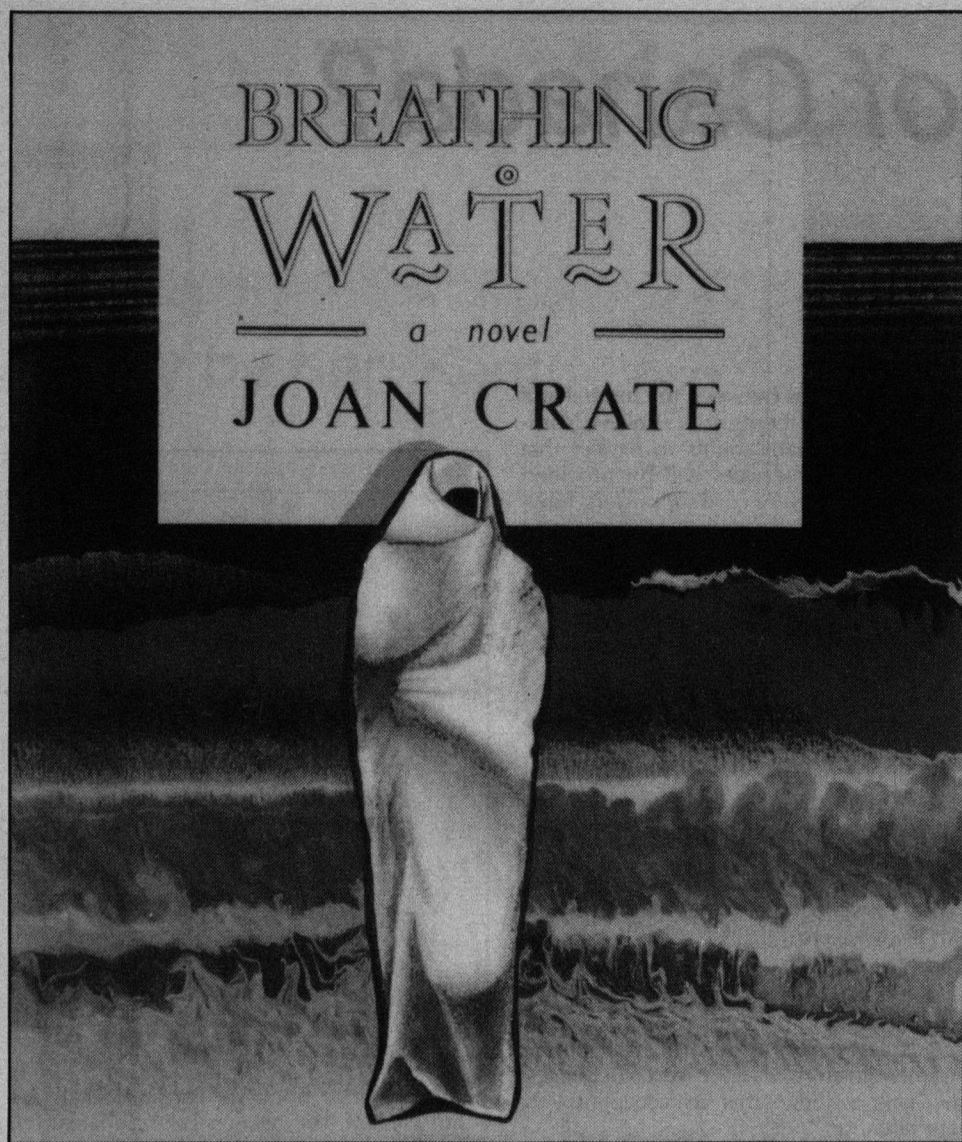


Crate's first novel a success



Breathing Water
By Joan Crate
Nunatak Fiction/NeWest Publishers Limited

review by Perry Gereluk

Breathing Water is Joan Crate's first attempt at a full-length novel after many successful poems and short stories. She proves herself to be a truly extraordinary novelist with this book.

Crate was born in the Northwest Territories and has lived all over Western Canada. She attended the University of Calgary where she graduated with an honours BA and went on to write her master's thesis. Her prolific writings have won her several awards. She is currently living in Calgary and has three children, a fourth on its way.

Dione, the main character in *Breathing Water*, is a woman who feels that her life has a deeper meaning than the stifling day-to-day work of a housewife. Her husband and his oppressive mother cast a domineering shadow over her as she tries to do her best to be the quintessential wife and mother. She is consumed with finding and understanding more fully her story-telling father. In between taking care of her husband and baby, she partakes in many fantastic adventures in hope of finding the answers to her questions.

Crate is truly an expressive writer. When

reading *Breathing Water*, I couldn't help feeling a sense of hopelessness towards Dione's situation. This is mostly due to her refreshing style of writing — a first person, rambling kind of style that I found a pleasure to read. At times, the written page of *Breathing Water* does not seem to be a medium for Crate, but rather a direct channel to her heart and soul. The plot is thin, but this isn't a problem, as the main vehicle of this book is Dione's unique character. It is spiced well with wit and keeps a good pace throughout.

Breathing Water has a couple of trivial problems. Her writing is overdone sometimes. It is mired with metaphors and descriptions, disrupting the flow of it. Secondly, Dione's sexuality is your run-of-the-mill 'contemporary woman' escapism. Affairs with various types of men, real and imagined, is terribly stale. With the creativity of Crate and the dynamic character of Dione, you would figure they would come up with something a little more original between the two of them. These points, however, are inconsequential and take little away from her work.

There will be a reading today (Thursday Nov. 9) at 3:30 p.m. in the Humanities building, room L3. After, there will be a book launching at Common Woman Books (8724-109 Street) from 7 to 9 p.m.

The Gateway

is looking for help.

We need people who are interested in the campus: politics, the arts, sports, student life. If you are reasonably capable in English or French, can take photos, draw, or do graphic design, we have a job for you. Drop by Room 282 SUB during office hours, and ask for an editor.

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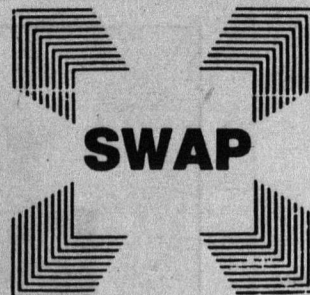
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