MICHAEL AUDAIN
1960s Freedom Rider, art collector, and builder of 30,000 homes and the Audain Art Museum in Whistler. see page 6

IVAN COYOTE
A love letter of empathy in socially-distanced times. 11

GRAPHIC NOVELS
2021

RENEE SAROJINI SAKLIKAR
Dystopia and female saviours. 22

St. Michael’s Residential School Lament & Legacy
Nancy Dyson & Dan Rubenstein

One of the very few accounts of life in a residential school by caregivers (Nancy Dyson and Dan Rubenstein) who witness the shocking discipline, poor food and harsh punishment for the children’s use of their native language. When they wished to report the conditions of St. Michael’s Residential School, they were fired. With 14 photos.

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THE ART OF PUPPETRY

From thousands of years, people have been charmed by puppets as this ancient art has been used to tell stories and share culture. It was the subject of an award-winning show in 2019 at UBC’s Museum of Anthropology called Shadows, Strings and Other Things: The Enchanting Theatre of Puppets curated by UBC associate professor, Nicola Levell.

Levell earned an award for the exhibition in 2020 from the Canadian Museum Association, followed this year by her book, Bodies of Enchantment: Puppets from Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas (Figure 1 $60). With over 150 photographs of puppetry from around the world and texts from other scholars and puppeteers, the book shows the ongoing popularity of such theatre including leather shadow puppetry based on ancient Indian epics in modern-day Indonesia, Taiwan’s Pili glove puppetry still thriving in the current digital era, and the growth of new fields of stop-motion animation.

Wunderkind, Douglas Coupland is easily one of B.C.’s best-known authors worldwide (this is his latest looking-to-the-future author photo). The last remaining member of a First Nation decides to go to court for his traditional lands in Kevin Loring’s latest play, Little Red Warrior and His Lawyer (Talon $16.95).

Little Red Warrior’s lawyer, Larry, invites him to live in his basement during the court case, romantic sparks fly between Little Red and Larry’s wife Desdemona. Then the court case takes an unexpected turn and everything is up in the air. Loring is Niikii’pamux from the Lytton First Nation and a graduate of Langara’s Studio 58. He has won many awards including the 2009 Governor General’s Literary Award for English-Language Drama for his first published work, Where the Blood Mixes (Talon, 2009).

Kevin Loring

The warrior, his lawyer and the lawyer’s wife
people in the Pacific Northwest have been warned about The Big One, a massive earthquake followed by a tsunami, which will cause billions of dollars in damages and many deaths. On Borrowed Time: North America’s Next Big Quake (Goose Lane $22.95) is Gregor Craige’s deep dive into the science behind earthquakes. In addition to interviewing scientific experts, Craigie has collected first-hand accounts from people who have survived deadly quakes — all in an effort to find out what we can do to prepare for this major natural disaster that is coming — it’s only a matter of time. Victoria-based Craigie is the host of CBC Radio’s morning show On the Island. He has also reported for CBS Radio and been a former BBC journalist who read the news to millions of American listeners of The World on Public Radio International.

Esi Edugyan will now give this year’s series of Massey Lectures—where major contemporary writers and scholars address important issues of their time. Broadcast on CBC radio, the lectures are also published in book form and in Edugyan’s Out of the Sun: On Race and Storytelling (House of Anansi $32.99) she reflects on Black experience and Black histories in art. She looks at how many “Black figures and stories have been lost to us, and at what it means for us collectively to have been unable to see them.” In an interview with Folio, Piper said, “There’s research that shows men are given second chances much more than women. Hence, women — especially those who are going first and under so much scrutiny — are sometimes reluctant to take risks. But if you don’t take risks, you’re not going to make a difference. Indira and I realized that we were willing to risk. We were willing to take on some of the old expectations and do things differently.”

Martha Piper and Indira Samarasekera

Stories from the SHADOWS

After twice winning the Scotiabank Giller Prize and twice being a finalist for the Man Booker Prize, Victoria’s Esi Edugyan will now give this year’s series of Massey Lectures—where major contemporary writers and scholars address important issues of their time. Broadcast on CBC radio, the lectures are also published in book form and in Edugyan’s Out of the Sun: On Race and Storytelling (House of Anansi $32.99) she reflects on Black experience and Black histories in art. She looks at how many “Black figures and stories have been lost to us, and at what it means for us collectively to have been unable to see them.”

In one section, Edugyan relates how the Texan journalist, John Howard Griffin, darkened his skin to masquerade as Black and write a book about his experiences, Black Like Me (Houghton Mifflin, 1961). Edugyan quotes Griffin describing what he called the ‘hate stare’ —“Nothing can describe the withering horror of this. You feel lost, sick at heart before such unmasked hatred, not so much because it threatens you as because it shows humans in an inhuman light.”

Mary Steinhauser, 1971

Steinhauser was a social worker, prison classification officer and prisoner rights advocate. Some believe she may have made herself an enemy of the guards’ old boys’ network. Franz also questions whether justice was served in the follow-up investigations. “I felt, deeply and bitterly, that Mary had been betrayed by the judicial system, by government and police authorities, and by society as a whole.” Christian Bruyère based a play and subsequent film of the same name, Wails (Talon, 1978) on the incident.

After the infamous hostage-taking incident that occurred at the old B.C. Penitentiary between June 9 – 11, 1975 and ended with one of the hostages being fatally shot is remembered by the sister of the victim, Margaret Franz, in Between Blade & Bullet: The Mary Steinhauser Story (FriesenPress $20.49). The shooter was one of the prison guards who stormed the area where the hostages were held. The guards deliberately covered up who fired the bullet that pierced Mary Steinhauser’s heart. The head of the glass

Head of the glass

Trailblazing women Martha Piper and Indira Samarasekera have joined together to produce Nerve: Lessons on Leadership from Two Women Who Went First (ECW $36.95). Piper served as the first woman president of the University of British Columbia and Samarasekera as the first woman president of the University of Alberta. The pair offer their insights and guidance to women of every age and at every stage of their career who take positions of leadership in academia or business. Through their experiences, Piper and Samarasekera share the reality of the demands of leadership, and caution that things are not always easy or fair.
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One Man in his Time...  
A Memoir by Michael Audain  
(Douglas & McIntyre $36.95)

Michael Audain and his wife Yoshiko Karasawa. The Audain family made history when it donated $100 million towards a new Vancouver Art Gallery building in November 2021.

B.C.’S AUDACIOUS AUDAIN

“I have been involved in a lot of ‘good trouble’.”
— Michael Audain

These days, when nearly everyone so desperately wants to believe they are special, Michael Audain writes as if he is not. It’s a hard act to pull off when you just happen to be one of the richest people in the province, but Audain succeeds charmingly in One Man in his Time.

His candour can be eye-popping. Did he really just confide to us his early struggles with impunity? Did he really just describe himself driving to Washington State with a rope, checking into a motel, and preparing to commit suicide? Did he really make a second trip to Asia to consult with a Buddhist monk to commit suicide? Perhaps best of all—did he really just describe himself driving to Washington State with a rope, checking into a motel, and preparing to commit suicide?

Did he really just say? (Douglas & McIntyre $36.95)

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about nudity in the shower rooms, which they found demeaning because it reminded who was circumsized and who wasn’t—a strange concern. Some even confided to me that their greatest fear was catching athlete’s foot! Others complained bitterly about the food we were provided, saying that it wasn’t a balanced diet or that it bothered their allergies. I must confess, I thought to myself that if these kids had experienced the Spartan British boarding-school that I had, they wouldn’t have felt that they were suffering."

Two years later, Audain read about the murder of Medgar Evers. In 2020 Audain was quoted in the Vancouer Sun as saying the experience changed him for the better. “Over the years I have been involved in a lot of ‘good trouble’ and it all stemmed from the Freedom Rides. In many ways, that frightening yet energizing experience changed my life.”

Fifty years later Audain returned to Jackson, Mississippi with his daughter Kyra to visit Evers’ home after it became a national heritage site. In 2012, Audain received a citation from President Barack Obama for his service to the Civil Rights movement. After forming the nuclear disarmament Club at UBC in 1960 and serving as its first president, Audain was married, in 1961, at Vancouver’s Unitarian Church (and overcame his earlier impotency problems) with Doukhobor-raised Tunya Swetleshnoff. Their eldest daughter Fenya is named after the best-known Sons of Freedom Doukhobor activist, Fenya Storgoff, nicknamed ‘Big Fanny’ by the blinkered and biased B.C. press that hurriedly condemned the public it was a good idea for W.A.C. Bennett’s Sacred government to confiscate Doukhobor children and place them in barbed-wire fenced compounds.

Michael and Tunya Audain were the only outsider witnesses at the outset of the famous, sometimes-awful, Doukhobor protest march from Krestova to the Lower Mainland. They remained active for months as key Doukhobor supporters and Audain also served as liaison for a film made by the French section of the National Film Board, crossing paths with poet Al Purdy in the process.

Again, as a social activist, Audain blew the whistle on the Dickensian practices of the Brannan Lake School for so-called juvenile delinquents. This led to his sympathetic meeting with a former social worker named Dave Barrett and Tom Berger the NDP opposition leader at the time. Soon after, Barrett became the NDP leader, and was eventually elected as B.C.’s first NDP premier in 1972. Barrett kept a promise he made to Audain and closed the Brannan Lake School. After gaining a Master of Social Work at UBC, Audain was hired to work “doing something called local area social planning” for the Strathcona/Chinatown district of Vancouver where he met realtor Faye Leung and developed his abiding interest in housing and housing policies.

Accepted by both Columbia University and London School of Economics for doctoral studies, Audain chose the latter but was soon diverted in the spring of 1968 by the general strike in France. After he was warmly met by the leader of the student union movement that was taking over the streets of Paris, Daniel Cohn-Bendit—known in the press as “Danny the Red”—Audain became greatly depressed when French idealism fizzled.

After the Gaullist Party won almost three-quarters of the seats in the National Assembly, Audain accepted an offer from the Ontario Housing Corporation that was building thousands of public housing units. “My Ph.D. thesis remains unfinished,” he writes, “something that I have always been rather ashamed about.”

Audain had eight different jobs, including working as a housing policy consultant for the NDP, before being invited to work for Polygon, the foremost builder of private homes in B.C. The latter quarter of his memoir—recounting his transition from being a socialist idealist to a large-scale residential developer—is less engaging because it is less revealing.

Rather than drone on for a 400-page epic, Audain has chosen to encapsulate his life story in 58 chapters that can be viewed as vignettes. Beyond the account of his Mississippi arrest and imprisonment concerns, the longest chapter concerns Audain’s latest passion—elevating the reputation of Quebec painter Jean Paul Riopelle—and it makes for an odd finale.

Tunya, mother of their two daughters, and his second wife Yoshi, have both shared in his love for art (and now twelve Labrador retrievers) but their personalities remain a mystery beyond a few memorable quips from the latter. Excitedly frank about his early life, he is the paragon of discretion about his epoch of success. The most detailed encounter in the book turns out to be Audain’s recollections of his chat with Queen Elizabeth during a formal reception, having revered her since his boyhood.

Audain’s literary journey in One Man in his Time is all the more impressive if you understand how much he has left out—one his remarkable record of philanthropy and public service. Rather than trying to be liked or admired, he is earnestly taking stock of who he has turned out to be. This is a thoroughly original book about a vital builder of B.C.
one of the province’s most prestigious awards for writers, the Lieutenant Governor’s Award for Literary Excellence, was presented to the poet and playwright Joseph A. Dandurand at this year’s BC & Yukon Book Prizes, held via Zoom on September 25.

Dandurand, a member of the Kwantlen First Nation, has been a storyteller since he was a young man. He is the author of more than twelve books of poetry and several plays for adults and youth. His most recent collection of poetry, The East Side of It All (Nightwood, 2020) was shortlisted for this year’s Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize (which was awarded to Michael Prior for Burning Province).

He is also the author of a best-selling children’s book The Stasquatch, the Fire and the Cedar Baskets (Nightwood, 2020) with illustrations by Simón Daniel James.

The LG prize recognizes a writer for having written a substantial body of literary work throughout their career and contributed significantly to the literary community/industry of B.C. The award was presented by B.C.’s Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Janet Austin. “Mr. Dandurand is a keeper of deep cultural knowledge whose work both shelters and amplifies voices that have long been silenced or ignored,” said Austin. “His work is a reverence gift of conservation that keeps these voices, experiences and ways of storytelling alive with both tenderness and ferocity. At a time when we look to artists for healing and for guidance of Joseph Dandurand.”

His second collection of poetry, Hear and Foretell (Bookland Press, 2016) continued with his focus on urban In- and Foretell in his first book of poetry in leaf, I Want His second collection of poetry, Hear and Foretell (Bookland Press, 2016) continued with his focus on urban In-and Foretell in his first book of poetry

In an earlier interview with BC BookWorld during which he was asked why he writes, Dandurand responded: “They say we are each born with a gift. Some take care of the fires; some are great cooks and fishermen. Others can carve wood. I truly believe that my ability to paint pictures with words is a gift. Even my Indian name Xalatsep means written down. This gift has both its wondrous side and also its tragic side. I write to release both demons and angels onto paper. Most times when I am writing I am filled with emotions and images that I have stored somewhere inside of me. This provokes memories and stories that I have carried all my life and when the moment comes and I cannot stand it anymore...I write.”

Here is the complete list of BC and Yukon Book Prize winners:

Joseph Dandurand

WINS LG AWARD

Victoria Book Prizes

Hosted online by CBC Radio’s Gregor Craigie, the 2021 Victoria Book Prizes announced its two prize winners on October 3: Briony Penn (with the late Cecil Paul) for Following the Good River: The Life and Times of Wa’xaid (Rocky Mountain Books); and Leslie Gentile for Elvis, Me and the Lemonade Stand Summer ( Cormorant Books).

Penn got the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize for her biography of one of North America’s more prominent Indigenous leaders, Cecil Paul (Wa’xaid). After overcoming the pain of the abuse inflicted by residential school, Wa’xaid became an outspoken fighter against the industrialization of his people’s land and traditional territory, working tirelessly to protect the Killepe, the largest intact temperate rainforest watershed in the world.

Gentile’s debut kidlit novel about an Indigenous girl who learns the importance of being part of a supportive community took the City of Victoria Children’s Book Prize. Gentile describes the summer of 1978 when most people think Elvis Presley has been dead for a year — except 11-year-old Truly who knows Elvis is alive and well and living at the Eagle Shores Trailer Park. Truly sets out to prove that her cool new neighbour is the King of Rock ‘n’ Roll while finding sanctuary with a Salish woman when her mother neglects her.

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Shaena Lambert: Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize for Pejus (Random House);

Billy-Ray Belcourt: Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize for A History of My Brief Body (Hamish Hamilton);

Michael Prior: Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize for Burning Province (McBride);

Kwanlin Dun First Nation: Rod- erick Haig-Brown Regional Prize for Kwixun Din (Figure 1 Publishing);

Sara Cassidy (text) and Charlene Chua (illustrations): Sheila A. Egoff Children’s Literature Prize for Genius Solene (Orca);

Rina Singh (text) and Ellen Rooney (illustrator): Christie Harris Illustrated Children’s Literature Prize for Grandmother School (Orca);

Robert Ames: Bill Duthie Booksellers’ Choice Award for The E.J. Hughes Book of Boots (TouchWood).

Briony Penn

Joseph Dandurand

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Robert Ames: Bill Duthie Booksellers’ Choice Award for The E.J. Hughes Book of Boots (TouchWood).
CONGRATULATIONS!
A rich harvest of Victoria writers

Winner of the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize

GRANT BUDAY
Orphans of Empire
TouchWood Editions

LORNA CROZIER
Through the Garden: A Love Story (with Cats)
Random House of Canada

WYEREN REGEHR
Cult Life
Pellaat Press

MADELINE SONIK
Fontainebleau
Aevil Press

BRIONY PENN
Following the Good River: The Life and Times of Wa’xaid
Rocky Mountain Books

Winner of the City of Victoria Children’s Book Prize

LESLEY GENTILE
Elvis, Me, and the Lemonade Stand Summer
Dancing Cat Books

LEANNE BAUGH
Wild Bird
Red Deer Press

MELANIE SEIBERT
Heads Up: Changing Minds on Mental Health
Orcas Island Books

Hats off to the other nominees...

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AVAILABLE NOW
Along the Shore and Through the Trees: Two Lives on the Line from Ahousaht to Estevan Point by Des Davidge
(Sandhill Distribution $19.95)

BY JOHN MOORE

After a scant couple of decades living with instant messaging, face-time global phone chat and portable laptops, we take wireless communication completely for granted. Consequently, it's hard to get our heads around the fact that for most of the last century, work in the 'communications field' still involved a lot more actual 'blood, sweat and tears' than anyone sitting at a computer terminal in an air-conditioned office can begin to imagine.

In 1955, fresh from five years in the Canadian Navy, Des Davidge answered an ad inviting young men to train as radio operators. Ex-service men had an edge, especially if they had served in Signals units, because they were familiar with Morse Code — the dots-and-dashes alphabetic code devised by Samuel Morse in the 1830s to be tapped out manually and transmitted over fixed wires between terminals. While 'wireless telegraphy' was invented in 1896 and radio by 1914, fixed-wire telegraph and Morse Code remained in use, especially at sea and between small communities that had limited access to telephone systems.

The Morse Code signal for help, SOS, is still recognized world-wide.

Davidge got the job and was posted to the Estevan Point Marine Radio Station, just south of Nootka Sound on the wild West Coast of Vancouver Island and describes his time there in his memoir, Along the Shore and Through the Trees. The area was still notorious as 'The Graveyard of the Pacific' because of the number of ships lost in stormy seas kicked up by weather-driven waves crashing into a continent. Facing that wide open ocean, connected to the nearest lighthouse and radio station existed in what could be described as a state of 'environmental siege.' Davidge loved it, even the constant danger and hard work of driving and repairing the plank road. He loved the people he worked with, many of them hired from the tiny community of Hesquiat, like George Rae Arthur, who maintained the telegraph line for more than thirty years over some of the most irregular geography on the planet.

George was one of the sons of Ada Rae Arthur, known as Cougar Annie, made famous by Margaret Horsfield's book, Cougar Annie's Garden (1999). Ada Rae Arthur built and maintained a beautiful five-acre farm/garden in the Hesquiat Peninsula wilderness and got her nickname by shooting seventy cougars who tried to help themselves to her livestock.

Most of all, Des Davidge came to love George's daughter, Rosina Adeline Ada Rae Arthur, who was inconveniently married to someone else. Des and Rosina resisted the intense attraction they both felt and he returned to eastern Canada, but neither of them forgot. Single again at last, they were permanently re-united after nearly a lifetime of separation. Davidge doesn't overdo the 'unromantic omnia' theme. Much of the charm of this oddly-structured memoir comes from Rosina's recollections of her childhood when she often accompanied her father in his boat on long patrols of the telegraph line he maintained so diligently. What resonates in this memoir is an intimate look into the lives of people living in supposed 'isolation' without feeling isolated. About a thousand people lived contentedly in a dozen small cells of a larger community connected by a fragile web of marine radio, telegraph wire, small boats and boot-leather in a wilderness of wild seas and rainforest.

Des Davidge's memoir reminds us that as we navigate groomed trails through barely suburban forests, satellite-based GPS transponders in hand, constantly checking how many bars our cell-phones register, we should all take a moment, turn off the electronics, sit where we can look at a river or ocean, read the weather in the clouds, measure time by the position of the sun, and re-think our concepts of 'connectivity'.

John Moore’s most recent book is Rain City: Vancouver Essays (Anvil, 2019).
Love Letters

Ivan Coyote shares epistolary wisdom on the acceptance of differences.

It's one of many letter and email exchanges that Ivan Coyote has published in Care Of Letters, Connections and Cures, which they wrote during the socially-distanced, early days of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ivan Coyote is a brave and tactful performer and writer who is as eloquent and entertaining in person as they are in print, leading to nearly three decades on the road as a performer in high demand. They have delivered at least 200 polished, powerful and often hilarious shows yearly. Then Covid-19 lowered the boom. No more tours to Australia, America, Hong Kong or hometown Whitehorse either. No more bookings cancelled, Ivan Coyote started answering the hundreds of letters and emails they have amassed from their audiences over the years. Now there was time to go deeper, to respond more thoughtfully with the wisdom gained from those years on the road.

One letter came from a closeted Muslim actress from Pakistan who discovered Coyote on social media. Her identity is protected because even though she moved to England, her family back home would be harassed about their gay daughter. Another exchange begins with a Canadian high school teacher who admits to being rather pleased with his own tolerance when his daughter announced in Grade 10 that she was gay. Fine, he thought, one of my brothers is gay, no big deal. Then his child springs the news that she wants to transition to male and, finally flummoxed, Dad turns to Coyote for guidance. This story has what storytellers hope for; that happier ending. A good many of the other letters are filled with despair and grief because fear of the unknown, not love, grips the wheel driving the bus, at school and at home, in the place of worship and in the workplace where some of the most toxic notions of masculinity are unleashed on those who are different.

Because Coyote's performances are engaging and because books like Tomboy Survival Guide (Arsenal, 2016) and, for LGBTQ teens, One In Every Crowd (Arsenal, 2012) have thrown lifelines to struggling individuals and families around the world, the ensuing correspondence must surely fill a massive filing cabinet. They have carefully selected some of those communiques in Care Of, including letters from people of all ages living in this world as someone other than the gender assigned to them at birth. Or realizing, like the high school student from a traditional Indo-Canadian family, that he was gay “ever since he could remember” and his father would kill him, “for real” and his brother would probably beat him up first. Coyote floundered and asked if he would carry the stand-up microphone to the parking lot and en route, about sixteen years of repression poured forth, the first time he’d ever confided to anyone. Ivan still thinks, and worries about that student.

There are heartbreaking letters like the one from a mother who lost her 21-year-old transgender daughter to suicide. Coyote’s own loving connection to a sprawling, raucous Yukon family, storytellers all, proves to be the key that breaks through resistance in other families.

Families are often simply afraid of losing their loved one. Parents fear what the world will do to their tomboy girl or their tender-hearted boy. Will surgery or any form of identity change mean losing their sister or their brother, their mother or their father? The loyal connection to family is supported on stage and in print by Coyote reassures parents and teens alike that the world will not end if the lifelong difference that is felt in every cell by one member of the family is acknowledged and future change is supported. This is not to say that the dark side, the snide and hurtful words and deeds dealt by some adults behind medical counters, or the usual suspects among hockey parents, for example, need to be tolerated. Thankfully there are people like the janitor at the Whitehorse Hockey Arena who created a locker room just for Coyote, at age 16 the only girl still playing organized hockey with boys in the entire Yukon. He tucked up a poster of Wayne Gretzky too.

One of my favourite zingers in this tough, tender and life-affirming book now festooned with post-it notes and underlined passages, is the following; “This is why labels peel off in the water.”

Caroline Woodward is the author of nine books in five genres for adults and children She lives in New Denver.

Ivan Coyote is a finalist for the 2021 Governor General’s Literary Awards in the non-fiction category for Care Of.
in her memoir Always Pack a Candle, Marion McKinnon Crook lays out a year in her life as a fledgling public health nurse during the 1960s.

Her delightful story is tactfully told, conveying the essence of the region, the people and the times, while at the same time protecting the identities of those who lived there.

What’s not clear is the book’s genre. Is it historical fiction or is it a memoir as Crook proclaims? The names of all the characters are made up, and some characters are completely fictionalized, but the author states that the conversations and events really did occur.

I’ve been a writer of local history in the Cariboo Chilcotin for several decades and have been a resident of the region since 1973, a decade after Crook describes her arrival in the community, disembarking from a Greyhound bus in Williams Lake on a hot dusty August day in 1963. So I relished the opportunity to suss out the “usual suspects” in her narrative. After all, the social landscape of the Cariboo Chilcotin has a preponderance of larger-than-life personalities.

To no avail, I was confounded. Crook cleverly conceals who was who. This was Crook’s prerogative and intention, and for good reason it turns out. It gave her the freedom to focus on difficult social issues and the shifting mores of the times like birth control, sexism and racism. It also gave her the opportunity to hit hard on tragic incidents of incest, sexual abuse, professional misconduct and impropriety without getting snagged on incriminations and finger pointing.

Crook’s portrayal of the geography and backwoods way of life traveling rugged roads, icy in winter and muddy in the spring throughout the region, rings true. Hence the survival technique described in the book’s title, “always pack a candle” is relevant.

Place names are familiar like Horsefly, Likely, Big Lake, Beaver Valley, Black Creek, Miscen, Canoe Creek, Lee’s Corner, Alexis Creek, Puntzi Mountain, Tatla Lake, Anahim Lake and Soda Creek, but for the most part the names and identities of people are kept well hidden.

In the time span of the book, August 1963 to summer of 1964, Williams Lake was in the midst of metamorphosing from a village into a town, then eventually into a city. Government offices and a new hospital were being constructed as the community was poised to take on the status of a regional centre. Hundreds of bush sawmills throughout the backcountry were also being consolidated into larger manufacturing plants in the bigger communities of Williams Lake, 100 Mile House and Quesnel.

Though the identities of her characters are fictionalized, Crook says the incidences and conversations in the book really took place. “I did live with the independent people of the Cariboo and experienced severe weather. I was not prepared and had to learn from experience,” she writes.

She also learned from others who readily shared their wisdom, insights and expertise.

“In the age of rock ‘n’ roll, Woodstock, free love and civil rights, I nursed in the wild regions of the Cariboo, where we were less interested in social movements and more interested in staying alive and surviving rough roads, oncoming logging trucks, and the challenges of country nursing.”

What I find difficult to comprehend is the strength and maturity Crook demonstrates as a young, first-year public health nurse. Her calling out incompetent doctors, misguided social workers and racist educators without getting crushed by the system is hard to fathom.

BY SAGE BIRCHWATER

A retired nurse recalls rough roads, tough people, racism and sexism in rural B.C.
Chalk it up to the joys of artistic license perhaps. Or maybe she really was a brash outspoken young woman, wise beyond her years.

Fictionalizing her story and compressing several years into one makes for a jam-packed, eventful narrative. When Crook drives 100 miles across the Chilcotin Plateau from Williams Lake to Puntzi Mountain Air Base to perform her community nursing duties, she is confronted by an American airman saluting her at the gate. She describes her humorous dilemma whether to salute back to a foreign official on Canadian soil, or just nod her acknowledgement. She chose the latter.

Crook conveys interesting historical information about the DEW (Distant Early Warning) system the United States established across Canada during the Korean War and Cold War with the Soviet Union in the 1950s. Puntzi Mountain Air Base was built by the Americans in 1950 to serve as a radar station on the DEW Line and it remained an American air base until the fall of 1962, the year before Crook started nursing in the region. Then the Americans turned over command to the Canadian Air Force, and some US personnel remained at Puntzi Mountain to help with technical operations until Canada closed the base on December 31, 1966.

One anomaly of Crook not naming real people in her book occurs when she travels west into the Chilcotin in the dead of winter and was given hospitality at the Graham Ranch in Tatla Lake. She states that a woman she assumed was Mrs. Graham, fed her enough breakfast “to keep a logger moving all day.” Of course Margaret Graham, matriarch of the ranch for over 50 years, had died five years previously in 1958. Nevertheless, members of the Graham Family were still proprietors of the place when Crook stayed there.

Time and again throughout the book Crook breaks through the staid social conventions that shrouded the Cariboo Chilcotin at that time. She is particularly empathetic to the plight of Indigenous people and makes a valiant effort to address racism in its many forms. This makes the book relevant to the current climate of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Indigenous injustices.

Crook is consistent in her manner of respectful dialogue with Indigenous characters throughout her narrative. This is exemplified by her encounter with an elder Indigenous woman at a child health clinic in Anahim Lake. She describes the woman approaching her and asking if she’d mind giving her niece a ride into Williams Lake. This provided a segue into learning more about the young woman, Charmaine who was an art student in Vancouver with dreams of becoming a great artist.

The strength of Always Pack A Candle is the easy conversational style employed by Crook. More like a novel than a memoir perhaps, but a polished work, attractive to both history buffs and readers of fiction alike.

Author of nine books, Sage Birchwater of Williams Lake is one of B.C.’s most essential historians and journalists.

“An impressive and necessary treasure that links Indigenous peoples’ self-determination with wise economic practices.”

SAKE’J HENDERSON
University of Saskatchewan
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* Milk, Spice and Curry Leaves
Bisous and Brioché
Cedar and Salt
Vegetables: A Love Story

Heritage House Publishing
In 1909, Hazelton was a small frontier town in northern British Columbia. It was a place of great natural beauty. There were no roads and there was no railway. To get around you walked, rode a horse or used canoes and, in winter, used snowshoes or dog-sleds. Sternwheelers did come up the Skeena river in the winter, used snowshoes or dog-sleds. They were in a bar near Hazelton. Gunanoot, a popular Gitxsan trapper and store-keeper brawled with a local thug named Alex MacIntosh. When MacIntosh was left the bar at four in the afternoon, a hunting guide new to the region, had also been found shot dead on the trail. He too had been shot when all the others had failed.

Before the First World War, the B.C. Provincial Police did not have a detective branch. On numerous occasions, including in one hunt for the train robber Bill Miner, they had turned to Pinkerton’s for assistance. Using Pinkerton’s to catch Gunanoot was a more difficult decision. Rather than an easy decision, because what the police needed in this case were expert trackers and outdoorsmen, not detectives. Why Pinkerton’s men were chosen for the hunt in B.C.’s north is one of many unanswered questions in this saga. Is the answer that the police in Victoria did not entirely trust the locals in Hazelton? And if so, was this suspicion justified?

For almost a year, two Pinkerton’s men searched the Upper Skeena, returning to Hazelton to recuperate and gather more information. Always trying to maintain their disguises as prospectors and trying not to be too interested in Gunanoot, they spoke with everyone they met and reported on their travels, the rumours and the stories and what Gunanoot did. They spent a difficult winter in the snows of the Upper Skeena. As we now know, they failed.

In 1919, after thirteen years as an outlaw, Gunanoot took refuge in the mountains of the Upper Skeena. The region where Gunanoot took refuge was an area half the size of England. A great traveler, he went as far north as the Yukon border.

How Simon Gunanoot remained uncaptured for thirteen years and evaded a premier detective organization.

Australian historian and author Geoff Mynett took three years to research and write the relatively unknown story of Dr. Horace Wrinch, Frontier Physician, a premier detective organization. It championed the use of mug-shots and fingerprints. In detective work, Pinkerton’s was the best. In the hunt for Simon Gunanoot, would they succeed when all the others had failed?

Before the First World War, the B.C. Provincial Police did not have a detective branch. On numerous occasions, including in one hunt for the train robber Bill Miner, they had turned to Pinkerton’s for assistance. Using Pinkerton’s to catch Gunanoot was rather an odd decision, because what the police needed in this case were expert trackers and outdoorsmen, not detectives. Why Pinkerton’s men were chosen for the hunt in B.C.’s north is one of many unanswered questions in this saga. Is the answer that the police in Victoria did not entirely trust the locals in Hazelton? And if so, was this suspicion justified?

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In 1919, after thirteen years as an outlaw, Gunanoot took refuge in the mountains of the Upper Skeena. The region where Gunanoot took refuge was an area half the size of England. A great traveler, he went as far north as the Yukon border. After a fraught week of evading the police, Gunanoot escaped with his family and brother-in-law, Peter Himadan, into the forests and lakes of the Upper Skeena. Simon Gunanoot need to be revisited.
Two hundred years ago, class lines separated the HBC’s “gentlemen” from the hardy voyageurs who did the heavy lifting.
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BY MARK FORSYTHE

Peregrine into Vancou-
ver's history can be like perusing con-
temporary headlines: frenzied real estate speculation, hous-
ing shortages, labour strife, racism and even a campaign to shunt down jitney drivers (who were akin to today's taxi and Uber drivers).

Plenty of common threads between then and now are found in Daniel Francis's book, Becoming Vancou-
ver: A History—the first chronological survey of the city's history in 50 years.

A West-sider by birth, Francis grew up in 1950s Vancouver, then a "low rise city" with few tall buildings. From his Kitsilano bedroom he looked across English Bay "at the dark shape of Stanley Park and the buildings of the downtown peninsula." It was a postwar city in transition: highly industrial-
ized areas like False Creek and Coal Harbour were being shaped into resi-
dential neighbourhoods. Today they're among the most desirable locations on the planet.

Francis launches Becoming Vancou-
ver by acknowledging the deep history of First Nations who were forcibly re-
moved from their lands as Vancouver grew (think Stanley Park and False Creek). In 1933 chief city archivist Major James Matthews spoke with August Jack Khatsahlano and other Squamish and Musquakan elders about where their people had lived, and he learned some of their stories. Names like E-yal-mough (Jericho) Ay-yul-
shun (English Bay Beach) Nyo-yowy (Lumberman's Arch) appeared on an illustrated map that Matthews created. Before The Pale-Face Came: Indian Names for Familiar Places drew praise from local Indigenous leaders who said their history had been lost. Francis writes, "The map reflects not just a different version of history but also a different understanding of the way the world worked."

Francis's book, Becoming Vancouver: A History, is a 10-year project with BC Historical Federation council mem-
ber and former CBC radio host, Mark Forsythe, co-authored with Greg Dick-
son, from the West Coast to the Western Front: British Columbians and the Great War (Harbour, 2014).

Vancouver as we know it emerged from white settler communities at Stamps Mill (later Hastings Mill), Gastown (a "jerry-built settlement" surrounding Gassy Jack Deighton's Globe House saloon) and the CPR's massive land grant (6,275 acres). "It was standard practice for the railway to secure grants of public land in return for building its facilities, but nowhere else in Western Canada was the grant as generous as it was in Vancouver," writes Francis. Terminal City "changed everything." Vancouver was now con-
necting to the world via rail and an expanding port.

The Great Fire of 1886 tore through the settlement leaving one building standing on the waterfront (shades of the recent devastation at Lytton). Whis-
key sales resumed the next day, and the Advertiser proclaimed, "Though disfigured, we are still in the ring." People immediately set to rebuilding. The famous H.T. Devine photograph of city council members sitting in front of a tent with a handmade City Hall sign foreshadowed Hollywood North—it was staged three months after the fire. Council had already set up shop in a nearby warehouse. Francis is an historian with 30 books to his credit, including the highly successful Encyclopaedia of Brit-
ish Columbia—a 10-year project with Harbour Publishing. Becoming Vancou-
ver skillfully chronicles tensions that defined the city through the decades: business vs labour; wartime losses and innovation (the expanding role of wom-
en in factory work and shipbuilding); and anti-Asian fear mongering (busi-
nessman Tong Louise's move to Dunbar in 1941 was considered by many an "oriental invasion"). After large swaths of Strathcona were razed, including the home of Vancouver's Black commu-
nity, Hogan's Alley, community groups pushed back and politicians began to listen. Francis regards this as a "turn-

Vancouver could be a wild and rough place, from loggers on Skid Road in the Downtown Eastside to corrupt cops on the take from brothels and gamblers. Early in the city's life there was also a brilliant tram system, im-
pressive theatre venues, a school of arts that attracted the likes of Group of Seven members Fred Varley and Jack MacDonald, and bike paths—before streetcars and cars shaped them off the road. The city's footprint often followed BC Electric streetcar lines, coupled with massive CPR lands or developments. Eventually the waterfront was rescued from heavy in-
dustry and complemented by a seawall begun by master stonemason James Cunningham in 1917. It is now the longest uninterrupted waterfront path in the world.

In the 1960s and 1970s community protests halted plans for a freeway through Chinatown and some of the poorest neighbourhoods in the city. Liveability became important and lo-
cal people would have a greater voice in future development plans. Francis also considers the pros and cons of more recent mega-projects like Expo '86 and the 2010 Winter Olympics. Each drew international attention and new investment to the city, but they also displaced people in poorer neighbourhoods. Mixed in with fact and anecdote are short profiles of key figures like L.D. Taylor, the city's lon-
est serving mayor and activist Helena Guttenidge, the first female mayor. Ample photos help tell the stories and a Jack Shadbolt painting on the cover vividly captures nightlife on Granville Street in 1946.

A central theme in Becoming Van-
coover is what Francis terms "the city's competing ideas of itself." The quest to create a "world class" city of steel and glass (with heritage buildings left in a pile of dust) often conflicts with other values—living for a livable community that includes development on a more hu-
man scale, "Vancouverism" realized.

These desires are not so new. Brit-
ish landscape architect and planner Thomas Mawson observed "com-
mercialism vs nature" impinges on the Vancou-
ver skyline back in 1912. As Daniel Francis sees it, Vancouver remains "a city with a split personality." This book's wise insights into Vancou-
ver's past just might help two compet-
ing visions forge a future together.

BY MARK FORSYTHE

Housing setbacks, racism, striving to be "world class" have been part of the city since white settlers founded it.

The BC Electric Railway Company, 1928, still stands at the corner of Hastings and Carrall.

Becoming Vancouver: A History by Daniel Francis (Harbour $36.95)
OЯACULE emerges from Nicole Raziya Fong’s remarkable and under-acknowledged debut, PEЯFACT. Together, the books sustain a meditation on the shape and nature of the poem.” —Kaie Kellough

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Graphic novels are the fastest growing genre in book publishing, with sales increasing every year. In 2020, the combined sales revenue of graphic novels/comics in North America was $1.28 billion. Graphic novelists were preceded by comic artists and cartoonists, such as Emily Carr, who in 1918, drew cartoons for the Vancouver-based Western Women’s Weekly. The first Canadian comic book, Better Comics, was published in Vancouver in 1941 and marks its 80th anniversary this year. Better Comics was produced in response to a ban on the importation of American comics during the Second World War.

Vancouver’s counter-culture weekly, Georgia Straight, in the late 1960s, played a major role in the development of comics by publishing Acidman by Peter ‘Zipp’ Almasy. Later, the Straight ran regular strips by the legendary Rand Holmes (Harold Heald, Guy Comics) in the early 1970s, and the hilarious David Roswell (Road Fleming, World’s Toughest Milkman) in the 1980s.

The Straight was one of over 500 alternative newspapers that sprang up across North America in the 1960s giving cartoonists a forum to break free of traditional comic art and present a more subversive, sometimes disturbing view of the world. This explosion of expression led to the growth of underground comic books.

The term, “graphic novel” was first coined by Will Eisner for his 1978 book A Contract with God. Graphic novel now covers any kind of book of sequential art, whether an actual novel or non-fiction work.

Art Spiegelman’s genre-defining Maus: A Survivor’s Tale won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992. The award gave legitimacy to graphic novels both commercially and intellectually.


Political awareness made an impact on comic art in B.C. with She Named It Canada Because That’s What It Was Called (1971) created by The Corrective Collective, a Vancouver-based feminist group whose aim was to re-write Canadian history for a popular audience. The comic was 50 years ahead of its time by offering an alternative perspective on the development of colonial Canada. The comic was illustrated by Colette French and printed at Persa Gung, going into four editions.

The accessibility of nature of comics is a perfect fit with social justice. Ee the Graphic History Collective (GHC), formed in 2008 when a group artists, writers and researchers test their activist approach to comics. The GHC says their goal is to produce alternative histories—real histories—in an accessible format to help people understand the 1 topical roots of contemporary social issues. Our comics show that ‘I don’t need a cape and a pair of tights to change the world.’ GHC box include Doors to Change: Graphic Histories of Working Class Struggles and 1919. A Graphic History of the Winnipeg General Strike.

In 2008, almost three decades after the Pork Roasts exhibit, Vancouver Art Gallery mounted KRAZY! The Delicious World of Ani Comics, Video Games, & Art, a groundbreaking, international review comic art, graphic novels and associated art. The exhibition catalyzed the creation of new artists and exhibitions that were featured in the following years.

Over the past few decades, evidence of a growing community graphic novelists and the wider acceptance of graphic novels can be seen on a number of fronts. The Vancouver Comic Arts Festival (VANCAF) an annual two-day celebration, has been going strong since 2012. A academic world has also stepped up with UBC, SFU, Camosun College, Emily Carr University of Art + Design and the Universi of Northern B.C. all offering courses on graphic novels. And in 2017, Vancouver Public Library’s Writer in Residence was, for the first time graphic novels. Also, Vancouver’s Queer Press created Vital Voices, named one of 2016’s top 10 graphic novels by Forbes magazine.

Recent graphic novels by B.C. artists & writers:

• Borders (HarperCollins $21.99) by Natasha Donovan, a Metis painter and writer originally from Vancouver has teamed up with Thomas K to adapt one of King’s short stories about a mother and son road trip that involves crossing the U.S.—Canada border. When the pair asks “Blackfoot” if they can be the border guard’s question as to their nationality, “I find ourselves in limbo, unable to go north or south.”

• Shadow Life (First Second $24.99) by poet and novelist Hiroshi Mi with art by Anu Xu follows a seventy-six-year-old mother whose w meaning making project is to place her in an assisted living home. But she won rather be in her own apartment. Shadow life questions institutionalized eldercare and memories of Japanese internment camps.

• In The Monster Sisters & the Mystery of the Stone Octopus (Arsenal Pulp $19.95), slouching sisters Enid and Lyra use the city’s archives and consult local bookstores to uncover a consipiracy spanning centuries and unruly monsters (for ages 9–12).

• Eleven years after its original publication, The 500 Years of Dignified Resistance Comic Book (Artsenal Pulp $19.95) by Gord I has been re-launched in a full-colour, revised and expanded edit.

This groundbreaking opus covers the history of Indigenous activis and struggle from contact to present day.

• Kristina Lau of Vancouver has illustrated Besti Work It Out (Sch/Clarion $12.99) written by Kayla Mil and Jeffrey Canino. The story, for ages 8–12, follows 11-year-olds Beth and Chandra as they navigate a dog-sitting job. Kristina Lau’s art has also been published in LGBTQ+ comic anthologies.

• Pizza Punks (Conundrum Press $15) by Cole Pa pushes the limits of extreme pizza love to new heights. Backpack pizza, couch pizza, moss pizza are all okay. I pineapple, yikes, no way. Cole Paula is a Tahltan comic ar and printmaker whose graphic novel Dakukukuda Wurrr was a 2020 Indigenous Voices Award and was nominated for two Doug Wright Awards.

• Pearl Low has illustrated Vampires Don’t Wear Pink Boots (Scholastic $22.99) by Marcia Thornton Jones & Debbie Dadey (for ages 7 to 10). The third graders at Bai Elementary are so hard to handle that all of their teas ers quit except the new teacher who has just arrived from Pennsylvania. Low’s art is rooted in Chinese-Canadian a Caribbean-Canadian experiences. In 2020, she won Academy Award for her film Hair Loss.

• Davidester Lester’s Prophet Against Slavery: Benji Lay, A Graphic Novel (Beacon Press $21) chronicles life of an 18th-century dwarf and punchback who runs a lonely, heroic fight for the immediate and total abolition of slavery in America. Benjamin Lay used guerrilla thea and direct action to speak truth to power and shame sl owners and traders in his community.

• Set in Victoria’s James Bay neighborhood, Paint Fences by Sara Cassidy, with art by Sydney Barnes (H tague House $19.95) depicts a child’s eye view of life dur World War Two by cutting between the present and the past to tell a poignant story.

• Coming Out, Again: Transition Stories (UBC Pr $30.95) by Sahina Symington is an empowering graphic novel exploring identity and how it can change over time. I comes out as a lesbian after coming out as a trans woman, her gender identity is then challenged and she struggles with her own gender identity in later life.

Forbes one of 2016’s top 10 graphic novels, Toward a Hot Jew by Miriam Libicki was published by Douglas & McIntyre. Forbes, with art by Sabrina Symington. Coming Out, Again: Transition Stories (UBC Press) $21 chronicles the relationship between two young women, one of whom is coming out as a lesbian and the other is coming out as a trans woman. The story follows their journey as they navigate the complexities of their identities and relationships with their families. It also explores themes of acceptance, self-discovery, and the power of love. The book has been praised for its realistic portrayal of the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals and their families, and has received critical acclaim for its sensitive and compassionate storytelling. With artwork by Sabrina Symington and text by Miriam Libicki, Coming Out, Again: Transition Stories offers a powerful and inspiring story that will resonate with readers of all genders and orientations.
WHEN MILK WON’T CURdle AND BREAD WON’T RISE

By Trevor Carolan

A new fantasy novel set in the not too far-off future, a band of anti-authoritarian resisters is determined to preserve themselves and a degraded humanit y against fearful odds. At stake is nothing less than planetary ecological survival.

The cast contains chiefly female lead characters and the story involves time travel via portals in the Perimeter, a huge post-ecocide territory governed by a brutal force called Consortium. Within the scores of mostly single-page verse accounts—some are longer—we encounter themes involving self and community identity, shifting tides of good and evil and what East-West philosopher Alan Watts (1915-1973) called “overcoming suffering.”

Action takes place largely in “Pacifica,” a coastal region resembling Cascadia. Language has deteriorated, but familiar names arise—Barnston Island, the Albion Ferry, Cedar Cottage, the Rentalsman and more.

Story-time begins at the Winter Portal. The earth is skilier and “spores, viruses [are] spreading.” Masks are important. Droughts, wild fires and melting ice-caps accelerate eco-change. The parallels with current climate change disasters and our past pandemic year and a half are obvious. But in Renée Sarojini Saklikar’s Bramah and the Beggar Boy, which has been ten years in the making, there’s even more societal devolution.

Something is amiss in this dystopian world—milk won’t curdle, bread won’t rise and an omnious Investigator lurks on behalf of the Consortium, tracking down dissenters to its authoritive. When the voices of ragamuffin beggar boys call for aid—“Turn your key, Bramah, and find us at last,” Bramah the heroine arrives packing “tools plus lasers, all the latest gadgets.”

With her tattooed arm she’s a “turner of bad odds.” Bramah, we’re told, is part-human, part-goddess, brown and beautiful, a female locksmith. Like a character from Indic legends she comes from the “far future.” An employee of the Consortium, she can travel in time and is tasked with retrieving a valuable box. But hearing the pleas of young resisters, Bramah goes rogue.

A first critical turn occurs when Bramah and her Beggar Boy sidekick find the box and snatch the contents. Escaping through a time portal, the crafty pair regroup in a Paris cafe. The box contains documents, disks, codes, maps and a parchment scroll of stories that will unfold for future survivors in recalibrating directions for a world gone off-course.

Female elders play critical roles. When the Beggar Boy is brought to Bramah’s grandmother we see the elders’ importance as “seed savers” in a ruined ecology. On their way to visit the elder, Bramah and the boy pass across time, vast earthspaces, diverse languages and cultures. Among the many story lines in this novel is a group of Auntes associated with “The Wishing Well” who work clan-destinely in preserving archival social memory and compiling seed-stocks for climate rehabilitation. There’s loving homage paid to bee-keeping, the joy of pollination, to royal queens and honey’s nutritional goodness—reminiscent of a formidable achievement. Some could be reset up front or in-text. Expect ballad refrains, tricky codes, romantic letters and terse corporate reports. However, the stories of poetic fragments she constructs, while skilfully effused, are often as ambiguous as Lucy in The Sky With Diamonds. Perhaps the poet intuits this. An end-note clarifies how her “obsession with formal poetry... finds its creative tension in the investigation of the fragment fused into forms of poetry...” By nature, fragments are discontinuous; inevitably there’s a challenge in having these clearly understood. The author does provide extensive supplementary information, including a link and a code to an external website providing further back-up to the epic. It’s bound to be buggy. Some could be reset up front or in-text. Nevertheless, a 300-page verse epic is a formidable achievement.

The author notes that Bramah and the Beggar Boy is the first in a planned trilogy. Trevor Carolan’s most recent book is Road Trips: Journeys in the Unspoiled World (Mother Tongue, 2020).


An adopted beggar girl, Abigail shapes Part Two. She’ll learn her mother’s story from one of the Auntes and the loveliest poetry in the book comes as a homologous message to the future from her—reminding her little survivor girl, “I will be/so silent/I will be that space hidden/... I will be the quiet of a forest/... the ocean/at night/advice/.../I will be/so silent/settled along the riverbank/city with its back/to the ocean/at night/a store-front/... I will be/that silent/unending night...”

Like Bramah, Abigail becomes a “purveyor of the artful dodge,” and in borrowing from South Asian religious mythologies, Saklikar’s interconnected heroines become mutually reflective. On meeting her soul-mate Bartholomew, love enters the saga; then after a sparkling exchange of letters we’re off toward second bookland in the poet’s promised trilogy.

Saklikar writes with keen metrical discipline, depicting finely polished images in lean lines that mix manifold verse forms. Expect ballad refrains, tricky codes, romantic letters and terse corporate reports. However, the stories of poetic fragments she constructs, while skilfully effused, are often as ambiguous as Lucy in The Sky With Diamonds. Perhaps the poet intuits this. An end-note clarifies how her “obsession with formal poetry... finds its creative tension in the investigation of the fragment fused into forms of poetry...” By nature, fragments are discontinuous; inevitably there’s a challenge in having these clearly understood. The author does provide extensive supplementary information, including a link and a code to an external website providing further back-up to the epic. It’s bound to be buggy. Some could be reset up front or in-text. Nevertheless, a 300-page verse epic is a formidable achievement.

The author notes that Bramah and the Beggar Boy is the first in a planned 1,000-page saga. Fans of fantasy literature and long-form poetry with a gritty ecological resonance have plenty to look forward to.

POETRY REVIEW

Renée Sarojini Saklikar’s epic fantasy in verse unveils a dystopian future and female saviours.

Bramah and the Beggar Boy by Renée Sarojini Saklikar (Nightwood $26.95)

In a new fantasy novel set in the not too far-off future, a band of anti-authoritarian resisters is determined to preserve themselves and a degraded humanit y against fearful odds. At stake is nothing less than planetary ecological survival.

The cast contains chiefly female lead characters and the story involves time travel via portals in the Perimeter, a huge post-ecocide territory governed by a brutal force called Consortium. Within the scores of mostly single-page verse accounts—some are longer—we encounter themes involving self and community identity, shifting tides of good and evil and what East-West philosopher Alan Watts (1915-1973) called “overcoming suffering.”

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Something is amiss in this dystopian world—milk won’t curdle, bread won’t rise and an omnious Investigator lurks on behalf of the Consortium, tracking down dissenters to its authoritive. When the voices of ragamuffin beggar boys call for aid—“Turn your key, Bramah, and find us at last,” Bramah the heroine arrives packing “tools plus lasers, all the latest gadgets.”

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With their brevity, the mini-prose puzzles in Clint Burnham’s White Lie consist of one-paragraph snippets that may or may not be autobiographical.

Described on the book jacket as “part travelogue, part autofiction” as well as “a series of quick bursts,” Burnham’s diary-like observations are connected in terms of tone rather than narrative.

The glue is Burnham’s cryptic, clever, literary gamesmanship. Can you deduce what he’s talking about in these mostly diary-like entries?

For an entry called Mark, he writes:

“In the long run… the econom-ics professor droned on at the military college, in a lecture hall built in 1930. A wiseass from the back of the room piped up… ‘we’ll all be dead!’ That night he sat next to a literature pro-fessor, the poet, Mark Madoff. His colleague, who wore tapered shirts, was named Brodsky, which led to a few russophobic jokes. He asked him what an oak bay was. The poet had been published in 3cent Pulp the previous decade.

Most people nowadays would not know that 3cent Pulp was a Vancouver-based literary publication, created by Stephen Osborne and others, that led to the creation of Pulp Press, which later changed its name to Arsenal Pulp. So White Lie is not for most people.

Nobel Prize-winner Joseph Brodsky (1940-1996), a friend of dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov, was arguably the greatest (or best-known) poet to emerge from post-war Russia. Soon after his expulsion from the Soviet Union, Brodsky gave a long-winded reading at UBC in 1972. It is presumed you might know this.

Seemingly hap-hazard but stylistically clever, Burnham’s collective entries are not connected by personality or plot; instead, they are bound together by his wry, critical eye, a tad elitist to be sure, but often funny—and most importantly—never dull.

It was Joni Mitchell, while giving a rare public address in Sechelt, who pointed out that most of the music we hear is degenerate. That is, it is a copy of something that came before. Hence the job of the artist is to make something new. One suspects Clint Burnham would agree.

For an entry called Roman Idol, he writes:

“…we’ll all be dead!” That night he sat next to a literature professor, the poet, Mark Madoff. His colleague, who wore tapered shirts, was named Brodsky, which led to a few russophobic jokes. He asked him what an oak bay was. The poet had been published in 3cent Pulp the previous decade.

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White Lie by Clint Burnham (Anvil Press $18)

MASH-UP

Burnham’s bite-sized prose can be filling
Elvis is in the house

A small town musician gets thrown into the limelight and attracts a stalker.

Vicar is a romp! Even at its darkest, Ditrich’s novel maintains that light-hearted edge: its villains and their schemes are harebrained, and when they get their comeuppance the tool of their destruction is a bong, wielded in a decidedly unconventional manner. Ditrich also provides just enough fore-shadowing that, by book’s end, you’ll be glad to know that a sequel is already in the works. Hopefully it’ll be out by next June, just in time for summer reading.

There’s more, though. Underneath the terrible puns, the unlikely coincidences, and the perpetually puzzling question of what, exactly, Jacquie sees in Tony, The Liquor Vicar has a large and generous heart. It’s probably useful to know that Ditrich was the long-time drummer with popular Vancouver folk-rock band Spirit of the West, an act that successfully managed to combine dance-floor friendly melodies with an activist spirit. In the past few years, Ditrich had to witness Spirit’s universally adored front man, John Mann, contract and ultimately die from an aggressive form of early onset dementia. And he’s had health issues of his own: in 2016 Ditrich successfully received a kidney transplant after suffering from kidney disease for several years.

“The situation has even one more miraculous wrinkle,” he reported on Facebook at the time. “My nephew gave up his kidney to some anonymous recipient so that I could in turn receive an anonymous kidney from someone else. This daisy chain of generosity humbles me to my core.”

So, in Ditrich’s world miracles really do happen. We can save lives just by being compassionate and good. Hope exists. Some of that spirit percolates through this book, and if you can get past its unpromising introduction, you may very well find yourself cheered at a time when cheer has never been more welcome.

Alexander Varty is a musician and writer living on unceded Snuneymuxw territory.
Cookbook fans are raving about the newest one! With the winter entertaining season upon us, you’ll be inspired by these recipes. Once again, Shelley Adams demonstrates her skill in elevating simple ingredients to new, wonderfully delicious heights. Easily sourced fresh foods are coaxed expertly with fresh herbs, creative seasonings and easy cooking techniques - to result in impressive dishes and meals cooks will want to return to time and time again. This is the 6th book in the Whitewater Cooks series - another must-have for the kitchen!

Paperback, 180 pp, all colour  9780981142449  $36.95  Alcon Holdings 2021
Brett Josef Grubisic completed his characters in the 1980s. Grubisic returned to the same setting with different stories (Now or Never, 2015) returned to From Up River and For One Night Only. From Mission, Grubisic’s second novel River Bend that is based on Mission, where he grew up, is a handwritten manuscript a student finds inside a vintage Home Economics textbook. He shows it to his professor, who then publishes it and discusses the manuscript as a document representing lost queer history—a gay fiction manuscript that would have not been published in the early 1960s because gay was “too much” for lettered Canadian society then. The manuscript depicts a weird journey of self-discovery for one Winston Wilson, a teacher in River Bend City. His visits to a medical specialist in Vancouver accidentally expose him to a shadowy queer society—about which he has radically mixed feelings.

From Up River is set in the autumn and winter of 1980/81 and offers a comical exploration of two sets of siblings led by two elder brothers (both gay) in Grade 12 who decide to become a New Wave band (called the Iron Curtains) and enter a battle-of-the-bands contest in Haney. Their quests to raise funds and learn to play Gary Numan songs lead them to all kinds of quandaries.

My Two-Faced Luck tells the life story of a gay inmate in Horsetail Institution, seated in River Bend Municipality. Before he dies in River Bend Hospital in 1990, the inmate records episodes for a memoir project from his life in rural Massachusetts (where he was born in 1927), New York City, Washington DC, and San Francisco. Decades later, the infirmary nurse to whom the inmate bequeathed the inmate’s cassette recordings, which accidentally expose him to a shadowy queer culture might get transmitted from generation to generation. They are also organized unconventionally. Age takes the form of a lost manuscript (and faux-professorial introduction, complete with photographic “documents” and samples of an unknown novelist’s handwriting), while From Up River features drawings, notes, song lyrics, diary entries, journalism and even sign language symbols. In Two-Faced, an inmate’s cassette recordings, which are lost and then recovered twenty years later and reorganized according to the whims and guesswork of their listener—continues with the stylistic through-line. While there’s no recurring character, the novels focus on queer lives in River Bend at different points in history.

Why the focus on closeted gay life? Brett Josef Grubisic: It’s 2021, same-sex marriage has been possible in Canada for sixteen years and people are still closeted. But there has been change: when looking at a rural character born in 27, or who was an adult in the 1950s, or an adolescent in 1980 (which are, respectively, the situations of Two-Faced, Age of Cities, and From Up River), the condition of “closetedness”—and the narrow range of locational contexts for being unapologetically gay—change massively.
then their daughter Elisse was a young girl, writers Slavia Miki and Roy Miki, illustrated by Mariko Ando (Tradewind, $19.95) Ages 6 – 8

When their daughter Elisse was a young girl, writes Slavia Miki and Roy Miki, little narwhal dives down deep, “writes Peggy. It turned out to be transformative for both Elisse and her new pet.

“Overcoming her initial fears and limitations, Peggy accepted any challenge, just so they [Peggy and Elisse] could be together, at least so it seemed to us,” write the Mikis in the acknowledgments to their fictionalized kidlit story about a similar guinea pig, Peggy’s Impossible Tale.

“The relationship between Elisse and Peggy enriched our lives, showing us how Elisse’s love could transform and elevate the life of even the smallest of beings. Peggy’s love for Elisse showed us how the seemingly impossible could become possible and how the ordinary could become special.

“The story is told in the voice of the pet guinea pig. It starts with Peggy alone in her cage at a pet store as a mother and daughter walk in. We quickly learn that Peggy knows what the humans are saying when the pet store owner calls guinea pigs stupid. ‘Hey Sandy, I’m not stupid,’ squeaks Peggy, ‘I can understand you.’”

Then Peggy Lonswag as the mother and daughter (a girl named Lisa) check out the special guinea pigs such as the Peruvian with long silver hair that covers its eyes and a tortoiseshell with dark eyes.

“I’m just an ordinary guinea pig with short white hair and small pink ears,” says Peggy. “I was afraid that Lisa wouldn’t choose me.” But Lisa does opt for Peggy and the two become instant best friends. “Finally I had a family of my own,” says Peggy. Soon, Peggy teaches Lisa to understand her ‘squeak talk’: “For five days I stood her ‘squeak talk’: ‘For five days I practiced my squeaks until Lisa finally understood me.’”

Peggy’s Impossible Tale

A lost narwhal finds a family

Little Narwhal, Not Alone

by Tiffany Stone & illustrated by Ashlyn Antee (Greystone Kids $22.95) Ages 4 – 8

A lost narwhal finds a family. And so while others hunt and play, narwhal sets off on his way.”

However, to everyone’s surprise, it was adopted by the group of young belugas. Now, the narwhal has even been adopted by the group of young belugas. The sounds they make are different and belugas and vice versa. And the belugas eat the kind of fish that the narwhal is not used to. But they all instinctively know how to play together and that becomes the bonding glue. “Although a lot is not the same, narwhal knows he knows this game! Flippers splash. He joins right in. And...SQURT...the new whales welcome him!”

Eventually Lisa helps Peggy do the impossible as, “one day, Lisa put my paws on a step and gave my round bottom a little push. To my surprise I climbed one stair, and then another... I could finally climb stairs.” Peggy learns many other things, some the hard way. Like staying away from electrical plugs and not chewing electrical cords as they can deliver an uncomfortable zap. The vacuum scares her. And when Lisa traings Peggy to walk outdoors with a special harness and leash, cats and crows are to be avoided. Most other people don’t believe that Peggy could possibly climb stairs and walk on a leash. That’s when Lisa’s mom suggests they enter Peggy in a Special Pets Contest. There, Peggy shows disbeliefing humans that ‘the impossible’ can be realized. It’s a valuable lesson for everyone.

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Silly verses, Maple Ridge-based Tiffany Stone has made animals the protagonists in some of her other books such as Floyd the Flamingo and His Flack of Friends (Tradewind Books, 2004) and Silli’s Sheep (Schwartz & Wade, 2020). Given that she regularly does volunteer work with new immigrants, it is not surprising her stories are often infused with themes of acceptance and friendship.

Little Narwhal. Not Alone includes a summary at the back of the book from marine biologist Marie Noel of Montreal about the real-life incident that inspired Stone. “It is unusual for young narwhals to wander, but this is just too far for him to find his way home or meet up with other members of his species,” writes Noel. “Although they are distantly related, beluga whales and narwhals usually do not interact. However, to everyone’s surprise, it looks like the young narwhal may have been adopted by the group of young belugas. In the narwhal’s natural habitat, individuals have never been observed blowing bubbles from time to time, just like his beluga cousins! What else will he learn? Every summer, researchers keep an eye on the whales of the St. Lawrence and this remarkable friendship.”
She saw her mother draw. Ever since that magic moment, she never stopped creating art. She lives with her husband in Montreal, where she helps intellectually challenged people of all ages draw and paint. She loves chocolate almost as much as drawing, and, like Bonnie Sherr Klein, best-selling author of Slow Dance: a story of love and disability, “for this lighthearted intergenerational story, sure to open young eyes to issues of disability.” —Quill & Quire

“This beautifully illustrated children’s book teaches important lessons about living with disability.” —Vancouver Sun

Bonnie Sherr Klein

Illustrated Children’s Literature Prize Finalist for the 2021 Christie Harris Illustrated Children’s Literature Prize (BC Book Prizes)

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Kate is upset when her Bubbie (grandma) gets a motorized scooter. Will Bubbie still be Bubbie in that scooter? Bonnie Sherr Klein, best-selling author of Slow Dance: a story of love and disability, joins acclaimed illustrator Élisabeth Eudes-Pascal “for this lighthearted intergenerational story, sure to open young eyes to issues of disability.”

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Arab Fairy Tale Feasts tales by Karim Alrawi recipes by Sobhi & Tamam al-Zobaidi and Karim Alrawi

Arab Fairy Tale Feasts is the latest title in the highly acclaimed Fairy Tale Feasts series in which prominent writers of diverse cultures have created enchanting tales paired with traditional recipes easily accessible to young cooks and their families. These magical tales, by award-winning author and master storyteller Karim Alrawi, all feature food or feasting and conclude with an iconic recipe. They are accompanied by intriguing anecdotes illuminating Arab culture and culinary traditions.

Arab Fairy Tale Feasts

illustrated by Nahid Kazemi

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Arab Fairy Tale Feasts

illustrated by Nahid Kazemi

Arab Fairy Tale Feasts is the latest title in the highly acclaimed Fairy Tale Feasts series in which prominent writers of diverse cultures have created enchanting tales paired with traditional recipes easily accessible to young cooks and their families. These magical tales, by award-winning author and master storyteller Karim Alrawi, all feature food or feasting and conclude with an iconic recipe. They are accompanied by intriguing anecdotes illuminating Arab culture and culinary traditions.

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Bonnie Sherr Klein

Illustrated Children’s Literature Prize Finalist for the 2021 Christie Harris Illustrated Children’s Literature Prize (BC Book Prizes)
When the burglar points the gun directly at Gramps, the old man says, “That I understand. And I won’t move. It takes me half an hour to get up from this couch. You’ve got nothing to worry about.”

The burglar uses black zip ties to secure Mikey and Gramps, then gets to work emptying kitchen cabinets, clearing out dresser and desk drawers, throwing books from their shelves and dumping files onto the floor of Gramps’ barely furnished single room apartment.

“How about we save all some time?” says Gramps. “There’s twenty bucks in a pickle jar by the door. It’s for the cleaning lady. Aside from that, you’re not going to find anything here.”

But there is one more thing; a silver pendant necklace that Gramps had bought for his wife, Mikey’s grandmother, now deceased. The necklace is the only memento of his beloved wife and the burglar finds it. Gramps is heartbroken.

Mikey determines to track down the burglar and the necklace, taking him on adventures that lead to a notorious gangster, a big-time drug dealer and his young girlfriend at a lavish birthday party in a mansion with a pool. Against his Gramps’ wishes, Mikey devises a plan to get into the mansion and steal the pendant necklace back. His friend and cohort, ‘Tank’ helps him.

While they are recovering the necklace, Tank thinks they should also take a little extra by rummaging through the guests’ coats and tells Mikey to check the pockets. “Might be something nice in there. Cash? Fancy phone? A little bonus for us, that’s all.”

But Mikey is having none of it. “What? No! We’re just here to get the necklace,” he says. “I’m not a thief, Tank.”

While Mikey is smart, he is not cunning like an experienced burglar. Luckily, his Gramps comes to the rescue and saves the day. He warns Mikey not to get into a lifestyle outside the law. “This is my last job,” he says to Mikey. “I mean it. No more00 stealing. I got what I wanted, and I’m done. But this was your last job too. Understand?” This was your first and last shot at being a criminal.”

Mikey agrees—sort of. “It’s too bad though, Gramps. We made a good team.”

The two smile at each other like, as Mikey puts it, “a pair of wolves.”

Maybe author Sean Rodman intends this storyline to continue.

Stay tuned.
OGS have long been valued for companionship and the work they do such as herding and protecting farm animals, searching for drugs and explosives, locating missing persons and assisting people with physical disabilities. Perhaps lesser known is that dogs also work in wildlife conservation projects as described in Isabelle Groc’s Conservation Canines: How Dogs Work for the Environment.

New Zealand employed canines for wildlife conservation as early as 1890 when Richard Henry trained his dog to use its great smelling abilities to locate the kiwi and kakapo, two flightless species of bird in danger of extinction, that Henry moved to an island where they would be safe from predators (the kakapo is still endangered).

More recently, dogs are being trained to protect domestic animals in Africa against cheetahs, which are highly vulnerable to human-wildlife conflict. Numbering around 100,000 in 1900, there are only about 7,000 left globally. “Because they live close to humans raising cows, sheep and goats, cheetahs are often held responsible for livestock losses,” says Groc adding that farmers feel they have no other option but to kill the big cats. “Between 1980 and 1990, more than 7,000 cheetahs were lost this way.”

The Cheetah conservation Fund (CCF) in Namibia has begun introducing a dog breed called the Kangal shepherd to local farmers. These dogs protect domestic animals against native predators. Nearly 700 have now been placed on farms across the country and fewer cheetahs are being killed by people needing to protect their livestock.

In Australia, a small island connected by a tidal sand bridge to Warrnambool in the southwest was once home to 504 little penguins, the smallest species of penguin in the world. An invasive species of fox almost wiped the little penguins out when they discovered how to reach the island at low tide. In 2006, a Maremma sheepdog that had been protecting a local farmer’s free-range chickens, was re-trained to protect the little penguins from foxes. Within eleven years, the penguin population rose to 182.

Increasingly, dogs help scientists collect information about important or endangered plants and animals. One example is an Australian cattle dog named Alli working in the Fraser Valley that has been re-trained from being a drug-detection dog to sniffing out Canada’s most endangered amphibian—the Oregon spotted frog. Once located in an area, wildlife managers can take steps to protect the frogs’ habitat.

Groc outlines many other examples of dogs being put to use protecting the environment. She also adds a section at the end of the book titled What You Can Do to Help Conservation Canines that encourages people to do their part and “join the dogs in making a difference.”

9781459821606
A IS FOR AMANDA
Marine biologist Amanda Swinimer turned her passion for the ocean into a successful business hand-harvesting seaweed, which she recounts in The Science and Spirit of Seaweed: Discovering Food, Medicine and Purpose in the Kelp Forests of the Pacific Northwest (Harbour; $28.95).

B IS FOR BOWERING
The indefatigable George Bowering has released a 38th volume of poetry Could Be: New Poems (New Star $18) that gathers his work since a health scare five years ago. The bright and warm perspective of these new poems reveal a man happy to be alive (albeit aware of the shadow of mortality) and who is seeing with, as his publisher says, “fresh eyes, curious as any young poet’s.” Using mostly short lyric verse, Bowering also includes “found” material and one long poem.

C IS FOR CHIU
Vancouver-based journalist, Joanna Chiu has written China Unbound: A New World Disorder (House of Anansi $24.99) chronicling China’s moves to become a dominant world power through its multi-billion dollar “New Silk Road” global investment project and growing sway on foreign countries. Chiu offers a background on the protests in Hong Kong, underground churches in Beijing and exile Uyghur communities in Turkey, and exposes Beijing’s high-tech surveillance and aggressive measures that result in human rights violations against those who challenge its power.

D IS FOR DEAS
Mike Deas and Nancy Deas began the “Sueno Bay Adventures” graphic novel series with Shadow Island (Orca, 2019) which first told of the mystical properties of Sueno Bay. In the follow-up, Outer Lagoon (Orca $14.95) a young girl teams up with a bad guy to sell exotic animals and stolen crab because she needs money to save a dog that she’s responsible for injuring.

E IS FOR EARLE
Gabriola Island’s Steven Earle has written A Brief History of the Earth’s Climate: Everyone’s Guide to the Science of Climate Change (New Society $19.99) that counters climate change skeptics and deniers. Earle explains how our climate evolved over 4.6 billion years and how climate change is different from human-caused global warming, which is much more dangerous.

F IS FOR FLASH FICTION
Readers can be forgiven for not believing that the long-winded style of a former judge could be transformed into flash fiction and short stories. Retired judge Thomas S. Woods, aka P.W. Bridgman shows it can be done in The Four-Faced Liar (Ekstasis, 2021). The story of how he was conceived at Woodstock is a mere 50 words. All the other stories in this collection are longer including the book’s title story about a village clock that cannot tell the truth—its four faces never agree on the time. In Bridgman’s writing things are not always what they seem.

G IS FOR GRAY-COSGROVE
The great-granddaughter of Jewish immigrants and early French and Irish settlers, Carmella Gray-Cosgrove was raised in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. Her debut short story collection Nowadays and Lonelier: Stories (Arsenal Pulp $19.95) features a lineup of gritty urban millennials from both working- and middle-class backgrounds. Gray-Cosgrove contrasts the experiences of the two classes as they seek access to education and art. Some struggle to secure jobs and housing, and face conditions that leave many straddling a world where mental health issues, addictions and sex work are daily realities. Gray-Cosgrove’s fiction has appeared in PRISM International and Broken Pencil.

Carmella Gray-Cosgrove photo by Gemma Geiger

Amanda Swinimer harvests seaweed for a living off the west coast of Vancouver Island.
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Indigenomics • Heroines • History • Memoir

BARRY GOUGH

Possessing Meares Island:
A Historian’s Journey into the Past of Clayoquot Sound
by Barry Gough (Harbour $36.95)

Rivaling Fort Langley, there was Meares Island, located near To-fino. It is little known that this remote part of B.C. was a thriving Indigenous-colonial place of trade relations in the early eighteenth century. The trade was based on sea otter furs as spearheaded by powerful Nuu-chah-nulth chiefs like Wickaninnish and Maquina. It died after 1835 but the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council draws on this complicated history of ownership for their legal claim to the land and continues to defend its wilderness from the clear-cut saw.

Teresa Hedley

Teresa Hedley chronicles the growth of her autistic son Erze with the rest of her family in What’s Not Allowed? A Family Journey with Autism (Winter-tale Press $29.95). The story champions an approach in which each family member strives to become the best version of themselves, autism or not. Previously, Teresa and Erze wrote a twenty-article series for Autism Ontario’s Au-tism Matters magazine entitled, I Have Autism and I Need Your Help. They now live in Coquitlam. 978-1-98966401-8

H IS FOR HEDLEY

Teresa Hedley

J IS FOR JOHN

John MacLachlan Gray

J IS FOR JOHN

Bailey the Bat and the Tangled Moose

Lawrence has twice won the Bill Duthies Book-sellers’ Choice Award. Illustrated by Noémie Gioblet Landry. 9781459827295

K IS FOR KIIDUMAE

Lorraine Kidumae

Beginning with a quote from poet e.e. cummings— “i fear no fate (for you are my fate, my sweet)”– Lorraine Kidumae’s debut novel River of Forgiveness (P.T.P Book Division $14.77) is a coming-of-age story set at the close of the Second World War. Eighteen-year-old Sydney’s chance encounter with an older British stranger awakens her to the power of love. Intrigued by this educated artistic man whom she later discovers is an escapee from an internment camp, Sydney impulsively begins a tumultuous relationship, finding herself embroiled in a doomed love affair. 9780981927840

L IS FOR LAWRENCE

Bats are nocturnal but not young Bai-ley who hears cries one morning out-side his colony’s tree roost. Against his mother’s orders, Bailey flies out to in vestigate and finds a young bull moose tangled in a fence. Bailey decides to help the moose as nearby wolves close in for the kill in Grant Lawrence’s first picture book, Bailey the Bat and the Tangled Moos e (Orca $19.95) for ages 6–8. A CBC radio personality and former pop musician, Lawrence has twice won the Bill Duthies Bookseller’s Choice Award. Illustrated by Noémie Gioblet Landry. 9781459827305

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

A Hesquiat woman of Nuu-chah-nulth descent from the west coast of Vancouver Island, Carol Anne Hilton, MBA (above) founded the Indigenomics Institute and wrote the book of the same name. She lays out the principles of Indigenous economies, introduces leading Indigen leaders and shows that Indigenous peoples are economic powerhouses. An ideal book for business leaders and entrepre-neurs, Indigenous organizations and nations, governments and policy-makers, and economists.

Geoff Inverarity

All the Broken Things

Though all things must end, Inverarity finds optimism in the ‘here and now’ and the future’s great hope — the coming generations. He probes the possi-bilities “in this fallen world of compro-mises,” and acknowledges that “we’re stockpiling for the short term / the long term we don’t know. / No matter how much you prepare / there’s always something new looming / like the Un-expected.” Inverarity’s tenth book, All the Broken Things (April $18), is an intimate exploration of relationships, the poetry of love, and life’s moments of joy and heartache. He is the author of the critically acclaimed novel The Burning Room (UBC Press $24.95), winner of Canada’s biggest literary prize, the Rogers unpleasantly.

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 whom feature in this follow-up mys-tery Vile Spirits (D&M $29.95). Set in 1920s Vancou-ver where alcohol is legal again but pro-temperance senti-ments are strong. When citizens start dropping dead like flies after drinking similar cocktails, suspicions are stoked that someone is deliberately tainting booze. It’s all set against a backdrop of temperance activists, the Ku Klux Klan (who really did set up a chapter in Van-couver in 1925) and the newly-formed Liquor Control Board. 978-1-77162-217-6

G IS FOR GHOST

”I have a friend who enjoys the supernatural.” – Ronald Goldsmith's character Major Charles "Chad" Burns in The Long Winter is a serious academic librarian, a former ghostbuster for the US National Museum of Natural History, who becomes involved in the murder of a mysterious and haunting woman. From New York Times bestselling author of House of Spells, The King of Lost Shadows, and The Parable of the Sower. 9781989663982
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Graphic novel on the life of a radical anti-slavery activist.

Prophet Against Slavery: Benjamin Lay, a graphic novel, chronicles the life of an 18th-century dwarf and hunchback who fought a lonely, heroic fight for the immediate abolition of slavery. The book was created in collaboration with renowned historians Marcus Rediker and Paul Buhle. Prophet Against Slavery brings Lay’s prophetic vision to a new generation of young activists who today echo his call of 300 years ago:

“No justice, no peace!”

“David Lester’s raw, expressive visual approach perfectly delivers. Prophet Against Slavery is a crucial account of abolitionism’s religious framework, its courage and moral clarity often recast as sin or insanity, and the necessity of taking outside risks in pursuit of justice and equality.”

— Nate Powell, National Book Award winning artist of the March trilogy about U.S. Congressman John Lewis

“In unflinching terms, Lester’s expressionist drawings capture the passion and commitment of his subject, he lays bare the bones that fill the cellar of American society, and reminds us that human decency and compassion—unrelenting—can change the world. A reminder we need now more than ever.” — Jason Lutes, author of Berlin

Yoka congrautlates Susan Sanford Blades for winning the ReLit Award in the novel category for Fake It So Real (Nightwood Editions). ISBN 9780889713888

“David Lester’s raw, expressive visual approach perfectly delivers. Prophet Against Slavery is a crucial account of abolitionism’s religious framework, its courage and moral clarity often recast as sin or insanity, and the necessity of taking outside risks in pursuit of justice and equality.”

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Beacon Press
Distribution by Penguin/Random House
ISBN: 978-080708179-2 • $21

Two cousins meet for dinner. Who are they? Why is a plumber arguing with a professor? They begin to discuss one of the great problems of our time, inequality. Can they find solutions? Can they agree on the meaning of equality? Follow their conversation to its powerful conclusion.

“Engaging, accessible and thought-provoking. This book is a good first step for anyone interested in exploring inequality as well as other social justice issues.”

— David Wilkins, former chief commissioner, AdWair, BC


Available from Firefly Press at: https://books.fireflybooks.com

Eric W. Sager
MS For Myers
Thirty-something Ruthie is unemployed, newly single and sleeping on a friend’s couch in Christina Myers’s novel The List of Last Chances (Caitlin $22.95). To get away and earn some quick cash, Ruthie takes a job driving a Vancouver man’s aging mother, Kay from PEI to his home on the West Coast. She is soon sidetracked by Kay’s bucket-list that includes visiting old friends and re-connecting with a long-lost love. While playing secret matchmaker, Ruthie is increasingly questioned by the son seeking updates and wanting the speedy arrival of his mother. Ruthie gets caught up in a web of her own lies. 9781773601556

N Is For Nickel
In her historical, middle-grade novel Dear Peter, Dear Ulla (Thistledown $12.95) Barbara Nickel crafts a child’s eye view of WW2 through the exchange of letters between two cousins who have never met in person—Peter in a Mennonite Saskatchewan community and Ulla in Nazi-occupied Danzig. Illustrations throughout the book represent drawings that Ulla creates and sends to Peter with her letters depicting things she sees such as battleships and explosions, and things she wishes for, like cakes to eat. The book uses humour and empathy to relate stories of complex cultural and moral issues. 9781771872171

O Is For O’Leary
As kidlit character Kateri O’Leary tries to get her rescue dog Belle ready for the Show Dog ring, life keeps getting in the way in Shirley Martin’s second title in this series, Kateri O’Leary and the Show Dog Scene (Self-Published $9.95), for 8–12-year-olds with illustrations by Helena Crevel. Kateri’s family has money troubles, her absent-minded mom causes major mix-ups and her pet mouse is sulking. Kateri can’t keep up with school work, has a fight with a friend, and a bully named Clive is a thorn in her side. On top of it all, her dog Belle keeps running away. Uchellet-based Martin’s first title in this series, Kateri O’Leary and the Computer Mouse (2019) is about a missing pet mouse. She’s working on a third Kateri O’Leary title. 9781620331548

P Is For Peach
Vancouver musician and social activist Earle Peach has written Questions to the Moon: Songs & Stories (Lazara Press $20) about his musical life, how music drives his social activism, and his belief that everyone has the right to create beauty. Each section in the book begins with a story by Peach followed by a group of songs that elaborate on the theme. From 1984-2000, Peach was the music coordinator at Vancouver’s Carnegie Centre on the Downtown Eastside. He also has a musical duo called Songtree. 9781620331524

Q Is For Quimby
A past president of the Federation of BC Writers, versatile George Opacic has followed his novels The Antichrist (Fernwood $22), set in the early 20th century, the son of a communist union leader meets the daughter of a fascist army officer complicit in murder and torture. The two bond over a commitment to social justice and their belief in art. The story is based on true events of the 1925 Marusia & La Coruna massacres in Chile when the army brutally suppressed striking miners and their families. More than two thousand people died. Rodriguez is a political refugee who immigrated to Canada from Chile after the 1973 assassination of the democratically-elected Salvador Allende and take-over by right-wing dictator, General Augusto Pinochet. 9781773634777

R Is For Rodriguez
In Carmen Rodriguez’s historical novel Atacama (Fernwood $22), set in the early 20th century, the son of a communist union leader meets the daughter of a fascist army officer complicit in murder and torture. The two bond over a commitment to social justice and their belief in art. The story is based on true events of the 1925 Marusia & La Coruna massacres in Chile when the army brutally suppressed striking miners and their families. More than two thousand people died. Rodriguez is a political refugee who immigrated to Canada from Chile after the 1973 assassination of the democratically-elected Salvador Allende and take-over by right-wing dictator, General Augusto Pinochet. 9781773634777

S Is For Spoon
Non-binary Rae Spoon of Victoria has published their first YA fiction book, Green Glass Ghosts (Arsenal Pulp $19.95), narrated by a young queer moving to Vancouver to start a new life in the year 2000. To get away from a traumatic childhood and abusive family in a conservative prairie city, the narrator searches for belonging and stability on the supposedly laid-back West Coast. Instead, they get sidetracked by too much drinking and too many bad memories from the past. It was never going to be easy. 97315152380

T Is For Turk
Jon Turk’s fifth adventure narrative about being on the unforgiving African savannah with a Samburu headman, Trackers, Lions, Myth, and Wilderness in Samburu (RMB $30) explores the aboriginal wisdom that our Stone Age ancestors used to survive—and how, since then, our culture has often been hijacked by our urban, scientific, oil-using world. In 2012, Turk was nominated by National Geographic as one of the top ten adventurers of the year. He has kayaked around Cape Horn and across the North Pacific from Japan to Alaska, mountain biked across the northern Gobi in Mongolia, made first climbing ascents of big walls on Baffin Island and first ski descents in the Tien Shan Mountains in Kyrgyzia. In 2011, he circumnavigated Ellesmere Island. He splits his time between Fernie and Darby, Montana. 9781771604724

U Is For Utility
How much science done at universities is actually practical and what is its utility to society? It is the main issue Lesley B. Cormack and Andrew Ede, of the University of British Columbia Okanagan grapple with in their best-selling A History of Science in Society: From Philosophy to Utility (UTP $39.95), now available in paperback in the book’s fourth edition, due out in March 2022. This edition adds content on Indigenous and non-western science as well as new case studies including one on the scientist and poet Omar Khayyam. The text is accompanied by 100 images and maps and a colour insert showing off key moments in the history of science. 9781497326430

Rae Spoon
which began in Vancouver in 1894, and concludes that the network succeeds in connecting newcomers with neighbours.

Research shows what LGBTQ+ communities have long known: that they face health disparities linked to societal stigma, discrimination and denial of their civil and human rights. Zena Sharman’s *The Care We Dream Of: Liberatory and Transformative Approaches to LGBTQ+ Health* (Arsenal Pulp $22.95) imagines a health system that honours queer and trans people’s lives and bodies; as well as one that is committed to their healing, pleasure and liberation. Sharman has presented on gender, sexuality and health to audiences across North America. She has also been a cabaret host, a go-go dancer for a queer punk band and a campus radio DJ.

**V IS FOR VOON**

More than 15 million people visit a hospital emergency department in Canada every year. Did they really need to go? Victoria-based emergency physician, Dr. Fred Voon has written *Your Inside Guide to the Emergency Department: And How to Prevent Having to Go!* (FriesenPress $36.95), busting common myths and providing practical tips to stay out of the ED. Guiding readers through what really happens in EDs, he provides answers to why you have to wait so long and why other people get seen before you.

**W IS FOR WANG**

Isabella Wang was the youngest writer to be shortlisted twice for The New Quarterly’s Edna Staebler Essay Contest. Her poetry has appeared in over 30 literary magazines and she holds a Pushcart Prize nomination for poetry. Her essays are published in *carte blanche, Invisible Blog* and *The New Quarterly*. She is also an editor for *Room Magazine*. *Pebble Swing* (Nightwood $18.95) is her debut full-length poetry collection.

**X IS FOR XXXX**

Xoskan ochih-Akitah-Masinahikan (Orca $10.95), also in Plains Cree and English, that starts with “One kiss, two kiss, three kiss, four!” and ends with “Please can we start again at kiss number one?”

**Y IS FOR YAN**

A Vancouver Foundation study found that although Vancouverites want to feel connected to and spend more time with their neighbours, one in five people reported that they didn’t have a neighbour to call on for help. *Neighbourhood Houses: Building Community in Vancouver* (UBC Press $32.95), edited by UBC professor Miu Chung Yan and Sean Lauer, explores the neighbourhood house movement.

**Z IS FOR ZENA**

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**WHO’S WHO**

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In 1990, three years after BC BookWorld began publishing, Ken Reid (left) joined the team to deliver papers to bookstores, libraries and restaurants in the Vancouver area. He continues to be a loyal and trustworthy part of our operations.

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Rodney Ward
Vancouver

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