

Nostalgic Summers: The Legacy of Roderick Haig-Brown

Saltwater Summer. Roderick Haig-Brown. Harbour, 2000. 246 pp. \$14.95 paper. ISBN 1-55017-222-0.

Harbour Publishing's reprint of Roderick Haig-Brown's 1948 classic *Saltwater Summer* is both welcome and timely: at a time when the entire salmon industry of British Columbia is threatened, it is comforting to return to a tale in which one is reminded of just how intoxicating salmon fishing and life in the great outdoors can be.

Saltwater Summer picks up the tale begun in *Starbuck Valley Winter*, but now Don Morgan and his best friend, Tubby Miller, are not trapping on Northern Vancouver island but fishing commercially along the length of the B.C. coast. Like the earlier novel, *Saltwater Summer* is both a primer on how to survive in nature and a further chapter in the maturation of the two young heroes.

The story begins when Don finds that there are not enough fish in the inland waters to pay off the mortgage on his 32-foot salmon troller and is forced to journey to the treacherous but more prolific waters along the coast. When Tubby agrees to accompany him, he is fully aware that "when you go along with Don...you run into trouble and hard work, too much excitement usually and far too much discomfort." And of course all of this proves to be true as they endure numerous storms, seductive peers, and even a rupture before embarking on a final adventure involving the sea rescue of a traditionally cantankerous old sea-captain. The concluding comments on the success of their mission capture what Haig-Brown suggests is the ultimate lesson one can learn from such saltwater summers: "It became a shared thing...a bond of experience far stronger than the realities of...shattering waves and the nearness of death."

But Haig-Brown never simply chronicles an adventure; he comments precisely and, for his time, rather audaciously on the world about him, on the dishonour attached to killing a buck out of season and, most tellingly, on the racial prejudices faced by Japanese fishermen.

Ultimately, *Saltwater Summer* — like all of Haig-Brown's justly celebrated classics — is a celebration of nature, realizing its "greater power, beyond control, all around." And I suppose Haig-Brown is also reminding us that "there's really fine people all up this old B.C. coast once you get away from roads and cities."

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Ten Days that Changed her World

The War Within. Carol Matas. Scholastic Canada, 2001. 151 pp. \$18.99 cloth. ISBN 0-439-98810-1.