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 Spatziit, 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).


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.

Heather Ramsay writes from Queen Charlotte City.
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 Klokhohns (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 gib thumb, 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 create the 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 where ugliness behaves, 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 adrenalin rush that comes with violence.

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

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 (she highwayies 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 worth-while. In grappling with this theme of redemption, increasingly the novel is marred by pi- cture Chantal declares, “I’m always going to be on the streets,” he is unable to contradict her. picture Chantal declares, “I’m always going to be on the streets,” he is unable to contradict her.

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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.

“There is no real consensus about how 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.

“But here did those feet in ancient time walk upon England’s mountain green! And was the holy Lamb of God on England’s pleasant pastures seen?”

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 depiction 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.

“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.”

“In England, the labyrinth is a symbol of pre-Christian spirituality.” —Gailand MacQueen
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, and you’ve got the makings of a raccoon skull hotmelted on its hood. Hammond, born in Sussex, England where she worked as a “relief herdswoman” 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 Sechelt in 1967, she later married veteran log salvor Dick Hammond, now an author of coastal tales. [see 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 upbringing” 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.

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JUNEAU THE WAY?

Jack’s Knife (Polestar $12.95) is the second installment in the time-travelling Suspits 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 cousin Robert. Through 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,” says Tyler, “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 One 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. 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 $16.85) 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.
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 Crowing.

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."

Garry Gottfriedson

ALSO RECEIVED

Lost Goat Lane by Rosa Jordan (Fitzhenry & Whiteside $12.95) 1-55041-932-3

Naomi's Road by Joy Kogawa (Fitzhenry & Whiteside $9.95) 1-55005-115-6

Remember, Remember by Sheldon Goldfarb (Isa Press $19.95) 1-094781-43-8

Earthworms by Norma Dison (Fitzhenry & Whiteside $15.95) 1-55005-114-8

Red Sea by Diane Tullson (Orca $9.95) 1-55143-331-1

Heart of The Hill by Andrea Spalding (Orca $9.95) 1-55143-466-6

Painted Pony by Garry Gottfriedson (Partners in Pub.) 0-9738406-2-5

No-Leap Webfoot by Bonni Breton & Corey Sigvaldason (Partners in Pub.) 0-9738406-0-9

A Brazilian Alphabet by P.K. Page (Timinkster $16.95) 0-88984-265-5

Second Watch by Karen Aucoin (Borealis $9.95) 1-88664-205-5

Finklehooper Frog Cheers by Irene Livingston (Youpee $14.95) 1-58246-139-9

Bottled Sunshine by Andiela Spalding (Fitzhenry & Whiteside $19.95) 1-55041-709-8

Zig Zag illustrated by Stefan Czernecki (Tradewind $22.95) 1-896580-43-2

Puppies on Board by Sarah Harvey (Orca $19.95) 1-55143-382-6

Ben's Big Day illustrated by Dirk van Brakel (Orca $12.95) 1-55143-384-2

Freddy is a Stupid Name by Tiny Wilson (Orca $12.95) 1-094781-302-6

Backyard Birds by Robert Balkman (Scholastic $12.95) 1-430-0174-4-2

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37 BOOKWORLD AUTUMN 2005
The Hopscotch of Matt Hughes

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, am I 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 Fool Me Twice. She only bought it, but commissioned a sequel, Fool Me Twice.”


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.

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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 Luft Imby. Their common enemy is Horselan Gebbingle, 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.”

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.
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 Continuum: 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 Wiesenthal 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 Wiesenthal’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, Wiesenthal provides a sophisticated reading of Roy Lowther’s trial, an event so marked by sensation that it has entered local legal history. The crime 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 overexposed by the media to accounts of celebrity murders, Wiesenthal’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, Wiesenthal 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 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 his 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 Wiesenthal 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.

Wiesenthal 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. Wiesenthal 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 keeping her craft, growing as an artist, and publishing her work.

Wiesenthal 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 29th. “With her forties stretching before her,” Wiesenthal notes, “she was beginning again, as she’d once told Dorothy Livesay, so see openings for herself.”

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

Foot 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.”

Biographer and novelist Joan Givner lives in Mill Bay.
Estranger in strange lands

Designeronvivist 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, 19th century travel clothing and painting kits that women like Hodgson might have used to document their travels in bygone eras.

By luck or design Hodgson has created a life for herself that allows her to follow many ideas for books and projects. An avid traveller, archaeologist, artist, photographer, she has written, illustrated and designed four novels and seven non-fiction books in 14 years.

This year Hodgson’s work includes Italy Out of Hand: A Capricious History (Greystone $26.95) and the newly released Dreaming of East: Women and the Erotic 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 interesting,” 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.

In October, book designer and novelist Barbara Hodgson will curate a Vancouver Museum exhibit about women travellers from the 18th to early 20th 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.”
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., 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. Rockhounds, 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 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 the 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, later attending 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 the University of Toronto in 1948.

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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.
I

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, who has been unfaithful, attacks the TV set with an axe. Patty, his wife, has her own wounded pride. 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. Moore is stressed out from work as a “tertiary worker in the tertiary world of H.R.” She develops an expensive addiction to nanotechnology.

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

“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 because they possess a general sense of direction and purpose.

Although both stories retain evidence of Gill’s infatuation with punchy, chopped-up sentences and what Zsuzsi Gartner has labeled ‘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 home.

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In his second novel Jericho, re-released earlier this year, George Fetherling introduces an unconventional and woman-hating low life. 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 something of a fictional district of Snaketown in Windsor, 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, with an astonishing knack for generate and a manipulator, he is the son of a prostitute. A deponent of the late 1960s.

Part two of the quartet, Running by Keith Maillard

Jericho by George Fetherling

(Frontlist: House $32.95)

Franz Kafka's life is treated on high. The psycho-babbling Theresa decides 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, by strikingly original aides and social commentary, but ultimately it's more Dostoevsky than Dickens.

There is something brave about caring for towards the darkness, whether it's done via sexuality, outlaw behaviour or writing, and Fetherling's ability to dispense with a central 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 newfangled 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.

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

“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 Dick- ens. The great author dothes on her and encourages her to read books from his library, much to 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.

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

**THE PLOT**

*The Vanishing Man* by Aaron Bushkowsky

**SHORT TAKES**

**The Vanishing Man** by Aaron Bushkowsky (Concordia, $22.95)

Aaron Bushkowsky’s linked collection of short stories, the *Vanishing Man*, concerns men who undergo divorces, laudably-posed questions in order to come to terms with themselves and “see love again.” He teases playwriting and archiving of Longara College, Studio 58, Playwright Theatre Centre and Van- couver film Centre.

The First Vial by Linea Heinrichs

Born on Vancouver Island, *Linea Heinrichs* lives on a hobby farm in northern B.C. Her debut young adult novel, *The First Vial*, is set in 14th-cen- tury England, a time when the coun- try was ravaged by the Black Death. Katherine, Lady of Crenfeld Castle, must set her against a villainous priest intent on usurping her land and terrorizing the innocent. 1-88043-2

The Walking Boy by Lynda Kuus

As the tale of concubines, converts and the elaborate palaces court of China’s only female emperor, *Lynda Kuus*’s *The Walking Boy* has a ’middlesex’ protagonist, born both male and female, who ventures to the ancient West Capi- tal of Chang’an in the 8th Century. In sheer of the aging hermit monk Hare- lip, who raised him/her, Baoshi be- comes embroiled in Tang Dynasty in- tigue and a great story. 1-883-49

The Courtesan Prince by 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 so- cieties. With their connection from earth severed long ago, and with 500 years having passed since the killing Reach War, conflict is again imminent. In spite of such tensions, two scientists from each empire must learn to over- come their cultural differences and ancient hatreds.

Ellen Fremendon Journalist by Joan Givner (Simply Read $14.95)

In 2004 Joan Givner published her first YA novel, Ellen Fremendon, 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 Fremendon *Journalist* in which the entitled hero- ine starts running a newspaper in Par- tridge Cove during her summer holi- days. Lary, the village librarian, finds typographical mistakes. An incorrect multi-recipe doesn’t help either, but trouble really starts brewing when she discovers some people are not exactly who they purport to be.
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.
“Humour is mankind’s greatest blessing.” — Mark Twain

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 humourous, and have certainly drawn their share of rueful laughter. Meanwhile Canada exports comedy, 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 Shoedee 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 Conference as serious fiction, never once mentioning that it is (in my opinion) a spool of organized 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 fired by lightning, just might be considered humourous 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 dub “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-schooling 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 Juby is the real thing. But children’s literature? Isn’t that picture books with unicorns and rainbows?”

Easter-egg painter.”

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 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 Ernsminkine and Frank Fencpost, 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.
In the verbatim transcription of his interview with Noam Chomsky, a Hand Political Enemy (Flank Publishing) & Standard Independent Media in the United States and Canada. For some, the grand old man of political economy was a beacon of sanity. For others who

NOAM CHOMSKY on IRAQ

"The New York Times" rather honestly called Iraq the desert petticoat. […] Noam Chomsky, the leader of the American political community, is one of the world's most influential public intellectuals. That's not an article, Chomsky replies. "If they're exercising in a theater or against a hated political enemy... Part of the scheme is to say well, you know, these crazy people, they have a few people, they have a few people...

"In fact, Noam Chomsky, a hugely popular speaker in the U.S. and he spends about an hour "elsewhere in the world he is a superstar." maintains Noam Chomsky "long ago became a more subtle weapon. To cut down content. There have been lots of objections from journalists, and that really is omi-

"I mean, compare it with other military occu-

"The wealthy and the powerful no longer have the monopoly of violence but they don't monopolize it anymore. That's what 9/11 did. That's what the 9/11 attacks did. They were a massive government media manipulation campaign designed to push Saddam Hussein as an im-

"Since the Second World War a leading fea-

"How come the U.S. can't do it under the most
time. They succeeded. And if you take a look at what they said, they did, even if Saddam Hussein and his family leave Iraq, it's too late to intrude anymore. Because we're not just interested in regime change. We're interested in putting order in our regime, not the Iraqi one.

NOAM CHOMSKY on REGIME CHANGE

"The military system has several functions. One is to control the world. But there is another function that is very significant and easily readied. And it is to maintain the order. If you look at what's called the new economy—the advanced sectors of the economy like computers, and elec-

"and also worth controlling. No point in attacking something, which is also defined for all that wants to do what they came! They come from places like MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) under the cover of military spending to socialize the costs and rules of research and develop-

"In so far as it goes from the control of the world, that's the task of concentrating what amounts to a state capitalist economy by socializing risk and control and privatiz-

"It's 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 propensity of the means of violence but they don't monopolize it anymore. That's what 9/11 did. That is the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 which came pretty close to succeeding. People tend
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 take note of whatever is 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 gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title. Since the area has been very aggressively logged, this also gives the book its title.

Dr. bill bissett and me n dr bill n manne ohr kool peepsul dancing n ther at th gladstone hotel queen west rainee oktrobo nite

eighty sev sword rockin it was ve-ra calm th danses n th band sew great playing 2gether n keepin th fires gowin when jus over ther th man who had bin smiling at us all nite on his back on th roof n smiling angels wer all around us n th scent uv deth

dr bill is on it 2 n th woman th man had bin dancing with me n dr bill had bin dancing sew great 2gether with this great band n now th spotlines shinning on th smiling man thumping his chest th danser down n cpr n another doktor in th hous hovr ovr n calling 911 n we get th door open evrenuwein is sew 2gether with this paramediks in quierne cum in th downed man makes strange sounds 4 a whil ther was no puleus we all hovr th band is silent watching on

we at all thinking in sew maney ways abt deth how it reeles sucl even if we can accept it how moving it is 2 b onlookers 2 sumwuns transissiun fean heur 2 ther wher is anee uv th quiet how our lives ar reeler n deth can cum at any time espeshulhe when wer not reede our way at wet mouths silent we hold th doors opn th man who was dansing goez in ou th streether rides off povpuls vibes follo him 4 what evr he needs th band cum 2gether n no spotlines on plays off th stage on th floor slowwer mountrous kay jun funinals bass drums hauntin songs careeer us thru all the emergensee doktor cumes back s th downd danser is recouping th band stays on th floor starts rockin wer all up dansing agen sew fene deth didnt interupt us 4 veere long tho we kno sumwher els it did a lot evn if its on line a courier

Graham Good

Talonbooks publisher Karl Siegel translated Marie 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 expresses 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.

ALSO RECEIVED

Miraculous Hours by Matt Rader (Highlight $16.95) 1-894808-70-8
Segue by Naomi Beth Waian (Wolsak & Wynn $15) 1-894808-01-2
One Stone by Barbara Pelman (Ekstatics $15) 1-894808-37-0
Frames of Silence by Alan Brown (Seraphin $16.95) 0-9734588-3-6
The Sutler by Michael Kenyon (Brick $17) 1-894078-41-1
Living Will: Shakespeare After Dark by Harold Rhamsh (Wolsak & Wynn $22) 1-894808-02-0
Republic of Fire by Skystarines Markerv (Broken Jaw $16.95) 1-59391-025-2
Ecology by Ken Ballford (Harbour $16.95) 1-55017-349-9
Bizarre Winery Tragedy by Lyle Nett (Brick $16.95) 1-55017-348-0
The Roots of Affection by Ian Rudkin (Brick $16.73) 0-9733942-5-0

Dramatic Review by Allan Brown

Also in Bookworld Autumn 2005

41 BOOKWORLD AUTUMN 2005
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.

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 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 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 in 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.”

Beverly Cramp is a non-Aboriginal who edits the Musqueam newsletter.
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 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 of a hydroelectric dam.

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

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 life in the city at the dawn of the 21st century. Vancouver Voices (Ripple Effect Press, $15.99) is a 188-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."

Watmough On The Street

Stumbling in The Bloom
John Pass
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

The School At Chartres

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.
Born 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.


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.

Three docs prescribe the Troubles, homicide and a global pandemic

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.

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).

In his novel, 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.

Tickets on sale September 19 at all Ticketmaster outlets, charge-by-phone at 604.280.3311 or online at www.ticketmaster.ca. Info: www.writersfest.bc.ca or 604.681.6330.

Presenting a world of words on Granville Island
BIOGRAPHY

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

Born 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 Brighouse 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.


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.
Peter Such’s energetic novel, Earthbaby (Ekstasis $22.95), envisons 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 Lifeforce forces, and from Earthbaby by crew member Lilith Shawradnitch, a feminist “psycho-simulacra” researcher.

As Andrew and Lilith 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 1980s 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, Riverburn (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 Failout (1988) 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 SaltSpring 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 titles 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.

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 opposition 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 release themselves out of the technological 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 of being a Marxist but that is the last thing I am, because any ideology to me is anathema. I think to circumnavigate 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 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 he just with each other.

BCBW: You raise the issue in Earthbaby that we always give over power to psychologically disturbed, tyrannical 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
reels and where you think all marching in goose step we rode with laughter.

And apparently when (the SS) first marched down the main street of Copenpenhagen, when they took over Denmark, the Danes screamed with laughter.

BCBW: That's also the reaction to the Lifesties in Earthbaby. No one took them seriously. I thought of right-wing, fundamentalist Christians in the Stares 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 savoir. 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 interesting 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 our wha's in a book. That's owing 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 the only thing we can really trust. Our friends believe some of it's true, so we get convinced it's true and it turns out it isn't true.

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 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: 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.

SUCH: Can you say something about the Regulators?

BCBW: 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.

SUCH: 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.

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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 replies: While our exchange was accurately reported perhaps it proves you can just never provide enough context in a personal memoir (Upstart! 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 at women). However, it was the booing and hissing of the group of women in front of her that was 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 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 novel, 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 booted 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 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.

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