

BC

BOOKWORLD

VOL. 37 • NO. 1 • Spring 2023



**DOROTHY  
DITTRICH**

Love, grief and  
the healing power  
of music.  
P 22



**DALE TRACY**

Magical poetry  
with startling  
surprises.  
P 29

# WISDOM FROM THE WOODS

**Harold Macy's** stories reveal  
the mysteries of rural BC life.

See page 7

**VERONICA  
STRONG-BOAG**

Uncovering BC's forgotten  
first female MLA. P 10-11



**EARLY DAYS  
OF FLIGHT**

Angus Scully profiles Canadian  
First World War pilots. P 8

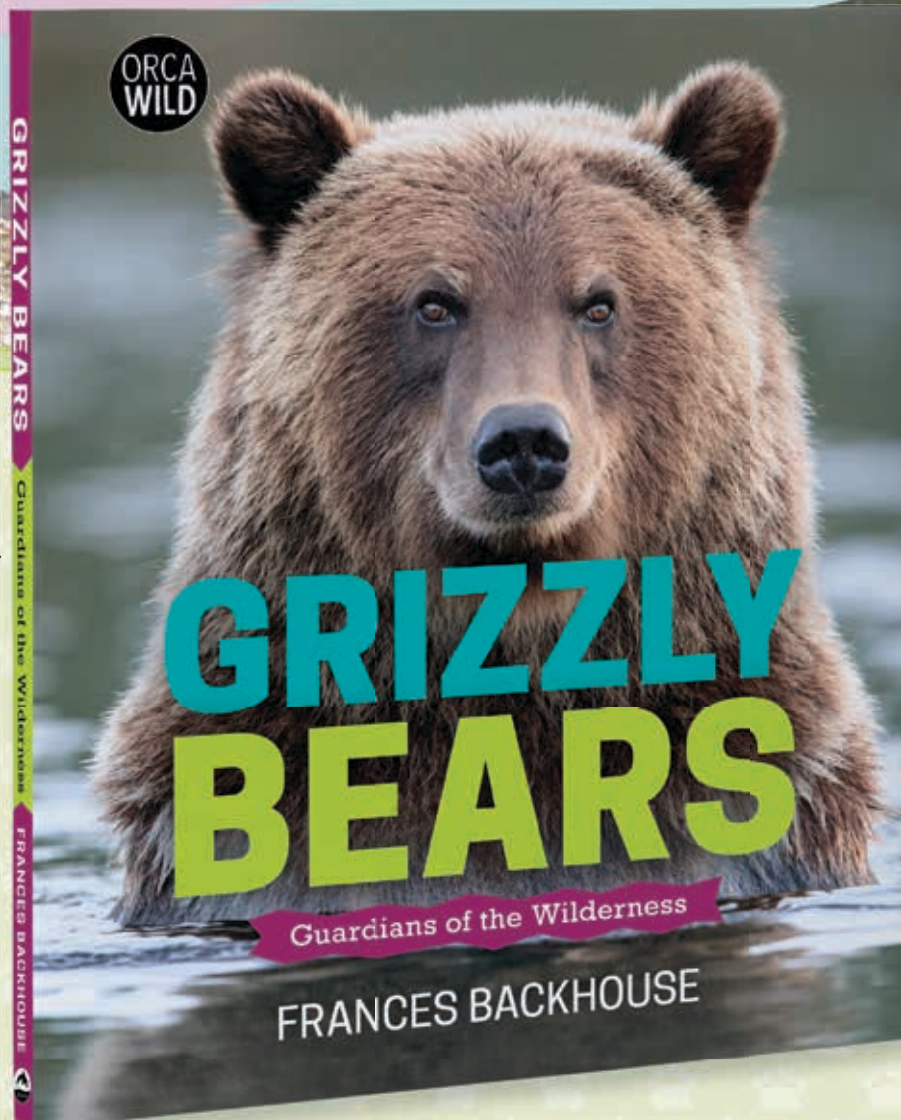


**GEOFF MYNETT**

Stories of settlers on the  
Skeena (1833-1930).  
P 14-15



# BEAR IN THE AREA!



**Get within hugging distance  
of the legendary grizzly**

“This phenomenal book is a must...  
[Readers] won’t be able to resist being  
drawn in. Highly Recommended.”

—*School Library Connection*



## DON'T MISS

“An engaging book that  
will leave readers spouting  
facts about beavers.”

—*School Library Journal*

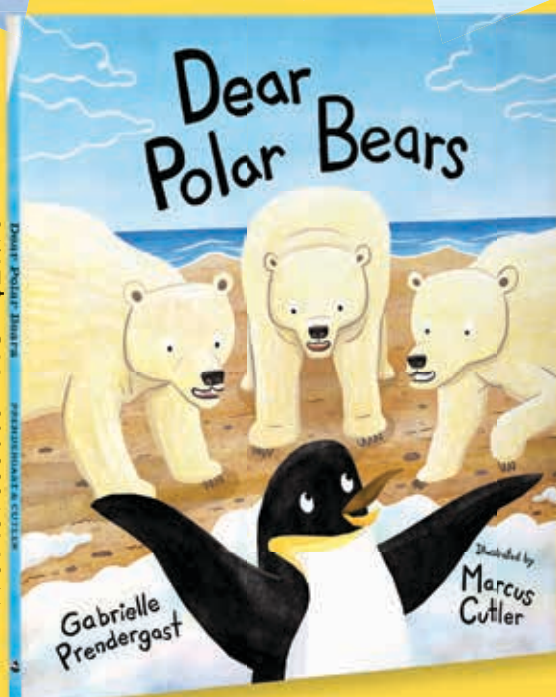
9781459824690 • HC • \$24.95



By environmental journalist  
and award-winning author,  
**Frances Backhouse**



# You're invited to party with the penguins



“Cute, comical, and relatable to anyone who  
has traveled a long distance to visit someone...  
An enjoyable book that can be read over and  
over. Highly Recommended.”

—*CM Reviews*





# BC TOP SELLERS

**Hilary Peach**  
**Thick Skin:**  
**Field Notes from a Sister**  
**in the Brotherhood**  
(Anvil \$22)

**Iona Whishaw**  
**To Track a Traitor**  
(TouchWood \$18.95)

**Jónína Kirton**  
**Standing in a**  
**River of Time**  
(Talonbooks \$19.95)

**Alexander Globe**  
**Gold, Grit, Guns:**  
**Miners on BC's**  
**Fraser River in 1858**  
(Ronsdale \$26.95)

**Mireille Messier**  
**& Anna Bron**  
**No Horses in the House!**  
**The Audacious Life of**  
**Artist Rosa Bonheur**  
(Orca \$21.95)

**Derek Hayes**  
**Incredible Crossings:**  
**The History and Art of**  
**the Bridges, Tunnels and**  
**Inland Ferries That**  
**Connect British Columbia**  
(Harbour \$46.95)

**Diane Borsato &**  
**Kelsey Oseid**  
**Mushrooming:**  
**The Joy of the Quiet Hunt**  
(D&M \$38.95)

**Shelly Adams**  
**Whitewater Cooks**  
**Together Again**  
(Sandhill Book  
Marketing \$36.95)

**Priscilla Omulo**  
**Amplifying Indigenous**  
**Voices in Business:**  
**Indigenization,**  
**Reconciliation, and**  
**Entrepreneurship**  
(Self-Counsel \$26.95)



**Maureen Mayhew**  
**Hand on My Heart:**  
**A Canadian Doctor's**  
**Awakening in Afghanistan**  
(Caitlin \$26)

**Carolyn Whitzman**  
**Clara at the Door with a**  
**Revolver: The Scandalous**  
**Black Suspect, the**  
**Exemplary White Son,**  
**and the Murder That**  
**Shocked Toronto**  
(UBC Press \$24.95)

**Marie Annharte Baker**  
**Miskwagoode**  
(New Star \$16)

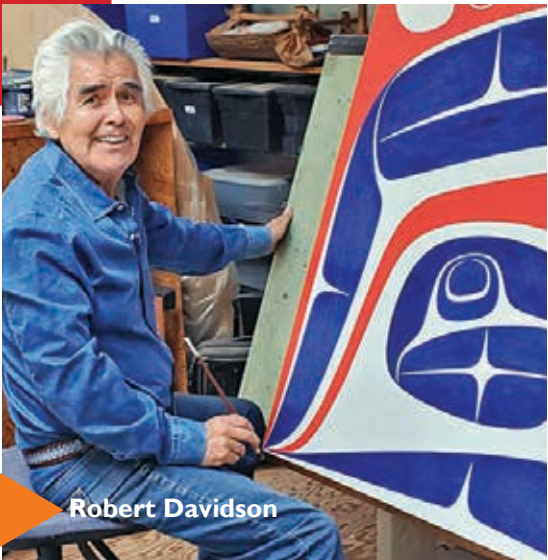
**Robert Pavlis**  
**Plant Science for**  
**Gardeners: Essentials for**  
**Growing Better Plants**  
(New Society \$22.99)

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

# PEOPLE

## HEY! We're alive!

**I**n 1969, **Robert Davidson** famously raised the first totem pole in ninety years on Haida Gwaii (at Masset). As a host of potlaches, a carver of masks and totem poles, and a performer and teacher of traditional Haida songs and dances, Davidson has been one of the driving forces in



Robert Davidson

the resurgence of Haida culture in the aftermath of colonization. “The totem pole was actually a catalyst, to make a statement,” explained Davidson years later. “Hey! We’re alive, and we want to be part of this world.” Now, **Echoes of the Supernatural: The Graphic Art of Robert Davidson** (Figure 1 \$60) is the first retrospective of his work in over 40 years. Written with Davidson’s long-time gallerist **Gary Wyatt**, it includes more than 150 photos of his prints, as well as images of over 50 paintings, painted woven hats, sculptures and jewellery, and dozens of archival photos. Davidson’s Haida name is **Guud San Glans**, which means “Eagle of the Dawn.”

9781773271903

## A PAGE TURNER

**A** young mother loses her husband while still grieving the death of both her parents and spirals into a dark period of pain and rage in **Chelsea Wakelyn’s** debut novel, **What Remains of Elsie Jane** (Dundurn \$24.99). Sam was Elsie Jane’s soulmate, the man she planned to grow old with, but now she is left on her own to raise their two small children who need daily feeding and attention. She feels betrayed by Sam’s secrets and how he died, and she is barely able to cope, let alone make small talk with neighbours or relatives. Wakelyn employs dark humour, especially in describing what Elsie Jane thinks about saying, but doesn’t, to well-meaning well-wishers. Her boss suggests Elsie Jane take a leave of absence. As the lonely days progress, Elsie Jane becomes obsessed with a local murder mystery, begins internet dating (it’s disastrous), and contacts a “space-time wizard” on Craigslist, magically believing it will get her close to Sam. Despite the topic of death, Wakelyn’s compelling portrait of Elsie Jane is full of life, and it’s a page-turner.



Chelsea Wakelyn

9781459750845



Jen Sookfong Lee

# POP goes the culture

**G**rowing up in “a noisy East Vancouver house where there were never enough bathrooms, privacy, or salt and vinegar chips to go around,” **Jen Sookfong Lee**, the youngest of five daughters, was born to parents for whom immigration from China was a recent memory. The whole family turned to popular culture—“the soap operas, the fashion magazines, the celebrity gossip, and the hockey fandom”—to find a way into white culture. Even her grandfather, who lived with them (and who had paid the \$500 head tax in 1913 when he immigrated) listened to CBC radio all day long. Lee’s father listened to **Chuck Berry**, and her mother, who came from Hong Kong, learned to bake “the perfect sponge cake.” Losing her father before she turned 12 years of age, Lee felt like an orphan and turned to reading *Anne of Green Gables* and all **Lucy Maud Montgomery’s** other books. Feeling the pressure to be “the good girl,” Lee fell in love with **Princess Diana** the day she married **Prince Charles** in 1981 and millions watched the wedding on TV, including five-year-old Lee. As she grew older though, Lee realized that Diana had not always been perfect and that neither was she. Lee also learned how white privilege made it easier for some people and difficult for racialized people like her. Pop culture in the Western world betrayed her, as she describes in her memoir, **Superfan: How Pop Culture Broke My Heart** (M&S \$24.95). Yet she admits her relationship with pop culture will always remain, that it is how she cobbles together her own “identities and memberships from the cultural storm.”

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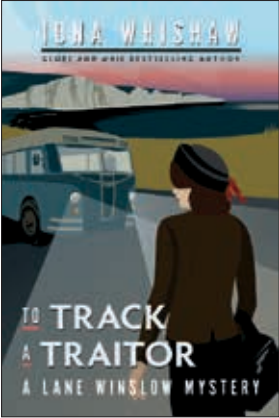
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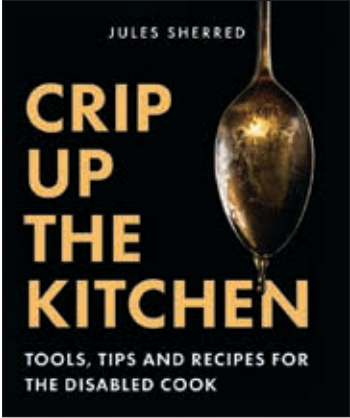


# Spring Forward with New BC Books

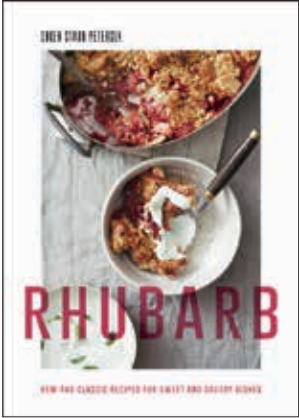
## TOUCHWOOD EDITIONS



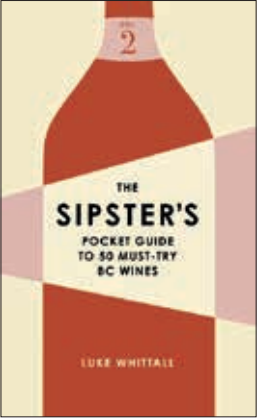
**To Track a Traitor**  
A Lane Winslow Mystery (#10)  
**Iona Whishaw**  
*A transatlantic tale of sibling rivalry, infidelity, and espionage.*  
\$18.95 pb | \$8.99 ebook



**Crip Up the Kitchen**  
Tools, Tips and Recipes for the Disabled Cook  
**Jules Sherred**  
*Recipes to make the kitchen accessible and enjoyable for disabled and neurodivergent cooks.*  
\$35 pb | \$14.99 ebook

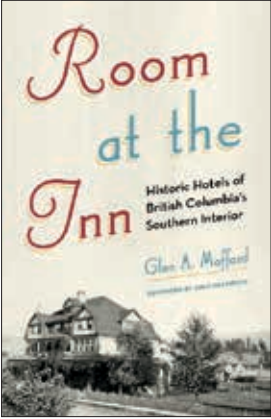


**Rhubarb**  
New and Classic Recipes for Sweet and Savory Dishes  
**Søren Staugaard Petersen**  
*35 savoury & sweet recipes that highlight the versatility of rhubarb.*  
\$25 hc | 15.99 ebook

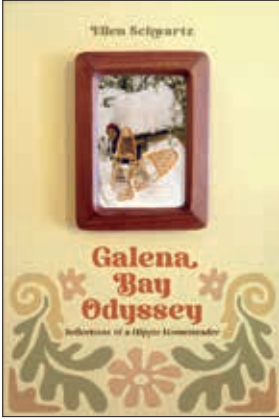


**The Sipster's Pocket Guide to 50 Must-Try BC Wines**  
Volume 2  
**Luke Whittall**  
*The eagerly awaited second volume the Vancouver Sun calls "the perfect go-to guide."*  
\$20.00 pb | 12.99 ebook

## HERITAGE HOUSE



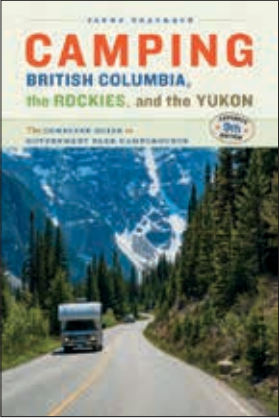
**Room at the Inn**  
Historic Hotels of British Columbia's Southern Interior  
**Glen A. Mofford; forward by Greg Nesteroff**  
*A fully illustrated social history profiling 40 historic hotels and the people who built, ran, and visited them.*  
\$26.95 pb | \$11.99 ebook



**Galena Bay Odyssey**  
Reflections from a Hippie Homesteader  
**Ellen Schwartz**  
*An eye-opening memoir about life on a communal farm in the Kootenays during the 1970s.*  
\$26.95 pb | \$13.99 ebook

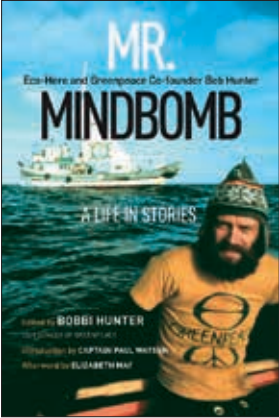


**Frances Barkley**  
Eighteenth-century Seafarer  
**Cathy Converse**  
*A riveting re-telling of Frances Barkley's world travels with her sea captain husband.*  
\$12.95 pb | \$6.99 ebook

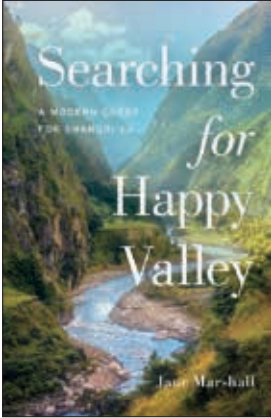


**Camping British Columbia, the Rockies, and the Yukon**  
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**Jayne Seagrave**  
*The bestselling guide to government campgrounds across the region, newly revised and updated.*  
\$29.95 pb | \$13.99 ebook

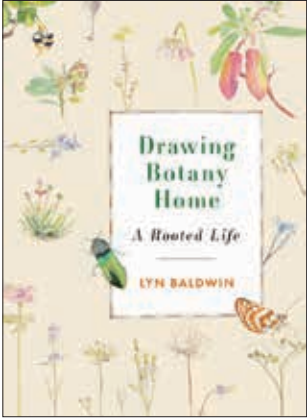
## ROCKY MOUNTAIN BOOKS



**Mr. Mindbomb**  
Eco-hero and Greenpeace Co-founder  
**Bob Hunter**  
**Bobbi Hunter, Paul Watson, Elizabeth May**  
*A collection of essays detailing the achievements of a renowned environmental hero.*  
\$30 pb | \$14.99 ebook



**Searching for Happy Valley**  
A Modern Quest for Shangri-La  
**Jane Marshall**  
*A global quest to comprehend the meaning of "Happy Valley" in Canada, Morocco, and Nepal.*  
\$25 pb | \$12.99 ebook



**Drawing Botany Home**  
A Rooted Life  
**Lyn Baldwin**  
*A beautifully illustrated natural history memoir about growing-up in the southern interior of British Columbia.*  
\$30 pb | \$14.99 ebook



**The Weekender Effect II**  
Fallout  
**Robert Sandford**  
*A pandemic-inspired look at the current and future challenges facing mountain communities in western Canada.*  
\$20 pb | \$9.99 ebook

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# PEOPLE

## Johnny's gold & living on sourdough in the Klondike

Canada's Klondike gold rush of 1896–1899 attracted people from all over the world, including **Johnny Lind** from Ontario. Most suffered in the harsh North; and few made their fortune. But Johnny Lind did and went on to use his new wealth to establish a successful cement company, unlike so many others who gambled away their earnings. Lind also left behind diaries from his Klondike days for generations of the Lind family, as told in **Tales of an Unsung Sourdough: The Extraordinary Klondike Adventures of Johnny Lind** (Page Two \$39.95). Written by Johnny's grandson **Phil Lind** with **Robert Brehl**, these stories shed new light on the events of the gold rush and its hub, Dawson Creek. "Sourdough" was the name miners gave to those who had survived a whole



**THE ICEMAN COMETH:** A fireman after fighting the Dawson City fire on April 26, 1899, when the temperature was forty-five degrees below zero. Fires were a constant hazard in those days due to the log structure of most buildings.

winter in the North, giving them credibility. "Sourdough was the main bread eaten during the gold rush," writes Phil Lind, adding, "a prospector protected their sourdough bread starter by keeping it close to the body, usually in a small container hung around the neck to keep the yeast warm and active." Phil Lind became a collector of Klondike memorabilia, a collection he recently donated to UBC Library including diaries, letters and other personal items from the 40,000 people who joined the historic gold rush. 9781774582930

★  
DURING THE KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH, Dawson City was hailed as the "Paris of the North" for its saloons, gambling halls and especially its theatres. In venues with names like Grand Opera House, Tivoli Theatre and the Orpheum, live theatre flourished until it gave way to cinema when an enterprising theatre manager, **Alexander Pantages**, brought the first films to the city on June 18, 1900. Many decades later, hundreds of boxes of silent films, mostly intact, were found buried in the permafrost when an old hockey arena was being demolished, as described in **Hollywood in the Klondike** (Lost Moose Books \$34.95). Including a good general history of the Klondike Gold Rush, the book links the two cities with icons such as **Robert Service**, **Jack London**, **Charlie Chaplin** and Pantages himself, who went on to control a chain of theatres across North America. 9781550179965



## The art of SOCIAL distancing

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, artist **Adad Hannah** hit the streets of Vancouver to record this moment in time. Within a year he had created 237 video portraits of people coping with the new reality of social distancing. His work was the focus of an exhibit at the Royal BC Museum, which included this skateboarder wearing a mask. Now the imagery can be seen in **Between Us: Adad Hannah's Social Distancing Portraits** (RBCM \$40). 9780772680907

## Ivory towers & London pubs, an education

**Carellin Brooks**, a UBC lecturer and author of four books, has published her debut collection of poetry called **Learned** (BookHug \$20). It's set primarily in the 1990s when Brooks was at Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship (one of the world's richest and most prestigious scholarship programs), during which she learned as much from London's BDSM pubs as she did in the ivory towers of academe. Her explorations span the body as much as the mind, and there's vulnerability in these poems, like the verses about a photo shoot for a media interview before Brooks sets off to England: "Black leather biker jacket shrugged over, / thick hide, weight of comfort. *Protect me.*" And boldness when Brooks asserts her political side wearing a bawdy T-shirt: "*Mr. President I murmur Please / Reconsider your stance / Don't Ask Don't Tell / His weary hand in mine.*" After she earns her PhD in Modern Foreign Languages, Brooks returns to Vancouver: "Soaked stucco, builders' rush / to erect the cheapest, California-style, / razed temperate rainforest" and the city's tainted drug overdose epidemic, that makes her wonder, "*Can I save anyone, / least of all / myself? / Open question.*" 9781771667876

## Petroglyphs on Gabriola

Explorers of Gabriola Island seeking the historic petroglyphs created by ancestors of the Snuneymuxw First Nation can now learn the stories behind the rock art in **Snuneymuxw History Written in Places and Spaces: Ancestors' Voices—An Echo in Time** (New Society \$15). Written by elder and traditional knowledge keeper **Geraldine Manson** the booklet has been produced through a partnership between Snuney-



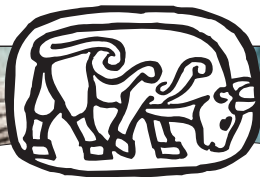
**Geraldine Manson** and petroglyph, Gabriola Island

muxw First Nation, the Gabriola Historical and Museum Society, and New Society Publishers. Manson shares sacred knowledge passed down through Snuneymuxw oral history. This unique work gives an overview of the many Gabriola petroglyphs as well as other sites of cultural significance and traditional Hul'q'umi'num place names on the island. 9780865719859

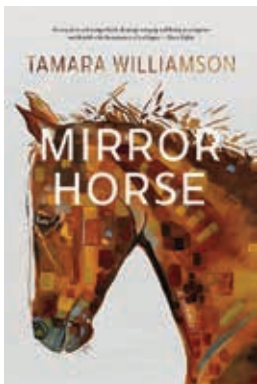


**Carellin Brooks**





## New books from Douglas & McIntyre



**MIRROR HORSE**  
*A Memoir*  
**TAMARA WILLIAMSON**

Dave Bidini calls this literary memoir by indie musician Tamara Williamson: “an exquisite and unique book about growing up and living in an equine world, told with the intimacy of a whisper.”

**MEMOIR | \$26.95**  
PAPERBACK • 272 PGS • 6" x 9" • 16 B&W PHOTOS  
978-1-77162-349-0 • APRIL



**JAJ: A Haida Manga**  
**MICHAEL NICOLL YAHGULANAAS**

With gorgeous imagery, artist Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas brings to life the tumultuous history of first contact between Europeans and Indigenous peoples and the early colonization by the Europeans of the northern West Coast.

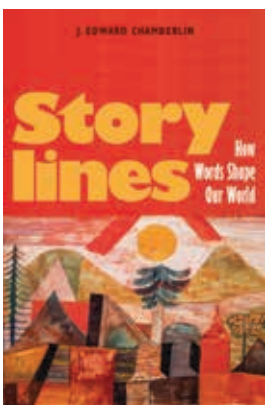
**GRAPHIC NOVEL/INDIGENOUS | \$34.95**  
CLOTH WITH DUST JACKET • 132 PGS • 8" x 10" • 100+ COLOUR  
ILLUSTRATIONS • 978-1-77162-353-7 • MAY



**THE MORNING BELL BRINGS  
THE BROKEN HEARTED**  
*A Novel*  
**JENNIFER MANUEL**

Exploring the intricacies of power, culture and emotion when a non-Indigenous person moves to an Indigenous community, this story is as captivating and perceptive as her bestselling, award-winning novel *The Heaviness of Things That Float*.

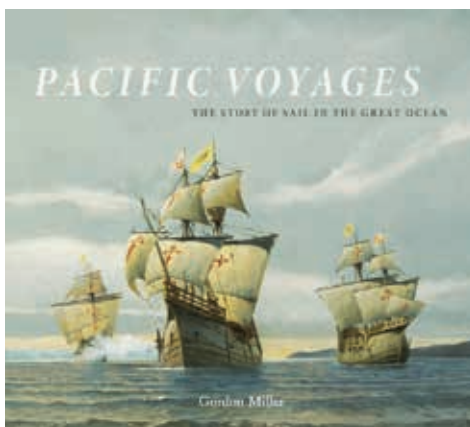
**FICTION | \$24.95**  
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**STORYLINES**  
*How Words Shape Our World*  
**J. EDWARD CHAMBERLIN**

A brilliant and timely exploration of the power of stories and songs—from both the distant past and today's news—counters despair and disillusionment with hope and possibility. **ARTS & LETTERS | \$26.95**

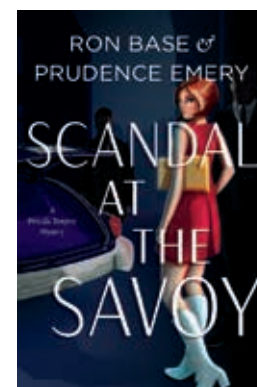
PAPERBACK • 208 PGS • 5.5" x 8.5" • 978-1-77162-351-3 • MAY



**PACIFIC VOYAGES**  
*The Story of Sail in the Great Ocean*  
**GORDON MILLER**

Historian and artist Gordon Miller is known for his ability to incorporate historically accurate detail into his stunning paintings. In *Pacific Voyages*, he pays tribute to the little wooden ships that first ventured across the great Pacific. **HISTORY/ART | \$59.95**

CLOTH WITH DUST JACKET • 264 PGS • 11.5" x 10" • 75 COLOUR  
ILLUSTRATIONS • 978-1-77162-347-6 • JUNE



**SCANDAL AT THE SAVOY**  
*A Priscilla Tempest Mystery, Book 2*  
**RON BASE AND PRUDENCE EMERY**

The rich and famous are converging on the iconic Savoy Hotel in the swinging '60s—including a Broadway producer with anger issues, a demanding Indian raja, and a gorgeous film star with kinky predilections. All is as it should be—until the murder of a showgirl threatens to scandalize the hotel.

**MYSTERY | \$19.95**  
PAPERBACK • 320 PGS • 6" x 9" • 978-1-77162-345-2 • MARCH

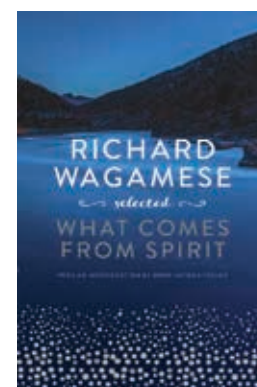
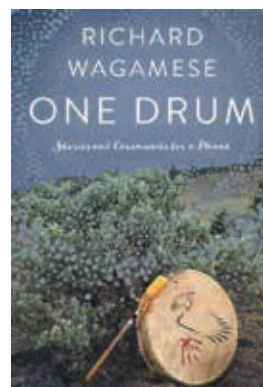
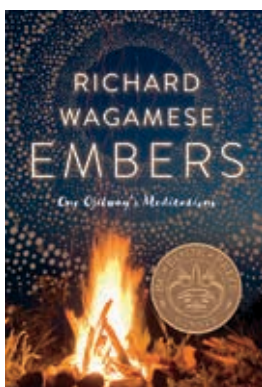
### FEATURED BACKLIST SHORT WRITINGS BY RICHARD WAGAMESE

Richard Wagamese was a writer of breathtaking honesty and inspiration. Always striving to be a better, stronger person, Wagamese shared his journey through writing, encouraging others to do the same.

**EMBERS**  
*One Ojibway's Meditations*  
\$18.85 • PAPERBACK • 176 PGS • 5.5" x 8.5" • 978-1-77162-133-5

**ONE DRUM**  
*Stories and Ceremonies for a Planet*  
\$18.85 • PAPERBACK • 192 PGS • 5.5" x 8.5" • 978-1-77162-229-5

**RICHARD WAGAMESE SELECTED**  
*What Comes From Spirit*  
with an introduction by DREW HAYDEN TAYLOR  
\$24.95 • HARDCOVER • 176 PGS • 5.5" x 8.5" • 978-1-77162-275-2



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# SHORT STORIES

## REVIEW

All the Bears Sing: Stories  
by Harold Macy (Harbour \$24.95)

BY TREVOR CAROLAN

Spend time with working folks in the towns of upper Vancouver Island or BC's interior and you'll recognize the characters in **Harold Macy's** unexpectedly fun collection of stories—men and women who still get their hands dirty when they work, usually in tough jobs and marginal, resource-based economies. Or, if you've yet to discover the natural grandeur and salty tongues in the bush, then **All the Bears Sing** will serve you like a Lonely Planet *guide* to community life where conventional wage-earning is always a good idea, but typically in short supply, and where dynamite-blasting, heli-logging, smoke-jumping with summer fire-fight crews, and bottle and junk collecting from the dump in winter endure as local employment options.

Women who've put up with all the crap that men and life can throw at them, old hippies, young stump-farm migrants from the city scuffling to live rural on soil that's hard to till—Macy's tales aren't necessarily about lovable losers or roughnecks who eat nails for breakfast, although you'll meet a few. He writes what used to be called "yarns:" stories that sound so believable they might even be true. There are 23 of them in this collection, ranging in the 2-, 3-, 8- or 10-page length; just don't expect the cultivated, ideologically approved fiction that gets nominated for the usual CanLit awards. Macy's style is less predictable, yet familiar. Written in simple language with twists, occasionally gripping plots, the contingency of urgent decisions, and told with surprising effect from either male and female character points of view, these are "entertainments." That's not to dismiss the form: some of **Graham Greene's** books and stories that rank among the finest literature of the 20th century he called entertainments.

The skill in making small-town talk work is to bring quirky characters alive in the reader's mind, so that in an ordinary sense even when their experiences don't make sense, they still have a way of pointing to a deeper truth. **Raymond Carver**, the Yakima, Washington, storyteller who revitalized American fiction from its New York-centered neuroses during the late seventies/early eighties understood this too, pioneering his "K-Mart Realism." A gentle guy who had to fight his way through life, this was Carver's honest response to South America's "Magic Realism." His version was tales from the tired late-night shoppers you see in the glare of US discount stores, people who missed out on the dream, people with trouble coming down. What Harold Macy delivers is a kind of homegrown "Lucky Buck Mart Realism"; the kind you find in BC's struggling mill-towns, where nobody passes the day-olds without a long look. His characters don't lug around a grievance that they've been wronged somewhere—they bump along with fate and the ordinariness of their limited futures. If there's magic it's in a kid's laugh, a lucky break, a moment of faith, or in the humble joys of what

J.S. VISUALS PHOTO

# Small town life

## everyday sacraments

**Harold Macy's** stories of rural characters are told in simple language while pointing to deeper truths.

Buddhism calls "everyday sacraments"—loyalty in a marriage, the constancy of old friendships, good neighbours. That's the real magic Macy understands.

**Bill Kittredge**, another Cascadia-affiliated writer, has noted that as a writer if you're not flirting with sentimentality, you're not in the ball park. Macy's stories sometimes flit near that candle flame, but that doesn't mean nostalgia for a romanticized past with the moral narrowing that can bring. Smart artists know nostalgia never goes out of fashion. It reinvents itself a step away from the age confronting it. Macy's Vancouver Island isn't too far off **Jack Hodgins'** fabled territory. People complain, help each other out, indulge in superbly rendered platitudes during family gatherings as in "House, Waving Goodbye," where no one's life has turned

out quite as hoped for by a widowed mom and grandmother. Even the title story itself is a bittersweet hymn to hermits and off-the-grid loners that the Courtenay-Merville area has always attracted, including a loopy old geezer that the story narrator says he'd "been carrying in my heart the past week." There's a glimpse here of the realizations that might come from long, solitary retreats along the Tsolum River in close company with wild critters that pad around in frozen winter without any shoes or socks on.

"Gelignite," one of the collection's best, offers insight into why an Okanagan farm-raised wife might simply drive off one day after thirty years of marriage, encounter a stranger in a Princeton pub, and venture even further. You can hear echoes of **Jane Rule** and **Anne Cameron** in her voice when she says, "How often do you get another chance?"

The bush is another country. Macy's known it forever. "Unclipped" and "Into the Silverthrone Caldera" depict the shattering side of life when horrendous job-site accidents or catastrophic mash-ups crash like lightning, destroying everything utterly. Taut moral fables like "Donkey Shame" and "Ditch Clothes" depict paying-it-forward justice when The Other finally arrives in a strange reversal of fate reminiscent of **Alice Munro** at the controls.

The book's one long-form contribution, "Overburdened," relates a tale of Gulf Island migrant newcomers, land developers and the mechanics of sub-soil resource "harvesting." Achieving moments of real narrative sophistication, there's plot and a mystery that's too BC to be purely invented, but what a fine yarn it is. Unless you've lived your entire life in downtown Vancouver, everyone in BC has a little bit of country in them, don't they? That's just enough to savour these welcome accounts from a wily storyteller who knows what it's all about.

9781990776007

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



# PILOTS

## REVIEW

**In Our Youth:  
The Lives, Adventures, and Sacrifices of  
Early Canadian Flyers by Angus Scully**  
(Heritage House \$29.95)

BY GRAHAM CHANDLER

*"He possesses resolution, initiative, presence of mind, sense of humour, judgement; is alert, cheerful, optimistic, happy-go-lucky, generally a good fellow, and frequently lacking in imagination."*

**S**o stated an article published in the September 1918 issue of *The Lancet*, then as now one of the world's foremost medical journals. It was written by two officers of Britain's Royal Air Force who were discussing the characteristics desired in a pilot. The article added, "It appears necessary for the well-being of the average pilot that he indulge in a really riotous evening at least once or twice a month." In short, "The type of fellow wanted as a pilot ... is the clean bred chap with lots of the devil in him."

Nanaimo-based retired educator **Angus Scully**, who taught history for 30 years has come up with **In Our Youth: The Lives, Adventures, and Sacrifices of Early Canadian Flyers**, a super-sleuthed book stuffed with little-known facts about early Canadian pilots, focusing on the 15 years between the Wright Brothers' historical flight and Armistice Day 1918. He does it in a creative way starting with a single photograph of 29 men standing in front of a Curtiss JN-3 biplane at the Curtiss Flying School—students, instructors and mechanics—in July 1916 in Long Branch, Ontario. Fortunately, the men's names were included so Scully set about painstakingly learning the details of each of their respective stories through old newspaper articles, diaries, museum documents and government files.

Scully's digging paid off as he found much material to illustrate what these young men were all about. There are surprises. For example, who knew that writing poetry was a common pastime among these early flyers? In 1918, the British pulled off a daring raid on the port of Zeebrugge in occupied Belgium. Pilot **Paul Bewsher** was an observer on the lumbering Handley-Page bomber flown by experienced pilot **Roy Allan**. On the return, an engine failure forced them to ditch. Allan died, leaving Bewsher devastated, and shortly afterwards he wrote a poem to his pilot, beginning with the lines: "Dear Roy! Who saved



**Lester B. Pearson**, instructor of aerial navigation in WWI. **William Faulkner** (right) a cadet at the School of Military Aeronautics at the University of Toronto in 1918.



## WANTED: A chap with lots of the devil in him.

Many of the wild fly-boys of World War One landed big, some as Hollywood actors, and Nobel Prize winners for peace and literature, and one even became prime minister.

my life and lost your own / In that dark dreadful night above the sea / When you talked reassuringly to me / As we sailed lower—though you must have known / How great our danger was ... then I was thrown...."

Flying was a new adventure to these young men, and flying in combat had a glamour that was denied to the troops in the trenches. It was also dangerous: the average life expectancy of a combat pilot in 1917 was 69 flying hours

(roughly 30–35 flying missions). Yet despite this terrible mortality rate, for many the call to fly was irresistible.

A good percentage of these pioneering "flyboys," as they were known, went on to distinction. **Roland Michener** became Governor General of Canada. **Mitchell Hepburn** became Premier of Ontario. **James Forrestal**, one of the Americans who trained to be pilots in Canada, became US Secretary of the Navy and Secretary of Defence. Other

Canadian-trained pilots included novelist **William Faulkner**, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature, and actor **Richard Arlen**, who starred in *Wings*, the first motion picture to win an Academy Award.

Probably the most famous Canadian who undertook wartime pilot training with RAF Canada at that time was another Nobel Prize winner, **Lester B. "Mike" Pearson**. Following an initial stint with the army medical corps, he transferred to the RAF for pilot training in 1918. It wasn't to be. He survived a training crash and then was severely injured when hit by a London bus during a blackout. However, those accidents didn't seem to be omens of any sort. Pearson won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 for his work in helping create the first United Nations peacekeeping force, and he was Prime Minister of Canada from 1963 to 1968.

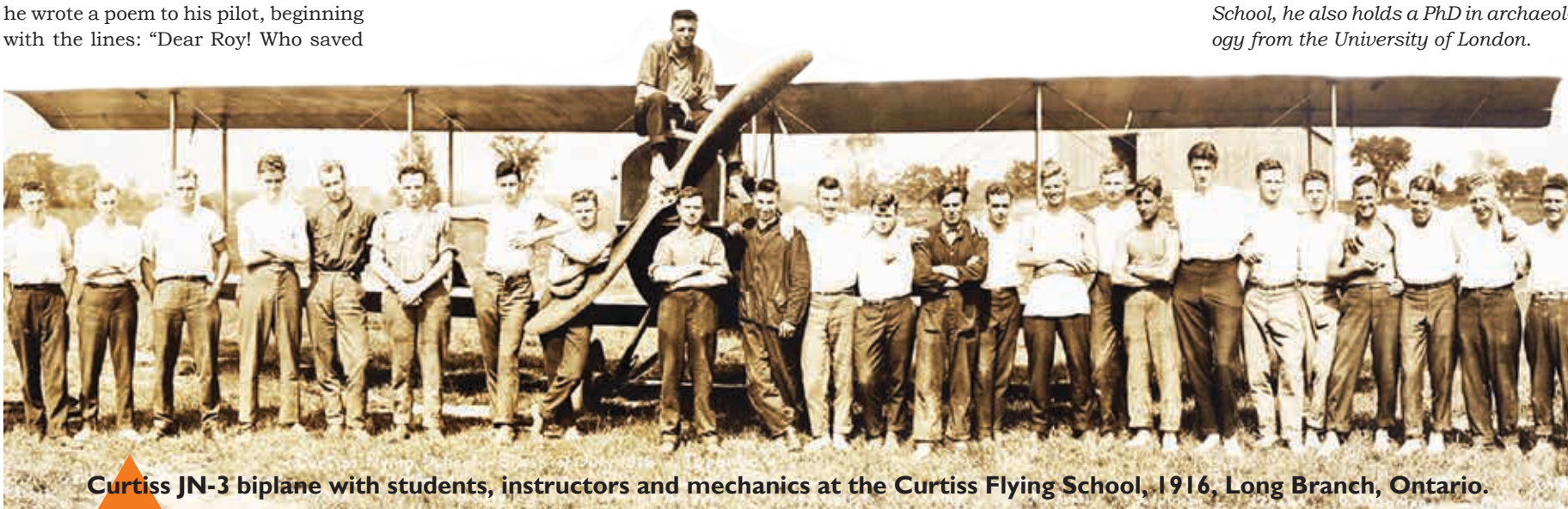


ANGUS SCULLY BRINGS TO LIFE SOME OF THE worst fears of the early pilots. One is the mystery of what was then called the *spinning nose dive*, now just called a *spin*. Put simply, a spin is a nose-down, out-of-control, ever-faster spiral dive. Until 1916 it was considered a death sentence. Then one Royal Navy **Lieutenant Parke** recovered from a spin by inadvertently doing everything wrong. The initial urge was to pull back on the control stick, whereas counter-intuitively, Parke's recovery started with full-forward stick. Ever since, spin recovery is a standard part of all pilot training curricula.

Postwar, *In Our Youth* delves into how these young men became entrepreneurs and pioneers integral to the birth of commercial aviation in Canada in the 1920s and 1930s—like **Osborne Orr**, **Major Earl Godfrey** and **George Trim**. **George Taylor** was a founder and the first president of the Aerial League of Canada in 1919, which had the goal of applying aviation to business. The first flight across the Rockies, aerial mapping, and the formation of the Pacific Aviation Company in 1920 (BC's first commercial aviation venture) are among the detailed.

An excellent selection of vintage photos is liberally sprinkled throughout. For readers whose appetites are whetted and are excited about learning more, Scully provides a thorough bibliography and source listing. 9781772034219

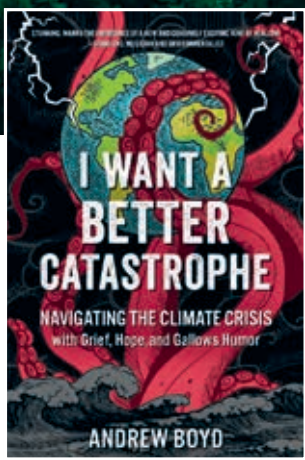
*Vancouver-based writer Graham Chandler writes frequently on aviation topics. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School, he also holds a PhD in archaeology from the University of London.*



**Curtiss JN-3 biplane with students, instructors and mechanics at the Curtiss Flying School, 1916, Long Branch, Ontario.**



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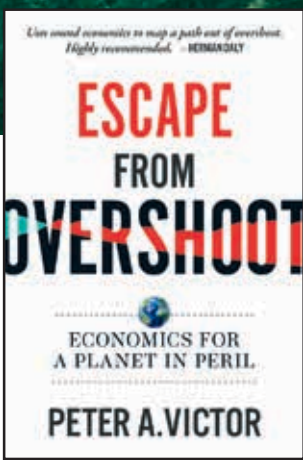
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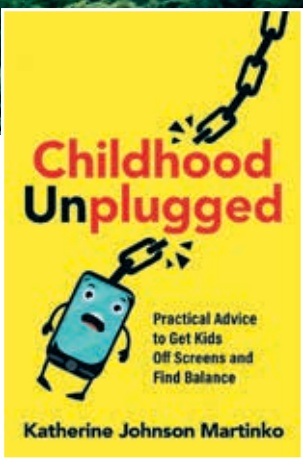
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# SUPERFAN

**JEN SOOKFONG LEE**

**HOW POP CULTURE  
BROKE MY HEART**

**ON SALE NOW**





Veronica Strong-Boag’s  
impressive biography ex-  
plores the flawed legacy of  
a pioneering BC feminist.

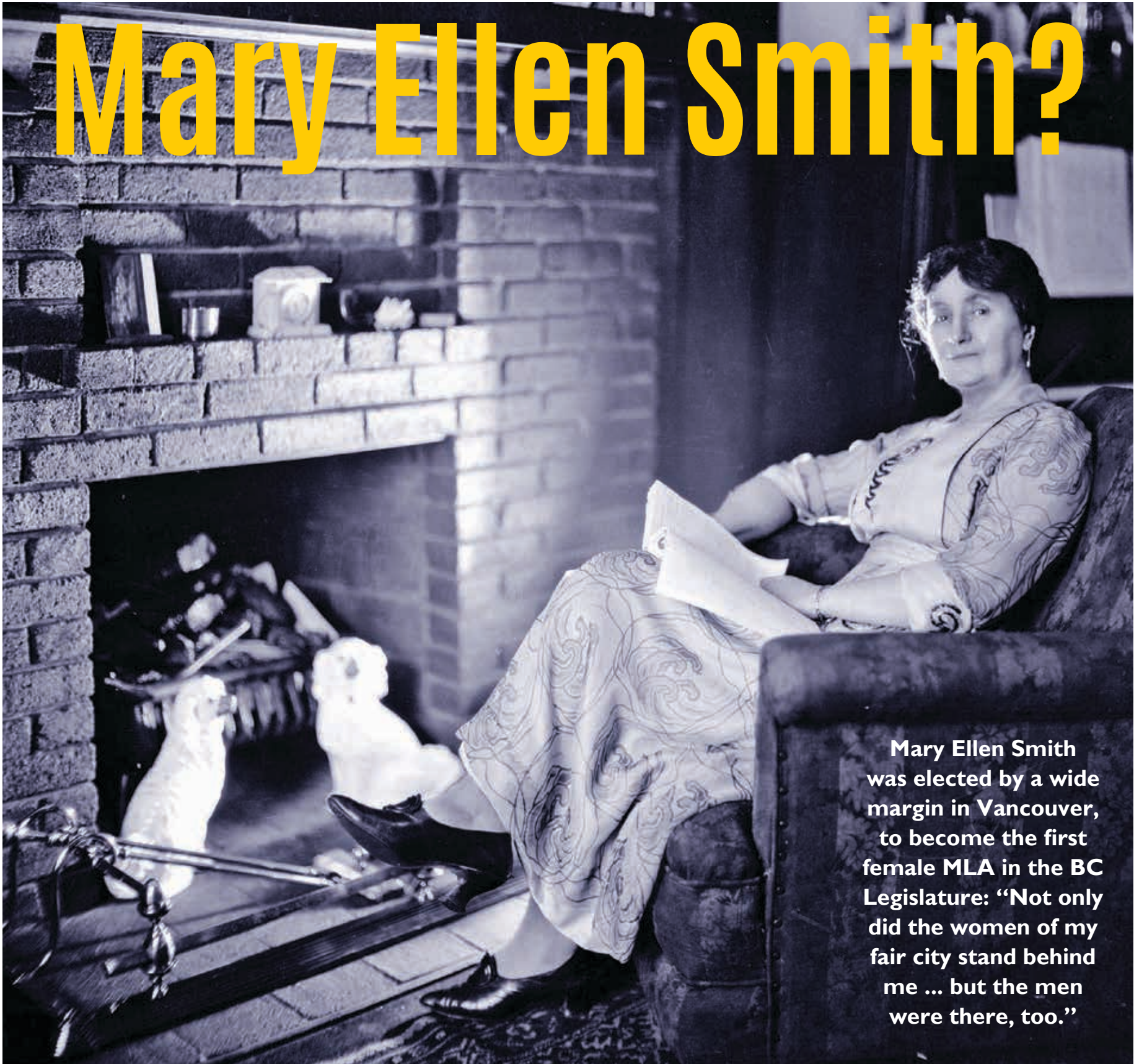
**W**hile **Mary Ellen Spear Smith** was a rough contemporary of Eugene Debs, an American firebrand whose life engaged many of the issues that defined Smith’s life and career, she would not, we can assume, have unequivocally endorsed the sentiment of the quote above. Much of Smith’s life was spent on a concerted effort to rise from the working class to middle-class gentility. And yet this complicated and imperfect woman also emerges in **Veronica Strong-Boag’s** biography **A Liberal-Labour Lady** as an important pioneering advocate for women and workers, so long as they were “white.”

Like most of us, Smith “contained multitudes,” and she was perfectly capable all her life of holding positions that to 21st century readers will seem wildly inconsistent, some even repulsively racist. Together with too much of the province’s labour movement in her era, Smith supported Asian exclusion and ignored the oppressed and colonized situation of the province’s Indigenous people.

However, Smith was a significant figure in Canadian history, campaigning for women’s suffrage, mothers’ pensions and other pro-women reforms

# What Happened to

# Mary Ellen Smith?



Mary Ellen Smith was elected by a wide margin in Vancouver, to become the first female MLA in the BC Legislature: “Not only did the women of my fair city stand behind me ... but the men were there, too.”



while becoming BC's first female MLA, and the British Empire's first female cabinet minister (albeit without portfolio, staff or stipend).

One of this remarkable biography's chief virtues is that it resists the temptation to flatten the contradictions in Smith's life or to explain them away. What emerges is a magisterial study of an important and too-long ignored figure in BC history, a masterclass in how to account for our bewildering past and present.

As a child of a miner and then a miner's wife, Smith saw first-hand the destructive impact of 19th-century capitalism on the workers who were her neighbours and family members in the hard-scrabble coal towns of northern England and then in the lethal BC coalfields around Nanaimo after she and her husband, **Ralph Smith**, moved to Canada in 1892. In the north of England, the young couple had already become involved in Methodist church life and the populist, co-operative projects and politics often associated with dissenting churches in 19th-century Britain. Never advocates for armed rebellion, or of militant class-conscious struggle, the Smiths saw the cross-class cooperation promoted by the Liberal-Labour tradition as the way forward for workers, and they both brought their enthusiasm for that tradition with them to Canada. Unsurprisingly, their lack of militance cost the Smiths some of the support they might have hoped for from unionized workers, but it won them support in their respective political careers from middle-class reformers.

In Canada, Ralph became involved



Veronica Strong-Boag

in BC's Legislative Assembly, where he had renewed his political life after a few years of post-Ottawa business ventures. Her victory, as previously noted, made history, as did her brief stint as a provincial cabinet member.

As Strong-Boag observes, "In both rejecting and reinforcing injustices, this flawed but extraordinary woman deserves far more than canonization or condemnation." Strong-Boag, an award-winning historian associated with the Social Justice Institute and the Department of Educational Studies at UBC, and the departments of History and Gender Studies at UVic, sets out in this book to provide her readers with enough context and detail to make our own assessments of Smith's mixed legacy. She brings to this task impressive strengths, both as a researcher and as a literary portrait painter. Her account of Mary Ellen's and Ralph Smith's personalities, and the political milieus in which they lived, reveals a sense of nuance and character worthy of a novelist.

We read history to see where we've been and to plot our course into the future. This thoughtful and informative study offers substantial help on both counts. It will be of interest to contemporary feminists and union organizers, to general readers and to fans of BC history.

Highly recommended.

9780774867252

*Tom Sandborn lives and writes on unceded Indigenous territory in Vancouver. He welcomes your feedback and story tips at [tos65@telus.net](mailto:tos65@telus.net)*

“Veronica Strong-Boag brings to this task impressive strengths, both as a researcher and as a literary portrait painter.”

in his union and in electoral politics, while Mary Ellen, busy raising five children, continued her lifelong pattern of hard work as a volunteer, serving in her church, the YWCA and many other women's reform-oriented groups. She accompanied Ralph to Ottawa when he was elected to Parliament and glittered in the capital's social scene during the first decade of the 20th century, be-

coming close to the Liberal Prime Minister Sir **Wilfrid Laurier** and his wife **Zoe**. While moving toward the political centre along with Ralph, Mary Ellen still advocated for women's suffrage and higher wages for women workers, as well as for backward and destructive policies like Asian exclusion and eugenics. After Ralph's death in 1917, she ran in the byelection to replace him

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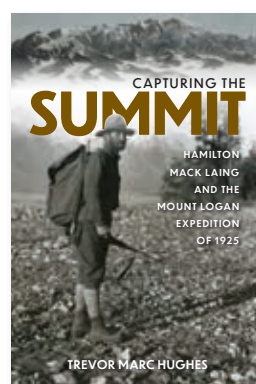
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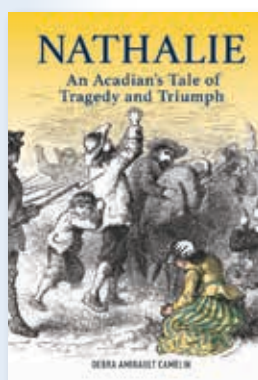
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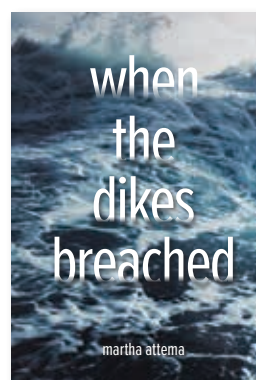
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The Descendants  
by Robert Chursinoff  
(Nightwood Editions \$24.95)

BY VALERIE GREEN

In July 1998, two teenagers are running away from a tragedy involving Hells Angels bikers. Jonah Seeger and Ruby Samarodin had played together as youngsters in the Kootenays despite coming from two very different backgrounds. When they reached their teens and met again at school, they instantly fell in love. The first sentence in **Robert Chursinoff's** debut novel, **The Descendants**, describes Jonah's feelings for Ruby as "*when you love someone with the force of an atomic bomb...*"

It's a passionate opening that draws the reader in immediately. But their love is doomed.

*The Descendants* is a captivating story of love, family trauma and loss set against the background of the complex history of BC's Doukhobors (the pacifist Christian group that emigrated from Russia to Canada in 1899, many members of which eventually settled in Grand Forks and southeastern BC's Slocan Valley).

Chursinoff's characters are compelling as they struggle to re-evaluate their pacifist roots, their long-misunderstood religious beliefs and the actions of the Sons of Freedom sect (a.k.a the Freedomites a small, breakaway group of Doukhobors who protested through public nudity and arson). The days of the struggles between the pacifist Community Doukhobors and the Sons of Freedom were over by the late 1990s, but the painful memories remain for Jonah and Ruby, who are suffering the consequences of their earlier Doukhobor ancestors.

The structure of Chursinoff's story is unusual. Not only is he writing a fictional story of love and hope, but he also begins each section with a non-fiction paragraph or two about the Doukhobor's complicated past. This helps the reader understand his characters a little better. There is reference to the original Doukhobor leader—**Peter V. Verigin**, a pacifist Doukhobor—and how he arrived in Canada from Russia and later mysteriously died in 1935 in an explosion on a train, a mystery that was never completely solved.

Jonah and Ruby feel the reverberations of some of these historical happenings—especially Jonah, whose mother is still affected by the humiliation of being a member of the Sons of Freedom. When he drives Ruby in his Honda Civic, screeching around mountain road curves as they get closer to home, Jonah wonders what he has done to his family: "Was more shame on its way to his mother, already shamed because of her Sons of Freedom family?"

# DOUKHOBOR LOVERS IN A DANGEROUS TIME

Descendants of a pacifist Christian sect must deal with love, family trauma, loss and a violent biker gang.

For how long could he and Ruby Samarodin just drive a loop through the West Kootenay towns?"

This all makes for an exciting start to the story and encourages the reader to want to know more.

The characters in *The Descendants* are clearly depicted, showing the author's compassion for each one of them. There is Virginia (Ruby's mother), a pious

stalwart of the traditional pacifist Doukhobors who only wants the best for her daughter; Sharon (Jonah's mother), who is trying to put her painful Sons of Freedom past behind her,

especially anything that involved stripping naked and burning down buildings; Sharon's brother, Yuri, who who pays the ultimate price; Ruby, the musician, who re-

turns to her Doukhobor roots in 2005 as a drug addict; Jonah, who returns from Iraq with post-traumatic stress disorder after serving as a Marine and losing a limb; and Sasha, the child Ruby left behind and lied to Jonah about his parentage.

Added into this mix are added two biker gang brothers, Michael (Swanny) and Clayton, with whom scores must eventually be settled in order for everyone to move forward.

Ruby's rock 'n' roll music, drug, sex and alcohol scenes are explicit and painfully raw, taking the reader into the drama of her life after she ran away to pursue her musical dream.

Chursinoff also depicts the frightening scenes of Jonah's time as a soldier in Iraq, which has left him with PTSD—where even the sound of fireworks exploding or a helicopter flying overheard instantly takes him back to being in the midst of battle and seeing his friends die.

The story swings back and forth in time between 1995 and 2005—which sometimes makes for a hard read. It might have been better written chronologically from the beginning of the story to the end. Nonetheless, it works this way too. All the pieces cleverly fit together, and questions are eventually answered—making for a powerful ending.

*The Descendants* also describes many similarities between the ill-treatment of the children of the Sons of Freedom, brutally taken from their parents and sent to a prison-like school, with what happened to Indigenous children sent to Residential Schools. Highlighting this lesser known instance of cultural genocide makes this book valuable.

Chursinoff is more than qualified to write this story, having grown up in a Doukhobor community himself. There is a strong essence of hope in his final paragraph on the Doukhobor history when he writes:

"Today there are an estimated 120,000 Doukhobors and their descendants living primarily in Canada, the United States, Russia and the Caucasus region. Many have forgotten their roots and their culture. Yet many more are rediscovering their Doukhobor identity each and every day."

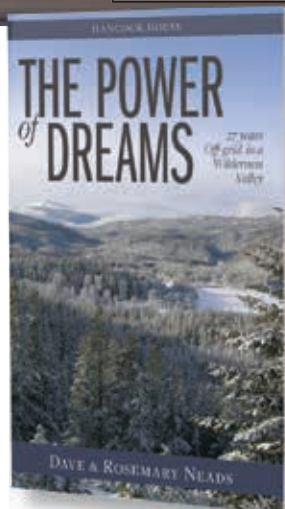
Chursinoff, a musician who has been a drummer for **Tegan and Sara**, Australian pop star **Ben Lee** and the **Be Good Tanyas**, has proven that he has a talent for writing, too, with this rich and exciting novel. 9780889714403

Valerie Green's most recent book is *Providence*, the first title in her historical fiction, four-book series called *The McBride Chronicles* covering six generations of a BC family from the 1840s to present day. [valeriegreenauthor.com](http://valeriegreenauthor.com)

"Today there are an estimated 120,000 Doukhobors and their descendants living primarily in Canada, the United States, Russia and the Caucasus region." —Robert Chursinoff

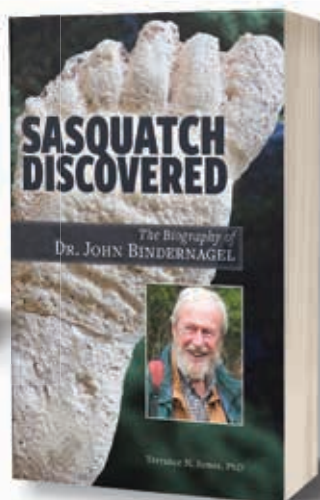


# BC STORIES FROM BC AUTHORS



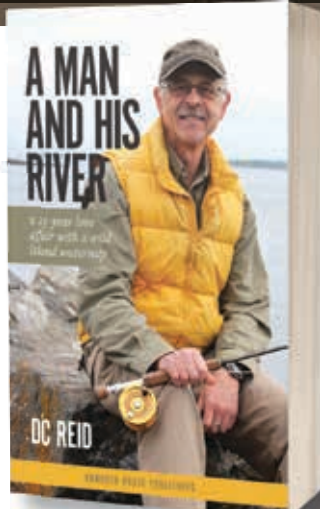
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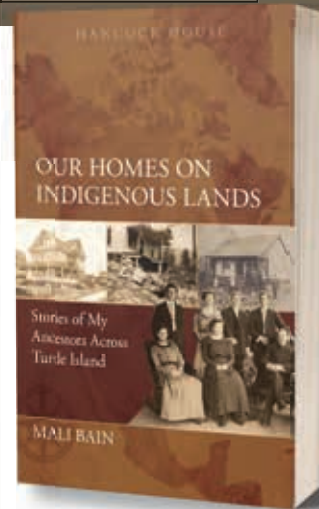
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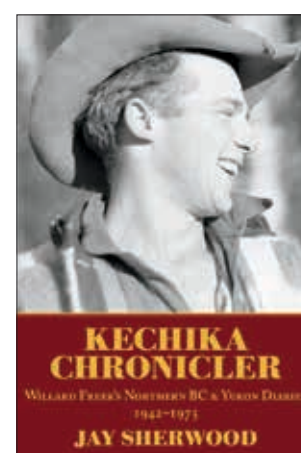
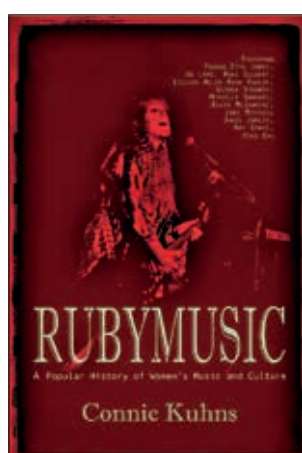
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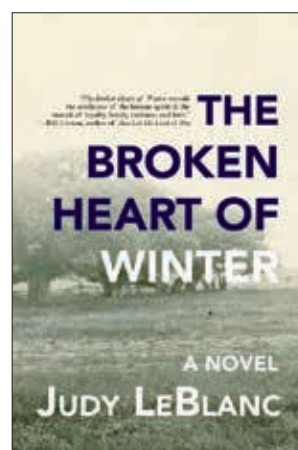
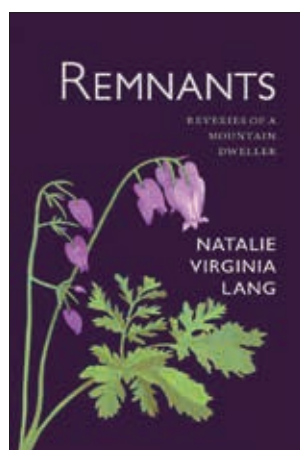
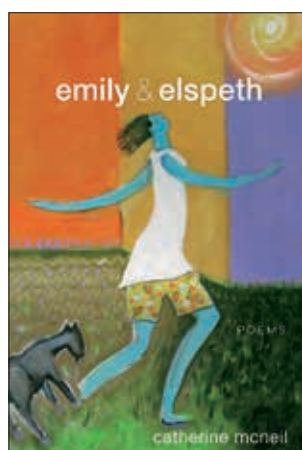
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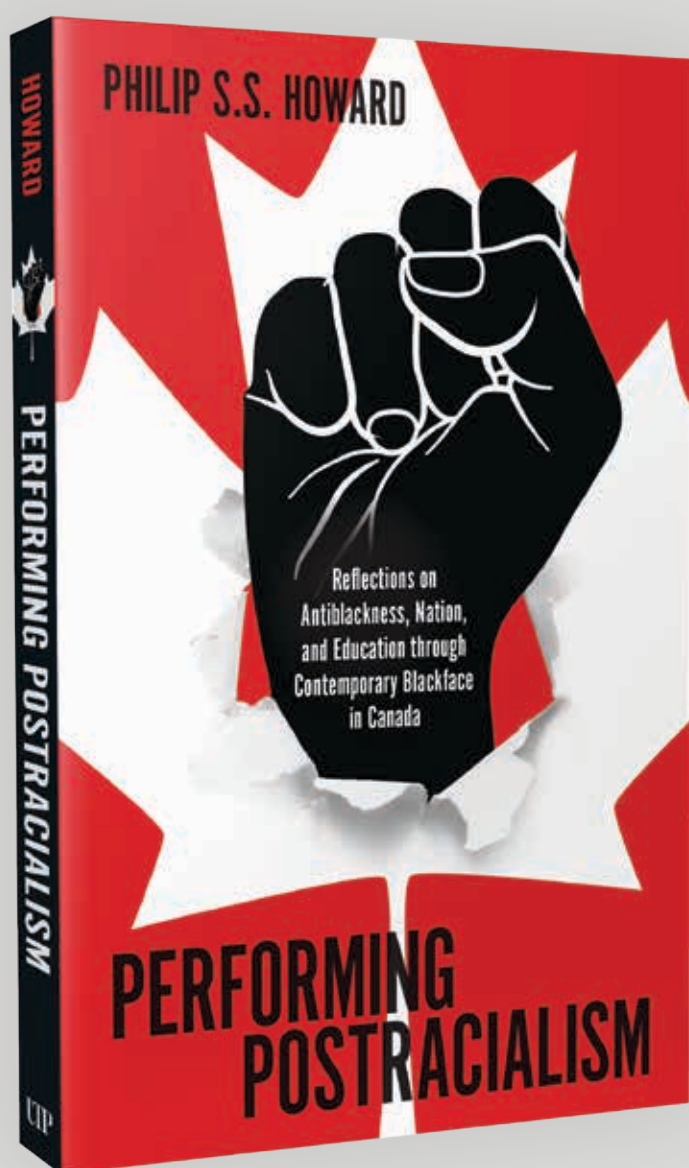
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HISTORY

REVIEW

# Pioneers, prospectors, painters & pastors

Stories and struggles of the weird and  
wild settlers of 19th-century Hazelton.

**River of Mists:**  
**People of the Upper Skeena, 1821–1930**  
by Geoff Mynett  
(Caitlin Press \$26)

BY MIKE SELBY

Once, long ago but all too recent for some, **Simon McGillivray** stood at the crossroads of not only two rivers, but two worlds. In what would become Hazelton, BC, McGillivray—an employee of the Hudson Bay Company—was the first white person to have reached the forks of the Babine and Simpson’s Rivers. As **Geoff Mynett** notes in **River of Mists: People of the Upper Skeena, 1821–1930**, the “largely undisturbed way of life” of the Indigenous population “would change forever.”

This is Mynett’s third book on the Skeena; one is tempted to call it a trilogy, but he probably has more stories to tell. In *River of Mists*, which is the term the Gitksan called the Skeena, the author has collected a series of bizarre, tragic, humorous and all-too-human profiles of people pulling against themselves as much as they pull against this most hostile of environments. While each chapter is a stand-alone story (perfect for dipping into now and again), the author has primarily arranged them chronologically, providing the reader a much more satisfying experience when read as a whole. Yet Mynett’s work has a definite arc to it, and certain characters overlap between pages, resisting the author’s structure and refusing to be bound by a timeline.

As with his previous works, the author’s description of BC’s wilderness of the past remains impressive: “On the riverbank behind him grew a profusion of hazel bushes and flowering paintbrush. White fluff-like balls shed by the cottonwood trees floated in the air and fell to the ground like loose snow. Swarms of mosquitoes, emerging after the recent downpour, were buzzing around their ears. An eagle swept smoothly from a branch of a tree and, talons down and trailing behind, swooped across the water to snatch a fish.”

Whether or not the



Edgar Dewdney (1835–1916)

author is consciously aware of it, the more people who pour into Hazelton, the less the surrounding wilderness is described. One can feel it being squeezed out with each succeeding chapter. But, as with his previous works, Mynett is at his best unearthing the varied personalities which occupy his work.

The sheer breadth of time and place covered reveals the known and the unknown inhabitants of BC’s history. **Edgar Dewdney**—our province’s most prolific trailblazer—affixes a flyer early on officially demarking the lots and layout of Hazelton. That he does so without any directives, permission, or even knowledge of the government pretty much says it all about the man, this place and Victoria. At the same time, gold prospector **Jack Gillis** is

putting a gun to his head and pulling the trigger after receiving a “Dear John” letter from his sweetheart back in PEI. That his grave has been kept in pristine condition for decades afterwards is a genuine mystery, which Mynett may or may not have solved.

Alongside the historic photos and maps that are peppered throughout are excerpts from the *Hazelton Queek*, a short-lived weekly



Father Adrien-Gabriel Morice  
(1859–1939)





The staff of the Hazelton Hospital, 1911–1912: falconer, laundryman, housekeeper, handyman, janitor, matron and doctors.

newspaper, which, although completely handwritten, was printed on a gelatin press owned by an Anglican bishop. “The Skeena just above the town was frozen across last Wednesday night ...” and “Mr. Owen, while skating the other day, broke through the ice and had a narrow escape from drowning” are indicative of the dispatches to be found in the *Queek*. (UBC librarians refer to it as “one of the most unusual British Columbia newspapers digitized” by them.) At least this bishop (**William Ridley**) appeared well-liked; not so in the case of Father **Adrien-Gabriel Morice**—a Catholic priest whose arrogance and sense of entitlement had fellow priests beat the tar out of him.

A chief constable arrives along with the new century, bringing with him a handful of policemen and a stellar arrest record. His diary entries have him “getting drunks out of the streets” and stopping the illegal sale of liquor to Indigenous people. These entries are a fantastic peek into the day-to-day struggles of Hazelton as well as what today would be called an abuse of 911.

In other stories, Americans, British and even Russians appear all interested in furs, gold and telecommunication. There is the mystery of the Swedish balloon; a complaint letter from a yesteryear “Karen” whose young son had been exposed to “filthy conditions,” “drunken men” and “bawdy women” while visiting Hazelton. She didn’t write it to the town’s chief constable, but to his manager in Victoria.

A not-yet-famous **Emily Carr** arrives to make paintings of totem poles,



Emily Carr (1871–1945)

which most of the town’s settlers at the time found grotesque and disturbing. The First World War draws heavily on Hazelton, and four airplanes land—something unthought-of when Simon McGillivray first arrived in 1833.

“I have never yet seen the want and misery,” an American complained in 1871 about his visit through Hazelton. The miserable people he saw were “trying to drag out an existence in hopes that something might turn up.” While he meant gold, Mynett’s expertly researched and accessible stories illustrate something else entirely.

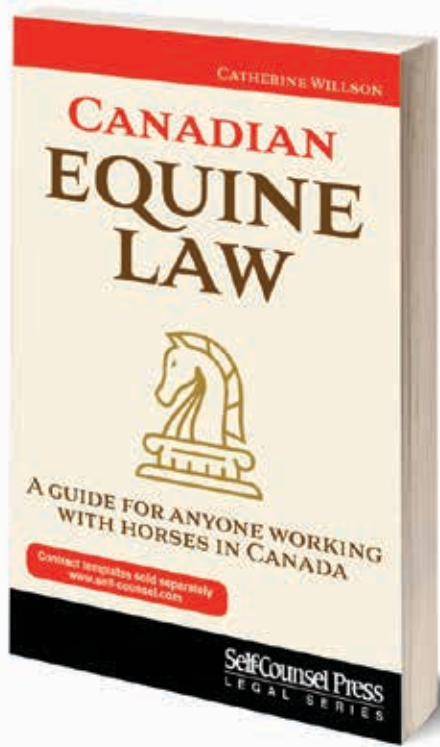
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*Mike Selby, deputy director of the Cranbrook Public Library and award-winning author, has published more than 900 book reviews.*



Bishop William Ridley (seated on the far left), and companions on a vessel that may be the *Evangeline*. The body language suggests that his wife, Jane, may be the one sitting on the right of the photograph.

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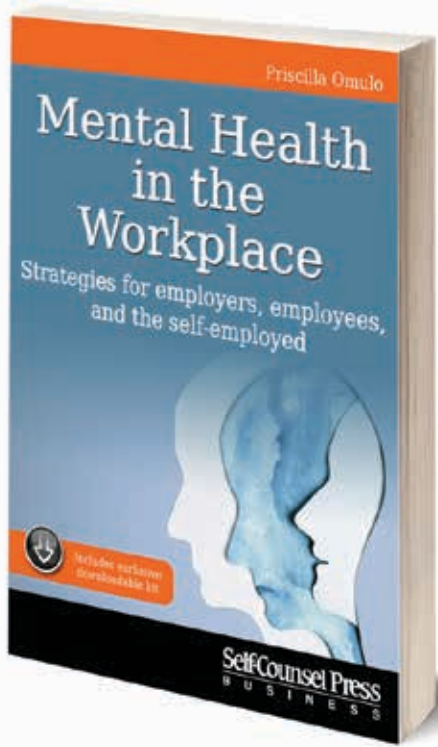


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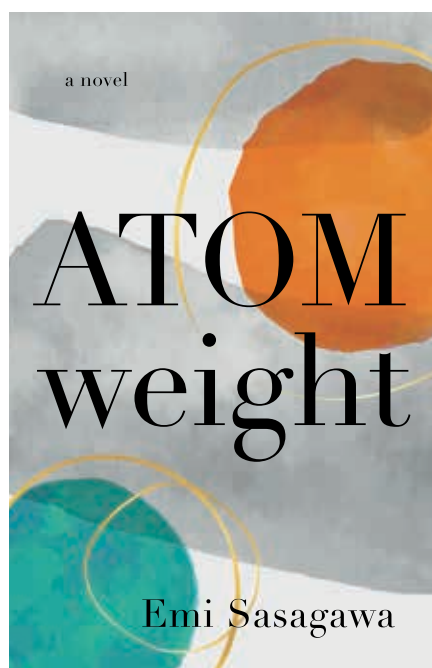
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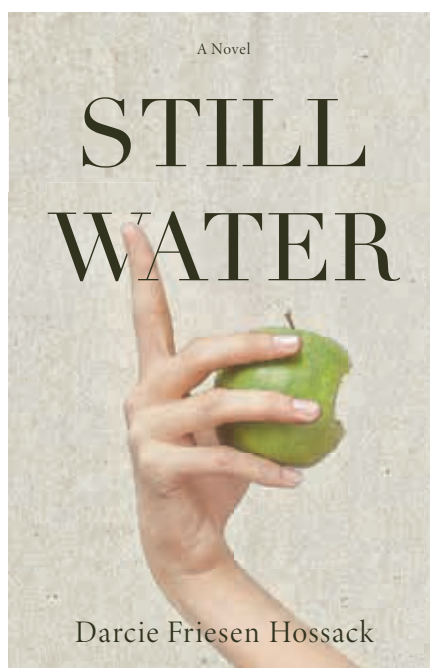
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Ron Thom (right) discussing complex house plans designed for naval architect Dennis Case (left), 1965.

## THE TROUBLED GENIUS

**Ron Thom, Architect: The Life of a Creative Modernist**  
by Adele Weder  
(Greystone Books, \$37.95)

BY ALEXANDER VARTY

**T**he general consensus among architectural historians—and Vancouver author **Adele Weder** does not deviate from this orthodoxy—is that

**Ron Thom's** signature building is Massey College, on the grounds of the University of Toronto. This graduate facility, with its Oxbridge-inflected exterior and a softly organic interior of pearly limestone, glowing softwoods, and warm brick, perfectly encapsulates one side of Thom's design aesthetic: the need to find sanctuary amid the ever-increasing pace of the industrialized outside world. His other prime directive—to bring those more calming aspects of the wider world, landscape and seascape, indoors—doesn't find much expression here, but that has no doubt to do with the college's busy urban site.

Other clues to Thom's personality and aesthetic are literally written into the shape and texture of Massey College's central space, a modernist reinvention of a medieval feasting hall. Circling the room, in calligraphy designed by Thom's associate **Allan Fleming**, are 72 words from philosopher **George Santayana** that echo and amplify the college's motto, *Sapere aude*, or "dare to be wise."

"To be happy, you must be wise," the inscription concludes.

"Of course, easier said than done," is Weder's response.

**Ron Thom Architect: The Life of a Creative Modernist** is an insightful, enlightening and gratifyingly

fast-paced examination of one of Canadian architecture's greatest minds and saddest lives. There is no doubt that Thom was inspired, and one of the chief joys here is learning how Thom was shaped and bolstered by a cadre of equally brilliant men and women, many of them instructors at or alumni of the Vancouver School of Art in the 1930s and '40s. **B.C. Binning, Jack**

abandonment of his first wife, **Chris Thom**, although typical of this *Mad Men* era, was unthinking if not actively cruel. And his conflicts with colleagues over aesthetic factors and, perhaps more tellingly, over budgets hint at a greater unwillingness to compromise: a worthy trait in a designer, but one less useful in the realm of making.

And then there was the drinking.

**A visionary architect, Ron Thom's houses on Vancouver's north shore remain avant-garde and remarkably comfortable 60 years on.**

and **Doug Shadbolt, Molly Bobak**, and others helped guide Thom in his transition from promising painter to master planner, and one of *Ron Thom, Architect's* greatest contributions to our shared store of knowledge lies in its clear-eyed yet affectionate portrait of a nascent Vancouver, beginning to stretch out from under the shadow of its colonial past and develop its own cultural identity, informed by its forests, mountains, and First Nations heritage. Even those whose interest in local architecture doesn't extend much beyond passing wonder at Thom and **Ned Pratt's** enduringly glorious BC Electric Building (now called The Electra), with its B.C. Binning mural, will find this revelatory.

Thom's BC years occupy almost half of *Ron Thom, Architect*, and the story grows much darker once the action shifts to Toronto, the location of its hero's greatest triumphs and gravest failures. There are foreshadowings of the latter, certainly. Thom's virtual

Although Thom did not see battle during the Second World War, something happened to him during that conflict, whether it was while he was on active duty in the Aleutians or learning aircraft navigation on the Prairies. As his first wife recalled, Thom left for Royal Canadian Air Force service sober and returned "soused." Two and three martini lunches elided into the bottle hidden in the desk and the suitcase full of clinking glass; a kind and considerate man in the morning turned, by most accounts, into a raging tyrant by mid-afternoon. Thom's work didn't suffer, but his ability to see things through did, and by the end of his career he was more tolerated in the office he had established than truly welcome.

He died, alone and at work, on October 29, 1986. He was only 63. The coroner's verdict? Acute alcoholism, coupled with cardiac arrest.

Weder speculates that the Peter Principle was at play in Thom's disintegration and ultimate demise: upward

pressure forced him into a managerial role that did not suit his intuitive and collaborative approach to design and life. There's little doubt that despite the success of his Massey College building—and his visionary but only partially realized plans for Peterborough, Ontario's Trent College—his true métier was home design. Sixty and seventy years on, the modernist houses he designed in West Vancouver, North Vancouver, Point Grey, and elsewhere remain both avant-garde and astonishingly comfortable. But there's another factor that must have weighed heavily on Thom's psyche: the conflict between his idealism and a client list that increasingly depended on institutions, large businesses and the wealthy.

Thom's childhood revolved around his mother, a demanding taskmaster and the fourth woman admitted to the Saskatchewan bar, but also a Christian socialist of the **Tommy Douglas** school. He often recounted how she would feed the indigent during the Depression years, and one reason why he died at his desk was that he had loaned his nearby apartment to a homeless couple, met by chance on the street. Building shopping centres rather than elegant low-income housing surely rubbed his conscience raw.

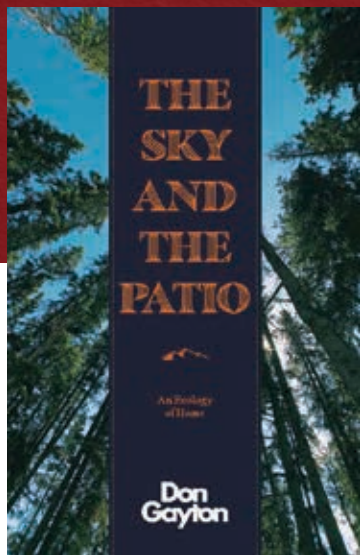
What could Thom have accomplished had Canadian society not turned away from the collective to the corporate? Why do we not fund beauty for all? *Ron Thom, Architect* is a moving elegy for a singular and sometimes difficult man, but it also mourns the calcification of what used to be a kinder, gentler nation, and it should be read by more than Thom's many admirers in the design community. 9781771643221

*Alexander Varty is a senior West Coast arts journalist living on unceded Snuneymuxw territory.*



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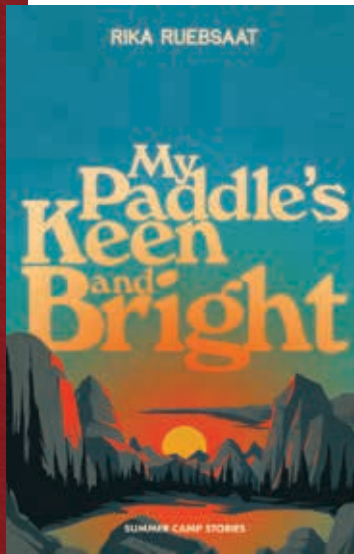
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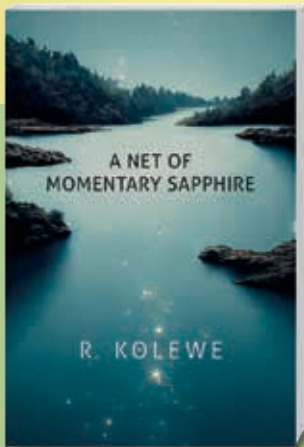
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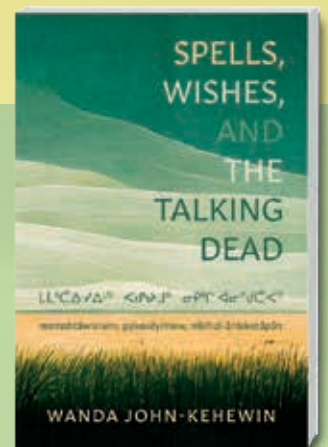


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*Spells, Wishes, and the Talking Dead* plays with form, space, and language, comparing meanings in English and nêhiyawêwin (Plains Cree).

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Chasing Rivers:  
A Whitewater Life  
by Tamar Glouberman  
(Douglas & McIntyre \$26.95)

BY MARK FORSYTHE

**T**amar Glouberman is “running the line” through standing waves and thunderous rapids while dodging massive rocks. On occasion her raft becomes “bent like a rubber taco.” Welcome aboard the liquid roller coaster of a whitewater raft guide. **Chasing Rivers: A Whitewater Life** is her adrenaline-charged memoir, where the unexpected can be around the next bend in the river.

Glouberman writes from an insider’s perspective after years of guiding on wild, remote rivers; from BC’s Chilko River and Tatshenshini to the Colorado River’s Grand Canyon and leisurely splashes in the Galapagos. A rusty, duct-taped Honda hatchback takes her cross-continent to the next whitewater rush and paying job.

Guide work is physically and mentally demanding. Standing 5 feet 2 inches tall, she is fully tested lugging rafts and supplies, grappling with oars on Class IV rivers, and dealing with male customers who wonder why they’re stuck with a woman. One guest, “Steroid Man,” finds himself “accidentally” bounced out of the raft a few times. Soon enough, he sees the light.

Raised in Montreal, Glouberman started guiding on the Hudson River in upper New York State and on the Ottawa River. Launching her kayak off Rockwell Falls in the Adirondacks sealed her fate. “It was the first time in my life that I’d focused on just one thing while every other thought, and even the outside world, went silent,” she says. Self-doubt vanished for a time too.

Glouberman headed west to BC in the 1990s shortly after the province had tightened regulations when 12 people died rafting in 1987. Five men were lost from a single raft on the Chilko River. Potential risks and the responsibility associated with keeping people alive occupied an eddy in the back of Glouberman’s mind.

Respect the river, and it rewards you though. Glouberman describes seeing hundreds of migrating caribou on the Yukon’s Firth River: “What amazed me most was the smell. The musky aroma of so many animals was unlike anything I had known before.” While she was rafting BC’s pristine Tatshenshini River, a detour to Alsek Lake included an earth-shaking moment: “Across the lake, the massive glacier boomed and calved huge chunks of ice into the water, sending waves splashing to the shore of our camp.... If we had to say our goodbyes to the world, I couldn’t think of a better place to do it.”

One of a handful of female guides in a male-dominated business, Glouberman was always having to prove herself. For the most part, she was accepted by male guides and loved being part of a community that was prone to partying hard: drinking to the “fall down stage,” dancing naked around campfires and engaging in multiple flings. She is frank about the latter:

# Up around THE BEND

**Tamar Glouberman’s** frank memoir of life as a whitewater raft guide in a male-dominated business. Partying hard, her life away from the river became darker.

“When running a rapid, I always put on a lifejacket. I needed to start treating sex with the same consistent caution.” She also shares regret about missing out on longer term relationships, and she recounts a violent sexual encounter with a man she had previously trusted.

Life away from the river became darker and more complicated too. While driving in the Chilcotin, Glouberman lost control of a truck and trailer and rolled over. The wreck “resembled crushed beer cans,” she recalls. A co-worker was injured, and Tamar

broke multiple vertebrae. Riddled with guilt, she questioned her ability to keep people safe on land or water. Self-doubt, PTSD, depression and physical injuries lingered;

her future as a river guide uncertain. (Faulty tires were determined to have caused the accident.)

Much like a winding river, *Chasing Rivers* meanders with further trauma ahead, including a fatal accident on the Firth River. Glouberman writes: “Rivers. Time. Life. Everything kept changing and moving on. I wanted life to pause while I got better, physically and mentally.... At nearly 35 I was already old on the river. They say time heals all wounds, but I didn’t have time to spare.”

Today Tamar is back on the water, although now as a wilderness guide introducing people to grizzly bears in more placid coastal waters. 9781771623414

*Mark Forsythe author/co-author of four books and a former host of CBC Radio’s BC Almanac enjoys kayaking in placid waters with his wife aboard Jensi I and Jensi II, named after their first grandchild.*



“Rivers. Time. Life. Everything kept changing and moving on. I wanted life to pause while I got better, physically and mentally.... At nearly 35 I was already old on the river. They say time heals all wounds, but I didn’t have time to spare.”

— TAMAR GLOUBERMAN

MARA GLOUBERMAN PHOTO



# CHEF POWER

**Alexander Varty** finds joie de vivre in **J-C Poirier's** debut cookbook.

**Where the River Narrows: Classic French & Nostalgic Québécois Recipes from St. Lawrence Restaurant by J-C Poirier with Joie Alvaro Kent** (Appetite by Random House \$45)

BY ALEXANDER VARTY

**M**y apologies, **Julia Child**. *Je suis désolée*, **Jacques Pépin**. But with the publication of Vancouver chef **J-C Poirier's** **Where the River Narrows**, it is now possible that the only French cookbook you'll ever need was made in BC.

I exaggerate, of course. Beginners still might want to turn to Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* for their first beef bourguignon before tackling Poirier's marrow-enhanced pot-au-feu. Should you need to break down a bunny before diving into either of Poirier's toothsome rabbit dishes, Pépin's *New Complete Techniques* will helpfully walk you through what the younger chef assumes that you already know. And even at a hefty 300-plus pages, Poirier's hardcover debut is not going to knock anyone's well-thumbed copy of *Larousse Gastronomique* off the kitchen shelves.

It's a triumph nonetheless.

The arrival of *Where the River Narrows* is also impeccably well-timed. In late October of last year, Poirier's restaurant, St. Lawrence, was one of eight Vancouver restaurants awarded a star from the prestigious Michelin organization. "There is so much to love about St. Lawrence with its textured walls, mosaic-tiled floor, antiques and open kitchen," the anonymous Michelin judges reported. "A hit ever since opening, this charming Québécois bistro shares a true sense of place—it's even named for the region's mighty river. Sit close enough to chef/owner Jean-Christophe Poirier's kitchen to experience the heady aromas of his rustic and hearty French-Canadian cooking."

The other Michelin honorees—AnnaLena, Barbara, Burdock & Co, Kissa Tanto, iDen & Quanjudé Beijing Duck House, Masayoshi, and Published on Main—mostly reflect Vancouver's position on the cutting edge of Pacific Rim cuisine. If they're not explicitly reflecting Japanese or Chinese tradition, they're combining Asian ingredients like koji and nori with European techniques. (This is something that Poirier's co-author, **Joie Alvaro Kent**, has some experience with: in 2020 she co-wrote classically trained chef **Angus An's** *Maenam: A Fresh Approach to Thai Cooking*. Maenam, An's restaurant, didn't get a Michelin star in 2022, but it was one of 60 runners-up.)

Poirier and St. Lawrence seem bent on bucking this West Coast focus, however. You'll search *Where the River Narrows'* index in vain for ingredients that wouldn't have been available to an 18th-century French

aristocrat or a 19th-century Québécois peasant: staples here are duck, pork, dairy, root vegetables, apples and maple syrup. *Lots* of maple syrup: for all that this book offers a reasonably comprehensive guide to classical cuisine, it's most definitely French cooking with a Canadian twist. Most of what you'll need to work with Poirier will be available at any well-stocked supermarket, with perhaps a side trip to a superior butcher's.

Granted, some of what *Where the River Narrows* has to offer will require patience, concentration and perhaps even daring from the home cook. Poirier's Pâté de Faisan, for instance, is a two-day process, and while his Terrine Chaude de Homard sounds like heaven on a plate, I have yet to muster the courage to make my first scallop mousse. Instead, my household has mostly stuck to the peasant side of the menu. My partner's first Poirier moment was with the chef's Saucisses Toulouse et Lentilles en Vinaigrette; this turned out exactly as described, and the leftovers were delicious as hand pies made with British chef **Calum Franklin's** buttery pastry. (For that, see his very worthwhile new book, *The Pie Room*, published by Bloomsbury Absolute.) In turn, late December's damp cold suggested a look at Poirier's Soupe au Petits Pois. A somewhat gilded take on that Canadian staple, split-pea soup—beer! bourbon! maple syrup!—it was a definite improvement on my usual improvised version, and it will surely become a winter standard in the Varty kitchen. Both recipes were easy to follow, as are many of the more complex preparations that we're looking forward to investigating. (Next week: Tourtière du Lac St-Jean!)

In addition to being useful, *Where the River Narrows* is also a pleasure to read and to hold. **Jennifer Griffiths'** design is both warm and elegant without ever going over the top, and that in itself is an appropriate tribute to Poirier's food. **Brit Gill's** photos are also effective: beyond providing a template for your own attempts, they actively encourage you to roll up your sleeves and get cooking. And Poirier's text paints a vivid portrait of why food matters and how his native Québec has shaped not just his cooking, but also his approach to life.

However, one should note that the most telling anecdote takes place in France rather than on the shores of the *Fleuve Saint-Laurent*. Poirier and his wife are on holiday in Bordeaux and feeling a little surprised by the apparent indifference of their waiter, who tells them that all he can offer is "a baguette and camembert and dry-cured sausage." But when the meal arrives, it's a feast—even if it's far from a polished restaurant experience.

"Enjoying food doesn't have to be precious or fancy to be memorable," Poirier recalls. Thank you, Chef J-C, for summarizing your book so well. I couldn't have said it better myself.

9780525611189

Alexander Varty is a senior West Coast arts journalist living on unceded Snuneymuxw territory.



CARLO RICCIN PHOTO

Chef J-C Poirier paid homage to his home province—*the phrase is a direct translation of the the area around Québec City where the St. Lawrence*



HEATHER CAMERON PHOTO

BC BookWorld's Alexander Varty goes the extra n one of Chef Poirier's recipes himself: split-pea sou





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Chef Poirier’s Tourtière au Cerf-Venison (Meat Pie)



Chef Poirier’s Poulet à la Crème  
(Braised Chicken in Cream Sauce)

## MICHELIN BRANCHES OUT

One of the more interesting aspects of the Michelin Guide’s decision to survey the Vancouver restaurant scene is that it reflects a kind of culinary devotion that’s been going on for some time. Whereas the Guide began as a French guide to France and only later spread into the culinary and financial capitals of the world—London, New York City, Tokyo—it has lagged behind in regard to regional cuisines. But within the last decade, Guide inspectors surveyed such notable food destinations as Bangkok, Shanghai and Taiwan. Remarkably, neither the continents of Africa and Australia nor the Indian subcontinent have yet been deemed worthy of a Michelin star.

More than a few cooks and critics have ascribed this to cultural bias, if not out-and-out racism, and it’s true that the Michelin standards are still those of French haute cuisine. The Michelin trail, which also encompasses luxury tourism, has been dictated more by money than by culinary brilliance; it’s probable that only the success of El Bulli, in a remote corner of Catalan Spain, and Noma, in otherwise untrendy Copenhagen, forced the Guide to branch out. Still, even if Vancouver’s exaltation is owed as much to it being a playground of the idle rich as to its abundance of talented chefs and superior ingredients, it’s good news for an embattled restaurant industry, and for cookbook publishers, too.—Alexander Varty

# COOKING BC STYLE



The Artful Pie Project:  
A Sweet and Savoury Book of Recipes  
by Denise Marchessault (Whitecap \$39.95)

Can one have too much pie? We say no, and even amid a glut of recent titles focusing on sweet and savoury tarts **Denise Marchessault’s** *The Artful Pie Project* stands out. The Victoria-based chef and educator has created a comprehensive guide to creating the perfect crust and contents; think of it as an MA program for home cooks, with edible dissertations.

9781770503601



Cooking Tips for Desperate Fishwives:  
An Island Memoir by Margot Fedoruk  
(Heritage House \$22.95)

Gabriola Island author, mother and soap maker **Margot Fedoruk** has penned a painfully honest memoir of her less-than-perfect life as a sea-urchin diver’s wife on a seemingly idyllic Gulf Island. It’s not all days on the beach and nights under the stars on the Canadian Riviera, but Fedoruk’s heartfelt text is enlivened by a number of recipes—including one for clam chowder that starts, reasonably enough, with gathering one’s own clams.

9781772033953



Whitewater Cooks Together Again  
by Shelley Adams  
(Alicon Holdings/Sandhill \$36.95)

BC itself is home to a great diversity of microclimates, and here Nelson’s **Shelley Adams** returns to the Kootenay traditions of freshness and sustainability that she explored in five earlier *Whitewater Cooks* titles. The first, subtitled *Pure, Simple and Real Creations from the Fresh Tracks Cafe*, set out her mandate, and although Adams no longer runs a ski-lodge restaurant she remains committed to energizing yet more elegant cuisine.

9780981142449



# MUSIC'S HEALING POWER

Caitriona Murphy,  
Megan Leitch and  
Kamyar Pazandeh in  
the Arts Club Theatre's  
production of  
**The Piano Teacher**,  
Vancouver, 2017

DAVID COOPER PHOTO

**The Piano Teacher:**  
A Healing Key by Dorothy Dittrich  
(Talonbooks \$16.95)

BY CAROLINE WOODWARD



inner of the 2022 Governor-General's Award for Best Canadian play script and the Jessie Richardson Award for Outstanding Original Script as well,

**The Piano Teacher** is **Dorothy Dittrich's** fifth script for the stage. Reading it is a master class experience for writers at any stage who write in any genre; its pitch perfect and powerful writing.

I was not in the right place at the right time to see this two-act play on stage for its debut in early 2022 but after reading the script in book form, I certainly hope other theatre companies will choose to mount it so I can plan to attend. Dittrich's play for three actors comes with such specific musical notes that I sought out certain compositions by **Haydn**, as played by the Beaux Arts Trio and revisited **Aaron Copland's** Appalachian Spring by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra just to hear the desired musical ambience. I could well imagine the beautiful musical pieces swirling out to an audience from amidst the 3-D presence of the players on the stage.

Do not skip over the illuminating Foreword by **Yvette Nolan**, who directed the first production of *The Piano Teacher* at the BMO Theatre Centre in Vancouver, produced by the Arts Club Theatre Company. Or the equally compelling and nuanced Introduction by dramaturge **Rachel Ditor**. They understand Dittrich's clean, clear melody through the voice of her character, Elaine; the pauses and hesitant harmonies as Erin is introduced; and the bounce and energy of Tom's lines. Both directory and dramaturge understand grief and healing and joyful release, and why this play is dedicated by the

A pitch perfect play about people moving through grief shows how music leads to recovery.



Megan Leitch and  
Caitriona Murphy in  
**The Piano Teacher**,  
at The Arts Club  
Theatre, 2017.

DAVID COOPER PHOTO

playwright: *For all those who have worked through a difficult passage.*



THE PIANO TEACHER'S ESSENTIAL PLOT emanates from a tragedy, slowly revealed, as experienced by Erin, a classical pianist who has been unable to play for two years. The classical music quintet she used to perform with is waiting for her to recover and so is a major orchestra touring opportunity but she is blocked, overwhelmed by the loss of her husband and son. This is compounded by the fundamental loss of her own musical means of expression. Think of a painter who cannot imagine what to do with colours anymore or a sculptor whose world view has gone flat, and stays that way. A psychiatrist and another counsellor have not worked for Erin. Then, she attends a student recital and meets Elaine, an unconventional piano teacher who gives her hope



Dorothy Dittrich

for a breakthrough. As Elaine gently reacquaints Erin with the piano, I was reminded of other kind and skilled people among us who work with traumatized children as art therapists and with the 'whisperers' who work with abused horses; all of whom rebuild relationships based on trust by patiently overcoming fear.

We witness the relationship between student and teacher blossom into a true friendship and then, as any perceptive teacher well knows, the roles can reverse with gifted pupils and the concepts of teacher and student flow back and forth. For Elaine, ever optimistic, kind, and generous, is coping with decades of her own repressed

sadness, and no small amount of physical pain. She reminds herself, several times, that **Oscar Peterson** had arthritis in his hands but he didn't let that stop him from becoming one of the world's most accomplished pianists.

Those of us who sing in choirs know how much better we feel in mind, body and spirit after a rousing rehearsal we've dragged ourselves to on a cold and damp night. Some of us were lucky enough to grow up in a house with a piano and other instruments, to learn to read music by taking lessons and to become lifelong musicians, amateur or professional. Next up on the stage is Tom, a skilled carpenter whom Erin has hired to build a window beside a large and dark stairwell landing, a spot in her house she considers wasted space.

Tom comes from a working-class family and his love of old tunes like "Stardust" and "My Buddy" was instilled by listening to his grandpa sing along to the radio in his truck as they picked up lumber and did other building trade errands. Music lessons were unaffordable but music appreciation was a joyful given every day along with the love of solving design problems and working with wood. Tom confides to Erin, whom he does not know is a fairly famous pianist with recordings to her credit, that he would love to take piano lessons some day like she does.

The power of music to heal, to overcome pain and to restore joy and love in our lives is honoured by this remarkable work. Given that a musical written by Dorothy Dittrich, *When We Were Singing* (Canadian Play Outlet, 1995), has toured Canada and the United States, I wish for even more exposure and success for *The Piano Teacher*.

9781772014020

*Growing up on an isolated Peace River homestead, Caroline Woodward had flutophone music lessons for several glorious weeks in Grade 7 at her two-room school. She has sung in school and community choirs for much of her life and hopes to be a musician in her next life.*



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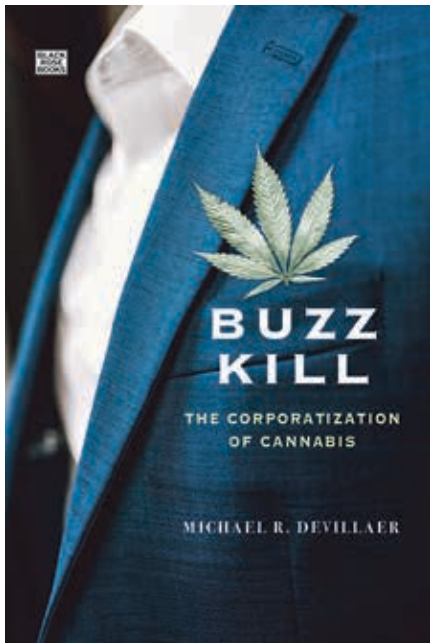
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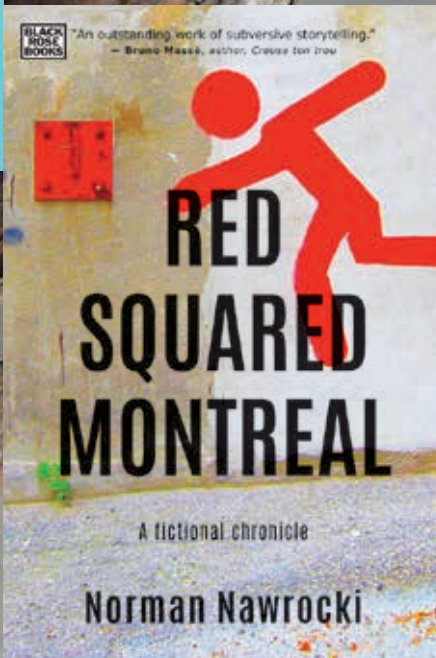
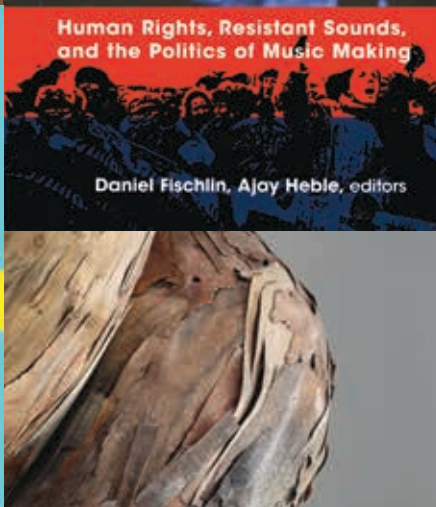
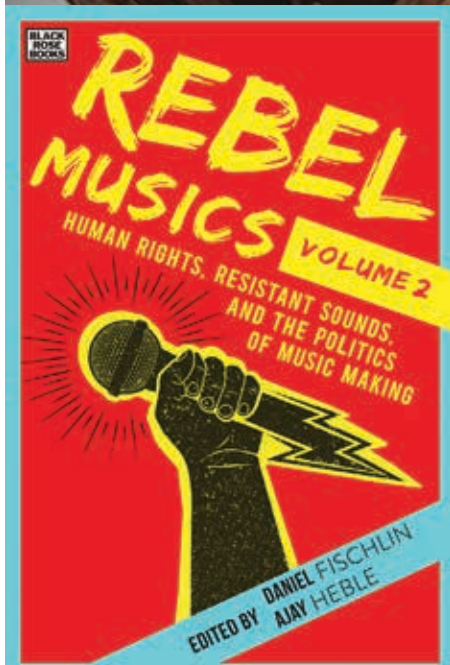
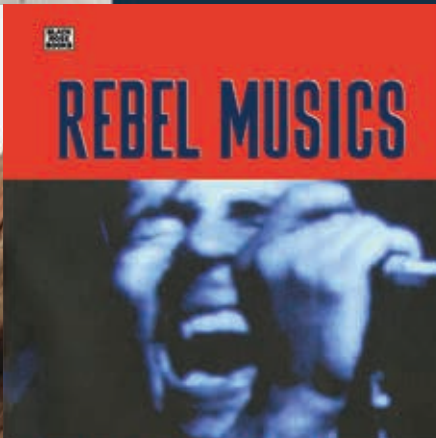
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# OFF-GRID

## REVIEW

## FIRHOME SWEET FIRHOME

Modern-day pioneers endure bugs,  
wicked storms, wild animals,  
forest fires and extreme temperatures  
while building a wilderness home.

**The Power of Dreams:  
27 Years Off-grid in a Wilderness Valley  
by Dave and Rosemary Neads**  
(Hancock House \$24.95)

BY JIM COOPERMAN

**A**lready in their 40s, **Dave and Rosemary Neads** discovered the wilderness area of Precipice Valley in 1986, tucked between the coastal mountains and the Chilcotin Plateau. They fell in love with the area and decided to leave their comfortable urban lifestyles to homestead in their newly found paradise. There they stayed for almost three decades, overcoming the hardships, even thriving, as they recall in their memoir, **The Power of Dreams**.

The book begins with a chronological telling of how the Neads arrived in the Chilcotin, happened upon the Precipice Valley property, built their “Firhome” and enjoyed an isolated and far-from-simple lifestyle in a near-wilderness setting. They lived well despite enduring the cold, the snow, the bugs, the long winters, the wicked storms and the ever-present dangers from wild animals, forest fires, extreme temperatures, and the time-consuming and often-difficult travels in and out of their valley.

Fortunately, by the mid-1980s the couple was able to innovatively utilize modern technology to provide them a comfortable way of life, complete with power (solar panels), running water and eventually internet communications. Yet, to take advantage of modern-day conveniences, Dave had to develop skills as a carpenter, plumber, mechanic, electrician and all-around handyman in addition to being a hunter, fisherman and skilled horseman. With great patience, he

often learned through trial and error and with the “sticktoitiveness” that his mother had taught him.

The Neads’ writing contains poetic descriptions of keen observations, peppered with almost spiritual-like, philosophic imagery, likely a result of their sharpened senses that had become attuned to the rhythms of nature in a setting devoid of the trappings of modern civilization. Whether they were watching the weather, lighting the fire in their home, listening to the birds, or growing vegetables and flowers, they found inspiration and peacefulness.

Most enjoyable are the many stories filled with humour, local colour and coincidences. We learn about the characters who lived nearby or visited them, the wildlife they shared the valley with, the emergencies they had to deal with, the vehicles they had to maintain and repair, the fish they caught and the trips they took into remote lakes via float planes.

One particularly memorable experience was the time they were canoeing on Turner Lake above the 280-metre-high Hunlen Falls. After paddling past a danger sign, they decided to stop for a break. “Not ten feet away, the lip of the falls disappeared into mist as the creek tumbled into oblivion. Dave stopped beside me, and we just stood there in silence, the realization sinking in that, had we not stopped when we did, we would have gone over the brink to sure death.”

An aspect of *The Power of Dreams* that many will appreciate are the connections made to the history of the region from geological times to the lives of the Indigenous people who used the valley as a waypoint along their much-used grease trail from the coast to the interior, and to the early explorers and settlers who used the trail to transport goods from ships that docked in Bella Coola.



Top floor of the Neads’ “Firhome” in the Chilcotin, 1988.





Dave and Rosemary Neads in Carnlick Pass, Itcha Ilgachuz Provincial Park, 2008.

This ancient trail also became a communication corridor in 1912, when a telegraph line was strung through the valley, which was still in use as a phone line when the Neads arrived. They had to go to great lengths to keep it operational, and when that was no longer possible, they found a legal route to force the telephone company to spend \$250,000 for helicopter-delivered equipment to provide service.

Self-sufficiency was never an option in the Precipice Valley, given the financial resources needed for building supplies, solar panels, transportation, batteries, food and especially the fuel required for their chainsaws,

“Not ten feet away, the lip of the falls disappeared into mist as the creek tumbled into oblivion. Dave stopped beside me, and we just stood there in silence, the realization sinking in that, had we not stopped when we did, we would have gone over the brink to sure death.”

generators, snowmobiles, ATVs, trucks and vehicles. Thus, Dave Nead had to work, and fortunately he landed a job as a backcountry park ranger in nearby Tweedsmuir Park. He and his work partner travelled by float plane, by horseback and on foot to clear ancient trails and create new ones, construct signage and structures, and build countless cairns in this massive landscape.

Although Dave and Rosemary Nead lived remotely, they were also part of a widely spaced community of other homesteaders and environmentalists and thus became aware of the threats to the wild spaces they loved from resource extraction, particularly clear cut logging. After helping to create local organizations to fight for wilderness protection and sustainable practices, Dave Nead’s leadership abilities became recognized by provincial conservation organizations, and soon he was employed to work incessantly as an environmental activist. Thanks to his efforts, many parks were created, including the 112,000-hectare Itcha Ilgachuz Provincial Park.

*The Power of Dreams* was a difficult book to put down, as with each page I was transfixed into their amazing world and was able to vicariously experience their extraordinary lives through their compelling storytelling and magical imagery. This book deserves to become a British Columbia classic, in the same vein as *Ralph Edwards of Lonesome Lake* and *The Curve of Time*.

9780888397188

*Jim Cooperman is a back-to-the-lander and worked with Dave Neads in the environmental movement in the 1990s. His most recent book, Everything Shuswap (2017), was praised by David Suzuki.*



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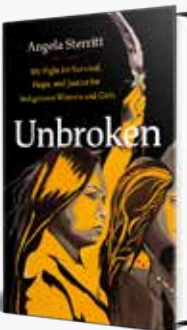


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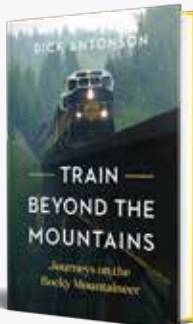
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Veronica and Ron Hatch

**BC BookWorld:** After two decades in the performing arts, you are back in publishing. How does your new role as publisher relate to your previous work?

**Wendy Atkinson:** I worked most recently at the Chan Centre at UBC where I created and programmed a performance series called *Beyond Words*. That series explored the power of words in performance and highlighted progressive social justice themes. For example, I paired writers **Carmen Aguirre**, **Aislinn Hunter** and **Nancy Lee** with choreographers to create new work, and I booked performing artists who have published books such



Margaret Reynolds



Brian Lam



Bud Osborn

as **Tanya Tagaq**, **Ivan Coyote**, **Cliff Cardinal** and international artists like **Laurie Anderson**. I'm excited to bring my programming vision to my publishing ideas for Ronsdale Press.

**BCBW:** What is your connection to BC publishing?

**WA:** Many years ago, when I was just out of university and wondering what to do with an English degree, I started working at the Association of Book Publishers of BC. I was very lucky to be mentored by executive director **Margaret Reynolds**, who was recently honoured with the Gray Campbell Distinguished Service Award. I later worked for **Brian Lam** at Arsenal Pulp Press, and I have always admired his strong focus and vision for the press. In my musical life, I played bass on East-side poet **Bud Osborn**'s CD, *Hundred Block Rock*.

**BCBW:** What opportunities do you see for Ronsdale Press?

**WA:** After acquiring the press in 1988, **Ron** and **Veronica Hatch** worked hard to build the press into its existing form. Ronsdale has 'good bones' with its solid

# BC's NEWEST PUBLISHER

**Wendy Atkinson** takes over Ronsdale Press after the passing of publisher **Ron Hatch**. An arts programmer and musician with a background in publishing, Atkinson shows what to do with an English degree.



"As we re-ignite the press, I'm passionate about collaborating with writers to bring their books into the world."  
WENDY ATKINSON

distribution and sales representation; good relationships with authors, booksellers, suppliers and funders; and solid 30-year publishing history.

Recently, we have been revitalizing marketing efforts, especially through social media. This past fall we created

video book trailers for all of the fall titles, which have been very popular and increased traffic to Ronsdale's YouTube channel.

We have also been exploring promotional opportunities in non-book media. For example, **Alexander Globe**, author



Alexander Globe



Sabyasachi Nag

of *Gold, Grit, Guns*, appeared on BNN Bloomberg's *Commodities* show, and **Antony Di Nardo**'s poetry book *Forget-Sadness-Grass* was excerpted in *Canadian Gardener*.

**BCBW:** What are your plans for Ronsdale moving forward?

**WA:** My first goal is to publish all of the books that Ron Hatch contracted before he passed away, and by this summer all of those books will be released. My next step is to bring my vision to future publishing decisions. I am prioritizing diverse authors and books that tackle contemporary themes as well as continuing with Ronsdale's strengths, such as BC history. This spring we are publishing *Hands Like Trees*, a story cycle by **Sabyasachi Nag** that poetically depicts the entangled lives of the Sen family. **George Elliott Clarke** said "*Hands Like Trees* is **Arundhati Roy** as if written in the mode of **Alice Munro**."

Next fall we are publishing two adult fiction titles: an epic story of a woman living through the Japanese invasion of China and a short story collection that takes a frank and evocative look at the power and vulnerabilities of "women of a certain age." We are also publishing a YA novel that tackles climate change with the main character reeling from the repercussions of the Fort Mac fire in Alberta.

**BCBW:** What challenges do you see ahead?

**WA:** During Ron's lengthy illness and after his passing there was a lot of uncertainty around the future of the press, which meant that many of Ronsdale's activities were stalled. Assistant publisher **Kevin Welsh** was instrumental in keeping Ronsdale going during that difficult period. As we re-ignite the press, I'm passionate about collaborating with writers to bring their books into the world.

Ronsdale also faces the same challenges as other publishers regarding dramatic increases in paper, printing and shipping costs; the changing landscape for book review media; and how to connect with readers. Also, in this time of increasing consolidation and influence of US publishers, support of independent Canadian presses is more important than ever.

I look forward to connecting with colleagues through the ABPBC to talk about these issues. Book publishing has always been a challenging, vital and exciting business, and book publishers are resilient!



Nancy Lee



Aislinn Hunter



Ivan Coyote



Carmen Aguirre



Tanya Tagaq



In a deep dive into cultural appropriation, **Voicing Identity** uncovers how both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can step out of bounds.

**Voicing Identity:**  
**Cultural Appropriation and Indigenous Issues**  
edited by John Borrows and Kent McNeil (UTP \$36.95)

Who is qualified to write about Indigenous culture? Turns out it can be as difficult an issue for Indigenous people as it is for non-Indigenous people. UVic law prof **John Borrows**, a member of the Chippewa of the Nawash First Nation, and York University emeritus prof **Kent McNeil** gathered Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together to discuss the oftentimes thorny problems of Indigenous cultural appropriation for a workshop and then published some of their stories in **Voicing Identity**, a collection more personal in tone than legalistic.

To illustrate how appropriation can be leveled at Indigenous people, too, Borrows asks: “Does a Mohawk academic from Akwesasne have any more authority to research and teach about Haida traditions and law, one might ask, than a non-Indigenous academic who grew up on the West Coast? Does being Indigenous provide the Mohawk scholar with special insight into Haida culture and worldview that a non-Indigenous scholar can never acquire?”

Borrows cites a specific Canadian example that comes from the world of entertainment to illustrate how Indigenous people are not immune to accusations of cultural appropriation: “**Cikwes (Connie LeGrande)**, a Cree songwriter and performer, utilizes Inuit throat singing in her music. When she received a nomination for a folk music award at the Indigenous Music Awards held in Winnipeg on 17 May 2019, a number of Inuit performers accused her of cultural appropriation and said they would boycott the awards ceremony as a result. One of the Inuit throat singers, who goes by the name **Riit**, explained: ‘Just because you’re part of another Indigenous group, it doesn’t give you the right to take traditions from other groups.’”

In her story for the book, Anishinaabe-Métis law prof **Aimée Craft** examines the line between support of Indigenous cultures and the exploitation of them. She surveys the Indigenous art and clothing she owns, wondering if she has the permission to display and wear these cultural items. As she does so, Craft notes that cultural appropriation is not limited to the taking of Indigenous things by non-Indigenous people. It depends on “how things are acquired, what they are used for, and whether proper respect has been paid and protocols followed.” Craft concludes an important element is “the building of relationships, mutual consent and reciprocity” and that she meets this criteria because all the art she has acquired is “rooted in my relationships.” That’s because Craft has deep personal connections to the creators of the art she hangs on her walls and the jewellery and clothing that she wears. Displaying the work of her friends “is a celebration, a resistance of sorts, against the Canadian colonial imperative of assimilation.”

★  
TO DEMONSTRATE HOW RELATIONSHIP BUILDING is critical for reconciliation, **kQwa’s’t’not (Charlene George)** and **Hannah Askew**, executive director of the Sierra Club BC, co-authored a story about how they have worked together for the past two years to facilitate a cross-cultural transformation of the en-



**Voicing Identity** book cover by Blake Angeconeb, an Anishinaabe woodlands artist from Treaty 3 territory. He is part of the Caribou clan and a member of Lac Seul First Nation.

# THE COMPLEXITY OF CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

vironmental charity located on Lekwungen territory. Part of the work involved painting a mural at a nearby middle school that invited voices and views about nature that have been notably absent in the environmental movement. Askew recalls an important learning moment, reprinted here:

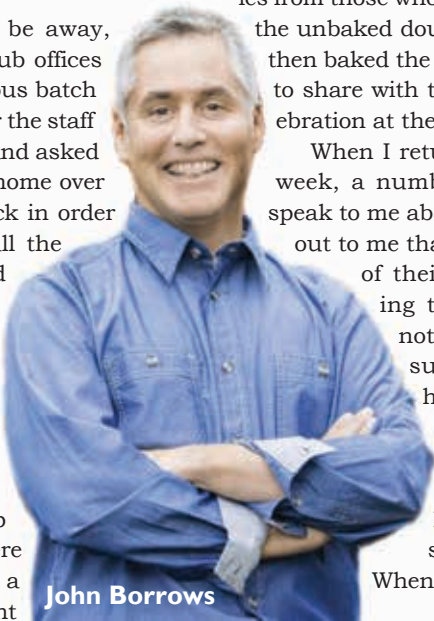
“One week, while I happened to be away, kQwa’s’t’not dropped by the Sierra Club offices on a Friday afternoon with an enormous batch of cookie dough. She gathered together the staff who were in the office that afternoon and asked everyone who was able to take some home over the weekend to bake and bring it back in order to have them ready to share with all the children at the middle school who had helped with the painting of the mural. kQwa’s’t’not explained that because she only had one small oven in her home, it would be difficult for her to bake the many hundreds of cookies by herself. At the time, kQwa’s’t’not was new to the organization and few of the staff had had an opportunity to develop a relationship with her. The staff were quite surprised by her request. While a few agreed, most said that for different

reasons they were unable to help. kQwa’s’t’not left most of the cookie dough in the fridge with an invitation for anyone who was able to help. She said that she would be back on Monday to pick up the baked cookies. On Monday, she returned and picked up the baked cookies from those who had been able to help, as well as the unbaked dough still sitting in the fridge. She then baked the remainder of the cookies herself, to share with the children at the school in celebration at the unveiling of the mural.

When I returned to the office the following week, a number of perturbed staff came to speak to me about the baking request, pointing out to me that baking cookies was not a part of their job description and explaining that they felt somewhat guilty not to have helped. They were also surprised and uncomfortable to have been asked, since it was out of the ordinary. Since I had not spoken with kQwa’s’t’not about the cookies, I was not sure what had happened but promised to speak with her and find out more.

When we talked, kQwa’s’t’not explained

*continued on next page*



**John Borrows**

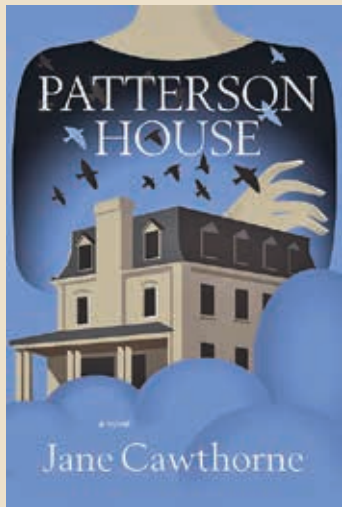


# Mystery & Fiction Memoir & Conversation



**Framed in Fire:**  
**A Lane Winslow Mystery**  
by **Iona Whishaw**  
(Touchwood \$16.95)

It's been eight years and nine books since the launch of the Lane Winslow Mystery series about the 1940s heroine and British ex-secret service agent who relocates from England to a tiny community near Nelson, BC after WW 2. Working as an amateur sleuth, Lane Winslow keeps treading on the local Nelson police's territory and that continues in this 9th book in the series as a murder and arson threaten Winslow's neighbours and friends.

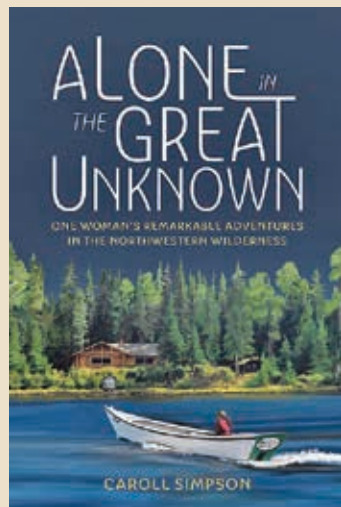


**Patterson House**  
by **Jane Cawthorne**  
(Inanna \$22.95)

In this historical novel set in Toronto during the Great Depression, Alden Patterson turns the ancestral home of her once-wealthy family into a boarding house. She's trying to retain her independence during a male-dominated era that doesn't allow for it. As Alden struggles to care for an orphaned child and an injured WW I veteran, one of her boarders threatens to destroy her life.

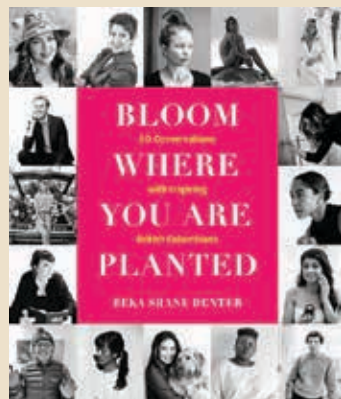
**Alone in the Great Unknown:**  
**One Woman's Remarkable**  
**Adventures in the North-**  
**western Wilderness** by **Caroll**  
**Simpson** (Harbour \$26.95)

Caroll Simpson tells how she came to operate a successful fishing lodge, on her own, in a remote off-grid area of northern BC. While still setting up the business, she lost her husband to a sudden health incident but persevered; she faced encounters with grizzlies and other wild animals, and treacherous weather but stayed because of her passion for the pristine land. She also became an activist who helped create new parklands.



**Bloom Where You Are|**  
**Planted: 50 Conversations**  
**with Inspiring British Colum-**  
**bians** by **Beka Shane Denter**  
(Heritage House \$39.95)

A coffee-table style book with lush photography and interviews that celebrate forty-nine women and one non-binary person who have merged their art and their careers in BC. Included are Hip Hop artist Kia Kadiiri, chef Kiko Nakata, non-binary model Lydia Okello, author Emma FitzGerald, and Haida & Cree artist Erin Brillion. Perfect for dipping in and out of when looking for inspiration.



Thought provoking books available on



Selected by BC BookWorld

## IDENTITY EXCERPT

continued from previous page

to me that she had wanted to share a teaching with the staff which would simultaneously invite them into Coast Salish protocol of providing food for guests (the children) at a gathering, as well as help them to reimagine their relationships with her and other staff members in a more intimate and familial way. This teaching would materialize as people pitched in and helped one another in ways that were not in their specific job descriptions and work hours. They would learn as they engaged in a more holistic way outside of their formal roles. The invitation was completely optional. If they chose to participate, it offered an opportunity to staff to experience their roles and relationships to one another and herself in a different way. kQwa's't'not did not directly explain this to the staff — they came to this understanding over time by learning other stories and teachings that kQwa's't'not shared. Many of the staff eventually began to affectionately refer to the incident as “the cookie test.” 9781487544683



BC CONTRIBUTORS TO VOICING IDENTITY also include:

**Sarah Morales (Sutaxwiye)**, who is Coast Salish and a member of Cowichan Tribes.



**Keith Thor Carlson**

She is an associate professor in the Faculty of Law at UVic, where she teaches torts, transsystemic torts, Coast Salish Law and languages, legal research and writing, and field schools.

UVic prof **Michael Asch**, has written and edited a number of books, including *Home and Native Land: Aboriginal Rights and the Constitution* (1984), *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equality and Respect for Difference* (1997), and *On Being Here to Stay: Treaties and Aboriginal Rights in Canada* (2014).

**Keith Thor Carlson** was hired by the Stó:lō Tribal Council to be their staff historian in 1992 and has been working with Coast Salish Knowledge Keepers ever since. Currently a Prof of History at the University of the Fraser Valley, Carlson was made an honorary member of the Stó:lō Nation in 2001.

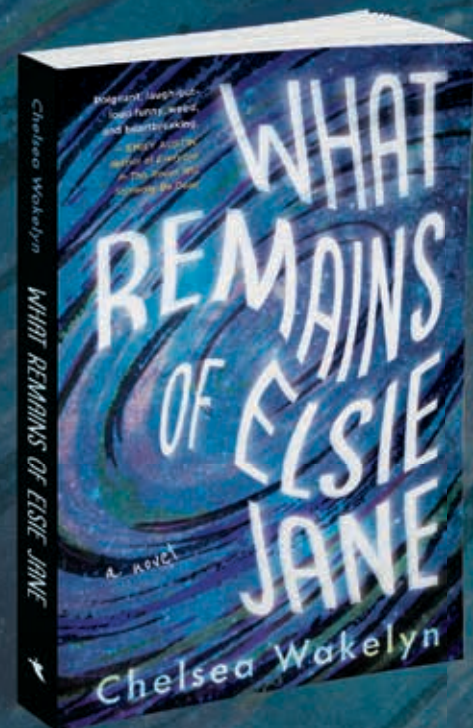
UVic Professor Emeritus **Hamar Foster** is a settler. He and his partner have two grandchildren who are members of the Heiltsuk First Nation. He is a coeditor of *To Share, Not Surrender: Indigenous and Settler Visions of Treaty-Making in the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia* (UBC Press, 2021).

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**Sarah Morales**

## Sad, Angry, and Spiraling Out of Control



“A striking reminder that there can be beauty in devastation ... poignant, laugh-out-loud funny, weird, and a heartbreaking window into being bereft and being in love.” — EMILY AUSTIN, author of *Everyone in This Room Will Someday Be Dead*



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Dale Tracy's debut collection of poems is released by a Vancouver imprint devoted to surrealist and post-surrealist poetry. She is a faculty member in the English department at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

# The weird, the dreamlike, the absurd

**Derelict Bicycles:**  
**Poems by Dale Tracy**  
(Anvil Press/A Feed Dog Book \$18.00)

BY HEIDI GRECO

Poetry is an ever-changing genre. The form that was once bound into strictly controlled lines where cadence and rhyme followed long-held rules has thrown off the old reins to run freely. **Derelict Bicycles**, a collection from **Dale Tracy**, runs freer than most.

The list of those Tracy credits as influences on her work ranges freely too. From acknowledging the importance of workshop leaders **Stuart Ross** (also this book's editor) and **Jason Heroux**, the reach of her inspiration extends from '90s TV series *Twin Peaks*, back to **Dostoevsky**, **Keats**, and even **Shakespeare**.

Most effective of the poems, for which Tracy shares credit with another, is "A Weird Part of Whatever"—a compilation of lines spoken over the phone by her 93-year-old grandmother during the height of the pandemic.

To put any label on these poems, one needs only look a century back to the founding of the surrealist movement and poets such as **André Breton** and **Paul Éluard**. Of contemporary surrealists, Tracy refers to **Ocean Vuong**, citing his "Essay on Craft" as work that led to her poem "Careful Is a Fire That Tends Itself," which she calls a response to his words. It should be noted as well that *Derelict Bicycles* is part of Anvil Press' Feed Dog series. When the press introduced the series, its editor, **Stuart Ross**, explained, "I am drawn to the weird, to the dreamlike, to the absurd." The promise of that lure has been fulfilled here.

Although not divided into sections, as so many collections are today, there is movement in the placement of the poems. The opening piece offers the perfect entrance to the book; it reminded me of the pup tent

**Dale Tracy**  
leads readers to  
nearly buried  
treasure, such as the  
foxes and wolves that  
lurk within some of  
these poems.



in one of the final *Harry Potter* films, how its inside magically grows to accommodate the three companions, with even a second storey, bunk beds and a dining room. The comparison is an apt description for how these poems reveal themselves to the careful reader. They are often magical, and they frequently open to more than one might have anticipated.

As an example, consider this small poem—almost an aphorism—one whose title I admit was one of several words in the book which sent me to the dictionary:

"Poioumenon"  
*The dark can never be  
too full of itself.*

As for that title, the word refers to a kind of meta-fiction whose story is about process, the process of creation — a kind of opening into. And this consideration leads me to a poem that is called "Open," a piece that opens in an almost straightforward manner:

*Gods made us with windows to see how we're  
doing inside.*

*Otherwise we'd be rocks, with no way in and nothing to eat.*

*We're open.*

But then it goes on for four more stanzas, doing a twist midway with a nod to "... *quantum physics, animal behaviour, and time travel*" and then, frankly, leaving me in the dust with its final stanza:

*Semiaquatic crocodiles warn infrasonically, closed-lipped.*

*Open though are their mystery pores, sensing something.*

*Nonlocal relations vibrate.*

While I admit to being more of a plain-speaking poet myself, I also admit to a fascination with work that takes me places I don't usually go. I enjoy being led to nearly buried discoveries, such as the foxes and wolves that lurk within these poems. There's actually a small red fox on the book's cover, looking patient as he sits in wait.

That fox, as well as the occasional wolf or deer—worms, an owl, the glimpse of a lynx—appears in several of these poems. The writing bears an odd kind of grounding in the natural world as well as quite a bit of human biology. References abound to the brain and eye, even the back of the head, perhaps challenging us to consider all the parts we'll need to use to make our way into the heart of the work.

Some of the best advice about this book comes from one of the poems:

*This is a celebration machine*

*With no instructions otherwise.*

*... Its process is a cycle: celebration in progress, celebration.*

The derelict bicycle on the cover appears to have one working wheel. Let that be an invitation to give these poems a whirl and to celebrate the ride.

9781772141986

*Heidi Greco has work in Hologram (coming from Caitlin Press this spring), an anthology of poems that honours P.K. Page.*



# MIDDLE SCHOOL REVIEW

**Dig Deep:**  
**Connecting Archaeology,**  
**Oceans and Us** by **Nicole F. Smith**  
(Orca \$21.95)

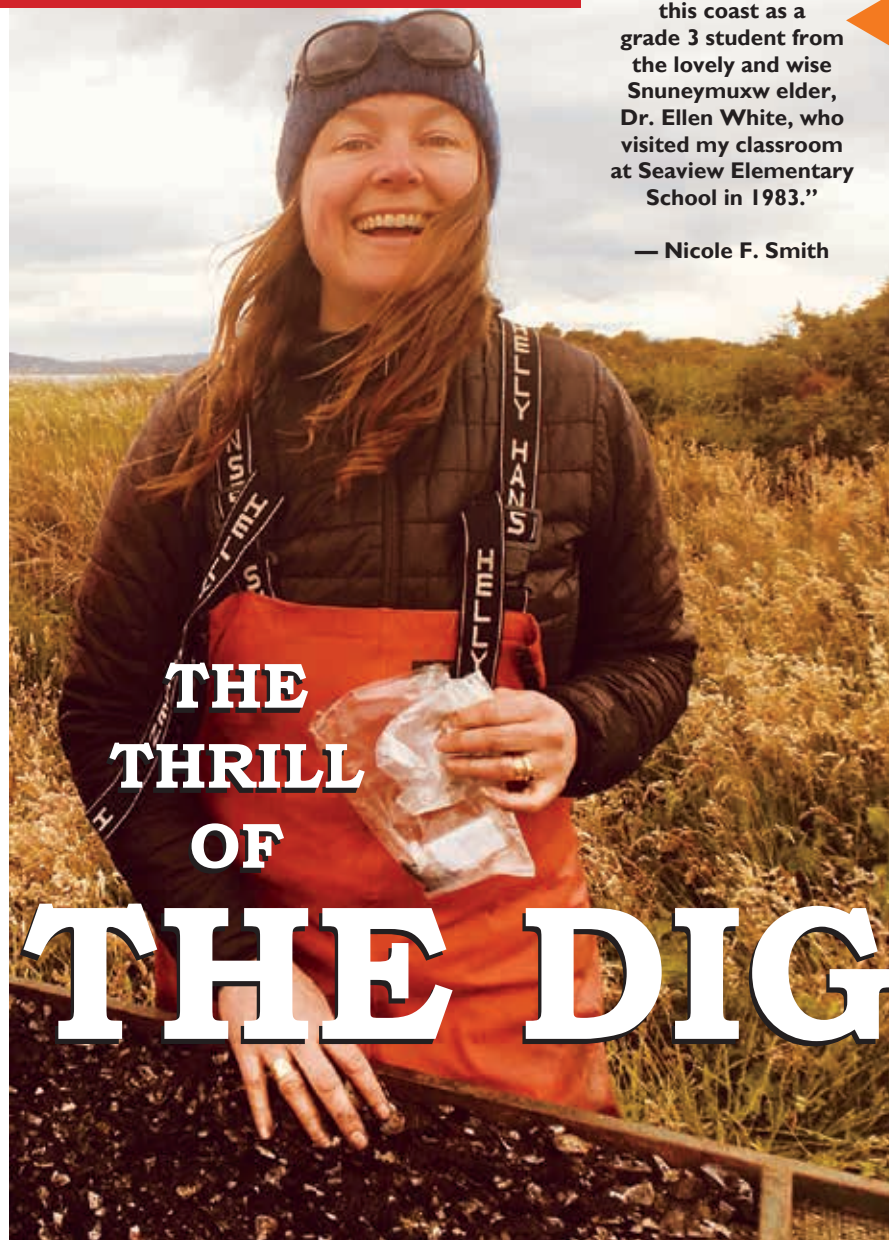
BY GRAHAM CHANDLER

**H**ave you ever found a seashell on land and wondered how it got there? The question is a fitting opener for this educational volume aimed at 9-to-12-year-olds curious about archaeology. Did you know you can look for clues that might help you figure out who moved it from the beach? Hints and clues as used by archaeologists abound. As a practising professional archaeologist since 2000, **Nicole F. Smith** knows what to look for.

Clearly too, **Dig Deep: Connecting Archaeology, Oceans and Us** shows Smith has the knack to captivate her targeted middle school crowd. Or, heck, even much older readers with her easy-to-read coverage of archaeological concepts—some complex—that she has encountered specializing in coastlines.

Smith's work has been mainly with BC coastlines, but she's worked on other coasts around the world as well. One thing that ties all coastal communities together, no matter where in the world we live, is our connection to the sea, she says. And what people have used and left behind can give us important clues about how our oceans have changed or stayed the same over hundreds and thousands of years.

*Dig Deep* has an ocean focus but offers readers a look into just what archaeologists do. Dig, yes. But, not surprisingly, there's a whole lot more to it. For example, people often wonder how archaeologists find their sites in the first place. Smith delves into this. "We start by imagining how our surroundings may have been different hundreds or thousands of years ago," she writes. "We need to ask what a place would look like if we took away the houses, buildings and roads. And what would the area look like if the bodies of water were different?" You then look for places that would have been good for people to use, for example a hill, rock shelter or cave. Once you've found a suitable place, search around for evidence like discarded or lost stone tools, or charcoal from a fireplace. Here



JUDE ISABELLA PHOTO

"I first learned about the rich heritage of this coast as a grade 3 student from the lovely and wise Snuneymuxw elder, Dr. Ellen White, who visited my classroom at Seaview Elementary School in 1983."

— Nicole F. Smith

## THE THRILL OF THE DIG

Archaeology reveals how coastal peoples used to live, and surprisingly, changes we can make for our future.

Smith rightly cautions that if you find one as an amateur, most countries have laws that forbid collecting in order to protect and preserve national heritage sites.

Stimulating and thought-provoking questions are interspersed, presented in a style befitting a grade school teacher, making *Dig Deep* valuable as a classroom teaching aid. Smith's field experiences will appeal to middle school readers even if archaeology is not all like the Indiana Jones life made popular in movies. Smith shows how finds can be exciting in other ways. Like the time she was working with the Nuuchah-nulth Nation along the

west coast of Vancouver Island and the Mukah People from the Olympic Peninsula, both of whom have a long tradition of whale hunting. Smith spent a summer with them in the Broken Group Islands off Vancouver Island's west coast excavating a structure built from whalebone. Four metres down they found the skull of a humpback whale with a remnant of a harpoon blade made of mussel shell embedded in its skull. Who could resist picturing the action story behind that?

Where interpretations tell a story, Smith is careful to use 'needing more evidence,' 'indirect evidence,' or 'suggesting,' as any scientific explanation

should be so qualified.

And speaking of science, Smith covers methods used by archaeologists to date artifacts. Many non-archaeologists have heard of radiocarbon dating. But how many have heard of optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) dating, which is commonly used in the field as well? Smith doesn't shy away from this one; very simply she gives readers all they need to know for a basic understanding of the OSL concept. (In case you're wondering, OSL is a technique that dates when sand grains were last exposed to sunlight).

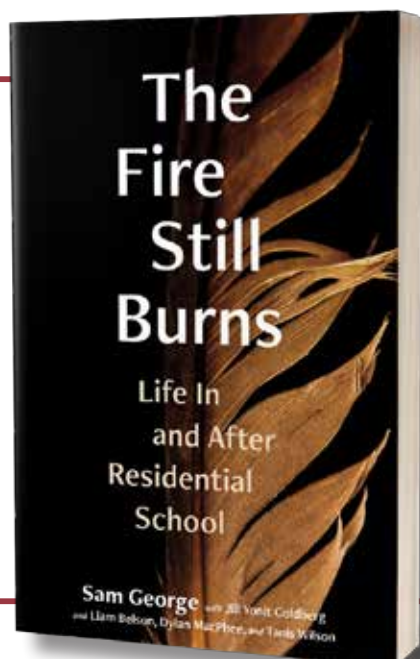
Archaeological science is an important and specialized part of the profession. But especially in places like our coastlines, Smith emphasizes, it should be supplemented or blended with Indigenous knowledge, which has been passed down through hundreds of generations. Like rock wall gardens used to capture fish, for example.

Overall, *Dig Deep* is a well-illustrated volume, including images of youngsters happily working on a dig. There's good discussion in the early chapters describing what archaeologists do and the "hows" and "whys" of their doing it. Kids will be fascinated by some of the lesser-known and surprising specialties like garbology (guaranteed to elicit an "ee-ew" response).

Speciality fields like these lead up to showing how archaeology helps reveal humans' effect on our environment, our oceans and our climate: the Industrial Revolution with all its pollution; modern fishing boats with their high-tech gear vastly overfishing our oceans; and, importantly, the latest damaging impact of humans with our use of plastics. We might as well call this The Plastic Age. Smith takes care to include information about what we can be doing about the damage we have caused, and continue to cause.

For kids excited by the stuff in *Dig Deep* and wanting more, a brief list of resources, both print and online, wraps it. Every school library should have copies of this volume. 9781459826083

Vancouver-based archaeologist and freelance writer Graham Chandler has worked on projects in Belize, the High Arctic, Turkey, Greece, and Pakistan. He holds a PhD in archaeology from the University of London.



"MY NAME IS SAM GEORGE. In spite of everything that happened to me, by the grace of the Creator, I have lived to be an Elder."

*The Fire Still Burns* is a frank and powerful personal story by Squamish Elder Sam George on the horrors of the Indian Residential School system, the healing power of one's culture, and the resilience that allows an individual to rebuild a life and a future.

Order now from your local bookseller or at [www.ubcpress.ca](http://www.ubcpress.ca)





# WHO'S WHO

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

By day Emi Sasagawa is the director of communications at UBC's Faculty of Arts. On weekends, she says she turns to writing "from literary essays to long-form journalism."

### A IS FOR ABDOU

Fernie's **Angie Abdou** wrote about her experiences as a hockey mom, frankly describing her son's sporting experiences on and off the ice in her memoir *Home Ice: Reflections of a Reluctant Hockey Mom* (ECW, 2018). Now she explores Canada's "other" sports in a collection of essays she has co-edited with UVic's **Jamie Dopp**, *Not Hockey: Critical Essays on Canada's Other Sport Literature* (AU Press \$37.99). By veering away from what is often described as Canada's national pastime, contributors, including **Timothy Taylor** and **Aritha Van Herk**, share their reflections on skateboarding, fly fishing, curling and other decidedly non-hockey sports. 9781771993777



Angie Abdou

### B IS FOR BASRAN

**Gurjinder Basran** takes on the perils of social media in her third novel, *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. In 2011, Basran was awarded the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize for her first novel, *Everything Was Goodbye*. The publisher, Mother Tongue, subsequently sold Canadian rights to Penguin Canada, and *Everything Was Good-bye* was re-launched in 2012. Basran is a graduate of SFU's Writer's Studio. 9781770416307



S.M. Freedman

### C IS FOR CHONG

It's been five years since **Kevin Chong** wrote his last novel, *The Plague* (Arsenal Pulp, 2018), inspired by **Albert Camus'** classic of the same title. In *The Double Life of Benson Yu* (Atria \$27), Chong's narrator, Benson Yu, is trying to write a story set in 1980s Chinatown about a twelve-year-old boy, Bennie, living with his grandmother. Bennie gets taken in by an eccentric neighbour named Constantine when his grandmother is suddenly hospitalized. But Yu, a bestselling comic book creator can't help interjecting himself into Bennie's story from the present day. Things get dark as Yu reveals his own past demons. Kevin Chong is an associate professor at UBC Okanagan. 9781668005491



S.M. Freedman



Valerie Green



Gurjinder Basran

### D IS FOR DILWORTH

During the COVID-19 pandemic, "our yards became our parks and our living rooms became our art galleries," writes **Julia Dilworth** in the introduction to her coffee table-style book, *West Coast North: Interiors Designed for Living* (Figure 1 \$50). It drove business to design studios as people largely confined to their homes consulted on ways to renovate and redecorate. Dilworth interviewed 29 BC design firms to find out what is behind their philosophies and how they work. She also showcases their projects in full-colour photography. Dilworth highlights the environmental concerns of designers, inspiration of local craftspeople and the influences of immigrants. 9781773271811



Kevin Chong

### E IS FOR EMI

Completing her Creative Writing MFA while working as a communications manager at UBC's Faculty of Arts (now the director), **Emi Sasagawa** is set to release her debut novel, *Atomweight* (Tide-water \$22.95), about a young Japanese-Latina woman, Aki, who discovers her passion for

fighting as an atomweight while studying overseas in England. Always viewed as a "good girl, good student and good daughter" back home, Aki must also break the news to her parents that she is gay in this story about reconciling competing cultures, traditions and values. Sasagawa is an award-winning journalist whose writing has appeared in publications ranging from *The Washington Post* to *Room*. 9781990160165

### F IS FOR FREEDMAN

In **S.M. Freedman's** psychological thriller *Blood Atonement* (Dundurn \$22.99), Grace DeRoche escapes the fundamentalist Mormon compound of Brigham and tries to prosecute its leaders. But when loyalists, including her own family, commit mass suicide to avoid jail, Grace retreats into solitude. Racked with guilt and suffering from dissociative identity disorder brought on by childhood abuse, Grace's life is fragmented; she never knows when an alter personality will take the reins. When other Brigham escapees die under suspicious circumstances, Grace's tenuous hold on reality crumbles. Notes left at each scene quote scripture and accuse the deceased of committing sins. As evidence mounts against her and one of her alter personalities becomes the prime suspect, Grace must determine if she's a murderer ... or the next victim. 9781459750241

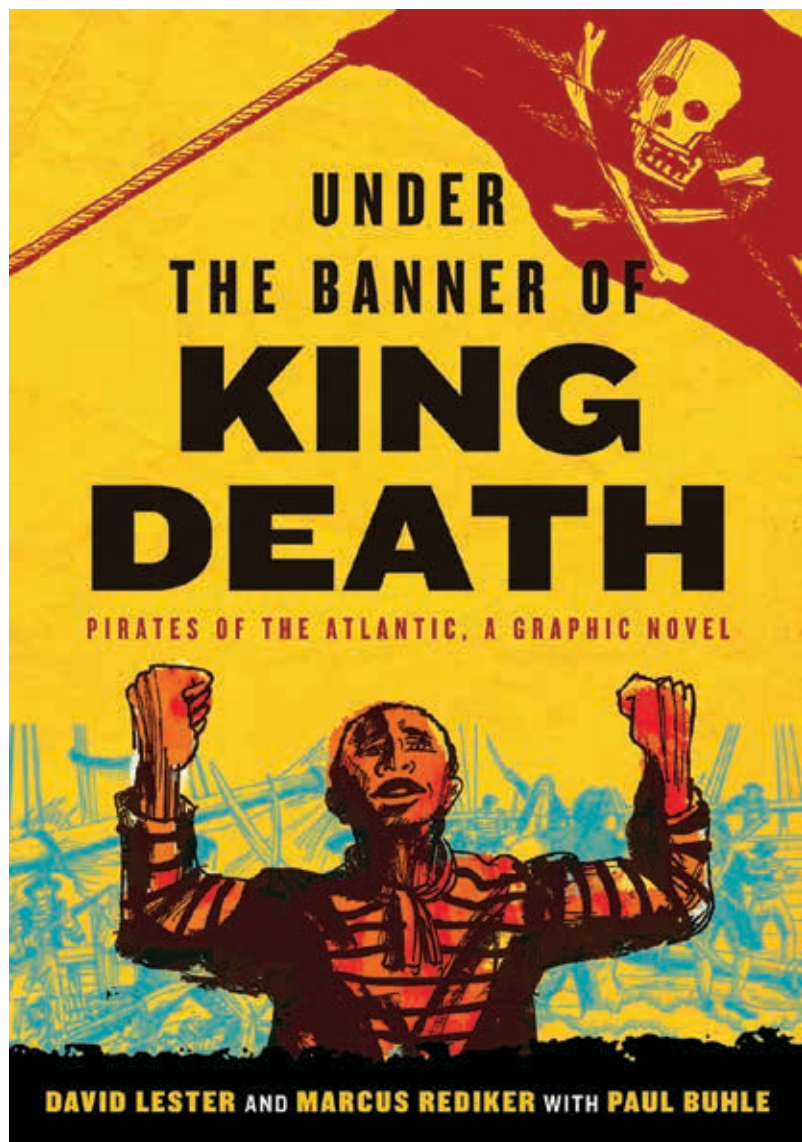
### G IS FOR GREEN

The hard-working author of more than 20 books, **Valerie Green** has published a historical fiction novel, *Providence* (Hancock House \$27.95), the first in a series she is calling the McBride Chronicles. Book One is the story of an English orphan, Jane Hopkins, and a tough Scotsman, Gideon McBride, whose separate journeys to the New World converge when they meet in Victoria and begin a family dynasty in BC. The family saga includes passion, deception, triumph and tragedy on the frontier. All the books in the series depict strong characters who are willing to fight for a better life against all odds. With a backdrop of BC's gold rushes, maritime disasters, and two world wars, the McBride Chronicles will be told from the period of the 1850s to present day. 9780888397393



**“Under the Banner of King Death** is a historical fiction that cleverly merges the spaces between our understanding of the myth and reality of pirates and the Golden Age. It is a tale of rising-up against a tyrant merchant king’s wanton cruelty and the oppressive regimes that emboldens and protects them.”

— Gibson’s Bookstore (Concord, NH) Staff Pick



“...a concise, sharp tale of a multiethnic crew of disgruntled sailors who mutiny against miserable conditions...”  
— Publishers Weekly

“The graphic novel is fascinating. Really entertaining.”  
— Graphic Policy

“A quick, fun read that twists the conventions of pirate stories in some fascinating ways.”  
— Thom Dunn, Boing Boing

“This compelling visual feast of rebellion in action will appeal to readers of all ages, as well as fans of HBO’s *Our Flag Means Death*.”  
— Jonathon Dalton, Cloudscape Comics

“David Lester blends historical and speculative insights into the lives of Golden Age pirates to great effect.”  
— Stuart Derdeyn, Vancouver Sun

“With expressive swooshes of ink that evoke both lashings of the whip and the splashes of the sea...” — Boston Globe

“The stories of insurrectionaries are always played down, because they are the stories which are prone to ignite a fire in the hearts of the oppressed.” — Freedom Journal (UK)

**Beacon Press**

Distribution by Penguin/Random House

ISBN: 9780807023983 • \$17.95

20 Canadian comics to check out in the first half of 2023!  
—CBC Books

# WHO'S WHO

BC

## H IS FOR HAYES

It would be putting it mildly to say that BC’s geography presented challenges to road, bridge and rail builders. Engineers and construction workers faced formidable barriers doing their work, as **Derek Hayes** shows in **Incredible Crossings: The History and Art of the Bridges, Tunnels and Inland Ferries That Connect British Columbia** (Harbour \$46.95). Hayes covers suspension bridges, cable-stayed bridges, both wooden and steel trusses. There were once five covered bridges in the province, and only one is left today. Hayes travelled BC to find the most interesting crossings, and he combines hundreds of photos with the most compelling stories about the province’s transportation connections.

9781550179903

## I IS FOR INDIGENOUS JUSTICE

One of the many social fallouts from harms done to Indigenous peoples by the residential school system continues to be an overrepresentation in prisons, affecting even those who did not attend the schools. **Reconciliation and Indigenous Justice: A Search for Ways Forward** (Fernwood \$32) by UVic associate professor of law **David Milward** gives an account of the ongoing ties between enduring trauma caused by residential schools and Indigenous over-incarceration. He also provides compelling examples that show a better way of doing justice in Canada. Milward is a member of the Beardsy and Okemasis First Nation of Duck Lake, Saskatchewan, and he assisted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with the authoring of its final report on Indigenous justice issues. 9781773635194



Art by nicole marie burton, from *Visions of the Crow*

## J IS FOR JOHN-KEHEWIN

In her YA graphic novel, **Visions of the Crow** (HighWater \$23.95), Volume One in the series *Dreams*, Cree writer **Wanda John-Kehewin** introduces us to Damon Quinn, who is struggling to get through his senior high school year. Bullies taunt him; a new girl named Journey keeps getting personal; and a mysterious crow begins following him. At home, Damon’s single mom struggles with alcohol and barely copes. One day, Damon is seized by a waking dream in the middle of a busy street, and his dream life becomes as real as his waking life. He also travels through time

and space to move forward in his life. Wanda John-Kehewin uses her work to understand and respond to the near destruction of First Nations cultures, languages and traditions. *Visions of the Crow* is illustrated by **nicole marie burton**. 9781774920459

## K IS FOR KYI

Headlines often tell of how social media causes depression in young girls and can be a source of destructive bullying. While this may be true, girls can also be empowered by social media, says mother and daughter writing duo **Tanya Lloyd Kyi** and **Julia Kyi** in their book, **Better Connected: How Girls Are Using Social Media for Good** (Orca \$24.95), for ages 9 to 12. “Despite the trolls and the self-esteem tolls, girls are using their platforms to change the world for the better,” they write. “So while this book acknowledges the challenges, we’re focused on the less-recognized—and more positive—parts of girls’ online experience.” 9781459828575



Tanya Lloyd and Julia Kyi

## L IS FOR LEWIS

A few years back, suffering from burn-out and too many hours hunched over a desk, over-achieving editor **Amanda Lewis** pledged to get outdoors and visit all the biggest trees in BC. She had recently returned to the province after nearly a decade away, and it seemed a good way to get reacquainted with its rugged, natural beauty. What could go wrong? For starters, a pandemic, climate change nightmares and the pressures of a one-year deadline she had given herself. In the end, Lewis gave up her “checklist” method and resorted to the slower, more fulfilling approach of simply getting to know the forests. She relates her metamorphosis in **Tracking Giants: Big Trees, Tiny Triumphs, and Misadventures in the Forest** (Greystone \$24.95). 9781771646734



Amanda Lewis



M IS FOR McKEEN



Channeling the gothic horror stories of **Mary Shelley**, the **Brontë** sisters, **Henry James** and others, **Erica McKeen** has released her debut novel, **Tear** (Invisible \$22.95), about a university student, Frances, who struggles to distinguish between what is real and what is imagined. McKeen’s style is lyrical. “The darkness was the palm of her hand, spread out and invisible in front of her eyes,” McKeen writes in an early passage. “She knew only by wriggling her fingers that the hand was there, by the texture of skin on air.” McKeen’s website calls the novel “a reclamation of female rage and a horrifyingly deformed Bildungsroman.” Now a resident of Vancouver, McKeen was born and raised in London, Ontario. She is working on her second manuscript.

9781778430060

N IS FOR NORTON

Often tackling historical subjects far removed from main urban centres, Victoria’s **Wayne Norton** has returned to one of his favourite places, the Elk Valley in his tenth title, **Beneath the Coal Dust: Historical Journeys through the Elk Valley and Crowsnest Pass** (Caitlin \$26). Norton made many childhood visits to the area, and he recalls it as “a magical place of mountains and fishing adventures up Coal Creek.” His book of 12 local history stories details people such as Hollywood great **Boris Karloff**, who appeared as a minor actor in a 1909 Fernie play when he was an unknown English immigrant called William Pratt. Other characters in the book include members of a 1920s women’s hockey team, Chinese and Syrian immigrants, and a German brewer who built a local beer empire.

9781773860923



Wayne Norton

O IS FOR ODYSSEY

An urban girl who grew up in the suburbs of New York, **Ellen Schwartz** later studied French at the University of Chicago. Not exactly the career route to becoming a back-to-the-lander, but that is what Schwartz did in the 1970s, moving to a remote BC area in the Kootenays, as she describes in her memoir **Galena Bay Odyssey: Reflections of a Hippie Homesteader** (Heritage House \$26.95). In her new surround-



Boarded-up store on Pender Street in Chinatown after white mobs attacked. Henry Tsang explores the rampage in *White Riot: The 1907 Anti-Asian Riots in Vancouver*.



Ellen Schwartz

ings, Schwartz learned to log, build a cabin, garden, and keep chickens and bees on a communal farm. Eventually, Schwartz moved with her husband and two children to Vancouver, where she established herself as an award-winning writer best known for children’s books.

9781772034455

P IS FOR PLANTE

Librarian, musician and cat photographer, **Hazel Jane Plante** has released her second novel, **Any Other City** (Arsenal Pulp \$22.95), a two-part fictional memoir ostensibly written by the narrator, Tracy St. Cyr, leader of an indie rock band. Referencing the two sides of a vinyl record, the book’s first half, “Side A,” covers the year 1993 when Tracy, a fledgling artist, arrives in a big city to pursue her ideals and falls in with a group of trans women; “Side B” flashes forward to 2019, when Tracy returns to the same city after a long healing period from a traumatic event, only now she’s a semi-famous musi-

cian. Plante’s debut novel, *Little Blue Encyclopedia (for Vivian)* (Metonymy Press, 2019) received a Lambda Literary Award and was a finalist for both a Publishing Triangle Award and a BC & Yukon Book Prize.

9781551529110

Q IS FOR QIN

**Qin Leng**’s delicate but distinct ink-and-watercolour pictures illustrate the poignant story of a father in China missing his daughter during the holidays while she studies abroad in France. **New Year** (Greystone Kids \$24.95), written by **Mei Zihan**, is set during the Lunar New Year when families traditionally come together in many cultures. The father imagines what his daughter is doing and recalls times he has spent with her. While acutely feeling the loss, the father acknowledges his daughter’s need to grow up and be independent. A previous book by Qin Leng was nominated for a Governor General’s Literary Award.

9781771647311



Hazel Jane Plante

R IS FOR RAESIDE

Political cartoonist **Adrian Raeside** began work in the early 1980s for Victoria’s *Times Colonist*, eventually becoming syndicated in more than 200 newspapers. He also published books of his collected cartoons as early as 1992 on subjects ranging from Canadian history and the BC Ferries to people’s relationship with animals. His most recent compilation, **Wildlife for Idiots: And Other Animal Cartoons** (Harbour \$16.95), includes 340 full-colour cartoons of wolves, bears, eagles, elephants and even shedding mammoths.

9781550179323

S IS FOR SAMPLER



Patrik Sampler

**Patrik Sampler** describes his upcoming novel, **Naked Defiance: A Comedy of Menace** (New Star \$19), as “the story of idealists who seek a richer engagement with life, but

are repressed by the intrusion of internecine politics.” Set at the turn of the 21st century, the story features a radical art group that undergoes disturbing disruptions of their public performances as well as the death of their leader, who dies mysteriously while in police custody. Vancouver-based Sampler’s first novel, *The Ocean Container* (Ninebark Press, 2017), was about climate change. His writing has appeared in *The Guardian*.

9781554202003

T IS FOR TSANG

In 2019, artist and Emily Carr University instructor, **Henry Tsang** created a video walking tour of the places in Vancouver’s Chinatown and Powell Street area where a crowd of white people in 1907 had rioted against anyone of Asian descent. Although no one was killed in the historic riot, extensive damage was caused by rocks and bottles thrown through Asian-owned businesses, and people of Chinese, Japanese and Indian heritage were beaten if encountered. Now Tsang will publish a book on the subject, **White Riot: The 1907 Anti-Asian Riots in Vancouver** (Arsenal Pulp \$32.95), about the dark legacy of British settler colonial violence and domination, as well as the resistance from the targeted communities. Includes a foreword by **Patricia E. Roy**, author of *A White Man’s Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (UBC Press, 1989).

9781551529196

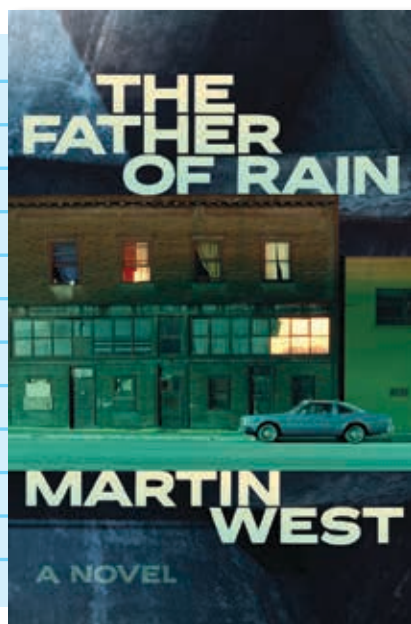


From Adrian Raeside’s latest collection, *Wildlife for Idiots: And Other Animal Cartoons*





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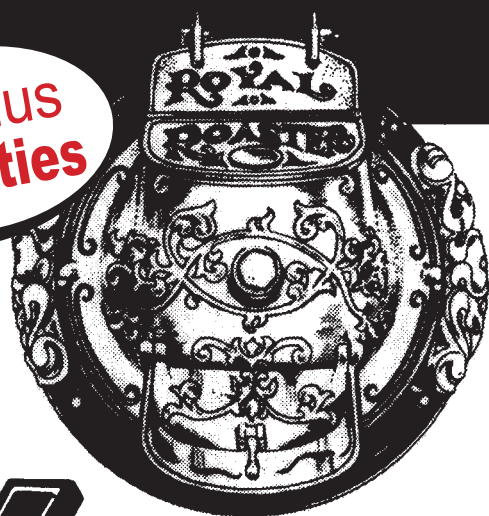
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WHO'S WHO

BRITISH COLUMBIA

U IS FOR UPTON

**Colin Upton** is a veteran of the Vancouver comics and lowbrow art scenes for more than 30 years, is set to release **Post-Modern Mini-Comics** (Conundrum \$10) a palm-sized collection of rare autobiographical work of the artist's everyday experiences. See him struggle with a new pair of stiff Doc Marten boots, or cross the border on a bus. One thing you won't read about is celebrity culture, which Upton says misleads people into believing life has no meaning without fame. After dropping out of art school in 1985, Upton went on to produce over 300 mini-comics and digests. His comics include *Big Thing*, *Buddha on the Road* and *Incubus*. In 2016 he created the 24-page comic book *Kicking at the Darkness* (Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre), which tells stories of the Canadian Army's encounters with victims and survivors of the Holocaust at the end of World War II.

9781772620849



Colin Upton, self-portrait

V IS FOR VALIN

In her debut collection of poems, **Shapeshifters** (Nightwood \$19.95), **Délani Valin** embodies different personas to deal with her urban Métis experience and neurodivergence. It was fellow poet **Marilyn Bowering** who suggested to Valin that she “play with different personas as a way to access difficult experiences,” says Valin in her acknowledgements. Valin's choice of personas is intriguing: Barbie, Betty Crocker, Michelin Man and Starbucks among others. She even shape-shifts to conditions like autism and depression. Other poems are straightforward confessionals. Valin's publisher says this book “maps ways in which an individual can attempt to fit into a world that is inhospitable to them, and makes a case for shifting the shape of that world.”

9780889714281

W IS FOR WHARTON

Former chair of creative writing at Douglas College, **Calvin Wharton** has published his second collection of poetry, **This Here Paradise** (Anvil \$18), which is balm for a troubled world facing a number of existential crises. There is a recognition that ‘paradise’ has both highs and lows, but Wharton ends on a high note. According to the book description, the tension in these poems resolves through the book's five sections “as Wharton opens a suitcase



The Mayfly was an aircraft designed and constructed in 1910 by Lilian Bland (at right). Haley Healey chronicles Bland's life.



Panel from Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas' graphic novel, *JAJ: A Haida Manga*

of birds and watches them soar over a landscape alive with radiant, open waters.” Previously, Wharton published a collection of short fiction and a poetry chapbook.

9781772141931

X IS FOR AVIATRIX

Like **Leonardo da Vinci** centuries before her, **Lilian Bland** (1878–1971) liked to watch birds soaring in the sky, fascinated by the mechanics of flight. Airplanes were still new when Bland was growing up and mostly flown by men. No one would teach the young woman to fly, so she designed, built and eventually flew her own plane, becoming the first woman in the world to do so. Her achievements are related in **Lilian Bland: An Amazing Aviatrix** (Heritage \$19.95), for ages 12+. Written by



Calvin Wharton

**Haley Healey** and illustrated by **Kimiko Fraser**, the story follows Bland's adventures in England to her adopted home in Quatsino Sound on Vancouver Island, where she homesteaded before returning to England.

9781772034332



Délani Valin

Y IS FOR YAHGULANAAS

Using his blend of traditional and modern art, **Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas'** third graphic novel, **JAJ: A Haida Manga** (D&M \$34.95), concerns the history of the first contact between Europeans and Indigenous peoples, and the colonization of the northern West Coast. A number of historical figures are tracked by Yahgulanaas, including a Norwegian settler named **Johan Adrian Jacobsen** (JAJ), who went to the Haida village of Masset to collect items for a German museum. *JAJ: A Haida Manga* chronicles the devastating smallpox epidemic, and the mass resettlement of disenfranchised peoples (Indigenous and European). Yahgulanaas doesn't use traditional comic book cells; rather, his panels flow from one scene to another that together, if merged, form one large image reminiscent of a woven robe.

9781771623537

Z IS FOR ZWICKY

“Western civilization is over.” So begins **Jan Zwicky's** latest collection of essays, **Once upon a Time in the West: Essays on the Politics of Thought and Imagination** (MQUP \$29.95). In her exploration of the root of global cultural and ecological collapse, Zwicky charts how the Renaissance led to



Jan Zwicky

industrialization, the growth of capitalism and Big Technology. She shows how our thought systems grew to become deeply anthropocentric, which caused value not to be recognized unless it was monetized. In general, we have become oblivious to context and big-picture thinking, all the while rejecting empathy and compassion as distorting influences. Western thought has become blind to critical features of reality, and now the consequences of that blinkered vision are beginning to unfold.

9780228017097



# FESTIVAL MILESTONE

BY BEVERLY CRAMP

At a one-day writers workshop in Sorrento, BC, in 2002, the late author **Jack Whyte** dared to imagine something bigger. Why not expand the format? Whyte, who was rumoured to have sold more than a million books of his historical fiction series *Dream of Eagles*, offered to invite some of his favourite authors for the following year to make something resembling a proper writers festival.



Deanna Kawatski

Boom! The Shuswap International Writers Festival was born. Held a year later in the larger city of Salmon Arm, the event will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year and is now called Word on the Lake.

Right from year one, the festival attracted prestigious writers like **Gail Anderson-Dargatz**, **bill bissett** and **Ann Walsh**. And of course, Jack Whyte.

But that first year wasn't without its glitches despite the enormous amount of work done by early organizers **Kay McCracken** and **Fran Bach**. On day one of the festival, McCracken was up at 4 am. While registering participants and volunteers, a call came in from one of the festival's guests, a literary agent,



(l to r): **Caitlin Hicks**, **Brian Isaac Thomas**, **Theresa Kishkan**, and **Howard White** will be among those at the 20th Word on the Lake (May 19–21).

consultant for the festival in its early years. She recalls that first year too: "The air in the Prestige Inn buzzed with excitement as I wove through the chattering crowd of authors, agents and publishers. When I checked in, I learned that my room was on the fourth floor and that the elevator was broken. Broken! Luckily my partner, Eric, helped me pack my heavy bags; one containing material for the three workshops (on three different subjects) that I had agreed to give, up the steep stairs. At the top a chambermaid told me the elevator would be fixed in a week."

Kawatski, who had spent much of the previous year as writer-in-residence at the Ryga Centre in Penticton, says she was inspired to help bring more literary life to the Shuswap. "It was the first writers festival to be held in Interior BC," Kawatski says, "and presenters were brought in from as far afield as Toronto, Seattle and even Minneapolis."

Kawatski is quick to acknowledge Fran Bach and Kay McCracken for getting the festival off the ground. "Together they built the 'flying machine,' but they'd be the first to agree that without the enthusiastic team of volunteers it never would have gotten off the ground."

Deanna Kawatski will be in Salmon Arm at this year's Word on the Lake (May 19–21). Other presenters include the Giller-nominated **Brian Isaac Thomas**, playwright **Caitlin Hicks**, author **Theresa Kishkan**, and publisher and author **Howard White**.

## Imagine... there's a writers festival

How **Jack Whyte's** daring idea led to the 20th anniversary of Word on the Lake.

reporting that she had landed at the wrong airport—Kamloops instead of Kelowna. McCracken placed a call to poet **Garry Gottfriedson**, who operated a ranch near Kamloops and was slated to be one of the workshop presenters. Although Gottfriedson was still haying that morning, he agreed to pick up the stranded literary agent. She would

have to wait at his homestead until he finished haying, but "they arrived in plenty of time for the gala," says McCracken.

Word on the Lake is held annually at the Prestige Harbourfront Resort in Salmon Arm. Author **Deanna Kawatski**, who is also a founding member of Word on the Lake, served as the main

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Edwin Wong (1974-) is a classicist and theatre researcher specializing in the impact of the highly improbable. He has been invited to talk at venues from the Kennedy Center and the University of Coimbra in Portugal to international conferences held by the National New Play Network, the Canadian Association of Theatre Research, the Society of Classical Studies, and the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. His first book, *The Risk Theatre Model of Tragedy*, is igniting an international arts movement. He was educated at Brown University and lives in Victoria, Canada. Follow him on melpomeneswork.com and Twitter @TheoryOfTragedy.

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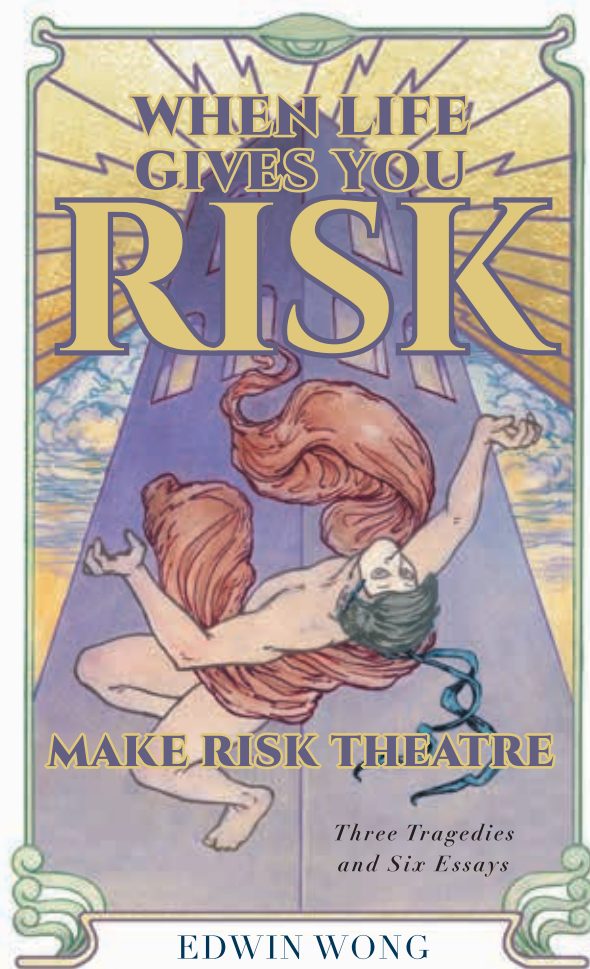


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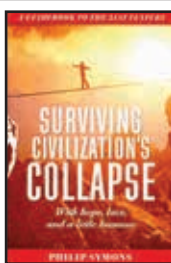


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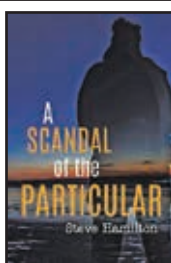


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# OBITS



## Anne Cameron 1938–2022

PETER ROBSON PHOTO

BY ALAN TWIGG

**A** British Columbia original, **Anne Cameron** was born in Nanaimo on August 20, 1938, and she died of bacterial pneumonia on November 30, 2022.

Easily one of the province's most ground-breaking writers, the 16th recipient of the George Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award and the author of possibly the bestselling work of fiction ever published within British Columbia by a BC-born author (*Daughters of Copper Woman*), was also an accomplished screenwriter (*Dreamspeaker*, *Ticket to Heaven*, *Bomb Squad*, *The Tin Flute*, *A Matter of Choice*, *Homecoming* and *Drying Up The Streets*) and a dutiful and doting mother and caretaker for three generations of children.

"I don't think anyone has captured the idiom of the working-class, BC, coastal small community as well as she has," says **Howard White**, Cameron's long-time publisher, in a *Tyee* interview. "I sort of think of her as the **William Faulkner** of the BC coast."

Anne Cameron's audacious *Daughters of Copper Woman* (Press Gang, 1981) has been reprinted at least fifteen times and translated into numerous languages.

Anne Cameron is a "strong voice for the emancipation of women, regardless of their sexual preference," said

Vancouver LGBTQ+ city councillor **Elen Woodsworth** when she presented the Woodcock Award in 2010 and declared Author Appreciation Day in Cameron's honour.

Often her books celebrated perseverance in the face of adversity, and she delighted in West Coast culture-at-large, capturing the inventive ways people spoke and the freedom to be unconventional beyond European traditions.

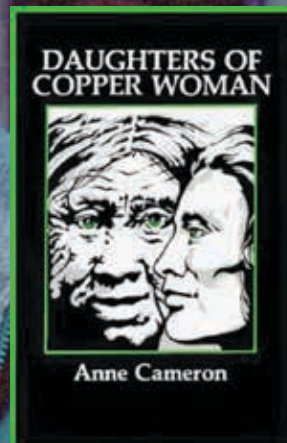
"I always enjoyed Cam's humour, admired her publications, and respected her serious commitment to good causes," says fellow Vancouver Island novelist **Jack Hodgins**. To many, Cameron was a mentor. "Without her as a lighthouse," says Haida artist **Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas**, "I might never have left my sheltered coastline to sail out into the offshore waters of Art."

### Robert Hogg



Robert Hogg

Born on March 26, 1942, **Robert Hogg** was raised on the VT Ranch on Green Lake in the Cariboo, and in the lower Fraser Valley. He died of cancer on November 13, 2022, in Ottawa, Ontario. Although he spent the majority of his adult life in Ontario, Hogg studied English and Creative Writing at UBC—where he co-edited



*Daughters of Copper Woman*  
by Anne Cameron (Press  
Gang Publishers, 1981)

the influential literary magazine *TISH* until 1964, when he left BC. As a professor of English Literature and Poetics at Carleton University, Hogg published five books of poetry and six chapbooks, as well as editing a comprehensive anthology of Canadian poetic theory. His poems appeared in more than 70 periodicals. Hogg remained a friend and colleague to many BC poets and writers, and a poetry reading event was held in his memory at People's Co-op Bookstore in February, which was attended by **George Bowering**, **Daphne Marlatt**, **Fred Wah** and others.

### Glen Mofford



Glen Mofford

Writer and historian **Glen Mofford** of Port Alberni died on February 19, 2022. Mofford wrote about BC's historic hotels and their drinking establishments for many years, with his work culminating in the books *Aqua Vitae: A History of the Saloons and Hotels Bars of Victoria, 1851–1917* (TouchWood, 2016) and *Along the E&N: A Journey Back to the Historic Hotels of Vancouver Island* (TouchWood, 2019). His most recent title, *Room at the Inn: Historic Hotels of British Columbia's Southern Interior*, will be posthumously published later this year by Heritage House.

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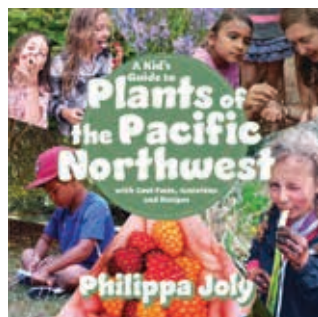
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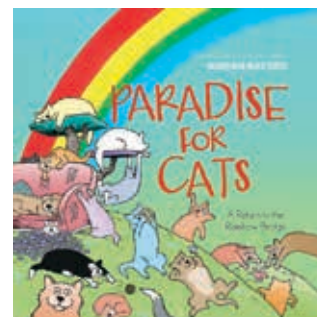
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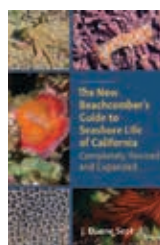
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