

De Literary

Adrien Arsenault, a Native Poet of Prince Edward Island, was born in Mont-Carmel, in 1925. His poetry, written both in his mother tongue of French and adopted tongue of English, has been published in Variations on a Gulf Breeze and Island Prose and Poetry (both books by the Centennial Commission in 1973)

This weeks Literary Section is devoted to Father Arsenault's latest publication, Eschatology.

Eschatology, meaning a final cosmic death, is a work of art, an Integration of poetry, prose, and collages. It was published in a limited-signed-edition of fifty. It is not a bound book, but rather a portfolio of separate pages and pictures, within it's own wrapping.

Father Arsenault began to work on this portfolio in the mid-summer of 1973 and completed his work within a span of about two months.

The poetry is a cathartic outburst in the face of ever-surfacing fear, bewilderment, and rage, rage at "this daily inner dying" and the realization that life has slipped through the fingers like grains of sand. It speaks to us with clarity, honesty, defiance...and great bitterness. One senses the pain, as mythologies and illusions and even, at times the life-quest itself, slip out of reach, elusive and vaporous, leaving the author facing the grim reality: "On trouve remède à tout excepté à la mort"

One is lead into another world, another media, through the collection of collages. They are a powerful statement in them-

selves. One sees a cry of horror and pain in the twisted face of an African mask, juxtaposed with the calm yet purposeful serenity of a Hellenic Apollo. Harsh black calligraphy breaks its way through obscene graffiti. Anger, rage, and utter hopelessness, shout through the straining figures of Picasso's Guernica. Cold dehumanizing numbers stand stark in the face of a Madonna's plea for salvation. Classical beauty, truth and confidence are shattered by the primitive violence and modern despair.

These collages are as an important facet of Eschatology, as much, if not more than the poetry itself.

For Father Arsenault, his art "remains one's sole capacity to redeem a private world otherwise condemned to unalterable oblivion."

by Pamela Sexsmith

