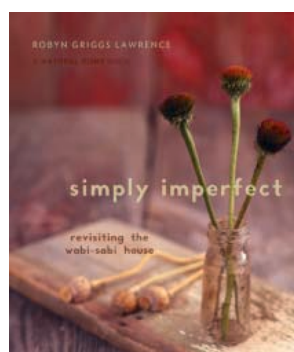


# Spring Releases from New Society Publishers



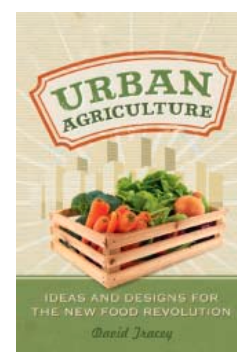
## **SURVIVING THE APOCALYPSE IN THE SUBURBS** **The Thrivalist's Guide to Life Without Oil** Wendy Brown

*... a clear-eyed, straight-ahead manual for what's shaping up to be permanent hard times.* –James Howard Kunstler, author of *The Long Emergency*  
US/Can \$19.95



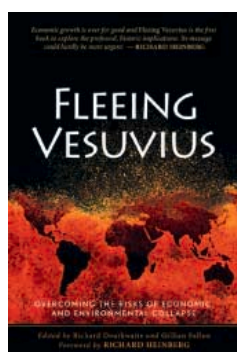
## **SIMPLY IMPERFECT** **Revisiting the Wabi-Sabi House** Robyn Griggs Lawrence

*A firm rebuttal to such a riot of technological innovation ... It's about spare living spaces and well-worn handmade objects, and an appreciation of quiet pleasures.*  
–The New York Times  
US/Can \$22.95



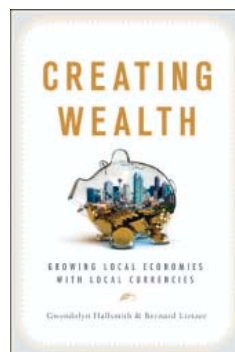
## **URBAN AGRICULTURE** **Ideas and designs for the new food revolution** David Tracey

*...a road map to food security, to our reconnecting to the soil and the earth, even in cities...*  
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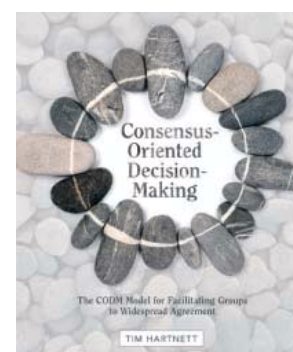
## **FLEEING VESUVIUS** **Overcoming the risks of economic and environmental collapse**

Richard Douthwaite & Gillian Fallon, editors  
*Economic growth is over for good... [this] is the first book to explore the profound, historic implications. Its message could hardly be more urgent.* –Richard Heinberg, author, *The End of Growth*  
US/Can \$22.95



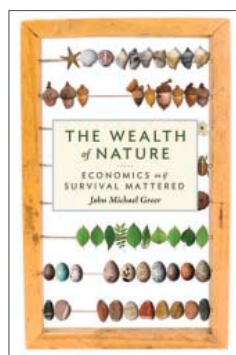
## **CREATING WEALTH** **Growing Local Economies with Local Currencies**

Gwendolyn Hallsmith and Bernard Lietaer  
*Gwendolyn Hallsmith and Bernard Lietaer share a commitment to renewing cities and creating a sustainable world for all endangered species—including our own. This is a book that provides framework, theory, tools, and examples galore. Get it. Use it.* –Edgar S. Cahn, PhD, JD, Ashoka Fellow, originator, TimeBanking  
US/Can \$19.95



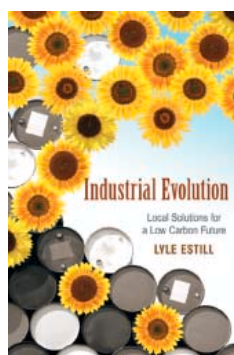
## **CONSENSUS-ORIENTED DECISION-MAKING** **The CODM Model for Facilitating Groups to Widespread Agreement** Tim Hartnett

*Regardless of how much or how little you work in the decision-making space, this guide will be of immense value.* –Fred Keeley, Former Speaker pro Tempore, California State Assembly  
US/Can \$29.95



## **THE WEALTH OF NATURE** **Economics as if Survival Mattered** John Michael Greer

*Greer's work is nothing short of brilliant.*  
–Richard Heinberg, author, *Peak Everything*  
US/Can \$18.95



## **INDUSTRIAL EVOLUTION** **Local Solutions for a Low Carbon Future** Lyle Estill

*Lyle Estill shows us the possibility of giving up the "American Dream" while losing nothing.* – Michael Gordon, E. F. Schumacher Society  
US/Can \$17.95

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## STANDING UP FOR SCIENCE

Religion won't save us. Or politics. Or business.

According to David Suzuki, the 74-year-old environmentalist who received the 18th annual George Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award in February, it all comes down to science.

If politicians had listened to Suzuki and other scientific-minded futurists about thirty years ago, Kyoto Protocol standards would have been achievable.

Now Suzuki still clings to a "very slender thread" of hope. The human race can still endure, IF we immediately enact rational strategies.

"Science is by far the most important factor for shaping our lives and society today... (but) decisions are made for political expediency," he says. "What's happening now is absolutely terrifying."

Suzuki recalled the advice of 300 climatologists who met in Toronto in the 1970s and identified global warming as the greatest threat to human survival, next to atomic bombs. "(But) the fossil fuel industry, the auto sector and neo-conservatives like the Koch brothers in New York began to invest tens of millions of dollars in a campaign of deception," Suzuki said. "You can find the best evidence of this in Jim Hoggan's book, *Climate Cover-Up*, and in Nancy Oreskes' *Merchants of Doubt*."

"Now we have public opinion on these issues driven by organizations like The Fraser Institute, the Heartland Institute, the Competitive Enterprise Institute. You just have to read *The National Post* and you'll never have to change your mind on climate change. You'll know that it's baloney..."

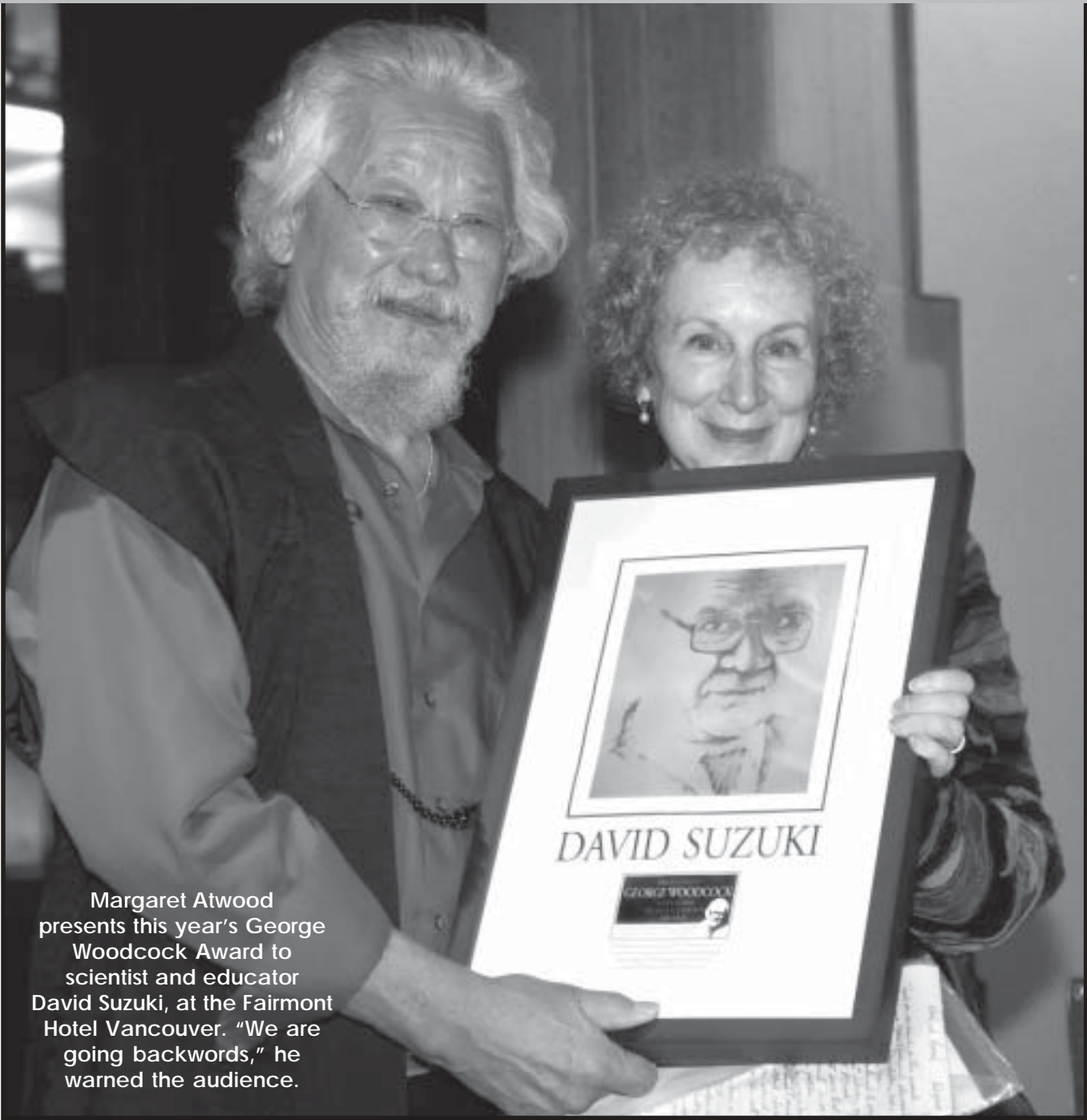
"I began my career in television believing that through education, through writing books, through radio and television programs, we would have a better-informed public. But, in fact, we are going backwards."

"The level of trust in science, especially in the United States, is dropping radically. And if we can't trust in science, then who do we turn to? The Koran? The Bible? Or all these right-wing pundits?"

This year The Writers Trust of Canada co-sponsored the Woodcock Award, presented by Margaret Atwood. Mayor Gregor Robertson also participated in the ceremony.

Since 1995, the Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award for an Outstanding Literary Career in B.C. has been supported by the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Public Library and *B.C. BookWorld*. Another new co-sponsor, as of 2010, is Yosef Wosk.

Born in Vancouver, David Suzuki has written more than 50 books.



WENDY D. PHOTOGRAPHY

Margaret Atwood presents this year's George Woodcock Award to scientist and educator David Suzuki, at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver. "We are going backwards," he warned the audience.

## Vaillant wins wholeheartedly

JOHN VAILLANT'S FIRST BOOK, *THE Golden Spruce*, about a former logger named Grant Hadwin who cut down K'iid K'yaas, a "Golden" Sitka Spruce on Haida Gwaii, in 1997, received several major book awards and was shortlisted for British Columbia's National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction.

Five years later, at a lavish free luncheon for invited guests, Vaillant received former Premier Gordon Campbell's B.C. National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction for his second book, an investigation of events in Siberia regarding a rare tiger that was killing people in Russia's Primorye Territory.

Like *Golden Spruce*, Vaillant's *The Tiger: A True Story of Vengeance and Survival* (Knopf \$34.95) uses a newsworthy story as the basis for an expansive look at conservation and ecology, revealing atavistic links between technological man and the wilderness.

Vaillant's face did not register pleasure or surprise when his name was an-



TWIGG PHOTO

Co-nominees for the BC's National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction, Stevie Cameron and John Vaillant

nounced as the winner during the three-hour ceremony. With sincere humility, he told the audience he had decided in advance: "I am going to feel wholehearted for whoever wins."

The event featured erudite and sophisticated dissertations on each of the four nominated titles, delivered by Daphne Bramham, Douglas Todd, Michael Levine and Wade Davis. Publisher Scott McIntyre, as one of the administrative board members, presented Gordon

Campbell with a set of leather bound copies of all the award winners since 2003. Campbell received a standing ovation from nearly everyone present.

This year all four nominated titles for the \$40,000 prize were published by Random House / Knopf of Toronto, including Stevie Cameron's courageous, 768-page *On The Farm: Robert William Pickton and the Tragic Story of Vancouver's Missing Women*.

Tiger 978-0-30739-714-0; Farm 978-0-676-97584-0



UBC PRESS' TITLE *CANADA, THE CONGO Crisis, and UN Peacekeeping, 1960-64*, by Kevin Spooner, has won this year's CP Stacey Prize for the best book in Military History awarded by the Canadian Historical Committee for the History of the Second World War and for Military History.

978-0-7748-1637-3



D&M'S *POLAR IMPERATIVE: A HISTORY OF Arctic Sovereignty in North America* by Shelagh D. Grant has been nominated for the 2011 Lionel Gelber Prize, a literary award for the world's best non-fiction book in English that seeks to deepen public debate on significant global issues.

978-1553654186



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Contributors: Hannah Main-van der Kamp, John Moore,  
Joan Givner, Sage Birchwater, Grant Shilling,  
Mark Forsythe, Louise Donnelly, Sheila Munro,  
Cherie Thiessen, Shane McCune, Joseph Farris.  
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## Treasure hunt



I AM EXTREMELY happy and honoured by your coverage in *B.C. BookWorld*. My husband and I are impressed by the scope of this publication, but it is quite intimidating to see how many good authors there are in B.C. What a treasure you have given to the public to be able to find out about and discover all these people and their books.

**Louise Jilek-Aall**  
Tsawwassen

## Curtis catchy

I'M A MEMBER OF THE ASSU FAMILY FROM Quadra Island, coming out with a book about the Kwakwaka'wakw and potlatch ban history, in 2011. I just want to say I really enjoyed that Autumn BCBW article on The Edward Curtis Project. I've been chatting with the author Marie Clements and the photographer Rita Leistner about the correlation between the Curtis subject matter in our respective books. I was pleased to read that *B.C. BookWorld* was already on top of this material. I will be posting my cheque and getting a subscription to *B.C. BookWorld* right away.

**Garry Thomas Morse**  
Vancouver

## Corrections



TLEKO (THANK YOU) for the nice review of my book, *Spirits of Our Whaling Ancestors*. The title is not *Spirits of Our Ancestors*. Also, for the record, the Makah treaty date was 1855, not 1885. And you misspelled Hishuk'ish. There is no "y" at the end of this word. In spirit,

**Charlotte Cote**  
University of Washington, Seattle



Eric Nicol (centre) playing a reporter with actress Leslie Caron. Also see p. 17

## Dick & John

THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDEED FOR THE piece comparing my book *Edge of the Sound* with *Fishing with John*.

I wouldn't be surprised if it's going to be the only mention of my book, because I haven't got a "name" or a degree,

I'm not a bright young thing, and I live on the West Coast. What the heck.

I've never read *Fishing with John* but I'm sure we have a copy of it somewhere. I recall my husband Dick muttering something about it. Now I'm curious.

**Jo Hammond**  
Sunshine Coast

## Unexpected

JUST CAUGHT THE NEW WINTER ISSUE OF *B.C. BookWorld*. Terrific exposure for me. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

With the cuts to the small presses like NeWest, the onus of marketing appears to have fallen on the shoulders of amateurs—the authors. Ugh.

Your support is needed and appreciated. I've been waiting for this article and it was more than I expected.

**Roy Innes**  
Gabriola Island

## Sexiconoclast

THE GREAT HUMORIST ERIC NICOL WILL BE missed. It was always a great pleasure for me to drive up to Eric's house in Dunbar to discuss his manuscript *The Casanova Sexicon* while we were readying it for publication. What I most remember about those visits was the way in which Eric's humour derived from his deft handling of language. I recall his eureka moment in which he playfully defined "aural sex"—as the phenomenon that occurs when the French word "oui" buds the lips, inviting a kiss. He was never mean-spirited.

**Ronald Hatch**, Ronsdale Press,  
Vancouver

## Nicol was shy guy

I ADORED ERIC NICOL'S HUMOUR AND I AM particularly saddened at the news of his death. I own many editions of his books.

Years ago, when I was a much younger sales rep, our three-day B.C. Book Fair was held in downtown Vancouver. Often authors were invited to attend a cocktail party. At one particular fair, the social event was held at the Vancouver Art Gallery. The guest of honour was to be Eric Nicol.

I so wanted to talk to him, but felt awkward. I didn't know what I could say to him that wouldn't sound foolish. I watched as he went outside, away from everyone, on the terrace. It was my big

chance to go and talk to him. I was overwhelmed with shyness and so we never spoke. I've regretted that lost opportunity ever since.

Just days before the news of his death, I happened upon an article about Eric Nicol in *The Essentials* by Alan Twigg. There, in print, was a sentence that stabbed my heart. "Terribly shy, he avoided parties."

And to think I was only steps away.  
**Nancy Wise**  
Sandhill Book Marketing, Kelowna

## Nicol was hoaxer extraordinaire

SHY, WITTY AND VERY GENTLE, ERIC NICOL WAS one of the finest writers I ever encountered.

He was a better writer than his shyness allowed the world to see. Few of his readers were aware of just how good he was on the world stage. In his brief spell as a radio scriptwriter in London, long before he got a play on Broadway, he worked with the best in the business, the legendary Frank Muir and Dennis Norden.

Our first book together was the city history, *Vancouver*, what you might call an urbane urban history. Other titles included the satire *Canadide* and the serious *Letters To My Son* (Eric's faithful readers were forewarned: "CAUTION. Contents May Prove Hazardous To Any Preconceived Idea Of An Eric Nicol Book").

But the crowning glory was Eric's "discovery" of the letters sent home by the very real Francis Dickens, son of Charles, and one of the worst Mounties in history.

Entitled *Dickens Of The Mounted*, this book was hailed by Andreas Schroeder in *The Encyclopedia of Literature in Canada* as one of the country's best Literary Hoaxes.

The book's opening line... "It was not the best of times, it was not the worst of times, it was Ottawa" surely gave a hint of Nicol mischief afoot.

Yet, to quote Schroeder, "The hoax became a runaway best-seller, appearing on both fiction and non-fiction lists, apparently fooling a lot more people than either Nicol or the totally unrepentant Gibson expected."

**Doug Gibson**  
Toronto

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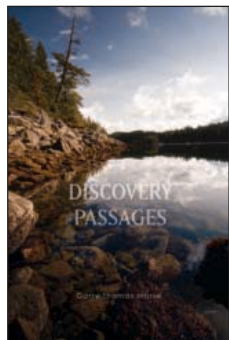
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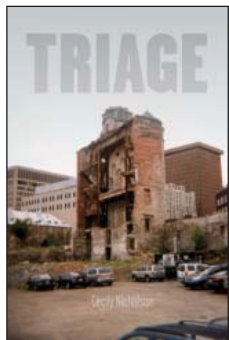


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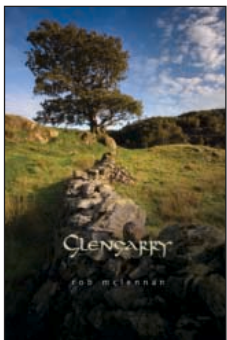
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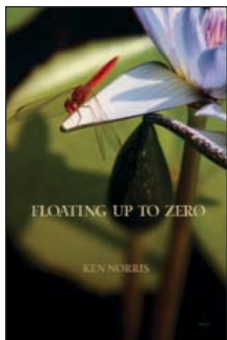
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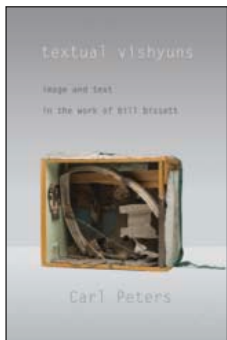
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DRAMA

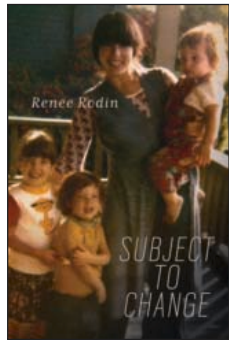
With *And So It Goes*, George F. Walker returns to the stage after a ten-year hiatus. During that time Canada’s middle-class dream has taken a heavy hit and the newly unemployed baby boomers in this darkly comic drama seek solace from the ghost of Kurt Vonnegut. • Drew Hayden Taylor deploys the literary conventions of theatre of the absurd and the mystery novel in *Dead White Writer on the Floor* when he locks six Native literary tropes in a room with the writer who created them. • Morris Panych brings us a new play that premiered at the Segal Centre last fall; *Gordon* examines a father and son whose lives are devoted to alcohol and obsession in the first generation and criminal activity in the second. Panych’s trademark piercing humour is evident throughout. • In *Paradise Garden*, playwright and actress Lucia Frangione dramatizes, through the romantic tale of a Gulf Island hippie and a Turkish immigrant, how paradise is hard to maintain—and so too a relationship of love in the time of individuality and alienation. • Emerging playwrights Chris Craddock and Nathan Cuckow address the topic of gay-bashing with a play that rocks the conventions of hip-hop and rap. The Associated Press says about *BASH’d*: “It’s furious, fast moving, hip-hop entertainment! As one of the lyrics proclaims, ‘It’s Romeo meets Romeo,’ complete with an ample supply of scatological language, swaggering attitude and a keen, often hilarious sense of observation about gay life.” • Finally, George Boyd’s Governor General’s Award-nominated play about the razing of Africville, *Consecrated Ground*, has been released in a revised, updated edition.

FICTION / SHORT STORIES

In Sadru Jetha’s first collection of beautifully crafted stories, *Nuri Does Not Exist*, we accompany Nuri on his quest to understand how servitude transcends slavery; fealty transcends servitude; and community transcends fealty, charming us with its cathartic vision. • Renee Rodin’s finely wrought autobiographical pieces in *Subject to Change* show the reader that the things we usually think of as too ordinary to talk about or too extraordinary to communicate to others are often the most formative elements of our social lives.



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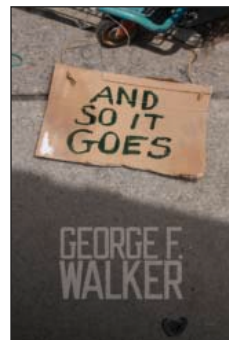


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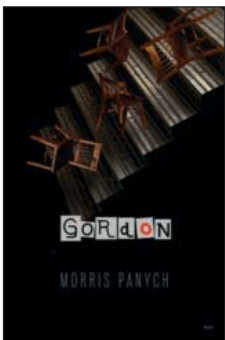
In *Discovery Passages*, Garry Thomas Morse sets out to recover the stolen, appropriated and scattered realm of his Kwakwaka’wakw ancestors, drawing upon written history and oral tradition in poems that scrutinize the bans on Native language and potlatching and the confiscation and sale of Aboriginal artifacts—as well as the effects these actions had on the lives of his people. • In a world where the corporate iron fist clad in the velvet glove of the state has appropriated all that is authentic and authoritative in language, *Triage*, the first book by community advocate Cecily Nicholson, utilizes the increasingly marginalized and criminalized language of protest and resistance to present a polyvocal narrative of human communities struggling at the brutal margins of the neoliberalized state. • Composed in three sections, *Glengarry* is a return in writing to the landscape of rob mclennan’s youth and a headlong rush into the fractures, slippages and buried surfaces of what the text leaves undisclosed to him, resisting the linguistic lure of nostalgia and romanticism to uncover a living language with every step. • In *Floating Up to Zero*, Ken Norris sings the present moment, precariously balanced between a frozen past and a fluid future. The poet at the centre of this journey inward finds himself trapped in his house in mid-winter, trying to talk his way out toward a world of infinite possibilities beyond a slowly melting history. • Very little critical work exists on the poetry of bill bissett, and almost no theoretical discourse on his visual work. In *textual vishyuns*, Carl Peters posits that bissett’s drawings, paintings and collages challenge artistic conventions of visual language in the same way his poetry challenges linguistic conventions of syntax and grammar to escape the strictures of Western modes of thought and perception.



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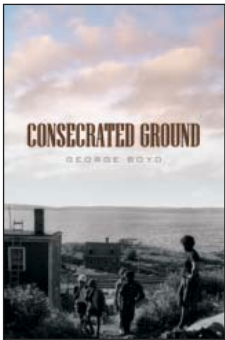
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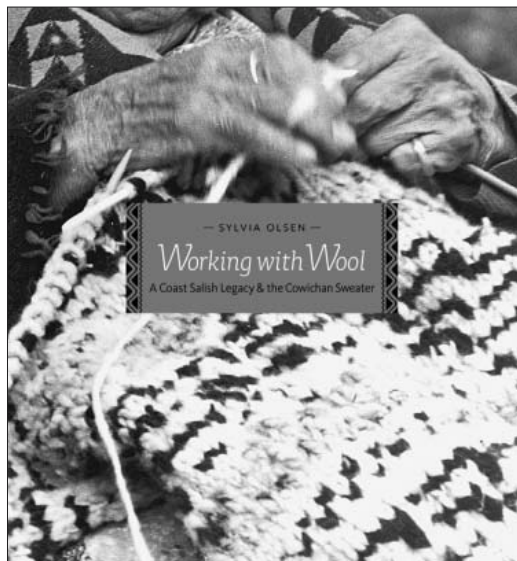


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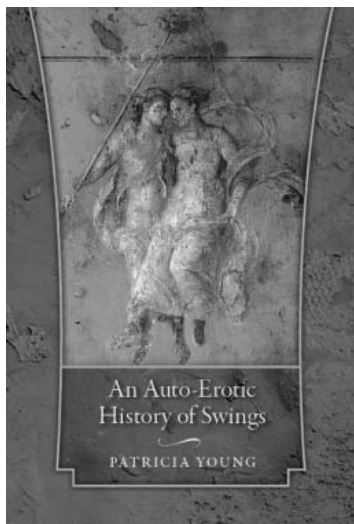
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Sylvia Olsen

Cowichan sweaters, with their distinctive bands of design and untreated, handspun wool, have been a British Columbia icon since the early years of the twentieth century, but few people know the full story behind the garment. Sylvia Olsen tells the tale, drawing on her own experience, academic research, and her four-decade friendship with some of the Coast Salish women who have each knitted hundreds of sweaters.

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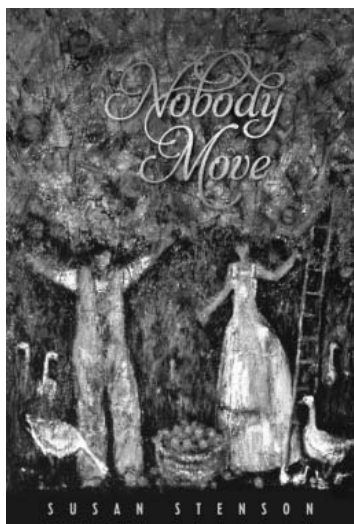
## An Auto-Erotic History of Swings

Patricia Young

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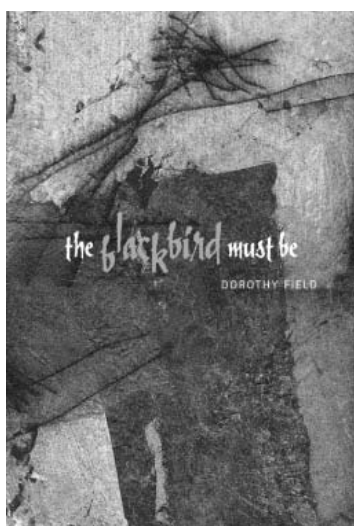


## Nobody Move

Susan Stenson

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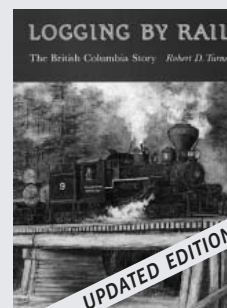


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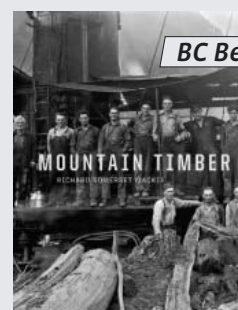
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### A is for Arneson



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HOST OF A NEW COOKING SHOW ON THE Food Network in Canada and the Cooking Channel in the U.S. called *Spice Goddess*, Punjabi-born Vancouverite Bal Arneson has followed her first book, *Everyday Indian*, with family recipes for classic Indian meals in **Bal's Quick and Healthy Indian** (Whitecap \$29.95).

978-1-77050-023-5

### B is for Bowering

NEVER MIND *PLAYBOY*. GEORGE BOW-ering's new memoir **Pinboy** (Cormorant \$32) recalls his sexual awakenings at age fifteen in the south Okanagan. He finds himself enamoured of three choices: his first love, the girl from the wrong side of the tracks, and one of his high school teachers.

978-1-897151-93-8

### C is for Czajkowski

CHRIS CZAJKOWSKI'S *A WILDERNESS Dweller's Cookbook* (Harbour \$14.95) is a multi-faceted account of how a wilderness dweller—in a non-growing climate 20 km from a road, 60 km from a store and 250 km from a town large enough to have a supermarket—feeds herself and the clients of her wilderness adventure business.

978-1-55017-518-9



Chris Czajkowski holds bread from her stone oven



John Furlong

### D is for Davis

VANCOUVER MAYOR GREGOR ROBERTSON and his predecessor Sam Sullivan both watched as Chuck Davis received the George Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award on October 14, 2010. It was Davis' last public appearance. He died at Surrey General Hospital of lung cancer on November 20, three days after his 75th birthday.

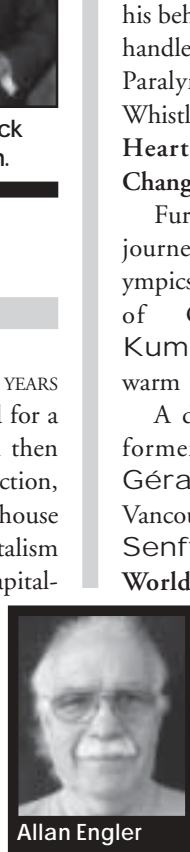
A Chuck Davis Book Fund has been set up at Vancity (account #173575) for donations to hire writers to compile his mammoth work-in-progress, *The History of Metropolitan Vancouver*. Tax deductions donations of \$100 or more can be made out to the Vancouver Historical Society, Box 219, Madeira Park, B.C. V0N 2H0. Crawford Kilian has created a Chuck Davis blog and the Davis' Woodcock Award speech is on Youtube.



Chuck Davis receives 2010 Woodcock Award from Mayor Gregor Robertson.

### E is for Engler

ALLAN ENGLER WORKED FOR MANY YEARS as a cook on coastal towboats and for a decade as secretary-treasurer and then president of Local 400, Marine Section, International Longshore & Warehouse Union-Canada. He believes capitalism is based on social labour, private capitalist entitlement and workplace dictatorships, a system that destroys environments, widens disparities and relies on repression, militarism and war. His new book is **Economic Democracy: The Working Class Alternative to Capitalism** (Fernwood \$15.95).



Allan Engler

Xue Shen and Hongbo Zhao of China came out of retirement to win a gold medal at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver.

### F is for Furlong

WITH HELP FROM VETERAN *GLOBE AND MAIL* columnist Gary Mason, Olympics boss John Furlong has recounted his behind-the-scenes version of how he handled the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Vancouver and Whistler in his immodestly-titled **Patriot Hearts: Inside the Olympics That Changed a Country** (D&M \$32.95).

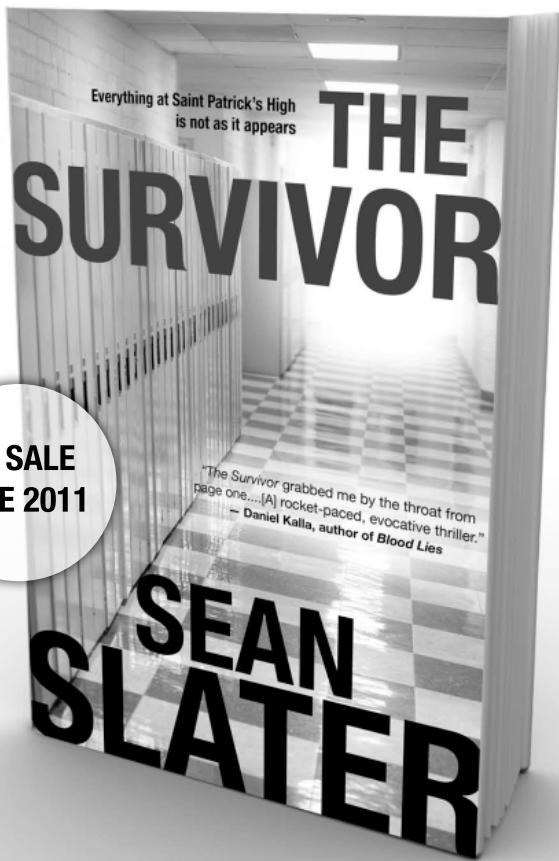
Furlong's account of his 14-year-long journey of shepherding the 2010 Olympics includes dealing with the death of Georgian luger Nodar Kumaritashvili and unseasonably warm weather.

A dazzling companion volume by former ice skater and photographer Gérard Châtaigneau and West Vancouver skating judge Jean Riley Senft is **Triumph on Ice: The New World of Figure Skating** (Greystone \$39.95) is primarily comprised of dramatic skating moments from the 2010 Olympics, augmented by shots from the 2010 ISU World Figure Skating Championships.

Furlong 978-1-55365-794-1;  
Senft 978-1-55365-657-9  
continued on next page



# Everything at Saint Patrick's High is not as it appears



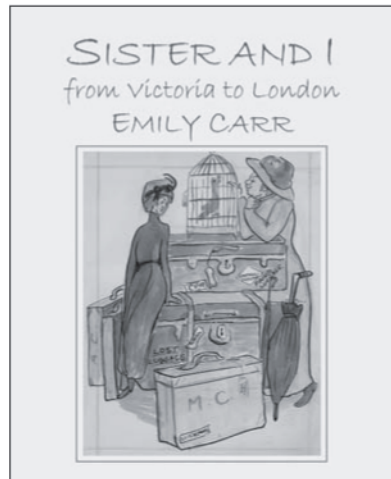
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This book is reproduced directly from Carr's original notebook, written and illustrated in her own hand. It includes an introduction by Kathryn Bridge, placing it in context with Carr's life and work.

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# WHO'S WHO BRITISH COLUMBIA



BEV DAVIES PHOTO

Joe Keithley (right) performing with D.O.A. in 1981. From *Talk—Action = Zero*

## G is for GGs

RICHMOND'S **WENDY PHILLIPS** HAS WON the Governor General's Award for children's text with **Fishtailing** (Coteau \$14.95). The lone Governor General's Award winner from B.C. publishers was **Allan Casey's** memoir and geographical study **Lakeland: Journeys into the Soul of Canada** (Greystone \$29.95), chosen as the best English non-fiction title.

Fish 9781550504118; Lake 9781553653080



Wendy Phillips

## H is for Hume

FEW BRITISH COLUMBIANS HAVE A deeper and more prodigious appreciation of this western corner of the continent than journalist and historian **Stephen Hume**. His latest compilation is **A Walk with the Rainy Sisters: In Praise of British Columbia's Places** (Harbour \$32.95). Hume was raised in various towns around B.C. 978-1-55017-505-X



Stephen Hume

## I is for Israel

HAVING ONCE LIVED NEAR THE APARTMENT of **Samuel Beckett** in Paris, and enjoying his writing for decades, poet **Inge Israel** has crafted **Beckett Soundings** (Ronsdale \$15.95) to explore his life, letters, plays and novels. The enigmatic, Irish-raised Protestant was known for his gloomy and sometimes existential world-view that spawned *Waiting for Godot*.

978-1-55380-112-2

## J is for Joseph

HAVING BEEN NOMINATED FOR THE Dorothy Livesay Prize for her first poetry collection about grief and death, **The Startled Heart** (Oolichan, 2004), **Eve Joseph** now evokes and examines the process of reaching epiphanies with **The Secret Signature of Things** (Brick \$19). In a long poem called 'Tracking' she struggles with the question of how to remember missing aboriginal women on the West Coast.

978-1-894078-81-8

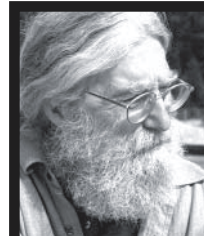
## K is for Keithley

GODFATHER OF CANADIAN PUNK, **Joe Keithley** has documented more than thirty years of rocking in the free world with the world-renowned band he founded—and still sings and plays with—D.O.A. Founder of Sudden Death Records and a Green Party candidate, Keithley is now a family man in Burnaby. Keithley's visual history of the band from 1978 to the present is **Talk – Action = Zero: An Illustrated History of D.O.A.** (Arsenal Pulp \$24.95). A joint book launch (with David Lester's graphic novel *The Listener*) and a D.O.A. concert June 4 at The Rickshaw in Vancouver is planned with tentative guests Mecca Normal.978-1-55152-396-5

## L is for Lived

NO GLOSS, NO GRANTS, NO INTERNS. NO internet presence. The nine-years-young non-fiction journal *Lived Experience* (\$19) is the brainchild of back-to-the-land philosopher **Van Andruss**, who ran Macleod's Books in Vancouver prior to **Don Stewart**. It is simply one of the most readable and mature literary publications in Canada. The journal comes out once a year from Lillooet. Van Andruss likes to get to know the people he publishes.

Contact: Box 1599, Lillooet, BC, V0K 1V0. [van@yalakom.com](mailto:van@yalakom.com)



Van Andruss

## M is for McKnight

TO MARK THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE City of Vancouver on April 6, 2011, **Lesley McKnight** has researched and collected stories about the city told from the perspectives of young people for **Vancouver Kids** (Brindle & Glass \$12.95)—from early potlatch ceremonies and the Great Vancouver Fire to modern times.

978-1-897142-52-3



## N is for Nuttall-Smith

SHIPWRECKED IN THE HEBRIDES IN THE tenth century, Irish priests, enslaved by Norse traders, manage to cross the Atlantic, via Iceland, and descend North America's plains to the steamy jungles of Mexico in Ben Nuttall-Smith's wide-ranging historical novel **Blood, Feathers and Holy Men** (Libros Libertad \$23), a blending of Irish, Norse and pre-Columbian mythology of the indigenous peoples of the Americas.

Having served as a brother in a Roman Catholic teaching order from 1956 to 1978, Nuttall-Smith has fashioned his truth-seeking heroes on Christian clerics who encounter the majesty of Quétzalcoatl, the feathered god of the Olmecs and Toltecs.

978-1-926763-10-1

## O is for Owen

CATHERINE OWEN'S SEEING LESSONS (Wolsak & Wynn \$17) is about the pioneer B.C. photographer, fierce traveler and visionary Mattie Gunterman and her photos from 1899-1945. "I was reading *The History of Women's Photography*," says Owen, "and came across a sentence on Mattie Gunterman that read: 'In 1927, Mattie's entire body of work was destroyed by fire.' Through research, I found out that, in fact, copies of most of her photos had been preserved through her son whose stash had been preserved before the flooding of the High Arrow Dam in 1965 in Beaton. Eventually, I got to meet her great grandson Henry Gunterman, Jr., and he took me on a tour of the Beaton region, showing me original documents and prints that chronicle his great grandmother's determined existence."

*Seeing Lessons* features 12 pages of Gunterman's photographs.

978-1-894987-48-6

## P is for Partridge

STEPHEN PARTRIDGE OF THE UBC English department has co-edited **The Cambridge Companion to Baseball** (Cambridge University Press \$26.95), with Leonard Cassuto of Fordham University, New York City. At various times, Partridge has counted himself a fan of the Cardinals, Orioles, Red Sox, and Mariners.

978-0-521-14575-6

## Q is for Queer

REBECCA HASKELL AND BRIAN Burtch address harassment experienced by many queer youth during their high school years in **Get That Freak: Homophobia and Transphobia in High Schools** (Fernwood \$17.95). They draw on accounts from young adults in



"When I became a mother to two sons of Chinese heritage and couldn't find modern day adventure stories with Chinese characters," says Bonita Sauder, "I wrote one."

B.C. to identify resources used to combat homophobic and transphobic harassment and strategies for establishing safe spaces for queer high school youth.

9781552663783

## R is for Reid

RETIRED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL Donalda Reid was captured by Rwandan Hutu militia in the Congo in 1998 while on a gorilla-viewing trek. Proceeds from the sale of her memoir, *Captive: A Survival Story* (Second Story Press, 2008) support African grandmothers living with AIDS through the Stephen Lewis Foundation. She has also visited Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda.

Reid's first young adult novel, **The Way It Is** (Second Story Press \$11.95), is an engaging 1960s-era tale of a gifted, young woman whose advanced educa-



Donalda Reid

tion is interrupted by a family move to Salmon Arm from Vancouver. Eager to become a medical doctor while still in her teens, the protagonist Ellen Manery befriends the outsider Tony Paul, who attends her high school but lives on the nearby Indian reserve. Their belief in one another enables them to overcome the hurdles of sexism and racism.

978-1-897187-80-7

## S is for Sauder

SOME OF US ARE MORE INTERNATIONAL than others. B.L (Bonita) Sauder of West Vancouver has resided in Hong Kong, Singapore, Cape Town and Bangkok where she was Director of Interna-

tional Relations at an International school. She has also been a restaurant manager, 'fitting' model, newspaper sub-editor, bartender, flag-girl, English teacher, guidance counsellor and a contributor to the Fistula Foundation in Ethiopia to support HIV/AIDS. **Year of the Golden Dragon** (Coteau \$9.95), the first novel for pre-teens in Sauder's *Journey to the East* series, has been awarded a Moonbeam Children's Book Award and gained a silver place in the Pre-Teen Fiction Fantasy category.

978-1-55050-428-6

## T is for Tanis

TANIS HELLIWELL OF POWELL RIVER HAS worked to bring spirituality into the workplace since 1976 with corporate clients, resulting in *Take Your Soul to Work: Transform Your Life and Work* (Random House, 1999). No mention was made in publicity materials about her previous publication about communing with leprechauns in Ireland, a self-published memoir called *Summer of the Leprechauns: A True Story* (Blue Dolphin Publishing, 1997). It was followed by another self-published memoir, **Pilgrimage with the Leprechauns: A True Story of a Mystical Tour of Ireland** (Wayshower Enterprises \$21.95). "Some years ago I lived in an old cottage in the village of Keel on the west coast of Ireland," she begins. "I shared Crumpaun Cottage with a leprechaun and his family who had lived there for a very long time. The leprechaun befriended me and taught me about elementals..."

Helliwell describes leading her fourth mystical tour of Ireland, to visit sacred sites, as an unmitigated disaster that simultaneously served as one of the most significant events of her life.

978-0-9809033-2-4



Tanis Helliwell visiting a dolmen (home of a leprechaun) in Keel, Ireland, June, 2010. Dolmens are megalithic tombs built between 4000 and 2000 BC for religious ceremonies including burying the dead.



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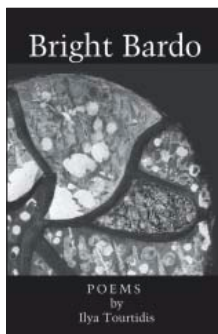
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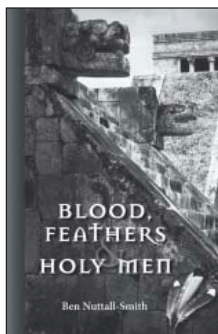
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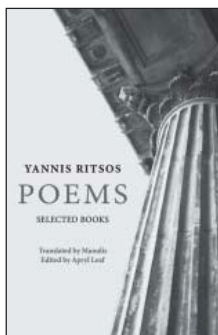
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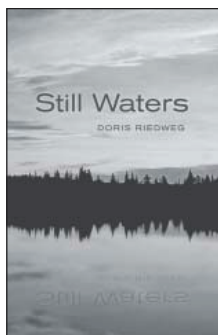
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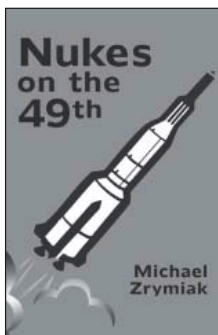
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# WHO'S WHO

BRITISH COLUMBIA



Judy Radul

## U is for Unclassifiable

BORN IN LILLOOET IN 1962, MIXED MEDIA installation and performance artist **Judy Radul** has been a cutting edge experimentalist on the West Coast since the early 1980s. To celebrate, explain and catalogue her works, **People Things Enter Exit** (Presentation House \$35) contains essays by **Christopher Eamon**, **Helga Pakasaar** and **Monika Szewczyk**, with interviews by **Jeff Derksen**, **Stan Douglas** and **Antonia Hirsch**.

978-0-920293-70-6

## V is for Verdicchio

THE ITALIAN CULTURAL CENTRE HAS ANNOUNCED the winning authors and works for the biennial F.G. Bressani Literary Prize. **Pasquale Verdicchio** has won the prize for poetry for **This Nothing's Place** (Guernica Editions \$15). The prize is named after the Jesuit priest, Father **Francesco Giuseppe Bressani** (1612-1672) the first Italian missionary to come to Canada, who wrote *Breve Relazione*, and who can be considered the precursor of Italian-Canadian writing.



Pasquale Verdicchio

978-1550712629

## W is for Wosk

ONE OF THE UNDER-CITED HEROES OF THE B.C. literary world, philanthropist **Yosef Wosk** was recently described as "an all-round good guy" by *Simon Fraser University News*, having just completed a 15-year stint with SFU Continuing Studies during which he pioneered the Philosophers' Café series and the formation of the Canadian Academy of Independent Scholars.

Although no longer formally associated with SFU, Wosk will continue his behind-the-scenes leadership as an independent financial supporter of countless literary and scholarly undertakings.

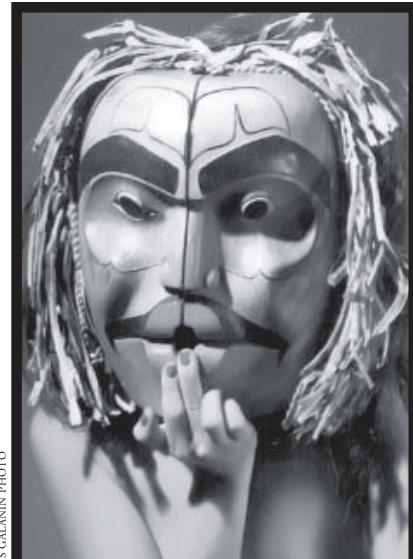


Yosef Wosk

## X is for eXotic

A COLLECTION OF EXPLICITLY SEXUAL poetry from an indigenous perspective, **Red Erotic** (Ojistah \$20), by **Janet Rogers**, a Mohawk/Tuscarora writer born in Vancouver in 1963, also features artwork by eight First Nations artists **Lee Claremont**, **George Littlechild**, **Denesse Grey Paul**, **Lindsay Delaronde**, **Chris Bose**, **Nicholas Galanin**, **Nadema Agard**, and **Marcus Amerman**.

978-1-77084-020-1



From *Red Erotic* by Janet Rogers

## Y is for Yeadon-Jones

THE SIX DREAMSPEAKER Cruising Guides by **Anne** and **Laurence Yeadon-Jones** feature hundreds of nautically accurate and informative hand-drawn charts of marinas and small boat anchorages for the west coast, augmented by colour photos. The pair have created a new edition for **Dreamspeaker Volume 2: Desolation Sound**

& the **Discovery Islands** (Harbour \$49.95) which also includes information on recreational activities suitable for adults and children; the best places to anchor your boat for a romantic sunset, pick blackberries or buy a cappuccino.

978-1-55017-524-0

## Z is for Zorgamazoo

WITH AN MFA FROM THE UBC CREATIVE Writing program, **Robert Paul Weston** was inspired by **Dr. Seuss**

and **Roald Dahl** to write his first fantasy novel for young readers, **Zorgamazoo** (Penguin \$17.50), an illustrated tale rich in wordplay and mythical creatures.

Katrina, a girl, teams up with Morty, a zorgle, to uncover an intergalactic conspiracy that threatens the existence of every bizarre creature on their planet.

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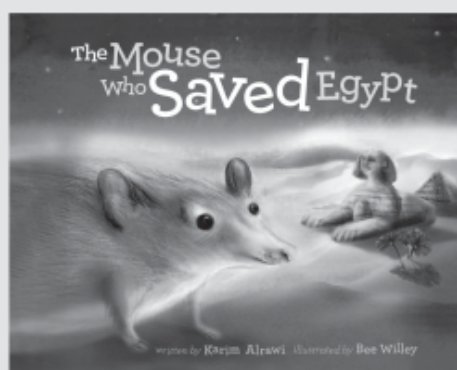
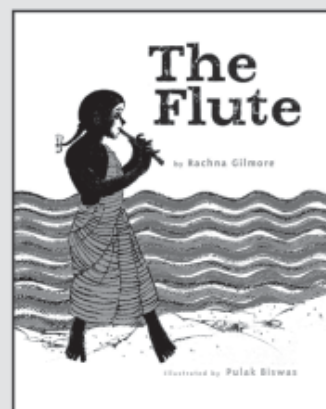
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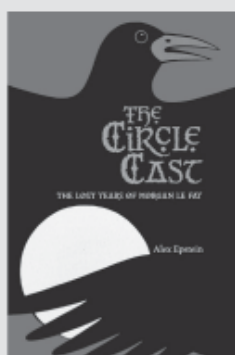
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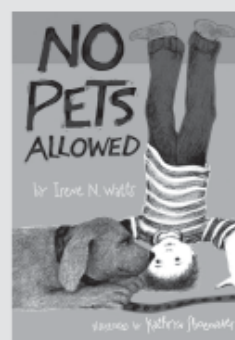
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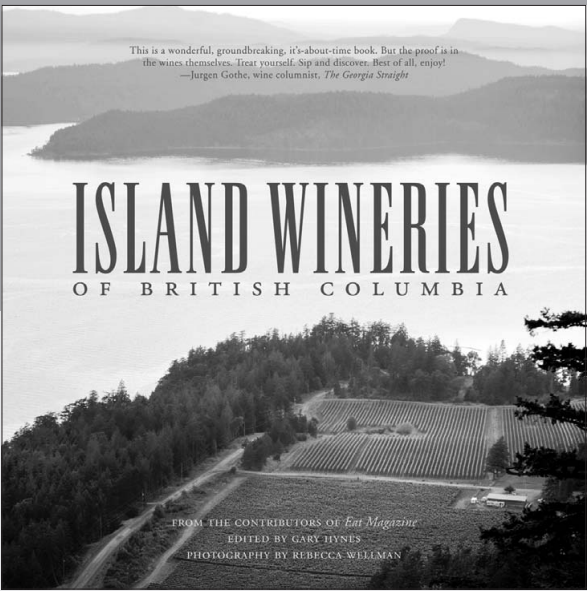


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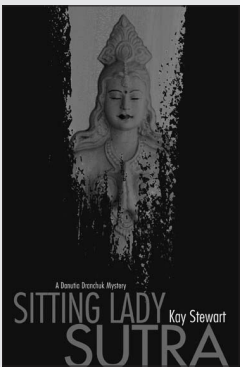
Paula Savard's boring life as an insurance adjuster takes a swift turn when a close friend is murdered. Is Paula's investigation taking her into dangerous territory?



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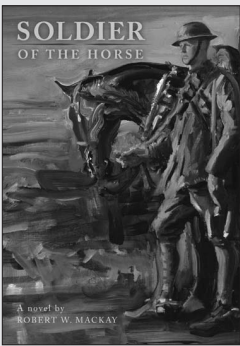
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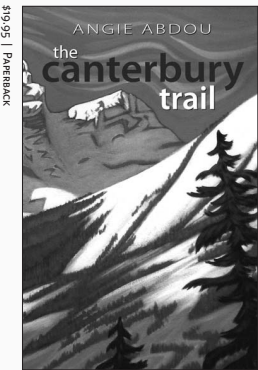
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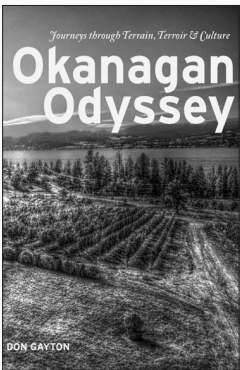
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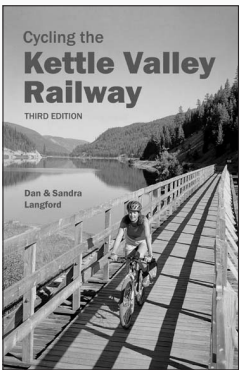
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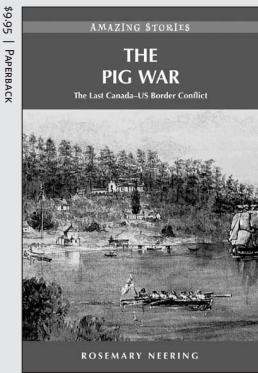
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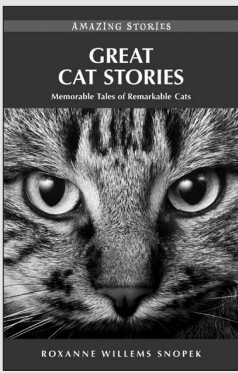
The Kettle Valley Railway and its many connectors has something to offer all levels of cyclist from easy day-riding to multi-day adventures through the magnificent scenery of southern BC. This edition includes everything you need to explore this incredible area.



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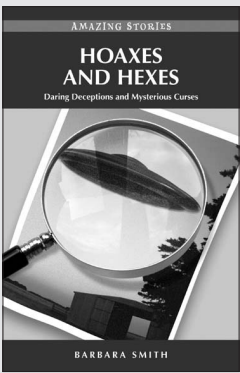
When an American settler shot a pig belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company on San Juan Island, little did he realize he would cause what would become one of the strangest border conflicts between Britain and the United States: the Pig War of 1859.



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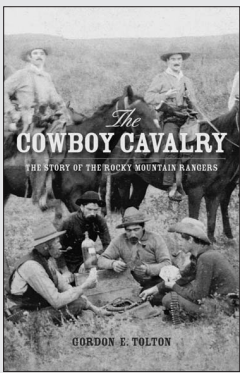
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BY JOHN MOORE

# PLANET OF THE AGGREGATORS

A FEW YEARS AGO THERE WAS A SPATE OF FILMS ABOUT PEOPLE WHO COULD see just a few minutes into the future. That's a sensation familiar to readers of William Gibson's novels, especially his latest, **Zero History** (G.P. Putnam's Sons \$31), third in a sequence of novels that began with *Pattern Recognition* (2003), followed by *Spook Country* (2007).

In *Zero History*, a marketing whiz named Hubertus Bigend has corralled an eccentric, anti-social, mathematical genius, Bobby Chombo, to serve as an 'aggregator.' His synthetic analysis of economic and social factors has the potential to provide Hubertus with the ultimate competitive edge, literally of all time.

In a world where global markets are electronically integrated in real time, a head start of a few minutes, even a few seconds, would be the ultimate in insider-trading. Chombo's calculations can afford Hubertus with a lead-time on the present of seventeen minutes. As Bigend says, when asked if that's enough, "Seven would have been entirely adequate. Seven *seconds*, in most cases."

The Holy Grail of brokers, wheeler-dealers and marketing magnates like Hubertus Bigend is that brief myopic moment of clairvoyance, just a glimpse into what Gibson calls "the order flow," or "the aggregate of all the orders in the market. Everything anyone is about to buy or sell, all of it."

The aggregate includes even the shadowy grey and black markets in drugs, rare commodities and forbidden technologies that thrive in the dark back alleys of capitalism, a subject that has been a signature theme in Gibson's writing.

In *Zero History*, Chombo's aggregate of the order flow is what director Alfred Hitchcock used to call the McGuffin—the secret information or object whose possession drives the plot without actually being part of the action.

Chombo is a relatively minor character. Gibson is much more interested in the characters developed in *Pattern Recognition* and *Spook Country*. These include Hollis Henry, ex-rock star who retired to write a book on 'locative art' and whose modest fortune has since been erased by the ubiquitous 'market forces' currently destroying our mutual funds and RRSPs; Hubertus Bigend cruises the world's oceans in his surplus Soviet *ekranoplan*, a ground-effect vehicle with an interior renovated by Hermes; and Milgrim, a young man whose addiction to anxiety-suppressing drugs has left him with such sketchy sense of self. He has become a man with "zero history."

A BLIND PERSON'S OTHER senses are said to become sharper in compensation for the loss

of sight. With Milgrim, Gibson offers the provocative suggestion that a loss of personal history—a sense of one's self as the aggregate of personal memory—might be replaced by a heightened affinity for "pattern recognition," a talent that could be more useful in a semi-cyberworld that is already part digital.

Bigend has paid to have Milgrim detoxified, weaned off his anti-anxiety drugs, in order to exploit his gift for pattern recognition in industrial/commercial espionage. Milgrim's assignment is to track down and recognize a distinctive and highly desirable blend of denim clothing produced as a "secret brand" only obtainable by those in the know from containers that appear briefly and mysteriously at outdoor flea markets and other ad hoc *souks* of the post-modern world.

Bigend wants to penetrate the anti-corporate culture of the secret brand and gain control of the coveted cloth in order to secure contracts for supplying military clothing that will inevita-

bly spin off into civilian fashions. Inevitably, assorted thugs and goons from the underworld of global capitalism have designs on both the denim and on the predictive services of Chombo.

Have you got all that?

As in his earlier novels, *Neuromancer*, *Burning Chrome*, *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, *Virtual Light* etc., Gibson excels at evoking baroquely detailed visions of a not-too-distant-future, a world enriched by co-existence with its own avatar, Cyberworld. (Apparently he's even appeared as himself as an avatar in the cyber-world game, *Second Life*, to publicize his books, which makes him the Hubertus Bigend of authors.)

Though Gibson has been described as a writer of science fiction, his novels are actually less fantastic than most of Kurt Vonnegut's and mercifully not marred by the smug self-congratulatory and patronizing humour that gets tedious in Vonnegut's work. The Dadaist collage that is Hollis Henry's hotel room in an exclusive London club, for instance, isn't one iota weirder than a designer's apartment I saw on one of those real estate shows on the *Home & Garden* TV channel the other night.

Back in 1978, in an essay about Walter Benjamin entitled "Under the Sign of Saturn," Susan Sontag observed,

"The genius of surrealism was to generalize with ebullient candour the baroque cult of ruins; to perceive that the nihilistic energies of the modern era make everything a ruin or fragment—and therefore collectible. A world whose past has become (by definition) obsolete, and whose present churns out instant antiques, invites custodians, decoders and collectors." The juxtaposition of culturally coded 'collectibles' from the recent past with technologies only imagined on *Star Trek* forty years ago isn't a vision of the future; it's your living room right now.

(I took a break from writing this article to watch an IBM computer named 'Watson' compete on *Jeopardy* against the TV game-show's two all-time champs. Watson beat them like a pair of borrowed mules and I went back to using a 500-year-old technology, the mechanically-printed book. It didn't seem like a terribly radical juxtaposition until I thought about it.)

Some critics have taken shots at Gibson's novels for being too strong on technology at the expense of character. Admittedly, his fondness for caricature and whimsical names is somewhat Dickensian, but so is the scope of his work. He's been quoted as saying he believes we're entering a new Victorian Age of polarization between the Haves and Have-Nots in the Global Village. So it is a not-so-brave (and not always so new) world he describes.

Despite the mock-thriller plot, *Zero History* is very much a character-driven novel whose real story is the gradual re-emergence of Milgrim's personality. From a detoxed vacant near-cipher, a man whose past has become obsolete, he grows through his attachment to Fiona, a rebel-girl motorcycle courier, and begins to make ethical decisions that are no longer subject to the agendas of Hubertus Bigend and favour the shadowy subversive culture of "secret brands" and alternative capitalism.

Maybe it's just *us*, with our personal and professional websites, blogs, Facebook pages, Second Life avatars, talking and texting constantly on Blackberries and iPhones, who have become too strong on technology at the expense of what used to be called character. And William Gibson is just the guy holding the mirror. 978-0399156823

Novelist and critic John Moore lives in Garibaldi Highlands.

MICHAEL O'SHEA PHOTO



# CARMEN

## A YOUTH OF OPERATIC PROPORTIONS

In her memoir *Something Fierce*, Carmen Aguirre boldly describes her upbringing in the long shadow of the Chilean dictator Augusto José Ramón Pinochet Ugarte. For 10 years, from 1979 to 1989, she takes the reader inside Chile, war-ridden Peru, the Bolivian dictatorship of Luis García Meza, strife-ridden Argentina and naive Canada.

ment. Such vagueness is entirely appropriate since Aguirre was deliberately kept in the dark, and direct knowledge of her full situation was suppressed, presumably for her own protection.

But *Something Fierce* is more than a journey into the shadows of political repression. What could have been a narrative of unrelenting horror is relieved by joyous occasions—an idyllic holiday with Chilean grandparents, several adolescent love affairs—and by poetic descriptions of surroundings, such as Aguirre’s first view of

the Bolivian capital city, La Paz, a place she comes to love:

“We drove for hours, until the land broke like a Greek plate and there was a drop in the road. I looked out to see nothing but sky. The universe. Then, I looked down, and there below us was a city in a bowl. A bowl like the deepest crater on the moon, with a little house stuck to every last square inch of it. The bus drove over the edge of the bowl and down.”

At one point Aguirre collapses under the strain. She candidly describes her emotional meltdown, wrought by the pressure of fear, her stepfather’s stress-induced anger and a long period of isolation in a house with a diminishing food supply. “I was an agoraphobic fifteen-year-old skeleton with an obsessive-compulsive disorder,” she writes.

It comes as a revelation when an acquaintance tells her, “Girls, always know this: it’s your human right to be happy.”

She wonders what that means for someone like her. “Did that mean children shouldn’t have to think about revolutions, or safe houses, or being tortured to death?” she asks.

Distracted, she slashes a wrist and is sent to a psychiatrist to whom she

can confide nothing. The suicidal episode results in her return to Vancouver, where she completes her first year of high school. Shortly after her arrival there, she is joined by her mother and step-father who have barely escaped capture. Broken and defeated, they go their separate ways.

Aguirre returns to South America. At eighteen, she takes the resistance oath in a cafe in Lima, vowing to reveal no information, even if she is tortured to death, and understanding that if she gives away her comrades during the first twenty-four hours of capture, she will be executed by the organization.

The contrast between her twin lives in North America and South America is, obviously, extreme. She worries that her convictions aren’t strong enough to overcome her fears. Nevertheless, with her *companero*, she carries out cross-border missions into Chile. The life-expectancy of those who undertake such work is two years.

Even though she is twenty pounds underweight and suffers from dizzy spells, Aguirre still pushes herself “to master the skill of killing my heart whenever I crossed the border.”

Powerful impressions are left by determined women.

Dr. Vergara Emerson, a Bolivian pediatrician and professor, walks to the front of a movie theatre to denounce the dictator, Luis García Meza. “You will remember her,” Carmen’s stepfather tells her, “because what that woman did is the definition of courage.”

Salvador Allende’s sister, Laura Allende, stays with Aguirre’s family in Vancouver during her cross-Canada tour, while dying of cancer. Carmen hears her weeping in the night, grieving for the lost of her country, not her life.

Carmen’s grandmother is a role model who risks banging pots and pans during the blackouts in Chile. “I’ve seen fear turn people into informers, monsters,” she says, “turning in their own friends and neighbors. You’re dealing with a country, sick with fear.”

Trinidad, a family friend, has given her life to the underground, at the expense of her husband and children. After a decade of struggle, she tells Aguirre, “The resistance has dissolved... we tried hard, but it’s time to state the obvious, we lost. Maybe in ten, twenty, a hundred or a thousand years, the society we dreamed of will come to be, but we lost this round.”

And we meet Carmen’s mother, a valiant spirit who can draw a knife to face down a band of human predators when they threaten her daughters. For her, motherhood and family life are not incompatible with revolutionary work.

These are hard acts to follow. But Carmen Aguirre, now a respected playwright, has found the courage to revisit her terrors. She has inherited the heart of a revolutionary, so the struggles for justice and freedom will continue, on the page, or on the stage. 978-1-55365-462-9

Biographer and novelist Joan Givner, from *Mill Bay*, writes frequently about books pertaining to women’s lives.



JOAN GIVNER

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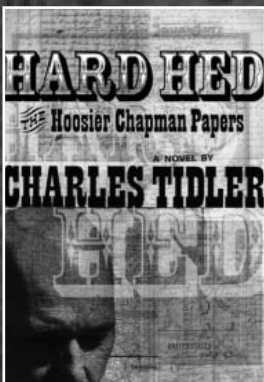
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## FIRST BOOK COMPETITION

The First Book Competition was held to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Writer's Studio at Simon Fraser University, Harbour Centre. The competition identified three fine new writers who will see their books published this spring. Watch for event info!

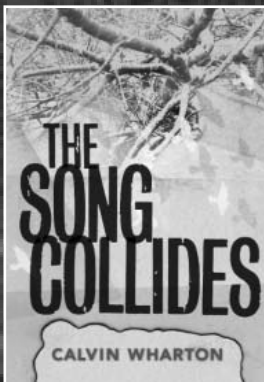
**The winners are:** *The House with the Broken Two* (Creative Nonfiction) by Myrl Coulter of Edmonton; *Nondescript Rambunctious* (Fiction) by Jackie Bateman of Vancouver; and *Galaxy* (Poetry) by Rachel Thompson, also from Vancouver.



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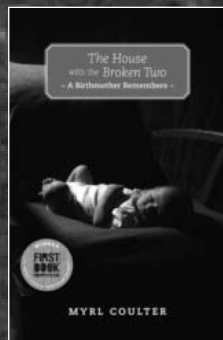
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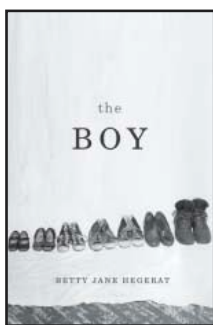


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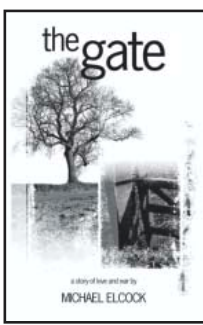
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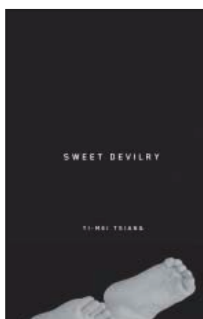
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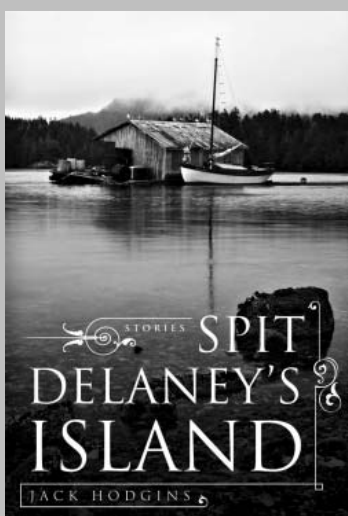
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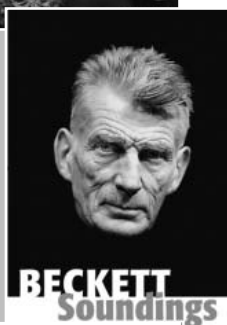
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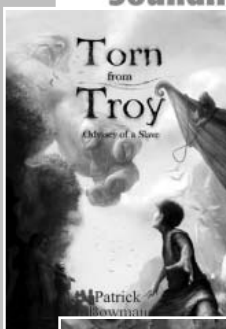


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**T**HE TURNOUT FOR A Memorial mass in honour of Eric Nicol on February 6, just four days after his death at age 91, was embarrassingly small for someone who had significant stature as a writer for six decades.

It was held in a modest Catholic church in the Dunbar neighbourhood of Vancouver, presided over by a Franciscan who deemed that anyone who is a writer is necessarily a contemplative, and all contemplatives are within the realm of God.

Nicol was a self-avowed agnostic.

Precious little in the service referred to Nicol as a person and the importance of his literary career was barely mentioned beyond a letter from his Alberta-based illustrator.

Laymen who knew Eric were only invited to speak at a tea 'n' sandwiches reception afterwards.

Despite severe back pain, veteran sportswriter Jim Taylor attended from West Vancouver to give some appreciation of Eric as a writer, and Norman Young (a retired UBC professor) was also present as someone who knew the bigger picture, but by then the humourless mass had unintentionally served as a sobering reminder of how fleeting "literary fame" can be.

JACK KNOX'S COLUMN IN THE *Times Colonist* on February 6 was a welcome antidote.

"Nicol wasn't just good," he wrote. "He was good for a long time, like Gordie Howe... He was a smart writer with an Everyman quality, finding humour in mundane life. Witty without being mean, he always seemed to have a cheerful sense of the absurd.

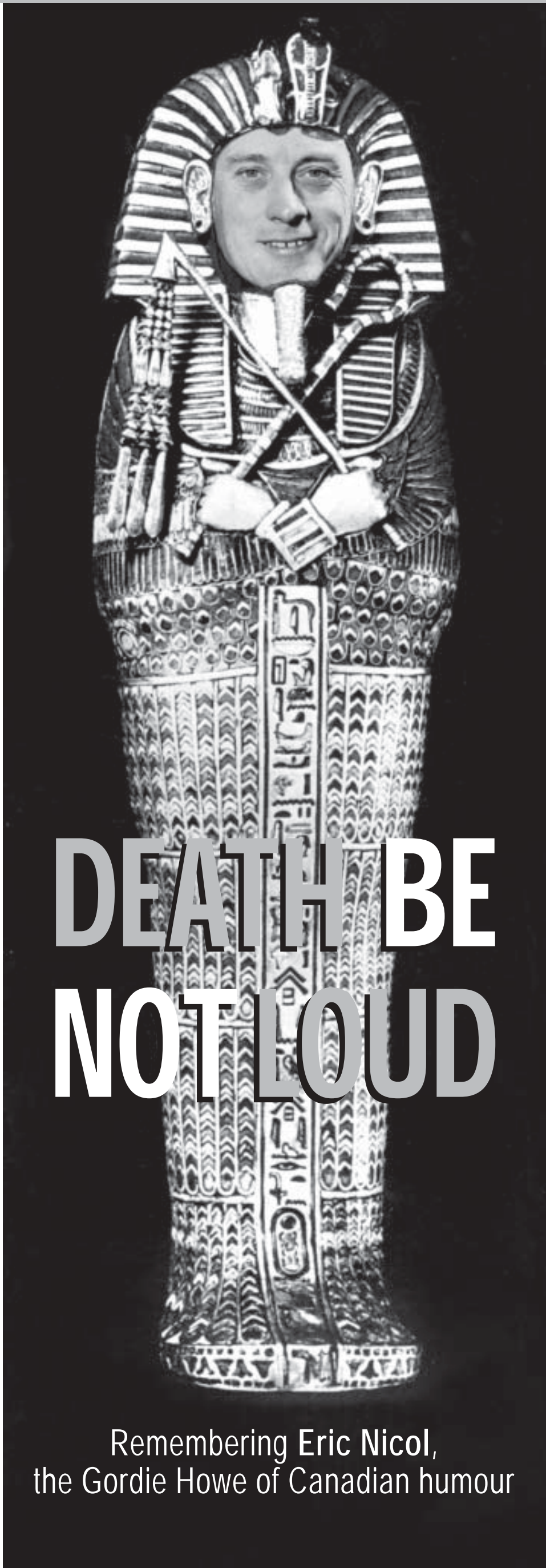
IN SHORT, ERIC NICOL CRANKED OUT 6,000 columns for *The Province* between 1951 and 1986; as well as 39 books, countless radio scripts, stageplays and magazine articles. One of his plays was produced on Broadway. He wrote two successful radio series for the BBC and he became the first living Canadian writer to be included in *The Oxford Book of Humorous Prose*.

He won the Leacock Medal for Humour three times. In 1995, he became the first recipient of the George Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award to recognize an outstanding literary career in British Columbia.

Eric Nicol wrote prodigiously and chronically. His last book, *Scriptease* (2010), was written while he had Alzheimer's.

He was good for a long time.

ACCORDING TO ERIC PATRICK NICOL—born on December 28, 1919 in Kingston, Ontario, the son of William Nicol and Amelia Mannock Nicol—in 1921 he "almost immediately persuaded his parents to flee a fierce winter in favour of a farmhouse



## DEATH BE NOT LOUD

Remembering Eric Nicol,  
the Gordie Howe of Canadian humour

on Kingsway," in British Columbia. He would later describe the province as "a body of land surrounded by envy." After a brief period in Nelson, the family relocated to Point Grey where Nicol began writing stories at Lord Byng High School. While pursuing an arts degree at UBC in 1941, Nicol wrote for the *The Ubysey* newspaper under the pen name of Jabez.

Nicol served with the RCAF in W.W. II, during which he started writing occasional columns for the *Vancouver News Herald* and *The Province*. As Jabez, he published his first book, *Says We* (1943), a collection of columns by himself and the once-legendary Vancouver journalist Jack Scott.

While he was in the RCAF, Nicol wrote comedy skits that were performed to entertain the armed forces. At war's end, he returned to UBC for his M.A. in French Studies ('48), then spent one year in doctoral studies at the Sorbonne. He moved to London, England, to write a radio comedy series for Bernard Braden and Barbara Kelly of the BBC from 1950-51.

During this period, while writing alongside Frank Muir and Denis Norden, Nicol bought a car and lived it up a little, renting a swanky apartment. Naively, he had not understood that he must pay taxes on his earnings.

And so he skedaddled back to Vancouver, where he became a regular columnist with *The Province* in 1951.

DURING 40 YEARS OF WRITING FOR *The Province*, Nicol claimed he never had a contract, he never took a holiday and he never missed a deadline. He feared that if he went on vacation, he might lose his job.

For most of his life, Nicol lived in the same house he purchased in 1957, near UBC. After being at any gathering for about fifteen or twenty minutes, he invariably whispered to his companion, "Let's get out of here."

Avoidance of parties was akin to avoidance of embarrassment. "I'm either sitting there like a frog full of shot," he told the *Georgia Straight* in 1989, "or I run off at the neck and then hate myself the next morning."

It was easier to let his characters speak. Nicol was the first Vancouver playwright to have his work successfully produced by the Vancouver Playhouse. His best-known play, *Like Father, Like Fun* (1966), concerned a crass lumber baron's attempt to contrive his son's initiation to sex. After it was unsuccessfully staged in New York under the title *A Minor Adjustment* (1967), Nicol rebounded with *The Fourth Monkey* (1968) about a failed playwright who takes refuge on the Gulf Islands.

Nicol's play for the National Theatre in Ottawa, *Pillar of Sand* (1973), was set in fifth century Constantinople and examined civilization's decline. "The reviews were mixed," he said, "bad and terrible." Other plays are *Regulus; Beware the Quickly Who; The Clam Made a Face*; a Joy Coghill vehicle, *Ma!* (1981), about once-legendary B.C.

continued on page 18



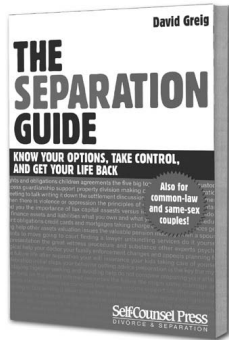
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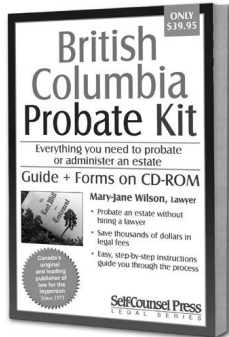


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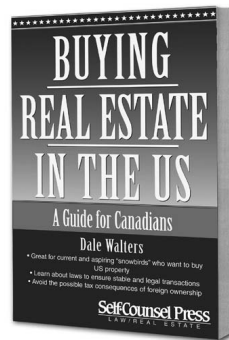


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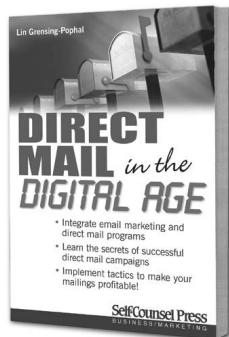


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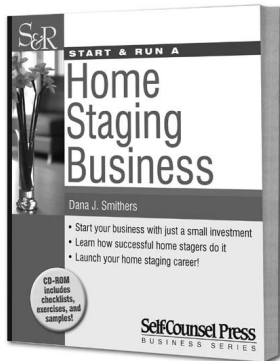


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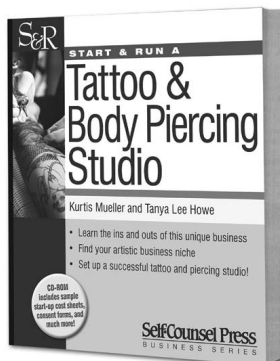


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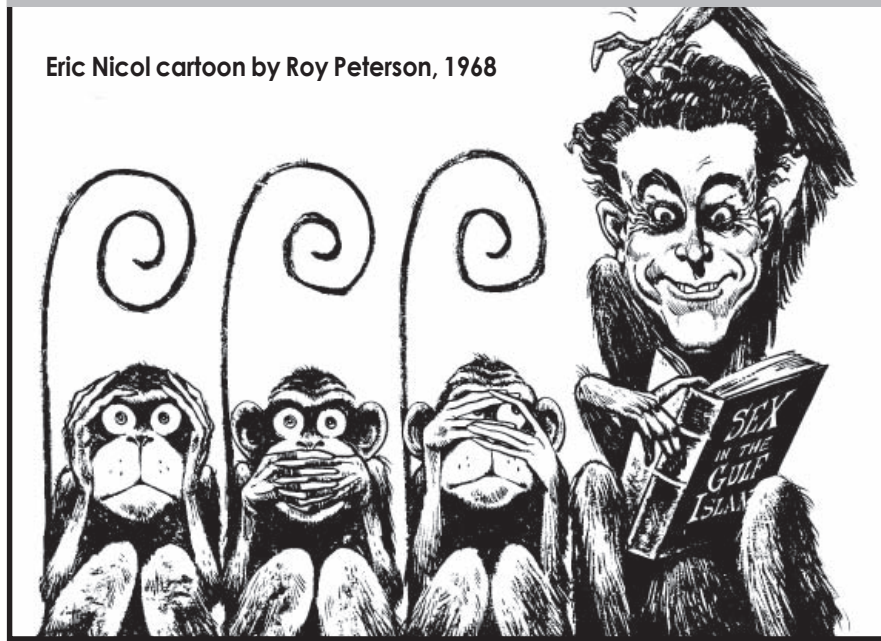
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Eric Nicol cartoon by Roy Peterson, 1968



continued from page 17

newspaperwoman **Margaret ‘Ma’ Murray**; and his cryptic *Free At Last*.

One of Nicol’s more audacious works was *Dickens of the Mounted: The Astounding Long-Lost Letters of Inspector F. Dickens NWMP 1874–1886* (1989), in which he devilishly invented correspondence from the son of **Charles Dickens**. This fictional work was taken for fact by many readers and some media outlets.

In his amusing but shrewd memoir *Anything for a Laugh* (1998), Nicol’s viewpoints are invariably witty, unfailingly original and occasionally downright odd. “I can take pride in nothing,” he writes. “It’s a sort of low-grade humility.”



ALTHOUGH HE WAS AN INVETERATE punster, Eric Nicol did not wish to be pegged as simply a humourist. Seldom cited among Nicol’s best books is the still-serviceable history of his city, *Vancouver* (1970).

Apolitical but wary of authority, he was proud that his column on the assassination of **John F. Kennedy** was read into *The Congressional Record*. If prodded, he liked to recall that one of his *Province* columns against capital punishment resulted in a citation for contempt and a trial that attracted national interest.

Beset by family troubles, Nicol shocked his readership by producing something serious, *Letters to My Son*, a book based on **Lord Chesterfield**’s famous tome to his wayward son. “Although life is a box of chocolates according to Forrest Gump,” Nicol wrote, “what they expected to get from me was a soft centre. Instead they bit into a sourball. I felt badly about this. I had violated one of the first rules of surviving as a writer: continue to give your readers what they have learned to expect from you. If you are **Stephen King**, you give them horror, book after book. **Margaret Atwood**, feminist turmoil. **Farley Mowat**, a torrid love affair with wolves, whales, whatever the Maritimers are slaughtering as a surrogate for having a team in the National Hockey League.”

A self-avowed commercial writer, Nicol frequently described his politics as “anarchist in theory, liberal in practice.” In public, he seemed downright conservative, even prudish. In 1962, Nicol quipped that he did not smoke, drink, play cards or run around with women—

but he hoped to do so if royalties came pouring in.

As a self-avowed ‘devout determinist,’ an agnostic ‘hooked on antique principles,’ Nicol was determined not to change with the times. After 35 years, the droll punster was retired by Pacific Press at age 65. After that he wrote one column per week, reduced to one column per month, then zilch.

“The print humourist is an endangered species,” he wrote. “Every year I expect to receive a Canadian Wildlife Federation calendar with my picture on it.”

Eric Nicol had three children from his first wife **Myrl Mary Helen Heselton**. In 1986 he married author **Mary Razzell**, with whom he lived in the same Point Grey home he had purchased in 1957. Although he once described himself as “pretty well retired from everything except breathing,” Nicol teamed with cartoonist **Peter Whalley** for *Canadian Politics Unplugged* in 2003 and released a “pal-sied opus” about aging in 2005. But he couldn’t stop joking.

Self-deprecating to a fault (“In the feast of life, I have been a digestive biscuit”) and not prone to self-mythologizing, Nicol accumulated the wisdom of the jester.

Just before he died, he joked once more to Mary, his steadfast supporter, “Let’s get out of here.”

Eric Nicol died at 9:19 a.m. on February 2, 2011, at the Louis Brier Home and Hospital in Vancouver.



SOMEWHERE NEAR THE MIDDLE OF **Frank Davey**’s new book on the origins of the TISH writing movement at UBC, *When TISH Happens* (ECW), Davey states that when he was growing up in Abbotsford in the 1950s, there were only three living B.C. writers that anyone knew existed: **Roderick Haig-Brown**, **Earle Birney** and **Eric Nicol**. That held true for the early sixties, too.

But from the Age of Pun to the Age of Rap, tastes in humour radically changed. Nicol’s gentlemanly wit began to seem anachronistic.

By the time Nicol was forced into retirement from the newspaper game, he was given a laptop computer as a present from Pacific Press.

Nicol, according to Jim Taylor, always wrote using a pencil.

For a complete bibliography of Eric Nicol’s work see [abcbookworld.com](http://abcbookworld.com)



## THE PASSIONATE COLLECTOR

*As books are digitized by libraries and Google, “real books” have become increasingly attractive to literary adventurers such as Andrew Irvine who search for precious objects.*

FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY, ANDREW IRVINE, A past president of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, works as a philosophy professor at UBC. But on the weekends he can be found hunting through Canada’s used bookstores.

Irvine’s particular passion is collecting first-edition copies of all the books that have ever won Canada’s Governor General’s Literary Awards. Between 1936 and 2010, 610 books have received awards. Of these, 357 have been in English.

Irvine has succeeded in finding all but three of the 357 English books in their award-winning editions, and seven are still without their original dust jackets.

The three books Irvine is especially eager to find are first-edition copies of Arthur Bourinot’s 1939 book of poetry, *Under the Sun* (The Macmillan Company of Canada) and two novels: Bertram Brooker’s 1936 *Think of the Earth* (Thomas Nelson & Sons / Jonathan Cape), and Gwethalyn Graham’s 1938 *Swiss Sonata* (Jonathan Cape).

“It’s especially hard to find some of the older books with dust jackets in good condition,” he says, “because the first thing libraries do is throw away a book’s dust jacket. This means that for anyone wanting to consult the original book, part of the experience is lost.”



FINDING BOOKS PUBLISHED DURING THE DEPRESSION IS A challenge because print runs were small. Then, during the Second World War, paper was often rationed, especially in Britain, but also in Canada.

“It’s not unusual to find dust jackets from the 1940s printed on backs of old military maps,” Irvine says.

Some of his favourite titles in his collection are:

- Anne Chislett’s *Quiet in the Land*
- Leonard Cohen’s *Selected Poems*
- Roméo Dallaire’s *Shake Hands with the Devil*
- Hugh MacLennan’s *Two Solitudes*
- Emily Carr’s *Klee Wyck*
- Robert Ford’s *Window on the North*
- Marshall McLuhan’s *The Gutenberg Galaxy*
- John Gray’s *Billy Bishop Goes to War*
- Stephen Leacock’s *My Discovery of the West*
- Michael Ondaatje’s *English Patient*

“So many of these books are worth reading more than once,” he says. “Recently I re-read Carolyn Frost’s book about the underground railroad [*I’ve Got a Home in Glory Land*]. “And for a long time, Marie-Louise Gay’s children’s book *Rainy Day Magic* [from 1987] was a favorite at bedtime in our house.”

“Of course, in addition to all the famous books, it’s also easy to find titles that over the years have been forgotten. It’s hard to read Josephine Phelan’s account of the assassination of Darcy McGee [*The Ardent Exile*, from 1951] without thinking that it’s a book that it would be good for more Canadians to read.”

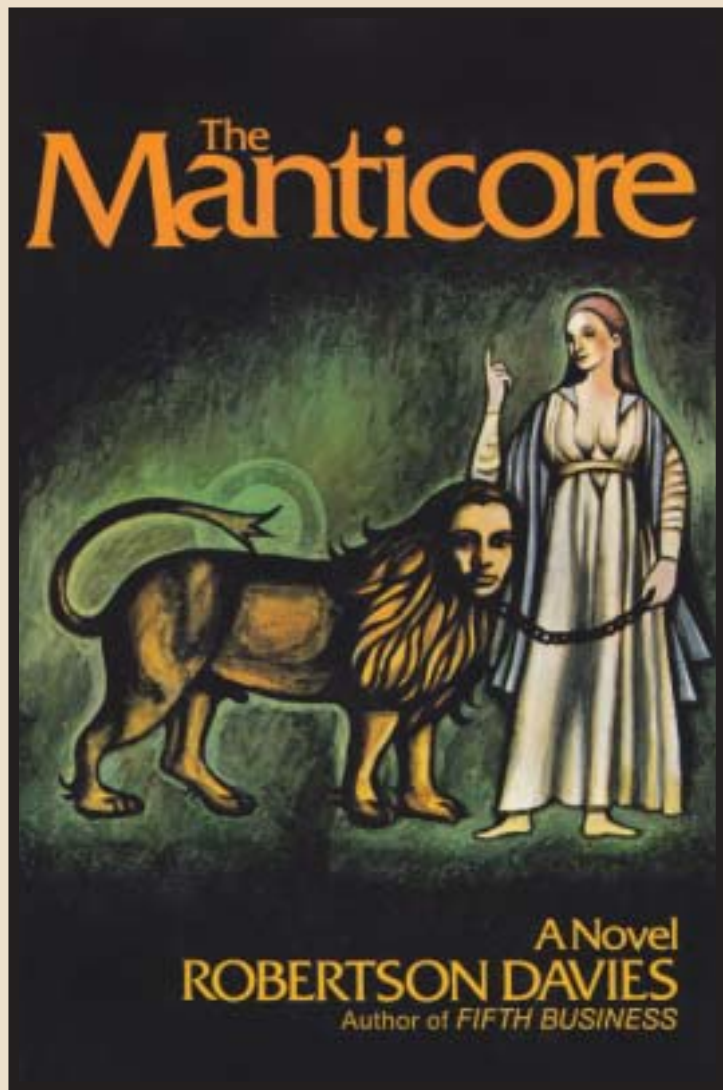
Some award-winning G.G. books were originally issued in such small press runs that finding first-edition copies is just a matter of luck.

“In 1947, Robert MacGregor Dawson won the prize for Academic Non-fiction for his book *The Government of Canada*. What’s not widely known is that, in addition to the 1947 hard copy of the book, a 1946 paperback student edition was also issued. The 1946 edition doesn’t appear on WorldCat, the online catalogue that lists the holdings of some 71,000 libraries from over 100 countries around the world.”

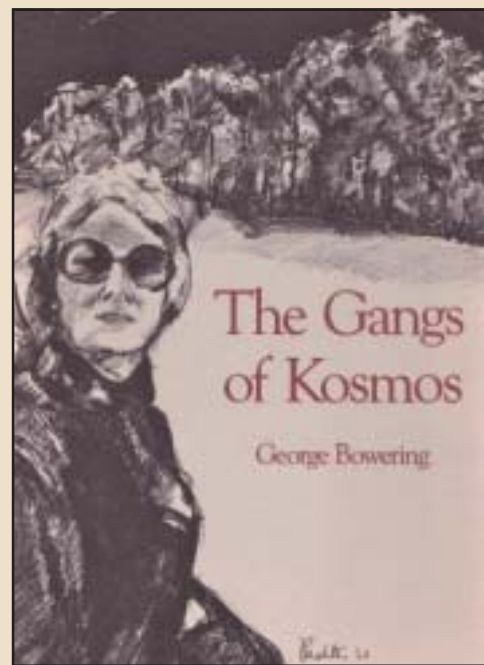
It’s very unusual for anyone to find an earlier 1946 copy, but Irvine has one.



IN THE PROCESS OF BECOMING AN AMATEUR BOOK SLEUTH, Andrew Irvine has become an expert in Canadian literary history by default. Having published numerous books of philosophy, Irvine is considering compiling a book about the awards, something that would not just introduce readers to the wide variety of Canadian literature that has been honoured by the Governor General’s Literary Awards since their inception in 1936, but that would also give Canadians the opportunity to fall in love with forgotten titles all over again.



1972 Fiction winner



1969 Poetry winner

**Can you help Andrew Irvine find dust jackets for these first editions?**

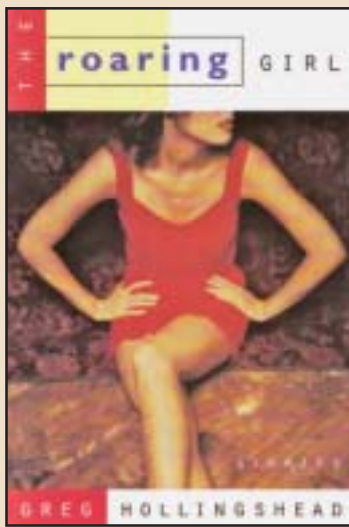
- The Fable of the Goats & Other Poems by E.J. Pratt (Macmillan, 1937) — poetry
- By Stubborn Stars & Other Poems by Kenneth Leslie (Ryerson, 1938) — poetry
- The Dark Weaver by Laura G. Salverson (Ryerson, 1937) — novel
- Three Came to Ville Marie by Alan Sullivan (Oxford, 1941) — novel
- The Pied Piper of Dipper Creek & Other Tales by Thomas H. Raddall (Blackwood, 1939) — novel
- The Government of Canada by Robert MacGregor Dawson (UTP, 1947) — non-fiction
- Democratic Government in Canada by Robert MacGregor Dawson (UTP, 1949) — non-fiction



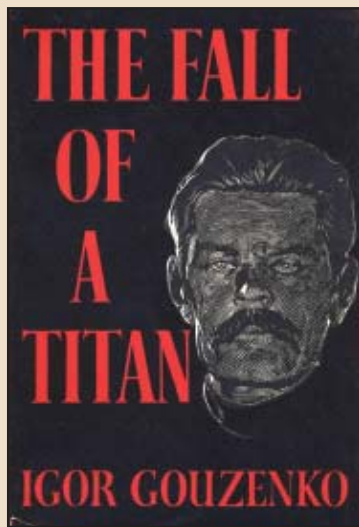
Andrew Irvine



1945 Fiction winner



1995 Fiction winner



1954 Fiction winner



## Gina McMurchy-Barber

has crafted a fictional memoir by someone who “grew up in Woodlands” with Down syndrome after her mother took her there one day—and never came back.

The narrator is Ruby Jean Sharp, a character *not* based on the author’s own sister, who also had Down syndrome but was raised by loving parents.

Opened in 1878 and once known as the Provincial Lunatic Asylum, Woodlands was a so-called school that was more like a prison. Abuse was rampant. Three thousand people are buried in the Woodlands cemetery. In her afterword to *Free as a Bird* (Dundurn \$12.99), McMurchy-Barber provides the following historical summary, having once worked at Woodlands for six months as a young adult.

978-1-55488-447-6

WHEN I WAS A KID, THERE WAS ONE WORD THAT GRATED ON MY nerves like fingernails on a chalkboard: *retard*. That’s because my older sister, who was born with Down syndrome, was often stared at, made fun of, and called names like *retard* by others who didn’t know any better. When I was thirteen, I looked up the word in a dictionary and found that one definition simply read: “slow or delayed learning.” I didn’t think that sounded so bad — after all, everyone has something

they find difficult to learn or master — and that took the sting out of the word for me.

At the time of Jane’s birth in 1954 the attending doctor told my parents there was a good chance she would be blind, would never learn to walk, and wouldn’t likely live beyond the age of five. He also explained there was no support available to help care for her and that she would be a burden to the family. His recommendation was to have her placed in an institution for the “mentally retarded” — a term used back then. The doctor’s limited knowledge and attitude were quite typical for those days.

I’m grateful my parents weren’t influenced by the dark predictions for Jane’s future and instead brought her home from the hospital. As she grew, she had perfect vision. And she not only learned to walk, but to run, skip, and jump, too.

Jane lived into her mid-thirties. By the time of her death, she had a job and a boyfriend and lived in her own apartment. She had a full life and was loved by many. What more could one ask for from their time here on earth?

When I was younger, I had a fierce desire to defend my sister against the ridicule of others. Then, as a young adult, I enrolled in a college training program responding to special needs children and others with learning disabilities. One of my first jobs was working at Woodlands School. My employment in that bleak institution in New Westminster, British Columbia, lasted six long months.

While I was there, I realized what my sister’s life might have been like if my parents had taken the doctor’s advice. I’m certain she would never have reached her full potential had she been one of those fifteen hundred people who spent their lives hidden out of sight and locked behind doors.

I left Woodlands to work for the Community Living Society, an organization started by parents and caring staff who fought to get residents out of Woodlands

School and into group homes in the community. The Community Living Society and other associations like it were instrumental in bringing an end to the institutionalization of disabled people in British Columbia and seeing to it that Woodlands closed forever.

The characters and events in this novel are fictitious. However, Woodlands School, as mentioned earlier, actually did exist. There were many similar government-run institutions throughout Canada and the United States, but like Woodlands, many of them have been closed. Unfortunately, there are still such places to be found both north and south of the border.



WOODLANDS BEGAN IN 1878 AS THE PROVINCIAL LUNATIC ASYLUM. SOON AFTER IT opened, a report was written with the following description of the facility: “The place is gloomy in the extreme, the corridors narrow and sombre, the windows high and unnecessarily barred.... The establishment exceedingly overcrowded.... The patients being herded together more like cattle than human beings” (Commission of Enquiry Report of the Provincial Asylum for the Insane, 1878).

The name of the place was changed in 1950 to Woodlands School, though at best there were only twelve teachers for more than fifteen hundred “students.”

The residents of Woodlands were labelled as “severely or profoundly retarded,” or as “morons.” Some weren’t mentally disabled at all but had physical disabilities or behaviour problems that were only made worse by the isolation, monotonous environment, and lack of normal human interactions. While some came to Woodlands as older children or even adults, others were abandoned as babies and knew no other home. Many lived out their lives behind its walls, locked metal doors, and jail-like windows.

Woodlands, as one resident chose to describe it, was “a garbage can for society’s garbage kids.”

# DARKNESS AT THE EDGE OF THE 'BURBS

Gina McMurchy-Barber’s heart-wrenching young adult novel, *Free as a Bird*, takes the reader inside Woodlands, a now-defunct provincial facility for the mentally challenged.

Ironically, some could even look out from this castle-like fortress to the B.C. Penitentiary next door, a maximum-security prison for society’s worst criminals.

Some of the residents had visits from relatives, but most had no contact with the outside community. Those residents who were able to build friendships with other residents, then cried each night when they had to be separated. More often than not, the ones who needed the most attention and love got the least. Woodlands, like many such institutions, was self-sufficient. It was staffed by medical and dental professionals, therapists, cooks, teachers, ward staff, and child-care workers. As a result, there was little contact with outside services such as public health, victim support, or police. In essence, it was a self-contained “city” with citizens who had no say in the running of their day-to-day life.

After Woodlands closed in 1996, the provincial government asked Ombudsman Dulcie McCallum to investigate the many complaints

of abuse directed at the institution. Her report, *The Need to Know: Administrative Review of Woodlands School*, brought to light many of the problems inherent in institutions of this kind. She recounted that most residents had little if any contact with family or friends outside the institution. They had no control over any aspect of their lives. Even those who were capable were considered medically and legally incompetent as “retardates” and therefore treated as if they were unable to speak for themselves or had any intellectual insight whatsoever. Some children were used for drug experiments and genetic research — some of which are known today to be quite painful. And it wasn’t uncommon for unclaimed bodies to be regularly donated to the University of British Columbia for research.

McCallum stated that Woodlands “was a perfect place for perpetrators seeking an opportunity to physically and sexually abuse children and adults who were silent, unable to complain, not knowing how or to whom to report or who



The sculpture in the Woodlands Memorial Garden entitled “The Window Too High.”

would, in many instances, not be believed. Severe punishment and threats were used to dissuade children from reporting abuse.” Her report also stated that the cruel behaviour modification techniques were rationalized by staff who felt residents “didn’t understand or feel pain, and in any event, required a strict disciplinary approach in order to learn.” Little consideration was given to the fact that “bad behaviour was a response to confinement, only spending time with people of similar disabilities, absence of effort to socialize or integrate residents into normal life, boring, bland, sterile environment.” One former resident of Woodlands described the place as “a garbage can for society’s garbage kids.”

Throughout the years there were many reported cases of physical and sexual abuse that leaked out. But according to reports, they were always handled internally. In most cases the investigation into the reported abuses was stalled by an apparent “code of silence” among the staff. Stories surfaced that staff who did report abuses

were punished by some of their peers, threatened, transferred, and in one case drugged and institutionalized. As a result of peer expectations, abuse was usually brought to light by people visiting the ward, such as student nurses or family members.

In 1977 the B.C. government ordered all headstones to be removed from the institution’s cemetery. The reasons aren’t completely clear why this action was taken. Some speculate it was to appease the directors of the new Queen’s Park Hospital next door, who felt it was disturbing for patients to gaze out their windows at a cemetery. Between 1977 and 1980 some eighteen hundred headstones were removed and recycled for such purposes as lining walkways and making a barbecue for staff. Many headstones were simply discarded in the creek or sold off as building supplies. The cemetery itself was made into a park.

At its height the population of Woodlands reached an estimated fifteen hundred residents. In the past there were no support groups or organizations for parents whose children had mental, behavioural, or physical disabilities. Although some thought institutionalization was the kindest treatment for these children, the very existence of facilities such as Woodlands testified to the general opinion that these people should be kept locked away and isolated from society.

McCallum’s report paints a bleak picture of this infamous institution. However, in fairness it should be added that there were some staff members who did their best to care for the residents in a respectful and nurturing manner. And there are a few parents who felt their sons or daughters benefited from being placed there.



AFTER WOODLANDS CLOSED, IT REMAINED EMPTY for many years, though the buildings were occasionally used by the film industry. Eventually, the provincial government sold the land to developers who began to erase all evidence of the institution’s existence. During a period of public debate over what was to happen to the few remaining buildings, a terrible fire broke out on July 10, 2008. In a few short hours the flames destroyed all but the facade of the centre block and tower, the oldest part of the institution. Two days after the fire, developers were given permission to demolish and remove the debris, but no in-depth investigation has so far been conducted. Today the cemetery has become the Woodlands Memorial Garden and honours the more than three thousand deceased individuals who were buried at the former Woodlands cemetery. To date only about nine hundred grave markers have been recovered. Officials say no more graves will be removed or dismantled.

The valuable real estate overlooking the Fraser River and the mountains beyond continues to be molded into modern townhouses and apartment towers. Only the black monoliths covered in headstones at the back of the property are left to remind us all that for more than a century undervalued people once lived and died there.

“For the needs of the needy shall not be ignored forever; the hopes of the poor shall not always be crushed.” —Psalms 9:18

To read the report on Woodlands written by Dulcie McCallum:  
[www.bcaci.org/documents/Woodlands\\_Abuse/The\\_Need\\_to\\_Know.pdf](http://www.bcaci.org/documents/Woodlands_Abuse/The_Need_to_Know.pdf)

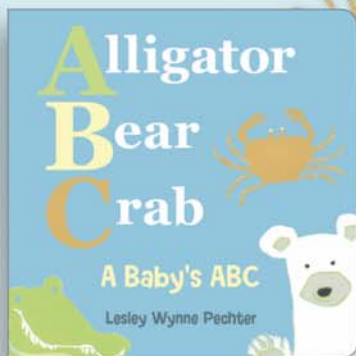
To view *Asylum: A Long Last Look at Woodlands* by Michael de Courcy, go to  
[www.michaeldecourcy.com/asylum](http://www.michaeldecourcy.com/asylum)

A teacher’s guide for *Free as a Bird*:  
[www.dundurn.com/teachers](http://www.dundurn.com/teachers)



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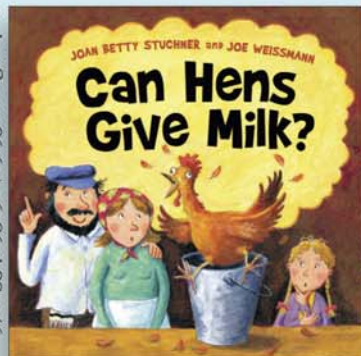


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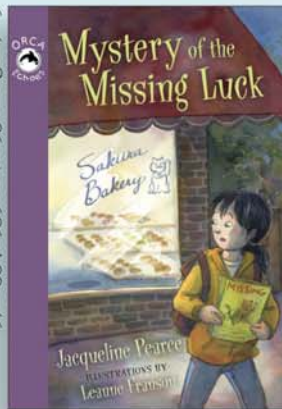


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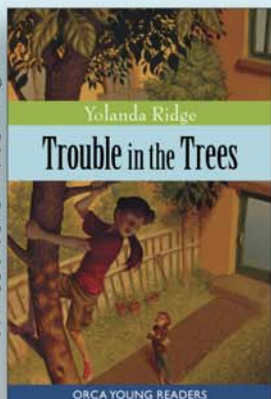


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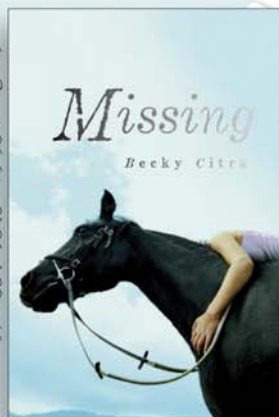
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—CM Magazine

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**John Wilson** was born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1951, of parents who had recently returned from a life in India. He grew up on the Isle of Skye and in Paisley, near Glasgow, and earned an Honours B.Sc. in geology from St. Andrews University. In 1975, he went to work for the Geological Survey of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) but, unwilling to consider military service there, he eventually resettled in Calgary, working in gas and oil exploration.

In 1986, as a geologist in Edmonton, he decided he wasn't travelling enough, so he sold his sports car, took a leave of absence and set off west. His grand tour took him to Japan, Thailand, the India of his parents, Nepal, Egypt, Zimbabwe and much of Europe. Returning home, he had difficulty adjusting back into a regular work schedule. A feature article, sold to the *Globe and Mail*, pointed him in a new direction, so he quit his job and became a full-time freelancer before moving on to novels and non-fiction books.

"As a teen growing up in the west of Scotland in the 1960s," Wilson says, "my primary concerns were staying out of trouble at school (not always successfully) and avoiding the gangs that hung around downtown on Saturday nights. I was a good sprinter!"

"I had no intention of trying to emulate the boring dead people we were forced to read in English class."

Wilson has now been a full-time writer for twenty years and boasts a bibliography that includes hundreds of articles, essays, photo essays, poetry, reviews, 22 novels and eight non-fiction books for teens and adults. His most recent book is *Shot at Dawn* (Scholastic Canada \$14.99).

BC BOOKWORLD: How did the metamorphosis from troubled teen to writer come about?

JOHN WILSON: History. I had a history teacher in grade 11 who told stories about the past. My favourite lesson was about the day Franz Ferdinand was shot in 1914. I lay awake half that night imagining I was one of the characters in Sarajevo that day. What would I have done? How would I have felt, either pointing the gun at Franz or seeing the assassin point the gun at me?

I never wrote anything down but I was already a writer. That's all I do now. Instead of lying in the dark making up stories, I sit at my computer, but I'm still a small boy trying to travel in time.

BCBW: Do you do a lot of research for your novels?

WILSON: Occasionally, I've been lucky enough to receive a grant from the Canada Council to go to archives and read old letters and documents, but mostly I use my holidays. For the trilogy I'm working on, called *The Heretic's Secret*, I went to France to see the castles and medieval towns where I set the story.

Also, the internet can be a great resource for details. For example, in *Written in Blood*, I needed to know about hand guns in the American southwest in 1877. There are websites that specialize in exactly that.

For my most recent book, *Shot at Dawn*, set in the First World War, I realize I've been reading books on WWI ever since my history teacher told me about Franz Ferdinand. I've spent the last forty years researching that book.

BCBW: There's violence in your books, I'm thinking of the prisoner having his toes cut off with rusty shears in *Death on the River*. Is it necessary?

WILSON: There *is* violence in some of my books, but none of it is made up or gratuitous. The guy in *Death on the River* is based on a man who really did have his toes cut off that way. The history of our species is violent and we have to acknowledge that. To paint the past as a pleasant, peaceful progression towards the present, hardly prepares a kid for living in the real world.

BCBW: What about the argument that gross or violent books simply pander to the baser side of the reader's nature and that boys should be encouraged to read better literature? Would you say boys need different kinds of books from girls?

WILSON: Absolutely. There are countless definitions of what makes a good kids' book. The only definition that really matters where boys are concerned is: a good book for

a boy is any book he will read.

When people question me about violence in my books, I say: If a boy gets bored with one of my books, he's not going to put it down and read *Anne of Green Gables*. Odds are he's going to go and play a video game where he can make people's heads explode. *Call of Duty's* my competition. I have to hold my reader's interest before I can even think about doing anything else, such as putting the violence in a moral context.

BCBW: *Shot at Dawn* is part of Scholastic's new series for boys, I Am Canada. Do you think enough is being done in Canada to interest boys in reading?

WILSON: The situation's improving. There are a lot of authors writing books for boys, such as Eric Walters, Art Slade and Iain Lawrence, but go into any Chapters store and stand a metre or two away from the Teen Fiction shelves. The predominant colour is pink. I have a seventeen-year-old son who would have his fingernails pulled before he took a pink book off a shelf, regardless of how good that book might be.

BCBW: So there's a marketing problem for boys?

WILSON: Partly. After all, it makes sense from a marketing perspective to target the easiest demographic, but not if it's at the expense of the readers who are a tougher sell. Anyone involved in children's literature—authors, editors, publishers, booksellers, marketers—has a responsibility to all readers, even the ones who would rather be playing video games.

BCBW: Did you read violent books when you were a teen, and if so, what?

WILSON: As a kid I read horror stories, H.P. Lovecraft, science fiction, Asimov, Bradbury, Wyndham, and a lot of historical non-fiction. At that time, the stories from the Second World War—fighter pilots in the Battle of Britain, prisoners escaping from Colditz—were coming out and I devoured them.

I didn't actually need a graphic description of mayhem. A suggestion was often enough to feed the part of me that lay awake at night making up stories. And the stories I made up were way more violent than anything I write now.

I would read any book that took me to a different place, anywhere that was more exciting than the real world I was stuck in. Essentially, now I'm writing the stories that I wanted to read as a teen, and hoping that they will help today's teens to escape.

*Shot at Dawn*: 9780545985956

# SAVED BY HISTORY

John Wilson  
doing research for  
*Written in Blood*  
at White Sands  
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*With his 30th book  
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John Wilson still wakes up every  
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# MORRIS

**M**orris Panych's poignant drama *The Trespassers* (Talonbooks \$16.95) runs from March 26 to April 16 at the Vancouver Playhouse, having played at the Belfry Theatre in Victoria in October.

It is about a fifteen-year-old boy caught between his born-again Christian mother and his rambunctious granddad, an anarchist and gambler, who arranges for his grandson's sexual initiation.

The boy comes to the attention of the police when they investigate a mysterious murder in an abandoned peach orchard. His grandfather advises, "There's something in between lying and not lying. It's called a story."

The following interview excerpts are from a longer interview conducted with Morris Panych by MK Piatkowski for *One Big Umbrella*.

How do you write, pen or keyboard?

I hate to admit it, but I have almost no penmanship left. I lack the coordination even to write my own name. I believe that writing will move more and more to the keyboard, and that the work itself will more and more reflect this mutable, tangential form; no less true, but less rooted. Committing to pen and paper is very different than committing to computer, which is not so much a commitment as a first date. I can change my writing on computer and nobody has to ever know just how shitty it was.

When I was first in creative writing at UBC, we copied our scripts on gestetner machines, which were like a kind of printing press. There were a lot more steps so I thought more carefully about what I was writing.

I wish I were the kind of person who could carry around a little notebook. Writing to me needs discipline. I get up, I get coffee, I go to my attic room, I turn on my computer, I fall asleep, I wake up, I write.

As a writer, what scares you?

I am scared to write non-comedic material because I fear it will come across as melodramatic. But I have to try. Lately I have been working to take away the comedy somewhat from my writing, deal with different themes. I cannot write about contemporary politics. I think I've been around long enough to know that some things don't last, trends change, philosophy evolves; what matters to me is human interaction; things that don't change, ever—fear, anger, love, death, suspicion.

I can't write about the war in Iraq because I don't know what to say about it. I can say 'war is bad' but that's not very interesting, and not necessarily even true. I admire people who can find something

to talk about in everyday politics, who can address current issues; I can't. I am scared of success, and failure in equal measure, but what scares me the most is writing that's irrelevant. It's a terrible contradiction to want to be relevant but not write about things that are current; I am pretty much doomed to failure. Sometimes I think I should write about being gay but I have nothing to say about that, either. 'I'm gay' is not a play; although some people seem to have made a career of it.

Where would you like your work to be produced?

It's a nice feeling to have a play make you some money, so anywhere is fine. That said, one of my favorite recent experiences was going to see *Lawrence and Holloman* at a little hole-in-the-wall place in Kensington Market. I felt that the play had legitimately reached its second life; a life away from the main theatre constituency. I love to have my plays achieve this second life, anywhere; in little out-of-the-way places, in big houses. It's important to me that my work is produced in places other than just where it originated. It makes me feel like my children are finally leaving home and going out into the world to make their mark.

What do you drink on opening night?

I like to start in the morning, to be honest. I like to drink enough by show time that I appear relaxed, funny, easygoing and generally feeling great about my work, when in actual fact I'm really just a little hammered.

At the Tarragon [Theatre], when **Urjo Kareda** was alive, we used to drink scotch all through the show; he would listen on the tano and I would venture, drunk, into the theatre, through the little back door. This I call the barf door, for two reasons. Immediately after any show, the obligatory cheap champagne I sip then dump into somebody else's glass; if somebody buys me a nice bottle I hide in a washroom and drink it, if somebody else gets a nice bottle I hide in the washroom and drink it with them; as for the 'gala' after party, usually I have red wine because I get a free couple of plastic glasses worth. What inspires you?

To say what inspires me, sort of implies that I'm inspired, which I'm often not. But I am often moved, particularly by acts of kindness; even somebody opening a door for me and smiling can bring

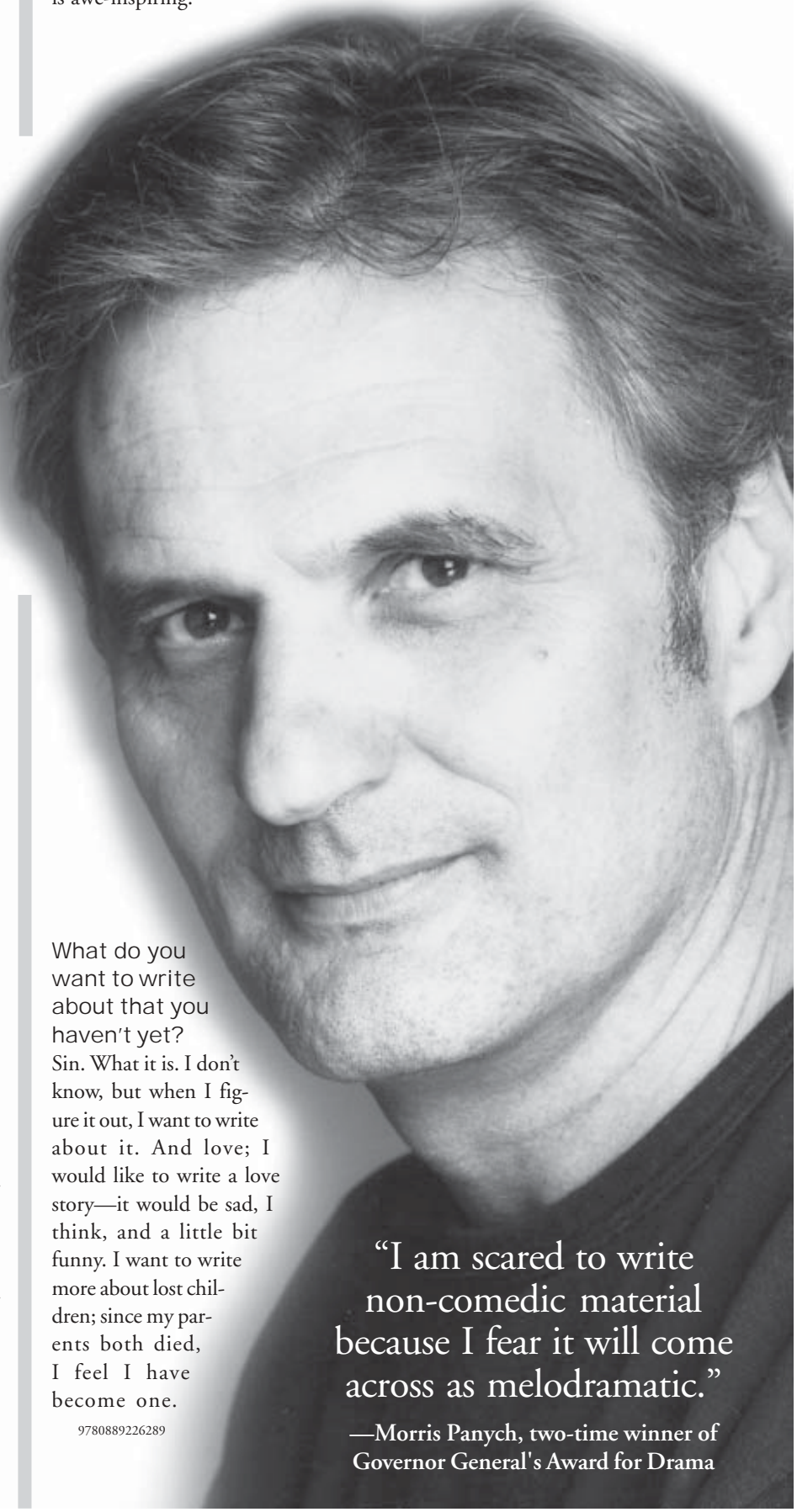
me to tears, of late. I feel pretty emotional when somebody displays their humanity, even in passing.

The thing that most deeply moves me is music; say, for instance, **Prokofiev's** cello concerto. To think how somebody could be such a genius to construct and interweave those harmonies, and to do it with such apparent ease and wit, but more than that, how this man has reached out a hundred years and somehow known what was in my heart.

How his music speaks to me; that is moving. For art to reverberate through space is wonderful, but through time it is awe-inspiring.

## Morris Panych

made his playwriting debut with a musical, *Last Call: A Post-Nuclear Cabaret*, in 1982, produced by Tamahnous Theatre in Vancouver. He has since written twenty plays, adapted others, and directed eighty plays, as well as film and opera. Usually featuring quirky characters, in semi-real situations, Panych's works such as *Vigil*, *The Overcoat* and *7 Stories* have been mounted in many countries. *The Trespassers* might be described as typical Panych, fuelled by pathos and humour, while slightly perplexing to the audience, with shades of Samuel Beckett.



What do you want to write about that you haven't yet?

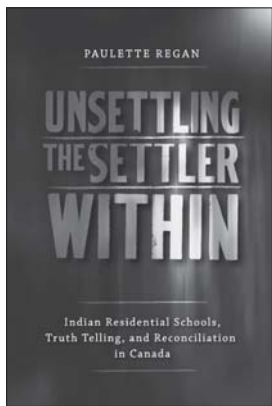
Sin. What it is. I don't know, but when I figure it out, I want to write about it. And love; I would like to write a love story—it would be sad, I think, and a little bit funny. I want to write more about lost children; since my parents both died, I feel I have become one.

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“I am scared to write non-comedic material because I fear it will come across as melodramatic.”

—Morris Panych, two-time winner of Governor General's Award for Drama





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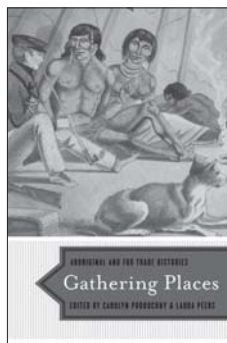
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– L. Michelle LeBaron, Professor of Law and Director, UBC Program on Dispute Resolution

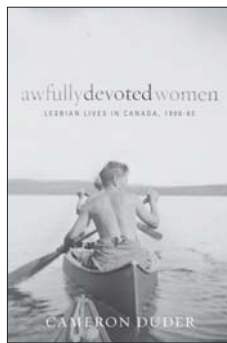
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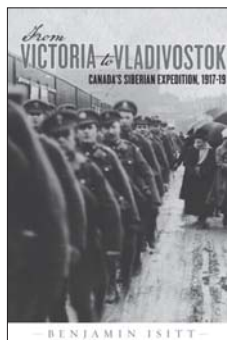
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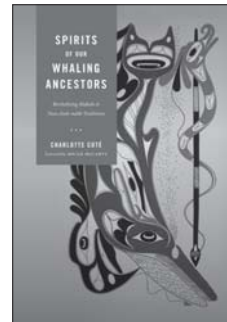
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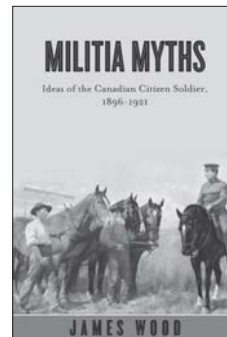


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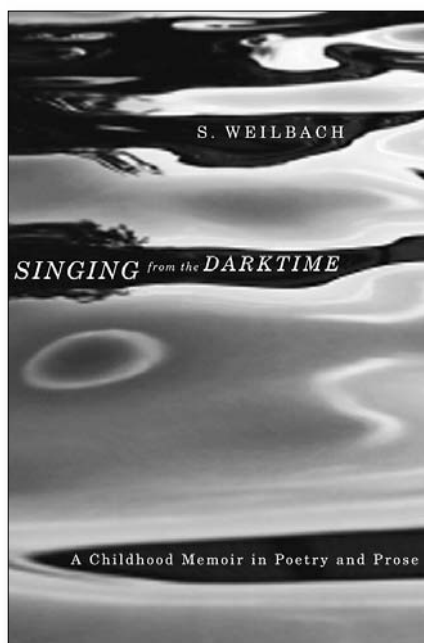


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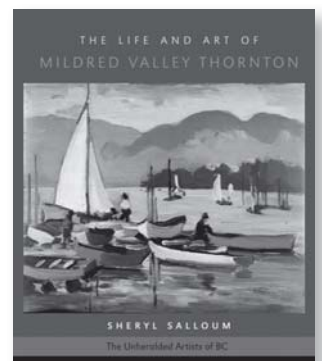


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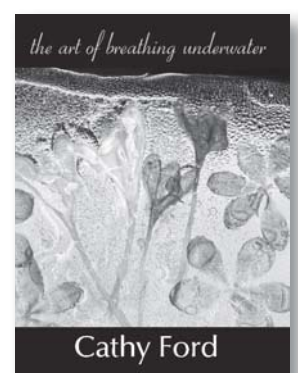
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Inspired by yellowed press clippings of about five plays her father Floyd Caza (standing far left in photo at right) had appeared in with the Everyman Theatre in B.C. and the Ottawa Stage Society, Susan McNicoll has illuminated the little-known origins of Canadian professional theatre in *The Opening Act: Canadian Theatre History, 1945-1953* (Ronsdale \$24.95).

"I was vaguely aware Dad was an actor but never knew he was a professional for six years following World War Two," she says. "Dad never seemed to think it was a big deal. It took his death for me to discover it was."

After spending a year in the Toronto Public Library reading every major newspaper in the country published from 1945 to 1953, McNicoll set about conducting almost fifty interviews with actors and directors from an era that produced Robertson Davies, Timothy Findley, Elwy Yost, Arthur Hill, William Shatner and Christopher Plummer.

"I did it with no internet," she recalls, "which, looking back, I have to admit may not have been a bad thing. It forced me to interview the actors from that time—most of whom have died since then—and to go to all the source documents."

When the war ended in 1945, no professional theatre companies existed in Canada. Only actor/director John Holden had been courageous enough to establish a professional company during the Depression, in 1935, and he had somehow kept it going until he left to fight overseas in 1941.

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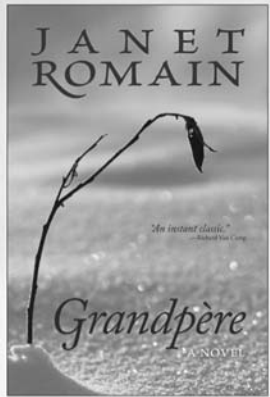
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Counterclockwise, bottom left: Bruno Gerussi (as Stanley) and Muriel Ontkane (as Blanche) in Totem Theatre's production of Tennessee Williams' *Streetcar Named Desire* in 1952. Bottom middle: Thor Arnglim and Norma MacMillan in a comedy staged by Totem Theatre in Vancouver. Bottom right: Thor Arnglim and Norma MacMillan in Totem Theatre's 1953 production of *No Time for Comedy*. The theatre operated in Vancouver and Victoria from 1952 to 1954. Left: Thor Arnglim (left) and Stuart Baker pose with the elephant they had walk down the aisle as a gag for a Totem Theatre production of *The Man Who Came to Dinner* in the summer of 1954 in Vancouver. Top: Floyd Caza, Ted Follows, Ed McNamara, Murray Westgate and David Major deliberately posing gloomily in front of the scenery truck for Vancouver's Everyman Theatre in the fall of 1946.







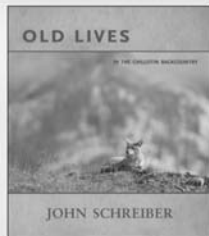
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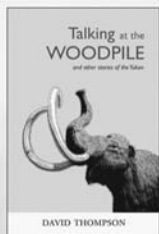
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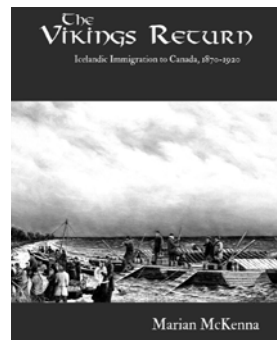
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As described in Jay Sherwood's *Return to Northern British Columbia* (Royal BC Museum \$39.95), that's how veteran photographer and topographer Swannell joined the Bedaux-Canadian 1934 Explorations of Sub-Arctic Regions described in a press release as "one of the most elaborately equipped private scientific ventures ever undertaken in North America."

The press soon dubbed it "the champagne safari." The 30-person cavalcade included Bedaux's wife, Fern, and his mistress, Madame Chiesa, a Spanish maid, a Scottish gamekeeper who doubled as a valet, 60 horses and Floyd Crosby, a well-known Hollywood filmmaker who was hired to record the heroics.

After Swannell and his assistant Al Phipps left Victoria on July 1 and met the Bedaux Expedition in Edmonton, it soon struck Swannell that Bedaux was not primarily motivated by science so much as his need to do something unprecedented. Departing from Edmon-

ton on July 6, the caravan made a promising start, reaching Fort St. John only eleven day later, after 550 miles.

Movie-making took precedence. By August 9, forced to abandon the Citroens (they were only getting two miles to a gallon, and they required rafts to be built each time they crossed a river), Bedaux admitted defeat and decided to destroy the vehicles in order to make dramatic footage for his movie.

Bedaux found "a darling place for destruction." His car No. 4 was to go down the Halfway River on a raft. "A beautiful descent down the rapids. The car looks like a toy." But the planned dynamite explosions fizzled. Al Phipps noted, "the car sailed gaily on to land undamaged on a sand bar."

Two remaining Citroens were simply abandoned. Reaching Fort Ware in early September, Frank Swannell noted the expedition had taken 54 days to travel 356 miles, averaging only 6 ½ miles per day. Remarkably, Bedaux persisted, reaching the Finlay River on October 16—and reaching Hudson's Hope soon afterwards, returning to Edmonton on October 24. The five Citroens had only covered about one-fifth of the planned route.



CHARLES BEDAUX'S QUIXOTIC escapades are just one of the adventures outlined in *Return to Northern British Columbia*, subtitled *A Photojournal*



Frank Swannell

of *Frank Swannell, 1929-39*, marking the close of Swannell's career. It's Jay Sherwood's third book derived from Swannell's archive of over 4,000 images, taken between 1900 and 1940.

Some of Swannell's images connect with classic books written about the northern BC wilderness and are doorways to fascinating people who appear in these works, such as the famous packer Skook Davidson, bush-pilot Grant McConachie and the shady mining speculator One-Armed Brown.

Shown in a 1931 photo with his partner, Loveseth, and Skook Davidson, One-Armed Brown met Swannell in the gold mining area of McConnell Creek on September 18. Swannell describes One-Armed Brown as a "typical American blowhard... Says they have 10-12 lb. gold, but only produces two nuggets which certainly never came from here."

Swannell could be a shrewd judge of character, as well as landscape. In the back of his 1931 diary Swannell pasted a newspaper article from the spring of 1932 with the headline: Rich Gold Field

Likely to Draw Rush of Miners: M.J. Brown predicts discoveries in northern British Columbia that will rival Klondike finds.

One-Armed Brown also appears in the classic memoir of life in the northern B.C. wilderness, *Driftwood Valley*, by Theodora Stanwell-Fletcher.

Swannell, a World War I veteran, also met and photographed Karl Hanawald, a veteran of the German Air Force, in 1931. Hanawald's trading post at Bear Lake was about a day's journey from the Stanwell-Fletchers' cabin in Driftwood Valley and their closest source for supplies.

As in his previous two books, Jay Sherwood peppers his narrative with excerpts from Swannell's journals. The result is another treasure trove of life in the remote areas of the central and northern part of the province. *Return to Northern British Columbia* also includes Swannell's surveys of the Columbia River and Vancouver Island.

978-0-7726-6283-5



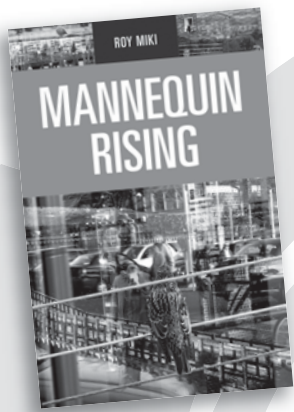
Charles Bedaux easing a Citroen down to the Cameron River. All five of his vehicles were ditched along the way.



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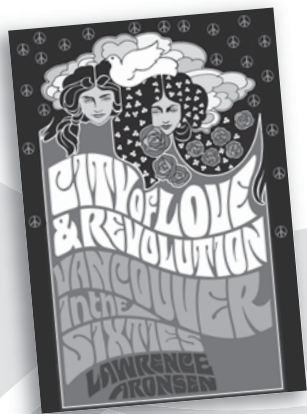
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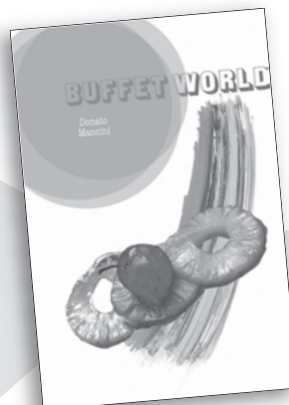


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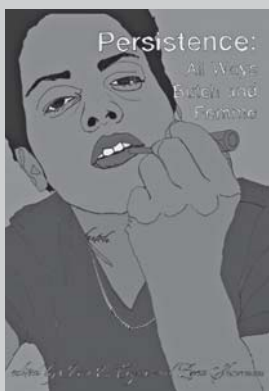
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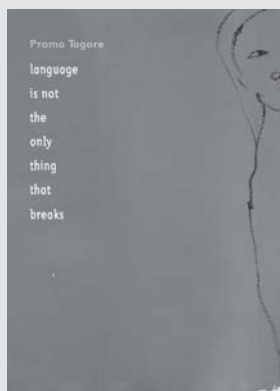


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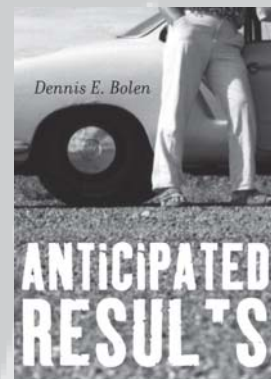


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## GLORY BE TO GOD FOR BROKEN THINGS

*The traveling mendicant Patrick Lane has become a garden Buddha*

Witness by Patrick Lane (Harbour \$16.95)

SOME YEARS AGO, WHEN ASKED how long it took him to build his garden, **Patrick Lane** replied, “Sixty-two years.” He could well now answer, “Seventy-one years” to the same question about his new collection of selected poems.

Lane made the selections himself. Readers who are familiar with his work will be happy to see old favourites showcased again. (Yes, for anyone who already knows Lane’s work, the severed-hand-tossed-over-the-bridge poem is included, as well as the doomed ptarmigans twins and the castrated ram.)

There is nothing that was previously published from the years 2004 to 2010, and there are no poems from some of his previous titles including *A Linen Crow* (1985) and *No Longer Two People* (1979).

But we do find some early poems from the sixties, the odd stories from *Old Mother* (1982), the tough, tight-lipped father/son poems from *Mortal Remains* (1991) and seven pages of previously unpublished poems.



PATRICK LANE WAS TWENTY-THREE years old when his first poems were published. *Witness* begins with excerpts from *Separations* (1969). His first identities were nomad, brawler, working class tough. His writing often detours into his hardscrabble childhood.

Subsequent public personas were the traveler, the champion of the Third World poor, the lover. The arc reveals that Lane did not get stuck in any one identity. Nor were previous identities jettisoned. They’re all still here but altered in emphasis.

Out of the confused tangle of stories and passions, some threads begin to suggest a patterned life tapestry. There is a shift in the psycho/spirituality that is not just about aging. The traveling mendicant has become a garden Buddha, from brawleresque to Merton-esque.

In 1980 the garden was screaming in “an irrevocable flood of rage.” Thirty years later, the poet on his knees, caresses rare mosses and remembers how



*Beth Kope's mother*

## DISMAY, ANGER & LOVE

Falling Season by Beth Kope (Leaf Press \$15.95)

Beth Kope’s first book, **Falling Season**, recalls heart-wrenching attempts to cope with the onset of a devastating form of Alzheimers called Lewy Body, as experienced by her mother.

“This disease pared her down,” she recalls. “It shredded her to the most basic. Unrestrained anger. Unrestrained love.”

Kope portrays her mother’s three years of rapid decline. Poignantly included are two photos of her mother as a stunning young woman.

Broken up, scattered lines on the page reflect the fracture of the mother’s personality, memory and health. This is not a generic Alzheimers mother; she is particular and unique as the daughter/poet stands by, “helpless, knowing no rescue,” bearing witness.

These poems of honest dismay and almost unbearable sadness will surely resonate with any readers who have lost a loved one to dementia.

Kope is now collaborating with Maureen Ulrich on a theatrical work to be based on *Falling Season*. 978-1-926655-11-6

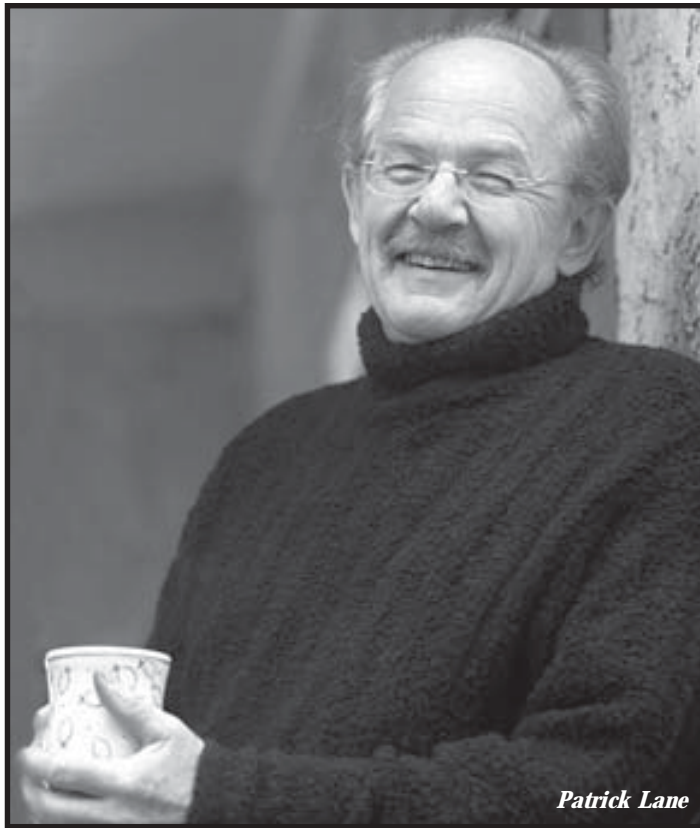
afraid he was once. The chaos and helplessness of *Wild Birds* (1987) has given way to “*the crazing time makes. How precious the broken.*”

Looking closer at the earlier poems, the reader can detect there were contemplative moments throughout. As in the equilibrium of the Taoist yin/yang symbol, the active and the contemplative lie curled side by side, each one seeing with the eye of the other.

Lane’s recent 2010 poems are stunning. He was always a teller of powerful stories but now, in the later poems, the narratives become more covert, more discreet, as in the exquisite still life, *The Green Dress (2010)* about a woman’s choice of dress in which to face a family tragedy.

*What My Father Told Me* (2010) is not just like some of the painful material Lane has shared before. It belongs at the end of this book because it is different. There was always some gentleness under his bravado. Now it is more open, a compassion for the father who failed him, for the son who failed the father.

What does an accomplished and no-longer-young poet do with his own apparent Lost and Found? As the book’s title suggests, he takes on the role of a



*Patrick Lane*

witness, makes a history of his people and of himself, “*whether in pain or in ecstasy.*”

“*Rest, reflect, prepare, listen.*” Recollection can be a monkish task. Lane has paid his dues as a human and a poet. Let him reflect!

That is why he is on his knees cleaning the garden...

*It is what the old know, a slight turning, something not seen, and reaching back for what was left behind*

*on the moss, something fallen, under the rain.*

A new *Collected* is now slated for the fall. If it contains more new poems such as these in *Witness*, it will be worth buying even for readers who already own Lane’s previous titles.

978-1-55017-550008-0

*Poet and teacher, Hannah Main-van der Kamp meditates in her garden at Black Point, on the Upper Sunshine Coast.*

## HIROSHIMA, MOTHERS, TORONTO & STALKERS

The Art of Breathing Underwater by Cathy Ford (Mother Tongue \$19.95)

CATHY FORD’S FIRST COLLECTION in twenty-one years is dense on the page, dense in associations and references. The many subjects include the disappearance of women and of species, fertility, Hiroshima, mothers, grandmothers, northern rivers, Mary Magdalene, Toronto, facial reconstruction, the Carmanah, and stalkers.

It’s only a slight exaggeration to say that many of these topics might occur on one thickly worded page. In short, this is serious stuff. The middle section is a long poem in forty-five sections loosely centered on the highly original textile art of Kubota’s kimonos. Perhaps an illustration of these textured silk works of art would have been helpful for some readers to better relate to the poems.

This volume will reward the reader who takes time to read slowly. Its general tone is one of elegiac reverence suggested by particulars. At 114 pages, it contains more depth than some poets manage in a dozen books.

978-1-896949-09-3



## TO BEG, GIVE, STEAL OR DUMPSTER

*The many ways to survive in the Beggar's Garden*

**Beggar's Garden by Michael Christie**  
(HarperCollins \$24.99)

**M**ichael Christie's literary debut of nine stories takes you where you've never been before—most likely—inside dumpsters and rat-infested backyard sheds.

Or outside to steal a car, or buy crack in Oppenheimer Park.

In this collection we encounter a poor sod who gets stomped in an alley for the sake of his crack pipe and a 14-year-old car thief who takes off to Kelowna with the woman who picked him up at a gas station—to mention just three of Christie's all-too-real characters.

An MFA graduate of the University of British Columbia's creative writing program in 2010, Christie has respected the adage, "Write about what you know." He has worked in a Downtown Eastside emergency homeless shelter and has also provided outreach to those

with severe mental disorders.

This work experience explains why the mentally-challenged protagonist of his story *The Extra* comes off so believably. But it doesn't explain how Christie has skillfully presented the reincarnation of **J. Robert Oppenheimer**, now a nattily dressed gentleman in a porkpie hat. Oppenheimer, a scientist, meets up with one of the local denizens, Henry, who, in the spirit of scholarly inquiry, requires assistance in the "procurement and consumption of crack cocaine."

Henry in *Goodbye Porkpie Hat* helps his neighbour out by calling 911 whenever the neighbour ODs. Henry has one sleazy basement room in an Eastside tenement, but even then thieves break in to take his old TV and a can of butts. Henry's proud possession is a Grade 10 science text he 'dumpstered' two years ago. That's how he was able to recognize Oppenheimer when he



CHERIE THIESSEN



TWIGG PHOTO

*Michael Christie of Galiano Island is a former skateboarding athlete who is flying high with his compassionate views of so-called low-life in Beggar's Garden. In January, he was one of three authors who launched Incite, the new series of free readings coordinated by Vancouver International Writers Festival at the Vancouver Public Library, every second Wednesday.*

appeared at the window.

The world as seen from the inside of a dumpster, or from behind the eyes of a crack addict, is a view worth seeing because it is often surprising. The people we meet in *Beggar's Garden* are surprisingly gentle, some victimized time and time again by those worse off than them-

selves, or simply much more intelligent.

A nameless waif on disability, in *The Extra*, thinks he's teamed up with a real hero, Rick, who really helps him out, while the 'landlord' above him, rents him an unserviced slab of his basement. But both men prey on the mentally challenged guy for his

disability pension. In earlier, kinder times, she would have been securely living in a supervised home. Now she's out on the streets.

Not all stories in this collection are going to resonate equally. I enjoyed Christie's 'grimy-side' stories much more than his tales of a condo-owning website designer who gets a dog and finds himself a new friend (*An Ideal Companion*) or the kindly retired woman who used to work in the shoe department of Woodwards but now runs a thrift shop (*The Queen of Cans and Jars*).

Similarly, I much preferred the grandfather in *Discard* to the bank manager of the title story (*Beggar's Garden*). Somehow a widower stricken with memories of the grandson he and his deceased wife brought up and then discarded rings much truer to me than a bank manager who moves into his shed, stops going to work, creates a marketing and financial plan for a beggar, and then ultimately kicks in his front door.

But I, for one, was happy to be given the opportunity to go dumpstering without risk. I now know that dumpster has become a 21st century verb: to look or crawl into a large trash container for the sake of finding food, objects, or shelter.

978-1554688296

*Cherie Thiessen reviews from Pender Island.*

Evolution challenges creationists and intelligent design.



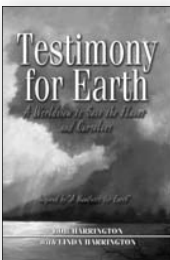
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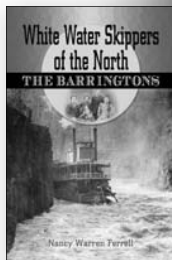
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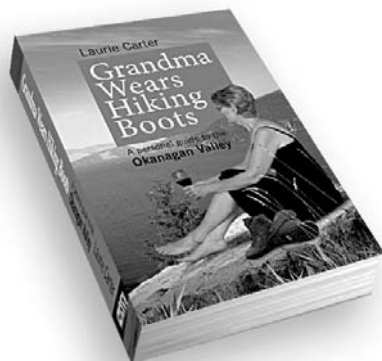
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Seeing Reds: The Red Scare of 1918-1919, Canada's First War on Terror by Daniel Francis (Arsenal Pulp Press \$27.95)

**M**OST PEOPLE KNOW THE story of the Red Scare: After the war an irrational fear of communism led to witch hunts, censorship and purges. Police infiltrated unions and spied on civilians, due process was suspended and lives were ruined or even lost.

Those crazy Americans, eh? Actually, the events described above happened in Canada during and immediately after the First World War, 30 years before the McCarthy era. The years 1918 and 1919 were arguably the most chaotic, fearful and politically significant in Canada's history, yet few of us know much about them beyond references to the Spanish flu and the Winnipeg General Strike.

Into that breach steps North Vancouverite **Daniel Francis**, B.C.'s best popular historian. His *Seeing Reds: The Red Scare of 1918-1919, Canada's First War on Terror*, is not only a solidly researched review of a neglected corner of our past but a gripping—and cautionary—tale.

For one thing, he reminds us that protecting civil liberties has never been a priority of the RCMP. Spying on civilians was not a dirty job foisted on the horsemen by politicians during the 1950s Cold War. It was part of its inheritance from the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, which embraced the task enthusiastically.

“(I)n the case of the RNWMP, it is probable that the force would not have survived if the Scare had not come along to give it a new reason for existing,” Francis writes.

So it's no surprise that, when asked to investigate the growing unrest and militancy among unions, the RNWMP ascribed it to leaders with unpronounceable names and suspicious accents, rather than to shrinking incomes, wretched working conditions, widespread unemployment and a very unpopular war.

That was also what the coalition government headed by Conservative **Robert Borden** wanted to hear. Under siege over conscription and a stalled economy, Borden was only too eager to redirect public anger toward the dreaded Reds (although Francis indicates the PM was not as hysterical about the threat as some of his ministers).

And many labour leaders, especially in Western Canada, were in fact Bolshevik sympathizers, while others endorsed the Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies) or the One Big Union. This radicalization of unionists sprang largely from their opposition to the war, a view not shared by mainstream labour groups back east, some of which even supported conscription.

It was also due to the wider political upheavals shaking the status quo around the world—the Russian Revolution, waves of immigration, militant unionism in Britain, anarchist violence in

lish the vaguest of rumours, each one scarier than the last. Police “specials” find themselves surrounded by a hostile mob and have to be rescued. A wild storm hits the city, toppling trees and snapping trolley poles in an omen of the violence to come.

Of course, the strike collapsed. It was followed by show trials of the leaders. The prosecution gained access to names of potential jurors and was able to stack the jury.

At the trial of strike leader **Bob Russell**, RCMP officer **Frank Zaneth**, who had infiltrated the strike committee as organizer “Harry Blask,” gave sensational testimony about conspiracies and ominous references to weapons—but nothing directly damning of Russell, whom he had never met. Even so, Russell was convicted, as were the other leaders.

(Zaneth retired in 1951 as an assistant commissioner of the RCMP.)

On Boxing Day 1919, Russell was taken to Stony Mountain Penitentiary, where he served a year. Upon his release, according to one account cited by Francis, the presiding judge, then on his deathbed, asked to speak with Russell. He refused, saying: “Let him die with his guilty conscience.”



DAN FRANCIS NOTES ONE MAJOR DIFFERENCE between the first and second Red Scares: While McCarthy was chasing ghosts, the radical unionists of the first Scare “did pose a threat to the establishment.” Not the church-burning, maiden-defiling, home-seizing threat cited by the shrillest of newspapers, but a determination to obtain better pay and working conditions and a say in the management of the economy—much scarier threats to employers and government.

“In this sense the threat was real, and the Red Scare was less an illogical outbreak of paranoia than it was a response by the power elite to a challenge to its hegemony.”

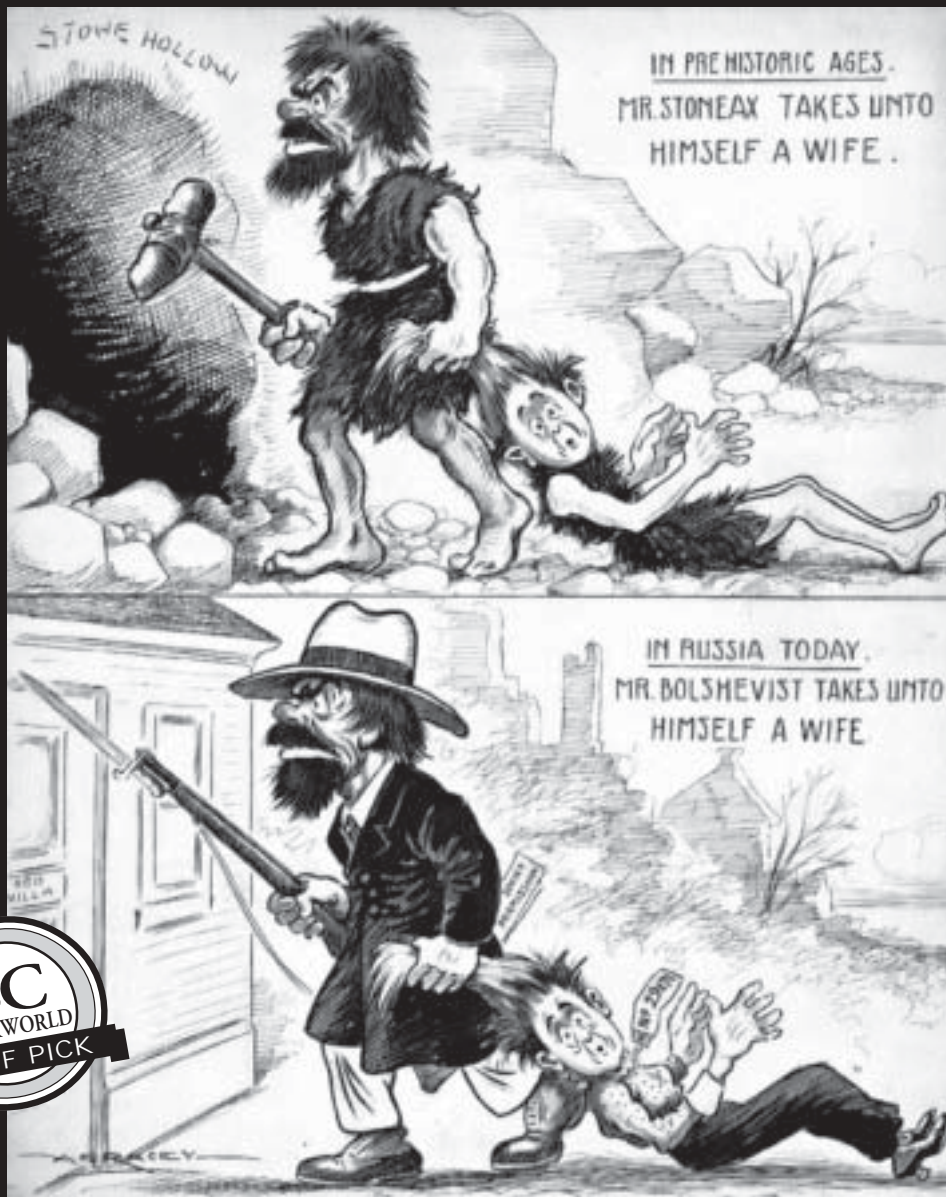
It's a cliché to say of a historical book that it is relevant today, but there's a reason why the subtitle refers to our “first war on terror.” The parallels between Robert Borden's Canada and **Stephen Harper's** are inescapable: fear and hatred of alien immigrants (Bolsheviks then, Muslims now), ill-defined military operations overseas (Siberia, Afghanistan) and suppression of due process at home (War Measures Act, secret trials).

At less than 300 pages, *Seeing Reds* manages to cover its subject with surprising thoroughness while remaining a brisk read. Every chapter offers details and insights that made me wonder, “Why didn't I learn this in school?”

Well, many of Dan Francis' previous works have become textbooks, so perhaps there's hope.

9781551523736

*Shane McCune writes from Comox.*



*In 1919, red scaremongering was common in Canadian newspapers, as demonstrated in this Montreal Star cartoon equating the Russian Bolshevik as a cave man.*

# SCARY REDS

*Daniel Francis' Seeing Reds has Shane McCune wondering "Why didn't we learn this in school?"*

Germany and even the growth of left-wing movements in the U.S. (Seattle's general strike preceded Winnipeg's by three months).



HAVING SET THE STAGE IN HIS OPENING chapter, Dan Francis zooms in on the cast of characters, bringing them to life in quick, vivid sketches. On the left are bold and outspoken men and women excited to be part of a movement they believe will change the world for the better.

On the right are employers, politicians, police and war veterans determined to crush that movement by any means. Some are gripped by foolish fears, some are cynically exploiting such fears, and a few, such as national censor **Ernest Chambers**, are almost comical in their pomposity.

Conflicts began to boil over in early 1918 as soldiers returning from the war demanded priority in the search for work over non-combatants, especially “enemy aliens.” They were incensed by the anti-war campaigns of radical unionists, and there were violent clashes from one end of the country to the other.

Francis recaps the shooting of **Albert “Ginger” Goodwin** in the hills above Cumberland in the Comox Valley. That sparked Canada's first general strike in Vancouver on Aug. 2, 1918, which in turn provoked mobs of veterans to attack labour halls and assault union leaders.

(Goodwin is still a figure of controversy in Cumberland. In 1996 a nearby section of the Inland Island Highway was renamed Ginger Goodwin Way. The sign was repeatedly vandalized and eventually disappeared.)

Tory alarmists made wild claims about Bolshevik cells fomenting revolution in Canada under the direct control of puppeteers in Russia. Apart from the utter lack of evidence to back such claims, they were more than a little hypocritical in light of Canada's participation in efforts to undo the Russian Revolution.

A month after the Great War ended, the Canadian Siberian Expeditionary Force—including an RNWMP squadron—sailed

for Vladivostok to fight the Bolsheviks. Its first skirmish took place in the streets of Victoria when some of the men mutinied.

“Officers ordered other soldiers to remove their belts and whip the recalcitrants back into line,” Francis writes. “Urged along at gunpoint, the mutineers eventually boarded the ship and the expeditionary force sailed for Siberia.”



THE CLIMAX OF *SEEING REDS* is, of course, the Winnipeg General Strike. Francis' narrative here is almost cinematic in

its pacing, its rapid switches among geographic and personal viewpoints and its sheer tension. Even though the reader knows how it will turn out—or perhaps because of that—each vignette adds to that tension.

The organizing council draws up last-minute plans, unaware than one of their number is an RNWMP plant. Women on both sides of the dispute pump gas, drive vehicles and generally keep essential services going. Sensationalist newspapers pub-



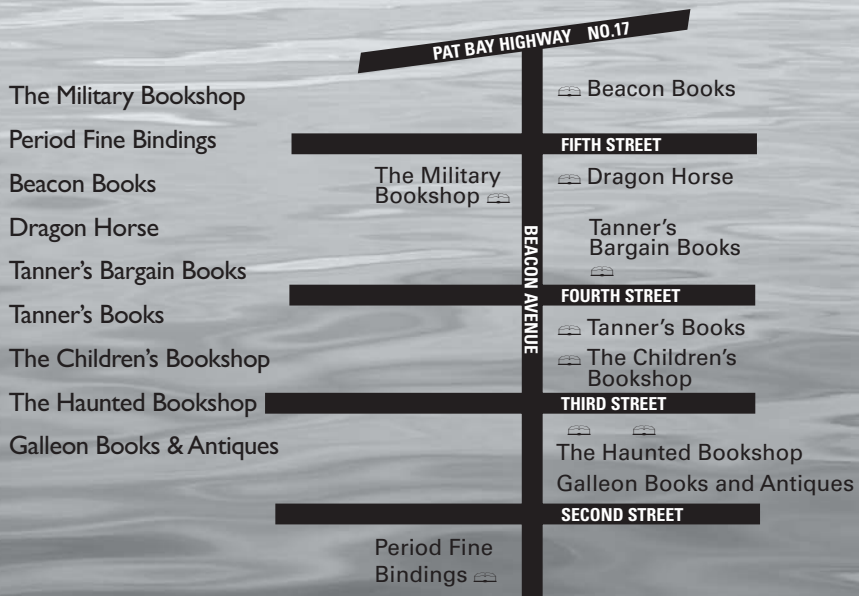
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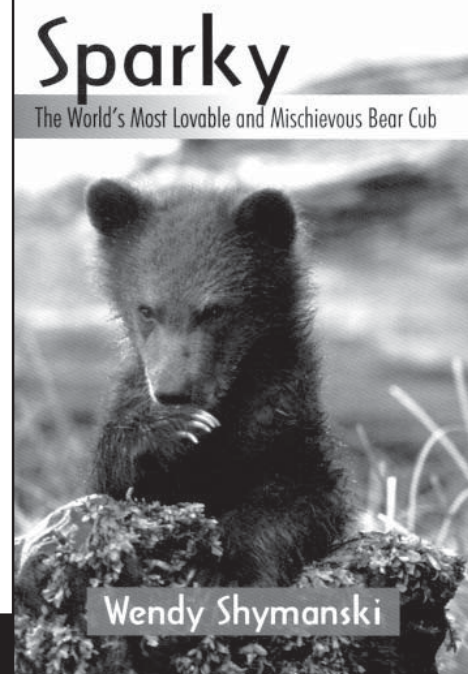
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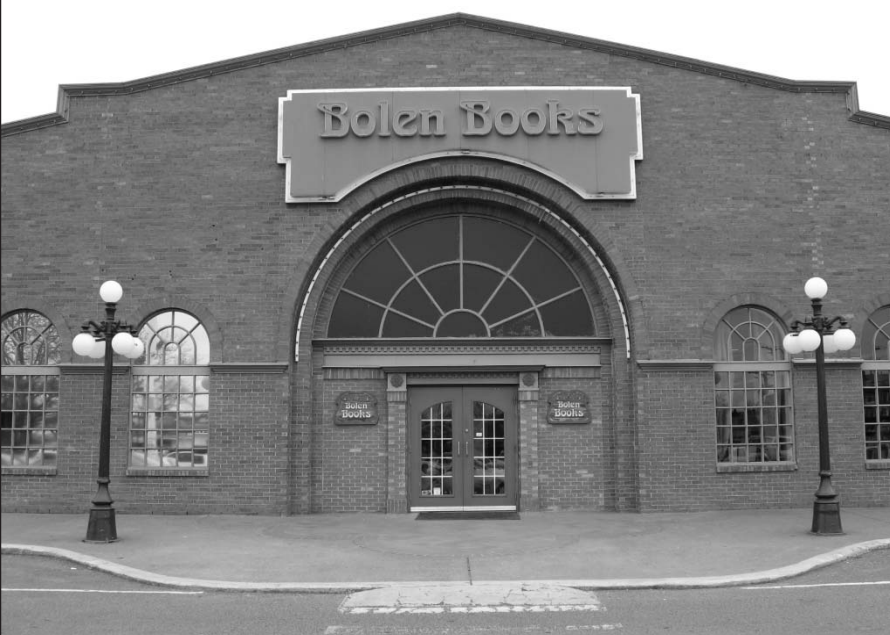
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# BIG VICTORY AT LITTLE STALINGRAD

*Mark Zuehlke's Rapid Read chronicle recalls how the 1st Canadian Infantry Division liberated Ortona, Italy, in 1943.*

**Ortona Street Fight** by Mark Zuehlke  
(Orca \$9.95)

**L**IEUTENANT JOHN DOUGAN figured he'd be dead in just a few moments. Since dawn, over forty of his comrades had been killed or wounded by enemy fire in two valiant, yet foolhardy charges.

Beyond the hundred yards of abandoned vegetable gardens and olive trees, "so torn by shell-fire that they looked like twisted fence posts," a row of two- and three-storey buildings concealed German snipers.

The snipers hid behind broken windows and on rooftops. More were dug in at the base of the buildings. And still more paratroopers crouched behind machine guns, waiting for yet another futile rush from the Canadians.

Dougan and the company commander agreed a third charge across open ground was madness but the battalion commander at the other end of the radio handset ordered them "to get on with it." Even if they blinded the enemy with smoke bombs, Dougan knew he and the six men going with him would be cut down in seconds.

Then he noticed the ditch. Across from a much deeper ditch where he and his men were huddled, there was a shallower ditch, barely three feet deep. It ran straight through the deadly hundred yards to an apartment building.

The Germans expected a logical assault from the Allied troops. A rifle company should predictably advance across open ground "in sections spread out over a wide front" creating too many individual targets for the

defender to effectively eliminate. Some men were bound to survive and continue onwards to storm the defensive positions.

That predictable tactic had devastated the company already, slicing them down to a mere 17 men. And so Dougan gambled. He decided his Canadians would attack by scuttling through a narrow ditch like field mice.

"Hell, we're all going to die anyway," he said to himself. "Might as well give it a go."

Minute by minute, yard by yard. This is how **Ortona Street Fight** by military histo-

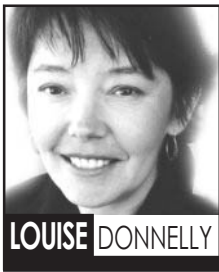
rian **Mark Zuehlke** chronicles the bloody week of December 21 to December 28, 1943 when the 1st Canadian Infantry Division wrested the port town of Ortona, Italy, defeating crack German paratroopers who had been ordered to hold the "pearl of the Adriatic" at all costs.

Ortona's location, on the eastern coast of Italy, directly parallel to Rome, and protected by cliffs on the north and east, and by a deep ravine on the west, had forced the Canadians to attack from the south.

Under heavy and constant shelling, infantrymen from the Loyal Edmonton Regiment and the Seaforth Highlanders, with tank support from the Three Rivers Regiment, fought their way across gullies, mud-choked vineyards, decimated olive groves and, finally, into the narrow, medieval streets.

Ortona was nicknamed "Little Stalingrad."

Gleaned from hundreds of interview hours with an ever-dwindling number of surviving WW II veterans, Zuehlke uses his trademark soldier's-eye view to bring men like the daring and resourceful Dougan back to life.



LOUISE DONNELLY



*German paratroopers surrender to the 1st Canadian Infantry Division in Ortona, Italy*

Many of the soldiers could have been mistaken for boys, such as 26-year-old Private **Gordon Currie-Smith**, whose small stature (he was under five feet tall and barely weighed a hundred pounds) saved him when a booby-trapped Ortona school exploded and buried him up to his neck in rubble.

Sergeant **Harry Rankin** was a "tough little guy from the wrong side of the Vancouver tracks." His forte was "destruction on demand." Armed with a recovered stash of German Teller mines, devices shaped like a covered frying pan, and packed with enough explosives to disable a tank, Rankin devised an effective strategy for mouse-holing, the practice of blasting a route through the interior walls of closely packed houses and buildings to avoid movement through the even more dangerous and exposed streets.

Jabbing the wall with a bayonet, with a Teller mine dangling from it, Rankin would slip a short



*Civil rights lawyer and Vancouver alderman Harry Rankin also distinguished himself as a soldier at Ortona.*

fuse to the built-in detonator, light it, and run "like hell." It's the same Harry Rankin (1920-2002) who notoriously gave hell to right-wing Vancouver city councillors and mayors for more than 25 years as an alder-

man and councillor who frequently topped the polls.



**ORTONA STREET FIGHT** DIFFERS FROM Zuehlke's more extensive *Ortona* (D&M) because it is the latest in the Raven Books Rapid Reads series for adult readers. Building on Orca Books' Soundings and Currents series of high interest/low reading skill books for reluctant young readers, the new Rapid Reads series features both compelling non-fiction and contemporary fiction with a straight-forward narrative. These titles, such as *Ortona Street Fight*, target adult literacy as well as offering a condensed one-sitting read of lengthier tomes.

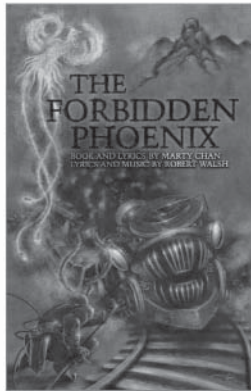
Other Rapid Reads include *Generation Us: The Challenge of Global Warming* by University of Victoria climatologist **Andrew Weaver** and mysteries such as *The Spider Bites* by **Medora Sale** and *Love You to Death* by **Gail Bowen**.

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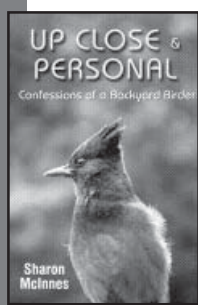
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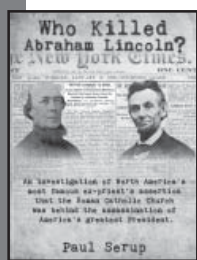
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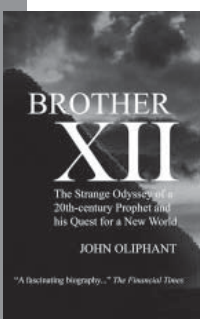


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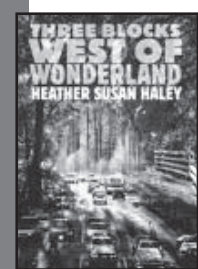


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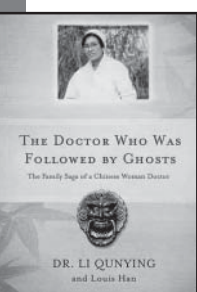


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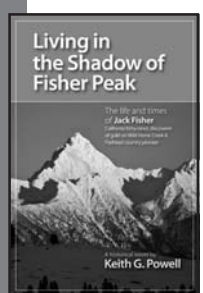
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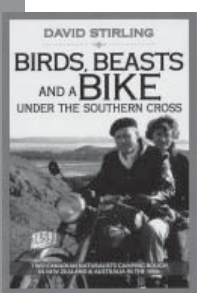


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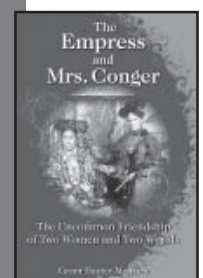


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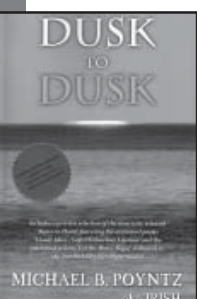


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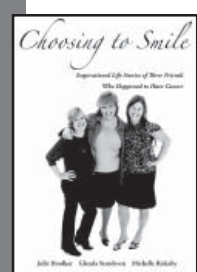
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# reviews

## RACISM REVISITED

*Tariq Malik's novel commemorates the exclusion of south Asians by B.C. immigration authorities in 1914.*

**T**ARIQ MALIK'S FIRST NOVEL CHANTING DENIED SHORES (Bayeaux Arts \$17.95) was fittingly launched at Joy Kogawa House, a facility that commemorates the internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II.

*Chanting Denied Shores* spans seven years (1914–1921) in the lives of four characters involved in the so-called *Komagata Maru* Incident. The story takes a complex look at events that are now generally simplified as a racist refusal of white Canada to admit would-be immigrants—mostly Sikhs—who arrived in the Vancouver harbour from India on a chartered Japanese vessel called the *Komagata Maru*.

The ship and its passengers remained stranded in Burrard Inlet while immigration officials enforced an exclusionary law that forbade arrival of British subjects from India unless they had sailed directly from India. Only 22 of the 376 passengers were permitted to go ashore.

The *Komagata Maru* embarked from Hong Kong. The ship could have landed in Port Alberni without hindrance but the man who had chartered the ship was intent upon directly challenging the British Empire and exposing its racist policies. This man was later hailed by **Gandhi** as a hero in the movement to gain liberation and independence for India.

The ship was sent back to India with most of its passengers, with some disastrous consequences. The stand-off is now marked by a plaque in Vancouver harbour.

Malik's story is strong on research but somewhat disjointed in structure. It features some first-person narration from a fugitive Punjabi schoolteacher, Bashir Ali Lopoke, who is a Muslim escaping his past as a revolutionary firebrand.

The conflicted, six-foot-six Canadian Immigration inspector **William Hopkinson**, who is of Anglo-Indian descent, understands there are revolutionary elements in India who are spreading their dissent into Canada. He speaks Punjabi and understands the politics of the situation better than the racist Vancouver MP **Harry Stevens** and the director of the Vancouver port, who are both bigots in keeping with the times.


Also profiled are **Mewa Singh**, a disgruntled Vancouver farmhand who is witnessing his people's daily humiliation; and **Jean Fryer**, Hopkinson's seven-year-old daughter, whose recollections shed fresh light on the unfolding traumatic events.

This novel provides an excellent refraction of the social climate of Vancouver near one hundred years ago. It also includes many fascinating details that will make this novel engaging for anyone who is already knowledgeable about the *Komagata Maru*.

*Chanting Denied Shores* will be a great deal more formidable for anyone who lacks previous knowledge of the story. This is an admirable work, from a discriminating and compassionate writer, but its cumbersome construction makes for the opposite of light reading.

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Mountain  
goat photo by  
Chris Harris

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**Chris Harris:**  
“I’m a mountain  
person. Mountains  
turn me on.”

# LOOKING UP

BY SAGE BIRCHWATER

*Motherstone: British Columbia's Volcanic Plateau* by Chris Harris and Harold Rhenisch (Country Light \$39.95)

TWO YEARS AGO, PHOTOGRAPHER **Chris Harris** and writer **Harold Rhenisch** set the bar high with their first high-altitude collaboration, *Spirit in the Grass: The Cariboo Chilcotin's Forgotten Landscape*, nominated for two BC Book Prizes.

Now, according to self-publisher Harris, they have surpassed that effort with ***Motherstone: British Columbia's Volcanic Plateau***, a coffee table book that portrays the majesty of the Central Interior and invites the reader to take an expedition into time; to peek into our geographical beginnings, and wonder how the landform we call the Cariboo Chilcotin was formed.

*Motherstone* covers a vast region of volcanic activity from the edge of the Chilcotin Plateau, where it buttresses up against the Coast Mountains in the west, to the sub-glacial volcanoes of Wells Gray Park to the east.

“I’m a mountain person,” Harris explains. “Mountains turn me on. I’ve ridden through these mountain ranges before, but this time I walked through every inch of it.

“When you walk you feel like you’re touching the earth. You feel the energy coming up through the earth.

“I found I was in tears out there. The volcanic landscape is so untouched; so powerful.”

As with most Chris Harris projects, *Motherstone* began with

the germ of an idea years earlier that took on a life of its own. When Harris was on horseback in the 1990s, photographing in the Ilgachuz Mountains with outfitters, **Roger** and **Wanda Williams**, he and fellow photographer, **Kris Andrews**, decided to take a side hike over a ridge to see what was on the other side. Harris came back with an image of a crater lake nestled in an undisturbed volcanic cone. In fact, it was a tarn in a cirque.

This became the seed for the *Motherstone* project. “I vowed to go back there,” he says. “It was the heart of the Ilgachuz volcano. How many people go through there in a year? It was a masterpiece of nature. I virtually don’t think anyone has ever been there.”

When he began the actual work of photographing for *Motherstone*, Harris wasn’t sure what the project was going to look like. “All my books are total exploration,” he says. “I’ve learned to trust the process. Doors start to open. I just like being out there hiking, physical and free, exploring with the camera.”

Harris decided he wanted to walk the ground he intended to photograph rather than travel by horseback. He hired guide outfitters **Dave** and **Joyce Dorsey**, and Roger and Wanda Williams to pack his camp gear and equipment two days into the wilderness. They ventured

to three west Chilcotin shield volcanoes, the Rainbows, the Ilgachuz and the Itcha mountain ranges, while he and his wife, **Rita Giesbrecht**, and friend, **Mike Duffy**, went by foot.

As a hiker, Harris returned to the tarn that inspired the project years earlier, and noted only slight changes to the landscape, caused by gravity and erosion over a fifteen-year span. For the most part, the natural vista was totally undisturbed except for a possible goat or two.



***Pipe Organ Mountain, heart of the Ilgachuz volcano***

“No one has walked here,” he says. “And with every drop of rain or snow flake, or with every freeze and thaw, the Ilgachuz volcano gallery is re-hung. Nature has not finished creating this masterpiece of art yet.

“It was totally an amazing experience to be up there and feel that energy coming up through my feet and legs.”

Over a two-year period Harris photographed hundreds of magnificent images, then he handed the project over to

Rhenisch who came up with the term “motherstone” as he was driving home to Campbell River from the Cariboo.

“It jumped into my head. The red rock south of Spences Bridge talked to me. It’s nice to feel in this vast, empty universe we’ve got a home. I’m of this place. I am this place speaking of itself. We are this place.”

Going back three billion years, Rhenisch says British Columbia was formed by the drifting of continental plates. Chains

of volcanoes formed along stress lines in the western Pacific, drifted east, and smashed into North America.

“Very little research has been done on this region,” he says. “I spent three months researching to find out what the story was. Everything we have in British Columbia is caused by continental plate movement. Rock is a record of a dance that happens in time.”

*Motherstone*, according to Rhenisch, is essentially the story of going out to the mountains and walking. “We wanted the book to be the art of the mountains, where the mountains are creating the art. The earth is an expression of itself where you can walk across ground no one has ever walked on before. The earth is seeing itself for the first time through your eyes.”

Both Harris and Rhenisch are adept at pulling back the veil of every-day perception to reveal the essence of what makes

the Central Interior unique. Rhenisch uses the scientific expertise of UBC professor Dr. **Mary Lou Bevier** to augment gut-felt romantic impressions to tell the story of this remarkable place.

“It’s an interesting balance—the scientific and the mythological,” Rhenisch says. “We had to have the science right, but at the same time it’s not a scientific book. We had to tell the story of being there. Science couldn’t do that.”

With his tenth book, *Motherstone*, Harris hopes to once more create an awareness of the value of the natural world and the biodiversity of the Cariboo Chilcotin region. Awareness affects public opinion about places,” he says, “and only public opinion affects change.”

The amalgam of art, science and adventure makes for one message. “The natural world is not something we must set out to conquer and subdue,” says Harris. “On the contrary, in fact it is our only hope for survival.”



SINCE LAUNCHING *MOTHERSTONE* AT A gala reception in 100 Mile House in October, the duo has commenced an extensive, province-wide tour and slide show. Seven hundred signed, hard-cover copies of *Motherstone* (\$69.95) are also available. For info visit [chrisharris.com](http://chrisharris.com)

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*Sage Birchwater is BC BookWorld's Cariboo correspondent, from Williams Lake.*



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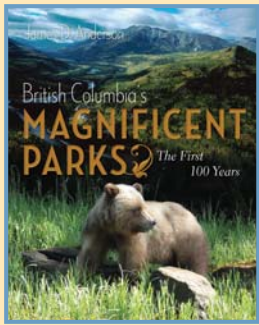
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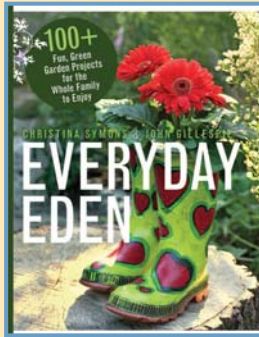
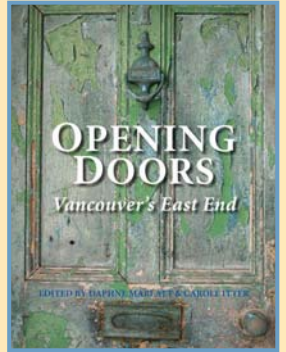
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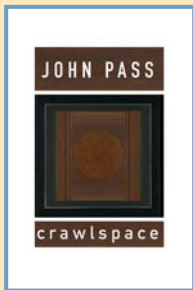
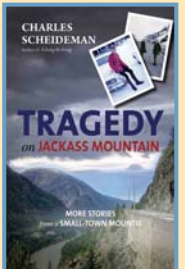
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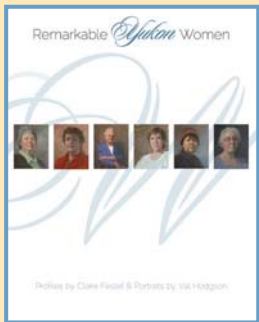
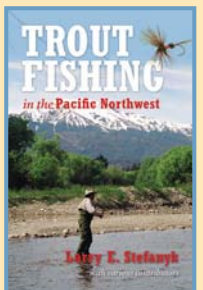
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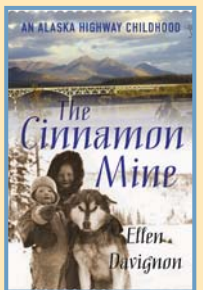
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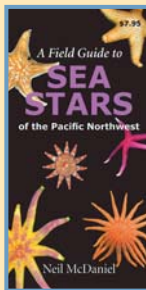
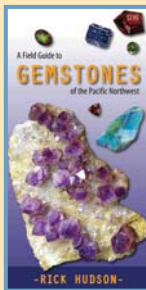
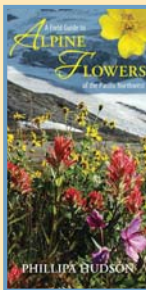
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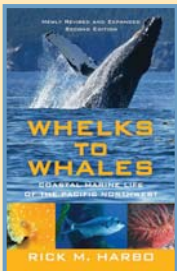
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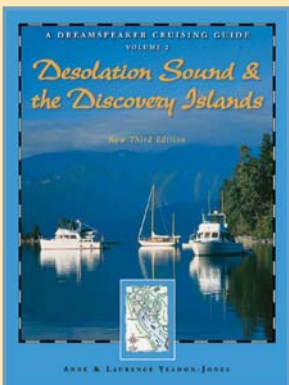
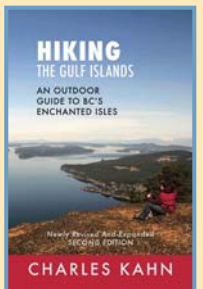
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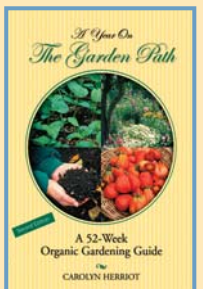
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