

CALGARY PROCESS

There are half a million people in Calgary, same as in Portland or San Jose or Albuquerque but Calgary is very different from those cities.

It's been a boomtown twenty years, first cattle, then oil took over and now construction goes on in all directions. Calgary sits on the prairie slope, sloping down from the Rockies, from Banff with its beautiful hot spring pool that surrounds you with steam as you swim in the middle of those snowy mountains. Calgary is jumping off into time -- there's enough space and water so a hundred million could live on this nucleus of a future monstropolis.

The train system abuilding now night and day is for a projected population of two million. Those empty spaces along the rapid transit tracks are as sure to fill up as a glass poised under the tembling mouth of a beer bottle.

There's an awful lot of drinking in Calgary. Saturday morning downtown people lie on sidewalks, or on the snow over the sidewalks, because they drank so much and have no other place to lie, some plee where they could go and be welcome and warm and maybe sober up with coffee perhaps laced with brandy and a good conversation about why the drinking really happened, why it had to happen Saturday morning in Calgary with all the crowdsof people and the streets flowing with cars barely moving along but with so much effort.

There may be weed in Calgary but none for me except one joint at Clouds'n'Water, or perhaps two or three on at most two occasions.

Yes, well what I'm saying is that Calgary is literally booming into the future. There are a few old houses along the river but it's mainly new ones going up like layers on an onion, cheaply built and sold for more money than mansions many other places.

If I were going to generalize I'd just tell you it's ~~xx~~ awful and to hell with it, but the point is I arrived there August 8th, had work by ~~February~~ August 17th as a proofreader at McAra printing plant, moved into a rooming house so as not to jeopardize the welfare of my wife and our kids, got on board as classical music reviewer for the CALGARY HERALD, one of two daily papers, bought two fine cars for a hundred fifty dollar apiece and contended with registering, insuring and operating them, learned to play my bouzouki with its eight strings and gourdlike shape, hung around the community art gallery as much as it could stand me (which was very little for reasons I'll explain), did a project on an authentic child prodigy piano genius, and a translation from Spanish of a truly original tract by Horacio Zepala, moved in with my wife and children and came to know them, applied to the Canada Council to do a grant that involved developing an art movement consisting of five artists each in Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver, and now have gone away to Mexico with my middle son Jesse, planning to either return to Calgary in six weeks, or not.

It seems to me to tell the story of the process of those weeks from August 1st~~xx~~, when I arrived by plane from a departure point so bizarre I mean to omit it entirely from the story, to when I left with my three year old son

Jesse Art in a 1968 Volkswagen bug last week, February seventh to be exact (Valentine's was yesterday, baby), starting on this trip. To tell how I got hired and managed to work and joined the Jewish community center and how we all went swimming and these other things I did besides that kept me alive as this thing we are often calling "artist" for want of a better word, to describe, um, the healthy obsession of having enough to do so everything is all right.

The truth is some episodes in my life in the past, in Montreal and Budapest and the mountains of New Mexico and, yes! even in an obscure institution for the disabled in rural Denmark, have been so spicy and spacy and fraught with peril and delight as well (oh the perfume of her blank-faced thighs, four years in a Turkish jail!?!)

that it feels pretty tame to talk exclusively about Calgary. Still, what we are about is basically scientific research, and the documents are handy. Save the rest for later, when the mantle of dimming memory can disguise embarrassment and call up your archetypes, the myth figures we're all busy creating (this is not a general circulation piece of shit, let me tell you) (we are artists--you're not me, I'm not you; leave plastic to preserve furniture, O.K.? (jump, jump, jump)--for now the facts are clear.

First there was getting off the airplane.

as gradually other voices build up and the bottle gets full of music.

Kynaston then played a sonata written for him by American composer Nils Vigeland, a student of Lucas Foss. Actually he only played the first half of the work and that for the second time. The second half calls for a chorus and consists of thirty-eight cadences.

Vigeland's work, called the Mendelssohn Sonata, contains clusters of tones that advance and ebb with a kind of Lunar vespers feeling.

Last on the program was a different kind of tribute to Bach by Czech composer Miles Sokola . . . This is a Passacaglia quasi Toccata based on the name of Bach. It starts muted and grows and grows tremendously, then dies and comes to life again with melodic figures inverting like a musical equivalent of the visual animation for a television title. This crab dance swells and swells and finally a clear arpeggio emerges whose notes spell B.A.C.H.

Kynaston is headliner of a series of six concerts to be played between now and Spring. He has eighteen records out, devotes himself entirely to concerts, and is just completing a three week tour that took him through New England and to Kansas before the final stop in Calgary.

"I enjoyed it a lot better without the snow", said the soft spoken performer over sherry and hors d'oeuvres following his performance. He expressed the opinion that every town may be a piano town, but Calgary could be that rarer thing, an organ town.