much wider than Riel's capacities would indicate (it probably grew to be so to Howard's dismay, but certainly to the reader's benefit). The period was one of simultaneous expansion of Canada and the United States: hopeful United States citizens dreamed of encircling Canada on the northwest and plotted from Washington to Winnipeg to effect it; while a prime minister in Ottawa demonstrated, in his mishandling of Canada's western peoples, how little one man could manage to learn from the American Revolution. Spies and bandits, traders and refugees, Indians and buffalo crossed and recrossed the border, mingling inextricably the history of the two nations. Riel's people, the Métis, those trappers, traders, and guides of mixed French-Indian blood who were as at home in the plains and woods as the Indians, bridged the gulf between the races, making the march of civilization west easier for the white race but often reaping their reward like the Indians in broken promises and ignored needs.

The Métis asked from the Canadian government the right to elect their own representatives and to keep their existing land claims—and under Riel they fought twice for these, and lost. By what Howard calls "a triumph of organization" for Indians, two Cree chiefs and their bands fought with them in the second rebellion. By contrast, only eight years before that, a striking demonstration had been made of the results of tactful handling of a people by a government: the Blackfeet Indians, reassured by their experience with its representatives, the Northwest Mounted Police, had gathered in 1877 to sign a treaty with Canada. Crowfoot, chief of the South Blackfeet, spoke, among others: "The Police have protected us as the feathers of the bird protect it from the frosts of winter. . . . I am satisfied. I will sign the treaty." Part of what the literature of the Northwest has lost in Howard's death is the fine book he might have written wholly about the Indians, out of his appreciation of their way of life and point of view.

The portraits of the plotters, statesmen, soldiers, priests who move in and out of this history are skilful. The narrative is packed with relevant detail, yet moves swiftly. From the whole carefully wrought work, it is probably the sketches of Métis and Indian life that will be gathered into the anthologies in years to come: the accounts of the semi-annual buffalo hunts; of the ravages of whisky and smallpox among the Indians; of the wagon trains of the fur traders, with their ungreased wheels, screeching down the Red River trails; of the "red coats" being routed at the battle of Duck Lake, both as the documents tell it and as a lad who was fourteen at the time remembered it fifty years later. The book is historical writing of the first order.

ROBERTA W. YERKES

Four Novels

Lament for Four Virgins, by Lael Tucker. New York: Random. $3.50
Autumn Thunder, by Robert Wilder. New York: Putnam. $3.50
The Disguises of Love, by Robie Macauley. New York: Random. $3.00
Time's Corner, by Nancy Wilson Ross. New York: Random. $3.50

Although there is no very obvious link among these four novels, they are all of them in a sense studies in frustration—stories of people who have somehow been bogged down, and who have fallen into traps largely of their own making. Curiously, however, the pervading atmosphere is not one of gloom. Only in "The Disguises of Love" does the iron bite deep and the trail lead inexorably to the wastelands. This is not to say, necessarily, that Mr. Macauley's novel is the best of the four, but merely that he faces up to reality a little more stringently, permitting no avenues of escape. If one is not too exacting, the other three books could be said to have happy endings. In "The Disguises of Love" the denouement is uncompromisingly bleak, and the taste it leaves behind is bitter. The trap remains closed in Mr. Macauley's novel. In the others the victims wriggle at least partially free.

Most engaging of this group of books, and certainly the most amusing, is Lael Tucker's "Lament for Four Virgins." Here the scene is Andalusia, a sizable Georgia town, and the four virgins in question—who do not remain virgins long—are daughters of the town's leading families. When one first meets them, at twenty, they are gay, fresh, ardent, seemingly full of promise, and they are all four in love with the personable local minister, who eventually flees their pursuit. That this had a disastrous effect upon them the author seems to hint, though the thesis would be difficult to prove. At any rate, they suffer over the years a sad sea change, and when one takes leave of them at forty their glory has tarnished, and they have fallen short of their promise, and their hopes. Blame their environment, or blame the young minister. The net results, in any event, are in very truth lamentable.

Miss Tucker, in telling this story, displays a neat gift for irony, and pictures most divertingly the didoes of her virgins as they dance and drink their way through the prohibition era. She does particularly well, too, by her portrait of Andalusia, with its insidious social pressures and its somewhat stifling Southern code. Essentially, though, and for all its bright wit and the inventiveness of its plot, "Lament for Four Virgins" is not the book it might have been, largely because the fate that Miss Tucker imposes on her characters seems entirely too capricious and arbitrary. What was it, really, that turned Hope into a drunkard? Would Ellen Terra, in actual fact, have suffered for her wantonness? Would Angela not have fought for her love? To these questions the answers are less than satisfactory.

"Autumn Thunder," Robert Wilder's latest, is the story of an ex-football star who feeds on memories of past glories and is unable to drag himself away from the scene of his former triumphs. Virtually a Southern hill-billy, Larry Summers receives a scholarship to his state university, and thereafter is handsomely subsidized for two glamorous years, during which he makes All-American. Poor marks and an early marriage cut short his career, and he lapses into a dead-end job as manager of a local college restaurant, where he can still maintain contact with a world that soon forgets him. As he approaches middle age, his life has fallen into a dusty and drab routine, and he is emotionally retarded because of his obsession with the past. It takes a series of melodramatic events at last to set him free, and return him to his native mountains where he should have been all along.

As it happens, this is the first book I have read by the prolific Mr. Wilder, and I can now see why he is apparently so popular. Mr. Wilder is a smooth, glib writer with a real gift for narrative, discerning enough not to offend one's intelligence but without sufficient depth to be disturbing. Were he less facile, "Autumn Thunder" might easily have been a moving novel. Unfortunately, Mr. Wilder has chosen to gimmick up his plot with the more torrid forms of sex, in the person of a lush, licentious siren by the name of Doreen who is married to a wealthy patron of Larry's. Doreen's all too frequent appearances in the story do much to destroy its integrity and credibility, and to distract attention —quite unnecessarily—from what is basically a good central theme.

Like "Autumn Thunder," "The Disguises of Love" has for its setting a university town, but there all resemblances end. A much more subtle novel than Mr. Wilder's, this is the story of a professor of psychology in a small midwestern college who falls in love with one of his own students as a means of escape from an increasingly stale and profitless marriage. Dull, pedantic, limited, Howard Graeme is so roused by his middle-aged passion that he is eventually prepared to burn all his bridges for the sake of the blandly ruthless and enigmatic Frances. Meanwhile, knowledge of the affair gradually penetrates both to the professor's tedious wife, Helen, and to his sardonic, gifted sixteen-year-old son, who goes to enormous pains to disguise his actual brilliance as a twisted means of rebellion against his parents. Of the three Graemes—from whose widely differing viewpoints the story is told—Gordon is the only one who could be called fully sentient, and who is capable, despite his youth, of detachment.

Obviously, there is nothing particularly fresh about Mr. Macauley's plot, which is our old friend, the triangle. What is unconventional in his book, what is arresting, what is good, is his handling of the intricate, interweaving reactions of Howard, Helen and Gordon, which depart so frequently from familiar, expected patterns. Thus, though she outwardly plays with appropriate gallantry the role of the wronged wife, in her heart Helen welcomes the martyrdom imposed upon her, since the sympathy it evokes in university circles helps to further her social ambitions. All this is shrewd stuff, and much else besides, yet one tends to feel, in the end, that the book is over-intellectualized—that the author has strained too hard to avoid the obvious. Irony has been overworked, I think, in "The Disguises of Love," and Mr. Macauley's attitude towards his characters is so coldly clinical that he makes it impossible for one to share their emotions.

"The Left Hand is the Dreamer" was one of the most interesting novels to appear in recent years, and seemed to be the product of a mature and exciting talent. Since then, however, Nancy Wilson Ross has written nothing comparable, and her latest novel, "Time's Corner," is definitely substandard. The scene of this bizarre tale is an Anglican House of Retreat, where the heroine, Louise Frazier, seeks temporary refuge following an unhappy affair with a married man. Instead of finding wholeness and peace, however, among the gentle sisters, Louise is precipitated into the midst of violent melodrama, and is nearly destroyed in the process. When a young, dope-crazed girl is saddled upon the sisters by two unsavory gangsters, Louise is drawn into contact with the doctor who attends her—himself half-mad and an addict. Sensing a likely collaborator, the doctor persuades Louise to join him in his experiments with drugs—thus offering her mysterious but deadly delights which almost prove permanently fatal to her.

As one might expect—for Miss Ross is a writer who is preoccupied with meanings—there are symbolic overtones to this tale, parables are implied, and the author has obviously attempted to grapple with the problem of good and evil as it exists in our ever-darkening modern world. All her subtleties, however, add up to very little, and the touches of Gothic horror which pervade the latter sections of her book are curiously overwrought and inept. "Time's Corner" is not a total loss, for the earlier scenes at the Retreat are immensely entertaining, and one is conscious of a fastidious wit at play throughout the story. I think it is fair to say, nonetheless, that the book as a whole is fumbling and pretentious, and that at times it skirts hysteria very narrowly.

EDITH H. WALTON

Voorhees on Korea

Korean Tales, by Lt. Col. Melvin B. Voorhees, USA. New York: Simon and Schuster. $3.00

Here is the story of EUSAK—the Eighth United States Army in Korea. It is the story of magnificence, of death, and of the way of life for soldier and civilian in war. It is told with the warmth and understanding that can only be generated within a sensitive observer who has had the misfortune to live that way of life.

"Korean Tales" has received its highest recommendation from the Pentagon. The author, who cast twenty years of newspaper editing aside to serve his country in Europe during World War II and in Korea, is to be courtmartialed, ostensibly because he refused to submit his book to military scrutiny and approval.

"Tales" is a collection of seven short stories, based upon incidents, people and situations Voorhees encountered, and thirteen brief reports on such diverse subjects as the three archaic tanks which saved the Pusan Perimeter, EUSAK's three commanders, and war correspondents.

Voorhees' great flair is fiction. His first chapter, dealing with the personal how and military why of an infantryman's death, and subsequent descriptions of the agonizing plight of a devastated, heroic Korea, will score a bull's-eye in any reader's heart. My one complaint is the author's failure to polish several of those chapters dealing with pure his-