

In this novel, you laugh at the antics of Barney's pet mouse, Saki; you suffer the agonies of a parent who loses a son; and you are deeply touched along with Barney, at the startling condition of alcoholics: "Barney had a sudden painful sense that Mike was the child and he the father". Barney learns that along with life's privileges go responsibilities. He learns that freedom, responsibility, and maturity are all intertwined.

Humanity's state of health - social, moral, economic, and domestic - is ailing, and so the Barney McGee's and the Marylee Jones's of the world are on the increase. What can be done to alleviate their hurting? What steps can be taken to build their self-esteem? Books such as these can provide insight into the reasons for damaging situations, can pinpoint the resulting emotional wounds and suggest ways of developing adequate coping mechanisms.

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Science and Art Can Converge

SHIRLEY LORIMER

Mammals in Profile, Volumes 1 & 2, Randolph L. Peterson. Illus. Martin Glen Loates. Cerebrus Press, 1979. 36 pp. in each. ISBN 0-9200-1600-6 (Vol. 1); 0-9200-1601-4 (Vol. 2).

Animals, Man and Change: Alien and Extinct Wildlife of Ontario, Hugh R. MacCrimmon. McClelland and Stewart: Biomangement Enterprises, P.O. Box 1056, Guelph, Ontario., 1977. 160 pp. cloth. ISBN 0-7710-5420-3.

Arctic Journey: Paintings, Sketches and Reminiscences of a Vanishing World, Peter Buerschaper. Pagurian Press, 1977. 126 pp. cloth. ISBN 0-88932-059-4.

There is a composition by Murray Schafer in which the score, rather than being written in the customary musical notation, is set out in linear descriptions for each instrument. Thus, a sweeping surf-capped wave, repeated across the page, presents the clarinet part; horizontal lines of varying length describe the strings. In place of such directions as "solemnly" or "con grazioso", we are given a score printed in blue. The music, in performance, would vary with the interpretation of the players involved, but the interesting feature for us, from a non-musical point of view, is the translation of a practical guide to an aural art into a visual art form. Two creative forms have been welded together; the visual pattern now suggests and reinforces the aural one, while being itself dependent on an aural pattern and interpretation.

The four books with which this review deals are all designated as science books, by definition intended to give information clearly and accurately, and to be literary works only by accident. All of them, in different ways and to varying extents, go beyond this definition to gather in other threads and evolve a richer pattern. There is no question but that all of these books present their scientific information well, but there is more to them than information alone. They have additions that add appreciably to their status as books, as literature, and also to their interest for a general reading public.

In the two volumes by Glen Loates and Randolph Peterson, to begin with the most traditional books, art and science are joined not only by convenience but by empathy. Cerebrus Press has done a fine job of book design and colour reproduction. Randolph Peterson, the curator of the Department of Mammalogy of the Royal Ontario Museum, has provided a brief commentary which is complemented by range maps and tabulated physical description. The heart of the books, however, is in Loates' paintings. They are superbly drawn, with a fine sense of line and detail. Not all, needless to say, are of equal quality; the muskrat bears no resemblance to the lively character who sat eating clams under the boathouse this summer, while the moose would be better suited to *Alice in Wonderland*, cousin to the White Rabbit and the Cheshire cat. Others, the raccoon and the gray squirrel for example, are not only satisfactory but somehow extend our recognition of the animal and its part in the natural world.

These are short books, sixteen mammals in each and 36 pages. No claim is made for the originality of the paintings and many seem to be familiar from other publications. The format, with its stapled back and soft cover, is quite unlike the usual coffee table design. Nevertheless, considering the price (\$2.95) and the quality of the reproduction, they are bargains of the first order. One minor problem does arise from the format: reading them, rather than browsing through, leaves the impression of a totally

happenstance arrangement, with the lynx next to a woodchuck and a bat beside a polar bear. In fact, the order follows the standard order used in texts on mammals; but here small numbers and a parallel rather than sequential arrangement in the two volumes blurs the logic of the order.

Animals, Man and Change is the one of these books that comes closest to being science alone. It is methodological, a little dry, gentle and unassuming. Hugh MacCrimmon has catalogued in surprising numbers the wildlife that has been introduced into Ontario and the species that have disappeared. He has recorded in scholarly detail, with a salutary absence of acrimony and blame-finding, the changes that have occurred since man first began to meddle with nature in Ontario. The trouble is that the species themselves tend to be lacking in colour and imaginative appeal for the most part. Here are no whooping cranes or condors, only prairie dogs and elk, neither of which are extinct in areas outside the province. The catalogue of introduced species, rats and mice and fish and game birds, is similarly lacking in drama. As Norman Myers writes in the October issue of *Harrowsmith*¹, invasive species are usually marked by their prolific natures rather than by any more aesthetically attractive features. Moreover, MacCrimmon does not touch on some of the more recent and curious changes, such as the virtual replacement of the herring gull by the smaller ring-billed gull on Ontario's shorelines within the last thirty years. This is presumably because the herring gull is far from extinct, but its decline, and the great increase in the numbers of raccoons and cardinals in the province during the same period, has a pertinency that the general reader would find more compelling than the detailed accounts of the fish species' rise and fall with which the last half of the book is taken up.

There is a short foreword to MacCrimmon's book but no conclusion. Each species is given a chapter which is introduced by an attractive black and white drawing and contains relevant historical sidelights as well as scientific data. In essence, the book is a partial and localized investigation of the phenomena described in shorter and more general terms in Myers' article in *Harrowsmith*. Seen from his perspective (and narrated in his more journalistic style), the issue of species extinction becomes sharply important: up to a million species may disappear from the earth by the year 2000. That figure, of course, includes insects and plants, many of which we have never recognized while they did exist. Countless more have undoubtedly disappeared in past time, but in nothing like the numbers man's own population explosion and the vast changes in the environment that are the result will have precipitated. Many will go not just unknown but unlamented, but if among them there is some unique form of unsuspected value either in terms of aesthetics or utility, our loss will be no less for being unwitting. The message is that when man tinkers with his environment the results are never predictable, and often are much less beneficial than he has

anticipated. The non-scientific aspect of this book is its role as a volume of cautionary tales, a form of literature for the young not much used of late. To impose the entire work as reading for a child would be perhaps unwise, but a selection of the chapters should be part of everyone's education, a necessary warning of the care that has to be the determining factor in what is done each day. Except for the Eskimo, man flies in like the birds, taking the best of the weather, surviving on a narrow ledge of high technology in a sea of cold and wind.

Peter Buerschaper's *Arctic Journey* is a rare composite, a happy joining of sensitive art, precise zoology and clear perception in a work of high merit. There is a sharpness of perception here that sets this book on a different level from that of the Loates paintings. While Loates paints two polar bear cubs, accurately but anthropomorphically, with the emphasis on their cuteness, Buerschaper has an adult on the edge of an ice floe, heavy, shapeless and wild. His painting of a king eider on a blue, blue pond makes clear the bird's total separateness from man's world while recognizing the beauty of line and colour that man finds so exhilarating.

In Buerschaper's book Pagurian Press has done a careful and generally successful job of putting together notes, paintings and sketches. The one irritation is the spacing between paragraphs which varies (evidently) according to the size and position of the related sketch. On occasion this gives unwarranted importance to incidental material. "The weather continues to improve" does not require one inch margins top and bottom. Minor quibbles of this nature should not, however, lessen the recognition that this is an unusually fine book, one that should be regarded as a classic in Canadian literature.

NOTES

¹Norman Myers, "The Sinking Ark," *Harrowsmith*, October 1980, pp. 31-41.

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