bother. The feathers are coming out." Neil heroically attempts the patchwork, but Jamie's "kibitzing," believe it or not, causes Neil to prick his finger.

Oh bother, indeed.

Another complaint is that Hughes abandons an early and logical attempt to have the two brothers pursue the treasure together. If one is practical and the other imaginative, and if the two are companions, the possibilities for constant and entertaining tension are endless. However, for some reason, Jamie becomes less important as the plot develops, leaving the "imaginative" Neil, who is really more obsessive than anything else, to champion the cause alone. The fault, I believe, is that increasingly Jamie becomes characterized as a child, unable to understand the seriousness of this adventure. He is even referred to as "young Jamie" by a brother only a year older. Hughes' reason for this is never learned.

At the back of the book, the publisher writes, "[Hughes] is one of the most popular writers for young people on both sides of the Atlantic." It seems a pity that *The treasure of the Long Sault* does little to enhance this reputation.

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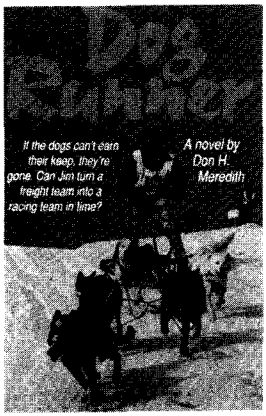
NORTHERN INHERITANCE



Dog runner. Don H. Meredith. Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989. 176 pp., $12.95 paper. ISBN 0-88833-293-9; **Houses of snow, skin, and bones. Native dwellings: The North**. Bonnie Shemie. Tundra Books, 1989. 24 pp., $12.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-240-9.

In *Dog runner*, an exciting and compelling novel for young adult readers, Jim Redcrow, a shy teenage boy of mixed white and Indian blood, unsure of himself and very sensitive about his Native ancestry, discovers strength in his Grandfather's teachings about Weesakaycha the Trickster, and Maheegun his guardian spirit, and about the uniqueness of his heritage and the wisdom of his ancestors.

In order to keep his team of sled dogs, Jim must show his father that he is capable of contributing to their upkeep. After troubles and losses, the Redcrow family finally unite to help Jim prepare for the race of his life, The Trappers' Trek. The narrative pace is fast but there are moments of quiet intensity when Jim, looking into the eyes of his fierce and loyal huskies, senses his affinity

with them, and feels the growing conviction that to be a dog runner is his calling.

If *Dog runner* is the story of one young person's coming of age, it is also a story in which many difficult themes and issues are sounded. Racial prejudice constantly reverberates in such name calling as "pie-yute," "wagon-burners," "squaw," and in the fights between Jim and his white peers. Family violence, welfare, poverty, and the struggle of Indians and Metis to destroy the stereotypical images that are held of them, are all woven into the fabric of the story. The author, however, chooses to soften the worst aspects of the themes he touches upon; I cannot help feeling that somehow he has missed an opportunity to explore aspects of Canadian life which for too long have remained hidden. In spite of this reservation, *Dog runner* is a novel which I highly recommend for use in schools. It may cause young readers to reflect on the rich spiritual and cultural inheritance which is available to all Canadians.

Houses of snow, skin and bones is the first title in Tundra's new series of architecture books for children, appropriately devoted to Native shelters of the North. The publishers are to be commended for producing a well-written and beautifully illustrated book, in which carefully researched information is presented, clearly and accurately and without any tendency to eulogize or romanticize. In my favourite section – on the igluvigak or snow house – the whole section is laid out across facing pages so that the reader can follow the building of the igluvigak from the beginning to the end without the interruption of turning the page. The insulating properties of snow and the unique shape of the igluvigak should interest urban dwellers who regard snow as a mushy, slushy nuisance and inconvenience.

The front cover shows a bird's eye view of an Inuit village with the tops sliced off the igluvigaat (plural of igluvigak) so that we look inside from above, to see the sleeping platforms covered in skins, the cooking rack above the qulliq – stone lamp/stove – the connecting passageways between the dwellings, and the manner of entering through the door at ground level. In one family igluvigak, three adults and two children work and sit on the platform, one child snugly nestled in the amout or carrying hood; the other child's bare hands and legs are graphic evidence of the difference in temperature (up to 40 degrees celsius) between the inside air heated by human bodies and the qulliq's gentle flame, and the cold air outside the thin walls of the igluvigak.

The circumpolar world, with Canada appropriately at the centre, is pre-

sented in maps inside the front and back cover, showing not only the different kinds of northern dwellings, but also where they would be found in relation to each other. I must qualify my praise of the circumpolar maps by objecting to the distortion suffered by the High Arctic, and by Baffin Island in particular. It is a pity that the area with the largest concentration of Inuit in Canada should be so distorted. Similarly, it is wonderful to see a book on northern topics for southern readers introducing vocabulary from a native language, such as "igluvigak" and "tupiq;" but the rather odd spelling "quarmang" is given for "qarmaq." The book could be improved if it included a glossary of words in Inuktitut to supplement the few which are used. It might surprise and interest southern readers to know that the culture which developed such efficient dwellings still has a living and unique language which linguists feel has a good chance of surviving.

The Inuit learned by practical experience and by trial and error how to use whatever they could find in their inhospitable environment. Today, however, many Inuit find themselves living in overcrowded substandard housing, which contributes to all kinds of social problems, from family violence to suicide. It is ironic that Inuit provided themselves with shelter superbly suited to their needs, literally out of skin, bones, stones, and snow, while governments today, with modern technology and building materials cannot adequately house an urban and growing population.

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