

# OUTDOORS

There is a bit of the gypsy in **Vivien Lougheed**, who traces her heritage, through her father, to the nomadic clans in Romania. Born in Winnipeg in 1943 and partially raised in northern Saskatchewan, she has visited more than 50 countries and written guidebooks about Mexico, Bolivia, Belize and Central America, plus stories about Tibet and Iran.

When her grandfather bought her a bicycle at age nine, she was gone. “My mom would say don’t go off our street,” she says, “and I’d be on the other side of the city.” At 16, Lougheed quit school and left home, hooked on travel. At 18, she took the Greyhound to the Rockies and decided she would one day have to live in the mountains.

Lougheed moved to Prince George in 1970 and co-wrote the Kluane National Park hiking guide with her husband **John Harris** in 1997. Together they have hiked in the Tatshenshini

River area just below the Yukon border, as well as in the wilderness parks, Mount Edziza and Spatzizi, and they spent years exploring Nahanni National Park (during which time she and John Harris co-wrote *Tungsten John: Being an Account of Some Inconclusive but Nonetheless Informative Attempts to Reach the South Nahanni River by Foot and Bicycle*).

Now a travel columnist for the *Prince George Citizen*, Lougheed has restricted her wanderlust to home turf for **From the Chilcotin to the Chilkooot** (Caitlin Press \$24.95), a guide to the mountains and hiking trails of Northern B.C.

With a bright photo of children on the cover, Lougheed hopes *From the Chilcotin to the Chilkooot* will encourage Mr. and Mrs. Motor Home that they,



“The world is my pumpkin,  
Prince George is my home.”

—Vivien Lougheed in the Sahara Desert

FROM  
CHICKEN BUS TO  
TATSHENSHINI OR

# BUST



HEATHER RAMSAY

too, can do the trails in places like Tumbler Ridge, Mackenzie and Haida Gwaii. “I want to get them out of their vehicles at 100 Mile House to walk around their 45-minute trail,” she says. “Too many American motor homes on their way to Alaska barrel past my favourite spots without taking the time to stop and look around. I want to entice the guy from Alabama who is going to Alaska to stay a little longer.”

Lougheed got her start in the travel writing game with a self-published title, *Central America by Chicken Bus*, which she says has sold over 10,000 copies in three editions. As a lab technician on vacation in 1986, she crossed from Mexico into Guatemala, then into El Salvador. She and her traveling companion **Joanne Armstrong** coined the term chicken bus to describe the con-

verted school buses in Latin America that transport passengers and livestock.

“I used to travel as cheaply as I could,” she says, “so I could afford to do more. I don’t like the beach scene. I like to get into the mountains. I like to do the hiking and learn some of the language. And try and get off the beaten path.”

Lougheed says she doesn’t travel to change the world. During a recent lecture to a secondary school class, she advised, “You have no power, you don’t know the culture, you are a foreigner. What you can do is learn there without judgment and come home and make sure the things you don’t like don’t happen in your own country.”

She is currently working on a novel that takes place in Winnipeg and Cuba.

1-894759-03-8

Heather Ramsay writes from  
Queen Charlotte City.

## VIVIEN LOUGHEED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- **Adventure Guide to Mexico’s Pacific Coast** (Hunter, 2005).
- **Adventure Guide to Bolivia** (Hunter, 2004).
- **Adventure Guide to Belize** (Hunter, 2002).
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- **Tungsten John: Being an Account of Some Inconclusive but Nonetheless Informative Attempts to Reach the South Nahanni River by Foot and Bicycle**, co-author with John Harris (New Star, 2000).
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- **Fobidden Mountains** (Caitlin, 1996).
- **Central America by Chicken Bus**, (Repository, 1993).



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# Bad boy Barry returns

*Barry Delta in Toy Gun reappears as a reluctant good guy in Dennis E. Bolen's third amalgam of bleak humour and compassionate urges on Vancouver's mean streets.*

Given the cover of **Dennis E. Bolen's** *Toy Gun* (Anvil \$26), a stark image of a handgun against an orange background, most readers will be surprised to discover this novel is more psychological study and moral exploration than hard-boiled crime thriller.

As the third instalment in Bolen's trilogy about federal parole officer Barry Delta, following *Stupid Crimes* (1992) and *Krekshuns* (1997), it focuses more on the inner machinations of its characters than on crimes committed.

A self-confessed 'burn out' eyeing early retirement, bad boy Barry Delta drinks too much (way too much), cheats on his wife, has trouble curbing his glib tongue, and is given to bouts of self-deception and self-loathing in about equal measure. His work in the underworld of addiction, prostitution and street crime has left him jaded and exhausted.

Bolen, a former parole officer himself, deftly weaves the stories of Barry Delta's life and loves (somehow women find him irresistible and more than one of them wants to have his baby), his boozy afternoons at the Yale Hotel, and the desperate escapades of the parolees on his caseload.

We witness the crazed excitement of a coke addict preparing to commit a robbery and the humiliation of a prostitute being tossed out of a car and called a whore. This is a country of the damned



SHEILA MUNRO

where ugly behaviour, brutal crimes, lies and deceptions prevail. Bolen renders this world with such visceral intensity that you can almost feel the drug cravings, the hangovers, the adrenaline rush that comes with violence.

Everything is convincing, nothing is glossed over. Obviously Bolen knows this territory from the inside out.

Ultimately *Toy Gun* is a novel of redemption, but first the worst has to happen so redemption can begin. Just about everything that can go wrong for Barry does. Disaster piles upon disaster as his personal and professional life spiral out of control. He finally bottoms out to find himself a mentally and physically broken man. There's something contrived about the plot in this regard, and of course the love of a good woman (the waitress at the Yale, no less) has much to do with his own redemption.

Meanwhile Barry wonders if even one of his clients can be saved. In so many cases the damage done to them in childhood is irrevocable. When the foul-mouthed, drugged-out prostitute Chantal declares, "I'm always going to be on the streets," he is unable to contradict her.

To keep going, Barry Delta has to believe that if even one former inmate doesn't re-offend, then his job will have been worthwhile. In grappling with this theme of redemption, increasingly the novel is marred by pious lectures about the need for love and forgiveness. The point is well taken but this is telling, not showing.



Dennis E. Bolen: visceral intensity

### To live is to experiment...

This time we've devoted half of **BC BookWorld** to fiction titles.

See pages 13-31

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We want to draw our own conclusions.

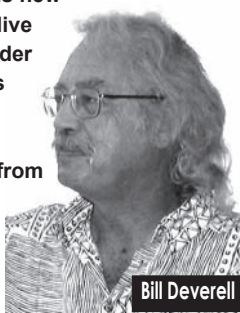
In *Toy Gun* Bolen takes us for a bracing ride, lacing sordid truths with humour and wit, mixing horror with the banality of everyday life, reflecting back to us our own messed-up lives. He forces us to look at things we don't want to look at, jarring us out of middle class complacency, and in doing so he reveals the narrowness of the worlds we live inside.

1-895636-68-X

*Sheila Munro lives in Comox where she is writing a novel.*

## WRITES OF SPRING

First introduced in **Bill Deverell's** *The Dance of Shiva*, crafty defence lawyer **Arthur Beauchamp** reappears in Deverell's 14<sup>th</sup> title, *April Fool* (M&S \$36.99). While his new wife decides to live atop a tree in order to protect eagles from loggers, Beauchamp is again retrieved from retirement from fictional **Garibaldi Island** to defend a notorious jewel thief on murder and rape charges. This courtroom thriller opens: "With envy, Arthur Beauchamp watches juncos mating in the raspberry patch. A bumblebee tests a daffodil. There is lust in his garden, spring's vitality. Maybe his sap will start flowing again too, and the lazy lout below will rise from flaccid hibernation. The desire is there, but the equipment faulty. When was his last erection – a month ago? A half-hearted attempt at takeoff. But he knows he must accept and move on. We age, faculties rust. Some men lose their hair. In compensation, Arthur has kept his, a thick grey thatch." 0-7710-2711-7



Bill Deverell

## Hitler's gold

A delusionary Aryan killer named **Swastika** arrives on the West Coast and heads to present-day Barkerville in search of Hitler's gold

in **Michael Slade's** eleventh gruesome thriller **Swastika** (Penguin \$24), a fast-paced, RCMP procedural inspired by the WW II archives of co-author **Jay Clarke's** father, Jack "Johnny Clarke," who flew 47 combat missions against the Third Reich. "What is it about the Cariboo that appeals to the Germanic mind?" Slade writes. "Are the mountains evocative of the Bavarian Alps? Are the thickets reminiscent of how the Black Forest used to feel? Is it the sense of *Lebenstraum* in its wide-open spaces, the yearning for elbow room that drove the Nazis to invade Russia? Whatever it is, German accents are everywhere in the Cariboo today, and that made the Aryan just one among many." 0-14-305325-6



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# Sadistic gardens—or SACRED GEOMETRY

From ancient Greeks to computer geeks, mankind has been fascinated by mazes.



The Amiens Labyrinth  
from *The Spirituality of  
Mazes & Labyrinths*

ENTRY

Another story has it that Joseph of Arimathea founded the first Christian church at Glastonbury in 37 A.D. For centuries the land around Glastonbury has been known as the Twelve Hides (given to Joseph of Arimathea, the uncle of Jesus, when he arrived here with the Holy Grail). The somewhat circular area is a series of ridges approximately ten miles across and roughly 30 miles in circumference.

MacQueen cites **Geoffrey Ashe** as the theorist who deduced that the ridges of Glastonbury constitute a circular maze—by far the largest labyrinth in the world—but he omits mentioning the earlier probing of **Katherine Emma Maltwood** (1878-1961), the wealthy theosophist who retired to Victoria, B.C. and died there in 1961. It was Maltwood who first suggested the Glastonbury landscape was a vast depic-

tion of Zodiacal forms constructed around 2700 BC.

After Katherine Maltwood linked the various hills (Chalice Hill / Aquarius; Wearyall Hill / Pisces, etc.) with the Knights of the Round Table in 1927, she founded the Maltwood Museum in Victoria in 1953 and bequeathed to it her extensive art collection. Maltwood's research archives into ancient cultures can be seen at the McPherson Library at the University of Victoria.



Meditation and retreat centres commonly incorporate labyrinths into their grounds, and Christians and New Agers alike have continued to seek historical and mystical connections between the literal and figurative outlines of Glastonbury, Christ and the Zodiac. MacQueen approvingly describes the

New Age Movement as “a wake-up call to organized religion” because many churches were neglecting the spiritual and experiential aspects of religion.

“Many New Age practitioners believe in reincarnation,” he writes. “For them, the labyrinth symbolizes death and re-birth.” MacQueen is particularly enamoured of the investigations made by **Lauren Artress** of the Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. She, in turn, was inspired by a visit to the Chartres Cathedral labyrinth in France and has since developed the ideas of **Keith Critchlow** to incorporate Chartres-style labyrinths in her Christian theology.

Artress' theories on the labyrinth can be found in *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Sacred Tool* (Riverhead Books, 1995). “At its core is the rose,” MacQueen writes, “which is a symbol of both Mary and Jesus. Buried within the labyrinth are the shapes of ten, two-bladed axe heads. Artress calls them labrys, relating them to the Cretan double-headed axe... Artress argues that the rose, the labrys, the luminations, indeed the entire sacred geometry of the labyrinth, represent the feminine face of God...”

“Today many Christian denominations are struggling to restore a balance between the God of power and might, and, the God of compassion and nurture. Feminist theology, in particular, challenges Christians to recognize God not just, or even primarily, as Father, but equally as Mother. Artress believes the labyrinth is a tool for putting us in touch with this feminine face of the divine.”

In medieval times the church used the classic example of Theseus slaying the Minotaur in the Cretan labyrinth, aided by Ariadne's thread, to explain how Christ, during his three days in the tomb, managed to descend into hell where he preached to souls of the dead and defeated Satan.

The labyrinth of Theseus makes sense of it all: The rational must triumph over the bestial.

1-896836-69-0

There's a prisoners-only 'Cretan' labyrinth in the jail yard at Brockville, Ontario and the movie version of Stephen King's *The Shining* features the Tree Tops Maze near Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

In Canada, there are labyrinths from St. Andrew's United Church in Halifax to White Rock United Church.

“Almost all mainline denominations have at least some labyrinths,” writes **Gailand MacQueen** in *The Spirituality of Mazes & Labyrinths* (Northstone \$37).

MacQueen's own fascination with these physical puzzles dates back to 1967 when he encountered the hedge maze that was planted on Centre Island in Toronto to mark Canada's centennial. Since then he has been leading labyrinth and maze workshops that connect his own United Church beliefs to a sense of wonder.

“Where the labyrinth is about trust,” he says, “mazes are about personal choice. Where the labyrinth is communal, mazes are individualistic. Where the labyrinth is intuitive, mazes are rational.”



The site that most clearly resonates with spiritual overtones in MacQueen's book is the ten-mile maze at Glastonbury in Somerset, England.

Long before Glastonbury was known as the Isle of Avalon, allegedly the burial place of **Arthur** and **Guinevere**, the New Testament character **Joseph of Arimathea** supposedly brought the **Virgin Mary** and the infant **Jesus** to Glastonbury, giving rise to the famous **William Blake** poem 'Jerusalem' and the English hymn of the same name.

*“And here did those feet in ancient time walk upon England's mountains green? And was the holy Lamb of God on England's pleasant pastures seen?”*



“In England, the labyrinth is a symbol of pre-Christian spirituality.” —Gailand MacQueen



"When you're a kid growing up on the coast, it's far easier to get into a boat and go somewhere than it is to learn to drive a car."—JO HAMMOND

# NEVER GET OFF THE BOAT

Take a smelly stranger in a dirty camouflage jacket, a mysterious house fire, add five kids, two boats and a 1980 Subaru station wagon with a raccoon skull hotmelted on its hood and you've got the makings of a West Coast adventure, **Home Before Dark** (Orca \$9.95), by **Jo Hammond**.

Her first published children's novel is loosely based on the rambunctious life of her son who has merged with a character in her book. Her teenage character Erik Johnson, for instance, knows his boats and engines.

At age five, Erik drove his parents' log-salvaging boat "powered by a 460 Ford coupled to a three-stage Hamilton jet." By age ten, he was piloting his own azure blue 10-foot fiberglass boat with a twenty-horsepower Mercury outboard named *DC-3*, for the "most dependable plane ever built."

As *Home Before Dark* begins, Erik's buddy Mike has just lucked into a secondhand runabout. A seemingly innocent run to Bowen Island turns nasty when a dirty stranger attempts to steal Mike's boat.

During their camping trip near a burned-out farm house, accompanied by girls Toni and Bronya, the boys discover an old miner's lamp.

They wake that night to the eerie and unlikely sounds of organ music...and the mystery is on.



Hammond, born in Sussex, England where she worked as a "relief herdsman" during her teen years, taught high school science and music and was a member of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic choir.

Immigrating on a freighter through the Panama Canal to Sechart in 1967, she later married veteran log salvor **Dick Hammond**, now an author of coastal tales. [see [abcbookworld.com](http://abcbookworld.com)]

She obtained her own log salvage licence, appeared as an extra on CBC's *The Beachcombers* for many years, raised two children free of her own "terribly restricted and autocratic up-

bringing" and survived towing their house on a barge when it nearly fell into the sea.

After a bout in ICU with anxiety-induced fibrillation, her enrollment in a stress management course set her to writing.

1-55143-340-0

## JUNEAU THE WAY?

**Jack's Knife** (Polestar \$12.95) is the second instalment in the time-travelling Sirius Mystery series by Ladysmith husband-and-wife team **Beverley** and **Chris Wood**.

When 15-year-old Jackson (Jack) Kyle's over-protective mother insists a

*continued on page 37*



LOUISE DONNELLY



Illustration from *The Gathering Tree*

# HEALING THE TIGER

Tyler dreams of running marathons like his older cousin Robert.

So when Robert arrives on the bus for the annual First Nations gathering, wearing a cowboy hat and a big smile, eager for his daily run, it's hard for Tyler to believe his favourite cousin is ill.

At 21, Robert has HIV. By speaking out he hopes he can encourage an awareness of AIDS among the First Nations community.

That's the set-up for **The Gathering Tree** (Theytus \$19.95) co-authored by **Larry Loyie** and **Constance Brissenden** of Vancouver.

During an outing to the zoo, Robert tells Tyler and his little sister, "I'm just like this tiger...locked up in a cage. We both want to be free but we're not."

Robert further explains why he can never be away from the city and his doctors for long periods.

At the rural gathering, under the old tree that had welcomed his people for generations, Robert adds, "I thought I could run through life, winning trophies, partying, and that nothing bad would ever catch up with me."

"[But to heal] I had to tell the truth and be open to others."

Later, when Tyler joins in an honor dance to support Robert, he suddenly understands that by just being part of his family, he's helping Robert stay strong.

With illustrations by award-winning artist **Heather D. Holmlund**, *The Gathering Tree* was initiated by Chee Mamuk, an Aboriginal HIV/STI educational program.

Co-author Larry Loyie spent his early years living a traditional Cree life before being placed in residential school. He received the 2001 Canada Post Literacy Award for Individual Achievement and is the author of *Ora Pro Nobis* (Pray For Us), a play about residential school, as well as the children's book *As Long as the Rivers Flow* (Groundwood).

In 1993, Loyie (Cree name: Oskiniko/Young Man) and Constance Brissenden formed Living Traditions Writers Group to foster writing within First Nations communities.

1-894778-28-6



Raised in the Nicola Valley, **Nicola I. Campbell** is a UBC Fine Arts student of Interior Salish and Métis ancestry. Illustrated by **Kim LaFave**, her first children's book **Shi-shi-etko** (Groundwood \$16.95) portrays a young girl named Shi-shi-etko ("she loves to play in the water") who must leave her family to attend a residential school. She spends her remaining four days playing outside and listening to her parents' and grandparents' teachings, intent on keeping everything inside her "bag of memories."

0-88899-659-4

—Louise Donnelly



continued from page 35

stray dog must be “disposed of,” Jack attempts to smuggle the dog to a friend. Jack, a troubled kid from the world of subdivisions and lawn mowers, finds himself transported to 1930s Juneau, Alaska. There ensues a constellation-studded adventure with Patsy Ann, the city’s plucky and famous white bull terrier.

1-55192-709-8



Vernon’s **Gerald “Jake” Conkin**, a lifetime member of the Alberta Cowboy Poets Association, worked for both the Waldron Ranch in Alberta and The Douglas Lake Cattle Company. His “passion for the cowboy culture” triggered *The Buckaroo Jake & Calico Carol Show* – storytelling performances for kids – and the *Little Jake* series of western adventures.

Little Jake, who left Vancouver for the Nicola Valley’s Double C Ranch, first appeared in *Little Jake’s Cowdog*. Now he’s back in **Little Jake & the Intruder** (Buckaroo Jake Productions \$12.95), determined to become a real buckaroo.

First there’s the challenge of training a coyote to be a “cowyote,” and then there’s the grizzly bear... Cartoon-style illustrations are by **Ben Crane**, who worked on ranches and farms in his early years and blames his family for a humorous twist that has become “permanently bent.”

0-9684444-1-5

Louise Donnelly writes from Vernon.

ALSO RECEIVED

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Garry Gottfriedson

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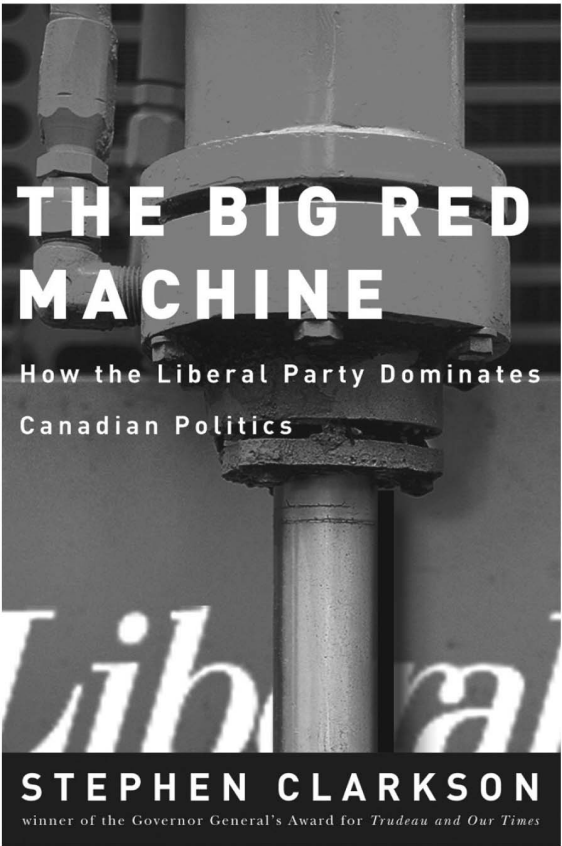
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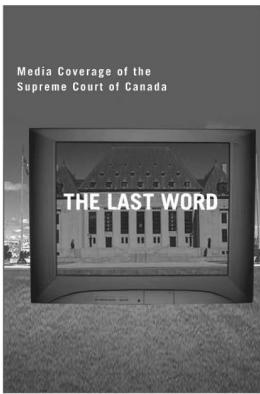
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Thought that counts



## THE HOPSCOTCH OF

## MATT HUGHES

“Ten years ago, I set out to be Elmore Leonard; instead, I became a sci-fi author.”

As a jack-of-all-trades wordsmith, **Matt Hughes** of Comox has juggled journalism and politics with mysteries, crime fiction and the creation of new worlds.

A university drop-out “from a working poor background,” Hughes is a lapsed member of Mensa who has worked as a staff speechwriter to Canadian Ministers of Justice, Small Business and Environment.

“Before I got into newspapers, I worked in a factory that made school desks, drove a grocery delivery truck, was night janitor in a GM dealership, and was briefly an orderly in a private mental hospital.”

Also a ghostwriter for hire, Hughes can’t be easily labelled, and this versatility has not necessarily been a blessing for someone who set out to be an author of hardboiled fiction.

The release of his fourth sci-fi volume, **The Gist Hunter & Other Stories** (Night Shade Books \$33.95) is akin to another unplanned but welcome pregnancy.

“I admire authors who can make a plan and follow it, the ones who proceed from short stories to a coming-of-

age novel then on to prestigious prizes and bestsellers. But, apparently, admire is all I can do. I cannot emulate.”



Combining mystery and sci-fi, *The Gist Hunter & Other Stories* features nine stories taking place in the universe of The Archonate, plus stories of Henghis Hapthorn, a Holmesian “discriminator” of Old Earth.

Hughes’ previous titles include *Black Brillion*, a novel about a pair of mismatched cops of the far future, plus a ghosted biography of Len Marchand, the first Aboriginal elected to federal parliament since Louis Riel.

Hughes’ fiction career was kick-started in 1997 when Doubleday Canada published *Downshift*, a humorous thriller, that led to short stories in *Hitchcock’s* magazine and *Blue Murder*, a web-based zine.

Hughes won an Arthur Ellis Award and graduated to a New York agent.

While he ghosted a medical thriller for a prominent US heart surgeon along the way, Hughes was also dabbling in an alternate universe.

“Years before, I’d entered Arsenal Pulp Press’s three-day novel contest, writing 27,000 words over 72 hours. I called it *Fools Errant*, an allegorical pastiche in the styles of sci-fi grandmaster Jack Vance and P.G. Wodehouse.”

Hughes expanded his hasty tale into a 72,000-word fantasy novel that follows the adventures of a layabout aristocrat Filidor and a wizened old dwarf Gaskarth.

He published *Fools Errant* with Maxwell Macmillan Canada only to have his novel plummet into obscurity when Robert Maxwell’s empire promptly collapsed.

“By 1999, *Fools Errant* was but a faint regret and I was a budding crime writer. Then I saw an interview with a senior editor at Time-Warner’s Aspect imprint who was looking for offbeat fantasies. On a whim, I sent her *Fools Errant*. She not only bought it, but commissioned a sequel, *Fool Me Twice*.”

Both works appeared in paperback in 2001.

Hughes’ agent couldn’t sell any of his thrillers but he was able to sell a third sci-fi novel, *Black Brillion*, to Tor, the world’s biggest sci-fi publisher.

*Black Brillion: A Novel of the Archonate* blends science fiction and fantasy with touches of Carl Jung. A peacekeeper of Old Earth, Baro Harkless reluctantly joins forces with the stylish swindler Luff Imbry. Their common enemy is Horselan Gebbling, a notorious con-man who may hold the cure for the fatal ailment known as the lassitude.

Next, a sci-fi anthology editor asked Hughes for a short story, and suddenly he was selling ‘shorts’ to the mass market pulps, *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, *Asimov’s*, and two British mags, *Interzone* and *Postscripts*.

“Within a year I had sold enough to make a collection,” he says. That’s the gist of how *The Gist Hunter & Other Stories* came to be published by a San Francisco company.

So Matt Hughes has inadvertently played hopscotch with his writing career.

“Other authors ascend a golden ladder. I hop, like Pearl Pureheart, from one passing ice floe to the next.

“If there is a plan behind any of this, it must be deeply unconscious. But since I honour my unconscious as the guy who actually supplies the creativity, maybe this is the way it has to be.”

Gist Hunter 1-597800-20-1

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# Pat Lowther:

## A full story of a half life

Vancouver-born **Pat Lowther** was bludgeoned to death at the age of forty by her husband just as she was coming into her full strength as a poet. The violence of her death and the weeks of suspense between her disappearance and the discovery of her body brought her a measure of fame and critical attention disproportionate to her relatively small output.

In the immediate aftermath of her death in 1975, **Peter Gzowski** orchestrated a tribute on FM radio, and there was an outpouring of elegies by her fellow poets. In the thirty years since then, an annual prize in Lowther's name has been awarded by the League of Canadian Poets to a female poet; there has been a documentary film, *Watermarks*; a selection of her published and previously unpublished work, *Time Capsule* (1997); a novelistic biography *Furry Creek* (1999) by **Keith Harrison**; a traditional biography, *Pat Lowther's Continent: Her Life and Work* (2000) by **Toby Brooks**; and other biographies and a memoir are reportedly in the works.

**The Half-Lives of Pat Lowther** (UTP \$65) by University of Alberta English professor **Christine Wiesen** is part scholarly analysis and part biography and the most comprehensive study so far. The title (half-life is a scientific term denoting the transformation of elemental energy into something smaller than its original luminous molecular whole) indicates

Wiesen's purpose in re-examining the history of Lowther's posthumous legacies. She explores the social and political forces that shaped Lowther's career, contributed to her death, and that still complicate the evaluation of her work.

In recent years the practice of biography has been extended from the simple writing of "A Life" to a new form or sub-genre that merges literary, historical and cultural analysis. If every genre demands its own set of canonical texts, Lowther's story with its literary, political and legal ramifications yields excellent material for this method.

In an early chapter, Wiesen provides a sophisticated reading of **Roy Lowther's** trial, an event so marked by sensation that it has entered local legal history. The crown prosecutor, in an incredible gesture, introduced Lowther's skull and the hammer that smashed it as evidence. He mesmerized the jury during the defense counsel's arguments by handling both objects, actually fitting the hammer into the hollows in the skull.

The trial, described in the *Vancouver Sun* under the headline 'Verses and Verdicts,' was also noteworthy for the extent that literature crept into the proceedings. The jury was initiated into the world of small literary magazines; Lowther's poems, and poems that her lover wrote to and about her, were introduced as evidence; the judge invoked the standards of the so-called New Critics in his instructions to the jury about the interpretation of the poems; and Roy Lowther used the proceedings as a platform for his own poetic theories, including an indictment of what he saw as "an intellectual kind of poetry."

In a year during which Canadians have been over-

exposed by the media to accounts of celebrity murderers, Wiesen's reading of the Roy Lowther case is both highly relevant and exemplary. Notwithstanding the fact that Roy Lowther was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic before the marriage, and that his jealousy was personal in nature, Wiesen sees more in the murder than the momentary outburst of an individual madman. She demonstrates clearly that his private, domestic fury was fanned and shaped by broader culture wars and class tensions.

As an unappreciated poet, writing unfashionable "amateur" poetry, Roy Lowther was enraged not only by his wife's success but by the kind of poetry she was writing and by her entry into the literary establishment—an entry marked by a widening circle of friends among influential editors and poets; a Canada Council grant; membership on a newly-appointed B.C. Interim Arts Board; a teaching job at UBC (a temporary sessional position with a \$4,500 stipend) and her election as co-chair of the Canadian League of Poets.

The acquisition of a briefcase became in his eyes the hated symbol of her growing professionalism. He confessed that after he disposed of the body, he flung the briefcase as far as he could into the bushes. It is a sad irony that the briefcase seems to have been the one private repository of her working papers for a writer who had no office, room or desk of her own.

The tendency of every prominent artist after death to become a contested site is amply illustrated by the acrimonious exchanges that followed the Gzowski radio tribute. Here, too, the insider-outsider theme ran through the rancorous charges, often in a way diametrically opposed to Roy Lowther's assessment. Her one-time friend, **Milton Acorn**, characterized Lowther as an exile, marginalized by the Toronto-centric literary elite.

Similar disagreements continue to emerge over the evaluation of Lowther's talent, and Wiesen examines them under the heading "Canonicity and the 'Cult of the Victim.'" One critic sees the violent death as an event that raised a poet of mediocre talent to a place among the "saints in CanLit heaven." Another uses the death to read the poetry as prescient, and the poet as a prophet of her own doom. Others urge resistance to allowing the death to become a factor in the complicated process of judging the poetry.

Wiesen sensibly argues for a distinction between the elevation of the woman to iconic status, and canonization of the literary artist.

The scholarly analyses in the first section of the book give way in later sections to more traditional biographical narratives. Wiesen tracks Lowther's working class ancestry and background, her decision to quit school at sixteen, her first marriage two years later, the birth of her first child at nineteen, divorce, custody battles, political activism, a second marriage, more children, and the disastrous deterioration of the marriage. Throughout all this, the one constant was Lowther's persistence in learning her craft, growing as an artist, and publishing her work.

Wiesen ends her study on a note that highlights the poignancy of Lowther's death. She describes Lowther on her fortieth birthday. She had returned to Vancouver after a successful reading tour on Prince Edward Island, packed up her children and was enjoying a family holiday on Mayne Island. She celebrated her birthday there on July 29<sup>th</sup>. "With her forties stretching before her," Wiesen notes, "she was beginning again, as she'd once told **Dorothy Livesay**, to see openings for herself."

*A Stone Diary*, the book she had just submitted to Oxford University Press, was accepted on September 9<sup>th</sup>. She died two weeks later. Roy Lowther died in 1985 in prison.

080203635X

*Biographer and novelist Joan Givner lives in Mill Bay.*



Poet Pat Lowther was brutally murdered by her husband in 1975. "The crown prosecutor, in an incredible gesture, introduced Lowther's skull and the hammer that smashed it as evidence."



# Estranger in strange lands

*Designer/novelist Barbara Hodgson creates characters and then sets out to live their lives.*

A walk around **Barbara Hodgson's** office in an old bank building on West Pender in Vancouver quickly reveals her penchant for mining the flea markets of the world.

She literally draws her inspiration from her collection of antique, yellowed photographs, 19<sup>th</sup> century travel clothing and painting kits that women like her once used to document their travels in bygone eras.

By luck or design Hodgson has created a life for herself that allows her to follow her many ideas for books and projects. An avid traveller, archaeologist, archivist and photographer, she has written, illustrated and designed four novels and seven non-fiction books in as many years.

This year Hodgson's work includes *Italy Out of Hand: A Capricious History* (Greystone \$26.95) and the newly released *Dreaming of East: Western Women and the Exotic Allure of the Orient* (Greystone \$34.95).

Although her books have settings outside North America, Hodgson maintains most of her ideas don't depend on travel experiences. "I find displacement intriguing," she says. "I'm mostly interested in how people cope outside of their milieu and how it stretches their characters."



Born in Edmonton, Barbara Hodgson had her first experience of displacement at the age eighteen when she moved to Vancouver. She earned an archaeology degree from SFU and attended the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design for training in graphic arts. After working for a time at Douglas & McIntyre as a book designer, Hodgson struck out on her own as a freelance book designer. She also teamed up with **Nick Bantock** designing books and working on ideas for illustrated novels.

*The Tattooed Map*, her first illustrated novel, came to life in 1995 after she was encouraged by an editor at Chronicle Books of San Francisco. It's the story of a woman who wanders around Morocco with her partner with such open curiosity that she falls victim to the country's mysterious past and ends up disappearing into it. "I tried to travel as Lydia," Hodgson says, speaking of the main character in *The Tattooed Map*. "I talked to people I never normally would have. It gave me so much more material."

To confirm details for *The Sensualist* (Raincoast, 1998), her story about one woman's gradual loss of her senses, Hodgson travelled to Vienna, Budapest and Munich. "I had written about an accident in Munich and I wanted to

make sure it could actually happen that way," she says. "One day I was walking down the street while visiting the city and all of a sudden I saw cars stop and heard sirens. What I had written was happening right in front of me."

For *Hippolyte's Island* (Raincoast, 2001), Hodgson visited the Falkland Islands where she spent her afternoons watching penguins and photographing her surroundings for illustrations. It's the story of an intrepid traveller who runs out of foreign lands to conquer so he sets out to rediscover the elusive Auroras in the South Atlantic. Hippolyte's meticulous documents about

his findings on the islands—the flora and fauna—become the marginalia that ground Hodgson's story in reality and also serve as the necessary proof, upon his return, of the existence of the Auroras.

Hodgson's most recent illustrated novel, *Lives of Shadows* (Raincoast, 2004), took her to Damascus, to bring to life the tale of a young Englishman who becomes possessed by his new house and its history written on the walls. As with much of her fiction, Hodgson continually blurs the lines between that which actually exists and that which her characters believe to exist.



There's a fine line of demarcation between Hodgson's fiction and non-fiction. Both are an end result of her wanderlust and inquiring mind. Her fiction has so many real geographical, historical and environmental elements that the stories begin to feel as though they may well have happened. Not only does she create characters but at times she deliberately sets out to live their lives in order to lend a deeper sense of reality to their sketches.

Hodgson writes her stories in tandem with creating the illustrations; each one spurs the other on. That fact is most evident in *Lives of Shadows* where her artwork and design are at their best, adding context and beauty to a story that is nothing short of page-turning.

Illustrated novels (not including graphic novels, which are growing in popularity) are still fairly rare in publishing and one reason is that they are expensive to make. To keep herself in form she pours her creative energy into non-fiction, creating illustrated histories on opium, morphine, rats, women travellers,

and the recent *Italy Out of Hand*, a truth-is-stranger-than-fiction account of the evolution of Italian culture. When asked to define her career trajectory Hodgson says, "I call myself a writer because it's a short cut. It's just too complicated to draw in all the other aspects of it."

As long as she can travel and collect artefacts, Hodgson will never be short of ideas for marrying words and pictures.

Next stop, India.

Dreaming 1-55365-118-9;  
Italy 1-55365-093-X

*Carla Lucchetta is a Vancouver writer who also works as a television producer.*



**CARLA LUCCHETTA**

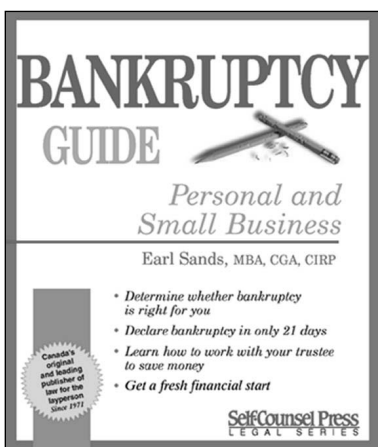


Tourists and guides ascending the Great Pyramid, circa 1910-20.



In October, book designer and novelist Barbara Hodgson will curate a Vancouver Museum exhibit about women travellers from the 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, an offshoot of her research for *No Place for a Lady*, (Greystone 2003). "I thought, I'll pick 20 or 30 of the world's most famous women travellers and concentrate on their stories," Hodgson says, "and then I kept coming across interesting women I'd never heard of. Now I have a list of about 700 women. It's a topic that has a life of its own."





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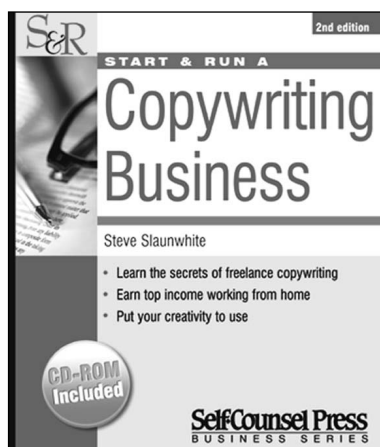
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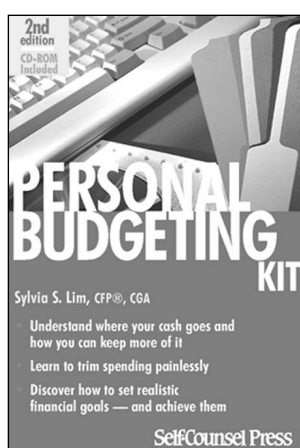


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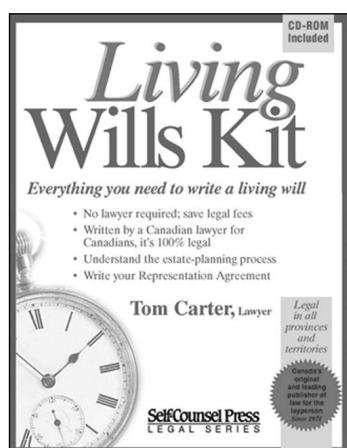


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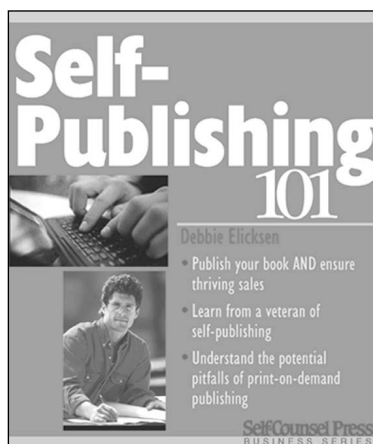


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# Totally Jaded

From 1995 to 2000, the world's leading producers of jade, in annual tonnage, were British Columbia (200), Siberia (200), Australia (25), Yukon (20) and USA (5).

BY MARTIN TWIGG

There are two types of jade. One is jadeite and the other is called nephrite. The former is rare and comes principally from Burma and Central America. Nephrite is chiefly found in B.C., the western U.S. states, Siberia, New Zealand and Australia.

Stanley Fraser Leaming is the primary authority on jade in Canada.

His new book *Jade Fever: Hunting the Stone of Heaven*

(Heritage House \$19.95) co-written with **Rick Hudson**, touches on all aspects of the so-called 'green-gold.'

"B.C. is the jade province par excellence," writes Leaming. "In fact, if you talk about Canadian jade you could almost be talking about B.C. jade."

This high concentration of the substance in B.C. has resulted in a rich local history. Jade was present in both First Nations and Inuit culture, a fact noted by many early European explorers, but began to disappear following the introduction of iron tools.

Jade remained largely forgotten until the mineral was identified by Chinese labourers as the 'stone of heaven' during the Fraser River gold rush, spurring many small-time prospectors to mine the material.

After the Second World War, a vibrant "rockhound" culture emerged, consisting of hobbyists dedicated to collecting, cutting and polishing rocks—pre-eminently jade—for jewellery. A rock enthusiast magazine, *The Canadian Rockhound*, was founded in 1957 and ran for almost 25 years.

"The principal contributors were mostly from B.C.—to such an extent that it might well have been called the B.C. Rockhound," writes Leaming. In 1998, **Win Robertson** started the *B.C. Rockhounder*, which is still currently in print.

In 1968, Premier **W.A.C. Bennett** declared jade the official provincial stone, and allowed anyone to collect it along the Fraser River, as long as it was not done for profit.

"Over the years there have been a few

cases of the Queen versus John Doe (and sometimes the reverse), involving jade in British Columbia," writes Leaming. "I was involved in one case, but, I hasten to add, as an expert witness, not as the accused."

Leaming's travels include Labrador, Siberia and the People's Republic of China, where the use of jade dates back more than 6,000 years.

"It was no simple matter to get permission from the authorities to visit the western reaches of China, as the province of Xinjiang had long been closed to foreign travel," writes Leaming. "We were prepared to offer lectures on jade by 'the experts from Canada and New Zealand.' I have no idea how much weight this carried, but we finally did



The world's largest jade Buddha was cut from a 32-ton boulder excavated near Dease Lake in northern B.C. in the early 1990s.

receive our permits, at a time when Xinjiang was just opening to outsiders."



Born in Minnedosa, Manitoba in 1917, Stanley Leaming moved to Brandon, Manitoba at a young age and later attended prospecting school there in 1939. At 23 he entered the RCAF and was discharged from World War II duties in 1945. He received his M.A. in geology from University of Toronto in 1948.

Leaming has traveled extensively in the world to collect and study jade, first working as a field geologist for 12 years, from Labrador to the Yukon, prior to joining the Geological Survey of Canada in Vancouver in 1960 and remaining with the GSC until 1981, when he retired to Summerland.

His scientific work *Jade in Canada* (1978) laid the groundwork for the jade industry of B.C. His other books include *Rock and Mineral Collecting in British Columbia* (1971), *Guide to Rocks & Minerals of the Northwest* (1982), which he co-wrote with his son Chris. 1-894384-85-7



## BOOBY-TRAPS IN PLOT LIMBO

“It is the fashion of today for writers, under the influence of an inadequate acquaintance with Chekhov, to write stories that begin anywhere and end inconclusively. They think it enough if they have described a mood, or given an impression, or drawn a character. That is all very well, but it is not a story, and I do not think it satisfies the reader.”—**W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM** (ON SHORT STORIES)

“CAUTION: Her prose is booby-trapped with combinations of words so lethally effective they may as well be dynamite.”—**ZSUZI GARTNER** (ON LADYKILLER)

BY MARTIN TWIGG

**Ladykiller** by **Charlotte Gill**  
(Thomas Allen \$24.95)

In her debut collection of short stories, *Ladykiller*, **Charlotte Gill** writes as if she has an abject fear of conventional storytelling. Frequently depicting dysfunctional couples, she allows her stories to drift through a fog of emotional tension.

The title story, “Ladykiller,” is typical of the seven stories in the collection. An unhappy couple visits the mother of the boyfriend during Christmas. There is a fight and the girlfriend drives away angry. The ladykiller boyfriend, who has been unfaithful, attacks the TV set with an axe.

The opening story “You Drive” grabs the reader with a car crash, but proceeds backwards, away from any resolution. After three pages of a rat-a-tat-

tat, machine-gun-style description of the accident, Gill’s truncated sentences devolve into a series of flashbacks about a couple’s prosaic relationship.

Highlights of the flashbacks include driving on a highway, stopping at gas stations and pulling over on the side of the road to go to the bathroom.

We never learn overtly whether the car crash victims survive or not.

In “Hush,” Brian, a security guard, is forced to leave his job after getting hit in the testicles during a robbery. Left to his own devices at home, he has nothing better to do than wait for his “acute contusion” to heal and, more importantly, deal with his wounded pride.

Patty, his wife, has her own problems. Morose and stressed out from work as a “tertiary worker in the tertiary world of H.R.,” she develops an expensive addiction to naturopathy.

Every day Patty brings home tofu, seaweed and roasted sesame seeds. The greatest hurdle the couple must overcome, aside from dealing with each other, is quieting their neighbour’s baby, whose incessant crying wakes them from their sleep.



*Charlotte Gill: seven stories*

The story ends where it began, in plot limbo. All the reader is left with is a lingering presence of a strange tension in the couple’s relationship.

Gill, a recent graduate of UBC Creative Writing, resorts to punchy, chopped-up sentences and what Zsuzsi Gartner has labelled ‘lethally effective’ phrasing.

“The horizon pukes sherberty light on another

gorgeous morning,” she writes.

Some readers might find such overt imagery annoying and distracting from the story.

Gill is at her best when she avoids puking sherbert imagery and instead focuses on telling a story. In “The Art of Medicine” a pre-med student has an affair with her ethics professor. Initially unaware of their student/teacher relationship, he lashes out violently, attempting to strangle her when she visits his house.

In “Open Water: A Brief Romance,” a broke scuba diving teacher—at Scuba Trooper, a sort of underwater boot camp for rich, successful careerists who crave discipline—falls for a student in his class, only to discover that she’s only 16 and is an unwilling participant in the program thanks to her parents.

“The Art of Medicine” and “Open Water” both succeed where her other stories fall short because they possess a general sense of direction and purpose. Although both stories retain evidence of Gill’s infatuation with the period, her stop/start writing style seems less rampant. We care what happens next.

0-88762-177-5

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### PUNJABI STORIES

**Rainsongs of Kotli** by **Tariq Malik**  
(Toronto: TSAR Publications \$18.95)

**Tariq Malik**’s first collection of stories, *Rainsongs of Kotli*, is mainly set in the Himalayan valleys of Punjab approximately ten years after the tumultuous Partition of India during which tens of thousands died and millions fled their homes due to religious conflicts. Full of lively conversation and sure-handed narratives, this deeply felt and frequently amusing debut chiefly explores the lives and longings of the Lohar people of Kotli.



*Tariq Malik*

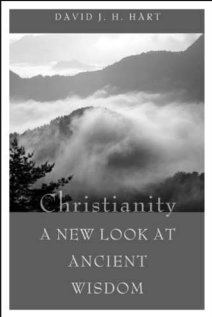
“Looking back, I realize it was the first arrival of electricity in Kotli that set in motion the events that had such profound and tragic consequences for our family,”

Malik writes. Another story begins, “There are certain days when the river sits quietly in profound contemplation of itself with not a ripple to disturb its thoughts.”

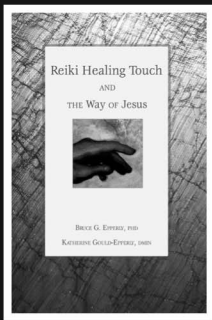
Born and raised in Pakistan, Malik lived for 20 years in Kuwait prior to immigrating to Canada in 1995. In an afterword, the Vancouverite writes, “This book is a tribute to the spirit of my parents’ enterprising generation that triumphed over adversity by sheer resilience and sacrifice; to those wise men and women who were able to fluently quote verbatim passages in Arabic from the Quran and follow these with elaborate translations in moments of moral rectitude, and, when moved to do so, would tearfully quote the classical Urdu and Farsi poets, and yet were unable to read or write a single word of their own mother tongue.”

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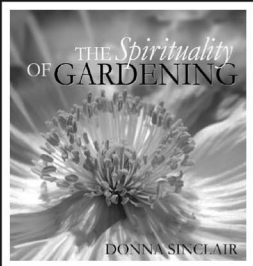
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## Laisha Rosnau: Writer

UBC MFA: 2000

Thesis: *The Sudden Weight of snow*, a novel, published by McClelland & Stewart in 2002.

A book of poetry, *Notes on Leaving*, was recently published by Nightwood Editions.

What’s Next: a second novel set in the Yukon is in progress.

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# DOSTOEVSKY DOES ALEXIS CREEK

**Jericho** by George Fetherling  
(Random House \$32.95)

In his second novel *Jericho*, released earlier this year, **George Fetherling** introduces an unconventional and mostly hopeless love triangle.

We meet an over-the-hill marijuana dealer named Bishop, a rural Alberta ingénue-cum-hairdresser named Beth and a lesbian social worker named Theresa who is in permanent rebellion against her upbringing as a Dutch Catholic.

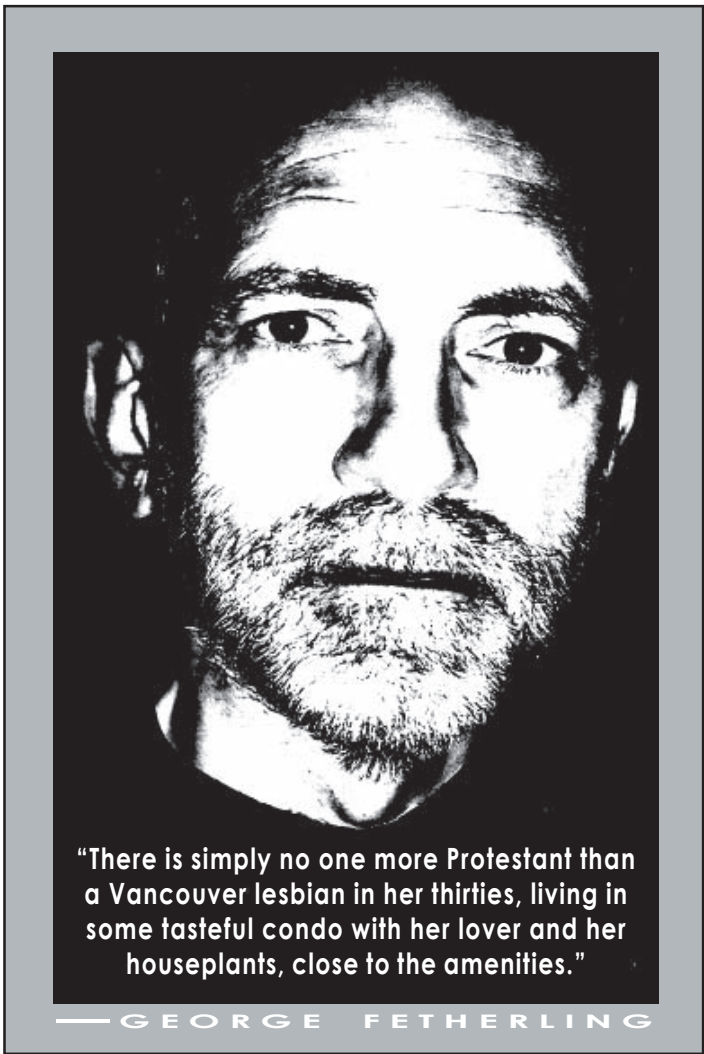
Beth is supposedly searching for her father on skid row, but that doesn't enter much into the story. She basically finds the unscrupulous Bishop instead.

The character of Bishop, a minor league Manson figure, is the most riveting aspect of Fetherling's frequently brilliant narrative that is divided haphazardly between the three characters in alternating segments of varying lengths.

Bishop is an alluring crackpot who can rationalize just about anything, the sort of brash person who sees a pregnant woman on a bus and tells her not to worry, he can help deliver her child in an emergency. Physically he resembles the drummer in Fleetwood Mac, balding on top, long-haired, a petty criminal, a petty guru.

Raised by his grandfather in the fictional district of Snaketown in Windsor, Bishop is the son of a prostitute. A degenerate and a manipulator, he has nonetheless been blessed with an astonishing knack for saying bizarre but strangely poetic nonsense.

In an interview Fetherling has said this novel emerged from



a line he wrote for a rejected *Toronto Life* article about a gang murder in the 1930s: "When I finally caught up with Cappy Smith, he was down in Chinatown, winding his watch."

This line appears on page 77, followed by about 50 pages of background material for Bishop that reads like a major chunk of a different novel parachuted into *Jericho* for lack of a demanding editor.

If the detour back to

Snaketown is something of a wrong turn, one can seldom find fault with the boldness of the writing.

"There is simply no one more Protestant," he writes, "than a Vancouver lesbian in her thirties, living in some tasteful condo with her lover and her houseplants, close to the amenities."

The title *Jericho* doesn't refer to the Jericho Beach area of Vancouver; it's a biblical reference

pertaining to Bishop's hideaway in the B.C. bush, north of Alexis Creek, off a logging road, between Williams Lake and Bella Coola.

The threesome ultimately heads for the hills in a stolen postal van that they paint green.

It's not the story that counts so much as Fetherling's writing. Unfortunately we don't get to see or learn about exactly how the psycho-babbling Theresa decided to join Bishop's mostly ridiculous rampage. We are left to presume she jumped aboard because she has the hots for Beth and she hopes to protect her from Bishop's megalomania.



This is a very funny book most of the time, with strikingly original asides and social commentary, but ultimately it's more Dostoevsky than Dickens.

There is something brave about careening towards the darkness, whether it's done via sexuality, outlaw behaviour or writing, and Fetherling's ability to dispense with his critical mindset in favour of an exploratory one will be surprising to anyone who has perceived him as primarily a brainy person, abstracted on high.

*Jericho* is risky and alive, and memorable in the long run for its presentation of a remarkable archetype. For anyone familiar with the underpinnings of West Coast culture, it's possible to view "Bishop" as one more weirdly deluded messianic figure in a rich tradition of mavericks and cult leaders who have cultivated egocentric madness in B.C.

0-679-31222-6

## EXPERIENCE, EVEN IF IT HURTS

BY JEREMY TWIGG  
**Running** by Keith Maillard  
(Brindle & Glass \$14.95)

If you read enough **Keith Maillard** novels, you start to believe Raysburg, West Virginia really exists. This time around Maillard returns to his fictionalized hometown with *Running*, first of his four-part *Difficulty at the Beginning* series that follows John Dupre from high school in the 1950s to the psychedelic underground of the late 1960s.

Dupre is a middle-class kid, kept busy by a half-crazy Polish friend, a high-maintenance rich girlfriend, a painful determination to become a decent runner, a new-found penchant for



**Keith Maillard**

booze and a secret yearning to be a girl. This whirlwind of themes is distinctly Maillardian: religion, music, philosophy, sexuality, class struggle and alcohol.

Dupre is hungry for experience, whatever the cost. "As a child, I'd wanted to know what it was like to be shocked, so with my hands dripping wet, I'd played with the light switches and electrical plugs—doing everything I'd been told I must not do. I got shocked."

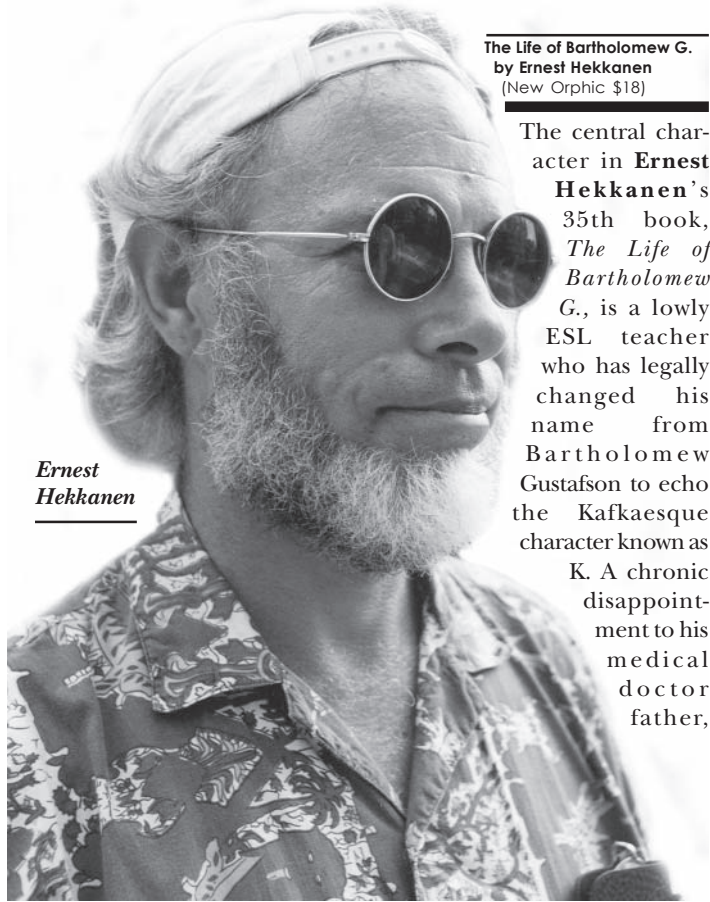
Dupre pushes himself by running track, then drinking too much. "If, on Monday morning, we were not bleary-eyed, drooping, weary—in short, totally demolished... we thought we hadn't had a good time over the weekend." Ever the extremist, he starves himself in his desire to be a girl, resolving to "match the weight-height charts for teenage girls."

To create this series, which he says "exists independently of me, has gone on, and will continue to go on, however I write about it or whether I write about it," Maillard has re-visited two previous novels, *The Knife in My Hands* and *Cutting Through*, revived unpublished manuscripts and added new writing. Part two of the quartet, *Morgantown* is scheduled for release next year.

1-897142-06-4

VIVE LE FRANZ

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**Ernest Hekkanen**

**The Life of Bartholomew G.**  
by Ernest Hekkanen  
(New Orphic \$18)

The central character in **Ernest Hekkanen's** 35th book, *The Life of Bartholomew G.*, is a lowly ESL teacher who has legally changed his name from Bartholomew Gustafson to echo the Kafkaesque character known as K. A chronic disappointment to his medical doctor father,

he often feels more like a fictitious character than a human being.

Having received his B.A. from Simon Fraser University in the late '60s, the chronically self-analytical 'Mewgi' has increasingly identified with Franz Kafka, the subject of his chronically unfinished thesis. When told he couldn't legally adopt the single letter G. for a surname, first he altered his last name to Ge, then made the 'e' smaller and smaller until it finally became a period. "I've come to think it isn't good enough to simply study Kafka," he tells a friend. "In a manner of speaking, to better know him, one must become the man."

Bartholomew is a self-elected defender of the great writer



**Franz Kafka**

against the arrogance and stupidity of other intellectuals and assorted nincompoops. During a three-hour period of G.'s life, while he prepares to go to work at his part-time job at the Avant Gardener, he stewes in his litany of humiliations, frustrations and fears.

Alienated from his drug-addicted son and a feminist ex-wife who has long since surpassed him in academe, our pathetic anti-hero remains obsessed with the physical minutiae of his body and his tiny Kitsilano apartment while clinging to sexual memories of an absent Finnish girlfriend. His brilliant sister, from whom he is forced to borrow

money, likes to send greeting cards portraying him in demeaning situations—and now she is coming to the Avant Gardener to take his photo in his shop assistant attire.

That's the gist of Hekkanen's disturbing and amusing portrait of an obsessive wise man who stumbles through life like a fool. Bartholomew G. jumps back and forth between self-loathing and self-aggrandizement like a literary hybrid of Woody Allen and Ingmar Bergman. "He was no longer capable of concentrating with the single-mindedness of a cat about to pounce on a mouse," Hekkanen writes. "All the intervening years had resulted in his mind becoming slack. A windbag. A flaccid bladder."

This short and frequently brilliant novel is an exaggeration of how we all could feel if we dared to dwell upon every tiny prick of mental injury and desire. Like a traffic accident, we can't help but look.

1-894842-06-5



# THE PLOT DICKENS

Audrey Thomas has reinvented a minor character from *Little Dorrit* for **Tattycoram**, her exploration of Victorian manners and the liberties often taken by novelists.

**Tattycoram** by Audrey Thomas  
(Goose Lane \$29.95)

Having picked a character from the pages of Hudson’s Bay Company history for *Isobel Gunn*, her novel about a woman who disguises herself as man in order to work in Rupert’s Land, for an encore **Audrey Thomas** has deftly plucked a character from Charles Dickens for *Tattycoram*, another penetrating depiction of a relatively powerless woman struggling with her identity.

It’s not necessary to untangle the lines between fictional reality (Dickens) and fictionalized fiction (Thomas) in order to read *Tattycoram*, but the twin realms make for an intriguing comparison.

In the Dickens’ novel *Little Dorrit*, an insular English gentleman named Meagles magnanimously rescues a girl named Harriet Beadle from the Foundling Hospital, an institution that arose in imitation of the hospital for “found children” in Paris. Established in 1739, the original Foundling Hospital in London was sponsored by a retired seaman, Thomas Coram.

“Harriet we changed into Hattie,” explains Mr. Meagles, “and then into Tatty, because, as practical people, we thought even a playful name might be a new thing to her, and might have a softening and affectionate kind of effect, don’t you see?” By applying the nickname Tattycoram, the do-gooder Meagles and his daughter effectively ensure their maid will never be able to conceal her disreputable beginnings.

The Thomas novel tells it differently. After infancy in a caring foster home, our heroine Hattie is mired in the Foundling Hospital from ages five to fifteen, until hard-luck Hattie gains domestic employment in the household of Dickens.

The great author dotes on her and encourages her to read books from his library, much to



Charles Dickens

the resentment of Dickens’ sister-in-law Georgina, who trains a parrot to tauntingly repeat the nickname Tattycoram. Then Hattie escapes servitude by running off with a Miss Wade in what can be perceived as a veiled lesbian relationship,

Thomas has Hattie marry her foster brother—only to have her happiness and security interrupted decades later by the news that Dickens has caricatured in her *Little Dorrit*. Having been stuck with the nickname Tattycoram

was bad enough, but now Hattie must decide whether or not her ex-employer has taken advantage of her by stealing her identity for his work.

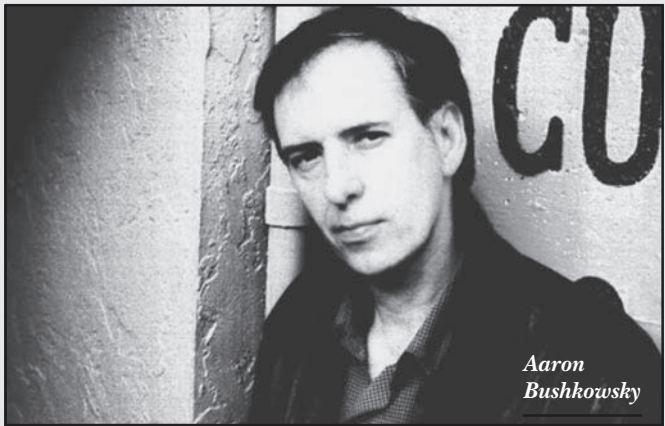
Should she risk confronting the great man? A fellow orphan named Elisabeth urges Hattie to take umbrage but Hattie is less accusatory and more worldly. “It’s not nice, what he’s done, but he understands my resentment,” she concludes, “and he understands about foundlings and children born out of wedlock.”

0-86492-431-3



Audrey Thomas

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Aaron Bushkowsky

DIANA LYON PHOTO

## SHORT TAKES

**The Vanishing Man** by Aaron Bushkowsky (Cormorant \$22.95)

Aaron Bushkowsky’s linked collection of short stories, *The Vanishing Man*, concerns men who undergo divorces, family death, failures and therapy in order to come to terms with themselves and ‘see love again.’ He teaches playwriting and scriptwriting at Langara College, Studio 58, Playwrights Theatre Centre and Vancouver Film Centre.

1-896951-58-9

**The First Vial** by Linnea Heinrichs (Thistle-down Press \$17.95)

Born on Vancouver Island, **Linnea Heinrichs** lives on a hobby farm in northern B.C. Her debut young adult novel, *The First Vial*, is set in 14th-century England, a time when the country was ravaged by the Black Death. Katherine, Lady of Crenfeld Castle, must pit her wits against a villainous priest intent on usurping her land and terrorizing the innocent.

1-894345-84-3

**The Walking Boy** by Lydia Kwa (Key Porter \$32.95)

As the tale of concubines, convents and the elaborate palace court of China’s only female emperor, **Lydia Kwa**’s *The Walking Boy* has a ‘middlesex’ protagonist, born both male and female, who ventures to the ancient West Capital of Chang’an in the 8th Century. On behalf of the aging hermit monk Harelip, who raised him/her, Baoshi becomes embroiled in Tang Dynasty intrigue and a ghost story.

1-55263-693-3

**The Courtesan Prince** by Lynda Williams (Edge \$24.95)

**Lynda Williams’** *The Courtesan Prince* begins many millennia in the future, where the colonization of space by cloning has created two distinct and ideologically opposed planetary societies. With their connection from earth severed long ago, and with 200 years having passed since the Killing Reach War, conflict is again imminent. In spite of such tensions, two colonists from each empire must learn to overcome their cultural differences and ancient hatreds.

1-894063-28-9

**Ellen Fremedon Journalist** by Joan Givner (Groundwood \$18.95)

In 2004 **Joan Givner** published her first YA novel, *Ellen Fremedon*, in which a young girl innocently decides to write a novel based on people she knows in the village of Partridge Cove. It has been followed by *Ellen Fremedon Journalist* in which the intrepid heroine tries starting a newspaper in Partridge Cove during her summer holidays. Larry, the village librarian, finds typographical mistakes. An incorrect muffin recipe doesn’t help either, but trouble really starts brewing when

she discovers some people are not exactly who they purport to be.

0-88899-691-8

**Killing Time** by Hank Schachte (New Star \$18)

**Hank Schachte**’s *Killing Time* follows a man who, after a car accident, loses both his memory and his ability to form new memories. As the plot unravels and his short-term memory slowly returns, the reader remains one step ahead of the character in realizing his past identity as well as what the future holds in store.

1-55420-019-9

**Rancour** by James McCann (Simply Read \$14.95)

In **Rancour** James McCann’s teen novel about a graduating high school student, a werewolf named Rancour and a vampire named Shay enter the life of Alix, who had been mostly worried about finding a date for the prom. She must cope with the thousand-year-old rivalry between the two violent combatants, while making sure she gets her homework done.

1-894965-31-0



Hannah Waters and the Daughter of Johann Sebastian Bach by Barbara Nickel (Penguin \$17)

Herself a violinist, **Barbara Nickel**’s latest young-adult novel, *Hannah Waters and the Daughter of Johann Sebastian Bach*, follows two girls born centuries apart whose lives entwine through the music of Bach’s Concerto for Two Violins.

0-14-305078-8

**Dreamspeaker** by Anne Cameron (Harbour \$9.95)

**Anne Cameron**’s reissued novel *Dreamspeaker* won the Gibson Literary Award after it first appeared in 1978 and was the basis for an award-winning film

1-55017-364-13

**13 Ways of Listening to a Stranger** by Keath Fraser (Thomas Allen \$26.95)

Eighteen short stories by **Keath Fraser** from a 25-year period have been reissued as *13 Ways of Listening to a Stranger*.

0-88762-193-72



Keath Fraser



Bob Hunter  
writing aboard  
the first  
Greenpeace  
protest vessel  
Phyllis  
Cormack, 1971.

# W • GEORGE RYGA AWARD winner



On behalf of her late husband, Roberta Hunter accepts "The Censors' Golden Rope" from sculptor Reg Kienast. The sculpture is given annually to George Ryga Award recipients.



AWARD SCULPTURE BY REG KIENAST.

## For Social Awareness in British Columbia Literature.

**Robert Hunter** (1941-2005) and photographer **Robert Keziere** collaborated on the first authoritative report on the Amchitka protests by Greenpeace in 1971, but Hunter's original manuscript was rejected by publisher Jack McClelland of Toronto in favour of a picture book. Recently Keziere's partner Karen Love retrieved the lone copy of Hunter's eyewitness report and took it to Brian Lam at Arsenal Pulp Press. Published last year as **The Greenpeace to Amchitka: An Environmental Odyssey**, the chronicle of idealism, bad weather, weird karma and personal tensions has been selected as the winner of the second annual George Ryga Award for outstanding social awareness.

The award was presented at the Vernon Performing Arts Centre on July 27 during a celebratory concert, hosted by CBC's Paul Grant, to mark the 73rd anniversary of George Ryga's birth. The shortlist included *Redress* (Raincoast) by Roy Miki and *A Stain Upon the Sea* (Harbour) by a collection of authors.

Sponsored by the George Ryga Centre (Summerland)



CBC  **radiONE** (Kelowna) and Okanagan College.

Information: [jlent@junction.net](mailto:jlent@junction.net)



# LOOKOUT

## NO LAUGHING MATTERS BY W.P. KINSELLA

*"Humour is mankind's greatest blessing."* —MARK TWAIN

In the 1980s, I attended a reading by **Alice Munro**. I had read her most recent book and loved it, but it had never occurred to me that her stories were humorous. She read a story and to my surprise the audience laughed many times. When I mentioned this to Alice after the reading, she smiled and said, "Bill, everything is funny."

Unfortunately this viewpoint has received little vindication in the world of Canadian fiction.

What was the last humorous book to win the Governor General's Award for Fiction? Or the Giller? Or the Books in Canada First Novel Award? Or the Canadian Authors Association Fiction Award?

While a few of the winning books have offered some semblance of humour, only the 2002 winner of the Canadian Authors Association prize, *Generica*, by **Will Ferguson**, was actually a comic novel.

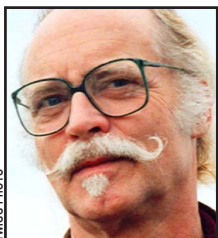
Except on occasions when the Governor General's Award is given to Alice Munro, the GGs are generally chosen by an incestuous clique of humourless academic drones who take turns rewarding each other's sub-mediocrity. On the other hand, some of the choices for the GGs have been so breathtakingly awful as to be unintentionally humorous, and have certainly drawn their share of rueful laughter.

Meanwhile Canada exports comedians by the dozen, possibly because they realize that their humour will be appreciated more in the U.S.

I remember once being asked the difference between Canadian and American responses to my work. My reply was, when an American reads my books, they say, "I loved your stuff. It was so funny I laughed out loud." While a Canadian would say, "I enjoyed your work, I just about laughed."

I consider myself a humorist, though I have not always been recognized as such. The reviews of *Shoeless Joe* were almost unanimously positive, but few mentioned that it is a funny novel.

One of the few times I ever replied to a reviewer was when the *New York Times* treated *The Iowa Baseball Confederacy* as serious fiction, never once mentioning that it is (in my opinion) a spoof of or-



W.P. Kinsella

ganized religion, and organized baseball. I suggested that having an outfielder run from Iowa to New Mexico chasing a fly ball, and having a church that ran 12 hours behind the rest of the world, and having an outfielder fried by lightning, just might be considered

humorous by some.

All of which brings me to **Susan Juby**.

I had just about given up on humour in Canadian literature, when, as I was wending my way through the sometimes good, sometimes bad, but generally humourless nominees for the Books in Canada First Novel Award, all of a sudden I started laughing out loud, and calling to my wife, saying "Listen to this! Listen to this!"

The book that excited me was *Alice, I Think* by Susan Juby, a young woman writing a very fictionalized version of her teen years in Smithers, B.C. The second sentence got me: "I grew up in one of those loving families that fail to prepare a person for real life."

The implosion of Alice's former high school counselor is a classic scene, and Alice's assessment of her replacement counselor, who she dubs "Death Lord Bob", is not entirely inaccurate, as she sees him as being needier than she is. Juby describes Alice and her family attending a picnic for home-schooled children:

"...home-schooled kids weren't exactly what my dad called 'paragons of normalcy.' A disturbing number of them were still breast-feeding at an age when most kids are taking up smoking." Then, "I am pleased to report that I am making rapid progress... now, thanks to my new Life Goals and an article I read on the Ukraine in *National Geographic*, I have realized it is my calling to be an

Easter-egg painter."

The second and third volumes of the trilogy are equally hilarious. Yes, Susan Juby is the real thing. But children's literature? Isn't that picture books with pop-ups that one reads to pre-schoolers?

I asked Susan if she had any misgivings about her work being considered children's literature. "If one wants to write comedy," she replied, "the YA/teen market is a good place to do it. A lot of the funniest writing these days is published for younger readers (and ends up getting picked up by adults.)"

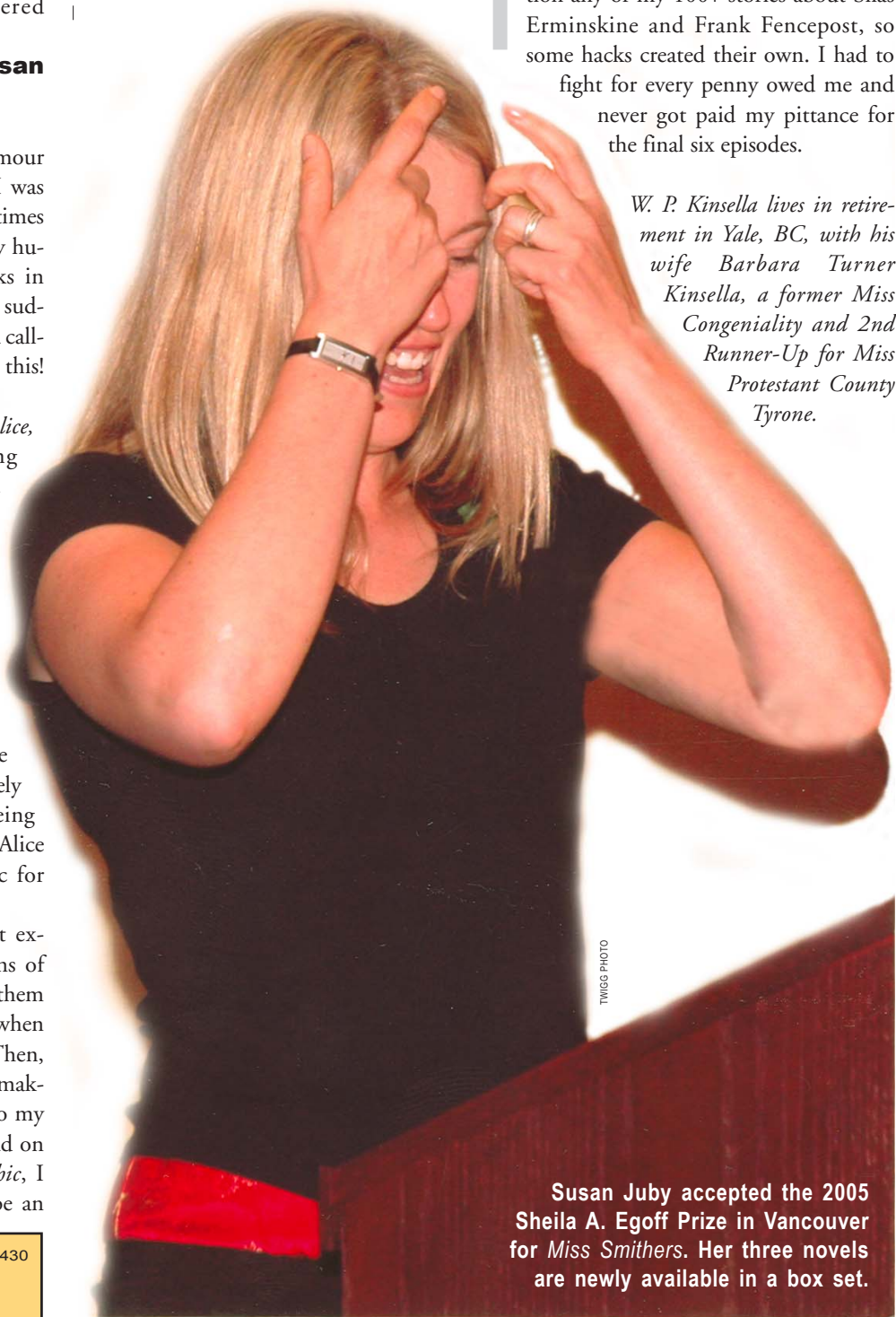
"I guess there's a long history of this kind of thing. I read somewhere that

**P. G. Wodehouse** was popularized by British school boys. There's a healthy respect for comedy in the YA market."

Susan's trilogy has been optioned by a production company associated with CTV Vancouver. These are the same people who created *Corner Gas*, a very funny *Seinfeld* in Saskatchewan series, whose greatest compliment is that it didn't receive any Gemini's because it is so many light years ahead of the drivel that passes for TV entertainment.

I'll hope Susan's experience with TV is better than mine. There was an unfunny travesty of a TV show called *The Rez*, which was created from my Leacock Medal-winning characters, but the TV people were too cheap, too lazy, or too untalented (my guess is all three) to option any of my 100+ stories about Silas Erminskine and Frank Fencepost, so some hacks created their own. I had to fight for every penny owed me and never got paid my pittance for the final six episodes.

*W. P. Kinsella lives in retirement in Yale, BC, with his wife Barbara Turner. Kinsella, a former Miss Congeniality and 2nd Runner-Up for Miss Protestant County Tyrone.*



Susan Juby accepted the 2005 Sheila A. Egoff Prize in Vancouver for *Miss Smithers*. Her three novels are newly available in a box set.

**Susan Juby Trilogy:** *Alice, I Think* (Harper Tempest \$15.99) 0060515430  
*Miss Smithers* (Harper Tempest \$15.99) 0060515465  
*Alice MacLeod, Realist at Last* (Harper Tempest \$15.99) 006051549X



# Disssembling Fear



On the wall in **Noam Chomsky**'s book-strewn office at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston there is a large poster of the British philosopher, mathematician and pacifist **Bertrand Russell**. Just as **Albert Einstein** owed "innumerable happiness to the reading of Russell's works", the even-tempered Noam Chomsky has adopted Russell as a father figure, as a beacon of sanity.

Incarcerated for his refusal to serve in World War One, Bertrand Russell came to teach in New York City and inflamed public opinion by attacking the United States as a monger of atomic warfare. Chomsky has since adopted Russell's mantle as North America's leading 'refusenik', dismantling White House hypocrisy and doublespeak on a daily basis, seemingly immune to egocentric indulgences and unfettered by conformist tendencies.

Now there are posters of Noam Chomsky on the walls of college dorms in the United States and Canada. For some, the grandfatherly professor has become a symbol of America's best qualities, as inspiring as the Statue of Liberty. For others who support the regimes of the current White House, he is anathema.



In the verbatim transcript of his interview with Noam Chomsky, **A Hated Political Enemy** (Flask Publishing / Sandhill Distributing, \$14.95), Victoria screenwriter and poet **Allen Bell** offers America's senior political dissident an opportunity to respond to attacks on his character ("mirthless") and his beliefs.

In particular, Bell cites innuendoes from a *Globe & Mail* book review [Feb. 15/03] and a 16-page article in the *New Yorker* [March 31/03] that maintains Noam Chomsky "long ago became alienated from the American political center" and "elsewhere in the world he is a superstar."

"That's not an article," Chomsky replies. "That's an exercise in character assassination against a hated political enemy.... Part of the scheme there is to say, well, you know, these crazy people elsewhere are coming to talks of mine. But in the United States nobody would pay attention."

In fact, Noam Chomsky is a hugely popular speaker in the U.S. and he spends about an hour every night turning down offers to speak. He has *always* been estranged from the flip-flopping, liberal intelligentsia. His disenchantment with toadying liberal intellectuals dates from the **Dwight Eisenhower** era, long before **Michael Moore** was in diapers.

The individuality of Noam Chomsky and his reluctance to pledge allegiance to power has made him an unlikely hero—a linguistics professor who stands like Horatio at the bridge against sophistry and deceit.

Bell's understandable respectfulness as an interviewer allows Chomsky to ramble somewhat, but *A Hated Political Enemy* is a revealing and intimate window into Chomsky's personality. It shows him in a relaxed mode, seemingly immune to the conceits of performance.

Bell asks Chomsky, towards the end of their conversation, if Bertrand Russell were alive today, would Bertrand Russell consider **George Bush I, George Bush II, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Tony Blair, Condoleezza Rice** and **Dick Cheney** to be war criminals? Chomsky gives his most succinct answer, "I take that for granted but I can't speak for the dead."

Here are samples from the book:

## NOAM CHOMSKY on CANADIAN MEDIA

"My impression is that over the years the Canadian media have become less open, more restrictive, probably more corporatized. There's massive corporate takeover, by CanWest Global I guess it is, who are forcing editorials on the papers and cutting down content. There have been a lot of objections from journalists, and that really is ominous. I mean if the press gets taken over by a couple of corporate magnets—**Conrad Black, Israel Asper**, a couple of other guys—then it really is bad news. Independent media are critically important for a democratic society. If you eliminate independent media, you undercut the functioning of the democratic society. Which is, of course, the purpose."

## NOAM CHOMSKY on IRAQ

"The *New York Times* rather honestly called Iraq the Petri dish test cast for the new doctrine announced in the National Security strategy which basically comes down to a dismantling of international law and institutions and a very brazen announcement that the U.S. intends to dominate the world by force and to do so indefinitely and to destroy any potential challenge to its dominance.

"That has precedents but no precedent that I know of as a statement of national policy except for cases we'd rather not think about. Which is why it caused plenty of shudders in the foreign policy elite here as well as around the world. And Iraq was a test case that shows how it's done. Why Iraq? Well, you pick a country that's first of all defenceless—you don't want to attack anybody that can defend themselves, that would be ridiculous—and also worth controlling. No point in attacking Burundi, which is also defenceless but who wants it?

"On the other hand, Iraq has the great advantage of being both defenceless and disarmed, and also very valuable. It's got the second largest energy reserves in the world. With the United States firmly implanted right in the middle of the energy producing center of the world, it increases enormously the leverage for global control. So Iraq was the perfect test case for the military."

## NOAM CHOMSKY on REGIME CHANGE

"They didn't want him [**Saddam Hussein**] overthrown from within. Because then Iraqis would have been in charge. In fact, Bush practically announced that on the eve of the invasion. On the eve of the invasion there was a

"The wealthy and the powerful no longer have the monopoly of violence that they had in the past and it's driving them up the wall."

summit meeting in the Azores with Bush and Blair. And if you take a look at what they said, they said even if Saddam Hussein and his family leave Iraq we're going to invade anyway. Because we're not just interested in regime change. We're interested in putting in our regime, not one the Iraqis want."

## NOAM CHOMSKY on the ROLE OF THE MILITARY

"The military system has several functions. One is to control the world. But there is another function that is very significant and rarely discussed. And that is to maintain the economy. If you look at what's called the new economy—the advanced sectors of the economy like computers, and electronics generally, telecommunications, the Internet, automation and so forth—where did they come from? They came from places like MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] under the cover of military spending to socialize the costs and risks of research and development.

"It's costly, it's risky. So you socialize that. And then, after it gets to the point where it's marketable, you put it into the hands of private power. That's why IBM is producing computers and not typewriters. They have their fingers in the mili-

tary-run programs at the research centers in places like MIT. That's what these institutions are for and that's the way the economy runs. The military system has been the basic backbone of the development of high technology industry. And many other sectors of the economy.

"Take what's called civil aviation. Many of these planes are modified bombers. The avionics, the metallurgy, the hard research, is usually done under a military cover. And then adapted to private commercial gain. Quite apart from the infrastructure—the airports and everything else. That's the way the public pays the costs, and you privatize the benefits. Aircraft extends enormously. It also leads to the biggest service industry, namely tourism. Trace all these things back and you find that quite typically they go back to the dynamic state sector of the economy and a lot of it is under military pretext.

"So quite apart from the task of controlling the world, there's the task of maintaining what amounts to a state capitalist economy by socializing risk and cost and privatizing profit."

## NOAM CHOMSKY on POLITICAL DISSIDENCE

"If you can't deal with arguments and evidence,

and you don't have the power to throw the people in jail as they probably wish they did, then what you do is vilify them. So it's expected. And it hasn't been any different in the past. You should see the way Bertrand Russell was treated. He was an object of hatred and contempt because he was doing some decent and honest things."

## NOAM CHOMSKY on the MILITARIZATION OF SPACE

"The main UN (United Nations) disarmament commission has been paralyzed by a conflict between the United States and the rest of the world over militarization of space. I mean, every other country just about is trying to institute measures to prevent the militarization of space and the U.S. is blocking them. There have been votes at the General Assembly reaffirming and strengthening the outer space treaty which bans the militarization of space. The U.S. alone abstained—the U.S. and Israel. Same with the disarmament committee."

## NOAM CHOMSKY on TECHNOLOGY

"It's been known by specialists for some years that, with contemporary technology, the monopoly of violence in the hands of the rich and powerful is probably gone. It's now more balanced. They still have an overwhelming preponderance of the means of violence but they don't monopolize it anymore. That's what 9/11 showed as did the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 which came pretty close to succeeding. People tend

to forget that. That wasn't [even] high technology. That was explosives. The wealthy and the powerful no longer have the monopoly of violence that they had in the past and it's driving them up the wall. If you do these things to other people it's no big deal. But when you do it to us—it's not allowed.

"I mean, take a look at 9/11. Look at the horrible atrocity, everyone in the world agreed with that. But if you look around the world, the reactions from much of the world were, yeah, a horrifying atrocity, but welcome to the club. You've been doing this to us for centuries."

## NOAM CHOMSKY on MANUFACTURING CONSENT

"a massive government media propaganda campaign began depicting Saddam Hussein as an imminent threat to the security of the United States—as involved in September 11, as tied up with al-Qaeda, planning new atrocities and right away, [in] a couple of weeks, about 60% of the population regarded Saddam as a threat to the security of the United States. They didn't think that in Kuwait even. Nobody thought he was a threat to their security. They hated him but he's not a threat to anybody. Except within

Iraq. But pretty soon close to half the population, maybe more, thought he was involved in September 11. A complete fabrication. They succeeded in frightening probably a majority of the population."

## NOAM CHOMSKY on OIL

"The U.S. is probably not intending to use the oil. The U.S. has never really been much concerned with accessing the oil of the Middle East. It's concerned with controlling. Which is something totally different.

"Since the Second World War a leading feature of policy has been to control the oil, not use it. In fact, the U.S. was, and to an extent remains, a major producer. But to control it. World control is a source of enormous wealth which doesn't flow into the pockets of the population. Rather the energy corporations and the construction companies and high tech industry and so on.

"The U.S. is not interested in lowering the price too far. Never has been. It wants the price kept within a certain range. Not too high because if it's too high it harms certain power interests and if it's too low it cuts into the profits that largely flow back to the United States. There's no reason to believe that it's helpful to the people of the United States any more than the British Empire was helpful to the people of England.

"The propaganda does not say let's conquer Iraq because there will be more money in your pocket. The propaganda says let's conquer Iraq because it will save you from destruction by terrorists. And it will let in freedom and democracy. That's the way the propaganda works. It never appeals to people's vulgar interests. And the reason is the people who make the propaganda make the assumption that the general population is not like them. The general population is not a bunch

of gangsters. They're decent, honest people so you have to lie to them about threats to their security and noble ideals. You have to make it attractive to the population in their terms. Which are usually moral and decent terms."

## NOAM CHOMSKY on RESPECTING DEMOCRACY

"The bad guys are the countries where the governments took the same position as the overwhelming majority of the population. Germany and France are the bad guys because the governments took the same position as perhaps 70% of the population. Turkey is hated because the government took the same position as 95% of the population.

"Who are the good guys? Spain and Italy where opposition to the war was higher than in France and Germany. But they're the good guys because the governments disregarded 80% of the population. In Eastern European satellites the populations are even more against the war than in France and Germany. But the leadership said, yeah, we'll go along. In fact, it was the former Foreign Minister of Latvia who was asked—I think [by] the *Wall Street Journal*—why they went along with the United States, and he said something like, 'Well, we know you have to say, yes, sir.' So they're the good guys.

"And it wasn't just Wolfowitz and Rumsfeld [saying it]. That was all the commentary. What's wrong with the French? What's wrong with Germans? What's the matter with the Turks? How come the governments don't disregard 95% of the population and do what we tell them?

"How can you have a deeper contempt for democracy than that? You find that in Stalin's Russia. And it passes without comment because it's so internalized. It's so deeply internalized that what they're supposed to do is take orders from us."

## NOAM CHOMSKY on OCCUPATION OF IRAQ

"I must say, I'm shocked at this, [that is] they're having trouble. I thought it would be a walkover. To fail to take control of Iraq and make it a viable society—that takes real talent. Just think of the situation they're going into. I mean, here was a country that was virtually devastated by sanctions. The sanctions are over. It was destroyed by war. The wars are over. It was being ruled by a brutal tyrant. Bad as the U.S. façade may be, it's not going to be that. How can you fail?

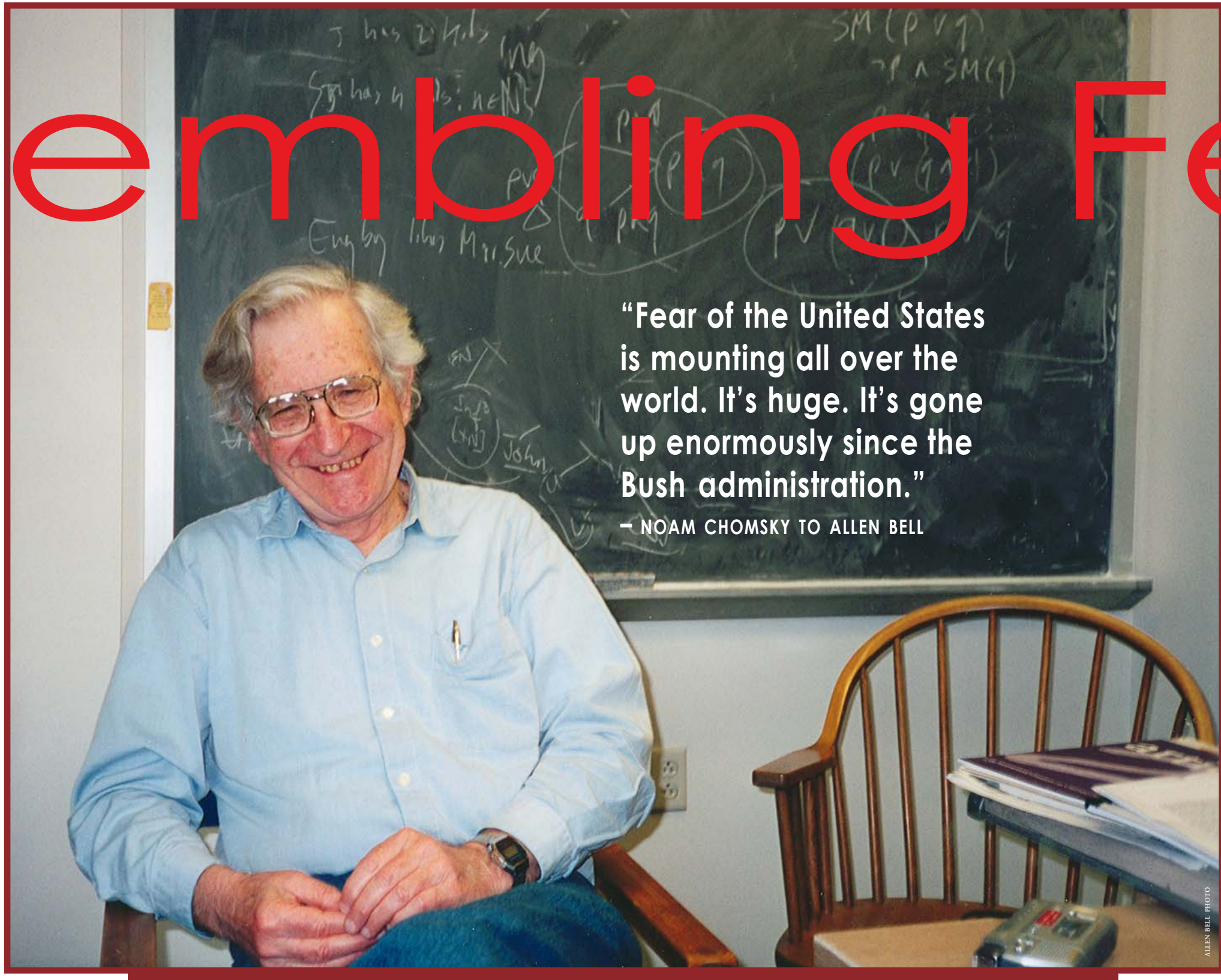
"I mean, compare it with other military occupations. Take the Nazis in Europe. They ran Europe with collaborators without much trouble. Every country had its collaborators that ran things for them pretty efficiently. There was a resistance but if it hadn't been supported from abroad they would have crushed it instantly. And they were under attack.

"Or take the Russians in Eastern Europe. They ran it without much trouble with collaborators all over the place.

"How come the U.S. can't do it under the most optimal circumstances?... Now they're in trouble. It's costing them too much. They can't pay for it. The army is starting to erode. It may get harder to go on to the next one. But it does reflect extraordinary incompetence."

[Interview conducted by Allen Bell on May 9 and September 11, 2003]

0973685301



ALLEN BELL PHOTO



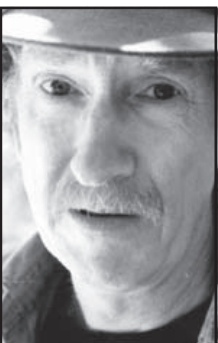
Allen Bell photographed by Noam Chomsky



# Man at fault

**Don McKay** uses six movements of prose and poetry in his **Deactivated West 100** (Gaspereau \$25.95) as he explores and examines a sense of place amid Vancouver Island wilderness and “in the scheme of infinite time.”

He says the background for the book is a fault line on southern Vancouver Island known as the Loss Creek-Leech River fault. “I decided, as part of my apprenticeship to west coast landscapes, to walk the fault from end to end and



Don McKay: I walk the fault line

take note of whatever it presented to me in terms of rocks, plants, animals, birds (of course) and human history. A lot of walking was done on the old deactivated bush road which follows Loss Creek and gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also led me into the history and politics of forestry hereabouts—including technological advances like the Shay locomotive and the Stihl chainsaw.”

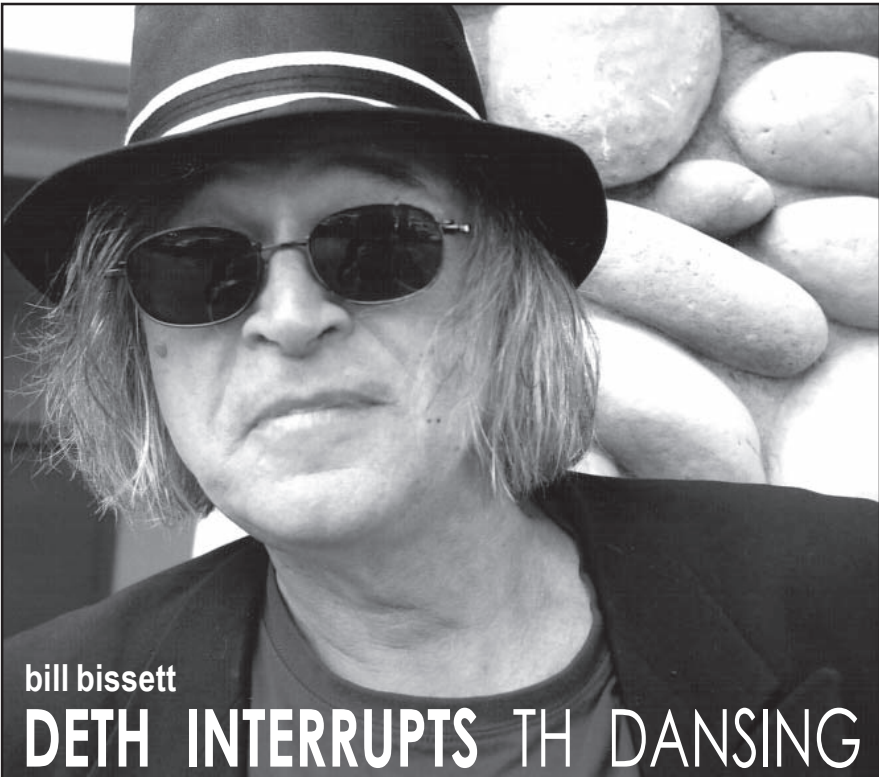
McKay is a professor with UVic's Department of Writing and an editor for Brick Books. He is the subject of a new critical anthology of essays, **Worth Fifty Thousand Finches** (Wilfrid Laurier Press \$12.95), edited by **Meira Cook** and due in December.

Deactivated 1554470080; Finches 0-88920-494-2



**Eric Miller** is an ornithologist fluent in several languages, including Latin. As the poetry editor of the *Malabat Review* and a teacher of 18th century literature at the University of Victoria, he has published his second collection of poetry, **In the Scaffolding** (Goose Lane \$17.95), a follow-up to *Song of the Vulgar Starling*.

0-86492-425-9



bill bissett

## DETH INTERRUPTS TH DANSING

TWIGG PHOTO

we wer kayjun dansing yu know thats from akadian 2 th great sounds uv swamperella great kayjun band me n dr bill n manee othr kool peopul dansing n ther at th gladstone hotel qween west rainee oktobr nite

it was getting sew rocking it was verree calm th dansrs n th band sew great playing 2gethr n keepin th fires goin whn just ovr ther th man who had bin smiling at us all nite on his back on th floor n smiling angels wer all around us n th scent uv deth

dr bill is on2 it n th woman th man had bin dansing with me n dr bill had bin dansing sew great 2gethr with ths great band n now th spotlites shining on th smiling man thumping his chest ths dansr down n cpr n anothr doktor in th hous hovr ovr n calling 911 n we get th door opn evreeyun is sew 2gethr with ths paramediks n guernee cum in th downd man makes strange sounds 4 a whil ther was no puls we all hovr th band is silent watching on

we ar all thinking in sew manee ways abt deth how it reelee sucks n evn if we can accept it how moving it is 2 b onlookrs 2 sumwuns transisyun from heer 2 ther wher is anee uv that how short our lives ar reelee n deth can cum at anee time espeshulee whn wer not redee our eyez ar wet mouths silent we hold th doors opn th man who was dansing goez out in th stretchr rides off peopuls vibes follo him 4 what evr he needs th band cums 2gethr no spotlites on

plays off th stage on th floor slowr mournful kay jun fidduls bass drums haunting songs carree us thru all ths emergensee doktor cums back sz th downd dansr is recouping th band stays on th floor starts rockin wer all up dansing agen sew fine deth didnt interrupt us 4 verree long tho we kno sumwher els it did a lot evn if its onlee a courier

From **bill bissett's northern wild roses / deth interrupts th dansing** (Talonbooks \$17.95)

088922532X



Graham Good

## Graham loves Maria

Talonbooks publisher Karl Siegler translated **Maria Rainier Rilke's** *Sonnets to Orpheus* in 1977, but UBC English professor **Graham Good's** *Rilke's Late Poetry* (Ronsdale \$16.95) is the first translation in a single volume of Rilke's three mature works, *Duino Elegies*, *Sonnets to Orpheus* and *Selected Last Poems*. Coincidental with **T.S. Eliot's** *The Waste Land* and **James Joyce's** *Ulysses* in 1922, the *Sonnets to Orpheus* lyrically express Rilke's philosophical response to the transience of life. The first two poems of the *Duino Elegies* were written in 1912 when he stayed at the Duino Castle near Trieste, Italy. The third and fourth elegies were mainly written in Paris (1913) and in Munich (1915). The much-travelled, German-born Rilke died in 1926; Good's critical work ranges from European literature to Buddhism.



Maria Rainer Rilke

1-55380-024-9

## ALSO RECEIVED

**Miraculous Hours** by Matt Rader (Nightwood \$16.95) 0-88971-201-8  
**Segues** by Naomi Beth Wakan (Wolsak & Wynn \$15) 1-894987-01-2  
**One Stone** by Barbara Pelman (Ekstasis \$18.95) 1-894800-37-0  
**Frames of Silence** by Allan Brown (Seraphim \$16.95) 0-9734588-3-6  
**The Sutler** by Michael Kenyon (Brick \$17) 1-894078-41-1  
**Living Will: Shakespeare After Dark** by Harold Rhenisch (Wolsak & Wynn \$22) 1-894987-02-0  
**Republic of Parts** by Stephanie Maricevic (Broken Jaw \$16.95) 1-55391-025-7  
**Ecologue** by Ken Belford (Harbour \$16.95) 1-55017-349-9  
**Bizarre Winery Tragedy** by Lyle Neff (Anvil \$14) 1-895636-66-3  
**Touching Tells And Learns** (Brio 0-9733942-5-0) and **The Roots of Affection** by Ian Rudkin (Brio 0-9733942-6-9)

# JACK PINES & STETSONS



Donna Kane

Poetry thrives in Tumbler Ridge, in Fort St John and Grande Prairie. The Northern Lights College Foundation and Writing on the Ridge are two of the organizations which foster writing in the north. **Donna Kane** of Dawson Creek is affiliated with both, hosting literary festivals and writers' retreats. **Somewhere, A Fire** (Regina: Hagios Press \$13.95) is Kane's first book of poems—and a very fine one it is. With skilful tension, Kane's poems thrust the reader northwards into early snowfalls, mud, and dust devils. Universal themes of death and life, love and weather, are conveyed with a distinctly northern slant.

*"Absence is a winter storm/ a two-lane highway bunched into one, / shoulders narrowed, snow bending/ jack pines mid-mantra."* A dead gopher in a fox's mouth: *"How well the gopher played its part, /sagging sock, body draped, at your service, bones / small mallets sounding the scale/ of ditch grass and willow."* In a poem about country and western dancing, the men with their boots and good Stetsons have *"a pure pulse inside them/ that knows instinctively how to thrust you into the upbeat / like turning a newly sewn garment inside out, poking out the corners / with something sure--men who learned to dance / some other way than counting steps / or looking at their toes, who move/with dogfight confidence."* 0-9682256-9-1

All BC BookWorld reviews are posted online at [www.abcbookworld.com](http://www.abcbookworld.com)

## Who Doesn't

for Larry

Who doesn't love a man who can back a trailer to within an inch of his mark, who can read not only the tracks in the driveway but the payload they carried, holds a finishing nail in his mouth, a pencil behind his ear, who studies the joists of the unfinished buildings so thoroughly you know you've disappeared and for a minute you are watching a boy you haven't yet met—his single-purposed concentration so fierce it's clear he loved the world before you or any other girl came into it. —**Donna Kane, Somewhere, A Fire**





Lewis Harvey, James Reynolds, Leona Sparrow, Andrew Charles and Marvin Storrow in front of the Supreme Court of Canada building, 1983

BY BEVERLY CRAMP

**B**ack in 1970, Musqueam Chief **Delbert Guerin** first gained access to the exact terms of a 1957 agreement that enables the Shaughnessy Golf and Country Club to lease 162 acres of the Musqueam Reserve in Vancouver, approximately one third of the reserve.



Delbert Guerin

**James Reynolds' A Breach of Duty: Fiduciary Obligations and Aboriginal People** (Saskatoon: Purich \$38) describes the 26-year legal quest for justice by the Musqueam, as initiated by Guerin, to

gain full knowledge of, and compensation for, that lease.

"I consider this the second best thing that happened in my life," Guerin says. "The first important thing was my wife saying 'I do' in 1960."



Federal Indian Agent **Frank Anfield** held private meetings in 1957 with representatives of the golf club and negotiated the lease without full consultation with the Musqueam.

Thirteen years later an Indian Affairs employee named **Graham Allen** permitted Guerin to examine some basement Indian Affairs archives containing the lease.

"When I read the agreement," says Guerin, "I phoned Ed (Sparrow), Bill (Guerin) and Mother (Gertrude Guerin) and asked them, 'How the hell

## Shaughnessy vs MUSQUEAM

The legal battle of *Guerin v. The Queen* is one of the top three or four cases that have advanced Aboriginal rights in Canada in the 20th century.

did you guys agree to all these terms?' and when they read the agreement they said, 'we didn't.'"

When the lease was signed, the government controlled reserve lands and Indians were not permitted to vote in federal elections. During this paternalistic era, the federal government had allowed the Musqueam to be taken advantage of through the actions of Anfield, a former Anglican minister and principal of a residential school.

Specifically, after a government appraiser had valued the land at \$53,450 per year, Anfield pressured him to lower this amount. The appraisal was given to the club but not the Band. Anfield also misconstrued the appraiser's opinion of a satisfactory return to the Band members and pressured them to agree to a rent of \$29,000 per year for the first ten years.

The Musqueam reluctantly agreed to this low rate because they wrongly believed they would be able to increase that amount to a market rent when the lease came up for renewal. Anfield did not correct their misconceptions about the proposed lease.

The final version of the lease was not given to the Musqueam. It stated each rental term was for 15 years—not ten—and there would be a maximum 15% increase for the second 15-year term. Future rents would not be at market rates but based on the uncleared, unimproved land value and the restricted use.

Delbert Guerin's detective work also revealed that all buildings put in place by the club could be removed by it at the end of the lease, contrary to what the Band members had understood to be the case.

Frank Anfield, the government agent, literally held the pen for Musqueam members when they voted on October 6, 1957.



More than 18 years later, at a Musqueam General Band Meeting on December 14, 1975, a decision was made to proceed with a writ to challenge the federal government for breach of its trust responsibilities.

The Musqueam initially won their case in September of 1979 with an award of \$10 million plus post-judgment interest. However, the Federal Court of Appeal overturned that decision and said the government had only a political and not a legal obligation.

The Musqueam then proceeded to the Supreme Court of Canada where the award was upheld on November 1, 1984.

"We were pleased with the finding of liability but disappointed with the amount of the award," Reynolds says. "The kind of numbers we put before the court ranged from \$41 million to \$70 million. The trial judge agreed these figures were justified.

"But there were contingencies (things that might happen in the future, before the lease finishes in 2033), that were used

to reduce the amount; in particular, the judge's view that the club might leave. Of course, this has not happened. The lease is too good to the club for them to leave before it ends in 2033."

The Musqueam took a second legal case to the Supreme Court of Canada in 1990, winning the *Sparrow* case that secured Aboriginal rights in Section 35 of the Constitution Act of 1982.

These two landmark cases were key elements in persuading the provincial government to discontinue its refusal to participate in treaty negotiations for settlement of Aboriginal rights in British Columbia. They laid the foundation for the historic Supreme Court *Delgamuukw* (1997) decision that established Aboriginal title as a legal right.



James Reynolds, who emigrated from England in 1976, specializes in Aboriginal, banking and commercial law from North Vancouver. He was one of the lawyers on the *Guerin* case along with lead lawyer **Marvin Storrow, Lewis Harvey, Robert Banno** and **Steve Schachter**.

"Our advantage was, we weren't experts," says Lewis Harvey. "But we thought, this can't be, this isn't right. Marvin Storrow thought it was constructive fraud [because] the lease terms were so terrible."

As a result of Delbert Guerin's persistence, the door opened for Aboriginal people in Canada to seek and obtain legal remedies for wrongs done to them by the Crown.

"There is no question that what the Crown did was wrong," says Reynolds. "In any other situation it would have been a slam-dunk. But because it was the federal government, everyone thought you couldn't sue them..."

"What the *Guerin* case did was to overturn the defence that the Crown was above the law and to achieve some measure of justice.

"I thought it was a story worth telling."

1-895830-25-7

*Beverly Cramp is a non-Aboriginal who edits the Musqueam newsletter.*



Having lived for many years in southeast Asia, **Christopher G. Moore** has returned to Vancouver where he has published a novel set in Rangoon and the Burmese countryside. **Waiting for the Lady** (Subway Books \$38.95), concerns a part-time smuggler Sloan Walcott and his quest to deliver a camera to Aung San Suu Kyi, the democratically elected leader who has long been held under house arrest by the junta in control of her country. It's his 15th novel since *His Lordship's Arsenal* in 1985.



Christopher G. Moore



Anne Degrace

A librarian and journalist in Nelson, **Anne Degrace** is the author of two photographic books of the West Kootenay region. Her first novel, **Treading Water** (McArthur & Co. \$29.95), is inspired by the tiny community of Renata, B.C., fictionalized as Bear Creek. Ursula Hartmann, the first child born at the site near the beginning of the 20th century, is one of several characters whose lives are recounted until the town disappears with the onset of a hydroelectric dam.

0-9687163-6-9



In **Brenda Brooks'** first novel, **Gotta Find Me An Angel** (Raincoast \$29.95), a film projectionist at a second-run cinema in Toronto is haunted by the ghost of a friend who died long ago. One night she addresses a lament to that ghost, recounting her failed attempts at finding love. Brooks lives on Salt Spring Island.



Brenda Brooks

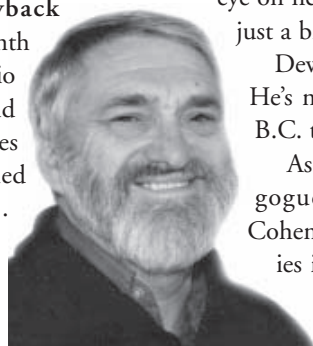


Anne Giardini

Hyped as very witty and deeply-felt, **The Sad Truth About Happiness** (HarperCollins \$29.95) is a first novel by **Anne Giardini**, daughter of Carol Shields, about family, love, work, friendship and loyalty.



**Ian Slater** is bound to get it right eventually. In **Payback** (Ballantine \$6.99), his tenth novel to outline a scenario for the outbreak of World War III, terrorist missiles strike three jetliners filled with innocent people. With the United States already awash in paranoia and fear-mongering after 9/11, retired-Gen



eral Douglas Freeman and a team of retired Special Forces operatives must obliterate the source of the deadly missiles in North Korea.

0-345-45376-X



**Rick Dewhurst's** first crime novel **Bye Bye, Bertie** (Nashville: Broadman & Holman \$15.99) is a light-hearted narrative by a Vancouver detective named Joe LaFlam who must search for the sister of a beautiful blonde client named Brittany Morgan. The sister has gone missing after joining a religious cult... of Druids. Both sisters are waiting to get married. LaFlam, a devout Christian, would also like to tie the knot and settle down. Much of the time LaFlam lives in Seattle in his mind.

The novel was favourably reviewed by the *Globe & Mail's* Margaret Cannon: "This is a pretty cute story, with a clever plot, no sex or violence, and characters who are a lot more engaging than the dogs and cats some authors use as gimmicks. Still, if you're wedded to the idea of private eyes who don't know the first word of the Gospel According to Luke, you may find this one, with his eye on heaven and his talk full of Jesus, just a bit hard to believe."

Dewhurst is a pastor in Duncan. He's not the first religious leader in B.C. to write crime fiction.

As a rabbi at Beth Tikvah Synagogue in Richmond, Martin S. Cohen published a series of mysteries in the 1990s, as well as *Heads You Lose* (Ekstasis, 2003).

Bertie 0805431829

## Watmough On The Street

One of dozens of writers scheduled to appear at Word On The Street on September 25 at the Vancouver Public Library Main Branch, **David Watmough** has been a mainstay of the West Coast fiction scene since the Cornishman accepted Canadian citizenship in 1963. Now into his fifth decade as a dedicated West Coaster (only recently transplanted to Boundary Bay from Kitsilano), Watmough is launching the first novel in a projected trilogy about



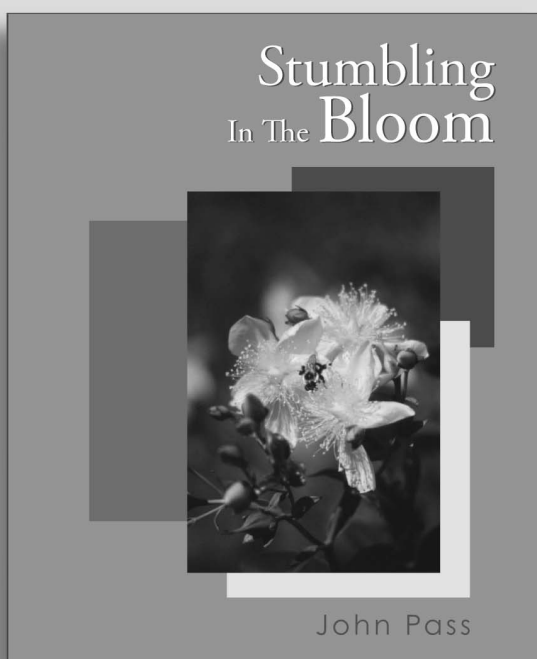
David Watmough

life in the city at the dawn of the 21st century. **Vancouver Voices** (Ripple Effect Press, \$15.99) is a 168-page novel about a gay priest falsely accused of child abuse. According to Jane Rule, "David Watmough fictionalizes his own life, trying on different sorts of parents, different sorts of siblings as well as different sorts of experiences. A blatant liar, he tells the real truth: the imagination has many lives. We laugh at, we judge, we forgive him and, therefore, ourselves."

1-894735-09-9

## Fall Reading from Oolichan

Distributed by University of Toronto Press

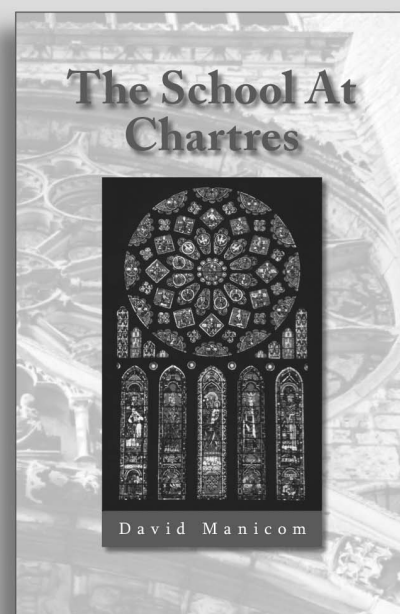


0-88982-201-8

The poems in *Stumbling in the Bloom* engage the ever-present enticements and entanglements of beauty on life's, and art's, home ground—in wilderness and garden.

"Pass truly qualifies as the best writer in Canada you never heard of until now . . ."

—John Moore, *The Vancouver Sun*



0-88982-222-0

*The School At Chartres* combines the intrigue of a thriller with the sophistication of a major international literary work. Set partly in 1990s Montreal and partly in medieval France, *The School At Chartres* is a long love-letter—the final letter—from the protagonist, John Wilson, to his lost love.

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# FICTION

## Three docs prescribe the Troubles, homicide and a global pandemic

**B**orn in 1941 in Blackpool, Lancashire, England, **Patrick Taylor** of Bowen Island was brought up in Bangor, Northern Ireland. His birth in England was a result of his father serving in the RAF and being stationed there. ("Just because you're born in a stable does not necessarily mean you are a horse.")

Taylor received his medical training in Northern Ireland and immigrated to Canada in 1970 to pursue a career in Academic medicine, moving to B.C. in 1991. Prior to his retirement in 2001 as Professor Emeritus, UBC, he was head of obstetrics and gynecology at Vancouver's St. Paul's Hospital for ten years. He served as editor of the *Journal of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada* and has written humour, sailing and opinion columns.

His first work of fiction, *Only Wounded: Ulster Stories* (1997) is a collection of short stories set during the 30 years of the Ulster troubles. His first novel, *Pray for Us Sinners* (2000), portrayed a violent political group in 1974 Belfast.

Earlier this year Taylor's light-hearted medical tale of manners, *The Apprenticeship of Doctor Laverty* (Insomniac, 2004), was short-listed for the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize. Set in 1965, in the Ulster village of Ballybucklebo, where newly graduated Doctor Barry Laverty enters the general medical practice of his eccentric senior partner Doctor Fingal Flahertie O'Reilly and his oddball patients.

Now Taylor is back with *Now and at the Hour of Our Death* (Insomniac \$21.95), a sequel to *Sinners*, in which a Vancouver-based character named Fiona Kavanagh, who is married to a doctor in British Columbia, is catapulted

back into the Troubles with news of the jail breakout at the Maze prison.

1-894663-99-3



**Roy Innes** grew up in Victoria and gained his training as a medical doctor at the University of British Columbia. While retired on Gabriola Island, he has written his first mystery, *Murder in the Monashees* (NeWest Press \$10.95) about RCMP Corporal Paul Blakemore in the Monashee Mountain village of Bear Creek.

The discovery of a frozen corpse in a snowbank, with no signs of foul play, has international ramifications that merit the intrusion of Vancouver Homicide Inspector Mark Coswell into Blakemore's investigations. Add a smalltown coroner, a feisty female reporter, plus some madness and mistakes, and you've got a police procedural with some medical know-how behind it.

1-896300-89-8



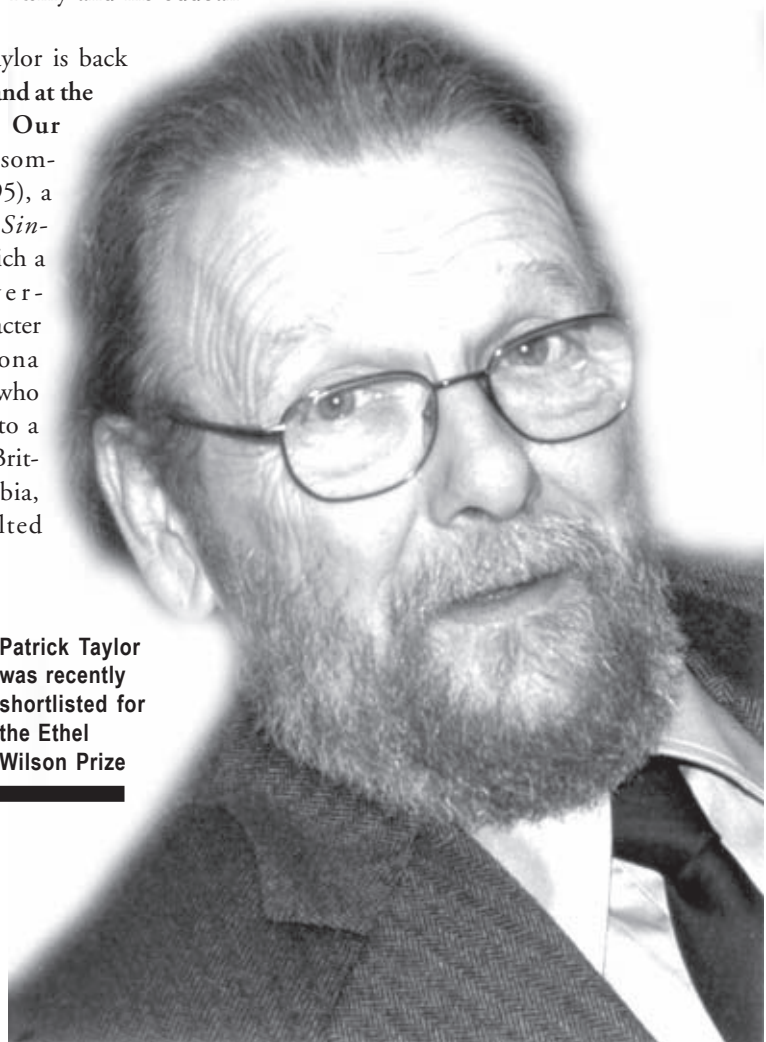
Having seen one of Vancouver's only confirmed SARS cases in an emergency ward in March of 2003, St. Paul's Hospital physician **Dan Kalla** has imagined a mass market thriller in which terrorists use a virus to generate a new pandemic. The title of this double dose of post 9/11 paranoia is *Pandemic* (New York: TOR \$10.99).

Its hero, Dr. Noah Haldane, knows humanity is due for a new killer flu like the one in 1919. He discovers Acute Respiratory Collapse Syndrome is killing one in every four people who contract it. The perpetrators are Muslim.

Kalla, 38, trained at UBC and sat on a SARS emergency task force in 2003, giving rise to this first novel. A second medical thriller is planned for release in 2006.

0-765-35084-X

Patrick Taylor  
was recently  
shortlisted for  
the Ethel  
Wilson Prize





## Down to the wire

**B**orn in Winnipeg in 1911, **Jim Coleman**, Canada's first sports columnist, was the son of D.C. Coleman, President of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, who would often take Jim and his younger brother Rowan to sporting events via private railway.

The kids saw everything from hockey and football to baseball and boxing, but nothing compared to Jim Coleman's love of horse racing. His love affair with the ponies began at age ten when his aunt took him to Brighthouse Park on Lulu Island.

"You may be wondering," he later recalled, "how anyone can get hooked on horse racing at the age of ten or so and then go through an entire lifetime without shaking the habit. It's easy, really. All you require is the spirit of perseverance."

Educated in a Victoria private school and McGill University in Montreal, Coleman was known by his cronies for his poker playing, his cigar smoking and his drinking—until he had to swear off the booze in the 1950s. He saw the Victoria Cougars win the Stanley Cup in 1925, he saw **Babe Ruth** and **Lou Gehrig** play, he interviewed a young kid named **Jackie Robinson** before he made it into the bigs and Jim Coleman was ringside when **Jack Dempsey** KO'd **Jack Sharkey**.

His peerless 70-year writing career entailed stints at the *Vancouver Province*, *Edmonton Journal*, *Edmonton Bulletin*, *Canadian Press*, *The Globe and Mail* and the Southam Newspaper chain.

A recipient of the Order of Canada, Coleman was inducted into Canada's Horse Racing Hall of Fame, the Canadian Sports and Newspaper halls of fame and the media divisions of the football and hockey halls.

His final column appeared on the day he died of heart failure at age 89 on January 14, 2000.



Now Jim Coleman has been memorialized by *The Best of Jim Coleman: Fifty Years of Canadian Sport from the Man Who Saw It All* (Harbour \$34.95), edited by fellow scribe **Jim Taylor**, one of his most ardent admirers. The long-awaited anthology of sports articles is illustrated—making it a photo finish for Coleman.

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Jim Coleman (1911-2000),  
dean of Canada's sportswriters.

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## Peter Such's

energetic novel, **Earthbaby** (Ekstasis \$22.95), envisions a future devastated by global warming. Technology's cure is a deep space habitat to be tested by scientists aboard a prototype called Earthbaby.

The astronauts soon discover that General Foreman, the President of the American Protectorates (formerly North America), has hijacked their research mission by secretly hiding nuclear weapons on board.

The novel is narrated from the ground by NASA chief Andrew Tremain, who escapes assassination by Foreman's Lifeist forces, and from Earthbaby by crew member Lillith Shawnadithit, a feminist "psychosimulacra" researcher.

As Andrew and Lillith struggle on behalf of humanity, a bizarre sect called The Regulators is gaining influence in the highly technologized society of 2039.

"This is a dystopia," says Such. "I don't want this to happen. If it doesn't happen, I'll be really, really happy. Ten years from now, I'd like people to say, 'Peter, you didn't know what the hell you were talking about.'"

Peter Such studied at the University of Toronto in the 1960s under **Northrup Frye** and **Marshall McLuhan**, and alongside **Margaret Atwood** and **Dennis Lee**. Atwood, Lee and Such left the university in protest when they weren't allowed to do a Ph.D. on a Canadian subject.

His best-known novel, *Riverrun* (1973), concerns the last days of the indigenous Beothuk people of Newfoundland who were exterminated with the coming of Europeans by 1829.

Such's first novel *Fallout* (1968) arose from experiences as a uranium miner near Elliot Lake. His history of the Dorset Inuit and Beothuk is *Vanished Peoples* (1978). His *Dolphin's Wake* (1979) is a thriller about an archaeologist and his wife who get drawn into opposing the ruling junta in Greece.

Such's first chapbook of poetry from (m)other Tongue Press on Salt Spring Island, *Their Breath Is The Sky* (2003), was his first title to be published outside of Ontario.

Interviewer **Sara Cassidy** met Peter Such at his home in Victoria, where he and his wife, the artist **Joyce Kline**, formerly ran an award-winning bed 'n' breakfast operation. He now works as a renovations consultant and contractor.

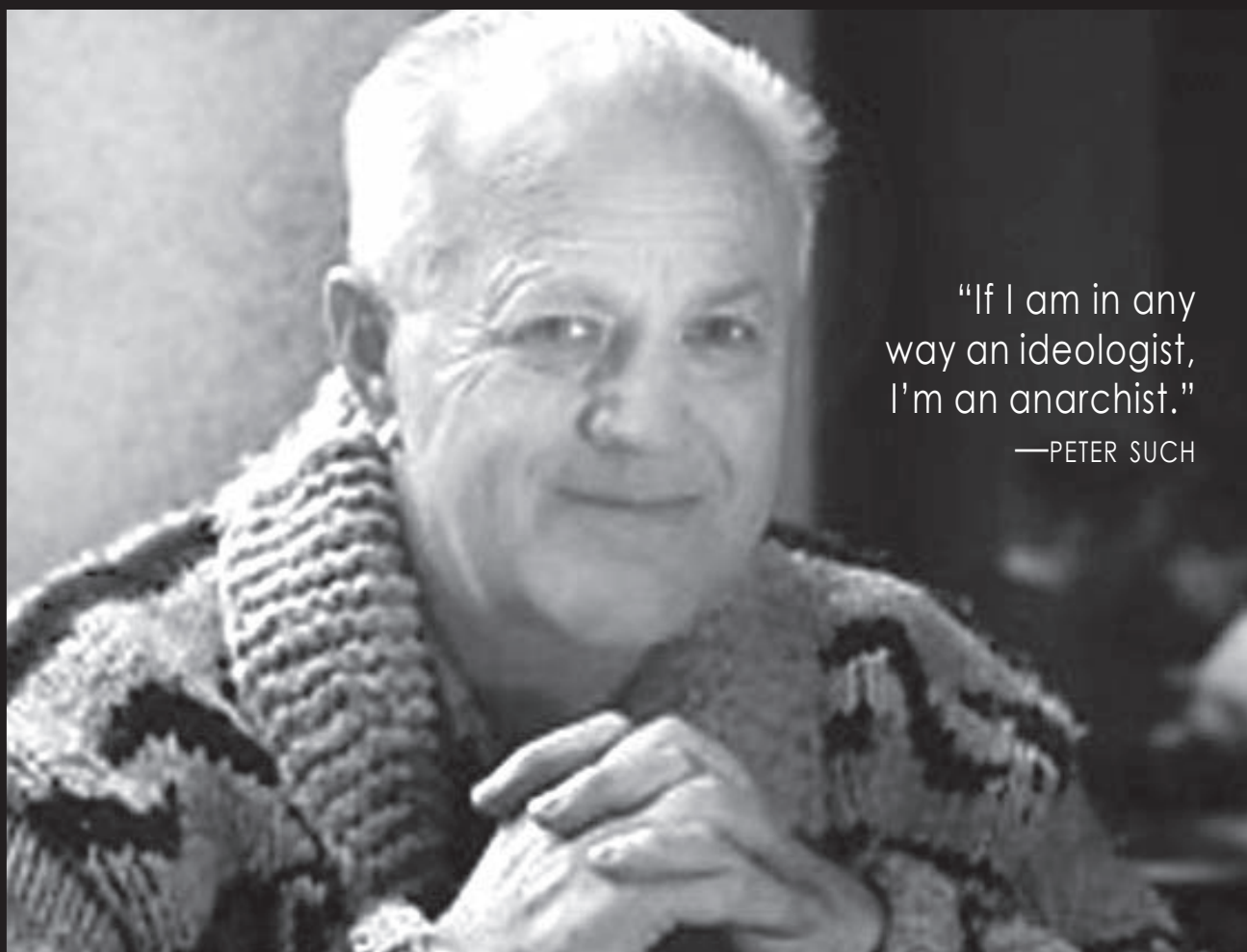


**BCBW:** Of all the dates a futurist novelist can choose, why 2039?

**SUCH:** Because I'll be a hundred years old. And I'm going to see how much of it comes true.

**BCBW:** You plan to live to a hundred years old?

**SUCH:** A hundred and four, actually. But it's important to tell you that I wrote this book seven years ago. The literary presses didn't want it and it was too literary for the science fiction people. It's this crazy cross genre thing.



"If I am in any way an ideologist, I'm an anarchist."

—PETER SUCH

# In the year 2039

After a 25-year hiatus, novelist **Peter Such** has returned to the future with his dystopic view of terrorism and technology run amuck.

There's a professor of literature at Lethbridge University named **Robert Runte**, and he looked at an early copy of the manuscript and said, "Oh this just fits in with the book I'm writing about the difference between science fiction in Canada to that in the United States and the rest of the world."

**BCBW:** Did he tell you what typifies Canadian science fiction?

**SUCH:** Well, number one, it is much more socially conscious and less fantasy and, number two, the heroes are not Rambo-like. They may succeed but they screw up a number of times before they get there. And they are not inviolable. Also, women are very leading characters.

**BCBW:** Sounds like *Earthbaby*. Why is it important to know that you wrote the book seven years ago?

**SUCH:** Because it's all been coming true!

**BCBW:** You've got global warming turned up high. You've got political oppression in the name of anti-terrorism...

**SUCH:** Yes, I wrote *Earthbaby* before the terrorist stuff happened. This is the original manuscript, except for two pages at the end, when they're flying over New York. In the original [manuscript], the twin towers still existed.

**BCBW:** When the space shuttle reaches Earthbaby, Lillith notes how its magnetic arms reached out toward them like "something both loving and deadly." How does technology enter your life?

**SUCH:** Actually, I'm very good at technology and always have been. In this construction work I'm doing, I use explosive bolts and blast them into the floor. But I think I have an essential difference in my approach to technology. To me, it's just fun. It's games. And I think that is McLuhan's posture as well.

The Europeans, particularly the Eastern Europeans, tend to see technology as something playful. In North America, we see technology as a sacrosanct kind of entity, as a religion. But if you take the posture of the clown, then you are in much better shape. You don't invest in the nightmare...

**BCBW:** In *Earthbaby*, the heroes are the ones who raise themselves out of the technology morass, to act for themselves. Are you alarmed by how much technology is in our lives today?

**SUCH:** Yes. We're going down a terrible road, actually. But I'm really against ideology. I've been accused in some of my writing as being a Marxist but that is the last thing I am, because any ideology to me is anathema. I think to circumscribe the world, to define pattern, is very, very uncreative.

If I am in any way an ideologist, I'm an anarchist. I read **Peter Kropotkin** when I was young, but that's because he studied Siberian tribes, and I was very interested in tribal dynamics.

**BCBW:** Why are you so interested in tribal dynamics?

**SUCH:** My background was fairly traumatic. I grew up in an orphanage essentially, so I could see the tribal dynamics operating. When you grow up with 800 boys, age seven to 18, in England, at the end of the war, when all the people who are the teachers and the administrators are shell-shocked crazies...

But it goes further than that. In cultural anthropology—and I am a cultural anthropologist—there are two main perspectives:

One is that there is no common human nature, because we are all just purely a product of culture and circumstance. It's a Skinnerian behaviourist-based notion. The other notion is that there is a common human nature and that we are hard-wired to be a certain way.

My experience, having grown up with 800 boys—where people got beat up and killed—was that if you weren't totally psycho, there was a tendency for cooperation and a real dynamic of compassion.

So I believe in the common human nature. I believe that basically human beings will love each other and be just with each other.

**BCBW:** You raise the issue in *Earthbaby* that we always give over power to psychologically disturbed, tyrant psychopaths. Why do we do that?

**SUCH:** Because somehow we don't believe it's going to happen. I remember my grandfather saying, "You know, we used to laugh at Hitler. We used to go to the movies and they had the news-

*continued on page 25*



SARA CASSIDY



continued from page 19

reels and when we'd see them all marching in goose step we'd roar with laughter." And apparently when (the SS) first marched down the main street of Copenhagen, when they took over Denmark, the Danes screamed with laughter.

**BCBW:** That's also the reaction to the Lifeists in *Earthbaby*. No one took them seriously. I thought of right-wing, fundamentalist Christians in the States when I read that.

**SUCH:** Well, yeah. I mean, everybody laughed at Bush. A sort of, you know, D-minus student in a fraternity, drunk, never been out of the country. Screwed up the only job he ever had, which was in the oil industry. What a laughable character. I really don't believe Bush is the power, of course—there are all these people who (prop) him up.

**BCBW:** Andrew Tremaine muses that because General Foreman is so vacant, it allows people to project all sorts of things onto him—whether it's a patriarch or some kind of saviour. It's almost like we're more likely to have a vapid leader than to have a leader who is really truly complex and thoughtful.

**SUCH:** But being fundamentally an anarchist, I don't believe in leadership. It is really frightening for me to see all these leadership courses in the schools—people are getting degrees in it, that is really, really frightening. No, I mean, leaders spontaneously arise, but in tribal society they arise not out of anything except situational context.

**BCBW:** *Earthbaby* is also very interested in interpreting reality. There is virtual reality modeling and even projected picture windows to make the Earthbaby feel larger. And there is no independent media left.

**SUCH:** Yeah, so you can't figure out what's real. That results in a tremendous sense of paranoia, which we have in our society. We are over-reacting to all the information we get. We know that a lot of it isn't true and yet we want to believe some of it is true. Our friends believe some of it's true, so we get convinced it's true and it turns out it isn't true.

The language is bastardised, words don't mean what they should. If you want to keep our lives and language honest you go to the poets. Poetry is really guerilla warfare and I try to read young people's poetry as much as I can because it's always more authentic than

anything you'll read in the newspaper.

**BCBW:** Can you say something about the Regulators?

**SUCH:** (*Laughter*) I leave it up to the reader to decide whether the Regulators really exist or whether they are just a model that has been created by a very highly evolved computer generation. I don't want people to know whether they are real or not. I just wanted to leave this edge of mystery about it all.

I guess at this stage of my life, I've nearly died several times and every time I've woken up after being half-dead, I've had ten seconds of feeling really peaceful and fulfilled before I get back into the real rush of the world. I'm not a great believer in any kind of religion... [but] I still had this feeling that there's this enormous mystery about existence, which everybody can't really just... accept.

I feel there is such an intensely huge mystery around the fact we are existing and that you and I are talking right now and relating as human beings over very fundamental questions. I think every age interprets and re-examines these questions and comes up with some kind of model around which they can somehow approach it.

**BCBW:** The book jacket mentions sex just once—but there is a lot of sex in *Earthbaby*. Are you imagining a more sexualized future?

**SUCH:** I write from my life's experience. All the people I know are very, very erotic and sexual. I am not held back about throwing it on the page. I think we're living through a Puritan age because of AIDS and all that.

**BCBW:** Do you think we need more sex in fiction?

**SUCH:** Absolutely. Yeah, I really do. But what we've been lacking really seriously is a socially and politically conscious novel. I haven't been published for a long time, and I'll tell you why—I have three novels in there [points toward his house] and they are all socially and politically significant. We have all these incredible people in this country, but what we get out of the publishing companies is a slightly exotic read for what I call the WASP market.

1-894800-57-5

*Sara Cassidy is a student and freelance writer in Victoria.*

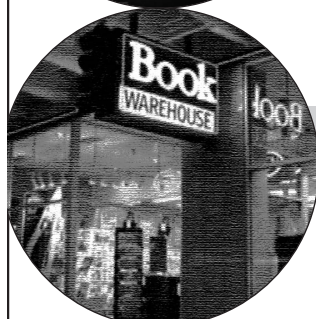
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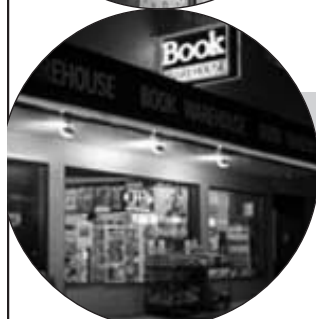
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# A HATED POLITICAL ENEMY

Allen Bell interviews Noam Chomsky

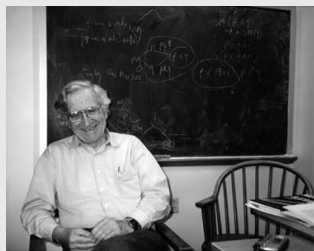
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In this rare face-to face post '9-11' interview, the poet Allen Bell talks to the renowned linguist and political theorist Noam Chomsky in his office at M.I.T. What emerges is a remarkably detailed and concise entrée into Noam Chomsky's social and political thought (including Iraq and '9-11'), and also into what he has had to endure on the personal level. The question-and-answer interaction is exceedingly interesting, though admittedly somewhat startling and disturbing.

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A HATED POLITICAL ENEMY



Allen Bell interviews Noam Chomsky

## LETTERS

### If memory serves

I know that as we grow older our memory often plays tricks on us—why did I come into this room? What was I supposed to get?—but that is usually short-term memory. My long-term memory is in excellent shape and for the life of me I can't remember ever making the remark to Brian Brett that is quoted in your summer issue. When was this said, and in what context?? I think he has me mixed up with somebody else. (It doesn't even sound like me!!) I am a big fan of Brian Brett, but I do object to having my name taken in vain. Brian may THINK I said it, and I can imagine one or two people who MIGHT have said it, but I'm sure I didn't say it.

Audrey Thomas  
Galiano Island



Brian Brett

*Brian Brett replies:* While our exchange was accurately reported perhaps it proves you can just never provide enough context in a personal memoir (*Uproar's Your Only Music*). I thought it was clear I considered my conversation with Audrey a case of friends bantering on a political issue while I was moderating a panel on voice appropriation at a Writers' Union AGM (which is why we were on the subject of men writing as women). However, it was the booing and hissing of the group of women in front of her that was a defining moment for me — those strangers, not engaging in dialogue like Audrey, but making abusive

and incorrect assumptions about my genetics and sexual history while attending a panel about the dangers of those very assumptions. And that was when I suddenly realized that at last I was capable of talking about my genetic condition in public. I remain a fan of Audrey's work, and would like to remain a friend.

*Brian Brett originally wrote:* Almost a decade ago I was chairing a Writer's Union of Canada panel when it collapsed into an acrimonious quarrel over discrimination, racism, and sexism — the usual stuff that intellectuals can get worked up about in our era. I found myself drawn into a confrontation with the fine novelist, Audrey Thomas.

I think I made a sympathetic remark about knowing what it's like to suffer. Audrey retorted from the back of the auditorium: "Brian, you can never know what it's like to suffer the way women have." To which I said: "You might be surprised." This annoyed Audrey, who I consider a friend, and she exclaimed: "Oh come on, give us a break." Verbal sparring matches often erupt between writers on contentious issues, so I didn't think much about it. However, to my amusement, I found myself being booed by the strident faction seated a few rows in front of Audrey. I was a hair away from launching into my abused history right there on stage.

It was one of the few times I've been smart enough to keep my mouth shut. Besides, I've never given much credence to today's cult of victimology.

## JOAN GIVNER

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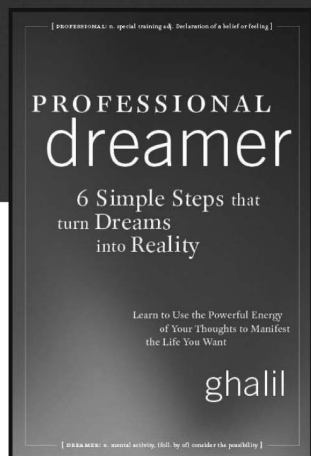
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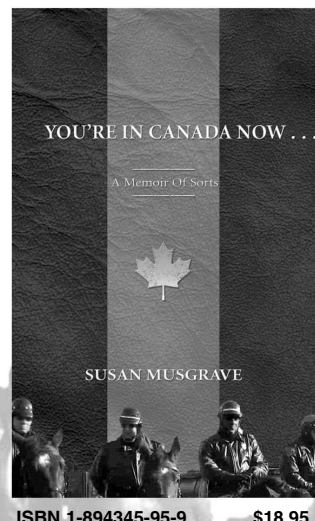
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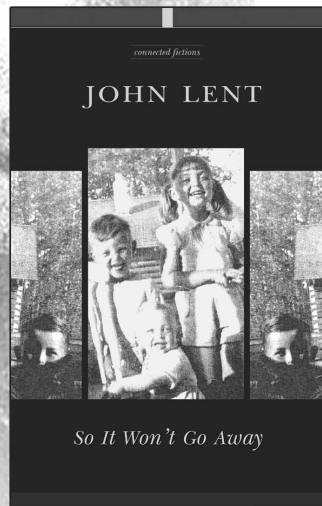
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