

## Layton's Collected Poems are larger than life

*The Collected Poems of Irving Layton*  
McClelland and Stewart (1972)  
\$14.95 hardback

Every once in a while there occur instances in which form reflects content, and I confess that I'm delighted to encounter these; so it is with this collection, a volume which overwhelms the reader by its sheer size in much the same way as Layton's poetry impresses one with the scope and sweep of the poet's imagination. Yet, like this book with its page of errata, Layton's collected poems themselves contain what I would call careless mistakes which, like the misprints themselves, should never have been printed.

The book reminds one of Layton physically as well, the poet in his purple leather suit comes to read his poetry with his hair in his eyes and not taking any shit from his audience, either, just reading what seems to strike his fancy at the time from among the seven hundred or so poems at his disposal. That is the chief problem with this collection, that it contains everything, the good and the bad of Layton's poetry hopelessly intermingled so that from the peak of say, "Berry Picking", we glance across the page and down and observe a less-than-mediocre poem like "Done on Both Sides". Certainly all poets write inconsequential poems, but from our heroic figures we demand perfect records and flawless choice. Of course, one should bear in mind that this book represents "collected" poems; Layton's *Selected Poems* (1969) contain the best of his life's work to date. If, as Layton says in the Foreword to this new collection, "My country has been an immense tree...from which I plucked hundreds of poems or waited confidently under its boughs for them to fall like ripe fruit into my open lap", then Layton's harvest should be subject to grading for quality before being released to the public.

But then it's easy to knock established tradition, more difficult to define that which is excellent; we should not deny the fact that when Layton is good, he is very, very good. He is one of two poets writing in Canada today who have what I would call a genuine, unrestrained and unforced sense of humor; his range of subjects is astonishing, for he seems to find a way of expressing a new perspective on almost everything he sees or experiences, he never

seems to express contempt for any human being - his wrath is always tempered by pity, and in the forty or so poems in which all these qualities are combined, we have poetry which will be read long after Layton has ceased to produce poems like those to be found in another recent collection, *Nail Polish*, which contains some of the worst poems I have ever read.

Earlier this year I sat in on a somewhat well-lubricated conversation between an older, established Canadian poet and a younger, hipper, just-published-in-book-form-and-feeling-his-oates Canadian poet in which the subject of Irving Layton and his place in the poetry scene came up. "Yeah, he's done some good things in his time, but he oughta sit back and let the younger guys have a say, y'know..." said the young/hip. "Look, if it wasn't for Layton having the guts to stand up against the tea and sonnet poetry that was popular in this country a few years ago, and do it *alone*, you guys wouldn't be able to get away with the things you do today. You owe him an audience..." replied older/established. Both these statements are over-generalized, but I tend to agree somewhat with the latter; no-one owes anybody an audience, however if that were the case Irving Layton would have earned his long ago. *The Collected Poems* is, like the man himself, larger than life, and so it is that the flaws appear to be exaggerated; but as for "sitting back and letting the younger guys have a say", well, let's hope not, for there are damn few who will ever be able to fill his place without rattling around inside the Layton myth like a pea in a whistle.

by Sid Stephen



Hi, folks: Your Friendly Arts Editor, here. I had a space to fill on this page so I thought you might like to see a shot from our last staph meeting. As you can see, we're a dedicated bunch (although Editor Beal, shown in flowing robes, is not usually so sombre). Anyway, why don't you come to the Gateway this afternoon at 3:30 and see for yourself. We're trying out some new carbines. . . .

### TEACHERS WANTED 1972-73

THE CALGARY SCHOOL BOARD will interview applicants, who are presently enrolled at the University of Alberta, at The Student Placement Office from February 14 - 18.

Applications will be received from Teacher-Librarians, Music Specialists, and within the areas of Special Education, Business Education, Technical and Industrial - Vocational, Industrial Arts, and Home Economics.

For application forms and interview appointments, contact:

Canada Manpower Centre  
Student Placement Office  
University of Alberta  
Box 854, Telephone 432 - 4291.



## 6 East European films to be shown

Films from eastern European countries are a rarity in Edmonton due to linguistic, geographic and often political reasons. And although the cultural background of many Edmontonians relates to these countries, no commercial theatre could profitably include these films in its program. Fortunately, there are non commercial film outlets which can provide specialized audiences with films for short periods of time; example: the third series of the Edmonton Film Society.

The series features five films, one each from Poland, Hungary and the U.S.S.R. plus two from Czechoslovakia. All will be screened in the language of their country of origin but will be accompanied with English subtitles, thus widening their audience beyond specific cultural groups. All have been acclaimed by European audiences and critics, and by North American viewers at film festivals and special showings.

A Polish film begins the series on February 2. *THE PASSENGER* concerns the problem of a German who is forced by a chance encounter with a Polish woman to recall their relationship at Auschwitz. 'The most explicit film yet made about the psychology in the Nazi death camps.' Feb. 9 brings one of the popular Czech

films, *EVERYONE A GOOD FELLOW COUNTRYMAN* directed by Voltech Jasny in 1969. The film shows a small town losing its traditional face during revolution. Next, a Russian film from 1927, *BED AND SOFA* dealing in a comic manner with the new society's effect on the ordinary person and family. The only silent film in the series, this is also the only film made prior to 1960. The following Wednesday, Feb. 23, will feature *THE RED AND THE WHITE* a Hungarian film directed by Miklos Jancos. Here, the aftermath of the Russian Revolution finds some Hungarian members of the Red Army fleeing from the Whites. A famous Czech film ends the series on March 1. *THE FIFTH HORSEMAN IS FEAR* is directed by Zybnek Brynych, hailed as one of the best directors we have by the New York Times. Dealing with the tenants of a house in Prague during the Nazi rise, the film has a message which "seems so well taken and inspiring that it is odd that it should work at all these neurotically sceptical, morally inert times."

All films begin at 7:00 on Wednesdays in TL-11 in the Tory Building on Campus. Series membership is \$5.00; individual films may be viewed for \$1.50 each. Tickets will be available at the door each evening.

## Film extravaganza

Did you ever conceive of your humble little Students Union Building as being able to present anything of worth? In its wildest imaginings could your humble little mind see the Art Gallery showing two displays from the National Film Board-Steel Photography Division?

Well, prepare for adrenaline shock. Starting on the 7th, the Gallery will contain (barely): "Photography in Canada" (20 prints) and "Les Motards" (Motorcycles) by Ronald Labelle.

The film programming projected involves new NFB releases showing from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. on the following dates: Feb. 8, 10, 15, 27, 22, 24, 29th. On February 16 comes a special program of locally made films at 8 p.m. But glad tidings are not restricted to the Art Gallery - Oh, no - the Students' Union Theatre is sharing inspiration, too.

Their part in the "Film in Canada" program (which this article, if you haven't guessed, is about) involves a lot of fine material. In order, it follows: Sunday-February 13th - 8 p.m. The premiere of the film "Jablonski" with subject Marek Jablonski, well known concert pianist. Both Mr. Jablonski and Reevean Dolgoy, the film's director, will be present to discuss following the show. Tuesday - February 15th - 8 p.m. A program of films by Alan King. Thursday - February 17th - 8 p.m. A public forum with Peter Morris, curator of Canadian Film Archives, on the history of Canadian film. Monday - February 21 - 8 p.m. A program of film - some of the 1971 Canadian Film Awards. Tuesday-February 22 - 8 p.m. A public discussion with Gerald Pratley, a man with just incredible credentials, on film in Canada. Monday - February 28 - 8 p.m. A public forum with speaker G. C. Adams Executive officer of the Canadian Film Development Corporation, on the role of the Corporation in attempting to create a uniquely Canadian film industry. Tuesday-February 29 - 8 p.m. A public screening of National Film Board releases directed by Bill Mason. His excellent films include "Blake", "Paddle to the Sea", "Rise and Fall of the Great Lakes", and the haunting "Death of a Legend."

Hopefully you read the menu with gusto without becoming glutted on its richness. We can only await "Film in Canada" with bated breath and slavoring minds.

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