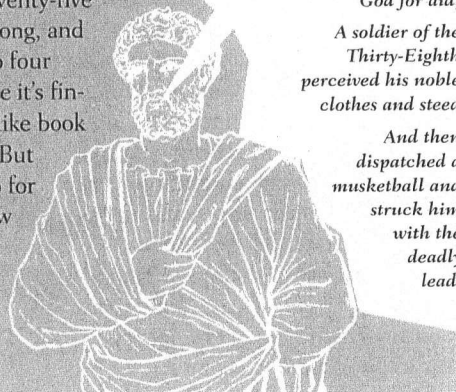


What I did on my summer vacation

It's not Homer, but it's Homeric. And it's part of an epic poem, the creation of Jack Mitchell, a twenty-three-year-old McGill student majoring in classics and history, who believes there's no reason why we can't take our good (and sometimes gray) Canadian history and give it the mythic grandeur that the poets of ancient Greece gave theirs. Are Wolfe and Montcalm not as mythopoeic as Achilles and Hector? Is the Battle of the Plains of Abraham not as splendid as the Battle of Troy? Mitchell thought not, and so began writing in dactylic hexameter his *Iliad*-like work-in-progress *The Plains of Abraham*, about the Seven Years' War. Moreover, he raised his own funds and spent the summer travelling across the country by motorcycle and giving readings for free, in a manner not unlike the ancient Greek *rhapsodes*, itinerant troubadors who recited Homeric verse. Fifty performances later, he's back in his last year of school, but still giving performances around Montreal on request. *The Plains of Abraham* is about twenty-five hundred lines long, and may well run to four thousand before it's finished. Sounds like book material to us. But what will he do for an encore? Now what was the name of Homer's sequel?



But

now the regiments of France were
driven back in headlong rout.

As when the pigeons scatter back, in
Place-des-Armes, at Montreal,
When children chase them to and fro,
delighting in the rush of wings,

And some will settle near at hand,
but most take flight upon the breeze

Just so the regiments of France
were scattered o'er the battlefield.

And last of all there stood alone the
regiment of Roussillon,

Unwilling yet to yield their ground,
surrendering their hearts to fear.

Amid them rode the wise Montcalm,
amid the smoke and blood of war;

He bade them yet to hold their ground
and guard their comrades' retreat.

But as he sat upon his
horse and prayed aloud to
God for aid,

A soldier of the
Thirty-Eighth
perceived his noble
clothes and steed

And then
dispatched a
musketball and
struck him
with the
deadly
lead.