Charles T. Bruce

Charles Tory Bruce was born in Port Shoreham, Nova Scotia on May 11, 1906; he died in Toronto, Ontario on December 19, 1971.

Upon graduating from Mount Allison University in 1927, the year his first book of poetry *Wild Apples* appeared, Bruce began his life-long profession as a journalist, first with the Halifax *Morning-Chronicle*, and then with the Canadian Press’s New York Bureau (1928-1933). In Halifax, Bruce began his affiliation with the Song Fisherman Circle, a relationship that shaped his second book of poems, *Tomorrow’s Tide* (1932). In 1933, Bruce transferred to Toronto, where he published four more books of poetry: *Personal Note* (1941), *Grey Ship Moving* (1945), *The Flowering Summer* (1947), and *The Mulgrave Road* (1951), which won the Governor General’s Literary Award (1951).

Though Bruce’s regional poetics are not generally regarded as avant-garde, A. J. M. Smith included him in the seminal *Book of Canadian Poetry* (1943) on the basis that his work “represent[s] a certain ‘aspect’ of the modern movement” in its “simplification of technique” (28-9).

In 1954 Bruce wrote his first and only novel, *The Channel Shore*, a story of three families in a small Nova Scotia community that exemplifies the regional realism of Bruce’s *oeuvre*—it includes the story of a demobilized soldier returning home from the front. His collection of short stories, *The Township of Time: A Chronicle* (1959) builds upon this epic motif and spans 150-years and six generations of maritime characters. Bruce ended his writing career with *News and the Southams* (1968), a biography of the influential newspaper family. Andrew Wainwright notes, “virtually all of Charles Bruce’s creative prose and a good proportion of his poetry…draw upon his experience and knowledge of life along the north shore of Chedabucto Bay [Nova Scotia, Canada]” (ii). Bruce continues to be anthologized and studied as a regional writer.

Sources:

Smith, A. J. M. *The Book of Canadian Poetry: A Critical and Historical Anthology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943.

Wainwright, Andrew. *Charles Bruce: A Literary Biography*. Halifax: Formac Publishing, 1988.

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