

MINI-REVIEWS

I Live on a Raft. Jerzy Harasymowicz. Trans. Seymour Mayne. Illus. Sharon Katz. Concertina, 1994. 24 pp., \$3.75 paper. ISBN 0-9697709-1-X.

Canadian poet Seymour Mayne here offers a selection of quiet little poems by the poet, Jerzy Harasymowicz. The illustrations are rendered on a Macintosh LC by Sharon Katz. The book is small, unassumingly stapled, almost a tiny pamphlet. It works, though, because the poems are fine, and the visuals are appropriately restrained.

The title, *I Live on a Raft*, provides the point of view for these reflections.

In spring
I sit down to write a poem
Adding a word
I begin to wonder
 Suddenly leaves
 fly by my hands
 announcing
 autumn

Modest understatement, words chiselled to fit small spaces, the passage of time witnessed from a quietly drifting raft, a successful little book.

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The Longest Home Run. Roch Carrier. Illus. Sheldon Cohen. Trans. Sheila Fischman. Tundra Books, 1993. Unpag., \$14.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-300-6.

The Longest Home Run has been translated and adapted from the original French version. Adeline, the protagonist, is part of her father's vaudeville act. When this two-person magical show passes through a village, Adeline shows up at the local baseball pad and demonstrates that she, a girl, can hit the ball better than any one of the boys. A retired baseball coach recognizes a great ballplayer in Adeline's hit, but is outraged when this potential world-class talent turns out to be a girl rather than a boy. The book emphasizes the older generation's stereotypical opinion about a girl's abilities which results in denying a talented child, the character, the opportunity to develop her potential. The theme of male domination of women's rights is further developed on a domestic level. Adeline's father, a magician on stage but quite a little man in reality, uses her as a prop in his act. He makes her disappear in a trunk, a euphemism for non-existence. Off-stage, he denies her presence so that her admiring baseball boys have no access to her. One persistent boy catches a last glimpse of her: boxed in her father's truck she is carted off to his next gig. On- and off-stage, Adeline's life can be summed up as the clichéd role of a woman: to be subservient to and controlled by the man in her life. For the protagonist, there is no way out of this box. But the reader