and Gary Chartrand's compelling landscape illustrations. These serene, almost stark images, often seen through windows and in paintings, call dramatic attention to the physical and natural beauty of the home that Flora is so eager to leave. If pictures in picture books exist not only to exercise the visual and aesthetic sensibilities of viewers but also to aid in the telling of stories, as Perry Nodelman has suggested (vii), then the dialectic in Delaronde's book between the "here" of Flora's community and the "there" of the white town warrants closer study.

Home is a resonant concept in children's literature and, as physical space, often provides the main setting of children's books. It is telling that at this time in Canada's history home figures so prominently in Canadian Aboriginal children's literature. Despite various configurations of home in the above texts, these images work to provide Aboriginal perspectives on several issues at the centre of political and literary discussions in Canada, particularly those involving Aboriginal identity, land claims, self-determination, and the environment. The link between the literary and the political implicit in the images of home in these books should offer numerous possibilities for children and adults to learn more about Canada's less studied nations and histories.

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Time Travels and Tangles / *Jennifer H. Litster*

Maud's House of Dreams: The Life of Lucy Maud Montgomery. Janet Lunn. Doubleday Canada, 2002. 152 pp. $24.95 cloth. ISBN 0-385-65933-4.

> Most of Janet Lunn's stories end as this one [*Shadow in Hawthorn Bay*] when the guy and the gal finally get together.
>
> — Yan Chen (Age 13)

When I was about 12, in the early 1980s before the category of "young adult" readers was invented (in Scotland at any rate), a favourite book of mine was Eileen Dunlop's *Robinsheugh* (1975). With her parents in America for the summer, 12-year-old Elizabeth Martin is packed off from London to her Aunt Kate's cottage in the Scottish Borders. Kate, who "liked people in history better than people now" (3), is holed up on the grounds of a stately home called Robinsheugh, researching the life

of its former Laird. (Little did I know that this absent-minded professor, nose in a book and housework on the sidelines, was what I was to become!) Abandoned, alone, and ignored by her workaholic aunt, Elizabeth escapes time and again through a looking glass into 18th-century baronial life where she is cared for and secure. But this seductive time travel proves sinister: Elizabeth, in a mirror of Kate's obsession, almost quits the real world for the call of ghosts and shadows. For me, the spell of *Robinsheugh* was double. The past is perfectly realized here, rich in colour and detail, and the miserable present only a look away from enchantment and romance.

This type of literary time travel has also inspired Janet Lunn, a Canadian writer for young adults. In her novel *The Root Cellar* (1981), New Yorker Rose, like Elizabeth Martin, is "shifted" backward, from her aunt's home in Ontario where she is sent after her grandmother's death. In the turbulent years surrounding the American Civil War, Rose discovers friendship, purpose, and her own potential. Indeed, as Elizabeth Waterston writes, the ending reveals that "access to the past, to history, can help a character to coalesce in the present" (148). In Lunn's stories, this past can chill with mystery and foreboding (*Shadow in Hawthorn Bay*), or memories and family history can be powerful agencies in the present (*Double Spell*). For Lunn, as for Dunlop, the past is full of thrills, certainly, but the past also schools young protagonists puzzled about their identity and needs. For young readers, time travels and tangles are exciting and immediate history lessons. Moreover, these fantasies, slipping between the dull present and the dazzling past, seem a particularly resonant way to explore the anxieties of growing up.

Now Janet Lunn has visited the Canadian past again, through the life of L.M. Montgomery (1874-1942). From her pedigree in fiction, we might have certain expectations of a biography written for young adults by Lunn, aside, that is, from anticipating a well-told tale. In the first instance, her admirers will look forward to the historical background being conveyed with animation and understanding to those who might otherwise be bored or perplexed by life in late nineteenth-century Prince Edward Island. In other words, a biography by Lunn promises to work magic and to travel through time, as it were, in order to make the past accessible and tangible to present-day readers. Secondly, Lunn, as a children's author, could offer unique insights into the relationship between a writer and her art. As L.M. Montgomery's fictional characters, from *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) onward, have a timeless appeal to young adults, Montgomery's life in Lunn's hands could enchant, amaze, and amuse these readers, and Maud Montgomery herself might even cut a dash in their twenty-first-century world.

It is in the second of these expectations that *Maud's House of Dreams* is the more fulfilling. The life Lunn describes is never distant from the fiction it inspired as she follows the author's "journey from the day her mother was buried to the day Maud wrote 'Lucy Maud Montgomery' at the end of her first published story" (2). (In actual fact, her first published story was attributed to "Maud Cavendish" [Russell, Russell, and Wilmshurst 66] and *Anne of Green Gables* to the gender-ambiguous "L.M. Montgomery.") As each of the book's 13 chapters is fronted by an epigraph from one of Montgomery's novels, well-known friends introduce her to readers. Thus, these chapters in turn — although chapters two and three are out of turn, for two covers Maud's schooldays and three her pre-school vacations — recount a life that is recognizable to Montgomery's readers: her mother's death recalls the deaths of Emily's and Marigold's fathers; in her father's subsequent move west are the absent fathers of Jane Stuart and Sara Stanley; her "Katie Maurice" and "Lucy Gray"

call to mind Anne's imaginary friends; her disagreeable stepmother evokes, for Lunn, Grandmother Kennedy, Ruth Dutton, and all of Valancy's dreadful aunts. The trials and triumphs of the developing Canadian author Emily Byrd Starr map, of course, Montgomery's own. Montgomery's heroines share with their creator a rich imagination that could release them from orphanhood, loneliness, and misery to a house of dreams, "a beautiful and magical realm" or, equally, to "one that was ugly and terrifying" (4).

So far, so familiar. Where Lunn's biography is unusually deft is in her treatment of Maud Montgomery's numerous relatives, friends, and acquaintances. Lunn takes what could potentially amount to a confusing array of names and makes these ghosts not only live and breathe and laugh and scold but shows them all to be, good or bad, integral to Montgomery's creative life. Lunn has a flair for spotting the salient feature of each person and its fictional equivalent: "There they all were, the colours and shapes and sizes of those old friends and companions, mixed and tossed up in Maud's imagination, to emerge as the living characters of the fictional Avonlea" (137). Thus, *Maud's House of Dreams* has a richness of character to it that many longer studies for adults lack. Chapter six, on Montgomery's year in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, is particularly fine: through Lunn's eyes we see a 15-year-old girl at a developmental crux, as she makes choices about friends and relations, schooling and career, love and marriage.

Although Maud Montgomery faced marriage decisions earlier than most Canadian adolescents today (receiving her first proposal when she was 16), Lunn's focus on this episode and other flirtations and romances makes her subject timeless for modern teenage girls. If Lunn's biographic style is first of all a matter of bringing Montgomery dashing into the here and now, she also succeeds in transporting her readers back into Montgomery's past with an immediacy made available to her by quoting Montgomery's personal journals. Lunn's readers travel through time to think as Montgomery thought, to see the world as she saw it. Because of this technique, we better understand her often-maligned maternal grandparents, her days in Halifax seem fuller, the death of her beau Herman Leard is felt all the keener. We sit beside Montgomery in a buggy when, her mind "in a turmoil of thoughts and questions" (57), the young teenager worries over her imminent meeting with Sir John A. Macdonald. This episode may remind readers of Anne's fraught ride from Bright River with Matthew, a parallel made all the stronger by learning that Montgomery, like Anne, would give birth to a child that lived for only one day (150).

Unfortunately, these last two examples are evidence of "a good imagination gone wrong." Montgomery's son Hugh was actually stillborn (in 1916). Anne's baby Joyce, in *Anne's House of Dreams* (1917), lives from dawn to dusk, true, but this is Montgomery romanticizing her own loss. Young Maud's "hot and dusty" ride with Uncle Charles Crosby was punctuated by a conversation about the supernatural: she did not worry about meeting the Canadian Premier because this encounter was not yet arranged. As these mistakes suggest, when the biographical detail comes from the subject (or the subject's fiction), there is scope for failure as well as success. Lunn's reliance on Montgomery's journals, for instance, raises questions of how we introduce biography, as a genre, to young people. There is no indication in *Maud's House of Dreams* that L.M. Montgomery's adolescent journal, rewritten in 1919 and 1920, could be a biased or selective account. Lacking such a critical dimension, this biography may patronize older readers.

There is also a danger that, in looking at Montgomery's life as Montgomery did, Lunn's biography inadequately explains the past to young readers. In the eighteenth-century world in *Robinsheugh*, Elizabeth is a stranger in a strange land and must learn a new vocabulary, new songs and new games, new manners and new customs — or rather old ones that are new to her — in order to survive. *Maud's House of Dreams* is, at times, a pinhole view of this foreign country, not a panoramic scene. In reviewing Lunn's biography for the *Globe and Mail*, Stephanie Nolen points out that Lunn's "well-vaccinated readers . . . will have little idea what typhoid is, how Maud might have caught it or how sick it made her" (27). One could add to Nolen's list of unexplained rituals and fashions the baffling names of childhood games (28) and the mysterious religious and social background that makes Grandfather Macneill object to Baptists and lady-teachers and kissing cousins.

The errors in this book are not themselves substantial, yet this short volume contains several mistakes that an editor should have spotted: Montgomery's age is sometimes incorrectly given; her beloved cousin Frede was more than eight, not seven, years her junior (22); the Island's second town is Summerside, not Sunnyside (3); *Anne of Green Gables* was indeed published in June (142), but in 1908, a year after Montgomery received L.C. Page's letter of acceptance (April 1907), and Lunn's description of this event rings false. Similarly, Lunn embellishes Montgomery's journal account of her Aunt Emily Macneill's marriage by adding that the clan "filled the Presbyterian church for the ceremony" (31). Weddings were not church affairs, a point made in *Green Gables* where Anne's idea of "news" is the (mistaken) rumour that Charlotte Gillis might marry in the church (262). Such slips hint that Lunn is not always familiar with rural Presbyterian P.E.I. More importantly, Lunn squanders the chance to illustrate the differences between wedding customs then and now, exactly the kind of historical detail that would please and illuminate young readers.

In her decisions about which parts of Maud Montgomery's life to recount, Lunn appears greatly influenced by Montgomery's somewhat saccharine autobiography, *The Alpine Path* (serialized in 1917 and published posthumously in book form in 1975). This leads to some questionable omissions. Grandfather Macneill's will, which left the homestead to his son and thus ushered in 13 years of wretched living circumstances for Maud and her grandmother, is ignored in favour of a too cosy and over-hurried portrait of Montgomery's Cavendish life until 1911. (Had Montgomery been bequeathed this house she might never have married or left the Island.) The harsh terms of Montgomery's book contract and her tense dealings with her Bostonian publishers are overlooked, despite their enormous impact on her finances, her fiction, and her fame. Clearly, a short book for younger readers must be selective: Lunn's biography principally narrates the real events and emotions that had a hand to play in creating fictional scenes and characters and does this work well. However, Lunn's concentration on Montgomery's child and adolescent heroines means that her "Life of Lucy Maud Montgomery" (to quote the subtitle) has next to nothing to say about Montgomery's life as Canada's most famous writer — which, in these celebrity-obsessed times, would surely intrigue readers — and is hazy at best on Montgomery's life after her mid-20s.

This brings me to my chief criticism. Not only is this biography unevenly paced, but it fizzles out in 1911, when Maud Montgomery and Ewan Macdonald married after a five-year secret engagement and left P.E.I. for Ontario. (Rubio and Waterston's short biography devotes only 54 of its 133 pages to these years.) In choosing to do

so, Lunn argues that, in her books, Montgomery is "living and reliving, shaping and reshaping the Prince Edward Island childhood that had meant so much to her" (147). While this image of childhood as a creative oasis is seductive for young readers, it limits and distorts any biography. After all, Lunn's title alludes to Montgomery's novel *Anne's House of Dreams*, wherein Montgomery's first years of marriage and motherhood are the experiences relived. It cannot be that the second half of her life contains meat too strong for young-adult sensitivities. Elizabeth MacLeod's engaging biography of Montgomery, for readers aged eight to 12, does not shy clear of nightmarish events. Lunn's two-page afterword — which devotes only one paragraph to Montgomery's life from 1911 to 1942 — is an inadequate response to those who want to know "what happened next." A follow-up volume from Lunn — *Maud's House of Horrors*, perhaps — would remind them that the story is rarely over "when the guy and the gal finally get together."

Maud's House of Dreams has much to recommend it. It is vividly told and beautifully crafted at times, and in Maud Montgomery's early literary struggles young adults will find an inspirational example of grit and determination. Lunn's story will charm many readers. As an academic, however, I have one further criticism. Lunn's text is heavily reliant on the journal Montgomery began at the age of 14; indeed, many pages of this book paraphrase or quote Montgomery's words. Yet, save for a brief acknowledgement on the closing page, these sources, to date published in four volumes by Oxford University Press, are not credited: no publisher's permission is recorded, and diary entries are quoted without dates and pages. Further, Montgomery's novels themselves are listed by their original and not renewed copyrights. This failure to obtain the appropriate licensing is regrettable and results in the book seeming like an unauthorized production, which the want of any photographs only enhances. Surely, visual images of Maud Montgomery, of the places she lived and studied and wrote in — such as Elizabeth MacLeod uses to good effect in her earlier book — are integral in making the past accessible and tangible to young readers?

In essence, Lunn's "biography" is a "retelling" of a tale Montgomery has already told, like the abridged "children's" versions of *Anne of Green Gables*. Yet, despite its flaws, Lunn's book did work a kind of magic on me. I travelled back, not to Prince Edward Island in the 1890s, but to an Amsterdam attic in the 1940s. With her love of clothes and books, her school friendships and feuds, her flirtations and romances, her adolescent struggles with conservative and protective guardians, with, more than all these, her need to write and her hunger for literary success, Maud Montgomery has much in common with Anne Frank, whose diary began (12 June 1942) less than three months after Montgomery's closed (23 Mar. 1942). It is a disservice to Frank to think that the perennial interest of young adults in her diary rests only on her bleak times and fate. She and Montgomery shared the ability to give voice to the timeless anxieties and heartaches, escapism, and magic of youth. Perhaps, then, the greatest value of *Maud's House of Dreams* is to remind us, as adults, what valuable reading for young adults Montgomery's journals could be.

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The Realm of the Zany / *Bert Almon*

My Cake's on Fire! Diane Dawber. Illus. Pat Wilkinson. Borealis, 2001. 66 pp. $14.95 paper. ISBN 0-88887-237-2.

Don't Be So Persnickety! The Runaway Sneezing Poems, Songs & Riddles of John B. Lee. John B. Lee. Illus. Frank "Woody" Woodcock. Black Moss, 2000. $9.95 paper. ISBN 0-88753-352-3.

Garbage Delight: Another Helping. Dennis Lee. Illus. Maryann Kovalski. Key Porter Kids, 2002. 48 pp. $19.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55263-470-1.

Nothing Beats a Pizza. Loris Lesynski. Illus. Loris Lesynski. Annick, 2001. $18.95 library, $6.95 perfect. ISBN 1-55037-701-9, 1-55037-700-0.

The books under review here are meant for children (roughly six-12 years) rather than young adults, and except for Diane Dawber's *My Cake's on Fire!* they provide good examples of the most popular contemporary approach to children's poetry, the tradition of strong rhythms, amusing word play, and whimsy, all traceable to Edward Lear and more recently to Dr. Seuss. Northrop Frye's discussion of the subconscious roots of lyric provides some context for understanding the style of such poetry. His iconic status makes it hard to remember that Frye had a remarkable sense of humour. In *Anatomy of Criticism*, his terms for the two fundamental impulses in lyric poetry are "babble" and "doodle" (275), words appropriate for a consideration of poetry written for children. For one thing, they lack the solemnity of so much literary criticism, although Frye suggests that these terms are the sources