



*Emergence, Guido Molinari, oil on canvas, 26" X 21", 1955, collection of the artist.*

vice — the story is about four young people, Canadians all, who are in greater or lesser degree, victims: the nameless heroine, her lover, Joe, and their married friends, David and Anna. They go to a remote cabin on a lake in northern Quebec to search for the heroine's father, a botanist, who has simply disappeared. The father is found, dead, and the four find and resent each other. The heroine begins, in her psyche, to find and understand her lost parents and her aborted child and the Indian spirits of the lake. The heroine, whose name may be legion, is first concerned with "the disease . . . spreading up from the south", which is killing more than the white birches.

Toward the end she goes mad for awhile, or, to put it another way, she abandons what the 1970's define as sanity. Finally she surfaces, "This above all, to refuse to be a victim. Unless I can do that I can do nothing. I have to recant, give up the old belief that I am powerless and because of it nothing I can do will ever hurt anyone. . ."

LET US ASSUME there is such a thing as Canadian literature and leave it for the moment and consider Canadian art. William Withrow, in *Contemporary Canadian Painting*, McClelland & Stewart, \$25, sees important Canadian art as both real and recent and abstract: "The first Biennial of Canadian Painting was staged by the National Gallery in 1955 and was dominated by traditional figurative painting. The second, only two years



*Above, Nature Mixes, Joyce Wieland, oil on canvas, 12" X 16", 1963, Mr. Udo Kasements' Collection, Toronto. Below, Truck Stop, Alex Colville, acrylic polymer emulsion on masonite, 35" X 36", 1966, Peter Ludwig & Wallraf-Richartz Museum.*

later, was more than sixty percent abstract."

Mr. Withrow's book, an extraordinary one with page after page of beautiful color, shows the selected works of twenty-four contemporary Canadian painters — "contemporary" meaning active since 1945.

For those outside (or inside) Canada who were assured that The Group of Seven, the celebrated art-nouveau landscapists, were the dernier cri from the North, this is a beautiful revelation. Mr. Withrow has chosen fully and well. The twenty-four together have made Canada graphically respectable.

They are certainly Canadian artists, but Mr. Withrow spoils it all by saying their product is not Canadian art. "If I were to enter a room filled with artists from many nations, including the 24 Canadians in this book, I feel sure that I could pick them out of the crowd . . . but if I was faced with the same challenge in terms of