

This study is at its best when it deals with its subject through Karen Blixen herself and Blixen's own writings. What mars much of the book is a fussy attention to every scrap of detail about Finch Hatton and a tendency to fall into the "must-have" school of biography (Dinesen's own off-hand account of a close encounter with marauding lions belies, says Trzebinski, the "sense of nightmare fear and urgency she must have felt").

All this aside, there is much in this book to attract anyone who is fascinated by the Dinesen enigma. Whenever she is on stage, the reading is worthwhile. Although Errol Trzebinski fails to deliver the one big piece of the puzzle as promised, there are compensations in some of the lesser pieces produced in this study. It is interesting, for example, to learn that Dinesen had more than a passing acquaintance with drugs, that she had contemplated suicide, that she could be mercurial in her emotions and possessive in her personal relationships.

Finally, one comes to Finch Hatton's death and Dinesen's removal from the Farm with almost a sense of relief, as if the path has at last been cleared for her to get on with the business for which she did truly seem destined. She needed to suffer in order to mature; and once Africa, which was really a prolonged adolescence for her, was behind her, her artistic genius matured unfettered. She was free at last to turn her African experience into the metaphor that would release her artistic consciousness.

All considered, Errol Trzebinski has done about the best one could with the available material.

Thomas Whissen

Laszlo Szabo

RICHARD M. DORSON
Folktales Told around the World
Chicago: The University of
Chicago Press, 1975. Phoenix
Edition, 1978. Pp. 622.

Richard M. Dorson is an eminent scholar who has made a valuable contribution to American and European folklore studies. His latest publication, a collection of folk-

tales from forty-six countries, is a highly scholarly work which is also amusing and entertaining. This is the largest one-volume collection of folktales that has been published lately; it includes tales from fifteen European countries as well as a considerable number from America (Canada is represented by ten tales), the Middle East, Asia, Oceania, and Africa.

In answering the question whether a collection of such tales be based on oral sources or on printed versions, Dorson decides in favor of oral tradition. For this reason most of the tales collected in this volume are published here for the first time. Dorson does not restrict himself to the acknowledged genres such as legend and fairy tale, but includes all forms of folk narratives (he even inserts a few jokes for he believes that a joke becomes a folktale when it is told often enough and endures the passing of time).

Each of these tales is preceded by useful bibliographical data and historical information as well as critical comments regarding the tale's extrinsic and intrinsic characteristics. The tales themselves are narrated exactly as they have been handed down by oral tradition and without any attempt on Dorson's part to improve their "literary quality and narrative artistry."

The book also includes some valuable indexes ("Index of Motifs," "Index of Tale Types," "Index of Bibliographic Items," "Index of Collections," and a "General Index"; a "List of Narrators" and pertinent information concerning the forty-four folklorists who contributed to this volume are also included.

MARIAN ENGEL
The Glassy Sea
Toronto: McClelland & Stewart,
1978. Pp. 167.

The author of *Bear*, in which a woman ironically commenting on original sin and hungering for psycho-sexual nourishment attempts to seduce a fortunately unwilling bear in a wilderness hermitage fur-