

VANISHING IN VIRIDIAN

“Vanishing British Columbia is genealogy tied to specific historic places” — MICHAEL KLUCKNER

Vanishing British Columbia by Michael Kluckner (UBC Press \$49.95)

Having travelled for several decades to compile the impressions for *Vanishing British Columbia*, Michael Kluckner has distilled the multi-faceted province into 12 essential colours: cerulean blue, manganese blue, ultramarine light, Payne’s grey, cadmium yellow deep, yellow ochre, olive green, viridian, burnt sienna, burnt umber, sepia and India red.

His 160 blue/green paintings of heritage buildings, usually nestled amongst trees and hills, are unmistakably Kluckner. Inspired by Delacroix and by Japanese *sumi-e* sketches as a young man, Kluckner has developed a coherent style, using washed-out hues, to match his preservationist aesthetic. *Vanishing British Columbia* doesn’t rescue the past; it invests the ever-ephemeral present with mystique.

Unlike some of Kluckner’s earlier work, *Vanishing British Columbia* doesn’t feel commercial, and perhaps that’s the result of more tasteful packaging, increased maturity or else more remote subject matter. After a string of ‘Vanishing’ books in the 1980s, the heritage activist has refined his peculiar historical bent that merges academic precision with folksy reportage.

The end result is at once charming and useful—a rarity for an art book. Engaging Mark



BC Packers complex at Alert Bay a year before it was demolished in 2003. Painting by Michael Kluckner.

Forsythe’s *BC Almanac* program to serve as his intermediary to the public, Kluckner has attracted oldtimers and history buffs to his website. These people have supplied background tidbits — ‘local colour’ — to complement his watercolours, archival photos and Union Steamships memorabilia.

Kluckner’s paintings of humble sites such as ‘the Brilliant bridge’, ‘the Dunster store,’ ‘Wong’s Market,’ ‘the Rolla Pub’ or ‘the Union Bay Station’ were all started out-of-doors, on location, and completed in his studio. Kluckner’s subjects are devoid of drama, dignified, at rest, almost invisible unless we are stationary with them. Humans are eerily absent.

The image of Maquinna Av

nue in Zeballos shows the Zeballos Hotel, built in 1938, and an adjoining two-storey building that housed one of the town’s brothels. The static street scene, complete with parked cars, is non-descript, and yet Kluckner has validated this forgettable scene as a link to a soon-forgotten era. In this way, ghosts are redeemed and we are not trapped in Anywheresville, USA.

Amid architectural details, thumbnail biographies and historical summaries, Kluckner includes human punctuation marks. While discussing two paintings of residential schools since converted to Aboriginal centres (St. Mike’s at Alert Bay and St. Eugene’s north of Cranbrook), Kluckner recalls a local woman saying to him, “This

is where they tried to take my culture away, so it is fitting that it will now help me to get my culture back.”

How many people today can remember Siska Lodge in the Fraser Canyon, managed by Fred and Florence Lindsay in the 1950s? After incorporating excerpts from a Barry Broadfoot column, Kluckner quotes a Quesnel obituary that notes Fred Lindsay was a self-published author of gold rush tales who had “a few enemies and a hell of a lot of friends.” Perhaps this is what they mean by magic realism. Poof. Fred Lindsay had vanished, but Kluckner, as an artist/magician/historian, has succeeded in plucking him out of a huge hat called history.

0-7748-1125-0

THE EARTHTURNER

The Earth’s Blanket: Traditional Teachings for Sustainable Living by Nancy J. Turner (D&M \$35)

In 1913, when a rock slide impeded the Fraser River during the construction of the Canadian Northern Railway, the Nlaka’pmx erected a wooden flume, dipnetted the salmon, and then carried them to the flume so they might continue their migrations.



Daisy Sewid-Smith

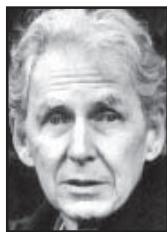
The title is derived from a report by James Teit who recorded the belief among Nlaka’pmx (Thompson) people that flowers, plants and grasses are the blanket of the earth. From the Saanich comes the story of Pitch, who went fishing in the sun, melted and was poured over the body of the Douglas Fir. From the Nuxalt comes the story of Raven bringing soapberries to the Bella Cooola Valley. Turner credits dozens of Aboriginal informants from around the province such as Chief Earl Maquinna George, Kim Recalma-Clutesi, Elsie Claxton and Daisy Sewid-Smith.

1-55365-081-6

DON’T SAY CHEESE

Second Chapter by Don Denton (Banff Centre \$22.99)

Jack Hodgins looks worried. Doug Coupland looks sideways. P.K. Page looks stoney. Robert Kroetsch looks stern. Marilyn Bowering looks professorial. Patrick Lane looks impatient. Esta



Jack Hodgins

Spalding looks resolute. Brian Brett looks suspicious. Possibly all this seriousness is intended to resonate through the ages in **Don Denton’s** second collection of author pix, *Second Chapter*, but for now the lack of animation makes for a glum-looking gang. Denton, who lives in Sooke, has gathered about one-third B.C. writers among the 50 represented, including Genni Gunn, Maria Coffey, Kevin Chong, bill bissett, Lorna Crozier, Lane, John Gould, Fiona Lam, Aislinn Hunter and Anne Fleming. Hunter and Fleming almost smile.

1-894773-11-X

FINDERS KEEPERS

Urgent 2nd Class by Nick Bantock (Raincoast \$26.95)

In much the same way sampling in the music industry has become legit for recording artists and poets can publish ‘found poems’, computer technology has enabled the easy borrowing of imagery for rejuvenated art by graphic designers. Lost ‘n’ founder **Nick Bantock** provides examples for “creating curious collage, dubious documents and other art from ephemera” in his *Urgent 2nd Class*, including technical



Nick Bantock

advise on how to photocopy flow-ers. “Urgent 2nd Class,” he says, “pays homage to the gentle art of embellishing the foxed and creased leftovers of bygone eras.” Theft or recycling; it’s all in the eye of the purloiner.

1-55192-723-3

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ABORTION STRUGGLE ENDS IN VICTORY

Winning Choice on Abortion: How British Columbian and Canadian Feminists Won the Battles of the 1970s and 1980s by Ann Thomson (Trafford \$31.45)

The struggle for women to gain unfettered and timely access to abortion services in British Columbia—abortion on demand—is a long and courageous one.

It goes back to a Quebec prison in 1975 when Dr. **Henry Morgentaler** was thrown naked into a solitary confinement cell and suffered a heart attack. Risking life imprisonment, Morgentaler, an Auschwitz survivor, spent a fortune on lawyers and on opening clinics to serve as an inspiration to the pro-choice movement across Canada. He had begun performing abortions in Montreal after a woman he turned away from his clinic tried to abort herself with a bicycle pump—and died.

“Parliament remained stony to the last,” writes **Ann Thomson** in *Winning Choice on Abortion: How British Columbian and Canadian Feminists Won the Battles of the 1970s and 1980s*, “and would not alter the 1969 abortion law.” The abortion law (allowing for therapeutic abortions only) was ultimately struck down in 1988 by a decision of the Canadian Supreme Court and that year the Everywoman’s Health Centre opened in Vancouver.

But with the Bush regime in the White House, and Liberals teetering in Ottawa, Thomson is anxious about neo-conservative politicians who would like to turn back the clock. That’s why she has fully documented



Mirthful Ann Thomson: fight was worthwhile

Ann Thomson believes women and the likes of Makaroff and Morgentaler might have to return to the barricades again if anti-abortionists continue to gain strength within the fundamentalist Christian movement. While history culminates in a happy ending, it also serves as a wake-up call to all who take access to abortion on demand in Canada for granted.

1-41204247-X

BOTH SIDES NOW

BY LORNE FINLAYSON
Salmon Wars: The Battle for the West Coast Salmon Fishery by Dennis Brown (Harbour \$25.95)

It takes two sides to make a war. In **Dennis Brown’s** *Salmon Wars* you have the DFO on one side, with allies in the fish processors and certain fishing groups. On the other side you have small boat fishermen, many of whom were members of the United Fishermen and Allied Worker’s Union (UFAWU), aligned with independent fishers, plant workers and the coastal communities.

Subtitled ‘The Battle for the West Coast Salmon Fishery’, Brown’s critical study recalls ferry blockades, the occupation of Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) offices, international incidents and the hard-nosed negotiations to save the salmon stocks and maintain communities during the 1990s.

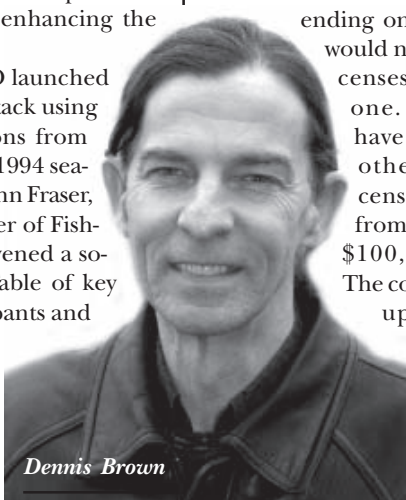
To complicate matters, occasionally the two adversarial sides would declare a truce and jointly confront the Americans.

In southern B.C. waters, Canadian and American fleets squabbled over shares of Fraser bound sockeye salmon. The DFO would sometimes permit the Canadian fleet almost unlimited fishing to choke off the runs before they reached US waters.

Similarly, on the North Coast, fishermen fought with Alaskans over their interception of fish bound for the Skeena River. In July, 1997, this disagreement led to the blockading of the Alaska Ferries vessel *Malaspina* in Prince Rupert harbour by frustrated gillnet and seine fishers. Eventually the dispute was resolved but not until tempers had flared on both sides of the border.

At issue for the DFO side and the UFAWU side was access to the salmon. DFO’s management plan was based on a report written in 1982 by Peter Pearse, a forest economist, who had advocated the privatization of the resource and a massive fleet reduction. The Pearse Report inflamed much of the fishing community, for it made no mention of the social disruption that implementation would bring and placed a minor emphasis on protecting and enhancing the resource itself.

In 1995, DFO launched a well crafted attack using recommendations from a report on the 1994 season written by John Fraser, a former Minister of Fisheries. They convened a so-called Round Table of key industry participants and others, getting them to agree to a regime of single gear and area licensing.



Dennis Brown



A sign of the times. From “Salmon Wars”

The word “gear” meant the method of fishing, be it trolling with hooks, gillnetting with a net or seining with a larger boat and different type of net. “Area licensing” meant that seine fishers would have a license to fish in one of two designated areas; gillnetters and trollers would have to choose to fish in one of three designated areas.

Fishermen wishing to use another gear type or fish in more than one area would have to buy the required license from another vessel. As well, the federal government came up with some funding to buy back a small number of licenses. This whole scheme was the “Mifflin Plan”, named after the Minister of Fisheries at the time.

In terms of fleet reduction, DFO’s plan seemed to work like hotcakes. For instance, a gillnetter who may have started his season fishing in the North, then worked his way south, and

ending on the Fraser, would need three licenses instead of one. He would have to buy the other two licenses at prices from \$70,000 to \$100,000 each. The coast was in an uproar over this, with massive protests and delegations to

Ottawa. DFO stonewalled to get its way and by the 2000 season the salmon fleet was reduced to 50% of its pre-Mifflin size.

Despite severe curtailment of opportunities for the remaining fleet, in 2004 some 1,874,686 Fraser sockeye went “missing”. These missing fish were the difference in numbers between those that the DFO counted entering the Fraser River and those that could not be accounted for when the runs reached the spawning grounds.

As one wades through all of the figures and acronyms, the accounts of meetings and commissions, the announcements of the latest DFO program to fix the last failed program, and the mystery of missing fish, one is forced to conclude that the real losers in the salmon war have been the salmon themselves and the hardworking coastal folk that once depended on them.

A third-generation fisherman, Dennis Brown was the premier’s special advisor on the Pacific Salmon Treaty in 1996. There may be a bias in favour of fishermen in Brown’s account, given that he was also a business agent and secretary-treasurer of the UFAWU, but with his intimate connections to the fleet, Brown can take the reader behind the scenes. It makes for dramatic reading.

1-55017-351-0

Lorne Finlayson is a former fisherman on the West Coast.

FISHING WITH DENNIS

“Reaching into the invisible and pulling out the beautiful. This is fishing’s greatest appeal. It is magic, and art form.”
 – D.C. REID

Fishing for Dreams: Notes from the Water’s Edge by D.C. Reid (Heritage \$16.95)

As a self-proclaimed “hunter of fish” who brought more than 500 salmon to his net in one year, **D.C. Reid** was weaned from a creek near Calgary with a “\$12 K-mart no name special” fishing rod.

Today he’s a Victoria-based sport fishing columnist, an expert who fishing lodges call upon to test waters and fly patterns. But meat fishermen beware: his new book is no “how to” bible.

In *Fishing for Dreams*, Reid’s prose is like a meandering current, carrying us through riffles, tidal pools, or brushing against the seams of memory.

Despite his degrees in zoology and biochemistry, he maintains a poetic view of landscape and fishing. Instead of catching an elusive cutthroat trout, Reid caresses it with words.

“I look into the water so clear a quarter could be seen on the bottom, its numbers and the queen... Red fan-shaped gills pass life through the insouciant pleasure of knowing it is beautiful.”

There are fine tales here, as well. Reid describes being alone in the woods, feeling he is being watched by bears with “an antediluvian sixth sense for being a carnivore’s prey.”

There arises a moment of terror as he faces a mother bear’s “enraged, individual teeth.”

In *Fishing for Dreams*, we travel to the East Kootenay in pursuit of Westslope cutthroat trout with bellies the colour of sunset.

“These are the few days which we are truly alive—days of blue and oranges, of succulent water that requires no justification, no need of cell phones or

laptops, no reminders of responsibilities that wait.”

There’s also a confessional story about 35 years of driving too fast down dirt roads in piscatorial pursuit, and a near death epiphany involving logging trucks and his rather small, maroon Subaru.

A day fishing with fellow poet Patrick Lane yields four fish, a new poem and later, a Bliss Carman award.

A solo boat journey from Victoria to Tofino borders on farce after a fuel miscalculation and a blown hatch—with potential to take boat and fisherman to the bottom in one gulp.

A solitary man, Reid writes “I am drawn from people, a loner like a metro-

nome, unclear of where I should be. “The only ones I ever got to know were my children in the eight years I spent at home with them. You give yourself up to your children, knowing it is right. Then the bond was broken, and a decade has gone by. What

more can I say?”

Since landing those 500 salmon in 2002, Reid says he’s finished with counting fish.

He now records the “specifics of technique, strategy and specifics of river hydrology that would inform the rest of my years.”

Reid, a published poet, was recently shortlisted for the Dorothy Livesay Prize. In *Fishing for Dreams* he savours those rare moments of purity: light dancing on water, the electric charge of fish on line...

“The arc from rod tip to fish mouth is purity. It is the moment when most easily the trout may be lost and so the largest thrill in all of fishing.”

1-894898-28-1

Mark Forsythe is host of CBC radio’s *Almanac*.



MARK FORSYTHE



D.C. (Dennis) Reid



LORNA CROZIER
Whetstone

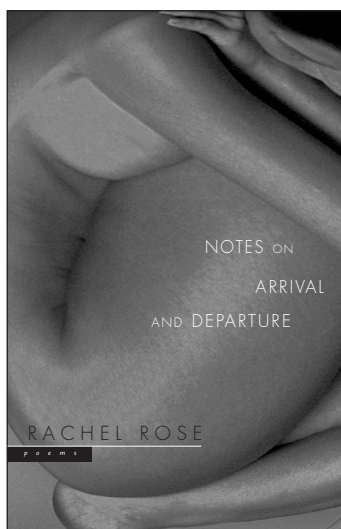
"Breathtakingly down-to-earth
and reassuringly lyrical,
new poems by Lorna Crozier
are always a reason
for rejoicing."

— *GLOBE AND MAIL*

RACHEL ROSE
Notes on Arrival
and Departure

"Rachel Rose is writing a poetry
of intense witness and emotional
drive, always marked by the
distinctive tang of raw experience
and the sort of wisdom which
can only be learned by a heart
that is fully engaged."

— DON MCKAY



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KID

Sally Fitz-Gibbon and
Kirsti Anne Wakelin



PIG IN THE MUDDLE

How memory loss can be playtime's gain

A first-time collaboration between **Sally Fitz-Gibbon** and daughter **Kirsti Anne Wakelin**, *Pig in the Middle* (F&W \$19.95), is a subtle tale of a child's acceptance of memory loss in a grandparent.

On days when "the pig dances in her garden," Grandma forgets. The rake and pruning shears end up in the sitting room armchair. Peppermints and gloves disappear. The cat's lost her kittens, the teapot is missing and Grandpa is gone.

The only clue is the trail of cake crumbs leading to the garden maze.

Emily knows what to do. She can't find a map of the maze, but she does have one of the zoo, and she and Grandma set off at once.

Soon they are in a fantasy land of acrobats and monkeys sipping tea, Chinese dragons and masquerades. Isn't that Grandma's rose-covered shawl? And the red checkered tablecloth?

In a world of mysterious peacocks and dancing pigs, something of the familiar still remains. A hobby horse. Pigeons. A favourite sun hat. And then, just like that, there are the teapot, the kittens – and even Grandpa!

1-55041-894-7



And Margaret comes to understand she's like the sweet bits in Grandma's favourite mile-high apple pie.

Lively collage-style illustrations by Lindsey Gardiner accompany the story based on a situation in Langston's own family. Pie recipe included. 0-370-32736-5



Told entirely through email and online communication, *Sun Signs* (Orca \$9.95) by **Shelley Hrdlitschka**, is the story of 15-year-old Kayleigh Wyse, a cancer victim who is unable to attend school while

she struggles with chemotherapy and radiation. In order to complete a science project on astrology, she enlists the collaboration of other on-line learners, assuming everyone is truthful.

She slowly realizes the world of the internet is as unreliable as astrological predictions based on the ever-shifting heavens. 1-55143-338-9



The Cure for Crushes (And Other Deadly Plagues) (Raincoast \$11.95) by **Karen Rivers** once again usurps the journal of Haley Andromeda Harmony who was featured in *Healing Time of Hickeys*.

As obsessive as Bridget Jones in recording and tallying the daily ups and downs, 17-year-old Haley-the-hypochondriac chronicles her final months of high school. Hair loss, brain tumours and a rash of other internet-researched symptoms continue to afflict her.

Dad moves his MYG (Much Younger



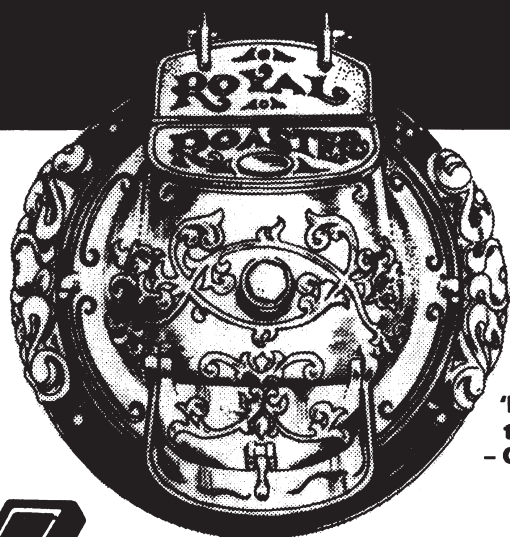
LOUISE DONNELLY

Former broadcaster **Laura Langston** also deals with loss of memory in *Mile-High Apple Pie* (Random House \$24.95).

Margaret's Grandma is "not the wrinkled kind; she's the special kind." She wears trainers with yellow laces and once had an art gallery and played the piano. But now Grandma confuses Chopin for Bach and sweet peas for roses.

She remembers bruises are the sweetest part of the apple. "A fruit man told me." Then one terrible day, she no longer recognizes Margaret. "You are my apple-cheeked bruise girl," she says.

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Girlfriend) in with them. There's the bikini-clad bungee-jumping. And, it turns out, having a boyfriend is no cure for crushes on other boys.

Still, Haley, inspired by the request of Rivers' mother for a book where "no one dies," is ever hopeful it will be TGYML2 (The Greatest Year of My Life, Part 2).

1-55192-779-9



For her medical adventure **Runaway at Sea** (Harbour \$9.95) **Mary Razzell** draws on actual events and her own nursing background.

It's the San Francisco of 1970, but 16-year-old Anne yearns to live with her free-spirited aunt in Vancouver. Then she runs into a childhood crush, now a draft dodger heading north himself, and it seems the chance to escape stifling family life is fate. But Anne finds herself caught between a typhoid outbreak on her B.C.-bound cruise ship and an heroic doctor who's investigating the incident. Razzell is also the author of the young adult novels *Snow Apples* and *Salmonberry Wine*.

1-55017-327-8



The irrepressible junior diva Dinah Galloway, who last appeared in *The Man in the Moonstone*, also sets sail, with a lounge gig on an Alaskan-bound cruise ship.

Mix in a rare First Nations mask, an aspiring thief with gooseberry-coloured eyes, two old people with romantic intentions and Dinah, once again, is up to her whipped cream mocha mustache in trouble.

The Mask on the Cruise Ship (Orca \$8.95) is the third Dinah Galloway mystery. Author **Melanie Jackson**, now living in Vancouver, was born in Aberdeen, Scotland and grew up in Toronto. If she had the nerve, says the former journalist, the person she'd be is the adventuresome, red-headed Dinah.

1-55143-305-2

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Ben Over Night (F&W \$19.95), the sequel to *Big Ben*, takes young Ben, who's really not that big, to Peter's house where anything can happen. Ben can be a pirate, a potato, a cook. He can be light as air. He can be invisible. The one thing

he can't be, however, is a sleepover-nighter. At Peter's house the bed feels wrong, there are strange noises in the night, there's no cat on his stomach. A flashlight doesn't help. Neither does Blanky. Nor big brother Joe's offer to come along. But sister Robin helps Ben dream the magic solution. Author **Sarah Ellis**, long-time Vancouver resident, and illustrator **Kim LaFave**, of Robert's Creek,

have been both recognized with Governor General's Awards.

1-55041-807-2

Louise Donnelly writes from Vernon.

ALSO RECEIVED

In the Paint: South Side Sports (Orca \$8.95) by Jeff Rud. 1-55143-337-0
Strawberry Moon (Orca \$7.95) by Becky Citra. 1-55143-367-2
The Pepins and Their Problems (Groundwood \$13.95) by Polly Horvath. 0-88899-633-0
Whatever Happened to My Dog Cuddles (Orca \$8.95) by Heather Sander. 1-55143-307-9
Emily's Dream (Orca \$7.95) by Jacqueline Pearce. 1-55143-368-0
Under the Sea with Googol and Googolplex (Orca \$6.95) by Nelly Kazenbroot. 1-55143-366-4
Charmed (Orca \$9.95) by Carrie Mac. 1-55143-321-4
Camp Wild (Orca Currents \$9.95) by Pam Withers. 1-55143-361-3
Sophie's Friend in Need (Beach Holme \$9.95) by Norma Charles. 0-88878-449-X
Dream Helmet (Ronsdale \$14.95) by William New. Illustrations by Vivian Bevis. 1-55380-021-4
Sky (Groundwood \$16.95) by Pamela Porter. 0-88899-563-6

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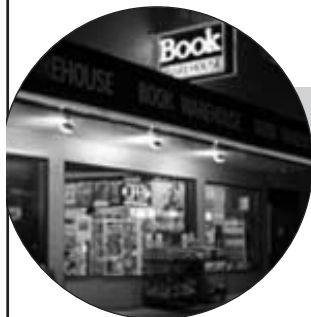
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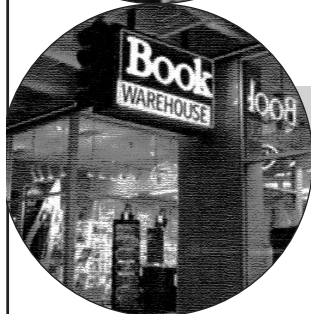
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LIFE OF

BRIAN

Brian Brett's memoir shows him as a girlish youth and as a Jethro-like character near his woodpile. That duplicity reflects the cruel nature of his brave journey.

Brian Brett's *Uproar's Your Only Music*

(Exile Editions \$22.95)

recalls the horrendous consequences of being born as a freak, as an androgyne.

Brett was born in 1950 with a rare aberration called Kallman's Syndrome so that as he approached puberty, several doctors assumed he was starting to 'present' as an hermaphrodite.

Growing up in relative poverty in East Vancouver, Brett assumed he was a boy and dressed like one, but his body was completely hairless, even under his arms.

"The current term for conditions like mine is 'middlesex,'" he says. "Though I had a penis, what the medical profession tactlessly calls a micro-phallus, I guess it could have been mistaken for an enlarged clitoris..."

Now that he's a hulking and articulate man, living comfortably with his family on Saltspring Island, it's difficult to imagine how Brett's hypothalamus was stunting his pituitary gland so that he didn't have any male hormones.

"They sliced open my groin, and oddly, those six-inch scars have survived, though most of the marks my history has given me have faded.

"They encountered some vestigial testicles which they yarded down, pierced, and attached by long, tight, black cords sewn cross-legged through the skin and muscles at mid-thigh..."

"I wandered lost, and sexless through adolescence, dreaming of being a real human being, or at least a definable one."

It was a lonely and frightening time. When first diagnosed, Brett was told he was one in four million.

"I've been told that with the development of modern technology for genetic testing, my kind have been placed on the 'recommended for termination' list, but I can understand it."

Prone to emotional fluctuations, he adopted the Chinese characters for the deer and the dragon as his personal emblems.

One of his teachers beat his hands with a leather strap 36 times in the sixth grade because he could not tolerate Brett's penchant for inexplicably bursting into fits of weeping during class.

Along the way, Brett also developed extremely painful osteoporosis. "It was decade later that I learned one of the other side-effects of Kallman's Syndrome is ei-

ther mental retardation or, very differently, an early-maturing mind (not necessarily a more intelligent one)."



First assaulted at age 13 for his feminine features, Brett took LSD for the first time at age 15 and embraced the counter-cultural zeitgeist.

"I fell into the sixties like a fly into shit."

At 20, he realized he also had anosmia—no sense of smell.

Finally he was treated with testosterone. "The initial shot was so strong my tiny organ developed an erection that lasted eight days."

At 20, Brett was 5'7" and weighed 114 pounds. With injections he reached 6' by age 30. On a lifelong diet of testosterone, Brett has since ballooned to 230 pounds.

Having survived the mean streets of Vancouver, among drugs and prostitutes and psychiatric wards, Brett somehow managed to start a publishing enterprise with **Allan Safarik** "in that brash, typical way of young hothead students" until they quarrelled and Safarik became the mainstay of Blackfish Press.

In 1980, while living in White Rock, Brett wrote a fiery broadside against local developers. He enjoyed a meteoric rise as a local hero and found himself surprisingly elected as an alderman.

Disdainful of his fellow aldermen who were toadies to commercialism, he was re-elected for a second term, only to appear on election night, "drunk as a skunk, enraged," before the television cameras, berating the electorate for their stupidity. One of the local papers launched a stream of sustained invective and Brett failed to win a third term, falling short by 11 votes.

Brett sued the newspaper for libel—and won. After paying his lawyer and assorted debts, he bought a parrot named Tuco. Twenty years later Tuco still lives with Brett and his partner Sharon on their small, organic, farm.

He now looks forward to his term as incoming president of the Writers' Union of Canada.

The title of his memoir—edited by **Margaret Atwood, Barry Callaghan** and **Heidi Greco**, including new poems—is derived from a line by **John Keats**. "There's nothing stable in the world: uproar's your only music."

"Like Teresias," he writes, "I've seen glimpses of the female and the male in one body—and the intersex, the middlesex, the hermaphrodite, or whatever you want to call it. They are astonishing."

"And although I don't believe these glimpses gave me any more wit or intelligence or prophecy, they did give me a varied perspective."

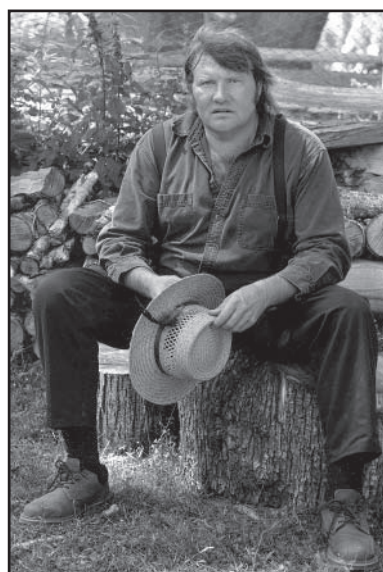


Once at a Writers' Union meeting, Brian Brett was berated by some female writers for daring to say he could understand their problems.

"Brian, you can never know what it's like to suffer the way women have," **Audrey Thomas** reportedly said. He replied, "You might be surprised," much to the annoyance of the women.

Brett didn't defend himself and soon found himself being booed. "I was a hair away from launching into my abused story right there on stage," he says.

Now the cat is finally out of the bag.



BARRY PETERSON/BLAISE ENRIGHT-PETERSON PHOTO

BRYANT KNOX PHOTO

HE COVERS THE WATERFRONT

Richard Tetrault was one of the masterminds behind Vancouver's largest work of public art, the 28 mosaics that cover a retaining wall along Commercial Drive, between 14th and 17th avenues.

His Peace Mural has been viewed for many years at Simon Fraser University and other murals are at the Britannia, Strathcona and Ray Cam Community Centres, the Keefer Street Overpass, Four Sisters Co-op, Four Corners Bank and the Portland Hotel. When you enter the Carnegie Centre at Main & Hastings, where Tetrault taught art classes in the eighties and early nineties, his *Summer City Street* mural is one of the first things you'll see.

Given the 'street' feel and locale of much of his commissioned art, Tetrault could easily be hyped as a local hero, as the **Diego Rivera** of the Downtown Eastside. That's where the likes of councillor **Jim Green** and MLA **Jenny**



Jim Green extols the virtues of Richard Tetrault's 'art armed for combat.'

Kwan have grown to love and respect his work, and that's where Tetrault has maintained a studio for 25 years, having attended the Vancouver School of Art between 1962 and 1979.

But if viewed collectively in **Painted Lives & Shifting Landscapes** (Anvil \$42), Tetrault's murals and prints—with or without his trademark crows, fire escapes, alleyways and bridges—are evidently cosmopolitan concoctions. His determinedly public style has been forged by his time in Berlin, Bangkok, New York and Havana, as much as by Vancouver's poorest neighborhood.



Richard Tetrault

For six weeks Tetrault also worked in the Mexican studio of muralist **David Alfaro Siqueiros**, a contemporary of Diego Rivera. Back in 1923, Siqueiros had proclaimed that art should not exist for individual expression; instead it must

"become a fighting educative art for all." Along with Rivera, Siqueiros also demanded "art armed for combat, that makes people aware of their history and their civil rights."

The tradition of the Mexican mural is one that preserves history and ennobles a common struggle for dignity. As one of British Columbia's leading progenitors of that tradition, Tetrault has con-

fronted racism, participated in the Arts for Action public art group formed by **Claudine Pommier**, and consistently celebrated the "edgy vitality" of his community in his paintings, prints, woodcuts and murals.

"Overhead, a neon-blue eagle buzzes with repeated wing gestures, never becoming airborne," he writes. "Inside a café, Eastside residents are leaning over coffees. Stories are being told. The inner-city core of Vancouver has a wealth of its own. As an artist, I always felt embraced by the energy of the street here."

Tetrault's new book arose from a 2003 retrospective held at the newly opened Interurban Arts Centre, at the historic intersection of Carrall and Hastings in Vancouver. During the first half of the 20th century, the building was the hub for the BC Electric Interurban Station.

The 'inter-urbanity' of Tetrault's best-known works, such as *Disappearing Alley*, have been characterized by art journalist **Michael Harris**. "Tetrault gives us the Downtown Eastside," he writes, "not from the perspective of a squeamish yuppie who got off at the wrong bus stop, but from an insider's compassionate eye..."

"Can art heal neighbourhoods like Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, where survival is an ongoing struggle? Tetrault and his colleagues submit that art in fact facilitates survival; that the Downtown Eastside must revel in its own history; that there is a lively, varied cultural scene; that there is talent and, yes, a future."

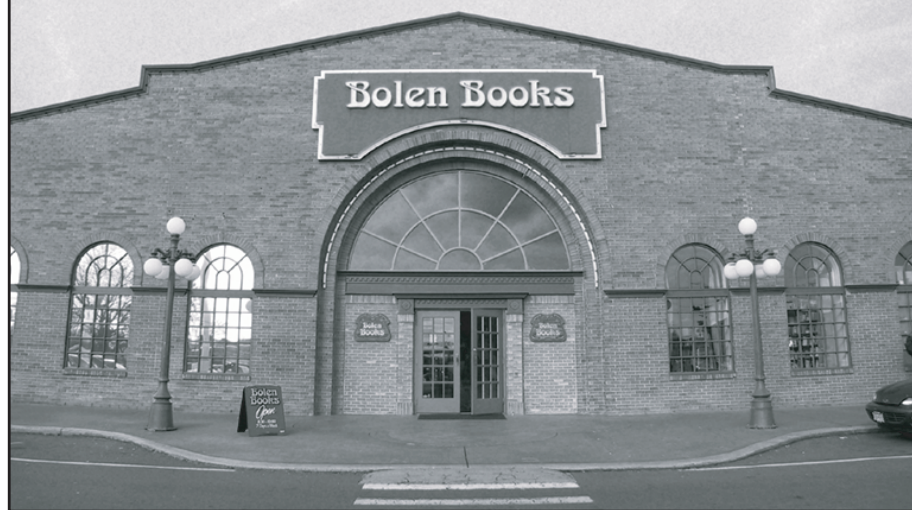
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ST. TERRY

Prior to the Olympics, perhaps some one will finally do the right thing and rename BC Place as Terry Fox Stadium, in keeping with the statue at its entrance. Meanwhile progress is being made. If **Terry Fox** had contracted his same cancer in 2005, according to **Douglas Coupland**, “not only would he have kept his leg, but he’d probably be alive and well.” Proceeds from Coupland’s 25th anniversary tribute to Fox’s Marathon of Hope, *Terry* (D&M \$28.95), will go to the Terry Fox Foundation to continue cancer research. Fox began his attempt to run across Canada from St. John’s, Newfoundland on April 12, 1980, precisely 25 years prior to the release date for Coupland’s collection of 145 photographs, including family memorabilia. Coupland will edit a follow-up collection of personal responses to Terry Fox from Canadians across the country.

1-55365-113-8

A short story about Alice

Once upon a time, before *Time* magazine bizarrely called her one of the most influential people on the planet, **Alice Munro**, born in Ontario in 1931, worked as a clerk in the Vancouver Public Library where she wasn’t permitted to help library patrons find their books. A mother of three daughters, Munro occasionally found spare hours to scribble stories in the Kitsilano Library branch.

In 1968, the same year **Joni Mitchell** released her first album, Alice Munro released her first book, *Dance of the Happy Shades*, and she has been publishing her short stories in the *New Yorker* ever since. Twice winner of the Giller Prize; three times the recipient of the Governor General’s Award for Fiction, Alice Munro is peerless as “the only living writer in the English language to have made a major career out of short fiction alone.”

A reviewer for *The Times* (U.K.) has added, “when reading her work it is difficult to remember why the novel was ever invented.”

Amid camera crews, dignitaries and well-wishers, Alice Munro returned to the VPL in May to receive the 11th annual Terasen Lifetime Achievement Award for an Outstanding Literary Career in British Columbia. “I guess I’ve come full circle,” she said.

A new biography by **Robert Thacker** entitled **Alice Munro: Writing her Lives** (M&S \$39.99) will be released in the fall. Meanwhile a plaque in Munro’s honour has been added to the Main Library’s Writers Walk on Georgia Street. 0-7710-8514-1



Alice Munro with Mayor Larry Campbell, who read a civic proclamation in her honour.

MARTIN TWIGG PHOTO

Scrutiny on the Bountiful

Former Creston veterinarian and self-publisher **Dave Perrin** has teamed with **Debbie Palmer**, an escapee from the Mormon Fundamentalist community of Bountiful, for her life story,



Debbie Palmer

Keep Sweet: Children of Polygamy (Dave’s Press \$28.95). Herself the oldest of 47 children, Palmer, now 51, willingly became the sixth wife of the community’s leader, her 55-year-old uncle, when she was 15. “You have to believe that as a woman you are to be part of your husband’s kingdom,” she says, “and he’s going to be a god and you’re going to be a goddess. That’s what I was taught from the time I was born. I didn’t know anything else.” Assigned to two other older men after that, she fled in 1988 and has since been profiled on CBC’s *Fifth Estate*. Her memoir concludes when she is 18; a sequel is planned.

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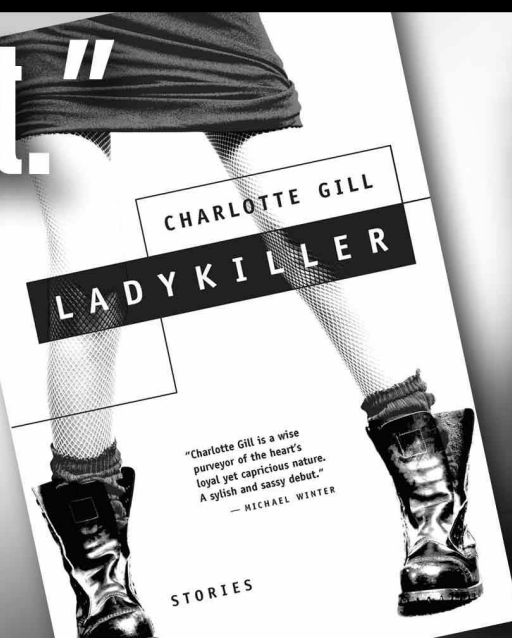
— VANCOUVER SUN

“Ladykiller lives up to the vigorous praise it has garnered. This is an impressive — I’m tempted to say smashing — start for a talented new voice on the Canadian fiction scene.”

— NATIONAL POST

“Fast-paced and dizzying, [these stories] shake you up like illegal rides at an emotional fun fair; despite her youth, this is a writer who knows how to spin you around until your stomach flips yet leaves you wanting more.”

— GEORGIA STRAIGHT



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Bun toss comes of age

The glass is half empty. The glass is half full. Now operated under the aegis of the Lieutenant Governor's office, complete with mandatory forelock pulling and a toast to the Queen, the 21-year-old BC Book Prizes gala is more impressive to some, less fun to others.

"I remember well the first awards," noted semi-retiring CTV talk show host **Vicki Gabereau**, reappearing to host the affair after a 20-year interim. "You were all a lot drunker than you are now."

With a minimum of self-deprecating wit, Gabereau ably noted the deaths of **Pierre Berton** and CBC's **David Grierson** while playing second fiddle to Lieutenant Governor **Iona Campagnolo**. The evening climaxed with Campagnolo's hymn of praise for the "sheer raw courage" of **Robert Bringham**, winner of the second annual Lieutenant Governor's Award for Literary Excellence.

"It is impossible to imagine a more worthy recipient," cooed the LG, who engineered the prize to honour the creator of a body of work who is deemed to exhibit mastery of the written word. Poet and editor Bringham thanked "cantankerous" bookseller **Bill Hoffer**, **Vic Marks** ("one of the most reclusive publishers in British Columbia") and his long-time publisher **Scott McIntyre**, adding, "It might come as a surprise to you that part of the value of winning a prize like this is the money that comes with it." [Judged by **Celia Duthie**, **Daniel Francis** & last year's recipient **P.K. Page**].

The most memorable acceptance speech was made by former Department of Fisheries employee **Otto Langer**,

one of six co-authors of *A Stain Upon the Sea*, an anti-fish-farming volume from Harbour Publishing that won the Roderick Haig-Brown Prize for best book about the province. [Judged by **Richard Hopkins**, **Theresa Kishkan** & **Rosemary Neering**].

"Above all, I'd like to thank my ex-employers because without their incompetence this book would not have been possible," Langer said. "And I would like to thank the fish farms and the multinational corporations because without their greed this book would not have been possible." Langer concluded by urging the audience to always ask if their salmon is farmed or wild.

Another dark horse recipient was novelist **Pauline Holdstock** who took home the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize for *Beyond Measure* (Cormorant). "I immigrated to B.C. twice," she said, "and I'm really glad I stayed the second time." [Judged by **John Burns**, **John Harris** & **David Watmough**].

Two rising stars of the Canlit scene, **Susan Juby** and **Charles Montgomery**, received the Sheila A. Egoff Children's Literature Prize and the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize respectively for *Miss Smithers* (HarperCollins) and *The Last Heathen* (Douglas & McIntyre). [Egoff judges were **Carolyn Cutt**, **Bill Valgardson** & **Irene Watts**; Evans judges were **Lynne Bowen**, **George Fetherling** & **Maria Tippett**].



Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize winner Pauline Holdstock. Inset: Non-Fiction winner Charles Montgomery

"This kind of makes up for the fact that I failed miserably in the Miss Smithers beauty contest," Juby said. Fresh from winning the lucrative Charles Taylor Prize, Montgomery thanked his friend **Michael Scott**, editor **Saeko Usukawa** and publisher **Scott McIntyre**.



Among 400 attendees were Angela Leung of the Publishers Assn. of BC and poet Marisa Alps.

For the first time a B.C.-published book, *Goodbye to Griffith Street* (Orca), illustrated by **Renné Benoit** of Ontario and written by **Marilyn Reynolds** of Victoria, received the Christie Harris Illustrated Children's Prize. [Judged by **Barbara Nichol**, **Andrea Spalding** & **Ron Lightburn**].

Another multi-author title from Harbour Publishing, *Birds of the Raincoast: Habits and Habitat*, received the newly renamed BC Booksellers' Choice Award in Honour of Bill Duthie, as selected by the membership of the BC Booksellers Association.

Jan Zwicky was not present to receive the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize for *Robinson's Crossing* (Brick Books) [Judged by **Brad Cran**, **Crispin Elsted** & **Angela Hryniuk**].

Billeh Nickerson was a breath of fresh air presenting the Livesay Prize. For the most part, presenters out-shone recipients in speechifying. **Alan Haig-Brown** recalled his father with a quote from **John Steinbeck**; **Stephen Osborne** gave an astute appreciation of Hubert Evans; **Janice Douglas** touted equal rights for children's literature; Women In Print bookseller **Carol Dale** recalled **Bill Duthie**. "Mr. D., to many of us," she said, "was a mentor to so many in this industry, not just booksellers."

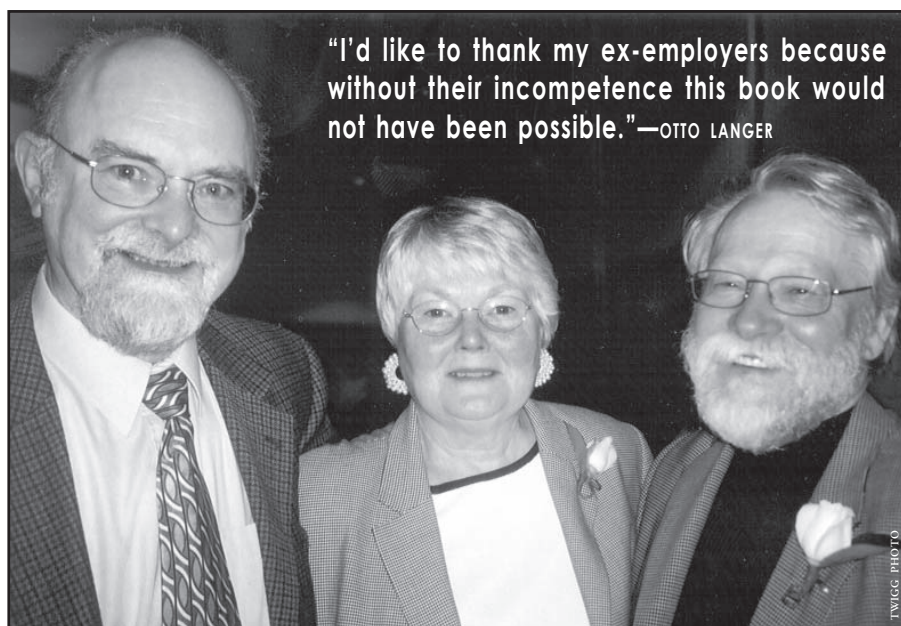
"90% of British Columbians read a book last year. It's the most book-friendly and literate place probably on the planet."

—GORDON PLATT

In recalling the collective history of the literary community, Dale noted the BC Book Prizes are an outgrowth of the Eaton's Book Award, a singular prize presented in a basement. Now there are twice as many prizes since Gabereau emceed the first bun toss on Granville Island in 1985, and half as many laughs. Such is adulthood.

It adds up to social progress. In one of the best speeches, Acting Director General of Publishing Policy and Programs **Gordon Platt** reported the findings from a forthcoming federal survey. "Book reading in Canada is rock solid," he said. Only 50% of Americans read a book in the past year, compared to 80% of Canadians.

"British Columbians score the highest," Platt said. "90% of British Columbians read a book last year. It's the most book-friendly and literate place probably on the planet."



"I'd like to thank my ex-employers because without their incompetence this book would not have been possible."—OTTO LANGER

RODERICK HAIG-BROWN PRIZE RECIPIENTS: Howard White, Betty Keller, Otto Langer. First hosted by Vicki Gabereau in 1985, the annual B.C. Book Prizes gala was held on April 30 at the Renaissance Hotel in Vancouver, hosted by Gabereau a second time.



Robert Bringham, Susan Juby, Betty Keller, Marilyn Reynolds, Otto Langer, Stephen Hume. Front row: Teresa Bubela (Book Prizes president), Pauline Holdstock and Her Honour, Lieutenant Governor Iona Campagnolo.

Seven pseudonyms

To reach beyond de-humanizing media representations of the Downtown Eastside, **Leslie Robertson** and **Dara Culhane** have collected stories of seven women for *In Plain Sight: Reflections On Life In Downtown Eastside Vancouver* (Talonbooks \$18.95).

To respect privacy and preserve the women's safety, the two academic editors have ironically opted to present *In Plain Sight* informants as surnameless and faceless. Having chosen their own pseudonyms, the seven women speak for themselves.

1. Raised in a white, middle-class family on the west side of Vancouver, Tamara first used drugs recreationally. Heavy drug use and dealing slowly followed.

"I always had a thousand bucks cash on me. I remember being stopped by these cops for a seat belt. It was some stupid ticket just to harass me. They knew I had money, and they knew I was probably dealing. I couldn't see that then, I thought it was just harassment. But I remember this cop wanting to count my money. The cops that brought me in made this other cop count everything, every last penny at the bottom of my purse. I had 999 dollars and ninety-four cents. They attached a little note. 'We couldn't see you leaving with such an odd amount. We put a collection together, put six cents in.' (Laughing) I walked out with a thousand."

2. Pawz, a victim of domestic abuse who, in an attempt to escape from her husband, took refuge in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. *"I had a child who passed away. I was almost murdered. I was raped. I've had all these bad things happen; yet I don't want to say I'm unhappy to be alive."*

3. A Cree native of Regina, Laurie was raised by foster parents in Saskatoon. She moved to Vancouver in her 20s where she began to participate in heavy drug use and trafficking. *"Drug addicts have an image, too. Yeah, we have an image. Even down here we've got low-class, middle-class, and high-class; you have the dope and you're up there. But what we don't have is people rallying around us...It's like when Gordon Campbell said, 'I'm just a social drinker.' If I ever get busted again I'm going to say, 'I'm just a social addict.'"*

4. Sara grew up in a physically, sexually and mentally abusive home. After working the streets in Alberta, she moved to Vancouver to avoid a domineering pimp. *"For once, I get to say my piece. I've done a lot of interviews on this and that around my life, around things from downtown like the missing women. A lot of stuff that I said was taken out of context or wasn't portrayed properly, and in the end it looked like non-truths. So this is finally my chance to say something and for it to be accurate."*

5. A Salish First Nations, Dee grew up on a reserve, but was forced to move to Vancouver when her mother lost her job. She became a drug user and sex worker. *"It's really hard to get out of the unclean feeling of having to be a prostitute. I still have my regulars, but when I go out there and look at the street, it's nothing to hold your head up high about. It's a dirty rotten occupation. I've never liked it."*

6. Born in Edmonton, Black Widow started "doing lines" when she was thirteen. After spending some time in jail, she followed her ex-husband to Vancouver where he had taken her kids. *"I've led my life the way I've led my life...I don't know if I've made all the right decisions, but I really don't think I'm a bad person. I don't steal; I don't lie. I'm not a selfish person. I'm not a self-centred person. Maybe when I'm gone, maybe somebody can read something about me."*

7. Soon after receiving her degree in therapy, Anne suffered a series of mental health breakdowns. She now lives with her child on the Downtown Eastside where she struggles with poverty and the stigma of mental illness. *"We might be recovering addicts, we might be recovering alcoholics, we might be recovering from a number of different things. That doesn't take away anything from our ability to be great mothers."*—by Martin Twigg

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MARTIN TWIGG PHOTO

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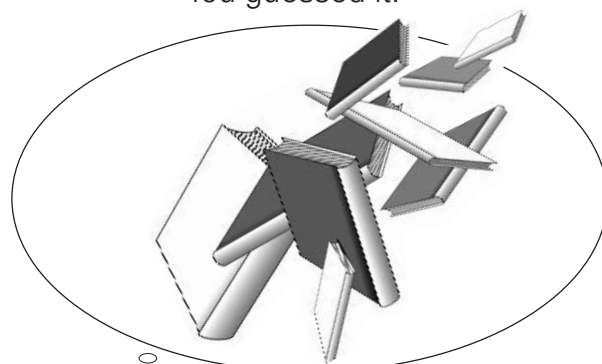
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Bob Hunter (1941-2005)

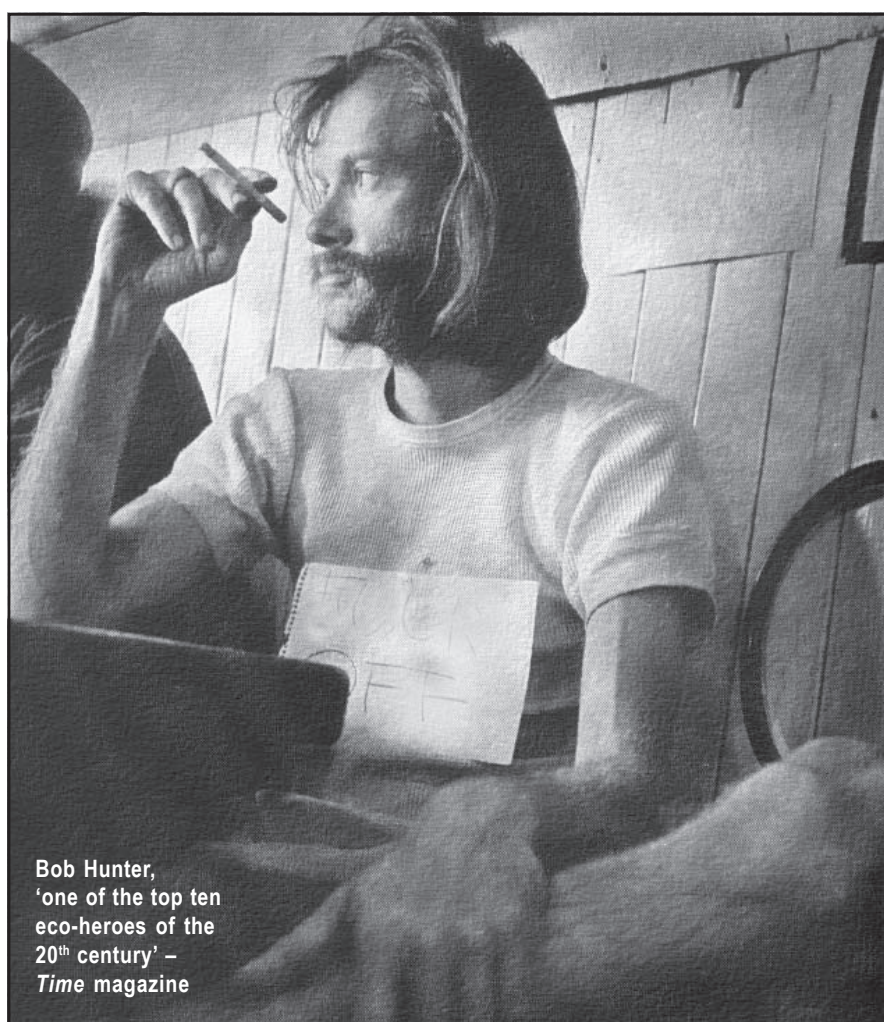
Much of the impetus for Greenpeace arose from the enthusiasms of Robert ("Bob") Hunter, an unconventional journalist who, during Greenpeace's genesis, was writing a thrice-weekly column for the *Vancouver Sun*.

As the End the Arms Race coalition was gaining momentum in Vancouver, Hunter and his partner Zoe Hunter were living in a farmhouse on the Fraser River, keen on the new ecology movement, when one day in 1969 an old red pick-up truck approached his farmhouse. The hippie vehicle contained a cedar-shaked house with a crooked stovepipe and a macramé God's-eye in its window. Its long-haired driver, a dulcimer-maker who wore moccasins, gave Hunter a book called *Warriors of the Rainbow: Strange and Prophetic Dreams of the Indian People*. With references to Buddhism, the Koran, the Bi-

ble and peyote ceremonies, it was a strange amalgam of philosophy and Aboriginal wisdom. Increasingly, as Greenpeace coalesced into a dynamic force for social change and education, Bob Hunter, as its first president and holder of the first Greenpeace membership, consulted *Warriors of the Rainbow* and used it as a moral compass. With Hunter aboard, the first vessel to sail north and protest anticipated American bomb testing in Alaska was accordingly called the *Rainbow Warrior*. *Time* magazine later named him one of the top ten eco-heroes of the 20th century.

Diagnosed with cancer in 1999, Bob Hunter rejected surgery and underwent a series of experimental treatments in Mexico. He died in Toronto at age 63 of prostate cancer on May 2, 2005.

For more on Robert Hunter and his books, see abcbookworld.com



Bob Hunter, 'one of the top ten eco-heroes of the 20th century' – *Time* magazine

Shirley Sterling (1948-2005)

Shirley Anne Sterling died after a two-year battle with cancer on April 3, 2005 at Merritt, B.C.

She will be remembered for *My Name is Seepeetza* (Groundwood 1992), a benchmark volume that fictionalized her 1950s stint at the Kamloops Residential School.

In 1993, Sterling became the first Aboriginal author to win a B.C. Book Prize, receiving the Sheila A. Egoff Children's Literature Prize for *Seepeetza*, possibly Canada's first publication for children about residential schools.

Born on the Joyaska Indian Reserve



in 1948, Shirley Sterling moved to Vancouver where she trained as a ballerina. In Vancouver she obtained her education degree and twice received the Native Indian Teacher Education Alumni Award, plus the Laura Steinman Award for Children's Literature.

Sterling acquired a Ph.D in Education from the University of British

Columbia and spent many years in Moricetown, B.C. among the Wetsuweten people, from whom she was given an Hereditary Chief's name.

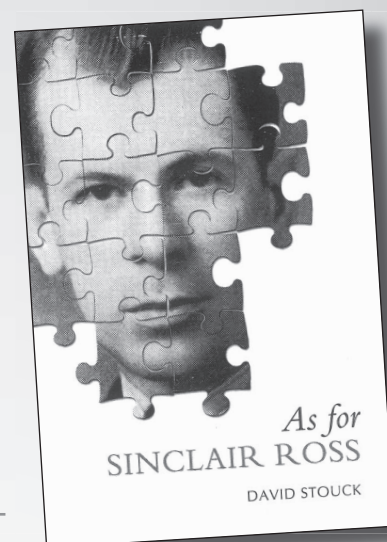
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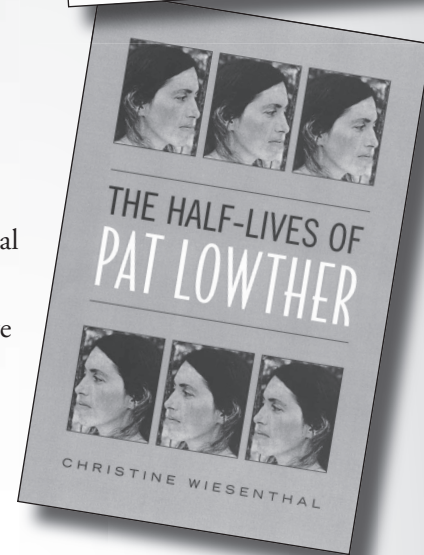


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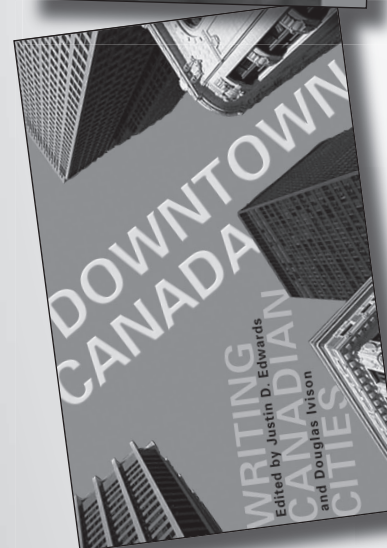
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Literary Prizes

Linda Rogers flew to Cardiff in May to accept the £5000 winner's cheque for the 2005 Cardiff International Poetry Competition sponsored by The Welsh Academy and announced by **Gwyneth Lewis**, Wales' new National Poet. Rogers winning poem 'He Saw the Pale,' reflects on the 2004 tsunami tragedy.

An Award of Merit has been conferred upon **Fred Thirkell** and **Bob Scullion** at the 26th annual City of Vancouver Heritage Awards for *Breaking News: The Postcard Images of George Alfred Barrowclough* (Heritage House) about Edwardian Vancouver.

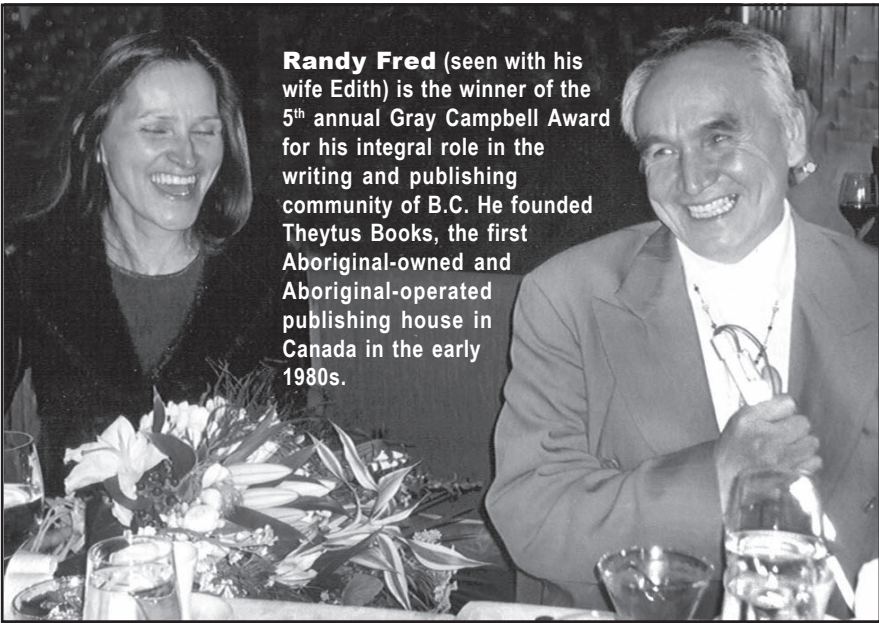
The Beckoners, a teen novel by **Carrie Mac**, has won the 2005 White Ravens Award at the Bologna Children's Book Fair. *The Beckoners* has also been nominated for the Canadian Library Association's YA Book Award and the Crime Writers' of Canada Arthur Ellis Award.

Waiting For Sarah (Orca), a teen novel by **James Heneghan** and **Bruce McBay**, has been awarded the 2005 Manitoba Young Readers' Choice Award.

At a meeting of the Council of Editors of Learned Journals in Philadelphia, **Eva-Marie Kröller** was named Distinguished Editor for 2004 for her work on *Canadian Literature*, the UBC literary journal now edited by **Laurie Ricou**.

Building the West (Talonbooks), compiled and edited by **Donald Luxton**, was selected for an Award of Merit in the Heritage Communication category of the 2005 Canadian Association of Professional Heritage Consultants (CAPHC) Awards.

Peter Trower has been awarded the Canadian Authors Association Jack Chalmers Poetry Award for *Haunted Hills and Hanging Valleys: Selected Poems 1969–2004* (Harbour), to be presented in Waterloo, Ontario on June 25.



Randy Fred (seen with his wife Edith) is the winner of the 5th annual Gray Campbell Award for his integral role in the writing and publishing community of B.C. He founded Theytus Books, the first Aboriginal-owned and Aboriginal-operated publishing house in Canada in the early 1980s.

At press time we were saddened to learn that **Sheila A. Egoff**, maven of Canadian children's literature, died at age 87 in Vancouver on May 22. An obituary by Judith Saltman is posted at www.abcbookworld.com.

Not to be confused with the Lieutenant Governor's Award for Literary Excellence, the Lieutenant Governor's Award for the 22nd annual BC Historical Federation Book Prizes competition was conferred

in Kelowna to *Plants of the Haida Gwaii* (Sono Nis) by **Nancy Turner**.

Runners-up at the BCHF annual convention included **Daniel Francis** for *Mayor Louis Taylor & the Rise of Vancouver* (Arsenal Pulp), **Michael Dawson** for *Selling British Columbia* (UBC Press) and **Daisy Sewid-Smith** for *Paddling to Where I Stand: Agnes Alfred, Quikwasutinuxw Noblewoman* (UBC Press), co-written with **Martine Reid**.



Daisy Sewid-Smith (left) and BCHF president Jacqueline Gresko

Other news

Hal Wake will replace **Alma Lee** as director of the Vancouver Writers Festival in January of 2006.

Two more independent bookstores are closing—Women in Print in Vancouver and Merlin Books in Kamloops.

The B.C. Interior lost one of its great champions on May 13, 2005 with the sudden death of **Cynthia R. Wilson**, owner and guiding spirit of Prince George-based Caitlin Press Inc.

Having grown up on the Sunshine Coast and Nelson Island, she moved to Prince George in the early 1970s where she dedicated herself to serving local writers and obviating what she called "the Lower Mainland bias" in B.C.'s literary and public life.

A long-time faculty member at the College of New Caledonia in Prince George, she bought Vancouver-based Caitlin Press in 1991 and moved it to Prince George. In 15 years she published more than 50 books.

Caitlin Press will continue to publish as usual, with marketing by Harbour Publishing.

Cynthia Wilson



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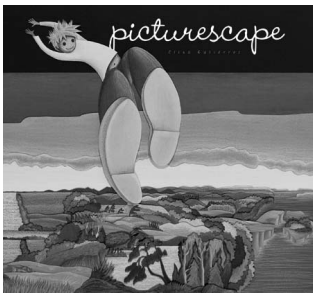
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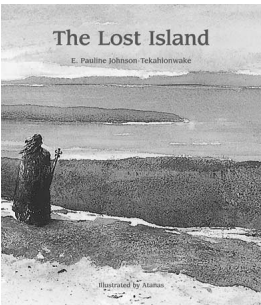


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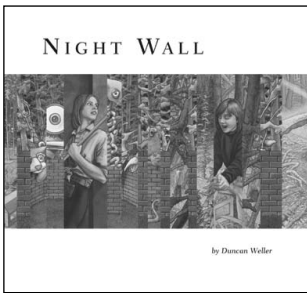


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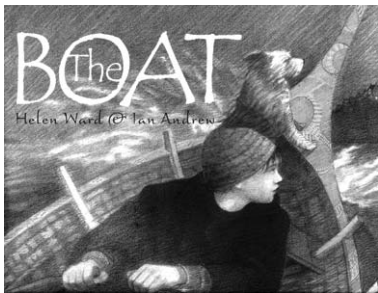


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If it's Sorokin, don't fix it

Michael Cassidyne's promotion of his translation of a work by "Vassily Solitsin" (pseud.), *Through Hell, to Heaven and Back!* (BCBW Summer), is misleading.

According to the translator/publisher, he spent ten years working with the original Russian-language manuscript, composed in 1954 by an author whose real name Cassidyne chooses not to disclose.

In fact, this epic was previously published in book form in 1950, ascribed to an author whose identity was then only thinly disguised.

Through Hell... is a translation of *Tri dnya i tri nochi v zagrobnoi zhizni* [Three days and three nights in the afterlife] by "Pantes Kiroson," an anagrammatic pseudonym not difficult to decipher given the place of publication – Crescent Valley, B.C., the former Sons of Freedom stronghold.

The Russian original is accessible in at least two B.C. libraries (see Outlook Online and UBC Library's on-line catalogue).

Jack McIntosh

Richmond

[The mystery author is *Sons of Freedom* leader Stepan Sevastionovicy Sorokin, born 1902. See abcbookworld.com – Ed.]

Wild allegation

I am a marine biologist who has been studying fish farms for years. I have been to Ireland, Norway and East Coast farms. Regarding Mark Forsythe's article on *Stain upon the Sea* (BCBW Winter), he forgot to ask one important question: que bono? Who benefits from writing such a book? Did the authors write *Stain upon the Sea* out of a concern for wild salmon or in return for donations from U.S. Corporate funds?

Alaska fears the competition of B.C. farmed salmon and will help groups access money from foundations such as the PEW Trust and the Packard Foundation. It's the same with BSE, the US interests groups are not afraid of BSE, they are afraid of competition with Canadian cattle farmers. Hundreds of BSE reports go uninvestigated within the USA every year. All they have to do is dress up their corporate agenda to look like an environmental (or health) issue. If your paper is going to review propaganda pieces and corporate brochures such as *Stain Upon the Sea*, then at least dig a little to see who is paying for it.

Terry Nielsen

Courtenay BC

[No American or environmental funding was used to publish *Stain Upon the Sea*. — Ed.]

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LOOKOUT

ROSAMOND'S MONDE:

CUBA

Bicyclist with double bass in the streets of Havana. Photo by Rosamond Norbury.

Cubans have lacked basic necessities for 50 years, mainly due to U.S. trade sanctions.

That's why tourists bring donations of sports equipment, musical instruments and school supplies. When photographer

Rosamond Norbury arrived in Havana to gather images for her third book **Notes at the Edge: Cuba on the Verge**

(Arsenal Pulp \$21.95), she had a different approach. With the help of an openly gay photo collage artist named Eduardo, Norbury donated bottles of foundation, pan stick, powder, lipsticks, Final Net hairspray, and jars of remover to Havana's seldom-seen drag queens. Here she recalls some of her visit.

Rosamond Norbury



"It's not easy being gay in a machismo culture like Cuba's, nor is it legal."

"I told Eduardo about the bags of makeup I'd brought and he offered to find me some drag queens. Drag culture is underground in Cuba so the shows are not advertised, and Eduardo had to ask around as to where one might be. Eventually he called me up from his neighbour's phone to say there would be a show Saturday night.

"We met across from the famous Coppelia ice cream gardens, featured in the film *Strawberries and Chocolate*, outside La Jara Theatre on the main street in Vedado. The fence along the sidewalk of Coppelia is known as "the bird perch" where men cruise and the word is circulated about the evening's events. We picked up a bottle of rum because you can go anywhere with rum and people are more than happy to share. Then we made our way towards an apartment in Centro, the dense and rundown barrio that sits between Vedado and Old Havana, where a small crowd milled outside on the street. This is one of the more dangerous areas of Havana but I felt in safe hands with Eduardo. We paid five US dollars to a man at the door and climbed three flights up a dark staircase to an apartment on the roof.

"It was like a typical gay bar even though it was in a private apartment. Eduardo dragged me through the crowd dancing to the booming beat: we squeezed past a line-up of men waiting for beer and went into the kitchen where the DJ was working his board beside a pot of beans boiling on the stove.

"To reach the dressing room, we had to step onto a cinder block and into a sink, then climb through an open window and down a short ladder where we were greeted with a room filled with half-dressed men getting into their outfits. The walls were covered with boas and wigs and pictures of Madonna and Marilyn Monroe.

"I handed over the bags to a shirtless man with a fully made-up face. They dumped the bags on the bed, examined everything minutely, and shared all equally.

"Finally it was show time so we climbed back through the kitchen window and joined the crowd. I wriggled up

to the front of the stage: we were packed in, body-to-body, but open to the sky. All I could do was hold my camera over my head and aim in the direction of the stage.

"It was really quite a dreadful show, collegial rather than professional, but they were so happy dancing, lip-syncing, and exchanging sunglasses and living their elicit life in front of an audience. I was glad that my bags of makeup had had a small hand in making the show just that much more glamorous.

"The utter joy and compulsion of drag triumphed in the face of the economic difficulties and social disdain and for a few hours it was easy to forget that this was an illegal gathering."

✍️

With an introduction by **Stephen Osborne**, Rosamond Norbury's *Notes at the Edge: Cuba on the Verge* contains 80 b&w photos and her accompanying text. Her previous titles are *Behind the Chutes: The Mystique of the Rodeo Cowboy* and *Guy to Goddess: An Intimate Look at Drag Queens*.

1-55152-175-X

The day I caught Fidel

by Lionel Kearns

You can't play ball with the Commies—that's what they used to say when I was a kid growing up in a little town in the interior of British Columbia. They weren't really talking about baseball. It had more to do with **Igor Gouzenko's** defection in Canada, **Joe McCarthy's** witch hunts in the U.S. and that big shift in attitude that went with the Cold War.

But there I was, a few years later, squatting behind the plate, squinting through the bars of a catcher's mask, the sweat running down into my eyes, as **Fidel Castro** fired the old *pelota* down on me from the pitcher's mound in the sports stadium of Santiago de Cuba.

It was the summer of 1964. I was en route to London on a Commonwealth Scholarship, with a few stopovers along the way. Some weeks earlier

I had been staying with my old poetry buddy, **George Bowering**, in Mexico City. He and Angela had rented a little apartment on *Avenida Béisbol*. Baseball Street! How was I going to top that one?

I had come to Mexico to join a group of other students from various parts of Canada. We had all signed up to participate in a work project in Cuba, but there were no direct flights from Canada at that time. Two years after the Missile Crisis, and a year after the abortive US sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion, Cuba was not a popular tourist destination. However, we found the island full of students from all over the world. Some of them were studying at Cuban schools and universities, and some, like us, had come for shorter visits, invited by the government to witness the Revolution first hand, in order to counter the bad image it was getting in the Western press.

The American blockade of the island was still in effect. We could see the US warships on the horizon when we walked down the Malecon on the Havana sea front. US fighter jets buzzed the city every day or two just to shake things up, and U-2 spy planes flew high overhead. On the ground there wasn't much food or luxury, but there was great enthusiasm.

Our group spent a week in Havana and then began moving east through the island, sometimes in a green Czech bus, sometimes in the rusty bucket of a big Russian dump truck. Other international student *invitados*, including a group of Americans, were doing the same kind of thing. We would meet them here and there along the way. Everywhere the Cubans welcomed us, and told us about what was happening and what they were experiencing and expecting. I was glad that I could speak Spanish.

As it turned out, we did not make it to the cane fields. Instead we spent a week doing manual labour on a school construction site in the Sierra Maestra mountains. It was not easy. It was very hot. We worked and lived side by side with the Cubans, most of them regular labourers, a few volunteers from urban areas, a few students from other countries. The menu at the camp was basic: fruits and vegetables, sausages, nothing fancy, not large rations, but enough to work on. At night we socialized and tried to get enough sleep to prepare us for the next day's exertions.

By the fourth week we had reached Santiago, Cuba's second largest city, in the eastern part of the island. We arrived in time for a traditional street carnival that coincided with the anniversary of the Fidel-led insurgent attack on the Moncada police barracks, a national holiday celebrated as the beginning of the Cuban Revolution. The carnival activity in the streets was intense, with dancers and musicians everywhere, everyone in crazy costumes.

We were staying with the other international students in the residences at the University of Santiago. One morning a jeep roared into the plaza beside the cafeteria. Something was happening. I grabbed my camera. We all crowded around. Fidel's younger brother **Raúl Castro** was driving, and Fidel was standing up shouting a welcome to us. Then, in English, he said:



Poet and SFU English professor Lionel Kearns (centre) went to Cuba with thousands of other idealistic volunteers, including Joe Fahrni (left) and Andre Beckerman (right), in support of Fidel Castro's revolution to oust the U.S. puppet dictator Batista. Here Kearns is building a school in July of 1964, a few weeks prior to being challenged to a baseball game by El Presidente.



"I understand there are some North Americans here, and I understand that North Americans think they can play baseball. Well! I challenge you to a game!"

Later that day a combined team of Canadians and Americans were playing baseball. The opposition was the regular University of Santiago team with Raúl Castro inserted at second base and Fidel pitching. I was catching for the North American team.

The Cubans, of course, were much better players, and by the second inning they were far ahead. To even things up, the teams switched pitchers, with Fidel coming over to our team, and our pitcher going over to them. For the rest of the game I caught Fidel.

I had not worn catcher's equipment for a few years, but I held my mitt up there in the right place and managed to hang on to whatever Fidel threw at me. He did not have excessive speed, but he had plenty of control. His curve broke with an amazing hook, and his knuckle ball came in deceptively slow. However, he paid no attention to my signals. At one point I called *time* and went out to the mound to confer. I thought for sure that someone would snap our picture as I stood there in my dusty catcher's outfit, glove in one hand, mask in the other, while Fidel told me, quietly, "*Hoy, los señales no están importantes.*" Apparently he did not take direction from other people, not even from his catcher. And as far as I know, that photo, famous only in my imagination, was never snapped. Even so, with Fidel's help, our team managed to hold down the opposition to one or two more runs.

Near the end of the game **Che Guevara** put in an appearance. He stood there in his olive green fatigues, smoked a cigar, and watched. As an Argentinean, he was not such a committed baseball aficionado.

I had once seen a CBC television documentary on Cuba that featured Che extolling the theory and practice of voluntary labour. The camera had caught him standing amidst the high cane, machete in hand, answering the interview questions in halting English. Che had defined Socialism as the abolition of the exploitation of one person by another. That had made a lot of sense to me. I too was ready to swing a machete in the tropical sun to further such ideals. In fact, that was the reason I had applied to come on this student work visit to Cuba. I had not guessed that Che would be standing over by the dugout watching me play baseball with his pal Fidel.

The night before the game I had been in the bleachers of this same stadium watching the Cuban National Ballet performing Coppelía. The day after the game I would listen to Fidel make an impassioned four hour speech to a throng of almost a million people standing and cheering in the 98 degree sun. At the end, we would all link arms and sing *The International*.

A few years after that game in Cuba, I was back in Vancouver playing ball with George Bowering on the infamous Granville Grange Zephyrs, scourge of the Kosmic League. But that is a tale for another day.

Lionel Kearns taught in the English Department at Simon Fraser University and has published 11 poetry titles since 1963.

After Lionel Kearns (seen at left, with tie-dyed shirt) caught Fidel Castro's curveball, he played baseball for the Granville Grange Zephyrs, pictured here at Nat Bailey Stadium in the early 1970s.

The Zephyrs played in the Vancouver Cosmic League. Back row from left: Brad Robinson (face obscured), Gary Nairne (aka Gary Lee Nova), Glen Toppings, Walter the Manager, George Bowering (facing sideways), Lionel Kearns and Dennis Vance. Middle row, from left: Gerry Nairne (aka Mr. Blunt), Dwight Gardiner, Brian Fisher, Lanny Beckman (New Star Books). Front row with bats: Liam Kearns and Frank Kearns.

Dictatorship Index

(Years of unelected power)

Fidel Castro (1926-) Cuba: 46

Kim Il Sung (1912-1994) North Korea: 46
King Hussein (1935-1999) Jordan: 46
Emperor Haile Selassie (1892-1975) Ethiopia: 44
Enver Hoxha (1909-1985) Albania: 41
Omar Bongo (1935-) Gabon: 38
Sultan of Brunei (1946-) Brunei: 38
Gnassingbé Eyadéma (1937-2005) Togo: 38
King Hassan II (1929-1999) Morocco: 38
Muammar al-Qaddafi (1942-) Libya: 36
Francisco Franco (1892-1975) Spain: 36
Antonio Salazar (1889-1970) Portugal: 36
Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) Yugoslavia: 35
General Alfredo Stroessner (1912-) Paraguay: 35 (living in Brazil)
Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan (1918-2004) UAE (Abu Dhabi): 33
Mobutu Sese Sédou (1930-1997) Congo/Zaire: 32
Joseph Stalin (1879-1953) Soviet Union: 31
General Suharto (1921-) Indonesia: 31 (living in Indonesia)
Rafael Trujillo (1892-1961) Dominican Rep.: 31
Hafez al-Assad (1928-2000) Syria: 30
King Singye Wangchuck (1955-) Bhutan: 33
Hastings Kamuzu Banda (1898-1997) Malawi: 28
Mao Tse-tung (1893-1976) China: 27
Ne Win (1911-2002) Burma: 26
Robert Gabriel Mugabe (1925-) Zimbabwe: 25
Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) Taiwan: 25
Daniel arap Moi (1924-) Kenya: 24
King Fahd (1923-) Saudi Arabia: 23
Moussa Traoré (1936-) Mali: 23
Nicolae Ceausescu (1918-1989) Romania: 22
Muhammad Siad Barre (1919-1995) Somalia: 22
Saddam Hussein (1937-) Iraq: 24
Julius Nyerere (1922-1999) Tanzania: 20
Joao Bernardo Vieira (1939-) Guinea-Bissau: 19
King Dorji Wangchuk (1929-1972) Bhutan: 19
Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-1970) Egypt: 18
Mathieu Kérékou (1933-) Benin: 18
Augusto Pinochet (1915-) Chile: 17
Mengistu Haile Miriam (1937-) Ethiopia: 17 (living in Zimbabwe)
Gaafar al Ramiz Nimeiry (1930-) Sudan: 16
Anastasio Somoza (1896-1956) Nicaragua: 16
Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier (1953-) Haiti: 15 (living in France)
Ho Chi Minh (1890-1969) North Vietnam: 15
Ferdinand Marcos (1917-1989) Philippines: 14
Francois Tombalbaye (1918-1975) Chad: 13
Omar Torrijos Herrera (1929-1981) Panama: 13
J.B. Bokassa (1921-1996) Central African Rep.: 13
King Farouk I (1936-1953) Egypt: 12
Kim Jong Il (1942-) North Korea: 11
Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971) Soviet Union: 11
Leonid Brezhnev (1906-1982) Soviet Union: 11
Fulgencio Batista (1901-1973) Cuba: 11
Milton Obote (1924-) Uganda: 10 (living in Zambia)
Mohammad Zia ul-Haq (1924-1988) Pakistan: 10
Samuel Kanyon Doe (1951-1990) Liberia: 10
Ayatollah Khomeini (1902-1989) Iran: 10
Michel Micombero (1940-1983) Burundi: 10
Achmad Sukarno (1901-1970) Indonesia: 10
Juan Domingo Peron (1895-1974) Argentina: 9
Idi Amin (1925-2003) Uganda: 8
Hissène Habré (1942-) Chad: 8 (now living in Senegal)
Ramiz Alia (1925-) Albania: 7
Sani Abacha (1943-1998) Nigeria: 5
Manuel Antonio Noriega (1934-) Panama: 5 (imprisoned, USA)
A. Massamba-Debat (1921-) Republic of Congo (Brazzaville): 5
Pol Pot (1928-1998) Cambodia: 4

bolded names still in power
(Index for leaders who lived from 1950 onwards.)

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Gabriel Garcia Márquez on his friend Fidel Castro (left): "I do not think anyone in the world could be a worse loser."

This article is the second in a new series celebrating enduring B.C. books.

Hunger in the jungles of Vancouver

During his 19 years at the First United Church at Hastings and Gore, Andrew Roddan became known as the 'Apostle to the Poor.'

As much as anyone, **Andrew Roddan** began the ongoing struggle for social improvement in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Like **J.S. Woodsworth** and **Tommy Douglas**, Scottish-born Andrew Roddan was a Bible thumper from the prairies who preached the Social Gospel. He felt morally obliged to translate Christian beliefs into practical acts to improve the well-being of others.

Roddan advocated low rent housing and provided an estimated 50,000 meals to the unemployed during the winter of 1930-1931.

His First United soup kitchen once served 1,252 patrons in a single sitting in November of 1930. The church was located near the Empress Theatre.

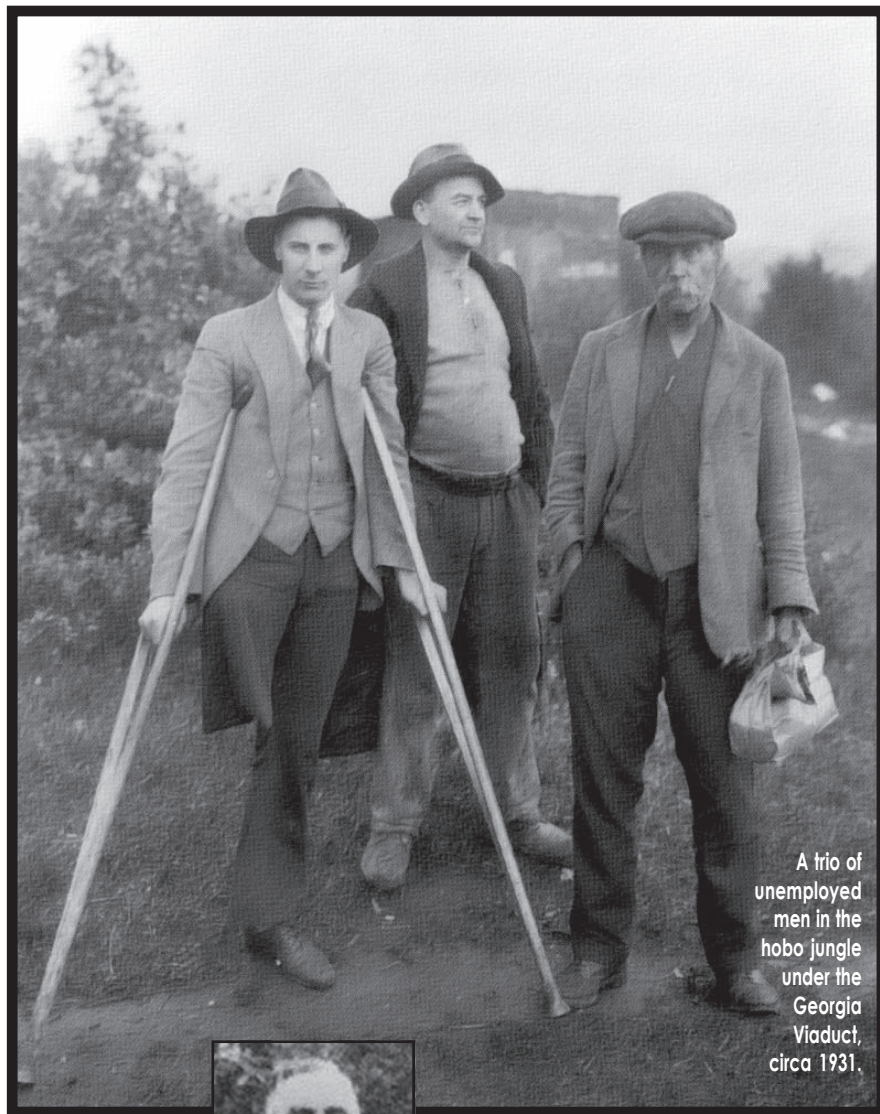
"To the Devil with their plays and tomfoolery," Roddan would mutter (according to his son **Sam Roddan**), raising his fist at the Empress.

"There's more tragedy right here on this street and down these lanes than those actors will ever get on their stage. And here we don't need any makeup."

Long before the term homelessness became de rigeur to explain away poverty and mental illness, Roddan wrote about the plight of the unemployed in a classic work about the Downtown Eastside, *God in the Jungles* (1931), newly reprinted as **Vancouver's Hoboes** (Subway Books \$16.95), with an introduction by **Todd McCallum**.

The jungles Roddan referred to in *God in the Jungles* were four makeshift encampments that sprang up within city limits by the summer of 1931, each housing hundreds of men.

These shanty towns were located near Prior Street, under the Georgia Viaduct, along the False Creek Flats and along the shore of Burrard Inlet.



A trio of unemployed men in the hobo jungle under the Georgia Viaduct, circa 1931.



Andrew Roddan

Rather than condemn the downtrodden as degenerates, Roddan appreciates their pluck. "Some of these men have no food when they start. They trust to luck and plan to live by begging at each divisional point on the way across.

"Those who are old hands and know the ropes get by, some of them in great style; but the other poor beggars have a rough time and often they are hungry."

Roddan puts much of the blame for the situation on technology and notes the dangers of consuming “canned heat,” a cooking fuel made from wax impregnated with alcohol. “It makes them blind, it makes them mad, and finally they take the count.”

As he ministered to the unemployed, Roddan encountered opposition from Communists who felt he was delaying an inevitable uprising.

To counteract leftist attempts to organize the unemployed, Roddan would point to their propagandist literature and declare, "Look fellows, you can't eat

that," then hold out a loaf of bread.

His charity was also resented by government officials, some of whom argued he was merely attracting more drifters to Vancouver.

The so-called jungles were destroyed in September of 1931, ostensibly due to a death attributed to typhoid. This death enabled the provincial government of Premier **Simon Fraser Tolmie** to relocate more than 1,000 men to labour camps outside the city.

Hunger marches in 1932 and 1933 ensued, followed by the On-to-Ottawa Trek led by **Slim Evans** in 1935 and the Post Office Sit-In and riot of 1938.

Although Roddan increasingly adopted the fundamentalist views of the Oxford Movement, he never entirely abandoned his Social Gospel principles, clearly expressed towards the end of *Vancouver's Hoboes*.

"We must learn to take Jesus seriously and apply his teachings of His Gospel to every phase of life."



Delivered in a heavy Scottish accent, Andrew Roddan's Sunday radio talks were published as *Christ of the Wireless Way* (1932). He also wrote *Canada's Untouchables* (1932).

Roddan provided help to the families of picketing longshoremen during the labour unrest of 1935; he endorsed the CCF candidate who ran against Vancouver Mayor **Gerry McGeer** in the federal riding of Vancouver-Burrard; and he supported the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion of volunteers who fought for the leftist Republican cause in Spain against Franco.

A charter member of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Roddan exhibited his own works as a painter in 1942. He died on April 25, 1948, still employed as the minister for First United Church.

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INDEX to Advertisers

Anvil Press...9	Heritage House...5	Save-On Foods...13
Arsenal Pulp Press...29	Hignell Printing...34	SFU Communications Dept...33
Banyen Books...32	Houghton Boston...34	SFU Writing & Publishing...28
BC Book Prizes...7	Hushion House...32	Shuswap Lake Writers' Festival...20
Book TV...26	Island Mountain Arts...32	Sidney Booktown...32
Bolen Books...12	McClelland & Stewart...22	Simply Read Books...33
Book Warehouse...23	Marquis Book Printing...13	Sono Nis Press...8
Crown Publications...12	New Star Books...16	Strong, Ken...32
Douglas & McIntyre...2	Northstone...20	Sunshine Coast Festival of the Written Arts...35
Douglas College/EVENT...23	Oolichan Books...16	Thomas Allen Publishers...3
Ekstasis Editions...10	Orca Books...26	Transcontinental Printing...34
Ellis, David...32	People's Co-op Books...20	UBC Press...14
First Choice Books...34	Penguin Books...30	University of Alberta Press...32
Friesens Printers...34	Printorium...34	University of Toronto Press...15
Givner, Joan...32	Ripple Effects Press...26	Vancouver Desktop...20
Granville Island Publishing...32	Ronsdale Press...30	Yoka's Coffee...22
Harbour Publishing...36	Rucker, Lance...20	TO ADVERTISE CALL 604-736-4011
HarperCollins...7	Sandhill Book Marketing...6	

For our series on where books come from, poet **Harold Rhenisch** recalls the origins of *Free Will* (Ronsdale \$14.95),



Harold Rhenisch

his view of the world as a tragi-comic version of theatre with Puck's irrepressible wit as the common denominator.

THE BOOK BEGAN when I drove off the farm to Victoria in a 1957 Ford Sedan with four colours of paint and a bullet hole in the back window.

Who knows where the bullet hole had come from. I bought that old beater off my brother for \$150. He used the money to buy himself a Honda 450, with a crash bar and lots of chrome.

He was into *Easy Rider*. I was off to play Puck in *A Midsummers Night's Dream*, on the strength of a passion for the absurdist theatre of Ionesco. I thought it best not to ask about the bullet.

Slipping the blue toque off my long golden hair and clearing my head of Leonard Cohen's "Songs of Love and Hate," which were rolling around in there like a piece of gravel in a hubcap, I thumped around a minimalist set for six weeks, speaking spells, making magic, and acting that I was acting.



Fifteen years later, I woke up with a start in the middle of the night, sweating, repeating lines from the play, but this time voicing them as they cried to be voiced — singing, laughing them out, teasing, calling, taunting.

The dreams, if they were dreams, continued for years. I was no longer acting. The result is this book.

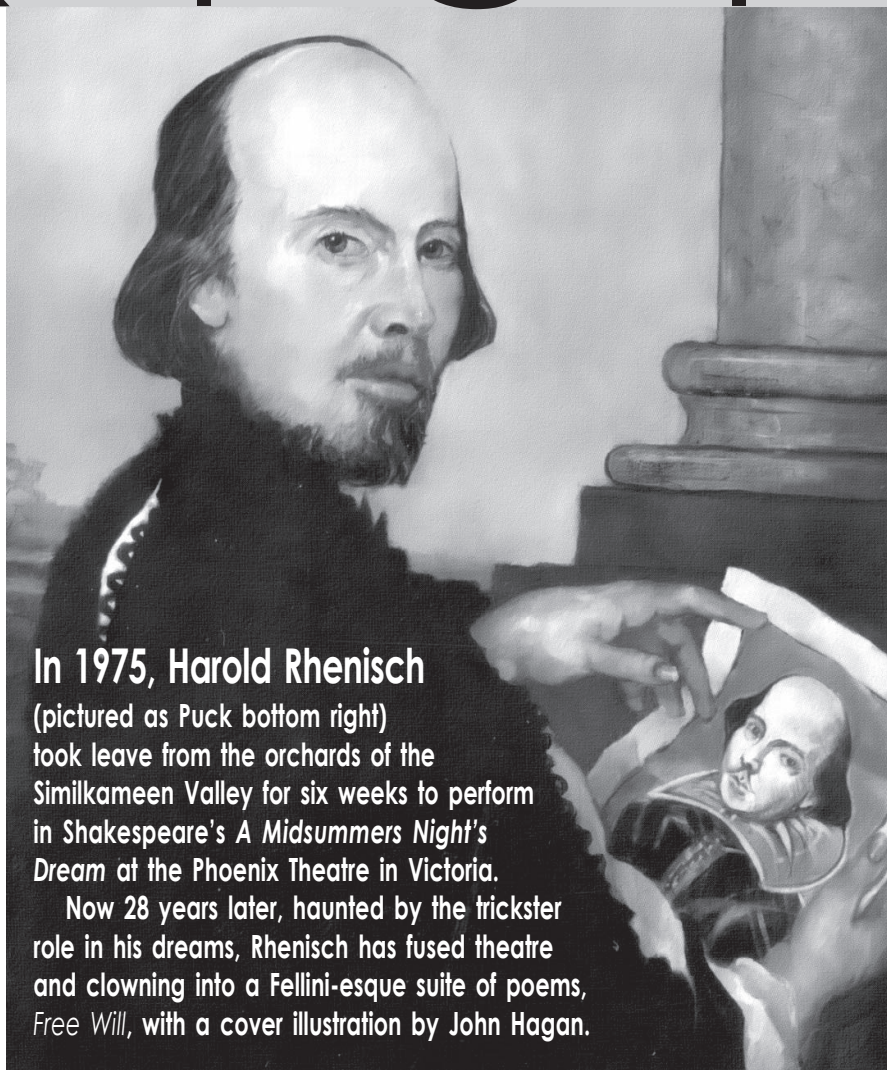
Shakespeare rattles around in it, as he does in my head, with his fools and lovers, his cross-dressers, his heroes who aren't heroes, his tragedies that aren't tragedies, his comedies that often have more in common with Monty Python and *La Cage aux Folles* than with high art.

Ionesco is never far behind. The whole avalanche of poetry that has come down off the mountain of Purgatory with surrealists skiing madly before it, absurdist playwrights digging up somnambulist lyricists, and visual poets and sound poets tramping in with their dogs and their barrels of brandy, end up tumbling into the après-ski chalet of this book, where Puck tends bar...

Puck is a fairy, a trickster, the one who stands outside of all stories and causes them to take place, capriciously. He is also a trick himself, a piece of sleight-of-hand...

Rapacious, driven, compulsive, unpredictable, impulsive, vital, frightening, transient, sexually ambiguous, and dangerous, Puck is the creative imagination itself. The card huckster that is Puck has his own mirrors, too: Lear, who mocks himself; the sinister but smiling Iago; the indecisive Hamlet, who plays his own fools.

They differ from Puck only because the space created for them forces their energy into different strait jackets, as our



In 1975, Harold Rhenisch (pictured as Puck bottom right) took leave from the orchards of the Similkameen Valley for six weeks to perform in Shakespeare's *A Midsummers Night's Dream* at the Phoenix Theatre in Victoria. Now 28 years later, haunted by the trickster role in his dreams, Rhenisch has fused theatre and clowning into a Fellini-esque suite of poems, *Free Will*, with a cover illustration by John Hagan.

THE PUCK STARTS HERE



different bodies do to our own souls. United by an urge to live, and to live freely, these characters fight their fate—Will Shakespeare, who penned them in.

By pulling the rug of tragedy out from under their feet, he is forcing them, the actors who play them, and any of the others of us who let them pound the boards in our minds, to think for ourselves, and to free him, Will, from death. The plays are great, complex, incantatory and alchemical engines. God help us all...

Any combination of reason and unreason is absurd, of course. The city of this book is populated by clowns and fools.

Punch, Coyote, Charlie Chaplin, Robin Goodfellow, Black Adder, Marcel Marceau, and the shriners on their scooters in small town parades, all take their turns behind the camera, directing a scene from the show. The tragedy is common to them all —Shakespeare and his audience trapped within the house of mirrors of their minds, finding escape by putting on masks of themselves...



This vision of Puck has roots in the old definition of infinity: if you were to lock 10,000 monkeys in a room with 10,000 typewriters, they would eventually write *Hamlet*.

In this book, they do — and a lot of other plays besides: comedies, tragedies, romances, histories, gallows humour, the works. These lab chimps finally get their own say, free of surgical implants and doubleblind controls.

In their plays, though, as in Shakespeare's own, the tragedies are not about tragic heroes. Instead, they detail the repercussions of tragedy upon people, how it constrains them, and how, by joy, delight and by playing roles they can be released from the cage of living alone in a vast, unknowable universe, where scientists wear identification badges and white coats and bring medications on steel trays.

Hamlet is not Hamlet's play, for instance, but Ophelia's. Her play appears here, stripped of Shakespeare's distorting lens that gave us Hamlet's story instead. Iago's play is here as well. So is Puck's. And Desdemona's.

Here, too, are actors identifying with their parts until the two are indistinguishable. The stage becomes the audience, the audience the actors on the stage.

A new sequence is added to Shakespeare's sonnets, bringing them into the world of prime time sitcoms and cop shows.

The major genres — and some minor ones — of western literature are put on stage, to do their vaudeville act, and Puck makes his magic, or reaches out his hook.

In this universe, the subconscious mind will not be contained and takes equal stage with its conscious twin.

I call that art.

Shakespeare appears, dressed in the monstrous garb of free will. It is the choice he can offer. The magic is real. In offering my version of Shakespeare's choice, I have followed Puck's lead.

Welcome to the show!

TO WRITE THE WINDSHIFT LINE, (*Greystone* \$24.95), her elegiac memoir, **Rita Moir** holed up in a Fort Macleod motel with her father's botanical research papers and the stories she had begged him to put down on tape before he died.

A former journalist, Rita Moir lives in Vallican, in the Slokan Valley, where she pieces together a life teaching writing, cleaning houses, doing fill-in reception work, and making sandwiches at the Co-op. "Sometimes I'll go to three jobs in one day," she says.

Her previous book, *Buffalo Jump: A Woman's Travels* (Coteau), received the VanCity Book Prize and the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize in 2000.

Rita Moir was interviewed by **Sara Cassidy**.

BCBW: Your book is about a lot more than your father's life as a botanist. Were you surprised by how it turned out?

MOIR: I knew it was more than a father-daughter story. I used his stories to help me be strong. I worked through some difficult issues, about who I get to be and how do I stake my own place on this earth as a woman. This book at one point was called "wind-trained trees," because that's an image from my father, an image of trees holding strong even in hard wind. Then it became *The Windshift Line*.

BCBW: Can you explain what a windshift line is?

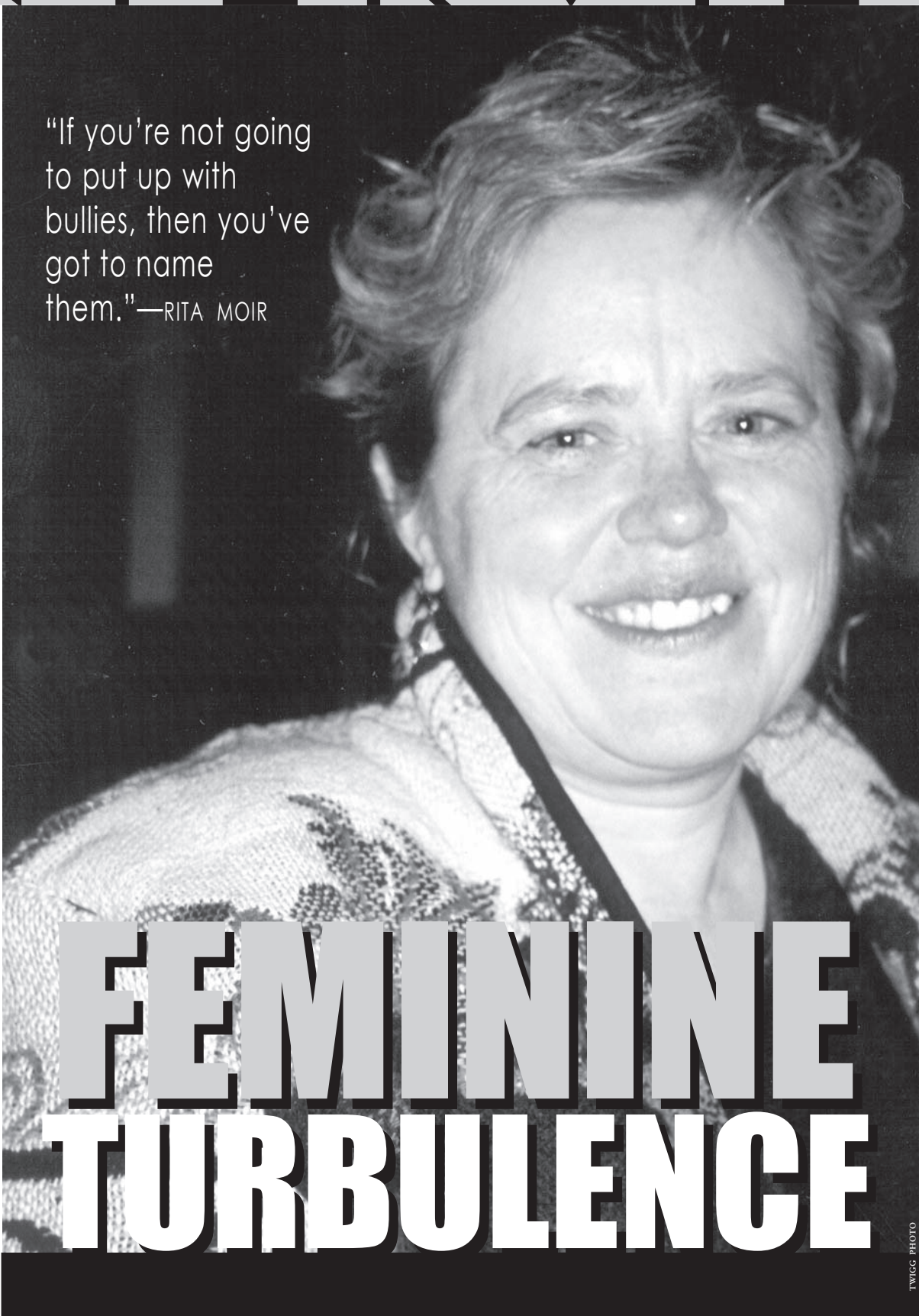
MOIR: In science, it has many meanings, but the one I chose is where the cold wind from the west meets a front of warm moist air from the south. If the cold air is moving fast enough it will override the warm air. Warm air is light and when it's overbalanced by this cold, oppressive air, it starts pushing to get out from under and that's where the turbulence and the turmoil starts, that's where tornadoes start.

BCBW: Speaking of turbulence, there is a lot in the book about your relationships with men. I guess that because you were writing about your father, you started to write about other men in your life?

MOIR: Yeah. And part of it is, what is a single woman? What attributes do you need to live alone in the country? If you're a woman in the country, you have to be able to take care of a lot of stuff—whether it's just making systems work, just having a handle on things, and not always depending on a male to take care of stuff for you.

I also wanted to examine the issue of male power. Can I live as a single female and not in a male protectorate? Because

"If you're not going to put up with bullies, then you've got to name them."—RITA MOIR



TWIGG PHOTO

sometimes it's very hard for a woman living alone in the country; sometimes the community looks on them with "if only you had a man" or "you need a man to take care of that for you."

BCBW: What about the—I'll say abusive—partner you had? Were you worried about writing about him?

MOIR: I had to do it. If you're not going to put up with bullies, then you've got to name them. I don't mean name the name, but you've got to tell the story. It wasn't an easy thing to write. I didn't want to over-write it, I didn't want to make it into something that it wasn't for the sake of more drama. Compared to the stories of a lot of women, what happened in this book was nothing. But other women will go, "Oh yeah. I can see this little shove or this little insinuation, this little control." There's probably not too many women who can't identify with what happened.



"I've always thought women in Canada would be far safer if they all hitchhiked back and forth across the country, non-stop, meeting strangers, than staying in their own homes."

—RITA MOIR

BCBW: In the book, you're also interested in the combination of art and science, the two together.

MOIR: That's partly why I've come to call creative non-fiction "Calvinist poetry." We tend to think of art and science as opposites and they're really not. That's what I learned when I listened to the language (of botanical names) and to my father tell his stories. The precision of detail in science is the same thing that makes art work. And when he talked about his work, his love of it, to me that was poetry, too.

BCBW: Where are you now in grieving your father? Did this book help?

MOIR: Well, I put him in file boxes recently and that was a good thing to be able to do.

BCBW: You mean the tapes and his papers?

MOIR: Yeah. Now I can take all the files and put them in a box and move on. I don't subscribe to the

"writing is therapy" because it's a big skill, it's a big craft, it's not just my diary on the page. But it was a synthesis. It was taking my art and craft and saying I care enough. This will be my say.

BCBW: Why did you move into a motel to write?

MOIR: Dislocation puts all your observation skills at their best. You're not involved with the daily minutiae of running your own household, fixing toilets and making firewood. You just go somewhere where you can empty your mind of all that busyness. You see things new. You start with a sparse landscape and then put the things into it that you need for the writing. I got to escape the clutter of my own home, take the things I really

needed and give them the prominence that they needed.

BCBW: And you formed some new friendships in the process.

MOIR: As a single woman I've always felt strongly that, yes, certainly there can be scariness out in the world, but there can be far more of that in the home. I've always thought women in Canada would be far safer if they all hitchhiked back and forth across the country, non-stop, meeting strangers, than staying in their own homes.

I always have been open, as a traveler, to the fact that people help travelers. I'm really extroverted—I think that comes from years of being a journalist, or else I became a journalist because I'm extroverted—and I'm curious about people. It doesn't scare me to strike up a conversation with somebody. And in a small town, if you meet someone at a gas station and strike up a conversation, people don't all look at each other like, *what kind of maniac are you, talking to strangers?*

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Sara Cassidy is a writing Department student at the University of Victoria.

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