

BOOKS

ern fishing village, finds a seagull whose wing is broken and devotes his fevered days and nights to trying to persuade someone in the village to cure the gull. Among the obstacles he must overcome in his determined search are a lunatic grandmother with renowned healing powers, an alcoholic father, a neighbor getting more and more deeply involved in smuggling, and an apathetic—as Salih sees it from his child's viewpoint—attitude the world takes toward a little boy and his dying gull.

Kemal, who is building a solid international reputation as a storyteller, is far from apathetic, however. He cares about Salih, and it is his understanding of what children choose as their obsessions, how they create their fantasies (a good deal of the digressive narrative is given over to a fairy tale Salih makes up) that gives impetus and strength to the symphonic quest.

It's possible that Kemal might have trimmed some of his excesses and produced an even better work. But what counts is that *Seagull* is one of those books that over the years may quietly reveal itself to be a classic.

—DAVID FINKLE

What We Talk About When We Talk About Love

by Raymond Carver
Alfred A. Knopf, 159 pp., \$9.95

SEVENTEEN TALES of Hopelessville, its marriages and alcoholic wreckage, told in a prose as sparingly clear as a fifth of iced Smirnoff. By my tally there are 13

hits and four so-sos or undecideds. But even the undecideds have something to commend them, and the hits are sometimes perfect. Rather, the uncanny power of Carver's drained images will often carry a story to a fulfillment beyond mere plot.

In Carver's world of whiskey-diminished household daylight, life is raw banality, lettered ashtrays, forgotten candy sacks, coffee-ringed notes on the kitchen table, living rooms for empty jawing, hallucinatory backyards, funerals. Crazy talk between long nourishing stares out the window. His characters wonder why their feelings don't fit what's happening, why their chemically depersonalized lives don't join halfway decently.

In the astounding "So Much Water So Close to Home," four heavy toppers go on a fishing trip, find a girl's nude body in a stream on the afternoon they arrive, and sit around drinking and fishing for three days before hiking to phone the sheriff at vacation's end. This brutal feelinglessness is carried over, but subdued in "Why Don't You Dance?" A hopeless man moves all his and his departed wife's furnishings onto the front lawn, hooks everything up to work, and has a yard sale to which two young people drop in, drink until evening, spin records, and dance into the twilight. Yet something dreadful about him is left untold.

A strong, nearly clinical collection of fugue states by the author of *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*, nominated for the 1977 National Book Award.

—DONALD NEWLOVE



"Damn Women's Lib."

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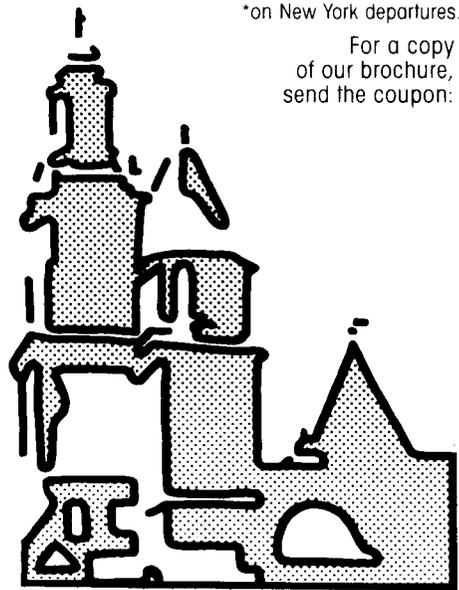
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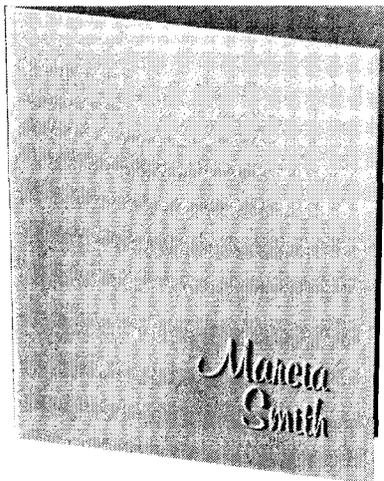
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Winter Count

by Barry Holstun Lopez
Charles Scribner's Sons, 128 pp., \$9.95

BARRY HOLSTUN LOPEZ is an Easterner who has migrated westward, ever further westward in a series of beautifully constructed, slender volumes that move back and forth between fiction and nonfiction, all of which grow out of his radical alignment with the truths that dwell in nature. *Winter Count* is his fifth book. It may be the one that will win him recognition as a writer who like, say, Peter Matthiessen or Edward Hoagland, goes to the wilderness in order to clarify a great deal about civilization.

The 10 fiction sketches in *Winter Count* portray sensitive observers, a number of them scientists and naturalists, coming to terms with various kinds of life both wild and tame in places as dissimilar as the American southwest, Park Avenue, Los Angeles, and Sanibel Island. Encounters with desert winds "of wild refinement," rivers that disappear, buffalo as spry as mountain goats, shells upon which the world's fate seems to rest, men who make pebbles fly, help Lopez's protagonists achieve their immediate desire to, as one of them puts it, "let go of a fundamental anguish."

Weaving "literalisms and metaphors and forms of proof" into a style

reminiscent of some important contemporary Latin American magical realists, Lopez turns the sentiments of a decade's worth of ecology lovers into a deeply felt and unnervingly powerful picture of reality. —ALAN CHEUSE

November

by Rolf Schneider
Alfred A. Knopf, 240 pp., \$11.95

VOMITING ALCOHOL every morning and ready to switch to low-tar cigarettes, privileged, "infallible" Natasha Roth, East Berlin's widely read writer-intellectual, is feeling her age. Her latest book, an in-depth story of a social worker, dissatisfies her because it ends before the real-life worker's arrest for attempted flight to the West with her three children. How can she face writing her new book about Rimbaud in the Paris Commune when she's already bored with her notes? Or face her son Stefan, now coming home after a long hospitalization following a bicycle-car collision? Should she write the tragic tale of the East German singer Rebecca and her poet-husband Bodakov (he can be published only in West Germany and so is abused by Red newspapers)? All these questions are considered finely against the intellectual climate of Red Berlin along with the Roths' eerie daily minutia.

After Stefan slowly recovers from

