

Mini-Reviews

The Reading Solution. Paul Kropp. Random House of Canada. 1993. 208 pp., \$20.00. ISBN 0-394-22266-0.

I cannot believe that the day of the printed book is passing. A book is such a convenient object; you can carry it anywhere.

(Robertson Davies)

The thrust of Kropp's book is to re-encourage reading as an active form of pleasure and enjoyment. To that end, he provides concrete step-by-step solutions to the problems besieging reading, both in the home and in the schools. His text is complemented by useful and informative statistical and anecdotal sidebars. The strength of this book relies on a notion which seems all but forgotten: the responsibility of a child's interest in reading (or for that matter, in life-long learning) falls firmly into the laps of parents or guardians. It is not the sole responsibility of the school! It must be remembered that during a seven-day week, children spend less than 18% of their time in school. Paul Kropp has produced a useful guide to help occupy the balance of a child's time.

N.J. Gossage currently lives in Guelph. He suggests you read Neil Postman's *Technopoly* and *Reading and Writing* by Robertson Davies.

Adventure on Thunder Island. Edna King and Jordan Wheeler. James Lorimer, 1991. 95 pp., \$8.95 paper. ISBN 1-55028-133-X.

Three of the four stories in this collection are written by Jordan Wheeler and one by Edna King. All of them present young Native protagonists as just ordinary kids who play, create mischief and who feel the effects of peer pressure. None of the Native kids back down from a challenge, even if it means confronting a notorious troll who might steal their imagination, or being precariously perched on a very high bridge where slipping means death as in "Pigeon Bridge" or walking into a haunted forest as Milton Whitehawk does in "Ebony Forest" to help a spirit reunite with her living sister; all of the protagonists confront fear and come out triumphant.

"The Troll" by Jordan Wheeler, the first story, pits the wits of a Native boy against a troll and with its opening line provides a lyrical portent highlighting what can be expected in the collection: "It lived in Colony Creek and had a voice like the *baa* of an angry sheep. It could be heard at night among the frogs' croaks and the sound of the crickets, warning the children to stay away." Jack Waboose