

Nicolaisen's article, "Legends as Narrative Response," recalls scholarly attention to the fact that a legend is a narrative, deserving the same rigorous analytical approach as other narrative forms. Despite claims of its formlessness, the legend's "truth" and its survival into modern times are dependent on understanding it as narrative.

Perspectives on Contemporary Legend is a fascinating cross-section of current research interests in contemporary legend scholarship. As such, it is a valuable contribution to this field's burgeoning vitality. The papers reproduced here in full, as well as the appendix of abstracts of papers not received in time for publication, will provide readers with many insights and questions for research, discussion, and quiet pondering.

Sing the Cows Home: A Folklore Field Study of the Swedish Fåbod. By Kerstin Brashers.
La Mesa, CA: Associated Creative Writers, 1983. Pp. 248, introduction, drawings, maps, list of references. \$10.00 paper.

Reviewed by W. K. McNeil.

In the northern Swedish province of Dalarna, in times past, a summer dairy farm system developed in response to economic conditions. Constructed at selected sites on mountain slopes or hilltops, these summer farms consisted of living quarters for a herder and cattle. Such settlements were called fåbod, a term made up of the Swedish words "få" (animals) and "bod" (building). It is the life on these farms that is the subject of *Sing the Cows Home*. The author, Kerstin Brashers, made at least two field trips, one in 1976 and one in 1980, to the province of Dalarna to interview former herders and others familiar with the fåbod. In addition,

she consulted more than 100 relevant unpublished manuscripts and recordings, as well as other articles and books.

Brashers states that the folklife which the herders developed illustrates, in varying degrees, adaptation to the environment, primitive conditions, and isolation. Thus, most of the items of material culture were constructed for purely functional reasons. The fäbod were adapted to the terrain and designed with economy of work in mind. Non-material aspects of fäbod culture reveal a similar adaptation. Folk medical practices were based on the use of herbs that were available in the forests and mountains. Folk beliefs were strongly influenced by cow-related activities, and even music was transformed into a work tool. Instruments were developed to scare wolves and bears away, and to signal over long distances. Folktales and legends dealing with fäbod related experiences were the most common folk narratives.

There is nothing very original about Brashers' thesis--after all, it can easily be argued that all folklore is a result of adaptation to existing circumstance. Still, Brashers arranges her data in a very orderly, logical way, to drive home her viewpoint. She quotes at length from interviews with former fäbod residents, providing a feel for fäbod life which could not be achieved by mere descriptive passages. Brashers discusses at length the unique features of the Dalarna summer dairy farm system--most significantly, unlike most other cultures, the herders in Dalarna are women. Earlier, the herders were men but, by the latter half of the seventeenth century, the accepted custom in northern Sweden was for women to take care of the cows and do the milking.

Sing the Cows Home is a well-written, carefully researched and enjoyable examination of the fäbod system. Brashers also provides much

information on the manner in which the herders were viewed by Dalarna society. Ironically, the main flaw of the book is an aspect that should be one of its major virtues, namely, the numerous photographs, which have not been reproduced well in print. Even so, Brashers' study is valuable, if for no other reason than that it is the most recent work dealing with a farm system which is now, for all practical purposes, history.

Progress and Nostalgia: Silvesterklausen in Urnäsch, Switzerland. By Regina Bendix. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. (University of California Publications. Folklore and Mythology Series, volume 33). Pp. xi + 136. Maps, appendices, notes, glossary, bibliography, plates. No price given.

Reviewed by Moira Smith.

For a long time, the literature on folk customs was dominated by a preoccupation with origins. Contemporary practices were viewed as moribund survivals of ancient rituals with little intrinsic interest except insofar as they preserved the supposed original forms. In more recent years, folklorists have become interested in customs for their own sake, and produce detailed studies which focus on contemporary rather than past forms. Among studies of mumming traditions, Alex Helm's *The English Mummer's Play* is more interested in the hypothetical ancient past of the custom than in its present versions. Henry Glassie's *All Silver and No Brass*, on the other hand, emphasizes careful fieldwork to present a detailed study of a custom in context. This book similarly focuses on the present rather than on the past, and lets the tradition bearers themselves do much of the