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Glynn A. Leyshon. *Waiting For Big Louie.* Ontario: Glynn A. Leyshon, 2000. 198 pp. No price listed (paper), ISBN 978-0-9695206-3-4.

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Published on H-Arete (January, 2003)

Going to the Mats With a Collection of Short Stories

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This book is a testament to the need for editors. For all of their picayune copyediting suggestions that can be maddening and the occasional changing of words that change their authors' meanings, editors serve a useful, indeed a vital, purpose in the publishing industry. Were I an editor for a publishing house, a copy of Glynn A. Leyshon's curious, odd, quirky, mystifying, self-published book, *Waiting For Big Louie*, would come along with me to my next contract negotiation.

It is not that Leyshon's book is bad. Leyshon is a former national Olympic wrestling coach in Canada and now Professor Emeritus of the faculties of Kinesiology and Medicine at the University of Western Ontario. He has published books on anatomy, health and on coaching and sports management, as well as books about wrestling, and he has also published dozens of articles in newspapers and journals. This time Leyshon tries his hand at a collection of short pieces that may or may not all be fiction, most of which are about sports, at least broadly, and many of which cover his area of sporting expertise, wrestling.

The biggest problem with the book lies in its editing, or lack thereof. We all know how important it is for others to read our work. Even the most conscientious writers miss little mistakes of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and style all the time. We are so familiar with our writing voice, with reading our own work, that we see what we know is supposed to be there and not always what is actually on the written page. Throughout *Waiting for Big Louie* (Big Louie is a wrestling coach who appears in a number of these vignettes) there are aggravating minor errors that crop up, distracting the reader from stories that range from the witty to the ham-handed and from the insightful to the prosaic. Batches of commas are missing from places they clearly belong, there are other punctuation issues, and occasional typos and questionable word choices appear throughout. Some of the stories work well, while some probably did not need to see the light of day, and still others needed to be rewritten to some degree or other. These are all problems that a good editor would have taken care of with grace and aplomb and, frankly, more tact than your average book reviewer usually can muster.

The stories take place in Canada, and usually involve sports as a backdrop if not as the central theme. There is an array of quirky characters that probably stem from years of observing the foibles and frailties of humanity. Being an athlete and coach himself, Leyshon usually manages to render his worlds with an appreciable level of realism even if some of the stories are pretty mundane. He has a good sense of life's ironies, which he plays up to full effect. He also is not afraid to let his stories serve almost as parables, complete with lessons that he sometimes spells out for his more obtuse readers.

Leyshon deals with a wide array of subject matters in this collection: the ethics of leaving a restaurant without paying the bill; how to improve the game of baseball; a boy's first job; a rather disturbing brainstorm by Big Louie to perpetuate the gene pool of his first-rate wrestling team through a sperm donor program; the responsibilities of an athletic trainer. All of these and more provide fodder for Leyshon's storytelling, and my guess is that he has indeed regaled people with at least some of them before.

My guess is that *Waiting For Big Louie* will fall through the transom. I have been able to find no purchasing information for the book anywhere, and it did not come to me with any details. But it is my guess that Leyshon wrote and published this book less to have lots of people read it and more for himself. More power to him. Now about that editor.

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Citation: Derek Catsam. Review of Leyshon, Glynn A., *Waiting For Big Louie*. H-Arete, H-Net Reviews. January, 2003.
URL: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=7143

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