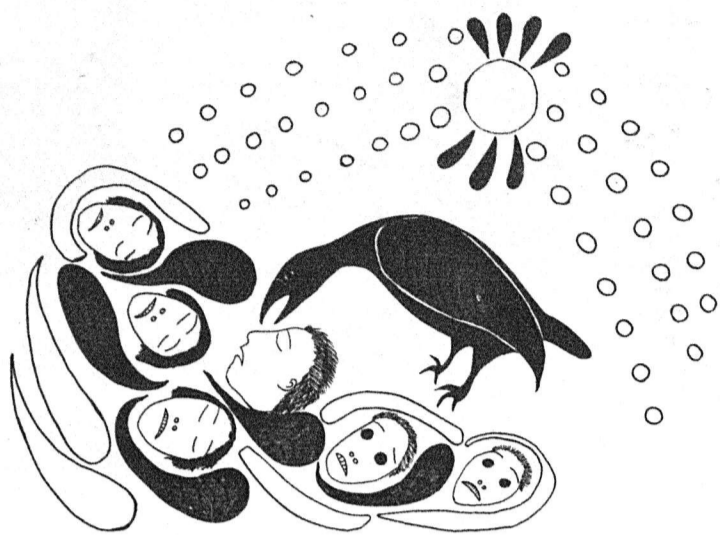


books:

tales from the igloo

(Fitzhenry Whiteside Ltd., 1972)
(edited by J. McDonald
and J. MacDonald)
\$1.95



In his forward, Al Purdy describes 'an old shaman/storyteller in an ancient igloo or a modern prefab house' telling tales in which 'fact and legend merge and become myth.' He is letting us off easy. These stories have the precision and power of the kind of myth Camus was referring to when he described mythmaking as the natural reflex of man confronted with a disordered existence. It is his attempt to inform chaos by his perception of basic patterns.

The reason people tend to deride myths today as fictitious and untrue, is that the watered down walt-disney-ed myths we have been weaned on demonstrate an overly settled order. Who could trust such a simple view? These myths are real. They show man against a very uncompromising environment, not man set in a pathetic pastoral where there is a good fairy behind each tree and the sun always shines and food is always abundant, at least for the morally upright. The teller of these TALES FROM THE IGLOO is aware of the undefinable ambiguity of existence.

Without sounding facetious I would describe this book as having real 'Canadian Content'. Father Metayer has edited a selection of the stories of the Copper Eskimos who live along the shores of the Arctic Ocean. There are tales of hunters and tales of animals, but basic to them all is a theme of man's confrontation with a hostile wilderness. It is, of course, a cliché of Can. Lit. Every Great Canadian Novel has its token snow storm. Here the image of man in a cold environment is much more primal. Sometimes he lives in accord with his world, able to catch enough fish, hunt

enough animals. At other times the universe is against him. The shaman is not always successful. Even then it is a matter of a long and bitter struggle. Sometimes the shaman's spells backfire-as do any attempts to control nature.

Most of the fairy tales my father read to me were based on the puritan work ethic. These tales are based on a much more primal struggle for survival and the hard-working characters do not always succeed. When held against the clear reality of these tales the old dichotomy between the grasshopper and the ant or the hare and tortoise are revealed as shabby little romances. There are shamans to intervene occasionally but the overall tone is not of a protected other-world where none of the matter-of-fact rules of life hold true. The weather is the great enemy here but it is not a force of overt animosity just of harsh neutrality. It is not moral virtue but sheer wit that defines the winners. The two stories of Kajartoq, the red fox, and one of the raven describe despicable characters as winners. Both are mafia-type manipulators. I kept waiting for one of their victims to develop enough insight to comprehend their situation and rise and kill them with the strength that usually comes of moral indignation. Instead, the story ends grotesquely. Kajartoq dances while eating a friend and the raven 'amused himself by emptying the eye sockets of those who had innocently followed his directions.'

To describe the effect of each of these tales would produce a regular paper and it would not be as concise and powerful as those tales themselves. The style Father Metayer has chosen is clear and precise. It is this clear precision

in the description of such mythic actions in such a bleak land that gives the tales their power. The prose does not have the halting uneasiness of a transliterated text but there does remain a bustling foreign aspect in the language. It is sufficiently poetic to build its own world as any fairy tale should. The accompanying pictures by Agnes Nanogak of Holman Island do more than illustrate the text. They are expressions of the whole psychological tone of the tales-- bright colors on a stark whitebackdrop. Terri Moore

santana

Amazingly enough this one happened to start only seven minutes late, which, as most Edmonton band concert goers know, is not usual.

The first band started playing and out of nowhere pops Freddie King, bouncing smiling, and looking as if everyone should recognize him and respond with enthusiastic applause. But not too many people in the gardens had ever heard of Freddie King, and showed him that he had to earn their applause. And that he did.

Freddie King, a blues guitarist from Dallas, Texas is a showman and performs with more than adequate ability, grinding out those blues licks and runs which give some guitarists trouble. Backed by four excellent musicians from all over the United States, he took us through a world of Blues, his style, a style which is not as boring as most 12 bar blues tends to be. Besides King's excellent showmanship, the group had other big pluses: their all around tightness, and well practiced dynamics. Dynamics, the art of knowing when to turn down or up in a piece of music, have been mistreated and sometimes absolutely excluded from many groups today. The group was able to build up to a shattering climax and then cut down to a fraction of the volume, leaving the audience somewhat bewildered, but basically pleased.

The audience showed their appreciation, calling for an encore and giving him a long, loud round of applause.

Next came a band who did not need to prove anything (and they knew it too), a band with an incredible reputation--(they did not live up to it).

Only three members of the original Santana are still with the group: the drummer, the man on the steel drums, and, of course, Carlos Santana, the lead guitarist. The change in style (mainly in the keyboards area) was hopelessly evident.

stompin' Tom

The crowd at the Sales Pavilion last Friday evening was hardly reminiscent of the sideshow groups who once assembled there to see the Warp Factor, and my companion and I felt conspicuously out of place. On this occasion the pavilion was filled with Real Canadian Country Music Lovers.

The most outstanding thing about Stompin' Tom is his absolute authenticity. He is what I would call a grass roots Canadian; his songs tell true stories about the land, the people, and the Canadian way of life. Sure, it gets a bit corny sometimes, but that's part of what country music is all about.

Conners is, of course, tall and rangy, and wears a big, black cowboy hat. The hat is probably acceptable only because he has won two consecutive awards for Top Canadian Male Vocalist in Country Music.

At the concert, Tom played most of his hits (you have to listen to CFCW, Camrose, to be up on these) including 'Bud the Spud' and 'The Tomato Ketchup Song'. As well, he played the old Hank Snow standard 'I've Been Everywhere' and a priceless

parody of 'Green Green Grass Home', which is also sung by Connors put it, 'the other Tom

The audience was a more subdued than I expected but everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves, especially Tom, who indulged in frequent large gulps of 'Skinners Pot Lightning'.



Stompin' Tom has, to my knowledge, seven albums to date, four of them having earned him gold records. He may not be a great Canadian hero, but he is an important element of contemporary national culture. T. Taylor

encore number), but between the changes it was all jumbled up. This could've been partially due to the sound balance. Unfortunately the percussion was tremendously loud, and the keyboards and guitar only voice in the distance.

Two men comprising the keyboard section, changing back and forth from electric piano, to organ. They had great ability, but unfortunately could not duplicate the original Santana sound, each of them retaining their own distinct styles.

The bass guitarist showed less promise than if he was playing bass fiddle in a grade five music class.

They did get called back for an encore, but it was more for their reputation, than for their performance here Thursday night.

Josh Miller

poems

I could suck you up
through a straw
the way sunflowers suck up
the sun
but then
I'd be the only one
and I'd be lonely.

A Visit
I kept thinking we were like suns in partial eclipse,
Half of our sentences were so bright and sunny,
The others lay unspoken in the dark.

I kept hoping someone would tear off the patch from his
left eye, so we could really look at each other.

But all afternoon we were as brittle as dry grass in the fields
and when the sun went down, we went home
and nothing was said
except that nothing would ever be said.

Sylvia Ridgley

