This leaves the misleading impression that these are simply two parallel women's groups. It overlooks the significant political fact that one side of the debate was defined autonomously by women claiming power over the abortion decison for themselves. The other side defends the power of the Church, the State and the medical profession over this decision. Luker makes the interesting point that women's different positions on abortion are related to different perceptions of their real interests stemming from different life choices. But in making it she fails to explore the qualitative difference between a dependent, defensive self-interest vested in maintaining male power and an independent self-interest in women gaining power over their own lives.

Although she notes that the abortion issue has been transformed to include a challenge to men's control over women's reproduction she does not deal with this new and real struggle for power in her analysis. Because she does not include men and male groups and organizations in her description of the debate she cannot deal with these central questions of power in her analysis.

She presents, instead, an essentially pressure group analysis of two parallel groups of women activists for whom rational behaviour would involve an attempt to "capture the middle ground" (228). This middle ground, she says, accepts both the "necessity" of abortion on a number of grounds and its policing by "society" and medical, parental and spousal authorities. Yet, strangely, neither group is following the logic of pressure group politics. Committment to the absolute personhood of the foetus or the absolute personhood of women is non-negotiable for each. Neither group is likely to "win" in the narrow terms within which Kristen Luker views the "debate." And yet the author's framework cannot encompass this possibility. Instead, she ascribes the lack of "calm and reasoned discourse" (244) and the apparently irrational group behaviour to the symbolic significance of this issue for women whose different life situations leave them vulnerable in different ways.

Despite her demonstration that women's position on abortion is closely related to their general world view, she does *not* examine the complex and central place of the debate in the general conservative/authoritarian, liberal/progressive and feminist political programmes that embody these world views. The most compelling political questions remain off bounds. How, for instance, did abortion become, for right-to-life-activists, a single issue overriding all other moral and life issues, including nuclear annihilation, war, oppression and poverty? And how has it become the linchpin, in both Canada and the U.S., of a mounting right wing attack on all progressive ideas? The recent Canadian federal election saw advertisements from anti-choice groups across the country urging support for the Conservative party even though it does not have a right-to-life policy. In the United States' election the issue was used to benefit Ronald Reagan.

The book, although repetitively written, provides a wealth of information about the early abortion debate and current female activists in California and is valuable on those grounds. But this information does not provide a sufficient basis for the political analysis that the book's title claims.

A. Rose

Island Women: Our Prose and Poetry. L. Brehaut, B. Epperley, G. King, L. Oughten, J.L. Turner. *Charlottetown: Ragweed Press, 1982. Pp. 128.*

The tough and innovative Ragweed Press again deserves praise for publishing yet another collection from local artists. This slim volume, *Island Women: Our Prose and Poetry,* contains poetry and prose by some forty-nine P.E.I.

women. The difference in ages of the contributors from early teens to late seventies reflects the broad selection of topics from landscape description to rape. While some women are familiar to the publishing world, several appear here in print for the first time. Alas, Ragweed has only gone part way in their job as publishers. Some five names appear on the title page, presumably as editors, but the volume remains very uneven and frustrating and a strong editorial hand is sorely missed. Several submissions should have been passed over and the decision to allow writers to write their own biographical sketch is doubtful. Some sketches use the first person; others seem to be written by some anonymous third person. The reader in search of an objective sense of the writers is severely handicapped. Also, one longs for some ordering of material. The collection would have benefited from groupings by age, by experience or by subject matter. One of these editorial decisions needed to be made.

Despite these problems with format, *Island Women: Our Prose and Poetry* offers some interesting reading. The variety of subjects and styles is stimulating. There are selections particularly about the Island in poetry and prose, and selections that reflect the different age groups that are found in the collection. There are four poems by Laura Compton and the variety of subject matter that she explores is very characterisic of the collection as a whole. Compton's "L.I.B.E.R.A.-T.I.O.N." celebrates the woman's movement, basing each stanza on a letter of the title. This poem is followed by a very different work, "Fishermen's Lament 1967." It recounts a happy day spent by fishermen of the Wood Islands Fleet, told from a fisherman's point of view. "Friend" follows and again tone, subject and style shift. "Keep on Smiling," the last selection by Compton, is unusual in this collection as it is several stanzas long. This poem humourously recreates a day in the life of the staff at the Pier 9 Restaurant. Despite irritated customers and leaking toilets, they must do what the title suggets.

Many different perspectives on Island life are offered here. One prose selection, "Island Savourings" by Evelyn Meader, explores each season on the Island while "They from Away," a poem by Evelyne MacLeod, suggests that the summer tourist can never understand life on he Island. A short poem, "Ex Farmer" by Leon Ross is a poignant portrait of the meaning of spring to a man who is no longer on the farm. Josephine Friesen's "The Harvest" describes a day on a farm during harvest time, stressing the woman's role. Although both men and women all do what they must do, a brutal summer storm destroys the harvest. The narrator of this prose selection, a young woman, describes how she watches her mother cry as the storm passes.

There are some promising young writers in this collection as well. Two high school students, Cynthia Harper and Tena Harris, are worth particular mention. The former has two poems; "Waste" comments on the potential tragedy in human relations and "Insanity" explores the different levels of reality. Tena Harris' "Cows" is a very different poem. While Harper struggles with sharp emotional questions, Harris lovingly celebrates the cow, apparently a pet she hopes to possess.

Perhaps the longest contribution is by Elaine Harrison who writes on a variety of subjects, using different styles. She writes about the island people, the seasons, Oscar Romero, and art, using different forms freely. Rene Horton has an excerpt from a play which is written in free style prose, light heartedly outlining the morning of a struggling young writer with her husband and children. Susan Malcom is preoccupied with bleaker subjects. "Child with Child" and "Rape" are very vivid portraits, with a penetrating social attack. Humour does dominate the collection, however. "The Cleanest Facial Tissues in Town," a prose piece by Marie Peters,

is one of the comic highlights. Peters outlines very common occurrences with gentle wit and warmth.

This collection, *Island Women: Our Prose and Poetry*, has some fine selections in prose and poetry. Unfortunately, again and again the reader longs for some logical arrangement by style or subject matter. Likewise, the biograhical sketches, while occasionally entertaining, are frustrating and annoying. Hopefully, the next time Ragweed undertakes a similar project, the Press will assume the responsibilities of editor and edit, organize and introduce the collection.

Complicity. Susan Glickman. *Montreal: Signal Editions (Vehicule Press), 1983.* p. 62.
Cankerville. Diane Dawber. *Ottawa: Borealis Press Ltd., 1984.*

In Susan Glickman's first collection of poems, *Complicity*, and in Diane Dawber's collection, *Cankerville*, modern preoccupations of the writer within her society are explored. The two poets speak from very different perspectives. While Glickman's milieu is a large urban centre and her poetry emphasizes the satisfactions and dissatisfactions of the lone female, Dawber writes from the base of a close rural community. Dawber's collection celebrates the strengths and weaknesses of the male and female neighbours as well as explores her own feelings about her mother's suicide. Both Dawber and Glickman share a similar poetic style, and both analyse the role of the artist in her society; however, the resulting two collections are radically different.

Complicity is organized under three sections. The first, *From the Balconey*, looks at the fact of single living from several points of view. Glickman explores the poet's feelings and thoughts within her own apartment as well as in a city of singles. This section also suggests the poet's search for some sort of understanding or meaning from family or community. "The Price of Stamps" suggests the poet's longing for written communication while "The Country of Old People" and "Oranges" reminisce about the role of parents and relatives. In the second section, *Cold Days*, the subject matter shifts. While the poet's sense of separateness persists, in *Cold Days* Glickman turns to male/female relationships. The poem with the section title appears to synthesize the poet's thoughts about men and relationships. She emphasizes the separateness and potenial feelings of desire as dominant characteristics in the single woman's dealings with different men. "Naming the Dragons," the final poem in this section, recounts a typical discussion of relationships and men, the dragon, by two women.

The final section, *Complicity*, offers a broader perspective. These poems, while still characterized by the single perspective, comment on the state of the world at large. Glickman sees a world of war and famine where only an illusion of peace persists. This pessimistic vision is softened by the poet's own quiet determination to continue to move on within her world. The three sections of *Complicity* offer perspectives on the life of a single woman in an urban setting. Glickman looks at life alone, relationships with men and the world at large in turn, and the resulting collection becomes not only a series of interesting poems but also a commentary on the life of the urban woman.

Glickman's voice in these poems is an agreeable one; here is an intelligent, literate woman trying, with general success, to communicate her particular vision in a language which is always accessible, and if seldom particularly striking, is also seldom banal. The opening story of "Naming The Dragons" suggests clearly the distinctive qualities of her poetry:

> Always the same silence.
> After nimble, defiant discussion of
> everything
> else-two women in a room at night
> inside the porcelain cup

of winter, two women working overtime
to understand their lives-
the word "men" hits the floor like a smoke bomb,
a grey perplexity in which we lose
our way.

Diane Dawber's style is in many respects similar to that of Glickman's. Again there is a detached intelligence at work that speaks with an accessible, yet distinctive voice. Characteristic are the opening lines of her mother's suicide:

I'm good at makings things,
repairing things, built this house but
it didn't do any good when she killed herself downstairs.
I've been building boats
getting better all the time
taking them out
at sunrise and sunset to fish
just afloat on the red water
safe in what I have made
solid wood, solid steel.

Cankerville explores the woman artist in a rural setting. The people of the community come alive in her poems. The opening poems serve as an introduction to the town and the following five sections are devoted to the people and events of this community. *Morning*, the first section, introduces different neighbours, such as the Cooks and the McGintocks and closes with a shift to a more introspective point of view. "Intrusion" introduces a secondary theme concerning the suicide of the poet's mother and the poet's reflections on this event. *Afternoon*, the second section, looks at different women, different areas and finally, different children. The arrangement of this section is effective in developing the poet's thoughts on this rural community. The reader is carefully drawn into this world and again the death of the mother is introduced in one poem, "It was a Near Thing." This poem, followed by a selection about children, such as the poet as school teacher remembering past pupils, emphasizes the importance of this early, even premature experience with death.

In the third section, *Evening*, the sense of darkness and terrors of life suggested in the earlier sections now becomes central. Dark memories from childhood, adolescent sex, illegitimacy, child abuse and death are topics. *Repercussions*, the following section, is devoted to the fact of her mother's suicide. The poet examines it from many sides and in conclusion is able to find some comfort, "Verification," by looking at her own young daughter. This section is followed by the final grouping, *The Breakaway*, in which death is again central. But, as though the poet has learned something through the other stories, death is presented as a fact of nature, an unavoidable part of life. The acceptance is suggested by the fact that death occurs here not as a result of human violence but of nature, the rising water of the local creek.

Glickman and Dawber are poets that write from personal experience, but the worlds that they move in are very different. The two collections *Complicity* and *Cankerville*, reflect two perspectives, one rural and one urban. While Glickman explores the individual in isolation, Dawber peoples her pages with several neighbours. The collections work together in an interesting manner and the role of the modern artist is seen in different contexts.

Falling From Grace. Elly Van de Walle. *Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1984. p. 49.*
Bernice: A Comedy in Letters. Georgia Jo Ressmeyer. *Chicago: Metis Press, 1984.*

The use of one dominant voice characterizes two very different works: Elly Van de Walle's *Falling From Grace* and Georgia Jo Ressmeyer's *Bernice*. Each work begins with a foreword and introduction and both writers move the reader through a specified period of time. The similarities cease when one considers the subject matter, style and tone. Walle's *Falling From Grace*, a