

predicament necessarily places a good deal of strain on any publisher who cares what he or she is doing. Perhaps all of us — typographers, authors, publishers and readers — may find solace in the remark of one of the finest typographer/printers of this century, Victor Hammer, who said: "The work itself is what matters, and when it is authentic, the condition of its accomplishment will necessarily be adverse."

### Poetry

The books submitted in this category covered a considerable range, from the sloppy and thoughtless to the joyful and knowledgeable creations of designers who have learned their trade and who practice it with honor. There were good books from Porcupine's Quill, Exile, General Publishing, and Aya as well as from Coach House Press, which in the end won all the acknowledgements in this category. A couple of the judges were impressed by the titles submitted from General Publishing's Spectrum Series, but the typographical quality of the books was very uneven, and their necessary fealty to the series design prevented them competing successfully one by one against the books from Coach House or Porcupine's Quill which are individually designed.

The Coach House books impress with their application of sophisticated typography to commercial paperback production — a feature long associated with Penguin Books, but maddeningly scarce in Canadian trade publishing. The Coach House books impress too with their range, from the traditional to the experimental in design, and they give clear evidence that each title is designed from the text out, not from the cover in. (Surprisingly, however, all the Coach House books in the contest, if they were perfectbound, as many of them were, suffered from vertical alignment problems.)

The merits of the winning book ought, I think, to be obvious to anyone handling it. The Fitzgerald won our attention in spite of its bad cover, because of the immaculate typography of the insides. The Cookshaw was particularly impressive to me personally, because of the designer's thorough yet inventive fidelity to the theme and title, and because of the understated but great technical skill evident in its execution.

### Prose

The submissions in this category were disappointing. Many of the books were badly bound (the action of the pages poor, the spine margins haphazardly calculated, if they were calculated at all) and the design quality overall was dull. Many of the books were caught be-

tween traditional and contemporary design and managed to fall flat between the stools. In most of the books, the typography was bargain basement stuff — bad cuts, badly set, probably by a compositor who was unsure of the difference between typography and typing. We chose no prize winner but gave honorable mention to three.

The McKay is a satisfying, if fussy, piece of traditional typography, disfigured, in my mind, by an unimaginative cover. (Not all the judges share this opinion. One of them at least wanted to give it a prize.) The McFadden, a resolutely ugly book, is so on purpose. It departs for its own reasons from traditional canons of typography, and we acknowledged it not for its beauty (it has none) but for its thoroughness as a piece of rather nostalgic (instead of traditional) design. The Varnai, on the other hand, is thoroughly traditional in its approach. It attempts nothing new, but does succeed in its own way, on its own terms.

Certain features of other books in this category merit attention. Paci's THE FATHER (Oberon) has some nice features, but the margins are bad, and there is a humorless woodenness in the execution. Gunnars' THE AXE'S EDGE has a splendid cover and title page, designed by Ken Seabrook, but the guts of the book are bland, and have *no relation* to the cover and title page. The book has been built, as many trade books are, in pieces which do not add up to a whole. There is a fine cover also to be found on the Doubleday entry, GLENN GOULD VARIATIONS, and inside this book is some fine photography nicely displayed. But the text pages are tired, badly set, characterless things. For all the money that was obviously spent in producing this book, a *much* better text page could have been obtained.

## Juvenile

While the illustrations in several of the children's books were exciting to behold, the *typography* of these books was, almost without exception, atrocious. In only one of the books — Tim Wynne-Jones's ZOOM AT SEA (Douglas & McIntyre) — was the typography at all appropriate to the subject matter and illustrations in the book, and even in this case the net result was rather tired. Most of the books, including the two Annick Press books, were set thoughtlessly in one of two readily available faces, Helvetica or Palatino, with never a moment's consideration of the appropriateness of the face to the text or to the illustrations. I'd have been happier, myself, giving no prize in the category.