

# BC

## BOOKWORLD

VOL. 31 • NO. 1 • SPRING 2017

## NO NEWS IS BAD NEWS

**Ian Gill** lambastes  
media moguls

PAGE 20

"I was in my twenties, living away from home for the first time. I had very little contact with my family. I was asking myself many questions about race, identity, politics, and art."

# MADDIE'S ASCENT

Booker shortlisted novelist  
**Madeleine Thien** is profiled in our  
FICTION ISSUE after winning both the  
Giller and Governor General's Awards

PAGES 25-39

THE PIANIST & THE KNITTER P.28

DON'T AGONIZE,  
ORGANIZE!



PUBLICATION MAIL AGREEMENT  
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*"Perfect amount of speakers, sessions, and attendees. I feel inspired and not overwhelmed. I am looking forward to 2017!"*

Tara Fort  
Prescott, AZ  
2016 Conference Attendee

# Chuckanut writers conference

## Inspiration into Action

Friday and Saturday

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Whatcom Community College  
Bellingham, Washington

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

presented by



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Left: Original serigraph titled "Along Chuckanut Drive" by Nancy McDonnell Spaulding, commissioned by Chuckanut Bay Gallery, [www.chuckanutbaygallery.com](http://www.chuckanutbaygallery.com)

Faculty:  
Alice Acheson  
Elizabeth Austen  
Paula Becker  
Daniel James Brown  
Jonathan Evison  
Waverly Fitzgerald  
Sean Fletcher  
Andrea Hurst  
Dan Larner  
Samuel Ligon  
Gary Copeland Lilley  
Priscilla Long  
Kelly Magee  
Tod Marshall  
Anis Moigani  
Kathleen Dean Moore  
Ijeoma Oluo  
Rena Priest  
Andy Ross

## JOIN US

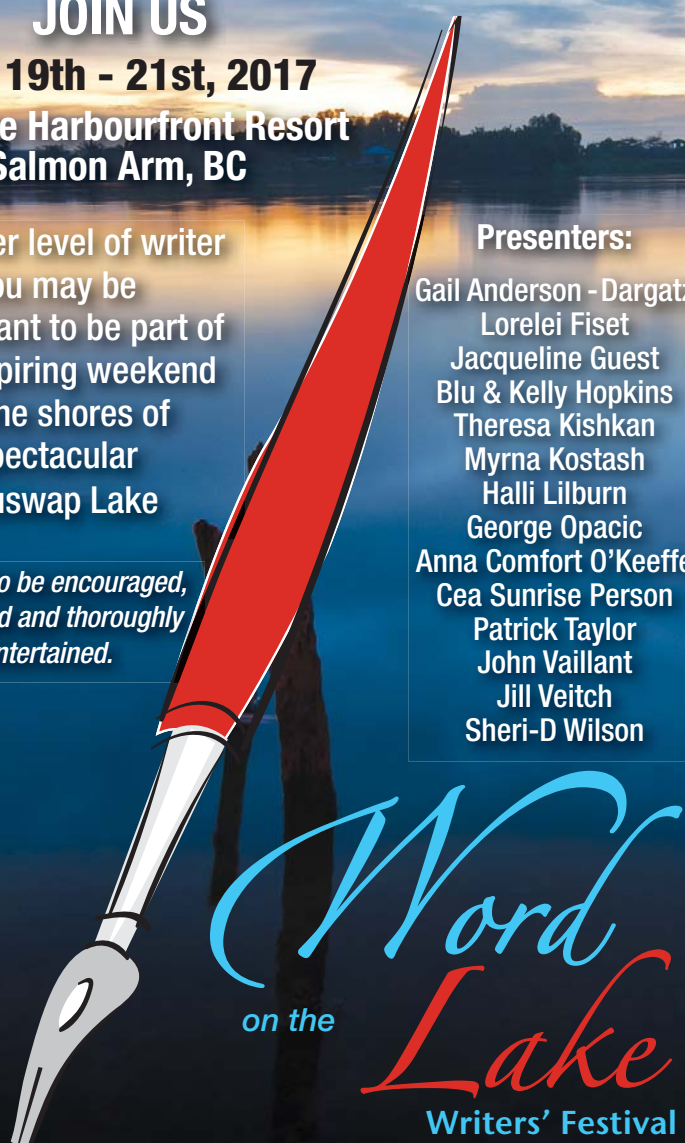
May 19th - 21st, 2017  
Prestige Harbourfront Resort  
Salmon Arm, BC

Whatever level of writer  
you may be  
you'll want to be part of  
this inspiring weekend  
on the shores of  
spectacular  
Shuswap Lake

*Expect to be encouraged,  
informed and thoroughly  
entertained.*

### Presenters:

Gail Anderson - Dargatz  
Lorelei Fiset  
Jacqueline Guest  
Blu & Kelly Hopkins  
Theresa Kishkan  
Myrna Kostash  
Halli Lilburn  
George Opacic  
Anna Comfort O'Keeffe  
Cea Sunrise Person  
Patrick Taylor  
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APRIL 27-30, 2017

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## Ron Smith

**The Defiant Mind: Living Inside a Stroke**  
(Ronsdale \$22.95)

## Wade Davis

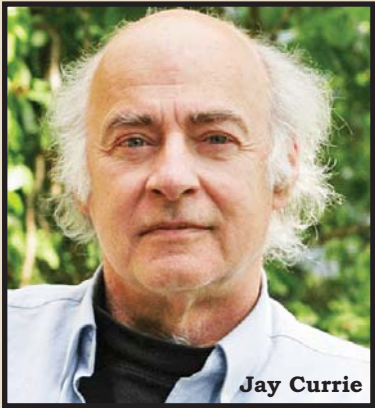
**Wade Davis: Photographs**  
(D&M \$39.95)

## Colin Henthorne

**The Queen of the North Disaster:  
The Captain's Story** (Harbour \$24.95)

## Aaron Chapman

**The Last Gang in Town**  
(Arsenal Pulp Press \$24.95)



Jay Currie

## Jay Currie

**Start & Run a Marijuana Dispensary  
or Pot Shop**  
(Self -Counsel Press \$22.95)

## Shelley Adams

**Whitewater Cooks with Passion**  
(Sandhill Book Marketing \$34.95)

## John Armstrong

**A Series of Dogs**  
(New Star \$21)

## Derek von Essen & Phil Saunders (text)

**No Flash, Please! (Underground  
Music in Toronto 1987-92)**  
(Anvil Press \$28)

## John Knox

**Hard Knox: Musings from the Edge of  
Canada** (Heritage House \$19.95)



Margriet Ruurs

## Margriet Ruurs & Nizar Ali Badr

**Stepping Stones:  
A Refugee Family's Journey**  
(Orca Books \$20)

## Bev Sellars

**Price Paid: The Fight for  
First Nations Survival**  
(Talonbooks \$19.95)

## Holly Crichton

**No Way to Run: A Mother and Son  
Story of Surviving Abuse**  
(Caitlin Press \$24.95)

## Douglas E. Delaney Serge Marc Durflinger

**Capturing Hill 70: Canada's Forgotten  
Battle of the First World War**  
(UBC Press \$34.95)

## Jedediah Loeks

**The Permaculture Market Garden**  
(New Society \$39.95)

\* The current topselling titles from major  
BC publishing companies, in no particular order.

# SHOUT, SHOUT, LET IT ALL OUT

GREG EHLERS PHOTO



**Chelene Knight is  
working with mentor  
Jen Sookfong Lee  
on a novel set in  
1950s Vancouver, in  
the area known as  
Hogan's Alley.**

*Room*, Canada's oldest feminist literary journal, is celebrating its longevity with a 400-page, retrospective anthology, **Making Room: Forty Years of Room Magazine.**

**W**E ASKED CURRENT *ROOM* EDITOR **CHELENE KNIGHT** TO reflect on how the publication has affected her life as a writer.



"I was a shy, paranoid, weird kid who never spoke and instead just wrote a lot; I spoke through writing.

I had no idea I could shape this skill into a career, and I definitely did not know there was a community of writers just like me out there feeling the same way.

"Before I stumbled onto *Room* magazine, I was steadily writing poetry and awkwardly-worded 750-word-limit parenting magazine articles, so why would a well-established literary magazine of such stature have any interest in a young girl with limited experience?

"*Room* magazine was the first Canadian literary periodical to publish my work.

"*Room* magazine was the first literary magazine to say "hey, we want you to be a part of this."

"*Room* magazine said, 'your voice matters' and they meant it.

"I know for a fact that many women who have published with *Room* over the past 40 years can easily say the same. *Room* has instilled an unwavering sort of pride in every woman that comes on board whether staff, volunteer, or contributor. I keep saying this aloud to myself and it is incredible to say, I am a part of this.

*Room* is making sure the story, the voice, and the woman are heard at equal volumes, above anything else. At *Room*, we can shout."

## What the Shell?

**A**t a gas pump, **Stephen Collis** notices an LED message crawl: Help Shell change the world. He collects such nuances for his amalgam of protest-driven poetry and "militant sincerity," **Once in Blockadia** (Talon \$18.95), partly a response to being named in a \$5.6 million lawsuit unsuccessfully launched by U.S. energy giant Kinder Morgan. Lawyers cited Collis' writing as a mobilizing force for protestors who stymied the company's exploratory boreholes on Burnaby Mountain.

It's hard to live up to being called "the most dangerous poet in Canada" but Collis is doing his anti-capitalist darndest, documenting his travels from the Alberta Tar Sands to **Wordsworth's** Lake District for *Once in Blockadia*—a term coined by **Naomi Klein**. His combination of transcripts and memoir has been

named as one of three finalists for this year's George Ryga Award for Social Awareness, to be presented in June. The other finalists are **Wade Davis** for *Wade Davis: Photographs* (D&M \$39.95) and **Eric Jamieson's** *The Native Voice: The Story of How Maisie Hurley and Canada's First Aboriginal Newspaper Changed a Nation* (Caitlin \$24.95).

**Stephen Collis is one  
of three finalists for  
the Ryga Award for  
Social Awareness in  
Literature.**



CARLOS TELLO PHOTO



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Aaron Chapman (centre) with former members of the Clark Park gang in Clark Park.

## When gangs used fists

The latest addition to the **Literary Map of B.C.** will be an allocation for Clark Park at 1500 E. 14th Ave., in Vancouver

V

ANCOUVER'S SECOND OLDEST URBAN PARK, CLARK PARK, IS THE FOCUS OF Vancouver author/historian **Aaron Chapman's** **The Last Gang in Town**. At this location in the early 1970s the Clark Park Gang evolved into one of that era's most notorious street gangs. In 1972, after the gang was involved in a number of headline-making clashes with police, including the 'Rolling Stones riot' outside the Pacific Coliseum, the Vancouver Police Department formed an undercover squad to go after the gang. Hostile interactions culminated in a shooting death of a Clark Park gang member, **Danny Teece**, age 17. Chapman's history includes stories from former gang members and undercover police officers who worked to stifle gang activity. The full title of Chapman's entirely original Vancouver history is **The Last Gang in Town: The Epic Story of the Vancouver Police vs. the Clark Park Gang** (Arsenal \$24.95).

978-1551526713

## I just shot Dad

ONE NIGHTMARISH DAY, **Holly Crichton** got a call from her youngest son **Mat** with the news: "I just shot Dad." It was common knowledge to neighbours that Holly and her sons had been victims of her abusive husband for years. Even after Holly and Mat had been disabled in separate accidents, the abuse didn't subside. The shocker was

that police investigators characterized the elderly father as the victim and they concluded that son Mat was the aggressor. Holly's community fiercely came to her and Mat's defence. A first-degree murder charge was reduced to manslaughter. **No Way to Run** (Caitlin \$24.95) is Holly Crichton's story of epic courage and tenacity in mounting her son Mat's defence. Born in 1958, Holly Crichton worked as a professional horse trainer and jockey, until a racing accident in 1996 left her paralyzed. She has two sons and the youngest, Mat, was severely brain injured in a car accident in 2004. Mat lives next door to her with his wife and two children, on their cattle ranch in northern Alberta. *No Way to Run* is Holly's first book.

978-1-987915181

## A SPANIEL IN THE WORKS

LIKE MANY CLASSICS FOR young readers—*Winnie the Pooh* books, for example—**Paymaneh Ritchie's** **My Name is Oliver** (Tellwell \$6.99) was written by a parent to entertain their own child. Told from the perspective of a lovable but depressive six-year-old Beagle-Springer Spaniel who was adopted from the SPCA, this children's book delves into mental health issues that include separation anxiety, allergies, anxiety and depression. Ritchie's aim is to have a light-hearted story that will enable the reader to discuss tolerance, acceptance and unconditional love with children. A portion of the proceeds will go to the BC SPCA and the Beagle Freedom Project.

E-book: 978-1-77302-425-7; PB: 978-1-77302-251-2; HC: 978-1-77302-250-5

## Founders of Bolen's & Munro's will be missed

Known to friends and family as **Mel**, Victoria bookseller **Madeline Bolen** died unexpectedly at age 72 in December. She first opened a small bookstore in Hillside Shopping Centre in 1975, expanding four times before settling into the current 17,000-square foot space in 1996, making it one of the biggest single-location independent bookstores in Canada. Her daughter **Samantha** took over management of Bolen's Books in 2010.



Mel Bolen

One month earlier Victoria also lost **Jim Munro**, who founded Munro's books in downtown Victoria with his first wife, Alice Munro, in 1963, and operated it until he turned over ownership to four senior employees in 2014. He received the Gray Campbell Distinguished Service Award in 2009 in recognition of his contribution to the book industry in BC. He received the Order of Canada in 2016.

Paymaneh Ritchie



# The voice of Joyce vs. choice of Trump

ONTARIO FINANCIAL ADVISER, DR. **JERRY Ackerman**, is so impressed by **Joyce Nelson’s Beyond Banksters: Resisting the New Feudalism** (Watershed Sentinel Books \$26) that he paid to mail copies to every member of Parliament in Ottawa, as well as every senator, in advance of Liberal Finance Minister **Bill Morneau’s** spring budget.

Ackerman sees Nelson’s investigative perspective of global financial chicanery as an ideal “toolkit” for legislators’ in the new Trump era. *Beyond Banksters*, Nelson’s sixth book, will likely grow in stature if U.S. President **Donald Trump** follows through on his campaign promises to renegotiate NAFTA and withdraw from the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP).



Joyce Nelson

Many of Nelson’s topics, like the trade deal with the European Union—CETA—or the Canada Infrastructure Bank that Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** is starting up, are time-sensitive subjects. “She wanted to get that information out there,” says publisher **Delores Broten**, “about how the trade deals, the banking institutions and the big financial investment companies all interact to remove the public interest from what government is doing with our property.”

Joyce Nelson—the **Noam Chomsky** of Vancouver Island—names the people responsible for eroding public accountability for trade deals and outlines the steps which have allowed trade deals to open up public services to corporate takeover and limit our ability to control banks and investment corporations.

WS Books is the fledgling book-publishing imprint of the non-profit Watershed Sentinel Education Society which began on Cortes Island. After fifteen years on Cortes, its environmental news magazine, *Watershed Sentinel*, was transferred to Comox.

978-0-9953286-0-0

Alligators and tigers can be white. Lobsters can be blue. One in twelve people has a rare disease. So what should we do? To raise awareness of rare diseases, “the underdogs of health care,” **Deborah Katz**, an artist and nursing professor with twenty years of experience in health care, has produced **Rare is Everywhere** (Miss Bird / Sandhill \$19.95) in an attempt to educate children about nature and make them feel better if they have a rare disease or any anomaly that makes them feel different. The overriding message about her assortment of strange animals comes at the end: “So if you ever feel different, like a white spirit bear, you don’t have to worry because, Rare is EVERYWHERE!” Proceeds go to the Rare Disease Foundation, started in Vancouver in 2007. A rare disease is defined as a condition affecting fewer than one in 2,000 people. There are more than 7,000 known rare diseases.

978-0-9958261-0-6

# Rare is everywhere



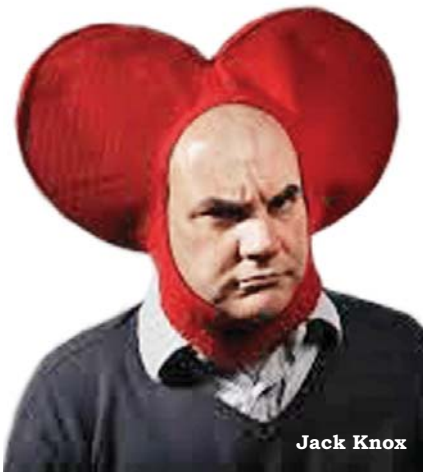
Zena Sharman: “Remember that you are the expert on your body and your health. So bring that expertise and knowledge into your conversations with doctors and nurses and other people who might be caring for you.”

# EnGendering health

EDITOR **ZENA SHARMAN’S** “MOVING AND INCENDIARY” LGBTQ anthology, **The Remedy: Queer and Trans Voices on Health and Health Care** (Arsenal \$18.95), presents true stories from queer and trans people about their health-care experiences. Chapters range from gay men with HIV facing prejudice, to a lesbian couple dealing with cancer, and essays from health-care providers and activists exploring and examining the challenges and politics of LGBTQ health issues in the shadow of the new post-truth era.

Zena Sharman co-chairs the board of the Catherine White Holman Wellness Centre, a holistic health care centre for transgender and gender-diverse communities, located on Kingsway in Vancouver. She has been a cabaret host, a go-go dancer for a queer punk band and a campus radio DJ.

9781551526584



Jack Knox

# Victoria is Knoxville

SELF-DESCRIBED GRUMP, THOROUGHLY British Columbian columnist **Jack Knox** has been delighting *Times Colonist* readers since 1988. **Hard Knox: Musings from the Edge of Canada** (Heritage \$19.95) is long overdue. Whether he’s addressing his city’s sewage crisis, offering a rhapsodic ode to Nanaimo bars or noting that millennials and elders are now willing to pay more for their bikes than their cars, Knox charms with his curmudgeonly wit and satirical eye. “No local peccadillo, imagined or real, escapes the anthropological notebook of this latter-day **Franz Boas**,” says **Bill Engleson** in *The Ormsby Review*.

In his dedication, he thanks **Lucille**, “who has stuck with me for more than thirty years. I question her judgment.” Raised in the B.C. interior, Knox previously worked at newspapers in Kamloops, Regina and Campbell River.

9781772031492



# TIME TO SPRING LOOSE

## Medicine Unbundled

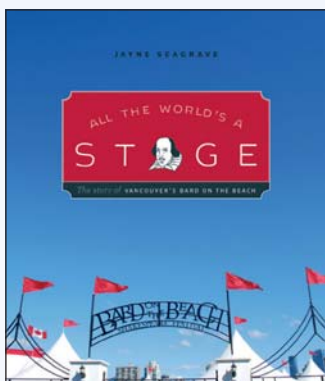
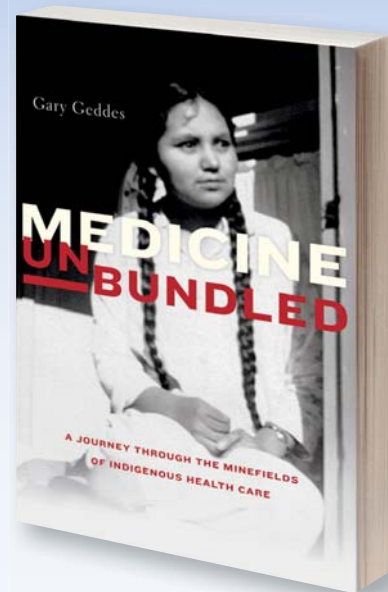
A Journey Through the Minefields of Indigenous Health Care

Gary Geddes

“Anyone who cares about human decency and social justice owes a debt to Gary Geddes and to his Indigenous informants. We can no longer pretend we don’t know about residential schools, murdered and missing Aboriginal women and ‘Indian Hospitals.’ The only outstanding question is how we respond.”

—Tom Sandborn, *Vancouver Sun*

Heritage House | \$22.95 pb | \$17.99 ebook

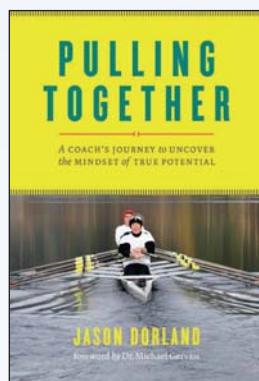


## All the World's a Stage

The Story of Vancouver's Bard on the Beach  
Jayne Seagrave

The inside story of Western Canada's most illustrious Shakespeare festival is revealed in dazzling photographs and a clever narrative by Bard aficionado Jayne Seagrave.

Heritage House | \$29.95 pb | \$22.99 ebook

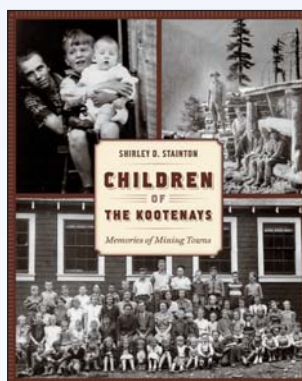


## Pulling Together

A Coach's Journey to Uncover  
the Mindset of True Potential  
Jason Dorland

A former Olympian reflects on his evolving ideas about coaching as he prepares a crew of junior rowers for elite-level competition.

Heritage House | \$19.95 pb | \$15.99 ebook

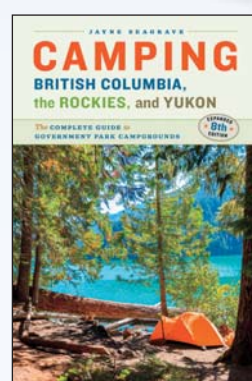


## Children of the Kootenays

Memories of Mining Towns  
Shirley Stainton

Scenes of West Kootenay communities in the 1930s come to life in this charming memoir that features over a hundred stunning photographs.

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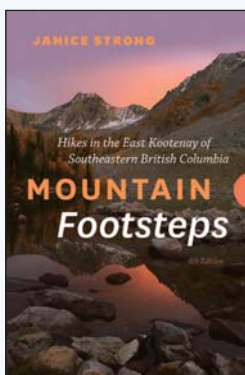


## Camping British Columbia, the Rockies, and Yukon

The Complete Guide to Government Park Campgrounds, Expanded Eighth Edition  
Jayne Seagrave

Now fully updated and expanded to include the national parks of the Canadian Rockies.

Heritage House | \$22.95 pb | \$17.99 ebook

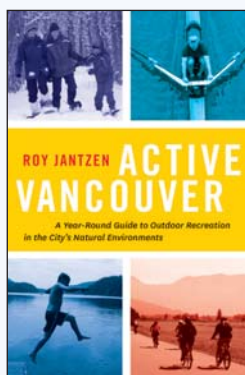


## Mountain Footsteps

Hikes in the East Kootenay of Southwestern British Columbia – 4th Edition  
Janice Strong

Revised and updated, with colour maps and beautiful photos which will breathe new life into the hiking experience for outdoor enthusiasts.

RMB | Rocky Mountain Books | \$30 pb | \$14.99 ebook

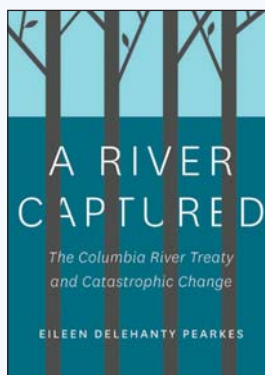


## Active Vancouver

A Year-round Guide to Outdoor Recreation in the City's Natural Environments  
Roy Jantzen

With colour photos and maps, *Active Vancouver* is the ultimate resource for family-friendly outdoor recreation.

RMB | Rocky Mountain Books | \$25 pb | \$12.99 ebook

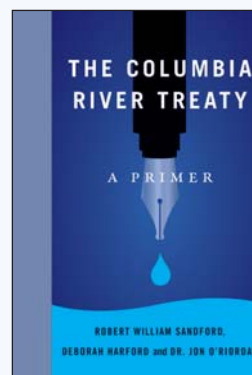


## A River Captured

The Columbia River Treaty and Catastrophic Change  
Eileen Delehanthy Pearkes

A profound work that explores the controversial treaty and its impact on ecosystems, Indigenous peoples, culture, and recent history.

RMB | Rocky Mountain Books | \$20 pb | \$9.99 ebook



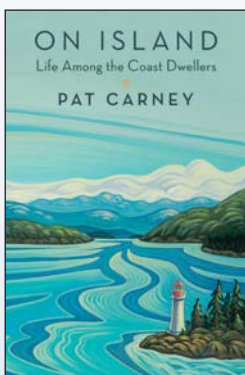
## The Columbia River Treaty

A Primer

Robert Sandford, Deborah Harford and Jon O'Riordan

A timely and accessible work that clearly explains this complex water agreement between Canada and the US and its impact on BC.

RMB | Rocky Mountain Books | \$16 hc | \$7.99 ebook

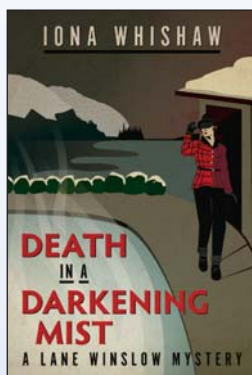


## On Island

Life Among the Coast Dwellers  
Pat Carney

A collection of stories chronicling the characters and dramas that capture life in small coastal communities, written by long-time islander and former politician Pat Carney.

TouchWood Editions | \$21.95 pb | \$7.99 ebook

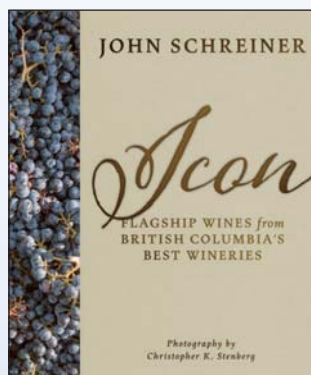


## Death in a Darkening Mist

A Lane Winslow Mystery #2  
Iona Whishaw

Former British Intelligence officer Lane Winslow teams up with the Nelson police force to investigate the murder of a local Russian man in this post-war cozy mystery.

TouchWood Editions | \$16.95 pb | \$7.99 ebook



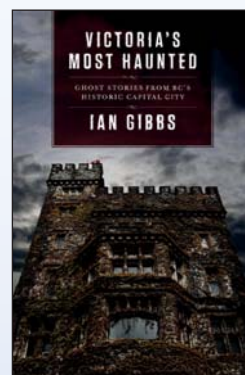
## Icon

Flagship Wines from British Columbia's Best Wineries  
John Schreiner

Photography by Christopher K. Stenberg

Canada's most authoritative wine writer showcases 100 of BC's highest-calibre wines in this guide of tasting notes and information.

TouchWood Editions | \$39.95 hc | \$17.99 ebook



## Victoria's Most Haunted

Ghost Stories from BC's Historic Capital City  
Ian Gibbs

Featuring more than 25 eerie tales from iconic sites such as the Empress Hotel, Hatley Castle, and Ross Bay Cemetery, as told by a Ghostly Walks tour guide.

TouchWood Editions | \$19.95 pb | \$7.99 ebook



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USUALLY CITED AS VANCOUVER’S FIRST ROCK ‘N’ roll deejay, **Robert Gordon ‘Red’ Robinson** was born in Comox on March 30, 1937. He started his career in radio by contributing to **Al Jordan**’s afternoon show for teenagers on CJOR in 1953. They made contact after Robinson phoned into the show impersonating Hollywood actor **Jimmy Stewart** who was visiting Vancouver at the time. Red Robinson’s first program, called *Theme for Teens*, has been described as the first scheduled radio program for rock ‘n’ roll in Canada. As soon as he graduated from high school in 1954, Robinson became an on-air host, befriending major artists who came to play in B.C. and frequently serving as an emcee for the likes of **Elvis Presley** (1957) and **The Beatles** (1964). Here **Steven Ferguson** responds to **Robin Brunet**’s biography, **Red Robinson: The Last Deejay** (Harbour \$29.95).

**A**S ROBIN BRUNET MAKES clear in his biography, Red Robinson is still a beloved hero in Vancouver, as much a part of his city as **Gassy Jack** or **August Jack Khatsahlano**. To emphasize that Robinson is much more than a relic, Brunet opens the story with Red Robinson attending **Michael Bubl  **’s wedding.

The glory years of Red Robinson are now almost alien. When **Bill Haley and the Comets**

## Before radio lost that lovin’ feeling, a kid from Comox thrived as the Forrest Gump of pop music in the Lower Mainland.

were singing *Rock Around the Clock*, before Elvis, rock and roll wasn’t just dangerous, it kept parents up at night worrying about their children’s future. In those days, as we learn from Robinson’s encounters with the likes of **Roy Orbison** (after a gig in Port Alberni), celebrities and musical performers could often be found in the backseat of a disc jockey’s car as they went speeding down a highway to catch a ferry.

In those days, buying an album by a black artist like **Fats Domino**, or **Little Richard** could mean having the cashier pull it out from under the counter in a paper bag, so people on the street couldn’t see what you were buying.

After Brunet introduces Robinson as an important and loved man, he goes headfirst into Robinson’s early career, sprinkling the names of countless celebrities, only to veer further back to Robinson’s upbringing. Robinson didn’t know his father while growing up with his siblings in near-poverty. But there are few tears shed about his tutelage in the school of hard knocks. Instead Brunet shows how Robinson’s innate good humour, optimism and sense of adventure got him going forward, always fueled by his trademark enthusiasm.

Robinson disclaims the notion that he brought rock and roll to Vancouver. He was there at the right place, at the right time. His fallback position is humility, but contemporaries and friends such as music agent **Bruce Allen (Bryan Adams)** are quick to place a lot of the credit on Robinson’s shoulders for bringing a nascent B.C. music business into the mainstream.

There is more to this portrait than a rehash of Robinson’s disc jockey encounters with celebs. We also learn about his stunts, such as the time he was broadcasting live from the bottom of Burrard Inlet in a dive suit—and hardly anyone took notice.

His foray into broadcast television, as a sort of alternative to **Dick Clark**’s *American Bandstand*, led him to a gig with a Portland radio station which, in turn, led to him getting drafted by the U.S. Army. His enrollment in Advanced Infantry Training (and his superior officers encouraging him to pursue a military career) are sides of Robinson’s story that the average teenaged Beatles fan would not have known.

Robinson returned to Vancouver and stayed the course. His love of the city is palpable; and it trumped grandiose career ambitions or possible salary increases from afar. That’s the charm of this biography: Robinson is a man filled with life and love, and never speaks disparagingly about anyone. (Renowned and beloved sports broadcaster **Jim Robson** is revered for his similar appeal.) There were some who cheated him, or treated him unfairly, but Robinson’s respectful nature apparently didn’t allow for him to engage in petty vendettas or slights.

But Robinson is not averse to telling it like it is, or was. Even though he was instrumental in the ad campaign that paved the way for the opening of the

first McDonald’s in Canada, he has no hesitation in criticizing the company. Increasingly Robinson made his living in the advertising business, buoyed by thousands of friendships and contacts he’d made in the radio and entertainment business. According to Brunet, his honest and respectful nature was an unusual set of traits amongst the large business peddlers and Robinson has kept his integrity in tact.

Brunet closes with accolades and honours acquired by Robinson, but more compelling are the closings at the end of each chapter, in Robinson’s own words, as he reminisces about the people he has met. To read those reminiscences from what is so obviously his own voice is a real treat. His respect and awe of these various people shines through as he revels in his meetings with the likes of **Steve Allen**, **Leonard Nimoy**, **Johnny Carson**, The Beatles, Elvis all the way up to Bubl  .

Robinson is quick to point out he’s not literally the last deejay. The book’s title is meant to express that the energy, the connectivity, and the radio business itself is in its death throes. In the old days, deejays were local celebrities; now playlists are compiled by bots.

Robinson compares the demise of his profession to his grandfather’s work on steam engine locomotives on Vancouver Island. He does not express indignation at the changing times, but there’s a sense of sadness knowing something important is being lost.

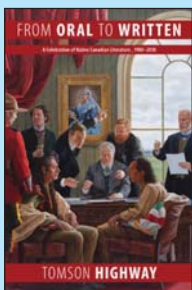
978-1-55017-769-5

Ubiquitous deejay **Red Robinson** (left) with **Elvis** in Vancouver, 1957.

SEEING RED



# TALONBOOKS 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

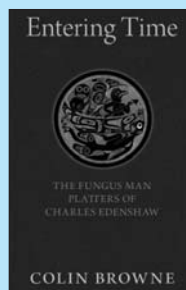


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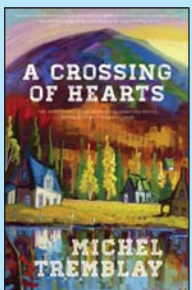


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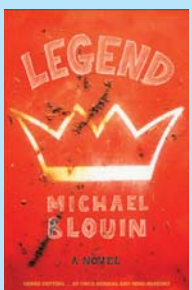
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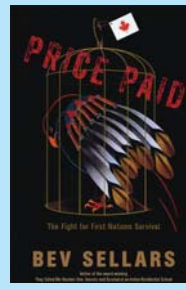


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## **The Gorge: Selected Writing**

**NANCY SHAW**

**Edited by Catriona Strang**

Edited by Catriona Strang – who co-authored *Busted*, *Cold Trip*, and *Light Sweet Crude* with Shaw – *The Gorge* collects a range of Shaw's prolific writing with a focus on her collaborations and poetry.

978-1-77201-140-1 • \$24.95 • 240 pages • Poetry  
April 2017



**Jane Rule's grave in the woods on Galiano is an oft-visited site for pilgrims who value her character and work. A new collection of Rule's letters reveals why she is revered.**

PEOPLE WHO KNEW

**Jane Rule** are still saying to themselves, "I wonder what Jane would think of this."

She has been called "the greatest lesbian writer of our generation" because the six-foot-tall, American-born, Galiano Islander wrote *Desert of the Heart*, a 1964 novel that dared to describe a lesbian couple succeeding in a long-term relationship.

But Jane Rule—or Jinx, as she was sometimes called—was much more.

She lent so much money to her fellow islanders, so often, that she earned a different nickname "The Bank of Galiano." For years, when she and her lifelong partner **Helen Sonthoff** shared their pool with teens and toddlers, it was Rule who was the lifeguard who taught kids to swim.

And she was hilariously funny. More importantly, she should be remembered as an iconoclastic social philosopher who was just as interested in children and the elderly as she was in gay pride and civil rights.

Jane Rule's wisdom is the best reason to wade through the misleadingly-titled **A Queer Love Story: The Letters of Jane Rule and Rick Bébout** (UBC \$50), a 650-page, overdue omnibus edited by **Marilyn R. Schuster** that records the eight-year correspondence between North America's foremost "public lesbian" and her editor at the Toronto-based publication, *The Body Politic*.

Bébout's descriptions of his sex life, the scourge of AIDS and the emergence of gay culture constitute two-thirds of the text, but it's Rule's sanity that shines.

Here is a sampling of Rule's private comments.

### Violence

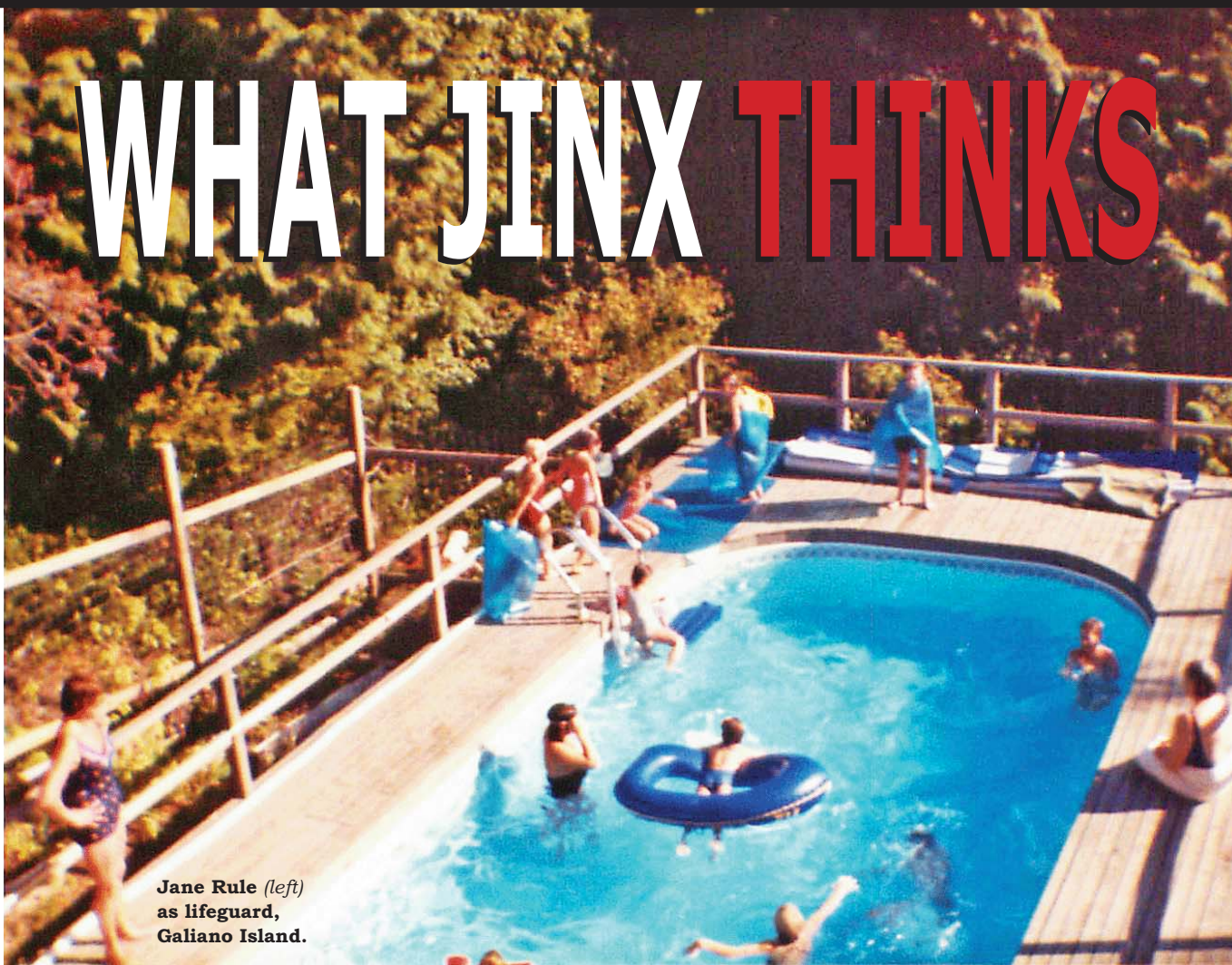
"If I were given an opportunity to censor, I would ban all violence against women, but I would ban all violence against men as well, and that would pretty well shut down the entertainment industry. And the wife beating, child abuse, beating up of men, and war would still go on."

### Children

"I do think the accusation that the gay community isn't sympathetic about children is probably a just one, though I think it's not a problem limited to the gay community. A lot of heterosexuals who don't have children or whose children are grown aren't interested in having children around."

### Risk

"There is a simple point about any sort of sexual experimenting: it should be done between consenting people, the dangers as well-known as those for mountain climbing, skiing, joining the Peace Corps or voting for Reagan."



**Jane Rule (left) as lifeguard, Galiano Island.**

### THE WORLD ACCORDING TO JANE, IN PUBLIC:

- I believe only in art and failure.
- I hope I'm remembered for being lusty, feisty and full of life.
- My own sense of role models is you only need bad ones. You can say, "I'm certainly not going to be like that when I grow up!"

- It is love, very ordinary human love, and not fear, which is the good teacher and the wisest judge.
- My private measure of success is daily. If this were to be the last day of my life would I be content with it.
- I came out as a lesbian long before I came out as a writer.

### Honour

"I do think it bizarre that we are taught to honor those who die in battle, condemn those who die of pleasure."

### Incest

"Not mentioning incest is one of the ways we keep it from going away."

### Candor

"I was very much in love with several women before I met Helen, one of whom I might have lived quite happily with if it hadn't been for her terror at my need for candor."

### Sublimation

"Most sexual energy directed toward me now I find simply wearying. I'm sure that importantly has to do with a frail back, aging bones, limited energy, but there's something else about it, too, a sense that the sexual energy is directed at my work rather than at me or anyway at the legend I am. As such it seems to be not only spurious but dangerous not for me so much as for the other person involved. One of the reasons I don't give readings or lecture is that I don't like the kind of energy that comes at me in those circumstances, but it is harder and harder for me to be a person among other people: personal. I increasingly therefore, turn my "abnormal attention" and need for energy in other directions, to the children I teach to swim (no, don't report me), to neighbors in need, to the amazing and fragile old. The defused eroticism I feel in all relationships nourishes me now more than those which require direct sexual acknowledgement. And I feel no loss at all."

### Creativity

"I can never think why anyone would be interested in reading a book I've just finished. It loses its vitality for me, I suppose, once my imagination is unhooked from it."

### Virginia Woolf

"Virginia Woolf killed herself on my birthday. I've never liked that. I've never liked, more importantly, the fixation on her suicide when she had lived to nearly 62, a hardworking, often wonderful life against hard odds."

### Death

"I try to figure out why the idea of my own death doesn't trouble me. I think I have found life hard enough, demanding enough, to think of death as a sort of reward, rest anyway." 978-0-7748-3543-5



**Jane Rule's classic *Desert of the Heart* was republished by Talonbooks (1978).**



**Helen Sonthoff and Jane Rule**

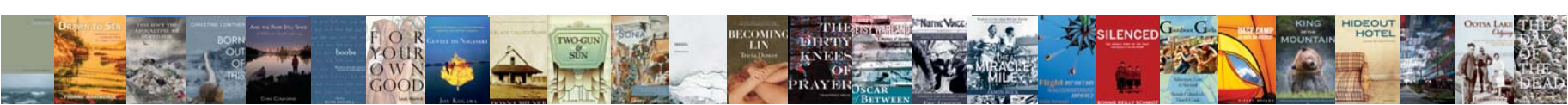


**Margaret Atwood and Jane Rule**



**Jane Rule, David Robinson (Talonbooks publisher), Audrey Thomas (novelist)**





# RURAL AT HEART — URBAN IN MIND

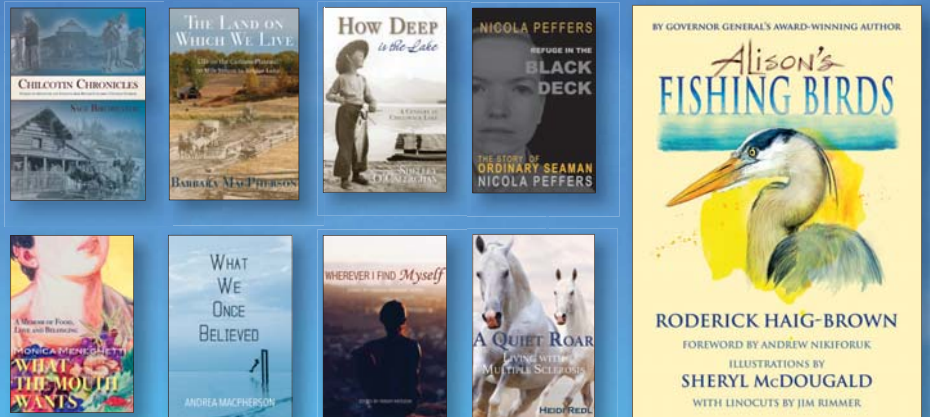
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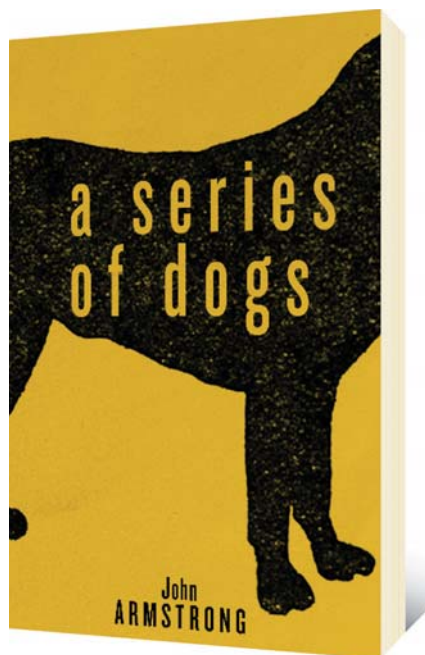


## A Series Of Dogs

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Pretty much guaranteed to make you laugh out loud... a memorable compendium of philosophy, social commentary, slobbery kisses and love.

—Heidi Greco,  
*Vancouver Sun*



Armstrong evokes a life immeasurably enriched by one best friend after another, with boyhood tales of romping along the railroad tracks with Spooky the mutt, touching accounts of Sluggo the Rottweiler befriending sex workers, howl-inducing memories of laying a treasured friend to rest during a rain- and beer-soaked night, and many more stories both moving and hilarious.



Armstrong and Bob, circa 1957.

## The News We Deserve

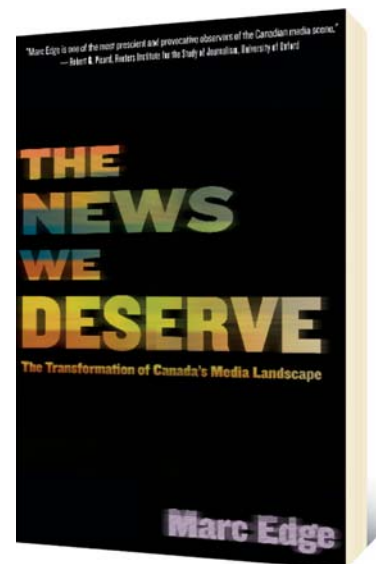
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—Barry Craig, *Winnipeg Free Press*



## Soviet Princeton

Slim Evans and the 1932–33 Miners' Strike

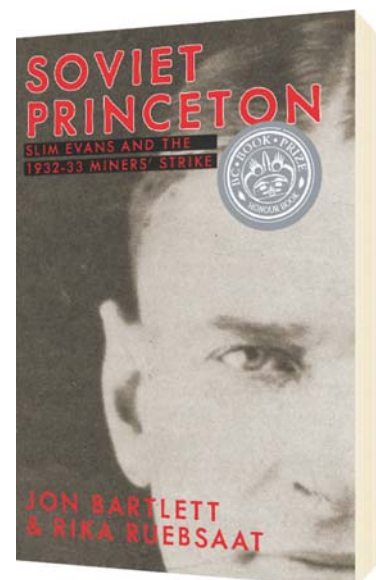
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B

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S LIBRARIES were recognizing there was a need for internet access to be made available to people without computers by the mid-1990s.

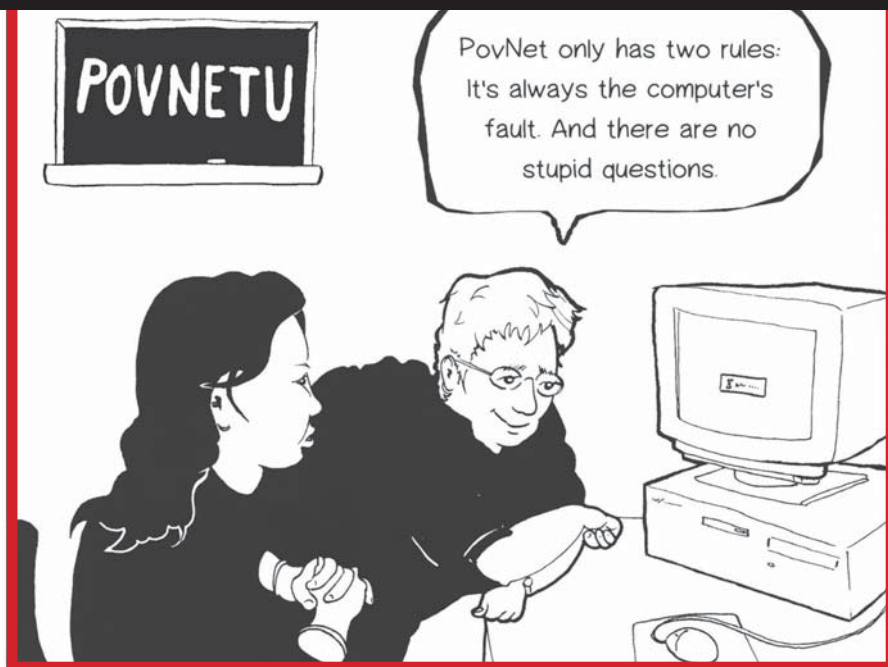
But affording access to keyboards and screens was only half the battle. Poor people needed to be shown the ropes. Enter longtime activist **Penny Goldsmith**.

For decades Goldsmith has maintained a book publishing imprint called Lazara Press, with literary offerings from the likes of **Helen Potrebenko**. It is lesser known that for 18 years as a freelance editor Goldsmith has doubled as the executive co-ordinator of PovNet, an online anti-poverty network based in B.C. with links to the rest of Canada and elsewhere.

So what the heck is PovNet?

To answer that question, Goldsmith has produced **Storming The Digital Divide: The PovNet Story** (Lazara \$12.95), a graphic telling of how PovNet activists and advocates have worked together. With illustrations by **Kara Sievwright** and **Nicole Marie Burton**, her book is a collection of activists' stories about using PovNet to connect with others advocating for the rights of poor people, farmworkers, First Nations, fishermen, immigrants, refugees and those with disabilities.

As for that phrase, *The Digital Divide*, it can be explained in one sentence: "When PovNet first started," Goldsmith writes, "people often asked



## OVERCOMING the DIGITAL DIVIDE

**The first email was sent in 1971. By 1994, about 18% of Canadians were using the internet. In 1997, anti-poverty advocates in B.C. met in Vancouver to create PovNet.**

me, how can you talk about computers and poverty in the same breath?"

Indeed. But attitudes can be a hindrance to learning about computers as much as lack of dough. "I used to teach secretaries how to use computers," says Goldsmith. "Highly skilled women were scared of losing their jobs because they were intimidated by computers.

"Working with them taught me that no one was ever going to be in a position of not being able to use PovNet because they didn't think they could use the technology we offered."

It is nowadays taken for granted, especially by younger people, that nearly everyone knows about the internet and how to access it. This assumption can

be crippling to someone who has never been familiar with a keyboard, or who can't afford an iPhone, or who still doesn't know what the heck an "app" is.

As PovNet user **Gisele Guay** writes, "There's a very thin line when you're dealing with technology—you can take an attitude when you start using the internet saying to someone, 'Well that's easy—just go and look it up online.' I've tried to be careful not to do that. There are still a lot of people who can't or won't go online."

By taking into account such sensitivities to the learning curve for people without much money or experience, PovNet has grown to become a major resource for activists.

Here are some examples that Goldsmith cites as to how it can be effective as a conduit to empowerment:

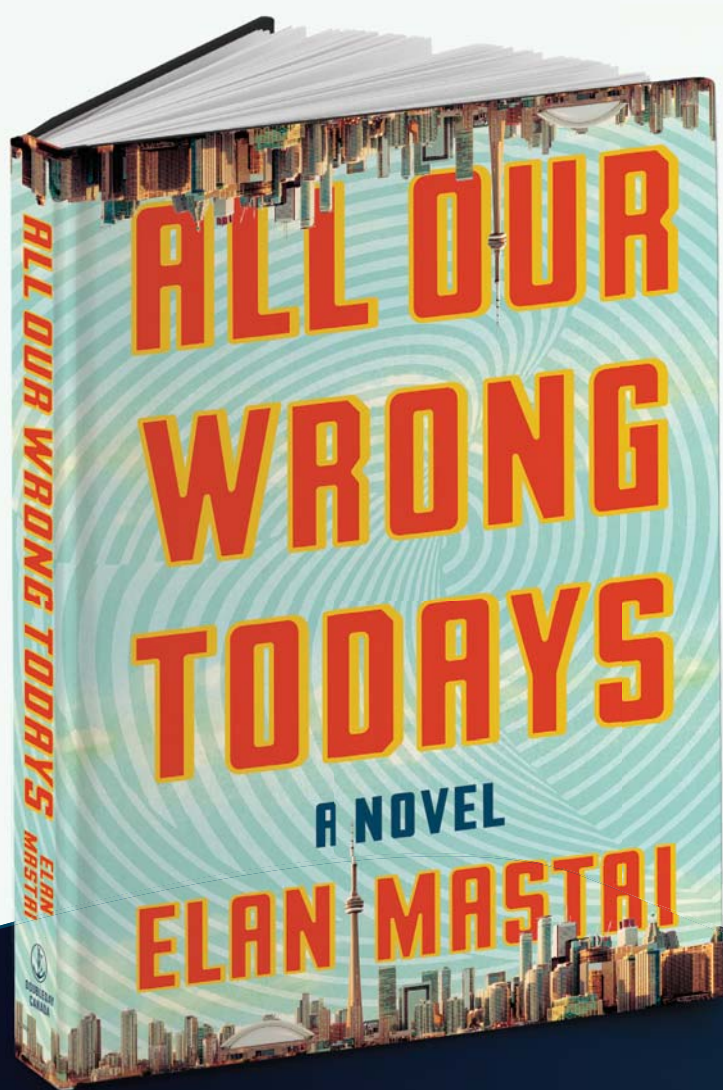
- A disability rights organizer in Nelson goes to the PovNet web site to get some information for a community workshop she is doing that night about changes to disability bus passes.

- A tenant in Vancouver goes online to find an advocate to help him deal with a landlord trying to evict him.

- Workers at a women's centre in a small northern B.C. town take a PovNetU course about dealing with debt because they have so many clients being harassed by a collection agency.

*Storming the Digital Divide* also illustrates how austerity measures have impacted grassroots social justice activists when the Canadian government began restructuring social welfare policies from 1971 to the present.

978-0-920999-11-0



**“A witty and freewheeling time-traveling romance that packs an emotional wallop.”**

**—MARIA SEMPLE,**  
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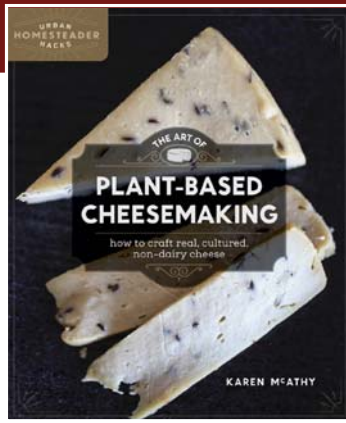
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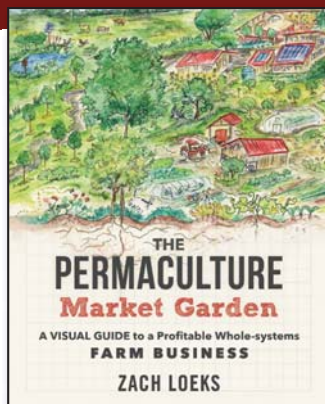
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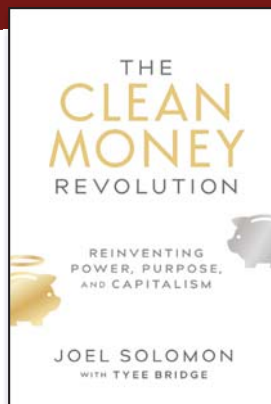
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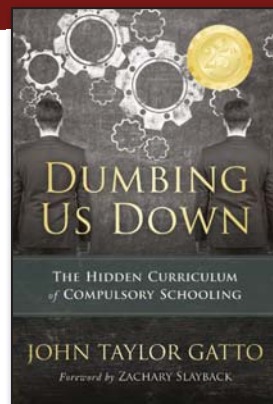
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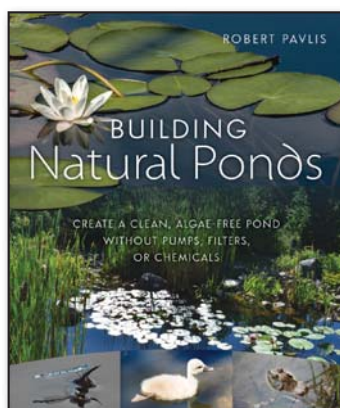
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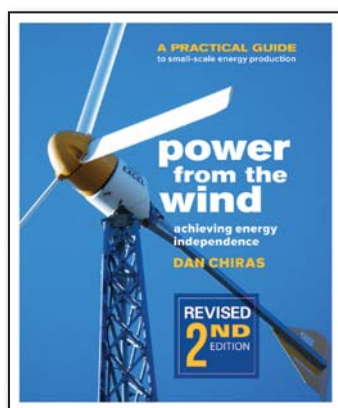
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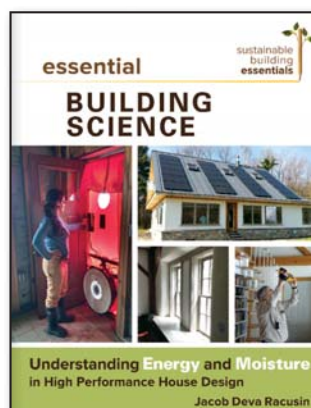
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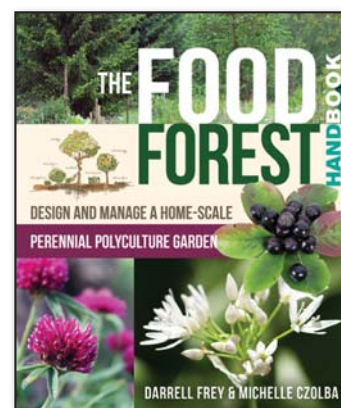
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ONCE UPON A TIME A LOT of folks in B.C. wanted to try living in communes. **Judith Plant** was one of them.

As a single mother of three, she had gravitated from Fort McMurray (Fort McMud) to the West Coast where she was wooed and pursued at Simon Fraser University by a kind, handsome, English-born journalist and fellow communications student, **Chris ‘Kip’ Plant**.

He had just spent seven years in the South Pacific helping Melanesian islanders liberate their small nations from the claws of colonialism, both French and English. “Add to this the misery of the diabolic, American nuclear testing in Moruroa and the Kwajalein Islands,” she writes in her memoir, **Culture Gap and Beyond: Towards a New World in the Yalakom Valley** (New Star \$19), “and Kip was near-to-seething with rage by the time we met.”

The soon-to-be romantic pair enrolled in **Fred Brown’s** 400-level communications course on community and society and it changed their lives. An idealist who had bizarrely accepted **Fidel Castro’s** personal invitation to serve as head of a new philosophy department in Havana after the Cuban Revolution, Fred Brown and his partner **Susan** also hosted lively Wednesday discussion groups at their “Clark House” residence in East Vancouver. Fred Brown’s wandering, intimidating intellect kept returning to one obsession: “What is community?”

Kip and Judith married in May of 1979. “Kip and I both agreed that the nuclear family is just too thin-on-the-ground,” she writes, “too fragile to support our children and ourselves.” Kip was fed up with political solutions and Marxist theorists. Their combined idealism and estrangement from conventional society led Judith to accept a job with Northwest Community College in Terrace as the first adult educator in New Aiyansh, a Nisga’a village in the Nass Valley.

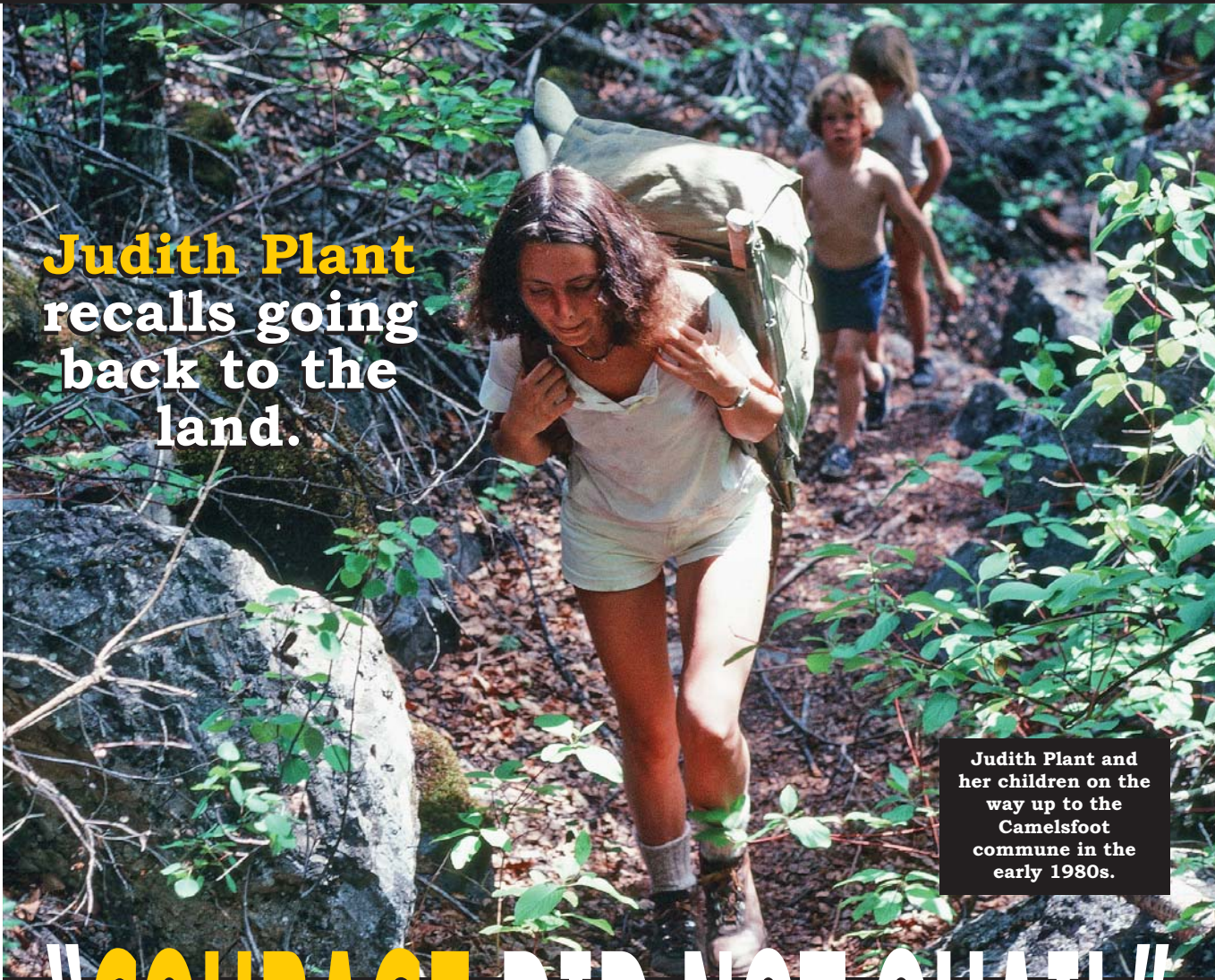
As a couple, with three kids in tow, they left behind the concrete of SFU to live in a renovated trapper’s shack, in a cedar and spruce forest, on the banks of the Tseax River. Meanwhile Fred, Susan and some cohorts, most notably **Van Andruss** and his partner **Eleanor** and their baby girl, had similarly moved “back to the land” to a 160-acre quarter section in the Yalakom Valley, 30 kilometres from Lillooet, known locally as Camelsfoot.

Fred Brown wrote to them, quoting the idealistic “back to the land” character Miles Cloverdale from **Nathaniel Hawthorne’s** novel, *The Blithedale Romance*, “...our courage did not quail. We would not allow ourselves to be depressed by the snowdrift trailing past the window...”

After Judith and Kip had taken their family to visit Camelsfoot in the spring of 1982, they learned that their rented trapper’s cabin would be sold. They had to vacate in August. They decided to join Fred Brown’s commune in July.

Judith Plant’s *Culture Gap and Beyond* describes how that isolated commune of sixteen people—more or less—survived and often thrived in the Bridge River Valley. Given that there are too few books on the counter-culture, back-to-the-land movement

## Judith Plant recalls going back to the land.



Judith Plant and her children on the way up to the Camelsfoot commune in the early 1980s.

# "COURAGE DID NOT QUAIL"

of B.C. in the Sixties, Seventies and Eighties, hers is a very necessary and fascinating document.

Every commune—as they were ubiquitously called in those days—was very different; and they were all the same, invariably disintegrating.

In fifty fascinating pages Plant describes how the intellectually-driven but prudently practical Camelsfoot enclave learned how to milk goats, kill pigs and make head cheese while simultaneously engaging in heady, philosophical banter.

Her family slept in fire pit-heated tipis with the temperature dipping to minus twenty. Her kids learned how to use an adz and a log peeler. Everyone helped with the ambitious hydro-electric project. They made their own music. It was one for all, all for one, but she questioned the division of labour.

“While I sometimes thought I knew why I was at Camelsfoot and other times I was much less certain,” she writes, “I could only guess what motivated others and even that guesswork would probably end up being superficial.”

Feeding the firebox. Feeding the chickens. Feeding twenty people (there were often visitors) pancakes or porridge. Debating if cows were better than goats. Canning 85 quarts of applesauce, pears, cherries, peaches, apricots, tomatoes and plums. Escaping to the Reynolds Hotel in Lillooet for a clubhouse sandwich and fries. Getting horses. Getting lost on a solo hike up Independence Ridge. Tolerating the triple-seater outhouse. Shooting a deer. Vowing to never shoot another

one. Having your ex-husband try to take your kids away.

It was all exhilarating and... exhausting.

Then Fred Brown, the patriarch, died. The gradual dissolution was painful. This, too, is universal for communes. As the commune began to unravel, outsiders could say, I told you so. “We couldn’t defend our beautiful dream of community to anyone,” she writes, “most importantly not even to ourselves. We were crushed. I started to cry, and I cried every day for a long time. Kip and I almost split up.”

A year after Fred Brown’s death, the Plants left the commune, buying a little cabin at the foot of the Camelsfoot trail, in close proximity, but independent.

The idealism of that shared Yalakom Valley experiment endures. Van Andruss has written an in-depth biography of Fred Brown, *A Compass and a Chart: The Life of Fred Brown, Philosopher and Mountaineer* (Lillooet: Lived Experience Press, 2012) and he continues to

live with his partner in the Lillooet area where he publishes his journal of non-fiction and poetry, *Lived Experience*.



EVEN THOUGH GETTING INTO CAMELSFOOT from Lillooet usually required a grueling hike—a description of which opens Plant’s memoir as she attends a recent Camelsfoot reunion—the Plants became involved in the Fed Up food co-op that was first funded by a \$20,000 grant from the NDP government in 1972. Twice a year Fed Up published a broadsheet called *The Catalyst*. In 1985, the Plants were inspired to publish

their own periodical, *The New Catalyst*, which they published from Bridge River Valley for four years. There, Judith also edited a groundbreaking book on sustainability, *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism*, published by New Society Publishers in Philadelphia in 1989. Fascinated with a new movement called Bio-Regionalism, the couple was well ahead of the curve and had already organized the third-continent-wide North American Bioregional Congress in 1986. By 1990 they were operating a Canadian adjunct of New Society Publishers.

In 1996, with the help of a silent partner, they eventually bought the bankrupt, Quaker-led publishing imprint based in Philadelphia, New Society Books, and soon moved their publishing headquarters to Gabriola Island as New Society Publishers. By 2005, they became the first publisher in North America to become carbon neutral, pioneering the use of recycled paper for books. Kip Plant died in Nanaimo on June 26, 2015 after courageously living with Progressive Supranuclear Palsy and Multiple System Atrophy for nine years. But the New Society imprint continues to serve as one of the most progressive and influential, hey-let’s-hurry-up-and-save-this-planet publishing companies in North America.

9781554201334



COINCIDENTALLY **ANDREW SCOTT** HAS PUBLISHED an expanded second edition of his **The Promise of Paradise: Utopian Communities in British Columbia** (Harbour \$24.95) featuring Doukhobor farmers, Finnish coal miners, Quakers and hippies. Scott sifts through the wreckage of the utopia-seekers’ dreams and delves into the practices and philosophies of contemporary intentional communities.

978-1-55017-771-8



By Graeme Wynn

THE ORMSBY REVIEW

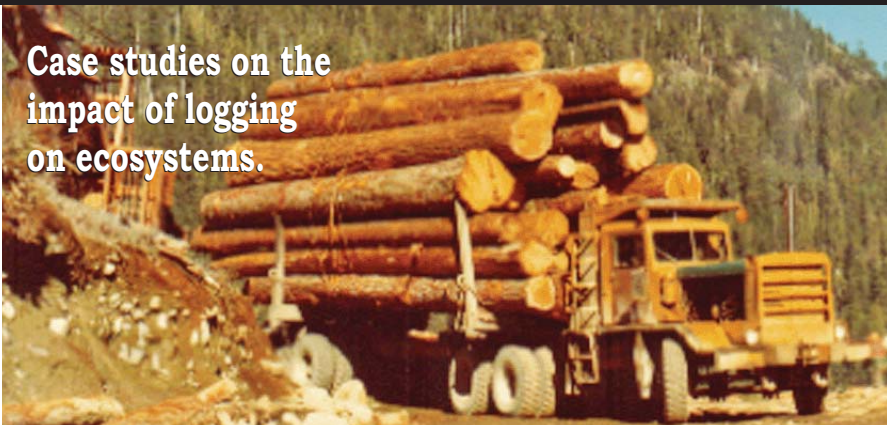
THE SUSTAINABILITY DILEMMA: Essays on British Columbia Forest and Environmental History (RBCM \$34.95) explores and revisits contested issues, policies and campaigns concerning the management of B.C. forests and the forest industry’s impact on freshwater ecosystems.

To do so, authors **Robert Griffin** and **Richard A. Rajala** plunge into a vast assortment of departmental files, parliamentary debates, official records, and contemporary commentaries pertaining to the forests of B.C.

Beginning with Royal Commissioner **Gordon Sloan**’s support for forest management on “Sustained Yield” principles in his Royal Commission report of 1945, and proceeding through the expansion of pulp-milling operations in the 1960s, to consider controversies over extensive clear-cutting in the 1970s and 1980s, they offer an account centred on the political debates over, and policy choices pertaining to, provincial forests during these years.

In broad outline, this is a familiar story, rooted in political economy but with evident “political-environmental” dimensions. **Jeremy Wilson, Gordon Hak, Patricia Marchak, Roger Hayter**, and others, have provided (inevitably incomplete) interpretations of it in the last 30 years or so.

Both Griffin and Rajala completed



DICK MCQUINN PHOTO, NITINAT, 1970s.

Case studies on the impact of logging on ecosystems.

## FROM SUSTAINABLE YIELDS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

doctoral dissertations on B.C.’s forests. Griffin served as history curator at the Royal BC Museum with special interest in the mining and forest industries for more than thirty years, and Rajala, an associate professor in the history department at UVic, has devoted his scholarly career to understanding B.C.

Both know the province’s archives intimately and here they join together to focus on “historical events... [that] have been largely forgotten by the public and largely unexamined by scholars.”

*The Sustainability Dilemma* is a book in two parts, each reflecting the particular interests of its authors. Griffin wrote the three chapters that make up the first third of the book. The first of these traces B.C. forest policy through the labyrinth of regulations produced by

efforts to implement the guiding principle of sustained yield while meeting industry’s diverse needs, responding to shifting government directives, reflecting different regional conditions, and doing so with inadequate information.

Griffin’s second chapter limns industry’s response to the government’s sustained yield policies by tracing the efforts of the Western Plywood (later Weldwood, then West Fraser) Company to establish a dominant position in B.C.’s central interior, and his third chapter centres on Forest Minister **Ray Williston**’s introduction of Pulp Harvesting Areas to promote economic development through the construction of pulp mills. Here Griffin again focuses, by way of illustration, on the Weldwood company’s efforts to build a

mill in Quesnel. Rajala follows, filling out the remainder of the book with a pair of case studies focused on the impact of the forest industry on freshwater ecosystems. Dealing with the controversial Stellako River log drives in the central interior in the 1960s and the Riley Creek/ Rennell Sound landslides on Haida Gwaii in the following decade, these are long (over 100 pages each) and detailed exegeses.

Griffin has the lighter touch. His 30- to 50-page chapters move the story along and, in my view at least, his discussion of the Western Plywood/ Weldwood ventures is a valuable contribution to understanding the development of the forest industry in B.C. in the third quarter of the twentieth century.

Read *The Sustainability Dilemma* for a deft interpretation of the reasons for, and the challenges posed by, the rise of the pulp and paper industry, and for the book’s “definitive” accounts of the Stellako and Riley Creek controversies. Admire and ponder its many illustrations. But always remember that history is at its best, most powerful, and most useful when it fires the imagination rather than when it rests content with recounting facts.

9780772669742

*Historical geographer Graeme Wynn has had a career-long fascination with and involvement in environmental history. He was editor of BC Studies (2008-2016). In 2017 he will become president of the American Society for Environmental History for a two-year term.*

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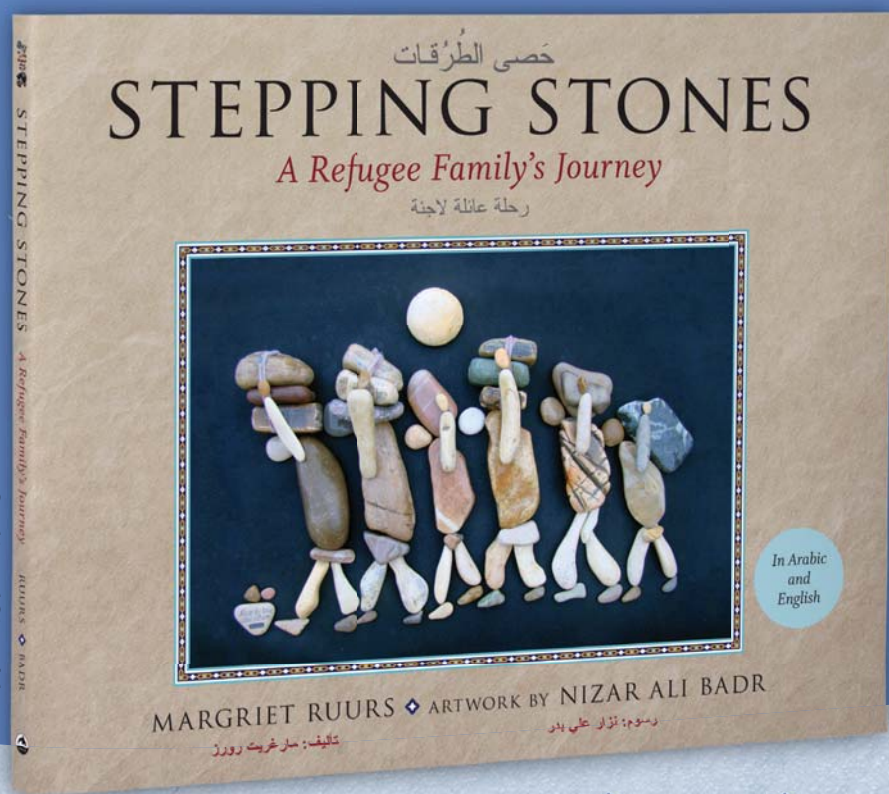
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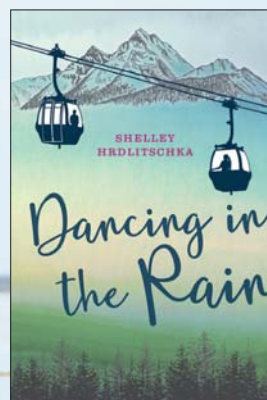
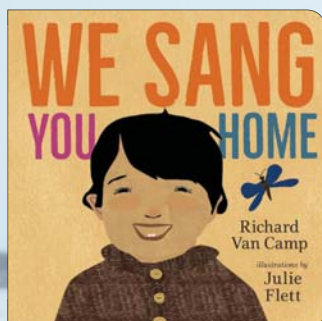
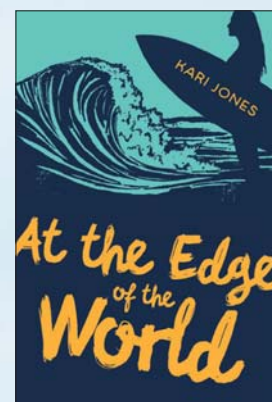
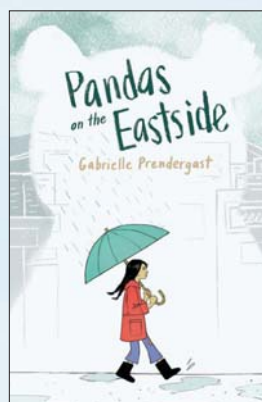
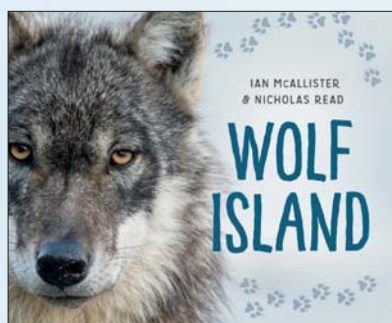
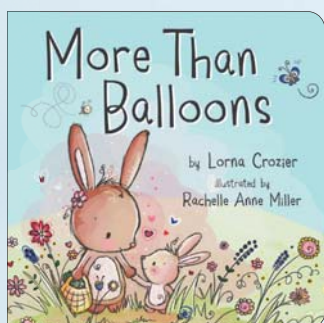
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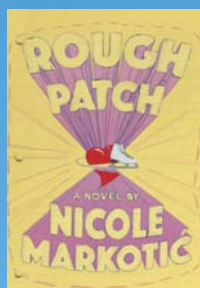


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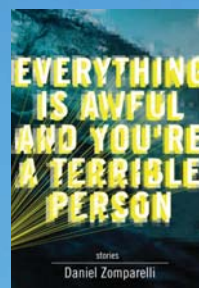


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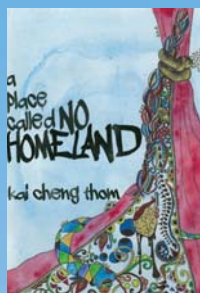


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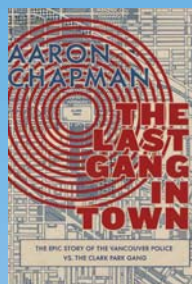


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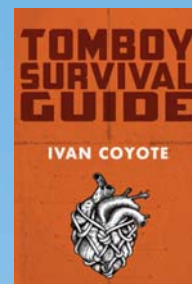


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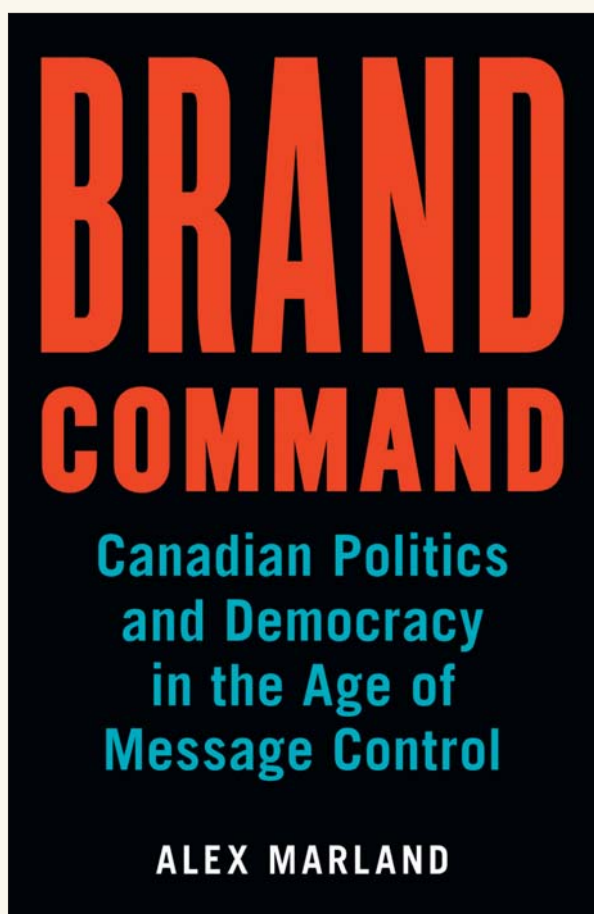
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By Hugh Johnston

THE ORMSBY REVIEW

**I**N JOURNEY AFTER MIDNIGHT: India, Canada and the Road Beyond (Figure I \$34.95), Ujjal Dosanjh recounts his journey from a village in the Punjab to London in 1964 and to Vancouver in 1968, to become the 33rd premier of B.C. as well as federal cabinet minister.

As premier of B.C., Ujjal Dosanjh visited his homeland at the invitation of the Indian and Punjab governments during the Christmas break of 2000-01. In his home state of Punjab he naturally visited his birthplace village of Dosanjh, named for his ancestral family.

The Government of Punjab paved a broken, pothole-filled lane of half-a-kilometer into the village of Dosanjh just so he could drive there, rather than walk in or be flown by helicopter.

Dosanjh left India at the age of eighteen, encouraged by the example of another student from his local secondary school. His declared purpose was to enroll in an electrical engineering college in London.

Dosanjh concedes that he was basically an economic emigrant, like many others, attracted mainly by the affluence of the West. His father was the founder of the village primary school but he did not have the means to pay for a university education overseas for an adult son.

Dosanjh had a one-way airfare to London, paid for by his father who had obtained the money from a maternal aunt. When he stepped off his plane at Heathrow airport in 1964, he had little money of his own. Relatives and former fellow villagers living in London gave him initial shelter and helped him find work.

Dosanjh describes a succession of low-level jobs: in a railway yard, in a crayon factory, and as a lab assistant running a projector. None of these jobs enabled him to pay tuition fees, let alone take any time off work for a college education. After three-and-a-half years he re-migrated to B.C.

An aunt and uncle in Vancouver sponsored him as a landed immigrant. They found him work in a sawmill. Within eight years of his arrival in 1968, he had completed a BA, graduated from law school, and been called to the bar, all while marrying

**Ujjal Dosanjh** was the second provincial premier of non-European descent ever to hold office in Canada. The first was Prince Edward Island’s **Joe Ghiz**, whose father was a Lebanese immigrant. Dosanjh, in contrast, is an immigrant himself.

and starting a family.

Dosanjh puts his command of English when he first landed in London at a rudimentary grade four level. But he quickly became a news junkie and an enthusiastic user of local public lending libraries.

His political outlook was shaped by the examples of **Robert Kennedy**, **Martin Luther King**, and **Pierre Trudeau**. But he had also grown up with family members in Punjab who had a powerful commitment to progressive and revolutionary ideals: his maternal grandfather had been prominent in the anti-British movement before Indian independence and had served time in jail as a political prisoner.

In Vancouver, Dosanjh educated himself on contemporary questions



Ujjal Dosanjh's 1964 passport photo.

of race, gender, gay rights and liberal values. His early Canadian experience also reinforced his inherently secular worldview.

The narrow religious nationalism that he encountered within his own Sikh community was something he quickly rejected. He applauded the opposition to

French Canadian nationalism that defined Pierre Trudeau’s politics. Dosanjh came to see the growing religious-ethnic nationalism of his own Sikh community and the provincial nationalism of French Canadians as comparable and similarly negative forces.

Dosanjh’s memoir reminds us of the appalling troubles of Punjab and the Punjabi diaspora in the 1980s and 1990s, when nearly the whole Punjabi community in Canada was intimidated by the presence of terrorists in their midst.

Dosanjh and his wife **Rami** had been booked to fly to Delhi on Air India’s tragic flight 182 in June 1985. This was the flight carrying 329 passengers and crew that was blown up over the Atlantic by a bomb that terrorists had placed on board in Vancouver. They fortuitously cancelled their booking a few days before.

A few months earlier, Dosanjh had been assaulted by a turbaned Sikh wielding an iron bar who inflict-

ed deep wounds to his head requiring 84 stitches to repair. This attack happened at the end of a working day in a darkening parking lot and ended only when Dosanjh’s law partner arrived on the scene, scaring the attacker off and saving Dosanjh’s life.

For some time before that, Dosanjh had been receiving threats to his life and to the lives of his family. These threats continued. Dosanjh says that his near death experience in that parking lot attack gave him a renewed sense of life’s purpose.

Dosanjh was a lumber union organizer, an advocate for Punjabi farm workers and an NDP party worker almost from the start. But at the summit of his career he was still dismissed by some opponents as an “ethnic” candidate, although his success at election time and his handling of issues in government belied the charge.

He makes it clear that the Sikh and South Asian community was the base that launched him into politics, but when in 1991 he was first elected as an MLA — after two unsuccessful tries — it was in a riding that was fifty percent Chinese and that was only five percent Sikh and South Asian.

Dosanjh deserves great credit for the principled role he played in the provincial and federal governments between 1991 and 2011 as an NDP member of the legislature, caucus leader, cabinet member, premier of B.C., Liberal member of parliament, and federal minister of health. He made difficult decisions in major portfolios and gained general respect in the process.

As a young man, Ujjal Dosanjh had unrealized ambitions as a writer in Punjabi, and it is not surprising that he writes with sensitivity and telling effect. He records the best and worst of his political career frankly and convincingly.

Dosanjh tells his story with disarming honesty and modesty, superbly in English, a language that he ultimately mastered as an adult.

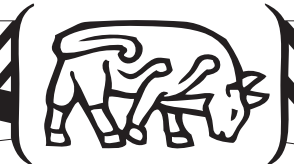
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*Hugh Johnston’s books include The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada’s Colour Bar; The Four Quarters of the Night: the Life Story of an Emigrant Sikh (with Tara Singh Bains); and Jewels of the Qila: The Remarkable Story of an Indo-Canadian Family.*

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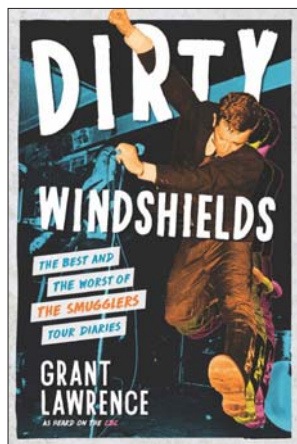
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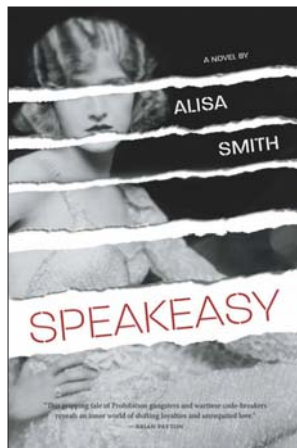
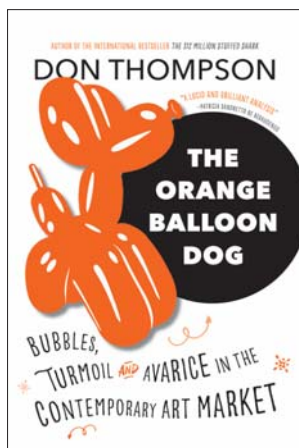
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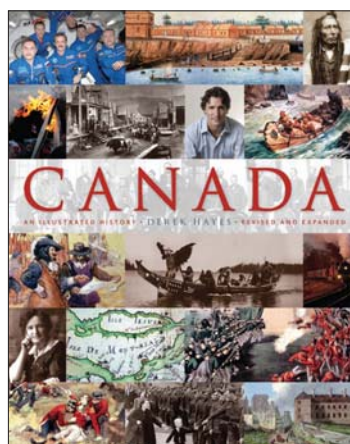
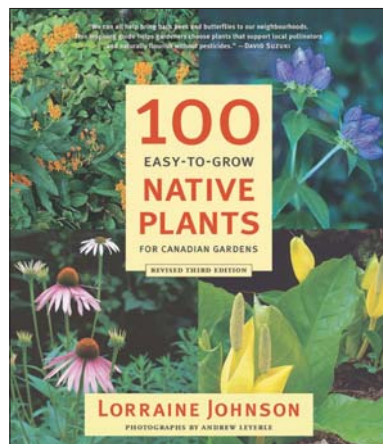
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HOW  
BIRTHDAYS  
VARY

Nikki Tate (left)  
and daughter  
Dani Tate-Stratton

FROM THE GET-GO, **Dani Tate-Stratton** [interviewed below] knew it was tough to make a living as an author.

Her mom, **Nikki Tate**, worked at Bolen Books in Victoria and has written more than thirty books.

But now, having participated in a national celebration of Adults Day in Tokyo to honour those who are turning twenty, she and her mom have co-authored **Birthdays: Beyond Cake and Ice Cream** (Orca \$24.95).

Aimed at pre-teens, this richly illustrated investigation of how other cultures observe the rite of getting another year older is loaded with stuff to also fascinate adults.

**BCBW: This is a smart and simple idea for a book. How did you come up with it?**

I was lucky enough to spend my 20th birthday in Tokyo and took part in Adult's Day, a national holiday celebrating everyone who turns 20 that year. I dressed up in a formal kimono, went to the speeches at city hall, learned about all the good luck rituals to take part in at the local shrine, and really felt a part of something significant.

I started to wonder about other countries and cultures and what their key milestone birthdays were. After just a bit of research I realized that there was more than enough to write a book about, and sharing some of those things with mom convinced her of the same.

**BCBW: Did you like having birthday parties?**

My birthday falls in the lee of the Christmas holidays. Sometimes it was the first day back at school after winter break; not a day my friends and I were particularly eager to celebrate! We mention it in the book. Growing up, I solved the problem by 'time shifting' and celebrating my half-birthday during the summer.

**A mother and daughter team explores a common tradition that most people take for granted in **Birthdays: Beyond Cake and Ice Cream**. Egyptian Pharaohs celebrated them — Jehovah's Witnesses don't. And if you reach 60, you're ambivalent.**

**BCBW: What about giving them?**

I have always loved planning birthday parties for others, like my mom's 50th where we managed to surprise her with about 50 friends and family members and my grandfather's 80th, where we arranged for him to have a letter from Prime Minister Trudeau. You can see a photo of Grampa holding his letter in our book.

**BCBW: And your mom?**

She has never been the type to bake fancy cakes and arrange delicate goodie bags, so her favourite birthdays for me were probably some of my favourites to attend—camping at Goldstream, building driftwood forts on French Beach, and a murder mystery where we turned the entire living room into a train car.

**BCBW: Is there any place in the world where people never celebrate or recognize birthdays?**

We were actually surprised just HOW prevalent birthday celebrations of one sort or another are, both all around the world and throughout history. That said, Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate birthdays, as they believe it would displease God for various reasons consistent with their religious beliefs.

**BCBW: Before there were calendars and people understood the lunar year, did 'pre-history' people ever have some 'natural' recognition for becoming one year older?**

We found instances of birthday recognition dating back to the Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt, but as you imply this makes total sense—they are thought to

be some of the first to have any sort of consistent and accurate calendar. Before we were able to keep track of time, it was certainly difficult to keep track of specific dates, such as birthdays.

Birthday celebrations for 'regular' people came awhile after calendars—initially birthdays were celebrations for Gods, Pharaohs, and other culturally-significant deities or leaders. A regular citizen might have celebrated his or her birthday on their Saint's Name Day, so even though they could have known the day they were born, they wouldn't necessarily have marked it.

**BCBW: How did your mother and daughter collaboration work out?**

Great! We have worked together on several shorter things in the past, and our first book together was *Take Shelter, At Home Around the World*, also with Orca. With that book, *Birthdays*, and our forthcoming Christmas book, we find that if one of us goes back to read the final, edited text, we can't remember—or tell—who wrote which sections. **BCBW: Given that Nikki, your mom, has done about thirty books, were you content to play second fiddle? Or was there complete harmony throughout the process?**

Ha! I'm sure it's been thought before, but you're the first to put it in so many words, so good on you for the honesty. But yes, it was harmonious. And I don't think either of us thinks of us in terms of first or second fiddle. One thing I learned VERY early on from watching my mom write and have her critique my early writing, is that editing isn't

personal and that to be a writer is to have a job, one where you grind away harder than most people imagine.

**BCBW: So you and your mom are co-workers.**

Yes. Initially maybe she was more the general manager and I was a new hire, but that's OK—I can learn from her and I'm sure she learned something through working with me. You'd have to ask her if she thought the division of labour was equal.

**BCBW: Maybe we should do an issue of BC BookWorld devoted to other mother/daughter or father/son or father/daughter or mother/son collaborations.**

I'm sure there are more of us out there! My friend **Xan Shian** contributed photos to her mom **Marilyn Bowering's** book in the last year or two...

**BCBW: Did you long harbour the notion that you would become an author?**

NO! I loved growing up in the stacks at Bolen Books. My mom worked there for years while I was growing up. I was lucky enough to tour with her and hang out at the edges of the Canadian book scene. But I saw what a struggle it was for my mom and most Canadian authors. I was not at all interested!

The story in our family is that with such creative parents, mom 'rebelled' by getting an honours neuropsychology degree. While I wasn't so extreme in my 'rebellion,' I did study both graphic design and contemporary cultural anthropology. I knew I didn't want to be an author! Funny how the things we 'know' can change...

**BCBW: Having done a book on birthdays, what's next?**

As someone who firmly believes that 364 days of the year are just in the way of Christmas and who starts their Christmas shopping in January, gift wrapping in July, carol listening in August, and baking in November, I couldn't be more excited about researching a book on the origins of Christmas.

9781459812970



Owners and publishers of Canada’s media are villains for failing to keep pace with the times, says Ian Gill. In No News Is Bad News he scathingly attacks complacency and greed.

By Beverly Cramp

THE NEWS ABOUT CANADA’s print media is grim. *Maclean’s* newsmagazine, over 105 years old and a weekly since 1978, will reduce its frequency to monthly. *Chatelaine*, around since 1928 and long-touted as Canada’s largest magazine in paid circulation, will be printed six times a year instead of monthly.

Other Rogers Media publications will cease to be printed altogether and instead will only appear online and through apps, including titles: *Flare*, *Sportsnet*, *MoneySense* and *Canadian Business*.

One of the few Rogers Media publications that will remain untouched by cutbacks is their celebrity gossip rag, *Hello! Canada*.

All hail piffle. Across Canada newspapers are also getting thinner, whether it’s *The Georgia Straight* or the once-dominant *Vancouver Sun*. Puffery masquerading as content is increasingly common.

In **No News is Bad News** (Greystone \$18.95), former newspaper editor and TV documentary reporter **Ian Gill** claims the “real villains” are “the owners and publishers.” He alleges dim-witted media owners “have bankrupted and/or destroyed the value of Canada’s great media companies, and they’ve been getting away with it for decades.”

One group that’s really been turned off by Canadian media are the millennials who, Gill says, have the least confidence in the media. Without them, he writes, “there won’t be two newspapers left in Vancouver—or in Calgary, Edmonton, or Ottawa—in just a few short years. In some cities there might not even be one.”

The loss of as many as ten thousand journalism jobs, he says, has hugely diminished the quality of our news. The erasure of billions of dollars of shareholder value from large media companies spells further decline. With

the advent of “that darned thing called the Internet,” newspaper revenues, primarily from advertisers, are spiralling ever downwards. Gill quotes research that between 2000 and 2008 revenue drifted gently downward, but then in the next five years plunged another third, from \$5.8 billion to \$3.7 billion.

ALL HAIL PIFFLE

So who will cover all the crucial news beats and public meetings? Politicians? Corrupt businesses? Gill quotes a *New York Times* article asserting that “nonprofit news organizations, digital start-ups, university-based centers and public radio stations are beginning to fill the gap... But they probably won’t fully take hold while newspapers, even in their shrunken state, remain the dominant media players in local markets.”

Much of Gill’s overview bristles with gleeful invective and scorn. “That giant sucking sound you hear?” he writes, “Oh, that’s just the implosion of Canadian media.” He dismisses local newspapers like those managed by the **David Black** chain foisting “truly execrable fare” on the public. He bashes the CBC with equal ease. Our media landscape is a horrid and almost hopeless mess. “It’s as if Canada’s journalists were assigned to cover a state funeral,” he writes, “and only now are wising up to the fact that the body in



the casket is their own.”

Gill abhors Ontario-based *The Walrus* magazine as “a flaccid, self-satisfied kind of poor man’s *New Yorker*.”

The only smart people in Canadian journalism, it would appear, are **David Beers**, founding editor of *The Tyee* and Gill himself, a columnist for *The Tyee*. In the fourth chapter, and arguably the weakest section of Gill’s otherwise highly entertaining romp, called *Wither the Future?* they foresee the road ahead could or should be paved by philanthropies. Gill was able to undertake research for his analysis of Canadian media due to a senior fellowship in 2015 provided by the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.

If the future of high quality Canadian journalism is going to be reliant

upon having our best independent journalists cozying up to rich people, as Gill appears to suggest in *No News Is Bad News*, some might argue the future of media in Canada will be even grimmer. But he has done a great service to the Canadian media community by providing this feisty diagnosis of Canadian journalism, getting vital conversations started. As he noted on a CBC Radio interview, if Canada’s roads and schools and hospitals fell into such decay, the public would not stand for it—and yet the news services of a nation are equally essential services to guarantee the well-being of a country.

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Beverly Cramp is associate editor of BC BookWorld.

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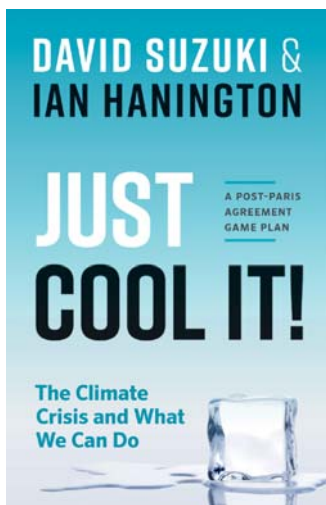
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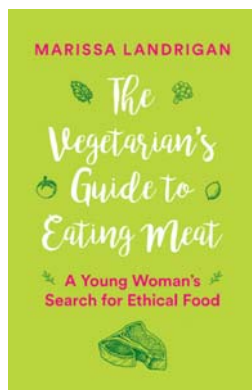
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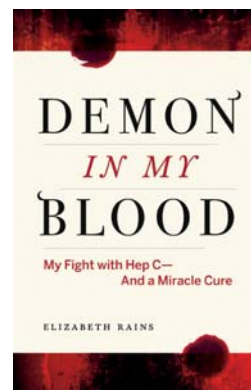
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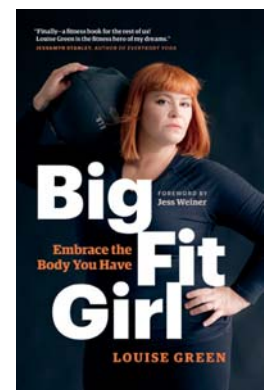


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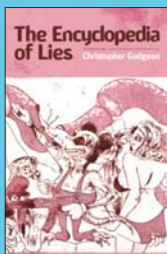
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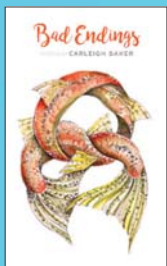


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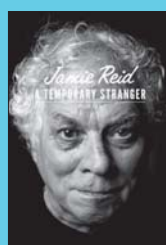
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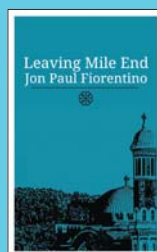


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# ONE MAN'S PASSION PASSCHENDAELE

It wasn't exactly **Steve Fonyo** running all the way across Canada, but **Alan MacLeod's** transcontinental Great Canadian Statue Hunt also required dedication and stamina.

HAVING HAD A GREAT UNCLE WHO FOUGHT IN World War I, Nova Scotia-born-and-raised **Alan MacLeod** of Victoria commenced an unprecedented odyssey in 2011, searching across Canada to document and showcase all military statuary erected between 1918 and 1929 that features a figure of a Canadian soldier in bronze or stone.

His resulting compendium, **Remembered in Bronze and Stone: Canada's Great War Memorial Statuary** (Heritage \$24.95), profiles 130 Great War memorials with family histories of the fallen and biographies of the craftsmen who made the statues.

**Coeur de Lion MacCarthy's** *Winged Victory* statues commissioned by the CPR for their rail stations in Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver are perhaps the most recognizable. There are statues from each province, representative works by well-known sculptors such as **Alfred Howell** in Ontario and New Brunswick; as well as statues by **Sydney March** and **George William Hill**; but most of the sculptors are unheralded. Many of the sculptors were unnamed artisans in Italy where many of the statues were made.

British Columbia has relatively few statues erected in comparison to the number of those who served—but the B.C. statues are no less interesting.

The book's cover shows **Emanuel Hahn's** "grieving soldier" statue located in Fernie. It's one of ten similar

**Alan MacLeod describes this bronze statue in front of the B.C. Legislature in Victoria as "one of the finest war-monument soldiers in Canada."**

statues credited to Hahn's design that can be found across the country. The original that first appeared at Westville, Nova Scotia in 1921 was something of a Cadillac, a status symbol for communities who wanted to show how much they cared, but only one other copy was bronze like the original. The other eight were granite, carved by craftsmen using the same scale and Hahn design. Some have since suffered due to preservation issues. "The imitations are not all equally well executed," MacLeod writes, "and not every carver felt obligated to pay slavish homage to the Hahn original."

MacLeod writes that 7,000 people gathered in New Westminster on Remembrance Day in 1922 to witness the dedication of a new board of trade-sponsored war memorial representing a bronze, wounded soldier wearing a head bandage and no helmet. With his bayonet mounted, he peers over the crowd, seemingly ready for action, but also contemplative. A soldier named **Major Jackson** envisaged the design and **A. Fabri** was the Italian sculptor who produced it.

"The figure wears the green patina typical of bronzes exposed to the elements for an extended time," MacLeod writes, "a patina that only enhances its effect. Because it is bronze rather than marble, the head-bandaged soldier of New Westminster retains all of its 1922 physical integrity—it is as vivid, evocative and impressive as it was on the occasion of its unveiling."

The striking bronze soldier on a granite base at the northeast corner of the B.C. Legislature grounds is credited to **Sydney March** (1876-1968). We learn he was one



**Winged Victory** by **Coeur de Lion MacCarthy**: Bronze statue (7' high and 3,000 pounds) erected in Vancouver in 1921 to commemorate the 1,100 Canadian Pacific Railway employees who lost their lives in the First World War.



**Bronze statue in New Westminster by A. Fabri**

of eight siblings who were sculptors, including **Vernon March** who was chiefly commissioned to undertake a World War I memorial in Ottawa that was commenced in 1926 and not completed until it was finally dedicated by **King George VI** in 1939—just before World War II started.

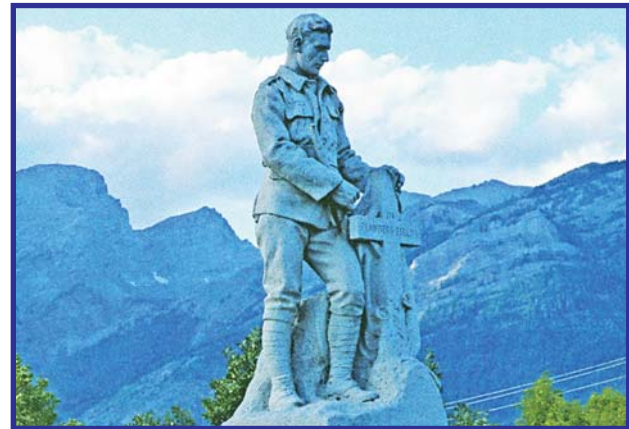
"Sidney March's Victoria soldier takes a back seat to none of his other sculptures," MacLeod writes. "The soldier is unique—in contrast to most of his stone and bronze comrades across the country, he is not handsome, he is not young, his face is one only a mother could love. "He is a worn, weathered, ancient-looking infantryman wielding his Lee-Enfield, bayonet mounted, ready to deal with the enemy. Weather-beaten face notwithstanding, this is one of the finest war-monument soldiers in Canada."

★  
APPROXIMATELY 60,000 Canadians died as a result of the so-called Great War. For a new generation of Canadians who have never heard of Ypres, the Somme, Vimy and Passchendaele, Remembered in Bronze and Stone is a novel approach to education.

The project began after Alan MacLeod came across a remarkable bronze war statue in Westville, Nova Scotia. MacLeod became curious about finding similar statues, gathering materials for illustrated talks he presented to members of the Western Front Association and other organizations. After a talk for the WFA's Pacific Coast branch, military historian-turned-novelist **Sidney Allinson** of Victoria urged him to write a book. Allinson became an enthusiastic supporter along with two other significant and prolific B.C. authors who are WFA members, **Wayne Ralph**, who served as a critical reader, and **Barry Gough**, helped him find his publisher.

Alan MacLeod studied English at Dalhousie University and worked in Nova Scotia and British Columbia in the field of labour relations prior to retirement.

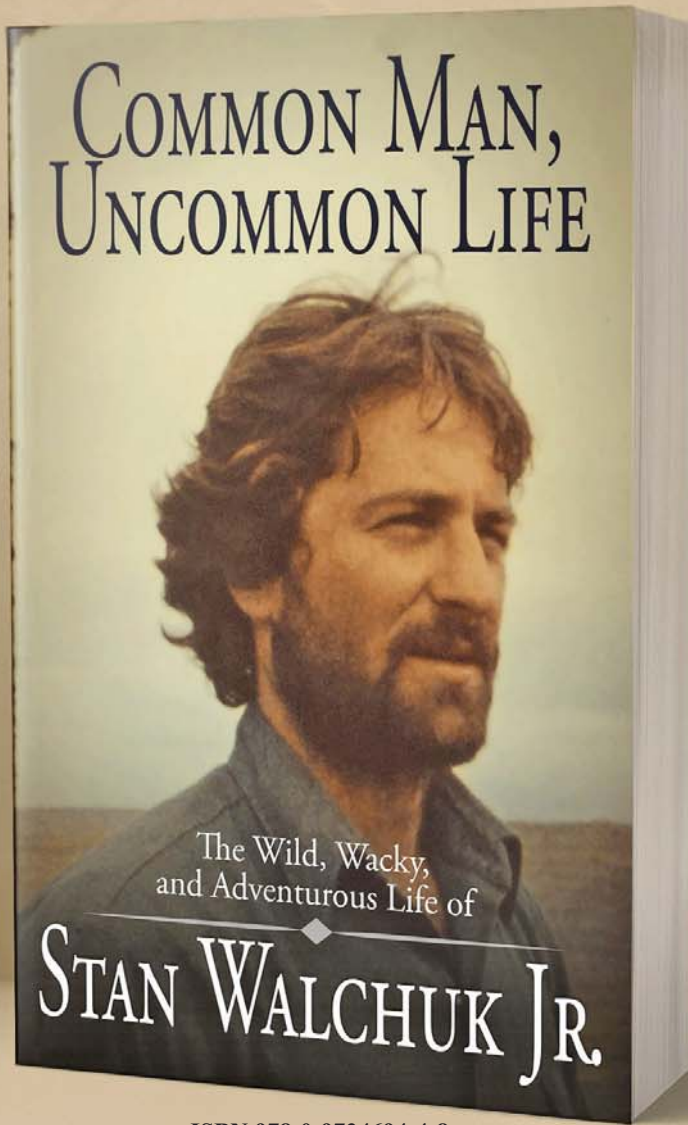
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**The "grieving soldier" statue in Fernie by Emanuel Hahn.**



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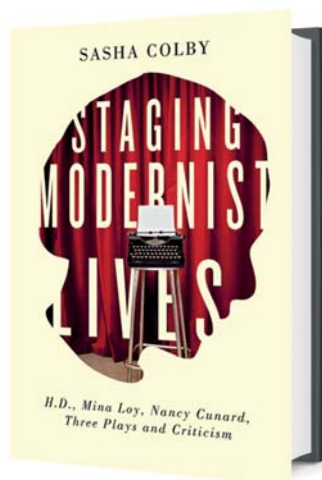
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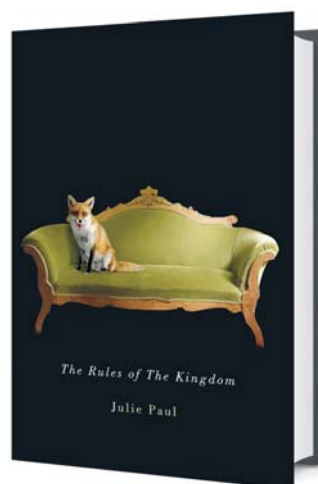
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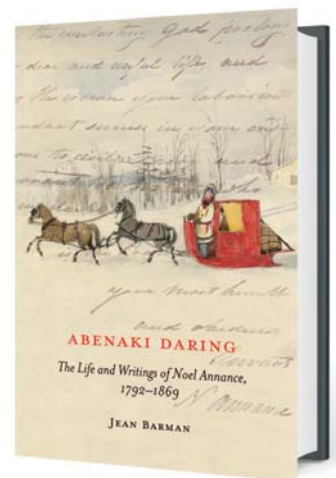
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# COVER MADDIE'S ASCENT

## Madeleine Thien

never showed her writing to anyone before she entered the MFA writing program at UBC.

Now she's the only B.C.-born author ever shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. Madeleine Thien's third novel, **Do Not Say We Have Nothing** (Knopf) has also won the Governor General's Award for Fiction and the \$100,000 Scotiabank Giller Prize—an unprecedented feat for a B.C.-born author.

By Allan Cho

**M**ADELEINE THIEN FIRST HEARD OF *RICEPAPER*, Canada's first Asian Canadian publication, when she was working for Press Gang Publishers, a feminist collective, in the late 1990s.

*Ricepaper's* founder, **Jim Wong-Chu**, hired her in 1999, during the magazine's fifth year of operation. He now recalls her as a very quiet, soft-spoken young woman with inquisitive and intelligent eyes.

"She was very passionate and enthusiastic about wanting to work for us," he says.

*Ricepaper* had started as a newsletter for members of the Asian Canadian Writers' Workshop (ACWW) to connect to writers from other parts of Canada. "This was the best way to do that before the Internet," he says. "Up to that time we were lucky to even have a few journalism grads come through."

It was a serendipitous match. Wong-Chu soon discovered she had a keen eye and innate talent for running a magazine but Thien needed mentorship. "I remember going to meet Jim," she says, "and being amazed at all the knowledge at his fingertips, all the stories and memories he had."

Having supervised a revolving door of editors, Wong-Chu considers Thien's short tenure as editor as the most influential in the evolution of the publication. "Those three issues of *Ricepaper* with Maddie [Volumes 5.1 to 5.3] were the high point of our magazine in terms of an articulate, distinct editorial and literary quality. Flipping through those early copies, I recognize the fingerprints of Maddie's intellectual curiosity in the types of articles she selected."

Under Thien, *Ricepaper* began exploring the diversity of writers and artists who refused or could not be defined by cultural labels, marking a turning point in the tone and in-



Now living in Montreal, "Maddie" Thien had her formative years on the West Coast where she grew up, worked for Press Gang Publishers and *Ricepaper*.

fluence of the magazine.

"I wanted to learn, I wanted experience, and I was still asking myself many questions about race, identity, politics, and art," she says. "I was in my twenties, living away from home for the first time, working almost 30 hours a week in addition to studying, and I had very little contact with my family."

Thien profiled international artists like **Shuibo Wang** by examining his Oscar-nominated documentary,

*Sunrise over Tiananmen Square*. Wong-Chu now believes her editorial themes were a precursor to her future writing, leading to *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*.

Another issue she edited featured Indonesian writer **Pramoedya Ananta Toer**, Indonesia's leading novelist who had been imprisoned 16 years without a trial. He was interviewed during a stopover in Vancouver, resulting in 'The Mute's Soliloquy: Pramoedya Ananta Toer and the literature of survival.'

"I was so hungry for everything, all the ideas that were coming towards me at full speed," says Thien, "My own sense of identity was changing." And so her overriding concern for justice and her opposition to intolerance were kindled by her editorial mindset.

If there was a turning point, it might have been when the Asian Canadian Writers' Workshop launched its Emerging Writers Award. The first year the jury selected **Rita Wong's** manuscript, *Monkeypuzzle*. In 2001, the jury unanimously selected Thien's first fiction collection, *Simple Recipes*.

This award attracted interest from publishers, resulting in a bidding war won by McClelland & Stewart. Still a prestigious imprint at that time, M&S agreed to publish *Simple Recipes*, as well as her first novel, *Certainty*.

*Simple Recipes* won the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize, the City of Vancouver Book Book Award and the VanCity Book Prize for best book pertaining to women's issues.

This triple success resulted in her receiving the Canadian Authors Association Air Canada award for most promising writer under age 30.

*Certainty* won the 2006 Amazon.ca/Books in Canada First Novel Award and it was nominated for the 2007 Kiriama Fiction Prize.

And the rest is her-story.



MADELEINE THIEN WAS rejected the first time she applied to UBC's Creative Writing MFA program, but she was neither upset nor angry.

"Maybe doors would open and maybe they wouldn't," she recalls, "but there were so many things that I needed to understand through writing, and those needs and desires weren't going to go away."

"I am no longer convinced that a writing program or an MFA program is the way forward. A good reader is necessary, a library, and one's own stubbornness, humility, and courage with the work."

Madeleine Thien completed her Masters degree in 2001 and relocated to Quebec City in 2005 after her Dutch-born husband, **Willem Atsa**, took a job there.

Allan Cho is a librarian at UBC and festival administrator at LiterASIAN Festival, Canada's first Pacific Rim Asian Canadian writers festival.



Madeleine Thien with her Giller prize in Toronto.

GEORGE PIMENTEL PHOTO / COURTESY OF THE SCOTIABANK GILLER PRIZE



# FICTION

## ROUND-UP

### Land Rover heroine

AS HIS TRIBUTE TO A MODEL OF LAND ROVER known as the Defender—the production of which was discontinued in 2016—Land Rover mechanical whiz **Ray Wood’s** first novel, **Stalking Geraldine** (MW Books \$33.95) follows freelance journalist Giles Jackson on a plum assignment to Africa to track down a specific, vintage Land Rover nicknamed Geraldine.

While on the trail of its enigmatic owner, Sarah Oakes, Giles learns of Sarah’s character from ex-lovers, friends, mechanics and even her cat, Horatio.

“If you’ve ever wondered how to fix your vehicle’s water pump while in a war in Eritrea or pondered how to winch a van out of muddy water,” writes *Coast Reporter* reviewer Jan DeGrass, “then this book is for you.”

Ray Wood is a Land Rover expert who once explored the spine of Africa on a Vespa Scooter. Now he lives in a heritage grocery store in West Vancouver when he is not sailing a 37-foot sloop or traveling the world in his elderly, Australian-built Land Rover.

9780995277809

### WW I heroine

**John Wilson** revisits World World I for his 32nd book, **A Dangerous Game** (Doubleday \$14.99), a novel for ages 8-12, which pays tribute to the resistance and spy network in Belgium called Le Dame Blanche (The White Lady) whose name was derived from a legend that predicted that the fall of the German monarchy would occur with the appearance of a woman dressed all in white.

By the end of World World I, there were an estimated 13,000 agents in this underground resistance network, including many girls and women.

Wilson’s protagonist is a teenaged student nurse, Manon, who enjoys cycling beautiful Bruges. After she becomes a conduit for information to the British, she uncovers crucial details about where deadly German weaponry is stored—only to discover that innocent people are being killed on both sides of the front.

978-0-385-68307-4

### WW II heroine

In **Alisa Smith’s** debut novel, **Speak-easy** (D&M \$22.95), heroine Lena Stillman works as an elite code-breaker at the Esquimalt naval base outside Victoria during WW II—and nobody knows she was formerly a member of a bank robbing outfit. Her world turns topsy-turvy when her old underworld boss, Bill Bagley, is sentenced to hang. An infamous bank robber in the 1930s named **Bill Bagley** did have a female ac-



Alisa Smith

complice, never named, who assisted on some of his heists and Smith had a great aunt who worked as a code-breaker on the west coast during World War II.

978-1-77162-066-6

### Also published

- **Eden Robinson**, Son of a Trickster (Penguin Random House \$32)
- **Elan Mastai**, All Our Wrong Today’s (Penguin Random House \$26)
- **Zoey Leigh Peterson**, Next Year for Sure (Doubleday \$24.95)
- **Mabel Hartley**, A Sapphire Moon (Gentle Soul \$8.99)

- **Adam Pottle**, The Bus (Quattro Fiction \$18)
- **Shannon Mayer**, Venom & Vanilla; Mayer, Fangs & Fennel (47 North \$21.95 each)
- **Ahmad Danny Ramadan**, The Clothesline Swing (Nightwood \$19.95)
- **Cary Fagan**, Wolfie & Fly (Tundra \$19.99) Illustrations by **Zoe Si**.
- **Deborah Willis**, The Dark and Other Love Stories (Penguin Random House \$29.95)
- **Lori McNulty**, Life on Mars (Goose Lane \$19.95)
- **Susin Nielsen**, Optimists Die First (Penguin Random House \$21.99)
- **Janie Change**, Dragon Springs Road (HarperAvenue \$22.99)
- **Elle Wild**, Strange Things Done (Dundurn \$18.99)
- **Anna Pitoniak**, The Futures (Lee Boudreaux Books \$34)
- **Iona Whishaw**, A Killer in King’s Cove (Touchwood \$16.95)
- **Dan Dunaway**, Heart Like a Wing (Ronsdale \$11.95)
- **Susan J. Crockford**, Eaten (CreateSpace \$21.95)
- **David Funk**, The Last Train to Leningrad (CreateSpace \$16.99)
- **Rachel M. Greenaway**, Cold Girl (Dundurn \$17.99)
- **Claire McCague**, The Rosetta Man (Edge \$19.95)
- **Nathaniel G. Moore**, Jettison, (Anvil \$20)
- **Martin West**, Long Ride Yellow (Anvil \$20)
- **Christopher Gudgeon**, The Encyclopedia of Lies (Anvil \$20)
- **Kat Rose**, The Loss (CreateSpace \$13.13)
- **Robert Pepper-Smith**, The Orchard Keepers (NeWest Press \$22.95)
- **Andrea Spalding**, Finders Keepers (Dundurn \$11.99)
- **Robyn Harding**, The Party (Scout Press \$26)

**Land Rover aficionado Ray Wood has made a Land Rover named Geraldine into a central character. Photo taken in Tanzania**





# review

## FICTION

### FORMALDEHYDE & BURLAP

Roy Innes' *The Extra Cadaver Murder* has an opening that is hard to beat.

**The Extra Cadaver Murder**  
by Roy Innes (NeWest \$15.95)

BY JAMES PALEY

PICTURE THIS. A FIRST-YEAR MEDICAL school class gathers in the old anatomy lab at the University of British Columbia.

Many have never even seen a dead body before—let alone cut into one.

Soaked in formaldehyde and wrapped in burlap, these cadavers are real. But wait a second. The med students literally uncover a problem. Why is there an extra corpse?

At the outset of **Roy Innes'** fourth Inspector Coswell novel, **The Extra Cadaver Murder**, we learn the uninvited, very dead, very naked, extra guest is Dr. Patrick Kelly, head of UBC's department of surgery. Given that he's both a cruel perfectionist and a drunken, gambling troublemaker, his murder is not as surprising as it should be.

Six suspects ultimately emerge, each investigated with Coswell's characteristic intensity. Kelly's ex-wife could well have done him in for his philandering. Or maybe it was Dr. Struthers, next in line for his job.

Coswell, the great detective, is slipping. On occasion, he's actually forgetting a suspect's name. Whenever Corporal Bostock or Corporal James catch something he has missed, there's a double sting to his pride. He is only 58 years old but he worries about early Alzheimer's disease. It doesn't help that he can't keep abreast of technology, even ignoring the convenience of the average smartphone.

His formerly keen mind is further befuddled when he becomes besotted by the victim's ex-wife, also a professor in the medical school and a stunningly beautiful woman.

★  
READERS OF ROY INNES' FIRST three mysteries had urged him to generate a plot utilizing his medical background. Recalling his own medical training at UBC, he had a great beginning but got stuck after that opening scene.

Then an unexpected email on Innes' website brought back a clear mem-

**Roy Innes during his days at UBC as a medical student.**

ory, from forty years earlier. He recalled a dark-eyed, serious little girl calmly climbing into his examining chair. This image sparked his imagination for the murder plot.

Inspector Coswell is assigned Corporal Bostock, a female detective, to help with the investigation, which enables Innes to explore sexual harassment within the RCMP.

Corporal James, who is gay, also serves as a confidante to Corporal Bostock. The duo empathize with one another over the prejudices faced in their professional lives.

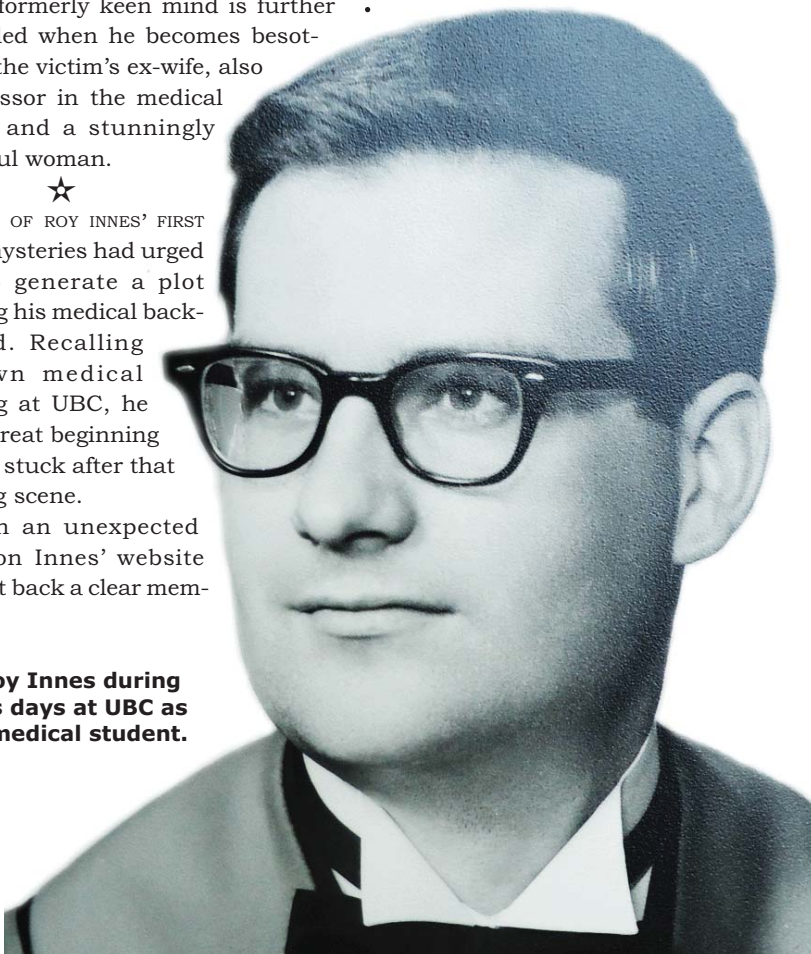
Bostock proves to be an exemplary officer at every turn, performing above and beyond Coswell's expectations of her. Gradually he is won over after his initial dismay when she was assigned to him.

The investigation veers off campus to locales around Vancouver. Eventually an undercover visit to an Irish pub leads the team to Larry, a gang member, whose boss, Conor Donohan, is named by a prostitute as Kelly's gambling connection.

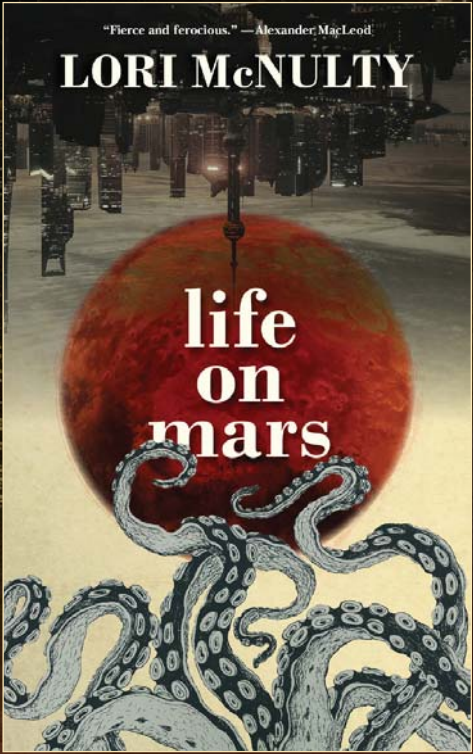
The three detectives also explore Roy Innes' old UBC stomping grounds such as the student residence, the Pit Pub and the Endowment Lands, as well as Vancouver General Hospital where Innes did residencies in internal medicine and then eye surgery.

*The Extra Cadaver Murder* is a multi-faceted novel, with complex characters and realistic details, doubling as a sympathetic portrayal of the difficulties faced by women and gay officers in the RCMP. 978-1-926455-72-3

James Paley is a Vancouver freelance writer.



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**The Performance**  
by Ann Eriksson (D&M \$22.95)

BY JAMES PALEY

ANN ERIKSSON’S FIFTH NOVEL **The Performance** contrasts the worlds of elite classical piano with urban homelessness. Hana Knight, a privileged and talented young pianist, develops a tenuous friendship with Jacqueline, a homeless woman who collects empty bottles and cans to buy tickets to Hana’s concerts. Hana is blessed with a magnificent Steinway piano, a place at Juilliard, a Manhattan apartment and a patron who arranges everything, including a European tour, but there is a dark mystery from her past that needs to be faced. She puts her privileged life at risk to do so.

HANA KNIGHT’S mother is in the grips of dementia when the story begins. Clare, Hana’s sister, takes care of her mother back in Vancouver. Hana tells everyone her father is dead.

As Hana ascends towards stardom as a classical pianist, she feels some guilt about her aloof position in her family as a pampered musician with a rare level of talent and a passion for **Chopin**, but she tempers such feelings with thoughts of her struggles during her career’s outset.

Without any money of her own, Hana’s music career is being supported by her patron, Mrs. Flynn, whose billions come from mining. As one of New York’s most prominent elite, Mrs. F.—as she is sometimes called—provides Hana with everything from her apartment to her wages and her performances.

As her star rises, Hana starts to take more notice of New York’s homeless population. In particular, her attention is drawn to an older woman who reminds her vaguely of her own mother. This woman often waits outside Hana’s concerts to see her. Initially Hana only identifies her as ‘The Knitter.’

Although she is clearly impoverished, this knitter named Jacqueline is a proud woman who refuses any help, no matter how badly it is needed. When Hana runs into Jacqueline at Riverside and 72nd Street, she tries to talk to her and offers her some money, but Jacqueline packs her things and walks off without a word. Jacqueline will only accept donations in exchange for her hand-knitted clothing.

As for a love life, Hana has one friend remaining from her time in school, a Japanese cellist named Kenji. The two of them slept together a few times. Hana broke it off, to prevent any complicated feelings. At Kenji’s insistence, they sleep together again but Hana wants to keep her distance.

There is a dump of snow

before Christmas so Hana seeks out Jacqueline with a sleeping bag. When her charity is refused, Hana remains persistent, going so far as to sleep outside with Jacqueline under a tree in Central Park. In the morning the obstinate old woman relents and accepts an offer of coffee and a shower.

Meanwhile Hana is getting closer to Mrs F.’s son, Michael, a confident rich kid who effortlessly sweeps Hana off her feet in only three meetings. Kenji quits school and goes back to Tokyo, rudderless and defeated, but Michael will soon discover Hana loves her piano

more than she cares for him.

As Hana’s mother’s dementia moves towards a crescendo of its own, there is palpable tension between Hana and her sister Clare regarding their mother. Hana must pay a price for being the star pianist when she goes home to visit. The Knights are a musical family. The children improvise scores with each other, play songs backwards as an exercise, performing mini-concerts. It’s a playful but competitive atmosphere.

The contrast between Hana’s inability to take care of her mother and her increasing

concern for the vagrant Jacqueline comes to the fore when Jacqueline is badly injured in a mugging. Hana tracks her down in the hospital as the staff is about to release her, regardless of her poor condition, during a harsh New York winter. Hana puts her up at her stately Manhattan apartment.

By this point, it would be giving away too much to say what happens next—so let’s just say it’s an astonishing and disturbing twist in the power dynamic between the two women.

Just as her mother remains on the periphery of Hana’s life

with her illness, her father will remain afar for reasons that should not be revealed here. Will Jacqueline prefer the streets? Will Hana reconcile with her sister?

*The Performance* is a wise and deeply rendered novel about Hana’s evolution beyond the ambitions of a self-centred artist. Chopin can be perfected; charity cannot. Ultimately she gains an understanding that empathy is the soul-food for decency.

978-1-77162-125-0

James Paley is a Vancouver freelance writer.





**The Griffin in the Griffin's Wood by Stephen Scobie**  
(Ekstasis Editions \$29.95)

BY **CHERIE THIESSEN**

**W**IKIPEDIA WILL tell you, a griffin is a mythical creature with the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion. It is typically depicted with pointed ears and with the eagle's legs taking the place of the forelegs.

In northern Germany, on the shores of the Baltic, Greifswald is a university town named after a legendary Griffin who lived in a tree in the town, seizing and devouring children and eventually chased away centuries ago by monks.

Hence Greifswald in English means Griffin's Wood.

In that town lives Helga Brandt, a university employee and informer for the Ministry for State Security in East Germany. She believes the Griffin has returned to devour the next generation—only it has resurfaced under the guise of a dicey nuclear reactor in nearby Lubmin.

In **Stephen Scobie's** 'spy fantasy,' **The Griffin in the Griffin's Wood**, the fate of Europe, and perhaps even humanity, hinges on events

## CANUCK SPY IN GREIFSWALD

There is intrigue afoot in "Griffin's Wood" as the Berlin Wall is about to fall in 1989.



**Stephen Scobie & Berlin Wall**

arising from that modern, technological griffin. It's 1989. The Berlin Wall is coming down. There is confusion and intrigue in the two Germanys.

Frank Carpenter, spy, is a relatively new Canadian intelligence officer based in West Germany who has recently been assigned to Group 7, a bungling attempt to coordinate intelligence operations along the Baltic Coast for France, the USA, Western Germany, Britain and Canada. No one takes Canada's role seriously, including its young agent

and disregards orders. Ultimately Carpenter will meet up with a family member whose shadow has always loomed large in his life. This novel is dark, funny, and—at times—intentionally predictable. Scobie skillfully empowers the reader with information the characters don't have. (We know the history of the Berlin Wall; they don't.) Mostly I enjoyed being immersed in a realistic sense of place. Greifswald, where Carpenter spends much of his mission, is portrayed with precision and empathy. That's

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Mostly I enjoyed being immersed in a realistic sense of place. Greifswald, where Carpenter spends much of his mission, is portrayed with precision and empathy. That's

partly because Scobie visited Germany several times in the 1980s and '90s as a poet/lecturer and guest professor of Canadian literature.

"At first, these visits were mostly to Kiel," he says, "but later concentrated on Greifswald. And I have been to Lübeck, and to the border site, which is the setting for the first and last chapters of the book. I was also in Lübeck for a weekend just two weeks after the Wall came down."

Scobie has returned several times since. "Both Kiel and Greifswald are cities very dear to my heart—due perhaps to their proximity to the sea, and the cleansing effect of the Baltic winds."

Stephen Scobie has been invited to speak abroad because he is diversely talented as a critic, scholar and poet who won the Governor General's Award for Poetry in 1980. He has also written critical studies on **Bob Dylan** and **Leonard Cohen**.

Scobie is not known primarily as a novelist. Tense and wisely drawn, *The Griffin in the Griffin's Wood* is his first and probably only novel, he says.

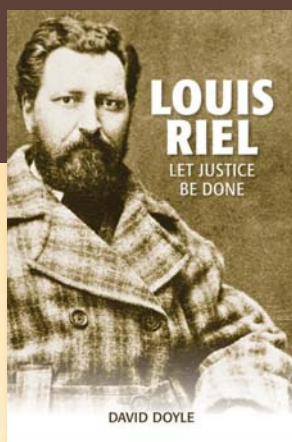
That would be a shame.

978-1-77171-105-0

*Cherie Thiessen reviews fiction from Pender Island.*

## Louis Riel: Let Justice Be Done

David Doyle



In this re-enactment of his trial, Riel is finally given the opportunity to respond to his conviction for treason. Using new historical research, Doyle shows how John A. Macdonald created a show trial, and we see for the first time Riel's inside political manoeuvring at Batoche and Red River—showing why he is now a Father of Manitoba and deserving of exoneration in 2017.

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Alice Jane Hamilton

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## Collecting Silence

Ulrike Narwani

In this moving debut volume of poetry, Narwani travels paths of disconnect and connect, loss and renewal, from North America to Asia, with a stop at the Berlin Wall—listening to the silence in which our deepest experiences talk to us in a "language we all know without speaking."

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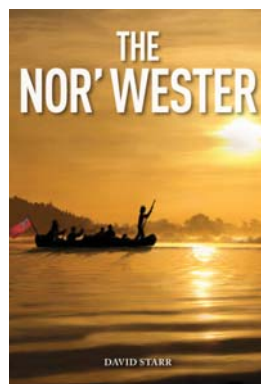
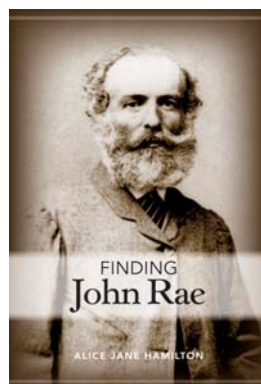
## The Nor'Wester

David Starr

A Scottish boy has to flee to Canada, where he is taken on by the North West Company and is sent by brigade canoe across the country. Here he joins Simon Fraser on his epic 1808 journey to the Pacific down what Fraser mistakes for the Columbia, encountering death, danger and treason along the way.

978-1-55380-493-2 (PRINT) • 978-1-55380-494-9 (EBOOK)

5-1/4 x 7-5/8 • 214 pp • \$11.95





# FICTION

## ROUND-UP

### International death

In **Not a Clue** (Touchwood \$14.95), the second installment in **Janet Brons'** Forsyth & Hay mystery series, the head of the Canadian High Commission's trade section has been found brutally murdered in London. Detective Stephen Hay of Scotland Yard teams up with RCMP Inspector Liz Forsyth to investigate an international conspiracy and militant nationalism. A second death raises the stakes. From Ottawa and London, the duo investigate the puzzling murders of two young women—a Canadian backpacker in London and a Chechen woman shot by a hidden assassin during a protest outside the Russian embassy in Ottawa. Brons had a seventeen-year career in the Canadian Foreign Service with postings in Kuala Lumpur, Warsaw, and Moscow.

9781771511476

### Sleeping murder

According to *Publishers Weekly*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt signed a six-figure deal to acquire **Eileen Cook's** twelfth book, **With Malice** (HMH \$17.99 US) a YA, psychological suspense novel about the misfortunes of 18-year-old Jill Charon who survives a terrible mishap while on vacation in idyllic Italy. Evacuated by her wealthy father, she wakes in a North American hospital in a leg cast, with stitches, unable to remember the previous six weeks of her life, let alone the fatal car crash that results in her being accused of murder. After she needs a doctor, then a lawyer, she needs a press agent. North Van's Cook is a mentor at SFU Writers Studio.

9780544805095

### Painting dusk

**Winter Wren** (\$18) by **Theresa Kishkan**, a novella set on Vancouver Island, has been released via her new imprint for novellas called Fish Gotta Swim Editions. In 1974, in the disrupted midst of her life as a painter in France, Grace Oakden comes home to Canada and buys a cabin on a west coast beach. A friendship with the dying, embittered son of a famous artefact collector, and an affair with a local potter working in the Bernard Leach tradition, buttress her awakening engagement with a chosen place and a discovered purpose: to paint the view at dusk.

978-0-9780054-5-0



Theresa Kishkan will be in Salmon Arm at the Word On The Lake Writers Festival, May 19-21.

continued on page 33

Gail Anderson-Dargatz with a ghostly image in the hallway. She will be at the Word On The Lake Writers Festival, May 19-21 in Salmon Arm.



MITCH KRUPP PHOTO

## MORE TO LIFE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Gail Anderson-Dargatz's affinity for the inexplicable results in ghosts and spirits in her stories.

In **Gail Anderson-Dargatz's** breakthrough novel, *The Cure for Death by Lightning*, a female character is chased by a transforming spirit. In *A Recipe for Bees*, a female protagonist travels through time. In her *Turtle Valley*, a woman and her family are haunted by ghosts.

So fans of her fiction shouldn't be too surprised to learn that in her latest novel, **The Spawning Grounds** (Knopf Canada \$32)—very significantly set in the Adams River area of the B.C. interior—there's a wandering soul who slips back and forth from "watery boundaries" in the river to inhabit the bodies of people.

Fiction and dreams are close cousins. And so, as the late writer **Margaret Thompson** pointed out, 'magic realism'—premonition, dreams, synchronicity, second sight—is an integral part of her novels, as much as her rural B.C. landscapes.

"In the years immediately after my mother died," Anderson-Dargatz recalls, "I dreamed of her. In these dreams, we often walked a familiar street and talked about writing, about my kids. My mother offered advice as she always had. Then we embraced and she left me, again. Once, my father was with her. In one of those lucid dreaming moments that are so rare, I asked, 'How can you be here? You're both dead.' And

my mother said, 'We're not real.' But they both felt so real, so very real. I hugged them and said, 'I miss you both so much.'

Gail Anderson-Dargatz woke, heart-wrenched, convinced she had spent a few precious minutes with her parents.

"These are the moments in which we say our good-byes," she says.

So it's an obvious question to ask: Do you believe in ghosts?

"No," she says. "I don't believe our souls survive death. But, yes. We see the ghosts of those we love in our dreams, and in our grief, and we see them walking on the street. They appear at the foot of our bed in the wee hours hovering in that space between sleep and wakefulness.

"Sometimes these encounters frighten us. But for the most part I believe that within these final visits with our beloved dead we find solace and closure. I know for a fact my mother's spirit lives on, in the stories I tell, in the bits of wisdom I pass on to my children.

"I see my mother in my own lovely daughter, in her haunting grey-blue eyes, in her grace, her humour, her will, and her ability to read the emotion of a room. I know when my life ends, my daughter will carry my stories and sensibilities forward. She will see me in her own children. And just as I carried on my conversation with my own mother long after she was gone, my daughter will visit me within her dreams." 978-0345810816



AWOL IN  
Ikea

Renovation or teardown:  
He loves me, he loves me not.

Teardown by Clea Young  
(Freehand \$19.95)

BY SHARON KURTZ

THE TWELVE STORIES IN **Clea Young's** debut collection **Teardown** are largely concerned with friendship and betrayal. Best friends can become strangers, or worse, sworn enemies.

There are childhood friends, jealous friends, friends who sleep with husbands, friends who were never really friends at all.

Some stories centre on love: love lost, love discovered, the love of siblings, the love of children and babies, and love betrayed.

Babies, thinking about having babies, and other people's babies are a central theme to a number of the stories. In the title story "Teardown" Marni is stressed during her last days of pregnancy. As she and her partner visit IKEA, they find themselves quarreling over a light fixture. Sometimes this sort of domestic meltdown in a public place can be forgotten; but other times it can be a game-changer.

With Young's deft handling, we realize that one partner wants to put down roots, to improve their home; the other is not entirely keen on making a nest. Marni disappears; so Marni's male partner and the IKEA employee, Julian, try to find her. Is their relationship going to get renovated? Or is it on the verge of a teardown?

In "Juvenile," one person's pain is another person's pleasure. Pete holds the power; Mia has none. When they meet again on a BC Ferry after ten years apart, you'd expect some growing up would have happened. But Pete remains a dislikeable dude. Mia is so shaken by seeing him that she slips back



into her supplicant role. Are they reverting to old programming, or are Pete's meanness and power over Mia irrevocable?

Parenting takes centre stage in "Chaperone" when Holt's daughter, Beth, and her school friends push the boundaries of the rules on a school trip. Holt is forced to confront his parenting abilities.

Rachel and Rory, the characters in "Firestorm" are attempting to rebuild a trust that they developed in high school. Rachel is not only the victim of her high school sweetheart but also her best friend. What will Rachel's revenge look like, and who will be the target of her revenge?

A plastic, pregnant body and her pretend plastic baby become a prop in "Congratulations and Regrets." Feelings of the protagonist are hurt by an ex-roommate, a forced move, a strange room in a strange house with a strange landlord, a temporary job and, yes, misplaced love for a plastic baby.

The surprising possibility of romance infuses the final story, "What are You Good at, What Do You Like to Do?" when the main character, who is looking for work and love in all the wrong places, finds herself being pursued by a loveable character as a result of her job search.

The main characters are usually in a time of flux, moving forward, sometimes by choice and other times driven by the desires of others, as they are thrust into new and unfamiliar territory. How they deal, or don't deal, with these new situations provides the storyline.

These stories in *Teardown* proceed at a quick pace; rich in complexity, description and dialogue. They can be depressing or uplifting, and often conclude with a surprise ending. The complexity of relationships is at the core of all of them—at times raw, and other times romantic and hopeful. Some stories readers may hate, some they will love, but none of these stories can be dismissed as boring. *Teardown* succeeds by revealing how scary and resilient love can be.

Clea Young's work has been included three times in *The Journey Prize Stories*, as well as the publications *Event*, *Grain*, *The Fiddlehead*, *The Malahat Review*, and *Room*. 978-988298-01-6

Sharon Kurtz is a Vancouver writer.

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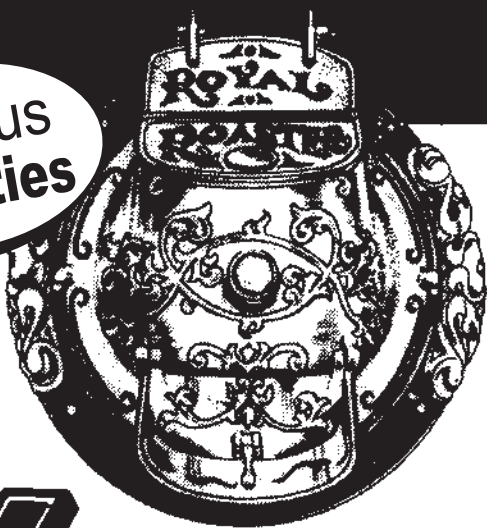
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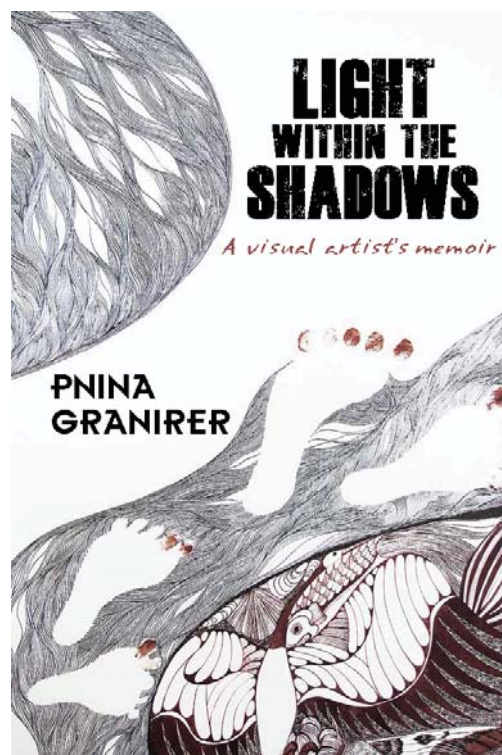
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25 years ago, Pnina Granirer co-founded *Artists in our Midst*, the first Vancouver Open Studios walk. During her 52 years in Vancouver, she has exhibited widely, both nationally and internationally.

978-1-926991-84-9 / \$24.95  
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# FICTION

## ROUND-UP

### Syria to Canada

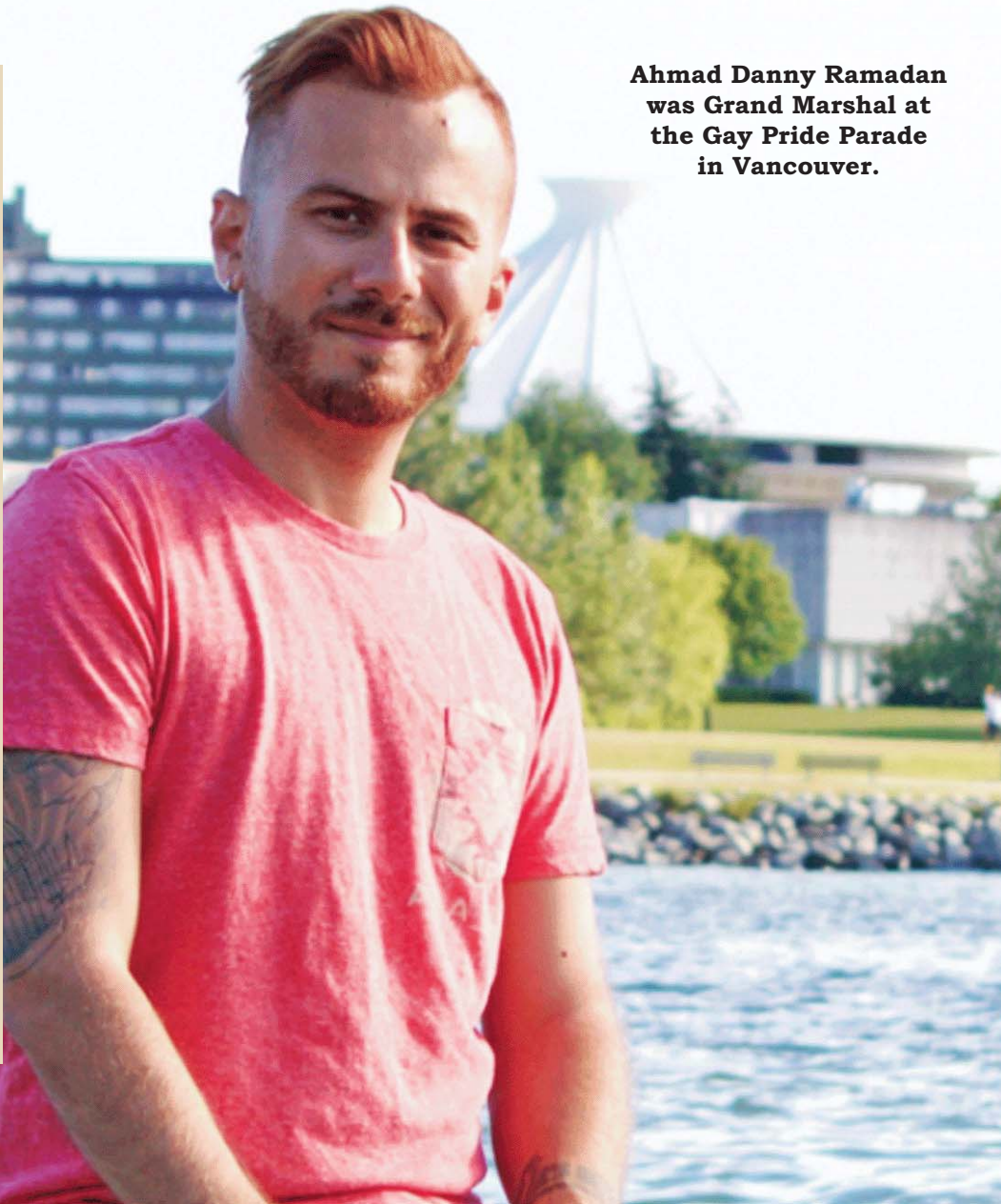
FORMER SYRIAN REFUGEE **AHMAD DANNY RAMADAN** OF VAN-couver is a journalist with bylines in the *Wash-ington Post*, *The Guardian* and *Foreign Policy*. He has also been Grand Marshal for Vancouver’s Gay Pride Parade. Prior to his first novel in English, **The Clothesline Swing** (Nightwood \$19.95), he published two collections of short stories in Arabic.

*The Clothesline Swing* draws inspiration from Arabian tales in *One Thousand and One Nights*, as two lovers lament their separation from Syria.

From the mountains of Syria, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, the characters describe jour-neys through the valleys of Lebanon, the seas of Turkey and the heat of Egypt before reaching Canada. Hakawati, a storyteller, tells fables to his dying male partner. Meanwhile Death, a looming character in a dark cloak, shares a house with the two men, eavesdropping on their secrets.

978-0-88971-332-1

**Ahmad Danny Ramadan was Grand Marshal at the Gay Pride Parade in Vancouver.**



continued from page 30

### Being gay in Iraq

*God in Pink*, the debut novel by **Hasan Namir**, won the Lambda Literary Award in the category of best gay novel at an awards ceremony in New York in 2016. Previously it was named to the “Globe 100” list of the best books of 2015 by *The Globe and Mail*. **God in Pink** (Arsenal \$17.95) is about Ramy, a young Iraqi boy who is gay. Ramy struggles to find a balance between his sexual yearnings and his culture. Having lost his parents, he lives with his strict brother and sister-in-law, who pressure Ramy to marry. Eventually Ramy turns to Ammar, a sheikh at a local mosque.

A searing exploration of the world of gay Muslims in Iraq, *God in Pink* contains graphic depictions of violence juxtaposed against moments of beauty.

Born in Iraq in 1987, Hasan Namir of Vancouver came to Canada at a young age and holds a BA in English from Simon Fraser University.

978-1-55152-607-2

### Slocan lockdown

**Katherine Prairie** is the first author to be published by a new imprint for mysteries and suspense novels, Stonedrift Press, based in Vancouver. Set in the Slocan Valley, her first novel, **Thirst** (Stonedrift \$17.95), depicts a ‘lockdown’ of the Slocan Valley by U.S./Canada forces to protect the Colum-bia River dams in the wake of a failed bombing attempt at the Keenleyside Dam that resulted in the shooting deaths of three teens. A female geologist named Alex Graham evades military patrols to slip into a restricted zone in

her hunt for a silver mine. Upon her discovery of another gunshot victim in an abandoned mine, she fears she could be next. All eyes are on the dams, but she discovers the true threat lies elsewhere.

978-0-9949377-0-4

### Surviving the Nazis

**Jack Dixon’s The Barn** (Friesen Press \$16.99) describes the ordeals and brav-ery of the Mollens, a family of nine in Arnhem, Holland, after their country was invaded by the German army in May of 1940. The novel is based on interviews that Dixon conducted with members of the Mollen family.

Forced to work for the Nazi Oc-cupation forces because he owned a garage, the father uses his wits to resist as best he can, helplessly watch-ing as Jewish neighbours are brutally arrested.

With the onset of the Battle of Arn-hem in September of 1944, the entire

civilian population is forced to evacuate their homes. After three days of walk-ing, the Mollen family take refuge in an empty barn for the remaining eight months of the war.

During the “Hunger Winter” of 1944-1945, the Mollen family survived on turnips, beets and acorns, and kept their secret radio hooked up to a Gestapo power line. A true story of per-severance and triumph, the Mollens, emboldened by listening to news on the BBC, ultimately return to the empty shell of their house.

978-1-4602-3970-4

### 19th century noir

B.C. novelists **John Gray** and **Ian Weir** have set dark, suspense novels in nineteenth century London; now **Steven Price** has followed suit with a highly touted second novel, edited by the late **Ellen Seligman**. Partially set in London during the 1880s, **By Gaslight** (Penguin Random House \$35) involves

murder and mayhem with detective **William Pinkerton** embroiled in mysteries that lead to the battlefields of the U.S. Civil War and the diamond mines of South Africa.

Married to novel-ist **Esi Edugyan**, Price was instrumental in the process that resulted in her second novel, *Half-Blood Blues*, being published in Canada. It went on to win the Giller Prize in 2011.

9780771069239



**Steven Price will be at The Federation of BC Writers Spring Writes Festival (Nanaimo, April 27-30).**

### Open relationship

**Zoey Leigh Peterson** has published her first novel, **Next Year, For Sure** (Penguin Random House \$22) about longtime romantic partners Kathryn and Chris who ex-periment with an open relationship, which leads them to reconsider every-thing they thought they knew about love. The story takes place over a year, and is at times tumultuous,

**Zoey Leigh Peterson**

revelatory and also funny. Peterson was born in England, grew up in the United States, and eventually moved to Vancouver.

978-0-385-68677-8

### Weird & wonderful

With her first short fiction collec-tion, **Double Dutch** (House of Anansi \$19.95), **Laura Trunkey**, who grew up in the Fairfield neighborhood of Victo-ria, was shortlisted for the \$5,000 City of Victoria Butler Book Prize. Appropri-ately dubbed as weird and wonderful, Trunkey’s stories can delve into bizarre storylines: An elephant named Topsy is killed on Coney Island by **Thomas Edison** in 1903. **Ronald Reagan’s** body double falls in love with the first lady. A single mother believes her toddler is the reincarnation of a terrorist. A man grieves for his wife after a bear takes over her body. Other stories are touch-ing and realistic: A young deaf girl visits Niagara Falls before she goes blind.

9781770898776

continued on page 35



**Waiting for the Cyclone**  
by Leesa Dean  
(Brindle & Glass \$19.95)

LEESA DEAN'S **WAITING FOR THE Cyclone** describes how contemporary girls and young women are mostly failing to establish stable relationships. The millennials in her thirteen stories are yearning to find dependable and loving partners, but instead they encounter faithless lovers, sexual predators and abusers who offer no shelter from the coming storm. Here **Joan Givner** responds to Dean's debut collection.

**L**EESA DEAN'S FIRST STORY, 'The Cyclone,' sets the tone. Increasingly severe weather conditions are a given for us all; at the same time 'The Cyclone' is also the name of a Coney Island roller-coaster that offers the most terrifying experience of danger in an amusement park.

As the narrator and Mike, her lover, stand in line to ride on The Cyclone, they watch the couple ahead of them, who are deaf, incongruously matched in size, shape and skin colour, and yet they appear to be happily married; they communicate vigorously in sign language. Mike, who believes in signs, takes them as an auspicious omen that he and the narrator will have a similar enduring relationship.

Like other lovers in these pages, initial contact was made through the internet. At their first meeting, they kiss long and passionately and become a public spectacle. A voice in the crowd cries out, "Look, they're in love," as if something miraculous is taking place. In the words of **T.S. Eliot**, "Signs are taken for wonders." At the end of the ride, a tragic incident augurs a different outcome. The Cyclone is told from the point of view of a narrator two years after the carnival ride.

Dean's collection is book-ended by 'Shelter from the Storm'—a title that gains some unanticipated topicality from the Nobel Prize award for literature going to **Bob Dylan**.



## FINDING THE OTHER HALF OF THE ORANGE

How millennials are struggling with love

Leesa Dean teaches English and creative writing at Selkirk College in Nelson.

The refrain from his lyric for a song of that same name is an invitation from a woman to a broken man, "Come in... I'll give ya shelter from the storm."

We meet Chelsea who is sitting out a hurricane in Halifax, anxiously awaiting the return of her lover. They had a brief, intense love affair in Mexico, and she fondly remembers the night they took shelter from driving rain inside a temple among the ruins of an ancient Mayan civilization.

Marco is on a cargo ship and repeatedly postpones his return, saying that he needs to make more money. Meanwhile, Chelsea is withholding a secret from him: she is pregnant. She is keeping the news

from him until she can tell him face to face in order to gauge his reaction.

During the Halifax storm, she meets Patrick who is secretly planning to leave

Canada for good in order to escape the stifling love of his mother. Shocked by his ruthless treatment of his mother, Chelsea tells him, "I hope I never have a kid like you."

Marco has returned to port and is heading to the airport to fly to Halifax. He is carrying a ring, engraved with part of a Spanish phrase, *eres mi media naranja*, meaning "you are the other half of my orange."

As in the first story, there are ominous signs. Marco might well be shocked to discover that the symmetry of their relationship will be changed by the birth of a child. Meanwhile, Chelsea's words "I hope I never have a kid like you," hover in her mind.

Between these two stories, eleven others ring the changes on the torments of love.

Flight from impossible circumstances is a recurrent motif. Some characters cross Canada or leave the country altogether, seeking escape. Latin America is the destination of choice, though some head to



JOAN GIVNER

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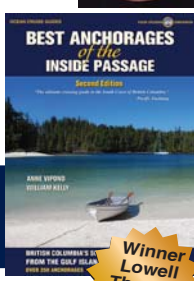
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# ROUND-UP

## Happy endings

978-1611945928

BORN A BOY, BUT A EUNUCH BY CHOICE, BOMBAY SEX worker Madhu, at 40, can no longer support herself as a transgender prostitute in the red-light district of Kamathipura. Since her teens she has managed to survive as a hijara—a person belonging to the third, middle sex—and now she must adapt to life as a beggar in **Anosh Irani's** fourth novel, **The Parcel** (Knopf \$32). Her past comes back to haunt her when the most-feared brothel owner, Padam Madam, wants Madhu to take charge of a new arrival from the provinces, a 'girl' who has been betrayed and trafficked by her aunt. This 'parcel' to be trained by Madhu evokes feelings of tenderness in her that have been long suppressed. 9780345816740

**James L. (Jim) McWilliams** created a series of historical novels known as *The MacHugh Memoirs*, about Rory MacHugh, a young Canadian of Scottish/French/Blackfoot background. The series begins in 1792 on the Canadian prairies then continues with Rory MacHugh's adventures involving the Sphinx and Napoleon in Egypt, the 79th Cameron Highlanders in Spain, and at Waterloo, eventually to end in 1836 at the Alamo.

McWilliams' new novel, **The MacHugh Memoirs: The Assassins** (Birkbeck & Norgate \$19.95), is set in 1803. Rory MacHugh returns to Paris as the bodyguard for the mysterious Count Mée de la Touche. There his affair with the glamorous Duchess of Abrantès lands him in the mountaintop prison, the Fortress of Bitche. After he escapes, he becomes embroiled in several assassination attempts aimed at his very personal enemy, the Emperor Napoleon.

McWilliams has also written (with **R. James Steel**) three First World War histories: *The Suicide Battalion*, *Gas! The Battle For Ypres 1915*, and *Amiens: Dawn of Victory*. 978-0-9917949-3-5



**Kathy Page's** fiction has often been the bridesmaid, not the bride. *The Story of My Face* was long-listed for the Orange Prize in 2002. *Alphabet* was a Governor General's Award finalist in 2005. *The Find* was shortlisted for the ReLit Award in 2011. After she was long-listed for the Giller Prize in 2014 for her story collection, *Paradise & Elsewhere*, Page was short-listed in 2016 for her follow-up collection, **The Two of Us** (Biblioasis \$19.95). Whereas the former delves into myth and the darker territory of parable and fable, *The Two of Us* contains stories about pairs, couples, and dyads. Whether it's a hairdresser and a client, a mother and her baby, or a girl and a fox, her duos are united by a primal desire for intimacy. Page has lived on Salt Spring Island since 2001.

**Robert Longe** worked in mineral exploration for many years as a geologist, consultant, and chief executive of a junior public company. His own experiences searching for mineral deposits in many parts of the world convinced him that the industry, much of it based in Vancouver, provides enough excitement, unique characters and engrossing situations for an entire genre of novels. His first novel, **The Nisselinka Claims** (Self-published \$27.49), is a 456-page, family saga that spans three generations. In the early years of the 20th century Edward Wickford, a settler in the Bulkley Valley, lays claim to a rich vein of copper and gold in the Nisselinka Mountains of central B.C. 978-1-4602-5294-9

Never mind *Hannah and Her Sisters*. **Hanne and Her Brother** (Thistle-down \$19.95) is **Bill Stenson**'s novel about Hanne Lemmon who, at age sixteen, moves beyond her isolated, home-schooled life in the Cowichan Valley with a protective father to seek independence and love within the very different landscape of Eastend, Saskatchewan.

Nelson-born Bill Stenson of Victoria was the driving force behind *The Claremont Review*, a magazine focused on publishing literary works by teens.

978-1-77187-114-3

*continued on page 39*



**Anosh Irani's**  
*The Parcel* was a  
finalist for both the  
**Rogers Writers'**  
**Trust Fiction Prize**  
and a Governor  
**General's Literary**  
**Award.** He lives in  
**Vancouver.**



**Sand** by Luanne Armstrong  
(Ronsdale \$11.95)

BY CHRIS BRAUER

**S**ITTING AT THE FORMICA table, **Luanne Armstrong** is buzzing with excitement. She has recently read and re-read **Seamus Heaney's** poem "North" that reflects the ancient and modern faces of Ireland.

Armstrong eagerly discusses the mechanics of poetry, her involvements with the UBC Creative Writing Program and a book she has just bought about sailing—even though she doesn't sail—before she gets around to her own new book, a teen novel.

"It's a story about Willy," she says, "a teenager reacting to trauma and eventually finding a place in the world where she feels she belongs."

In *Sand* we are introduced to fifteen-year-old Willy Cameron who is paralyzed from the waist down after a car accident. Demoralized, she takes up therapeutic horse riding and regains the use of her legs, developing a bond with a spirited rescue horse named Sand. Trouble arises when she takes Sand from the stable, against the order of the stable owner, to search for a missing friend.

Named after the horse that helps Willy, *Sand* is dedicated to the Creston and District Therapeutic Riding Centre. All horses in the book are based on real horses at the Centre. Therapeutic riding is something close to Armstrong's heart.

"I remember when **Karen Brain** came to Creston," she says. "She was a member of the Canadian Equestrian Team, but she had a severe accident and her spine was crushed. She was told she would never walk again—and certainly not ride—but she demanded to be put on a horse two months after her accident."

"Three years later, she represented Canada in the

2004 Paralympics in Athens, winning Individual and Team Bronze medals."

Karen Brain came to Creston to teach riding workshops. She is one of numerous examples of individuals who have regained the ability to walk while using horses as therapy. Armstrong herself also has an understanding of trauma and the recovery process, having herself overcome brain surgery.

Writing about teenagers for teenagers, says Armstrong, has allowed her to get back to the habit of writing: "Writing Young Adult books is not difficult for me. In a way, it's a form of entertainment. I sit down to write in the afternoon and it carries me away for the rest of the day. I wonder, what will happen today? Where will the story go? I try to write a great story with action and interesting characters. My brain gets to run wild. I didn't know the ending of the book while I was writing it. Some-

times the characters lie to me and then the truth comes out later. I allowed the characters to unravel the story for me."

Armstrong was interested in exploring how teenagers react to dealing with various trauma. Specifically three teenagers in the book—Willy and her two friends—are all dealing with hard emotional truths: paralysis, psychosis and bullying. "It's a sweet, positive book," she says, "but it's also about ferocious anger and the emotions of teenagers," says Armstrong.

"Willy has to deal with paralysis; Ben has a psychotic break from taking drugs; and Lailla is bullied. But they recognize each other for who they are, and help define each other."

*Sand* is part of Armstrong's ongoing recovery from a brain injury. Now she has finished the book, she regained the

rhythm of constantly writing. "I used to write everyday," she says, "I'd get dressed as if I was working a regular job and cross my living room and write at 9 a.m. But my brain injury forced me out of the habit. It's harder during the summer with so many visitors at the farm. I'm harvesting fruit and chasing away bears. But now I'm working on four different projects. Still the process of writing is no picnic. "Every book is a book I haven't written yet," she says, "so it takes a lot of thinking and walking around before I figure things out."

# RIDE TO Heal

Horses and healing are a good fit in **Luanne Armstrong's Sand**, a YA novel about a therapeutic riding centre.



LUANNE ARMSTRONG HAS PUBLISHED twenty books in a variety of genres. She won the 2014 BC Chocolate Lily Award for *I'll Be Home Soon* (2012) and other titles have received other nominations. Among them, her book of essays, *The Light Through the Trees: Reflections on Land and Farming* (2012) was a finalist for The Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize.

Kootenay-born-and-raised, Luanne Armstrong is an organic farmer on a fourth-generation family farm in the small community of Boswell. With her MFA degree from UBC, she has increasingly taught writing (as an adjunct UBC professor of creative writing, at the College of the Rockies in Cranbrook, and for evening courses at Langara College). Along the way Armstrong has worked as a feminist researcher, a freelance journalist, publisher and editor for Blue Lake Books and HodgePog Books.

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*Chris Brauer's article is adapted from the Creston Valley Advance, reprinted by permission.*



Luanne Armstrong on her farm

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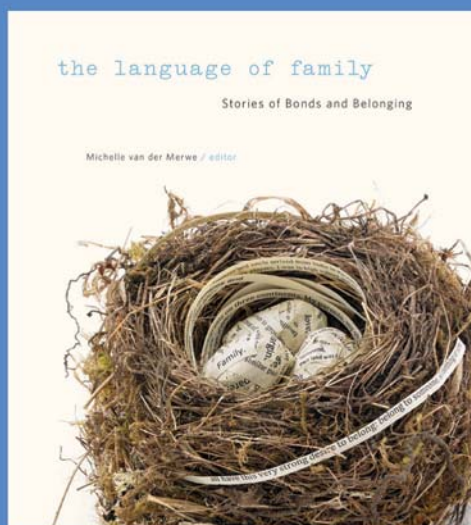
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**Cluck by Lenore Rowntree**  
(ThistleDown \$19.95)

**"While I wrote *Cluck*,  
I thought about that  
Saskatchewan  
farmer who became  
obsessed with Anne  
Murray and travelled  
a very long dis-  
tance to see her."**  
LENORE ROWNTREE



# FROM CORTES TO Cluck

**"I have long believed isolation leads to dysfunction and dysfunction leads to isolation."—Lenore Rowntree**

Yup, looking after chickens is Henry's dream job. Except for his boss, Elaine. *Cluck* follows Henry to Idaho where there's a funky radio station, CFOX, as well as a deejay, Jamie Lee, with whom the poultry technician is obsessed.

Here we also meet Charity, the Idaho knitter who holds unusual shows and who initiates 30-year-old Henry into sex when he drunkenly confesses to being a virgin. All the while, through the miracle of fiction, Henry is still lying in that same puddle.

That radio station in *Cluck* is loosely modeled on Cortes Island's community radio station, CKTZ, 89.5 FM, started in 2004, which the author dedicates her book.

"I first heard it when I was driving a truck on Savary Island," says Rowntree, who was a radio junkie as a kid. "I have a cabin there, which is about 20 kilometres south of Cortes Island. I listened to the station a lot when I went to Savary to do a couple of major edits and rewrites of *Cluck*, and some of the quiriness of the station crept into me as I rewrote the novel."

The novel is an extension of a short story Rowntree wrote in the 1980s. "Because of the evolution of this novel from a short story into a longer piece, the rest of the process was a spinning backwards and forwards from the short story. So over the years I thought about Henry from time to time. I took about three years to write it as a focused effort, beginning in 2010. I'm one of those writers who writes to find out what the story is."

A graduate of UBC's Creative Writing Program, Rowntree also has a collection of short stories, *Dovetail Joint* (Quadra Books, 2015) and she co-edited and contributed to the anthology *Hidden lives: Coming Out on Mental Illness* (Brindle & Glass, 2012), a publication to which her sister also contributed. 978-1-77187-108-2

*Cherie Thiessen listens to radio on Pender Island.*



**CHERIE  
THIESSEN**

pain to corrupt his basically caring nature or distort his gentle sense of humour.

Henry could have opted out of looking after his mother after quitting school. Instead he went after a job he really wanted, studying hard and slogging for three years as an apprentice before finally becoming an accredited poultry technician with Agriculture Canada.

Lenore Rowntree. "I lived with someone who has a mental illness, my sister, **Beth**, who has schizophrenia. She is the real writer in the family. She started experiencing symptoms as a young child.

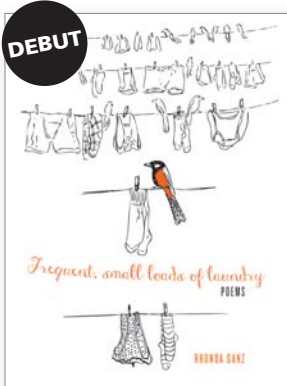
"Without consciously thinking about it, I took my experience of growing up close to mental illness and exaggerated it for Henry by making him an only child living with a single parent with bipolar disorder. Because my sister was ostracized and I was associated with her, so was I at

times. Even when I wasn't the direct target it impacted me because I saw up close how it hurt her."

Henry cannot bring himself to leave his mother on her own even though she is often out of control and she's always embarrassing him, thwarting any of his attempts to have a social life. Although Henry is friendless, joyless and a bit weird, he has not allowed his

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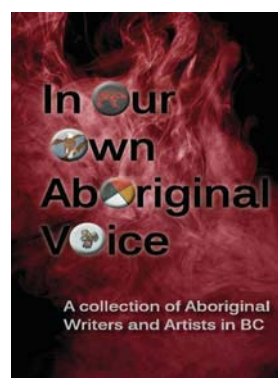
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# FICTION

## ROUND-UP

continued from page 35

### Prairie marriage

**Tricia Dower**’s third novel, **Becoming Lin** (Caitlin \$22.95), beginning in 1965, is mainly set in Minnesota against the backdrop of the turbulent ‘Sixties’ that gave rise to the civil rights movement, resistance to the Vietnam War, the push for equal rights for women and the unraveling of the traditional marital contract. Twenty-two-year-old Linda Wise despairs of escaping her overprotective parents and her hometown where far too many know she was sexually assaulted as a teenager. Deliverance arrives in the form of marriage to the charismatic, twenty-six-year-old Ronald Brunson, a newly ordained Methodist minister who ignites in her a dormant passion for social justice. He sweeps her away from New Jersey to serve with him at a church in a speck-on-the-map prairie town in Minnesota. The constraints of marriage do not always sit well with her evolving sense of self. 978-1-987915-07-5

### Hamlet re-imagined

After thirty-one years as an English teacher, primarily in Terrace, **Alan W. Lehmann** has combined his admiration for **Shakespeare** with his desire as a teacher to make *Hamlet* more accessible in **Hamlet, The Novel** (Lulu \$24), a self-published tale largely told from the perspective of Horatio at Hamlet’s castle Elsinore. The novel opens with the Norwegian Prince Fortinbras arriving at Elsinore claiming Denmark should cede the castle to Norway.

Lehmann imagines contemporary dialogue for all the characters as Horatio ostensibly creates a journal that provides insights into Hamlet’s character from an admiring friend. 978-1-4834-2867-3

### Bollywood noir

A Boston-born, New York forensic scientist named Elanna Forsythe George is hired by the Bollywood starlet, Simryn Gill, to investigate the oddly under-publicized death of Rajesh Sharma, a Bollywood director who supposedly died of a heart attack two years previously.

Elanna Forsythe George travels to Mumbai and begins to unravel a cult that controls the Bollywood film industry in **N.K. Johel**’s two-volume novel, **Bollywood Storm** (EFG Publishing \$19.99)—that includes five Bollywood song ‘n’ dance numbers.

N.K. Johel is a pseudonym for an Indo-Canadian writer born in Duncan in 1959. Her grandfather was a Sikh who immigrated to North America during the first decade of the twentieth



**Grant McKenzie: 5 book deal**

century. She credits **Toni Morrison**’s *Jazz* and **Michael Ondaatje**’s *Running In The Family* as strong literary influences. Johel studied painting and fine arts at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver.

Bollywood Storm, Book I: New York 978-0991797738;  
Book II: Mumbai 978-0991797738

### And in the end...

AS A METIS/ICELANDIC WRITER IN VANCOUVER, **CARLEIGH BAKER** HAS PRODUCED stories with unexpected and strange endings for **Bad Endings** (Anvil \$18), a collection rife with bad decisions and misconceptions. Salmon, bees and rivers play reoccurring roles. Animals and humans can merge, adding a touch of magic realism. Baker won the Lush Triumphant award for short fiction in 2012 and her short story “Chins and Elbows” was published in the *Journey Prize Anthology* in 2015.

978-1-77214-076-7

### Dark secrets

Former Monday magazine editor **Grant McKenzie** now works as the communications director for a street community centre in Victoria on Pandora Avenue that provides 1,500 meals per day as well as transitional housing for the homeless. On the weekends he writes like a demon.

McKenzie’s novel, *The Fear In Her Eyes*, introduced a new protagonist, Ian Quinn, a child protection officer with Children First in Portland, Oregon. Ian Quinn returns in a stand-alone sequel and McKenzie’s tenth thriller, **The Butcher’s Son** (Polis \$37.50), in which Quinn discovers a dark secret about his family’s past concerning the disappearances of both his sister and his father. Quinn has a tough exterior but he’s something of a broken man within.

McKenzie signed a five-book deal with Polis Books of New York last year that brought three of his previously published novels to the U.S. for the first time, plus two new ones.

978-1943818020

### Mexican noir

**Chelsea Bolan**’s debut novel, **The Good Sister** (HarperAvenue \$22.99) was the second winner of the HarperCollins/UBC Prize for Best New Fiction. It focuses on contemporary Mexican culture in a tourist town in the Baja, particularly a family whose daughter Gabriela Amador Prieto has been banished after a sexual assault, just prior to her fifteenth birthday.

Bolan was born in Spokane, WA and received her MFA from UBC.

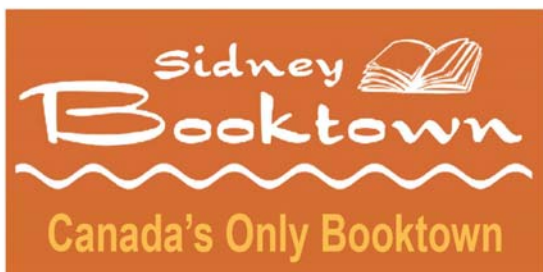
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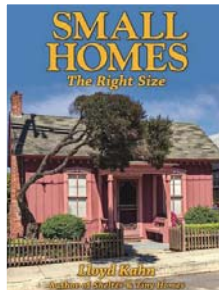
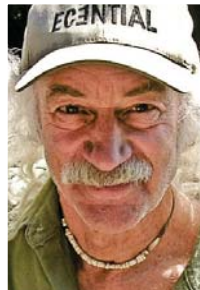
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By Trevor Marc Hughes  
THE ORMSBY REVIEW

ANTHROPOLOGIST WADE Davis calls Chris Harris “one of Canada’s finest nature photographers.” A quick glance through Harris’ stunning **British Columbia’s Cariboo Chilcotin Coast: A Photographer’s Journey** (Country Light Publishing \$39.95) reveals that this stunning coffee table book resembles Davis’ opus, *Stikine River Valley, The Sacred Headwaters* (Greystone, 2011), in that it calls attention to a certain part of the province with the intent to welcome adventurous and respectful visitors and discourage industry.

Harris’ book is also reminiscent of *Stein: The Way of the River* (Talonbooks, 1989), seeking to protect wilderness, and *Carmanah: Artistic Visions of an Ancient Rainforest* (Raincoast Books, 1989) by the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, published in response to the possibility that the ancient hemlock and Sitka spruce of southwestern Vancouver Island’s Carmanah Valley would be logged.

Throughout *A Photographer’s Journey* there is mention of the Chilcotin Ark, a unique ecosystem extending from the province’s tallest mountains to dormant volcanoes, ancient rainforests, and retreating glaciers. Harris has been a guide in this area for many years. The region has deepened his sense of place.

We travel with Harris on various journeys through the different environments the Ark has to offer in the Cariboo and Chilcotin plateaus and their incomparable mountains. Along the way he chronicles the history of the land and provides descriptions of natural solitude, ranging from the dip of a canoe’s paddle in the Bowron Lakes and the call of a kingfisher to the jaw-dropping sight of an immense ancient Western red cedar.

In the “Halls of Wood,” an ancient

# THE CHILCOTIN ARK

Photographer **Ian McAllister** identified, named and then successfully lobbied to preserve The Great Bear Rainforest. Now photographer **Chris Harris** seeks to preserve the Chilcotin Ark, a 2.5 million hectare tract of B.C. wilderness that he has explored and named—from Tweedsmuir Park to the Fraser River.

forest east of Isaac Lake, Harris enjoys his photographer’s perspective within these massive trees with diameters of five metres, some possibly as old as 1,500 years.

For Harris, the perceived threat to this region comes from global warming, mining, and development. Harris argues that the Chilcotin Ark is inseparably and intimately connected to the rest of British Columbia. It drains important rivers. It contains “the greatest water tower in the temperate zone of the earth: the Waddington Massif.”

Part guidebook, part travelogue, part visual smorgasbord, this book is ambitious in scope. With detailed maps to guide readers, we know where Harris and his travel companions are at all times.

Sometimes Harris considers it desecration to photograph certain aspects of the landscape, the grandeur of which makes him feel insignificant. It is as though the deep natural and human history needs to be acknowledged before an image can be captured.

One such time is when he came face-to-face with a massive glacier that



Chris Harris

provoked a reverential state in Harris, who decided that taking photos would be sacrilege. The glacier’s awesome presence and antiquity reminded him that he was following in the footsteps of the First Peoples, who since time immemorial have made such pilgrimages without the need to capture images along the way.

The section of the book that describes a journey through the Anahim Volcano Belt is notable for its close dedication to natural history, making *British Columbia’s Cariboo Chilcotin Coast* more than just a photographic reconnaissance.

The shield volcanoes northwest of Anahim Lake defy age. Millions of years old, the Rainbow Volcano has withstood two ice ages. Here Harris points out the innate wisdom of these aspects of the natural world. For him, even jagged, eroding lava remnants have their own story, their own personalities.

On a canoe expedition across iceberg-laden Jacobsen Lake, Harris describes the parental glacier as “a moving, breathing entity.” Capturing these environments is an exercise in

finding light. The challenge to an author is describing that light.

When a shaft of light hits the basalt of Pipe Organ Mountain it’s hard not to cheer Harris for this ideal opportunity to capture the image through his viewfinder. This is nature photography at its superlative best.

In The Fjordlands and the Coastal Rainforest section, the tone changes. Here Harris looks more on the human history of the area approaching the Bella Coola Valley. He investigates the ways of the Nuxalkmc (Nuxalk, previously Bella Coola) people, and learns the cultural uses of cedar trees for bark and planks.

He also travels The Precipice, a ten-thousand-year-old trail used by nomadic hunters in an ages-old valley of eroded basalt. Harris tells of a depository of obsidian, a volcanic glass traded extensively within Indigenous B.C.

What’s clear in Harris’s tale is that modern industry has been short-lived and fleeting in the Chilcotin Ark. He compares the ancient obsidian trade route with the short-lived pulp and paper mill of Ocean Falls and a derelict logging wharf in Kwatna Bay. It’s a germane and fitting comparison.

At times bordering on the poetic, this is not an ordinary collection of photographs from the natural world. It’s a love letter to a region the author admires and respects—and a letter that invites his readers to appreciate it as deeply as he has.

It’s often posited that mountains, glaciers, flora, and fauna make an overall map of the Earth’s history. This hits home when Harris tells of the Cariboo-Chilcotin Grassland and its endangered ecosystem, which he describes as “one of the ecological wonders of the world.” 978-0-9865818-4-7

*Trevor Marc Hughes is the author of two books, **Zero Avenue to Peace Park: Confidence and Collapse on the 49th Parallel** (2016), and **Nearly 40 on the 37: Triumph and Trepidation on the Stewart-Cassiar Highway** (2013).*



No, it’s not a painting. It’s one of Chris Harris’ photos of the Chilcotin.



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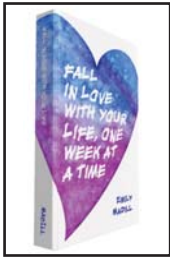
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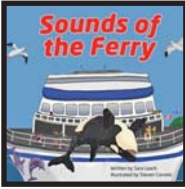
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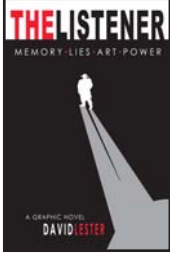
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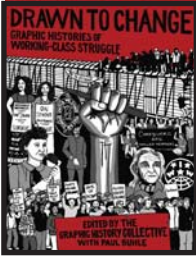
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Smithers treat

THANK YOU FOR FEATURING ME ON THE COVER of the thirtieth anniversary edition of *BC BookWorld*. That photo was taken in late spring in our Tyhee Lake Road field; the melt water drew me into a reflection that could be wings rather than a scarf. These images connect me to memories of the mountain that inspired the end of my novel, *The Dancehall Years*.

Thanks also for doing a great job of connecting our reading communities. We receive your publication at the Smithers library and also at Speedee Interior Stationery and Books. It's a treat when it arrives.



Hopping on a Chuck wagon

I CAN'T THINK OF A MORE APPROPRIATE BRONZE statue for the city of Vancouver to erect than one of Chuck Davis. What a terrific idea. Being the unparalleled curator of B.C. literary history for over 30 years, the *BC BookWorld* newspaper is surely the best agent provocateur for such a project. Surely there must be many others who feel the same way about Chuck Davis. I grew up in Vancouver and so Chuck's dedicated, tireless and loving recounting of the city's history is precious to me. We are supposed to learn from history, right? You'd think a statue dedicated to the city's greatest historian should be a slam dunk.

Susan Yates  
Gabriola Island

Ormsby Review namesake recalled

NOW THAT BC BOOKWORLD HAS ALSO STARTED up *The Ormsby Review*, named after historian Margaret Ormsby, I remember meeting the Ormsbys in the early 1990s, when I was working at Historic Hat Creek Ranch. I knew the name immediately, having attempted to read Margaret Ormsby's devastatingly comprehensive *History of B.C.* I thought it pretty dry stuff. Frankly, I think journalists make the best writers of history. Harry Gregson's *History of Victoria*, for example, I've read at least twice. Full of information I could use in my articles one way or the other. But back to the distinguished Ormsbys. They listened to my spiel about the early history of the House and the Ranch. Didn't question anything. They were very polite, and obviously, good listeners.

Esther Darlington  
Ashcroft

Prurient Aloha fan

BY THE WAY, AFTER SEEING THE BLURB IN *BC BookWorld*, I obtained a copy of the Aloha Wanderwell book (the last one of present stock left unsold at Volume One Books in Duncan as there was so much interest in it locally!) I have devoured it over Xmas—what a dynamic read! Been a while since I enjoyed a non-fiction read so much! I noticed the *BC BookWorld* article says she was bi-sexual but there wasn't any indication of that in the book that I could see (prurient legal mind at work)! All in all, a terrific read, I regretted finishing it.

Joe Simpson  
Duncan

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Letters may be edited for clarity & length.

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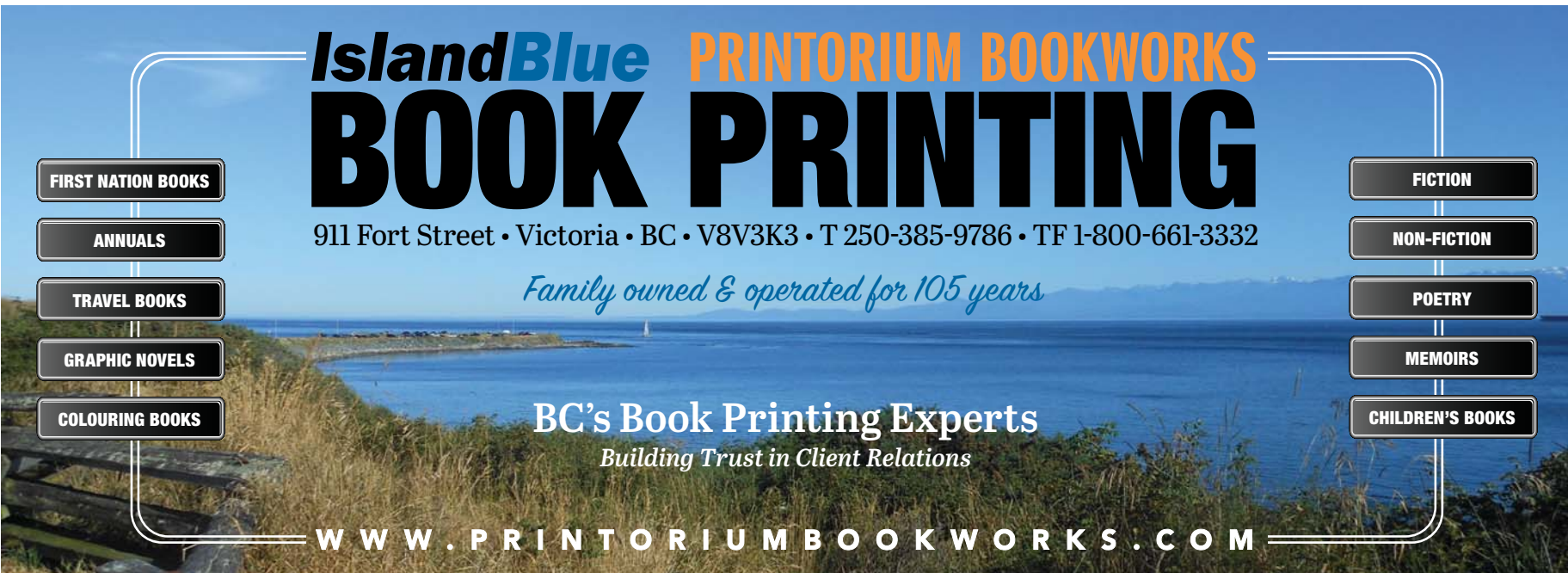
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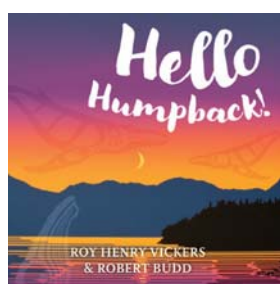




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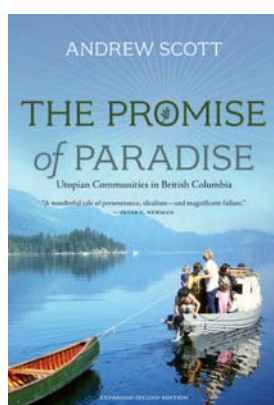


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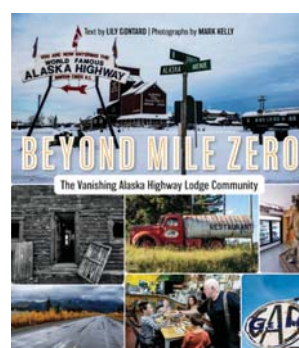
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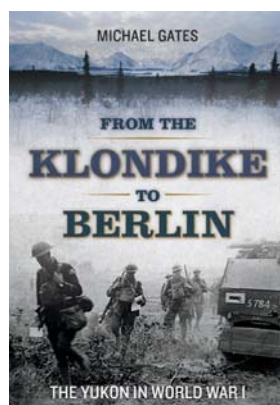
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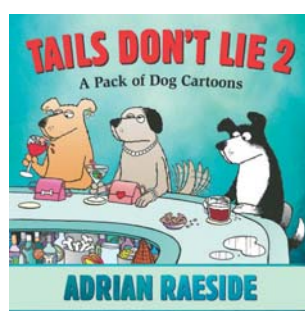
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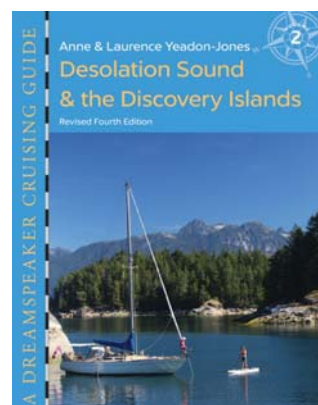
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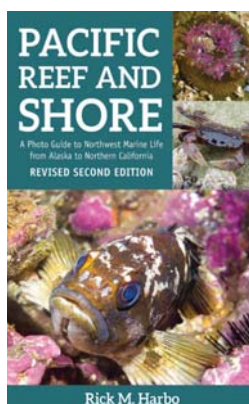
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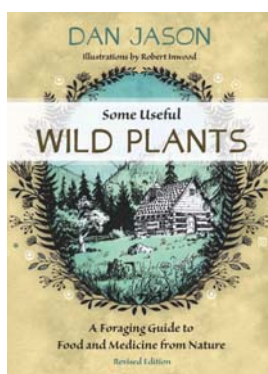
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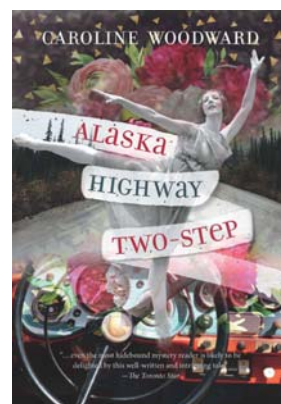
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