
Elizabeth Cleaver, William Toye, and Oxford University Press: Creating the Canadian Picturebook

Judith Saltman and Gail Edwards¹

In a series of four Aboriginal stories published in the late 1960s and early 1970s by Oxford University Press Canada, William Toye, the influential editor at the Press, and Elizabeth Cleaver, artist and illustrator, worked together to create the first full-colour picturebooks with identifiable Canadian themes and images. This fruitful collaboration between Toye and Cleaver, and its role in nurturing Cleaver's career as an innovative children's book illustrator, is an important part of the history of the development of Canadian children's book publishing.

William Toye as Children's Book Editor

As trade editor at Oxford University Press Canada, Toye played a significant role in the growth of Canadian children's book publishing in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He had been inspired by the fine illustration, design, and writing in the British parent firm's children's list, and determined to create books of similar quality in Canada. As Toye stated, at the time "there were a number of Canadian children's books, but they weren't very good ones."²

Toye determined to remedy the situation by seeking out and nurturing fine illustrators who would add a level of visual pleasure to Oxford Canada's books for children. The majority of illustrations in

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² William Toye, interview with Judith Saltman, June 2003, Toronto.

these early books were in black and white, sometimes highlighted with spot colour, limited in number, and distributed throughout the text. A self-taught book designer, Toye was responsible for their distinctive modern look, and in some cases wrote or rewrote the texts.³ Oxford illustrators of the 1950s and 1960s included Theo Dimson (James McNeill's *The Sunken City and Other Tales from Round the World*, 1959; *The Double Knights*, 1964), Donald Grant (Dorothy M. Reid's *Tales of Nanabozho*, 1963), John A. Hall (Cyrus Macmillan's *Glooskap's Country and Other Indian Tales*, 1956), Arthur Price (Marius Barbeau and Michael Hornyansky's *The Golden Phoenix and Other French-Canadian Fairy Tales*, 1958), and Leo Rampen (William Toye's *The St Lawrence*, 1959; Anne Wilkinson's *Swann & Daphne*, 1960).

The genre of the picturebook, in which text and illustration are fully integrated, was slow to develop in Canada, primarily due to the high production costs of printing in full colour and the limited number of experienced illustrators who could work with the cumbersome process of manual colour separations. Just as he had challenged the perception that Canadian children's illustrated books were dull and pedestrian, Toye collaborated with talented artists with European experience in book design to create picturebooks comparable in quality to those published in England and the United States. Frank Newfeld was already an established graphic artist when Toye asked him to illustrate *The Princess of Tomboso: A Fairy-Tale in Pictures* (1960) in full colour and black and white, with a text based on a folktale from Marius Barbeau's *The Golden Phoenix, and Other French-Canadian Fairy Tales* (Oxford, 1958). Toye and Newfeld later collaborated on *Simon and the Golden Sword* (1976), an adaptation of a Canadian fairy-tale first told by Wilmot MacDonald. Laszlo Gal, who had worked as a set designer for the CBC, and had illustrated books for the Italian publisher Mondadori in the 1960s, created meticulously researched full-colour paintings for Toye's *Cartier Discovers the St Lawrence* (1970), a unique illustrated picturebook of Canadian history.

Toye's involvement with the Friends of the Toronto Public Library's Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books resulted in the first publication of *An Illustrated Comic Alphabet* (1966), a hand-lettered text illustrated with humorous and delicate drawings

3 Ibid. For book design in Canadian children's books in the 1950s and 1960s, see Judith Saltman and Gail Edwards, "Towards a History of Design in Canadian Children's Illustrated Books," *Canadian Children's Literature / Littérature canadienne pour la jeunesse*, no. 107 (2002): 10-41.

by Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon. Although Howard-Gibbon had created the work in Ontario in 1859, the manuscript, which is considered Canada's first picturebook, had never been published, and its issue stimulated interest in the historical study of Canadian children's book illustration.

In all of these illustrated books, Toye's sense of design and attention to detail had begun to shape a new aesthetic for children's books that was markedly different from other Canadian publishers. As May Cutler, the visionary and iconoclastic publisher of Tundra Books, described it, in the 1960s, "The only one who was bringing out anything worth anything was William Toye at Oxford and he brought out Elizabeth Cleaver's first books ... and that was *it*."⁴

The Beginning of the Collaboration

Elizabeth Mrazik Cleaver (fig.1) was born in Montreal on 19 November 1939, the daughter of Hungarian immigrants. As a child, she was fascinated with her father's hand-shadow images that he created to accompany bedtime stories, and spent hours amusing herself with paper cutout books, themes that would later reappear in her illustrations.⁵

For three years in the 1950s, while she was a teenager, Cleaver and her family returned to Hungary, where the breadth of her schooling at the Gymnazium in Sarospatak made a deep impression on her. The school itself had a history that Cleaver later found significant, as it was there that Bishop Amos Comenius published his *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* in 1658, the first picturebook specifically designed for use in the education of children. After her return to Montreal, Cleaver rediscovered her childhood interest in art and design while attending night classes at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University) and L'École des Beaux Arts. She received training in design from David Viest, who had studied at the Bauhaus in Germany and experimented with collage, linocuts, and woodcuts in Richard Belmire's class at Sir George Williams.⁶

4 May Cutler, interview with Gail Edwards, March 2003, Montreal.

5 Elizabeth Cleaver, "Fantasy and Transformation in Shadow Puppetry," *Canadian Children's Literature / Littérature canadienne pour la jeunesse* no. 15-16 (1980): 67-68; and Elizabeth Cleaver, "Idea to Image, The Journey of a Picture Book," *The Lion and the Unicorn* 7-8 (1983-4): 156.

6 John Sorfleet, "Elizabeth Cleaver: The Early Years," *Canadian Children's Literature / Littérature canadienne pour la jeunesse*, no. 50 (1988): 22-23.

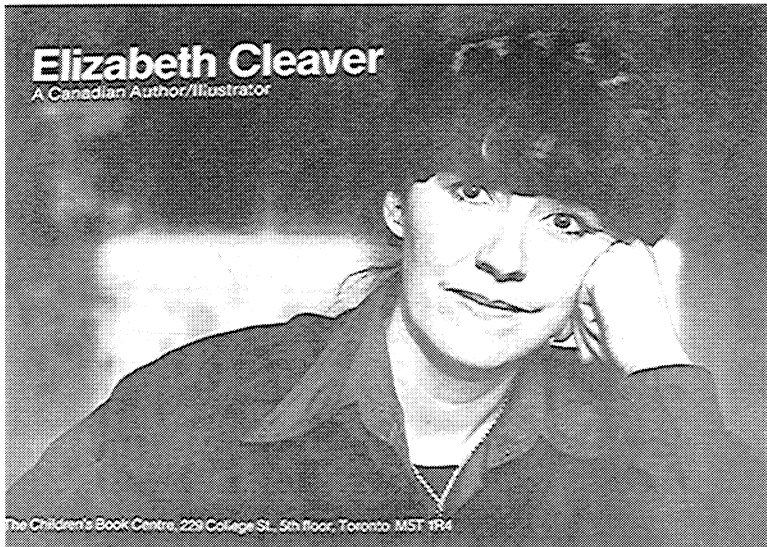


Figure 1. Elizabeth Cleaver in 1978. Photo. by Nicholas Bornemisza, courtesy The Canadian Children's Book Centre.

In 1965, Cleaver moved to Toronto, where she worked as a secretary for MacLaren, the influential Canadian advertising agency, while looking for work as an illustrator. At the encouragement of noted graphic designer Allan Fleming, she created twenty collage images to accompany a text by her co-worker Ted Wood.⁷ Although *The Dragon Story* was never published, one of the collages subsequently won a Citation of Merit from the 1968 New York Society of Illustrators Annual National Exhibition.⁸

In November 1967, during her unsuccessful search for a publisher, Cleaver brought slides of her pictures to show to the staff of the Osborne Collection. The head of the Collection, Judith St. John, advised her to return that evening to a reception at Boys' and Girls' House in celebration of Young Canada's Book Week, so that she

7 As a reminder of how small the Canadian publishing world was in the 1950s and 1960s, Fleming and Toye both belonged to the Society of Typographic Designers of Canada. See William Toye, "Book Design in Canada," *Canadian Literature*, no. 15 (1963): 52-63.

8 Irene Aubrey, "Elizabeth Cleaver Memorial Lecture," *Canadian Children's Literature / Littérature canadienne pour la jeunesse*, no 50 (1988): 7.

could meet Toye. Cleaver's collage illustrations had been turned down by several publishers, who told her they would be too expensive to reproduce. Toye, with his eye for fine illustration, immediately recognized the quality and originality of Cleaver's art the moment that he looked at her slides, and signed her on the spot.⁹ Toye was working on a new project, an anthology of Canadian poetry for children selected by Mary Alice Downie and Barbara Robertson, and asked Cleaver to illustrate the volume. When Toye next spoke with her, she was in a Montreal hospital recovering from an operation for cancer. He assured her that he would hold the poetry book for her. Cleaver later told Toye that it was the prospect of that book that inspired her towards recovery, praying "that if she were spared she would devote her life to making beautiful books for children."¹⁰

Cleaver and Collage

Cleaver's chosen medium for illustration was collage, an art form that replicated the sense of happiness and play that she had found in the paper cutout books of her childhood.¹¹ The foundation of her illustrations were monoprints pulled wet from a glass plate to create intensely-coloured, texturally rich papers.¹² She then transformed the papers through tearing, cutting, layering, and pasting, in combination with potato prints, fabric, and found objects as varied as pearls, zippers, cedar branches, birch bark, pine needles, and grasses. She further expanded the range of collage in some illustrations with collagraphs, a collage composition from which a textural print was pulled. As her style matured, she increasingly combined the paper collage with linoleum cuts "to add impact," playing the texture and the intense saturated colour of the monoprinted paper with the variable black line of the cuts.¹³ As she explained, she used pen-and-ink line drawings only to transfer images to the linoleum block in preparation for cutting and printing images, stating that "I get excited

⁹ William Toye, interview.

¹⁰ William Toye, "Elizabeth Cleaver (1939-1985)," *Quill and Quire* 51 (October 1985): 21.

¹¹ Cleaver, "Idea to Image" 156.

¹² Hilary Thompson, "Transformation and Puppetry in the Illustrations of Elizabeth Cleaver," *Canadian Children's Literature / Littérature canadienne pour la jeunesse*, no 70 (1993): 72.

¹³ Elizabeth Cleaver, "The Visual Artist and the Creative Process in Picture Books," *Canadian Children's Literature / Littérature canadienne pour la jeunesse*, no 4 (1976): 75, 76.

about the line I can achieve in my lino-blocks, but I'm not excited about the line I can achieve in pen and ink or pencil."¹⁴

The combination of monoprinted paper and linocuts allowed her to play with colour and form, working out colour relationships, trying different colours, tones, hues, and experimenting with variations of the same composition.¹⁵ Cleaver's approach to her art was iterative. Using linocuts (and photocopies) allowed her to try out the placement of different elements, repeat motifs from page to page, and create pleasing consonances between the various design elements. She might try four or five different combinations, using photocopies of the drafts as a design aid, before settling on a final placement. The final product of this painstaking work was sophisticated, vivid collage illustrations with such three-dimensional depth, texture, and detail that they seem to break the two-dimensional surface of the page.

Cleaver explained that she chose the unusual mixed media approach to her illustrations because collage allowed her to "exploit the accidental," adding that "discovering and developing the unexpected configurations is a form of visual play."¹⁶ She believed that as an artist, her task was to learn to see and then translate feelings. Collage allowed her to "express and create feelings and moods in a contemporary way. There is great scope to use much imagination and colour."¹⁷

Cleaver was one of only a handful of North American children's book illustrators working in collage. In Cleaver's period, from the 1960s to the 1980s, in the United States, Ezra Jack Keats, Leo Lionni, and Eric Carle all experimented with graphic art and collage techniques in their picturebook illustrations. Keats, in *The Snowy Day* (1962), combined marbled paper and fabric collage with naturalistic painting to depict the urban world of a small African-American boy. Lionni used marbled paper and collage in strong semi-abstract design in his illustrations for *Frederick* (1967) and other animal fables. Carle's expressionist collages in *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (1970) and other works used a combination of monoprinted papers, layered tissue papers, and wood and lino cuts, playing intense colour

14 Sorfleet 25.

15 "The Loon's Necklace: Commentary by Elizabeth Cleaver," File 8, Box 5, Elizabeth Cleaver fonds, Literary Manuscripts Collection, no. LMS-0123, National Library of Canada. Hereafter Cleaver fonds.

16 Cleaver, "The Visual Artist" 5.

17 Elizabeth Cleaver to Gloria Smedmore, March 17, 1970, File 1, Box 1, Cleaver fonds.

against a plain white background. All of these artists used the visual tensions of collage to play with surface and texture to the fullest, as did Cleaver, and like Cleaver, worked with the dichotomy of the intrinsically static nature of collage and the innate movement of narrative picturebook action.

Cleaver's exploitation of cut and torn paper to create complex images also reflected her interest in folk art and modern art. In describing her artistic influences, she named "hand shadows, shadow puppets, textiles, appliqué work, folk art, Persian art, the Impressionists, and Matisse."¹⁸ Perry Nodelman has noted the link with Matisse in her illustrations. "Cleaver's pictures are intensely expressive, clear in structure, and simple in technique. Her work is 'primitive' in the way a Matisse is primitive.... In fact, her imagery is frequently reminiscent of Matisse. Her picture of the Fairies of Light and Sunshine and Flowers dancing around their queen, Summer, in *How Summer Came to Canada* is clearly modeled on Matisse's *The Dance*; the figures form the same grouping, and Summer's face could have been drawn by Matisse"¹⁹ (fig. 2).

As a culturally sophisticated widely-read artist, Cleaver drew inspiration from the artist-illustrated books of the early twentieth century, naming Bonnard, Picasso, Matisse, Derain, Duffy, Miro, Braque, Chagall, and Calder as artists who "brought many new concepts to book illustration and many different mediums: woodcut, linocut, etching, lithography." She could be speaking of herself when she added, "These artists illustrated on their own terms though they kept within the spirit of the particular piece of literature they were illustrating."²⁰ She was fascinated with the visual poetry of type on a page, and was keenly aware of the design potential of the layout of type as an element of her illustration, which she would fully exploit in her witty 1984 *ABC*²¹ (fig. 3). Cleaver saw herself in the tradition of

18 "Elizabeth Cleaver, Author/Illustrator," *Writing Stories, Making Pictures: Biographies of 150 Canadian Children's Authors and Illustrators* (Toronto: The Canadian Children's Book Centre, 1994), 60.

19 Perry Nodelman, "Non-Native Primitive Art: Elizabeth Cleaver's Indian Legends," *Canadian Children's Literature / Littérature canadienne pour la jeunesse*, no 31-32 (1983): 74.

20 Elizabeth Cleaver, "An Artist's Approach to Picture Books," *In Review: Canadian Books For Children* 8, no. 1 (1974): 6-7.

21 For an exploration of Cleaver's *ABC*, see National Library of Canada, *Beyond the Letters: A Retrospective of Canadian Alphabet Books*, <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/abc/t20-212-e.html#a>.



Figure 2. *How Summer Came to Canada*, p.19.

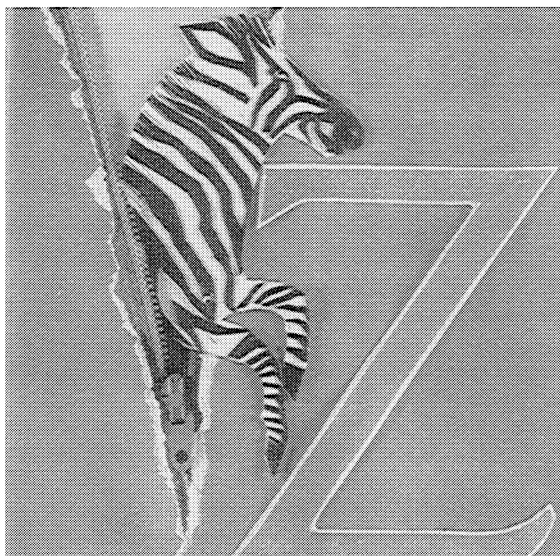


Figure 3. Cleaver plays with the juxtaposition of layers, letters, and objects in *ABC*, p. [z].

the fine artist as illustrator. She established The Melville Press in 1975 to publish an early precursor of the *ABC*, the *Love and Kisses Heart Book*, her illustration of a concrete poem by Luko Paljetak, in a limited edition of 110 copies, printed on single and double-faced corrugated board in seven colours, and tied with cord. While she referred in articles to other *livre d'artiste* volumes that she was planning, including the *Heart Book*, the *Heartless Book*, and the *Carousel Book*, finished copies seem never to have made the transition into print.²²

Cleaver began the process of planning illustrations with repeated readings of the manuscript, until she began to formulate images spontaneously in her mind, directly inspired by the texts. As she noted, "To receive and realize new ideas, to be able to form mental pictures requires a special kind of devotion, tranquility and self-confidence. For me to do my work it is necessary to be inspired by the piece of literature I am working with, and to believe in it, to have a great feeling and love for it." Images for *The Wind Has Wings* "came from the poems themselves. Poets draw pictures too. They do it with words instead of with paint, pencils or collage."²³

Irene Aubrey, past Director of Children's Services of the National Library of Canada and a close friend of Cleaver, also commented on her meticulous process of preparation. "Before she could begin ... to put the different elements of her picture together there were other steps that she had to undertake: she would read the text several times until she had formed an idea of what pictures she would like to do; research her material; prepare pencil drawings which she would transfer to linoleum blocks; make monoprints (textured paper) and try endless combinations; and, finally, make the collage composition. It could take Elizabeth as long as a year to work on the illustrations for a book."²⁴

The Wind Has Wings

The Wind Has Wings richly demonstrated the creativity and the intuitive understanding of text that Cleaver brought to her collage illustrations, which she described as a medium that allowed her to paint without a brush. The book, which was originally planned with black-and-white illustrations, evolved into a visually sophisticated

22 Cleaver, "Visual Artist" 78.

23 Cleaver, "Visual Artist" 73.

24 Aubrey, 11. Aubrey is paraphrasing Cleaver's own notes on her process. See Cleaver, "The Loon's Necklace, Commentary," File 8, Box 5, Cleaver fonds.

integration of text and image, in which double-page collage illustrations alternate with single-page collages and linocuts that fully exploit the play of solid and void, positive and negative, and the textural possibilities of the medium (figs. 4-5). Cleaver reflected that the vibrant contrasting colours had life and energy, and that her work with poetry at the time that she was convalescing was a healing experience.²⁵

The Wind Has Wings represented the realization of Toye's desire to produce quality Canadian children's books equal to those of the British parent firm. The colour printing by York Litho of Toronto was personally supervised by Toye, who preferred to make corrections while the sheets were on the press, rather than from colour proofs.²⁶ Cleaver's work was hailed in reviews as bold, dramatic, and "a welcome and celebratory riot of colour"²⁷ unprecedented in contemporary Canadian children's publishing. Cleaver won the New York Illustrators Society Award of Merit in 1968, a Look of Books citation for Illustration in 1970, and the Canadian Library Association's first Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Award for illustration in 1971 for her work in *The Wind Has Wings*, establishing a pattern of international recognition that would be repeated throughout her career with the creation of each new book.²⁸

Her illustration of poetry was deeply meaningful for Cleaver. According to her friend, Ronald Jobe, professor of children's literature at the University of British Columbia, "The illustrations for *The New Wind Has Wings: Poems from Canada* [the revised 1984 edition] had special significance for Elizabeth. They were her statement of artistic style, feeling and vision. The book reveals a dramatic contrast of mood, colours, and intensity. So important was this book to her – she requested a copy be placed in her coffin."²⁹

25 Sorfleet 28.

26 June E. Munro, "The Wind Has Wings: The Creative Production," *In Review* 3, no. 4 (1969): 8.

27 Sheila Egoff, *The Republic of Childhood: A Critical Guide to Canadian Children's Literature in English*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1975), 241.

28 In 1972, Cleaver received a "highly commended" citation as runner-up for the international children's literature "Little Nobel" – the Hans Christian Andersen Award from the International Board on Books for Young People, and in 1974, was elected to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.

29 Ronald Jobe, "Recognition of Canadian Excellence: The Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Award." Speech at the 2001 Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Award ceremony, Ottawa. Available at <http://www.ibby-canada.org/job.html>.

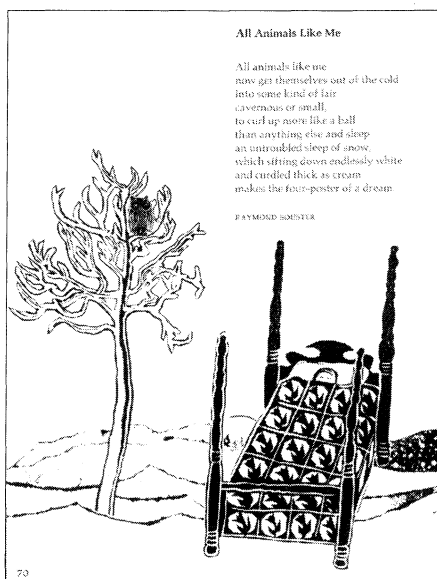


Figure 4. Black-and-white linocut illustration, *The Wind Has Wings: Poems from Canada*, p. 70.



Figure 5. *The Wind Has Wings: Poems from Canada*, page 76 of a double-page collage on pp. 76-77.

The Aboriginal Quartet

Between 1969 and 1979, Oxford University Press Canada published a quartet of Aboriginal stories with texts by William Toye and illustrations by Elizabeth Cleaver. The four picturebooks include *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham* (1969), a Tsimshian story in which a young boy's rescue of a mountain goat from cruel teasing by the villagers saves his life from the goats' revenge; *How Summer Came to Canada* (1969), a Micmac story of the creator god, Glooskap, and the giant, Winter, whose icy power is overcome by the Queen, Summer; *The Loon's Necklace* (1977), a Tsimshian story in which a loon magically restores a blind man's sight and receives its white markings in reward; and *The Fire Stealer* (1979), an Ojibway story of the theft of fire for his people by the creator-trickster figure Nanabozho. Although there had been collections of Aboriginal stories before this date, these were the first full-colour Canadian picturebooks on Aboriginal themes.

The inspiration for this innovative collaboration appears to have come from more than one source. Cleaver wrote that she suggested the series to Toye. "In the late 1960s, I discovered that there were no colourful picture books published on the Indian legends of Canada and I drew this to the attention of William Toye.... He agreed, and eventually decided to produce two, thirty-two page picture books simultaneously, choosing two Indian legends with strong pictorial qualities. One of the stories, *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham*, a Tsimshian legend, had been suggested to him by Professor Sheila Egoff.... The other was *How Summer Came to Canada*, Mr. Toye's adaptation of a Micmac legend that was first retold by Cyrus Macmillan in the 1920s."³⁰

Sheila Egoff, children's literature scholar and Professor Emerita of the University of British Columbia's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies recalled that she had advised Toye that he should publish picturebooks of Aboriginal legends for Canadian children. "I suggested to Bill Toye ... 'Look at the American publishers and the British publishers. They're making all of this money just taking old folktales and getting a great illustrator and putting them on the market as a single illustrated folktale and selling them either as picturebooks or as beginning readers,' which they were good for, of course, they were great for beginning readers. And then I said, 'The

³⁰ Cleaver, "Idea to Image" 157.

archives in Ottawa must be filled with material – absolutely filled with material.’ But anyway, I think together we decided on the great British Columbian one – *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham*, which is a classic Indian legend of course – but I don’t know how he found *How Summer Came to Canada*.” Egoﬀ also said that the picturebooks by Toye and Cleaver had an influence on the genre’s development: “I think that they at least saw that there was room for us to have our own traditions and, as I say, not just have *Curious George* and *Make Way for Ducklings*.”³¹

Toye himself remembers that he searched for primary source materials in the National Library. Believing that the oral quality of the tales as recorded by anthropologists was unsuitable for a children’s story, he turned to retellings and worked from Cyrus Macmillan’s early twentieth-century versions to create his text for *How Summer Came to Canada*. *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham*, as he explained it, “was based on my reading of these native tellings in several versions and I turned it into my own.”³²

Cleaver’s Art in the Quartet

The first two stories, *How Summer Came to Canada* and *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham* (1969), represent the consolidation of Cleaver’s artistic style. Perry Nodelman describes Cleaver’s illustrations as “always recognizably hers. They are always collages that combine drawn images and found objects, and they all use startlingly bright colours, made all the more startling because the collage technique makes separations between figures and ground so abrupt.”³³

Cleaver explained her techniques to dramatize the changes of climate from ice and cold to warmth and fertility in *How Summer Came to Canada*, by stating, “I carefully choose my paper for colour, texture to convey a certain feeling. Through collage one learns to simplify and bring out the essence. Collage represents feeling because all the decisions made are based on feeling.... For example in *Summer*, there is the Indian tradition that Glooskap, the mythical lord and creator of the Micmac, had a rock-like face and moss in his hair. This immediately gave me a starting point and of course I started experimenting with other materials beside paper. I used actual moss in

31 Sheila Egoﬀ, interview with Judith Saltman, September 2001, Vancouver.

32 William Toye, interview. See also Darlene Money, “Profile: William Toye,” *In Review: Canadian Books For Young People* 14, no. 4 (1980): 22.

33 Nodelman 69.

his hair. Then to suggest ice and frost and cold in contrast to warmth and fertility I used cedar branches, some painted, some not. Certain colours give the feeling of cold and of warmth. You can look up the theory if you want. Torn white papers represent snow. Pine needles represent grass. A return to symbolism"³⁴ (fig. 6).

A close examination of Cleaver's original illustrations for the Toye-Cleaver Aboriginal picturebooks, now located among the Cleaver fonds in the National Library of Canada's Literary Manuscripts Collection reveals the intricacy and detail of her collages, as well as the development and maturation of her art. In *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham*, she constructed faces from cut paper, with graphite pencil for the features, while using linocuts based on photographs for the totem poles and house panel, and coloured pencil crayon for the fine details of the Chilkat blanket³⁵ (fig. 7). In the climactic scene of the destruction of the lodge (double page 22-23), the house screen is linoprinted on vividly coloured and shaded monoprint paper coloured with deep saturated washes of turquoise, violet, and crimson. The cataclysmic events are symbolized by the tearing of the paper so that the white backing paper shows through – the world is literally ripped asunder (fig. 8). What is not evident on the printed page is the multipart-collage construction of the goat, whose eye is cut out and applied, and whose hindquarters are a separate layer, fringed to suggest goat hair.

In the original illustrations for *How Summer Came to Canada*, Cleaver's highly complex collage layers (more than 30 layers of paper in some illustrations), and her incorporation of a variety of natural materials is evident. Real cedar leaves are used for the trees, with touches of white paint to replicate winter snow on branches.³⁶ The background collage for pages 16-17 is composed of layers of paper. The birds are cut out of monoprint paper with details added in watercolour. Glooskap's wreath is constructed of real leaves and flowers.

34 Elizabeth Cleaver to Gloria Smedmore, n.d., Box 1, File 5, *How Summer Came to Canada* correspondence, Cleaver fonds. Parts of the letter reappeared in Cleaver's article, "The Visual Artist and the Creative Process."

35 Elizabeth Cleaver, original art for *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham*, Box 35a, Cleaver fonds.

36 Elizabeth Cleaver, original art for *How Summer Came to Canada*, Box 1985-12-2, Cleaver fonds.



Figure 6. Note the cedar and the potato print snowflakes in *How Summer Came to Canada*, p.6.

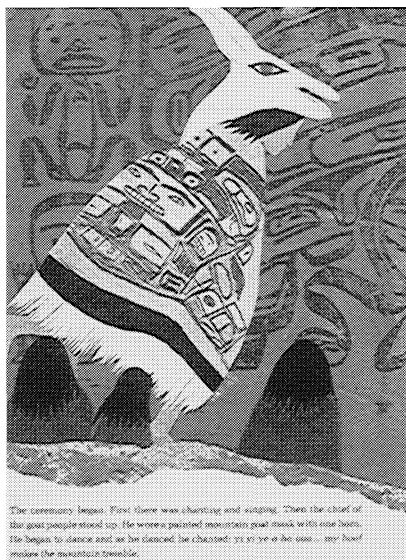


Figure 7. The dancer wears a Chilkat blanket with a goat mask in *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham*, p.18.



Figure 8. *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham*, pp. 22-23.

Cleaver created her most intricate collage illustrations for *The Loon's Necklace*.³⁷ In the title-page image of the loon on the lake, the background collage is constructed of multiple layers of pale monoprinted heavy watercolour paper, layered to suggest mountains in the distance. The loon is a linocut image, cut out and affixed to the paper. The reeds are twisted monoprint paper with touches of watercolour (fig. 9). The original image has up to ten different layers and has a depth and texture and a startling vividness lacking on the printed page. Colours and depth were flattened in the process of reproduction.

In the scene where the boy meets the witch, the construction of the hide stretched out at the right of the double page is remarkably complex. The hide is monoprinted paper, minutely fringed and glued on top of the linoprinted and cut-out lacing. Monoprinted and cut-out stretchers are threaded through the cut-out linoprinted lacing, with fibre added to the joints of the stretchers to resemble rope lashings (fig. 10).

³⁷ Elizabeth Cleaver, original art for *The Loon's Necklace*, Box 1985-12-11, Cleaver fonds.

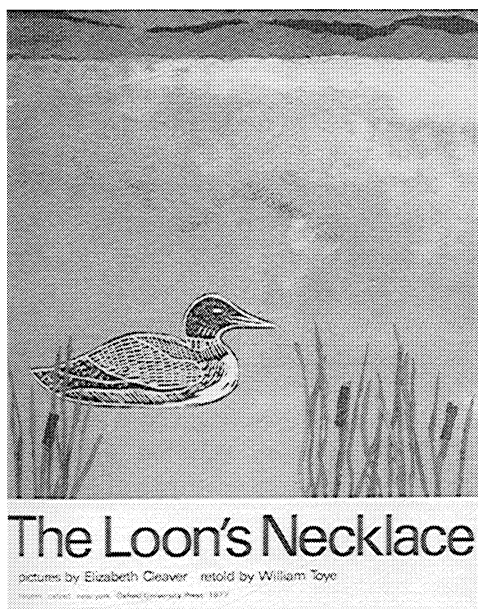


Figure 9. Title-page from *The Loon's Necklace*.

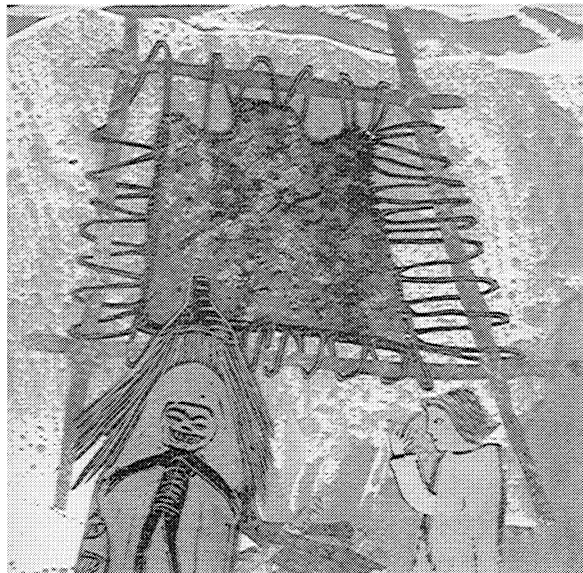


Figure 10. *The Loon's Necklace*, p. [8].

The image that accompanies the central point of the story, as the old man and the loon dive under water, is a brilliant collage, constructed of three distinct layers. The foreground is a monoprint on acetate. The monoprint was textured like fingerpaint with wallpaper paste stirred into it, but has a translucent and dripping quality and an intense jade-green colour that perfectly captures the sense of being underwater. The old man and the loon are cut-out linoprints, glued to the paper behind the acetate. On each facing page the same linoprints are used, but positioned to suggest a succession of moments. Finally, the reeds are flat cut outs of monoprinted paper, glued to the surface over the linocuts (fig. 11).

In the scene of the child returned to his parents, the monoprinted background is deep teal and prussian blue shading into a violet background. The figures are linoprinted onto monoprint paper and cut out, as are the trees and the forks of white lightening that divide the sky. The house is made of folded paper, monoprinted with bark and moss colorations, carefully pleated and stitched to resemble log construction. The emotional centre of the image, the reunited family, is constructed of layered collage that creates a sense of embrace in the layers of arms and bodies. The child at the centre is glowing ochre, the father is light teal, and the mother behind is violet (fig. 12).

Cleaver's Research

Cleaver engaged in substantial research prior to the illustration of any of her texts. It was a primary step in formulating the integrity of each of her works. She received a Canada Council Travel Grant in 1969 to travel to British Columbia in order to examine Aboriginal material culture in various museums, and then locate them within their specific geographical and temporal setting. In Cleaver's words, "In the Indian Legends *How Summer Came to Canada* and *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham* it was necessary to research Tsimshian and Micmac artifacts to understand more fully their art. I was greatly influenced by Tsimshian art and tried to recreate the ceremonies the Indians might have had. It was necessary to try to re-create their spectacular environment along the shores of the Pacific against the mountain ranges. You have to put yourself in the right frame of mind to imagine the legend being re-enacted for the glorification of the chiefs, for spiritual benefit of individuals, and the pleasure and instruction of

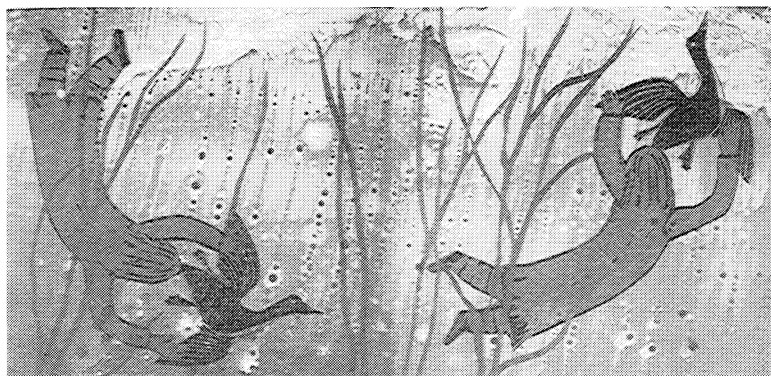


Figure 11. *The Loon's Necklace*, pp. [14-15].



Figure 12. *The Loon's Necklace*, pp. [20-21].

spectators. It was important to convey the communication they had with nature and animals and their highly developed art forms.”³⁸

Cleaver meticulously read through anthropological documents and ethnographic publications as part of her preparation for *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham*.³⁹ She made careful notes on the details of Tsimshian and Gitksan material culture and made photocopies of illustrative material from her readings to act as visual reference

³⁸ Cleaver, “The Visual Artist” 73.

³⁹ Elizabeth Cleaver, “The Mountain Goats of Temlaham research notes,” File 10, Box 1, Cleaver fonds.

points for her illustrations. Some of her final illustrations were directly inspired by the photographs, while others were an imaginative synthesis of several objects. For example, the totem pole on the front cover is fairly close to the photograph of Hole-through-the-sky pole at Kitwancool, published in *The Beaver* in the Winter 1964 edition; the blanket worn by the goat dancer invokes the colours and decorative style of the prized Chilkat blankets; and the screen behind the dancer is directly copied from a Tsimshian original house panel. Her research notes also detail her keen interest in Tsimshian social structures, rituals, and spirituality – further indications of her desire to locate the story historically, geographically, spatially, and culturally.

Cleaver's similar use of reference material for research towards her art in *The Loon's Necklace* is documented in a diary of the evolution of the book that she kept in preparation for her master's thesis:

April 13, 1977: William Toye's manuscript arrived from Oxford University Press. From this time onward I will spend time on the book virtually every day.

April 15: I start my research by going to the National Museum of Canada Library in Ottawa, where I discovered variants of the legend. Even though William Toye has done the retelling I will illustrate, I am interested in understanding how the characters are portrayed, and what incidents are important, in other versions. I collect visual material relating to Tsimshian artifacts that I may use in my pictures: totem poles, huts, articles of clothing. During my two-hour bus drive each way between Montreal and Ottawa, I work on an outline for the twenty-four-page picture book.

April 19: I continue my picture research at McCord Museum and its library in Montreal. I consult anthropological journals and books by Diamond Jenness, Franz Boaz, Marius Barbeau, and Viola Garfield. I think about my travels in 1969 through the mountains of British Columbia, by air and by bus and try to recapture the spectacular environment, especially the mountains and the trees.⁴⁰

Despite her conscientious research, the scholar and critic Perry Nodelman sharply criticized Cleaver's art as false to Aboriginal culture and experience, claiming that although Cleaver acknowledged the culture of each story by including representations of cultural artifacts and customs, "her pictures imply a detached point of view that prevents involvement. Like viewers of a travelogue about people

40 Cleaver, "Idea to Image" 163-64.

with customs different from our own, we *observe* these people and comment on how interesting their artifacts and customs are.”⁴¹ Nodelman’s criticism of Cleaver’s interpretation of Tsimshian material culture in *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham* raises difficult questions that are also at the heart of Toye’s retelling of a story that is part of the oral history of the Tsimshian people.⁴² At the time of the book’s creation, Aboriginal people were seen by many as marginal to modern Canadian society. Their oral histories and stories of creation were compared unfavourably to European legends, the product of a “stone-age unlettered people,” crude in form, tedious in their repetition, and unappealing to modern Canadian children without careful reworking into the more familiar tropes of the European folk tale. The idea that the right to tell a story is an inherited one within Tsimshian culture, and that the *Mountain Goats of Temlaham* is an oral narrative that forms an integral part of the Gitxsan people’s understanding of their historical territorial rights, was utterly outside the concerns of literary critics or the wider Canadian society of the day.

Cleaver’s reading of the anthropological literature, and her careful and respectful notation of Tsimshian design forms, clearly reflect her respect for Aboriginal culture.⁴³ At the same time, her use of non-naturalistic colour to express the emotional tenor of the story reflects her deep personal engagement with the power of images to explore themes of transformation, and her belief that her task as an artist was to convey the feeling and mood of a text through colour. Cleaver explained that “Illustrations should add a different understanding to the text. The Indian legends express qualities such as kindness to animals, loyalty, courage, struggles between man and nature. I hope to bring to life the culture of the Indian race. I am interested in

⁴¹ Nodelman 72.

⁴² For a brief, clear introduction to the issue of stories and oral history in Aboriginal societies as evidence of territorial rights, see Stan Persky, “Commentary,” in *Delgamuukw: The Supreme Court of Canada Decision on Aboriginal Title*, David Suzuki Foundation series (Vancouver and Toronto: Greystone Books, Douglas and McIntyre, 1998), 16-17. See also James McDonald with Jennifer Joseph, “Key Events in Gitxsan History: A Gitxsan Time Line,” in *Potlatch at Gitsegukla: William Benyon’s 1945 Field Notebooks*, ed. Margaret Anderson and Marjorie Halpin (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), and Ministry of Forests, Bulkley-Cassiar Forest District, *The Past Into the Present: Cultural Heritage Resources Review of the Bulkley Timber Supply Area*, prepared by Ken Rabnett, March 2000, at <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/dss/cultural/CHRREVIEW.pdf>.

⁴³ Cleaver, “Idea to Image” 156.

producing an artistically valuable book – for there should be pleasure and reward for the child to open a book again and again.”⁴⁴

Cleaver and Toye were at the very beginning of the transformation of Aboriginal themes in Canadian children’s books from the early twentieth-century romanticisation of Aboriginal peoples as a doomed remnant of a pre-industrial past into the recognition that Aboriginal people are part of contemporary Canadian society, have voice and agency, and that their stories are uniquely part of their history and must be approached with respect. Cleaver’s images represent an attempt to fuse specific and particular cultural images with universal archetypes, an innovation that may be seen as inappropriate or culturally insensitive by today’s understanding, but was unprecedented in Canadian children’s books of the period.

Archetypes and Symbols

Cleaver’s rigorous research was matched by her profound attraction to the archetypal patterns and symbols in the verbal and visual imagery of mythology. She pondered, “What truths ... might be explored in a picture book, especially one dealing with mythological material? What role might mythology have in our lives as children and adults?”⁴⁵ Her approach to the interpretation of Aboriginal culture was quite different from the more naturalistic illustrations of contemporary illustrators of Aboriginal stories, the best-known of whom were Douglas Tait and James Houston. Where Houston and Tait’s art was naturalistic and realistic, Cleaver’s was symbolic and expressionist, highly graphic in design, abstract, and colour-based.

Cleaver communicated the emotional import of the stories through dramatic, non-naturalistic colour, shadow, and composition. This attraction to symbolic, non-figurative representation was deepened by her passion for Jungian psychology and the archetypal patterns and symbols found in the psychological transformative dreams and visions of the artist, and in traditional oral tales such as the fairytales, legends, and myths that she loved to read and to illustrate. As Cleaver explained, “When I am attracted to a particular myth or legend it is because of the verbal or visual images, the symbols, in it. For each of us, some symbols are more powerful than others.... For me, the forest and magical animals are particularly significant.... Trees

44 Cleaver to Gloria Smedmore, 17 Mar. 1970, File 1, Box 1, Cleaver fonds.

45 Cleaver, “Idea to Image” 157.

comprise one of the most widespread and oldest symbols in cultures from around the world.”⁴⁶

Cleaver first read Freud in the late 1950s while working as a secretary at the Mental Hygiene Institute in Montreal, and was fascinated with Freud’s work on the interpretation of dreams.⁴⁷ She later became deeply interested in the work of Carl Jung and his theories of the role of images in keeping in touch with the unconscious.⁴⁸ Her thesis for her Master of Fine Arts degree from Concordia University in 1980, “Words and Images: An Investigation into the Literal and Symbolic in the Illustration of a Text,” combined her passion for Jungian archetypes, visual imagery, and the picturebook genre. She was an eloquent writer on the subject of illustration, and spoke passionately of her fascination with Jungian thought and its influence on her art, and on the symbolic and archetypal narrative patterns and visual images in the oral tradition of myth, legend, folktale, and story. She self-reflectively analyzed her approach to picturebook making, and articulated her theories, vision, style, and technique in speeches and articles which were published in *CCL: Canadian Children’s Literature* and *The Lion and the Unicorn*, prestigious journals of children’s literature scholarship.

For Cleaver, images of nature symbolize the cycles of change and transformation central to mythology and her own mythic imagery. Tree images spontaneously appeared in her pictures, both for their symbolic import and as a compositional device that provided balance.⁴⁹ As she explained, “The plant elements in *How Summer Came to Canada* express the theme of growth. For these illustrations I found and added botanical material like pine needles and cedar branches to the monoprinted paper to create a three-dimensional composition. In the dream sequence ... as Glooscap dreams, a tree sprouts out by the side of his head, a use of the tree as a symbol of imaginative thought (fig. 13). In *The Fire Stealer* the tree is a symbol of transformation. I chose the birch tree because of its beautiful white bark and also because it was sacred to the Ojibway Indians.... I represented the tree with roots and boughs to express integration”⁵⁰ (fig. 14). In her master’s thesis, she expanded on this theme, explaining

46 Cleaver, “Idea to Image” 157.

47 Sorfleet 22.

48 Cleaver, “Fantasy and Transformation” 67.

49 Cleaver, “Idea to Image” 158.

50 Cleaver, “Idea to Image” 161-62.

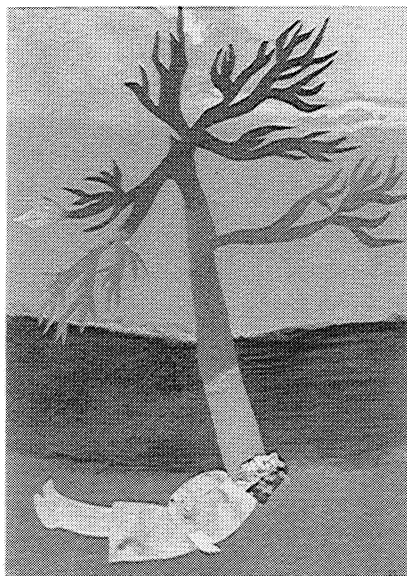


Figure 13. Glooskap dreaming in *How Summer Came to Canada*, p. 11.

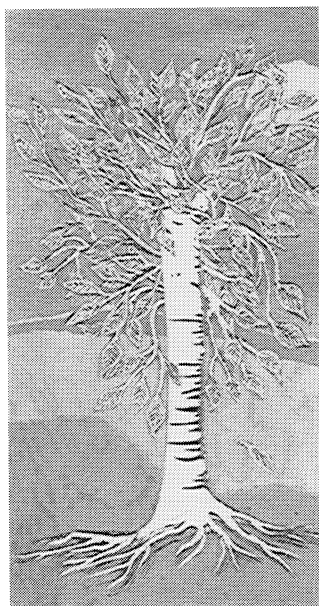


Figure 14. *The Fire Stealer*, p. [5].

that “the seasonal transformation of a tree shows the process of growth from the seed to the fullness of development. In the creation of a work of art there is a similarity; the seed of an idea grows and develops until it matures and stands on its own.”⁵¹

Cleaver had a lifelong fascination with the ballet and theatre design. As she told Toye in a March 1970 letter, “I have been working very hard lately on a number of projects. I have finished the set design for ‘Beauty and the Beast;’ and I am now working on ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’. I will show you my work when you visit. I have learned very much from this course – I can now work in 3-D. My set designs relate to my work (medium) and I am not interested in designing anything out of character with what I am doing. I would be interested in doing sets for ballet and opera because there is the opportunity to abstract in both reproduction and presentation. I wonder if I will ever design a real live set.”⁵²

In 1970-71 she created shadow puppets based on Inuit stories for children’s theatre performances at the Centaur Theatre in Montreal. She became fascinated with the link between shadow puppets and collage: “I realized that shadow puppetry was an extension of my picture books. Since pictorial form in books cannot move, I was searching for devices to show me ways in which my cut-out collaged figures would come alive. I found movement could be created through the shadow figures. Later shadow puppetry would lead me to partial animation.”⁵³

Following her work with Montreal’s Centaur Theatre she earned a Canada Council Arts Bursary Award that enabled her to conduct research in 1971 and 1972 on shadow puppetry and shadow art in various European countries, Turkey, and Iran. She subsequently traveled to Baker Lake in the Northwest Territories, where she worked with Inuit children to teach them shadow puppetry. She adapted her picturebooks to shadow puppetry and, with the children, adapted Inuit stories to the form. This research reflected her love of the play of light and dark, the beauty and mystery of shadows and their affinity with legends of the spirit world. In her words, shadow puppetry “can

51 Elizabeth Cleaver, “Words and Images: An Investigation Into the Literal and Symbolic in the Illustration of a Text,” (MA thesis Concordia U, 1980, 160), quoted in Ronald Jobe, “Recognition of Canadian Excellence.”

52 Cleaver to Toye, 18 Mar. 1970, File 1, Box 1, Cleaver fonds.

53 Cleaver, “Fantasy and Transformation” 68.

be the most poetic form of puppetry since it is ideal for presenting dreams, visions, and transformation scenes.”⁵⁴

Cleaver's final book was another tale of transformation, an Inuit story that she both wrote and illustrated. *The Enchanted Caribou* is a coming-of-age tale of a young Inuit woman who is transformed into a white caribou through a shaman's magic, and is brought back to human form through wisdom and love. The book was the culmination of Cleaver's journey towards a deeper awareness and understanding of shadow plays, shadow art, and the concept of the shadow in myth and Jungian archetype. The symbols of transformation, self-realization, and death and rebirth, which are present in much of her earlier work are here fully realized. The black shadow puppet figures, photographed in silhouette against a flat white background combine a static compositional tableau with the suggestion of movement (figs. 15-17). The figures have a magical otherworldliness as they shift and change shape and identity, reflecting the quest theme as the Inuit woman's destiny is described through layers of shadow and light. According to Hilary Thompson, Cleaver's aim in this work is “Jungian self-actualization. Her subject matter and her shadow puppet pictures promote self-discovery in both writer and reader.”⁵⁵ Thompson further points out that the powerful theme of transformation is true to Cleaver's philosophy of picturebooks, their creation, and, by extension, her life. “Puppetry and transformation are found in Cleaver's use of collage where the paper reveals the landscape; in her use of legends whose essence is a major event or transformation of nature or of people; in her creative process where she projects her imagination into the objects and beings she creates; and in her theme and aim for her picture books. Self-discovery and learning, ‘self-realization and individuation’ is ultimately the way she comes to define ‘transformation’” (82-83).

The Collaboration Matures

The collaboration between Toye and Cleaver was deep and fruitful and pushed Cleaver to greater accomplishments than she may have been able to achieve on her own. Toye was both the author in four retellings of Aboriginal stories and her editor for seven books. He even advised her on books she created for other publishers.

⁵⁴ Cleaver, “Fantasy and Transformation” 72.

⁵⁵ Thompson 82.



Figure 15. *The Enchanted Caribou*, p. [11].



Figure 16. Teyya is transformed into a caribou, *The Enchanted Caribou*, p. [19].

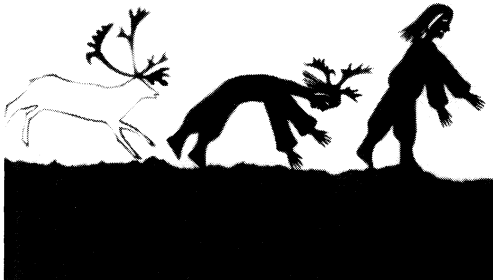


Figure 17. The sequence of figures reverses the transformation in Figure 16, *The Enchanted Caribou*, p. [27].

Cleaver's reflective, intuitive visualization of textual narrative was personally difficult. As she noted, during the initial phase of forming mental pictures, she was "in a very vulnerable state and might even feel insecure. Every time I begin a project it is as if it's the first time I am attempting a book. There is an uncertainty. But then I also have reassurance in the fact that I have done it before. But having created books before does not guarantee that I can do it again. My mind seems to be constantly working on problems, even in my dreams. Finally there comes a time when I cannot put off getting into the ideas I have taken in."⁵⁶

Toye said that in all their books together, he would visit with Cleaver in her apartment in Montreal while she worked on the art. Often he pushed her to do better, to repeat her work until she reached what she was capable of. Sometimes, he said, there were tears, but the respect and mutual understanding between them was deep and profound. In Toye's words, "She would do something, and I would say, 'You can do better.' And make her do it over and over and over. In the beginning ... she erupted in tears a lot.... I was [a tough task master]. But she appreciated that the work was improving all the time. And she knew that what we ended up with was way ahead of what she started with. I think she had to go through this with me. So as time went on, she didn't mind.... I wasn't cruel or rude, you know, but I was demanding. And she would get tired, of course."⁵⁷ It is clear from Toye's correspondence with Cleaver regarding *The Loon's Necklace* that he was very involved in the fine detail of the creation of images. "I suggest you make all the faces look like the first, with the eyes like this [sketch of eyebrow set high above eye] not [sketch of eyebrow set very low to eye]. The protruding jaw on the second one doesn't suit the other pics."⁵⁸

Cleaver casts light on her working relationship with Toye in her abridged journal entries documenting the process of creating art for *The Loon's Necklace*, which formed the core of her MFA thesis:

April 28: I meet with William Toye to show him my sketches. We go over the text and rough drawings very carefully, discussing the content of each picture....

⁵⁶ Cleaver, "The Visual Artist" 72.

⁵⁷ William Toye, interview.

⁵⁸ Toye to Cleaver, n.d., File 1, Box 5, Cleaver fonds. See also the remarkably detailed letter from Toye to Cleaver regarding changes to her illustrations for *ABC* (Toye to Cleaver, 5 Apr., 1984, Cleaver fonds, reproduced at <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/abc/t20-212-e.html#a>).

May 28 to June 2: Mr. Toye came to Montreal and examined what I had done. We spent a full day discussing and agreeing on various changes – some had to do with the figures and their placement, some with the background colours. However, there was one big change, a serious one at this late stage, and this was in the overall colour treatment. It was clear to both of us when we looked at the pictures all laid out together on the floor that the colours were too dark. I had to make fresh monoprints and reassemble every composition. This took me until June 2, and while it entailed a great deal of unexpected effort, the results were very worthwhile.⁵⁹

In a commentary on *The Loon's Necklace*, Cleaver revealed, “This book was Bill Toye’s idea. He has a sensitivity in finding images we both can relate to. After reading a draft of the story I immediately knew I could feel my way into it. I enjoy collaborating with Bill Toye – he knows when to push me further – and inspires me with good suggestions. Although collaboration could be difficult, his insight into the images that we can both relate to is what gives our work life. We approach the story from opposite directions.”⁶⁰

According to Irene Aubrey, “William Toye was an amazing influence on Elizabeth. They had a warm personal friendship but also a business relationship. Elizabeth’s artistic temperament and tendency to procrastinate sometimes met Bill’s business deadlines when he’d arrive in Montreal from Toronto with an ‘OK, Elizabeth, draw!’ Without a doubt, he helped guide her career, and his sure eye for her pictures and positive support allowed them to bring out the best in her art. She would say to me, ‘Irene, I’ve met the deadline and it was thanks to Bill that we did!’”⁶¹

Aubrey also noted that Toye encouraged Cleaver to “play” with her illustrations during the process of revision, the same word that Cleaver used to describe her own method of working in collage, although she also noted that “collage is a way of making art by pasting, cutting and tearing. From this description it sounds as if I play and do not work at all. How misleading. Making pictures is demanding work. It is creative play if you like, but one has to use the mind, the hands, the eyes and the heart to create a picture.”⁶² Toye and Cleaver’s collaboration

59 Cleaver, “Idea to Image” 170–72.

60 Elizabeth Cleaver, “Loon’s Necklace, Commentary by Elizabeth Cleaver,” File 8, Box 5, Cleaver fonds.

61 Irene Aubrey, personal communication, 15 Mar. 2004.

62 Cleaver, “An Artist’s Approach to Picture Books” 5.

was demanding and creative play that resulted in beautifully written, designed, and illustrated picturebooks (fig.18).

The Legacy

The Enchanted Caribou was Cleaver's last book. In 1985, shortly after returning from the Bologna Children's Book Fair, she was diagnosed with liver cancer, and died a month later. She had created a body of work that richly fulfilled her prayer in 1968 that she might recover from surgery to make beautiful books for children. Her collaboration with William Toye stands as a monument to the power of images to expand the textual narrative, and bring pleasure to the reader. Their work together laid the foundation of the creation of the modern Canadian picturebook.

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 —. *ABC*. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1984.
 —. *The Enchanted Caribou*. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1985.

Illustrated by Elizabeth Cleaver

- Downie, Mary Alice, and Barbara Robertson, compilers. *The Wind Has Wings: Poems from Canada*. Illus. Elizabeth Cleaver. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1968.
 Toye, William. *How Summer Came to Canada*. Illus. Elizabeth Cleaver. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1969.
 —. *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham*. Illus. Elizabeth Cleaver. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1969.
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Figure 18. William Toye and Elizabeth Cleaver, Montreal, 1969.

- Toye, William. *The Loon's Necklace*. Illus. Elizabeth Cleaver. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1977.
- . *The Fire Stealer*. Illus. Elizabeth Cleaver. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1979.
- Downie, Mary Alice, and Barbara Robertson, compilers. *The New Wind Has Wings: Poems from Canada*. Illus. Elizabeth Cleaver. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1984.

Awards

- 1968 The Award of Merit, New York Illustrators Society for *The Wind Has Wings*.
- 1968 Citation of Merit, New York Illustrators Society for an illustration for *The Dragon Story* (unpublished).
- 1971 Runner-up for The Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award, Canadian Association of Children's Librarians for *How Summer Came to Canada* and *The Mountain Goats of Temlaham*.
- 1971 The Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award, Canadian Association of Children's Librarians for *The Wind Has Wings*.
- 1972 Canada's representative at the 1972 London International Book Year Commonwealth Book Fair, exhibition at London's Commonwealth Art Gallery.
- 1972 Highly Commended citation, runner up for the Hans Christian Andersen Award from the International Board on Books for Young People.
- 1974 The Canadian Library Association Book of the Year for Children Award, Canadian Association of Children's Librarians for *The Miraculous Hind*.
- 1974 Member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.
- 1976 Runner-up for The Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award, Canadian Association of Children's Librarians for *The Witch of the North*.
- 1977 IODE Book Award, Municipal Chapter of Toronto, for *The Loon's Necklace*.
- 1978 The Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award, Canadian Association of Children's Librarians for *The Loon's Necklace*.
- 1980 The Canada Council Children's Literature Prize for English-Language Illustration for *Petrouchka*.

SOMMAIRE

William Toye, directeur d'Oxford University Press Canada, et Elizabeth Cleaver, artiste et illustratrice, travaillèrent ensemble à la fin des années 60 et au début des années 70, pour créer les premiers albums tout en couleurs incorporant des thèmes et des images caractéristiques au Canada. Cet article examine le travail de Toye en ce qui a trait à la création de livres illustrés canadiens pour enfants au cours des années 50 et 60, la carrière d'illustratrice de Cleaver, ainsi que le quatuor d'albums illustrés autochtones publiés par Oxford University Press Canada, entre 1969 et 1979. Cette fructueuse collaboration entre Toye et Cleaver, qui permit à Cleaver de devenir une auteure innovatrice de livres pour enfants, constitue une partie importante de l'histoire du développement de l'édition pour enfants au Canada.

À titre de directeur commercial à Oxford University Press Canada, William Toye a joué un rôle important en ce qui a trait à la croissance de l'édition de livres pour enfants à la fin des années 50 et au début des années 60. Il avait été inspiré par l'illustration, la conception graphique et l'écriture de qualité des livres répertoriés dans la liste d'ouvrages destinés aux enfants de la maison mère britannique, et il était déterminé à créer des livres de qualité similaire au Canada.

En novembre 1967, Cleaver rencontra Toye, qui immédiatement reconnut la qualité et l'originalité de l'art de celle-ci et passa un contrat avec elle pour illustrer une anthologie de poésie canadienne intitulée *The Wind Has Wings*. Entre 1969 et 1979, Oxford University Press Canada publia un quatuor de récits autochtones sous forme d'albums illustrés avec des textes de Toye et des illustrations de Cleaver. Pour ses illustrations, Cleaver utilisa comme moyen le collage, lequel combinait des monotypes avec des gravures sur linoléum ou sur pomme de terre, du matériel, ainsi que des objets trouvés. Cleaver effectua des recherches importantes sur la culture matérielle des Autochtones avant d'illustrer les textes, afin de les situer dans un environnement géographique, temporel et culturel spécifique. Elle était aussi profondément influencée par la psychologie de Jung et se concentrait dans son travail sur des images qui représentaient le changement et la transformation.

La collaboration entre Toye et Cleaver était profonde et fructueuse, forçant celle-ci à accomplir beaucoup plus qu'elle ne l'aurait fait si elle avait été laissée à elle-même. Toye était à la fois le co-auteur de quatre adaptations de récits autochtones et le responsable de l'édition de sept de ses livres.

En 1985, quelque temps après son retour du salon du livre pour enfants de Bologne, on diagnostiqua que Cleaver souffrait d'un cancer du foie. Elle mourut un mois plus tard. Elle avait créé un corpus d'œuvres qui exauçaient éloquemment sa prière en 1968, selon laquelle elle espérait guérir après une chirurgie afin de créer de beaux livres pour les enfants. Sa collaboration avec Tøye s'élève comme un monument témoignant du pouvoir de l'image à élargir le récit textuel et à donner du plaisir au lecteur.