

# Association of Italian-Canadian Writers Newsletter

Bulletin de l'Association des écrivain(e)s italo-canadien(ne)s • Bollettino dell'Associazione scrittori/scrittrici italo-canadesi

No. 41

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**C**ari amici. Mancano poche settimane all'inizio della IX Conferenza Nazionale e mi auguro di incontrare molti di voi a Toronto nel corso delle giornate dei lavori e di poter insieme esaminare e decidere svolte significative per il futuro dell'associazione.

La nuova Costituzione è stata allegata a questo numero del bollettino per poter permettere a tutti i soci, anche a coloro che non parteciperanno alla Conferenza, di prenderne visione prima di ratificarla nel corso della Assemblea Generale.

La mia esperienza alla presidenza della ASSIC è stata stimolante, ricca di interesse e anche di soddisfazione nel vedere che gli obiettivi che ci eravamo prefissi con il direttivo sono stati raggiunti. Penso che si possa guardare al futuro con ragionevole fiducia, con idee e progetti che possono essere sviluppati contando sulla esperienza e la capacità dei nostri soci. Grazie di avermi dato l'opportunità di servire l'associazione.

Anna Foschi Ciampolini



## Culos' Book Launch a Great Success!

**A** ICW member Ray Culos introduced the second volume of his research entitled *Vancouver's Society of Italians, Volume II (1967-2001)* at *Vancouver's Italian Cultural Centre*, Tuesday, April 2, 2002.

An estimated 400 people attended the up-beat reception which featured guest speakers Giorgio Visetti, Consul General for Italy in BC and Alberta and Leonard Bruno the newly elected president of the Italian Cultural Centre Society.

Entertainment was provided by a 40-member choir – Il Coro Trevigiano-Veneto. The evening's sponsors provided finger food and red and white beverages with a familiar Italian flavour.


Ray Culos, introduced by Donatella Geller cultural director of the ICCS, was assisted by Anna Maria Zampieri Pan. Zampieri, who wrote the foreword to the book, translated Ray's remarks into Italian for the benefit of the largely partisan group.

With his eight-year-old granddaughter Julia in his arms, Culos remarked, "It's great to be Italian," to enthusiastic applause. Culos stated that he is proud to be a Canadian of Italian origin and credited his parents for motivating his interest in Italian culture and heritage. Moreover, he said, he was proud of those who had contributed to the well being of the Italian community, especially during the last 35 years. In particular he applauded the many volunteers who helped in the construction of the Italian Cultural Centre (1976/77).

The dustjacket of the book includes thumbnail photos of the 114 people interviewed for the 300-page hardcover book which contains 115,000 words and 400 photos. The book lists at \$50 but is being offered at \$39.95 plus \$2.80 GST.

Books can be ordered through Ray Culos at "mailto:raynet@axionet.com" or by fax, 604-298-6110.

**THE Dynamics OF CULTURAL Exchange** Creative and Critical Works



Edited by Licia Canton  
With an Introduction by Cristell Verduggi and Licia Canton

CUSMANGO

#41

## AICW Executive Nominaton form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ Tel (Bus.) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Position for which you wish to be nominated:

President \_\_\_\_\_ Vice-President \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary/Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter Editor \_\_\_\_\_ Editorial Board \_\_\_\_\_

**CONSENT:** I have read the Constitution of the Association and I support its goals. I have read the description of the duties of officers. I am a member in good standing. I agree that I may be called upon to do a two or three minute presentation at the General Business Meeting.

I have answered the questions below:

1. Securing funds is an important responsibility for the Executive Members. What role do you expect to play in this regard?
2. Are there any major challenges that you see AICW focusing on in the near future? How would you suggest the AICW meet these challenges?

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### AICW Executive Members

President: Anna Foschi Ciampolini

Vice-President: Licia Canton

Secretary/Treasurer: Delia De Santis

Newsletter Editor: Demmie Cusmano

Editorial Board: Elettra Bodon, Marisa De Franceschi, Venem Fazio, Joseph Pivato.

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The AICW Newsletter is published three times a year by the Association of Italian-Canadian Writers. The deadline for submissions for the next issue is August 15, 2002. Submissions are welcome in English, French and Italian, and should be sent to the editor (preferably by email at [dc@cusmano.com](mailto:dc@cusmano.com)) or to the following address (on diskette, with hard copy):

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The ideas and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of their authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editor, the Association or its members.

### ELECTION OF THE 2002-2004 EXECUTIVE: NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Election of the new AICW executive for 2002-2004 will be held during the IX Biennial AICW National Conference to be held in Toronto from May 24 to 27, 2002. Prior to the election, a Nominating Committee will be created to contact members interested in running as candidates and to oversee the election. The Committee will be comprised of three members, ideally representing eastern, central and western Canada respectively and by a member of the current executive who will act as liaison. Members interested in being part of the Nominating Committee are invited to contact Delia De Santis (see right).

### ELEZIONI DEL DIRETTIVO 2002-2004: COMITATO NOMINE

Le elezioni per il direttivo ASIC 2002-2004 si terranno nel corso della nona Conferenza nazionale che si svolgerà a Toronto dal 24 al 27 maggio 2002. Prima delle elezioni verrà formato un Comitato Nomine allo scopo di contattare i soci interessati a presentare la propria candidatura e provvedere quindi a formare una o più liste elettorali. Il Comitato sarà composto da tre soci, possibilmente in rappresentanza nelle zone dell'est, centro e ovest del Canada, e da un membro del Direttivo che agirà da "liaison". Il Direttivo AICW invita i soci interessati a far parte del Comitato a contattare Delia De Santis (vedi a destra).

### ÉLECTION DE L'EXÉCUTIF 2002-2004 : COMITÉ DE NOMINATION

L'élection du nouveau exécutif de l'AEIC se tiendra durant la neuvième conférence biennale nationale de l'AEIC qui aura lieu à Toronto du 24 au 27 mai, 2002. Avant l'élection, un Comité de Nomination sera formé dans le but de contacter les membres qui seraient intéressés à se présenter comme candidats, et pour organiser l'élection. Le comité sera formé de trois membres, idéalement représentant chaque région du Canada, soit l'est, le centre et l'ouest, et par un membre de l'exécutif sortant qui agira de liaison. Les membres intéressés à faire partie du Comité de Nomination sont invités à contacter Delia De Santis (voir à droite).

#### Moving?

Help us keep our mailing list up to date. If you are moving, kindly let us know!

#### Vous déménagez?

Aidez-nous à garder notre liste de membres à jour. Si vous déménagez, s'il vous plaît avisez-nous!

#### Traslocato?

Aiutateci a mantenere la nostra lista soci aggiornata. Se traslocate, per favore avvisateci!

### Gems of Wisdom: the Short Stories of Marisa De Franceschi An Interview by Venera Fazio

**M**arisa De Franceschi lives in Windsor, Ontario. She is the author of the novel *Surface Tension* (Guernica, 1994) and editor of the collections *Pillars of Lace* (Guernica, 1998) and *The Many Faces of Woman* (River City Press, 2002). Her short stories, articles, and book reviews have appeared in a number of anthologies and in a variety of Canadian publications including *Canadian Author and Bookman* and *Mystery Review*. She has twice been the recipient of the *Okanagan Short Story Award*. On March 4, 2002, I spoke to Marisa about her recently released short story collection *Family Matters* (Guernica, 2001).

I really enjoyed *Family Matters* and finished it in one sitting. The stories are absorbing, beautifully crafted, and the characters real enough to jump off the page.

You liked them that much? Thank you.

Reviewers have said you have a minimalist style. You use simple words and write in short sentences. I believe your prose is simple, but sharp and clear as cut crystal.

The English language has a huge vocabulary. You have to search and search for the right word. I can't tell you how many times I go over and over each of my stories. And I don't believe you have to use fancy words. You can use simple words to create complicated stories. With straightforward everyday language, you can evoke strong feelings and have the reader care about the characters.

The stories are narrated by a woman named Marlana and span her childhood, teen-age years, and into her middle age –

Yes ... years and years ago, I read Margaret Laurence's *A Bird in the House*. Ever since then, I have wanted, like Laurence, to write a collection of stories based on one central person. Through this character, I could explore different life stages. As well, writing about one person allowed me to delve into someone that may very well be a lot like my alter ego.

What is Marlana, your alter ego, like?

I believe she is inquisitive and sensitive. She wants to dig into whatever happens to her. She wants to know the "why" of everything. Many societies force women to be quiet and not discover truths. For instance, in the story "That Summer At Grandma's," Marlana says, "When you are a child, you passively accept what's thrown at you, I've learned. No questions asked.

Those come later. And the answers later still." These lines describe Marlana. She wants answers. She wants to uncover the truth about who she is and give meaning to her experiences.

Marlana is also very funny and wise. The funniest story in the collection is "For Better or For Worse." I laughed aloud at the part where Marlana's dad accidentally vacuums

*The English language has a huge vocabulary. You have to search and search for the right word.*

his testicles as he is removing epidermal scale off his pants. Most of your stories conclude with a gem of wisdom. For example, in the story I just mentioned ... in the last paragraph ... Marlana, in bed with her husband Michael, is unable to make love because the images of her father's "flaccid penis dangling from boxers, (his) skinny scrawny shoulders, chicken legs, knobby knees and elbows ..." intrude. She wonders if her dad had once been as robust as her husband is right now and becomes fearful of the future. To resolve her fears, Marlana bends over and kisses Michael. "This was the 'for better part,'" she decides. "If 'the worse' was programmed, so be it. I will retrieve these images, play them on my mind's screen. I will relive the good times."

You are onto something. You probably realized that each story expresses a moral. "Dancing on the Roof," is about the importance we all place on external looks. Marlana lives in a family with men who

*Families provide us with both our worst and our most exhilarating moments.*

resemble Clark Gable, Cary Grant, and Rock Hudson. Her mother was "a man's woman, rounded out in all the right places," whereas Marlana is constantly ridiculed because she has hairy, toothpick legs and breasts the size of a "couple of hard peas." She dates the equally homely John, but unlike her family, she sees and values what is inside of him, his kindness and gentleness.

"That Summer at Grandma's" is about the power of denial. Neighbours of Marlana's grandmother take in two foster children for

mercenary reasons. They treat the children worse than their dogs. The two children are kept tied to a pole and fed out of bowls. The dogs have shelter and the children do not. The foster parents spend the money Social Services provide for the care of the children on booze. All the adults in the neighbourhood ignore the abuse. Marlana is the only one who cares enough to make a plan to rescue the children. Ironically, it is Marlana's grandmother who sells the foster parents their liquor—

"The T-Shirt Man" is also a strong tale of morality. In it, you explore the themes of rich/poor and black/white. The story is set in the Caribbean islands and is told from the points of view of Marlana and the native who sells her a T-shirt. Marlana and the T-Shirt Man become obsessed with each other. At the end of the story, Marlana comes to realize it "was she who should be ashamed. Ashamed of her whiteness and all the luck it had brought her. Ashamed of her power to come and usurp him and his island." Are there any other common themes?

Yes, I need to mention it is about family matters, family relationships. Families provide us with both our worst and our most exhilarating moments.

Where do you find inspiration for your stories?

In every day life. For example, the idea of exploring the power of denial for "That Summer At Grandma's" came from an incident that happened to me. One day, when I was driving my car into my driveway, I was side swiped by another vehicle. While I was still sitting in my car, in shock, I saw my neighbour looking out at me from her window.

Afterwards, I spoke to her and asked if she had seen that other car hit me. Plain as day, she said, "No." She denied she ever saw the accident. A long time ago, before this incident, I was driving out in the country and saw two children tied up to a pole. You can see how these two events merged into that short story.

What are the elements of an effective short story?

You have to surprise the reader, make him/her wonder what is happening in the story. Then, you pull the story along and end with something that is also unexpected. Sometimes the biggest surprise is the truth.

**D**onna Caruso, a documentary filmmaker of Italian descent, lives in Saskatchewan's beautiful Qu'Appelle Valley, under blue skies and puffy clouds that remind her of the best of Michaelangelo's church ceilings. Desperately rooted in her Italian culture, Donna makes award-winning films and videos rich in sumptuous images; films and videos which tell stories with a personal intimacy that heals and heartens. Donna's films and videos have won international awards. Among her titles are, *Doll Hospital*, Rhode Island Film Festival, 1998, and *CanPro*, 1998; *Twixt Heaven And Earth*, Montana International Wildlife Film Festival, 1999, and *Columbus International Film Festival*, 1998.

Working in the arts for over twenty years as a writer, performer, and filmmaker, Donna's first book of short stories, *Under Her Skin*, was published in the fall of 1999, and has spawned a one-woman stage play, *Grace Before Meals*. *Under Her Skin* is published by Thistledown Press Ltd., 633 Main Street, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7H 0J8, (306) 244-1722.

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**L**o scrittore e giornalista Ermanno La Riccia è nato in Italia ed è emigrato in Canada nel 1952. Parallelamente alla sua professione di Ingegnere, ha svolto nel passato e continue a svolgere una intensa attività nel campo giornalistico e delle lettere. È stato collaboratore di numerosi giornali tra cui i quotidiani "Il Progresso Italo-Americano" di New York; il "Mezzogiorno" di Roma; dei settimanali "la Verità", "Il Corriere del Quebec", "Il Cittadino Canadese", "La Tribuna Italiana", "La Voce del Popolo", "Insieme". Attualmente è editorialista de "Il Corriere Italiano" e Corrispondente da Montreal del "Messaggero di Sant'Antonio". Poeta e scrittore, alcune sue poesie sono state pubblicate da vari giornali e due di esse figurano nell'Antologia della "Poesia Italiana del Quebec" pubblicata anni fa a Montreal. Ha scritto due libri: "Terra Mia" e "Viaggio in Paradiso": uno dei racconti, apparso nel libro "Viaggio in Paradiso", dal titolo "La Gelataia di Londra" ha vinto il primo premio Internazionale di narrativa Emigrazione con medaglia d'oro indetto dal comune di Pratola Peligna in collaborazione con il Ministero degli Esteri, del giornale "L'Emigrante" e la Regione Abruzzo. Attualmente è Direttore di una scuola di lingua italiana del Sabato, "Pierre De Coubertin", organizzata dal PICAL. Molto attivo nel campo della cultura; è stato Direttore del Comitato Culturale della Federazione delle Associazioni Molisane del Quebec. Ha scritto e diretto come regista alcune commedie musicali rappresentate dal Coro Alpino di Montreal di cui è membro del Consiglio Direttivo.

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**M**y name is Connie Guzzo-McParland. I caught the writing bug only a few years ago, even though I have always been interested in the study of literature. Twenty-five years ago, I obtained a B.A. degree from Concordia University with a major in Italian Literature; however, because of personal circumstances, I followed non-academic pursuits. I worked as a hairstylist, a vocational teacher, and a business operator. Presently, I own and operate a small chain of hair salons specifically oriented to children. Three years ago, to relax from business pressures, I took a writing workshop at Vanier College. I enjoyed it immensely and went on to complete the Creative Writing program at Concordia University. I have decided to continue on at Concordia in the Masters program. Like many new writers, I started by writing short stories based on personal experiences. After my first workshop, I submitted a short personal essay to *Canadian Living* magazine. To my great surprise, it was published (May 1999 issue).

At the university workshops, I discovered that my style is best suited to writing novels. Currently, I'm working on a novel that draws on my experiences growing up in Montreal as an Italian immigrant. (I came to Canada from Calabria in 1957.) The main characters of my novel are people caught up in the reality of Montreal life during the sixties and seventies, but carrying the baggage of memories from another time and place.

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**M**y name is Eufemia Fantetti. I'm the second-generation daughter of two Molisans. I was born and raised in Toronto and moved to BC to study Theatre & Creative Writing at university, and much to my parents' disappointment, I've stayed out west.

I've written and produced a few plays, among them *The Last Moon*, *An Italian Tale*, *The Waiting Room* and *It's All the Rage*.

I've been published as a playwright and short-story writer in a number of anthologies. "The Curse" (short story) appeared in the anthology *eye wuz here*. "The Last Moon" (play) was published in the anthologies, *Contemporary Canada*, and *Concrete Daisy & Other Plays*.

I've had every odd job one can to support myself as an actress/writer. Recently I started working at *L'Eco d'Italia*, BC's Italian language newspaper. I've been able to reconnect with the Italian community, which has been like the missing link for me in my time out west. I started a column called "Daughter of Italy" which I hope to expand into a collection of essays.

It seems I'm always juggling three things at once, but I've learned that that seems the only way I get anything done...

## L'Amore per l'identità

Three days after St. Valentine's and still basking in its spirit, a group of artists and writers got together at the new Leonardo Da Vinci Center in St. Leonard (Quebec) to celebrate love in all its dimensions, with particular emphasis on the love of identity. The event, organised by the Association of Italian Canadian Writers and the Servizi Comunitari Italo-Canadesi del Quebec, drew an audience of over 150 people, a much larger number than was hoped for by its organizers, this being the first attempt at such a pairing of the organizations.

Anna Campagna, President of the Servizi Comunitari, welcomed everyone. She spoke of the role of her association within the community, and the need for the community to cooperate in such joint efforts in the spirit of Leonardo Da Vinci, undoubtedly present in the crowd surrounded by the circular wall of the sunlit room, adorned by the vibrant colors and landscapes of the art work on display. Licia Canton, Vice-President of the Association of Italian Canadian Writers, spoke at length about the Association.

What made the day so successful from the point of view of the participants as well as the spectators was the happy mix of talent that was displayed: poetry, prose writing, visual art, music and song.

Who better to open the discussion on love than the poets? Gaetano Mariano read sensitively in Italian; Emilio Francescucci's reading about romantic love was very lyrical in French, warm and evocative in Abruzzese and Italian. Ermanno La Riccia paid tribute to his Molisano roots by also reading in his dialect and added a humorous note with a dialogue between an immigrant husband and wife suffering the pains of separation from each other, especially felt by the wife at night.

Anna Maria Zaidmain ended the poetry readings with a poem written especially for the occasion, in French and Italian, exalting the love of Italian identity grounded on Canadian soil, which makes us both unique and universal.

All of the poets were softly accompanied by the music of harpist Véronique Couturier.

Connie-Guzzo McParland read from the prologue of a novel-in-progress in which she described a sunny Palm Sunday in



a village in Calabria, as she remembered it, on the brink of mass immigration.

The day also saw the launch of the Italian translation of a book by Shulamis Yelin, *Una Infanzia Yiddish a Montreal*. Licia Canton read an excerpt from the book.

The visual artists were given the opportunity to say a few words about the vision of their art. Benedetta Pignataro chose to express her love of her Tuscany landscapes through a poem, "Io ho un sogno"; Renée Pompa's paintings have a broader European scope; young Vittorio Ugolini's abstract images are meant to mean different things to different people, while Salvatore Gaetano is clearly inspired by his Sicilian upbringing; Angelo Querin Pivetta shows love of detail whether in the portrait of a young man or sea gulls, and Aldo Pomaro's unique display of papier maché masks was whimsical and colorful.

The presentations were crowned at the end by Giovanni Lombardi's rendition of the song, "Tu che mi hai preso il cuor".

The crowd was clearly appreciative of the artistic tenor of the proceedings and mingled and chatted with each other over tea, biscuits, fruits and nuts. Everyone cheered at Anna Campagna's promise to repeat the event next year.

The committee that helped Anna and Licia organize the day was led by Rosalia Fata, Director of the Servizi Comunitari, and composed of Nancy Rossi, Connie Guzzo-McParland and Luigi Spadari.

Connie Guzzo-McParland

Visit the official web site of the AICW at  
[www.aicw.ca](http://www.aicw.ca)



**Huitzilopechtlì e altre storie di Erminio G. Neglia (Bari, Uniongrafica Corcelli Editrice, 2001) (Recensione)**

Il titolo di questo libro ci dice qualcosa del suo autore. La prima parte (per me impronunciabile) testimonia dell'interesse di Neglia per la letteratura iberoamericana, un interesse che data da lungo tempo, tanto da farla scegliere come argomento della sua tesi di laurea. La seconda parte - e, in particolare, la parola «storie», evoca il racconto orale, fa pensare a una persona curiosa dei fatti della vita, attenta al possibile significato di atteggiamenti, di avvenimenti, di parole a prima vista banali.

L'attenzione è concentrata su uno, due personaggi; la descrizione è minima; il

lettore si trova immerso in quello che sembra essere un momento della «storia», momento che spesso presuppone un prima e un dopo dall'episodio raccontato.

Diverse quasi una dall'altra per argomento, queste «storie» sono unificate dallo stile dell'autore, capace di rimanere fedele al proprio modo di scrivere sia quando il soggetto è strettamente realista che quando esso sfuma nel surreale.

Due storie, «Gli angeli» e «Una esperienza indimenticabile di campeggio», si staccano dalle altre; in esse l'elemento fantastico apre a un piano diverso, alleggerisce, fa spuntare il sorriso. Sembra di poter dire che è in questa direzione che Neglia dà il meglio di sé, permettendosi di passare dalla «storia» al racconto.

Elettra Bedon

**The Many Faces of Woman. Marisa De Franceschi, Ed. Sarnia, Ontario: River City Press, 2001. 143 pp. \$24.95 sc. (Review).**

*The Many Faces of Woman* is a unique volume of poetry and prose by six women from Southern Ontario: Delia De Santis, Venera Fazio, Peggy Fletcher, Norma West Linder, Hope Morrith and Carmen Ziolkowski. The collection includes twelve poems and twelve short stories. Editor Marisa De Franceschi, who demonstrated her editorial skills with *Pillars of Love: The Anthology of Italian-Canadian Women Writers*, has found a remarkable way to blend prose and verse: a poem introduces the theme of the story which follows.

These are stories that many readers, especially women, will identify with. They are about the relationships in our lives, the long-lasting intense ones as well as the new hopeful ones; and they are about making amends with the past in order to move towards the future. The collection features diverse but profound writing, which keeps the reader thinking long after (s)he has put the book down. The title, *The Many Faces of Woman*, refers to the subject matter and to the talented contributors whose creative expression is inspired by their many roles in daily life. This collection is an original initiative and a welcome addition to Canadian writing.

Licia Canton

**New Publications**

- Bedon, Elettra. "Veneto", in *Dialect Poetry of Northern & Central Italy, Texts and Criticism: A Trilingual Anthology*. Legas, Brooklyn, New York, 2001. pp. 287-359.
- Caccia, Fulvio. *Republic Denied: The Loss of Canada*. trans. Domenic Cusmano. Toronto: Guernica, 2002.
- Carducci, Lisa. *Pays inconnu / Paese sconosciuto*. Ottawa, Les Éditions David, 2002. (poesie).
- Carducci, Lisa. *Talking About China*. 2002.
- Carducci, Lisa. *Propos d'une étrangère en Chine*. 2002.
- Castellini, N. A. *Cina e dintorni*. Montreal: Losna And Tron, 2002. 151 pages.
- Catalano, Francis. *M'atterres* (oeuvre poétique).
- De Franceschi, Marisa. *Family Matters*. Toronto: Guernica. 2002. (short stories)
- De Franceschi, Marisa, ed. *The Many Faces of Woman*. River City Press, 2002. (Short stories by women in southern Ontario, including Delia De Santis, Venera Fazio, and Carmen Ziolkowski.)
- Francescucci, Emilio. *Échos du silence*. Répontigny: Carrefour de Poésie de Lanaudière, 2002.
- Lariccia, Ermanno. *La Padrona*. Montreal: Lex Libris, 2001.
- Scambray, Kenneth. *The North American Italian Renaissance*. Toronto: Guernica, 2000.



## A Warm Italian Breeze on a Blustery Manitoban Evening

This is the best way to describe the evening Caterina Edwards provided for the crowd who braved the first storm of the winter to come and hear readings from her collection of writing.

The Dante Alighieri Cultural Society of Winnipeg, in collaboration with the Sons of Italy, Lupa di Roma Women's Lodge and the Centro Caboto, invited Caterina through the Canada Council Reading Program. Caterina was especially invited to the new Italian-Canadian Cultural Centre for March 8th, International Women's Day. As president of the Dante, I opened the evening with a few remarks on the historical importance and current need to commemorate March 8th around the world.

Caterina Edwards then launched the evening with readings from her newest book of short stories *Island of the Nightingales*. She also read from her contributions in the anthologies *Eating Apples* and *Wrestling with the Angel*.

The following day Caterina returned to Centro Caboto to meet the nearly 100 students ages 3 to 18 who attend the Dante Alighieri Italian School. They were there to meet a "real, live author" – a first for many of these bright-faced youngsters. They had their questions ready in English and Italian and, after Caterina's presentation, they bombarded her with the "whys" and "why nots" of being an author. The majority had already discovered the magical power of words, but were surprised to hear of the need for our and their stories to be told.

The smiles on the faces of the students, teachers and parents in attendance clearly demonstrated the importance of the Canada Council Reading program and the positive impact it can have in the life of Canadians of all ages.

Caterina M. Buetti Sotiriadis



Photographs taken during readings by Caterina Edwards at UBC and the Italian Centre in Vancouver, February 27, 2002. Left: Luisa Canuto, Department of Italian Studies at UBC, Romano Peticarini, Donatella Geller, Cultural Director of the Italian Centre, Anna Foschi, Genni Gunn.

*Cina e dintorni*. N. A. Castellini. (Montreal: Losna And Tron, 2002, 151 pages) (Review)

In this collection of short stories N. A. Castellini gives us a view of China and its surroundings. I read each story with pleasure. The language is elegant, reminding me of the Italian of my school days. However, the author sprinkles in some English phrases.

Castellini's style has a special lilt; the author makes the reader ponder and analyze the depth of each story. He begins his stories in a light vein; therefore, the hard-to-take ending always comes as a surprise, almost like a punch in the face.

The most poignant example is "Monkey Face", which is narrated in an almost jestful mood and is about women

and the different kinds of beauty – and the way we have been brought up to assess it. The main character has the courage to search for beauty of a different kind, though in the end he is overcome by what he learns. Not all that glitters is gold. He feels betrayed and wonders whether he shouldn't subscribe to his mother's assessment of beauty.

The story which will always remain with me is "Taxi Driver", a story narrated in the first person. The conflict and the horror could be felt from the very first paragraph. The character is caught in a no-win situation. It takes place during the Tiananmen Square events.

This book is well worth reading. It takes us into another culture, and the reader will enjoy the people portrayed because Castellini is kind to his characters.

Carmen Ziolkowski

**Transcending Difference: Montreal Educators, Response To Diversity (ABSTRACT):** Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, Doctor of Philosophy, 2002.

At the heart of this inquiry are eight Montreal educators and their teaching experiences in multicultural schools and classrooms. These female and male practitioners represent different racial, ethnic, linguistic and class groups, and a range of teaching experience. This study considers how their understanding of diversity shapes and informs their teaching practices in the specific socio-political, cultural and linguistic venue of Montreal, Quebec.

My theoretical framework brings together the work of established scholarship, and examines contributions to the issues of language, culture, and identity, as they impact multicultural education and the learning and teaching environment in schools. This qualitative inquiry is guided by my own multicultural awareness as a bicultural Canadian and an educational researcher. I use case study methodology as a form of inquiry within qualitative research, collecting field notes from various sources, and searching for stories that provide insight into the educators, wisdom and practical knowledge. The teachers' stories reveal the knowledge, attitudes, skills, awareness, and values that contribute to dialoguing across difference, and provide us with an image of what a multicultural educator might look like.

The overarching theme of this study is the potential fusion between educational theory and classroom practice. The educators profiled offer a framework for communicating and relating to pluralistic learning and teaching environments, and open the possibility for meaningful dialogue about diversity in classrooms, schools, and the community at large. In affirming the harmony of cultures in their schools, the teachers breathe life into new multicultural spaces where cultures intersect, and where new forms of understanding are created. Several themes emerge in this study: the educators' changing role in a multicultural teaching environment, dialoguing with "other" and the rewards and challenges of providing equitable educational opportunities for all students. Given the shifting racial and cultural composition of Canada's

population, education must prepare students and teachers for life in a multicultural society. Teacher education programs must evolve to address the needs of changing racial and cultural student populations, and engage teachers in learning experiences to enhance their effectiveness in multicultural classrooms. The study concludes with recommendations for integrating multicultural perspectives in teacher education.

Gina Valle

***The Dynamics of Cultural Exchange***. Licia Canton, Ed. Montreal: Cusmano Communications, 2002. 265 pp. \$18.00 sc.

*The Dynamics of Cultural Exchange* is a remarkable collection of critical essays and creative works – short stories, poetry, and drama – in English, French and Italian. One of the pleasures of reading this collection is the variety of themes and styles it encompasses. A number of topics recur, such as the challenges of language and translation, relations between the generations, history and memory, and the persistent theme of identity.

*The Dynamics of Cultural Exchange* is an important contribution to Canadian multiethnic studies. The dynamics of cultural exchange, this collection proposes, occur between writers and artists, not only of Italian descent but of other cultural heritages as well. This volume represents a bridging of the arts and a bridging of cultures; it evokes an encounter among artists (writers, painters, musical performers and filmmakers) from across Canada and the Atlantic, who work in many forms and who are influenced by many languages and cultures.

Christl Verduyn and Licia Canton introduce the works of well-established, and lesser-known, writers and critics: Ralph Alfonso, Lam Balboni, Elettra Bodon, Fulvio Garcia, Frank Canino, Anna Carlevaris, Francis Catalano, Giovanni Costa, Domenic Cusmano, Sara D'Agostino, Marisa De Franceschi, Della De Santis, Mary di Michele, Venera Fazio, Celyne Fortin, Anna Foschi Ciampolini, Giuliana Gardellini, Sergio Gilardino, Gabriella Jacobucci, Francesca L'Orfano, Antonino Mazza, Carmelo Militano, Gianna Patriarca, Joseph Pivato, Juliana Pivato, Joseph Ranallo, Filippo Salvatore, Francesca Schembri, Caterina Buoti Sotiriadis, Luigi Spadari, Verena Stefan, Bruno Villata, Carmen Lucrezia Ziolkowski and Jim Zucchero.