

A CONFEDERACY OF DUNCES by John Kennedy Toole. Louisiana, \$12.95. "Whatever it is," cries his long-suffering mother, "Ignatius done it," and that statement pretty well sums up this clever, grotesque, uneven but engaging farce. Ignatius Reilly is a self-righteous educated fool, an anti-hero without a single appealing feature except his ability to convert any situation into chaos. As he lumbers about like a mobile disaster area, he inadvertently poleaxes capitalist enterprise, workers' rights, gay liberation, student activism, the glamor of Old New Orleans, and any other sacred cow on his route. This learned dunderhead is contrasted to Jones, a brainy black with no learning at all, and the slight sense of imbalance in the tale arises from the fact that Jones has not been given enough space by the author. Imbalance regardless, the book is an unusual and interesting first novel. It is also, unfortunately, a last novel, for Toole killed himself at the age of thirty-two.