

Campus Extras

Less filling, reads great-- try *Crash Diet*

CRASH DIET

By Jill McCorkle. June 1992. Chapel Hill: Algonquin. 253 pages. \$16.95

"Kenneth left me on a Monday before I'd even had a chance to mousse my hair, and I just stood there at the picture window with the drapes swung back and watched him get into that flashy, red Mazda, which I didn't want him to get anyway, and drive away down Marnier Street and make a right onto Seagrams. That's another thing I didn't want, to live in a subdivision where all the streets are named after some kind of liquor."

Jill McCorkle's *Crash Diet* opens with this story of a woman watching her man speed away into the arms of another. In fact, each of the eleven short stories treats the topic of women— women falling in love, women losing a loved one, women wishing they could find someone to love. With the variety of experiences, McCorkle's tales connect with practically every female reader.

McCorkle humorously explores

the psychology of women and their actions in her simple, conversational style. Passages tracing the characters' streams of consciousness have the ability to make the reader laugh aloud. In "Comparison Shopping," Norlina recalls thinking that she could "overlook the fact the Jack Crawford wore platform shoes and had bad breath." Details of the characters' everyday thoughts like this one make *Crash Diet* a pleasure to read.

Not only are the stories comical, but they are also believable. The characters seem real. Take for instance Maureen Drummer, a bored bank teller in "First Union Blues," and Anna Craven, a widow in "Departures" who hangs out in "... airports, shopping malls, fairs, political rallies, any place she can be surrounded by people without having to interact with them." Both are common, small-town women who lead fairly normal lives. Their experiences aren't bizarre happen-

ings, but instead, familiar occurrences that anyone can relate to. McCorkle possesses that same talent that we've seen in the works of Lee Smith—the ability to take the simplest episode and create an immensely enjoyable story.

Crash Diet is a book for locals. As a resident of Durham, North Carolina, McCorkle writes what she knows best— Carolinians. An outsider may still like the book, but delight comes from not only reading, but understanding. References to places like Ocean Drive at Myrtle Beach, the pickle business of Mt. Olive, and the community library of Fuquay can be best appreciated by the native reader.

Most stories run about ten to fifteen pages and can be easily read in one sitting. It is the type of effortless reading that one wants to do in a porch swing on a lazy summer afternoon. The light-heartedness and familiarity of McCorkle's writing leave the reader with a sense of pleasure and a smile.

If you aren't Southern and female—the most appropriate audience for this book—you may still want to give *Crash Diet* a try. The glimpse into the minds of hard-to-understand women may make reading the book worthwhile.

Kristen Mundy



Meredith Performs dazzles with *Tintypes*

by Frances Pate

Every year Meredith Performs entertains the community with a variety of cultural events ranging from musicals to dance concerts. This season looks as promising as ever, judging from the success of the season's opener, *Tintypes*.

The playwright, Mary Kyte, cleverly intertwined many songs from the Vaudeville Era (1890-1920s) with a lot of very cute, funny scenes. With such favorites as "The Yankee Doodle

Boy," "Stars and Stripes Forever," "Shortnin' Bread," and "You're a Grand Old Flag," Kyte created a phenomenal musical review.

The cast consisted of five characters: Charlie (Gary Williams), T.R. (David Bartlett), Susannah (Tina Morris), and two Meredith shirts, Truly Ager who played the part of Anna and Laura McCabe who played Emma. Each actor played a role that was representative of a certain class of people during the turn of the century.

The acting was superb and the singing voices were outstanding. Each character was "spotlighted" at least once and the audience got a true taste of each character's personality. One particularly outstanding number was the show-stopping "Nobody," performed by Tina Morris. Other highlights included "What It Takes To Make Me Love You-You've Got It" performed by Laura McCabe and David Bartlett and "Toyland" performed by Truly Ager.

Catherine Rodgers did an excellent job directing the show.

Nancy Bennett and Cindy Hoban worked well together as musical director and choreographer. There were many dance numbers which involved quite a lot of intricate foot work. The result was amazing.

Billy Murray was responsible for the set and costume designs. Again, the results were wonderful. The costumes depicted the time well and were very pretty. The sets were breathtaking. As the main curtain opened we saw a backdrop that was beautifully decorated with a bald eagle. At another point in the play we saw slides of years past projected onto another backdrop. The images added to the overall effect of the play. Kirt Landry's lighting and sound expertise also added to the success of the show.

Word of mouth brought a lot of people to the show last weekend. All of the crowds seemed to enjoy the performances, and as one man said during intermission, "It's the kind of entertainment everyone can enjoy."



Laura McCabe and Truly Ager starred in *Tintypes*. file photo

Career Connections

Graduate Education Fair— Wednesday, Oct. 7 - 9:00 a.m.-noon. Fireside Lounge, Cate Center. (Grad School representatives available for information exchange, drop-in basis).

Chance to attend Business and Professional Women's Conference in exchange for assisting with hosting responsibilities at this state-wide business women's conference, 5 Meredith students will have an opportunity to attend this excellent professional development and networking event free of charge (\$55 value). Saturday, Oct. 17, 8:45 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., North Raleigh Hilton. Contact (evenings): Stacie Cronin, 704/633-1957 or Valerie James, 919/872-3716. Application deadline: Oct. 9.

Attention Freshmen and Sophomores. Are you undecided about choosing a major? Come to the **Choosing Your Major Workshop**, Friday, Oct. 23, 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., Career Resource Room. For additional information on majors offered at Meredith, don't miss the **Choosing Your Major Fair** Monday, Oct. 26, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon, Fireside Lounge. Drop by to talk to representatives from all majors. (Both events will be held on 2nd floor of the Cate Center).