

YOUR FREE GUIDE TO **BOOKS & AUTHORS**

BC

BOOKWORLD

VOL. 35 • NO. 2 • Summer 2021

“We have lost a giant.”
Premier John Horgan

TOM BERGER

(1933 - 2021)

He listened to the North
and he was vital in validating
Indigenous land claims.

page 7

CEDAR BOWERS

Raised in a commune, a
woman takes on city life. 23



HARD LIQOUR

Artisanal distilleries
on Vancouver Island. 14



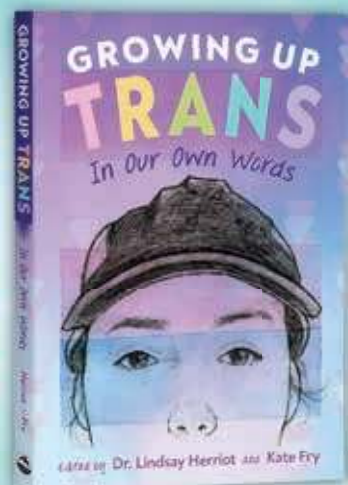
HOWARD WHITE

Fifty humorous sketches
of West Coast life. 5



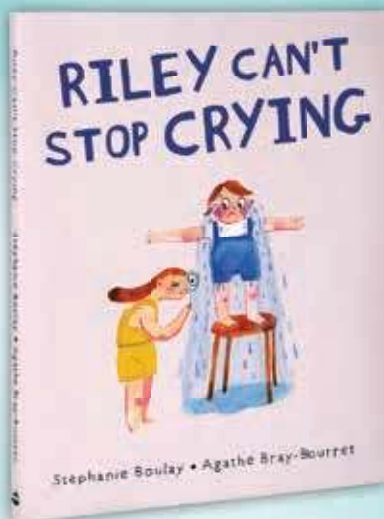
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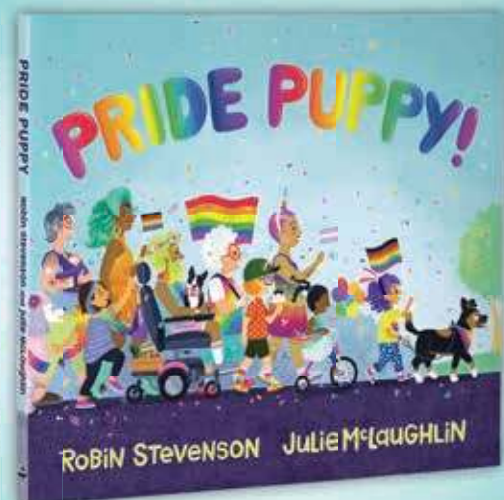
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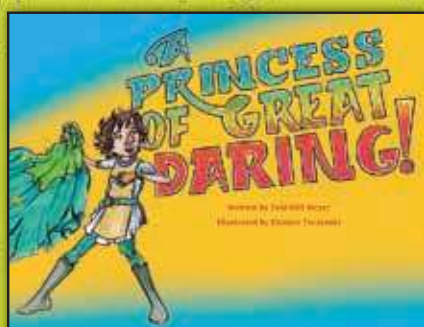


Look for these books and more at your favourite bookstore.

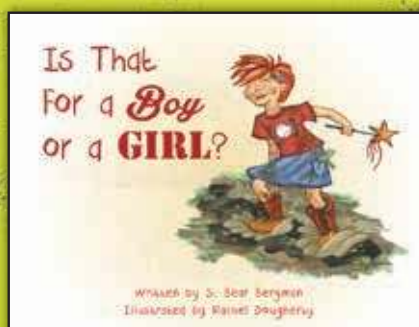
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the Rainbelt
(Harbour \$24.95)

Sylvia Olsen
Title: Unravelling Canada:
A Knitting Odyssey
(D&M \$24.95)

Cheryl Alexander
Takaya: Lone Wolf
(Rocky Mountain Books \$30)

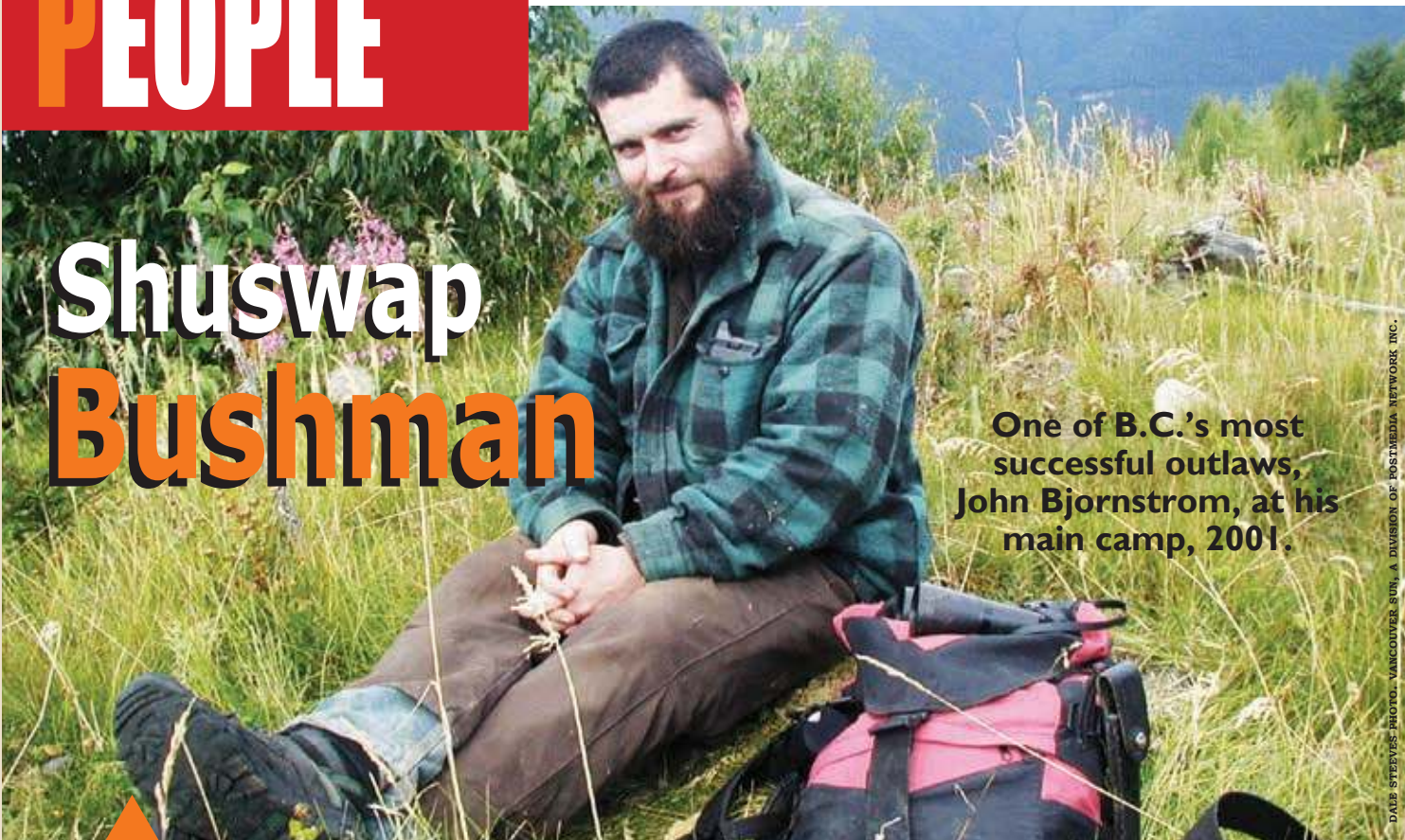
M.A.C. Farrant
One Good Thing
(Talonbooks \$19.95)

**Richard Cannings,
Tom Aversa, &
Hal Opperman**
Birds of British Columbia
and the Pacific Northwest:
A Complete Guide,
Second Edition
(Heritage House \$29.95)

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

PEOPLE

Shuswap Bushman



One of B.C.'s most
successful outlaws,
John Bjornstrom, at his
main camp, 2001.

DARR STEVENS PHOTO, VANCOUVER SUN, A DIVISION OF POSTMEDIA NETWORK INC.

British Columbia has been home to many fugitives—train robber **Bill Miner**, labour leader **Ginger Goodwin**, Gitksan trapper **Simon Guna-**

noot—but none as mysterious as the 'Bushman of the Shuswap'.

His real name was **John Bjornstrom** and he made headlines around the country twenty years ago as he evaded the RCMP for two years hiding in the Shuswap Lake wilderness. The Bushman dug an elaborate 900 sq. ft. cave out of rock and serviced it with solar energy power, propane tanks and water from the lake. He re-stocked his supplies by raiding summer cabins to get food, clothing, tools, weapons and whatever else he needed. He also harvested the land for grub including squirrels and hares.

Bjornstrom taunted the police when he snuck out of the bush for media interviews or to buy a McDonald's burger on his birthday before slipping back into the forest. Some admired his survival skills, others thought he was a common thief.

Eventually caught by police posing as reporters, Bjornstrom was cooperative and willing to share information, much of it startling:

Officer One: "You look very healthy. So you'd just bathe in the lake and stuff?"

Bjornstrom: "I had a hot tub."

Officer One: "Hot tub?"

Officer Two: "You had a hot tub?"

Years later, houseboaters hiking the surrounding hills discovered the Bushman's cave just as he had left it with food, books, lights, a bed, small washing machine and other amenities. It spurred author **Paul McKendrick** to interview people who had known

Bjornstrom, and read court and RCMP transcriptions for **The Bushman's Lair: On the Trail of the Fugitive of the Shuswap** (D&M \$22.95), which answers why Bjornstrom went into hiding, how he eluded capture and what eventually happened to him.

The story has more twists than a switchback road including a bizarre, top-secret U.S. military program that recruited people like Bjornstrom who supposedly had psychic abilities, and involvement with the \$6 billion Bre-X gold mining swindle of the 1990s. At the heart of it is Bjornstrom, a hyperactive son of Romani refugees and later adopted by an outdoorsy couple from Norway who helped him develop survival skills. Bjornstrom died in 2018 at the age of 58. 978-1550179224

Anti-vaxxer Noir

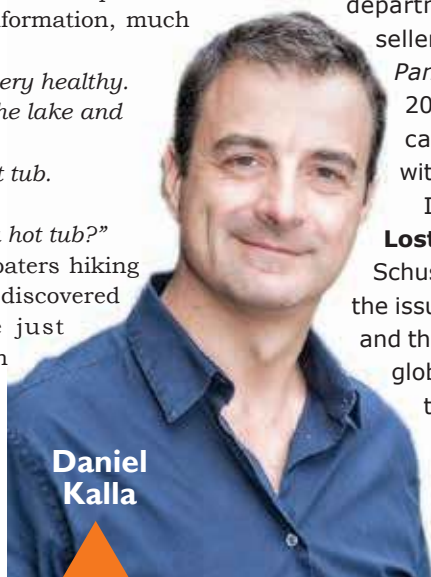
Entering the second summer of the Covid-19 pandemic as nerves get frayed and tempers lost is a bit like being in one of **Daniel Kalla's** medical thrillers.

The practicing emergency physician and head of St. Paul's Hospital ER department became a best-seller with his first novel,

Pandemic (Forge Books, 2005) based on his clinical experience dealing with the 2003 SARS crisis.

In his latest novel, **Lost Immunity** (Simon & Schuster \$22) Kalla tackles the issue of vaccine hesitancy and the potential impact on a global outbreak. And yes, the book was inspired by Kalla's time working on the medical frontlines of the Covid-19 pandemic.

9781982150150



Daniel Kalla

Surviving without GPS

Driving to the Grand Canyon in the U.S. from B.C., 13-year-old Francie's dad finds out the hard way not to rely on GPS, in Penticton-based **Frances Greenslade's** first novel for young readers, **Red Fox Road** (Penguin \$19.99).

The GPS shortcut road he decides to take isn't on Francie's mom's map. Turns out, it's a logging road that gets rougher and rougher until they hit a rock, taking out the truck's oil pan. They are stranded.

After a night in their tent, Francie's dad hikes out to get help. With little food left, Francie puts her survival skills to work making fires and fir needle tea.



Frances Greenslade

A few mornings later, Francie finds a note left by her mom: "Dear Francie, I'll be back for you. Don't go anywhere. I know you'll be brave. Love, Mom."

Left on her own, Francie makes do while remembering her beloved grandmother and twin sister (both now dead), the stuttering boy next door who saved her from bullies and others in her life.

On the ninth day, Francie must decide if she should hike out too. 9780735267817



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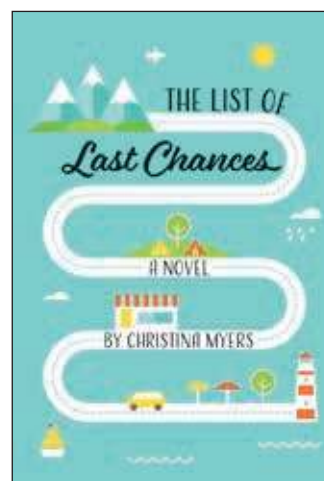


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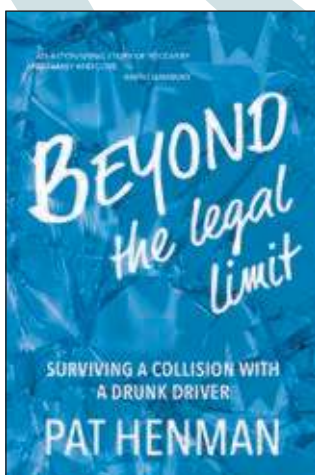
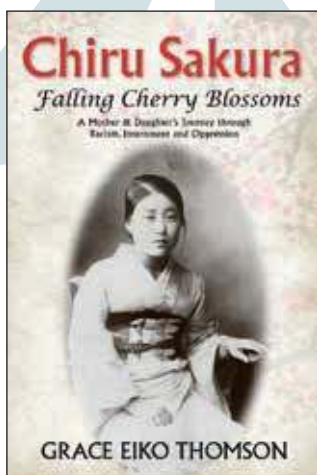
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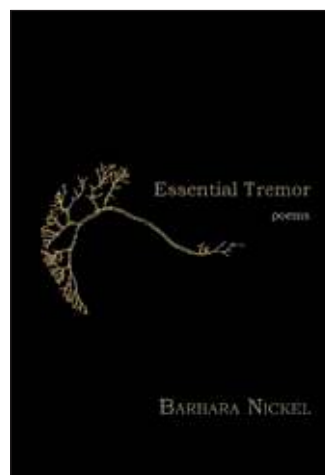
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and others, for a safer
and more inclusive world.**

“*Girlvana* helps readers release
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greatness! This is a timely book
with an empowering message.”

—GABRIELLE BERNSTEIN,
#1 *New York Times* bestselling author



Vancouver
author!

ALLY MAZ

appetite

Here on the Coast:
Reflections from the Rainbelt
 by **Howard White**
 (Harbour \$24.95)

Sunshine Coast is such a goofy name, it borders on asinine. In the opening pages of his charming, new collection, **Here on the Coast**, **Howard White**, the latter-day **Mark Twain** of B.C. literature, deftly explains how the name crept into common parlance.

“It took a lot of gall to nickname a piece of certified rainforest ‘the Sunshine Coast’...The blame for that usually goes to **Harry Roberts**, the pioneer who put Roberts’ Creek on the map in the 1900s.”

Doing his best imitation of a country farmer, chewing the fat, not up to anything special, maybe hanging around outside the general store, or swatting flies in a rocking chair, White proceeds to draw us into his hilarious world of cagey yarns and sly wisdom by talking about the weather.

We learn that the nearby town of Gibsons (formerly called Gibson’s Landing, where they made *The Beachcombers* TV series) actually gets just ¾ of an inch more rain annually than Roberts Creek so, for a joke, the pioneer builder Harry Roberts erected a facetious sign on his steamboat dock, circa 1930: The Sunshine Belt.

This prompted a less-than-scrupulous realtor down in Gibsons to extend that misnomer to describe the entire, rugged coastal zone from Gibsons to Egmont (where you catch a ferry to Powell River) as the Sunshine Coast.

At least Long Beach is actually long.



IF YOU CARE ABOUT BEING A BRITISH Columbian, you want to know such things. So fast forward to the early 1970s when Howard White returns from the Big Smoke (a.k.a. Vancouver, where he attended UBC) and co-founds Harbour Publishing with his wife **Mary**. She would serve in every capacity from typesetter to bookkeeper to editor to designer before retiring from active duty in 2019. White also decides he wants to pay tribute to authentic West Coast history and eccentric working characters like his dad, **Frank White**, by starting a regional history publication.

(It helps to know that Frank White—who makes cameo appearances in *Here on the Coast*—was a jack-of-all-trades gyppo logging outfit operator and mechanic who later ran the Pender Harbour gas station and wrote two coastal bestsellers at age 99 and 100, after he married *New Yorker* journalist **Edith Iglauer**.)

The absurdity of Sunshine Coast as a name prompted Howard (he’s known as Howie) and Mary to choose the name *Raincoast Chronicles* for his acclaimed ongoing digest of coastal lore. In contrast to the phoniness of that RealtyWorld moniker, he ventured deeper into realism by giving us *The Encyclopedia of British Columbia* and publishing about 1,000 other books, earning the Order of B.C. and Order of Canada.

It might be more pertinent to know he has also won the Stephen Leacock



Howard and Mary White. He will be at the Sunshine Coast Festival of the Written Arts in Sechelt, July 4 - August 15.

WET-COASTER WIT & WARMTH

During a pandemic, it’s good to have a book that convinces us there’s no place like home.

Medal for Humour. As a contributor to the regional magazine *Coast Life*, White has continuously developed his own sophisticated and original style to make his stories in *Here on the Coast* hilarious and easy to read with zero artifice. This is no mean feat.

Yes, the family vehicle – a three-ton Ford gravel truck – really did slide off the back of a Black Ball Ferry called the *Quillayute* (the first car ferry to provide regular service to Gibsons from Horseshoe Bay) in October of 1959 and into Horseshoe Bay and, yes, for a few dreadful minutes, the White family and the equally horrified ferry workers really did believe his sister must have

disappeared into the drink with it.

Yes, **Michelle Pfeiffer** really did buy getaway property at Leask Cove, below Fawn Bluff, in Bute Inlet, some fifty kilometres beyond the end of the nearest road. Yes, Princess Louisa Inlet used to attract Hollywood types like **John Barrymore**, **William Powell** and **Mack Sennett**. Yes, a Frisbee really was thrown at Madeira Park in 1957.

Once upon another century all newspapers used to have a humour columnist.

Here on the Coast is such an engaging and proudly non-urban collection you’ll want those days to return. While billions are being distracted by click

bait, they could be chuckling and nodding to a voice that cleverly convinces us there is no place like home.

“Nobody on my side of the family could carry a tune in a wheelbarrow,” White writes. Describing the late logger poet **Peter Trower**, B.C.’s bard of the woods, he suggests, “That he lived to age eighty-seven is a testament to the human liver... Pete never learned to drive, which was a good thing.”

As White’s friend, **Lorna Crozier** states, “Howie White’s story-telling voice is intimate, funny and oh so smart.” Howard White writes like a wry angel, leaning on a garden gate, seemingly in no hurry. He also happens to be one of the kindest people one can hope to meet. Readers who encounter him as a storyteller will ultimately be mystified. Who is this guy anyway?

There is a great deal more to Howard White than sagacity and humour. You have to be oh so shrewd to figure out how the heck you can manage to operate Western Canada’s most-established publishing consortium (Harbour Publishing, Douglas & McIntyre and Nightwood Editions) from tiny Pender Harbour rather than Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton or Vancouver.



Howard White, 1970s

An autobiography should come next. Meanwhile, if more people nowadays could tell you who **Stephen Leacock** was, this collection could have been called *Sunshine Coast Sketches*. It’s in keeping with a literary tradition in B.C. that dates back to **M. Wylie Blanchet**’s *A Curve of Time* (coached into existence by **Hubert Evans**), followed by the likes of **Don Hunter**’s *Spinner’s Inlet*, **Jim Spilsbury**’s *Spilsbury’s Coast* and *The Accidental Airline* (both co-written with White) and more recently **Pat Carney**’s *On Island: Life Among the Coast Dwellers*. 978-1-55017-924-8

EXCERPT: **Here On The Coast** by Howard White

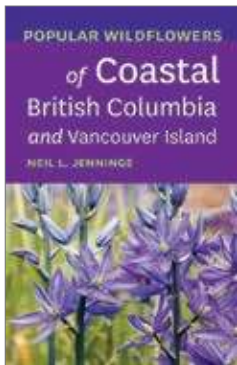
Things as deeply entrenched in our psyches as books don’t disappear overnight just because some propeller-head comes along and announces he’s made a better mousetrap. If that were so, painting would have stopped the minute photography was invented. Instead, we have more art galleries than at any time in history and a painting of someone having a bad day selling for \$120 million.

Sailboats didn’t disappear the minute the Easthope brothers announced their first marine engine. A ferry trip across Howe Sound on any sunny summer day will confirm there’s more rag-hangers afloat than ever, no matter if they spend 99 per cent of their time motoring.

Bicycles were supposed to disappear at the appearance of the first motor car. Horses, too. I read somewhere there are more horses in B.C. today than there were in 1900, and they are leading much happier lives. Dogs and cats were first domesticated for very practical reasons and I can show you vet bills to prove they account for a much larger share of the GDP now than when they actually earned their keep.

When you think about it, we are surrounded by things that once we only kept out of dull practicality but we now keep because we darnwell feel like it. The very fact books and libraries have become technologically obsolete may mean their best years are just beginning.

Shop local for these great summer staycation reads

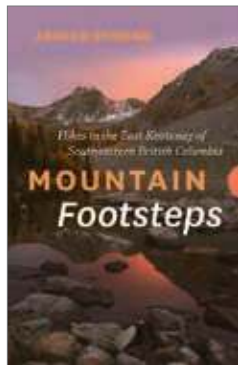


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Neil L. Jennings

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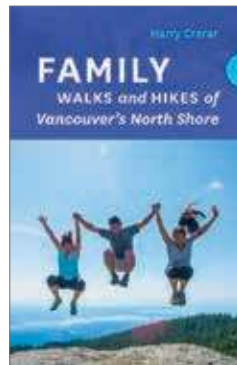
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Janice Strong

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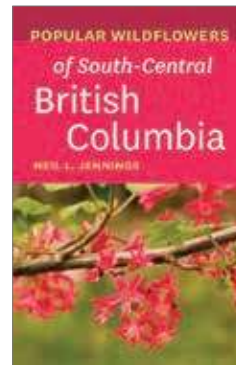


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Harrison (Harry) Crerar

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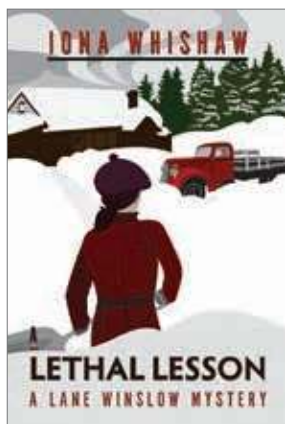


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Neil L. Jennings

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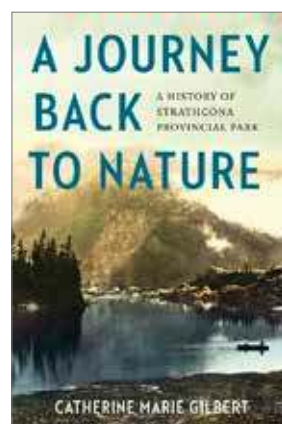
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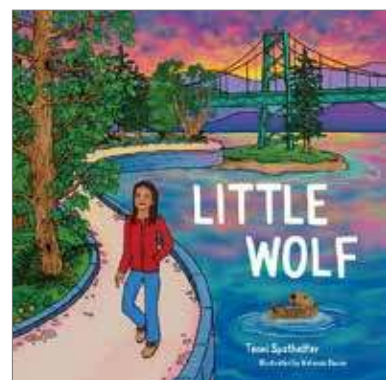
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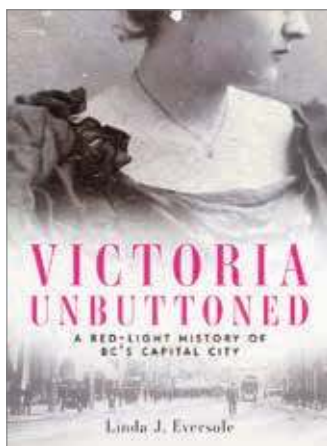


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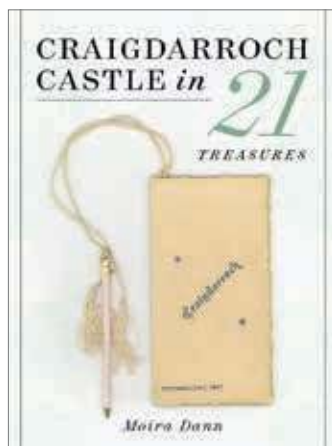
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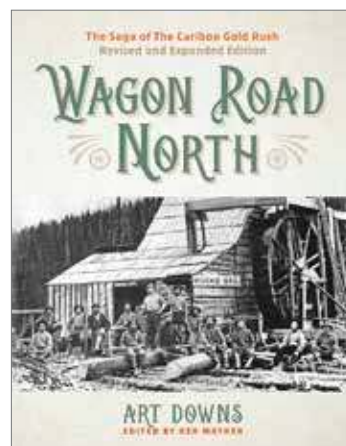


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Moira Dann

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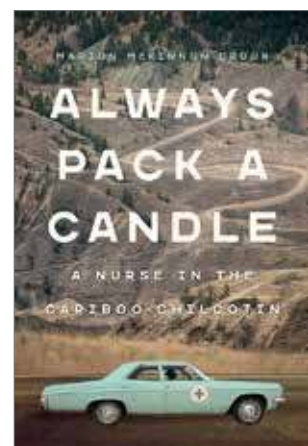
Wagon Road North

The Saga of the Cariboo Gold Rush

Art Downs, Ken Mather (ed.)

A newly revised and updated edition of the classic pictorial account of the Cariboo Gold Rush trail.

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Marion McKinnon Crook

An adventurous young nurse provides much-needed health care to the Cariboo-Chilcotin in the 1960s.

\$22.95 pb | \$11.99 ebook
Heritage House

Canada

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Thomas Berger, one of the most influential British Columbians, was best known as the commissioner of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, sometimes called the Berger Inquiry. His dual professional life in law and politics fundamentally enhanced the concept and viability of self-government for Indigenous people since the 1960s.

Born in Victoria on March 23, 1933, of Swedish descent, Thomas Rodney Berger gained respect for the law from his father who was in the RCMP. After his early schooling in B.C. and Saskatchewan, Berger attended high school in North Vancouver, earned a law degree from UBC and was called to the bar in 1957.

The following year the Ironworkers Union retained his services for a judicial inquiry into the tragic collapse of the Second Narrows Bridge that resulted in the deaths of 18 construction workers. Soon, Berger was battling the Workmen's Compensation Board, trying to get a pension for a miner named **Luis Battaglia** who suffered from silicosis. This case led to the creation of a Royal Commission to investigate the WCB.

It was an auspicious beginning.

In the shadow of his achievements as a social activist and a lawyer, Thomas Berger was a productive author.

His memoir *One Man's Justice: A Life in the Law* (D&M, 2003) spans 40 years of precedent-making cases since 1957 and includes the landmark case of [Frank] Calder v. British Columbia in 1971, during which Berger asserted that Aboriginal rights must have a distinct place in Canadian law. By 1973, the Supreme Court of Canada concurred. Berger's approach in the Calder case laid the foundation upon which most modern treaty-making cases have been argued.

As the commissioner of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, Berger wrote an extensive report, *Northern Frontier Northern Homeland* (Queen's Printer, 1977), which sold more copies than any other federal government publication.

The report's work involved Berger compiling 40,000 pages of documentation, visiting all 35 communities along the Mackenzie River and holding hearings that were augmented by CBC coverage in six languages. It led Berger to strongly urge there be no pipeline built across the Northern Yukon for at least ten years, essentially stalling industrial development.

"If it were built now," he told the Liberal government, "it would bring limited economic benefits, its social impact would be devastating, and it would frustrate the goals of native claims."

When the report was released, several negotiations were underway over Indigenous land claims and Berger's view was that pipeline construction should be delayed until those claims were settled. He also argued that the previous pipeline process had not taken Indigenous culture seriously and that any development needed to conform to the wishes of those who lived in the North.

THE GREAT LISTENER

Trail-blazing lawyer **Thomas Berger** (1933-2021)

fought for Aboriginal rights in Canada by hearing directly from Indigenous peoples, often in their own language.

Berger's integrity influenced the nature of future negotiations with Indigenous people, ushering in a new standard for respect. "The Elders really liked to talk to him because he wanted to listen and he encouraged people to speak in their own language," said former Dene national chief **Bill Erasmus**. "People had never heard from our Elders before in such a setting. I learned from him. Letting people speak is very, very powerful."

Filmmaker **Peter Raymont**, now

that took us from the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, to Tuktoyaktuk, to Fisherman Lake near Fort Liard in Dehcho Territory.

"[Berger] helped Indigenous people in their struggle to have their rights recognized. A noble service indeed."

In Berger's book *Fragile Freedoms: Human Rights and Dissent in Canada* (Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1981), he recounts his abiding concerns for civil rights and in *A Long and Terrible Shadow* (D&M, 1991) he surveys European-Aboriginal

federally for the NDP. He persevered and was later elected to serve the constituency of Vancouver-Burrard, both federally (1962-1963) and provincially (1966-1969). Then, in 1969, Berger narrowly defeated **Dave Barrett** for leadership of the B.C. NDP only to resign later that year after losing in the provincial election to the Social Credit's **W.A.C. Bennett**.

"I first met Tom Berger when he was campaigning against Dave Barrett for leader of the BC NDP," says **Howard White**, President of Harbour Publishing and Douglas & McIntyre. "I was impressed by his high mindedness but worried about his diffident, wooden manner. Charismatic he was not. He beat Barrett but was creamed by W.A.C. Bennett in the general election. It was the best thing for him because it opened the way for him to serve in ways that better suited his talents, first as a judge, then as commissioner of the landmark Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry, then as a tireless advocate and author for the rights of Indigenous peoples. In this last role he did as much as any Canadian to advance the cause of First Nations. It is hard to think of a public figure in Canada who earned more universal respect."

Berger served as a B.C. Supreme Court judge from 1971 to 1983, during which time he conducted the aforementioned pipeline inquiry.

Accorded more than a dozen honorary degrees, Berger also served as chair of SFU's J.S. Woodsworth campaign, which set out in 1984 to raise \$1 million for the J.S. Woodsworth Endowment Fund in the Humanities, and he received the Order of Canada in 1990. He was accorded Freeman of the City status in Vancouver in 1992.

After 12 years as a judge in the Supreme Court of British Columbia, Berger returned to the practice of law and represented the province in a lawsuit against tobacco companies. "I always made my way back into law practice," he once wrote.

Berger is the subject of a biography by **Carolyn Swayze**, *Hard Choices: A Life of Tom Berger* (D&M, 1987). He remained active in the B.C. Civil Liberties Association throughout his life.

Berger also wrote *Village Journey* (Hill and Wang, Farrar Strauss, 1985) and *Northern Frontier Northern Homeland Revisited* (D&M, 1988).

"Tom was a great champion of Indigenous peoples and rights," says **Jody Wilson-Raybould**, Vancouver Granville MP, "a true trail-blazer."

Berger died on April 28, 2021.



Thomas Berger with David Suzuki in 2004, near Tuktoyaktuk, NWT to film an episode for *The Nature of Things*. Photo taken by director/producer, Geoff Bowie.

president of White Pine Pictures, was in the North researching a film for the National Film Board at the time. As quoted in the *Globe & Mail*, Raymont said, "Justice Berger was unfailingly polite, patient and respectful. He had a gift for listening. His inquiry was transformative."

Around 2004, a new Mackenzie Valley pipeline was being considered. Filmmaker **Geoff Bowie** made a documentary with Thomas Berger for CBC's *The Nature of Things* titled *Ghosts of Futures Past: Tom Berger in the North*.

"We took Tom back to several Indigenous communities where he had held his famous Berger Inquiry in the '70s," says Bowie. "Thirty years had passed, three of the four Indigenous groups in the valley had signed comprehensive land claims agreements and Tom was asking them how they felt now about a pipeline. It was a wonderful film project

relations in the Americas since 1492.

Berger's interest in the moral and legal rights of Indigenous peoples spread his influence beyond Canada. In 1991, he was appointed deputy chairman of the first independent review commissioned by the World Bank to examine the implementation of resettlement and environmental measures in the Sardar Sarovar dam and irrigation projects in India. He co-authored a 360-page report critical of the World Bank's support for a project that would displace nearly 100,000 people, *Sardar Sarovar: Report of the Independent Review* (Resource Futures International, 1992).

In 1997, he was part of an international human rights team that went to Chile to assess the social and environmental impact of a major dam project on the Biobio River.

Berger took his first run at politics in 1962 although he failed to win a seat



Sharon Thesen (left)
and Janet Gallant

80,000 HAIRS

The Wig-Maker
by Janet Gallant and Sharon Thesen
(New Star \$18)

BY CAROLINE WOODWARD

Imagine neighbours gathering during a hot, dry summer in a home high above Lake Okanagan to wait for a fire evacuation order. A wildfire bears down on them but they are hoping for the wind to change, for their homes to be cupped in the hands of a merciful God.

In the meantime, the hosts serve chips and salsa and wine. The hours tick by and two women begin a conversation that will continue for months, one that will change their lives and that will result in a remarkable book, **The Wig-Maker**.

One woman is the wig-maker, **Janet Gallant**, who works from home on her painstaking creations. Black and white photos of Gallant's wig-making are featured throughout this slim book of connected poems that charts her journey overcoming a tragically abusive upbringing.

Gallant starts telling her life story to one of the wildfire party hosts, **Sharon Thesen**, who happens to be an editor and poet with a dozen books to her credit, no less than three of which have been nominated for the Governor-General's Award. The two decide to work together on a book about Gallant.

"I remember how easy it was to talk to Sharon. There was no small talk. I can't explain it, my heart trusted her heart," says Gallant.

"I could not, would not, try to write it in the third person," says Thesen.

"Janet's telling was going to compose the entirety of the text—her telling processed through my ears, my heart, my hands."



JANET GALLANT'S LIFE STORY TO DATE IS about surviving as the daughter of a Black woman with a mental illness who abandoned the family when Janet was three years old. Gallant and her siblings were left in the care of their father: a white, poorly educated, binge-drinking soldier who found ways to physically, sexually and emotionally abuse his children and future adult partners.

Doreen, another Black woman with a young daughter of her own, answered his ad for a 'housekeeper' and moved in as a stepmother. Doreen was the kind who ignored blatant child abuse happening right in front of her. So, these poor kids were, in a sense, abandoned yet again by a mother figure to the miseries of life with a monster.

No faraway family intervened. No concerned friends stepped up on behalf of these children. The frequent transfers of army life mitigated against any sort of outside investigation by social agencies outside the military bases of that era.

Gallant's story is about wanting to find a way to remember her brutalized older brother, Billy, who committed

suicide just before his fourteenth birthday after a particularly horrible beating. It's about finding a way to memorialize her older sister Penny who absorbed the worst of the sexual abuse from the erstwhile father but this did not shield the two younger daughters for long.

Gallant's story also leads us to her kind young husband, a best friend, confidante, and father of her two beloved daughters to whom this book is dedicated. Tragically, Gallant's husband is struck down by the ticking time bomb of a hereditary condition.

The autoimmune disorder of alopecia then claims Gallant's glorious African mane of hair within the next six years. Ill-fitting wigs bought off-the-rack only add to the discomfort of this inner/emotional and outer/physical health condition.

After working in Calgary businesses as an executive assistant for twenty-five years, Gallant takes up the nearly-solitary world of wig-making. By knotting up to 80,000 hairs in singles, doubles and triples to create one transformative wig, Gallant contemplates larger life issues yet again. She wants to find family members. She wants to know the truth; she wants photos and any stories family members may or may not choose to share.

She is rejected countless times in this search but Gallant is made of tough stuff and she persists in her search, including DNA ancestry sources. These investigations are included in Gallant's and Thesen's memoir-poem, ultimately leading to a mysterious healing process through the telling itself.



JANET GALLANT FOUND SHARON THESEN by chance. Thesen's husband, Paul, and Jim, Janet's current life partner both love to cycle year-round, solid bicycling buddies. At the time of the threatening wildfire in 2017 however, Sharon and Paul were aware that Janet Gallant's partner was away on business in Alberta. So, although they don't know Gallant well, she is the first of the neighbours to be invited down to wait among friends and acquaintances.

It proved to be fortuitous as Gallant had been searching for the right person to tell her story to. Fortune had led her to Thesen, a master poet with an acutely sensitive ear for language, its rhythms, its hesitations and how an empathetic soul might be a skilled conduit to transfer those lines of speech and the heartbreaking stories therein to the page. Gallant and Thesen's conversations took place over the next two and a half years.

A line from *The Wig-Maker* describing the storytelling, alludes to a form of grace that Gallant so deservedly finds: "The music is indeed here. Lyrics of truth, and notes of healing, are there.... You and Sharon are singing together."

978-1-55420-171-6

Caroline Woodward's most recent book was *A West Coast Summer* (Harbour, 2018), a children's picture book about summer on the Pacific Northwest coast illustrated by Carol Evans.

Peyakow:
Reclaiming Cree Dignity,
A Memoir by Darrel J. McLeod
(D&M \$29.95)

BY LATASH-MAURICE NAHANEE



Darrel J. McLeod's
Peyakow takes
the reader on his
personal odys-
sey and reveals
the history of a
country with a
dark colonial mind-

set regarding Aboriginal people. It's the follow-up to his first memoir, the best-seller *Mamaskatch: A Cree Coming of Age* (D&M, 2018) about the impact of colonization on McLeod and his family.

We witness in these new stories McLeod's dignity and intelligence as he faced the tsunami-like impact and destruction caused by the draconian Indian Act, which brought about cultural genocide to First Nations people all across Canada.

It has taken courage to stand up to a country that took control of land and resources from Indigenous people. It didn't stop there. The Indian Act sought to eradicate Indigenous languages and culture. Leaders like McLeod have stood up and said enough is enough.

"I now grasp how my extended family, once proud and strong, independent and thriving, became disenfranchised and impoverished while the society around us grew increasingly affluent," he says. "In the pages of this book, I write what I've come to understand about the colonization of my people and tell the story of how I struggled to turn around our dystopian lives, striving to salvage some degree of happiness and well-being not only for myself and my family but also for Indigenous individuals and peoples in Canada and other parts of the world."

McLeod grew up in an impoverished Cree First Nations community in Treaty 8 territory in Northern Alberta. He tells of the painful legacy of his impoverished youth, at times struggling with self-destructive behaviours and later the deaths of some of his siblings. He endured the bullying of white classmates, and coped with physical and sexual abuse.

McLeod moved to Vancouver to pursue his educational goals. While

AFTER MAMASKATCH

An extraordinary Cree man
describes how his people overcame
"dystopian lives" in *Peyakow*.

he achieved much by coming to the coast, it also led McLeod farther from his family and culture.

Eventually earning degrees in French Literature and Education from UBC, McLeod began a career in teaching. He climbed the ladder to become principal of a school in northern British Columbia. The conditions of this school were appalling. The federal government underfunds many aspects of Aboriginal education in Canada and McLeod experienced this firsthand. Federally operated schools built on a tight budget fall apart within a few years.

McLeod, then moves on to work for the federal government and the Assembly of First Nations, the national body of elected Aboriginal politicians. His meteoric rise in the ranks of the civil service brings him into roles and situations that draw out the best in his warrior spirit and intellect.

One of his first government jobs involved convincing senior decision-makers to fund new Aboriginal certificate and degree programs in colleges and universities. "My colleagues, all white—policy analysts, economists and accountants—made the same argument: if they agreed to fund special programs for "Natives," they would have to do the same for other minorities—Chinese Canadians, South Asian Canadians, Ukrainian Canadians and so on," says McLeod.

His comeback argument was: "With respect, other 'groups' aren't victims of rapid and brutal colonization, their culture and language methodically suppressed, their territory and birthright usurped,

their suicide rates four times the national average, their children making up half of the kids in government care, with gross overrepresentation in prisons, a lower life expectancy than other Canadians, poor educational outcomes at all levels and low economic participation. If any minority group ever faces a crisis remotely similar to what we are facing, I hope government will seriously consider their proposals."

As executive director of international affairs for the Assembly of First Nations, McLeod leads an Indigenous delegation to the United Nations in Geneva. With courage and unstoppable determination, he helps draft the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP). He tells us that Canada, Australia and New Zealand strongly opposed this universal declaration of the rights of Indigenous People. As countries that were once colonies of Great Britain, from their early days they suppressed the rights of Indigenous people. Canada was among the last of the western countries to sign the UNDRIP.

McLeod's honest account of his life and work is brutal at times. Truth-

telling is like that. But we need someone to reveal what happens behind the scenes. He was a lead federal negotiator on the Nisga'a Treaty, the first modern treaty in British Columbia. The quest for a formal agreement within the Nisga'a Nation started over 100 years ago. I am married to a Nisga'a woman who is the daughter of a high-ranking Chief who was also a senior negotiator for the Nisga'a negotiating team. Also, starting in the mid 1980s, I was an editor and writer with a provincial First Nations newspaper and reported on the Nisga'a treaty negotiations. So, I can verify that it was a long, arduous process.

A few years later, McLeod is once again a lead federal negotiator. This time he is trying to negotiate a treaty with the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Nation on the west coast of Vancouver Island. On the table are issues related to land, economic development, fisheries, culture and language. And there is also the question of an apology from Canada to those members who were forced to attend an Indian residential School. But the federal government of Canada was initially opposed to issuing such an apology. In the end, the Canadian government relented and did issue an apology to the Nuu-chah-nulth victims of physical, sexual, spiritual and cultural abuse suffered at residential schools.

McLeod understood the impacts of such abuses. It's inspiring to learn how he was able to overcome his own challenging obstacles to become a school principal, a treaty negotiator, a jazz musician and raconteur.

Peyakow is a page turner. Take the time to read and understand the history of Indigenous people in Canada through books such as this.

978-1771622318

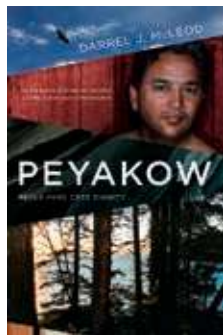
Latash-Maurice Nahanee is a member of the Squamish Nation. He has a B.A. degree (Simon Fraser University).



Darrel J. McLeod,
Port Renfrew; (inset)
recent portrait.
Peyakow is Cree for
"one who walks alone."



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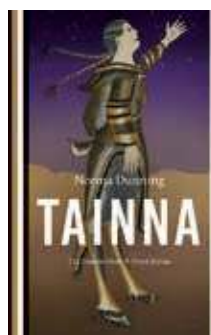
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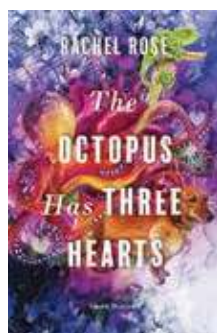
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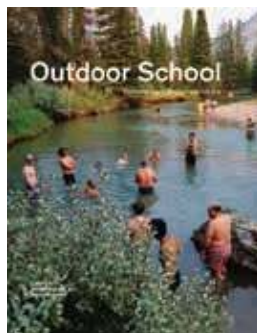
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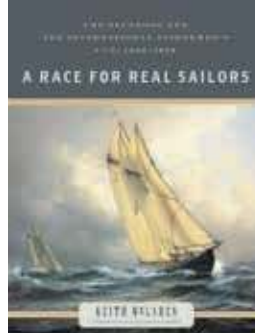
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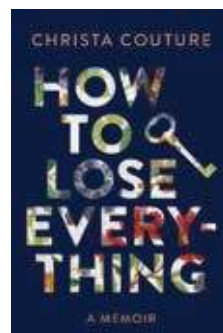
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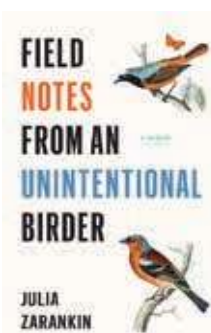


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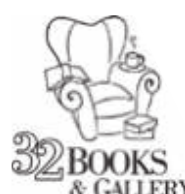
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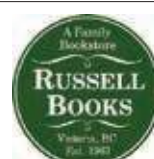
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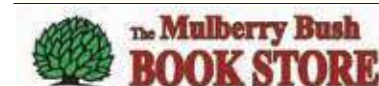
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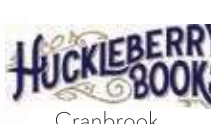
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Two Pieces of Cloth:
One Family's Story of the Holocaust
by Joe Gold
(Page Two \$21.95)

EXODUS

from Auschwitz & Bergen-Belsen to Vancouver

After three days and two nights in a cattle car crammed with 100 people sharing a single bucket for waste and a single pail of water,

David Goldberger arrived at Auschwitz on April 20, 1944. Dr. Josef Mengele directed him to the right. He could live.

All his possessions were confiscated. Goldberger stood naked with the other lucky ones while their heads were shaved and the crevices of their bodies were searched for valuables.

It wasn't until David Goldberger's Vancouver-raised son Joe Gold was himself in his seventies that his father's story of faith, perseverance and family love made its way into print as a book, **Two Pieces of Cloth: One Family's Story of the Holocaust**.

Much of the text that Joe Gold prepared to honour his family's story was gleaned from interviews conducted with David Goldberger decades before by Robert Krell.

IN REMEMBRANCE LIES THE SECRET OF redemption. That idea is from the teachings of the Polish mystic Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer who is regarded as the founder of Hasidic Judaism. David Goldberger always knew he had a story to remember and tell. He just never found a voice for it.

After the home and the textile business of the Goldberger family in Spisske Vlachy was confiscated because they were Jews, the Slovak government proceeded to solve its so-called unemployment problem that ensued by deporting Jews in the spring of 1942.

The first train to Auschwitz from the Poprad transit camp in Slovakia departed on March 25, 1942 carrying 1,000 unmarried Jewish women between the ages of sixteen and forty-five in cattle cars. Family transports commenced on April 11. Jewish males were dispatched to labour battalions in 1943.

David Goldberger first worked as a slave labourer in 1944 in one of the 32 factories of the Manfred Weiss Steel and Metal Works. (The wealthy Weiss family had been allowed to immigrate to Portugal but their enormous art collection was confiscated.)

David Goldberger was ultimately transferred from Auschwitz to Bergen-Belsen on February 17, 1945. Exactly 303 days after he boarded the cattle car, he was liberated from Bergen-Belsen among 60,000 ghostly inmates.

By then, David Goldberger—known as Deszer, or Deszy—weighed sixty-five pounds.

Yugoslavia was the only government that came swiftly to rescue its Jews. Seemingly too skeletal to travel, Goldberger was told by the camp's liberators to wait for the arrival of Slovakian troops. The concentration camp was rife with typhus. The risks of remain-



In the camps, David Goldberger vowed that if he survived he would arrange to be buried in Jerusalem. His many trips to Israel included the Wailing Wall in 1975.

ing were lethal. He opted to take flight with a group of men to reach Hanover, 50 kilometres away, in northwestern Germany. It was there he was given two pieces of woollen cloth that would enable him to begin anew.

"My father noticed a large building which housed a textile company," his son Joe Gold says. "He recognized the name of the company as one of his woollen fabric suppliers before the war. He walked inside and introduced himself to the owners. When asked how they might be able to help

him, my father replied 'If you are able to give me two pieces of cloth—two times three metres—I will be able to start my

life again.' Three metres of fabric would be sufficient to make a suit. It was with these two pieces of cloth that my father was able to barter for other merchandise and necessities and to move on and support his family once again."

In *Two Pieces of Cloth*, we learn that several thousand Jews fled from Czechoslovakia to Hungary aided by Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Ungar. In the voice of David Goldberger, his son Joe Gold recounts his father's successful return to Budapest after the Holocaust to find his wife Aurelia and their first-born son, Andrew, who had been in hiding with false Christian identities. Andrew was disguised as a girl.

"Andrew's hair was long and beautiful. It was imperative that Andrew



Aurelia Gold

be dressed as a girl in case we were ever stopped by the gendarme. They would check any suspicious boys for circumcisions."

Although the story is mainly told from the perspectives of the separated couple, it opens with Joe Gold, as a child, discovering a book of concentration camp photographs hidden in his father's fabric store. "It made sense that my father, upon arrival in Canada in 1948, would open a fabric store," Gold says. "Having successfully managed and owned textile businesses twice (both before and after the war) in his native country of Czechoslovakia, it was the natural way for him to make a new start once again." This precious and rare photo album that Joe Gold first saw in 1952 went missing for seventy years until he traced its origins just before *Two Pieces of Cloth* went to press.

"For as long as I can remember," Joe Gold says, "I have thought of the Holocaust every day."

He says the inspiration to complete his family story arose from a poem written by Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis in the High Holy Day prayer book, *Backwards and Forwards*:

Looking backward, we recall our ancestry.

Looking forward, we confront our destiny.

Looking backward, we reflect on our origins.

Looking forward, we choose our path.

Remembering that we are a tree of life, not letting go, holding on, and holding to, we walk into an unknown, beckoning future, with our past beside us.

After David Goldberger eventually emigrated to Canada with his family, he changed his last name to Gold and became highly successful in Canada's clothing sector with a prominent store, Gold's Fashion Fabrics on Granville Street in Vancouver.

9781989603826



"For as long as I can remember, I have thought of the Holocaust every day." JOE GOLD

MEMOIR

REVIEW

**Chiru Sakura — Falling Cherry Blossoms
A Mother & Daughter's Journey through
Racism, Internment and Oppression
by Grace Eiko Thomson
(Caitlin \$24.95)**

BY CAROLINE WOODWARD

From 1993—2001, my husband and I ran the Motherlode Bookstore in New Denver, B.C. where we had, amidst signs designating the usual books about wood-

working, gardening, and fiction, one sign with these three words: issei nisei sansei. In the early '90s, those shelves contained books like **Ken Adachi's** groundbreaking non-fiction title, *The Enemy That Never Was*, **Joy Kogawa's** luminous novels and one of her books for children, **Barry Broadfoot's** oral history, *Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame*, post-modern poetry volumes by **Roy Miki** and **Gerry Shikatani**, and several general titles about the history of the Slocan Valley where there were ten internment camps for Japanese-Canadian citizens in 1942.

Today, those shelves would be packed with many more Canadian books, from the sansei/third generation in particular. And it would contain many copies of **Chiru Sakura—Falling Cherry Blossoms: A Mother & Daughter's Journey through Racism, Internment and Oppression**, at once



A mother and daughter's bittersweet memoirs explore generational trauma during the racism of the war years.



Sawae Nishikihama was required by law to carry this registration card at all times; (top) A train carrying Japanese Canadians from Vancouver, stopped in the Slocan Valley, circa 1942.

SHATTERED DREAMS

a conversation between issei/first and nisei/second generation immigrants to Canada, a decades-long argument between mother and daughter, and a close-up, personal history of dreams shattered and self-worth battered by the Canadian government's decision to treat 22,000 citizens as "enemy aliens."

In the "orchard half" of New Denver in 1993, once one of B.C.'s WW2 internment camps, work was nearing completion on the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre, given National Historic Monument status in 2007.

In the summer of 1994, the film cast and crew for *The War Between Us* directed by **Anne Wheeler**, descended on bucolic New Denver and provided work for carpenters, horse wranglers, and local professional and amateur actors including a number of former Canadian-Japanese internees and their descendants who had stayed when the war ended. Other B.C. internment camp residents had been ordered to go "east of the Rockies or be sent back (sic) to Japan" as the government didn't want them staying in the province. But New Denver was the only internment site to which this rule did not apply and the cherry trees in the orchard and many beloved and highly esteemed former internees blossomed after the harsh war years.

★
FATE AND FAMILY PRESSURE HAD OTHER plans for **Grace Eiko Thomson** (whose maiden name was Nishikihama) and

her family, who had thrived in the lively, pre-war Powell Street neighbourhood of Vancouver. First, they were sent to Minto City, a mostly-abandoned gold mining town near Lillooet, for three years. Then they were persuaded to go east to Manitoba, to work on farms.

Culture shock does not begin to describe it.

Grace's mother, **Sawae Nishikihama** wanted her family to know about this life, including being faced with the prospect of living in a barn during Manitoban winters. She began writing her memoirs at the age of 84. Her second of five children, Grace, was by then a nationally respected curator of art exhibits, a gallery director, a leader of Japanese Canadian associations and mother of two, married to a Scot. She had also been taught the Japanese language and script from an early age so she began translating her mother's memoirs.

Grace found herself adding her own reflections in response, from her very different perspective as a child enduring racism from all quarters,

molestation by older white men, and recalling happier times as well, with kindnesses shown to the family by other Canadians, most notably Jewish friends from Winnipeg.

Since her older sister had been sent to Japan to live with a grandmother long before-hand, Grace inherited a list of daily chores from the age of ten onward. These included looking after her two younger brothers and one sister and making simple meals for the family.

Both parents worked constantly to support their family on inadequate wages and dealt with an older family member who was, by my reading, constantly taking financial advantage of "third brother's family" through coercive methods.

Sawae was a gently raised and educated woman when she left Japan to marry her handsome, hardworking fiancé, by then a naturalized Canadian, in 1930. He worked at every manual labour and service job that came his way while she became a skilled dressmaker. It is one of the inevitable conflicts in this bittersweet book that

her teenage daughter, Grace, treasured the factory-made sweaters and neck scarves given to her by a friend more than the exquisite ball gowns made by her mother.

Grace wanted the Hit Parade tunes to sing along with while Sawae recalled Ikebana floral arrangement lessons.

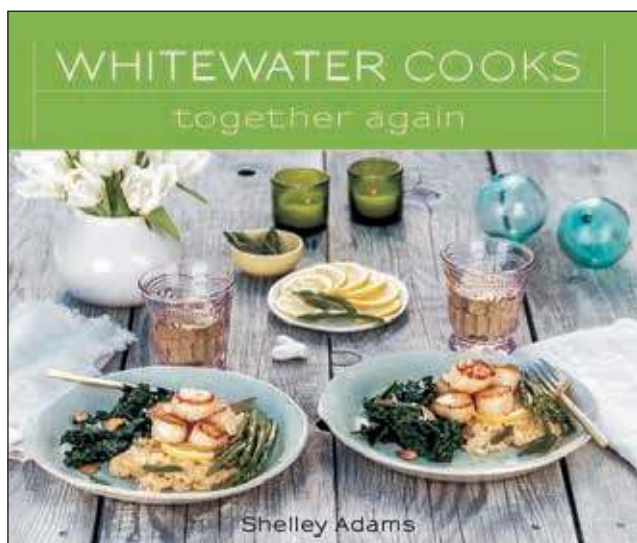
A timid but bright and lovely little girl, Eiko (Grace) came to demand her first name be anglicized to Grace because an ignorant teacher made a point of mangling her two-syllable Japanese name every time he had to utter it publicly.

This world is still full of injustices. Stories like these, painful and shameful and hopeful, too, help us understand the cost to our humanity of racist government policies. Throughout, Grace Eiko Thomson returns to her mother's teachings of hope and resilience symbolized in the cherry blossoms around what was once their home in Vancouver. 9781773860411

Recently retired as a lighthouse keeper on Lennard Island, Caroline Woodward lives and writes from somewhere on the road in a mighty BigFoot motorhome. Eventually she'll return to New Denver.

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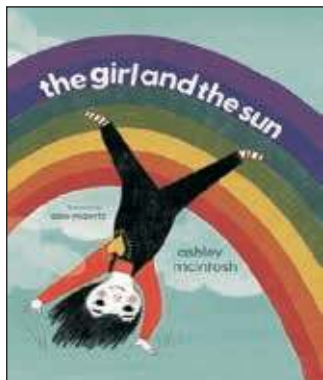
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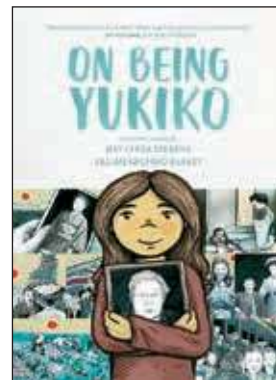
The GIRL AND THE SUN *Ashley McIntosh*

Each of us has a sun that lives in our heart, and a cloud that lives in our mind. In this beautifully illustrated book, a little girl is happy and the sun shines brightly in her heart. But one day, a rain cloud comes into her world and suddenly things begin to make her feel bad - sometimes mean even. She tries to get rid of the cloud, but nothing works. Sad and depressed, she lays down in the forest and stares up at the sky. But then something happens to make the cloud disappear and her sun begins to glow again... Ages 4 – 8 9781777017903 \$21.95 hc



FOX IN A BOX *Eva Klassen*

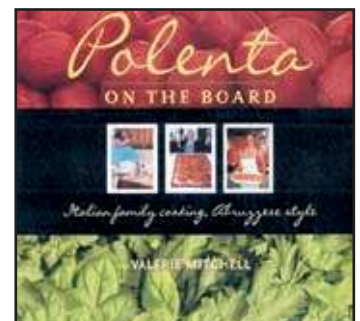
Socks and rocks and blocks and clocks, Fox loves everything in his box hidden deep in the forest. But when he realizes he can no longer fit inside, Fox decides he must take action! Fox learns to part with his collected objects by thoughtfully giving them to his friends and learns that happiness is found not in the accumulation of things, but in the people we love and the gift of giving. Fox in a Box has 40 glorious pages of full colour illustrations with a secret map of Fox's forest that kids will love. Ages 4 – 8. 9781999244804 \$24.95 Big Mind Books



ON BEING YUKIKO

*Jeff Chiba Stearns
Lillian Michiko Blakey*

Through the blending of two unique artistic styles, this exciting graphic novel tells an intergenerational story of family history and cultural identity. 12-year-old Emma learns about her Japanese roots when her Ba-chan tells her the true-life story of her great-great grandmother Maki, a Japanese picture bride, who journeyed to Canada at the turn of the 20th century. Maki's story of extreme perseverance and sacrifice inspires Emma, who identifies as a quarter Japanese, to discover a deeper connection to her Japanese Canadian identity...and on being Yukiko. 9781775234333 \$19.99 hc Meditating Bunny



POLENTA ON THE BOARD

*Italian Family Cooking Abruzzese style
Valerie Mitchell*

Featured on CBC's NorthxNorthwest, this sumptuous recipe collection follows the traditions of Abruzzo, a region of Italy recognized for its unique dishes such as stracci (Abruzzese crepes filled and baked in a succulent sauce) and polenta sulla tavols (slow cooked cornmeal covered with a rich sauce and eaten communally). Seasoned and novice cooks alike will enjoy these easy-to-follow recipes. Learning at her Nona's side, Valerie Mitchell has created a timeless addition to any cookbook collection.

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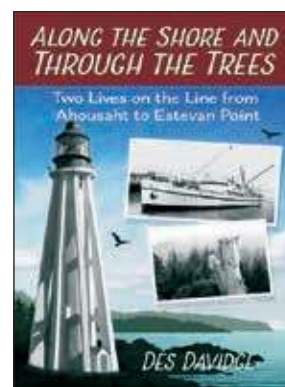


Common BIRDS of Coastal British Columbia *J. Duane Sept*

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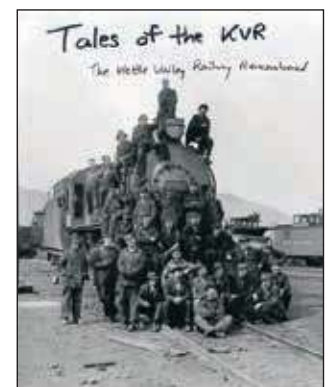
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ALONG THE SHORE AND THROUGH THE TREES *Des Davidge*

A telegraph line runs the length of Vancouver Island's rugged west coast, from an iconic lighthouse on Estevan Point to the small Nuuchah-nulth community of Ahousaht on Flores Island. This is the story of two lives - two memoirs - tied together by that line. Des Davidge recounts his time spent as a radio operator at the remote Estevan Point Marine Radio Station. It is also the story of his wife, Rosina Adeline Ada Rae Arthur who accompanied her father, the man who spent over three decades surviving hardships and wilderness to maintain that same line. Set in an isolated corner of British Columbia, this is a compelling story of history, geography, friendship, and love.

9781777392901 \$19.95 pb Davidge



TALES OF THE KVR

*The Kettle Valley Railway Remembered
Barrie Sanford*

Drawing largely from his interviews with railroaders over the past 50+ years and his own research, Sanford presents fresh stories and fresh photographs to give the Kettle Valley Railway its due as a product of a generation of wild west BC adventurers. Here are the stories of Hurricane Hawkins, the engineer whose trains were always perfectly on time, of Minnie Engen who hailed from Minnesota, of Bunkhouse Bill who guarded sleeping engineers in the little town of Brookmere, BC - and stories of many others. Told as a series of long and short pieces, Sanford has assembled living social history carefully preserved by one of BC's foremost railway history experts. 9780973560237 \$21.95 pb NRHS BC Div

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ARTISANS

REVIEW

The Distilleries of Vancouver Island:
A Guided Tour of West Coast Craft
and Artisan Spirits by Marianne Scott
(Touchwood \$25)

BY ALEXANDER VARTY

Just this weekend I spent a happy hour with Betty and Veronica, hanging out in a warehouse abutting a sheep farm and a brewery just a few short minutes outside of downtown Parksville. Reggie and Archie were there, too, although they stuck demurely to one corner of the space, as if aware that the ladies were and would always be the true stars, sparkling and shining and adorned with copper and crystal.

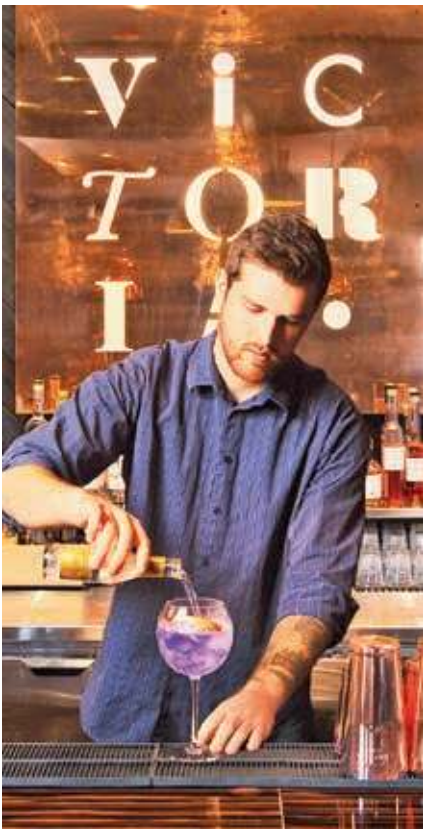
Now, before you conclude that I'm either a senile fantasist, obsessed with *Riverdale* cosplay, or have been booked to play Pop Tate in series 7 of the popular TV show, let me explain. Betty and Veronica are the two Chinese-made stills that **Shelly Heppner** uses to produce her Bespoke Spirits line of vodkas and gins, and they are undeniably gorgeous, standing tall and elegant amid a steampunk array of condensers, boilers, piping, tanks, and gauges. Reggie and Archie are considerably more utilitarian, but gleam with care nonetheless: they're the two 1000-litre fermenters that handle the first part of

IN GOOD SPIRITS

Discovering Betty and Veronica at an artisanal hard liquor distillery on Vancouver Island.



Distiller Kevin Titcomb explains the grains in Devine's Ancient Grains Whisky



Bartender Cam Watson of Victoria Distillers in Sydney.

the alchemical process of turning grain into a cheering dram.

More to the point is that I willingly spent the first swimmable Saturday of 2021 in a warehouse rather than on the beach, for it's an indication that **Marianne Scott's *The Distilleries of Vancouver Island*** serves its intended purpose perfectly. In the spirit of previous island guides such as **Elizabeth Levinson's *An Edible Journey: Exploring the Island's Fine Food, Farms, and Vineyards*** and **Don Genova's *Food Artisans of Vancouver Island and the***

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MONDAY WAS A SIMPLER TIME: REFLECTIONS ON A PANDEMIC

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Gulf Islands, it's designed to help readers plot their own self-guided regional tours, not only alerting them to off-the-beaten-track delights but providing them with the background information necessary to fully understand what they'll see en route.

Until very recently there would have been very little need for a book of this particular kind. Organic farms, small-scale smoking and canning operations, and even craft breweries have been a part of Vancouver Island life for decades, and in a sense so have artisanal producers of hard liquor. But interview requests would likely have met with the sharp end of a shotgun; the legendary moonshiners of Lasqueti or the Prohibition-era rum chemists of Jordan River were not only flying underneath the government's radar, but indulging in an activity as legally dubious as heroin importation or the counterfeiter's trade.

Changes to government regulations at the start of this century have now made small-scale distilling legal, if subject to strict controls, and Scott's book covers all 21 producers now operating on Vancouver Island, Salt Spring and Hornby. These range from one-woman operations like Heppner's, the most recent craft distillery to open here but surely not the last, to Saanich's 23-acre Devine Distillery & Winery, bankrolled by co-owner **John Windsor's** successful career as an Ontario property developer. Distilling seems an ideal retirement project for some, like Hornby Island's Island Spirits Distillery, run by former ferry captain **Peter Kimmerly**; for others, it's a natural outgrowth of operating a craft brewery or cidery. Many of the techniques and some of



Alayne MacIsaac and Jason MacIsaac, Sheringham Distillery, Sooke



Shelter Point Distillery's massive Forsyths pot stills in Campbell River.

the equipment is in common, and so it's not been a big leap for Victoria-based Phillips Fermentarium Distilling Company to diversify into whisky and gin, or for Merridale Cidery & Distillery to make various brandies from the same photogenic *pommes* and pears that surround its Cobble Hill plant.

And if there's any doubt that Vancouver Island craft distilleries are on the verge of the kind of international recognition that has greeted this province's wineries, consider the surprising rise of Sooke's Sheringham Distillery. After only four years in business, owners **Jason** and **Alayne MacIsaac** and their team won a "world's best contemporary gin" award in 2019. It's a well-deserved honour.

Scott's straightforward style is effective in conveying the science behind the distilling process, and the stories behind the distilleries themselves. It's perhaps unfortunate that she doesn't offer more colourful descriptions of the beverages on offer; *The Distilleries of Vancouver Island* doesn't say much about taste or mouthfeel or aroma. But that might be for the best. As Scott notes, "What might be my favourite gin tastes like gasoline to others."

The thirst this book provokes is more for personal discovery than for expert guidance, and with that in mind I'm already plotting post-COVID field trips to Sheringham, Island Spirits, and several other facilities, including a return visit to Betty and Veronica.

This time I'll ask about Jughead.

9781771513326

Alexander Varty is a musician and writer living on unceded Snuneymuxw territory

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**GABRIEL DUMONT'S
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This bilingual flipbook is a flamboyant epic, constructed as a series of tableaux, about the struggles of the Métis in the Canadian West.

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STILL
by Anahita Jamali Rad

A powerful follow-up to Jamali Rad's *for love and autonomy*, *still* proposes an alternative to action, a way to jam the signal by refusing receptivity. *still* disclaims language, writes without writing, divests in itself, is nonliving and unlife. This book begins and ends in emptiness.

978-1-77201-285-9; \$16.95; POETRY



THEN NOW
by Daphne Marlatt

Written in response to the discovery of letters by Marlatt's father, these poems explore a sense of place and home on Canada's West Coast now on the brink of global climate change.

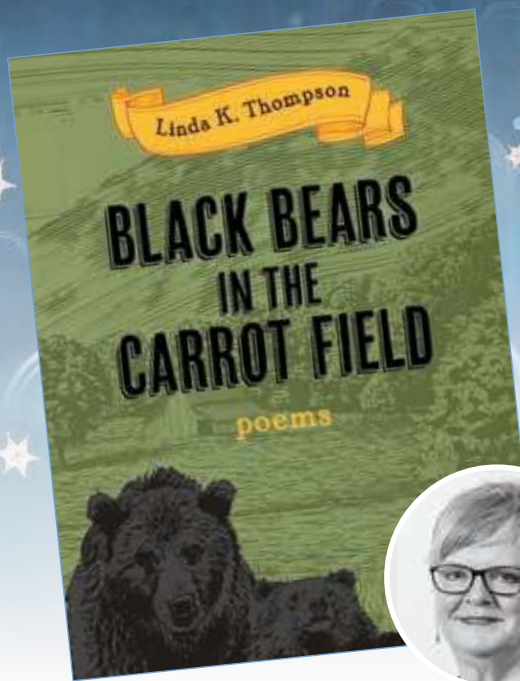
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Linda's book is loaded with personalities from farms, small towns and long ago days. Finally a Canadian poet that writes characters better than many novelists. Linda K. Thompson has won awards for her writing and her work has been published across Canada, the U.S. and Great Britain. She lives in Port Alberni.

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Clear minimalist poems that embrace with gentle and perceptive wit; aging, family, dreams, Matsuki's Japanese roots, marriage, Parkinson's, Chemo and impermanence. Matsuki Masutani is a poet and translator living on Denman Island. He has translated Canadian works such as Roy Kiyooka's *Mother talk*, Hiromi Goto's *A Chorus of Mushrooms*, and from Japanese into English, Kishizo Kimura's memoir, *Witness to Loss*. Includes Japanese translations.

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- Daphne Marlatt, author of *Intertidal: The Collected Earlier Poems 1968-2008*.

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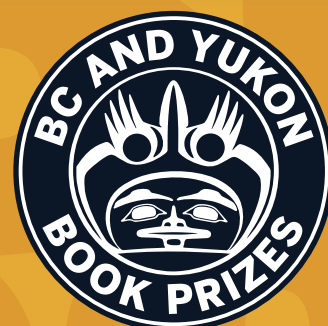
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**St. Michael's Residential School:
Lament & Legacy by Nancy Dyson
& Dan Rubenstein**
(Ronsdale \$21.95)

In 1970, two young, recently wed idealists, **Nancy Dyson** and **Dan Rubenstein**

arrive at the Alert Bay Student Residence as childcare workers. The Residence used to be the St. Michael's Indian Residential School and that was the name it was still called although the actual schooling had been moved to the Alert Bay public school and the high school in Port McNeill.

Nancy and Dan's jobs were to look after the children before and after school and on weekends. Within days of starting their new jobs, Nancy and Dan were exposed to the ugly truths of what happened to Indigenous children there. It was more than they could bear and they left four months later, hardly able to speak of what they saw.

When the Truth and Reconciliation reports came out in 2015, divulging survivor's stories about Canada's residential schools, Nancy and Dan were shocked. "When we read the survivors' statements and realized the lasting, tragic legacy of the schools, we felt compelled to share our story."

Encouraged by Chief **Robert Joseph**, Ambassador of Reconciliation Canada, Nancy and Dan published **St. Michael's Residential School: Lament & Legacy**. "You must tell your story," Chief Joseph counselled the couple. "Tell what you witnessed so no one can deny what happened. This is so important to the survivors."

Here are two excerpts from the tell-all book, written primarily from Nancy's point of view and including passages from the Truth and Reconciliation reports relating to the couple's experiences.

THE FIRST SUPPER

At five o'clock, Dan and I followed the children down a steep flight of stairs to a dark, musty dining room in the basement of the residence. The children sat on metal chairs at long, grey folding tables. Bare fluorescent bulbs cast a green light over their faces.

Dan and I sat at a table with a group of little boys. When they looked at us and smiled, there were gaps where they had lost their baby teeth. I guessed that they were young, five or six years of age.

"Ahem." A white-haired man in a black suit stood and cleared his throat. His face was thin with a pointed nose and a tic contracted his features into a grimace. As he brought his hands together for prayer, his bony wrists extended well past the cuffs of his jacket. He cast his eyes around the room, warning all to be quiet. Then he intoned, "O Everlasting God, Who hast ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order; mercifully grant that, as Thy holy angels always do Thee service in heaven, so by Thy appointment they must succour and defend us on earth. Through

Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen." His Adam's apple bobbed up and down as he spoke. He reminded me of the character of Ichabod Crane in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."

The older students began ladling soup from metal pots into Melmac bowls. The bowls were passed, hand to hand, to each child. A basket of white Wonder Bread was also passed down the tables and each child eagerly laid two slices beside his plate. The bread disappeared quickly, unlike the watery and tasteless soup. The children, their eyes fixed on their bowls, ate in silence. The meal was meagre and I thought the children must be hungry.

"Is there any joy here?" I asked myself.

"Again and again, former students spoke of how hungry they were at residential schools. Students who spoke of hunger also spoke of their efforts to improve their diet secretly."—The Survivors Speak, A Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, p. 7.



WE START HERE

[Shortly after their first evening, Nancy and Dan witness the induction of four children into the Residence]

"We start here," the matron said crisply.

We heard footsteps and a man

Entrance to St. Michael's Residential School, Alert Bay, 1970.



ANTHONY CARTER PHOTO, COURTESY: UBC MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY, A037992

pushed four children into the room. "Here they are," he said proudly. "I had quite a struggle getting them out of Bella Bella. A granny put up a fight but I got 'em." He wiped his hands vigorously on his pant legs. Then, frowning, he examined his hands, front and back, to see if they were soiled before hurrying up the stairs and disappearing.

The children, two girls and two boys, clustered together with their heads lowered and eyes downcast. Their chests rose in quick, shallow breaths. The small girl clutched the hand of the bigger girl. The matron used a heavy glove to open the boiler door and, as air whooshed into the firebox, the flames turned a fiercer shade of orange. The children looked up with fear. The matron pulled a pair of heavy shears from her apron pocket and grabbed the smaller girl. She quickly cut the child's hair and let it fall in a dark mass at her feet. Then the matron cut the clothes from the girl's small body until the child stood naked and trembling. The other children gasped.

Dan protested, "Is this necessary?"

She gathered the hair and clothing and threw them into the fire.

"Lice," she said. "They all come in with lice."

"But they're frightened," I said, shaking.

The matron ignored me and went on to the next child. When all four were shorn and naked, she pushed the children to a wall where six shower heads ran along a galvanized pipe. The matron carefully took off her white apron and hung it on a hook, then put on a rubber smock. She turned on the showers and washed the children's heads and bodies with harsh soap. The little girl cried out.

"Stop, please stop," I repeated.

But the matron shook her head. "I guess you've never seen a hundred kids with lice," she said. "Well, I have. All it takes is one child. Then, pretty soon, they've all got lice."

Dan and I grabbed towels from a row of pegs and wrapped them around the children.

"It's okay," I mumbled senselessly. "It's okay."

The matron led us to the second floor. The children shuffled barefoot, still wrapped in towels. From time to time, a soft sob rose in the little girl's throat and she wiped her nose on her arm. The matron unlocked the infirmary, which doubled as a storeroom.

"Pull those wet towels off the children," she told us as she opened a locked cupboard. She eyed the children and selected clothes roughly the right size for each of them. For the girls, two sets of underwear, two pairs of leggings and two shirtwaist dresses sewn in the style of the 1950s. For the boys, two pairs of briefs, two pairs of pants and two checked shirts. Socks, rolled into pairs, filled a wicker basket on the floor. "Give each of them a pair," she told us. She motioned for the children to sit down on a bench while she found them shoes, shoes that were used and scuffed but serviceable.

"That should do for now," she said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAN RUBENSTEIN

Nancy Dyson and children from St. Michael's Residential School watching preparations for a potlatch, Alert Bay, 1970.

978-1-55380-623-3



**Polly Horvath's
Pine Island Home is a
finalist for a 2020
Governor General's
Literary Award.**

ORPHANS & GENIUSES

Pine Island Home by Polly Horvath
(Puffin Canada \$19.99)

AGES 9-12

Sisters Fiona, Marlin, Natasha and Charlie find out the hard way they are orphans. Having recently lost their missionary parents in a tsunami in Indonesia, the four arrive at their great-aunt Martha's farm in B.C., who volunteered to take them in, only to find she is nowhere to be found.

Checking in with the nearest neighbour, a number of red flags should have deterred them. A dilapidated trailer in a forest clearing has a torn screen window, broken steps and an old refrigerator and bathtub clutter the front lawn. A man with uncombed hair, a dirty white undershirt and ripped pants bangs open the screen door, gruffly wanting to know who they are.

"Our great-aunt lives next door," offers 14-year-old Fiona, the eldest sister.

"Not anymore she doesn't," says the man. "She buried herself two days ago."

Turns out great-aunt Martha had unexpectedly died of a massive heart attack. In her will, she leaves the farm to her nieces. Despite seeming to be a curmudgeon, the neighbour, Al is clearly upset at Martha's passing. But the sisters now have more pressing matters to worry over. They don't want to be separated by social services.

Fiona hatches a plan to keep them together at the farm by pretending that Al is their guardian. They find a way to get him to go along with the scheme and enroll in the local school. Fiona takes over as head of the household, Marlin turns out to be a good cook, give or take the odd culinary disaster, and they all pitch in with other household chores. **Polly Horvath's *Pine Island Home*** rolls along, pitching the sisters from one challenge to another.

The theme of orphaned children is

Books for young people, often referred to as young adult literature (YA), start children and teenagers on the road to developing good reading habits and they are also tools

for understanding life's moral dilemmas, contemporary issues and matters of health and wellness. *BC BookWorld's* summer selection of YA and kidlit includes titles about the importance of family and community, racism, fascism, addiction, ecology and compassion.

common in literature for young people. Famous classics include *Cinderella* (of which there are many versions but the popular one was published by the Brothers Grimm in their 1812 folk tale collection *Grimms' Fairy Tales*), *Oliver Twist* by **Charles Dickens**, the *Harry Potter* novels by **J.K. Rowling** and, closer to home, **Lucy Maud Montgomery's** *Anne of Green Gables*. *Pine Island Home* has vague similarities to the endearing classic, *Little Women* by **Louisa May Alcott** as it emphasizes four daughters without at least one parent (their father was away in the American civil war) and the girls are left to make important decisions about their futures. Orphan stories are also an archetype that stresses the importance of family and of belonging.

Fiona is mature and wise enough to know that she and her sisters will eventually get caught in their ruse. Only a true guardian can keep the family together.

978-0-73526-862-3

Double or Nothing
by **Brooke Carter** (Orca \$10.95)

AGES 12-18

Essie Tomasi starts college at the age of fifteen. By eighteen, she is already taking advanced courses. It's clear that Essie and her identical twin Aggie are geniuses.

What no one knows is that Essie has a serious gambling addiction.

In a third-year English class where Essie is supposed to be watching the movie *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, looking for particular themes, she thinks about a thousand other things during a scene where the characters are talking about the odds of coin flips.

In **Double or Nothing** by **Brooke Carter**, readers see what is going through Essie's mind in her interior monologue: "I'm thinking about coin combinations on the screen. I'm thinking about probability theory. I'm thinking about the odds of my coin matching the flips the characters make. I'm thinking about Hamlet and the sucky life he's living. To be or not to be, dude. Yeah, that is the question."

But mostly, the monologue reveals Essie is thinking about her online gambling and stock trading apps, and the several windows that are open on her computer waiting for her attention. "Every second that goes by, I'm losing money," says Essie.

Her gambling gets so bad that Essie wrangles a dorm room to herself rather than rooming with Aggie. Essie tells her family that she needs space to figure out who she is besides a twin. But it's really so that she can gamble in private.

It gets to the point where Essie makes a bet she can't cover and Aggie comes to the rescue, making a dangerous deal herself. Together the two have to find a way out of their gambling mess or face daunting consequences.

978-1-45982-381-5

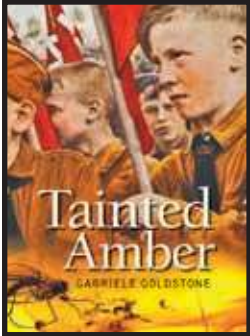


Brooke Carter earned her MFA in creative writing at UBC and lives in Maple Ridge.

Tainted Amber
by **Gabriele Goldstone** (Ronsdale \$12.95)

AGES 9 AND UP

It's hard to beat the context of wartime for focusing a reader's attention on matters of good and evil. A servant girl, Katya, working on a horse breeding estate in East Prussia in the pre-war year of 1937, is at the core of **Tainted Amber** by **Gabriele Goldstone**. Katya travels one hot



summer day with her good friend Minna to a spa town on the Baltic, looking for a special piece of amber. The girls are accompanied by the estate owner's two sons, Helmut and David. But terrible things happen on the trip, turning the amber into a bad talisman. After Minna suddenly leaves for Vienna, the servant hired to replace her is a fervent Nazi supporter, who catches the eye of Helmut and they marry. David, whom Katya loves, and who will have nothing to do with Nazism, has an epileptic seizure. According to the country's new race laws, David must be sterilized. Katya learns that the piece of amber from the Baltic is a symbol to Minna of her rape by Helmut. War is about to break out and life gets even more complicated for Katya.

978-1-55380-614-1

When We Are Kind
by **Monique Gray Smith** (Orca \$19.99)

AGES 3 - 5

Some of **Monique Gray Smith's** favourite topics include resilience and reconciliation. Her background is Cree, Lakota and Scottish and she has written several books covering reconciliation includ-

ing her latest title *When We Are Kind*. According to the book's back notes, Smith's aim was "to prompt a dialogue among young people, their care providers and educators about kindness and the importance of the connections children make with their friends, classmates and families."

When We Are Kind celebrates acts of everyday kindness. Elegantly simple phrases such as "I am kind when I share with my friends" and "I am kind when I bring food to my Elders" speak to the importance of a child's community. And "I am kind when I only take from the earth what I need," demonstrates the value of respecting ecology.

Gray also shows how receiving kindness brings positive results: "I feel loved when my Elders are kind to me."

Dual language copies are available in English and French, and English and Diné.

9781459827530

Lilliana and the Frogs
by **Scot Ritchie** (Harbour \$22.95)

AGES 3 - 5

Scot Ritchie's picture book **Lilliana and the Frogs** is about a young nature lover who decides to capture frogs and keep them in her bedroom.

Lilliana's bedroom is already full of frog posters and frog toys. One night, while lying in bed listening to chorus frogs singing outside, Lilliana decides to bring some of these sweet-sounding creatures to live with her.

After an adventure collecting the frogs from a local pond the next day, she takes them back to her bedroom where she has made a cage for them. Then she goes to the kitchen seeking food for her new friends. But when she gets back, the frogs have disappeared; they have escaped to other parts of the house.

Luckily, Lilliana and her parents find a way to get the frogs out the door and back into nature.

"Chorus frogs know where they

belong," writes Ritchie. "Now Lilliana knows, too."

The story is based on Ritchie's memories of exploring Camosun Bog in Vancouver's Pacific Spirit Park as a boy. Ritchie admits that he, too had brought wild chorus frogs from the woods to his parent's house: "I made a home for them under my backyard stairs but they escaped through the chicken wire." Ritchie's hope is that his book inspires readers to explore nature but leave it outside.

9781550179347

Pride Puppy!
By **Robin Stevenson** (Orca \$19.95)

AGES 3 - 5

In **Pride Puppy!**, a rhyming alphabet book, **Robin Stevenson** describes a young child, a sibling baby, their parents and their puppy celebrating Pride Day. They meet up with Grandma, make new friends in the crowds of people wearing everything from feathers, cowboy hats, flowered hats, bunny ears to tiaras, and enjoy snacks like ice cream as it melts in the hot sun.



Robin Stevenson

Stevenson describes the event in straight forward but lively sentences that portray the event: "E for everyone under the sun. F for feathers, for flags and for fun."

Suddenly the young child realizes that their puppy has been lost in the parade. Being in a supportive community, other people help find the puppy and bring it back to his family.

With vibrant illustrations by **Julie McLaughlin**, the story is helpful for young readers learning to recognize letters of the alphabet. It is an LGBTQ+ inclusive book where identity is not the focus but rather queer community-focused and the family is intentionally not gendered.

9781459824843

Painted Fences
by **Sara Cassidy** (Heritage House \$19.99)

AGES 4 - 8

Walking with her great-grandfather Afi on his birthday when the air is filled with the scent of spring blossoms and fluttering petals, Esther is surprised when he starts to tell her a story about one of the peeling paint colours on a nearby fence.

"What if I told you a boy painted it here 75 years ago, with a paintbrush sneaked from a neighbour's shed? All because he wanted some meatballs," said Afi.

"You can't know that!" replies Esther.

"Oh, can't I?" chuckles Afi. "Listen to this story ..."

And with that, Afi regales Esther with tales of what it was like living during WW2 in 1945, when fathers were overseas fighting and times were hard for little boys—like Bob and his friend Charlie. Their clothes were patched, their shoes had holes and it was difficult to make money to buy extras. Food was rationed and had to be bought with ration tokens.

Bob is off to get meat for a special meatball dinner his mother is making for his birthday. He meets up with Charlie and they run to the butcher's shop. But Bob loses the ration token

he needs to get the meat through a hole in his pocket.

Charlie agrees to help Bob make some money so they can get the meat anyway. They salvage some paint, borrow paintbrushes from

Charlie's Uncle Zing's shed (who, like Bob's father is away fighting in the war), and look for a neighbour who can afford to pay the boys to repaint their fence.

Just as they finish, there is excitement on the street. It has just been announced that the war is over. At this point in the story, Esther realizes that Bob is really her Afi. Now she wants to paint a fence like Charlie and Bob did, starting with some salvaged paint.

Painted Fences by **Sara Cassidy**, is a cleverly disguised history lesson for young people. The book's blurb describes it this way: "From a memory revealed in a chip of paint comes a story of friendship, hardship, and hope for the future."

Illustrated by **Sydney Barnes**, the pictures creatively separate the current story (using multi-colours) from the past story (using monochrome hues).

Sara Cassidy's previous book *Nevers* (Orca) has been noninated for a 2020 Governor General's Literary Award,

9781772033519

ALSO NOTEWORTHY

YOUNG ADULT:
Tremendous Things
by **Susin Nielsen** (Penguin Teen)
Green Glass Ghost
by **Rae Spoon** (Arsenal Pulp)
On the Trapline
by **David A. Robertson**,
illustrated by **Julie Flett** (Tundra)

PICTURE BOOK:
We All Play by **Julie Flett** (Greystone)

GRAPHIC NOVEL:
Bubble
illustrated by **Tony Cliff**
(First Second Books)
TARTARUS #9
by **Johnnie Christmas**
(Image Comics)



Illustration by Nicole Neidhardt from *When We Are Kind* by Monique Gray Smith (Orca).

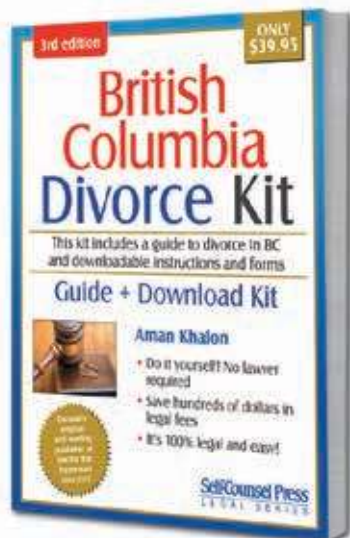
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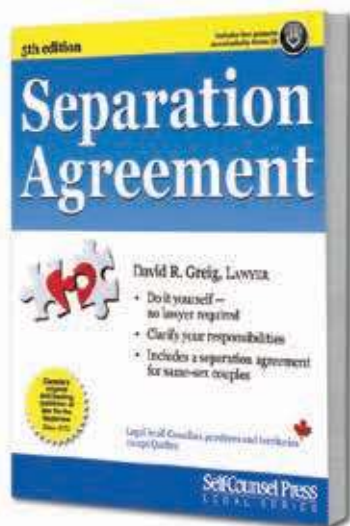


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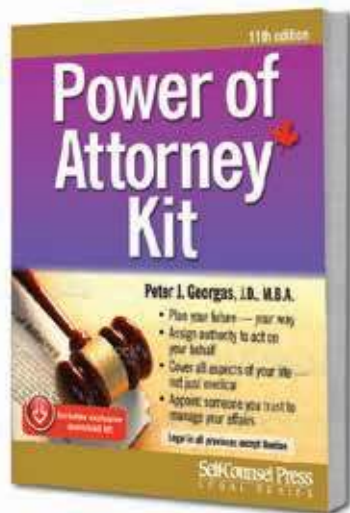


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ECOLOGY REVIEW

BEAVERING AWAY

An ingenious builder of dams,
this odd-looking rodent creates
wetlands essential to many
other animals and plants.

Beavers:
Radical Rodents and Ecosystem
Engineers by Frances Backhouse
(Orca Wild \$24.95)

Beavers are the world's second largest rodent. Only Capybaras found in South America are bigger. Rodents they may be, but beavers are also a keystone species that support many other animals and keep ecosystems healthy and functioning properly. If they are removed, the ecosystem is weakened and can break down completely.

Pretty important for an animal that **Frances Backhouse** describes as "kind of goofy-looking" in **Beavers: Radical Rodents and Ecosystem Engineers**, a crossover book for young adult readers aged 9–12 and older people interested in nature. "They have big orange buck-teeth, front feet that don't match their back ones and a tail that looks like it was run over by a tractor."

Backhouse also calls beavers amazing. "They can build structures that are visible from outer space," she says. "They can turn streams into lakes and

Frances Backhouse
and taxidermied
beaver



change the shape of valleys. They can gnaw right through the trunks of trees that are as tall as flagpoles. And they do all this with nothing more than their sharp front teeth, nimble paws and powerful muscles."

Typically about three feet from nose to tail tip, and weighing about 16 to 32 kilograms (35 to 70 pounds), beavers are known for cutting down trees and building dams, which no other animal does other than humans. Beavers do so because, as semi-aquatic animals graceful and fast in the water, they are awkward movers on land and vulnerable to enemies like wolves, coyotes, cougars and bears.

"If they meet one of these predators onshore, their chances of escaping on foot are slim," says Backhouse. "Beavers can gallop for a short distance if necessary but their normal gait is a slow waddle. A cornered beaver is unlikely to win a fight, even though its tree-cutting incisors can slash like a knife."

But venture onto land they must in order to get to their food sources and gather building materials for the lodges they build to live in, surrounded by the safety of water.

However, not all beaver lodges are in the middle of ponds as "some locations aren't suitable for this kind of construction," notes Backhouse. "Beavers that live in wide, fast-flowing rivers or deep lakes have to settle for a home that is anchored to land on one side."

These bank dens, as they are called, are usually temporary homes. Beavers have evolved to change their environments with dams that spread water out



North American beaver

across the land, making shallow ponds with slow-moving water. It is in such places beavers can make their ‘castles encircled by a moat’.

“Beavers often build a series of [dams] along a stream or river, creating a chain of ponds like beads on a string,” says Backhouse. In the process of forming their ponds, beavers create wetlands that are “among the world’s most biologically productive ecosystems, right up there with rainforests and coral reefs,” says Backhouse.

Wetlands provide essential habitat for many plants and animals as well as purifying water by filtering it through plants. Plankton and insects nurtured in the ponds feed fish and tadpoles, which are in turn eaten by herons, kingfishers, minks and racoons. Beavers also provide safe living spaces for turtles and other mammals.

Many wetlands and mature beaver meadows were lost after the beaver was almost hunted to extinction for its furs in the nineteenth century. Called “brown gold”, beaver pelts were historically valued by Europeans to make hats.

Indigenous stories tell of the changes wrought by such ecological destruction including those from a member of the Tsilhqot’in First Nation nicknamed **Lala**. She was born around 1830, “about the time the fur trade and European settlers reached [the Chilcotin Plateau],” writes Backhouse. “She had witnessed big changes to her people’s way of life during her early childhood.”

Lala told her children and grandchildren about the beaver ponds that had been home to enormous trout and abundant wildlife “including muskrats, minks and otters. In the spring and fall, migrating ducks and geese covered the water. But those days were over. Fur seekers had killed off the beavers, and

the ponds had dried up.”

Lala’s biggest wish was to have the old habitat restored and “give it back to the beavers.”

In *Beavers*, a story is recalled by **Veasy Collier** of his father **Eric** (who had immigrated from England at the age of 17) meeting Lala when she was nearly 100 years old. “Eric learned a lot about his new home from Lala,” writes Backhouse and Lala inspired him to repair the old beaver dams. Collier was only seven when he helped his father and mother laboriously use hand tools to fell trees, drag them to the dams and put them into place. “When the next rains came, the old beaver pond began to refill. Then the first ducks splashed down. Success!”

Eventually park wardens helped the Colliers re-introduce beavers to the area to carry on the work that the family found so hard to do.

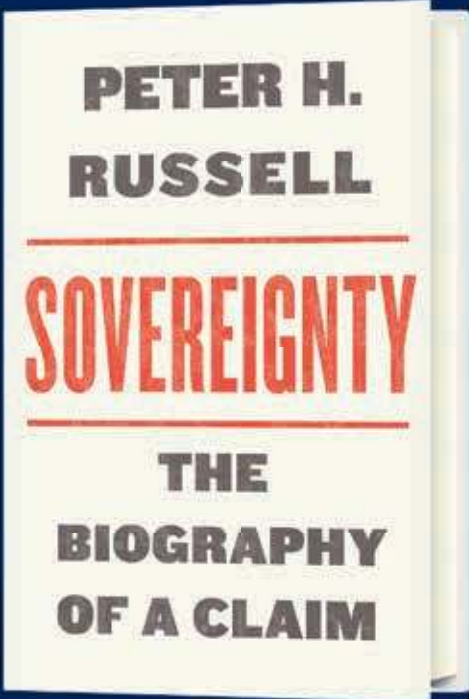
Today beaver populations have recovered in North America. Now, some people consider them pests because as Backhouse notes, “there is no denying that they can make trouble for their human neighbours.” Beavers fell trees that many people would prefer to see alive and upright. And beavers occasionally attack swimming dogs because they resemble predators like wolves, especially if there are beaver kits nearby.

But there are many ways to ameliorate the negative effects of beavers. Groups of people have sprung up to promote the peaceful co-existence of people and beavers.

“These radical rodents are always worth celebrating and helping,” says Backhouse. “Because if we are there for the beavers, they’ll be there for us and all the other living things that benefit from their remarkable ecosystem engineering.”

9781459824690

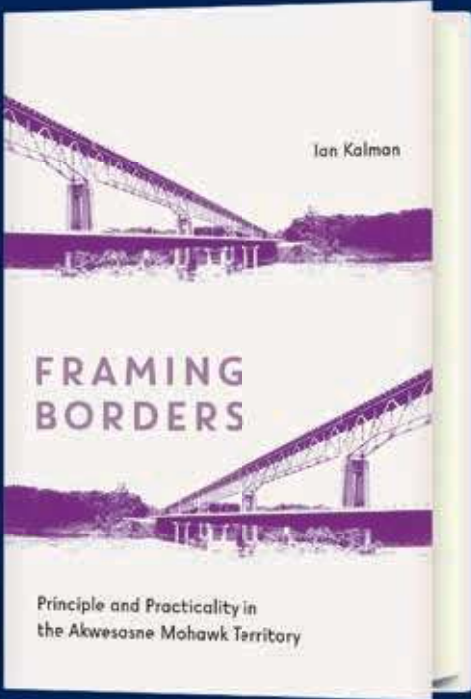
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Doris Forbes
with Mickey,
her 70 pound
pet beaver



MICKEY THE BEAVER

In *Beavers*, Frances Bakehouse relays the story of how **Doris Forbes** met her pet beaver **Mickey** in 1939 when it was brought to her as a baby near death. It recovered and lived with the Forbes family in Red Deer, Alberta for the rest of its life. Sleeping in a kennel during the day, Mickey played with the family in the kitchen in the evening where he built dams using pieces of firewood and the family slippers. While they slept, Mickey continued playing in the garage with logs and boards. Beavers were still rare then and Mickey attracted news reporters and magazine writers, and the CBC told his story on national radio. “He’s the best pet I ever had and I love him with all my heart,” Doris once said. Today, most people understand it is better to take orphaned animals to wildlife rescue centres where they can receive expert care and be set free back into the wild when they recover.

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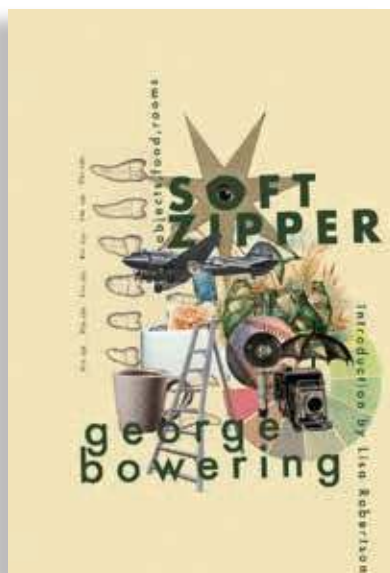


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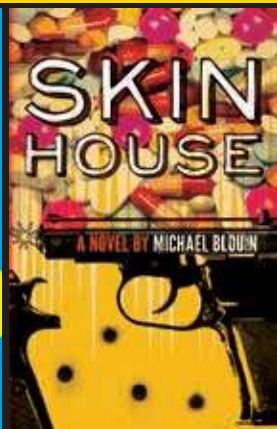
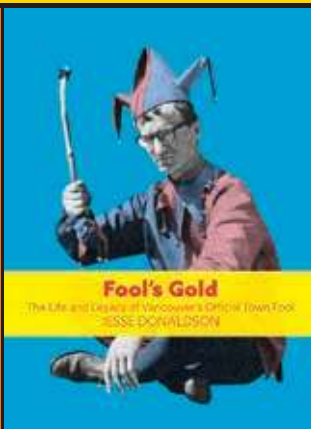
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Astra
by Cedar Bowers
(Penguin \$24.95)

BY PORTIA PRIEGERT

One big challenge for emerging writers is structure. You have a story—but how to tell it? Chronologically? A series of flashbacks? Or something more elaborate? In **Astra**, Cedar Bowers of Victoria develops an elegant solution for her debut novel—a series of loosely linked vignettes based on the perceptions of 10 people who pass through the life of the titular character.

They range from Raymond, the reluctant and incompetent father left to parent Astra after her mother dies in childbirth at Celestial Farm, a rural B.C. commune, through to Astra’s own child, Hugo, and his father, Dom, as well as some of the people Astra meets when she adapts, as best she can, to mainstream life away from Celestial.

This structure lets readers see Astra, a complex figure, through multiple lenses. Each vignette adds to our understanding, even as her life shifts and loops forward. The book is character-driven, something Bowers handles with aplomb. These people feel real and linger in your mind. Their struggles and their joys play out against common themes of the West Coast experience. Perhaps that’s not surprising: Bowers grew up and still lives part-time on Galiano Island, which has a long history as a counter-culture haven for writers.

The book’s first chapter, an introduction to the themes that will mark Astra’s life, needs a tighter edit, a problem that crops up periodically elsewhere, as does a tendency, at times, to tell a little too much, rather than letting the story reveal its insights more organically. But these are minor quibbles, and easier to overlook once the scene is set and the narrative momentum begins to build.

Astra, who mostly raises herself, has scars on her face from a cougar at-



Cedar Bowers grew up on Galiano Island where she continues to live part-time.

MICHAEL CHRISTIE PHOTO

tack as a young child, a visible marker that echoes the invisible wounds she bears. She is tough and fiercely independent, a product of her environment. Talking to her childhood friend, Kimmy, she lectures about the perils of sugar, uses “complicated words” like consumerism, organic and oppressive, and borrows a favourite sweatshirt with seemingly little intention of returning it. “Where I live,” Astra tells Kimmy, “we share everything. It’s better that way.”

But as Astra heads into the world beyond Celestial, she seems naïve and vulnerable. She is prone to let others take care of her, whether the creepy manager at her first job, who lets her crash at his place, or the husband she eventually divorces. The repercussions of her unorthodox childhood become increasingly apparent. She is working through neglect and childhood trauma and seems to have some sort of attach-

ment disorder but is a survivor. Later in life, caring for her father as his mind clouds with dementia, she wonders: “Is he even aware I’m here? Has he ever been?”

The story, ultimately, is a critique of the idealists and misfits who seek escape, redemption, a simpler life, whatever, as an alternative to mainstream consumerist culture and the ravages of capitalism. Yet, dream as they might, Bowers’s renegades mostly seem adrift and confused, as they replicate patriarchal systems that relegate women to cooking, cleaning and caregiving, leaving a trail of collateral damage in their wake. As Astra tells Dom, who spent his early years at Celestial but ends up as an emotionally remote financial manager in Toronto: “We come from the same sort of place ... a place that isn’t real, that only exists as an idea. A place filled with irresponsible dreamers

like them, and left-over kids like us.”

Circling back to structure, the book is remarkable in how it replicates the way we get to know people in real life. We watch them and talk to them, listen to others telling stories about them, perhaps study their photos or read something they have written, and, through all that, piece together an understanding. However fractured or contradictory, these shards are all we have, and our sense-making is informed by who we are as much by who these people might be or believe themselves to be. Indeed, readers who seek to understand Astra will be holding a mirror to their own most basic assumptions.

9780771012891

Victoria-based Portia Priegert is the editor for Galleries West and a former reporter for the Ottawa bureau of the Canadian Press.

Five Ways to Disappear
by **R.M. Greenaway**
(Dundurn Press \$17.99)

BY JOHN MOORE



You could speed read **R.M. Greenaway's** latest mystery, **Five Ways to Disappear**, to make sure, but—despite several murders and the memory of another—there isn't a single reference to firearms in this novel.

That doesn't make it unique. Guns are also much less common in British crime fiction than in the American genre, but like the previous novels in Greenaway's *B.C. Blues* series, this novel is what's often called a 'police procedural' where you might expect the occasional mention of duty side arms carried even by detectives in Canada.

Greenaway has clearly sussed that not having a smoking gun every half-dozen pages has advantages. It spares the reader having to wince at yet another erroneous evocation of the 'smell of cordite' in a room where shots have been fired. (Note to readers, cordite hasn't been used since WW2 and then mainly by the British). Back in the days of cordite, **Agatha Christie** discovered going gun-less also compels an author to invent methods of murder that are both more imaginative and more realistic. The killing that opens *Five Ways to Disappear* combines the banal and bizarre in equally intriguing measure.

On one of the suburban streets that dead-end on the steep-sloped forested margins of 'development' in North Vancouver, at the hour most people have breakfast, a man is found pinned to his front lawn by a long iron pole rammed through his throat. The pole is surmounted by an amateurish painted wooden whirly-gig of the cartoon character Porky Pig, one of a row of equally tacky 'artisan' creations displayed for sale along the fence. RCMP investigators aware of the demographic of their patch suspect the murder may have been the result of an escalating dispute over neighbourhood 'aesthetic values' and start looking for suspects among the more upscale residents of the street.

No Spoilers Alert: you'll have to read the book to find out how this case connects to two subsequent murders, one as comically bizarre as the first and the other so ruthlessly calculated it's more terrifying for being almost mundane. The absence of all but the most fractionally circumstantial evidence linking the crimes reflects how the institutional professionalism of police officers isolates them from the very people they try to protect and serve, sometimes leaving them dependent on old-fashioned human intuition and dumb luck to uncover the tragic truth.



FIVE WAYS TO DISAPPEAR IS THE FIFTH instalment of the adventures of North Vancouver RCMP officers Cal Dion and David Leith, so readers new to the series may feel like they've arrived at the theatre in the middle of the second act. Early authors and film directors of 'police procedurals' quickly realized that the novelty of showing how police officers solve crimes wore thin faster



R.M. Greenaway has worked in nightclubs, darkrooms and courthouses.

BIZARRE murders and a police triangle

R.M. Greenaway's

latest murder mystery has no smoking gun, focusing instead on the lives of three troubled police officers as they solve crimes.

writers responded with **P.D. James's** Adam Dalgliesh, **Ruth Rendell's** Inspector Wexford and **Colin Dexter's** Inspector Morse. They set the stage for **Ian Rankin's** Edinburgh cop, John Rebus, whose rebellious persona and tangled private life Rankin has detailed in more than a dozen best-selling novels.

Taking Rankin as her model, (you could hardly find better) Greenaway

varies the formula by creating a triangle of characters, Leith, Dion and their female colleague JD, held together by the shared inherent stress of police work and indefinable emotional tension. As friends do, they love but don't always like each other. While it may be elegant and stable in mathematics and engineering, in human relations the triangle is unstable and potentially explosive. In *Five Ways to Disappear*, Leith is considering an undercover assignment that would improve his career prospects but break up the team, while JD and Dion recognize their mutual attraction despite the secret guilt that torments Dion.

Five Ways to Disappear succeeds because Greenaway subordinates the internal, personal and professional drama of the relationships of the cops and never loses sight of the real human tragedy at the novel's core: the relationship between an aged arthritic social misfit and the great-grandson he hardly knows and didn't expect to love.

Pandemic reading recommendation: get a copy of Greenaway's first novel, *Cold Girl*, and catch up. 978-1-45974-156-0

John Moore's most recent book is Rain City: Vancouver Essays (Anvil, 2019). He lives in Garibaldi Heights.

Harold and Maude & Heidi

Why a love affair with a 1960s movie endured for half a century.

Glorious Birds: A Celebratory Homage to Harold and Maude
by Heidi Greco (Anvil \$18)

BY JANE CURRY

Is it possible to write a love letter to a movie? In her new book **Glorious Birds: A Celebratory Homage to Harold and Maude**, Heidi Greco sets out to share everything she knows about her favourite movie's production, casting, characters and place in history. In the process she includes us in her own personal journey and 50-year relationship with her beloved film.

First screened in 1971, the cult

classic *Harold and Maude* is a coming-of-age, oddball comedy directed by **Hal Ashby**. It was chosen in 1997 for preservation in the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress for cultural, historical or aesthetic significance. The plot focuses on a suicide-obsessed 20 year-old, Harold Parker Chasen (**Bud Cort**), and his friendship and eventual romantic relationship with a 79-year-old, Maude (**Ruth Gordon**) a holocaust survivor who teaches Harold about the importance of living life to its fullest.

Greco is a poet, and clever in the structure of her book. The first page is a framed, untitled spoiler alert to her audience that includes several disclaimers. She recommends that readers "take the time to see it [the film], before you begin reading." (If you haven't seen it yet, or want to watch it again, it's on Kanopy via



Ruth Gordon and Bud Cort in *Harold & Maude*, 1971

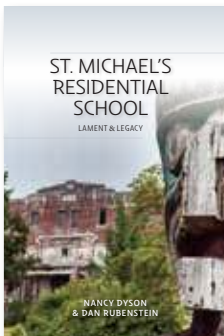
digital streaming through your local library.) Greco also warns that she is "not a film critic, or an academic who is trained in scholarly research" and takes responsibility for all her errors. Next up Greco provides a useful cast list of 'The Players' and 'The Collaborators.' These clues aid our navigation of her dense research.

The body of Greco's writing takes on the form of a play, complete with three chapters (or acts), beginning with: 'Coming Attractions,' where she presents her rationale for writing. "I

suppose you might call it a special fondness—one that's based in emotion but that also takes into account the many elements director **Hal Ashby's** film manages to accomplish in such remarkable fashion. Impeccable casting, erasing the fourth wall to create that special sense of intimacy with an audience, and soaring above it all, the emotional effect achieved through the score and the soundtrack both of which are creations of the artist known then as **Cat Stevens**."

continued on next page

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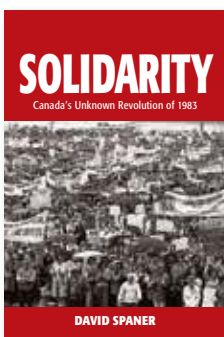
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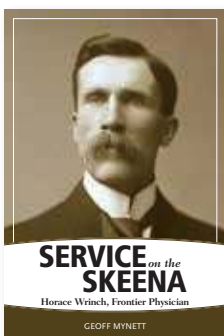
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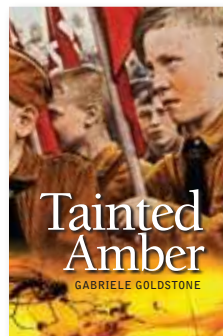
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Gabriele Goldstone

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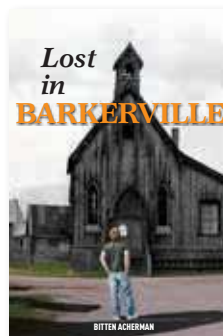
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FILM REVIEW

continued from previous page

In her second chapter 'Feature Presentation' Greco includes the bulk of her research and explores what makes *Harold and Maude* special. She compares the film to other films from the same period, as well as placing it in the context of the past century of cinema history. Her comparison with **Mike Nichols'** film *The Graduate*, released four years earlier in 1967, is the most comprehensive. She examines the turbulent times of the late 1960s and early 1970s, concluding that Ashby's anti-war messages and "embedded visual links to this era of such significant cultural change" are why this film continues to resonate today.



Heidi Greco

Greco also examines the innovative and meticulously detailed art direction, describing it as "letter-perfect." Ashby relied on the talents of the film's artistic director, **Michael Haller** to decorate the rail car where Maude lived. "The details for this task involved creating not only a memorabilia-filled, and homey environs, but Maude's inventions had to be included—and to at least appear to function according to specs." Maude's 'Odorifics' fragrance device and Harold's retrofitted Jaguar-hearse are legendary.

In a quest to define cult films, Greco quotes **Christopher J. Olson**, author of *100 Greatest Cult Films*: "He points out that audiences for cult films often consist of people who consider them-

selves outsiders and reject prevailing cultural norms." "Also, cult films should challenge mainstream sensibilities in some way and transcend typical ideas about good and bad taste."

Harold and Maude was, in many ways, ahead of its time as one of "the earliest films to point its finger at war... to give us a full-on philosopher/environmentalist in the character of Maude" and to include "the concept of computer dating."

To probe the history of the film even further, Greco includes an interview with actress **Ellen Greer** who played Harold's third date; and a comical, fictitious interview with the deceased Dame Marjorie Chardin (aka Maude).

In the final, third chapter 'Behind the Lens' Greco completes her research with a scene by scene breakdown of the film and a bibliography.

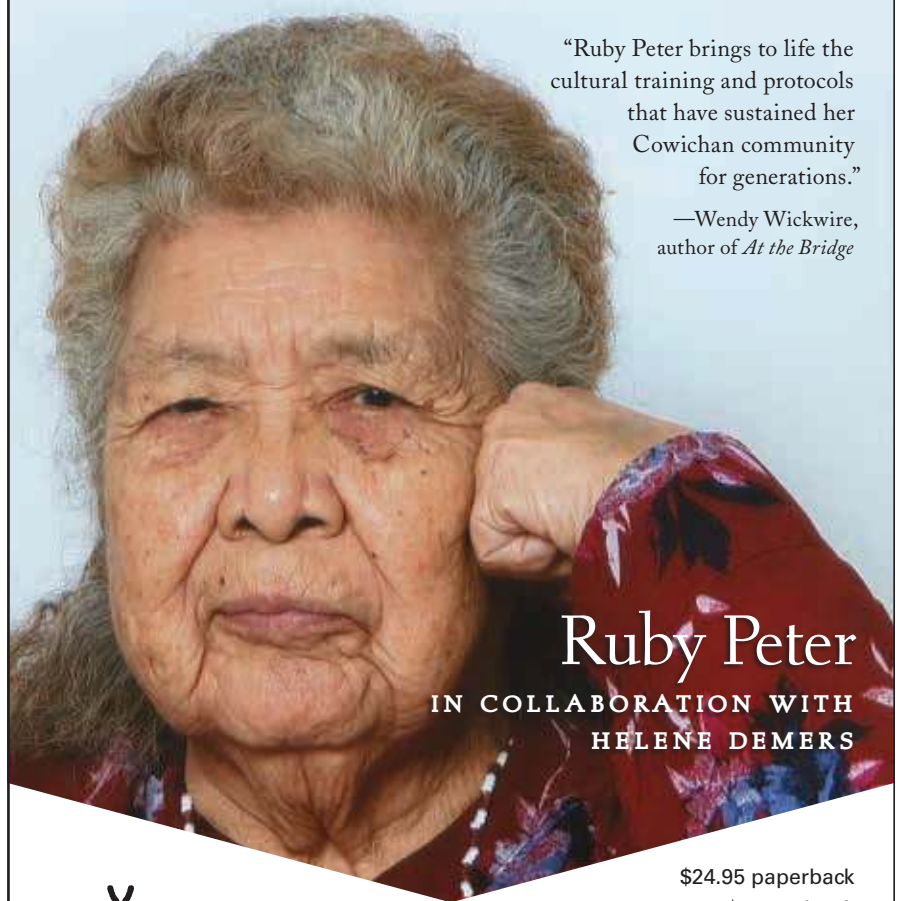
Greco first saw *Harold and Maude* when she was in her twenties and a university student. Her love for the film has endured for half a century. Now a writer, editor, critic, literary activist and instructor, Greco acknowledges the film had a profound affect on her. "I can't help but think the movie inspired me and helped me be brave enough to become the person I am today."

978-1-77214-171-9

Jane Curry is head of the Joe Fortes branch of the Vancouver Public Library system.

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Big Reader: Essays
by Susan Olding
(Freehand Books \$22.95)

BY MARY ANN MOORE

From the time Susan Olding was a child, she has had a book on the go. She is, as the title of her new book suggests, a big reader.

One of her earliest memories is seeing images of “ordinary garden vegetables with some letters beneath them.” The little girl connected those letters to words. It was an exciting discovery which led Olding to more pleasures later in life: reading as a student, a book store employee, a library haunter, a teacher, and not least, as a writer.

As an adult, writing essays became Olding’s forte. Her debut collection *Pathologies: A Life in Essays* (Freehand, 2008) was selected by 49th Shelf and Amazon.ca as one of 100 Canadian books to read in a lifetime. Her work has won a National Magazine Award and other honours.

Olding’s follow-up book, **Big Reader: Essays** references her love of reading and contains writing that is as intimate as personal letters combined with the lyricism of poetry. She illustrates the beguiling multiplicity of the personal essay form and celebrates the life-enhancing aspects of reading.

The other meaning of ‘Big Reader’ is a machine similar to an old-fashioned microfiche reader that can magnify words onto a screen. Olding writes about her mother being introduced to the huge and awkward machine when her sight was failing. The Big Reader proved to be far removed from the tactile nature of a book in one’s hands. “To lay a page in that device, to see the words taking shape on that big screen, would have stripped a veil from the past and reminded her of all she had lost,” writes Olding.

Olding’s essays are full of this sort of poignant perception. Most of them are preceded by a prose poem, or a “short” as she calls them. For example, in *Billy*, Olding writes this following short about books: “Carry your treasures home, pile them beside the bed, place them under the living room chairs, set them on every table, on every counter, on every windowsill.”



Susan Olding

UNPACKING HER LIBRARY

Susan Olding on being “human” and the joys of reading.

Olding frequently refers in her essays to one or more books that have influenced her life, such as *Anna Karenina*, *A Rake’s Progress*, *The Golden Notebook*, *Oliver Twist*, *Middlemarch* and the poetry of **John Keats**. There are several more noted in her addendum and include the novels of Indigenous writers **Katherena Vermette** and **Tanya Tagaq**, and the poetry of **Billy-Ray Belcourt** and **Michelle Poirier Brown**.

Olding’s first essay, *In Anna Karenina Furs* recalls

when she was sixteen, “during the height of second-wave feminism” in the seventies that she defended the married *Anna Karenina* heroine who fell in love with an army officer in **Leo Tolstoy**’s novel. Upon reading the book later in life, Olding has now had more life experience with which to connect to Tolstoy’s adulteress as she herself has been an ‘adulterous adult’ involved in her own ‘scandal.’ The essay is beautiful and revelatory, ending without the tragedy of *Anna Karenina*.

Olding is an astute writer and researcher, evident in *Library Haunting* in which she blends her particular ‘haunting’ with the historical. The title of the essay reflects the title of **Virginia Woolf**’s story, *Street Haunting*.

Many of the essays are award winners such as *A Different River* that won the Edna Staebler Award for the Personal Essay in 2017. Each section of the segmented essay bears the title of a Toronto river, stream or creek including Taddle Creek, which has been covered over on the grounds of the University of Toronto. Metaphors notwithstanding, Olding openly writes about her relationships with a boyfriend and a gay man, intertwining these stories with Toronto’s cholera epidemic in 1832, the works of Oscar Wilde, the casualties of AIDS and her own depression. As Olding says: “Rivers can’t help showing us that everything is connected.”

In *Unpacking My Library*, Olding describes a move from Vancouver to Vancouver Island in the spring of 2020. She makes note of the writ-

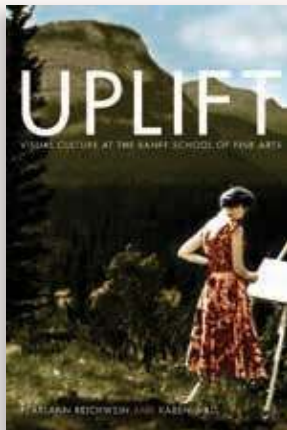
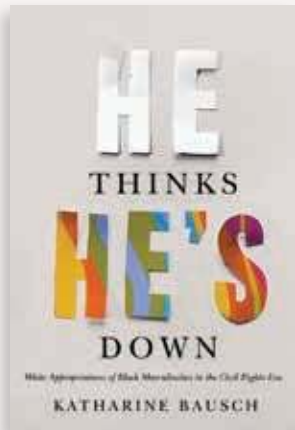
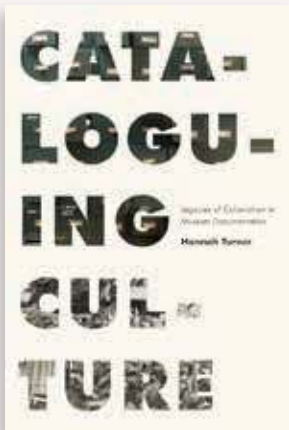
ings of **George Orwell**, **Joan Didion**, **James Baldwin**, **Alice Walker** and **Mary Rich** and upon reflection says: “Essays told stories, essays were concrete and intimate instead of abstract and forbidding, essays made me feel smart instead of stupid. They made me feel, period.”

Olding’s essays offer honesty, intellectual curiosity and impeccable research. *Big Reader* is a splendid example of how our own life stories are enhanced by and interconnected with the characters we meet in books.

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Mary Ann Moore is a poet, writer, writing mentor and avid reader who lives in Nanaimo. She’s writes a blog at apoetsnanaimo.ca

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POETRY REVIEW

Matsuki Masutani

**LONG TIME YOUNG
SUDDENLY OLD**

A life's worth of poetry in 110 pages.

I will be more myself in the next world
by Matsuki Masutani
(Mother Tongue \$19.95)

Publishing a debut book of poems in his seventies, **Matsuki Masutani** of Denman Island had plenty of material to work with: growing up in Japan, marrying a Canadian, moving to Vancouver and later the Gulf Islands, experiencing old age, ill health and grandchildren. He covers all these life phases in **I will be more myself in the next world** with a unique minimalist style through which he manages to express his ruminations with the sparest of words. The effect is one of deep meditation. His first poem gives the book its title: "I am/ more than/ my body/ more than/ what I think./ I am/ more than/ what I do/ what I did/ and what I will do./" "Actually/ I am/ more than/ what I am/ in this world/ and I feel/ I will be more myself/ in the next/world."

In addition to being a poet, Masutani is also a translator and one of the early artists he worked with was the multidisciplinary painter, photographer, poet **Roy Kiyooka** (1926 – 1994). It was Kiyooka who encouraged Masutani to write poetry in English and Japanese, and both languages are included in this collection. Masutani often ends his poems with an unexpected twist. In describing how he met his wife while traveling in Kathmandu and how the two continued to wander around together for many months, he says they stayed in "the travellers' lifestyle" even after raising their children. "We are still in travellers' mode bumbling around in cafes and thrift shops in the neighbourhood," he writes before concluding, "going nowhere."

Masutani shares that he ran away from his father in Japan, "to find out who I was." Forty years later, "I look back at my father and wonder, who he was."

Undergoing cancer treatment and feeling like he is dying, Masutani is told to "embrace" the chemo bottle around his neck. But he is afraid of the bottle

that the nurse calls "a baby bottle." Nonetheless, he makes a resolution: "I must make my life more worthy."

He survives only to be diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. His wife tells him, "You were young for a long time and suddenly, poof, you're an old man."

In the final poem, Masutani watches his newborn granddaughter sleeping. "Sometimes she shudders like a bewildered insect, a mystery from the other world."

Gold in the Shadow: Twenty-Two Ghazals and a Cento for Phyllis Webb by Diana Hayes
(Rainbow Publishers \$24.95)

Long an admirer of **Phyllis Webb**, **Diana Hayes** was honoured in 2017 to assist with the cataloguing of the poet's other artistic work: her paintings.

It led to a much profounder engagement and Hayes says that she was soon "lost in exotic and unfamiliar worlds beyond the canvas."

The result is Hayes's poetic homage to Phyllis Webb (both women live on Salt Spring Island), using the form that Webb has made her own—the ghazal, or rather a Canadian form pioneered by **John Thompson**. "The paintings provided the maps for my journey into the ghazals," says Hayes in her introduction to **Gold in the Shadow**.

Hayes cross-referenced Webb's poetry and experiences with her own visions, often working through the night and emerging from her studio at dawn, "disoriented and exhilarated."

It was a journey that took Hayes to the various places and people encountered by Webb including Montreal, Paris, Egypt, and Russia; and writers, artists and composers such as Leonard Cohen, Paul Bowles, Thomas Merton, Jan Garbarek and Cristobel de Morales.

Diana Hayes published her book on April 18, 2021—Phyllis Webb's 94th birthday.

WHO'S WHO

BRITISH COLUMBIA



AMY BOHEGIAN PHOTO

Jane Byers has co-written two award-winning documentary films, *Only In Nelson* and *Conceiving Family*.

A IS FOR ANDERSON

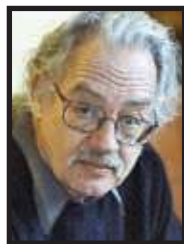
The York Factory Express (Ronsdale \$24.95) by **Nancy Marguerite Anderson** portrays voyageurs that, between 1826-1854, paddled boats up the Columbia River for a thousand miles east to Jasper's House, 3,000 feet above sea level. Their grueling job was to quickly move Hudson's Bay Company departmental correspondence and personnel, not the bulkier furs and supplies that went on other boats. From Jasper's House, the voyageurs carried on much further to York Factory on the shores of Hudson Bay. In total, it was a staggering climb and descent, which they did in reverse on the way back home to the mouth of the Columbia. 978-1-55380-578-6



Nancy Marguerite Anderson

driver. Ryder must also deal with his own vicious half-brother, a strained relationship with his father, and the after-effects of his previous brush with murder. 978-1-988732-92-3

D IS FOR DEVERELL



William Deverell

In his 19th novel, **Stung** (ECW \$32.95) **William Deverell's** crafty defense lawyer, Arthur Beauchamp defends seven environmentalists accused of sabotaging an Ontario plant

that pumps out a pesticide linked to the mass death of honeybees. The story moves between Toronto, where the trial takes place, and Arthur's West Coast island home, where he finds himself arrested for fighting his own environmental cause: the threatened destruction of a popular park. 978-1-77041-595-9

E IS FOR EDÔSDI

Edôsdî is a member of the Tahltan Nation who also goes by the English name **Judy Thompson**. Edôsdî's poem, *My Grandfather's Cherished Mittens* in the poetry collection **In Our Own Aboriginal Voice 2** (Rebel Mountain \$18.98) is an homage to a pair of intricately



S.M. Freedman



Judy Thompson's grandfather's mittens

beaded canvas mittens adorned with moose hide and beaver fur. "The mittens symbolize so much to me .../The knowledge and wisdom of our Ancestors./The love between generations./The slipping away of our language./The grasping on to our language before it is too late./And the courageous and tireless work our people are carrying out/In order to keep our language alive." 9780994730299

F IS FOR FREEDMAN

Recovering from a near-fatal accident on her 27th birthday, up and coming artist Eve Gold is desperate to return to her old way of life in **S.M. Freedman's** psychological thriller, **The Day She Died** (Dundurn \$18.99). She wants to resume her successful art career, finally marry the man who once broke her heart and try to have a baby. But brain damage leaves Eve confused by repressed memories of a troubled childhood destroyed by lies and even a suspicious death. Does she cling to stories that helped her survive her upbringing or unearth the secrets she buried? 9781459747401

G IS FOR GUNN

The short stories in **Genni Gunn's Permanent Tourists** (Signature \$19.95) are linked although they take place in an array of geographical locations across Canada, USA, Thailand, Cambodia, Mexico and Italy. Gunn describes her characters as "less thrill-seeking tourists on vacation than they are **P.K. Page's** terrible tourists 'with their empty eyes / longing to be filled with monuments.' What they're looking for cannot be found in any postcard destination." 978-1773240-80-0

B IS FOR BYERS

After two books of poetry and a chapbook, Nelson-based **Jane Byers** has written the memoir **Small Courage: A Queer Memoir of Finding Love and Conceiving Family** (Caitlin \$24.95) about her childhood, coming out, finding love and adopting two children. Her newly found parenthood with her wife Amy became daunting when threatened by homophobia. "Pre-kids we only caught the eye of other lesbians," writes Byers. "We are so clearly a unit now, kids yelling 'Look, Mama! Look, Mom!' We get stared at." 978-1-77386-040-4

C IS FOR CAREW

In his debut novel, *The Killer Trail* (NeWest, 2014), crime novelist **D.B. Carew** introduces Chris Ryder, a Vancouver psychiatric social worker who gets drawn into the mind games of a murder suspect. In Carew's second thriller, **The Weight of Blood** (NeWest \$18.95), Chris Ryder is called in to learn as much as he can about a severely autistic young man who has been found covered in blood at the scene of a murdered ice cream truck



D.B. Carew



Genni Gunn: before becoming a full-time writer she played bass guitar, piano and sang in a variety of bands

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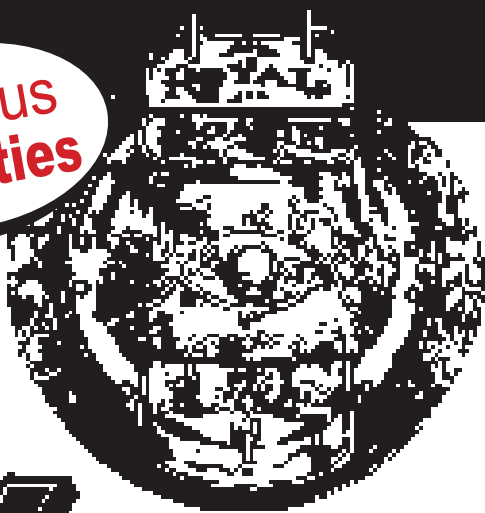
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BC

Jen Sookfong Lee
was born and raised
in **East Vancouver**.
She now lives in
North Burnaby.



KYRANI KANAVAROS PHOTO

H IS FOR HARRISON



Klisala Harrison

To advocate for musical work in the Downtown Eastside, and elsewhere in the world, as a means to promote human rights and development of the poor, **Klisala Harrison** has written **Music Downtown Eastside: Human Rights & Capability Development Through Music in Urban Poverty** (Oxford Univ. Press \$29.95). The book emerged from her research in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside about the human dignity people get from the arts, particularly music-making, which is readily accessible. A 1997 graduate of UVic's Music History program, Harrison now holds a PhD.

978-0-19-753507-3

I IS FOR IVAN



Ivan Coyote

For an inveterate traveler and performer like **Ivan Coyote**, the Covid-19 pandemic initially proved to be confining. The non-binary writer turned to their file of special letters and communique they had saved over the years from readers and audience members including Facebook messages, emails and notes written-on-the-run. Coyote began answering those letters, eventually combining both the originals and their responses in **Care of: Letters, Connections, and Cures** (M&S \$25). As a whole, the compilation came to reflect many of the central themes of Coyote's past writing: compassion and empathy, family fragility and identity.

Ivan Coyote's *Rebent Sinner* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2019) is a finalist for the 2020 non-fiction Governor General's Literary Award.

9780771051722

J IS FOR JOHNSON

Kamloops-based **George M. Johnson** has published his second picture book for kids, **Marisa and the Mountains** (Simply Read \$21.95). When Marisa

moves to the mountains from the prairies, she struggles at first. But when she visits her cousin Rosie in Saskatchewan, who has never seen a mountain or mountain wildlife, Marisa realizes her home is unique. Now that she has a friend to share her experience, Marisa looks forward to Rosie visiting her. Illustrations are by **Chelsea O'Byrne**.

9781927018910

G. Shimi Kang



K IS FOR KANG

Vancouver-based, Harvard-trained psychiatrist Dr. **G. Shimi Kang** has written **The Tech Solution: Creating Healthy Habits for Kids Growing Up in a Digital World** (Penguin Random House \$29.95) about the short-term and potential long-term consequences of tech use for children. She also offers advice for tackling specific concerns such as tech addiction, anxiety, cyberbullying and loneliness. She is the recipient of a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her years of outstanding community service. 978-0-7352-3954-8

L IS FOR SOOKFONG LEE

Having written many fiction and non-fiction books, **Jen Sookfong Lee** has now released her debut collection of poetry **The Shadow List** (Wolsak & Wynn \$18), in which she creates a narrator describing what it's like to live as a woman of colour and a caregiver. She is a person with few societal opportunities, yet the poems are filled with desire. SookFong Lee's narrator also questions the politics of who gets to choose and who doesn't. She makes hidden lists of what she really wants.

978-1-989496-28-2

WHO'S WHO

BRITISH COLUMBIA

M IS FOR McLEAN

Years after retiring from his 35-year newspaper reporting career, **Bruce McLean** published his debut novel **The Mañana Treehouse** (Thistledown \$20) about an aging couple coming to terms with Alzheimer's disease. It is inspired by McLean's memory of his late wife who spent the last seven years of her life with Alzheimer's. The novel's final lines are poignant: "Yesterday has vanished and any thoughts of tomorrow are out of the question. It's today and we're getting somewhere with it."

9781771872058

N IS FOR NEIL



Danial Neil

Oliver-based **Danial Neil** has published the historical novel **Dominion of Mercy** (NeWest \$20.95) about a young woman leaving Edinburgh, Scotland in 1917, where she made a living

as a prostitute, to move to Anyox, B.C. to work as a nurse for injured soldiers returning from the war. Living on the frontier turns out to be more challenging than the dark streets of Old Town back home and the heroine must use her smarts to survive. But in her time, women are not encouraged to reveal quick intelligence.

978-177439-020-7

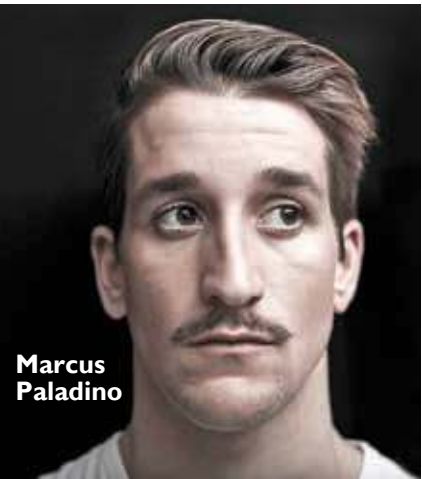
O IS FOR OCTOPUS

Having made her mark as an award-winning poet, **Rachel Rose** has turned to short stories with her collection, **The Octopus Has Three Hearts** (D&M \$22.95) about fringe characters who all have better relationships with animals than people. The pet companions include an octopus, rats, deer, bats and the more traditional dogs and kittens. Rose's characters are vividly drawn and her premises, original. She explores issues such as parenthood, sexuality, identity and fidelity, and looking for a place to belong.

9781771622882

P IS FOR PALADINO

"There are constantly unique images, angles or moments that burn away in my mind and the only way to be rid of them is to try to bring them to life," says photographer **Marcus Paladino** in **Cold Comfort: Surf Photography from Canada's West Coast** (RMB \$45). His images have appeared in publications around the world, making him one of Canada's most desired water photogra-



Marcus Paladino



Rachel Rose has written four books of poetry and a memoir, *The Dog Lover Unit* which was shortlisted for the Arthur Ellis award for best non-fiction crime book in 2018.



Christine Quintana

phers. While Paladino's writing appears in his new book, it's his images that take center stage. Paladino grew up on Vancouver Island, where he earned a diploma in photography in 2010. Later he moved to Tofino for a summer job and stayed. Paladino's work has been featured in various publications around the world, including *SURFER*, *Surfing Magazine*, *The Surfer's Journal*, *Explore* magazine, *Tracks*, and *Carve*.

9781771603997

Q IS FOR QUINTANA

Christine Quintana has written **Selfie** (Playwrights Canada \$17.95) about how sexual assault against minors can happen in any community. "The question I want to pose," says Quintana, "is how can we talk about consent in a



Danny Ramadan

way that prevents this from happening in the first place?"

Quintana is a Siminovitch Prize Protege winner for playwriting and a founding member of the Canadian Latinx Theatre Artist Coalition. Born in Los Angeles to a Mexican American father and a Dutch British Canadian mother, Quintana holds a BFA in Acting from UBC and is currently playwright-in-residence at Vancouver's Tarragon Theatre.

9780369101259

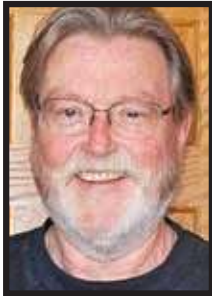
R IS FOR RAMADAN

Vancouver author, activist and former Syrian refugee, **Danny Ramadan** has published his first children's book, **Salma the Syrian Chef** (Annick Press \$21.95) with illustrations by **Anna Bron**. Newcomer to Canada, little

Salma decides that a homemade Syrian meal might cheer up her mama, but she doesn't know the recipe, or what to call the vegetables in English, or where to find the right spices. With help from friends and her new community, Salma shows her mama that even though things aren't perfect, there is cause for hope and celebration. The book represents Syrian culture and speaks to the power of cultivating community in challenging circumstances.

978-17732137501

S IS FOR STEEVES



Gary Steeves

Gary Steeves, a social and environmental activist, wrote **Tranquility Lost: The Occupation of Tranquille & Battle for Community Care in B.C.** (Nightwood \$21.95). It's a firsthand ac-

count of the occupation of the Tranquille residential complex for people with developmental disabilities by workers at the site when the provincial government announced its closure in the summer of 1983. It marked the beginning of a groundswell of activism uniting community and labour groups in B.C. that came to be known as *Operation Solidarity*.

9780889713864

T IS FOR TREGEBOV

Michael Tregebov's Winnipeg-based novels continue with **The Renter** (New Star \$18), the story of a Jewish man in the late 1960s who is hoping to marry up. During an era when it was both common and even socially acceptable to deal in soft drugs, Bret Yeatman, our Duddy-Kravitz-of-Manitoba protagonist, is seeking romance and social redemption for his family at Winnipeg Beach, formerly the "cottage country" preserve of the province's WASP elite. The target for both his ambitions and affections is the delectable Sandra Sugarman but our man-on-the-make will have to renounce his easy, promiscuous life in the drug trade. Tregebov earned his MFA in Creative Writing from UBC and studied at SFU before moving to Spain in 1982, where he works as a translator.

9781554201631



Michael Tregebov

RAVEN CHAPBOOKS POETRY WINNER

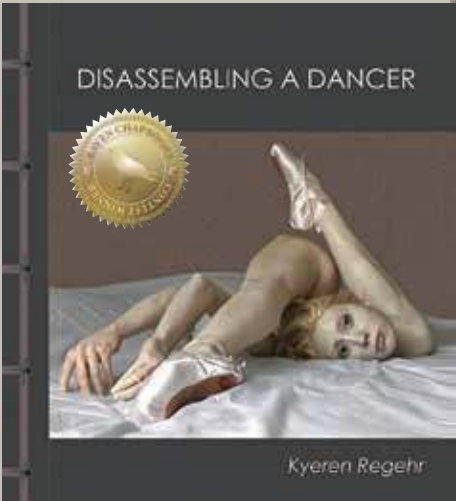
“Kyeren Regehr gives us the body locked in the torment of beautiful movement in this insider’s revelation of a dancer’s life. Her language—trim, muscled, momentumed—soars. The sequence is unforgettable.”

—Tim Liburn

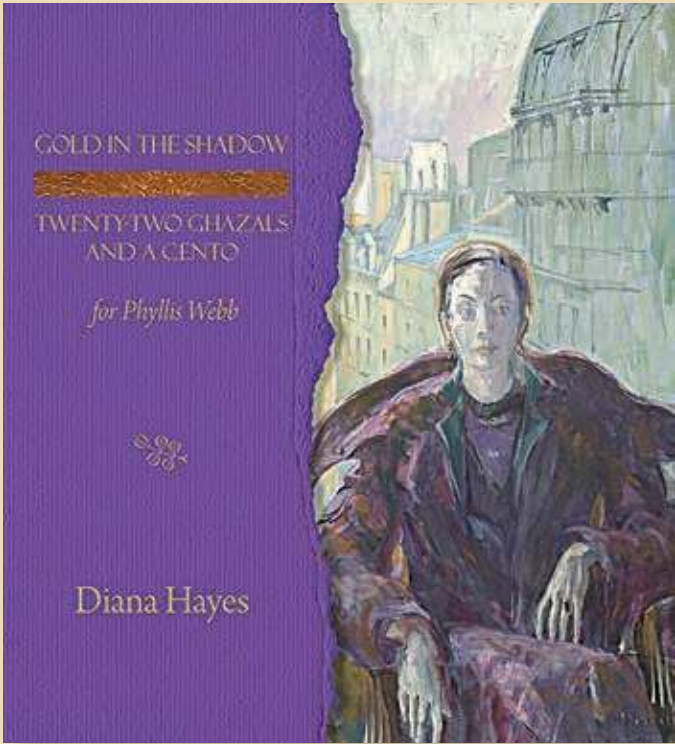


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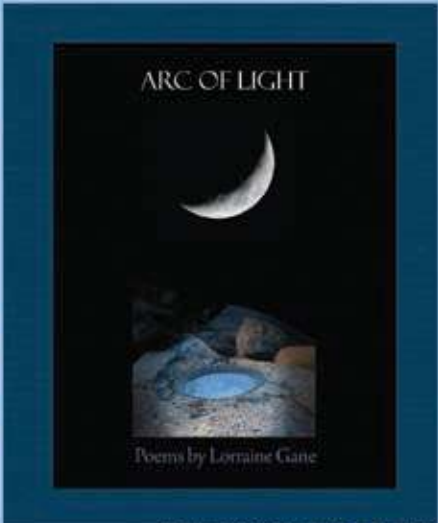
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—Eve Joseph

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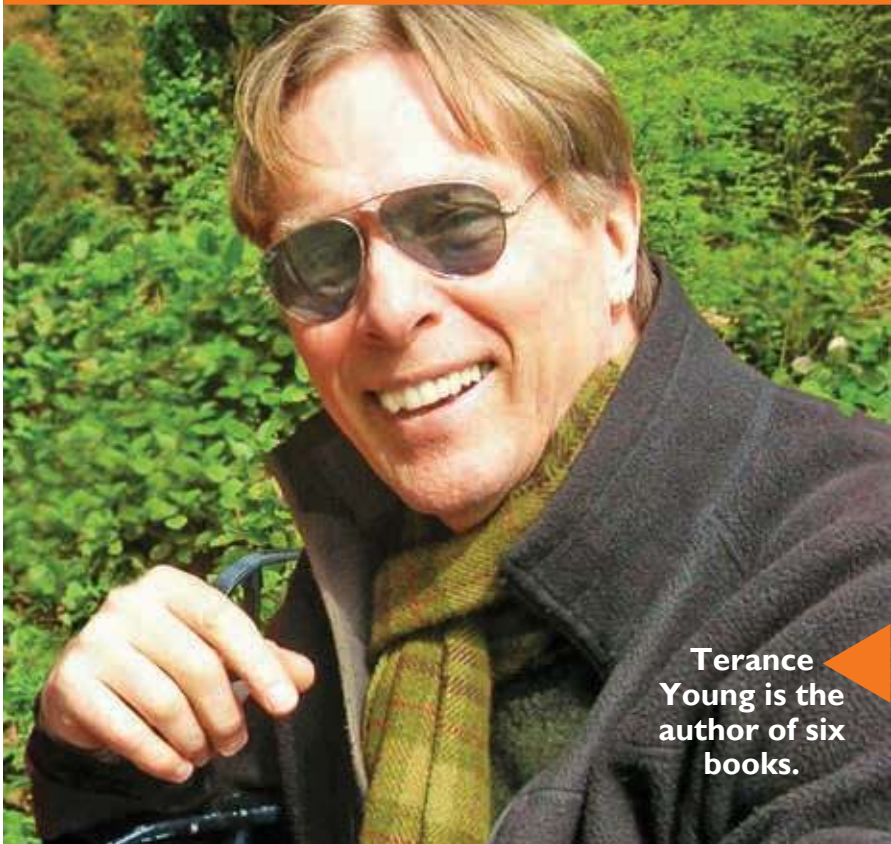
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WHO'S WHO

BC



Terance Young is the author of six books.

U IS FOR UNIVERSE

Seventeen-year-old Michael ends up in an alternate universe when he visits his mad-scientist uncle who works on time-travel experiments in his lab in **Arthur Slade's** new YA novel **Mr. Universe** (Orca \$10.95). Michael must fend for himself in this new world where he encounters lizard men dressed in gray suits. But he also meets a girl, Emily who needs his help even though she is confident and sassy. Emily turns out to be key to Michael finding his way back to his own dimension.

9781459826885

V IS FOR VICKERS

“Let me begin with a warning” heads one of **Janet Vickers'** new poems in **Sleep With Me: Lullaby for an Anxious Planet** (Ekstasis \$23.95) because not all these verses are gentle lullabies. They have been described as poetry like a cold shower and a warm towel all rolled into one; but that ultimately assert we can act against the forces for destruction. Vickers lives on Gabriola Island and this is her fifth poetry collection.

978-1771713603

W IS FOR WEBSTER

With access to court transcripts and many related documents, **Helen Webster** has written the true story of four-year-old **Susan**, beaten to death in the name of discipline, **A Question of Intent: Child Abuse and the Justice System** (FriesenPress \$27.99). Beatings had started when Susan was only five months old and continued until just days before her fifth birthday. The question central to the court case was whether or not her parents meant to kill her. The author does not attempt to second guess the results of the trial, but simply presents the evidence and the legal arguments, leaving the reader to decide.

978-1525579813

X IS FOR XAADAA

Xaadaa Gwaay gud gina k'aws is the traditional name of Skidegate and Xaadaa Gwaayee guu ginn k'aws is the traditional name of Massett. These two Haida Gwaii communities form

part of the title of the third edition of **Nancy Turner's** classic, **Plants of Haida Gwaii: Xaadaa Gwaay gud gina k'aws (Skidegate), Xaadaa Gwaayee guu ginn kaw's (Masset)** (Harbour \$29.95) representing over half a century of ethnobotanical research into over 150 plant species native to the Haida people's homeland. The new edition comes after a fire destroyed the remaining stock of books of the 2010 edition published by Sono Nis Press. Turner has updated the Haida writing system in this new edition and acknowledged the new Chiefs' names.

978-1-55017-914-9



Y IS FOR YOUNG

Having retired from teaching English and creative writing at St. Michael's University School, **Terence Young** has published a spellbinding collection of poems, **Smithereens** (Nightwood \$18.95) in which he finds the extraordinary in everyday things—the last raspberries of summer, a ferry trip that is detoured, watching TV shows from the past, a family car that lasted twenty years, a child's picture lost in a fire, a bear at the cottage. All are bits of life that Young turns into “shining artifacts of memory,” a phrase he quotes from **Leonard Cohen** in one of his verses.

9781550179439

Z IS FOR ZIEGLER

Robert Ziegler's second novel **The Telling Method** (Self-published \$24.95) explores a relationship between two writers, both with mental health conditions, and tells how they manage to heal themselves through their story telling. Ziegler has worked as a therapist in the Prince George region for thirty years.

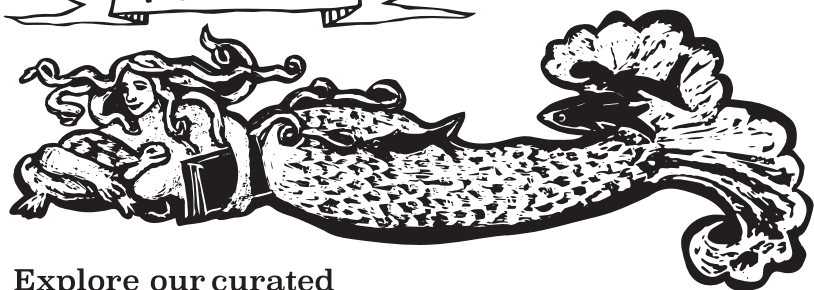
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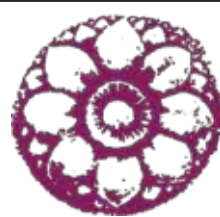
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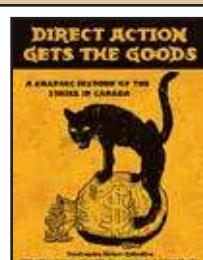


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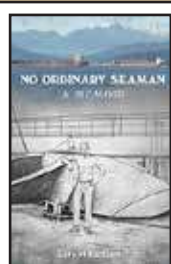
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LETTERS

The last is the best

Thank you so very much for the marvelous coverage that you gave to my book, *My Life as a Potter* [BC BookWorld, Spring 2021]. It was such a wonderful review and a real treat to see so many photographs included with it. I especially love the last paragraph which I confess to reading over and over again. What an outstanding publication you have created for book readers everywhere.

Mary Fox
Ladysmith

A special cover

I've long intended to thank *BC BookWorld* for the space and attention you've given my work over these years. What an important and amazing role you fill. I still remember the excitement of making the cover for *Saltwater Women at Work* [BC BookWorld, Autumn 1995]. That issue's cover is framed and hangs on the wall over my desk. Please keep up the great work. Writers and readers need you now more than ever.

Vickie Jensen
Vancouver

[Vickie Jensen's new book, *Deep, Dark and Danger-*



Vickie Jensen

Mary Fox (with Amy) has been a potter for forty-plus years. Her book, *My Life as a Potter: Stories and Techniques* was published in 2020.



ous: The Story of British Columbia's World-Class Undersea Technology Industry published by Harbour, will be out this Fall.—Ed.]

Handbag treasure

I just got *BC BookWorld* newspaper in the mailbox. I snatched it before my family could and I carry it around in my handbag as a treasure.

And I borrowed my son's credit card to order books! Yes! We love the *BC BookLook* website too and explore every single corner of it. Gawd, what a delight. Thanks for existing.

Titia Jetten
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OBITS

Jack Whyte (1940 – 2021)

At age 52, Scottish-born Jack Whyte burst onto the writing stage with *The Sky-stone* (1992), the first of a projected quartet of Arthurian novels in a series dubbed *A Dream of Eagles* (but called The Camolud Chronicles in the U.S.). He wrote many more historical novels, achieving sales of over a million books and became one of B.C.'s most successful authors. An entertainer and orator, Whyte was also an avid golfer and he was able to sing in eight languages. After a long battle with liver cancer, Jack Whyte died in Kelowna on February 22 at the age of 80.



Jack Whyte

James Heneghan (1930 - 2021)

Born in Liverpool on October 7, 1930, **James Heneghan** came to Vancouver in 1957 where he eventually began writing fiction for young people. His historical and realistic YA fiction won many prizes including the Sheila Egoff Award for children's literature three times, one of which was for his most acclaimed novel, *The Grave*. In 2017, he was awarded the Phoenix Award for his novel, *Wish Me Luck*,



James Heneghan

which was also nominated for a Governor General's Award. Many of his books appeared on the American Library Association's lists of Best Books for Young Adults, the New York Library lists of Best Books, the Junior Library Guild list and the VOYA Top Shelf Pick list. James Heneghan died on April 23, 2021.

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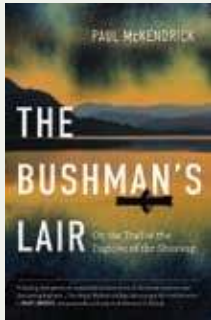


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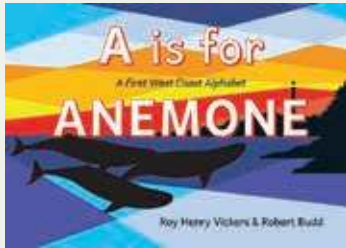
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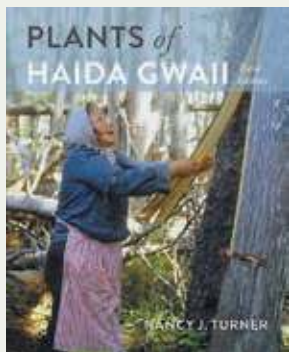
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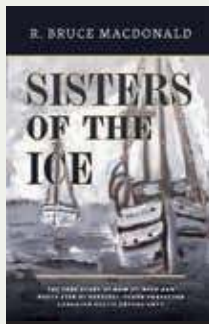
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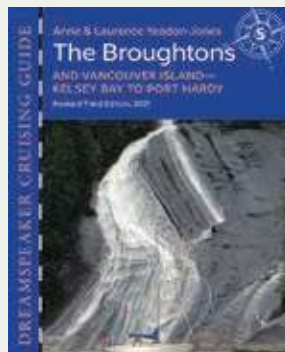
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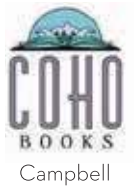
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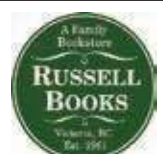
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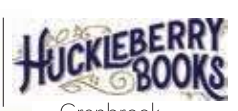
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