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may tire him. And trying to read his life and ours into his eyes when they are open. He has been with us for a long time, well into our middle age. Un? like those boys in that boat of so long ago, we did not see him taken from us in our youth. And un? like their youngest brother who, in turn, became our great-great-grandfather, we did not grow into a world in which there was no father's touch. We have been lucky to have this large and gentle man so deep into our lives. No one in this hospital has mentioned the cu mor glas a' bhctis. Yet as my mother said ten years ago, before slipping into her own death as quietly as a grownup child who leaves or enters her parents' house in the early hours, "It is hard to not know what you do know." Even those who are most sceptical, like my oldest brother who has driven here from Montreal, betray themselves by their nervous actions. "I avoided the Greyhound bus stations in both Montreal and Toronto," he smiled upon his arrival, and then added, "Just in case." He did not realize how ill our father was and has smiled little since then. I watch him turning the diamond ring upon his finger, knowing that he hopes he will not hear the Gaelic phrase he knows too well. Not having the luxury, as he once said, of some who li've in Montreal and are able to pre-

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banque offre ses services dans les deux langues officielles. CanadS tend they do
not understand the "other" language. You cannot not know what you do know.
Sitting here, taking turns holding the hands of the man who gave us life, we are
afraid for him and for ourselves. We are afraid of what he may see and we are
afraid to hear the phrase born of the vision. We are aware that it may become con?
fused with what the doctors call "the will to live" and we are aware that some
beliefs are what others would dismiss as "garbage." We are aware that there are
men who believe the earth is flat and that the birds bring forth the sun. Bound here
in our own peculiar mortality, we do not wish to see or see others see that which
signi? fies life's demise. We do not want to hear the voice of our father, as did those



other sons, calling down his own particular death upon him. We would shut our eyes and plug our ears, even as we know such actions to be of no avail. Open still and fearful to the grey hair rising on our necks if and when we hear the scrabble of the paws and the scratching at the door. This story is taken from a new collection by Alistair MacLeod, *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun and Other Stories*. It is offered here by arrangement with the publishers, McClelland and Stewart Limited, of Toronto. They are also the publishers of his first collection. *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood* (1976), which received wide popular and critical acclaim. Photograph of Alistair MacLeod by Charlie Murphy. Readers who do not have easy access to a bookstore should know that you can order the book from the following outlets on Cape Breton Island: Blue Heron Gift Shop (Baddeck), Coles the Book People (Sydney), Island Crafts (Sydney), The Treasure Cove (Sydney), Volume One Bookstore (Port Hawkesbury). *As Birds Bring Forth the Sun* is published as a Quality Paperback for \$12.95. * Sport Fishing Supplies & Fishing Licenses * Sa's ISM MEAT FISH GROCERIES OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 9-9 TO SERVE YOU BETTER STPETERS -ALSO video rental- 535-3363 Overlooking the Margaree Valley at the Junction of Route 19 and the Cabot Trail A full-accommodation Lodge featuring spacious rooms, dining room and lounge, swimming pool. Nearby are golf fairways, beaches, fresh and salt water fishing, camping, hiking. The best of Nova Scotian musicians entertain in our lounge every weekend. Check with us to see who's playing, and drop in for an enjoyable evening. P. O. Box 550, MARGAREE FORKS, Nova Scotia BOE 2A0 Phone (902) 248-2193, William F. MacIsaac, mgr. RELAX IN THE BEAUTIFUL MARGAREE VALLEY (16)