

From verses on napkins to published anthologies

By **BOB BERGEN**
Mississauga's Terry Rowe is a poet who's come a long way from writing his poems down on napkins in restaurants, on beer coasters in Europe and who ran away from his Peterborough home at the ripe old age of 13.

His third book of poetry has hit the book shelves and has already sold unprecedented thousands even before publication.

His publishers, Lester and Orpen are the same company that handled Richard Bach (Jonathan Livingston Seagull) and Rod McKuen.

The appeal of his poetry, he says, is its purity and that it's something people can relate to personally.

"I don't know how many people have come

up to me and said, 'When I read your poetry, I thought it was me,'" he said sipping coffee in the kitchen of his Kenbarb Road home.

He writes love poetry. Some say he's exposing his soul.

But that fact doesn't bother him.

"North American males aren't supposed to show any sensitivity or feeling," he said.

"We're supposed to be afraid of feeling it — or expressing it. It's about time that changed."

He writes with simple honesty about his feelings. Why Terry is different from other people is that most haven't yet come to terms with that kind of honesty.

"Once you're honest with yourself, the importance of being

honest is enough after a while," he explains.

That's where his poetry began although he didn't always call it poetry. He was just writing down his feelings.

It's only recently that his writing has been packaged and marketed in the form of books, at a big risk to his publisher one might add.

ANALYST

By occupation he's a condominium marketing analyst. Before that he lived on welfare. Before that he was an insurance salesman, a strawberry picker, a burlesque usher, a carnival barker and a shoe-shine boy.

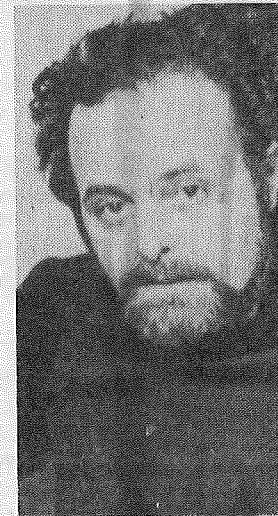
"I live for the moment," he explains. "I used to worry about yesterday, and I used to wonder about tomorrow, but the only thing that really matters is the here and now."

"I enjoy each day to the fullest — and it's not easy. I still catch myself worrying about tomorrow."

Now his days are filled with talk show appearances, interviews with newspapers and magazines of every description, recording dates (he's made an album of *To You with Love*), college concert tours and, always, writing.

He's currently working on his next book of poetry, a biographical novel, another album and a film based on *To You With Love*.

That book is planned to



Terry Rowe

be translated into Japanese, German and French.

Is he the great Canadian author critics have been waiting for?

"No," he explodes. "I'm proud to be a Canadian, but I've lived just about everywhere. Every time someone says, I'm the Canadian poet, I'll speak out against it. Why does it have to be Canadian? Why does it have to be labelled?"

His success doesn't surprise him. He says he knew it would happen, he just didn't know when.

"Whatever I've done, I've always done it to the best of my ability. Now I'm doing whatever I can to make this as successful as possible," he says.

His future directions include moving from suburbia and buying a farm.

"There was a time when I thought a big house and a nice car would make me happy," he said.

"That's just not true anymore," he explained saying he wants to get back to the land to the point where he even wants to grow his own food.

It's hard to believe that writing love poetry can get one that far. Terry's the proof.