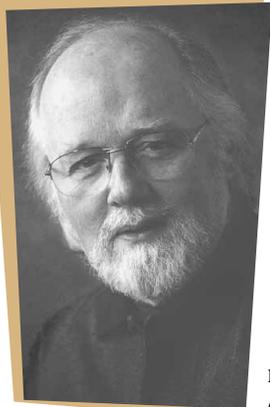


Recently I was browsing at a book display and happened on a copy of *The Mirror and the Lamp* by M.H. Abrams, first published in 1953. At the heart of this work is an account of a shift from understanding art as mimesis (copy) to art conceived as expression. The mirror suggests that art reflects the world while the lamp invites us to understand art as expressing something of the human person taking us beyond what meets the eye. These metaphors speak to the question of whether the artist (and everyone else) is passive, simply receiving impressions of the world or active, contributing to shaping the world as we know it. The former tends to focus on the senses where art reproduces what is seen, while the latter is inclined look to emotions or ideas that are projected through art. While the mirror has been a key image for science and its relationship with nature, the lamp metaphor loomed large during the early days of the Romantic Movement in the nineteenth century. The romantics advocated for a view of art that would bring new vitality to the merely mechanical world which was the legacy of some Enlightenment thinkers.

The metaphors of mirror and lamp are rich and I would like to suggest a different application than that found in Abrams. I am

thinking about the trends, values and ethos of the prevailing culture. How is it that art relates to these? Humanity is deeply embedded in culture, influenced at every turn by the style, morals and ideas of the time. In our

world we are subject to swift changes which pressure us to leave the familiar behind and opt for the latest. It is, I think, more com-



Conscious, by Tina Newlove
oil on paper, 24" x 20"

mon to find artists who mirror back to us the spirit of the times, a spirit internalized and often accepted uncritically. There is value in this to be sure but there is also need for lamps that will shed unmasking light on the thinness of so much of what constitutes the spirit of the age.

This leads me to wonder about art done by members of the Christian faith. It is a standard responsibility of those who are Christian to "discern the times". It is much easier of course to join with the flow of cultural life and leave the difficult tasks of discernment, critique and challenge to

Protection

Artist Tina Newlove has had work in over 70 juried exhibitions.

With the painting, stitching and assembling I have been doing for "Protection", I am seeking to nail down the past.

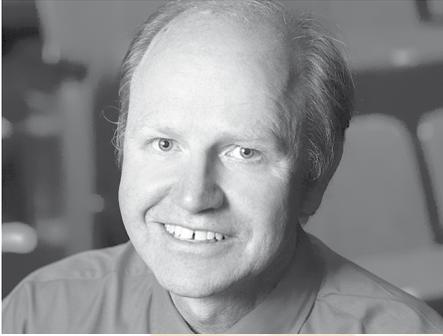
The antique photo albums, filled with paintings and poetry and musings, are like dairies where I can record feelings and memories – a daily meditation. The works wrestle with a need to express and explore my subconscious as well as with the desire to hide those same things – to confess and clear the air or to lock them away.

I have been searching, finding and protecting. I cradle my thoughts in little hideaways or secret drawers, in history and poetry. The violations of privacy and over-protection in society are of concern to me. In the larger works, I continue to explore the vulnerability of the individual in both city and intimate home-life situations.

"Protection", her first solo show at a public gallery, she says contains secrets, protests and declarations. Latham Gallery, Stouffville, October 26 to November 29. www.tinanewlove.com ■

someone else. Mirroring can be exercised not just in mainline culture but also in our sub-cultures. Art can serve the role of simply

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Pacific Theatre: 25th Anniversary

This October, Pacific Theatre in Vancouver celebrates the launch of its 25th Anniversary Season. The theatre presents a prodigious offering of plays, ranging from the achingly relevant, to the deeply poignant, to the side-splittingly funny, all within the financial grasp of most.

Pacific Theatre was founded in 1984 by a group of actors who wanted to establish a non-propagandist professional theatre where they would be free to explore work having particular meaning to them as Christians. Pacific Theatre's mission statement is "to serve Christ in our community by creating excellent theatre with artistic, spiritual, relational and financial integrity."

Since that time the community-minded professional theatre has worked with many Vancouver artists, regardless of their faith orientation, mounting productions of established works as well as premiering many new plays (e.g. *Espresso*, *A Bright Particular Star*, *Prodigal Son*, *Tent Meeting*, *Cariboo Magi*, *Book of the Dragon*). Many have gone on to subsequent runs at other professional theatres around the continent.

"25 years. Close to half my life spent telling stories, building a place where other artists tell stories..." says founding artistic director, playwright and actor Ron Reed. His latest play, *Refuge of Lies* has just finished an off-Broadway run. Talking with BC Christian News, Reed explained what it means to be called "the Christian theatre in town." He said, "If one thinks it means we're propagandistic – preaching answers, exclusive,

even amateurish – then we're certainly not that. We do plays that interest us, but the 'us' is different. I, and the company, are pre-occupied with the things Jesus talked about and embodied: reconciliation, forgiveness, restoration, new life and a new start, the supernatural, ethical and moral decisions, and peace and justice. So we put on plays that explore these themes." The newspaper clarified that "the Christian aspect has more to do with your worldview, than whether a play could be put on in a church."

Since opening the new space in 1994, Pacific Theatre has received seventy-five nominations for Vancouver's Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards, which have resulted in many awards. In June 2007, Pacific Theatre received no less than 8 Jessie Award nominations and 3 Jessie Awards – including Outstanding Production of the Year for *GRACE!*

In celebration of their Quarter Century, PT is reassembling the original company to revive their very first production *First Christmas: An Entertainment*, December 14-16, 2008. Allen Desnoyers, Elaine Myers and Byron Linsey, who founded PT, With Roy Salmond, will join Ron Reed onstage those three nights for the show that launched the Pacific Theatre company. www.pacifictheatre.org ■



St. John's Bible

"One of the extraordinary undertakings of our time." – *Smithonian Magazine*

At a Scriptorium in Wales, calligraphers are applying medieval arts to create a 21st century bible. The St. John's Bible is a major artistic, cultural and spiritual endeavour. It is the first handwritten and illuminated Bible commissioned since the invention of the printing press. Commissioned by the monks of the Benedictine, St. John's Abbey Collegeville Minnesota, the St. John's Bible is a unique blend of ancient methods, material and tools, with modern themes, images, technology and text. This ten year project is near completion and each of the seven volumes can be purchased individually.

Imago will host a lecture in April 2009 with Father Michael Patella from St. John's Abbey. He will provide a behind the scenes look at the project and speak on the theme of Word and Image. ■



Doug Beardsley: Christian Bard of British Columbia

“And there was one
that wrestled with him
until daybreak”

The Jerusalem Bible, Genesis 32:24
Introduction to *Wrestling with Angels* (1995).

There are few Christian poets and prose writers in BC and Canada that have the visionary breadth and historic depth of Doug Beardsley. Doug was a close friend of Irving Layton for many years, and he has a lengthy (unpublished) correspondence with Layton. Doug has also published two books with Al Purdy: *No One Else is Lawrence: A dozen of D.H. Lawrence's best poems* (1998) and *The Man Who Outlived Himself: An appreciation of John Donne: a dozen of his best poems* (2000). Doug was also a student of the controversial Wiccan-Celtic poet (who taught creative writing for many years at University of Victoria), Robin Skelton.

The friendship with Layton and Purdy would make most more than delighted and purr with pleasure. But, there is yet much more. Doug has also become an expert on the great Canadian sport: hockey. *Country on Ice* (1987) and *The Rocket, The Flower, The Hammer And Me* (1988) have become minor classics in the genre of hockey literature. Doug has taught one of the few courses in Canada on the literary side of hockey and the role of hockey, as a metaphor, in defining Canadian identity.

The real spine and backbone, heartbeat and visionary insights of Doug can best be felt and absorbed in his poetry, though. More than fifteen books of poetry have been birthed from the womb of Doug's ever pregnant imagination and sensitive perceptions. The poetic tale unfolds from such missives as *Going Down into History* (1976) and *The Only Country in the World Called Canada* (1976) through the probing insights of *Kissing the Body of My Lord: The Marie Poems* (1982) and *A Dancing Star* (1988) to the wise and compact reflections in *Wrestling with Angels: New and Selected*



Face by Maria Gabankova, oil on canvas

Poems 1960-1995 (1995). Needless to say, many other fine works of poetry were published between 1976 and 1995.

Wrestling with Angels is an excellent primer and introduction to the poetic vision of Doug Beardsley. Many of his earlier poems, including the ‘The Paul Klee Poems’, are in this collection, plus some ‘Early and Uncollected Poems’ and ‘New Poems’. The ‘New Poems’ reflect Doug's pondering on the meaning of the Holocaust as a result of teaching a course on the topic for many years at the University of Victoria. There is, obviously, much more to read, ponder, meditate upon and internalize in the poetry of Doug, but *Wrestling with Angels* offers the interested reader a sense of how Doug wrestles, and who his soul has wrestled with over the decades.

Poetry is essential to read, but when poetry is read by the author, the spirit that is often hidden in the words takes wings and flies. It is a feast and banquet to hear Doug, the bard, read from his many works of poetry. He understands the bardic role of the poet, and in true Homeric style, offers much hope and vision, struggle and insight, to attentive hearers of the word.

I have no doubt that Doug will, in time, be recognized as one of the most important Christian poets in Canada. The sooner he is offered the kudos he so rightly deserves, the quicker Canadians will realize there is yet much gold to mine in our literary seams.

By Ron Dart, author, poet, political science professor, University of Fraser Valley, BC. ■

Till we have faces

Perhaps nothing is more personal than a face. It is the primary locus for our relationships with others. And so the face is both the icon of our individuality and uniqueness as well as essential for community. This claim of course may be challenged in an age where the internet offers a kind of community – which despite Facebook – is very much a faceless network. I say essential for community because so much of who we are is found in the face and it is through the face that we most often represent ourselves to others.

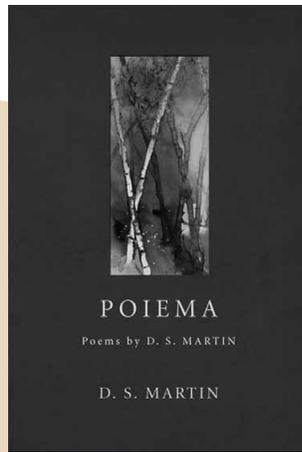
It is in face to face encounter that we are able to enter into deeper relationship and to come to know one another more intimately. But hiding is also possible. The face can be employed as an instrument of deception, covering the truth about who we are, professing instead pretense and falsehood. Whether it is deeper relationship or deception, each is possible because of the communicative power of the human face. Theologian David Ford declares; “Each face is an interrupting summons to justice and peace, with endless ramifications for economics, politics, institutions and other structures.”

Our consumerist society plays out its themes drawing on the power of the face to propagate its message. But more importantly the face is a common component of both personal and cultural memory. When one thinks of cultural memory it is art that provides glimpses into the lives of those from centuries past. The human face has had a prominent role in the history of Western art. The sculptures of ancient Greece and Rome, the icons of early Christianity, the portrait in the Renaissance, the faces of bourgeois patrons of the arts or the distorted and troubled faces that appear in 20th century art all speak to the centrality of face for understanding our humanity and expressing our identity.

Imago is pleased to host a lecture by Roberta Green Ahmanson on the theme *Till We Have Faces*, Wednesday November 5, 7:30 p.m. The lecture will be in the Sam Sorbara Auditorium, Brennan Hall, St. Michael's College U of T. This is an event in collaboration with Toronto School of Theology and an art show and panel discussion will be part of this event. See Events on page 4 ■

D. S. Martin's *Poema*

D. S. Martin's first full book of poetry entitled, *Poema* is out. Publishers Wipf & Stock quote Luci Shaw as saying "Each of these poems makes you want to descend to its heart and discover the precious metal there. D. S. Martin knows how to evoke the mystery that lies beneath the relationships we have with ourselves, each other, and God. This is skillful and probing poetry." Martin says, "The title *Poema* is the Greek word in Ephesians 2:10 that is often translated workmanship. Another way the verse could be translated is: We are God's poem. This says so much about us and our world, and is an insight that fits well with much of what I seek to capture in my poetry." Martin is a Canadian whose poetry appeared in numerous literary journals and magazines such as *Canadian Literature*, *The Christian Century*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Queen's Quarterly* and more. His chapbook, *So the Moon Would Not Be Swallowed* (The Word Guild's Award of Merit 2008) was published with Rubicon



Poema, 96 pp., paper,
ISBN 13: 978-1-55635-856-2

Press in 2007 and is reviewed in the Imago Newsletter. He writes about poetry for *Faith Today*, *Books and Culture* and *Image*. A full blog from the author himself is found at twgauthors.blogspot.com/2008/09/poema-new-poetry-collection-martin.html You can also reach him at his website dsmartin.ca

Poema's book launch happens at Brampton Public Library's Chinguacousy Branch October 20, 2008, 7:30 p.m. ■

The Mirror and the Lamp

continued from page 1

reflecting back what we already hold to and so reassure us (perhaps falsely) that all is well. Art practiced as lamp might enable us to better negotiate our way in the dark spots of contemporary life. Art will not save us, but it may be able to help us to see more clearly.

I don't wish to suggest that we must choose one of these metaphors over the other. What I have said suggests that lamp may offer us more than mirror. But one of the great values of metaphors is the variety of ways they can be employed and how they can open up an otherwise sealed perspective. Both mirror and lamp are images used to describe the scripture. As mirror it aids us in seeing ourselves, disclosing what we may otherwise have missed entirely. As lamp it assists us in lighting a path for the complex journey in which we participate. Likewise art can bring self awareness and new light. Poetry, story, drama and image all are able to contribute to giving us a deeper grasp of who we are and who we ought to be.

This same theme is taken up by British author Nigel Forde in his fine book *The Lantern*

and the Looking-glass. Let me offer here an adapted quote from the end of the book;

"We must continue to tell our stories, to explore our experience of those vast abstracts such as love and death and mercy and sacrifice and forgiveness and redemption in concrete [art] that can shake the mind and heart. For, in the end, there is nothing else worth talking about. [Human] relationship to the universe, to God, the actual compared to the ideal, is the stuff of all comedy and all tragedy, and the Christian voice should echo through [art], through the nations memory, as loudly as any other."

In order for this to happen we need art that speaks not only to ourselves but that speaks to the important realities that we face in a world shaped by the globalizing currents of modern life.

John.

John Franklin, Executive Director
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Events

Till We Have Faces

Tuesday November 4, 2008, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Toronto School of Theology along with Imago will host the opening of an art show taking up the theme *Till We Have Faces*. At 6:30 in Charbonnel Lounge at St. Michael's College, 81 St. Mary's Street, there will be a panel discussion that will explore *Human Countenance and the Sacred*. Panelists will speak about the face in the context of Icons, Renaissance Art, Modern Art and Neurobiology. All of these events are open to the public free of charge.

Wednesday November 5, 2008, 7:30 p.m., Imago, in partnership with Toronto School of Theology, will host a lecture, *Till We Have Faces: The Human Face in Western Art*, by Roberta Green Ahmanson, Philanthropist and Independent Scholar in the Arts, in the Sam Sorbaro Auditorium, Brennan Hall, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto. Reception to follow at Toronto School of Theology, 47 Queen's Park Crescent. www.imago-arts.on.ca

2000 Candles Returns

A collective production, originally staged by Brookstone Performing Arts is back with the original cast! *2000 Candles* is contemporary, hip, and evocative. It's a journey through ancient Christmas celebrations and modern traditions on a quest to find: the true meaning. With four stars from Now Magazine, a viewer states "(it) deliberately reminds us how commercially obnoxious and politically satirized Christmas has become". Video at the website, go and see the show or book it! www.2000candles.com

Kelita's Heavenly Night

is both a Christmas Benefit Concert and CD that raises awareness, funding and support for children rescued from the global sex slave trade, restoring and redeeming innocent lives. Come, listen, read or volunteer! www.heavenlynight.org 905-813-0677

It must go further still: that soul must become its own betrayer, its own deliverer, the one activity, the mirror turn lamp. W.B. Yeats