



New from Wilfrid Laurier University Press

Cabbagetown Diary

A Documentary

Juan Butler

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When first published in 1970, *Cabbagetown Diary*'s rowdy concoction of grit and violence and rooming-house sleaze had a strongly polarizing effect on its readers. Many admired the frankness of Butler's depiction of a sordid environment, and others deplored the obscenity of the language and the dangerous and careless ways in which his characters behave, bent as they are on downward self-transcendence. But *Cabbagetown Diary* was undeniably a promising debut by a young writer whose brash tone and pungent subject matter were unique in Canadian writing at that time.

The novel takes the form of a diary written by a disaffected young Toronto bartender, Michael, over the course of his four-month liaison with Terry, a naive teenager who is new to the city. Michael introduces her to his friends and his inner-city haunts, to drink and drugs, and to the nihilist politics espoused by some in his circle. With hard-bitten cynicism and flashes of dark humour, Michael relates the vicissitudes of their summer together.

This reissue of *Cabbagetown Diary* includes a biographical sketch by Charles Butler and an afterword by Tamas Dobozy.

Juan Butler (1942–1981) was a Canadian writer who was born in London, England. His three novels are *Cabbagetown Diary: A Documentary* (1970), *The Garbage Man* (1972), and *Canadian Healing Oil* (1974). Butler suffered acute disappointment when the latter—the one he considered his best—proved an abysmal seller. In his later years he struggled with his mental health. He died by his own hand, in Toronto, at the age of 38.

Tamas Dobozy specializes in the teaching of and publishing on postwar American fiction, including naturalism and dirty realism, which characterize Butler's work. Dobozy's work has been published in numerous journals in North America and Europe and is the author of three books of short fiction: *When X Equals Marylou*, *Last Notes*, and *Siege 13*.

Juan Butler, photographer Michel Lambeth, and poet Milton Acorn were three who spent their lives and their art challenging the status quo. They were mapmakers without whom I might have lost my way.

— **Michael Ondaatje**, on receiving a Toronto Arts Award, 1987

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