

# THE SPICE OF CANDOUR

*Stan Persky sprinkles his enthusiasms from A to C*

**The Short Version: An ABC Book**  
by **Stan Persky** (New Star \$24)

Many reviewers of **Stan Persky's** *The Short Version: An ABC Book* will begin by mentioning that Persky's new collection of memoirs and opinion pieces is supposed to be modeled on Czeslaw Milosz's two-volume work *Milosz's ABCs* in which the late Polish Nobel Prize winner, in his mid-eighties, provided a miscellany of literary profiles, reflections and recollections, in alphabetical order.

Some reviewers will also mention that many of Persky's ruminations and ramblings have been initially posted on the Dooney's Café website managed by his friend Brian Fawcett in Toronto. Or they'll quote Persky's own obtuse explanation for his A-to-C litany. "An ABC book is perforce the short version of another, conceptually amorphous entity, just as life itself is the short version of the dream of immortality. That entity is one that includes both a database—the sum of all my vocabularies—and the events of my life; together, they provide a locus in which I experience the world."

All of which just gets in the way.

Whether Stan Persky is writing about Athens, Woody Allen or AIDS; describing sex-acts in a Bangkok nightclub or providing a paean to his former mentor/lover Robin Blaser; or discussing Canada or Chicago, his amalgam of seemingly informal A-to-C chatter is mostly a lot of fun.

Clearly Stan Persky is not writing a book to change the world, or even an insightful self-portrait. He's amusing himself. And the undeniable intelligence of his amusement is infectious.

Reading *The Short Version* is like being in the presence of a confident joke-teller. Even though one suspects Persky's easy-going style is an illusion, we want to believe the rabbit really does come out of the hat, as if he's just making up his prose as he goes along, effortlessly and without artifice.

It's a clever act to follow. *The Short Version* is a one-man show in which Persky is free to be an enthusiast, indulging in the comfort of

his memories and intellectual discoveries with all the zeal of a record-collector putting on tracks from his favourite albums. Spalding Gray-like, Persky could easily perform excerpts from this book as a one-man play at the Fringe Festival, and *Balding Gray* would be a hit.

Persky's flirtations with the mainstream are apparently over. He won't be writing any populist paperbacks about the Gordon Campbell government, as he did in the old days of Bill Bennett. That would take a lot of work. Instead *The Short Version* enables the now-venerable Capilano College professor and habitué of Berlin to explore the self-satisfaction of his accumulated riches. *The Short Version: An ABC Book* presents Persky the philosopher king, unplugged, unfettered, counting his chips, with the insouciance of a brainy Jabba the Hutt.

A is for Art and Auschwitz. "Theodor Adorno sternly declared in the wake of the Holocaust that lyric poetry is impossible after Auschwitz. I think that the best way to interpret that remark is not that good poetry can't be written after Auschwitz, but that good writing now requires an understanding of the Holocaust."

B is for Bald. "My father was bald, and I inherited, along with much else

from him, his standard male pattern baldness. I fretted about it, mainly worried, I suppose, about its potential effects on my sex life. For years, I fought a losing battle by arranging my hair in a desperate 'comb-over,' attempting to disguise the obvious. What an extraordinary waste of time, of mirror gazing, of brilliantine and gels occasionally, walking around the streets, when a breeze comes up and ruffles through my fringe, I forget that I'm bald, and like people who have lost an arm or a leg are said to experience a phantom limb, I experience some imaginary hair. Then I run my hand over my crystal-ball-shaped dome, and move on."

C (at the end of the book) is for Continued. "I remember how thrilling it was as a child to come to the conclusion of something I was reading, a story or a book, and discover, at the end, it wasn't 'The End,' but that there might be more to come.

More Walter Farley Black Stallion stories, more Wizard of Oz books, more John R. Tunis sports novels or Amazing Adventures. Ever since I began to write, I've always wanted to end a book with the magical promissory words: to be continued."

It adds up to a smorgasbord, not a five-star restaurant. You can go back and forth along the line-up, dismissing some dishes, finding delight in others. The spice of candour is Persky's most consistent quality, whether he is hyping Chicago Cubs' shortstop Ernie Banks or the influence of French heavy-hitter Roland Barthes. (Discovering the latter's posthumous, alphabetically-ordered book entitled *Roland Barthes*, we learn, was "an indelibly liberating experience" that encouraged Persky to embrace himself as a subject, leading him from his breakthrough homosexual memoir *Buddy's*, and now onto *The Short Version*.)

You don't have to be a previously committed Stan fan to appreciate someone who admits, "My books, like late-medieval chrestomathies, are a patchwork of books." To emphasize his point, Persky proceeds to provide a six-and-a-half page bibliography of his favourite books and authors. He's telling us everything he wants us to know, and very little otherwise.

1-55420-016-4

## BUSH AS NERO

**War Law: Understanding International Law and Armed Conflict** by **Michael Byers** (D&M \$35)

In the early 1940s, German soldiers shaved off the beards of Orthodox Jews. American soldiers have done the same to Islamic fundamentalists captured in Afghanistan.

The sickening—and largely unpunished—physical abuse and sexual humiliation of detainees at Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq is one of the subjects addressed by **Michael Byers** in his treatise for the layman, *War Law: Understanding International Law and Armed Conflict*, recommended by **Noam Chomsky**.

"The United States," writes Byers, "wields more power than any political entity since the Roman Empire." Holding a Canada Research Chair in Global



**George Bush, Jr.**

Politics and International Law at UBC, Byers traces international humanitarian law from the 1859 Battle of Solferino to the 'regime changes' that entailed the ousting of **Slobodan Milosevic** and **Saddam Hussein** in wars not sanctioned by the United Nations.

Byers refers to the disturbing precedent of Guantánámo Bay where so-called 'enemy combatants' are being incarcerated indefinitely, in contravention of the Geneva Convention, but he doesn't consider whether or not the U.S.-engineered torture of Canadian citizen **Mahar Arar** can be justified in accordance with the **George Bush** doctrine of pre-emptive self-defence.

1-55365-151-0

## IN THE (DON'T) KNOW

**Left Hook: A Sideways Look at Canadian Writing** by **George Bowering** (Raincoast \$22.95)

**George Bowering's** advertisements for his own literary agenda in *Left Hook: A Sideways Look at Canadian Writing* are as illuminating and exasperating as ever. It's surprising and good to learn his "main male Canadian poetry hero" was **Raymond Souster**, but he doesn't elaborate. "The most poetic person I've ever known is **Phyllis Webb**," he states, but we don't learn anything about his relationship to her.

He shrewdly praises novelist **Ethel Wilson's** feigned simplicity as "the most complicated trick of all" but he limits his celebration of **Al Purdy** to a lengthy dissertation on the poet's penchant for



**George Bowering**

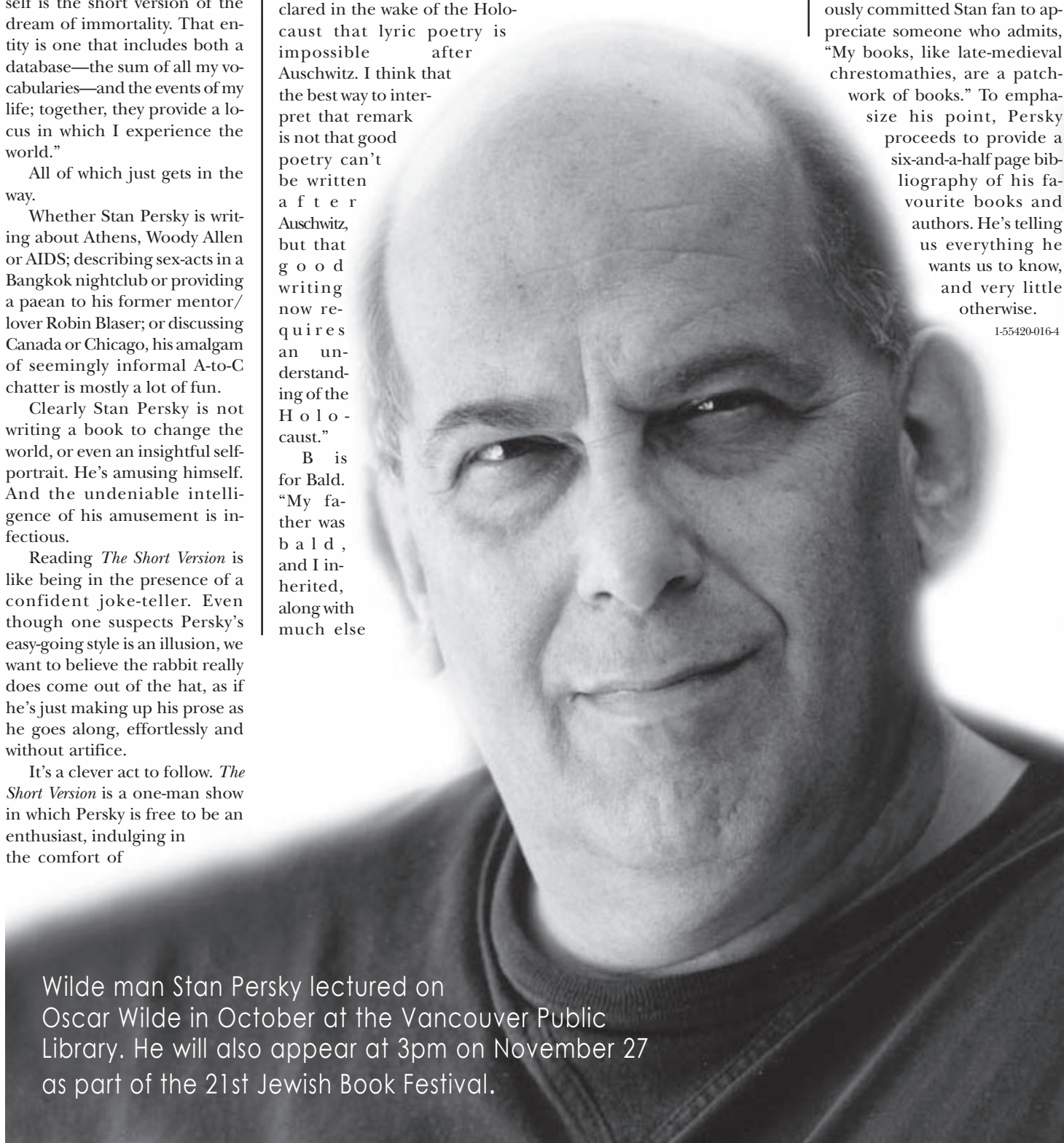
using the word purple. As much as we're happy to learn that Bowering's poetry buddy **Fred Wah** is a former high school trumpet player who took the title for his 1981 collection *Breathin' my name with a sigh* from a line in the song Deep Purple, Bowering naturally assumes the reader knows who the heck Fred Wah is.

There's a fair-minded appreciation of **Mourning Dove**, who also hails from the B.C. Interior, but several chapters aren't indexed and Bowering is overly prejudiced in favour of his acquaintances.

Bowering drops his breadcrumbs of cleverness and wit as if writing is a meandering game at which only he can win. It's a willy-nilly compendium.

You gotta be in the know, folks.

1-55192-845-0



Wilde man Stan Persky lectured on Oscar Wilde in October at the Vancouver Public Library. He will also appear at 3pm on November 27 as part of the 21st Jewish Book Festival.

Imagining Difference: Legend, Curse, and Spectacle in a Canadian Mining Town by Leslie A. Robertson (UBC Press \$29.95)

Margaret Mead went to Samoa. Louis Leakey found hominids in Kenya.

To make her name in anthropology, **Leslie A. Robertson** went prospecting for a myth in the hard-luck town of Fernie.

As the former mining centre slowly morphed into a destination ski resort, she hung out at the local hospital, at the ice rink, in the Dairy Queen and at the Remembrance Day ceremony, etc., nudging closer to ordinary folks.

Trained as an ethnologist, Robertson wanted to investigate various interpretations of a curse supposedly placed on the former ‘Pittsburgh of the West’—nestled in the Crow’s Nest Pass area, just west of Alberta, in the east Kootenays—by Ktunaxa Indians.

The litany of Fernie’s misfortunes since then is impressive.

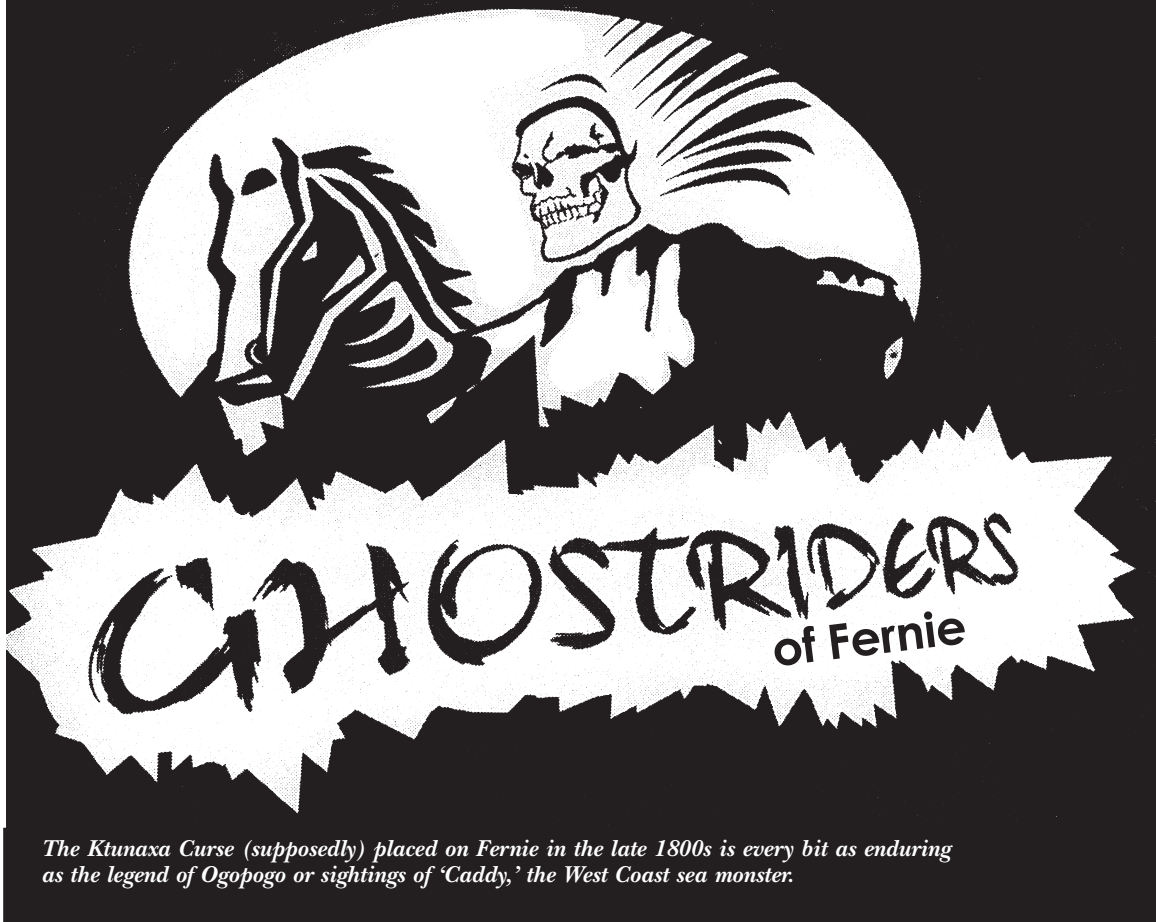
## CALAMITY’S VEIN:

- **1902**—an explosion kills 130 men
- **1904**—fire
- **1908**—Fernie burns to the ground
- **1911**—heavy snowfall isolates town, starvation looms
- **1917**—explosion kills 35 miners
- **1924**—bankruptcy of Home Bank of Canada
- **1897, 1902, 1916, 1923, 1948**—floods
- **1897, 1902**—typhoid
- **1902**—smallpox
- **1918**—scarlet fever, measles, chicken pox, influenza

In the late 1990s, mainly relying on oldtimers, Robertson tape recorded varying accounts of how and why the town was disaster-prone. It was all William Fernie’s fault. Or so legend has it.

After stints in Australia and South America, the Englishman William Fernie arrived in B.C. in 1860, looking for gold. Failing to find his fortune in the Cariboo and the Boundary District, he helped construct the Dewdney Trail and gravitated to the Kootenays where he met Michael Phillips, a Hudson’s Bay employee who had established a trading post at Tobacco Plains, south of Elko, around 1865.

Motivated by wanderlust, Phillips’ urgings and the findings of George Mercer Dawson, who had explored the Crow’s Nest Past for the Geological Survey of Canada in 1883, the intrepid William Fernie began scouting for huge seams of coal that were rumoured to exist in nearby Elk River Valley, an area considered taboo by the local Indians. The Indians were tight-lipped to Fernie’s enquiries, but his passions were stirred when he saw an Indian princess—it’s rare that an Indian commoner appears in these stories—wear-



# THE CURSE OF A HARD-LUCK TOWN

*Leslie Robertson looks at Fernie with an anthropologist’s eyes.*

ing a necklace of coal diamonds, or a necklace of coal.

In order to gain the secret of the coal’s whereabouts, Fernie asked the chief if he could marry this local Pochontas. Upon receiving consent to do so, Fernie was shown where he could find the coal.

Then he jilted her. William Fernie generated the Crow’s Nest Coal and Mineral Company in 1898. The Indians resented the intrusion of the white men (and later the Canadian Pacific Railway). The girl’s mother, or the girl herself, cast a curse upon the emerging community of Fernie, established in 1898 and incorporated in 1904. Forever afterwards, white settlers would suffer “from fire, flood, strife and discord; all will finally die from fire and water” (according to one source).

In 1906, Fernie retired to Oak Bay on Vancouver Island where he died in 1921. Over the ensuing decades Fernie residents have claimed they can see the shadow of a ‘ghost rider’ on Hosmer Mountain, depicting William Fernie galloping away from the princess and her father. Local hockey teams are now nicknamed the Ghostriders.

One logical explanation for the origin of the Curse is supplied by an unnamed Ktunaxa woman, born in 1955. When her people travelled into Alberta from B.C., they generally took the route via Corbin and Coal

Creek, rather than use the more arduous route via Fernie. Hence the curse narrative could have “fulfilled the practical purpose of warning people about the rigours of travel through the Fernie area.”

In 1964, at the behest of Fernie Mayor James White, members of the Kootenay (Ktunaxa) tribe were invited by Rotarians and the Fernie city council to officially lift the curse on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the town’s incorporation. “During these years many misfortunes have befallen us,” said the mayor, “and by many, it is believed that your curse brought these about.”

Chief Red Eagle passed a peace pipe to Mayor White, but it went out. Amid more incantations and puffing, the curse was symbolically vanquished. A month later Mayor Jimmy White dropped dead.



The good citizens of Fernie (pop. 5,000) could have shunned Robertson as a nosey Parker, an outsider but she had family connections to smooth the way, as the fourth generation in her mother’s line to live in the town. There was only one key component of the far-from-homogenous town that resisted. Having started her research in May of 1997, Robertson visited the Ktunaxa-Kinbasket Tribal Administration Office on St. Mary’s Reserve in August of 1997 to gain permis-

sion to conduct her research—but was rebuffed.

Elders gave her a hearty lunch—and a firm denial. “This has happened to our people before,” complained one elder. “They take our knowledge and say it will just stay put and then they make a book! We give them our knowledge and then what do we have left? Nothing! They take it away! [A writer] asked me a long time ago to tell him about things. I told him he should be speaking to my elders. He came back and asked me to write down everything I knew and he made a book. He used to come to my house. I didn’t like him there—it gave me a bad feeling... A man a long time ago came to work on our language. He said he wouldn’t publish it; he would just sit on it. Now it’s a book.”

Rebuffed by others, Robertson later procured a letter containing some non-committal phrasing that could be construed as a glimmer of assent. It was hardly a vote of confidence, but it allowed her to pursue First Nations informants under the pretence of being politically correct. The idea that she was directly connected to William Fernie as an interloper, another white outsider seeking to enrich herself by extracting valuable material, is not deeply considered in Robertson’s otherwise wide-ranging study, *Imagining Difference: Legend, Curse, and Spectacle in a Canadian Mining Town*.

*Imagining Difference* could have been called *The Curse of Fernie*, or *A Whole Bunch of Stuff about Fernie*. Enemy aliens, graffiti, hate-mongers, video games, Buffalo Bill’s circus visit in 1914, skiing, tourism and Italian superstitions are all stuffed together, connected by personal asides, melding academic reference work with the methods of so-called creative non-fiction.

One of Robertson’s informants tell us, “Ukrainian women took control over their lives. I mean, they used the men in their lives...”

“For example, your husband only works three days a week, there isn’t much coming in, so she takes a boarder, okay? She takes in a boarder, she creates a nice living space for this

boarder. Now you have two incomes coming in, right?

“The first thing you know, there are two or three children who look slightly different and they go right into old age with two men and one woman in a house and they’re all happy together. She’s the one who is controlling the situation.”



Much of the value or pleasure to be derived from *Imagining Difference* arises from such tangential excerpts.

It’s fun to learn, for instance, that in 1909, Fernie police made 188 charges of prostitution, 166 charges of drunk and disorderly, 32 charges of vagrancy, and 20 charges for assault.

“Amongst the fines that were levied,” she writes, “a Chinese launderer was given a fine of five dollars or fifteen days for spraying water from his mouth onto an article of clothing.”

In 1917 there were 30 charges of “abduction” because local men were seizing women from their work in the whore-houses.

During WW I, 306 alleged enemy aliens were arrested and interned in Fernie and nearby Morrissey.

This sort of thing has precious little to do with the Curse, but Robertson’s interviews with common folk, and her diggings in the files of the *Fernie Free Press*, dating from 1898, provide balance to her musings on the “politics of cursing.”

While purportedly seeking new ideas, academics tend to be slavishly conventional with their writing, deferring to the work of colleagues wherever possible. With its 25-page bibliography, most of *Imagining Difference* won’t pass for popular history, but this work has an intriguing premise and Robertson deserves credit for an original undertaking.



When asked about the merits of having two wives, Potts is reported to have answered "One wife fights her husband, but two fight each other."

## TWO CULTURES, FOUR WIVES & THE BOTTLE

*For understanding the western prairies in frontier days, Jerry Potts serves as an ideal prism.*

**Bear Child: The Life and Times of Jerry Potts** by Rodger Touchie (Heritage House \$19.95)

An unparalleled tracker, scout and interpreter, Jerry Potts participated in the crucial events of his turbulent times and he embodied the two cultures whose conflict marked them.

Respected by chiefs of the Blackfoot Confederacy, Potts led the Mounties to the notorious "whiskey fort," Fort Whoop-Up, and was later buried with full military honours.

Rodger Touchie begins his biography *Bear Child: The Life and Times of Jerry Potts* with Potts' father, Andrew Potts, a disaffected medical student, who left Edinburgh for Pennsylvania, then proceeded to the western territories of the American Fur Company.

At Fort McKenzie, in what is now northern Montana, he took a "country wife," Namo-Pisi, or "Crooked Back," from the Blackfoot tribe, and she gave birth to Jeremiah Potts sometime after the small-pox epidemic of 1837-1838.

Andrew Potts was shot to death two years later.

Jeremiah Potts was raised by two very different step-fathers; Alexander Harvey, a reputedly villainous man with a deep hatred of native people, and Andrew Dawson, a gentle, well-educated Scot.

From Dawson, Jerry Potts absorbed knowledge of the fur trade and learned English, though one source reported that "his English was weird." In his travels with Dawson he also learned three Blackfoot dialects as well as Cree, Crow,

Assiniboine and Sioux.

By his late teens Potts, alone again, sought out his mother's people and immersed himself in their way of life. He was quickly accepted, given the name "Bear Child" and respected for his skills. In spite of his unimposing stature—Potts

was stooped and bowlegged, his growth stunted by periods of starvation and malnutrition—he was a fierce fighter who never let any abuse go unavenged. He was also a capable interpreter and a good marksman. His weakness was a

fondness for whiskey.

Potts had four wives during his lifetime. The first was a Crow woman who bore him a son, but who grew homesick for her own people. He allowed her to return with their son to the Crow lodges, and took two sisters for his new wives—Panther Woman and Spotted Killer, daughters of a South Piegan chief. When asked about the merits of having two wives, Potts is reported to have answered "One wife fights her husband, but two fight each other."

Like many another person who combines two cultures, Potts never completely belonged to one or the other. He never fully accepted the Blackfoot

way of life, refusing to join raids for horses and other booty, and decided to return to the White world during his thirties. In doing so, he abandoned his Bear Child persona and indirectly contributed to the decline of his mother's people.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, unscrupulous settlers, whiskey peddlers and traders flooded into the West. Potts adapted to the situation by becoming a horse-trader, a hunting guide, an interpreter and a scout. When the North-West Mounted Police force was formed in 1873, he signed on with the Canadians and became an indispensable ally of Colonel

James Macleod. He proved so valuable as an advisor, a gatherer of information and as a go-between in Macleod's meetings with local chiefs that any lapses into irresponsibility caused by inebriation were quickly forgiven.

"When whiskey smugglers were arrested," Touchie notes, "Jerry had a great affinity for the evidence."

Potts' son and both of his wives died in the late 1880s, so he married the daughter of a Blood chief and returned with her to live among his mother's people on the Blood Reserve. There he became a father for the last time and broadened his spiritual life to include Catholicism along with his other beliefs.

Potts died at the age of 56, possibly of cancer or tuberculosis. When he was transferred to the hospital at Fort Macleod, many of his Aboriginal and Mountie friends converged on the hospital for a final visit.

After his funeral, six Mounties carried him from the Catholic church at Fort Macleod to their own graveyard on the banks of the Oldman River. There his stone bears the following inscription: *Spl/ Const. Intpr-Guide Jerry Potts 13<sup>th</sup> July 1896.*

*A Blackfoot family, in traditional Hudson's Bay blankets, with their interpreter, Jerry Potts (centre) and North-West Mounted Police commanding officer John Cotton and Inspector A. B. Perry, who would become the force's fifth commissioner in 1900.*

An obituary in the Macleod Gazette read: For years he stood between the police on one side, and his natural friends, the Indians, on the other, and his influence has always made for peace. Had he been other than he was... it is not too much to say that the history of the North West would have been vastly different to what it is....

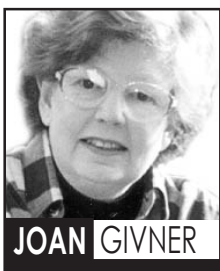


Rodger Touchie concludes his account by commenting on the regrettable circumstance that someone who chose Canada as his homeland and served it so well should remain largely unrecognized. His only public memorials to date are an informally christened mountain along the Great Divide, and a Calgary school named in his honour.

Rodger Touchie, who owns Heritage House press with his wife Pat, became interested in Potts as the subject for a biography from reading accounts of the western frontier in which Potts' name repeatedly recurred among those of better-known figures such as Crowfoot, Red Crow and Sitting Bull, as well as Mounties such as Macleod, Sam Steele and James Walsh.

The use of a lesser-known character as a prism to view history has been popular since 1978 when Barbara W. Tuchmann published *A Distant Mirror: The Catastrophic 14<sup>th</sup> Century*. 1-894384-63-6

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



JOAN GIVNER

Rodger Touchie



## DETOURS FROM EDEN, PARADISE & BLISS

*John Pass, Mona Fertig and Stephen Bett contemplate inevitable falls from grace*

**Stumbling in the Bloom** by John Pass  
(Oolichan \$17.95)

Can anyone these days live in paradise without cynicism? Paradise is popularly conceived as perfection and since post-moderns consider perfection to be either boring or unachievable, the Adam or Eve role is bound to be a charade.

**John Pass**, who lives and writes in an Eden called the Sunshine Coast, achieves the delicate manoeuvre of writing about beauty and happiness without irony or certainty in *Stumbling in the Bloom*.

*"My peace falls / into place near perfection, is nearly there. And I would be the poet / Of those places wholly. I would give them away / in restlessness, rest, to have them certain. / Certain? That one thing or the other? No! / Subtlety, shading is the tang."*

It's not all sunshine in the garden and wilderness. The contentment is shadowed by atrophied friendships, back injury, virus infection, rot and decay, kids leaving home, kidney stones, depression and anxiety (the cure for which: chopping firewood in the presence of an amiable dog.) A long poem about the Twin Towers (a Canadian perspective) is not out of place here yet Pass tempts the reader to believe that "a wondrous life" is still possible. We are invited into "The huge and intractable beauty... where it's always the first day of summer." His lush, tumultuous and immoderate lines echo the piled-upon layers of the rainforest's particularities. Beauty, "complete, complex, aloof and lightfooted" has been Pass' theme in many books. After decades of gazing and recording, he's still in an ecstatic state of grace because paradise is not primarily a physical place but the ability to remain in the paradoxical tension of happiness and uncertainty.

The wisteria's "off-hand fragrant gesture," "the duvet of November fog those mornings / light seems to push from within / the downcast leaves, their brasses / and umbers gleaming"; these are not greeting card, bucolic images because the copious language is inventive, often quirky. He's no minimalist. His more is more. Gulping life, "sun-stunned and song-prone," Pass is over-the-top goofy at times but never predictable. Writing well about place depends not on conveying its familiarity but on uncovering its unique angles, strangeness, namelessness. Some of these poems are incautious, even excessive; the reader is carried along on a stream so enticing that coming to the book's end is a letdown.



**John Pass: lush & immoderate lines**

The believability of this poet's fulfillment is that he doesn't second-guess it. Pass, stumbling in the bloom, is man besotted with a particular place, a possible Paradise.

0-88982-201-8

### BEAUTY SUPPORT

**This is Paradise** by Mona Fertig  
(m)Other Tongue Press \$25)

Was Paradise ever pristine? Is perfection even desirable? Mention Salt Spring Island and elicit Utopia. **Mona Fertig** has lived there for fifteen years and in her self-published long poem chapbook *This is Paradise*, she laments the island's decline.

Each stanza is prefixed, "This is paradise," followed by accounts of its flaws and cracks. Grazing pastures become vineyards, Americans buy up waterfront, the history of racism conveyed by buried rice bowls, the First Nations' dead, the idealistic hippies, grown old, cut their greying hair, are felled by arthritis, artists hustle tourists like hookers, the kids leave for the city. There are food banks and homelessness.

What's to be done? Fertig's elegiac descriptions are more shadow than light. The tone is resignation, a requiem. Paradise cannot be grasped; as soon as one tries to corner it in words or own it as real estate, it slips

out of reach. How far can the notion of earthly Paradise be shifted before it snaps? If all perfection is flawed, where is the point where flaws outweigh vision? A reader prone to philosophizing about environment and civilization will find much to dwell on in this long poem.

One is reminded of the inscription from Ovid, quoted by another Salt Spring Islander, **Ronald Wright**, in *A Short History of Progress*: "Clever human nature, victim of your inventions, disastrously creative."

Only in the final stanza does Fertig offer a slim hope in the promise of Beauty, always returning in spite of the destruction. "Beauty walks the beach barefoot with herons, cradles Hope."

The old acreage is subdivided. The activists are burned out. Politics are hypocritical. Fertig conveys a palpable bereavement. The dream was always flawed but now it's crumbling, maybe beyond repair. But there's an irony. This gorgeous-to-see-and-hold book, hand sewn luscious paper, tipped in photographs with embossed cover, was made on Salt Spring by the private literary press which Mona and her husband operate. Maybe that's one answer to entropy: support Beauty "clear as the future," re-growing with her, restoratively creative.

1-896949-38-X

### BETT NOIR

**Note Bene Poems: A Journey**  
by Stephen Bett (Ekstasis \$18.95)

It's one of the oldest stories: Iman and woman fall in love: bliss. They fall out: agony. Amazing the nerve of poets who try to tell it one more time anew. Amazing that poetry is up to the task. **Stephen Bett's** slangy, jivey *Note Bene Poems: A Journey* is a suite of 71 poems about an intense relationship between the male

narrator and "an astonishing woman artist" that has plenty of anguish and despair to share.

The serial poem identifies the couple in relation to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. What's

unique in this sequential narrative is not the melodramatic heart's spasms but the loose and humorous notes that Orph sends down to his Eury girl in Hades. The man is suffering but can't help being sassy at the same time.

It's a risky venture, love poetry. Bett pulls it off, just. The last suites suggest an edgy resolution to the lovers' conflict. That, too, is part of the old story: maybe there will be a sequel?

1-894800-65-6

*Hannah Main-van der Kamp's most recent collection of poetry is According to Loon Bay (The St. Thomas Poetry Series).*



**HANNAH MAIN-VAN DER KAMP**

### ALSO NOTED



**The Sleep of Four Cities**  
by Jen Currin (Anvil \$15)

Born in Portland, educated in Boston, New York and Arizona, **Jen Currin** teaches creative writing in Vancouver and online for the John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth. Her inaugural collection *The Sleep of Four Cities* uses the city as a metaphor for the complexity of self.

1-895636-70-1

**Mandorla** by Nancy Holmes  
(Ronsdale \$15.95)

In her fourth collection, *Mandorla*, **Nancy Holmes** explores the complications of being a parent after her 20 years as the mother of three children, one with a disability. Starting with poems about the Virgin Mary, she links motherhood to historical and mythological forces, drawing on fairy tales and her Ukrainian heritage.

1-55380-029-X

**Anarchive** by Stephen Collis  
(New Star \$18)

As an assistant English professor at SFU, **Stephen Collis** has published *Anarchive*, an investigation into the connection between anarchy and poetry, and he has also edited *Companions & Horizons* (West Coast Line \$12), an anthology including the work of 41 poets associated with the university, in conjunction with SFU's 40th birthday. *Anarchive* 1-55420-018-0



*Mona Fertig on Salt Spring Island: palpable bereavement*

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[www.abcbookworld.com](http://www.abcbookworld.com)

FINDING GOD  
IN A WITCH HUNT

Vancouver Voices by David Watmough  
(Ripple Effect Press \$15.99)

David Watmough, senior chronicler of the gay male experience in Canada, has never been one to shy away from heavyweight subjects. In a career spanning five decades, in which he has written sixteen books, he has taken on religion and marriage, homophobia and bigotry, love and war, all perceived through a gay sensibility.

His latest novel, *Vancouver Voices*, the first volume in a projected trilogy, tackles what he calls “the witch-hunt,” the persecution and punishment of a gay Anglican priest who is falsely accused of sexual abuse.

Through a chance encounter, Beth, a recently widowed woman whose troubled relations with her family are giving her grief, meets and befriends a much younger man, Daniel, a landscape gardener who is gay. That same day, while working on the grounds of St. Botolph’s Anglican Church, Daniel catches the eye of a young assistant priest, Jonathan, who is also gay. The two soon become lovers and Daniel begins attending services, to the consternation of some members of the congregation who are aware of their relationship, but it isn’t until a homophobic and vindictive teenaged boy accuses Jonathan of molesting him, and his mother goes to the Rector, that all hell breaks loose.



SHEILA MUNRO

In the aftermath of this accusation, played out against the backdrop of the changing Vancouver skyline and the seasons of the Anglican liturgical calendar, Jonathan, the young priest, undergoes an excruciatingly public humiliation and punishment, and a media-fed hysteria infects the city’s population. The fallout has far-reaching consequences for other characters, particularly Beth, who is forced to reconsider her judgements about her family, and move beyond bitterness; and for the mother of the accuser who realizes her son has lied and why.

Jonathan’s own attitude to his

predicament is admirable and problematic. He is determined to be true to Christian values of selflessness and forgiveness. But by maintaining a Christ-like and possibly dangerous detachment throughout the proceedings against him, is he doing the right thing? Or is he being unfair to the ones who love him by allowing himself to be victimized? Is Jonathan possibly enjoying the role of martyr just a little too much?

This is rich territory for a novelist to explore. If someone is persecuted, are they obliged to fight back? It’s more than a gay issue; it’s a spiritual and moral conundrum most people are forced to consider in their lifetimes, to varying degrees.

In his preamble Watmough states that this is a novel and not

a treatise, yet I was aware of how in almost every scene and conversation it was the author’s voice I was hearing more than the voices of his characters. A didactic approach results in scenes that are more thought out than deeply felt, a gloss put on characters who need to be more thoroughly explored, threads tied up a little too neatly at the end.

It may be that the pages of this slender volume are just too flimsy to bear the weight of its ideas, but this isn’t surprising really, given the author’s passionate engagement with moral questions, specifically with how to carry forward the Christian message of love into the 21st century. *Vancouver Voices* is infused with an Anglican perspective as Watmough tries to allow

for both contemporary and traditional values in presenting the complexities of the witch hunt.

More than fifty years ago, David Watmough’s first book, *A Church Renascent: A Study in Modern French Catholicism*, was published in London in 1951. That same year, when Watmough was 25 years old, he met his life-long partner Floyd St. Clair, aged 21, at a Wednesday night social at St. George’s Anglican Church in Paris. So it’s tempting to pronounce that with *Vancouver Voices*, David Watmough has come full circle; he has gone back to the church.

Perhaps, more accurately, he has never left.

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

MUMMERY’S THE WORD

All BC BookWorld reviews are posted online at  
www.abcbookworld.com

King Arthur confesses as to how he inspired his troops by pulling his famous sword Excalibur from the stone.



Fast forward thousands of pages to the conclusion of **The Eagle** by Jack Whyte (Viking \$35)

In *The Eagle*, the eighth and final volume of Jack Whyte’s expansive Arthurian opus about the origins and exploits of the Brotherhood of Knights Companion to the Riothamus—aka the Knights of the Round Table—Arthur Pendragon’s closest friend and admirer, the Frankish knight Lancelot du Lac—aka Sir Lancelot of the Lake, or Clothar—returns to Gaul and gets the last word.

Lancelot, the “lover, adulterer, deceiver and very perfect, gentle knight,” reveals Merlyn’s fate and hears King Arthur confess as to how he inspired his troops by pulling his famous sword Excalibur from the stone. “There was nothing miraculous involved,” he says. “It was mere mummery, designed by Merlyn for effect, no more than that.”

Fascinated with 5th century history ever since his school days in Scotland in the 1950s, Jack Whyte immigrated to Canada in 1967 and first imagined a probable solution to the Sword in the Stone mystery in 1978.

Entering the fictional field of **Thomas Mallory** and **T.H. White**, Whyte was determined to also trace and imagine the formative years of King Arthur. “Arthur is the quintessential hero who surrounds himself with other heroes of equal stature,” he said in 1992. “The story of the Holy Grail contains in and of itself the nucleus of man’s search for the unachievable.”

And so the Scottish-born high school teacher-turned-actor and advertising writer proceeded to re-write British history ‘on spec.’ At age 52, in the literary equivalent of

pulling a sword from a stone, he acquired Penguin Canada as his publisher after sending his manuscript ‘over the transom’ (without an agent). Re-published and re-packaged in the United States, his series has consistently gained starred reviews in *Publisher’s Weekly*.

His next series will re-invent The Knights Templar, a medieval order of military monks who, according to Whyte, became “the most powerful and influential organization on earth” within fifty years of their formation by nine obscure knights in the Holy Land in either 1118 or 1119. Also known as The Poor Fellow Soldiers of Jesus Christ, they were expunged less than 200 years later when King Philip IV ordered the arrest of the senior leaders of the Order in France and they were imprisoned on Friday, October 13, 1307, giving rise to the superstition that Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> is an unlucky date.

According to Whyte’s website, “The novels will look at the Templars as they were at three stages of their growth—the beginnings, from 1119 through 1129, when the nine founders were searching for the treasure that would make them famous; the peak, during the Third Crusade when the Templars were at their strongest as a fighting

force, campaigning with King Richard the Lionhearted against Saladin, the Sunni Moslem sultan of Syria; and the very end, with the arrest of the French Templars on Friday 13th and the flight and legendary destiny of the few who escaped the fate suffered by the others at the hands of the Holy Inquisition.”

An avid golfer who sings in eight languages, Whyte is a genial and gracious performer who has never seen a stage he didn’t like. He wrote and performed a one-man show about **Robert Burns**, created a Remembrance Day Special for TV with the **Irish Rovers** and narrated an award-winning documentary for **Terry Jacks’** Environmental Watch organization. Having founded Burns Clubs in Calgary and Vancouver, he now lives in Kelowna. 0-670-86764-0

JACK WHYTE BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- I. **The Skystone** (1992)
- II. **The Singing Sword** (1993)
- III. **The Eagles’ Brood** (1994)
- IV. **The Saxon Shore** (1995)
- V. **The Sorcerer** (Vol. 1): The Fort at River’s Bend (1997)
- The Sorcerer** (Vol. 2): Metamorphosis. (1997)
- VI. **Uther** (2001)
- VII. **Clothar the Frank** (2004)
- VIII. **The Eagle** (2005)

# ANNA BECOMES A FIRST BANANA

The Isabel Factor by Gayle Friesen (Kids Can \$19.95)

An inevitable loss, the loss of who we once were, is at the heart of *The Isabel Factor*, **Gayle Friesen**’s fourth young adult novel.

A pair of socks. Peanut butter and jelly. Anna and Zoe. All inseparable. Best friends since first grade, Zoe wasn’t afraid to live life and Anna wasn’t afraid “to take notes.” Together they were a pair.

Then the indomitable Zoe breaks her arm. This year her accommodating sidekick Anna must head off to Camp Stillwater alone. Anna has always been comfortable playing second banana, but now she’ll have to operate as a Camp Counselor in Training beyond her friend Zoe’s shadow. Her Book Club, Oprah Magazine-reading mother insists, “Sometimes in life we just have ourselves. Sometimes it has to be enough.”

But Anna isn’t convinced. At the camp, it seems everyone is lining up to take pot shots at her. First, there’s the uber-competitive Jennifer, with a 3.8 grade point average and her future Chairman of the Board aspirations. The high achieving Jennifer is determined they must trounce Arlene Breckner’s cabin in the big swim race.

Karim, the swimming coach Anna is paired with, has the “same toffee-coloured skin, same black, silky hair that would brush the top of his shirt collar, if he wore a shirt, which would be a shame.”



But her dreamboat swimming instructor is as hard on Anna as ever, accusing her of pacing herself so she never comes in first.

Isabel, the new, rainbow-haired girl at camp, doesn’t play by the rules. She kowtows to no one and says what she’s thinking. It’s unsettling for Anna to meet someone who always tells the truth.

Anna remains a moving target, keeping peace between Jennifer and plain-spoken Isabel, and convincing Karim she’s up to being his assistant. As someone whose name has never appeared on the list of the Top Five Girls You Hate, she is determined, above all, to get along.

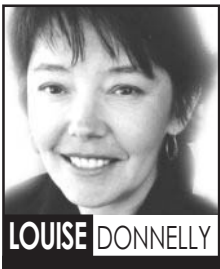
Then her loyalties get confused when suddenly her former best friend Zoe shows up at camp, plaster cast, hidden agenda and all.

Delta-based Gayle Friesen grew up in the Fraser Valley reading *Little Women* and *Peter Pan*.

All three of her previous titles, *Janey’s Girl*, *Men of Stone* and *Losing Forever*, have been selected by the New York Public Library for its Books for the Teen Age list.

1-55337-737-0

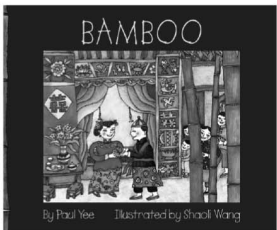
Louise Donnelly writes from Vernon.



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**BAMBOO**  
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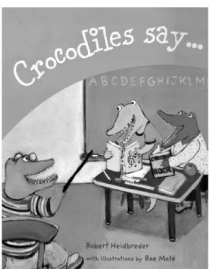
This tale is set in turn-of-the-century China. When Bamboo, a young farmer, sets off to try to earn his fortune in the New World, his sister-in-law schemes to steal his ancestral lands. But the magic bamboo that his new wife, Ming, has brought as a gift saves his life and brings the family life-long prosperity.



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**IF I HAD A MILLION ONIONS**  
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Illus. by Yayo

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This new collection of Sheree Fitch poetry will tickle the funny-bones of children, teachers and parents everywhere. The illustrations perfectly enhance an atmosphere of frivolity; helping to make this an exciting new book.



**NANNYCATCH CHRONICLES**  
by James Heneghan & Bruce Mcbay  
Illus. by Geraldo Valério

ISBN 1-896580-56-4  
Hardcover • \$19.95

A bit of black humour for primary school aged kids who will appreciate the tongue-in-cheek tales of Uncle Possum in the Nannycatch Meadows. Poor Uncle Possum. Or should we say: poor animal-folk of Nannycatch who have to put up with him! In the spirit of Uncle Remus, young readers will delight in these cheeky tales.



**ZIGZAG**  
by Robert San Souci  
Illus. by Stefan Czernecki

ISBN 1-896580-43-2  
Hardcover • \$22.95

Zigzag is an ugly little doll sewn and put on the shelf one night by Polly, the dollmaker. But poor Zigzag! He is pushed off the shelf and out the door by the other dolls and has to fend for himself out in the wide world in the search for a little girl or boy who will love him.

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# GROTTY BOTTOM FOLLIES

**Nannycatch Chronicles** by James Heneghan and Bruce McBay  
(Tradewind \$19.95)

When children outgrow Piglet and Eeyore at the House of Pooh Corner, now there's a nearby place to learn—gently—that everything in this world doesn't always turn out all right in the end.

It's called Nannycatch Meadows.

And it's in the Great Forest, across from Grotty Bottom, which is located between Sheepshank Knott and Pokey Edge. You can't miss it because **James Heneghan** and **Bruce McBay** have put a map at the outset of *Nannycatch Chronicles*. The marvellous place names of that map, such as Boggle Hole, Biskey Fen and Pusytoe Hollow, are derived from real villages that Heneghan and his wife discovered in the north of England during a recent walking tour.

Having collaborated with McBay on several books already, Heneghan was happy to lend his list of places to the process of creating an unusual chapter book about an unassuming possum and his decidedly nasty uncle.

The drawings by **Geraldo Valério** are com-  
fortingly familiar, teensy etchings of Chief Moose, a tea pot, Chipmunk, Robin and Bear. But the amus-  
ing and concise storylines in *Nannycatch Chronicles* are a

tad different. More than a few of the charm-  
ing critters die. Or rather, they get killed. Some-  
times not entirely by accident, usually because  
Uncle Possum is as careless as he is callous.

The *Nannycatch News* carries the UP-

SETTING news but it appears no-  
body can do much about such  
things.

Death, like a well-known  
four-letter word, happens.

Good-hearted Possum can't fix his Un-  
cle Possum's temper. "Uncle's heart grows nast-  
ier and meaner every year," he says. "He yells  
at babies, he doesn't believe in Christmas or  
coloured crayons or bubblegum, and he never  
plays any games. Uncle Possum doesn't know  
the meaning of fun."

As a radical measure, Possum arranges for  
his uncle to have a heart operation to get it  
fixed. "If the operation is a success,"

says Chipmunk, "perhaps

your uncle  
will be-  
come a vege-  
tarian like  
us."

But no  
such luck. In  
*Nannycatch*,  
whimsy is  
seldom re-  
warded.  
The pro-  
cedure  
fails and

Uncle Possum remains as cantanker-  
ous as ever. A new highway is built

by humans, making refugees  
of Possum's friends. He

tries to help everyone, he-  
roically saving Old Wea-  
sel's life. But fatal and

near-fatal accidents continue.  
Skunk is killed when Uncle Pos-

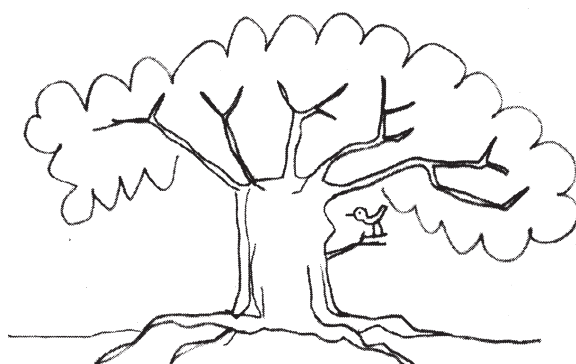
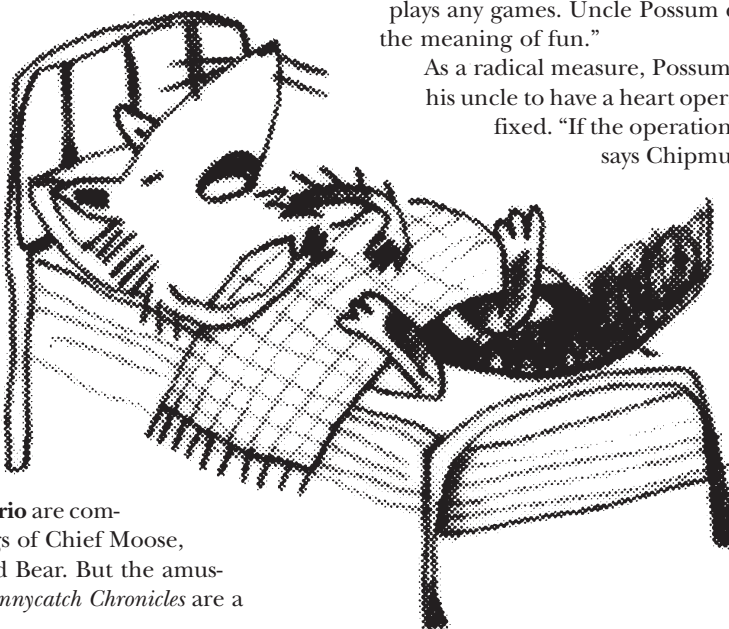
sum hurls a book at him. Forced to  
try swimming, Swallow drowns. "Swallow

swallowed a lot of water," notes Woodpecker.

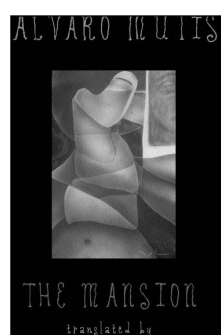
Nannycatch Meadows, like the real world, is a charm-  
ing but dangerous place.

Illustrated by little tombstones, there's a Publisher's  
Warning at the outset. "Everything dies: flowers, trees,  
elephants, bees, hamsters, turtles, dolphins, dogs, cats...  
Everything. Nothing lives forever. Everyone knows this.  
Young readers, however, should guard against this book  
falling into the hands of grown-ups, many of whom get  
quite upset whenever the subject of death is mentioned.  
Don't ask us why."

1-896580-56-4

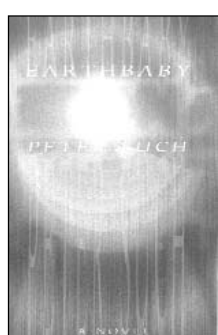


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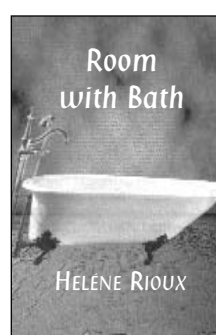
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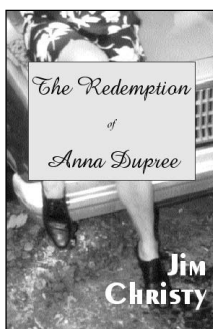


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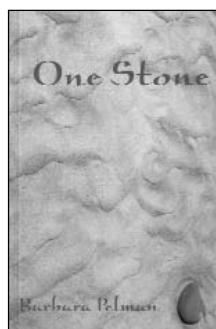
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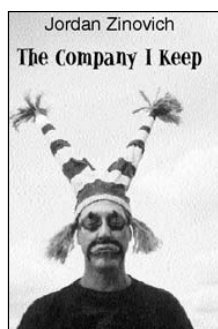
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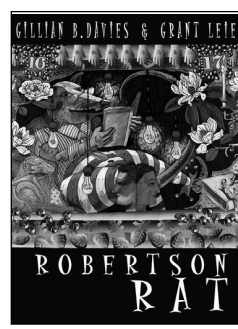
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## PIRATES & PENANCE

Red Sea by Diane Tullson (Orca \$9.95)

In *Red Sea*, **Diane Tullson**'s teen thriller about surviving an attack by present-day pirates, fourteen-year-old Libby is an unwilling participant in a year-long sailing trip with her mother and stepfather. "I've seen walk-in closets bigger than our boat," she complains, "but it could be the *Queen Mary* and still not be big enough."

Their sailboat is named *Mistaya*, meaning little bear. "I think it means big mistake," Libby gripes. For five years Libby has resented the addition of a stepfather, Duncan, and she



TWIGG PHOTO

Diane Tullson

pires for her 19-year-old boyfriend. Then her problems really begin.

Having sailed from Djibouti at the southern end of the Red Sea, bound for the Suez Canal, the threesome are attacked by murderous pirates. Libby's stepfather is shot and killed, the boat is ransacked and Libby's mother is seriously wounded. Brought roughly on deck in her pyjamas, Libby is in danger of being gang raped by the masked invaders until a suddenly impending storm convinces the pirates to hastily depart. They knock Libby unconscious and disappear.

The mainsail is in rags, peppered by bullets. Left to manage a crippled boat, Libby must sail to safety and find help for her wounded mother who doesn't realize Duncan is dead.

Written after Tullson spent two years sailing around the Mediterranean with her family,



Diane Tullson sailed with her family for most of a year on the *Red Sea*, the body of water that connects the Indian Ocean with the Mediterranean, via the Suez Canal in Egypt.

*Red Sea* was nominated for the American Library Association's Quick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers list. It joins three Orca Soundings titles nominated for the same list (*Charmed* by Carrie Mac, *Dead-End Job* by Vicki Grant and *Something Girl* by Beth Goobie.

Tullson previously wrote *Saving Jasey* (Orca 2001), the story of a 13-year-old boy's search for acceptance and hope within a dysfunctional family and his concurrent friendship with, and in fatuation for, Jasey, who worries that Huntington's disease within her family will prove hereditary.

1-55143-331-1

### ALSO RECEIVED

- Kendra Kandlestar and the Box of Whispers by **Lee Edward Fodi** (Brown Books) 1-933285-11-7
- Healthy Choices, Healthy Lives by **Karen Olson & Marie Micheline Hamelin** (Theytus) 1-894778-31-6
- Ben's Big Day by **Daniel Wakeman & Dirk van Stralen** (Orca) 1-55143-384-2
- The Whistle by **Valerie Rolfe Lupini** (Red Deer) 0-88995-314-7
- Second Watch by **Karen Autio** (Sono Nis) 1-55039-151-8
- Adoptive Families are Families for Keeps by **Lissa Cowan** (Groundwood) 0-9735444-5-7

- Taking Care of Mother Earth by **Leanne Flett Kruger & Marie-Micheline Hamelin** (Orca) 1-894778-30-8
- Crocodiles say...by **Robert Heidbreder & Rae Mate** (Tradewind) 1-896580-13-0
- The Kids Book of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada by **Diane Silvey & John Mantha** (Kids Can) 1-55074-998-6
- Peek-a-Little Boo by **Sheree Fitch & Laura Watson** (Orca) 1-55143-342-7
- Ghost Wolf by **Karleen Bradford** (Orca) 1-55143-341-9

- Mrs. Goodheart and the Gargoyle by **Lena Cookley & Wendy Bailey** (Orca) 1-55143-328-1
- Eat, Run, and Live Healthy by **Karen Olson & Marie Micheline Hamelin** (Theytus) 1-894778-32-4
- Yellow Line by **Sylvia Olsen** (Orca) 1-55143-462-8
- Living Safe, Playing Safe by **Karen Olson & Leonard George Jr.** (Orca) 1-894778-33-2



MANDELBROT PHOTO

Mary Schendlinger

## MARY'S MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR

Prepare to Be Amazed by Mary Schendlinger (Annick \$14.95)

When she's not transforming words into seamless prose for others—who usually get all the credit—top-notch editor **Mary Schendlinger** always has a few other tricks up her sleeve.

As a member of a collective named **Maria Von Couver**, she co-wrote a book about parenting called *Don't Say No – Just let Go* (Arsenal, 1991). As **Eve Corbel**, she has also developed a reputation as a cartoonist.

Schendlinger is one of the brains—and the workers—behind *Geist* magazine, plus she's a member of a serious writers' sorority that meets on a regular basis to critique one another's work.

Along those lines, **Colleen MacMillan** of Annick Press suggested there ought to be a decent kids' book about magic.

"Like most mortals I love a good magic show," says Schendlinger, "and another of my favourite things is to read up on people's lives."

After a year of research and a 90-degree learning curve, Schendlinger surprised herself by pulling a book out of a hat.

*Prepare to Be Amazed* consists of 10 stories of some of the most awesome magicians from the 1840s to the present.

Sorry, but the man they call **Reveen** doesn't make the cut. Nor do **Penn & Teller**. Or New Westminster-born **Mandrake**, who honed his act at the PNE, performed as a tuxedo-clad illusionist for 47 years, inspired the comic strip *Mandrake*, and died in 1993.

Schendlinger begins her survey with the man who took magic out of the carnivals and circuses and took it into the theatre, **Jean-Eugene Robert-Houdin**, a pioneer

trickster not to be confused with Harry Houdini, the showman who once visited Vancouver and dangled from an office building.

Along the way we also meet **Chung Ling Soo**, who died onstage while performing the daring Bullet Catch trick, and **David Copperfield**, known for his state-of-the-art magic show with lasers and live video feeds.

Each magician's story is accompanied by a simple trick, in the spirit of that performer, that kids can learn. Included are:

- Jean-Eugene Robert-Houdin** (1805-1871)
- Adelaide Herrmann** (1853-1932)
- Chung Ling Soo** (1861-1918)
- Great Lafayette** (1872-1911)
- Harry Houdini** (1874-1926)
- Harry Blackstone** (1885-1965)
- P. C. Sorcar** (1913-1971)
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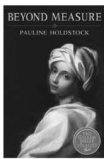


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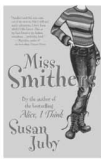
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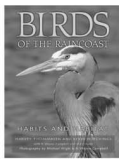
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Wendy Wickwire's third compilation of Harry Robinson's tales **LIVING BY STORIES** veers away from "traditional" First Nations' narratives favoured by Franz Boas and other anthropologists.

# Wild about Harry

A longtime rancher and member of the Lower Similkameen Indian band, **Harry Robinson** was born in Oyama near Kelowna on October 8, 1900. He devoted much of the later part of his life to telling and re-telling Okanagan stories that he first heard from his partially blind grandmother **Louise Newhmkin** on her Chopaka ranch.

Other mentors included **Mary Narcisse**, reputed to be 116 when she died in 1944, **John Ashnola**, who died during the 1918 flu epidemic at age 98, as well as **Alex Skeuce**, old **Pierre** and old **Christine**.

"When I become to be six years old," he said, "they begin to tell me and they keep on telling me every once in a while, seems to be right along until 1918. I got enough people to tell me. That's why I know. The older I get, [it] seems to come back on me.... Maybe God thought I should get back and remember so I could tell. Could be. I don't know. I like to tell anyone, white people or Indian."

With the help of **Margaret Holding**, Harry Robinson learned to read and write English in his early twenties. Weary of itinerant ranching and farming jobs, Robinson bought his first suit from a second-hand store in Oroville and married **Matilda**, a widow about ten years older than he, on December 9, 1924. By the 1950s they had acquired four large ranches near Chopaka and Ashnola where Matilda had grown up as the daughter of **John Shiweelkin**.

Childless and burdened by a hip injury in 1956, Harry Robinson sold his ranches in 1973, two years after Matilda died. On August 24, 1977, Robinson was living in retirement in a rented bungalow in Hedley when he met a non-Aboriginal graduate student from Nova Scotia, **Wendy Wickwire**, who was introduced by mutual friends.

On the evening before they all went to the Omak rodeo in Washington State, Harry launched into a story after dinner and continued until almost midnight. That experience drew Wickwire back to the Similkameen Valley for the next ten years, with her Uher reel-to-reel tape recorder, transcribing and editing Robinson's stories, narrated by him in English.

For part of the 1970s, Wickwire lived in Merritt and Lytton, immersing herself in Aboriginal culture for a Ph.D. dissertation on Indian song. "I went to Lytton, to Spences Bridge, to Spuzzum, and all over to get a bigger cross-section of songs. Then I got to spend the whole year in the Nicola Valley, near Merritt, living in a cabin and trip-

ping out to find people to record. During this time Harry kept telling me his stories."

Now a member of the Department of History and the School of Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria, Wickwire first broached the idea of putting Harry Robinson's stories into book form in 1984 and he approved. "I'm going to disappear," Robinson said, "and there'll be no more telling stories."

For years Harry Robinson would wait for Wickwire at the bus stop outside his home near Hedley, waiting for her to climb into his old green Ford pickup truck so he could tell more stories. "We'd go out to dinner and he'd tell stories all night. The next day we'd drop around to all of the various places in town, buying groceries at the general store, or sightseeing or something, and I'd make him dinner, and then we'd spend another night telling stories. I'd come back and go to a rodeo with him, or go on a car trip, or something, and we'd always have a great time. Hanging out, we kind of became like a father and daughter."

Interviewed in 1993, Wickwire said, "Harry was such a tremendous artist and a tremendous

man, I just knew deep in my heart that this was really, really, really important stuff. I sent Harry's manuscript out—the first one—to almost everybody and it was turned down flatly by almost all of them. Then all of a sudden, one person, **Karl Siegler** of Talonbooks, picks it up. I knew Harry's work was important for British Columbia, for Canada, for the Oral Traditions—so I have kept flogging it.

"Now Harry's on the map."

The Wickwire/Robinson collaboration has produced three volumes of stories, *Write It On Your Heart: The Epic World of an Okanagan Storyteller* (1989), a finalist for the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize when Robinson was 89; *Nature Power: In the Spirit of an Okanagan Storyteller* (1992), winner of the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize in 1993; and the newly released *Living by Stories: A Journey of Landscape and Memory* (Talonbooks \$24.95), containing Coyote stories and material about the new quasi-monsters, *SHAmas* (whites), who dispossess "Indians" of their lands and rights.

"The third volume contains many of the sto-

ries I put aside earlier because they were just too weird for words," says Wickwire. "For instance, Harry tells a story about a meeting between Coyote and the King of England. I did not find anything like this in the published collections."

"But after a detailed study, I have decided that Aboriginal folks a century ago were likely telling such far out stories—but the collectors weren't recording them very often. They weren't interested in them because they saw them as 'tarnished' stories. **Franz Boas** and his colleagues were looking for the authentic 'traditional' stories. And of course they were busy defining authentic and traditional in their terms, for their own purposes."

In his stories Robinson differentiated between stories that are *chap-TEEK-wbl* and stories that are *shmee-MA-ee*. The former explain creation from a period when the Okanagan people were animal-people. The latter are stories from the world of human people, not animal people. He was always willing to incorporate modern influences, including the Judeo-Christian God, within his evolving world view.

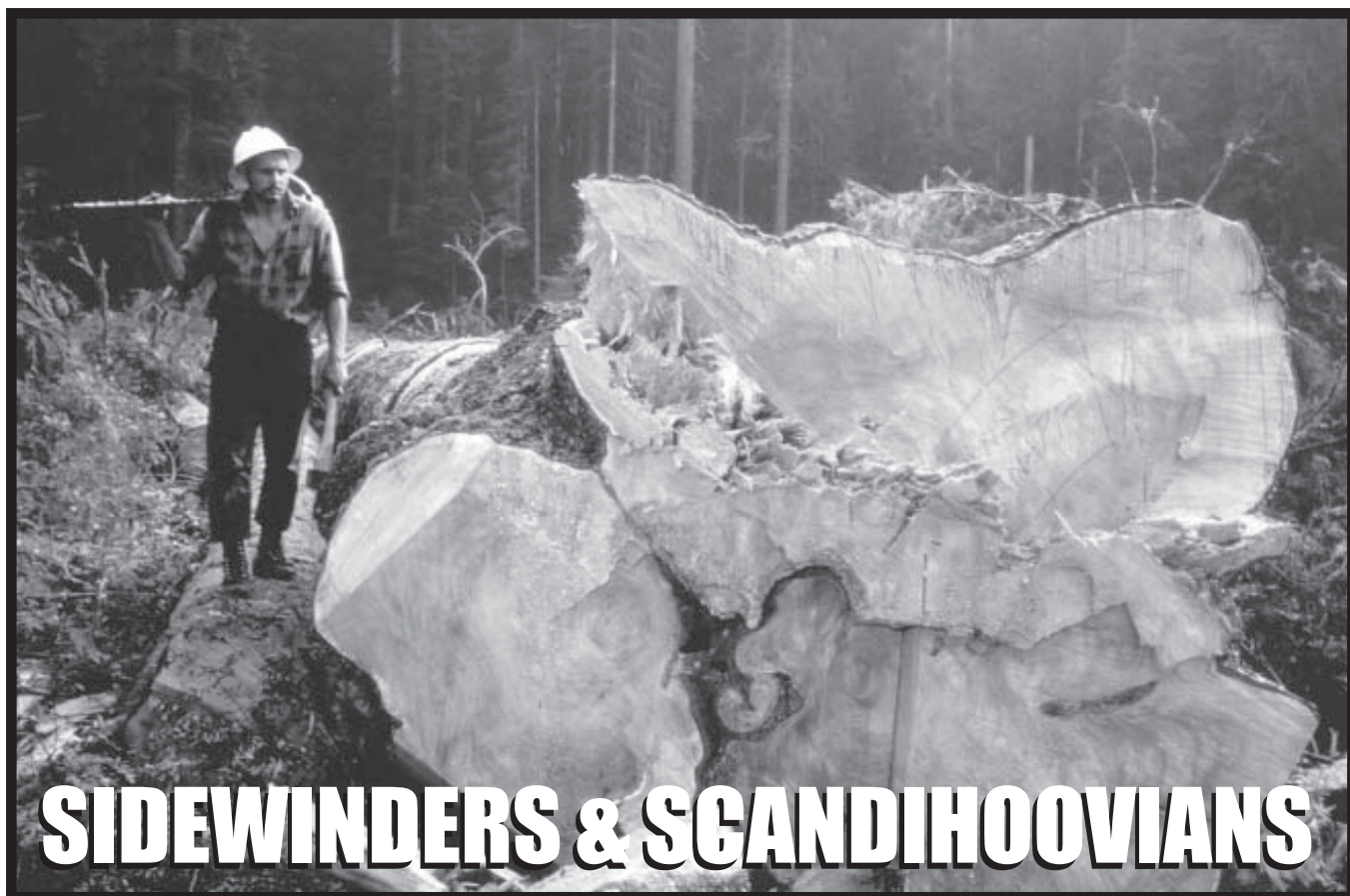
"A good example of Harry's ability to incorporate current events in a meaningful way in his stories," writes Wickwire, "is his interpretation of the landing on the moon of the American astronaut **Neil Armstrong**. When the news of this event reached Harry, it was not surprising to him at all because he knew that Coyote's son had gone there years ago. The white people were naive, he concluded."

"Armstrong was not the first to land on the moon. He had simply followed the path that Coyote's son had learned about long ago, which is recorded in the old story 'Coyote Plays a Dirty Trick.' In this story, Harry sees the earth orbit and the moon orbit of the Apollo mission as the two 'stopping points' so critical to Coyote's son's return to earth."

Eventually Harry Robinson needed full-time medical attention for a worsening leg ulcer. He went to live at Pine Acres senior citizens home near Kelowna, in Westbank. "It was very sterile," Wickwire recalls. "He was used to driving his old pickup truck into town and getting his mail, and having lots of visitors come to his house." Robinson moved to a senior citizens' home in Keremeos. Later his condition deteriorated when his artificial hip dislocated and caused serious infection. He had 24-hour care at Mountain View Manor in Keremeos until he died on January 25, 1990.



Wendy Wickwire



## SIDEWINDERS & SCANDIHOoviANS

Upon his arrival in Vancouver from Austria in May of 1951, **Hans Knapp** (above) applied for work with The Loggers Agency and soon entered a world of fires, poker games and rats. Having recovered from a near-fatal accident in the woods, he has now penned a lively, ribald memoir of post-war logging camps, **Loggers of the BC Coast** (Hancock House \$19.95) in which he concludes, "Logging seems to be an impossible task in a land where nothing seems to be impossible." Knapp's cast of supporting characters includes Axel the Scandihoovian, Rosie the homosexual logger, Sidewinder Rowley, Springboard Jack, Ha Ha Harry, Whispering Swede, The Grouch, Skookum Joe, Flash Harry, Arne the Bull, Hank the Finn, Big Gustav, Gimpy, Screwie Louis and the Coffee Queen.

0-88839-588-4

## Tales of tall

As a child in the Fraser Valley, **Al Carder** stood in awe of the ancient forests, with Douglas fir trees that commonly reached heights of more than 300 feet. Sixty years later, after retiring from a career in plant biology and having received the Canada Centennial Medal for his contributions to Canadian agriculture, Carder has documented some of the largest trees in Western

America in relation to tall trees in the rest of the world in **Giant Trees of Western America and the World** (Harbour \$26.95). He includes information and scale drawings of B.C.'s 400-foot Lynn Valley fir, the tallest authentically measured Douglas fir ever felled, and California's Eureka Tree, the tallest redwood. The greatest breast-high diameter of the bole of a red cedar ever recorded was 22.3 feet, that of the Ocasta Cedar felled near Grays Harbour, Washington, in 1906, and also a Sointula Cedar felled on Malcolm Island in 1923. Another western red cedar was so wide that eight men and women danced a quadrille on its stump in 1887. The tallest tree currently standing in North America is the Stratosphere Giant, a California redwood with a height of 369.8 feet. Carder previously published *Forest Giants of the World, Past and Present*.

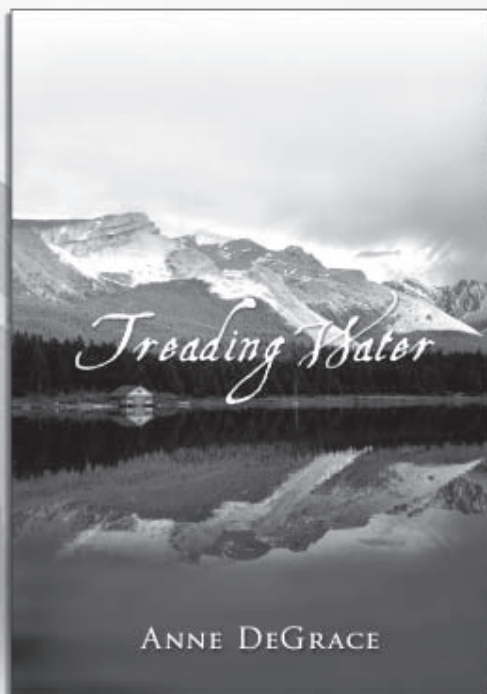
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Illustration of a Douglas fir at 125 metres, dwarfing three humans. *Giant Trees of Western America and The World* (Harbour)

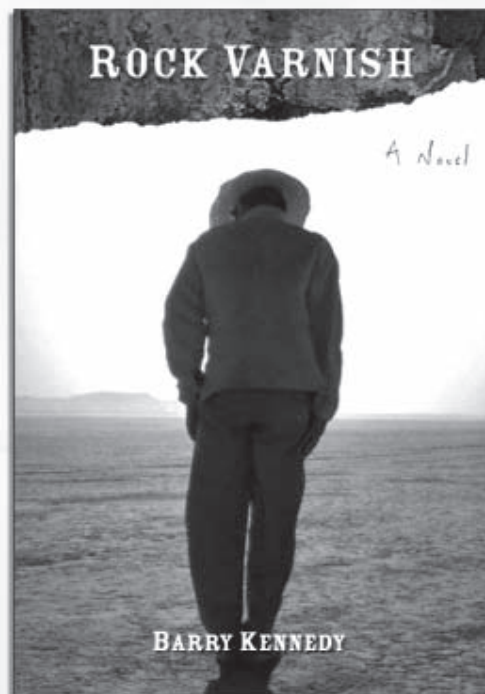
## Great Books from BC

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— *Toronto Star*



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From the Kootenays to Stalingrad to Hong Kong

Sylvia Crooks was three years old when Hitler invaded Poland in 1939. Thereafter her hometown of Nelson, ‘Queen City of the Kootenays,’ with its population of 7,000, supported the war effort full bore. Crooks’ **Homefront & Battlefront: Nelson BC in World War II** (Granville Island \$24.95) celebrates the sacrifices of a community that raised eight million dollars for Victory Bonds, shipped 17,000 pounds of clothing and eight tons of jam overseas, and lost 70 lives from the 1,300 men and women who enlisted after 1939. Nelson also sent more men to the Boer War per capita than any other comparable Canadian town and its 54<sup>th</sup> Kootenay Infantry Battalion suffered heavy losses in WW I.

1-894694-38-4



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The Queen and I offer you our heartfelt sympathy in your great sorrow.

We pray that your country's gratitude for a life so nobly given in its service may bring you some measure of consolation.

George R.I.

This letter was sent to comfort the family of John Balfour Gray. Born in Trail, he was the first resident of Nelson to be killed in World War II.



Aperture cranked up to 10

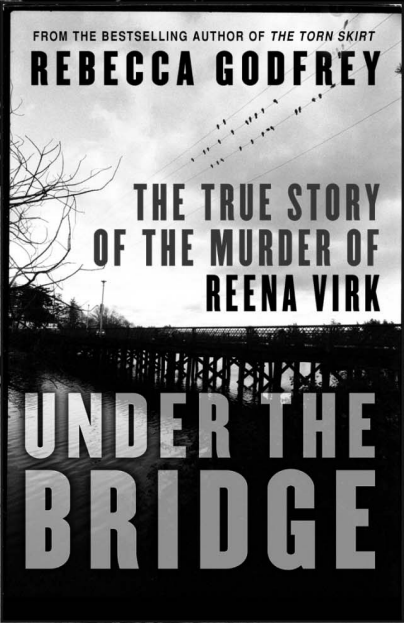
Burton Cummings once sang, “*American Woman*, get away from me”... but ex-North Vancouverite **Bryan Adams** has turned away from hard rock to soft focus pix of rich, famous and distinguished women to raise money for breast cancer research. Having provided hardcover photo albums of Canadian women and British women, Adams has turned his non-Ansel eyes to the likes of **Hillary Rodham Clinton** (above right) and **Lindsay Lohan** (left) for *American Women* (Key Porter \$60), a coffee table book in concert with designer **Calvin Klein** who is listed as co-author. Adams’ first book in the series, *Made in Canada* (Key Porter, 1999), benefited the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.

1-55263700-X

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# Fresh basil, clams & dogs

"I get really excited by ordinary things," says Victoria tattoo shop owner **Sarah Kramer**, returning for her third vegan cookbook, *La Dolce Vegan! Vegan Livin' Made Easy* (Arsenal \$24.95). Kramer doesn't mean raindrops on roses, brown paper packages tied up with strings or snowflakes that fall on her nose and eyelashes. She means, "the scent of fresh basil. The crunch of an empty sun-bleached clamshell as my foot runs across it on the beach. The deep, soft sigh of my dog as he's about to fall asleep.

The smell of my kitchen when I'm baking bread...." Going vegan, for Kramer, is not just about food; it's also a lifestyle and an attitude. Her ebullient approach to self-marketing has helped turn *How It All Vegan!* and *The Garden of Vegan* into bestsellers. "*La Dolce Vegan!* comes at a time when I find myself multi-tasking to the nth degree," she writes. "I'm busy running a tattoo shop, maintaining the GoVegan.net website, testing and creating recipes, taking photos, and making sure my dog and my husband get enough exercise... I don't have a lot of free time to muck about in the kitchen and I suspect you don't either."

1-55152-187-3

**Sarah Kramer**

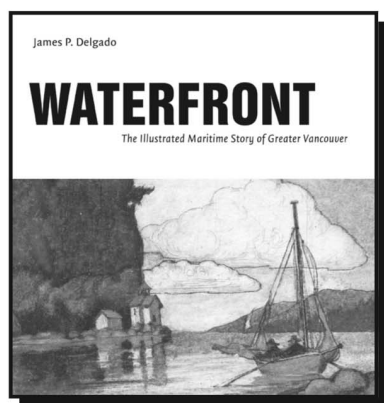


**Pam Freir**

## Banana slugs & death in the library

A food columnist for the *Victoria Times Colonist* since 1997, Galiano Islander **Pam Freir** mixes humour with humus in her first collection of recipes and wit, *Laughing With My Mouth Full* (HarperCollins \$29.95). Raised in Nova Scotia, Freir has retired from her career as the creative director of an advertising agency to host a do-it-yourself Cornish Hen Stuffathon and concoct chapters with headings like Oh No! There's Butter on the Honey Knife! "I want to ride a scooter and swim the length of the lake through duckweed when there's a child at my side. I become an instant expert on baseball stats, banana slugs and who killed whom with a lead pipe in the library. And I am touched in tender spots I'd forgotten I possessed when I'm presented with the Harry Potter book they know I've not yet read. But, all things being equal, I'd rather eat with the grown-ups."

0-00-200801-7



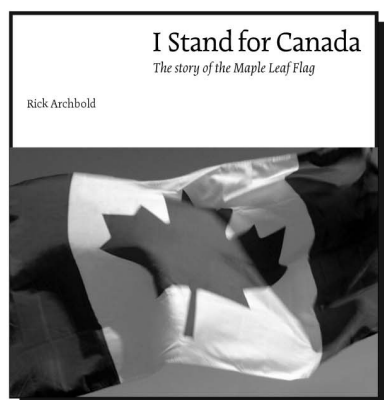
WATERFRONT: THE ILLUSTRATED MARITIME STORY OF GREATER VANCOUVER

"...This is a book for every British Columbian, indeed every Canadian, every newcomer and visitor. Of its genre, it is a masterpiece." – PATRICK REID

*Waterfront* is a magnificently illustrated, authoritative and lively tour of the maritime history of Greater Vancouver, exploring the relationship between the water and the

people that has shaped the region. The growth of maritime activity unfolds in its pages, as text and images focus on the history of Greater Vancouver's waterfront.

# BOOKS *for* CANADA



I STAND FOR CANADA: THE STORY OF THE MAPLE LEAF FLAG

"This is a fascinating account of how we raised our own flag. I heartily recommend it to any Canadian who has a feeling for our country." – FARLEY MOWAT

*I Stand for Canada* is a stunning visual biography of Canada's flag that traces the maple leaf from its origin to its acceptance as the unofficial but unmistakable emblem of Canada.

Widely used in the 19th century, the maple leaf came into its own during World War I when Canada's men in the trenches wore badges that incorporated a maple leaf into their design.

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Two of the 100 Canadian police officers and army personnel in Haiti, 2005.

## Hate in Haiti

Vancouver’s **Anthony Fenton** travelled to Haiti to conduct interviews for **Canada in Haiti: Waging War on the Poor Majority** (Fernwood \$14.95), co-authored with **Yves Engler**, a Montreal activist who once played for the Chilliwack Chiefs of the B.C. Junior Hockey League.

Their book is described as “a cry to the citizens of rich countries to understand what is being done in our name to the descendants of the world’s only successful slave rebellion.”

Engler and Fenton claim interference in Haitian politics by Canada, the U.S. and France has led to thousands of deaths and deeper impoverishment.

Yves Engler has traced his evolution from a Concordia Student Union vice president and hockey player to political activist in **Playing Left Wing: From Rink Rat to Student Radical** (Fernwood \$19.95).

“My father learned how to be a journalist through his involvement in anti-apartheid and other activism,” he recalls, “and my mother’s commitment to community health arose from her participation in Latin American solidarity struggles.”

The memoir is dedicated to his favourite Canuck, Trevor Linden, because he has always taken an active role in the NHL Players’ Association.

HAITI: 1-55266-168-7;  
PLAYING LEFT WING: 155266-169-5

## READY, SET, LIFT & WRITE

**Renee Rodin**’s *Ready for Freddy* (Vancouver: Nomados Press \$10) is a short but poignant memoir of moving back to Montreal to care for her 88-year-old father who is diagnosed with mesothelioma, a form of lung cancer caused by asbestos. When he declares he’s ready to die, he was promised he can die with dignity. The narrator and her sister Sandy monitor his decline as he stops eating and starts hallucinating. The aftermath of his death is at once surrealistic and all-too-real. Three of the pallbearers are women. “When it’s time to lift the coffin, though the women struggle valiantly to keep their side from dragging on the floor, it’s considerably lower than the men’s.” *Ready for Freddy* is like a **Norman Levine** short story, strangely uplifting for its reportage of commonplace details.

0-9735337-5-7



Renee Rodin

## Tu Amor Mato Mi Cancer

In the aftermath of the coup by Augusto Pinochet Ugarte that caused the deaths of approximately 30,000 Chileans, including the assassination of President Salvador Allende Gossens in 1973, **Alejandro Raul Mujica-Olea** came to Canada as a Chilean political refugee after two years of prison and torture.

Having worked for the socialist government of Allende, Mujica-Olea was one of the first 100 political prisoners exchanged for wheat in 1975. But when he became a Canadian citizen in Alberta in 1980, his troubles weren’t over. “Edmonton was a prison of snow,” he says, “in relation to the culture, the language, work, food and the terrible stress of not being respected by the new society.”

As a sewage system worker in Alberta, he worked with heavy equipment such as concrete drills and jackhammers, and developed a lymphatic tumour in his stomach eight years later. His physician told him he had three months to live in June of 1983.



Alejandro Mujica-Olea

Five more cancers were found in his body in 1984. Three more cancers were discovered in 1985. From his readings of books recommended by Dr. **Abram Hoffer** and Dr. **Deanne M. Roberts**, Mujica-Olea became convinced that **John Robbins**’ book *Diet for a New America* was correct in stating, “beef, pork and poultry industries help to cause cancer” due to chemicals and preservatives.

Mujica-Olea stopped eating animal products, but continued eating mussels and clams (for their high iodine content), vegetables, high-fibre cereals and whole grain bread, supplemented by vitamins (as directed by Dr. **Linus Pauling**). “Today, we walk together / along the path of solitude, / my cancer, my poetry and me,” he writes in **Your Love Killed My Cancer/Tu Amor Mato Mi Cancer** (New Westminster: World Poetry Publishing \$20), a self-published, bilingual collection that includes his detailed dietary advice.

Now living in New Westminster, Mujica-Olea founded The World Poetry Reading Show on Co-op Radio, 102.7 FM in 2001, a weekly show featuring multilingual, multicultural poets in the Vancouver area that provides a forum for immigrant poets to be heard in honour and respect. He and **Ariadne Sawyer** also co-founded and manage the World Poetry Reading Series at Vancouver Public Library, hosting more than 250 poets of differing ethnic backgrounds from more than 50 countries.

Mostly self-published, Mujica-Olea has written about his experiences of torture in a Pinochet prison in *From the Shadow of Death in Chile* (2003) and *Pearls From the Soul of a Political Prisoner* (2003), both published to mark the 30th anniversary of Allende’s overthrow with CIA complicity.

The former book is a diary derived from scraps of paper filled with tiny writing that were smuggled out of prison by family members. For more info, visit [www.abcbookworld.com](http://www.abcbookworld.com)

0-9731479-3-8

## WINGING IT

More WW II veterans die each day than Allied combatants at the height of the Second World War, claims **Wayne Ralph**, who says more than 20 of the interviewees for his latest aviation book, **Aces, Warriors and Wingmen: Firsthand Accounts of Canada’s Fighter Pilots in the Second World War** (Wiley & Sons \$34.95), have died in the past two years. More than 40 life stories are told in detail



Wayne Ralph

to reveal the emotional lives of the fighter pilots from a variety of aircraft. *Aces, Warriors and Wingmen* is Ralph’s follow-up to *Barker VC—The Life, Death and Legend of Canada’s Most Decorated War Hero* that resulted in two TV documentaries. 0-470-83590-7



Victoria historian **Mark Zuehlke** has released his fifth book on World War II, **Holding Juno** (D&M \$35), a continuation of his previous *Juno Beach*, a Hubert Evans Non-fiction Prize nominee in 2004.

*Holding Juno* tells the story of six days of battle fought by Canadian soldiers as



Mark Zuehlke

they struggled to hold onto Juno Beach after D-Day against the 12th SS (Hitlerjungund) Panzer Division. Their success enabled Allied troops to slowly advance towards Germany—and victory.

1-55365-102-2



Not-for-profit prophet J.S. Woodsworth

In conjunction with an SFU conference on **J.S. Woodsworth**, co-founder of the CCF (forerunner to the NDP), **Glenn Woodsworth** and his wife Joy have published **A Prophet at Home, an Intimate Memoir of J.S. Woodsworth** (Tricouni Press \$10). A grandson of J.S. Woodsworth, Glenn Woodsworth was born in 1943, the year after his grandfather died. He nonetheless knew J.S. Woodsworth’s wife Lucy, who lived to age 102, and he gleaned some of his grandfather’s political idealism from his own father Ralph. The 54-page book features three of his grandfather’s previously unpublished letters and a reminiscence of J.S. Woodsworth by his son Charles, likely penned in the late 1940s. 0-9697601-6-7

## Apes of the Planet

WORLD-RENOWNED AS A PROTECTOR OF ORANGUTANS, SFU ANTHROPOLOGIST and Indonesian conservationist **Biruté Galdikas** has followed her *Orangutan Odyssey* with **Great Ape Odyssey** (Harry N. Abrams \$65), including 125 photographs of gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans by **Karl Ammann**. It was the SFU Book of the Month for October.

081095575X



Biruté Galdikas

## Ch-ch-ch-anges

**Cindy Oxenbury** has returned to Book Warehouse to become Chief Operating Officer succeeding founding partner **Sharman King**, who will remain as CEO. **Carol Dale** and **Louise Hager** have closed Women In Print bookstore but will remain involved in the book trade with personal initiatives. Veteran bookseller **Jim**



Shirley Naylor & Douglas Fraser

**Allen** and the cooperative owners of Granville Book Company also closed their doors this year. After many years at the UVic Bookstore, **Sarah Harvey** has taken a job as an editor for Orca Books; her replacement is **Jennifer Cameron**. After keeping Ladysmith's Fraser & Naylor Bookstore afloat for many years, **Douglas Fraser** and **Shirley Naylor** have given way to their employee of many years, **Frieda Douglas**, who has changed the name to Salamander Books. Following a send-off for founding organizer **Alma Lee** and a climactic appearance by **Alice Munro**, the Vancouver International Writers Festival will be steered by **Hal Wake**, a veteran journalist and interviewer. An editor who worked with **Jim Douglas** during the formative years of J.J. Douglas Ltd., and later at Douglas & McIntyre, **Marilyn Sacks** died on October 17. **James Bryner** has left the Literary Press Group to work for Wiley & Sons. Edited by poets **Richard Olafson** and **Trevor Carolan**, the new *Pacific Rim Review of Books* will expand beyond its initial emphasis on authors pertaining to Ekstasis Editions for three issues per year.



Richard Olafson



Ray Viaud:  
birthday bouyed

ment of **Ray Viaud** marked its anniversary as Vancouver's senior bookstore with a party in October.

## PRIZED AUTHORS

**Lance Berelowitz** has received the \$2,000 City of Vancouver Book Award for *Dream City: Vancouver and the Global Imagination* (Douglas & McIntyre).

The B.C.-related nominees for the Governor General's Awards in literature this year are:

### FICTION:

**Charlotte Gill** of Vancouver, for *Ladykiller* (Thomas Allen Publishers).

**Kathy Page** of Salt Spring Island, for *Alphabet* (McArthur & Co.).

**POETRY: W.H. New** of Vancouver, for *Underwood Log* (Oolichan Books).

### DRAMA:

**Daniel MacIvor** of Toronto, for *Cul-de-sac* (Talonbooks).

### NON-FICTION:

**John Vaillant** of Vancouver, for *The Golden Spruce: A True Story of Myth, Madness and Greed* (Knopf).

### CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (Text):

**Barbara Nickel** of Yarrow, for *Hannah Waters and the Daughter of Johann Sebastian Bach* (Penguin).

**Pamela Porter** of Sidney, for *The Crazy Man* (Groundwood Books/ House of Anansi Press).

### CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (Illustration):

**Murray Kimber** of Nelson, for *The Highwayman*, text by Alfred

Noyes (Kids Can Press).

### TRANSLATION:

#### (French to English):

**Wayne Grady** of Athens ON, for *Return from Africa* (D&M).

**Fred A. Reed** of Montreal, for *Truth or Death: The Quest for Immortality in the Western Narrative Tradition* (Talonbooks).


**Fred A. Reed** and **David Homel** of Montreal, for *All that Glitters* (Talonbooks).



Charlotte Gill



W.H. New



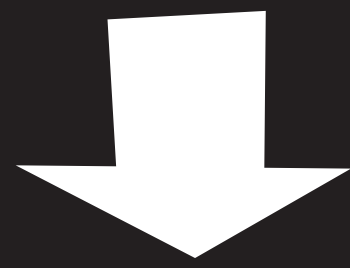

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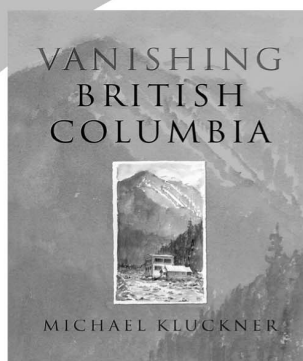
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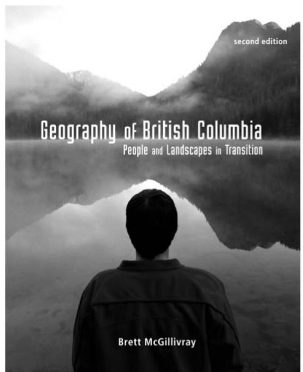
### Vanishing British Columbia

Michael Kluckner

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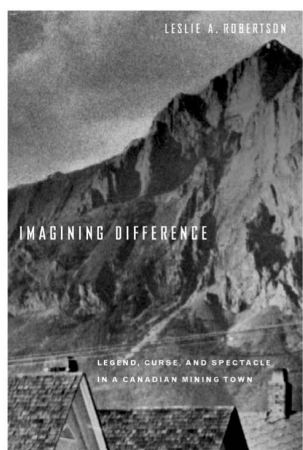
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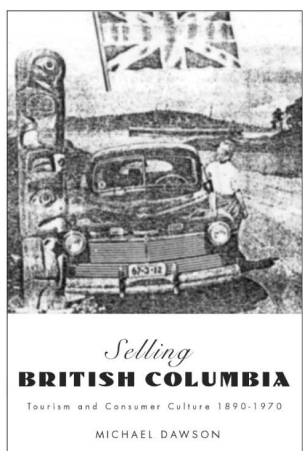
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Leslie A. Robertson

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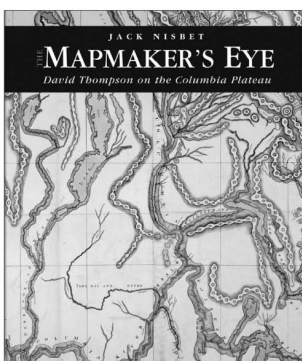
### Selling British Columbia

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Michael Dawson

An entertaining and illustrated account of the development of BC's tourist industry between 1890 and 1970, examining how BC's history of colonialism was deftly marketed to potential tourists. Dawson looks at the history of the tourism industry in BC throughout the twentieth century from an innovative cultural perspective.

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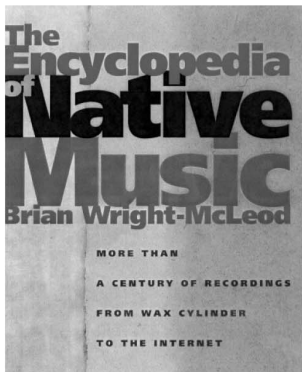
### The Mapmaker's Eye

Jack Nisbet

Nisbet draws upon David Thompson's journals – the basis of the first accurate maps of the region – and other representations of the Columbia to convey Thompson's experience of the sweep of both natural and human history etched across the Columbia drainage.

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS

192 pp • ISBN 0-7748-1125-0 • pb \$36.95



### The Encyclopedia of Native Music

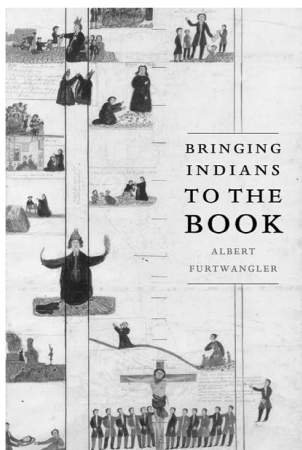
More than a Century of Recordings from Wax Cylinder to the Internet

Brian Wright-Mcleod

A comprehensive survey of Native music with more than 1800 entries, compiled by the host of Canada's longest-running Native radio program.

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### Bringing Indians to the Book

Albert Furtwangler

Furtwangler recounts the experiences of missionaries and explorers in the 19th century. Resolutely literate, they came west to meet, and attempt to change, cultures who for thousands of years passed on their memory, learning, and values through the sung or spoken word.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRESS

248 pp • ISBN 0-295-98523-2 • pb \$29.95



### The Orphan Tsunami of 1700

Japanese Clues to a Parent Earthquake in North America

Brian F. Atwater et al.

A transpacific scientific detective story. Atwater – one of *Time's* 100 most significant people of 2005 – leads an investigation into a tsunami that originated off the Northwest Coast of North America and produced tidal waves in Japan.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRESS

144 pp • ISBN 0-295-98535-6 • pb \$32.95



### At Work in Life's Garden

Growing the Soul through Parenting

Sarah Conover and Tracy Springberry, eds.

Well-known writers share their stories about the wonder, the chaos, and the pain of raising children.

EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY PRESS

160 pp • ISBN 1-59766-006-X • pb \$24.95



# THOUGHT THAT COUNTS UBCPress

## W.P.'s p's-and-q's

I love that you devoted half of the (BCBW Autumn) issue to fiction titles. I have only one complaint (and it's a small one) and that is with W.P. Kinsella's No Laughing Matters article in the Lookout section when he suggests that children's literature is "picture books with pop-ups that one reads to pre-schoolers."

I know that the opinions of your contributors don't necessarily reflect the opinions of the staff of *BC BookWorld*, but sure hope someone set him straight on that one. Thankfully Susan Juby gave him a thoughtful response, though I don't know if it was enough to have educated him on the vast spectrum that is children's lit...

Anyway, I'm finally going to do what I have meant to do for years—subscribe to *BC BookWorld*. Deep Cove doesn't have any outlets (that I've discovered) that carry your newspaper. Please keep up the great work! I discover so many books through your publication.

Shelley Hrdlitschka  
North Vancouver

## Scarlet malapropism

I read with interest the interview with Noam Chomsky [BCBW Autumn]. Mr. Chomsky's views are always challenging, and he can usually be trusted to look at issues with a brutally honest eye. One aspect of this article left me somewhat baffled, and that was the title, in headline format, in large red letters, which read as follows: Dissembling Fear. To dissemble means "to conceal or disguise" or "to give a false impression." In other words, putting the dictionary aside and relying on everyday English, I will use the synonym "pretend." So there we have it; to dissemble is to pretend. The title of the Noam Chomsky article tells us that fear is being dissembled. Someone, for some reason, is pretending to be afraid.

I perused the interview several times to see who it was that was pretending to be frightened. After all, the concept is counterintuitive—it is far more typical of human nature that one would pretend NOT to be afraid; there is little to be gained by pretending to be scared if we aren't. Anyway, failing to find a single line in the text that conveyed the idea of fear feigning, I came up with some theories.

Perhaps your publication is one of those where the job of printing titles and headlines is relegated to one person who comes up with catchy hooks for everybody. That would, at least, exonerate the writer. Still, the question remains: what did the author of this huge scarlet malapropism really mean say? Disseminating Fear? The multinationals and warmongers could be accused of that. Disassembling Fear? Mr. Chomsky could be credited with attempting that. Whatever the explanation, I think the *BC BookWorld* editors overlooked a whopper—and I ain't dissemblin'!

Nick Sullivan  
Cumberland

Write to: BC BookWorld,  
3516 W. 13th Ave.,  
Vancouver, BC V6R 2S3  
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Letters may be edited for clarity & length.

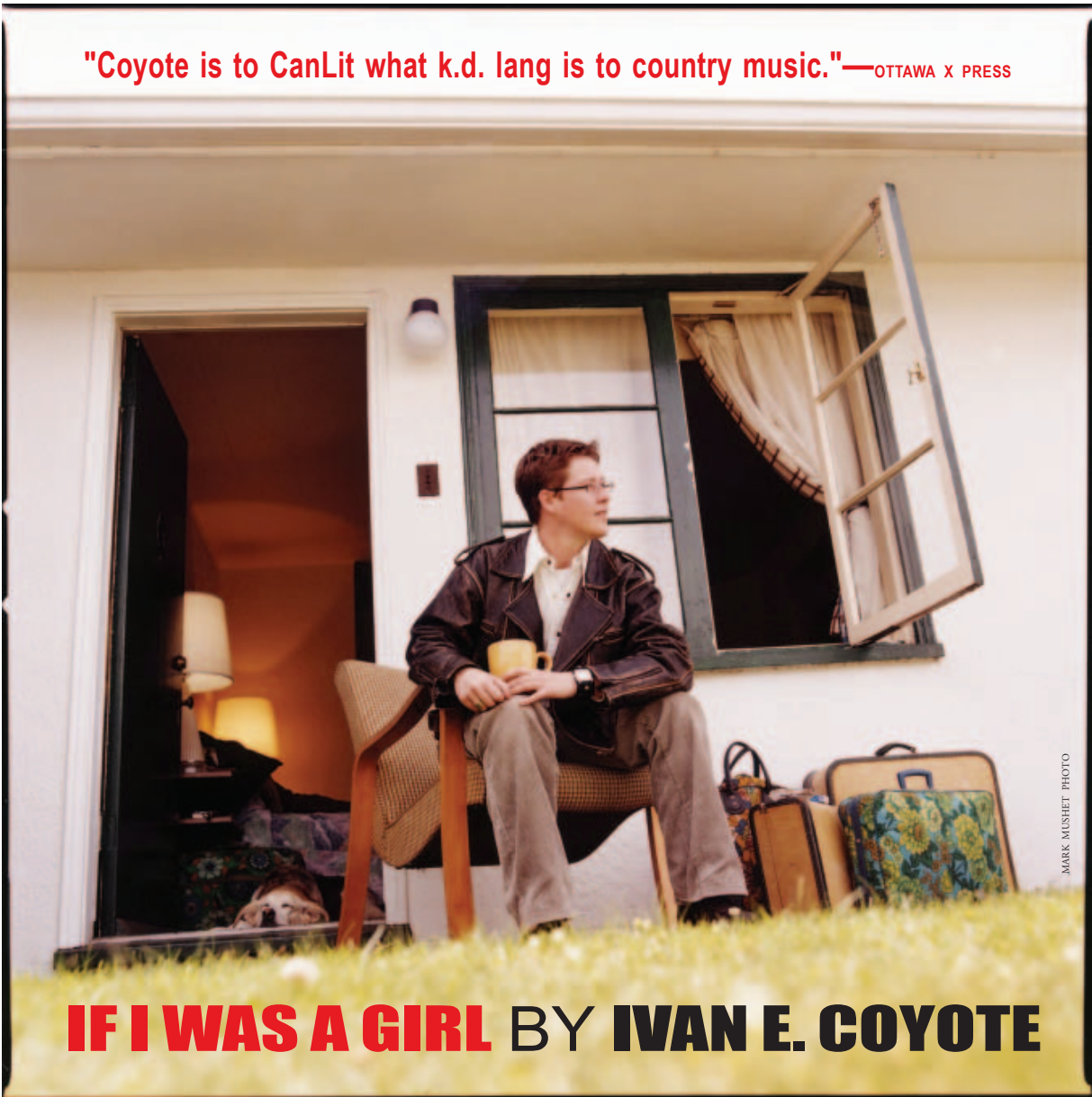
# LOOKOUT

BORN AND RAISED IN Whitehorse, **Ivan E. (Elizabeth) Coyote** is the daughter of a welder and a government worker. "Although technically I fall into the biologically female category," she writes in the following story entitled 'If I Was a Girl', "I do lack most of the requirements for membership in the feminine realm."

Last week, my cousin Dan's girlfriend, Sarah, mentioned to my girlfriend that they were hiring at the restaurant she worked at on the Drive. "You should come in and apply. We would have too much fun, and the tips are good," Sarah told her. But my girlfriend already has a job. I, on the other hand, have been subsisting on a storyteller's wage since I abruptly lost my job in the film industry, mostly due to my unapologetic and appalling lack of respect for authority, and my visceral distaste for people who won't stop talking about Los Angeles. "Tips?" I perked up. "I can wait tables. Did it all the way through high school."

Sarah shook her head. "No offence, Ive, but my boss likes to hire, you know . . ." She held two imaginary melons up in front of her chest. ". . . girls." Now, although it is true that I technically fall into the biologically female category, I do lack most of the requirements for membership in the feminine realm. And though I do not personally believe this would directly affect my ability to pour coffee, I knew exactly what she meant. Mere days later, my girlfriend got a call from a buddy of hers. It turned out Playboy magazine was in town, holding auditions for their Canadian Girls special issue, and did she want to come backstage and help her in/out of her G-string and bathrobe? I thought this would make a good story, and wanted to tag along. "I'm not sure you would be . . . appropriate backstage," I was informed. Now, my girlfriend does possess all the prerequisite femme characteristics, but she is at least, if not more, perverted than I am, and I really would be backstage just for the human interest angle of it all, as I don't usually go in for the Playboy Bunny type. But she can go, you know, undercover, whereas

"Coyote is to CanLit what k.d. lang is to country music."—OTTAWA X PRESS



## IF I WAS A GIRL BY IVAN E. COYOTE

I have never had the luxury.

My grandmother explained it best the day I tried to "come out" to her. I was nineteen. "There's something I need to tell you," I said. We were drinking Earl Grey tea and eating scones with raspberry jam. "I think I might be gay," I blurted out. "Finally," she laughed and went to get the photo album. "Look, here, there you are, queer as a three dollar bill on your first day of school." (I was wearing double holster cap guns and a plaid shirt.) "And look, a little lesbian goes to hockey camp, and here, poor thing, the dyke in her grad dress. I was wondering when you would figure it out." Just once, I would like to be in the closet, just for the novelty of it all. I wonder what my life would have been like, if I had a girly bone in my body. Would I have made it through trade school at all, or would it have been easier? Would my father have taught me how to weld? Would my Uncle John have given me a perfect mini-tool kit for my ninth birthday? Maybe I would have made more tips, and not dropped out of college. Think of

it. Maybe those two guys who jumped me in the park in '89 and punched me out for being a fag would have left me alone, or maybe they would have been after something else. The sweetie and I went to Seattle a couple of weekends ago. Just before we arrived at the American border, I did my usual tidying up: turn off radio, take off cowboy hat, roll sleeves down to cover up tattoos, button up shirt, sit up straight, seat belt on. I looked over at her. She was slouched casually in the passenger seat, tattoos hanging out, nipples a twitter in the light breeze, not a nervous bone in her body. "Sit up, for chrissakes, and put a long-sleeved shirt on." I was shocked by her apparent lack of border angst. "You wanna get us pulled over?" I forgot that she looked like a girl, and thus the rules were different for her. She had a better chance of crossing without incident if she didn't put on the long-sleeved shirt. "Next time, let me drive," she said calmly as we breezed through the border. "Sad, but true." One day, we stopped for gas at the Mohawk around the corner from my place.

While I filled up, she went in to buy a snack. When I came inside to pay, the gas jockey, whom I have known for five years or so, was draped across the counter explaining the intricacies of Keno to my lovely companion. She was drinking a Slurpee. I had to drag him away to pay for my gas. "That'll be \$22.50," he tells me, still distracted by the fascinating world of lottery odds. "I'll get that too," I added, motioning toward her Slurpee. "Don't worry about that," he said, waving his hand like a magician, "that's on me." Five years I buy gas from him and Slurpees never grew on trees until I bring the redhead in. We talked about it in the car, and the whole time we were buying groceries: the pros and cons of girlery versus boydom. She gets free Slurpees, but deals with harassment twenty-four seven. I get free anal searches at border crossings, but have to change my own tires. We are in Shopper's Drug Mart in the makeup section when another pro on the girl side presents itself: sixty-seven names for the colour red: heat wave red, firecracker red, code red, forward, blazing and nuance red, really winey red, vain stain, maraschino, downtown, and plumage red, and my favourite, Vampire State Building red. Not to mention prep's cool peach or country club coral. Who knew? Could I masquerade as a real girl if I had to? My mom used to think so. Me, I'm not so sure. I think it somehow goes deeper than just a brushcut and baggy pants. Look at my graduation photo: me in the aqua blue number, looking about as comfortable as a dog with one of those cones on my head so I won't chew on my own strapless. Maybe I could grow my hair and the real girls wouldn't notice the intruder. But that's the real point here, is it not? Maybe then the real girls wouldn't notice me.

**Ivan E. Coyote** (above) has released three collections of humorous and usually autobiographical writing, *Close to Spider Man* (Arsenal, 2000), *One Man's Trash* (Arsenal, 2002) and now *Loose End* (Arsenal \$17.95). She recently moved to Squamish.

1-55152-192-X

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

## Swiss family Blanchet

A mother's sailing memoir remains a coastal classic after 13 printings.

**P**ublished in 1961 when its author was 70 years old, **M. Wylie Blanchet's** unlikely bestseller, *The Curve of Time* (Whitecap \$18.95) recalls the author's 15 summers with her five home-schooled children aboard a 25-foot cedar launch, *Caprice*.

The family's June-to-October adventures are condensed into a series of sketches as if they constitute one voyage when her youngest child was three.

Born in 1891 in Lachine, Quebec, Blanchet was a tomboy who upset her tutor by carrying mice in her pockets. Her High Anglican father was often mysteriously absent on world travels, disappearing for a year at a time.

As Muriel Liffiton she competed for academic honours with her two sisters until, at age 18, she married **Geoffrey Blanchet** from Ottawa. Theirs was not a marriage made in heaven.

Whereas her banker-husband was emotional, she could be intensely pragmatic. After he fell ill in his early 40s and retired, the couple drove west with four children in a Willys-Knight touring car.

Upon reaching Vancouver Island in 1922, they serendipitously discovered a long-vacant cottage designed by Samuel Maclure at Curteis Point, near Sidney. A year later they bought the one-year-old *Caprice* for \$600. Its gas engine had to be overhauled because the boat had sunk during the winter. With constant tinkering, the engine would remain in use for 20 years until 1942.

One more child was born, then tragedy struck. Geoffrey Blanchet died, or else he disappeared, in 1927. After he embarked on *Caprice* and stopped at nearby Knapp Island, he was never seen again. The boat was found, but not his body.



Capi Blanchet (far right) with her children Frances, Peter, Betty, David and Joan.

The indomitable 'Capi' (i.e. captain of *Caprice*) was hard-pressed to make ends meet. Each year she rented her home and set off in *Caprice* with her children for five months of exploration.

The family investigated Indian settlements, canneries, marine stores, floating logging camps and traced the voyages of Captain **George Vancouver**, keeping a copy of his diary aboard.

Blanchet rejected conventional notions of fashion for women and wasn't afraid to get her hands dirty. "Engines were invented and reared by men," she once wrote.

"They are used to being sworn at, and just take advantage of you; if you are polite to them—you get absolutely nowhere."

After World War II, Blanchet sold *Caprice* for \$700 to the owner of a Victoria boatyard. It went up in flames during repairs and never sailed again.

Capi Blanchet continued to live at Curteis Point after her children grew up, resisting her doctor's advice to move. To

combat her emphysema and the damp climate, she reportedly sat with her head inside her oil stove for 20 minutes each day.

*The Curve of Time* began as a series of articles for *Blackwoods Magazine* in London, England, before it became a book in 1961. Its unusual title was derived from *The Fourth Dimension* by **Maurice Maeterlinck**, who viewed time as a curve. At its height, one can simultaneously view the past, present and future.

On September 30, 1961, Capi Blanchet was found dead at her typewriter, having suffered a heart attack at age 70.

Blanchet's neighbour and friend **Gray Campbell** of Sidney released the first Canadian edition of *The Curve of Time* in 1968. It sold for \$1.95.

**Edith Iglauer Daly** has written about Blanchet in *Raincoast Chronicles*; **Rosemary Neering** has provided a profile in *Wild West Women*.

1552853519

### FOR YOUR EYES ONLY

**T**his is just a note to say thank you to all our readers, throughout the province and across Canada, for making our 18th year in print as worthwhile as our first. If it ain't broke, we won't fix it.

### COMING NEXT ISSUE...

Long in the works and due in January, **Eden Robinson's** second novel, *Blood Sports* (M&S \$34.99), is set in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. It's about extortion and other



JAY POWELL PHOTO

Eden Robinson

forms of human manipulation, amid drugs and prostitution. We'll have a profile by **Vickie Jensen** in the spring issue. 0-7710-7604-5

# BC

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# Canada



Canadian Heritage

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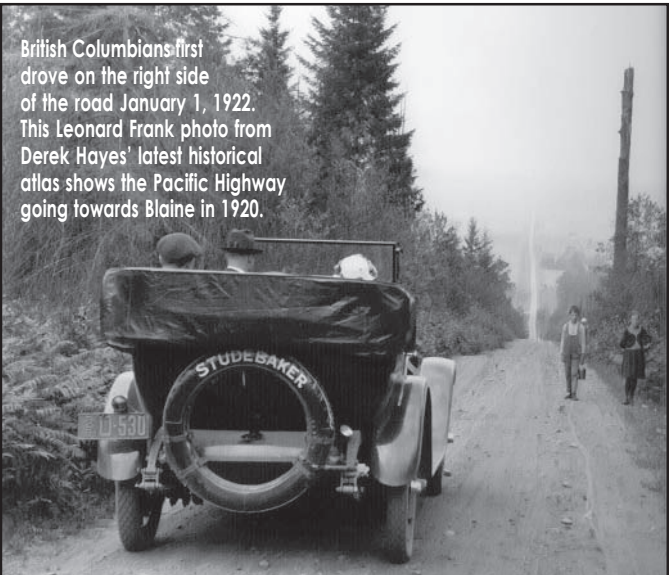
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British Columbians first  
drove on the right side  
of the road January 1, 1922.  
This Leonard Frank photo from  
Derek Hayes' latest historical  
atlas shows the Pacific Highway  
going towards Blaine in 1920.

What's wrong with this picture?

With 370 maps charting the growth of Vancouver and its environs, **Derek Hayes**' sixth intensively detailed historical atlas and his eighth book, **Historical Atlas of Vancouver and the Lower Fraser Valley** (D&M \$49.95), traces the region's development from the days when Vancouver's predecessor, the village of Granville, with 30 buildings, was divided into lots in 1882 for a city to be called Liverpool.

1-55365-107-3



Paul Goranson's 'BC Purse Seiners' (1940) from *Waterfront*.



James Delgado covers the  
waterfront

BURRARD'S ROUTE CANAL

**James Delgado** makes clear in **Waterfront: The Illustrated Maritime Story of Greater Vancouver** (Stanton, Atkins & Dosil \$45), it was the Spanish explorer **José Maria Narváez** who made the first recorded European visit to English Bay in 1791; **George Vancouver** arrived the following year and made the first European entrance to what he called "Burrard's Canal" after a former shipmate Sir **Harry Burrard-Neale**, passing the Squamish settlement of Wh'mulltsthun on June 13, 1792. Delgado credits **Len McCann**'s "sleuthing" and numerous others for his survey of the harbour's history.

0-9732346-5-2

Third Sexers & Intelligence in the City

And you thought all academic books were dull? From Sigmund Freud's theories on penis envy to the desires of "testosterone- taking third-sexers," **Carellin Brooks** examines the proliferation of "phallic feminine figures" in North American and European writing since the end of the 19th century in **Every Inch a Woman: Phallic Possession, Femininity, and the Text** (UBC Press \$85). Her penetrating study of gender-bending penetration will be a far cry from Canadian actress **Kim Catrall**'s attempt to capitalize on her *Sex in the City* sexpot role with **Sexual Intelligence** (Greystone \$34.95), an alluring tie-in to a television special.

Inch 0-7748-1209-5; Intelligence 1-55365-105-7

SLAM CHAMP

A former US national slam poetry champion, Vancouver spoken word poet **Shane Koyczan** has performed with such notables as **Maya Angelou**, **Quincy Troupe** and **Utah Phillips**, and has been an opening act for **Ani DiFranco**, **Spearhead** and **Saul Williams**. His first poetry collection **Visiting Hours** (Vancouver: Mother Press Media \$16.95), will be launched by a new press in November. 0973813105



All live and no take

Having worked as Chief Collector at the Vancouver Aquarium and as a fish culturalist with Fisheries and Oceans Canada for many years, **Andy Lamb** of Theytus Island has been a scuba diver for forty years, including 28 years in the company of underwater photographer **Bernard P. Hanby**. The pair has combined their knowledge from 4,000 scuba dives to co-found the Marine Life Sanctuaries Society of British Columbia, a non-governmental agency to encourage the establishment of a network of 'No-Take' marine protected areas. As well, with more than 1,700 colour photos of some 1,400 saltwater seaweeds and animals, Lamb and Hanby's new **Marine Life of the Pacific Northwest: A Photographic Encyclopedia of Invertebrates, Seaweeds and Selected Fishes** (Harbour \$69.95) is touted as the most comprehensive and up-to-date collection of Pacific marine life photos ever produced. It follows Lamb's *Coastal Fishes of the Pacific Northwest*.

1-55017-361-8



Bernard P. Hanby and Andy Lamb

# Tooth & male

Photojournalist *Bruce Kirkby* has travelled 60 countries

*"When you jump  
over the edge, you  
are bound to land  
somewhere,"*

—D.H. LAWRENCE

Bruce Kirkby in an abandoned U.S. army vehicle along the 372-kilometre CANOL Heritage Trail, created in the winter of 1943-1944 to transport oil from Norman Wells, NWT, to Whitehorse, Yukon, via the Macmillan Pass.

CHRIS FERGUSON PHOTO

In a brave new world of palm pilots and email, it's getting harder and harder to pretend you're Harrison Ford in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. A new breed of travel writers nonetheless keeps trying, flying off in all directions with their Tilley hats and laptops, would-be Heyerdahls with VISA cards in their pockets.

**Bruce Kirkby** isn't quite like that. At 22, Kirkby left his mind-numbing job at Ontario Hydro to take a solo bicycle trip along the newly opened Karakoram Highway in northern Pakistan. A contributor to *National Geographic* who tackled Everest in 1997, Kirkby wrote his first book, *Sand Dance*, as a member of the first expedition to cross the Empty Quarter of the Sahara since the 1930s, learning some Arabic beforehand. It was only one of his adventures.

More philosophical than self-inflationary, *The Dolphin's Tooth: A Decade in Search of Adventure* (M&S \$34.99) is Kirkby's well-edited summary of globe-trotting to Ethiopia, Arabia, Nepal, Belize, Tatshenshini, Swiss Alps, Burma, Tibet and Nepal. About one-third of his memoirs describes travels within Canada, chiefly along the B.C. coast, in the Rockies and in the Arctic.

Quoting **Carl Jung** and **Albert Camus** is all very well, but Kirkby has wisely chosen *The Dolphin's Tooth* for a title, thereby obliging reviewers to mention his encounter with a local man who gave him a dolphin's tooth when he was kayaking in the Andaman Sea (off Phuket, Thailand). "Always remember that the dolphin still dreams of freedom," he was told.

The Catch 22-like notion that freedom can pursued by concocting risky adventures is, of course, far from freeing, and the quest-driven Kirkby seems to fully understand his psychic predicament as an adrenaline junkie. Along the way, his camera equipment was stolen in Belize City (one of the least safe cities in the Americas) and he lost a Swedish girlfriend named Cecilia.

"I never blamed guiding," he writes, "because I never saw it as a choice between my lifestyle and our love. Feeling young and immortal, I was just too consumed with my search to imagine any other way."

A gifted photographer along the lines of veteran climber **Patrick Morrow**, Kirkby is not another 'creative non-fiction' writer who has taken a brief trip to an exotic place and produced a thick book; he is an outdoorsman who has taken a lot of excursions and produced a concise summary. When he's not travelling, he lives in Kimberley, B.C.

0-7710-9566-X

## THE SECOND WAVE

"Women's clothing was hanging from the palm trees, twenty feet in the air. People's shoes were everywhere."

—LEN WALKER

Four weeks after the Boxing Day tsunami hit south-east Asia in 2004, **Len Walker** of Deep Bay/Bowser (near Qualicum Beach on Vancouver Island) flew into Sri Lanka, where, in cooperation with Doctors Without Borders and Canadian relief organizations, he mobilized relief and rebuilding efforts on the east coast of the island, in the town of Kalmunai. In Sri Lanka alone, one million people were displaced by the catastrophe.

"I'm not an author," he says, "but I had a story to tell." Upon his return, the ex-child care worker and Industrial FirstAid attendant has self-published **Tsunami Journey: Seventy Days in Sri Lanka** (\$25), printed by First Choice Books in Victoria, partly to publicize how "the rich have gotten richer and the population of the poor greatly increased due to this tragic historic event."



As a practical idealist who "cut through red tape" in order to provide direct assistance, Walker, 60, now fears a second wave of reconstruction will be "much larger than the wave itself." He reproduces a **Naomi Klein** article that suggests corruption and incompetence are masking a much deeper scandal: "the rise of a predatory form of disaster capitalism that uses the desperation and fear created by catastrophe to engage

in radical social and economic engineering."

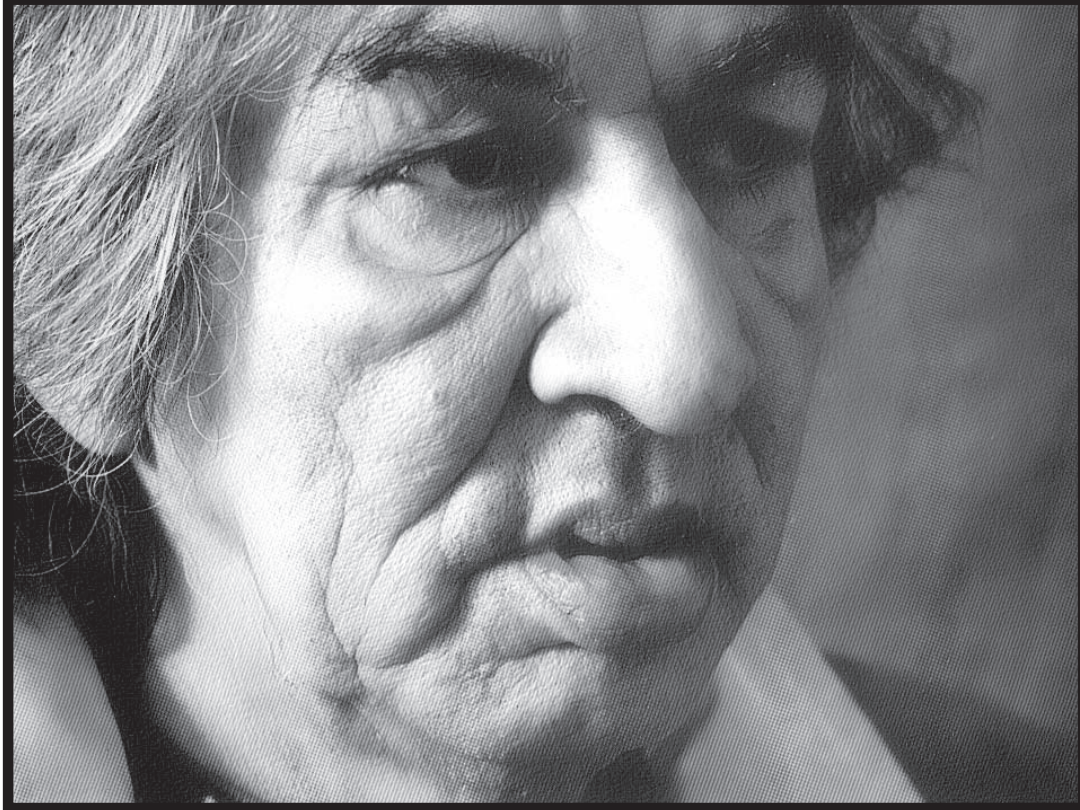
Walker's uplifting memoir takes a bad news detour. Just as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund recently forced Sierre Leone, the world's second-poorest country, to privatize its resources, including water, the reconstruction industry in Sri Lanka, with the complicity of foreign aid, has been working so quickly that, in Klein's words,

"the privatizations and land grabs are usually locked in before the local population knows what hit them..."

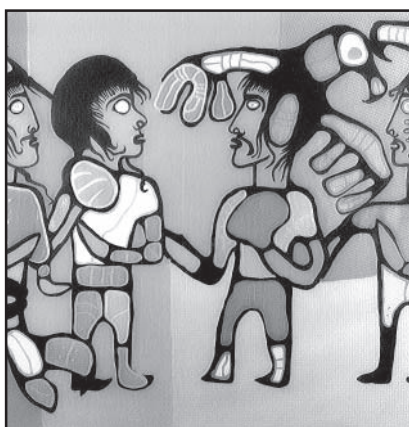
"Hundreds of thousands of people are being forcibly relocated inland. The coast is not being rebuilt as it was—dotted with fishing villages and beaches strewn with handmade nets. Instead, the Sri Lankan government, corporations and foreign donors are teaming up to rebuild it as they would like it to be: the beaches as playgrounds for tourists, the oceans as watery mines for corporate fishing fleets, both serviced by privatized airports and highways built on borrowed money."

*Tsunami Journey* has also been published in a Tamil version. Walker is now raising money to build ten more community schools, at \$4,000 per school, and urging Canadians to become directly involved in relief, avoiding VISA and Mastercard, if possible. 0-9738612-0-7  
Len Walker can be reached at lenisinsrilanka@yahoo.ca.  
Published by Tsunami Haven Pre-Schools, Box 400, Qualicum Beach, B.C. V9K 1S7J

# THE ASTRAL TRAVELS OF Norval Morrisseau



*Seldom considered a British Columbian, Norval Morrisseau of Nanaimo has been called the "Picasso of the North" and the greatest painter Canada has ever produced.*



Astral Beings (1991) by Norval Morrisseau

**Jack Pollock** met Morrisseau while travelling through northern Ontario and soon afterwards held Morrisseau's first one-man show in Toronto. All his paintings sold the first day. With **Carl Ray**, a Cree apprentice and friend from Sandy Lake, Morrisseau painted the

large mural for the Natives of Canada Pavilion at Expo '67 in Montreal. Almost killed in a Vancouver hotel fire in 1972, he recovered from burns and adopted Christian beliefs that were reflected in his art. The Bau-Xi Gallery in Vancouver had a solo exhibition of Morrisseau's work in 1974.

A recipient of the Order of Canada in 1978, Morrisseau was the only Canadian painter invited to participate at the French Revolution bicentennial "Magicians of the Earth" exhibition at the Pompidou Museum in Paris in 1989. In 2000, Morrisseau was honoured at the En'owkin Centre in Penticton as "the bridge between traditional art and modern western painting." Morrisseau was inducted *in absentia* into Thunder Bay's Walk of Fame in 2004 and his work will be the subject of a National Gallery retrospective in 2006.



**Norval Morrisseau:** *Return to the House of Invention* (Key Porter \$45) is a revised version of a 1997 volume re-released in conjunction with the new Toronto exhibit of Morrisseau's work.

Morrisseau has also provided illustrations for *Windigo and Other Tales of the Ojibways* (1969) but he has published few books largely due to difficulties negotiating business terms. Other titles are *Legends of My People: The Great Ojibway* (1965) and *Travels to the House of Invention* (1997). His former manager Jack Pollock co-edited *The Art of*

*Norval Morrisseau* (1979) with **Lister Sinclair**.

Morrisseau has had a profound influence on the work of other Canadian Aboriginal artists, particularly **Daphne Odjig**, **Jackson Beardy** and **Joshim Kakegamic**.

"Morrisseau was committed, from the very start, to preserving the stories and myths of his people," says documentary filmmaker **Paul Carvalho**. "He never wavered. As troubled as his life was, he also went through it with this incredible sense of mission."

With the companionship of Gabor Vadas and Vadas' wife, Morrisseau stopped drinking in 1991 (and got a new set of teeth). He moved to a two-storey ocean-front studio on the Semiahmoo Reserve near White Rock in 1992 and suffered a minor stroke in 1994.

He suffered another stroke in 1996, moved to Nanaimo in 1999 and has not painted since 2000. Afflicted with Parkinson's disease, he moved into the home of friends in Nanaimo in 2002, then transferred to Nanaimo nursing home in 2004, confined to a wheelchair.

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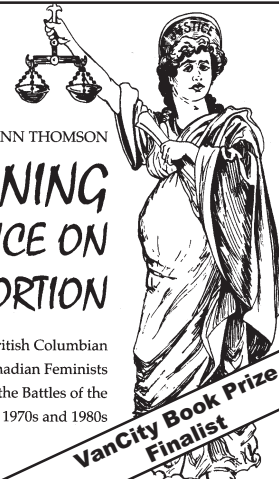
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# The Laird of Sooke

B.C.'s first lumber baron John Muir locked horns with James Douglas of the Hudson's Bay Company to ensure that token British government was introduced to Vancouver Island in 1850. *by Joan Givner*

In his fictionalized biography of one of British Columbia's first settlers from Europe, **John Muir: West Coast Pioneer** (Ronsdale \$21.95), **Daryl Ashby** begins by having the 83-year-old Muir recall his family's six-month sea journey from Scotland to Vancouver Island in 1849, when he and four sons had pledged to serve as "consignee workers" for the Hudson's Bay Company for three years in return for their fare and a 25-acre land grant.

Upon his arrival at Fort Victoria, John Muir, at age 50, selected one hundred acres of land in Sooke. He chose the property because it reminded him of Loch Lomond in Scotland. The harbour and its surrounding territory, inhabited for centuries by the native T'Sou-ke, was only accessible from the main colony of Fort Victoria by canoe.

While fulfilling his HBC obligations as a coal miner at Fort Rupert on Vancouver Island, Muir organized the first labour strike in B.C. history in 1849 to object to working conditions and inadequate pay. After a brief imprisonment, Muir homesteaded on his Sooke farm named Woodside, where he built the island's first steam-operated sawmill.

While building a fleet of ships Muir became the largest exporter of lumber and raw materials in the northwest—in effect, the founder of the B.C. lumber industry. From a lumberyard built in Victoria in 1860, Muir & Co. developed trade with South America, Asia and Australia, and supplied wood for sailing ships and buildings around the world, including the rebuilding of San Francisco after its fires. Muir & Co. continued its lumber operations until 1892.

Muir doubled as a magistrate and an elected representative for the District of Metchosin and Sooke at Fort Victoria. His son Andrew served as Vancouver Island's first Chief Sheriff.

A first person point of view is tricky, especially for an historian, since the virtue of immediacy is offset by the danger of subjectivity and potential unreliability, but Ashby has skillfully adopted Muir's voice based on his readings of Muir's dia-

ries. What gives Ashby's story its dramatic tension is Muir's antagonism for **James Douglas**, the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company and later, Governor of British Columbia. Muir's narration makes Douglas the villain of his piece, and the subjective account of his arch-enemy paints a picture that serves as a counter-balance to the official portraits—not so much warts-and-all as warts-above-all.

Muir's hostility for Douglas began when Douglas failed to personally welcome those who had just traveled 12,000 miles in order to work for him. Douglas' subsequent behaviour confirmed Muir's first impressions. Muir saw Douglas as an autocratic, overbearing man with a sporadic temper whose mandate to establish a colony for the British government clearly took second place to his desire to see the HBC prosper.

Muir also found Douglas' treatment of the Aboriginal population not only exploitive but barbaric, although no character in the book can escape criticism on that score.

In 1854, Muir joined other reformers to send a petition to the British Government requesting a new form of government for the colony—a democratically elected

body that put the interests of the settlement before those of the HBC. The bearer of the petition was a respected clergyman, **Robert Staines**, who had witnessed Douglas' lack of interest in the needs of the independent settler. Tragically, the ship on which Staines traveled, like many vessels loaded to excess by greedy owners, sank as it entered the seas of the open Pacific.

In a letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Douglas slandered Staines as "a violent party man, prudent neither in his conduct nor associations." Nevertheless, the fact that Douglas was in conflict of interest must have been noted in Britain, for the severance of his connection with the HBC was soon made a condition of his becoming Governor of B.C.

The two antagonists eventually reached some accommodation. Governor Douglas attended a wedding in Metchosin at the Blinkhorn homestead, or Bilston Farm as it was known, in spite of the presence of those who had tried to depose him. To Muir's credit he was

fair-minded enough to admit at last, "I must confess he proved himself a man of vision over the long haul."

While this account is dominated by two men, there are numerous colourful figures from the colonial period such **William Alexander Smith**, better known by his adopted name of Amor de Cosmos, who became editor of the *British Colonist*. He targeted Douglas' abuses and became the second premier of British Columbia, after **John McCreight**.

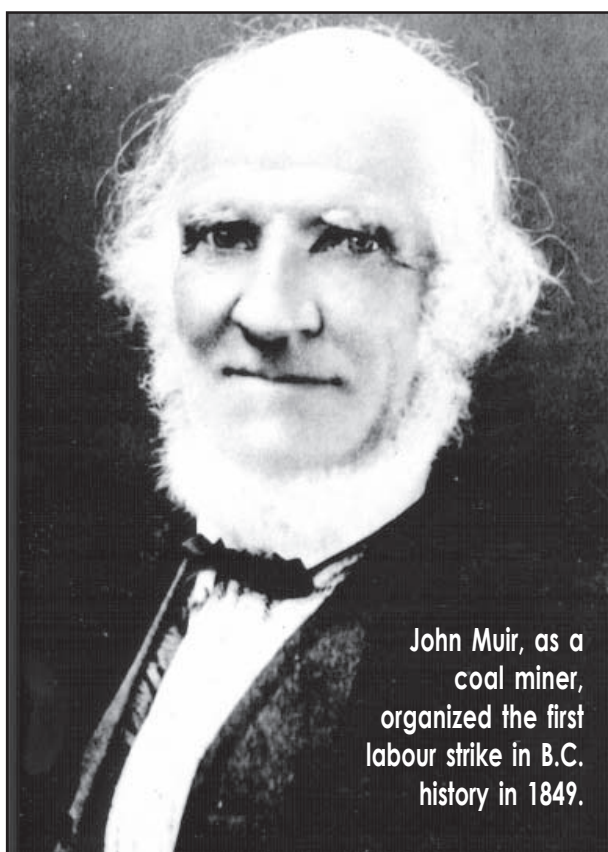
Ashby also introduces Muir's neighbour, Captain **Walter Colquhoun Grant**, usually described as the first independent settler on Vancouver Island and the first within the whole colonial region. Grant arrived at Fort Victoria in August of 1849—after Muir—and proceeded to join his eight labourers who were clearing a farm about 40 km from the fort, at Sooke (having likely arrived on the ship that brought Muir). Grant's wish to turn the area into a Scottish settlement was so strong that he tried to teach the Aborigines to speak Gaelic.

After a brief prospecting trip to the Oregon territories, Grant liquidated his Sooke holdings and returned to Scotland in 1853. To the Victoria Open School he gave his beloved croquet set in the hopes that the students would play the sport in his absence—but his second gift was a more dubious one. He gave the Muir family three bushes of Scotch broom from the Sandwich Islands. These fast-spreading plants were a gift to Grant from the British Consul in Honolulu, who in turn had bought them in Tasmania. "That," says Muir, "may explain why they proliferated in the devilish way they did."

A Member of the First Legislative Assembly on Vancouver Island, John Muir died in Sooke on April 4, 1883. During ten years of research, Daryl Ashby of Victoria found the Muir's original Fort Rupert homesite and the site of the first Muir sawmill in Sooke.

1-55380-027-3

*Joan Givner writes from Mill Bay on Vancouver Island.*



John Muir, as a coal miner, organized the first labour strike in B.C. history in 1849.

"Every city has its distinct history of rioting," he says. "... I decided to pursue the subject after the APEC riots made it clear that the local political economy was ignored in favour of a 'bad apple' explanation, which only further obscured the causes and events leading up to the riot."

Barnholden, publisher of *The Rain Review of Books*, proposes an equivalent of the London Riot Re-enactment Society in order to stage re-enactments that will make historical events live again. His roster of riots includes the Anti-Asian riots of 1907, the B.C. Penitentiary riots of 1934 and 1938, the Rolling Stones riot of 1972, the Guns 'n' Roses riot of 2002 and the Punk Rock riot of 2004.

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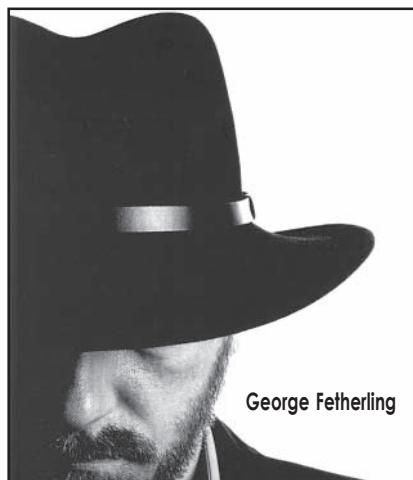


In the riot that followed the occupation of the Vancouver Post Office by the unemployed in 1935, Steve Brodie (left) was singled out by police officials.

## Raising the bar

Most book reviewing is biased, or else bordering on self-advertisement. But not all.

**Linda Rogers's** nifty *George Fetherling and his Work* (Toronto: Tightrope \$14.95) has gathered a variety of articles and appreciations of Fetherling that reveal, among other things, how the country's most prolific reviewer goes



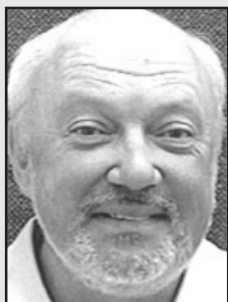
George Fetherling

about his craft. "I honestly try to be nicer to everybody else than they are to me," he once said. "Not out of altruism, out of purely selfish motives of making myself feel better. And some people, by their nastiness, make it much easier for me to be nicer to them than they are to me." Fetherling fans in Rogers' compilation include **John Burns, George Elliott Clarke, W.H. New, Brian Busby** and **Rhonda Batchelor** (who recalls why her late husband Charles sent Fetherling his gold pan, "dented from long use and nicely oxidized," before he died.)

0-9738645-1-6

## IN SEARCH OF SHADOWS

"The history of Poland since the sixteenth century, when its empire began to unravel," writes **Ryszard Dubanski**, "is one of loss, longing and partitions under cruel dominations." On the eve of their honeymoon in 1940, for example, his mother was rounded up by the Russians and his father was picked up by the Germans. His father managed to jump over a fence and run away, joining his bride. Together they were crammed into a boxcar for the 25-day trip to Siberia. "And they were lucky to get



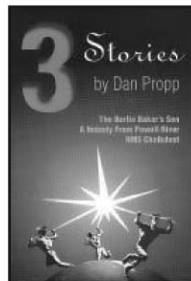
Ryszard Dubanski

sent to a slave labour camp," writes Dubanski, who now teaches at University College of the Fraser Valley. Ironically, Dubanski's parents and their friends managed to immigrate to the Canadian prairies where they found "a shadowless land of Siberian dimensions." Having been born to displaced parents in a camp for WW II survivors near Sherwood Forest in England, Ryszard Dubanski grew up in Winnipeg from ages two to twenty-two. His linked short stories in **Black Teeth** (Signature Editions \$18.95) recall his experiences in Winnipeg's multicultural North End and the struggles of his parents. He lives in the Commercial Drive area of Vancouver.

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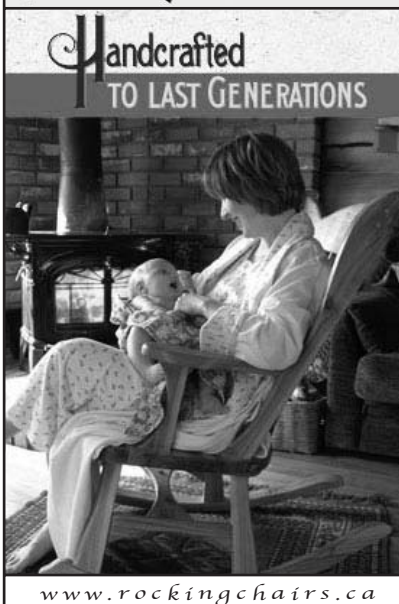
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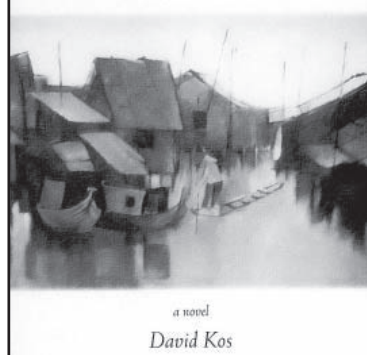
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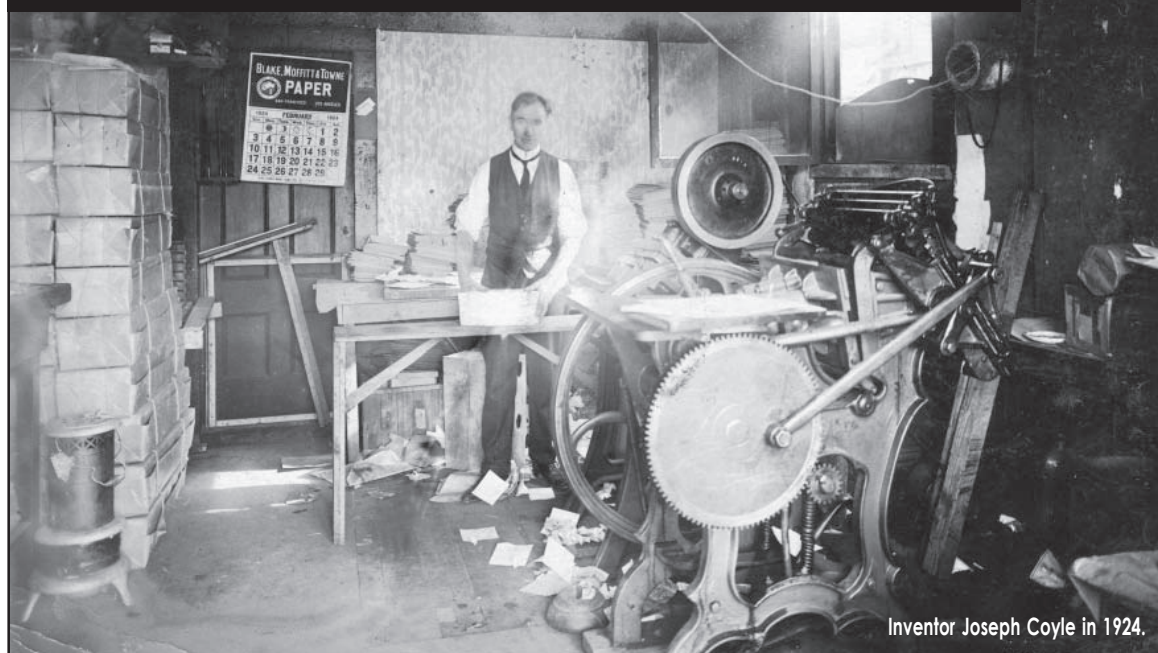
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# I am the egg carton man



Inventor Joseph Coyle in 1924.

**C**ompiled with **Greg Dickson** of CBC Radio, **Mark Forsythe's BC Almanac Book of Greatest British Columbians** (Harbour \$39.95) includes entries for the likes of Emily Carr, Terry Fox and W.A.C. Bennett, plus the man who gave the world the egg carton.

**Joseph Leopol Coyle**, who lived in tiny Aldermere, a community close to Smithers, evidently invented the egg carton in 1911 after a local rancher named Gabriel Lecroix was having difficulty shipping his eggs intact to the Aldermere Hotel near present-day Telkwa.

The rancher and the hotelier were forever squabbling about who was responsible for the broken eggs. Coyle, who owned and ran the local newspaper, was privy to this bickering and decided to fix the problem.

Having taught himself how to construct most of the machinery necessary to produce Smithers' first news-

paper, the *Interior News* (still publishing today), Coyle, a do-it-yourselfer, was a man who relished a challenge. After he designed his paper prototype of the modern egg carton, he sold his newspaper in 1918 and moved to New Westminster to mass-produce his product with the help of United Paper Products, eager to make a fortune. It was not to be. Coyle ran low on funds, sold his patent, and died in New Westminster, so un-sung that his name does not appear in the first edition of the *Encyclopedia of B.C.*, but his archives are at the Bulkley Valley Museum.

Coyle's little-known story emerged after Mark Forsythe requested his province-wide listeners to submit nominations for the 100 Greatest British Columbians.

Suggestions from the public were augmented by invited submissions from provincial experts to complete Forsythe's second book project.

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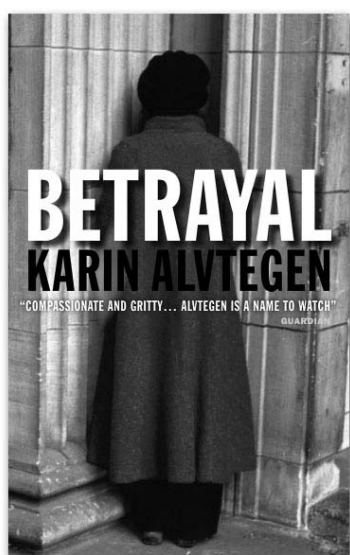
## Heavy metal Royal wedding

**B**orn in New Westminster and raised in White Rock, **Barrie Sanford** was entranced by the opening and closing of the New Westminster train bridge as a child. The allure of that bridge has remained so strong that Sanford and his bride were recently married on a train nearby the bridge. Having long ago acquired his engineering degree, Sanford has yet to satisfy his childhood ambition to design a bridge, but he has published several successful books about railroads—including his newly released **Royal Metal: The People, Times and Trains of New Westminster Bridge** (Sandhill / National Railway Historical Society \$39.95).

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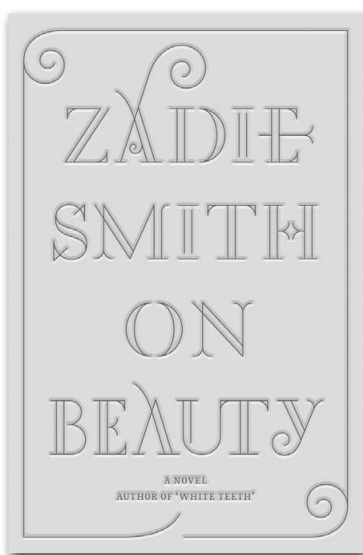
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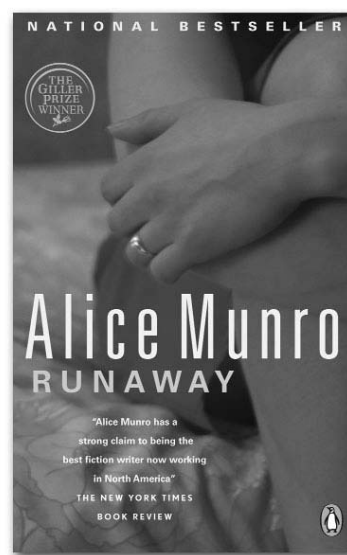
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# The stork doesn't bring them

*The long gestation period of a Prince George bookseller comes to a beginning.*

Friends who are authors in the northern B.C. literary scene told **George Sipos** the greatest excitement for any new author is having that first book arrive at your door, holding it for the first time. He's not so sure about that.



Recently a box arrived at the Sipos home in Prince George after dark, brought by a dedicated delivery man who'd found no one at Sipos' address during the day and had retraced his steps later that evening, with his wife and children in tow. "It was certainly an auspicious moment," says Sipos. "But it wasn't an ecstatic, erotic epiphany."

That's partly because George Sipos, a former bookseller who was no stranger to the feel of a new book, had worked closely with an editor and poet, **Sue Sinclair**, in the preceding months to whip *Anything but the Moon* (Goose Lane \$17.95) into shape. For Sipos, the wonderfully philosophical discussions on the placement of a comma during the six months he and Sinclair had pored over the manuscript—"a long, protracted, interesting, pleasure"—was more fulfilling.

That editorial exercise culminated in a trip to Toronto where Sipos sat "eyeball to eyeball" with Sinclair, a fellow poet he had met at the Banff Writing Studio. Months later Sipos got an email from the publisher with suggestions for cover artwork. There was another prolonged period until the proofs came in the mail, accompanied by some terse instructions to get them back promptly. "Getting published is great," he laughs. "Don't get me wrong." But for Sipos getting there was more than half the fun.

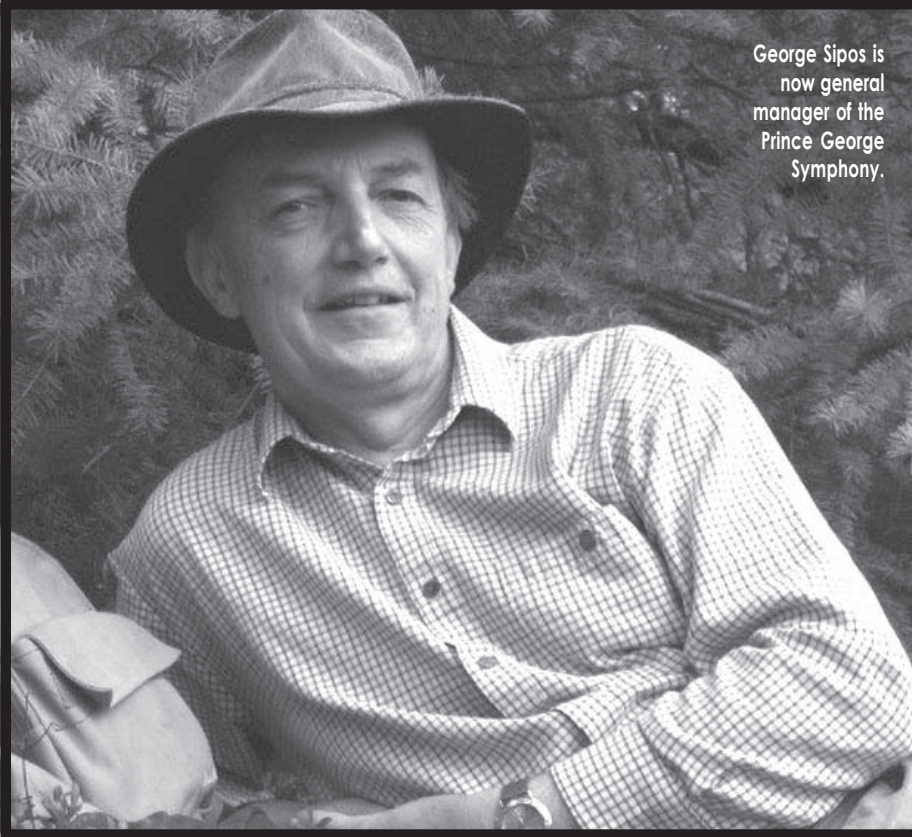


After moving to Prince George in 1979, George Sipos and his wife Bridget soon realized they were bringing back hundreds of dollars worth of books whenever they went to Vancouver. Coles and Woodward's had the only book outlets in town so Sipos began selling books from his home.

In the late 1980s, he borrowed \$1,000 from a friend and opened a storefront location named Mosquito Books. The bookstore soon became a major focus for literary activity in central B.C., hosting literary readings that included visits by renowned dissident Russian poet **Yevgeny Yevtushenko** and novelist **Timothy Findlay**. Sipos fondly remembers the caravan of fans led by booksellers **David** and **Janet Walford** from Mountain Eagle Books in Smithers who trooped four hours down Highway 16 with banners waving, "Timothy Findlay or Bust."

Meanwhile the poets he encountered over the years—such as **Patrick Friesen**, **Don McKay** and **Jan Zwicky**—encouraged him to take up his own pen. Sipos, a former English teacher, had dabbled in writing since his

teen years, but with a business and a family, he had let that part of his life slide. His most productive period occurred in 2001 when he attended the Banff Writers' Studio, a retreat less like the proverbial cabin in the woods and more like a stay at a five-star hotel. That removal of other responsibilities allowed Sipos to seriously entertain the notion of authordom.



George Sipos is now general manager of the Prince George Symphony.

Many of the poems in *Anything but the Moon* are concerned with memory and how this changes the past. All are rooted in the landscapes and experiences of the north. "By God, there's a lot of weather in them," he laughs. He describes his own work as mostly lyrical, as opposed to post-modern "mucking about with language."

Currently Sipos is editing the work of a fellow poet, **Gillian Wigmore**, a younger writer from Vanderhoof

whose first book will be *Home When it Moves You* (Creekstone \$20). **Donna Kane** of Dawson Creek will be handmaking each of the 100 copies using golden-coloured papyrus and indigo tissue paper to echo Wigmore's poems set among the lakes and rivers of northern B.C.



As one door closes, another opens. On December 31, 2004, Sipos closed Mosquito Books after 19 years. It was a hard thing to do, he says, but it was a response to getting older and the difficulties of selling books in Canada. He laments the recent closure of other great independent bookstores, such as

Vancouver's Women in Print, Granville Books and Merlin Books in Kamloops.

"We were there, we were small, we were brilliant and now we are gone," he says in his irreverent style. Sipos is moving on, but he'll remain within the arts community.

*Anything but the Moon* 0-86492-427-5;  
*Home When it Moves You* 0-9684043-7-5

*Heather Ramsay writes from Queen Charlotte City.*



The late Timothy Findlay (centre) attracted a caravan of literary fans from Smithers for an event at Mosquito Books organized by George Sipos in 1993.

## Soccer, Fall

rain, all day and  
you on the soggy field  
running on the wing  
all arms and legs  
hair wet against temples  
your eyes  
on the play, always  
elsewhere

you are sixteen  
you are learning  
to ignore the weather  
to feel in  
your thin muscles  
the tug of abstraction  
what it means to yearn  
at a distance, learning  
to move over the earth  
to be always thinking  
of something else,  
to be ready

and I, huddled  
in the notional shelter  
of an umbrella  
do I long for the play  
to come your way  
water spraying from  
facets of leather as  
the ball rolls toward  
the brief moment  
when you  
become the centre of everything  
when you alone  
propel the world  
your clean-hearted faith  
in getting it right

I want to witness those  
gestures of grace  
your feet more intricate  
than fingers  
what they can do  
the way your body moves  
beyond grass and rain  
the way you lean  
into thought

but the cold, the dampness  
in my bones  
make me wish the ball away  
afraid  
not that you'll stumble  
not that the girl in blue  
will elbow you aside  
but that you'll succeed beyond your  
hopes  
break away down the side  
legs a blur, the ball  
spurting forward, and you  
diminish toward  
the dubious triumph  
of the distant net  
the goal

I want to keep you  
like this  
the awkward elegance  
of waiting  
the sound only  
of your boots as you  
run by, and I  
in the rain with your wristwatch  
keeping it dry  
and ticking

—From *Anything but the Moon*  
by George Sipos

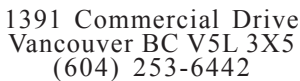
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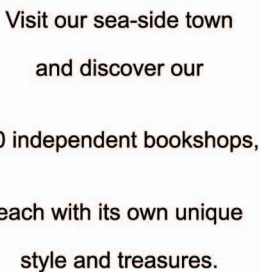
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## Rebecca Godfrey

**M**urder mystery novelist **Ellen Godfrey** won an Edgar Allan Poe Mystery Writers of America special award for true crime after writing *By Reason of Doubt* (Clarke, Irwin, 1981), her coverage of the Swiss trial of a UBC professor named **Cyril Belshaw**, a renowned anthropologist, who was accused and acquitted of murdering his wife in Switzerland and leaving her body in a ravine. Fast forward 14 years and **Rebecca Godfrey**, her daughter, has followed a first novel, *The Torn Skirt*, with a true crime investigation of a brutal killing and its aftermath in which teenagers were accused of leaving their victim's body under a bridge. Rebecca Godfrey, now a New York-based journalist, has profiled the characters involved in the beating death of 14-year-old **Reena Virk** of Victoria on November 14, 1997, for **Under the Bridge: The True Story of the Murder of Reena Virk** (HarperCollins \$32.95). Godfrey attended the trials of **Kelly Ellard** and also interviewed **Warren Glowatski**, both convicted in the case.

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