

Wilson, 1970) and in the fiction portion of Irma McDonough's *Canadian Books for Young People* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978). Despite the latter selection tool's categorization, *Molly* is supposed to be a true "boy-and-his-dog" story.

As a lad of eight in Prince George, B.C., Charlie Perkins fell out of a tree and fractured his ankle. While Charlie was bedridden, his father brought him a St. Bernard pup and the dog became Charlie's close companion over the next five years. Molly shared in all of Charlie's activities from camping to tobogganing to playing the outfield in baseball games. Molly's friendly nature made her popular with the local children, and her oversized doghouse came to be the neighbourhood clubhouse.

Within the community, Molly was both heroine and villainess. She acquired the former mantle after she rescued a child from drowning in an abandoned, waterfilled gravel pit. Gradually though, the latter perception came to be the one more popularly held as Molly's natural instincts to protect her young master led her to "attack" other children when they behaved aggressively towards Charlie. Charlie's young friends understood the absence of malice in Molly's behavior, but their parents, and especially the town gossips, saw only the torn clothes and the "torrents" of blood from scratch "wounds". The local R.C.M.P. sergeant volunteered to keep Molly, but again Molly's protective nature got her into trouble when she savaged a cowardly man who tried to kill her and her pups with a pitchfork. Only memories of Molly's former heroism saved her from a death sentence, and she was banished from Prince George and sent to live with an elderly lady in a remote community fifty miles away. And there the story might have ended except that five years later Charles Perkins saw Molly's picture on a magazine cover and discovered that Molly, "the dog that wouldn't quit", had received a medal for saving three children from drowning in a raging river.

Because the book's time setting remains vague, its contents are not dated for modern audiences; however, the subject matter and the book's gentle pace would make *Molly* much more appropriate for today's children in upper elementary grades rather than junior high.

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TO CHANGE, OR NOT TO CHANGE. . .

**Wm. Jay and the farm**, Susan Hiebert. Borealis Press, 1984. 62 pp. \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-88887-898-2; **When an osprey sails**, Patricia McKenzie-Porter. Nimbus Publishing, 1984. 160 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-920852-26-2.

Fear of change is a dilemma faced by each of the young and contemporary protagonists of these books: Wm. Jay, fourteen, in *Wm. Jay and the farm*, is disheartened by the impending sale of the place he most associates with home, his grandparents' farm in Manitoba; in *When an osprey sails*, Jane, nine, and Mark, eleven, reluctantly embark on a sailing holiday in Nova Scotia with their estranged father and his new wife. What these young people discover is that within their changing circumstances lie unexpected opportunities for renewal and maturity.

Susan Hiebert's story about Wm. Jay builds slowly and quietly towards a kind of adventure, but the adventure is almost incidental to the developing acceptance of his grandparents' decision to sell. Much of the focus during the boy's last day on the beloved farm is on memories of special moments during his reign as "Wm. Jay, King of the Farmyard" (for example the day when the horses were no longer "scary beasts"). Such memories gradually modulate his despondency, enabling him to forgive his grandparents for selling the farm and to understand this change and the changes in himself.

Wm. Jay is a thoughtful, sensitive boy and the relationship between him and his grandparents is touching; one wonders, however, about the story's ability to sustain the interest of today's ten-to-fourteen-year-olds, given the amount of introspection and the slow pace of the book's first half.

Although *When an osprey sails* is also concerned with developing maturity, its lively pace and compelling account of Jane and Mark's metamorphosis from timorous landlubbers to sea-loving sailors stalking a ship named Sea Devil, make one turn its pages with more zest. This book is a gem, and well deserved the Nimbus Award it received in 1982. Carefully detailed maps, diagrams, and nautical terms add to the texture and authenticity of this sea tale, as do the realistic descriptions of rising tides and other such hazards that make people vulnerable at sea: included among these are the cramped quarters that give leave to messy bunks and sibling tiffs, and allow no place for private pouts. More importantly, however, the small spaces invite cooperation and shared joys as this family renews its bonds and establishes some tentative ones with Sam, the new wife.

One of these books will fulfill the needs of quiet moments; the other will make readers long to chase the Sea Devil. Both offer changes worth reading about.

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