

# “Somewhere the Hurting Must Stop”

LIONEL ADEY

*Terry Fox: A Pictorial Tribute to the Marathon of Hope*, Jeremy Brown and Gail Harvey. General Publishing Company, 1980. 96 pp. \$5.95 paper. ISBN 7701-0176-3.

That any reputable author or publisher would exploit the suffering and heroism of Terry Fox is out of the question, but upon reading that the profits from this book were to go to the Canadian Cancer Society I felt prepared to suspend normal critical standards. This soon proved quite unnecessary. Though the text is short, its quality, and that of the many press photographs collected from all over Canada, make this book excellent value for the money. It hardly surprises anyone familiar with printing costs that the publishers can guarantee no more than to pass on 50¢ per copy sold, or actual profit, whichever is the larger.

Naturally, a teacher or school librarian must wonder whether the story of Terry Fox's epic run, so tragically terminated by the spread of cancer to his lungs, is too painful for child readers. I do not think so. Jeremy Brown, the radio reporter who wrote the text, Gail Harvey (press photographer) and Fay Mathews, who collected the photographs, and Andy Donato (*Toronto Sun* cartoonist) and Vince Desai, jointly responsible for design and layout, have taken the utmost trouble to avoid tear-jerking or sensationalism. Their plain, clear account appears far more likely to stir and exalt than to depress young readers. If an adult can scarcely without tears compare the ravaged face in the latest newscasts with the heart-warming smile of the first photograph in the book, taken before the run began, the child reader will almost certainly know, or at least remember, only the smile. The many pictures taken during the run express determined concentration rather than suffering.

In August, 1979, Fox wrote to the Canadian Cancer Society that he intended to raise funds for research by running one-legged across Canada because “Somewhere the hurting must stop.” He referred not to his own pain but to that of young cancer patients he had observed during his six weeks in the Royal Columbian Hospital, New Westminster, B.C., after having his leg amputated in 1977. In February, 1979, this small but iron-willed basketball player and gifted student in Simon Fraser University's Department of Kinesiology began training himself for his yet unannounced run. For eight months he extended his daily stint by a half-mile each week until by the fall he could manage 13 1/2 miles per day.

On April 12, 1980, after dipping his artificial leg in the Atlantic, he set off from St. John's, running 26 miles each day, seven days per week, through snow, sleet and gales in the Maritimes, through scorching heat in Quebec and Ontario, often at first unnoticed, always a continent's width from his native Pacific coast. By September 2, when he gasped "I've got to go home," he had run over three thousand miles and raised more than a million dollars for cancer research. In so doing, he had written a glorious page in the history of an inglorious age and, as Brown remarks, "had caught the essential spirit of what man can be."

Since we have all heard so much of the Terry Fox saga, what have we to learn from this book? It is most heartening to discover how much gigantic, impersonal corporations did to help one who sought a good which transcended self: Ford provided a camper van, Esso the gasoline, the Four Seasons hotel chain all city accommodations, Adidas the running shoes and a war veterans' organization the expensive replacement artificial legs. But his first and most splendid support came from his cruelly-trying family and friends, who by holding dances and garage sales raised \$3,000 to send Terry, his brother and his school friend (and van-driver), to St. John's.

More predictably, we learn in what large measure media coverage contributed to the run's success. A CBC camera crew and the local press ensured Fox of support in Newfoundland and the Maritimes; lack of publicity in Quebec reduced the flow of donations as he jogged along the St. Lawrence; and an ever-growing army of reporters, photographers and commentators aroused such public interest on both sides of the border that his many helpers could scarcely cope with the flood of donations as he limped through Toronto and Ottawa in torrid August.

The deepest impression the book makes, however, is of the utter selflessness of Fox and all who fell under the spell of his "naive purity." Only upon first hearing that he must lose his right leg did this dedicated athlete pity himself, and never did he invite pity from others. When he undertook his marathon for the benefit of sufferers in future generations, he had every justification for concentrating upon his own adjustment to some new career. Month by month, as the constant pounding along highways caused his stump to ache, bleed and suppurate, he refused all suggestions of rest-days, even on his birthday, sometimes giving up his lunch-hour rest to address a school meeting. Never did he accept gifts or donations for himself.

The author does not gloss over the trials and setbacks: the smells of sweat and pus in the van, the occasional quarrels, the horseplay in restaurants. Especially vivid is his cameo of a furious runner using a hand-cranked phone to force a journalist in his home province to print a retraction to a

story of his having been driven through Quebec. But what shines out on every page is the white heat of selfless commitment that impelled Fox and everyone around him. It was this that drew a response reserved only for heroes and saints. One surprising omission is any reference to the deep Christian faith and motivation that Terry Fox expressed to television news interviewers after his return to Vancouver.

A final yet no less strong reason why children should be enabled to see this tribute is the superb collection of photographs, which leave unforgettable impressions not only of the runner but of the eastern and central landscape through which he made the longest marathon run in history.

That the body of Terry Fox can survive seems at this time unlikely, but like the martyrs of old he has lit a fire of the spirit that will not be put out. In this brutal and cynical age, he has set an example to inspire not only our medical research teams but Canadians of all succeeding generations. The authors of this tribute can take pride in having placed this example before us.

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## Dreams and Reality in *The Lady of the Strawberries*

ANN BOLTON

*The Lady of the Strawberries*, Helen Chetin. Illus. by Anita Kunz. Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1978. 89 pp. \$8.95 hardcover. ISBN 0-88778-183-7.