





# Amor 6

This is the sixth issue of the Amor de Cosmos People's Memorial Quasirevolutionary Susanzine, otherwise known as "Formerly Bill Smith" after the first premier of British Columbia.

AMOR is produced for friends, relatives, and people to whom I owe letters by Susan Wood, #12-2920 Victoria Ave., Regina, Sask. S4T 1K7. Please note the enclosed COA notice; as of the end of June, mail should go to the Department of English, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W5.

This issue is also a postmailing to FAPA mailing #151.

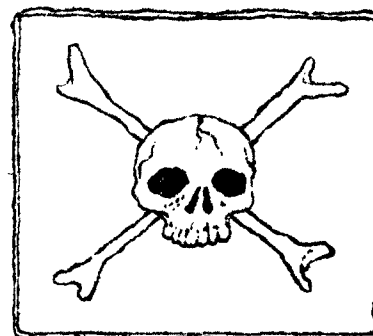
Thanks to Eli Cohen for mimeograph assistance, Mike Glicksohn and Brian McCarthy for electrostencils, and Humphrey and the Dumptrucks for background music.

\* \* \* \* \*

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SHULL  
1-23-75



At Discon II, I rode on a merry-go-round. On Capitol Hill.

It was Eney's fault.

So is the cover. It's a portrait taken by Jim Saklad, with Dick Eney's camera, printed by Eney, of me-on-Monday-at-the-worldcon, after winning a Hugo and liberating the pool at 6am and not sleeping for, it seemed, several weeks. It sums up fairly accurately my four weeks Back East: meeting Marvellous Mae; being hosted by the hospitable Gillilands (Alexis, Doll, Charles, and Tybalt-who-let-me-tread-on-him); meeting old friends (and in the usual worldcon-ritual, never getting to talk with them); being egoboosted by Tim Marian as I registered, Forry Ackerman as the con and I wound down, and a cast-of-thousands in between; flitted about as a dryad under Sandra Miesel's expert marshalling; watched Tucker smo-o-o-th and Leigh Edmonds produce bleeps from Synthia the synthesizer; sold alot of Aussiecon memberships; and on and on, until suddenly I was clambering out of Brian McCarthy's car at Kennedy and handing luggage to a porter who said "Isn't that a Hugo?"

Somehow, it all seems more real, still, than the two semesters of teaching I've just finished.

\* \* \* \* \*  
They're jealous, those other Canadians who come for a holiday, so they lie about British Columbia, mock it, misinterpret it and concoct outrageous myths about the Promised Province. They say it's so backward that B.C. must stand for Before Christ. That people don't tan in Vancouver, they rust. That the province has three legendary monsters: the Sasquatch in the mountains, Ogopogo in Lake Okanagan and Dave Barrett in Victoria....

\* You have to be a duck to live here with all this rain. It's that sort of thing-- exactly. The tourists traipse in each summer and before they have time to unpack their mackintosh and galoshes, they're saying "It rains like hell here, doesn't it?" They say it seriously, as if they've discovered insulin, or wittily, wondering when the webs will start sprouting between their toes, or subtly, observing that all the buildings sure look clean....

\* The mountains are nice, say the wheat farmers from Weyburn, but they make you feel all hemmed in-- trapped. The mountains are not nice: they are immense, immovable, inspiring and, if they must be described in one syllable, grand.

\* The mountains are even invoked to take the name of Vancouver in vain, as in Get rid of the mountains and what have you got? Regina. This sacrilege is usually spoken by a Montrealer who has been here eight hours and has never set foot in Regina.

--Paul Grescoe, THE CANADIAN MAGAZINE--

\* On the subject of climate, all Vancouverites are shameless, brazen, unblinking liars.

\* The climate in Vancouver is terrible. The rains begin at the beginning of September. They continue virtually unbroken until the end of the following August. Then nature's inexorable cycle repeats itself, and another year's growth of of moist green moss begins growing on everyone's hair.

--Donald Cameron, WEEKEND MAGAZINE--

\* \* \* \* \*  
Since September, I've been to the other side of the continent--twice. In January Lynne Dollis watched in amusement as I made small whimpering noises in bookstores, bounced up and down saying "OOOH, mountains!" snapped chopsticks at slippery prawns-with-cashews, shivered (it was the first time I'd worn a dress since world-con, and my legs were cold), and generally tried not to let my mind dwell on how much I wanted the job at UBC.

In late February, safely employed, I flew back to Vancouver for the fourth V-Con. What could be more fannish than a little jaunt of 1600 miles over winter break for a convention? In fact, I excused it to myself on "business" grounds. Seeing crocuses and visiting the Stanley Park zoo were necessary to my mental health in a Regina midwinter. Besides, I actually travelled out to UBC with Lynne, at some ungodly hour, nagging her because she's in law school and shouldn't waste time entertaining guests. I saw my new department head, got some booklists, filled out personal forms, looked up a few obscure first-edition references in the shadowy sub-basements of the library, and discovered there were actually a few department members who hadn't grilled me in that memorable 6-hour interview.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Humans expect dogs to agree with them. This is why so many people keep dogs. Dogs are famous for agreeability, and most of us are desperate most of the time in our need to be agreed with. So we acquire dogs, and the

\* dogs sit around with their tongues out pretending to smile and showing us in every possible way what splendid people we are. Cats will not do this. Cats have too much dignity. When a man does something foolish, no cat will hang his tongue out in a loving smile and tell the man he is a splendid fellow. The cat simply looks at the man with contempt, demands to be fed, then tells the man to get out of the armchair because he, the cat, wants to lie down there, and goes to sleep. Cats, in fact, behave this way even when a man does something noble. A man who keeps a cat is constantly reminded that gratitude is short-lived, that the important things in life are regular meals and periodic bouts of love, and that in the end, no matter how well things seem to be going, there will always be cat hairs on your blue suit.

--from Richard Needham's column, THE GLOBE & MAIL--

\* \* \* \* \*

One of the English department people I hadn't met was Ron Johnston, the co-ordinator of second-year classes. (The department has 100 or so members, and a lot of classes.) Would I please see him about my two sections of intro-to-Canlit? I found his office and knocked. Someone barked.

Barked?

A large, dirty-white sheepdog thrust her nose round the door, sniffed, decided to trust me, and proceeded to shed hair all over my dark-green coat. A larger companion joined her. Behind the quivering mass, a large blue-jeaned man yelled: "Sit!" I sat.

Ron turned out to be an amiable, if deliberately-iconoclastic sort, who chatted about class sizes and marking schemes and required texts and suchlike, while his fur rugs snored. As I rose to leave, brushing off hair, he said: "By the way, what are you doing here? You're not supposed to be here til July."

"Oh, I'm here for a conference," I explained. He looked bored. I decided to see if he (like most academics) would also look patronizing, or contemptuous. "On science fiction," I added.

"It's this weekend? Where?" So I told him the relevant details; and he told me that UBC was planning to introduce an sf course, probably in 1976. This surprised me, since the interview had had the usual you-do-do-serious-work-not-that-scifi-nonsense-ha-ha slant I'd come to expect from job interviews. I told him I'd like to teach it; that I was qualified to do so. He looked dubious. I rose to go, brushing off hair.

"A lot of people want to teach that class. You came all the way from Regina for this conference-- just what's your special interest in sf?"

I slouched against the doorframe, trying to look nonchalant. "Oh," I said, "I have two Hugos."

"What? What are you doing for lunch?"

So we trotted across campus at a fast sheepdog clip, bundled the dogs into his station wagon, and had shrimp and white wine and conversation, looking out over the Japanese garden, in the exotic white-tablecloth-and-uniformed-flunkys atmosphere of the Faculty Club. (I kept expecting that a lackey would sense my pinko past and say "Excuse me, but you don't belong here.")

I'm still brushing white hairs off my coat...

\* \* \* \* \*  
There's always a fight out in Calgary,  
\* Vancouver, it always rains...

--Ian Tyson, "The Great Canadian Tour"--

\* Anybody who has friends in Vancouver knows they take a little getting used to. \*  
\* Many of them will brag before they say hello. At the Ottawa airport last \*  
\* weekend a woman in a pale blue summer suit, arriving on a flight from Van- \*  
\* couver, typified the visiting Vancouverite. After her dash from the air- \*  
\* craft to the terminal, without a coat, she reached the entrance and stopped \*  
\* to pull a yellow daffodil out of paper wrap. Then she made her way through \*  
\* the second set of doors and into the lobby where friends or family were \*  
\* waiting. Before she reached them, she stopped, hugged herself and shivered \*  
\* a little more than necessary. Then before she hugged or kissed anybody, \*  
\* she extended the yellow flower, beamed, and said: "From my garden this \*  
\* morning!" Only then did the hugging and hello-ing start. The Ottawa people \*  
\* welcomed her without a trace of envy or sarcasm. It takes a little something \*  
\* extra to be an Ottowan.

--from the "Below the Hill" column in the OTTAWA JOURNAL--

\* \* \* \* \*  
I am now a Vancouverite.

I bought an umbrella.

I had to. Rick Mikkelson's basic black broolly threw out its spokes and committed suicide out of sheer frustration as I set off down Robsonstrasse with Eli in search of chocolate and cheese for him, books for me, and Murchies' coffee and tea for a variety of friends-- I felt like a missionary on leave back home, bearing civilization's comforts (a vegetable steamer, the February GALAXY) back to some Outpost of Empire.

We also Consumed. Food, that is. If you ignore the one good restaurant, the pizza place and the Chinese grovery store, Regina is a culinary desert liberally greased with Macdonalds. (Mae Strelkov thinks Macdonalds and laundromats are the apex of Western civilization, but that, to me, says alot about Argentina; they're so behind the times, they still breathe clean air.) We devoured enough seafood to fill a large tank in the Stanley Park aquarium; we hiked past windows full of dried snakeskins and tigers' testicles into the shadows of Chinatown for more prawns-with-cashews and chicken-with-lemon and such; we enjoyed cannelloni as created by the superb Italian hef, Ricki di Mikkelsoni; we formed a fannish expedition to that V-Con landmark, the Schnitzle House, with Loren MacGregor ("Hey, Lorrie, the last time I had dinner with you was at the Chuan Hong. In New York." "Yeah, we must do this more often...") and David George and Pat Burrows and Lynne and Rick, all of whom must've been thoroughly confused by the fannish chatter ("And then Arnie said..."); and we finished up with pastries with the Barbours and Paul Novitski at the Mozart tearoom, in what is becoming a pleasant V-Con ritual. Nice holiday.

And, with Paul, we sampled oolicans and fiddelheads and bannock and (gingerly) wind-dried salmon at the Muck-a-Muck, a coast Indian restaurant we can try when all of you who've promised to visit me, do; we ate and were glad to have food, at least, as we listened to a depressed Bob Silverberg talk about the coming depression, and the present depression, and the stricken state of sf publishing, and the reasons his current sf novel would be his last.

I think we wanted to argue and protest and say high-minded nonsense about Art and Developing the Genre. We knew, though, that Bob was right. The Regina newstands are indeed flooded with Burroughs and Perry Rhodan and John Norman and brass breast-plates and space opera: all the sci-fi junk the publishers, desperate, have decided is What the Public Will Buy. DYING INSIDE is indeed packaged like mindless garbage, with a jellyfish-blob on the cover. So we sat and felt more depressed, and wondered uneasily how the fans would react to their GoH's gloom. And how soon our civilization would vanish.

The V-Con is a strange convention. There's an active local club of nice people who kept warning me about the apartment shortage; but they have very little contact with fandom-at-large. There were about 4000 locals who watched the movies and the panels, and vanished at night. Finally there were the diehard fan: Paul who drove 8 hours from Eugene, the Barbours who flew in from Edmonton (doug finally admitting he's a fan, Sharon looking a little puzzled still), and the Busbys and Broxons (including Sigmunda) and Dentons who arrived from Seattle. By day, we greeted each other with small cries of glee amid the sea of unfamiliar faces; we complained bitterly of sore throats, dubbing the occasion, prophetically, Virus-con; and, ignoring this, we talked and talked. By night we huddled together in the friendly, if crowded, warmth of the Dentons' room, and talked and talked. ("One thing about Susan, when she's around there aren't any awkward silences," Paul commented.) We talked to each other. We talked to the bemused locals. Frank Denton, Elinor Busby and I had our panel again, when we got to talk formally to the bemused locals about fandom. We talked fan. We talked Canlit. And occasionally, in that strange and disjointed convention, we talked at cross purposes, as I did with the depressed Mr. Silverberg, sir.

For some reason, whenever I see Bob Silverberg, I'm talking to someone else about Canlit. (This may be hard to arrange in Melbourne.) So we had parallel monologues about the undeniable problems of sf publishing and the depressing problems of once-bright Canadian publishing, with doug barbour assisting on electric lit-crit. (doug does a pretty good job of filling in awkward silences too; he's one of the few people who can actually out-talk me.) I was enjoying spring and snowlessness, free of snowboots and Woolfe, bouncing about babbling about feeding the birds and smelling the roses in Stanley Park. Meantime Silverberg in sandals --sandals!-- complained frequently and in detail about the wintry cold, and commented often on the beauty of his blooming fuschias. Different universes. I was feeling great, seeing my friends and trying to get used to the idea that I was going to live here, for years. Bob was feeling depressed and lonely, predicting a bleak future and not looking forward to it much. By Friday night, it was clear we were talking out of different worlds. By Sunday, we'd switched. The GoH was enthusiastically meeting his fans, and grinning, and looking positively cheerful as he handed in his resignation to the audience (who responded with intelligent comments, and egoboo, and unease.)

Me? I felt depressed.

And I hadn't even met the dybbuk.

\* \* \* \* \*  
The world has never been partial to the thinking woman-- the wise woman-- the  
\* wise ones have always forseen danger. Long years ago, when women asked for an \*  
education, the world cried out that it would never do. If women learned to read \*  
\* it would distract them from the real business of life which was to make home \*  
happy for some good man. If women learned to read there seemed to be a possi- \*  
\* bility that some day some good man might come home and find his wife reading, \*  
and the dinner not ready-- and nothing could be imagined more horrible than \*  
\* that! That seems to have been the haunting fear of mankind-- that the advance- \*  
ment of women will sometime, someday, someplace, interfere with some man's \*  
\* comfort. \*  
\* --Nellie McClung, IN TIMES LIKE THESE (1915); for Linda Lounsbury-- \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

Bob had read AMOR 5 before V-Con. He was delighted, he said, to see someone so enthusiastic and bouncy, but... "You haven't paid your dues, you know. They always come round collecting again."

Right. The Greeks called it hubris.

Monday morning, I contemplated snow, more snow, termpapers, more termpapers, a mid-term



exam to mark, and The Virus, all on four hours' sleep. "And please at least start to read HEART OF DARKNESS for tomorrow" I, as a pulp writer would say, 'husked.' I was trying to convince my conscience that sleep was infinitely preferable to the Honours-Graduate Committee meeting when I noticed that Lionel, my friend/hairdresser/Lit 100 student (a bad combination; the prospect of a green crewcut in return for low marks can be daunting) was waiting to talk to me.

"Bad news" he said, and introduced The Dybbuk.

It had been difficult, nearly impossible, to find a typist in Regina willing to tackle a 395 page dissertation, especially one containing large chunks of undigested (or uncomposted) agrarian-novel French. Bilingue, le Saskatchewan n'est pas. But Lionel had a customer who... Unfortunately, the day after my persuasions (including \$425) worked, and we delivered the ms., several pounds of white bond and a rented French-keyboard typewriter to Mrs. Heaps, while I'd been wielding chopsticks in Vancouver, she'd been washing crystal in her kitchen sink-- and slashed both hands open on shattered glass.

A week later I had another typist: Mrs. Heaps' niece Jean, in North Regina beyond the buslines, who didn't read a word of French. I felt a little nervous as we loaded manuscript and all into Lionel's car.

The next day, Jean called me. She sounded very nervous. The typer had begun by not spacing, and ended by self-destructing in a shower of sparks.

The same day, Lionel arrived for class late, looking grim. As he returned from delivering my manuscript, his car's engine had self-destructed, spitting pistons.

Two days later, the rented typer broke down again.

The next day, as I retyped the 20-page bibliography on this machine, it went \*clunk\* and the motor fell out.

The next day, Jean called again. "I've only got 30 pages done, and we're selling our house, and I can't work for 3 days. I'm sick. I keep fainting. The doctor doesn't know why."

I had a completely irrational explanation, which began to seem rational by the time I got those 30 pages and tried to Xerox the necessary 4 copies. Because:  
-the Xerox 2400 in the Social Sciences office started printing only half an image  
-the Xerox 2400 in the Registrar's office caught fire  
-and the Xerox 2400 in the President's office jammed its paper feed...  
on four successive days

Coincidence? I was supervising a Master's thesis, for a candidate in Ft. McMurray, Alberta. When Allan submitted his final draft, I xeroxed it for him: 4 copies of 150 pages. Page 151 was actually my page 1. And the machine, humming and clicking merrily as it spat out imprecable copies... clanked... shuddered... and jammed. I fixed it. The next page jammed. And the next. And the next.

(And this page had to be retyped. You don't want to know what happened to the stencil.)



"Of course there's an explanation," said my friend Burton, the blind Jewish Milton scholar. Burton finds my hysterics amusing. "It's obvious. The thesis is possessed by a dybbuk."

"A dybbuk? But that's nonsense. Besides, it's not even a Jewish thesis. I never mention Mordecai Richler. It's full of French priests and Presbyterian missionaries and The Land."

"Exactly. You have a dybbuk who thinks you're discriminating against him."

It was a black-comedy sort of month: ridiculous but frustrating too as my submission deadline passed and receded in a flurry of minor crises. The rental agency had provided the wrong ribbons for the rented Hermes. The ribbon jammed. There were no Hermes ("A what, lady? Sure you don't mean a Smith-Corona?") ribbons in the city. None at all. Then there was the day I spent two hours trundling through a blizzard looking in every store for white correction-paint, which Jean was using by the gallon. My manuscript looked like an acned adolescent. Both Lionel's car and this typer broke down again. So did the President's office copier, until Xerox stock-holdere begged me to use someone else's machine. The semi-annual postal strike hit, trapping my last chapter in Toronto for a month. And all through this, I struggled along with swollen glands and a general desire to lay down and die, because The Virus was destroying my lecture voice, my minimal proofreading ability, my sense of proportion to deal with crises, and my sense of humour.

After working so hard, for so long, to have my work held up by trivial little problems... I felt depressed. "Look, dybbuk," I said, in a voice of sweet reason turning harsh around the edges, "I don't believe in you. So go away." The copier vindictively spat forth four clear copies, each with a huge black smear down the middle. "GO AWAY!" So he provided a blizzard, and a foot of snow, for Easter; unwound the Smith-Corona ribbon on the Hermes for the thirteenth time, making Jean call with a threat to quit, her fifth in as many weeks; and triumphantly slammed me into bed for the holidays, with a fully-developed cold.

Then, I think, he lost interest.



I mailed off 15 $\frac{1}{2}$  pounds of manuscript. It arrived safely in Toronto. My advisor is well, and the university hasn't burned down. But when I fly back East for my oral, I'm not taking my manuscript on the plane with me.

\* \* \* \* \*  
I really like the place, you know  
\* The sun's so warm, it makes me want  
To dance and sing  
\* But something about the winter  
Makes me feel so low...  
\*  
Now wouldn't you know                      --Humphrey and the Dumptrucks,  
\* It's started to snow                      "Another Storm"--  
Again, just yesterday  
\* And the weatherman says  
There's another storm on the way...  
\* \* \* \* \*

"The West," said David Miller, "is where Quebec was ten years ago. We're just starting to find out who we are-- and starting to do something about it."

The dragon tapestry Cathryn had just finished glowed on the farmhouse wall. Snow fell outside, since it was only the second day of spring. Logs crackled in the stove. Tea steamed. And the Globe Theatre school tour company chatted fannishly with David about the delights of playing to restless adolescents in the school gyms of Biggar and the Poundmaker reserve, Marcelin where the town's in one time-zone, the surrounding farms an hour behind in another, and the school keeps half-time, and Rabbit Lake where David once had to make his exits from the town hall out a window, dash fully-costumed though the snowdrifts, and re-enter through the front door. After weeks of smalltown hotels, and hamburgers, and beerhalls and pool, the tiny company was still looking forward to the spring tour, playing in places that got a train a week, one tv channel if they were lucky, and live theatre once a year. From them. Prairie culture is a group of Torontonians and Vancouverites wanting to tour the boondocks. It's also farmers discussing plays intelligently with the actors. It had also been "Cruel Tears" the night before.

"Cruel Tears" is a C&W opera, based on OTHELLO. "Cruel Tears" is a Ukranian truck driver, the boss's daughter, greasy Jack the jealous overgrown punk, and his frowsy, discouraged wife Flora with four kids ("Every one an animal.") It's four teenaged Ukranian dancers, moving like pros: milling in the beer parlour scenes, playing stagehands and props, miming refrigerators and record players, and bringing the first act to a crashing finale with a superb Ukranian wedding dance.

"Cruel Tears" is also Humphrey and the Dumptrucks, shaggy and slightly smelly in badly-cured moosehide vests, singing the songs they wrote, playing banjo and dobro, guitar and autoharp, bass and jug and kazoo. "Cruel Tears" the weekend we went to Saskatoon was also Mitchell the Moose Jaw Kid, huddled in his chair scribbling notes on programme backs, wincing while the audience laughed.

Now I've inhabited the office next door to Opera Headquarters for too many months to be objective. I loved it. So did the audience, loyal Dumptruck fans. (The Dumptruck has earned that loyalty. They went to Toronto, made their records, looked around, shivered, and decided "Saskatoon is much more central." So they came home to just-survive. There's a quality of affection flowing at any Dumptruck concert that I haven't felt since my very early folkie days, except possibly at Mariposa.)

The audience recognized themselves, or at least their own people, on Friday night at the Blacktop Bar, in the suburban apartment-box furnished in Eaton's Catalogue Special, maybe even in the drag race on the Saskatoon bypass. But local boys and

local references don't make a good play (opera, whatever; hybrid, actually.) The only discouraging voice was the local newspaper reviewer. The loudest praise for this untried play by a writer who isn't nationally famous yet, the third production of brand-new Persephone Theatre in a snowbound Saskatchewan city, came from the Calgary HERALD reviewer who flew in to rave; the Toronto GLOBE AND MAIL reviewer, who did the same; and the Southam News reporter who splashed his praise over seven Eastern papers. The officials from the Canada Council and the National Arts Centre and, so I heard, the Stratford Festival were also impressed-- impressed into making noises about taking a beer-drinking, banjo-picking, truck-driving portion of Prairie life across the country.

It is somehow symptomatic, though, that two weeks later when Ken and Eli and I slithered through another storm to hear the Dumptruck in the smoky, red-table-cloth basement darkness of the local coffeehouse (who says 1967 is dead?) the between-sets talk didn't linger on fame and national fortune. I got the feeling it would be nice, but... Ken's busy with a National Film Board script about a biker and some Jehovah's witnesses, being hassled by a Montreal producer who won't believe Saskatchewan bikers aren't \*M\*E\*A\*N. And the Dumptruck were just three shaggy, friendly, lowkey people, more interested in talking about their music than coming on like stars. Sure of themselves. Sure of their music. Liking their audience.

Ten years behind Quebec?

\* \* \* \* \*  
Do you want to hire someone? If you can afford to pay a living wage, how about  
\* offering me a job? I am enthusiastic, friendly, bilingual, and willing to work \*  
hard at any reasonable and legal endeavour. I can also read and write, qualities \*  
\* increasingly rare among first year university students. Job offers, witty stories, \*  
further inquiries and well-meant suggestions should be addressed to: S.M. Tillot- \*  
\* son, R.R. #2, Wolfville, N.S. (Offer only good east of Man.-Ont. border.) \*  
  
\* Poems painted anywhere. You supply the wall, we supply the poet and the poem. \*  
Published and unpublished work installed by the creators. Nationally and inter- \*  
\* nationally published poets available. Reasonable rates and transportation. \*  
Ceilings slightly extra. Box 43, Station V, Toronto Ont. M6R 3A4. \*  
  
\* --classified job-wanted ads in THE CANADIAN FORUM, courtesy Hal Davis-- \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

It's May 1st in Regina. 4°C, according to the noon weather report on CBC, and hardly snowing at all. Happy spring. I'm unemployed.

My contract at University of Regina ended yesterday, though I'll be around for awhile spending \$10 thou on Canlit books for the library. My contract with UBC doesn't start til July. My student status at the University of Toronto hasn't been successfully terminated. So here I sit, afflicted by inertia, balanced between two coasts and two lives, waiting to move: to fly back East, see my family and friends, take my oral exam; to fly or train West, shipping my first-edition Frederick Philip Groves and my teddy bear, to settle briefly in Vancouver before thumbing a ride with the Dentons down to Westercon.

Anybody want to host a travelling Canuck? I wash dishes, just like Terry Hughes.

Meantime, Aussiecon is beginning to seem like a reality. I have a large orange backpack, and some Sturdy Walking Shoes, and a visa and a smallpox vaccination. I'm even learning Strine, by tape from the Aussiecon committee! To pass the time til my future decides itself, I sit reading murder mysteries and Aussielit, writing a fan article a week (if it hadn't been for this thesis business, I might be a BNF!) and learning an alien language.... because after years of being told I was tone-deaf, I am now the proud owner of Decora, a David Miller Appalachian dulcimer (a graduation gift from Eli.) A plunk and a twang until the next issue.... 10

GUIL: A man breaking his journey between one place and another at a third place of no name, character, population or significance, sees a unicorn cross his path and disappear. That in itself is startling, but there are precedents for mystical encounters of various kinds, or to be less extreme, a choice of persuasions to put it down to fancy; until-- "My God," says a second man, "I must be dreaming, I thought I saw a unicorn." At which point, a dimension is added that makes the experience as alarming as it will ever be. A third witness, you understand, adds no further dimension but only spreads it thinner, and a fourth thinner still, and the more witnesses there are the thinner it gets and the more reasonable it becomes until it is as thin as reality, the name we give to the common experience.... "Look, look!" recites the crowd. "A horse with an arrow in its forehead! It must have been mistaken for a deer."

ROS (eagerly): I knew all along it was a band!

GUIL (tiredly): He knew all along it was a band.

ROS: Here they come!

GUIL (at the last moment before they /the players/ enter-- wistfully): I'm sorry it wasn't a unicorn. It would have been nice to have unicorns.

--ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD, by Tom Stoppard--



19/2

The following view of Greenwich village is from a letter from DAVID EMERSON,  
October 10, 1974. You could call it a

#### VILLAGE RAMBLE

I want to tell you about an experience I had last Sunday. It being a lovely afternoon, I went out for a walk. It turned out to be not just a walk, not even a Walk, but an Epic Journey.

I was puttering around the house Sunday afternoon, with the stereo playing early Byrds and Sgt. Pepper Beatles, and generally thinking about the late sixties and what all went down in those years. Since it was such a gorgeous day outside, I just couldn't stay inside for long, so I pulled on my jeans and sneakers and R. Crumb t-shirt and embroidered workshirt and headed out, thinking to myself, "Here I am in GREENWICH WILLAGE, wowie zowie!" and keeping an eye peeled for friendly freaks and their organic denim lifestyle. But this was still the West Village, and actual Freaks were definitely outnumbered by the fashionable Hip. Of course, I sez to myself, what else to expect in such a middle-class neighbourhood. After all, my own apartment costs \$350 a month, and you can't pay the rent with spare change. So I set out eastward in search of circa 1969 Freak.

Just to make sure I touched all the bases, I walked a historic route. First down West Fourth St., which has recently become my very own turf, at least as far as Sheridan Square. Across Seventh Avenue, past the place where the VILLAGE VOICE used to be; farther down W. 4th past the art galleries and the organic bakery, emerging into the openness of Sixth Avenue. Across the avenue was the first sign of the past-- the sidewalk vendors selling jewellery and paintings and leather belts. There used to be constant parades by the Krishna people, but they seem to have vanished this year. The subway station Tom Marks and Dennis Hearn and I used to use coming in from Queens; W. 3d St. (ignoring the McDonalds), the Purple Onion, the defunct Night Owl; around the corner onto MacDougal Street-- the first street I saw the first time I ever visited The Village-- and down past the souvlaki places, the boutiques (tho no longer the Naked Grape), where the Cafe Au Go Go used to be, where Gaslight used to be, where the original button shop, The Big Store, used to be; and finally to the corner of Bleeker and MacDougal.

And all the while I had been thinking of the Hippie culture that had arisen before I knew what was happening, and of the Freak culture that replaced it, (a little less naive but still hopeful) that I had tried so hard to be a part of. And for a time I almost succeeded. I wore jeans, but I didn't have any desert boots. I was an impoverished student, but I wasn't a radical. I was away from home but I hadn't run away. I had day-glo posters on the wall and acid rock on the stereo, but I also had a fellowship at the university and an account at the bank. I never went once to the Fillmore East, never went near Tompkins Square, never ate brown rice, never took acid. I didn't make sandals and I didn't play rock'n'roll. I was a fake freak. In fact, almost everything I knew about the counter-culture I learned from ROLLING STONE and underground comics.

But I did grow long hair and a beard, and I did learn about marijuana, and I did live in a communal co-ed apartment, and I did hitch-hike to Pittsburg with a pack on my back just to see my girlfriend. And I did feel part of a movement. It was "them" and "us" in those days, and I counted myself as "us".

As I stood there on the corner of Bleeker and MacDougal, I tried to feel it again. I pictured in my mind how the place looked on summer nights in 1967, with the bright colours coming and going, mixing with the sound of the barkers in front of the Cafe Wha? and a waft of incense from the nearest head shop. I called up out of the depths of memory, the state of mind I was in at that time, that glowing sense of

wonder I had for everything around me, and that sense of brotherhood I felt with just about everybody with long hair and wire-rimmed glasses. For a few seconds I came very close to recalling the entire era in a feeling, but I lost my grasp and the dream started to fade. Sometimes I think that if I could have attained it perfectly, I would have transcended time and gone back to the very year I was thinking about.

I came down... and looked around. There weren't any Freaks here, either. Lotta tourists and a few winos, and not much else. It certainly did not seem like the Revolution was going to happen any minute. I ambled down Bleeker towards the Bitter End, waving at The Fantastiks on the way, then turned up towards Washington Square.

That at least had not changed much. Washington Square on a sunny Sunday afternoon has always been a gathering place, and it was still going strong. There were frisbees all over the place, a soccer ball being kicked and head-butted around, a couple of haranguers, several clumps of music-makers, and tons of people just sitting or wandering around, watching. I stopped to trade soccer comments with an old man sitting on the low stone wall, but mostly I circulated, still searching. I finally found them. They were in a cluster at one side of the square, pickin and grinnin and playing bluegrass on guitars, banjos and mandolins. I wished I had brought my autoharp along; I certainly would have joined in. As it was, I stood there for a while, listening and drinking it all in. The music, The people. The sun. The afternoon. The time.

Maybe this was the direction things had taken-- towards the country. Maybe my boss, George Pitagorsky, was right and all the action was out in the sticks, on farms and in rural communities. If so, I had to face the realization that I had missed out once again. What was I still doing in the city?

I made my way out of the park, pausing briefly by a pair of musicians playing guitar and flute, and a group playing Jewish music way over in the corner. Thinking that perhaps the East Village might hold some clues to the great cosmic question, I headed along Waverly to Astor Place and Cooper Union, then right into St. Marks Place itself.

It was like walking into a burned-out basement. Desolate. Empty. Depressing.

It was incredible to think that this place had once been the focus of psychedelic vibrations for the whole city. The bookstore that was busted for selling ZAP Comix, the Electric Circus, the Naked Grape-- all gone. The block used to dazzle with all the colours of the day and night; now the only shine was from the chrome in the haircut places.

I couldn't take it for long. I turned the corner down Second Avenue, but there was the Fillmore East, renamed, long vacant, now bought by some religious organization. Up Sixth Street, the macrobiotic Cauldron restaurant had gone kosher as its owners had converted to orthodox Judaism. The place with the great egg-creams had been redecorated in plastic. The whole area was dead, dead, dead, dead.

So I sighed and went home.

And all across Tenth Street, past the high-rises and the classy Fifth Avenue buildings, I kept pondering: Hippie seemed to have arisen from nowhere; it soon turned into Freak; but Hip and Glitter are not the logical outgrowths-- what is? And where is it? Where have all those people gone?

\* \* \* \* \*  
\* If you evade suffering you also evade the chance of joy. Pleasure you may get, or pleasures, but you will not be fulfilled. You will not know what it is to come home. \*

--Ursula K. LeGuin, THE DISPOSSESSED--

DAVID MILLER, luthier, actor, farmer, ex-biker and Good Person, writes to answer my request for an article...

Forget it, Susan.

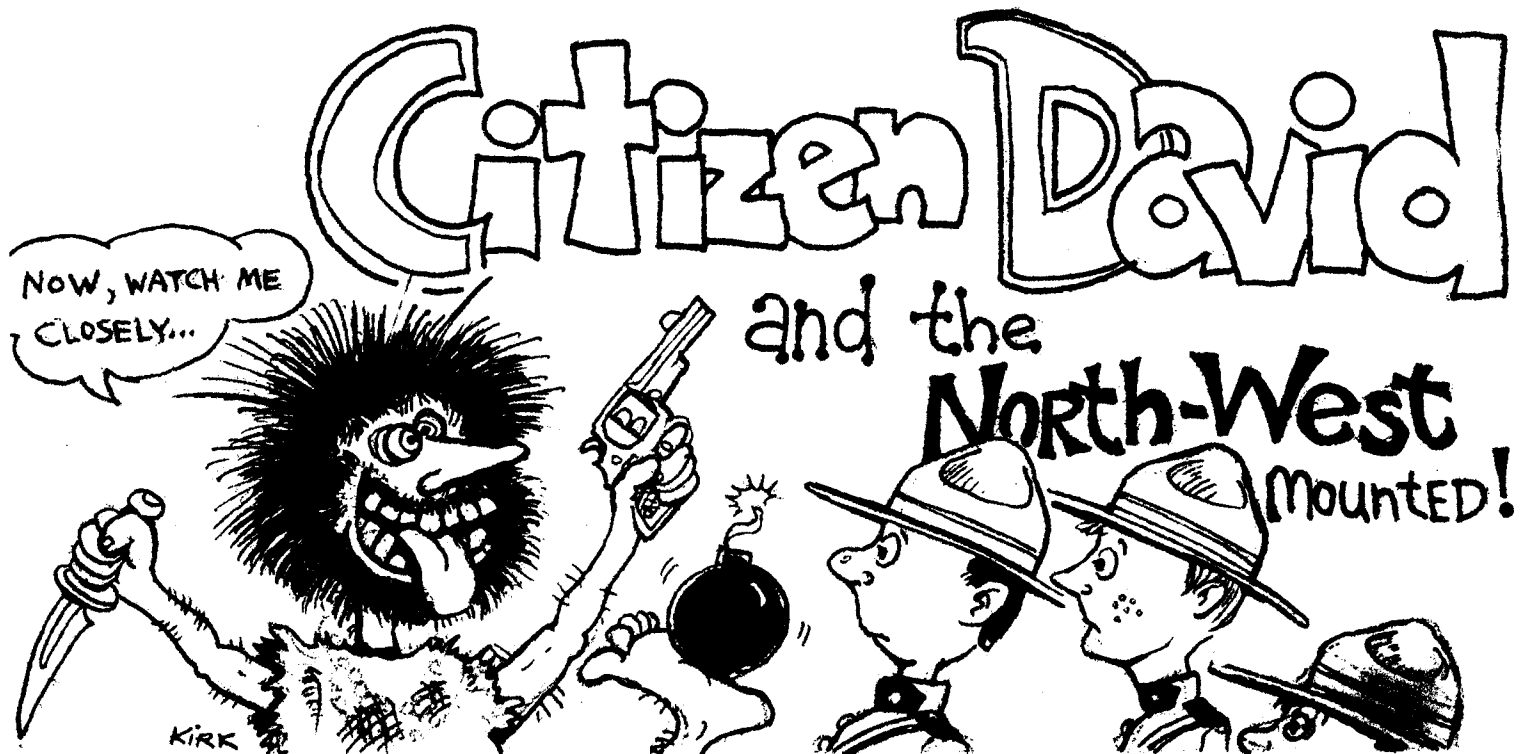
If this story ever became public, I could lose every friend I've got: some through disgust, some through jealousy.

Not even a Royal Commission could force me to testify about it.

No, not even the Spanish Inquisition (and nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition) could drag this information out of me.

But you've offered me a tape of the Complete Works of Tom Lehrer... every man has his price.

So here it is, the true story of



"Basically," I said to K, my beautiful brunette companion, "I'm scared shitless."

"Mmm," she replied, as I swung the high-powered International Harvester Travelall 1000 into the compound of the RCMP training centre at Regina, "me too."

A dozen recruits double-timed past our car and disappeared around the corner of the barracks. My eyes zeroed in on a building across the parade square. It squatted on the flat prairie, an unattractive mass of brick, concrete, and practicality. It fit the description I'd been given.

"That must be the place," I said quietly.

K nodded, looked at me with a half-smile, and said, "Let's go."



Cloaked in the early dawn shadows, a figure waited for us in the doorway. It was G., his face hidden behind a thick blackbeard. "You know what to do?" he asked.

We nodded and followed him. I wondered if he or K. noticed the struggle I was going through to keep my hands from trembling.

\* \* \* \* \*

Minutes later, K. and I were working feverishly, when the door burst open and two RCMP recruits came barrelling through. I had a momentary glimpse of one of them grabbing K., and of her kicking at him, squirming to get out of his grasp; then I was too busy fending for myself to notice anyone but the big, burly, bareheaded figure who faced me.

\* \* \* \* \*

Perhaps half an hour had passed. We were surrounded by cops -- maybe thirty of them-- who watched us silently. Some took notes as we spoke. K., on one side of the room, spoke quietly with one of them. On the other side, I sat in a chair and stared sullenly at a pair of coldly shining police boots. All I could do was mutter, over and over, "That bitch! That lousy bitch! I shoulda known she couldn't keep her mouth shut!"

I glanced up for a moment and realized that G. was standing quietly at the back of the room, smiling to himself. Suddenly I knew it was all over. G. moved forward, and the officers moved aside respectfully to let him pass. He was one of them!

\* \* \* \* \*

"All right," G. said, "I think that's enough."

\* \* \* \* \*

I think it's listed on the RCMP training schedules as "Crisis Intervention Simulation," but to us at the Globe Theatre, it's simply "doing an RCMP." (Leaves it open to all sorts of delightful misinterpretation, doesn't it: "All right, who's going to do the RCMP this week?")

For several years the Globe company has been involved in the training of RCMP recruits at the Regina base. I'm told that more police officers are killed or injured-- in Canada at least-- while breaking up domestic fights than in any other line of duty. So the idea is to give the recruits a little taste of battlefield conditions before sending them into the front lines.

Gary Bell works for one of the social service bureaus in the city. He's got an amazing skill and instinct in dealing with these explosive situations, and is also a bloody good teacher. Each troop of trainees gets a couple of lectures in techniques and approaches from Gary, and finally a two-hour session with actors and actresses from the Globe.

In principle, it's simple: an actor and actress come into the classroom and improvise some sort of domestic fight, which two of the recruits must intervene in and bring to some sort of conclusion--perhaps arrest, perhaps reconciliation, perhaps referral to a family counselling service or perhaps separation (temporary or permanent.) When the situation is resolved (or stalemated), Gary brings the simulation to a halt and there is a general discussion among the trainees, Gary, and us as to what went on and how things should or should not have been handled.

This week's session was fairly typical. Mari and I got together after our Sunday night performance at the Globe, and put together the framework for two improvisations for the RCMP on Monday morning.

Ist. situation: Couple living together for about a year. Unmarried. Basically in love, and get along pretty well. She had just discovered that she's preggers, and demands that he marry her. He refuses, but has a screaming shit-fit when she says she's going to get an abortion. Enter the police.

Oh yeah, there's a catch to this one. I have decided-- but Mari doesn't know-- that I'm already married, and have thus far been unable to get a divorce because of my fear of lawyers' mumbo jumbo, and because I don't know where my wife is, anyway. Heh, heh, heh.

2nd situation: Child custody case. Husband and wife who should never have been married. Shotgun wedding five years ago. Four and three-quarter years of bickering and brawling. One child. Pretty irresponsible mother, frequently takes off for the afternoon and leaves the baby unattended. Husband thinks she screws around (it's up to her to decide whether or not this is true.... we're under no obligation to tell the truth to the police unless they can find a way to pin us down to it.) Husband drinks; drives a cab. Wife has abandoned hubby and the kid a couple of weeks ago. Now she returns to take the kid with her. Husband has secreted the child with another family. Wife demands to see child. Wham, pow, biff, socco, scream. Enter the police.

You get the idea? From this framework we can improvise with whatever reaction the cops give us. And we generally give rein to our baser, uglier, meaner side.... it's not our job to make things easy for them.

\* \* \* \* \*

At ten the next morning, we're faced with the two dozen shining, short-haired trainees of '25-troop.' After a brief introduction by Gary, and a couple of questions from the troop, we get set for the first 'simulation.' To my surprise, two guys volunteer immediately for the first session. They leave the room with orders to knock and/or enter when they hear sufficient commotion to warrant it. The rest of the troop move their desks back and out of the way, to give us operating space.

"Start high" is the maxim for getting these things going. So, after a moment's pause to get our concentration, I suddenly slam my fist down on a table and bellow, "Will you shut your fuckin' mouth and listen, or am I going to fuckin' well shut it for you?!" And the fight is on.

There's no physical violence going on when they come through the door, so they don't have much trouble getting us separated. (This is Step 1.) Step 2-- getting the parties into separate rooms to talk about the situation and find out just what is going on-- gives them a bit more trouble. I go into a routine of lord-and-protector-and-what-does-that-bastard-want-to-get-her-alone-for, with overtones of being worried that if she spills the beans about wanting an abortion, they may arrest her on the spot. Mari, on the other hand, is playing the weak and weeping female and won't-the-big-strong-mounties-save-me-'cause-this-man's-gone-berserk. They find me easier to deal with than her; they're always a little frightened of the women.

Eventually they get us on opposite sides of the little room divider. It takes the cop quite a while to get me sitting down and talking. I'm a pacer. Ever try to talk calmly and rationally with someone who's doing a fair imitation of a caged cheetah?

He keeps at it, though, and eventually my snarls turn into grunts, my grunts into grudging conversation, and he persuades me to sit down. Now he takes a new tack, simply asking for straight-fact information. How long have Mari and I been married? (And I could see his antennae go up when I clammed up at this question.)

Now he began to get to the guts of the matter. He was getting subtler in his methods, too, sympathizing with me, saying how he has fights with his wife now and then, and that these sorts of things happen all the time and Jeez its a tough life, isn't it?

Slowly he wins me over and I begin to spill the whole story, including the abortion and my secret wife. He's very reassuring, and I begin to feel better.

Step 3: the officers switch places, so that each of them gets to hear both sides of the story.

By now Mari is starting to get suspicious, and manages to wheedle out from the cop the fact that there is a wife to be contended with. (I don't know just how he handled all this, but he apparently assured her that I seemed to love her and had only held off from the divorce because I didn't know how to go about it.) At any rate, he had her quite calm and ready to talk it over with me.

But when they bring us together (Step 4) and I realize that he's told her.... I think he has a moment of genuine fear when I start screaming and closing in on him with blood in my eye. He doesn't retreat, but when I reach out to grab him, his partner intercepts with some form of highly effective "hold" and eases me off to the other room to talk quietly for a bit longer while I cool down.

All in all, they do it pretty well. With a bit more talking, they get Mari and me back together. They give me the information I need to start arranging for a divorce, and actually leave the two of us holding hands and thanking them for coming. It's seldom that they "solve" these improvisations so effectively, and it's a good feeling for everyone when they do.

Gary seemed quite pleased with what they had done. A few mistakes were brought up during the discussion, most notably the blooper of revealing privileged information to the wife instead of letting the husband divulge it himself. Gary added a few suggestions on how things might have gone a little smoother and quicker. And then a much-needed coffee break.

\* \* \* \* \*

I suspect that the next two volunteers were impressed with the happy ending of the first improv, and figured things would go much the same with them.

Surprise, surprise, fellas!

By the time they came through the door, I had Mari on the floor, and was preparing to put the boots to her. One of the fuzz grabbed at me from behind, and I swung around fast.

I didn't really mean to catch him in the chest with my elbow as I turned. Well, not that hard anyway. He fell back a couple of steps and smashed hard into the wall. For a moment there was a terrible stillness in the room. I stood there, listening to the echoes of the crash and watching the clock on the wall swing back and forth from the shock, and I thought, "He is going to kill me. Now."

But he didn't. He took a deep breath, and said a little shakily, "Sorry if I startled you." The quietness of his reaction just took the rug out from under me; I didn't know how to react.

Then Mari screamed at me again, and I spun round to face her. The minute I took a step towards her, both officers closed in, and I caught a glimpse of something flapping around behind my left ear. It was my right arm. The cop who was holding it there (just ever so slightly short of the dislocation point) was saying, "Now, sir, would you mind sitting down?"

Compared with a broken arm, sitting down seemed like a small sacrifice, and I was quite prepared to comply.

Mari, however, decided that if the cops were kind enough to hold me, she could hardly be so ungrateful as to pass up the opportunity.

I've never examined Mari's fingernails at such close range before. (Take a note on that one, fellas; if it had been real, she'd have shredded my face.)

When they finally get her off me (they always have more trouble handling women; it seems like wherever they grab, there's a tit in the way, and they embarrass easily) things quiet down a bit.

But not much.

I didn't know what the recruit was trying to talk about at this point, but I was concerning myself with a series of epithets concerning his geneology, his manhood, and his sexual habits, culminating with a phrase along the lines of "motherfucking, whore-sucking (?), pimp asshole faggot pig!" He was unmoved. (This sort of language is most effective in embarrassing them when it comes from a woman; I wondered how Mari was doing on the other side of the divider.)

I felt around for another way to upset him... if he'd had a French accent, I might have tried the "papist priestfucker" routine... hmmm, maybe age will do the trick...

"Quit your preachin'! What the fuck do you know about anything anyway? You fuckin' little kid, how old are you?"

He didn't answer. Aha!

"What are you, anyway, eighteen, seventeen? Shit, how could you know what it's like to have a bitch for a wife? Jeez, I'll bet you never even been laid!" (I love it when they blush.)



Basically, they struck out on this improv. They did get us quieted down, but then they kept trying to help us get our marriage straightened out. And let's face it, guys, it's a marriage that should never have happened in the first place, and if it goes on much longer, someone's going to be murdered some night.

After a futile twenty minutes, Gary brought things to a halt, and we sat down to discuss the situation. It seemed like all they could have done with this couple was to stop the actual fight and explain the legal situation to them (and with child custody in this country, the laws can be pretty involved and difficult.)

Then the two hours were up and Mari and I were grateful to head back into town for our "day off."

\* \* \* \* \*

The improvisations go on for longer than my description may have indicated. There are long periods of cursing, of stubborn silence, of mumbling, of probing. Lots of ugliness.

It's always a relief when a session is finished. I guess it disturbs me to realize what wells of hostility, hatred and violence I can plumb within myself. But it's all over for the week, now, and I

feel good. There's not an aggressive bone left in my body.

On the whole, I've got to admit that I'm impressed with the recruits. For guys so young, they've sure as hell developed self-control. (If you had a serious acne problem, how would you like to have some lippy bastard screaming "Pimple-face!" at you from a distance of about eight inches?

Often the volunteers are amazed at how involved they become in the simulations: "I forgot all about the other guys watching. It was really real. I mean, I really felt sorry for him/her."

Or, perhaps more often, "Man, I really wanted to smash him!" But they don't. I've been bruised more than once, but only when I struggled to break a "hold." I've never seen them lose their tempers.

Trade places with those guys? No thank you!

But I've got to admit I respect them.

All in all, "doing an RCMP" is an interesting undertaking.

And where else can you get paid fifteen bucks an hour to call police officers "fucking pigs!"?



\* \* \* \* \*

Don't you see?! We're actors-- we're the opposite of people!

\* --Tom Stoppard, ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD-- \*

\* \* \* \* \*

\* And while we're on the subject...

\* JUMPERS [a later Stoppard play] was signed up by one Board before Broadway had plans for it." Thus David Self, a little sourly, in the current issue of THE USE OF ENGLISH. Tom Stoppard, he says, is "an unwise choice for the present GCE exam papers" because of his "exclusive theatricality"-- exclusive, that is, of discussible content. Mr. Self goes on to suggest ways of coping with a writer who seems to be concerned only with giving pleasure: "perhaps the moral is that we must enjoy ourselves when studying Stoppard." It's not a response to be dismissed cut of hand despite Mr. Self's final warning-- "dare we just laugh?"

\* --TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT, March 28, 1975, which also announced the Faber & Faber edition of Stoppard's TRAVESTIES-- \*

\* \* \* \* \*



## MAIL ORDER COCKTAIL PARTY

Carole King, "Tapestry," playing; "You've Got a Friend" seems a good place to start the lettercol, doesn't it!

David and Cathryn Miller  
 Sub. P.O. 13  
 Saskatoon, Sask. S7H 0R0

Whooppeeeefuck! Herein are our official congratulations on your gallant thesis-slaying! May its hulk be enshrined in the Academe Hall of Fame, with your photo beside it, captioned, "Susan Wood, Ph.D.; Left-of-centre on the famous Lit Line of the Riel Raiders; Rookie of the Year 1974; Most Assists in the League 1975 (Voted by Ken Mitchell); All-time record-holder for Most Hugos held by a Can Lit specialist in any University west of Brandon."

Elizabeth Buchan Kimmerly  
 103 James St.  
 Ottawa, Ont.

Zowie! huzzah! Hooray! Golly whiz! Terif! Wowie! Good show! Excellent! No more than you deserve! Aren't they lucky!

From what little I know of B.C. you can retire Woolffe to the Home for Genteel Old Coats of Limited Means and buy a Golf Umbrella.

ps: I forgot-- Yippety shit!

((I appreciated all the congratulations, I really did; but these were the first, and the most fun to print. It seems appropriate to digress here, and mention that, the day before I flew to Vancouver for the initial job interview, I picked up the January 1975 issue of BOOKS IN CANADA, and read a review, by Clive Cocking, of four books about Vancouver which opened as follows:

"Vancouver, as its most severe critics say, is really just another Moose Jaw with mountains. And traffic jams, I hasten to add. Now that may be unfair to Moose Jaw, but it certainly isn't to Vancouver. This city has never lived up to its lushly beautiful mountain-sea setting. In fact, if ever there was a city in Canada with the potential for becoming one of the world's great cities, it is Vancouver. But so far, potential is all it is."

Well, ok. Vancouver also has alot of rain. ("Yes, but you don't have to shovel it"-- a line included solely for Lynne Dollis' benefit.) Vancouver also has flowers almost all year, good people, good bookstores, a fine job, and mountains. I've seen Moose Jaw. I'll take the mountains!))

Meanwhile, back to Elizabeth, from a later letter:

Is Eli going to B.C. with you? I take it his immigration is still screwed up? Who gets custody of the mimeo?

((Since everyone was asking: a)no, his job here is essential, vital, he loves it, and the earliest it will finish is April, 1976. After that, he may go back to New York, being homesick for bagels and cockroaches... we really don't know; b) yes, sort of; c) Gobrin Press is jointly owned, but I'll loan my half to Eli temporarily since I hope I can borrow the Vancouver club's machine and coolie labour. Besides, when I get to Lotus Land I may gafiate, who knows?))

Ian((Elizabeth's husband, temporarily resident with Mike in Toronto-- job problems)) went to Windsor this weekend. I went a little stir crazy. Shopped! Bought albums by Dory Previn (great for being depressed to), George Carlin (funnier if you're Irish Catholic but good), and American Graffiti,(an absolute must.) I also bought 20 lbs. of detergent from a hippie freak spaced out telephone lady at Eaton's catalogue ("Oh wow, I got a neat price on that, not \$9.99. It's like, I really get off on this, only \$6.87. Isn't that wild? Hey, wow, I've never had a Ms. before!" etc) and a foot-stool and a twopiece sweater/skirt outfit that looks like 3 pieces, and a necklace and ½lb. of feta cheese, some anchovies and a tin of black olives. Then I ordered 2 pizzas, opened a beer and sat around the house crying and eating olives and singing along to "Crying in the Chapel."

I'm fine now, really I am.

((The above is a sample of why Elizabeth my Earth Mother is such a Dearly Beloved Friend. Hint: in certain listening moods, Joni Mitchell really provides music-to-slash-your-wrists-by.))

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT:

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Bill Wright  
53 Celia St.  
Burwood, Vic. 3125, AUSTRALIA  
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I went to a dinner last saturday at which the principal speaker was the former Australian Prime Minister Mr. John Gorton. He spoke at some length on the mating habits of penguins, and I feel that you might be interested in a summary of what he said:

When a male penguin feels the urge to find a mate, he picks up a pebble in his beak and goes off in search of a female. When he finds one he likes, he drops the pebble in front of her. If the lady penguin picks up the pebble he is in luck and off they go and get married. If she walks away or just looks bored the rejected suitor goes in search of another girlfriend.

On the surface this appears to be yet another example of Mother Nature making tidy arrangements for the continuation of the species, but nothing could be further from the truth.

You see, all male penguins without exception have great difficulty in distinguishing



female penguins from other male penguins, and it happens occasionally that the pebble gets dropped in front of another male. The result is a fast and furious fight that leaves the victor in possession of the pebble and the vanquished torn and bleeding, on the sand.

None of the foregoing explains why the penguins on Philip Island (about 50 miles from Melbourne) are known as Fairy Penguins. Mr. Gorton concluded his speech by drawing parallels between members of the penguin species who are right only half of the time and his political opponents whose score, according to Mr. Gorton, is even less impressive. Mr. Gorton had to contend with three hundred starlings who, in full voice, flew through a hole in the roof to settle in the pine trees with which the city fathers had decorated the Town Hall, for the occasion. He was unconcerned at the noise, but I did notice that he paused for a moment when one of the starlings crapped in his soup.

All in all, a very pleasurable evening.

-----  
Bob Tucker  
34 Greenbriar Drive  
Jacksonville, Ill. 62650  
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How wise of you to get out of Regina before the ice! Have you heard that the piedmont

glaciers in Alaska are beginning to creep forward?

'Tis fortunate that you are becoming an authority on Can. Lit. and that soon you will be the source to which other students and scholars turn. When Can. is under ice in about five hundred years, your books may be the only sources of information. You will be the da Vinci of future generations, of the days to come after the glaciers are gone.

I would suggest that you postpone reading ICE AND IRON until the Ballantine reprint appears next October. While the Doubleday edition is erudite, perceptive, adventurous, and withal superior science fiction from a gifted pen, the Ballantine edition will be moreso because the ending has been changed and the story has been enlarged by an additional 10,000 words or so. Some fans and reviewers complained because the novel's ending seemed inconclusive; they felt robbed because I neglected to spell out everything for them. I suppose I shouldn't have expected them to think it through for themselves; science fiction fans aren't noted for literary competence and the ability to read between lines and flesh out unstated story inferences. Well, then. Judy-Lynn Del Rey, the Ballantine editor, asked me if I'd care to rewrite the ending and add a few thousand words as well-- she said I could have plenty of space if I wished to expand any part of it. So I did.

A woman who was found frozen to death on a Regina street in the original, is now found alive and carried back to the hospital for questioning in the reprint-- and that radically alters the ending because the entire ending depends on her. The reprint will contain two new chapter, over the original. Read them both if you wish, but I suspect



you will find the reprint telling a better story. At least, a more complete story with a bang-bang climax the fans know and love. (Perhaps that's why they were disappointed with the original. It lacked a bang-bang ending, it lacked the traditional gun-down on the Martian street at sunset. Sometimes I feel disappointed in our star-begotten slans.

((And Bob Silverberg was complaining because all the publishers and the fans seem to want is Perry Rhodan and space opera.... Thanks for the weather warning, Bob-- by the way, "weather warning" in Saskatchewanese means "stay off the highway unless you want to freeze to death." It's now May 2, and 0° Celcius. AMOR, the fanzine with the weather reports...))

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doug barbour  
10808-75th ave.  
edmonton  
alta. t6e 1k2  
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well, i said i'd say something about AS IT HAPPENS, & i'm listening right now, to barbara frum talking to lois gould-- in new york city-- about pornography, for women, & why much of it still doesn't work too well. as mr. spock would say, fascinating. & so is most of what we hear, night by night, on AS IT HAPPENS, the CBC's radio phone-talk show which runs, in edmonton, monday through friday from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. with alan maitland and ms frum, surely one of the best interviewers in the world-- i have never seen her let an interviewee wiggle out from under her questions, at least without admitting that such a manoeuvre is taking place, that he or she will not answer the questions. they talk to important people in politics and journalism, artists, straight out of the woodwork wierdos, & just about anyone who might have something interesting or different to say.

last week, while the Answer was trying to sail away down the st. laurence river to the open seas, & the mounties were trying to get their man, er, ship, AS IT HAPPENS managed to talk to the captain by ship-to-shore phone-radio. the next night, while the John A. Macdonald slowly crept up on the Answer, & no news story gave the same information about the ship as any other, the show managed not only to talk to the captain again, but set up a three-way conversation between their studio in toronto, the mother of a young woman on board the ship in montreal, & the young woman. the latter insisted that everything was fine, mom, while mom kept saying she had been so worried, & we listened torn between giggles & awe that we were hearing this thing. that's AS IT HAPPENS, & my only complaint about it is that i usually have plans for an evening things to do, books to read, & if I leave the radio on long enough to hear what they're going to do tonight, my schedule is shot to hell. you have to listen to this show, & you learn things (they had some lovely phone calls to astronomers about black holes & quasars a while back), yes, but the time, the time....

((There are times when a barbour letter reminds me of "As it Happens"-- the Friday night edition, with Dr. Bundolo's Pandemonium Medicine Show from UBC... Anyone who can pick up CBC-AM at 6:30 should listen in; it's a behind-the-news interview show, only the interviews are all conducted by phone. Straight investigative reporting is combined with... telephonic slapstick? -- like the campaign to nationalize the beaver, when New York State tried to make "our" beaver its official symbol. This week, for instance, Barbara Frum had a long call to CBC radio reporter Mike Duffy, who flew out of Saigon to Hong Cong on one of the last evacuation flights; then about half an hour of serious political material, talks with people in Paris and Washington and someone who'd interviewed Madame Nu in Rome, And then... a tape of the love call of the female stickleback, the sounds of water weeds giving off bubbles, and so on, from a man who wins prizes for his tapes of the sounds of nature. My favorite interview, though, is still the longdistance call to England to the woman who played the "As it Happens" theme for them on her kitchen sink (or was it the garden hose?))

\* \* \* \* \*  
It's only in the woods, cut off, no TV, no telephone, no electricity even,  
lulled by the sound of lake water lapping and the incessant hum of mosquitoes,  
that I appreciate the meaning of CBC radio, the human voice defying the wilder-  
ness, trying to impose order and reason on the cacaphony, to create a civilized  
nation in a savage land where, for the most part, outside our cities we are  
unimportant. It is, at best, a fragile and tenuous connection; the wilderness  
is winning.

This was indicated last year when, having discussed changing its name to Radio  
Television Canada, the CBC felt it needed an identifying sound, a radio logo, to  
go with its new name. Someone suggested that a bird call would be appropriate,  
and a committee of senior executives was formed to choose bird calls to represent  
the various provinces-- the booby for Newfoundland, l'alouette for Quebec, and so  
on-- so that, before the news, instead of the traditional "This is the CBC radio  
network" we would get, depending on where we lived, the cluck of a prairie  
chicken or the squawk of a seagull. The Loon at Eight. Birdnews. As a result  
of deafening birdcalls and other rude noises by various CBC personnel, the  
plan was discreetly abandoned.

--Heather Robertson, MACLEAN'S--

\* \* \* \* \*  
Connie Reich Faddis  
5731 Kentucky Ave.  
Pittsburg, PA 15232  
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It's delightful to hear that someone, somewhere, feels she is accomplishing something  
in the world! I live in an office now in the Learning Research and Development Center  
of the U. of Pitts., with two part-time people who are graduate students in Ed.  
Research, and if I were to take them as examples, I would have to conclude that  
writing a thesis is a life-long project that one naturally expects to be one of those  
things left incomplete upon death at some far future date; it is a major event when  
one of them admits to having accomplished some progress. I think I'll march into  
work on Monday and show them ("Here, it's right here in black and blue") that the  
goal is not beyond human reach. ((No, just almost beyond...))

I find it interesting to read about how rewarding you're finding teaching to be.  
Right now, as part of my job, I'm going into the Pittsburg Public schools every day  
to videotape an hour of math and an hour of reading in first and second grade class-  
rooms, and all I hear from teachers at those levels is frustration and more frus-  
tration. I think every teacher who's ever lived ought to be awarded the Congressional  
Medal of Honour for ever daring to step into a classroom.

((I agree. Last week, I went to one of our local highschools to teach a class  
on sf, for a friend whose Grade 11 lit. class was taking FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON.  
"Every one an animal" doesn't half describe it... and this was a good class,  
supposedly, so Shirley said, on its best behavior for me. I had forgotten how  
noisy highschools were; and the janitors were on strike; and the kids were just  
plain rude. I went to a very rigid, authoritarian highschool, and don't want to  
see a return to that; still, I think we are in for a period of rigid discipline,  
rules, 3-R's curriculum and the rest. I know MY freshperson students can't read  
or write a coherent sentence, and we hear the same complaints around the Western  
world. In fact, a British government committee just brought in a so-called  
"black paper" on education which said, basically, British secondary school  
students were illiterate, ill-mannered hooligans. Bring out the birch rods  
and the spelling drills, folks.))

Or at least teach people to read before I get them!))

Gloria Andersson  
770 N. Dodge, #29  
Tucson, AZ 85716

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Received AMOR 5 today, and I want to say thank you. Lately, all we have been getting are wrong numbers insisting that I must be Sister Esther Mae and that Brother Tom won't be able to take me to church this week. The last time this happened, I had an envious feeling about Sister Esther's popularity. As for mail, I'm getting to look forward excitedly to Thursdays, because that's when TIME comes.

About Presbyterian ancestors, I can relate. I was brought up by a Presbyterian mother (who happens to be a church elder and local regent of the DAR.) Of course this was all counteracted by the sombre fact that my dad is a Czech-Irish (Catholic) steel-worker. I still haven't found a language to talk about my family and the double vision my parents' views gave me. Talk about roots! Each person must find his own way to assimilate his/her background, but I think it gets more confusing when parents spring from diametrically opposed cultures and worldviews. Personally, I relate more to my 'ethnic' side, because they are just more passionate or something, but all my hang-ups are Presbyterian ones-- Never borrow money or be indebted to anyone because OUR Lord's Prayer says "Forgive us our debts" instead of "trespasses." Such predestination. Such rottenness of human nature-- my Slavic friends have no idea what I'm talking about. On the other hand, I can't get my mother interested in folk-dancing and other such life-affirming activities. I'd better get off the subject before I confuse myself.

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Michael Carlson  
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I share deeply your feeling of searching for, recognizing, understanding, even when hating, your own roots. My imagined roots (Swedish and New England) go back so far beyond reality as to be a millstone at times. I don't think that it's love of country as much as love of one's own earth, soil, etc.-- the place where your ancestors have turned back into dust-- the place which has molded you for better or worse. I sometimes feel my Swedish roots very strongly, for that very reason. And Lord knows I've never been an American chauvinist, although at times I am a New England elitist.

...Where else but in fandom would 50% of the reviews of a novel (DHALGREN) mention what a great bargain it is per page? Oughta sell it by the pound.

...Was pushing sf and LeGuin to some of the sisters here((Michael is teaching remedial reading at a Catholic girls' college for 6 weeks)). One of them is writing the Monarch Notes for Sherlock Holmes, no less. ((Boggle.))

It's tough to smoke dope and listen to "Runaround Sue," a quotation from my friend Berman, who just used it to end an argument about head music vs body music.

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jill jamieson  
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I liked what you had to say in AMOR about roots. My own ancestry on both sides is the same as yours, except my shanty Irish bred one valley over, in the Gatineau. Regina sounds great, nice dry cold. London makes me feel so homesick in midwinter when it rains and rains and I O.D. on allergy pills attempting to cope. Kapuskasing weather is much preferable. The thesis sounds really fine; I'd like to talk about it sometime but as travellers we are hopeless: haven't got as far as Toronto in two years. I'm beginning to feel like all those people we kept meeting in Kitchener that (so help me)

had never been as far as Waterloo. Must be something in the air of southern Ontario.

((And on the problems of small presses: jill and husband Mac publish, among other things, APLEGARTH'S FOLLIES, a little mag I recommend)): My dream is to take the day off and wax my floors.

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Mike Glicksohn  
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I was busy today. Very busy. Sorta looked at the mail this afternoon (a mere 20 pieces, a light Monday) and put it aside. It was ten o'clock before I even got to writing a letter or two, and those were in answer to letters from several days back.

Wrote a few letters. Drank a few martinis. Finally got the chance to sit back and look in detail at some of the mail that came today. Letter from Bruce Gillespie, which I'll try to answer before Aussiecon. ANCR, which I read, liked, felt good about, wanted to write a loc on. Haven't locced a fanzine in ten days: feel honoured.... Good stuff.... But you think your mail has problems getting lost? I recently had a small parcel returned despite having my proper name and address quite clearly marked on it. It had a PO official stamp on it very clearly marked: "Undeliverable... DECEASED." I'm always the last to know...

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URSULA K. LEGUIN: "PLEASE don't stand in awe, it makes me cower in embarassment.... You know, I don't think I've ever read a joyful fanzine before."

SANDRA MIESEL: "Vancouver is definitely a superior environment for a dryad."

LYNNE DOLLIS: "Congratulations on the new job. I will be available for lunch (or dinner, if you prefer) at the Faculty Club next year at the beginning of the rainy season."

TERRY AUSTIN: "You burned my clams! I get off the train from NYC, walk home, shove a boxful of frozen clams in the oven, and sit down to read the almost incredible adventures of Susan, darling of the frozen tundra. Lo and behold, folks, what's this hideous stench? Clams a la charcoal! But 12 pounds of tartar sauce and I couldn't even taste them as I finished off the Susanzine (it was either that or read "the story of a Howard Johnson clam" on the boxback.) No need to feel guilty. I figure a cosmic balance has been reached, one night your dinner was saved from destruction by the letter I did not send."

JODIE OFFUTT: "I am happy with you. I rejoice with you. Isn't it marvellous to feel good inside? (I cried too, but what else is new?).... I am teaching a Yoga class once a week at the public library. I am amazed at myself, my capabilities and abilities. In the first place I had serious doubts at my standing before a bunch of people and talking, not to mention teaching anybody anything. As it turned out, I had no trouble talking about it, and I was surprised at how much I know about it when they started asking questions. So far, it has been gratifying."

ALICIA AUSTIN: "I'm very happy for you... so much so that I shan't even prattle about sunshine and flowers to remind you of the snow. Why I was so excited I wished for one or two mad moments that I could have been there, even though 'twas freezing all those brass balls off, to raise a pint or two of shared cheer."

SOE COHEN: "I told Ted ((White)) to write to you about our trying to get the US Postmaster in Washington to issue an AMAZING postage stamp in 1976 honouring the 50th Anniversary of AMAZING STORIES which coincides with the Bicentennial. Possibly you can get fans to write letters." ((How about it, folks?))

BILL HIXON: "-94°! Ye gods, that's no temperature, it's a disaster in the making."

SUE CLARKE (Sue and Ron recently became the parents of Evelyn Rachel): "I tell you, the whole pregnancy was quite an experience... I mean to say, how many fen could say that they did the majority of organizing a convention whilst pregnant and in hospital? Leigh Edmonds said I could chalk up some kind of first (fannish first, that is) with that, but I'm not sure if it's been done before. Tell me, whom do I ask about things like that?"((Harry Warner, Jr.))

JOHN FOYSTER: "I gather from your date of leaving for Australia that you may be planning to walk. As a water-walker from way back, I'd suggest you take the first thousand miles easily, and wear a raincoat as it can get pretty chilly down here in August."

AUSSIECON COMMITTEE: a telegram about the job, reading " Here's wishing relief for tenure itch Aussiecon congratulations" which proves that Robin Johnston can make terrible puns and get a telegraph operator to transmit them intact. Amazing.

BILL BOWERS: "Publish your biggie issue, but don't get stuck into making it a genzine. That's a sure road to ruin and quick-aging... ask me: actually I'm 16 years old."

Mike O'Brien: "Congratulations! And now that that's out of the way, what's for dinner, dear? ... It's all like a fantasy tale of success in academe. If I were more under the old influence of my Pittsburg friends, I'd be inclined to say, "Oh, gosh! That's great!... uh, what terrible thing is going to go wrong now?" ((See page 7.))

\* \* \* \* \*

AND THANKS TO: Paul Anderson, Phyrne Bacon, Sheryl Birkhead, Valma Brown, Linda Bushyager, Grant Canfield, Don D'Anmassa, Richard Delap, Leigh Edmonds, Dick Eney, Moshe Feder, Jackie Franke, Freff, David George, Bruce Gillespie, Alexis Gilliland, Paul Glicksohn, Jerry Kaufman, Tim Kirk, Richard Labonte, Dennis Lee, Eric Lindsay, Linda Lounsbury, Don Lundry, Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell, Tim C. Marian, Shayne McCormack, Patrick McGuire, Jim McLeod, John Millard (and I got my Hugo, thank you), Debbie Notkin, Ted Pauls, (who reminded me I owe him a book on Roger Zelazny; Real Soon Now, Ted), Dave Piper, Andy Porter, Robert Silverberg, Dan Steffan, Sean Summers (formerly one-third of Sask Fandom), Angus Taylor, Suzle Tompkins, and Tom Whitmore who sent a tape of "But in the Morning, Ho."

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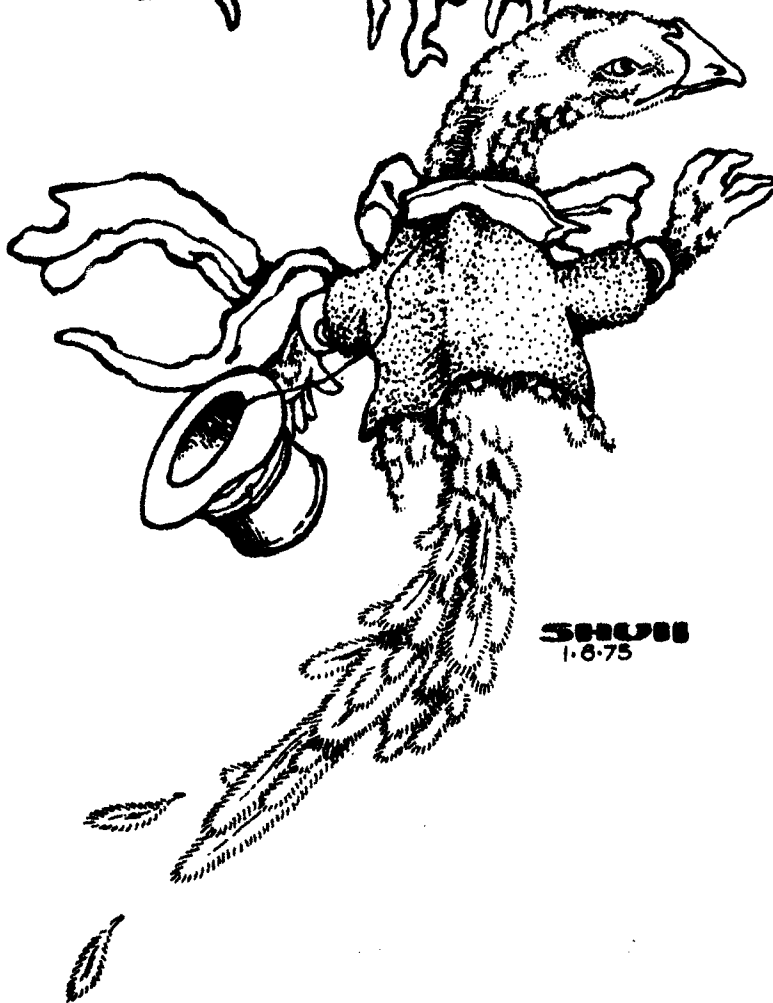
I keep forgetting that Saskatchewan doesn't have Spring. We went from winter to \*S\*U\*M\*M\*E\*R this past week, with buds popping out wildly on all the trees, and temperatures of 20°C and more. It's something of a shock, to go from winter-coat weather to t-shirt weather, all in a single week.

To celebrate spring/summer, the end of book-packing (I do not like moving) and the approach of my final exan, I spent some time living the Agrarian Reality. I got a cryptic phonecall from Citizen David, a week ago. "The crocuses are up!" he said. I instantly deciphered the code: he meant that the prairie crocuses were up...

At an ungodly hour of the morning, in the pouring rain and chill of a Regina dawn, I caught the bus to Saskatoon. It was the local. I saw a lot of small-town grain elevators, and heard the life history of a little old lady wheat farmer from Brandon, Manitoba. In Saskatoon the sun was shining, and Cathryn and David Miller did, indeed, have prairie crocii to show me. They are furry. (So would you be, if you had to come up through the snow.) Now I can leave Saskatchewan.

And in the sunshine and warmth, I took off my shoes, rolled up my jeans, tossed my sweater onto the fence, and picked up a rake... It's an arcane agrarian ritual called Putting in the Garden, and it involves burying little dead things in the earth in the faith that they'll come up peas and beets and onions and snow peas and garlics and carrots. Beats reading agrarian novels, any day.

CLOSE THAT PAGE!  
YOU'RE LETTING  
IN A DRAFT!



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