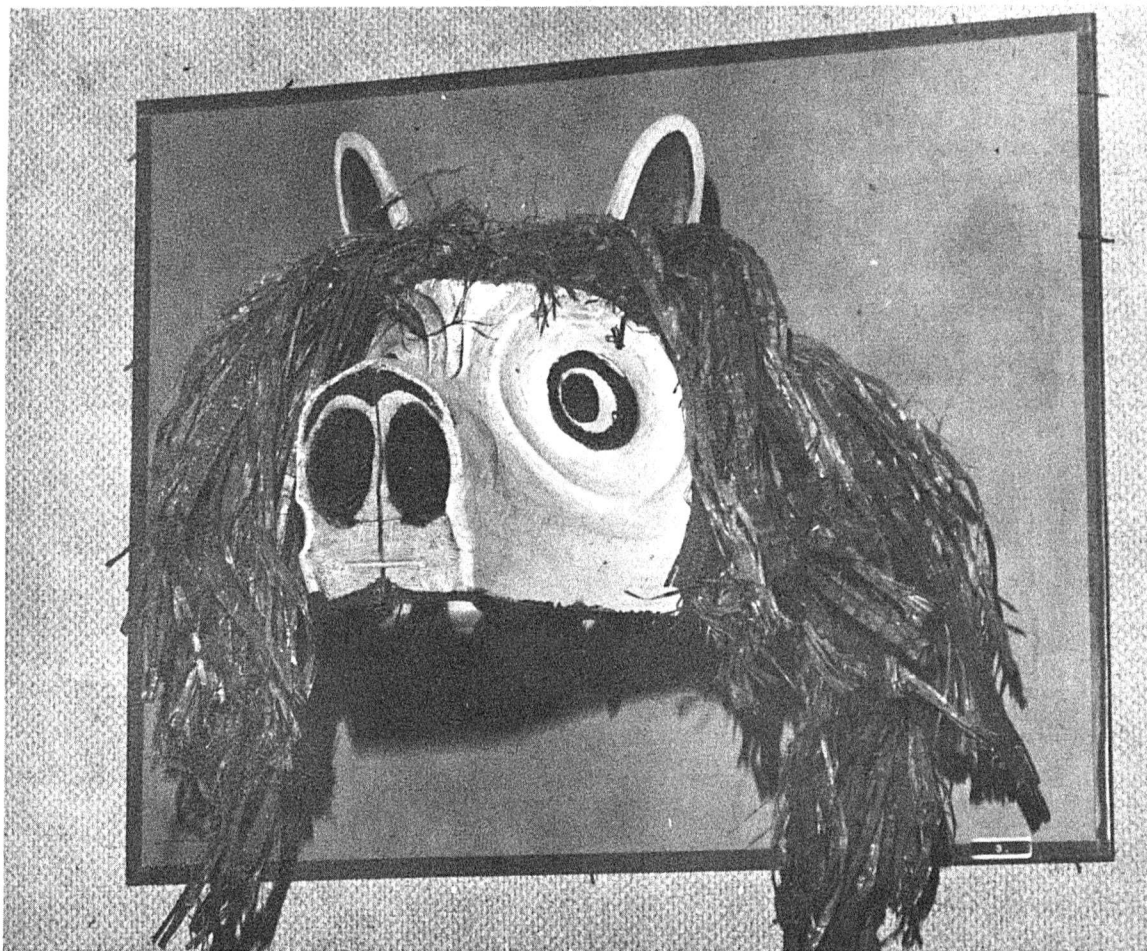
Earle Birney has written a short foreword in which he justifies the fact that a collection of Canadian stories should be edited by a couple of Italians.

The Introduction, written by said Italians, is a lengthy treatise on the authors included and on Canadian writing in general. It's kind of refreshing to see Canadian literature through the eyes of non-Canadian critics. They tend to take a more impartial and objective look at our fledgling culture. However, I must confess that the Introduction to this volume antagonized me somewhat. It had more bad things than good to say about the material presented, and made one or two rather injudicious remarks about the racial origins of certain of the writers. The whole thing is a bit high-handed but well worth reading if only for disagreement's sake.

A notable omission in this collection is the work of W. O. Mitchell, the dean of writers born in Saskatchewan, whose *Jake and the Kid* stories have probably been read by more people than any other body of Canadian fiction produced in the last few decades.

But we'll forgive that. It is one of the best anthologies to be had, even though you'll probably have to give up pizzas for three weeks to afford it.

—Terry Donnelly



—Forrest Bard photo
LOOKIT, PAW, LOOKIT, MAW, I'VE GOT A SHADOW FOR A JAW—This rough beast's hour has come at last at the Fine Arts Gallery, where an exhibition of Indian masks is being held. The gallery is open from 7 to 9 p.m. week-nights, and is situated across from the Arts Building on 112th Street.

Con Hall goes batty for Alice

*Twinkle, twinkle, little bat,
How I wonder what you're at.*

These lines from Lewis Carroll were startlingly brought to life last week at Culture 500's presentation of *The Other Side of the Looking-Glass* last week.

Just as the Kaleidoscope Players were enacting the sequence from *Alice in Wonderland* where Alice is musing on the nature and diet of bats and cats, a bat flew out from some dark corner of Convocation Hall and began doing aerial acrobatics over a surprised and very

amused audience.

It was purely coincidental, and turned out to be the high point of the evening. An absolutely superb script was given a rather poor interpretation by the Kaleidoscope Players, who gave the impression

that they were bored by the whole thing. Bill Fegan turned in a few good performances as Humpty Dumpty and the White Queen, but the other three members lacked professionalism and proper diction.

—Terry Donnelly



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