"structures intérieures" qui visent à "faire des êtres responsables". Il suffit par exemple de relire les textes de ce recueil pour y découvrir ici un appel à la générosité ("Barati, Baratin", "Les Ailes"), là une préoccupation écologique ("Les trois fils du vieux Maltais"). ailleurs une condamnation du racisme ("Petite berceuse au temps de la colonie"). . . Partout, cependant, on y célèbre la vie, l'imagination, le rêve, la poésie, la musique, l'aventure et la création.

Une seule réserve: ce merveilleux "livre-disque", que Vigneault dédie aux enfants avec une passion enjouée parce qu'il reconnaît leur pourvoir salvateur, ne devrait pas être réservé à ce seul auditoire. Tout adulte peut en tirer profit. La rencontre dans cet ouvrage du poète-chansonnier et de jeunes illustrateurs permettra à chacun de rejoindre l'enfant qu'il porte encore en soi et de déployer au sein de son quotidien un peu d'espoir, de beauté et de rêve.

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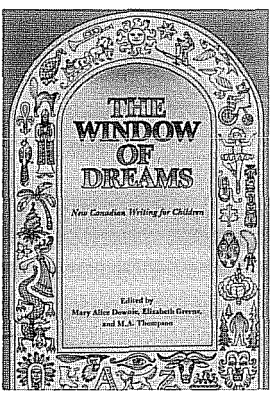
A TROUBLESOME GENRE: THE JUVENILE SHORT STORY

The window of dreams: New Canadian writing for children. Mary Alice Downie, Elizabeth Greene, and M.A. Thompson, Eds. Methuen, 1986. 191 pp. $22.95. ISBN 0-458-8003900-1.

The short story is not a popular children's genre. So it must have been with some trepidation that the editors of *The window of dreams: New Canadian writing for children* solicited manuscripts for this anthology. Of the 600 submitted, the editors selected 20 stories and 10 poems. It is the former that are, by and large, disappointing – frequently strained, clumsily-wrought pieces by both lesser-known and well-established Canadian authors. This is perhaps the inevitable result of the selection process: few of these works had weathered the storms of the marketplace.



Many pieces rely on extra-literary elements, at the expense of good storytelling. In Nancy Prasad's "The boy who loved fire," the pretentious cosmic dimension is a superficial overlay on an unengaging plot line – the boy's rejection by siblings and classmates and his mysterious rapport with his grandfather, whose gratuitous poetic musings – "'Fire can't sit still,' he would say in his raspy voice. 'It must be leaping, twisting, trying to reach the sky and the first fire, the sun. That is the dream of fire'" (100) – have little bear-

ing on anything else in the story.

Jean Little's "Goodbye, Tizzie" provides more information than will ever be wanted about guide dogs, and Jan Truss's "The day of the cantaloupes" hammers home an anti-pollution message through an absurd plot device (birds relieve a city's heat wave by swarming after cantaloupe seeds).

Technical flaws weaken many stories. Elfreida Reid's modern fairytale "Mary and the cabbage-head" takes three paragraphs to get to its dilatory opening:

> One day Mary went to the market to buy a bit of meat and some vegetables. She saw an old man selling cabbages that were going to seed. No one wanted to buy them, and he looked very sad. Mary felt sorry for the old man and decided to buy a cabbage to cheer him up. It would be good enough for soup, she thought. So she paid for the cabbage, put it in her shopping bag, and set off for home (104).

Dialogue is frequently unconvincing. Here is Janie, sounding very unchildlike as she arranges to buy a stuffed goose off its toy store shelf in Peggy Capek's "The blue goose": "'Then I'll talk to Mrs. Brown about having you delivered, and I'm so happy that you have decided to give up your adventure for us,' Janie said as she skipped off to make the arrangements" (12). L'al and her young dragon friend, in Eileen Kernaghan's "The sorcerer's child," sound similarly stilted:

> "Save us!" L'al cried into the dragon's ear."Use your sharp teeth and claws and kill it." "I cannot," said the dragon. "I am too young. My teeth are too small, and my claws are not sharp enough. But you, L'al, you are a sorcerer's child. Have you no spells to destroy it?" "I have learned no spells," said L'al in a voice full of despair. "I am not old enough" (91).

Some stories strain painfully at humour. The Delahay family is hardly a modern-day version of the Peterkins, and the children's gibes at their absent-minded professor father – "Oh, our Pappy/He has a mind like a steel trappy," (James Reaney, "At the Bigfoot Carwash" (148), – hardly excite uncontrollable laughter.

Meguido Zola's "When the Sultan came to Teal' is probably the most successful comic piece. Though I can't vouch for its authenticity, the African-English dialect reads well in this briskly-edited series of vignettes of daily life in Zanzibar in the 1950's. Zola's social satire is reminiscent of V.S. Naipaul's: "'I accepting,' I announce when first week holidays gone and my career not even off the ground yet. (I try to forget Pepper's pa win less votes than he even have voting relatives)" (132-133).

The poetry is of a higher calibre than the fiction. Children will enjoy the twist at the end of Charles Wilkins's "*", on forgetfulness – so named, as the footnote indicates, because the author can't recall the poem's title. Mary E. Choo's "Morpheus and the boy" paints a lovely picture of a boy awakened at

night, playing flute to dream pelicans. And there is a striking image in George Swede's haiku:

Dropping stone after stone
into the lake I keep
reappearing (112).

The book, with its black-line illuminations at the opening of most stories, is exceptionally well-designed by Peter Dorn. The black and white illustrations – scraperboard, charcoal, pen and ink, pencil, wash and silhouette – decorate the text in many formats, from full-page to miniature insets (Jillian Galliland's Victorian ice skates on page 117 are particularly enchanting). I hope we will see more of her work, and of the more romantic drawings of Peggy Capek.

There is a need for short stories for children, especially in the classroom, where works that can be read and discussed in a 50-minute period are in short supply. If a sizable body of Canadian juvenile short stories accumulates gradually – and the success of Martha Brooks's *Paradise Cafe* bodes well – perhaps a more impressive anthology can be assembled in the future.

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UN VÉRITABLE RÉGAL

Angèle et l'ours polaire. Marie-Louise Gay. Illus. auteure. Saint-Lambert, Héritage, 1988. 32 pp., 9,95$ relié. ISBN 2-7625-2579-9.

Angèle et l'ours polaire, le plus récent album illustré de Marie-Louise Gay, est un véritable régal. Comme toujours chez cette auteure-illustratrice douée, c'est le rapport texte-image qui fournit aux enfants de trois à sept ans (et aux lecteurs bien plus âgés aussi) une expérience de lecture savoureuse et mémorable.

Angèle, une petite fille de bientôt six ans, a la voix très forte et les cheveux noirs et ébouriffés. Comme tous les enfants de son âge, Angèle a l'habitude de se réveiller bien avant ses parents le week-end – et de demander leur présence dans sa chambre sur-le-champ en se réveillant. Quand une simple demande ne réussit pas (les parents préfèrent dormir le samedi matin), Angèle a recours à une autre stratégie bien connue des enfants: elle "découvre" un monstre sous son lit, puis invente une histoire fantastique dans laquelle sa chambre est inondée avec des requins partout. On reconnaît facilement cette situation