

poignant statement on industry vs. nature: "I am the river / I have cleaned your toilets for you." In the third section the men return to the towns from the rigs, bringing with them their roughness where fists and bravado are the means of communication. Mountains pervade all three sections: the sun bounces off them, they lie on their backs, songs move them, they are shattered by the drill bit.

The poems are stark and vivid with meaningful, not decorative, pauses and words well chosen for their power of expression. The bold black print emphasizes the hardness. Together the poems are a powerful sequence, apart they would lose some of their strength. Illustrations are sprinkled throughout; like the poems, they are uncluttered, relevant, meaningful.

Ellen Pilon

3076 Clark, Thomas A. *Madder Lake*. Toronto: Coach House Press, 1981. 160p. \$6.50pa. ISBN 0-88910-219-8pa.

The Coach House Press does not publish many poets of Scottish origin; the only other one I can remember is Iain Hamilton Finlay. Thomas A. Clark's *Madder Lake*—an attractive paperback in a madder-coloured cover—is a welcome international addition to the Coach House Press's poetry list. Clark's skilled lyrical experimentalism, producing miniature gems, was already well established by his earlier volumes, published from 1969 to 1980; his haiku-like experiments have long produced poetry that is economical and clever on one level, and moving and colourful on another.

Although Clark was born in Scotland, I do not find his work in this volume particularly Scottish. Poems like "Patchwork":

The quiet fields
are sown together
stitched and hemmed
with loud hedgerows
quiet sewn to quiet
by seams of song

are dominated by the gardens and domestic landscapes of England, where the poet and his artist wife have lived for many years. Other poems are less localized and concentrate on movement, light, and sound. Apart from a piece called "The Crofter's Garden":

A sea of kale
an allotment of waves
an acre of islands
a harvest of graves

very few of the poems in the collection gave me any sense of northern Scottish scenes. I was astonished to find that one critic was misled by Clark's Scottish origins to the extent of finding "a landscape of craggy silhouettes and stony crofts" in the evocative poem made up of the names of varieties of roses. I can think of few things less Scottish than "Lucy Cramphorn, Wendy Cussons, Mary Wheatcroft, and Ellen Willmott." Neither Clark, nor Laurie Clark, his illustrator, whose delicate drawings use "line" and "point" with the same spare efficiency as her husband uses words, is responsible for the vagaries of critics. The title of the section "Thrums" puzzles me. J. M. Barrie lovers should perhaps be warned that the word "thrums" in the weaving trade refers to the fringe of threads remaining on the loom when the web has been cut off and is not a reference to Barrie's birthplace. The section title puzzled me because "loose ends" and "loose threads" are antithetical to Clark's whole approach to lyric poetry—an approach that makes a strong poetic virtue out of precision and control. This compelling collection of tiny gems and necklace-like strings of lyric pearls should not be missed.

R. H. Carnie

3077 Colombo, John Robert, ed. *Poems of the Inuit*. Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1981. 117p. illus. bibliog. \$23.95; \$11.95pa. ISBN 0-88750-403-5; 0-88750-404-3pa.

In *Poems of the Inuit* John Robert Colombo, himself a poet, has gathered 80 out of some 500 available translations of Inuit songs. Each poem represents a particular performance by an individual singer who, within this essentially oral culture, is handing down his own version of poetry that stretches far back into the past. Moreover, since most of the books from which these translations are taken were published over 50 years ago, the collection records and preserves part of the pre-Westernized traditional heritage of the Inuit. Here are charms, incantations, satires, poems of personal anecdote; most frequently, however, these songs articulate and celebrate incidents from everyday Inuit life.

They may not immediately strike the modern reader as lyrical; anyone expecting the smooth grace of English folksongs, for example, will be disappointed. But the poems have a rough directness that is both appealing and effective. For the most part, they proceed in leisurely fashion, stanza after stanza, with recurring refrains and only slight variations on the basic theme. In their form and pattern (though not in delicacy or subtlety)