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INSIDE

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These poems wouldn't exist without Wikipedia, but writing them felt liberating

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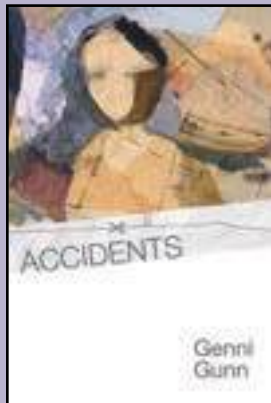


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Armin Wiebe

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CELEBRATE POETRY THIS SPRING



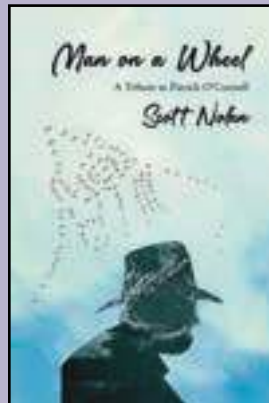
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On the Cover: From *Tales of the Mountains and the Sea*
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Collection of emerging young Francophones began with writing workshops at Café Postal

No quick fix to navigating identity, as novel explores trans humanity, complex relationships

'We are always in flux' with no fixed timeline, says Sam K MacKinnon

by Keith Cadieux

THE BODY RIDDLE

Sam K MacKinnon
House of Anansi Press
\$26.99 pb, 368 pages
ISBN: 978-1-4870-1391-2
Available as an ebook

Winnipeg writer Sam K MacKinnon bursts onto the literary scene with their debut novel *The Body Riddle*, an authentic and loving portrait of not only discovering, but also navigating, embracing, and evolving alongside trans identity.

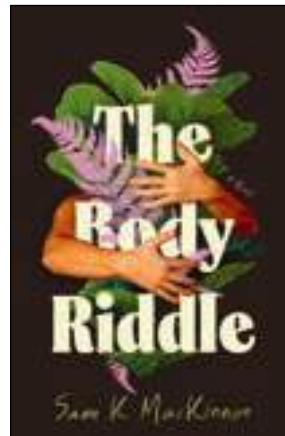
The novel is set in Winnipeg, a city that MacKinnon knows and loves well. “I write about things I love and things I am curious about. I love Winnipeg deeply, and it sparks endless curiosity,” they say. “I never considered setting the book anywhere else.”

MacKinnon has published several short pieces, both fiction and creative non-fiction, that explore queer and trans identity. Their non-fiction reads as quite personal, and that form of writing and storytelling continues in their foray into long-form fiction.

“Choosing the first-person perspective for *The Body Riddle* probably came from my love for creative non-fiction,” MacKinnon says. “I wrote the section in the novel titled ‘How to Solve the Body Riddle’ by imagining it as Lex writing a piece of creative non-fiction.”

Lex, the narrator, is a transmasculine graphic artist who, at the beginning of the novel, has just received the date for their top surgery, which they have been waiting to get for two years. Lex lives with their partner Ada, a cis woman who is supportive of Lex’s decision to get surgery.

At the same time, Lex’s struggles with their identity, contrasted with Ada’s firm confidence in her own, have put considerable strain on their relationship. Both hold out hope that things will improve after surgery, but things do not go as planned.



Post-surgery, Lex is sometimes pleased with the outcome, and other times ridden with doubt and worry that they may have made a mistake. But the moments when Lex feels pure joy in their new body, when they realize a way of being they did not realize was possible, open them to a new way of experiencing the world.

At the same time, the surgery has not been a magical fix-all, and the issues

in Lex and Ada’s relationship not only remain but grow more complex.

Part of that complexity involves Sadie, another queer trans person. Lex has never dated another trans person and becomes confused as to how that plays into their identity, even as they feel a connection to Sadie that is wholly different from the connection they feel with Ada. Lex’s confusion means they don’t always act how readers might expect or want them to.

“I want readers to be able to empathize with my characters so that they root for them, but I’m not concerned with whether readers find my characters likeable,” MacKinnon explains.

“I deliberately wrote characters, including Lex, who are at times frustrating, annoying, and who make morally questionable choices. Trans people are human, and humans are not always likeable. It was important to me to express our humanity.”

Even when Lex and the other characters are making choices readers might not agree with, the core of the novel is their humanity and the idea that navigating identity, for anyone, is often messy.

“I hope all readers – trans or cis – take away that identity is complicated, there is no fixed timeline and often no end point to understanding who we are,” says MacKinnon.

“We are always in flux.” 🌿



Sam K MacKinnon

BRUCE HOYE

Literary thriller unwinds in deep mines, where true motivations remain hidden

Set in the near future, Margaret Sweatman's 7th novel draws on geological research

by Margaret Goldik

NIGHT BIRDS

Margaret Sweatman
Goose Lane Editions
\$26.00 pb, 340 pages
ISBN: 978-1-77310-448-5
Available as an ebook

Night Birds, Winnipeg author Margaret Sweatman's seventh novel, is a literary thriller. It begins with a mining disaster in Romania: an open-pit gold mine and its cyanide-laced tailing basin are pummelled with heavy rains, which sends deadly slurry down the mountain.

Tellingly, when Peter Zugravi, the mine owner, hears of the disaster, he phones first his accountant, then his lawyer.

Gold mines feature in *Night Birds* – in Burkina Faso, Romania, Finland. Sweatman says, "Mining at Roşia Montană, Romania, has been going on since the beginning of the first millennium. This collusion of forces, and the epic time span, inspired *Night Birds*. The novel is cast in the near future. Now the climate crisis is gathering force, upending us, a judgment on our blindness and aggression."

Gold brings greed. Farrar, a foundry owner, has benefited from the practice of hawala, an ancient way of transferring money between people, without banks. The primary link is trust, and Farrar never asks the question: Where does the money come from?

"If hawala is corrupted, it can be a method for money laundering," Sweatman explains. "The extenuation of trust between the characters is personal and fragile. The breach of trust is criminal on one level. More intimately, characters betray their loved ones, caught up in a fatal current."

The concept of *tocado*, "deep time sickness," is important in *Night Birds*. It is a bedrock disruption of the



Margaret Sweatman

body and soul. Those who have been touched, like Farrar's wife Clio, have, as Sweatman explains, "unwillingly gained the almost inhuman knowledge that comes from being plunged into a deep geological past. This impersonal knowledge radically alters a person's sense of identity."

One of the main characters, Mark, the financier who arranges Farrar's loans, is an ambiguous impersonal figure. It is he who suggests that Farrar invest in the Romanian mine, but also he who provides a sanctuary at Five Towers for several people connected to those who have angered Zugravi.

All the characters are drawn with such subtlety that their true motivations only slowly become evident. And often their true motivations are not known to themselves.

Sweatman's research was meticulous. "When I first

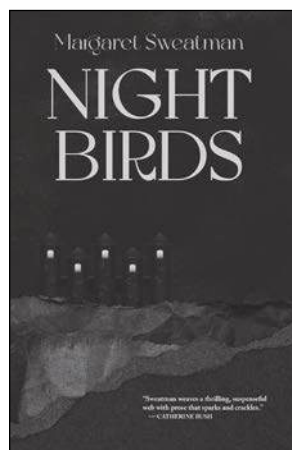
began research for this novel, I pawed through handbooks on rocks and minerals and tried to understand books about geology," she says. "I found wonderful field guides and read brilliantly written and researched books. This material is marvellous. The world is a marvel.

"And thanks to the miracle of YouTube, we can watch obsessive blacksmiths and metallurgists handling molten metal in their garages."

The title connects to various levels of the novel, Sweatman says. "The characters in my novel have an abstract affinity with birds that sing and hunt at night. Nighthawks, whippoorwills, owls, loons – I love their acute hearing, their

night vision, their mystery.

"Much of the action of this novel is at night, in darkness, as in a mine. The story's elements are underground – money laundering and mining – and in the psyche, the dreaming mind, the impulses that might not surface into full cognition. The characters are private people, they keep secrets." ✍



Quest follows clues left in a story told in an attempt to evade death

Main character isn't a reliable guide, but he may be a fascinating one, Thomas Trofimuk hopes

by David Jón Fuller

SAUDADE

Thomas Trofimuk

NeWest Press

\$23.95 pb, 320 pages

ISBN: 978-1-77439-132-7

Available as an ebook

Can telling stories help us outrun death – or at least assuage our fear of it? In Thomas Trofimuk's new novel, *Saudade*, the main character certainly hopes so.

Saudade is the award-winning author's sixth novel. Its title is a Portuguese word meaning, says Trofimuk, "a nostalgic longing to be near again to something or someone that is distant, or that has been loved and then lost; the love that remains."

In it, Bruce and his wife, Pilar, who loves telling long, convoluted stories, are on vacation in Mâcon, France. Bruce is haunted by a fear of death, as if it's lurking nearby.

Pilar asserts that if he can hide in a story long and complicated enough, death won't be able to find him. So she tells him such a tale – and then disappears. Bruce must decide whether to call the authorities or to try to find her himself, following clues left in the tale she spun for him.

Fans of Italo Calvino's *If On a Winter's Night a Traveller* will appreciate the tangents and narrative reframing that Trofimuk builds into Pilar's story, and Bruce's quest to find the people in it as he follows Pilar's trail. At one point Bruce even travels to the

Italian author's hometown of Sanremo.

"Calvino plays a role simply because he is a favourite of mine," says Trofimuk, "His playfulness. His fearlessness. His elegant intelligence."

Bruce misses Pilar, infusing the novel with *saudade*, but Trofimuk keeps a light touch given the prospect of outrunning the inevitable. "It was fun to take a simple story: a man leaves his lover in bed and goes to the hotel's restaurant for his morning coffee. And then digress, and shift, and dance, and find abstract storylines that swerve wildly – as if Death were chasing me."

As for that notion – can we really defy death through the stories we share? – Trofimuk says he's fascinated by the tales everyone has, and he's always open to hearing new ones. They all have something to reveal, he says, whether they are simple or complex.

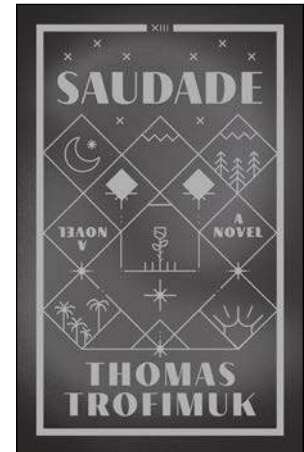
Bruce's quest takes him to Lyons, Palm Springs, Seattle, Lake Louise, and Sanremo (all places, except for the last, that Edmonton-based Trofimuk has visited himself). The reader is drawn into Bruce's obsession that Pilar is leaving clues for him.

"We're with him as he goes on this journey," says Trofimuk. "Is he a reliable guide? Probably not. Is he a fascinating guide? I'll let readers have the final say on that."

Bruce's experience of literally following Pilar's story does lead him to answers, surprising though they may be, and he is ultimately changed by the experience. Maybe that's just the elegant power of narrative – in fiction, and in our own lives.

"One of the most beautiful and original and intimate things we can do for each other is tell stories," Trofimuk says; and maybe, in adding his own take on them, the novel can spark a discussion about how we interact with each other, what we share with our fellow humans.

"Wouldn't it be amazing if we started to shut off our social media accounts and instead, met in cafés or wine bars and told each other stories?" 🌿



JANINE ROSE PHOTOGRAPHY

"Is he a reliable guide? Probably not. Is he a fascinating guide? I'll let readers have the final say on that."

THOMAS TROFIMUK

Debut informed by love of theatre, except this venue comes with a ghost

David Jón Fuller weaves stage directions into narrative starring neophyte theatre owner

by Ian Goodwillie

VENUE 13:
A Novel in Five Acts

David Jón Fuller
Ravenstone Press-Turnstone Press
\$23.95 pb, 300 pages
ISBN: 978-0-88801-810-6

Dreams can take many forms, and manifest in a variety of ways. Some people want to play in the NHL, while others want to see their first release on the shelves of their favourite bookstore. For Robert Laliberte, his dream was to be a stage actor and run his own venue in Winnipeg.

He just didn't plan on a ghost being part of the equation.

That's the core of the story that plays out in David Jón Fuller's debut book, *Venue 13: A Novel in Five Acts*, a narrative complete with stage directions to punctuate the action.

A veteran of Winnipeg's robust theatre scene going back to 1991, Fuller is particularly well suited to tell a story like this. "I would say my Fringe experience, both as a star-struck theatregoer right out of high school, as well as an actor struggling to write and perform in shows or get cast in Fringe plays, had a huge impact on me, both as a performer and as a writer."

But the impact of the live theatre on this novel, and Fuller's life, goes beyond that, giving him valuable insights into human nature. "You see the best and the worst of people," he says. "You form tight bonds, and you have to trust your fellow actors, night after night. All of that went into *Venue 13*."

His main character, Robert, is on a mission to transition from working as an actor and restaurant server to owning and operating a bring-your-own-venue space.

"He wants to give performers who didn't make it into the regular Summer Theatre Festival (a.k.a.

Skeeter Fest) venues a shot at success – and the roar of the crowd," says Fuller. One of these performers includes Robert's ex-girlfriend, which raises the stakes a bit, making him extra keen to prove himself.

Unfortunately, Robert has to contend with an unruly ghost named Henry, who haunts the space and who has his own motives. "Henry wants to be free, but isn't sure how to achieve that," explains Fuller. "He thinks he knows – by forcing the building to fall into such a state of disrepair it will be torn down."

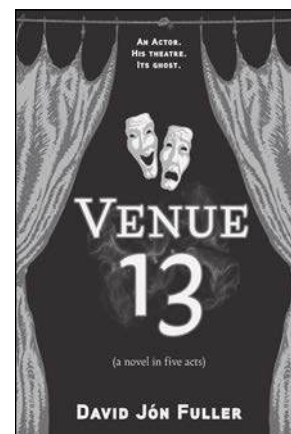
The last thing a neophyte theatre owner needs is a phantasm of some kind trying to bring the building down around him.

Fuller's years of experience in and around the Winnipeg theatre scene have naturally formed the basis for the world he has created. That being said, the key locations and people in the book are all fictional, though he worked quite hard to represent the real Winnipeg in a positive light, which shines through in, for example, the portrayals of the heritage buildings and the lively restaurant scene.

The bigger concern is whether Fuller has had any paranormal experiences of his own inside a Winnipeg theatre.

"Yes, my experiences as an actor definitely inform the story, and Robert's love of theatre," he says.

"But I can't say I have actually experienced a haunting or a ghost sighting. Some actors I have worked with, though, have, so you never know ..." ✍



"But I can't say I have actually experienced a haunting or a ghost sighting. Some actors I have worked with, though, have, so you never know ..." DAVID JÓN FULLER

Social commentary mixes with speculative fiction in short story collection

Dania Idriss's 5 takes feature young women at important moments in Lebanon's history

by Bev Sandell Greenberg

TALES OF THE MOUNTAINS AND THE SEA

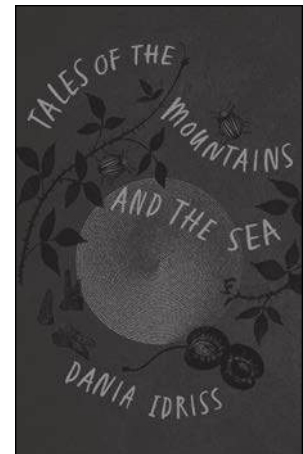
Dania Idriss

Freehand Books

\$22.95 pb, 160 pages

ISBN: 978-1-997534-17-4

Available as an ebook



Storytelling is a very Lebanese way to deal with often traumatic memories and realities,” says Lebanese Canadian author Dania Idriss about her urgent and visceral debut short fiction collection, *Tales of the Mountains and the Sea*.

Idriss is currently a doctoral student in the English department at the University of Calgary. She first wrote this collection as her master’s thesis.

Each of the five stories is deeply rooted in Idriss’s culture and history. “I know the issues I address aren’t unique to Lebanon,” she says. “However, as a Lebanese Muslim woman, that is the perspective I have when trying to work through issues of gender, sexuality, and colonialism.”

The stories feature marginalized young women at important moments in Lebanon’s history. In “The Brass Bowl,” the teenage protagonist struggles amid the aftermath of giving birth to a child out of wedlock.

In mourning her grandmother, the young heroine in “The Muslin Shroud” is convinced that her grandmother’s spirit has invaded her body. Amid the backdrop of civil war, the young woman in “What We Do When No One Is Watching” fears that her younger brother is getting involved with the wrong crowd.

According to Idriss, all the stories are autobiographical to some extent.

“A lot of the tales draw on oral folk stories and memories I heard growing up,” she says. “They are conglomerations of some real people and events from my

family. However, none of the characters is one person, though they take interesting bits from lots of people.”

In addition, the tales include paranormal elements, for Idriss’s favourite genre is speculative fiction.

“The politics and histories of the Middle East are so heavy, and I began unpacking those dense topics through fiction,” she says. “I had a hard time finding the combination of social commentary and speculative fiction that I loved seeing in South American lit, so I wrote what I most wanted to read.”

In terms of her protagonists, Idriss is most drawn to Dab’a from “A Pouch of Hair and Bone” and Huda from “The Muslin Shroud.”

“Huda is a lot like me personality-wise – quiet and outwardly obedient, but always anxious and scheming,” she says. “Dab’a is my favourite character – I love a feral child.”

Idriss notes that her family moved to Canada near the end of the Lebanese civil war; however, they never actually talk about the war. “Family members will drop little pieces of lore while telling stories about something else entirely,” she says. “These are often funny stories about their childhoods with the war constantly raging at the periphery.”

Idriss wrote these stories because she felt compelled to, and she hopes they will hold some meaning for readers.

“I want people to view us Arabs as complex human beings,” she emphasizes. “I also want people to think critically and empathetically about the conflicts in the Middle East that dominate Western news cycles.”

On a final note, Idriss says, “I would like to convey that Arabs, specifically Arab women, have agency and individuality.”



RAYANE SABRAGH

“I also want people to think critically and empathetically about the conflicts in the Middle East that dominate Western news cycles.” DANIA IDRISSE

MORE FICTION

SHORT FICTION

DEAR HUMANS

Hollie Adams

Thirteen quirky and sometimes surreal stories feature a variety of characters – a woman growing a horn on her forehead, teen neighbours dealing with the awkwardness of death, a group of friends trying to make a sasquatch documentary over 50 years, married couples with their challenges, and young adults trying to make use of their education – to explore what makes us human in this engaging and contemporary collection.

(NeWest Press, \$23.95 pb, 300 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77439-140-2, available as ebook)

EARTHEN

Katherine Koller

These 20 short stories explore bonds between mothers and children, friends, classmates, casual acquaintances on park benches, neighbours, and spouses; human relationships with animals and nature; and violence against women, especially in northern Alberta towns. The genres range from realistic to speculative to historical to fable/fairy tale, and the narrators include a tree and an animal along with various humans in this engaging collection.

(Enfield & Wizenty-Great Plains Press, \$22.95 pb, 192 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77337-151-1)

THE LIBRARY COSMIC

Ben Berman Ghan

Moving through time, space, and the written word, and hearing from ghosts to golems to far-future AIs, these magical and compelling stories consider the mysteries of life and ask the big questions: What gives a being its soul? What are the boundaries of love? How will libraries save us all?

(Wolsak & Wynn Publishers, \$24.00 pb, 248 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998408-41-2)

LIKE A RIVER DIVIDES THE EARTH

Dora Dueck

Simply luminous in their discernment and precision, the five stories in this collection explore complicated family tensions and misunderstandings, and complex

ideas of faith and love. Ranging from the contemporary to the historical, from England and British Columbia to Russia and Germany to Brazil, the stories follow thoughtful and perceptive characters, some on the verge of adulthood and others at the end of life, but all living and contemplating lives of both estrangement and connection.

(Freehand Books, \$22.95 pb, 180 pages, ISBN: 978-1-997534-20-4)

MIND THE GAP

Alice Zorn

Whether on vacation or on a quest, the young and middle-aged women and men in this collection of seven stories and one novella, are away from home – in Texas and Tunisia, in Morocco and Mexico, in England and Austria, and in rural Quebec. They discover new parts of themselves as they uncover hidden truths, connect with new people, and/or realize their dreams.

(NeWest Press, \$23.95 pb, 400 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77439-134-1, available as ebook)

ONE SUNDAY WITHOUT DESIRE

CJ Frey

Almost hallucinatory and very compelling, this allegorical novella explores love, grief, and memory as it follows two sisters travelling through Europe, ending up in a plague-infested hotel, where the narrator nurses her sister until she dies.

(Inanna Publications, \$22.95 pb, 100 pages, ISBN: 978-1-83421-015-5)

TOAST FOR TWO TONGUES

Gisèle Villeneuve

The nine stories in this contribution to Far Ouest literature (that is, literature by Francophones west of St. Boniface) portray Prairie lives on the margins, in the in-between areas that overlap and mix French and English languages, cultures, and even gestures.

(University of Alberta Press, \$22.99 pb, 134 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-831-4, available as ebook)

NOVELS

AGE OF SILENCE

Alaa Al-Musalli

This family saga and anti-war tribute to mothers in war zones is based on real events in Baghdad during the Iraqi-Iranian War and the Gulf War. The novel follows Bedria, telling how she struggles to keep her family together while a son is missing in battle and a huge fortune is tearing her family apart.

(At Bay Press, \$34.95 hc, 352 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998779-98-7)

BENEFICIARY

JoAnn McCaig

Moving back and forth in time, Seren, now wealthy, looks back on the past 50 years of her life and the choices she made, starting with resisting the notion of mindlessly going out with her high school boyfriend, and on through living in communal houses on Vancouver Island through marriage, motherhood, and divorce – all the while living her life on her own terms. (University of Calgary Press, 216 pages, \$52.99 hc, ISBN: 978-1-77385-677-3; \$28.99 pb, ISBN: 978-1-77385-678-0; available as ebook)

BEYOND THE DARK FOREST

I. D. Russell

Every year, people seek the wilderness experience at Rock Peak Lake, deep in the Whiteshell area. But this year, no one – not a retired police officer, not a rock star, not an influencer, or even an experienced outdoorsman – is safe from what lurks in the forest.

(Ringo Jones Productions, \$17.00 pb, 354 pages, ISBN: 978-1-988383-46-0, available as ebook)

THE BROKEN DETECTIVE

Joel Nedecky

Jake Joelsen has two weeks to put together enough money to support his mother while he does what he hopes is only an 18-month sentence in jail. Selling his truck isn't enough – he needs a well-paying client and a minor miracle. Luckily, Nia Rowe is willing to hire him, even though he no longer has his private investigator licence, to find her missing sister. His initial inquiries indicate the Watershed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Moments cult may have something to do with her disappearance.

(Run Amok Crime, \$32.99 pb, 272 pages, ISBN: 978-8-9904851-3-6)

THE CHAMBERMAID'S KEY

Genevieve Graham

Set at the elegant Dominion Hotel in Toronto, this dual-timeline novel follows Rosie Ryan, a young chambermaid in 1929, who hopes to find a better life with the charming waiter Damien until a friend is murdered, and city building inspector Bridget Kelly in the present day, who is assigned to check out the recent renovations, uncovers clues to a decades-old murder, and finds herself in danger as a result.

(Simon & Schuster Canada, \$25.99 pb, 400 pages, ISBN: 978-1-6682-0342-2, available as ebook and audiobook)

DIONISION LIFE

C. C. Benison

This delightful and witty romantic comedy follows Evan Boone, a gay chef who has moved to a Gulf island to recover from a breakup and job loss by working with his best friend, Lin, who owns a bed and breakfast aspiring to be an inn. Filled with eccentric folks and surprises around every corner, this novel explores friendship, chosen family, second chances, and love.

(At Bay Press, \$24.95 pb, 352 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998779-94-9)

THE FALSE CREEK MURDER, AN INSPECTOR COSWELL MYSTERY

Roy Innes

The latest intricate police procedural in the Inspector Coswell mystery series spotlights Sergeant Janet Bostock, who is made leader of the narcotics squad after a young constable is killed under suspicious circumstances, and who must work together with Coswell, head of the homicide division, and the Vancouver police to solve what turns into multiple murders that are entwined with the drug trade.

(NeWest Press, \$23.95 pb, 392 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77439-138-9, available as ebook)

GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE, THE DOWNLOADED 2

Robert J. Sawyer

This followup to *The Downloaded* sees ex-convict Roscoe Koudoulian and Captain Letitia Garvey and her starship crew re-uploading their consciousnesses into cyberspace. In that digital realm, Rosco is confronted by someone he thought was long dead, and the astronauts face younger versions of themselves whose continued existence could destroy the human race.

(Shadowpaw Press, \$22.99 pb, 260 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998273-56-0, available as ebook)

HOVEL

Ailsa Ross

The narrator of this poetic and sensuous debut novel moves fluidly among *you, I, and we*, and among places and times, as she tells of her current life in a ski town in Alberta with her husband, her growing up in Scotland, and other people's stories. All the while, she longs for something more, something she thinks the past holds, some way to feel her ancestors moving through her.

(Strange Light-PRH, \$36.00 hc, 352 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7710-1348-5, available as ebook and audiobook)

THE INFINITE SADNESS OF SMALL APPLIANCES

Glenn Dixon

Set in the near future, this touching and original novel follows Scout, a sentient robotic vacuum, who joins with her fellow sentient appliances and a few humans to save Harold and his home from the omnipresent and all-controlling Grid.

(HarperCollins Canada, \$23.99 pb, 272 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4434-7546-4, available as ebook)

INHERITANCE

Jane Park

This beautifully rendered debut novel explores the immigration experience and intergenerational trauma through the story of Anne Kim, a successful lawyer in New York, who returns to Edmonton when her father dies. Dealing with her family and Korean community brings back memories of her childhood in Edmonton and in Crow Plains, a small Alberta town where her family ran a grocery

store. To add to the emotional turmoil, going through her father's papers, Anne finds letters that reveal a past she didn't know he had.

(House of Anansi Press, \$26.99 pb, 352 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4870-1399-8, available as ebook)

THE LAUNDRYMAN

Dwayne Brenna

Set in the winter of 1893 to 1894 in Prince Albert, this detective story is told by surgeon and RCMP officer Virgil Montgomery, as he assists (and keeps an eye on) Corporal Belvedere, who is brought in to investigate the murder of Mr. Chen, the laundryman. More violence follows in this town of prejudice and secrecy, and Montgomery and Belvedere get mired more deeply in it as they search for the truth.

(Shadowpaw Press, \$26.99 pb, 284 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998273-52-2, available as ebook and audiobook)

MARMALADE PARADE

M. C. Joudrey

This David Lynchish exploration of memory and nostalgia brings together a first-person narrator who remembers almost nothing and his host, a man obsessed with memory but ill and afraid of losing it. A fascinating three-part structure – a first-person narrative, an auction catalogue of objects, and fragments of investigator dialogue about the paperwork done to wrap things up – makes for a highly original novel.

(Guernica Editions, \$22.95 pb, 240 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77849-043-9, available as ebook)

POLITICAL SUICIDE, RIVER CITY HELL, BOOK 3

I. D. Russell

This third horror novel in the River City Hell series follows Samantha Abraham, as she tries to fight an organization known as The Authority, whose corruption is spreading beyond the music industry and professional hockey, to now exert its power on the university campus, the police force, and even the political network of Ottawa.

(Ringo Jones Productions, \$17.00 pb, 400 pages, ISBN: 978-1-988383-43-9, available as ebook)

SINNER'S BANQUET

Randy Nikkel Schroeder

Luke Falk, a drug dealer/user and petty criminal, moves his dealings from Vancouver, where things are getting complicated, to his home town, a small Mennonite place just outside of Lethbridge, Alberta, where religious and moral codes barely hide an underworld of crime and most unworthy motives.

(NeWest Press, \$23.95 pb, 350 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77439-1365, available as ebook)

SON OF NOBODY

Yann Martel

A recreation of the Trojan War, this striking novel tells the story of Harlow Donne, a Canadian scholar studying at Oxford, who discovers and pieces together fragments of a lost epic that, unlike Homer's *Iliad*, recounts the war from a commoner's perspective. The fragments appear in epic-style verse, and Harlow's story of what he makes of them – and at what price – is told in the footnotes, addressed to his daughter, Helen.

(Knopf Canada-PRH, \$36.95 hc, 352 pages, ISBN: 978-1-0390-0150-3, available as ebook and audiobook)

THOSE ARE PEARLS

André Narbonne

From the Boer War in 1895 to the Great Flood of 1950 in Winnipeg, this intergenerational story moves back and forth through time and across oceans as it explores the ebbs and flows of love amid major events such as the First World War, the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, and the Great Depression.

(Palimpsest Press, \$21.95 pb, 200 pages, ISBN: 978-1-997508-17-5)

THREE BENGAL KITTENS, A DR. BANNERMAN VET MYSTERY

Philipp Schott

In this fourth Dr. Bannerman Vet Mystery, the action shifts to Winnipeg, where Peter's brother, Sam, lives. After Sam's neighbour in his North End apartment is murdered, Sam takes in his three kittens and calls on Peter and his sniffer dog Pippin to help find one who escapes. But Peter has to help with a lot more when

Sam is arrested and charged with his neighbour's murder.

(ECW Press, \$24.95 pb, 256 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77041-861-5, available as ebook)

TRENT: THE DEVIL'S DETECTIVE

Travis Walters

Trent is a slacker with no direction in life and no money, but when his devil-may-care ways land him in trouble with an actual devil, he finally has a purpose – to be a detective. This parodic horror novel follows Trent as he tries to solve the case despite government agents, religious zealots, a zombie-infested pawnshop, and, of course, the rock star devil called Lightbringer. Can Trent grow up in time to save the world?

(Pearl Place Publishing, \$18.99 pb, 278 pages, ISBN: 978-1-7390388-30, available as ebook)

VILLAIN HITTING FOR VICIOUS LITTLE NOBODIES

Lindsay Wong

Wong's debut horror novel draws on the horrific ancient Chinese practices and beliefs of corpse brides and villain hitters (women who specialize in curses) to explore ambition, privilege, and choicelessness. The engaging narrative moves back and forth in time to tell the story of Locinda, a present-day corpse bride, and her grandmother, a most vicious villain hitter.

(Penguin Canada-PRH, \$27.95 pb, 384 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7352-4241-8, available as ebook and audiobook)

WELCOME TO SUNNY TOWN

Théodora Armstrong

This debut novel follows narrator Maggie, an art student with no sense of purpose or direction, who decides to escape her relationship with her married professor and join her talented friend Jamie in Japan, where he is teaching English. She quickly gets a similar job and becomes enmeshed in his group of friends. But is she there to find herself or to disappear?

(Freehand Books, \$24.95 pb, 396 pages, ISBN: 978-1-997534-11-2)

GRAPHIC NOVELS AND ILLUSTRATED FICTION

AFTERLIFE-TIME EMPLOYMENT, HELL, INC.

Jeff Martin

Doug is a lowly office demon, working a soul-crushing job at Hell Inc., trying to start up an office romance, often running afoul of his boss, and now in charge of a new intern who is freshly deceased and understandably terrified in this collection of 300 comic strips from the popular webcomic *Hell Inc.* Also included are six new comic stories.

(Renegade Arts Entertainment Ltd., \$29.99 pb, 176 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998489-92-3)

ALL THE PEOPLE IN MY HEAD

George Toles, illustrated by Robert Fleming

In this latest collection of mini-narratives combined with abstract artwork, Toles tackles issues related to climate change, politics, relationships, death, and sex, with his characteristic wry humour.

(At Bay Press, \$26.95 pb, 120 pages, ISBN: 978-1-988779-93-2)

GRANDE PRAIRIE WITH AN E, MODERN ASIAN FAMILY 2

Stefano Jun

The second collection in this charming series of comics about Jun's life, family, and culture focuses on growing up in Grande Prairie, Alberta, and includes plenty of food and fun comparisons between Canadian and Korean culture.

(Renegade Arts Entertainment Ltd., \$19.99 pb, 104 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998489-79-4)

KNIGHT TERROR

George Michail and Andrew Buckley, illustrated by Vinz el Tabanas

In the style of 1980s American horror movies, this murder mystery graphic novel takes place at a secluded campground where a startup company is holding a team-building retreat. Things get scary pretty quickly when the company's mascot goes on a killing spree.

(Renegade Arts Entertainment Ltd., \$25.00 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998489-41-1)

50 years after his first book, Patrick Friesen is still seeing the world poetically

Working with CMU Press marks return to Mennonite, Manitoban roots

by Ariel Gordon

SIGHTINGS

Patrick Friesen
 CMU Press
 \$24.00 pb, 120 pages
 ISBN: 978-1-987986-29-7

In 1976, Patrick Friesen’s first book of poetry, *the lands i am*, was published. Five decades and 19 books later, his latest collection, *Sightings*, is now available.

“It’s exactly 50 years since my first book with a Manitoba publisher, Turnstone,” says Friesen, who grew up in Steinbach and lived in Winnipeg for 30 years before moving to British Columbia in 1996. “I thought it a good idea to return to a Manitoba publisher, and also come back, in a way, to my roots by going to a Mennonite publisher, CMU Press.”

Friesen had seen some of CMU Press’s recent titles and liked the feel of them.

“Publisher Sue Sorensen is a very sharp reader of poetry; she spotted things I hadn’t noticed. The whole process of working with an outside editor, Nathan Dueck, and with Sue as both copy editor and publisher, went extremely well. They didn’t impose their poetics. That can be a problem with some editors/publishers.”

Friesen refers to Dueck as the outside editor because Friesen’s resident editor is his wife, Eve Joseph, the author of four books of poetry, including her latest, *Dismantling*.

“Eve is an invaluable editor for me,” Friesen says. “She has a reputation of being Atilla the Editor with her friends. She zeroes in on technical difficulties and is amazing at entering the ‘feel’ of a poem, critically. She understands the whole of a poem and sees where problems lurk.”

Friesen enjoyed working with Dueck, himself a Mennonite poet who moved from Manitoba to B.C.

“His poetry is very different from mine, and I liked that,” says Friesen. “What I wanted was for his sharp intelligence to offer me a ‘take’ on poems, how they felt overall. I didn’t



ask for close editing. He read quickly and responded with very valuable insights almost overnight.”

And while he has been publishing poetry for 50 years, Friesen can trace his roots in poetry even further back, into his earliest childhood.

“Poetry has been with me my whole life,” he says. “Not written in childhood, but experienced. I believe most children, if they’re fortunate in their environments, experience the physical world

“I believe most children, if they’re fortunate in their environments, experience the physical world poetically, with immediacy.” PATRICK FRIESEN



poetically, with immediacy. That usually vanishes as they grow older for various reasons. In some it doesn’t. It didn’t with me.”

Friesen was deeply influenced by his mother Margaret Sawatzky Friesen, who wrote poetry, sang, and played piano.

“She saw the world poetically, and she didn’t have to teach me that,” he notes. “I saw it in her, heard it. She sometimes wrote poetry; I still have one of her poems. She sang a lot, in every room of the house, and sometimes as a soloist in church. There was non-stop music.”

Eventually, the form Friesen’s poetic approach took was words. But he has continued to be influenced by music and to collaborate with musicians, including his son, Niko, and

jazz pianist Marilyn Lerner.

Over the years, Friesen has developed methods of invigorating his poetic practice.

“I have sometimes spent a month or more trying to write a good haiku,” he says. “It has never worked, but I returned to my usual poetry with a different slant, a greater feel for precision and surprise.”

Lyric, erasure poems document personal human cost of Japanese Canadian internment

Kevin Irie highlights indignities of history that echo in anti-migrant sentiment today

by Melanie Dennis Unrau

EVACUATIONS

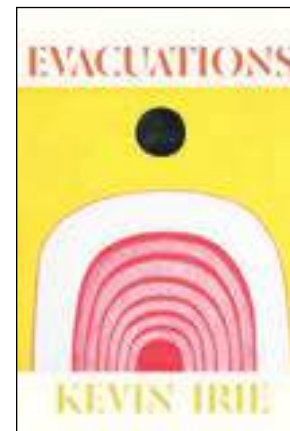
Kevin Irie

University of Alberta Press

\$19.99 pb, 104 pages

ISBN: 978-1-77212-853-6

Available as an ebook



Irie uses evacuation as a method to make erasure poems influenced by Kogawa and queer Nisga'a writer Jordan Abel.

"When Abel's *Injun* won the Griffin Poetry Prize, the jury cited how he evacuates original texts, but for me, the word *evacuate* recalls Kogawa's poem," Irie says.

Racist government source texts are exposed, subverted, and transformed in several poems that move between "evacuation" and "official version," or "whitewash" and "blackout." Evacuations of shocking government edicts from the 1940s are followed by a series using contemporary sources about so-called invasive plant species.

"While researching what kind of food the internees ate while interned in the Rockies, I looked up the local vegetation, and I realized how the botanical description of invasive species in B.C. used the same phrases and terminology that were applied to Japanese Canadians at that time," Irie explains.

These erasure-evacuations become linked to other evacuations in the lyric poems, like the wooden chain in "A Carving from Solsqua Road Camp, 1942" (*my father's concrete poem*) made in a forced-labour work camp (*a place he never mentioned*).

The effect of Irie's tender, historical, and all-too-timely poems is gutting, revealing both the indignity of being called an "Enemy Alien" in one's own home and the persistent racism and anti-migrant sentiment in Canada today.

The law forbidding Japanese Canadians from returning to coastal British Columbia and compelling them to choose between deportation and moving "East of the Rockies" was, as Irie notes, "a government law that affected generations. It explains why I was born in Toronto, not Vancouver. Growing up, I used to wonder why all Japanese Canadians in Toronto seemed to know each other. They had all come through the internment.

"They *knew* what no other group of Canadians had to know, and hopefully, never will." 🍃

Toronto poet Kevin Irie credits Joy Kogawa as an inspiration for his seventh collection, *Evacuations*, about the internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War.

"Rereading her poems about the internment struck me more forcibly now because so many who were interned, including family and their friends, have passed away," he says.

"The fact that Kogawa's family and mine were interned at Slocan, British Columbia, always made her novel *Obasan* and her poems feel much more personal to me. I grew up hearing about those places."

Evacuations begins with "On Reading Joy Kogawa," an homage to Kogawa's "What Do I Remember of the Evacuation," which recalls a child's-eye view of evacuation and the cruel, inexplicable acts of racism that the adults in her life try but fail to fully shelter her from.

In Irie's poem, those who experienced evacuation first-hand, including his own parents, are growing old and passing away, while racist taunts on the streets of contemporary Toronto are signs of the enduring afterlives and reverberations of internment.

The title of the next poem, "What Do I Remember (Hearing) of the Evacuation," another homage, suggests that the remembering/hearing documented in *Evacuations* is a combination of family history, research and research-creation, and lived experience.

The poems in *Evacuations* take a variety of forms; as Irie describes, "The lyric poems show the personal human cost of the sweeping government edicts in the erasure poems."



Kevin Irie

These poems wouldn't exist without Wikipedia, but writing them felt liberating

Kyle Flemmer hopes to 'bring the fringes of experimental poetic form to the people'

by Ariel Gordon

THE WIKI OF BABEL

Kyle Flemmer

University of Calgary Press

144 pages

\$49.99 hc, ISBN: 978-1-77385-673-5

\$29.99 pb, ISBN: 978-1-77385-674-2

Available as an ebook

Kyle Flemmer is a Calgary-based writer, publisher, and digital media artist. So far, he has not risen to the notability standard set by *Wikipedia*.

But his third poetry collection may change all that. While Flemmer was inspired by work by Jorge Luis Borges and John Cage, and by Oulipo's literary experiments, *Wikipedia* was a critical text for *The Wiki of Babel*.

"The entirety of my book has been copied and pasted directly from *Wikipedia* articles; these poems simply could not exist without it," Flemmer says, noting that he has been using the online encyclopedia almost daily for the last two decades.

The techniques Flemmer was using to build his poems weren't new, but the way he was using them was.

"The Oulipo movement, founded in the 1960s and which produced imaginative writing under abstract restrictions, was very much rooted in print culture," Flemmer notes.

"The N+7 technique I have adapted to my purposes originally required the selection of two print books, a dictionary and a source text to modify. It assumed a fixed, linear organization of source texts and imposed

a set of rules to reorganize those texts to produce new ones."

But that's not how online encyclopedias work: instead of alphabetically arranged entries on subsequent pages, they use hypertext links to combine linear texts with a multitude of other linear texts.



SARAH THOMAS

Flemmer says that's a "fundamental ingredient" separating digital texts from print ones and that by combining the two, he was able to take a reverent look back while trying something original and surprising.

And while writing *The Wiki of Babel* was interesting formally, it also helped Flemmer loosen up as a writer.

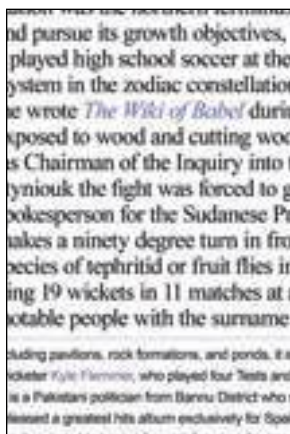
"My goal for this book was to shake up my creative practice by circumventing the obsessive need to control every single word." KYLE FLEMMER

"My goal for this book was to shake up my creative practice by circumventing the obsessive need to control every single word," he notes. "My second book, *Supergiants*, took a decade to write, and I still agonize over particular word choices and rhythms."

By contrast, *The Wiki of Babel* only took a couple of months to draft.

"Its writing felt automatic and fun, like a well-rehearsed gymnastic routine set deep in my muscle memory, but without any of that pesky rehearsal," Flemmer says. "It was liberating and validating to let these poems unfold with minimal guidance."

The Wiki of Babel also benefited from the input of editor Helen Hajnoczky, whom Flemmer had known for almost a decade before they worked on this book.



“She balanced a reassuring appreciation for my vision with a keen sense of my blind spots and a sensitivity for the needs of my potential readership,” Flemmer says.

“It is a rare treat to have an editor who is all things: a good friend, a perceptive editor, a talented poet, and an industry ally. Perhaps it breaches professional decorum to say this, but Helen is a sister to me, and I could

not be happier with her involvement in this book.”

While he is humble in acknowledging his influences, Flemmer isn't immune to questions of notability.

“On a more public level,” he says, “I hope this book continues the overall trajectory of my work, which is to bring the fringes of experimental poetic form to the people in a way that feels more inviting than forbidding.”

“It was liberating and validating to let these poems unfold with minimal guidance.”

KYLE FLEMMER

MORE POETRY

BABA YAGA AND THE GIRL WHO ATE THE ROPE

Kate Rogers

The Slavic witch Baba Yaga, who can be seen as both matriarch and mirror, is the inspiration behind these incantatory poems that reimagine family, folklore, and climate grief. An aging mother is forgetful and filled with rage, but still works to protect the ecosystem in this frightening yet humane book.

(Frontenac House Poetry, \$22.95 pb, 80 pages, ISBN: 978-1-997580-12-6, available as ebook)

BLACK PASSPORT

Paul Akpomuje

An archive of radical remembering and a vivid portrayal of hope, dreams, and resilience, this debut collection explores the complexities of identity and home, and brings into view the everyday textures of space, movement, and memory as experienced by Black African migrants navigating immigration offices, airports, cities, and classrooms.

(Griots Lounge, \$22.99 pb, 102 pages, ISBN: 978-1-0698034-0-5)

THE BLUE GATE

Kathryn MacDonald

Love and loss, and what one does to live with them, are explored in this collection of nature, ekphrastic, and travel poems. After the death of her partner, the speaker accepts an invitation to journey to Kenya, where she experiences life on a small farm,

and where she sinks into the seasons and processes her grief.

(Frontenac House Poetry, \$22.95 pb, 80 pages, ISBN: 978-1-997580-08-9, available as ebook)

BLUE THINKS ITSELF WITHIN ME: LYRIC POETRY, ECOLOGY, AND LICHENOUS FORM

Kim Trainor

Inspired by her reading of poets, theorists, and ecologists, and her activist experience at the Ada'itsx / Fairy Creek blockade to prevent logging of Vancouver Island old growth forests, this book traces Trainor's thinking as a poet, her contemplation of what lyric poetry can do to attune readers to more-than-human life such as the specklebelly lichen, as she works on a book-length eco-poem about Fairy Creek.

(University of Regina Press, \$27.95 pb, 344 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77940-120-5, available as ebook)

DESCÂNTEC FOR MY SPLIT TONGUE

Adriana Oniță

Using the form of a descântec, which is a traditional Romanian ritual – a prayer, spell, incantation – to unravel curses, to protect, and to heal, this mesmerizing debut collection unpacks the culture, memories, and humour found in Romanian words and proverbs to explore a deep longing for a lost mother tongue and homeland and to attempt to fuse the speaker's “split tongue.”

(Palimpsest Press, \$21.95 pb, 104 pages, ISBN: 978-1-997508-11-3)

DRIFTING COWBOY

Robert Currie

These very moving narrative poems in a variety of voices tell the dramatic life story of writer/artist/fraud Will James, a French-Canadian who, as a teen, reinvented himself as a cowboy in the West, and who became a cowboy and cattle thief, a Hollywood stunt man, an artist, a writer, and a celebrity.

(Radiant Press, \$20.00 pb, 80 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998926-41-1)

FIRST LIGHT, LAST LIGHT

Glen Sorestad

The latest collection from Saskatchewan's first poet laureate, now in his 80s, reflects on his long life – his family and friends, some of whom have died, memories of his childhood, often prompted by photographs, lessons learned during the pandemic, and the process of aging – along with the life around him, specifically Prairie birds and red foxes, especially in winter and spring.

(Shadowpaw Press, \$19.99 pb, 148 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998273-46-1, available as ebook)

I WANT TO BE BURIED STANDING UP

Sandra Yuen

Drawing upon 50 years of life experience, these poems ponder the learning gained from pain and illness, and the strength to be found in embracing the present moment.

(At Bay Press, \$24.95 pb, 140 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998779-97-0)

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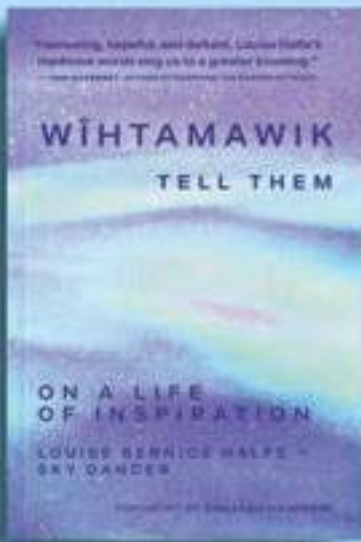
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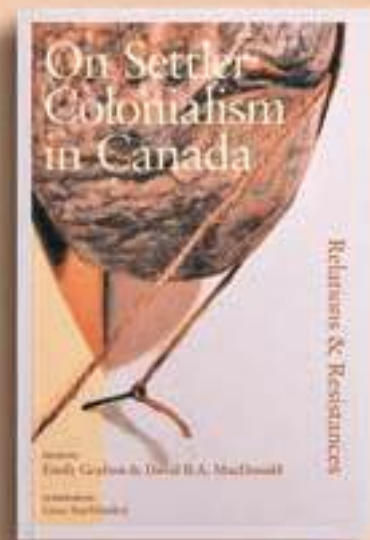
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BRENT VAN STAALKOUIEN

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LOVES OF OUR LIVES: POEMS FOR HOPEFUL HEARTS

Josie Balka

In this second collection, the social media sensation explores six types of love – familial, toxic, and romantic love, love between friends, self-love, and lost love – in this love letter to love itself.

(Simon & Schuster Canada, \$32.99 hc, 160 pages, ISBN: 978-1-6682-2752-7)

MY MOTHER JOINS THE RESISTANCE

Richard Harrison

A companion to Harrison's Governor General Literary Award-winning *On Not Losing My Father's Ashes in the Flood*, his latest collection focuses on the life of his mother – from her childhood during the Second World War until she had terminal cancer and died, choosing MAiD, in 2017. These evocative poems examine both the wounds and the love passed down through a family.

(Wolsak & Wynn Publishers, \$20.00 pb, 88 pages ISBN: 978-1-998408-40-5)

NIGHTHAWKS

Lisa Martin

In sonnets, and ekphrastic, how-to, question, and other lyric poems, this collection traces the losses of wildlife, the disintegration of a marriage, the shifts in friendships and families, and the fragility of health, exquisitely expressing pain and despair, but also hope and love, in images of bird song, coyotes, invasive species, poetry itself (“the white space between stanzas that allows // leaps to occur”), and more.

(University of Alberta Press, \$19.99 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-855-0, available as ebook)

NIGHTSTEAD

David Martin

In both experimental forms – running footnotes exploring memories in questions, split concordance – and traditional forms – sonnet, triolet, and rhyming children's verse – these poignant poems explore memory and elegize Martin's younger brother who died by suicide at age 23. As

he often does, Martin teaches his audience a new way to read.

(Palimpsest Press \$21.95 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-1-99750-805-2, available as ebook)

REAL GROWNUP

Elizabeth Bachinsky

Now a parent herself, the speaker of these crystal-clear poems juxtaposes her mother's stories of her birth and childhood with stories of birthing and raising her own daughter, daring to hope for an easier time, as she looks back on her wild youth, losses, and hard-won recovery with humour and love.

(Nightwood Editions, \$19.95 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88971-496-0, available as ebook)

A SINGLE SYLLABLE OF WILD

Angela Waldie

This exquisite collection of poems explores the resilience of nature and wildlife under threat – forests, mountains, rivers, glaciers, and bears, birds, elk, bison – observing them in the wild, on display in museums and zoos, after forest fires, and during various seasons, especially winter.

(Frontenac House Poetry, \$22.95 pb, 72 pages, ISBN: 978-1-997580-09-6)

STIGMATA

Scott Jackshaw

Breaking the limits of the confessional

– in both the poetic and the religious senses – these poems probe the wounded body, leaking and gushing blood and other fluids, to explore the intimacy and authenticity of queerness, language, and grief.

(Talonbooks, \$19.95 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77201-691-8, available as ebook)

SUBLUNARY

Lisa Richter

The pandemic-tinged poems in this collection portray the deep grief and love related to losing a father, the climate crisis, societal breakdown, and Jewish traditions in ways that are surreal, playful, elegiac, reflective, and forgiving. They are poems that offer “not absolution, but

acknowledgement, / not a soapbox but a touchstone.”

(University of Alberta Press, \$19.99 pb, 88 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-854-3, available as ebook)

WE SURVIVED UNTIL WE COULD LIVE

Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike

These compelling and powerful poems tell the story of a family – the father and mother who survived the Biafra-Nigeria war of 1967 to 1970, and their son who lives with the intergenerational trauma – in their various voices, giving a searing portrayal of the darkest and most vibrant forms that love can take.

(University of Calgary Press, 120 pages, \$44.99 hc, ISBN: 978-1-77385-681-0; \$24.99 pb, ISBN: 978-1-77385-682-7; available as ebook)

WIND & HORSES

Dennis Cooley

Revisiting the world of Sinclair Ross's fiction – rural Saskatchewan during the Great Depression – these poems bring to life that world of wind, dust, baseball, radio, war veterans, disappointments, and Christmas concerts, through Cooley's characteristic use of vernacular, personification, and word play, combined with sensual lyricism.

(At Bay Press, \$24.95 pb, 140 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998779-96-3)

WOUND ARCHIVE

Anna Veprinska

This collection of minimalist poems forms a fragmented archive documenting the wound left by the concurrent ending of a relationship and the beginning of an invisible chronic illness. The poems show how brevity can hold the vastness of ache and how the body can be a vessel for both pain and transcendence.

(Porcupine's Quill-Gordon Hill Press, \$20.00 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77422-176-1)

Drama doesn't shy away from violence, exploring survival during partition of India

Anusree Roy sees history repeating itself, urges audience to engage with world around them

by Luis Reis

TRIDENT MOON

Anusree Roy

Scirocco Drama-JGS Publishing

\$18.95 pb, 120 pages

ISBN: 978-1-990738-88-3

In her foreword to *Trident Moon*, Nina Lee Aquino, the director of the play's 2025 Canadian premiere co-production by Crow's Theatre and National Arts Centre, English Theatre, presents the following proverb: "Until the lion finds a storyteller, the hunter will always be the hero."

Toronto-based playwright Anusree Roy concurs, saying, "So much of history is explored through the male gaze, the hunter, that it's finally time to hear the other side. The side of the hunted."

Trident Moon is an intense, unrelenting drama set during the 1947 partition of India. It involves two pairs of women, each pair with one young daughter. The Hindu group have abducted the Muslim group and have

them captive in a coal truck travelling from the newly created, mostly Muslim, Pakistan to the "new," mostly Hindu and Sikh, India.

The play examines ideas of survival, revenge, women's experience, and shared humanity, amid extreme violence. "Most of the play explores the theme of survival," says

"I love exploring the female gaze, female rage, motherhood, and the complexities of being a woman."

ANUSREE ROY

Roy. "I love exploring the female gaze, female rage, motherhood, and the complexities of being a woman."



Anusree Roy

DAHLIA KATZ

The 90-minute play highlights the experiences of the women caught in the violence. The cramped coal truck is a significant physical setting. "I wanted the characters to be trapped as much as possible," Roy explains.

"But, I also wanted the truck to be moving – with no way out. This was important to me because I wanted to bring the women together while they kept travelling."

Written over a decade ago, the play was first produced in 2016 at London's Finborough Theatre, and in 2018, it was a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Yet, as Roy says, "getting a production in Canada was really difficult. But, I held onto hope, and I am so glad

“It was important to me not to shy away from the horrors that the survivors faced. It was important to me to present it plainly and honestly without any ornamentation.” ANUSREE ROY

I did. Crow’s and NAC have been incredible producing partners.”

Part of the reason for the delay on the part of Canadian theatres may have been the violence that Roy deemed necessary and refused to soften.

“I included the conflict/violence in the play because that is the reality of what women and children faced during the partition,” she explains. “It was important to me to tell the truth. It was important to me not to shy away from the horrors that the survivors faced. It was important to me to present it plainly and honestly without any ornamentation.”

The play was, as director Aquino says, “ahead of its time.” But now seems to be the perfect moment for it to be seen and read.

“Given the horrific political turmoil we are currently in, the play feels deeply relevant at the moment,” says Roy. “What women and children are continuing to experience is very similar to what the characters in the

play are navigating. History is repeating itself!”

By the end of the play, while there is a sense of hope in the shared humanity that the characters experience, Roy also makes sure the characters are telling the audience to pay attention to the world around them.

“Hence, the last line is *Wake up, wake up, wake up*. I want to talk to the audience and invite them to see what’s around them, to *wake up*.” 🌿



“Given the horrific political turmoil we are currently in, the play feels deeply relevant at the moment.” ANUSREE ROY

MORE DRAMA

MAD MADGE

Rose Napoli

Wild and raucous, this play follows Margaret Cavendish, a 17th-century woman who wants to be famous and taken seriously as a writer and thinker, and who goes about achieving her ambitions the only way she knows how, ditching her family to join the court of an unruly queen. (Scirocco Drama-JGS Publishing, \$18.95 pb, 92 pages, ISBN: 978-1-990738-87-6)

PLAYING SHYLOCK

Mark Leiren-Young

This one-person play within a play sees the actor playing Shylock in a production of *The Merchant of Venice* break character at the beginning of the second act to explain and fight against the cancellation

of the play, addressing censorship and accountability, anti-Semitism, and the value of art.

(Scirocco Drama-JGS Publishing, \$18.95 pb, 110 pages, ISBN: 978-1-990738-85-2)

REBELLIOUS BODIES AND RADICAL ACTS: DEAF AND DISABLED ARTISTS RAISE THE CURTAIN ON CRIPPING THE STAGE

Edited by Alex Bulmer and Debbie Patterson

This anthology includes an “irregular magnificence” of essays, scripts, interviews, poetry, and critique by d/Deaf, Disabled, Mad, Chronically ill, and Neurodivergent artists whose work has advanced theatre practice across Canada and Turtle Island. The contributors peel back the curtain on their creative process – how they use their bodies and abilities as the raw material of their craft. The

book not only showcases the innovative work of the artists, but also establishes the community’s cultural value and history, inviting Disabled readers to connect and non-Disabled readers to travel to unfamiliar territory.

(Coach House Books, \$28.95 pb, 256 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55245-513-5, available as accessible ebook)

TABLE FOR TWO

Akosua Amo-Adem

It’s not easy living up to the expectations of a traditional Ghanaian mother, as 35-year-old Abena (Abby) knows all too well. This comedic play follows her in her unsuccessful search for love/ and marriage, and her new understanding of romance, identity, and a good life.

(Scirocco Drama-JGS Publishing, \$18.95 pb, 84 pages, ISBN: 978-1-990738-86-9)

Historic, present-day storylines alternate with Métis woman choosing to pass as white

Title carries deep meaning for Tara Gereaux, reflecting ‘dark times’ in Métis history

by Rowan McCandless

WILD PEOPLE QUIET

Tara Gereaux
Scribner-Simon & Schuster
ISBN: 9781668060568
\$25.99, 304 pages

Writing from Regina on Treaty 4 territory and homeland of the Métis, Tara Gereaux’s *Wild People Quiet* is a remarkable and compelling work of historical fiction.

Wild People Quiet follows the story of a Métis woman named Florence who chooses to leave her family and community behind to embrace her new identity as white. Ultimately, she faces consequences when her past intersects with her present. The novel features two alternating storylines: Florence’s history and her current life.

“Initially, there was only going to be one storyline – that of 1946 – and the past was only going to be fleeting thoughts or memories that surfaced now and again,” Gereaux says.

“However, those memories from the past were too fractal and obscure, and it also became apparent that what happened in the past was key to understanding Florence in the present, her motivations and behaviours, so I took those memories and wrote them out into their own chapters to give them space to breathe.”

The act and craft of beading play an important role in Florence’s life. In Métis culture, beading is central.

“It’s a shared practice that’s used to pass down stories, teachings, and cultural knowledge. It was – and still is – a symbol of sovereignty and a way to show pride.”

We discover Florence has been attuned to the importance of beading since she was a child. She has a

natural talent for it, but stops beading as an adult to pass in a white world. However, this passing comes at a cost.

“For Florence, when we first meet her she’s been living for decades as a white woman, but we see immediately that there’s something wrong. Something’s off. On the surface, everything seems fun – she has a good job, her own house, and very nice things. So many nice things! But we also see that she’s living her life in quite a controlled manner with rigid routines and she’s quite separate from everyone else.”



CHRIS GRAHAM

The title, *Wild People Quiet*, carries deep meaning for the entire book.

“The title of the book comes from a quote from John A. Macdonald.

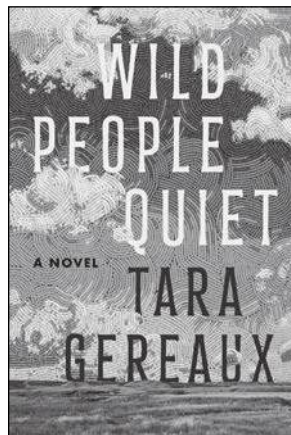
In 1869, he sent his lieutenant governor out to meet with Louis Riel and his men to negotiate the terms for bringing the Prairie territory into the confederation, and he said he thought his lieutenant governor was going to encounter a good deal of trouble and that it was going to require considerable management (on the part of his lieutenant governor) to keep those ‘wild people quiet.’”

“For Florence, when we first meet her she’s been living for decades as a white woman, but we see immediately that there’s something wrong. Something’s off.” TARA GERAUX

Gereaux finds significance in the quote. Historically, it reflects “the dark times” in Métis history.

“Negotiations did not go well, leading to further resistance efforts on the part of the Métis, and battles and deaths, and ultimately resulting in the hanging of Louis Riel.

“Riel’s hanging was said to be for acts of treason, but ultimately it was about silencing Métis resistance, and it was after this that many Métis went underground and hid their Métis identity in order to survive.”



Collection celebrates resilience while confronting ‘heavy load’ of Indigenous history

Poetry, essays, and personal stories from Louise Bernice Halfe – Sky Dancer offer many ways to engage

by Sarah Seroy

WÎHTAMAWIK – TELL THEM:

On a Life of Inspiration

Louise Bernice Halfe – Sky Dancer

University of Regina Press

ISBN: 9781779400840

\$27.95, 288 pages

W*ihitamawik – Tell Them: On a Life of Inspiration* by Louise Bernice Halfe – Sky Dancer is a collection that confronts difficult moments in Canadian history, including residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, racism, and intergenerational trauma. However, it is also a celebration of Indigenous resilience, hope, and cultural reclamation.

“We cannot discount these very important topics that correct the mainstream European history. There has been some increase in understanding Indigenous history, past and present. Indigenous peoples have carried a very heavy load and continue to be scapegoated for the problems and costs attached to colonization. I believe in mutual dialogue so we can all learn compassion, empathy and respect.”

Halfe’s own experiences are intentionally woven into this collection. She writes about how her connection to land, language, and spirituality “fell asleep” during her time in residential school, and describes reconnecting with these aspects later in life.

“I returned to the dream place and lived among my people in Kootenay Plains in Alberta during my early twenties. We lived in tipis and tents, lived off the land, and spoke freely with our mother tongue. It was a natural progression to return to ceremony, as having witnessed aspects of it in my childhood. It was in my blood and memory.”

Wihitamawik offers readers a mix of poetry, essays, and personal stories. This format allows readers to

engage with these topics in different ways.

Poetry, for example, in Sky Dancer’s point of view, “does not provide the answers. It asks that one think for themselves and come up with their own ideas and answers. Poetry invites reflection.”

The collection is thoughtfully organized, moving from trauma to recovery to celebration. This was not Halfe’s original intention.

“My inclination was to start the text chronologically.

Perhaps this would reflect my own maturation better. However, I turned to others to help me see the other themes, with a loose grouping around the Indian Residential School, recovery through culture and language, writing and sharing the values to move forward in life.”

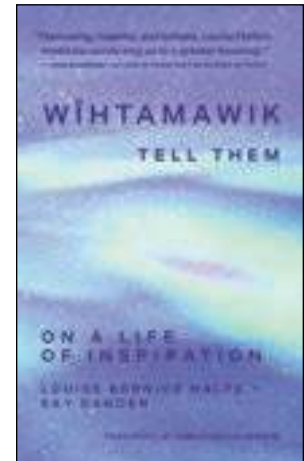
Certain pieces resonate strongly for Sky Dancer, including her daughter’s introduction and her own reflections on the West Coast Trail.

“She blew me away. I have also enjoyed reflecting back on my West Coast Trail experience since I attempted it at the age of 69. The experience was difficult and valuable,” she recalls.

The collection also offered Halfe a chance to reflect on her own experiences and growth.

“I recognize and accept responsibility for all the errors I have made in my lifetime and at times wish I could turn back the clock. However, what is the use of that when those very experiences developed my character to what I hope is to the better good. Growth is a demanding teacher. I am amazed at the life I have been given.”

When asked what she hopes readers, especially younger generations, will take from the book, Sky Dancer pointed to personal reflection and perseverance, stating, “They need to know their parents are not gods nor saints. That even those with grey hair are struggling to improve themselves. They must persevere in life, honour their gifts, and use them in a good way.”



Louise Bernice Halfe – Sky Dancer

CRAIG RICHARDS

Learning new Cree words is like beading, 'gathering a word here or there'

Language revitalization and traditional storytelling meet in Elizabeth Merasty's children's book

Penny Thomas

KISĒWĀTISI-BE KIND

Elizabeth Merasty

Illustrated by Brie Phillips

Your Nickel's Worth Publishing

9781778690624

\$19.95

32 pages

In her colourful children's book, *kisēwātisi-Be Kind*, educator and language advocate Elizabeth Merasty (a member of the Peter Ballantyne First Nation, Saskatchewan), immerses us in Nehiyaw (Cree) pedagogy.

This true account of her mother's experience in the Sturgeon Landing Indian Residential School is approached with gentleness, beauty, and warmth.

Told in traditional storytelling style in English, translated to Cree by Edie Venne (Lac Laronge Indian Band, Saskatchewan), and with watercolour artwork done by Métis illustrator Brie Phillips (Creighton, Saskatchewan), a teaching of kindness passed to Elizabeth by her late mother Cathy Merasty is brought to life.

With the story visually painted to resemble a hide and complemented with painted bead designs based on actual beadwork by Elizabeth's late Aunt Angelique McKay, Elizabeth and Brie skillfully work together to gift the reader with a holistic work of art that honours history, connection, and culture.

Not only does this combination of language, lesson, and artwork symbolize skill and craft, but it activates further imagery of old ways of life, land, teaching, being, and all that is Indigenous identity, as well as the loss of these things.

"We chose the hide as the background or border of all the paintings very intentionally. There is content in the



story that is heavy, but it is kindness and resilience that shine through," Phillips says.

"Hide is very soft and warm and comforting but also strong. Home tanning is a long process with a lot of love, time, and attention put into

it. We wanted the story to feel held in the same way: with softness but also strength."

In the painting of the residential school, some of the beadwork is visibly unravelling.

"We wanted this to represent all that so many students lost or had taken from them during their time at residential school,

"Gathering a word here or there may seem like a small thing: yet, eventually those small things can be gathered together to create something beautiful."

ELIZABETH MERASTY

such as language, traditions, land, and family."

This storybook comes complete with a teacher's guide in the back of the book in both Cree and English, a detailed collage of historical photographs of Elizabeth and her family, two colouring pages that are free to copy and distribute, and resources for those seeking support in navigating this often difficult topic.

With language revitalization also a goal of this book, author Elizabeth Merasty encourages readers and language learners to keep on learning their language:

"*Abkameyimo* (persist or keep going). I encourage people to use apps that have a voice of a fluent speaker saying the word. Replay and try to copy the sound of the fluent speaker," she says.

"It may help to think of learning new Cree words like beading. Gathering a word here or there may seem like a small thing: yet, eventually those small things can be gathered together to create something beautiful." 🌿



Visions of death are part of darker, supernatural themes in coming-of-age tale

Amy Lynn Farrell trusts YA readers with complexity while navigating different cultural worlds

by Keith Cadieux

THE MOTH DREAMER

Amy Lynn Farrell
HighWater Press
ISBN: 9781774921616
\$17.95, 272 pages



Amy Lynn Farrell

BAEZ CREATIVE

“I’ve always been a fan of young adult books,” says Amy Lynn Farrell, an educator and author originally from Thunder Bay but now based in Winnipeg.

“In young adult [as a genre], I write differently than I do in adult. Namely, I see the differences in how the relationships are evoked, the severity of violence or horror, and in including more adult-level themes.”

The Moth Dreamer, Farrell’s first novel, is a coming-of-age tale that centres on sixteen-year-old Aubrey. As if navigating high school isn’t enough, Aubrey suffers a devastating loss when her cousin, Saagaate, dies in an accident while the family is at their cabin, an accident of which Aubrey had a vision just before it happened.

Consumed with guilt over her cousin’s death, and unable to share those feelings because she doesn’t think anyone will believe her, Aubrey becomes plagued by dreams in which a mysterious man with long, dark hair approaches Aubrey. He is strangely alluring and yet also emanates a darkness. It’s not clear if this man means Aubrey harm or is a kind of warning.

As an educator, Farrell has a great deal of trust in young readers to understand complex themes and to accept being challenged by the stories they read. “Young readers are very adept at picking up on imagery, symbolism, and a variety of themes; I can be subtle with those and they’ll see it.”

The supernatural elements in the novel draw from darker genres. “I love horror – but the spooky kind of

horror, not the gore horror,” Farrell says.

“I’m fascinated by how strong the feelings of fear and mystery unfold in a story – and the thrill that comes with them. And, for me, it is often in exploring and visiting the unknown that I am drawn to find out what happens and what deeper meanings might come by the ending.”

Having blended ancestry herself, Farrell gives her protagonist the same

background, allowing her to explore navigating two different cultural worlds.

“Aubrey is both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. I deliberately gave her the same cultural background as myself so that I could accurately present both parts of her culture, family dynamics, and even her reaction to things happening around and to her.”

The novel doesn’t shy away from the complexity of living between cultures. Aubrey experiences positive teachings and support from her Indigenous culture, as well as racism and bullying because of it.

Farrell expects, too, that her readers will come to the novel with their own backgrounds and that their interpretations of the story will be different.

“I also know that every reader will see and understand something differently, that in a given scene there can be multiple perspectives – and this is absolutely okay, I expect it, and is as it should be.”

Farrell has trust in her readers to take in the themes of the story.

“I hope readers will find a sense of that pull that opens us to the possibilities of the unknown,” she says. “That readers will see Aubrey, an Anishinaabe girl, drawing on the strengths of her culture to see her through to the end.”

MORE FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT SIDEBARS

PICTURE BOOKS

THE BEST GIFT EVER / KISHCHI LI MIIYEUR PRAYZOON

Wilfred Burton, illustrated by
Natalie Laurin, Michif translation
by Norman Fleury

Told in both English and Michif, this story shows Gabby's love of fiddle music and love for her Mooshoom and Koohkoom as she is given the gift of a fiddle and in turn gives her Mooshoom the best gift ever. (Heritage House Publishing, \$24.95 hc, 48 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77203-578-0, available as ebook)

THE CEDAR MOTHER, MOTHERS OF XSAN 8

Hetxw'ms Gyetxw (Brett D. Huson), illustrated by Natasha Donovan
Nox Sim Gan, the western red cedar mother, lives for hundreds of years, providing gifts for the Xsan river valley ecosystem in northern British Columbia – gifts such as shelter for birds, refuge for insects, and medicinal tea for the people, not to mention oxygen for all land-dwelling creatures to breathe. (HighWater Press-Portage & Main Press, \$24.95 hc, 32 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77492-158-6, available as ebook)

THE GREAT GATHERING PLACE

Naomi McIlwraith, illustrated by Onedove
This gentle picture book invites readers on a trip in a red canoe to a meeting place where people express their appreciation for the land and nature, discuss good and bad things, and celebrate achievements, as they build a fire, feast, and pledge to be kind, generous, and gentle. It features Cree words and phrases and includes a glossary and pronunciation guide. (Kids Can Press, \$21.99 hc, 32 pages, ISBN: 978-1-5253-1010-2, available as ebook)

I LOVE MY AUNTY BECAUSE ...

Elena Bentley, illustrated by Kate Boyer, Southern Michif translation by Irma Klyne and Larry Fayant
Celebrating the important role aunts play in Métis culture, this charming picture

book follows several aunts with their nephews and nieces, with each vignette highlighting what the children love about their aunts, from bannock making to dancing and more.

(Gabriel Dumont Institute Press, \$17.50 pb, 36 pages, ISBN: 978-1-988011-39-4)

IF YOU MAKE A MOSOM TEA

Tonya Simpson, illustrated by Emily Côté
This lovely story shows the bond between a young boy and his mosom – how they tell stories, eat bannock, and go for walks together, during which Mosom teaches his grandson Cree words and what different plants are. Cree words are woven throughout and a picture glossary is included.

(Orca Book Publishers, \$21.95 hc, 32 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4598-4200-7, available as ebook)

LI'L ONE – OSKAWĀSIS

Treena Wynes, illustrated by Olha Tkachenko, Woodland Cree translation by Charlotte Ross
Perfect for welcoming a baby to the family, this picture book features rhyming couplets in English, enhanced with Woodland Cree words and phrases, for which it includes a pronunciation guide. (Your Nickel's Worth Publishing, \$19.95 pb, 32 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77869-063-1)

ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS IN ÎLE-À-LA-CROSSE

Rita Bouvier, illustrated by Kate Boyer, translated into Northern Michif by Vince Ahenakew
In vivid and heartfelt prose, Rita Bouvier reminisces about her childhood in the historic, Métis community of Île-à-la-Crosse. Readers learn how this deeply spiritual, family-oriented community came together to prepare throughout the year before celebrating Christmas – from planting gardens and harvesting in the fall, to ordering dresses through catalogues, to dressing up for Midnight Mass – in a time and place when community connections and relationships mattered. Kate Boyer's colourful oil pastel art captures the magic of the community's togetherness.

(Gabriel Dumont Institute Press, \$17.50 pb, 38 pages, ISBN: 978-1-988011-40-0)

FOR YOUNG READERS

THE CASE OF THE MOVIE MAYHEM, A MIGHTY MUSKRATS MYSTERY 6

Michael Hutchinson

Set in the fictional Windy Lake First Nation community, this latest in the middle years mystery series sees Sam, Otter, Atim, and Chickadee at work feeding the cast and crew of a movie production, while they also try to solve the mystery of the stolen truck, which was filled with expensive equipment and specialty props. Along the way, they learn about unions in the film industry and how to best deal with bullies. (Second Story Press, \$12.95 pb, 152 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77260-460-3, available as ebook)

SARAH PONAKEY, STORYCATCHER, AND WĀPOS'S FRIENDSHIP GARDEN

Sita MacMillan, illustrated
by Azby Whitecalf

This third book for early years readers follows Sarah and her friends – including some magic animals – as she continues to learn her Cree language and culture, along with learning patience and kindness when her precious time with Kôhkom doesn't always go as planned. (Annick Press, \$10.99 pb, 160 pages, ISBN: 978-1-83402-061-7, available as ebook)

GRAPHIC NOVELS

THE SEARCH FOR GLUSCAP, ADVENTURES OF THE PUGLATMU', VOLUME 2

Brandon Mitchell, illustrated
by Veronika Barinova

In this graphic novel for early years readers, young Mali, a Mi'kmaw girl, and Pug, one of the Little People, go in search of Gluscap to help the Serpent Guardian, who is sick and no longer protecting the river from the lumber mills that have poisoned it. Will they find Gluscap in time to make the Serpent Guardian and the river well again so that the salmon can return? (HighWater Press-Portage & Main Press, \$21.95 pb, 88 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77492-051-0, available as ebook)

THE UNBEATABLE SONYA BALLANTYNE

Sonya Ballantyne, illustrated by Rhael McGregor
Author, filmmaker, and speaker Sonya Ballantyne tells her story of growing up on the rez as a geek who loved comic books, fantasy books, and movies in this memoir for young adults. Superheroes provide the model for overcoming racism, bullying, and other obstacles, and now Ballantyne serves as an inspiration to others.
(HighWater Press-Portage & Main Press, \$22.95 pb, 64 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77492-137-1, available as ebook)

VISIONS FROM THE FIRE, DREAMS VOLUME 2

Wanda John-Kehewin, illustrated by nicole marie burton
This graphic novel for young adults follows Damon Quinn, who is able to see the traumatic memories of people he loves. He and his mom return to her home community for a powwow and Sweat Lodge and to reconnect with family, when Damon stumbles into a vision quest and discovers the family history that his mother had kept from him.
(HighWater Press-Portage & Main Press, \$24.95 pb, 80 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77492-065-7, available as ebook)

DRAMA & POETRY

HORSEPLAY

Kole Durnford
A talking racehorse and his jockey discuss their dreams and how the world thwarts them, in this play that looks at the price one can pay for so-called success.
(Scirocco Drama-JGS Publishing, \$18.95 pb, 92 pages, ISBN: 978-1-990738-89-0)

PITIFUL

Brandi Bird
Hard-hitting and heartbreaking, this second collection of poems, carefully crafted in a variety of forms and wittily drawing on pop culture, portrays experiences of eating disorders and depression, and how they intersect with religion, sexuality, and patriarchal and sexist treatment, especially in the medical profession.
(House of Anansi Press, \$22.99 pb, 112 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4870-1408-7, available as ebook)

SAVE YOUR PRAYERS – SEND MONEY

Jónína Kirton
This hybrid collection of poems interspersed with prose reflections and extensions examines Métis history and more recent family history to show how the repression of trauma, memory, and feelings lodges in the body, resulting in chronic illness. Kirton provides a biting critique of the lack of support and understanding in the medical profession and among family and friends, but she also shows how loving relationships and spiritual practices give her strength.
(Talonbooks, \$19.95 pb, 120 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77201-790-0)

WHITE NOISE: A CURIOUS COMEDY

Tarn Kootenhayoo
Windwalker and his parents move into a posh white neighbourhood when he earns a small fortune by selling an app he created. Their new neighbours invite them for supper – a gesture toward reconciliation? an attempt to boost Instagram followers? – and all kinds of hilarious and

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Lil' One—oskawāsis
Treena Wynne & Olha Tkachenko
The birth of a child is a happy event for family, friends, and the whole community! A gorgeously illustrated tender tale of welcome. Presented in English and Woodland Cree (th-dialect). Includes guide to pronunciation.
978-1-77869-063-1
\$19.95 | 8 x 8 | Soft Cover | 32 pp

INDIGENOUS AUTHOR



A Fondness for the Reckless: A Ten Past Midnight Story
Jennifer Jacoby-Smith
Canadian teen music sensation Ten Past Midnight is on the verge of success, but lead performer Indie has suddenly gone missing. Boiling with frustration, he's walked out on the band he created with his best friend, Jaxson, to chase his new, heartthrob, pop-music-superstar boyfriend to Los Angeles. But while Indie questions his choices, his bandmates must deal with a savvy reporter scrounging for a scoop. Contains LGBTQ+ content.
978-1-77869-048-8
\$24.95 | 5.5 x 8 | Soft Cover | 354 pp

SHORTLIST SASKATCHEWAN BOOK AWARDS 2026




On the Hunt for William Hallett: Discovering a Forgotten Métis Leader
Audrhea Lande
Veteran chief of a hundred battles, William Hallett called himself a loyal half-breed of the Red River Settlement and sworn enemy of Louis Riel. Overlooked by history, this is the true story of a remarkable man.
978-1-77869-052-5
\$29.95 | 5.5 x 8 | Soft Cover | 200 pp

MÉTIS HISTORY



Love Big Country: Tales of Wildfire, Wildlife & Wild Times
Mark Fletcher
Fighting forest fires is not for the faint-hearted: it's 80% boredom, 20% terror! There is a lot of magic and mystery between heaven and earth, as reflected in these eclectic stories from the life of a wildland firefighter & outdoorsman.
978-1-77869-047-1
\$29.95 | 5.5 x 8 | Soft Cover | 400 pp

MEMOIR of a wildland firefighter




hurtful misunderstandings and racist interactions ensue.

(Talonbooks, \$19.95 pb, 152 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77201-557-7)

ADULT FICTION

JOE

Carol Rose GoldenEagle

Joe was pretty much at the end of a long process of dying from alcoholism, when he is saved by a vampire. As a vampire himself now, Joe no longer drinks to excess – he just feeds on the blood of other alcoholics. Ironically, he is able to become the decent person he'd always wanted to be, and Hazel, the waitress he's long admired, is noticing the change in him – maybe he has a chance at love?

(BookLand Press, \$21.95 pb, 240 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77231-246-1, available as ebook)

SCENT OF A NON-CRIME

Garry Thomas Morse

The third book in the surreal and innovative Tulpaverse series follows a former agent who is given the task of tracking down Modal, and who, in his search, encounters PQ, a disgraced police clerk; CM, a harpsichordist; Dr. VK, a travelling psychiatrist; and Barbie, a resourceful realtor. He also learns about Modal from an actress, a linguist, a transcriber, and a Shakespeare professor, all the while using a procedural guide called *Scent of a Non-Crime*.

(At Bay Press, \$24.95 pb, 304 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998779-91-8)

ADULT NON-FICTION

CROPPED: FIRST NATIONS AGRICULTURE IN MANITOBA, 1871–1971

Sarah Carter

Drawing upon oral histories, speeches, petitions, and writings of Indigenous Peoples in Manitoba, and Department of Indian Affairs records, Carter shows the deep roots of First Nations agricultural knowledge, their efforts to farm after the signing of Treaty 1, and the federal and provincial government policies and practices that thwarted them.

(University of Manitoba Press, \$31.95 pb, 498 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77284-146-6, available as ebook)

EVERY STORY IS A CALL TO ACTION

David A. Robertson

In this latest CLC Kreisel lecture, Robertson explains how giving space for the telling and hearing of Indigenous stories is a way – especially for youth – to understand one's place in the world and to determine what one can do to work toward a better future where all live in a community of respect, understanding, acceptance, and love.

(University of Alberta Press, \$14.99 pb, 56 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-851-2, available as ebook)

JAMES BAY MEMOIRS AND OTHER STORIES, CRITICAL EDITION

Margaret Sam-Cromarty, edited by Isabella Huberman and Élise Couture-Grondin

Brought together for the first time, Margaret Sam-Cromarty's three books of poems, life stories, and legends along with a selection of her uncollected editorials, essays, and poems look back to her life on Fort George Island in Eeyou Istchee before the hydro dams forced a relocation of her people, and look forward, passing on knowledge and wisdom to her children and grandchildren. This edition includes an introductory essay and a conversation between the editors and author, providing the context of the original publications.

(University of Manitoba Press, \$24.95 pb, 288 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77284-138-1, available as ebook)

ON SETTLER COLONIALISM IN CANADA: RELATIONS AND RESISTANCES

Edited by Emily Crafton and David MacDonald

This book builds on the previous volume *On Settler Colonialism in Canada: Lands & People*, and likewise includes Indigenous, racialized settler, immigrant settler, and white settler perspectives. Contributors offer strategies – related to honouring Treaty responsibilities, centring Indigenous knowledge systems, and making space for Indigenous self-determination – to shift colonial inequities and take steps toward reconciliation and resurgence.

(University of Regina Press, \$36.95 pb, 368 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77940-068-0, available as ebook)

THE OUTRAGE CURE: HOW OVERCOMING ANGER AND BETRAYAL CAN TRANSFORM THE WAY WE LIVE, CONNECT AND HEAL

Alika Lafontaine, M.D.

Compelling and accessible, this book draws on the author's experience as an Indigenous doctor, and blends his personal story with an analysis of anger and outrage, providing tools for disrupting the spiral and using anger for positive change.

(HarperCollins Canada, \$36.99 hc, 304 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4434-7459-7, available as ebook)

READING THE BIBLE ON TURTLE ISLAND: AN INVITATION TO NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS INTERPRETATION

T. Christopher Hoklotubbe and H. Daniel Zacharias

Exploring the intersection of biblical studies and Indigenous cultures and world views, Indigenous scholars Hoklotubbe and Zacharias offer a fresh reading of scripture that celebrates the assets and insights of Indigenous interpretation, reasserting the dignity of cultures that were condemned through colonial practices.

(InterVarsity Press, \$26.99 pb, 240 pages, ISBN: 978-1-5140-0756-3)

TRULY TRIBAL: CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS TATTOOING

Edited by Dion Kaszas

Alongside stunning photos of their work, 19 Indigenous ancestral skin markers from 15 nations and cultures around the world discuss their reclamation of traditional tattooing practices, including the revival of ancestral tattoo designs, symbols, and motifs; the re-envisioning of meaning and protocols; and the refashioning of application methods.

(Fernwood Publishing, \$74.00 hc, 288 pages, with full colour images, ISBN: 978-1-77363-809-6, available as ebook)

Thistledown Press believes in ‘universal appeal’ of Western Canadian writers

Saskatoon-based publisher turned 50, marked 5 years under new leadership

by Brock Peters

When Saskatoon-based Thistledown Press celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, it also passed a different, more subtle milestone: five years under the leadership of publisher JoAnn McCaig. And as McCaig and acquisitions editor Elizabeth Philips plot a course forward for the press, they are working to honour Thistledown’s long legacy while remaining open to fresh ideas.

After McCaig acquired Thistledown in October 2020 and brought Philips on, the pair hit the ground running. “The previous owners left us not one title in the pipeline for 2020 – not one,” McCaig recalls. “Liz Philips led the charge and acquired six titles in time for the fall 2021 season, a feat worthy of several laurel wreaths!”



JoAnn McCaig

Thankfully, they weren’t starting entirely from scratch. By that point, Thistledown, founded in 1975 and helmed for the previous two decades by siblings Al and Jackie Forrie, was already a mature press.

“We have a deep backlist,” says Philips, “which requires attention and maintenance and also supplies us with some stability.”

McCaig and Philips recognize both the advantages and the challenges that come with running a storied Canadian literary press.

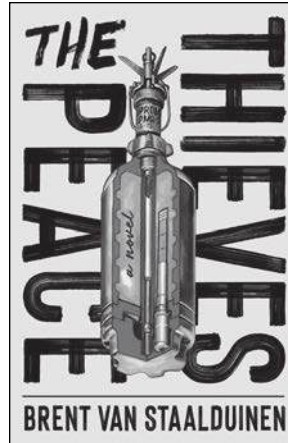
“We are always looking to balance our wish to honour the history of the press and its legacy with what a publisher needs to do to stay viable in today’s publishing climate,” Philips notes. “We have to be open to different

points of view, to innovations in style and content, and to diverse voices and radical ways of thinking.

“Of course,” she adds, “we are always mindful of our obligation to uphold the cultural side of the Truth and Reconciliation process.” Thistledown’s second-ever picture book, *Kobkum’s Royal Bannock* by Wilfred



Elizabeth Philips



Burton, includes a full Michif translation and was featured on Saskatchewan Family Literacy Day in January 2026.

Since coming under McCaig’s ownership, the press has maintained a publishing schedule of six books per year. Thistledown keeps its list small intentionally, according to Philips, “so that we can give an artisanal level of attention to every phase of the editorial and production processes.”

Of those six annual titles, one will always be a volume of poetry. In its earliest years, in fact, Thistledown published poetry exclusively. “We are deeply committed to publishing poetry,” says Philips, and the poetry offering in their spring 2026 lineup is *U ALIVE* by Saskatchewan poet Chelsea Coupal. Since 2021, Thistledown has published primarily Saskatchewan poets.

This regional focus is actually part of the press’s efforts to reach a national audience. “Thistledown has a deep belief in the universal appeal of the Western [Canadian] voice,” Philips says, while also noting that they publish work by writers from across Canada in every genre: poetry, novels, short stories, and non-fiction, including memoir and lyric essays.

Together, McCaig and Philips bring another perspective to Thistledown: in addition to lengthy resumés in

Thistledown keeps its list small intentionally, according to Philips, “so that we can give an artisanal level of attention to every phase of the editorial and production processes.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

“No one but another writer can appreciate the sheer effort, grit, and hope it takes to submit a manuscript to a publisher.” JOANN MCCAIG

publishing, both are experienced writers themselves. “It’s a mixed blessing to sit on an editorial board and have to say no when I’ve faced rejection myself,” says McCaig.

They are both still active in the writing sphere. Philips’s poetry collection *The Time of Great Singing* was recently released by Alberta’s Freehand Books, while McCaig’s novel *Beneficiary* will be available this spring from University of Calgary Press.

“No one but another writer can appreciate the sheer effort, grit, and hope it takes to submit a manuscript to a publisher,” says McCaig.

Another pillar of ThistleDown’s original mandate was publishing work by new authors. “Our commitment to providing a foothold for new and emerging writers remains,” says McCaig.

In addition, she says, “we are committed to widening our scope even further to embrace greater diversity, to welcome marginalized voices, and to make room for inventive approaches to storytelling.”

Their approach seems to resonate with readers and critics alike. Connie Gault’s *The Rasmussen Papers* was shortlisted for the 2024 Toronto

Book Awards – “What a rush to see the cover of the book on a downtown billboard in Canada’s largest city!” says McCaig – while Sharon Butala’s *Leaving Wisdom* won the 2023

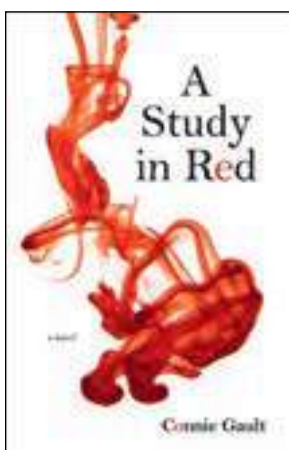
Glengarry Prize, and Guy Vanderhaeghe’s *Because Somebody Asked Me To* won in two categories at the 2025 Saskatchewan Book Awards.

Looking forward, spring 2026 will see novels by Connie Gault (*A Study in Red*) and Brent van Staaldunin (*The Peace Thieves*), in addition to Coupal’s poetry collection.

With its unique mix of historical legacy, literary quality, and forward-thinking innovation, ThistleDown Press will continue to be a source of interest for readers throughout the Prairies and across Canada.

“We’re not the only small press with 50 years under our belt, but we’re certainly the Prairie-est,” McCaig

says. “And also, I think, the grittiest.” 🍷



SPRING TITLES FROM THISTLEDOWN PRESS

THE PEACE THIEVES

Brent van Staaldunin

About the search for peace during and after war, this novel alternates between Croatia in 1993 and Francis’s experience as a medic there and then, and Hamilton, Ontario, 30 years later, when Viva, who carries resentments and anger, searches him out. Together they build a relationship and learn to share their past and present wounds.

(ThistleDown Press, \$24.95 pb, 348 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77187-285-0, available as ebook)

A STUDY IN RED

Connie Gault

Utterly captivating, this novel is told by two unreliable narrators, Amy and Carol, who, when they hear that romance writer Hattie has died, are prompted to think back to the summer of 1962, when something life-changing happened at Hattie’s place. Exploring trauma, memory, isolation, and passion, the story pulls the reader into partial solutions to more than one puzzle.

(ThistleDown Press, \$24.95 pb, 320 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77187-290-4, available as ebook)

U ALIVE

Chelsea Coupal

Attuned to the seasons but not chronologically organized, the contemplative and direct poems in this collection reveal connections and transitions among adolescence and parenthood, birth and death, and all of the regret, grief, and wonder that go along with them, as the speaker tenderly juxtaposes the death of her grandparents and the birth of her child, events complicated by the pandemic and the uncertain future of the world.

(ThistleDown Press, \$19.95 pb, 80 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77187-283-6, available as ebook)

Historian finds newspapers in 1870s Manitoba blatantly promoted settler colonial goals

Shelisa Klassen analyzed 9 papers as 'tools for storytelling and mythmaking'

by Paula E. Kirman

IMPRINTING EMPIRE:

Land and Settler Colonialism in Manitoba Newspapers

Shelisa Klassen

University of Manitoba Press

\$27.95 pb, 296 pages

with tables, figures, bibliography, index

ISBN: 978-1-77284-142-8

Available as an ebook

Newspapers publish stories reflecting a place and time, and this was certainly the case in 1870s Manitoba. The province was still an Indigenous space at the beginning of that decade, despite the continued oppression of the Métis community following the Red River Resistance led by Louis Riel. However, as the decade progressed, settlers took over the province's land and power structures.

In *Imprinting Empire: Land and Settler Colonialism in Manitoba Newspapers*, Shelisa Klassen describes how newspapers helped this happen, and how they were weaponized against the Indigenous population of Manitoba as tools of settler colonialism. She examines nine newspapers of the era published in the province, including *Le Métis*, a French one.

"Manitoba was fortunate to have a diverse and active print media culture, with multiple newspapers operating during that decade," says Klassen, who is an assistant professor of Canadian history at the University of Regina.

"They wrote extensively about Indigenous people and about immigration, including Mennonite immigration, which was my entry point into this period."

What they wrote about Indigenous people and immigration had a distinct bias and purpose. Newspapers in the 1870s were, according to Klassen, "run by businessmen and politicians who want[ed] to shape public opinion towards whatever political or economic agenda they [were] trying to achieve. In most cases, that [was] settler colonialism."

Newspapers intentionally promoted settler colonial propaganda that ultimately led to the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their land by the end of the decade.

"Newspapers are tools for storytelling and mythmaking, and both are essential to settler colonialism," Klassen explains.

Klassen discovered that the settler colonial goals of newspapers in her research period were pretty blatant. "I thought they'd hide their motives a little better, but no, you can read it right on the newspaper page," she says.

"People are calling for violence, or excusing bad behaviour, whether from mobs, politicians, government officials, or soldiers, or wishing for the total erasure of Indigenous people from the province. It made my job as a historian rather easy."

She adds, "It's very honest, even if that means that you can't trust all the facts they are publishing. In the pages of a newspaper (or I suppose the home page of a digital media site) you find clear evidence of a society's fears and anxieties, as well as what will outrage readers, and what that society is working towards."

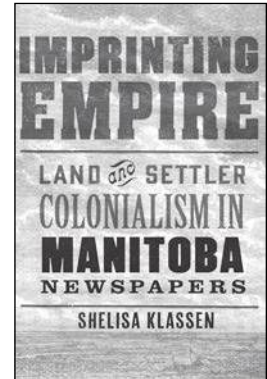
Imprinting Empire was originally written as Klassen's doctoral thesis. She reworked the book into one of interest to a general readership, which includes anyone who wants to learn more about settler colonialism or Prairie history.

"I think that in Canada we're taught a historical myth about a 'peaceful' settlement period, and my book is directly challenging and exposing that myth," Klassen says.

"I also want to invite readers from backgrounds like my own [Mennonite] to learn that our stories are part of the settler colonial project. Our histories of immigration are not separate from colonial narratives or violent systems of removal."

Klassen also hopes that "learning about the fragility and insecurity of settler colonial systems inspires us all to imagine a better future.

"Colonial narratives about land and race and power prop up a settler colonial system that was not inevitable and therefore can be undone." 🌱



Shelisa Klassen

The case for adult basic education: An anti-poverty strategy, and part of reconciliation

Underfunding, lack of awareness hamper adult education efforts, Jim Silver says

by Rowan McCandless

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF ADULT EDUCATION

Jim Silver

Fernwood Publishing

\$28.00 pb, 156 pages

ISBN: 978-1-77363-812-6

Available as an ebook

When it comes to education, one size does not fit all. Overlooked and underfunded, adult basic education is treated as the poor relation of the Kindergarten to Grade 12 and post-secondary education systems in Manitoba.

Yet the benefits to individuals, communities, and the province are clear, as outlined in *The Transformative Power of Adult Education*, the latest book by Winnipeg-based author Jim Silver. This book provides excellent information on adult basic education, including its history, theory and practice, participants' perspectives, case studies, benefits, and funding constraints.



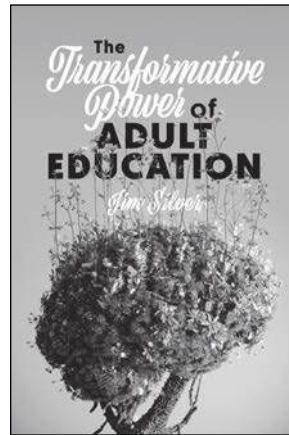
Jim Silver

Adult basic education includes adult learning centres that offer mature high school diplomas and adult literacy programs that focus on literacy and numeracy. Of special note are adult learning hubs, which provide a holistic approach to adult basic education and include support systems such as daycare, transportation, emotional and cultural provisions, and recognition of their students' personhood and unique gifts and challenges, all of which foster change.

Silver, professor emeritus at the University of Winnipeg, says, "I became interested in adult basic education because I have long been interested in and involved with poverty and anti-poverty efforts. Adult basic education is a powerful anti-poverty program."

His book demonstrates the importance of adult basic education for students, especially those marginalized by poverty.

"People whose lives are severely constrained by poverty are transformed by their experience with adult basic education. Not only do they earn their mature high school diploma, but they also gain self-esteem, self-confidence, and a sense of hope for the future. In so many cases, this enables them to move out of poverty and to move their families out of poverty."



These programs are more than anti-poverty strategies. "Adult basic education is also an important part of the process of reconciliation," says Silver.

"Indigenous youth in Manitoba graduate high school at a rate about 30 percentage points lower than the population at large, but they are represented in adult basic education at a rate about two and a half times their share of the population. So adult basic education

is both an anti-poverty initiative and a promoter of reconciliation."

Given the benefits, why is adult basic education underfunded? Silver argues that the lack of public awareness and therefore public advocacy is part of the reason.

"Also, adult learners tend to be disproportionately those who are poor and marginalized in our society," he says.

"As a result, governments don't fund adult basic education at a level anywhere close to the levels at which they fund K to 12 and PSE. This is a choice. They choose to underfund adult basic education. They could just as well choose to fund adult basic education, but they don't."

Silver sums up the situation. "Adult basic education is a program that works exceptionally well, that meets a real societal need, that pretty much pays for itself because it moves people off social assistance and into the labour force, but that is sorely underfunded.

"We should be promoting and funding adult basic education much more than we have done and are doing." ❧

Sustainability can start in the kitchen, linking daily life to broader issues

Over 80 interviews went into Naomi Hansen's work, meant to be a 'well-used guide'

by Margaret Anne Fehr

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE KITCHEN:

A Practical Guide to Prioritizing the Planet from the Heart of Your Home

Naomi Hansen

TouchWood Editions

\$35.00 pb, 368 pages

with resource list, bibliography, index

ISBN: 978-1-77151-473-6

Available as an ebook



Naomi Hansen

In addition to food waste and plastics, and how to shop to avoid them, Hansen also covers topics such as gardening, cleaning, and sustainable use of appliances.

When gathering this information, Hansen wanted to give the book a distinctly Canadian lens by focusing on Canadian statistics, information, and experts whenever possible. “I

conducted over 80 interviews, many of them with Canadian experts,” she says, and all of them are listed in the book.

In addition to the help of all the interviewees, Hansen received a contribution from Elizabeth May, officer of the Order of Canada, member of Parliament, and Leader of the Green Party of Canada, who wrote a foreword to *Building a Sustainable Kitchen*.

“It is an immense honour to have her words included in the book. I cannot thank her enough!” says Hansen.

Hansen realizes that not all Canadians have access to a local zero waste store or a municipal organics program, but many of the solutions can be implemented regardless of where one lives.

“It’s possible to reduce your overall consumerism, eat more plant-based foods, start a compost, and get mindful about food waste, whether you live in Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, or Yukon,” she says.

And Hansen’s tome will not gather dust on readers’ shelves. “The book is absolutely meant to be a well-used guide,” she explains.

“I want readers to write in the margins, fold down corners, read it once cover to cover, but highlight things that stick out to you so you can go back and work your way through it in your own kitchen and home.”

As a gen-Y/millennial, Hansen says that she expects the book will resonate with her generation, but her target audience is universal.

“The book’s key message is really that taking part in the conversation around sustainability and implementing actions at home and beyond is *for everyone*.” 🌿

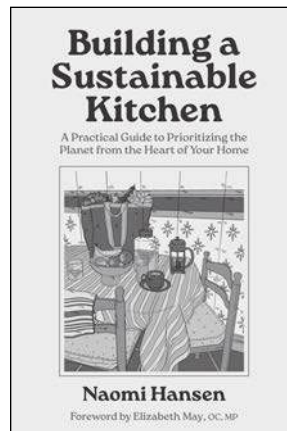
It’s a quandary that affects many of us: how to address climate change within our own practices. *Building a Sustainable Kitchen: A Practical Guide to Prioritizing the Planet from the Heart of Your Home* by Naomi Hansen, a Saskatoon-based writer, looks at sustainability from a kitchen-centred perspective.

“I think many people want to know what they can do to be a part of this conversation in a tangible and realistic everyday way, and that’s exactly the question I’ve tackled in the book,” says Hansen.

“I also strive to gently nudge the reader along the way to think big-picture, using the kitchen as a sort of portal to wider climate issues.”

The kitchen, as the heart of the home and central to everyday life, is a good entry point, and the links between daily activities in the kitchen and broader climate problems and solutions are made clear.

Hansen gives examples: “When food waste rots in landfills, it generates methane gas, which is a potent greenhouse gas. Daily use of plastics, which are so very pervasive in the kitchen, is tied to plastic pollution. Some of the most common single-use plastics that end up littering beaches and coastal environments around the world are related to food and the kitchen, like plastic straws, food wrappers, and beverage bottles and caps.”



MORE NON-FICTION

BIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR

CHEAPSKATE IN LOTUSLAND: THE PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF LIVING WELL ON A SMALL BUDGET

Steve Burgess

Blending memoir and journalism, Burgess tells of his frugal life in Vancouver, demonstrating how he is able to live in an expensive city on a freelance writer's income. He brings in experts, literature, and everyday people to expand on his philosophy and the strategies that give him the perspective and values that allow for his comfortable life.

(Douglas & McIntyre, \$26.95 pb, 256 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77162-463-3, available as ebook)

I'M GOING TO BREAK YOUR HEART: A ROCK N ROLL LOVE STORY

Chantal Kreviazuk and Raine Maida

Two ultra-successful music stars reveal the details about the most difficult and rewarding part of their journey – their marriage and the work it is taking to keep it together. Through therapy, they learn that the goal isn't perfection but to keep trying and keep choosing each other.

(ECW Press, \$28.95 pb, 240 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77041-880-6, available as ebook)

IN HARM'S WAY

Peter Newman

This memoir takes the reader along on Dr. Newman's journey around the world, as he works as a philanthropic medical doctor in such locations as the Golan Heights and Uganda. His reflective narrative examines his motives and reveals his doubts as he witnesses the tenacity of the human spirit.

(At Bay Press, \$24.95 pb, 350 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998779-95-6)

MINERVA'S OWL: AFTERTHOUGHTS ON LOVE AND LOSS, 2ND EDITION

Carol Matthews

Part grief memoir, part love story, this lyrical and honest book offers the insights and perhaps wisdom gained from going through the dark time – the grieving, longing, belonging, mourning, cleaving, and surviving – of the death of her husband of 40 years. This second edition

includes a new epilogue that reflects on the loss more than a decade later.

(Freehand Books, \$21.95 pb, 186 pages, ISBN: 978-1-997534-14-3)

MY YEAR OF LIVING ANONYMOUSLY

Ian Thornton

Novelist Ian Thornton connected with a panhandler only to discover that he was the legendary anonymous hacktivist, Commander X, on the run from the FBI. Christopher Mark Doyon, a.k.a. Commander X, is now living in exile in Mexico, and Thornton is permitted to tell his remarkable story.

(At Bay Press, \$34.95 hc, 230 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998779-99-4)

NO PLACE LIKE HOME: THE MISSING KEY TO OUR HOUSING CRISIS

Jessica Barrett

In a mix of memoir and journalism, Barrett tells how she was priced out of living in Vancouver; examines how the housing crisis has undermined our sense of home, that is, our human needs for belonging, connection, and stability; and scours the world for examples of how we might do things differently, building a framework for solutions and the basis for change.

(Viking-PRH, \$38.00 hc, 352 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7352-5025-3, available as ebook and audiobook)

READING WITH MY GRANDMOTHER: CHINESE CANADIAN LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND FAMILY

Lindsay Diehl

Diehl deepens her analysis of a range of Chinese Canadian works of literature – such as Fred Wah's *Diamond Grill*, Wayson Choy's *Paper Shadows*, and Denise Chong's *The Concubine's Children* – by brilliantly bringing alongside elements of her own family's story, such as her grandmother's letters and photographs, and her personal story, allowing her to embrace subjectivity and ask more profound questions about the effects of literature.

(Wilfrid Laurier University Press, \$39.99 pb, 180 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77112-728-8, available as ebook)

SOLE SURVIVOR: A FAMILY STORY OF GENESIS AND SURVIVAL

Avi Friedman

Architect and academic Avi Friedman goes to Europe to trace the story of his father, Chaim Frydman, the only member of their family to survive the Holocaust. Friedman visits the homes, factories, and synagogues in which his family lived, and the ghettos and camps in which they were imprisoned and killed. He finds stories in interviews, archives, and the built environment, and shares the Frydmans' history, experiences, and testimony.

(University of Calgary Press, 258 pages, \$68.99 hc, ISBN: 978-1-77385-690-2; \$34.99 pb, ISBN: 978-1-77385-691-9; available as ebook)

GUIDES & COOKBOOKS

THE INDOOR GARDEN: EXPERT GARDENERS SHARE ADVICE FOR GROWING FOOD AT HOME

Janet Melrose and Sherry Normandeau

In their 13th book together, Melrose and Normandeau now explain, in their signature question-and-answer format, how to grow plants like veggies, herbs, fruits, and more indoors, which requires a whole different level of care.

(TouchWood Editions, \$20.00 pb, 160 pages, with colour photos throughout, ISBN: 978-1-77151-469-9, available as ebook)

OH SHE GLOWS SALADS: GET GLOWING: PROTEIN-PACKED, PLANT-BASED SALADS FOR EVERY SEASON

Angela Liddon

Whether readers are longtime *Oh She Glows* fans or people new to Liddon's plant-based recipes, this collection of 110 recipes will impress. Included are refreshing spring and summer bowls and hearty, cozy bowls for autumn and winter, along with protein toppers, creamy dressings, savoury cheeses, and crunchy nut clusters.

(Viking Canada-PRH, \$45.00 hc, 392 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7352-5021-5, available as ebook)

GENERAL NON-FICTION

BANGSUND ON THE COMMERCIAL LIENS ACT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Clayton Bangsund

Designed to assist service providers, lawyers, judges, students, and other

financial professionals, this book explains how the Commercial Liens Act (CLA) of British Columbia gives service providers lien and enforcement rights on serviced goods in cases of non-payment. Hypothetical scenarios, self-assessment exercises, a governance overview table, a glossary, and a table of statutory concordance and indexing are included. (University of Toronto Press, \$56.95 pb, 264 pages, ISBN: 978-1-0498-0442-2, available as ebook)

BUFFALO LESSONS: HOW BISON RETURNED TO BANFF NATIONAL PARK

Karsten Heuer

Packed with photos and weaving in Indigenous perspectives, Heuer's last book is an inside account of the reintroduction of plains bison to Banff National Park in 2017. Thrilling moments include a helicopter-assisted translocation, a horseback chase to tranquilize a bison, and the tracking of wayward bulls that scale steep treacherous terrain. (Greystone Books, \$28.95 pb, 192 pages, with colour photos, ISBN: 978-1-77840-314-9, available as ebook)

THE BYLAW STATE: ENCAMPMENT EVICTIONS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR PUBLIC SPACE

Alexandra Flynn and Joe Hermer

This book shows how municipal bylaws have emerged over the past two decades as the method of governing homelessness in Canada, creating an exclusionary ideal of public space through evictions and banishment. The authors make a powerful case for a more inclusive approach that protects people not just spaces. (Fernwood Publishing, \$25.00 pb, 126 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77363-802-7, available as ebook)

CANADA AND NATO: THE MYTH OF A GLOBAL PEACEKEEPER

Owen Schalk

In this book, Schalk disrupts the popular Western perception of NATO as a defensive, collective security organization, and argues that Canadians should oppose it and support their government's withdrawal from it for the following reasons: NATO has always been an offensive alliance; the wars it wages are not just; its existence and expansion stir

global tensions and raise the risk of global war; it undermines Canadian sovereignty; and it diverts resources that can serve the social needs of Canadians into a largely U.S.-owned arms industry.

(ARP Books, \$24.00 pb, 140 pages, ISBN: 978-1-997544-07-4)

COLLAPSE: NAVIGATING CIVILIZATION'S PREDICAMENTS WITH COURAGE AND WISDOM

Juan Pablo Quiñonez

In a world of social, ecological, and economic upheaval, this book examines why systems are faltering, how they are interconnected, and how a new way of understanding ancestral perspectives, spirituality, systems thinking, science, and deep ecology is needed to navigate the storms and respond wisely.

(Boreal Creek Press, \$29.95 pb, 250 pages, ISBN: 978-1-7772838-2-7, available as ebook)

CONFRONTING THE RESURGENT RIGHT

Edited by Miriam Edelson

This volume combines academic analysis with advocacy strategies in a thorough look at how the radical/alt/far right has gained power in recent years – as demonstrated by Canada's 2022 "Freedom Convoy" – and how to resist the division and conspiracy theories by finding ways to work together.

(University of Manitoba Press, \$31.95 pb, 348 pages, with b/w illustrations, ISBN: 978-1-77284-134-3, available as ebook)

DISABILITY WAYS: AN ANTHOLOGY ABOUT DEAF GAIN BY D/DEAF AND DISABLED WRITERS

Edited by Diane Driedger and L(ani) Zastre

In this anthology, 33 d/Deaf and disabled people from across Canada write about how disability benefits them and how our societies and cultures are enriched by a disability perspective. They powerfully show how disability is not something to be fixed and is not a tragedy – it is a positive force.

(Arts AccessAbility Network Manitoba, \$30.00 pb, 132 pages, ISBN: TBD, available as accessible PDF/ebook)

DO IT WRONG: HOW TO BE A POET IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Derek Beaulieu

In this joyfully liberating collection of essays, ideas, and approaches to writing and teaching poetry, Beaulieu, currently the director of literary arts at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, draws on 20 years of experience teaching creative writing. The book is designed to foster creativity, encouraging poets to do the counter-intuitive thing, to embrace the weird, to question assumptions, and to come together as poets to build stronger writing communities.

(Assembly Press, \$21.95 pb, 144 pages, ISBN: 978-1-998336-29-6, available as ebook)

FREE TO BE MORE: CREATIVE ACTIVISM IN THE ERA OF BLACK LIVES MATTER

Edited by Syrus Marcus Ware and Ra'anaa Yaminah Ekundayo, with d'bi.young anitafrika

A powerful collection of interviews/roundtable conversations, visual artwork, poetry, and reflections on "artivism" over the past dozen or so years by Black artists, this book affirms the connection between art and activism and how art can be used as a powerful tool for change. (University of Regina Press, \$32.95 pb, 320 pages, with b/w images throughout, ISBN: 978-1-77940-132-8, available as ebook)

FROM RED DRESSES TO MEMORY STONES: MULTIMEDIA ACTIVISM AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN CANADA

Nicolette Little

In this much-needed investigation into gender-based violence – sexual assault, intimate partner violence, femicide, and violence against 2SLGBTQIA+ people – and activism in Canada, Little interviews numerous activists and looks in detail at five anti-violence media projects: the REDress Project and Disposable Red Woman installations; the digital memorialization of murdered Ontario women each anniversary of the Montreal Massacre; the documentary *Slut or Nut*, filmed during the lead-up to a rape trial; and the Memory Stones Project.

(UBC Press, \$29.95 pb, 240 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7748-7325-3, available as ebook)

GENDER, PEACE, AND POWER-SHARING

Siobhan Byrne and Allison McCulloch

This book explores how two powerful norms in international conflict resolution and post-conflict governance – power-sharing as a model of ethnic inclusion, and the women, peace, and security agenda, which calls for greater representation of women and gender perspectives – intersect, capturing both the tensions and transformative potential of these frameworks.

(University of Toronto Press, \$55.00 hc, 208 pages, ISBN: 978-1-0498-0433-0, available as ebook)

IN SEARCH OF DIGNITY: A LIFETIME OF REFLECTIONS

Harvey Max Chochinov

Dr. Chochinov, one of the world's leading researchers in palliative care, shares insights he has gained from his patients over a long career as a doctor in these essays and talks, both serious and humorous, reflecting on such topics as end-of-life conversations and medical assistance in dying, and always emphasizing the need to maintain patient dignity.

(Oxford University Press, \$38.50 pb, 240 pages, ISBN: 978-0-19-780511-4)

IT'S ONLY FOREVER: LABYRINTH

Jes Battis

Queer writer and teacher Battis explores the enduring impact of *Labyrinth*, Jim Henson's cult classic starring goblin puppets that both reflects and challenges its '80s era. Battis argues that the film offers its audience, especially those on the margins, an alternative to the conservative politics and soulless economics of its time as it presents childhood as not only dangerous, but also heroic and even queer.

(ECW Press, \$19.95 pb, 160 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77041-858-5, available as ebook)

JOHN D. ATCHISON ARCHITECT: HIS WORKS & TIMES

Gail Perry

This first monograph on Atchison, one of Winnipeg's most prolific and accomplished architects, collects and considers his life's work in historical context – his early influences in and around Chicago,

his profound impact on the architecture of Winnipeg from 1905 to 1923, and his later design direction in California. The book includes hundreds of images and an illustrated listing of his extant works in Winnipeg and Western Canada, the American Midwest, and California. (Winnipeg Architecture Foundation, \$60.00 pb, 296 pages, ISBN: 978-1-988321-12-7)

JUST SATIRE: COMEDY AND COMMENTARY IN AN AGE OF CHAOS

Andrew Unger

Drawing on examples from 2000 years of comedy, including his own *Daily Bonnet* pieces, Unger explores the elements and purposes of satire, and its limitations in our current social and political climate, and argues that the greatest threat to it is not political correctness but a lack of literacy.

(Turnstone Press, \$23.95 pb, 276 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88801-822-9)

KNOWLEDGE UNDER SIEGE: CHARTING A FUTURE FOR UNIVERSITIES

Edited by Marc Spooner and James McNinch

Leading voices from around the world consider how universities are facing unprecedented threats – defunding, criticism of and the dismantling of initiatives to diversify the academy, academic gag orders, efforts to undermine tenure – and how to resist these threats while trying to be engines of social mobility and to graduate critical thinkers who will build a better world.

(University of Regina Press, \$36.95 pb, 360 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77940-124-3, available as ebook)

THE LETTERS: INSTITUTIONAL LIVES AND EDI

Nisha Nath, Rita Kaur Dhamoon, Anita Girvan, and Davina Bhandar

A collaboration among four publicly engaged scholars amplifies marginalized voices by tracing the circulation of equity, diversity, and inclusion-related letters to examine how they are used by the university to take on the false identity of being equitable, inclusive, diverse, and decolonizing, while warding off criticism.

(Fernwood Publishing, \$29.00 pb, 192 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77363-810-2, available as ebook)

LITERARY LIFE AFTER DEATH: COMMEMORATIONS OF WRITERS IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING CANADA

Carole Gerson

Gerson categorizes and analyzes the ways in which writers have been commemorated in Canada to show how tributes have changed in response to evolving national and social concerns. These ways include commemorations by governments in objects such as coins, stamps, and plaques, and in historic sites and place names; by local communities and non-profit organizations in house museums, literary tourist sites, statues, and parks; and by hobbyists and literary authors who incorporate or revisit deceased authors in new works.

(Concordia University Press, \$34.95 pb, 280 pages, ISBN: 978-1-988111-66-7, available as ebook)

THE LONG SIXTIES: STORIES FROM THE NEW LEFT

Edited by Jim Harding

Seven veteran social activists from the sixties, all still engaged in campaigns and organizations across Canada, tell their stories of six decades of political engagement – how they got involved, why they stay involved, how they persevered into their twilight years – and critically reflect on their victories and defeats, challenges, what they learned, and how their perspectives have changed.

(Fernwood Publishing, \$29.00 pb, 256 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77363-803-4, available as ebook)

THE MULTIVERSE: A PHILOSOPHICAL INTRODUCTION

Jeremy Butterfield

Written for students and newcomers, this book presents and assesses three versions of the multiverse, one from philosophy, where all logically possible universes are equally real, and two from physics, which include the branches of the quantum state, and the bubbles of inflationary cosmology. (University of Calgary Press, 354 pages, \$168.99 hc, ISBN: 978-1-77385-695-7; \$59.99 pb, ISBN: 978-1-77385-696-4; available as ebook)

**THE NEW POLITICS OF WESTERN CANADA:
CONTESTED HISTORIES, UNCERTAIN FUTURES**

Edited by Charles Smith and Tom McIntosh
Contributors to this volume interpret underexplored aspects of Western Canadian politics, re-examining the historical and contemporary meanings attached to “the West” as a form of identity, providing a nuanced analysis of western political ideology, and exploring pressing western economic and policy concerns.

(UBC Press, \$37.95 pb, 352 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7748-7199-0, available as ebook)

**NOT YOUR CASH COW, NOT YOUR SCAPEGOAT:
STUDENT MIGRATION AND CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES**

The Racialization of Asian International Students Collective
Collectively written by post-secondary educators, researchers, and students, including student migrants themselves, this book looks at the international student within the larger context of student migration to examine the everyday vulnerabilities arising from this immigration status, and it provides anti-racist recommendations for supporting student migrants from Asia to Canada.

(Fernwood Publishing, \$28.00 pb, 156 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77363-805-8, available as ebook)

**THE ORIGINS OF UKRAINIAN GOTHIC:
HISTORY, CULTURAL HAUNTINGS, AND POLITICAL IMAGINATION**

Svitlana (Lana) Kryś
Through a comparative study of the horror works of selected authors and the application of post-colonial theory, this book shows how, from the 1820s to the 1920s, Ukrainian dark prose used the conventions of the British and western European Gothic novel to introduce politically dissenting views, making it a tool for resistance and decolonization.

(University of Toronto Press, \$70.00 hc, 264 pages, ISBN: 978-1-0498-0165-0, available as ebook)

**OUR RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS: A BIOGRAPHY
OF CANADA'S CHARTER**

Aaron W. Hughes
Written for a wide readership, this book looks at Canada's legal situation prior to

1982, examines the historical origins and legal language of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and traces its reception, interpretation, and influence over the ensuing decades, including how it has become a model for constitutions in new democracies throughout the world.
(University of Alberta Press, \$24.99 pb, 268 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-826-0, available as ebook)

**OUT ON A LIMB: SAVING THE URBAN TREE
CANOPY, THE CITY PROJECT, BOOK 3**

Erna Buffie
The third book in the stellar series about issues facing the city of Winnipeg provides a very clear and concise presentation of all of the benefits of an urban forest, how it more than pays for itself, and how the City needs to find the will and a way to finance the cultivation and care of trees in the city.

(Great Plains Press, \$19.95 pb, 150 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77337-147-4)

**PLANTING THISTLES: SCOTTISH ISLANDER
COLONIZATION IN LATE VICTORIAN CANADA**

Timothy S. Forest
Forest explores the motivations, misfires, and consequences of the state-sponsored and failed attempts to transplant Scottish crofters from the Outer Hebrides to British Columbia and the Prairies at the height of the Victorian age. This failure prompted colonizers to re-examine issues of religion, race, class, gender, Britishness, and modernity.

(UBC Press, \$125.00 hc, 456 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7748-7097-9, available as ebook)

**POSTAL CENSORSHIP, SURVEILLANCE,
RESISTANCE: TWENTIETH-CENTURY
UKRAINE AND LETTER WRITING**

Edited by Alex Averbuch, Natalia Khanenko-Friesen, and Jelena Pogosjan
Drawing on newly uncovered archival materials, and bridging history, anthropology, literary studies, and memory studies, this book is the first comprehensive study of censorship and epistolary culture in Ukraine under the repressive regimes of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, examining how systems of control shaped the practices of letter writers, who devised strategies of resilience through metaphor, folklore, and coded language.

(McGill-Queen's University Press, \$110.00 hc, 488 pages, with illustrations, ISBN: 978-0-2280-2795-9, available as ebook)

**“P.S. BURN AFTER READING”: THE KELLOCK-
TASCHEREAU COMMISSION AND SOVIET
ESPIONAGE IN CANADA**

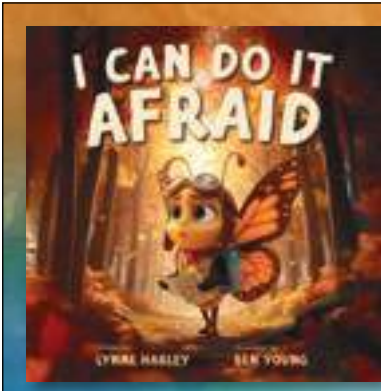
Reinhold Kramer and Tom Mitchell
This book explores how Canada, after the 1945 defection of Soviet cypher clerk Igor Gouzenko and the exposure of Canadian spies, used the Kellock-Taschereau Commission – sometimes judiciously, sometimes not – to confront espionage and protect national security.

(University of Toronto Press, \$90.00 hc, 432 pages, ISBN: 978-1-0498-0466-8, available as ebook)

**QUEER AND MUSLIM: ON FAITH, FAMILY,
AND HEALING**

Edited by Rahim Thawer and Maryam Khan
This compelling anthology of essays, poems, personal narratives, conversations,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36



I Can Do It Afraid
Lynne Harley & Ben Young

Follow the flight of a little monarch butterfly whose 3,000-mile migration adventure from Canada to Mexico reminds us all that courage, strength, and trust live within!
Contains discussion questions and butterfly facts.

978-1-77869-068-6
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BRAVE the JOURNEY

and letters to future selves shows how, when mental health frameworks are expanded to allow for the complexity of intersections among spirituality, community, and sexual identity, space is created for queer Muslims who were previously marginalized by both Muslim and queer communities.

(University of Regina Press, \$25.95 pb, 208 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77940-128-1, available as ebook)

RETHINKING HOMICIDE: THE CONSTITUTIONAL CASE FOR REFORM

Colton Fehr

Scholars, judges, and lawyers will appreciate Fehr's case for constitutionally restructuring Canadian homicide law. He proposes changes to the distinctions between first- and second-degree murder and manslaughter, the infanticide provision, murder's exclusion from the duress defence, and minimum sentences. (McGill-Queen's University Press, \$39.95 hc, 274 pages, ISBN: 978-0-2280-2775-1, available as ebook)



REVOLUTIONARY SCIENCE: THE STRUGGLE FOR AGROECOLOGY IN THE AMERICAS

Bruce H. Jennings

This book shows how agroecology – a science grounded in ecology, cultural respect, and political commitment to those most marginalized – offers hope to the millions of campesinos and others across the Americas whose traditional farming systems were dismantled in the 1940s with the U.S.-backed spread of industrial agriculture.

(Fernwood Publishing, \$28.00 pb, 156 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77363-806-5, available as ebook)

THE SACRED PATH OF SIMPLICITY

Mark A. Burch

First presented in 2005, this series of reflections provides a distillation of Burch's life practice – the exploration of voluntary simplicity, which is “a freely chosen way of life that aims to reduce material consumption and the pursuit of money and power generally” in favour of cultivating values such as non-violence, social justice, ecological sustainability, and a more contemplative approach to living. (CMU Press, \$28.00 pb, 144 pages, ISBN: 978-1-987986-30-3)

SPARE THE CHILD: ENDING CHILDHOOD CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Ailsa M. Watkinson

This very accessible history of childhood corporal punishment includes how it was introduced into Indigenous communities through residential schools; a presentation of efforts made and needed to repeal section 43 of the Canadian Criminal Code; and a description of the long-term social, emotional, physical, and developmental effects of childhood corporal punishment. (University of Regina Press, \$29.95 pb, 256 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77940-104-5, available as ebook)

TARGETING LIBYA: HOW CANADA WENT FROM BUILDING PUBLIC WORKS TO BOMBING AN OIL-RICH COUNTRY AND CREATING CHAOS FOR ITS CITIZENS

Owen Schalk

Investigative journalist Schalk examines the influence of Canadian business and government actors in Libya, the rise and fall of Muammar Qadhafi, the SNC-Lavalin affair, and Libya's ongoing instability,

dismantling the myth of Canada as a neutral peacekeeper.

(James Lorimer & Company, \$27.95 pb, 240 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4594-2032-8, available as ebook)

THIN BLUE RAGE: THE POLICE COUNTERMOVEMENT

Andrew Crosby and Jeffrey Monaghan

This book recasts policing in Canada as a social movement rather than a neutral public institution, through exploring policing's ideological dimensions, communications practices, membership structures, and political campaigning. (Fernwood Publishing, \$28.00 pb, 208 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77363-808-9, available as ebook)

TROUBLED TRIBUTARIES: ALBERTA ANGLERS, FISH FIGHTS, AND THE RACE TO SAVE MOUNTAIN COLDWATER STREAMS, 1900–1930

George Colpitts

A story of passion and commitment, of the struggle to balance nature's use and preservation, and of people coming together, this book reveals for the first time the work and the controversy of fisheries conservation of the Bow, Highwood, and Oldman rivers and their many high mountain tributaries.

(Bighorn Books-University of Calgary Press, 258 pages, \$68.99 hc, ISBN: 978-1-77385-685-8; \$34.99 pb, ISBN: 978-1-77385-686-5)

A VACATION FOR VICTORY: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S LAND ARMY IN CANADA

Kelsey M. Lonie

Blending creative non-fiction with archival letters, newspaper clippings, interviews, and her own grandmother's recollections, Lonie portrays the working lives of the women and girls of Canada's Women's Land Army who planted, picked, and packed food to sustain the nation during the Second World War.

(McGill-Queen's University Press, \$42.95 pb, 312 pages, with illustrations throughout, ISBN: 978-0-2280-2761-4, available as ebook)

Pair of picture books reminds children and caregivers of their worth

Anticipation of a birth, kindergartener's frustrations explored by Anne Renaud

by Sara Harms

BEFORE YOU CAME

Anne Renaud

Illustrated by Nahid Kazemi

Peanut Butter Press

\$17.95 hc, 28 pages,

ISBN: 978-1-927735-90-9

ZOEY'S CHEER-ME-UP CHEST

Anne Renaud

Illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard

Peanut Butter Press

\$19.95 hc, 32 pages

ISBN: 978-1-927735-91-6

Prolific award-winning children's author Anne Renaud is releasing two new picture books with Winnipeg-based Peanut Butter Press this year: *Before You Came* and *Zoey's Cheer-me-up Chest*.

Both titles were previously published in French, and they are illustrated by Nahid Kazemi and Gabrielle Grimard, respectively. Renaud, who lives in Quebec, writes in both languages and submits her manuscripts simultaneously.

Though these books first appeared in French, Renaud explains, "[They] began in English, which is the language in which I always first explore a story's emotional core, rhythm, and voice. Once the English text feels true, I translate it into French, aiming to stay as close as possible to the original while making subtle adjustments for cultural nuance, if needed."

The emotional core of *Before You Came* is the anticipation, longing, and love experienced before the arrival of a child, which is conveyed, Renaud says, "through poetic imagery, repetition, and the language of the body and the natural world."



Montreal-based artist Nahid Kazemi says, "For me, this book is about quiet emotional space."

She chose a muted palette of earth tones, pinks, and blues, but creating gentle images to reflect the gentle text was not easy.

"All of [the illustrations] captured the moment of quiet expectation – when everything feels paused before change arrives," she says. "It was challenging because it needed restraint. If I added too much detail, the feeling disappeared. If I removed too much, it became empty rather than full of anticipation. Finding that balance took time."

Capturing subtle but powerful feelings was also part of the author's inspiration for the story – the birth of her niece. "I felt an immediate visceral connection to her – an overwhelming realization that I would lay down my life for this child," explains Renaud, who has no children of her own.

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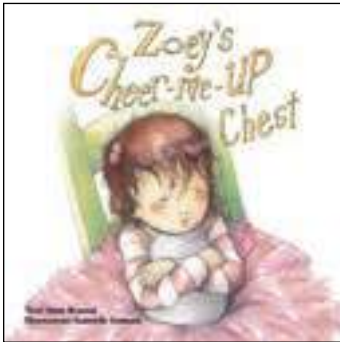


MAGENTA PHOTO STUDIO

"This book grew out of that emotional awakening and my desire to put words to a love that existed even before the child arrived." ANNE RENAUD



"All of [the illustrations] captured the moment of quiet expectation – when everything feels paused before change arrives." NAHID KAZEMI



“The colours exceed her drawing in the same way that she lets herself be overwhelmed by emotions in her own life!” GABRIELLE GRIMARD

“That moment gave me a profound insight into what parental love must feel like: instinctive, fierce, and limitless. This book grew out of that emotional awakening and my desire to put words to a love that existed even before the child arrived.”

Shifting gears from newborn to kindergartener, *Zoey’s Cheer-Me-Up Chest* chronicles the frustrations of a day in the life of young Zoey, who feels inadequate compared to her older siblings. Their handmade gifts of cookies and a scarf for their father’s birthday are superior, Zoey feels, to her own simple handmade card.

Zoey’s story reminds and reassures readers that, as Renaud says, children’s “abilities, creativity, and efforts are worth celebrating.”

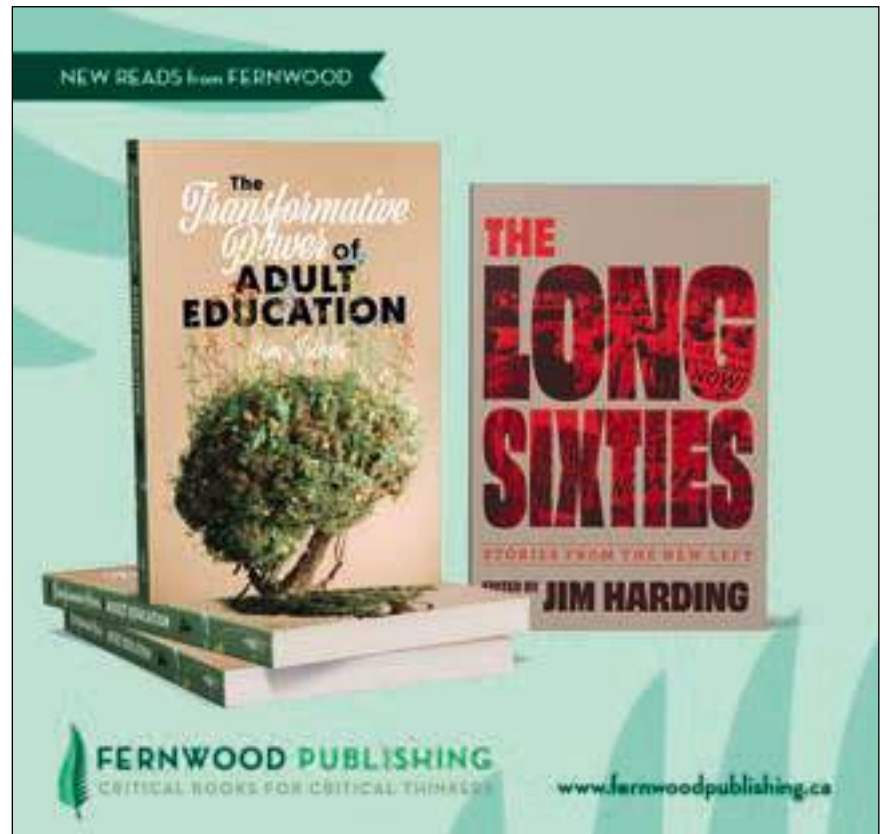
Siblings Mathilda and Mathew introduce Zoey to the idea of a “cheer-me-up chest,” which, Renaud explains, “helps Zoey shift her focus from what she can’t do yet to all the things she can do.” As Zoey fills the chest with her art and drawings, her self-doubt gives way to calm confidence.

Quebec-based illustrator Gabrielle Grimard ensured that Zoey’s drawings reveal her character: “The colours exceed her drawing in the same way that she lets herself be overwhelmed by emotions in her own life!” she says. “But her colours are frank and vivid like her!”

Both of Renaud’s books remind all readers, children and caregivers alike,

of their worth. Zoey’s story reminds and reassures readers that, as Renaud says, children’s “abilities, creativity, and efforts are worth celebrating.”

And, “*Before You Came* is for anyone who needs to be reminded that they are cherished, chosen, and profoundly loved.”



Middle-grade novel explores how to cope when friendships fall apart

Partially inspired by her own life, Anna Rosner's story encourages self-forgiveness

by Laura McKay

LAST YEAR WITH MADDY

Anna Rosner

Yellow Dog-Great Plains Press

\$19.95 pb, 208 pages

ISBN: 978-1-77337-149-8

Award-winning author Anna Rosner's captivating new middle-grade novel, *Last Year with Maddy*, is about two close friends who have a falling out. It's also partially inspired by the Toronto-based author's own life.

"A lot of *Last Year with Maddy* is autobiographical, but the truth is in fragments, and some of these fragments occurred when I was older than the protagonist," says Rosner.

"The novel is like a jigsaw puzzle, with each piece being a part of my life, fitting in here or there, until the (semi-fictional) story comes to life."

One of these fragments connects to Rosner's best friend, Sarah, who took her own life at 37.

"I've wanted to write a book about her for a long time, but it took me more than a decade to figure out how to begin," Rosner explains.

"When I started to imagine the plot and characters, I thought about what aspects of Sarah's personality I loved most. Maddy has Sarah's innate understanding of people's emotional needs. Aviva, the protagonist, has Sarah's dry wit and courage."

Aviva is the narrator, and her wit pulls readers into the magnetic world of the novel. In some ways, Aviva is a reincarnation of Rosner's friend Sarah.

"Aviva's voice is very much like my friend Sarah's," says Rosner. "Sarah was wickedly funny. When I was writing, I often found myself thinking, 'What would Sarah have said or done here?'"



"The most challenging part of writing Last Year with Maddy was revisiting the past and the mistakes I felt I'd made in the last year of my friend Sarah's life." ANNA ROSNER

Aviva is writing a book to process her conflict with Maddy – *Last Year with Maddy* is the result.

"Both girls become consumed by their own problems when they need each other the most," says Rosner. Maddy is preoccupied by her parents' separation, as well as a high-pressure music competition. Aviva is processing her brother Ethan's new diagnoses of hearing loss and autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Rosner's portrayal of Ethan draws upon her work with autistic children throughout her teen and university years. "I wanted to represent Ethan respectfully and realistically, so I modelled his behaviour on children with ASD whom I knew and loved," she explains.

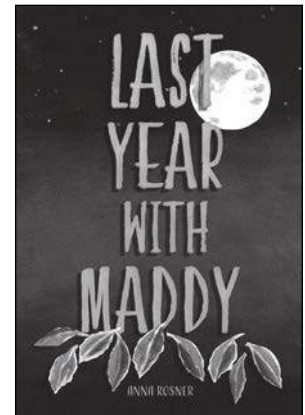
To flesh out her research, she also interviewed the family members of children with ASD, as well as a pediatric speech-language pathologist. "All of these interviews helped me understand Ethan better," she says, and they helped her give nuance to both Ethan's character and the impact of his diagnoses on Aviva.

For many authors, writing a character whose life experiences are very different

from their own is likely to present a story's biggest challenge. For Rosner, however, it was more about the emotional toll.

"The most challenging part of writing *Last Year with Maddy* was revisiting the past and the mistakes I felt I'd made in the last year of my friend Sarah's life. Like the protagonist, Aviva, I often said the 'wrong thing' and tried to fix things I couldn't," says Rosner.

"But Aviva comes to understand that everyone says the wrong thing sometimes, especially in impossible situations, and you have to forgive yourself – though I do admit I still struggle with that myself." 🌿



MORE YOUNG ADULT & CHILDREN TITLES

PICTURE BOOKS

AYAH AND THE BIG WORLD OUTSIDE

Julie Sedivy and Souad Shehab, illustrated by Barkha Lohia

Ayah has always lived in a refugee camp and has a dream where a swallow flies her around the world to show her that there are places without fences and without war. This beautifully illustrated book is inspired by Souad Shehab's experience – it powerfully shows how imagination provides strength and hope.

(Orca Book Publishers, \$21.95 hc, 32 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4598-4364-6, available as ebook)

THE BURROWING OWLS OF THE PRAIRIE GRASSLANDS

Deborah Hodge, illustrated by Karen Reczuch

This non-fiction picture book shows the life of the small burrowing owls of the Prairies, the only owls who live underground. Once common, living among

prairie dogs, foxes, and other grassland creatures, the owls are now endangered as their habitat was taken over by agriculture. Many dedicated people are working hard to restore the grasslands and the burrowing owls population.

(Groundwood Books, \$21.99 hc, 36 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77946-031-8, available as ebook)

GRANDMA'S BLUE BUCKET

Valerie E. Fritz, illustrated by Pranisha Shrestha

In this heartwarming story about the bond between a child and her grandmother, Linh explores Grandma's garden with her, filling Grandma's blue bucket with wonderful peas, tomatoes, and potatoes – the fun continues in the kitchen as Linh learns about healthy eating.

(FriesenPress, 28 pages, \$21.99 hc, ISBN: 978-1-03-831748-3; \$12.99 pb, ISBN: 978-1-03-831747-6; available as ebook)

I BUILT A ROCKET SHIP

Anna Lazowski, illustrated by Jennica Lounsbury

Showing how children may grieve in unexpected ways, this emotionally sensitive book follows a young child who addresses a loved one who is now gone, telling them how they are building a rocket ship in the back yard and what they are packing to take with them on a trip to the stars.

(Kids Can Press, \$21.99 hc, 32 pages, ISBN: 978-1-5253-1131-4, available as ebook)

WEBSTER THE SMILING DOG

Traci Deck, illustrated by Maria Dagh

Based on a true story, this charmingly illustrated book celebrates patience and hope as it tells of Webster, a dog waiting and waiting at a pet store, watching other puppies find their homes.

(Your Nickel's Worth Publishing, \$19.95 pb, 24 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77869-059-4)

WORM ON THE JOB

Maureen Fergus, illustrated by Paul Hammond

Worm is very good at his job as head librarian, but he decides to try out some other careers, such as window washing and lifeguarding, before seeing an ad for a night security guard at the Invention Convention – it sounds exciting, requiring courage and

the ability to keep a thief from stealing nifty inventions. His self-confidence gets him the job, but will he catch the thief? (Kids Can Press, \$21.99 hc, 36 pages, ISBN: 978-1-5253-1316-5, available as ebook)

FOR EARLY YEARS READERS

THE NEXT BIG PIGS

Ryan Uytdewilligen, illustrated by Charlotte Cho

Ten-year-old Mikey doesn't want to farm; he wants to perform! Lucky for him, so do the three pigs he is given to raise for market – when he discovers they can not only talk but also juggle, do acrobatics, sing, dance, and more, he joins their troupe and together they set off for the big lights of Broadway. But can they get there before the evil Mr. Baconmaker catches up to them? (Wandering Fox-Heritage House Publishing, \$12.95 pb, 168 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77203-576-6)

THE HEALER AND THE PHOENIX, LEGENDARY ALLIES, BOOK 1

Linda Trinh, illustrated by Quynh Anh Nguyen

The first book in this fantasy series follows 10-year-old Mai, as she is chosen to be the newest member of the Legendary Allies Team by Ruby, a phoenix with the power to heal. Together with the team – Cam and their ally, a turtle named Emerald, and Lieu and her ally, a lan named Diamond – she sets off on their first quest, to cure people of a heart sickness. Can Mai trust her and Ruby's power enough to figure out the cure?

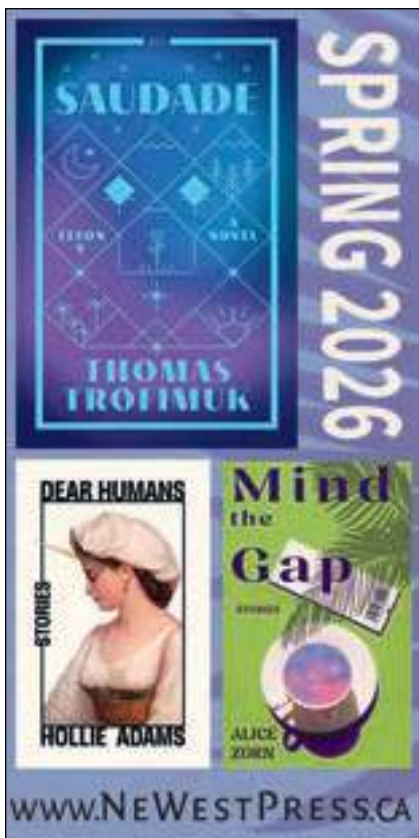
(Annick Press, \$25.99 hc, 172 pages, ISBN: 978-1-83402-069-3, available as ebook)

THE KING'S JOURNEY

Omorieg Osakpolor, illustrated by Benjamin Ebimobowe

Eight-year-old Uki and his grandfather accompany the crown prince of Benin through different sacred sites across the ancient kingdom – from Uselu and the sacred palm tree to Usama Palace and Useh Village – dancing and celebrating his coronation as the monarch or Oba.

(Griots Lounge, \$32.99 hc, 120 pages, ISBN: 978-1-0698034-1-2)



READY, CASSETTE, GO! CASSETTE CITY, BOOK 1

Jarett Sitter

The first book in a debut graphic novel series, this fun story explores friendship and how working together is better than going solo. New to the city after her parents split up, guitarist and singer Melody Li joins with a raccoon drummer, a mushroom bassist, and a robot keyboard player to form a band to compete in a competition and beat the bully, Styles. (Annick Press, 208 pages, \$31.99 hc, ISBN: 978-1-83402-056-3; \$19.99 pb, ISBN: 978-1-83402-057-0; available as ebook)

FOR MIDDLE YEARS READERS**IZZY WONG'S DRAMA DISASTER**

Marty Chan

This sequel to the novel *Izzy Wong's Nose for News* sees Izzy in a new school, where she navigates between two groups of students – the acting stream and the technical arts stream – and continues her podcasting activities, this time reporting on the circulation of mean AI-generated memes about one of her classmates – but not until she figures out who is doing it! (Orca Book Publishers, \$14.95 pb, 224 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4598-4236-6, available as ebook)

QUEEN OF THE WOLVES: THE LEGENDARY O6 FEMALE, CHRONICLES OF THE YELLOWSTONE WOLVES, BOOK 3

Rick McIntyre and David A. Poulsen

Based on the observations of renowned Yellowstone wolf expert Rick McIntyre and co-written with prolific author David A. Poulsen, this non-fiction book celebrates alpha females, particularly o6, who is brave and intelligent and born to be the leader – she just needs to find a mate equal to her. (Greystone Kids, \$24.95 hc, 128 pagws, ISBN: 978-1-77840-195-4, available as an ebook)

YA FICTION**THE CURSE OF HEARTWOOD ACADEMY**

Marty Chan

This high-interest accessible novel for teen readers blends horror and dark academia, following 15-year-old Allie, who must undergo an initiation ritual at her

boarding school, which involves spending the night in a haunted forest.

(Orca Book Publishers, \$10.95 pb, 128 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4598-4189-5, available as ebook)

MEMENTO MORI: THE AWAKENING OF ANDREW

Brent M. Loehr

It's 1990, and 14-year-old Andrew is finishing Grade 9 in the small town of Spring Hill. Suffering from sleep issues and living without a father, he is anxious and distracted. Then he buys a boom box with an auto-reverse feature, which not only helps him sleep, but reveals that with its help, he can memorize almost anything while sleeping. This newfound talent changes everything!

(9 of Diamonds Publishing, \$15.99 pb, 240 pages, ISBN: 978-1-0694251-0-2, available as ebook)

NO MORE FRIDAYS

Lesley Choyce

Elliot's mother – who firmly believed in “the possibilities,” one of which was that Elliott has powers of extra-sensory perception that he needs to develop – dies of ALS in his last year of high school. He and his best friend, the brilliant and very science-oriented Riley, must somehow learn to navigate life without his mother's smile and constant affirmation that life is magical.

(Roseway-Fernwood Publishing, \$28.00 pb, 126 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77363-804-1, available as ebook)

THE ROMANCE REWIND

Sarah Everett

After Zadie's anniversary dinner with her boyfriend, Jason, ends in a breakup and car crash, she wakes up in the hospital to find out he is in a coma. No one knows that Jason broke up with her, except his cousin Marcus, and somehow, the two of them are transported back in time to witness Zadie and Jason's first date. Zadie sees a chance for a do-over, but will Marcus allow it?

(G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers-PRH, \$17.99 pb, 304 pages, ISBN: 979-821700298-6, available as ebook and audiobook)

THE SAW MOUTH

Cale Plett

In this YA rural horror novel, Cedar, a genderqueer teen, after surviving a near-apocalypse called Autumn, when technology “woke” 10 years ago, is going to live with their grandmother in Sawblade Lake, a nowhere town that the bus doesn't even go to. There, Cedar finds queer family, but is hunted by a mysterious being in the woods, whose existence is somehow entwined with their own.

(Delacorte Press-PRH, \$27.99 hc, 384 pages, ISBN: 979-821702570-1, available as ebook and audiobook)

THE SLEUTH OF FERREN CITY, THE BRINDLEWATCH QUINTET, BOOK THREE

S. M. Beiko

The third book in the Brindlewatch Quintet is set back on Mount Quixx, this time following Sable, a scaly two-mouthed monstro who wants nothing more than to retreat after her best friend abandons her and read the mystery novels she steals from Professor Bedouin's observatory. But she must take on the role of detective when Kepler sends an urgent request for help! (ECW Press, \$23.95 pb, 344 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77041-697-0, available as ebook)

YA NON-FICTION**SO SHE WENT AHEAD: 50 TRAILBLAZING WOMEN OF THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES**

Haley Healey, illustrated by Kimiko Fraser

This inspiring collection of concise biographies reveals the under-reported history of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba through the stories of female artists, entrepreneurs, adventurers, pioneers, writers, doctors, midwives, activists, politicians, journalists, community leaders, and more – women such as photographer Geraldine Moody, Anishinaabe inventor Olivia Poole, Canada's first Black female lawyer Violet King Henry, and silk merchant and business owner Kimi Wakabayashi. (Heritage House Publishing, \$22.95 hc, 128 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77203-572-8)

Un collectif de jeunes francophones émerge des ateliers d'écriture au Café Postal

« *La dimension communautaire du projet* » : le fil conducteur qui relie les nouvelles

par Katryne Parvais-Dion

ON FAIT DES TRACES

Collectif Génération d'encre
sous la direction d'Anne-Marie Turcotte
Les Éditions du Blé
11,95 \$ papier, 162 pages
ISBN : 978-2-925452-25-6
Disponible en livre numérique

Dix écrivains francophones émergents laissent leurs premières traces littéraires dans *On fait des traces*, une nouvelle anthologie. Le collectif Génération d'encre rassemble des jeunes adultes âgés de 18 à 35 ans pour des ateliers d'écriture visant à perfectionner leurs écrits et à publier des nouvelles.

Les ateliers ont eu lieu au Café Postal à Saint-Boniface et ont été animés par l'écrivaine Anne-Marie Turcotte. Les rencontres régulières au café ont été un excellent moyen de soutenir une entreprise francophone locale et d'inspirer la créativité au sein de la communauté.

Turcotte a choisi de mettre l'accent sur « les thèmes de l'identité et du territoire, des thèmes larges et rassembleurs », encourageant les écrivains, issus de milieux culturels variés, à s'inspirer de leurs propres expériences.

Les récits se déroulent dans tout le Manitoba, des prairies rurales aux rues de Winnipeg, et explorent des thèmes tels que l'immigration, la mémoire et l'espoir. Dans l'une des histoires, un homme se rend à Churchill, où il est confronté à la fois au froid du nord et à son propre chagrin, montrant aux lecteurs comment notre environnement peut façonner nos émotions.

Collection of emerging young Francophones began with writing workshops at Café Postal

Common thread between short stories shows 'community aspect of the project'

by Katryne Parvais-Dion

ON FAIT DES TRACES

Collectif Génération d'encre
Under the leadership of Anne-Marie Turcotte
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\$21.95 pb, 162 pages
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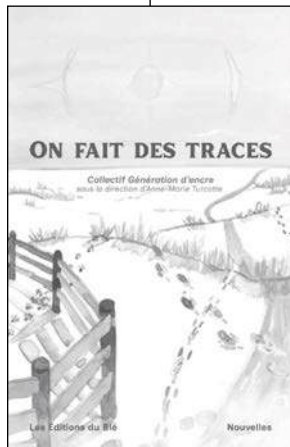
Ten emerging Francophone writers are leaving their first literary marks in *On fait des traces*, a new anthology. The collective Génération d'encre brings together young adults aged 18 to 35 for writing workshops aimed at perfecting and publishing short stories.

The workshops took place at Café Postal in St. Boniface and were led by writer Anne-Marie Turcotte. Regular visits to the café were a great way to support a local French-speaking business and inspire creativity in the community.

Turcotte chose to focus on the “broad, unifying themes of identity and territory,” encouraging the writers, who come from varied cultural backgrounds, to draw from their own experiences.

The stories take place across Manitoba, from the rural Prairies to Winnipeg's streets, and explore topics like immigration, memory, and hope. In one story, a man visits Churchill, where he confronts both the northern cold and his own grief, showing readers how our environment can shape our emotions.

The anthology is defined by the interconnection of characters, places, and themes. For example, two recently immigrated characters from different stories cross paths and bond over adjusting to Canadian life.





Le Collectif Génération d'encre : (de g. à d. / left to right) : Yvan Bouchard, Émilie Vermette, Axelle Oulé, Rachelle Rocque, Fulgencia Bidossessi Hountondji, Anne-Marie Turcotte, Ena Mallarino, Eline Mallarino, Béatrice Vien, Jean-Luc Loïselle et Hugo Beaucamp.

L'anthologie se caractérise par l'interconnexion des personnages, des lieux et des thèmes. Par exemple, deux personnages récemment immigrés, issus d'histoires différentes, se croisent et tissent un lien en s'adaptant à la vie canadienne.

Les récits interconnectés sont plus communs dans les recueils de nouvelles d'un seul auteur; Turcotte souligne à quel point il est rare de voir ce genre d'approche dans un ouvrage collectif. Elle dit que c'était voulu dès le départ et que « l'écho entre les différentes nouvelles permet d'évoquer davantage l'aspect communautaire du projet ».

La coordinatrice du projet, Katrine Deniset, a supervisé le projet et a joué un rôle clé dans les étapes éditoriales. Elle a mené un atelier avec les nouveaux auteurs pour déterminer le titre du projet : *On fait des traces*.

Au-delà de son sens littéral, l'expression évoque aussi l'idée de nouveaux écrivains laissant leur marque dans la littérature francophone, tout en possédant une signification locale. Elle explique que les francophones

« L'écho entre les différentes nouvelles permet d'évoquer davantage l'aspect communautaire du projet. »

ANNE-MARIE TURCOTTE

Linking narratives are more common in short story collections by a single author; Turcotte notes how rare this approach is in a collective work. She says this was intentional from the beginning, and that “the echo

“the echo between the different stories further evokes the community aspect of the project.”

ANNE-MARIE TURCOTTE

between the different stories further evokes the community aspect of the project.”

Project coordinator Katrine Deniset oversaw the project and played a key role in the editorial stages. She led a workshop with the new authors to determine the project's title: *On fait des traces*.

In addition to the literal meaning of “making tracks” or “leaving traces,” which speaks to the idea of new writers leaving a mark on Francophone literature, the phrase has an additional local meaning. She explains that Francophones in the Prairies use this expression to say “Okay, I'm leaving” or “I'm going for a bit.”

“It's very appropriate,” she says, “especially when you think about the project's concept of place and belonging.”

Turcotte describes *On fait des traces* as a varied reading experience that is “sometimes deeper, sometimes lighter, highlighting the variety of human experiences found in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44

des Prairies utilisent cette expression pour dire « bon, je m'en vais » ou « je vais faire un boutte ».

« C'est tout à fait approprié », dit-elle, « notamment quand on réfléchit au concept de 'terroir' du projet. »

Turcotte décrit

On fait des traces

comme une

expérience de lecture

variée, « tantôt

plus profonde,

tantôt plus légère,

qui met en lumière

la diversité des

expériences humaines

qu'on retrouve

sur le territoire ».

Elle espère que les

lecteurs retrouveront

un sentiment de

familiarité avec les lieux et les thèmes abordés.

Deniset souhaite que l'originalité du projet permettra « d'ajouter de nouvelles voix à notre répertoire ».

Elle dit, « Les auteurs et autrices du collectif font, si on veut, 'leurs premières traces', mais j'ai l'impression que ce ne seront pas les dernières ». ✎

« *Les auteurs et autrices du collectif font, si on veut, 'leurs premières traces', mais j'ai l'impression que ce ne seront pas les dernières.* »

KATRINE DENISET

the region.” She hopes that readers will find a sense of familiarity with the settings and themes.

Deniset hopes the project will “add new voices to our repertoire.”

She says, “The authors of the collective are, so to speak, making their ‘first marks,’ but I have a feeling they won’t be their last.” ✎

“*The authors of the collective are, so to speak, making their ‘first marks,’ but I have a feeling they won’t be their last.*” KATRINE DENISET

VIENNENT DE PARAÎTRE EN FRANÇAIS

MISTASINÏY: LE ROCHER D'UN PEUPLE

Mary Harelkin Bishop, illustré par Heaven Starr, traduit par Bernard Fafard

Danny et Zach sont des élèves en 6^e année; ennemis depuis trois ans. Leur professeur confie un projet de recherche familiale à la classe et oblige les deux garçons à travailler ensemble. Danny découvre un passé intéressant, entre ses ancêtres et ceux de Zach, qui mène à leur réconciliation. Danny and Zach are Grade 6 students who have been rivals for three years. Their teacher assigns the class a family history project and forces the two boys to work together. Danny discovers an interesting past, linking his ancestors to Zach's, which leads to their reconciliation. (Éditions de la nouvelle plume, roman jeunesse, 18,95 \$ papier, 218 pages, ISBN: 978-2-925329-32-9, disponible en livre numérique)

PAULINE BOUTAL, ENTRE LES TOILES ET LES PLANCHES

Lise Gaboury-Diallo

Artiste peintre, illustratrice de mode, actrice, metteuse en scène et directrice artistique du Cercle Molière, Pauline Boutal (1894–1992) a laissé une empreinte indélébile dans le paysage culturel du Manitoba. Dans cette pièce en deux actes, Lise Gaboury-Diallo redonne voix à cette femme d'exception, dont la vie oscille entre passion amoureuse, engagement artistique et désir de transmission. Visual artist, fashion illustrator, actor, director, and artistic director of Cercle Molière, Pauline Boutal (1894–1992) left an indelible mark on the cultural landscape of Manitoba. In this two-act play, Lise Gaboury-Diallo brings back the voice of this exceptional woman and her life of romantic love, artistic commitment, and a desire to leave a legacy.

(Les Éditions du Blé, théâtre, 17,95 \$ papier, 210 pages, ISBN : 978-2-925452-20-1, disponible en livre numérique)

SEUILS

Louise Dandeneau

Dans ce deuxième recueil de poésie de Louise Dandeneau, le monde onirique et le monde vécu s'entrelacent. Le fruit de l'inconscient de l'autrice propose un moyen de mieux toucher la corde sensible de l'attachement désiré mais troublé entre mère et fille. Ces textes inspirés de rêves explorent la furie et la fragilité de ce lien des plus infrangibles. In this second collection of poetry, the worlds of dreams and real life intertwine. The author's unconscious mind offers a better way to touch the sensitive chord of the desired yet troubled attachment between mother and daughter. These dream-inspired texts explore the fury and fragility of this most unbreakable bond.

(Les Éditions du Blé, poésie, 21,95 \$ papier, 80 pages, ISBN : 978-2-925452-28-7, disponible en livre numérique)

From the Governor General's award-winning author Tonya Simpson



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If you visit Mosom and make him tea, you might go on a walk together and learn new words in Cree. After, Mosom might just ask for another cup of tea.

“Tender and thoughtful.”
—Kirkus Reviews



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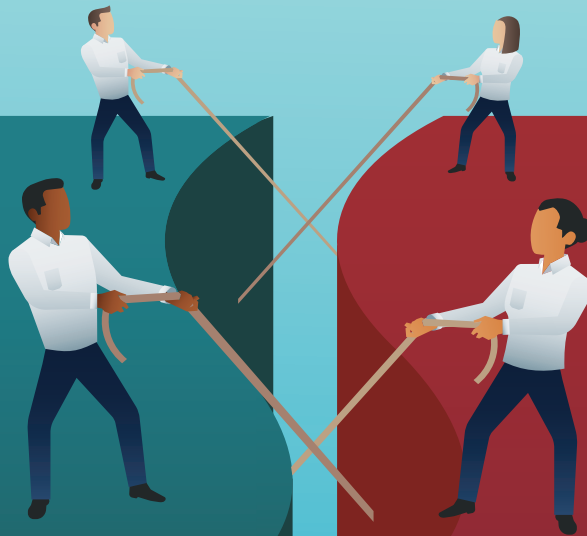
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Winnipegger **MELANIE DENNIS UNRAU** authored *Goose* (Assembly, 2025) and co-edited *I'll Get Right On It: Poems on Working Life in the Climate Crisis* (Roseway, 2025).

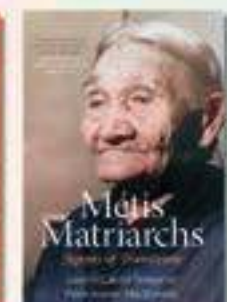
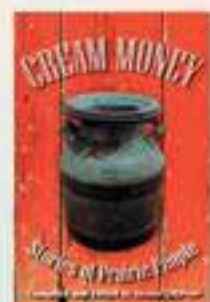
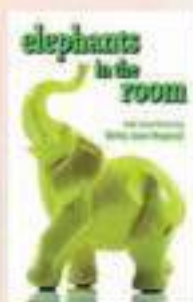
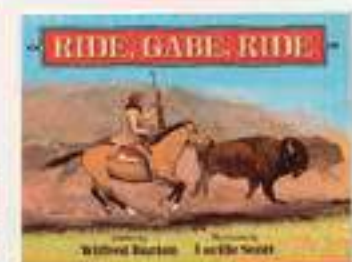
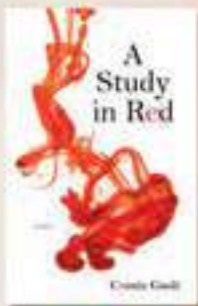
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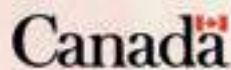
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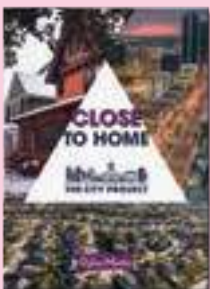
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Dylan Martin

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