

Editorial: Voices of British Columbia

From the animal tales of Roderick Haig-Brown and Hubert Evans to the award-winning realistic fiction of Sarah Ellis and Kit Pearson, from the early collections of native legends of Pauline Johnson, Fran Martin and Christie Harris, to the more recent celebrations of native culture by Jeannette Armstrong, Heather Smith Siska and Shirley Sterling, from the sparsely illustrated adventure tales of the thirties to the brilliance of illustrators like Nick Bantock, Ann Blades and Kim LaFave, British Columbian children's literature has a rich and varied tradition.

It was in British Columbia that Canadian fantasy first found a voice in the works of Catherine Anthony Clark, Christie Harris and Ruth Nichols as they portrayed a land that bridged the real and the magical, a land at the edge of reality. And this land on the edge has spawned many voices: voices of social responsibility like Don Sawyer, Marion Crook, David Day, David Suzuki, and most recently, Severn Cullis-Suzuki; voices like Paul Yee, Naomi Wakan, Shizuye Takashima and Shelley Tanaka that explore the Asian experience in British Columbia; and the voices of playwrights like Irene Watts, Dennis Foon and Gwen Pharis Ringwood, who have helped establish a rich tradition of children's literature in this province.

In this issue I hope to examine some of the voices that have helped create this multicultural chorus. Christie Harris examines her own history as a children's writer, particularly her pioneering work as a collector of native legends. Jane Flick interviews Kit Pearson, exploring not only the breadth of her work but also her views on children's literature.

The next entry in this issue is a summary by Sheila Egoff and Terry Clark of the children's literature holdings of the Vancouver Public and University of British Columbia libraries. This submission is followed by a brief summary by Judith Saltman of Professor Egoff's monumental contribution to Canadian children's literature. Next, Joan Weir examines realistic fiction in British Columbia, providing not only a glimpse of its diversity and relevance, but also including the voices of many writers who are presently creating this tradition. The last entry is a bibliography, a list that clearly suggests the remarkable emergence of B.C. writers and illustrators in the last two decades.

I would like to end my brief introduction by respectfully dedicating this entire issue to Sheila Egoff who, as a scholar, teacher and children's librarian, has more than any other person been responsible for the growth of this province as a major contributor to the Canadian tapestry. We sincerely thank her for her continuing inspiration.

J. Kieran Kealy, *Department of English, University of British Columbia*