Labour/Le Travailleur

Work Poetry / Poésie de Travail

Volume 20, 1987

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/llt20wp01

Aller au sommaire du numéro

Éditeur(s)
Canadian Committee on Labour History

ISSN
0700-3862 (imprimé)
1911-4842 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer ce document

All rights reserved © Canadian Committee on Labour History, 1987
"Why write: as soon ask, why rivet? Because a number of personal accidents drift us toward the occupation of riveter, which pre-exists, and most importantly, the riveting-gun exists, and we love it"

John Updike

In this city
where some of us write
about work

the owner of a construction firm
near bankruptcy
last year

killed his lover
and himself
with a riveting-gun

Why write?

"Work is a kind of prayer"

Dannie Abse

If work is a kind of prayer
it is a prayer to things handled
as the things handled
pray back to us

When we handle things and then write words
we speak of that interchange of prayers

But when we handle only
pens

we begin to pray to our pens
for words

that are solid
excuses for having let go

In July 86 I gave notice at my proofreading job in Toronto,
because I had been invited to Split Shift, the first work
writing conference, August 21 - 24, in Vancouver.

When the clear plastic overlay
of this two-colour coupon is lifted

the bullets prices and logos
that will come out red when printed

seem to hover
above the base blue copy -

effortless clouds above the prairies
are hovering also all this morning

their shadows unconnected below of those hard-won patch-works of ground

Proofread these coupons 5 more weeks
then settle back in a window seat

and look down / as now
as always: for flaws

7.18.86
Toronto
Come Daylight

Shriek of stellar jay -
how long has black been blue-black?

The self-pitying nasal chant
of a saw starting up -

has the cleared slope's image bristling
in the raised lake

White bone-wood fuzzed with frost
warms down to wet grey
along the demarkation lines of shadows -

pushed through the teeth of that whining chain:
furious light
by the board-foot

Near Gold River, B.C.

"Working Up-Island" is what we (me, Calvin Wharton, Tom Wayman, & Glen Downie) called out mini-tour of northern Vancouver Island in the spring of 1985 during National Book Festival, or "National Bug Festival" as one woman who was hard of hearing called it.
The Choreography Of Getting

From the peak of lateness I see I love
even the woman who stops abruptly
in front of me on the escalator -
excuse me excuse me

**Phantom Hosiery**
- pinks yellows
- hobbling or balled-up
- fist-sized in drawers

**Fierce grey drag of worth**
- he throws his long butt at the wheel
- pushes onto the bus behind me
- blows smoke into my hair

- Resigned
  - oozing stumped
  - dreams bumper
to bumper

The driver despite my silent entreaties
that he stop for nothing must
stop beside the Beckers store
and waddle in for a coffee to go

**Penguins broken**
- open stories grafted
- forgotten plots
- of sleep

From the peak of lateness I see I love
and despise the choreography of getting
each morning to my drafting table:
**papered incline / root-cellar door**...

Advertise
with Val-Pak
of Metro
222-4300
Sunday

I dream fact:

Windsor/Detroit
The slash is the river
in winter pre-Seaway
pre-tunnel

Houdini cannot find the hole
he went through
The current is too strong

He scrapes his nose
raw on the ice
He glares at ice
inches thick

Air bubbles get him
down-stream alive to open
water near Zug Island
steel plants

I wake to fact:

Another actual Monday
has thickened against us
during the night

Heart of Saturday Night
we pushed to the limit
like always

I go back down
to dream more fact:

There are no holes

Phil Hall
An interdisciplinary journal devoted to the study of ethnicity, immigration, inter-group relations and the history and cultural life of ethnic groups in Canada.

Une revue interdisciplinaire consacrée à l'étude de l'ethnicté, de l'immigration, des relations entre groupes, et de l'histoire et de la vie culturelle collective au Canada.

SPECIAL ISSUES AVAILABLE/NUMEROS SPÉCIAUX EN VENTE

1981, Vol. XIII, no. 1 — Ethnicity and Femininity
1982, Vol. XIV, no. 1 — Ethnic Literature
1983, Vol. XV, no. 3 — Ethnicity and Aging
1984, Vol. XVI, no. 3 — Ethnic Art and Architecture
1985, Vol. XVII, no. 2 — The Métis: Past and Present
1986, Vol. XVIII, no. 2 — Ethnicity in Quebec

RECENT REGULAR ISSUES INCLUDE/NUMÉROS RÉCENTS COMPRENNENT

1986, Vol. XVIII, no. 1 — "Ethnic migrations and Atlantic Canada: Geographical Perspectives" by Graeme Wynn.
1986, Vol. XVIII, no. 1 — "Italian-Canadian Women Writers Recall History" by Joseph Prato
1986, Vol. XVIII, no. 3 — "Ethnogenerational Variation in Educational Achievement" by Anthony H. Richmond

$10.00 for individual issues; **$12.00 for Ethnicity in Quebec/ $10.00 pour un seul numéro; **$12.00 pour Le Pluralisme au Québec

For all issues prior to 1987, enquire at the Calgary Journal address below/pour les numéros avant 1987 disponibles adressez vos demandes au bureau du Journal à Calgary à l'adresse ci-dessous.

Issues also include book and film reviews, opinions, immigrant memoirs, translations of primary sources, books received, an index and annual bibliography.

Chaque numéro comprend des recensions de livres et de films, des opinions, des mémoires d'immigrants, des traductions de sources primaires, livres reçus, et des bibliographies.

Subscription rates/fras d'abonnement:

Individuals/particuliers $30.00
Students/étudiants $12.00
Institutions/Institutions $36.00

Above rates include a quarterly newsletter and membership in the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association/Les frais comprennent les bulletins trimestriels et la qualité de membre de la Société d'études ethniques au Canada.

Articles for publication, books for review and general correspondence should be addressed to CANADIAN ETHNIC STUDIES, c/o The University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4 Canada. Single orders and back issues can be obtained from this address.

Subscription orders and inquiries should be addressed to CANADIAN ETHNIC STUDIES ASSOCIATION. Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture. 290, Place d'Youville, Montréal, Québec. H3Y 2B6 Canada.

Tous les articles, les recensions, et la correspondance générale doivent être adressés aux ETUDES ETHNIQUES AU CANADA, Université de Calgary, 2500 University Drive N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4 Canada. Tout numéro courant et ancien de la revue peut être commandé à l'adresse ci-dessus.

Pour les abonnements et les informations prière de vous adresser à la SOCIÉTÉ D'ETUDES ETHNIQUES AU CANADA, Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture. 290, d'Youville, Montréal, Québec. H3Y 2B6 Canada.