

YOUR FREE GUIDE TO BOOKS & AUTHORS

BC
BOOKWORLD

VOL. 36 • NO. 1 • Spring 2022

SHASHI BHAT

Her coming-of-age novel,
The Most Precious Substance on Earth
tells of teen years and dark secrets.

see page 7

PUBLICATION MAIL AGREEMENT #40010086 OLIVIA LI PHOTO

DAVID SPANER

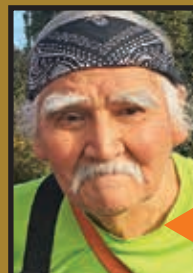
Returns to B.C.'s
1983 revolution.

12



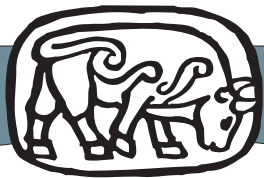
**EMILY CARR
UNPLUGGED**

20-21

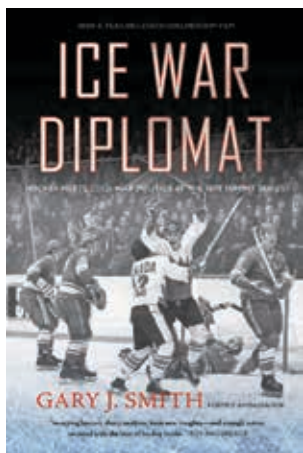


**LUSCHIIM ARVID
CHARLIE**

Shares Indigenous plant
knowledge. 8



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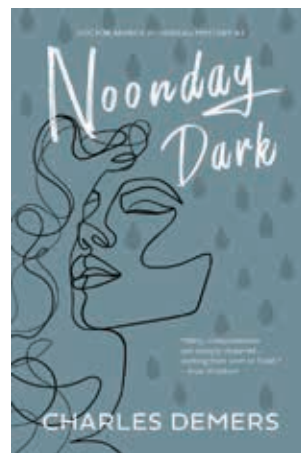
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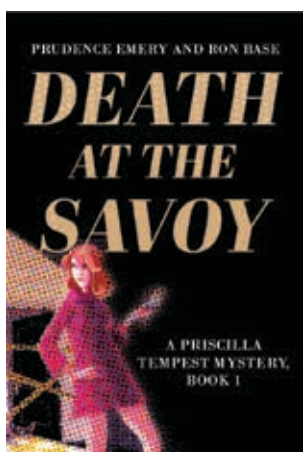
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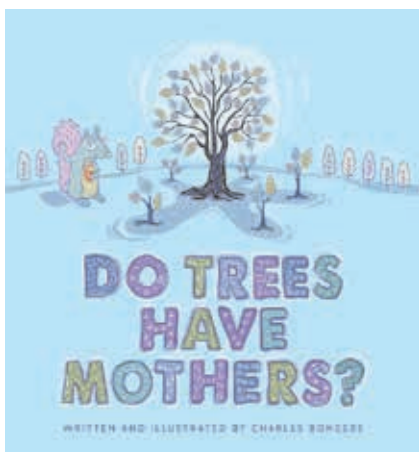
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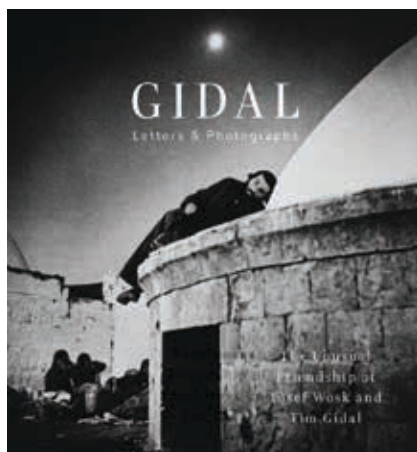


DO TREES HAVE MOTHERS?

With whimsical art and gentle text, **CHARLES BONGERS** translates scientific knowledge about the kinship structures of the forest into a beautiful and affirming story about how trees nurture the young. Discover all the ways a mother tree protects and nourishes the forest understory, and show children what it means to care for a community.

CHILDREN'S (3-5) | \$19.95

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INDIGENOUS/BIOGRAPHY | \$28.95

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Shelley Adams

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Harry Crerar

Harry Crerar

**Family Walks and Hikes
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(Rocky Mountain Books \$20)

Geoff Mynett

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Canadian West, 1884-1914**
(Caitlin \$24.95)

Richard Wagamese

**Richard Wagamese Selected:
What Comes from Spirit**
(D&M \$24.95)

**Roy Henry Vickers
& Robert Budd**

**A is for Anemone:
A First West Coast Alphabet**
(Harbour \$14.95)

Tamas Dobozy

Ghost Geographies
(New Star \$24)

**Monique Gray Smith
& Nicole Neidhardt**

When We Are Kind
(Orca \$19.95)

Geoff Inverarity

All the Broken Things
(Anvil \$18)

Bev Sellers

They Called Me Number One
(Talonbooks \$19.95)

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

PEOPLE

**"The industry
really shouldn't be
clear-cutting."**

SUZANNE SIMARD



TREES • ARE *socialists*

Suzanne Simard

shows how trees work together.

Canadian forests always felt haunted to me," said **Suzanne Simard** when she was a young forestry worker. "It seems the forest always remembers. Even when we'd like it to forget our transgressions, especially by my ancestors who came to cut, burn, and farm the trees."

Simard's affinity with the woods began when she was growing up in the Monashee Mountains in a family that made its living cutting down forests. She had an unusual sensitivity to trees as described in her book **Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest** (Random House \$28.95).

Upon making it to a clear-cut on one of her first jobs, Simard felt a jolt. "Every tree had been cut down to a stump," she writes. "White bones of wood jutted out of the soil ... I picked my way past severed limbs, feeling the pain of their neglect."

"Some little velvety firs had been orphaned near the stumps of their parents and were trying to recover from the shock of their loss."

She learned early that new seedlings struggled to grow in clear-cut areas while those germinating in the midst of old-growth, flourished. Simard went on to earn her forestry Ph.D. and now teaches at UBC.

After decades of research, Simard dis-

covered that an interdependent ecology was at work that allowed trees to communicate and support one another—like a human community, like a form of natural socialism. She identified hub trees, or "mother trees," which support seedlings and supply them with nutrients they need to grow. That explains why young trees grow so well in old-growth areas and not nearly as well in clear-cuts (without any "mothers").

Now Hollywood has come knocking. There are proposals to make a movie about Simard's life and research. The rights to her *New York Times* bestseller *Finding the Mother Tree* have been bought by a production company backed by **Jake Gyllenhaal** and **Amy Adams**.

Although Simard is not at all keen to have the spotlight on herself—she'd rather be traipsing through the woods of the UBC Endowment Lands—she hopes a movie will extend worldwide knowledge about the sophisticated relationships between trees.

9780525656098



Ian
Hanomansing

The last book of Daniel

While visiting almost 100 countries since beginning his travels in 1963, **Daniel Wood** simultaneously became one of Vancouver's most successful freelance writers. Along the way he managed to publish 15 books and win more than 30 writing awards. Born in 1943 in the United States, he came to B.C. as a Viet Nam War draft resister. Published posthumously, **Tales of B.C.: 50 years of wacky, wild & thought-provoking adventures** (OP Media/Sandhill \$24.95) is his last title. He died on September 19, 2021 of leukemia. For more obits, go to page 38.



Daniel Wood (1943-2021)

A SENSE of duty

In all of **Ian Hanomansing's** years of news coverage, the CBC co-host of *The National* says he has known only two stories that dominated newscasts for months on end.

One was 9/11; the other, the Covid pandemic. "Every story on every day for weeks was connected to this new, frightening virus," he says in **Pandemic Spotlight: Canadian doctors at the front of the Covid-19 fight** (D&M \$22.95). "We were all so desperate for information ... we needed explanations and above all, reassurance. What should we do to try to stay safe?"

A remarkable thing happened. Highly specialized doctors began to offer their time—lots of it—to be interviewed and who, "kept coming back, never paid for their time and expertise, never making us feel like we were imposing," says Hanomansing.

One of the doctors told Hanomansing "a sense of duty" was why she participated in newscasts. "And while not every doctor in the book used that word," he says, "It's clear they felt that way too."

In keeping with this spirit of philanthropy, all book royalties will be donated to UBC's medical school.

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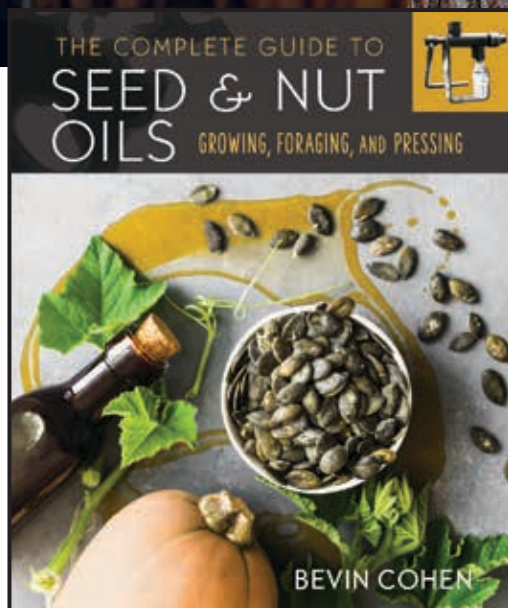
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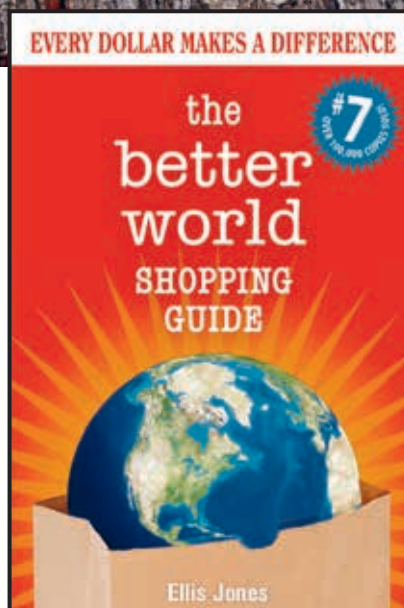
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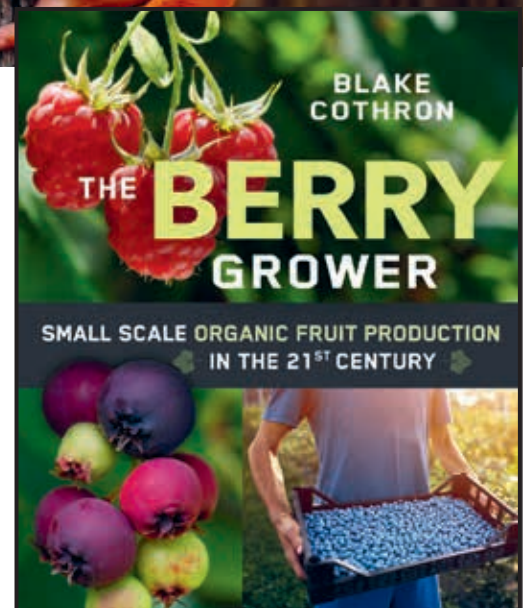
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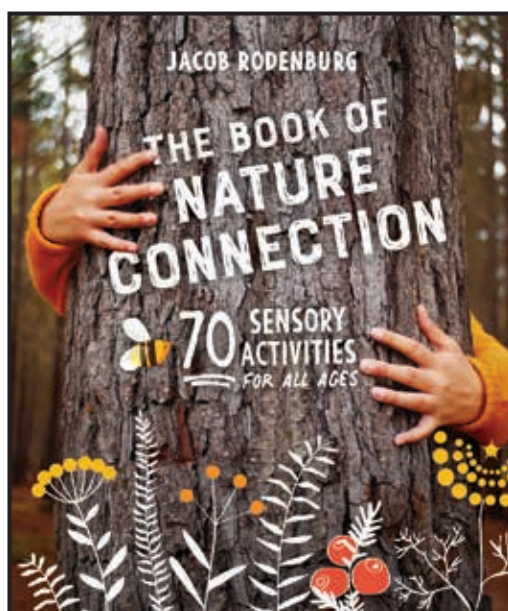
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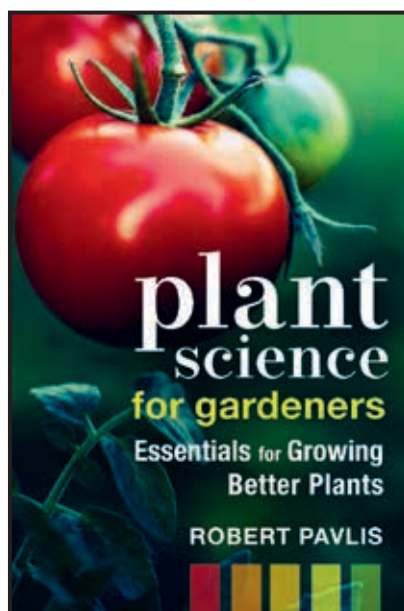
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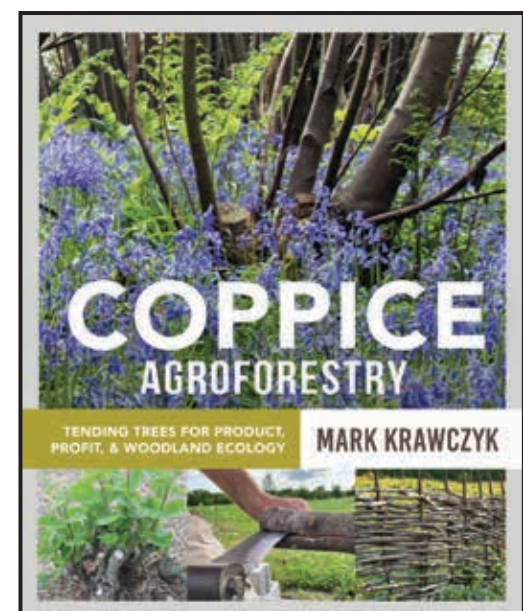
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PEOPLE



LIVING

THE DREAM

“Skiing has become my soul—a gift, a truth, an expression, a passion, a job and so much more.”
CHAD SAYERS



Chad Sayers (above) and at right with his daughter Aiya.

PAUL MORRISON PHOTO
JASON THOMPSON PHOTO

Breakdowns & breakthroughs

In 1993, Vancouver poet, spoken word artist and filmmaker, **Kagan Goh** was arrested by eight police officers for causing a disturbance in a church. He had aroused the suspicions of the priest when he “innocently donated a stale loaf of bread to the collection tray, with the reasoning that the bread symbolized the body of Christ,” as noted in the forward to Goh’s memoir, **Surviving Samsara: A Memoir of Breakdowns, Breakthroughs, and Mental Illness** (Caitlin \$22.95). The charges against Goh were later dropped when he was diagnosed with bipolar mood disorder.

Thus began Goh’s struggle to overcome mental illness while becoming a writer, following in the footsteps of his father, **Goh Poh Seng**, a doctor and Singaporean literary pioneer. *Surviving Samsara* goes into detail about Goh’s difficult family altercations, being pushed to the brink of living on the street and his experiences in hospital wards and welfare offices. All the while, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges, Goh strove for personal growth and healing.

The term Samsara is a Sanskrit/Pali word that broadly means “world,” although it includes concepts about rebirth and the cycle of life.

Goh emigrated to Canada with his family in 1986 and grew up in rural Newfoundland and urban B.C. He has lived in Vancouver for more than twenty years, gotten married, largely overcome the painful early years of bipolar disorder and become a mental-health advocate in addition to his work as a writer.

Kagan Goh

9781773860329

Chad Sayers of Whistler began as a professional freeskier—with all the benefits of sponsorship perks and travel to the world’s mountain ranges—by pushing his limits at Blackcomb Mountain.

“I felt confident and inspired, feeding off the high energy and world-class talent in Whistler at the time,” he says in the coffee table-style book of photographs and stories, **Overexposure: A Story About a Skier** (RMB \$60).

Pressure amped up when Sayers made a move to the competition scene where skiers are ready to do almost anything to win. “For a while I felt indestructible, I wasn’t a big-time star, but I was skiing my best and felt in sync and powerful. I was still too naïve to know that such confidence, so necessary to perform, could also kill me.”

After a horrific injury, Sayers changed his lifestyle, giving up competitive skiing for traveling the world with photographers to shoot and film skiing on mountains. They hoped, writes Sayers, “to capture something more genuine and heartfelt—the kind of soulful expression shared through a collective drive to travel, to be in the mountains, to understand new cultures.”

Out of this, a series of films, *A Skier’s Journey* was born. Sayers also began surfing as well as skiing and continued to travel the world, visiting more than 60 countries. The recent birth of his daughter **Aiya** shifted Sayers’ life again as he says in the book’s epilogue: “A child expands your life, teaching you to love unconditionally and surrender to something more profound than your own existence.”

9781771605199

WHAT IF?



While hiking in the North Shore mountains in 2013, **Frances Peck** suddenly wondered what would happen if an earthquake struck. “What would I do? How would I get home? How would I find my husband? What happens to families that are separated in a disaster?” wondered Peck, a writer and editor who is known for her collection of essays,

Peck’s English Pointers. She had long been considering writing a novel, in fact, had already completed a manuscript. But these new questions led to the premise of her debut novel **The Broken Places** (NeWest \$24.95). The story follows fictitious Vancouver characters in the aftermath of an earthquake, including Kyle a cosmetic surgeon; Charlotte, the wife of a successful high-tech tycoon; Joe, a landscaper; and Anna, a caregiver from Ukraine.

Several themes emerge: class and wealth, love and lust, fear and power, and identity. Peck says she wanted to explore what happens in a disaster “when basic infrastructure and communications collapse, the skills and assets that keep the wealthy aloft suddenly mean less. It’s the blue-collar characters—like Joe and Anna—who know what to do.”

“Overall, the title best sums up what the novel is about,” says Peck. “It’s from an **Ernest Hemingway** quote: ‘The world breaks everyone and afterwards many are strong at the broken places.’”

978-177439-045-0



Frances Peck

Wisdom of the ages

Indigenous peoples of North America pass down their knowledge from generation to generation as described in **SkyWolf’s Call: The Gift of Indigenous Knowledge** (Annick \$16.95) by **Eldon Yellowhorn** and **Kathy Lowinger**.

Written for ages 11 years and older, the authors reveal how Indigenous knowledge comes from centuries of practices, experiences and ideas gathered by people who have a long history with the natural world. They explore the use of fire and water, the acquisition of food, astronomy and healing practices. This book follows upon Yellowhorn and Lowinger’s titles *Turtle Island: The Story of North America’s First People* (Annick, 2017) and *What the Eagle Sees: Indigenous Stories of Rebellion and Renewal* (Annick, 2019).

9781773216294



Eldon Yellowhorn

Spring Books for your TBR Pile



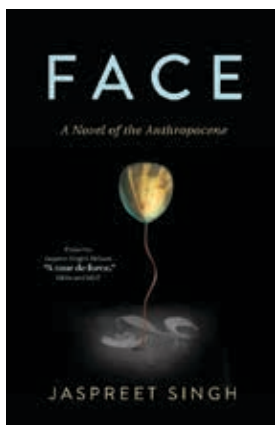
Now in Audio

Framed in Fire

A Lane Winslow Mystery (#9)
Iona Wishaw

"Wishaw deftly intertwines plot and psychology, giving readers insight into Lane's crime-solving strategies . . . Well plotted and laced with dry wit, Lane's adventures are entirely satisfying summer reading." —*Shelf Awareness*

\$16.95 pb | \$8.99 ebook
TouchWood Editions

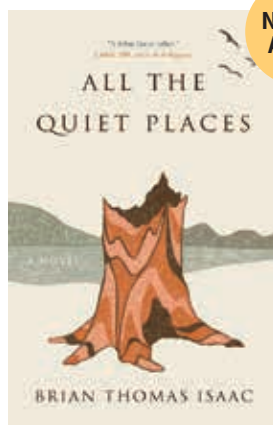


Face

A Novel of the Anthropocene
Jaspreet Singh

"Scalpel-sharp . . . flinches from nothing. It approaches memory, family, history, and the great oncoming disaster of the anthropocene with courage bordering on fury." —Premee Mohamed, author of *The Annual Migration of Clouds*

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Brindle & Glass



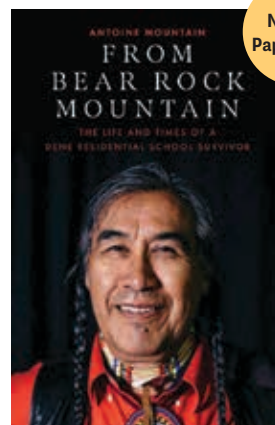
Now in Audio

All the Quiet Places

A Novel
Brian Thomas Isaac
[Longlisted for Canada Reads](#)

"A deftly crafted, evocative story about the trials of growing up Indigenous . . . complex, relatable, and overall, beautifully human." —Waubgeshig Rice, author of *Moon of the Crusted Snow*

\$22 pb | \$12.99 ebook
Brindle & Glass



New in Paperback

From Bear Rock Mountain

The Life and Times of a
Dene Residential School Survivor
Antoine Bear Rock Mountain

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Brindle & Glass



Out of the Fire

Metalworkers along the Salish Sea
Pirjo Raits; Dale Roth,
Michele Ramberg (photog.)

A stunning art book featuring 24 west coast artists and craftspeople who work in metal as their primary medium, from the team behind the bestseller *Out of the Woods*.

\$39.95 pb | \$19.99 ebook
Heritage House Publishing



Little Wolf series

Abalone Woman

Teoni Spathelfer; Natassa Davies (illus.)

A vivid dream inspires Little Wolf to show her daughters and their classmates how to be proud of their diverse cultural backgrounds.

\$19.95 hc | \$9.99 ebook
Heritage House Publishing

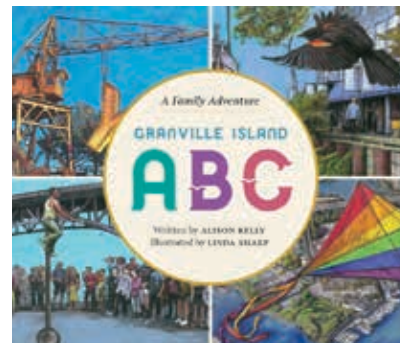


Magical Beings of Haida Gwaii Colouring and Activity Book

Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson,
Sara Florence Davidson, Paula Varnell

Featuring beautiful images, this colouring and activity book introduces ancient Haida narratives that promote respect for the natural world.

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A Family Adventure
Alison Kelly; Linda Sharp (illus.)

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\$22.95 hc | \$11.99 ebook
Heritage House Publishing

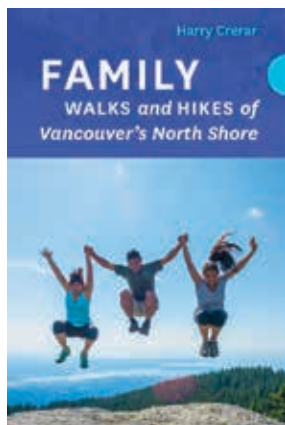


Wildlife Weekends in Southern British Columbia

Day and Multi-day Trips from Vancouver for Wildlife Viewing
Roy Jantzen

An astounding new guidebook packed with colour photographs, day trips, personal reflections, and a variety of activities for nature lovers of all ages.

\$45 pb | \$19.99 ebook
RMB | Rocky Mountain Books



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Harrison Crerar

This full-colour guidebook introduces readers to a wide range of trails that North Vancouver, West Vancouver, and the Howe Sound Islands have to offer.

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RMB | Rocky Mountain Books



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

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John Crouch

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\$25 pb | \$12.99 ebook
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The Most Precious Substance on Earth
by Shashi Bhat
(McClelland & Stewart \$24.95)

BY HEIDI GRECO

Sometimes a novel offers more than a multi-plotted story. Shashi Bhat's second title, *The Most Precious Substance on Earth*, which is divided into Part One and Part Two, is more like at least three stories; and much of it has the feel of a memoir.

Even if the times Shashi Bhat writes about obviously can't be in synch with every reader's background, nearly all the details are believable enough to feel real. To me, that suggests powerful

A young woman grows up with the lingering damage of buried trauma.

KEEPING SECRETS

an amazing number of TV references) and may well reflect some of Bhat's own experiences, as she has an MFA from Johns Hopkins University and now teaches creative writing at Douglas College in New Westminster.

Nina, only a few months into her graduate program, returns home to Halifax in a chapter called *Hindu Christmas*, a section strong enough to stand as a story on its own. It's here that we meet Savithri, a guest who's staying with Nina's family.

"She's visiting from India for a few months to complete a medical technician course and she also happens to be a professionally trained dancer," writes Bhat. Savithri also seems perfect in just about every way. She happily chops onions in the kitchen with Nina's mother, something Nina avoids. "Savithri is



Shashi Bhat
teaches creative writing
at Douglas College in
New Westminster and has
an MFA from Johns Hopkins
University.

writing—writing that evokes an experience universal enough to resonate, with characters believable enough to care about, even worry about.

Part One is set in the world of high school, a place I wouldn't particularly want to re-visit. Nonetheless, Bhat's narrator, Nina, takes me back to those years, complete with the embarrassments, the excuses, the friendships, the crushes. Nina's high school years are set in Halifax, a place far from where I grew up, yet the scenes are completely recognizable. She and her best friend Amy, who she's been pals with since Grade 6, like to go to the seashore and lie on a piece of public art that's shaped like a wave. While it probably wasn't a sculpture of a wave, who of us hasn't had some kind of special place—maybe even in plain sight of others—where we shared secrets with a friend?

In contrast to my life, Nina's experience is quite different; she's growing up in a family who came to Canada from India. Although the two generations clearly love each other, they exhibit more than a few differences. As Nina explains, while she's online upstairs (writing to a pedophile she's come to know by name), "...my parents are downstairs praying. They have created a god room in the basement, where Hindu gods and goddesses hang in rows on the blue walls, staring out with placid expressions."

To me, [Shashi Bhat's novel] suggests powerful writing that evokes an experience universal enough to resonate, with characters believable enough to care about, even worry about. — Heidi Greco

Nina knows that her parents want the best for her in all things, but perhaps most especially in a marriage partner. She describes Nishant, one of these potential mates, as being much like her parents: "He's fluent in two languages besides English. He volunteers at temple functions, takes the coats of aunties and uncles at dinner parties while greeting each one by name, sprinkles chutney pudi on his toast in the morning, and explains to me why Napster is the doorway to moral decrepitude." Yet she goes on to say, "He's also a hybrid. He understands references to *The Simpsons*. His family moved to Halifax when he was four, so he's as much of a Haligonian as I am. He puts donair sauce on everything. I once heard him refer to Halifax as 'the

Big City.' I've never seen him tuck in his shirt."

Despite the light tone to much of this book, it (through Nina) holds dark secrets. Not all injuries result in visible scars, a fact that contributes to the depth of Bhat's characters. They may be members of the hand-picked elite high school band, a group guided by the tagline 'the most precious substance on earth' but that doesn't mean life is as smooth as one of their well-rehearsed concerts. As readers will learn, the past can find nasty ways of lingering.

Part Two begins with Nina in a graduate creative writing program in Baltimore. "Everyone is drunk. It's like I'm in a John Cheever story..." Her existence at grad school is busy (with

alternate-reality me. Me if my parents hadn't immigrated to Canada. Me if I'd embraced religion. Me with more expressive eyes. Me if I dedicated myself to something. Me if I could stand on one bent leg with the sole of my other foot tucked into the crook of my knee, arms in a diamond above my head, and never, never lose balance."

What I call the 'third part' (the rest of the book), remains for readers to discover. Just know that it comes with its own complications, as well as reflections, and even some resolutions of deeds long gone by.

I'll admit I didn't find the book as "laugh-out-loud funny" as one of the blurbs promises. Not all of Nina's adventures are terribly hilarious. Like most women, she pays attention when walking alone and is alert to the sound of footsteps behind her. But yes, there were many places in the book where I couldn't help but laugh, not so much because of the joke related, but more because what Bhat writes comes as such a delight and surprise. Often, it's in these comedic moments that the story shines its brightest—those self-deprecating moments that all of us, whether we care to admit it or not, understand all too well. 9780771094965

Heidi Greco lives in Surrey, on territory of the Semiahmoo Nation. For more information: www.heidigreco.ca

Luschiim's Plants: Traditional Indigenous Foods, Materials and Medicines by Dr. Luschiim Arvid Charlie and Nancy J. Turner (Harbour Publishing \$29.95)

BY ALEXANDER VARTY

Five hundred feet from where I write, in the unceded and traditional land of the Snuneymuxw, a short road slopes down to a small, sheltered beach on the Salish Sea, where my partner and I often swim in summer and well into the fall. This unnamed strand is little known even by locals, and it's rare that we share it with anyone—although this year we were frequently joined by a red squirrel, who we first noticed scolding us from a stand of green bushes at the end of the road. On closer inspection, those bushes proved to be hazelnut trees, and over the next week the squirrel grew increasingly tolerant of us, often running almost within petting reach as it transferred green nuts to a well-concealed hiding place.

We were too amused by its antics to even consider raiding the trees ourselves, which was just as well: within a few days they were completely bare of sustenance, with only a handful of husks left on the ground to show that nuts had ever been on offer.

But what if the squirrel had been inviting us to share, rather than simply warning us off?

Talking about harvesting hazelnuts with his co-author, ethnobotanist **Nancy J. Turner** in **Luschiim's Plants: Traditional Indigenous Foods, Materials and Medicines**, Cowichan elder Dr. **Luschiim Arvid Charlie** has this to say: "When the squirrels start to make noise at this particular tree, it was time to go and harvest. So if you didn't go harvest right away, in a couple of days [the nuts] would all

Foraging in the FOREST

A Cowichan elder offers tips about hazelnuts, yew tree branches, fireweed fluff and other useful wild plant matter.

be gone. So they found out they didn't have to keep track of when it was ready to pick. All they had to do was keep track of the squirrels. As soon as they start to make noise there, it was time to go and pick it."

Open *Luschiim's Plants* at random, and whether you land on Charlie and Turner's discussion of seasoning yew bows in kelp tubes, sparking an emer-

gency fire with fir pitch, or plumping up a blanket with fireweed fluff, you'll learn something about the world in which we live.

And you might learn something, too, about paying attention to that world.

The primary audience for *Luschiim's Plants* is going to be those who love to forage for wild food. Foraging is frugal, healthy, and fun, and many of us—even

settlers of European heritage—have a family history of going into the woods and fields to eat, drink or seek medicine. My English father, for instance, made a potent but noxious dandelion wine from foraged blossoms, while my Scottish great-grandmother, born in the 1860s, was the village herbalist in an age when over-the-counter remedies could do as much harm as good.

But between the resource-extraction mindset of many settlers and the rapid commercialization of "wildcrafting" it's helpful to be reminded that wild foods and medicines are gifts, not commodities, and that they should be received both gratefully and gracefully. Turner and Charlie's conversations, which make up the bulk of *Luschiim's Plants*, are themselves true exchanges: Turner receives the gift of Charlie's traditional knowledge, gives her own time to the task of transcribing and contextualizing his wisdom, and helps to convey some of his Indigenous worldview to us, their readers. And Charlie is a humble yet erudite teacher; unlike many self-styled experts he's willing to acknowledge that he's unfamiliar with how some plants are used, notes sadly that much traditional knowledge has been lost and gently cautions that some uses—in ceremony, for instance—are not to be set down in books.

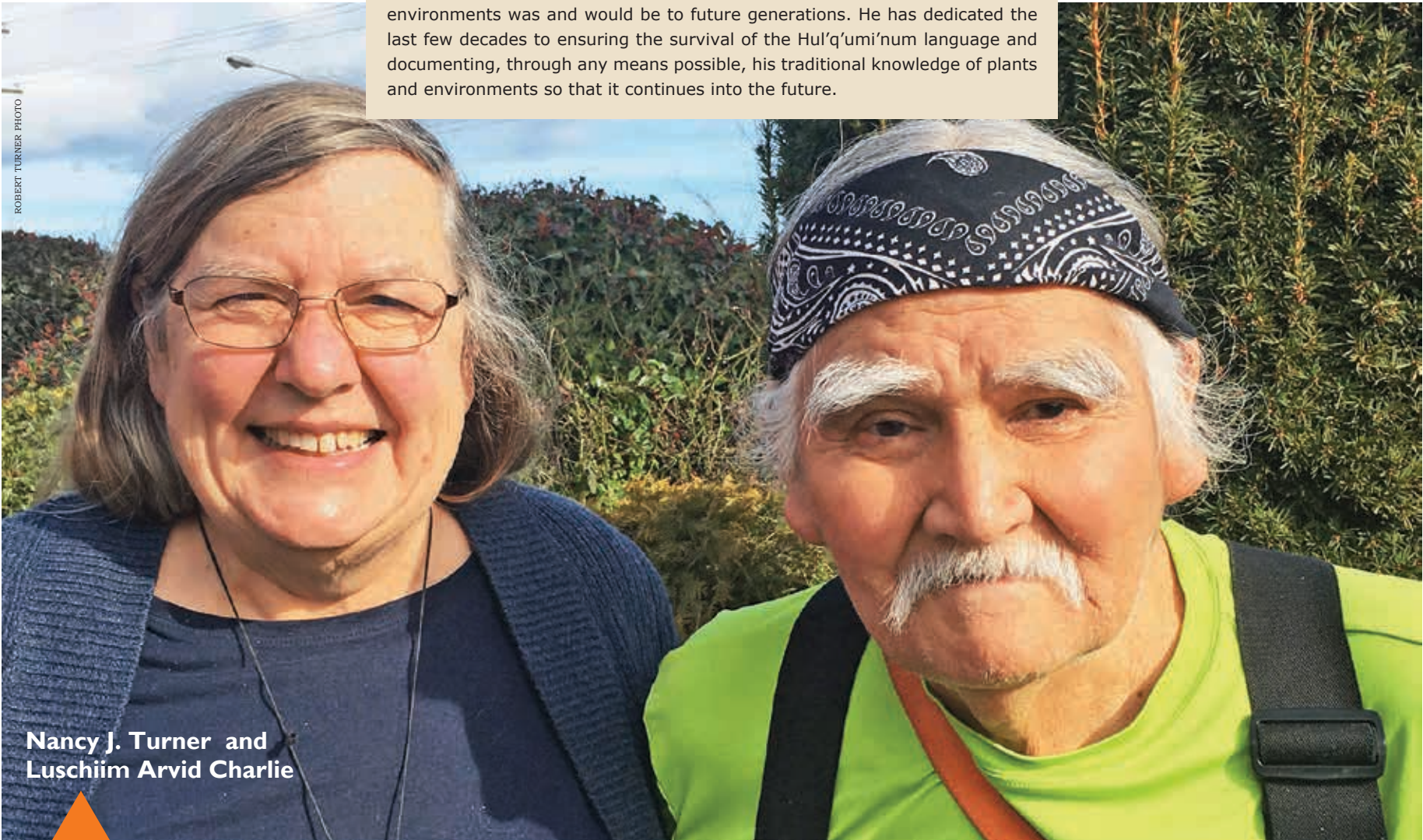
Although too large to be a true field guide, *Luschiim's Plants* will join **Jim Pojar** and **Andy MacKinnon's** *Plants of Coastal British Columbia* (Lone Pine, 1997; revised 2016), **Louis Druehl's** *Pacific Seaweeds* (Harbour Publishing, 2001; second edition 2016), and **David Arora's** *All the Rain Promises and More* (Ten Speed Press, 1991) in any list of this region's most essential natural-history reference books. It's more than that, though: for those who have not been here for thousands of years, it's a window into what we don't know about our new home, its bounty, and how we can join in its stewardship. A guide to belonging, in short, and that is most welcome.

978-1550179453

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

Excerpt from **Luschiim's Plants**

Luschiim [Arvid Charlie] was born in Quamichan, one of the villages of the Cowichan Nation, in 1942. His mother, Violet, passed away in December 2016. His father, the famous carver and artist Simon Charlie, passed away in May 2005 at the age of eighty-five. Luschiim, his namesake great-grandfather, who was born in 1870, lived until Arvid was about six years old and had a big influence on his life, teaching him about plants and medicines even at the tender young age of three to four years old. Even as a boy, Arvid was a hunter and fisher, contributing to his family's meals and provisions. His formal "Western" education ended in Grade 8. He was a canoe puller in Quw'utsun racing canoes from the age of fourteen and over the years he skippered many racing canoes, setting an example of calm, disciplined leadership that continued into the Yulhualh Journeys of recent years (2005 to 2017). He married and started his own family in the 1960s. To support his family he became a logger, learning much about the trees and forests from his keen powers of observation. In the 1970s, he started his employment with the Cowichan Band (now Cowichan Tribes), working on various land- and culture-related contracts. As his family grew, he realized increasingly how important his knowledge of language, culture and environments was and would be to future generations. He has dedicated the last few decades to ensuring the survival of the Hul'q'umi'num language and documenting, through any means possible, his traditional knowledge of plants and environments so that it continues into the future.



Nancy J. Turner and Luschiim Arvid Charlie

ENVIRONMENT

REVIEW

A Brief History of the Earth's Climate: Everyone's Guide to the Science of Climate Change by Steven Earle
(New Society \$19.99)

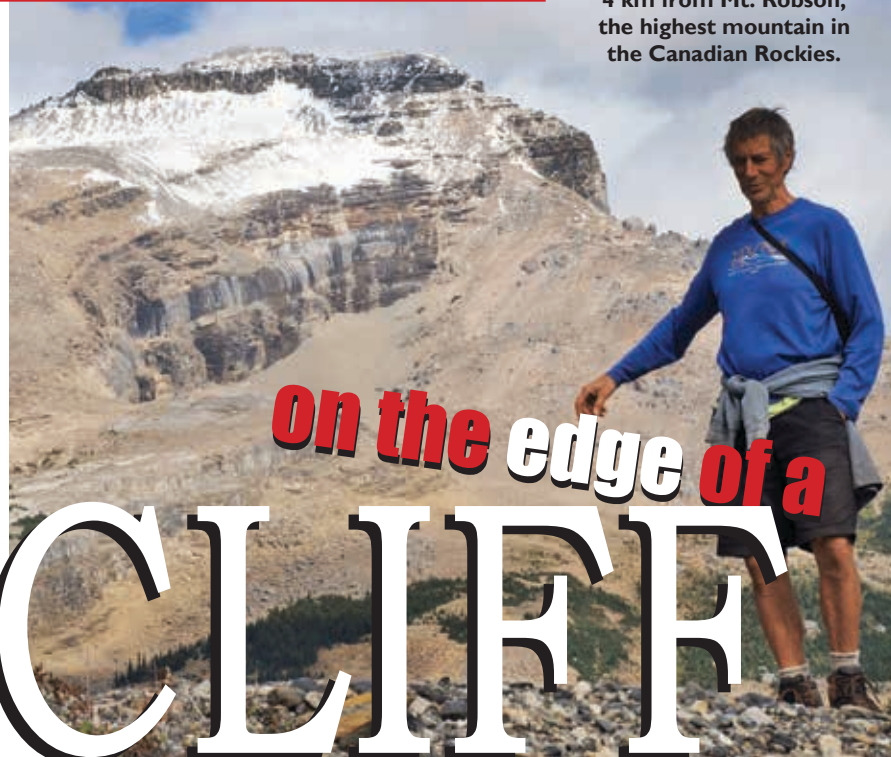
Today, the atmosphere contains 42 per cent more carbon dioxide than it did before the Industrial Revolution.

—David Suzuki Foundation

Steven Earle, an earth sciences expert who has taught university classes on the topic for four decades, is worried.

He knows that 1°C of global warming doesn't sound like much. "After all, nobody really cares if tomorrow is a degree warmer than today," he says in **A Brief History of the Earth's Climate**. "But this isn't about just one day; it's about it being 1°C warmer every day (on average)," he continues, adding "One degree of warming matters to me; it matters enough to make me alter my lifestyle significantly, to march around the streets with signs and noisemakers, and to put the time into writing this book... I fear the unknown terrain that we will be venturing into if we don't all make some big adjustments to the way we live, and very soon."

Earle's book puts the lie to the notion that climate change is "natural." He shows why the worst of global



Steven Earle on Rearguard Mountain, about 4 km from Mt. Robson, the highest mountain in the Canadian Rockies.

Climate change is here **now**.
How **bad** will the impact be?

warming is human-caused and that this kind of global warming is much more dangerous than any natural process that has occurred over 4.6 billion years on this planet. Partly this is because climate change is happening so fast that plants and animals won't have time to adapt and survive.

Some experts warn that we are close to numerous tipping points already, beyond which there will be massive biological destruction.

"Approaching a climate tipping point is a bit like walking toward the edge of a cliff in the dense fog," says Earle. "You may know it's out there, but you don't know how close you are, and by the time you've crossed it, it is probably too late."

Earle outlines ten major tipping points, including some that are likely with us now such as the increase in wildfires, melting Arctic sea ice and coral reef die-off:

1. Increasing wildfires.

After forest fires razed the entire town of Lytton last summer and two people died in the ensuing hell, British Columbians learned how bad climate change can be. And wildfires are on a worsening trend based on experience south of our border. The area consumed by wildfires in the U.S. "has increased from an average of about 12,000 sq km in the 1980s and '90s, to about 25,000 sq km in the first decade of this century, to 30,000 sq km in the past decade," says Earle. "And it's not just North America that is changing in this way because of runaway fire activity. Similar things are happening in Australia, Russia, Indonesia, and the Amazon."

2. Melting Arctic sea ice.

Polar bears aren't the only animal suffering from less sea ice, although emaciated and dying bears are powerful images of global warming. Melting Arctic Ocean ice worsens many other tipping points (that Earle likens to a death spiral) such as the loss of glaciers in Greenland and Western Antarctica, and permafrost that will lead to huge releases of stored methane and carbon dioxide thereby vastly increasing global warming.

3. Dying tropical reefs.

Warming ocean temperatures are causing "bleached—and therefore likely dead—coral" says Earle. "Coral reefs are vital to tropical marine ecosystems, and their decline will have far-reaching implications."

Earle ends on a call to action and his suggestions alone are worth the price of this book. Hint: the biggest source of carbon dioxide is from fossil fuel use i.e. cars, trucks, planes, electricity generation, heating buildings and industrial activity.

9780865719590



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NEW STAR BOOKS



Many Rivers to Cross

Rivers Run Through Us:
A Natural and Human History of Great
Rivers of North America by Eric Taylor
(Rocky Mountain Books \$38)

BY JOHN GELLARD

Rivers do indeed run through us. “One simply cannot understand the history of human civilization, or its future without an appreciation of the role that rivers have played,” states **Eric Taylor** in **Rivers Run Through Us: A Natural and Human History of Great Rivers of North America**.

His aim is “not to provide an encyclopedic summary of rivers of North America, but to provide a taste of the diversity of rivers and their geography.”

Actually, he does both supremely well.

There are ten great rivers in North America. Taylor places them within the six “continental divides” defined by mountain ranges. Namely, these are:

- The Great Divide, which is the crest of the Rocky Mountains. Into the Pacific Ocean flow the Yukon, Fraser, Columbia, Colorado and Sacramento-San Joaquin Rivers.
- The Arctic Divide sends the Mackenzie River into the Arctic Ocean.
- The Laurentian Divide sends the Mississippi basin to the south, and the St. Lawrence to the northeast.
- The St. Lawrence Divide, and fifth, the Eastern Divide along the Appalachians contain the St. Lawrence and send the Hudson south to the Atlantic Ocean.
- The Sixth Divide circles the Great Basin west of the Rockies. Its rivers are “endorheic”: that is they run inwards to the Great Salt Lake. Rivers never cross the Divides... except sometimes.

Most of us live along rivers and our lives are caught up with rivers. Here’s some advice to the reader. Bring the book title to a personal level and relive some vivid river experience. In my case, it was lying alone with a broken leg for

North America is lucky to have ten great rivers, but are we mismanaging them?

six days, having fallen into Cottonwood Creek, drinking the sweet water that tumbled down from alpine Brimful Lake on its way to the Stein River, which joins the Fraser at Lytton, just before the canyon. Yes, the creek ran through me.

The Stein valley is small, only 1070 sq km, but it’s very special. It was about to be crisscrossed with roads and logged in the 1980s but protest prevailed and now the pristine forest is a jewel in B.C.’s crown—the Nlaka’pamux Heritage Park, known for camping and salmon fishing.

Bring your own experiences to the book.



ERIC TAYLOR DELVES INTO ALL ASPECTS OF A river’s life: geology, glaciation, ecology, flow variations, First Nation occupancy, colonial settlement and exploration, and possible future development.

Taylor outlines some development issues around major rivers in Canada. East of the Great Divide, the 4,000 km Mackenzie River runs from Lake Athabasca to its delta near Inuvik. The main tributaries are the Athabasca coming north through the oil sands, the Peace,

and the Liard. Two issues stand out here. One was the proposed pipeline to bring gas south from Alaska. This was abandoned in 2017 after the Berger Commission found it “too disruptive to the environments.” The second issue is damming.

The W.A.C. Bennett Dam holds back the 1,760 sq km Williston Lake and generates power. It’s followed by the Peace Canyon dam. Then the Peace opens east into rich farmland. A hundred kilometers downstream, the Site C Dam will flood 6,000 valuable hectares and the power it will generate must be sold at a huge loss. So why keep building it? Taylor mentions the North American Water and Power Alliance (NAWAPA) as a possible factor. He also quotes General **G.L. McNaughton**, who calls NAWAPA “a monstrous concept, a diabolical thesis.”

B.C.’s most prominent river, the Fraser, is a consummate salmon river. Its 1,375 kilometres flow entirely within the province and there are no dams on it. Several tributaries including the Harrison, the Chilcotin, the Thompson and the tiny heroic Stein are spawning



Eric Taylor

Sockeye salmon holding on a Fraser River tributary before spawning.

grounds for a huge variety of species returning annually from the Pacific.

Once, the river flowed north. Now it starts northwest out of the Rocky Mountain Trench. Then it turns south across the Interior Plateau, then through the Canyon where it is called “the savagiest of all the major rivers of North America” (**Hugh MacLennan**). It abruptly turns west through a fertile alluvial plain and enters the Pacific in a huge estuary beside Vancouver.

Problems have developed with the Fraser’s salmon fishery. Returns have dropped recently from several million to less than a million and then briefly back up again. Causes? Climate change, overfishing, mining spills, fish farm disease and human development generally. Fraser River salmon remain in a “perilous state.”

Taylor goes into detail about the other great North American rivers, including the Yukon River, the Sacramento & San Joaquin Rivers, the Colorado River, the Rio Grande, the Mississippi River, the Hudson River, and the St. Lawrence River. He ends with a plea for better stewardship.

We have treated rivers as hydraulic machines and have neglected them as ecosystems. To avoid disaster, we must change. “The health of rivers is a metaphor for the health of Canadians,” writes Taylor. He urges readers to recognize the “Rights of Nature” and share water with the natural world.

Taylor’s book is a masterpiece of scholarship with exhaustive appendices, an index and notes. Your humble reviewer has merely skimmed the surface. Find your personal river and prepare for a wild ride. 9781771605113

John Gellard was named Canada’s “Best High School Teacher” in a *Maclean’s* poll in August 2005. His articles have appeared in *BC BookWorld*, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Watershed Sentinel*, as well as online at *BCBookLook* and *The Ormsby Review*.

BIG

ON ACTION,
LOW ON WORDS!*



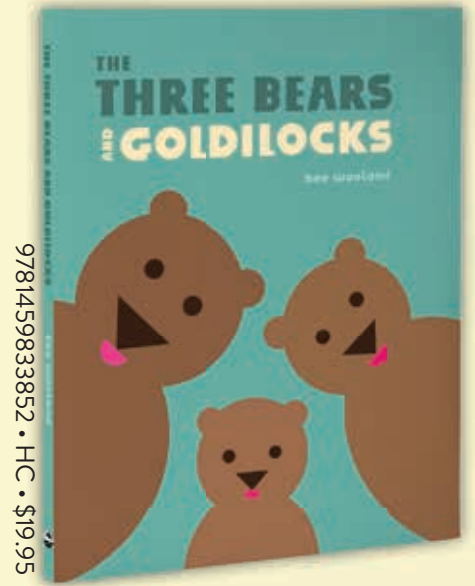
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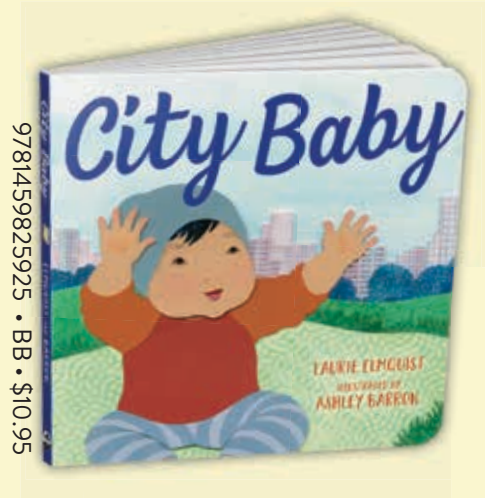
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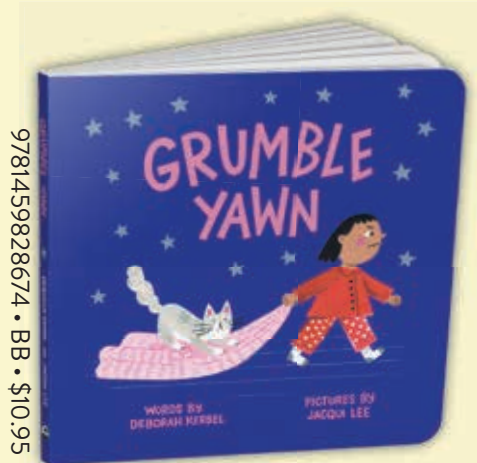
“A simple, celebratory story of community collaboration and religious tolerance.”
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“The wordless story providing an opportunity for child readers to speculate on the events of the story.”
—CM Reviews



★ “The spare text is developmentally perfect for children.”
—SLJ, starred review



“The perfect book to read before bedtime and an equally perfect book to add to your bookshelf. Highly Recommended.”
—CM Reviews



“Playful...Clear illustrations in pastel colors will be accessible to the youngest lapsitters.”
—SLJ

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THE UPRIISING

In 1983, hundreds of thousands united for justice and human rights, fighting against repressive new laws in B.C. as **David Spaner** chronicles in this extraordinary story.

Solidarity:
Canada's Unknown Revolution of 1983
by **David Spaner** (Ronsdale \$21.95)

BY ROD MICKLEBURGH

On a single, unforgettable day in B.C.—July 7, 1983—26 government bills came down the chute striking at the very heart of longstanding union and societal rights. Oversight of human rights, tenant rights, employment standards and more was abolished. Government employees had their contract gutted and all public sector employers in the province were given the power to fire employees without cause.

It was truly a revolution of the right wing.

People fought back with a revolution of their own. Under the banner of Operation Solidarity, occupations and record large protest marches took place across the province. When nothing changed, there was job action that brought B.C. to the verge of an all-out general strike.

Despite these dramatic events, nothing of any depth has been written

PACIFIC TRIBUNE / DAN KEETON / SFU PHOTO



Operation Solidarity rallies, Empire Stadium (above); Legislature in Victoria (top).

PACIFIC TRIBUNE / SFU PHOTO



Solidarity tent-in at Vancouver's Vanier Park protesting the Residential Tenancy Act

about it, beyond labour historian **Bryan Palmer**'s useful but overly-partisan book, *Solidarity: The Rise and and Fall of an Opposition in British Columbia* (New Star, 1987) published 35 years ago, and last year's *Tranquille & Battle for Community Care in B.C.* (Nightwood 2020) by the late **Gary Steeves** on the three-week occupation of the Tranquille residential facility in Kamloops.

Solidarity: Canada's Unknown

Revolution of 1983 is a welcome addition to the surprisingly thin library of books on one of the largest, most broad-based political protests in Canadian history. Over four turbulent months in the summer and fall of 1983, hundreds of thousands of British Columbians were caught up in the massive fightback against the wave of repressive legislation brought in by Premier **Bill Bennett**'s freshly-elected

Social Credit government.

Solidarity is far from a comprehensive history. That remains to be written. Rather, **David Spaner** focuses on the non-union partner of Operation Solidarity, the Solidarity Coalition. There is comparatively little about unions and the labour movement, which, after all, co-founded and co-funded Operation Solidarity with the Coalition, as well as providing the picket line muscle that started the uprising down the path to a general strike. There are background bios of many of the activists featured in the book, giving it a folksy feel, but not much about Coalition leaders **Renate Shearer**, Father **Jim Roberts** and the fascinating history of BC Federation of Labour president, **Art Kube** who also headed Operation Solidarity. Concentrating on the Coalition, where Spaner's sympathies lie, is not a bad thing. Largely ignored by a media that concentrated on a "what next?" mentality, it's a story that cries out to be told. But the result is an incomplete, somewhat one-sided account.

The Coalition was the broad-based organization of community advocates, activists and social movements that drove the fight on social issues. Stretching into every nook and cranny of the province, they represented the heart and soul of Operation Solidarity, giving it credibility and proof that it was more than a self-interested crusade by unions. The welding of these two disparate groups—the inspired brainchild of Art Kube—was unprecedented. Operation Solidarity would never have been the force it was without the Coalition.

It is refreshing to revisit those heady times through the eyes of those who threw themselves into the Coalition. Spaner provides good descriptions of the endless organizing, unwieldy but respectful marathon meetings, and grassroots decision-making that went on. The chapter on feminism and the strong role played by women in the fightback is particularly good. "It brought all those people together in such a short period of time," participant and now speaker of the Legisla-



Women Against the Budget's Stone Soup Rally at Sacred Grace McCarthy's home.



Kim Zander, Unemployed Action Centre, addresses the Lower Mainland Budget Coalition rally of 35,000 people, Vancouver

“There was a time when British Columbians united in common resolve to stand up for justice and human rights.”



Cultural Workers Against the Budget march, Vancouver.

ture, **Raj Chouhan** tells the author. “It was quite a phenomenon, you know, like when you saw people from the faith groups, socialist types, or women’s rights, suddenly together.” They galvanized many British Columbians to join a protest for the first time in their lives. But at times, the book loses focus by drifting off into quirky tangents such as socialist history going back to the First International, tales of old lefties, endearing though they are, musical memories from Vancouver’s past and tales of Barkerville and Wells. There are also errors. It was the Fraser River gold

rush that prompted establishment of the Colony of British Columbia in 1858, not the 1860s gold rush at Barkerville. There are others, none fatal. In the end, it mostly came to nought. With 70,000 public sector workers already on the picket line, ferry workers and bus drivers were due to walk out the following Monday morning. By then, however, the government had backed down on its anti-union bills and

BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU) members picket during Solidarity's November strike.

Operation Solidarity leaders wanted out. With Kube sidelined by pneumonia, International Woodworkers of America (IWA) leader, **Jack Munro** flew to Kelowna to negotiate a deal with Premier Bill Bennett. Solidarity’s Coalition partners were frozen out. It was now a union show. Late Sunday night, November 13, as the province held its breath, Munro and Bennett announced the strike was over. The so-called Kelowna Accord contained nothing that addressed social issues. Left in the dark back in Vancouver, members of the Coalition, many

of whom had put their personal lives on hold for months, were devastated. Spaner gives them justifiable voice. “We were all in tears,” recounts tireless social justice advocate **Patsy George**. “It was a horrible betrayal.” Self-styled “hoarder of records” **Sara Diamond** was so upset she threw out all her records from Solidarity and the Coalition. Despite the ennobling harmony of the summer, the gap between unions and social groups proved too wide to be bridged. Spaner puts all the blame on the labour side, disparaging what he calls “obsolete unionism.” It’s an odd term for what was the most militant labour movement in Canada, reflecting an imperfect understanding of how unions work. The Coalition’s vote for a general strike to be carried out by unions, not Coalition members, irritated many in the private sector. Munro, who unleashed a barrage of disparaging remarks of his own about members of the Coalition, takes his lumps, including withering criticism from then BC Teachers’ Federation president **Larry Kuehn**, one of Solidarity’s heroes for leading 30,000 teachers out on an illegal strike, as the first wave of Solidarity’s general strike. Despite its faults, we should be grateful that David Spaner has given us this account. His book reminds us that there was a time when British Columbians united in common resolve to stand up for justice and human rights, and anything, even the political surrender of a government, seemed possible. Spaner is right to conclude: “The Solidarity uprising of 1983 gave us a glimpse of what could be. [It] was far greater than its anticlimactic ending.” Such a time it was. 978-1-55380-638-7

Rod Mickleburgh co-authored with Geoff Meggs, The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett & the NDP in Power, 1972-1975 (Harbour). It won the Hubert Evans Prize in 2013.



The Acid Room:
The Psychedelic Trials and
Tribulations of Hollywood Hospital
by Jesse Donaldson & Erika Dyck
(Anvil \$18)

BY JOHN MOORE

*"If you remember the Sixties,
you weren't there."*

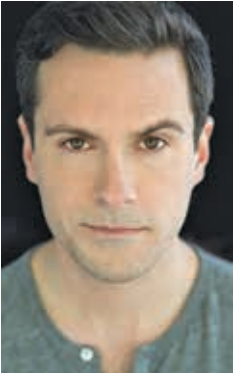
This oft-misattributed Eighties joke (officially credited to L.A. comedian **Charlie Fleischer**) implied that people who were really there were so stoned on newly popular psychedelic drugs like LSD-25 that they couldn't recall ten years of the most fun you can have with your clothes on and off. Like most slow wit that passes for observational humour, it sounds cleverly definitive yet it's about as accurate as your Fourth Avenue drug dealer's assurances that the Lysergic Acid you were getting was 'clinical' or came direct from the pocket of the legendary Grateful Dead soundman and amateur chemist **Owsley Stanley** himself.

In this concise entertaining history of New Westminster's long-demolished Hollywood Hospital, **Jesse Donaldson** and **Erika Dyck** take a trip back in time that sets the record straight on what was clearly a lost opportunity for psychiatric medicine. Located in a white mansion surrounded by holly trees (hence its name), the hospital treated psychological disorders from 1957 to 1975. Its unorthodox methods,

HEAD TRIPS

A New Westminster hospital for psychological disorders might have been onto something with its LSD therapy in the Sixties.

which produced a remarkable success rate of 50-80% included, for a time, the new field of psychedelic psychiatry and attracted a long line of celebrity patients such as **Andy Williams**, **Cary Grant** and **Ethel Kennedy**. More than 6,000 medically supervised LSD trips were conducted in a special area known as the Acid Room. Such unorthodox treatments eventually led to the hospital's closure despite its success rate.



Finding out that the old Hollywood Hospital was not only one of the original epicentres of the Acid Trip, but the place where the ideal Acid Room, (provided with comfy couches, patterned and textured fabrics, art works, music etc.) was designed and described in a therapeutic manual is "mind-blowing," as we said back in the day.

Donaldson and Dyck trip



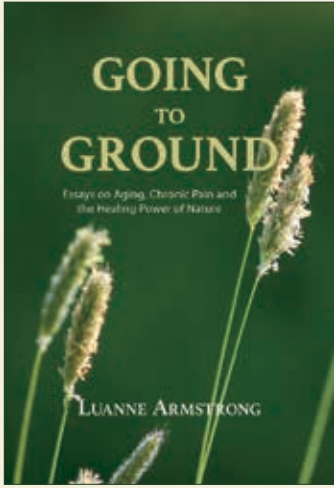
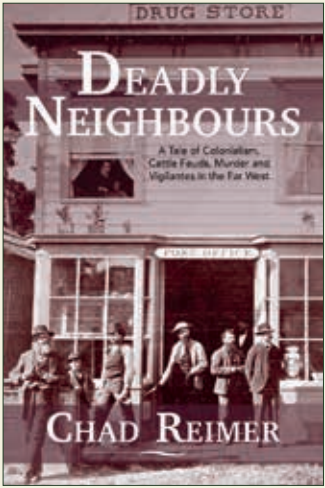
Jesse Donaldson
and Erika Dyck

lightly through the development of LSD-25 by **Albert Hofmann** of the Swiss Sandoz pharmaceutical company in 1938, while pursuing a treatment for migraine headaches. Returning from an accidental acid trip, (not the world's first; also covered here) Hofmann's reports on LSD's effects languished until after WW2 when, in the early Fifties, some psychiatrists who, despairing of their discipline's lack of progress in dealing with mental health issues, began looking for alternative methods. 'Better Living Through Chemistry,' a variant of the 1935 DuPont slogan, had become the mantra of the pharmaceutical industry (which produced amphetamines and anti-depressants before the war) long before it became an acid-head t-shirt banner a decade later.

Early experiments with LSD revealed that it was a particularly successful treatment for chronic alcoholism, a mental illness notoriously resistant to conversational therapy. Anybody lucky enough to hang out fifty years later with friends from those days knows the effects of psychedelic drugs are the exact opposite of the belligerent behaviour, stupefaction and memory loss produced by alcohol. ("Booze is a bum trip," we said then.)

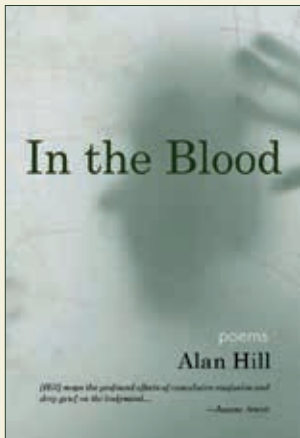
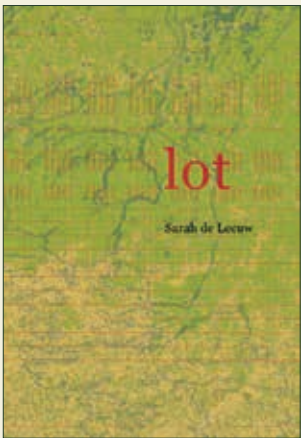
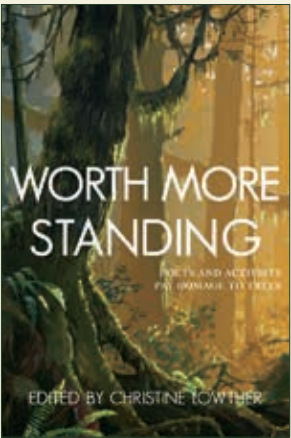
Under the influence of psychedelics, people became peaceful, hyper-aware of their own most authentic emotions and of their deep spiritual connection to the rest of humanity and especially the natural world.

Unlike drunks, LSD users remember their experiences as intellectual



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Cary Grant, 1958;
Andy Williams, 1966;
Ethel Kennedy, 1968

and emotional turning points for the rest of their lives. Since Hollywood Hospital was primarily a private detox clinic for wealthy dipsomaniacs, its doctors were willing to give LSD a try. They found the drug enabled patients to discover the emotions that drove them to drink in a non-confrontational way, causing them to give up booze without fear. A few were so thoroughly cured they were later able to drink socially, a notion still taboo among alcoholic recovery programs today.

In 1959, young Vancouver Province reporter **Ben Metcalfe** underwent LSD therapy and wrote a series of prescient articles about it for the paper. That same year, film star Cary Grant extolled the virtues of LSD in a *Look*



magazine interview. Later, celebrities like **The Beatles, Carrie Fisher, Steve Jobs, Sting, Angelina Jolie, Anthony Bourdain, Susan Sarandon** and **Bill Gates** would testify to the positive life-changing effects of LSD.

Radical new ideas always attract eccentric characters, would-be messiahs and self-appointed grand inquisitors. Psychedelic psychiatry got the full cat-



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author **Aldous Huxley**, whose 1954 book *The Doors of Perception* described his life-changing experiences with mescaline (and gave The Doors rock band their name), to **Al ‘the Captain’ Hubbard**, the original Captain Trips, the pistol-packing wild boy who had the exclusive contract with Sandoz to import LSD-25 until amateur alchemists like Owsley Stanley cut into his action. Hubbard is a bio-worthy subject on his

own, never mind UBC head of psychiatry Dr. **James Tyhurst** who, along with Dr. **Pat McGeer**, were responsible for demonizing LSD and having it criminalized (leading to the closure of Hollywood Hospital).

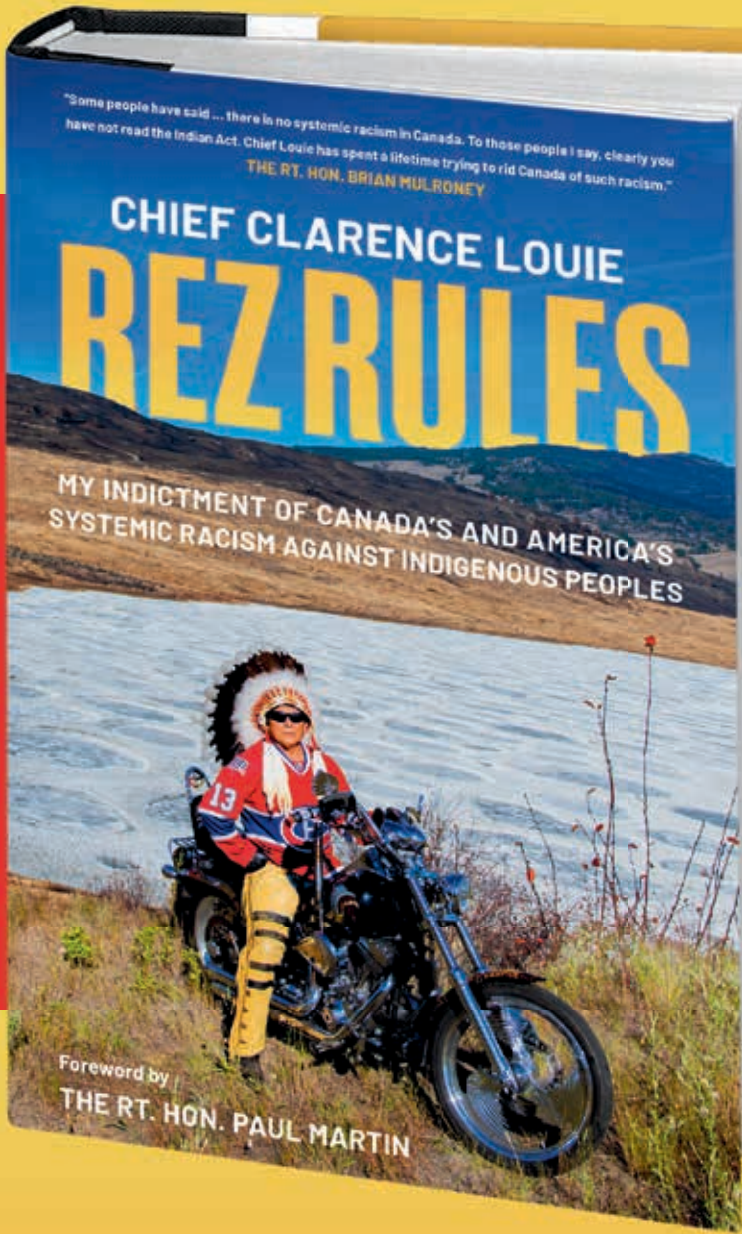


The donnish pipe-smoking Tyhurst proved to be no upstanding citizen. He was later convicted of coercing female patients into master-slave sexual relationships involving whips etc. that went on for years. No wonder he was afraid of LSD.

With his books *Land of Destiny* (Anvil, 2019) about the development of Vancouver as a real estate swindle and *Fools Gold* (Anvil, 2020), the story of **Joachim Foikis**, Vancouver’s Official Town Fool, Jesse Donaldson has emerged as the successor to Ben Metcalfe and the legendary **Chuck Cook** as the keeper of Vancouver’s ‘Closet of Secrets’. Erika Dyck is a professor and Canada Research Chair in the History of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan. She’s the author of *Psychedelic Psychiatry, Facing Eugenics*, co-author of *Managing Madness* and co-editor of *Psychedelic Prophets*. As we said in the Sixties of dealers who had a dependable sense of quality control, “She really knows her shit.”

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John Moore drove cab in the early ’70s and had occasion to drop off dipsomaniacs at the Hollywood Hospital.



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Robert A.J. McDonald
(1944 - 2019)

POLARIZED POLITICS

**A Long Way to Paradise:
A New History of British Columbia
Politics by Robert A.J. McDonald**
(UBC Press \$39.95)

BY GENE HOMEL



When I studied Canadian history at universities in the Sixties and early Seventies on my way to a Ph.D., the emphasis was still on traditional politics—governments, elections, parties, key policies.

But our baby-boom generation, steeped in the ferment of those years, chose to focus instead on the emerging social history based on subjects such as women, class, labour and the “Left.” With some exceptions, mainstream political history was largely set aside.

A new history of British Columbia richly blends political history with the not-so-new social history in the late **Robert A.J. McDonald’s A Long Way to Paradise** covering B.C.’s history from union with Canada in 1871 to the NDP’s victory under Premier **Dave Barrett** in 1972.

A prominent scholar in UBC’s History Department, McDonald focused on class, status, region, gender and ethnicity, the stuff of social history. He was completing this book when he suddenly died in June, 2019. A group of historians including **Jean Barman** ensured that the culmination of McDonald’s work would be published in a timely way.

As McDonald noted, most British Columbians still think about their history through a politics framework, and

the time was ripe for what he called “a balanced, general history of B.C. politics” that reflected the research of the last fifty years including work done on B.C. women, First Nations, labour, and the Left.



READERS WHO FOLLOW CURRENT B.C. POLITICS will sense the familiar continuities between past and present in *A Long Way to Paradise*. The “people versus elites” political culture and individualist versus collectivist values of the early 1970s when the NDP first came to power, were equally present a century ago.

The alienation of public resources to a handful of large corporations, megaprojects, political corruption, the efforts of working people to gain effective power, and the dispossession of Asians and Indigenous people have deep roots in B.C. history. McDonald emphasizes the important role of political ideologies in these areas, including: conservative, liberal (both 19th century and contemporary), and socialist.

At Confederation, politics reflected a “Fight Ottawa” stance and bitter grievances over the Canadian Pacific Railway and the immigration of Chinese labourers. Traditional wealthy colonial elites were in decline in the 1880s, challenged by democratic politics, but most agreed that Asians and Indigenous people (the latter greatly outnumbered whites at first) had no place in a society defined by whiteness and British origins. First Nations’ assertions of aboriginal title were suppressed until the 1960s.

The gross give-aways of public resources, particularly land to railway companies, were typified by grants to a

few businessmen/cabinet members, of which the Victoria “Colonist” newspaper asked: when has personal financial advantage ever been “regarded as an objection to an (elected) representative?”

The attack on corruption, coupled with democratic, class-based and populist ideas, heightened in the 1890s and early 1900s, as it did elsewhere in Canada. The result was the election of labour and socialist MLAs, as well as the development of a reform-minded Liberal Party, which opposed the reign of Conservative Premier **Richard McBride** (1903-1915). The “people’s Dick,” as McBride was called, transformed B.C. politics on the basis of organized provincial political parties and economic boosterism.

The Liberal governments that followed McBride in 1916 initiated government reforms that helped pave the way for Liberal Premier **Duff Pattullo** (1933-1941), whose new brand of activist state liberalism responded to the Great Depression.

McDonald extensively details social democracy, as exemplified by the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in the 1930s and 1940s and its 1961 successor the NDP. He traces the ideas and policies of such strands as anti-elite populism, rural cooperation and Marxist socialism, and describes the colourful personalities who built the B.C. Left.

Voters’ enthusiasm for radical change in the Depression and War years of the forties brought the CCF to the brink of power, but a Coalition of the Liberals and Conservatives blocked the social democratic CCF from forming a government in 1945.

“Class divisions played a role in the subsequent polarization of provincial politics” between the CCF/NDP, and the Coalition and its 1952 successor, **W.A.C. Bennett’s** Social Credit Party. Bennett spoke vaguely of individualism and “free enterprise” while attacking large monopolistic corporations. Notwithstanding the rhetoric of conservative populism, the Socreds presided over twenty years of large-scale megaprojects, resource extraction and economic growth.

McDonald then details **Tom Berger’s** efforts to remake the NDP in the sixties to appeal to the liberally-minded middle class, as well as the more traditional populist appeals of Dave Barrett. The NDP’s 1972 victory over the tired Socreds was based on profound modernizing changes in B.C.’s society: increasingly urban and middle-class populations concerned with social development, human rights and the environment. Although McDonald does not report on the Barrett years, these are covered in *The Art of the Impossible: Dave Barrett and the NDP in Power 1972-1975* (Harbour, 2012) by **Geoff Meggs** and **Rod Mickleburgh**.

Historian **Lara Campbell** noted that McDonald, “hoped that *A Long Way to Paradise* would be read not just by academic specialists but by a wider public interested in how societies think about the obligations and role of government and the relationship between the individual and the collective.” His book richly deserves the wider public that he wished for.

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Gene Homel has been a faculty member at universities, colleges and institutes since 1974.

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HISTORY

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A Métis leader IN COLONIAL TIMES

Rising through the ranks of the
Hudson's Bay Company,
Joseph William McKay was at
the forefront of exploration
and development in B.C.

**Joseph William McKay:
A Métis Business Leader in
Colonial British Columbia**
by **Greg N. Fraser** (Heritage \$22.95)

Should anyone ever decide to generate a Netflix series on the formation of British Columbia, they might do well to select **Joseph William McKay** as their central character.

Here we have a seemingly dashing figure who went just about everywhere and did just about everything. He straddled the great racial divide as both his parents were Métis and became an intrepid businessman who ventured to California, Hawaii and Alaska, then thrived as a linguist and diplomat, living to an unusually old age as a devoted family man.

A screenwriter, given free reign, could have a field day.



BORN ON THE SHORE OF JAMES BAY IN Quebec, Joseph McKay was educated at the Christian-based Red River Academy, near what is now Winnipeg, for the children of high-ranking Hudson's Bay Company officials.

At age 15, McKay canoed across Canada with four other men and arrived at Fort Vancouver, in what is now southern Washington State, where he soon impressed and befriended his mentor, **James Douglas**. In 1849, Douglas and McKay explored southern Vancouver Island together.

As a young Hudson's Bay Company employee, McKay would ultimately rise to the enviable position of Chief Trader at Fort Kamloops (in 1872). This was an unheard-of ascendancy for a Métis anywhere east of the Rockies where he could have only hoped to gain the rank of postmaster. In fact, McKay had served as the postmaster of Fort Victoria in 1848 when he was still a teenager.

He explored the Cowichan Valley in 1851 and witnessed the Queen Charlotte Islands (now Haida Gwaii) gold rush.

McKay proved valuable to Governor James Douglas because he spoke English, French, Chinook and numerous First Nations languages, including the Indigenous language of the Saanich peninsula. Between 1850 and 1852, McKay signed eight of the eleven so-called "Douglas Treaties."

For his next feat, McKay proceeded to establish the original townsite for Nanaimo in 1852, where he built the port city's still-standing, white bastion in 1853 and he supervised the opening of the first coal mines.

At age 31, he married 19-year-old **Helen Holmes** at Christ Church in Victoria in 1860. McKay eventually served as one of the original six members of the first legislative assembly for the colony of Vancouver Island—another remarkable distinction for someone of mixed-race heritage.

These are some of the details we glean from **Greg N. Fraser's** laudable **Joseph William McKay: A Métis Business Leader in Colonial British Columbia**.

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Joseph McKay (1829-1900), as noted by J.C. Jackson in *Children of the Fur Trade*, was a Métis who gained a full partnership in the Hudson's Bay Company "to enjoy the status of an officer and a gentleman."

"During his three-year term in office, Joseph McKay raised many issues in the Assembly. He argued that US coins should be legal tender on Vancouver Island—a measure passed by the Assembly but denied by Douglas' council. He also initiated discussions on voter registration and adjusting electoral boundaries to increase the number of representatives in the Assembly, and called for the protection and preservation of game."

In 1878, having likely seen more of the new construct known as British Columbia than any other man, he published *Reflections of a Chief Trader in the Hudson's Bay Company*. This was the same year he finally left the HBC and took a two-year contract as manager of the Inverness Cannery at the entrance to the Skeena River.

After eleven years as a well-travelled federal Indian agent for the government of Canada, gaining knowledge of the entire province, he was appointed assistant superintendent of Indian Affairs

for British Columbia in 1893.

A dedicated family man with six children and a non-Indigenous wife, McKay personally vaccinated 1,300 Indigenous people against smallpox and expressed his ethnographic knowledge of the Coast Salish in an article called "The Indians of British Columbia" in 1899, not long before he died.

McKay also took an interest in Coast Salish blankets, some of which were acquired by the Field Museum of Chicago and the National Museum of the American Indian in New York.

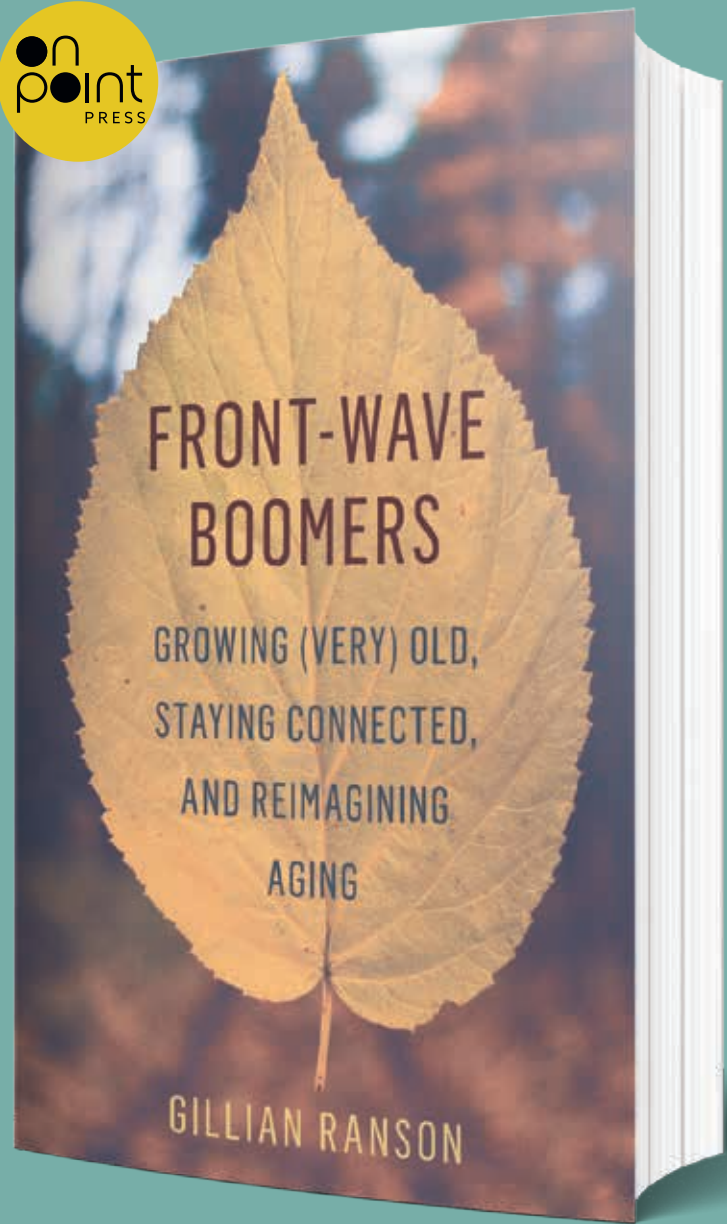
There's a fulsome bibliography and Fraser frequently gives credit to the likes of **Richard Mackie**, **Barry Gough**, **Terry** and **George Goulet** (*The Métis in British Columbia*) and **Brodie Douglas**, research historian for the Métis Nation British Columbia.

This is a solid and easily accessible work for readers of all ages. If there were more books such as this one, more people might be inclined to learn about the history of British Columbia.

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EMILY UNPLUGGED

Emily Carr's hidden writings on art school, sexism in the art world, and the struggle to forge a modern art in Canada.

Unvarnished:
Autobiographical Sketches of Emily Carr
by Emily Carr, edited by Kathryn Bridge
(RBCM \$24.95)

BY BEVERLY CRAMP

The artist **Emily Carr**, who wrote as well as she painted, kept notebooks and private sketchbooks for much of her adult life. In them, she wrote and drew so candidly of her inner thoughts and opinions that they represented, she said, “unvarnished me.”

These personal writings and pictures reveal Carr at her most honest, even more so than her published books like *Growing Pains: The Autobiography of Emily Carr* (1946/republished by D&M, 2005), *The House of All Sorts* (1942/republished by D&M, 2004) and the Governor General's Award-winning *Klee Wyck* (1941/republished by D&M, 2003).

Many of her journals and notebooks are stored in the B.C. Archives in files with names that were created decades ago. Errant pieces got hidden within other papers while others were disregarded when Carr had flipped around notebooks so that she could write on the blank back-sides of the pages (she disliked wasting paper). Carr even penciled over some pages with scrawls as if dismissing them herself.

Emily Carr expert, **Kathryn Bridge** has combed through the records of Carr's hidden writings, file by file, to draw out new information and has published the findings in **Unvarnished: Autobiographical Sketches of Emily Carr**. Bridge has left misspellings and bad punctuation unedited to protect Carr's authenticity.

Primarily covering the period 1899 to 1939, the revealing moments and encounters from Carr's life read like stream-of-consciousness

prose. “We are privy to Carr's innermost thoughts and emotions in ways that were later polished out of the published versions,” says Bridge.



UNVARNISHED BEGINS WITH NOTEBOOKS EMILY CARR KEPT while studying art in England from 1899 to 1904.

“Nearly every Sunday I went to **Mrs. Redden's** at tea time,” writes Carr of her early days in London. “Her eyes were brown & stared when she was thinking—like caged things that had reached their limit.”

An independent Carr is evident when she dismisses Mrs. Redden's urges to go to the church across from her art school to pray for soldiers fighting in the Boer War. (Mrs. Redden calls Carr by one of her nicknames, ‘Klee Wyck’).

“Do you not think Klee Wyck that you should spare time from your studies to pray for our soldiers. The school is so close to the Abbey.”

“But Mrs. Redden I could not run into the Abbey in my paint apron by the time I had changed and run across & prayed & run back, it would be a big hole in [the] days work.”

“It makes a big hole in the men's lives going out to fight for us.”

“I can pray for them night & morning does it have to be in the Abbey?”

“The historic Abbey of all places should rouse ones patriotism.’ Mrs Redden wallowed in the South

African war, she bought every paper & every special and read & wept and prayed.”

Another family friend, **Mrs. Sophia Mortimer** who toured Emily Carr around the historic sights in London, also hounded Carr about a perceived lack of patriotism.

“If we hurry we can see the change of guards.”

“Why should we want to?”

“My dear! The dignity of traditions.”

“She was a pretty little lady & romantic with 3 white curls in front of each ear wore widdows bonnets & widdow colors & cuffs though her husband had been dead more years than she had



Emily Carr at St. Ives, England in 1901



known him alive when he died she had become a widow-for-good swathed inside her weeds. The same as she would always be a woman of old England swathed in its traditions.”

Showing early on that she preferred the country to the city, Emily Carr went to the small town of Bushey near London in 1901. Carr was determined to continue her artwork despite the distractions.

“Bushey was a good deal talked of as an art colony in the country. The Herkomer school was there,” wrote Carr. “Bushey is full of studios & students besides having Herkomer school. On enquiry I found that if I wanted theatricals dances & good times you went to the school, but if you were out for hard work you went to Mr. Whiteley's studio. I wanted work.”

After Bushey, Carr travelled to another well-known art colony, St. Ives where she stayed for several months. Upon returning to London in 1902, her domineering older sister **Lizzie** came to visit. Emily was not pleased as her favourite sister was **Alice**.

“Oh why isn't it Alice?’ I wailed. Lizzie & I never did hit it off.

“What made me really angry was the Hypocrisy of making out that we were utterly devoted sisters & kissing & fondling me which I loathed and which was not natural to either of us.”



EMILY CARR WENT THROUGH A LONG PERIOD OF ILLNESS before she could return to Canada. Her writing of the return was rejoiceful. “It is good that there is the great ocean between England and Canada the violence of the jump from one to the other would hurt. Of course there is [the] rest of Canada to go through as well before you come to B.C. on the west coast but Canada clear aired & big from the moment you go up the rushing St. Lawrence. I never tired of staring, absorbing from the train window.”

Paintings from sketchbooks, including 'The Old England' (1901), showing a woman in a white dress standing in a field, looking up at a large, dark, abstract shape in the sky.



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Back in Victoria Carr says, “... the beach & the woods were grand as ever.... I went into it & breathed & breathed till the last vestige of London was cleaned from my lungs.” In 1906, Carr moved to Vancouver and in 1907, she went on a life-changing trip to Alaska with Alice. “It was in Sitka I first conceived the idea of painting Indians & totem poles,” writes Carr. “I shall come up every summer among the villages of B.C. and I shall do all the totem poles



& villages ... That was exactly what I did in the years that followed ... It cost a lot of money but I felt it was worth while & worked very hard.” Early on, Carr encountered pushback and sexism. “Some of the men artists in Vancouver were angry because I was making headway and because my work was strong more like a man’s than theirs. When the Art society gave exhibitions these men hung my pictures under shelves or on the ceiling.” Carr was not one to be deterred. “I [went] right on my own way. I did not bother with the other artists or societies and they got angrier than ever because I did not care. A plan was forming in my head ... I was saving to go to Paris everyone said Paris was the top of art and I wanted to get the best teaching I knew.” And it was in Paris that Carr began painting in a Post-Impressionist way, complete with bright, unrealistic colours. Upon her return to Canada and her family, her new work was met with dismay. “They had never taken much interest in my painting at home but when I unpacked my box there was dead silence among my sisters and friends ... Nobody painted that way out West.” But Carr knew that her French instructors had deepened her art. “I was doing bigger freer work. I attacked my material with a bolder fiercer spirit,” she writes of the period. And here is where Carr’s strength of character shines through as she was ridiculed for her new Modern painting. “I built a wall high & solid. My friends & relatives, the old way of work were on one side on the other side of the wall was myself, my aspirations my real work. I did not talk about it to anyone.”



EMILY CARR MOVED BACK TO VICTORIA IN 1913 AND built a small apartment house that she hoped would provide a living. Her studio was in the back. Life remained difficult for many years. “We

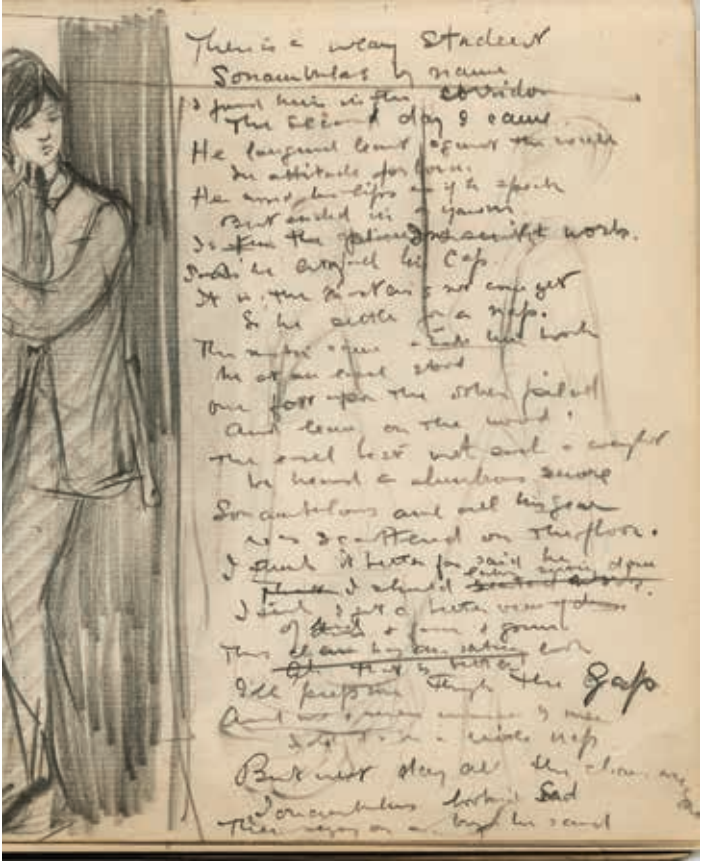
had always been a devoted if independent family. My smoking, damning and not going to church troubled my family very much. It was frequently thrust upon me that I had always been different from the rest.” Carr was so discouraged, she did little painting for over a decade. It was Eastern Canadians who rescued her. The National Gallery of Canada, big on the Group of Seven painters had heard of Carr’s work and invited her to participate in a 1927 exhibition. When asked about the Group of Seven, she said, “Who are they?” The reply: “Seven fine men who are the art leaders in Canada. You have not read ‘The Group of Seven’ just out by **Fred Housser?**” Carr admitted that she hadn’t and that she had not painted for nearly 15 years. “Come, make a new start you have fine material out West come & meet the ‘Group’ they are inspiring,” Carr wrote in her journals of the offer. And that is what she did, becoming ‘discovered’ by the rest of Canada and paving the way for a new round of work that focused on the forests and scenery of the West.



IN 1937, EMILY CARR HAD HER FIRST HEART ATTACK. WHILE recuperating, and under strict orders not to paint, she began writing stories. Between 1939 and 1940, she had a second heart attack forcing her to move in with her sister Alice. A stroke followed, debilitating her further. Carr’s writing gained attention, championed by her friends including **Ira Dilworth**, and were read on CBC Radio. Her first collection, *Klee Wyck* (1941) won the Governor General’s Award for Literary Merit in non-fiction. She published two more books before dying on March 2, 1945. But she left behind a treasure trove of unpublished writing, some of which has found its way into *Unvarnished*.

9780772679642

Beverly Cramp is publisher of BC BookWorld.



Emily Carr’s notebook from art class, 1899 or 1900.

THE BANQUET OF

LIFE

Stardust:
Memoir and Essays by an Astronomer
who Became a Psychiatrist
by Jaime Smith
(Granville Island Publishing \$19.95)

BY BRETT JOSEF GRUBISIC

The table of contents for **Jaime Smith's** collection of autobiographical writing is worth noting—it spans five jam-packed pages. Aside from two prefaces and one postscript the book weighs in at 145 chapters. As a writer, Victoria-based Smith is a sprinter.

Stardust's first part, "Foxtrot" is straightforward memoir. However, it's the substantial second part, "Mosaic" where Smith reveals many of his life-long thoughts. The Wisconsin-born former astronomer, teacher and psychiatrist (and neophyte memoirist) describes them as "pedaling my thoughts in short essays."

Autobiographical in their way, these "thoughts" cover topics by the hundred—books, greed, opera, patriotism, atheism, emojis, abortion, pseudoscience, melancholy. One hundred thirty-four of them take up about 170 pages. Often prompted by Smith's reading, they're eclectic, lively, thoughtful and funny. The sheer volume also encourages any reader to reconsider what an individual gets up to in *his* 80s. (Yes, "his": in "The Abominable Pronoun" Smith explains his annoyance at "they" as a singular pronoun).

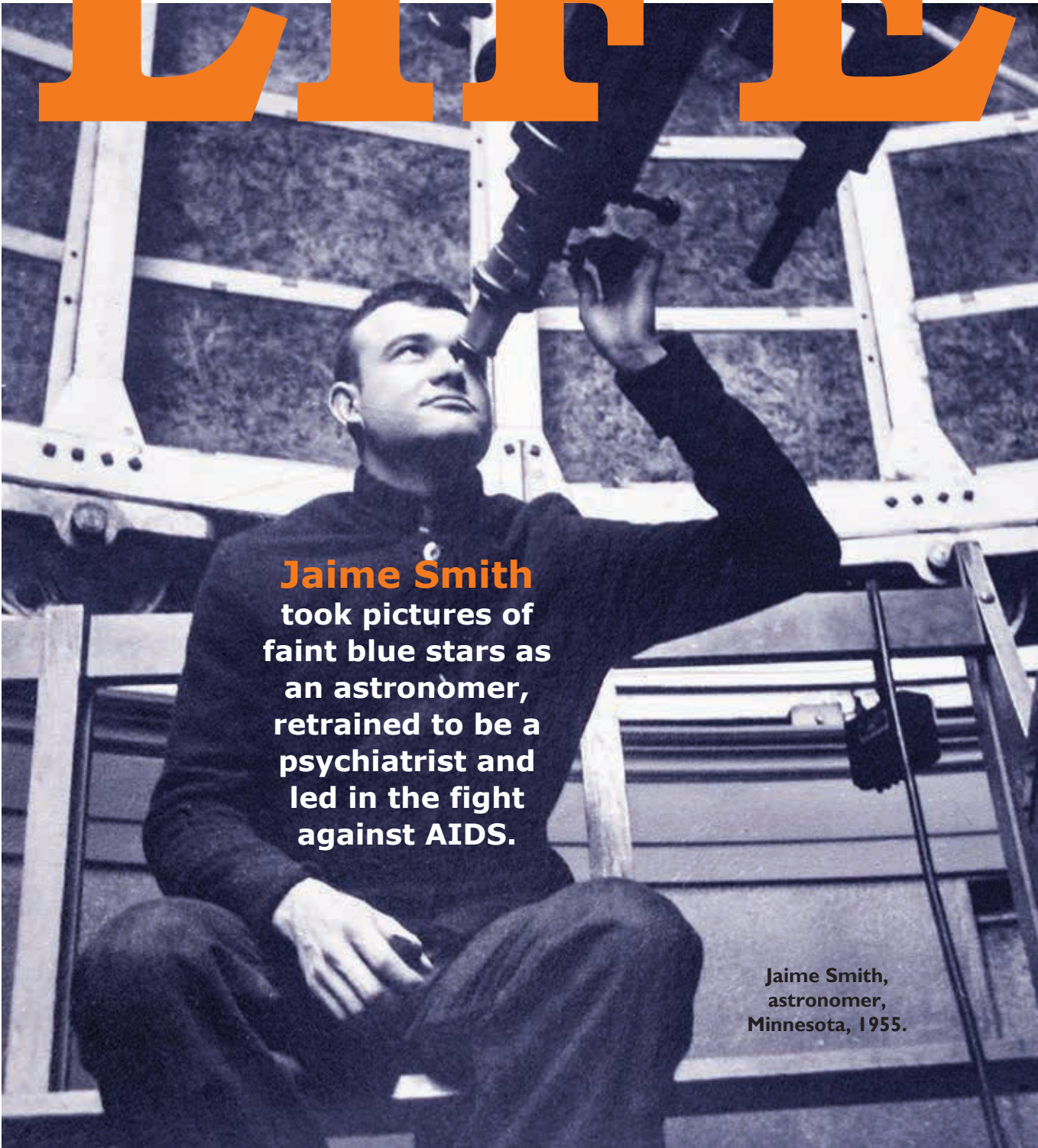
In "The Portable Curmudgeon," Smith confides he's an "old grouch" vexed by misplaced apostrophes. That curmudgeon persona appears intermittently, especially when Smith addresses "the 'United' States" (a "failed state" "founded ... by slavers, perpetuated by a minority of white supremacists, egged on by an aspiring fascist government and facilitated by an eighteenth-century constitution that both prevents majority rule and promotes indiscriminate possession of lethal weapons").

Now and then, Smith veers closer to despair: "The underlying problem is the evident unstoppable rush towards the collapse of social order caused by environmental catastrophe. I for one intend to persevere, one day at a time, but remain pessimistic about civilization, the future of the planet, and the foreseeably likely bleak lives of my descendants and others."

These bite-sized, philosophically-minded pieces complement the memoir that precedes them.

"Foxtrot's" ten chapters don't quite reach eighty pages. In sharp contrast to the 3600 pages of **Karl Ove Knausgård's** *My Struggle* novels, Smith wrote his reminiscences quickly and was not moved to delve deeply or at length on any one episode. The result is succinct and surprisingly detailed but also quick to move from one year to the next.

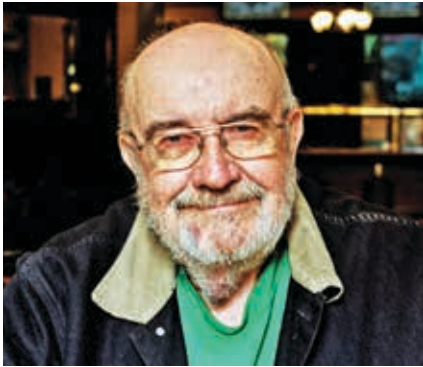
As a self-described "fox" (the hedgehog knows one thing well; the fox lacks expertise in one major area, yet knows many things), Smith grew bored of other hobbies. "I considered composing some kind of memoir or autobiography and began writing a chronological account of my life experiences," he explains, "I rigidly restricted it to one



CATHLEEN SMITH PHOTO

page per year, about 500 words." The project took about three months.

Born an only child in Appleton, Wisconsin in 1933, Smith (then "James") covers his first 22 years in seven pages. He expresses gratitude to his mother—a "kind person and well-meaning parent"—and outlines an evolving worldview that drew this bookworm loner to democratic socialism. Generally, Smith races through accounts of books, learning experiences and accomplishments. He's averse to navel-gazing. The alcoholism of his father, Smith's eventual statelessness as he moves from the U.S. to Argentina and Canada, his experimentation with hallucinogenics and later-life experiences with same-sex relations are there, yes, but the words dedicated to them rarely extend beyond a few lines. For example, he writes "a ceramics student at the art school gave us tabs of LSD to try. My first experience with that powerful psychedelic agent turned out to be transformative..." The next paragraph pivots to university coursework and Smith acting in a Shakespeare produc-



AL MACKIE PHOTO

Jaime Smith, 2021

tion. Therefore, the "transformative" psychotropic fills out only a portion of one small paragraph. And that's too bad: as curious voyeurs, readers would appreciate greater detail on some topics.

This quibble aside, Smith describes a staggeringly full life, one where intellectual curiosity and abundant opportunity led to innumerable motorcycle trips and mountain peaks, richly satisfying and invaluable relationships (and a marriage that lasted over five decades), diverse occupations, and

travel from Ashland (home of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival) to Zurich.

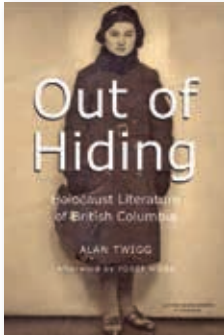
Stellar photography in Argentina (citizenship there too) and, later in B.C., post-secondary teaching in Quesnel began a career that switched tracks when Smith became a doctor and counselled patients with HIV disease in Vancouver. He later took up residence in Whitehorse to assess patients. The man volunteered, parented, played in string quartets, read voraciously, learned calligraphy and made time to lobby for the de-stigmatizing of homosexuality in psychiatry.

Interpreted as an instruction manual, *Stardust* lets readers see how much there is to see, do and accomplish. The main character in the 1958 movie of the same name, Auntie Mame, once spoke immortal lines about life being a banquet; Smith's book ably illustrates her point.

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Brett Josef Grubisic has published five novels including The Age of Cities and My Two-Faced Luck. He resides on Salt Spring Island.

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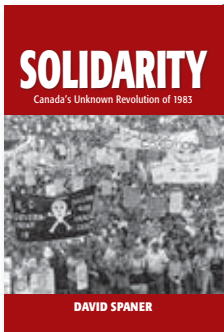
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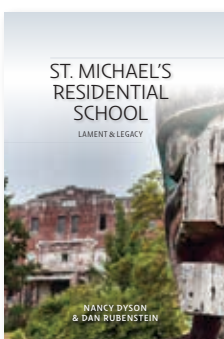
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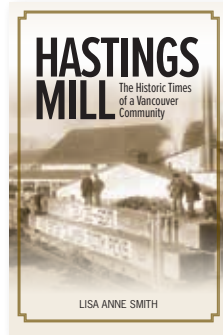
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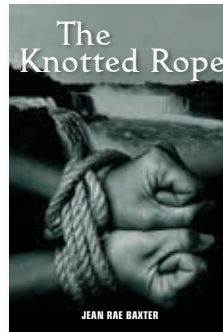
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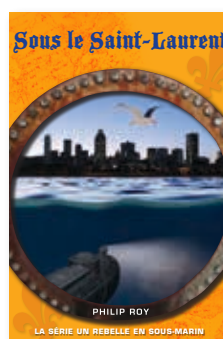
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Unfuckable Lardass

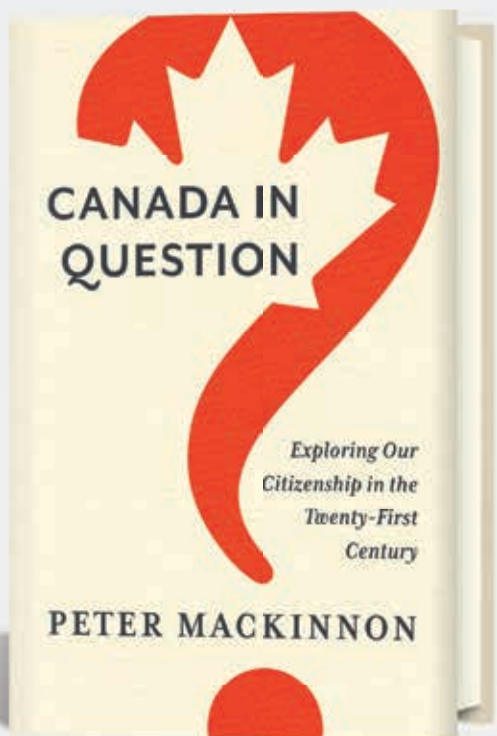
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Unfuckable Lardass, a book of poetry by British Columbian author and editor Catriona Strang, takes its title from an outrageous insult allegedly lobbed at German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Fuelled by the energy of grief and rage, but counterpoised by moments of love and hope, this book refracts the patriarchy's gaze.

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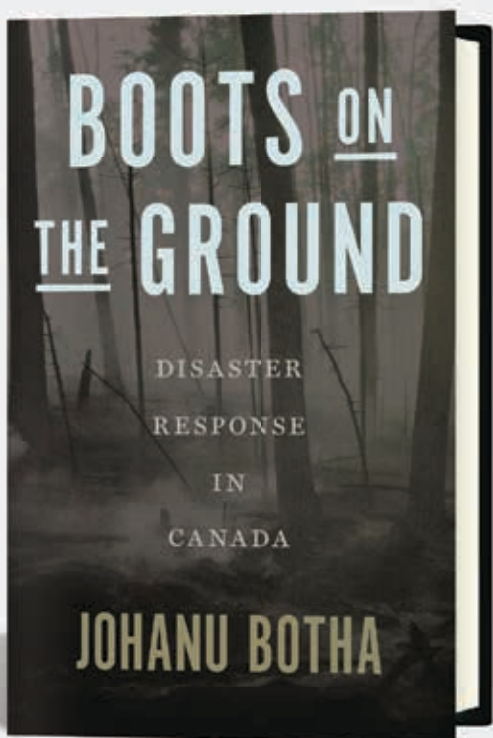




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FICTION INTERVIEW

GLITZ GLAMOUR AND MURDER

Prudence Emery talks about the origins of her murder mystery series set in London’s Savoy Hotel during the “swinging” Sixties.

Death at the Savoy:
A Priscilla Tempest Mystery, Book 1
by Prudence Emery and Ron Base
(D&M \$18.95)

Prudence Emery, co-author of *Death at the Savoy*, worked at the Savoy Hotel from 1968–1973 before returning to Canada where she was a publicist on over one hundred movie productions. She met stars such as Sophia Loren, Peter O’Toole, Angie Dickinson, Robin Williams and David Cronenberg. In the field of literature, Emery’s longtime friendship with Krystyne and Scott Griffin is noteworthy, leading to her involvement with the launch of Canada’s lucrative Griffin Prize.

BC BookWorld: Your first book was a memoir, *Nanaimo Girl*. What gave you the idea to write a murder mystery?

Prudence Emery: I must confess that the idea to write a murder mystery did not occur to me. But it did occur to an old friend, **Ron Base**, retired film critic, showbiz journalist and novelist. I knew Ron from the years I worked as a film publicist and invited him to visit my sets. Many years later in 2020, Ron read my memoir and was intrigued

with the section at the Savoy, where I worked as press officer in London during the Sixties. He subsequently called me with an invitation to collaborate with him on a series of mystery novels based at the iconic hotel. The collaboration was launched, Ron working in the east in Milton outside Toronto and me in the west in Victoria.

BCBW: The Savoy is an historical luxury hotel, the kind of place that **Agatha Christie** would have chosen for one of her mysteries. Is that why you choose this backdrop?

PE: Thank goodness Agatha Christie didn’t base any of her books at the Savoy. It would have precluded Ron and I from basing *Death at the Savoy* there. It was chosen not only because I worked there, but for its rich history dating back to 1889, studded with royalty, celebrities and the odd scandal, set against the epitome of luxury, perfect background fodder for a mystery novel.

BCBW: Was the Savoy as sexist and tradition-bound during your time there as you describe in the novel?

PE: I guess you could say that the Savoy was sexist and tradition-bound. But by being tradition-bound, the hotel maintained its high standards. And as for sexist, it’s true that no women worked in the public areas of the hotel. It was all men. However, as



The Savoy Hotel, London (circa 1940s) has a history studded with royalty, celebrities and the odd scandal.



Prudence Emery: “Mixing fact with fiction is a delicious recipe; give it a stir and it creates a rich tapestry of a tale.”

Priscilla has in the book, I had carte blanche to entertain in both the Grill and the Restaurant. I could be found on occasion drinking Buck’s Fizzes in the American Bar. But I must say, operating in a predominately male world, like Priscilla, I did feel occasionally uncomfortable. Also, like Priscilla in the book, I sometimes had the feeling management wasn’t happy with me.

BCBW: You used your knowledge of 1960s London to expertly develop great settings for your novel. What were some of your favourite places in London and which of them ended up in your book?

PE: King’s Road in Chelsea was a favourite area of mine, mainly, because at that time, the trendy shops and restaurants as well as the “in” nightclub Aretusa (where **John Lennon** made his first public appearance with **Yoko Ono**) were to be found there. Although King’s Road didn’t make it into our first book, Priscilla wore outfits from King’s Road, in particular dresses by the fashion designer **Mary Quant** who popularized the mini-skirt.

A few London pubs which I frequented and which occur in the book include The Admiral Codrington in Chelsea and the Coal Hole next to the Savoy. I also liked hanging out with journalists on their territory, Fleet Street, scoffing beer in the The Wig and Pen. But my

favourite spot to recuperate from overdosing on beer or champagne was in my Savoy-owned flat at 37-39 Knightsbridge overlooking Hyde Park, where Priscilla also lives. We both loved it in the spring when the daffodils bloomed across the street.

BCBW: Are you Miss Priscilla Tempest?

PE: Maybe. All I can reply to this question is that Priscilla does things that I didn’t do and I did things that she didn’t do. But if one reads both *Nanaimo Girl* and *Death at the Savoy*, one can judge for themselves.

BCBW: You use real life characters like **Bob Hope**, **Richard Burton** and **Elizabeth Taylor**, **Noel Coward**, and **Princess Margaret**. But you also (I’m guessing) added fictitious names such Amir Abraham and Daisee Banville. Why this mix?

PE: Mixing fact with fiction is a delicious recipe; give it a stir and it creates a rich tapestry of a tale. Having Priscilla interacting with celebrities gives the story veracity, lots of occasions for humour and probably supplies nostalgia for old “Savoyards.” There may be more fun than dropping famous names and dead bodies around a legendary luxury hotel, but I can’t imagine what it is. Also, who knew that collaborating on a book (with Ron Base) working four thousand miles apart could be such fun?

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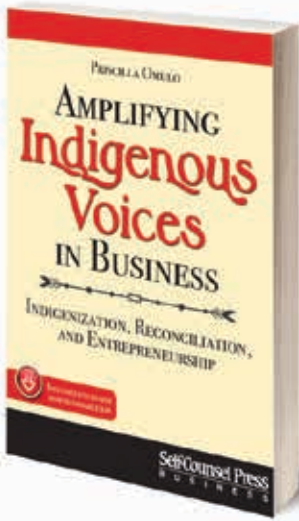
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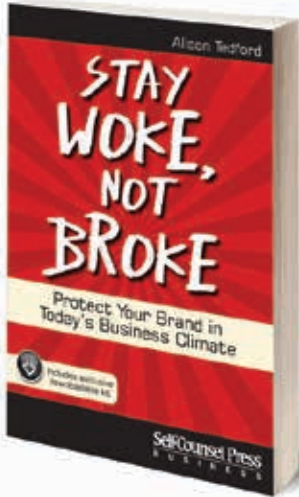


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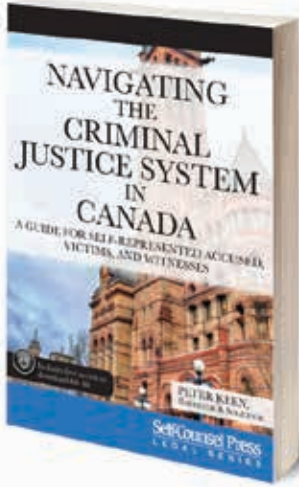


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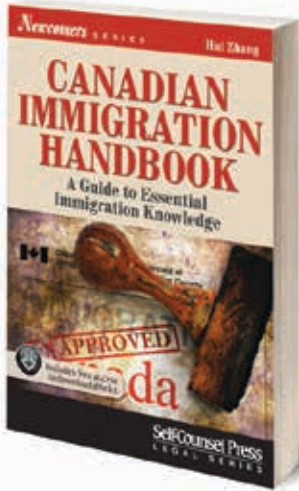


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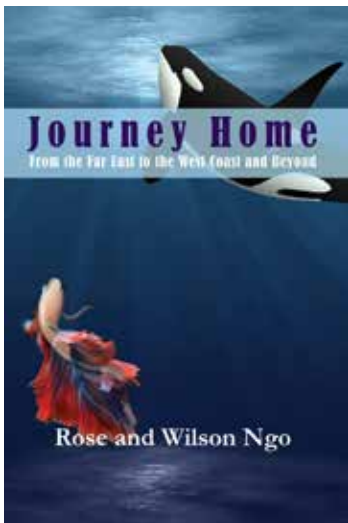
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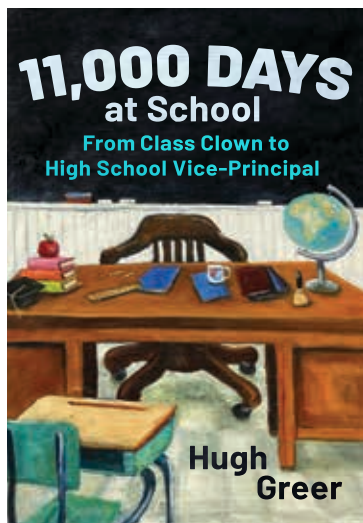
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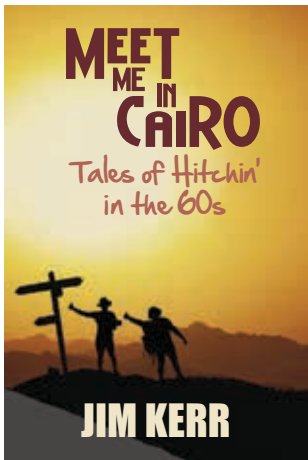
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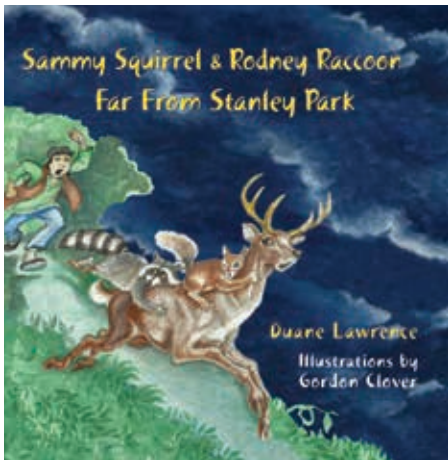
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Talonbooks

Ghost Geographies by Tamas Dobozy
(New Star Books \$24)

BY DUSTIN COLE

Exiles, defectors, refugees and orphans; five rogue artists and one professional wrestler—all characters impacted by the vicissitudes of power in **Tamas Dobozy**’s collection of short fiction, **Ghost Geographies**.

While reading about these displaced individuals, some downtrodden, some deranged, all grappling with lost or imagined ideals, I sensed a few implicit, recurring questions in the text: How might an individual deal with lack of place, lack of roots and the corresponding lack of personal fulfillment? How does a person embody place? How do they bring place with them?

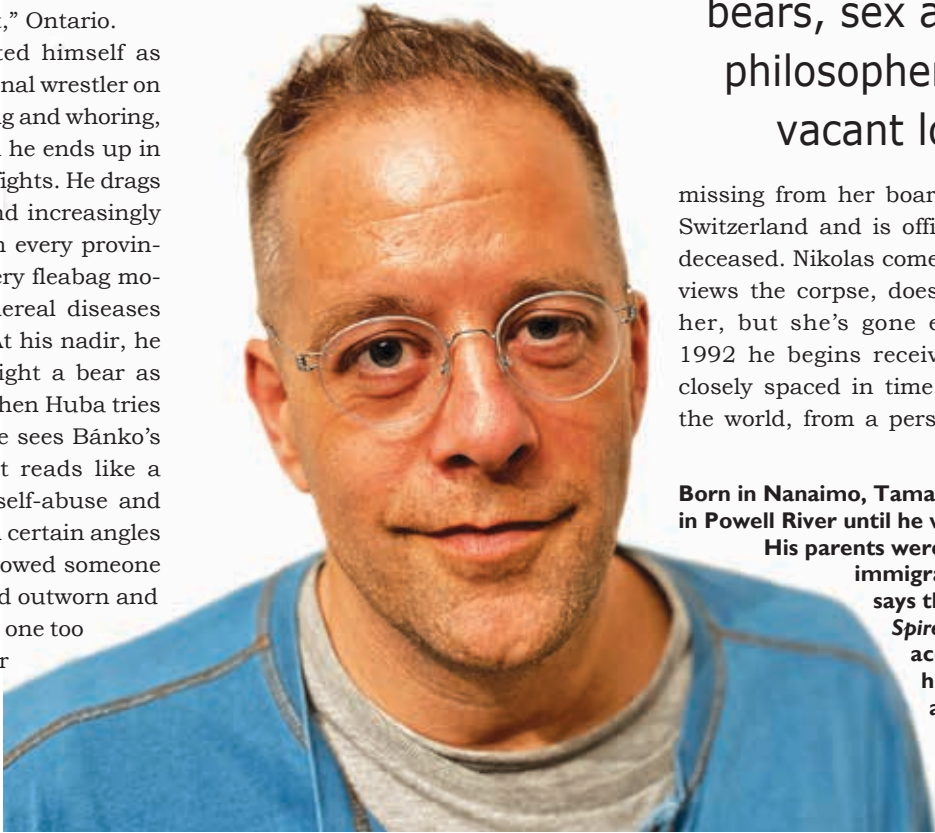
In *Ray Electric* three friends, Bánko, Huba and Írén, escape communist Hungary to Austria in a makeshift hot air balloon, eventually settling in Kitchener, Ontario. They have to go because Bánko, wrestling star and Olympic hopeful, paralyzes his wrestling coach, Maxim Zabrovsky, a Kunist thug fallen out with the current regime. The trio live together in a small brick house, a love triangle, an island unto themselves—“Budapest,” Ontario.

Bánko has reinvented himself as Ray Electric, a professional wrestler on the rural circuit, partying and whoring, steadily declining, until he ends up in illegal underground pit fights. He drags his shattered dream and increasingly shattered body through every provincial backwater, into every fleabag motel, the drugs and venereal diseases passing through him. At his nadir, he considers an offer to fight a bear as sick and old as he is. When Huba tries talking him out of it, he sees Bánko’s face catch the light. It reads like a map charting failure, self-abuse and disenchantment: “From certain angles it looked as if he’d borrowed someone else’s skin, ill-fitting and outworn and long ago discarded after one too many repairs.” It never was Bánko’s life, but he lived it anyway, and he made the worst of it too.

The principal char-

Darkness on the EDGE OF TOWN

Tamas Dobozy
tells what happens
to people who lose
their roots and be-
come lost souls in a
world of wrestling
bears, sex addicts,
philosophers and
vacant lots.



Born in Nanaimo, Tamas Dobozy lived in Powell River until he was nineteen. His parents were Hungarian immigrants. Dobozy says the short story *Spires* is based on accounts from his parents, and that their experiences “filter in everywhere” in his work.

missing from her boarding school in Switzerland and is officially declared deceased. Nikolas comes from Oxford, views the corpse, doesn’t believe it’s her, but she’s gone either way. In 1992 he begins receiving postcards closely spaced in time, from all over the world, from a person he believes

is Sophie: “June 23, 1991, Beijing; June 24, 1991, San Francisco; June 25, 1991, Valparaiso.” He concludes that “each postcard deserves an atlas of its own ... as if each one was sent from another world, another timeline, another Sophie alive but impossible to get to.” This interpretation aligns with the many-worlds interpretation of quantum physics that Nikolas applies to political ethics, which he appears to refine from beyond the grave.

He’s presumed dead in 2015. His posthumous book ‘Dyschrony’ is a collection of disturbing, unconnected historical moments, one per year. These found facts structure the narrative while ignoring its action and thematic concerns. They activate the disjunctive tension between global events and private life. In response to Nikolas Blackman’s oeuvre, and once he isn’t around to defend himself, scholars accuse Nikolas of having not committed to an ideological position. In my view, his unwillingness to identify politically reads as an antidote to the dire humanitarian consequences of ideological conviction throughout the 20th century.

The story from which the volume borrows its title is about Sándor Eszterházy, an Hungarian man orphaned during World War II and raised in New York City and Toronto. Until history (9/11 and the War on Terror) disrupts his movements again, he wanders ceaselessly back and forth across the Canadian-American border, staying in flophouses, mapping vacant lots wherever he goes. He charts an imagined fragmentary country made up entirely of these vacant lots, sketched or described on beer coasters, postcards, the insides of takeout coffee cups. Eszterházy transports this imagined country in a battered suitcase, as if compiling all this emptiness will fill his own void. He likes to keep moving, it seems, because if you’re always going somewhere you don’t need to be anywhere.

Ghost Geographies dramatizes the displacing effects of power, both real and imagined. For our enrichment, and to his credit, Tamas Dobozy surveys with efficacy and feeling the intractable human spirit caught in the middle, rescuing some of the lost and unlucky, marooned on an alien continent that is no place.

9781554201792

Dustin Cole is author of the novel *Notice* (Nightwood Editions) and the chapbook *Dream Peripheries* (General Delivery). He has contributed to *Ormsby Review* and *Heavy Feather Review*.

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EVENT celebrates a milestone anniversary with **50 Years of EVENT Magazine: Collected Notes on Writing** (\$21.75).

Published by Douglas College and helmed by editor **Shashi Bhat** and managing editor **Ian Cockfield**, EVENT is one of Western Canada's longest-running literary magazines with each issue focusing on fiction, poetry, non-fiction and book reviews. It has served as a springboard for emerging writers, some who garnered writing awards after appearing in EVENT. The anthology features 70 essays with insights into the joys and struggles of the writer's life and includes notable Canadian writers such as **Kevin Chong, Amber Dawn, Lorna Crozier, Madeleine Thien, Eden Robinson, Jen Sookfong Lee, Caroline Adderson, Joy Kogawa**, and **Lydia Kwa**.



In comedian, actor, and playwright, **Charles Demers' Noonday Dark: Doctor Annick Boudreau Mystery #2** (D&M \$18.95), Boudreau returns with a twisting tale of the political conflicts in a city on the verge of change.



Dietrich Kalteis' debut, Ride the Lightning (ECW, 2014), was a romp through Vancouver's underbelly with a cast of characters whose ambitions exceeded their criminal skills. Now he is back with his tenth thriller, an action-packed caper **Nobody from Somewhere**

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Novelist Madeleine Thien, is one of 70 writers featured in 50 Years of EVENT Magazine.

EVENT Celebrates 50th anniversary & 2022's early crop of Spring fiction titles.



Dietrich Kalteis

(ECW \$19.95). Retired cop, Fitch, gets embroiled in helping a runaway escape two casino robbers. As Fitch and the teenager attempt their getaway in his broken-down Winnebago, both are aware that time is not on their side.

9781770416116



Vancouver-based **Iona Whishaw** has mystery in her blood—both her mother and grandfather were spies during their respective wars. The ninth title in her Lane Winslow series, **Framed in Fire: A Lane Winslow Mystery** (Touchwood \$16.95) begins with a trio of shocks: a shallow grave, a missing person, and a near-fatal arson. As Lane solves the mystery, questions of community and belonging emerge along with the knowledge that trusted neighbours can sometimes be as sinister as strangers in the dark. Set in Nelson, B.C., the novel evokes the local milieu.

9781771513807



Iona Whishaw

Maureen Brownlee's Cambium Blue (Harbour \$22.95), also evokes the B.C. Interior in this account of a town council's embrace of a resort developer as the way out of their financial struggles due to the closure of the sawmill and the devastation caused by the bark beetle. The story alternates between Stevie, a timid single mom, Nash, a reclusive Spanish Civil War veteran, and Maggie who is attempting to sell her dead husband's newspaper.



Maureen Brownlee

Angie Abdou, author of *The Bone Cage*, describes Cambium Blue as "vibrating with violence and singing with beauty" and asserts that Maureen Brownlee is "a vital and important voice in British Columbia fiction, capturing a way of life under-represented in our country's literature."

9781550179309



In the fourteen stories of **Exit Strategies** (Signature Editions \$19.95), **Meg Todd** gives voice to characters on the margins: a former actuary with a head injury, a defiant farmer who is facing the decline of his body, and an elderly Belgian woman who refuses to continue



Meg Todd

9781773240947

a road trip when her son and his girlfriend stop to help a stranded motorist. These stories do not shy away from difficult truths. Meg Todd is an alumni of UBC's creative writing program and currently lives in Vancouver.



Gurjinder Basran takes on the perils of social media in **Help! I'm Alive** (ECW \$22.95). When video footage of a teen's death is shared online, a community is left to try to make sense of his death and whether it was an accident or a suicide. A SFU Writer's Studio alumni, Gurjinder Basran won the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize for her debut novel, *Everything Was Goodbye* (Mother Tongue, 2010/Penguin, 2012).

9781770416307



Gurjinder Basran



In his debut novel **The Little Bruders of Misericorde** (Tidewater \$21.95) **David M. Wallace** explores loss, connection and friendship. Spence's brief optimism in his early retirement and brave move from Vancouver to Montréal devolves into the loneliness of French lessons and watering his absent daughter's plants. When Spence meets Thierry, a petty thief, he is drawn into a web of conspiracies. Wallace earned a BFA from the University of Victoria before acting in theatre productions across Canada.

978-1-990160-08-0



David M. Wallace



CD cover painting by Jean Smith.

Book cover drawing by David Lester.

"The record kicks off with the striking 22-minute opus, Durruti: A Life in 8 Parts."

— Adam White, *Some Party* (Polaris Music Prize jurist)

I Knew I was a Rebel Then is a CD/chapbook by Horde of Two, a collaboration between guitarist/artist **David Lester** (Mecca Normal) and bassist/writer **Wendy Atkinson**, which is being released as a special project by Shrimper Records and Bamboo Dart Press.

THE ALBUM: The musical centrepiece of the album is a cinematic and atmospheric 22-minute piece on the Spanish anti-fascist Durruti. Rebellion infiltrates the rest of the album through field recordings, finger snaps, stand-up bass, crazed laughter and a live one-handed guitar frenzy.

THE BOOK: The 42-page chapbook contains two intertwined stories by Atkinson, "The Recording" and "The Runner," which reflect on the nature of triumph, defeat and legacy. With illustrations by Lester, the book mirrors their musical collaboration by interweaving visual art and text.

Available digitally: Bandcamp: **hordeoftwo.bandcamp.com**
For CD / chapbook, contact **hordeoftwo@gmail.com**

Shrimper Records / Bamboo Dart Press BDPSPO02
Distribution by Revolver USA and Grapefruit.

An exchange between
two feminist Muslim poets in
Vancouver and Srinagar, Kashmir.

The City That Is Leaving Forever:
Kashmiri Letters by Rahat Kurd and
Sumayya Syed (Talon \$19.95)

BY TREVOR CAROLAN

The City That Is Leaving Forever borrows its title from the poem “The City of Daughters” by Kashmiri-American poet **Agha Shahid Ali**, and recounts

six years of friendship, 2014-2020, between **Rahat Kurd** writing from Vancouver and **Sumayya Syed** from Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir famed for its Himalayan beauty. An epistolary gathering of letters, text-messages and 29 of their poems, their task, they agree, is “to name the things that can survive erasure.”

Kurd and Syed are poets of place. Kurd has lived in Vancouver for twenty years. A single mother with a teenage son, we learn belatedly she is going through a trying divorce. Syed, we also learn later, attended grad school at UBC and works in a clerical position at a university. Ardent feminists and sick of the situation in Kashmir (see sidebar), happiness seems to elude both women. They are pious, though not uncritical Muslims and from the depth of their religious salutations and benedictions that are offered with tenderness and care, each writer derives solace from her faith. At a time in North America when spiritual conviction slips another point or two each season, it’s affecting to witness intellectuals still affirming strength from the divine in times of personal crisis.

Syed is notably vulnerable. There’s no end to the indignities she reports that are imposed by the Indian army’s ongoing military interventions—incidents of “suspended mail deliveries, communications blackouts, travel restrictions and banned news coverage,” as well as allegations of extrajudicial killings, torture and rape. These letter exchanges are vital to her and to those like Kurd who await them in the Kashmiri diaspora. Supportively, Kurd writes that their correspondence is challenged to bring “order, legibility, and linear cohesion to seeming chaos.”

Syed initiates an exchange of poetry that blossoms. In a fragment of an untitled work, she relates that what binds the two in the face of disparate geographies is “...Facebook, there’s Gmail, there’s a search history /... There’s a playlist between us...There is God.” The pair observe the synchronicity of snow and water between their cities as a kind of “Tropic of Poetry.” They also note their mutual questioning of Islam, its historic exclusions of women from Cordoba, Spain to Kashgar, China. This conversation is compounded when

LOVE

FROM A PLACE OF DESPAIR

provides valuable depth information, but in print this doesn’t work and critical narrative meaning is lost. Some basic footnotes would provide clarity. A back-of-book glossary of the dozens of Urdu terms would also be helpful.

But life goes on. Ultimately, Kurd is able to visit Srinagar for a family wedding. The friends meet, although there is illness and some things are unaccomplished. Syed talks of an engagement, then disillusionment. Kurd mentions a rare, welcome stroll with her son, and both find retreat in the landscape comforts of their respective cities—Vancouver’s wooded parks; Srinagar’s Dal Lake houseboats and Mughal gardens. It’s these simple moments that offer relief from daily hardship, but the coronavirus arrives in Kashmir too, then existential crisis. Inspiration comes through craft discussions and searching poetic analysis, particularly the stylized Persian *ghazal* form each loves. Rahat shares a searching poem/critique, “Alkohol” with a blistering view of gender relations, proposing, “Could it be the only sexy thing/ever suspended in the air/between women and men/... the promise to meet as equals?”

The grief continues. Syed takes her little niece out to the festive *Eid* prayers in all her finery and they must walk among armed soldiers while the mosques are “roaring with the takbeer prayer”—Allahu Akbar. When the child’s innocence backs off the soldiers, Syed bravely offers to escort her grandparents outside. It’s heartbreaking to read. Her auntie concludes, “*the zeitgeist isn’t of revolution but wretchedness.*”

By the end, as Kurd hopes, their poetic correspondence creates “*a fierce, substantial body of work*”—not without imperfections, but that defiantly recounts in a time of conflict and trauma “what love is possible from a place of despair.”

9781772013573

Trevor Carolan’s most recent book is *Road Trips: Journeys in the Unspoiled World* (Mother Tongue, 2020)



Sumayya Syed (left) and Rahat Kurd

Syed reports on an *Umrah* pilgrimage to Mecca with her mother: the pair are outraged at the strict security within the holy sanctuary areas, prompting Syed to write of her “extreme disgust with patriarchy.” With pent-up anger of her own, Kurd responds from Canada in a poem asking, “could our acts of inspiration/be our true acts of rebellion? /To write upon the surfaces of our exclusion /until we carve a doorway into belonging...”

Kurd comments at one point that

it has been a year since the killing of the rebel, **Burhan Wani** when a subsequent Indian government crackdown compelled her to cancel a visit to Srinagar. The result has been, as Syed has noted, “the clash of extreme force and extreme resistance.” Few Canadian readers however, will know of this rebel leader killed in a gun battle and an explanation of his significance is needed. That’s the rub with reading text message conversations that tend toward the hyper-lean. Occasionally an e-link reference will appear that if searched

The tragedy of Kashmir

Like Northern Ireland, Palestine and other areas of tragic conflicts, Kashmir has a long history of foreign occupation and violence. Following the subcontinent’s secession from the British Empire in 1947, and partition, India assumed control of Kashmir after attacks from Pakistani tribals in a disputed annexation. The state had a chiefly Muslim population in major areas, along with Jammu’s Hindu communities, Ladakh’s Buddhist majority and a Hindu maharaja ruling them all. A promised plebiscite on its political future—whether to join Pakistan or India, or become independent—has never taken place. Three wars between India and Pakistan failed to settle the issue and there has been bungling and deceit on both sides. Attempts to discuss alternative futures remain a white-hot issue and militant Muslim resistance to New Delhi control still festers.

Poster stapled to a rickshaw driver’s seat in 2018 protesting the loss of Kashmir’s special status within India and rights for its Muslim majority.



BOLLYWOOD BOY

Project Bollywood
by **Mahtab Narsimhan**
(Orca \$10.95)

FICTION AGES 9-12

Salman Khan lives with his parents in a fourteen-room mansion on a large property with manicured lawns in the middle of a big North American city. It has an indoor pool, sauna, gym and a media room where Salman likes to entertain his friends. With a giant-screen TV, a calibrated surround-sound system, soft lighting, couches and cushions, it's a fun place to hang out, especially with family and friends.

There is a man named Ramesh from Chennai, India who drives Salman around and cooks his meals.

It seems a dream life that **Mahtab Narsimhan** has created in her new YA novel **Project Bollywood** ... although there's a 'but' coming ... Salman is an only child and his parents are often away on business, leaving him alone with Ramesh for days at a time.

"This house had everything a person could want," writes Narsimhan. "Except people to share it with."

Salman Khan has the same name as a big Bollywood star and he tries to emulate this role model because he has a passion for Hindi movies. Salman even dreams of being a famous Bollywood celebrity himself one day. Fortunately, he recently met three friends at school who enjoy watching Hindi movies with him in his family's media room. They include his best friend Jason as well as Maya and Arman. "If it weren't for them, he'd be as invisible in school as he was at home," writes Narsimhan.

After some behind-the-scenes social planning by Ramesh, the three friends drop what they are doing one evening when Salman is particularly lonely to join him to watch a recent Bollywood hit, *Dabangg 3*. As the name suggests, it's a gangster movie. Here author Narsimhan drops in some info about the Bollywood industry: "...Bollywood movie plots were corny and made no sense," she writes, adding of Salman's friends "they watched all the new ones with him. He loved them for it."

Narsimhan includes other information such as the fact that India produces the largest number of feature films in the world per year, not Hollywood as most North Americans likely presume.

Salman wants to make his own mini-Bollywood movie and has the camera, editing equipment and everything else needed to do the job. Remember, his parents are rich. They own several companies that manufacture IT security equipment. That's why they travel so much and are frequently away from home.

Salman gets the opportunity to put his plan into action after his media arts teacher gives the class an assignment to create a group project. A stroke of

A lonely teenager plans to produce his own Hindi movie and must encourage his friends to help.

luck has Salman linked with his three friends, Jason, Maya and Arman. Not so lucky is a fifth person added to the group: "Natalie Ming. Salman knew that name and it stood for trouble."

Turns out Natalie is independent, strong-minded and speaks her mind. Maya points out this isn't such a bad thing, noting that Natalie stands up for herself. "Sometimes I wish I was as strong as she is," says Maya.

Salman charges ahead, writes a script and plans the film shoot, working long hours into the night. He does all this before consulting his group. He is after all, an only child, self-centred and used to having his own way.

The inevitable happens. There's pushback and his friends threaten to quit the project. With quiet counsel from the wise Ramesh, Salman realizes he must apologize and learn how to cooperate with his group. It's not easy and there are setbacks and consequences to deal with along the way to gaining these important life lessons. But like the happy ending in a Bollywood movie, there is a positive resolution.

Without giving away too much of the plot, Narsimhan gives this novel surprising amounts of diversity. Not only does she shine a light on Hindi movies with specific references to current Bollywood titles and music, she describes Indian food (crispy dosa rolls, chicken-tikka rolls and an alternative Thanksgiving dinner of Cornish hens with garam masala and go with spicy potatoes) and has her young film production group embrace LGBTQ themes.



DIVERSITY AND CROSS-CULTURAL REFERENCES are a major theme in Mumbai-born Narsimhan's previous books for young readers including the illustrated kids' title *Valley of the Rats* (Cormorant, 2022), for ages 9 to 12, about a boy, Krish who goes with his father to Ladakh, India. They end up in the hidden village Imdur that has the custom of worshipping rats. By mistake, they break a sacred rule and the Imdura threaten to keep the two there forever. The story is based on the real "rat temple" Karni Mata in Rajasthan.

Narsimhan immigrated to Canada in 1997 and worked in Ontario's IT industry prior to receiving a Silver Birch award in 2009 for her debut YA novel, *The Third Eye* (Dundurn, 2007) the first in her Tara trilogy including *The Silver Anklet* (Dundurn, 2009) and *The Deadly Conch* (Dundurn, 2011).

Project Bollywood is another example of Narsimhan's educational explorations of family and understanding other cultures. 9781459832114



"First drafts are the hardest and I used to have a tough time starting every morning. Of late, I tend to plot out my story and it's easier to write the first draft."
MAHTAB NARSIMHAN

BE YOUR TRUE SELF

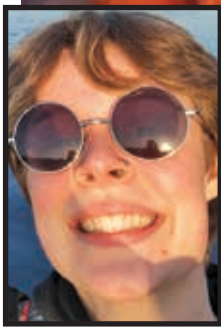
Celebrating children and gender

I Am Everything In Between
by Sydney Sunderland
(Rebel Mountain \$13.95)

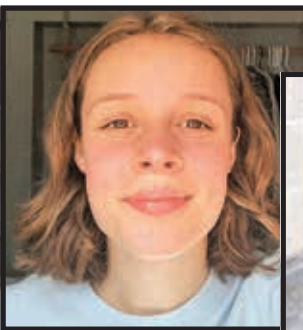
Growing up in the Co-mox Valley, **Sydney Sunderland** liked art, soccer and playing guitar. She expressed herself in a variety of ways: sometimes with short hair, fun colourful hair, long curly hair and many other styles. What was always central to whatever Sunderland did though, was being her true self despite the pressures to conform to stereotypes.

At the age of eighteen, Sunderland has written and illustrated **I Am Everything In Between**, a picture book for ages 4–8 years that celebrates children and how they gender identify. As the book’s back blurb notes, “it’s okay to feel like a girl, it’s okay to feel like a boy, and it’s okay to feel like Everything In Between.”

On the first page, Sunderland presents an illustrated BIPOC child



Sydney Sunderland at various ages with different hairstyles.



with short spiky hair who adamantly declares “I am not a boy.” Then she describes herself as liking to wear shorts and t-shirts, running and playing basketball with friends and getting dirty (stereotypically boyish qualities).

“But I am not a boy. I am a girl,” she says.

The book’s second illustrated character also has short hair, identifies as not being a boy and says, “I like to play dress-up, and wear dresses, and put on jewelry.” She likes playing with her dog, has a crush on a boy and plans to grow her hair long. Then she reveals, “I was born a boy, but *I am a girl.*”

The third child in Sunderland’s book, unlike the first two, states, “I am not a girl.” He loves his short hair and also likes to do his makeup, paint his nails, wear skirts and also loves baseball. “But I am not a girl. *I am a boy.*”

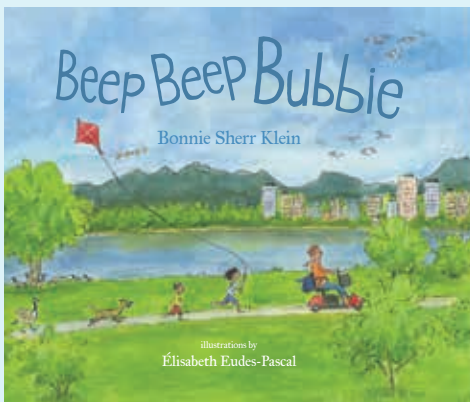
All Sunderland’s characters break through major gender stereotypes including a child that shouts, “When I grow up, I want to be an astronaut. I am not just a boy, and I am not just a girl, I am both!”

The importance of self-empowerment is clear in one child’s expressive outburst: “I am loved, I am happy ... My gender does not define who I am!”

Sunderland reaches out to all children, including those who are still discovering themselves. “It’s OK to not know exactly who you are. You can be small and have BIG feelings,” she writes. “Whoever you are, and whoever you choose to be, know that you are ... beautiful, brave, smart, and awesome!”

Sunderland graduated from Grade 12 in 2021, and moved to Kamloops in fall 2021 to begin post-secondary education at Thompson Rivers University on a soccer scholarship. 9781989996065

TRADEWIND BOOKS



Beep Beep Bubbie
by Bonnie Sherr Klein
illustrated by Élisabeth Eudes-Pascal

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.”

—Quill & Quire

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

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

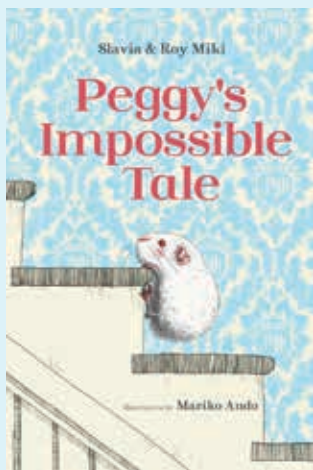


Arab Fairy Tale Feasts
tales by Karim Alrawi
illustrated by Nahid Kazemi
recipes by Sobhi & Tamam al-Zobaiddi and Karim Alrawi

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.



Peggy’s Impossible Tale
by Slavia Miki and Roy Miki
illustrated by Mariko Ando

Peggy’s Impossible Tale is told by an extraordinary guinea pig—curious and determined, she finds the world of her adopted family full of wonder and adventure.

“(This book is) an especially apt choice for transitioning readers. This simple, endearing story has universal appeal.”

—Kirkus Reviews starred review ★



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WHO'S WHO

BRITISH COLUMBIA

“One thing I do like, though, is that more people appear to be seeing Cree as a “living language,” so I guess in the grand scheme of things, as long as people see our languages (and us) as alive, there really isn’t much more I could hope for.”

DALLAS HUNT

A IS FOR ÁVILA

Set in the back alleys and brothels of old Lisbon, **Fado: The Saddest Music in the World** (Talonbooks \$16.95) is Portuguese Canadian playwright, **Elaine Ávila**’s new play. It tells the story of a young woman coming to terms with her country’s fascist past and her own identity. Part concert and part theatre, the play contains Fado songs, the national music of Portugal. Ávila’s plays are produced in Central America, Europe, the U.S., Australia and Canada. She is also the founder of the LEAP Playwriting Program at the Arts Club Theatre in Vancouver.

9781772012897

B IS FOR BUSHKOWSKY

Aaron Bushkowsky’s second novel **Waterproof** (Cormorant \$24.95) is a black comedy about two men who lose their humanity and try to regain it in a plot to bankrupt their business because of a lawsuit. They pour all their company’s money into a movie about their pathetic lives. Neither one realizes how much trouble their shenanigans bring, especially after a kayaker they know goes missing. Bushkowsky is the author of a previous novel (shortlisted for the Stephen Leacock Award for Humour Writing), one collection of fictional short stories, over 20 plays and two books of poetry, the first of which, *ed and mabel go to the moon* (1994) was shortlisted for the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize.

9781770866362

C IS FOR CHAPMAN

Once home to Vancouver’s first up-scale district, the West End morphed into a middle-class community for newcomers by the early 1900s when its wealthy residents began to move further east to Shaughnessy. By the late 1970s and early 1980s however, cultural changes were afoot across the city and crime crept into the area. Sex workers, both men and women, were common in the West End’s streets and



(clockwise) Elaine Ávila, Aaron Bushkowsky, Christopher Evans, Aaron Chapman.



they fought a well-publicized turf war with the residents. This, combined with a rising crime rate, brought closer attention from the Vancouver police, including its vice squad as covered in **Aaron Chapman**’s fifth book about Vancouver’s nightlife and cultural underbelly, **Vancouver Vice: Crime and Spectacle in the City’s West End** (Arsenal Pulp \$27.95).

9781551528694



D IS FOR DALLAS

UBC assistant professor **Dallas Hunt**’s debut collection of poetry, **Creeland** (Nightwood \$18.95) plunges readers into the inner life of Indigenous people and their notions of home, as well as references to the ongoing destruction and violence of colonialism. In his poem *Cree Dictionary*, Hunt writes “the translation for joy/ in Cree is a fried bologna sandwich” and “the Cree word for white man is unpaid child support.” Attachment to the natural

world is clear in the line: “the Cree word for constellation/ is a saskatoon berry bush in summertime.” Hunt ends on a note of hope: “the Cree word for poetry is your four-year-old/ niece’s cracked lips spilling out/ broken syllables of nēhiyawēwin between/ the gaps in her teeth.” Key to Dallas Hunt’s writing is that it is steeped in the Cree language.

9780889713925

E IS FOR EVANS

Christopher Evans portrays people that are trapped between reality and expectations: of who they think they are, who others think they are and who they want to be, in his debut collection of short stories **Nothing Could Be Further from the Truth** (House of Anansi \$22.99). His publisher writes “Resignation and reinvention are always a breath apart,” and says that Evans’s characters have fallen short of their dreams, or never expected more.

Christopher Evans is also an editor and teacher whose work has appeared in *EVENT*, the *Literary Review*, and *Best Canadian Poetry* and has been short-listed for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize. He lives in Vancouver.

9781487010331

F IS FOR FRASER

A stepmother, father and biological mother worry about their daughter Greta, who leaves medical school to run off to Africa to work for Doctors Without Borders with a much older family friend, 88-year-old Rudy, in **Charity** (Biblioasis \$17.95)—**Keath Fraser**’s first fiction in more than 16 years. The parents think all will be well when Greta returns home after Rudy dies, ending their March to December relationship, but Greta develops an eating disorder. Narrated by the stepmother, this novella is a meditation on goodness. Fraser won the Chapters/Books in Canada First Novel Award for *Popular Anatomy* (Porcupine’s Quill, 1995). His collection of stories, *Foreign Affairs* (Stoddart, 1985), was short-listed for a Governor General’s Award for Fiction and won the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize in 1986.

978-1-77196-380-0

G IS FOR GILBERT



Catherine Marie Gilbert

Most visitors to Strathcona Provincial Park on Vancouver Island know it for the beauty of its mountains, lakes and waterfalls. In her second book, **A Journey Back to Nature: A History of Strathcona Provincial Park** (Heritage \$26.95) **Catherine Marie Gilbert** shows that behind the breathtaking scenery lies a volatile history of competing interests that have struggled to protect and define the park over the past century—from Indigenous Peoples who have lived on the land for millennia, to European explorers and industrialists who could not see beyond the wealth of its natural resources, to early conservationists and enterprising settlers who wished to preserve the area as a wilderness playground for B.C.'s booming population. 9781772033588

H IS FOR HARRIS



Michael Harris

Consumer culture and endless economic growth have been the prevailing paradigms for centuries. That must change if the current climate crisis is to be defeated according to **Michael Harris** in **All We Want: Building the Life We Cannot Buy** (Doubleday \$26). Harris offers a roadmap towards a more humane and healthier future involving three realms in which humans can find deeper meaning: the worlds of craft, the sublime and care. By embracing these principles, Harris argues we will have far richer lives—and begin righting the wrongs we have done to the environment too. 9780385695206

I IS FOR ISA

A three-time winner at the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards for her poetry, **Isa Milman** has written a memoir about her investigation into the lives of two Jewish sisters who grew up in interwar Poland, **Afterlight: In Search of Poetry, History, and Home** (Heritage \$24.95).



Isa Milman

The two women include Sabina, Milman's mother, who survived the Holocaust, and her mother's twin, Basia who did not. Milman describes the fear and fascination she felt as she traversed the lands of her ancestors in modern day Poland and Ukraine, looking for Basia's vanished poems that she published at the age of fourteen. Milman delves into the complexities of what cultures choose to remember and what they erase. 9781772033830

J IS FOR JENKINS

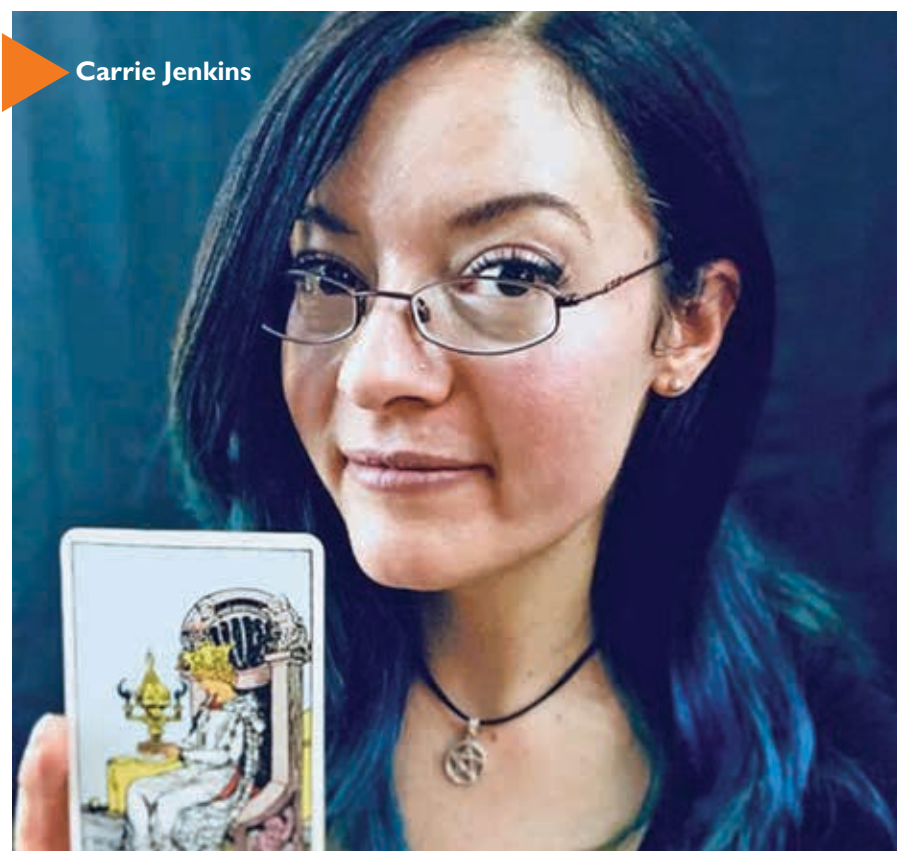
UBC prof **Carrie Jenkins'** debut novel **Victoria Sees It** (Strange Light/Penguin \$24.95) is a mix of queer psychological thriller and gothic mystery. Raised by an aunt and uncle, Victoria leaves behind her English working-class background after she gets into Cambridge. Amidst all the rich 'toffs' Victoria is an outsider. When her one friend on campus, wealthy Deb goes missing, Victoria sets out to find her. She is helped by a police officer with whom she has an affair. They travel the English countryside investigating various crime sites but Deb is not found. Victoria graduates, moves to various other places to achieve academic success, eventually ending up in Seattle. 9780771049279

K IS FOR KOPECKY



Arno Kopecky

In **The Environmentalist's Dilemma: Promise and Peril in an Age of Climate Crisis** (ECW \$24.95) **Arno Kopecky** zeroes in on a core predicament of our times: the planet may be dying, but humanity's doing better than ever. To acknowledge both sides of this paradox is to enter a range of difficult decisions: should we take down the government, or try to change it from the inside? Is it okay to compare climate change to **Hitler**? How do you tackle collective delusion? Should we still have kids? And can we take them to Disneyland? 9781770416093



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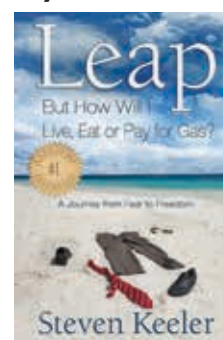
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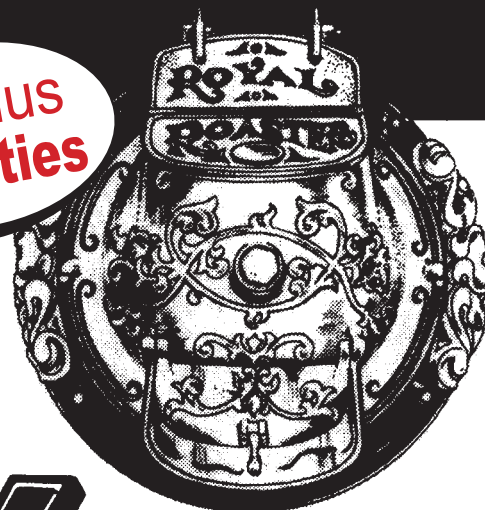
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Yoka congratulates **Susan Sanford Blades** for winning the ReLit Award in the novel category for **Fake It So Real** (Nightwood Editions). ISBN 9780889713888

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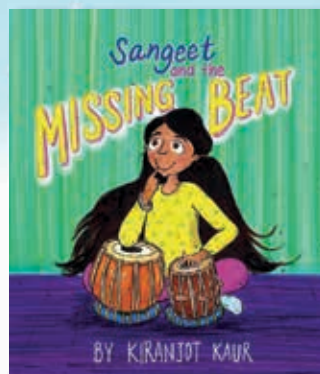
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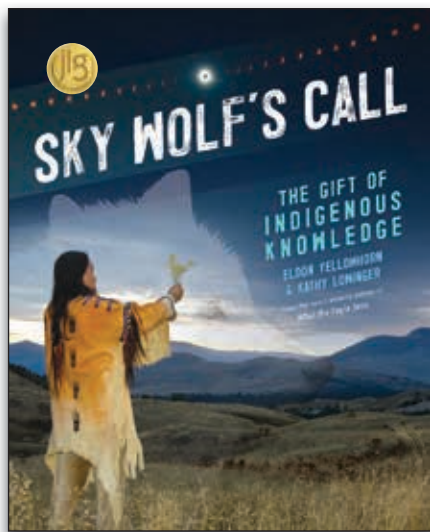
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"Sometimes it's not as simple as being a boy or a girl."

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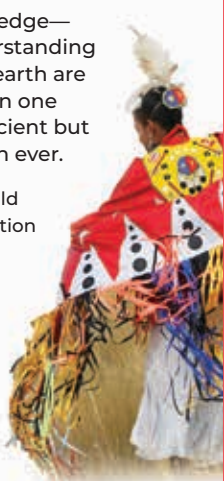
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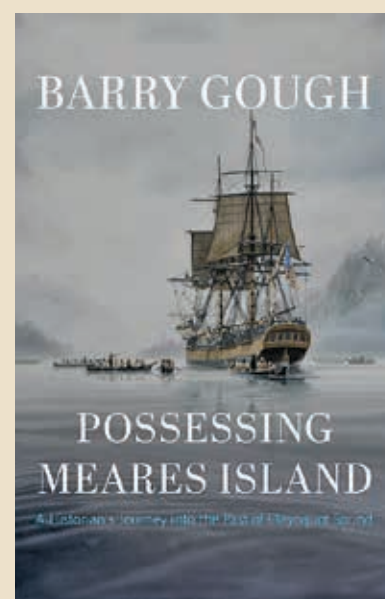
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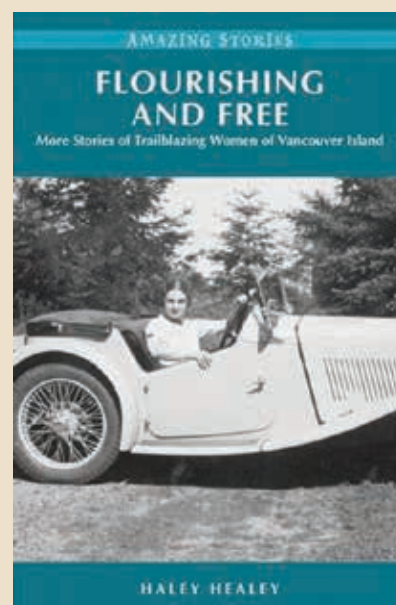
Indigenomics: Taking a Seat at the Economic Table by Carol Anne Hilton (New Society \$19.99)

A Hesquiaht 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 Indigenous leaders and shows that Indigenous peoples are economic powerhouses. An ideal book for business leaders and entrepreneurs, Indigenous organizations and nations, governments and policymakers, and economists.



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

Rivalling Fort Langley, there was Meares Island, located near Tofino. 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 Maquinna. It died after 1855 but the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council draws on this complicated history of ownership for their legal claim to the land and continue to defend its wilderness from the clear-cut saw.



Flourishing and Free: More Stories of Trailblazing Women of Vancouver Island by Haley Healey (Heritage House \$9.95)

In 1906, Minnie Paterson hiked six miles through freezing seawater and mud in a west coast storm to rescue sailors shipwrecked on a tempestuous shoreline known as the "Graveyard of the Pacific" near Bamfield on Vancouver Island. Then there's the early Salt Spring Island homesteader Sylvia Stark, who had been born into slavery in the U.S. These are a few of the women at the center of this collection of true stories about sixteen unsung heroines of the West Coast.



One Man in His Time... A Memoir by Michael Audain (Douglas & McIntyre \$36.95)

He went from being a left-wing social worker to a millionaire residential developer. Michael Audain also donated millions to art causes in B.C. and built an art museum in Whistler. Descended from the Dunsmuir family who were known for coal mines, railroads and castles on Vancouver Island, Michael Audain didn't gain from their wealth as it was gone by the time he was born. He made his own fortune after attending eleven schools, five universities and holding eight different jobs by the age of forty-three.

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L IS FOR LAMBERT

At the start of World War Two, a young German Canadian girl, Eva, living in the Okanagan, gets a new friend when Wanda, a child refugee from the London blitz moves to her town. Eva fears Wanda will abandon her when she learns Eva’s family has been branded as German enemy aliens. **Barbara Lambert**’s novella, **Wanda** (Fish Gotta Swim \$20) takes place during a time when B.C.’s interior towns were rife with prejudices. The story focuses on Eva as she grapples with the realities of guilt, innocence, shame and love for her family.

9780978005474



Barabara Lambert

M IS FOR MINTZ

The subject of **Sarah Mintz**’s debut short fiction collection, **Handwringers** (Radiant Press \$20) is her “mediated Jewish identity,” she says, referring to how Jewish culture is portrayed in popular media. The stories are as short as a few sentences and the longest is less than five pages. Mintz uses the ‘schlemiel’—a figure in Jewish folklore who is unlucky and inept—as a guiding concept. Having grown up in various places such as Goose Bay (NL), Montreal, Greenwood, Courtenay, and Vancouver, Mintz now calls Victoria home.

9781989274477

N IS FOR NYBO

Kelowna-based **Darcy Nybo**’s novel, **Reluctant Angel** (Artistic Warrior Publishing \$19.95) is about a woman, Ana living in Vancouver in 1986 who was supposed to die on her 28th birthday, but doesn’t. Instead, she wakes from a serious brain injury to discover that ten years previous she’d signed a contract that makes her a superhuman being. Life takes on new meaning as she follows the instructions of her guides and becomes a reluctant angel in human form. There are plenty of twists and turns as Ana and her quirky guardian angels maneuver the space between this world and theirs.

9781987982534

O IS FOR OLORUNTOBA

Tolu Oloruntoba won the 2021 Governor General’s Award for Poetry for his first full-length collection of poems, **The Junta of Happenstance** (Palimpsest \$19.95) that focuses on the juxtaposition of disease and dis-ease, the immigrant experience and social injustices. Oloruntoba’s poetry has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and his debut chapbook, *Manubrium* (Anstruther, 2019) was a bpNichol Chap-



Willie Sellars



Sarah Mintz



Tolu Oloruntoba

book Award finalist. His poetry has appeared in Harvard Divinity Bulletin, PRISM International, and the Humber Literary Review. Oloruntoba was born in Nigeria and spent his early career there as a primary care physician. He now lives in Surrey and works as a project manager for a health authority.

9781989287729

McLaughlin. Pearce has also edited a collection of contemporary haiku and related poetry this year: **Last Train Home: haiku, tanka, and rengay** (Pondhawk Press \$24) about trains and train travel that features poets from 22 different countries.

978-1459825659

Q IS FOR QUEASY

As if teen years aren’t difficult enough, **Madeline Sonik** was still grieving her father’s death and the end of her first romantic relationship when her mother moved them from Ontario to England in the 1970s. Sonik wasn’t prepared for the cultural differences and the tumult of her new home: trade union strikes, mass unemployment, IRA violence and crippling taxes as well as the rise of **Margaret Thatcher**. Talking politics with her friends over cups of tea in the day and pints of lager in the evening, Sonik felt the stirrings of a writer within herself. She writes of this time of promise and discord and how it formed her development as a person and a writer in her memoir **Queasy** (Anvil \$20).

9781772141894

R IS FOR RESTAKIS



John Restakis

Former executive director of the B.C. Co-operative Association, **John Restakis** has written **Civilizing the State: Reclaiming Politics for the Common Good** (New Society \$19.99) chronicling

the history of the liberal state from enabler of capitalism to protector of citizen welfare, to its hollowing out and capture by corporate and moneyed interests. He argues that in its current state, the liberal state is unfit to deal with contemporary crises of inequality, injustice and ecological collapse. He then explores citizen-powered alternatives and experiments in co-operation, solidarity economics and ‘commoning’ from Spain, India, and the global peasant movement. Finally, Restakis looks at the opportunity to reimagine the state as a “partner state” that promotes equity, economic democracy and human thriving—a fully sovereign civil society.

9780865719439

S IS FOR SELLARS

In 2014, **Willie Sellars**, chief of the Williams Lake First Nation made a publishing splash with his debut kidlit novel, **Dipnetting with Dad** (Caitlin \$16.95) about a boy nicknamed Little Brother who learns the importance of his culture and family. It won a Moonbeam Children’s Book Award, and was shortlisted for the Chocolate Lily, Shining Willow and Ontario Library Association awards. In the follow-up, **Hockey with Dad** (Caitlin \$19.95) Little Brother’s adventures continue as he grows and learns about the importance of hockey to his Secwépemc community. In one particularly important hockey match, the team goalie gets sick and Little Brother and his Big Sister must rely on the wisdom of Grandpa, Dad and Secwépemc cultural values to overcome big challenges. Both books are illustrated by **Kevin Easthope**, also of Williams Lake.

9781987915808



Madeline Sonik



Jacqueline Pearce

P IS FOR PEARCE

Author of ten kidlit novels, **Jacqueline Pearce** has written her first non-fiction title, **What Animals Want** (Orca \$24.95) for ages 8-12. She explores the physical and emotional needs of animals focusing on pets, farm and zoo animals, as well as rescued wildlife and human impacts on habitat and climate. Written in consultation with the B.C. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the book is illustrated with photographs and drawings by **Julie**

WHO'S WHO

BC

T IS FOR TEDFORD



Alison Tedford

Starting a business is stressful. Combine that with chronic pain and the challenges ramp up even more for would-be entrepreneurs. **Alison Tedford** experienced both when she left a full-time job to set up a small business venture. An Indigenous woman based in Abbotsford, Tedford writes that she was attracted by the ability to “pick and choose which projects I worked on, how much I would be paid for them, and I could make decisions as the head of my own entity that would position me for success, my definition of success.”

Tedford suffered from chronic pain, yet despite this she succeeded, which she describes in **Chronic Profit: Building Your Small Business While Managing Persistent Pain** (Self-Counsel Press \$26.95) along with business-building strategies and proven methods for maintaining personal health. 9781770403321

U IS FOR UNNA



Nicholas Read

Unna, an 18-year-old female orca born in captivity, starved to death in 2015 at SeaWorld San Antonio according to **Nicholas Read** in **A Home Away from Home: True Stories of Wild Animal Sanctuaries** (Heritage \$19.95). “History has taught us that keeping an orca in captivity can be full of hazards—some of them deadly,” writes Read. These animals usually can’t be safely released back into the wild, but sanctuaries are the next best thing says Read, who describes the advent of whale sanctuaries in Britain and Iceland as well as many other kinds of sanctuaries (for monkeys, apes, elephants and birds). 9781772032192

V IS FOR VIGNA

John Vigna’s second novel **No Man’s Land** (Arsenal \$22.95) is set in the late 1890’s in B.C.’s wilderness. Fourteen-year-old Davey is being raised by a



Zazie Todd: “I think my cat ‘aha’ moment relates to how dogs and cats get along with each other.... about the importance of the cat feeling safe. And that really is the most important thing in the relationship between a cat and a dog.”



John Vigna

group of eccentric hostile misfits who rescued her from a bloody battlefield. Together they roam the countryside led by Reverend Brown, a charismatic false prophet. There’s violence but this is true of much of the province’s history. Vigna takes a long hard look at this legacy of violence, its senseless destructiveness and the fearless dignity required to rise above it. His first novel, *Bull Head* (Arsenal, 2012) was re-published in 2017 in France by Éditions Albin Michel and in the same year, Vigna was named one of 10 writers to watch by CBC Books. Vigna is an assistant professor at UBC’s School of Creative Writing. 9781551528663

W IS FOR WONG

A life-changing time in **Caroline Wong**’s life occurred in her early teens when her family moved from Southern China to Canada. It led her to write poems and stories following the interior journeys of a transplanted woman. In her collection of poetry, **Primal**



Caroline Wong



Heidi Waechtler (ABPBC)

Sketches (Signature Editions \$17.95) Wong writes of actual journeys such as hiking in B.C., walking Spain’s Camino de Santiago, the Yangtze River in China, as well as personal feelings of loss, death and hope. She references two ancient Chinese poets, Li Po and Li Qing Zhao, both of whom were exiles. Wong lived in Vancouver’s Chinatown with her family from the 1950s to the early 1960s and now lives in Burnaby. 9781773240862

X IS FOR EXIT

After five years as executive director of the Association of Book Publishers of B.C. **Heidi Waechtler** is leaving for another, as yet undisclosed position in B.C. publishing. “Heidi was instrumental in all facets of the operation of the ABPBC, from developing strong and lasting relationships with government, to implementing successful new marketing initiatives and engaging directly with members,” says **Andrew Wooldridge**, ABPBC board chair and publisher of Orca Books Canada. “The pandemic has meant we needed to adapt to a changing landscape and Heidi helped lead the membership through uncertain times. And while we will definitely miss her, the association is in great shape and well-positioned for the future.” Waechtler’s past jobs included a stint as managing editor of Toronto-based Coach House Books.

Y IS FOR YAHGULANAAS



Tara Cullis

Celebrated Haida artist, **Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas** has provided illustrations for a 30th anniversary edition of **The Declaration of Interdependence: A Pledge to Planet Earth** (Greystone \$20) by **Tara Cullis** and **David Suzuki** with **Raffi Cavoukian**, **Wade Davis** and **Guujaaw**. This call to action was composed by David Suzuki and a team of activists in anticipation of the United Nations’ Earth Summit in 1992. Suzuki contributes an inspiring essay of hope and Cullis an informative afterword. 9781778400049

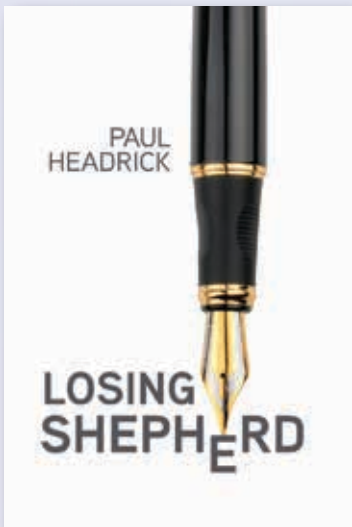
Z IS FOR ZAZIE

Social psychologist and certified dog trainer, **Zazie Todd** has followed up on her book *Wag: The Science of Making Your Dog Happy* (Greystone, 2020) with the cat companion advice book **Purr: The Science of Making Your Cat Happy** (Greystone \$32.95) due out in May. Todd covers the science behind cats’ petting preferences; the multiple meanings of purrs, chirrups, and meows; how to best satisfy the scratching and stalking desires for indoor cats; and even how to keep both cats and wildlife safe if felines spend time outside. Todd writes a column for *Psychology Today*. She has a Ph.D. in psychology (U. of Nottingham) and an MFA in creative writing (UBC). 9781771648141

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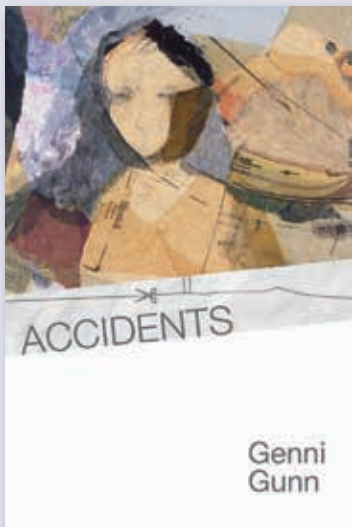
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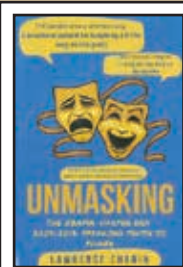
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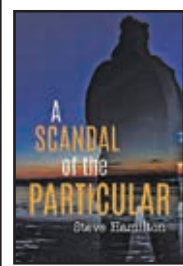
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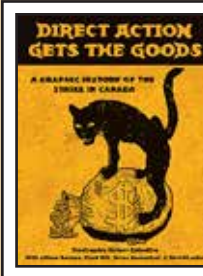
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LETTERS

Art and heart

Thank you so much for including
*What's Not Allowed? A Family Journey
with Autism* in *BC BookWorld* [Winter
2021]. I'm thrilled and honoured to
be included.

I've been reading through the
magazine this morning and it truly is
a work of art and heart ...so creatively
assembled, engaging and pleasing
to the eye. Love the abundance of
visuals, the striking cut-outs and the
beautifully written reviews. I'm always
drawn to creative layouts and this
one is especially pleasing. The entire
publication draws you in and keeps
you turning. I was told how good it is
by a fellow writer and now I see that
for myself.

I'm still in the midst of savouring
the publication, but I wanted to take
a moment to thank you and also to
commend you on producing such a
first-class publication. We are fortunate
to have you here in B. C.

Teresa Hedley
Comox



Teresa Hedley, pictured with her son, **Erik Hedley**'s book *What's Not Allowed?* is on the reading list for a psychology course at Carleton University this year.

Moving and shaking

I've just renewed my subscription and
I'm looking forward to the next two
years of reading all the moving and
shaking going on in the B.C. writing
and publishing world. Thanks!

Anne DeGrace
Bonnington

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Taryn Schmid
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bookworld@telus.net Letters may be edited for clarity & length.

OBITS

Phyllis Webb (1927 – 2021)

Poet **Phyllis Webb**, who received the
the Governor General's Award for Po-
etry in 1982, the 1999 George Wood-
cock Lifetime Achievement Award, and
the Order of Canada in 1992, died on
November 11, 2021. Born in Victoria
on April 8, 1927, Webb settled on Salt
Spring Island. She handled poetic
forms from the villanelle to the ghazal.
She was also a seeker after justice, a
fearless intellectual, sexual rebel and
co-creator of the CBC radio program,
Ideas. In 2014, she published **Pea-
cock Blue: The Collected Poems of
Phyllis Webb** (Talonbooks), described
by her publisher Kevin Williams, as "a
dazzling testament to her masterful
use of language and the range of her
poetic voice."

Lee Maracle (1950 – 2021)

One of the first Indigenous fiction
writers published in Canada, **Lee
Maracle**, died at the age of 71 on
Nov. 14, 2021. Of Salish and Cree

ancestry, Maracle was a member of
the Stó:lo First Nation. Her ground
breaking synthesis of autobiogra-
phy and fiction, **Bobbi Lee, Indian
Rebel** (Women's Press, 1975) recounts
travels to 1960s and 1970s counter-
cultural communities. It admonished
Canada to "search out the meaning of
colonial robbery and figure out how
you are going to undo it all." Maracle
published **I Am Woman** (Write-On
Press, 1988), which describes her
struggle to "climb the mountain of
racism." Her last novel, **Celia's Song**
(Cormorant, 2014) was nominated for
the \$50,000 Neustadt Prize, dubbed
the "American Nobel."

Ron Hatch (1939 – 2021)

The revered co-owner and publisher at
Ronsdale Press, UBC professor emerit-
us **Ron Hatch**, died peacefully, with
his family at his side, on November
25, 2021. Ron and **Veronica Hatch**
purchased Cacanadadada Press in
1988 with the intention of publish-
ing books that would give Canadians
new insights into themselves and
their country. Ron and "Ronny" soon
renamed their imprint Ronsdale Press
(thereby incorporating her maiden
name, Lonsdale). More than 300 titles
later, Hatch has left the indelible

impact of his topnotch editorial stan-
dards. He will also be remembered as
a teacher, mentor, mountain climber
and environmentalist. Hatch excelled
at nurturing the best out of his writ-
ers, co-workers and colleagues.

Louise Jilek-Aall (1931 – 2022)

The physician and psychiatrist **Louise
Jilek-Aall**, author of two books, died
on January 4, 2022. In 1959, Jilek-
Aall worked for three years as a phy-
sician in Tanganyika (now Tanzania).
In the Ulanga district she discovered
many people who suffered from a
convulsive disorder, called Kifafa. To
help, Jilek-Aall founded the Mahenge
Epilepsy Clinic in 1960 that continues
to function in Tanzania. In 1961, she
arrived unannounced at Dr. Albert
Schweitzer's jungle hospital in Gabon,
writing about it later in her memoir,
*Working with Dr. Schweitzer: Sharing
his Reverence for Life* (1990). "In my
work," she writes, "I am keenly inter-
ested in people who are role models
and who serve as ego-ideals, espe-
cially for the young; but only a very
few appear to be worthwhile models."
A biography of Jilek-Aall, written by
Alan Twigg was published in 2019,
*Moon Madness: Dr. Louise Aall, Sixty
Years of Healing in Africa* (Ronsdale).

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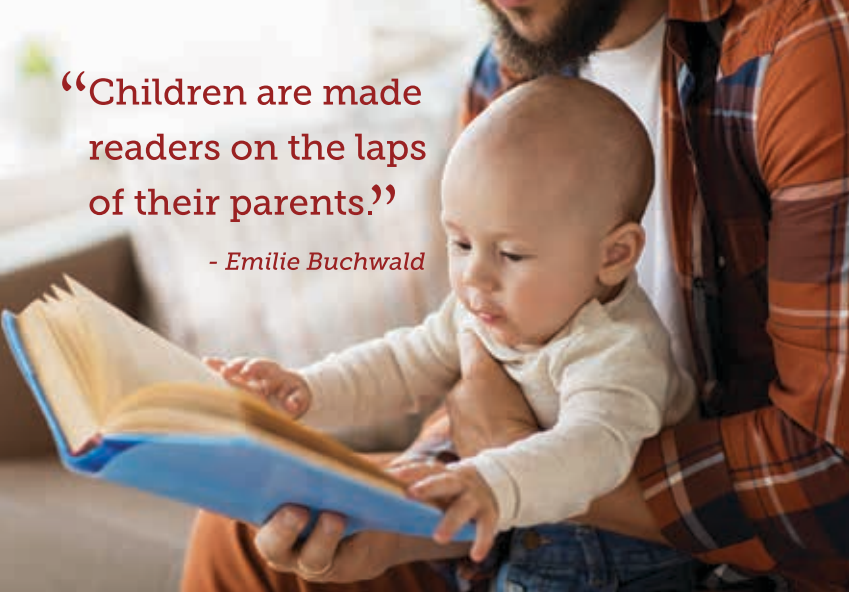
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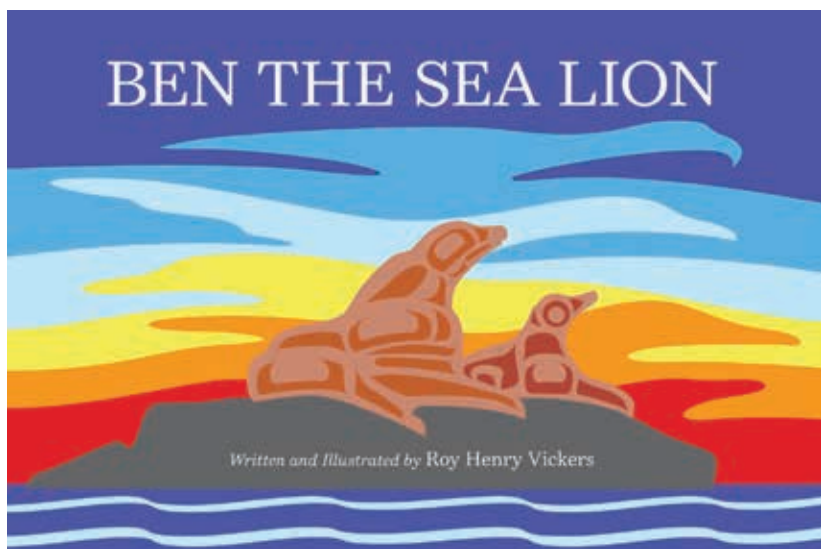
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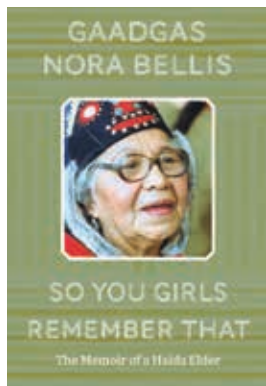
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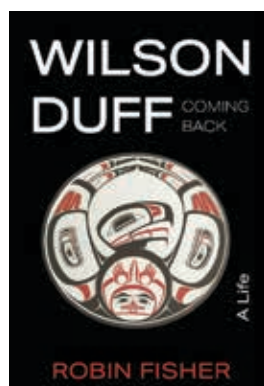


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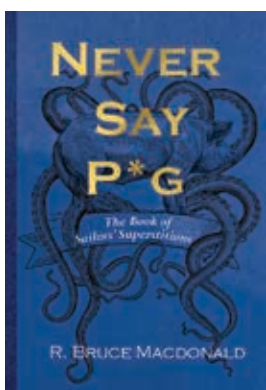
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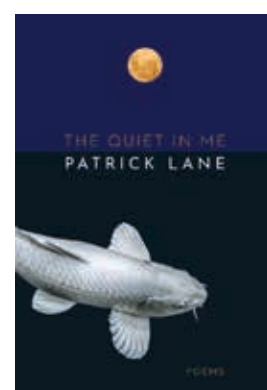


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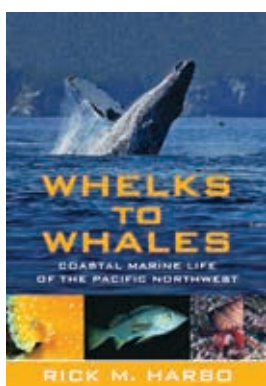
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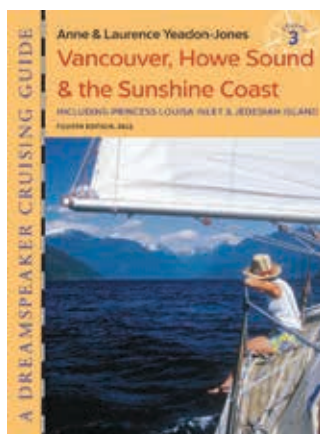
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