

"A Sad Ballad"

(George Bain, former Ottawa Editor of the *Toronto Globe and Mail*)

In places quite as north, I'm sure, as here
The air grows warm and happy children sing,
The grass, long-hidden, starts to re-appear,
The dogwood blooms, the songbird's on the wing;
How lovely; what a soul-restoring thing
To see all nature bud, and bloom, and grow,
The sun is back, farewell to winter's ting
—And here we woke once more to falling snow.

In places less recalcitrant and queer,
Less out-of-joint and downright ding-a-ling,
The sights alone this gladsome time of year
Would justify a monumental fling,
Mimosa, gold enough for any king,
And cherry-trees with lace all burdened low,
Anemones in shades to beggar Ming
—And here we woke once more to falling snow.

And what is more, what virile sounds to hear—
The 'click' that greets the golfer's proper swing,
Or else that sound the baseball fan holds dear,
That wood-on-leather, homer, sort of ring,
That tight, high sound of tennis, almost 'ping',
The 'thock' of bowling balls that meet just so,
The sound that days of sunshine always bring
—And here we woke once more to falling snow.

Envoi

Oh, Prince who's good, oh, Prince to whom we
cling,
Proclaim the truth, intone it soft and low,
"The world, the whole damn world, is bathed in
spring"
—And here we woke once more to @#\$\$% /#
Snow.

"April"

(From *A Suit of Nettles* by James Reaney)

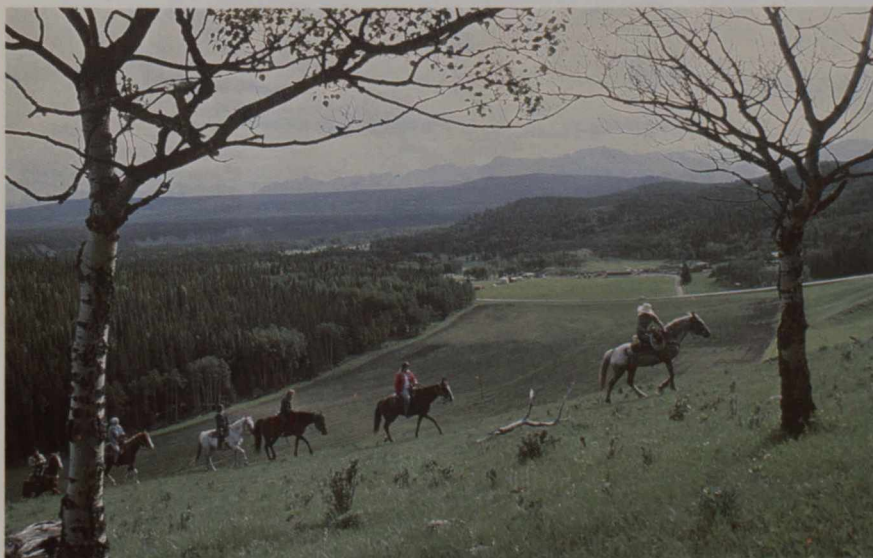
Your limbs are the rives of Eden.
From the dead we see you return and arise,
Fair girl, lost daughter:
The swallows stream through the skies,
Down dipping water,
Skimming ground, and from chimney's foul dusk
Their cousins the swifts tumble up as the
tusk of roar day
in bright May
Scatters them gliding from darkness to
sun-crisp.

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When the Ice Worms Nest Again

There is a worm of the Oligochaeta family that lives on ice fields, but the one encountered most frequently in the Yukon is a fraud. He is served to summer visitors in cocktails and is usually a bit of spaghetti with an eye painted on it. Robert W. Service's novel *The Trail of '98* has one character telling another that he'll meet her when the ice worms nest again. There is also a folk song of obscure origin which has a chorus that promises: "In the land of the pale blue snow/where it's ninety-nine below/And the polar bears are roaming o'er the plain/In the shadow of the Pole/I will clasp her to my soul;/we'll be married when the ice worms nest again."

The nestings take place in the spring, of course, in time for the tourists.



Ghost River, Alberta.