

LITTLE HISTORIES:

MODERNIST AND LEFTIST WOMEN POETS AND MAGAZINE EDITORS IN CANADA, 1926–56

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ABSTRACT

This study incorporates archival and historical research on women poets and editors and their roles in the production of modernist and/or leftist little-magazine cultures in Canada. Where the first three chapters investigate women poets who were also magazine editors and/or members of magazine groups, the fourth chapter takes account of women magazine editors who were not themselves poets. Within this framework, the dissertation relates women's editorial work and poetry to a series of crises and transitions in Canada's leftist and modernist little-magazine cultures between 1926 and 1956. This historical pattern of crisis and transition pertains at once to the poetry of Dorothy Livesay, Anne Marriott, P. K. Page, and Miriam Waddington and to the little-magazine groups in which they and other women were active as editors and/or contributing members. Chapter 1 deals with Livesay's editorial activities and poetry in the context of two magazines of the cultural left, *Masses* and *New Frontier*, between 1932 and 1937. Chapter 2 concerns Livesay, Marriott, their involvement in poetry groups in Victoria and Vancouver, and their publications in *Contemporary Verse* and *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, between 1935 and 1956. Chapter 3 addresses the poetry of Page and Waddington published in *Preview* and *First Statement* from 1942 to 1945, their poetry appearing in *Contemporary Verse* from 1941 to 1952–53, and their editorial activities in and/or relationships to these Montreal and Victoria–Vancouver magazine groups between 1941 and 1956. Chapter 4 documents the histories of some often forgotten women who edited modernist or leftist little magazines in Canada between 1926 and 1956. These core chapters are prefaced and concluded by histories of the antecedents to and descendants of Canadian modernist and

leftist magazine cultures.

RÉSUMÉ

Au travers d'archives et de recherches tant historiques que littéraires, cette étude retrace l'existence de nombre de poètes et rédactrices de revues canadiennes tout en examinant leurs rôles dans la production et l'entretien d'une culture de la revue culturelle non-commerciale et de tendance moderniste et/ou gauchiste au Canada. Alors que les trois premiers chapitres traitent de ces femmes qui furent non seulement poètes mais également membres de collectifs de rédaction et de groupes littéraires affiliés à certaines revues, le quatrième chapitre tient compte de rédactrices-en-chef qui n'écrivaient pas de poésie. L'auteur fait le lien entre, d'une part, oeuvre poétique et/ou travail de rédaction et, d'autre part, une série de crises et de transitions qui atteignent les revues culturelles gauchistes et modernistes du Canada entre 1926 et 1956. Ces crises et transitions historiques affectent la poésie de Dorothy Livesay, d'Anne Marriott, de P. K. Page et de Miriam Waddington, ainsi que les groupes affiliés aux revues auxquelles ces femmes participaient avec d'autres en tant que rédactrices ou collaboratrices. Le premier chapitre introduit les activités de rédaction et la poésie de Livesay entre 1932 et 1937, et ce, en ce qui a trait à deux revues de la gauche, soit *Masses* et *New Frontier*. Le second chapitre examine l'engagement de Livesay et de Marriott dans des groupes de poésie de Victoria et de Vancouver, ainsi que leurs ouvrages publiés dans *Contemporary Verse* et *Canadian Poetry Magazine* entre 1935 et 1956. Le troisième chapitre aborde la poésie de Page et de Waddington telle que parue dans les revues *Preview* et *First Statement* entre 1942 et 1945, de même que dans *Contemporary Verse* entre 1941 et 1953. Les activités de rédaction et les relations de ces écrivaines vis-à-vis des groupes affiliés à ces revues entre 1941 et 1956 y sont également

étudiées. Le quatrième chapitre documente l'histoire de certaines femmes, souvent oubliées, qui dirigèrent des revues gauchistes ou modernistes entre 1926 et 1956. Enfin, ces chapitres fondamentaux sont préfacés et conclus par une étude des précurseurs féminins et des héritières de ces cultures reliées aux revues modernistes et gauchistes du Canada.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Throughout the text, the abbreviations for archival collections listed here have been used in parenthetical references. Full citations of archival collections appear in the list of works cited. A list of other abbreviations and acronyms adopted in the text follows. On first citation or appearance, the full title or name is given, followed by the abbreviation or acronym, employed thereafter.

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

AJMSP-TU	A. J. M. Smith Papers, Trent University
AJMSP-UT	A. J. M. Smith Papers, University of Toronto
ACP	Alan Crawley Papers
AMKP	A. M. Klein Papers
AMP	Anne Marriott Papers
AWP	Anne Wilkinson Papers
DLC-UM	Dorothy Livesay Collection, University of Manitoba
DLP-QU	Dorothy Livesay Papers, Queen's University
EBP	Earle Birney Papers
FMP	Floris McLaren Papers
ILP	Irving Layton Papers
LDF	Louis Dudek Fonds
LPP	Lorne Pierce Papers
MA	Macmillan Archives

MEPP	M. Eugenie Perry Papers
MFP	Margaret Fairley Papers
MWP	Miriam Waddington Papers
PAP	Patrick Anderson Papers
PKPP	P. K. Page Papers
PMMP	PM Magazine Papers
RGP	Ralph Gustafson Papers

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAA	Canadian Authors Association
CAC	Canadian Arts Council
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CPUSA	Communist Party of the United States of America
CPC	Communist Party of Canada
CCF	Co-operative Commonwealth Federation
CWC	Canadian Writers Committee
FCW	Federation of Canadian Writers
IWW	International Workers of the World
LPP	Labour Progressive Party
LSR	League for Social Reconstruction
NFB	National Film Board of Canada
NFC	New Frontier Club

- PAC Progressive Arts Club
- VPS Vancouver Poetry Society
- WCC Writers' Craft Club
- WWI World War I
- WWII World War II
- YCL Young Communist League

Introduction

READING BACKWARDS: HISTORY'S LITTLE HISTORIES

I: Little Histories

Canada in the 1920s witnessed the emergence of a little-remarked period of activity among women editors of literary, arts, and cultural magazines. Between 1926 and 1956, an unprecedented number of Canadian women established and edited these kinds of periodicals. Many of these editors were themselves poets who published in their own magazines and in those of their contemporaries. Dorothy Livesay, Anne Marriott, Floris McLaren, Doris Ferne, P. K. Page—all of these women helped either to found or edit magazines in which they also published their own poetry. Other women also established, edited, and contributed occasional poems to their own magazines: Laura and Hilda Ridley, Myra Lazechko-Haas, and Aileen Collins. Still other women never published their own poems but edited magazines: Florence Custance, Eleanor Godfrey, Catherine Harmon, Yvonne Agazarian, and Margaret Fairley. Numerous other women joined editorial boards, magazine-affiliated writers groups, and organizations involved in the production of literary, arts, and cultural magazines in Canada. The kind of periodical these women edited is commonly called the little magazine: a type of non-commercial literary, arts, or cultural-interest periodical whose history is coextensive with the rise of literary modernism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In Canada, the little magazine first appeared in the mid-1920s, coincident with the consolidation of high modernism in European and American literary cultures. Despite their major contributions to the making of little magazines since the mid-1920s, however, women have so far

remained peripheral to historical narratives of the little magazine in Canada.

Histories of Canada's little magazines have accumulated since the late 1950s. Previous research on Canadian little magazines has already produced a sizable archive of theses, dissertations, bibliographies, indexes, essays, and books—many of which refer to women's literary and editorial work. Even though the range of scholarship on little magazines of this period is far more extensive than scholarship on previous generations of Canadian periodicals, women magazine editors and poets who were members of little-magazine groups between 1926 and 1956 have continued to be minor figures in the historical record. As a consequence, feminist scholars such as Carole Gerson have characterized literary histories of the period as masculinist, even claiming that Canadian modernism itself has been gendered in the historical record (and literary canon) as a masculinist aesthetic ("Literary" 65). Pauline Butling has likewise described the definition of Canadian modernist little magazines as "masculinist" in literary histories ("Hall" 62). A screening of literary-historical documents will help to isolate masculinist historiographic tendencies. Yet the result of that critical inquiry should not be a solidification of the literary-historical myth of Canadian modernism and its magazine culture as a masculinist phenomenon. Rather, I should expect to recover a site for critical readings of women's contributions to the production of literary modernism and little magazines in Canada.

Another history of literary *modernism* in Canada cannot, however, account for the numbers of women active on the cultural *left*. Histories of cultural magazines of the left in Canada may in fact serve as models for critics and literary historians in search of alternatives to an apparently masculinist narrative of modernist little magazines. Inspired

by the careers of literary women such as Dorothy Livesay and Margaret Fairley, historians of Canada's cultural left have produced wide-ranging scholarship on women and periodicals from the 1920s to the 1950s. Following Joan Sangster's seminal study *Dreams of Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1920–1950* (1989), Douglas Scott Parker, David Kimmel, Gregory S. Kealey, and James Doyle have all contributed studies of women editors and writers involved with *Masses* and *New Frontier* in the 1930s and *New Frontiers* in the 1950s. These histories supplement the predominant histories of Canada's modernist little magazines, a field of scholarship which has tended to disregard or disparage the literary content of leftist magazines. Conversely, histories of the cultural left have been reluctant to acknowledge contemporary modernists—except, of course, those authors sympathetic to or active on the left. By bringing together leftist and modernist literary histories, then, I negotiate between competing cultural discourses, allowing their coextensive narratives to enter into dialogue, reanimating leftist and modernist critiques of one another's literary practices.

Both leftist and modernist magazines in Canada have been the subject of historical research since the late 1950s. Louis Dudek, Michael Gnarowski, Wynne Francis, Ken Norris, and James Doyle have surveyed and catalogued Canada's modernist little magazines—though none of these general surveys incorporate leftist periodicals. Gregory Peter Schultz, J. Lee Thompson, Richard F. Hornsey, and Peter Stevens have also composed histories of Canadian periodicals after WWI; their work includes thematic analyses and/or close readings of the poetry published in magazines and journals, addressing both leftist and modernist periodicals, among others. Their studies are

comparative in approach, covering a wide range of periodicals. One could also add a sizable list of indexes, articles, theses, and books devoted to one or two periodicals. Many of these are relevant to the study of *Contemporary Verse*, *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, *Preview*, and *First Statement*. Literary historians, biographers, and bibliographers who have specifically addressed women's editorial and literary contributions to these and other magazines are far fewer. I have made references to this scholarship throughout the subsequent chapters, though one should note that the collective work of modernist and/or leftist women poets and editors has not been previously consolidated as a field of scholarly research.

Literary-historical practices have not been scrutinized often enough in scholarship on leftist and modernist periodicals in Canada. As a corrective to little-magazine histories by Dudek, Gnarowski, Francis, and Norris, Brian Trehearne has initiated revisionary study of 'forties literary culture by calling into question "the apparent need to categorize and hierarchize the various magazines important to Canadian modernism according to unacknowledged, certainly unarticulated, prescriptions for 'real' little magazines" ("Critical" 24). Trehearne's interrogation of these histories represents an "attempt to supersede the little-magazine alignments so familiar in the period," though it is not "a rejection of Canadian literary history, only one of its prominent and least compelling narratives" (*Montreal* 12). If one takes his repudiation of little-magazine-based narratives to signal the need for the revision of Canadian literary history as it has been written in the past, then his polemic may in fact point to a new phase in the making of little-magazine histories rather than an abandonment of the project altogether. His critique of the

Dudek–Gnarowski–Francis–Norris lineage of little-magazine scholarship also indicates his predecessors’ complicity in “the exclusion of vital magazines and journals from extensive study” (“Critical” 24); that recognition underpins my own research on Canadian women editors and their little magazines, even those deemed to be “antithetical to the ‘little magazine’” in previous histories (Dudek, “Role” 207).

Little-magazine historiography as it stems from Dudek—including Trehearne’s critique—has so far privileged a Montreal-based literary culture emergent in the early 1940s. Most commentators will provisionally admit the *McGill Fortnightly Review* (1925–27) and the *Canadian Mercury* (1928–29) into their little-magazine histories, though not without the qualification that these 1920s periodicals were not “real” little magazines, but rather precursors to those of the 1940s (Dudek, “Role” 206; Gnarowski, “Role” 214–19; Norris, *Little* 12, 19). According to Dudek’s restrictive definition of the little magazine, “Canada in the 1930s had no ‘little magazine’ or ‘little press’ movement: no magazines of poetry and experiment representing the rebellion of the creative minority against the profit-motive literature of mass-readership and cultural appeasement” (“Role” 207). His exclusionary practice thus omits periodicals of the 1930s such as *Masses*, *New Frontier*, and the *Canadian Forum*, whose leftward orientations nonetheless subscribe to his notion of the little magazine as “the embattled literary reaction of intellectual minority groups to . . . commercial middle-class magazines” (206). His emphasis on the “literary” disqualifies these magazines supported by the Canadian left, all of which published writing about social, political, economic, and non-literary arts matters as well as poetry, short fiction, and literary reviews. Given that these magazines were the chief repositories of

both modernist and/or leftist writing—especially poetry—in Canada during the 1930s, one might question the value of Dudek’s “literary” category of “little magazine.” The impact of Dudek’s categorical strictures is visible in Norris’s *The Little Magazine in Canada 1925–80: Its Role in the Development of Modernism and Post-Modernism in Canadian Poetry* (1984). His history bridges the gap between the 1920s and the 1940s with references to *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, *New Provinces: Poems of Several Authors*, *New Frontier*, and a catalogue of poetry collections. Only the anthology *New Provinces*, however, seems to merit analysis: *Canadian Poetry Magazine* he dismisses in a disparaging parenthetical comment, *New Frontier* he quotes only to provide historical context (20–21). According to Norris’s narrative, a decade of silence intervenes in the history of the Canadian little magazine.

The wholesale omission of the 1930s from little-magazine-based histories has contributed to the marginalization of women’s literary and editorial activities. Canadian literary and cultural magazines of the 1930s featured women editors such as Hilda and Laura Ridley of the *Crucible* and Eleanor Godfrey of the *Canadian Forum*—none of whom appear in historical surveys of Canadian little magazines (though Godfrey has received sporadic recognition in histories and memoirs specifically related to the *Canadian Forum*). *New Frontier* included a majority of women on its staff: its founder (Jean Watts), two of its four editors (Dorothy Livesay and Margaret Gould), and its business manager (Jocelyn Moore). Likely as a result of the high proportion of women involved in its production, *New Frontier* served as an important forum for women’s writing. As Parker claims, “[d]uring its short life, from April 1936 to 1937, no other magazine in Canada

published as many articles, poems, short stories and plays written by women, not even *Chatelaine*" (46). Hilda and Laura Ridley were equally diligent in printing women writers in the *Crucible*. During its decade-long run, from 1932 to 1943, a significant majority of its contributors were women—especially its poets: roughly 75% of poems published in the magazine were written by contributors identified as women. *Canadian Poetry Magazine* posted a similar majority of women poets. As the official organ of the Canadian Authors Association (CAA), *Canadian Poetry Magazine* predictably represented the parent organization's majority of women members: just under 60% of poems published in the magazine during the 1930s were written by contributors identified as women (some issues reaching as high as 80%), a gender ratio the magazine sustained into the 1940s and 1950s. (Only during Earle Birney's editorship from 1946 to 1948 would the percentage of women—and CAA—contributors decrease.) While the succession of *Canadian Poetry Magazine*'s male editors—E. J. Pratt, Charles G. D. Roberts, Watson Kirkconnell, Earle Birney, Arthur Bourinot—was only once interrupted by Amabel King's two-issue stint as an acting editor in 1944, its exclusion from literary-historical narratives of Canadian little magazines warrants further scrutiny.

Under Dudek's "literary" category of little magazine, the *Canadian Forum*, *Masses*, and *New Frontier* would be omitted on the grounds that none is primarily literary. Yet his definition of the little magazine also guards against other kinds of literary magazines. Dudek even singles out *Canadian Poetry Magazine* as a periodical "antithetical to the 'little magazine'" ("Role" 207). Factoring in its high percentage of women contributors, one could infer that his characterization of *Canadian Poetry*

Magazine is itself predicated upon a masculinist definition of the little magazine. Even more revealing of his masculinist categorization is his derisive commentary on the “poetry of appeasement, of gullible sentimentality” published in *Canadian Poetry Magazine* (“Role” 207): for modernists such as Dudek, as Suzanne Clark has shown, the sentimental is a discourse gendered feminine (2). Hence his masculinist definition of *Canadian Poetry Magazine* as the antithesis of the little magazine renders it as modernism’s sentimental, feminized, and excluded other. Neither Dudek nor his successors have considered the *Crucible*, even as an object of contempt: its predominantly female poets’ sentimental tendencies would have just as readily received uncharitable jeers as their counterparts in *Canadian Poetry Magazine*. Both the marginalization of *Canadian Poetry Magazine* and the invisibility of the *Crucible* in the historical record are indicators of the extent to which a masculinist discourse has so far shaped the historiography of Canadian little magazines.

Having bracketed out the 1930s, little-magazine historians have focused on Canada’s modernist literary culture of the 1940s. Primary attention to little magazines of the 1940s has been directed toward two Montreal publications, *Preview* and *First Statement*. Critics and literary historians have regularly assigned these little magazines a central role in Canadian literary culture of the 1940s, the corollary of which has been the neglect of their contemporaries. Butling locates the origins of this historiographic tendency in Dudek’s history of the little magazine (“Role”), calling into question his brief mention of the first little magazine founded in Canada in the 1940s, *Contemporary Verse* (1941–52). Dudek states that it was superseded by a “more aggressive ‘second stage’” of little magazines, *Preview* (1942–45) and *First Statement* (1942–45); he determines the

“defect” of *Contemporary Verse* was that it “was not a fighting magazine with a policy” (“Role” 208). According to Butling’s critique of Dudek, *Contemporary Verse* eludes his “masculinist” definition of the little magazine “as an aggressive, assertive, fighting, militant instrument of the avant-garde” (“Hall” 62). If, as Butling contends, Dudek’s definition is masculinist, its gender bias is not specifically directed against the group of women poets who founded *Contemporary Verse* (Dorothy Livesay, Anne Marriott, Doris Ferne, Floris McLaren), nor against the high proportion of women poets who published in it, but against any literary periodical that fails to meet his criteria for the little magazine. Even so, his preference for an avant-garde, “fighting magazine” (208) does lead him to emphasize the typically masculine traits of those that fit under this rubric: hence he praises the Montreal-based *CIV/n* (1953–55), edited by Aileen Collins, for its “vigour and aggressiveness” (“Role” 210). Just as he employs a feminizing discourse to designate those publications “antithetical to the ‘little magazine,’” so he enlists a masculinist discourse to certify those he includes in a category of the “real ‘little magazine’” (“Role” 207, 209). Such gendered categorizations and oppositions are by no means limited to Dudek: he is, however, the progenitor of a masculinist little-magazine historiography in Canada, later reproduced in Gnarowski’s description of *Northern Review*’s “more virile grouping of poets in Montreal” (“Role” 221) and Francis’s assessment of *First Statement*’s “masculine, virile ‘poetry of experience’” (“Montreal” 27). This Dudek line of little-magazine history can be traced back to his involvement in the *First Statement* group: its masculinist editorial practices are exhibited in chapter 3, where I relate the early poetry of Page and Waddington to its gendered contexts in the Montreal little-magazine culture

of the early to mid-1940s.

At the root of this problem, then, is a definition of the little magazine that privileges a masculinist literary-historical discourse. From the perspective of queer studies, Robert K. Martin, David Leahy, Justin D. Edwards, and Peter Dickinson have analyzed the masculinist discourses circulating among Montreal little magazines of the 1940s and among literary histories of the period. What these studies all hold in common is a persistent questioning of normative gender categories; only Edwards, however, has interrogated the “masculinist position” of the little magazine itself (67). Because prescriptive and haphazard definitions of the little magazine in Canada have previously tended to exclude women, a revision of the category of the little magazine itself is in order. A redefinition of the little magazine could incorporate those non-commercial literary, arts, and cultural-interest magazines whose editors facilitate and participate in the construction of a magazine culture for their contributors and readers—but not, primarily, for profit. (For reasons of economy, I have not undertaken a study of mass-circulation commercial magazines—women’s magazines among them—nor journals affiliated with academic institutions.) Others might query this categorical emphasis on the economy of the little magazine rather than its ideological or aesthetic values or its proportion of literary content, but the implementation of this broader literary-historical category will enable less guarded readings of modernist and leftist literary cultures in Canada than adherence to circumscribed definitions has encouraged in the past. Yet this revision is not altogether alien to standard definitions of the little magazine (cf. Hoffman, et al. 2–6), though it subordinates the little magazine’s aesthetic and/or ideological character to

material concerns related to the means and conditions of its production.

Placing an accent on the little magazine's economic base also serves to locate women in relation to the material histories of cultural production in early- to mid-twentieth-century Canada. This approach calls attention to the business of little magazines, which has so far been misrepresented and undervalued in Canadian literary histories. When Francis addresses the subject of little-magazine production in Canada, she claims that little-magazine editors are unbothered by business matters, unconcerned by money, indifferent to production values, and "most often antipathetic to the public" ("Literary" 65–66). Insofar as little magazines of modernist and leftist orientation habitually define themselves against the commercial values and markets of mass-produced magazines, they may project an image of unbusiness-like practices and inattentive public relations. Yet the women poets and magazine editors included in this study were actively and variously involved in the business of little magazines: they conducted promotional tours, solicited and collected subscriptions, courted advertisers, typed stencils, cut and pasted dummies, answered correspondence, and so on. Most little magazines routinely employed women (and, less frequently, men) in clerical roles, sometimes acknowledged on the masthead, often not. Though crucial to the little magazine's non-commercial economy, these menial jobs have regularly been deemed inferior to editorial work and summarily disregarded by little-magazine historians. The predominantly clerical labour involved in little-magazine production is, in this historical context, gendered female: this, too, demonstrates that literary history has so far not only marginalized women editors and members of magazine groups but also their feminized forms of labour. Though I

recognize women's non-editorial as well as editorial contributions to modernist and leftist little magazines, I have not sought to catalogue all women involved as editors, associate editors, regional editors, business managers, and subscription agents. In cases where women's editorial and non-editorial duties overlap—as in the case of Page, for example—I have documented the impact of their labour on the making of little magazines.

According to Francis's description of the little magazine's unbusiness-like policies, its antipathy to the "public" is counterbalanced by its "'given' audience, more often seeking than sought out by the magazine" ("Literary" 66). While little magazines initially assume a "given" readership, they also enlist marketing techniques of self-promotion and advertising as a means of expanding their audiences. Modernist and leftist critiques of popular culture and mass-market magazines do not block little magazines from public engagement: Canadian modernists and leftists alike participate in a non-commercial magazine culture whose actual audience is limited, but whose ideal audience is often imagined in terms of the "masses" or the "public" or the "people." To argue that their actual audience was always a "given" is to misrepresent little-magazine cultures of the period. One may take for granted that *Canadian Poetry Magazine* counted on subscriptions and contributions from members of the CAA; that the *Woman Worker*, *Masses*, *New Frontier*, *New Frontiers*, and the *Canadian Forum* depended on the same from cultural and political organizations of the left: but to say that these magazines merely took these "given" audiences for granted and solicited no others is to contradict statements made by editors in the magazines themselves. Francis contends that the little magazines she names—*Contemporary Verse*, *First Statement*, *Preview*, and *CIV/n* among

them—are disseminated among a “given” audience only, and that their “readers are self-initiated members of a cult who recognize each other by certain attitudes and enthusiasms” (“Literary” 66). Yet the editors of Canadian little magazines initiated schemes—whether shifting from typescript/mimeograph to print (the *Woman Worker*, the *Crucible*, *First Statement*, *CIV/n*), or publishing a broadsheet and educating readers with an explanatory issue (*Preview*), or going on speaking tours and broadcasting poetry on radio (*New Frontier*, *Contemporary Verse*), or holding readings and fundraisers (*Canadian Poetry Magazine*, *here and now*)—in order to gain public exposure, to attract more readers, and to increase circulation levels. Such activities clearly indicate that these little-magazine editors were not underground dealers of “cult” magazines nor contented with “given” or “self-initiated” audiences.

For arts, social, and political groups, little magazines constitute sites of cultural mediation among editors, authors, and audiences. Little-magazine editors and authors are often self-conscious about their circumscribed audiences: the “littleness” of the little magazine’s cultural circles encourages its editors and writers to participate in internal dialogue and debate, whether by way of editorials, poems, stories, letters, or reviews. This self-consciousness also emerges through an unsettling awareness of the little magazine’s isolation from its ideal or imagined audience, often articulated by editors and authors in terms of crises of communication. So the leftist poet will write of her failure to communicate her political or social consciousness to the masses or the people through a populist poetic and proletarian poetry; the modernist poet will write of her inability to express her social solidarity or personal empathy with others through an impersonal poetic

and depersonalized poetry. For leftist and modernist poets alike, the articulation of these experiences was often related to the means of communication itself: the poet's crises find correlatives in the cultural mediations of the little magazine, particularly in its reaching out for audiences beyond its own communities of contributors, editors, and organizations. Women poets central to Canada's little magazines adopted self-reflexive positions, writing poetry about their own and their magazine culture's crises of communication. Their interrogation of poetry's relationship to its actual and imagined audiences led to a series of impasses—for Livesay in the early 1930s and in the 1950s, for Marriott and Waddington in the 1940s, for Page in the 1950s. By the mid-1950s, all four women had withdrawn from little-magazine cultures; their collective withdrawal coincided with the collapse of the magazines that had emerged in the early 1940s.

These convergent histories of modernist and leftist women poets and of little magazines constitute one of the formative narratives of literary culture in Canada from the 1920s to the 1950s. I have sought here to demonstrate how transitions and crises in each poet's creative career often coincide with, and can sometimes be caused by, moments of transition and crisis in Canadian modernist and leftist little-magazine cultures. In correlating these histories of individual poets and little magazines, I have brought together four of the most prominent Canadian women poets of this period and the principal little magazines in which they published their poetry. These poets' individual circumstances come together in the collective contexts of little magazines. This approach has enabled me to integrate readings of each poet's early trials and turning points into a history of Canada's modernist and leftist little-magazine cultures.

If we have not yet recognized the extent to which these women addressed poetic and cultural crises, it is in part because so many of the poems in which they voice these concerns were published in periodical form but not included in their early poetry collections of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Retrospective collections by Page, Livesay, and Waddington have now recovered some of these periodical poems from their early years. Most of Marriott's early poetry, however, has been out of print since the 1940s; her uncollected poems are still scattered among the pages of magazines and newspapers. Numerous other poems have been left unpublished in any form: much of Page's, Marriott's, and Waddington's early poetry remains hidden, relegated to archives. Literary history cannot accomplish the work of editors: I cannot expect here to retrieve the poems themselves from their periodical and archival sources, nor will I instigate a process of collecting such stray poems by putting together appendices (see Ringrose, "Preview"; Boylan; Schultz; Stevens, "Development"). Even when these poems have been subsequently collected in retrospective volumes by Livesay, Marriott, Page, and Waddington, they have not appeared in scholarly editions. Without even a minimal editorial apparatus, these retrospective collections have not represented the historical origins of poems originally published in little magazines. Fortunately, annotated bibliographies of Livesay, Page, and Waddington have traced the print histories of these poems. For Marriott, though, there is no such bibliography available and I have reconstructed the print histories of her poems. My method here, then, has been to integrate these print histories and critical readings of the poems, taking account of their contexts in Canadian little-magazine cultures of the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s.

This method stems from Cary Nelson's strategies of literary-historical recovery in the context of modern American poetry, attending to those poems omitted from the historical record and even those left out of a poet's collections: "Uncollected poems may point to historical realities that seem irrelevant or counter-productive only at the particular moment that the poet is assembling a collected volume. . . . Uncollected poems can also often define the outer edges of a poet's enterprise, directions a poet may have pursued for a time then rejected" (192). Another methodological innovation here will be to consider those poems never published by Livesay, Marriott, Page, and Waddington but composed at the same time as their activities as little-magazine editors, founders, and/or contributors during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Taken together, these methods for the study of Livesay, Marriott, Page, and Waddington will allow me to present readings of their poems either never collected or published at the time or only later collected in retrospective volumes; these poems I will resituate in relation to Canadian little magazines, their editorial policies and practices, and their historical context in modernist and leftist magazine cultures from the 1920s to the 1950s.

This literary-historical approach not only reconstructs the contexts in which these poems were originally written and published, but also reconstitutes the circumstances that contributed to the exclusion of these poems from chapbooks, books, and little magazines of that time. Attention to the minutiae of little-magazine, book, and chapbook production is imperative in such recovery work. This minimalist preoccupation with the materia of cultural production is fundamental to the method of "little histories." Manuscripts, typescripts, correspondence, and other archival documents as well as poems, letters,

editorials, articles, and reviews published in the little magazines themselves contain an abundance of information about these women—as poets, editors, and/or members of little-magazine groups. From these materials, I assemble a narrative about the formation and disintegration of Canadian little-magazine cultures and about the editorial construction of Canadian women’s leftist and modernist poetry.

Although correspondence between Livesay, Marriott, Page, Waddington reveals women employed as editors for Canadian publishing houses (Sybil Hutchison of McClelland and Stewart and Ellen Elliott of Macmillan), these women and their male counterparts (John Sutherland of First Statement Press, Jack McClelland, Jr. of McClelland and Stewart, Hugh Eayrs of Macmillan, and Lorne Pierce of Ryerson Press) only enter into consideration here insofar as their editorial decisions have an impact on the publication of women’s leftist and modernist poetry in Canada. Records of their editorial interventions are crucial, though, to any attempt to assess the discrepancies between the poetry that Livesay, Marriott, Page, and Waddington published only in little magazines and the poems included in their books and chapbooks.

Where women poets who were also editors of little magazines and/or members of little-magazine groups are featured in the first three chapters, women little-magazine editors who were not themselves poets (or not primarily poets) are introduced in chapter 4. This final chapter examines how these women editors of literary, arts, and cultural magazines initiated and facilitated the formation of Canadian leftist and modernist magazine cultures between 1926 and 1956. Contemporary with the emergence of Canada’s earliest modernist little magazines—the *McGill Fortnightly Review* (1925–27)

and the *Canadian Mercury* (1928–29)—Florence Custance founded the *Woman Worker* (1926–29), the first in a line of little magazines edited and co-edited by women in Canada. Custance was followed by editors Hilda and Laura Ridley of the *Crucible* (1932–43), Eleanor Godfrey of the *Canadian Forum* (1935–47), Catherine Harmon of *here and now* (1947–49), Myra Lazechko-Haas of *Impression* (1950–51), Yvonne Agazarian of *pm magazine* (1951–52), Aileen Collins of *CIV/n* (1953–55), and Margaret Fairley of *New Frontiers* (1952–56). Beyond their marginalization by literary historians, these women editors form the cast of an alternate narrative contiguous to the predominant masculinist histories of little magazines in Canada.

By examining a diverse range of women editors and little magazines, chapter 4 attests to the multiplicity and complexity of cultural discourses that circulate among literary, arts, and cultural magazines in Canada throughout the thirty-year period under consideration. Modernism and leftism are variously inflected by regionalist, nationalist, and internationalist interests in the context of Canada's little magazines. Feminism, too, plays a significant part in these emergent modernist and leftist cultural formations. In fact, the chronological limits of this study are marked by feminist magazines: the fourth chapter opens with a study of the proletarian feminism of the *Woman Worker* in the 1920s, which anticipates the conclusion's remarks on the emergence of a feminist literary-magazine culture in Canada in the 1970s and 1980s.

Proceeding chronologically from the mid-1920s to the mid-1950s, the main trajectory of this little-magazine history moves toward and passes through Canada's major national cultural event at mid-century: the Royal Commission on National Development in

the Arts, Letters, and Sciences (1949–51)—or, as it is commonly called, the Massey Commission. As the *Massey Report* of 1951 indicates, the dominant story of Canada's little magazines is their constant state of economic crisis. Its economic instability is the one universal condition of the little magazine in Canada prior to the founding of the Canada Council in 1957. About the Massey Commission, the Canada Council, and the little magazine's continuance in the post-Canada Council era, I reserve comment until chapter 4, though I should note here that the decision to end the present study with the folding of Margaret Fairley's *New Frontiers* in 1956 owes much to a radical shift in Canadian literary-magazine culture after 1957. While I look ahead to the emergence of Canadian feminist literary periodicals of the 1970s and 1980s in the conclusion, I proceed there only with the understanding that the material basis of these periodicals is fundamentally different from the little magazines edited by women prior to 1957. Before thinking ahead to a contemporary feminist magazine culture, though, I should like to consider some of the historical antecedents to modernist and leftist magazine cultures in Canada.

II: Reading Backwards

Critics and literary historians have in recent decades assessed the contents of English Canada's literary periodicals from their beginnings. Indexes, bibliographies, theses, dissertations, and book-length histories compose a significant body of scholarship devoted to early Canadian literary periodicals. The variety and extent of these scholarly contributions prevent a comprehensive discussion of their contents. I intend, however, to cull from these resources an introductory narrative that represents women editors and

their literary activities since the beginnings of Canadian literature. This narrative serves a double purpose: it opens a critical and literary-historical archive, and drafts a history of women editors of literary periodicals in English Canada. By way of introduction to the modernist and leftist little-magazine cultures between 1926 and 1956, then, these preliminary readings of a critical and literary-historical archive will anticipate my later readings. In a study where the objects of concern have been retrieved and read in terms of how and why they have been lost to literary history, the subject of those women editors and poets I have not selected for study—but whose histories predicate the production of leftist and modernist magazines in Canada—seems to me crucial as a preface to discussions of the historical origins and permutations of cultural discourses.

Histories of early English-Canadian literature most often recognize Frances Brooke as the author of Canada's first novel, *The History of Emily Montague* (1769). Prior to her arrival in Quebec in 1763, however, Brooke had also edited her own periodical, the *Old Maid* (1755–56). An alternate narrative of literary history thus originates with Brooke's periodical: a history of periodical literature and its production by women editors and authors. Though Canada cannot lay claim to Brooke as its first literary editor, nor name the *Old Maid* among its earliest serials, the history of her editorial and literary apprenticeship in mid-eighteenth-century London nonetheless deserves consideration as a formative literary-historical narrative. Edited under the pseudonym Mary Singleton, Spinster, the *Old Maid* was issued weekly from 15 November 1755 to 4 July 1756 (McMullen, *Odd* 13). In the first of thirty-seven issues, Brooke situated the *Old Maid* among a throng of periodicals circulating in mid-eighteenth-century London:

Amidst the present glut of essay papers, it may seem an odd attempt in a woman, to think of adding to the number; but as most of them, like summer insects, just make their appearance, and are gone; I see no reason why I may not buz amongst them a little; though it is possible I may join the short-liv'd generation; and this day month be as much forgot as if I had never existed. Be that as it may, in defiance of all criticisms I will write. (qtd. in McMullen, *Odd* 13; Brooke 1)

Through her editorial persona, Brooke plays the role of an independent modern woman, at liberty to publish her opinion; her persona is a type common among women editors of literary periodicals—whether those of the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century, or the twentieth century.¹ By taking control over the means of textual production (she is both editor and chief contributor), she asserts her autonomy as a modern literary woman. Another sign of her persona's modernity is her self-conscious identification with a print culture equipped for mass reproduction. Literary modernity is in part characterized by the emergence of a "short-liv'd generation" of periodical, whether the literary papers of Brooke's time or the little magazines of the twentieth century. Chief among the characteristics of these periodicals is their ephemeral existence, determined less by their frequent appearance (as is the case with the daily press) than by their infrequent longevity. The *Old Maid's* six-month run is typical of the transitory lives of little magazines, though the twentieth-century periodical almost never appears weekly—more often monthly, quarterly, or at other irregular intervals. Little magazines were most often cash-strapped, and consequently large numbers joined the "short-liv'd generation" after a few issues. This does not appear to be the case, however, with the *Old Maid*. Though the

circumstances of the *Old Maid*'s termination remain obscure, Brooke frames the situation as another instance of her editorial persona's autonomy: "I am tired of the confinement of writing every week, whether I chuse it or not; a slavery not at all agreeable to the volatile spirit of woman" (303). If the *Old Maid* must end, it will be by her choosing, not in deference to creditors or critics; her "short-liv'd" periodical thus appears to be self-constructed, self-willed, self-determined—yet another character trait replicated in the twentieth century's little magazines. One measure of the *Old Maid*'s success—and its relevance to Canadian literary history—is the fact that Brooke reissued a revised and corrected edition in 1764, the year after she came to Quebec. The edition must have been prepared in London prior to her departure for Quebec, but its appearance in 1764 would mark her first publication upon arrival in the new world.

Freighted with unforeseen cultural significance, the *Old Maid* was lost for two centuries en route to Canada. Its value as a cultural document has so far largely been restricted to an assessment of its literary-historical contexts and its anticipation of her first and second novels, *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville* (1763) and *The History of Emily Montague* (McMullen, *Odd* 31; *New* 11). This displacement of the periodical by the novel is not, of course, limited to Brooke criticism; it is standard critical practice to view an author's periodical publications as a stage to be superseded by book publication. (Brooke seems to have been well aware of this opinion, having issued the corrected 1764 text of the *Old Maid* as a bound publication, thereby conferring material and symbolic value upon the periodical and, furthermore, bettering its chances of survival.) It is also conventional for the author of a book to acknowledge prior publication in periodical form.

Few critics, however, “read backwards” to discover the origins of these texts and their contexts in literary magazines. Even fewer consider the value of those texts published in periodicals, but never collected by the author in book form. Fewer still read those texts left unpublished, sometimes destined for a retrospective or even a posthumous book, sometimes consigned to a file among an author’s archival papers. These kinds of “lost” periodicals and texts constitute the basis of an alternate history of Canadian literary culture, a history to which this study of English-Canadian modernist and leftist women poets and magazine editors of the twentieth century contributes.

Scholars working on pre-Confederation periodicals and periodical literature in English Canada have produced a varied collection of historical studies on women literary editors. Lorraine McMullen’s *An Odd Attempt in a Woman: The Literary Life of Frances Brooke* (1983) gives a full chapter to the *Old Maid* (67–83; see also New, “*Old Maid*”). Better known is Susanna Moodie’s collaboration with her husband J. W. D. Moodie as co-editor of the *Victoria Magazine* (1847–48), which has been detailed in W. H. New’s introduction to the 1968 facsimile edition, in Michael Peterman’s several studies of the Moodies, in Klay Dyer’s thesis “A Periodical for the People: Mrs. Moodie and *The Victoria Magazine*,” in John Thurston’s *The Work of Words: The Writings of Susanna Strickland Moodie*, and in Charlotte Gray’s *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Lives of Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill*. Much as Brooke’s *Old Maid* anticipates later generations of women editing little magazines, so too the Moodies’ *Victoria Magazine* invites comparison (albeit qualified) to magazine ventures of the early twentieth century. The Moodies’ magazine advertised itself as “A CHEAP PERIODICAL, for the

CANADIAN PEOPLE” on the title page and its editors’ address “To the Public” targeted both rural and urban audiences, the “intelligent farmer” and the “Towns’-people” (Moodie and Moodie, “To the Public” 2; see Dyer; New, Introduction, ix–x; Peterman, *This Great* 42–44; Gray 199–203; and Thurston 101–02). Though the Moodies’ “hope of inducing a taste for polite literature among the working classes” would collapse within a year (“Editor’s Table” 287), their laudable attempt to reach a literate labouring class through the *Victoria Magazine* prefigures much later efforts by Canadian leftist cultural organizations to capture a similarly constituted readership in the 1930s. In fact, the Moodies’ inability to secure an audience among the working class heralds the crises of communication confronted by politically progressive Canadian literary and cultural magazines of the early to mid-twentieth century. This critical phenomenon resurfaces in chapter 1, where I reconstruct Dorothy Livesay’s experiences as a poet and editor in Canadian leftist magazine culture in terms of a communication breakdown, a failure of her proletarian poetry to reach its intended working-class audience through two left-wing cultural magazines of the 1930s, *Masses* and *New Frontier*. While the political and class consciousness of Livesay’s magazine culture in the 1930s is radically opposed to the genteel values of the Moodies’ provincial milieu in the 1840s, the problem of establishing a rapprochement between literary and cultural magazines and working-class readers proves to be an abiding concern for editors and authors of both periods.

Reading Gwendolyn Davies’s histories of literary women and periodicals in Atlantic Canada of the early 1850s, one may again detect parallels to periodicals and the activities of women editors and poets in the early- to mid-twentieth century.² Mary Eliza

Herbert's periodical the *Mayflower* (1851–52), “a women's periodical that invited regional literary submissions,” was oriented toward local literary women of Methodist extraction (*Studies* 79). Davies locates the *Mayflower* at the centre of a group of Halifax women who “all wrote poetry and probably discussed and shared their work” (*Studies* 85); their brief convergence in the 1850s—as an informal regional gathering of women poets—gestures toward Canadian women's majorities among regional poetry groups and their local periodicals of the 1930s and early 1940s. The extent of women's involvements in regional literary organizations is addressed in chapter 2, where I resituate the poetry of Livesay and Marriott in relation to the Vancouver Poetry Society and the Victoria and Islands Branch of the Canadian Authors Association and their respective periodicals, established in the mid-1930s. This does not suggest that the origins of these poetry groups and periodicals are only to be found in the early history of Canadian women's magazines, but rather that the impetus to publish regional periodicals had been generated by local communities of literary women as early as the mid-nineteenth century.

A contemporary to Herbert's *Mayflower*, Mary Jane Katzmann's *Provincial, or Halifax Monthly Magazine* (1852–53) manifests her desire to foster a “native” literature, an idea that would continue to occupy the minds of women (and men) editing arts, literary, and cultural magazines a century later. Davies is clearly right to emphasize the regionalism of Katzmann's periodical; its name alone is indicative of its provincial and civic identity (*Studies* 86). But it would seem that Katzmann also set out in January 1852 to defy her critics who “confidently asserted that no purely literary undertaking will succeed in Halifax”—an assertion she felt “unwarranted in every respect, for neither

genius nor talent has any particular locality” (“Our Address” 2). In the end, however, the *Provincial* fulfilled her critics’ predictions, as she admitted in her closing editorial of December 1853:

The circle of Provincial readers who take an interest in colonial literature would appear to be very limited. . . . No doubt there exists a general taste for reading, a taste that is indulged to a considerable extent and which is gradually extending. This is proved by the large number of Periodicals from both England and the United States that find their way to the Provinces through the Book Stores and other channels. The desire, however, to cultivate and support a native literature in the country is either yet to be formed or has not yet developed itself to any great extent. (“Our Monthly” 487)

Katzmann’s quandaries would be rearticulated by Canadian women editing non-commercial arts, literary, and cultural-interest magazines in the mid-twentieth century. Whether regionalist (Yvonne Agazarian’s *pm magazine*), nationalist (Florence Custance’s the *Woman Worker*, Hilda and Laura Ridley’s the *Crucible*, Myra Lazechko-Haas’s *Impression*, Margaret Fairley’s *New Frontiers*), or internationalist (Catherine Harmon’s *here and now*, Eleanor Godfrey’s *Canadian Forum*, Aileen Collins’s *CIV/n*), non-commercial magazines struggled and failed to sustain a Canadian reading public. For these women editors, the “desire . . . to cultivate and support a native literature in the country” was met with the perennial problem of securing audiences and adequate finances for non-commercial magazines. In chapter 4, I address this economic crisis in Canadian magazine culture in relation to the findings of the Massey Commission. Its *Report* (1951)

uncannily echoes Katzmann's conclusions about a national literature, suggesting that the cultural crises of the 1850s remained those of the 1950s—particularly in the case of non-commercial literary and arts magazines.

Research on women's editorial work and periodical literature of the post-Confederation period has been slower to develop than research on the same of the pre-Confederation period. Carole Gerson has been a groundbreaker in both periods, compiling analytical and statistical findings on the contributions of women authors in Canadian literary magazines (which unfortunately exclude those magazines edited by women), and concluding that "literary periodicals of nineteenth-century Canada reflect a high level of activity among women writers." While she also notes that women participated in "the production of books" ("Anthologies" 58), neither she nor other literary historians refer to Canadian women involved in the production of literary magazines during the post-Confederation period. James Doyle mentions the rapid growth of women's magazines in the nineteenth century, and Marjory Lang indicates the inroads Canadian women had made into newspaper offices (as reporters, columnists, and editors) since the 1830s, which may help to account for the employment of those women who might have otherwise found editorial work with literary magazines during the post-Confederation period (Doyle, "Canadian" 32; Lang 79–80). Doyle also observes the inability of Canadian women writers to match the success of their male counterparts in obtaining editorial positions with American literary magazines of the 1890s, which might lead one to infer that women experienced similar difficulties with Canadian magazines ("Canadian" 31).

Is this apparent absence of women editors among Canadian literary magazines of the late-nineteenth century attributable to as yet unexplored areas in literary history? Certainly the literary-historical record has yet to register women among those editors of Canadian literary periodicals in the post-Confederation period. Though the historical scope of the present study prevents more disciplined research into the post-Confederation period, a chance discovery suggests to me that research in this area may prove productive: a biographical note on the minor Canadian poet Constance Fairbanks Piers records her work as an associate editor of the *Critic* (Halifax) in 1890–92 and of the *Caledonian* (St. Johnsbury, VT) in 1893–94 (“Constance”). As it happens, Constance Fairbanks co-edited with her husband Harry Piers *Frankincense and Myrrh: Selections from the Poems of the Late Mrs. William Lawson (M. J. K. L)* (1893)—a collection of poems by none other than Mary Jane Katzmann, editor of the *Provincial, or Halifax Monthly Magazine*. Such aleatory finds and felicitous connections among authors and editors sometimes lead the way to whole new fields of literary-historical research.

Similar to the later nineteenth century, the first two decades of the twentieth century have yet to foster studies of women’s editorial activities among Canadian magazine cultures. These decades witnessed the advance of literary modernism in European and American contexts, concurrent with the rise of the little magazine as a forum for modernist writers and editors. Scholarship on women editors of American and British modernist little magazines has developed into a sub-field of its own.³ A Canadian adjunct to this field of modernist studies, Doyle’s essay “Harriet Monroe’s *Poetry* and Canadian Poetry” (1989) addresses Canadians published in the American little magazine

Poetry: A Magazine of Verse (1912–), which served as a host to the poetry and poetics of an early modernist experiment, Imagism. Of the Canadian women who appeared in *Poetry* during Monroe's editorship (1912–36), Louise Morey Bowman, Martha Ostenso, and Florence Randall Livesay are included in Doyle's study. His analysis of the early stages of Canadian modernism in Monroe's *Poetry* anticipates the later development of modernist poetry in Canada's own literary magazines of the 1930s and 1940s: *Canadian Poetry Magazine* (1936–63) and *Contemporary Verse* (1941–52). I remark in chapter 2 how these Canadian poetry magazines model themselves on Monroe's *Poetry*, drawing particular attention to women's editorial and poetic contributions to the formation of a modernist poetry-magazine culture in Canada.

Concurrent with the emergence of Canada's earliest modernist little magazines in Montreal, Atlantic Canada witnessed the emergence of an antimodernist poetry-magazine culture in Halifax. Davies's history of the Song Fishermen—a circle of Halifax folk poets who contributed to the *Song Fishermen's Song Sheets* (1928–30), a poetry magazine edited by Andrew Merkel (*Studies* 166)—has inspired a series of commentaries on the group's "literary strategy of antimodernism" (McKay 227) and on its women members (Gerson, "Literary"; Kizuk, "Molly"). The poetry-magazine culture these historians describe is not antimodernist because its romanticist poets rebelled against the modernists, but because they resisted the effects of modernization through their poetry: the Song Fishermen resolved to conserve traditional modes of poetic expression and to preserve folk poetry's rural cultural values against the corrosive social and economic forces of modernity (Davies, *Studies* 164). Both Davies and Kizuk cite the antimodernist or

“romantic” features of the Song Fishermen’s poetry among the reasons for its exclusion from a Canadian literary canon and historical record biased toward modernist poetry (Kizuk, “Molly” 175–76; Davies, *Studies* 163). The marginalization of antimodernist cultural production in Canadian literary history resurfaces here in chapters 1 and 4, where I examine antimodernism’s political manifestations as well as its practice among women poets and editors in the context of Canadian leftist cultural organizations and periodicals of the 1930s and 1950s. There are fundamental differences between these periods, however: the antimodernism of the Song Fisherman primarily concerns itself with the social and economic forces of modernity, while the antimodernism of leftist cultural groups confronts the aesthetics of literary modernism.

Although Gerson’s contribution to the discussion of the Song Fishermen is brief, she does highlight two women members of the circle, “Annie Campbell Huestis, a child protégée of Charles G. D. Roberts” and “Molly Beresford, a prize-winning poet while a Dalhousie student in 1924”—both of whom contributed poems to the *Song Sheets*, though neither managed to put together a book or chapbook and have consequently “remained obscure for obvious reasons” (“Literary” 64). As a companion to Davies’s history of the Song Fishermen and Gerson’s survey of literary women in Atlantic Canada between the wars, Kizuk’s essay “Molly Beresford and the Song Fishermen of Halifax: Cultural Production, Canon and Desire in 1920s Canadian Poetry” (1993) offers readings of the “forgotten” poems of a “forgotten” poet in an attempt to recover both the historical circumstances and cultural significance of her poetry’s repression. Kizuk’s recuperation of Beresford’s uncollected and unpublished poems from periodical and archival sources

represents a literary-historical practice similar to my own readings of unpublished, uncollected, and historically neglected poems by Livesay in chapters 1 and 2, by Marriott in chapter 2, and by Page and Waddington in chapter 3. His analysis of Beresford's correspondence with Merkel and her relationship to the *Song Fishermen*, as a member of its inner circle but not an editor of its periodical, also prefigures my attempts to reconstruct the dynamic between non-editorial women members of modernist and leftist magazine groups and the male editors of these magazines. The interactions between women poets and male editors surface to some degree in the first three chapters, where I reconstruct from available evidence the editorial relationships between women poets and the *Masses* and *New Frontier* groups (chapter 1); the *Contemporary Verse* group (chapters 2 and 3); and the *First Statement* and *Preview* groups (chapter 3).

Gerson's "literary archaeology" has also helped to reclaim women editors among Atlantic Canada's periodicals of the interwar years ("Literary" 70). With the wide sweep of women poets, novelists, anthologists, and editors represented in her article "The Literary Culture of Atlantic Women between the Wars" (1993), Gerson has uncovered "Mary K. Ingraham, librarian at Acadia University, [who] made a . . . contribution to the local literary scene with *Book Parlance*, a modest and intelligent review she conducted single-handedly from 1924 to 1929" (69). Gerson has also revealed a feminist editorial influence in an otherwise masculinist milieu: "A distinguishing feature of the *Dalhousie Review* was the position of a well-known feminist, Eliza Richie, on its editorial board from the time of its founding in 1921 until Richie's death in 1933. Her prominence, coupled with the fact that during the 1920s she was the major contributor of book reviews, likely

both attracted other women to the *Review* and justified their presence” (67). Gerson’s additional recognition that feminist articles by Hilda Ridley and Margaret Fairley appeared in the *Dalhousie Review* during Richie’s tenure invites further consideration here (67), as these women would go on to found and edit their own magazines: Ridley, the *Crucible*, and Fairley, *New Frontiers*. These magazines are featured in chapter 4, in which I comment upon both editors’ feminist and cultural-nationalist commitments, on Ridley’s modernism, and on Fairley’s antimodernism.

Reading backwards through English-Canadian periodicals to 1764, we may begin to perceive the general outlines of a women’s history. The literary-historical archive that I have so far represented is provisional and lacks an account of research on specific little magazines established and/or edited by women between 1926 and 1956, to which I shall turn in each of the introductory sections of the first three chapters and in the preambles to each sub-section in the fourth chapter. The histories I have assembled will no doubt be added to and corrected by others, and I expect that other women poets and editors as well as periodicals will surface for scholars to reckon with in the future. Having briefly revisited the histories of women editors and literary periodicals of early generations, I think the thirty years of Canadian literary and cultural history that I have bracketed hereafter are pivotal: 1926 to 1956 may witness the development of an unparalleled number of women engaged in editing literary, arts, and cultural magazines, yet their editorial activities build upon the histories of generations past. At the same time, these thirty years of Canadian little-magazine culture are foundational for generations of women poets and editors in the decades that follow.

At this juncture, I should like to consolidate some of my introductory remarks and to reiterate the chronologies of the chapters that follow: chapter 1 deals with Livesay's editorial activities and poetry in the context of two magazines of the cultural left, *Masses* and *New Frontier*, between 1932 and 1937; chapter 2 concerns Livesay, Marriott, their involvement in poetry groups in Victoria and Vancouver, and their publications in *Contemporary Verse* and *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, between 1935 and 1956; chapter 3 addresses the poetry of Page and Waddington published in *Preview* and *First Statement* from 1942 to 1945, their poetry appearing in *Contemporary Verse* from 1941 to 1952-53, and their editorial activities in and/or relationships to these Montreal and Victoria-Vancouver magazine groups between 1941 and 1956; chapter 4 documents the histories of often-forgotten women who edited modernist or leftist little magazines in Canada between 1926 and 1956, beginning with Florence Custance and the *Woman Worker* and ending with Margaret Fairley and *New Frontiers*. Within this historical framework, I relate these women's editorial work and/or poetry to a series of crises and transitions in Canada's leftist and modernist little-magazine cultures. This historical pattern of crisis and transition pertains at once to the poetry of Livesay, Marriott, Page, and Waddington and to the little-magazine groups in which they and other women were active as editors, founders, and/or contributing members. If these histories attend to fine details of literary production, they do so in order to comprehend some of the intricacies and complexities of relations among poets, editors, and the concomitant formation and breakdown of Canadian modernist and leftist little-magazine cultures, between 1926 and 1956.

Chapter 1

INVITATION TO SILENCE:

LIVESAY AND MAGAZINE CULTURE OF THE LEFT, 1932–37

I: Histories of the Cultural Left

Ruth McKenzie's pronouncement in her 1939 article "Proletarian Literature in Canada" continues to be representative of literary-historical attitudes toward proletarian culture of the 1930s: "Since few members of the labouring classes are articulate in the literary sense, practically no literature of that origin exists in Canada or in any other country" (49; cf. Hynes 11). Even among members of the cultural left, an author as committed to proletarian literature as Dorothy Livesay questioned its material existence. Writing in "Proletarianism in Canada" around 1936, she anticipated McKenzie's later verdict:

There is no proletarian literature in Canada; but there is no Canadian literature either. It is my theory (and as one of thousands of Canadians writing verse I am entitled to have my theory) that until we look to the people, and the industries, and the economics of our social set-up, we will have no original contribution to make. Until our writers are social realists (proletarian writers if you will) we will have no Canadian literature. (*Right Hand* 230)

By 1936, Livesay had already taken part in a failed attempt (circa 1932–34) to establish a Canadian proletarian literature through the leftist cultural magazine *Masses*. Between the collapse of *Masses* in April 1934 and the formation of *New Frontier* in April 1936, she witnessed and contributed to the transformation of the Canadian left's magazine culture. Her theory about the absence of a proletarian literature in Canada is symptomatic of that

period of transition: the cultural left had shifted away from the proletarianism of the early 1930s toward the antifascism of the Popular Front after 1935. Livesay's analysis of proletarian literature in Canada was part of an ongoing project of self-definition conducted in Canadian magazines of cultural left, particularly in *Masses* and *New Frontier*.

Crucial to this project were deliberations over the meaning of the term "proletarian literature." Within leftist literary culture, it was often defined as class-conscious and revolutionary literature written from the point of view of the working class. Because the working class was just learning to produce its own literature, the definition of proletarian literature was not limited to include only literature of working-class authorship. Livesay's interpretation of proletarian literature points to the lack of Canadian working-class authors: "All of our writers today come from an educated, middle-class group. Their experience is almost wholly confined to one aspect of life, the consumer's." Middle-class writers, she contends, "ha[ve] no understanding of the producing groups"—that is, the working class (*Right Hand* 231). Livesay exempted herself, of course, setting herself as an example to the middle class: she was a convert to communist "producing groups" and herself a producer of proletarian literature. Yet at mid-decade she presented herself not as a communist, nor as a socialist realist, but as a "social realist"—a term she identified with "proletarian writers." This correlation of the proletarian and the social realist bypassed the political association between socialist realism and communism in the 1930s; her redefinition of "proletarian literature" circa 1936 maintained its class significations, but muted its political affiliations with a communist literary culture. Livesay's exegetical strategies can be attributed to the conditions of mid-1930s cultural politics: the emergent

Popular Front coalition of communists, social reformers, and progressive liberals necessitated the reinvention of cultural keywords. Where she erred in “Proletarianitis in Canada,” however, was that her definition of the working class as cultural producers precluded their function as cultural consumers. Typical of her contemporaries in the Canadian left’s magazine culture, she devoted full attention to the authors, but little attention to the audience, of proletarian literature.

Just as the question of authorship was problematic in the development of proletarian literature in Canada, so was the question of audience. This latter problem became acute when, as McKenzie observed of Canadian proletarian writers en masse, Livesay, among other writers of revolutionary verse who wanted “a Canadian audience,” had “to rely almost solely on magazines for publication” (49). For poets writing proletarian verse in Canada, audience was mainly generated through magazine publication and distribution. Fortunately for Livesay, her publication history coincided with the emergence of an Canadian magazine culture on the left in the 1930s.

Having authored two collections of poetry, *Green Pitcher* (1928) and *Signpost* (1932)—both published by Macmillan with the stipulation that the Livesays cover the printing costs (Stevens, *Dorothy Livesay* 29)—Livesay would not see another collection until Ryerson Press published *Day and Night* (1944).¹ Livesay’s correspondence with Lorne Pierce of Ryerson Press began on 8 June 1936. Her first letter alluded to her current arrangement with Macmillan:

I am sending you herewith a new manuscript of mine which I want to have published in the autumn. I believe it is a significant advance over my previous

poetry, and should have considerable effect in developing a new trend in Canadian poetry as a whole. Quite regardless of its worth, because of its particular *direction* I feel it is essential to have it published now, and have made arrangements to do so myself. (Lorne Pierce Papers [LPP], box 6, file 6, item 5; original emphasis)

Pierce was not as eager as Livesay to see the new collection in print. Their correspondence concerning the collection continued until 2 July 1937, after which a hiatus of several years ensued.² Livesay submitted a new collection called “Day and Night” to Pierce on 13 March 1943, which led to its publication in 1944. The reserved tone of her cover letter whispers compared with that of her first contact with Pierce in 1936: “I think, after ten years of silence (from the book point of view), I really should have something to offer” (LPP, box 9, file 10, item 39).³

From 1932 to 1944, therefore, Livesay depended entirely on periodical publication to reach her audience. Beginning in 1932, she would learn the magazine trade in the company of authors and magazine editors of Canada’s cultural left. Founded in Toronto in 1931, the Progressive Arts Clubs of Canada (PAC) had formed the leftist cultural group that Livesay would join and in turn find an audience through its magazine culture. In the autumn of 1932, she started to work with the first of three different PACs—first in Toronto, later in Montreal (1933–34), and then in Vancouver (1936–39).⁴ Having participated in the Toronto PAC writers’ group, she began in November 1932 to contribute reviews, agitation-propaganda (“agitprop”) plays, and proletarian verse to *Masses*, the magazine published and edited by members of the PAC from April 1932 to April 1934.

Among other Canadian magazines of the cultural left in the 1930s, such as *New*

Frontier and the *Canadian Forum*, *Masses* has not yet enjoyed comparable literary-historical attention. What sparse coverage *Masses* has received more often than not attacks its adherence to the cultural directives of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) and belittles its minor production of proletarian literature. Even Livesay herself only briefly mentions *Masses* in her recollections in *Right Hand Left Hand: A True Life of the Thirties* and *Journey with My Selves*. But we need look no further than her own poetry collections for her evaluation of her proletarian verse of the early 1930s, much of which she published in *Masses*, but all of which she left uncollected until she assembled her retrospective volumes *Collected Poems: The Two Seasons of Dorothy Livesay* (1972) and *Right Hand Left Hand* (1977). Just as *Masses* has been relegated by literary historians and by Livesay herself to a minor role in Canadian cultural history, so has her proletarian verse of the early 1930s.

With an eye for critical principles of selection, George Woodcock once suggested that “One way of approaching Livesay’s poetry of the Thirties is to consider the pieces that were left out of *Collected Poems* and included in *Right Hand Left Hand*” (241). Another related approach is to import Nelson’s literary-historical method of recovering and recontextualizing periodical poetry, but with the specific intent of targeting those poems Livesay left out of her collections altogether (Nelson 192; see also Hornsey; Schultz; and Stevens, “Development”). To make one further advance in method is to consider those poems never published by Livesay, but written from 1932 to 1937 during her years with *Masses* and the PACs in Toronto and Montreal, and with *New Frontier* and the New Frontier Club (NFC) in Vancouver. Taken together, these methods for the study

of Livesay's proletarian verse will allow me to present readings of her collected, uncollected, and unpublished poems from 1932 to 1937 in relation to *Masses* and *New Frontier*, their editorial policies, and their historical contexts in an international magazine culture of the left.

II: Among *Masses*: Leftist Magazine Culture

Prior to *Masses*, PAC writers published poems and articles in proletarian papers such as the CPC's weekly *Worker* and the Labour Defense League's organ the *Labour Defender*. But these were not cultural organizations and publications; this cultural gap on the Canadian left was filled by the PACs and *Masses*. What started in Toronto as "a Saturday afternoon discussion circle which began meeting in 1928 at the home of Abraham Nisnevitz, the operator of a small upholstery plant and author of poetry in Yiddish and English" (Endres xxiii), expanded in the fall of 1931 into "the Progressive Arts Club of Toronto, with about 35 members in an artists' group, a writers' group, and a dramatic group" (Ryan). After 1932, the Toronto PAC evolved into a national PAC network extending to Halifax, Montreal, East Windsor, London, Winnipeg, and Vancouver, interconnected by the Toronto-based cultural magazine *Masses*.

One such organization of leftist cultural groups was already active in the United States, the John Reed Clubs (JRC), founded in 1929. The Canadian PACs were contemporaries of the JRCs, which also supported local magazines in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The earliest of these was the New York-based *New Masses* (1926–48). Canada's *Masses* took at least its name from one of its American predecessors—the *Masses* (1911–17) or *New Masses*; this claim could be substantiated by comparison of

graphic design (see Carr 133–34). In addition to *Masses*'s linocut prints for cover art and cartoons, its typeface and layout also mirror *New Masses*. Unlike its American comrade, however, *Masses* itself never experienced active government repression in Canada, though its very existence was partly attributed to the censorship of *New Masses* by Canadian customs officials (“Cultural Reaction in Germany” [2]; “Weekly ‘New Masses’”). Nor were the *Masses* editors trying to reach an audience beyond Canadian borders, since the JRCs’ magazines already met the demands of the American market. Rather, the *Masses* editors were attempting to introduce an international proletarian culture—writers, workers’ press, visual artists, theatre groups—to left-wing Canadian workers, writers, and intellectuals in order to develop the nascent proletarian cultural movement in Canada.

What *New Masses* and *Masses* did hold in common was their desire to discover and promote working-class voices—that is, to allow the historically repressed access to means of literary expression and production. They also shared the consequence of giving voice to the historically silenced masses: the attempted silencing of those voices raised in opposition to the proletarian movement. Those voices were shouted down at the time by populist enthusiasm for revolutionary modes such as mass chants, workers’ songs, and agitprop verse and theatre. Reticent bourgeois intellectuals and artists were equally censured within the proletarian movement for what was perceived to be willed silence on issues of concern such as poverty, unemployment, labour rights, and civil liberties.

With polemical rhetoric and incisive commentary on the cultural milieu in which *Masses* was conceived, the first *Masses* editorial broadsided Canadian intellectuals and artists in an attempt to goad them into following their American, Soviet, and French

contemporaries who had already expressed support for the proletarian movement.

Although unsigned, the editorial was penned by Toronto playwright, theatre critic, and newspaperman Oscar Ryan (Gordon Ryan 27). Ryan placed rhetorical emphasis on the comparative silence of Canadian artists and intellectuals, both to elaborate common cultural tropes in the Depression era—sterility, drought, wasteland—and, paradoxically, to enumerate such silences in order to give voice to the working class:

This development has not as yet very forcibly manifested itself in Canada. Possibly it is because Canada has been so culturally sterile. But there are a number of Canadian writers, painters,—intellectuals of greater or lesser achievement. Are they *eternally to remain silent*? Will they perhaps actively engage in the social life of Canada,—but in the drawing rooms of our social pillars? Or will a few be found who will go among the workers, try to understand the sufferings of the workers, their struggles, their hopes? Will they continue *to remain silent*, or at best stifle their indignation when workers are massacred, as in Estevan, when workers are jailed under sedition laws, under Section 98, under every manner and form of anti-labor statute? Can they *remain silent* and “impartial” when workers are starving in tens of thousand[s], when farmers are evicted, when foreign-born jobless are deported en masse? (emphasis added)

By naming their silences, Ryan also attacked Canadian bourgeois artists and intellectuals for their passivity and irresponsibility toward the working class and the unemployed. While his editorial purported to recruit so-called fellow travellers—that is, progressive bourgeois sympathetic to revolutionary proletarian organizations and objectives—his tendentious

manifesto style counteracted the intent to convert anyone other than the already converted. In giving voice to the emergent working-class culture, Ryan condemned what he believed to be a dying bourgeois culture “eternally to remain silent.”

Ryan’s treatment of bourgeois intellectuals and artists represented a typical stage in the development of twentieth-century proletarian culture, a stage most prominently documented in the cases of the editors of the *Masses* and *New Masses* in the United States (see Aaron; Gilbert; Murphy). That stage was commonly characterized by the term “leftism,” one aspect of which was a tendency toward proletarian sectarianism, while another was a propensity toward antibourgeois propaganda (Murphy 1). During the parallel developmental stage in Canadian proletarian culture, the PAC and *Masses* dismissed bourgeois literati and emphatically encouraged industrial workers, farmers, and the unemployed to generate an autonomous cultural movement:

[The PAC] does not seek the applause of the select literati, nor does it ask for their tolerance. It is a movement of workers. It is a movement that will find its greatest encouragement in the approval, by the workers, of its work. It addresses itself to the workers, to the poor farmers, to the jobless man in the bread-line. . . . The workers will produce, and are today producing, their own writers, their artists, their revolutionary intellectuals. *MASSSES* is the first publication of its kind to appear on Canadian soil, produced from the life of Canada’s factories, farms,—and breadlines. (Ryan)

The *Masses* manifesto could only ensure a nonsympathetic response from a majority conservative population to a minority proletarian culture in 1930s Canada. Even if Ryan’s

message had managed to reach an audience of “select literati,” their response—like McKenzie’s pronouncement on proletarian literature—was commonly one of incredulity toward working-class writers. An aggressive demand for autonomy of proletarian writers, artists, and intellectuals could only guarantee for *Masses* a reciprocal autonomy of proletarian readers. This autonomy would translate into a self-imposed entrapment of the Canadian proletariat producing and consuming only among themselves. At this moment in the history of Canadian proletarian culture, then, we witness the proletarian artists and intellectuals of *Masses* assigning themselves to a culture of their own.

Anxieties among the PACs over the cultural identity and autonomy of the proletariat were translated in specific ways to the field of literary production. Livesay in particular communicated these anxieties in her proletarian poetry of the 1930s. She was one of the fellow travellers who wanted to move beyond sympathy to activism, and who pledged herself to the proletarian cause by choosing not to remain silent. To prove her commitment to the working class, Livesay recognized—in her published letter of July 1932 to Jean Watts—that she would have to repudiate her bourgeois heritage in order to participate in an autonomous proletarian culture:

As for communism, it’s a working-class movement and I realize now that it’s no use trying to spread it anywhere except within the proletariat. It is alien to the other classes, they do not *feel* that way and so they cannot think that way. I want to think and belong to, work for the proletariat. . . . (*Right Hand* 45; original emphasis)

Full commitment to the proletarian movement would effectively require Livesay to repress

her personal history and identity as a bourgeois poet. As such, she had been prolific, but as a proletarian poet her desire for solidarity with the working class would draw her away from writing verse and toward political, social, and cultural activism. The repression of her bourgeois identity and history contributed to her preoccupation with problems of language, communication, and audience in the proletarian verse that she did manage to write in the years coincident with the publication of *Masses*. These personal issues, connected to her conversion to communism in 1932, were tied to communal issues concerning the authorship, autonomy, and audience of proletarian culture. In Dennis Cooley's words, "Livesay's political conversion can be seen then as a crisis in language as much as a crisis in social formation" (237). These crises Livesay most often presented in her poetry through figures of silence.

Studies of figurative silences in Livesay's poetry have been common among her critics. Only Nadine McInnis and Beverley Mitchell have intentionally diminished, even negated, the presence of silence in Livesay's poetry from the 1930s (McInnis 38; Mitchell 519); other critics, namely Margaret Ann Munton and Peter Stevens, have identified silence as the dominant and unifying poetic figure of Livesay's *oeuvre* (Munton 146; Stevens, "Out" 580). Dennis Cooley and Caren Irr have also isolated figural silences in Livesay's 1930s poetry, Irr even extending her readings to include some previously uncollected and unpublished poems (220, 225). Both Cooley and Irr acknowledge and extrapolate from the thematic reading of Livesay's early poetry in terms of "arrested or twisted voices" (Cooley 257) and "muted or thwarted voices" (Irr 220), originally formulated by Stevens as "the silence within that struggles to break out into poetry, a

poetry that tries to use the silence but somehow fails to" ("Out" 585). Where Cooley and Irt differ from Stevens is in their gradual shift away from thematic and psychological criticism and toward cultural criticism that seeks to interpret Livesay's figural silences as signs of aesthetic and sociopolitical expression and repression in Canadian proletarian culture of the 1930s.

Because Livesay's figural silences signify both expressive and repressive, positive and negative forces in and around Canadian proletarian culture, they become signifiers of ambivalence. In her antifascist poem "Broadcast from Berlin" from the September 1933 issue of *Masses*, for instance, silence acquires both positive and negative valences of meaning. Contrary to the symbolic representations of German fascism, silence is associated in the poem with the physical embodiments and implements of labour and of communism. While workers' implements such as hammer and sickle are common communist symbols, they are presented in the poem not as symbols but as metonyms of labour, thus rendering the "hammer's swing, the sickle's harvesting," as physical rather than symbolic (*Archive* 42). The physical, material language of communism in the poem thus counters the symbolic, abstract language of fascism; this emphasis on the physical necessitates communication through the workers' universal gestures of manual labour. To interpret their gestures, the audience addressed in the poem is drawn rhetorically into a position of solidarity with the workers, into their work space "behind closed doors" (42). In tandem with the speaker, whose second-person address to an audience opens the poem, the reader initially views the workers from the distance of the third person in the first and second stanzas. As the poem progresses to the third and fourth stanzas, both speaker and

reader enter the workers' space. Access to it has been granted to the speaker, who in the fourth stanza actually speaks on behalf of the workers and directs the reader with imperatives to interpret the workers' labour and their point of view. Even though their "work" and their "searching glance" are physical manifestations of silence, both express a positive aspect of silence as the kind of universal knowledge understood by communist "[w]orkers of the world" (42). But because their work is hidden from the brown-shirted fascists who run the communists out of the streets to shelter "behind their doors," the "silent searching glance" of the workers also indicates their scrutiny and distrust of outsiders to the proletarian movement (42). Therefore, the silence of the workers also marks the negative and repressive social conditions experienced by organized labour under German fascism in the early 1930s; the communist workers must remain in secret and in silence as they plot strategies of resistance and revolution against the ruling fascists. At least rhetorically and imaginatively, the poem attempts to counteract the repressive force of fascism, for it is presented as a "broadcast," a global radio transmission in which speech is freed from physical restraint in a disembodied medium. Contrary to our knowledge of the limited circulation of *Masses*,⁵ Livesay's imagined broadcast was directed to the masses as an audience of "millions" (47).

"Broadcast from Berlin" puts forward the image of the masses as an autonomous proletarian body, an image that Ryan invoked in his opening editorial and that *Masses* editors reproduced in subsequent issues. That the poem was originally published in *Masses* but subsequently omitted from later poetry collections speaks to the consequences of Livesay's ideological choice to represent the cultural autonomy of a sectarian

proletariat. Her articles for *Masses*, beginning with the November 1932 issue, had already exposed her appreciation only of artists “whose work tends towards a comprehension of present-day conditions, of the life of the working class” (“Art Exhibition”). Likewise, her review of Edmund Wilson’s book *Devil Take the Hindmost* challenged the author on the basis that he was only a fellow traveller and “that his position as an observer is untenable, that a writer must be a revolutionary.” Livesay’s intolerance of such fellow travellers is again raised in her article on the Art Students’ League of Toronto: “The aim of the artists of the proletariat is not seclusion and individualism. Not ‘co-operation’ with bourgeois wealth, but solidarity with the workers’ struggle” (“Guild”). Each review article Livesay signed only with her initials, a shield of anonymity that she maintained until the final issue of *Masses*.⁶ These review articles sharply reiterated the typically leftist sectarianism of PAC members and magazine contributors. Her need to protect herself, however, behind an impersonal signature among the ranks of *Masses* contributors signaled a patent contradiction in her service to proletarian culture and her attack on bourgeois culture: she secluded herself among the proletariat rather than among the bourgeoisie.

In addition to “Broadcast from Berlin,” Livesay published three other poems in *Masses*: “Pink Ballad” (December 1932), “A Girl Sees It!” (March–April 1933), and “Canada to the Soviet Union” (March–April 1934). “Broadcast from Berlin” was never collected by Livesay herself, though it was reprinted during her lifetime in *Dorothy Livesay and the CBC: Early Texts for Radio by Dorothy Livesay* (1994). Both “Pink Ballad” and “Canada to the Soviet Union” Livesay excluded from *Collected Poems* but included in *Right Hand Left Hand*. For both poems, she could expect sympathetic

reception only from leftist audiences. “Pink Ballad” makes no concessions to noncommunists and addresses no audience other than CPC members, those “workers” to and by whom the final “chorus” is spoken (*Right Hand* 177). Congruent with Livesay’s criticism of fellow travellers in her articles for *Masses*, “Pink Ballad” is an uncompromising polemic against Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) leader J. S. Woodsworth and MP Agnes MacPhail, politicians supported by the rival “pink” or social-democratic magazine the *Canadian Forum* (*Right Hand* 176).⁷ As Douglas Scott Parker has commented on “Pink Ballad,” “Livesay’s dedication to her cause, the urgency to create a voice for the workers against their enemies, and her adherence to CPC strategy all shaped this poem into a polemical diatribe rather than a persuasive piece” (65). By giving voice to a chorus of workers, “Pink Ballad” exerts repressive force on those CCF voices raised in opposition to the CPC. Indicative of CPC tactics of the early 1930s, Livesay attacks the CCF for conducting political action “[b]y ‘reason,’ not by force” (*Right Hand* 176); she thereby applies the “force” of CPC politics, repressing “reason.” With an adjusted political strategy, “Canada to the Soviet Union” makes plain its expressive intentions and identifies repressive forces with church, bourgeois, and capitalist figures. The poem is a mass chant documenting how underprivileged Canadians suffer under capitalism and aspire to the social conditions of their idealized Soviet comrades living under communism. Presented as a recitation by Canadian masses to an audience of Soviet masses, the poem seems almost forced to justify *itself* to its intended audience in its final lines: “We shall be unashamed to face you, comrades! / For our children will have songs, at last / To spur their eager feet!” (*Right Hand* 72). Like political ballads and workers’

songs, the mass chant was developed for proletarian voices; their audiences, of course, were also proletarian. Because of their intended proletarian audiences, Livesay wisely reserved both “Pink Ballad” and “Canada to the Soviet Union” for a collection such as *Right Hand Left Hand*, in which readers are given some indication of the historical and sociopolitical contexts in which such proletarian verse was originally published.

Of Livesay’s poems printed in *Masses*, only “A Girl Sees It!” was republished in *Collected Poems*—and only then because the poem was brought to her attention by a young socialist correspondent who wrote to Livesay when she was reviewing the galleys.⁸ Substituted for the previously unpublished poem “Testament,” “A Girl Sees It!” was selected by Livesay to open “The Thirties” section of the collection. Appropriate to its position in *Collected Poems*, “A Girl Sees It!” represents her early-1930s views on proletarian culture as a revolutionary movement constituted by members of the working class and by middle-class converts to communism. Published in the collection under the title “In Green Solariums,” the gendered title of “A Girl Sees It!” is thereby effaced; here we can begin to see how the publication history of such a poem raises issues of gender representation in *Masses*. The revised title substitutes an image of the bourgeoisie, “In Green Solariums,” in place of a proletarian declamation, “A Girl Sees It!” Like Livesay’s other *Masses* poems “Broadcast from Berlin” and “Canada to the Soviet Union,” “A Girl Sees It!” opens with a second-person address to its audience, but now the implied audience is bourgeois and the speaker’s tone is accusatory: “You don’t know the city, / You who sit in green solariums” (*Collected Poems* 72). The poem is largely the first-person narrative of a young female servant, Annie, who becomes pregnant by the son of

her bourgeois employers, who receives care during her pregnancy from the Salvation Army, and who after giving birth is inspired as a witness of social injustice to incite revolutionary action. Unlike other young women who are rehabilitated by the Salvation Army and “clamber back to green solariums” (73), Annie rejects servility among the bourgeoisie and opts instead for liberation through solidarity with the workers’ movement:

We will march up past green solariums
 With no more fear, with no more words of scorn:
 Our silence and the onrush of feet
 Will shout for us: the International’s born! (75)

Like the speaker of “Broadcast from Berlin,” Annie valorizes “silence” and physical action as the workers’ means of communication. In fact, the poem is written in blank verse and is therefore indebted to the literary tradition of the bourgeois; hence, Annie declares at the beginning of the poem to her bourgeois audience, “I have learned to talk like you” (72). Her final declaration of silence and sounding out of marching feet offers an alternative system of communication for the workers’ movement, a form of proletarian action rather than bourgeois speech. As in “Broadcast from Berlin,” verbal silence may take on a positive meaning in the context of proletarian culture.

However we may view Livesay’s revisionist degendering and depersonalizing of the title, the social issues of concern in the poem are congruent with her critique of middle-class feminism printed in the same issue of *Masses* as “A Girl Sees It!” The masculinist bias of proletarian culture as it manifests itself in *Masses* is unavoidable: a masculine proletariat is dominant on the cover designs and in the articles devoted to the

question of what constitutes proletarian art and culture. For *Masses*, whatever proletarian art is, it is the socially conscious art of the working man; whatever bourgeois art is, it is decadent, effete, the “pink” art of “literary poseurs, scoundrels, eccentrics, and sex maniacs of the bourgeois intelligentsia” (“To All Subscribers”). Livesay, in her review of *Ann Vickers* by Sinclair Lewis in the March–April issue of 1933, likewise accommodates the cultural program of *Masses* to her critique of middle-class feminism and individualism:

Feminism was essentially a middle-class movement. The economic “rights” of the proletarian woman had been decided in the eighteenth century, when the textile mills seized her. The feminists of the twentieth century, on the other hand, were individualists seeking economic equality and political power for their own class. To say they have won either would be ridiculous. The middle-class female will always be obliged to give up her career if she is to be considered as a woman and mother. Only in Soviet Russia, only in a socialist state, can real equality between the sexes be established.

That Livesay writes of twentieth-century feminists in the past tense is perhaps telling enough; that gender parity can only be fulfilled by the establishment of a classless socialist state further signals her indoctrination into a leftist ideology that cannot value any form of middle-class feminist individualism. What her critique entails is a reaction against suffragette feminism, a rejection of the middle class, and a censure of individualism. Her reading of Friedrich Engels’s *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* had strongly influenced her thinking about the roles of women in proletarian culture (*Right Hand* 22). Just as her review of Lewis reflects ideas inspired by Engels, so her poem “A

“A Girl Sees It!” enables a female speaker to voice the idea, shared by her 1930s contemporaries, that “a revolutionary working-class women’s movement was the only true vehicle for women’s emancipation” (Sangster 18).

The conviction with which “A Girl Sees It!” announces a young woman’s conversion to the workers’ movement is conspicuously absent from the poem that it replaced in *Collected Poems*. Composed on 28 July 1934, approximately three months after the demise of *Masses*, “Testament” records a far more tentative and troubled conversion to the cause of the working class than its substitute in *Collected Poems*. Certainly, the folding of *Masses* after its March–April 1934 issue would have shaken Livesay’s faith in the successful establishment of a radically leftist proletarian culture in Canada or at least one devised by the CPC members of *Masses*. Without the optimism of “A Girl Sees It!” then, “Testament” reiterates the need for the proletarian movement to recruit rather than ridicule members of the bourgeoisie. Where “A Girl Sees It!” embodies the agonistic leftist approach toward the bourgeoisie, “Testament” expresses the trepidation of those bourgeoisie sympathetic to the proletarian movement, a major obstacle in the formation of a nonsectarian proletarian culture that stems from working-class scepticism toward middle-class converts to communism.

“Testament” is a parable-poem primarily about the conversion of two bourgeois lovers—the speakers of the poem—to communism. At first Livesay presents the lovers as socially alienated and sexually repressed office employees, who remember their sexual intimacies in the marshland country, and who desire release from their workplace in the city. To express their social alienation while working in offices, Livesay borrows a

metaphor from the newspaper industry:

Business of living crushing us, until

We come out from between the rollers

Flat as newspapers, with a few headlines

For recognition, someone's photograph, and a "lost" column. (*Archive 43*)

Effectively pressing the speakers into what they materially are on a page—print-media constructions—Livesay reflects upon ways in which the machinery of capitalism reproduces "flat," impersonal, dehumanized images of mass-humanity in its mass print culture. At least figuratively, the office workers are processed into a print commodity; their alienation is compartmentalized into a newspaper "'lost' column." Formally, Livesay isolates the conceit in a four-line stanza of its own, signifying their social alienation in a way analogous to the segmented format of newspapers. Immediately preceding and following this stanza, the office workers' experience of social alienation in the city is juxtaposed with their physical release from the city to the country, though their release is presented as escapism, another form of social alienation. When the lovers recall their sensual and sensuous pastoral experience, their personal memories are deliberately divorced from social consciousness:

Clothes without thinking we took off

To be relieved and free of thought

And after caressing, bodies together moving

We could withdraw released as the tree from the wind

Yet not divided, quiet in our escape

For a moment only. . . . (*Archive* 43)

Imagined as a unity in and of themselves, the bourgeois lovers escape from urban memories of office work and street poverty into pastoral memories of bodily pleasure; their escapism is hedonistic: “It was all sensation. Feel it, the air sings / The sun burns in exaltation” (*Archive* 43). Livesay advances the notion that the lovers perceive the world without self-consciousness, that their sensation is dissociated from thought, but that their coming to self-consciousness is a renewal of sensibility: “When thought began to push a shy root / Into our consciousness, our sensitive crust, / Sensation took on a new form— / An illustration of the indictment” (*Archive* 44).

Initiated by the lovers’ self-indictment, the balance of the poem is dedicated to a parable about their conversion to class consciousness. Using natural images suitable to the conventionality of a parable, the lovers’ escapes to the country are continuously rendered through sun imagery, meant to represent the bourgeoisie, in contrast to shadow imagery, intended to stand for the working class and unemployed:

We know nothing, we haven’t touched anything of living

We live in the sun, casting a shadow

On all the others, the nameless, the toilers

And our sun-life, untouched by shadow

Is not a life, is a scorched blade.

There must be a way out for those in the shadow:

Can we join them, can it be found? (*Archive* 44)

Analogous to the black-and-white image of the newspaper, the sun and shadow imagery in

this passage depicts stark divisions between classes, divisions which the speakers are keen to eliminate, but only by projecting a screen of bourgeois self-loathing and self-questioning. The speakers' subsequent gesture to join the working-class masses is neither easily given nor accepted, and is again punctuated by self-doubt and self-interrogation:

Moving over then, with the masses
 Afraid to touch, and be friendly,
 Afraid to be found out, and jeered at:
 "You—you came from the sun!"
 Fear dwindles, in the growing knowledge
 The growing oneness of work to be done.
 We look at the sun, and are not blinded
 The sun our attainment, and its parasites
 Blades of burnt grass to be trampled.
 Was it so once for us? Were we once so,
 Parasites burnt with a false possession? (*Archive 44*)

Here Livesay makes explicit the paralysis that besets sympathetic bourgeois intellectuals and artists who, like herself, remained silent about their social privilege and who feared ostracism from the proletarian movement for not passing as authentic working class. Once more the sympathetic bourgeois recall their former social alienation, figured as "parasites," consumers of capitalist culture "burnt with a false possession" of and by a mystified commodity like the "sun." Yet the speakers' rhetorical questioning of their past lives as "parasites" of capitalist culture indicates the rigorous class consciousness

proletarian culture demands of its partisans; here their self-reflection is carried out rhetorically, and the final two stanzas of the poem reinforce such self-inspection.

In the penultimate stanza, the speakers' conversion to class consciousness is presented through their return to the marshland. Their return signifies a rebirth of sensibility, joining sensation and thought in a new knowledge and themselves in a new union: "Returning with understanding, we have delight / Because there is no longer isolation in the valley" (*Archive* 44). Employing structures of repetition to imitate the movement of their return, Livesay not only reflects their shift in consciousness imaginally by revisiting the opening images of the lovers' escape, but also formally: the poem is structured so that the form of the second and third stanzas (four and six lines apiece) is inverted and repeated in the final two stanzas. Where the isolation of the four-line stanza in the first instance had communicated the alienated condition of the office workers, the formal repetition in the concluding four-line stanza serves to show their emergence from that former social condition. Their new union within the proletarian movement is, contrary to the lifeless and "flat" image of the newspaper, now imagined as fecund and "rounded." Their new knowledge is, however, much like the codes of the poem itself, not openly communicated: "Look," they declare, "we have secrets comradely yielded" (*Archive* 44). Those "secrets" may serve to alienate the non-partisan audience of the poem, perhaps to place them in a position of social alienation and to tempt them into following the speakers. Non-partisans are left with a "false possession" or nothing at all; they cannot share the secrets encoded in this proletarian parable, communicated figuratively: "the wind for all city lovers and children / Is a banner upshaken" (*Archive*

44).

As a poem that elaborates crises of sectarianism and communication—among the working- and middle-class left and among communists and noncommunists—“Testament” is a complex form of proletarian literary expression. Its figurative language, imaginative ambiguities, and formal principles are by no means “common”; it could hardly be a poem written by or for one of the workers-writers to whom *Masses* editors wanted to appeal (see J. Lee Thompson 119–20). “Testament” offers a critique of the form, if not content, of proletarian verse in particular and proletarian culture in general, countering leftist sectarianism, antimodernism, and didacticism.

Masses editorialists and reviewers were often strongly biased, of course, toward cultural leftism. Ryan’s 1932 manifesto statement—“Art is propaganda, or more precisely, a vehicle of propaganda”—typified the leftism of *Masses* editorialists and reviewers. Specific to proletarian poetry, M. Granite’s July–August 1932 article “On Canadian Poetry” represented the *Masses* editorial line on propaganda and verse:

Poetry must become the inspiration of the masses; it must be a powerful weapon in the hands of the workers.

The beginning of the movement towards this poetry may seem crude, incomplete, bombastic. . . .

The poet of today must sing about the demonstrations of the workers in such a way that workers will want to repeat his poems and march the streets to the beat of their rhythm.

Poems of miners, and strikes, and the sufferings and triumphs of the

working class. Poems against police terror, against section 98, against the imprisonment of workers, against deportation.

Propaganda? Yes! But is this not life? Is not life propaganda?

Arguments concerning the relationship between propaganda and proletarian art reached their apex in the debate between Ed Cecil-Smith and Stanley Ryerson published in the magazine's final issues of January and March–April 1934. Cecil-Smith's critique of leftism for its disregard of aesthetics and technique, and for its propaganda-for-propaganda's-sake conception of proletarian art ("Propaganda" 11), was met by Ryerson in a leftist riposte in which he condemned his fellow CPC and PAC member for accepting "at face value the meaning which the bourgeoisie gives to the word 'propaganda,' i.e., 'the spreading of subversive, untrue ideas'" (6). Cecil-Smith's rejoinder in the final issue of *Masses* pointed to the danger that an antibourgeois, leftist stance posed to the continuation of Canadian proletarian culture:

. . . the narrow and sectarian line in this regard . . . has a very retarding effect on such artists as are drawn into the class struggle. We have ample proof of this both in Montreal and Toronto, where artists and writers coming under this influence actually tend to cease to produce. . . . More than one competent writer and critic in the Progressive Arts Clubs has practically quit writing altogether, because he has come under this influence and believes that the little he knows of the class struggle is "utterly insufficient." ("Let's" 7, 16)

Livesay certainly counts among the leftists who contributed to *Masses*; her sectarian, antibourgeois, and antimodernist attitudes are prominent in her reviews and poems. Cecil-

Smith's criticism of leftism was intended to encourage *Masses* editors, writers, and readers to embrace proletarian art, but under the rubric of socialist realism, which subsumed proletarian art as a subcategory and allowed for "the development of art from the point where the bourgeoisie ha[d] left off" ("Propaganda" 11). Contrary to sectarian leftist definitions of proletarian art—that is, revolutionary art by working-class authors and artists—Cecil-Smith's definition of socialist realism did not exclude nonproletarian or noncommunist fellow travellers. According to Cecil-Smith, leftism threatened the very core of PAC writers and artists, leaving fellow travellers to abandon progressive art to the revolutionary working class.

Some consequences of Livesay's leftism are visible in the sharp decline in her poetic production during her *Masses* years. Lee Briscoe Thompson's archival report on Livesay's poetry worksheets from the early 1930s details the drastic reduction:

After having produced an average of nearly one hundred poems every year from 1926 through 1931, . . . [Livesay] drafted a total of barely two dozen poems in the pre-New Jersey phase of 1932, 1933, and 1934. . . . Only four of her poems made it into print in those three years, the depths of the Depression, and all in the Marxist periodical *Masses*. . . . (34–35)

Of those "barely two dozen poems" that Thompson locates among Livesay's 1930s poetry worksheets, "Pink Ballad" was the only political poem that Livesay published in 1932, but she had published five poems—typical in style and content of her romanticist and imagist lyric poetry collected in *Green Pitcher* and *Signpost*—in the January 1932 issue of the *Canadian Forum*. Among her recollections of her 1931–32 year at the Sorbonne in Paris,

Livesay mentions her cultural and political associations, which consisted of “attending meetings and watching parades” (*Right Hand* 36), but which were far from the feverish political and social activism in which she would become engaged on her return to Toronto. With the exception of one social documentary of impoverished Paris denizens in her poem “Old Trees at Pere La Chaise” (*Right Hand* 41), Livesay did not record her Paris experiences of social and political protest in verse. Compared with her single poetry publication on her return to Toronto in the summer of 1932, her year in Paris was relatively productive in terms of writing poetry. Having completed her thesis on modernist poetry and symbolist poetics at the Sorbonne, Livesay returned to Toronto in June 1932, but not to write either lyrical or political poetry. Following entry into the School of Social Work at the University of Toronto in the autumn of 1932, her poetry was largely displaced by her social, political, and cultural activism. This trend continued over the next three years as she finished her first-year social work studies in Toronto and moved to Montreal in 1933 to commence her second-year fieldwork at the Family Service Bureau. These social-work years in Toronto and Montreal, from 1932 to 1934, coincided with her cultural and political work for the PACs and *Masses*, the Young Communist League (YCL) and later the CPC, the Canadian League against War and Fascism, and the Workers’ Unity League of Toronto. It follows that the most significant consequence of Livesay’s leftism was the shift in her priorities away from the personal pursuits of writing poetry and toward the public roles of social, political, and cultural action. What little poetry Livesay did produce during her extreme leftist years of the early 1930s was consumed with and by these public roles.

After Livesay moved from Toronto to Montreal in the autumn of 1933, she was promoted from the YCL, which she had joined the previous year, to full membership in the CPC. As she records in her memoirs, she “was chosen [by the CPC] to contact organizations such as the YMCA, YMHA, church groups and welfare groups” (*Journey* 82). Contrary to appearances in the “Montreal 1933–1934” section of *Right Hand Left Hand*, Livesay did not write many poems during her ten months in Montreal. Given the dates on her extant worksheets, it seems rather that her social, political, and cultural work in Montreal was less conducive to writing poetry than to collecting documentary material for later composition.⁹ Based on extant archival evidence, Livesay appears to have written only seven, possibly eight, poems while living in Montreal: “Broadcast from Berlin” and “Canada to the Soviet Union,” which she contributed to *Masses* while working as secretary for the Montreal branch of the PAC; “Montreal: 1933,” which she first drafted in October 1933;¹⁰ an untitled and unpublished poem, dated October 1933 (DLC-UM, box 80, file 4); “An Immigrant,” which she based on the shooting of an unemployed immigrant worker, Nick Zynchuk, at an eviction by the RCMP on 8 March 1933 in Montreal;¹¹ “Rain in April,” which she probably composed prior to May Day 1934;¹² and two other unpublished poems, “Montreal—1934” and “Repeal.”¹³ Of these eight Montreal poems, only “Montreal: 1933” and “An Immigrant” appeared in *Collected Poems*, “Canada to the Soviet Union” and “Rain in April” in *Right Hand Left Hand*; only “An Immigrant” appeared in both collections.¹⁴

When “An Immigrant” was first published on 14 March 1936, Livesay identified a necessary function of proletarian verse. The poem was published as an elegy. It therefore

functioned as a form of cultural memory—that is, the documentation of proletarian history in verse. Although she records events particular to an individual historical figure, Livesay renders Nick Zynchuk as a proletarian martyr analogous to figures such as Sacco and Vanzetti, Tom Mooney, or the Scottsboro Boys in American proletarian literature. By staging the conflict between the “silent” workers, ready to defend, and the police sergeant “at his words,” giving orders to attack, “An Immigrant” speaks for the historically repressed and silenced masses (*Collected Poems* 79). Having first been published in the CPC’s weekly paper the *Worker*, the poem had also spoken to the masses. When “An Immigrant” was later published in *Collected Poems*, it continued to function in terms of cultural memory, though no longer limited to proletarian culture and audiences.

The same perennial cultural function cannot be attributed to the bulk of Livesay’s proletarian verse from the early 1930s. All of her poems from the Montreal period adhere to the leftist tendencies of agitprop; they are didactic poems, directed to proletarian audiences, communicating worker-related political and social events, and inciting revolutionary action by the labouring class. Yet only three of her Montreal poems appeared in print in the 1930s. As Irr has written about Livesay’s proletarian verse of the 1930s, the poems may have served a legitimate function, but only for a cultural minority:

The discovery of this horror is still fresh enough in the didactic poems to be taken personally; perhaps this is why these poems were not especially powerful for readers outside Livesay’s political subculture, for readers who had not experienced a similar revelation. The didactic poems do not communicate her crisis in language as well as they reflect it. (227)

Here Irr first reiterates the problem of audience as central to Livesay's early failure to find a broad readership among the masses, given that the audience of her poems published in *Masses* was a minority, not a mass, culture. Irr then gestures toward Livesay's publication history in the early 1930s, raising the question of why Livesay had contributed poems to *Masses* but not to leftist papers such as the *Worker* or the *Labour Defender*.

Livesay's unpublished poetry from this period reveals her difficulties in writing poetry for leftist publications and proletarian audiences. Around the time she moved to Montreal and took full membership in the CPC, Livesay marked the occasion with a poem of October 1933 that begins with a denunciation of bourgeois individualism and ends with an encomium for Lenin (DLC-UM, box 80, file 4). Like her 1934 poem "Growing Up," which opens the "Montreal 1933-1934" section of *Right Hand Left Hand*, this untitled and unpublished poem follows a pattern of opening apologia for bourgeois individualism and concluding celebration of proletarian solidarity. Its tribute to Lenin's accomplishments serves as a model of action for its speaker; but it is not a model of rhetoric. Its value as a poem is not so much aesthetic as historical, even personal.¹⁵ Despite the speaker's claim, "I must fight, not with myself at all," the poem's strength lies in the internal struggle with the self to reject bourgeois individualism and to accept communism; its tell-tale leftist weakness lies in its "unflinching certainty of right" and evangelical "belief and faith" in Lenin. Oscillating between the individualist "I" and collective "we" voice, the poem possesses the kind of polyvocality found in mass chants that "workers of the world create and sing" in labour halls: by shifting between individual and collective voices, the poem stages the process of transition from individualism to

communism. Its intended audience, however, would not have been at the labour hall, since it addresses the need to convert those individuals who would not have been among the masses at the labour halls in the first place. It is primarily a didactic poem that instructs its audience to forego individual struggle with the self and to join the communist struggle against the ruling class. That the poem never appeared in *Masses* may be explained by the fact that it is untitled, and probably unfinished; but that the poem was never finished may be more to the point: its value to Livesay could have been personal, not public.

Livesay's poetic expression of personal crisis is intimately tied to the problems of communication and organization among leftist political, cultural, and labour groups of the early 1930s. Taking into account her organizational roles within these groups, and casework within social agencies, it is natural that her poetry of the period should reflect immediate problems of action and planning in these contexts. Neither able to sustain an autonomous working-class culture nor maintain an acceptable meeting ground between working-class and progressive middle-class artists and intellectuals, Canadian leftists became intensely self-conscious about their state of cultural and political crisis. Never published, "Montreal—1934" is a topical poem that points to failures among leftist organizations, emblemized by the collapse of *Masses* after April 1934.

To say that "Montreal—1934" reflects such failures is also to suggest that it contributes to the problem. A didactic poem such as this may propose collaboration between intellectuals and artists to plot the destruction of capitalist cities and construction of socialist utopias, even though its imagined audience is composed of intellectuals and

artists, not of workers. Artists and intellectuals are invited to join the speaker as Shelleyan legislators and organizers of “beauty,” but they would not carry out the labour necessary to construct such a city (DLC-UM, box 80, file 4). The poem itself becomes the legislation for the city, but its speaker will not be its builder, nor will its poet; these poetic lines are but legislation, and the speaker concedes to the audience their inability to transform their thoughts and words into that city:

Yes, but you and I cannot do it. We are thinkers;

Our hands are not strong enough.

The others must do it! All those born under ugliness—

Shock-brigadiers, children, workers!

It is their job and our job, together.

Even as she calls for solidarity, Livesay reinscribes definite lines of division—between thinkers and workers, intellectual and manual labour, “we” and “they.” There are two jobs, two divisions in her bureaucracy. How these two groups communicate in order to perform their labour is not made entirely clear in the poem: this is its impasse, its crisis of communication and organization. Livesay’s resolution to this problem in the final stanza is to trust in universal symbols of labour as a means of communication between the artists and intellectuals and the workers: “The hammer beats, and the sickle has its song.” She attempts here to transform the manual tools of labour into the verbal tools of the poet’s craft: by abstracting these implements from their material context, she uses them to represent the work of her verses; and, conversely, by attributing “beat” and “song” to the workers’ tools, she identifies analogues to the metrics and lyrics of her verse. The poet’s

craft and the worker's labour is thus rendered in a mutually communicable, universal language. Such communicability and universality is finally intended to transcend not only divisions of labour within the proletarian movement, but also divisions of nationality and of language. Beyond Montreal, Livesay ultimately extends her poem to the proletariats of Germany, France, and Austria to "tear down" and "build up" their cities: "Ours is a WORLD of cities, each / By beauty made impregnable and strong!" Resolution of current problems of communication and organization among workers and thinkers of the world is implicit in the conclusion to the poem, but the resolution is utopian. Livesay does not ultimately legislate a resolution for Montreal in 1934, but for a socialist utopia of the future; her aesthetic of "beauty" in such a "WORLD of cities" develops from the utopian tendencies of "socialist romanticism."¹⁶ Even an aesthetic of socialist romanticism, which inflects much of Livesay's poetry of the 1930s and presents an alternative to rigid proletarianism, does not resolve the problems of its leftism. "Montreal— 1934" may negotiate the division of labour within the proletarian movement, but it makes no attempt to address a wider public.

Because of its intended audience, "Montreal—1934" may have been unsuitable for publication in *Masses* or in any other proletarian periodical of the time. "Canada to the Soviet Union" could have been selected for publication in the final issue of *Masses* for its qualities as a mass chant about the "beauty" of workers in the Soviet Union in contrast to the "ugliness" of the unemployed in Canada, spoken by and addressed to the workers, instead of "Montreal—1934," which duplicates many of the same tropes but is spoken by and addressed to the artist and intellectual. Another consideration is that Livesay could

have written “Montreal—1934” after the collapse of *Masses* and thus faced difficulty finding an appropriate Canadian periodical to publish her poem and even more trouble finding an American periodical to accept such a localized piece. One final contingency, to which Irr alludes, is that a poem such as “Montreal—1934” does not communicate but reflect the failure of language and form in revolutionary verse. The poem mixes archaic and present-day diction, rhyming couplets and *vers libre*. It is not socialist realism but socialist romanticism. In terms of poetic language and verse form, it is an imperfect alloy of nineteenth- and twentieth-century verse, a confusion of the conventional and the contemporary.

Livesay herself was sensitive to this transitional character of proletarian verse in the early 1930s. Reviewing *When Sirens Blow*, a collection of verse by Leonard Spier, in the March–April 1934 final issue of *Masses*, she called attention to the crisis of language and form faced by the proletarian poet:

In any new literature that is rising with the rise of a new class to power there is much of the old forms and the old words that will be used, even when the thought behind it is new and revolutionary. We cannot expect a new way of writing all at once. So we find the writers of these poems struggling to think the way the worker thinks and yet putting his thoughts into forms that were used during the nineteenth century. (15)

For all its aesthetic imperfections, “Montreal—1934” is itself a perfect example of the contradictions in language and form that Livesay identified in the proletarian verse of her American contemporary. Even as she criticized others for faults present in her own verse,

and even though she did not relent from her typically leftist line of argument (refusing to admit the value of influence from revolutionary nineteenth-century romantic poets), Livesay advanced her own poetics toward socialist romanticism. The shift of audience from workers to artists and intellectuals in “Montreal—1934” was particularly strategic, then, since she could incorporate literary traditions and innovations outside the immediate experience of the worker-writer. This is not to say, however, that she was ready to cast aside her leftism and accept contemporary modernist experiments in language and form. Taking issue in the same review article with the practice of modernist poetics in the anthology *We Gather Strength*, by Herman Spector, Joseph Kalar, Edwin Rolfe, and S. Funaroff, Livesay subjected their poetry to her antimodernist and antibourgeois criticism: “What happens, on the other hand, when the worker-poet has steeped himself in ‘modernism’? When the fantastic language, obscure thinking, and chaos of decadent bourgeois (such as T. S. Eliot) has made a deep impression on his mind? The little anthology ‘We Gather Strength’ is the answer” (15). Just as she admonished Spier for displaying residual effects of nineteenth-century poetry, so she panned the anthology for presenting proletarian poets of the early 1930s in transition from modernist poetry of the 1910s and 1920s: “They grope, they are overloaded with words and traditions which they have not succeeded in fusing with their thought” (16). Whether Livesay would have considered the anthology successful had the poets merged modernist poetics and revolutionary proletarian thought is uncertain, though the direction of her poetry after the demise of *Masses* indicates that she would soon follow her American contemporaries with her own attempts—beginning with “Testament” in 1934—to resolve the proletarian poet’s

crisis in language and form by accommodating her poetics to a post-Eliot modernism.

What Livesay deemed the greatest value in the poetry of her American contemporaries was less its content than its format. Reviewing pamphlets of American poetry at a time when proletarian literature met “an impassable barrier” at the Canadian border (“Cultural Reaction Continues”), she praised their American publishers and urged Canadian presses to follow suit: “Such pamphlets are a challenge to Canadian revolutionary writers to get together and print the same type of thing, whatever the odds” (Rev. of *When Sirens* 16). With the collapse of *Masses* imminent, Livesay’s call to the workers’ press in Canada to take up the project of publishing proletarian verse was necessary but unsuccessful. The Canadian workers’ press had produced some publications, including plays performed by the Workers’ Experimental Theatre and workers’ song sheets, published by the PAC, as well as political pamphlets, published by the Canadian Labour Defence League. With the exception of the lyrics of workers’ song sheets, the Canadian workers’ press did not devote its energy or capital to the production of poetry pamphlets. Yet contrary to the literary-historical myth that persists in reference to the economic hardships faced by publishers in the 1930s, there was no material lack of poetry collections published during the Depression. J. Lee Thompson’s survey of Canadian poetry in the 1930s is salutary in its corrective to this myth, at once reiterating McKenzie’s claim for the necessity of periodical publishing at a time when “book publishing was undeniably impeded by economic conditions” and advancing her own unexpected findings on the material conditions of poetry production:

In view of the acute financial problems of the Depression, one would expect very

few books to have been published in the thirties, and particularly poetry, a sphere regarded by many as purely ornamental. It was after reading four, five, six hundred volumes that I began to suspect that the urge to self-expression transcends dollar reality. (6, 7)

Thompson leaves to the imagination the economic output required to produce such vast quantities of verse. To take Livesay's publishing history as representative of Canadian poets (proletarian or not) of the 1930s, we should expect that the "urge to self-expression" was more often than not self-financed (see n1). Since the workers' press in Canada was not producing poetry, nor were worker-poets in a financial position to pay for their own collections, the economic burden of publishing proletarian poetry largely fell on cultural periodicals such as *Masses* and the *Canadian Forum*.

When *Masses* ended its print run after only twelve sporadic issues over two years, it did so at a perceived moment of triumph. Commemorating its two-year anniversary in the March-April 1934 editorial pages ("Your Task and Ours"), the editors claimed to be confident in their accomplishments: "With this number we become the leading cultural magazine in Canada with respect to circulation, having now surpassed 'The Canadian Forum' which has held that honour for many years." Despite their claim of superiority in terms of circulation, they complained of the need for "prompt payment of bills," a "subscription drive in the localities[,] and the ordering of regular bundles" in order to improve the quality and guarantee the regular appearance of what was supposed to be a monthly magazine. Their indication of financial instability was compounded by their continued anxieties over the distribution of the magazine to their target audiences: "We

still remain largely isolated from the masses of workers in shop, mine and farm who are daily becoming more conscious of the need for struggle. We have not yet reached the large numbers of the intelligentsia who are becoming dissatisfied.” Having identified the problem of audience, they suggested that its solution could be found in the demographics of contributors: “Broadening out of the circle of contributors to include dozens more from among you who work in the industries, slave camps, mines and farms of Canada will assure that the contents of our magazine will be close to the daily struggles.” Given that they had heralded their success as a “cultural magazine” and that they had obtained financial support through the PACs—not groups of workers or intelligentsia but groups of artists—they may have intended to elicit “the support of the readers and of the cultural groups who see their first copy of *MASSES* with this issue” (March–April 1934). Because *MASSES* ceased publication after this issue, we can only assume that their appeal to readers and cultural groups outside the PACs met with little success.

That the termination of *MASSES* was not accompanied by the disbanding of the PACs points to the economic underpinnings of leftist cultural magazines in Canada. Unlike the American magazines affiliated with the JRCs, *MASSES* was not dependent on the Communist Party for funding. When the Communist Party withdrew its financial support from the JRCs toward the end of 1934, the clubs folded along with the majority of the cultural magazines that they had published. The two exceptions were *New MASSES* and *Partisan Review*. Founded in 1934 but forced in 1936 to suspend publication after the dissolution of the JRCs, *Partisan Review* was refounded without party support in 1937. Even though *MASSES* had folded prior to these changes on the American scene, its failure

to reach audiences beyond the PACs marked a crisis in Canadian proletarian culture similar to that in the United States after the disbanding of the JRCs. Because the American clubs had largely comprised working-class amateurs, the decision to liquidate the JRCs and their magazines indicated the shift in policy away from support for young proletarian writers and prefaced the international move toward the more liberal policies of the Popular Front. Parallel to the refounding of *Partisan Review* during the rise of the Popular Front, the successor to *Masses*—*New Frontier: A Canadian Monthly Magazine of Literature and Social Criticism*—was founded in April 1936. Along with editor-in-chief William (Lon) Lawson, and editors Margaret Gould, Jocelyn Moore, Leo Kennedy, and J.F. White, Livesay would serve as a cofounder and a regional editor of *New Frontier*, which she later described as “a ‘united front’ magazine set up in contradistinction to another, more radically communist magazine *Masses*. It was to rally the middle class intellectuals and artists to the cause of the international working class against war and fascism” (*Right Hand* 219). Likewise, in the American context, the new *Partisan Review* founded itself as a Popular Front magazine in opposition to *New Masses*, which *Partisan Review* editors artificially constructed as their leftist scapegoat (Murphy 195). Although *New Frontier* did not single out *Masses*, its editorials and articles sometimes reacted against the former sectarian cultural policies of the CPC. While *Masses* was not officially affiliated with or funded by the CPC, it was strongly partisan and merits distinction as a communist cultural magazine. According to Livesay, *New Frontier* “was not a strictly Communist Party organ”; its finances were secured through her longtime friend and the wife of the editor-in-chief, Jean Watts Lawson, whose inheritance from her capitalist grandfather paid for the

magazine (*Right Hand* 219). Where *Masses* was entirely dependent on the PACs for financial support and largely so for contributions, *New Frontier* received assistance and contributions not only from the PACs but also from intellectuals and artists of broad political persuasion and class orientation. With the widening of authorship and audience that accompanied *New Frontier's* support for the Popular Front, the magazine's advance toward the incorporation of progressive (liberal and left-wing) members of the middle class indicated not its retreat from the working class but its reorganization of proletarian authors and audiences into new relations within Canadian magazine culture of the left.

III: *New Frontier's* Popular Front

Remembering 1935, Livesay often remarked in her memoirs and retrospectives a break with her leftism of the early 1930s. She also recalled 1935 as the occasion of a nervous breakdown which, during her period of convalescence in the autumn months, allowed her to write and, for the first time since the collapse of *Masses*, to publish her poetry.

Consequently, her recollections of the early 1930s were often tainted by reactionary antileftism and functioned as disclaimers for her activism in support of Stalin (Irr 216).¹⁷ Her memories of 1935 record innovations in her poetry that coincided with a shift on the left toward the politics of the Popular Front, an international movement among communists, socialists, and progressive liberals that supported workers and the unemployed and protested against war and fascism. In a headnote written for *The Documentaries: Selected Longer Poems* in 1968, and revised for *Right Hand Left Hand* in 1977, Livesay strategically bracketed her leftist years (1932–34) between two significant events: her rejection of Eliot and bourgeois poetry in 1932 and her introduction to post-

Eliot modernist poetry in 1934–35. This account chronicles her introduction to poetry written by British fellow travellers in the early 1930s. She claimed to have discovered these poets for herself while she was employed as a caseworker at Memorial House in Englewood, New Jersey—from late 1934 to late 1935:

All these social work years I had abandoned writing any poetry which was personal. But in New Jersey, so near New York, in trips to Greenwich bookshops I delved about—perhaps seeking some relief from the orthodox Marxian literature I had been consuming for so long—[*New Masses*, *The Daily Worker*, and countless pamphlets and political tracts along with some heavier economics and Engels, Lenin and Stalin. What was my astonishment and unbelief to find some slim volumes of English poetry—revolutionary poetry but full of lyricism and personal passion! C. Day Lewis first, then Spender, then Auden and MacNeice. There was nothing like it in America and Canada, but it was a movement that followed exactly where I had left off with my Paris thesis—it threw Eliot aside and proclaimed a brave new world. (*Right Hand* 153)

By foregrounding her repudiation of Eliot in 1932, Livesay obviously intended to draw attention to the coincident and sympathetic tendency in British poetry of the time and the subsequent publication of collections by second-generation, post-Eliot modernists: W. H. Auden's *The Orators* (1932), C. Day Lewis's *The Magnetic Mountain* (1933), Stephen Spender's *Poems* (1933) and *Vienna* (1934), and Louis MacNeice's *Poems* (1935). In counting the so-called MacSpaunday (MacNeice, Spender, Auden, Day Lewis) group among her contemporaries in a post-Eliot movement, Livesay re-established some of the

bonds she had broken with bourgeois literary culture in 1932 by embracing British fellow travellers in 1935.¹⁸

In the fall of 1935, she composed the title poem for the collection she tentatively called "The Outrider and Other Poems" (see n1). A tripartite poem in multiple sections and verse forms, "The Outrider" was intended to be her "revolutionary" advance in Canadian poetry to match that of her British contemporaries; she even adopted her title, epigraph, and serial verse structure from Day Lewis's *The Magnetic Mountain*. Yet "The Outrider" itself did not come out in print until the September 1943 issue of *First Statement*.¹⁹ The "revolutionary" poem she did publish after twenty months of absence from periodicals was "Day and Night," which appeared in the inaugural issue of *Canadian Poetry Magazine* in January 1936. In breaking her publication silence, she also overcame the problem of cultural isolation that had stifled *Masses*, the PACs, and leftist literary culture of early 1930s: she presented her proletarian poetry to a predominantly bourgeois, *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, CAA audience. This reconciliation with the CAA and its bourgeois literary-magazine culture was only temporary. At the 1936 CAA convention held that summer in Vancouver, she reasserted her leftism to that same audience and "insisted that young poets should take their spiritual sustenance from participation in the daily life going on around them in the factories, mines and farms of the Dominion, and especially that they should become socially and politically conscious" (Macnair 23).²⁰ Just three months after her January 1936 appearance in *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, Livesay and her fellow *New Frontier* editors recoiled from Canada's bourgeois, CAA literary culture and founded an alternative national magazine for socially and politically

progressive authors.

As a forum for the Popular Front in Canada, *New Frontier* attempted to facilitate communication among members of working and middle classes, among leftists and fellow travellers, and among an international bloc of sympathetic authors and readers leaning toward the political left. *New Frontier* avoided the sectarianism of *Masses*, at once maintaining a rigorous skepticism of the bourgeoisie and welcoming those literary fellow travellers who had committed themselves to the Popular Front. *New Frontier*'s inaugural April 1936 editorial closes with an invocation of that international contingent of "middle road writers" or fellow travellers, "those who have been sitting on the fence lining up in support of culture and civilization." "If NEW FRONTIER is able to assist their progress in any way," the editors announced, "we feel we will have more than justified our existence." *New Frontier* did print an international range of progressive-minded authors, including many prominent leftists and fellow travellers already published in American and British magazines of the cultural left—*New Masses*, *Partisan Review & Anvil*, *New Verse*, and *Left Review*, among others. With the May–June 1936 issue, Jack Conroy and Edwin Seaver were added to *New Frontier*'s list of associate editors, at a time when both were still editing *Partisan Review & Anvil* (Carr 135). Beginning in October 1936, *New Frontier* ran a campaign that offered new subscribers deals on books by American, British, and Canadian authors who had published in the magazine. What we may infer from its composite of contributors, associate editors, and marketing strategies is that *New Frontier* was organized as an international cultural magazine, yet specifically aimed at Canadian audiences.

New Frontier's internationalism was obviously well suited to Livesay's mid-1930s realignment with the modernist poetry and poetics of British fellow travellers. The *New Frontier* poetry she published either in *Day and Night*, or later in *Collected Poems* and *Right Hand Left Hand*, reflects her international outlook and affiliations during the mid-1930s. With the declamatory title "Yes!" Livesay's first poem in *New Frontier* appeared in the May 1936 issue; its title appropriately announced her mid-decade conversion to a "revolutionary poetry" of "lyricism and personal passion" (*Right Hand* 153). She followed "Yes!" with "Doom Elegy" in the July 1936 issue; this elegiac poem documents the impact of an imperialist ideology on the daily lives of her own interwar generation. This personalist poetry not only rejected Eliot's and others' mode of modernist impersonality, but also superseded her own mode of leftist impersonality—that is, her abandonment of "writing any poetry which was personal" during her nearly two-year period of publication silence after the collapse of *Masses* (*Right Hand* 153). Her personalist mode of socially and politically conscious poetry is characteristic of the Auden generation's modernism; this modernist mode would become dominant among the fellow-travelling poets of the Popular Front.

When it was later recovered by Livesay for her *Collected Poems*, "Yes!" was even arranged in a longer poetic structure ("Queen City") typical of the Auden generation. This is also true of "Doom Elegy," which was collected in the sequence "Seven Poems" in *Day and Night*. Like her other poetic sequences of the 1930s—"Depression Suite," "The Outrider," and "Day and Night"—both "Queen City" and "Seven Poems" are formally fragmented, ranging from rhymed stanzas to blank verse to free verse. Day Lewis's *The*

Magnetic Mountain provided Livesay's modernist model not only for "The Outrider" but for all of her longer sequences of the mid-1930s. Although she never printed her longer multisectioned poems in *New Frontier*, she did follow the practice of Day Lewis in this regard: both poets regularly published individual poems in magazines prior to their integration into poetic sequences (see Hynes 117; Irvine, "Editorial" 264n23).²¹ It seems then that her exposure to the Auden generation's innovations in poetic form facilitated her transition from leftism to modernism, and that *New Frontier* provided an outlet for this transformation in her poetry and poetics.

Abandoning the collectivist voice of her proletarian verse, "Yes!" is a modernist interior monologue, which may have led Stevens to suggest that "the title [is] perhaps an echo of Molly Bloom's affirmation of love" in the final chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses* ("Development" 258). The declamatory title could likewise be traced back to Joyce's moments of epiphany. Stevens's proposition is plausible insofar as an allusion to Joyce's modernism would coincide with the mid-1930s shift in Livesay's poetics away from the antimodernist tendencies of her *Masses* years. Beyond the titular allusion and the interior monologue form, though, evidence of Joyce's specific influence is less substantial. With "Yes!" Livesay concatenates unusual juxtapositions of images, employing a common modernist stream-of-consciousness technique. The opening of "Yes!" *in medias res* is also typical of the modernist foregrounding of the poem as fragment, as in Ezra Pound's *The Cantos*. Not only structured as an internally coherent fragment like the first of *The Cantos*, "Yes!" also exploits fragmentation as the technical means of mixing voices, images, and verse forms in radical discontinuity, which in turn generates new connections

through juxtaposition.

“Yes!” establishes its formal discontinuity in its fragmented opening line, where the initial conjunction implies its rhetorically logical but absent antecedent:

But there must be beauty somewheres, somewheres,

Kid yourself, keep telling yourself, Kid.

The steel-helmeted bird, relentless to Honolulu

Pilot spanning blue’s outdistance,

They lie low together, loving. They know,

They speed in intimate connection

Pilot in plane, man in woman. (*Collected Poems* 84)

Shifting from the colloquialisms of the internal monologue to the elevated diction of the poetic conceit, this opening stanza epitomizes the vocal juxtapositions and class intersections throughout “Queen City.” While changing vocal registers, the speaker imagines the figurative passage from street to sky, and the transcendence of both class and economic barriers. With the ascent to the sky, juxtaposed images of airplane in sky, pilot in airplane, man in woman travel with “speed in intimate connection” in classless freedom; but with the return to the street, images of obstructed movement present “a hard street and a smashing hatred / Enemy shoulders brushing” in class conflict. Pursuing beauty not in stasis but in movement, the speaker constructs the second and final stanza by means of anaphora, creating rhetorical connections as the continuous sentence accumulates images of beauty, culminating in “the warm scent of the breath bent on a woman.” These juxtapositional images build to this “beauty with connection caught / My fruit content in a

warm womb.” That the final line break creates discontinuity—by terminating the rhetorical figure of anaphora, and by juxtaposing the abstraction of beauty to the concrete final image by grammatical means of apposition—only reasserts the poem’s creation of new continuities. Furthermore, Livesay’s introduction of the personal pronoun (“my”) in the final line not only underscores her conversion to a modernist poetry of “lyricism and personal passion” (*Right Hand* 153), but also enables an empathetic response from the reader through the personation of the speaker and of his/her desires. The personal pronoun is, in itself, “with connection caught”: its gender ambiguity suggests the “intimate connection” of “man in woman.” Their sexual congress is a metonymic form of intimacy, one that Livesay herself achieves through her poem’s embodiment of a personalist poetic.

Given her auspicious debut in *New Frontier*, it is disconcerting to discover that of her *New Frontier* poems only “Doom Elegy” was collected in *Day and Night*, that only three additional *New Frontier* poems appeared in “The Thirties” section of *Collected Poems* (“Yes!” rpt. in “Queen City”; “And Still We Dream” rpt. as “Deep Cove: Vancouver”; “Spain”), and that the “New Frontier 1936–1937” section of *Right Hand Left Hand* contains no poetry whatsoever. Even after the publication of *Collected Poems* and *Right Hand Left Hand*, Livesay left uncollected over half of the poems (five of nine) she contributed to the magazine. That she suppressed more than half of the poems she published in *New Frontier* can surely be attributed to their failure to meet the criteria of social realism she demanded of “proletarian literature” at the time (*Right Hand* 230). Were these poems reproduced in her poetry collections, we could have seen the disparity between her pronouncements on social realism and her own proclivities toward socialist

romanticism. Just months into her *New Frontier* period, her modernism would be displaced by a revival of her leftism, a transition to socialist romanticism triggered by the declaration of war in Spain on 18 July 1936.

For Livesay and other Popular Front poets and activists, Republican Spain in the early months of the Spanish Civil War represented a socialist utopia, a romantic topos onto which she and her comrades projected their dreams of revolution. Her earliest poems about the Spanish war are predictably suffused with socialist romanticism. As Nicola Vulpe observes, “Livesay supported the Republic as a matter of course and transferred it to her utopias” (45); he also notes that she was not alone among non-Spanish poets in her inclination to write “at once about the Spanish War but only rarely about Spain,” and that even Auden’s “Spain,” probably the most famous English-language poem on the war, “appropriates the Spanish War . . . through a *displacement*, a transposition of the most pressing issues of the time” (32; original emphasis). Elaborating upon the historical conditions that contributed to the displacement of issues central to the Spanish war from Spain, Vulpe concludes:

The international and acutely ideological nature of the Spanish War, as did political and ideological conditions at home, facilitated, even demanded such a displacement. . . . Spain was the theatre only, and to Spain and the very concrete and immediate struggle there for political and economic democracy the poets (and not only the poets) transposed from Canada, as from the rest of the world, their hopes and dreams which at home could only belong to a remote and abstract future. (32)

The internationalism of the Popular Front's struggle against fascism certainly encouraged the effacement of national distinctions. The Popular Front in Canada was predicated upon the fact that the rise of fascism in Spain was but an indication that the same could happen in Canada. *New Frontier* articles documenting the fascist press and political activities in Quebec were then aimed at an acquiescent Canadian populace that steadfastly believed the fascists could never take political power in Canada (see Betcherman; Martin). So when the *New Frontier* editorial of September 1936 reported on the Spanish Civil War, it concluded with the displacement of the ideological conflict from Spain to Canada: "For Canadians the lesson in Spain is clear: the only hope for democracy, peace and progress in this country is a People's Front including all sections of the working and middle class" ("Civil War" 3).

This practice of transnational displacement is effected in Livesay's early romanticist poems about the Spanish war—"And Still We Dream" and "Man Asleep"—published together in the October 1936 issue of *New Frontier*. For both poems, the dream is the figurative vehicle through which people escape from war to utopias. In "And Still We Dream" the speaker warns a fellow dreamer on the mountainside that "we, who like to lie here hushed, immobile / . . . Can have no rest from clash of arms" and that they must take collective action: "rise up, Comrade, / It is death to rest" (*Collected Poems* 94). The speaker in "Man Asleep" addresses a figure "hunched in grass": a homeless man, the "dreaming one" whose figurative Spanish guerrilla "brothers raise the dust / Over Madrid." The homeless man is then urged to behold the utopian prospect of a Republican victory in Spain:

See, the world's home they build in Spain—

The fireside stone you never had, the arms

You snatched at, but could not maintain.

Now hunched in sleep, you dream the battle's done

But still your bones shall spring to life like steel

Clamp down on victory, behold the sun! (*Archive* 45)

Here the bond of comradeship between the homeless man and the guerillas effects the displacement of social and economic problems of homelessness in North America to the political arena in Spain. As inspiration for the homeless man, who dreams his “battle’s done” and so passively accepts defeat, the war in Spain is presented as another struggle for a utopian “world’s home.” Because “Man Asleep” was written at an early stage of the war when “the triumph of Republican and especially revolutionary Spain seemed, and indeed was, a distinct possibility” (Vulpe 46), it communicates an optimism unique among Livesay’s war and antiwar poems of the 1930s. Since her optimism had been so premature and, in the end, mistaken, it is not surprising that Livesay chose to suppress “Man Asleep” from her subsequent collections and to omit “And Still We Dream” from the “Spain 1936–1939” section of *Right Hand Left Hand*.

“In Preparation,” Livesay’s next Spanish-war poem in *New Frontier*, was published in the February 1937 issue. Contrary to the socialist romanticism of “And Still We Dream” and “Man Asleep,” “In Preparation” presents a romanticized portrait of lovers undercut by its wartime context. Not until the poem’s final lines is it revealed that the

poem is set at time of war. At first we perceive the lovers concealed in the “dark,” looking at the “intermittent spark / Of sun shaft hitting out at snow.” We encounter this striking image of natural beauty, not knowing its violent origin. That the lovers are holed up in blackout during an air-raid is suspended until the final couplet: “Look fearless at these searchlight suns, / Unblinking at the sound of guns. . . .” Read as an imperative, the lovers’ command (“Look”) implores the reader to behold the reality behind the poem’s romanticized images of natural beauty. So the poem itself is constructed “in preparation” of its audience for the reality of anti-aircraft floodlights and guns. That the poem could ever adequately prepare its audience for the reality of war is doubtful. Apparently Livesay was herself uncertain about “In Preparation,” since she never reprinted the poem.

Nor did she reprint the other two poems that accompany “In Preparation” in the same February 1937 issue of *New Frontier*, “The Dispossessed” and “In Praise of Evening.” While “The Dispossessed” may have been written as early as 1934 or 1935, when the majority of Livesay’s verse was directed toward issues related to her social work, its subject matter is still consistent with the social concerns of the Popular Front. Livesay had at one time collected “The Dispossessed” among the poems in the unpublished typescript “The Down and Out Series” (circa 1934–35; DLC–UM, box 80, file 4), which contains poems she later published as part of “Depression Suite.” “The Dispossessed” shares certain formal features with some of the verse in “Depression Suite,” lyrics reminiscent of IWW ballads and workers’ song books. The distinctive formal character of the poem, however, is not its derivation from the working-class ballad, but from the Elizabethan pastoral lyric. It is, in part, a parody of Christopher Marlowe’s “The

Passionate Shepherd to His Love.” “The Dispossessed” signals a departure from her previous social and political poems in its evocation of courtly poetry of the sixteenth century; this departure represents not so much a problem of audience, for Marlowe’s poem had long been the object of parody and would have been familiar to an intellectual readership, as a problem of voice. The speakers of the poem are the urban homeless, not intellectuals. Another related problem with the poem is its objectification of the homeless for a predominantly intellectual audience of *New Frontier* readers. As a homeless speaker declaims in the final stanza:

O come with me and be my love!

Here in the crowd, break free:

The world’s eye shall our pleasures prove

And lust at misery. (7)

The speaker’s attempt to convince a *New Frontier* audience to join the homeless crowd is of course ironic, undercut by the final lines that objectify and ironize (and so establish the audience’s distance from) the miserable conditions of the homeless. Coupled with the parody of a courtly lyric, the speaker’s objectification of the homeless is therefore not empathetic but rather ironic. The speaker, who appears in the guise of the collective “we” in the opening stanza, is revealed to be an individual “me” in the final stanza. What we are left with is the speaker’s impersonation of the homeless, an ironized lyric subject speaking as a member of the homeless crowd.

“In Praise of Evening” appears to have been the third section of a sequence, possibly together with “In Preparation” and “The Dispossessed.”²² The typescript of this

“sequence” as such is no longer extant, but all three poems were printed together in *New Frontier*, and all thematize “love” as a social force—whether ironized (“In Preparation,” “The Dispossessed”) or idealized (“In Praise of Evening”). Where “In Preparation” and “The Dispossessed” employ techniques to undercut poetic romanticization, “In Praise of Evening” fully embraces the aesthetics and ideology of socialist romanticism. If these poems were indeed part of a sequence, they constitute a contradictory social vision.

While the speaker of “The Dispossessed” ironizes the conditions of poverty, the speaker of “In Praise of Evening” empathizes with the homeless. The speaker of “In Praise of Evening” identifies with the homeless, seeing beyond their privation to their endurance, and to their future:

The excitement of evening, bare relief
 In living, and thrusting the hand out
 In taut silhouette against sunset
 As a tree on the rim of horizon:
 The liveness of breathing, clenched against hunger
 Leaving defeat behind on the doorstep
 The heart resilient with April’s motion
 Contracting, expanding to earth’s own rhythm . . . (*Archive* 49)

Composed in one continuous sentence, this first half of the poem renders a sense of movement by stringing together a series of verbs in the progressive present tense, giving form to the speaker’s hope for progress. Assonance here creates continuities, presenting a formal pattern of social solidarity among the homeless. These unified gestures of the

homeless are juxtaposed to “famine’s gesture” in the second half of the poem: “The run on the banks, panic at noonday, / Bones to a dog and taunts to a beggar, / Chattels and dishpans set on a sidewalk . . .” (*Archive* 49). The conspicuous disappearance of organic imagery so prevalent in the first half of the poem underscores the non-pastoral reality that the urban homeless experience day to day. Absence of assonance further emphasizes the harassed and unsettled condition of the homeless, which is brought into relief with the return to an assonantal pattern, and tree imagery, in the final lines:

The will to be rooted, but like a tree waving
 Sifting the air through boughs and branches
 Leaning to lover, urgent with blossom
 In wise embracing shielding the seed. (*Archive* 49)

Given order through image and sound, these final lines rearticulate “earth’s own rhythm,” springtime plenitude counterposed to barren “famine’s gesture.” In particular, the repetition of the tree image—the static silhouette of a tree at sunset, which becomes the dynamic gesture of a tree in the wind—communicates the ideas of progress and regeneration propelled by “April’s motion.” Like the silence of the workers in Livesay’s proletarian verse, the homeless communicate here through gestures. These gestures are not coded in the courtly pastoral language of “The Dispossessed” (those homeless who, ironically, probably never possessed such language), but coded in nature imagery, the language of a common people. The final lines embody the socialist-romantic vision of the poem: they shift into the romanticized language of lovers, whose “seed” or children represent a utopian generation.

That Livesay never placed “In Praise of Evening” in any of her collections may be attributed to her tendency to suppress her socialist romanticism of the 1930s. “In Praise of Evening” was published (and perhaps written) in early 1937 when Livesay’s poetic interests were shifting away from social poetry about the unemployed and the homeless, and revolutionary romanticist poetry about the Spanish war, toward antiwar and elegiac poetry about the victims of war. This shift in poetic sensibility may explain why she left uncollected all three poems published in the February 1937 issue of *New Frontier*. Indeed, the next two poems she published in the April and June issues—“A Mother, 1918” and “Spain”—were both antiwar pieces.

“A Mother, 1918” returns to a wartime context through an elegiac mode of antipastoral and antiwar poetry. This is not uncommon among poets of the Popular Front, who often drew upon images of the First World War to serve as antiwar propaganda (Dowson 19). As a poem about a mother who recalls the wartime loss of her son, “A Mother, 1918” was likely also influenced by the policies of the League Against War and Fascism—a Popular Front group of which Livesay was member and organizer. “Women who joined the League,” writes Joan Sangster, “believed one could be anti-war and anti-fascist at the same time, for few were absolute pacifists” (143–44). With the onset of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936, the League moved away from pacifism to support a war for peace and democracy in Spain, eventually changing its name in 1937 to the League for Peace and Democracy (Sangster 143). Yet the only way one could read “A Mother, 1918” as both antiwar and antifascist is to establish that the poem was originally published in a Popular Front magazine like *New Frontier*. Because “A Mother, 1918” was never

collected by Livesay, we might conclude that its governing allusion to the First World War diverted too sharply from the immediate historical events documented in her other war poetry of the 1930s. Another reason that Livesay might have left “A Mother, 1918” uncollected is the speaker’s romanticization of her dead son, imagined through the conceit of a “deflowered” flower:

[. . .] O loveliness. O son
 Whose eyes, flow’r-blue
 They stole the colour from:
 Let me be covering and gown
 For girls you knew . . .
 Let me alone face burnt-out eyes
 Where love had flowers sown. (*Archive 50*)

Livesay relies here upon the primary sentimental value of the flower imagery to communicate secondary political significations. The mother’s romanticization of her son’s death may be a faint political gesture, but her elegaic act of commemoration is personal (“Let me alone . . .”), not communal.

Livesay’s poetic sentimentality soon came under attack in an article submitted by Vernon van Sickle to *New Frontier*, entitled “Dorothy Livesay and A[udrey] A[lexandra] Brown.” Van Sickle was a member of the Vancouver New Frontier Club (NFC)—founded in June 1936 and chaired by Livesay (DLC-UM, box 15, file 3). In his letter of 5 April 1937 to the Vancouver NFC, *New Frontier* editor William Lawson summarized van Sickle’s article (never published and no longer extant), saying that “Dorothy’s work is

criticized for its sentimentality. But there is no attempt to substantiate this criticism (with which I am in complete agreement)” (DLC-UM, box 60, file 37). Given the appearance of “A Mother, 1918” in the April 1937 issue, the timing of van Sickle’s article and Lawson’s letter suggests that Livesay’s most recent poem may have provoked this critique of her “sentimentality.” By the reference to her sentimentality we may infer from the balance of Lawson’s summary that he means van Sickle’s critique of Livesay’s romanticism, both before and after her conversion to communism.

Between December 1936 to April 1937, correspondence between the Vancouver NFC and Lawson had been dominated by arguments over *New Frontier* publication policies. Lawson’s justification for not publishing the Vancouver group’s offerings was based on what local NFC secretary Duncan Macnair, in his January 1937 letter to Lawson, claimed the Toronto editor had called the “sectarianism” of the Vancouver NFC (*Right Hand* 237). “We were considered to be too individualistic and anarchistic,” Livesay later reflected (*Right Hand* 234), which was met by Lawson’s decision to promote aggressively his own leftist political beliefs—anti-Trotskyite and anti-CCF²³—and which resulted in his rejection of some contributions by members of the Vancouver NFC. Even so, Lawson’s assessment of Livesay’s sentimentalist and individualist tendencies does not seem to have impeded her publication in *New Frontier*, though one should note that she published only one more poem in the magazine after April 1937.

“Spain,” the next and last poem Livesay would publish in *New Frontier*, appeared in the June 1937 issue. Possibly written in reaction to van Sickle and Lawson, “Spain” abnegates her poetic sentimentality and individualism. “Spain” accosts an audience of

bourgeois aesthetes, assailing their appreciation of an apolitical art for art's sake: "You who hold beauty at your finger-tips / Hold it because the splintering gunshot rips / Between your comrades' eyes" (*Collected Poems* 98). Rather than allow aesthetics to subordinate Popular Front politics (as in "A Mother, 1918"), "Spain" engages leftist tactics to censure aestheticism. Later in the poem Livesay specifies her intended bourgeois audience—"You who live quietly in sunlit space / Reading The Herald after morning grace" (*Collected Poems* 98)—but this merely serves to exculpate middle-class readers of *New Frontier* and fellow travellers. Less than a year since she published "And Still We Dream" and "Man Asleep," the revolutionary romanticism of Livesay's early Spanish war poetry had dissipated, replaced by an extreme antibourgeois leftism.

Livesay's poetic critique of aestheticism is consistent with *New Frontier* editorial policy. Its inaugural April 1936 editorial, for instance, targeted the aestheticist's retreat to "the ivory tower, in which some artists in general and so many poets in particular have taken temporary refuge." *New Frontier's* editorial board strongly opposed what was perceived to be bourgeois, aestheticist, *l'art pour l'art* leanings of Canadian writers, artists, and intellectuals. Livesay's own critiques of aestheticism can be found in two prose documents from her *New Frontier* period published in *Right Hand Left Hand*: "Proletarianitis in Canada," probably the text for one of her public talks about *New Frontier* in 1936 (see *Right Hand* 220–24), and "Decadence in Modern Bourgeois Poetry," the transcript of her CBC radio broadcast that same year. As the title of her broadcast suggests, Livesay was preoccupied at the time with a leftist critique of aestheticism and decadent—that is, in her terms, non-progressive—modernist poetry.

According to her thesis, “modern poetry reflects the decadence of bourgeois society” (61). “All modern poetry has this same tendency,” she adds, “which arises from the theory of art for art’s sake: namely, to appeal to a very small group of people who happen to have had the same prolonged education and the same refinement of the senses” (*Right Hand* 63). In typically leftist fashion, her broadcast ends with the pronouncement that such aestheticist and decadent “bourgeois art is dead, [and] that a new art, the art of the proletariat is being born” (*Right Hand* 67).

Never published by Livesay herself, “Invitation to Silence” (circa 1936–37) is a suppressed poem from her *New Frontier* period that represents the continuation of her leftist (antibourgeois and antimodernist) tendencies after the collapse of *Masses*. “Invitation to Silence” performs the leftist critique of decadent modernism that she implemented in “Decadence in Modern Bourgeois Poetry” and demonstrates her own poetry’s failure to meet the criteria for social realism (or, in her terms, proletarian literature) that she detailed in “Proletarianitis in Canada.” “Invitation to Silence” opens with its proletarian speaker’s oration to an audience of “befuddled poets and prophets . . . / convinced of decadence” (*Archive* 47). Though she uses the term “decadence,” she does not limit its denotation to fin-de-siècle culture. For Livesay, the term signifies the condition of modern bourgeois culture in decline; her decadent “poets and prophets” are therefore representatives of what she and other leftists believed to be a literary culture and capitalist economy in a state of decay. Language itself, her speaker laments, has deteriorated in this historical context: “Words! I am ashamed to use words, you have so abused them / They were lovely once: now they have been corrupted / Crushed under the

weight of too many meanings.” According to Livesay, the language of decadent modernist poetry consists of an erudite diction (*Right Hand* 63–64). As her speaker says of that language toward the beginning of the second stanza: “Forget the tinkings and the jangle: there is volume behind them.” The “volume” behind a decadent poetic language is the sound and mass of the proletariat—agricultural labourers, miners, and factory workers. For the balance of the second stanza and the whole of the lengthy third, Livesay records the sounds of labour and protest from the proletariat in the fields, the mines, and the factories. It is in these stanzas that she chronicles events that concern the militant working class and that make the poem, if only in part, a document of social realism—or, in Livesay’s lexicon, proletarian literature.

That social realism gives way to socialist romanticism in the latter half of the poem. As in her leftist poetry of the early 1930s, Livesay’s proletariat in “Invitation to Silence” communicates by non-verbal means. Opening the fourth stanza, the speaker calls out to the bourgeoisie: “shake off your radio-trained ears / And hear the thunder of non-broadcast sounds” (*Archive* 48). Like the “volume” behind the bourgeoisie’s decadent language, the “thunder” above the radio is that of the proletariat; their “non-broadcast sounds” are the products of their labour and their means of communication. In the final two stanzas, the proletariat gains control over the means of communicative production—that is, the means of production *as* the means of communication (Williams 57). Replacing the bourgeois “poets and prophets,” the proletariat becomes the “singers of this world” (*Archive* 48). These stanzas describe the silence of a decadent bourgeoisie whose culture and economy has come to a standstill and, at the same time, the silence of a proletariat

whose seizure of the means of production brings about a general strike. Contrary to the first stanza where the bourgeois “poets and prophets” are said to have accumulated words with too many meanings, in the final stanza words are said to be emptied of all meaning: “Until one word comes hurling, striking at the root of you . . . / Until from ploughed lands, the mines or the factories / ‘Revolution’'s sounded out in marching feet” (*Archive* 48). Communicated in a non-verbal form—recalling the final lines of “In Green Solariums”—“Revolution” is signified by the action and sound of “marching feet.” This non-verbal means of proletarian communication manifests the utopian aspect of Livesay’s socialist romanticism, yet it also represents a crisis for her leftist verse. It bears repeating that this poem, after all, is an “Invitation to Silence.”

Radical proletarian verse such as “Invitation to Silence” threatens the liberal-democratic tenets upon which *New Frontier* and the Popular Front were founded: it is an agitprop poem that speaks unashamedly for the revolutionary proletariat and it only. Even though the poem is addressed to a bourgeois audience, its proletarian speaker does so to convert the “dying bourgeoisie” to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat (*Right Hand* 67). There is little chance that “Invitation to Silence” would have been published in *New Frontier*, a Popular Front magazine aimed at drawing support from the class that Livesay’s poem attacks and intends to eliminate.

Published in the June 1937 issue of *New Frontier*, Livesay’s article “Poet’s Progress” better serves the social and political interests of the Popular Front. This article could even be read as an apologia for her *New Frontier* poetry, an arbitration between “revolutionary” modernism and socialist romanticism in the historical setting of the

Popular Front. Livesay purports here to determine the “functions” of the progressive poet: “He must have individual personality[;] he must associate himself with ‘pure ideas’; [and] he must be the conveyor of emotional values” (23). Taken in order, she defines each of the three functions. Instead of modernist and leftist practices of poetic impersonality, the first function accentuates the poet’s personality: “No modern poet can be accused of trying to lose his individualism in the ‘collectivist spirit’” (23). Individualism, once anathema to Livesay’s leftism, is re-accommodated in the “collectivist” context of the Popular Front. In her concept of individualism, the personality of the poet is sublimated by the poem itself: “A poet’s individual mark appears not in his thought content, but in his style, form, and technique. This is as true of T. S. Eliot as it is true of Auden and Spender” (23).²⁴ The poet’s second function is concerned with “the problem of what we mean by experience and the expression of ‘pure ideas,’” or traditional poetic themes (“love, death and nature”). Here the poet’s role is to associate what Livesay calls “‘pure ideas’” and “‘poetic experience’ with the philosophical, political and social concepts of his time” (23). The poet’s third function is to render the “ideational content” of poetry not as abstractions, but as expressions of “emotional value” in the portrayal of social, economic, or political issues and, at the same time, in the arousal of “aesthetic sense” (23). Having defined the three elements of progressive poetry—“formal expression, philosophical content, and emotional value” (23)—Livesay then observes their correlation with the two functions of that poetry’s audience: “The three are related together in such a fashion as to create in the hearer a sensation of identity with others, and to release in him an individual creative comprehension” (23–24).

These concepts of social solidarity and aesthetic response make plain the sociopolitical character and cultural function of her progressive poetry: it is at once collectivist and individualist. Accordingly, the three functions of the poet and two functions of the audience constitute the theoretical underpinnings of not only modern poetry's progress but also sociopolitical progress. Her concluding remarks on this progressive movement resound with revolutionary romanticism:

If these premises are accepted we can go on more fearlessly to an understanding of what modern poets are attempting. Recognizing that we are living in a time of transition, their concern is to identify themselves with those forces in society which are working towards human development and expression, as opposed to other groups, identified with capitalism, which are seeking to hold the clock back. . . . To those who still cling to the more static conception of society such poetry is "propaganda." Fifty years hence it will not seem so, and the critics will again have time to concern themselves with the highly varied individual differences between poets who are now lumped together as being ruined by the "collectivist complex."

(24)

Because Livesay's apologia was the last item she contributed to *New Frontier*, her words obtain an uncanny sense of closure. In conceptualizing the functions of progressive poetry and its audience, she ventured to offer her contemporaries and historians the critical tools with which they could separate her "individualism" from the mass of versifiers on the cultural left. Like the progressive modernist poets of the Auden generation whom she emulated, Livesay has emerged more than fifty years after the collapse of the Popular

Front as one of the distinctive voices among Canadian poets of the literary left. Yet also in common with the Auden generation, Livesay would retreat from the cultural left at the end of the 1930s. By 1939 these revolutionary modernist poets of the Popular Front would find their socialist utopias in decline.

IV: Left in Crisis

As Livesay tells the story in her memoir and dramatic monologue addressed to Jean Watts Lawson (Gina in *Journey with My Selves*), the founder and financial backer of *New Frontier*, the collapse of the magazine after the September 1937 issue was the first in a chain of calamitous events among political and cultural groups of the left in the late 1930s:

Nineteen thirty-eight must have been the watershed of our youth. What we had worked for and dreamed it could lead into was a decade without war, without dictatorship, when man's urge for power and destruction might be curbed for good. Instead the scene was dominated by Mussolini, Franco, Hitler and Stalin. You will remember, Gina, the tension of that year when all across Canada the forces of left and right were lining up, not for unity, but for power. Magazines like *New Frontier* folded, the United Front collapsed and in my seaport town, Vancouver, the Progressive Arts Club and the West End Community Centre . . . were in disarray. (*Journey* 83, 85)

As much as international and national politics in 1938 could have devastated a Popular Front publication like *New Frontier*, the magazine was already in trouble by late 1937, but not on the political front. The problems encountered by *New Frontier* were less international and national than local, less political than financial and organizational. The

organizational crises that Livesay recalled—among the Popular Front, the Vancouver PAC,²⁵ and the West End Community Centre—certainly contributed to the demise of *New Frontier*. But she neglected to mention the magazine’s financial crisis, which was outlined together with a plan for fiscal and editorial restructuring on the final page of the September 1937 issue:

New Frontier is an independent venture, with the backing of no organization or party. Contributions from friends have supplemented its income from sales and subscriptions. . . . To continue we must have circulation, and so we have decided to launch a public drive for the establishment of a circulation fund. . . . We are re-organizing our editorial board and securing the services of a full-time business manager. We hope that the improvement in the magazine and in its business organization will raise circulation to a point where we will be self-sustaining.

(“Message”)

Given that no further issues of the magazine were published after September 1937, we can assume that the appeal for public funding proved unsuccessful. While the statement that *New Frontier*, like *Masses*, received no funding from political parties is true, the claim that the magazine lacked organizational support certainly diminishes the importance of the national network of NFCs, which the editorial describes as “discussion groups in every Canadian province” (“Message”).²⁶ The portrait of the “new” *New Frontier* as an “independent venture” in the September editorial clearly conflicts with the statement that appeared at the foot of the every masthead until the July-August 1937 issue: “NEW FRONTIER welcomes the work of Canadian artists and writers. . . . As NEW FRONTIER is a

co-operative venture, it does not pay for contributors.” The removal of this policy statement from the September 1937 issue indicates the direction of the magazine’s reorganization away from a “co-operative venture,” where the NFCs contributed material and solicited subscriptions, toward an “independent venture,” where the NFCs would be limited to the role of “discussion groups.” Given the featured writers in the September 1937 issue—Sylvia Townsend Warner, Valentine Ackland, and C. Day Lewis—we can also witness how *New Frontier* would play down “the work of Canadian artists and writers” and exploit the value of internationally recognized authors in order to boost circulation. While these reorganization policies may appear to have been fiscally sound, they also risked alienating the magazine’s guaranteed reader and contributor base in the NFCs. In reality, *New Frontier* was already an “independent venture” when it was founded and financed by Jean Watts Lawson’s inheritance money; its reorganization strategy failed to estimate the potential loss of “co-operative” support from the NFCs. With the campaign to solicit funds from public sources, to increase circulation, and to become an “independent” and “self-sustaining” magazine, *New Frontier* wrote its own invitation to silence.

Without support from organizations like the PACs or the NFCs, or without patronage, magazines of the cultural left such as *Masses* and *New Frontier* could hardly have lasted longer than a single issue. Both magazines terminated with an appeal for increased circulation, and both succumbed owing to financial shortfalls. To blame the financial crises experienced by both magazines on the economic difficulties of the Depression is the immediate temptation, if we seek an easy answer to the question of why

neither magazine could maintain fiscal security. We could produce a comparable contemporary, the *Canadian Forum*, as a magazine that experienced financial instability but still survived under private ownership in the early 1930s and, in the middle to late 1930s, with backing from the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR).²⁷ As an association of intellectuals with leanings toward British Fabianism, the LSR was well positioned to wage educational campaigns against the injustices of monopoly capitalism and present the alternative system of co-operative ownership and centralized state planning. With a middle-class membership of intellectuals, the LSR was far more financially secure than the predominantly communist and working-class PACs. Cultural rather than class affiliation of intellectuals, artists, and writers in the NFCs produced a composite left-wing membership of progressive liberals, socialists, and communists who supported the Popular Front. Neither the PACs nor the NFCs were political organizations like the LSR; both were essentially cultural organizations that supported magazines, without the financial resources of a political organization. Whatever the social and political agendas of these magazines on the cultural left, their organizational affiliations would determine their solvency or their failure.

Instead of creating continuities, new means and modes of communication, instead of forging unities, new communities and organizations, the Popular Front and Canadian magazine culture of the left were faced at the close of the 1930s with a new state of fragmentation and new conditions of silence. Following the Hitler–Stalin non-aggression pact in August 1939, the CPC, the YCL, Popular Front organizations like the League for Peace and Democracy, and all leftist publications were banned by authorities and many

leaders of CPC cells were jailed under the Defence of Canada Regulations. Even under Section 98, which gave authorities the ability to halt performances by the PACs' theatre groups in the early 1930s, leftist publications were not made illegal in Canada. August 1939 signaled a more rigorous era in the persecution of Canadian leftist culture with the government repression of the CPC's national paper, the *Daily Clarion*, published illegally and distributed by an underground network until a new legal paper, the *Canadian Tribune*, was established in January 1940 by one of the regular reviewers for *New Frontier*, Margaret Fairley, among others. While the Canadian cultural left was entering this forceful and prolonged period of political repression, Livesay retreated to live as one of those fellow travellers whom she had so mercilessly battered in *Masses* and *New Frontier*. As she remembered of herself and her husband in late 1939: "We were isolated from hearing any Party 'line,' as I imagine were most people who had been active on the left. Our solution was to withdraw, to settle down to family life on the North Shore" (*Right Hand* 278). It was there, on the North Shore of Vancouver, that Livesay had met Alan Crawley in 1938, and there that the organization of a different species of magazine and magazine culture—literary and devoted to poetry—was inchoate but poised on the threshold of the 1940s.

Chapter 2

A PEOPLE'S MODERNISM:

LIVESAY, MARRIOTT, AND POETRY-MAGAZINE CULTURE IN VICTORIA AND VANCOUVER,

1935-53

I: *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, the CAA, and *Contemporary Verse*

Both *Canadian Poetry Magazine* and *Contemporary Verse* were products of the CAA: the former at the national level, the latter at the local level. When the CAA launched the *Canadian Poetry Magazine* under the editorship of E. J. Pratt in January 1936, it was the first periodical of its kind in Canada. Even so, literary historians have routinely omitted *Canadian Poetry Magazine* from studies of Canadian little magazines, largely because of prevailing antipathies toward the CAA and its publications among critics and historians in the field of Canadian literary modernism (see Norris 20; Dudek 207; McCullagh xxiii).

Literary biographers David G. Pitt and Elspeth Cameron have contributed histories of *Canadian Poetry Magazine* editors Pratt and Earle Birney respectively, and historian Lyn Harrington has written of the magazine in *Syllables of Recorded Time: The Story of the Canadian Authors Association*; there are also Birney's memoirs about the CAA and its poetry magazine collected in *Spreading Time: Remarks on Canadian Writing and Writers*. These histories and memoirs have offered us views of the CAA and its poetry magazine; they have not, for the most part, ameliorated current critical opinion of either the association or the magazine. They have served to elaborate episodes in the careers of Pratt and Birney, but neglected the literary-historical significance of the poetry cultures that circulated around the CAA's poetry chapbooks, yearbooks, and magazine during the

1930s and 1940s. While Harrington documents meetings and conventions of the National Executive, articles in the *Canadian Author* and the *Canadian Bookman*, and editorial changes on the board of *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, she does not record the histories of local CAA branches. Ever since F. R. Scott memorialized the CAA as a group of Miss Crotchets in his 1927 poem "The Canadian Authors Meet," his portrait has remained indicative of the pejorative ways in which the association has been remembered and, moreover, feminized by critics and literary historians of Canadian modernism (see Vipond). That portrait of a predominantly female membership is, despite its misogyny, representative of the local branches and poetry groups of the CAA in the 1930s and 1940s. Neither the women of these local poetry groups nor their poetry yearbooks have received attention from historians of the CAA and *Canadian Poetry Magazine*; these omissions have also occluded the origins of *Contemporary Verse* in the 1930s and early-1940s CAA.

Even memoirs and histories of *Contemporary Verse* have failed to mention its evolution out of local poetry groups of the 1930s and early 1940s. Joan McCullagh's history of *Contemporary Verse* admits no connection between the magazine and the "annual yearbooks of non-modern poetry from various branches of the Canadian Authors' [sic] Association [that] continued to be published through the Depression" (xxi-xxii; see also McLaren, "*Contemporary*"; Livesay, "Foreword" and *Journey* 159-66). This categorization of the local CAA yearbooks as "non-modern" poetry is indicative of the literary-historical refusal to recognize the publications of the CAA poetry groups. While most of these CAA yearbooks more often than not included poets of minor talent, there were notable exceptions. Singled out by Pratt as one of the most accomplished among the

CAA branches (“News” 56), the Victoria and Islands poetry group began publication of their yearbook, the *Victoria Poetry Chapbook*, in 1935, followed by another in 1936 and three more in biannual instalments (1937–38, 1939–40, 1941–42). Having attended meetings of the Victoria poetry group since 1934, Alan Crawley was chosen to select the contents of the *Victoria Poetry Chapbook* in 1935 and 1936; he worked on the chapbook with a committee consisting of Floris McLaren, Doris Ferne, and branch president M. Eugenie Perry. For both McLaren and Ferne, their experiences with Crawley and the *Victoria Poetry Chapbook* were, in important ways, rehearsals for the development of editorial and production policies for *Contemporary Verse*. Both poets were apparently interested in expanding their readerships to a public beyond that of CAA publications.¹ One way to reach and create a public for poetry outside the CAA was to found a new poetry magazine. Coincident with the suspension of the *Victoria Poetry Chapbook* after 1941–42, McLaren, Ferne, and Anne Marriott—three of the core members of the Victoria poetry group—assisted in preparations for the first non-CAA affiliated poetry magazine in Canada. Under Crawley’s editorship, McLaren, Ferne, and Marriott were joined by Livesay and helped to launch *Contemporary Verse* in September 1941.

If *Canadian Poetry Magazine* and *Contemporary Verse* were products of the CAA in the 1930s, they were also connected to an international modernist little-magazine culture that had emerged in the 1910s. That magazine culture originated with the work of women editors in the United States. *Contemporary Verse* was, like *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, not an avant-garde magazine in the tradition of Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap’s the *Little Review* (1914–29), but rather a poetry magazine in the tradition of

Harriet Monroe and Alice Corbin Henderson's *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* (1912–). Both *Canadian Poetry Magazine* and *Contemporary Verse* were in fact fashioned in the image of that first modernist poetry magazine in the United States, *Poetry*, founded in Chicago by Monroe in 1912.

In his editorial for the inaugural January 1936 issue of *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, Pratt makes plain his desire to replicate the successes of American little magazines: "The United States . . . keeps alive, if not flourishing, more than forty magazines which publish nothing but verse and critical comments, and a few of these are responsible for the discovery of several major American poets of the twentieth century. The time is well advanced for Canada to initiate its own movements in the same direction" ("Foreword" 6). While *Poetry* has been memorialized by literary historians as the origin of the modernist little-magazine movement, *Canadian Poetry Magazine* has been denigrated by literary historians as a purveyor of CAA conservatism, boosterism, and mediocrity in verse. There is ample evidence to show that these pejorative traits characterize great quantities of verse published in *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, yet there is substantial verse by poets such as Livesay, Marriott, Waddington, Page, Kennedy, Smith, Birney, Dudek, and Scott that proves the magazine was by no means bereft of emergent modernist poets.² In fact, Pratt published many of the poets in the 1930s who would develop their talents in the more fashionable Canadian little magazines of the 1940s.

As a noncommercial venture, *Canadian Poetry Magazine* was also in line with the financial organization of little magazines like *Poetry*.³ By June 1938, Pratt would appeal to the magazine's CAA readership for financial aid, instancing the economic struggles of

Poetry and the efforts of its founding editor, Monroe, whose autobiography *A Poet's Life: Seventy Years in a Changing World* (1938) was reviewed in the same issue (Pratt, "Third" 7–8). If Pratt's comparison between *Canadian Poetry Magazine* and *Poetry* were not explicit enough, we need only consider the description of the Canadian magazine in Hoffman, Allen, and Ulrich's *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* (1946): "The magazine admits the purpose of its beginning—to furnish Canadian poetry with a voice similar to Harriet Monroe's *Poetry* and other American poetry magazines" (399).

Contemporary Verse announced itself to some of its future contributors in June 1941 as a new (as yet unnamed) magazine "inspired by the Chicago Poetry Issue" and conceived in reaction to "the Canadian Poetry Magazine's very low standard" (Livesay to A. M. Klein, 9 June 1941; A. M. Klein Papers [AMKP], M-3619, 146).⁴ The appearance of the April 1941 issue of *Poetry*, the Canadian number edited by E. K. Brown,⁵ precisely coincided with the original meeting of the four women founders of *Contemporary Verse* in Victoria on the Easter weekend of 1941 (McLaren, "Contemporary" 55–56). As contributors to the April 1941 issue of *Poetry*, Livesay, McLaren, and Marriott were acutely aware of the prestige of the magazine, especially among Canadian poets seeking recognition from its established American audience.⁶ Livesay and Marriott were featured, and McLaren briefly mentioned, in the survey article by Brown, "The Development of Poetry in Canada, 1880–1940" (46–47); Marriott was additionally represented by W. E. Collin's review of her 1939 chapbook, *The Wind Our Enemy*. The April 1941 issue not only marked the first appearances by Livesay, McLaren, and Marriott in *Poetry*, but also the last. Yet this did not sever the informal correspondence between *Poetry* and

Contemporary Verse. As an advocate of the export of Canadian poetry to the United States, Crawley would make it his editorial priority to have poets send what he felt to be their best pieces to *Poetry* if, after his own reading, he felt they merited the sizeable audience the American magazine could offer. If rejected by the editors of *Poetry*, poets were encouraged by Crawley to resubmit their manuscripts to *Contemporary Verse*. Given its origins in the founding committee's response to the Canadian number of *Poetry* and its editor's practice of redirecting Canadian poets and their manuscripts toward *Poetry*, *Contemporary Verse* was unofficially opening lines of communication between poets and magazine editors in Canada and the United States. While it would sometimes serve as a repository for poems rejected by the pre-eminent North American poetry magazine of its time, *Contemporary Verse* in the 1940s was confronted with a modern poetry culture in much the same inchoate condition as that faced by *Poetry* in the 1910s.

Among histories and memoirs of *Contemporary Verse*, only minimal attention has been given to its relationship to *Poetry*. Only Mary Lee Bragg Morton conjectures that *Poetry* was a likely model for *Contemporary Verse* (based on her examination of the two magazines' size and format [44]), though her argument applies equally well to the Philadelphia-based poetry magazine *Contemporary Verse* (1916–29). Livesay has claimed that resuscitating the name *Contemporary Verse* was her suggestion, "which [she] made remembering an earlier journal printed in the U.S. that [she] had seen on her mother's desk" (*Journey* 164).⁷ In his 3 June 1941 letter to the founding committee, Crawley accepted the editorship of a magazine he referred to as "Canadian Poetry Quarterly," so named in a letter (since lost) from Marriott to Crawley (Alan Crawley Papers [ACP], box

1, file 43). While Livesay's suggestion avoided confusion between their poetry quarterly and the CAA's poetry magazine, the rejected name gestures toward the American template for *Contemporary Verse*.

McLaren, in her 14 January 1952 letter to the editor of *Poetry*, Karl Shapiro, would explain the nature of the decade-long association between their magazines:

Both Alan Crawley and I are long[-]time readers and admirers of POETRY (and subscribers whenever we can raise the annual five dollars) and to both of us POETRY has been a more or less unofficial pattern of what we wanted CONTEMPORARY VERSE to be. . . . CV has existed for ten years to give the serious poets in Canada a place for their work and assurance of critical reading by the few people who feel that "modern" poetry is important. (Floris McLaren Papers [FMP])

McLaren and Crawley, whose extant correspondence dates from 1936, often mentioned issues of *Poetry* in their letters; they even shared a subscription during the 1940s. Writing to McLaren in 1939, Crawley alerted her to the July 1938 issue of *Poetry* in which Archibald MacLeish printed the transcript of his speech on the state of modern poets and poetry "In Challenge Not Defence." "It will help you I am certain," Crawley wrote to McLaren, "and set into actual conviction what I have tried to say so often and what I know you feel with me" (FMP). Crawley redirects MacLeish's challenge toward Canadian poetry and poets: ". . . what is Canadian poetry doing really? Will the poets never get away from the old expressions and longings and verbiage? Do so few of them really feel so little of [w]hat is going on about them in the world today and do they entirely overlook

or ignore what a poet should feel is his mission, to put it highly, or his JOB at any rate?" (Crawley to McLaren [1939]; FMP). Taking the pioneering editorial work of Monroe and *Poetry* as their American models, Crawley and McLaren would produce *Contemporary Verse* as a magazine for modern poetry in Canada. Crawley would even recommend that McLaren borrow a copy of "Harriet Monroe's book of her life"—*A Poet's Life* (ACP, box 1, file 39, item 1). Having borrowed at least a page or two from Monroe's autobiography, McLaren was also a minor poet who, like Monroe, became a poetry-magazine editor. For McLaren and Monroe, a poet's life was exchanged for—if not sacrificed to—an editor's life; their poems have become footnotes to their editorial work in the service of modern poetry.

For Crawley and Monroe alike, the editorial vocation began with a common interest in modern British poetry of the 1910s. Both were introduced to modern poetry when the Georgians were in vogue (Livesay, Foreword ix-x; Monroe, *A Poet's Life* 255-56).⁸ Of *Contemporary Verse* historians, Morton alone contends that although Crawley's interest in the Georgian poets had declined by the time he began editing *Contemporary Verse*, his editorial principles and critical sensibility continued to be influenced by modern British poets into the 1940s (2). Morton correlates certain of the Georgians' traits—simplicity, lyricism, pastoralism, eclecticism, nationalism (4-5)—and their popularity to Crawley's editorial practices and tastes: "Their search for a wide audience and their emphasis on an unpretentious style appealed to Crawley and constitute his most enduring heritage from Georgian poetics" (4). Although the relation of Georgian poetics to Crawley's editorial principles is only sometimes pertinent, Morton does not

mean to suggest that he was influenced to the point that *Contemporary Verse* replicates Edward Marsh's *Georgian Poetry* anthologies (1912–22). If Crawley were remembered solely as the compiler of the *Victoria Poetry Chapbook* (1935–36), there might be better justification for the comparison. Crawley, like Monroe, was an advocate of modern verse among late Romantics and Georgians: she among their midwestern American counterparts of the 1910s and 1920s, he among their western-Canadian imitators of the 1930s. Like the Georgians with their popular anthologies, however, Crawley and Monroe sought wide audiences for modern poetry; through the medium of their poetry magazines, they endeavoured to create modern poetry's public.⁹

The modern poetry that Crawley would introduce to the poetry group of the Victoria CAA was not Georgian but rather that of second-generation British modernists—the Auden generation—and their Anglo-American, Canadian, and Spanish contemporaries.¹⁰ Such modern poetry was not yet in common parlance among the CAA poets in Victoria. Nor were such moderns yet a major influence on the poetry scene when Crawley moved to Vancouver in January 1935. In the fall of that year, he attended his first and only meeting of the poetry group of the Vancouver CAA, convened by Marion Isabel Angus, but left dismayed (Crawley to Perry [1935]; MEPP, box 3, file 12). In the meantime, he would continue to give readings of and talks on modern poetry to the CAA group in Victoria, and later make contact in Vancouver with Livesay (Crawley, “Dorothy” 117), with whom he could share his enthusiasms for modern poetry. Crawley and Livesay had initially arranged—via their mutual acquaintance with McLaren—to get together at a meeting of the Vancouver Poetry Society (VPS) in October 1938. Both

Livesay and her husband Duncan Macnair were members of the society, chaired by Ernest Fewster.¹¹ Among the society's accomplishments was the founding of *Full Tide*, a thrice-yearly magazine containing poems by members of the VPS, in December 1936. Livesay's contributions to the society and its poetry magazine consisted of delivering talks on poetry and publishing poems in the May 1938 and February 1939 issues. Crawley, however, had little patience with the VPS; his first attempt to rendezvous with Livesay at a VPS meeting in the fall of 1938 produced only feelings of exasperation with the poetry he heard, compounded by his disappointment at her absence from the meeting (Crawley to McLaren [1938]; FMP). Crawley would later submit to Livesay's entreaties to attend another VPS meeting in 1939 and even give a reading with his "own comment on the modern poetry and the writers" (Crawley to McLaren [1939]; FMP).¹²

Crawley's letter of 3 June 1941 to the founding committee of *Contemporary Verse* emphasized his interest in modern poetry and poets: "In spite of the distress of the times and the prospect of continued disquiet and unsettled days to come, I feel that the idea of the publication of a magazine of Canadian poetry is a worthwhile and reasonable venture that could if properly managed and edited do much to help modern Canadian writers for I know of no publication that is now giving this possible help to writers" (ACP, box 1, file 44). Implicit in his assessment of the publishing field is his criticism of the CAA's poetry yearbooks and its *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, as well as the VPS's *Full Tide*. His emphasis on modern Canadian poets excluded many members of the Victoria and Vancouver poetry groups and, moreover, militated against Pratt's editorial compromise between modern and traditional verse in *Canadian Poetry Magazine* (see Pratt,

“Comment” 6). When Crawley wrote in his September 1941 editorial about spending “two hundred hours reading poetry published in the preceding twenty years in Great Britain, Canada and the United States” and “half as many hours in libraries and book shops and in searching through current magazines to find and get together these poems,” he declared himself a reader of the moderns (“Foreword”).

It may seem unfair to ask in hindsight why none of Livesay, nor Marriott, nor Ferne, nor McLaren even contemplated taking on the editorship herself, or even collectively. Instead they selected Crawley and assumed roles on the founding-publishing committee. “The founding committee,” McLaren recalls, “felt strongly that the choosing of poems for the magazine was a one-man job; there should be no board of editors or editorial advisors” (57). Crawley’s insistence on editorial autonomy probably stemmed from his prior dissatisfaction with committee interference during the process of selection for the *Victoria Poetry Chapbook* in 1936.¹³ Crawley expressed his displeasure with such mechanisms of selection and compromise—namely, the necessity of including at least one poem by every poet in the group—by declining the Victoria poetry group’s request that he choose the poems for its 1937 chapbook (Crawley to Perry [1937]; MEPP, box 2, file 9). When approached by Birney in 1946 with a proposal to amalgamate *Canadian Poetry Magazine* and *Contemporary Verse*, Crawley would again back away from the compromised editorial role in which an organization like the CAA would place him. He balked at the offer of an associate editorship on the board of the proposed magazine because of his belief in the necessity for editorial autonomy.¹⁴ Crawley’s notion of editorial independence should, however, be understood only in terms of his power to make

final decisions on the selection of poems for *Contemporary Verse*. His sense of autonomy is somewhat misrepresentative of the production of the magazine, especially his dependence on the publishing committee in Victoria. Within the *Contemporary Verse* group there was a definite division of labour between editorial work undertaken by Crawley in North Vancouver and production work conducted predominantly by McLaren, but also by Marriott and Ferne, in Victoria. McLaren took charge of the clerical work, circulation, and, in the fall of 1950, assistant editorship; McLaren, Livesay, Marriott, and Ferne all contributed reviews, poems, and participated in discussions on matters of policy and management, including the decision not to amalgamate with *Canadian Poetry Magazine*. Crawley, who was visually impaired, had to have his wife, Jean Crawley, read manuscripts aloud to him so that he could transcribe them on his braille typewriter. Without Jean Crawley, McLaren, Livesay, Marriott, and Ferne, *Contemporary Verse* might never have appeared at all.

So why would the four women found and publish, but not edit, *Contemporary Verse*? Perhaps Livesay, Marriott, McLaren, and Ferne were aware that in 1941 a Canadian poetry magazine edited by four women living on the west coast was utopian, or that the Montreal and Toronto literary establishments would scoff at the presumption of four “poetesses.” Livesay’s leftward politics and agitational persona made her a high-profile member of the founding committee, but not an impartial editor. Because Marriott, McLaren, and Ferne were poets still intimately associated with the Victoria poetry group, there was an immediate need to dissociate *Contemporary Verse* from the CAA—if they wanted to attract the leading modern Canadian poets to publish in their magazine. Their

ties to the predominating conservative CAA poets might discourage contributions from those modern Canadian poets who were already disinclined to publish in *Canadian Poetry Magazine*. Crawley alone among the founders belonged to no organizations, represented the interests of no cliques, and preached no political programs.

When P. K. Page reviewed *Contemporary Verse* in the eighth issue of *Preview*, the reasons for the four women on the founding committee to defer editorial responsibility for the magazine became evident. In her opinion, “[t]he first—*Contemporary Verse*—did not say a particular[ly] loud ‘boo’ to the pink tea pretties but it was loud enough for one of their wags to dub it *Contemptible Verse* in a moment of irritation. That was probably its first real victory” (“Canadian” 8). Page’s gender-inflected phrase “pink tea pretties” was presumably aimed at the CAA. As well, the parodic name “*Contemptible Verse*” is indicative of CAA attitudes toward contemporary experiments in free verse.¹⁵ As Page’s review attests, *Contemporary Verse* prompted criticism from the poets of the newly-formed *Preview* group in Montreal. Immediately following the publication of *Preview*, the fourth issue of *Contemporary Verse* presented Crawley’s statement of his editorial policies:

A glance at the note on contributors at the back of this number shows that CONTEMPORARY VERSE is not the chapbook of a limited or local group of writers. The contents of each number will at once dispel any charge that it exists to press political propaganda, particular social adjustment or literary trend. The aims are to entice and stimulate the writing and reading of poetry and to provide means for its publication free from politics, prejudices and placations, and to keep open its pages

to poetry that is sincere in thought and expression and contemporary in theme and treatment and technique. (“Editor’s Note” [1942] 3)

Here Crawley countered point by point the original manifesto “Statement” of the *Preview* group: *Contemporary Verse* would be neither parochial, militant, political, partisan, agitational, nor avant-garde. His only definitive statement of editorial policy required that poetry submitted to the magazine be “contemporary”—or, to use an equivalent term, “modern” (“Editor’s Note” [1942] 3). Having for the first time printed in this issue the names of the members of the founding committee (“To Our Subscribers”), he also made certain to differentiate *Contemporary Verse* from a “chapbook of a limited or local group of writers” like the CAA poetry yearbooks, or like *Preview*, a self-proclaimed “Literary letter” (Anderson, “Note” [1942]).

When CAA president William Arthur Deacon wrote to offer Birney the editorship of *Canadian Poetry Magazine* on 8 July 1946, he too mentioned its problem of “arising out of local chap-books put out by CAA Branches in Edmonton, Ottawa, Montreal, and elsewhere, but excluding Toronto.” Deacon felt dismayed that “these local efforts, often connected with contests, represented distinct disloyalty to our own publication,” noting the recent Ottawa branch chapbook *Profile* as credible but detrimental to contributions and subscriptions to the national magazine (Deacon 231). Not so myopic as to ignore factors external to the CAA, he acknowledged the competition of magazines like *Contemporary Verse*, *First Statement*, and *Preview* founded in the early 1940s: “We are also conscious of the fact that the starting up of several rivals by groups of younger poets at different points indicates very clearly that there is some lack in the service that the

magazine is not performing” (230). Of the members on the CAA National Executive, he cited Marriott as a representative voice of the “younger poets” in favour of Birney’s editorship: “Miss Anne Marriott said that your influence with the younger poets would be of inestimable value. She saw now the one chance of uniting the poetic interest in Canada” (229–30). Deacon proposed to effect such unity by amalgamating *Canadian Poetry Magazine* with its rivals: “We have not the capital to finance the purchase of other magazines, but you intimated that the suggestion might be the reverse, namely, that Mr. Alan Crawley is now financing *Contemporary Verse* at a loss and now might be willing to contribute to the costs of *The Canadian Poetry Magazine*” (230–31). We can only speculate whether such a merger might have produced a conflict like that so often documented (and exaggerated) in histories of the Montreal little magazines *Preview* and *First Statement*.

Despite their common ancestry in the CAA poetry yearbooks and derivation from *Poetry*, *Canadian Poetry Magazine* and *Contemporary Verse* would remain separated by their different commitments to the making of a modern poetry-magazine culture in Canada. During Birney’s editorship (1946–48), the publication of modernist Canadian poets would become a priority in *Canadian Poetry Magazine*: this had a reciprocal effect, however, of alienating many of its CAA contributors and subscribers whose conservatism conflicted with its editor’s modernism. For just under two years, Birney transformed *Canadian Poetry Magazine* into a modernist little magazine aligned with *Contemporary Verse*.

Birney seized the opportunity to unite “poetic interest” by attempting to integrate a

diversity of poets and regional concerns into the editorial organization of *Canadian Poetry Magazine*. While he edited the magazine from the University of British Columbia campus in Vancouver (with typing and filing assistance from his wife Esther [Cameron, *Earle Birney* 292]), it was still published and distributed by the management committee in Toronto. In August 1946, he wrote to poets “selected with a view to regional representation” to form “an editorial board of men and women who are themselves writing poetry of distinction” (Editorial 6). Letters went out to prospective associate editors: McLaren in Victoria, Marriott and Page in Ottawa, Charles Bruce and Philip Child in Toronto, Patrick Waddington and Leo Cox in Montreal. Page declined on 24 August, claiming conflict of interest: “I believe that a person cannot work for two magazines—there was the possibility that N[orthern] R[eview] would fold. If it had I would have been delighted to be on your editorial board. As it hasn’t, I must refuse” (Earle Birney Papers [EBP], box 15, file 21). McLaren followed on 29 August, citing similar circumstances: “Although my work on C[ontemporary] V[erse] has been entirely non-editorial, my name has been on the magazine from the beginning, and it does take all the time and energy I have to give. I feel that I simply cannot associate myself with another poetry magazine and do justice to either” (EBP, box 14, file 2). Bruce, Child, Waddington, and Cox accepted Birney’s offer. Marriott also accepted, though her response to Birney on 21 August betrayed her profound ambivalence and divided loyalties to both *Canadian Poetry Magazine* and *Contemporary Verse* (EBP, box 14, file 25).

Marriott’s concurrent involvement with both *Contemporary Verse* and *Canadian Poetry Magazine* is emblematic of their intertwined histories; her poetry of this period,

published in both magazines, is informed by her negotiations between the competing interests of the *Contemporary Verse* group and those of *Canadian Poetry Magazine* and the CAA. Consequently, the tension between the innovative forms and idioms of her modernist poetry (prominent in her *Contemporary Verse* publications) and the derivative manner of her romantic and imagistic lyrics (prevalent in her *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, newspaper, and commercial-magazine publications) is central to her first two decades as a poet (circa 1934–53). Her exposure to the *Contemporary Verse* group would further her progress as a modernist poet, yet she would ultimately find herself unable to sustain a consistent modernist poetic.

Rather than consolidate her poetic interests, she wrote for multiple print and radio outlets: for noncommercial and commercial magazines, for small-press chapbooks and books, for newspapers and radio. By 1941, the Ryerson Press could boast of her publications in “over fifty magazines in Canada, England, and the United States” (Marriott, *Calling* [front cover]). With publications exceeding even that of the young Livesay, Marriott would produce three chapbooks—*The Wind Our Enemy* (1939), *Calling Adventurers!* (1941), and *Salt Marsh* (1942)—and one book-length collection, *Sandstone and Other Poems* (1945), by the age of thirty-two. For her second collection, *Calling Adventurers!*, the CAA awarded her the Governor General’s Award for Poetry; that collection contained her verse choruses from the CBC radio documentary drama, *Payload* (1940). During the early 1940s, Marriott collaborated with Margaret Kennedy on several CBC radio documentary dramas in prose and verse, including *Payload*, *Who’s Johnny Canuck* (1941), and *We See Thee Rise* (1943). In the early 1940s, she also

broadcasted her poetry over local Vancouver radio stations and, in 1943, conducted a cross-Canada school radio broadcast series called “My Canada.” Though she knowingly forfeited the complexities of her poetic modernism for these radio productions, she accomplished her goal of securing a mass audience for her poetry. Throughout the 1940s, Marriott would attempt to reconcile her modernist poetic practices with her desire for a popular poetry; that project would end in crisis. After *Sandstone* was published in 1945, she would not publish another collection of poetry for thirty-six years. This period of withdrawal and silence was anticipated in her poems of the early to mid-1940s and chronicled in her uncollected poems of the late 1940s and early 1950s—especially in her modernist poetry, much of it still uncollected, published in *Contemporary Verse*.

Within this Victoria–Vancouver poetry-magazine culture, Marriott was joined by Livesay, Crawley, and Birney as advocates of modern poetry’s broad dissemination through print and radio media. For Livesay, these prevailing concerns recall her own frustrated efforts to communicate her proletarian poetry of the 1930s to mass audiences through minority magazine culture of the Canadian left. By the late 1930s, though, her publication strategies had changed in significant ways. Following the collapse of *New Frontier*, she would shift her politics from communist to “soft socialist” (Thompson 61), thus allowing her to expand her audience beyond the cultural left in Canada. In contrast to her *Masses* and *New Frontier* periods of 1932–34 and 1936–37, when she restricted her publications to periodicals of the cultural left, the late 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s witnessed her poetry’s dissemination among an expanding number of commercial and noncommercial periodicals—a tactic, comparable to Marriott’s, enabling her to reach as

wide an audience as possible. Prior to Marriott, Livesay similarly sought to extend that audience through radio. Anticipated by “Broadcast from Berlin” in 1932, Livesay’s interest in writing for radio began in earnest as early as 1936 and continued through the 1940s and 1950s (Tiessen and Tiessen xi). Concurrent with her poetry’s distribution through diversified print and radio media, her experimentation with new modes of poetic expression provided alternatives to her leftist modes of the early to mid-1930s. These alternatives developed out of her interest in populist modes of expression employed in other media—not only in radio, but also in visual art and theatre—through which she might, were she capable, reach out to greater audiences. Each of her poetry collections of the 1940s and early 1950s—*Day and Night* (1944), *Poems for People* (1947), *Call My People Home* (1950)—is characterized by her interest in poetry as a medium of mass communication. But even with her increased readership, publicity, reputation, and critical acclaim throughout the 1940s—Governor General’s Awards for *Day and Night* and *Poems for People*, and the Lorne Pierce Gold Medal of the Royal Society of Canada (1947)—this productive and distinguished period would be curtailed by the early 1950s. For Livesay, like Marriott, would experience a decline in productivity at this time, most noticeably following the demise of *Contemporary Verse* in 1952–53.

Both women would articulate crises of language and communication in their poetry of the late 1930s through the early 1950s. Even though they augmented the range of their poetry’s reception, Marriott and Livesay compromised the linguistic density and formal complexity of their modernism in the interest of what Pratt, in his January 1936 *Canadian Poetry Magazine* editorial, called “greater marketability” and “public

consumption” (“Foreword” 5). In the sections that follow, the readings of Marriott’s and Livesay’s poetry will focus on the apparent contradiction between the proliferation of modern poetry’s media in Canada during the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s—including *Canadian Poetry Magazine* and *Contemporary Verse*, Ryerson Press chapbooks and books, and CBC radio—and these poets’ distinctive crises of communication.

II: Modernism Our Enemy? Marriott and “Magazine Verse”

When John Sutherland reviewed *Sandstone* in the first issue of *Northern Review*, he characterized much of Marriott’s collection as “‘magazine verse’ . . . not essentially different from work appearing in *Good Housekeeping*, *American Magazine* and similar publications” (“Anne” 100). His derisive reference to “magazine verse” was directed at the publishing practices of commercial periodicals—national monthlies, daily newspapers, Sunday supplements—in which some of her poems had been published prior to *Sandstone*. Such print organs encouraged a kind of crass commercialism with respect to poetry, often printing it “as a kind of decorative cement to fill the gaps left by articles which fail to reach the bottom of a column,” as Birney once described the poems published in *Saturday Night* (“Has” 7). Related to his first criticism, Sutherland’s second volley assailed Marriott’s predominant style in the collection, exposing a masculinist condescension typical of his attitudes toward women’s poetry: “she gives the impression of trying to whip up an inspiration by compounding each word with every other word and by packing in modifiers until lines are bursting at the seams. She adopts a difficult modern style to express the philosophy of lady writers of the C.A.A.” (101). If by “philosophy” he means the typical CAA poet’s inspiration by nature, producing imitative Romantic, Georgian, or Imagist

verse, his remark on her “magazine verse” is apposite to the popularity of such poetry in commercial periodicals of the time—and, moreover, in *Canadian Poetry Magazine*. But in questioning her “difficult modern style,” namely her frequent hyphenations and modifications, he also challenges her for adopting the modernist idiom of poetry in other little magazines. If Sutherland is correct in his seemingly contradictory assessment of Marriott’s “magazine verse” written in a modernist style, then we can see how she landed herself in a double bind: she attempted to maintain artistic integrity by writing modernist poetry for little magazines and to gain financial rewards (*pro rata* and prizes) and other honours by writing “magazine verse” for popular magazines, newspapers, and CAA publications.

This contradiction of aesthetic interests produced a crisis in language in Marriott’s poetry of the 1930s and 1940s. Her modernist style of this period is characterized by its condensation of language: a poetry directed at those smaller and more specialized audiences of little magazines. At the same time, she often applied this style to her poetry published in periodicals of mass consumption, thus decorating such “magazine verse” with the surface effects of modernist aesthetics. She produced far more of the latter type of verse, probably to the detriment of her reputation among editors and poets of little-magazine groups, but certainly to her benefit among CAA groups whose local yearbooks and national poetry magazine alike honoured her with awards. Writing “magazine verse” carried her through a boom period extending from 1934 to 1945, during which she published more than two hundred poems in periodicals and after which she entered a period of decline. She published only eighteen more poems between the appearance of

Sandstone in 1945 and the closure of *Contemporary Verse* in 1953, and only nine more throughout the remainder of the 1950s.

Economic pressures would also govern Marriott's prolonged decline in poetic production after 1945. This is not to say that economic forces were the determining factor in her retreat from writing poetry. Her departure to Ottawa, where she started work at the NFB in March 1945, detached her from the poetry communities in Victoria. Although she continued to write and publish poems in newspapers and magazines after 1945, she ceased publishing books and chapbooks of her poetry; her creative energies at the NFB were channelled into writing film scripts. After leaving the NFB in 1949, she concentrated on commercial media: writing radio dramas and documentaries for the CBC, editing the women's page of her local paper, and broadcasting poetry on Victoria radio. Having married Gerald McLellan in 1947, she moved with him to Victoria in 1949 and later to northern British Columbia in 1951; this latter move isolated her altogether from literary communities. This separation would not, however, occasion a further drop-off in her poetry output comparable to that after her departure to Ottawa in 1945. The Victoria and Vancouver poetry groups of the CAA and of *Contemporary Verse* were the motivating forces behind her poetic production for roughly two decades—from the mid-1930s through the early 1950s. Her history and her poetry call attention to the vital cord that connects the poet to her community, and that, if severed, may lead to alienation, invisibility, even silence.

The Victoria poetry group would profoundly affect the progress of Marriott's early poetry. Having joined the mass of CAA versifiers in 1934, she emerged at the

forefront of Canadian modernist poets by 1939. She has credited several figures connected to the Victoria poetry group with the cultivation of her poetic technique at this time. Of the first, then CBC radio regional director Ira Dilworth, she has recalled:

[He] gave me one of the first real revelations of my life. One of the CAA ladies (most were ladies!) had a meeting at her house at which Ira gave a reading of T. S. Eliot's "The Wasteland" [sic]. The Keats and Shelley et al[.] I had read at [private] school [in Victoria] fell away into the past and I sat there truly enthralled. I thought "The Fire Sermon" was the most wonderful piece of writing I had ever heard. I really walked out of there a different person. I know it sounds melodramatic but it was like that. (Marriott to Geoff Hancock, 22 November 1984; AMP box 4, file 1; see also Marriott, *Anne*)

As Marriott's most recent critics have noted, Eliot's influence on her long poem *The Wind Our Enemy* is thematically and stylistically marked. Drawing on information given in Ruth Scott Philip's 1982 interview with Marriott (11), Anne Geddes Bailey even attempted to track down Dilworth's *critical* reading of *The Waste Land* (55), but could not find the source because his reading of Eliot to the Victoria poetry group was no more than a recitation. D. M. R. Bentley has likewise proposed not only Eliot's but also Joyce's influence on *The Wind Our Enemy*, noting Marriott's interpolation of modernism's "various techniques—montage, unfinished sentences, snippets of popular culture, the comments of unidentified voices—that were assembled by Joyce and Eliot to describe the spiritual deserts of early twentieth-century Europe" (71). Based on Marriott's testimony, we should reconsider the question of Eliot's influence, which has proved salutary in both

Bentley's and Bailey's readings of modernist poetics in *The Wind Our Enemy*. Marriott's exposure to Eliot's free verse—as she would claim during a 1974 panel discussion at Simon Fraser University—gave her “a whole new freedom to write the way [she] wanted to” (AMP, box 5, file 4). That freedom to write in *vers libre* was not limited to *The Wind Our Enemy*, but rather developed throughout her successive collections of the 1940s. While Dilworth's reading of Eliot would offer Marriott the *vers-libre* and long-poem model for her composition of *The Wind Our Enemy* in the fall of 1937, her poetry from the early 1940s would be checked and measured against her first modernist long poem. Rather than reaffirming Marriott's liberation from traditional modes of rhyming verse in the 1930s, the positive critical reception of her modernism would demand that she continue to produce poetry in this mode; instead of giving her “freedom to write the way she wanted to,” modernist poetics would increasingly weigh upon her as a burden.

Even the publication history of *The Wind Our Enemy* is connected to the Victoria poetry group of the CAA. At one of its meetings in the fall of 1938, Ferne, in her capacity as convenor, gave a reading of the poem to the group (Perry to Edgar, 6 January 1939; MEPP, box 5, file 23). Livesay remembers being present at the meeting, along with her father J. F. B. Livesay, the General Manager of the Canadian Press (Livesay, “Poetry” 87). After the reading, Ferne presented him with a typescript copy of *The Wind Our Enemy*, which he in turn conveyed to Toronto and brought to the attention of Pierce at the Ryerson Press. Marriott's correspondence with J. F. B. Livesay between 26 November 1939 and 16 February 1939 documents his successful negotiations with Pierce for the publication of *The Wind Our Enemy* (AMP, box 3, file 1). Rather belatedly, Dorothy

Livesay made the negotiations public knowledge in “An Open Letter to Sir Charles G. D. Roberts,” published in the April–May 1939 issue of the *Canadian Bookman*.¹⁶ She berated not only Canadian publishers who allegedly refused to publish Marriott’s poem, but also the CAA poetry group that received its first reading and that, after all, facilitated its publication:

I have been looking in vain, not for “proletarian poets”—we are far from that—but for some genuine expression of experience, related to the way people live and struggle in Canada. I have found it only in isolated spots, cropping up in a shy way on the prairie and then being silent again. I have found it, most certainly, in Anne Marriott of Victoria, who has written a poem about the prairie which no one has seen fit to publish, but which is a voice from the people crying out. But woe unto her if she does not break free from critics and mutual admiration societies!

Livesay’s raillery against the lack of objective criticism among CAA poetry groups is probably true, and her advice to Marriott to liberate herself from the shallow praise of such groups is wise. From Livesay’s dissatisfaction with the state of Canadian poetry groups (whether the CAA or the VPS or any other poetry society, association, club, or guild), we can detect the first stirrings of a different kind of group—not led by poets, but by critics like Crawley.

While connected to the Victoria CAA in the 1930s, Crawley would markedly change the direction of Marriott’s poetry. He offered her objective criticism, even in the context of so-called “mutual admiration societies” such as the Victoria poetry group. Marriott would later credit him with encouraging her to attempt a longer poem like *The*

Wind Our Enemy. Commenting on his early editorial advice, she noted during a talk delivered in Saskatoon in 1971 that he “did point out, right away, that what I wrote mostly, a catalogue of scenic effects, however nicely phrased did not really constitute a genuine poem” (AMP, box 4, file 1). By 1935, she had started the transition from rhymed quatrains and sonnets to verse forms favoured by the early modernists, particularly the hokku and its western correlative, the imagist lyric. These uncollected hokku and imagist poems from 1935 are not themselves distinctive, except insofar as they prefigure what Bentley has identified in *The Wind Our Enemy* as “its use of techniques derived from Imagism” (69). As a stage in her development toward the accumulation of imagistic fragments in the long poem, Marriott’s imagist lyrics represent her transition from the conventionalized subjects and verse forms of the CAA poets—for even the imagist lyric and hokku had been acceptable CAA fare since Louise Morey Bowman and Frank Oliver Call introduced them to Canadian poetry in the early 1920s—toward the integration of modernist techniques and social subjects. Crawley would urge Marriott to work toward writing poetry in longer forms, so that she could organize her tendency toward the “catalogue of scenic effects” into a larger structure like the long poem, where she could attempt to catalogue the heterogeneity of social phenomena in a sequence of imagistic verses.

The only extant typescript of *The Wind Our Enemy*—a single sheet consisting of the first and final sections—is really the kind of catalogue Crawley wanted Marriott to supersede. Originally entitled “Dust Storm” and changed to “Drought Area,” the early version is merely an imagistic portrait (AMP, box 15, file 4). Turning to Marriott’s

recollections of Crawley, we might speculate how he would have responded to this early version:

Alan used to criticize my poetry, and urged me to write something longer. *The Wind Our Enemy* was the result. But after that, nothing I could write measured up to “The Wind—” and gradually I stopped showing him my work, in fact stopped writing poetry altogether, feeling nothing else I did would be good enough. I virtually stopped writing poetry for over twenty years. Though of course I was involved with other kinds of writing, and with people, as I hadn’t been before, and that all used up my creative energy. (Marriott to Hancock, 22 November 1984; AMP, box 4, file 1)

Unlike her experiences with the core group of the Victoria CAA, Marriott’s encounters with Crawley were not occasions for flattery. He would prove a demanding editor of her poetry, his expectations raised by her early long poems *The Wind Our Enemy* and *Calling Adventurers!* Both long poems were published prior to *Contemporary Verse*. Marriott would publish a total of fifteen shorter lyric poems, but only one long poem, in the magazine. Her poetry from *Contemporary Verse* tells the story of her efforts and failures to produce another modernist long poem like *The Wind Our Enemy*. These struggles most often manifest themselves in her poetry of the 1940s—particularly in her poetry published in *Contemporary Verse*—as failures of language and communication.

Printed in the first, September 1941 issue of *Contemporary Verse*, Marriott’s uncollected “Prayer of the Disillusioned” is among the earliest of her renewed efforts to write in the modernist manner of *The Wind Our Enemy*.¹⁷ If *The Waste Land* presents a

language of spiritual and cultural exhaustion in postwar Europe, “Prayer” revisits Marriott’s earlier transposition of Eliot’s tropes of alienation and sterility to *The Wind Our Enemy*. Where her long poem translates Eliot’s vision to the ecological, social, and economic conditions of the Canadian prairies during the Depression, her poem-prayer rearticulates his mood of disillusionment through her speakers’ exhausted language. Her traveller-speakers in the poem-prayer undertake their quest through a spiritual desert in search of renewed sources of communication. “Give us too a cause!” they exhort at the beginning of their journey, then go on to describe their spiritual alienation and sterile speech:

We who have talked through days, nights, barren seasons,
 Said everything, emptied our hearts and minds out
 In sourceless dry streams of words
 And still said nothing,
 Never found the one word
 Our speech ran after,
 The potent word, the complete answer
 To a billion circling questions.

The failure of communication that the speakers convey leads to their crisis of faith in language. As speakers of a prayer, they address an absent audience, a divine host whose “potent word” would grant their “cause.” If not the cause, then the ambiguous meaning of the speakers’ quest is delivered in the final lines, as they emerge from their “aimless desert”:

. . . we come to the bound of the desert,
 The perpetual river set in unchangeable course,
 And deep in the current, the long strong water, lose
 The last dry grain from the ear, from the solaced eye,
 Most blessedly lose our selves.

Like the drowned Phoenecian sailor of *The Waste Land*, the drowned speakers of Marriott's poem are ambiguous figures: their death by water may signify no more than the last words and act of the "disillusioned"; or it may symbolize their self-sacrifice as a prelude to rebirth in the "perpetual river." To pursue the latter reading, Marriott's poem concludes with a benediction, like Eliot's—a paradoxical blessing, since her speakers' loss of self is "blessed" only insofar as it is *self*-blessed. Without the "potent word, the complete answer," their loss of self is a leap of faith into an "unchangeable course." It ironically reiterates their loss of faith in language.

Of the seven poems that she published in *Contemporary Verse* prior to the appearance of *Sandstone* in June 1945, only "Prayer" was omitted from the collection. That it appears in *Contemporary Verse* is significant in so far as Marriott's return in "Prayer" to the thematic concerns of *The Wind Our Enemy* was probably applauded by Crawley. Perhaps the defining characteristic and chief fault of "Prayer" is its double derivation from two modernist long poems—not only from Eliot's but also from her own. Although "Prayer" recaptures a symbolic world of spiritual drought that one encounters in *The Waste Land* and *The Wind Our Enemy*, the fragmented, multivocal, multilinear narrative of cultural and spiritual crisis in these long poems is not replicated in the

structure of her prayer-poem. While the ironic and ambiguous close of “Prayer” is indeed a signature modernist effect, its recycling of the thematics of *The Wind Our Enemy* is above all telling of Crawley’s insistence that she write something that would measure up to her first modernist long poem.

Although Marriott’s *Calling Adventurers!* predates *Contemporary Verse*, its organization as a long poem would seem to gesture toward Crawley’s early influence on her modernist poetics.¹⁸ *Calling Adventurers!* contains her verse choruses from *Payload*, the documentary drama in verse and prose co-written by Marriott and Margaret Kennedy, with music by Barbara Pentland. Originally broadcast over CBC radio on 8 November 1940, *Payload* was scripted for multiple voices and employed techniques of audio montage (see AMP, box 16, file 2). Instead of multivocality and montage, *Calling Adventurers!* produces a narrative that is lyrically univocal and occasionally interspersed with other voices carried over from the radio version.¹⁹ Separated from their original radio format, the choruses compose a discontinuous narrative of sectional pieces, arranged in the fragmented manner of a modernist long poem. While the radio play was popular enough among CBC audiences to merit its second broadcast in 1943 (see Marriott to Frank Flemington, 17 January 1943; LPP, box 10, file 1, item 74), *Calling Adventurers!* would not demand a second printing—even after winning the Governor General’s Award. Compared to *The Wind Our Enemy*, which had already sold out its run of 250 copies by the time *Calling Adventurers!* went to press, her second chapbook was not nearly so popular (see n20). Both author and publisher had evidently mistaken the limited readership of poetry chapbooks for the popular audience of radio.

Once Marriott offered Ryerson Press the choruses from *Payload* on 7 December 1940 (LPP, box 8, file 1, item 96), Pierce would suspend plans for the publication of what would be her third collection, *Salt Marsh*. Originally submitted to Ryerson on 14 September 1940, *Salt Marsh* would be the object of numerous revisions, additions, and deletions prior to its publication over two years later in October 1942 (Marriott to Pierce, 14 September 1940 and 13 October 1942; LPP, box 8, file 1, item 94 and box 30, file 3, item 58). Marriott's apparent uncertainties about the collection were reflected in its critical reception and, compared to the success of *The Wind Our Enemy*, its meagre sales.²⁰ Livesay's review of *Salt Marsh* in the June 1943 issue of *Contemporary Verse* renewed her earlier warning to Marriott about the dangers of writing poetry for "mutual admiration societies" ("Open" 35) and even accused her of "letting work be published which is adolescent verse" ("Recent" 13). *Salt Marsh* certainly reproduces a representative selection of what Sutherland would later call her "magazine verse"—that is, derivative imagist and romanticist nature lyrics. The collection also contains some of her more challenging modernist work from the late 1930s and early 1940s ("Night Travellers," "Station," "Traffic Light," "Prairie Graveyard"), though this material is far outnumbered by her prevailing poetic tendency to produce imagistic catalogues, romanticist reveries, and impressionistic portraits.

Given Livesay's sharp assessment of *Salt Marsh*, Marriott understandably balked at the inclusion of juvenilia in her first book-length collection, *Sandstone*. Having submitted a selection of her poems to Ryerson on 24 May 1944, she would later question her judgement. After moving to Ottawa at the end of March 1945 to start work for the

NFB, she received the proofs of the collection. At that time she alerted Pierce to changes she wished to make:

I have completely deleted several poems. I have gone over the whole MS most carefully in my spare moments this past week, and, viewing it as a whole a year after sending it to you, I feel rather strongly that there are a few poems included which I do not now want to have in a representative collection. I do not feel they would do the book or my "literary reputation" any good. (LPP, box 12, file 7, item 60)

The "literary reputation" she wanted to promote was not that of the prodigy of the Victoria poetry group, but rather that of a poet who had released the apron strings tying her to the so-called "lady writers" of the CAA (Sutherland, "Anne" 101).

As early as April 1944, when she first selected the poems for *Sandstone*, Marriott had started to manifest anxieties about her poetic abilities. She found herself at that time on the cusp of poetic silence, her creative energies for poetry sapped by writing plays for CBC radio (see Marriott to Pierce, 17 April 1944; LPP, box 11, file 1, item 108). Just prior to her move to Ottawa, she confessed to Pierce in a letter of 7 March 1945: "As a poet, I'm beginning to think I've seen my best days—though I hope that's not the case" (LPP, box 12, file 7, item 59). Appended to this letter, she sent Pierce a copy of her poem "Portrait," recently published in the January 1945 issue of *Contemporary Verse*. It would appear as the final poem in *Sandstone*; its placement at the end of the collection, as much as its content, foreshadows the thirty-six year period that would follow the publication of her book.

“Portrait” is not a Marriott self-portrait. Rather, it begins as an impersonal, even dehumanized, portrait of a librarian: “Bloodless as paper she, and lifeless / as dead words on dull binding are her eyes, looking not in or out . . .” (*Sandstone* 42). Debilitated by routine, the librarian has fallen into a condition of silence, become as inarticulate as the inanimate books and implements of her occupation:

. . . mute
 as volumes never off the shelves her tongue—
 the rubbered pencil used to point
 the novel overdue, the scanty fine.

Like the speakers’ pleas for the “potent word” in “Prayer of the Disillusioned,” the speaker of “Portrait” calls out for something to reanimate the librarian:

O life—love—something—burst the resisting doors—
 ignore the silence sign—vault the tall desk
 and on her locked blank pages
 write a living tale.

If the impersonal portraiture early in the poem establishes the speaker’s aesthetic distance, the closing apostrophe and imperatives here indicate her empathy for the librarian. With the image of writing evoked in the final lines, the poet-speaker declares her empathy, releasing both librarian and poet from their mutual conditions of silence. The poet-speaker’s realization of her empathy for the librarian obtains the force of an epiphany: her “living tale” at the close revitalizes the “dead words” of her initially impersonal portrait. But because this final poem in *Sandstone* was followed by a thirty-six year gap, it would

seem that her poet-speaker's epiphany would lead nowhere.

"Portrait" would be the final poem of Marriott's prolific early period—that is, prior to her move to Ottawa in March 1945. Her Ottawa period was not at all productive in terms of writing poetry, nor was she particularly effective as an associate editor of *Canadian Poetry Magazine*. Her editorial duties were limited to soliciting manuscripts from potential contributors and drumming up subscriptions; she was especially recruited to serve as a liaison with prairie poets.²¹ Birney also wanted her to contribute her poetry to the magazine, giving it first priority. Her acceptance letter obviously angered him, since she stated that "this is a tentative acceptance of the job—I don't know what I'll do if faced with a superb poem to be channeled towards Vancouver and have to decide whether to direct it to you or to Alan Crawley!" (EBP, box 14, file 25). Birney fired back a letter on 10 September 1946, first thanking her for accepting the position and sending a poem, then berating her for wanting to preserve ties to *Contemporary Verse*:

I don[']t want you on the Board if your first loyalty is still to *Contemporary Verse*.

I am having to get tough about this because too many people are saying to me—isn[']t it wonderful you are trying to make a go of C[anadian] P[oetry] M[agazine]—I am all for you—though of course my first loyalty is to C[ontemporary] V[erse] (or Northern Rev[iew], or what have you). So with Floris McLaren, Doris Ferne, Dee Livesay, Pat Page, etc. etc. Well, you must all make a choice. I can[']t carry the whole load myself. If you *want* a national magazine of poetry then you have to support it first, before you support local efforts. After all, it was I who tried to avoid this situation by an amalgamation

with C[ontemporary] V[erse]. And the CAA were willing. It was C[ontemporary] V[erse] that turned it down. I'm not "feuding" with Alan over that but I have no recourse now than [sic] to be tough and competitive; and I want you on my side.

(EBP, box 14, file 25; original emphasis)

Marriott managed to swing both ways, contributing poems to *Canadian Poetry Magazine* and *Contemporary Verse* during the tenure of her associate editorship.

After nearly a three-year hiatus from *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, she contributed "Appeasers" to the September 1946 issue, the first edited by Birney. In sending her poem along with her acceptance of the assistant editorship on 21 August 1946, she also submitted a caveat:

As for unpublished verse of mine—would that I had some. I just can't write poetry any more—it's gone, and I haven't the remotest idea if it's ever coming back. . . . However—searching through the MSS I have here, I discovered the enclosed, which was written at least five years ago, polished it a bit, and am sending it. I don't know if it is any good at all—but it literally is the only thing I have. (EBP, box 14, file 25)

Characteristic of her contributions to *Canadian Poetry Magazine* in the 1930s and early 1940s, "Appeasers" is a romantic nature lyric, though far above the standard of verse accepted by Birney's predecessor, Watson Kirkconnell. Its central trope is a journey, an escape into a place of "solace, ease for stress, soft peace": first, into the "tropic wood," where the speaker discovers there is "No solace in the lush"; then, "Into bare steep country," where "Peace is in sturdy leaves making no stain, / Ease in strong scent of

stripped, storm-raked earth, / . . . Comfort is the high sunlight on the peak.” Of her nature lyrics, “Appeasers” is by no means distinguished and numbers as one among dozens of her early uncollected poems, typical of her so-called “magazine verse” (Sutherland, “Anne” 101).

After a several-month break in correspondence, Birney became impatient with Marriott and asked in a letter dated 23 July 1947 whether she wished to continue as associate editor (EBP, box 14, file 25). Writing a long letter to Birney on 15 August 1947—after a visit to Victoria and after missing the CAA annual convention in Vancouver—Marriott explained that she still wanted to continue her associate editorship.²² With respect to her failure to contribute poetry to the magazine, she confessed that over “the last two and a half years, I have written possibly five small pieces of inferior verse” (EBP, box 14, file 25). Given Birney’s strict position on Marriott’s obligations to the magazine, however, we might suspect that the appearance of her poem “Communication to a Friend” in the spring 1947 issue of *Contemporary Verse* may have led him once again to question her loyalties to *Canadian Poetry Magazine*.

Although her ties to *Contemporary Verse* were no longer editorial, nor managerial, her friendship with the Victoria–Vancouver group superseded her membership in the CAA and her editorial relationship to *Canadian Poetry Magazine*. Her failure to communicate with Birney during the first year of her associate editorship was symptomatic of her growing distance from the CAA; she remained a member and served on its National Executive throughout the 1940s, but rarely contacted other CAA poets in Ottawa—never joining the Ottawa poetry group of the CAA, nor contributing to its poetry yearbooks.

After “Appeasers” appeared in *Canadian Poetry Magazine* in September 1946, she would not publish again until the spring of 1947, when the first of four poems written during her Ottawa period came out in *Contemporary Verse*. Perhaps to deflect readings of the poem as a coterie piece, Marriott revised and changed the title of “For Friends Far Away” to “Communication to a Friend” for publication in *Contemporary Verse* (AMP, box 15, file 5). Contrary to the way that the original title personalizes the poem in the manner of a dedication to the *Contemporary Verse* group, the changed title universalizes the poem. Its appearance in *Contemporary Verse* may have been occasioned by Crawley’s visit to Ottawa as part of his ten-week reading tour hosted by the Canadian Clubs in the fall of 1946, advertised in the summer and fall 1946 issues of *Contemporary Verse*.²³ Her encounter with Crawley, renewing her connection to a community of friends in Victoria and Vancouver, seems to have prompted her to write and, moreover, publish her strongest poem since her departure from Victoria in March 1945 and her last publication in *Contemporary Verse* in January 1945.

“Communication to a Friend” foregrounds the travails of communication between two lovers separated by physical distance.²⁴ The means of communication in the poem is not verbal but physical. Its emphasis on exploration, maps, and settlement reads as a frontier narrative, where communication is conveyed through the lovers’ journeys. It is a narrative of communication and mis-communication, tracking and backtracking, tracing and retracing:

Five thousand miles a broad wound between us
yet tonight we are closer

than within the hand's reach of first meeting.

For then, like two travelers in a vast wilderness,
 sighting pin-size on the horizon another journeying,
 we began the long exploratory march toward each other
 over tortuous terrain and frequently mistaking map-readings.

The journey is, in the end, successful: the two travellers come “face to face” and build a figurative “hostel, storm proof, added to yearly, / with walls to stretch at need five thousand miles.” Reassured by the travellers’ reunion, the reader may be “mistaking map-readings.” For the “hostel” is a temporary lodging, a site of physical impermanence—an unlocatable place, inhabited by mental travellers. This place exists only in the space of the poem, only in its act of communication: it is a lyrical correspondence between lovers, and, for Marriott, between herself, the readership of *Contemporary Verse*, and her friends, its publishers.

In Ottawa at the NFB, Marriott found a new community of poets among co-workers P. K. Page and, another fellow-modernist poet, Kay Smith. “This was almost as great as ‘The Fire Sermon,’” Marriott recalled, “I found I *could* talk to them, about contemporary work and thoughts and feelings and topics” (Marriott to Hancock, 22 November 1984; AMP, box 4, file 1; original emphasis). However, her initial poetic response to Ottawa and the NFB returns to the prevailing narrative of alienation and communication breakdown that characterizes her modernist poetry of the early 1940s. Like Page’s office poems of 1942–43 (see chapter 3: 182–92), Marriott’s “Ottawa

Payday, 1945” portrays the conditions and effects of alienation in a bureaucratic office environment. In their Kafkaesque world, Marriott’s civil servants are given only titles, no names, no faces; they exist only as entries in records, ledgers, and bank books. Even access to their pay cheques is granted by bureaucratic means:

Obedient to bank’s unyielding sign
 with “departmental pass” in hand,
 resigned, cattle-patient line
 Dominion civil servants stand.

“Ottawa Payday” does not document personal experience through a persona, but rather impersonally renders the bureaucratic order of civil servants. Combined with the impersonal mode of address, the incorporation of acronyms (“CS,” “DBS”) and job titles (“Grade One typist,” “Grade Two file clerk,” “Temporary Five”) reminiscent of office memoranda reproduces depersonalized bureaucratic conditions. Civil servants obey and become signs. This is a poem of multiple solitudes, of individuals alienated from any sense of community. In place of community, civil servants live in bureaucracy; instead of communication, they line up in impenetrable silence. That Marriott published “Ottawa Payday” in the Spring 1948 issue of *Contemporary Verse* serves as a reminder of the poet’s need for community to ensure the survival of the self in the face of such alienating and dehumanizing bureaucracies.

The same issue of *Contemporary Verse* also contained her poems “The Waiting Room: Spring” and “Old Maid.” Marriott had already sent the latter to Birney on 2 February 1948, calling it “a small bit of verse which suddenly arrived a couple of days

ago—maybe the effect of marriage, I don't know, anyway it's the first for nearly a year" (EBP, box 14, file 25). He returned the poem on 11 February 1948 with a short letter explaining that the June 1948 issue would be the last under his editorship and that any submissions would have to be handled by the new editor (EBP, box 14, file 25). Marriott would stay on as associate editor during Arthur Bourinot's editorship, only leaving her position when she and her husband moved to Vancouver in the summer of 1949. She would not submit "Old Maid" to Birney's successor at *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, but rather redirect it to Crawley for immediate publication in *Contemporary Verse*.

If her modernist poems of 1945–48 document crises of communication, dehumanization, and alienation, then "Old Maid" presents a breakthrough in its central figure's search for and discovery of a new means of communication. The poem begins with the image of a spinster-figure, similar to the librarian of "Portrait," caught in her daily routines, wearied and trapped in her isolated world. This figure—like the speakers of "Prayer of the Disillusioned" and "Communication to a Friend"—embarks on a journey, though hers is conducted along "[c]orridors of loneliness," not across deserts or continents. Trapped in a domestic space where "windows [have] turned to mirrors reflecting her own face," her claustrophobic hallway is marvellously transformed by the discovery of an "incredible outlet" into an "unsuspected spring." This moment of revelation presents a new world where everything is as yet unnamed, a fabulous land where she is struck dumb, "not knowing the language here / nor able to read even one pointing sign, / a speechless stranger in a land of love." Instead of the exhausted landscape and language of her earlier poems from the 1940s, "Old Maid" envisions rebirth

and the promise of redemption. Like the poet-speaker at the close of “Portrait,” the old maid is poised to cross the threshold of silence and answer the urge to “life—love—something—burst the resisting doors.” Yet Marriott herself would wait two years before learning how to write in the language of this new world, before interpreting the revelation of an unfamiliar landscape.

Nearly a decade after publishing *Calling Adventurers!*—a decade of failure to recapture the form of *The Wind Our Enemy*—Marriott would at last write another modernist long poem in July 1950. McLaren and Crawley, who had urged Marriott to write another long poem, would publish “Holiday Journal” in the Fall–Winter 1950 issue of *Contemporary Verse*. Her new long poem is a natural sequel to “Old Maid,” because Marriott is no longer a “speechless stranger” dumbfounded by a “land of love,” but rather a documentarist reading the landscape of Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia and communicating her perceptions in a journal dedicated to “G. J. M.” (16)—her husband, Gerald McLellan. “Holiday Journal,” moreover, provides a modernist counternarrative to the drought, sterility, and alienation in *The Wind Our Enemy* and to the crises of communication articulated in the modernist poems that she composed throughout the 1940s and published in *Contemporary Verse*.

“Holiday Journal” resembles the kind of documentary writing in which she had been engaged during the war years and for which she was employed at the NFB; its variance from such writing is most immediately apparent in the lyrical distortion of the documentary footage, recording both objective and subjective images. Its syntax and rhythms travel at the speed of trains and emotions: “O lovely patterning lovely lovely the

train sang / our hearts sang our eyes affirming” (16). Technologies of radio communication and train travel, as well as topography and vegetation, become elaborate “patterning” to the speaker’s eye:

Soon then radio towers gawked from the Sackville marshes
 (crying unheard to us a loud Canada to the world)
 intricate cat’s cradle cables spurning
 simpler twisting of red mud marsh channels.
 Then the flowers in the heart burst to bloom and rivaled those roadside,
 —for him homecoming, for me delight of discovery.
 Wheels at boundary chanted Nova Scotia Nova Scotia
 engine snorted Halifax Halifax
 our sea-born blood springing to outstrip. (16)

Marriott’s juxtaposition of radio-tower cables and red-mud channels connects communication technology and topography, the radio broadcast of CBC international and the local Sackville marsh. By similar means, she locates in the percept of roadside and trackside flowers an objective correlative to communicate the subjective experience of travelling through the marshlands. The repeated names of the province and of its capital transform into onomatopoeic phrases imitating the auditory experience of train travel; this audible pattern is echoed by the rhythm of the travellers’ blood. Every image in the speaker’s experience—visual and auditory—represents some kind of communicative function; every image is anthropomorphic, mapping human language, emotions, and bodies upon Canadian geographies.

“Holiday Journal” is structured by the chronology of journal entries—“July 2 . . . July 3–11 . . . July 12 . . . July 16 . . . July 25 . . . July 31”—but its narratives are by no means linear chronicles. Memories, histories, itineraries all collide in multiple temporalities and perspectives. The temporal linearity of the journal structure is, moreover, shaped by the natural narrative circularity of a round trip. The Sackville marsh of July 2, viewed at speed and distance from the train, is then recycled into the narrative of the Amherst marsh of July 25, perceived up close. Typically modernist, the cyclical movements of time and history are foregrounded in this pattern of repetition. When the travellers rest at the edge of a dyke, their perception of the marsh mud recaptures not only the recent history of three weeks ago, but also European imperial histories of exploration and settlement, and even Christian mythologies of creation:

Sat there heels dangling
 over mud red as the old blood of the first comers.
 Under wind spined with salt implacable tide
 turned, thrust a strong grey fist
 up Digby Gut
 and as the current bent our beginnings glimmered.
 The spirit of God moved on the face of the waters
 the ship of Champlain moved on the face of the waters,
 waters that thrust up the inlet into the bloody land,
 receded came again (requiring no reproduction).
 We pulled our roots, found them set fast and tight

In the loose shifting sea of his of our discovering. (20)

Marriott's "mythical method," to borrow a phrase from Eliot ("*Ulysses*" 178), telescopes multiple histories and mythologies into a personal narrative of discovery. The linearity of the travel narrative resumes in the final entry of July 31, as the travellers leave Nova Scotia and return by bus to Quebec:

Poles trees houses unrolled faster than eye-blink.

Slowly ashished [sic] from the world

with the old sensation "the bus hung in space".

With numb body bright brain grew nimble,

causes and patterns incredibly clear. (20)

Detached from the landscape, the travellers' perceptions become abstracted, just as before when they observed from the train the "patterning" of the Sackville marshlands. Their clarity of perception is then ruptured by contact with the social world, so that "causes and patterns" lose coherence. Other travellers interrupt their reverie and force the fragmentation of their travel narrative: the pieces of its pattern—likened to "puzzle pieces" (20)—disintegrate into a series of discontinuous impressions. As befits a round trip, their narrative is reintegrated into an aesthetic whole, encircled by impressions of flowers—"rose blue amber blurred together trackside" flowers that "greeted" them upon departure (16) and flowers in the "dingy terminal" upon homecoming (21). "Festooned with memory," the travellers continue homeward in a taxi, "through a forest of flowers" (21).

Marriott's decision not to include "Holiday Journal" in either her chapbook

Countries (1971) or *The Circular Coast: Poems Selected and New* (1981) prompts consideration of the consequences of its exclusion. She may have believed the poem to be only meaningful to a closed audience of *Contemporary Verse* readers, many of whom would be aware of her recent marriage (announced in the Winter 1947–48 issue). Other concerns include her and her readers' historically contingent attitudes toward nation and empire, nationalism and imperialism. "Holiday Journal," which opens *in medias res* the day after Dominion Day, is a narrative driven by the travellers' romantic-nationalist desire to identify with the people and land of Canada, and culminates in their meditation upon and identification with the imperial history of exploration and settlement in the new world. Such a narrative, directed to Canadian audiences engaged in the cultural and economic project of nation-building in the early 1950s, might appear ideologically naïve to present-day readers. Even so, the omission of "Holiday Journal" from Marriott's canon has obscured a momentous advance in her modernist poetics, a corrective to her poetic crises of communication throughout the 1940s.

While she would not publish another collection until *Countries* in 1971, she did outline preliminary plans for another as early as 1949. Under the heading "New Poems for a Chapbook Feb. 1949," she listed twelve of a projected fifteen poems inside the back cover of a binder containing typescripts from 1939–53 (AMP, box 15, file 6).²⁵ All four poems published in *Contemporary Verse* after *Sandstone* in 1945 were listed, but not "Appeasers" from *Canadian Poetry Magazine*. (This latter absence reconfirms the importance of *Contemporary Verse* as a forum for her modernist poetry through the late 1940s, even as she maintained ties to the CAA and wrote occasional reviews for *Canadian*

Poetry Magazine.) Apart from the four poems from *Contemporary Verse*—“Communication to a Friend” (listed as “For Friends Far Away”), “Waiting Room: Spring,” “Ottawa Payday, 1945,” and “Old Maid”—the list chiefly consists of nature lyrics, typical of her romanticist and imagist “magazine verse” (Sutherland, “Anne” 101). Rather than risk the harsh criticism that she had received from Livesay for *Salt Marsh* or from Sutherland for *Sandstone*, however, Marriott dropped the plan for a new chapbook. Had she added “Holiday Journal” to this projected collection, one could speculate on her long poem’s potential to anchor the other modernist poems slated for inclusion. If such a chapbook had been issued in the Ryerson Press series, it surely could have helped to recentre her within modernist poetry culture in Canada.

Instead, combined with her decline in productivity and withdrawal from little-magazine culture after 1950, her decision not to publish another poetry collection for so long after *Sandstone* would lead to her subsequent marginalization in the literary-historical record. Without a collection containing “Prayer of the Disillusioned,” “Communication to a Friend,” “Ottawa Payday, 1945,” “Old Maid,” and “Holiday Journal,” it is not surprising that we have so far failed to comprehend her trials with modernist poetry and poetics after writing *The Wind Our Enemy*. These uncollected poems constitute the basis of an alternate narrative of Marriott’s involvement in modernist poetry-magazine culture of the 1940s and early 1950s. Unless we recognize the evidence of that narrative, which has been hidden in her uncollected poems published in *Contemporary Verse*, we will continue to miss the continued progress of her modernism in the decade after *The Wind Our Enemy*.

III: People's Poetry: Livesay's *Contemporary Verse*

When Livesay championed *The Wind Our Enemy* as “a voice from the people crying out” (“Open” 35), she might have identified Marriott as a poet at the forefront of Canadian proletarian literature. Aware of Marriott’s heritage among CAA poets in the Victoria poetry group, Livesay hesitated at such a claim: she instead denied the existence of any proletarian poetry culture in Canada, and called attention to the genteel poetry culture that had, ironically, produced a kind of people’s poetry. After two failed attempts to establish a proletarian magazine culture in Canada, Livesay would discover “a voice from the people” emerging not from a radical political culture but from a conservative poetry culture. Whatever criticisms she levelled at the CAA poetry groups, she could not deny the fact that they had aided the development of at least one poet of national significance. At the same time, even as she maligned the CAA poetry groups, she was herself a member of the equally conservative VPS. However forgettable the majority of their poets, such organizations as the CAA and VPS would prove valuable for their ability to fund and manage poetry magazines, essential to the dissemination of poetry. Livesay recognized the importance of such magazines to the development of a national poetry culture, even though the poetry itself could so often be negligible. Yet she grasped the need for exceptional poets like Marriott to reach a national poetry-reading public—beyond that of CAA yearbooks or *Canadian Poetry Magazine* or Ryerson chapbooks.²⁶ Having witnessed in Marriott the promise of a people’s poetry—a poetry accessible to the general public, a popular poetry written in the idiomatic style and diction of common speech—Livesay perceived the necessity for new means of publication, so that poems like

The Wind Our Enemy could profit from increased exposure to a Canadian poetry-reading public, regardless of a poet's affiliation with groups, associations, parties, societies, coteries, or clubs.

Contemporary Verse probably failed to satisfy Livesay's immediate expectations. Over the course of its first year of publication, she recommended to the founding committee the possibility of mergers with other magazines. Just as he was preparing the make-up of the third issue in the spring of 1942, Crawley wrote to McLaren to veto Livesay's suggestion of an amalgamation with *Canadian Poetry Magazine* (FMP). After her visit to Toronto in the summer of 1942, Livesay reported to Crawley the feasibility of a merger with *Canadian Review of Music and Art*, the Toronto-based journal founded by Marcus Adeney in the fall of 1941 (Crawley to McLaren [1942]; FMP). These proposals for mergers with other national periodicals give some indication of Livesay's unrealized hopes for *Contemporary Verse*; both were printed and bound magazines, not mimeographed and saddle-stapled like *Contemporary Verse*, and had the financial backing to cover production costs. Livesay's dealings also bespeak her initial dissatisfaction with the editorial organization of *Contemporary Verse*. As Crawley wrote to McLaren in the spring of 1942: "I have been a bit worried as you appear to be as to how to prevent any feeling among the committee that you and I are taking over all the selection and complete charge of C[ontemporary] V[erse] and what to do about it. . . . I will do anything you suggest to do away with this feeling and for[e]stall it and if you think there should be an editorial com[m]ittee it is fine with me. . . ." (FMP).

If Livesay could not have her way with the editorial organization of the magazine,

then she would leave her mark on *Contemporary Verse* by way of reviews and poems. For every year of its twelve-year run, she would publish at least one poem or review in the magazine. During this period she appeared in *Contemporary Verse* more often than any other periodical. Of her twenty-four poems that came out in the magazine, only four were never collected by Livesay herself; and, of those four, only one was a fully realized, discrete poem—that is, not part of a longer sequence. In other words, many of her prominent poems from the 1940s and early 1950s were first printed in *Contemporary Verse*. Even when she could not find a periodical to accept a poem, she was almost certain to find receptive readers among the *Contemporary Verse* group.²⁷ As we will witness, however, in the case of the one poem she published in *Contemporary Verse* but never collected herself, this unofficial policy of receptivity was vulnerable to editorial lapses.

Other Livesay poems discussed in this section never appeared in *Contemporary Verse*—not because Crawley formally rejected them, but because they were aimed at audiences beyond the little magazine's readership. Either previously uncollected or unpublished, and/or marginalized in the literary-historical record, the poems selected for analysis here offer case studies of Livesay's post-proletarian poetry for mass audiences. Some of her poems from the 1940s and early 1950s look beyond the medium of modernist poetry magazines to mass-communication media; these in turn exhibit the pressures exerted by mass-communication media on modernist poetry and poetry-magazine culture during the 1940s and early 1950s.

Never collected by Livesay herself, "Motif for a Mural" is a portrait of a poet in

transition, a poet in search of post-proletarian modes of expression and means of mass communication. Even so, “Motif” is influenced by proletarian art. Dating from the 1940s, the poem invokes contemporary modes employed by modern visual artists for monumental public installations. Alluding in its title to the murals of Canadian artists in the 1930s and 1940s, “Motif” evokes the work of Vancouver PAC muralists Jack Shadbolt, Charles Comfort, Fraser Wilson, and Margaret Carter (see Livesay, *Journey* 158). “Motif” even imitates the three-panel structure of a triptych—the traditional format of altarpieces, but also common to murals—and depicts a triadic historical perspective on the poet’s relationship to the public.

Its first panel, so to speak, is an idealized portrait of the urban working class, reminiscent of Livesay’s proletarian verse of the early to mid-1930s. It depicts a street scene of unemployed men, comrades who “Hurry from silence / Wear on their brow / The brand of a brother” (*Archive* 71). The “silence” is that of “streets / Shifted to low gear / Thrown in reverse” (71). Although the historical context and origin of this “silence” is not specified, the mechanical image likely refers to the shutdown of factories and slowdown or “reversal” of economic progress during the 1930s. The furrowed brow of the unemployed men is a sign of brotherhood they bear in silence; they are united by “deeds unsung / Alone / With the unnamed name / Burning the tongue” (71). Because they lack the means of communication and organization, the unemployed men “walk in the street” alienated, anonymous, and silent. So this “silence,” unlike that of the workers in Livesay’s proletarian verse of the early to mid-1930s, is not an alternative system of communication among the unemployed. The “deeds unsung” and the “unnamed name” are not the

revolutionary manifestations of “silence” Livesay once attributed to the radicalized and organized actions of the proletariat. Silence is no longer loaded with revolutionary signification; rather, it is merely a sign of the potential for revolution. Given the significance of silence as a motif in Livesay’s 1930s verse, its permutation in “Motif” may reflect her ambivalence, as a poet of the 1940s, toward the naïveté of leftist agitprop rhetoric and cliché. While in this section the repetition of a phrase—“So many young men”—invokes techniques common to proletarian mass chants, its tone is not agitational. Where in agitprop verse the poet typically impersonates a voice of the masses, in this opening section of “Motif” the poet’s proximity to the unemployed is not made explicit; its purported objectivity is that of the documentarist—or, in Livesay’s 1940s lexicon, the social realist.

The second section adopts a leftist mode of documentary—reportage—in which a partisan speaker emerges as the voice of the proletariat.²⁸ Objectivity and temporal immediacy in the first section give way to subjectivity and temporal distance in the second. Events recounted by the first-person speaker are now situated in the past; this shift from first to second section, from present to past tense, is reinforced by the rhetorical repetition of the formulaic phrase, “In the time of. . .” This phrase introduces each subsection of a tripartite history: “the time of speech,” “the time of action,” and “the time of quiet” (71, 72). In succession, each subsection portrays a proletarian history of leftist propaganda, revolution, then repression in the 1930s. The first subsection introduces a proletarian figure—a speech-maker and leader—now dismayed by the impotency of agitational propaganda and the vacuousness of leftist rhetoric:

In the time of speech
 I came forward
 Made speeches
 The inert audience
 Leaned spineless
 On a column of words
 Grandiose in a tower of strength
 Loaned from a leader,
 But liquid as water:
 For the curtain fell
 And the people melted. (*Archive 71*)

Giving voice to disillusioned members of the left in the early 1940s, Livesay's speaker embodies a range of critical responses to leftism and its decline. Here language itself is politically and rhetorically suspect: leftist propaganda is now "liquid," slippery, deceptive. Speeches are staged before a proletarian audience unable to move, stand, or speak for itself; it is an "inert" audience, fashioned of the same elemental substance as language. So when the "people melted," their collapse dramatizes the rhetorical construction of an imagined "spineless" audience—supported by a figurative "column of words"—and the staging of that audience necessary to the speech-maker's didactic mode. By exposing the constructedness of such an audience, Livesay lays bare the foundations of her own leftism and poetic practice in the 1930s.

Turning from speech to social and political action, the second subsection reflects

upon the catastrophic effects of proletarian revolt. As leftists, the revolutionaries attack institutional structures symbolic of church and capital. Their violence becomes their means of expression, obviating the role of speech-maker and leader:

In the time of action

I pranced on a black horse

And the crowd roared

The guns exhorted

Skyscrapers toppled

Cathedrals perished

In the mounting movement

The astounding action. (72)

The speaker is obviously ill-fit to lead the crowd, as exhibited by the ostentatious mounting of a steed. This romantic gesture betrays the poetic speech-maker as a truly “unacknowledged” leader of the revolution. No longer in control of the crowd, the speaker is figured as a rider upon the back of the revolution. Bereft of all but a symbolic means of expression, the speech-maker is ironically silenced. The crowd roars, the guns exhort, even the black horse snorts, but the speaker is “routed” (72). Knocked off the horse and buried under the rubble of fallen skyscrapers and cathedrals, the speaker is, at least figuratively, overthrown by the “mounting movement” itself. “In the time of action,” there is no time for romantic revolutionary speech.

Symbolically entombed “under a stone” (72) after the revolution, the speaker regains the capacity for self-expression in the third subsection. In imagining a self-

contained romantic landscape, the speaker's tears replenish the post-revolutionary waste land so that "the grass grew again / Green in a gold oasis / And the well was watered" (72). Just as the rider is a romantic symbol in "the time of action," so the post-revolutionary resurrection bespeaks the speaker's romanticism in "the time of quiet." If this post-revolutionary world is utopia, it is an imaginary "no place" where no one but the speaker bears witness:

In the time of quiet
 No one listened
 Nothing shouted:
 And the world's infested
 Wound found healing
 Licked by tongue
 Of the ancient sun. (72)

Although the speaker does not fall into a condition of silence, there is no audience for this speech. It is not the speaker's emotive expression of tears but the archetypal power of the sun, figured here as a "tongue" or language, that brings health to the wounded and diseased world. Alluding to the solar and vegetation myths upon which Eliot had drawn in *The Waste Land*, Livesay at last embraces his "mythical method" (Eliot, "Ulysses" 178). But her mythical vision is not of a waste land, but of a *post*-waste land; her recourse to mythical language is taken as a means of transcendence from the social and political waste land in "the time of action." Myth is posited here as a means of communication, an ancient but always historically situated system of signs (see Barthes 118). This second

section of Livesay's "Motif" illustrates how mythical language is always produced "in time," how myth is a type of speech predicated upon (real or imagined) events in history. For here the transcendent function of myth is not ahistorical, not an escape from history, but rather the refiguration of contemporary history in another sign system, a mythical language—a "tongue / Of the ancient sun."

That transcendence is depicted in a painterly fashion on the third "panel" of the mural. Livesay not only transmutes history into myth, but also refines mythic language. She reduces myth to the materiality of colour and abstract pattern, stripped of rhetorical apparatus. Unlike the proletarian speech-maker, the speaker of this third section never employs rhetoric to persuade an audience to take action. Even though the verbs in the first two stanzas of this section are predominantly imperative, there is little resemblance to the rhetorical imperatives of Livesay's proletarian verse of the 1930s; these imperatives are self-reflexive. Like the first two "panels," the self-reflexive third is a species of documentary—that is, "the making of" a portrait of the self. Of course, this third "panel" is not objective documentary, nor social realism; nor is it socialist, revolutionary romanticism. With its tendency to iconic abstraction, its radical subjectivity, its eruptive palette (purple, blue, gold, dove grey, scarlet, yellow, green), its violent dynamism, and its spiritual utopianism, this self-portrait exhibits characteristics of modernist, specifically expressionist, visual art.²⁹ Its closing motif is a signal expressionist image of conflagration and regeneration, an apocalyptic death and rebirth of the self:

Bound in the bands of colour, burned

A salamander, I:

Or phoenix who
 In world[’s] own ashes lie:
 Affirming the still firmament, the flame
 Leaping to meet the master sun
 Praising his fiery name! (73)

Expressionist or expressionist*ic*, this portrait is nevertheless a spiritual expression of the self. It represents transcendence of the self from the material conditions of alienation; it signifies an ecstatic communion with the world. For the unemployed men depicted on the first “panel,” this is the scene of self-revelation, the expression of “the unnamed name / Burning the tongue.” For the speech-maker of the second “panel,” this is mythical speech in the “tongue / Of the ancient sun.”

Because the poem can only be dated approximately to the 1940s, we cannot know which of Livesay’s collections of 1940s poetry might have included “Motif.” Nor can we determine if Livesay ever attempted to publish the poem in a periodical, since no extant correspondence mentions its submission or rejection. The fact that she decided not to publish “Motif” during the 1940s may be attributed to its political and cultural context. Considering that the political magazine culture in which she had been writing in the 1930s was no longer active by the early 1940s, Livesay could not expect to find a sympathetic audience for a non-partisan poem like “Motif” in the underground leftist press in Canada during the war years. Nor could she really count on finding a forum in Canada interested in the dissident verse of disenchanting members of the left. Had she solicited Crawley to publish “Motif” in *Contemporary Verse*, she might have reached some readers sympathetic

to the disenfranchised left, but she could not have expected to capture her poem's intended mass audience.

None of her proletarian poems collected in *Day and Night* articulates the disillusionment prevalent among artists, intellectuals, and activists of the left after the Soviet–Nazi non-aggression pact in August 1939, nor after the banning of leftist organizations and publications and jailing of leaders of CPC cells under the Defence of Canada Regulations implemented during the Second World War. By 1944, Livesay had capitulated to the Canadian war effort, so that the proletarian poems published in *Day and Night* were either dated as historical artifacts of the cultural left from the 1930s (“Day and Night” [1935], “The Outrider” [1935]) or presented as labour poetry in support of the wartime workforce (“West Coast” [1943]). Just as L. A. Mackay observed “the strained apocalyptic tone in the earlier part of the book” (16) in his review of *Day and Night* for the April 1944 issue of *Contemporary Verse*, so we could measure the resonance of “Motif” against the revolutionary tone of Livesay’s proletarian verse from the mid-1930s. Given its apocalyptic tone and revolutionary subject, “Motif” resembles her mid-1930s proletarian verse in *Day and Night*; but its critique of mass action and its affirmation of the self contradicts the collectivist ethos of her proletarian verse in the 1944 collection. This dissonance with the proletarian modes at work in *Day and Night* marks “Motif” as a transitional poem: it not only turns toward the self as the centre of her poetry in a transitional period between *Day and Night* in 1944 and *Poems for People* in 1947,³⁰ but also anticipates the mythic bent of her modernist poetry in the 1950s.

By the mid-1940s, Livesay had at once distanced herself from her proletarian verse

of the 1930s and reoriented herself toward its intended mass audience. Hence the title of *Poems for People* echoes the social and political verse that she had written during the 1930s, yet none of its poems could be called proletarian. Nor is its intended audience proletarian. Rather, its poetry is populist, a democratic mode of social realism—or, in another phrase, a people's poetry. *Poems for People* is, therefore, post-proletarian.

Crawley, reviewing *Poems for People* in the summer 1947 issue of *Contemporary Verse*, presents a careful consideration of Livesay's intended mass audience: "The title and contents of POEMS FOR PEOPLE suggests [sic] that its author has determined that her writing shall bring the language and content of poetry into closer touch with the average reader, and in this aim many of the poems have been simplified in form and expression" (16). Crawley contrasts such "simplified" poetry written for the "average reader" with poetry written for poets, quoting Robert Graves as an adherent of the latter tendency: "I write poems for poets . . . for people in general I write prose" (qtd. in Crawley, "Two" 16). Although he does not entirely agree with Graves, Crawley notes that Livesay's "simplification is successful" in some poems "but in others she comes dangerously near to writing down. It is in the more complex poems that she strongly declares her care for poetry as such, whereby language itself becomes a continuing experience" (16).

Livesay's transitional period of the mid-1940s is related to her search for post-proletarian modes and media suitable to a people's poetry. During this period, she composed poetry about artistic mass-communication media (visual art, radio, stage). Of course, writing a poem about radio, about the stage, about a mural, or about a painting does not in itself constitute mass communication. *Poems for People* is exemplary of her

poetry's restriction to limited-circulation print media in the mid-1940s. While almost all of these poems had previously appeared between May 1943 and June 1947 in magazines, only one appeared in a mass-circulation magazine. Her subsequent publication of *Poems for People* with Ryerson Press could not ensure its mass circulation, nor its dissemination among the general public for which her people's poetry was written. Not until she focused on writing *for* mass-communication media—instead of writing *about* it—could she hope to communicate her poetry to mass audiences.

Livesay endeavoured in the late 1940s and early 1950s to write both “poems for people” and, to reiterate Graves's phrase, “poems for poets” (qtd. in Crawley, “Two” 16). She planned to address mass audiences by broadcasting her poetry on radio (see Tiessen and Tiessen xii–xiii), and to maintain contact with a minority literary culture by publishing her poetry in a variety of literary, arts, and academic periodicals. Through *Contemporary Verse* in particular, she was able to bring together her poetry for radio and print media; both the magazine and its editor were instrumental in Livesay's integration of her poetry and mass-communication media in the late 1940s. As Livesay told Crawley in conversation in 1948: “Canadians still put an aura around a poet's head, yet they rarely read poetry, let alone read it aloud. I believe that radio will change that picture. We will become as used to the sound of poetry as we are to the sound of classical music and, once uninhibited, people will not mind reading poetry aloud at home, or having a poet talk to them” (qtd. in Crawley, “Dorothy” 122).

Crawley published Livesay's “Call My People Home,” a documentary poem for radio about the expulsion of Japanese-Canadians from the west coast after Pearl Harbor,

in the summer 1949 issue of *Contemporary Verse*. In his editorial afterword to this issue, he called attention to recent broadcasts of her poetry on CBC radio—a fifteen-minute version of “Call My People Home” on CBC Vancouver, a thirty-minute version on CBC Montreal produced in collaboration with musicians from the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, and a thirty-minute reading of her poems over the CBC Toronto TransCanada network (see Tiessen and Tiessen xv)—and concluded that “it is a grand thing that at last CBC gives an often [sic] chance to thousands of listeners to hear the reading of poetry” (“About” 24). Annoyed by the dramatic vocalization and musical accompaniment of the “Call My People Home” broadcasts, he reserved his praise for the reading of Livesay’s poems: “The producers of the Toronto broadcasts realized poetry’s one great need and gave it, quite simply, the means of communication. . . . The readers were content to be a mouthpiece for the poet in clear and intelligent speech” (23). Disengaged from the apparatus of radio production, Crawley’s publication of “Call My People Home” grants it another means of communication and so presents her work as an example of such “poems worthy of publication which by reason of content or length are unlikely to get printing elsewhere” (24).

After *Saturday Night* and *Poetry* rejected “Call My People Home”—to give another example of his tendency to encourage Livesay and others to submit to prominent magazines before *Contemporary Verse*³¹—Crawley set aside an entire number for her radio poem, making it the only issue ever devoted to one poet. Evidently Livesay had originally intended to reach a larger audience through periodical publication elsewhere. Her decision to release “Call My People Home” in a Ryerson chapbook by the same name

in October 1950 indicates that her radio documentary could in fact “get printing elsewhere,” and that its publication in *Contemporary Verse* and later in a chapbook represented a strategy to reach as large an audience as possible through available print media. If Marriott’s critical review of *Call My People Home* in the spring 1951 issue of *Contemporary Verse* is a reasonable gauge of the printed poem’s reception at the time, then we might question Crawley’s judgement in handing over an entire issue of the magazine to Livesay. As an experienced radio scriptwriter, Marriott delivered her criticism with authority: “Writing for broadcast naturally demands a more simplified style than Miss Livesay’s usually is, with meaning which may be instantly appreciated. But how even in the interests of radio directness, can a writer of such ability justify the dullness of some passages, or such outworn poetic stuff . . .” (“New Crop” 19). Reading Marriott’s critique of “Call My People Home,” one is reminded of her own radio poetry in *Calling Adventurers!*, published nearly a decade earlier as a Ryerson poetry chapbook, and her commentary on the problems of writing for radio (see n19). “Call My People Home” crystallizes Livesay’s poetic project and crisis in the late 1940s and early 1950s: to write at once social-realist “poems for people” and modernist “poems for poets.”

During the hiatus between the “Call My People Home” issue in the summer of 1949 and the release of her Ryerson chapbook by that name in the fall of 1950, Livesay’s poem “Vancouver” came out in the spring 1950 issue of *Contemporary Verse*. It does not appear among the eight additional poems appended to the typescript of *Call My People Home*, submitted by Livesay to Ryerson on 21 September 1950 (DLP–QU, box 2, file 20). “Vancouver” has the dubious distinction of being the only discrete poem—that is, not part

of a longer sequence—printed in *Contemporary Verse* but never collected by Livesay herself. It is a poem that would have been, to borrow Crawley's words, "unlikely to get printing elsewhere." In this respect, Morton's assessment of Livesay's frequent appearances in *Contemporary Verse* is apposite to the publication of "Vancouver," if not "Call My People Home": "Crawley appears to have been influenced . . . by his friendship with Livesay to publish the large amount of her work that appears in *Contemporary Verse*" (96).

Like "Call My People Home," "Vancouver" is written in the mode that Livesay calls "documentary"—that is, poetry "based on topical data but held together by descriptive, lyrical, and didactic elements" ("Documentary" 269). It is at once a personal documentary of the speaker's cross-Canada journeys to and from Vancouver and a social documentary of the city itself. "Vancouver" diverges from standard documentarist tenets of social realism; rather, it shares with several of its contemporaries collected in *Call My People Home* a tendency to incorporate mythical motifs, characteristic of her modernist poems of the 1950s. It closes with a report on gang violence in Vancouver's Chinatown, with a dead body that is not real but symbolic of the city personified and, in this final stanza, apostrophized:

O body lying shattered, limbs of man
 Tossed in a doorway for the maggot sun:
 City unburied, shall I approach you now
 Open and undeterred?
 What, if your arms say nothing and your mouth

Cries out unheard
 Can you awaken yet, out of this sleep
 And proclaim the Word? (*Archive* 91)

Now the publication of the poem in a Vancouver-based periodical becomes significant: it addresses a localized audience, figuratively embodied as a city of the dead. Here the documentarist speaker shifts into a didactic voice, reminiscent of Livesay's leftist verse of the 1930s, addressing the city itself. The exposed corpse of the city—"stuffed in closets, left until the stench / Wrenches the roof off, and explodes the bomb" (91)—dramatizes a topical crisis of racialized violence. This explosive revelation of the body presents violent consequences related to the repression of social problems. By speaking for the city, "Vancouver" reveals the unspeakable. The speaker's method, however, is not that of the social worker: the annunciation of the Word is a mythical means of representing this revelation, this awakening of the city of the dead. This modernist "mythical method" that forces the poem's closure sits uncomfortably with the leftist, didactic, agitational manner in this final stanza. The uncertain juxtaposition is perhaps indicative of a poet in transition, whose sense of social justice naturally leads her back to a 'thirties, leftist mannerism, but whose aesthetic disposition tends now toward the mythic modernism of her 'fifties poetry.

If "Vancouver" exposes Livesay's continuing negotiation with leftism, it also documents her ongoing development of modernist modes of expression. Throughout the 1940s, *Contemporary Verse* offered her a forum that enabled her to bridge her leftism of the 1930s and her modernism of the 1950s. While she sought to develop a post-

proletarian poetry for mass audiences, the magazine enabled her to work at locating some middle ground between “poems for people” and “poems for poets,” even if the results were not always successful. Without *Contemporary Verse*, Livesay could have found other editors and magazines—Birney and *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, for instance—at times sympathetic to her interests in cultivating a taste for poetry among mass audiences. Yet no other magazine would so comprehensively and consistently represent the long transition in her poetry and poetics as *Contemporary Verse*.

IV: After *Contemporary Verse*

As early as April 1945, Crawley had expressed his interest in giving up *Contemporary Verse*. In a letter to McLaren, Crawley stated his editorial crisis: “I am dissatisfied with what I am doing now with C[ontemporary] V[erse]. For some time I was able to hold my own with what I had already read but now this is getting faded and out of reach and no good” (n.d. [c. April 1945]; FMP). Unable to keep up with reading the new 1940s poetry, Crawley sensed that his editorial tastes were falling behind that of other little-magazine editors. *Contemporary Verse*, he feared, might no longer be contemporary at all. Nevertheless, the founding committee (especially McLaren) would urge Crawley to persevere. By finally naming McLaren associate editor in the fall of 1950, Crawley not only received assistance to continue editing the magazine into its second decade, but also made official what had been unofficial all along—that *Contemporary Verse* was a collaborative editorial production by himself and McLaren. When he finally decided to give up the magazine in the fall of 1952, McLaren initially resisted but by early 1953 acceded to make the Fall–Winter 1952 issue of *Contemporary Verse* the last. Writing in

February 1953 to inform Livesay of the joint decision to terminate the magazine, Crawley updated his complaint of April 1945:

I have not been at all pleased with what I was able to do or did do in the past year and disappointed in the work I was getting, failing completely to fit in with much of the writing that gets into Contact [a Toronto-based little magazine, founded in January 1952 and edited by Raymond Souster] and seems to be the contemporary trend. Further than this the “older writers” are not only doing very little or no work at all but do not seem to need what C[ontemporary] V[erse] once could do for them. (DLP–QU, box 3, file 11)

Livesay’s reply was by no means conciliatory. Unlike the numerous letters Crawley received from contributors and subscribers lamenting the passing of *Contemporary Verse* (see McCullagh 48–49), Livesay’s letter of 16 February 1953 was accusatory. First, she resented not having been consulted prior to McLaren’s and Crawley’s joint decision: “I had sort of thought, having been so definitely a midwife, I might have been called in at the death.” Next, she reproached Crawley’s lack of commitment to the new poetry of the early 1950s and his nostalgia for the poetry of the early 1940s:

I am sad, but not to cry. Where there is no enthusiasm, poetry perishes. And I have felt strongly, this past year, that you have lost the fiery interest you once had. For this we are all probably to blame—we writers, that is. We move on and where we move doesn’t perhaps interest you. I mean, you have to think of the publication and how it stands up; we think only of our own development: we have to have faith in ourselves and our direction. And your frequently expressed sense

of disappointment—because work isn't the same as it was—does incline one to question: why should it be? How could it be? (DLP–QU, box 3, file 11)

Crawley was by no means alone among little-magazine editors of the early 1950s who sensed a decline from the heyday of the early 1940s when *Contemporary Verse*, *Preview*, and *First Statement* first appeared on the scene of Canadian poetry. Sutherland and Souster both published articles in the early 1950s suggesting that a new era of Canadian poetry was beginning (see Souster; Sutherland, “Past”). Given her questioning of Crawley, Livesay seems to share Sutherland's and Souster's belief in Canadian poetry's new directions in the early 1950s, rather than Crawley's nostalgia for the poetry of the early 1940s.

Yet during the 1950s, Livesay's poetry would never appear in Souster's *Contact*, nor, after the February–March 1950 issue, in Sutherland's *Northern Review*. She may have had faith in herself but not in the direction of Souster's or Sutherland's magazines. Conversely, they may not have had faith in her new poetry of the early 1950s. No editorial correspondence between Souster and Livesay from the 1950s has survived, but the last extant letter from Sutherland to Livesay, dated 8 March 1951, is a rejection letter (Sutherland, *Letters* 181–82). Constrained by the loss of *Contemporary Verse* as an outlet for her poetry, Livesay would have to rely on editors not always favourable to her submissions. Instead of publishing in a diversity of magazines as she had during the 1940s, she would mostly appear—after the disappearance of *Contemporary Verse*—in either the *Canadian Forum* or the *Fiddlehead* throughout the balance of the 1950s. Unlike Marriott, Livesay would not give up publishing books and chapbooks, though she

would not produce a full book of new poems during the 1950s—only two chapbooks, *Call My People Home* (1950) and *New Poems* (1955), and one retrospective collection, *Selected Poems of Dorothy Livesay 1926–1956* (1957). Following *Poems for People* in 1947, she would let twenty years pass before releasing her next book of new poems, *The Unquiet Bed*, published by the Ryerson Press in 1967.

For Livesay, the demise of *Contemporary Verse* would affect only one aspect of her experience of poetry culture. She had faith in herself and her own development via alternate means of publication. When she found herself in the mid-1950s without a local poetry-magazine culture, however, she might have reconsidered her criticism of Crawley's editorship and his nostalgia for a Canadian poetry culture of the 1940s. After her gravitation toward writing for radio as a means of mass communication failed to produce a reliable channel between her poetry and mass culture, Livesay would discover that she had partly followed Marriott's withdrawal from poetry-magazine culture in the early 1950s. Livesay would not withdraw as far as Marriott, but would still learn how the dissolution of *Contemporary Verse* in 1953 signalled the end of the local poetry-magazine culture that had supported her through the most distinguished phase of her career. Its absence eliminated the primary means through which she had reached her audience during the 1940s and early 1950s. The people for whom she had written in the 1940s and early 1950s were not among an imagined mass culture, but rather the people among her own poetry-magazine culture—the *Contemporary Verse* group and its audience. Having realized that her "poems for people" could not reach their intended audience by means of book production and distribution, and having attempted to disseminate poetry for mass

consumption by means of radio, Livesay would reconsider her options in the early 1950s. Her *New Poems* of 1955, published by Jay Macpherson's Emblem Books, would signal her retreat from mass culture toward the specialized audience of "poems for poets" and the medium of chapbooks produced by small presses. Rather than limit herself to one means of communication—book, chapbook, broadside, little magazine, academic journal, commercial periodical, newspaper, radio—Livesay would enlist a multiplicity of means throughout the balance of her career to distribute her work to poetry's public. She would prove as adaptable to changes brought about by the end of *Contemporary Verse* in the 1950s as she had to the collapse of *Masses* and *New Frontier* in the 1930s.

For Marriott, the discontinuation of *Contemporary Verse* severed her nearly two-decade-long relationship with poetry-magazine culture. Alongside Livesay, Marriott would publish her poetry in either the *Canadian Forum* or the *Fiddlehead* throughout the 1950s. More important to Marriott than Livesay, Crawley's and McLaren's decision to suspend *Contemporary Verse* after February 1953 announced the end of a poetry-magazine culture that officially originated in September 1941, but unofficially commenced with the poetry group of the Victoria CAA and its first *Victoria Poetry Chapbook* in 1935. Marriott's participation in the formative decades of that poetry culture concluded with two events: her departure from *Canadian Poetry Magazine* in 1950—as regional editor and contributor—followed by the cessation of *Contemporary Verse* in 1953. Detached from poetry-magazine culture, Marriott would subsequently disappear from the scene of Canadian poetry until the publication of her 1971 chapbook *Countries*. After the collapse of Vancouver–Victoria poetry-magazine culture, she would resign herself to writing

sporadic “magazine verse” until the 1970s. Her “magazine verse” may have circulated among a wider public than small-press chapbooks and books, but nobody seemed to notice.

Neither radio nor any other communication media could replace the function of that Vancouver–Victoria poetry-magazine culture from the mid-1930s through the early 1950s. Even for Page and Waddington, poets whose presence in Montreal little-magazine culture during the 1940s has been well-documented by scholars of Canadian literary modernism, *Contemporary Verse* would provide an important outlet for their verse and a valuable source of editorial advice from both Crawley and McLaren. *Contemporary Verse* would offer them an alternative to the sometimes fractious Montreal little-magazine culture of the 1940s. If *Contemporary Verse* and *Canadian Poetry Magazine* were founded in the staid poetry-magazine tradition of *Poetry*, then the Montreal little-magazines *Preview* and *First Statement* were inheritors of the radical tradition of the *Little Review*. That Montreal little-magazine culture of the 1940s would begin in 1942 and reach its height by 1945; its decline after the merger of *Preview* and *First Statement* into *Northern Review* in 1945 and the mass resignation of key editorial members in 1947 would result in the more frequent publication of Page, Waddington, and other poets associated with Montreal little magazines in *Contemporary Verse* throughout the latter half of the 1940s and into the early 1950s. Of that migration from the Montreal little magazines to *Contemporary Verse*, virtually nothing has been recorded in Canadian literary history.

Chapter 3

GENDERING MODERNIST LITTLE-MAGAZINE CULTURE:

PAGE'S *PREVIEW*, WADDINGTON'S *FIRST STATEMENT*, AND THEIR *CONTEMPORARY VERSE*,

1941–53

I: Gendering Modernism

Miriam Waddington's 1989 essay-memoir "Apartment Seven" points to the underdevelopment of gender studies in Canadian literary culture of the 1940s. Although the critical field has since shifted, her assessment is still pertinent to the study of women in little-magazine culture of that time:

Gender has seldom, if ever, been studied or written about in relation to the literary life in Canada during the forties. . . . It would be interesting, all the same, to explore what part, if any, gender actually played in the development of the little magazines, in their selection of material and in their editing, and ultimately in the shaping of modern Canadian tastes and cultural attitudes. (34–5n1)

Her gesture toward gender studies has since been followed up by Robert K. Martin, David Leahy, Justin D. Edwards, and Peter Dickinson, whose analyses of queer and leftist politics in Patrick Anderson's poetry of the 1940s have contributed to the past decade's criticism on the Montreal little magazines *Preview* and *First Statement*. Yet Waddington's own part in Canada's little-magazine culture of the 1940s has attracted minimal critical attention, even from those critics writing about her poetry from this period (Ricou, "Into"; Panofsky). Recent feminist studies of Waddington (McLaughlan) and of her contemporary P. K. Page (Relke, Killian) foreground the construction of gender in their

poetry of the 1940s, but these readings disregard the historical contexts of the decade's little magazines. Brian Trehearne's *The Montreal Forties: Modernist Poetry in Transition* offers readings of gender in the modernist poetics of the period and its effects on Page's early poetry (*Montreal* 43, 96–7), though her gendered poetics is not prominent in his narrative of the Montreal poets and their little magazines. Gender, in the decade or so following Waddington's pronouncement, has clearly entered the field of critical inquiry; its study in relation to modernist poetics and literary culture of the 1940s has so far exposed what Edwards calls the "masculinist position" of the little magazine in Canada (67). But even this gendered critique of Canadian little-magazine culture has failed to account for two of its most prominent women poets, Page and Waddington.

Waddington's push toward a gendered reading of Canadian modernism directs critical attention toward largely unopened areas of historical inquiry: namely, the contributions of women to Montreal little-magazine culture of the 1940s. Archival materials that document women's activities as poets and editors in this milieu are, however, far less abundant than those relevant to their contemporaries in Vancouver and Victoria. This scarcity should not deter the study of women's various roles—as poets, short-story writers, editors, critics, reviewers, typists, mimeographers—in Montreal (circa 1942–45). Much has been recorded in articles, biographies, critical histories, and interviews about John Sutherland, Louis Dudek, Irving Layton and *First Statement*; and, at least recently, as much published about Patrick Anderson, F. R. Scott, A. M. Klein, and *Preview*. Treatments of Page in the context of *Preview* have been few: there is no comprehensive study of her essays, short stories, and poetry published in *Preview* (see

Sutherland, “P. K. Page”; Ringrose, “*Preview*”; Trehearne, *Montreal* 49–53). Nor has there been anything more than passing mention of Waddington—except in her own memoirs and criticism—in the context of *First Statement*.

Rather than duplicate another *Preview–First Statement* narrative of Montreal poetry culture, this chapter traverses the multiple cities and communities in which Page and Waddington were prominent contributors to Canadian little magazines from 1941 to 1956. This narrative imbricates the histories of three modernist little-magazine communities: the *Contemporary Verse* group (1941–53), the *Preview* group (1942–45), and the *First Statement* group (1942–45). By introducing *Contemporary Verse* into a history of two poets chiefly associated with *Preview* and *First Statement*, we may revisit this period of modern Canadian magazine culture without resorting to a reductive binaristic model of literary history.¹ After all, neither Page nor Waddington was restricted by allegiances to magazine groups. Both published more poems in *Contemporary Verse* than any of the members of its founding committee; they also appeared there more often than any other poet of the *Preview–First Statement* groups. In fact, Page was the poet most often published in the thirty-nine issues of *Contemporary Verse*, Waddington tied (with Anne Wilkinson) for its second-most published poet. Beyond such statistics, however, Page and Waddington are figures through whom we may witness the communication and mobility among poetry communities of the 1940s and 1950s commonly isolated or opposed in the literary-historical record, and through whom we may observe exchanges of and about modern poetry among the *Preview*, *First Statement*, and *Contemporary Verse* groups.

I have divided this chapter into three sections: the first details Page's activities as an editorial member of the *Preview* group in Montreal, the second Waddington's involvement as a member of the *First Statement* writers' group in Toronto and interaction with the *First Statement* editorial group in Montreal, the third both poets' contributions to *Contemporary Verse*. From their debuts in the early issues of *Contemporary Verse*, to their withdrawals from *Contemporary Verse* after joining the *Preview* and *First Statement* groups in 1942, to their returns to *Contemporary Verse* after the amalgamation of *Preview* and *First Statement* to form *Northern Review* in 1945—this literary-historical narrative follows the development of Page's and Waddington's poetry and poetics in relation to transitional events in modernist little-magazine culture during the 1940s and early 1950s.

These transitions in little-magazine culture have correlates in Page's and Waddington's biographies. Page's departure from Montreal for Victoria in the fall of 1944 and move to Ottawa to work at the NFB in the spring of 1946 coincided with the period of transition and amalgamation in Montreal—from *Preview* and *First Statement* to *Northern Review*. While she maintained her association with *Northern Review* as a regional editor in Victoria (1945–46) and in Ottawa (1946–47), her separation from the Montreal group began well before her resignation from the editorial board of *Northern Review* in 1947. And though Waddington had no editorial affiliation with *First Statement*, her departure from Toronto for Philadelphia in September 1944 to attend the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Work initiated a transitional year during which she too distanced herself from Montreal little-magazine culture; even after her return to Canada and move from Toronto to Montreal in 1945, she would take no active role among the

Montreal groups. For Page and Waddington, the *Contemporary Verse* group would provide a reliable source of personal and editorial advice through these years of transition. Even after the final issue of *Contemporary Verse* in 1953, Page would continue her editorial relationship with Crawley and McLaren after moving to Australia that year.

Given these broad historical and biographical contexts, we may begin to respond to Waddington's call for a gendered reading of Canadian modernist little-magazine culture of the mid-century. Her call recognizes the place of gender in the production of literary magazines, that is, in the selection and editing of material ("Apartment" 34–35n1). This acknowledgement of gender, however, should also account for women's roles in the physical production of magazines—as we have already witnessed in the case of *Contemporary Verse*.

Page's part in the making of *Preview* deserves close attention, as it draws out connections among her and other women's roles in its physical production, feminized forms of labour, and her office poems in the magazine itself. Analysis of these office poems in their little-magazine context will help to trace her development of a gender-conscious poetry primarily through a modernist poetics of impersonality during her *Preview* period. This combination of gender consciousness and poetic impersonality re-emerges in her poetry of the late 1940s and early 1950s, as she increasingly counterweights a poetics of impersonality with a poetics of personality. Published in *Contemporary Verse*, her subjective, gender-conscious poetry and metapoetic critiques of impersonality from this post-*Preview* period will invite reconsideration of the *Contemporary Verse* group and its editors' effects on her poetry. After all, her critique of

both impersonality and gender in her poetry would evolve into a crisis by the mid-1950s, followed by a decade of poetic silence. This crisis and subsequent period of silence between 1956 and 1967 has been the subject of ongoing critical speculation, most recently and comprehensively by Trehearne (see *Montreal* 41–105, *passim*). To his narrative of events leading to Page's mid-career silence, this chapter adds a supplemental history of the *Contemporary Verse* group and its complicity in her poetic crises.

Unlike Page, Waddington did not have direct access to the means of magazine production. She did not type stencils for the early mimeographed issues of *First Statement*, which was done by Audrey Sutherland (née Aikman) (Fisher 5), or later typeset and print the magazine on the First Statement hand press, which was chiefly carried out by Sutherland and Layton; nor did Waddington take part in the magazine's editorial construction. Her role as a member of the *First Statement* group in Toronto subjected her to the editorial control of Sutherland and the *First Statement* group in Montreal. If gender played a role in her experience of *First Statement* and First Statement Press, it was in her subjection to the masculinist editorial practices of Sutherland, Layton, and Dudek. Not without a sense of irony, Waddington recalls that "gender did not even exist . . . or else it was completely submerged and invisible in our small circle. For my part, I accepted that men were top dog in this world" ("Apartment" 34n1). However, the invisibility of gender here does not signify its absence, but rather the naturalization and, thereby, dematerialization of gender relations. Making gender visible will enable the analysis of its material part in the editorial handling of Waddington's poetry by Sutherland and the *First Statement* group. Their masculinist editorial manner would in fact

exacerbate Waddington's poetic crisis circa 1943–45, as she grappled with problems of communicating human sympathy and social solidarity in the poems she published in *First Statement*. Less dramatic than Page's similar poetic crisis and subsequent withdrawal from little-magazine culture in the mid-1950s, Waddington's crisis in the mid-1940s was not signalled by a period of poetic inactivity, but by her retreat from Montreal little-magazine culture. This retreat led to a decade-long gap between her first poetry collection *Green World* (1945)—published by Sutherland's First Statement Press—and her next, *The Second Silence* (1955). Waddington's concurrent experiences with Crawley and the *Contemporary Verse* group in the early to mid-1940s will serve as a narrative in counterpoint to her trials with Sutherland and the *First Statement* group during the same period.

Because the periods of crisis in Waddington's and Page's early poetry were followed by their separations from little-magazine groups, I have taken these terminal events as end points in this chapter. Waddington's detachment from little-magazine culture takes place in the mid-1940s, Page's in the mid-1950s. Numerous poems published in either *Preview*, *First Statement*, or *Contemporary Verse* but excluded from their respective volumes of the 1940s and 1950s offer insight into the accumulated self-questioning, self-criticism, and self-doubt that characterize these pivotal periods in their early careers. These are poems in which Waddington and Page articulated many of the most pressing concerns in their early development as modernists and the difficulties they experienced as women in the context of Canadian little-magazine culture at mid-century.

II: Page's *Preview*

Contemporary Verse and *Preview* were separately conceived in April 1941, months prior to the appearance of either in print. That same April when the founding committee of *Contemporary Verse* gathered at Floris McLaren's house in Victoria (McLaren, "Contemporary" 55–56), Patrick and Peggy Anderson produced their first little magazine in Montreal, *The Andersons* (Whitney, "From Oxford" 34; Anderson, Introduction iii). By June, the founding committee of the Victoria–Vancouver magazine had issued letters requesting submissions from poets across the country, and three of the founding editors of *Preview*—Patrick Anderson, F. R. Scott, and Margaret Day—had met to discuss the prospect of starting a magazine (Bentley and Gnarowski 95). During the fall months, Neufville Shaw and Bruce Ruddick joined the *Preview* group (Bentley and Gnarowski 95). The first issue of *Contemporary Verse* was published in September 1941, followed by *Preview* in March 1942. By April, P. K. Page had been introduced to Patrick Anderson and invited by him to join the *Preview* group. Anderson met Page through a mutual acquaintance in Montreal, but he may have already read her poems printed in the first two issues of *Contemporary Verse* (Bentley and Gnarowski 98). However Anderson may have originally discovered Page, she appeared as an editor on the masthead of the second, April 1942 issue of *Preview*.

If *Contemporary Verse* was designed in the image of the internationally renowned *Poetry*, *Preview* took after the production values of the virtually unknown *The Andersons*.² Neither *Contemporary Verse* nor *Preview* was a fine-press periodical, of course: both were mimeographed from typescript. Pertinent to women's roles in

modernist little-magazine culture, these production values embody feminized forms of labour. “Two wives,” as Patrick Anderson recalled, “Kit Shaw and Peggy Doernbach Anderson, were extremely important behind the scenes” (Introduction iii). Kit Shaw handled subscriptions and submissions through the first fifteen issues,³ while Peggy Anderson managed production work for *Preview* from the first to the last issue.⁴ Page and her employment in war offices would prove indispensable to the physical production of *Preview*, as she had access to a heavy typewriter, which she used to cut the stencils for the magazine (Letter). She also mentions doing the “paste-up” of the July 1942 issue (Page to Scott, 18 July [1942] [FRSP, reel H-1211])—a job that Patrick Anderson would single out for derision in his August 1942 letter: “I quite forgot to say that I thought the last issue of PREVIEW very disappointing typographically—I hope something can be done” (Anderson to Page, August 1942; P. K. Page Papers [PKPP], box 6, file 7). With the exception of Anderson himself, neither literary critics nor little-magazine historians have detailed the involvement of women in *Preview*’s physical production (see Anderson, Introduction; and “A Poet”). Like *Contemporary Verse*, *Preview* might never have appeared without the behind-the-scenes work of the group’s women members. *Preview* could have existed otherwise as a Montreal writing group—analogue to the local poetry groups of the CAA—without producing any kind of publication; its so-called “Literary letter” (as Patrick Anderson dubbed *Preview* in the June 1942 issue [“Note”]) might not, however, have materialized without the investment of time and skill by Peggy Anderson, Kit Shaw, and Page. Patrick Anderson saw fit in his editorial capacity to criticize the make-up, but was unwilling (if not unable) to do anything to rectify it himself; he would contribute content

to *Preview*, but not material labour toward its production. He may have declared himself a socialist, but at the same time he maintained gendered divisions of labour: it was Peggy Anderson, herself an activist for the Labour Progressive Party, who would frequently use the party's offices to mimeograph *Preview* (Ringrose, "Preview" 31; Anderson, *Search Me* 149).

Given Peggy Anderson's hand in the production of the prototype, *The Andersons*, it seems logical that it should be the model and she one of the typists of *Preview*. If the first six issues of *Preview* appear crude, it is because the means of production available to its producers were those of the office—typewriter, mimeograph machine—not of the printing press. Certainly *Preview*'s low production values prompted the editors to comment upon its presentation to the public. "This is no magazine," the first *Preview* editorial declares; "[i]t presents five Montreal writers who recently formed themselves into a group for the purpose of mutual discussion and criticism and who hope, through these selections, to try out their work before a larger public" (Anderson, et al., "Statement"). Three issues later, in June 1942, Patrick Anderson clarified its genre and its intended audience: "PREVIEW is a private 'Literary letter'" and "in no sense a 'magazine' on sale to the general public" ("Note" [1942]). *Preview* was not so much a "private" letter as an "open" letter published for and disseminated to an audience of 80 to 100, perhaps 150, subscribers (McKnight 4; Bentley and Gnarowski 96). It was called a "Literary letter" because the means of production available to the group necessitated that *Preview* appear (for its first six issues) as a mimeographed and stapled newsletter, not because the editors deliberately wanted to alienate the "general public."⁵ A strict definition of *Preview* as a

“Literary letter” may not be vital to bibliographers of literary periodicals in Canada, but its production as such is crucial to our appreciation of the women responsible for its typing and mimeographing.

Page’s role in the production of *Preview* situates her within the social and cultural history of women living and writing in Montreal during the war, particularly in the context of women’s wartime labour. Her poetry from her *Preview* period often chronicles the social conditions of living, working, and writing in wartime Montreal from the perspective of a young woman; many of these poems were never published or, if published, not collected at the time. Although she had started writing such social poems as early as October 1941 when she first arrived in Montreal from Saint John, she would publish almost none before joining the *Preview* group in the spring of 1942. Her copy-book of 1940–44, which contains fair-copy versions of her published and unpublished poems, chronicles the progress of her poetry toward social consciousness during these formative first months in Montreal in 1941–42 (see PKPP, box 1, file 5). In *Preview* she found a place to publish her social poetry on a regular basis, not because she could find no other outlet (her first published war poem, “Blackout,” appeared in the December 1941 issue of *Contemporary Verse*), but because the *Preview* group itself was intent upon producing a socially engaged modernist poetry. Her modernism resonated with the social consciousness of the group.

As well as recording wartime conditions in Montreal, her pre-*Preview* poems from late 1941 to early 1942—all unpublished—work through problems in modernist poetics to which she would attend throughout the 1940s and 1950s. This is especially true of her

impersonalist poetry was inflected by gender consciousness. Many of her poems written during her first few months in Montreal are concerned with ideas of impersonality, sometimes in conjunction with reflections on the social conditions of urban alienation, sometimes in relation to the social construction of women's gender roles. These pre-*Preview* poems employ personation both as a means of recording subjective impressions of impersonal phenomena and as a reflexive device for interrogating limitations of self-expression and communicating crises of subjectivity. These crises are not, however, restricted to her poetry of 1941–42: they anticipate the crises of personality and impersonality recorded in her poetry throughout the 1940s and 1950s.

Page attended her first *Preview* meeting in either March or April 1942, though we cannot say which month for certain, nor which of her poems were written immediately afterward. Entirely absent from the poems in her copy-book prior to March–April 1942, the class consciousness and predominant impersonality of her poetry during this two-month period are signs of her early exposure to the poetry and poets of the *Preview* group. Her poetry of March–April 1942 is marked by an increased attention to class-specific subjects, often captured in impersonalist portraiture of isolated figures. Not surprisingly, Page's introduction to *Preview* in the spring of 1942 coincided with the publication of impersonalist social portraiture by other members of the group in the early issues. Many of her poems in *Preview* exhibit a pronounced social—if not socialist⁶—consciousness, especially in conjunction with civilian women's experiences on the home front.

Published in the July 1942 issue, "The Stenographers" represents the realization of

Page's early—mostly unpublished—experiments with an integrated poetics of impersonality, class consciousness, and gender consciousness. Among the many commentators on "The Stenographers," Killian has noted "the irony of choice of distance in this particular poem—the impersonal poetic treatment of impersonal labour practice" (91). While "The Stenographers" impersonally chronicles the social and psychological conditions of urban alienation on the home front, the persona who appears in the final lines emerges as a credible witness to the suffering of female office workers. This act of self-inscription attempts to ascribe authenticity to the persona's account of the alienating effects of women's clerical labour. But we should not confuse this "low-key personation" (Trehearne, *Montreal* 83) and "impersonal, observing and distancing eye" (Killian 91) with self-expression. Unlike the majority of personae in Page's (mostly unpublished) poems from late 1941 to early 1942, the persona of "The Stenographers" is neither self-reflexively constructed nor conspicuously gendered. From the persona's sympathetic representation of female office workers, we may infer a female persona, but nowhere in the poem is the persona's gender made explicit. Rather, the persona's gender is revealed through a socialized gender coding that builds upon our expectation of gendered sympathies between the persona and a feminized labour force.

"The Stenographers" attracted immediate critical attention from her contemporaries. Writing of Page in the November 1942 issue of *First Statement*, Sutherland signalled the way in which "The Stenographers" would begin to inflect readings of all her poetry from her *Preview* years:

P. K Page joined *Preview* after the appearance of the first issue, and she has been

particularly influenced by their general policy. . . . As far as I know, everything that this writer has since produced has had some social implication. She has dealt with that section of society of which she has personal knowledge. She has been like a field worker for the magazine, making a special poetical report on the lives of stenographers. ("P. K. Page" 97)

Sutherland's example of Page's poetical reports is "Prediction without Crystal," a poem which accompanies his article in *First Statement* and which contains no mention of stenographers. His assumption that a poem about "girls" is also about "stenographers" betrays an overdetermined autobiographical reading (though he does not mistake Page for one of her "stenographers," noting that she is not "writing about herself" [96]). What he calls the "general subject that [has] served her as a focal point for poetry" ("P. K. Page" 97) presumably refers to the "social implication" of her poems and not to the "lives of stenographers." In any case, his generalization was certainly premature, since the only office poem that she had published at the time was "The Stenographers," but his prescience is remarkable given her composition and/or publication of numerous poems about women office workers over the next year.

It may seem unlikely that any of Page's other office poems from the 1940s could be read today as anything but context for a reading of "The Stenographers." In the absence of any other office poems in *As Ten As Twenty* (1946) and *The Metal and the Flower* (1954), it is perhaps inevitable that "The Stenographers" should have gained canonical distinction. Of the office poems she published in the early 1940s, the majority appeared in the year following the original July 1942 publication of "The Stenographers."

Of these poems, only “The Stenographers” would appear in *As Ten As Twenty*; neither “Typists,” nor “Shipbuilding Office,” nor “The Inarticulate,” nor “Noon Hour,” nor “Offices” would be collected until her 1974 retrospective volume, *P. K. Page: Poems Selected and New*. In addition to these published office poems, Page’s copy-book from 1940–44 contains a number of unpublished poems documenting the lives of office workers. To retrace the trajectory of her office poems, which begins with “The Stenographers,” we may recover and elaborate one of the definitive narratives of her *Preview* period. More than merely supplemental to “The Stenographers,” her published and unpublished office poems from this July 1942 to October 1943 period develop a range of perspectives on a predominantly female sector of the wartime workforce. If “The Stenographers” has been taken as a synecdoche for Page’s office poems, its limited perspective cannot account for the subtle gradations of and hierarchies among office workers, whose occupations are often overlooked by historians of the war, especially those chroniclers of women’s employment in industrial (and traditionally male) sectors of the workforce (see Pierson; Nash). Page was not herself concerned with the “Rosie the Riveter” phenomenon and women’s mobilization in war industries to compensate for shortages of male workers, but rather the traditional clerical and secretarial jobs of women workers in offices.

Page was employed in war offices—as a filing clerk, not as a stenographer. Her employment and skills as an office worker were key to her work on the physical production of *Preview*. We need only note that “The Stenographers” (July 1942), “Typists” (February 1943), “Shipbuilding Office” (August 1943), and “Offices” (October

1943) all appeared in *Preview* to demonstrate that the means and conditions of the magazine's production were materially linked to the subject matter of her poetry. After all, the majority of her office poems from 1942–43 first appeared in *Preview*. Her poems do not have to refer to women doing the make-up, typing, and mimeographing of a little magazine for us to infer tacit connections between the representation of office work by women in *Preview* and the materiality of its production by women. Restored to the historical contexts of *Preview* and women's wartime office work, these poems become nuanced by details of Page's cultural and social milieux in Montreal during the early 1940s. Writing to F. R. Scott on 18 July 1942, Page makes plain the correlation between her office work, the production of *Preview*, and the poems she would publish in that month's issue:

The reason I inflict my writing upon you is because my typewriter is at the Shaws for Patsy to type the stencils. I feel lost without it—hardly know how to hold a pen any more. I hope you smile upon the new issue. It's difficult to know whether a thing's good or bad when you've mulled over it for so long. But I think it stands up pretty well. . . . I've been turning out practically nothing—in fact you will see almost my entire output in this issue. I write a few lines a night and then scratch them out the next night! I've been working terribly hard at the office—had two blissful weeks of doing 2 jobs and 1 of doing 3, if you please. I honestly thought I'd have to be put away. (FRSP, reel H-1211)

Page refers to yet another woman who volunteered to type the *Preview* stencils, and the implication is evident: typing is, in this historical context, the job of women.⁷ Whether she

is writing of her own labour, that of women at the office, or that of women behind the scenes of *Preview*, she documents the psychological and social conditions in which her office poems of 1942–43 were written. As this July 1942 letter attests, Page writes to Scott at the beginning of a period of reduced productivity and creative frustration, a period during which she could complete only two or three new poems a month—likely as a result of her workload at the office and her responsibilities as an editor of *Preview*.⁸ The first of her office poems, “The Stenographers,” appeared in the same issue of *Preview* on which she had worked to finish the “paste-up” the night before writing to Scott. Given the demands of the office, it is not surprising that she should turn her workplace to poetic account.

Page’s poetic preoccupation with offices would continue throughout the late summer and fall months of 1942 and into early 1943, resulting in an accumulation of unpublished poems about men and women employed in various kinds of office work. Such unpublished pieces as “The Office” (August 1942), “For Michael” (September 1942), “Janitor in the Drafting Room” (September 1942), and “Girl at Work” (c. early 1943) appear at intervals in her copy-book from this period.⁹ Of these unpublished poems, only “The Office” appears to have been sent out—first to *Partisan Review*, and later to *Canadian Poetry Magazine*—and rejected (PKPP, box 1, file 5). Its impersonal representation of office work and stark juxtaposition of pastoral and urban imagery marks it as a variation on “The Stenographers,” with a focus instead on the activities of a ledger keeper, and with the notable absence of any personation at all. In fact, the overwhelming majority of Page’s office poems are written without the use of personation. There are

notable exceptions, however, including “The Stenographers.”

Page’s only unpublished office poem in which a persona figures prominently is a piece written for her brother Michael, who served as a midshipman in the North Atlantic during WWII (Orange 223). Simply titled “For Michael” and dated September 1942, it is a rare personal poem from this period in which she draws connections between her brother on the war front and herself on the home front:

[. . .] Look, there is blood
 in these factories where I work.
 There is blood on each tongue
 that licks an envelope
 or spits a “yes sir.”
 These are your kind and close
 in the bulging little boat they crowd you.

 You are my doer, turning
 silver of your sinews
 like searchlights in a moth thick dark.
 Knee caps butter smooth as c[r]umpets slip you
 from bunk to bridge,
 while I spin corpses in my brain
 and ache from wounds
 in the battl[e]field of an office. (PKPP, box 1, file 5)

Earlier in the poem, the speaker's invocation of a "brother" functions on a personal and political level, configuring the rhetoric of comradeship throughout the poem. Unlike the impersonal and distanced perspective of the speaker in "The Stenographers," "For Michael" consistently gives a personal and intimate point of view that enables Page's articulation of empathy between persona and subject, office worker and seaman, home front and war front. The persona is self-conscious about this expression of empathy, citing it as a sign of weakness, and asking, "if I am sentimental / you be steel for my crumble" (PKPP, box 1, file 5). If, as Killian says of Page in particular and Suzanne Clark notes of women modernists in general, the sentimental is often viewed in the context of modernism as a feminine-coded discourse, then we might observe that the speaker's self-consciousness about her sentimentality exposes her femininity (Clark 2; Killian 87–90). "For Michael" encodes the feminized gender of the speaker's personality in terms of her empathy and sentimentality.

Writing a prose report on war-office workers for a special issue of *Preview* in February 1943, Page would characterize the "girls" in her office as "people who think almost exclusively in terms of personalities. . . . They think of the war effort in terms of personalities, they think of their personal freedom in the same terms—both somehow arising from and connected with the boy-friend [in one of the services] and both, confusingly, seeming to pull in opposite directions. . . . Unfortunately there was no one to tell them that winning the war and attaining personal freedom are one and the same thing" ("Stenographers" 2). Page's feminization of the relationship between gender and personality is, in the context of her office poems, telling once we consider the feminized

personae of “The Stenographers” and “For Michael.” If Page believed that women war-office workers thought of their personal freedom in terms of the expression of personality, and that their freedom is connected to a male figure at war, then we may want to consider how the transformation of the office into a battlefield—as in the opening lines of “The Stenographers” and the closing lines of “For Michael”—is a figurative correlation of the war front and the home front, how that correlation enables a female speaker’s articulation of empathy with the war effort, and how that empathy allows for her expression of personality, itself an act of personal freedom.

But ironically, the majority of her office poems document women’s inability to express their personality. Office workers are often represented by Page as women either dispossessed of or alienated from language. The women “seem to sense each others’ anguish with the swift / sympathy of the deaf and dumb” in “Typists” (*Hidden* 1: 103); the “girl in gingham” types carbons of her emotions in “her jargon,” the “strange jargon of ships” in “Shipbuilding Office” (*Hidden* 1: 104); the office “girls who had held each other’s hands like lovers” become estranged “without speech” as “no response or reply dotted the screaming i’s / of their clamouring signatures” in “The Petition” (*Hidden* 1: 106); and the office workers “who cannot speak, / hammer all day at keys that do not print, and file their voices in the teeming vault” and practice instead “the language of the deaf and dumb,” even though “no one reads their hands” in “The Inarticulate” (*Hidden* 1: 109). In all of these poems, the alienation of these office workers is conveyed in terms of their dissociation from language and from one another, their lapses of personal and interpersonal communication. Language itself becomes impersonal, instrumental to the

operation of offices, but alien to office workers and their social interaction. Page's office workers become emblems of a crisis of communication.

Page's final office poem from her *Preview* period continues to present the same social conditions of alienation and depersonalization of language, but, at the same time, allows for the speaker's expression of personality. Published in the October 1943 issue of *Preview*, "Offices" opens with a prominent declaration in the first person:

Oh, believe me, I have known offices—
 young and old in them, both—
 morning and evening;
 felt the air
 stamp faces into a mould;
 office workers at desks
 saying *go* to a typewriter
 and *stop* to a cabinet. . . . (*Hidden* 1: 100)

Trehearne has suggested that the opening line indicates "a desire to claim ownership over the genre, and perhaps a defensiveness regarding her authority on the subject" (*Montreal* 354n53), a claim based on a perceived exchange of office poems between Page and Louis Dudek, whose poem also entitled "Offices" appeared in the January 1943 issue of *First Statement*. Page's defensive gesture may owe something to Dudek's infringement on her poetic territory, but it seems as likely that if she were responding to the *First Statement* group on this matter she would also counter Sutherland's criticism of her "lives of stenographers" in his November 1942 article "P. K. Page and *Preview*": ". . . as one feels

that the emotion is overwrought and becomes subjective, so one feels that the phrasing is too overwhelming to be entirely true. There is lack of complete ease in the style and there is some emotional discomfort with the subject-matter" (97). While the objectivity and distance of the speaker from her subject in "The Stenographers" confirms at least the latter part of Sutherland's criticism, the intimacy and empathy of Page's speaker in "Offices" contests his claims against the emotional authenticity of her portraiture of office workers. As in "The Stenographers," however, the gender of the speaker in "Offices" can only be inferred from the poem's detailed knowledge of women office workers, including the contents of their desk drawers and the dynamic of their smoke breaks in the washroom. "Offices" is not so much a sympathetic portrait as a candid exposé, not a sentimental and empathetic lyric but a personal testimonial by a woman about women and offices. Its expression of personality lays claim to a genre of socially committed poetry that Page virtually invented for herself.¹⁰

By the end of 1943, shortly after the publication of "Offices," the *Preview* group had started to show signs of fatigue. Having lost the services of the Shaws after the October 1943 issue, and with the Andersons occupied by editorial and production work on the leftist cultural magazine *En Masse* by early 1945, the departure of Page from Montreal in the fall of 1944 must have posed a significant problem to the physical production of *Preview*. In short, *Preview*'s regular pool of typists was otherwise and elsewhere occupied. The erratic publication of *Preview* throughout 1944 signalled that the group was in a period of disorganization and decline long before the merger with *First Statement*.¹¹ Page's contributions to *Preview* fell off significantly over the course of what

would be its final year. Probably a consequence of her move to Victoria in the fall of 1944, she would not appear in the December 1944 issue. Having appeared in every issue of *Preview* since April 1942, her absence from the December 1944 issue would prove to be a sign of the group's weakened state following her departure. During this final *Preview* year, she would submit her poems to periodicals with larger audiences—instead of printing them in *Preview* first and then reprinting them elsewhere—and thus expand her range of periodical publications. That same year she would not only publish her prize-winning sequence of four poems in *Poetry* (Chicago) but also renew her contacts with the *Contemporary Verse* group. This reconnection with *Contemporary Verse* would prove vital to Page during the period of transition within Montreal magazine culture from 1945 to 1947, a period during which her poetry itself would undergo transition.

III: Waddington's *First Statement*

When *First Statement* first came out in August 1942, *Preview* had just completed the end of its original run of six issues and *Contemporary Verse* had been in operation for a full year. For its initial nine issues (August–December 1942), *First Statement* advertised itself as “A Magazine for Young Canadian Writers.” With its January 1943 issue, the editors changed its subtitle to “A National Literary Magazine.” Whether this change of name had an appreciable effect on the contents of the magazine is doubtful, though it did signal its editors' efforts during its first year to gain a national audience. As early as October 1942, *First Statement* announced a merger with the single-issue little magazine *Western Freelance*, founded in Vancouver and edited by Geoffrey Ashe (Ashe, “Editorial”). By February 1943 the Montreal-based editorial group issued a proposal for the formation of

First Statement groups in other Canadian cities (Sutherland, “New Organization”).

Interested authors were invited to contact the magazine’s agents, Lois Darroch in Toronto or Ashe in Vancouver. By March 1943 progress had been made toward the organization of a group in Toronto: a report of its activities was promised for an upcoming issue (Sutherland, Editorial 10). The report from the Toronto *First Statement* group published in the 2 April 1943 issue included a list of its members: Miriam Waddington, Sybil Hutchinson, Patrick Waddington, and Lois Darroch (Sutherland, “First Statement Groups”).

Miriam Waddington’s earliest poem published in *First Statement* coincided with the original announcement of the *First Statement* groups in February 1943. According to her memoirs, she first met John Sutherland and others of the original *First Statement* group—Betty Sutherland and Louis Dudek—during a visit to Montreal in March 1943 (Introduction 7; “Apartment” 30). Waddington’s letter of 7 April 1943 to Dudek indicates that she returned to Montreal the following month to meet with John Sutherland and Dudek “to discuss this whole matter of literary groups, what you do, how you function, etc.” (Louis Dudek Fonds [LDF], series 2, box 13, Waddington file). Both she and her husband had contributed short stories to *First Statement* as early as January 1943, and no doubt Sutherland had them in mind when he and the rest of the Montreal group proposed the creation of a Toronto *First Statement* group. But the Toronto group would by no means fulfil the Montreal group’s lofty expectations:

The chief concern of these proposed new groups would naturally be Canada and Canadian literature. It is not suggested that they form a patriotic organization, but

that they assist in the development of a national consciousness. At regular meetings, papers will be presented on our modern writers, and a special emphasis will be placed on the writers of our past. Poets and prose-writers, either members of the group or members of the district, will attend meetings and read samples of their work. Selections from these, and from critical papers, will later be published in *FIRST STATEMENT*. A page will be given up to notices of the programmes and to accounts of the proceedings. (Sutherland, "New Organization")

These groups appear to be modelled after the local branches of the CAA, an organization which had, ironically, just come under fire in the December 1942 issue of *First Statement* (Sutherland, "Production"). Sutherland is perhaps aware of this resemblance, given his suggestion that such a group should not be a "patriotic organization," but he seems unaware of the similarities between the practices of the CAA and its periodicals and the proposed activities of the *First Statement* groups.¹² Once the Toronto group did meet, however, its report published in the 2 April 1943 issue (Sutherland, "First Statement Groups") revealed a far more informal gathering than the Montreal group had envisioned. The report itself consisted of little more than a restatement of Sutherland's 19 March 1943 editorial ("The Role of the Magazines") by Lois Darroch and an excerpt from a letter of criticism concerning the poetry of Page and Shaw in *Preview* by Patrick Waddington ("First Statement Opinions"). Unfortunately, Miriam Waddington's opinions were not recorded in the report, though it would seem from her letter of 7 April 1943 to Dudek that she was not entirely certain how she was supposed to contribute or how the group itself was intended to function. Although Sutherland reported plans of a second meeting of the

Toronto group (“First Statement Groups”), there would be no further mention of its or any other local group’s activities in the pages of *First Statement*.

Given the almost immediate disintegration of the Toronto group, Miriam Waddington’s contributions to *First Statement* cannot substantively be attributed to its formation or influence. She published almost as many poems in the magazine prior to the first meeting of the Toronto group as she did after its disappearance. By Waddington’s account, the extent of her relationship to *First Statement* amounted to her personal rapport with Sutherland himself. Far more than her contributions to *First Statement* and *Preview*, Waddington would document her relationship with Sutherland in her personal histories of Montreal in the 1940s (see Introduction; “Apartment”; “John Sutherland”). Regrettably, their correspondence from the early 1940s is no longer extant, so we cannot recover that immediate historical perspective. We can, fortunately, correlate her memoirs and her poems from *First Statement* as a means of reconstructing the relationship between poet and editor.

While all of Waddington’s poems first published by Sutherland in *First Statement* deserve some contextual consideration, here specific readings will be given to poems he excluded from her first collection, *Green World*. Her collection was part of the New Writers Series launched by Sutherland’s First Statement Press in 1945. She set down her memory of his selections for *Green World* in the afterword to her *Collected Poems*: “When John Sutherland . . . wrote to me in Philadelphia that he would like to publish a collection of my poems, I was of course pleased. I don’t remember having much to do with putting the book together. I was preoccupied with my courses [at the University of

Pennsylvania's School of Social Work] and my field work in the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic" (412). If Waddington had made the entire selection herself or in collaboration with Sutherland, there would be little reason to question the circumstances of its making. But the inclusion of less than half of the poems that Sutherland had previously published in *First Statement* invites critical scrutiny.

In looking at those poems originally published in *First Statement* but subsequently excluded from *Green World*, we may recover pieces of a poetic narrative cast out in the editorial process. Sutherland's selection of her poems that foreground the speaker's social consciousness typically represents the speaker's sympathy for others or self-reflexive situations in which the speaker's sympathy is under scrutiny. By omitting poems in which her speakers fail or refuse to demonstrate social sympathies, Sutherland elides the evident ambivalence in her poetry's social consciousness at this time. Even as it superficially ameliorates her profile as a socially conscious poet, his elision not only reduces the complexity of her social vision but also erases telling signs of a crisis in her early poetry. That ambivalence is nevertheless present in these early poems published in *First Statement*, even if attenuated in *Green World*.

Originally published in the February 1943 issue of *First Statement*, "Social Worker" illustrates Waddington's recollection that "at that time only half of [her] was a poet—the other half was a romantic middle-class social worker" (Introduction 7) and that her "1943 meeting with John Sutherland took place in a special context: after graduating from the [University of Toronto's] School of Social Work the year before, [she] had entered a new and exciting profession" ("Apartment" 33). Her speaker is not wholly

“romantic” in this chronicle of a social worker’s passage by streetcar to “slums in odd corners of cities.” The romantic half of the persona imagines her release from the social world and temporary escape to an imagined green world: she would “go straight as the crow flies / Arrowing over the Don and its leafy mudlands, / Over the brickyards, over the scooped ravines, / The most direct route.” But she returns to the streetcar and her realist social-worker self in the final lines of the poem, addressing herself not to the families she visits in the city slums, but to those onlookers who witness her work: “So do not wonder when I knock at battered doors / If my face is cold, busy with afterthoughts” (“Social Worker”). Here the social worker’s address to onlookers in the street instead of her clients is indicative of her self-conscious impersonality: as she turns aside to deliver this final couplet, she dons the “cold” mask of the social worker. Impaired by “afterthoughts” or residual attachments to the green world, the social worker becomes deficient in showing sympathies for others in the social world, whether her clients at the door or passers-by in the street.¹³

By the time “Indoors” appeared in the August 1943 issue of *First Statement*, the failure of sympathy in Waddington’s social poetry had started to enter a critical stage. “Indoors” portrays its speaker’s utter alienation from the social world. Confined indoors, her impersonal speaker is wholly detached from the social dynamic of the domestic sphere. With an echo of Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (13), the speaker observes how the “winter sky was cold” and “The guests held forth in long debate / While the lamplight shone on the dark table / Like a soft tired operation.” Rather than contribute to the debate, the speaker ironically turns away and contemplates the loss of contact with the

outside world:

One more day that I didn't see
 The city move on its lighted wheels
 And the toy trams with their small noise
 Through the gothic vista of the arch
 Framing old Saint Mary's. (*Collected Poems* 361)

In counterpoint to the speaker amid the urban noise and jostle in “Social Worker,” the speaker of “Indoors” desires the city’s aesthetic dynamism. Instead of a romanticized flight from the city to a pastoral green world, “Indoors” figures the speaker’s withdrawal into aesthetic contemplation of an imagined city. For Waddington, the green world need not be green at all: it is, as Berger says, “a place into which the mind may withdraw for a variety of reasons, good and bad” (13). Even the speaker in “Social Worker” returns from her pastoral green-world fantasy to knock on her clients’ doors, however ambivalent her attitude toward her casework or strained her sympathies toward her clients. Declining all contact and communication with the social world, the speaker of “Indoors” seems incapable of human sympathy. This aestheticized city is, after all, devoid of people. While the religious imagery in the final lines may offer the faint prospect of aesthetic transcendence—and the redemption of the speaker from conditions of social, if not spiritual, alienation—there is little reason to believe that this aestheticization will ensure such fulfilment.

If Waddington’s *First Statement* poems present a series of obstacles impeding her communication of human sympathy, her relationship to the magazine itself is indicative of

the mutual failure of sympathies between herself and the *First Statement* group in Montreal. As a member of the *First Statement* group in Toronto, Waddington would remain distant from the core group of Sutherland, Dudek, and Layton in Montreal. Although there is no evidence that she was ever hampered in her attempts to publish in *First Statement*, her poems were often punctured by the Montreal group's editorial and critical barbs. This is principally true of those poems first published in *First Statement*, but subsequently omitted from *Green World*.

Appearing in the early March 1943 issue of *First Statement*, "Now We Steer" is a statement of political consciousness and poetics specific to the 'forties generation. Given its generational specificity, it is not surprising that "Now We Steer" does not appear in either *The Second Silence* (1955) or *The Season's Lovers* (1958); its exclusion from *Green World* is less obviously motivated. It opens at the onset of WWII, narrating a parable of political disillusionment among members of the left:

That was when
 The whole centre of my world wavered,
 The tenuous balance of revolution was upset by war,
 The cupboards of the future were all rifled,
 And I longed to be on a cold stone on that far island,
 With green to cover me up and blind me
 With trees growing out of my sealed eyes. (*Collected Poems* 360)

Influenced by the political verse of the Auden generation, "Now We Steer" is a parable-poem in which the speaker imagines another green world, a temporary "place of

withdrawal” (Berger 13)—that is, for leftists and fellow travellers after the catastrophic events of 1939. Waddington’s homage to the Auden generation follows thereafter:

Since they
 Whose names were a white legend in our night
 Auden and Spender and Thomas Wolfe—
 Whose words poured through our blood like warm wine,
 Whose hands rang clear and warning bells
 Across the dark and troubled oceans of our youth—
 Whose names we conjured with, fire across our sky,
 A blessing and a curse together—
 They taught us to love at our own cost.

One lesson we learned too well.

We must love one another or die.

Quoting here from Auden’s “September 1, 1939,” the speaker invokes the seminal poem of that generation’s political disenchantment following the Nazi–Soviet non-aggression pact in August 1939 and the outbreak of WWII in September 1939. Waddington’s parable-poem does not close, however, with his pessimistic dictum; she is well aware of the Auden generation’s retreat from the political left after 1939, observing that even “though they have carried us no further / They are a golden compass pointing south / To a possible world, warm and good” (*Collected Poems* 361). This optimistic turn is, in the end, the progressive political promise of a ’forties generation, the “we” of “Now We Steer” that

might include Waddington and many of her contemporaries in the *First Statement* and *Preview* groups. As a parable of the education and maturation of the 'forties generation, we might read the poetics and politics of "Now We Steer" in relation to Waddington's report of her first encounter with Sutherland. "At the time I met him," she recalls, "Thomas Wolfe was his favourite writer"; she also notes his reading of Auden and Spender (Introduction 8).

It is difficult to determine why Sutherland would omit "Now We Steer" from *Green World*. His exclusion of a poem that, in effect, expresses solidarity with his own literary and leftist interests is a conspicuous rejection of Waddington's early sympathetic identification with him and *First Statement*. Among the possible influences on Sutherland's decision to exclude the poem, we might take Dudek's statement in the 2 April 1943 issue, immediately following the March 1943 publication of "Now We Steer." There Dudek decries the faults of the *Preview* poets and offers a set of slogans for their edification, among them "No poetry about poets and poetry" ("Geography" 3). Following so closely after the publication of "Now We Steer," Dudek's corrective must have registered with Waddington as a reprimand. Furthermore, Layton's poem "The Modern Poet" published in the same April 1943 issue upbraids Waddington's invocation of Auden with his patronizing opening lines:

Since Auden set the fashion,
 Our poets grow tame;
 They are quite without passion,
 They live without blame.

Like a respectable dame.

The gendered inflection of Layton's caricature of Auden-generation poets must have struck Waddington as particularly, if not personally, offensive (see also Layton, "Poetry"). In light of Dudek's and Layton's indiscretions, Waddington must have wondered what the Montreal group could have wanted from her (and vice versa) when she joined the *First Statement* group in Toronto. While Patrick Waddington's criticism of Layton (qtd. in Sutherland, "First Statement Opinions") and Layton's riposte in reply, published in the same issue, must have strained their personal relations, the added reproach of Miriam Waddington could have thrown the whole question of the Waddingtons' membership in the Toronto *First Statement* group into doubt. One might expect that Miriam Waddington arrived in Montreal in April 1943 with a number of pointed questions for Dudek and Layton. In any event, she seems to have heeded their criticisms, as she would not publish another poem about Auden or any other poet in *First Statement*. Nor would Sutherland publish "Now We Steer" in *Green World*.

In view of Dudek's edict, "No poetry about poets and poetry," Waddington's "Two Poems" published in the 19 March 1943 issue also qualify as objects of his criticism. Both begin with a self-reflexive conceit comparing the speaker's beloved to a poem:

1

Your oh so gentle hands.

They are as pure and mobile as the lines of a poem.

They have all the cadences and wild changes

That ride my dreams at night. . . .

2

You

With your words and your desperate gestures

Are a violent punctuation to my life. . . . (*Collected Poems* 360, 361)

Although it is not difficult to imagine why Sutherland would have passed over these two poems when putting together *Green World*, it is legitimate to ask why he, Dudek, and Layton agreed to publish her poems, if only to attack them in the next issue. This pattern, however, is not without precedent in *First Statement*: both Kay Smith and Page had published poems in early issues, accompanied by Sutherland's critical blasts (see "A Criticism" and "P. K. Page"). Added to Layton's "The Modern Poet," the gender specificity of this manner of masculinist *First Statement* criticism exposes its animus toward its own female authors. *First Statement*'s questionable policy of public criticism of its own authors would appear to have affected Waddington's contributions, since she would not publish another poem about poetry in subsequent issues. Here we can see, in Waddington's words, how she had "accepted that men were top dog in this world" ("Apartment" 34n1), at least in terms of their editorial control over her poetry. Her call for a gendered reading of Canadian modernist little-magazine culture clearly illuminates the significance of gender relations in her own dealings with the central male figures in the *First Statement* group.

Possibly as a consequence of the blatantly masculinist editorial practices of Sutherland, Dudek and Layton, Waddington would temporarily suspend her contributions to *First Statement* following the appearance of "Indoors" in August 1943. Having

decided to publish "Indoors," Sutherland would then proceed to construct an editorial and critical apparatus in which her poem was subject to caricature. His August 1943 editorial declares that "[o]f the several hundred manuscripts of verse that we received as a mimeographed magazine, about eighty-five percent were directly in the romantic tradition": "Indoors" might well be in the modern "romantic tradition" he derides. His September 1943 article "The Role of Prufrock" attempts to sketch the archetypal figure of that tradition. He gestures toward Waddington's persona in "Indoors," writing of Prufrock as a modern poet-figure who "grows unhappy and falls victim to visions and self-romanticizing" (20). Just as his portrait gives us Prufrock caught "between an everyday personality and one that is founded on romantic dreaming" (20), so Waddington depicts her persona trapped in the quotidian and dreaming of the romanticized city. Seizing upon her allusion to Prufrock and her predilection for urban romanticism, Sutherland once more subjects Waddington to his penchant for reproaches of *First Statement's* women poets.

Having published in *First Statement* on a consistent basis between February and August 1943, Waddington would not contribute another poem until the February 1944 issue. After the appearance of Sutherland's Prufrock essay in September 1943, this break with *First Statement* is predictable. At a time when Waddington herself was articulating problems of communicating sympathy for others, she must have found little consolation in the consistently unsympathetic criticisms of Sutherland and the *First Statement* group. If we continue to view Waddington's relationship with *First Statement* in light of her personal ties to Sutherland, we may look to her memories of him at this time for clues to explain her temporary withdrawal from the magazine after the summer of 1943.

Waddington's recollection of Sutherland in 1943 focuses on the projection and retraction of their interanimating sympathies:

When I met John Sutherland in the spring of 1943 my emotional needs were great. Our rapport was instantaneous and he seemed to be the one person who would understand and respond to my literary and personal problems. That spring we began an intense daily correspondence about literature, love, life, and our hopes and ambitions. Undoubtedly I projected my own needs and problems on John and he did the same with me. Neither was prepared or able to face the reality of the other. By the end of that summer I had taken back my projection and realized that I would have to solve my own problems, literary, personal, and professional.

("Apartment" 33)

It would seem that Waddington had not only "taken back" her projection, but at the same time temporarily withdrawn further contributions to *First Statement*. This first period of withdrawal (August 1943 to February 1944) from *First Statement*, punctuated by a poem ("Sympathy") about projections and identifications, is symbolic of Waddington's psychological investment in Sutherland and his little magazine. Her next period of absence (February to December 1944) from *First Statement* following the publication of "Sympathy" would coincide with her decision to leave Toronto and her job at the Jewish Family Service and enroll at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Work in Philadelphia.

Her appearance in *First Statement* prior to her departure for Philadelphia revisits the problem of her speaker's sympathy—a problem she left unresolved six months earlier

in “Indoors.” Published in the February 1944 issue and later collected in *Green World*, “Sympathy” presents a persona alert to psychological projection—in this case, the unconscious transfer of one’s feelings to another person. It is telling that her persona in “Sympathy” is the recipient of another man’s projection: this has been, in effect, the predicament of Waddington herself in her relationship with Sutherland. In response to the man’s projection, her persona communicates not in dialogue but through a self-reflexive internal monologue: “I will answer with the round technique / That walls me from you; / Give your misfortunes; I’ll remember mine” (*Collected* 5). The persona’s sympathy is, then, internalized: there is no dialogic exchange, only the sympathetic reception of the other man’s projection. “So tell me your misfortunes, lay your plans,” the persona reiterates, “I’m listening with one ear to my past” (*Collected Poems* 6). Despite the persona’s receptivity, the practice of impersonality (“the round technique”) stands in the way of open dialogue; this manner of impersonal, yet sympathetic, listening ends in communicative failure.

After “Sympathy,” Waddington published her poems between February and December 1944 in magazines other than *First Statement*, many in early issues of *Direction*. None of her poems from this period would appear in *Green World*. Sutherland was certainly aware of *Direction* itself (he reviewed its first, November 1943 installment in the March 1944 issue of *First Statement* [rev. of *Direction*]), so it is likely that he would have seen Waddington’s poems in its second and third issues, both undated but probably from early 1944.¹⁴ Other Waddington poems from this ten-month period appeared in more prominent magazines such as *Contemporary Verse* and *Canadian Forum*, yet they

too are absent from *Green World*. Since Sutherland assembled her collection on his own, and since he was out of regular contact with Waddington while she was living in Philadelphia and at the time he made his selections, it is easily conceivable that he was not fully aware of the extent of her poetry publications over the course of 1944. Because he included several of her most recent poems from her Philadelphia period after she had published “In the Big City” in the December 1944–January 1945 issue of *First Statement*, we may surmise that he followed her publications more closely after December 1944.

Whatever the reasons for Sutherland’s failure to collect any of Waddington’s poems from this February–December 1944 period, he would publish some of the poems she sent to him after she moved to Philadelphia in the fall of 1944—in *First Statement* and/or later in *Green World*. It is particularly significant that Sutherland issued his offer to publish *Green World* immediately after her reappearance in *First Statement* in December 1944–January 1945.¹⁵ Once he had made the offer, then, she must have kept him up to date on her most recent poems, whether already accepted elsewhere or submitted to him for publication in *First Statement*. Although she was not directly involved in the compilation process, she recalled “sending Sutherland ‘Lullaby’ and ‘Morning until Night,’ both of which were new and had their source in [her] Philadelphia experience” (“Afterword” 412)—and both of which he included in *Green World*. She also must have sent him “In the Big City,” written shortly after her arrival in Philadelphia and first published in the December 1944–January 1945 issue of *First Statement* and then in *Green World*. “Lullaby,” her last poem published in *First Statement*, appeared in the April–May 1945 issue.

During the summer of 1945, Waddington would return from Philadelphia to Toronto and then immediately move with her husband to Montreal. By the time she had settled in Montreal in July, the *Preview* group had accepted *First Statement's* proposal to merge the two magazines and preliminary discussions about the new magazine (then called *Portage*, but later *Northern Review*) were underway. In her 28 July 1945 letter to Livesay, Waddington noted the formation of the new magazine: “[H]ere in [M]ontreal [P]review and [First Statement] have amalgamated to call themselves [*P*]ortage with a composite and unwieldy editorial board of eight—4 from each group. [I] am still not in the group. [A]nd not sorry, because groups get very personal” (DLP-QU, box 5a, file 1). Writing to Livesay on 27 August 1945, Waddington commented further on her and her husband’s relationship to the new little-magazine culture in Montreal:

[P]atrick [Anderson] wants us to contribute to [*E*]n [*M*]asse—also to help edit it. [Y]ou know [I] can[']t help having a malicious little reservation—good enough for [*E*]n [*M*]asse but not good enough for [P]ortage sort of thing. [B]ut possibly other things are at stake and [I] may be being unfair about it. [H]ave you seen [*E*]n [*M*]asse? [I] will try and hunt you out a copy if you haven[']t. [I]t seemed to me to be dull, and had the disadvantage of being mimeographed. (DLP-QU, box 5a, file 1)

Waddington’s reservations about the leftist cultural magazine *En Masse*—edited by Anderson and funded by the Labour Progressive Party in Montreal—were well founded, as it would only last for four issues (March–October 1945). And given Anderson’s attitude toward women’s roles in the physical production of magazines, she may have been

wise to his request that she help “edit” *En Masse*. Having arrived in Montreal during a period of transition in Montreal little-magazine culture, the Waddingtons would remain outsiders to the *First Statement* and *Preview* groups. Updating Livesay on literary activities in Montreal and her recent rejection from the new *First Statement–Preview* magazine, Waddington would announce her withdrawal from Montreal little-magazine culture:

[R]e [E]n [M]asse. [A]nderson asked me to be on the editorial board with honey. ([O]n the new magazine [*Portage*] he rejects my poems with gall.) [I] went to one editorial meeting and felt unutterably depressed. [I]t is worth while but somehow [I] hav[e]n[']t the heart to sit at meetings. [D]on[']t know what's wrong with me. [F]eel as if [I] must be holing in. Well, as [F]orster says, after thirty one must close some doors if one wishes to grow in one's own true way. (DLP–QU, box 5a, file 1)

As in her poetry of the early to mid-1940s, Waddington would experience a failure of sympathy in her relationship with Montreal little-magazine culture. Rather than seek social and cultural solidarity through little-magazine communities, she would choose to “close some doors.” Her falling out with the Montreal group was not limited to the formation of new magazines, though, as she told Livesay in her 11 November 1945 letter: “I feel I have missed about 10 years of my life—rather slipped over them, and no longer find I have patience with many of the struggles and jokes of the young. Thinking mostly of John Sutherland and Irving Layton to whom a slight aura of bygone bohemia still clings” (DLP–QU, box 5a, file 1). Ultimately, her disillusionment with the Montreal

magazines and lack of sympathy for their editorial members would lead her to a retreat into her self, into her social work, and into her domestic life.

Ironically then, the publication of *Green World* in November 1945 would signal the end of Waddington's association with Montreal magazine culture. Emblematic of her outsider status among the former *First Statement* and *Preview* groups, her launch party at Sutherland's place was sparsely attended. "John Sutherland had a small party for me," she informed Livesay the next day, "but he had been vague and casual in his invitations so that there were no 'patrons' or prominent writers of the Montreal Group present"—though she would go on to note that F. R. Scott was in attendance and "very kind" (Waddington to Livesay, 11 November 1945 [DLP-QU, box 5a, file 1]). Although we should not overinterpret Waddington's meagre reception by the Montreal poets at her launch, especially in view of Sutherland's ineptitude as a promoter of *Green World*, it is still a significant event in her shift away from Montreal magazine culture toward other venues and literary communities. Most telling of her detachment from the Montreal groups is the fact that she would never publish poems in either *En Masse* or *Northern Review*.

Although she never again attached herself to a literary group, her increased contributions to *Canadian Poetry Magazine* during Birney's editorship (1946–48)¹⁶ and to *Contemporary Verse* after 1945 would suggest her more intimate and enduring sympathies with poets and editors on the west coast. With the disintegration of Montreal little-magazine culture after the mass resignation of editors from *Northern Review* in 1947, Waddington would find herself returning to the poetry magazines where she had first published in the early 1940s. Like Page, Waddington would benefit from Crawley's

publication of her poetry in *Contemporary Verse* through the late 1940s and early 1950s. While *Contemporary Verse* would offer Waddington a venue in which she would overcome obstacles to her poetry's social consciousness after 1945, it would provide Page with the primary forum in which she would progress toward her decade of silence after 1956.

IV: Page, Waddington, and their *Contemporary Verse*

As poets then uncertain of their place in Canada's emergent modernist little-magazine culture, Waddington and Page would cast about in the early 1940s in search of sympathetic magazine editors and poets. Both appeared in the early issues of *Contemporary Verse*—Page in the first (September 1941) and second (December 1941) issues, Waddington in the third (March 1942). Page had been introduced to Anne Marriott at the CAA convention in Ste. Anne de Bellevue in 1940. Waddington had met Livesay in Toronto in the spring of 1941 (Waddington, "Apartment" 21), probably not long after the founding committee of *Contemporary Verse* had initiated the plan for a new poetry magazine. Through these early personal contacts with the magazine's founders, Page and Waddington would come to contribute to *Contemporary Verse*. After meeting the *Preview* and *First Statement* groups, however, both published far less frequently in *Contemporary Verse*. Aside from this interval of 1942–45, during which they would establish themselves in the Montreal little magazines, their poetry would appear on a fairly consistent basis in *Contemporary Verse*.

Page's earliest contact with *Contemporary Verse* had been through Marriott (via the CAA), not Crawley; in fact, Page's submission of five poems is listed in her poetry

copy-book of 1940–44 under the heading “Anne,” probably because the new magazine had not yet been named (PKPP, box 1, file 4). From the group of poems Page sent to Marriott, Crawley selected “The Crow” and “Ecce Homo” for the first issue (September 1941); he held “Blackout” for the second (December 1941). Of her first poems submitted to *Contemporary Verse*, but subsequently rejected by Crawley, “Realization” is notable for its anticipation of her poetry written after her move to Montreal in the fall of 1941. And though it never appeared in *Contemporary Verse*, “Realization” foreshadows the subjective, self-reflexive, personative verse she would later contribute to the magazine following her *Preview* period. Its scrutiny of the “personal” is remarkable, as is its self-reflexivity:

[. . .] This is the inside-out, no-corner spared, duster
of forgotten alley ways,
collection of memories: the swift pulse of the slow word.
.....
[. . .] I have drawn back from his findings,
frightened to face the collection
frightened to look upon all that was hidden and old
frightened and shy
for this is more personal—far more of me than my speech is—
and I would escape the disclosure
and run in the night. (PKPP, box 1, file 4)

Preserved in her poetry copy-book of 1940–44, “Realization” is itself undated but

probably (based on its placement in the copy-book) written in late 1940 or early 1941. Unlike the impersonality and objectivity of “The Crow” or “Blackout,” “Realization” problematizes its own restrictive subjectivity and personative mode of communication. With its inward gaze, “Realization” shares an exploration of subjective experience with “Ecce Homo,” though the rejected poem lacks the topical wartime consciousness present in the latter accepted by Crawley. His editorial preference for war themes and imagery is predictably strong in the early issues, as is nostalgia for the antebellum world. This editorial tendency is continued by the publication of “The Traveller” (retitled “Cullen” in Hambleton, ed. 44–47) in the December 1942 issue.

None of these early poems in *Contemporary Verse* would appear in *As Ten As Twenty* (1946). By the time Page came to put together her first collection, Crawley’s editorial tastes were not her only measure, though he had been among the earliest and most valued of her critics when she started to submit to *Contemporary Verse*. Writing to him on 1 December 1941, she accepted his first offer of criticism: “At the moment I am on my own in Montreal knowing practically no one who writes and having no critical eyes scan what I am writing and should welcome anything you have to say. More than anything in this world I would like to be a good poet. . . .” (ACP, box 1, file 20, item 10). Even though Crawley’s responses to Page’s early letters have not been preserved, we may infer from her replies that she appreciated his “unbiased opinion” and praised his editorial standards: “There has been too much kow-towing to personalities, lowering of standards and lack of discrimination shown in editorial policies before” (Page to Crawley, n.d. [c. January 1942]; ACP, box 1, file 20, item 11). Presumably Page took no offence when

Crawley did not publish the poems she enclosed with this letter (“I say ‘poems,’” she offered by way of caveat, “but I fear they are a poor apology—and sent largely as a gesture”). Even if he chose not to publish her poems, he replied with critical admonishments and encouragements, as Page observes in her letter of 9 May 1942: “How grand of you to write to me about the poems. You’ve no idea what a stimulating thing it has been—this contact with you, even across so many miles. It is doubly good to get praises from someone who is unafraid to damn” (ACP, box 1, file 20). By the time Page was writing to thank Crawley for his criticism, however, she had joined the *Preview* group; her contact with him and *Contemporary Verse* would predictably recede once she could rely on critical feedback from the editorial members of *Preview*.

With the arrival of *First Statement* in August 1942, Page would have even fewer reasons to seek Crawley’s criticism. Accompanying her submission of new poems to *Contemporary Verse* on 20 October 1942, Page informed Crawley that she had herself turned critic and would be publishing in that month’s *Preview* “a rather superficial summary-cum-criticism of the contemporary scene which touches briefly on Contemporary Verse” (n.d. [20 October 1942]; ACP, box 1, file 20, item 9). I have already noted in the previous chapter the substance of Page’s criticism of *Contemporary Verse* in her article “Canadian Poetry 1942,” and Crawley’s response to *Preview* in the June 1942 issue of *Contemporary Verse* (see chapter 2: 114–15). Judging from Page’s reply to Crawley in December 1942, his reception of her criticism of *Contemporary Verse* was “generous” (n.d. [December 1942]; ACP, box 1, file 20, item 8). As Crawley says of Page’s article in his letter to Waddington on 13 November 1942, “She is refreshing in her

attack and manner. . . . At any rate she gives C[ontemporary] V[erse] credit of a BOO at the old writing and when I think of the ammunition from which it was made I am hap[p]y that it did get to be more than a sputt[e]ring PSSSS" (MWP, box 45, file 12). Just as Page praised Crawley for being "unafraid to damn," so he applauded her critical acumen.

By the time Page submitted "The Traveller" and "The Sleeper" to *Contemporary Verse* on 20 October 1942, she had already sent the latter to *First Statement* in August and both to *Partisan Review* in September. With his acceptance of "The Traveller," Crawley returned "The Sleeper"—which Page apologetically informed him had recently and, in view of her stern rebuke of Sutherland in "Canadian Poetry 1942," surprisingly been published in the November 1942 issue of *First Statement*. This pattern indicates that Page was at once attempting to expand her audience and no longer soliciting Crawley's criticism as she had before meeting the *Preview* group. Perhaps by way of excuse for not submitting any new poems, she told him in her letter of December 1942 that she had encountered difficulties writing: "I find it more and more difficult to write—let alone do anything half way satisfying. Whether it's the times or the job or what, I don't know" (ACP, box 1, file 20, item 8). To consult her log of submissions recorded in her poetry copy-book of 1940–44, we find that Page had suspended her submission of poems after 20 October 1942 until 23 January of the new year (PKPP, box 1, file 5).

Given her publication record in 1943, she would also seem to have held off submission of poems to *Contemporary Verse*. In a letter to McLaren written just prior to June 1943 issue, however, Crawley mentions that "Pat [Page] has sent me some poems which she says she does not like but which I think are good and I would like to have them

but if she is not insistent that they are used at once I would prefer to hold them against the [ne]xt issue but if you want some [m]ore for this issue let me know and I would put in one of hers" (n.d. [c. June 1943]; FMP). Crawley goes on to talk about having Page for a visit, which would suggest that she had recently visited the west coast and that her meeting with both himself in Vancouver and McLaren in Victoria likely prompted the contribution of some new poems to *Contemporary Verse*. Apparently Page did not mind that "Average" and "Schizophrenic" were held over until the April 1944 issue. Her continued dislike for "Schizophrenic," however, would result in its exclusion from *As Ten As Twenty*, though she would change her mind about "Average" and include it.

While she submitted poems to *Contemporary Verse* just prior to the June 1943 issue, and though they were held for nearly a year before publication, Page would not publish there again until "Round Trip" in the April 1945 issue. This contribution to *Contemporary Verse* would be her first in nearly two years. Her return to *Contemporary Verse* would coincide with her move from Montreal to Victoria in the fall of 1944, her separation from the *Preview* group, and the termination of *Preview* in early 1945.

Following Page's debut in the fall of 1941, Waddington would publish groups of poems in *Contemporary Verse* on a regular basis between March 1942 and March 1943. Crawley received her first contributions in January 1942, just prior to the late release of the second issue of the magazine. This batch of poems included "The Bond," "Immigrant, Second Generation," and "Ladies"—all of which impressed Crawley and appeared in the March 1942 issue. As he had Page, Crawley asked whether Waddington would mind if he suggested revisions and offered criticism of her poems (Crawley to Waddington, 14

January [1942]; MWP, box 45, file 12). None of the poems included in her second submission impressed Crawley, which prompted him to write her on 11 June 1942 to complain that, in comparison to “The Bond” and “Immigrant,” “these MSS are anaemic” (MWP, box 45, file 12). Of the poems included in her third submission, “Contemporary,” “Shutters,” and “Sorrow” would appear in the September 1942 issue; he asked for revisions to “Uncertainties” (also among this batch), but she decided to publish it without change in the January 1943 issue of *Preview* (Crawley to Waddington, 14 July [1942]; MWP, box 45, file 12). Delays in the production of *Contemporary Verse* during the fall of 1942 compelled Crawley to return his cache of Waddington’s poems on 13 November 1942, perhaps in accordance with her request, along with his apologies: “I am sending back the MSS I have not used and hope the delay in return will not and has not been too inconveniencing or costly to y[ou]. I am pleased to hear of the acceptances of your work in other publications and my best wishes are with you for larger and grander fields” (MWP, box 45, file 12). Presumably Waddington had informed him of the acceptance of “Investigator” and “Ballet” by *Providence Journal* in Rhode Island, though his comments also anticipate her first appearances in *Preview* and *First Statement* and continued publication in the *Canadian Forum* and *Canadian Poetry Magazine*.

During the course of 1943, Waddington would indeed expand her audience through such diversified publications. With the exception of her appearance in *Providence Journal*, she had published only in *Contemporary Verse* in 1942. Crawley’s response to her latest submission in his letter of 8 February 1943 suggests that she had been considering the need for “larger and grander fields” for her poetry. While her “I Love My

Love with an S” and “Proposal for Integration toward a Common End” would appear in the March 1943 issue of *Contemporary Verse*, she had other ideas for the magazine on her mind. Following on the heels of Livesay’s proposals in the spring and summer of 1942 (see chapter 2: 149), Waddington’s suggestion of a merger among the new little magazines was met with resistance from Crawley:

It seems to me that the work the three new publications, C[ontemporary] V[erse], Preview and First Statement are doing is well worth while and the doing. But it does not seem that the time is ripe for a fusion of the three into a national magazine for the poetical and prose efforts of Canadian writers. That may come, indeed I look forward to such a magazine but think just now more is to be done by separate publications with their own individual slant and preferences. D[orothy] L[ivesay] disagrees with me in that in a valuable [sic] manner, but so far has failed to convince me. (MWP, box 45, file 12)

In concert with Livesay, Waddington disagreed with Crawley. She wrote to him after her spring 1943 visit to Montreal to inform him of the activities among the magazine groups, to which he replied on 15 June 1943:

I did so enjoy and chuckle at your pertinent observations on the groups of literati you ran into in Montreal. I had been wanting to know more of the First Statement lot other than what I could gather about them elsewhere and was greatly interest[ed] in what you told me. I like F[irst] S[tatement] and get a good deal of pleasure from the content and in making my own criticisms of the work most of which I find very wo[r]thwhile and interesting and thoroughly cheering, not in

content, perhaps[,] but in showing what is being done by the younger writers and bringing to conviction almost my old [h]ope that something really worthy will come of the efforts to build a contemporary Canadian writing. (MWP, box 45, file 12)

We can only speculate on Waddington's report on the Montreal group, though we might suspect Crawley felt that she might balance her involvement in the Toronto *First Statement* group with assistance to *Contemporary Verse*. "I cannot see that with the similar objects and in the less extensive field that C[ontemporary] V[erse] can in any way do more than help F[irst] S[tatement] and that we should not be able to go on workin[g] in our own ways to the common good," Crawley observed in his 15 June 1943 letter to her, then asked, "would you represent C[ontemporary] V[erse] in the east for us?" (MWP, box 45, file 12). Waddington must have replied in the negative, since she was never named as a Toronto agent in the magazine, though she may have spread news of *Contemporary Verse* on an informal basis.

Crawley's conditional acceptance of Waddington's poems "Prairie" and "Fragments from Autobiography" in his 15 June 1943 letter was followed by a long delay in publication, partly owing to his request for revisions of the former. Both would eventually appear in the April 1944 issue. Writing to Waddington on 15 December 1943, Crawley approved of the revised version of "Prairie," but added his disapproval of her most recent batch of poems: "There is something in all the others that does not completely satisfy me and I find them uneven and [u]nfinished and bodiless" (MWP, box 45, file 12). Waddington replied by sending copies of the first issue of *Direction*, perhaps adding that

her poems would be appearing in the next issue (see Crawley to Waddington, 9 February [1944]; MWP, box 45, file 12). Whether or not any of the poems that Crawley had deemed “uneven and [u]nfinished and bodiless” were among those she published in *Direction* is uncertain. What is certain is that Waddington would find other outlets for her current poems. She would publish nothing else in *Contemporary Verse* before leaving for Philadelphia in the fall of 1944.

Waddington’s period of withdrawal from *Contemporary Verse* (April 1944–January 1945) invites comparison with her ten-month absence from *First Statement* following the publication of “Sympathy” (February 1944–December 1944). On looking at her “Fragments from Autobiography,” published in the April 1944 issue of *Contemporary Verse*, one recognizes the crises of subjectivity, sympathy, and social solidarity represented in her *First Statement* poetry of 1943–44. In the first section of “Fragments,” her social-worker speaker contemplates the disparities between the conditions of gender inequality under capitalism and the prospect of women’s emancipation in the Soviet Union:

I would have been a well-adjusted gal by now
 If I had been born in the Soviet Union.
 Driving a truck, a tractor or an aeroplane
 Captain of a tug-boat, first mate at least,
 Champion sniper, or cook for a guerilla band,
 Who knows, maybe a writer of plays
 Sometime honored citizen of the republic,
 But certainly not this social worker

Divided by double-guilt, public and private. (*Collected Poems* 363)

Here the persona's ironies may undermine her political and gendered sympathies, but her social conscience still seizes her with socialist-feminist "double-guilt." Along with her speaker's declaration of socialist solidarity in "Now We Steer" and her speakers' failures of sympathy in "Social Worker" and "Indoors," her social worker's "double-guilt" in "Fragments" was suppressed by Sutherland in *Green World*.¹⁷ The omission of "Fragments" in particular is symbolic of Sutherland's masculinist editorial practices, highlighted by the exclusion of a poem in which her social-worker persona imagines a utopian (albeit ironized) socialist state of gender equality. Its publication in *Contemporary Verse* is, at the same time, symbolic of Crawley's editorial advocacy on behalf of so many women poets in Canada, Waddington among them.

Waddington's only contact with *Contemporary Verse* after her move to Philadelphia was through Livesay. "What can I do with the Crawleys," she wrote to Livesay on 25 January 1945, "when Alan owes me a letter? Is C[ontemporary] V[erse] still extant?" (DLP-QU, box 5a, file 1). Waddington's three poems in the January 1945 issue—"Problem," "Where," and "Circles"—were not sent to *Contemporary Verse*, but to Livesay. Crawley wrote to Waddington on 1 February 1945 to inform her that he had received some of her poems from Livesay and to ask if he could include a selection in the immediately forthcoming, and behind-schedule, January issue (MWP, box 45, file 12). Following another lapse in correspondence, Crawley contacted Waddington on 2 July 1945 to complain of not hearing from her and to congratulate her on news of the forthcoming *Green World* (MWP, box 45, file 12). He ended his letter with a request for

more poems, to which she replied by sending “adagio” and “heart cast out”—both published in the October 1945 issue. Whatever minor rift that had arisen between Waddington and Crawley prior to departure for Philadelphia had been levelled, thanks in part to Livesay’s intervention on behalf of *Contemporary Verse*.

Though Crawley was a tough critic of Waddington’s poetry in the early to mid-1940s, his rejections of some poems and requests for revisions of others would not ultimately deter her from contributing to *Contemporary Verse*. Following her break with Montreal little-magazine communities, Crawley’s criticisms would help her to develop the sympathetic poetic sensibility he praised in his review of *Green World*, namely her “keen interest in people and deep compassion for their physical and mental ills” (Rev. of *Green World* 18). If in the early 1940s she struggled to balance the urge to withdraw into subjective green worlds against the desire to communicate human sympathy, in the later 1940s and early 1950s she managed to co-ordinate these tendencies in a personalist mode of socially compassionate and humanitarian poetry. Her poetry of this period would follow in the post-leftist, post-proletarian vein of Livesay’s “poems for people.” This progression in Waddington’s poetry is evident in several sequences she published in *Contemporary Verse*: “Three Poems for My Teacher” (April 1946), “Three Poems to a Pupil” (fall 1948), and “St. Antoine Street” (spring 1950). Along with the majority of her poems published in *Contemporary Verse* during the later 1940s and early 1950s, these sequences were later collected in *The Second Silence*.

Though the *First Statement* and *Contemporary Verse* groups held considerable sway over Waddington’s poetry of the early to mid-1940s, it is too much of a stretch to

suggest that after 1945 any *one* magazine, editor, or editorial collective exercised influence over the development of her poetry or poetics. Having absented herself from Montreal little-magazine culture by the mid-1940s, she would continue to publish widely in Canadian and American periodicals, but by the time *The Second Silence* appeared in 1955, her audience would seem to have forgotten her. Her second volume received mediocre reviews from respected critics, including George Woodcock, Milton Wilson, and Northrop Frye.¹⁸ Tepid critical reception of *The Second Silence* was accompanied by lacklustre sales, suggesting that her withdrawal from little-magazine culture had, in telling ways, an impact on her poetry and its readership.¹⁹ In spite of her critics, Waddington would persevere to write, publish, and collect her poems through the mid-1950s and beyond.

Just as *Contemporary Verse* played a prominent role in Waddington's poetic development at mid-century, so it would allow Page to expand the range of her poetry and poetics over the latter half of the 1940s and into the early 1950s. *Contemporary Verse* would also offer her the support of a little-magazine community. While Page held no official position in magazine culture after her resignation from *Northern Review* in 1947, her personal contact with the *Contemporary Verse* group more than compensated for the loss of the *Preview* group and Montreal magazine culture of the early 1940s. By the 1950s, *Contemporary Verse* would provide her only outlet for publication; even after its termination in early 1953, she would solicit editorial assistance from Crawley and McLaren.

With Page living in Victoria from late 1944 until June 1946,²⁰ she had regular

contact at that time with the *Contemporary Verse* group, especially with Crawley and McLaren. Owing to their close quarters, we might expect that little in the way of correspondence passed between them, and none has survived. Instead of private exchanges of manuscripts and letters between Page and Crawley, the only record of their interaction from this period is in *Contemporary Verse* itself. Crawley's editorial relationship to Page would enter the public forum of critical reviews. His review of her poems in Ronald Hambleton's anthology *Unit of Five* (1944) in the January 1945 issue is pointed: "I think the selection of poems by P. K. Page is not the best that could be made. In too many of them there is too strong an impression of cold analytical detachment unwarmed by sympathetic understanding, so that the people of who [sic] she writes are lifeless and remembered only as the woman, the surgeon, they, them, he and she" ("Editor's Note" [1945] 15). Crawley's objection to the selection is telling: of her dozen poems, only one ("Cullen") had previously appeared in *Contemporary Verse*, while seven came from *Preview*. Here the criticism and characterization of her impersonalist poetics is closely related to his disapproval of the selection in that "Cullen" alone stands out from the mass of anonymous figures inhabiting her poems in *Unit of Five*. His review of *As Ten As Twenty* in the October 1946 issue again takes issue with her impersonalist poetics: "It is always the strange aspects of life which capture Miss Page, and her preoccupation with human behaviour, and intensification of ordinary gestures and mannerisms often produce a record only, from which no interpretation is made. She often avoids going below the surface of these aspects, and is content to be only a commentator detached and impersonal." The review concludes with a gesture toward her future poems and poetics:

“In this book there is the promise that the writer will produce the rarest kind of poetry, the poetry which flowers out of experience, out of personality, into the immutable and absolute” (“Editor’s Notes” 18).²¹

Not until the Summer 1948 issue would Page contribute to *Contemporary Verse* the kind of “poetry which flowers out of experience, out of personality.” If her poetry from the early 1940s emphasized a poetics of impersonality, her poetry from the late 1940s shifted toward a poetics of personality. How much we may attribute this development to Crawley’s criticism is uncertain, though we can be sure that Page was aware of his reviews. Certainly the gendered self-consciousness of her speaker in “Meeting,” published in the Summer 1948 issue of *Contemporary Verse*, responds to Crawley’s critical desiderata. It is a self-reflexive poem about the gender of personality, the expression of a divided self:

Still, in his sleeping head I am his love,

still move like water in his dreams—

a woman—

who daily drown my sex

to make it a swimmer.

.....

I live, unwilled, the way he moves me, speak

in symbols fashioned from his symptoms, yet

in him, I am more whole than in myself. . . .

Here masculine and feminine meet in the division of gender, the cohabited self. Page’s

persona is feminized, yet contained by a masculine body (“In head and heart / of him who held me, find me, / there I live”) and discourse (“I see my figure through his eyes”). This is, then, the condition and conundrum of the female poet, particularly one who has practiced a poetics of impersonality, occluding her self behind masks and excising her “I.” “Meeting” is her first self-reflexive exploration of the gendered construction of the self since her first forays into a poetics of impersonality in the early 1940s. It is a transitional poem, a movement away from the impersonalist poetics of her Montreal period. Just as none of those early pieces (c. fall 1941–spring 1942) in her poetry copy-book was ever published, “Meeting” was left uncollected until *The Hidden Room* in 1997 (rpt. as “Find Me” 2: 42). Perhaps its primary value, like that of her early experimentation with ideas of impersonality, is its self-reflexive interrogation of her poetics. As Trehearne has said of Page’s poems in *The Metal and the Flower*, her reader may “feel entrapped in a *mise-en-abyme* of self-reflexive gazing” (*Montreal* 93). That feeling is, evidently, even more pronounced in those poems left out of her second volume.

By the time “Meeting” appeared in *Contemporary Verse*, Page had been living in Ottawa and working at the NFB for two years. During that time she resigned from the editorial board of *Northern Review*,²² though she would retain ties with the former *Preview* group. In late 1947, she wrote to Crawley about the mass resignation of “the old *Preview* gang,” her personal exasperation with “Sutherland and his works,” and her disagreement with his introduction to the anthology *Other Canadians* (n.d. [c. October–November 1947]; ACP, box 1, file 20, item 16). Page’s subsequent letters to Crawley document her attempts to consolidate the former *Preview* group against Sutherland and

Northern Review: “The chances are (slim as yet) that the exPreviewites will begin a new magazine come the New Year. In view of the fact that Sutherland has our subscriber’s list & will not give it up we were wondering if you’d be generous & a lamb & let us have yours. Would you?” (n.d. [c. October–November 1947]; ACP, box 1, file 20). In the meantime, Crawley and McLaren would agree to offer the *Contemporary Verse* list to the “exPreviewites,” but Page would follow up with a letter on 11 January 1948 to decline their offer: “Between us, I don’t think we’ll ever need the list. . . . A lot hinges on whether or not Here & Now is good. If it is we shall give it our support & and not try anything of our own” (ACP, box 1, file 20). The eventual disinclination among former *Preview* members to organize a new magazine and the demise of the Toronto-based magazine *here and now* in June 1949 after only four issues,²³ however, would leave Page disillusioned with the state of magazines in the Ottawa–Toronto–Montreal triangle.

Following the disappearance of *here and now*, Page would channel all of her poems through Crawley, McLaren, and *Contemporary Verse*. Beginning with her five poems in the Spring 1950 issue, Page’s contributions would oscillate between modes of impersonality and personation. Impersonalist poems from this issue such as “Probationer” and “The Map” are highly self-reflexive and seek to question a poetics of impersonality, especially its tenets of objectivity and anonymity. Others published in this issue, namely “Summer” and “The Verandah,” employ a subjective, personative mode appropriate to the pastoral lyric. But their pastoralism is not, as in the poems from her Montreal period, ironized or juxtaposed to conditions of urban alienation. Rather, they envision the pastoral topos that she had identified in her 1946 poem “Subjective Eye” as “the green

world” (“Subjective”). For Page, the green world is subjective, its circumference bounded by the lyric self; it is, as is Waddington’s green world, a “place of withdrawal” (Berger 13). Just as Page’s green world is imagined in “Summer” in terms of her speaker’s interiorization of a pastoral topos, so it is presented in “The Verandah” in a similar manner:

Each day as I awaken I see the sun
 spread like the ghost of gold-leaf on the verandah,

 an outside area supported by pillars
 which are not as bright but not as fragile as flowers
 and which are as everyday as a kitchen table
 but which are difficult to hold with the fingers
 being more inside the self than flowers or sun. (4)

This internalized, self-reflexive vision is, however, counterposed to its opposite in “His Dream,” also published in the Spring 1950 issue. “His Dream” envisions the self externalized, where the dreamer projects his gaze, imposed upon a pastoral topos as a surrealistic “coloured stare”; but when his projection is resisted by a woman (“She stood beside him but refused to take / what she was offered, even with a choice” [*Hidden 2*: 43]), his dream vision is withdrawn. That resistance of the dreamer’s projection is indicative of Page’s aesthetic preference at the time: rather than project her self outward, she would withdraw into her green world, the subjective “I/eye” of the lyric self. The fact that it is a woman who refuses a male dreamer’s projection is itself significant, particularly

in view of a roughly contemporary poem such as “Meeting” in which the feminine self is “unwilled,” and subject to a masculine will.

Of the five poems Page contributed to this issue, “The Verandah” and “His Dream” were passed over when she put together *The Metal and the Flower*. However she assessed their faults in retrospect, “His Dream” and “The Verandah” nonetheless exhibit her oscillation between a poetics of impersonality and a poetics of personality, and between objective and subjective modes, in the early 1950s. We continue to witness this shifting back and forth among the poems she published in *Contemporary Verse* in 1951 and 1952. Of these poems, only “Migration” and “The Photograph,” published in the Summer 1951 issue, were omitted from *The Metal and the Flower*. Yet they, too, are typical of her alternating impersonalist (“Migration”) and personative (“The Photograph”) tendencies. Also among these poems, “Photos of a Salt Mine,” “Portrait of Marina,” and “The Event” are exemplary of the impersonalist portraiture included in *The Metal and the Flower*, while “Incubus,” “Poem,” and “Elegy” are representative of the personative verse present in the volume. As McLaren said of *The Metal and the Flower* in her 4 January 1955 letter to Page: “We talked once about the arrangement of poems in a collection. It was absorbingly interesting to see the new poems and the ones I knew fit into a sort of pattern of . . . sensibility [. . .] a way of perceiving and feeling. The subjective and the objective all making a whole that is personal” (PKPP, box 8, file 16). McLaren’s emphasis upon the “personal” in *The Metal and the Flower* thus counterbalances Crawley’s criticism of the “impersonal” in *As Ten As Twenty*. However, that personal–impersonal balance would shift toward the impersonal after the publication of *The Metal and the*

Flower.

This subjective–objective “whole” manifests itself in the impersonalist poetics that Page articulated in the final two poems she published in the 1950s: the “two Giovanni poems,” as McLaren calls “Giovanni and the Indians” and “After Rain” (McLaren to Page, 19 April 1956; PKPP, box 8, file 16). Even though *Contemporary Verse* had folded just prior to her move to Australia in 1953, Page had asked if McLaren would still be willing to act as a kind of personal editor and agent, that is, to critique and send out poems for publication in North American periodicals. McLaren agreed to this arrangement in her letter of 26 March 1956—adding that she would also solicit Crawley’s advice—and sent off her critique of Page’s first batch of poems on 19 April 1956. Page responded with revised versions—of both Giovanni poems, among others—and another group of poems. “The new poems interested me,” McLaren informed Page on 20 May 1956, “because they are so utterly different from your work . . . what I think of as your idiom and image” (original ellipses; PKPP, box 8, file 16). In her initial response to McLaren, Page had herself expressed concern about what she perceived to be an idiomatic shift in contemporary poetry: “I don’t know what is at the root of this excessive uncertainty that has held me—Australia perhaps, and the current poetic idiom so different from my own” (n.d. [c. May 1956]; PKPP, box 8, file 16). We may perceive Page’s uncertainty concerning her own poetic idiom in the eclectic batches of poems she sent to McLaren. From these batches, McLaren selected a group with what she believed to be a coherent idiom—“This Frieze of Birds,” “When Bird-like, Air Surrounded,” “The Glass Air,” “Blowing,” “Portrait,” and both Giovanni poems—and sent it simultaneously to the

Tamarack Review and *Poetry*.²⁴ Of this group, only “After Rain” and “Giovanni” were published in the November 1956 issue of *Poetry*.

McLaren’s decision to send Page’s new poems to *Poetry* is, in itself, but a continuation of Crawley’s editorial advice and practice, and, in effect, a surrogate publication in the magazine that had once served as the model for *Contemporary Verse* (see chapter 2: 106–10). It is fitting that McLaren should have been the one to broker the publication of Page’s last two poems prior to her period of silence, that this editor who identified the objective–subjective “whole” of Page’s poetry and poetics should see her two Giovanni poems into print. Taken together, “Giovanni” and “After Rain” embody the objective–subjective dialectic in which Page’s impersonalist poetry and poetics had been engaged since the early 1940s when she first came into contact with the *Preview* and *Contemporary Verse* groups. However, her Giovanni poems have since been separated by critics interested in “After Rain” but not “Giovanni”; this trend of critical attention to one but not the other has released the dialectical tension between the pair. In order to reanimate the dialectic, then, we might read the crisis of subjectivity in “After Rain” in relation to the crisis of objectivity in “Giovanni.”²⁵ Such a reading attends to what McLaren calls the “whole” of Page’s early poetics, and its terminal crises.

Both poems represent acute problems in her impersonalist poetics. “After Rain” presents a poet-in-crisis as she withdraws into her subjective green world, unable to communicate or sympathize with her gardener Giovanni as he surveys the ruined garden (see Relke 26; Trehearne, *Montreal* 41). She opens with a catalogue of garden images, then pauses for a self-reflexive critique of such “female whimsy”: “I see already that I lift

the blind / upon a woman's bedroom of the mind" ("After Rain" 100). This "self-chastisement," as Page explained it to McLaren (n.d. [c. May 1956]; PKPP, box 8, file 16), is followed by two more stanzas of garden imagery, punctuated by another self-critique: "I suffer shame in all these images." That "recognition of the depersonalizing effects of such an impersonal aesthetic," as Killian observes (97), announces the poet-persona's crisis of subjectivity. Even as she cultivates her image garden, the poet-persona observes that her shame is rooted in her inability to sympathize with Giovanni: "I find his ache exists beyond my rim, / then almost weep to see a broken man / had satisfied my whim" ("After Rain" 101). That "whim" is a verbal echo and reiteration of her "female whimsy," which she believes to be the cause of her shameful act of image-making and the source of her lack of sympathy. Apparently Page's autocritical gestures failed to satisfy McLaren, since her objection to the repeated critique of "female whimsy" in the poem would prompt Page to excise the final stanza: "I feel what is said in it is surely implied in what has gone before and it seems to me to drop in poetic level . . . dangerously close to women's magazine emotion and thinking" (original ellipses; McLaren to Page, 19 April 1956 [PKPP, box 8 file 16]).²⁶ As it appears in *Poetry*, the poem closes without the self-reflexive statement of a new poetics, but instead with an invocation: "O choir him birds, and let him come to rest / within this beauty as one rests in love" ("After Rain" 101). No longer in a mood of self-chastisement, the poet entreats the birds to communicate with Giovanni because she cannot. Ironically, then, her invocation of the birds reiterates her own crises of sympathy and communication.

These crises are echoed in the opening lines of "Giovanni," where the Indians "call

to pass the time with Giovanni / and speak an English none can understand.” Unlike “After Rain,” “Giovanni” does not sustain a metapoetic critique of the poet’s apparent failures of sympathy and communication. We may, however, detect certain self-reflexive ironies in the difficult image-manner of the poem. Perhaps the Indians might ask of the poet whether hers is “an English none can understand.” Even Page chastized herself for what she called the poem’s “illegitimate obscurities” (Page to McLaren, n.d. [c. May 1956]) in response to McLaren’s commentary in her letter of 19 April 1956: “Giovanni and the Indians is (from this continent) a bright and strange (foreign) and objectively delightful painting. Being objective I feel that it is most necessary that it should be completely clear. . . . I can’t help the feeling that the poem would be better if there were no groping whatever in that so-near-the-beginning verse . . . if the picture were sharply clear and arresting to the uninformed and unready eye” (PKPP, box 8, file 16). McLaren’s sense of the poem’s objectivity demands that even the unfamiliar should appear familiar, that the poetic act of perception should, as she said of another of Page’s Australia poems, create “a fusion that will tie the familiar and the strange and convey it to the uninformed” (McLaren to Page, 20 May 1956; PKPP, box 8, file 16). What McLaren misses is the poem’s enactment of defamiliarization, its communication of the sense of estrangement that the poet encounters upon seeing a new world. The foregrounding of “foreign” imagery in “Giovanni” indicates that the poet is detached from her gardener and the Indians, and that her objectivity in fact exposes her ethnocentric eye:

Giovanni trims the weeping willow

his ladder teetering in the yellow leaves.

They make him teeter even when he's steady:
 their tatters blow and catch him through the trees;
 those scraps of colours flutter against stucco
 and flash like foreign birds;

and eyes look out at eyes till Giovanni's
 are lowered swiftly—one among them is
 perhaps the Evil Eye. ("Giovanni" 101–02)

Such ethnocentric representation of the indigenous and the aboriginal suggests the poet's lack of sympathy with her environment—that is, her estrangement. The objectification of the Indians that closes the poem reinforces such a reading:

One, on a cycle, like a ragged sail
 that luffs and sags, comes tacking up the hill.

 And one, his turban folded like a jug,
 and frocked, walks brittle on his blanco'd legs—
 a bantam cockerel. ("Giovanni" 102)

The depersonalized portraiture of the Indians is an effect of Page's impersonal poetics. Like the representation of Giovanni in "After Rain," the Indians exist only as aestheticized objects, subject to the impersonal poet's whim. But in contrast to the objective and impersonal poet, Giovanni possesses a means of communication with the Indians, a non-verbal expression of sympathy—that is, an offering of flowers. The simplicity of his

offering (“hyacinths, tulips, waterblue and yellow”) undermines the complexity of the poet’s impersonal image-manner. Similarly, Giovanni’s verbal gesture that closes the poem may not be grammatically perfect, but it is an English all can understand, a declaration of human sympathy for and fraternal solidarity with the Indians: “‘Good fellow’ . . . ‘Much good fellow’” (“Giovanni” 102). Giving him the last word, as it were, Page calls into faint question the ethics of impersonality, gesturing toward the personal, speech-based idiom of Giovanni.

Giovanni’s declaration would be Page’s last public statement for ten years. Following the publication of the two Giovanni poems in November 1956, she would disappear from print until the publication of *Cry Ararat!* in 1967. In view of the foregoing analysis of the failures of sympathy and communication in “After Rain” and “Giovanni,” Trehearne’s assessment of Page’s period of silence and its relationship to her “ethics of metaphor” is apt: “she had recognized the dissonance between an elaborate verbal style and desire for human sympathy and solidarity . . . and I believe found their incommensurability an utter impasse to her verbal creativity’s continuation at that time” (*Montreal* 98). Given Page’s decision to stop publishing for a decade, this careful assessment seems entirely sound.

As early as July 1958, however, Page would attempt to enact the new poetics imagined in the final stanza of the original and *Cry Ararat!* versions of “After Rain”.²⁷

And choir me too to keep my heart a size
larger than seeing, unsexed by each
bright glimpse of beauty striking like a bell,

so that the whole may toll,
 its meaning shine
 clear of the myriad images that still—
 do what I will—encumber its pure line. (*Hidden 2*: 110)

In a draft of her unpublished poem of July 1958 entitled “Could I Write a Poem Now?,” Page would restate the critique of her effusive image-manner. Recalling the poet’s “shame in all these images” in “After Rain,” her poet-persona in “Could I Write” confesses that “the image derives / purely from guilt” (PKPP, box 3, file 17). In a revised version of the same poem, Page expands upon her ethics of the image, claiming that the image itself is

[. . .] a matter of guilt
 having believed
 (and pledged my troth)
 art is the highest loyalty
 and to let
 a talent lie about unused
 is to break faith. (PKPP, box 3, file 17)

As are so many of Page’s self-reflexive poems about her poetics, “Could I Write a Poem Now?” is most valuable for its insight into a period of crisis and transition. Its economic image-manner and phrasing indicates its attempt at the enactment of a new poetics. And unlike “After Rain,” the poet-persona’s image-making is neither profuse nor gender conscious; she does not feel shame for “female whimsy” or impersonal aesthetics, but rather guilt for abandoning poetry altogether. The poet’s guilt may also indicate a degree

of social consciousness, if only because the decision to “break faith” entails a severing of social commitments and a retreat into the self. Page’s conundrum is obvious: how do you write a poem about not writing poetry? The result is the articulation of her poet-persona’s crisis of faith: in order to create “art,” she must forsake her faith in poetry. If, as the poem suggests, the creation of the poetic image is at once an expression of guilt and an act of faith, then this poem is a private confession, a *mea culpa*. Yet the source of the poet-persona’s guilt and the true object of her faith are concealed until the final couplet, where her confessions regarding poetry and the poetic image are supplanted by an allusion to visual art: “But how do you write a Chagall? / It boils down to that” (PKPP, box 3, file 17). As Page relates in her *Brazilian Journal*, she started working in visual media in June 1957 (59); her poem of July 1958 therefore acts as a segue from verbal to visual media. This painter’s confession is, as she reflected upon a passage in her journal from this period, “an attempt to understand [her] poetic silence, this translation into paint” (*Brazilian* 195). Where the poet of 1956 would invoke the birds in “After Rain” to communicate her aesthetics through a new poetics, the visual artist of 1958 would call upon the art of Marc Chagall to represent her aesthetics in a new medium. Her invocation of Chagall is, in the end, a declaration of faith in a religious and subjective art.

The reply to Page’s question, “how do you write a Chagall?” would have to wait nearly a decade until the publication of her title poem in *Cry Ararat! Poems New and Selected* (1967). The extent to which she achieved the synthesis of the objective–subjective “whole” of her poetics in “Cry Ararat!” is beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is enough to suggest that its “focus of the total I” (*Hidden* 2: 186) envisions that

integration (see Trehearne, *Montreal* 103–04). After the oscillation between objective and subjective modes prior to her period of silence, the formulation of a new poetics in “Cry Ararat!” represents the resolution of crises in her early poetry. Her new poetics is, at least in part, an accumulated product of her affiliations with the *Preview* and *Contemporary Verse* groups. In particular, the editorial and critical interventions of Crawley and McLaren appear to have had a lasting impact on the advancement of Page’s poetics, long after the demise of *Contemporary Verse*. It is fitting, then, that Page should have named Crawley as one of the co-dedicatees of *Cry Ararat!*

Page’s nod to Crawley acknowledges the importance of 1940s and early-1950s little-magazine culture to the development of her early poetry, some of which she collected for the first time in *Cry Ararat!* It is equally telling that the second dedicatee should be her husband, Arthur Irwin. Following their marriage and his appointment to Australia as an ambassador in 1953, she would leave Canada and the little-magazine communities that had sustained her poetry through the 1940s and early 1950s. Though important to Page’s biography and to the gendered contexts of her poetry, it is too reductive to conclude that her duties as an ambassador’s wife were the primary determining factors in her decreased poetic creativity in the 1950s. In fact, her difficulties in putting together a manuscript of sufficient length for her second book would arise several years prior to her departure from Canada; these years of poetic frustration during her Ottawa and Australia periods are well documented in her correspondence concerning *The Metal and the Flower* with editors Sybil Hutchison and Jack McClelland between April 1950 and July 1954 (see PKPP, box 15, file 9). *The Metal and the Flower* eventually

appeared at the mid-point of a period of diminished productivity following the demise of *Contemporary Verse*, a four-year period during which she would publish nothing in periodicals and commence her withdrawal from little-magazine culture. Coincident with news of her imminent move to Australia in early 1953, Page would write to Crawley with her views on the end of *Contemporary Verse*: “I cannot help but feel that a part of me dies with it. It has been of tremendous value & comfort to me & to many like me. But if it is to end, let it end” (ACP, box 1, file 20, item 22). It would appear that, indeed, a part of her had died with *Contemporary Verse*. Added to the aesthetic crises in her poetry of the mid-1950s, the collapse of that modernist little-magazine culture would herald her decade of silence and transition to a new poetics in *Cry Ararat!*

Where Page maintained contact with *Contemporary Verse*'s editors after 1952–53, Waddington sought alternate editors and venues for her poetry after the magazine ceased operation. Although *Contemporary Verse* received all but one of her poems published in the 1950s prior to its final issue, Waddington would not seek or receive editorial advice from either Crawley or McLaren after her poems appeared in the Winter–Spring 1951–52 issue. Waddington did not have the same personal attachments to the *Contemporary Verse* editors. Her withdrawal from little-magazine communities had taken place after the publication of *Green World* in 1945. The choice to distance herself from the Montreal magazine groups coincided with her decisions to raise her children and, at the same time, to teach and practice social work. These biographical circumstances could be adduced in a reading of the gendered contexts of her poetry after 1945, but this would tell us no more about her willed detachment from the personalities and masculinist editorial practices of

Montreal little-magazine culture. The literary culture that gave Waddington a cold welcome when she published *The Second Silence* in 1955 was not the little-magazine culture she had known in 1945. Together with the folding of *Contemporary Verse* in 1952–53, the fall of *Northern Review* in 1956 signalled that modernist little-magazine culture in Canada had entered a period of transition. By 1956 Sutherland was dead and with him went *Northern Review* and the last remnant of the little-magazine culture in which both Waddington and Page had found their early poetry's audience.

Chapter 4

EDITING WOMEN: THE MAKING OF MODERN MAGAZINE CULTURE IN CANADA, 1926–56

I: Culture in the Making

Just as the early poetry and poetics of Livesay, Marriott, Page, and Waddington coincide with critical and transitional events in leftist and/or modernist magazine cultures, so the histories of other women editors of modern literary, arts, and cultural-interest magazines from the same period follow analogous narratives of crisis and transition. These “other” little magazines and the “other” women responsible for their editing participate equally in the making of a modern literary culture in Canada. Women’s editorial construction of these magazines is informed by some common cultural discourses of the period: modernism, leftism, nationalism, and internationalism. Feminism also contributes to women’s editorial outlook at this time—though less consistently than these other cultural discourses. Of course, these discursive formations are by no means isolated from one another: for any given magazine, one category of discourse may combine with another (or others) to define its compound cultural orientation. At times these cultural formations become unstable and enter into historical periods of decline and/or change, often coinciding with either the establishment or the termination of a magazine. Downturns in one magazine culture may prefigure the ascendancy of new magazines to fill a perceived void, or the inaccessibility of another magazine culture to a given constituency of authors may signal the need for change and the creation of new magazines. These general cultural trends are certainly not limited to Canadian history, nor restricted to non-commercial literary, arts, and cultural-interest magazines edited by women. Women’s editing of

modernist and leftist little magazines and their advocacy of nationalist and internationalist literatures are, however, distinctive cultural phenomena conspicuously absent from the historical record in Canada. To recognize this absence is to acknowledge a crisis in the writing of Canadian cultural history itself, one that may facilitate a transition in the historiography of English Canada's modernist and leftist literary cultures.

English-Canadian cultural history lacks a comprehensive account of magazine cultures from the early- to mid-twentieth century. Histories of individual magazines, of isolated cultural and political groups, and of literary movements have produced a scattered record, but nothing close to a consolidated cultural history—particularly in the area of women magazine editors. Arranged as a narrative about lesser-known magazine editors that parallels and, on occasion, intersects with the literary histories of Livesay, Marriott, Page, and Waddington, this chapter gestures toward the integration of women poets and editors, and their publications and organizations, into a cultural history. Where appropriate, then, I have noted poems by Page, Waddington, Livesay, and Marriott if they appear in little magazines edited or co-edited by women of this period: Florence Custance of the *Woman Worker* (1926–29), Hilda and Laura Ridley of the *Crucible* (1932–43), Eleanor Godfrey of the *Canadian Forum* (1935–47), Catherine Harmon of *here and now* (1947–49), Myra Lazcheko-Haas of *Impression* (1950–51), Yvonne Agazarian of *pm magazine* (1951–52), Aileen Collins of *CIV/n* (1953–55), and Margaret Fairley of *New Frontiers* (1952–56). My intention here is not, however, so much to recover women's uncollected poems—though they receive brief mention—as to assemble the histories of women editors responsible for the selection of such poems in the contexts of English

Canada's leftist and modernist little-magazine cultures.

For little magazines in Canada, the culminating cultural event of this period took place at mid-century: the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1949–51)—also known as the Massey Commission, so named after its chairman, Vincent Massey. Though the Massey Commission has been at times mythologized as an institution that enabled the consolidation of Canadian cultural nationalism, its published report of 1951 determined that, in the literary field, “Canada has not yet established a national literature” (*Report* 225). These findings document a critical moment in modern Canadian literature, a crisis predicated upon the absence of a coherent national culture. Instead of a national literature, the Massey Commission witnessed a multiplicity of literatures, a heterogeneity of literary discourses and cultures. This heterogeneity was made apparent in the briefs submitted to the Massey Commission by little-magazine editors; these briefs often testify to the economic hardships among little magazines, sometimes presented in the form of budgets, financial statements, and schemes for funding. If modern Canadian literature moves toward a crisis at mid-century, we should consider as well the economic and communicative problems experienced by earlier literary, arts, and cultural groups and their periodicals that anticipate the Massey Commission's findings. Among those magazines principally edited by women in the pre-commission era, such critical situations are prominent, though rarely (if ever) noted in our cultural histories.

These lacunae are conspicuous in the case of those cultural histories that foreground the Massey Commission. Maria Tippett's *Making Culture: English-Canadian*

Institutions and the Arts before the Massey Commission (1990), for instance, ignores much of the activity associated with the emergence of modern literary magazines and magazine cultures. Her ambitious, yet inconsistent, cultural history gives little more (often no more) than passing mention to the *Canadian Bookman*, *Canadian Forum*, *McGill Fortnightly Review*, *Canadian Mercury*, *Masses*, *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, and *New Frontier*. But she affords no space for *Contemporary Verse*, *Preview*, or *First Statement*, to name a few of the prominent little magazines of the period to which she attends. And though her study recognizes the importance of women as founders and members of “art, literary, and dramatic societies and schools of music, art, dramatic expression, and elocution” and as “private patrons” (103), she passes over those arts, literary, and cultural magazines with which women were affiliated and of which they were editors. Of those women “making culture” in the literary-historical narrative I have compiled so far, only Livesay is represented by Tippet as a contributor to *Masses* and *New Frontier* (31, 33). Nowhere in her narrative of Canadian culture before the founding of the Massey Commission does she identify women magazine editors. As a gesture toward women little-magazine editors who predate the Massey Commission—Florence Custance, Hilda and Laura Ridley, and Eleanor Godfrey—three sections of the present chapter address their contributions to leftist and modernist literary culture in Canada. Following Tippet’s historical orientation *toward* (but not *about*) the Massey Commission in her cultural history, these three sections build toward the events at mid-century and the contemporaneous little magazines discussed in subsequent sections.

Paul Litt’s *The Muses, the Masses, and the Massey Commission* (1992) is similar

to Tippet's *Making Culture* in its deficient representation of Canadian magazine cultures. His analysis of English-Canadian magazines and their responses to cultural issues during the tenure of the commission and after the publication of its *Report* is restricted to *Maclean's*, *Saturday Night*, and the *Canadian Forum*, with references to others by name only. None of the Canadian literary magazines in circulation at the time enters into his cultural history. Following Tippet, Litt also calls attention to the demography of Canadian cultural organizations, noting that it is "an inarguable fact that women dominated the local cultural associations across the country" (34), but fails to correlate this observation with an analysis of briefs submitted by such groups to the Massey Commission. To his credit, he does incorporate into his findings the briefs from the local and national arms of the CAA, whose membership represented a typical predominance of women in cultural bodies of the period (106, 171, 172). And though he also entertains the views of such groups as the Canadian Writers' Committee (which included Birney, Scott, Livesay, and Page, among others) and the Fiddlehead Poetry Society (which was represented by Fred Cogswell), Litt rationalizes what he perceives to be the commission's diffidence toward such groups in his concluding remarks:

Cultural modernism could not serve the political and social ends that the commissioners demanded of high culture. . . . A variety of marginal and discordant voices were drowning out the harmonious ideal of a wholistic Western culture. These trends were clear enough during the Massey Commission's existence. Its indifference to them again reflected the relative insignificance of the artist, and especially avant-garde artists, among its supporters. (253)

Rather than contest the commission's views, Litt perpetuates indifference by not attending to the voices of cultural modernism represented in briefs submitted by Alan Crawley of *Contemporary Verse*, John Sutherland of First Statement Press, Paul Arthur and Catherine Harmon of *here and now*, and Dorothy Livesay of an independent group of Vancouver poets.¹

Jody Berland's article "Nationalism and the Modernist Legacy: Dialogues with Innis" (2000) resumes where Tippett's and Litt's studies conclude, contradicting the latter and focusing instead on "the formative coalition between nationalism and modernism which arose in Canada in the 1950s" (15). Berland contends that the Massey Commission's nationwide hearings, the publication of the *Massey Report*, and the founding of the Canada Council brought cultural modernism to the forefront of national culture:

These events placed modernist art discourse—nationalist in their rhetorical claims but international(ist) in aesthetic strategies and terms of reference—at the centre of the country's new official culture. Modernism thereby served the apparently antagonistic but actually complementary goals of nationalism and internationalism which motivated and defined Canada as an emergent nation in the postwar period.

(22)

Contrary to Litt's assertion that the Massey Commission believed modernism and cultural nationalism to be incompatible, Berland's thesis is consistent with the *Massey Report's* section on literature and Edward McCourt's supplemental report on literature in *Royal Commission Studies* (1951). In Berland's view, modernism mediated between nationalist

and internationalist cultural discourses. According to the *Massey Report*, Canada's nationalist-internationalist literary culture was undergoing a "crisis of orientation," one attributed to competing views among those who valued the influences of other nations' literatures on Canadian authors and those who feared these influences as forces of cultural imperialism and/or colonialism (225). Trying to avoid taking a side in the debate, the *Massey Report* regretted that the Canadian author "has not yet reached that level of universalism which would permit his [or her] work to awaken echoes outside of our country as well as within it" (226). This attempt to remain neutral in fact reveals the Massey Commission's bias toward so-called cosmopolitan or modernist literature, a cultural discourse that prizes "universalism."

That bias toward cultural modernism was confirmed in McCourt's supplemental report on "Canadian Letters" (1951), in which he advocates giving financial assistance to "avant-garde" or modernist magazines (81). Collected in *Royal Commission Studies*, his report draws particular attention to the modernist little magazines of the 1940s:

There is . . . a periodical of different stamp which appears spasmodically among us, and after a brief and flustered existence disappears—the so-called little magazine. The little magazine is, in nearly all countries, defiantly *avant-garde*; it is precocious, revolutionary, often snobbish. But, significantly, it has fostered a large number of genuinely creative artists, particularly poets. In Canada the little magazine, nearly always the publication of a small, irritatingly self-assured, and genuinely talented group, has for obvious reasons an unusually short and troubled life. But many of our best poets and some of our best prose writers have made

their first appearance in the pages—frequently mimeographed—of *Preview*, *First Statement*, *Contemporary Verse*, *Northern Review*, *Here and Now*, etc. (81–82)

While his report rates their literary value highly and recommends subsidies to alleviate their chronic financial crises, McCourt's conclusions about these magazines somewhat distort the evidence of the briefs submitted to the Massey Commission. "It is popularly believed," he notes, "that the editor of a little magazine would scornfully reject the offer of government aid" (82). While such a statement preserves the myth of the avant-garde's autonomy, it bears little relation to the economic situation of non-commercial magazines which was detailed in briefs submitted by the editors of *Contemporary Verse*, *Fiddlehead*, *Northern Review*, and *here and now*. Judging by *here and now*, whose Massey Commission brief we will revisit, the avant-garde magazine of that period was not necessarily indisposed to the idea of accepting government support. In the case of *CIV/n*, however, McCourt's characterization of the little-magazine's indifference toward government aid would prove well-founded: its editors deplored the Massey Commission's plans for a subsidized national culture and promoted its magazine as an international avant-garde literary organ supported by an international reading public. Its defence of an autonomous avant garde would counter the cultural discourse sanctioned by the Massey Commission, the compound discursive formation that Berland calls "nationalist modernism" (28). Other variations on Berland's modernist–nationalist thesis to which we will turn include 'fifties periodicals such as *pm magazine* and *Impression*—both of which were founded in the years immediately after the Massey Commission.

Berland's emphasis on modernism's tendency toward aesthetic autonomy finds its

correlative in the Massey Commission's concern for Canada's cultural autonomy.

According to Berland, "[t]he connection between the arts and national defence—between autonomous art and an autonomous nation—was a fundamental component of postwar reconstruction and continued to lay the foundation for cultural policy" (22). Implicit in her correlation of aesthetic and national autonomy is the cultural concept of the avant garde, especially its derivation from a militaristic discourse. Though uncited, her claim is certainly based in part on the pairing of national culture and national defence in the *Massey Report*: "Our military defences must be made secure; but our cultural defences equally demand attention; the two cannot be separated" (275). Summarizing briefs submitted by author organizations and non-commercial magazine groups, the Massey Commission recorded "the efforts of those literary groups belonging to various schools of thought which strive to defend Canadian literature against the deluge of the less worthy American publications" (225). These groups appealed for assistance in their defence of Canadian literature against the influence of American mass-culture magazines imported into Canada and the loss of Canadian literature exported to the United States for publication in these commercial magazines; these writers and magazine editors submitted that American popular magazines "threaten our national values, corrupt our literary taste and endanger the livelihood of our writers" (225). Both the *Massey Report's* qualified endorsement of these briefs and, as Berland suggests, its own defence of a national literature endeavoured to protect the non-commercial values of Canada's modernist literary culture against the commercial values of American mass culture. Among women editors of non-commercial magazines, the protest against the literary values of commercial

periodicals was unanimous, whether voiced in terms of aesthetic or national autonomy.

The obverse of Berland's collocation of modernism and nationalism was articulated by the leftist cultural wing of the Labour Progressive Party (LPP). Opposed to the advocacy of cultural modernism or avant-gardism, the LPP Cultural Commission contested the findings of the Massey Commission and disseminated its views in its own cultural-interest magazine, *New Frontiers* (1952–56). Edited by Margaret Fairley, *New Frontiers* represents a leftist cultural lobby whose radical policies promoted a people's culture as the only legitimate and democratic expression of Canadian nationalism. Unlike the internationalism of leftist and Popular Front magazine cultures of the 1930s, however, the character of cultural leftism in Canada during the Cold War was predominantly nationalist and, in reaction to anticommunism and cultural imperialism from the United States, anti-American. Fairley stood among the leaders of the cultural left and promoters of a nationalist leftism in mid-century Canada. Her published responses to the Massey Commission, in particular, will provide material for reflection on the emergence of leftist magazine cultures in the first half of the twentieth century and, especially, women's participation in their making. After all, the sources of her radicalism in Canadian little-magazine culture actually extend to the late 1910s, when she was a contributor to the University of Toronto student magazine, the *Rebel* (1917–20), the precursor to the *Canadian Forum* (1920–). Her career frames the histories of modernist and leftist women editors and their little magazines developed in this chapter, beginning with Florence Custance and the *Woman Worker* in the mid-1920s and ending with Fairley herself and *New Frontiers* in the mid-1950s.

II: Feminism on the Left: Florence Custance and the *Woman Worker*

Feminist little-magazine culture on the Canadian left emerged in the mid-1920s. Fifty years prior to the formation of Canadian feminist “literary magazines where women wrote for other women” in the 1970s (Godard, “Women” 269) and contemporary to the rise of little magazines edited by men in Montreal and Halifax in the 1920s, Custance founded the *Woman Worker* in Toronto in July 1926. Subtitled “A Monthly Magazine for Working Women,” it was written by and for the members of the Canadian Federation of Women’s Labor Leagues—a national working-class women’s organization under the direction of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC). Histories of the *Woman Worker*, its editor, and the Women’s Labor Leagues (WLL) can be found in Joan Sangster’s *Dreams of Equality* (1989) and in *The Woman Worker, 1926–29* (1999), an anthology of writings from the magazine, edited and introduced by Margaret Hobbs and Sangster. Chiefly concerned with the sociopolitical dimensions of Canadian women’s history, these historical approaches consider literary content only as supplements to the *Woman Worker*’s articles, editorials, and correspondence columns. Admittedly, the magazine’s literary contributors were often anonymous, or identified by initials only; even among those men and women whose names appear in the magazine, none would go on to make an impact on Canadian letters. Beyond their value as sociological and political source documents, though, these literary contributions were integral to the early formation of a proletarian feminist magazine culture in Canada.

Even the *Woman Worker*’s classification as a magazine has so far remained unsettled. References to the *Woman Worker* as a “newspaper” (Sangster 28) and “paper”

(Sangster and Hobbs 8–12) have occluded its typical little-magazine format and, at the same time, exposed its origins in the CPC's newspaper the *Worker*. Prior to editing the *Woman Worker*, Custance co-ordinated its prototype: the "The Working Woman's Section" of the CPC paper (Sangster 28). At a transitional stage, the *Woman Worker* was first issued in mimeographed editions, before its premier printed number came out in July 1926. In recognition of this material aspect of magazine production, Custance opened her first editorial with a statement on the *Woman Worker's* "previous feeble mimeographed attempts" and outlined the economic "means [by which] we have been able to get sufficient money together to pay for our first printed issue" ("Success" 32). Ahead of other pressing issues of social and political concern among working-class women, the economy of magazine production would take precedence in Custance's inaugural editorial address to the WLLs.

Her first editorial also made plain the *Woman Worker's* antipathy to the commercialism of mass-market women's magazines and to the typical contents of women's pages in newspapers:

It will be seen that our magazine will be quite unlike other magazines which are published for the benefit of women. It will not contain fashions and patterns, and we are leaving recipes for cooking to the cook book. We shall not print sickly love stories, we are leaving these to the other magazines. Instead, we shall devote our attention to things that are overlooked by the other magazines. Everything that will be printed in our magazine will deal with life, real life, not imaginations. ("Success" 33)

One might expect from Custance's editorial that the *Woman Worker* would publish only documentary journalism, reportage, reports and letters from local WLLs—though she would, as Sangster notes, accept a “wide selection of fiction” (46) and, less regularly, poetry. Inflected by socialist idealism, “real life” is invariably distorted in the *Woman Worker*'s literary pages. Literary realism in the *Woman Worker* typically edges toward socialist romanticism—especially in its poetry. This tendency is pronounced in the anonymous poem of January 1927 entitled “Prostitutes,” whose portrait of a sex worker as capitalist victim and socialist martyr attends to those “things . . . overlooked” by commercial women's magazines, though in a manner idealized, moralized, sentimentalized, and remote from “real life.” Even so, the literary-historical significance of its publication in the *Woman Worker* should not be missed, especially in view of the poetry published in other women's magazines and even in little magazines of the time. Custance's daring to publish a poem in 1927 with a prostitute first-person speaker is socially progressive and entirely unmatched by her editorial contemporaries in Canada.

In its only explicit editorial on literary matters, the *Woman Worker* highlighted the reactionary conservatism of another Canadian women's group—the National Council of Women—and its support for the government's ban on proletarian literature imported from the United States. The editorial in the April 1927 issue of the *Woman Worker* denounced the National Council of Women: “these women, whose interests are bound up with the present order of things, can claim that anything which criticizes this order is ‘pernicious’ and ‘demoralizing’” (Custance, “War” 5). Documenting one of the main reasons for the establishment of the *Canadian Masses* five years later, the editorial went on to attack a

recent censorship ruling on the American *New Masses*:

Recently, a magazine called "New Masses" was declared "Unfit" by the Customs Department of the government. There is only one reason why such a magazine should be refused the privilege of the Canadian mails, and this is that it is "progressive." Unlike the *Tabloid Press*, "New Masses" is strictly educational. (5)

As we have seen in the case of *Masses*, the *Woman Worker* was not itself subject to prosecution under Canadian censorship laws (see chapter 1: 41). In coming to the defence of *New Masses*, the *Woman Worker* demonstrated its solidarity with an international leftist magazine culture and its literary values. Custance's most definite gesture toward literary internationalism appeared in the September 1927 issue, in which she printed a page with selections from *The Sacco-Vanzetti Anthology of Verse* (1927), edited by Henry Harrison (Custance, comp.). At a time of reactionary conservatism, when American leftist literature could have been stopped at Canadian border, Custance's publication of these poems in commemoration of the August 1927 execution of Sacco and Vanzetti is a declaration of international solidarity and a defiance of repressive government legislation.

Just as *New Masses* in the United States was to a certain extent an educational forum for members of the John Reed Clubs, so the *Woman Worker* served a similar pedagogical function in Canada: its didacticism was intended to inform and instruct WLL members "to champion the Protection of Womanhood, and the Cause of the Workers generally" (Custance, "Success" 33). This didacticism was certainly evident in its literary content, particularly in those poems specifically addressed to working-class women: "Wanted—Women M. P.'s / (Dedicated to Agnes McPhail, M. P.)" (August 1926) and "A

Word to Wage Slaves" (April 1929). The sex-worker speaker of "Prostitutes," however, aggressively targets the dominant classes as well as the repressive church and state institutions she deems responsible for her social and economic status. This tactic is typical of the leftist's tendentious, anticapitalist manner; her leftist polemic focuses not on women's sexual oppression by men but on an economic critique of prostitution. "This is not to say that it was seen as a form of work like any other," Sangster and Hobbs caution, "but rather prostitution was portrayed as an evil by-product of capitalist social relations" (160). Feminist issues in "Prostitutes" are implicit yet marginal, edged out by its leftist priorities. Characteristic of literary leftism, and anticipating the communicative crises in Livesay's leftist poetry of the early 1930s, "Prostitutes" never reached the social classes at which it aimed its socioeconomic critique. As an educational forum, the *Woman Worker* and its literary content was limited in its audience to the female, working-class, and predominantly communist members of the WLLs.

Prefiguring the organizational and communicative problems encountered by later magazines of the Canadian left—*Masses*, *New Frontier*, and *New Frontiers*—the *Woman Worker* was constrained by its distribution among the WLLs. At the same time, the magazine could not have survived for almost three years without the WLLs' financial support; its economic base in the WLLs anticipates the collectivist economies of non-commercial magazines on the Canadian left, supported by social, cultural, and political organizations. This organizational affiliation would have a reciprocal effect on the magazine, since it also chiefly depended upon contributions from the WLLs. If the *Woman Worker* published poetry and fiction infrequently, it probably reflected the priorities among

women activists in a labour organization: we need only recall, for example, Livesay's decline in literary production during her activist period in the early 1930s. And though the *Woman Worker* printed "things that are overlooked by the other magazines," the policy of publishing only writing about "life, real life, not imaginations" may have staved off more literary contributions.

With the illness of Custance reported in the October 1928 issue, followed by her death in July 1929, the *Woman Worker* would lose its founding editor. Though the Toronto WLL continued the magazine in her absence for several months, its final installment would be the April 1929 issue (Sangster 52). Having appeared monthly since July 1926, the *Woman Worker* would far outstrip the erratic two-year print run of *Masses*, its successor in Canadian leftist magazine culture. Not until Fairley founded *New Frontiers* in 1952 would leftists in Canada produce a more enduring magazine.

III: In the Making: The Ridleys and the *Crucible*

Around the same time that the Toronto PAC was making arrangements for the launch of *Masses*, the first issue of the *Crucible* appeared in March 1932. If only by name, the *Crucible* connotes the revolutionary and experimental intent of its leftist and modernist contemporaries. Similar to *Masses*'s emergence out of a discussion group convened in 1928, the *Crucible* evolved out of the Writers' Craft Club (WCC) founded in 1925. The WCC's approximately twenty members were drawn from across Canada and its "official organ" was circulated in manuscript form from 1925 to 1932 ("Old Friends"; Ridley and Ridley, "Open"). Unlike the national organization of the local branches of the PAC or the CAA, the WCC and the *Crucible* brought together individual authors—rather than arts or

literary collectives—into a national body. Among the WCC's Toronto members were the founding editors of the *Crucible*, sisters Hilda and Laura Ridley.² In addition to the Ridleys, who served as managing editors, the *Crucible* enlisted an editorial committee, originally including members from Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia, and later expanding east and west to New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia, overseas to England, and south of the border to Maine and Florida. Although international in its editorial membership, the *Crucible* remained committed to Canadian cultural nationalism; its patriotic contributors tended to “paint the native maple” as often as its CAA contemporaries (Scott, “Canadian”).

Launched with the subtitle “A Quarterly Dedicated to Canadian Literature in the Making,” the *Crucible* advertised itself as a nationalist publication. Emblematic of its national organization, the *Crucible*'s early covers were emblazoned with the crests of the nine provinces. Given the origins of both the WCC and the *Crucible*, the design and marketing of the magazine as a nationalist print organ are signs of its historical relationship to earlier Canadian magazine cultures. Its opening, March 1932 editorial lays claim to a nationalist heritage, tracing the genealogy of the magazine back to 1925: “when one of its editors was reading manuscripts for *The Canadian Magazine*, she was impressed by the excellent quality of much of the material submitted that, through lack of space or other considerations, could not be published” (Ridley, “Open”). That reader was Hilda Ridley. Her distinction as a reader for the *Canadian Magazine* served to establish the *Crucible* not as a periodical with respectable affiliations. Borrowing on the cultural capital of the *Canadian Magazine* (1893–1939), she lent her magazine dedicated to Canadian literature

the history of a popular general-interest periodical devoted to the development of a national cultural consciousness since the 1890s.

If the Riddleys' inaugural editorial of March 1932 declared the *Crucible's* nationalism, it also proclaimed the magazine's modernism: "The very word 'Crucible' suggests that the function of our magazine is experimental. . . . The writers we shall especially welcome are those who are making an honest endeavour to express their real selves—and those who are in the process of 'becoming.'" The editors continued in this progressive idiom, echoing their modernist little-magazine counterparts in their critique of commercial magazines:

Most of our periodicals cater necessarily to the public at large, its current tastes, fads, and needs, and writers who contribute to them must keep this fact constantly in mind. Their editors are in their places to see that they do so, and to say to would-be contributors who do not conform, "You shall not pass."

It is evident that the writer with an original slant whose work does not fit into the existing scheme of things, runs the risk of failing to impress himself, and his message, esthetic, dynamic, or premonitory, is lost,—or he conforms, and the public is presented, not with the real man, but with a caricature.

With such an editorial position, the Riddleys' ambivalence about commercial magazine culture is evident. Granted that Hilda Ridley founded the WCC and the *Crucible* after determining that many of the submissions she was reading for the *Canadian Magazine* went unpublished because of "lack of space or other considerations," the first *Crucible* editorial at once capitalizes on the *Canadian Magazine's* reputation as a mass-culture

periodical and launches a critique of its commercialism. The WCC and the privately circulated version of the *Crucible* emerged shortly after changes in the *Canadian Magazine*'s format in May 1924, moving away from its origins as a general-interest journal of "Politics, Science, Art and Literature" toward a mass-market periodical in the style of *Saturday Night*. Where poetry had once been the subject of features in the *Canadian Magazine*, it was relegated to a decorative role after the implementation of a new editorial mandate in May 1924 ("Larger" 19). It would seem, then, that this transition in the *Canadian Magazine* precipitated the formation of the *Crucible* as an alternative to commercial magazines. That Hilda Ridley had been a reader for the *Canadian Magazine* and a "contributing staff member" of *Saturday Night* adds authority and conviction to the *Crucible*'s critique of such commercial magazines and its editor's experimentation with alternative means of publication ("Hilda"). With an idealism characteristic of socialist economists of the time, the Riddleys even envisioned their printed magazine not as a commercial product on sale to the general public but as a co-operative venture supported by writers themselves: "Co-operation, we hope, is to be the keynote of our changing economic system, and we want it to be the keynote of our own undertaking" (Ridley and Ridley, "Open"). Although the *Crucible* may not have been experimental in terms of its poets' or its editors' poetics, its co-operative means of production and circulation among the members of the WCC from 1925 to 1932 was itself a cultural experiment that succeeded in securing sufficient national interest and economic resources for the publication of the *Crucible* as a printed magazine from March 1932 to April–May 1943.

Among “those who are making an honest endeavour to express their real selves . . . in the process of ‘becoming’” in the *Crucible* were younger women poets such as Anne Marriott and P. K. Page. Marriott’s second-published poem “Strangers” appeared in the Christmas 1933 issue, a poem which may have been solicited by the Victoria member of the *Crucible* editorial committee, M. Eugenie Perry. Following her introduction into the Victoria poetry group of the CAA in 1934, Marriott would not publish again in the *Crucible* until 1940. Between the fall of 1940 and the spring of 1942, she would submit two more poems, “I Cannot Write—” (Autumn–Christmas 1940) and “Resurrection” (Spring 1941). None of these poems would appear in the poetry collections of her early period. Similarly, neither of Page’s poems “Light and Shade” (Christmas 1938) nor “Safety” (Christmas–New Year 1940) published in the *Crucible* would appear in her collections of the 1940s. All of these early uncollected poems may have contributed to the process of Marriott and Page “becoming” poets, their coming to lyric expression of their “real selves,” but their exposure to new little-magazine groups in Victoria, Vancouver, and Montreal during the early 1940s would propel them, as we have seen in previous chapters, toward a modernist poetics of impersonality. The Ridleys would once more make overtures toward modernist poetry and poetics in their winter 1936 editorial (Ridley and Ridley, “Word”). They later ran advertisements beginning in the Christmas–New Year 1940 issue in which Alan Creighton—Hilda Ridley’s co-editor for the Crucible Press’s *A New Canadian Anthology* (1938)—offered the magazine’s contributors editorial services to help “modernize” their poetry (Creighton, “Modernize”). Yet the discrepancy between such editorial gestures and advertising in the magazine and

the actual selection of poems indicates a contradiction between intention and action on the part of the *Crucible*'s editors.³ The *Crucible*'s advocacy of modernism in poetry either amounted to an empty gesture or, if genuine, ended in failure. Indicative of other modernist poets' inattention to the *Crucible*, once Marriott became involved with the *Contemporary Verse* group and once Page joined the *Preview* group in the early 1940s, neither poet would find occasion to contribute to the *Crucible*.

According to the editorial in the February–March 1943 issue, the *Crucible* was in fact suspended for a two-year period after the Spring 1941 issue. In the interim, Hilda Ridley had moved to Ottawa “due to the war” and resigned her position as managing editor, which was taken over by John S. Crosbie of Halifax (Crosbie). Hilda Ridley remained an Ottawa-area regional editor for the last two issues of the new *Crucible*. Its abrupt reception by John Sutherland was a telling sign that Canadian magazine culture had changed its guard during the *Crucible*'s two-year hiatus. Sutherland's review in the 19 March 1943 issue of *First Statement* notes that the new *Crucible* “has become streamlined and adjusted to meet popular taste as far as possible,” and that it “puts the stamp on its own badness, and claims with the old gall that it is ‘attaining recognition for Canadian writers’” (“*Crucible*'s Standard”). The 'forties generation's assessment of the *Crucible* must have alarmed Hilda Ridley, whose expressed intention as its founder had been to counteract the detrimental effect of the “popular taste” on poetry published in commercial magazines. According to Sutherland, the new *Crucible* had succumbed to commercial magazine design, where poetry merely serves a decorative function: “Set in niches between prose are a series of pieces [of poetry] intended to entertain the reader for a

passing moment.” While Sutherland’s caricature of the new *Crucible* is typical of his polemical style, his sharp assessment must have resonated with that of the magazine’s readership, since the April–May 1943 issue would be the last. The *Crucible*’s experiment in non-commercial magazine production had been superseded by the ’forties generation’s modernist little magazines. For the *Crucible*, this transition in little-magazine culture coincided with its decline and the ascendancy of the modernist magazines.

After the demise of the *Crucible*, Hilda Ridley published an article in the July 1944 issue of the *Dalhousie Review* on the subject of the contemporary writer and his or her relationship to commercial and non-commercial magazine cultures. “The Literary Aspirant” is, in some ways, her lament for the passing of the *Crucible* and, in others, her advocacy for a non-commercial magazine culture. Addressing the hypothetical figure of an aspiring young writer who refuses to conform to the strictures of the commercial press, she describes the non-commercial magazines available to the writer for publication:

A few “quality” magazines survive [sic], but these serve the interests of a cultured minority. Contributors are carefully selected, and they are often the members of a privileged staff. Year after year, we witness the rise and demise of small, independent magazines whose editors declare that they have but one desire,—to discover original talent. Sometimes, in turning the pages of these derelicts of a decade or so ago, one is impressed by the rare quality of a poem, so flawless in execution and so vital in substance that one marvels. . . . Surely the names of such writers must have become well known. But no!—the signatures evoke no recognition. These creators of vital beauty are “to fame unknown,”—and the

world is poorer, perhaps, because they were effectually silenced. (181)

Taking Katherine Mansfield as an instance of the exemplary “literary aspirant,” Ridley sketches the story of Mansfield’s dependence for early publication on a little magazine called the *Blue Review* (May–July 1913), edited by her husband John Middleton Murry, and on another called *Signature* (October–November 1915), edited by Murry, D. H. Lawrence, and Mansfield herself.⁴ After the demise of these little magazines, Mansfield apparently had no place to publish her writing until Murry became an editor of the *Athenaeum* in 1919, the prestigious London periodical where she published her short stories and gained the notice of book publishers (Ridley, “Literary” 181–82). “Such an experience,” Ridley submits, “offers an eloquent plea for the existence of small, privately printed journals, edited with vision” (182). While she is aware that the crux of her story about Mansfield is that she found her audience and earned her literary reputation only after securing her place in a prominent commercial periodical, Ridley insists upon the value of “small, short-lived publications, edited by youthful enthusiasts” such as those in which Mansfield started off. Although she never mentions her own editorial history, Ridley makes a tacit case for the value of publications such as the *Crucible* and editors such as herself and her sister, aligning these with such modernist little magazines as the *Blue Review* and *Signature*, and such editors as Mansfield and Murry. That Hilda Ridley should look to Mansfield and England for a success story might indicate the degree of her disillusionment with Canadian literature and little-magazine culture, which had yet to produce a modernist of Mansfield’s calibre. But even though she had just experienced the collapse of the *Crucible* and its unfavourable reception among Canada’s emergent

modernists, she could still appreciate the value of modernist little-magazine cultures to Canadian literature in the making.

IV: Taking Care of Business: Eleanor Godfrey and the *Canadian Forum*

Despite her position as managing editor of the *Canadian Forum* for two terms—1935–37, 1939–47—Eleanor Godfrey has received scant attention in histories and memoirs of the magazine. Her historically undervalued managerial position on the *Forum* editorial board exemplifies the chronic marginalization of women’s editorial labour in Canadian cultural history. Peter Stevens and J. L. Granatstein neither mention her in their preface to *Forum: Canadian Life and Letters 1920–70* (1972), nor select anything of hers for inclusion in this anthology of writings from the *Forum*. Neither Sandra Djwa in her article “The *Canadian Forum*: Literary Catalyst” nor Margaret Prang in her essay “F. H. U. of *The Canadian Forum*” refer to Godfrey. Rose Potvin in *Passion and Conviction: The Letters of Graham Spry*, Djwa in *The Politics of the Imagination: A Life of F. R. Scott*, and Elspeth Cameron in *Earle Birney: A Life* neglect to name the *Forum*’s managing editor during Spry’s tenure as editor and publisher of the *Forum* (July 1935–May 1936), during Scott’s tenure as a *Forum* contributing editor (July 1935–September 1936, March–September 1939) and fellow member of its editorial board (October 1936–February 1939), and during Birney’s tenure as its literary editor (December 1936–November 1940). Of the retrospectives collected in the *Forum*’s fiftieth-anniversary issue, Godfrey rates only two passing glances (Frye, “Rear”; Horn, “Forum”). Only Carlton McNaught in “Volume Thirty: In Retrospect” (57–58), Ann Stephenson Cowan in “*The Canadian Forum* 1929–1950: An Historical Study in Canadian Literary Theory and Practice,” Michiel Horn

in *The League for Social Reconstruction: Intellectual Origins of the Democratic Left in Canada 1930–1942* (131, 165), and Birney in *Spreading Time* (28–29) call attention to Godfrey's activities on the editorial board of the *Forum*. These usually brief citations, however, are unequal to her central role in the management of the *Forum* through the end of the Depression and the war years and to her written contributions that addressed issues of commercialism, feminism, modernism, and nationalism in literature and literary-magazine culture.

Godfrey joined “The New Group” of the *Forum*, an editorial collective formed after Graham Spry purchased the magazine from its former editor and owner Stephen Cartwright in July 1935. She soon became part of the group and was named the new managing editor on the masthead of the November 1935 issue. Headed by Spry, “The New Group” declared its intentions in the July 1935 editorial: “The principle of free controversy will be adhered to by the new group and it is hoped that the *Forum* will be looked upon as a journal in which advanced thought may be expressed without the odious blue-penciling that reduces most attempts at originality to a uniform pattern of maudlin commercialism” (Spry, et al.). Having expressed its anticommercialism, the group proudly noted its reduction in the cost of production, thereby referring obliquely to the *Forum*'s recent acquisition of a second-hand press (Horn, *League* 129). Even though Spry had obtained the press in order to reduce printing costs, the *Forum* quickly fell into financial trouble. He then appealed to his colleagues in the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR) for assistance; by May 1936, the LSR had assumed control of the *Forum*. As the LSR national secretary, Helen Marsh, announced in a postscript to the minutes of the 1936

national convention: "The Forum, an excellent monthly to which all LSR members should be subscribers, is now the official organ of the LSR, and as such will consistently express its views" (qtd. in Horn, *League* 130–31).

From December 1935 to May 1936, editorial positions were divided among the board members: Frank H. Underhill (politics), H. J. Davis (literature), G. M. A. Grube (book reviews), and Pegi Nicol (art). These editorial assignments were not distinguished on the masthead as such after June 1936, except for the position of managing editor. Given this division of editorial labour, we may well suspect that Godfrey had little to do with the literary affairs of the magazine. From Horn's history of the LSR, we might also be led to believe that Godfrey was a minor player on the editorial board of the *Forum*; his first of only two references to her managerial activities is a quotation of her 19 March 1940 remark on the *Forum*'s troubled financial situation. Godfrey presumably had a great deal more to contribute than platitudes ("It is a pity the Forum is such a money sponge" [qtd. in Horn, *League* 165]). Carleton McNaught is more generous to Godfrey in a series of articles published on the occasion of the *Forum*'s thirtieth anniversary: he notes her appointment as managing editor, details her responsibilities, "which at that time involved the onerous duty of planning each issue, organizing material, and looking after make-up," and commends her for sustaining the *Forum* through the war years (58). Birney also recognizes Godfrey's editorial and production work and, further, indicates that she did in fact play a role in the literary composition of the magazine:

Poetry . . . because it was generally shorter than anything else, had sometimes to be treated as filler. When seven or eight of us sat around Eleanor Godfrey's

diningroom table, making up the dummy far into the night, there would be a cry from her or from Mark Farrell, the business manager, for something between ten-to-fifteen lines to fill out a column. (*Spreading* 29)

Birney, as literary editor, was therefore subject to the everyday, material concerns of magazine production, which Godfrey handled—like so many other women involved in little-magazine culture of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Cowan, given the advantage of private interviews with former *Forum* editors in 1973, composes the most complete biographical portrait of Godfrey available: a composite record and study of her interactions with other members of the *Forum* board of editors, her responsibilities as managing editor, and her critical responses as a reviewer. But because of the scope of Cowan's history of the *Forum*'s first three decades, her portrait of Godfrey is necessarily cropped, though still valuable for its representation of a dynamic editorial figure among the more often chronicled men and women of the *Forum*.

Though historians have been inattentive to Godfrey, the *Forum*'s readers, correspondents, and contributors during WWII could not have missed her on the masthead. For fear of persecution by authorities and employers, the *Forum* board of editors removed their names from the masthead after the October 1939 issue (Horn, *League* 165). Only Godfrey, who resumed her position as managing editor in November 1939,⁵ and L. A. Morris, as business manager, remained on the masthead for the duration of the war; they were joined by assistant editor (and former *Crucible* anthology co-editor) Alan Creighton in June 1943. While other board members carried out their editorial duties anonymously, Godfrey would stand alone in her exposure to public scrutiny.

While the *Forum* was never subjected to censorship after the implementation of the War Measures Act and the Defence of Canada Regulations, Godfrey was attacked on another front. At least one *Forum* reader took extreme exception to her editorship. In his letter to the editor published in the January 1940 “Correspondence” section, Ian MacPherson of Vancouver objected not only to Godfrey but to all women involved in the production of magazines:

Had I known that the editor of The Forum was a woman I would not have sent anything. Magazines have fallen on evil days. Most of the copy readers are women. And behold what trash they give us—sloppy stories full of slang and “wise-cracks”—most of them written for American publications and refused, probably not reaching the high editorial standards of Gotham. See last issue of *Maclean’s*. Fifty years ago there were good magazines publishing things of literary merit . . . today—well let us not contemplate it. (original ellipsis)

MacPherson’s expression of anger toward the wartime magazine industry, in which women were becoming even more frequently employed as men were conscripted for war duty, manifests an alarming misogyny. His implicit feminization of the popular style found in such commercial magazines as *Maclean’s* is linked both to the women he alleges are responsible for the editing of magazine copy and to the change he perceives in editorial values. Published in the previous, December 1939 issue, Godfrey’s own short story “The Samaritans” is a prime example of the “slang and ‘wise-cracks’” to which her disgruntled reader objects (see Godfrey, “Samaritan”). No doubt he had her story in mind when he penned his letter to the editor.

Reading the brief biographies of “The New Group” on the back cover of the November 1935 issue, one learns that Godfrey “writes book reviews and general criticisms. Is a literary jack-of-all trades” (“New Group”). Godfrey had published her first feature-length book review in the August 1935 issue, just prior to joining the *Forum*’s new group. With her review article on Sinclair Lewis’s *Selected Short Stories*, she offered the first of her regular book reviews to *Forum* readers. Opening with a hard-nosed critique of Lewis and his publishers, she immediately proved herself the kind of writer that Spry was interested in having on staff of a publication opposed to the literary values of commercial magazines. She skewered Lewis’s collection for its commercialism: “it must be explained that these exercises in commonplace are reprinted from a number of smooth paper family journals; but this scarcely serves as a recommendation” (“Sinclair” 333). In calling attention to literature intended for a popular audience, Godfrey presumed such readers to be less discriminating than those of the *Forum*; her elitism betrays her predictable bias toward a non-commercial magazine culture represented by the *Forum* and its editors’ literary values, chiefly modernist in aesthetics and left-wing in politics. Unfortunately for the *Forum*’s new group, its readers were not so plentiful that it could afford to alienate the general public. Consequently, Godfrey continued to review books—novels, short-story collections, and popular biographies—whose audience may have held little regard for the social and political aims of the LSR, the CCF, or any other progressive movement supported by the *Forum*’s editors. Because Godfrey was not among its primary editorialists, her written contribution to the *Forum* was mainly restricted to book reviews and review articles.

Godfrey wrote and reviewed only prose. Poetry she left for her *Forum* colleagues: G. M. A. Grube, Northrop Frye, Birney, and Creighton, among others. The sheer quantity of reviews that she published in the *Forum* prevents a comprehensive survey of her contributions. Nor admittedly are the books she reviews always relevant to the study of modernist and leftist women poets and magazine editors. Some of her reviews stand out, though, for their shrewd commentaries on magazine publishing and modernist magazine culture. Perhaps indicative of her experience as a managing editor, her reviews exhibit an acute awareness of the economics of magazine production. This economic interest is, of course, prevalent in her first review and would reappear in later reviews of the 1930s and 1940s.

Although never named as a *Forum* editorialist during her tenure on its board, nor vocal in terms of defining its editorial policy, Godfrey voiced definite opinions on magazine culture—or as much as could be expected in the confines of her reviews. Among her earliest reviews, her September 1936 commentary on Leslie Bishop's rare 1936 novel *Paper Kingdom* exposes it as a roman à clef about a Toronto literary-arts magazine during the Depression:

The novel is concerned with the efforts of an irresponsible young man to establish an incoherent literary magazine, *The New Conquest*, in Macgregor. The shady and feverishly executed deals by which he manages to get it published are not unfamiliar to anyone who has watched the birth and early death of similar ventures, undertaken as a rule without even a shoestring. (30)

Godfrey goes on to note that Bishop spent a few years in Toronto as the manager and

publisher of the *Twentieth Century*, a short-lived and little-known literary monthly that appeared from November 1932 to November 1933.⁶ Godfrey's dismissive attitude toward Bishop and his foundered magazine is somewhat overstated, written as if from the perspective of a managing editor with significantly more experience than herself and in the context of a magazine with far more secure financial backing than that of the *Forum* in the mid-1930s. Even with the recent injection of support from the LSR, the *Forum* was running on little more than a "shoestring" budget itself at the time of Godfrey's review. Her tacit objection to the *Twentieth Century* is that it aspires to be a commercial magazine without the financial resources to do so; her satisfaction with the *Canadian Forum* may have been that it survived because it always stayed within its meagre means of production and circulation, never hazarding gains and losses on the commercial-magazine market. Without access to public funding, the *Canadian Forum* and the *Twentieth Century* represented two different magazine economies: the former backed by the LSR (and later by a private fund), the latter dependent on advertising revenues.

Godfrey is no more sympathetic to non-commercial, modernist little magazines. Reviewing *American Writing 1943: The Anthology and Yearbook of the American Non-Commercial Magazine*, edited by Alan Swallow, she begrudges the desire "to present in accessible form and to the editor's best critical ability the finest creative writing which appears in the 'little' or non-commercial little magazines of America" (Swallow 7; qtd. in Godfrey, Rev. of *American Writing*). In Godfrey's view, literary standards should transcend the economic means available to little-magazine editors:

Good writing is good writing and no matter how arbitrary the anthologist's other

bases for selection may be he should at least be governed by the kind of writing and not where it appears. It is possible that the best writing, especially of an experimental nature, is found in the non-commercial magazines but this certainly cannot be proved by excluding the commercial magazines from consideration.

To be fair, one should note that in his introduction Swallow refutes the notion that the “literary production which is to be called ‘great’ is the exclusive property of the ‘little’ magazines,” but maintains that “the larger proportion of it which appears in magazines at all does appear in those magazines” (12). He contends that because their circulation is so limited little magazines cannot hope to attract a wide enough subscription base to stay solvent and that his anthology is another means of promoting American little magazines and reaching untapped markets (14–15). Yet Godfrey is unmoved by his appeals, disputing the validity of his categorization of the non-commercial magazine: “Because commercial poetry simply does not exist in the same sense that commercial prose fiction does, the editor is drawing on substantially the same sources for the anthology as he would without his non-commercial magazine restriction.” Of course “commercial poetry” does exist: it is the “magazine verse,” as Sutherland says (“Anne” 101), that fills out the columns of such periodicals as *Saturday Night*, *Chatelaine*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. Godfrey seems to have forgotten her own criticisms of the commercial values in mass-market magazines.

Even as she expressed reservations about the distinction between commercial and non-commercial magazines, the *Forum* helped to promote non-commercial modernist literary magazines in Canada. Reviews of *Contemporary Verse*, *First Statement*, and

Direction appeared in the *Forum* on a regular basis from 1941 to 1944.⁷ Although she never reviewed any of the magazines herself, Godfrey was by no means oblivious to the spirited dialogues among these groups. According to Cowan, the *Forum* “was often a clearing house for the arguments raging between little magazines of opposing views” and “served as a neutral area for arguments between members of opposing groups” (7, 15). Citing the infamous native–cosmopolitan debate of the 1940s chronicled by literary historians, she points to a sequence of exchanges among Frye, Livesay, Margaret Avison, Patrick Anderson, A. J. M. Smith, and W. W. E. Ross which appeared in the form of reviews, articles, poems, and letters to the editor in the *Forum* (18–22). Public acrimony among Canadian modernists dotted the pages of the *Forum* between December 1943 and July 1945. Yet the private correspondence among the key figures in the debate represents a period of reconciliation and transition in modernist literary culture. Extant archival evidence indicates that Godfrey herself may have favoured the “native” side of the debate, though the complexity of relations among various personalities and the freedom of opinion among reviewers and correspondents should discourage assured conclusions (see Godfrey to Livesay, 7 June 1944; DLP–QU, box 2, file 17). As managing editor, she would oversee the *Forum*’s impartial role in this critical negotiation between competing discourses of nationalism and internationalism in Canadian modernist literary culture. While Godfrey may have held strong opinions about any given magazine, poet, or magazine group, the *Forum* policy of withholding such editorial statements allowed literary rivals to air their grievances in the public space of the *Forum* and, ultimately, to come to terms of agreement in closed forums. Rather than voice an opinion in the native–cosmopolitan

debate, Godfrey and the *Forum* editorial board helped to facilitate the negotiation between nationalist and internationalist cultural discourses that would converge in Canadian modernist literary culture of the 1940s and 1950s. That convergence was effected in the transition of modernist magazine culture in Montreal and the merger of the *Preview* and *First Statement* groups in 1945.⁸

The *Forum* itself had undergone transition over the course of Godfrey's editorship, beginning with "The New Group" of the 1930s. Despite her marginalization in *Forum* histories, her managerial and production work was vital to the magazine's continuation through the Depression and WWII—the most trying years of the *Forum*'s life. Having joined the board at a time of economic uncertainty and editorial reorganization in the mid-1930s, Godfrey contributed to the *Forum*'s stabilization by holding her post as managing editor over a decade during which the magazine established itself as a cultural institution. When she resigned her editorship in early 1947, modernist little-magazine culture in Canada had similarly reached a point of stability: the Montreal magazines had joined to form *Northern Review*, Birney was editing *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, *Contemporary Verse* was still thriving, and new magazines were in the making.

V: Her Yellow Book: Catherine Harmon and *here and now*

At the same time as the announcement of Godfrey's resignation from the *Forum* in February 1947 ("To Our Readers"), Catherine Harmon and Paul Arthur were making plans to found and co-edit a new arts magazine based in Toronto.⁹ Among Canada's women magazine editors of the mid-century, Harmon holds a position of distinction in the literary-historical record. Though the entire run of *here and now* consists of only four

issues (December 1947–June 1949), little-magazine historians Ken Norris and Bruce Whiteman and bibliographer David McKnight have devoted a respectable amount of attention both to the magazine and to Harmon’s co-editorship. As well, Birney’s memoir *Spreading Time* is particularly valuable for its record of Harmon and *here and now*, as is their extant correspondence on which he bases his recollections (see EBP, box 11, folder 18). Wynne Francis’s entry on literary magazines in English in the latest edition of the *Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* unfortunately only indicates that *here and now*’s designer and editor was Paul Arthur and that the magazine lasted for only three issues (Francis, “Literary” 666). Francis is correct in identifying Arthur as the designer and editor, but he was by no means the *only* editor. Harmon is listed as the editor on the masthead of all four issues, Arthur as the managing editor. Although *here and now*’s editorials were primarily written by Arthur, they were signed by “the editor”; these editorials were actually collaborative compositions emerging out of joint editorial discussions between both co-editors (Arthur, Interview; Harmon, Interview). They were aided by a number of successive editors: Alan Brown and Anne Wilkinson as literary editors, Robert Hall and Paul Duval as art editors, Carrol T. Oates as American editor, and Jean Mallinson, Tom Mallinson, and Belle Pomer as assistant editors. Only Harmon and Arthur were affiliated with the magazine for all four issues.

Harmon and Arthur’s collaboration on *here and now* would produce an avant-garde arts magazine, a publication distinguished for its cultural internationalism and nationalism, a periodical without precedent in Canada for its aestheticist design and editorial values and its editors’ simultaneous commitment “to unearth, encourage and

project the truly native in our [Canadian] literature and art" (Prospectus, n.d. [1947]; Ralph Gustafson Papers, Harmon file, item 2). *here and now's* rapid ascendancy and decline is exemplary of the crisis in Canadian modernist magazine culture at mid-century: its avant-garde aesthetic disposition, international consciousness, and national orientation would appear to be the ideal vehicle for the Massey Commission's professed cultural values. Yet *here and now* lacked the economic means to continue production beyond its fourth issue in June 1949.

Of those who have written about *here and now*, Birney, Norris, Whiteman, McKnight, and Francis all foreground and comment upon its expensive production values. In fact, Dudek's only references to *here and now* in his July 1958 article on Canada's little magazines slight its editors' "very expensive venture" and "extravagant" magazine ("Role" 210, 211). In contrast to the inexpensive production values of its contemporaries, the multicolour printing, glossy art reproductions, and elaborate typographic design of *here and now* reveal the influence of aestheticism—particularly that of late-nineteenth-century arts magazines—upon a modernist little magazine in Canada. On the whole, the twentieth-century avant-garde little magazine owes much to the late-nineteenth-century American and British progenitors of the genre; this kind of international context and lineage sets *here and now* apart from its Canadian predecessors and contemporaries. *here and now* exploits the historical value of an established avant-garde magazine culture in order to create for itself a kind of cultural distinction in Canada's modernist milieu of the late 1940s.

As co-editors, Arthur and Harmon impressed a distinctive editorial stamp on *here*

and now. They intended to produce a Canadian modernist arts magazine in line with aestheticist magazines of the 1890s. That aestheticism and modernism should coincide in *here and now* is, as Trehearne has shown in the case of early twentieth-century Canadian poetry, typical of the development of literary modernism in Canada (see *Aestheticism* 1–21). With its faint visual allusion to Aubrey Beardsley’s signature design, the first issue of *here and now* appeared in a yellow cover, often associated with the aestheticist periodical *The Yellow Book* (1894–97). Even *here and now*’s reproductions of etchings by Joan Miró, paintings by David Milne, illustrations by Jean Cocteau, drawings and paintings by Alfred Pellán, and sculpture by E. B. Cox suggested the example of *The Yellow Book* in printing the original work of contemporary avant-garde artists. As *here and now*’s designer, Arthur made plain his aestheticist disposition in his article “In Silk and Scarlet Walks Many a Harlot” published in the January 1949 issue, where he advocated the aesthetics of typography and book production:

Suffering from all the ill effects of having become a puff of air, [typography] has dissolved into an inconsequential vacuum. For books are not like pots and pans, purely functional objects. They are too much weighted with the aesthetic. And the aesthetic, as everyone knows, is an “imponderable,” meaningless, another puff of air. Yet surely the question is resolved very simply. Eric Gill stated an immutable truth when, like Carlyle, Ruskin, and William Morris, he said that the beauty one attaches to any well-made object whatever is the only indication that it *is well-made*. (17; original italics)

The invocation of an aestheticist canon—Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris (minus Pater)—reveals

the intellectual foundation of Arthur's principles of magazine design and production. His article on typographic aesthetics was accompanied in the same issue by H. A. Nieboer's article on the history of industrial design, featuring Morris's arts and craft movement ("History and Industrial Design"), and anticipated in the first issue by A. B. Garrow's article on British book and periodical design of the 1860s ("The Golden Age of English Illustration"). The December 1947 and June 1948 editorials prefigure Arthur's "Silk and Scarlet" article; both editorials employ the language of aestheticism—especially that of Morris's writings on book design, typography, and production. The first closes with the expectation that "readers will also see in our pages an attempt to reform the typographical manners of this country" and expression of "regret that in this issue we have not an essay on typography (as in the future we expect to have)" and of "hope that this production will prove an essay in typography of a different sort." The second disparages the "utilitarian doctrine . . . within arts, crafts and industries," where "[t]he printer was once a guiding spirit and an artist as well as the actual engineer of the printed book" but now "[l]ike a worm caught in a lawn-mower, this complete identity of the printer has been chopped up by the advance of the industrial revolution's whirling machinery" (4). All of these articles and editorials contributed to *here and now's* aestheticism, which was clearly not limited to slavish imitation of *The Yellow Book* or of any other aestheticist periodical of the 1890s, but rather incorporated into the editorial values and practice of its co-editors.

In line with Arthur's design, the inaugural editorial of December 1947 traced *here and now's* preferred heritage back to an era of late-nineteenth-century aestheticism:

At the present time there are, in England and in the United States, a number of

excellent Little Magazines which play a very considerable part in the culture of these countries. Ever since the nineties of the last century, they have, with varying degrees of popularity, presented the greatest writers and artists of the time. That Canada has played a small part in this movement is a result less of its being a “young country” than of a preconceived notion that Canada does not possess enough *avant-garde* writers and artists to warrant such publications. With the exception of *Canadian Poetry Magazine* and *Contemporary Verse*, two poetry magazines of a very high order, which have for many years been attempting to disprove this, there is no publication whose primary aim it is to provide an outlet for the wide variety of Canadian Art that we know does exist.

Having invoked the 1890s as a decade of origin for little magazines, the editors’ reference here to the emergence of the modern *avant garde* in *fin-de-siècle* aestheticism gestures toward the foundation of a Canadian *avant garde* through its little-magazine culture. Yet neither Canadian poetry magazine to which the editors point is really *avant-gardist*, not in the manner of early-twentieth-century periodicals such as Wyndham Lewis’s *Blast* (1914), Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap’s *Little Review* (1914–29), or Eugene Jolas’s *transition* (1927–38). As I have already shown in an earlier chapter, the Canadian magazines named in the editorial bear closer affinities to the modernism of Harriet Monroe’s *Poetry* (1912–). *here and now*, however, can legitimately claim ideological and aesthetic kinship with British *avant-garde* periodicals and print cultures of the later nineteenth century. With its commitment to a national culture and an international aesthetic, *here and now* attempts to consolidate a native–cosmopolitan (or

nationalist–internationalist) cultural discourse and thereby capitalize on a current public debate among modernist authors and editors conducted in the pages of the *Canadian Forum*, *First Statement*, *Preview*, and *Northern Review*.

The editors' strategic allocation of *Contemporary Verse* and *Canadian Poetry Magazine* to a "high order" of magazines also effectively extended an invitation to the *Contemporary Verse* group and the CAA to support *here and now*. *Contemporary Verse* ran advertisements in all four issues and Crawley even offered manuscripts in his possession for publication in *here and now*.¹⁰ Former editor E. J. Pratt returned *here and now*'s compliment to *Canadian Poetry Magazine* with his salutation "A Greeting," and then-current editor Birney answered with a poem ("Prairie Counterpoint")—both published in the inaugural issue of *here and now*. Birney's association with *here and now* resumed in the January 1949 issue, where the editors agreed to publish extracts from his 15 November 1948 letter to CAA bursar Philip Child, in which he made public the reasons for his resignation as editor of *Canadian Poetry Magazine* ("Age"). With this gesture, the editors must have been conscious that, as a consequence, they would inevitably and irreparably sever relations with both the CAA and its poetry magazine. In fact, the publication of the Birney letter seems to have been carefully calculated insofar as its appearance coincided with the formation of the Canadian Writers' Committee (CWC), a CAA rival organization whose *ad hoc* steering committee in Toronto was located in the *here and now* office and whose unofficial magazine was, while it lasted, *here and now* (Birney, *Spreading* 137–38).

Conspicuous in its absence from *here and now*'s higher order of Canadian

magazines, *Northern Review* had recently suffered from the controversy over Sutherland's editorial conduct and the concomitant exodus of editors from the magazine after the August–September 1947 issue. The timing of the resignation of the former members of *Preview* from the editorial board of *Northern Review* and the emergence of *here and now*, as noted in the previous chapter, is more than a historical coincidence. Rather than found a rival to *Northern Review*, the former editors of *Preview* were content, as Page put it, to give *here and now* their support, if it continued to fulfill the promise of the first issue (Page to Crawley, 11 January 1948; ACP, box 1, file 20). Page, Anderson, and Klein all contributed poetry and/or prose to *here and now*. Page's interest in the magazine can be traced back to a letter of 19 November 1947, which indicates that she had already made an earlier inquiry about *here and now* and submitted some work (Harmon to Page; PKPP, box 16, file 5). Her short story "The Neighbour" and poem "Sleepers" appeared in the first issue (December 1947), her poems "Portrait" (retitled "Paranoid" in *The Metal and the Flower*) in the second issue (May 1948) and "The Age of Ice" in the fourth issue (June 1949). For Page, her informal commitment to *here and now* may also be linked to her association with the CWC; she had been enlisted as a committee member and consultant on the CWC brief submitted to the Massey Commission.¹¹

True to its genre, the *here and now* brief submitted to the Massey Commission amounted to little more than a précis of the editorials. Dated 16 May 1949, the brief itself was signed by Arthur, Harmon, and their new business manager, Langford Dixon. By the time *here and now* met with the commissioners in Toronto in November 1949, however, Arthur and Harmon had moved to England, leaving the magazine's business affairs to

Dixon; though he had just joined the magazine with the fourth issue, he spoke to the Massey Commission on behalf of *here and now*. Anne Wilkinson, who had been enlisted as a reader for *here and now* in February 1949 and named literary editor in the fourth issue, was visiting Arthur and Harmon in England at the time of the commission's Toronto hearings (Wilkinson 34, 48–59). Prior to their departure, Arthur and Harmon had brought out the fourth and final issue (June 1949) and compiled a fifth (which Whiteman notes was “devoted to the short story in Canada,” but never made it into print [*Here* 78]). The brief that they submitted to the Massey Commission before leaving for England was composed around the time that the editors were discussing the editorial for the June 1949 issue. Indicative of *here and now*'s ongoing concerns, the brief echoes not only the current editorial of June 1949 but also an earlier editorial of May 1948—both of which comment on the loss of Canadian authors to magazines in the United States or to commercial magazines:

It is constantly being brought to the attention of the editors of *HERE AND NOW* that young authors are being forced either to remove to the United States or to have the major portion of their work published there for lack of proper remuneration here. Another alternative is that these same authors turn to writing exclusively for the “pulp” magazines because serious writing is not a profitable profession. In this way Canada is losing its literary heritage piecemeal.

The editors' proposed solution to this crisis entailed the establishment of “a fund similar to that set up by the Rockefeller Foundation on behalf of two comparable magazines in the United States: *Kenyon Review* and *Sewanee Review*.” Distant from the aestheticist

periodical to which *here and now* had once traced its origins, both the *Kenyon Review* (1939–), edited by John Crowe Ransom, and the *Sewanee Review* (1892–), edited by Allen Tate, represented the kind of modern American literary quarterlies that *here and now* could expect members of the Massey Commission to appreciate as models for a Canadian counterpart. Even so, *here and now* justified the proposal for the creation of its own fund in terms reminiscent of aestheticist principles of the autonomy of art and the artist, concluding that “it would enable writers of merit to continue in their endeavours without resorting to the complete debasement of their art” (Harmon, et al.).

Attached to its brief, *here and now* included a plan for distribution of a \$4,900 fund among its contributors over the period of one year. No part of the fund was marked for payment of printer’s bills or office rent, staff, and supplies.¹² Even though the brief claimed that “writers of Canada have responded to the magazine in a fashion hitherto unequalled, contributing generously of their work without remuneration,” and that “[t]he magazine has in its files the work of, or promises of work from, nearly every writer of competence in the Dominion,” Dixon admitted after questioning by the commissioners that “we are not saying that all the material is of a calibre that we would like to get” and that without “real money to pay the authors, you cannot get the top material” (Harmon, et al.; “Here and Now” 149). But it would be a mistake to conflate *here and now* with commercial magazines: its aestheticist orientation is reconfirmed during the commission hearing by Dixon’s admiration of the “quality of taste” and “quality of art” in a Montreal School of Art and Design periodical and by his prepared statement in which he advances “the premise that art begins with self[-]expression which is moulded by the playwright, the

composer, and the poet into something of beauty” (“Here and Now” 151).

Given the specificity of *here and now*'s brief, it seems that Harmon, Arthur, and Dixon expected immediate results from their appeal to Massey Commission. The magazine's troubled financial situation certainly required an expedient remedy. After publishing issue four in June 1949, *here and now* owed its printer \$2,700 (Whiteman, “Here” 78). Without additional sources of patronage, *here and now* could not maintain its editors' aestheticist principles of magazine production and, consequently, was forced to halt publication within a year of its submission to the Massey Commission. While both editors compiled material for a fifth issue and Harmon continued to work on a sixth after moving to England (Whiteman, “Here” 78), the editorial in the fourth issue had already hinted that the continuation of *here and now* was doubtful:

With regard to the Little Magazines, the invariable seed-beds for the best work of our time, they hardly exist. Admittedly their numerousness in the United States is rather appalling, but surely we deserve more than we have. Or do we, really? Costs are again colossal and the proper distribution throughout such a gigantic territory is veritably impossible: all of which is very disheartening for the editors and for the interested public. (5–6)

Aestheticism, as a principle of magazine design and production, demanded patronage.

What *here and now* required was not a fund for the payment of contributors, but a patron to cover basic printing and distribution costs. Although Wilkinson's invitation to join the magazine as literary editor in early 1949 does not appear to have been motivated by a need to solicit new patrons for *here and now*—at least she never mentions offering financial

assistance to the magazine in her extant correspondence or in her journals—she would several years later become a major patron of Canadian culture in helping to found, edit, and finance the *Tamarack Review* (1956–82) during its early years. From the start, *here and now* had relied upon the generosity of such patrons—including Massey himself; but, in the end, its desire for aesthetic value exceeded the resources of those patrons who, as the editors acknowledged in the dedication to the first issue, supported a magazine “published in the interests of Canadian culture” (n. pag.). In this respect, one could even characterize the decline of *here and now* as a kind of decadent corollary to its initial period of aesthetic intensity. The editors’ pursuit of beauty in the aesthetics of the arts magazine had, in a manner typical of the aesthete, exhausted itself in the process of making culture.

VI: Making Her *Impression*: Myra Lazechko-Haas’s Canadianism

Just months after the demise of *here and now*, Myra Lazechko-Haas set down the groundwork for another national arts magazine. Based in Winnipeg, *Impression* first appeared in the spring of 1950, under the editorship of Lazechko-Haas, assisted by John Bryant and George Nasir. For the first three issues, the masthead also listed a contingent of editorial-board members. According to David McKnight’s bibliography of Canadian little magazines, *Impression* was the only new magazine founded in Canada between 1949 and 1951 (24). Like *here and now*, *Impression* started with fanfare but lasted for only four issues, its final installment issued in the spring of 1952. But where *here and now* published many of our most prominent modernist authors, *Impression* chiefly devoted its pages to the early work of emergent authors: Phyllis Webb, George Nasir, and James Reaney, among others. As a corollary, *Impression* has received no more than mention by

name and its editor is not even acknowledged in the published record (Norris, *Little* 55; Dudek, "Role" 210). McKnight's brief annotation on *Impression* is the only literary-historical document in which Lazechko-Haas has been given credit for her editorship. *Impression* is distinctive among Canadian arts magazines of the period for its representation of an immigrant literary culture; its "nationalist ambitions may not have been achieved," as McKnight notes (24), but its editor's articulation of Canadianism as the core of a people's culture gives voice to a "nationalist modernism" among immigrant cultural groups otherwise assimilated into the Massey Commission's conception of a bilingual and bicultural Canada (Berland 28; Litt 113–14).

Impression's editor was not an editorial neophyte when she founded the magazine in the spring of 1950. The biographical note to her 1952 poetry chapbook, *Viewpoint*, informs us that she had been engaged in a number of editorial roles:

Mrs. Myra Lazechko-Haas'[s] name is familiar and prominent in Ukrainian-Canadian circles, and her articles and poems have appeared in a wide number of Canadian and American newspapers as well as periodicals of Ukrainian descent. . . . A graduate of Berkeley University, California, she is now literary editor of *Opinion* (Winnipeg), *New Canadian Poetry Column* (Toronto) as well as editor of *Impression* (Winnipeg). (inside cover)

As the literary editor of *Opinion* (1945–55[?]), the official newsletter of the Ukrainian Canadian Veterans' Association, Lazechko-Haas worked out of a Winnipeg-based immigrant culture.¹³ Her opening editorial for *Impression* thus situates the magazine in relation to the local literary community, its cultural groups, and its other periodicals such

as *Opinion*:

Canada, specifically Winnipeg, is in dire need of newspapers, literary journals and magazines, capable of bringing into the public light, the artistic efforts of our many diversified talents. . . . There are . . . the occasional magazines of Icelandic, Ukranian and Jewish descent, which do splendid work and encourage the splendid work of others. But their following is necessarily limited. The only magazine or newspaper in Winnipeg to actively enforce some measure or force of pure Canadianism in the printed word today, is "*The Manitoban*", and this is run almost exclusively by the student body and University staff. (1-2)

Having outlined the local cultural contexts, Lazechko-Haas then expands upon her plans for the magazine's dissemination to a national audience and her concept of Canadianism:

Impression is, mainly, a journal for the Arts. It is an independent magazine whose sole aim is to instigate, encourage and make known, the latent as well as the developed talents of young Canada; to investigate the talents of all Canadians of various racial differences; to bring together under the common denominator of the mutual arts, these peoples; to sublimate these peoples into a whole, rounded sum—Canadianism! (2)

Lazechko-Haas's emphasis on youth recalls a similar intention in the early issues of *First Statement*. But where Sutherland's "Magazine for Young Canadian Writers" aims to strike a discordant modernist and nationalist "fighting mag" pose, Lazechko-Haas's magazine seeks to develop a Canadian youth magazine culture whose nationalism is based upon harmony, not dissonance. Her editorial manner is antithetical to Sutherland's

polemical attacks on *Preview*, *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, and the *Crucible*. Local periodicals whose readership consists of immigrant communities received her praises rather than her reproaches; her support of such ventures was reciprocated, as she demonstrates in the first issue by publishing a supportive letter from one H. F. Danielson, editor of the *Icelandic Canadian*.

Lazechko-Haas's concept of Canadianism is related—but not identical—to the discourses of multiculturalism in current theoretical lexicons. Extrapolating from a liberal editorial policy of inclusiveness for the “mutual arts,” she articulates a multicultural, liberalist approach to the representation of “racial differences.” Images of the arts as a “whole, rounded” or as a “common denominator” and of artistic expression as the sublimation of difference, however, may in fact connote the cultural practice of assimilation. Her metaphor of sublimation (and its mathematical language) suggests the transmutation of difference into the sameness of Canadianism, if only in the arts. The hypothesis and expected outcome of this cultural experiment are by no means well defined, though clearly distinct from contemporary articulations of Canadian cultural nationalism. Lazechko-Haas's orientation toward a people's culture indicates a crucial distinction from a national culture—or what Litt calls the “liberal humanist nationalism” mandated by the Massey Commission as an official culture.¹⁴

Published in the Spring 1951 issue, Lazechko-Haas's next editorial offers her own artistic expression of a people's culture. Opening her editorial with a poem of her own, she presents a poetic catalogue of the people's means of communication through their manual labour:

speak to me not in the tongue of trees and valleys,
 the primary alphabets of hills and prairies,
 teach me instead, the syllables of tractor,
 of drill press, smelting ladle, motivated
 by human hands

.....

I have outgrown

the stumbling speech of soil, the rhetoric of rivers
 teach me the living language of people, my people,
 and I will spell out Canada for you. (45)

Lazcheko-Haas's rhetorical manner is remarkably similar to that of Livesay's social and political poetry of the 1930s; their common proletarian subject also suggests a thematic link between the two poets. (One could compare, for instance, Lazechko-Haas's "living language of people" to Livesay's "Invitation to Silence"; or the former's Canadianism to the latter's vision of the "people" in "Canada to the Soviet Union" [see chapter 1: 92–94; *Right Hand* 72].) The proletarian idiom of the poem is typical of the verse circulated in labour and farm papers of the early- to mid-century, chiefly published by and distributed in immigrant communities. With its version of Canadianism, her poem repudiates the pastoralism typical of the so-called Maple Leaf poets and the literary fashion of nineteenth and early-twentieth-century boosterism. Instead, she correlates the language of people's labour in immigrant communities and the discourse of modernist progress. This idealized vision of modernity embodies the tenets of an agrarian utopianism. Lazechko-Haas's

understanding of modernism and modernity is antithetical to the social and economic conditions of modernity that foster a modernist poetry preoccupied by urban alienation and industrial mechanization. Rather, her Canadianism integrates a utopian approach to modernity, a modernist poetics of language, and a nationalist conception of social, cultural, and economic forces. As she writes in the prose section of the editorial, "In us is the human bridge to cultural and economic understanding between ourselves and the outside world" (45).

Having appeared at approximately six-month intervals for the first three issues, the fourth and final issue of *Impression* would not come out until a year after the Spring 1951 issue. No doubt the editors had experienced difficulties raising funds to cover printing costs. In the second issue, Lazechko-Haas compiled a page of responses from readers and advertisers, clippings of positive and negative reviews. Entitled "Court of Comment," its final anonymous "witness" delivered a prophetic piece of testimony: "Come back and see me about my three dollar advertisement when your circulation is 5,000. We can't afford to gamble right now on your indefinite magazine" (43). With subscriptions at \$1.00 for one year or single issues for 35¢, one suspects that advertisements generated the majority of revenue for the magazine. Circulation figures for *Impression* are not available, but if the readership of its contemporaries is taken into evidence, we may conclude that it never reached a level satisfactory to advertisers and, consequently, never managed to obtain sufficient revenues to keep the magazine afloat.

Concurrent with the final issue of *Impression* in the spring of 1952, Lazechko-Haas would shift her attention to the composition of her poetry chapbook, *Viewpoint*.

Published in the Ryerson Press series in early 1952, *Viewpoint* includes two of her poems first printed in *Impression*: “After This” from the first issue (spring 1950) and “Selkirk Avenue” in the second (autumn 1950). The collection received moderate praise from B. K. Sandwell, editor of *Saturday Night*. His review of 17 May 1952 situated her as writer “well-known to the Ukranian part of the population” and noted her “rich fertility of figuration,” deploying an agricultural image which connotes and reiterates her ethnic background (33). Sandwell must have been impressed by her, since he published her photograph beside the omnibus review, which also covered three other titles in the Ryerson Poetry Chapbook series: *The Searching Image* by Louis Dudek, *It Was a Plane* by Tom Farley, and *Mint and Willow* by Ruth Cleaves Hazelton. The publicity afforded by the *Saturday Night* review did not translate into recognition by a national reading public: Lazechko-Haas may have been well-known to readers of Ukranian periodicals, but she would move for only a brief period beyond that immigrant audience into a national arts culture—as an editor, poet, and reviewer in *Impression* and as an author of *Viewpoint*. Once *Impression* faded after the spring 1952 issue, so too would her prospects of national recognition as a modernist poet in Canada.

Though short-lived, Lazechko-Haas’s contributions to little-magazine culture should not be underestimated: her editorial and poetic vision of a national people’s culture offered Canada an alternative to the official national culture advocated by the Massey Commission. The collapse of *Impression* not only signalled the lack of economic support for little-magazine culture in Canada, but also exemplified the critical failure of the Massey Commission to comprehend multiculturalism in the arts. Had Lazechko-Haas the financial

backing available to magazines affiliated with political organizations, *Impression* might have sustained a national people's magazine culture without the restrictions of authorship or audience placed upon periodicals such as its leftist contemporary, *New Frontiers*.

VII: Art in Small Print: Yvonne Agazarian and *pm magazine*

During the year-long interval between the penultimate and final issues of *Impression*, Yvonne Agazarian headed an editorial group intent upon founding an arts magazine in Vancouver. With Agazarian as its editor, *pm magazine* arrived on the Vancouver arts scene in November 1951. Its appearance in the fall of 1951 trailed the recent release of the *Massey Report* in June 1951, which had given brief notice of the non-commercial magazine in its section on the press and periodical literature:

A final word should be said about the non-profit periodical, the little magazine which, published by a small and confident group of talented people, not infrequently has given encouragement to genuinely creative writers, to poets in particular. Its literary and other criticisms are severe but usually well-informed, written brilliantly and without restraint. These small and generally short-lived magazines which attract few readers and as a consequence no advertisers, play a most important part in the cultural life of our country; their precarious life, their premature extinction and their courageous reappearance are no doubt all essential to our slow growth as a cultivated community. (65)

The commission's assessment of non-commercial magazines advocates a kind of cultural Darwinism: its figurative language of extinction and organic metaphors of regeneration support its recommendation not to interfere in the natural life of the little magazine. The

editors of non-commercial periodicals did not all share the same non-interventionist perspective on Canadian magazine culture. Just as *here and now* gratefully acknowledged the support of patrons, so too *pm magazine* gave thanks to its private supporters—including Dr. Norman MacKenzie, president of the University of British Columbia and former member of the Massey Commission (Agazarian, Editorial [1952] 2). The “premature extinction” of *pm magazine* after only three issues highlighted the problem of overspecialization among non-commercial magazines intended for a local rather than a national audience; its regionalism foregrounded a critical gap in the Massey Commission’s mandate in that a national culture may, in fact, be composed of a multiplicity of local cultural groups.¹⁵

Unlike *here and now* and *Impression*, *pm* was not concerned with the cultivation of a national arts culture. Its arts calendar was limited to Vancouver events; its patrons and advertisers were for the most part local, as were its contributors of articles, poems, and short stories. The local emphasis of the magazine likely dissuaded prominent authors from contributing their work. *pm*’s most notable literary contributor was Phyllis Webb, who had recently graduated from the University of British Columbia in 1949 and moved to Montreal in 1950 (Butling, *Seeing* 130); she even offered to distribute subscription forms for *pm* in Montreal (Webb to Agazarian, 27 December 1951; PM Magazine Papers [PMMP], box 1, file 2). The third and final issue included one of her early poems, “Is Our Distress”—later collected in *Trio* (1954), a Contact Press anthology of poems by Eli Mandel, Gael Turnbull, and Webb herself. Of the local Vancouver literati, Ethel Wilson opted for a financial contribution to *pm* rather than a literary one (Agazarian, Editorial

[1952] 2); Livesay offered a review, but no poems.

As a Vancouver arts monthly—of visual art, film, music, theatre, ballet, fiction, and poetry—*pm* differentiated itself from its local literary counterpart, *Contemporary Verse*. Production values (offset printing, tricolour and black-and-white art reproduction) also distinguished *pm* from the mimeographed *Contemporary Verse*. In a letter to Crawley about *pm*, Page's evaluation of the first issue perfectly captured the stark disparity between its aesthetic and literary values: "What do you think of P.M. & how long do you give it? I thought the first issue pretty bad in the writing line. In fact, awful. But I liked the courage of so many [lino-]cuts" (Page to Crawley, n.d.; ACP, box 1, file 20). The positive elements of her response to *pm*, especially its design aesthetic, reflect the early design and print work of Robert R. Reid, an innovative typographer, printer, and graphic designer (McKnight 26). Page's admiration for *pm*'s visual art and design would not, though, compel her (or others of her calibre) to submit poems to the new magazine in order to raise its literary profile.

Agazarian's opening editorial offers a rather abstracted view of *pm*, in that she employs the figure of typographic design as a conceit to represent the magazine's aesthetic principles. In brief, her self-reflexive editorial suggests that "art" and "ART" represent two extreme perspectives on the "arts":

Remove art from the small print of life and put it into capitals and it becomes the barrier between the half of us who don't understand and the other half who do. Look through the wrong end of a telescope and the capitals suddenly become familiar. They diminish into that piece of music you hum, that story you

remember, or that painting you want to see again.

Presumably, *pm* could represent the point of view of the reversed telescope: just as uppercase “ART” becomes lowercase “art,” so, by analogy, “PM” becomes “pm.” The typographic analogy is somewhat harder to sustain after the opening exposition:

But where did ART go?—the impetus that is behind hundreds of books, meetings, exhibitions and shows? Basically the change of perspective does not alter art, however capitalised, at all. It merely shows two extremes of the same thing, one a part of living, the other a development of one slice of living until it becomes as specialized as atom-splitting. No focus can alter either art or its value.

Agazarian commits *pm* to a view of “ART,” but admits that its readers may only see “art”:

If at first you judge what you see as art in small print we will abide by your judgement, in the hope that subsequent issues will convince you, or re-enforce your conviction, that art is an important part of living. Then voluntarily you may decide to set it in the capitals it deserves. (Editorial [1951])

Insofar as its audience may prefer to read “ART” as “art,” so the editor intends “to present a view of the arts” as part of “the small print of life” so that the reader may eventually be inclined to accept “ART” as an integral to everyday experience. For Agazarian, the generic everydayness of the magazine (which is also implied by *pm*’s title) lends itself to the project of integrating art into life. The notion that it is the reader him or herself who must decide to set “art in . . . capitals” is indicative of a democratic view of art—that is, an everyday art that Agazarian had hoped to promote through the monthly publication of *pm*.¹⁶

As much as Agazarian practised the democratic editorial principle of keeping *pm* open to younger writers, she could hardly deny the value of publishing the work of older, accomplished writers. Enlisting Livesay as a reviewer in the February 1952 issue, Agazarian invited a dissonant voice into *pm*'s back pages. Reviewing the special Canadian issues of *Arena*, a New Zealand magazine guest edited by John Sutherland, and of *Poetry Commonwealth*, a British magazine guest edited by Earle Birney, Livesay delivers an incisive assessment of each editor's approach:

Admittedly, it is a hard thing to be an anthologist! Either you let your own tastes take you any whichway, as Birney does; or you try and be catholic, judicial and representative, like Sutherland. The first method encourages new talent, sets a new name in print. But one poem by an unknown writer, with no published work behind him, is scarcely giving accurate measure to the reader abroad. . . . (62)

Livesay makes plain her preference for Sutherland's anthological construction of "a bird's eye view of Canadian poetry from its beginning to the present" (62). Given her decision to review for *pm*, Livesay's criticism of the method adopted by Birney is rather ironic in that she thereby upbraids one of the mandates of Agazarian's magazine, as she states in the editorial to the same issue: "Our aim is to give young artists and writers a medium of expression" (Editorial [1952]). Perhaps accustomed to Crawley's editorial inclination to represent longer poems and groups of poems by individual authors in *Contemporary Verse*, Livesay finds the representation of a poet by a single poem insufficient. Because of the broad representation of the arts in *pm*, each issue could only print one or, at most, two poems. While Agazarian stood by *pm*'s policy of publishing younger and unknown writers

for its three issues, she would not have the opportunity to experiment with Livesay's views and publish larger groups of poems or longer poems in future issues.

Although we should not conflate the views of a contributor with those of *pm*'s editor, Agazarian published only one article about the Massey Commission, one that confirmed the commissioners' view of the cultural Darwinism that inexorably haunts the life of the little magazine. Published in the second issue, Rene Boux's article "A Note on Theatre and the Massey Report" echoes the commissioners' assessment of little magazines:

Neither the commissioners nor any of the contributors [to *Royal Commission Studies*] suggest that true culture is anything but an organic growth, and the Report eschews any suggestion that the federal government present Canadians with a large beribboned gift-box of custom designed luxuries. . . . Let us distrust any sort of direct state patronage of the arts when the artists are not in a strong enough position. . . . (49, 50)

In the third and final, February 1952 issue, Agazarian implemented a plan to put the magazine in a stronger position. She announced the growth of *pm*'s circulation from five hundred to two thousand, accompanied by a plea for "the capital for further expansion" in order to attract advertising revenues, and a request for assistance "to handle our growing organization" (Editorial [1952]). Increases in *pm*'s print run and plans to expand further still indicate its editor's efforts to compete for a larger share of the periodical market. But if Agazarian's claim that *pm* "will not be talking advertising language until five or ten thousand" is not an exaggeration, then *pm*'s target market could hardly be reached by

advertising itself as “B.C.’s only arts magazine” (Editorial [1952]). Having obtained start-up funding from the local Community Arts Council of Vancouver, *pm* could legitimately expect to serve a local market, and had managed to balance its books up until the third issue (Editorial [1951]); but without the resources of a Canada Council, and without attracting major advertisers or charging advertising rates on a national scale, *pm* could never expect to secure a share in a national periodical market. As Boux put it in his article, “What a dream world the Massey Report created, full of modest but exciting treasures!” (48). Had the “dream world” of Canada Council funding materialized in time for Agazarian and *pm*, it might have allowed her to complete the magazine’s expansion plans, to attract literary contributions from established poets such as Page and Livesay, and to help launch the careers of still more emergent modernists such as Phyllis Webb. With the collapse of *pm* after February 1952, it would fall into the category of “premature extinction” that the Massey Commission had identified as the defining trait of the little magazine.

VIII: “Not a one man job”: Aileen Collins and *CIV/n*

“Let us distrust any sort of direct state patronage of the arts” is a declaration that could have found its way into Montreal’s *CIV/n* instead of Vancouver’s *pm*. *CIV/n* lends credibility to McCourt’s conjecture in *Royal Commission Studies* that the editor of a little magazine “would scornfully reject the offer of government aid” (82). *CIV/n*’s first “editorial” was, in effect, a critique of the Massey Report and its proposals for government subsidies for the development of Canadian culture. This “editorial” was, in fact, an advertisement for Irving Layton’s *Love the Conqueror Worm*, published by Contact Press:

“We are asking readers of this magazine to order a copy of this book. This is not a paid advertisement. We are not welshing or quoting the Massey Report. The way to support Canadian literature is to buy and read the work of our best writers” (“Love”). Who is this “we”? If it is Contact Press, then the “we” represents Raymond Souster, Louis Dudek, and Layton himself. If it is *CIV/n*, then the “we” stands for Aileen Collins, Jackie Gallagher, Stanley (Buddy) Rozynski, and Wanda Staniszevska (later Rozynski). Or, better yet, the “we” includes both groups. From the start, the *CIV/n* group extended its collective to include Dudek and Layton, both of whom accepted advisory roles: they attended editorial meetings and read submissions, but neither appeared on the masthead. With the exception of Souster, then, this extended group comprised the “we” of *CIV/n*’s first editorial–advertisement. In any case, the advertisement makes plain the resistance of a number of Canadian poets, editors, and artists to cultural policies outlined in the Massey *Report*. Instead of opening with a typically tendentious little-magazine manifesto, *CIV/n* employed advertising as an aggressive avant-garde editorial discourse.¹⁷

Edited by Collins, *CIV/n* was conceived in Montreal in 1952 and its first issue appeared in January 1953. Like *here and now*, *CIV/n* published a range of established and emergent North American modernist poets of the time: Waddington, Dudek, Layton, Souster, Scott, Smith, Wilkinson, Webb, Ralph Gustafson, Leonard Cohen, Eli Mandel, D. G. Jones, Charles Olson, Cid Corman, and Robert Creeley, among others. Probably because of this impressive list of North American contributors, *CIV/n* has garnered significant literary-historical attention. Histories and memoirs particular to *CIV/n* have been written by Dudek (“The Making of *CIV/n*”), Norris (“The Significance of *Contact*

and *CIV/n*"; *Little* 63–68), Francis ("A Dramatic Story Missed"), and Collins (Introduction). Biographical studies of Dudek (Davey 17–18) and of Layton (Cameron, *Irving* 204–06) also bear witness to their advisory roles among the *CIV/n* group. Given her primary position as *CIV/n*'s editor, Collins's role in these histories, memoirs, and biographies related to the magazine requires recasting.

Because of its cryptic signature, the starting point for historical narratives about *CIV/n* has always been the name of the magazine itself. By way of explication, the *CIV/n* masthead offers a gloss below the title: "civilization is not a one man job." The source of both *CIV/n*'s title and its gloss, as Dudek reveals in his memoir "The Making of *CIV/n*" (1965), is an unidentified letter by Ezra Pound. (In his annotations to *Dk/ Some Letters of Ezra Pound* [1974], Dudek notes that the name *CIV/n* originated in "one of Pound's laconic sayings" [103], making no mention of a letter.) Placed in quotation marks, the gloss is itself suggestive of Pound's practice of unattributed quotation, notably in the *Cantos* but also generally as an idiosyncratic notational practice in poems and correspondence. Commentators have often noted Pound's influence on *CIV/n*, especially through his correspondence with Dudek (circa 1949–55). As a consequence, Collins's activities as an editor have been sidetracked by critics and historians exclusively interested in the Dudek–Pound correspondence; this tendency has also bypassed potential inquiry into Pound's influence on Collins. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that Pound was ever in correspondence with Collins. Nevertheless, her editorial decisions to publish excerpts from Pound's prose writings, essays about Pound, and her own editorial about his views on "Kulchur" in *CIV/n* indicate an intellectual influence deserving of

consideration.

In her 1983 memoir about *CIV/n*, Collins carefully distances herself from any direct association with Pound. Recalling the selection of a name for the magazine, she refers to Dudek's "high enthusiasm for Ezra Pound" and suggestion of "CIV/n, from Pound's off-hand statement in a letter," but attributes no agency to herself as part of the process: "This name struck us as perfect for our intentions. So CIV/n it was" (Introduction 8). In reporting Stanley (Buddy) Rozynski's retrospective view of *CIV/n*, she again disassociates herself from Pound: "Central to our work, Buddy believes, were the ideas of Ezra Pound, especially the motto we had adopted as our title" (Introduction 10–11). Nowhere in her memoir does she indicate any direct association between Pound or his ideas and herself. In light of Pound's self-confessed antisemitism (and his self-condemnation), Collins's historical revisionism is understandable: she detaches herself from Pound himself, though not from his influence on *CIV/n*. In this respect, her retrospective handling of Pound is somewhat representative of her indirect contact with him through his correspondence with Dudek.

All communication between Pound and *CIV/n* was channeled through Dudek. One could even say that Pound's relationship to *CIV/n* bears residual resemblance to his transatlantic correspondence and editorial affiliations with Harriet Monroe and Alice Corbin Henderson of *Poetry* and Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap of the *Little Review*. Pound's attempts to manoeuvre *CIV/n* are tinged with his nostalgia for a modernist little-magazine culture of the 1910s and 1920s. His correspondence with Dudek is scattered with references to *Poetry* and the *Little Review*. In a letter of April 1950, for instance,

Pound writes to Dudek about the “difference between Harriet’s Poetry and Little Review,” concluding that “the L. R. did NOT try to putt [sic] writing on mantlepiece” (Dudek, *Dk*/ 19). Pound’s distinction may be debatable, but if one were to choose between the two, the eventual model for *CIV/n* would have to be the avant-garde *Little Review*. If his caricature of *Poetry* is any indication, the admiration Pound still held for the *Little Review* was based as much on its editors’ willingness to engage in polemic as on the poetry, fiction, and criticism they published in the magazine. Any contemporary little magazine, according to Pound, should carry out a polemical agenda. As part of their correspondence, Dudek would send copies of Canadian literary magazines—*Northern Review*, *Contact*, and *CIV/n*—on which Pound passed swift judgement. Disappointed by the second issue of *CIV/n*, for example, he chastised Dudek in a letter of April 1953: “surely among all you bright young things yu [sic] OUGHT to be able to find the makings of at least one pt polemical writer. . . . Immediate NEED, 1953, of polemical writers/ in eras of ease. decadent 90s etc.” (Dudek, *Dk*/ 101). Dudek, in his annotations to this letter in *Dk*, clarifies his and others’ resistance to Pound’s polemical program:

The magazine [*CIV/n*] was in fact extremely “polemical,” but Pound only recognized as rightly polemical and “useful” those magazines which parroted his little program to the letter. . . . We were very much for Pound, but we could not possibly serve him in the way he wanted. In fact, *CIV/n* had its own ego-personalities, and a very locally-focused Canadian program, so that it could not be entirely subordinated to Pound’s internationalist ideas. (103)

CIV/n would never be granted Pound’s unconditional (or even conditional) approval.

After receiving the fourth issue in December 1953—which contained a pamphlet reprinted at Pound’s request, Dudek’s review of *The Translations of Ezra Pound* and article “Why is Ezra Pound Being Held in St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, Washington, D. C.,” a translation of Camillio Pellizzi’s article “Ezra Pound: A Difficult Man” from the Italian newspaper *Il Tempo*, and excerpts of letters in support of his release—Pound would even break off communication with Dudek and *CIV/n* (Dudek, *Dk/* 107).

Resuming correspondence with Dudek in December 1954, Pound acknowledged his continued receipt of *CIV/n* and thereafter offered laconic commentaries on the magazine. In a letter of 21 April 1955, Pound inquired about Collins: “who is the CIV/N female. No civilization without civic sense. which I can’t recall hitting HIGH in Civ/n. tell me more about the gal’s Anschauung [outlook]” (Dudek, *Dk/* 111). Apart from identifying Collins as the editor of *CIV/n*, Dudek provides no annotation on her editorial ideas or “outlook.” Pound’s query probably stemmed from Collins’s editorial in the fifth issue, published in March 1954:

Culture . . . is the main topic to-day, for CBC radio talks, letters to *Saturday Night*, etc, etc, etc. . . . Now, to me, it doesn’t matter half a damn whether we ever achieve a “Canadian Culture”—or not. Nothing will be done until we start concentrating on producing *poetry* without qualifications as to nation. But a poet in Canada is forced to write with maple syrup on birch bark. . . . The kind of poetry we want will be a vital representation of what things are, done in strong language (if necessary) or any language, but it will rouse the reader to see just what the world around him is like. . . . For Kulchur’s sake, at least, let’s have a lot

of bad *good* poetry in future, instead of more *good* bad poetry—and let the dead-head critics hold their peace until the call of the last moose. (“Canadian”; original italics)

Collins’s adoption of Pound’s vernacular neologism “Kulchur” and advocacy of poetry as its primary vehicle may allude to his *Guide to Kulchur* (1938): “Man gittin’ Kulchur had better try poetry first. If he can’t get it there he won’t get it anyhow. . .” (122). For Pound, “Kulchur” signifies no less than the history of a civilization, “the perception of a whole age, of a whole congeries and sequence of causes” (*Guide* 136). The shift from “Canadian Culture” to a Poundian “Kulchur” in the space of Collins’s editorial is itself indicative of a continued resistance among the *CIV/n* group to the popular articulation of cultural nationalism. As in *CIV/n*’s advertisement-cum-editorial of January 1953, Collins’s March 1954 editorial targets the idea of a national culture as represented in the Massey *Report* and circulated through popular print and radio media. Given her rejection of a “protected and insured” Canadianism and defense of an international “Kulchur” (“Canadian”), Collins likely would have concurred with some of Pound’s exclamatory comments in his letters to Dudek, especially those delivered in reaction to the national orientation of little-magazine cultures in Canada: “naturally to HELL with Canadian or any other parochial pt/ of view” and “[h]ell No/ git yr/ eye off Canada/ and onto internat/ criteria/” (Dudek, *Dk*/ 88, 89). If we read Pound’s April 1955 letter of inquiry as a diffident response to Collins’s March 1954 editorial (which is probable, since she contributed no other editorials to subsequent issues), his correlation of what he calls her “civic sense” and what he deems to be the mediocre level of “civilization” in the magazine

is a clear sign of his disapproval—both of *CIV/n* and of its editor. While her editorial was primarily directed at a national Canadian audience (a “parochial pt/ of view,” according to Pound), Collins published in the same issue poems by Creeley; translations from the Provençal of Arnaut Daniel, and from the French of Rilke and Verlaine; reviews of Woolf, and of Creeley, Olson, and Paul Blackburn; and excerpts from Pound’s *ABC of Reading* (1934) and *The Letters of Ezra Pound 1907–41* (1951). Subsequent issues displayed its editors’ continued maintenance of an international literary profile. Contrary to Pound’s assessment, then, Collins edited *CIV/n* with an eye on international criteria, contributors, and literary-magazine culture.

Pound’s question, “who is the *CIV/n* female?” is one too rarely considered by literary historians.¹⁸ In his history of *CIV/n*, Norris diminishes Collins’s role to that of an adjunct: “Despite Dudek’s contention that he and Layton tried to stay in the background, their presence was very much felt. . . . The production work and distribution were handled by Aileen Collins and the Rozynskis, but much of the energy expressed in the magazine stems from Layton and Dudek, and particularly from Dudek” (*Little* 63–64). Reiterating Norris’s narrative, Francis has similarly suggested that “[t]he truly ‘antithetical’ individuals involved with *CIV/n* were Louis Dudek and Irving Layton, and the ‘real dramatic story’ of this magazine derives from the tensions between them” (“Dramatic” 90). Both Norris and Francis thus dispute Dudek’s retrospective in the *Index to CIV/n*: “There was always a tactful solicitude on the part of Layton and myself not to interfere with the editorial freedom of the actual editors. We read poetry before a group at Layton’s house, enjoying free comments and debate over the poems, but we made no

decisions and left the final choice of what was to go in the magazine up to the Editor” (“Making” 230). In her memoir of *CIV/n*, Collins also emphasizes the collaborative nature of the editorial and production work on the magazine. In a letter of 15 August 1954, however, she wrote to Dudek about Layton’s interference with *CIV/n*, as he was wanting “Smith and Scott to be asked to be contributing editors” and Dudek, Layton, and Robert Currie to be “listed as associate editors,” and “saying that you can’t have unknowns listed in editorial capacity in the magazine any more—because now we have important names in it and the *civ/n* will increase and people *must* know who really run it, hence, inspire confidence. Staniszewska, Collins, Rozynski—who ever heard of those three wierdies?” With Dudek away from Montreal, Layton seems to have thought himself a Pound—in the manner of Pound’s editorial infiltration of Harriet Shaw Weaver’s *New Freewoman* (1913)—and attempted to renovate *CIV/n*. Collins’s concluding remarks in her letter to Dudek about Layton make plain her anger toward him and his failed takeover bid:

I am just about ready to pull out—but will see this issue through—Layton is an overpowering son of a, and is also crazy now for names and a policy to cater to said names. Maybe I’m being too sensitive and “childish” about it—but I feel strongly—why does he want to be publicly ass/d with the editorial staff now?—it is quite obvious and if we wants [sic] it that way, I am not staying as editor to do the typing and send out the mail— (LDF, series 2, Collins file)

Having invested in a new electric typewriter (which, incidentally, Collins thought to name “Ezra”) and abandoned mimeograph for print, Collins soon found the costs of printing as overwhelming as Layton’s directives (Collins to Dudek, 15 August 1954; LDF, series 2,

Collins file).¹⁹ In the end, though, it was not Layton but the lack of a sufficient economic base that brought about the demise of *CIV/n*—a direct and unfortunate result of Collins’s decision in the summer of 1954 “to venture into print” (Collins, Introduction 9). While others would rather have the more sensational figures of Layton and Dudek dominate the history of *CIV/n*, Collins herself deserves final recognition for her central role in its editing and its physical production—and, ultimately, in its downfall.

Because the only advertisements carried in *CIV/n* were those of other little magazines or of recent publications from small presses, Collins and the Rozynskis “paid the costs of the magazine—several hundred dollars before the project ended” (Dudek, “Making” 231).²⁰ Whatever the exact circumstances of the decline of *CIV/n*, its editors’ intention to engage with an international little-magazine culture was nevertheless accomplished in the later issues. Similar to the opening editorial–advertisement in the first issue, the advertisements on the back cover of the seventh and final issue served as a kind of editorial entitled “*CIV/n* in Canada / and Abroad.” This self-advertisement quoted the *Globe and Mail*’s assessment of *CIV/n* as “‘the latest poetic purgings’ in Montreal,” and, in contrast, noted the magazine’s enthusiastic reception by a Spanish quarterly called *Quadernos*, the publication of a long article on “recent Canadian poetry” (presumably on *CIV/n* poets) in the Rome newspaper *Il Secolo d’Italia*, and the dedication of a special New Canadian Poetry issue of the British magazine *Artisan* to “the Contact–*CIV/n* poets” (Layton, Dudek, Souster, Webb, Mandel, among others) (“*CIV/n* in Canada”). Despite the breadth of its international contacts (it was also listed in James Boyer May’s *Trace* magazine, a kind of little-magazine directory), *CIV/n* ended up with a large mailing list of

issues “sent out free of charge to a galaxy of Canadian and American writers” and a small subscribers’ list of “about 100” (Collins, Introduction 8, 9). Though they conferred distinction upon *CIV/n*, these international contacts did not translate into capital to cover the basic production costs for a printed magazine with a limited circulation. Without a grant, a patron, or an organization to underwrite their expenses, the editors of *CIV/n* could not afford to sustain the magazine beyond its final two printed issues. Yet Collins and her fellow editors remained indifferent to the Massey Commission’s promise of subsidies for Canadian culture. Rather than write editorials to solicit government aid, *CIV/n* would continue through its final issue in early 1955 to run advertisements for little magazines and small press books and thereby encourage their readers to support both Canadian and international literary culture through the purchase of such publications.

IX: A People’s Culture: Margaret Fairley and *New Frontiers*

Even as *CIV/n* contested the *Massey Report* and promoted an international literary avant garde, cultural leftists likewise opposed the findings of the Massey Commission but, at the same time, deplored cultural internationalism and avant-garde art. Canada’s cultural leftists and modernists were fellow critics of the Massey Commission, but otherwise irreconcilable. When news of the forthcoming leftist cultural magazine *New Frontiers* had started to circulate in Toronto literary circles by the end of July 1951, it mobilized an oppositional modernist literary-magazine culture. In his letter to Dudek dated 6 October 1951, Souster wrote of the Labour Progressive Party’s (LPP) plans to launch *New Frontiers* and of his own scheme to release a new magazine at the same time: “Biggest factor is the forthcoming publication of the L. P. P. called *New Frontiers*. This will leave

no other literary mag in Toronto, and I think that just isn't good enough. There must be some other publication, even if it's only a token gesture. Therefore we plan to bring out the first issue of a mimeographed magazine of verse to be called *Contact* in February.” Adding that “MAKE IT NEW is our unofficial slogan,” Souster aligned *Contact* with Pound's modernist dictum—and perhaps, if one takes into consideration his anticommunist politics and internationalist cultural agenda, alluded to an ally in opposition to the leftist nationalism of the LPP's cultural arm (Souster qtd. in Gnarowski, *Contact* 4). A preliminary report on the LPP's proposed cultural magazine had been circulated at the Second National Cultural Conference of the LPP held in Toronto, 12–13 May 1951 (Margaret Fairley Papers [MFP], box 2, file 13). Souster had probably received word of the prospectus and dummy of *New Frontiers* prepared and distributed by the LPP Cultural Commission during the summer and fall of 1951. Opposition to *New Frontiers* seems to have been shared not only by Souster but also among contemporary modernist poets and fellow veterans of Canadian modernist little-magazine cultures of the 1930s and 1940s. None of Canada's prominent modernist poets of the early to mid-1950s would appear in *New Frontiers*.

Edited by Margaret Fairley, *New Frontiers* would first appear in January 1952 (Doyle, “Margaret” 86). Fairley was well aware of the current modernist poets in Canada, including Kennedy, Souster, Klein, Livesay, Scott, Wreford, Anderson, and Waddington—all of whom she named in “Our Cultural Heritage,” which she published as the lead article in the first issue of *New Frontiers*. Rather than refer to them as immediate contemporaries, however, she situated them in the earlier social, economic, and political

contexts of the Depression, the Spanish Civil War, and WWII: "Writing in the *Canadian Forum*, and elsewhere, they showed that the life around them was their life, and the energy of their work expressed the response to life of the men who fought back. Where are they now? Is no fighting back needed today?" (1). As the editor of *Spirit of Canadian Democracy: A Collection of Canadian Writings from Beginnings to Present Day* (1945), Fairley had anthologized poems by Waddington ("Partisans," "Summer on My Street"), Page ("Foreigner"), and Livesay ("West Coast"), among other modernist poets of the 1940s. Fairley had even submitted a preliminary list of selections to Livesay, asking for suggestions of poems (other than Livesay's own) for inclusion in the anthology (Fairley to Livesay, 27 October 1944; DLP-QU, box 1, file 1, item 13). While Fairley could take her pick among numerous social and/or political poems written by Waddington, Page, Livesay, and others as an anthologist in the early to mid-1940s, she would not have the same plenitude available to her as an editor of *New Frontiers* in the early to mid-1950s.

While Fairley's literary and political life has been well sketched in articles by David Kimmel and James Doyle, the story of her editorial work still remains in outline—that is, a general biographical and historical narrative to which the present study adds detail about her editorships in Canadian leftist magazine cultures. *New Frontiers* naturally tends to dominate this narrative not only as a highlight of Fairley's editorial career, but also as a resuscitation of a leftist magazine culture dormant in Canada since the fall of its forerunner and namesake, *New Frontier*, in October 1937. The planning of *New Frontiers* in the months concurrent with the release of the Massey Commission's *Report* in 1951 and the launch of the magazine in January 1952 make Fairley's editorials and articles in response

to the commission's findings significant cultural documents. Both Kimmel (47–48) and Doyle (“Margaret” 86–87) have devoted attention to Fairley's articles and editorials about the Massey Commission in *New Frontiers*. But apart from a nod to the numerous editorials and articles about the Massey Commission in the “left-leaning” *Canadian Forum* (232), and record of the commissioners' refusal to entertain partisan political groups such as the CCF (46–47), Litt's history of the origins, conduct, and reception of the commission and its *Report* omits all reference to leftist cultural organizations and periodicals such as the LPP and *New Frontiers*. This omission is emblematic of *New Frontiers*'s reception in Canadian cultural history: except in studies of leftist figures, groups, and publications, the LPP's cultural magazine of the 1950s has been left out of the historical record, especially that of Canadian literary culture at mid-century. Because the majority of studies about English-Canadian literary cultures of the 1950s has focused on the development of modernism, Canada's contemporary leftist and antimodernist literary culture—as represented by magazines such as *New Frontiers*—has so far remained in the minority and outside the prevailing critical narrative of the period.

If, however, a leftist magazine such as *New Frontiers* were recontextualized in relation to its modernist contemporaries, then the history of Canadian magazine culture could accommodate the heated conversations between leftists and modernists in the 1950s. This agonistic relationship reactivates the leftist–modernist dynamic operative in cultural magazines of the 1930s such as *Masses* and *New Frontier*. Just as Livesay's poetry and prose in *Masses* and *New Frontier* often denigrate modernism in the 1930s, so Fairley's involvement with the LPP's Cultural Commission and *New Frontiers* promotes an

analogous antimodernist agenda in the 1950s. One crucial distinction, however, is the transition from the internationalism of those leftist and Popular Front cultural magazines of the 1930s to the nationalism of Canadian leftist magazine culture of the 1950s.

Fairley's association with Canadian periodicals began in Toronto with the University College student magazine the *Rebel* (1917–19), which was superseded in 1920 by the *Canadian Forum*; she contributed to both magazines "articles and reviews that were informed by moderate feminism, Fabian socialism and pacifism" throughout the late 1910s, 1920s and early 1930s (Doyle, "Margaret" 79). From January 1929 to October 1930, Fairley was an associate editor of the *Forum*. During her *Forum* editorship, she contributed only one piece of writing, a review article about Virginia Woolf published in the March 1930 issue. Commenting on *Orlando* (1928) and *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Fairley praised Woolf's modernist prose style and handling of the "woman-artist" as an historical feminist figure ("Virginia" 204); this interest in feminist literature stems from Fairley's early commitments to political feminism and activism in the late 1910s and early 1920s articulated in such early articles as "The Women's Party" (1918) and "Domestic Discontent" (1920). These feminist political interests would anticipate her later involvement in communist politics by the mid-1930s.

Though she would not follow Livesay's leftist tendencies of the early 1930s and turn antifeminist, Fairley would become a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain after moving to England in 1932, and later, upon her return to Canada in 1936, a member of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC) (Kimmel 36). From November 1936 to October 1937, Fairley contributed to *New Frontier* book reviews, review articles, and

even a drawing of the Scottish nationalist and communist poet Hugh MacDiarmid. Having re-established herself in Canadian periodical culture through her publications in *New Frontier*, Fairley was appointed book-review editor of the progressive weekly paper the *Canadian Tribune* in the early 1940s, a position she held throughout the war (Doyle, "Margaret" 83–84). Unlike Livesay, Fairley would not distance herself from the CPC after 1939; she would remain with the party (and its "unofficial" paper the *Tribune*) through its underground war-years (1939–42) and its rechristening and re-emergence as the LPP in 1943.

After the war, she would become a member of the LPP Cultural Commission, founded by Stanley Ryerson in April 1947 (*The L. P. P. and the Arts: A Discussion Bulletin* [n.d.] [1]; MFP, box 2, file 13). As a result of her work on the LPP Cultural Commission, Fairley would be appointed editor of *New Frontiers*. Among the first tasks of the commission was a "study of the background and structure of the Canadian Arts Council" (CAC), an independent administrative body consisting of sixteen national arts groups, whose original May 1944 brief submitted to the House of Commons Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment called for the creation of a government-sponsored arts administration, among numerous other items of cultural concern (*LPP Cultural Bulletin* [June 1948]; MFP, box 1, file 13).²¹ Though the LPP's cultural arm would not gain affiliation with the CAC, the party's support of the council's initiatives would lead to the LPP's subsequent demands for the implementation of the CAC's government-appointed successor, the Canada Council, whose formation was recommended by the Massey Commission in 1951. Of those LPP Cultural Commission

members who kept a careful watch on the *Massey Report*, Fairley would remain sceptical of the government's intentions. Her lead article in the first issue of *New Frontiers* takes a scalpel to the *Massey Report*, a document to which she would return in her winter 1954 editorial ("The Canada Council"), written in response to Prime Minister Louis St-Laurent's October 1953 announcement of the government's plan to form the Canada Council.

Fairley used her positions as a representative of the LPP Cultural Commission and editor of *New Frontiers* to promote the cause of a progressive Canadian people's culture, one to which she believed the *Massey Report* and its conception of a national culture stood in opposition. In her January 1952 article "Our Cultural Heritage," she offers a useful delineation of the terms "culture in general . . . and progressive Canadian culture in particular":

our progressive culture is the energetic expression of our life of social struggle, directed to positive, creative, fruitful ends. It is a culture which seeks to record, adorn and change the real life of men in our country. Such culture is opposed to violence in a corrupted world; it is opposed to the negative self-pity of introspective poets, and the escape from reality of abstract artists; it is opposed to the Massey-External Affairs-U.S. State Department culture which would close our eyes to what is happening in half the world, and fix our attention on brutality and murder. (2)

Fairley's melodramatic description of oppositional cultures alludes to the second section of the *Massey Report*, where the commissioners correlate national culture and national

defence, declaring their inseparability (275). For Fairley, this connection between militarism and culture signals the antithesis to the peaceful and democratic people's culture to which *New Frontiers* pledged itself in its inaugural editorial ("For a Canadian"). Antiamericanism and antimilitarism are pervasive in the Cold War cultural discourse of *New Frontiers*, foregrounded in the opening editorial where blatant derogations such as "the degenerate products of U.S. commercialism" and "the war-fostering U.S. culture" make plain what Fairley fears in the "Massey-External Affairs-U.S. State Department culture" ("For a Canadian"; "Our Cultural"). *New Frontiers*'s antimodernism is equally pronounced. Fairley's characterization of contemporary modernist poetry and art betrays an antipathy toward modernist modes of subjectivism and non-representational abstraction. Given the turn toward subjectivist modes in modernist poetry of the 1950s—not only in the poetry of Livesay, Marriott, Page, and Waddington, but more generally in Canada, the United States, and Britain—the fact that none of the prominent modernist poets of the day published in *New Frontiers* is hardly surprising.

The logic that enables Fairley to draw links between modernist aesthetic practices and what she calls "Massey-External Affairs-U.S. State Department culture" may seem dubious, but it derives from her advocacy of an indigenous national culture, a Canadian people's culture. In Fairley's view, literary modernism in Canada is another product of American cultural imperialism. The *Massey Report* mistakenly focuses on the underdevelopment of a contemporary modernist literature, Fairley claims, rather than properly celebrating Canada's literary heritage. Her main objection to the *Massey Report* is, then, that it neglects to report on "the content of Canadian culture" and instead

“focus[es] the attention on what is not there” (“Our Cultural” 1). Writing of Canadian–Mohawk poet Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), for instance, Fairley makes plain her aversion to literary modernism as a “cosmopolitan” cultural import and her preference for a native—Canadian and aboriginal—literature:

It is not difficult to see why she is cold-shouldered by the clique of poets and novelists who are more at home with the cosmopolitan writers of the United States and Britain than with the people of Canada. There are a number of Canadian verse-writers who choose to stand aloof from their country, and write as if suspended in mid-air over no-man’s land. (“Pauline” 43)

In her editorials and articles in *New Frontiers*, then, Fairley challenges the question posed in the *Massey Report*—“Is it true, then, that we are a people without a literature?”—and its conclusion: “all our informants agree that Canada has not yet established a national literature” (222, 225). She disputes the commission’s conclusions, arguing that the “level of universalism” to which the *Report* would have the Canadian author aspire is not the measure of a national literature (226). Universalism is, in this instance, another term for the “cosmopolitanism” of those American and British modernist authors whose influence was, according to Fairley and *New Frontiers*, the bane of a national people’s culture and literature.

While most would dismiss her choice of Canada’s greatest poet, Fairley would rather champion the communist poet Joe Wallace than any Canadian modernist:

At the present time there are men and women in Canada bursting to speak their minds. Some of them are hampered by lack of training and lack of craft. But in

different fields some are leading the way; and others are striving through self-education and mutual criticism to overcome their difficulties. In poetry J. S. Wallace writes about and for the people. He expresses the struggles and hopes of the working class in language clear and moving. In emotional power he is the finest poet Canada has yet produced. ("Our Cultural" 6)

The import of Fairley's canonization of Wallace is that, in her estimation, Canada had in fact produced a national literature, even if, in view of the findings of the *Massey Report*, it was unrecognized by the legislators of Canadian culture. In its negative assessment of Canadian literature in the 1950s, the *Massey Report* recalls Ruth McKenzie's and Livesay's pessimistic conclusions about the absence of a Canadian proletarian literature in the 1930s (McKenzie 49; Livesay, *Right Hand* 230; see chapter 1: 34–35). According to Fairley, there was a national literature, the democratic and patriotic expression of a people's culture, which had already developed in Canada. So, instead of lamenting the lack of a national literature, she asked of the Massey Commission: "Why not examine more carefully what is there, find out its worth, and discover why, if such is the case, it has been hidden?" ("Our Cultural" 1). *New Frontiers* was thus designed as the means to uncover, discover, and recover a Canadian people's literature: for established contemporaries (Wallace, Kenneth Leslie, Wilson MacDonald), for newcomers (Milton Acorn, George Ryga), and for canonical and non-canonical authors in reprint (Johnson, Norman Bethune, Isabella Valancy Crawford), among others.

Although *New Frontiers* would outdistance the combined runs of *Masses* (1932–34) and *New Frontier* (1936–37), its sixteenth and final issue would appear at the

end of a four-year campaign in the summer of 1956. The minutes and memoranda from the LPP Cultural Commission meetings corroborate Doyle's determination that the "main reasons for the disappearance of *New Frontiers* were economic" ("Margaret" 88). Both the January 1956 memorandum on *New Frontiers* and Fairley's report at the 12 January 1956 meeting of the LPP Cultural Commission indicate that the magazine faced other obstacles as well, one of which involved the recruitment of editorial board members from Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver to assist the Toronto members. No doubt it was hoped that these local groups—analogueous to the Women's Labor Leagues, Progressive Arts Clubs, and New Frontier Clubs affiliated with the *Woman Worker*, *Masses*, and *New Frontier*—could help to increase the distribution and readership of *New Frontiers* across Canada. Plans for a pocket-size format intended to boost circulation and for a reduction in printing and paper costs were implemented in time for the spring 1956 issue, and an appeal was made at that time for subscription renewals and donations. However, as Charles Simms, chairman of the LPP Cultural Commission, predicts in his comments on Fairley's January report and the memorandum on *New Frontiers*: "There is a growing feeling that the objective situation in the country does not lend itself to the sustaining of a cultural magazine like this" (MFP, box 1, file 13). Simms's prediction, followed by the spring 1956 English publication of Khrushchev's revelation and denunciation of Stalin's crimes, would ensure the end of *New Frontiers*. In his postmortem on *New Frontiers*, Doyle is incisive in his anatomy of the magazine's failings: "The non-Communist literary establishment ignored it, most book and periodical dealers boycotted it, and the relatively small number of party members interested enough in cultural matters to subscribe fell far short of what

was needed to break even" ("Margaret" 88). Just as the Hitler–Stalin pact of 1939 had thrown the CPC into disarray and prompted members such as Livesay to withdraw from political life, so too the impact of Khrushchev's speech would prove devastating to the LPP and its already-weakened cultural arm.

On 15 October 1947, Fairley delivered a lecture in which she reiterated a lesson that she might well have learned from the failures of *Masses* and *New Frontier*: that "our own progressive periodicals . . . reach only the limited number who for the most part are already on the right track" (qtd. in Kimmel 53). After 1956, there was little hope that the LPP could reach out to a people disillusioned by the confession of Stalin's reign of terror, let alone promote its own cultural magazine. Since the demise of *New Frontiers* in the summer of 1956, the CPC has produced several successors: *Marxist Quarterly*, *Horizons*, and *Communist Viewpoint* (Kimmel and Kealey 254). All of these leftist periodicals reinforce Fairley's lesson of October 1947, as none has reached beyond the limited and insular audience of the already converted to realize the promise of a people's culture in Canada.

X: In Crisis and Transition

Ranging from the nationalism and failed modernism of Hilda and Laura Ridley's the *Crucible* to the leftism, antimodernism, and failed nationalism of Fairley's *New Frontiers*, the histories of women editors and their making of little magazines form a series of critical and transitional events. These events in women's editing of literary, arts, and cultural magazines often correspond to analogous (though not necessarily contemporaneous) moments in the histories of leftist and modernist women poets, particularly those who

were also either magazine editors and/or members of little-magazine groups. Always shadowing these poets and editors were matters endemic to the business of little-magazine production, the chronic financial, organizational, and communicative problems of the non-commercial literary, arts, and cultural magazine.

Chief among the stumbling blocks encountered by women little-magazine editors were the economic obstacles related to the cost of magazine production and distribution, usually signalling the end of a given magazine's existence. Such economic difficulties were inevitably related to the problem of securing a sufficient audience to guarantee the continuation of these non-commercial magazines. The means of continuance, for some magazines, would be found after 1957 through granting agencies such as the Canada Council and other provincial and civic arts councils. *here and now* had already obtained support from a forerunner to the Canada Council, the Canada Foundation (est. May 1945), whose founder Walter Herbert contributed financial assistance and an appeal on behalf of the magazine to the June 1948 second issue.²² *pm magazine* had similarly solicited funding from the Community Arts Council of Vancouver (est. October 1946). These small grants-in-aid could not, however, support either magazine for any extended period of time. Without sustainable funding, such non-commercial magazines became part of a continuous cycle of economic crisis, failure, and transition to another magazine. Having set up its own sustaining fund in the late 1930s, the *Canadian Forum* proved an exception to this economic cycle; its survival to the present day is, in large part, owing to the foresight of its editorial board in its second decade. Other magazines without access to private funding looked to public funding administered by the Canada Council in the

post-1957 period. For those magazines founded prior to 1957, though, the pattern of insolvency and collapse became entrenched in non-commercial magazine culture, perpetuating a historical narrative of cultural growth and extinction. This is not to suggest that the Canada Council could possibly redeem all non-commercial magazines from this cycle of cultural Darwinism. The founding document of the Canada Council—the Massey *Report*—may not have proposed subsidies for non-commercial magazines, but McCourt’s supplemental report and recommendation, as we have seen, anticipated the Canada Council’s policy of offering grants-in-aid to non-commercial magazines. Had these grants been available to such promising editors as Catherine Harmon or Myra Lazechko-Haas, the histories of their magazines probably would have been substantially longer. Given the continued founding of non-commercial literary, arts, and cultural magazines by women after 1957—with and without funding from the Canada Council—we do well to attend to those women whose editing and publishing of such ephemeral periodicals opened the way for contemporary women editors making their own literary culture.

Conclusion

IN TRANSITION: 1957 AND AFTER

I: In Transition

After 1957, the number of little magazines in Canada increased dramatically. The transition to a Canada Council era in the production of literary, arts, and cultural magazines would also enable the continuation of magazines from the pre-Council era, including the *Canadian Forum* (1920–), the *Fiddlehead* (1945–), the *Tamarack Review* (1956–82), and *Quarry* (1952–). Of these magazines, however, only *Quarry* was ever edited by a woman, though not until Gail Fox took over the editorship in 1976, succeeded by Bronwen Wallace (1978–81). The decade during which *here and now*, *Impression*, *pm magazine*, *New Frontiers*, and *CIV/n* appeared (1947–56) would remain one of the most productive periods for women editors of Canadian little magazines. As the number of little magazines in circulation increased after 1957, the percentage of women editors affiliated with these magazines actually dropped.¹ While this statistic does not discriminate between funded and unfunded little magazines, it does suggest a motive for the emergence of a distinct feminist literary-magazine culture in an era of little-magazine proliferation. Since increasing numbers of men had taken up editing little magazines after 1957, it is not surprising that Canadian women in the 1970s perceived the need to band together to found and edit their own magazines for the publication of women's writing. Just as editors of earlier generations often established their modernist or left-oriented magazines at moments of cultural crisis, so too the editors of feminist literary magazines would take collective action during a period of men's ascendancy—if only in number—in

Canadian little-magazine culture after 1957.

The feminist literary magazines of this period first appeared during a transitional decade in the 1970s and 1980s, one which witnessed the creation of *CV/II* (now *Contemporary Verse 2*) (1975–), *Fireweed* (1978–), *Room of One's Own* (1975–), and *Tessera* (1984–). Compared to the poor survival rate among magazines founded and/or edited by women from the pre-Canada Council period, the high survival rate among contemporary feminist literary magazines indicates the degree to which their endurance has been facilitated by funding from the Canada Council and other (provincial and civic) public sources of funding for the arts. The chronic insolvency of the pre-1957 magazines may have abated among the most prominent feminist literary magazines, but this should not lead one to conclude that the Canada Council itself alleviated the problem of women gaining access to the means of magazine production, nor to miss the point that a male-dominant magazine culture precipitated a crisis for women writers and a decade of transition during which their feminist literary-magazine culture emerged. While it is not possible to survey here the ongoing editorial and literary contributions of women involved with these magazines, it will be useful to outline the relationship between an earlier generation of little magazines founded and edited by women (1926–56) and the production of feminist literary magazines by contemporary women's writing and editorial collectives.

The need for this kind of transgenerational narrative becomes immediately apparent with the appearance of a feminist literary history such as Barbara Godard's "Women of Letters (Reprise)" in *Collaboration in the Feminine: Writings on Women and*

Culture from Tessera (1994). “For a number of generations in Canada,” Godard observes, “young men have seized the means of production to found little magazines and publish their own work.” She goes on to trace a genealogy of magazines founded and/or edited by men since the turn of the nineteenth century, itself a masculinist history, that finally leads to “literary magazines where women wrote for other women” in the 1970s (269). Her historical narrative accounts for none of the women editing little magazines prior to the 1970s, suggesting that the advent of feminist periodicals in the 1970s constitutes a rupture in Canada’s literary-historical narrative. This perspective can only perpetuate the literary-historical representation of Canadian modernist and leftist little-magazine cultures as masculinist cadres. Rather than accept Godard’s view of feminist literary magazines founded in the 1970s as phenomena isolated from previous generations of periodicals founded and edited by women, we might consider the circulation of feminist discourses in earlier literary periodicals studied here as constitutive elements in the later formation of a late-twentieth-century feminist literary culture. Feminist literary magazines founded by women for the publication of women authors may not appear in Canada until the 1970s—since Godard’s emphasis on “literary” magazines excludes the feminist *Woman Worker*—but the history of periodicals in Canada repeatedly registers instances where women have taken control of the means of literary-magazine production since the mid-nineteenth century. Citing Gwendolyn Davies’s essay on pre-Confederation literary women collected in *Gynotexts / Gynocritiques* (1987), Godard attests to the histories of women writing for periodicals, yet she neglects the fact that some of the women about whom Davies writes were themselves editors of literary periodicals. Instead of

acknowledging these women as editors and foremothers, Godard reads their history as a cautionary tale for contemporary literary women: “the lesson Gwen Davies has drawn from the past is that the vast body of writing by women in Canada from the eighteenth and nineteenth century appeared in periodical form and, when it has not disintegrated with the paper it was published on, has rarely been taken into account by literary historians charting the periods and genres of literary production in Canada” (265). Despite its erasure of the histories of Canadian women as magazine editors, Godard’s assessment of the feminist project of recovery undertaken by Davies speaks eloquently to the necessity for studies of literary women in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including Godard’s own history of *Tessera*.

Reading Godard, it appears that the myth of Canadian modernism and its little magazines as masculinist phenomena has not yet been displaced by an alternate literary-historical narrative; it is a myth that is recentred in her history of *Tessera*, not decentred.² That history elides the little-magazine origins of at least one leading feminist literary magazine in Canada. Among the “literary magazines where women wrote for other women” to which Godard alludes, *Contemporary Verse 2* attests to profound continuities between Canada’s contemporary feminist literary-magazine culture and its little-magazine culture of the early- to mid-twentieth century. At the time Livesay founded *CV/II* (now *Contemporary Verse 2*) in 1975, it was a literary magazine edited by a woman and soliciting women’s writing—but not yet a feminist literary magazine. *Contemporary Verse 2*’s transition from Livesay’s editorship (1975–77) to its first women’s editorial collective (1984–) provides a case study in the historical connections between the feminist

literary magazine and the little magazines founded and/or edited by women in Canada. *Contemporary Verse 2* is, to the present day, a standing tribute to Livesay's pioneering work on little magazines in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Her historical span between magazine cultures has been recognized by editors of feminist literary magazines through the publication of the Dorothy Livesay special issues of *Room of One's Own* (1979) and *Contemporary Verse 2* (1999). Livesay's enduring significance for contemporary literary women may be attributed in part to the ways in which her modernism and feminism have bridged gaps between generations and literary cultures. Her early political radicalism has also continued to appeal to feminist historians, literary critics, writers, and editors—particularly those involved in feminist editorial collectives such as *Contemporary Verse 2*. A history of the beginnings of *Contemporary Verse 2*, leading from Livesay's editorship of 1975–77 to its takeover by a women's editorial collective and transition to a feminist literary magazine in 1984, shall serve as an apt ending to this narrative of her own and other women's contributions to the formation of a little-magazine culture in Canada.

II: "A Putting Down of Roots": Livesay and *CV/II*³

Among the Canadian literary magazines established by women in the post-1957 period, *CV/II* is distinguished from its contemporaries by its ties to Livesay. During her tenure as its founding editor, from May 1975 to September 1977, she not only drew upon her experiences with Canadian little magazines of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, but also documented these experiences in her own articles, interviews, and editorials published in *CV/II*. Livesay herself employed the magazine as a literary-historical archive, a repository for the cultural discourses communicated through her poetry and editorial work since the

early 1930s. Cultural modernism and leftism coexist for her in *CVIII*, inflected by her various nationalist, internationalist, and regionalist interests, and by her feminism.

Through *CVIII*, she recovered some of the histories of little-magazine cultures with which she had been involved for extended periods from 1932 to 1952–53; this recuperative strategy lends itself to my own rearticulation of the histories of modernism and the cultural left developed throughout the present study.

For her first editorial, “A Putting Down of Roots,” Livesay announced that *CVIII* would function not just as another poetry magazine but as a critical forum for “perspectives” and “retrospectives” on Canadian poetry:

The main body of our magazine will consist of book reviews, review articles, taped interviews concerning “Perspectives.” It will contain, as well, “Retrospectives” dealing with poetry and poetic criticism of the past (especially in areas which we feel have been neglected by our literary historians).

That *CVIII* should *not* serve primarily as a venue for contemporary poetry Livesay justified on grounds that “in 1975 ‘the times is different’”: the proliferation of small presses and little magazines in the 1960s and early 1970s had obviated the need for another Canadian poets’ corner. Yet Livesay distinguished her new quarterly from academic journals of the period such as *Canadian Literature* (1959–) or *Essays on Canadian Writing* (1974–) by situating *CVIII* in a genealogy specific to her own editorial experience: the little magazine. Notably, in her editorial, Livesay uses the term “magazine”—but not *little* magazine. Instead of being a little magazine—limited in size, circulation, financial resources, and duration—*CVIII* could imitate the style of a little magazine, but at the same time appeal to

a more extensive literary and academic audience and secure funding from cultural institutions (including St. John's College at the University of Manitoba and the Canada Council). Livesay founded *CVIII* in recognition of a multiplicity of cultural discourses and institutions, an amalgam representing the diversity of poetry and poetry criticism advanced in the mid-1970s. She was particularly careful not to cut *CVIII* from its modernist little-magazine origins, though, as she took a graft from *Contemporary Verse: A Canadian Quarterly* in "putting down roots" for *CVIII: A Quarterly of Canadian Poetry Criticism*. Even as Livesay refers to *CVIII* as a "magazine," the subtitle itself indicates an ancillary allusion to the little "quarterly," *Contemporary Verse*.

The times were indeed different, as Livesay recalls in her May 1975 editorial, when the progenitor of *CVIII* came into being: "*Contemporary Verse* was the name of a poetry quarterly published in Vancouver from 1941 to 1952—years of drought for the publishing of poetry in Canada." Putting into practice her own editorial mandate, she attempts to redress the literary historical neglect of *Contemporary Verse* at the time and to restore it to the forefront of Canada's little magazines of the 1940s. Her editorial "retrospective" on the publishing "drought" in Canadian poetry intimates that *Contemporary Verse* was founded at a time of cultural crisis. Compared to the hundred or so little magazines founded in the 1970s alone, the dozen or so little magazines established in the 1940s corroborate Livesay's impressions (see McKnight). Surveying Canada's little magazines of the 1940s, she regards a literary culture consisting of isolated regional publications. She proposes the integration of regions in *CVIII*: "We would like to have criticism from all the regions, about all the regions. For regionalism is the putting down of roots" (2). For

Livesay, the work of the little magazines of the 1940s had marked out the regional frontiers of modern poetry, and “the work of criticism” could represent the settlement, the cultivation, and “the growth into maturity of the arts in Canada”; this developmental model is, however, predicated upon the belief that a national quarterly of poetry and poetry criticism could unite Canadian poets and critics. Though she acknowledges the Canadian poetry criticism contributed to academic journals, she derides such “reports in the elitist quarterlies (with a few honourable exceptions)” and rebukes such criticism for tending “to concentrate on books published within our ‘golden triangle’ [Montreal–Toronto–Ottawa].” Here her recollection of little-magazine culture of the 1940s carries over into her outlook on Canadian literary culture of the mid-1970s. She redefines her perception of geographical faultlines among modernist little magazines and poets of the 1940s, categorizing *CVIII* as a “grass roots,” regionalist, western quarterly in opposition to “elitist,” cosmopolitan, eastern quarterlies. These faultlines are mapped onto a new context—not among poetry magazines, but among quarterlies of poetry criticism. For *CVIII* shares with *Contemporary Verse* a “western,” regional affiliation, but likewise mandates a national interest in Canadian poetry.

The genealogy Livesay traces—from *Contemporary Verse* to *CVIII*, from poetry quarterly to quarterly of poetry criticism—signifies far more than passing on a name and a tradition to the next generation. Between the lines of her comments in “A Putting Down of Roots” the complex genealogical sources of her editorial practice emerge. Livesay neither alludes to her role as a member of the founding committee for *Contemporary Verse* (except to say that she and McLaren “gave [Crawley] support through letter writing

and contributions”), nor mentions her earlier involvement as a member of the editorial board of *New Frontier*. Even so, Livesay’s roots in both of these magazines anchor her editorial outlook for *CVIII*.

Albeit nearly forty years after the April 1936 inaugural issue of *New Frontier*, Livesay’s May 1975 editorial addresses many of the same issues concerning provincialism, social disengagement, and unity of action raised in the first *New Frontier* editorial.⁴ Granted “the times is different,” but the issues of social and cultural concern and the calls for change remain constant. Although signed by Livesay alone, her editorial is written on behalf of the *CVIII* collective and responds to “a sense of community.” She is more inclusive and more precise than the *New Frontier* group in her appeal to include issues of class, ethnicity, gender, language, and region under the *CVIII* banner:

The poetry we want to praise and to print must have the authority of experience and action from all levels of society: the deprived, the enslaved, the sheltered, the brainwashed; as well as the fat, sleek, jaded. It must spring from all ethnic (and immigrant) sources, whose roots will nourish us. Where necessary, as with the literature of Quebec, we must translate and expound. And especially from all parts of the country we would like to explore the true feelings of women.

During her editorial tenure, Livesay started to fulfill her goal of inclusiveness by publishing special-interest numbers of *CVIII*: “Special Issue: Women Poets” (fall 1975), “The Thirties” (May 1976), “Canadian Indian Poetry and the Folk Tradition” (August 1976), “A Special International Issue” (December 1976), and “Manitoba Poets and Poetry” (spring 1977). Also in the interests of inclusiveness, Livesay organized a national editorial

network for *CVIII*: “We are centred here [in Winnipeg, Manitoba], but we are setting up a network of regional scouts from Prince Edward Island to Vancouver Island: first, so that critics may come to know the work of poets better; and second, as added impetus for the fast-developing interest in Canadian writing in the high schools and universities.” This network of regional “scouts” or editors was similar in organization to the local branches of the Progressive Arts Clubs and the New Frontier Clubs—and, beyond Livesay’s history, to the *Crucible*’s Writers’ Craft Club and the *First Statement* groups. Where *New Frontier* had hoped to reach a general Canadian public, *CVIII* had become more specialized and institutionalized in its intentions: to inform an audience of poets, critics, teachers, and professors already interested in Canadian poetry and poetry criticism. Of course, the actual audience of *New Frontier* had not been so general as the Canadian public either; its own specialized audience comprised a limited group of leftists and fellow travellers among intellectuals, writers, and artists in Canada in the 1930s.

Livesay’s retrospective turn to the 1930s in *CVIII* came about in the premiere “Perspective” piece in the first issue: “How I Began,” “selections from an interview with Joe Wallace, veteran Canadian labour journalist, poet and humanitarian . . . conducted by Allan Safarik and Dorothy Livesay: January 1975 in Vancouver, B.C.” (35). Even the title of the Wallace interview (“How I Began”) serves as a kind of vicarious retrospective on Livesay’s beginnings as a leftist activist. In the interview, Livesay recalls when she first met Wallace in Montreal in the 1930s—at a time when he, like herself, was contributing poetry and articles to *Masses*. The interview, like Livesay’s editorial, is another “putting down of roots.” As both a perspective on Wallace’s literary activities in the 1970s and a

retrospective on his and other Marxists' literary and political activities in the 1930s and 1940s, the interview documents one of those areas that Livesay believed to be neglected by social and cultural historians. Even the "Retrospective" article in the following special issue on women poets reflects Livesay's interests in renewing her leftist vision from the 1930s. Livesay's headnote to Kenneth J. Hughes's article ("Democratic Vision of 'Malcolm's Katie'") sets his Marxist reading in the context of a feminist act of historical revision and reclamation: "Emphasis in this issue on women poets makes it fitting that we print an article on a neglected aspect of the work of Isabella Valancy Crawford" (38). "A Special International Issue," which appeared in December 1976, also embodies the internationalist concerns espoused in *New Frontier* in the 1930s. Of particular interest is Livesay's interview with Hugh MacDiarmid in that issue, which demonstrates her wide knowledge of communist politics and Marxist theory. Taken together, the "Perspective" on Wallace, the "Retrospective" on Crawford, and the interview with MacDiarmid represent Livesay's entwined ideological positionings in the 1930s and in the 1970s—at once leftist and feminist.

In May 1976, the *CVIII* special issue "The Thirties" headlined retrospective pieces by two veterans of *New Frontier*: Livesay ("Canadian Poetry and the Spanish Civil War") and Leo Kennedy ("A Poet's Memoirs"). As Livesay mentions in her Spanish Civil War article, Kennedy was "one of the contributing editors to the magazine founded in April 1936, *New Frontier*" ("Canadian" 14). In calling attention to Kennedy's June 1936 *New Frontier* article "Direction for Canadian Poets," Livesay praises his "setting up critical standards which he was the first to follow" ("Canadian" 14). Kennedy's article speaks to

the social responsibility of Canadian poets: "It is my thesis that the function of poetry is to interpret the social scene faithfully; *to interpret especially the progressive forces in modern life which alone stand for cultural survival*" (22; original italics). Four decades later, Livesay still refers to poetry of the same orientation in her May 1975 *CV/II* editorial: "The aim of poetry, which has the potential of surviving fashions and fads, is to illuminate the world and mankind's task within it" ("Putting"). The complementary purpose of poetry criticism, as Livesay envisioned it in putting together "The Thirties" issue, is to ensure that such poetry survives even forty years in our cultural memory. Collectively, Livesay, in her article "Canadian Poetry and the Spanish Civil War," Kennedy, in his memoir and review of the special Raymond Knister issue of the *Journal of Canadian Fiction* ("A Poet's Memoirs"), and Roy St. George Stubbs, in his review of the 1975 reissue of Kennedy's 1933 collection *The Shrouding*, contribute to the preservation of 'thirties culture for contemporary audiences. Cultural memory depends, though, on the interests of contemporary culture. Robert Enright's "Reflections and Expectations" editorial of August 1976 therefore underscored the relationship between perspectives and retrospectives on the past and *CV/II*'s situation in the present: "The 'Thirties Issue' was an attempt to combine a traditional poetic with a more modern one, to look back at where we have been and ahead to where we might proceed."

Just as *CV/II* provided the forum for Livesay to generate critical awareness of her own and others' contributions to the cultural left in the 1930s, it also gave her the opportunity to pay homage to Crawley and the *Contemporary Verse* group of the 1940s and early 1950s.⁵ At certain moments in "A Putting Down of Roots," Livesay even

echoes Crawley's editorial policies. Like Crawley, Livesay adopts a policy of openness toward poetry. What Crawley calls "poetry that is sincere in thought and expression and contemporary in theme" ("Editor's Note" [1942] 3) Livesay names "poetry—whatever its genre—that expresses our craving for confrontation with the real, with direct, day-to-day living" ("Putting"). (Livesay's demand for social realism, though, is more typically her own criterion than a reflection of Crawley's request for sincerity and contemporaneity.) In terms of poetry criticism, Livesay's scepticism toward avant-garde poetics resonates with Crawley's diffidence toward the current "literary trend": "Thus, we need to challenge, in terms that are cogent, apropos, and informed, the writings of our avant-garde experimentalists, so that we may profit by what extends the bounds of poetry, and not be held back by sentimental revisitations of the scandals and astonishments of the past" (Livesay, "Putting"). To be "contemporary in theme and treatment and technique," to reiterate Crawley's poetic criteria, is not licence to what Livesay terms "metaphysical, linguistic, and absurdist strivings" or "gamesmanship with pun and counterpun, a glittering skill in mounting maps of montage" ("Putting"). Livesay may want to be liberal, but her bias against poetry that generates an anti-referential free play of signifiers is unequivocal; she is not so much rearguard as cautious in her advocacy for the contemporary poet's progress. Livesay's editorial policy is aimed at the advancement of multiple constituencies, including poets of the avant-garde.

One of the effects of Crawley's editorial policies was his strong representation of women poets in *Contemporary Verse*. Crawley's personal correspondence, including editorial advice and recommendations for revision, inspired an entire generation of

Canadian poets, particularly women poets, to publish their poetry in *Contemporary Verse* as well as other little magazines. As Butling notes in her article on women and British Columbia little magazines: “*Contemporary Verse* is . . . significant for the number of women writers that it published. Thirty to fifty percent of the poems in every issue were by women. . . . I can only speculate on the high percentage. (Not until the eighties do we see such a high percentage again)” (“Hall” 61–2).⁶ While she is emphatic that *Contemporary Verse* is not a “women’s magazine” (62), Butling speculates on the possible reasons for its attractiveness to women: “Was it the greater prominence of women in wartime combined with the obvious presence of women contributors at the start of the magazine, or editor Crawley’s open and supportive manner, or the non-aggressive nature of the magazine?” (62).

In memory of Crawley, Livesay’s fall 1975 “Rememberings” article serves as an important retrospective in the context of the “Women Poets: Special Issue” of *CVIII*: “Alan Crawley has been so closely associated with poets, especially women poets, over the past forty years that none of us, perhaps, can write of him with detachment” (2). As editor of *Contemporary Verse*, Crawley had anticipated Livesay’s offer to women poets in her first *CVIII* editorial: “from all parts of the country we would like to explore the true feelings of women. Many women poets today are either looking into mirrors or speaking from behind masks” (“Putting”). In the eight issues of *CVIII* edited by Livesay, the number of male and female poets is roughly even. (S. G. Buri calls attention to this statistical fact in his editorial to the “Women Poets” issue: “CVII would like to strike a balance fairly soon based on gender, not for political reasons, but because it is a fact of

Canadian poetry's life.") However, the number of critics and reviewers published during Livesay's editorship is weighted toward men—approximately four men to one woman. (Buri takes note of this gender imbalance in the same editorial: "I hope we shall have more women critics.") Women poets and critics are represented in less than one third of the reviews, articles, and interviews carried by *CV/II* during these first two years. It should be noted, however, that Livesay's *CV/II* was, as Butling says of *Contemporary Verse*, not a "women's magazine." Statistics on the representation of region, class, race, ethnicity, and region in *CV/II* could substantiate different interpretations. According to Livesay's original objectives for the magazine, women are but one constituency, albeit privileged, that she wished to represent in the demographic of *CV/II*.

Unlike Crawley's decision to terminate his editorship of *Contemporary Verse*, Livesay's resignation from *CV/II* obviously did not signal the end of the magazine. Published in the January 1978 issue, Livesay's final *CV/II* editorial opens with a reversal of her May 1975 position on "surviving fashions and fads": "Fashions in clothes change, fashions in painting and poetry change. And so, in the course of things, editors change" ("On the Way"). Rather than invest in the illusion of permanence she so desired in founding *CV/II*, Livesay admits that magazines are sites of cultural impermanence, always subject to change. With her resignation in September 1977, she left open the possibility for the editorial transformation of *CV/II*.

Almost a decade after Livesay's "Women Poets" special issue in 1975, gender returned to the foreground of *CV/II*'s editorial concerns. In 1984 Pamela Banting, Di Brandt, Jane Casey, and Jan Horner announced yet another transformation of *CV/II*: "[The

conference] *Women and Words* focused our frustrations and our energies and we began to think seriously about forming an editorial collective.” These four women of *CV/II* assumed editorial responsibility for what the four women on the founding committee of *Contemporary Verse* started more than four decades earlier. In her editorial for the newly-designed, newly-named *CV II*, Pamela Banting offered her retrospective on the gender distribution among the editors and publishers of *Contemporary Verse* and *CV/II*:

Vol. 1, No. 1, of *Contemporary Verse: A Canadian Quarterly* was published in September 1941. . . . Four women conceived of the magazine and elected a man . . . to edit it. . . . At the launch of *CV/II* in 1975 the editor was a woman, Dorothy Livesay, and the three assistant editors were men. . . . At this juncture, all the editors are female, and we operate as an editorial collective. . . . Dorothy Livesay remains the publisher, and we have a tradition to draw on, to scribble on. (“blurred” 5, 6, 7)

Prefaced to this genealogy, I would add *New Frontier*, a Popular Front magazine with a socialist ideology and organized around the idea of the editorial collective. As an ideal (though, as we have seen in the first chapter, in reality imbalanced) democratic editorial prototype, *New Frontier* embodied what the four women editors of *CV II* might have imagined in 1984 when they “were talking about men and women in dialogue, reinterpreting Dorothy Livesay’s original vision for a national poetry magazine.” The democratic model of *Contemporary Verse*, whereby four women elect a man to edit the magazine, is by no means an adequate template. The feminist model of *CV/II*, whereby Livesay takes over Crawley’s position as editor, with male assistants, is also flawed

because it reproduces a hierarchical, even patriarchal, editorial structure. The takeover of *CV II* from Robert Foster by the women's editorial collective was, in theory and in practice, an act of deconstruction: a tradition of hierarchical editorial power was dismantled and an editorial collective founded. This editorial takeover in 1984 signals yet another moment of transition in the history of women and little magazines in Canada, the transition to a women's literary-magazine culture. No longer styled or organized in imitation of the little magazines of the 1930s and 1940s, *CV II* evolved thereafter into a feminist literary magazine.

Contrary to Godard's version of feminist literary-magazine history, *Contemporary Verse 2* has not forgotten its little-magazine origins. Livesay's historical recovery of her own little-magazine activities through the "perspective" and "retrospective" pieces she published during the two years of her editorship rooted the magazine in the histories of modernist and leftist little-magazine cultures. These histories are not, as Godard would have it, exclusively masculinist. They are, at least in part, the histories of literary women that the *Contemporary Verse 2* editorial collective commemorated in 1999 by publishing a special Livesay issue. These histories are, rather, the intertwined narratives of modernist and leftist women poets and little-magazine editors that I have recovered and compiled in this account.

III: 1957 and After

None of the other magazines founded and/or edited by women between 1926 and 1956 has been re-established at a later date. Nor would any other of the women magazine editors from this period found new magazines in subsequent decades. During the 1970s,

Livesay, Page, and Waddington would return to editing, but not to editing magazines.

Livesay and Page both tried their hands at editing anthologies of poetry (see Livesay's *40 Women Poets of Canada* [1971] and *Woman's Eye: 12 B.C. Poets* [1974]; and Page's *To Say the Least: Canadian Poets from A to Z* [1979]). Waddington edited John Sutherland's *Essays, Controversies, Poems* (1972) and *The Collected Poems of A. M. Klein* (1974). Livesay, Marriott, Page, and Waddington, of course, would continue to publish new and retrospective collections of poetry throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.⁷

There is scant evidence of literary activity among the rest of the magazine editors after the demise of their respective publications. Except for Hilda Ridley, who published a biography of Lucy Maud Montgomery in 1956, the output of these women was sharply attenuated after the early to mid-1950s. Harmon published a handful of poems in the *Fiddlehead* and the *Canadian Forum* in the summer of 1959, but nothing more came of her brief venture into poetry. After a promising debut chapbook in 1952, Lazechko-Haas seems to have stopped publishing her poetry—at least in periodicals outside of the Ukrainian-Canadian community. As the editor (with the assistance of Simon Dardick) of *CIV/n: A Literary Magazine of the 50's* (1983), Collins would renew critical and literary-historical interest in the magazine she founded; she has since edited and introduced Louis Dudek's *In Defence of Art: Critical Essays and Reviews* (1988) and his *1941 Diary* (1996). Fairley would continue to write articles for the successor to *New Frontiers*, the Marxist quarterly *Horizons*: "Roots of Patriotism in English Speaking Canada before Confederation" (1963), "Moral Responsibility of the Communist" (1966), and "The

Cultural Worker's Responsibility to the People" (1968). Of Laura Ridley, Godfrey, and Agazarian, not a trace of literary or editorial activity is evident in the years after their departure from Canadian magazine culture. New evidence may surface to contradict these findings, but searches through currently available indexes and bibliographies have turned up nothing to suggest their ongoing activity.

Unlike the long careers of poets such as Livesay, Page, Marriott, and Waddington, the careers of little-magazine editors last only as long as their ephemeral periodicals. Because many of the little magazines edited by women between 1926 and 1956 folded after short runs, and because all but one (Hilda Ridley) of these women seem to have ended their literary and/or editorial careers along with their magazines, women little-magazine editors have fared poorly in Canadian literary history. Fairley's long career has attracted the attention of several historians, and to a lesser extent, Custance, Harmon, Godfrey, Collins have gained some recognition, but the Ridleys, Agazarian, and Lazechko-Haas have been invisible to Canadian literary history. Certainly the rarity of little magazines such as the *Woman Worker*, the *Crucible*, *pm magazine*, and *Impression* has hindered research on their editors. The scarcity of archival documents related to women little-magazine editors has likewise hampered research in the field. Histories of these women may always remain incomplete for lack of resources, yet even partial histories are better than their exclusion from narratives about the literary cultures they helped to develop through their little magazines.

Women poets who contributed to leftist and modernist little magazines have of course fared much better in literary history. Livesay, Marriott, Page, and Waddington

responded to and recovered from the poetic crises of their little-magazine years in different ways. As Marriott and Page lapsed into periods of silence, Livesay and Waddington continued to write and collect their poems through the 1950s, 1960s, and thereafter. All four poets would return to their early poetry in retrospective collections, recovering for later generations the modernist and/or leftist poems of their little-magazine years. The publication of Waddington's *Collected Poems* in 1986, the release of Page's two-volume *The Hidden Room: Collected Poems* in 1997, and the re-issue of Livesay's *The Self-Completing Tree: Selected Poems* in 1999 represent their publishers' continued commitment to Canadian women's poetry from the 1920s through the 1950s and, presumably, their readers' abiding interest. Both Waddington's and Page's collections have reprinted previously uncollected poems. If the response to Livesay's *Collected Poems: The Two Seasons* in 1972 and *Right Hand Left Hand* in 1977 is any measure of the effect that the reprinting of previously uncollected poems can have on a poet's critical reception, the literary-historical narratives we have constructed around Page and Waddington will likely require revision. In Livesay's case, her *oeuvre* has been augmented once more with my own recovery of additional pieces in *Archive for Our Times: Previously Uncollected and Unpublished Poems of Dorothy Livesay* in 1998. It is, however, too soon to judge whether or not these poems will induce substantial change in critical and literary-historical narratives. Compared to Page, Waddington, and Livesay, Marriott has not sustained a consistent following among critics and literary historians. With *The Circular Coast: Poems New and Selected* (1981) long out of print, and her poetry now rarely anthologized, it is difficult to imagine a renaissance in Marriott

criticism. Perhaps a collected (or even a complete) volume will appear in future years to spark interest in a poet whose early success has not been matched by a sustained record of criticism.

Access to little magazines probably represents the major obstacle to the advancement of research in the field. *Preview* was reproduced in a facsimile edition in 1980. The text of *CIV/n* was issued in book form in 1983. An anthology of material from the *Woman Worker* was compiled in 1999. *Masses*, *New Frontier*, and *First Statement* are available on microfilm. The *Canadian Forum* is easily the most accessible among these magazines. Plans for a facsimile edition of *Contemporary Verse* were made in the early 1970s but scuttled once Crawley determined that the collection might infringe upon authors' copyright; it is, however, available in bound copies from the National Library of Canada. Projects such as the Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (CIHM) have made a selection of pre-1900 Canadian periodicals readily available for scholarly research on microfiche; but this project has not yet reached the 1920s and after. Were full runs of little magazines such as the *Woman Worker*, the *Crucible*, *Contemporary Verse*, *here and now*, *pm magazine*, and *Impression* more widely available in reproduction, the literary-historical investigation of women little-magazine editors could be undertaken by a greater number of scholars and their work more often taught to students of Canadian literature and history. Of course, the problem of access is equally true of poetry published in these little magazines but never collected; this is obviously more pronounced in the case of poems never published and only available in archives. Having drawn attention to little magazines edited by women and to previously uncollected and unpublished poems written

by women, I expect the need for further critical and editorial projects designed to retrieve and recontextualize these materials should be apparent. Otherwise we may continue to reproduce literary-historical narratives based on *oeuvres* circumscribed by editors, publishers, and the poets themselves, but not necessarily representative of the poetry and poetics at a particular historical moment.

Continued editorial and historical reconstructions of little-magazine cultures between 1926 and 1956 and of women's modernist and leftist poetry will be essential to remaking literary-historical narratives of that period. By documenting women poets' editorial activities and memberships in writers' groups, I have sought to restore their poetry to the historical circumstances of little-magazine cultures and to the actual practices of little-magazine editing and production. At the same time, I have attempted to read their poetry in the immediate context of its publication in little magazines or in relation to its rejection by little-magazine editors, by publishers, and by the poets themselves. These poems left out of books or chapbooks and consequently from literary history have provided the textual resources for alternate literary-historical narratives about Canadian women's modernist and leftist poetry. It should be evident that I have not undertaken a survey of Canadian women's poetry published in little magazines between 1926 and 1956. Rather than sweep through the period with a broad overview, I have recorded literary-historical minutiae and recontextualized these findings. This strategy has proven useful to a project of exposing masculinist editorial practices and recovering histories of women's editorial labour in the context of Canadian little magazines. With the knowledge of particular editorial practices and decisions, we may begin to understand with

greater precision the ways in which cultural phenomena as capacious as literary modernism and leftism have been constructed by Canadian women poets and little-magazine editors. That knowledge will enable further literary-historical reconstructions written in a manner strange to the narratives we have known, yet written in order to reclaim the histories of women and little magazines in Canada.

ENDNOTES

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

¹ For a study of Brooke's feminism in the *Old Maid*, see New, "Old Maid."

² Davies's dissertation "A Literary Study of Selected Periodicals from Maritime Canada, 1789–1872" (1980) and essay "'Dearer Than His Dog': Literary Women in Pre-Confederation Nova Scotia" (1987; rpt. 1991) present comprehensive research on women's literary and editorial contributions to Maritime periodicals in the 1840s and 1850s. Davies's studies incorporate the literary lives and works of women "destined to disappear from the eye of posterity by the very ephemerality of the periodicals and private editions in which they published": editors Sarah Herbert of the *Olive Branch* (1843–45), her sister Mary Eliza Herbert of the *Mayflower* (1851–52), and Mary Jane (Lawson) Katzmann of the *Provincial, or Halifax Monthly Magazine* (1852–53) (Davies, "'Dearer'" 72).

See also Mary Lu Macdonald's *Literature and Society in the Canadas 1817–1850* (1992), which offers detailed biographical accounts and statistical reports on an early generation of women authors and literary editors in the Canadas, adding to Davies's list the names of Eliza Lanesford (Foster) Cushing, editor of Montreal's *Literary Garland* (1838–51) during its final year, and Susanna Moodie. For a discussion of research on the Herbert sisters, Katzmann, and Cushing, see Halpenny. Brief citations of editorial work by the Herbert sisters, Katzmann, Cushing, and the Moodies can also be found in George L. Parker's *The Beginnings of the Book Trade in Canada* (1985).

³ For studies specific to women little-magazine editors and modernism, see Jane E.

Marek's review of the literature and bibliography of articles, books, theses and dissertations in *Women Editing Modernism: "Little" Magazines and Literary History*.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

¹ Peter Stevens's information about the terms of publication for *Green Pitcher* is taken from the correspondence series between Livesay and Hugh Eayrs of Macmillan, dated 5 March 1928 to 15 August 1928 (Macmillan Archives [MA], box 114, file 3).

Correspondence concerning the publication of *Signpost* is no longer extant. Another correspondence series between Livesay and G.E. Rogers of Macmillan, dated 1 April to 2 June 1936, indicates that she had submitted to Macmillan a poetry collection entitled "The Outrider and Other Poems" circa March 1936. Macmillan agreed to publish the collection on terms similar to those for *Green Pitcher*, which suggests that they had reached a comparable agreement for the printing costs of *Signpost*. According to Rogers's letter of 25 April 1936, Livesay's proposed collection was forty-four pages in length. Her reply of 25 May 1936 requested the return of her collection so that she could "shorten the ms. somewhat." Livesay requested a deadline for returning the collection for publication in the fall of 1936. Rogers gave her a deadline of 30 June 1936, but we may surmise that Livesay must have changed her mind about publishing her collection with Macmillan (MA, box 114, file 4).

² Ellen Elliot's letter of 14 April 1942 mentions Livesay's submission of another collection to Macmillan (Dorothy Livesay Papers, Queen's University [DLP-QU], box 1, file 1).

³ In a subsequent letter to Pierce, dated 16 August 1943, Livesay alludes to an offer from

the recently founded First Statement Press to bring out her collection in the fall of 1943, but adds that she is willing to wait for Ryerson to release *Day and Night* in the spring of 1944 (LPP, box 9, file 16, item 45). No correspondence between John Sutherland of First Statement Press and Livesay has survived to corroborate her claim.

⁴ In *Journey with My Selves: A Memoir 1909–1963*, Livesay recalls that in Toronto in 1932–33 she “was in the writers’ group chaired by Ed Cecil-Smith” (81); she was secretary of the Montreal PAC in 1933–34 (a letter dated 16 January 1934 and published in *Right Hand Left Hand*, from the Montreal PAC, is signed by “D. Livesay, Secretary” [83]); she was chairperson of the Vancouver PAC in 1936 (an incomplete carbon bearing the minutes to a PAC meeting dated 15 June 1936 names Livesay among other members of the executive committee) (Dorothy Livesay Collection, University of Manitoba [DLC-UM], box 15, file 3).

⁵ According to Ryan, *Masses* “had national circulation in the principal Canadian cities and in some smaller ones.” “Our sales were modest,” he says, “but we obviously created some interest” (qtd. in Gordon Ryan 27).

⁶ See Livesay, *Right Hand* for her explanation of the use of pseudonyms to conceal her leftist activism from her father, J. F. B. Livesay (115).

⁷ *Masses* later published a series of editorials attacking *Canadian Forum*. See “The Canadian Forum”; “Canadian Forum”; “Canadian Forum—The General Articles”; and “The Forum Editorials.”

⁸ See Livesay’s letter to the editor of *Collected Poems*, Laura Damania of McGraw-Hill Ryerson, dated 22 June 1972: “It[’]s strange after feeling so frustrated last evening about

the inclusion of ‘Testament’ amongst The Thirties galleys (now sent back to you), today an answer came. A young socialist in Fredericton sent me a poem of mine he liked from the Thirties. I have no recollection of writing it, but I’m sure it’s mine.” The poem to which Livesay refers is clearly “A Girl Sees It!”; she adds a note at the bottom of the letter requesting that “Testament” be pulled from the collection and replaced with the newly titled “In Green Solariums” (DLC–UM, box 51, file 3).

⁹ Autobiographically speaking, “Growing Up” fits perfectly in the “Montreal 1933–1934” section of *Right Hand Left Hand*. According to the date on Livesay’s worksheet, however, the poem was composed on 13 September 1934—two months after her return to Toronto. Likewise, her worksheet for “Twenty Years After” is dated August 1934 (DLC, box 80, file 4).

¹⁰ An early version of this poem, entitled “Case History I,” is dated October 1933 (DLC–UM, box 80, file 4).

¹¹ Livesay published “An Immigrant” in the *Worker* on 14 March 1936, together with the subtitle “Commemoration: Montreal, March 8, 1933.” Whether or not the poem was written immediately after the events or several years later to commemorate the death of Zynchuk is uncertain. The surviving typescript of the poem, the copy text for the poem as it appears in *Right Hand Left Hand*, is undated. The poem may have been revised in 1936 for publication in the *Worker*.

¹² The typescript of “Rain in April” appears among a selection of poems entitled “Down and Out Series,” which Livesay retrospectively dated 1934–35 (DLC–UM, box 80, file 4).

¹³ Although undated, “Repeal” may have been written while Livesay was living in

Montreal. Her reference in the poem to the incarceration of CPC secretary Tim Buck in October 1932 offers one clue to its earliest possible date of composition; another piece of evidence is her later notation on the typescript, “1934 or whenever the 8 were jailed” (DLC-UM, box 80, file 4). (The “4” of 1934 is written over a “5,” which indicates Livesay’s uncertainty as to the exact date of composition.) The Kingston Eight—the imprisoned members of the CPC who were the subject of the PAC’s December 1933 performance of *Eight Men Speak*—served over two years in prison. “Repeal” could have been written at any point between the time of their conviction in October 1932 and that of their release over two years later.

¹⁴ “Broadcast from Berlin” and “Canada to the Soviet Union” contain lines duplicated in the mass chant “Struggle” and the poem “Montreal: 1933.” This duplication may help to explain why “Montreal: 1933” but not “Canada to the Soviet Union” was included in *Collected Poems* and why “Struggle” but not “Broadcast from Berlin” was collected in *Right Hand Left Hand*.

¹⁵ See Livesay’s recollection of her 1934 conversation with Louis Kon, a Russian immigrant and activist for the Friends of the Soviet Union, in *Right Hand Left Hand*: “‘Why aren’t you writing poems? You have the lyric gift and you are wasting yourself writing propaganda?’ ‘But my poem Nick Zynchuk is not just propaganda!’ . . . I told him I did not want to write lyric poetry anymore. All that was finished. My guide was Lenin” (101).

¹⁶ Given Livesay’s close working relationship with Cecil-Smith while he was the chair and she a member of the Toronto PAC writers’ group, we may look to his “Propaganda and

Art” article for affirmation of such an aesthetic principle. Cecil-Smith quoted the following passage from Anatole Lunacharsky’s 1933 speech to the Organization of the All-Russian Union of Soviet Writers: “One of the most important variations of this mastery of reality by art is socialist romanticism which can fancy the future and picture utopias that may provide scientific socialism with an excellent form of the essentially realistic dream which Lenin regarded as a necessary element of a general revolutionary outlook” (qtd. in Cecil-Smith 11).

¹⁷ In a passage from *Right Hand Left Hand* that angered her former communist friends, Livesay recanted and, at the same time, rationalized her youthful participation in the CPC: “I learned a great deal about Communist tactics of penetration and camouflage; but I was too committed to be shocked. It was only years later that the false actions and fractional tactics were revealed to me in their real light. This did not cause me to hate the communists, or to red-bait; rather I was disgusted with myself for having been so duped. But I believe I let myself be duped because no one else except the communists seemed to be concerned about the plight of our people, nor to be aware of the threat of Hitler and war” (74).

¹⁸ Remonstrations against Livesay’s overstatement concerning the absence of radical poets in North America contemporaneous with the MacSpaunday group in Britain have already been made convincingly by Irr (215); there is no need to add to her list of North American candidates. There may, however, be some validity in Livesay’s statement—if we read her to say that there were no books of revolutionary social or political verse published in Canada by 1935; but there is no defence for her contention that there were no

such poetry collections printed in the United States by the mid-1930s.

¹⁹ W. E. Collin had already written about “The Outrider” (still unpublished at the time) in his chapter on Livesay in *The White Savannahs* (1936; see Collin 161–66). When published in 1943, an editorial note informed the reader that the poem, “hitherto unpublished, was written in 1935. It was discussed at length by W. E. Collin in his ‘White Savannahs’” (Livesay, “Outrider” 18).

²⁰ For more on this 1936 CAA convention, see Colman; and Livesay, “Live-Sayings.”

²¹ Writing to Livesay on 16 July 1937, Jocelyn Moore noted that Leo Kennedy wanted to print sections of “The Outrider” in an upcoming issue of *New Frontier* (DLC–UM, box 64, file 36). No further mention of the poem is made in the extant *New Frontier* correspondence.

²² An untitled typescript of “In Praise of Evening” is so numbered in roman numerals, indicating its former inclusion in a sequence (DLC–UM, box 80, file 5).

²³ As chair of the Vancouver NFC, Livesay had approached Lawson in the spring of 1936 with a proposal for the merger of *New Frontier* and the *Canadian Forum*. Lawson’s guarded response in his 6 May 1937 letter to Livesay not only makes clear the impossibility of a merger on his terms, but also speaks to problems of organization among left-wing groups on the Popular Front: “The basis of unity would be the exclusion of Trotskyites and putting two or three of our people on the Forum board. We couldn’t as I see it do anything about the united front policies for the time being, but that should be no reason for delaying the merger if it can be effected” (*Right Hand* 237).

²⁴ Cf Eliot: “the poet has, not a ‘personality’ to express, but a particular medium, which is

only a medium and not a personality” (“Tradition” 42).

²⁵ Although separate from the PACs, the Vancouver NFC had been officially affiliated with the local PAC since July 1936 (DLC–QU, box 15, file 3).

²⁶ These clubs were first proposed to the national readership in the “Between Ourselves” column of March 1937. The proposal for the NFCs was occasioned by managing editor Lawson’s “tour of Western Canada, with the object of building our circulation in the western cities. He will visit Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Victoria, Regina and Winnipeg. New Frontier clubs, organizations of individuals interested in our magazine and willing to help increase its influence, have been set up in Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto.”

²⁷ For more on the financial situation of the *Canadian Forum*, see chapter 4: 266–67. See also Carr 43–44.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

¹ As early as December 1936, McLaren and Ferne were seeking alternative venues for their own poetry, both having interviewed with Hugh Eayrs of Macmillan about bringing out an anthology of the strongest poets from the Victoria poetry group and about publishing individual collections of their own (Perry to Edgar, 28 December 1936; M. Eugenie Perry Papers [MEPP] box 5, file 23).

² This co-existence of conservative and modernist poets in the same publication attests to the representativeness of *Canadian Poetry Magazine* as a forum for the nation’s poetry culture in transition. Indeed, closer scrutiny of the first volumes of *Poetry* would also reveal a magazine—where late-Romantic, late-Victorian and Georgian verse was often

printed alongside that of the Imagists—not unlike *Canadian Poetry Magazine* during Pratt’s editorship (1936–43).

³ Pratt’s January 1936 editorial contrasts the noncommercial poetry magazine with the “popular journals and academic reviews,” where “the general position for verse contributions was in the backyard of the periodicals”—that is, in deference to “the far greater marketability of short stories, sketches, and articles” and “public consumption” (“Foreword” 5).

⁴ See also Livesay’s letter of 9 June 1941 to A. J. M. Smith, in which she solicits poems for the as yet unnamed poetry quarterly: “Apropos of the Chicago ‘Poetry’ a B. C. Group represented there are [sic] anxious to continue the good work, hoping thereby to set a higher standard for Canadian poetry than has been evident heretofor” (A. J. M. Smith Papers, University of Toronto [AJMSP-UT], box 1). Klein and Smith had themselves published in *Poetry* and would be aware of the import of Livesay’s comparison.

⁵ As his biographer notes in *E. K. Brown: A Study in Conflict*, “Pratt was [Brown’s] collaborator, although his name did not appear with Brown’s on the editorial page” (Groening 64). Given Pratt’s editorial hand, the Canadian number of *Poetry* bears a certain relation to its Canadian counterpart, *Canadian Poetry Magazine*.

⁶ In the “News Notes” section at the back of the issue, *Poetry* editor George Dillon emphasized the significance of the issue to both Canadian contributors and American readers: “It has been assumed, by editors and readers in general, that the work of Canadian writers would make itself known in this country through the usual publishing channels; that it would be as readily available for publication as the work of European

writers. For various reasons, however, this has not been the case. New poets are ‘discovered’ almost simultaneously here and in England, their careers are fostered by magazines and book publishers in both countries, but there is no comparable interchange between the United States and Canada” (57).

⁷ While she attempts to distance herself from the earlier magazine by calling attention to her mother, Florence Randal Livesay, a traditional versifier of the kind most often published in the Philadelphia-based magazine, Dorothy Livesay had herself submitted a group of poems for publication in *Contemporary Verse* in 1927. In his 7 December 1927 letter, Benjamin Musser of *Contemporary Verse* wrote to Livesay to accept her poem “Sympathy” (published in *Green Pitcher*) and to reject two others (DLP-QU, box 2, file 24).

⁸ During WWI, Crawley was employed as a lawyer in London when he came across Harold Monroe’s Poetry Bookshop, a meeting place for contemporary British poets, where they would give recitations of their poems, and where Crawley would find volumes of the Georgian poets Davies, Hodgson, de la Mare, as well as the war poets, Brooke, Owen, Sassoon, and Edward Thomas (Livesay, Foreword ix-x).

⁹ Appealing to the modern poet’s desire to communicate with as wide an audience as possible, Monroe selected a quotation from Whitman—“To have great poets there must be great audiences too”—as the democratic motto emblazoned upon the cover of *Poetry*.

¹⁰ By the mid-1930s when Crawley had established relations with members of the Victoria poetry group, he could count a number of modern British poets of the 1930s among his reading repertoire. When making arrangements to give a poetry reading in February 1935

to the Victoria CAA, he proposed Sassoon's *The Road to Ruin*, and, on another occasion, suggested the addition of Auden, Spender, and Day Lewis (Crawley to Perry, 30 January 1935; MEPP, box 2, file 7). See also note 12.

¹¹ The society, whose honorary members included Bliss Carman, Charles G. D. Roberts, and Lorne Pierce, was founded in October 1916. One of its proudest achievements was its role in influencing Pierce to commence the series of Ryerson Press Poetry Chapbooks, inspired by its publication of president Fewster's chapbook *Three Poems* in 1925. For an anecdotal history of the VPS, see *The Vancouver Poetry Society 1916–1946: A Book of Days*.

¹² Crawley's range of influence on the poetry groups of Victoria and Vancouver is evident in the description of his preparations for the 1939 VPS reading and talk: "As the two high spots and big pieces of the talk I am saying [Auden's] *Spain*, the last thing, and in the middle somewhere almost all of the *Lament of Lorca*. Then three poems of Archibald MacLeish, and [t]hree of Louis MacNeice; [f]or Canadians L[eo] Kennedy's *Circling Eagles* and *Words for a Resurrection* and Pratt[']s *Erosion* and Dorothy Livesay has made me very proud and happy by promising to let me say a new one of hers not yet published which she read to me the other af[t]ernoon. Jean wants me to give also Lorca's *Presciosa* which she likes and I may do so. Then I have four from the W[ar] P[oetry] A[nthology] writers, and several odd ones of British writers . . ." (Crawley to McLaren [1939]; FMP).

¹³ As Victoria branch president Perry reported to CAA president Pelham Edgar in her letter of 28 December 1936: "Our Year-book gives the impression that [Crawley] chose all the poems in the collection. But I am sure some of them give him acute pain. When he sent

in his report, Doris [Ferne] and Floris [McLaren] and I were horrified to find he had chosen three for each of us and for Anne [Marriott], and only one for everyone else. . . .

As the three of us were on the committee of arrangement, we were in a quandary; but got out of it by adding an extra poem to his choice for most of the older members, or the juniors whose work seemed in our opinion to merit it" (MEPP, box 5, file 23).

¹⁴ As he reflected in a letter to Livesay: "I would be no earthly good as associate editor and would be nothing and I think the whole standard and value of a magazine is in the character and likings of the sole editor" (n.d. [c. August 1946]; DLP-QU, box 3, file 7). He expressed similar sentiments in a letter of August 1946 to McLaren: "I said [to Birney] I did not think I could work satisfactorily as an associate as I thought a magazine lost a lot unles[s] it were under one pers[on]'s sole editorial management and that I thought this was shown in some of the numbers of Poetry Chicago" (FMP).

¹⁵ Page's private retraction of her remarks on *Contemporary Verse* in a letter to Crawley is worth noting for the record: "I no sooner saw it in print than I wanted to disown it—send out letters to everyone saying 'there has been a mistake.' Actually I still agree on the whole with what I said but it was so condensed that it seemed distorted. And the fact that I was a Previewer and a would-be poet seemed to make it worse—as if I were setting myself above everyone else, which I was *not* doing" (Page to Crawley [1942]; ACP, box 1, file 20, item 8).

¹⁶ Ryerson Press had accepted the poem by January 1939 and published it in its chapbook series in February 1939, and Livesay herself had reviewed it on 23 February 1939 in the *Victoria Daily Times*, before she saw fit in her "Open Letter" to assail the Canadian

publishing industry on Marriott's behalf for not publishing the poem (see Marriott to Norma MacRostie, 2 February–3 March 1939; LPP, box 7, file 6, items 73, 75–76).

¹⁷ See also "Prairie Graveyard," published in the April 1941 issue of *Poetry* (rpt. in Marriott, *Circular* 43).

¹⁸ The impetus to publish *Calling Adventurers!* may have come from McLaren. As Marriott recorded in a list consisting of comments she received from friends and fellow writers in Victoria, McLaren recommended that Marriott "get it published somewhere, like [Archibald] M[a]cLeish's 'Fall of the City'" (AMP, box 16, file 2).

¹⁹ Prefacing a 1942 reading from *Calling Adventurers!* over CJOR radio in Vancouver, Marriott commented on the limitations and advantages of radio as a broadcast medium: "In radio, the writer of poetry is presented with a marvelous new medium of making his work take on vitality, and of presenting it to an audience of a size that no book of poetry would be very likely to reach. . . . Writing poetry for radio has of course its particular problems—one of them is the need for simplicity. Long tangled up phrases and complicated words just won't go over the air. . . ." (AMP, box 15, file 9).

²⁰ By March 1945, when Marriott contacted Ryerson about the sales of *Calling Adventurers!* and *Salt Marsh*, Pierce noted in the margin of her letter that 63 of 250 total copies of the former, and 327 of 500 of the latter, were still in stock (LPP, box 12, file 7, item 59).

²¹ Birney, like many of her contemporaries, assumed her intimate knowledge of the prairies on the basis of *The Wind Our Enemy*. She made certain to disabuse him of this assumption in her letter of acceptance on 21 August 1946: "I never knew anyone there

who *did* write, that I can remember, though I'll see if memory can be forced to yield anything up" (EBP, box 14, file 25; original emphasis).

²² Birney misremembered the events leading up to his resignation when he wrote in his memoirs of *Canadian Poetry Magazine* that in the summer of 1947 he had received a note from Marriott "resigning from the editorial board by reason of marriage and removal to the wilds of Prince George" (*Spreading* 107).

²³ Marriott mentioned the talk in her fall 1946 letter to Birney, complaining of the NFB that "generally the people are pretty uninterested in poetry—when Alan Crawley spoke here last month in spite of signs on the bulletin boards and so forth, if it hadn't been for a solid back-log of the despised CAA, the hall would have been more than half empty" (EBP, box 14, file 25). However ironically she intends Birney to read her distaste for the CAA, she nonetheless lets slip her discontent with poetry communities in Ottawa.

²⁴ The deeper biographical context of this poem may refer to Marriott's first engagement, later broken off. M. Eugenie Perry, in her letter of 14 May 1944 to Edgar, mentions Marriott's recent engagement (MEPP, box 5, file 23). Marriott herself, in a letter of 8 June 1944 to Pierce, mentions her engagement and attaches a manuscript of sonnets written by her fiancé, H. Wakefield Maunsell of Calgary (LPP, box 11, file 1, item 113). She later met and married Gerald McClellan in Ottawa in 1947.

²⁵ The list includes twelve poems—"Country Sunday," "Pussy Willows From a Train," "The Riel Road," "New Season," "How Most Imperfect," "The Rideau," "For Friends Far Away," "Poetry Mountain Valley," "Seeing Him," "Waiting Room Spring," "Old Maid," and "Ottawa Payday"—left incomplete with a note indicating the possible addition of

“new poems.”

²⁶ In a letter to McLaren about the publication of *The Wind Our Enemy* in the Ryerson series, Crawley’s perception of the chapbooks is instructive in this regard: “. . . these Ryerson Chapbooks have been rather a thorn in the side of the newspapers and reviewers and they dislike doing much with them, I expect the ‘girls’ who have written the others that have been brought out take sadly and vituperatively to any serious criticism. I have liked the poem so much that I am sorry that the stupidity of its handling is not to make it more widely read. I thought at first that its publication in this forum was a good thing for it and for Ann[e] but now I am inclined to believe that it is not so, it is too good to be in the company of the others in the forum and may suffer greatly from the association” ([1939]; FMP).

²⁷ As an example of his editorial practice of encouraging poets to attempt publication in *Poetry*, Crawley wrote to Livesay on 20 February 1942 about her poem “Serenade for Strings”: “Sorry about your luck with Poetry certainly I think the poem good enough and if you want to let me have it will be delighted” (DLP–QU, box 3, file 3). The poem appeared in the September 1942 issue of *Contemporary Verse*. There are numerous instances when Crawley published Livesay’s poems after she had received rejections from other editors.

²⁸ For analysis of reportage as a species of leftist prose in general, and Livesay’s prose reportage in particular, see Carr 180–81, 184–85.

²⁹ See Grace, *Regression* 11–42 and “Mapping” for her studies of the influence of expressionist aesthetics on Canadian modernism. Setting the context for the arrival of

expressionism in Canadian visual art, Grace not only notes the expressionist influence on Lawren Harris's early paintings in the 1910s and early 1920s but also cites Charles Comfort's defence of expressionism in his 1931 article "The Painter and His Model" (*Regression* 24–25). As noted above, Livesay was familiar with Comfort's murals from the West End Community Centre in Vancouver in the late 1930s (*Journey* 158). Even if Livesay was exposed to any expressionist motifs in murals by Comfort, or if his murals in particular were influential on her conception of "Motif," there is little more than circumstantial evidence to corroborate such a claim. "There is less evidence of Expressionism in any modernist Canadian poet [than in novelists or painters]," Grace cautions, "although *expressionistic tendencies* are apparent in some poems by Bertram Brooker, Lawren Harris, F. R. Scott, and Dorothy Livesay" (*Regression* 248n5; emphasis added).

³⁰ For another example of Livesay's transitional poetry and her postwar return to the self, see "V–J Day / Improvisations on an Old Theme," published in the October 1945 issue of *En Masse* (1–2).

³¹ Prior to its publication in *Contemporary Verse*, Livesay had submitted "Call My People Home" to B. K. Sandwell at *Saturday Night* and Hayden Carruth at *Poetry*. Both editors returned the poem, claiming its length exceeded their means (see Sandwell to Livesay, n.d.; DLP–QU, box 1, file 1) and Carruth to Livesay, 26 May 1949 (DLP–QU, box 2, file 25).

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

¹ This is the subject of Trehearne's recent correctives to previous scholarship on Montreal

little magazines of the 1940s, including articles by Louis Dudek, Michael Gnarowski, and Wynne Francis, indexes by Don Precosky and Neil Fisher, biographies by Elspeth Cameron and Sandra Djwa, Waddington's introduction to her edition of John Sutherland's *Essays, Controversies and Poems*, and Ken Norris's *The Little Magazine in Canada*. Trehearne argues for more affinities than disparities among the Montreal poets and little-magazine editors of the 1940s. See Trehearne, "Critical" and *Montreal*.

Earlier attempts to expose the *Preview-First Statement* binary as a fallacy include literary histories from the perspectives of either *Preview* or *First Statement*: originally, in a rarely cited Master's thesis entitled "Preview: Anatomy of a Group" (1969) by Christopher Xerxes Ringrose and, more recently, in the introduction to *The Letters of John Sutherland, 1942-1956* (1992) by Bruce Whiteman. Ringrose is usually noted for his 1970 article, "Patrick Anderson and His Critics," much of which is taken directly from his thesis. Ringrose admirably downplays what he calls the "melodrama" of the *Preview-First Statement* rivalry (in reference to Francis's 1962 article, "Montreal Poets of the Forties") and provisionally attempts to reconstruct the social and political conditions in Montreal during WWII and personal tensions within the group that impinge upon the production of *Preview* ("Patrick Anderson" 16; "Preview" 20). Without merely reiterating the misinformation laid down by critics and literary historians writing from the perspective of *First Statement*, Whiteman scrupulously details some of the extant correspondence among the *Preview* and *First Statement* editors, confirming some stories and refuting others about the conflicted relations between the two groups.

² Patrick Anderson makes note of *Preview's* predecessor in his introduction to the

facsimile edition: “The format of the first six issues of *Preview*, about six folio mimeographed sheets with a printed title in either red or blue, owed much to an almost totally forgotten ‘literary letter’ presented by my American wife and myself to some thirty friends in April, 1941. This was *The Andersons*, of which there was no more than a single issue” (Introduction iii). See also Whitney, “First Person”: “Peggy had typed it . . . and [Patrick] wrote the content and ran off the copies at [Selwyn House] school [where he was employed as an English master]” (90).

³ Both Kit Shaw and her husband would relinquish their positions in the group prior to the October 1943 issue, though extant correspondence indicates that Neufville Shaw continued with the group in a casual capacity. See Neufville Shaw to Miriam Waddington, 16 March 1944 (Miriam Waddington Papers, box 34, *Preview* file); see also Shaw to Dorothy Livesay, 16 March 1944 (Dorothy Livesay Papers, box 2, file 17). Kit Shaw’s liminal position in relation to the editorial members of the *Preview* group is recorded in Patrick Anderson’s 18 November 1942 letter to her, the only extant document in which she figures so prominently and occupies a central position in the group. He addresses her “as someone in the PREVIEW group” and goes on to apologize for his recent animosity toward her and, afterward, to refute her “‘sexual’ or ‘Freudian,’ or alternately ‘up in the clouds’ theory” concerning his poetry (FRSP, reel H-1211). Evidently, she too participated in group discussions of the work published in *Preview*.

⁴ See Anderson, *Search Me* 149. See also Anderson’s letter to A. J. M. Smith: “I feel quite bitter about *Preview*’s attitude toward Peggy. She spent hours and hours mimeographing the magazine, carrying paper etc. and actually called most of the meetings.

She never got a word of thanks” (Patrick Anderson Papers [PAP], box 1, Correspondence 1945 file [n.d.; circa 1946–47]). Patricia Whitney excerpts a longer passage from this letter and notes: “This holograph letter is written on *Northern Review* stationery and is undated” (“From Oxford” 48n41).

⁵ After sending out a questionnaire in August 1942 with the sixth issue, the editors decided to change the periodical’s format from a single-stapled newsletter mimeographed on *Preview* letterhead to a side-stapled magazine with mimeographed content pages and printed covers. Although replies to its questionnaire are not extant, the *Preview* group’s subsequent investment in higher production values was most likely implemented as a result of feedback from current subscribers.

⁶ However, as Page says of the *Preview* group in a letter of 9 May [1942] to Alan Crawley: “It is a strange group to be associated with—especially as I am the only non-political member” (ACP, box 1, file 20).

⁷ She mentions the collaborative nature of *Preview*’s production at the head of the letter, saying, “We did the paste-up last night.” One might guess that “we” refers to the Shaws and Bruce Ruddick (the Andersons were, as Patrick’s August 1942 letter to Page indicates, vacationing that summer in Baie St–Paul) (PKPP, box 6, file 7).

⁸ Having completed an average of fourteen poems every month since she arrived in Montreal in October 1941, she would experience a gradual decline in production after joining the *Preview* group in April 1942, composing seven new poems in April and nine in May, but only two in June and July, and three in August. The trend would continue through the end of the year: she would write eighteen more poems in the next four

months.

⁹ Among these unpublished poems in her copy-book of 1940–44 are such published poems as “Noon Hour” (c. early 1943), “The Petition” (c. early 1943), and “Typists” (February 1943).

¹⁰ For an earlier, Marxist version of a poem in this genre, see Weiss. See also Livesay, “Depression Suite,” part iii (“I sit and hammer melodies . . .”), *Collected Poems* 87.

¹¹ As early as December 1943, the group issued an insert in the magazine entitled “The PREVIEW Fund” in which it outlined its financial situation: “The production of all little magazines is hazardous and many, too many of them, fold up within a month or two of their first appearance. They are the dragonflies of the literary world. Our case is somewhat different for we are an inexpensive, modest but tenacious insect. We can resort to the cocoon of the clique or the caterpillar stage of limited circulation. But to make ourselves heard, to multiply, to take the nuptial flight—for this we need money. Not a great deal. But some. We need your nickels for our gold, upon your quarters and dollars our irridiscence [sic] depends” (Anderson, “PREVIEW” n. pag.). The group set a goal of one hundred dollars as its target. A reminder about sending contributions to the *Preview* fund appeared in the February 1944 issue (Anderson, “Note”); no subsequent issues contain notices about the fund. How the group planned to invest the money from the fund is unknown; it is possible that the group hoped to afford to have the magazine printed instead of mimeographed. The *First Statement* group had recently obtained a printing press and had started to issue a printed magazine in August 1943; the group had announced the *First Statement* fund in the 13 March 1943 issue in order to raise money to

purchase the press (Sutherland, "Role" 1–2).

¹² Geoffrey Ashe, the *First Statement* agent in Vancouver, reported in his letter of 2 March 1943 to Sutherland that he had in fact attended a CAA branch meeting on 26 February 1943 to canvas subscriptions and support for the magazine. Ashe's follow-up letter to Dudek on 8 April 1943 mentions the possibility of setting up a Vancouver *First Statement* group, but promises little: "If you knew the nature of the Vancouver literary public you would realize, better than I can convey myself, how little is to be expected even when the group is formed" (LDF, series 2, box 6, Ashe file). One suspects that Ashe's pitch to members of the Vancouver CAA may have sounded too much like the same organization with a different name, but without the financial resources or national reputation.

¹³ According to Harry Berger, Jr., such poems illuminate the constitutive ambiguity of the green world:

It appears first as exemplary or appealing and lures us away from the evil or confusion of everyday life. . . . Those who wish to remain, who cannot or will not be discharged, are presented as in some way deficient. Thus the second quality of the green world is that it is ambiguous. . . . In its positive aspects it provides a temporary haven for recreation or clarification, experiment or relief; in its negative aspects it projects the urge of the paralysed will to give up, escape, work magic, abolish time and flux and the intrusive reality of other minds. (36)

See also Frye, Rev. of *Green World* for an anatomy of Waddington's green-world symbolism.

¹⁴ In “Miriam [Dworkin] Waddington: An Annotated Bibliography,” Ricou has dated the second and third issues of *Direction* October and December 1944 respectively (300–01). This cannot be the case, since these dates correspond to the fifth and sixth issues. While issue one is dated 20 November 1943, issues two through four are undated.

¹⁵ See Waddington to Livesay, 24 January 1945: “Dee—you heard about the F[irst] S[tatement] project of chap books (to be financed by F[irst] S[tatement]). So far Layton and Souster are slated. They invited me, and I am vacillating. I want to get my stuff published but don[’]t have too much faith in my prospective editors . . . [.] would that compromise one[’]s integrity? In a way, maybe yes. What do you think of me issued under F[irst] S[tatement] sponsorship? Somehow I feel I deserve better, but maybe I am conceited?” (DLP–QU, box 5a, file 1). Waddington had submitted a collection entitled “Canadian Summer” to the Ryerson Press as early as 1943, which was subsequently declined and returned (see Lorne Pierce to Waddington, 11 November 1943; MWP, box 35, file 21); she received another rejection slip from Ryerson in early 1945 (see Pierce to Waddington, 16 February 1945; MWP, box 35, file 21). After this latter rejection, we may expect that Waddington then decided to accept Sutherland’s offer.

¹⁶ Patrick Waddington was Montreal regional editor for *Canadian Poetry Magazine* during Birney’s editorship.

¹⁷ Of the thirteen poems Waddington published in *Contemporary Verse* before the November 1945 launch of *Green World*, only four were selected by Sutherland for this first collection. Of the next fifteen included in *Contemporary Verse* previous to *The Second Silence* in 1955, twelve were selected by Waddington herself for this second

collection.

¹⁸ See Frye, "Letters"; Wilson; Woodcock, "Recent". For Waddington's immediate reply to Wilson, see her letter in the December 1955 *Canadian Forum*.

¹⁹ See Waddington to Pierce, 7 June 1956 to 25 November 1957. Waddington had sent another full-length manuscript to Pierce in 1956. He attributed his hesitation to publish another collection of hers to the poor sales of *The Second Silence*. As of 25 November 1957, Ryerson still had 256 of the 500 copies in stock. Waddington eventually agreed to purchase 100 copies for herself. Writing to Pierce on 5 September 1957, Waddington assessed the situation: "I realize the difficulties involved in publishing books of poetry and the lack of financial gain that is attached to such ventures. I have no answer to that problem either, except to say that if my next book received favorable reviews it may help to sell the first book . . ." (MWP, box 35, file 21).

²⁰ During her Victoria period, Page would not only publish a dozen poems in Hambleton's anthology *Unit of Five* in November 1944, but also put together and submit a poetry manuscript to Macmillan in the early fall of 1945. After withdrawing the collection from Macmillan, she sent it to Ryerson in December 1945. This manuscript, originally called "The Untouched Hills," was published by Ryerson under the title *As Ten As Twenty* in September 1946. See Ellen Elliott of Macmillan to Page, 11 October 1945; see also Pierce to Page, 5 December 1945 (PKPP, box 17, file 8).

²¹ Ironically, Crawley's criticism of the "detached and impersonal" accompanies five new poems by Page—"Morning, Noon and Night," "Sailor," "Virgin," "Piece for a Formal Garden," and "Squatters, 1946"—in which she persists in the practice of an impersonalist

poetics. Crawley not only accepted these poems for the October 1946 issue, but later honoured them with the Bertram Warr Memorial Award for the best group of poems published in *Contemporary Verse* that year (Crawley, “Bertram”).

²² Although Page’s official letter of resignation was published in the October–November 1947 issue of *Northern Review*, she had in fact submitted her resignation to Sutherland in a personal letter dated 23 August 1947. There she expands upon the reasons for her resignation:

I, as you may know, have for some time been unhappy about the way the magazine was being operated. Having covered a considerable part of Canada in the last year I have some idea of how people react to it. I think that had we been attempting to do a job of creating ill-will we could not have done much better. I wrote to you about this when I was in Victoria, suggesting that some measure of courtesy was necessary. Also I have agreed less and less with opinions expressed in your critical articles and as there is nothing in the magazine explaining that the opinions are those of the reviewer himself—the whole board, whether regional editors or otherwise is automatically implicated. I am no longer prepared to be implicated and would be glad if you would remove my name from any further issues. (Irving Layton Papers [ILP], box 15, Page file)

²³ For a full discussion of *here and now*, see chapter 4: 275–86.

²⁴ For typescript versions of the poems in this group, see AJMSP–TU, 78–007, box 1, file 6.

²⁵ In keeping with the historical basis of my argument, all passages will be quoted from the 1956 versions of “After Rain” and “Giovanni” as published in *Poetry*.

²⁶ For another account of McLaren's suggested revisions to the early version of "After Rain," see Trehearne, *Montreal* 101. Page in fact accepted McLaren's recommendations—not only to retitle the poem (originally entitled "Kitchen Garden"), but also to omit the final stanza. See also Page's reply to McLaren: "It seems so slight, but then so does everything I do. And the Kitchen Garden poem was of course, self-chastisement for just this. The title and last verse were further chastisement, and whereas legitimate enough, hardly legitimate in that context, so I have acted on your advice, and made another small deletion" (n.d. [c. May 1956]; PKPP, box 8, file 16). A copy of the revised version, without the final stanza, can be found in AJMSP-TU, 78-007, box 1, file 6; it was simultaneously submitted by McLaren to the *Tamarack Review* (for which Smith was an advisory editor), but withdrawn once it was accepted by *Poetry*. The truncated version appeared in the November 1956 issue of *Poetry*. McLaren's assessment of the final stanza was corroborated by Crawley in his letter of 6 May 1956 to Page: "I listened quite absorbed and content with the two Giovanni poems. The first reading . . . struck me deeply and when it ended I was for a moment unaware that it was over and at the second reading the last two stanzas came as new to me, the earlier ones were so right that they held strong against the last two which I feel are weaker and might, God I say 'might' only be a weakening effect. The line beginning 'Choir . . . me' starts a verse I thought weak and could be improved or cut off, but I would hate to lose the fine strong last line of this stanza" (PKPP, box 6, file 43).

²⁷ The original version of "After Rain," entitled "Kitchen Garden," has not survived in typescript. I am assuming that the final stanza, as it appears in *Cry Ararat!*, is by and large

the same as that in the version Page sent to McLaren in April 1956. Given the changes of wording and phrasing made between the *Poetry* and *Cry Ararat!* versions, however, others were likely introduced in the final stanza as well.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

¹ See Crawley, Brief; Sutherland, Brief; Harmon, et al., Brief; Livesay, et al., Brief.

² According to H. T. D. Robinson's brief history of the *Crucible*, Hilda Ridley alone founded the WCC and the *Crucible*; Laura Ridley primarily attended to the advertising end of the magazine.

³ Also published in the Christmas–New Year 1940 issue, Creighton's article "Pioneering in Poetry" gives extended attention to modern poetic themes (industrialization, mechanization, commerce). For another reading of these "modernist" *Crucible* editorials and articles as well as their failed application, see J. Lee Thompson 94–101.

⁴ *The Blue Review* superseded a quarterly entitled *Rhythm*, edited by Murry, Mansfield, and Michael T. Sandler from the summer of 1911 to March 1913 (Hoffman, et al. 243, 240). For a note on *Signature*, see Hoffman, et al. 248.

⁵ Even during the two-year period when she was replaced as the *Forum*'s managing editor (July 1937–October 1939), she remained a member of the board of editors and continued to be a contributor.

⁶ Godfrey neglects to mention the editor of the *Twentieth Century*, Mary Davidson. If Bishop's novel is even a remotely reliable record of the magazine, it would appear that the only woman affiliated with the magazine was in fact employed in a clerical role. It is possible, though, that Bishop has effaced Davidson's editorial role in the novel.

⁷ See Frye, Rev. of *Contemporary Verse* (December 1941); Birney, Rev. of *Contemporary Verse* (April 1942); Creighton, Rev. of *Contemporary Verse* (September 1944); Frye, Rev. of *First Statement* (November 1942); Frye, Rev. of *Direction* (March 1943).

⁸ Plans for the formation of a new literary magazine had been proposed as early as July 1944. A preliminary meeting of the Federation of Canadian Writers (FCW), an organization proposed as an alternative to the CAA, was held in May or early June 1944 (see Dorothy Livesay to Earle Birney, 7 June 1944 [EBP, box 13, file 23]; and A.J.M. Smith to Livesay, 24 June 1944 [DLP-QU, box 5, file 15, item 2]). The provisional executive committee of the FCW included Anderson, Klein, and Shaw of the *Preview* group and Layton and Dudek of the *First Statement* group. Others in attendance at the original FCW meeting were Audrey Aikman and John Sutherland of the *First Statement* group and Scott and Ruddick of the *Preview* group, among others including Smith. Among the suggestions raised at the FCW's preliminary meeting was a proposal to "consider the creation of a national literary magazine, perhaps through the amalgamation of existing magazines" ("A Proposal for a Federation of Canadian Writers," 29 July 1944; DLP-QU, box 1, file 1, item 11). Although the FCW itself never moved beyond the planning stage, its proposal for a national magazine would eventually take the form of *Northern Review*, whose founding editorial board chiefly consisted of members of the provisional executive committee of the FCW and others from the *First Statement* and *Preview* groups in attendance at the meeting.

⁹ Harmon's earliest extant correspondence concerning *here and now* dates from July

1947. In a letter of 31 July, Harmon acknowledges the receipt of a letter from Livesay dated 11 December 1946. The first issue had been announced for the fall of 1947, but as Harmon noted in her letter to Livesay: “We should like to send you a copy of the magazine but we cannot tell you when because it is at present tied up with the strike with no immediate signs of the printers returning to work” (Harmon to Livesay, 31 July 1947; DLP-QU, box 4a, file 26, item 69). The first issue is dated December 1947, though “it did not appear until late February or early March, 1948” (Whiteman, “*Here*” 77).

¹⁰ See Harmon to Crawley, 18 October 1948 (Anne Wilkinson Papers [AWP], box 4, file 9).

¹¹ An early draft of the CWC brief and Page’s commentary on it have survived. Page’s undated letter to Sybil Hutchison (c. September 1949) has been transcribed and preserved along with the draft in the Birney Papers. Of particular note in the draft is a passage on the little magazine: “The gap between the non-paying or poorly paying magazines which publish serious literary work—the so-called ‘little’ magazines (such as *Contemporary Verse*, *Northern Review*, and *Here and Now*) and the university quarterlies—and the commercial magazines is great, and there are in Canada as yet no magazines between these two poles such as provide markets for writers of a great many types in the United States.” Page’s response is pointed: “The ‘little magazines.’ Nothing in the world could sound more pitiful to the initiated than that term. I think we would do better to express the *idea* of the little m[a]gs’ and I shall hunt up, if I can, the book *THE LITTLE MAGAZINE*, written by two Americans to see if they have any good points on the subject. Certainly, it must be made clear to the boys on the Commission that it is the ‘little mags’ that first published the

Lawrences, the Eliots (let's skip the Pounds to avoid another Saturday Review controversy). And that seems to be about the extent of my thought on the subject" (EBP, box 11, file 67; original emphasis). All references to little magazines were excised from the final brief.

¹² The following figures are listed for a projected one-year run of four issues: short stories (15 at an average of \$100 each, total \$1500); critical essays (10 at an average of \$100 each, total \$1500); poetry (2000 lines at \$1 a line—minimum \$10 per poem, total \$2000); reviews, book notices, etc (total \$400) (Harmon, et al.).

¹³ I have not been able to track down *New Canadian Poetry Column*, but the title suggests that it may have been a poetry supplement with contributions from New Canadians.

¹⁴ Litt's analysis of the commission on this point of contention is trenchant: "Massey and others were willing to accept the integration of ethnic cultures into a distinctive Canadian culture, but the idea of an ethnic mosaic had yet to be translated from an emerging demographic trend into an acknowledged good. Thus each of the two constituent elements of liberalist humanist nationalism imposed constraints upon the other.

Nationalism limited liberalism just as liberalism qualified nationalism" (113–14). For a telling portrait of the Massey Commission's handling of multiculturalism, see the Ukrainian Canadian Committee brief and transcript of its presentation to the Massey Commission.

¹⁵ See the brief submitted to the Massey Commission by the Community Arts Council of Vancouver for its request for federal recognition and support for the development of regional cultural groups (Arkell and Andrew).

¹⁶ Though by no means as explicit as *here and now*'s editorials, Agazarian's statement of aesthetic principles is also reminiscent of Morris's reform of typographic, printing, and design practice. Collaboration with Reid as the printer and typographer of *pm* more than likely influenced Agazarian's thinking in the field of aesthetics and design. Her ideas of the usefulness of art, of art as inseparable from living—these are aesthetic principles fundamental to Morris's handicraft movement, particularly his practice of the so-called "lesser arts" which included typography, printing, and book design.

¹⁷ For a study of language usage in scientific, literary, and advertising discourse, see D. G. Jones's article "The Question of Language Prostitution," published in the fourth issue.

¹⁸ While Collins would never comment on her gendered position as editor of the magazine, her contributions indicate that she was certainly aware of the representation of gender and its politics. Her poem "Renewal," published in the third issue of *CIV/n*, articulated a consciousness, a politics, and a poetics stripped of all that is stereotypically feminine:

Toss your frustrations on the nearest chair,
Place your neuroses neatly on a shelf,
Wash out your inhibitions and hang them up to dry.

Yes, dearie, you can sleep now,
unclothed, free.

Tomorrow you will be bitter, satirical, even gay,
No bloody gorgons chasing through the intestines of a giraffe,
No thundering herds of centaurs pounding through the brain.

Brush aside now the maggots that gnaw

Heart, hope, ambition;

Sink into a sleep where all is sane, logical, safe.

Its bright, alive, lurid and loathsome

nightmares:

Where loudness of voice, power, not intelligence

Or justice dominate;

Stenches rise from unaired

Minds rancid with petty fears, conventions, cowering

Before all newness, clean thinking. (67–68)

Just as Collins calls for vital and experiential poetry in her editorial, so her poem bears the stamp of her letter.

¹⁹ In a letter of 24 August 1954 to Dudek, Layton defended his actions: “Of course I agree with you that *A/C* stays on as editor. But, pray, when did I say different? I don’t know who’s twisting your ear: the plain fact is that I have no more aspiration than your modest self to be conspicuously laid out on the masthead. For me it was and is entirely a matter of responsibility—call me a crank, but I do like to do my sniping in broad daylight. I thought that since we were responsible for what goes into the trash heap we were under no obligation to own up to the deed. If however as you point out *A/C* is free to pick and choose among our respective opinions then we exist only in an advisory capacity and the final responsibility rests with her. That rests my soul, and I am content” (LDF, series 1, box 8, Layton file).

²⁰ Extant correspondence indicates that Robert Currie, together with Collins, invested in an electric typewriter with a print-quality typeface (see Currie and Collins to Dudek, 7 August 1954; Currie to Dudek, 5 September 1954; LDF, series 1, box 4, Currie file)—presumably the same typewriter that Collins remembers selling to settle debts for the printing of the sixth issue (Introduction 9). Plans were made at that time to have the magazine printed in England. Though less expensive than laying out the magazine themselves in Montreal, printing costs were so much higher than those for mimeographing that the two printed issues of *CIV/n* (nos. 6 and 7) would be the last. In a letter of 10 July 1955, Currie wrote to Dudek about the fact that he had not “asked AC about *CIV/n* 8 yet” and in a later (undated) letter reported that she had made “[n]o mention of *CIV/n*” (LDF, series 1, box 4, Currie file). Letters from Currie to Dudek indicate that the end of the magazine may have been as much caught up in personal affairs as it was in its troubled financial affairs (see Currie to Dudek, 10 July 1955; LDF, series 1, box 4, Currie file).

²¹ For a more comprehensive analysis of the CAC and its brief, see Tippet 171–76.

²² For a concise history of Herbert and his activities with the Canada Foundation, see Tippet 177–81. See also Herbert’s appeal in the June 1948 issue of *here and now*.

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

¹ According to David McKnight’s bibliography, of those little magazines founded between 1941 and 1956, 11 of 23 (47%) had at least one woman editor; of those little magazines established between 1957 and 1980, the ratio decreases to 65 of 177 (36%).

² Godard’s own women-centred narrative of Canadian modernism, entitled “Ex-centriques, Eccentric, Avant-Garde: Women and Modernism in the Literatures of

Canada,” appeared in the inaugural *Tessera* issue (1984); this overview of women’s writing from Mère Marie de L’Incarnation to Nicole Brossard deals primarily with prose and considers only those texts that incorporate “the language innovations necessary in order to enter Modernist writing” (62). “An account of the importance of women in the advent of Canadian Modernism,” she claims, “will of necessity result in a decentring of the existing tradition which has denied the presence of modernism before 1960” (63). And though her examples—Elizabeth Smart, Sheila Watson, Thérèse Tardif, and Gabrielle Roy—amply demonstrate the presence of Canadian women modernists prior to 1960, her failure to take account of the modernist poetry of Louise Morey Bowman and Livesay in the 1920s and 1930s, or that of Page, Waddington, Marriott in the 1940s, indicate how far her history is out of alignment.

³ A longer and earlier version of this section appeared in the Livesay special issue of *Contemporary Verse* 2. See Irvine, “Dorothy.”

⁴ See chapter 1: 76, 91. See also Irvine, “Dorothy” 67–68 for an expanded reading of this *New Frontier* editorial.

⁵ See also McLaren, “For the Record.” Written in response to the May 1975 editorial in *CV/III*, McLaren’s “feedback” letter recalls the production work on *Contemporary Verse* conducted by herself, Marriott, and Ferne in Victoria.

⁶ Butling’s statistics refer only to British Columbia little magazines. As I noted in the introduction, the percentage of women poets published in the *Crucible* and *Canadian Poetry Magazine* was significantly higher.

⁷ Page still publishes collections of poetry (in collaboration with Philip Stratford, she has

recently written a cycle of renga, entitled *Four Poems for Two Voices* [2001]; see Page and Stratford).

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