

[Page 30 - A Poem From Cape Breton Quarry the new book by Stewart Donovan](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 68](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1995/6/1

A Poem from Cape Breton Quarry Ingonish Intervale THE NEW BOOK BY STEWART DONOVAN
Clybum Brook a river only in spring its shallow summer stream boasts more golf balls than trout. As boys we learned to fish them out. From Franey Mountain the crystal cracks the Intervale a tiny Yangtze down to a delta where salt cattails bend to the tide's change, and blue and white lobster boats of Doyle brothers point west and rest like compass needles inside a blue-hardened glass. Portuguese and Basque Right Whalers once boiled blubber on North Bay beach, that some dark Iberian winter night might light the lamps of Saint Lucia Isabella, or hooded Torquemada. No one now remembers these roughnecks of the whaleroad, their pre-Columbian loneliness and pain. Our colonial school readers paid no wages to these sailors, or to the blood and bone of slaughtered infant giants, Nor did we know that Wolfe had shelled our shores. The Face of Sydney is Changing... The City of Sydney continues to grow and change with a commitment to the challenges of the future and a recognition of our "WW" responsibility to the past. HHH
From Centre 200 to the "H" Historical "K" 'foi' excellent "Hk" shopping to the heritage "H" buildings of the North End and our Waterfront • first-rate restaurants and motels make Sydney your base for //of Cape Breton. Within easy reach of the Miners' Museum, the Fortress of Louisbourg, the Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Museum and the marvellous Cape Breton Highlands • Sydney offers lots of reasons to visit and to relocate here. You are Welcome in Sydney, Mayor Vince MacLean Their songs and stories left no marks upon the land. They vanished in the winds of Fall, carried on decks salted with the sum of all they saw. Acadians exiled in their wake and the dispossessed of Kerry, Donegal, and Skye. Hunter gatherers, our Irish ancestors wintered in the Intervale's upper reaches turning snow scarlet with the blood of young does, sweet smelling fried meat on the stone hearth for the unrelenting solstice of that first December dark. Skating below the bridge of childhood we saw only ourselves reflected in the frozen stream. Indestructible amphibians, we jumped claspers as high as cenotaphs and sipped to our waists in the jade soup at Clybum Brook's edge. A quicksand of sorrow swallowed our infant cousin down the crusty bank through April thin ice. The casual statistic on the small stones and wooden crosses a census carved by a carpenter's son affirming a stepfather's status as widower and parent alone. Stoic as eagles on the crags and cliffs they sheltered in stands of pine swaying against a bitter and accustomed fate. The gentle summer waters of the stream are withdrawn and thin so low they need no Christopher to carry a child across. The saint's statue stuck to the dash of our father's '59 Pontiac my brother washed mid-stream for Friday nights at the parish hall. And at the brook's mouth, below the 16th tee the snailed spired Catholic Church pokes out above the Irish peasants' mounds of stone long since carpeted for middle-class play. Cape Breton Quarry is \$7.95 in book (Stores, or from Breton Book (see Order Form on page 61). Born in Ingonish, Stewart Donovan teaches at St. Thomas University, and is the founding editor of a new journal of fiction, articles and poetry: The Nash-waak



Review {P. O. Box 4569, Fredericton, NB E3B 5G3}.