Rudy Wiebe: Collected Stories

Citation metadata
Author: Sarah Klassen
Date: Jan. 2012
From: Mennonite Quarterly Review (Vol. 86, Issue 1)
Publisher: Mennonite Historical Society
Document Type: Book review
Length: 1,215 words

Main content

Article Preview:


Rudy Wiebe's writing began on the Canadian prairie where the author, as a young boy, listened and "Everything spoke, and it spoke Low German" (231). But although rocks, birds, trees, and even light spoke the language of his mother, and the church spoke High German, it was his third language, English, that he tapped for its storytelling potential.

In this latest publication, Wiebe has gathered together every short story he has ever written--most of them published, many reprinted, and some translated. And what a formidable collection it is: more than 500 pages, composed over more than half a century of story-making. In the wake of oral culture and on the cusp of e-book culture, what better repository for this literary outpouring than a real book? The process of compiling the material must have been as satisfying as bringing home a prairie harvest and seeing it safely stored. "The only safe place," Athol Fugard wrote, "is inside a story."

Wiebe's acclaimed "Where is the Voice Coming From?" appears early in the collection and demonstrates the eloquence of which he is capable:

... a voice rises over the exploding smoke and thunder of guns that reel back in their positions, worked over, serviced by the grimed motionless men in bright coats and glinting buttons, a voice so high and clear, so unbelievably high and strong in its unending cry (31).

This piece is not so much a story as it is a description of the arduous search for the story, in this case the true facts about the Cree chief Almighty Voice. "Presumably all the parts of the story are themselves available. A difficulty is that they are, as always, available only in bits and pieces" (22). Wiebe has...

Source Citation


Gale Document Number: GALE|A278277110

Explore

This is a preview. Get the full text through your school or public library.

Access from your library

Footer

- About
- Contact Us
- Terms of Use
- Privacy Policy
Rudy Henry Wiebe OC (born 4 October 1934) is a Canadian author and professor emeritus in the department of English at the University of Alberta since 1992. Rudy Wiebe was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in the year 2000. Wiebe was born at Speedwell, near Fairholme, Saskatchewan, in what would later become his family's chicken barn. For thirteen years he lived in an isolated community of about 250 people, as part of the last generation of homesteaders to settle the Canadian west. He did not