

**YOUR FREE GUIDE TO BOOKS & AUTHORS**

**BC**

**BOOKWORLD**

**VOL. 38 • NO. 1 • SPRING 2024**



**BRANDON  
REID**

A novel of  
indigeneity,  
masculinity  
& tradition.

P 22

# HOLD YOUR WILD HORSES

**Wayne McCrory** originally thought wild horses were an invasive feral species. But one night he dreamed of a giant stone horse and everything changed.

See page 7

**JUDY  
LEBLANC**

Three generations of  
Acadian women. P 26



**EMELIA  
SYMINGTON-FEDY**

A memoir of her girl gang and 90s  
rape culture in a small BC town. P 10

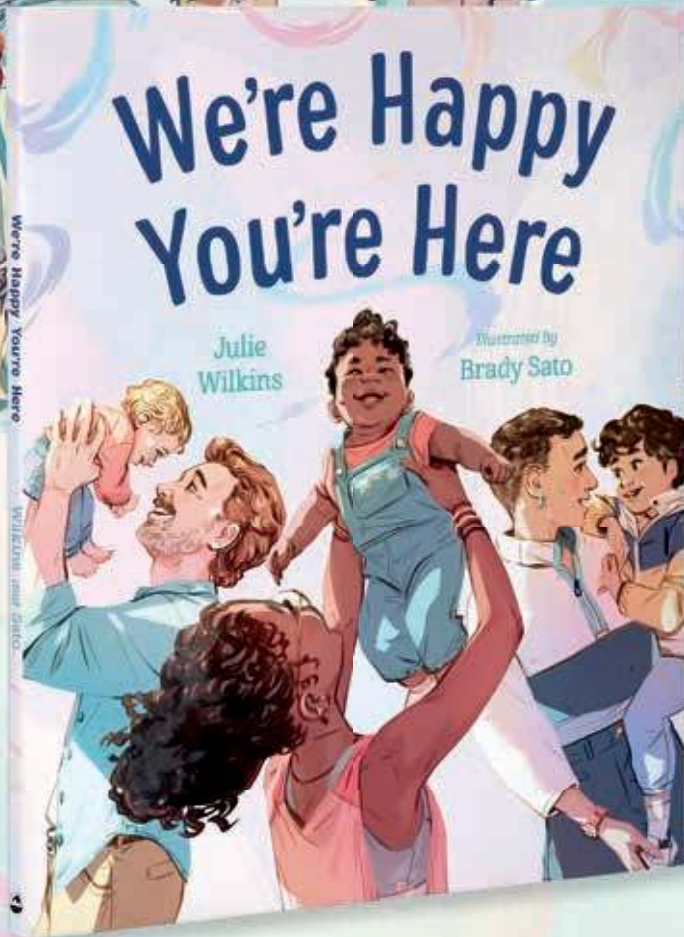


**GINGER  
GOODWIN**

Playwright Elaine Ávila on  
the union activist. P 20-21



# We Wished. We hoped. We Dreamed.



9781459836488 • HC • \$21.95

**“An inclusive epistolary debut.”**

—Publishers Weekly

**“With a realistic style and crystalline colors, the pictures convey the happy anticipation of new babies.”**

—School Library Journal

It takes many special people to help a child grow, and every journey is unique!

Recently my best friend became a father to the most wonderful small human through a whole lot of wishing, planning and saving. Curt and Avery’s journey involved friends, family, a surrogate, an egg donor, healthcare specialists, a financial adviser, doctors, nurses, lab technicians and many others. Their beautiful story continues within a community of shared wisdom and love.

The path to (and through) family life isn’t always easy. And while I set out to create a book that shows the care, tenacity and expertise I witnessed along Curt and Avery’s journey, I sure hope it resonates with small humans of all sorts—and their many special people.

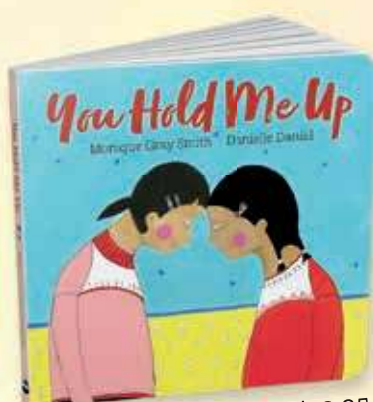
—Julie Wilkins



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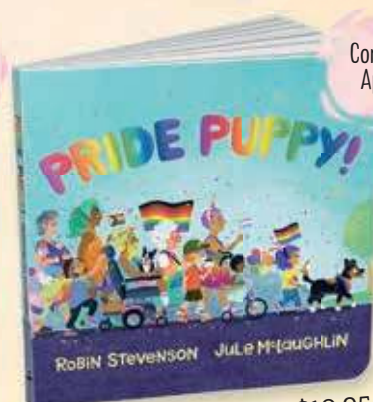


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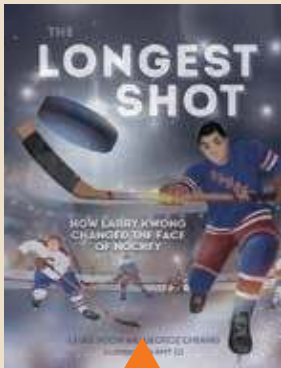


# BC TOP SELLERS

**Ken McGoogan**  
Searching for Franklin: New  
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Mystery (D&M \$38.95)

**Wayne McCrory**  
Wild Horses of the Chilcotin:  
Their History and Future  
(Harbour \$38.95)

**Osprey Orielle Lake**  
The Story is in Our Bones:  
How Worldviews and Climate  
Justice Can Remake  
a World in Crisis  
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The Longest Shot:  
How Larry Kwong Changed  
the Face of Hockey  
(Orca \$24.95)

**Daniel Smeen**  
Autistic Adults: Exploring the  
Forgotten End of the Spectrum  
(Ronsdale \$24.95)

**Yosef Wosk**  
Naked in a Pyramid:  
Travels & Observations  
(Anvil \$22)

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



**Lorraine Weir** with  
**Chief Roger William**  
Lha yudit'ih  
We Always Find a Way  
(Talonbooks \$35)

**Perry Bulwer**  
Misguided: My Jesus Freak  
Life in a Doomsday Cult  
(New Star \$26)

**Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson**  
& **Robert Davidson**  
A Haida Wedding  
(Heritage House \$29.95)

**Sam George, Jill Yonit Goldberg,**  
**Liam Belson, Dylan MacPhee,**  
**Tanis Wilson**  
The Fire Still Burns: Life In and  
After Residential School  
(UBC Press \$19.95)

**Lou Allison & Jane Wilde**  
Gumboot Guys: Nautical  
Adventures on B.C.'s North Coast  
(Caitlin \$26)

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

# PEOPLE

Natasha Tatton  
and Ed Tatton



## SNOWBOARDS to SOURDOUGH

**B**ecome a master bread-maker, open a bakery, publish a cookbook. That's the path taken by Whistler-based **Ed Tatton** with his wife **Natasha** for **BReD: Sourdough Loaves, Small Breads, and Other Plant-Based Baking** (Penguin \$50), a vegan cookbook. The couple moved from the UK to Canada in 2013 to snowboard and work in hospitality. Ed eventually began making sourdough bread for the restaurant where he worked, which he also sold in small batches to his friends. Word spread, more people wanted Ed's bread, and the couple opened their own bakery to maintain their vegan lifestyle and values (sourdough is naturally vegan). Their cookbook shares techniques and 100 recipes for making naturally leavened sourdough loaves, small breads and vegan small-baked goods.

9780735244443

## Novel motherhood

**W**e meet Frida in the hospital, finding ways to concoct memories of a happy childhood, whether truthful or not. Having lost her memory, Frida looks to others for answers including a nurse. "Your name is Frida Frank Brooke," says the nurse. "Named Frida either after the Mexican painter or a rich old aunt, not quite sure which. Your mother, Lulu Frank, is quite famous and you are both artists. Does any of that ring a bell?" Frida isn't sure and thinks, "Not what I am hoping for, but it's a start. And truth be known, the sound of her voice is more comforting than the words."

But it's Frida's lawyer who draws out most of her story in **A Reluctant Mother** (Ronsdale \$25.95) **Deirdre Simon Dore's** debut novel, due out in May.

Difficult, blunt and humorous, Frida unfolds her story while

confined to the hospital bed where the lawyer relentlessly pushes for a recounting of events. It seems that Frida had chosen not to have children but her husband's daughter from a previous infidelity ends up in their care with uncomfortable, even disastrous consequences. Frida's memory comes back to her in scenes that she is forced to relive, some involving tragedy and others with humour.

Award-winning Dore is an artist with two children. She came to BC from New York with a degree from Boston University. She has an MFA in creative writing from UBC and lives in the Kootenays with her family, black lab and assorted livestock.

9781553807100

**Journey Prize-winning**  
**Deirdre Simon Dore**



## Being Black in a white culture

**A**s an early creator and proponent of Black literature in Vancouver, **Wayde Compton** found he was on a lonely path—although he was supported by other white colleagues who "made space" for his sensibilities, they were so influenced by the dominant white culture and blind to the overwhelming power of it, that it was hard for them to relate to Compton.

"I could see in the way that my hip hop interests simply did not fit anywhere that there was a centralization of a singular lineage. I *felt* it. It was there in the silences," Compton writes in **Toward an Anti-Racist Poetics** (University of Alberta Press \$14.99), adding, "the underlying assumptions of the scene functioned in a way that also made my work intellectually orphaned."

For artists from outside white culture, they either held on to the dominant "white centre," says Compton, and engaged with it by bending their work to fit in, "or you made your lonely way outside it."

Compton argues for unseating white universalism in art and shows how a more collective poetic approach makes space for diversity.

9781772127430



**Wayde Compton**



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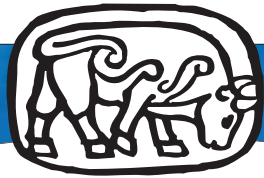
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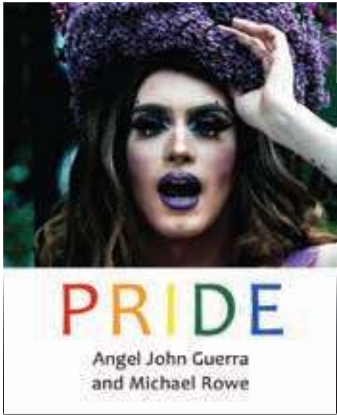
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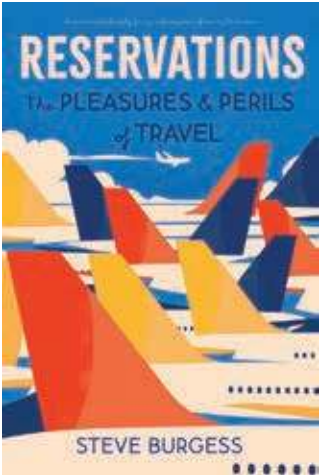


PRIDE

ANGEL JOHN GUERRA AND  
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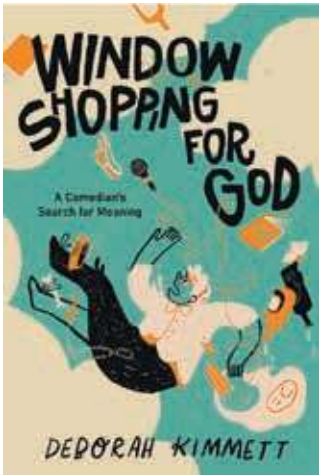
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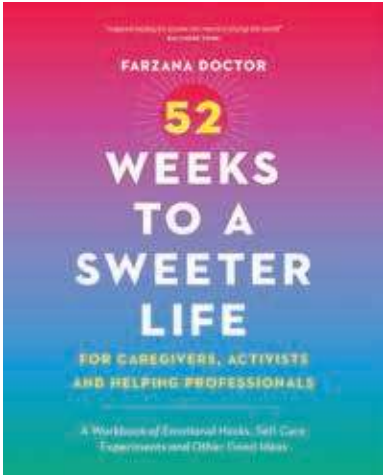
WINDOW SHOPPING FOR GOD

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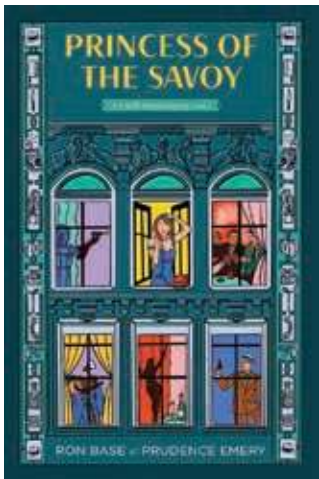
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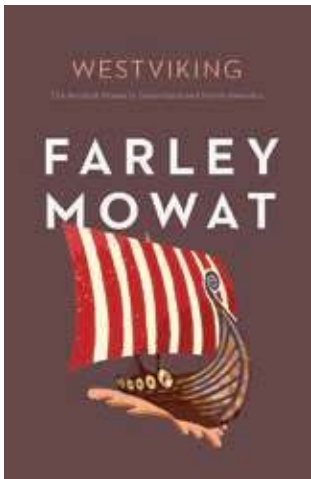
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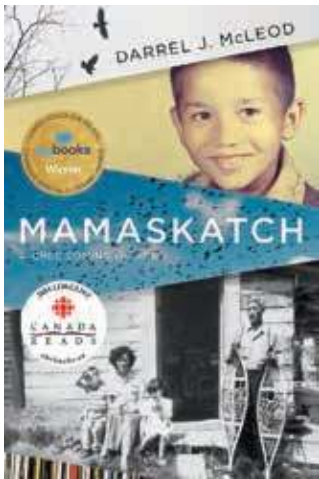
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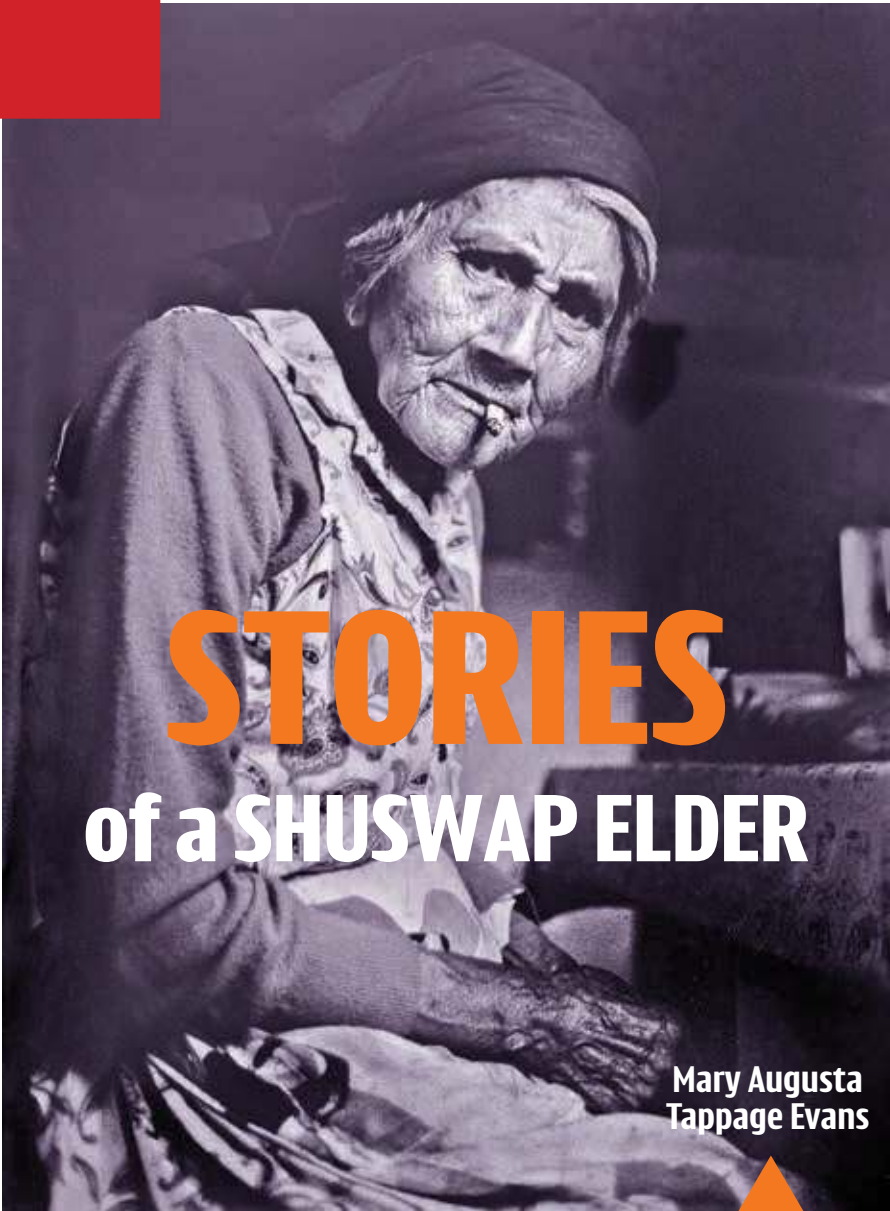
Pasta, rosaries and girlfriends

In a deeply-felt paean to her immigrant parents who moved from post-war, sunny, dry southern Italy to Lake Cowichan where it rains more than the sun shines, **Tina Biello** writes of her upbringing in **The Weight of Survival** (Caitlin \$20), a combination of poetry, short prose, Italian curses and blessings, and even a recipe. “Church every Sunday, pasta three times a week, / prayed the rosary each night before bed,” she writes. Her father becomes a logger, her mother a housewife in a poor but loving household with seven children. Hot chocolate from a vending machine at the hockey arena was a rare and special treat. School lunches were often mortadella sandwiches and strange cookies that the other kids weren’t familiar with and wouldn’t trade for their desserts. Later, Biello begins living her queer life and “The women she brought home / every Christmas got them talking. / One year the woman who came home was her wife.” Poet, playwright and actor, Biello was the second Poet Laureate of Nanaimo from 2017–2020. Recently, she has been collaborating with composers and the Vancouver Island Symphony to set her poetry to new symphonic works.

9781773861395



Tina Biello (middle) with her two sisters in the town of Lake Cowichan, circa 1975.



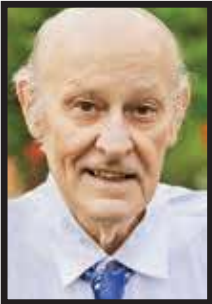
Mary Augusta Tappage Evans

**Born in BC’s Cariboo region in 1888,** **Mary Augusta Tappage Evans** (known as Augusta) could remember when travel was by horse-drawn stagecoach—indeed, she knew stories of stage coach robberies. The granddaughter of a Soda Creek hereditary chief on her maternal side, and on the paternal side, a Métis who came west after **Louis Riel** was arrested, she was a fluent Shuswap speaker despite having spent her early years at a residential school where she was only allowed to speak English. Interviewed five years before she died in 1978 by pioneer settler descendant, **Jean E. Speare** (1921–2022), Augusta’s oral history was originally published in 1973 with photography by **Robert Keziere**. Now back in print, **The Days of Augusta** (Harbour \$24.95) edited by Speare, offers a look back at the coming of gold seekers and settlers who changed the lives of First Nations. “I could see things happening to my people that I didn’t like, but what could I do? I was still too young,” Augusta said.

9781990776489

Logger-shamed

It’s been over 30 years since the War in the Woods in Clayoquot Sound that ended environmentally unsound clear-cut logging in the area—the largest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history until the 2021 Fairy Creek blockades. A less noted outcome was the loss of 150 logging jobs. One of those loggers, **Bruce Hornidge**, writes of the impact on his life in **Loggerheads: A Memoir** (Endless Sky \$24.99) in his effort to add “a more nuanced light” on those combative times. “I came to believe the Clayoquot protest summer cost me a



Bruce Hornidge

twenty-six-year accident-free safety record—and very nearly cost me my life,” he writes. “Logger-shamed” at the age of 49, Hornidge later worked as a security guard. He admits “the logging industry was not blameless. Yes, a careless approach was adopted by many as the forestry industry picked up speed during what was an era of largely unrestricted logging.” But in his defence, Hornidge adds, “there were those among us proactively seeking a more environmentalist approach that would conserve, even while we harvested.” This is his story.

9781989398975

A rainbow of diversity

One of the benefits of being Canada’s rainiest and cloudiest city is that it gets a lot of rainbows—hence the title of **Blair Mirau’s** history of his hometown, **The City of Rainbows: A Colourful History of Prince Rupert** (Heritage \$24.95). Located on Kaien Island, Prince Rupert has always been a trading hub. Beginning with the Ts’mysen inhabitants and their many Indigenous trading partners, and the later arrival of Eu-

ropean fur traders as well as European and Asian settlers, the city is also ethnically diverse. Compiling a series of historical events that are illustrated with archival photographs, Mirau doesn’t shy away from uncomfortable truths even as he celebrates how the city has grown. Mirau was a former Prince Rupert city councillor before the age of 30. Since 2016, he has worked as the chief executive officer of the Gitmaxmak’ay Nisga’a Society.

9781772034752



Blair Mirau



# New Friends for Your Bookshelf!



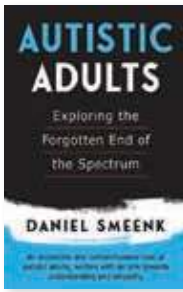
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BC HISTORY

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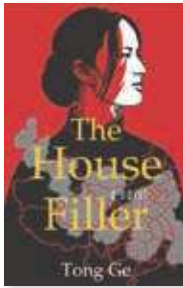
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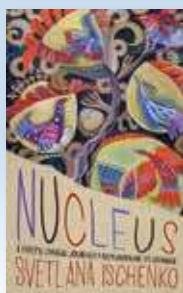
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## Nucleus: A Poet's Lyrical Journey from Ukraine to Canada

Svetlana Ischenko

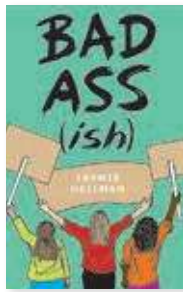
Illuminates Ischenko's poetic transformation and the dynamic of both Ukrainian and Canadian subject matter and sensibilities.

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## Badass(ish)

Jaymie Heilman

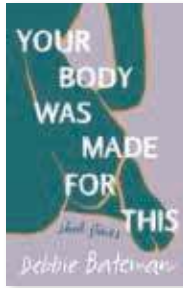
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The Wild Horses of the Chilcotin:  
Their History and Future  
by Wayne McCrory (Harbour \$39.95)

BY JIM COOPERMAN



When **Wayne McCrory** first visited the Chilcotin in 2001 to research grizzly bears and other species, he came with prejudices about the wild horses in the area. McCrory held the common view that these horses are an invasive feral species that can damage native grasslands and thus need to be eradicated. He couldn't have been more wrong.

After a few days of survey work during which McCrory and his study group encountered bands of large, handsome wild horses, he saw that the wild bunchgrass meadows where they grazed were free of degradation. McCrory began to question his previous assumptions.

Following an intense dream one night about climbing a cliff that morphs into a giant stone horse that for a moment becomes alive, he became inspired to study these wild horses and thus began documenting their numbers and mapping their locations and trails.

After two decades of rigorous field work, McCrory makes the case that the wild horses in this part of BC are a resilient part of the ecosystem in his book, **The Wild Horses of the Chilcotin**, and must be protected.

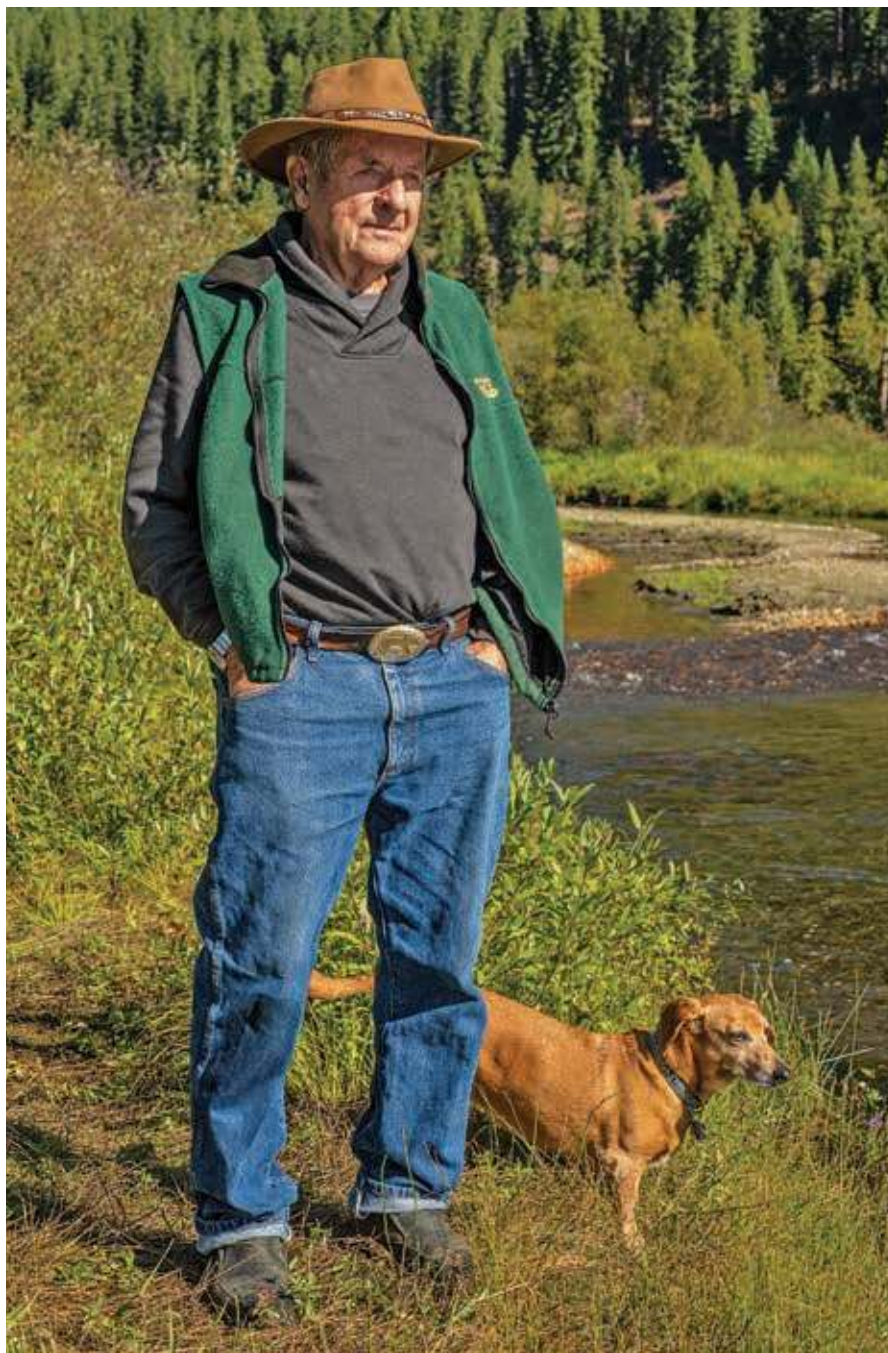
McCrory isn't the only one seeking to save wild horses. The Xeni Gwet'in/Tsilhqot'in First Nation view the wild horse—or qiyus in their language—as an integral part of their lives, a spiritual element even, says **Marilyn Baptiste**, former Xeni Gwet'in Chief in the book's foreword. "To protect our existence, we must also protect our wild horses and our rights to work with them," she writes. "To protect them means never to break the spirit of the wild heart."

The original goal of McCrory's research project was to collect data for the Xeni Gwet'in to help support their goal to halt logging plans and create a massive wilderness preserve. A big part of the area they fought to save is known as the Brittany Triangle. The only reason that Brittany Triangle remains a wilderness area today is because of the tenacity of the Tsilhqot'in, with help from conservation organizations, to do so. When loggers were ready to move equipment into the region in 1992, the Tsilhqot'in blockaded the only entrance at Henry's Crossing bridge. This protest action resulted in a promise from the then-Premier **Mike Harcourt** that no logging would take place without the consent of Xeni Gwet'in First Nation.

Two years later, land use planning resulted in the creation of parks in the region including the large Ts'il7os Provincial Park, but the wild grasslands were not included due to pressure from cattle ranchers and the Brittany Triangle remained mostly unprotected. After Wayne McCrory completed his initial research, he presented his results to the Xeni Gwet'in community in 2002 and recommended that the Brittany Triangle be fully protected as Western

# Hold your wild horses

**Wayne McCrory** originally thought wild horses were an invasive feral species. But one night he dreamed of a giant stone horse and everything changed.



JEFF GEORGE PHOTO

**Biologist Wayne McCrory has published more than ninety scientific reports on wildlife and conservation, including reports on wild horses in BC and Alberta.**

Canada's first wild horse preserve. As a result, the community's leader, Nits'iln (Chief) **Roger William**, recommended that the entire Xeni Gwet'in traditional 770,000-hectare land base be fully protected as the "Eagle Lake Henry Elegesi Qiyus (Cayuse) Wild Horse Preserve."

Following his initial study, McCrory continued to do more research to determine where the horses originated, how they survived the harsh winters, how they coped after a massive wildfire had burned through the region and how they interacted with other species, including the wolves and cougars that prey on them. When he heard

how the peat was still burning after the wildfires, he joined others with the difficult task of putting these fires out by digging trenches by hand. When he seriously burned his ankle after stepping into hot coals, McCrory was forced to leave on his ATV alone in the night, drive 22 kilometres to his vehicle "including through a stream" and then on to Williams Lake where he checked into a busy emergency ward, and had to clean the wound himself. Fortunately, it was only a serious second-degree burn which finally healed after a few months, despite a throbbing infection.

Certainly, a real treat for readers are the amazing photos and the many

stories about the wild horses, including those so well known by the locals that they have names. Most often, the horses remained aloof and were difficult to observe, but McCrory describes one field day when a group called the black stallion band "...descended upon us from about 100 metres away. Chunks of turf flew as if flocks of little black cowbirds were flitting out of the way. The foals kept pace alongside, as close to their mothers as they could get. At the last minute about 20 metres away, the herd veered off in amazing unison as one sees in flocks of birds when they turn. They passed so close we saw the whites of their eyes and the pink insides of their flared nostrils."

Thanks to McCrory's impeccable research, we learn about the origins of these wild horses and how they ended up in the Chilcotin. Genetic testing of hair samples, along with physical traits that the primary bloodline for most of the wild horses in the Brittany Triangle is from the Spanish Iberian horses that arrived in Mexico in the sixteenth century with the conquistadors, as well as from the Canadian horse that originated from the horses that arrived from France in the seventeenth century.

Although these wild horses are deemed by some to be feral horses, we learn they could also be seen as a species that has returned to where it originated. Paleontologists have long determined that the original horses first evolved in North America, then migrated across the Bering Strait to populate Europe and Asia, while the first horses here went extinct. The genetic testing also shows traces from the East Russian (Yakut) horses that have evolved to withstand extreme cold winters, which may explain how the Chilcotin horses have adapted to survive in this northern region.

Still, many of the wild horses of West Chilcotin are only partly protected, as an estimated 2,200 of the total population of 2,800 survive outside the Eagle Lake Henry Elegesi Qiyus (Cayuse) Wild Horse Preserve in heavily logged areas. Negotiations between the Tsilhqot'in and the province are ongoing. In the meantime, wild horses are still subject to outdated provincial laws. In the past, bounties were placed on wild horses and many were killed. The province also hasn't recognized the wild horse preserve created by the Xeni Gwet'in.

Overall, *The Wild Horses of the Chilcotin* is a fabulous read about a fascinating topic that should be of great interest to horse lovers, to those interested in conservation and to those who love stories about First Nations that remain close to their lands. In this part memoir, part history, part research report and part adventure story, the Chilcotin wilderness comes alive through Wayne McCrory's keen powers of observation, analysis and storytelling.

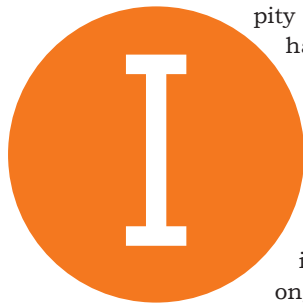
9781990776366

*Jim Cooperman, author of the BC bestseller, Everything Shuswap, is a back-to-the-lander and environmentalist who lives with his wife Kathi in a log home they built decades ago. He is currently working on a book about the wildfire that devastated their community in 2023.*



**Pitfall:**  
**The Race to Mine the World's Most**  
**Vulnerable Places by Christopher Pollon**  
(Greystone/David Suzuki Institute \$39.95)

BY ALEXANDER VARTY



I pity the poor bookseller that has to rack **Christopher Pollon's** groundbreaking study of the international mining industry, **Pitfall**. It's not that this work isn't going to sell: it is, and it should, dealing as it does with a hidden and ongoing catastrophe that is already affecting us all. But where to shelve it?

Logically, perhaps, *Pitfall* should be placed in the Business and Economics section. Much of Pollon's text has to do with the unseen economic infrastructure that supports the mining industry, whether that comes in the form of speculative stock ventures featuring Vancouver-based "zombie companies" or through government subsidies and outlandishly favourable tax deals, often from small and debt-stricken nations that can ill afford them. Also under consideration is the role that rare minerals such as lithium, cobalt, niobium and tantalum will play in the emerging "green economy"—without them, the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy will be impossible. Ironically, as Pollon points out, the extraction and processing of these minerals requires vast amounts of electricity, most often generated by coal-fuelled power plants.

Which raises another possible placement: Science and the Environment. Published with the imprimatur of the David Suzuki Institute, *Pitfall: The Race to Mine the World's Most Vulnerable Places* looks at a variety of emerging technologies, both those used in the manufacture of such things as EV and cell phone batteries and in mining itself. Especially fascinating, although equally worrying, are the advances in robotic technology that will allow new mines to go deeper than humanly possible—inside the earth's crust, but also to the bottom of the world's oceans, where millions of tons of mineral-rich nodules lie on the surface of vast abyssal plains.

The "Places" in its title suggests that *Pitfall* might also find a home in the Travel section. In addition to the Pacific islands of Tonga, Nauru and Kiribati, where nearby ocean canyons are being explored as a possible source of profit, Pollon's explorations take us to Timmins, Ontario—where his grandfather dug for gold and nickel before dying of silicosis, the "miner's disease"—to Inner Mongolia's Bayan Obo mine, created thanks to the unpublicized ethnic cleansing of some 150,000 locals, and to the world's richest island, New Guinea, where entire mountains of gold and copper are being reduced to rubble against a background of Indigenous unrest, corporate secrecy and government-backed killings.

As the mining industry seeks riches from Mongolia to the Pacific Islands and new territory on the ocean floor, the methods remain the same: secure the terrain, steal the resources and clear out, leaving a terrible mess behind.

And with that in mind, I'd like to propose a fourth option for puzzled booksellers: True Crime.

What may be surprising to many—although probably not to those of us who, like Pollon himself, have family history with the mining industry—is that the rapacious greed of the Gilded Age robber barons such as BC's own **Robert Dunsmuir** lives on a century later. The scene of the crime has shifted from the coal mines of Northumberland, Kentucky and Vancouver Island to the so-called "global south," but the methods remain the same: secure the terrain, steal the resources and move on, leaving a terrible mess behind.

In places like New Guinea, the corporate thieves are abetted by politicians who contend that since Western nations grew rich by despoiling their own terrain, Third World countries should be allowed to do the same. Increasingly, though, the residents of areas affected by mining's devastation and toxic aftermath are organizing, often with the aid of environmentally focused non-governmental organizations. Despite being met by a torrent of misinformation and, sometimes, lethal force, activists are beginning to win enough legal and public-opinion battles that the words "social licence" are starting to be heard more frequently in corporate boardrooms. This is encouraging, and *Pitfall* is not entirely a catalogue of past disasters, current worries and future horrors.

The downside of victories on the ground, however, is the aforementioned move to explore for minerals under the sea, and this pro-

vides *Pitfall* with additional urgency. Under the guise of the green economy, companies such as Vancouver's The Metals Company (TMC) are touting deep-sea trawling by vast robotic submersibles as a means of supplying Big Tech with the rare minerals it needs. It remains to be seen whether this is an economically viable plan or simply a way of excavating the pockets of credulous investors, but the danger is that our species' technological arrogance will once again rush into an environment that is not well understood, ruin it and move on.

But move on to *where*? As there is no Planet B, the answer to that question can be found under Science Fiction.

9781771649124

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

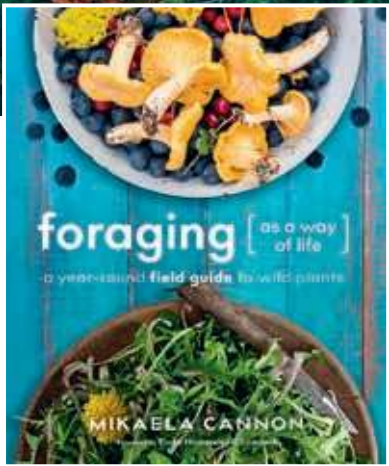
Christopher Pollon



# MINE CRIMES



# Building a Brighter Future for the Generations to Come



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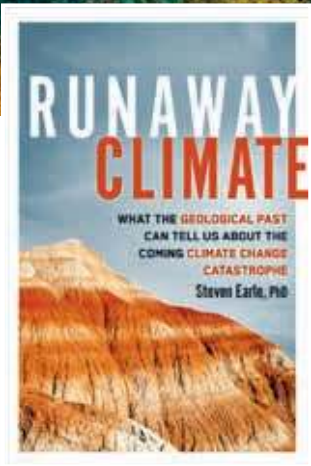
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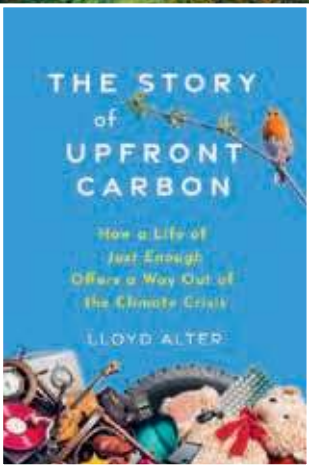
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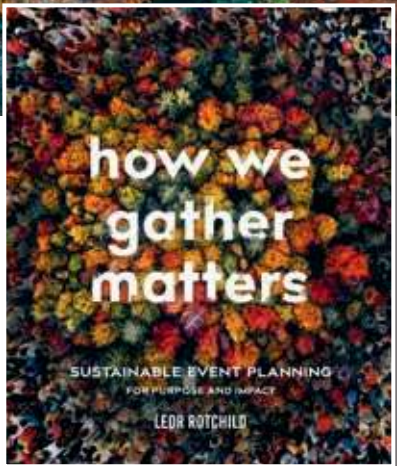
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–Bob Willard, Founder and Chief Sustainability Champion, Sustainability Advantage

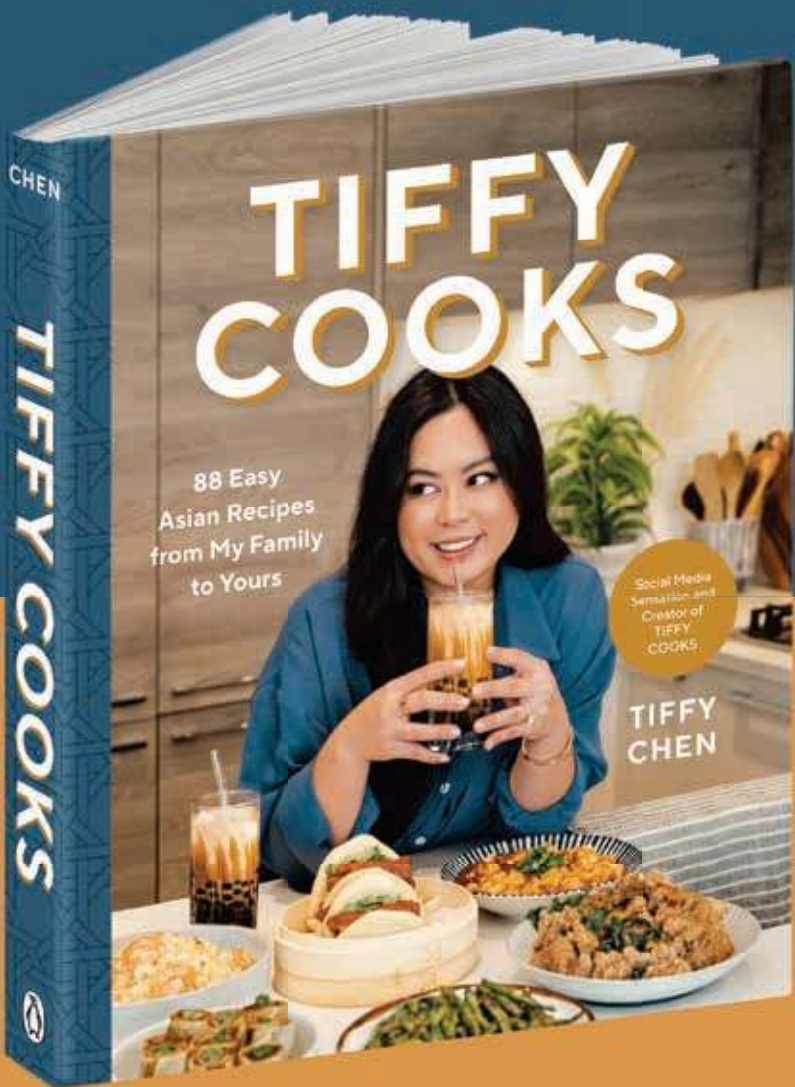


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Train tracks snake through  
**Emelia Symington-Fedy's**  
hometown of Armstrong—  
the town where she grew up  
and where she has returned  
in the wake of a murder.

# TOWN WITHOUT PITY

In this gritty  
memoir, a woman  
faces the rape  
culture she  
grew up in.

**Skid Dogs**  
by **Emelia Symington-Fedy**  
(D&M \$26.95)

BY SONJA PINTO

TRIGGER WARNING:  
Review includes sexual  
assault content.

**E**melia Symington-Fedy moved to Armstrong at the age of thirteen, where she fell in with a group of unruly girls who regularly met on the train tracks. They “acted like how I imagined sisters would be,” writes Symington-Fedy in her memoir, **Skid Dogs**, which she narrates alternately from vantage points of midlife in the early 2010s, and the earlier 1990s as she entered high school.

“The girls,” as Symington-Fedy often calls her new friends, provide solace from the stresses of school and home life. Raucous and feisty, the “skid dogs,” a derogatory name they called themselves, includes Em, Cristal, Bugsy, Aimes and Max. The girls casually banter about “bush parties” and “blowjobs” at their railway hangout spot. “None of us

are allowed to wear makeup in public yet,” writes Symington-Fedy. “Bugsy and I are the only ones to have bled so far.” Her narrative is filled with references to armpits and crotches, and other hallmarks of puberty’s awkwardness.

Symington-Fedy writes with a biting wit that shines through her recollection of the 90s, but her humour is darkened by tragedy. At the heart of the memoir is the 2011 murder of 18-year-old **Taylor Van Diest** on Halloween night. Returning to Armstrong to take care of her ill mother, Symington-Fedy hears residents speculate about the motives for Van Diest’s murder: “If the man had got what he wanted, he wouldn’t have beaten her so badly,” is one particularly jarring comment. Symington-Fedy remarks dryly, “everyone knows, a girl has to be killed before she’s taken seriously; anything less is just called growing up.”

It is Van Diest’s sexually motivated murder that prompts Symington-Fedy’s reflection on her own adolescent sexual experiences. *Skid Dogs* reveals the constant pressure on teen girls to perform for men. “Some nights before bed, I’d get on my hands and knees in my favourite flannel nightie to practise in front of the mirror,” recalls Symington-Fedy, “simulating the different positions I might find myself in—what angle to keep my neck at so there was no

Emelia  
Symington-Fedy

ZEV TIEFENBACH PHOTO



double chin, and how much I needed to suck in my stomach to show off my ribs—so I'd know what I'd look like before it happened.”

The girls navigate questions about their bodies—“the dick hole and pee hole are two separate holes?”—while combatting the ruthless rape culture of the 90s that they face. They dodge boys in the hallways, who suck up time that could be spent on the railway tracks—their “sanctuary.” But when Em and her friends do begin exploring relationships with boys at school, they unlock feelings of both annoyance and fear: “He scared me, in the way nothing was off limits to him, how he so easily looked at our boobs instead of our faces.”

This burgeoning sexuality also becomes an intoxicating power for Em: “If all I had to do to feel this good was give them my body, the decision was easy.” The exchange also brings a sense of safety: “If we gave the boys what they wanted before it was demanded of us, we stayed safe,” figures 13-year-old Em. Yet each intimate encounter tends to end with lips punctured by braces, bloody fingers or plain discomfort. But around the skid dogs, Em has the freedom to express herself fully. “With the girls I had opinions. I could disagree and gain their respect... It was only the boys I dulled myself down for,” she says.

Symington-Fedy doesn't shy away from her own experiences of sexual assault and the pressures to endure the advances of boys despite the pain they caused her physically. Many of Em's memories are unclear or incomplete, dimmed by the consumption of alcohol.

After a drunken night that ends with Em getting her stomach pumped, the girls' parents convene to make sense of the night's events, which included Em's friends finding her in a bush with her shirt removed. The disgust from their parents is directed towards the *victims*: “Thirteen-year-olds too drunk to say no is asking for it in *my* opinion,” one mom spits out.

A few years later, Em goes out on a first date with a boy who pushes her head towards his crotch expectantly: “I don't know how, but I knew what he wanted me to do next. I didn't want to do it. It was our first date. But I'd already agreed by being there.” Symington-Fedy attempts to reconcile these events in adulthood, asking “What happened to us, back then? What had they done? Was there a single sexual encounter that felt mutual, shared? With the language I have now, like *coercion* and *fawning*, the answer is no.”

There is one place Em and her friends can always go to escape. “The tracks were where we'd been happiest. Where we came to escape the boys' tedious picking over of our bodies,” says Symington-Fedy.

Van Diest's spectre looms as Symington-Fedy wraps up her narrative, an unspoken *this could have been me*. *It could have been one of my friends*. In the end, it is the camaraderie with the skid dogs that heals her wounds.

9781771623643

Sonja Pinto is a writer, photographer and printmaker. They reside on the unceded territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən peoples (Victoria, BC).

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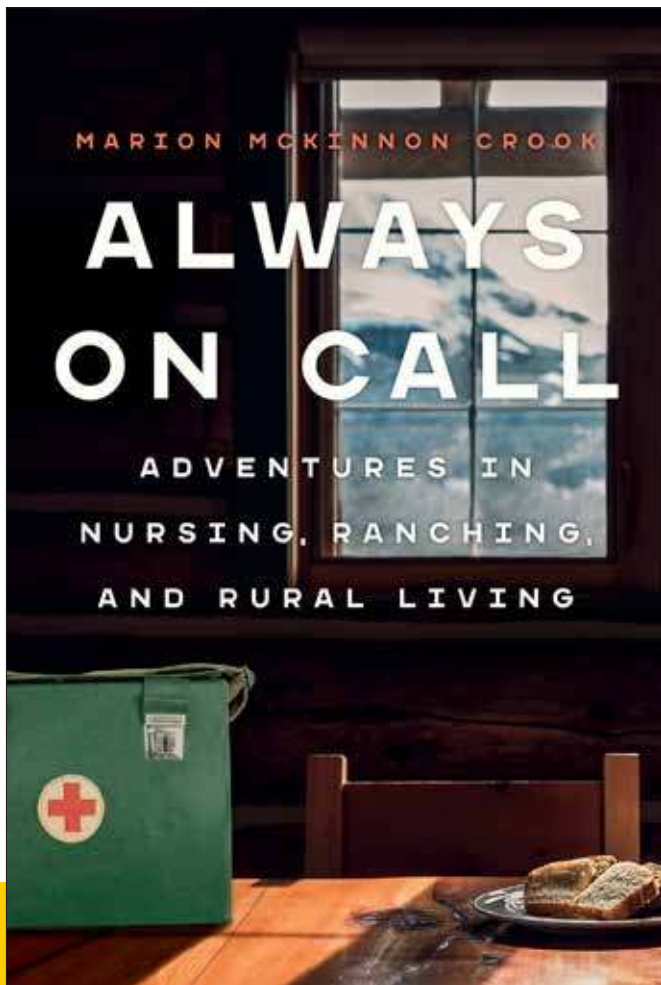


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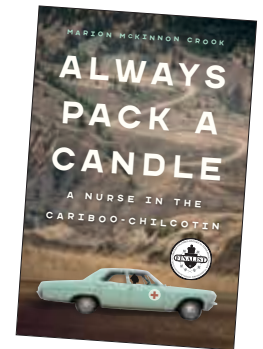
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# HOUSING EXCERPT



**Broken City: Land Speculation, Inequality, and Urban Crisis**  
by Patrick Condon (UBC Press \$32.95)

BY PATRICK CONDON

In the 1980s, Vancouver grew up. This sleepy resource town was discovered by international investors. Hong Kong émigrés were the first to spot the potential of a city set in a landscape so stunning that it brought tears to one's eyes. Luckily for Vancouver, it had city officials who knew an exciting opportunity when they saw one. Uniquely, they set up a system to capture as much of this influx of new capital value for public benefit as seemed possible. Derelict industrial sites blessed with incredible water views were rezoned for homes.

With some sage advice from Hong Kong investment experts, city officials zoned these areas for very high-density housing, depending on towers to deliver the bulk of this new density. This approach was the secret to their success. Because British Columbia's laws allowed it, city staff and other stakeholders could, in effect, bargain with developers for amenity payments as a condition of project approval. The payments were to be negotiated, not imposed.

This model will get a city into trouble in many parts of the world and often for good reason. In some places, this process, pejoratively called paying for zoning, is illegal. Decades later this strategy got Vancouver into trouble—even if, for a few decades, it all worked out.

In the 1980s and 90s, city staff and political leaders collaborated with talented designers and accommodating developers to evolve what became known worldwide as "Vancouverism." When it emerged, Vancouverism was unique, an unprecedented model of high-density living in the midst of an amenity-rich urban environment

WITH 40 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE in sustainable urban design, UBC architecture and planning professor **Patrick Condon** has watched housing prices skyrocket out of affordability for an increasing number of people.

In **Broken City**, due out in May, Condon says the economic link between local wages and housing is broken. In Canada, many immigrants, racialized minorities, young people and service workers are prevented from joining the middle classes as they cannot build wealth through home ownership because they can't afford it. Wages for workers, adjusted for inflation, have stayed flat, while housing costs multiplied—a trend seen across the English-speaking world. Condon argues that the 1% who today own 20% of national income (up from 10% in the 1980s) are the small minority who can most afford to buy property and, therefore, are the biggest beneficiaries of the housing crisis.

In the following excerpt, Condon writes of a period when Vancouver found a way to remain a truly livable place as the City bargained with developers to take back a healthy portion of the increase in land values when land was rezoned for much higher density (which added vast new amounts of value to the land that buildings are erected upon—in the business, called "land lift"). This money was then used for amenities such as community centres, daycare, parks and, most importantly, affordable housing. It worked ... at least for a while.



Patrick Condon

where all the lessons of urban-planning theorist **Jane Jacobs** and other late-twentieth-century urbanists could be executed. And it was all paid for with captured land Rent [commonly known as land price].



AS IN ANY REVOLUTION, A NEW VOCABULARY was needed. Most important here was the term "land lift." When developers negotiated with the city for how many millions they would contribute to the city in return for a new high-density zoning allowance, the yardstick was expressed in percentage terms.

The city was explicit in suggesting that 80 percent of land lift should go to the city, with 20 percent left for the landowner in order to motivate the

sale. Land lift was (and is) the difference between the value of the land—its land price, or Rent—before and after rezoning. In the Vancouver example, the difference between its value when authorized for a two-storey building and its increased value when reauthorized for a twenty-storey building was immense. We can assume that there was a one-to-one increase in value as allowable density increased. Doubling the allowable density doubled the land value, which in Vancouver was about \$100 dollars per buildable square foot at the time and is over \$600 today. So, using 1990 figures, a developer that starts off with an "as of right" allowance to erect a building on a parcel of 10,000 square feet, for which the "as

of right" zoning might allow for a two-storey construction—that is, a building with twice as many interior square feet as the site, or a floor surface ratio of two (FSR 2)—would be worth \$1 million at the outset of the project. If the construction is allowed to go to twenty storeys, with an interior floor space of 100,000 square feet, the value of the parcel can shoot up to \$10 million. If the city negotiates for 80 percent of the land lift, it will net \$8 million from this one tower project.

The use of land lift was (and is) a bit more complicated than this account might suggest, especially when the new allowable density was calculated, but this type of revenue gain was the idea. An accrual of \$8 million was really a tax on land, not a tax on the building itself. Thus, it captured the bulk of the post-development increase in land Rent, providing the city with funds to be used for civic purposes.

This captured land Rent was more than enough to create an urban design balance between density and amenities. Community Amenity Contributions (CACs), the politically more palatable name for the land-lift tax, paid for the generously provided open spaces and waterfront promenades that became a part of the city's fame. CACs paid for community centres and daycare facilities. They paid for broad, well-landscaped boulevards. Portions of land to be used for affordable housing (assuming that construction money was forthcoming from the province) were handed over by developers in their negotiations with the city for future development. Based on the model of False Creek South ... the original aim was the construction of an equal number of low-income, medium-income, and upper-income units, and for a time these targets were nearly met—that is, until global land price inflation caught up with Vancouver [and developers no longer would make these deals with the city], making it one of the world's most unaffordable cities. 9780774869553

*Excerpt has been edited for brevity and clarity.—Editor*



Pathway To The Stars:  
100 years of the Royal Canadian Air Force  
by Michael Hood and Tom Jenkins  
(Aevo UTP \$39.95)

BY GRAHAM CHANDLER

T rail-born General **Paul David Manson** (retired) posed a puzzling question when he commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Air Force: “I wonder how many Canadians realize that the RCAF didn’t exist for 48 of those years?”

General Manson passed away in July 2023 but his comment opens one of a hundred stories celebrating the 2024 centennial of the RCAF. The hiatus he refers to was a result of the controversial and in-service unpopularity of the 1968 unification of Canada’s three armed forces by then-Minister of National Defence **Paul Hellyer**. The act resulted in the “disappearance” of the RCAF. “Staunch members [of the air force] sensed a heavy impact on their history, heritage, and custom... lost too was the distinctive light blue uniform,” wrote Manson.

Packed among stories like this one—a hundred of them written by a hundred different contributors—are more than 300 photographs and five appendices.

It’s a celebratory coffee-table package you can enjoy flipping through and reading at your leisure. Open it to any page at random and you’ll find a story that stands on its own—there’s no need to read them in any particular order although they are presented chronologically.

And chances are, whether you’re a current or past RCAF member, an in-between one or neither, you’ll find many stories inspiring a “well, I’ll be darned” moment. For instance, Vancouver Folk Music Festival goers will recognize the name but how many know the RCAF history behind Jericho Beach? Well, it was the first Canadian

# Flying high

The people, machines and global events that shaped the Royal Canadian Air Force in its first hundred years.

Air Force base in BC and, in 1924, the first RCAF station in the province. The Jericho Beach station can brag of a rich history in pioneering aviation and developing BC’s remote coastal communities via civil flight services provided to federal and provincial governments. They patrolled, mapped, inspected and transported stuff throughout the province’s rugged coastal waterways during the 1920s and early 1930s.

The book doesn’t restrict its heroes to RCAF personnel, either. Included are stories of individuals with contributions important to the force. For example, Vancouver-born **Elizabeth “Elsie” MacGill** was the first woman engineer in Canada. Amongst other accomplishments, such as being the first woman to design an aircraft, she managed the wartime production of over 1,400 Hurricane fighter airplanes at Canadian Car and Foundry. She even starred as a comic book hero when, in 1942, she was celebrated in the *American True Comics* series—dubbed “Queen of the Hurricanes.”

Nor are the contributors just among the senior ranks as they are in most history books. The lieutenant-colonels’ and generals’ stories share equal space with lots of so-called “other ranks”—the military term for non-commissioned personnel such as corporals and flight sergeants.

For techies, RCAF aircraft descriptions are sprinkled throughout, conveniently placed where they’re first

mentioned in the text.

Some may find that coverage is a little unbalanced: a mere 12 pages out of 211 are devoted to pre-Second World War stories. But after all, it was the RCAF’s performance in that war that really brought it into its own. With some downright unimaginable stats such as the fact that out of every hundred pilots in Bomber Command, 45 were killed.

Not all of the RCAF major units are covered; but then the tome doesn’t purport to be a comprehensive history. For example, despite its importance in testing out and proving most new aviation-related equipment for the RCAF, the Aerospace Engineering Test Establishment (AETE), based at Cold Lake, Alberta since the 1960s, isn’t mentioned, instead rating just a caption on an excellent photo of one of the unit’s CF-104 Starfighters, distinguished by the red “X” painted on its tail. The AETE has the highest number of test pilots and flight test engineers of any RCAF unit.

And who knew about the RCAF hockey connection—starring in both Olympic and NHL competition? Three players for the Boston Bruins who later joined the RCAF, left winger **Woody Dumart**, centre **Milt Schmidt**, and right winger **Bobby Bauer** (dubbed the “Kraut Line”) finished in the top three consecutive spots in NHL scoring in the 1939-1940 season and won Stanley Cups in 1939 and 1941. Then, after enlisting, they played on the Ottawa

RCAF Flyers that won the Allan Cup in 1942 (the senior ice hockey championship of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association). The hockey experience continued when the RCAF Flyers won Olympic Gold in 1948, reeling off six straight victories. And did it in fine style: five shutouts in eight games.

Many have heard of Canada’s world-leading Avro Arrow supersonic interceptor design, way ahead of its time when it was developed between 1955–1959 (but scandalously scrapped before it could be implemented). But have you heard of the RCAF’s 5BX Plan for Physical Fitness? In the same late-1950s era, it wasn’t cancelled like the Arrow but instead went on to worldwide fame despite the RCAF’s tepid adoption of the Plan. The 5BX booklet was a worldwide bestseller. Translated into 13 languages, its philosophy resembles today’s high-intensity interval training adopted by **King Charles III**, **Prince William**, and **Catherine**, Princess of Wales.

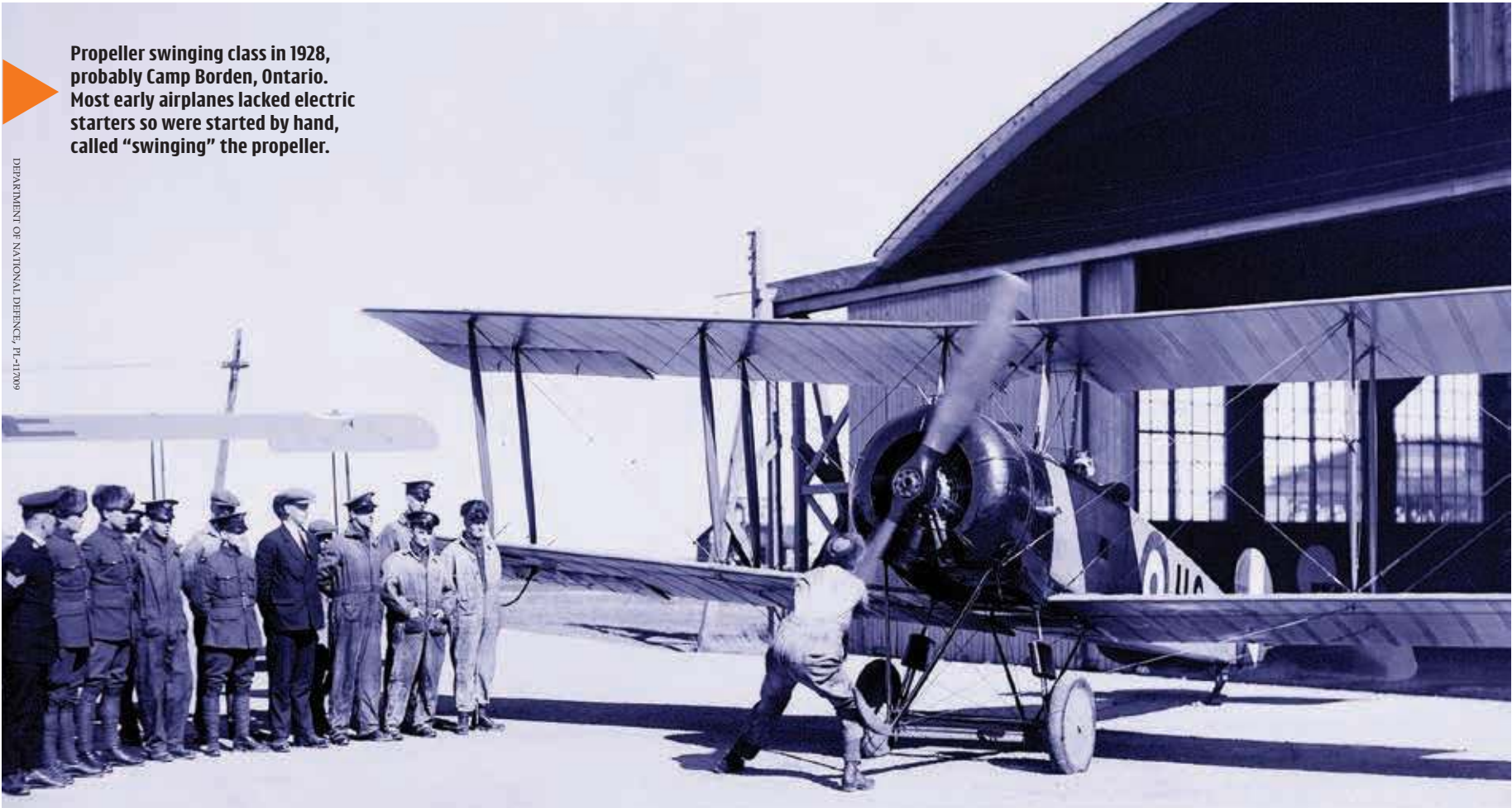
Another of the book’s stars is Lieutenant-Colonel **Steven Deschamps** who was a victim of the “Gay Purge.” During the Cold War (1947 to 1991), paranoia prompted the federal government to identify and remove suspected LGBTQ2+ military personnel because they were thought to be potential security risks through their vulnerability to blackmail. Deschamps fought it and, following a successful Federal Court challenge, in 1992 became the first known homosexual to be re-accepted.

There are so many more stories, too numerous to mention. From involvement in world hotspots such as Rwanda, Kosovo, 9/11, UAE, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Romania; to tamer topics like the origin of the RCAF Tartan and tracking Santa Claus through NORAD each Christmas Eve.

Buy one for your coffee table. Not only will you and your guests enjoy reading it or just looking at the pictures, but you’ll be supporting a registered charity: all proceeds go to the RCAF Foundation.

9781487547431

Vancouver-based writer Graham Chandler served in the RCAF/CAF for 17 years. A graduate of the US Naval Test Pilot School, he also holds a PhD in archaeology from the University of London, UK.



Propeller swinging class in 1928, probably Camp Borden, Ontario. Most early airplanes lacked electric starters so were started by hand, called “swinging” the propeller.

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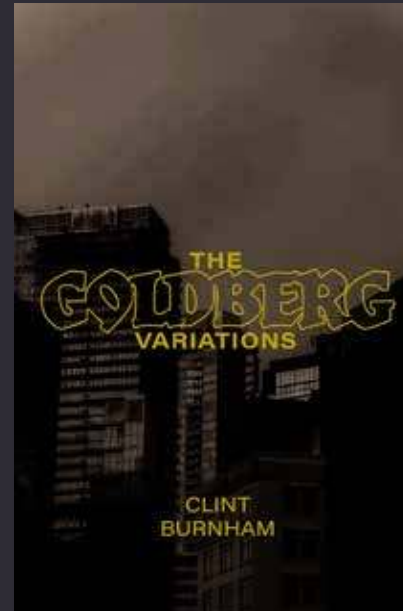


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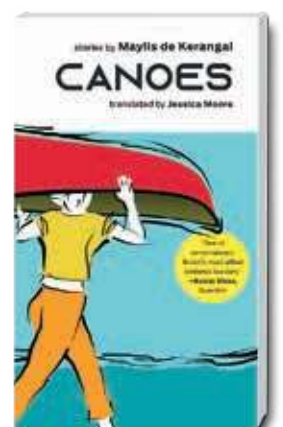


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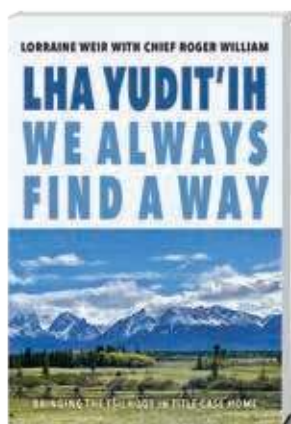


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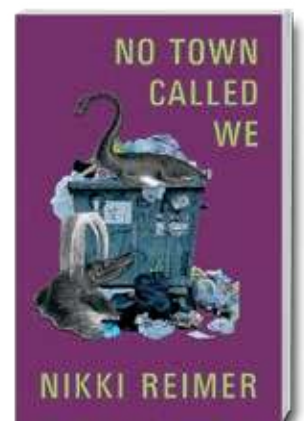
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### No Town Called We

NIKKI REIMER

"Bipedal fuck-ups R us. Nikki Reimer brings grief and snark to the crises of late-stage capitalism."

—Tanis MacDonald





**Inuit Relocations: Colonial Policies and Practices, Inuit Resilience and Resistance**  
by Frank James Tester and Krista Ulujuk Zawadski  
(James Lorimer \$34.95)

Life in Canada's Arctic is hard. But it was made harder for Inuit by the federal government's actions in the twentieth century to relocate them from where they had lived for generations, to places they had never seen. The outcomes were disastrous and reverberate to this day. **Inuit Relocations**, co-written by Vancouver filmmaker, **Frank James Tester** and **Krista Ulujuk Zawadski**, an Inuk with an MA from UBC and a PhD from Carleton University, uncovers these devastating periods in Inuit history. The book is part of the "Righting Canada's Wrongs" series, which uses first-person accounts, short texts, abstracts from documents and visuals such as photographs and artwork to tell of what happened. *BC BookWorld* presents the following book excerpts.

**F**ollowing the Second World War, Inuit in the Canadian Arctic experienced many changes in their lives. In a few short years, Inuit went from living in small extended family camps with tents in the summer and igloos in the winter, hunting and gathering for food, and trapping for the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), to living in settlements with wood frame houses, and often working for wages. Within about twenty years, Inuit went from the oldest form of social organization on the planet—a hunting and gathering culture—to dealing with industrial society.

★  
FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, INUIT LIVED ON THE land, mainly in family-based camps. In winter and spring, they hunted seals, walrus and whales along the Arctic coast. They travelled inland in the summer and fall to hunt caribou. Some Inuit spent all their time inland, fishing and hunting caribou. Inuit were creative and resourceful, incredibly skilled hunters, seamstresses and artists.

They were wise and respectful users of their lands, waters and resources.

★  
AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR, THE colonial government in Ottawa began to exercise more control over Inuit lives. Change happened more quickly, and circumstances forced Inuit to move off the land where they had always lived, and relocate to settlements.

It is easy to think about these relocations as simply moving from one place to another. But Inuit are hunters and gatherers. Their relationship with the places they live and the animals they depend on is very different from most Canadians. When Inuit had to relocate, this was much more than just moving to a different location and a permanent house. Relocation to settlements had a big impact on how people were made to feel about themselves,

# NORTHERN DISLOCATIONS

Canada's history of relocating Inuit communities to lands they did not know.



The qulliq, or soapstone lamp, was an Inuit family's most valuable possession. It was used for light, heating the dwelling and cooking. Above, artist Kenojuak Ashevak (1927–2013), who became famous for her drawings, in her tent at Kinngait lighting a qulliq, circa 1940s.

their relationships and their culture.

When Inuit moved to settlements, they were now living in communities managed by Qablunaat (white people) from the South. Qablunaat had different values and ideas about how Inuit should live. The relationship to land and animals was not as important for them. Being close to relatives was not valued as highly. Even food and clothing changed.

*"We sometimes got sick from the houses. Young and old got respiratory diseases. They do not get enough fresh air. I was born before there was a government. When I was a girl, we lived in tents and igloos. We lived in the cold, but now we live in modern houses... All of a sudden when we moved into houses we became like white people. And then we would throw away the much warmer clothing we had. Those of us who grew up in tents were very capable people. When we moved into*

*houses, we became helpless. That is how I think."*—**Cecilia Angutialuk, Naujaat**

★  
IN 1952, RCMP IN INUKJUAK (PORT HARRISON) approached a number of Inuit families and encouraged them to move to the High Arctic where they were told they could live a self sustaining, traditional lifestyle and that there was plenty of wildlife there to support them. Saying no to Qablunaat authority figures at the time was not something Inuit felt comfortable about or were inclined to do. It was not explained how far they were going to be moved and what different climate, snow and daylight conditions they would face.

When the long journey was over, Inuit families were in for a shock. Instead of being kept together, as promised, they were separated into two groups. One group was landed at Craig Harbour on Ellesmere Island and

the other was dropped at Qausuittuq (Resolute Bay) on Cornwallis Island, about 380 kilometres away. There were no shelters provided, so families spent the first few winters in their tents in freezing cold weather. No boats were available for hunting and fishing. In the High Arctic, Inuit had to learn different ways of hunting. They also had to figure out where species, including caribou, walrus and seals, could be found and hunted. Inadequate food and supplies were provided. Relocated Inuit suffered from cold and hunger.

★  
IT TOOK NEARLY FORTY YEARS OF WORK BY individuals and Inuit institutions to achieve compensation and a government apology for Inuit who were relocated from Inukjuak (Port Harrison) to the High Arctic. This effort started in the late 1970s ... Finally, on August 18, 2010, **John Duncan**, Minister of Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development officially apologized in Inukjuak (Port Harrison) for the relocation of Inuit to the High Arctic in the 1950s.

9781459416673



No Letter in Your Pocket:  
How a Daughter Chose Love & Forgiveness  
to Heal from Incest by Heather Conn  
(Guernica Editions \$25)

BY STEPHEN MCCLURE

This can't have been an easy book to write. **No Letter in Your Pocket** describes the long and difficult process by which writer and editor

Heather Conn gradually realizes that she was a victim of incest, and how she comes to terms with that awful reality.

Nor is this an easy book to read. The subject of incest is obviously an uncomfortable one. While Conn spares readers most of the disturbing details, her story at times makes for a toe-curlingly intimate account of how her father abused her—physically and emotionally.

But Conn's soul-baring honesty and writing skills compel you to keep reading and keep learning. The arc of her narrative—how she denied and masked her trauma, her attempts to find the human connections and love she needed, and how she was able to deal with the past and get on with her life—is one that anyone with the slightest amount of empathy will be drawn in by.



Heather Conn with Rhubarb on the pier in Roberts Creek on BC's Sunshine Coast.

# Forgiving an abuser

How Heather Conn overcame her childhood trauma.

The first half of *No Letter in Your Pocket* recounts Conn's travels through Asia with her father, and then solo. She is on a quest for self-knowledge, healing and love. Interspersed throughout her narrative are memories of growing up in a strict household dominated by her sexist, alcoholic, workaholic father, a leading Toronto anesthesiologist. At this stage of her life, Conn is still not consciously aware that her father com-

mitted incest with her when she was a child growing up in a comfortable, upper middle-class household, but she is increasingly aware that something in their relationship isn't right.

Recounting her travels, Conn weaves her struggle with her inner demons and her search for a romantic partner to whom she can commit with evocative descriptions of the people and places she encounters

in India, Ladakh and Nepal.

The second half, titled "Healing at Home," describes the long and harrowing process whereby Conn gradually realizes how she has repressed the memory of being abused by her father, and how she eventually finds the courage to confront him with that painfully acquired knowledge.

"To heal meant releasing my anger," Conn writes, "but I had no idea how much debilitating grief lay beneath it .... On too many days, I found myself sobbing without prompt."

Heather Conn tells a compelling, deeply emotional story—and a controversial one, because she decided that ending the trauma that had plagued her for decades meant forgiving her father.

"That wouldn't work with a sociopath or psychopath," Conn writes, "but at least it acknowledges the potential for good in someone ... by denouncing my dad's actions, I don't have to hate or obliterate him ... Although I will never dismiss what he did to me, I can still choose to forgive him for it."

Not all of us are victims of incest, but we all have our traumas and psychic wounds, which is why Conn's book is so engaging and inspiring.

9781771837873

Stephen McClure is a freelance writer and editor who divides his time between Vancouver and Tokyo.



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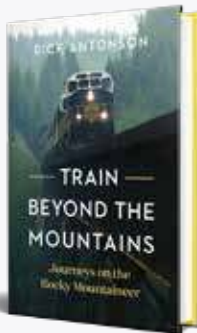
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### THE TENANTS PAT DOBIE

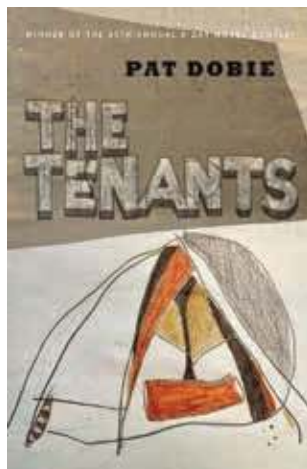
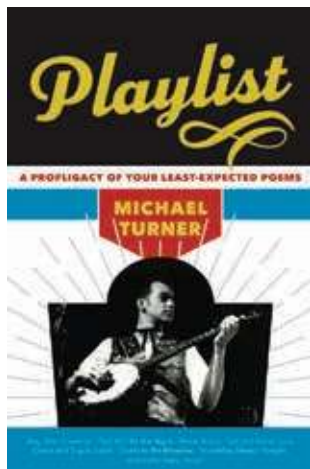
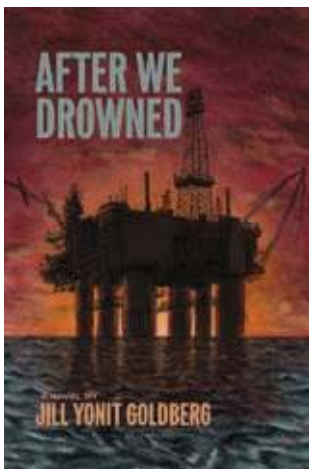
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### WATER FORGETS ITS OWN NAME



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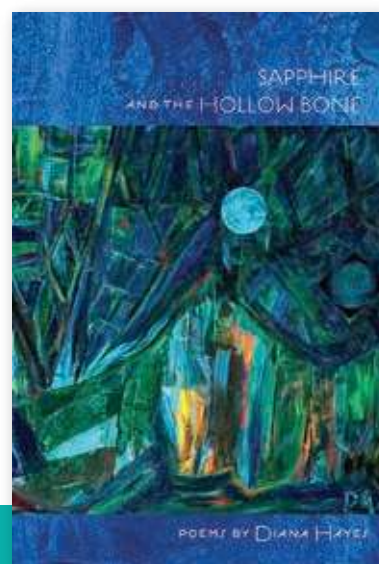
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# Where a crow's eyes see right

Bad Cree by Jessica Johns  
(HarperCollins \$24.99)  
BY ODETTE AUGER

**I**s there anything more intimate than our cheek against a pillow, or a hand against our cheek?

**Jessica Johns** (Sucker Creek First Nation) starts their debut novel **Bad Cree** with an extreme closeup of protagonist, Mackenzie, sensing surfaces against their cheek—as a location check, or even a reality check.

We meet Mackenzie in their bed, as they wake from disturbing dreams into an uncontrolled liminal state. We soon learn that Mackenzie is dealing with the untimely deaths of their older sister and their Kokum (Cree for grandmother). Johns' descriptions crack open the story with all senses engaged.

Johns is also an award-winning poet and visual artist and their deft use of imagery is highlighted in *Bad Cree*. A recurring scent of pine wafts through the novel—first intermingled with blood, then with cold air. Johns uses sharp contrasts such as the sticky viscera of waking up with a crow's head in their hand, to crisp wintriness. The immediacy of the first scenes is slowed with the line, "the last pine I saw was 1,000 miles away."

Shifting from intimate to distant, Johns' writing reflects the contrasting states of linear life and the threshold to other ways of being. As a genre, magical realism carries the undercurrent of fantasy and Johns' novel refocuses this through a Cree lens. Their worldview of land, body and spirit being interconnected includes the shadows. "Being connected to everything, you are a part of it all, but you can't choose what gets sent out into the world—or what can find you," writes Johns. Through this worldview, dreams as communication and connection are not only possible, but essential.

Mackenzie lives in an increasingly liminal state, where dreams are doorways, and light and shadow coexist. In their waking life, Mackenzie is told time by crows who "move through the sky like a thundercloud, collecting kin." Mackenzie watched the crows gather as a murder at their doorway, listening to how the crows' calls "slice in from all directions, from the city and ocean. A swarm of warnings."

**Jessica Johns'** debut novel about a traumatized Cree millennial who is followed by a crow is beyond labels of horror or magical realism.

into  
YOU



When Mackenzie shifts their periphery an inch, we can smell the snow of their home in Treaty 8 territory. Johns, like their protagonist, is from northern Alberta where Johns says lakes are "watchful," and lands and waters are sacrificed to the appetite of extractive industries.

Mackenzie has known "darkness dreams" before, when as a child, they experienced dreams of connection, forewarning and the protection of their sister. Dreams can be tools to fix moments we're forced to remember. Mackenzie is fighting a dark being while unravelling feelings of guilt and incomplete grieving. A sense of loss seeps in, and in this way the stalking spirit in *Bad Cree* feels like an allegory for the weight of grief and the unresolved.

Recognizing spirit is part of this protagonist's self-discovery, and things ramp up with Mackenzie's archetypal return home to multifaceted relationships. Mackenzie's circle of Indigenous women and queer characters bring warmth as a counterpoint to the atmosphere of silent keening. Indigenous readers know these aunts—we've sat at that table, felt the love of teasing jokes. With complicated and interesting characters, Johns introduces readers to the strength of our women without cliché or romance.

Part of the rising tension is Mackenzie's need for repaired relations and reconnection with their family. Estrangement as a coping mechanism has done harm, and this needs to be healed so they can rally together "like two pieces of skin on either side of an open wound, considering how to reconnect again," writes Johns.

This novel has been tagged as horror, and I'm not sure I agree. There are too many things in our families' lived experiences that are horrific to use the label for anything that involves violence, mystery or darkness. *Bad Cree* holds all of those things, while still being poetic and loving.

9781443465489

Odette Auger, journalist and storyteller, is Sagamok Anishnawbek through her mother and lives as a guest in toq qaym ixw (Klahoose), ʔə́lamən qaymuxw (Tla'amin) and ɔp qaymuxw (Homalco) territories.

Jessica Johns identifies as non-binary, as does the protagonist, Mackenzie, in *Bad Cree*.



MADEON KERR PHOTO



In her two new plays,  
**Elaine Ávila** portrays people who  
risked their well-being for labour rights  
and environmental protection.

**The Ballad of Ginger Goodwin & Kitimat:  
Two plays for Workers**  
by **Elaine Ávila** (Talonbooks \$19.95)

BY BEVERLY CRAMP

**O**ne of BC's most contro-  
versial and well-known  
labour activists, **Gin-  
ger Goodwin** (1887-  
1918), credited with  
getting Canada the  
eight-hour workday,  
also opposed military  
conscription during the  
First World War. He was shot and killed by a  
police constable while evading conscription in  
the wilderness near Cumberland on Vancouver  
Island. Several books have been written about  
Goodwin and now **Elaine Ávila** of New West-  
minster has added to this list with **The Ballad  
of Ginger Goodwin & Kitimat: Two plays for  
Workers**.

# WORKING CLASS

*Ávila's second of the two plays, Kitimat, is concerned with another kind of social justice and is about the period in 2014 when Kitimat residents had to decide between economic prosperity and environmental protection as they voted on a proposed oil pipeline. Many of the workers in the town were descended from Azorean immigrants who had come to Kitimat to find work and the good life in the early 1950s as the "instant town" sprang up to support an aluminum smelting industry.*

*How did a person like Ginger Goodwin decide to risk his life for the good of others? Is it safer to be a land defender, or engaged in a labour action? Elaine Ávila deals with these questions and more in this BC BookWorld interview.*



**BC BookWorld:** How did you first discover Ginger Goodwin? What about his life attracted you to write a play about him?

**Elaine Ávila:** I learned about Ginger Goodwin in the Cumberland Museum and Archives. They had a display featuring Goodwin's fly-fishing rod and tackle. It detailed his assassination, which led to Vancouver's first general strike, Canada's first general strike, and to Canadians getting the eight-hour day. People came from as far away as Chile to lay wreaths on Goodwin's grave, yet few Canadians have heard of him. Goodwin's fishing gear was such an intimate object, showing his love of life, poignant against the massive historical struggles which led to his death.

**BCBW:** Did Ginger Goodwin really have a love interest (Anna Petroni, a launderess) in Trail, where he led a labour strike before fleeing to Cumberland?

**EA:** While his biographers mention that Goodwin had many female friends and that there were many Italians and launderesses in Trail, Anna Petroni is fictional. Yes, she is a love interest, but she is also an adversary. Anna is actively

anti-union at the start of the play. She changes, becoming Goodwin's friend and confidante. Writing the character of Anna helped me explore Goodwin's psychology. How does a person like Goodwin decide to risk and then lose his life for the good of others? He could have focused on his own needs—such as the need for love, the desire to make a family. But he didn't. Writing Anna also gave me a chance to explore how immigrant, working-class women found ways to become educated. Over the course of the play, both Goodwin and Anna's employer, **Selwyn Blaylock** (1879-1945), a celebrated Canadian geologist, gardener and smelter manager, help Anna in her quest to read and write.

**BCBW:** The managers and owners of mines and smelters don't come off well in your play (including Selwyn Blaylock). You paint a picture of entitled and arrogant upper classes who ma-

nipulate and mistreat working people. Was this borne out in your research?

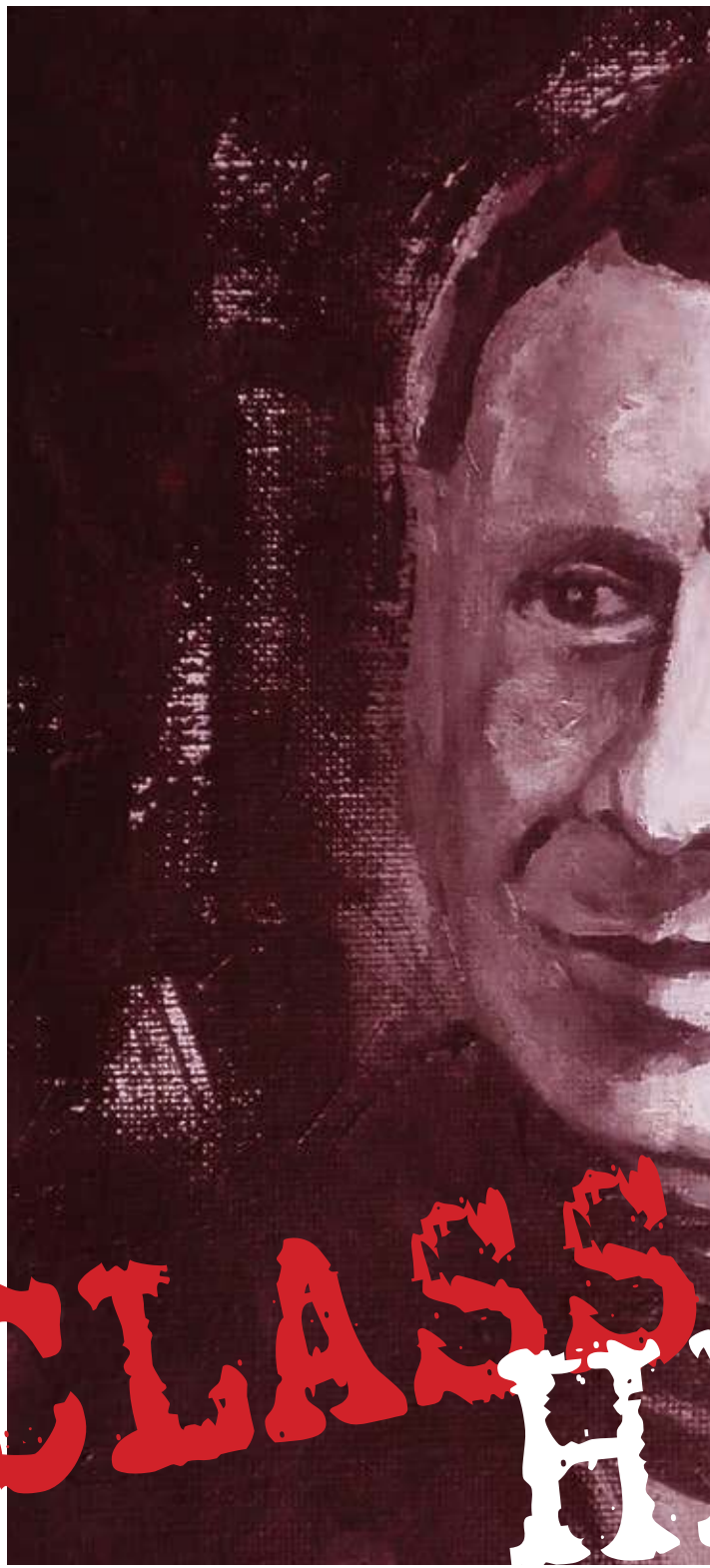
**EA:** In this particular play, I don't presume to represent all managers and owners of mines and smelters, or the upper classes. My play focuses on the history of the working people in our province, and yes, it is borne out by extensive research.

Selwyn Blaylock's main actions in the play are well documented, including his refusal to meet the labour mediator from Ottawa, and that he served on the draft board which, during the strike, suddenly switched Goodwin's status from Category D, unfit for duty (because of ill health as a coal miner and years of strikes, ulcers, terrible teeth) to Category A, ready for the front lines. The poisons from the smelter Blaylock managed are also well documented: the airborne toxins disintegrated leaves, made holes in laundry if it was on the clothes line and killed dogs.

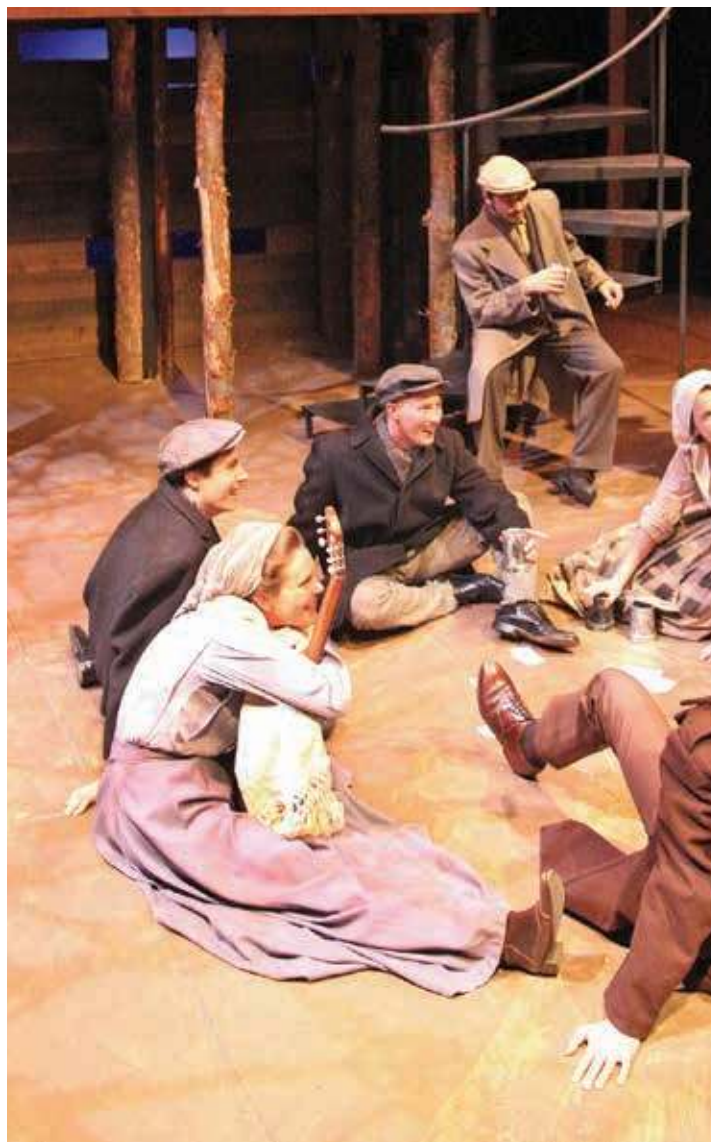
During Blaylock's leadership, this toxic smoke led to a landmark trans-boundary pollution case: the "Trail Smelter Dispute," settled in 1941, in which citizens in both the US and Canada complained that their crops were dying due to the fumes from the smelter.

**BCBW:** You incorporate old labour songs in the play about Goodwin. What was the purpose? Or do you just like to have music in your productions?

**EA:** Because Goodwin and his friend, **Joe Naylor** (featured in the BC Labour Heritage Centre's new podcast series) were from Yorkshire and the Petronis were from Southern Italy, I instinctually felt I would know them better if I learned to sing the songs they sang. Folk songs from Yorkshire (like "Old Grimy") and Calabria (like "Tarantella") were in their hearts, minds and mouths, so I included them in the play. Adding the labour songs became a natural extension of this impulse. People sang much more then than they do now, and they drew great inspiration



Albert "Ginger" Goodwin was a delegate for the British Columbia Federation of Labour.



CHRIS ROWE PHOTO



**“Now they are upon me,  
I hear the branches crack. It’s time I  
must surrender. It would do no good to  
run. I would rather face a prison term  
than a bounty hunter’s gun.”**

**—Ginger Goodwin’s last note to his mother  
before he was killed in 1918**

from it. I love modern interpretations of labour songs, so, while writing the play, I listened to **Wayne Horvitz, Robin Holcomb** (who came to the play’s premiere), and **Bill Frisell**’s recording: “Joe Hill: 16 Actions for Orchestra, Voices and Soloist,” which premiered at Seattle’s Earshot Jazz Festival.

**BCBW:** What is your opinion of how he died? And is there evidence of him writing that last letter to his mother in England, which you use in the play (“Dear Mum. Now they are upon me, I hear the branches crack. It’s time I must surrender. It would do no good to run. I would rather face a prison term than a bounty hunter’s gun. I remain your affectionate son...”)?

**EA:** Yes, the letter is Goodwin’s actual last writing, to his mother. It was discovered in his cabin after he was assassinated. It’s incredibly moving, isn’t it? In the play, I also quote directly from Goodwin’s actual speeches. Regarding his death: you touch on something vital here, thank you! For a long time, I considered writing a courtroom drama. The circumstances around his death are hotly contested and covered extensively by his biographers but (purposefully or not) there isn’t a great deal of evidence. There were no witnesses to the shooting. Meanwhile, Goodwin’s decisions during the Trail strike are dramatic, little discussed, well documented and reveal so much about his character, as well as what he was up against. I was surprised by all

the hope in Goodwin’s speeches. He so believed in a day where we could find a way for people to live without misery, want and war. He believed in education, that we are all capable of better. I find his hope deeply sustaining and inspiring.

**BCBW:** You dedicate this play to workers but also to the late **Bill Clark Sr.**, former president of Telecommunications Workers Union (and your father-in-law). What did you learn from him about contemporary labour union strife? Is it any safer now to engage in labour action than in Goodwin’s time? Or, for that matter, is it even safe to write about labour activists (you were threatened while writing this play)? Any particular reason you combined *The Ballad of Ginger Goodwin* with *Kitimat*, the latter being more about social justice than labour strife?

**EA:** Bill Clark Sr. and I discussed the pivotal strikes he led in BC during the 1970s and 1980s. He received death threats during those strikes.

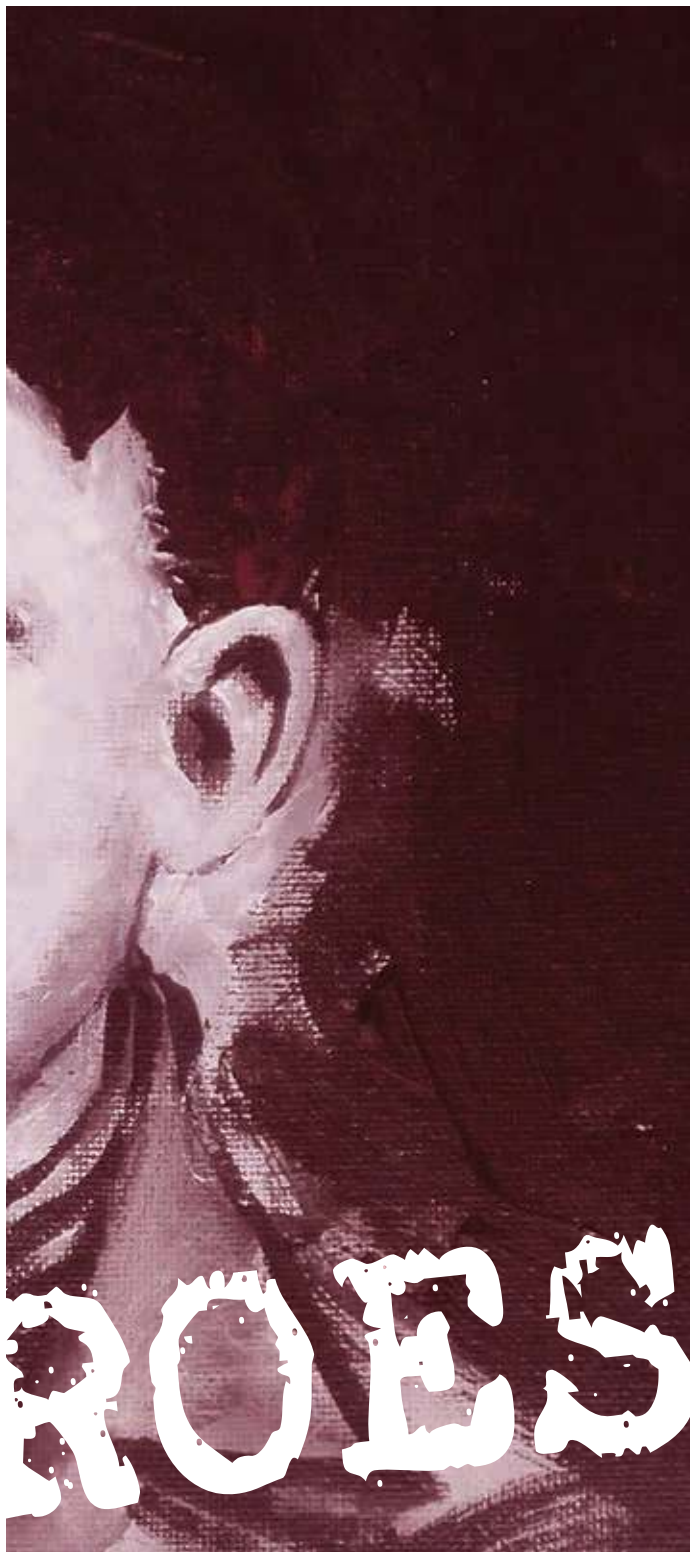
Regarding safety, I suppose it depends on your racial and cultural background, on your specific situation. Internationally, I’m not sure it is safer to be a land defender, or engaged in a labour action. Both involve putting yourself physically in the way of something unjust. As you can see from the “Trail Smelter Dispute” and from my other play in the book, *Kitimat*, these issues quickly become intertwined.

Recently, **David Dodge**, former Bank of Canada governor, said of the Trans Mountain Pipeline: “There are some people who are going to die in protesting the construction of this pipeline. We have to understand that.” This is why Goodwin’s story is inspiring now. This is why I wrote a play inspired by the events in Kitimat (one of the first municipalities in North America to vote on whether or not they wanted an oil pipeline).

I approached Talonbooks and my fabulous editor **Charles Simard** with these plays because they are epic and based on true events which happened in BC with international implications. For example, Nobel Women’s Initiative, founded by women who’d won the Nobel Peace Prize (including **Rigoberta Menchú Tum** of Guatemala, **Shirin Ebadi** of Iran, **Leymah Gbowee** of Liberia) made a point of travelling to Kitimat before the vote took place to hear directly from women impacted by the project. This delegation was led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate **Jody Williams** and included Kenyan environmentalist **Ikal Angelei**, corporate executive **Chris Page** and climate scientist **Marianne Douglas** from the University of Alberta, and went from the oil sands in Northern Alberta to the coast of BC. News outlets across Canada, the US and Britain covered the story of the vote in Kitimat.

Both plays brought me closer to communities in our province. *Kitimat* is my first play inspired by my ancestral islands, the Azores (Kitimat’s population was 40-50% Portuguese), which is why many residents opened up to me during the process of writing the play. Eighty-year-old women sang me the first Azorean songs I’d heard, taught me to cook with them in the Luso Hall, shared their immigration stories. Because plays are written to be embodied by actors, to inspire designers and directors to create a world, these moments are vital, corporeal, experiences I will always treasure.

9781772014471



DAVID LESTER ILLUSTRATION

anizer for the Socialist Party of Canada.



CARRIE ROSEMA PHOTO

In the play, *Kitimat*, two sisters take joy in their Azorean immigrant mother’s shoes. Having new shoes was a sign of achievement and the family’s rise out of poverty.

*The Ballad of Ginger Goodwin* at the Douglas Underground Theater (DUG) of Western Washington University in 2016. Goodwin rallies the spirits of workers during the 1917 smelter strike in Trail.



# LIFE IS MAGIC

Beautiful Beautiful: A Novel  
by Brandon Reid  
(Nightwood Editions \$24.95)

BY ODETTE AUGER

In a brilliant debut, **Brandon Reid's Beautiful Beautiful** is a coming-of-age story about twelve-year-old Derik, who shares the mixed Heiltsuk background of the author.

Derik is returning to his ancestral hometown, Waglisla, which is also known as Bella Bella (Beautiful Beautiful) for his grandfather's funeral. Reid uses the archetypal device of a sea journey to indicate that a major change in Derik's life is underway as he travels by boat with his father, George. Also along on the trip is Derik's shaman Raven—yes, Derik is closer to things beyond the conscious and half the novel is narrated by his inner spirit guide who is named Redbird.

Although we see Redbird as a falcon type bird on the cover of *Beautiful Beautiful*, it's important to note the trickster element of shapeshifting that Redbird represents. Redbird also describes himself as "Thunderbird" and draws connections to Quetzalcoatl, an Aztec deity in the form of a feathered serpent that figured in the creation of mankind. Raven, Redbird and Thunderbird become interchangeable.

On the boat trip north, conversations between shaman, father and son weave in and out, moving from social issues (white people using blackface, abuses at residential schools) to finding paths beyond "how to adapt to the Western way...not that they need to," explains Raven.

Self-sovereignty and decolonization are not talking points, but are intrinsic to the tone, voice and structures of the writing itself.

Often, coming-of-age novels move the protagonist through development from a self-centered thinker to a wider, other-focused lens. For Derik, finding his place in the world happens on a few levels including a broader concept of family and a larger community. It also includes validation of the non-linear ways he has already discovered and has been moving towards.

Poetry and visions enter early in this novel, and deconstructing Western narrative begins from the onset. By the third page "they enter a new world, a world of spirit (sure enough) but also that of true Earth, where Nature has her course, where the living gods breathe through her and the deeds of evil men are absorbed, taken apart and reassembled for the greater good," writes Reid.

Derik pauses at a piano, "by feel he goes, striding across sonic landscapes, raising cities from sand, then letting them fall from his hands. Their sketches fade in resonance; the end

## A Heiltsuk teen learns about visions and spirit life from his shaman Raven on a trip to Bella Bella.

alters the start." With writing like this, Reid's story circles, rather than moving on a timeline.

It's a book where the towering cliffs holding gull eggs intermingle with ebon worms of video games and magic. Reid's characters gift us with the teaching that life is full of magic. Raven goes even further, stating: "Life is magic."

"Magic is causing change to occur according to will," Raven teaches Derik. "So aligning anything with your true will and causing it to happen is considered magic."

When Derik first steps onto the dock at Waglisla, he orientates himself by looking at his father's face. "His eyes are wide with the spirit now flaming within him, fuelled by the coming home, rising with the past."

That's when Derik hears his first eagle. "The call of an eagle coils through Derik's one ear and out the other, resonating within him, bringing him to joy," writes Reid. "He bathes in the melodies of the happy, healthy, thriving birds, unlike those scavengers down south fighting over refuse and hand-outs. Here, they are mighty. Here, they are worthy."

Like most families, there are dynamics to navigate, both for Derik and his father. Coming to terms with the loss of his grandfather and the ongoing impacts of inter-generational trauma are real, not buzzwords. Derik's fresh eyes on old patterns teach him more about his father, and how he re-

sponds to family members' shifts. As a twelve-year-old, he still mourns the loss of a loved pet companion and feels frustrated by a cousin's acting out. We witness him stepping into his adult self through compassionate gestures that we can all learn from.

Truth-telling starts from the first page, and part of that is seeing how our

relatives are coping—and not coping. With a background in both journalism and Indigenous education, Reid navigates the truth-telling with clear-sightedness and grace.

I'll be sharing this book with my own children—young ones who need to know they're not the only ones disconnected from some family; and older ones I left gaps with, because I was uncertain how to share.

Holding those truths doesn't need to interfere with how we can reconnect with elements and spirit. Interrupting a conversation about orca and crow dialects, Reid writes: "The wind pushed past, saying, 'We know you. Follow us.'"

Derik hears this, and asks, "When can I start fishing?"

*Beautiful Beautiful* fills an essential need for sophisticated and genuine Young Adult novel readers, but I reluctantly place a "coming-of-age" genre tag on this beautiful, beautiful book of brilliance because it is a story for everyone—an insightful teaching tool for those learning about reconciliation, and a powerful sharing of Indigenous guidance.

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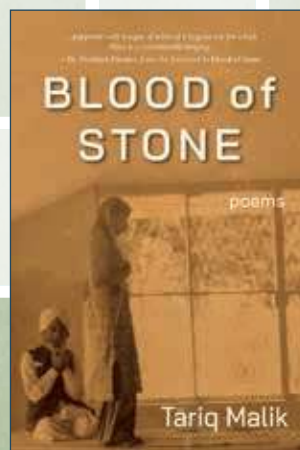
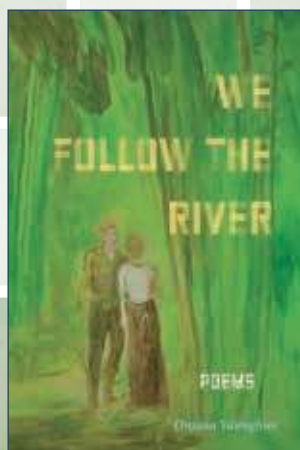
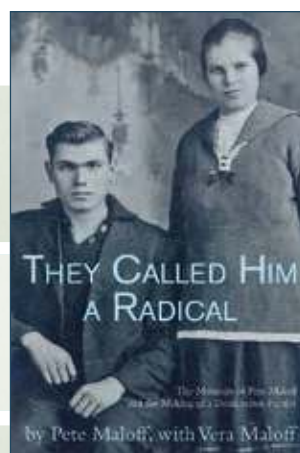
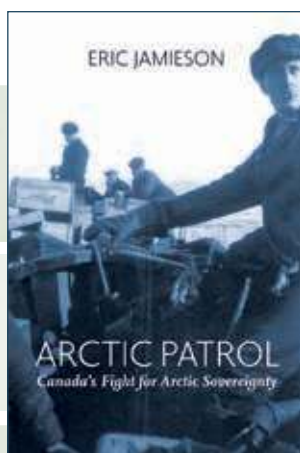
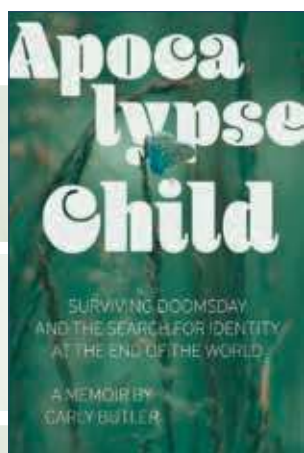
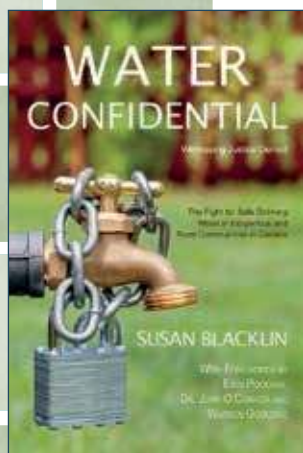
Odette Auger, a member of Sagamok Anishnawbek through her mother, lives as a guest in toq qaym ix' (Klahoose), ʔəʔamen qaym ix' (Tla'amin) and ʔop qaym ix' (Homalco) territories.

Brandon Reid, a member of the Heiltsuk First Nation with a mix of Indigenous and English ancestry, works part-time as a teacher and in his spare time enjoys cooking, playing music and listening to comedy podcasts.

KEVIN CRUZ PHOTO

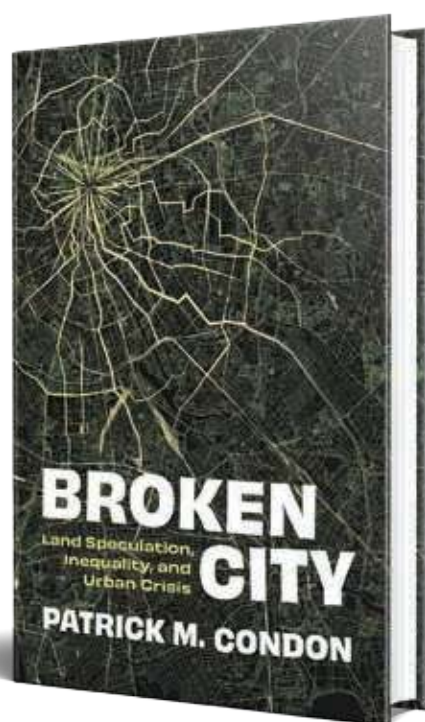
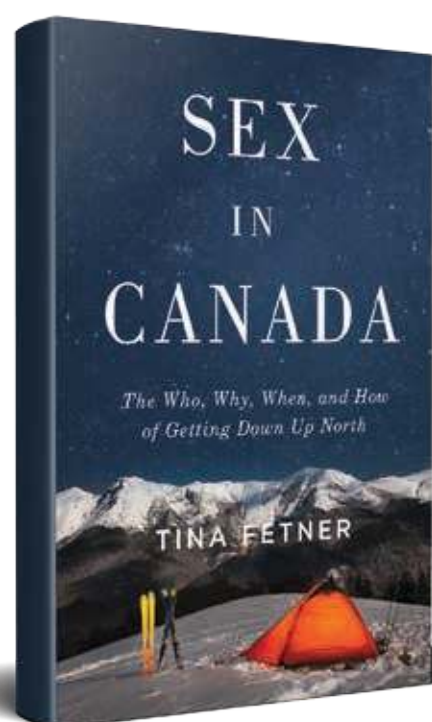


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## Hot Topics



### Sex in Canada

*The Who, Why, When, and How of Getting Down Up North*

TINA FETNER

What do we do in the bedroom? Guided by the results of a one-of-a-kind survey of adults aged eighteen to ninety, Tina Fetner pulls the covers off of sex among singles and couples, marriage and monogamy, hooking up and committed relationships, cheating, desire, risk, and pleasure.

### Broken City

*Land Speculation, Inequality, and Urban Crisis*

PATRICK CONDON

*Broken City* argues that skyrocketing urban land prices drive our global housing market failure, and offers real solutions to reclaim land wealth from speculators and individuals for the common good.



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[ubcpres.ca](http://ubcpres.ca)



# ROUND-UP FICTION



John MacLachlan Gray

Dora Decker, a.k.a. the Fatal Flapper, becomes internationally famous for stabbing her employer in 1920s Vancouver. Meanwhile, Ed McCurdy, Canada's first radio personality, who reads news as "Mr. Good-Evening," fears becoming the next victim. **John MacLachlan Gray's** latest historical fiction, **Mr. Good-Evening: A Mystery** (D&M \$34.95) also includes Inspector Calvin Hook as he navigates gritty streets and uncovers connections between the murder, **Al Capone**, **Winston Churchill** and a mystical cult leader on DeCourcy Island in this page-turning tale.

9781771623957



In **Last Woman** (M&S \$24.99) **Carleigh Baker** navigates a hellscape world, addressing concerns including the ozone layer's deterioration, toxic cul-



Carleigh Baker

tures and floods and wildfires. Through 13 stories, Baker's characters grapple with modern anxieties, revealing a world askew. From a young woman finding sisterhood in a strange fertility ritual to an emerging academic suddenly choosing institutional violence, the tales explore intergenerational misunderstandings, fear for the future and the complexities of belonging. Baker's irreverent style and empathy offer a fresh perspective on our troubled world, blending humour, heartbreak and startling insight.

9780771004148



In **Stewart Goodings'** debut, **My Friend, My Enemy** (FriesenPress \$23) two childhood friends reconnect in adulthood. Nadezhda and Alla had spent their childhood summers together near the Caspian Sea, becoming "almost sisters." Fate re-unites them after Alla loses family in the Russia-Chechnya war and is secretly recruited for a revenge mission. Nadezhda knows nothing of this subterfuge, although she shares a Moscow apartment with her long-lost friend. As they find their lives entwined in unexpected ways, the question arises: can a friend also be an enemy?

9781039153929



Historian, Anne, discovers five seventeenth-century manuscripts recounting the story of Joan and Thomasina, young survivors separated after the Plague in the Middle Ages, in **Anne Fleming's** novel, **Curiosities** (Knopf \$35.00). Joan gets work as a maid while Thomasina embarks on a sea voyage as a man named Tom. Their adult reunion unfolds a love story marred by scandal, prompting Tom's undercover escape to the North Pole. In the present, the historian meticulously pieces together their fate, contributing her own layer of "truth" to this saga that defies societal norms.

9781039004986



Anne Fleming

Denman Island's best known gardener, **Des Kennedy**, has published his sixth novel, **Commune** (Harbour \$24.95) a saga about six ambitious youths from 1970s Vancouver who impulsively establish a back-to-the-land commune on a Salish Sea island. Over five decades, the commune survives tumultuous conflicts, community uproars, births, deaths, animal husbandry mishaps and the War in the Woods (Clayoquot Sound, 1993). Narrated by the last commune member

to a mysterious stranger, the story reflects on life's big questions—how do we best live life and build community?

9781990776519



In the summer of 2000, grief-stricken skateboarder, Ines, leaves her sheltered hometown for Montreal. Entranced by the city, she befriends goth-girl April and becomes a cam-girl. During a bar fight, Ines meets Max, another skateboarder, and a romance ensues. However, Ines has to confront the challenges of her past, Max's mental health struggles and a threat from a regular at the cam studio. **Late September** (Nightwood \$22.95) by **Amy Mattes** unfolds Ines' exploration of self-love, trauma and mental health.

9780889714564



In a surreal exploration of queer love, **Myriam Lacroix's** debut novel, **How It Works Out** (Doubleday \$14.99) deals with alternate realities. Myriam and Allison's relationship unfolds through a series of hypothetical scenarios. What if they became mothers by finding a baby in an alley? How would their dynamic be affected if one were a powerful CEO and the other her lowly employee? The narrative delves into the promises and perils of love, blending dark comedy with tender moments.

9780385698429



During the Second World War, small-town singer, Molly, craves a lavish lifestyle and dreams of escaping her working-class life in **Louis Druehl's** wartime tale, **Bamfield Posh** (Granville Island Publishing \$23.95). After

a brief encounter with a Canadian soldier, Molly gets pregnant. She's sent to isolated Bamfield on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Amid refugees, misfits and fishermen, Molly adapts to a new life. Her husband's abuse and death test her "posh" dream, but she perseveres, hoping to find love. Molly eventually learns resilience and redefines her identity against the backdrop of a diverse community.

9781926991610



A Whistler Independent Book Award Winner, **Tom Stewart's Immortal North** (Lucky Dollar Media \$23.99) follows the story of a man and his son navigating a rugged life in a remote forest. They face familiar threats in the wilderness: harsh weather, predators and the intrusion of civilization at odds with their lifestyle. One day, their woodland life is shattered, prompting a quest for justice. This narrative explores the profound bonds of human love while grappling with the dueling forces of life: joy and suffering, good and evil, compassion and vengeance.

9781777221126



**Shashi Bhat** delves into the everyday absurdities faced by women in her collection of stories, **Death by a Thousand Cuts** (M&S \$24.95). A writer is confronted with her ex's novel about their breakup. An immunocompromised woman falls in love, but is betrayed by her body. A man's habit



Amy Mattes

## 15 FRESH FICTIONS

Historical, thrillers, coming-of-age tales and family dramas are included in this year's crop.



of grabbing his girlfriend’s breasts prompts a shocking confession, and more. With honesty, tenderness and sharp wit, these stories capture the complexities of women’s relationships with others and with themselves.

9780771095115

★  
In 1952, a young man, Kalu, from Punjab seeks to escape the suffocating grip of caste and moves to Britain with his family to seek dignity. England’s promise of respect crumbles as he realizes that caste prejudices persist among expatriates. Having endured brutal oppression in India—expulsion from a rally and denial to enter temples—Kalu now faces a determined struggle abroad. **Ujjal Dosanjh’s** debut novel, **The Past Is Never Dead** (Speaking Tiger/Sandhill \$30) unveils the Punjabi family’s quest for a better life and struggles shaping Sikh immigrants’ lives in Britain.

9789354474958



Susan Juby

★  
Buddhist butler-detective Helen Thorpe assists the eccentric Cartier Hightower, a wannabe influencer, in sorting out Hightower’s chaotic life at the same time that Thorpe is solving the mysterious murder of a fellow content creator in **Susan Juby’s A Meditation on Murder** (HarperCollins \$24.99). A sequel to *Mindful of Murder*, Juby delivers a hilarious tale as Helen navigates the influencer world, attempting to help Cartier find her true nature away from her Instafamous persona.

9781443469524

★  
Seventeen-year-old Aimee Roh grapples with Sensory Time Warp Syndrome, a rare condition causing her to time travel to a moment in her life when a scent triggers that memory. A nine-hour vanishing act into a new memory of her estranged mom prompts Aimee to journey to Korea for answers. Unraveling her past, she discovers the truth about her mother and confronts the painful silences in an exploration of memory, grief and self-discovery in **Sarah Suk’s** YA title, **The Space Between Here & Now** (Quill Tree Books \$24.99).

9780063255135

★  
In **The World is But a Broken Heart** (HarperCollins \$24.99), **Michael Maitland** weaves together eleven tales of the hapless Fitzpatrick family, who are perpetually shadowed by misfortune. Dale, Kenny and Patrick, bound by brotherhood, navigate a turbulent household with bouts of antagonism and camaraderie. Amidst difficult parenting, despairing mothers and fathers numbed by their occupations, these stories explore life’s complexities—violent labour strikes, predatory insurance agents, student-teacher relationships and estranged siblings.

9781773241296

Billy-Ray Belcourt



★  
“It [the boreal forest] wraps right around the northern hemisphere. We need it to breathe.’ I let his comment hang in the air. What else wraps around the northern hemisphere? History, its many wounded,” writes **Billy-Ray Belcourt** in his collection, **Coexistence** (Hamish Hamilton \$27.95). From an aging mother revealing an intimate friendship from her past to her son, to a PhD student dog-sitting at what was once a lodge for nuns operating a residential school, Belcourt’s stories highlight Indigenous love and loneliness.

9780735242036

★  
**Scott Alexander Howard’s** debut novel, **The Other Valley** (Atria \$27.99), follows Odile living in an isolated town with a unique heavily-guarded border. The town, repeating in a time loop, is mirrored 20 years ahead in time to the east and 20 years behind to the west. When Odile spots the grieving parents of her friend Edme in town, having crossed the border from the future, she grapples with her growing connection to the boy who is about to die. Will Odile imperil her entire future to save a doomed Edme?

9781668015476

★  
It’s 1964. Daisy Shoemaker dreams of life beyond her strict Mormon community in the town of Redemption. While boys are taught to work in the lucrative sawmill that supports their enclave, Daisy and her female friends are instructed to wait for the day the bishop will choose a husband for them. **Leslie Howard** narrates Daisy’s feminist and counterculture urges to flee with a man forty years her senior in **The Celestial Wife** (Simon & Schuster \$17.99). Can Daisy truly escape her past?

9781982182403

★  
Fresh out of prison, Cameron Shaw, a paroled killer, is offered a fortune to infiltrate the League of Nations crime syndicate. **Sam Wiebe’s Ocean Drive** (Harbour \$24.95) follows Sgt. Meghan Quick, as she investigates the bizarre death of grad student, Alexa Reed, revealing Reed’s connection to the League of Nations. As Quick seeks Alexa’s killer, Shaw gets entangled in the cross-border drug trade. With a gang war looming, Quick must solve the case and rescue Shaw from impending violence in the town’s future.

9781990776694

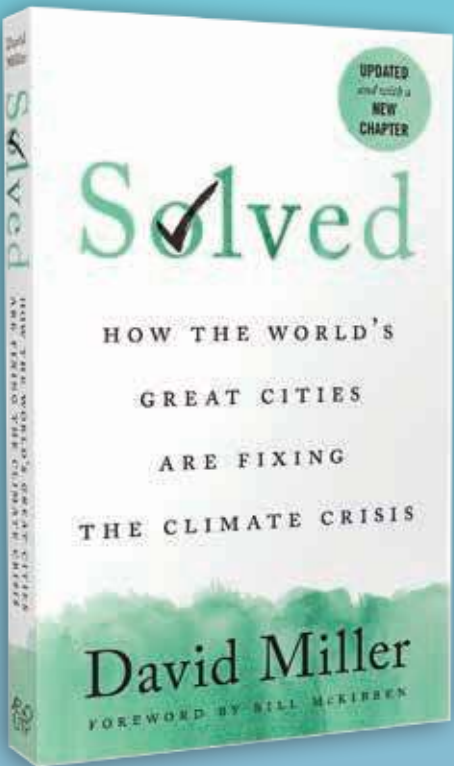
★  
Vancouver’s **Roberta Rich** has released her latest historical fiction novel, **The Jazz Club Spy** (Simon & Schuster \$24.99) about a Jewish cigarette girl, Giddy Brodsky, in the tenements and jazz clubs of 1930s New York. When Giddy discovers the identity of the Cossack who torched her Russian village, she partners with Carter van der Zalm, an immigration official, to seek justice. The two become entangled in a political conspiracy just as the Second World War breaks out.

9781982187729

★  
A 2018 ReLit Award winner, **Martin West’s** novel, **The Father of Rain** (Anvil \$22.95) follows the journey of a perplexed seventeen-year-old Cirrus who had to endure the sudden vanishing of both his parents from his family home. With ongoing police investigations, weekly reporter invasions as well as visits from a parade of social workers, doctors and concerned relatives, Cirrus decides to embark on his own investigation of who his parents truly were or, perhaps, who they could have been. Martin West was born in Victoria.

9781772142105

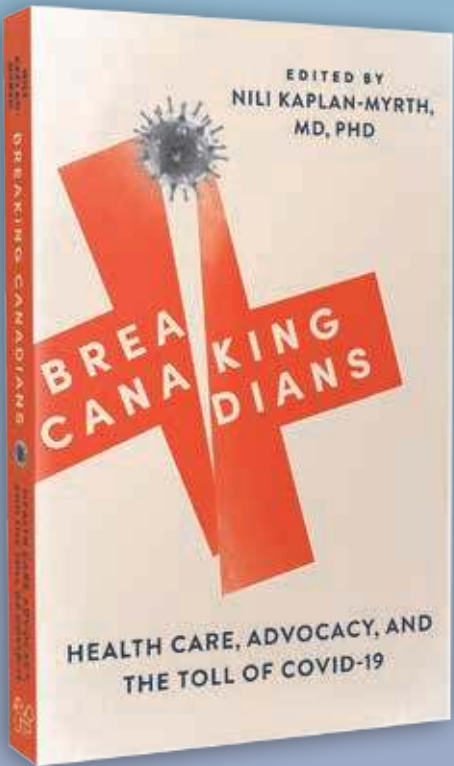
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Long-Time Street Nurse, C.M.

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**The Broken Heart of Winter**  
by Judy LeBlanc  
(Caitlin Press \$24.95)

BY GRANT BUDAY



When wayward son, Daniel, runs away from his Victoria home at the age of sixteen to explore his Acadian roots in Nova Scotia, he leaves behind his bewildered and grieving parents. Although his mother, Lise, is descended from the French settlers who were exiled by English armies in the mid-18th century during what is now called the Expulsion of the Acadians, she is not at first aware that this tragic event still affects her so many generations later. But Daniel feels the impact and he seeks some answers in **Judy LeBlanc's** novel, **The Broken Heart of Winter**, an exploration of how historical trauma is passed from generation to generation.

The Expulsion of the Acadians, or the Grand Dérangement, dates to 1713, when Britain gained control of Acadia, which included parts of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Maine. Over the following decades, tensions flared between France and England, who were competing for control of North America. Refusing to sign an oath of loyalty to the British Crown, some Acadians joined French military operations against the English, culminating in the Acadians' forced removal; an entire people—farmers, fishers, hunters—were brutally uprooted.

Of the approximately 14,500 Acadians, 11,000 were relocated, nearly a third of whom died of disease, while some 3,000 managed to hide or make it to safety in Quebec. Those sent by ship to Louisiana became known as Cajuns. In 1764 an order was given allowing them to return. Such is the book's backstory.

*The Broken Heart of Winter* does not deliver epic sea voyages, military heroics or naval battles. LeBlanc focuses instead on family life and what she describes as the mass trauma that caused "patterns of deep disruption [that] repeat themselves generation after generation." This is an exploration of stress that persists through the centuries like a virus.

Composed of three sections, the first and longest one focuses on Lise and Daniel. The latter two sections, set in 1832 and 1755–63 respectively, take us into the lives of those who emigrated from France to North America and were subsequently persecuted.

Certainly Lise, her husband Dick and Daniel are stressed, particularly when Daniel suddenly leaves at such a young age. "For the first two years Daniel was gone, Lise looked for him through the police, his friends, the obituaries," writes LeBlanc. "She and Dick blamed one another; they made vicious accusations." And later, "All those years of conflict with Dick didn't amount to anything resembling resolution." Inevitably they divorce.

Section two, titled *Isle Madame, 1832, Contrary Winds*, is narrated by Appoline, the backbone of a multigenerational family composed mostly of women. The dour and dutiful Appoline negotiates between her exhausted



Although Judy LeBlanc was born and raised on the west coast, she has Acadian ancestry on her father's side. She founded the Fat Oyster Reading Series in Fanny Bay on Vancouver Island.

# Exile

## from paradise

After more than two and a half centuries, descendants of Acadian settlers still wrestle with the historical mass trauma of losing their homes and livelihoods.

mother, her nearly one-hundred-year-old grandmother and a wild younger sister. "My grandfather died before I was born, though his fiddle has rested against the wall near Grand-Mère's bed my entire life and no one, not even Papa, was permitted to touch it. I've never known music in the house and yet there it sits, a reminder that it was not always this way."

The third section, *Acadia, 1755–1763, The Starving Time*, is narrated by the grandmother herself, who survived the crisis as a young woman. This is the book's most dramatic part with its combination of suspense and action as the Acadians flee through the forest avoiding the redcoats.

"I lost track of how many days we walked, how often we returned to where

we'd started that morning. We were slower each day and our food supply dwindled. We ate eels when we were near enough to the marshes and when the night was light enough that the men could spot and spear them in the shallow waters."

Their trek culminates with the narrator killing not an eel but an Englishman. "I loaded my gun again and fired just as he reached his. It had become a game to keep him from his gun. I kicked it farther up the bank as he moaned and held a bloody hand to his chest. The creek swirled red, the colour of his infantry jacket."

The rifle she uses is a Charleville, a five-foot-long flintlock French infantry musket. Like the Acadians themselves, this particular specimen survives, and

we meet it in all three sections of the book, including the first: *Victoria-Halifax, 2001, The Charleville*.

*The Broken Heart of Winter* is about endurance, hope and survival. Though generally gloomy in tone, the third section ends on an upbeat note with Grand-Mère saying: "Shouts of 'Je suis Acadian' ride high above the clamour and throng. A daughter of a time I've not yet known will be swept into the motion of the crowd, not quite of the people that flow around her and yet affected with their lightness and energy. My memory is a rich country."

Rich in domestic detail and personal emotion, *The Broken Heart of Winter* will enlarge any reader's appreciation of Acadian history in particular, and Canadian history in general.

9781773861050

Grant Buday's historical fiction novels, *Orphans of Empire (Brindle & Glass, 2020)* and *In the Belly of the Sphinx (Brindle & Glass, 2023)* tell of the late 19th century lives of settlers in Vancouver and Victoria respectively.

## YA novel of the Expulsion

The Expulsion of the Acadians is also the subject of a recent YA novel, **Nathalie: An Acadian's Tale of Tragedy and Triumph** by **Debra Amirault Camelin** (Ronsdale \$23.95). The tale follows Nathalie as she escapes the expulsion from Grand-Pré, Nova Scotia after being separated from her family. She walks 150 kilometres to Cap-Sable and is taken in by the Amirault family until further, more brutal, deportations are carried out by the British. Based on the real lives of two Acadian families.

9781553806714

“My grandfather died before I was born, though his fiddle has rested against the wall near Grand-Mère's bed my entire life and no one, not even Papa, was permitted to touch it. I've never known music in the house and yet there it sits, a reminder that it was not always this way.”



# Suffering as a blessing

Poetry that sees a grandfather who can still wallop young males, and petals in the morning light.

**A Bouquet Brought Back from Space**  
by Kevin Spenst (Anvil Press \$18)

BY TREVOR CAROLAN

**P**ublic reader, event organizer, moderator and columnist for *subTerrain* magazine where he tracks chapbooks, poet **Kevin Spenst** has authored, or collaborated on, thirteen of these himself. In addition to his chapbooks, his latest title, **A Bouquet Brought Back From Space**, is his fourth collection with Anvil Press in less than ten years. Clearly, he's an energetic, hard-working writer.

These new poems resonate throughout with Spenst's Mennonite and family history. Memory is critical and Spenst's father, who struggled with mental illness, surfaces repeatedly. There are meditations on Spenst's ancestral origins, on poverty, on old-school Mennonite pacifist discipline—and on a grandfather who could still wallop the faces of unwary young males. This tough love is juxtaposed in the book's latter half with the joy of Spenst's own intimate partnership, and gratitude flows through his many love poems which, strangely, is a genre we don't see much of anymore.

Spenst is also a technician. His poetics are wide-ranging and employ phrasings from Low German and multiple languages: keep your Google Translate function handy.

A prose-poem, "A Post Mennonite Preface..." articulates Spenst's concerns: "I can't stop thinking of petals in the morning light, trying to imagine some wholeness heralded by beauty in a world built out of broken parts, schisms, and histories of fear and violence...What else can I do but acknowledge systems of oppression while decorating mystery in beauty, absurdity and historic flourishes?"

In counterpoint, he reflects on his father's schizophrenia that he explored



in an earlier collection, *Ignite*. Remembering him as "an iceberg calving father on the lazy-boy who collapsed our home into cold waves..."—it's bleak. Other memories are like weather reports when it rains "sharp teeth." There are few good endings. "How many asylum visits assailed/ our no-place-like-home, how many ways/ did you go for broke" he asks. "How many times did/ we ride out your storms?...I'm calling for the one I can no longer trust."

Yet there's empathy, too, for a father who'd "gone lunar." You'd need a heart of stone not to appreciate "Kneeling by the Side of the Bed, He Taught Me to Pray" with its beautiful image from childhood: a father, guiding. Spenst yearns to travel back "with what I know/ now and work on the mechanics of our awk-/ wardness, to stop mid-prayer and tell my dad/ he wasn't a sin-wracked failure... just different." That's a hard moment of recollection. This is what poetry can give us. A small shot at something like redemption, of compassion.

As Spenst's fellow Fraser Valley Mennonite poet, Robert Martens, has reminded us, you don't come from the Bible Belt and not know about angels.

"This The Day" is a series of tercets on the delight of contemplating angels that are noted in half a dozen exotic orthographies—Burmese, Hindi, Malayalam and Chinese. Back in the day, mothers comforted ailing children with stories of their guardian angels that "fold their wings in unison to hold up our world," writes Spenst. Here's a guy who can still recall that lost magic.

The Dalai Lama reminds us that we're not compelled to follow our parents' faith teachings, but that we shouldn't rush to junk them either. "Astrophysical Flowerings"... plumbs Spenst's faded Christian heritage with an epigraph from the Book of Luke—"Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Spotting Jesus the carpenter who, in his own agony, still comforts the low-caste crucified thief beside him, it's a timely tale from a troubled city like Vancouver.

For a nearer taste of our world, now on fire from horizon to horizon, consider "In the Geology of a Moment" that tracks the topology of a scream. With his own troubles, what Spenst craves is to crawl inside what Gabor Maté might call a complex trauma—"the inner sanctuary of/ my scream" to let it go

and understand. Think Gaza. Ukraine.

It's not all edgy relevance. There's fun as well in Spenst's surrealist lyrics. "It Will Rain Like Rods on the Hillside in Sweden" showers geographically appropriate precipitation—frogs' legs rain down in France, plums plummet in Taipei, frontal systems of bamboo fall on Tokyo. Why not? Poetry is a way of looking at the world, something between blarney and prophecy.

The book's title arrives via the old Mennonite capacity to regard even suffering as a blessing. Depicting a winter's indisposition, "Another Gift of a Migraine" portrays its creeping aura as "a psychedelic porcupine," "a jagged halo" that shades "the border of consciousness" between light and darkness. But there are moments, Spenst hopes, that may be shared—of "concocted angels," of "reprieve," or of a sacredness that "he can hold out to others." From such exhaustion may come, he affirms, "a bouquet brought back from space." Even anguish, we see, can have value if we trust.

9781772142259

*Trevor Carolan writes from North Vancouver.*



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**Grizzly Bear Science and the Art of a Wilderness Life: Forty Years of Research in the Flathead Valley**  
by **Bruce McLellan**  
(Rocky Mountain Books \$32)

BY TOM HAWTHORN

**I**n the fall of 1978, wildlife graduate student **Bruce McLellan** and his partner **Celine** moved to British Columbia's Flathead Valley,

living first in a VW van before moving into a riverside log cabin so old that steel wool was stuffed into gaps in the chinking to help keep mice out.

One morning 20 months later, the ground was covered by fine ash while the sun was obscured by a grey haze covering the sky. The couple was so isolated, so removed from print and electronic media, not to mention people, that several days passed before they learned of the eruption of Mount St. Helens.

McLellan has emerged after 42 years of field studies, as well as dozens of research papers, with a dense, informative and detail-filled book about the lives and behaviours of bears. He also shares with us the pleasures and the tribulations of raising a family in the wilderness.

Over the decades, he has followed about 170 different grizzlies with the assistance of radio collars. The placing of those collars means trapping and drugging an animal the size of two Shaquille O'Neals—with a less amiable disposition than that of the former basketball star.

McLellan's study began to determine ways to lessen the impact of salvage logging on the bears and their forested habitat. He practiced behavioural ecology ("Why do bears do what they do?") as well as population ecology ("What are the interactions that determine how many grizzly bears there are? Or more simply: Why aren't there more bears?").

As a scientist, McLellan avoids anthropomorphizing the creatures he studies, other than giving them names for identification. Still, it seems to be human nature to reduce the threat posed by bears through humour or cautionary tales. In popular culture, we've got Yogi Bear and his felonious intent on "pic-a-nic baskets," though the Goldilocks fairy tale hints at our primal fear of the creatures, which also finds expression through the use of pelts as rugs — a symbol of our triumph over a feared predator.

McLellan has an intimate knowledge of the grizzlies and their behaviour. He is an ursine voyeur unlike any other and has possibly conducted the longest uninterrupted wildlife research project done by one person. He amassed intimate knowledge of bear movement and behaviour, including eating and mating habits. He first spotted one female, called Aggie, as a days-old cub and was still tracking her when she was shot by a hunter 32 years later.

And then there's Mitch, one of 17 cubs born to another bear named Elspeth. Mitch was a "bait hound" who



Bruce McLellan working in the field with his young son, collaring and measuring a tranquilized grizzly bear.

# BEARING WITNESS

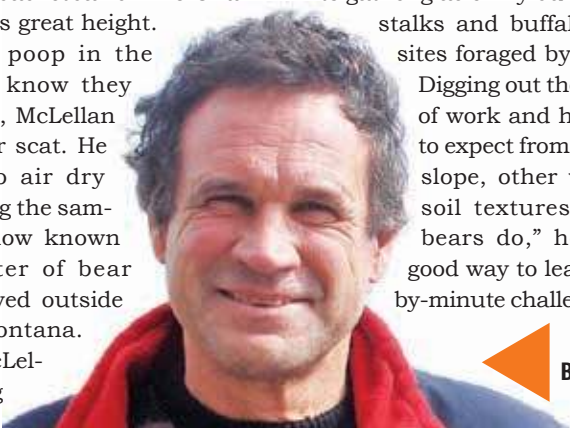
Wildlife research ecologist  
**Bruce McLellan** has spent 42 years studying grizzlies. He has an intimate knowledge of their eating and mating habits as well as poop, having sent 1,190 dried chunks to be analyzed.

revelled in the easy pickings of a trap. Despite McLellan's best efforts not to capture him, Mitch got caught in eight traps in 1988 alone. Happily, four of those were in aluminum barrel traps, so they could just roll him out without needing to use tranquilizers. Mitch was happy to mooch a free meal even at the cost of his liberty. In the end, Mitch was killed during mating season by a larger male bear named Wilt. That bear was named after basketball's **Wilt Chamberlain** for his great height.

Do bears poop in the woods? You know they do. For years, McLellan collected bear scat. He allowed it to air dry before sending the samples to a fellow known as the master of bear poop, who lived outside Missoula, Montana. Over time, McLellan sent along 1,190 chunks

of dried grizzly scat and another 395 souvenirs of black bear scat.

The desire was to learn more about the grizzly diet. The gathered scat didn't answer all their questions, so another step was to feed captured bears a diet of their favourite foods before checking the scat. Data in, data out. The challenge: Bears eat a lot. In exchange for a nutrient analysis of grizzly bear food samples, McLellan agreed to gather glacier lily bulbs, cow parsnip stalks and buffalo berries from sites foraged by tracked bears. Digging out the roots was a lot of work and he learned what to expect from the angle of the slope, other vegetation and soil textures. "Doing what bears do," he writes, "is a good way to learn the minute-by-minute challenges they face."



Bruce McLellan

High-tech science eventually showed a path beyond being knee-deep in scat. Isotope ratios provided the best picture of a grizzly's diet.

Another black bear he tracked, a female, managed to locate a big, dead, hollow larch tree in the middle of the forest. She climbed up and in to kipper down for a six-month snooze, free from fear of attack from wolves, cougars and grizzlies while hibernating. Her ability to walk through a thin snowfall to the location of the hollow tree offered anecdotal evidence of bears possessing spatial memory.

While a general reader, like me, learns much about British Columbia's bears, McLellan's book will be particularly useful for those interested in wildlife ecology and related fields, who can better appreciate such concepts as minimum convex polygon and marginal value theorem.

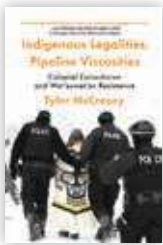
The author has included in the text the latitude and the longitude of described events which can be typed into the search box of Google Earth. That is most helpful, as is an index which includes such entries as: "Mitch (grizzly bear), 62, 63, 191." 9781771605656

*Tom Hawthorn is the author of The Year Canadians Lost Their Minds and Found Their Country (D&M, 2017) and Deadlines (Harbour, 2012). His anecdotal history of baseball in Vancouver will be published next year.*





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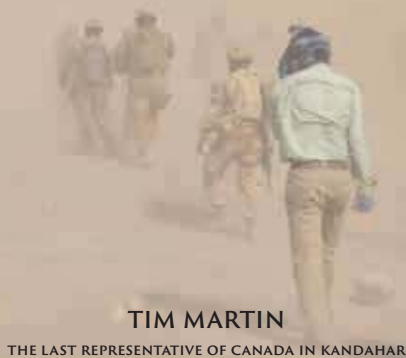
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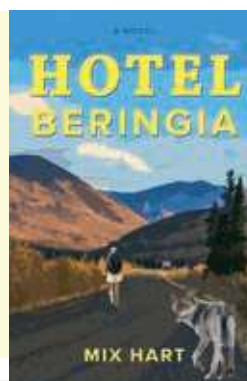
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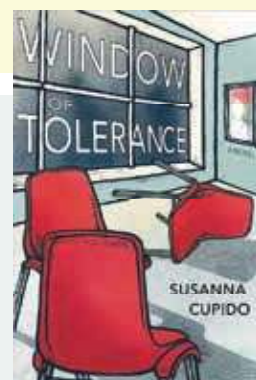
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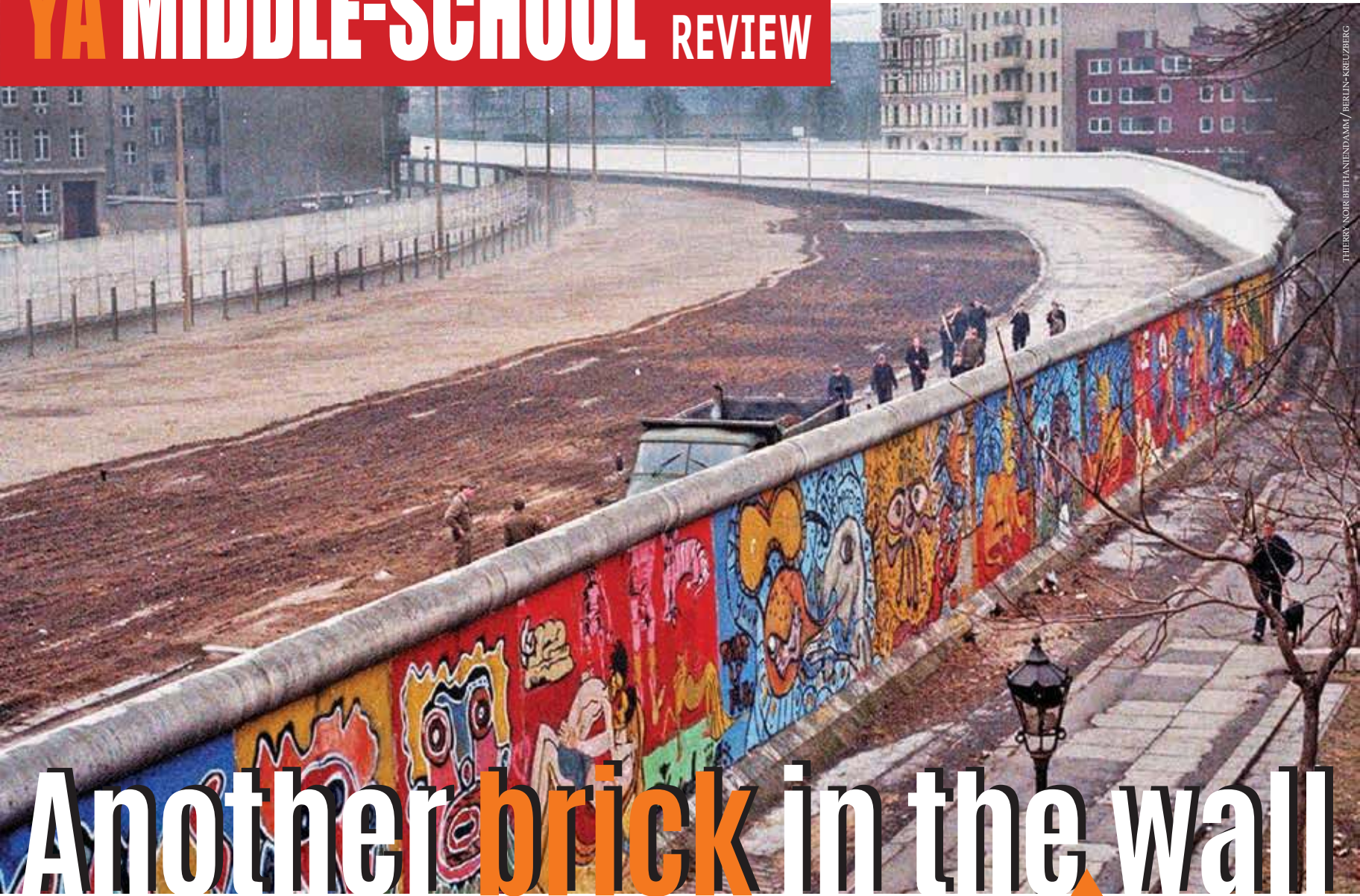
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# Another brick in the wall

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(Orca \$29.95) 9–12 Years

BY SENURI WASALATHANTHRI

As a child, I hardly understood the importance of learning about world history and how things came to be. It wasn't until adulthood that I realized history possesses a tendency to repeat itself. It became evident that understanding significant historical events was a way to arm ourselves against repeating the mistakes of our ancestors.

Consider this: How would our perspective of the world evolve if we possessed knowledge and understanding about major historical events during our formative years? Radio journalist, **Gregor Craigie**, has willingly embraced the challenge of educating children about walls and human barriers erected across the globe—a neglected detail in world history conversations. He meticulously categorizes all the crucial walls built throughout history based on the most significant purposes they serve.

The act of keeping people out of a particular territory has been the primary motivation for countries and kingdoms to construct barriers along their borders for thousands of years. From the Great Wall of China to Ukraine's ancient walls, the current United States-Mexico border wall, and the border wall in Hungary, these structures were erected with the sole purpose of restricting entry by people from other nations. Craigie delves into the efficacy of each of these barriers and explores what they are intended to protect. However, he also cleverly shares his perspective on what these walls could potentially harm or destroy. These physical barriers often serve

"It's been said that people build too many walls and not enough bridges," **Gregor Craigie** notes in his exploration of the barriers that divide us.

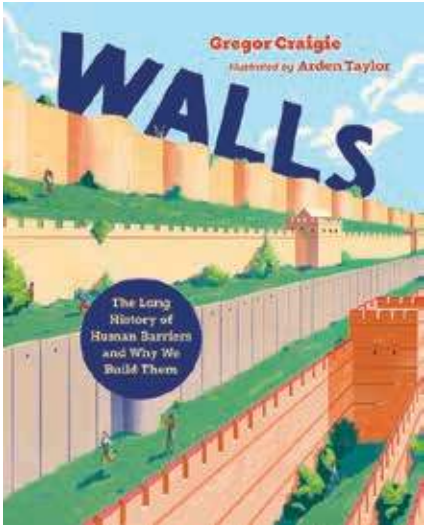


as painful separations for family members living in different countries, making it difficult for them to frequently see their parents, siblings and loved ones. "Is this a compassionate response to people in need? Or a cruel divide between people who should be allowed to come together?" Craigie writes. "Like so many questions about barriers, the answer depends on who answers and on what side of the wall they stand."

In stark contrast, some barriers were designed solely to prevent people from moving out of their home nation, trapping the unwilling inside without any possibility of escape. Craigie goes into detail about the events that led to the construction of the Warsaw Ghetto wall in Poland, the Berlin wall, the Western Sahara wall and the Israeli West Bank barrier. He meticulously provides details about **Adolf Hitler** and the Nazi reign, the Communist Party Alliance with the Soviet Union, the war between Western Sahara and Morocco, and the Israeli and Palestinian conflict—situations that brought about the erection of these walls.

Despite the challenging concept of war and conflict, Craigie writes with precision and care, ensuring to avoid language and details that may sensationalize or be too intense for young readers.

To bring attention to economic and trade implications of human barriers, the book focuses on the Great Zimbabwe walls, the



Great Hedge of India and Pueblo Bonito walls that made money by controlling nations, sometimes brutal amounts as in the salt tax imposed by the British colonial government in India. "The tax was essentially a price that anyone transporting salt across India from the Punjab region, where it was produced, had to pay. The British collected millions of rupees from the Indian people through the salt tax. But it was an expensive fee for one of the essential elements of life, and millions of poor Indians had to pay, even during famines when many were starving and could not afford food," Craigie writes.

On the other hand, some walls were erected for benevolent reasons. Craigie includes information about

The Berlin Wall, 1986

walls that are designed to protect nature, crops, livestock and ecosystems. The Walls of Jericho, Rabbit-Proof Fence and Dingo Fence in Australia were built to protect people from natural disasters such as floods, as well as protecting crops, endangered birds, reptiles and small mammals from other animals that cause ecological devastation.

Further, Craigie goes into detail about the Great Green Wall of Africa, Delaware Estuary Living Shoreline Initiative and the Delta Works Ocean walls in the Netherlands that are imperative for the growth of more trees and food sources, stabilizing the edge of marshland preventing erosion, and protecting communities from storms and other disasters caused by climate change.

"It's been said that people build too many walls and not enough bridges," says Craigie. "Looking back on thousands of years of human history, it's hard to argue with that. And looking into the future, it's hard to imagine people stopping. Let's hope that in the years and decades ahead, people will choose to build walls that protect all and exclude no one," Craigie writes, inviting young readers to ponder the different outcomes of barriers and solutions that promote inclusivity, unity and hope.

This thoroughly researched and well-written book will aid young readers in understanding how our society came to be, while looking at current systems from different perspectives. For any young person interested in learning more about the history of our world, exploring why humanity has put up barriers as we have evolved and why we continue this tradition, they couldn't ask for a better resource.

9781459833111

*Senuri Wasalathanthri is a Vancouver based publishing assistant, writer and student.*



Gregor Craigie

REBECCA CRAIGIE PHOTO



# WHO'S WHO

## BRITISH COLUMBIA



The subject of Kerry Gilbert's poetry collection, *Lady Bird* is Amelia Earhart (inset).

### A IS FOR ANDERSON-DARGATZ



Gail Anderson-Dargatz

An old growth tree activist named Piper, in a BC town with plenty of unemployed lumber mill workers has her husband go missing when he searches for tree poaching culprits in a planned park area in **Gail Anderson-Dargatz's** novel **The Almost Widow** (Harper Avenue \$25.99). Not knowing if Piper's husband is dead or alive, the town comes together to find him. A wilderness thriller, readers are drawn into the dangers of the forest, both natural and human. 9781443464482

### B IS FOR BAILEY

When her children took up musical instruments, Courtenay's **J.P. Bailey** took up writing picture books about music. Her latest title, **There's a Trombone in My Toolshed** (H. Wilson Books \$19.85) for ages 2-8 years employs rhyming stanzas about a trombone that gets into a tool shed. No one knows why or how it got there, but it's interacting with the tools and machines it encounters. With illustrations by **David Thrasher**, this fanciful story references musical legends such as **Glenn Miller**, **Urbie Green** and **Angela Wellman**. 9781775279341



J.P. Bailey

### C IS FOR COX

Environmental journalist, **Sarah Cox**, looks into dilemmas such as dwindling numbers of spotted owls in Canada's wild (only three known survivors), wolves hunting endangered woodland caribou, and housing developments

that threaten a tiny frog in **Signs of Life: Field Notes from the Frontlines of Extinction** (Goose Lane \$24.95). From military bases preserving ecosystems to Indigenous communities restoring ecological balance and the work of ordinary citizens, Cox finds fresh perspectives on conservation and hope. 9781773102887

### D IS FOR DeMEULEMEESTER

After being abandoned at birth by her father, Phineas, Effy finds a comfortable home with her great-aunt Ada, who is a women's rights advocate. But when Ada dies, Effy's relatives try to seize her trust fund. To prevent this, Effy seeks Phineas in the circus world. Her journey involves proving herself as a performer, saving an elephant and embracing equality

**Sarah Cox's Breaching the Peace: The Site C Dam and a Valley's Stand Against Big Hydro** (UBC Press, 2018) won a BC Book Prize and was a finalist for the Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing and the George Ryga Award for Social Awareness in Literature.



Linda DeMeulemeester

in **Linda DeMeulemeester's** novel, **Ephemia Rimaldi: Circus Performer Extraordinaire** (Red Deer Press \$14.95), a historical adventure set in the early 20th century for ages 8-12. 9780889957299



KIM PARKER PHOTO

### E IS FOR ELLIOTT

**Lauren Elliott's** second book in her Crystals & CuriosiTEAS mystery series, **Murder in a Cup** (Kensington Cozies \$37.00), has seer and New Age tea shop owner, Shay Myers, facing problems when she begins blending herbs in her greenhouse. A deadly poison from the greenhouse claims a customer's life. Shay holds a group reading only to have it take a dark turn when her assistant is accused of murder. Shay must quickly unravel clues to save her business and prove her assistant's innocence. 9781496739070

### F IS FOR FRANCES



Frances Backhouse

There are 19 species of owl in Canada and the United States, all described and illustrated with colour photographs in **Frances Backhouse's Owls: Who Gives a Hoot?** (Orca \$24.95) for ages 9-12. Many of these predators are under threat due to the use of rodent poisons that also kill owls and other wild rodent-eaters. Backhouse includes examples of kids across the continent who are helping save the owls. 9781459835290

### G IS FOR GILBERT

In her collection of linked poems, **Lady Bird** (Exile Editions \$15.95), **Kerry Gilbert** addresses **Amelia Earhart** at the same age Earhart was when she disappeared more than 80 years ago. Gilbert explores Earhart's fate, incorporating conspiracy theories surrounding her death. Beyond the historical context, the poetry examines the contemporary theme of women's erasure as they age, highlighting the ongoing societal challenges they face. 9781990773105





Art by Gordon Clover, from *Sammy Squirrel and Rodney Raccoon: Far from Stanley Park*.

H IS FOR HART



Mix Hart

A remote outpost on the Dempster Highway, the only all-season public road in Canada to cross the Arctic Circle, gives a new novel by **Mix Hart** its name, **Hotel Beringia** (Tidewater \$24.95),

due out in May. Set in the 1980s, two city slicker sisters take live-in summer jobs at the hotel during a time when miners and other resource extractors are seeking fortunes in the North, whatever the cost to the land and its peoples. Both sisters find romance, although it might not be the kind they were hoping to encounter. An award-winning blogger, Mix Hart lives on a mountain top in BC. 9781990160387

I IS FOR INVISIBLE

**The Invisible Hotel** (Bond Street \$34) by **Yeji Y. Ham**, who calls Coquitlam, BC and Seoul, South Korea her hometowns, is a gothic horror that speaks to the long afterlife of the Korean War, which technically ended in 1953 with an armistice although the two sides remain divided between north and south. Ham’s protagonist, Yewon, loses her job in a convenience store in a South Korean village where her mother continues to wash the bones of her ancestors—stark reminders of what they have lost to a war that never seems to end—in the same bathtub where women continue to give birth. Ham has a BA in creative writing from UBC and an MFA in literary arts from Brown University. 9780385698054

J IS FOR JUDE

In a love letter to Bowen Island, poet **Jude Neale** and painter **Nicholas Jennings** have collaborated to produce **Water Forgets its Own Name** (Ekstasis \$28). Neale’s poetry set to Jennings’ art celebrates the island’s bays, beaches

Yeji Y. Ham



JOHN JEFFREY PHOTO



Jude Neale

and other scenic charms, and conjures memories of a life lived close to nature. Neale concludes in one of her poems, “... there is no other purpose / to living, than to become / part of it all.” In previous years, Neale has also combined her poetry with music for an EP titled *Places Beyond*. 9781771715300

K IS FOR KNIGHT

**Chelene Knight** has added a guide to her two memoirs and a novel with **Let It Go: Free Yourself from Old Beliefs and Find a New Path to Joy** (HarperCollins \$27.99). Drawing on personal experience and insights from Black community leaders, Knight provides tools for joy-discovery including saying no with love, reshaping communication and learning to let go. The book offers a reflective examination of Black self-love and happiness, inviting readers to carve their own path. 9781443466455



Chelene Knight

L IS FOR LAWRENCE

It was during a stroll in Vancouver’s Stanley Park that retired teacher **Duane Lawrence** decided to write about the animals there. The resulting book, *Sammy Squirrel and Rodney Raccoon: A Stanley Park Tale* (Granville Island Pub., 2007) for middle school readers, was one of the top 100 recommended books by BC elementary school teachers on BCTF’s 100th anniversary. It is now available as a picture book with simplified writing for pre-school children just beginning to read, or who enjoy being read to: **Sammy Squirrel and Rodney Raccoon: Far from Stanley Park** (Granville Island \$14.95). 9781989467404

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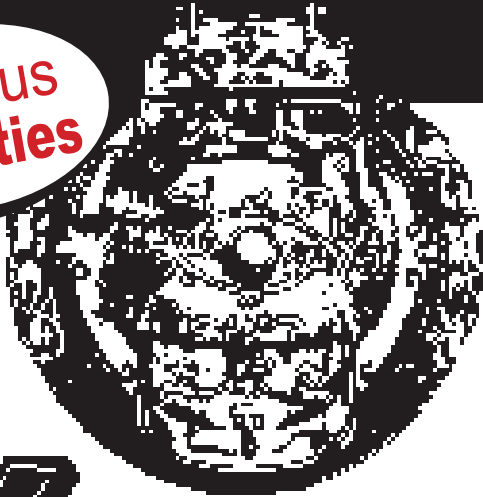
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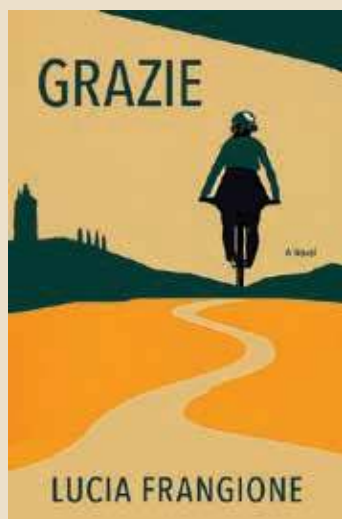
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# Fiction ~ Steamships ~ Mining ~ Textiles



**Grazie: A Novel**  
by Lucia Frangione  
(Talonbooks \$21.95)

Graziana (Grazie for short), traumatized by Ivan, takes a pilgrimage to Italy and leaves their dyslexic, ADHD, eight-year-old daughter, Hazel in the care of her stepfather, Herman. Hazel calls Grandpa Herman, "Grumpy," but he gives her the first stable home she has known. This violent, tender and funny story is told in turn by the four characters.

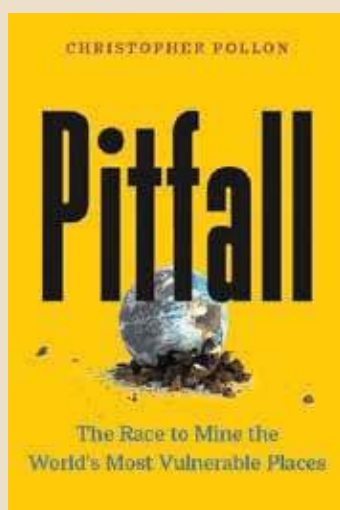


**The Best Loved Boat: The Princess Maquinna** by Ian Kennedy (Harbour \$34.95)

In the early 20th century, 14 steamships plied BC's coast, including the beloved SS Princess Maquinna. In a reconstructed summer journey, stop-by-stop, of a typical Maquinna voyage in her heyday, circa 1924, Ian Kennedy shows that despite the colonial class divides of the time, the Maquinna whistle was often "the most welcome sound on the West Coast."

**Pitfall: The Race to Mine the World's Most Vulnerable Places** by Christopher Pollon (Greystone \$39.95)

Investigative journalist Christopher Pollon takes on the international mining industry in his latest book. Pollon worries that as the industry seeks riches from Mongolia to the Pacific Islands, and new territory on the ocean floor, past methods will remain the same: secure the terrain, plunder the resources and clear out, leaving a terrible mess behind.



**Fleece and Fibre: Textile Producers of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands** by Francine McCabe (Heritage House \$34.95)

Anyone looking for locally produced wool, linen, or "slow fashion" textiles will be interested in Francine McCabe's quest to find the small-scale fibre producers within a day's drive of her Chemainus home (she discovered over 40 plant and animal producers). Her book explores the region's vibrant fleece and fibre community, and rural life. Includes illustrations and photography.



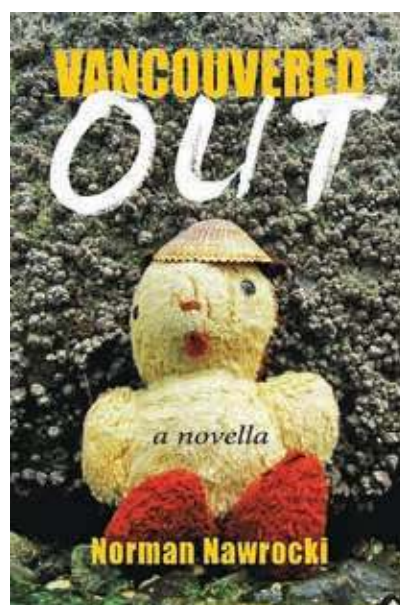
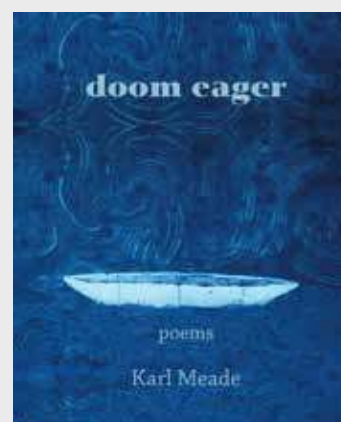
## KARL MEADE doom eager

"Read these poems to enter a cascade of language like spring water, like a landslide, like light. Read the poems aloud and fall in love, drink the healing balm of beauty, raise the dead, or allow them to rest, finally, in peace. I'm not exaggerating. This is a dazzling collection." - Karen Connelly, author of *The Lizard Cage*, and *Come Cold River*

ISBN: 978-1-7781603-4-9 \$22.95

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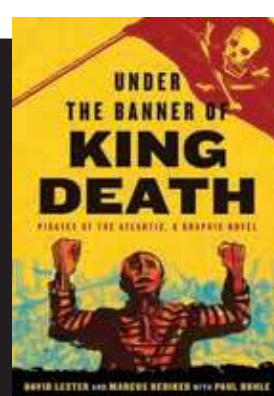
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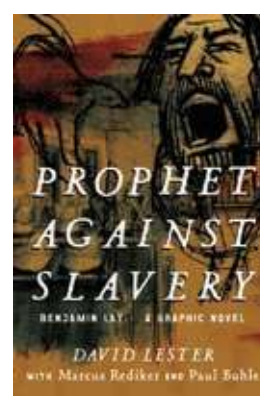
## Graphic novel **history from below**

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by David Lester & Marcus Rediker with Paul Buhle  
**Prophet Against Slavery: Benjamin Lay**  
by David Lester with Marcus Rediker & Paul Buhle



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author of *BERLIN*



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M IS FOR MEADE

**Karl Meade** came across a term used to describe the 19th century **Bronte** sisters that became the title of his recent collection of poems: **doom eager** (Raven Chapbooks \$22.95). “While I cannot trace its full etymology, for me every poem in this chapbook has doom eager at its core,” Meade writes in his preface. The deaths of beloved people central to his life are “precisely what I write for,” Meade adds. “That our lost loves are never entirely lost. They are right here, in my heart, on the page.” Meade splits his time between Salt Spring Island and New York.

9781778160349

N IS FOR NOWICKI



Cole Nowicki

A collection of short nonfiction pieces by **Cole Nowicki**, **Laser Quit Smoking Massage** (NeWest \$21.95) delves into the intricacies of Canada’s urban and rural West. Nowicki explores the dynamics of community, family and belonging in prairie towns and sprawling cities. The essays reflect a childlike curiosity, uncovering peculiarities like missing relatives, home-based businesses and even lasers, transforming simple events into complex yet relatable stories. His humorous examination of small-town life creates a nostalgic album of memories, capturing moments of love, grief and the passage of time.

9781774390900



Joanne Sasvari

O IS FOR OKANAGAN

BC is blessed with local food-producing areas where gourmands go beyond eating with the seasons to eating with “micro-seasons.” The Okanagan is one such area as detailed in **Okanagan Eats: Signature Chefs’ Recipes from British Columbia’s Wine Valleys** (Figure 1 \$38.95) by **Dawn Postnikoff** and **Joanne Sasvari**. Profiles of top chefs from the Okanagan, Thompson and Similkameen Valleys are combined with their recipes as well as write-ups of the wineries and places they work. Full of photography and sentences that celebrate food such as this description of biting into an Okanagan peach picked in August: “It’s so sweet and juicy and quintessentially peachy, it’s practically life-changing.”

9781773271804



Karl Meade

P IS FOR PAYLOR



Loghan Paylor

Kit McNair, a troublesome, non-binary changeling was nursed to health by their mother’s Celtic magic, after having fallen through the river ice and drowned. A daredevil in boy’s clothes, Kit finds themselves caught in a love triangle with Rebekah, a German-Canadian doctor’s daughter, and Kit’s brother, Landon, just prior to the Second World War. The three take separate paths when the conflict gets underway in **The Cure for Drowning** (Penguin \$24.95), by **Loghan Paylor** in a narrative that explores identity, love and the impact of wartime experiences. Their reunion after the war brings unexpected twists.

9781039006454

Q IS FOR QUEENIE

Ten-year-old Queenie is on a mission to make friends at her new school after moving to Vancouver. But, even before the first bell rings, she’s in trouble. Queenie has a secret—she’s been diagnosed with ADHD. From always being late to never being able to focus, she struggles to navigate her new world as she figures out how to manage her ADHD as well as finding ways to impress the “cool” girls. Queenie’s funny and inspiring journey is told in



Christine Read

**Christine Read’s Queenie Jean Is in Trouble Again** (Heritage House \$14.95) for ages 9 -12. Read lives in a rural seaside community outside of Vancouver.

9781772034790

R IS FOR ROCHE

Born with a facial vascular malformation, motivational speaker **David Roche** shares a refreshing perspective on beauty, self-worth and finding happiness in his latest essay collection, **Standing at the Back Door of Happiness: And How I Unlocked It** (Harbour \$22.95). From a “seriously Catholic” upbringing to devoting twelve years to the Democratic Workers Party, Roche’s journey explores disability, activism, religion and family. Ultimately, his path led to receiving the Order of Canada for showing the transformative power of embracing acceptance and love after realizing the importance of knowing one’s own soul.

9781990776762



David Roche

S IS FOR SUEÑO BAY

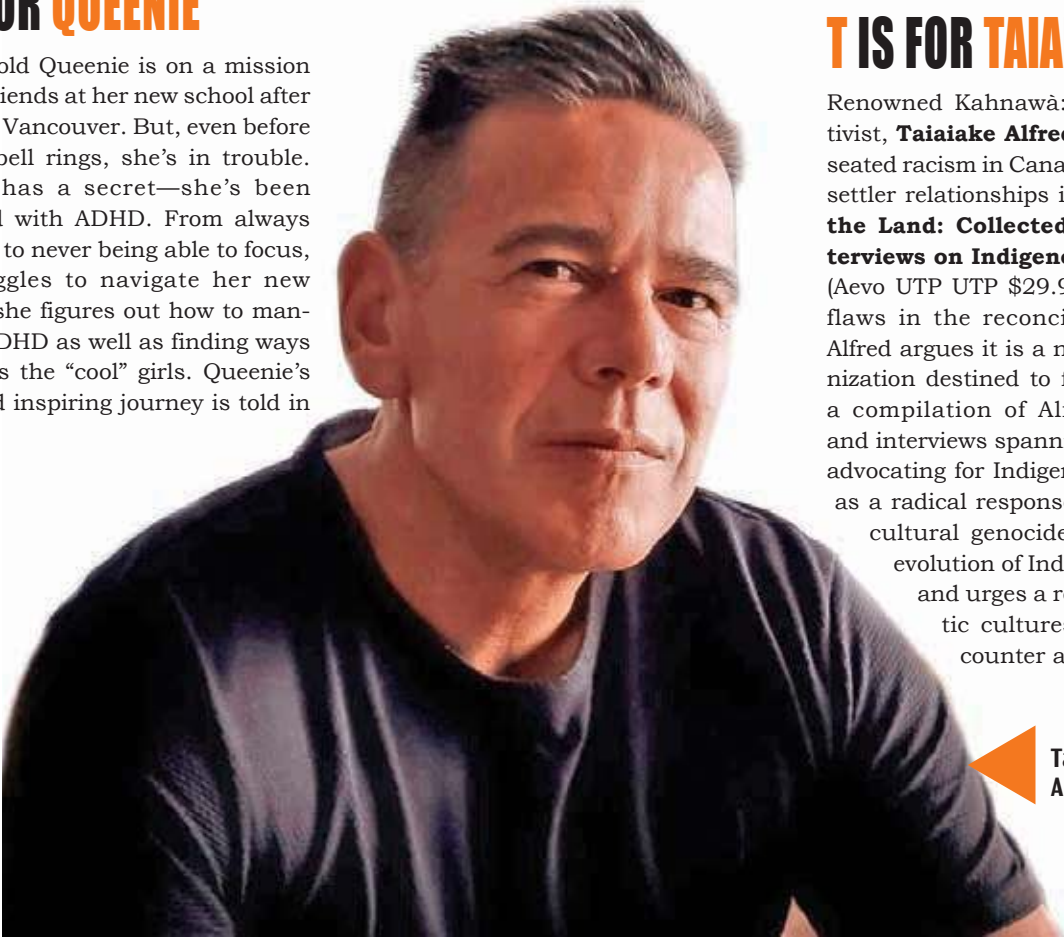
During a long trek through a winter storm, Kay discovers an injured moon creature. She hides it in the lighthouse her aunt takes care of, where she later discovers a colony of moon creatures underground. With the help of friends, Kay tries to reunite the animal with its family, but to no avail. She then plucks a moon crystal to heal the creature, triggering a dangerous chain of events. Follow this imaginary world in **Candle Point** (Orca \$16.95), a graphic novel by **Mike** and **Nancy Deas**, which is the fourth title in their Sueño Bay Adventures series.

9781459831513

T IS FOR TAIIAIKE

Renowned Kahnawà:ke Mohawk activist, **Taiaiake Alfred**, exposes deep-seated racism in Canada’s Indigenous-settler relationships in **It’s All about the Land: Collected Talks and Interviews on Indigenous Resurgence** (Aevo UTP UTP \$29.95). Highlighting flaws in the reconciliation agenda, Alfred argues it is a new form of colonization destined to fail. The book is a compilation of Alfred’s speeches and interviews spanning two decades, advocating for Indigenous resurgence as a radical response to the ongoing cultural genocide. He traces the evolution of Indigenous struggle and urges a return to authentic cultures and values to counter annihilation.

9781487552831



Taiaiake Alfred



# WHO'S WHO

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### U IS FOR UJJAL



Ujjal Dosanjh, 1964

Born in rural India, **Ujjal Dosanjh** emigrated to the UK at 18, where he worked various jobs while attending night school and learning English by listening to BBC Radio. He moved to Canada in 1968 and became a lawyer and advocate for the rights of BC farm and domestic workers. Eventually, Dosanjh rose to become the first person of Indian descent to serve as Attorney General and then as premier of British Columbia. Dosanjh's memoir, **Journey After Midnight** (Speaking Tiger Books \$26.95) tells of that journey.

9789354471278

### V IS FOR VARNER

Retired horticulturalist, **Collin Varner**, who worked at UBC's Botanical Garden where he also taught courses in native plant studies, continues to follow his passion for BC's flora and fauna as an avid photographer and author of guidebooks. His latest offerings are two pocket guides: **50 Keystone Flora Species of Coastal British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest** (Heritage House \$19.95); and **50 Keystone Fauna Species of Coastal British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest** (Heritage House \$19.95).

9781772034776 (flora), 9781772034943 (fauna)

### W IS FOR WUEST

Countless boys dream of being a cowboy. And for many who worked at the fabled Douglas Lake Ranch, that dream became reality. **Douglas Lake Ranch: Empire of Grass** (Harbour \$50) by **Donna (Yoshitake) Wuest** with **Joe J. Gardner** chronicles the history of Canada's largest ranch that started in the mid-1880s and now spans over a million acres. Drawing heavily from longtime manager Joe Gardner's recollections, the book dives into the personalities central to the ranch, including **Joseph Blackbourne Greaves** (see above), while exploring the ranch's environmentalism including responsible grazing, closure of public access and protection of native species. 9781990776427



COURTESY NICOLA VALLEY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

**Joseph Blackbourne Greaves, circa 1880s, founded the Douglas Lake Ranch with four other investors. From Douglas Lake Ranch.**

### X IS FOR MAX



Max Wyman

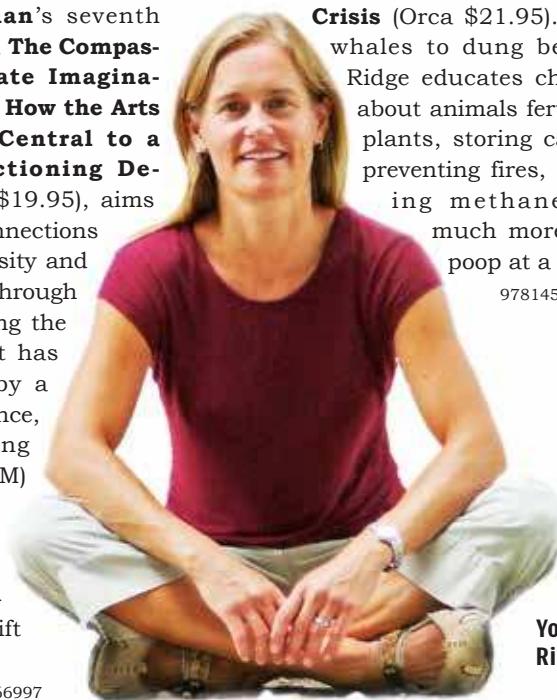
Advocating a major role for art and culture in modern democracy, **Max Wyman's** seventh book, **The Compassionate Imagination: How the Arts Are Central to a Functioning Democracy** (Cormorant \$19.95), aims to revitalize societal connections by emphasizing generosity and compassion expressed through art. He says that during the past four decades, art has been overshadowed by a utilitarian focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in education. Wyman argues for including art at the core of decision making and education, envisioning a shift from STEM to STEAM.

9781770866997

### Y IS FOR YOLANDA

"Poop can't fight the climate crisis alone, of course. But the truth is that healthy ecosystems rely on poo-producing animals and the plants that benefit from their excrement," writes **Yolanda Ridge** in her latest book for ages 9-12, **What Poo Can Do: How Animals Are Fighting the Climate Crisis** (Orca \$21.95). From whales to dung beetles, Ridge educates children about animals fertilizing plants, storing carbon, preventing fires, reducing methane and much more—one poop at a time.

9781459835412



Yolanda Ridge



George Zukerman

### Z IS FOR ZUKERMAN

In **Have Bassoon, Will Travel: Memoir of an Adventurous Life in Music** (Ronsdale \$24.95), **George Zukerman**, a concert bassoonist who played with the Vancouver Symphony, humorously recounts his worldwide tours that elevated the instrument's profile and freed it from obscurity. Zukerman describes his travels across Canada navigating diverse terrains, often with unconventional modes of transportation. As an impresario, Zukerman's Overture Concerts left a lasting impact, inspiring new audiences and musicians.

9781553807131

## The forced relocations and resistance of the Inuit people

A ground-breaking, highly visual account of the multiple forced relocations by the Canadian government of Inuit communities and individuals. Each has now been the subject of an official apology, but this history is little known beyond the Arctic.

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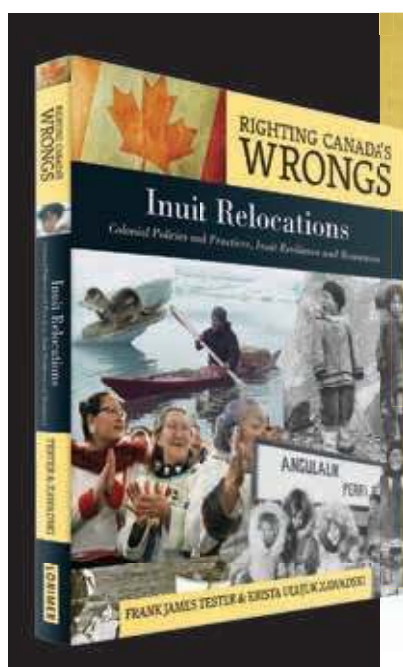
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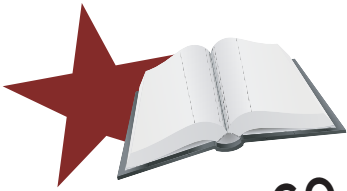


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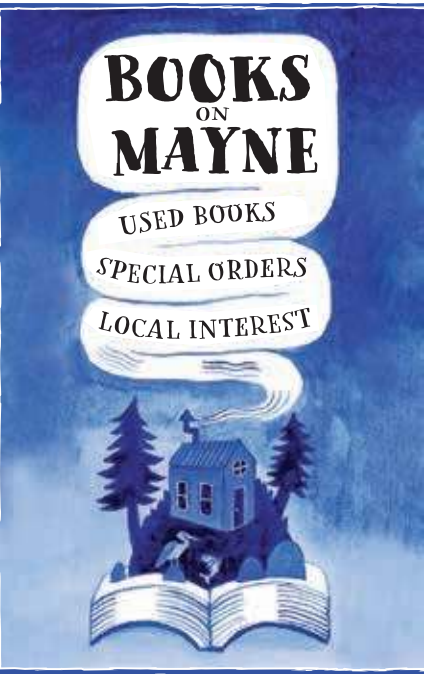


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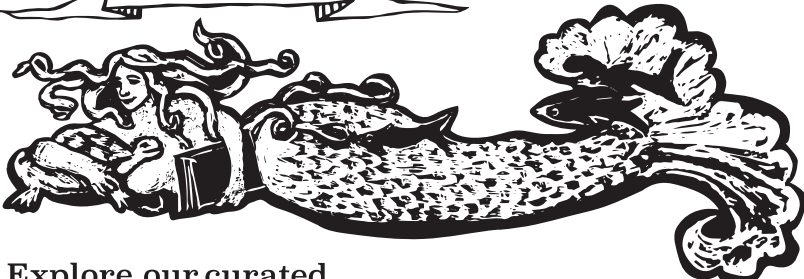
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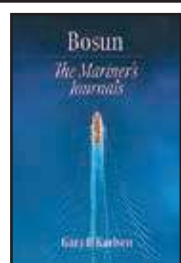
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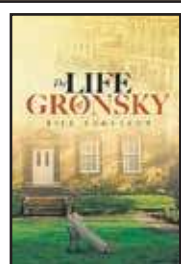
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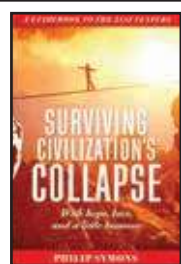
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## Barry McKinnon

(1944 – 2023)

Prince George poet and publisher, **Barry McKinnon**, died on October 30, 2023. His poetry collection, *Pulp Log* (Caitlin, 1991) won the 1992 Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize, and his preceding book, *The the* (Coach House, 1980) was shortlisted for a Governor General's Award in 1981.

Born in Calgary in 1944, McKinnon earned his MA from UBC. A position at the College of New Caledonia took him to Prince George in 1969, leaving Vancouver where he had become a veteran of the poetry scene.

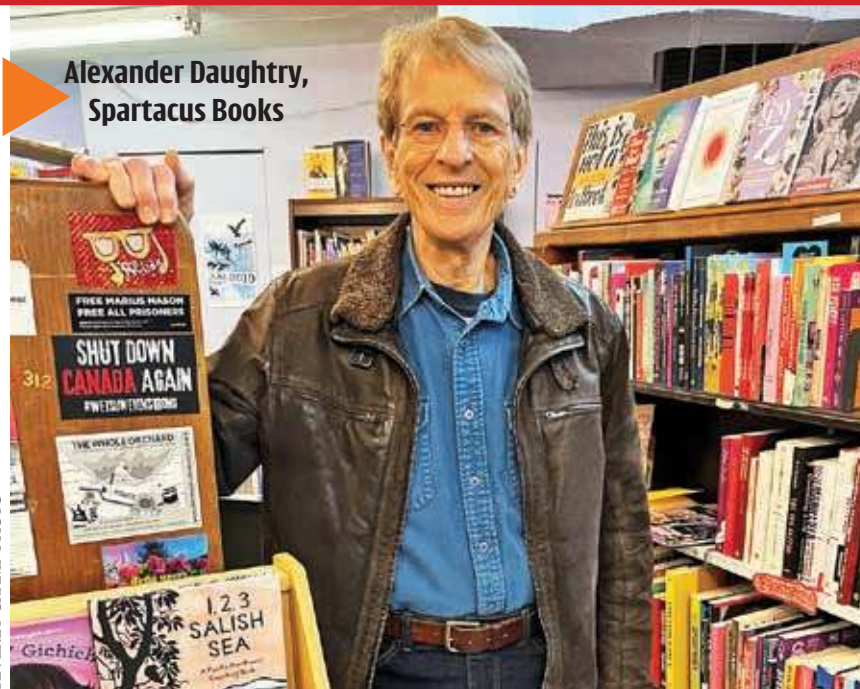
McKinnon also operated Gorse Press that brought acclaimed Canadian writers such as **Margaret Atwood**, **Michael Ondaatje** and **Al Purdy** to Prince George for reading events.

## Irene Howard

(1922 – 2023)

Historian and author, **Irene Howard**, born in Prince Rupert to Scandinavian parents on November 19, 1922, died on November 2, 2023 after living on Bowen Island for many years. Howard grew up in mining camps around Smithers and the Bridge River area where her father worked as a miner.

Among her four published books is *The Struggle for Social Justice in British Columbia: Helena Gutteridge, The Unknown Reformer* (UBC Press, 1992) about the first woman to be elected to Vancouver City Council. It earned



BEVERLY CRAMP PHOTO

## Rebel bookstore turns 50

Formed in 1973 to provide hard-to-find books about social change, **Spartacus Books** walks the talk. Run entirely by volunteers who make decisions on a collective basis, the bookstore is thriving as a purveyor of books that are "anti-capitalist, anti-oppression and anti-racist," says **Alexander Daughtry**, the longest-serving volunteer, who has been with the collective since 1976. "We started as a book table at Simon Fraser University but moved down from the mountain to West Hastings above a pool hall," he says. "We were on the third floor that you got to up a narrow staircase. Later we moved to a second floor space in another building that had a wider staircase."

After many years in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, in various locations (including one that burnt down), Spartacus found its current location at 1983 Commercial Drive where they sell new and used books, graphic novels, magazines, posters, cards, CDs, T-shirts and pins. They also hold book launches, poetry readings, film nights and concerts. "This is what we always wanted," says Daughtry. "We're reaching a lot more people here." And a new generation of "twenty-somethings" is joining the collective he adds. "Social media may be killing newsprint and magazines, but we're going stronger than ever with books." —**Beverly Cramp**

the UBC Silver Medal for Canadian Biography, and was shortlisted for a City of Vancouver Book Award and the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize.

Howard also wrote of her family's roots in *Gold Dust on His Shirt: The True Story of an Immigrant Mining Family* (Between the Lines, 2008).

## Brian Brett

(1950 – 2024)

One of BC's seminal poets and writers, **Brian Brett**, died on January 17, 2024 of sepsis at the UBC Hospital's Purdy Pavilion. Born in East Vancouver on April 28, 1950, Brett had a rare genetic condition which left him unable to produce male hormones. He studied literature at SFU from 1969 – 74 and co-founded Blackfish Press

in 1970 that published a Governor General's Award-winning book.

Brett published over 15 books of fiction, poetry and memoir including *Trauma Farm: A Rebel History of Rural Life* (Greystone, 2009) about his 10-acre property on Salt Spring Island that took the lucrative Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction. A third memoir, the best-selling *Tuco and the Scattershot World: A Life with Birds* (Greystone, 2015) chronicled Brett's friendship with a parrot.

In addition to nine major writing awards, Brett won BC's Lieutenant Governor's Award for Literary Excellence in 2012 and in 2016, the Writers' Trust of Canada awarded him the Matt Cohen Lifetime Award for his body of work.

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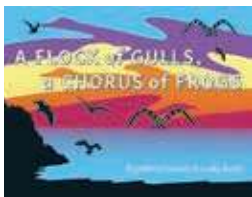


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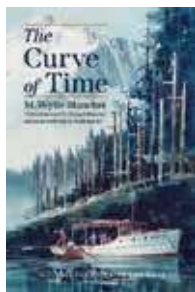
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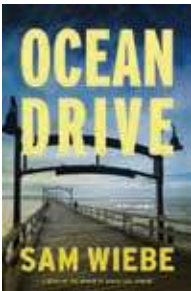
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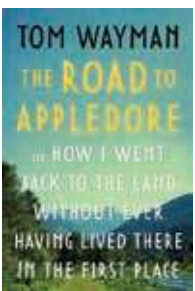
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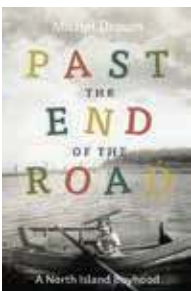
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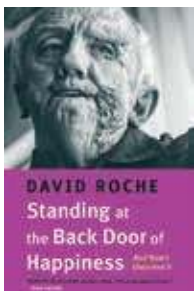
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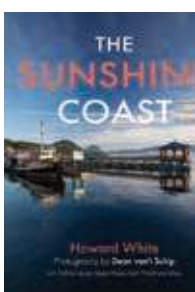
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