A darkly comedic memoir by Lindsay Wong

NOT CRAZY RICH ASIANS

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POLITICS: Christy Clark's downfall is a political thriller. PAGE 10

IMPROVING YOUR SEX LIFE WITH MINDFULNESS 15
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“I come, after all, from a family of very ordinary, hard-working Saskatchewan people.”

One of the first public events for Christina de Castell (above left), new chief librarian of the Vancouver Public Library, was to unveil a plaque of B.C. marble to be added to the VPL’s Woodcock Walk of Fame for Lorna Crozier (right), a beloved poet and writing instructor who is this year’s recipient of the 25th George Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award.

For more than four decades Crozier has made herself widely known across the country as a poet and played a significant role in the mentoring of younger writers. In 1991, she and her life partner, Patrick Lane, moved to Victoria so she could teach at the University of Victoria’s Department of Writing. In her Woodcock acceptance speech, Crozier said:

“It doesn’t seem that many years ago that I was the youngest poet on the stage at literary festivals, now I am the oldest. Seventy seems a good time to look back and evaluate how I’ve spent, some might say how I’ve wasted, my life. I can honestly claim that since my mid-twenties, a day hasn’t gone by when I haven’t been in the company of poetry. It helps that my husband of 40 years is also a poet, many say Canada’s finest, but I can’t blame him for my obsession. I was on this esoteric path before we met, and in fact, it was poetry that introduced us. But I have to wonder, with some amusement, why I chose an art form that most people find more daring, wittier, less needy. Not many poets can live up to the integrity you find in their work.”

“I come, after all, from a family of very ordinary, hard-working Saskatchewan people. My parents were working Saskatchewan people. My mother cleaned houses and sold tickets at the swimming pool. My father drove a truck for Maritimers, including his son and grandkids, devoured them. Neither of my parents would eat the crustaceans when they were on the island, but my father couldn’t get over the fact that Maritimers, including his son and grandkids, devoured them with gusto. The lobster stretched out in its place of honour above our books until my father died and my mom got rid of it. Our books stayed…”

Why have I spent five decades wrestling with this demanding, dangerous angel? At seventy, still smitten, I have to say that it’s also poetry’s uncanniness that attracts me. It knows things before I do—the breakdown of my first marriage to say that it’s also poetry’s uncanniness that attracts me. It knows things before I do—the breakdown of my first marriage to the integrity you find in their work.”

Lorna Crozier will be appearing at the Whistler Writers Festival in October. Crozier has written and edited twenty-five books while receiving a Lieutenant Governor’s Award for Literary Excellence; a Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize for Small Beneath the Sky: A Prairie Memoir (2010) and the Dorothy Liebesky Poetry Prize for What the Living Won’t Let Go (2006); plus two Pat Lowther Awards for best collection of poetry by a Canadian woman; a Governor General’s Award for Inventing the Hawk (1992) and a Canadian Authors Association Award. Administered by Pacific Book-World News Society, the $5,000 Woodcock Award is co-sponsored by Yossi Wosk, The Writers Trust of Canada, The City of Vancouver and VPL. For more info: abcbookworld.com
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Going the Distance: The Life and Works of W.P. Kinsella
by William Steele (D&M $34.95)
This biography explores the life and often controversial work of W.P. Kinsella, the author who wrote “If you build it, he will come.” Kinsella hit the big time in 1989, when his novel Shoeless Joe was turned into the international blockbuster film Field of Dreams. Kinsella’s personal diaries are used to document his health problems, accusations of appropriation, failed marriages and a tumultuous romantic relationship with writer Evelyn Lau.

Culture Gap: Towards a New World in the Yalakom Valley
by Judith Plant (New Star $19)
Culture Gap is Judith Plant’s memoir of life on a commune in a remote valley deep in B.C.’s Coast Mountains. Set in the early 1980s Plant shares her adventure as a young mother struggling to reconcile her social ideals of personal and environmental responsibility, while loving and caring for those closest to her. Rural communal living was a lifestyle emblematic of its time, and Culture Gap heroically lets us enter that world.

The Woo-Woo: How I Survived Ice Hockey, Drug Raids, Demons and My Crazy Chinese Family
by Lindsay Wong (Arsenal $19.95)
In contrast to the movie Crazy Rich Asians, Lindsay Wong’s darkly comedic memoir of a young woman coming of age in a dysfunctional Asian family could have just been called Crazy Asians. It is being heralded as a powerful tour de force on mental illness in the family and refrigerators that are out to assassinate you. Novelist Kevin Chong has predicted Wong is “the future of Asian Canadian writing.”

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Selected by Alan Twigg
THE SIXTH ANNUAL BASIL STUART-STUBBS PRIZE FOR OUTSTANDING SCHOLARLY BOOK ON BRITISH COLUMBIA was presented at the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre to Dr. Marianne Ignace and Chief Ronald E. Ignace, authors of Secwepemc People, Land and Laws—an exploration of Secwepemc history told through Indigenous knowledge and oral traditions.

Their book has been described as a model for collaborative approaches to Indigenous history that draws on Aboriginal sources and the work of outside experts to masterfully integrate oral histories and “western” scholarship.

The event at UBC began with an official welcome from Morgan Guerin, councillor of the Musqueam Nation, followed by opening remarks from University Librarian Susan E. Parker, speeches from the winning authors and a lively Q&A session.

In a surprise announcement, the prize amount of $1,000 was doubled this year to $2,000, thanks to the generous support of Yosef Wosk.
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“In affection and anguish and deft comedy Undiscovered Country celebrates extraordinary moments in our ordinary and temporary lives. An absolute joy to read.” – DENNIS COOLEY.

Al Rempel has published two previous books of poetry and two chapbooks and is included in several anthologies, including Rocksalt and 4Poets +.

Ordinary Strangers, a novel
Bill Stenson
WINNER of the 4th Great BC Novel Contest.
978-1-896949-70-3 | 282 pages | $23.95

“Never, since Jack Hodgins made mirth and myth out of lumberjacks, has Settler Coast culture been so accurately rendered. Humour and wisdom flesh out their liturgy of lies, a web these Ordinary Strangers spin around a stolen child in this tragic-comic thriller.” – LINDA ROGERS.

Bill Stenson’s previous fiction includes: Translating Women, Svoboda and Hanne and Her Brother. A former English and Creative Writing teacher, and co-founder of The Classroom Review, he lives in the Cowichan Valley and wins every day.

Deep in their roots, all flowers keep the light. 
— Theodore Roethke

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MOTHER TONGUE
PUBLISHING LIMITED
The Woo-Woo: How I Survived Ice Hockey, Drug Raids, Demons and My Crazy Chinese Family by Lindsay Wong (Arsenal Pulp Press $19.95)

By Joan Givner

On Canada Day 2008 the Second Narrows Bridge spanning the Burrard Inlet was shut down for several hours as a distraught elderly woman was seen hanging from a cable. Holiday traffic was thrown into chaos during the rescue episode, causing subsequent recriminations between various municipal jurisdictions. Mental health workers were outraged by Transport Minister Kevin Martin’s comments: “How can it take six hours to deal with an elderly female?”

She was not elderly at that time. She was the 42-year-old favourite aunt of Lindsay Wong, and like other women in the family was plagued by mental illness. Grandmother Poh-Poh suffers from paranoid schizophrenia and fears the refrigerator is out to assassinate her. Wong’s mother, Quiet Snow, suffers from depression and severe anxiety. Both are in the bridge jumper, who planned suicide attempts on every national holiday for two years after the bridge episode, has periodic psychotic breakdowns.

Lindsay Wong has ample material here for the kind of human misery memoir that has been a dominant literary genre since around 2005. Her accomplishment, however, is not restrained by her accomplish- ments or her courage. Her academic success began at UBC (“The University of the ‘Asian tsunami.’”) and like other women in the family was plagued by mental illness. Grandmother Poh-Poh suffers from paranoid schizophrenia and fears the refrigerator is out to assassinate her. Wong’s mother, Quiet Snow, suffers from depression and severe anxiety. Both are in the bridge jumper, who planned suicide attempts on every national holiday for two years after the bridge episode, has periodic psychotic breakdowns.

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Worry Stones
Joanna Lilley

Set in the Canadian Arctic and Scottish Highlands, Lilley’s captivating debut novel portrays art historian Jenny in her struggle to rescue her mother from a religious cult and keep her fanatical father at bay. All the while, Jenny tries to move beyond her need for the comfort of “worry stones” and to foster her own talents as a sculptor, working alongside Inuit artists.

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Surveying the Great Divide: The Alberta/BC Boundary Survey, 1913-1917 by Jay Sherwood (Caitlin Press $29.95)

*BY ROBERT ALLEN*

**The provincial boundary between B.C. and Alberta is the longest in Canada. Surveying the Great Divide by Jay Sherwood recalls how surveying that line between the two most-western provinces was a remarkable feat.** The “man-defined” northern section follows along the 120th meridian of longitude whereas the southern part—follows a natural feature, the Continental Divide.

Sherwood’s focus is the latter—the spine of the Rocky Mountains commonly referred to as the Great Divide.

**From the time that British Columbia became a province in 1871 until almost the end of the nineteenth century, the province was continually in debt. Very little money was allocated to surveying any boundaries, let alone the main eastern one.** Sensitivity to the province’s extensive borders started to change with the Klondike gold rush of 1896-99, when the province’s northern and northwestern boundaries came into focus. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the B.C. government also required more precise knowledge of its boundaries to regulate mining and timber interests and to encourage railway and mountain tourism in the Rockies. Particularly, in April 1912, Richard McBride’s government committed to surveying B.C.’s eastern boundary. George Herbert Dawson, B.C.’s Surveyor General, contacted Edouard Deville, the Dominion of Canada’s Survey General, to discuss timing, methods of surveying, and cost sharing.

In 1913, the Dominion, B.C., and Alberta governments agreed to a tripartite agreement to jointly fund the boundary survey. Of the mountain passes to be surveyed, Kicking Horse Pass was chosen first, even though the Crownest Pass had the most economic importance. Kicking Horse, on the CPR mainline and accessible to Banff and Calgary, offered the commissioners easy access by rail. Men and supplies were moved to the site easily. Each pass was designated a letter as it was surveyed. Pass A was Kicking Horse, Pass B was Vermillion, C was Simpson, and the list continued on to Pas S, the Yellowhead Pass. The monument (or survey marker) set at the lowest point of Kicking Horse Pass was numbered XA. All other monuments set going northerly were given even numbers such as 2A, 4A, 6A, etc.

As the remaining passes were surveyed, the same numbering system was retained, but the letter designated for the pass was changed to B, C, D, etc. Fortunately, a number of field party members kept diaries and careful field notes or described their progress in letters to family and friends. Required to take a “round” of photographs at each of his survey stations, B.C. commissioner A.O. Wheeler took nearly 2,000 of them, an astonishing record of mountain photography. Sherwood has incorporated a number of these in each chapter.

During this past decade, members of the Mountain Legacy Project at the University of Victoria have returned to some of Wheeler’s survey stations to compile a “before and after” photographic record in a technique known as “repeat photography.” “The repeat photographs that they have taken,” notes Sherwood, “are being used by scientists to document a variety of changes that have occurred in the landscape during the past century.”

Sherwood has gone through the documentary and photographic records meticulously to provide a detailed chapter for each year’s fieldwork from 1913 to 1917. Besides these five yearly chapters, he provides chapters entitled Background, Cast of Characters, Surveying Methods, Geographical Names, Afterword, and Survey Crews. Rounding out the book are acknowledgments, a lengthy list of sources, and a useful index.

Later, from 1918 to 1924, the impressive and resolute A.O. Wheeler—whose son Edward Oliver Wheeler took part in the Dominion of Canada’s survey of Mount Everest in 1921—added to the survey of the Great Divide, while Alberta commissioner Bill Cautley moved further north to survey the 120th meridian from the Great Divide through the Peace River area. Cautley’s later work could probably fill a book of its own.

Surveying the Great Divide leaves me awestruck by the hardships involved in surveying that border and full of admiration for the detailed fieldwork of a century ago.

We have all driven by signs saying, “Welcome to Alberta” and “Welcome to British Columbia”), and so now I will have a new and better appreciation of what was involved in determining our intricate eastern boundary from high elevation survey stations in mountains that had never or only very recently been climbed. Indeed, on my next journey through one of those passes, I will stop and tip my hat to Wheeler, Cautley, and their crews.

I am still spellbound every time I drive through the Yellowshead, Kicking Horse, Vermillion, or Crownest passes.

Robert Allen is a life member of the Association of British Columbia Land Surveyors (ABCCLS), a life member of the Canadian Institute of Geomatics, and a Canada Lands Surveyor.
A Matter of Confidence is a fast-paced political thriller.

The British Columbia provincial election on May 9, 2017 was one for the history books. After a long night of ballot counting the Liberal and New Democratic parties were locked in a virtual tie, with the upstart Green Party holding the balance of power in the legislature with three seats, but the final seat count was not known until two weeks later after a painstaking recount and count of absentee ballots in the riding of Courtenay-Comox.

When these ballots were finally tallied, Christy Clark and the Liberals had come up one seat short of a bare majority. The stage was set for the NDP to assume power with the support of the Green Party.

But Christy Clark was determined to exercise her right to test the confidence of the legislature some six weeks after the election, only to be handed an inevitable defeat. As per convention, she visited the lieutenant-governor to inform her that she was not in a position to govern, but we now know—in violation of the convention that the narrative is accurate, but it would have been helpful to have some opinion poll data to support the additional information included in the story. Two stand out in particular.

A Matter of Confidence: The Inside Story of the Political Battle for BC by Rob Shaw and Richard Zussman is a gripping account of B.C.’s most dramatic election. The 336-page book is a first-hand account of the election based on more than seventy interviews with political operatives, including all of the principal players (save the lieutenant-governor). This primary research has been supplemented by a few newspaper reports; there are no other sources. While extensive reference to secondary sources is always a much fuller account of these tense negotiations. I certainly expect my students to work more than five hours on their essays.

The book’s account of the political negotiations that led to the formation of the new government is especially compelling. As kingmaker, the Greens entered into negotiations with both the Liberal and New Democratic parties. While there was always a better policy fit between the Greens and the NDP, Andrew Weaver had a better working relationship with Christy Clark and previously Gordon Campbell than with John Horgan. Indeed, the relationship between Weaver and Horgan was apparently frosty, at least initially. However, the Liberals reportedly did not offer the Greens much in their meetings, whereas the NDP was very keen to work with the Green Party to form a government.

But Shaw and Zussman report that the outcome of the negotiations was essentially pre-determined by the visceral dislike of the Liberals by Green MLA Sonia Furstenau, who had battled the Liberal government for years over the dumping of toxic waste in a quarry near her community of Shawnigan Lake on Vancouver Island.

Furstenau was the deal breaker. She “simply could not be brought onside to consider any type of deal that would allow the Liberal government to spend one more day in office.” There were hints of this enmity in the media at the time, but Shaw and Zussman offer a much fuller account of these tense negotiations.

In sum, Shaw and Zussman have provided a comprehensive and highly readable account not just of the B.C. election of 2017 and the first minority government in the province in sixty-five years, but the entire decade of politics in the province that preceded these historic events. A Matter of Confidence is a great summer read for any political junkie.

Hamish Telford is an associate professor of political science at the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford. His latest book is Talking Past Each Other: Quebec and the Federal Dialogue in Canada, 1867-2017 (Peter Lang Pub. Group).
Kuei, My Friend
A Conversation on Race and Reconciliation
DENI ELLIS BÉCHARD & NATASHA KANAPÉ FONTAINE
translated by Deni Ellis Béchard & Howard Scott

Kuei, My Friend is an engaging book of letters: a literary and political encounter between Innu poet Natasha Kanapé Fontaine and Québécois-American novelist Deni Ellis Béchard. They engage in a frank conversation about racism and reconciliation, posing questions we should all be discussing.

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A Conversation on Race and Reconciliation
DENI ELLIS BÉCHARD & NATASHA KANAPÉ FONTAINE
translated by Deni Ellis Béchard & Howard Scott

Kuei, My Friend is an engaging book of letters: a literary and political encounter between Innu poet Natasha Kanapé Fontaine and Québécois-American novelist Deni Ellis Béchard. They engage in a frank conversation about racism and reconciliation, posing questions we should all be discussing.

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Emily Lansopalia, Photos by SC Aiken
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Total Transition
The Human Side of the Renewable Energy Revolution
by Sandeep Pai, Savannah Corn-Wilson
Follow the journey of a Canadian and Indian couple, Savannah and Sandeep, as they travel the world to capture the human side of one of the biggest energy transitions of our times—the global shift from fossil fuels to renewables.
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The Codfish Dream
Chronicles of a West Coast Fishing Guide
David Giblin
West Coastiers will delight in this amusing and slightly surreal account of life as a fishing guide for the well-to-do on a remote BC island in the summer of 1983.
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Lina Jean Ross
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Alan Livingstone MacLeod
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Linda DeMeulemeester
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in 1958 and 1968, the federal Liberal Party bounced back, never remaining in opposition for longer than nine years. While standard political science theories of party systems suggest that the Westminster model will tend towards two dominant parties, what is remarkable about the Liberals is that rather than being a party of the right or the left, they were—and remain—a party of the ideological centre, consistently fighting off attacks on both their left and right flanks. Furthermore, the Liberals have faced not one consistent opposition but an array of insurgent parties that rapidly attracted substantial support in certain regions of the country, and in most instances just as rapidly lost it.

This fractionalized and unstable nature of the Canadian party system also seems to defy standard interpretive theories. But how much does Canada actually depart from the political norm? And if indeed it does depart from the norm, as the examples above suggest, why?

It is these questions that University of British Columbia political scientist Richard Johnston addresses in his book The Canadian Party System: An Analytical History.

For Johnston, the nature of the Canadian party system is fundamentally shaped by three main forces. The first is the electoral logic within the Westminster system which rewards parties with broad national support but not an overwhelming voting base in any region. Alternatively, however, the parliamentary logic of the system pushes parties in the other direction, encouraging one-party governments with a tremendous amount of power, thus encouraging all parties to focus on the country rather than competing nationally.

The second force is that, despite creating a system that cording to Johnston, it is this cycle of Conservative Party victory and defeat that gives the Canadian party system its extreme volatility.

The third force is that, as Johnston explains as a result of the system’s volatility. One insurgent party stands apart from all the others: the New Democratic Party (NDP) in 1961. This group of arguments in his conclusion, these can be summarized in four broad themes. The first group of arguments addresses the Liberal Party’s electoral dominance, which Johnston explains as a result of the party’s consistent ability to win the majority of seats in Quebec combined with extensive support from non-francophone Catholic voters.

But as Johnston details in his second group of arguments, Quebec also plays an important role in shaping the Conservative Party’s electoral fortunes, which are determined by whether Quebec swings for the party or not. If it does swing for the Tories, as Quebec did in 1930, 1958, and 1984, then the Conservatives win a majority government. However, when Quebec inevitably swings back to the Liberals, the Conservatives’ seat totals collapse, as they did in 1935, 1962, and 1993. As a historian of Canadian political parties, I find Johnston’s prose clear and straightforward.

Ultimately, Johnston has written a book that will be required reading for students of Canadian politics for decades to come. In identifying and explaining the role of the Liberal and Conservative parties and their relationship to Quebec, while also highlighting the importance of what he calls “insurgent” third parties, Johnston provides a valuable explanatory framework for the unique nature of Canada’s party systems.
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Lori Brotto has enhanced the ethnically minded campaign to boost women’s sexual self-esteem worldwide.

BY BECKI L. ROSS

LORI A. BROTT0 IS A feminist sex scientist at UBC whose goal is to translate sexuallogographical findings into digestible and meaningful knowledge for women in search of fulfilling sexual activity. At 260 pages, her Better Sex Through Mindfulness: How Women Can Cultivate Desire marks a spiffily addition to the raft of sex advice books marketed to women over the past thirty years such as Becoming Orgasmic (1987), For Yourself (2000), The Elysium Obsessive (2007) and Come as You Are (2000), as well as the sexual literacy movement’s legions of #MeToo and #TimesUp. Lori Brotto’s hope-filled book arrives at an auspicious moment.

Brotto points to stress arising from work, family, and money, the ‘tyranny of informa- ncia,’ as well as the pressures of navigating contradictory cultural messages. Such messages can pum- mel women into normative ways of looking, acting, and thinking.

The well-documented ‘orgasm gap’ among straight women suggests that women have been paying attention to men’s sexual satisfaction much more than their own for far too long. Brotto explicitly critiques the alleged benefits of ceaseless multi-tasking. Cognitive overload often leads to less ef- ficiency, more mistakes and unwanted distractions in the bedroom.

Rather than endorse the promise of a pharmaceutical ‘pink pill’ equivalent to Viagra — Brotto makes a persuasive case for applying the 4000-year-old Buddhist practice of the mindfulness to matters of women’s sexual dysfunction.

Mindfulness is a thera- peutic approach that can help women with very brief gestures to enlightenment. For example, she relies heavily on stories from white, heterosexual women, with very brief gestures to lesbians, bisexuals, and same- sex couples. Moreover, how do Indig- nogy’s legacy of pathologizing non-normative sexuality, I found Better Sex to be both surprisingly radical and im- mensely stimulating.

EXHAUSTING PROMISE RESIDES in Brotto’s thesis that mindfulness practice can change the brain’s structure and function to enable cultivation of more nourishing human sexual exchange. At the same time, Brotto’s research would benefit from a more rigorous adoration of an intersectional analytical framework. For example, she relies heavily on stories from white, heterosexual women, with very brief gestures to lesbians, bisexuals, and same- sex couples.

We could have learned more about the sexual desires and frustrations of LGBTQ women, folk and two-spirits, including those who identify as trans or non-binary. Moreover, how do Indig- enous women and women of colour navigate the added minefield of racialized mi- sogyny en route to expressions of healthy sexual subjectivity?

For asexuals who narrate their contestment in life with- out sex, what might be the un- intended consequences of the reductive claim that all areas of life suffer when sex suffers? And might sex-based mind- fulness yield dividends for the polyamorous and kinky as much as for those conventionally coupled?

I also wonder about the specific sex-related concerns of sex workers—escorts, cam girls, sugar babies, porn ac- tors, and erotic dancers—who have rarely received non- judgmental treatment for sex complaints from health care providers?

Nevertheless, as a queer sociologist disturbed by sexual and even imprisonment. It is no wonder that so many women in Brotto’s re- search expressed self-criticism and self-doubt about their sexual selves, as well as un- happiness with obligatory and unrequited sex.

Brotto also exposes the lack of evidence-based education in schools dedicated to the theme of sexual pleasure.

On the campaign trail, the new premier of Ontario, Doug Ford, catered to his funda- mentally sex-negative and fearful base by promising to roll back the previous government’s revised sex education curriculum. Months later, as Ford and his conservatives dither, let’s consider the value of re-imagining pedagogy in high school classrooms that a) introduces sex toys as valued stimuli for sexual arousal, b) explores the meaning and practice of enthusiastic consent, c) foregrounds knowledge of sexual and gender minorities, and d) integrates sex-based mindfulness as a strategy for sexual enlightenment, joy, and healing.

Lori Brotto’s Better Sex not only inoculates the reader against the scourge of sexual ignorance, guilt, and dread, her book bravely enlarges our grasp of what might be possible on a new or even revolution- ary sexual horizon.

978-1771642354

Becki Ross teaches at the Institute for Gender, Race, Sexual- ity and Social Justice at UBC. She is co-founder of the West End Sex Workers Collective and author of Burlesque West: Showgirls, Sex, & Sin in Post- war Vancouver (UTP, 2009).

For the unabridged version of this commentary, visit The Ormsby Review.

Alert to the path- clearing work of oth- ers, Brotto carefully cites William Mas- ters and Virginia Johnson who devel- oped ‘sensate focus’ sex therapy with couples in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as molecular biologist Jon Kabat-Zinn, who began introducing mindfulness to patients suffering from chronic pain in the 1970s and 1980s. We learn that Brotto, in collaboration with the B.C. Centre for Sexual Medicine in Vancouver, has co-led a mind- fulness-based sex therapy pro- gram for hundreds of women over the past fifteen years.

During an eight-week pe- riod, Brotto and her inter- disciplinary team at UBC lead small groups of women through awareness exercises such as the Body Scan (taking note of sensations in each part of the body, including genitals), guided meditation, and discussion about what participants are discovering, including the vulva-like proper- ties of a raisin.

At week 5, women are en- couraged to use sexual AIDS such as erotica (made by and for women) and/or vibrators to elicit sexual arousal. Post- session facilitation, or coach- ing, is made available online and through audio-recordings, and women are encouraged to complete up to 40 minutes of daily meditation between sessions.

Evidence-based results, including questionnaires and self-reports by session particip- ants, reveal increased sexual satisfaction by 66%, as well as improvements in desire, orgasms, mood, and overall well-being.

To me, it was refreshing to encounter instruc- tions for awakening the vagina, vulva, and clitoris through solely paying atten- tion to genitals while lying on a bed. In a later chapter, readers are invited to try hands-on ‘plea- surable touch’ exer- cises designed to enhance sex- ual response in both singles and couples, emphasizing the benefits of employing all five senses during sexual activity.

In her final substantive chapter, ‘Tuning In To Pain,’ Brotto addresses the 15% of women in North America for whom acutely painful sex is a regular occurrence. While noting that research findings are still scant, Brotto draws on several studies to show that group mindfulness-based therapy—with its emphasis on acceptance and compassion—helps women reduce genital pain, sex-relat- ed distress, and depression.

Brotto defines mindfulness as a strategy for en- gaging the brain’s structure and function to enable cultivation of more nourishing human sexual exchange. At the same time, Brotto’s research would benefit from a more rigorous adoration of an intersectional analytical framework. For example, she relies heavily on stories from white, heterosexual women, with very brief gestures to lesbians, bisexuals, and same- sex couples.

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As early as eight weeks, puppies are tested to determine whether or not they have the personality to do police work.

Rose's research was conducted over a four-year period and takes her to canine units (K9 in police vernacular) in four countries. As she states, "I go wherever the dogs take me," and she gains access to units that few civilians are afforded. Rose "tracks" along with the units during investigations, and volunteers to allow the dogs to "take a bite" of her during their training. She interviews the dog handlers and researches some of the more controversial issues facing police forces today, such as the harassment of female police officers and the use of deadly force, making for an informed narrative.

Anyone who loves dogs will enjoy this book. One of the first things readers learn is that police dogs are highly trained working dogs, not pets. No one should pet or touch these animals except their handlers, who are referred to as members of a canine unit. The dogs are issued with a regimental number and are considered partners with their handlers, an indication of their value in police work.

Once the puppy passes muster, a handler is assigned. Handlers, too, are subject to intense periods of physical training and years of voluntary work with police dogs before being selected as members of a canine unit. The dogs are highly praised by their handlers and allowed time to play. Rose supplements these stories with photographs of many of the dogs she meets along with their police parents. Although the dogs are happy to be working, few of us consider that they are also exposed to danger. For example, they may inhale an illicit drug such as heroin during a search. They can also die in the line of duty, often while defending their handler. This was true of Chip who, along with RCMP officer Doug Lewis, was stabbed multiple times by a violent suspect who refused to chase. Chip did not survive, and Lewis almost lost his life.

We also learn more about how police forces in other countries use canines. In France, for example, the public has a general fear of police dogs. This is often until death. This relationship begins as early as eight weeks, when puppies are tested to determine whether or not they have the personality to do police work, a fascinating process and one of the most interesting chapters of the book.

In THE DOG LOVER UNIT, Rose manages to capture the personality of each dog and describes in detail their ability to do what they are trained to do. The dogs she meets are experts in water recovery, searching for drugs in prisons, locating cadavers, finding missing people, and chasing down suspects, to name a few of their responsibilities. As a reward for their obedience, the dogs are always highly praised by their handlers and allowed time to play.

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We also learn more about how police forces in other countries use canines. In France, for example, the public has a general fear of police dogs. This is
because the Nazis used dogs to control the population during the occupation of France in the Second World War, a factor still ingrained in the minds of many French citizens. To this day, French police officers muzzle their dogs while in public.

In the United Kingdom, most of the dog handlers are men, though Rose just happened to visit a squad with a majority of women. In contrast, few women make it into canine units in Canada. Rose notes that many women canine handlers in the RCMP face “years of discrimination and bullying.” In the RCMP, this gendered viewpoint also extends to female dogs, which are considered a liability because they are thought to lack aggression. The majority of the canines used by the RCMP are male.

These conversations provide insight into the thoughts of the men and women who place their lives on the line for their communities on a daily basis. In the process, Rose distills some of the more recent controversies involving the police over issues such as the appropriate use of force. She compares the public’s perceptions of the police with the “situational awareness” skills that all police officers are trained to use, and she offers alternative ways to look at these issues and the work police officers do.

Rose acknowledges in the epilogue that people will be conflicted over her conclusions. She rubinates that she finds herself caught in between two groups: between her “leftie circle” of friends in the arts community who she anticipates “will not support this work” because of its focus on policing, and those people “on the right politically [who] likely will not support me, either personally or ideologically” because she is from that community.

Politics and ideology aside, Rose insists that we are all part of the conversation, noting that there is “danger” in adopting any one “single story” when it comes to justice. It is a powerful reminder that not only stirs our admiration for Rose’s honesty and courage, but makes for challenging but engaging reading.
BY SANDI RATCH

TEN YEARS AGO, I WAS CARRYING GLASS STRAWS BECAUSE I COULD SEE THE DAMAGE PLASTIC ONES WERE DOING. EVENTUALLY I GAVE UP.

After years of trying to make a difference by helping our environment, I became jaded. I became lazy in my efforts because it felt like so many others were doing nothing.

This book explained to me how iterative learning happens: change is slow and individual changes in lifestyle are necessary even if they feel pointless—they are the starting point.

Millions of other people were still using plastic straws, so what difference would my little action make? Well, we are at a tipping point as enough people now see plastic straws affecting ecology and wildlife that plastic straws are being banned.

It’s a success started by many individuals like myself who acted a decade earlier. Our actions weren’t for naught. Environmental improvement is a process and what we do matters.

“By changing ourselves or changing a relatively small detail of the way we live, we change the world,” write Fay Weller and Mary Wilson in Changemakers: Embracing Hope, Taking Action and Transforming the World.

As they explain the psychology of it all, how social change happens, they provide examples of individual and community efforts in the Gulf Islands, one of Canada’s more environmentally-conscious areas. This is the area that elected the only federal Green Party MP, Elizabeth May.

Many of these island communities changed drastically in the 1960s and ’70s when draft evaders came to Canada from the U.S. The isolated nature of islands like Salt Spring, Pender and Gabriola made them ideal bastions for left-leaning immigrants—places where action could happen under the government’s radar.

In conjunction with B.C.’s losing ground, it is a relief to see people working towards a new world that fits with our core values. Weller and Wilson argue that we need to develop a new societal story that matches the changes we need to make. The authors describe how dissonance often occurs when “the societal story that we have learned about our way of life” does not fit with our reality or experience. ‘When we see that we have to fix the environment’.

Coincidentally, we can feel a positive resonance when we see people working towards a new world that fits our core values. Weller and Wilson argue that we need to develop a new societal story that matches the changes we need to make. The authors describe how dissonance often occurs when “the societal story that we have learned about our way of life” does not fit with our reality or experience. When we see that we have to fix the environment.

Cofounded, the “neighbour effect” whereby a change by one person influences another, who then influences another, who then influences another, and so on. Change can induce distress when it becomes clear that shifts in attitudes and actions need to be made. The authors show how small groups of dedicated individuals have created change for their communities. The topics include food (production and provision), transportation, pluming, clothing, resource re-use, energy options, and challenging the economic system.

The process of expanding similar changes to larger groups might seem arduous and grim but there is something satisfying about reflecting upon the way we exist in this world, and something even more satisfying about living a life aligned with our values. It is one definition of happiness.

The final fourth of the book is a hands-on manual for individuals wanting to build change in their communities. There is room for reflection and mindfulness here, and the examples are useful guidelines for community action. Facilitation techniques are provided.

If you are the kind of person who likes to engage people, do workshops, and wants to make environmental change or other community changes, Changemakers is a vital resource.

In the era of Trump, when environmental protection measures are being cut and environmentalists are losing ground, it is a relief to read about people who are making important changes for our environment. 9780657128753

Historian and blogger Sandi Ratch received her master’s degree in archaeology from Simon Fraser University in 1995.
ABROAD WAY

For a student in 1960, forsaking Vancouver for Italy was one step removed from making a trip to the moon. Now it’s called taking a gap year.

1960: Robert Thomson (holding a book on Italian history) departs from the CNR station in Vancouver en route to Jasper (visiting his fiancée), Quebec and boarding a ship to Europe.

“I’m afraid of men will widen your lens on gender and challenge you to do better.”

RUPI KAUR

“I’m afraid of men will widen your lens on gender and challenge you to do better.”

VIVEK SHRAYA

“Don’t miss Vivek Shraya of Men.”

VIVIEK SHRAYA
CHIEF BEAU DICK (WALAS Gwa’yam) (1955-2017) was a much-honoured artist and activist in the Kwakwaka’wakw community, and the wider Indigenous and non-Indigenous arts community of British Columbia.

Like many Kwakwaka’wakw artists, Beau Dick produced work that was used in the continuing dramatic ceremonial life of his people’s communities. However, Dick then chose to apply his knowledge of Kwakwaka’wakw cultural traditions on to the world of politics and social advocacy.

In 2013, supported by his family, community, and the Idle No More movement, he initiated a trek from Quatsino on northern Vancouver Island to the legislature in Victoria. He and his companions ceremonially broke a copper shield, an act fraught with traditional meaning and an expression of anguish to shame the government of B.C. for its inaction in addressing longstanding Indigenous and non-Indigenous arts community of British Columbia.

This activism is recorded in the 2018 documentary movie Maker of Monsters: The Extraordinary Life of Beau Dick, written and directed by Natalie Boll and LaTiesha Fazakas.

Beau Dick: Revolutionary Spirit by Darren J. Martens, in collaboration with the Audain Art Museum (Figure 1 §40)

BY ALAN L. HOOVER

Copper shields are a measure of wealth and power. The shaming rite, once practised throughout the Pacific Northwest, had all but disappeared until Beau Dick revived it.

In 2014 Haida leader Guujaaw (Gary Edenshaw) and Beau Dick led a group of protesters across Canada to Ottawa, where they broke copper shields to draw attention to the Harper government’s broken relations with Indigenous peoples. “[The] copper that is being provided is brought forth by the Haida Nation who have suffered atrocities over the last 150 years, almost totally alienated through genocide,” said Dick.

This activism is recorded in the 2018 documentary movie Maker of Monsters: The Extraordinary Life of Beau Dick, written and directed by Natalie Boll and LaTiesha Fazakas.

BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED, BEAU DICK: Revolutionary Spirit is a record of a retrospective featuring 89 pieces of Dick’s work exhibited at Whistler’s Audain Art Museum in 2018. This book includes 44 of Dick’s wondy...
A number of pieces illustrating Beau Dick’s mastery of different Northwest Coast art styles appear in the book, including a large model totem pole in the style of Haida artist Charles Edenshaw, a Tsimshian style head-dress frontal, and two Nuxalk-style Thunder masks.

In addition to the colour photographs of objects and stills of the artist, exhibit co-curator and book editor Darren J. Martens discusses Dick’s work and career in a 13-page essay divided into headings “The Man,” “The Mentor,” “The Activist,” “The Artist,” and “The Legacy.”

Martens emphasizes the differences between Dick’s work produced for the art market and for potlatches.

“Each piece is carefully considered,” he writes, “meticulously executed and presented for maximum effect, [which is] a very different approach from that used in his work for potlatch ceremonies.”

And it was here that I wanted a bit more curatorial input. Martens introduces Dick’s appealing phrase “potlatch perfect” to describe his pieces intended for use in the potlatch ceremony.

However, none of the objects illustrated in Beau Dick: Revolutionary Spirit are identified as having been used in a potlatch ceremony.

Nor does Martens discuss the attraction that both museums and collectors have in obtaining pieces that were in fact used in potlatches and thus carry the cachet of “authenticity.”

The book’s other textual piece is a Letter to Beau Dick written by Tahltan Nation writer and academic Peter Morin some time after the artist passed away. Morin then burned the letter, but it is reproduced here in its original seven-page hand-printed form. In it, Morin discusses the role of the Indigenous artist and how Beau Dick was, and remains, so important to the practice of west coast art.

An unusual and poignant touch is the inclusion of a poem about the artist written by his daughter Linnea Dick, who also contributed as co-curatorial of the exhibition that the book memorializes.

If you are unfamiliar with Beau Dick’s work or simply want a record of it, Beau Dick: Revolutionary Spirit will serve you well.

 فالكلمة والفعل في اللسان العربي واللغة العربية، والكلمة والفعل في العرف العربي واللغة العربية.

Born in Alert Bay and Raised in the small community of Kingcome, and then in Vancouver, Beau Dick worked with his father, Ben Dick, and later studied under senior artists Doug Cranmer and Henry Hunt.

His work was first collected by major B.C. museums in the 1970s and 1980s, when he was in his twenties. From the start of his career he was recognized as having a talent to carve in many tribal styles, not just in the style of his own Kwakwaka’wakw tradition.

Beau Dick’s work is in many private and institutional collections including the Canadian Museum of History, the Royal BC Museum, the UBC Museum of Anthropology, the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Heard Museum (Phoenix), and the Burke Museum (Seattle).

If you have a book in you, we can help you get it out — to the entire world! granvilleislandpublishing.com

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The World’s Most Travelled Man: A Twenty-Three Year Odyssey to and Through Every Country on the Planet

By Mike Spencer Bown

M is for the Congo with the deep in the backwoods. Perhaps the most memorable moment was when he became some-thing to follow.

The Congo adventure is one of several places where we are offered insights into Bown’s unique sensory capacities. These have been honed, he tells us, by long periods of solitude in the Canadian wilderness. Life alone in the wilds of western Canada has resulted in him being able to virtually read the minds of others, discerning who is truly a friend or foe, who’s dangerous and who’s not. This helps immeasurably when it comes to navigating tricky situations abroad, particularly when one might feel tempted to get involved in local difficulties, which Bown steadfastly avoids.

This sort of spying seems cultivated in the “Fourth world” (as he calls our local wilderness) proved remarkably effective in helping him word his way through countries and situations where he otherwise had only the most super- ficial understanding of local conditions and personalities.

I felt a bit motion sick at times from the all movement in rapid succession, from Central America to South East Asia to the Balkans, from Central Asia to the Amazon basin, back to Asia again and on to central Africa. I suppose this is inevitable in a tale covering nearly 195 countries in less than 400 pages, but it might be disorienting for the more obvious among us.

There is a chapter, for ex- ample, entitled “The Forest Primates.” While the title suggests Central Africa, the posted itinerary starts in Hanoi and the ac- tual discussion begins in the Belgian capital of Kinshasa. The World’s Most Travelled Man contains many such geo-graphically- extended examples that might result from a need to include each of the 195 countries somewhere in the narrative. I couldn’t help wondering if organiz- ing the book more rigorously according to geography might have helped over- come my occasional travel sickness. But that might have required more careful introductions and a clearer framing of each region, which is not Bown’s style. Rather, The World’s Most Travelled Man is a kind of Bushbuck’s Voyage for the Facebook age, describing the details of how one travel if one wanted to go everywhere in the known world on an extended voyage recounts Bown, the seasoned, leisured traveller.

The reader is offered tips not just on how to get to and through these places, but how to do so without losing sleep. Passing through Switzerland, our traveller was briefly disturbed by thoughts of genocide in that place, once again a “peaceful green land.” He reassured himself by remembering that it all happened long ago, in 1994, “back when the colour of my backpack were still bright and all the zippers worked.” A similar close brush with disorienting locale- nity came when Bown was offloaded from a Guatemalan bus, early in his travelling days, by soldiers inclined to “disappear.”

“Just as in Tunisia, the economy is fed rich tribal greed and competition for women. The crisis was fuelled by a competence for women. The crisis was fuelled by a national ‘do-gooders.’”

I must admit, however, that I’ve been spoiled recently by the global travel books of the more recent years. I’ve enjoyed the book most where Bown steadfastly eschews. This pygmy interlude becomes fraught with much economy, making it perhaps the most interesting guy you’ll ever meet.

How to maximize your travel, budget and fun from perhaps the most interesting guy you’ll ever meet.

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I don't consider myself a Zappa collector. On a scale of one to ten, my level of fandom is around 7.5, though it reaches ten during some guitar solos. I own ten of his LPs, under a dozen CDs, and a few bootlegs.

In some circles I’d be considered an extreme fan. In Zappa circles, where there’s 100+ official releases (hundreds more if re-mastered re-releases are included), I’m merely the average, bystander fan. I mean, how many versions of “Black Napskin” does a guy really need? Apparently as many as there are fans. So I began to hear all the others listed in The Big Note: A Guide to the Recordings of Frank Zappa by Charles Ulrich. In some circles I’d be considered an extreme fan. The notes on recording material are extraordinary. I was immediately eager to get all the others listed in The Big Note: A Guide to the Recordings of Frank Zappa.

In Charles Ulrich’s lengthy introductory section, which also has a bit of a “how to” on deciphering The Big Note, each album has been listed alphabetically with bootlegs finishing it off. When it came to looking up all the Zappa LPs I own, the alpha listing certainly made quick work of finding their place in the book. With Zappa and most artists with extensive back catalogues, my brain works chronologically, so I appreciated that it was listed in the back of the book, followed by an unbelievably lengthy song index.

The notes on recording sessions are extraordinary. The technical information is only one aspect included. Performer details, personal dramas, lyrical references, and sometimes historical context play into each section, as well as sidebar interviews and bios of selected players, which also have their own index at the back.

Given Zappa’s sound opinion of journalists and how they misrepresented him, it’s heartening to see him directly related to Ulrich’s vast enterprise. Inter-spersed throughout, Zappa’s own words play well into Ulrich’s text and give excellent context.

One of my favourite albums, Overnite Sensation (1973) immediately gave up the goods in Ulrich’s assiduous treatment. Among much else, I learned that Tina Turner and The Ikelettes performed on the album without credit, at the request of Ike Turner, who insisted that Zappa pay them each $25 per song, which was Ike’s rate for them. In the end Zappa paid them $25 per hour at the recording session.

There was much material for Ulrich to compile from Zappa’s career as a composer, bandleader, lyricist, and over-all large personality, but it never gets boring; in fact, quite the opposite. Reading through the individual song details is fascinating. While some were recorded right off the floor, most came to life in pieces and in a multi-layered—more like multi-multi-multi-layer—fashion. Zappa then utilized his outstanding and patient editing skills to stitch together the ideal version for release.

I hadn’t realized how much editing went into many of my favourite tracks, which then appeared years later on live albums sounding insanely complicated in performance—and rightly and inevitably so.

The Big Note is not only for Zappa fans. Musicans of all genres will benefit from his approach to creating complex arrangements with uncom- on mon devices and instruments. Xenochrony, polyrhythms, Lydian melodies, and other uncommon time signatures —sure, I can dig it; but when we get into Electro-Wagnerian Emancipators and Pignoses, I start to wonder if the casual reader might be interested in any of this. But would anyone other than Zappa and music fans be reading such a hefty brick of a book anyway?

As a non-musician but appreciative listener, I encountered a lot of terminology that I don’t understand, and wish I did. But this is what search engines are for. I admit to checking many references while reading this reference book. I also ended up shopping around for more Zappa material to sate my yearning after some inspired reading. Three days into reading I bought Zappa’s first album, Freak Out! (1966) because it concerned me that it wasn’t in my collection of 2,000+ albums sounding insanely complicated in performance—and rightly and inevitably so.

Buying this book for a Zappa collector would be akin to giving a dictionary to an aspiring writer, or Gray’s Anatomy to a medical student. The details within these pages are vast and no one could absorb all of them—though thankfully Charles Ulrich did. As a book to take in before bedtime it gets painful at almost 800 pages. But as a reference tool—wow—absolutely wow.

From that record shop floor I recall a few Zappa-centric debates that could easily have been settled with The Big Note. In fact, for those record shops still in operation, this is an absolute must-have book to have at hand. Forget the baseball bat under the counter, this volume would decide all arguments with its information.

P.S. “First printing: Mothers Day 2018.”—well timed.

Frank Zappa, his parents, and cat at his Los Angeles home, 1970.

Frank Zappa

The Big Note: A Guide to the Recordings of Frank Zappa

By Charles Ulrich

New Star $45


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**Straight Circles**

In the diverse genre of suspense writing, North Vancouver’s Jackie Bateman offers us *Straight Circles*, the final book in her Lizzy Trilogy set in Scotland, a grim inspection of domestic abuse, child neglect and murder. This is hard-boiled suspense despite the clever insertion of a cozy knitting shop in the fictional Scottish town of Dalbegie where winter is setting in and “it’s Baltic out there,” as one landlady aptly puts it.

It will come as no surprise to fans of these well-written novels—albeit deeply chilling at several levels—who also favour gritty British television mystery series (okay, full disclosure, rabid fans like my own self) that the Lizzy Trilogy has been optioned for a TV series. I can only hope they get the production values and the terrific writing and acting chops of the *Cardinal* series, based on the acclaimed police procedural novels by Giles Blunt, also a Canadian.

**Jackie Bateman obviously knows her suspense writing formulas and sub-genres and skillfully applies cracking good dialogue and just the right amount of Scottish dialect, a deft hand at pacing and acutely observant descriptive powers.** She uses four main narrators to tell this story, dipping us in and out of their heads, while ratcheting up the tension to nearly unbearable levels. Former runaway Lizzy is the main narrator, newly pregnant and on a quest to find out what happened to her mother nearly two decades earlier when she simply disappeared from bleak Dalbegie.

Not one, but two serial killers reveal their plans in their respective chapters and what’s worse, they have more than a passing acquaintance with each other. Oliver is an obsessive man, forever cleaning himself and his surroundings, using bleach and scalding hot water. He must wear a hat to conceal the damage he’s done to his own scalp. Oliver, an early computer user, has discovered a way to monetize his murderous urges which led Helen to him some years before. Helen began life as one of the crawling wounded, quite literally the twin given up for adoption as a baby. She has been weaving her random vengeance on the rest of the world ever since, in a creepily convincing portrayal of the narrator of the main foursome is Lauren, the ghost of Lizzy’s mother. In Bateman’s hands, this does not present a credibility issue. In fact, some of the best writing in the book comes from the point of view of this hovering other-worldly mother, offering wisdom and warning, unheard in death and often ignored in life, the lot of mothers to wayward daughters the world over:

**Beautiful things shouldn’t be hidden away.**

We think the things that are precious to us will somehow bring us luck, and it’s not true. Even the real necklace didn’t do me any favours. Look at me now. But if you want to live the fairy story, just this once, you deserve to be in it. God knows, we all need to live in our minds once in a while, as long as we’re stuck on earth.

**Stick the chain in your pocket, touch it once in a while, and make believe it’s looking after you.**

**Because right now, no one else is.”**

**Jackie Bateman obviously knows her suspense writing formulas and sub-genres and skillfully applies cracking good dialogue and just the right amount of Scottish dialect, a deft hand at pacing and acutely observant descriptive powers.**

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**Stick the chain in your pocket, touch it once in a while, and make believe it’s looking after you.**

**Because right now, no one else is.”**

**Just as in real life, the thoughts and actions of damaged and dangerous people do not need to “make sense” and Bateman shows how prevalent vicious behaviour is, especially when fuelled by drugs, alcohol and morbid projections triggered by a voice, a laugh, a brief-case. Being in the wrong place at the wrong time has never made sense of their own obsessions and ultimately, they lack crucial elements of self-control and self-awareness, which readers will see revealed by the novel’s conclusion. There are black holes in their psyches where souls ought to be, to channel Grunny Mac, an off-page, long-dead character who dwells securely in the hearts and minds of her generations of offspring, especially Lauren and Lizzy.

Every single character, major and minor, among the watchful eyes on Dalbegie’s High Street or in the overgrown back yards of the side streets, plays a memorable role and the good and generous nature of small towns is revealed as well in a very satisfying ending to this book and the Lizzy Trilogy. The first two novels in the trilogy also published by Vancouver’s Anvil Press, are *Nomad* (2011) and *Savoir* (2014). 978-1-77214-114-6


**Jackie Bateman**

**Caroline Woodward**
Valhalla is no haven for heroes in a Canadian Gothic crime novel

**In Valhalla’s Shadow**

BY CHERIE THEISEN

In Norse mythology, Asgard was the dwelling place of the gods, located in another dimension, possibly the sky or a different planet. It was divided into at least twelve realms; Valhalla being one. Valhalla was the home of Odin and Norse heroes slain in earthly battle.

Valhalla is also the name of a town one hour’s drive from Winnipeg, located just fifteen minutes from W.D. Valgardson’s hometown of Gimli. The protagonist in Valgardson’s novel, Tom Parsons, who has just arrived at Valhalla on the northern shores of Lake Winnipeg, north of Gimli, is not a warrior. If confronted with crises, he mostly does nothing or behaves foolishly.

After his RCMP career, his marriage and his family have disintegrated, Parsons just wants to escape from Winnipeg. Mind-numbingly cold in winter and searingly hot in summer, Valhalla may be the perfect setting for mosquitoes and ticks but it doesn’t seem to have much to recommend it to humans. Why this place then?

Well, there’s the fishing, which could have been one of the reasons Parsons’ father came here in the long ago past. And then there’s the fact that as an RCMP officer, Parsons has been here before, when he came to investigate a mysterious disappearance. Now he’s suffering from depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and its subsequent nightmares.

Thrice during my interview with W.D. Valgardson about In Valhalla’s Shadow he declared that “While I’m never sure about labels, I hope it’s successful as a Gothic crime novel. I think it has something worthwhile to say about a number of issues: the RCMP, old age and identity, PTSD, our treatment of Aboriginal people, the importance of the past, the need people have for a place to which they can belong, and the power, good and bad, of ambition.”

Valgardson—repeatedly cited by the late W.P. Kinsella as his foremost mentor—thrusts the reader immediately into the middle of the action. Parsons finds the body of a fifteen-year-old Indigenous girl lying near the beach near the rundown home he has just purchased.

Then comes the meticulous weaving of a ‘sense of place,’ with the introduction of the wacky, wild and wary inhabitants of Valhalla where everyone knows everyone else’s business but nobody talks about their own, where everyone threatens but nobody talks about their own, everyone else’s business but everybody’s business. Where everyone knows everyone else’s business but nobody talks about their own. Where everyone threatens but nobody talks about their own, everyone else’s business but everybody’s business.

There’s a supporting cast of drug dealers, pimps, probable murderers, chess playing intellectual recluses with killer dogs, unhappy housewives, drunks, crooks, yachts, cultists and plain old thugs.

The atmosphere is pregnant with suspicion, innuendo, mysteries and fear but Valgardson is too good a writer to leave it so one-sided. There’s the search for lost gold, drugs, sex and two Odin groups living near the lake, one rebelling against the other. Plus, there’s all that Nordic mysticism and history of an area known as New Iceland.

In fact, the origins of this novel’s protagonist can be traced back to the days when Valgardson was in graduate school in the United States and some of the Vietnam vets were returning.

“They didn’t call it PTSD in those days but it was what they had. My grandfather called it ‘shell shock.” As well, when I taught in Missouri, I travelled a bit with a friend who was a highway patrolman and I had the privilege of seeing the world of police from their perspective. I think Tom was forming over a long period of time. It wasn’t like I sat and cogitated and said now I will make up characters like this. It was more like they wandered into the room.

“This narrative began with a man who invaded my dreams and who insisted on telling me his story. He was often not consistent, there were pieces missing, sometimes I didn’t listen well. And, of course, other characters appeared. When I wrote The Girl With The Botticelli Face, I wrote it every night from 3-5 a.m., one chapter a night. One rewrite and it was done. In Valhalla’s Shadows took a year.”

Always interested in the effects of isolation on people in remote settings and frequently confronting what he says a Jungian would call his own shadow, William Dempsey Valgardson has written 15 books. Gentle Sinners (1980) won the Books in Canada Award for Best Novel of the Year. The Girl with the Botticelli Face (1992) won the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize. In addition, Valgardson served as editor of the Icelantic publication Logberg-Heimskringla for two years and has kept an apartment in Gimli for many years, returning nearly every summer. He taught creative writing at UVic from 1974 to 2004.

Cherie Theissen regularly reviews fiction from Pender Island.

28 BC BOOKWORLD AUTUMN 2018
**Beautiful Communions** by Des Kennedy (Ronsdale Press $18.95)

BY CHERIE THIESSEN

**G**

inger wants to get back the fam-

ily home from the disgraced church of The Congregation of the Great Convergence.

Ginger’s parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dustin Flynn, gave their mansion to the sect in their will, with the provision that it couldn’t change hands until their daughter died.

There had been a son, Frank, but he was killed at the end of WWII. Frank’s loss was devastating for both parents but especially for Ginger, who had adored her older brother. Frank’s death was devastating for someone else as well...

That’s just a smidgeon of Beautiful Communions, the fourth novel by Denman Island’s best-known gardener Des Kennedy. Among his ten fiction and non-fiction books, three have been nominated for the Stephen Leacock Medal for fiction and non-fiction books.

Kennedy weaves together disparate elements and plotlines with seeming ease for a fun-to-read story. Ultimately, there are good gals and bad guys aplenty and environmental battles, of course. How could there not be?

Observing all these human shenanigans is an uncanny Border Collie, Shep, who maintains the bemused detachment appropriate for most human affairs.

In Des Kennedy’s latest novel, a Border Collie called Shep maintains the bemused detachment appropriate for most human affairs. As the story zips back and forth between the past and present, there is so much going on that you would think it would be difficult to follow. It isn’t. Ginger had envisioned an exciting marriage but after a dozen years of boredom, Nigel up and leaves his wife and daughter, Irene, and never contacts them again—even though his wife is about to have their second child (Peter). Irene is seriously damaged by the departure of her father because he had appeared to be so devoted to her; the mother-daughter relationship suffers as a result. Why would Nigel do this? Well, Ginger ultimately thinks she knows, and readers will probably guess, too.

The fatherless son, Peter, later endures an unimaginable tragedy. Irene’s daughter and subsequent granddaughter also suffer reverberations of the abandonment. But would Ginger have turned out the way she had if Nigel had remained? She has become some kind of überhuman, Grillin’ over with wisdom, joy of life, and causes.

Des Kennedy starts this ever-widening narrative—set primarily in a fictional Canadian small-town—when Ginger is a feisty and very active woman in her eighties. She is being interviewed by young newspaper reporter, Chrissie Crosby, a former runaway described as split-second smart and completely pissed off at just about everything.

Back in the 1950s, after Ginger’s brother, Frank, had been dead five years, Ginger was taking a class from Nigel when he recognized likenesses between Ginger and Frank—whereupon Nigel realizes Ginger is his dead lover’s sister. Yes, you read that correctly.

Nigel had a brief but passionate affair with Frank when the latter was in wartime London on leave. In fact, the professor was the last person that Frank wrote to, just days before he was killed, asking Nigel to let his family and especially his sister Ginger know if anything happened to him in the war, but the professor had not done that.

Debbie Kennedy

DES KENNEDY STARTS THIS EVER-WIDENING NARRATIVE—SET

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The indomitable Ginger has so much humanity and love in her that she hugs anyone who reaches out to her and even some of those who don’t. It is as if her brimming spirit is the wellspring for the story.

There are good gals and bad guys aplenty and environment battles, of course. How could there not be?

Observing all these human shenanigans is an uncanny Border Collie, Shep, who maintains the bemused detachment appropriate for most human affairs.

Kennedy weaves together disparate elements and plotlines with seeming ease for a fun-to-read story. Ultimately, we learn who gets the family mansion.

What’s not to love? This is a delightfully wise and mirthful read. 978-1-55380-532-8

Cherie Thiessen reviews fiction from Pender Island.

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Cherie Thiessen reviews fiction from Pender Island.

Des Kennedy was featured at the Denman Island Readers and Writers Festival, presenting his ‘feel good’ novel Beautiful Communions.
A dancer and crooked lawyers, even a crooked insurance salesmen, crooked restaurateurs, crooked grocers moonlighting as moon-eyelenders, even a crooked First Nations guy—and murderers.

The detective is Indigenous—but the author is not. British-born, Stanley Evans has lived in Canada most of his life, had several careers, and written other books and readings that include poetry, interviews and essays. His work is sold and promoted under his name, and not the Indigenous name he was born with. His schooling was at Victoria's prestigious St. Michael's, where he beat up women. His boss, Inspector Bernie Tapp, regards Silas as the quintessential hard-boiled cop who lives in a container to serve and retired members. And women—even colleagues, victims, and murderers—and women—even colleagues, victims, and murderers—like him in his sleuthing.

“Sensitive” is an odd word to apply to writing so blatantly based on the Whodunit police procedural formula, but the deadpan narrative learned from Spade and Marlow permits Detective Sergeant Sea-weed to treat everyone with the same nonchalant tough love—be they Coast Salish, Italian, Chinese, Filipino, or Caucasian. Silas’s heritages is always present, giving him a perspective useful in his dealing with spirituality step short of sentimentalism. Silas Seaweed has two residences: a container on the waterfront and a shack on the reserve, with a small outboard boat to take him between them. This is a man who rescues a large cedar log from the sea and builds a dugout canoe. He is a shape-shifter, chang-ing effortlessly from someone who lives in a container to someone who goes for a drink at the Laurel Point Hotel and makes love to a beautiful bil-lionaire. A raccoon and a rascal confronts crooked lawyers, even a crooked insurance salesmen, crooked restaurateurs, crooked grocers moonlighting as moon-eyelenders, even a crooked First Nations guy—and murderers.

Detective Sergeant Silas Seaweed confronts the crooked in his quest for clues to murder.

Beacon Hill Park, scene of the first murder in Seaweed Under Fire.
More revelations ensue. and is a counterbalance to her, helps her make sense of life. He is steadfastly loyal to Tourette Syndrome, is the escape to the city. Filthy Billy, partnerships for Beth.

All three have been damaged Indian anyway,” retreat from society. They provide potential
denial from the community.

When he takes a shotgun to a neighbour whom he blames for his woes, he is apprehended by the authorities and temporarily removed from the community. Mother barely manages to keep the place together, coping through denial, commuting with her dead mother, and keeping the place together.

Beth’s complicated relationships with the two Indigenous hired hands, cousins Dennis and Filthy Billy, and their Indigenous settler cousin in Nora add to the tumult of her initiation into adulthood. All three have been damaged by the place together, coping through denial, commuting with her dead mother, and keeping the place together.

Beth’s story, a fifteen-year-old in a rough Fraser Valley mill town, “where the men all smelled like sawdust and the women washed it out,” Talker’s Town is a memory play in part about the unreliability of memory—and a great deal about the viciousness of racism and the lasting repercussions of colonialism. The narrator-talker recounts being on the fringes of a tough group of boys in the superstitious town. He is not fully accepted because he was a talker rather than a doer.

Talker’s Town is a possibly children’s story about children, and humans. John becomes seemingly possessed animals and humans. John becomes seemingly possessed animals and humans.

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In a powerful, disturbing denouement, Talker, like Beth in Cleoran’s play, achieves adulthood by taking action—action that is disturbing, ambiguous, and complete with spirits and sacrifices. Although this ending is a purging and a personal cleansing for Talker, it is also, ultimately, a scathing indictment of the ethos of the town and, by extension, of the project of colonialism.

As is patent in both the preface and the play itself, the actual events on which Talker’s Town are based are difficult for Gray to recall and to process into a fiction that, in turn, is not pleasant to the reader to process. However, confronting the horrors of racism is a necessary step to eradicating racism.

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As is patent in both the preface and the play itself, the actual events on which Talker’s Town are based are difficult for Gray to recall and to process into a fiction that, in turn, is not pleasant to the reader to process. However, confronting the horrors of racism is a necessary step to eradicating racism.

Beth’s story, a fifteen-year-old in a rough Fraser Valley mill town, “where the men all smelled like sawdust and the women washed it out,” Talker’s Town is a memory play in part about the unreliability of memory—and a great deal about the viciousness of racism and the lasting repercussions of colonialism. The narrator-talker recounts being on the fringes of a tough group of boys in the superstitious town. He is not fully accepted because he was a talker rather than a doer.

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THE FUTURE OF POETRY

THE WORLD OF CANADIAN POETRY SINCE 2000
is examined in What the Poets Are Doing (Nightwood Editions $22.95). The book brings together millennium and Generation X poets in conversation with a focus on the role of poetry and poets in the twenty-first century. What the Poets are Doing asks the questions, what’s changed, what’s endured and what’s next in Canadian poetry?
The volume is edited by Rob Taylor, who teaches creative writing at the University of the Fraser Valley.

978-0-88971-343-7

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THE ORMSBY REVIEW

A rebirth for serious book reviews

After two years as a pilot project in the wilderness, publishing 350 in-depth reviews and essays, The Ormsby Review is off ‘n’ running under editor Richard Mackie. We hope to erect a stand-alone site for Ormsby materials soon.

Meanwhile, thanks to all our editorial contributors and financial supporters. As of September, the latter include creativeBC, Yosef Wosk, Simon Fraser University (Graduate Liberal Studies), Web Express Printing and B.C. Historical Federation.

—Alan Twigg, PUBLISHER
Julie Flett

A grandfather’s final words spur Cree alphabet project.

“I’m such a visual person that as soon as I read the story for the first time, I start visualizing it. I begin by doing spontaneous sketches, immediately getting the images down within hours.”

Beverly Cramp is associate editor of BC BookWorld.
Ryan Correy died of cancer on April 28, 2018 at his home. As an indefatigable promoter of cycling and outdoor adventure, he founded Bikepack Canada and recently revised his 2015 RMB memoir *A Purpose Ridden*, to include his marriage and updates on his extensive career as a long-distance competitor throughout the Americas. Due this summer, his posthumous *Bikepacking in the Canadian Rockies* (RMB $25) will share his passion for some of his favourite backcountry cycling trails. It outlines ten ambitious, multi-day routes complete with directional cues, detailed maps and a “Bikepacking 101” section for newbies.

Rob Morris was born and raised in St. Catharines, Ontario. He moved to British Columbia in 1974 to attend the University of Victoria. As a marine biologist, he worked in Prince Rupert, also writing for fisheries and aquaculture publications.

In 1991 he became the editor of *Westcoast Mariner* magazine and soon relocated to Courtenay, literally moving his house there via tug and barge. In 2000 he was the founding editor of *Mariner Life*. In 2003 he founded *Western Mariner*, Canada’s largest commercial marine magazine which he continued to edit until his death.

Morris wrote the book *Coasters: the Uchuck III, Lady Rose, Francis Barclay and Tyee Princess* (Horsdal & Schubart, 1993), an illustrated tribute to four B.C. vessels and crews that were continuing the delivery of passengers and freight to inlet settlements.

Morris also co-wrote historical articles for compilations like *The Greater Vancouver Book* and *Raincoast Chronicles 22*.

According to Rob Morris’ publisher at *Western Mariner*, David Rahn, “He leaves an unparalleled legacy that includes thousands of articles on every aspect of west coast maritime life: the history, the vessels, the mariners and fishermen and the coastal communities where they live.”

### Call for Submissions TO THE 36TH ANNUAL BCHF HISTORICAL WRITING COMPETITION

The BC Lieutenant-Governor’s Medal for Historical Writing may be awarded to the author whose book makes the most significant contribution to the historical literature of British Columbia.

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**Eligibility**

For historical writing of non-fiction books published in 2018 by authors of British Columbia history.

Winners announced at our annual conference in 2019. See our website for entry details.
A is for Albyn
FORGET FORTUNE COOKIES. AFTER 34 YEARS in business, Julie Emerson has installed a hand-cranked Haiku Gumball Machine at Albyn Books (523 Richard) in Vancouver to provide book-store patrons with a free, randomly selected haiku from among works provided by forty B.C. poets, as well as five classic Japanese poets. The ceremonial first crank was performed by poet Jacqueline Pearce who read aloud one of her own haikus, unraveled from an acorn capsule.

B is for Butler
THE SECOND NOVEL IN a projected series by biologist and for-ester Dave Butler of Cranbrook, No Place for Wolverines: A Jenny Willson Mystery (Dun- durn $14.99) follows National Park War- den Jenny Willson as she investigates the death of a wolverine researcher in a mysterious fire. In the process, Willson forms an uneasy alliance with an RCMP corporal and an Idaho-based investiga- tive journalist. She’s quickly drawn into a web of political, environmental and criminal intrigue that threatens to tear apart a small British Columbia town, pitting neighbour against neighbour.

C is for Coleman
ANNE COLEMAN’S I’LL TELL YOU A SECRET: A Memory of Seven Summers (M&S, 2004) previously revealed her intimate friendship with revered Canadian nov- elist Hugh MacLennan, almost thirty years her senior, during the 1950s, mostly during summers in the pictur- esque resort village of North Hatley, Quebec. Coleman has now published a follow-up memoir called Inland Navigation by the Stars (BPS Books $25.95) that covers eight decades of her life. It is again set in North Hatley (and also involves the early lives of writers such as Michael Ondaatje and Marga- ret Atwood). Coleman has previously won the Edna Staebler Award for Cre- ative Non-fiction and was shortlisted for the Governor General’s Award for Non-fiction.

D is for Drown
ROD DROWN and co-author KEN McINTOSH have spent six years investigating Metro Vancouver’s 1960s drug underworld for No Dog Barked: Who Killed the MacLauchlans? (Archives New West $30), a true story about the unsolved murders of Dr. Robert Henry MacLauchlan and his wife Margaret Ann in 1966.

E is for Egypt
As one of the great empires of the an- cient world, Egypt pulls at the imagi- nation with its famous pyramids and pharaos. Its contemporary state is not so glorious given the country’s socio- political troubles, especially after the failure of the “Arab Spring.”

One of North America’s top schol- ars on Egypt and the Middle East, Dr. Robert Springborg argues in his latest book Egypt (Polity Press $22.95) that the country is in a downward spiral of poor governance. Now a Vancouver resident, Springborg writes that Egypt’s accumulated failures under military rule, particularly since a 2013 coup, have become so grave that the nation-state is at risk of collapsing.

Springborg is married to Cai- ro-born Anne-Marie Drosso, whose book, Hookah Nights: Tales from Cairo (Darf $12.95), is a collection of 14 short stories of men and women in present-day Egypt.

F is for Forster
WHEN SHE WAS MAINLY KNOWN AS AN astronaut, Julie Payette wrote the foreword to Merna Forster’s second book, 100 More Canadian Heroines: Famous and Forgotten Faces (Dun- durn, 2011). Forster later launched a campaign to include images of notable Canadian women on our banknotes with a petition and website where Canadians could suggest worthy can- didates. That led to rights activist Viola Desmond being chosen to appear on the ten-dollar bill. This year, as Gov- ernor General of Canada, Julie Payette presented a Meritorious Service Medal (M.S.M) to Forster in Victoria. In 2016, Forster also received the Governor Gen- eral’s History Award for Popular Media, known as The Pierre Berton Award.

G is for Gaston
BILL GASTON’S MEMOIR JUST LET ME LOOK at You: On Fatherhood (Penguin Random House $24.95) delves into the messy relationship that can exist between father and son when it in- volves alcohol, fishing, rebellion, and all the judgements given and all the words not said. Gaston also unravels his father’s relationship with his father, which involved heavy drinking and family secrets taken to the grave.

Bill Gaston is the au- thor of seven novels and six short story collections, as well as poetry and drama. He will be appearing at the Vancouver Writers Fes- tival (October 15-21). He lives and teaches in Victoria.

Merna Forster wearing her Meritorious Service Medal (M.S.M) to Governor General Julie Payette in Victoria.

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**Fat Cats**

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Conquest and Conquest on Canada's West Coast: A Personal Account

by Kevin D. Annett

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_At the Mouth of a Cannon_ is a moving personal story of Group Crime and resistance; of the power of big money but also of high integrity and courage. It is the author’s thirteenth book addressing Crimes against Humanity in Canada.

*This is a remarkable book that I couldn’t put down. It names the names and documents the crimes still destroying First Nations and the land. This book should be read by every student in Canada.* - Bob Arnold, journalist, Nanaimo, B.C.

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**Ann Hansen:** “I found that my experiences did not always conform to politically correct stereotypes of prisoners, guards, wardens, or even myself.”

**H** is for Hansen

**Ann Hansen was arrested in 1983 with the four other members of the radical anarchist group dubbed by the media as the Squamish Five. The bonds and experiences Hansen shared with other imprisoned women during her many years of incarceration have prompted her to write a firsthand account of the brutal effects of imprisonment on women’s lives. The heartbreaking and engaging stories in _Taking the Rap: Women Doing Time for Society’s Crimes_ (Between the Lines $29.95) make her case for prison abolition.

Hansen is a former member of the radical left-wing group called the Squamish Five. 

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**L** is for India

**Meenal Shrivastava of Sidney has written a creative non-fiction history of the female foot soldiers of Gandhi’s national movement. Amma’s Daughters (UBC Press/Athabasca University Press $29.95), using her grandmother Amma’s 1962 autobiography as a foundation. Shrivastava recalls the courage of Amma, at the age of twelve, as she joins the nationalist movement and is arrested for making seditious speeches. Despite serving many jail sentences, Amma never wavers from her devotion to Gandhi’s teachings and her dream of equality for women who faced deeply patriarchal rules and attitudes. 

Amma’s Daughters documents an important part of India’s history. Born in Jaipur, Shrivastava is an alumna of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. She is now coordinator of Political Economy and Global Studies at Athabasca University.**

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**K** is for Kim

**Michelle Kim’s**_ Running Through Sprinklers_ (Atheneum $22.99) details a friendship between two girls—one half-Korean and the other half-Japanese—who are separated when one attends high school a year earlier. Kim previously worked for the BBC but now lives in Vancouver.

---

**Lin**

**Julia Lin’s_ biography, Shadows of the Crimson Sun: One Man’s Life in Manchuria, Taiwan, and North America (Mawenzie House $24.95), outlines the little-known histories of Manchuko and Taiwanese immigration to North America. She describes how fourteen-year-old Akhisa Takeyama escaped with his family to Taiwan after the Russian invasion of the Japanese puppet state of Manchuria (Manchuko) in 1945. To withstand the brutal Chinese dictatorship of the Kuomintang, Takayama reinvents himself in the 1960s as a physician named Charles Yang. First escaping to the U.S., Yang then takes his family to Vancouver where they become the first Taiwanese Canadians.**

---

**FAT CATS**

_Book Four in the *Dyed In The Green* fiction series about our national parks._


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

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**Who’s Who**

**J** is for Jago

**Following World War II, returning veterans such as Al Neil pioneered the formation of not-for-profit jazz clubs in several Canadian cities, most notably The Cellar on Watson Street in Vancouver. Touring jazz heavyweights mingled with up-and-comers in the 1950s and 1960s, giving rise to a pan-Canadian jazz culture as outlined in _Marian Jago’s Live at the Cellar_ (UBC Press $29.95).

---

**K** is for Kim

**EVEN PLATONIC RELATIONSHIPS can end in heartbreak. Michelle Kim’s_ debut, middle-grade youth novel, Running Through Sprinklers_ (Atheneum $22.99) details a friendship between two girls—one half-Korean and the other half-Japanese—who are separated when one attends high school a year earlier. Kim previously worked for the BBC but now lives in Vancouver.**

**L** is for Lin

**Julia Lin’s biography, Shadows of the Crimson Sun: One Man’s Life in Manchuria, Taiwan, and North America (Mawenzie House $24.95), outlines the little-known histories of Manchuko and Taiwanese immigration to North America. She describes how fourteen-year-old Akhisa Takeyama escaped with his family to Taiwan after the Russian invasion of the Japanese puppet state of Manchuria (Manchuko) in 1945. To withstand the brutal Chinese dictatorship of the Kuomintang, Takayama reinvents himself in the 1960s as a physician named Charles Yang. First escaping to the U.S., Yang then takes his family to Vancouver where they become the first Taiwanese Canadians.**
M is for MacLeod
For his previous book on poverty in B.C., legislative reporter Andrew MacLeod received the George Ryga Award for Social Awareness. In All Together Healthy, A Canadian Wellness Revolu-
tion (D&M $22.95), he examines inequities within Canada and draws on international comparisons to assess why Canada’s high spending on health care has failed to achieve better results.
978-1-77162-188-5

N is for Nesling
John Nesling’s fourth book, The Long Cold War and Beyond: A Bystander’s Perception (Island Blueprint) is about the phenomenon of the Cold War from 1945 to 1991. Nesling discovers that “history does not quite repeat itself, but it rhymes” as Mark Twain so aptly stated. Chapter 9 attempts to speak on the evil of proboscis and the scapegoat principle with which we avoid it.
978-0-9076401-0-7

O is for Ochani
SILENCE is the PRACTICE GROUND for finding inner peace. Honesty without courage is a lost virtue. Vipassana meditator Amar Ochani has learned from his renowned Vipassana teacher, the late S. Goenka, for his debut book, Inner Explorations of a Seeker (Inspired Living $16.95) in which he advi-
ses, “The truth hurts, but only once; untruth keeps hurting all the time.” Ochani’s short essays and thoughts are numbered for readers of particular faith, religion, denomination or creed.
Born in Mumbai, Ochani led inspi-
rational seminars for the Landmark Forum in India, and now lives in Coquitlam. He reminisces, “Like most people, I spent a substantial part of life with the feeling that something is missing. This feeling stayed with me until I realized that meditation and spirituality interested me more than money and recognition did. Money and fame still pull me, but their lure is far
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Q is for Quizz Queens
K.L. GOSMAN’S Q U I Z Q U E E N S (Nirca Currents) (9.95) is about boy-crazy Kiara who convinces her studious pal Jane to create a questionnaire to help find her soulmate. It makes for a cre-
ative blurb on the back of the book: “Your friend asks you to help her land the perfect boyfriend. You: A. Tell her to go away—you’re reading. B. Agree to create a quiz (even though you think it’s a bad idea). C. Withhold the surprising results when a boy you like comes out ahead. D. Try to patch things up after you both say things you regret.”
9781459813960

R is for Ramji
Shazia Hafa Ramji of Vancouver will launch her debut title, Port of Being (invisible $16.95) with appearances at the Vancouver Writers Festival and the Surrey International Writers’ Confer-
ence. Its content examines migration, immigration, technology and B.C.’s urban housing crisis.
978-1-988784120

S is for Stanton
Born in 1927 on a prairie farm, and co-creators of an internationally
achieved petal recognition leading to the status of “World’s Greenest Modern House” for a number of years. From wastewater to mainstream, the Bairds have flushed forth their knowledge in Essential Composting Toilets: A Guide to Options, Design, Installation, and Use (New Society $39.99).

P is for Potty
GORD and ANN BAIRD and the owners and co-creators of an internationally recognized Eco-Sense home in Victoria. Its building occurred when greywater, rain water harvesting, compost toilets, and earthship architecture were still on the fringes of cultural acceptance, not yet supported by local regulations. By challenging the building codes and regulations in a logical, informed and respectful manner, they created the first legal, seismically-engineered, two-storey load bearing cob home in North America. It became the first Eco-
Sense home audited within the Living Building Challenge (LBC) project. The LBC is the most challenging green building rating system globally, and the Baird’s home was the first to achieve petal recognition leading to the status of “World’s Greenest Modern House” for a number of years. From wastewater to mainstream, the Bairds have flushed forth their knowledge in Essential Composting Toilets: A Guide to Options, Design, Installation, and Use (New Society $39.99).

T is for Tater
In her first collection of poems, This Will Be Good (BookThug $18), Malory Tater writes about her femi-
nism and struggles with an eating disorder. She also critically observes the suburbs of the Lower Mainland and nearby American lands, from Delta to Point Roberts, painting disturbing images of modern suburban life. She describes the latter as “a bruised thumb of American soil” and people in the former, “where Baptist women get regular perms, where palm trees rest in traffic islands, and a Walmart will soon sprout from the earth.”
978-1-77162-394-6

U is for Utopia
Austin Andrews’ photographs from six continents have appeared in TIME, Foreign Policy, Maclean’s and the online edition of National Geographic. As a film director and editor, his films have screened at Sundance, Tribeca, and the Hot Docs festival. Writer Si-
mon Cockerell has made almost two hundred trips to the absurdly named Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) for his Beijing-based company, Koryo Tours, to promote interaction be-
tween North Koreans and the rest of the world. Together they’ve produced an unusually engaging coffee table book, Red Star Utopia: Inside North Korea (Durville/UTP $49.95) that reveals the bleak and repressive society, admired by Donald Trump, that is home to 25 million freedom-starved and frequently
starving North Koreans.
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Beverly Cramp

V is for Virag

*After Forty Years Making Other People* look good as an editor, *Nancy Flight* of Greystone Books has semi-retired hav- ing recently earned the inaugural Karen Virag Award which recognizes excep- tional efforts by an individual or orga- nization to raise the profile of editing in their community. It’s named for *Karen Virag*, a member of the Editors’ As- sociation of Canada who died in 2014.

W is for Wick

*SINCE 1996, THE POINTE RESTAURANT AT* the Tofino-based Wickaninnish Inn (The Wick) has been an innovative proponent of west coast cuisine. Now they’ve served *The Wickaninnish Cookbook: Rustic Elegance on Na- ture’s Edge* (Penguin Random House $45), that shares recipes (combining cutting edge techniques with fresh, seasonal ingredients) from their cur- rent and former chefs—Warren Barr, Rod Butters, Matthias Conradi, Mark Filatow, Justin Laboissiere, Duncan Ly, Andrew Springett and Matt Wilson.

X is for Experiences

*Out There Learning: Critical Reflections on Off-Campus Study Programs* (UTP $29.95) examines the value of non-traditional avenues of study. This collec- tion offers “voices from the field” expe- riences of faculty members, students, teaching assistants, and community members engaged in every aspect of off-campus study programs. Edited by UVic professors Deborah Curran, Cameron Owens, Helga Thorsen and Elizabeth Vibert.

Y is for Yamagishi

*Japanese-born Kunio Yamagishi* did not experience Japanese-Canadian internment camps himself. He was educated in Tokyo before immigrating to Canada without knowing about the camps. Devastated when he found out about them, he has suffered am- bivalence towards Canada ever since. His novel, *The Return of a Shadow* (*Austin Macauley $21.95*), is based on historical facts, but his protagonist, Eizo Osada, is fictitious.

In 1930s, Eizo leaves his wife and three young sons, one of them only two years old, to come to Canada to earn money for the family back in Japan. Then Japan attacks Pearl Harbor and he is sent to an internment camp. Eizo returns to his family after 43 years in Canada, but will his family accept him?

Z is for Zuehlke

*The Cinderella Campaign: First Canadian Army and the Battles for the Chan- nel Ports* (D&M $37.95) is one of five shortlisted titles for the 2018 John W. Dafoe Book Prize, a $10,000 prize in memory of Canadian editor John Wesley Dafoe.

The Cinderella Campaign describes First Canadian Army’s urgent and thankless mission of opening the Channel ports to Allied victory in World War II. They thought of themselves as the “Cinderella Army” and international correspondents agreed. This was be- cause First Canadian Army had been relegated to the left flank of the Allied advance toward Germany from the Normandy beaches and given the tough task of opening the Channel ports from Le Havre to Ostend in Belgium against brutal German resistance.
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ON A RECENT B.C. FERRY CROSSING FROM VANCOUVER ISLAND TO VANCOUVER, I PICKED UP A COPY OF YOUR EXCELLENT PUBLICATION. WHAT A REFRESHING CHANGE TO FIND SOMETHING LIKE THAT RATHER THAN THE USUAL SHOPPING BROCHURES.

I AM NOW BACK IN UK, COMPLETE WITH MY COPY AND WONDER IF YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP.

FOR PART OF OUR TRIP THIS TIME WE STAYED ON QUADRAD AND ONE MORNINGS WHilst IN THE STORE AT HERIOT BAY, I OVER HEARD SOME LADIES TALKING ABOUT BOOKS THEY HAVE READ WHICH ARE SET IN NAANO AND ALSO ON SOME OF THE ISLANDS. I WISH I HAD PLUCKED UP THE COURAGE TO ASK FOR TITLES AND AUTHORS BUT BRITISH RESERVE DOESN'T LET US DO THAT TOO OFTEN! I DID GO TO THE BOOKSTORE ON THE ISLAND AND ALSO TO THE LIBRARY BUT NOBODY COULD HELP ME.

COULD SEND ME A LIST OF AUTHORS WHO SET THEIR WORK IN AND AROUND VANCOUVER ISLAND? I HAVE JUST READ THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE EMILY CARR TRAVELS BOOK AND I AM WAITING FOR ISSUE 2 TO ARRIVE FROM MUNRO’S AGAIN I SHOULD HAVE BOUGHT IT WHILE I WAS THERE...

JEAN SKELDING

UNIVERSITY OF VANCOUVER, BC

ANTI-ANTI-AGING

ALL IN ALL, THIS WAS AN EXCEPTIONAL ISSUE! SO MUCH COVERAGE BY OR ABOUT SO MANY EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE. THE REVIEW OF SARAH COX’S BOOK (BREATHEING PEACE) WAS TERRIFIC. ISN’T THERE SOME KIND OF PRIZE FOR SUCH A GREAT TITLE? THE REVIEWS OF BOOKS BY CHARLESON (THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES) AND CATHY CONVERSE (AGAINST THE CURRENT) WERE EXCEPTIONAL AS WELL.

ARCHIE & THE HOLOCAUST

MY COPY OF BC BOOKWORLD CAME IN THE MAIL YESTERDAY (THANK YOU!) AND WHEN I OPENED IT, I DISCOVERED THAT MY BOOK IMPRINT had been selected for the BC Ferries shops thanks to BC BookWorld. THIS IS SO EXCITING FOR ME TO HEAR. THANK YOU FOR SELECTING A BOOK ABOUT ANCESTRAL HOLOCAUST MEMORIES AS AN EXEMPLARY TITLE. I SO APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT! I AM NOW LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING IT ON THE SHELVES OF A BC FERRY WHEN MY SON FORCES ME TO BUY HIM YET ANOTHER ARCHIE BOOK!

CLAIRE SICHMERAN

SALT SPRING ISLAND

GOOD TEARS

THANK YOU! I’VE JUST SEEN THE SUMMER ISSUE ONLINE AND I FEEL CLOSE TO TEARS. I KNOW THAT I WILL BE READING THE REVIEW MORE THAN A FEW TIMES. I AM VERY GRATEFUL THAT YOU TOOK THE TIME TO READ AND APPRECIATE MY FIRST NOVEL, THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES AND EVEN CHOSE TO FEATURE IT ON THE COVER OF BC BOOKWORLD.

KAREN CHARLESON

HOAKSM’S OUTDOOR SCHOOL, TOLNO

Canada has been ranked as the eleventh-most literate society on the planet, as reported by The Guardian.

Photo by B.C. Ferries by Mark Forsythe.
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