

ouleurs du u bec... in uand Deux peintre

LOUISE KIROUAC I.A.F

The only daughter of a family of three children, Louise Kirouac was gentle and docile as a child. *“My mother’s life revolved around her children... I tended to cling to her... At School, she was obedient, studious, almost meek... until that day, in the ninth grade, when I rebelled. At the time, I was very much a nationalist and Remembrance Day was sacred for me. My father, a veteran of World War II, always attended the official ceremonies for which I, personally, had great respect. But, that specific year, the school was not represented at the cenotaph while many on the Anglophone side were there to pay tribute to the war dead. When I heard the Last Call, followed by the minute of silence, I broke into tears and when the nun asked me what was the matter with me, all my pent-up aggressiveness exploded and I screamed out – you’re just a dirty bunch of ... you hate the English but at least their heart is in the right place, more than yours. Finally, at noon, I came home and told my father why the Mother Superior had bawled me out. My father didn’t say a word but got up and brought me back to school right away. I was scared to death as you can image. We had barley arrived when my father said to the Mother Superior – “Mother, I’ve come here to congratulate my daughter in front of you” From that day on, my life was never the same”.* Louise left school. She became a trainee in a hairdressing salon where she stayed three years. She married for love at the age of twenty. She had never done any cooking... *“I didn’t even know how to boil an egg but... Somehow I managed.”* Her sole ambition in life was to become a good mother, a good housekeeper and a good wife... *“At the time, I really didn’t have any specific plan, except to have children, that too was sacred and all I needed to be happy...”* She did go back to school, at night, to finish her twelfth grad, and at that time, probably became aware of some long-repressed

aspirations. She had acquired the basic elements of painting from her father, who painted when his fancy so moved him, and began to express her feelings through painting, but family chores and the caring of her sick mother left her little time for her burgeoning art. One day, her brother, a recognised painter, took her along to work on the motif... “To learn how to observe better” he told her. It was A REVELATION! Until then, I didn’t really see things... I was bored with painting the streams of my village... I needed something else, something more; I needed to learn how to observe. When my brother took me into a back year, I said to him ‘Come on, brother, *there’s* nothing here! – He then showed me how and where to look, how to frame the subject properly and at that point, I began to feel that I would never have enough canvas to work on. I have him to thank if I no longer felt boxed in. I began to SEE”. Louise had come to the end of the tunnel. She knew what she wanted to do –Paint. She then knew that daily routine would no longer stifle her. She then became interested in photography and developed her films herself in a dark room. Her achievements inspired her to dabble in just about everything – pottery, enamel work, sculpting etc. “*Then I really broke loose*”. Louise is now a happy woman with a family of her own and, furthermore, much appreciated on the painting market. Today, Louise Kirouac is lively and cheerful, quite different from the docile and very tame little girls he was, but she hasn’t lost any of her natural characteristics, she is still gentle, kind, understanding, available and full of humour. Her nickname is W.B. for “Wild Buffalo”, a name her brother gave her when the beauty of a site so enthused her, that she began painting in a frenzy, as though afraid the landscape would fade away before her wyes. In her frantic haste, she didn’t even notice that she had walked right over her brother who was crouching down (to arrange his things). That’s just like her! She has one big dream: to leave for at least tow months on a trip to “nowhere” and each day paint every where and

everything in sight. This truly charming individual has lost none of her childish innocence not to say naivety. A meeting with Louise Kirouac is like a breath of pure, fresh bracing air.

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