

# Travelling: Toward The Love of Reading

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*A Trip Across Canada*, Terry Leeder. Illus. by Emma Hesse. Anthony Hawke, 1980. approx. 40 pp. \$9.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88882-044-5.

"*All Aboard!*" *Across Canada Adventure*, written and photographed by Barbara O'Kelly and Beverley Allinson. Greey de Pencier Books, 1979. 95 pp. \$6.95 paper, \$12.95 cloth. ISBN 0-919-87244-1.

*Kidding Around Montreal*, Sherry Stein and Howard Shapiro. Illus. by Peter Lole. Collier Macmillan Canada, 1976, 85 pp. Paper. ISBN 0-29767-10-5.

*The Adventures of Mickey, Taggy, Puppo and Cica and how they discover . . . Toronto, Montreal, Kingston and the Thousand Islands*, Kati Re kai. Illus. by Elise Kane. Canadian Stage & Arts, 1976, 1979, 1980. 50 to 141 pp. \$3.75 pp. ISBN 0-91995-20-2x, 09-7, 06-2, 05-4.

Of the little group of books under review here, united by the theme of travel in Canada, it can be said that all follow the rules and fulfill the demands of the present time regarding the avoidance of stereotyping in sex or race roles, the absence of violence, of undesirable or difficult language, and so on. *A Trip Across Canada* is beautifully illustrated and wonderfully produced, with a text so devoid of story and so full of information it can be said to be a cliché of Canlit. *Kidding Around Montreal* is a real guidebook which parents can use to plan days in that city. It tells places where children are welcome, where films are shown for them, and what sites are especially interesting for kids. It's divided into zones so one can take a day trip for each zone, and it tells how to get to restaurants kids like. It is neither arch nor coy. *The Adventures of Mickey . . .* is a series which now includes several cities. The ones on Toronto and Kingston have some sense of story, but the others contain large chunks of information, mostly indigestible. When an adult who reads quickly and is trying to read with attention continually skips over paragraphs it's a pretty good bet the kids will skip too. The character ideas are good but they don't come alive, maybe because they are not given enough space to do so. Contrary to prevailing opinion, not every word in a book should further the action or add to the information. Even so, something about these books by Kati Re kai makes them attractive.

Perhaps it is the idea you know lurks behind them, the sense of fun. If they were not displacing books that offer the thrill of discovery of really good reading then the *Adventures of* books might have been acceptable. *All Aboard* is, however, lively and loving and interesting. The photographs are wonderful: what a pleasure to see that same little girl in all of them!

Too many books are manufactured out of ideas of what will sell, while the work of love goes unnoticed in the unsolicited manuscript pile. Too many books don't get published because editors have in mind certain rules about getting to the point, keeping it simple and not frightening the kiddies. Parents and other adults must share the blame for buying the pretty four-colour pictures instead of taking the time to read the text and deciding whether it is worth-while. Of the rules in effect regarding children's books today it must be pointed out that all of the classics break them. *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* are made of unfamiliar language and complex situations. *Alice in Wonderland* is thoroughly confusing. *The Three Little Pigs* is terrifying. And what would Dickens be like without his marvelous digressions?

Most important, "writing to rule" means that something intangible but essential is lost. We miss out on that quality of reading a story for the joy of it, the mood of settling in for a good, long tale, and the special excitement of entering the world that story inhabits.

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