

Il reste qu'Henri Lamoureux a réalisé un roman soigneusement composé et agréable à lire, et que le talent du conteur compense les faiblesses que nous avons signalées. Ce livre devrait plaire surtout pas son caractère onirique: les aventures de Rébecca et Victor, même dans leurs invraisemblances, ne sont-elles pas de celles dont peut rêver particulièrement un adolescent en milieu urbain, surtout s'il n'a pas de grand-mère en Gaspésie?

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A SWEDE IN TIME

Time is flies, George Swede. Illus. Darcia Labrosse. Three Trees Press, 1984. 48 pp. \$4.95 paper, \$11.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88823-090-7, 0-88823-091-5.

George Swede's first collection of funny poems for children, *Trick bird*, earned itself a place on the Children's Book Centre Choice List. In addition, Swede has authored six books of fiction for children, among them the four volumes of the "Sherlock" series.

Time is flies takes its title from a cryptic little verse which exemplifies all the best features of this collection. Short and sweet, "Time is flies" borrows a familiar adage from the business world. Swapping the businessman for a frog, and money for flies (a very decent exchange from a frog's point of view, no doubt), Swede produces this whimsical haiku-style piece:

For the fat green frog
Crouched on the log
time is flies

Here, success lies in the compactness of expression and — of course — in the playfulness, which is enhanced by a full-page illustration (in black and white, as they all are in this book). Depicted is a musing frog good-naturedly studying the face of his wristwatch, which displays a cartooned fly, hands extended to show that the time is ten to three. Fly break at three, perhaps?

Other, less witty, but superbly evocative poems are represented by this untitled piece:

More watchful
than seeing eyes
pebbles
under the cool
creek water

Or, like this:

Around the eyes
of the old fisherman
permanent ripples

Poems such as these offer lovely nuggets of imagery; they also restate the timeless appeal of haiku poetry in its immaculate spareness. Observations mainly, these poems are refreshingly free of messages: no morals or dicta. Instead, a tiny world minutely observed from an individual point of view. In these works Swede is a superb craftsman.

Not all of the poems in this collection depend on verbal imagery for their impact:

M SS NG
Thiiief!

is a funny little sight poem, keeping good company with another which, untitled, is simply rendered as:

ski
i
n
3

However, not all of the sight poems are equally original or effective:

V-eering
around the skyscraper
dawn geese

offers no semantic motherlode buried in the play of "V-eering". It seems to be little more than playful typesetting. In contrast, "November", from Anne Corkett's newest collection, makes most evocative use of the form:

sun
the
than
higher
snow and fly
night geese
comes sky
down of
into ledge
the yellow
last

Not all of the poems in *Time is flies* offer either clearly resolved image or a credible fusion of form with content. The weaker poems require an act of translation to deduce the meaning; like little puzzles, they are truly more games for eye and ear than poems. Some suffer by their placement: one or two lines alone upon a page, *sans* title. It is impossible for the reader to know if these are remote bits of a titled poem from a preceding page, or if they are orphan fragments waiting for a home. The layout of the book could be criticized for contributing to this unfruitful ambiguity, since some of the poems are clearly and sensibly titled. The reader stretches reason (or faith) to link these disenfranchised fragments to their titled neighbours, but without success. And one suspects that they don't unite because they aren't meant to. Still, it makes reading aloud difficult.

Nevertheless, these problems of context are small nuisances; rather like flies, come to think of it. The book as whole is very satisfying. Small in format, as suits its content, and whimsically illustrated (although rather sparingly so for this reader's taste) by Darcia Labrosse, the collection offers if not a banquet certainly a most fortifying snack. Is it three o'clock yet?

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HISTORY AND FICTION

Tom, David and the pirates, Betty Clarkson. Borealis Press, 1980. 93 pp. \$7.95 paper. ISBN 0-88887-050-7; *Sweetgrass*, Jan Hudson. Tree Frog Press, 1984. 143 pp. \$6.95 paper. ISBN 0-88967-076-5; *Sarah Jane of Silver Islet*, Elizabeth Kouhi. Illus. Jeanette Lightwood. Queenston House Publishing, 1983. 144 pp. \$10.95 cloth, \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-919866-87-5, 0-919866-88-3; *The secret of Marie Broussard*, Eileen Murphy. Borealis Press, 1983. 40 pp. \$13.95 cloth, \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-88887-954-7, 0-88887-952-0.

Historical fiction may well be the most important road by which we arrive at that love and understanding of the past requisite for a humane appreciation of the present. In a sense, though historians are often contemptuous of creators of a fictional past, their task is the same: to make us grasp the paradox of how very different from us were our forebears, and yet how astonishingly like. The difference is primarily the concern of the academic historian, but the likeness, the intuition of sympathy, is the particular task of the imaginative writer.

Of the books reviewed here, all attempt in some way to make the reader sympathetic to the past, but only one succeeds at the co-requisite task of keeping