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JOAN FINNIGAN: AN ESSAY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

by

M. CATHARINE CARROLL, B.A.

**A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of**

Master of Arts

Department of English

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

30 September 1999

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ABSTRACT

Although Ottawa Valley writer Joan Finnigan has been writing steadily for many years, virtually no critical analysis of her works exists. This thesis paper therefore examines the writer's works with a view to creating an awareness of their volume and variety. The thesis paper comprises an essay and a descriptive bibliography (including selected reviews) of the writer's published works from 1957 to 1999.

The essay focuses on the interrelated genres of poetry and prose (oral history and fiction), while the accompanying bibliography provides an overview of Finnigan's published writings. Also included are appendices describing relevant library holdings, awards and recognitions, plays, as well as film, television and radio productions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I wish to acknowledge and thank Joan Finnigan, whose writings provided the inspiration for this project. When I interviewed the writer during 1998 and 1999 at her farmhouse at Hambly Lake, north of Kingston, she welcomed me with grace and hospitality, and was eager to answer my questions. She also gave me access to her personal papers which were consulted in the preparation of this thesis paper.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Michael Gnarowski of the English Department, Carleton University, for sharing his time, expertise and more important, for his encouragement. I also wish to thank Dr. Larry McDonald, Chair of the English Department, Carleton University, for his enthusiasm for this project and for making my transition into the Graduate Program possible.

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METHODOLOGY

The thesis paper consists of an essay (Part A) and a bibliography (Part B), including excerpts from selected reviews, of Joan Finnigan's works from the earliest to the most recent publication (1957 - 1999). Although contributions to anthologies and other publications, as well as newspaper and magazine articles, may be cited in Part A, they are not dealt with extensively either in that section, or in Part B.

Part A consists of a discussion of major elements in Finnigan's poetry and prose (oral history and fiction). Although she has written works in several other genres, one of the main assertions of the present work is that her poetry, oral histories and fiction are closely interrelated, which accounts for the critical emphasis in Part A. Poetry, in turn, receives the most attention because it emerges as the writer's most consistent genre in a somewhat eclectic body of work.

Most of the biographical information in Part A was culled from interviews (cassette recordings are included with the original copy of the thesis) with the writer at her home on Hambly Lake, north of Kingston, which took place during 1998 and 1999. Other sources of biographical and literary information include the writer's curriculum vitae, as well as her personal collection of literary magazines, newspapers and popular magazines containing her writings. All other sources of information used in Part A are documented in notes and as additional works consulted.

The bibliography is based on the model in Fraser Sutherland's 1984 work, *John Glassco: An Essay and Bibliography*. It is included as Part B because it is an

integral part of the thesis, representing the first comprehensive bibliography of Joan Finnigan's published works. Part B is divided into poetry and prose, but unlike Part A, the prose section includes oral history, fiction, children's books and literary miscellany. Each section, in turn, is ordered chronologically.

The specifics of Part B are as follows: titles are transcribed exactly as they appear in the publications (this also holds true for Part A), major sections in collections of poetry are printed in small caps and bolded, while sub-sections are printed in small caps; individual poems which appear in more than one published collection are cross-referenced and finally, any irregularities or anomalies in individual poems or collections are explained in a note. As well, poems written by Finnigan to which she accorded the same title, but different text, are differentiated in a note. Accompanying the bibliography are excerpts from selected reviews, many of which were included in the author's personal papers. As well, an additional reference source for reviews was the *Canadian Periodical Index*.

Finally, to provide further clarification, listings of library holdings, awards, recognitions and media productions are included as appendices.

PART A: THE WORKS OF JOAN FINNIGAN

INTRODUCTION

In September 1997, while researching Irish influences on Ottawa Valley literature, I came across Joan Finnigan's retold oral history *Some of the stories I told you were true*. While I knew that Finnigan had written extensively on the Ottawa Valley, I had no idea of how prolific and diverse her literary career has been. When I decided to undertake additional research, I discovered that there was virtually nothing written on her. So, with the encouragement of Carleton University's reference librarian, Janice Scammell, I set out to compile a descriptive bibliography of the writer's published works. While working on the project, I became intrigued by the diversity of Finnigan's writings and decided to write the explanatory essay which prefaces the bibliography.

Joan Finnigan's literary reputation has been largely based on her recording and publishing of the Ottawa Valley oral histories -- the stories, anecdotes and folktales told by the "old timers." Not so readily known, however, is the fact that she wrote the award-winning screenplay *The Best Damn Fiddler From Calabogie to Kaladar*, the plays *Wintering Over* and *Songs From Both Sides of the River*, which have played at the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, respectively, as well as the long poems *Entrance to the Greenhouse*, *In the Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake* and "May Day Rounds: Renfrew County." Over the course of some thirty years, she has published almost thirty books of poetry, oral histories, fiction,

childrens' books, as well as literary miscellanies; this figure does not take into account the large output of writings for newspapers and magazines, both in Canada and abroad.

While the writer acknowledges the fact of diversity, she contends that most of her works were labours of love which were born of the creative process and then sold; still others were commissioned works and, finally, there were works written for purposes of income. When publisher and friend Jack McClelland told Finnigan that she was too profuse a writer, it caused her to ponder the matter. She explains,

I believe that I diversified to survive. If I had gone at a genre in a single manner, my life would have been different. I really do believe that I would have concentrated on fiction and poetry. I might have done more children's literature, especially for my grandchildren. Diversification diluted [my work] but [I did it] to survive.¹

Following her husband's death in 1965, Finnigan was adamant about working at home to stay with her children; such determination, coupled with financial considerations, required that she diversify her writings. In addition to the literary works discussed in this paper, Finnigan also engaged in journalism writing for newspapers and magazines, and worked as a freelance writer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).

In the introduction to Finnigan's most recent collection of poetry, *Second Wind*; *Second Sight*, she reveals that poetry, her "primary steadfast genre,"² has been the one constant in an eclectic body of work. She has been writing steadily since age nine when she began to write verse and, to a lesser extent, fiction. Although she may not have been

aware of it at the time, writing allowed her to escape the tension surrounding her parents' marriage -- a tension which permeated the household. Such escapism became a hallmark of Finnigan's writing in that she used it as a way to cope with personal tragedy, including unhappy familial relationships and the deaths of loved ones. However, she now realizes with a touch of irony that "even the death of a loved one is part of the fullness of life" (SWSS, 9).

Finnigan also muses extensively on art in the introduction, commenting on aesthetics, influences and the creative impulse. As the following comments demonstrate, she also understands, first hand, the relationship between art and emotional repression:

Healthy people express their emotions on the spot. When they are angry they yell it out immediately. When they are hurt, they turn at once upon the hurt inflictor. When they have grief they weep until the time for weeping is done. Unhealthy people fail to have this mechanism for salvation; they have to find outlets, sublimations, substitutes in many places, many ways, including art. Hence the value of art, all art, as positive surrogate for the real thing. (SWSS, 9)

Throughout her life, art has helped Finnigan to cope with life's uncertainties and has allowed her to use the artistic impulse to respond to unfortunate circumstances in a creative, rather than destructive, fashion.

While Finnigan wrote poetry in response to misfortune, she also wrote poems which rejoice in the beauty and mystery of life, specifically nature and children. The solace that she found in nature and the joy that she received from her children are related to a philosophy which views nature as a conduit to the divine and procreation as

providing transcendental continuity. The writer has lived long enough to reap the rewards of motherhood, and counts herself fortunate to have reached the stage where understanding, acceptance and accessing new sources of creativity are the dominant themes. She states, "But our later years are not necessarily without second, or even third wind that might bless us through change, and risk, and growth, wrought by new friends, new relationships, and the joy of becoming part of the lives of our grandchildren" (*SWSS*, 8 - 9).

When Finnigan was in her mid-forties, her personal celebration of the rejuvenating properties of the landscape was translated into a public celebration of the cultural landscape of the Ottawa Valley; subconsciously, she may have realized that relinquishing the personal would allow her writing to explore more universal themes, and acquire additional credibility. Her writings therefore began to explore the regional landscape of her childhood as a way to define her identity and, ultimately, to define the Canadian identity.

One of Finnigan's greatest achievements, and one of her greatest challenges, has been to utilise Canada, specifically the Ottawa Valley, as a literary setting. Beginning with the Ottawa Valley long poems, the poet blends art and history, as she charts the early settlement of the Ottawa Valley, focussing on the extraordinary vision of the settlers and their development of a new world tradition. As Finnigan chronicled this new world tradition, she was struck by the wealth of regional culture and, at the same time, was alarmed at the possibility that it could vanish without ever being set down. This epiphany led her to record the oral history of the Ottawa Valley -- that wonderful amalgam of tall

tales, anecdotes, humour, folklore, myth and historical fact, which is particular to the region.

The oral history project was a monumental undertaking, requiring that Finnigan interview, transcribe and edit hundreds of interviews. She knew, however, that if she didn't commit herself wholeheartedly to the venture, then the storytelling tradition might be lost forever. The oral histories brought to light forgotten folk tales and heroes and inspired other artists to examine the local landscape; the result was an unprecedented flowering of regional culture which has continued unabated to the present day. Some fine examples of regional works include Pat and Rosemarie Keough's gorgeously photographed *The Ottawa Valley Portfolio* (1986) and Steve Evans's photographic realism in *Up the Line* (1989) and *The Back Forty* (1990). The fascinating history and people of the Ottawa Valley have been succinctly chronicled by Carol Bennett in *Valley Irish* (1983), *Renfrew County People & Places* (1989), *The Lanark County Society Settlers* (1991) and *People of St. Patrick's* (1993) as well as by Brenda Lee-Whiting in *The Way It Was in the Ottawa Valley* (1992).

The oral history project was also a prime factor in the writer's decision to try her hand at fiction. For years she had been telling stories in her poetry; however, while recording the oral histories, it occurred to her that they were essentially short stories. Therefore, when she began writing fiction, she used the oral histories as a base -- several of the short stories are oral histories retold by Finnigan, while others are anecdotes from oral history interviews which she embellished. At the same time, the life stories told by the old timers prompted her to write autobiographical short stories, while others are

composites of oral histories and autobiographical material. The common denominator of each genre, however, is that the story told forms the basis of the narrative. Perhaps, in the final analysis, the key to understanding Finnigan's commitment to literature is her lifelong fascination with the storytelling process. Beginning with the early autobiographical poems, to the long poems on regional landscape and its history, to the oral histories, told by men and women in their own words, to the fictional narratives, storytelling is the one constant in an eclectic body of work. The following lines from Finnigan's unpublished manuscript, *Aphorisms & Absolutes*, may provide the best assessment to date of a varied and prolific literary career:

Every life is a story, some told, some untold.

Every life, long or short, is a pilgrimage.

Every story you enter becomes a rediscovery that

you are not alone: for ultimately story-telling

binds together all the pilgrims on the road to Compostela³.

BIOGRAPHY

Maye Horner, schoolteacher, and Frank “The Shawville Express” Finnigan, professional hockey player, were married in Aylmer, Quebec in 1923. Maye was a member of the established Horner family, which had settled in the Ottawa Valley in the mid eighteen-hundreds, while Frank represented the boisterous Finnigan clan who “came in from the bogs / and sties of southern Ireland.”⁴ Two years into the marriage, Helen Joan, the eldest of five children, was born on 23 November 1925.

The Finnigans’ marriage was a clash of two strong personalities; as a result, there was sometimes tension in the family home, a tension which stemmed from the gap between Maye Horner Finnigan’s conservatism and Frank Finnigan’s colourful, public persona. According to Finnigan, her father was always “on” when in public. He had a charisma and a celebratory status which attracted people and prompted them to treat him as if he were an old friend. Mrs. Finnigan, however, did not like the perception that her husband was public property. The writer recalls,

My mother was a sterling, fine, beautiful, incredible woman but she was hard to like. My father was instantly easy to like. People saw him as a hero, but at home we had a different perspective. My mother couldn’t cope with the ‘entertainer’ as a husband. The entertainer is really hard to live with (28 July 1998).

The Finnigan household was stocked with books and by the age of nine young Joan had read all of them, including the murder mysteries and romances which her mother had hidden away in various corners of the house. By the time she enrolled at

Lisgar Collegiate Institute in Ottawa, she was writing not only poetry, but also essays and stories. In 1943, she was named editor of *Vox Lycei*, Lisgar Collegiate Institute's yearbook. The edition featured an editorial history, several poems and humorous essays by the aspiring writer.

Following her graduation in 1945, Finnigan taught for a year in an eight-grade, one-room schoolhouse, up the Pontiac at Beechgrove, Quebec. In September 1946, she entered the journalism program at Carleton University in Ottawa, and completed one and one-half years before being hired as general reporter for the *Ottawa Journal*. She was hired on the basis of an editorial originally written for the *Vox Lycei* and printed in the *Ottawa Journal*, as well as pieces written for the Carleton University newspaper. Also during this period, she continued to write poetry which was frequently published in the city newspaper.

After entering the Faculty of Arts at Queen's University in 1949, Finnigan won two scholarships in English Literature and worked on the *Queen's Journal*. While there, she met Grant Mackenzie, a young medical student, who also wrote poetry. The two married in 1949 and shortly thereafter, Finnigan left school to work as a freelance writer for magazines and newspapers to help support her husband's medical studies. Not only did she write literary criticism and book reviews, she also sold feature articles on such varied subjects as child care, cats, weather predictions, mental illness, the education system and "junk playgrounds." At the same time, she continued to write poetry and fiction, the latter often based on stories told by her husband about his experiences as a psychiatrist-in-training.

Finnigan has written countless poems, essays, editorials and articles which have been featured in such diverse publications as the *New York Times*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Star Weekly*, the *Ottawa Journal*, the *Farmer's Advocate and Canadian Countryman*, *Maclean's*, *ThisMag*, *Chatelaine Magazine*, *Chatterley*, *Parents' Magazine* and *Modern Baby*. Two articles, however, which the writer considers "landmarks" were written for *Chatelaine Magazine*. The first one argued that Canada's abortion law⁵ was archaic and inhumane, and put women's lives at risk. Although the article prompted controversy, compared with contemporary pro-choice attitudes, the argument articulated within is moderate; the incident, however, is indicative of the writer's willingness to raise issues she feels strongly about, no matter how hostile the political climate. The second article expressed Finnigan's belief "that a mother's place is in the home with her children, that child-rearing, without any exception, is the most important profession in any society."⁶ Furthermore, "the most selfish and immature" are "the people who have children and do not really want them, who are going to 'dump' them as soon as possible."⁷ Not surprisingly, the response to the article was negative, and the writer was accused of trying to derail the feminist movement. However, to appreciate Finnigan (who has three children) and her works, one must realize that she considers herself a mother first, and an artist second. It is this philosophy on motherhood and child rearing that is a major theme in her writing and life.

Beginning in the mid-forties, Finnigan's poetry began to appear in Canadian literary magazines. From then until the late seventies when writing the oral histories began to take precedence, her poetry featured prominently in publications such as

Alphabet, Canadian Author and Bookman, Canadian Forum, Canadian Poetry Magazine, Canadian Literature, Delta, the Fiddlehead, Limbo, Prism International, Quarry, Queen's Quarterly, Sunyata, the Tamarack Review, Teangadoir, Warpings and Yes. Her poetry has also appeared in anthologies published in England, the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

In 1957, the poetry collection *Through The Glass, Darkly* was published. In 1960, Finnigan, her husband and their three children moved to Kitchener-Waterloo where Dr. Mackenzie set up a medical practice, specializing in psychiatry. In 1965, the family returned to Kingston and Finnigan's second poetry collection, *A Dream of Lilies*, was published. That same year, however, everything changed for the writer and her three children (then aged 7, 12 and 14) when Dr. Mackenzie committed suicide. Because of the circumstances, the family was ineligible for the life insurance benefit and they were left in desperate financial circumstances. With the remaining five-thousand dollars that Finnigan had in her savings, she re-registered at Queen's University to finish her studies. In 1967, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature, History and Economics. Although her family's financial situation during those two years was tenuous, going back to university helped Finnigan recover from her husband's death and further bolstered her writing credentials.

After graduating, Finnigan realized that she would have to be flexible if she wanted to make a living by writing. She decided once again to try freelance journalism, "bread and butter stuff," and worked at finding a balance between journalism and creative writing. At times she found it difficult to "walk a fine line between balancing the bread

and butter thing with the creative thing [because journalism is] doing something until you have nothing left in terms of your creativity and imagination; because you don't use those things in journalism -- you're writing facts" (28 July 1998).

In the late sixties, Finnigan began working as a freelance writer with the CBC, thereby initiating a long-standing professional relationship with producer Robert Weaver. Also during this period, Ian MacNeill, program director at the National Film Board (NFB), hired her as a freelance researcher for the newly created series on poverty entitled *Challenge for Change*. This commission began Finnigan's very productive association with the NFB, one of the highlights being her award-winning screenplay *The Best Damn Fiddler From Calabogie to Kaladar* which won nine of eleven Etrogs (Genie Awards) in 1969.

The year 1968 heralded the publication of Finnigan's first published long poem, *Entrance to the Greenhouse*, which won the Centennial Prize for poetry. Her next literary venture was the social satire, *Canada in Bed* (under the pseudonym Michelle Bedard), published in 1969. Finnigan's fourth volume of poetry, *It Was Warm and Sunny When We Set Out*, followed in 1970. Included in the collection is "death of a psychiatrist," which won the University of Western Ontario President's Medal for Poetry in 1969, and was included in Borestone Mountain's *Best Poems of 1973*.

From the late sixties through the seventies, the writer worked steadily on projects for both the CBC and the NFB. In 1969, the long poem *In the Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake* was broadcast on CBC Radio's *Anthology*, and rebroadcast in 1970 on *Tuesday Night*. Subsequently, the coffee-table book *In the Brown Cottage on*

Loughborough Lake with photographs by the *Globe and Mail*'s Eric Christensen, was published by CBC Learning Systems in 1970. Other CBC radio scripts of published and unpublished poetry from the seventies and early eighties included "Songs for the Bible Belt," "May Day Rounds: Renfrew County," "Coming Over a Country of No Lights," "The Valley of the Outaouais," "Poems From Pontiac Country" and "The River." Also broadcast was *Children of the Shadows*, a script on child poverty, *There's No Good Times Left -- None At All!* the first in-depth CBC radio documentary on the Ottawa Valley and *The Lakers*, a documentary on the retired captains and pilots of the Great Lakes. In 1973, Finnigan gained additional experience in television and film production when she conducted the research, script and interviewing for the CBC film *Kingston: Celebrate This City* and the NFB film *They're Putting Us Off The Map*; wrote the script *Home* for CBC's *This Land* in 1976, as well as her second screenplay, *A Day in the Life of God's Country*, in 1982.

In 1975, the writer was chosen from among one-hundred and fifty candidates across Canada to become one of the five working members of the Tarragon Theatre's Writer's Workshop in Toronto. Culling from her youth spent in and around the Ottawa Valley, she wrote the play *Up the Vallee!*, complete with history, characters and anecdotes from the region. The play was produced by the Workshop and in 1977 an excerpt was performed at the University of Ottawa. Although the process was gradual, Finnigan was becoming immersed in the regional culture which would soon dominate her writing.

In 1976, the poetry collection *Living Together*, the Ottawa Valley miscellany "*I come from the Valley*," the recipe book *Canadian Colonial Cooking* and the illustrated coffee-table book, *Kingston: Celebrate This City*, based on the 1973 film of the same name, were published. The pace became even more intense in 1978 when, in addition to having published the poetry collection *A Reminder of Familiar Faces*, Finnigan began to record the life stories of the Ottawa Valley old timers. She has made her reputation on the Ottawa Valley oral histories, and she remembers the time spent researching and writing them as one of the greatest experiences of her life. In August 1978, Finnigan and her son were photographing along the Opeongo Line, the famous settlement line running from the Ottawa River at Farrell's Landing back towards Opeongo Lake in Algonquin Park. During the excursion, she subconsciously decided to follow the advice of her relatives and tape the stories told by the old timers of the area. She reversed a lease on accommodations in Toronto, bought a cassette recorder and set out on her journey throughout the Ottawa Valley. Journey is the appropriate word, for the project lasted twenty years, on an intermittent basis, during which time she recorded approximately 400 tapes of old timers relating their life stories, as well as legends, folk-tales, anecdotes and legends. These recorded interviews are now deposited at the National Archives of Canada, and are used in research by archivists, folklorists, genealogists, historians, linguists, photographers, playwrights, researchers, songwriters, students, teachers and writers wishing to further their understanding of the uniqueness of the Ottawa Valley.

In 1981, Finnigan's first oral history, *Some of the stories I told you were true*, was published, followed by the children's book, *Look! The Land Is Growing Giants*, based on the legendary giant Joseph Montferrand, as well as the biographical *Giants of Canada's Ottawa Valley*. Also that year, *This Series Has Been Discontinued* appeared and would be the last collection of poems to be published until 1992. Because of her extensive original research on the giants of history and legend, the writer was presented with the Philemon Wright Award for Research and History in the Outaouais in 1983. Three other oral histories were published in the eighties: *Laughing All The Way Home* (short-listed for the Stephen Leacock Award for Humour) in 1984, *Legacies, Legends & Lies* (winner of the Ottawa-Carleton Literary Award) in 1985 and *Tell Me Another Story* in 1988.

Branching out from the oral histories, the writer began profiling people and places connected with the Ottawa Valley lumber industry for her weekly "Valley Vista" page in the *Ottawa Journal Magazine*. She also wrote a series of features for *Ottawa Magazine*, excerpted from the tapings, about the people, history and legends of the Ottawa Valley.

During the late eighties and early nineties, Finnigan had several diverse works published. In 1988, *The Watershed Collection*, an anthology of her best long poems, as well as *Finnigan's Guide to the Ottawa Valley*, were published. Robert Weaver both edited and wrote the introduction for *The Watershed Collection*, in which he stated his belief that "Joan Finnigan is the finest writer of the long poem in Canada."⁸ As her grandchildren began to become an integral part of her life, she turned to writing children's stories set in Canada; as well as the aforementioned *Look! The Land Is Growing Giants*, she wrote *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be Left Behind*, detailing a canine's

Canadian peregrinations, published in 1989, and *Witches, Ghosts and Loups-Garous*, featuring ghost stories and scary tales from the Ottawa Valley, published in 1994. All three children's books are used extensively in schools across Canada, with the author often invited to read from them.

The nineties have seen the writer employ several new genres, including fiction and historical works. She also returned to poetry with the 1992 publication, *Wintering Over*. The dramatic monologue "Wintering Over" was commissioned for the opening of the Canadian Museum of Civilization and was performed there intermittently from 1988 to 1993. *Wintering Over's* centrepiece play, *Songs From Both Sides of the River*, was performed in 1997 to sell-out audiences at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. Also in 1992, *Old Scores, New Goals: The Story of the Ottawa Senators* was published to coincide with the resurrection of the famous old National Hockey League (NHL) team. In 1993, the writer came full circle when, fifty years after first editing the *Vox Lycei*, she edited and wrote the commemorative *Lisgar Collegiate Institute 1843 - 1993* in honour of the school's Sesquicentennial celebrations.

The latter half of the decade does not see any reduction in Finnigan's literary activities. In 1995, the fiction collection *Dancing at the Crossroads* was published, followed in 1997 by *down the unmarked roads*. Her most recent collection of poetry, *Second Wind; Second Sight* was published in 1998 and her fifth collection of oral histories, *tallying the tales of the old timers*, was published in February 1999. Future plans include a coffee-table book on the Opeongo Line, an anthology of the best of the Ottawa Valley humour, a memoir and new collections of poetry and short stories.

Profiles of the writer can be found in the following publications: *Survey - A Short History of Canadian Literature* (1973) edited by Elizabeth Waterston, *Who's Who in the Writers' Union of Canada*, *Canada Writes!* (1989) edited by K.A. Hamilton, *Who's Who in the League of Canadian Poets* (1976) compiled by Edita Petruskaite, *The Directory of Members of the Writers Union of Canada* (1981) edited by Ted Whittaker, *Who's Who in Canadian Literature* (1983) edited by Gordon Ripley, *Canadian Who's Who* (1986) edited by Elizabeth Lumley, *Literary Images of Ontario* (1992) by W.J. Keith, *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature* (1997) edited by William Toye and Eugene Benson and *1999 Who's Who of Canadian Women*, co-published by Paul Jones and Donna Clark.

ENVIRONMENT AND INFLUENCES

Between 1820 and 1870, thousands of Irish immigrants undertook the perilous journey across the Atlantic Ocean and settled in the Ottawa Valley. These people emigrated largely because of poor economic conditions in Ireland, which were a consequence of the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and the catastrophic potato famine of the eighteen-forties. It is commonly said that people emigrate, not for themselves, but to create better living conditions for their children. Although the Irish settlers endured further hardships in the new land, most were able to see their children grow and become prosperous.

After landing in Canada, many of the Irish immigrants travelled up the St. Lawrence River and settled in West Quebec and Eastern Ontario. The Finnigans and Horners were members of the so-called “clans” of the Ottawa Valley who were descended from those early Irish immigrants; they spoke the Ottawa Valley dialects, particularly Ulster Irish, and Joan Finnigan credits them with introducing her to that aspect of Irish culture which reveres literature and storytelling. As a child, she spent many happy hours with her Horner and Finnigan relatives, listening to them recount the legends, tall tales and stories, especially related to the lumber industry, which had been passed down from generation to generation. Her childish imagination was fired by stories that were never labelled folklore or legends; rather, they were the “stuff” of everyday life and the talk of common folk. These legends, tall tales and stories not only provided Finnigan with subject matter for her Ottawa Valley poems and short stories, but they also

motivated her to record the oral histories of the Ottawa Valley.

Finnigan theorizes that every child is born creative but that forces, either external or internal, will either nurture or destroy that creativity. She also makes a distinction between healthy creativity (the everyday kind) and neurotic creativity (the obsessive kind).⁹ While the young girl's extended Irish-Canadian family provided an environment which nurtured her literary talents, life in the Finnigan household became increasingly strained. The writer suggests that some creative people, emerging from a situation where the parents are diametrically opposed, feel compelled to recreate the world in a more perfect image; often for such people, creativity becomes a way of life. She suspects that many artists, like herself, couldn't please their parents, or one parent, so they instead try to please the whole world, and gain universal acceptance. Still struggling with her theory of creativity, she postulates "creativity is the most positive defense of the damaged individual" (*SWSS*, 7).

For her collection, *Everybody's Favourites*, Arlene Perley Rae interviewed well-known Canadians about books that changed their lives. In her interview, Finnigan fondly remembers being "read to by a mother who brought with her as part of her 'marriage dowry' classics she had collected as a teacher."¹⁰ At age eleven, she discovered the local Carnegie library and soon became a "bender" reader, borrowing anything and everything written by favourite authors James Fenimore Cooper, Charles Dickens, G.A. Henty and Ernest Thompson Seton. The young girl's love of literature was also nurtured by her Horner aunts who made certain that she received collections of poetry as birthday and Christmas gifts. Among her most treasured gifts were poetry collections by Edward

Lear, James Whitcomb Riley, Robert Louis Stevenson and John Greenleaf Whittier.

The Finnigan children lived in an era of colourful tales and anecdotes, often about NHL players, teams and games, as well as stories of Frank Finnigan's adventures on the road. When he returned home from such places as Montreal, Toronto, Detroit and New York, he told stories "in the Irish way" of the giants he had beaten, and the giants to whom he had lost. It is therefore appropriate that the writer credits her father with instilling in her a love of stories and storytelling. In another way, Frank Finnigan was a strong motivating force behind Finnigan's writing in that she used it to deal with her ambivalent feelings for him; several of her poems are an attempt to bridge the conflicting emotions connected to this relationship.

Irish Protestantism also left an indelible imprint on the writer. In the days before secularism permeated North American culture, families read the Bible together, religious classes were taught in the schools, and church and Sunday school were an integral part of a child's life. As part of her religious training, the child memorized verses from the Bible and, as a result, her works, including their titles, content and rhythmns, have a resonance of things biblical. In particular, Finnigan's poetry draws on biblical themes to provide timeless conduits to contemporary truths and realities. At the age of sixteen, after deciding that there was no God, she found herself going through the various stages of agnosticism, atheism and searching for relevance in other religious doctrines, often a necessary part of the artist's development. The writer also believes that a brief period of Jungian psychotherapy had an enormous influence on her artistic development, by taking her creative consciousness to a new level.

The writer also credits the Ottawa public education system with encouraging her literary talents. She remembers her grade school years as peopled with imaginative and enthusiastic teachers who instilled in their students a love of learning, and provided them with encouragement and support. More than once the young writer received first prize in the Friday afternoon story-writing contests, and in Grade 5 she actually wrote a novel which she read chapter by chapter to the class. Finnigan remains mindful that she had a number of core people, both relatives and teachers, who provided her with what she likes to call “the necessary pats” during her formative years (28 July 1998).

While at Lisgar Collegiate Institute, Finnigan’s English literature teacher, Walter B. Mann, introduced her to Louis Untermeyer’s *Modern American Poetry* (1942). The writer recalls “confronting the free expression, the liberated style, the unadorned realism, from the unrhymed rants of road-makers like Walt Whitman to the totally non-conforming ‘determined madness’ of e.e. cummings.”¹¹ *Modern American Poetry* was to have the greatest influence on Finnigan, both during her high school years and as a developing Canadian poet.

The writer’s major goal in her body of work from 1978 to the present has been to illuminate and expand awareness of the unique nature of the Ottawa Valley. As a regional writer, she was inspired by William Butler Yeats’s *The Celtic Twilight* (1893), which motivated her to research the influence of Celtic culture on the Ottawa Valley. However, the prime inspiration for her Ottawa Valley writings was historian Dr. A.R.M. Lower of Queen’s University. Finnigan believes that “No one in Canada is really aware of the Ottawa Valley. [Dr. Lower] was because he had done the classics on lumbering”

(28 July 1998). Dr. Lower was the first national historian to write extensively on the history of the Ottawa Valley and his publications *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest* (1938) and *Great Britain's Woodyard* (1973) had a tremendous influence on Finnigan's work, and she describes them as "the academic cornerstones in the pyramid of writing and research directed toward the elucidation of the Ottawa Valley identity."¹²

Dr. Lower also wrote several important pieces in *Queen's Quarterly* detailing his definition of the Ottawa Valley according to geographic and demographic criteria. Lower and Finnigan's brief, empathetic relationship was limited to a few meetings before the former's death at age 93, and a cherished letter to her in which he stated "the unique nature of the Ottawa Valley is hardly understood elsewhere in Canada."¹³

In general, however, the books Finnigan considers the "generative landmarks" of her life are *The Bible*, Clarissa Pinkola Estes' *Women Who Run with the Wolves* (1992), Marilyn Ferguson's *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (1980), Abraham Maslow's *Motivation and Personality* (1968), M. Scott Peck's *The Road Less Travelled* (1978) and Paul Tillich's *The Courage to Be* (1959). She continues to read voraciously and finds herself returning in her later years to some of her favourite and most influential authors, including James Agee, Robertson Davies, Timothy Findley, Don Gayton, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Liam O'Flaherty, William Shakespeare, Sigrid Undset, Eudora Welty and W.B. Yeats.¹⁴

In the final analysis, perhaps the most crucial influence on Finnigan's writing is life itself. She transforms the everyday "stuff of life" -- love, marriage, family, children, and death -- into literature, which represents her response to life. As well, she has taken

her attachment to the people and landscape of the Ottawa Valley and translated it into poetry, oral history and fiction. One of the writer's greatest insights is her knowledge that she needn't look too far for inspiration -- it is all around her.

POETRY

Joan Finnigan has been “writing poetry ever since [the age of nine] and it remains [her] primary steadfast genre” (*SWSS*, 7). When interviewed for the *Whig-Standard Magazine* she recalled being “so in love with the music and voices of language that I began to write poetry. I have been hearing the music and the voices ever since, and I have been writing poetry ever since.”¹⁵ At that young age, Finnigan would get out of bed in the middle of the night, write poems in the dark and read them over the next morning. She suspects that this nocturnal compulsion stemmed from her sleep being interrupted by her parents arguing. She states, “At this stage of my life, I don’t pretend that this nocturnal phenomenon was a manifestation of precocity but more likely, I think, a sign of childhood disturbance, even a symptom of communications needs unfulfilled” (*SWSS*, 7).

Through her high school and university years, Finnigan continued to write poems which began appearing in literary magazines in the mid-forties. Since 1957, she has published eleven collections of poetry and has won the Centennial Prize and the President’s Medal for Poetry, University of Western Ontario. Her poems have appeared eight times in the Borestone Mountain Poetry anthologies published in California, the annual collections which recognize the best poems in the English-speaking world. Finnigan’s poetry is also well-respected in the literary community. Joy Kogawa recalled “reading through [literary] magazines in the University of Saskatchewan library and [feeling] one of those strong leaps of recognition and joy . . . . Since then, I have approached [Joan Finnigan’s] works with eagerness and hunger.” Louis Dudek has

described her as one of the few poets “who has kept going, enlarging in scope and sharpening in style for more than a decade,” and Fred Cogswell affirmed that “Some poets are ‘poet’s poets,’ others appeal only to the crowd of non-poets. A few poets like Joan Finnigan are both.”¹⁶

Finnigan acknowledges that poetry is her first love and probably her best genre. She believes that poetry should evoke an emotional response and confesses to be “most pleased when someone says to me ‘I laughed, I cried, I really empathized’” (22 October 1998). Finnigan’s disclosure that “my poems tend to be people-inspired, event-inspired and love-inspired” (*SWSS*, 8), implicitly acknowledges that poetry is the language she uses to respond to life -- writing poetry allows her to define emotion and identity, to express love and to make social comment.

In the early stages, the young poet tapped into her personal experience and wrote poems chronicling her response to marriage, family, children and death. However, although the mundane inspired her muse, she used it to explore the larger issues of human relationships, mortality and spirituality. This early period also witnessed a preoccupation with defining the poetic process, as well as experimenting with multiple genres.

As the poet matured artistically and emotionally, however, her voice became more public and began to express social commentary. At the same time, she developed the need to define place; this she accomplished in the Ottawa Valley poetry and oral histories which began to take precedence in the second half of the seventies. However, with the publication of *Second Wind; Second Sight*, Finnigan’s poetry comes full circle and again addresses private issues, but with an insight and balance which was lacking in the early

pieces. The collection represents her new vision of poetry as a vehicle for imparting wisdom, and reflects her conviction that “as we grow older if we’re lucky, maybe even emotionally healthy and self-actualizing, intelligence becomes wisdom.”¹⁷ In particular, her use of the long poem provides the means by which her poetic works achieve unprecedented consistency and conviction.

When Finnigan attempts to define the poetic impulse which has dominated so much of her artistic life, she concludes that “I can no more say today why I [write poems] than I could back then. Over the decades I have made various attempts to tackle the why of it, in essays and particularly in my ongoing manuscript, *Aphorisms and Absolutes*” (*SWSS*, 7). Ultimately, however, it is through the actual writing of poetry that she is finally able to define both the poet’s role and the aesthetics of poetry. This concern with definition is evident in “Poet,” from the 1957 collection, *Through The Glass, Darkly*:

His voice was never still.
And, although he misinterpreted the thing called love,
He had a vaster function to fulfill,
He had the essence of life to distil
And tell the world of.¹⁸

Finnigan, too, has distilled “the essence of life” by transmuting her life experiences into compelling, empathetic poetry. Not only does “Poet” attempt to define the poet’s role, but it also reveals the motivation behind the poetic impulse, which is implicitly linked to the storytelling process.

The preoccupation with process becomes stronger and is a major theme of *A Dream of Lilies*, the poet's second collection. The free verse "Poetry Reading," articulates her poetry aesthetic:

the poem.
like a kingfisher
from a tree high above the lake.
without error
or misjudgement
of a fraction of an inch,
fell upon the idling
unsuspecting prey.¹⁹

The kingfisher is remarkable for its peculiar shape and brilliant colouring; it is also noted for its diving skills. Finnigan believes that poetry must, like the kingfisher, have an interesting form as well as a message which hits people at their most vulnerable and most receptive. That the prey are "idling" and "unsuspecting" indicates complacency, which the poet knows is a very dangerous state. Poetry, therefore, should be thought-provoking; perhaps even discomfiting:

and the audience shuffled
uneasily,
squirmed, wriggled. (DL, 51)

Because poetry is Finnigan's response to life, and because life can be unpleasant, it is her duty as an artist to address disquieting issues such as hypocrisy, old age, poverty and

death.

In the satiric “I Do Not Wish To Be A Canadian Poet,” the speaker desperately commands:

don't hang
that label on ME! Don't damn me to ignominy
with that pasty nondescription. (*DL*, 46)

The rationale underlying the directive is double-edged in that the speaker knows that if she were not saddled with that moniker, then she would have full freedom to celebrate the beauty of the country:

I shall be stricken always by the Ottawa Valley;
there is to be no ending to my longing
to go down to that river again and again
until I meet with it in the final moonlight
of a winter's night, the dark sirens
calling from the islands of the wind. (*DL*, 47)

Such uncontrived and simple lines reveal the poet's willingness to expose her vulnerability, and her ultimate longing to fuse with the landscape; however, the lines provide only a generic landscape description. When the poet gains confidence in her craft and “locus,” her writings begin to describe the landscape's essence, rather than its landmarks. An excellent example of this heightened perspective is found in the following lines which depict the landscape as a spiritual tonic, linking past and present:

The returning. The returning when the need
 for the Valley rises in you like desire
 for a man who has cherished you;
 The returning to find so many more
 have gone underground, but the few remaining
 still sharing the same unspoken passion
 for the landscape as breakwater, as anodyne,
 as Sunday sermon, as restoration, as a soul-song
 we all retain in the same "hearing ear."²⁰

At this early stage, however, the poet proves that she does have a command of the formulaic writing required of her if, in fact, she wishes to be a Canadian poet:

But still I DO NOT WISH TO BE A CANADIAN POET
 celebrating the purblind pines and the unequivocal rocks,
 or the narrow provincial themes, like discovery
 of sex in Montreal or ploughing matches
 in New Brunswick, Hockey Night in Canada
 or pigeons in Stanley Park. (*DL*, 46)

The poem's divergence into the absurd in its final section allows the speaker to relinquish all complicity in the situation, and further negates the possibility of further discussion, as she reiterates her plea, "I DO NOT WISH TO BE A CANADIAN POET / I wish to be a Blue Titmouse" (*DL*, 49). Finnigan risked being alienated from her peers by writing the poem; however, she viewed it as a vehicle for exorcising her feelings about

the Canadian literary industry. The poem therefore pleads that all poets be given the same opportunity to express themselves within the framework of their own creativity, and not be confined by an artificially imposed "search for 'truly Canadian themes'" (*DL*, 48).

"And Poems Become a Kind of Loving" expands the theme of "Poet." In the tradition of the romantic, tragic heroines of Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" and "Mariana," and recalling the myth of Arachne, this ballad chronicles the sterility of a life dominated by art and the imagination. The speaker is frustrated at "having lived forever / on the edge of longing" and tearfully recognizes that she is loved solely for her artistic talent -- "this poem-making part" (*DL*, 16). In order to acquire love, even though it is only a facsimile of the eros she craves, the speaker obsessively pens:

poems, poems, poems!
 you spin them like a spider
 whose web is broken
 every evening by a giant. (*DL*, 16)

The futility of a life dominated by work, as defined in the images of creation and destruction, is further heightened by the nocturnal destruction wreaked by the fairy-tale giant. The dichotomy between art and life is mirrored in both the poem and its description of the poetic process -- art is not created from a balanced perspective but, rather, "with fury you create, fill in / the lines between the days and nights" and "transmute your loss / into a great gain of stanzas" (*DL*, 17). Although the poet deludes herself into believing that she has successfully substituted art for life, the fact that her works are sometimes born of anger and obsession argues for a balance between creativity

and engagement with the world.

Apart from writing poetry as an attempt to define the process, Finnigan used it as a framework in which to express emotional concerns, particularly those related to her father and, in later poems, her husband. In “Grey is the Forelock Now of the Irishman,” the poet attempts to reconcile conflicting emotions of love and resentment toward her father. On another level, the poem recognizes the mutability of fame and the expendability of aging sports heroes. However, because the poem’s tone is primarily one of ambivalence, it does not satisfactorily resolve the issues surrounding the father-daughter relationship. Although sympathy is evoked by the description of the “old pro’s” decline from “the all-round right-wing Maple Leaf god” to “Adonis of an arena now crumbled / and fallen into the cannibal maw of mobs” (*DL*, 22), it is undercut by the revelation that his enormous ego led him to be swayed by public adoration. The speaker’s primary memories are of an absent father, spending his time with affluent strangers “whose money had not bought them youth / and the golden skates of fame.” (*DL*, 22) who offer hollow tokens of “suitably engraved silver dishes / which my mother never used” (*DL*, 23). Ultimately, however, the life story of the “all-star father” translates into a cautionary tale told to children, in order that they may learn “in smaller forums and with less limelight, / how heroes are really made” (*DL*, 23).

The ambivalence of “Grey is the Forelock Now of the Irishman” is replaced by reconciliation in “My Father Often Told Me,” from *Second Wind; Second Sight*. The piece provides the poet with the means by which she finally embraces her father and all of his shortcomings, through an understanding of the artistic process. The poem charts

the speaker's movement from innocence to experience, as mirrored in her response to her father's stories. Initially, she "believed him when I was very young, / just as I believed in Santa Claus and God" (*SWSS*, 13), but then she "came to believe that my father / was a liar, a teller of untrue tales, / a spinner of improbable yarns" (*SWSS*, 14). As the speaker matures, her "father suddenly became wiser," as she listens "to him telling me truths / that changed my life;" (*SWSS*, 14). She eventually realizes that her father's stories, although they may have lacked literal accuracy, conveyed deeper truths. As part of her artistic development, Finnigan has come to appreciate that a work of art begins with a kernel of truth, upon which the artist, or the storyteller, elaborates.

Concurrent with the creeping doubts and final acceptance of the truth inherent in the old man's stories, is the speaker's spiritual quest, which comprises periods of agnosticism and atheism, and which is a necessary part of the artist's development. The poem is crucial because it resolves two major sources of conflict: first, it allows the speaker to work through conflicting emotions, to arrive at an acceptance of her father and all of his failings and, second, it provides the framework within which she is able to define the artistic process. Most important, however, is that the bond forged by art between the speaker and her father, ultimately provides her with a vehicle for reconciliation and forgiveness.

Echoing her tenuous relationship with her father, Finnigan's marriage was also complex and ended catastrophically when her husband committed suicide in 1965. The writer acknowledges, "that first year on my own, 1965 - 66, was a tough year all-round but especially emotionally . . . . There were times of desperate loneliness."²¹ Although

Finnigan never remarried, she is reluctant to relinquish her romantic concept of partnership; she says, "I don't think people should be alone, I think that you're half or less than half if you're alone. I always say that two is more than two, and one is less than one" (28 July 1999). Conversely, the vision in her marriage poems is dark and filled with irony and, given her personal experience in that realm, it is difficult not to view them as autobiographical. These poems depict marriage as a restrictive state which evokes sorrow, duplicity and betrayal; more ominous, however, is the undercurrent of dysfunction which lurks beneath the facade of normalcy.

"Honeymoon" from *Through The Glass, Darkly* challenges traditional views on marriage by configuring the honeymoon period as a time of apprehension and alienation. The "look of love" of popular imagination is replaced by "Strange eyes looking into strange eyes. / In a strange place" (TGD, 11); hopes for the future are blighted by "Questions, doubts and fears" as the speaker questions the validity of "the vows / Desire brought us to" (TGD, 12). The speaker's Christian upbringing is evident as she charts her descent into the realm of the world, the flesh and the devil:

We are not sure yet if flesh
Has merely sprung a trap,
But between the not-knowing and the knowing
Bed will span the gap. (TGD, 12)

The speaker consciously allows sex to dull her pain and anxiety, fully realizing that, at some point, the "knowing" will intrude upon her consciousness. The banality of the last line is indicative of her inability to admit any complicity in the situation, as well as her

attitude of resignation. Although “Honeymoon” does not offer the speaker any real insight or solutions, it does provide her with a forum in which to acknowledge and articulate emotion.

The speaker’s anxiety level becomes increasingly heightened and reaches a breaking point in the unsettling “From My Multi-level House.” The perspective offered from the front window in the house exacerbates the schism in the speaker’s psyche as she chants the mantra of madness:

I look out, I look in,
giving birth to fated stars
picking up a pin. (*DL*, 57)

The veneer of the mundane is ripped off when the speaker, in an attempt to reconcile her public and private personae realizes that “nothing that I dust or shine / makes very much sense” (*DL*, 57). With that revelation, the true horror of her existence becomes apparent:

yesterday my green dress
I wore so gay to town;
leave it on the corpse now,
let the evening down. (*DL*, 16)

The strain of trying to mask the overwhelming dysfunction leaves the speaker emotionally and physically spent; as a result, she becomes “the corpse” in the evening. Desperately trying to maintain the facade, yet wanting to strip it away, she undergoes a symbolic death and buries her current persona “in the garden, / deep beside the others” (*DL*, 57).

With its black terrors and “bloody stains,” the house’s interior mirrors the speaker’s semi-psychotic state; simultaneously, however, “in the house of craziness / the miracle remains” (*DL*, 57). Although the nature of the miracle is ambiguous, it could be that the speaker is able to function within a dysfunctional framework, albeit at great personal cost. There is no mediating factor, or resolution to the situation within the poem; rather, it offers a bleak perspective on the speaker’s inability to reconcile her two selves. The poem ends on a note of despair, repeating the speaker’s compulsive actions.

“All Marriages are Terminated in Tundra” provides an explicit assessment of the consequences of the marital trap. The speaker’s tarnished perspective is mirrored in her description of marriage as a hostile landscape:

All marriages are terminated in tundra
above the tree-line, without wind-break.
the self riddled, punch-drunk, wandering
in a wilderness of moonless dark and ice. (*LT*, 64)

The fires of lust have given way to darkness, cold and sterility. There is no respite for the speaker who wanders aimlessly “babbling” and “sobbing” without landmarks or light to guide her. “the eyes blind” and the extremities frozen (*LT*, 64). No longer able to rely on sex to anaesthetize her anguish, she experiences “an easy Arctic death” which leads her to “dream in a snow-bank / of a sunny road in Spain” (*LT*, 64). Sex has been replaced by a fantasy world into which the speaker retreats in order to cope with her miserable existence.

Although these poems point to an unhappy marital situation, Finnigan achieved tremendous contentment and satisfaction as a mother, which she considers her most important role. She does “not believe that there is *any* substitute for the concerned, loving, mature, disciplined, aware and perceptive mother.”²² After her husband died, she was determined to stay at home with her children and is thankful to have been “blessed with a talent that I could keep my kids and I could stay at home. I would have been an absolutely totally ruined person if I had to go out everyday to earn a living” (28 July 1998).

Finnigan wrote poems about her children (and now her grandchildren) in much the same way that others document their children’s lives in photographs and videos. In particular, several poems focus on the special bond between mother and daughter. “Morning With Martha,” from *A Dream of Lilies*, describes the child as a solar deity whose simple actions give light to the darkness and vanquish all negative influences:

She meteors the winter’s dark morning
With flashes of song;
She turns on electrical suns
For her bed-witch dark. (*DL*, 29)

In “Sunday Morning,” the speaker’s daughter is the Grail princess within the domestic realm who:

bears the sunrise in a cup
sent from the kitchen where my husband
reads his morning paper. (*DL*, 38)

The mystery and sanctity of the mother-daughter relationship supercedes religion,
mythology and magic:

Puck's potion, love-in-idleness was no alchemy
compared to this burning ersatz
borne in the chalice
of her small hands. (*DL*, 39)

Even in a period of darkness, whether metaphorical, or literal, as in the winter and early morning settings of the two poems, the child embodies the warmth and promise of life.

Procreation and permanence, within a winter context, is a concern of "The Children are Making a Snowfort," from the 1978 collection *A Reminder of Familiar Faces*:

I hear their voices
resonating time
echoing down
the barrens
of my future. (*RFF*, 16)

Although the mutability of the parent-child relationship evokes wistfulness in the speaker, she understands that in the natural order of life, the children eventually leave; this understanding is underlined by the nature and landscape imagery which bridges the chasm between innocence and experience. The description of the children as "birds briefly together / in a nest of snow" (*RFF*, 16), coupled with the speaker's recognition of the encroaching "falling sky / between us" (*RFF*, 17), underlines the futility of trying to

delay the natural process.

“For My Grandchildren,” from *Second Wind: Second Sight*, provides the speaker with concrete proof of the immortality afforded by procreation. At the same time, she implicitly defines the root of her past emotional turmoil by articulating her hopes for her grandchildren. In the poem, she wishes her grandchildren to have all of life’s most important gifts; not material gains, however, but “parents whose caring for each other / is a constantly becoming partners, better friends” (SWSS, 16), “a complete childhood, / not one cut short by use, abuse, favouritism” (SWSS, 17), “emotional health” (SWSS, 18), “the power of love,” “the ability to smile,” “creativity and imagination,” “the heritage of a beloved landscape” and “the nobility of self-actualization” (SWSS, 20).

Most important, however, is the passage which reveals that the speaker has finally come to an understanding of what constitutes a happy, healthy life:

Foremost I want emotional health for you
so that, despite the shifting sands of relationships,
the cumulative cankers of disappointments,
the pain of losses like open wounds in your side,
you will still be able to expand your joy
in the challenge of living fully,
(as I now, at seventy, can tally
all these things, bear their burdens
and yet proclaim my joy
in your presence upon the earth,

and in your unlimited unfolding potential). (*SWSS*, 18)

“For My Grandchildren” is Finnigan’s spiritual autobiography in which she implicitly charts her life, with its highs and lows, sorrows and motivations, through an articulation of her philosophy of life and art. More important though is the poet’s ability and willingness to translate experience into wisdom, and impart it to future generations.

A different perspective on the theme of mutability and immortality is found in “Lines In The Last August Of John,” from *A Dream of Lilies*. This narrative poem chronicles the last days of the poet’s brother, who was born with a heart defect and died at the age of thirty. The poet’s love and respect for her brother are summed up in the following dedication: “For my brother, John Milton Finnigan (1927-1957) who, although considerably handicapped from birth, taught me more about heart, guts and courage than most of the people I have known, so far, in my lifetime” (*LT*, 2). In the poem’s opening lines, John’s life is analogous to:

a seed defied the rock,

And took its substance from scant earth,

And raised the special splendour of a crooked tree. (*DL*, 4)

Ironically, a life which persisted against all odds ebbs away during harvest time. Nature’s bounty, however, is only a distraction which is able to “Disguise where life and death push always / On our unsuspecting ways” (*DL*, 4). The poignancy of the situation is further heightened in the penultimate stanza when the speaker, who has been complicit in nature’s dissembling, is revealed to be “Toad-great with child, / In this last August of John” (*DL*, 4). The images of sterility and fecundity are deftly woven together to

configure the life cycle as a protean complex, in which inter-generational replication triumphs.

Similarly, the poet's grief upon losing two dear friends (albeit one metaphorically) affected her deeply and motivated her to pen "For Monique at Midnight" and "In Memory of Elizabeth (Dec. 16, 1962, Aged 37)" which appear in *A Dream of Lilies*. In "For Monique At Midnight" a symbolic death has transformed the once-vibrant Monique, who entered a convent, into a static, sterile saint:

Hairless and voiceless now,
gardening a verbena child.
and weaving a tapestry lover
.....
the cyclic blood of her flesh is dried;
her beauty is fallen like unneeded stars;
her hands are folded and frozen in prayer
are folded and frozen in death. (DL, 18)

Like the speaker in "And Poems Become A Kind of Loving," Monique has also renounced the world. Nature frowns on Monique's choice of the spiritual over the temporal, and shows its displeasure by ravaging the symbols of her womanhood -- her hair and voice. Although she occupies herself with traditional feminine pastimes of gardening and weaving, the "verbena child" and "tapestry lover" are only parodies of the real thing. Monique's potential creativity is transformed into stasis with the cessation of menses, and the resultant death of her child-bearing capabilities.

Conversely, in the second piece, death has transmuted the tormented Elizabeth, who committed suicide, into a romantic heroine: she is “Ophelia of the First Snows, / adrift in a valley of flakes” (*DL*, 64), whose beauty is enhanced by the winter landscape. Elizabeth’s madness, which was played out on a sea of creativity, provokes an epiphany in both nature and the speaker:

the quixotic stars
 breaking on the dark
 shores of this night
 light the ways she fled
 light where we all stand
 between cliff
 and web. (*DL*, 64)

The “unneeded stars” (*DL*, 18) of Monique’s beauty, which no longer decorate the heavens, become Elizabeth’s guiding “quixotic stars” (*DL*, 64). The images of cold and sterility which describe Monique’s transformed state, and the images of light related to Elizabeth’s demise, signify the poet’s response to the choices made by the two women. While the poet is unable to comprehend that the lovely Monique chose the religious life, she can accept that Elizabeth took her own life. Finnigan’s perspective on suicide will be radically altered, however, following her husband’s death in 1965.

Dr. Mackenzie’s death had an enormous impact on his wife and it inevitably affected her work. Finnigan was angry because the children were left fatherless, and she resented being widowed at a young age. More than once, she “would wake in the night in

a cold sweat, thinking about what would happen to my children if something happened to me.”²³ Her anger and anxiety provided the impetus for several powerful poems, including “death of a psychiatrist” featured in *It Was Warm and Sunny When We Set Out*. Not only does the piece provide the poet with a forum for expression, but it also allows her to interpret the aphorism “Physician, Heal Thyself.” The poem catalogues the incongruity between the psychiatrist’s private torment and his public persona, a dichotomy which was only resolved by an act of self destruction. The bewildered speaker derides the psychiatrist for his inability to solve his own problems:

you advised and consented; yet never for yourself
all those lost psyches found in the closed parlours
of the lecherous grandmothers
but never your own.²⁴

In the twisted world of psychoanalysis, the harmony of family life, represented by the parlour and the grandmothers, has degenerated into a house of horrors. The speaker’s anger over the deceased’s abjuration of his psychic dysfunction springs hotly from the following lines which document the chasm between the doctor’s private, creative self and his rational, professional persona:

but yourself floundered and threshed about
on the lost roads
that ended in the evil flowers of the swamps
and quagmires

your intellectual deliberations were
 an unqualified evasion
 of the childhood you couldn't remember. (*WWS*, 36)

By charting “the INSIDE / for the OUTSIDERS” (*WWS*, 36), the doctor sacrifices his private self and his domestic life for monetary considerations. However, the poem’s most caustic and poignant lines are the rhetorical questions challenging the deceased to explain his decision to the children:

What lies shall I tell them about your final results?
 How shall I make the boys into men
 How shall I teach them about love
 When the basic statement
 From generation to generation
 Has been one of hate? (*WWS*, 38)

The “lost psyches,” “closed parlours,” “unqualified evasion” (*WWS*, 36), simultaneously signify confusion and deception, thereby underscoring the treachery and finality of suicide. By its very nature, suicide is not a private act but, as the speaker realizes in the final line, a supremely selfish act which gives the deceased “the possibility of revenge” (*WWS*, 39). Although “death of a psychiatrist” deals with an unpleasant subject, it is indicative of the poet’s willingness to reveal her psyche in a public forum in order to address disturbing issues. Finnigan acknowledges that she has “written poems arising out of anger and negativism,” but contends that “they are not my best” (*SWSS*, 8). Even so, the poem won the University of Western Ontario President’s Medal for Poetry in 1969, and is included in Borestone Mountain’s *Best Poems of 1973*.

For at least ten years after the event, Finnigan wrote poems chronicling her response to Dr. Mackenzie's death -- poems which chronicle her movement from apportioning blame to self-reflection and eventual renewal. In "winter bird," also from *It Was Warm and Sunny When We Set Out*, the anger and passion of "death of a psychiatrist" is replaced by an intense loneliness precipitated by widowhood. Using the framework of the biblical story of Noah and the Flood, the poet articulates her resentment at being widowed, contrasts her current situation with the security of her childhood (a childhood filled with biblical readings), and questions the age-old attitude that women without partners are of no use to society.

The life-affirming dove in one version of the story has been superceded by a winter bird which:

feeds in a barren tree
hears Noah in the wind
making his cursed count

Into the Ark all go by two's. (*WWS*, 45)

The winter bird's sterile existence is reflected in the simple, almost banal, words of the stanza. Because death has subverted the natural order, the winter bird (or speaker), is denied access to the ark even though she "would live / beyond the flood" (*WWS*, 45).

Given her extensive grounding in biblical tradition, the poet must be familiar with the following lines:

How lonely sits the city that was full of people!

How like a widow has she become,

she that was great among the nations!²⁵

Although the poem appears to plead that this attitude be re-evaluated, Finnigan maintains that “To live alone is not the way it was meant to be” (28 July 1998). At first glance, it may appear as though the ideal promoted by Finnigan in her writings contradicts the reality in her life. However, art and life are not always compatible and she therefore uses her writings to delineate the exemplary model.

“New Years Eve Widowland” (included in *Second Wind; Second Sight*, but written in the sixties) furthers the dialogue on widowhood by describing the acute loneliness and bitterness felt by a widow during the festive holiday season:

Here it comes again,

New Year’s Eve in Widowland,

pretending you don’t care anymore, don’t care

How many years now have I been praying for detours

around the Christmas Holidays that crucify,

underline the incompleteness, deepen the loneliness? (*SWSS*, 45)

The Winter Wonderland is transformed into Widowland, while Christmas is conflated with Good Friday, with its connotations of death and mourning. Neither the sterile landscape nor the pain, however, can be alleviated by frantic activity:

I never gave up   dancing lessons, singles groups,
 boring parties attended with one single hope
 clubs joined   candidates supported   trips taken
 married cowards screened out   home in tears. (*SWSS*, 45)

The speaker tries to anaesthetize herself with work, but is plagued by negativity as she realizes that “hope dies as more and more others / crowd into Widowland” (*SWSS*, 46), and the pain becomes more intense:

past the promiscuous period
 the alcoholic period
 the last menstrual period
 the psychiatrist period. (*SWSS*, 46)

The vision in “New Years Eve Widowland” becomes increasingly grim and concludes with the poet’s recognition of her “closet shame / unmateable” (*SWSS*, 46). Although this revelation appears unduly harsh, it indicates the speaker’s increased level of self-awareness which eventually translates into healing.

Following Dr. Mackenzie’s death, Finnigan began to examine the lives of her married friends. She explains,

After Grant died and I was on my own, I had many friends who were married, and I began to examine [their situations]. They often were held together by complacency. Maybe I was looking at [the situation] with too much idealism or a jaundiced eye. In the sixties, and seventies, people entering their forties were into sexual promiscuity and drinking. I think they were protesting [the conformity of]

their youth. (21 January 1999)

Both A Reminder of Familiar Faces and This Series Has Been Discontinued

include a section entitled “A Set of Marriages,” which addresses the theme of the stultifying, “sham” marriage, featuring partners who are hypocritical, neurotic, adulterous and supremely selfish. An exemplary poem is “Contemporary Incest” which documents the life of a married couple, a pair of corpses, who “agreed to live in the same crypt, / not having the courage for anything positive” (*RFF*, 105). The disintegrating marriage leads to the destruction of the family, with the worst consequences being visited on the children. The natural order is subverted when the mother turns to her sons as “husband-lovers” and the father turns to his daughters as “wife-lovers” (*RFF*, 105). The damaged children, in turn, propagate the cycle of pain:

there followed the usual melee of human misery,
losers, loners, perverts,
unmated, alcoholics, suicides. (*RFF*, 105).

Once again, however, the inability to take responsibility constitutes the real tragedy as the parents “wring their hands” and query “‘Where did we go wrong?’” (*RFF*, 106).

In “Contemporary Marriage,” the crypt is replaced by a “cell padded with broadloom” (*RFF*, 111). The two inmates are a promiscuous husband and wife who “both came from the wrong side of the tracks” (*RFF*, 111), but remain together, locked in a sterile, mutually convenient relationship, to keep up appearances. In the dead of night, however, the couple’s glamorous facade crumbles and they are revealed to be prisoners of their stagnant perspective:

it is true that both of them
 have shadows of bars
 on their eyes
 and in the still of the plush night
 their chains rattle. (*RFF*, 111)

“Marital Team-Work” articulates a grim vision of the married state. It is a poetic expression of Finnigan’s view that “every marital relationship is a complementary interlocking of neuroticisms. In some cases it works. in others [the partners] destroy each other” (21 January 1999). Rather than provide each other with love and support, the marriage partners of the poem are a self-serving “bender alcoholic” and a “periodic depressive” who:

are only together in the house
 long enough
 to tee one another off again. (*RFF*, 107).

Given the nature of the relationship, the question “is it really a case of / perfect marital team-work?” (*RFF*, 107) which ends the poem, provides its own response.

One poem in the series, “The Exact Spot,” provides a semblance of respite from the poet’s bleak vision of marriage, even though the context is unusual. The opening lines reveal a culture pervaded with cynicism and immorality:

the whole town said it was just another affair;
 she would be his mistress for a short run
 and then fare-well

“she will age,” they said
 “and he, as usual,
 will vanish.” (*RFF*, 109)

The language of impermanence (“short run,” “fare-well,” and “vanish”) is replaced by a language of introspection and renewal, but only after the adulterer “looked long enough / and deep enough into himself” to realize that:

the fountain of youth
 is in the exact spot
 where you find you can love somebody
 beyond yourself. (*RFF*, 109)

Working through the death and marriage poems leads the poet to conclude that the individual’s relinquishment of responsibility is the cause of psychic blight. Implicit in the poems is Finnigan’s recommendation, based on her personal experience, that people conduct an internal search to address their emotional disturbances; it is only after they heal themselves that they can connect with others.

The heartache and sorrow that the poet has experienced are reflected in her poetry, as are the serenity and equilibrium which she has finally achieved. The poems in *Second Wind*; *Second Sight* mirror Finnigan’s renewed perspective by projecting a sense of joy and reconciliation which displaces the anguish and resentment of earlier pieces. An excellent example is “The Winter Walk,” Finnigan’s loving tribute to Sheenboro storyteller and adventurer Carl Jennings. The poet’s confession that “all my life runs on in gratitude for you” (*SWSS*, 55) and her conclusion that “I have loved and been loved,

finally know now / how frail the snows, how ineffectual the ice,” (*SWSS*, 56) illustrates her unprecedented understanding of the transcendental nature of love. The emotional maturity of “The Winter Walk” dissipates the rancour and cynicism of earlier writings on relationships, and although Jennings has since passed on, he continues to provide the poet with strength and inspiration:

so your love enfolds, succours, transforms.
exalts me and the remainder of my life.
fortifies me on this part of the journey,
the winter walk. (*SWSS*, 56)

The theme of revelation, healing and nature found in “The Winter Walk” can be traced back some twenty years in a series of nature poems written after Dr. Mackenzie’s death and published in *It Was Warm and Sunny When We Set Out*. “[T]he week that kim came” and “the week after kim left” chart the speaker’s movement from desolation to ecstasy at the arrival of spring. Although the titles suggest that the poems centre around “Kim,” they actually define Finnigan’s vision of the Canadian pastoral. In the former, the schism between urban and rural life is manifested in Kim’s wish “to have spring burst upon her here / as a loved one met at Union Station” (*WWS*, 65). Nature, however, asserts its dominance and conspires to prove Kim wrong; it sends “its cruellest message, snow” and “The creek at the front of the house / kept as silent as the bees in the basement” (*WWS*, 65); however, nature’s confidantes the “winter birds, blue-jays, chickadees” and “crows” possess insight into the seasons as does the speaker, who wistfully concludes that “I could not order spring for you here / any more than love somewhere for myself” (*WWS*, 65).

The pensive tone of “the week that kim came” is obliterated by the exhilaration and joy of “the week after kim left.” The lush opening lines assail the senses with their proclamation of nature’s triumph and influence:

The lawn is a riot of robins listening
to the celebrations of the worms
and I am mad with meadowlarks; after the winter
the clear yellow of their breasts undoes me. (*WWS*, 66)

The speaker’s comfort level in a rural setting is evidenced by her willingness to make herself vulnerable as she sits “smiling like a simple fool / in crotches of the apple trees” (*WWS*, 66). Nature, however, plays tricks on her also; she hears the telephone ring repeatedly and good-naturedly “answered several times but finally realized / it was only spring calling from the sky” (*WWS*, 66). The speaker cheerfully acts as nature’s emissary when she informs Kim that “now the creek you waited for runs in full flood” (*WWS*, 66); she is so at ease and happy when in nature, that she needs no human companionship.

The two “Kim” poems encapsulate the poet’s esteem for nature and the joy that it evokes in her. Simultaneously, they are autobiographical in the sense that they chart the poet’s movement from mourning to healing, which is paralleled by nature’s movement from late winter to early spring.

The concept of healing and nature is also at the core of several of Finnigan’s long poems. Her recognition of the possibilities afforded by the long poem has resulted in it being one of her favourite genres and she can actually sense when she is on the verge of writing one. When circumstances allow for a consolidation of feelings and factors,

particularly, “a sense of well-being and some kind of emotional build-up” (25 August 1998), a long poem is usually forthcoming. The contentment and love that she describes in her long poem, *Entrance to the Greenhouse*, is conducive to this process:

This morning
I should like to make
poems
golden and prolific
as dandelions.²⁶

The long poem also suits Finnigan’s artistic temperament. She tends “to be a bender person . . . . As I get older, I tend to store the process, hold it in abeyance until I’m ready to do a long poem. I jot down thoughts, notes, reading because I know that I’m brewing a long poem” (25 August 1998).

During the summer of 1969, Finnigan withdrew with her children to a lakefront cottage owned by actor Dan Ackroyd’s family. While there, she was inspired to write the long poem *In the Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake*, which charts her ultimate acceptance of her husband’s suicide. The note of defiance sounded within the period of mourning foreshadows the renewal that eventually takes place:

There is nothing left of me
but grief
and curses
And I will NOT give up!²⁷

Desperately hoping that her departed mate will journey to her by water, the speaker rises early to catch a glimpse of him:

And I looked for you every morning
on the path
to the boat-house. (BC, 4)

As yet, however, she has not tapped into the Christian consolation offered by the Resurrection, but instead continues to seek a physical manifestation of her dead husband.

In The Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake testifies to Finnigan's belief that children "allow you to move beyond yourself" (28 July 1998). The children's request that their mother imitate a loon prompts her to move beyond herself and provides the means whereby she fuses with the natural landscape. The response evoked is both spontaneous and organic:

Loughborough Lake echoed the laughter
as the children laughed at the clown of me
we play the clown so often
for our children. (BC, 8)

The speaker's spiritual crisis is definitively resolved with her re-articulation of the limitations of the individual life, and the permanence which arises from procreation. On a personal level, the summer that Finnigan spent in the brown cottage healed her emotionally and provided closure to the sorrow of the past. On an artistic level, the poem allowed for a movement from the purely personal to the articulation of public concerns, within the framework of place.

Finnigan's reconciliation with the past allowed her poetry to move beyond the self-absorption which characterized her early work, and toward an artistic maturity. From the mid-seventies on, place began to take precedence in her poetry and she began to examine her relationship with the landscape of her childhood. The writer's interest in the Ottawa Valley was heightened during her tenure with the NFB and CBC, especially while writing the screenplay *The Best Damn Fiddler From Calabogie to Kaladar*. After this period, her familiarity with the history, people, culture and landscape of the region developed into a preoccupation and, since then, she has worked tirelessly to promote the region as a legitimate setting for literary works. Although her best known Ottawa Valley works are the oral histories, the major poems in *Living Together*, *A Reminder of Familiar Faces* and *This Series Has Been Discontinued*, as well as the two volumes of fiction, *Dancing at the Crossroads* and *down the unmarked roads*, owe their genesis to the landscape and people of the Ottawa Valley.

The two long poems, "Ottawa and the Valley" and "May Day Rounds: Renfrew County," which appear in *Living Together*, mark the beginning of the writer's literary love affair with the region. The former, which is a series of sketches blending childhood memories with local lore, is invaluable in its first-hand account of a vanishing culture and lifestyle. The poem is laid out in a series of tableaux beginning with the saga of Maggie Masterson, a semi-literate rustic who embodies the plight of the rural poor, especially impoverished women without access to education. Maggie gives birth to a "born idiot" illegitimate child, and develops a compulsion to "work off her guilt by going to every / funeral within walking distance" (*LT*, 7). On a secular level, Maggie's plight embodies the

powerful Christian concept which links sex with death; on a temporal level, it is a reminder that the cycle of grinding poverty is a severe sociological problem. This concern with poverty threads its way throughout this long poem and reaches an apex in the critically acclaimed “May Day Rounds: Renfrew County.”

The semi-legendary stories which are a part of domestic culture are explored in “in the spring when the larder was low.” The speaker retells a cycle of stories centred around death, which include apocryphal tales about “the horses all died of thirst / in the fields,” “an uncle who nearly died of pull taffy” and “the children who died of nettle stings / and bread poultices / and mustard plasters” (*LT*, 8). “[N]ever eat chokecherries” warns about the dire consequences of inappropriate behaviour, citing the following examples: “the Childerhose child died / of eating chokecherries,” “Aunt Cora died of tight corsets” and “Aunt Hattie of a perfectly / broken heart” (*LT*, 10). In the last section of the poem, the speaker becomes storyteller and manipulates factual material and local lore to create a tale which supports the dire consequences theme:

Whelan died for the murder
of Thomas D’Arcy McGee and all the people
from up the valley
who went to the public hanging,
on the way home were caught
in a blizzard
and died of snow. (*LT*, 10)

In their combination of fact and folklore, “in the spring when the larder was low” and “never eat chokecherries” foreshadow the oral histories which Finnigan began to record in the seventies, and highlight the link between the two genres.

The tone switches from the apocryphal to the nostalgic in “It’s supertime on McLeod Street.” Initially, the speaker recalls a stable past assured by a predictable routine. Her immaturity is reflected in the childish rhyme in which she speculates on professional life:

the fire chief is home from no fires
and Mr. Cheeseman is home from his cheese,
and principal is home from his strappings,
The RCMP constable is home from his horses
the dentist is home from his teeth. (*LT*, 9)

The second half of the poem changes dramatically with the speaker’s recollections of “crazy Mrs. Courtland” the reclusive neighbour who skulks through the streets and alleys, spying on the neighbourhood children. The image of Mrs. Courtland triggers apprehension in the speaker about her own psychological state -- a fear which masks the anxiety attributable to her father’s absence:

and I am home from the Carnegie Library on Laurier Ave.
with my arms full of G.A. Henty
(what is going to save me from becoming
a bookish prig?)
but my father hasn’t come home. (*LT*, 9)

The final section of "Ottawa and the Valley" brings the speaker's anxiety to a climax as she recalls having to rhyme off by rote the books of the Old Testament. Her distress is palpable as she wails "I am running out of breath / I am bogged down at Ezekiel!" and senses that "THEY ARE ALL LOOKING AT ME!" (*LT*, 16). The relationship between fear, repression and organized religion which is touched on in this poem is fully explored in "Songs for the Bible Belt," the poem which denounces the degradation and manipulation of organized religion.

"Songs for the Bible Belt" and "After a Tea" are the poet's response to the veneration of materialism that she encountered while living in Kitchener-Waterloo. In "After a Tea," from *A Dream of Lilies*, the speaker recognizes that her misery springs from a lack of assertiveness. However, like the bride in "Honeymoon," she is unable to propose any solutions to the spiritual malaise which she observes around her; she can only grumble and document her emotional response:

I always go away, angry-gutted
At further betrayal of self,
And fury-filled that social pressure
Can bring me to heel. (*DL*, 50)

The speaker does not lose her soul in a dramatic struggle between good and evil but, rather, "In a roomful of jellied salads and meringues" (*DL*, 50). The artificial food is, in turn, analogous to the metallic veneer which masks the tea guests' inner corruption:

In their heels and hair-dos and tinted half-moons,
The sure signs of cancer and conformity,

And in their sick eyes the symptoms
 Of life-force channelled
 Into dandelion-destruction. (*DL*, 50)

The women, “the sleek groundhogs of the over-consumptive continent,” have subverted nature privately with their “occasional coital expression of boredom” (*DL*, 50) and publicly with their obsessive destruction of dandelions. The speaker, repulsed by the cloak of materialism draped over the spiritually bereft, tentatively suggests that:

when life is vital and burning with met challenge
 And thrust and try and giving,
 Death then only wins by long waiting. (*DL*, 51)

However, she knows that “here, at tea in Waterloo” the “suburban rot” of conformity and materialism, has irreparably infiltrated the culture (*DL*, 51).

“Songs for the Bible Belt” is a scathing denunciation of middle-class hypocrisy, permeated with anger and resentment. The visceral, garish images in the opening stanza set the tone and purposefully solicit a strong response:

The sign on 401 is a Schneider’s Meats sign,
 an enormous neon-lit troll
 shrieking out of the hillside,
 directions to the Schnapps-and-Schnitzel town. (*LT*, 19)

The once-edenic landscape has been chemically manipulated into sterile terrain where “by truck they spray / death to dandelions” (*LT*, 19). However, now the speaker dares to show her disapproval by allowing the dandelions -- “my protest, bright yellow”

(*LT*, 19) to overtake her lawn. As the natural landscape is suppressed by noxious chemicals, spirituality is displaced by commerce:

Our town!

Everything's for the business!

Is it good for the business! (*LT*, 20)

In the contemporary Sodom and Gomorrah that is Kitchener-Waterloo, the arts are sacrificed to the god of materialism; there are “no Art Galleries, libraries, auditoriums, / theatres, music halls, museums” (*LT*, 21). The blight extends to education, where the youth are taught “neat writing and religion,” and debate is discouraged by the clergy who favour “less ‘free discussion / amongst the laity’” (*LT*, 28). The city is populated by unnatural, vampiric women who anaesthetize and destroy their partners:

wives with hard little faces

and tight little bodies

greet them with kisses of death.

offer freely the aphrodisiacs

of double gins. (*LT*, 29)

The Kitchener-Waterloo poems introduce the morally bereft, intellectually stagnant, woman who commits the most grievous iniquity by not fulfilling her maternal responsibilities, either by not having children at all, or by not nurturing them. Given the poet's strong views on motherhood and child-rearing, the most heinous character in the poem is the woman whose “furniture, floors and china / would be more important than her children” (*LT*, 33).

In themselves, conservative values such as “Stability, security, safety, status quo” are not evil; in fact, they can keep anarchy at bay. In Kitchener-Waterloo, however, such values have been corrupted, thereby propogating the culture of sterility by “marking time, over-protection, denial” (*LT*, 36). The speaker then does what she was previously incapable of -- she boldly offers a prescription for the disease contaminating the city and its inhabitants:

Risk, insecurity, change and adjustment

creativity, inventiveness

.....

loving, giving, building, exploring.

seeking, questioning, growing, producing. (*LT*, 37)

Drawing upon nature and art for inspiration, the speaker demands that the superficial be rejected and counsels her son, “mine own Telemachus,” to “learn from one bird / how to sing” (*LT*, 37).

From the veneration of the false gods of industry, to the suppression of nature, Kitchener-Waterloo, the “sauerkraut city” (*LT*, 36), is a core of depravity where the Ten Commandments are fractured, rather than followed. Recognizing that greed has transformed the Bible Belt into the Money Belt, “Songs for the Bible Belt” is the poet’s requiem for the death of spirituality. The use of antiphony (which alternates between a narrator providing historical background and a reader giving social commentary) parodies that most ancient and sacred of Christian rites, the Mass; at the same time, the technique lends itself to radio broadcast. Actually, after the poem was broadcast on CBC Radio in

1974, the Member of Parliament for Kitchener-Waterloo tabled a complaint on the floor of the House of Commons and threatened to sue both the poet and the CBC; the threat, however, never went beyond the verbal stage.

Just as “Songs for the Bible Belt” was taken from a chapter in the poet’s life, the long poem “May Day Rounds: Renfrew County”²⁸ documents her stretch in the Ottawa Valley backwoods while researching the screenplay *The Best Damn Fiddler From Calabogie to Kaladar*. While the former examines the consequences of affluence, the latter is concerned with the cycle of poverty which is perpetuated by an ineffectual social welfare system. Both poems feature women as main characters, although those in “May Day Rounds: Renfrew County” are the forgotten victims of poverty, rather than the instigators of corruption.

The opening lines describe an edenic landscape in the process of casting off the last vestiges of winter:

Sorrow of the last snows is still in the crevasses
of the hills, humus-scented. And in the damp darkling tangles
of the hepatic-woods, bird-forbidden, but the day
is the may-apple sun come at last to the reeling earth. (*LT*, 41)

The romantic wilderness soon transforms into a rural slum, betokened by the dilapidated buildings that encroach on the landscape. The century-old Clarke farm, the first stop-off for the speaker and Jordan the social worker, has deteriorated into a series of ramshackle buildings with “broken fences, light spaces of missing boards and beams / doors slapping loose against the barn-sides” (*LT*, 41). Inhabiting the farm are the aged Mr. “Job” Clarke,

his wife and their son “the sacrifice / on the mountain” (*LT*, 43). Mr. Clarke and his son are Old Testament figures who are simultaneously symbols of faith and of undeserved suffering. However, even the “Good News” of the New Testament is powerless to combat the tribulations inflicted on Mrs. Clarke who, while praying frantically that the welfare cheques will not be stopped, describes herself in christological terms:

(Christ the Martyr, hear thy servant of the hot-stove
hands wring over this wretched fortune and hearken an old pain
going back into the childhood nails of our hands and our feet).

(*LT*, 42)

Conversely, when Mrs. Clarke realizes “that we have not come to take anything away” (*LT*, 42), her relief is so intense that creative activity is stimulated -- she grows “apples the size of pumpkins” and produces maple syrup when “warm days and cold nights make love and sap comes trickling down” (*LT*, 37). The speaker’s recognition of a fellow artist is reflected in the permanence of the “hundred-and-twenty years of moonlight and sunlight” housed in the “sainted shrine of scarlet geraniums and sweet pink clover” (*LT*, 42). The reality of poverty intrudes on the pleasant scene, however, when “the man coughs behind the curtain” and “all his prayers have gone unanswered” (*LT*, 42). As in Kitchener-Waterloo, money is the “root of all evil” in Renfrew County, albeit its malignancy is manifested differently in a rural setting.

The speaker and Jordan continue the treadmill of their rounds, arriving at the second residence, inhabited by Mrs. Plath and her blind son Eric. Although the Plaths’ circumstances differ from the Clarkes’, they share a commonality in their welfare

dependency. Unlike the ailing Mrs. Clarke, the “brown as a rose-pip berry” (*LT*, 43), Mrs. Plath is an earth mother who presides over a farm brimming with produce at harvest time. Simultaneously, however, she lives the sterile life of a widow “in a two-winged house” which is “too big for two” (*LT*, 43). In the tradition of western Christianity, Eric is the “Son of the Widow;”²⁹ as are both Jesus and Perceval of the Grail romances; however, there is no possibility of either mythic or Christian consolation for Eric:

when he ploughs she walks
lilies of the fields in front of him with a white sheet
tied over her head. (*LT*, 43)

Just as her son is literally blind, Mrs. Plath’s lack of education has made her blind and complacent, a state which is fostered by the social welfare system. Although the Resurrection is subverted with “An Easter of slow exultation struggle” (*LT*, 43), there is a benevolent power watching over the poor. Echoing the Gospel of Luke³⁰, the speaker muses:

(who is it today back there in the bush walks in front
of Eric the Blind with a white sheet tied over her head
to give him light for the clearing and brushing?). (*LT*, 44)

Sadly, it is not Jesus the Christ who accompanies the two on the road to Emmaus, but a metaphorically blind old lady leading a literally blind man.

The decline of Renfrew County’s agrarian society is fully disclosed during the speaker’s visit to “the log-house of the last days of the Timms” (*LT*, 44), the third stop on the rounds. Mrs. Timm’s desperate pleading with Jordan “Would you write that down,

please?” (*LT*, 46) is symptomatic of the bureaucracy’s failure to communicate with its clients. The poem parodies the futility of trying to comprehend the bureaucratic instructions which the illiterate Mrs. Timm must follow in order to be reinstated in the welfare program. Such futility is mirrored in the instructions themselves, which are a hodge-podge of snatches from nursery rhymes, fairy tales, popular culture, official instructions and whimsy.

The speaker’s recognition of creative talent is mirrored in the poem’s movement from the static, stale language of bureaucracy to a language of colour, variety and fluidity. The description of Mrs. Timm’s home-made handicrafts is decidedly enthusiastic:

and therein such a parade-day array of orange
and red and yellow pot-holders with scarlet tulips for trim
and doilies made of string and doilies made of No. 90
doilies made for all occasions coloured crocheted antimacassars
Crown of England doilies, Star doilies, The Queen Mary Doily.

(*LT*, 47)

Realizing that Mrs. Timm’s handiwork is valueless in contemporary society, the speaker’s tone suddenly becomes derisive as she exclaims, “oh, to be greeted on a dull desperate morning with this mardi gras / of roses around the insipid chrome of the dull pop-up toaster” (*LT*, 43).

The last section of the poem switches from a eulogy for forgotten arts to a contemporary re-interpretation of Christian female stereotypes. The last stop of the day is the Darien family home “at the end of the last road at the last road’s end” (*LT*, 48).

Although her brood of thirteen children would seem to indicate fecundity, Mother Darien “bride at sixteen” (*LT*, 48) promotes a domestic culture which fosters indolence and dishonesty. She would allow none of her thirteen children to go to school until she was told “about the baby bonuses if the children / went to school” (*LT*, 48) by the welfare workers.

The Dariens’ twenty-eight year old daughter Margaret uses her literacy skills to manipulate the welfare system, thereby continuing the family tradition. Whispered rumours about Margaret are incorporated into a bawdy children’s rhyme:

Margaret Margaret has a mystery
a child by default to the virgin who waits
Beryl had a baby   sister Beryl of the Busy Bushes
and wouldn’t say if it was Tom, Dick or Harry’s. (*LT*, 49)

Both Margaret and Beryl are parodies of sacred women; the former has subverted the message of the Virgin Mary, the spiritual mother of the faithful, and the latter does not give birth to a hero, sired by a god, but a bastard whose father is unidentified. The conflation of the Old Testament story of Pharoah’s daughter discovering Moses, with the Virgin Mary of the New Testament, symbolizes the degeneration of the maternal icon:

the baby on the grassy ditch there
crying to the heavens which fortunately was Margaret coming after
child in her arms and that slow angelic smile in the night
waking and smiling at the moon and the sleeping child. (*LT*, 50)

There is no sacred promise, however; rather, the profane is invoked and sterility vanquishes creativity when Margaret forges the baby's birth certificate in order to obtain illegal welfare payments. Unlike Moses and Jesus, the icons of Judeo-Christianity, the bastard child's potential is stunted by the society into which he is born; he "never grew and now at five is still in diapers / and wets down his legs and speaks of nothing all the time" (*LT*, 50).

The bleak vision of "May Day Rounds: Renfrew County" implicitly suggests that welfare payments foster indolence. Simultaneously, both the bureaucracy and the education system have been infected with the malaise and cannot manage the root cause of poverty:

Darrien is the name of the isthmus between
two unfathomable oceans
and Margaret's window looks out on the arrogance
of missionaries, rescuers, educators. (*LT*, 50)

"May Day Rounds: Renfrew County" documents the failure of the social assistance system in its imposition of an urban construct on a rural culture. The poem argues that a bureaucracy can only, at best, provide a "band-aid" solution to economic problems, and actually encourages the cycle of poverty. With its focus on the dearth of education, the poem suggests that a society which fosters complacency must be overhauled at the grassroots level to refocus on providing accessible education.

The above-cited poems utilize place to provide a framework within which the poet makes a social statement. Finnigan has also written poems informed by place, but with a

view to articulating her love of place. For example, the Kingston area has inspired several works. She has great affection for the area and, although born in Ottawa, has spent much of her life in and around Kingston; she attended Queen's University, was married in Kingston and her three children were born there.

"City Stones, Country Stones," the fourth section in *Living Together*, is subtitled "Kingston Poems" in honour of the city. The poems are personal and reflective, suggesting a world of permanence and tradition from which the poet gains sustenance. One such poem, "Skating on Navy Bay," evokes the city's exalted past as a means of appreciating the simplicity of the present. The speaker proudly exclaims "the North-West Passage is here, / here amongst the Thousand Islands" (*LT*, 84). The city's exotic architecture, featuring "Spires and minarets of India" and "silver-paved" streets (*LT*, 84), locates Kingston in the tradition of the great cities of the world. In Canada, however, the natural landscape frames and enhances the urban:

In maple leaves and fronds of ferns,
in cat-tail stems
are tangled
the cities
of voyageurs' dreams. (*LT*, 84)

Although winter has turned the city into a "sepulchre" and "the lake is a crystal of frozen voices / and tears" (*LT*, 85) hope and continuity are found in nature:

but the frog breathes below
in channels of mud

and vigilant the stalled fins
of the fish. (*LT*, 85)

In celebration of life's triumph over death, the speaker and her companion commence an ice dance "under the hypnotic spell / of sun" (*LT*, 85). The pair's ultimate fusion with the winter landscape results in an encounter with the divine as they become "absorbed by the flow of ice / We walk on water" (*LT*, 86). The balance between contemplation and engagement that the poet chronicles in "Skating on Navy Bay" reflects the balance between nature and the urban found in that particular setting.

Without a doubt, however, the place having the greatest influence on Finnigan's works is the Ottawa Valley. The monumental suite of poems "The Valley of the Outaouais," featured in *A Reminder of Familiar Faces*, is the first of many pieces set in the region. The suite chronicles the early settlement of the Ottawa Valley, as well as the legends, tales of the lumber industry and anecdotes told by the old timers, many of which were culled from the oral histories. The suite begins with a meditation on the early Scottish settlers' pilgrimage to the Promised Land, an event as significant as the Israelites' conquest of foreign lands:

Our journey then from Montreal to MacNab Township began,
eighty-four pilgrims to the land of Goshen and Canaan
breaking a tortuous trail through tall timbers³¹

Attempting to keep at bay the terrors of the wilderness, the settlers sing "Scottish hymns in tears / and Gaelic sung" (*RFF*, 45). However, just as the new world is an alien place to the settlers, they, in turn, are perceived as strange creatures by the indigenous inhabitants

of the vast and rugged landscape:

the Indians and the animals came out of the forest
and looked at us
mutations
crawled up out of the ocean. (*RFF*, 45)

In contrast, the Irish couple recognize that nature worship must supplement traditional rites to create a theology appropriate to the new landscape -- they therefore bring with them vestiges of a magical, mystical landscape which they graft onto the new. In the new Eden they are "Adam and Eve / at the beginning of Time," as they consecrate their "first child born in the wilderness" (*RFF*, 47) in a ceremony which mirrors a primitive rite:

so we carried
him out into the clearing
down by the river's sound
and we walked around
and held him up
so God could see him. (*RFF*, 47)

The consecrating ceremony combines Christianity and paganism, thereby amalgamating European culture with the Canadian landscape, to form a new tradition:

behold, god of the river,
our love-child
our first born.

a holy child. (*RFF*, 47)

The focus on the humble origins of the early settlers throughout the suite emphasizes the poet's belief that courage and determination were more important than pedigree in the new land. For example, on board a ship packed with poor immigrants, which sailed from England to Canada, was one "James Gillies" whose son "grew up to become / Lumber Baron Gillies" (*RFF*, 53). In Canada, in this case the Ottawa Valley, the landscape was integral to the survival and prosperity of the settlers -- from the people who farmed the land to those who made their fortunes from lumber. With its architectural heritage of mills and sites, shanties, lumber barons' mansions, as well as a cultural heritage of story, song, folktale and legend, the lumber era would leave an indelible imprint on the physical and cultural landscapes of the Ottawa Valley.

The poem moves from the origins of the lumber barons, "who," Finnigan believes, "were giants in their own way" (21 January 1999), to the catalogue of Ottawa Valley giants. The legendary strongmen and giants who emerged from the lumber era quickly became one of the writer's symbols for the country. She theorizes that the ruggedness of the Canadian landscape demanded giants:

As with many poetic statements, the truth is fundamental. I do believe that in our pioneer times there was a functioning morphology amongst males; not only was there unlimited space for growth on many levels but survival in early days in the Valley depended basically on physical strength, endurance, and fitness. All three were required to wrest the land from the forest and to run a farm from dawn to dusk; all three were required to "make logs" from the giant pines and then to raft

them down river.³²

As a child, Finnigan heard stories from an age when giants were a vital part of the culture; every village and town had its strongman and contests between the giants were part of day-to-day living. Not only did she hear stories about the giants, but her family had its own giants in NHL hockey star Frank Finnigan and Grandfather Horner “the strongman of Radford.” However, according to Finnigan “the lines are fudged between physical and metaphorical giants.” For example, Frank Finnigan’s good friend, Harry McLean of Merrickville, made a tremendous impact on the Finnigan children and their friends. The flamboyant McLean “was an alcoholic who drove a giant Packard and threw money around. [He] was a giant Canadian who built all kinds of things.” It is therefore small wonder that Finnigan always felt that “somehow in my background and psyche there was [always] a lurking giant” (21 January 1999).

“[T]he land needed giants” is a poetic catalogue of Ottawa Valley giants Alexander Macdonnell, Mountain Jack Thompson, Black Pat Ryan, the Frost Brothers, Big Dan and little Dan Gahan, Andrew White, Springer McKechnie, Big John Horner, Gentleman Paddy Dillon and Big Joe Mufferaw (Joseph Montferrand). The proliferation of giants in the Ottawa Valley landscape is explained succinctly as “the land needed giants / and so it bred giants” (*RFF*, 56). Over the years, the stories of the giants’ exploits were exaggerated to the extent that some were to become legends. The story of the Giant of Cantley, Quebec is an excellent example of such transmutation:

when he died

they had to wake him

in the barn
 because the coffin
 wouldn't go through the doors
 of his house. (*RFF*, 56)

The stories were expanded in the 1984 publication *Giants of Canada's Ottawa Valley*, which brings together the historical and legendary giants, previously found in Finnigan's poems and oral histories. Using a narration which combines legend, fact and fiction, the author records the lives of giants who have passed into the realm of myth, as well as transfers from oral to written form, the stories and legends of these strong men.

Finnigan interviewed Ottawa Valley songwriter and storyteller Bernie Bedore for her CBC Radio program *There's No Good Times Left -- None At All!* Bedore had concocted stories about the giant river boss Joseph Montferrand, whose life story had been documented by French-Canadian historian Benjamin Sulte in his work *L'Histoire de Joseph Montferrand* (1899).

In the long prose selection "'Do Ya Mind the Time?'" from *This Series Has Been Discontinued*, the poet skillfully intertwines a chronicle of Bedore's life with actual stories from his repertoire, with the result that storyteller and stories become inseparable. The opening lines provide the background, suitably replete with the exaggeration and extravagance which marked Bedore's style:

Badour heard all the stories,
 in two languages,
 double vision, nuances of ghosts,

in the lobby of his father's hotel. (*TSD*, 9)

The stanzas in the poem alternate between Finnigan's poetic mythmaking and stories from Bedore's corpus. One famous story recounts the exploits of strongman Mick Culhane:

"Do ya mind the time Big Mick Culhane

came in from Rockingham

.....

and him saying to the people

"Come with me, me lads. I think

I kilt a bear with me bare hands!" (*TSD*, 9)

In an effort to provide verisimilitude, Bedore's stories begin with either "Do ya mind the time" or "Remember." However incredible they may be, Bedore's tall tales and anecdotes of giants, rivermen and lumber barons enrich the cultural identity of the region. Ultimately, however, the poem is about storytelling. Although the speaker recognizes that stories transmitted orally are apt to be embellished, "as Badour's ears got bigger / the stories grew and grew" (*TSD*, 9), she too is complicit in the process:

In the times in the valley

when the hills were mountains,

and the men were giants

and the horses Pegasus,

Badour heard the stories. (*TSD*, 10)

When the poet transforms the hotel lobby into a Golden Age inhabited by fabulous creatures, she locates the storyteller within the realm of legend and provides an ancient pedigree for the region. Bedore fuses the mysticism of the old world and the landscape of the new in his capacity as the “tribal recorder” who:

kept the Valley Book of Kells
 illuminated with mists from Newfoundland
 spirits from the caves at Clontarf
 haunts from Ryan’s Mountain. (*TSD*, 12)

The preoccupation with the past continues in “O’Kane Keilly,” a long prose piece which provides a snapshot of life in the Ottawa Valley at the turn of the century. The narrator, O’Kane Keilly, is a composite of the vanishing “old timers” that Finnigan met during her Ottawa Valley taping sessions. Keilly and his life story are an amalgamation of the stories, replete with humour, anecdotes, folklore and legends, that Finnigan would have heard while recording the oral histories. For the Canadian-born Keilly, the old country is but a hazy memory:

My father came from Ireland
 but when, my god, I couldn’t tell ya,
 a long time ago. (*TSD*, 12)

Keilly’s recollections of leaving school at age eleven to “get down to work / or get hungry” (*TSD*, 13), along with his disclosure that “I’ve worked for seventy-seven years / I’ve had a good time” (*TSD*, 13), are evidence of the strong work ethic fostered by the landscape. However, Keilly recognizes that both the landscape and the work ethic have

declined in contemporary society, and when he rhymes off the genealogy of the actual families (the Hunts, Blakes, Maloneys and Lynches) who settled and farmed the area, he invokes the values of the past and ensures that an accurate historical record is maintained.

Finnigan recognizes the invaluable contribution of the storytellers toward preserving the history and developing the legends of the Ottawa Valley. Therefore, in homage to the storytelling tradition, Finnigan set part of her play *Songs from Both Sides of the River*, from the 1992 publication *Wintering Over*, in “Carl’s Kitchen.” The colourful Carl Jennings welcomed storytellers, poets and musicians into the enormous family home at Sheenboro, Quebec where they would sit in the kitchen, play music and tell tales. Finnigan describes this last “ramblin’ house” in the Ottawa Valley as “a treasure trove beyond all imaginings” (28 July 1999). Jennings’ own stories feature that unique combination of nostalgia, bombast and humour, which are typical of the oral histories, as the following excerpt from *Songs from Both Sides of the River* indicates:

My father told me about the first Chapeau Fair
away back in its beginnings. Black Joe Venosse
rolled a great big pumpkin down the mountain
from his farm to show at Chapeau Fair. And Father
Renaud brought his great big bull. At noon on the
first day the bull got loose and ate the pumpkin
And that was the end of the Chapeau Fair. (*WO*, 109)

The storytelling technique also influenced Finnigan when she combined Sulte’s biographical details about Joseph Montferrand with her own imaginative soaring in the

long prose piece “A Legend from the Valley.” The opening lines testify to her conviction that Canada is an appropriate setting for legend:

Once upon a time
in the Not-so-long-ago
of a beautiful new country named Canada
there lived a giant named Joe Mufferaw. (*TSD*, 98)

Unlike traditional giants, Montferrand’s origins are not supernatural; rather, he is nurtured by the majestic Canadian landscape:

Joe was born on a farm north of Montreal
In the tall forests and long fields of his father’s farm
there was room to grow as big as his heart desired. (*TSD*, 98)

The giant finds a suitable employer in Daniel McLachlan “King of the Timber Barons” a giant in his own way. McLachlan, who lives “in a stone castle on the Ottawa River” (*TSD*, 99), is a benevolent king conjured up from medieval romance:

He had two thousand men working for him in the bush.
seven hundred teams of horses and six twelve-horse hitches.
He owned ten farms around Arnprior and Carleton Place
where he grew the food and grain to feed
his two thousand men and his seven hundred teams of horses.

(*TSD*, 99)

Although Montferrand becomes famous for his bravery and physical prowess, he is more important as an emblem for Canada. Finnigan believes that “Montferrand, the

giant riverman from Quebec who worked in the lumber camps of Ontario for the Scottish timber barons, is a unifying symbol for Canada” (22 October 1998). Montferrand uses his impressive physical presence to maintain the peace between warring factions, thereby promoting cohesion and unity:

At Finnerty’s Camp the Poles fought the Finns.

At Foley’s Camp the French fought the Indians

.....

Joe threw a few Irishmen over Ben Bulben Mountain

and a few Scots into the white water at Ferguson’s Falls.

After that, peace reigned in all the lumbercamps. (*TSD*, 100)

The framework of historical accuracy is overlaid by legend in “The famous battle between the Good and Evil Giants” (*TSD*, 103) -- the battle between Montferrand and the evil Windigo. In its description of supernatural feats of strength and endurance, the battle chronicle evokes a Heroic Age, in the same way that Bedore’s stories evoke a Golden Age. As “war lord” Monferrand enlists the aid of the other Ottawa Valley giants; the catalogue of Titans which follows is designed to elicit pride in regional heritage:

Mountain Jack Thomson

of Portage du Fort, the Seven Frost Brothers of Pembroke,

the Twelve MacDonnells of Sand Point,

the Giant of Cantley, Big John Horner of Radford,

Black Pat Ryan of Pontiac Village,

John Joe Turner of Quyon. (*TSD*, 104)

Both real and legendary characters from the Ottawa Valley oral histories attend the festivities celebrating the defeat of the Windigo, and echoes of chivalric romance merge with the indigenous landscape:

Dinny O'Brien from the Burnt Lands of Huntley,

Pussy Paddy Maloney from Mount Saint Patrick

the Wild Donnellys from Calumet Island,

the Witches of Waltham and Plum Hollow.

Big Mick Culhane from the Opeongo Line. (*TSD*, 104)

By vanquishing the Windigo, Montferrand becomes "celebrated as a giant-killer" (*TSD*, 105), thereby assuring his place in Canadian legend; however, he becomes even more famous as the progenitor of Canadian hockey:

"Well," said the six sons of Joe Mufferaw.

"Father was 'in wood.' And he always worked
in snow and ice."

And they, too, went into wood.

They, too, went to work in snow and ice.

They became the first Montreal Canadiens

and giants in their own way. (*TSD*, 106)

The poet galvanizes regional identity by linking the giants with the lumber industry and hockey. In turn, the legendary pedigree given to Canada's most famous hockey team acknowledges the sport's indelible imprint on the national consciousness.

From an early piece, such as “Grey is the Forelock Now of the Irishman” to “Rink” from *Second Wind; Second Sight*, the hockey theme threads itself throughout Finnigan’s poetry. Initially, “Rink” chronicles the poet’s painful recollections of her brother John who, despite a congenital heart defect, played:

Road hockey, pond hockey, pick-up hockey,
river hockey, backyard hockey,
in simulation of his All-Star father. (*SWSS*, 26)

Pitifully, “his enlarging heart grew” (*SWSS*, 26) forcing him to quit the sport and sell game programmes while his father plays hockey “on the ice below / for an ailing Air Force Team.” Although John dies “at age thirty / in the arms of the old hockey player” (*SWSS*, 27), the poet’s faith, and the fact that “Rink” is addressed to her grandchildren, temper her sorrow:

right above Canada
God made the first rink in heaven.
put up golden goal-posts,
blew the opening whistle
on an eternal hockey game. (*SWSS*, 27)

Hockey has superceded national mythology, to become part of Christian mythology; at the same time, the spiritual renewal which the poet sought so desperately in earlier works, is now available in her later years.

The hallmark of Finnigan’s poetry is its eclecticism, an eclecticism based on her knowledge that routine events and everyday settings are sources of art. She has

experimented with many poetic forms, and has employed themes ranging from the intensely personal to the intensely public. It is therefore appropriate that the final comments on Finnigan's poetry should come from the dramatic monologue "Wintering Over," the piece which merges the personal and public elements so critical to Finnigan's poetry. The poem is narrated by Upper Canadian pioneer Abigail Edey who subsisted in a log cabin during the winter of 1827, while her husband worked in the bush to achieve "something better / for our children" (*WO*, 16). In the following passage, the poet draws from the experience of the early immigrants to the Ottawa Valley, as well as her own personal experience:

I am here. This is me, Abigail Edey on the Ottawa
in this log fortress, cradling a child in the snowdrifts
of her husband's absence, alone in the middle
of concentric circles of desolation. (*WO*, 14)

Abigail's query "'Where am I?'" and the response "'You foolish woman! You're not even on the map yet!'" (*WO*, 14), reflects the trepidation the poet experienced while on her own journey. In the final analysis, however, both Abigail Edey and Joan Finnigan can proclaim "I tell you I am not just a survivor here / I am an achiever" (*WO*, 40).

PROSE (ORAL HISTORIES)

The Ottawa Valley is distinguished from the rest of Canada by its geography, Irish influence and the lumber industry, as well as its rich tradition of oral history. Joan Finnigan has tapped into each of these characteristics as a source of inspiration in her writings, but has achieved the most public recognition for her Ottawa Valley oral histories. The writer is convinced that oral history and poetry are connected by language -- quite often, an anecdote heard in an oral history interview would stimulate her poetic ear and result in a poem. Two long poems in particular, "The Valley of the Outaouais" and "A Legend From the Valley," which are featured in *A Reminder of Familiar Faces*, owe their genesis to the oral histories. Finnigan describes her motivation for recording the oral histories: "I wished my poetic ear to be enchanted. And, oh, it has been! And often by 'men and women who do not read or write but speak their own words'" (LWH, 14).

In the early seventies, Finnigan ventured into oral history when she interviewed family members Bert Horner of Shawville and his wife, Janet Nesbitt Horner, for CBC Radio. The resultant tape became part of the first in-depth CBC radio documentary on the Ottawa Valley, a one hour-and-a-half program produced by Bill Terry entitled *There's No Good Times Left -- None At All!* which aired twice on CBC Radio's *Anthology*. When Finnigan began researching and writing the oral histories, she viewed the project as a way to "[define] my own identity, the Valley identity and, ultimately, the Canadian identity. Starting with the oral histories, I was trying to define a region historically and geographically in terms of its people, lumbering saga, cradle of hockey and centre of

original wits and entertainers” (22 October 1998). Under the umbrella of creating an awareness of the unique identity of the Ottawa Valley and its cross-section of people, she also wished to preserve the language and the indigenous humour, to move the oral tradition to print in order to preserve the history, language, legends, folktales, folklore, folk-verses and songs and, finally, to entertain.

In an article on oral history, Finnigan writes, “very often in life great decisions are made after a mysterious coalescing of conscious, subconscious, maybe even preconscious factors. I cannot remember exactly when it was I resolved to do the oral history of the Ottawa Valley. But I do know that I held this resolve in my subconscious for a number of years and that this resolve was often brought to the surface by people saying to me, ‘Joan, you must tape the oldtimers before they are all gone.’”³³ Finnigan’s decision to begin the recordings was also prompted by her experiencing “empty-nest” syndrome following the departure of her grown children from the family home in Kingston. Finally, the satisfaction and enjoyment she had experienced while writing the screenplay for *The Best Damn Fiddler from Calabogie to Kaladar* added further motivation to the project.

Although oral history societies have sprung up all over North America, the debate continues as to whether oral history provides a genuine record of the past. For her part, Finnigan considers oral history “the important colorful theatre, the human interest additive, the sociological underlay of academic history.”³⁴ During the course of her work, she learned the value of story-telling as a way for people to come together in bonds of roots, history and laughter. She believes, “We have only creativity and imagination left

with which to make our stand; and creativity and imagination are reinforced in oral history, both for teller and listener.”³⁵ Perhaps the essence of oral history can be found in the following titles of collections and interviews: *Some of the stories I told you were true*, *Legends, Legacies & Lies*, “If You Can’t Print the Truth, Print the Legend,” and “There is Truth in Every Legend.”

From the beginning, Finnigan wanted to chronicle the oral histories differently than had previously been done in Canada. Because she was interested primarily in the in-depth interview, the life story, she developed her own technique in oral history recording. Instead of focussing on a theme, such as the lumber industry, and interviewing people solely with that theme in mind, she examined the individual storyteller in depth, within a thematic framework. However, if the interviewee added additional material, such as an anecdote, a joke or a folktale, it was retained in the published interview. Although the stories in an oral history interview may be either experienced or remembered, it is imperative that they be told by people “in their own words.” Finnigan was therefore unwilling to substitute sanitized versions of the recorded interviews in the printed versions; she felt that the colourful language used by the old timers, as well as the sometimes bawdy stories which they told, were an integral part of the lively spirit of the Ottawa Valley.

In 1981, Finnigan’s first oral history, *Some of the stories I told you were true*, was published. Because she wanted the Ottawa Valley lumber industry to constitute the main theme of the book, she interviewed people from all social classes who were connected to the lumber business -- timber barons and wives of timber barons who were still alive,

descendants of the timber barons, shantymen and rivermen. Although each person interviewed was connected to the lumber industry in some way, the use of the in-depth interview resulted in the interviewee emerging as a real character, almost as if he or she were a character in a short story. Phoebe McCord, who married into a family of “lumbermen, bushmen -- Egan’s men”³⁶ is one such person. Her dissertation on “The Good Woman” in which she candidly comments on her life as schoolteacher, lay preacher and politician, was so popular that Finnigan reworked it into the short story “The Cherished Woman,” featured in *Dancing At The Crossroads*.

Part-time philosopher and mystic O’Kayne Payne represents the type of Irish-Canadian who had worked as a young man in the Ottawa Valley lumber camps in the twenties. The opening paragraph of Payne’s interview “I Can See Better Than Lots of People with Two Eyes” describes his response to a horrible accident in which he was badly mutilated, a response which typifies the stoicism of the Ottawa Valley old timers:

I had my head caught in a hay baler, July 9, 1965. A dandy, dandy. Knocked me eye out, knocked me ear off. But I’m all right; never knocked me out . . . I lost an eye. But I get along fine -- I can see better than lots of people with two eyes.

(SS, 275)

Payne’s difficult life contrasts dramatically with the incredible affluence of the lumber barons. The following recollection of Tommy Barnett in “The Last of the Timber Baron Line” highlights this social discrepancy:

Why, I can remember my father starting off to the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto with both his own horses and my uncle’s horses, two whole carloads of horses

competing against horses from all over the continent and coming back with all kinds of ribbons. (SS, 130)

Mrs. Charles Liberty's interview, "Eighty-Seven Years A-Sewing" chronicles her experiences, eeking out a living by sewing gowns, often until her hands bled, for the wives of the timber barons and such social luminaries as "Lady Laurier, Mrs. M.J. O'Brien and Lady Grey" (SS, 144). Mrs. Liberty's story is proof that social inequity is not confined to men, but rather cuts across gender lines.

Some of the stories I told you were true highlights the disparity between the social classes which was fostered by the lumber industry. Although the social standing of each person interviewed varies, their stories have many things in common, including an intense nostalgia for the past, as well as a fascination with heritage and folklore. Perhaps the collection's most critical contribution is its glimpse into a social structure which has disappeared with the rise of technology. O'Kayne Payne speaks for all the old timers when he succinctly assesses the loss of community in the Ottawa Valley:

I'm disappointed in the country right now. People used to be friendly, neighbourly, in the old days. TV and cars have ruined it all. When it was horse and buggy and you met on the road, you'd stop and pass the time of day. Now everybody is too busy making cash, making money. (SS, 276)

Humour is another critical element of the oral histories. One day in 1981, while Finnigan was driving home and recalling some of the stories from a recording session, she found herself almost doubled up with laughter. She suddenly realized that very often while returning from these sessions, she was in fact "laughing all the way home"

(LWH, 15). The result of this insight was the 1984 publication *Laughing All The Way Home*, which is filled with stories, reminiscences, legends and tall tales imbued with the special humour of the Ottawa Valley old timers. In Finnigan's words, that special humour "is multi-form, elusive, and often invisible to the naked eye. One of its most priceless human qualities is that it dwells most often in the imagination. It is frequently symbiotic with the tragic root and, in its best form, an integral part of the philosophy root"

(LWH, 16).

This latter quality is exemplified by Father Tom Hunt's anecdote in the interview "That Makes Him Related to Both of Us":

And one day I was going out Wellington Street on the streetcar and an Irishman got on away out at Britannia. The streetcar was full and he looked around for a seat and there weren't any but only one very fashionable lady sitting with her poodle on the seat beside her. So Pat, nothing daunted, went down and picked up the dog, put him on the floor and sat down beside the fashionable lady.

"Madam," he asked politely, "what breed of dog would that be?"

The fashionable lady, disgusted with the Irishman, replied, "He's half monkey and half Irish!"

"Oh, begorrah, is that right!" Pat exclaimed. "That makes him related to both of us!" (LLL, 21)

While taping for her CBC documentary, *There's No Good Times Left -- None At All!*, Finnigan was intrigued by the yarns she heard about master storyteller Dinny

O'Brien of the Burnt Lands of Huntley. Several years later, when she began to search in earnest for O'Brien, she discovered that "'the legend-in-his-lifetime' had died forty years previously!" (*LWH*, 30). Luckily, however, she came across people who had collected stories from O'Brien's repertoire, which are included in "There's a Haunt in Me Bottle!" Two of the collectors were lawyers, and when they recounted their favourite O'Brien story, it had a decidedly jurisprudential slant; their story began, "One time Dinny O'Brien was being sued by a cattle dealer from Ottawa by the name of Scharfe" (*LWH*, 30). Likewise, when Bernie Bedore, the son of local innkeepers, told an O'Brien story, it would begin, "I was standing in the bar one time . . ." (*LWH*, 32). The O'Brien example is of special interest to the genesis of the oral history tradition for two reasons: first, it confirms that the story is more important than the storyteller and second, it illustrates how different perspectives, even self-interest, can colour a story.

Finnigan's third oral history publication, *Legacies, Legends & Lies*, followed in 1985. Once again, she interviewed Phoebe McCord, whose story had appeared in *Some of the Stories I Told You Were True*. In "Going to Heaven on Dandelion Wine" Mrs. McCord recounts gossip, legends, snippets of local history and comic stories about the lumber camps, high society and politics in the Ottawa Valley. The interview opens with the nostalgic tone which typifies the oral histories, while hearkening to the glory days of the lumber industry and the Ottawa Valley social scene:

Lady Napoleon Brinkman was very much a leading light in the social hierarchy of early Ottawa in the twenties. I feel sorry for the women who have to try to write the social columns in Ottawa today, for there is nothing to write about. But in the

days of Booth and Eddy, the Popes and the Blackburns, the Southams and the Brinckmans, high society was very colourful and nobody had to dig for a story . . . they belonged to the social class which could say, "If you need to ask the price of a yacht, you can't afford it." (LLL, 23)

Another highlight of the collection is "The Best Damn Builder from Calabogie to Kaladar," the title being a send-up of Finnigan's award-winning screenplay. In the prelude to the story, Finnigan theorizes on the genesis of myth. She writes, "Indeed, just as the image of the hockey hero succeeds from the image of the lumbering hero, so the image of the crooked developer may emerge from the earlier 'robber' timber baron" (LLL, 85). During the tapings, Finnigan heard stories about the exploits of Charlie "Chain-Saw" Channigan who specialized in building defective homes then disappeared before they collapsed. Finnigan fleshed out the character from the original taped stories, and developed a story, ostensibly told by an employee of Channigan. As the following passage demonstrates, Channigan is one of Finnigan's most memorable and quirky characters:

Charlie was a little guy who always smoked a "cigah" -- an expensive "cigah." And he lisped. Lithped. Otherwise Charlie was not at all what you'd expect a business man to look like. Or even a con man. He was a slob . . . But, all the time, he was taking it in, taking it in. He missed nothing. (LLL, 86)

In its combination of truth and tale, "The Best Damn Builder from Calabogie to Kaladar" exemplifies the interconnectedness of oral history and fiction; as a result, it is included as a short story in *down the unmarked roads*.

Finnigan's fourth collection of oral histories, *Tell Me Another Story*, was published in 1988. Where the first oral history focussed on stories from the lumbering saga, and the next two were collections of Ottawa Valley humour, this publication relocates the stories within the framework of Canadian myth. Even so, the lumber industry's influence in and on the region is inescapable; the collection includes excerpts from a three-hundred page memoir by Edgar Boyle, who established two pulp and paper companies, to tales of the twilight days of the lumber business told by Charlie Kenny, president of the last lumber company to be absorbed into the corporations.

The focus of *Tell Me Another Story* is on heroes, and along with the legendary giants of the lumber industry, contemporary heroes emerge from the hockey rinks, mines and law offices to play their part in Canadian mythology. A highlight of the collection is the interview "Yes, I Was a Sixty-Minute Man" of Frederick W. "Cyclone" Taylor, of the Renfrew Millionaires, who recounts the glory days of his hockey career. Taylor, an all-Canadian hero who played both hockey and lacrosse, describes his hockey career using that mixture of elegy and bombast, particular to the oral histories:

Yes, I was a "sixty-minute man." We all were in those days I wouldn't want to make any comparisons with the players today. I can only say I wouldn't want to play in this game today. For one thing, you're only getting out there for two or three minutes . . . But we were on for sixty minutes and we paced ourselves for that sixty minutes. And we could go!³⁷

The wit and sharp tongue of The Honourable Charlotte Whitton, Mayor of Ottawa in the sixties, have become part of local legend. The Honourable Lloyd Francis's

recollections in “A Woman Without a Single Unspoken Thought” of the volatile and passionate “Lady Mayor,” describe a woman of heroic stature, despite her diminutive build:

She could never be neutral or moderate about something. She was attacking it violently or vigourously supporting. She was never neutral on anything. Jack Lloyd described her as “a woman without a single unspoken thought.” I think there’s some truth to that. (*TAS*, 153)

Tallying the Tales of the Old Timers, Finnigan’s fifth oral history collection, was published in the spring of 1999. The collection contains previously unpublished interviews, as well as the familiar archival and original photos. Of particular interest is “Sing and Be Happy,” in which the late Russell D. “Rusty” Leach explains how he spent six years collecting the old songs of the Ottawa Valley, described by Finnigan as “an incomparable treasury of our heritage.”³⁸ The genesis of Leach’s project parallels Finnigan’s work on the oral histories:

I believe it was the spring of 1978 when I started collecting these old songs in the Ottawa Valley here, the old logging songs and poems that people had written around here, eh? I didn’t know how to go about it at the time. I just wrote them all down and I got permission from the people to use their names. It took six years to collect them. I thought I’d do it in a couple of months. I could still do another six years of songs. (*TT*, 177)

Leach’s interview is also notable in that he debunks the romantic aura surrounding the lumber industry. His revelation that the loggers and shantymen “were singing about *The*

Tart from Turtle Creek . . . And Bess the Blacksmith's Cross-Eyed Daughter and The Black River Whore" (TT, 179), as well as his assessment of the mighty lumber barons, reveal a cynicism unprecedented in the oral histories:

I hear lots of stories about how wonderful the old timber barons was. They were the most hypocritical, money-grubbing bunch of bastards that you ever seen in your life. J.R. Booth or whoever. And when you died in the bush! There's stories of loggers getting killed on the job in the middle of the winter . . . and they just wrapped them up in a grey blanket and pulled them up into a tree and let them freeze. (TT, 180)

Leach's recollections of "life in the bush" present a challenge to the traditional, romantic portrait of the lumber barons as benevolent kings, maintaining the welfare of their workers. As well, his cynicism reflects a contemporary re-evaluation of the lumber industry, and provides an excellent example of how such stories can evolve simultaneously with popular social trends.

Apart from being a collector of songs, Leach was both poet and mythmaker. His "creation myth of The Ottawa Valley, 1980" celebrates the regional landscape which evolved from a barren landscape to form a new Eden:

And the bleak and desolate mantled land
Cast off its cloak of crystals,
With its burden lost, the brown earth tossed
And threw up its craggy vestals.

The emerald waters filled each lake
 And the hills with pine and maple,
 While the deer and moose and the beaver came
 to feed on its boundless table.

As nature moved through the verdant stands
 With a diamond pen took tally.
 She smiled and said, "'Tis my best so far.
 'Twill be called the Ottawa Valley.'" (77, 184)

Leach's interview provides a meeting place for the collection and creation of story: by its very nature, collection inspires imitation, or creation. Collecting stories certainly inspired Finnigan's creative impulse, as evidenced by the extensive by-products of the oral histories. Initially, the stories Finnigan heard from relatives and friends only incidentally provided the material for several early poems set in the Ottawa Valley, which were concerned primarily with landscape. However, with the publication of *Living Together*, followed by *A Reminder of Familiar Faces, This Series Has Been Discontinued* and *Wintering Over*, the oral histories were rendered into poetry, and transformed into literature. The oral history interviews also formed the core of the collections "*I come from the Valley*" as well as *Witches, Ghosts and Loups-Garous*, the latter inspired by the stories of fairies, banshees and hauntings told to Finnigan by the superstitious shantymen from the backwoods of the Ottawa Valley. Finally, several of the short stories in her two collections, *Dancing at the Crossroads* and *down the unmarked roads*, are based on oral

history interviews.

For the last twenty years, Finnigan has written extensively about her experiences taping the old timers and preserving the stories of the Ottawa Valley. She has also lectured on the oral histories in academic circles and at conferences, and has written numerous essays for historical societies, scholarly publications and newspapers. In 1980, she was the a keynote speaker at a conference in Cork, Ireland, on the oral history tradition in North America and Ireland.

Perhaps the appeal of the oral histories is in part due to the incursion of technology and the resultant demise of storytelling in contemporary society. As Finnigan writes in the introduction to *Some of the stories I told you were true*, "The land of the macho men and the women 'who were glad of it' is now invaded by craft shops, art galleries, museums . . . The lumbering hero evolved into the hockey hero and is now I fear emerging as the High Tech Exec" (SS, 4). The incredible stories of personal valour and larger-than-life heroes, told by the old timers, make the title of that first early taping, *There's No Good Times Left -- None At All!* an appropriate moniker for the oral history segment of Finnigan's literary career.

PROSE (FICTION)

From the age of nine, Joan Finnigan has been writing both fiction and poetry, and it now appears that the wheel has turned full circle. In the last four years, she has published two collections of short stories, *Dancing at the Crossroads* in 1995 and *down the unmarked roads* in 1997, as well as the poetry collection *Second Wind; Second Sight* in 1998. Finnigan believes that the two genres trigger one another to the extent that she can simultaneously write a short story and a poem.

The fiction and poetry share common elements, including a concern with defining place, and a concern with defining female “types.” With respect to the former, the short stories are set in the Ottawa Valley, in tribute to what Finnigan describes as “the rootedness of belonging and . . . a passionate love of the landscape and the region” (20 July 1999). As in the poetry, the “naming” of cities, towns, villages, lakes and rivers is the writer’s attempt to give authenticity to the regional. Additionally, Finnigan believes that such precise delineation of place is “almost a preservation thing. It may be to differentiate ourselves from the Americans, because I feel strongly that we’re being swallowed up [by American culture]” (20 July 1999). Although Finnigan has been accused of being “too Canadian,” she believes that she has a mission to legitimize Canada as a setting for literary works.

The short stories also feature a predominance of female characters, both admirable and distasteful. However, in contrast to the cold, sterile woman of the poetry, the fiction introduces the fertile, creative woman who is both loved and admired by men. Finnigan

examines both types of women in her fiction perhaps because at several times in her life, circumstances have placed her between these two polarities. Another consideration is related to the writer's attempt to define her relationship with her mother, a complex woman who was both warm and aloof.

While Finnigan's poetry can easily be classified according to themes, the fiction is more difficult to categorize. Several of the short stories replicate the oral histories in their combination of regional history, genealogy, autobiographical material and anecdotes -- while such eclecticism is appropriate to the oral histories because they are life stories, a reader unfamiliar with that genre could possibly conclude that the fictional narrative requires more focus. Conversely, the short stories which are based on autobiographical material are both sharply focussed and linear because Finnigan is doing what she does best -- writing first hand about people and events which have affected her life.

The fictional setting of Lost Nation, somewhere in the backwoods of the Ottawa Valley, in *Dancing at the Crossroads* provides cohesion and a framework within which the author can establish themes. However, the stories' blending of "fantasy with folklore, humour with horror."³⁹ indicates the author's conscious attempt to replicate the oral histories. One story which is particularly successful in reproducing the ambiance of the oral histories, "A Blossom Gathered in No Man's Land," includes colourful stories about the larger-than-life Lenora O'Donnell, whose exploits live on in the stories told by the old timers in the Sheenboro area. The narrator observes that Lenora's notoriety is unusual because storytelling is usually concerned with "men's talk about men, men's feats and defeats, men's foibles and strengths, men's doings and undoings" (DC, 35). However,

Lenora is the muse who inspires stories in a pre-technological agrarian society where storytelling is venerated:

After harvest O'Rourke's store would fill up with men sitting on stools or nail barrels, drawing on their pipes in the early winter dusks, chronicling the summer crops, beginning a new story and then letting the sails spin out into a good wind as the story took off. (*DC*, 33 - 34).

The story features a narrator who, like Lenora, is a receptacle for the stories told by the Lost Nation storytellers; she acknowledges that, by its very nature, storytelling is a communal venture, dependent on creative input:

[Then] someone like old Tom Maloney would repeat, "I think it was in 1911 Harmie grew a pumpkin so big he was able to cut a door in it and keep a cow in it all winter long. And then the old lads might argue whether it was 1911 or 1912, or someone like Cyrus Hunt would throw an embellishment into the story stew by saying, 'Yes, and did you know that come spring when the cow-byre pumpkin thawed out a whole field of pumpkins sprang up--!' (*DC*, 34)

Also, because oral histories are a conglomerate of unrelated stories, Lenora's story shares the stage with "Stories of Harelip Doherty in the lumber camps of the Dumoine and the Black, of Sheriff Emery Sloan who shot down Joe Sullivan in the McGuldrick gully just outside of Chichester, of the terrible Liam McCauley of the Nickabeau . . . all these Men's Club's stories and many others . . ." (*DC*, 36).

Adhering to tradition, the Lost Nation storytellers recount the genealogy and history of the region, as well as miscellaneous anecdotes and folktales. When they finally

arrive at the main story, their bombastic and loquacious descriptions of the long-dead Lenora exemplify how the mundane is transmuted into legend during the process:

She could do *anything*. She could cook, bake, pickle, preserve. She could dance and do fancy-work, recite dirty verses and tell raunchy jokes. She could hunt and fish like a man, do a man's day's work in the hay-fields, drink like a man, fight like a man. (DC, 36)

The stories circulating around Lenora present her in various guises, including surrogate mother, prostitute and bank robber. Largely as a result of such stories, Lenora develops into a multi-faceted female icon, mirroring society's ambivalent attitude towards women. The narrator, however, appears fascinated by this non-traditional woman who, the storytellers agreed, "was good at something else too" (DC, 36). Lenora represents a "type" of woman who is loved and admired by men, and who reappears in the short stories.

However, because Lenora's true function lies out of the realm of the mundane, and within the realm of story, her character becomes a secondary consideration, and the storytelling process takes precedence. By gathering up and retelling the Lenora stories, the narrator locates herself within the framework of the storytelling tradition, while simultaneously creating a new story. In the same way that Finnigan's poems are preoccupied with the definition of poetry, this story's preoccupation with storytelling, by its very nature, crystallizes the process. "A Blossom Gathered in No Man's Land" successfully fuses form and function, thereby helping to define the storytelling process.

From the antagonistic relationship between the narrator's parents, to her husband's suicide, "Clan Wake" is largely autobiographical. The short story provides the

narrator with the opportunity to muse on a range of subjects, including marriage, love, death, children, politics, religion and sex. A nostalgic and contemplative tone is conveyed in the opening paragraph when the narrator says, "I'm here in Boyneville again . . . I realized I am filled with curiosity about this funereal gathering of the clans and particularly about all my cousins with whom I spent so much time when I was growing up, most of whom I haven't seen for years" (*DC*, 163). The landscape evokes nostalgia and awe in the narrator, who is rejuvenated in the rural setting:

I decide to walk and so I find myself following the trail of my ancestors in Pontiac County, down Main Street past all the village houses towards the village stores, collecting as I go the spirit of Christmas, enjoying the leisurely pastoral pace of the villagers. I keep trying to escape from the Ottawa Valley, from my roots, but here I am back once again on Main Street. (*DC*, 164)

The optimism of "The Valley of the Outaouais," which portrays Canada as the Promised Land, is replaced by a sense of dislocation resulting from the political situation. The following passage highlights the gap between past and present which is such a dominant theme of the oral histories:

I, too, am saddened by and concerned about the movement of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec into its "Reign of Error" and I would have commented on it . . . I stand alone in the shadows of the wake-room, gathered into myself quietly for a moment, thinking of all the members of my clan I have seen stretched out in caskets in this old funeral parlour, dressed in their best suits and Sunday dresses, Higgins, Harpers, Caldwells, Murrays, Dales, Armstrongs, all those Irish and

Anglo-Irish Orangemen gone to the Village Cemetery or to the little graveyards around the country churches, descendants of first settlers, of the men who wrested the rich fields from the forest, and of the women, often alone, who raised the children in the wilderness. (*DC*, 170)

In addition to the elegiac, the passage reiterates common themes in Finnigan's work, including interest in the early history and settlement of the region, as well as the concern with genealogy. However, authorial intrusion, as evidenced in the political discussion, is an element which is particular to the fiction.

"Clan Wake" is full of such interruptions; for example, when the narrator states, "I turn to watch Lilah for reaction, looking at her skin in the strange lights of the funeral parlour. I realize with an intuitive flash that she is a lesbian" (*DC*, 173), the switch from the descriptive to the personal is so rapid that the effect is startling. Lilah is typical of the women in "Clan Wake" -- women whom the narrator finds repulsive, largely because they have negated their childbearing function. The most loathsome of all, however, is the unsuitably named Charity, who is a conflation of the grotesques in the Kitchener-Waterloo poems with the world-renouncing Monique, protagonist of "For Monique At Midnight":

She's thin with the brittle thinness of women who have never been touched, and still badly scarred by the ravages of her adolescent acne . . . All Charity's repressed rage and caged passion manifests in the visible world through the tremble on the right side of her lower lip whenever she speaks. She has the pallor of Evangelicals, nuns and hippie women, a pallor which has nothing to do with

aging but rather with denial and a woman's attitude towards herself. As she walks towards me I remember a man I once knew telling me that a well-loved woman even walks differently from the others. (DC, 168)

In contrast, the "well-loved woman" has it "both ways" in that she has the narrator's approval and respect, as well as the love and admiration of men. The sterile old maids who mourn at the wake, however, reflect an interior world of egocentricity and death, and the narrator realizes with horror that even as she disparages them, she could be one of them. Some respite from this bleak vision is offered by the narrator's "favourite cousin" Mary Jane who, being engaged with life ("She's babysitting one of her grandchildren") (DC, 175), does not attend the funeral. When the narrator confesses, "I wanted to see Mary Jane's nice glowing normalcy, her grandmotherly frumpiness, her easy disarray, her country complexion, the wide hips and stomach paunch of eight birthings" (DC, 175), she implicitly invokes her favourite cousin's fecundity as protection against the barrenness around her. All the same, the speaker bleakly realizes that she is one of "the outsiders, the unmateables, the dwellers in neuterdom, the nuns without status or vows" (DC, 175). The narrator of "Clan Wake" faces a crisis in that she has a fragmented vision of herself; she recognizes that because she incorporates aspects of both "types" of women, she stands at a crossroads between sterility and creativity.

Another "well-loved woman" is Jenny Killoran, the heroine of "The Cherished Woman," from the 1997 collection, *down the unmarked roads*. Ostensibly based on the Phoebe McCord interview featured in *Some of the stories I told you were true*, Killoran is a composite of McCord and Finnigan. The resultant complexity makes Killoran's

character simultaneously elusive and dynamic, as are the legendary Lenora and the absent Mary Jane. The opening paragraph provides a post-feminist interpretation of gender roles and promises a provocative story:

The first political warmer-upper in Pontiac County was a woman, yes, a cherished woman named Jenny Brennan Killoran from Lost Nation, Quebec. And her story needs telling . . . it needs to be told in this day and age when the libbers would have you believe that, back in those early pioneering days, the women were all downtrodden . . . The truth is that men killed themselves with hard physical labour . . . while the women created works of art like children, signed quilts and crabapple jelly. (*DUR*, 1)

Where “May Day Rounds: Renfrew County” cites the undermining of domestic art as symptomatic of agrarian society’s decline, “The Cherished Woman” blames feminism for society’s undervaluing of traditional female roles. The narrator promises, however, to set the record straight by revealing “how it all happened that the remarkable Jenny Brennan Killoran became the first political warmer-upper in Pontiac County” (*DUR*, 1), then launches into a full-fledged oral history replete with genealogy, history, humour, folktales and anecdotes.

The latter half of the story, however, is dominated by autobiographical elements which unobtrusively creep into the narrative:

She began to take her B.A. by correspondence from McGill University; history, law, political science. She joined the Women’s Catholic League and the following year was elected president. From this platform she began talking about

birth control, women's rights, getting out to vote and lobbying for the women's right to vote. Ontario had given women the right to vote in 1911 but Quebec, still under the sway of the Roman Catholic church, had not yet recognized this inalienable right, this recognition of their equality with men. (*DUR*, 14)

As the autobiographical begins to dominate the narrative, Jenny provides the means by which Finnigan expresses her own social conscience. For example, Jenny's "real issues (like sex education in the schools, birth control in Quebec, legalized abortion, using Canadian books as textbooks in classrooms)" (*DUR*, 16), are also Finnigan's real issues, and when Jenny speaks on "sex education in the schools, legalized abortion, equal pay for equal work" (*DUR*, 20) she vocalizes Finnigan's own writings on social issues.

Jenny's confession in her memoirs that "I'd rather be cherished than liberated" (*DUR*, 20) reflects an irony which has permeated Finnigan's life -- although she advocates traditional female roles and responsibilities, circumstances have required her to live her life non-traditionally, and her writings reflect a feminist perspective. So, too, the cherished woman proclaims that her most important roles are as mother and wife, yet she is a supporter of feminist causes and is accomplished in areas traditionally dominated by men. This dichotomy is perhaps best explained by Jenny's recognition that "I've had it both ways, always" (*DUR*, 21). Although Finnigan does not consider herself a feminist and has sometimes been censured by the feminist movement because she advocates traditional gender roles, "The Cherished Woman" is, by its very nature, the writer's feminist manifesto.

In Finnigan's works, the state of being cherished results in creativity while

celibacy results in stagnation. The autobiographical “The Dead-End Road,” from *down the unmarked roads*, hones this theme and links it to the tension between the urban and the rural. Although born in the city, Finnigan considers herself primarily a rural writer. While she associates the rural with “inspiration, poetry and creativity,” the urban represents “grim reality and brutishness” (20 July 1999). The opening of “The Dead-End Road” describes the urban as an artificial construct defined by sterility:

Marina was at a publisher’s party in Ottawa when it came to her like all life-changing messages – surreptitiously and as a tiny voice at first bleating far-off but rising to a blare – that she should abandon all hope of finding a mating man her age and equal in High Tech City. Or, as her Toronto friends disparagingly dubbed it – Deadsville. (*DUR*, 159)

The death of creativity that Finnigan associates with celibacy is epitomized in Ottawa, “the civil service town, the woman fortress” (*DUR*, 161). Marina bleakly muses that “The ratio of men to women in the cocktail party crowd was the usual in Ottawa -- ten to one. And half of those are gay, she calculated with a sinking feeling in her gut” (*DUR*, 160). As in “Songs for the Bible Belt” the city is a modern Sodom and Gomorrah where “unmet needs, old and dead-end relationships, extra-marital affairs . . . partying, hard-drinking” are the staples of the morally vacuous “well-heeled crowd” (*DUR*, 162). However, the simple act of reflecting on rural life stimulates Marina’s imagination and suggests creative possibilities:

And how delicious was the mere contemplation of three or four months without paying rent, getting her feet back on the earth, falling into the lake a dozen times a

day, putting in a garden, having her old friends in to dinner on her own chairs, with her own dishes . . . Yes, maybe it was time for her to accept the fact that she would never find, at her time of life, a man of her own to love and cherish, to share with and grow with. Other people seemed to accept such realities. (*DUR.* 163)

Marina is spiritually and creatively rejuvenated when she attends "a country wedding which continued on for three days of visiting, dancing, drinking, story-telling -- a circle of relations' warmth which she found difficult to leave" (*DUR.* 168). However, the well-being stimulated by the extended rural festivities contrasts sharply with the bleakness evoked by her relationship with a married man. It becomes increasingly obvious to Marina that "things went lovingly well when all that was involved was a blissful few hours" (*DUR.* 170) and she realizes that the affair is indeed "The Dead-End Road":

So this was really why she had come back to the lake place! To see the truth of it, to discover this ugly immature part of herself, to come to grips with this childishly romantic illusion nurtured for so long as a substitute for the exciting reality of risking again. This, then, was why she had kept one foot in Kingston, fragmenting herself, preventing herself from cleanly entering a new community, from moving totally onto the new plateau of her life! (*DUR.* 171)

Marina's decision to quit the city for the country parallels Finnigan's decision to move permanently to the lake house. Therefore, the short story contributes to understanding Finnigan's works in its articulation of a definitive moment in the artist's development,

when she decides to move from an urban to a rural environment. The story also demonstrates the scope of Finnigan's pantheism which is implicit in the nature poetry, particularly the long poem *In the Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake*.

Finnigan's venture into fiction writing represents the natural extension of the artistic process which manifests itself in poetry and oral history. She feels that the two collections of short stories represent "a wonderful new plateau which I was really lucky to reach. I really love the fiction and would have [written only] fiction if I didn't have to earn a living." However, she does believe that "poetry is of longer duration and the fiction is easy [to write]" (28 July 1998). Writing fiction gives permanence to the oral histories by relocating them within an accepted literary framework and also provides the author with a wider scope to reflect on subjects of interest and concern. Ultimately, however, the three genres are related not only by theme and language, but they are the conduit by which stories are told.

PART B: A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WORKS OF JOAN FINNIGAN

POETRY

B1   *Through the Glass, Darkly.* Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1957. 12 pp.

“Dusk Song,” “The Gulls,” “The Clever One,” “April in Kingston Harbour,”
“Poet,” “The Substitute,” “Yesterday,” “Honeymoon” and “Some Lines on
Despair.”

B2   *A Dream of Lilies.* Fredericton: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1965. 64 pp.

“Lines To Accompany A Gift Of Sculpture,” “Lines In The Last August of John,”
“For Ray” (B4), “Noon Hour,” “Lovers on the Plaza,” “News of an Old Affair,”
“Sketch in the Art Gallery,” “In November,” “Lines on Leaving the Jones,”
“Cutting of the Tree,” “Night Poem (For Horst and Ruth),” “As I Have Never
Come From The Fields” (B4) [also features as part of the ENDINGS sub-section of
B10], “And Poems Become a Kind of Loving,” “For Monique at Midnight,” “Tale
of the Chiclerons,” “Credo,” “It is the Autumn Sun,” “Grey is the Forelock Now
of the Irishman” (B4, B23), “Neighbours” [a portion of the poem appears in
“Songs for the Bible Belt” (B6)], “Roots Hold in Place the Unruly Earth,” “I am
Disturbed by the Old Man’s Death” [modified version appears in B23], “Beggar,”
“Morning with Martha,” “Lines from the Look-out at Sunfish Lake,” “For Faith
on a Thirty-Third Birthday,” “Bad News,” “Mr. Shantz, Senior Member,” “When

You are Cradled in a Valley” (B23), “Rescue,” “Sunday Morning,” “The Sick Deer.” “Winter on Amherst Island” [included in B24], “Last Day at the Bay” (B4), “Children in the Spring Night,” “I Do Not Wish To Be A Canadian Poet,” “After a Tea,” “Poetry Reading,” “May Day, 1962,” “Girl With Parasol,” “Portrait,” “At the Party,” “From My Multi-level House,” “A Christmas Poem for Monique,” “For All People and Poets Who Wish to Listen to or Write About Nightingales,” “I Had a Sweetheart Once,” “Voice of the Turtle,” “Stop-Over in Kingston” and “In Memory of Elizabeth (Dec. 16, 1962, Aged 37).”

B3   *Entrance to the Greenhouse. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1968. 39 pp.*

Entrance to the Greenhouse (B9).

B4   *It Was Warm and Sunny When We Set Out. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1970. 96 pp.*

“listen to me at crowe lake. my love.” “last day at the bay” (B2), “for ray” (B2), “grey is the forelock now of the irishman” (B2, B23), “in the house on mcLeod street.” “patio: october night.” “return to the kazubazua,” “a birthday poem,” “premonitions,” “county fair.” “morning on lake wah-wash-kesh,” “journey,” “for a fish, intimidated,” “for a fish, beautiful at birth,” “for a fish, fallen from the sea,” “death of a psychiatrist,” “your death is like the rain,” “first snow,” “poem between christmas and new year’s,” “winter bird,” “la gare centrale, montreal,” “for an academic,” “the gifted eyes,” “the closed bird-books,” “the long lane,”

“windy night” (B6, B9) “number seven,” “snowed in,” “to a friend, growing deaf,” “canadian stanza,” “the mountain road” [song from the film script *The Best Damn Fiddler from Calabogie to Kaladar* (B23)], “you ask me for an incantation,” “moon-walk,” “the week that kim came” (B6, B9), “the week after kim left” (B6, B9), “the kildeer have come to the fields again” (B6, B9), “removal of the bees” (B6, B9), “summation of the week” (B6, B9), “a journey for pussy willows” (B9), “horses” (B9), “my seven deaths,” “simon, I tell you I do love ectomorphs,” “lunch at the nfb,” “fixing the boat,” “for a poet who does not understand the tragedy of himself and beautiful women,” “the chosen world” (B9), “return along 401,” “as I have never come from the fields” (B2) [also appears in the ENDINGS sub-section of B10], “a woman in love is all the trees,” “for himself in the spring,” “the land before christmas” and “landscape.”

B5   *In the Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake.* Toronto: CBC Learning Systems, 1970. 28 pp.

In the Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake (B9).

B6   *Living Together.* Fredericton: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1976. 114 pp.

OTTAWA AND THE VALLEY, including the poem “Ottawa and the Valley” [contains several untitled poems which appear, with minor variations, in subsequent collections under the following titles: “Maggie Masterson had a Wrongside Baby” (B7) and “Maggie Masterson” (B23), “in the spring when the larder was low” (B7, B23) and “never eat chokecherries” (B7)]; **SONGS FOR THE**

BIBLE BELT, including “Songs for the Bible Belt”; **MAY DAY ROUNDS:**

RENFREW COUNTY, including “May Day Rounds: Renfrew County” [abridged and modified versions appear in B9 and B23]; **CITY STONES, COUNTRY STONES (KINGSTON POEMS)** [this section includes poems from B4, along with several new ones; although the section title appears in B9, the content is both modified and abridged, and includes some additional poems from B4 which do not appear in B6], with three sub-sections: **ORSER FARM POEMS** which includes, “Windy Night” (B4, B9), “A Bird and Fish Story,” **THE OLD BARN**, which includes “Sometimes by Snowlight,” “Verdict,” “The Main-Beam,” “November on the Orser Farm” (B9), “In the Night the Little Cataraqui Died” (B9), “The Diminished” (B9), “All Marriages are Terminated in Tundra,” “It Couldn’t Happen in the City,” “Record Winter,” “Removal of the Bees” (B4, B9), “The Week That Kim Came” (B4, B9), “The Week After Kim Left” (B4, B9), “The Kildeer Have Come to the Fields Again” (B4, B9) and **CITY**, which includes “Summation of the Week” (B4, B9), “Elias the Greek,” “Peter’s Map Room,” “Friends, Dearly Beloved in Other Cities” (B9), “Dirge for the Mowat Building,” “There is No Need to Go Looking for Me,” “Tommy’s Gate” (B9), “Skating on Navy Bay” (B9), “The Procession of All My Dreams,” “A Tenth Anniversary,” “Message,” “Nineteen Seventy Five” and “Confession” (B9) and **COMING OVER A COUNTRY OF NO LIGHTS (NORTHERN ONTARIO POEMS)** [all of the poems from this section appear in B9, supplemented by two poems from B8], including “Coming Over a Country of No Lights” (B9), “Turn-A-Bout” (B9), “Speed Limit” (B9), “A Line South” (B9),

“Man’s Country” (B9), “Staking the Claim” (B9), “Arctic Crafts: Moosonee” (B9), “Southern Hunters” (B9), “Northern Cohabitation” (B9), “Northern Housing” (B9), “Notes from the North for Women’s Lib” (B9), “Bonds of the North” (B9), “Northern Mating” (B9), “A Different Level of Abstraction” (B9), “Gerry St. Onge” (B9), “Bill 22 in Timmins” (B9) and “Toronto Airport” (B9).

B7   *A Reminder of Familiar Faces.* Toronto: NC Press, 1978. 128 pp.

“Rest Period,” **WINNERS**, including “Ride Through Niagara, 1963,” “Boxing Day, 1975,” “The Children are Making a Snowfort,” “Winner” [47 line poem about “the old pro”], “First Aid,” “Relativity,” “I Shop at the A&P Because,” “November in the City Garden,” “Indian Summer,” “Toronto Zoo,” “In the Five Counties of My Sense,” “On Viewing Herschel’s House at Bath,” “Bottle Message,” “Hawker’s Harangue For Mrs. Lolly’s Love Potion” [modified version appears in THE PARADE sub-section of B10], “Winner” [27 line poem about “my old man”] and “Winner” [9 line poem about “your own runner-up”]; **THE VALLEY OF THE OUTAOUAIS** (B9), including “Our journey then from Montreal to MacNab Township began” (B9), “nothing said in any time” (B9) “From Kilkee in County Clare” (B9) [also appears in the **TIMBER** sub-section of B10 and in B23 as “Holy Child”], ““Who in the winter’s night?”” (B9), “And Cadieux came in from the fur trade” (B9) [modified stanzas appear in both the **BEGINNINGS** and **TIMBER** sub-sections of B10], “In 1785 Daddy Tom Hodgins” (B9, B23) [modified version appears in the **TIMBER** sub-section of B10], “And the Horners came in from Upper

New York State" (B9, B23), "And Archibald and Annie MacKechnie" (B9) [modified version appears in the BEGINNINGS sub-section of B10], "When we were cradled in the valley" (B9) [modified version appears in the TOM MURRAY sub-section of B10], "the land needed giants" (B9) [modified version appears in B23], "In the Rivermen's hey-day" (B7, B9, B23), "Lumber Baron Gillies" (B9) "One time the strongest man in Quebec" (B9) [also appears in the TIMBER sub-section of B10], "In 1841 Darcy Truman Draper" (B9), "after Rory Macdonald" (B9, B23), "Strange I tell ye it was" (B9) "In 1878 the Knights of Columbus Hall" (B9), "For years and years" (B9), "in the spring when the larder was low" (B6, B9, B23), "One of the most famous of the Joe Mufferaw Stories" (B9) [also appears in the TIMBER sub-section of B10], "when Lumber Baron Hoolihan" (B9), "At the turn of the century" (B9), "never eat chokecherries" (B6, B9), "Sunday" (B9), "You see, in the old days sugar was more precious than gold" (B9), "In a voice that echoed over to the Hanna place" (B9), "Those Lawtons always thought" (B9, B23), "and the Horners went bald and went West" (B9), "Yessirree, it was a double tragedy" (B9), "'Hell, now that I've retired'" (B9), "I had an aunt who could do head-stands" (B9), "And then there's the story of the time Joe Mufferaw" (B9), "I remember 1916 very well" (B9), "Maggie Masterson had a wrongside baby" (B6, B9, B23), "Fair-time" (B9) "Here comes King Billy on his white horse!" (B9) [expanded, modified version appears in THE PARADE section of B10], "And I had a great-uncle" (B9), "sure we all know, all of us" (B9), "And the Horners" (B9), "and when we asked Grandma Horner" (B9, B23), "this is a

picture of my grandfather John Horner" (B9), "this death sweeps an era into the sea" (B9, B23) and "our valley forefathers" (B9) [also appears in the ENDINGS sub-section of B10]; **A SET OF MARRIAGES**, including "Contemporary Incest," "Marital Team-Work," "The Close Family," "The Exact Spot," "From Generation to Generation," "Contemporary Marriage," "The Teeter-Totter without Alcohol," "The Sick Trio" and "Renunciation is So Holy" and **A CIRCLE OF LOVE**, including "this is my beloved," "this is my beloved Italian lover," "This is my beloved friend" [21 line poem about "the hearing doctor"], "When Bernice moves toward Noel," "This is my loving," "This is my language barrier," "I have a marvellous aunt," "This is my beloved friend" [26 line poem about the "beloved friend growing more beautiful"], "I awoke that night," "The waves roll" and "Growth."

B8   *This Series Has Been Discontinued.* Fredericton: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1981. 106 pp.

"Do Ya Mind the Time?" "O'Kane Kielly," "It is the Autumn Sun," "Warning for my Daughters," "Lines for Year of the Child," "Greedy Consumer of Life I Was," "The Latch-Key Kids," "Le Lac Des Trois Montagnes," "Aylmer, Quebec, 1961," "Timing," "Song for Simon," "Grey Cat," "A Poem for Jack Bechtel," "Pine Ridge Country," "Observation," "Family Reunion," "Gatineau," "Case for Justice," "Remark Overheard in the Timmins Airport" (B9), "Black Angus," "Lines for the Movement" (B9), "Sing a Song of Sixpence" and "Chris's Place at Lac Ste. Marie." The volume also contains the following five sections: **A SET OF**

MARRIAGES [same section title, different poems from B7], including “Little Theatre Marriage,” “Two with One Blow,” “The Very Polite Husband,” “The Coin Turned Over,” “Miracle,” “Paying the Bill,” “Unveiling,” “The New Woman” and “Captain of the Ship”; **A CIRCLE OF LOVE** [same section title, different poems from B7], including “This is my would-be lover,” “Fisher of time,” “This is my beloved albino friend,” “This is my beloved Peter Pan friend,” “This is my beloved brown-eyed mother,” “This is my beloved friend” [12 line poem about “my hungry Hungarian friend”], “This is my beloved friend” [17 line poem about “my beloved friend / whom I love too much”], “Clay loves me so much,” “Let the days go round my love for you” and “This is my beloved friend” [30 line poem about a “world-renowned geneticist”]; **MEN**, including “Andre,” “Albert,” “Sean Quilty” [modified version appears in THE PARADE sub-section of B10], “Dooley,” “Marc,” “Harry,” “Joe,” and “David”; **HOME**, including “Listen!” [opening stanza appears in the TIMBER sub-section of B10], and **A LEGEND FROM THE VALLEY**, including “A Legend from the Valley” [republished as *Look! The land is growing giants* (B19)].

B9   *The Watershed Collection.* Kingston: Quarry Press, 1988. 205 pp.

CITY STONES, COUNTRY STONES (B6) [in this section, three additional poems from B4 (which do not appear in B6) are interspersed with select poems from the original **CITY STONES, COUNTRY STONES** of B6], including “A Journey for Pussy Willows” (B4), “Windy Night” (B4, B6), “November on the Orser Farm” (B6),

"In the Night the Little Cataraqui Died" (B6), "The Diminished" (B6), "Removal of the Bees" (B4, B6), "The Week that Kim Came" (B4, B6), "The Week After Kim Left" (B4, B6), "The Kildeer Have Come to the Fields Again" (B4, B6), "Friends, Dearly Beloved in Other Cities" (B6), Tommy's Gate" (B6), "Skating on Navy Bay" (B6), "Confession" (B6) "Horses" (B4) "The Chosen World" (B4) "Summation of the Week" (B4, B6) *Entrance to the Greenhouse* (B3); *In the Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake* (B5); "May Day Rounds: Renfrew County" (B6, B23); "The Valley of the Outaouais" (B7) [in this collection, the individual titled pieces of B7 constitute the one long poem "The Valley of the Outaouais"; in addition, excerpts appear in *Songs from Both Sides of the River* (B10)] and **COMING OVER A COUNTRY OF NO LIGHTS** (B6) [interspersed with poems from B8], including "Coming Over a Country of No Lights" (B6), "Turn-A-Bout" (B6), "Speed Limit" (B6), "A Line South" (B6), "Man's Country" (B6), "Remark Overheard in the Timmins Airport Waiting for a Plane" (B8), "Lines for the Movement" (B8), "Staking the Claim" (B6), "Arctic Crafts: Moosonee" (B6), "Southern Hunters" (B6), "Northern Cohabitation" (B6), "Northern Housing" (B6), "Notes From the North for Women's Lib" (B6), "Bonds of the North" (B6), "Northern Mating" (B6), "A Different Level of Abstraction" (B6), "Gerry St. Onge" (B6), "Bill 22 in Timmins" (B6) and "Toronto Airport" (B6).

B10   *Wintering Over.* Kingston: Quarry Press, 1992. 154 pp.

"Wintering Over," "Cadieux," *Songs from Both Sides of the River*, including the

sub-sections BEGINNINGS [includes a modified stanza from "And Cadieux came in from the fur trade" (B7), which is married up with the opening stanza from "And Archibald and Annie MacKechnie" (B7, B9)], TIMBER [includes modified versions of "From Kilkee in County Clare" (B7, B9), retitled "Holy Child" in B11, "In 1785 Daddy Tom Hodgins" (B7, B9, B11), "One time the strongest man in Quebec" (B7, B9), "One of the most famous of the Joe Mufferaw Stories" (B7, B9), a modified stanza from "And Cadieux came in from the fur trade" (B7) and an expanded version of "Listen!" (B8)] TOM MURRAY [includes "When we were cradled in the valley" (B7, B9)], THE PARADE [includes a modified version of "Hawker's Harangue For Mrs. Lolly's Love Potion" (B7), an expanded and modified version of "Here comes King Billy on his white horse!" (B7, B9) and a modified version of "Sean Quilty" (B8)], CARL'S KITCHEN [includes ghost stories which are expanded in B21] and ENDINGS [includes "our valley forefathers" (B7, B9) and "As I Have Never Come from the Fields" (B2, B5)], and "The Breakwater and the Web."

B11   *Second Wind; Second Sight.* Windsor: Black Moss Press, 1998. 69 pp.

"Summer Storm," "My Father Often Told Me," "For My Grandchildren," "Rink," "Who Cares? Who Cares?" "The Stone Picker," "Christmas Message," "The Meaning of Meaning," "The Wind-Lady," "Salute," "Polar Bear Pass," "New Year's Eve in Widowland," "At the Kingston Shopping-Centre," "Mouth-painted, Foot-painted," "The Winter Walk," "Poems for the New Tyranny," "Summer

Rain at Hambly Lake,” “Last Mission (in memory of Kenneth G. Roberts, D.S.O.),” “The Tigers of Sundarbans,” “Some Consolation,” “Confession” and “Love, in the Silent Songless Fields.”

PROSE

Oral History

B12   *Some of the stories I told you were true.*   Ottawa: Deneau Publishers & Company Ltd., 1981. 289 pp.

“A Hundred Years in the Valley,” “MacNab, Buchanan, McLachlan, Low and Sam Potney’s Ass,” ““Yes, My Great-Grandfather Signed That Terrible Contract.”” “All the Big Irishmen Are in the Ottawa Valley.”” “Ottawa Was Just Slabtown.”” “Who Cares!.”” “Running on the Loose.” “Water and Fire,” “The River Was a Busy Highway,” “The Brysons Came Out of Their Own Free Choice.”” “Four Generations in Lumbering at the Fort.” “The First Irish in Fort Coulonge,” “I Knew by the Time I Was Nine.”” “The Last of the Timber Baron Line.”” “The Drive Started at Palmer’s Rapids,”” (B23), “Eighty-Seven Years A-Sewing,” “Dudley’s Dream,” “The Last of the Oldtime Camp Cooks,” “My People Were Lumbering People for Generations Back,”” “The Minute School Closed, Everybody Came to Edgewood,”” “First-Hand Knowledge,” “Henry-for-Breakfast Brumm,” “The Petawawa Kid -- Never Armed but Always Dangerous,” “A Mirror for the Dancing Partners in Pembroke,” “Going West, Going North,” ““When I Was in the Bush I Think Was the Nicest Part of My Life,”” “The

Decision Was Made to Demolish the House,” “I’d Say the Animals Are Smarter Than We Are,” “Not Peaceful, Gentle Canadians at All,” (B23), “David Ought To Be Around Soon,” “The Crookedest Business in the World,” “I Can See Better Than Lots of People with Two Eyes” and “The Good Woman.”

B13   *Laughing All The Way Home.* Ottawa: Deneau Publishers, 1984. 160 pp.

“Did You Hear That Cesspool Fell?,” “The Lad from Ragged Chute,” “There’s a Haunt in Me Bottle!,” “Never Tie a Knot in Your Tongue,” “Only as Far as the Blackboard,” “Oh, the Gatineau is a Crazy Fast River!,” “Come on in, Sam,” “The *Ghost* of the Ottawa River” (B17) and “Legacies, Legends and Lies.”

B14   *Legacies, Legends & Lies.* Toronto: Deneau Publishers, 1985. 162 pp.

“Yours half-truly,” “That Makes Him Related to Both of Us,” “Going to Heaven on Dandelion Wine,” “My God! And so Small for its Age!,” “The Good Roads Gang,” “Yes, But He Has a Rich Father,” “The Man in the Coffin, Sir,” “It’s Thirty-Three Miles by Snake Fence,” “The Best Damn Builder from Calabogie to Kaladar,” [appears in B18 as “The Best Damn Builder from Kanata to Carlsbad Springs], “Strike Again, You Son-of-a-Bitch!,” “Late Leaves and Bran Baths,” “Three Big Moose in the Mash,” “Disturbing the Piece,” “He’s Done a Lot for the Town” and “The Recipe for Toe Whiskey, The Opening of the Burnstown General Store, May Day Rites, etc.”

B15   *Tell Me Another Story.* Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1988. 316 pp.

“The Fighting Dennisons of Lake Dore,” “We Lived on What They Called Snob Hill,” “And There Was the Cat with Its Head in Its Mouth!,” “I Hear Your Home Town Is All Burned Up,” “Many Years Ago the Indians’ God Was Nature,” “This Year the River’s Jammed with Baloney!,” “Yes, I Was a Sixty-Minute Man,” “Grandfather, Did You Ever Swim the Ottawa?,” “Yes, Jim Maloney Just Drank the Evidence!,” “Would You Take a Mink Hide for a Bottle of Whisky?,” “Send the Bull by Boat,” “Remember Paul Moxon, the Singing Waiter in Hull?,” “Hero Worship! We Were Full of It!,” “A Woman Without a Single Unspoken Thought,” “The Senator for the Ottawa Valley,” “Sixteen Miles a Day to Lisgar Collegiate,” “Hull to Aylmer: Seven Miles of History,” “QMG -- Quickly Made Gentleman!,” “You Don’t Ever Shoot a Beaver in the Head!,” “You’re the One They Call the Snowshoe Kid!,” “Three Generations of Boyles in the Bush,” “Are You Hiring on a Man Today?,” “Stories from Glengarry, the Scottish ‘Holy Land’” and “If You Can’t Print the Truth, Print the Legend.”

B16   *tallying the tales of the old-timers.* Burnstown: General Store Publishing House, 1999. 270 pp.

“After the Beer was in the Tubs, All the Labels Came Off,” “During the Depression Men Started Fires to Make Work,” “The Stanley Cup was a Centrepiece on Our Dining-Room Table,” “I worked at Fisher’s on Sparks Street until I was Eighty,” “For some Obscure Reason I Always Wanted to be a

Newspaperman,” “We Should Have Separate Roads for the Transport Trucks,”
 “It Ain’t Bragging if You’ve Done It,” “Believe Me, the Ball Players were Just
 as Good in the 1920s as Today,” “For Every North American Indian Who
 Disappears, I Disappear,” “My Father Brought Phar Lap from Australia,”
 “Horses, Horses, Horses -- And a Horse Railway,” “We Grew Up Surrounded
 by Surveyors and Surveying Talk,” “I Played all the Warrior Sports,” “For My
 Grandfather, the Short Walk was Twenty-five Miles,” “Sing and Be Happy.”
 “From the Head to the Foot of the Island,” “They Used to Put Us All on the
 Top Floor in the Vankleek Hotel,” “The Lads from *Paradise Springs*,” “An
 Indian Guide and His *Garnets* at Quinze Lake,” “We Crossed Twenty-two
 Tracks to Get a Loaf of Bread” and “There is Truth in Every Legend.”

Fiction

B17   *Dancing at the Crossroads.* Kingston: Quarry Press, 1995. 191 pp.

“The Woman Who Named All Her Cows,” “A Blossom Gathered in No Man’s
 Land,” “How Old Brye Came Down from the Mountain,” “Command
 Performance,” “The *Ghost* of the Ottawa River” (B13), “A Simple Life,” “A Final
 Understanding,” “Clan Wake” and “Crossing the Calumet Bridge.”

**B18   *down the unmarked roads.* Burnstown: General Store Publishing House,
 1997. 186 pp.**

“The Cherished Woman,” “Bad Blood,” “The Language Inspectors,” “A Tour of

the Valley,” “The Road Between the River and the Mountain,” “Try-out in Toronto,” “The Damn Best Builder from Kanata to Carlsbad Springs” (B14), “The Journey from Feakle to Dublin,” “The Dead-End Road” and “The Opening of the Hunting Season in South Porcupine.”

Children’s Books

B19   *Look! The Land is Growing Giants.* Montreal: Tundra Books, 1981. 40 pp.

[Translation by Jacques de Roussan published in 1993 by Livres Toundra, Montreal. Also published in the United States by Tundra Books of Northern New York, Plattsburgh.]

The legend of Joseph Montferrand, the giant of the Ottawa Valley (B8).

B20   *The Dog Who Wouldn’t be Left Behind.* Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1989. 32 pp.

The adventures of Thaddeus, Amaryllis and Clementine, their dog.

B21   *Witches, Ghosts and Loups-Garous: Scary Tales from Canada’s Ottawa Valley.* Kingston: Quarry Press, 1994. 83 pp.

“The Wolves of Malakoff and Other Haunting Tales,” “The Thronging Ghosts of Ghost Hill and Other Spooky Stories” and “The Burial of Bandy Burke and Other Dark Legends.”

Literary Miscellany

B22   *Canada in Bed*. Toronto: Pagurian Press Limited, 1969. 157 pp.

“The State of the Nation” (Canada in Bed), “The Evolution of Love in Canada” (Log Cabin Lust), “Canadians in Bed -- How They Love” (A Man Is A Man Is A . . .?), “Attitudes of the Contemporary Canadian Male” (Sex and the Dollar Bill), “The Confused Society” (A Case of Mistaken Identity), “How and Where to Find a Canadian Husband” (If You Can’t Beat ‘em, Join ‘em), “How to Choose a Canadian Lover” (Don’t) and “The Future of Love” (Canada -- Wake Up!).

B23   *“I come from the Valley”* Toronto: NC Press, 1976. 159 pp.

“I come from the Valley.” “. . . and Hats with Feathers for which Birds had Died.” “Daddy Tom Hodgins” (B7, B9, B10), “And the Horners came in from Upper New York State” (B7, B9), “Holy Child” [appears in B7 and B9 as “From Kilkee in County Clare” and is untitled in the TIMBER sub-section of B10], “The Land needed Giants” (B7, B9), “Oh, the Rivermen!,” “My great grandfather Barnet came out . . .” “Renfrew County: Once a Howling Wilderness,” *A Prince of Good Fellows*, “The actual story of the Laird MacNab?,” “The River,” “The Baskatong,” ““In the Rivermen’s heyday,” “The Stopping Place,” “Good Liquor and Bad Liquor,” “Young Conway” [appears in the oral history interview ““Not Peaceful, Gently Canadians at All”” (B12)], “Paddy Garvie: From the Opeongo,” “Hogan’s Lake,” “Five Years on the Rouge, A Dollar a Day,” “Poupore’s Shanty Crew,” “The Drive Started at Palmer’s Rapids” (B12), “Working the Boats on the

Ottawa,” “The Chapeau Boys,” “Last Drive on the Petawawa River,” “Lumber Drives on the Madawaska,” “Cadging, Sport and Duke,” “Horse Drive,” “There’s no old times left. none at all!” [same title, different text, appears in THE PARADE sub-section of B10], “Old Mr. Culhane, Irish to the bone he says,” “No, no. That didn’t happen at Culhane’s,” “After Rory MacDonald” (B7, B9), “Big Mick Culhane,” “May Day Rounds: Renfrew County” (B6, B9), *The Best Damn Fiddler from Calabogie to Kaladar*, “Number Seven,” “Samson ‘Saw-saw,” “And when we asked Grandma Horner” (B6, B9), “Joe Mufferaw,” “County Fair,” “Where are the Gypsies?,” “Building with Logs,” “The Opeongo Trail,” “Rare Trees,” “I am Disturbed by the Old Man’s Death” (B2), “Maggie Masterson” (B6, B7, B9), “On Christmas Eve: 1963,” “In the Spring when the Larder was Low” (B6, B7, B9), “The Little Milliner” (B7, B9), “This death sweeps an era into the sea” (B7, B9), “The Renfrew Millionnaires,” “Crossing the Ice,” “Grey is the Forelock now of the Irishman” (B2, B4), “The Story of the Smaller Heroes,” “Those Lawtons” (B7, B9) and “When You are Cradled in a Valley” (B2).

B24   *Kingston: Celebrate This City.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976.

127 pp.

The history of the city since its founding in the early seventeenth century to the current century.

- B25   *Canadian Colonial Cooking: Tested Recipes from Ontario's Pioneer Villages and Historical Sites.* Toronto: NC Press, 1976. 48 pp.**

Recipes from Ste. Marie Among the Hurons, Black Creek Pioneer Village, Upper Canada Village, Allan MacPherson House, Old Fort Henry, Dundurn Castle and Montgomery's Inn.

- B26   *Giants of Canada's Ottawa Valley.* Burnstown: General Store Publications, 1981. 121 pp.**

Biographies of Joseph Montferrand, Archibald MacNab, Alexander Macdonnell, Rory MacLennan, Mountain Jack Thomson and Harry McLean.

- B27   *Finnigan's Guide to the Ottawa Valley.* Kingston: Quarry Press, 1988. 226 pp.**

Suggested tours including Ferryboat Junkets, Glengarry Days. Through Lovely Lanark, Aylmer: The Leisure Capital, Up the Pontiac, Around and About Renfrew, Along the Opeongo Line and Pembroke and the Whitewater Country.

- B28   *Old Scores, New Goals: The Story of the Ottawa Senators.* Kingston: Quarry Press, 1992. 219 pp.**

The history of the Ottawa Senators hockey team from 1891 to contemporary times.

B29   *Lisgar Collegiate Institute: 1843 - 1993.* Ottawa: Lisgar Alumni Association, 1993. 313 pp.

The history of Lisgar Collegiate Institute from 1843 to 1993, in celebration of the school's Sesquicentennial.

EXCERPTS FROM SELECTED REVIEWS

Poetry

B1 *Through the Glass, Darkly*

Mariot, Anne. *Canadian Forum*, Vol. 37, (March 1958).

"From the biographical note and from the poems themselves I would imagine Joan Finnigan to be a pretty young poet. If so, most of the things wrong with "Through The Glass, Darkly," are things she is likely to outgrow. Because there are quite a lot of things good about these poems -- a sense of movement and immediacy, or the feeling of light and air in "April in Kingston Harbour." The main subject of the poems is physical love -- good, again -- but it is treated with an emotional artfulness that gets quite embarrassing ."

B2 *A Dream of Lilies*

Purdy, A.W. "Blue Titmouse." *Canadian Literature*, No. 28, (Summer 1966).

"[Joan Finnigan] colours the housewifely spectrum vivid, makes living seem genuine. At least part of the time she . . . gives the poems coherence and a kind of extempore form. . . . Dear Blue Titmouse: go ahead and be."

MacCallum, Hugh. *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 4, (July 1966).

"Its rhythm and rhetoric is usually that of the waking mind, and its appeal lies in vigorous honesty and closeness to experience. She shows a determination to speak plainly, to abandon disguises and fancy-dress, to make poetry out of the

perceptions of a 'middle-aged' mother and housewife who is sufficiently well-off and leisured to be free to take an intelligent interest in society, and who yet finds the ground of existence in personal relations."

B3   *Entrance to the Greenhouse*

Rynasko, Elizabeth. "Poetic imagery echoing life." *Kingston Whig-Standard*, (December 5, 1968).

"This delightful collection of poetic imagery is a joy to read, its utter simplicity communicating, sometimes tenderly, sometimes whimsically, but always lyrically."

Schroeder, Andreas. "Joan Finnegan [sic] -- a poet to watch in her next book." *The Province*, (January 3, 1969).

"Miss Finnigan's verse . . . unfortunately, ends up reading much like the way I imagine bad Phyllis Webb would read -- it lacks the penetration, the breathlessness and, in some cases, the surprise."

Barbour, Douglas. "Low Key." *Canadian Literature*, No. 44, (Summer 1970).

"[The poem] represents a real victory of the artist's discipline. There is no needless repetition, no preaching or exhortation at all. The poetry, its images and symbols, its tone, carry all the meaning and all the energy, as they should, and the result is a poem of richness and delight."

B4   *It Was Warm and Sunny When We Set Out*

Fiamengo, Marya. "Careful and Careless." *Canadian Literature*, No. 53, (Summer 1972). "Undoubtedly, [these poems] are meant to illuminate the pedestrian, show us the poetry inherent in the ordinary as well as the extraordinary moments. Too often, however, they fail to move beyond recorded observations into any significant statement."

Douglas Barbour. *Dalhousie Review*, Vol. 50, No. 1, (Spring 1970).

"Joan Finnigan comes across as a warm, loving woman, capable of close observation of the people around her, whatever situation she may find herself in. But she is not merely writing poems of social observation: every poem is informed by the emotion of love needlessly lost; she sees everything through eyes made clear and bright by the knowledge of such loss."

B5   *Living Together*

Oliver, Michael Brian. "Miscellanies, Metamorphosis, & Myth." *Canadian Literature*, No. 74, (Autumn 1977).

"Ms. Finnigan is a CBC poet if there ever was one . . . . From beginning to end these poems broadcast well: they are genuinely interesting, but they achieve at best a state of anthology. Only in isolated instances do they transform the poet's miscellaneous life and the reader's equally miscellaneous understanding."

Farmiloe, Dorothy. *Quill and Quire*, Vol. 42, No. 13, October 1976.

“The coupling of the various themes and voices -- narrator and reader, city and countrylife and death -- in *Living Together* gives the collection its name. Joan Finnigan has gone beyond the pain and poignancy of her earlier lyrics with their darkly lovely nature image . . . . [and] deepened into something more universal; her major themes are now more social and contemporary. But the lyric gift is still evident, underlying some exceptionally fine pieces.”

B6   *In the Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake*

Barrie, B.D. The *Fiddlehead*, No. 93, (Spring 1972).

“Joan Finnigan has opened the door to the brown cottage, put us at ease in the muted environment of personal grief by preserving moments of feminine longing and reflection in unselfconscious emotional fragments, that flower successfully as poetry because there is no plea for sympathy, no cluttering self-pity -- simply narration of suffering not easily absolved . . . . The vitality of Joan Finnigan’s poetry hinges on intensity and simplicity: the thorough stripping of her soul so that her grief can be mirrored in nature or contrasted with the ironic counterpoint of having to function as a mother while suffering as a woman.”

B7   *A Reminder of Familiar Faces*

Mathews, Robin. “Valley poetry praised.” *Ottawa Citizen*, (July 28, 1979).

“The poet’s voice is strong. She can go back in real time, can develop legend, and

can comment tersely (sometimes painfully) upon contemporary human relations. The voice involved never seems to stumble into someone else's style or subject. Indeed, *A Reminder of Familiar Faces* is full of poetry that would read well to a live audience, for it has good pace, sharp insight, and 'story.'

Noonan, Gerald. *Toronto Star*. [date not available].

"There's a masterful touch in the poet's diction, vowel tone and rhythm, and these qualities combine with her images to spin off large ideas and fresh emotions from things and perceptions that are achingly familiar."

B8   *This Series Has Been Discontinued*

Coggins, Gordon. *University of Windsor Review*. Vol. XVI, No. 2, (Spring-Summer 1982).

"For those who have enjoyed Joan Finnigan's earlier books, *This Series Has Been Discontinued* offers a smorgasbord of familiar themes; choose an outburst of social conscience, a personal lyric, a family or social vignette, a terse verbal snapshot of the natural scene, or something from the history and legend of the Ottawa Valley, in a range of genres and styles . . . . Technically, Finnigan displays, with some exceptions, a professional competence in both metred and free verse and in the handling of her dramatic voices."

Thompson, Eric. "Imagination's Sources." *Canadian Literature*, No. 93, (Summer 1982).

"Finnigan has been writing about the Valley for several years but she may just now be on the verge of becoming recognized as one of its significant voices . . . . she reveals a sure touch in the handling of garrulous characters and folkways."

B9   *The Watershed Collection*

McDonald, Luella. *Whig-Standard Magazine*, (December 2, 1989).

"In Joan Finnigan's *Watershed Collection*, a lot of us have a golden opportunity to find our way back to poetry . . . . This is an anthology of six long poems, or poetic sequences . . . . The earlier sequences are the most intensely confessional; the later ones -- based on the past and present of the Ottawa Valley -- are more narrative, though still poignant with lives and places ground away into mythic heroism, suffering survival, or unspeakable failure, in tones of wonder ranging from wide-eyed credulity to sardonic hilarity."

James-French, Dayv. "Finnigan's poetic riches." *The Ottawa Citizen*, (October 22, 1988). "Finnigan's poetic sensibility and personal sympathy never deteriorate into self-obsession. Her subjects are not forced to serve an autobiographical vision, but exist in their own worlds of symbol and metaphor."

B10   *Wintering Over*

Scott, Chris. "Memories of Winter Past." *Ottawa Citizen*, (March 6, 1993).

"[The poem] remembers the 1827 winter of Abigail Edey . . . [in] the voice of a real woman . . . . [*Wintering Over*] also includes the poem *Cadieux*, which evokes the lure of the wilderness for the voyageurs, and Finnigan's lyrical celebration of family and place, *The Web*. The collection also includes the voice drama, *Songs from Both Sides of the River*. A kind of *Under Milkwood* . . . *Songs* uses the voices of Irish immigrants, voyageurs, priests, lumber barons, and Indians to recreate a mythic sense of Valley history. The Ottawa Valley is in Joan Finnigan's voice and in her blood. *Wintering Over* is an extraordinary performance by an extraordinary poet."

Crook, Barbara. "Stageworthy collection of poetry and songs brings Valley history to life." *Ottawa Citizen*, (September 19, 1987).

"*Songs from Both Sides of the River*, Ottawa writer Joan Finnigan's engaging and stageworthy collection of poetry, yarn, myths and songs of the Ottawa Valley, is a rich and evocative portrait of the people and traditions that coloured the history of this region. Finnigan knows how to use words for sound and cadence as well as meaning . . . and the stories are great --"

B11   *Second Wind; Second Sight*

Reviews not available.

Prose

Oral History

B12 *Some of the stories I told you were true*

Padolsky, Enoch. "An author shares her beloved Valley with all." *Ottawa Citizen*. (January 22, 1982).

"Joan Finnigan is to be congratulated on carrying out what must have been a monumental task -- interviewing, transcribing, and editing so many accounts [of oral history interviews]. Weaknesses could be mentioned -- a lack of representation of the French, German, and Polish minorities, the low profile of farming in the book, the lack of a clear structure, the excessive stress on the "famous" and "legendary" -- but these are minor compared to the real achievements of the book. Once again Finnigan's enthusiasm has resulted in an important contribution to our understanding of life in the Ottawa Valley."

Kilfolyle, Harry. "Tall tales from the Valley." *Whig-Standard Magazine*. (February 27, 1982).

"Finnigan's method of interviewing the region's story-tellers to compile an oral history is one full of bonuses and pitfalls. The limited success of oral histories has been fanned by the public's thirst for folk tales and area heroes . . . . Joan Finnigan has produced an oral history book, full of good photographs, that is a cut above the average. Her love for the Valley shines through."

B13   *Laughing All The Way Home*

Cook, Mary. "Author relishes flavour of humour from Valley." *Ottawa Citizen*, (January 26, 1985).

"Here are stories of hard-drinking, ribald characters who make the valley's distinctive history come alive. No doubt each time a tale is told it gathers momentum and an added dimension in the telling. Finnigan has a very real "feel" for the Ottawa Valley . . . [and] a close kinship with her subjects and even though the reader bristles under some of the attacks on the old Valley characters, it is impossible to work through *Laughing All The Way Home* and not feel that kinship too."

Hancock, Geoff. "Celebrating Ottawa Valley in pranks, puns and piety." *Sunday Star*, (December 30, 1984).

"The emphasis is on tall tales, yarns, practical jokes, puns and one-liners. But she also deals with ancestral pride, especially of the Irish Catholics, the psychology of folk humour and even ideology . . . . *Laughing All The Way Home* will best be appreciated by readers familiar with the valley and inspiration to residents of other valleys --"

McCulloch, Gord. "This is the Valley." Review of *Laughing All the Way Home*. [publication and date not available].

"For those who ever experienced the humour of the valley or heard the special

dialect and sayings of its people, the book is a pleasant companion and a reminder that there is a flavour, all its own, to the region and its inhabitants . . . . The tales are often raw and ribald, but they are the stories told by real people who made up the colourful tapestry of the Ottawa Valley . . . . To read the book is to laugh and cry along with them.”

B14   *Legacies, Legends & Lies*

Newman, S.A. *Books in Canada*. (March, 1986).

“This second book of Finnigan’s yarns is humorous and light yet full of sound country wisdom, the inventiveness that comes from necessity . . . . Unfortunately, humour -- especially that in folklore -- is a neglected part of our literary tradition. Instead, we usually dwell on the gravity of the intangible “survival” without ever experiencing it. *Legacies, Legends & Lies* is a must for anyone who enjoys a good story and a good chuckle. Or for those Canadians who can laugh at themselves.”

Heller, Liane. *Toronto Star*, (February 16, 1986).

“Joan Finnigan has emerged with a book that is both entertaining and an irreplaceable record of storytelling traditions which might otherwise be lost . . . . what emerges is a sort of oral docudrama, transposed into narrative and condensed into punchy, fast-moving sequences that leave a vibrant impression of the memorable individuals in question . . . [it is] so much sheer fun to read [because]

the process never overshadows the stories.”

B15   *Tell Me Another Story*

Wake, Robert. “Another story: More Valley gems.” *Ottawa Citizen*, (December 26, 1989).

“Though a thread of continuity can be found through the many accounts of the lumber industry, there are sections on the importance of ice hockey, on the appearance and disappearance of ghosts, such that the reader constantly becomes aware of the many facets of Valley life . . . . No matter how the book is approached, there are gems that will embellish an understanding of the Valley’s social history . . . . one might find as much enjoyment from the many photographs that tell companion stories to the oral histories. Joan Finnigan achieved her goals.”

B16   *tallying the tales of the old timers*

Reviews not available.

Fiction

B17   *Dancing at the Crossroads*

Wytenbroek, J.R. “Oral Tradition in Print.” *Canadian Literature*, No. 156, (Spring 1998).

“[It is] difficult for the reader to find continuity amongst the stories. Indeed, the

main link is that the stories are about the people of Lost Nation, and that most if not all are of Irish descent. The tone of the tales differs also . . . they reflect the vagaries and variety of human existence and relationships. They are simple tales, well told for the most part, with the occasional startling image . . . . Many readers may not read past that first dark tale which is a pity given the beauty of many of the rest of the tales, tales which give the reader a quick but profound glimpse into the lives of a proud people who once formed one sub-culture in the fascinating varied land of Canada.”

Leith, Linda. “The Prairie and the Valley.” *Books in Canada*, (September 1995).
 “Joan Finnigan -- a veteran poet, playwright, and oral historian with more than 20 books to her credit -- turns her hand to fiction in *Dancing at the Crossroads*, writing rough-hewn, moving, and sometimes shocking stories of the Ottawa Valley that are informed by the musicality of the Irish oral tradition . . . . But the immediacy and power of her writing are impressive in communicating the poignancy of lives that survive disappointment and despair, and she is wonderful in her account of aging and . . . of the love that outlasts youth.”

B18   *down the unmarked roads*

Reviews not available.

Children's Books

B19 *Look! The Land Is Growing Giants*

Adilman, Sid. "High on list [of Tundra's best books]." *Sunday Star*, (October 23, 1983).

"It's a lively picture book of a poem by Joan Finnigan . . . drawn in vigorous broadshaded black and white by Richard Pelham. Kids learning to read or who are read to will have a happy time, so will adults with them."

Argus. "More Mufferaw -- Finnigan writes again." *North Renfrew Times*, (November 23, 1983).

"In spite of the book's deficiencies, the reader will end up knowing more family and place names of the Valley than if he had read a 'made in USA' Davey Crockett or Paul Bunyan story, and Finnigan can feel some justification for her attempt to turn the oral tradition of a Valley legend into a written record. One can only regret that she does not seem to capture the spirit of Joe Montferrand as well as she did in her *Giants of Canada's Ottawa Valley*."

Smith, Mary Ainslie. "Small pleasures: some curiously familiar native folklore and the simple joys of playing with string." *Books in Canada*, (January 1984).

"[Joseph Montferrand] has strength, ingenuity, courage, and humour. But to suggest that he is the progenitor of all the hockey teams in North America is putting too much on him. No Canadian hero should have to bear responsibility

for the Hartford Whalers, let alone the disastrous New Jersey Devils. It just isn't fair to Joe."

B20   *The Dog Who Wouldn't Be Left Behind*

Goedhart, Bernie. *Quill and Quire*, Vol. 55, No. 8, (August 1989).

"[Although] some of the written humour seems geared more to adults than children --speculation about Clementine's lineage, for example . . . and the book does, at times, read like a travel guide. Finnigan's dedication makes it clear that her book is based on a real-life Clementine, which may explain why the story occasionally seems a bit self-indulgent . . . But the author has a fine way with words."

Garvie, Maureen. *Whig-Standard Magazine*, (October 1989).

"The tale has the flavour of Ms. Finnigan's oral histories . . . This is a funny, good-humoured tale, with characters that resemble Ms. Finnigan's friends and relations. It's often funny; occasionally it's just too silly . . . until the story settles down after the first few pages . . . The illustrations catch the tone nicely -- this is a work without literary pretensions, more of a comic turn."

B21   *Witches, Ghosts and Loups-Garous: Scary Tales from Canada's Ottawa Valley*

Egan, Kelly. "Scary tales perfect for campfire." *Ottawa Citizen*, (June 18, 1994).

"Joan Finnigan's writing has a striking oral quality, producing in this volume

stories better read to than read . . . . For a storyteller like Finnigan, though, repetition and conversational bridges give the stories juice . . . . That's the sneaky part of Finnigan's stories, they slip from truth to tale without the reader noticing the shifting ground. But, with legends such as these, that's as it should be."

Greenwood, Barbara. *Quill and Quire*, Vol. 60, No. 7, (July 1994).

"Her latest collection focuses on scary stories that grew out of the superstitious imaginings of Scottish, Irish, French-Canadian, and German settlers . . . . Finnigan retells them as she heard them, in the voice of the fireside storyteller . . . . The sentences have the rolling lilt of the oral storyteller; names and phrases have an agreeable assonance that gives the telling a [hint] of swing. Readers sated with the horrors of Stephen King and Christopher Pike might well find that these "real" stories produce an even more palpable frisson than their fictional counterparts."

Literary Miscellany

B22   *Canada in Bed*

Curran, John. "Canada in Bed. Michelle Bedard." *The Telegram*, (April 19, 1969).

"Her style is rambling and discursive . . . . One is irresistibly -- and lamentably -- reminded of what a Reader's Digest article would be like if somebody said "stretch it" . . . . Archness is, indeed, the word for her style -- one suspects that if she were any archer, somebody would light an eternal flame to the Soldat Inconnu

under her.”

French, William. “Between the sheets: failings of the native lover.” *Globe and Mail*. (April 5, 1969).

“The whole thing is not meant to be taken seriously -- I think. So let’s overlook the generalizations, contradictions, cliches, exaggerations and superficialities and enjoy the fun. If the book is taken in the right spirit, no one need get upset by the fact that it is about two thirds hogwash and 10-cent psychology and only one third good feminine common sense.”

Gordon, Michael. “Canadian Writers on Assignment.” CBC National Network. (June 2, 1969).

“If one is able to strip away the accompanying fan fare and foo for ah [sic] surrounding Miss Bedard’s book one will find that there is considerable merit in many of the things she has to say . . . . She is attacking the standards of the mid-twentieth century and notes, not without reason, that we live in a society which seems to concentrate an inordinate amount of attention of sex. There is an absence of ‘Love’ in our human relationships, she seems to claim, and that is a very great pity.”

B23   “I come from the Valley”

Bishop, Dorothy. *Ottawa Journal*, (February 12, 1977).

“[The collection is] a lively anthology partnered with 46 black and white photographs by *Globe and Mail* photographer Erik Christensen . . . the book is such a happy marriage of subject and talent.”

Keeler, Helen. *Financial Post*, (April 2, 1977).

“Finnigan’s poems and essays exude love and respect for the valley and its people. She has a deep rapport with the local folk, whose richness in character, emotion, and imagination compensate for the physical poverty of their lives . . . Finnigan has the Irish gift for gab, the ability to write a lilting lyric that resonates in the mind long after one has finished reading [her] poem[s].”

B24   *Kingston: Celebrate This City*

Bishop, Dorothy. “Ontario’s oldest city.” *Ottawa Journal*, (April 17, 1976).

“*Kingston: Celebrate This City*” will attract a natural fellow love from old Kingstonians . . . . But Joan Finnigan’s choices and text are persuasive even for only occasional visitors to Kingston. The author woos you to come beyond the traveller’s barren railway yards and the crisp highway that skirts the suburban sprawl in the old “heartland” that was and is the city itself.”

Dodds, Gordon. *Quill and Quire*, Vol. 42, No. 6, (April 15, 1976).

“Joan Finnigan, poet and writer of repute and award has put together a photo-album on Kingston, Ontario, mostly from archival sources, containing maps, engravings, pictures and early diaries or notebooks . . . . [This] book will no doubt appeal above all else to the descendants of the “clans and cliques” who contributed so much to the graciousness of this quiet waterfront town . . . . And yet gazing into someone else’s love affair is frustrating and difficult to grasp. So equally with Joan Finnigan’s *Kingston* -- the celebration is mostly hers.”

B25   *Canadian Colonial Cooking: Tested Recipes From Ontario’s Pioneer Villages and Historical Sites*

Reviews not available.

B26   *Giants of Canada’s Ottawa Valley*

Arnett, Janet. *Quill and Quire*, Vol. 48, No. 5, (May 1982).

“Finnigan is well established as an Ottawa Valley historian. She has published several books on the topic . . . . In *Giants* she continues the local history tradition by portraying the giants against their times until a snapshot of life in the early days of The Valley emerges. We read about bloody fist fights, tavern brawls, risks taken on the timber rafts and in the bush, savagery, trickery, dirty politics and even a bit of charity.”

Neill, S.D. "Giants Not Giants." *Canadian Children's Literature*, No. 33, (1984).

"As a history told through biographies, the book is more colorful than scholarly. There is much hyperbole and bragging and many of the anecdotes have to be prefaced by the words "legend has it" because there is no proof. There are, however, many excellent early pictures and photographs as well as a short bibliography. *Giants of the Ottawa Valley* is good reading and Joan Finnigan, a Valley author, has worked hard to uncover as much of the factual material as she has . . . it is a very interesting attempt to popularize Canada's past."

B27 *Finnigan's Guide to the Ottawa Valley*

Gwynn, Julian. "Eight one-day tours of Valley zero in on history and culture." *Ottawa Citizen*. (November 5, 1988).

"Here is an unusual guide book. Joan Finnigan's *Guide* is characterized by a love of the Ottawa Valley's past, a lament over the wanton physical destruction of historically interesting buildings, and a general sadness about the failure of Valley inhabitants to develop a mature interest in their heritage. [Tourists] now have the chance, through this book, to begin to grasp the real value of coming to the Ottawa area. This book breathes some life into the Ottawa Valley . . . The travel advice is excellent. Finnigan's stories are a rare asset."

B28   *Old Scores, New Goals: The Story of the Ottawa Senators*

Campbell, Don. "Hockey tales of the Valley." *Ottawa Citizen*, (January 23, 1993).

"One of the most interesting aspects of this book is its recounting of great rivalries within the Valley, be it in intermediate, senior, or industrial hockey . . . . The tales are interesting but as you get entrenched in one great tale, the author moves into another as-told-to segment. About the best thing that can be said for the book is that somewhere along the way just about any reader is sure to come across interesting anecdotes."

Hawthorn. Tom. "Eminent, excellent, engaging." *The Province*, (January 3, 1993).

"This oral history by Joan Finnigan, the daughter of the late Senators star Frank (the Shawville Express, the Slumbering Romeo) Finnigan, looks at the days when hockey's heart was found not in Montreal or Toronto, but in Ottawa . . . .

Unfortunately, oral history is not the best way to tell the story of a franchise whose glory days are 90 years past. The reminiscences that are here are too often aimless, rambling, and undisciplined. Finnigan makes up for the text's shortcomings with delightful photographs and ephemera."

B29   *Lisgar Collegiate Institute: 1843 - 1993*

Kennedy, Janice. "A lively look back at 150 years of Lisgar Collegiate." *Ottawa Citizen*, (December 24, 1993).

"[It is] an affectionate history of Ottawa's oldest school. Looking back on 150 years instead of a single one, the book is a high-school yearbook unlike any other, an enviable collection of archival documents and photographs. It is also a leisurely ramble through the splendid chaos that is 150 years of daily life and local history

. . . . And what she has produced with her sesquicentennial collage is a lively look not only at the old school itself, but at the larger world beyond the grey stone walls."

NOTES TO PART A

1. Interview between Catharine Carroll and Joan Finnigan, 28 July 1998. Additional interviews took place at various times in 1998 and 1999. All further references to interviews (date) appear in the text.
2. Joan Finnigan, introduction to *Second Wind; Second Sight* (Windsor: Black Moss Press, 1998), p. 7. All further references to this work (*SWSS*, page number) appear in the text. Unless otherwise indicated, all further references in text and notes are to Joan Finnigan's published works.
3. Aphorisms & Absolutes (unpublished) appearing in the dedication to *down the unmarked roads* (Burnstown: General Store Publishing House, 1997). All further references to this collection (*DUR*, page number) appear in the text.
4. "And the Homers came in from Upper New York State," from *A Reminder of Familiar Faces* (Toronto: NC Press, 1978), p. 67. All further references to this collection (*RFF*, page number) appear in the text.
5. "Should Canada Change Its Abortion Law?" *Chatelaine Magazine*, August 1959.
6. "My Battle to be a Stay-at-Home Mother," *Chatelaine Magazine*, October 1975.

7. See note 6 above.
8. Introduction to *The Watershed Collection* (Kingston: Quarry Press, 1988), p. 9.
9. Joan Finnigan, correspondence to Catharine Carroll, July 1999.
10. Arlene Perley Rae, *Everybody's Favourites* (Toronto: Viking Penguin, 1997), p. 112.
11. *Everybody's Favourites*, p. 113.
12. Introduction to *Laughing All The Way Home* (Ottawa: Deneau Publishers, 1984), p. 14. All further references to this work (*LWH*, page number) appear in the text.
13. Introduction to *Legends, Legacies & Lies* (Kingston: Quarry Press, 1987), xi. All further references to this work (*LLL*, page number) appear in the text.
14. See note 9 above.
15. "Twelve Years: On the Moving Staircase," *The Whig-Standard Magazine*, 1 July 1989.

16. From the back cover of *Living Together* (Fredericton: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1976). All further references to this work (*LT*, page number) appear in the text.
17. See note 9 above.
18. "Poet," from *Through the Glass, Darkly* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1957), p. 7. All further references to this collection (*TGD*, page number) appear in the text.
19. "Poetry Reading," from *A Dream of Lilies* (Fredericton: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1965), p. 51. All further references to this collection (*DL*, page number) appear in the text.
20. "The Breakwater and the Web," from *Wintering Over* (Kingston: Quarry press, 1992), p. 136. All further references to this collection (*WO*, page number) appear in the text.
21. See note 6 above.
22. See note 6 above.
23. See note 6 above.

24. "death of a psychiatrist," from *It Was Warm and Sunny When We Set Out* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1970), p. 36. All further references to this collection (*WS*, page number) appear in the text.

25. "The Lamentations of Jeremias," *New Catholic Edition of the Holy Bible* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1949), p. 875.

26. *Entrance to the Greenhouse* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1968), p. 3.

27. *In the Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake* (Toronto: CBC Learning Systems, 1970), p. 3. All further references to this work (*BC*, page number) appear in the text.

28. The poem has appeared in several anthologies, including Borestone Mountain's *Best Poems of 1969*, *The Women Poets in English* (1972), edited by Ann Stanford and *The Anthology Anthology* (1984), edited by Robert Weaver.

29. Caitlin Matthews, "The Voices of the Wells" in *The Household of the Grail*, edited by John Matthews (Wellington: The Aquarian Press, 1990), p. 35.

30. See Luke 24: 13 - 35.

31. "Our journey then from Montreal to MacNab Township began," from *This Series Has Been Discontinued* (Fredericton: Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1981), p. 45. All further references to this collection (*RFF*, page number) appear in the text.
32. Introduction to *Giants of Canada's Ottawa Valley* (Burnstown: General Store Publications, 1981), p. 8.
33. Introduction to the Proceedings of *Exploring Our Heritage: The Ottawa Valley Experience* (Arnprior: The Arnprior and District Historical Society, 1980), ii.
34. "Ottawa Valley: Preserving the Legends," *The Whig-Standard Magazine*, 13 September 1986.
35. See note 33 above.
36. See note 33 above.
37. "The Good Woman," from *Some of the stories I told you were true* (Ottawa: Deneau Publishers, 1981), p. 280. All further references to this collection (*SS*, page number) appear in the text.

38. “Yes, I Was a Sixty-Minute Man,” from *Tell Me Another Story* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1988), p. 72. All further references to this collection (*TAS*, page number) appear in the text.
39. Introduction to “Sing and Be Happy,” from *tallying the tales of the old-timers* (Burnstown: General Store Publishing House, 1998), p. 177. All further references to this collection (*TT*, page number) appear in the text.
39. From the back cover of *Dancing at the Crossroads* (Kingston: Quarry Press, 1995). All further references to this collection (*DC*, page number) appear in the text.

ADDITIONAL WORKS CONSULTED

Bennett, Carol. *Valley Irish*. Renfrew: Juniper Books, 1983.

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Matthews, John. *The Household of the Grail*. Wellingborough: The Aquarian Press, 1990.

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New Catholic Edition of the Holy Bible. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1949.

Perley Rae, Arlene. *Everybody's Favourites*. Toronto: Viking Penguin, 1997.

Steinberg, Mandy, ed. *Guidelines, Policies and Procedures for Comprehensive and*

Thesis Examinations and the Preparation of Theses. Ottawa: Carleton
Univeristy
Press, 1988.

Sutherland, Fraser. *John Glassco: An Essay and Bibliography.* Downsview: ECW Press.
1984.

APPENDIX 1: ARCHIVAL AND LIBRARY HOLDINGS

Queen's University Archives

In 1969, Queen's University Archives, Kingston, purchased Joan Finnigan's early literary papers; a second purchase followed in 1974, and a third in 1977. The last purchase was made in 1992, consisting of more literary papers, as well as archival photos of the Ottawa Valley lumbering sector. As of the Spring of 1998, much of the holdings were still uncatalogued. In November 1998, the Archives collected further literary material housed in a shed on the author's property.

Archival holdings date from 1939 to 1992 and include working papers, drafts, typescripts and manuscripts of both published and unpublished poetry, short stories, essays and plays; there are also galley proofs of published material. Highlights include the following: drafts, manuscripts and galley proofs of *Through the Glass, Darkly*, *Entrance to the Greenhouse* and *It Was Warm and Sunny When We Set Out*, a manuscript of "I come from the Valley," a typed draft of "May Day Rounds: Renfrew County," early typed and handwritten drafts, as well as the only extant manuscript copy, of *The Best Damn Fiddler from Calabogie to Kaladar* and, finally, typescripts of *In the Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake* as well as Robert Weaver's introduction to *The Watershed Collection*.

There is extensive material related to *Canada In Bed* (A Woman Looks At Love In Canada), including early drafts, incomplete manuscripts and letters to publishers. The collection also contains considerable material related to the book *Kingston: Celebrate*

This City, including photographs, land surveys, newspaper articles, old prints, historical documents, maps and the business contract. There are also three folders of material related to *Wintering Over*, including working papers and a play script.

The Archives cartons are full of papers on which are written and typed endless ideas for films, books and plays dealing with subjects as diverse as poverty, native people and social activism. There are also brief, untitled essays on incest, race relations, national identity, women's fashion, Mrs. Plath, crime, feminism as well as life at Hambly Lake and in Kitchener-Waterloo; there are also handwritten and typed essays about the Ottawa Valley, past and present. There is also an extensive collection of quotes from unnamed sources. There are masses, literally hundreds, of typed and handwritten individual poems, with and without titles. Prose pieces include *Command Performance*, *The Golden Age*, *Here Come De Psychiatrist*, *The Off-Shore Fisherman*, *A Love Story* and *Woman Is Thy Name*. Manuscripts of unpublished plays include *Closing the Bar*, *The Dark Hungers of the Heart*, *The Widow* and *A Winter Bird*.

In the collection are several drafts of the plays *A Prince of Good Fellows* (unproduced) and *Up the Vallee!* as well as film scripts for *Kingston: Celebrate This City*, *They're Putting Us Off The Map*, *The Queen's Engineers* and *Life In Solomon* (unproduced) and radio scripts for "Coming Over A Country Of No Lights," *There Are No Good Times Left -- None At All!*, *Children of the Shadows* and *Margaret's Stones Are Falling Down*.

The collection also contains nineteen sound tape reels, including interviews with the Ottawa Valley "old-timers" and retired sea captains, which were used in the Ottawa

Valley oral histories and the Great Lakes radio series featured on CBC.

Also included in the collection are Canadian literature periodicals and North American newspapers featuring Joan Finnigan's poetry as well as critical reviews, personal and professional correspondence, school notebooks, diaries and original photographs used in books on the Ottawa Valley.

At the author's request, several of the files are closed.

Queen's University Libraries

Holdings at the Joseph S. Stauffer Library include *A Reminder of Familiar Faces* and *Second Wind; Second Sight*. As well, the library has a black and white, sound copy of *The Best Damn Fiddler From Calabogie to Kaladar* (16 mm., 49 min., 4 sec.).

Holdings at the Lorne Pierce (Special Collections) Library include *Through the Glass, Darkly, It Was Warm and Sunny When We Set Out, Canadian Colonial Cooking, The Dog Who Wouldn't Be Left Behind* and *Old Scores, New Goals*.

Holdings common to the Joseph S. Stauffer Library and the Lorne Pierce Library include *A Dream of Lilies, Entrance to the Greenhouse, This Series Has Been Discontinued, Living Together, The Watershed Collection, Wintering Over, Some of the stories I told you were true, Laughing All The Way Home, Legends, Legacies and Lies, Tell Me Another Story, Dancing at the Crossroads, down the unmarked roads, Witches, Ghosts and Loups-Garous, "I come from the Valley," Kingston: Celebrate This City, Giants of Canada's Ottawa Valley* and *Finnigan's Guide to the Ottawa Valley*.

Holdings at the Education Library include *Legends, Legacies & Lies*, “*I come from the valley*” and *Kingston: Celebrate This City*. Holdings common to the Lorne Pierce Library and the Education Library include *In the Brown Cottage at Loughborough Lake* and *Look! The Land is Growing Giants*.

National Archives of Canada

Holdings at the National Archives of Canada, in Ottawa, include documentation related to Joan Finnigan’s film project *Godsend* (unproduced), correspondence, clippings and a list of publications concerning Ottawa Valley oral histories, extensive cassette collection of interviews for the Ottawa Valley oral histories; radio interviews of Joan Finnigan regarding her work; several readings by Joan Finnigan of her poetry and stories recounted to her; CBC dub of “Coming Over a Country of No Lights” and off-air recording of CBC series *Between Ourselves*, featuring recollections of the Great Lakes sea captains and CBC pre-broadcast interview of Joan Finnigan.

National Library of Canada

Holdings at the National Library of Canada, in Ottawa, include a complete collection (in duplicate) of the author’s published works, as well as sound recordings of the Ottawa Valley oral history interviews. As well, the artwork and manuscript material for *Look! The Land is Growing Giants* was the first deposit in the Children’s Collection.

Canadian Public Libraries*

Through the Glass, Darkly (C1) - Newfoundland (1), New Brunswick (1), Ontario (2),
Manitoba (1), British Columbia (2)

A Dream of Lilies (C2) - Newfoundland (1), New Brunswick (1), Ontario (3), Manitoba
(1), Saskatchewan (1), British Columbia (2)

Entrance to the Greenhouse (C3) - Newfoundland (1), New Brunswick (1), Ontario (3),
Manitoba (1), Saskatchewan (1), British Columbia (1)

It Was Warm and Sunny When We Set Out (C4) - Newfoundland (1), New Brunswick (1),
Ontario (2), Manitoba (1), Saskatchewan (1), British Columbia (1)

In the Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake (C5) - Newfoundland (1), New Brunswick
(1), Ontario (2), Manitoba (1), Alberta (1), British Columbia (2)

Living Together (C6) - Newfoundland (1), New Brunswick (1), Ontario (3), Manitoba (1),
Alberta (1), British Columbia (2)

A Reminder of Familiar Faces (C7) - not listed.

This Series Has Been Discontinued (C8) - Newfoundland (1), New Brunswick (1),
Ontario (3), Manitoba (1), British Columbia (2)

The Watershed Collection (C9) - Newfoundland (1), New Brunswick (1), Ontario (3),
Alberta (1), British Columbia (1)

Wintering Over (C10) - Newfoundland (1), New Brunswick (1), Ontario (3), British
Columbia (1)

Second Wind; Second Sight (C11) - not listed.

Some of the stories I told you were true (C12) - Newfoundland (1), New Brunswick (1),
Ontario (3), Saskatchewan (1), Alberta (1), British Columbia (1)

Laughing All the Way Home (C13) - Newfoundland (1), Ontario (3), Alberta (1), British
Columbia (2)

Legacies, Legends & Lies (C14) - Ontario (2), Alberta (1), British Columbia (1)

Tell Me Another Story (C15) - Newfoundland (1), Ontario (2), Saskatchewan (1), Alberta
(1), British Columbia (2)

Tallying the Tales of the Old-Timers (C16) - not listed.

Dancing at the Crossroads (C17) - Ontario (3), Saskatchewan (1), Alberta (1), British Columbia (2)

down the unmarked roads (C18) - Ontario (1)

Look! The Land is Growing Giants (C19) - Nova Scotia (1), Ontario (4), Manitoba (1), Saskatchewan (1), British Columbia (2)

The Dog Who Wouldn't be Left Behind (C20) - Nova Scotia (1), Ontario (2), Manitoba (1), Saskatchewan (1), British Columbia (2)

Witches, Ghosts and Loups-Garous: Scary Tales from Canada's Ottawa Valley (C21) - Ontario (3), Saskatchewan (1), Alberta (1), British Columbia (1)

Canada in Bed (C22) - Ontario (2), British Columbia (1)

"I come from the Valley" (C23) - Newfoundland (1), New Brunswick (1), Ontario (2), Manitoba (1), Alberta (1), British Columbia (2)

Kingston: Celebrate This City (C24) - Ontario (3), Manitoba (1), Saskatchewan (1),

British Columbia (2)

Canadian Colonial Cooking: Tested Recipes from Ontario's Pioneer Villages and Historical Sites (C25) - not listed.

Giants of Canada's Ottawa Valley (C26) - Newfoundland (1), Ontario (3), Alberta (1),
British Columbia (2)

Finnigan's Guide to the Ottawa Valley (C27) - Ontario (3), Saskatchewan (1), Alberta (1)

Old Scores, New Goals: The Story of the Ottawa Senators (C28) - Ontario (1),
Saskatchewan (1), Alberta (1), British Columbia (1)

Lisgar Collegiate Institute: 1843 - 1993 (C29) - British Columbia (1)

*Listings of the Public Lending Right Commission (provided by the Canada Council)
library holdings as of August 1998 (updated July 1999).

APPENDIX 2: AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

“News of an Old Affair” (C2), Borestone Mountain’s *Best Poems of 1960*.

“Winter on Amherst Island” (C2, C24) Borestone Mountain’s *Best Poems of 1962*.

“A Night Poem” (C2), Borestone Mountain’s *Best Poems of 1964*.

“The Children are Making a Snow Fort,” Borestone Mountain’s *Best Poems of 1966*.

Entrance to the Greenhouse (C3, C9), 1967 Centennial Prize.

“death of a psychiatrist” (C4), Borestone Mountain’s *Best Poems of 1968*.

“death of a psychiatrist” (C4), President’s Medal for Poetry. University of Western Ontario, 1969.

“May Day Rounds: Renfrew County” (C6, C9, C23), Borestone Mountain’s *Best Poems of 1970*.

“Moon Walk” (C4), Borestone Mountain’s *Best Poems of 1972*.

“Journey,” Borestone Mountain’s *Best Poems of 1974*.

The Best Damn Fiddler from Calabogie to Kaladar (C4, C23), winner of 9 of 11 Etrog (Genie) Awards in 1969, including best screenplay.

Philemon Wright Award for Research and History in the Outaouais, 1983.

Legends, Legacies & Lies (C14), Ottawa-Carleton Literary Award, 1984.

APPENDIX 3: MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

Plays

The Best Damn Fiddler from Calabogie to Kaladar (C23), NFB

Produced and directed by Peter Pearson, 1969.

Up The Vallee! Tarragon Theatre Workshop

Produced by Bill Glassco, directed by Guy Sprung, 1976.

Produced and directed by Terry Tweed (excerpted version at University of Ottawa), 1977.

Songs From Both Sides of the River (C10), National Arts Centre

Produced by Andis Celms, directed by Gil Osborne, 1987.

Wintering Over (C10), Canadian Museum of Civilization

Produced and directed by David Parry, 1988 - 1992.

Film and Television

The Best Damn Fiddler From Calabogie to Kaladar (C23), 1969

Screenplay written for NFB's *Challenge for Change* series.

They're Putting Us Off the Map, 1972

Idea production, scriptwriting and interviews for NFB film about Napanee.

Home (C8), 1972

Script written for CBC television series *This Land*.

Kingston: Celebrate This City, (C24), 1973

Research and interviews and scriptwriting for CBC film about Kingston.

Godsend, 1975

Screenplay (unproduced) written for Potterton Productions.

Oh, Rugged Land of Gold, 1980

Screenplay (unproduced) written for Integra Films for film set in Alaska.

A Day in the Life of God's Country, 1982

Screenplay (unproduced) written and backed by an Ontario Arts Council screenplay grant, for film set in the Ottawa Valley.

Title and date not available.

Film script promoting professional engineering at Queen's University.

Title and date not available.

Film script written for Queen's University capital fundraising project.

Radio

Poems

“Songs for the Bible Belt” (C6) produced by John Reeves and broadcast on CBC Radio in 1974.

“May Day Rounds: Renfrew County” (C6, C9, C23), produced by John Reeves and broadcast on CBC Radio’s *Anthology* in 1968.

“Coming Over a Country of No Lights (Northern Ontario Poems)” (C6, C9)), produced by John Reeves and broadcast on CBC Radio’s *Anthology* in 1977.

“The Valley of the Outaouais” (C7, C9), produced by Howard Engel and broadcast on CBC Radio’s *Anthology* in both 1979 and 1980.

In the Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake (C5, C9), produced by John Reeves and broadcast on CBC Radio’s *Anthology* in 1969, and on CBC’s *Tuesday Night* in 1970.

Two suites “Poems from Pontiac County” and “The River” were purchased by CBC Radio’s *Anthology* in 1981.

Other

Children of the Shadows, a script on poverty, was produced by Bill Terry and broadcast on CBC Radio's *Anthology* in 1967.

There's No Good Times Left -- None At All! a documentary on the Ottawa Valley, was produced by Bill Terry and broadcast on CBC Radio's *Anthology* in 1972.

The Lakers, a documentary on the retired lake captains and pilots of the Great Lakes, was produced by Howard Engel and broadcast on CBC Radio's *Anthology* in 1974.