

What I do remember are things like the smell of the oil furnace in the shack where we changed into our skates, the sharp searing of cold air in the throat, and the rich shlucking sound of your blades on the cracked ice. You don't have to play hockey to experience these things, but you remember them, as I do, if you ever spent any of those Saturday mornings chasing a puck up and down a frozen sheet of ice, pretending that you were Rocket Richard scoring the winning overtime goal.

Back in 1961, any Canadian kid who wasn't subject to...

LOOKING ABOUT, ACCUSINGLY:

...perverse influences... was a fan of one of the two *Canadian* teams in the NHL: the Montreal Canadiens, or the Toronto Maple Leafs. I was a Canadiens fan.

STANDS UP.

They were French, so they had an aura of *magique*. Their names were mysterious and wonderful:

HE PRONOUNCES THEM, POORLY, BUT CARRESSINGLY:

"Rocket Richard," or his brother Henri, "Da Pocket." "Boum-Boum Geffrion."
Or "Jaques Plante," a goalie who would often skate out as far as his own blue line to make a save against a breakaway.

The Leafs, on the other hand, stood for business-like efficiency. They were upright and straight and Protestant... and I didn't want to be like them.