GEORGE FALUDY

(b. 1910)

By the time George (György) Faludy arrived in Canada in 1967, he was already one of the most important Hungarian poets in exile. His prominence was secured with the 1937 publication of *Villon Balladái* (*Ballads of Villon*). Despite, or perhaps because of, its great appeal and influence, the book was burned in Germany by the Nazis in 1943, and was confiscated four years later by the Hungarian Communist government. Until 1987 when he signed contracts with Hungarian publishers for editions of 50,000 copies each', that was Faludy's last book to appear in Hungary.

Born in Budapest, Faludy studied at the Universities of Berlin, Vienna, Graz, and Paris. His resistance to totalitarianism and bourgeois complacency, which forced him to go into exile, began while he served in the Hungarian army, where he was accused of engaging in anti-Nazi activities. Following his immigration to Paris in 1938 and subsequently to Morocco, he moved to the United States in 1941. While there, he enlisted in the American army, and was stationed at many locations in the United States.

His American sojourn led to his writing poetry in which he views the New World culture in America with critical irony. The poem included here is an early example of the poetry he wrote before returning to Hungary from New York in 1946. An ode, it employs Walt Whitman's grand style, but the exuberance of Whitmanesque rhetoric is parodically reversed to castigate the insidious anxieties and consumerism of daily life that Faludy saw as a threat to American culture.

Of the ten years that he lived in Hungary after his return as literary editor of *The Voice of the People*, three and a half were spent in detention. Accused of espionage on behalf of the Americans, he was imprisoned for six months in the secret headquarters of the Budapest police. Following this, he did three years of forced labour in a camp at Recsk (1950-53). He discussed those experiences, as well as his life in France, Africa and the United States, in his autobiography, *My Happy Days in Hell* (1962). After escaping from Hungary during the revolution of 1956, he spent the next ten years in Europe, living in London, Italy, and Malta.

Hungarian friends in Toronto 'lured' him there in 1967 'with the promise of an academic position, which turned out to be non-existent'. Failing to find employment in Canada, he found himself lecturing at Columbia University in New York, while he continued to live in Toronto. Commuting between these two cities for three years, Faludy had ample opportunity to observe, and write about, the differences between their two cultures and life-styles. As many of his poems in *Learn This Poem of Mine by Heart* (1983) and *East and West: Selected Poems* (1978) illustrate, Faludy bemoaned the eroding impact of technology on American culture, and the tastelessness and crassness that assaulted his aesthetic and social sensibilities. The morality of Faludy's cultural stance toward the disintegration of civic order is summed up by the persona of Georgius, in the poem 'The Letter of Georgius, Byzantine emissary', published in his *összegyüjtötVersei* ('Collected Poems', 1980): 'The wall won't defend the burghers of the town / If the burghers do not defend the wall.'

Although 'Toronto is not Athens under Pericles,' as Faludy said, he wrote about his Canadian life with a brightness that often belied his general reproach of the contemporary human condition. After his wanderings from country to country, and having 'held five different passports', Faludy had no qualms in stating that Canada 'is the most marvellous decent society I have ever lived in. Not perfect, God knows, but *decent*.' *Notes from the Rainforest* (1988) records, in the form of diary entries and in a meditative style, his thoughts about, among other things, the cultural differences between Canada and the United States.

Faludy, who wrote poetry only in Hungarian, received honorary degrees from the University of Toronto (1978) and Bishop's University (1983), and was twice nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature. Other Canadian publications by Faludy include *Twelve Sonnets* (1983), *Selected Poems 1933-1980* (1985), and *Corpses, Brats and Cricket Music* (1987).

GOODBYE, MY AMERICA

after **Walt** *Whitman*

1.

I **outbellow** you, O boat's fog-horn. O ocean, the hue of slate,
Like fog over asphalt,
Long Island appears there, slate-grey,
As it stands erect above the distant **horizon,**
As if to take its leave of me.
O continent, I am taking my leave of you, O country, where I could remain, were it not that I had to go,
O country, where I was received as a guest, I rise now to my feet to take my leave.
If I had one, I would tip my hat.

2.

O arid Arizona, O magical Colorado,
O New Jersey of slag-heaps,
O rock-bound Massachusetts, O wind-swept Indiana,
O Missouri of the lightning-bolts,
O endless plains of Kansas, and you who pained me so,
O Magyar-like Ohio,
You, the states over which I wandered, feared and loved,
Over which I suffered and succumbed:
O you, the Great Lakes of bored grey waters,
With these winds from Canada,
The forests of the Carolinas, the trailing moss among the trees,
So like the Gothic cathedrals,
Thrice-shaded coast of Maine, its green pine forest sloping
By greenish rocks into a sea of greenishness,
O **pebbly-sea'd** Nevada: O Salt Lake, its crimson mountains
like isles amid the snow,
Louisiana's coast, muskeg of the marsh,
Like mouldy skins forgotten in fields,
Downy Montana, sheep in their millions
On mildly shelving pasture-lands,
Violet-hued Wyoming, where solitary I might wander
Over passes unsuspected by birds,
And then you, immense Manhattan!

3.

O people, Scots, Swedes, Dutch, **Philippinos,**
Albanians, Portuguese,

You vanishing Indians,
You Negro cotton-pickers, you Polish shopkeepers,
You Chinese laundrymen,
You Jewish cab-drivers, you Norse sailors,
You half-breed quarrymen, Irish cops,
You, who have airplanes spray your fields of fruit
And have garages for your cars,
Workers, awaiting your trains and clutching in your hands
The handles of lunch-buckets, you,
You, who at bars down your whiskeys and never once greet
The moon for the neon-signs,
Who occupy rented rooms and loiter on streetcorners,
The sticky asphalt of summer evenings,
You, who naked in your sleep stare at the awesome
Windowless walls of night, bleak and blank,
Who in salmon-shaded shirts ride across the prairies,
With lassos in hand,
You, who angle for trout in the bluish creeks
Of a Pennsylvania dusk,
You, rocking on the verandah of your family home,
Pipe clutched between your teeth,
Or hurrying from your red-brick house to your place of work
On broad Main Street,
(No difference which Main Street, since you made them all
Similarly distasteful),
You, who love a steak larger than a plate,
And about speeding without limit,
You, who loaf about in open shirt, with loose socks—
Comfort above all else—
And feet on the table, you drink, hugging one another's
Shoulders, laughing and laughing,
You who picnic by driving into the country on Sunday
And turning your car into a field,
You, who always rush about as if life were a sport
And you, who prefers
To sport on the road of technology
You dash along
As if it would carry you ever-upward—O races by the thousands
Well-nourished and well-looking,
Beaming and busy, clean and uncomplaining,
Good-hearted and most helpful,
From all of you I take my leave.

4.

Insolent capitalism! Abattoirs, smoke-stacks,
Fields of oil and mineshafts!
Lift-bridges, canals, threshing-machines, blast-furnaces,
Tugboats and railroad cars!
And you, bold youth! O universities by the hundreds,
O volleyball games in the evening,
O Palo Alto gardens, wherein I could pluck grapefruit
From my sleeping-bag,
And where blimps of silver by the dozen course above the palm-grove,
In the reddish dawn!
O you, dear San Francisco, Telegraph Hill, Golden Gate Bridge,
Sweet smell of olive trees,
Those weekends on the ocean, those noisy crowded cable-cars
With their tipsy Marines!
O electricity in every home! And those who gave me lifts in their cars,
Whenever I stood on the roadside,
People most dear, who drove a hundred miles out of their way to show me
A mountain peak, like a family heirloom!
My bathroom, and sallow Long Island, with its record-players
And blaring radio sets!
My Manhattan of pincushions, where skyscrapers and towers
Out-thrust each other!
Washington! As if infants' hands had mixed up mud and marble
And made of them a green park!
O beryl of Green River! O greyish Hudson!
O the azure of the Colorado River!
The deep Mississippi, jaundice-coloured, whirlpooled,
Its surface a treacherous peace,
All along its shores: ramshackled Negro shacks with shadows
Leaning over the waters,
Within them, through the dirty windows, glass figurines of flowers,
Erect on broken-down chests of drawers.
O slender, chattering girls! After them, summer louts!
O kids, red of cheek,
Afraid of nobody, who are angling in the mouths
Of sleeping uncles their dentures!
O Negro mammy in your bandana! Labourers in leather vests,
O briefcases flying by!
O bathing beauties of Hollywood! Hags of henna-coloured hair,
Ancient gentlemen with knotted white ties:—
From all of you I take my leave.

5.

O the past, O the pioneers, Revere riding through the night,
And Lincoln, Lincoln, Lincoln,
King George the Third and his taxes, which were found unjust,
And Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln, who . . .
The rising of Washington and of Abraham Lincoln
Who, in Springfield, Illinois,
When he was elected President and stood there,
Taking leave of his townsfolk
Between the rows of sumach trees before the yellow station,
Big and unbeautiful,
And Mary Todd, eyes raised to her husband, bursting with joy,
All the while Abraham Lincoln spoke thus
And Walt Whitman, the poet, the white-bearded, the beautiful,
Who lamented the death of Lincoln,
Teddy Roosevelt with his big stick, and the famous Edison,
But Abraham Lincoln it was who spoke thus
While he stood between the rows of such trees
By the big yellow railway station,
Lincoln six-feet-tall, who never would have become President,
Had not Mary made his life intolerable,
And Woodrow Wilson the bungler, and his rebellious Congress,
And the Depression of the Thirties,
But it was Lincoln who said, taking his leave of Illinois,
On his way to the White House
And the war will last long and grow bloodier and bloodier,
But end in the defeat of feudalism,
And in the liberation of the slaves,
Or to express it with more precision,
Make slaves of the miners and factory-workers
So that in place of the whip,
The horror of the big city, the penny dreadful,
And prosperity would make the slave
Happier and happier, but it was Lincoln who said,
Taking leave of Illinois,
That in the end everything that man plans
Sinks and stinks,
That in the end, everything that man creates
Is faulty and transitory,
That everything in the end is senseless and will pass away,
Like all man's doings,
And so, therefore, we must believe that all our work is necessary

One must believe this until the end, the bitter end,
It was Lincoln who said that to them.

6.
Permit me to bid you adieu, buddies—not lofty generals,
Gleaming with medals,
Never unaccompanied or unattended, whose names appear regularly
In the newspapers—
But you, who lugged the machine-gun and the mortar,
The cauldron and the spade—
And the officers' possessions—and yet asked not their advice
During the fighting,
You, who crawled in the mud and whose resinous sweat trickled
Into our eyes,
And into the pools of the jungles and who asked not
Praise for every enemy killed,
O anonymous buddies! You waded in seas up to your chins,
To land at Tarawa
While machine-guns riddled you with holes and the landing vessels
Overturned on the reefs,
Who passed through the sulphuric hell of Iwo Jima,
And you, who, at Guadalcanal,
Feverish with malaria, fought though the snipers
Were on high up the palm-trees,
Who swam in the waters of Manila Bay, across the Irrawaddy,
In the brine of the Sea of Japan,
And at Chinwangtao, on the Yellow Sea, where the sharks played
Hide and seek around your ankles.
O unnamed buddies! Who set sail across great oceans,
Joking and singing,
And leapt onto islands, in your pocket the snapshot of your sweetheart,
From island to island,
Who strolled so far away from home, with pocket radios,
With electric razors,
Who died modestly, making no great fuss,
Taking leave of life,
Who lie under Saipan's Coral Reefs, Luzon's yellow loess,
The clay of New Guinea,
Who shattered into hundreds of pieces when crashing
Into the slopes of the Himalayas,
O marine pilots, who lie buried inside their wrecked planes,
Or under the waves,
Who fell into volcanic holes, you who rest now

And you who rest nowhere and never again shall see
Lovely Main Street,
Broadway, or hear your sweetheart say goodbye to you.

And to you, who once more are living at home,
And have the power to forget,
You, who work, drive cars, bathe and fish,
For whom nothing has happened—
O America the happy, O America the young, O America, you,
unlike you,

The country where I am going will be in terrible torment,
Will be a desolate ruin, a foul shack, home for rats and ravens,
Bedlam made by raving half-wits and fanatics,
Where quarrels are everlasting and life is lessened—
O America, happy, O America, young,
I take my leave of you.

O monumental mountains! O prairies and plains,
Where beckons a future still,
Where I could live for myself alone, and no one would ever ask me:
What's your address? What's your politics?
O whipped cream and chocolate fudge! O pleasant train journeys,
O leisured lifetimes!
O wolf-whistles! O snappy conversations!
O endless laughter!
O country, so hard to leave, so impossible to forget,
O country, where I was received as a guest, O country,
Where I could stay, were it not that I had to go,
On which I now look back and which a hundred times I will evoke,
I take my leave of you.

Aboard ship on the Atlantic, having left Long Island behind, 1946

NOTES

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14 'Canadian Ethnic Minority Literature in English' in *Ethnicity and Culture in Canada,* p. 361.

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FREDERICK PHILIP GROVE

(1879-1948)

In his second book on Frederick Philip Grove, *FPG: The European Years* (1973), Douglas O. Spettigue says 'There is still much too little known about our literary forefathers; it will take our joint efforts to do them justice.' The notion of Grove as one of our Canadian 'literary forefathers' was at the time a rare instance of claiming an immigrant author as a forefather of the Canadian literary tradition. Whether he is one of 'us', or a 'stranger', as Ronald Sutherland once called him, Grove has long been a major, albeit controversial, figure in Canadian literature. From the first book he wrote in English, *Over Prairie Trails* (1922), which chronicles his winter-time commuting as a teacher in Manitoba, and his first Canadian novel, *Settlers of the Marsh* (1925), to his later novel, *The Master of the Mill* (1944), Grove's writing has commanded critical attention ranging from exaggerated or qualified praise to rejection. He won the Lome Pierce Medal in 1934, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1941, and received the Governor General's Award for his fictionalized autobiography, *In Search of Myself* (1946). This kind of recognition, however, did not lessen Grove's feelings of neglect.

Beyond the ongoing critical debates about the literary value of Grove's fiction, arguments about him have also revolved around his identity and origins. Until Spettigue resolved the mystery of 'who Grove really was', what we knew about Grove derived from his own autobiographical narratives, which proved to be largely fictional. Both in his writing and in his life, Grove kept reinventing his identity and origins. He was not, as he claimed to be, a Swedish national born in Moscow, nor was he the son of a wealthy landowner who, upon leaving Europe, emigrated first to Canada. And he was a novelist and a translator of literary tides before he became a writer in Canada.

Grove, a German national, was born Felix Paul Greve in Radomno, Prussia, a border town now in Poland. He was brought up and educated in Hamburg. Living in a style beyond his financial means, he had to borrow money, was charged with fraud, and ended up spending a year in prison. Failing to earn a living that would found his way to America. He was accompanied by Elsa Ploetz (a.k.a. Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, also a writer) whom he eventually abandoned somewhere in Kentucky before he came to Canada. Assuming the name Fred Grove, he worked as a schoolteacher in the Mennonite regions of Manitoba, where he began to write. He moved to Ottawa in 1929, and, a year later, to a farm near Simcoe, Ontario, where he made a failed attempt to raise cattle.

As was made obvious by the great success of his three lecture tours across Canada in 1928 and 1929, Grove's audience at the time was well aware of what his life choices and writing represented. In Margaret Stobie's words, 'Here was an ideal subject for the Canadian Clubs—an immigrant who had tried life in the United States, spurned it, and chosen Canada; a New Canadian who could give voice to the silent strangers, who could reveal their needs, trials, and dreams to their would-be helpers.' With public lectures such as 'Canadians Old and New' and 'Assimilation', Grove participated in the vigorous debates of the twenties about immigration. In a tone that was ironic and extremely confident, Grove chastized the 'old' Canadians for not making the 'newcomers . . . feel at home'. Acknowledging the values inherent in the indigenous literary traditions of immigrants, Grove passionately argued that, 'If assimilation means the absorption of one race by another, the absorbing race not to undergo any change by the process, then there is no such thing as assimilation.'

The struggles of early immigrants that Grove wrote about in epic and tragic terms, and the frankness with which he approached the living conditions of women immigrants, make his writing exemplary of many of the patterns that characterize migrant experience. Interestingly enough, his immigrant characters rarely, if at all, reflect a nostalgia for their origins or a need to align themselves with other members of their ethnic group. For example, the itinerant life of Phil, one of Grove's invented selves, in *A Search for America* (1927), expresses a kind of individualism modelled after Rousseau and Thoreau, rather than a desire to assert ethnic difference; indeed, Phil is often indifferent, if not con-

ters. This is not the case, however, in the short story that follows, where Niels, a character who is also the protagonist of Grove s *Settlers of the Marsh,* finds encouragement in the presence of another Swedish immigrant.

THE FIRST DAY OF AN IMMIGRANT

About six miles west of the little prairie town of Balfour, twelve miles south of another little town called Minor, hard on the bank of the Muddy River which gurgles darkly and sluggishly along, there lies a prosperous farm, a very symbol of harvest and ease. Far and wide the red hip-roof of its gigantic barn shows above the trees that fringe the river which hardly deserves that name, seeing that it is no more than a creek. The commodious, white-painted dwelling, with its roofed-over porch and its glassed-in veranda, however, reveals itself for a moment only as you pass the gate of the yard while driving along the east-west road that leads past it, a few hundred feet to the north; for the old, once primeval bush has been carefully preserved here to enclose and to shelter the homestead; and the tall trees, with their small leaves always aquiver, aspen leaves, while screening the yard from view, seem at the same time to invite you to enter and to linger.

The east-west road cuts right through the property, leaving the level fields, at least the greater part of them, three hundred and twenty acres, to the north, while the yard nesdes to the south in a bend of the little river which, curiously, makes the impression as if it were introduced into this landscape for the sole purpose of enfolding this home of man. Beyond the river, there is the remainder of another quarter section the greater part of which serves as pasture. Huge, sleek, gaily coloured cows and frisky colts, accompanied by anxious mares, have at all times access to the black-bottomed water.

The gates to both sides of the road—the one leading to the yard, and the other, opposite it, to the fields—stand open; and a black track leads across the grey-yellow highway from one to the other. There, humus from the field is ground together with the clay of the grade into an exceedingly fine and light dust, perfectly dry, which betrays that many loads have already passed from the field to the yard.

It is a beautiful, crisp, and sunny morning of that reminiscent revival of things past which we call the Indian summer. A far corner of the fields, to the north-west, is bustling with the threshing crews. Engine and separator fill the air with their pulsating hum; and the yellow chaff of the straw comes drifting over the stubble and crosses the road and enters even the yard, threading its way through the trees which, apart from the trembling leaves, stand motionless, and through the entrance that winds in a leisurely way through their aisles. Slowly the chaff filters down, like fine, dry, light snow.

Now and then a wagon, drawn by heavy horses and heavily laden with bags of grain, passes slowly over the road; and every now and then an empty wagon—empty except for a pile of bags on its floor—rattles out in the opposite direction

stubble to the engine; it is cut a few inches deep into the soft soil and worn smooth and hard by many haulings.

That happens just now; let us jump on at the back and go with the driver, an elderly, bearded man of unmistakably Scottish cast: broad-shouldered and heavily set, his grave, though not unpleasant face dusted over with grime and chaff. The wagon, being without a load, rattles along; the horses trot.

Twice the driver has to get out of the trail in order to let a load pass on its way to the yard. To the left, the ground now slopes down a grassy slough in which here and there a clump of willows breaks the monotony of the prairie landscape; no doubt this slough holds water in spring; but at present it is perfectly dry. At its far end, beyond the threshing outfit, an enormous hay-stack rises on its sloping bank.

Now we are in the field of operations. All about, long rows of stooks dot the stubble, big stooks of heavy sheaves. Hay-racks drive from one to the other, one man walking alongside and picking up the sheaves with his fork, pitching them up to another who receives and piles them on the load. Here the work proceeds in a leisurely, unhurried way which contrasts strangely with the scene ahead. The horses do not need to be guided; they know their work; a word from the man on the load is enough to tell them what is wanted.

We have reached the vibrating machines now, joined by a huge, swinging belt. But our Scotsman has to wait a few minutes before he can drive up to the spout that delivers the grain, for another teamster is filling the last of his bags.

Two or three hay-racks, loaded high with sheaves, stand waiting alongside the engine that hums its harvest song. The drivers are lazily reclining on their loads while they wait for those who are ahead of them to finish. They do not even sit up when they move a place forward; the horses know as well as their drivers what is expected of them. Here, the air is thick with chaff and dust.

The few older men in the crew set the pace; the younger ones, some of them inclined to take things easy, have to follow. Those who are alongside the feeder platform, pitching the sheaves, do not make the impression of leisurely laziness.

The engineer, in a black, greasy pair of overalls, is busy with long-spouted oil-can and a huge handful of cottonwaste. The 'separator-man' stands on top of his mighty machine, exchanging bantering talk with the pitching men.

'Let her come, Jim,' he shouts to one of the men, a tall, good-looking youth who works with a sort of defiant composure, not exactly lazily but as if he were carefully calculating his speed to yield just a reasonable day's work and no more; a cynical smile plays in his young, unruffled face. 'Let her come,' the separator-man repeats. 'Can't choke her up.'

'Can't?' challenges Jim's partner, a swarthy, unmistakably foreign-looking man.

And from the opposite side of the feeder-platform another foreigner, a Swede, a giant of a man, six feet four inches tall and proportionately built, shouts over, 'We'll see about that.' He is alone on his load, for, as usual, the crew is short-handed; and he has volunteered to pitch and load by himself.

And this giant, the Swede, starts to work like one possessed, pitching down the

side, follows his example; but Jim, a piece of straw in the corner of his smiling mouth, remains uninfected. He proceeds in his nonchalant way which is almost provoking, almost contemptuous.

All about, the drivers on their loads are sitting up; this is a sporting proposition; and as such it arouses a general interest. Even the Scotsman follows proceedings with a smile.

But apart from these, there has been another looker-on. The outfit stands a few hundred feet from the edge of the slough which stretches its broad trough of hay-land slantways across this end of the field; and there, among some willows, stands a medium-sized man, with a cardboard suit-case at his feet and a bundle hanging from the end of a stout cane that rests on his shoulder. He is neither slender nor stout, five feet and eleven inches tall, and dressed in a new suit of overalls, stiff with newness, his flaxen-haired head covered with a blue-denim cap that, on its band, displays the advertisement of a certain brand of lubricating oil. His clean-shaven face is broadened by a grin as he watches the frantic efforts of the two men on their respective loads. His is an almost ridiculous figure; for he looks so foreign and absurd, the more so as his effort to adapt himself to the ways of the country is obvious and unsuccessful.

But he watches idly for only a very few seconds. Then he drops bundle and cane and runs, circling the engine, to the side of the Swede. There he looks about for a moment, finds a spare fork sticking with its prongs in the loose soil under the feeder-platform, grabs it, vaults up on the load of the giant, and, without a word of explanation, begins to pitch as frantically as the other two. The loads seem to melt away from under their feet.

The grimy separator-man on top of his machine laughs and rubs his hands. His teeth look strangely white in his dust-blackened face; his tongue and gums, when they show, strangely pink, as in the face of a negro. 'Let her come, boys,' he shouts again, above the din of the machine, 'let her come. Can't choke her up, I tell you. She's a forty-two. But try!' From his words speaks that pride which the craftsman takes in his tools and his output. He looks strange as he stands there, in the dust-laden air, on the shaking machine; his very clothes seem to vibrate; and in them his limbs and his body; he looks like a figure drawn with a trembling hand.

A fixed, nearly apologetic grin does not leave the face of the unbidden helper. There is good-nature in this grin; but also embarrassment and the vacancy of non-comprehension.

The elderly Scotsman who came out a little while ago has meanwhile driven up to the grain-spout and is filling his bags. He keeps watching the newcomer, putting two and two together in his mind. And when his load is made up at last, he detaches himself from the group, casting a last, wondering look at the man who is pitching as if he were engaged on piece-work; for, when the Swede has finished his load, this stranger has simply taken his place on the next one that has come along.

Then the Scotsman threads once more the diagonal trail across the field, staying on it this time when he meets another wagon, for the man with the load, such is the rule, has the right-of-way; and finally, when he reaches the gate, he drives through it

entrance leads through the gap between the huge, park-like trees, and then it widens out into the yard. Right in front stands the house, a large, comfortable, and easy-going affair with a look of relaxation about it, though, no doubt, at present nobody there has time to relax, for, red from the heat of the ranges, women are frantically preparing the noon-day meal for the many-mouthed, hungry monster, the crew. The huge and towering barn, painted red, occupies the west side of the yard; and beyond it, a smaller building—it, too, painted red—is the granary for which the load is bound.

In its dark interior a man is working, shovelling wheat to the back. He is tall, standing more than six feet high, broad-shouldered but lean, almost gaunt. His narrow face is divided by a grey moustache which, as he straightens his back, he rubs with the back of his hand in order to free it from the chaff that has collected in its hairs. He is covered all over with the dust of the grain.

When the wagon approaches, he looks out and asks, 'How many, Jim?'

Jim is backing his load against the open door. 'Twenty-four,' he answers over his shoulder.

The man inside takes a pencil suspended by a string from a nail and makes note of the number on a piece of card-board tacked to the wall. Thus he keeps track of the approximate number of bushels, counting two and a half to the bag.

Jim, having tied his lines to the seat, tilts the first of the bags, and the man inside receives it on his shoulder and empties it into the bin to the left. That bin is already filled to one third of its height.

Jim speaks. 'Got a new hand, Dave?' he asks.

'Not that I know of,' replies the man inside with a questioning inflection.

'Fellow came about an hour ago, climbed up on a load, and started to pitch. Good worker, too, it seems.'

'That so?' Dave says. 'I could use another man well enough. But I didn't know about him.'

'Looks like a Swede.'

'Better send him over.'

So, when Jim, the Scotsman, returns to the field, he shouts to the stranger, above the din of machine and engine. 'Hi, you!' And when the stranger turns, he adds, 'Boss wants to see you,' nodding his head backwards in the direction of the yard.

But the stranger merely grins vacantly and, with exaggerated motion, shrugs his shoulders.

The others all look at Jim and laugh. So he, shrugging his shoulders in turn, drives on and takes his place behind the wagon at the spout.

Two more hours pass by; and still the stranger goes on with his unbidden work. The sun, on his path, nears the noon. Meanwhile the stranger has been the partner of all the men who drive up on his side of the outfit: but only one of them has spoken to him, that giant of a Swede who was the first man whom he helped. This giant is clean-shaven and dressed with a striking neatness, yes, a rustic foppishness which shows through all the dust and chaff with which he is covered. He does not wear overalls but a flannel shirt and corduroy trousers tucked into high boots ornamented with a line of coloured stitching

'Aer du Svensk?' he has asked of the stranger. Are you a Swede?'

'Yo,' the stranger has replied in the affirmative.

And further questions have brought out the fact that he has just arrived from the east, on a through-ticket reading from Malmoe in Sweden to Balfour, Manitoba, Canada. 'You'll find lots of Swedes up there,' the agent had told him at home, at Karlskrona in Blekinge, whence he hails.

Nelson grins when he hears that tale. Three years ago, when he himself left Sweden, he was told the same thing; but when he arrived, he found that the Swedish settlement was small and considerably farther north. Thus he has become wise in the tricks of the steamship-agent's trade. 'Did the boss hire you?' he asks, speaking Swedish, of course, while they proceed with the work in hand.

'No. I haven't seen anybody yet. But I do want work.'

'Better see him at noon. What's your name?'

'Niels Lindstedt.'

'Come with me when the whistle blows,' says Nelson as he drives away.

The brief conversation has cheered Niels greatly.

'I am in luck,' he thinks, 'to meet a Swede right away, a friend to help me in getting started.'

In Balfour, where he had landed very early in the morning, he had almost lost courage when he had found that nobody understood him. But at the hardware store a man—the same who had made him a present of the cap he was wearing—had made signs to him as if pitching sheaves, meanwhile talking to him, tentatively, in short monosyllables, apparently asking questions. Niels had understood this sign language sufficiently to know that he was trying to find out whether he wanted work in the harvest fields; and so he had nodded. Next the hardware dealer had made clear to him, again by signs, that his clothes were unsuitable for work; for he had been dressed in a black cloth suit, stiff and heavy, the kind that lasts the people at home a lifetime, so strong that even years of wearing do not flatten out the seams. He had shown him the way to a store where he had acquired what he needed, till he thought that now he looked exactly like a Canadian. Then he had once more returned to the hardware store, and the friendly man had put him on the road, pushing him by the shoulder and pointing and shouting directions till he had picked up his suitcase and the bundle with the clothes he had been wearing and had started out. When, after a few hundred yards, he had looked back, the hardware man had still been standing at the corner of his street and nodding and waving his arm, for him to go on and on, for many miles. And he had done so.

Most of the men with whom he has been working are foreigners themselves. Niels knows the English or Canadian type sufficiently already to recognize that. Some are Slavonic, some German; though they, too, seem to have Russian blood.

Niels exults in the work. After the enforced idleness of the passage across the ocean and the cramped trip in the train, it feels good to be at work in the open. He wonders whether he will be paid for what he does. He is hungry, for he has had no breakfast; and so he hopes he will get his dinner at least. [illegible]

workingman in America. But possibly that is no more than idle talk. As hunger and the consequent exhaustion lay hold of him, he begins to view things pessimistically.

The size of the field about him dazes him. The owner, he thinks, must be some nobleman. Will a field one tenth, one fiftieth of the size of this one some day be within his own reach, he wonders? The mere thought of it sends him once more into a fury of work; again he pitches the sheaves like one possessed.

Then, suddenly, startlingly, the noon whistle blows from the engine; and when he sees Nelson, the giant, just arriving on top of a load of sheaves, he runs over and helps him to unhitch his horses.

'Come on,' says Nelson and starts off, running and galloping his horses, in order to snatch a ride on a hay-rack which is returning empty to the yard. The rack waits for them, and they climb on, Nelson leading his horses behind.

When the team is stabled in the huge barn where Niels looks about and marvels, the two go over to the granary and find Dave Porter, the boss. Dave looks Niels over and asks a few questions, Nelson interpreting for his new friend.

A few minutes later the newcomer is hired at current wages of four dollars a day till threshing is over; and if he cares to stay after that, at a dollar and fifty a day for plowing till it snows or freezes up. Niels gasps at the figures and has to recalculate them in Swedish money, multiplying them by four: sixteen and six Kroner a day! There must be a mistake, he thinks; he cannot have heard right. The wages must be for the week. But when Dave turns away and Niels asks Nelson, the giant laughs and says, 'No. No mistake.'

So they turn and walk over to the house for dinner.

Niels is quick to learn; and by the time he has had his dinner and gone over the yard with Nelson while they are waiting for the horses to finish theirs, he has picked up much of the new country's lore.

In the granary where they return Niels shows him the figures jotted down on the piece of card-board which show that already the huge bins hold eight thousand bushels of oats, four thousand of barley, and three thousand of wheat. Niels is awed by the enormity of these quantities. There is a strange sort of exhilaration in them. He merely pronounces the figures and has to laugh; and something very like tears comes into his eyes. Nelson chimes in with his throaty bass. No, Niels does not feel sorry that he has come out into this west.

Yet, when the horses are taken out again and the two new friends once more find room on an empty hay-rack, to return to the field, there is a shadow on his consciousness. At dinner, in the house, he has become aware of a certain attitude towards himself, an attitude assumed by those who were unmistakably Canadian. After all, this is not home; it is a strange country; and he is among strange people who look down upon him as if he were something inferior, something not to be taken as fully human. He does not understand that, of course. He has heard Jim, the cynical, good-looking young fellow say something to a number of the men who, like Niels himself, were apparently recent immigrants. Jim had contemptuously addressed them as 'You

But he also understands that what they really resent is the tone in which it was said.

He wonders as he looks about while the horses trot briskly over the stubble whether in a few years' time this country will seem like home to him, as apparently it does to Nelson, his newly-won friend.

And with that he turns his mind away from his critical thoughts and back to his dreams. He sees himself established on a small farm of his own, with a woman in the house; and he sees the two of them sitting by lamp-light in a neat little living room of that house while from upstairs there sounds down to them the pitter-patter of little children's feet—his own little children's, romping before they crawl into their snug little beds.

That is his vision: the vision that has brought him into these broad plains. And that vision is destined to shape his whole life in the future.

LAURA GOODMAN SALVERSON

(1890-1970)

The daughter of Icelandic immigrant parents, Laura Goodman Salverson was born in Winnipeg but spent her early years moving with her poor family from place to place, crossing the American and Canadian border more than once. Her nomadic life continued after her marriage in 1913 to George Salverson, an American-born railway employee of Norwegian descent. Although as a child she often felt embarrassed because of her parents' ethnic differences, Salverson's devotion to her art and her pride in her Icelandic heritage can be traced back to their encouragement. Despite the deprivations she experienced as a child, and her interrupted education because of her frail health and her family's moves, she was a voracious reader from early age, and decided to 'write a book . . . and . . . write it in English'. She was ten when she began to learn what she called 'the greatest language in the whole world!' And she kept her promise to herself by writing the first Canadian ethnic novel in English, *The Viking Heart* (1923), which established her reputation as one of the most talented Canadian writers of the time.

A narrative that records with almost documentary accuracy the mass migration of 1400 Icelanders to Canada in 1876, this novel announced Salverson's persistent concern with the theme of immigrant dislocation and the dilemma of maintaining one's ethnic traditions or opting for integration that run through her other two novels, *When Sparrows Fall* (1925) and *The Dark Weaver* (1937). The latter won Salverson her first Governor General's Award. She received a second Governor General's Award for her autobiography, *Confessions of an Immigrant's Daughter* (1939).

A regular contributor to such magazines as *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine,* Salverson enjoyed national and international recognition (the Institute of Arts and Letters in Paris awarded her a gold medal in 1939) early in her career. However, perhaps because her other books, including *Lord of the Silver Dragon: A Romance of Leif the Lucky* (1927), *The Dove of El-Djezaire* (1933), and *Immortal Rock* (1954), were written in the manner of the historical romance, her reputation later dwindled. Although she is considered to be a forerunner of Canadian prairie fiction, her work has received only scant attention in recent years.

The selection that follows, a chapter from *The Viking Heart,* is about the birth of Thor. Although a third-generation Canadian, Thor's Canadianness is achieved, later in the novel, only after he dies at Passchendaele an ironic and symbolic death as an Icelander.

THE COMING OF THOR

White as a white sail on a dusky sea,
When half the horizon's clouded and half free
Fluttering between the dun wave and the sky
Is hope's last gleam in man's extremity.

—*Lord Byron.*

All day the wind had swept angrily about the little house in the clearing, whistling down the chimney and rattling the panes of the little windows. Now it was beginning