

# Editorial:

## In praise of poetry

Ever since *CCL* was established eleven years ago, we have been making notes about verse for Canadian children, by Canadian children, about Canadian children — all with the idea of producing a special issue on poetry. Here, now, is that issue. Our articles range from the general (why all children need poetry) to the particular (how one poem by Dennis Lee and one by sean o huigin modernize the image of the RCMP). An interview with Margaret Atwood, our most admired poet today, reaches into her own memories of childhood readings; in another article, a forgotten national heritage is recalled in an account of a pre-Confederation writer of children's hymns.

As for our own pile of notes on books of poetry, we have scrapped that, and we present instead Joanne Stanbridge's annotated list of 111 volumes published in English, from Confederation to the present. This quantitative indicator of the extent of Canadian poetry for children might be supplemented by another index, compiled in 1983 by Kathleen Snow, Esther Gorosh, and Margaret Harper, and published by the Canadian Library Association. That 182-page subject index lists 70 items — anthologies, or individual books by Canadian poets who have written verse that can be effectively offered to children and young adults. The index offers a guide by topic (for instance, thirty-five poems on cats include items by Pratt, Layton, Souster, Lee, and Musgrave).

We regret that the issue contains no general essay on Quebec poetry, but we have tucked in a short piece, on Gilles Vigneault. Submitted first as a review, this mini-article reminds us of the flourishing world of francophone poets, and in particular brings to mind the poet most of us know as the passionate chansonnier of Quebec identity. We praise him, and all the poets who have given our children songs of love, songs of the seasons, songs of our country.