

D. E. Hawkins and  
D. A. Vinton.  
**THE ENVIRONMENTAL  
CLASSROOM.**  
Toronto:  
Prentice-Hall, 1973.  
374 pp. \$9.50.

*The Environmental Classroom* is really two books in one. The first section, of approximately 140 pages, contains Hawkins' and Vinton's views on today's educational problems. The second part, about 200 pages, is a potpourri of articles, photographs, government pronouncements, cartoons, and book excerpts that reinforce the authors' position.

Hawkins and Vinton maintain that contemporary North American society is in the midst of several serious crises. The environmental crisis, however, is the most serious simply because unsatisfactory solutions will result in mankind's demise. The authors see education (but definitely not the "education" of the educational system which exists today) as the only possible hope for civilization.

Education must incorporate environmental issues not as separate disciplines or subjects, but as an integral part of a total commitment to human survival. Environmental education, then, must deal with mankind in a truly multidisciplinary, realistic way.

*If we conceive of the environment as the total world in which man lives, and if we therefore conceive of all education as being environmental education . . . , then the environmental classroom becomes not just another panacea applied to an unworkable and anachronistic curriculum structure, but a new conception of the purposes and methods of education. (p. 21)*

The authors support their holistic view by citing numerous examples of environmental programs presently in existence and the latter section of the book adds rein-

forcement. There, over forty writers demand that we examine our present, inadequate programs and think realistically of alternatives. This second section goes a long way toward making *The Environmental Classroom* an interesting, relevant, and practical book. Hawkins and Vinton have brought a serious problem down to the only level where meaningful action will happen — the classroom.

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Tory I. Westermarck and  
Bryan S. Gooch, eds.  
**POETRY IS FOR PEOPLE.**  
Toronto: Macmillan, 1973.

Richard Woollatt and  
Raymond Souster, eds.  
**SIGHTS AND SOUNDS.**  
Toronto: Macmillan, 1973.

Brian S. Powell.  
**MAKING POETRY.**  
Toronto:  
Collier Macmillan, 1973.  
180 pp. \$3.00 (\$5.95 cloth).

There have been numerous recent attempts to "blow the dust off" poetry and make it exciting and meaningful — well, at least mildly interesting. Most of this fervent activity is generated on behalf of the secondary school student who is not exactly enamored of the subject. "It's neither interesting nor relevant," they say; and so, teachers, aided by publishing companies, have attempted to make it relevant.

What sometimes happens in this rush to gain favor with the "turned off" student is that the craft of writing is ignored. Pop songs and cryptic verses of 20th Century entertainment gurus, most of them questionable in diction, imagery and rhythm, are brought into high school literature classes to entertain the "with it" generation. It is no great surprise that the results of these doses of "relevancy" yield minimal return in terms of interest or ability on the part of students. Students need

and want to be exposed to poetry of substance. Further, they need to develop skills they can use to test a poet's craft and insight.

*Poetry is for People* is an example of an attempt to meld traditional and contemporary poetry in a "relevant" way. The aim of the book — to show that poetry is written by and about people — is an admirable one, but the attempt ends in failure. There are a few excellent selections from both traditional and contemporary contributors but the majority of the traditional selections are well-worn, to be found in any high school anthology — and, therefore, hackneyed in this context. Moreover, the contemporary selections tend to be catchy and trendy (with the over 30's by the way) and lack substance, e.g., Tom Lehrer's "Pollution" and Pete Seeger's "Hammer Song." Space is wasted by printing two French Canadian folk songs three times: original version, translation and music.

The book's aim is to view all walks of life — but do we have to be subjected to the football player (twice) the baseball player (thrice), the hunter, the diver, the skater, the sportsman! What — no hockey? It all seems as though quantity were the concern here, not quality. The book lacks critical selection and the photographs seem to be thrown in as an afterthought because they have something to do with the words.

*Sights and Sounds.* It is about time Raymond Souster was introduced to high school students. Down to earth, harsh, gutsy and yet a penetrating observer of urban Canada, Souster does with poetry what Hemingway does with prose. His direct yet careful style should appeal to the teenager. There is much of Souster's poetry in this book, but there are other excellent contemporary poets here too: Frost, Sandburg, Milton Acorn, Gwendolyn McEwan, Al Purdy, Anne Marriott, James Reaney, Dorothy Parker. This book is one of the few I have seen with such a good collection of Canadian

talent — a tribute to editors Souster and Woollatt. Nor is it chauvinistic poetry. The subjects reflect a universality and range through the city, progress, sports, the native peoples, prisons, pollution. The editing is tight, critical. Each poem provokes and probes and, in contrast to *Poetry for People*, the photographs and illustrations, for the most part, enhance the book. Included are valuable appendices: biographical notes, discography and collections of poems by contributing authors.

*Making Poetry.* Brian Powell has been inspiring young people all over the world to write poetry and in the process makes them aware of the exacting craft a good poet must practise. His first book *English Through Poetry Writing* was an invaluable piece of work because of the methodology and the numerous examples of students' works he collected. *Making Poetry*, a sequel designed for pupils aged 9-14, is equally valuable for the examples of writing and for the additional forms and exercises introduced. The language is more simple, more prescriptive (which to some teachers may be a boon — I prefer the style of his previous book) and, given the two books, a teacher could do a creditable job implementing a program which can inspire his pupils to write effectively.

The two chapters "What Makes a Teacher" and "Profiles of Distinguished Teachers" have no place in this book. In the introduction Powell adequately explains why his approach is useful and delineates the kind of attitude and personality needed to make it work. To digress any further, to skim glibly over truisms of education, to wax eloquent on motherhood and apple pie and notions of ideal teachers, to reminisce about "great teachers I have known" detracts from his substantial contribution to education.

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