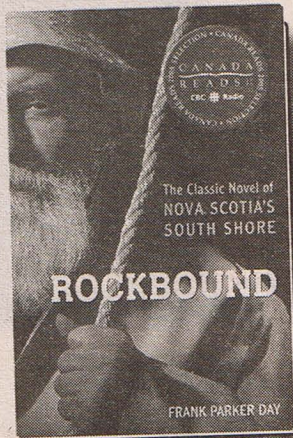


Another World Out There

Have you ever read a book that left you with a sense of loss? A book that provided you with a window to a world you feel you could really connect with, if only it were real? I can think of few books that have touched me in this way: Michael Ondaatje's *In The Skin of A Lion*, Alistair McLeod's *No Great Mischief*, Pauline Melville's *The Ventriloquist's Tale*. These are the sorts of stories that build a world so real and so beautiful, they leave me feeling a little lost for not being part of it.



Rockbound
by Frank Parker Day
U of T Press
328 pages
\$21.95

This year's winner of CBC's Canada Reads contest, *Rockbound*, is another such book. It is the story of David Jung, a young man who grew up an orphaned beggar on the coast of Nova Scotia. At the age of 18 he is trying to reclaim his share of the island Rockbound, left to him by his mother. The island is inhabited by two families feuding over the rights to its land and seas. David falls somewhere in between in the feud. His desire to build a small existence out of his poverty is continually challenged by his harsh unforgiving surroundings, both of the land and of the people who own it.

Though Frank Parker Day wrote *Rockbound* in the 1920s, there is a timeless quality about the story, making it feel as though it could have taken place any time

over the last century. Day describes the slow, steady life of a small fishing community with a quiet, easy narrative style. His words are simple and straightforward, and startling in their sincerity. Day also manages to perfectly capture the rough dialect of the islanders, no easy feat for the written word. It is something like a Newfoundland accent mixed with some German, and it adds a lyrical quality to the text that just begs to be read aloud.

Here's an example: "An' what might ye be wantin'?" said the old man, the king of Rockbound.

"I wants fur to be yur shareman," answered David.

"Us works here on Rockbound."

"I knows how to work."

"Knows how to work an' brung up on de Outposts!" jeered Uriah. "Us has half a day's work done 'fore de Outposters rub de sleep out o' dere eyes, ain't it!"

Rockbound carries traces of a fairy-tale:

stoic young hero, a fair maiden, a villain you just love to hate, ghosts and devils, a nasty storm, a few good battles, and a happy ending.

These elements, mixed with the stories and superstitions of the islanders, create a lovely portrait of David's life. *Rockbound* is a simple, heartbreakingly good story of a world I would love to exist in, if only for a day.

—Sarah Gignac