

Editorial

This issue of *Canadian Children's Literature* begins with a poem by Jean Little. It might seem that we are breaking our policy of producing a journal of criticism and reviews. But Jean Little's poem, in its own creative mode, offers a profound comment on children's literature. We think our readers will find in it a perceptive and wise view of the power of reading. The poem is something of a quiz, too. How many of the references and allusions are familiar to our readers?

The opposite to a poem about children's literature is surely a bibliography! The list of books published in 1978 has a poetic quality, nevertheless. It presents an image of endless effort, energy, creativity. Imagine 391 books, coming in one year, from all these publishers, big, small, and miniscule! Imagine the fusion of skills of writing, illustrating, editing, book designing, production, and marketing. Again a quiz: how many of the items on this year's list will wind up some day as allusions in a poem like Jean Little's? We invite our readers to make a guess. Our own editors' choices would include *A Salmon for Simon* (Waterton/Blades), *Up in a Tree* (Atwood), and *La Chicane* (Anfousse). The first two are reviewed in this issue and the third was reviewed in #17. All three are picture-story books for quite small children – books which thus offer a “double-door” approach to children's responsiveness. The problem of assessing such books is touched on in several reviews. We also offer in this “doorways” issue three reviews of plays – another art-form in which the power of words is supplemented by other appeals to children's sensibilities. Finally on our cover and in a major article we focus on the work of Margaret Laurence, the great Canadian writer whose novels – for adults and children – have reopened the doors to our own sense of home.

Cover design: from THE OLDEN DAYS COAT, written by Margaret Laurence and illustrated by Muriel Wood. Reprinted courtesy of McClelland and Stewart and Muriel Wood. This issue contains an article by Margaret Laurence's work and a review of one of her latest children's books.