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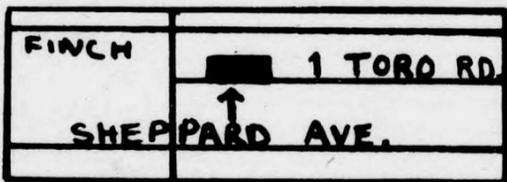
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Swollen suburbia

Elliott Lefko

It's 10:30 p.m. and two members of Swollen Members and myself are sitting in Stong residence listening to CFNY's Great Ontario Talent Search.

The rules call for groups without a record contract to send their tapes in and two tapes are chosen to play-off against each other each night. The winners keep going until they've been knocked out.

Swollen Members had been winners for three nights and judging by the competition tonight, an out-of-place folkie by the name of John Green, it looked like it was going to be four nights.

I asked lead singer Evan Siegel if he felt this was a victory for his group. "Not really, we just got our friends to phone in enough," he replied frankly.

You mean that it is fixed, I asked? "Well, why leave it to chance?" he reasoned.

But what will you get out of it? I wondered. "The airtime. Just to



Members worship false idols.

keep the candle burning I guess." Swollen Members are Sandy McFadyen on guitar, Grant Matthews on bass, Dave Richardson on drums and Rob on Keyboards. They've been around the Toronto music scene since 1976 when they used to wear pink leisure suits and sunglasses.

Siegel calls Swollen Members "high-energy, minimalism. Actually anti-sound."

McFadyen notes that the band that was onceso bad that they were good, has actually learned how to play.

Siegel dismisses any knock against his group's suburban origins with the observation that where it was once cool to be from the streets, it's now 'in' to be a suburbanite. *Touche*.

Swollen Members will be performing tonight in Stong's JCR

Books...

Spear's dreambats

Peter Robinson

Silks, by Roberta Spear. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980. \$4.95.

In her first book of poems, *Silks*, Roberta Spear creates a world both private and accessible; private because her attention is inwardly-directed, yet accessible because of the insights and perceptions she discovers.

Many of the poems take place on the borderline between waking and dreaming, but Spear usually manages to focus clearly on what she wants to present. In the first poem, "Building a Small House", for example, she describes a dream about carpenters then appears to stand back and consider it:

*I can't understand
how these men keep
themselves in my dream.*

*I refuse to be the nail
that holds this place together.*

Later, waking is a vaguely disturbing experience:

*Our imperfections
show up now—blotches
like rusty nails,
knots bored in sleep.*

Not all the poems take place in that world, however. Several concern animals—"The Bat" and "In the Wind" are good examples—and some relate events in a sparse narrative style, like "The Wake". "A Sale of Smoke" seems to centre on a young Asian prostitute and ends quite startlingly:

*She tries to squeeze the life
back into her nipples,
"When I dry up I'll break a jug*

*over the last fucker's head."
Her fire has already started.*

The book's faults stem from the same source as its strengths. Spear is often too contrived and insistent in her other-worldliness. Images of clouds, smokes, mist and shadow predominate and she is all too ready to make metaphors and symbols of everyday things. In "The Festival of Fatima", for example, a fishing-boat's nets are "falling from side to side/like the Virgin's veils" and a little later the hem of a priest's white skirt is "like a giant sail". The similes are certainly in context but seem, nevertheless, a bit overworked.

Silks is not likely to take the poetry world by storm but, in its quiet way, it has about it a freshness and quality of perception that make it a worthwhile read.

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APPLICATION DEADLINE:

FEBRUARY 1

ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS:

APRIL 1

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or from the graduate program director of the program to which the candidate is applying.