“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.

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
Flamingo Rampant

Flamingo Rampant produces feminist, racially-diverse children’s books that celebrate LGBT2Q kids, families and communities, in an effort to bring visibility and positivity to the reading landscape of children everywhere. We make books kids love that love them right back, bedtime stories for beautiful dreams, and books that make kids of all kinds say with pride: that kid’s just like me!
Anti-vaxxer Noir

Entering the second summer of the Covid-19 pandemic as never get frayed and temps 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

Flavoursome. It’s a no-brainer.

BC BookWorld, Summer 2021

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

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 wakes up to help. With little food left, Francie puts her survival skills to work making fires and firing needle tea. 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 stonier 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

Frances Greenslade

Let’s Go Biking

Second Edition

The BC BookWorld Summer 2021

Richard Waganese
A Perfect Likeness: Two Novellas (Orca Books $19.95)

Carol Anne Hilton
Indigenomics: Taking a Seat at the Economic Table (New Society $19.99)

Colleen Macdonald
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Janet Gallant & Sharon Thesen
The Wig-Maker (New Star $18)

Terry Watada
Mysterious Dreams (Ronsdale $12.95)

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Chasing Your Small Business While Managing Persistent Pain (Self-Counsel Press $26.95)

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Taking a Seat at the Rainbelt (Ronsdale $12.95)

Bjornstrom, a hyperactive son of Romani cigan 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.

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A handbook for teens—a compassionate, honest, and personal guide to empowering yourself, and others, for a safer and more inclusive world.

“Girlvana helps readers release unworthiness and step into greatness! This is a timely book with an empowering message.”

—Gabrielle Bernstein, #1 New York Times bestselling author
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 early 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 watching 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 faceious 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-founders Harbour Publishing with wife Edith Iglauer. 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 be a typesetter to bookkeeper to editor to de-facto sign on his steamboat dock, thereby becoming a jack-of-all-trades.

Harry Roberts was a jack-of-all-trades mechanic who later ran the Pender River) as the Sunshine Coast. Eventually, you make a name for yourself, and perhaps the name will be born of such activities as开车safes, selling for $120 million. Instead, we have more art galleries and proudly non-urban collection of things that once we only kept out of dull practical use.

In the 1900s we had a better mousetrap. If that were so, we’d have more art galleries and proudly non-urban collection of 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-founders Harbour Publishing with wife Edith Iglauer. 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 be a typesetter to bookkeeper to editor to de-facto sign on his steamboat dock, thereby becoming a jack-of-all-trades.

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At least Long Beach is actually long.

EXCERPT: Here On The Coast

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.

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 practical use 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.
Heritage Group Distribution—with the endorsement of its three Vancouver Island–based publisher clients, Heritage House, TouchWood Editions, and Rocky Mountain Books, and the assistance of Canadian Heritage’s Canada Book Fund—salutes our cultural community and the strong survival instinct of all book retailers. Please support them in their time of need.

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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 peoples, 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 peoples in their struggle to have their rights respected. A noble service indeed.”

In Berger’s book Fragmented Freedoms: Human Rights and Dissent in Canada (Clarke, Irwin & Co., 1983), 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 Wilson-Raybould. “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.

Berger is the subject of a biography by Carolynn Swayne, Strong 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 (Bill 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.
Janet Gallant transforms her story of abuse and alopecia into a state of grace with the help of Sharon Thesen

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, one that will change lives and sensation that will continue for months, tick by and two women begin a conversation that will change their lives and sensation that will continue for months.

Janet Gallant's story is about wanting to compose the entirety of the text—her telling processed through my ears, my heart, my hands. "I remember how easy it was to talk to Sharon. There was no small talk. I can't explain it, my heart trusted her, it trusted her heart," says Gallant. "I could not, would not, try to write it in the third person," says Thesen.

Gallant starts telling her 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 are featured throughout this slim book of connected poems that charts her journey overcoming a tragically abusive upbringing.

Gallant and Thesen’s collaboration began after working in Calgary business as an executive assistant for an insurance company for twenty-five years. Gallant takes up the formative wig, Gallant contemplates the autoimmune disorder of alopecias, 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 hereditary condition.

"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 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 SISTERS 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, Thilly, 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 alopecias 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 hereditary 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.... Yoa and Sharon are singing together."

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.

BC BookWorld • Summer 2021

The Wig-Maker (New Star $18)

BY CAROLINE WOODWARD
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.

Latash-Maurice Nahane 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.”
EXODUS
from Auschwitz & Bergen-Belsen to Vancouver

Two Pieces of Cloth: One Family’s Story of the Holocaust
by Joe Gold
(Pages Two $21.95)

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 confiscation. 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. His 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 father’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 Jacob 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.

The first train to Auschwitz from Nováky, Slovakia was experienced by David Goldberger who was transferred from Auschwitz to Bergen-Belsen on February 17, 1945. Exactly three months later, on May 7, he was liberated from Bergen-Belsen among 60,000 ghostly inmates. 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.

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According to Joe Gold’s Fashion Fabrics on Granville Street in Vancouver.

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.

“Fort 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, becalming 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.
from 1993—2001, my husband and I ran the Meth-erlode Bookstore in New Denver, B.C. We packed the shelves with books 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—Fall ing Cherry Blossoms: A Mother & Daughter’s Journey through Racism, Internment and Oppression, at once 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 Den vor in 1993, once one of B.C.’s WW2 internment camps, work was nearing completion on the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre, given National Histo
tic 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. inter- ment camp residents had been ordered to go “east of the Rockies or be sent back (sic) to Japan” as the govern- ment 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 Pow- ell 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 Nishiki-hama wanted her family to know about this life, including being faced with the prospect of living in a barn during Mani tobatan winters. She began writ- ing 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, 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 recited Ilenea floral arrangement lessons. A timid but bright and lovely little girl, Eiko (Grace) came to demand his way while she became a skilled dressmaker. It is one of the inevitable conflicts in this bittersweet book that her name every time he had to utter it publicly. This world is still full of injus-
tices. Stories like these, painful and shameful and hopeful, too, help us understand the cost to our humanity of racist government policies. Through-
out, 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.

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.
AND NOW...THE COOKBOOK WE’VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR...

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Cookbook fans have been waiting for this one! Once again, Shelley Adams demonstrates her skills in elevating simple ingredients to new, wonderfully delicious heights. Shelley continues her innate ability to take easily sourced fresh foods - coaxed expertly with fresh herbs, creative seasonings and cooking techniques - to result in recipes cooks will want to return to time and time again. This is the 6th book in the Whitewater Cooks series - ask at your local bookstore and collect them all.

Paperback, 180 pp, all colour 9780911424449 $36.95
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POLENTA ON THE BOARD

Italian Family Cooking Abruzzese style
Valerie Mitchell

Featuring on CBC’s Northwest, this sumptuous recipe collection follows the traditions of Abruzzo, a region of Italy recognized for its unique dishes such as stracchi (Abruzzese crepes filled and baked in a succulent sauce) and polenta sulla tavola (slow cooked cornmeal covered with a rich sauce and water slowly). 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.

9780973285109 $21.95 pb V Mitchell

ON BEING YUKIKO

Jeff Chiao Stearns
Lillian Michiko Blakey

Through the blending of two unique artistic styles, this exciting graphic novel tells the 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-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 Yukiiko. 9781775244343 $19.95 hc Modelling Bunny

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 Nuu-chah-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. 9781771773929 $19.95 pb Davidge

TALES OF THE KVR

The Kettle Valley Railway

Remembered
Barrie Sanford

Drawing largely from his interviews with railways over the past 50+ years and his own research, Sanford presents fresh stories and fine 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 hiked 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 a living oral history carefully preserved by one of BC’s foremost railway history experts. 9780973560217 $21.95 pb NRHS BC Div
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 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...
Many of the techniques and some of operating a craft brewery or cidery. for others, it’s a natural outgrowth of former ferry captain Island’s Island Spirits Distillery, run by retirement project for some, like Hornby developer. Distilling seems an ideal re-
successful career as an Ontario property Gulf Islands, it’s designed to help read-
ers 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 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.

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 ef-
fective 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 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.

Alexander Varty is a musician
and author living on unceded Snuneymuxw territory.
Debut poetry from the Islands. Candid, rural, witty & refreshing.

Black Bears in the Carrot Field
Linda K. Thompson
$19.95 • 90 pages, includes photos • July • 978-1-896490-64-0
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.

“This collection is a hillbilly chin wag in a jacked-up shack with a big bottle of whiskey. It’s an off-kilter kitchen party, a Lil’irror River valley hoontoony. It’s the sweet chord harmonica music drifting out through the window of a dusty pickup as it punts down a westbound road. Delicly crafted, razor-sharp, rhythmic and filled with heart. There is no other writer like her.”
- Sandra Reiley, author of Sillyja.

“The story teller’s voice is refreshingly urial, heart driven and tough. Every character Thompson brings so brilliantly to life will stay with you forever.”
- J ames Coop, author of Thought the Garden: A Love Story (with Cats).

I will be more myself in the next world
Matsuki Moustani
$19.95 • 118 pages • June • 978-1-896490-87-1
Clear minimalist poems that shatter bare with gentle and perceptive wit; aging, family, dreams, Matsuki’s Japanese roots, marriage, Parkinson’s, Chemo and Impermanence. Matsuki Moustani is a poet and translator living on Denman Island. He has translated Canadian works such as Roy Kiyooka’s Motherf**ker, Hiroko Goto’s A Chorus of Mushrooms, and from Japanese into English, Kishio Kimura’s memoir, Witness to Loss. Includes Japanese translations.

“There’s a Zen smile at work as Moustani notes the dailyness of long marriage, effects of immigration, and life’s looming end to the daily. Each poem a ‘small flame’ through which dark waters dance.”
- Daphne Marlatt, author of Interlands


“The poet Fred Cogswell spoke of ‘star people.’ You chance upon them. They emanate a certain deep inner glow. Matsuki Moustani has that bright light. You will know it when you meet him.”
- Joy Kogawa

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to the finalists of the 2021 BC and Yukon Book Prizes

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Two childcare workers reveal ugly truths from a half century before.

**TELLING IT LIKE IT WAS**

* 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 witnessed the induction of four children into the Residence]

“We start here,” the matron said crisply. We heard footsteps and a man pushed four children into the room. “Here they are,” he said proudly. “I had quite a struggle getting them out of Bella Bella.” A grumpy 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 chins 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 little 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 child’s soft 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 shower 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 at once,” she said. “Well, I have. It takes four or five minutes. Then, pretty soon, they all get 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 eyes 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 swum 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.
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 front lawn. A man with uncombed hair, a dirty white undershirt and ripped pants hangs 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. “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 their guardian. They find a way to get him to go along with the scheme to keep the sisters together at the farm by pretending that to be separated by social services.

Fiona hatches a plan to keep them together 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 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 Grimm’s 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 enduring 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.

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.

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Orphans, Geniuses

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.

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 Rosenzweig & 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 in 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.

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I t’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 Gabri- ele 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 accom- panied 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 an adventure collecting the amber into a bad talisman. After things happen on the trip, turning evil. A servant girl, Katya, work- ing on a horse breeding estate in East Prussia and Scottish and she has written sever- al 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 pro- viders and educators about kindness and the importance of the connections children make with their friends, class- mates 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 commu- nity. And “I am kind when I only take from the earth what I need,” demon- strates the value of respecting ecology.

Gray also shows how receiving kind- ness 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 Dine.

Lilliana and the Frogs
by Scott Ritchie
(Harbour $22.95)

S cot Ritchie’s picture book Lill- iana 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 mem- ories of exploring Camosun Bog in Van- couver’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.

Pride Puppy!
By Robin Stevenson
(Orca $19.95)

I n Pride Puppy!, a rhyming al- phabet 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.

Stevenson de- scribes the event in straightforward but lively sentences that portray the event: “It for everyone under the sun. F for feath- ers, 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.

Painted Fences by Sara Cassidy
(Harper House $19.99)

W alking with her great- grandmother Ali 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 Ali.

“You can’t know that!” replies Es- ther.

“Oh, I can’t!” chuckles Ali. “Listen to this story.”

And with that, Ali regales Esther with tales of what it was like living dur- ing 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 diffi- cult to make money to buy extra. Foods was rationed and had to be bought with ration tokens.

Bob is determined to get 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 any- way. They salvage some paint, borrow some paint, and Charlie sneaks 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 repainting their fence.

Just as they finish, there is excite- ment 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 Ali. 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 blur 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 nominated for a 2020 Governor General’s Literary Award, 9781772030319.

ALSO NOTEWORTHY

YOUNG ADULT:
Tremendous Things
by Susin Nielsen (Penguin Teen)
Green Glass Ghost
by Rae Spoon (Arsenal Pulp)

On the Trampoline
by David A. Robertson, illustrated by Julie Flett (Tundra)

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

GRAPHIC NOVEL:
Ruttle
by Tony Cliff (First Second Books)

TARTARUS #9
by Johnnie Christmas (Image Comics)
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 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.
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 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.”

“Few, if any, other animals have been so assiduously tamed by man as the beaver. Ordinary folk and naturalists alike have learned to live with these highly intelligent and industrious rodents.”

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NEW STAR BOOKS

In Could Be: New Poems, gathering work since his close call five years ago, Bowering shows off a wiser, though not necessarily mellower, aspect alongside the wit and unerring ear readers have come to expect from one of our greats.

This engaging memoir relates stories about George Bowering’s small-town BC upbringing and his parents, while at the same time honouring the author’s other “parents”: Gertrude Stein, Charles Olson, and Roland Barthes.

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“From where I live, we share everything. It’s better that way.”

Astra
by Cedar Bowers
(Penguin $24.95)

BY PORTIA PRIEGERT

ne 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 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 attachment 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.

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)

ou 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 assed 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’ in a room where shots have been fired, the reader having to wince at yet another erroneous evocation of the ‘smell of cordite’ in a room where shots have been fired, the reader having to wince at yet another erroneous evocation of the ‘smell of cordite’ in a room where shots have been fired.

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 whirligig of the car-
toon 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 than the cheap suits worn by their protagonists. Legal strictures governing police investigations inevitably make them repetitive and make police protagonists like Simenon’s Inspector Maigret look like dull birds compared to ever more eccentric amateur ‘consulting detectives’ that followed in the footsteps of Conan Doyle’s eminently imitable Sherlock Holmes.

From Hercule Poirot and the village busybody Miss Marple, to Philip Marlowe, Sam Spade and Nero Wolfe, amateur or private detectives could conduct intuitive ‘asymmetrical’ investigations and flaunt personal quirks that endeared them to readers by making them seem almost ordinary people the reader could identify with. Their authors usually employed police characters as stereotypical stooges, crude bullies or robotic straight-men typified by “Inspector Jutland,” meme of all fictional British flatfoots created by mystery writers, in the finest film send-up of the genre, Sleuth, (1972), starring Michael Caine and Laurence Olivier.

Greenaway follows the model created by police procedural writers, who countered by writing novels that focus on the often-troubled personal lives of police officers instead of procedure.

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 a sad and gimmicky social smidgit 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.

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Pandemic reading recommendation: get a copy of Greenaway’s first novel, Cold Girl, and catch up.
Harold and Maude & Heidi

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

Heidi Greco sets out to share everything she knows about her favourite movie, Harold and Maude. Greco also warns that she is “not a film critic, or an academic who supposes 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 special 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

New from Ronsdale Press

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978-1-55380-611-0 (PRINT) 978-1-55380-612-7 (EBOOK) 438 pp $12.95
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.

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 themselves 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.”

What Was Said to Me

“The Life of Sti’tum’atul’wat, a Cowichan Woman

Ruby Peter brings to life the cultural training and protocols that have sustained her Cowichan community for generations.”
—Wendy Wickwire, author of At the Bridge

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**Susan Olding**

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 Rakete’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 Pouier Brown.

Olding’s first essay, *In Anna Karenina Porus 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 adultress 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 writings 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 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 apotsnanaimo.ca

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**NEW BOOKS from UBC PRESS**

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**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 Books $22.95) 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* (UBC Press 2021) references her love of reading and contains writings that are 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 machine when her sight was failing. The Big Reader is a splendid example of how our own life stories are enhanced by and interconnected with the characters we meet in books.
“Through our own Indigenous stories, we discover our roots.”
—Teri Mack, author

“There is medicine in these stories, stories that could only be told by those who lived to tell. Some still seek restitution, long for healing, and to bring home the bones of their ancestors.”
—Jonina Kirton, Indigenous author of An Honest Woman

“This ongoing commitment to further the remarkable growth of Indigenous literature can only be applauded.”
—Alan Twigg, author—Aboriginality: The Literary Origins of British Columbia, Vol. 2

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

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

In the final poem, Masutani watches his newborn granddaughter sleeping. “Sometimes she shoulders a bejeweled insect, a mystery from the other world.”

Long Time Young Suddenly Old

LONG TIME YOUNG
SUDDENLY OLD

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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.
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

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 (NeWest $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 onlyened by homophobia. “Pre-kids we only

C IS FOR CAREW

In his debut novel, The Killer Trail (NeWest, 2014), crime novelist D.B. Carew introduces Chris Ryder, a Van-ouver psychiatric social worker who gets drawn into the mind games of a murderer 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 se-verely autistic young man who has been found covered in blood at the scene of a murdered ice cream truck 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

In his 19th novel, Stung (ECW $32.95), William Deverell’s crafty defense lawyer, Arthur Beauchamp defends seven environmentalists ac-cused 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 environ-mental cause: the threatened destruc-tion of a popular park. 978-1-77041-595-9

E IS FOR EDŐSĎ

EdősĎ is a member of the Tahltan Na-tion who also goes by the English name Judy Thompson. EdősĎ’s poem, My Grandfather’s Cherished Mittens in the poetry collection In Our Own Aborigi-nal Voice 2 (Rebel Mountain $18.98) is an homage to a pair of intricately

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? 9781499857340

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 loca-tions across Canada, USA, Thailand, Cambodia, Mexico and Italy. Gunn describes her characters as “less thrill-seeking tourists on vacation than they are P.H. Page’s terrible tourists ‘with their empty eyes / longing to be filled with monuments. ’ What they’re look-ing for cannot be found in any postcard desti-nation.” 978-1-772240-80-9

10000_007_0857_2021_01.jpg
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.

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 communiques 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.

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.

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 the remarkable Holocaust survival tale of a BC business legend, Jen Sookfong Lee was born and raised in East Vancouver. She now lives in North Burnaby.
M IS FOR McLEAN

Years after retiring from his 35-year newspaper reporting career, Bruce McLean published his debut novel The Madana 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.”

978-1771372588

N IS FOR NEIL

Olive-based

Daniel 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.

978-1771390207

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 (RMB $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.

9781771603997

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 photographers. 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 Curve.

9781771402997

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 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

Canadian-based 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

9782646011259
**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.

978-1-55017-914-9

**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.

978-1-77113-063-9

**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.

978-1-52057-601-3

**X IS FOR KAADAA**

XXaadag Gwaayay guu k’aws is the traditional name of Massett and XXaadag Gwaay gyu k’aws is the traditional name of Skidegate. These two Haida Gwaii communities formed part of the title of the third edition of Nancy Turner’s classic, Plants of Haida Gwaii: XXaadag Gwaayay guu k’aws (Skidegate), XXaadag Gwaayay guu k’aws (Massett) (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 Sonó Nis Press. Turner has updated the Haida writing system in this new edition and acknowledged the new Chiefs’ names.

978-1-55017-614-9

**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 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.

978-1-55017-743-0

**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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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

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
Ladysmith

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, 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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