

BC
BOOKWORLD
VOL. 39 • NO. 4 • WINTER 2025-2026



JUDY DARCY
A life of breaking barriers: union leader, activist & legislator. P 16

The indomitable spirit of Rudi

In 1944, Rudi Vrba and a comrade escaped Auschwitz-Birkenau and exposed the Holocaust to the world.

See page 7

Rudi Vrba in 1962.

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JOHN HORGAN

Unvarnished memoir of BC's most popular premier. P 18-19



JOLINE MARTIN

Tales of those who resisted the Vietnam War and settled on Vancouver Island. P 12



NEVIN HARPER

Understanding the gap between kids and their parents. P 20-21





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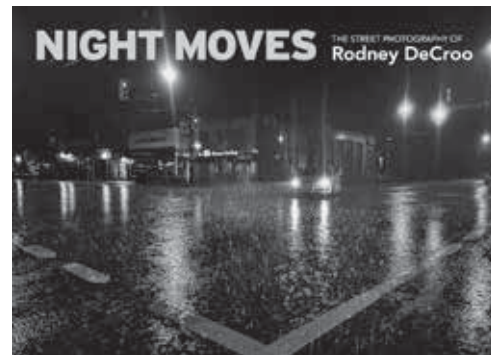
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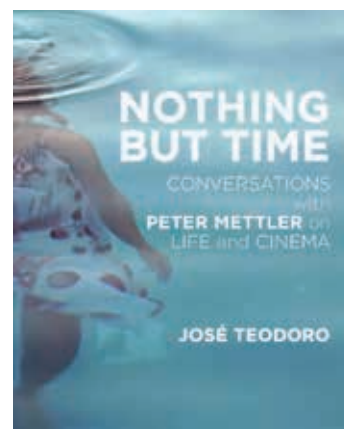
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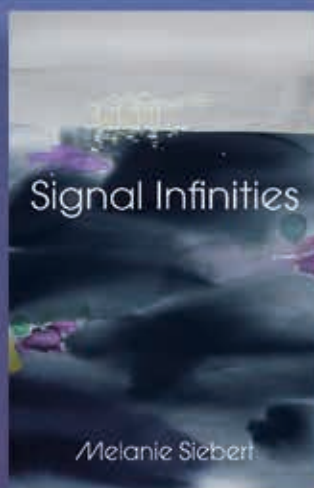
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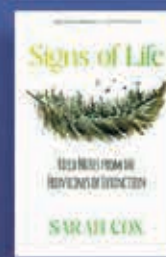


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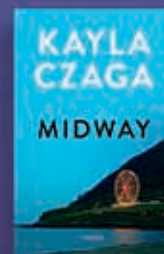
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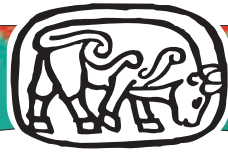
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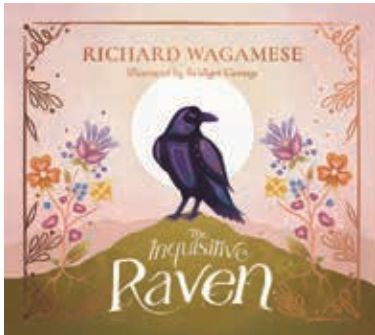
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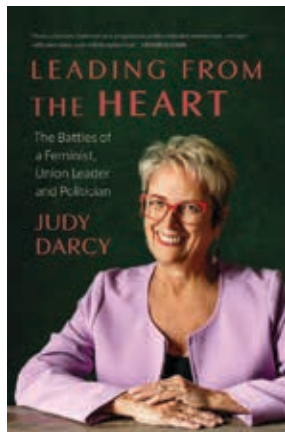
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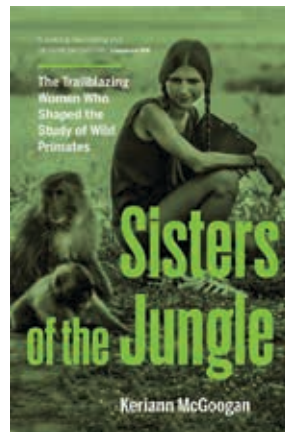
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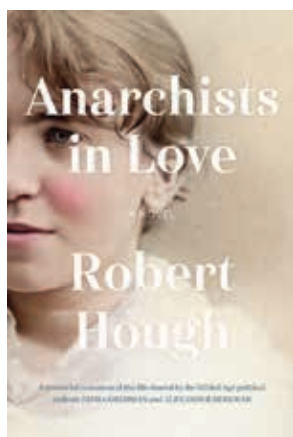
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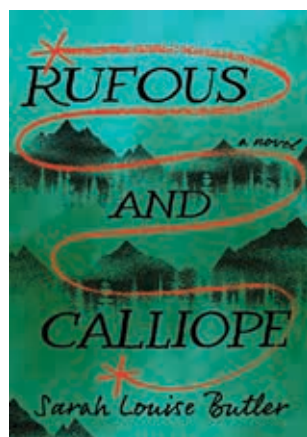
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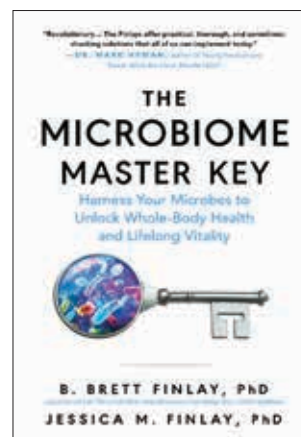
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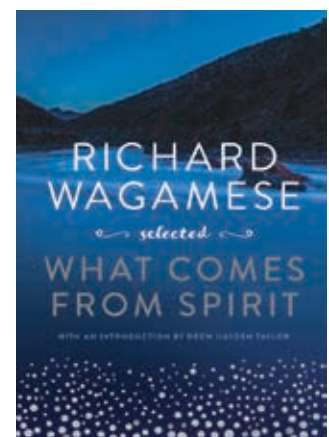
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PEOPLE

A mountain bike paradise with a past

It was coal that brought early settlers to Cumberland, incorporated in 1898 and growing to 1,881 people three years later. Mining barely paid the bills, the work was dangerous and the mine owners deeply exploitative. These early years spawned union activists such the legendary labour organizer, **Ginger Goodwin**, and his lesser-known mentor, **Joe Naylor**, who lived half his life in Cumberland.

Its gritty days now long behind it, Cumberland is better known today as a mountain bike paradise. The evolution is described in a collection of stories, **A Place Called Cumberland** (Figure 1/Cumberland Museum \$25), edited by **Rhonda Bailey**. “The storied old village has been quietly redefining itself as a laidback, hipster’s haven and a neighbourly place to



At the 2003 re-opening of Cumberland’s historic Tarbell’s hardware store, which had been repurposed for the Riding Fool Hostel, jump piles were trucked in for the town’s mountain bikers.

raise a family,” writes **Rod Mickleburgh** in his story about Naylor, who died aged seventy-four in Cumberland in 1946 after decades of advocating for labour rights.

Cumberland’s historic “Chinatown,” is described by Dr. **Tom L.Q. Wong**, who grew up there, as “a community loathed and marginalized by the dominant society of the time [European settlers],” adding that it was also, “a place of belonging, ac-

ceptance, and joy” for Chinese families amongst themselves.

Other stories describe logging the surrounding old-growth forests, raising two welcome poles to commemorate the unceded territory of the K’ómoks First Nation and, of course, the building of the Cumberland Trail Network—a renowned area covering 200 kilometers and shared by mountain bikers, hikers and trail runners.

9781773272511

JEREMY GRASBY PHOTO

Memoir of an Island Christmas

Trekker extraordinaire, **Bill Arnott**, has added another title to his *Season* memoirs—a series of travel books that include memories, sensory excursion and his patented visual art made from cell phone photos that he digitally paints. **A Festive Season on Vancouver Island** (RMB \$25) has Arnott travelling to Port Renfrew, Victoria, Duncan, Ladysmith, Nanaimo, Parksville, Qualicum Beach, Port McNeill and more, seeking out the magic of end-of-year holidays.

Arnott chats to people and quotes them in his stories, listens to music on the radio, picks up on cultural ephemera such as concerts, movies, decorations and food. All the while, he describes the natural world and landscapes. He concludes his festive meanderings with pensive thoughts on a ferry ride home to Vancouver. “With a smile I raise a small glass, to nothing specific,” he writes. “A salute to most everything, and a toast to each one of us too.” A great idea for stocking stuffers.

9781771607261

The buildings they are a-changin’

On a warm September weekend in 2006 while visiting Chilliwack where he was born in 1953, **Merlin Bunt** noticed changes. “Some historic buildings were boarded up or gone, others were in disrepair, lots were empty, and long-time businesses had folded,” he says. “I suddenly felt compelled to start taking photos of older structures and locations before they were gone or permanently changed—to in some sense preserve them, as well as perhaps start a rudimentary record of old Chilliwack.”



The Paramount Theatre, Chilliwack, 1951, featured a 55’-high, 5,000-pound orange blade sign with neon tube lettering.

Merlin’s efforts continued for many years and culminated with his book, **Boom Times in Chilliwack: Memories from the Post-War Years** (Harbour \$38.95). “I had a happy childhood in Chilliwack ... and I love my hometown very much,” he writes. “I wanted to somehow get things down on paper to create a record of how things were that will endure long after I am gone.” 9781998526369

CHILLIWACK MUSEUM & ARCHIVES PHOTO

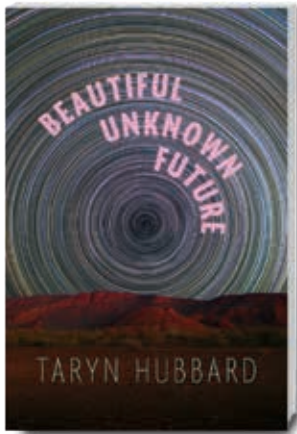
TAKING AIM AT THE HOUSING CRISIS

Born in Bulgaria and raised in Nigeria, poet **Daniela Elza** immigrated to Canada in 1999 and has lived in Vancouver since. After five poetry collections, Elza published a debut essay collection, *Is This an Illness or an Accident?* (Caitlin, 2025) that delved into the conflicts of what it means to belong, to work and to find home. She has extended these reflections to the housing crisis, greedy profiteers and their devastating impact on Vancouver and other cities in her sixth poetry book, **SCAR/CITY** (MQUP \$19.95). Elza also plays with writing elements in these poems—sometimes using symbols to replace letters and capitalizations that appear in the middle of words as in this verse: *Bright surface\$ concrete higher and higher / at every turn / the eye is trapped in the \$sharp angle\$ of / a \$ \$ et & profit \$ \$ \$ / so much gla\$\$ turns this city into \$moke / and mirror\$.*

9780228023739



Daniela Elza



Beautiful Unknown Future
Taryn Hubbard

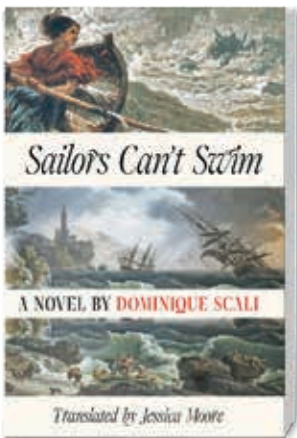
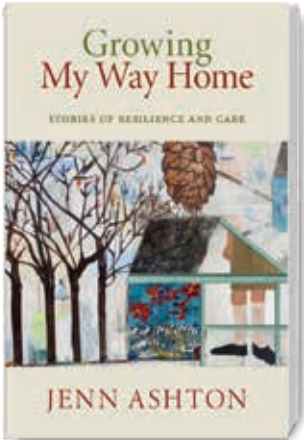
Haunted by the looming shadows of our compounding crises, these poems refuse false optimism, instead reflecting with candour and wit on the precarity we share with the nonhuman world.

April 14, 2026

Growing My Way Home
Stories of Resilience and Care
Jenn Ashton

Growing My Way Home chronicles one woman's struggle through events all too common among a People who have been separated from their culture and their language.

April 7, 2026



Sailors Can't Swim
Dominique Scali
Translated by Jessica Moore

Sailors Can't Swim is a squall of a novel – a bildungsroman inside a maritime fairytale inside a history lesson for an alternate eighteenth century.

May 20, 2026

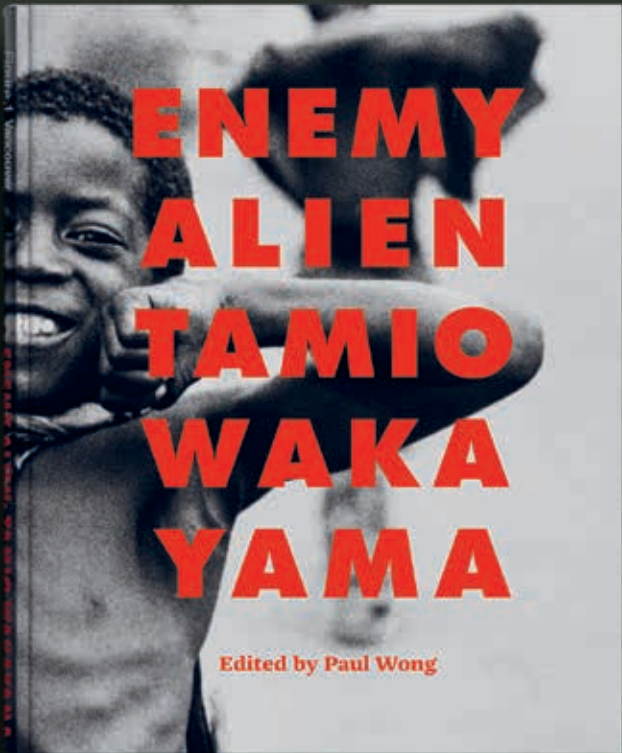
White Noise
Taran Kootenhayoo

White Noise asks, "How do we deal with internalized racism? Do we keep pushing it away ... or do we make a change?" Taran Kootenhayoo's answer is both emotionally intense and outrageously hilarious, a blistering comedic exploration of what it means to live in so-called Canada..

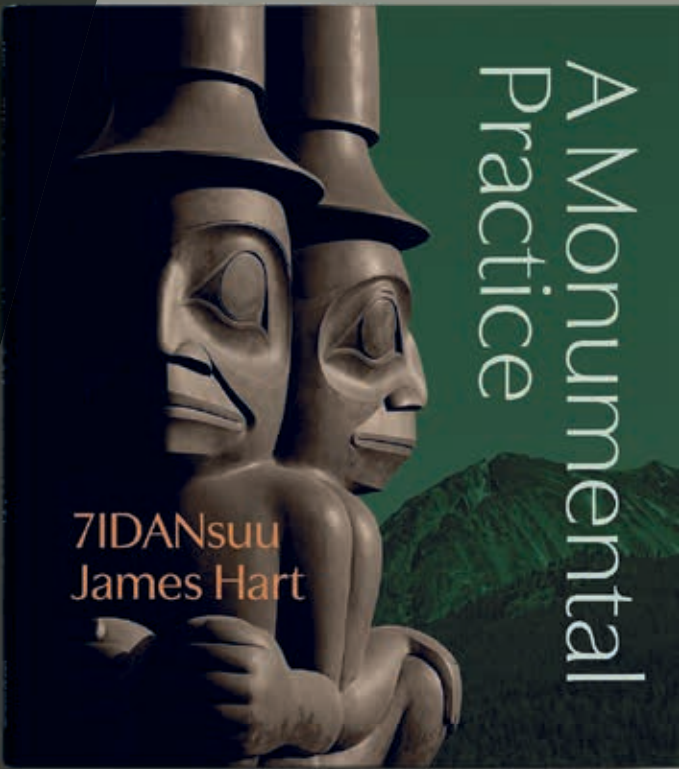
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**Holocaust Hero:
The Life & Times of Rudolf Vrba
by Alan Twigg
(Firefly Books \$29.95)**

BY JOHN MOORE

When I was young, I broke the First Parental Commandment; I talked to strangers.

In coffee shops, on buses and park benches I discovered the innocuous city of Vancouver was actually filled with people whose lives should've been shown in Technicolor at the old Orpheum Theatre. Many of them came from European countries crushed by the weight of too much history, seeking peace in a place that seemed to have too little. **Rudolf (Rudi) Vrba** was one of them.

I never met him, but **Alan Twigg** did. Thus began Twigg's multi-year journey of research and writing about history's most emotionally challenging subject. Now known simply as the Holocaust, the industrially organized murder of millions of non-combatant men, women and children by the Nazi government of Germany is a millions-strong muster of ghosts that haunts human history to this day. Victims were primarily Jews from Germany and Nazi-occupied countries.

Most of Vrba's adult life was spent as a tenured professor teaching pharmacology at UBC. On casual acquaintance, you wouldn't imagine that as a Jewish teenager in 1944 he'd escaped from the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, evaded capture, fought alongside anti-Nazi partisans in his native Slovakia, or that he co-authored the Vrba-Wetzler report — the first account of the enormous genocide being perpetrated behind the curtain of "night and fog" that covered Europe during World War Two.

In essence, the Vrba-Wetzler report is the document that tore the scales from the eyes of Allied governments, forcing them to acknowledge that rumours about the fate of "relocated" Jews were not only true: the reality was infinitely more horrific than anyone imagined.



VRBA AND **ALFRED WETZLER** WERE ENSLAVED workers at Auschwitz when the camp was being expanded to "process" the entire Jewish population of Hungary. Surreptitiously they gathered facts and figures. Vrba even made maps of the camp and its "improvements." Their report was not a cry from the heart; it was a statement of fact delivered as bluntly as the orders of the Nazi state.

Unfortunately, and tragically, while Allied governments could no longer deny the Holocaust (because Vrba and Wetzler's reportage was so convincing), some of the Jewish Councils appointed by the Nazis to streamline the genocide (by telling Jews to obediently go to the train stations) chose not to alert their own people about what Vrba and his



Rudolf Vrba's number from Auschwitz.

EXPOSING THE HOLOCAUST

In 1944, **Rudi Vrba** escaped from Auschwitz-Birkenau and saved hundreds of thousands of lives by telling the truth.

escape partner had divulged.

For the rest of his life, Vrba was not afraid to express his opinion that many Jews who survived (and made it to Israel) did so at the expense of others. Had the Vrba-Wetzler report been widely circulated as soon as it was written at the end of April 1944, he believed quite possibly none of the 434,000 Hungarian Jews murdered at Auschwitz between May 15 to July 9 would have ever boarded the trains.



Rudolf Vrba's partisan medal

In a tersely telegraphic style as compelling as the original Vrba-Wetzler report, Twigg addresses the issue of complicit Jewish Councils as well as the post-war distortions by some historians of Vrba's own personal story. Wetzler also wrote a fictionalized account that pleased authorities behind the Iron Curtain where he lived.

Wetzler lived most of his life in obscurity in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Inevitably he became an ideological hostage

to Soviet-controlled media whose publishers, film producers and state censors convinced him to emphasize the Communist component of Hitler's "imaginary Jewish-Bolshevist Conspiracy." Ignoring contrary evidence from Nazi files, according to the Soviet view the Nazis weren't trying to make Europe "Jew-free;" they were just trying to get rid of those pesky Communists.

Despite the controversies, Vrba never cut ties with his old comrade. He remained a supportive friend to Wetzler and a sociable, charming man imbued with sardonic wit, making him the chief instigator of any party for the rest of his life. Given what he lived through, that in itself is a heroic achievement.

With **Holocaust Hero**, Twigg may have invented a new approach to writing history. Combining bullet list timelines, narrative and transcriptions of interviews, he avoids the narcoleptic prose that often characterizes conventional history and brings to life the indomitable spirit of one of those apparently ordinary men who prove to be utterly remarkable when you hear their stories.

This book for the first time reveals how Vrba and Wetzler actually escaped from Auschwitz as discovered by Twigg in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library archives and confirmed by his long-time wife and former Vancouver realtor, **Robin Vrba**, who now lives in Rhode Island.

Alan Twigg is a well-known journalist who has written twenty other books on diverse subjects such as Canadian authors, Cuba, Belize and soccer. In the same month (this past September) as the first volume of the Vrba biography appeared, Twigg, founder of *BC BookWorld*, received the Order of BC having already received the Order of Canada in 2015.

9780228105718

John Moore writes reviews from Garibaldi Highlands.



Rudolf Vrba's partisan identification, 1946.

Let it Snow! Because we'll be inside reading!



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Wilderness Mother
A Memoir of 13 Years Off the Grid
Deanna Barnhardt Kawatski

BC Best-seller!

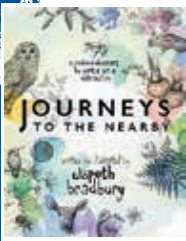
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BOOK PRIZES



Minelle Mahtani, Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize winner.



Sarah Leavitt (left), winner of the Jim Deva Prize for Writing that Provokes, with partner Bren Robbins.



Fred Wah (right), winner of the 2025 Lieutenant Governor's Award for Literary Excellence, with his long-time publisher, Kevin Williams of Talonbooks.

In its 41st year, the BC and Yukon Book Prizes took place on September 21 beginning at 1 p.m., the first time the awards were given out during the afternoon and not at an evening gala.

The recipient of the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize, **Minelle Mahtani** gave a courageous acceptance speech. Mahtani won for her title **May it Have a Happy Ending: A Memoir of Finding My Voice as My Mother Lost Hers** (Doubleday \$34.95) about gaining her “voice” as a new mother and a radio host, while her mother was literally losing her voice due to tongue cancer. “I was not prepared to win as the other books in this category are so spectacular,” said Mahtani. Then she veered into a political plea asking the crowd of about 150 to “support the petition requesting journalists be allowed into Palestine,” adding, “this is my small way of saying ‘Free Palestine.’”

Later, when the Jim Deva Prize for Writing that Provokes was presented to **Sarah Leavitt** for her heart-rending graphic novel, **Something, Not Nothing: A Story of Grief and Love** (Arsenal \$27.95) about life after her partner **Domino**’s assisted death in 2020, Leavitt added a touch of humour during her acceptance speech. “I want to thank Arsenal Pulp Press and the BC and Yukon Book Prizes ... and for including really weird comics.” Leavitt also thanked her new partner, “who lets me talk about my dead partner.”

Other winners included **Shashi Bhat** in the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize category for her collection of short stories **Death by a Thousand Cuts** (M&S \$24.95); **Leanne Dunic** in the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize category for **Wet** (Talonbooks \$21.95); **Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson** with **Robert Davidson** in the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize category for **A Haida Wedding** (Heritage \$29.95); **Li Charmaine Anne** in the Sheila A. Egoff

An afternoon AFFAIR

Humour, politics and the act of writing were highlighted during acceptance speeches at the BC and Yukon Book Prizes.



Shashi Bhat, Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize winner.

Children’s Literature Prize category for **Crash Landing** (Annick \$18.99); **Julie Morstad** in the Christie Harris Illustrated Children’s Literature Prize category for **A Face is A Poem** (Tundra \$24.99); and **Dana Claxton** and Dr. **Curtis Collins** for **Curve! Women Carvers on the Northwest Coast** (Figure 1 \$45).

Fred Wah was the recipient of the Lieutenant Governor’s Award for Literary Excellence. Established in 2003, the award is for writers who have produced a substantial body of work throughout their career. “When I started to write I thought you just sat down and wrote,” said Wah. All that changed when he began to meet with other writers. “Writing is a community activity. The BC and Yukon Book Prizes fosters that community.”

“I love this province. I’ve grown up in it and it has given me everything I have.”

Victoria Book Prizes

The nominee and winner of many previous prizes, **Barbara Black** took this year’s City of Victoria Book Prize for **Little Fortified Stories** (Caitlin \$23), her collection of fictional stories variously described as surreal, dream-like, weird and full of wonder.



Barbara Black

The City of Victoria’s Children’s Book Prize went to **Uma Krishnaswami** for her middle-reader book, **Birds on the Brain** (Anansi \$16.99), illustrated by **Julianna Swaney**, about the power of grassroots activism and how kids can make a difference, set in India.

The winner of the inaugural DC Reid Poetry Prize was **Melanie Siebert** for **Signal Infinities** (M&S \$22.95). Described as a documentary poem, Siebert’s second poetry book interrogates colonialism and environmental loss and is influenced by her therapy practice. Siebert has also been a finalist for the Governor General’s Literary Award for Poetry.

Whistler Independent Book Awards

Two winners of the Whistler Independent Book Awards are BC authors. The non-fiction prize went to Indigenous academic and UBC lecturer, **Carolyn Roberts** for **Re-Storying Education: Decolonizing Your Practice Using a Critical Lens** (Page Two \$34.95). From the judges: “I hear more about



Carolyn Roberts

the need for reconciliation than how to do it. This book helps fill that gap. It’s a terrific, approachable text that has a lot to offer people in the field of education.”

The children’s winner was **Trevor Atkins** of Coquitlam for **The Day the Pirates Went Mad** (Silverpath \$14.95). From the judges: “Arrr, ye did a grand job on yer book! (Said using my best pirate voice.) ... this is a great story for anyone picking it up—middle-grade readers, adults, whoever. Atkins’ tale is an excellent read and a fun nautical adventure.”

The fiction winner was **Jerome J. Bourgault** of Toronto for **Day of Epiphany** (Friesen-Press \$26.99).

Established in 2016, the Whistler Independent Book Awards provide Canadian self-published authors with a unique opportunity to have their work recognized through an independent juried process.

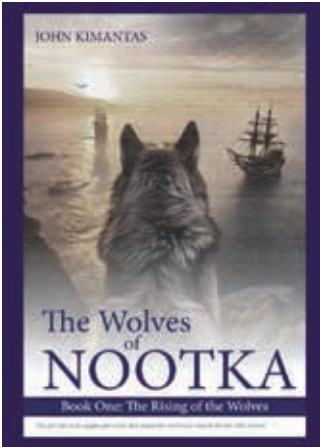
Available through your local bookstore!

BC history series...



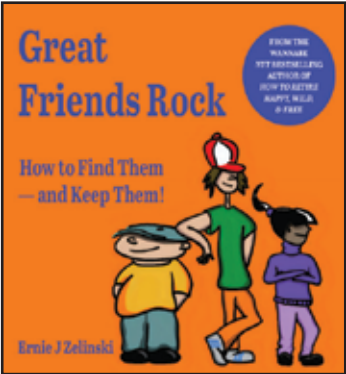
**CLOUDY with a
RISK of CHILDREN**
Straight Talk from the Pediatric ER
J. Edward Les, MD, DVM

Here's a warm and deeply relatable look at parenting from a pediatrician who's been on both sides of the ER curtain. As an ER doctor and father of four, he brings clinical insight and lived experience to the chaos, comedy, and care of raising kids. He covers a wide range of topics from fevers, colic and antibiotics to deeper issues that are not always black or white. A must-have read for all parents. 9781069635303 \$24.95



**The Wolves of
NOOTKA Book 1**
The Rising of the Wolves
9781989401569 \$26.95
John Kimantas

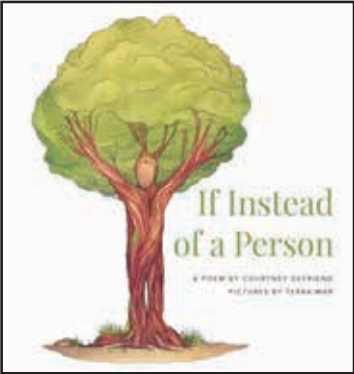
In the late 18th century, four powerful figures—Vancouver, Colnett, Bodega y Quadra, and Maquinna—clashed and collaborated at Nootka Sound, shaping Pacific Northwest history. Their true adventures unfold amid global revolutions, joined by the long-silenced She-Wolf Hestoquatto. These are the Wolves of Nootka: bold, brilliant, and fiercely unpredictable explorers. This three book series is due Spring 2026.



Great Friends Rock
How to Find Them - and Keep Them
Ernie Zelinski

From the bestselling author of *How to Retire Happy Wild and Free* ... Zelinski's latest is a vibrant, image-rich celebration of the many facets of friendship. With colorful visuals, text and uplifting quotes, this hefty little book is a perfect gift for anyone. *Great Friends Rock* is a reminder that friendship is much more than just hanging out and being accommodating of others — it's about the joy of friendship and community. 9781927452127 \$21.95

Back in Print!



**If Instead
of a Person**
A Poem by Courtney Defriend
*"If instead of a person
I were a tree,
how would I live differently?"*

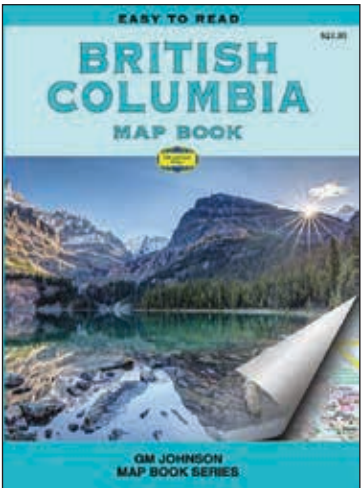
Beautifully illustrated by Terra Mar, this book explores the wisdom to be learned from living as a tree. Using rhyming verse, Defriend thoughtfully ponders a tree's steadfast connection and vital contribution to life on earth while powerful illustrations invite young readers to become change agents who respect the interconnectedness of nature and humanity. 9780995012769 \$14.00



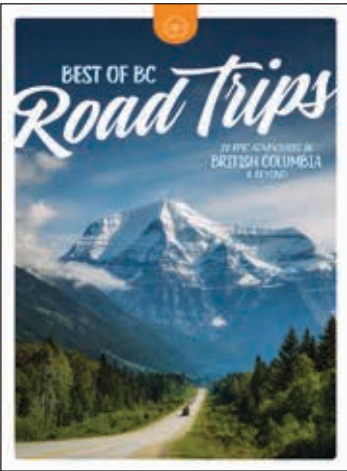
Wild Harvest BC
A Forager's Guide to Edible
Plants of British Columbia
Linda Gabris
9781777876425 \$24.95



**British Columbia
Lullaby**
P.L. McCarron
9780991946389 \$14.95



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**We Survived the Night:
An Indigenous Reckoning
by Julian Brave NoiseCat**
(Random House Canada \$39)

BY ODETTE AUGER

Within pages of Tsecwinucw-kuc, **We Survived the Night**, the genius of the structure is clear. Just as **Julian Brave NoiseCat** (St’at’imc, Secwépemc) moves deftly from journalism to directing (award-winning documentary, *Sugarcane*), his book writing takes a circular, but steady path through oral history, father-son relationships, trickster tales, environmental reporting and love.

The opening scene digs deep, quickly. We’re brought to his father being abandoned in a residential school’s incinerator. It’s NoiseCat’s choice of words that jarringly brings us into this moment as a watchman’s flashlight casts “rays of light onto rubbish and soot,” inside a garbage burner.

“Within was a newborn,” continues NoiseCat. “The authorities called him ‘Baby X.’ And he was my father.”

Babies in the incinerator is a familiar story to Indigenous people across the country. I grew up somehow knowing this happened more than once, in more than one place—despite being sheltered from even knowing my mom went to an Indian Residential School (IRS) until I was an adult.

Sliding like Sek’lep, the shifting Coyote, the story brings us to learning that NoiseCat’s father is **Ed Archie NoiseCat**, a renowned Secwépemc artist. Readers learn about Julian NoiseCat’s talented father, whom Julian describes as a “combination of character, comedy and tragedy... He draws the eye and fills up a room.” He also describes being raised by his Harvard-educated Jewish/Irish mom who, NoiseCat explains, has been his editor since day one and is “intellectually, emotionally, and socially brilliant.” Readers are taken on a journey into the Indigenous art world, community and NoiseCat family. His auntie is **Martina Pierre** (Lil’wat) who wrote the “Women’s Warrior Song,” gifted from a spider during a ceremony, to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women.

Julian NoiseCat brings fresh Coyote storytelling and shares lineages while simultaneously myth-busting (about topics such as Indigenous casino wealth, free education and that Indigenous people don’t pay taxes).

Marketed as genre-defying, NoiseCat weaves memoir, traditional stories and reportage into an unconventional whole. I found myself reading it one chapter at a time, often setting it down to absorb what I’d just read. It wasn’t a difficult read so much as the shifts in form and tone moved me from my norm of reading cover to cover in a linear fashion. That’s the power of design: each section stands on its own, inviting—even demanding—reflection before moving on. The effect is less a single narrative journey than a series of deep encounters, cumulative rather than continuous.

At times, NoiseCat’s hybrid form creates shifts in voice. There are mo-

We Survived The Night is a hybrid memoir that takes us on a path of oral history, father-son relationships, trickster tales, environmental reporting and love.

ments where NoiseCat is writing from a mixed lens, for example, referring to “ancestral tongues ... fast slipping from the Land of the Living to that of the dead ... Salish languages are what linguists call agglutinative,” then circling back to the teaching when we “tell these stories ...the Coyote truths they hold come back. Because death is not permanent—at least not this kind of death. No, this cultural and linguistic death is, as the trickster told us, like sleep.” Our ancestors speak the languages, “and they could bring it all back, if only we could reach them.”

In the “Exodus” chapter, there’s a biblical comparison of the Israelites’ forty years of wandering to the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree’s seventy years of waiting for land claim settlements. Yet, I find linking the biblical **Moses** leading his people out of Egypt to Chief **Abel Bosum** leading his people to a new home after they had been cast out of their own land is oddly out of step. The Bible story is an example of people lacking faith and engaging in rebellious disobedience, leading to a generation-long punishment from their God. The Ouje-Bougoumou Cree story is one of injustice against people who have been displaced by industrial activity.

In the same chapter, a line that imagines the author’s great-grandmother as “a lot like” one of the Cree women profiled momentarily, blurs the boundary between witness and participant. These brief, sudden jogs show both the reach and the risk of NoiseCat’s genre-defying approach. It’s a structure that invites empathy and connection, even as it sometimes unsettles the narrative.

The first chapter is titled “In the Beginning” (the first three words of the Bible), although NoiseCat lets readers

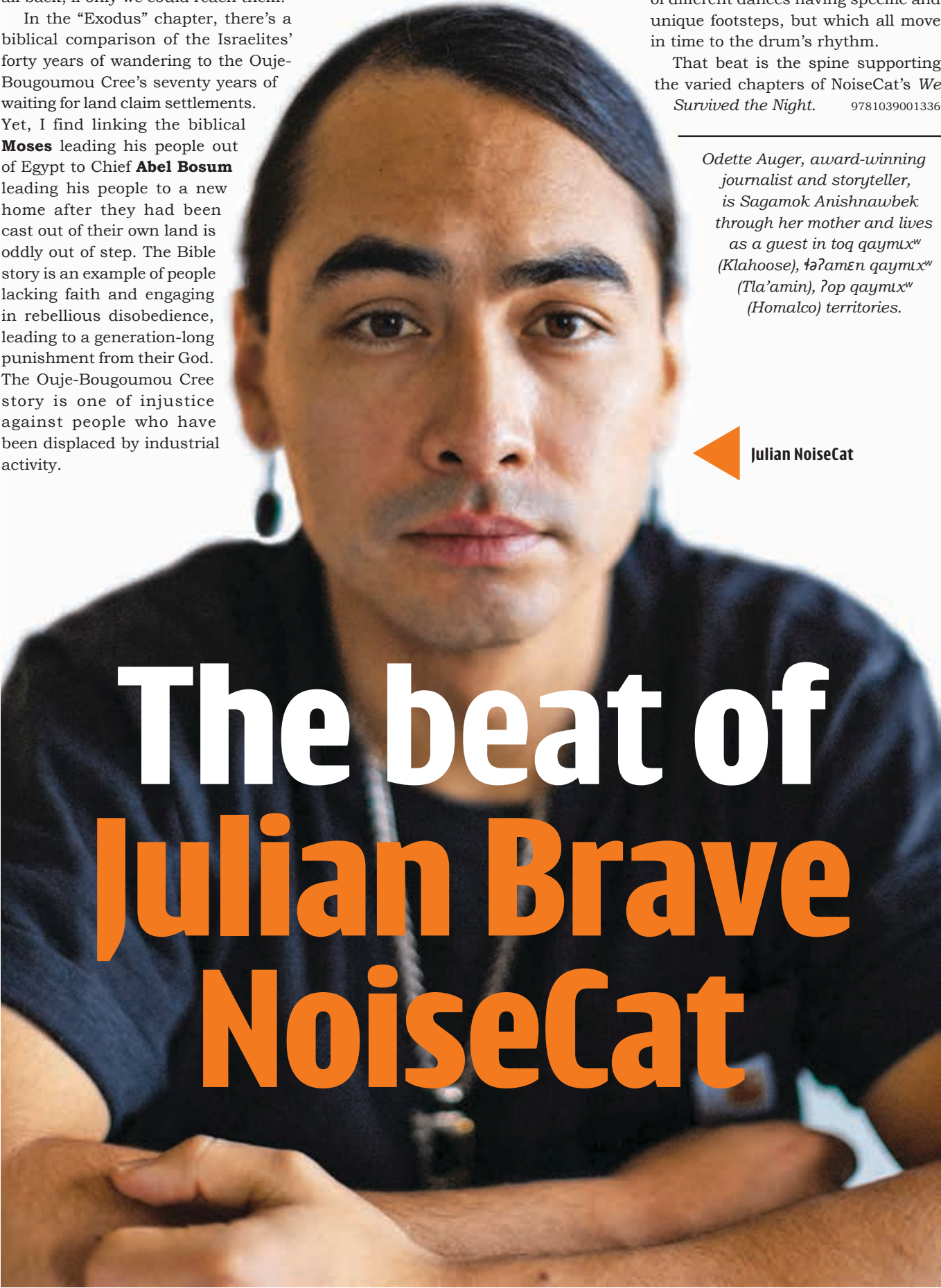
know, “I don’t go to church.” These touches have the effect of underscoring NoiseCat’s calling out of churches working with the state to advance the imperialist, capitalist goals of extraction and which impact land, waters and people—dismantling communities, families, lives.

NoiseCat holds space for love, grief and renewal in equal measure. “At the end of each Coyote Story, the Coyote People have always understood that Coyote may die, disappear, or turn to stone, but he was never truly gone,” writes NoiseCat. “He is our ancestor. He will always be part of us. We will always be part of him. And in the end—some say any day now—he will come back.”

Rhythm unites the structure and Julian NoiseCat’s faceted style is executed with a steady pace and strong vision. As he is a champion powwow dancer, the comparison comes to mind of different dances having specific and unique footsteps, but which all move in time to the drum’s rhythm.

That beat is the spine supporting the varied chapters of NoiseCat’s *We Survived the Night*. 9781039001336

Odette Auger, award-winning journalist and storyteller, is Sagamok Anishnawbek through her mother and lives as a guest in toq qaymux^w (Klahoose), ʔəʔamən qaymux^w (Tla’amin), ʔop qaymux^w (Homalco) territories.



Julian NoiseCat

The beat of Julian Brave NoiseCat

HISTORY REVIEW



Tim Fuchs told his parents of his intent to desert the US Army. They did not take the news well. Tim and DD in their rental house on Inverness in Vancouver, 1974.



Oliver Clarke, 1975. His older brother, an elite military commander, told Oliver the US had “no business trying to conduct a land war in Asia.”



Valerie Straw and Greg giving their baby Lisa a bath in the makeshift shed where they were living in Mitchell Bay. “We had a feeling of being rats leaving a sinking ship,” was how Valerie described her and Greg’s reason to leave the US.



Marvin Boyd in the 1980s in Swan Bay, a remote location in South Moresby, now part of the National Park.



In the 1970s, Manny Meyer joined the Redheart Theatre and the Manfrog Circus travelling to summer fairs on Vancouver Island, Texada and the Sunshine Coast, presenting a family-friendly satire.



Pan and Steph Nathan, 1972: “We sure hoped the isolated places where we would live in Canada were safe. We expected we could live a good life without constant fear.”

I Ain’t Marching Anymore

War Resisters:
Standing Against the Vietnam War
by Joline Martin
(Caitlin Press \$26)

BY TOM HAWTHORN

They came from farms and college towns, from striving blue-collar families and comfortable bourgeois backgrounds, from Iowa and Minnesota and California.

And they seem mostly to have come in Volkswagen “Bugs.”

For about eight years starting in the mid-1960s, tens of thousands of young American men and women crossed the border to begin new lives in Canada. Some were draft evaders, some deserters, some simply fleeing “Dodge” because they knew trouble was brewing at home. They were war resisters, opposed to the American conflict overseas with Vietnam and certain they did not want to kill or be killed in an immoral war.

“One thing that really affected me as a teenager of draftable age was the mainstream media’s coverage of the war,” recalled **Oliver Clarke**. “They had reporters in the trenches with American soldiers. We could see the effects on the soldiers first-hand. While one of the NBC reporters was waiting in a trench, a soldier who had been shooting at the enemy jumped back into the trench. The reporter asked, ‘Soldier, do you know why you are here?’ and the soldier answered, ‘I have no idea.’”

Manny Meyer, an aspiring musician whose father had a career in the

Joline Martin’s homage to the thousands of Americans who came to Canada to escape military service in Vietnam in the 1960s and early 70s.

military, could not see the point of the war. “We were going halfway around the world to kill the Vietnamese,” he said. “They were just people, and we did not even know them.”

Fleeing north often came after desperate bids to avoid compulsory military service. “They claimed medical issues, homosexuality, psychiatric conditions, allegiance to radical groups or intentionally flunked the aptitude tests,” **Joline Martin** writes in **War Resisters**.

Having graduated in 1964, Meyer faced the draft. He claimed to have asthma, mistakenly thinking the condition made him ineligible. Instead, he was given 1-A status and cleared for military service. Before being sent to what he was certain would be a hellish assignment, Meyer and a buddy lit out for the West Coast to find paradise. He’d already had adventures in life, including becoming a pilot and learning banjo from a musician who would years later compose “Dueling Banjos,” the theme music for the 1972 movie, *Deliverance*. In California, Meyer’s neighbour was spiritual leader **Baba Ram Dass**, a former mental health professional formerly known as **Richard Alpert**. The novelist **Ken Kesey**, who wrote *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* before leading a band of “Merry Prank-

sters” around the US, lived down the block and **Stewart Brand** of the *Whole Earth Catalogue*, which would serve as a combination Bible and how-to manual for long-haired back-to-the-landers, including draft evaders in Canada, was in the neighbourhood.

To protest the war, Meyer flew a small plane over the Bay Area from which antiwar leaflets were dropped. Figuring he was going to be drafted, he tried to enlist in the Air Force Reserve as a way of avoiding active duty in the war zone. Instead, his asthma claim was accepted. His status went from 1-A to 4-F (meaning unfit for military service).

A friend of a friend who brought a delicious bag of apples from Denman Island convinced Meyer and his wife to head to British Columbia, where he joined a traveling hippie circus.

Meyer is one of a dozen resisters who wound up on Vancouver Island and who were interviewed and profiled by Joline Martin. Many arrived here broke and desperate, relying on a loose network created by the earliest arrivals and Canadian sympathizers. The folks portrayed in the book survived, grateful for Canada as a refuge from madness, and several continue to contribute to their adopted communities.

Among the fascinating characters

profiled is **Marvin Boyd**, a fugitive from the US military, the American legal system and, most worrying of all, a bail bondsman with Mafia associations. Boyd came to BC after being inspired to travel here by a textbook about the flora and fauna of what is now known as Haida Gwaii. He wound up getting a government job before losing it when the government realized he was not a citizen. Eventually, Boyd found success operating a small airline.

Alternating chapters of *War Resisters* offer potted histories of the times, though these summaries are too perfunctory to offer much insight. An exception is a chapter on Canada’s changing immigration rules during the period, which helps explain why some of the newcomers sought to disappear into the Canadian wilderness like outlaws, off the grid and, hopefully, away from the attention of authorities.

U.S. president **Jimmy Carter’s** amnesty in 1977 allowed many of these war resisters to return to American hometowns and families some feared they might never see again.

From the Kootenays to the Gulf Islands, from Vancouver’s Kitsilano neighbourhood to far-flung resource towns, these 20th century war resisters followed earlier generations of arrivals in building new lives. They came seeking refuge from a turbulent world, having made a difficult decision with legal, as well as moral, consequences.

9781773861685

Tom Hawthorn’s anecdotal history of professional baseball in Vancouver, *Play Ball!*, was published by *Echo Storytelling* earlier this year.

Letter to our readers & the BC book community...

Times are tough in the world: tariffs, rising rents and grocery costs, unemployment, climate change and the erosion of democracy.
We get it.

In our own literary ecosystem of people who love books, the BC book community valiantly struggles on despite stagnant government support and declining outlets to publicize BC's great books.

As more media outlets proclaim they will no longer cover books or will rely on AI to do the coverage, we guarantee that *BC BookWorld* will fill that void by continuing to use human reviewers. In addition to book reviews and excerpts, we have increased our coverage to include more Q&As to let authors speak directly to readers.

As we enter our 39th year, we will continue to champion BC's literary culture to our 100,000 readers via distribution to BC Ferries, bookstores, libraries, subscribers, funders, media and Canada's literary movers and shakers.

A vibrant literary culture needs to be heard and seen. Join with us in holding the line. Be a subscriber (or buy a friend a subscription), advertise your books and events, carry *BC BookWorld* in your store, and if you previously advertised, please rejoin.

We're all in this together!



Beverly Cramp, publisher/editor



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LABOUR INTERVIEW



AN INJURY TO

Joe Barrett
on the plight of
Temporary Foreign
Workers, solidarity
from the heart
and his passion
for social justice.

**A Fight for Justice:
The Compelling Story of Temporary
Foreign Workers & Human Rights**
by Joe Barrett
(Ronsdale Press \$26.95)

BC BOOKWORLD: Your book is specifically about foreign workers in BC in 2006, but what makes it relevant internationally?

JOE BARRETT: All migrant workers are vulnerable. Many don't speak English or French and many come from countries where labour rights are non-existent. While in Canada their work permits are tied to a single employer. If they are being abused, they can't quit and take up a job with another employer. It's like indentureship. If they are fired or quit, they can legally stay in Canada until their visa expires, but without a work permit there's no income. They have a choice to leave the country or find work in the underground economy.

The Canada Line workers' case established a global legal precedent. The BC Human Rights Tribunal (BCHRT) determined that the Latin American workers labouring on the Canada Line tunnel boring machine had the same skills as their European (Spanish, Italian, Portuguese) co-workers, yet the Europeans were earning twice as much and were provided luxury apartments compared to the motel housing provided to the Latin Americans. The Europeans' meal and living allowances were more generous than the Latin Americans'. The discrimination criteria for human rights goes beyond

ONE

IS AN INJURY TO

ALL

skin colour or ethnicity; it also includes discrimination based on country of origin. The BCHRT decision said workers of equal skills coming from poor countries must be paid and treated equally to those coming from rich countries.

Internationally the decision changed the way global tunneling companies practice their business. The BCHRT set a global standard. Tunnel boring companies worldwide now treat all workers equally, irrespective of their country of origin.

BCBW: What inspired or deeply moved you most in the process of knowing the workers during their fight for justice?

JB: The Latin American workers' humility, dignity and courage continue to move and inspire me to support all migrant workers in all industries. The Canada Line tunnel workers were young, most in their mid-20s, and most were married with young children. They sacrificed by being far away from their families to earn wages in Canada. They had the added burden of being unable to speak the language and were unfamiliar with our customs and culture. To defend their labour rights and dignity these workers risked their jobs, retaliation from their employer and their future careers.

They trusted Canadian union organizers and the Canadian legal processes from the start. In their home countries none had appeared before a formal legal tribunal as a witness in a legal case. It was another scary experience. They were supported by their families in Latin America with short telephone calls. The strength of their family and community bonds played a huge role in sustaining their will to carry on their fight for justice. The workers' background was important. They came from a rural agricultural region in central Costa Rica. Almost all of them started working when they were less than 10 years old, picking coffee or working on sugar cane plantations. After that, many had worked in clothing factory *maquiladoras* before finding work operating tunnel boring equipment on a water diversion project in Costa Rica.

As the world goes backwards in terms of progress in the areas of climate change, equality, democracy, health, truth and workers' rights, we have a bold reminder

in **Joe Barrett's A Fight for Justice** that positive victories can be achieved — but it takes courage.

Barrett follows the true story of the foreign workers brought to Vancouver in 2006 to build the Canada Line SkyTrain. Though set in Vancouver, it is really an international story of exploitation that we've seen played out across the globe, such as in Qatar during the FIFA World Cup in 2022.

What makes this book required reading for all activists and lovers of David and Goliath stories is the unusual bonding of unions and migrant workers acting collectively for justice. Barrett's narrative follows a growing body of historical writing known as "history from below." *BC BookWorld* spoke with Victoria-based Joe Barrett about his book.

“Canadian union leaders’ and representatives’ solidarity came from the heart. It’s hard not to try and help vulnerable workers when you see them being abused for asking for basic rights.” — JOE BARRETT

BCBW: What was the most remarkable aspect of the story of these workers?

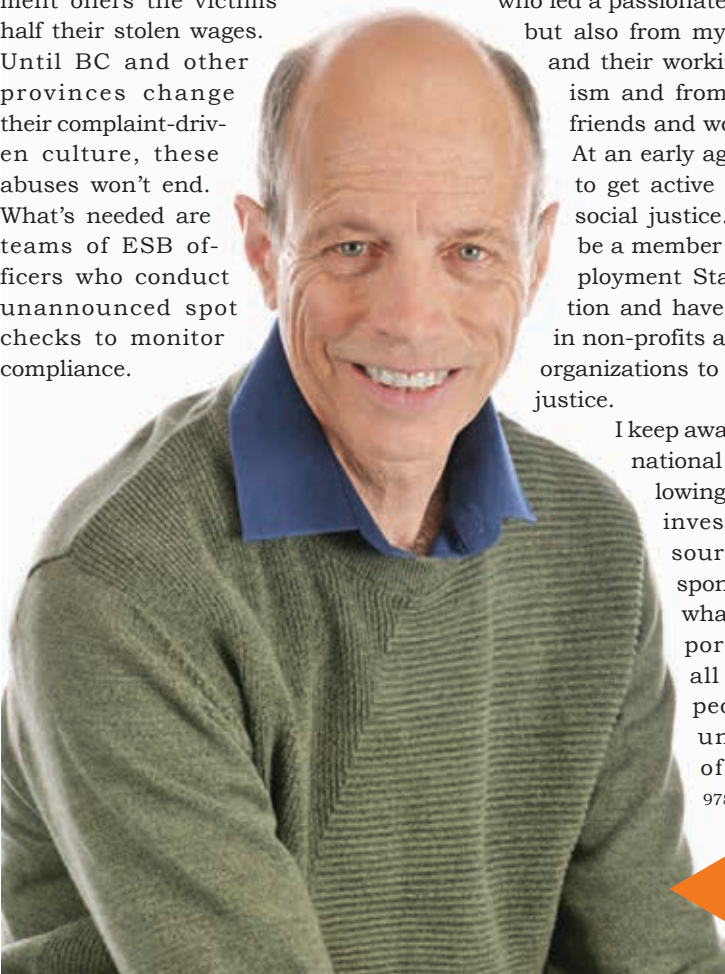
JB: Their story has inspired me to get involved with the broader issue of migrant workers in Canada and around the world.

Since the Canada Line workers plight in 2006-2008, our country’s reliance on migrant workers has more than doubled. Statistics Canada tells us there were fewer than 111,000 temporary foreign workers in 2000 and just 90,000 under the International Mobility Program (IMP) — about 200,000 in total. In 2020 there were 117,000 temporary foreign workers and 407,000 IMPs, a total of 514,000. Today, that number is even higher.

Our society has a declining birth rate and a rapidly aging population. Canadian employers will increasingly rely on migrant workers. Whatever the industry — domestic/homecare, seasonal agricultural workers, service workers in fast food or hospitality industries, truck drivers and construction — these workers share the same vulnerabilities.

Ruthless labour brokers in their home countries and in Canada sometimes charge illegal placement fees. Once in Canada, subcontractors pop up then disappear, often leaving their migrant worker employees with unpaid wages or overtime issues.

The Employment Standards Act excludes agricultural workers from basic minimums afforded to most other workers (lower minimum wages and fewer overtime provisions). There is little or no oversight by the mandated authorities. Complaints to the BC Employment Standards Branch (ESB) can go unanswered for over a year. The ESB is known to try and resolve non-compliance by asking the victims of wage theft to accept a settlement. The settlement offers the victims half their stolen wages. Until BC and other provinces change their complaint-driven culture, these abuses won’t end. What’s needed are teams of ESB officers who conduct unannounced spot checks to monitor compliance.



Joe Barrett

BCBW: Describe the bond between the foreign workers and organized labour.

JB: Canadian unions have been on the front lines defending migrant workers. For example, for many years dedicated union activists from the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) have stood by seasonal agricultural workers in their fight for justice. Construction unions as well.

All of the BC building trades unions were involved in defending the rights of the Canada Line workers but none as much as the Labourers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA). LIUNA provided free legal services at the BC Labour Relations Board (BCLRB) and never charged workers union dues. LIUNA made a commitment not to charge union dues until workers achieved a freely negotiated collective agreement.

Canadian union leaders’ and representatives’ solidarity came from the heart. It’s hard not to try and help vulnerable workers when you see them being abused for asking for basic rights. Canadian union activists live by the principle that an injury to one is an injury to all. It’s more than a slogan. It’s achieved by bringing the abuses to light.

Rank and file union members have seen the exploitation of migrant workers with their own eyes. Canadian union activists know if we don’t stand up to these abuses of migrant workers today, tomorrow it will be us facing the ruthlessness of some employers. A union’s strength is their unity; members have learned these lessons from their own experience.

BCBW: Your book demonstrates a passion for social justice. How did you come by that?

JB: Social justice was a part of my upbringing. Not only from my father, **Dave Barrett** (premier of BC, 1972-75), who led a passionate life in politics, but also from my grandparents and their working-class activism and from my teachers, friends and work colleagues. At an early age I was taught to get active and engage in social justice. I continue to be a member of the BC Employment Standards Coalition and have been involved in non-profits and community organizations to fight for social justice.

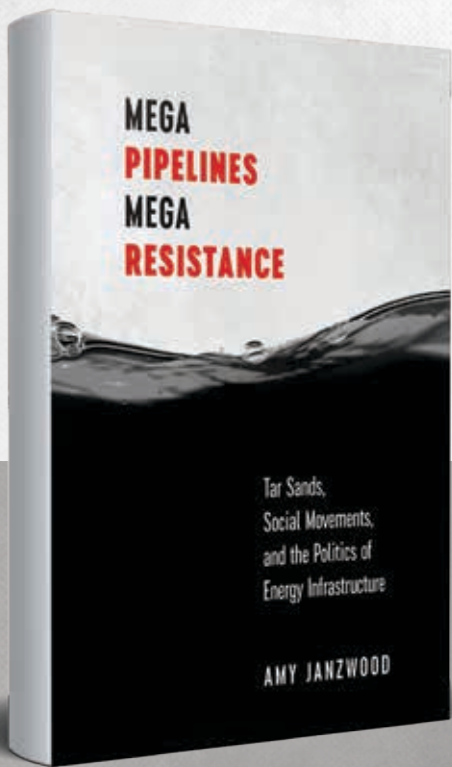
I keep aware of world and national events by following the news and investigating news sources. Then responding by doing what I can to support equality for all workers and people suffering under systems of oppression.

9781553807391

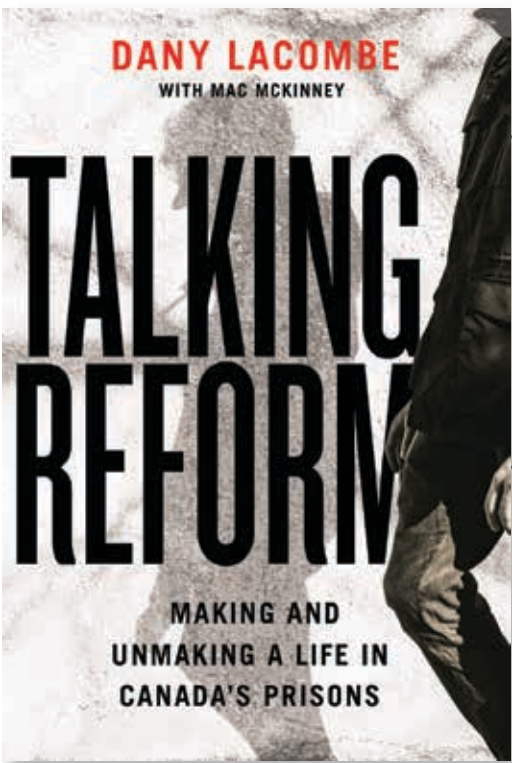
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—Denielle Elliott, co-editor of *Naked Fieldnotes: A Rough Guide to Ethnographic Writing*



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Leading from the Heart:
The Battles of a Feminist,
Union Leader and Politician
by Judy Darcy (D&M \$40)

BY SONJA PINTO

Not many can reflect on a career as distinguished and eventful as **Judy Darcy's**. A passionate unionist, feminist and activist, Darcy's memoir details the raucous and demanding highlights of her extensive career in the public eye.

Darcy is a natural-born leader whose oratory gifts were discovered as early as grade one when her teachers began assigning her "an official role at the weekly assemblies" where she was asked to "read the Lord's Prayer, recite the salute to the flag (the Union Jack) or lead the singing of 'God Save the Queen,'" roles that the young Darcy "performed with gusto." These formative moments set the stage for "a lifetime of public speaking—of learning to use words, tone of voice, and stories to communicate ideas, evoke emotions, inspire people to action."

Darcy, who spent the majority of her childhood in Sarnia, Ontario's "Chemical Valley," is shaped by the secrets of her family's history. Her father kept his Jewish identity a secret for most of her life, scarred by the trauma of the Holocaust. Her mother was once part of the Danish Resistance during World War Two, but later developed mental health and addiction struggles that led her to suicide. It is her mother's tragic passing that later fuelled Darcy's mission to end overdose deaths during her time as the NDP's Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

As a college student, she found her place in the growing feminist movement: "It is a time when more doors are opening for women—but also when traditional notions of beauty still reign supreme." Her tight-knit feminist community leveraged this social currency to crash a beauty pageant for exploiting women as Darcy recounts in an anecdote where she goes undercover to be a Miss Canadian University contestant.

Never one to shy away from challenge or controversy, Darcy's activism leads her to fight for causes like women's rights, labour rights, access to safe birth control and abortions and immigrant and migrant workers rights.

This activism doesn't come without harsh criticism. Opponents call her a radical, a communist and a "gape-mouthed, bull-horn blowing" union boss. Though her actions are perceived as extreme—and even subversive—Darcy recalls that "most of what we actually did was feed people."

Darcy first becomes involved with Canadian Union of Public Employees as a photocopier technician at a University of Toronto library. Here, she and her colleagues develop frequent headaches resulting from the blue light emanating from the photocopiers. With the help of her union rep, Darcy convinces the supervisor to supply staff with sunglasses, a simple but effective solution to prevent the headaches. This

HEAR ME ROAR

From crashing a sexist beauty contest, to leadership of CUPE and finally as an NDP cabinet minister, **Judy Darcy** has left her mark.

proves to be Darcy's first union win: "So began my lifelong passionate affair with my union," writes Darcy.

She becomes more and more involved with CUPE, speaking at conferences and events to advance labour rights with a focus on women's issues. Once, as one of the few women attending a high-level conference, she faced difficulty accessing childcare and turned the obstacle into an opportunity to advocate for free childcare at union events.

Learning how to balance being a spokesperson for her workplace with her own visions and opinions on the future, Darcy learns many hard lessons along the way. After it gets out that she is a communist whilst at a CUPE conference, Darcy goes from getting a "standing ovation one day to being booed off the floor the next!"

Indeed, the union isn't free of its own prejudices. Misogyny is common among the membership.

Darcy reveals some of the cutting comments she had to withstand as she navigated union leadership positions, such as being told that "real union leaders don't cry."

Despite every hurdle, Darcy built a reputation as a competent, passionate and influential speaker. By the age of 39, she says: "I am now a national officer of Canada's largest union—only the second woman in the country to ever serve in such a role."

Darcy excelled at both the pragmatic and the emotive parts of her leadership positions. For instance, recognizing the need to convince her membership of the importance of paying dues on time, she used her voice to communicate the problem simply but persuasively: "Finances pump blood into our beating heart—the healthier the blood and the steadier the rhythm, the stronger our union will be."

In tough times when CUPE locals were striking, Darcy marched with her brothers and sisters: "... leaders have to lead from the front," she writes. "That's the only way

to keep members' trust, reduce risk and achieve the best possible outcome."

After many years in CUPE leadership, Darcy eventually entered the world of politics, becoming a BC NDP MLA to continue pushing for change. "Together we went to bat for hundreds of people," says Darcy. With the help of her team, she moved the needle on Medicare. "I believed with every fibre of my being that Medicare was a sacred trust," she says, adding "that we couldn't go back to a system where they checked your purse before your pulse."

Defending public health invigorates Darcy: "It infuriates me that many politicians on the right don't believe Medicare should provide coverage for us as *whole* human beings: our minds, our teeth, our bodies as we age."

It is partly this advocacy for public health that led her to be appointed BC's first Minister of Mental Health and Addictions in 2017, an extremely challenging role that tested her mentally and physically. Darcy and her team rolled out overdose prevention campaigns and visited safe consumption sites and treatment centres like the Indigenous-led Ts'ewulhtun Health Centre.

This work hit an emotional chord for Darcy. "I understood that my mother's death gave me the power to feel what families in BC were feeling, to hear what they were saying," she writes. "And to move from pain to action."

Perhaps the most moving parts of **Leading from the Heart** come from Darcy's ability to reflect on her mistakes and regrets she has about her career. She reflects thoughtfully on ways she could have improved and better served the community, showing striking vulnerability, conscience and integrity.

To read *Leading from the Heart* is to understand the ambition and perseverance that fuelled Darcy's success as a speaker and a leader. As a writer, she channels these same strengths in creating this absolutely captivating memoir.

9781771624534

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



"I believed with every fibre of my being that Medicare was a sacred trust, that we couldn't go back to a system where they checked your purse before your pulse."

— JUDY DARCY



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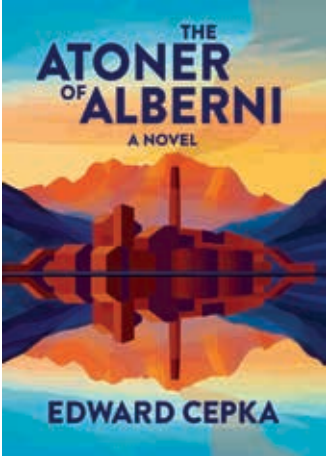
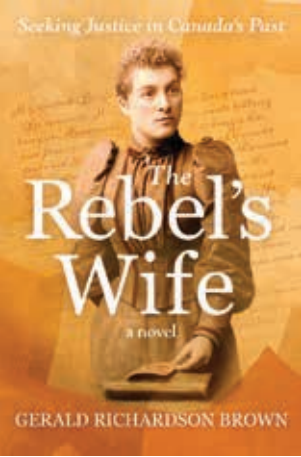
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Across the Atlantic

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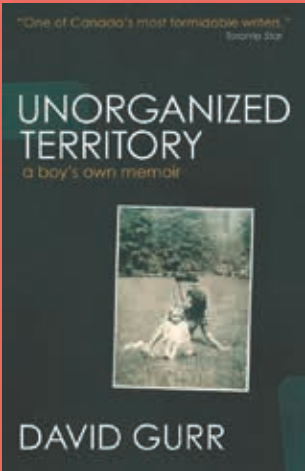
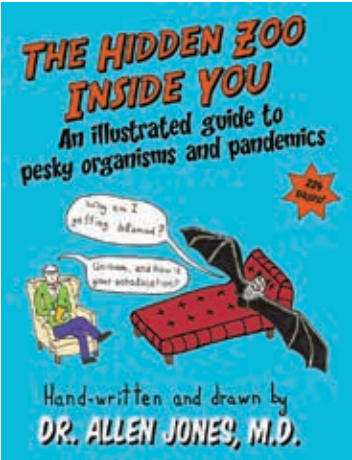
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The **working-class** who became **premier**

A deep-dive memoir of the remarkable rise of **John Horgan**.



After leading the province for five years and resigning in 2022, **John Horgan**, BC's 36th premier, passed away in 2024. Few provincial leaders in living memory earned the level of public affection Horgan enjoyed — a tribute to his stalwart administration during the global Covid epidemic. While others faced economic, social or environmental challenges, none as premier ever confronted an existential crisis of that magnitude. His legacy is engraved at the heart of our definition of genuine public service.

We knew little of his personal story. John Horgan squeaked into the premier's office through an alliance with the Green Party in 2017, ending 16 years of Liberal government that was tarnished by the "Casino Gate" scandal (when alleged foreign money was laundered through gambling and later invested in BC real estate) ... or when, as *The Province* newspaper reported, "Metro Vancouver housing prices soared beyond the reach of non-millionaires."

This is a book filled with remembrance. Following his resignation as premier, an event as unexpected and free of drama as **Bill Bennett's** departure in 1986, Horgan—a two-time cancer survivor—recorded a series of interview conversations with labour journalist **Rod Mickleburgh** addressing his life and the history of his long political voyage. They met at Royal Roads University in Victoria in August 2023 and their sessions ran several days. They talked again the following November. More interviews followed via Zoom sessions in spring 2024 after Horgan had been appointed Canada's ambassador to Germany. But that June, Horgan was diagnosed with thyroid cancer—his third round with cancer. Mickleburgh's introduction relates that with Horgan sitting up in his Berlin hospital bed, they logged four final sessions in late-August. Horgan died in November.

Those interviews shape **In His Own Words**, a deep-dive memoir and autobiography from a political leader broadly experienced in governing. Horgan knew hard times growing up and if salty language isn't in your wheelhouse, especially in the early chapters, be advised.



BC'S FIRST NDP PREMIER TO EARN RE-ELECTION RECALLS HOW HIS PATH TO the premier's office came after years as an NDP staffer in Ottawa and Victoria. He attended Trent University in Peterborough after learning of it in Ocean Falls, the pulp mill town where he migrated after a working-class upbringing in Saanich. The mill's solid union wages enabled him to study social work. At Trent, he heard Canada's beloved social justice hero, **Tommy Douglas** speak. From then on, Horgan intimates, he knew who he was and that what he believed in was worth fighting for.

His father, he says, was a drunk. An Irish scrapper and sports fan who made truck deliveries around Chinatown. He died while Horgan was an infant, leaving the load of raising four kids to his wife, **Alice**. "She did everything pretty much by herself," Horgan explains.

Horgan had a passion for lacrosse. He could play and became, he says, "the guy everyone wanted on their team." Horgan dreamed of joining Victoria's renowned Shamrocks but never made the senior squad. Yet it was during this time he grasped that "team sports were where you learned that everyone's role was important."

By grade 8, Horgan concedes he "was heading into the ditch."

**John Horgan:
In His Own Words**
by John Horgan with Rod Mickleburgh
(Harbour, \$38.95)

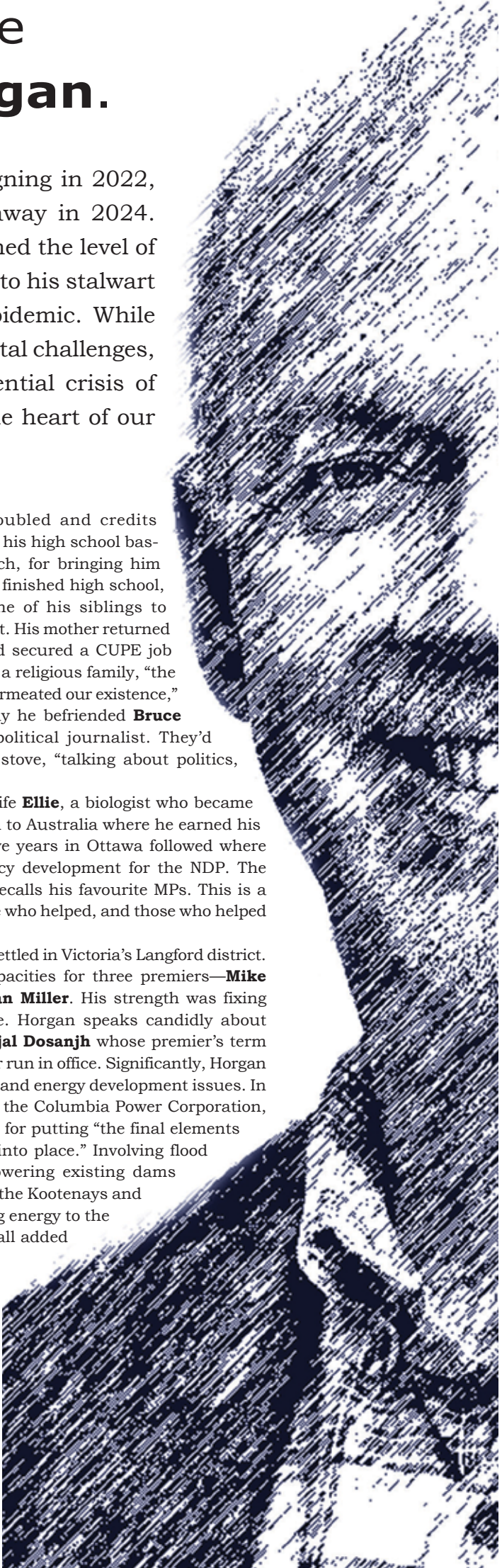
BY TREVOR CAROLAN

He was troubled and credits **Jack Lusk**, his high school basketball coach, for bringing him around. He finished high school, the only one of his siblings to manage that. His mother returned to school, learned to drive and secured a CUPE job in local government. While not a religious family, "the basic decency of Christianity permeated our existence," Horgan recalls. Along the way he befriended **Bruce Hutchinson**, the renowned political journalist. They'd spend hours together by the stove, "talking about politics, past and present."

At Trent, Horgan met his wife **Ellie**, a biologist who became his rock and accompanied him to Australia where he earned his Master's degree in history. Five years in Ottawa followed where Horgan worked in public policy development for the NDP. The narrative spices up when he recalls his favourite MPs. This is a book that names names—those who helped, and those who helped themselves.

In 1991, the Horgan family settled in Victoria's Langford district. Horgan worked in various capacities for three premiers—**Mike Harcourt**, **Glen Clark** and **Dan Miller**. His strength was fixing problems—he got things done. Horgan speaks candidly about these former bosses and of **Ujjal Dosanjh** whose premier's term ended the NDP's almost 10-year run in office. Significantly, Horgan was drawn to natural resource and energy development issues. In 1999, he moved sideways into the Columbia Power Corporation, a Crown operation responsible for putting "the final elements of the Columbia River Treaty into place." Involving flood control, purchasing and repowering existing dams from Cominco, job creation for the Kootenays and revenue generation from selling energy to the US, Horgan confirms that, "It all added up to a \$500 million deal."

Dan Miller, the short-term premier from Prince Rupert, hired Horgan as his Chief of Staff just as climate change began making government agendas. Horgan understood that energy and emissions action was about to boom and could talk to environmentalists and big labour alike. But the NDP was dethroned in 2001; Horgan considered his future from the sidelines.





In 1986, just back from Australia, John and Ellie bought a 1967 Buick from friends in Victoria for \$17.50 and drove it across Canada, looking for suitable employment. Eventually, both found work in Ottawa.

When **Gordon Campbell**'s Liberals awarded a ferry-building contract to Germany, Horgan howled at the news. The drummer in his son's garage rock band overheard and asked, "Well, what are you going to do about it?" Horgan responded by getting elected as MLA in the next election, joining leader **Carole James**' Official Opposition. For 12 years he polished his public speaking and media skills, critiquing Liberal premiers Campbell and **Christy Clark**. When Clark demolished **Adrian Dix** in the 2013 election, Horgan says it was "one of the worst campaigns I've ever seen."

Known as an economic pragmatist, Horgan was approached to join the Liberals who needed an Island voice, but declined to cross over. He saw that Clark had out-strategized the NDP and didn't forget.

By 2014, Horgan was leader of BC's NDP. The party was stone broke and had "internal divisions." He treaded water, built alliances with unions and the Indigenous community and gradually pulled things into cohesion. Significantly, Horgan championed the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) for which he is still warmly remembered, and he includes a chapter of sincerity and insight into Indigenous issues and reconciliation. He also developed a reputation having a temper. He and Clark did not get on—"not at all," Horgan emphasizes.

With his party still struggling, Horgan brought in **Bob Dewar**, a seasoned Manitoba campaigner, as Chief of Staff. Dewar brought the mojo Horgan needed and "the sinking stopped." Then came The Big One. In 2017, Horgan pulled off the unthinkable after forging an understanding with Dr. **Andrew Weaver**, leader of BC's Greens. With their combined seats, they narrowly toppled Christy Clark, despite her pleas for a second, snap election that

Lieutenant Governor **Judith Guichon** declined. Horgan's explanation of the agreement with Weaver is fascinating reading. Both made economic and ecological compromises that benefitted the province.



JOHN HORGAN'S PARTY inherited a budget surplus from the Liberals. The NDP got busy: no more Medical Services Plan premiums, improved disability assistance rates, tuition fees waived for adult education and ESL, free postsecondary education for 18-year-olds coming out of foster care, Port Mann Bridge tolls ended. The NDP increased the minimum

wage. Carole James in finance added a new tax bracket for those earning over \$250,000, as well as a speculation and vacancy tax on empty homes. They balanced the budget and BC earned Canada's highest credit rating. Horgan delivered for the people and didn't mind sharing the applause around, regardless of affiliation.

He admits "the transition from activist to administrator" is challenging. But it was the anti-old-growth logging protests at Fairy Creek and the Site C dam decision in the Peace River country that earned him the wrath of eco-activists. On the books for 40 years and kick-started by the Liberals, the Site C infrastructure project faced skyrocketing costs and geotechnical issues. Yet, "even if getting there has been one of the province's most challenging public policy questions," Horgan could see its enormous value "in an energy-constrained marketplace." He moved it forward. His chapter on working with the Greens on this and LNG issues explores the most complex ethical and economic questions he encountered in political life. Of his controversial commitments to "working forests," hydroelectric power and developing LNG as a clean energy source—a \$40 billion private sector investment—he explains his higher responsibility to "[meet] the needs of five million people," not just the dissenters.

When Covid hit in 2020, Horgan's government lead a bewildered public through the shock. His deputies on the file, Dr. **Bonnie Henry** and Adrian Dix, got BC past the worst. Who can forget their nightly updates? Ironically, the Greens' support grew shaky; Andrew Weaver began sitting as an independent. Horgan's decision to call a snap election after only three years caused grief and he speaks compellingly to this.

Maximum pressure came in 2021: extreme temperatures, a "heat dome" and "atmospheric rivers," vast wildfires including the Lytton conflagration, flooding, and pipeline decisions—it was a fateful time. And Horgan now had throat cancer.

Horgan maintains he was already "becoming a grumpy happy warrior," however, a badly thought out decision proposing a long public closure of the Royal BC Museum proved the tipping point. He realized that he was "not reading the room right on something [he was] passionate about." Mindfully, he apologized and decided he was done.

In his afterword, Mickleburgh concludes this valuable book with an emotional grace note. During their final interview he asked Horgan, "What he would want me to say about him if today ever came?" In a scene so typical of Horgan, he responded simply, "Just tell everyone I did my level best."

9781998526260

Trevor Carolan writes from North Vancouver where he served as municipal councillor.



HORGAN FAMILY COLLECTION

ILLUSTRATION CREATED FROM WIKIPEDIA CREATIVE COMMONS



Selfie snapped by John Horgan with Ellie as they smell the lilacs a few minutes from their ambassador's residence in Berlin.

HORGAN FAMILY COLLECTION

BY GRAHAM CHANDLER

The challenge intrigued two experienced therapists and researchers who studied the phenomenon and devised ways of dealing with it, understanding it and offering others their respective findings. The researchers reviewed hundreds of academic papers and talked to many experts to hear what they had to say about “kids these days.” They also interviewed many youths for their perspectives. Moreover, both researchers have extensive experience in related clinical work: **Will Dobud** is

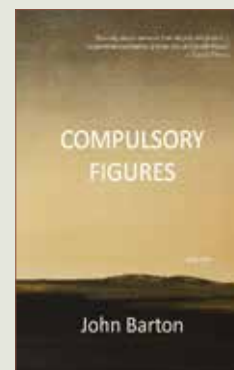
BLUES

The generational gap between kids and their parents is an ongoing problem but it doesn't have to be that way.

“In the end, our goal was to understand why so many young people are hurting, starved for connection and

Dobud and Harper distilled their results into three types of harm which need to be addressed in order to promote positive youth development today:

But ignoring those questions clearly won't help. "If we want to perpetuate the '*kids these days effect*,' all we have to do is continue to rely on, and trust other adults to do the 'adulthood' for us, while we bemoan today's youth. Efforts to fix the teenager are likely to fail... we'll continue to treat today's youth as



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Nevin Harper is a professor in the Faculty of Health at the University of Victoria and a clinical counsellor focusing on nature-based sessions in parks, beaches and trails.

“Cell phones, new drugs, social media and more bring complexities many of our parents didn’t experience.”

lazy, selfish, fragile, and anxious, as adults have done for millennia.”

“The experts we’ve relied on for this book often told us ‘don’t trust the experts.’ But through close listening and study, we’ve come to trust what they have imparted to us...the translation and dissemination of their work, however, by mainstream and social media, governmental regulatory bodies and corporate-speak and special interest groups is incongruent with much of their evidence and advice about healthy child and adolescent development.” What is eventually seen and heard by the public and presented as “expert” advice, often contradicts the experts Dobud and Harper used. Sources are listed; if you like, check them out.



KIDS THESE DAYS IS ENGAGINGLY WELL WRITTEN and easy to follow—it should appeal to professionals and moms and dads alike. Numerous examples are provided to illustrate points, using that age-old mantra so many writers rely upon: “show, don’t tell.”

An example is the book’s description of a case where a 23-year-old young man, **Danny**, was forced to give up

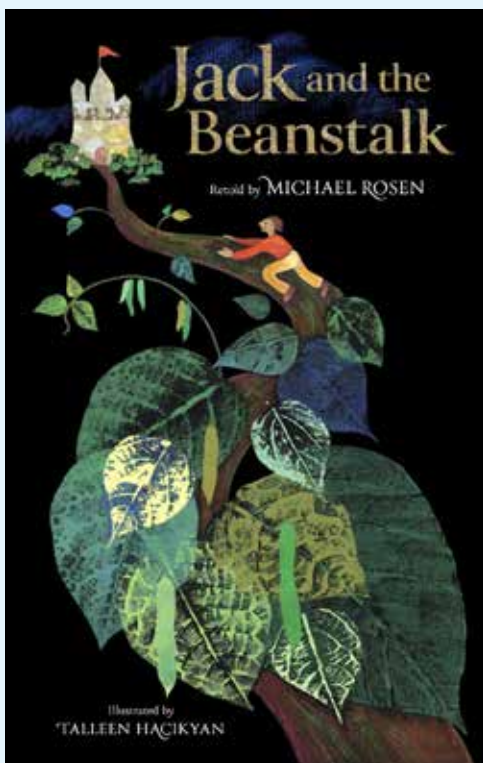
the apartment he shared with friends and move back into his mother’s home during the Covid pandemic. Danny used the opportunity to complete his Bachelor of Commerce degree online, but that introduced new stresses like “the loss of his social life, peer relationships, and his routine of going to school, rugby practice, the gym, his girlfriend’s place, and the bar. Danny experienced life in a vacuum,” write Dobud and Harper. “Day by day he felt worse.” Finally, Danny sought therapy. His first counseling session was with Harper in a local park. Read the book to find out how Harper’s strategies were successful and how his unconventional approaches can work. The last session Danny and Harper had was just four months after they first met. When asked what he wanted to talk about that session, Danny said with a sense of pride, “I’d just like to hang out and let you know how good I’m doing.”

“Maybe what really needs to change is the adults these days,” the authors conclude.

9781774060223

Graham Chandler is a Vancouver-based freelance writer.

T R A D E W I N D B O O K S

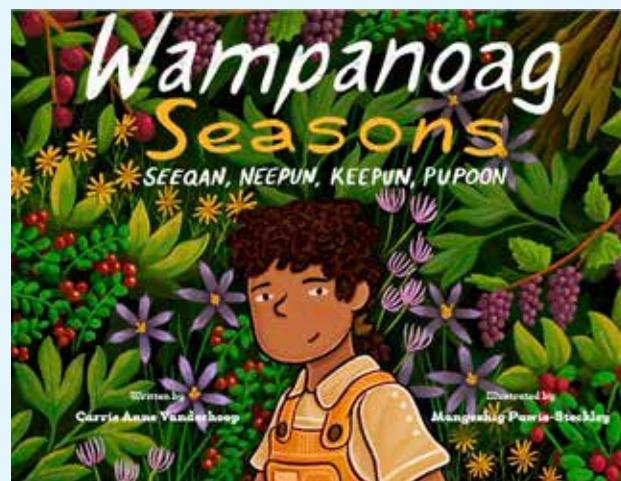


Jack and the Beanstalk

by Michael Rosen
illustrated by Talleen Hacikyan

“Rosen’s unsentimental but always theatrical voice, and Hacikyan’s stained-glass-like visuals replant a familiar folktale in rich imaginative ground, showing how old stories can continue to yield new growth.”

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY



Wampanoag Seasons: Seeqan, Neepun, Keepun, Pupoon

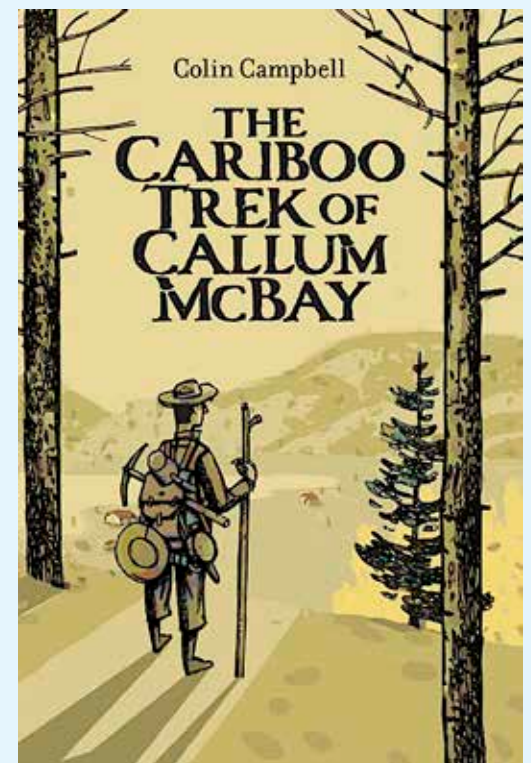
by Carrie Anne Vanderhoop
illustrated by Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley

“With lovely, striking images and a warm, exultant child’s voice that exclaims about nature, family, and family-in-nature, Carrie Anne Vanderhoop and Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley take readers to another imaginative world whose citizens appreciate their place in the family of things.”

—THE BRITISH COLUMBIA REVIEW



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The Cariboo Trek of Callum McBay

by Colin Campbell

“Sensitivity to place and to the original peoples of the Fraser Canyon add to this tale of youthful adventure . . . I expect today’s young readers will enjoy joining Callum’s trek just as I did.”

—THE BRITISH COLUMBIA REVIEW

The Rebel's Wife
by Gerald Richardson Brown
(Granville Island Publishing \$24.95)

BY TREVOR CAROLAN



Historical fiction typically sets the lives of imagined characters within real historical events. **The Rebel's Wife** by Vancouver's **Gerald Richardson**

Brown re-crafts this formula, focusing on the peregrinations of authentic characters from a turbulent period of Canada's early political history that readers may recall foggily from school as the time of the Family Compact.

Some historical background to start: after the War of 1812 when United Empire Loyalists fled to Upper Canada, a group of rigidly conservative landowners and financiers emerged there as a new ruling colonial elite. The Family Compact exercised enormous power based on unflinching loyalty to its closed, hierarchic structure and self-interest. For more than thirty years, and despite there being an elected Assembly, by dominating finance and credit in what is now southern Ontario, the Family Compact controlled government appointments and favours and manipulated land ownership. Strict class intermarriage, fealty to the Anglican Church and the vehement rejection of American-style democracy were its hallmarks. Its influence extended to violence against opponents to its authority.

In 1837-38, taking leadership from crusading journalist-reformer **William Lyon Mackenzie**, desperately oppressed settlers took up arms against the Compact in poorly organized rebellions. Swiftly crushed, a number of rebels were hanged. Further executions, or at best a brutal exile to Van Diemen's land—now known as Tasmania—awaited remaining captives. However, when unexpected popular resentment and pleas for mercy grew, fearing intervention from across the US border, senior British officials intervened to allow the festering atmosphere to cool down.

The Rebel's Wife shapes its narrative from this history, dwelling on one unique incident. In 1838, **Maria Wait**, a young wife and mother, witnesses her husband's courtroom sentence of execution and quartering (yes, we did use to dismember the bodies of hanged convicts) for his role in the failed revolt.

Rebellion against the colonial elites

Maria Wait's extraordinary battle to save her rebel husband from execution and quartering in 1838.

She pledges herself to saving his life. In recounting Maria's extraordinary battle against every form of prejudiced, patriarchal and aristocratic disinterest of the day, the novel is rooted in surviving letters between Maria and her husband **Benjamin** and on research left by witnesses to the rebellions in a thin line of previous accounts. It's a remarkable tale.

Imprisoned for debt and cheated out of his mill by a Compact ally, Benjamin's case obliges Maria to make a hazardous horse coach journey across the border to visit her aged father: she needs cash to redeem the debt. It's a brave venture. Highwaymen plague the roads; inns are dangerous. When she is victimized, we see Maria's true character emerge in confronting her antagonist.

Freed and thirsting for

reform, Benjamin joins a fledgling rebel army with disastrous results. Jailed, the captives await grim futures. Page-turners are not always notable for their psychological depth, typically relying on quick action turnovers. The novel offers plenty of that, underscored by Maria's burning determination which confirms her as an engaging character. Amidst detailing her struggles, the author evokes the rich seasonal imagery, landscapes and daily life of the Niagara River region.

Supported by her devout Christian faith, Maria negotiates arduous journeys throughout the Niagara and St. Lawrence Valleys to visit her husband and to meet officials, journalists and local religious groups. Readers can expect insightful portraits of colonial life in Toronto, Kingston and Montreal in Lower Canada. As her bravery attracts attention, even reluctant figures feel obliged to

grant her a hearing. Her heartfelt plea is simple: "I can only trust that you will view our plight with the mercy given to us in sacred scripture." With inchworm progress her campaign advances.

Maria's solemn family encounters and maternal turmoil at leaving her daughter with relations humanize her while she petitions authorities far from home. Benjamin's letters, written from convict hulks and prisons in Upper Canada, Liverpool (England) and Van Diemen's Land, expose the hell of an utterly unforgiving legal system, its ten-pound chains and the savage lashing even of children.

Packed with incidents, Maria's heroism as a woman represents an insufferable truth for the Compact system. Yet she perseveres, becoming a renowned public speaker on behalf of all the sentenced rebels. When fundraising enables her to undertake an Atlantic crossing, she sails to England in hope of speaking with young Queen Victoria. The writing during this hard, long voyage at nine knots is some of the liveliest in the book. Maria's interactions with fellow passengers, and one in particular during a vulnerable stretch, are convincing.

Brown hits real pace as Maria makes her way through London's Whitehall power corridors. Charmed by the capital's sophisticated culture, her odyssey here to gain an amnesty for the Canadian rebels suffers a lack of her usual progress but gives readers a deeper exploration of colonial and imperial politics of the day. Maria's association with the compassionate Quaker community especially brings her into contact with **Charles Dickens**, **Elizabeth Fry** and other social reformers, offering some relief from her burdens. Ultimately, it is her faith and increasing moments of visionary prescience that sustain her.

Time passes quickly in affairs of state and public interest. By 1841, Maria has dedicated herself to mothering her little girl. With fortune come unanticipated developments. If Maria remains indomitable, Benjamin's blind spots, in contrast, can make him appear self-absorbed; he would benefit from more self-reflection. There's a complex ending. Again, these are real characters with fates that are known. This is a stirring book about early Canada with more than a few echoes for the future.

9781989467794

Trevor Carolan writes from North Vancouver.



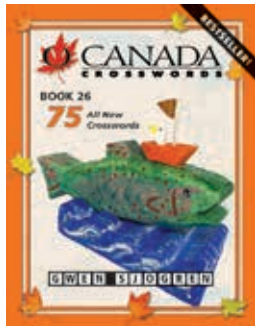
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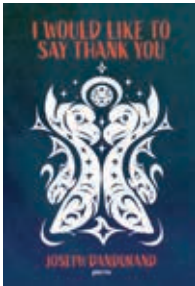
NOVEMBER, NOVEMBER

POEMS

ISABELLA WANG

Written across the span of four Novembers, this collection delivers a send-off to "loved poets" who are no longer with us.

POETRY | \$19.95



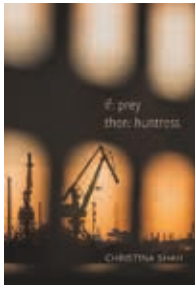
I WOULD LIKE TO SAY
THANK YOU

POEMS

JOSEPH DANDURAND

Building on his legacy as a skilled storyteller, Dandurand continues to write about trauma, love, grief and forgiveness.

POETRY | \$19.95



IF: PREY, THEN: HUNTRESS

POEMS

CHRISTINA SHAH

An eclectic collection of observations and experiences as a woman on the road and out in the field in traditionally male-dominated environments.

POETRY | \$19.95

**The Scramble for the Teenage Dollar:
Creating the Youth Market
in Mid-Century Canada
by Katharine Rollwagen
(UBC Press \$110)**

BY GENE HOMEL

If you are a baby boomer old enough to remember the fashions and fads of the sixties, you might assume that the Canadian market began to cater to teenagers only then. Not so. The sixties teen market had its origins in the 1930s, 40s and 50s according to **Katharine Rollwagen** in **The Scramble for the Teenage Dollar**. In her interesting book, Rollwagen shows the remarkable ability in the middle of the last century of Canadian retailers, advertisers and the mass media to laser focus on teens as a specific, special segment of the market. After all, eight million babies were born in Canada from 1943 to 1964, and a million immigrant children arrived over the same period. Concentrating on this teen market secured young people as a vital part of expanding consumer capitalism. By 1957, a *Maclean's* magazine article on “The Scramble for the Teen-Age Dollar” explained that retailers and advertisers were “out-hustling each other to cash in on the market that just grew up.”

As a veteran of the fifties’ Hula Hoop and Davy Crockett coonskin cap, Rollwagen is on target when she explains that “Canadian retailers and advertisers worked to construct an image of the teenager that would appeal to young people and encourage them to associate consumer goods with their stage of life.”

In this way, Canada’s consumer-oriented society tied us to the market and fixed our identity as commodities and citizens. To this, Rollwagen later warned of the ample evidence “that growing up in a consumer society can be detrimental.” For example, keeping up materially with one’s peers can be negative psychologically, especially for teens from lower-income families. Gender expectations can also be problematic, as can discouraging independence from group-think. Other detriments include environmental waste and poor working conditions overseas in lower-waged countries.

Rollwagen used archives of the T. Eaton Company Limited, the dominant department store of mid-century Canada, which had 48 stores in the 1960s and was the fourth-largest employer in the country. Eaton’s proclaimed itself “The Store for Young Canada.” Rollwagen describes how the store solicited the attention and input of popular, “cool” high school students by approaching the schools themselves. Eaton’s set up what it called the Junior Council for teen girls and the Junior Executive for teen boys to understand teens’ consumer desires and styles and to help with fashion shows.

The “Hi-Spot” in a 1940s store was an area “where you and all the ‘coke crowd’ can gather to gossip about clothes and listen to music.” Teens



Sloppy Joe boxy and long sweaters for teens, 1946.

Magazines also cemented the marriage of teens with the market, especially “co-eds” (high school and college girls). Co-eds could navigate adolescence, including menstruation and acne, with the support of products and images provided by *Chatelaine*, *Canadian Home Journal* and *Mayfair*. With the “right” commodities, a co-ed in and out of the classroom could present herself as attractive and popular. “Go Back a Smarter Girl” referred to fashion, not book learning. Other slogans were more overt in what we consider sexism today: “Don’t get the idea that because you got a first in History you don’t need any lipstick.”

Rollwagen sometimes employs current faddish language in her analyses. The image of the co-ed, she writes, presents “the so-called typical teenager as a white, middle-class, cisgendered, heterosexual student, an image that excluded many Canadian youth.” Apart from class hierarchy, I don’t believe that many youths would be excluded by this description in the 1930s to 1950s in Canada. Of course, working-class young people were just as concerned with fashion and fads, and also had money to spend. Rollwagen also refers to urban Canada—Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and so on— as “settler” societies, as in “white settler femininity.”

Quibbles aside, Rollwagen’s book will appeal to readers interested in fashions, marketing and youth culture, whether or not they played with Hula Hoops.

9780774869881

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

THE COOL KIDS

How Canadian stores and marketers worked with youth from the 1930s to the 1950s to create the teen market.

were groomed to become avid Eaton’s customers as well as paid or volunteer employees—on a gendered basis, of course.

This two-way exchange is an important concept to understanding consumption under capitalism. Fashions were not just a product of dictation by business. Instead, business had its ear cocked to what consumers at the grassroots desired. It was a complex, two-way street.

Some fashions from the grassroots provoked anxiety on the part of marketers and authorities—for example, Sloppy Joe sweaters popular with teen girls and Zoot Suits popular with male youths. The Sloppy Joe was an oversize knit sweater; the zoot suit was a distinctively tailored suit associated with the lower classes or delinquents. Some manufacturers capitalized by producing zoot suits and marketing clothing

with the Sloppy Joe label. These fads from the forties tied into marketers’ dual notions that teens were both reasonable and rational consumers, and immature and irrational fad chasers.

Not surprisingly, marketers emphasized sex appeal to teen girls: “Just listen to ‘em whistle when you go by wearing this outfit,” proclaimed one ad.

Marketers presented teens as ideally slender and their slim-fitting dresses were “plentifully supplied with the lively detail that rates second glances.” Teen males, on the other hand, were to wear suits that denoted preparation for responsibility and business.



Katharine Rollwagen

LANDMARKS

REVIEW



Marquee photographs by Justin Filippone, Joshua Coleman and Benjamin Jackson.



**A Sign of the Times:
The Best of the Penthouse Marquee
by Benjamin Jackson & Aaron Chapman
(Anvil \$30)**

BY BEVERLY CRAMP



Vancouver's historic Penthouse Night Club has had its fair share of pushback over the years—from police raids during its time operating as

an illegal bottle club to being temporarily shut down on Christmas Eve, 1975 and later charged with living off the avails of prostitution.

But it's the Penthouse's marquee with its sassy messages that has been getting attention in recent years, including getting its X account (@ThePenthouse604) suspended last January over letters that spelled out "Forever neighbours, never neighbors." The message highlighted the way Canadians and Americans spell words differently, but it was also around the time US president-elect, **Donald Trump** starting making swipes about Canada becoming the 51st state.

Four years previous, after the January 6, 2021 Capitol riot in Washington, DC, the Penthouse marquee touted its bouncers with: "Better security than the US Capitol."

At a Coldplay concert in July, 2025, a couple was caught embracing on one of the large overhead video screens and singer **Chris Martin** wondered out loud if the couple was having an affair because they had ducked out of view so quickly. It made headlines around the world and the couple's "outing" led to job resignations as the couple worked

SASSY

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Over its 77-year history, the Penthouse Night Club has been known for many things; lately it is getting international attention for its marquee signs.



Benjamin "The Sign Guy" Jackson

together at the same company. The Penthouse quickly responded on its marquee with: "Relax guys, Coldplay isn't here." Someone took a photo of the sign and posted it on social media,

garnering 10,000,000 views by the end of the day, and 22,000,000 views on Instagram by the end of the weekend.

Now there's a book celebrating the Penthouse's special brand of humour,

A Sign of the Times by **Benjamin Jackson** and **Aaron Chapman**, featuring glossy photos of some of the more well-known marquee signs. Many are bawdy, some are political and others are just plain witty. Readers learn that the co-author, Benjamin ("The Sign Guy") Jackson who works as a Penthouse bartender, is also the one who comes up with the jokes and messages. Jackson tells how he finds his ideas and shares some of his personal favourite signs from the past—many of which have been shared millions of times online.

"The whole thing started with me trying to make my friends at work laugh," says Jackson, later adding, "We just wanted to have some fun and get some notice and promo for the club."

"It's okay if people don't know my name, or just call me 'The Sign Guy.' In the early days, on Reddit, they referred to me as 'The Marquee Boy.' I just like making the city laugh through that sign—and that's the point in the end. The sign speaks for itself!"

Cultural historian, Aaron Chapman, says the Penthouse signs have given attention to Vancouver and its local culture as well as the nightclub. "Vancouver doesn't enter the national or global realm of pop culture too often," says Chapman. "Our media is often overshadowed by images from New York or Toronto. We might see movies and TV shows where we recognize our own city street—but Vancouver never plays itself. When we see another of Ben's outrageous or funny signs, online or in the news, we're reminded that the sign is one of us. It's from Vancouver, and from Seymour Street. It's like spotting the face of a friend we know in a crowd of people. That's the Penthouse marquee."

9781772142501

Sparkling under steel toes

if: prey, then: huntress:
poems by Christina Shah
(Nightwood \$19.95)

BY BEVERLY CRAMP

Poetry virtually never pays the bills, but it can reflect the world in which poets work. Such is the case with **Christina Shah** of New Westminster, who spends most of her time on the road, working in industrial sales for an industrial distributor. She makes her way in this male-dominated workplace and writes about what she finds there. “Here’s a woman, ‘a huntress / sparkling under steel toes’” says journeywoman carpenter and fellow poet, **Kate Braid**, adding “who’s not afraid to say it as she sees it, whether that be in a fine restaurant or on a heavy industrial site, admiring gel nails or a jerrycan.” *BC BookWorld* conducted the following interview with Shah.



BC BookWorld: How did you get into heavy industry work?

Christina Shah: How much time do you have? Someone once told me about industrial sales and said, “if you want a man’s pay, you’ve got to do a man’s work.” I put two and two together. Sales is a common off-ramp from the bar and restaurant industry, which is where my work poetry started. I began working for one of the industrial laundries where I had a mix of restaurant and industrial accounts, so I saw that as my entrée into this world. I like being on the road—meeting people, seeing places, learning how things work and helping solve complex problems. I work with a lot of great people (customers, coworkers and suppliers) and I like the paycheck and commissions.

BCBW: When did you start writing?

CS: I tried writing before I could write. As a four-year-old, this involved writing a letter to a girl named Laura who lived on the same street. I wanted a friend to play with. All I could find in the moment were some seed packets and a yellow highlighter in the garage, so I highlighted all the words on the back. Her mom (who’d originally put me up to it) told me that was not good enough. Apparently not owning a play oven and baking set also disqualified me. I suppose this early rejection (and willingness to improvise) prepared me for both my writing and sales careers. I wrote short fiction starting at age ten and into my twenties, but poetry has always been my mainstay, starting at age seven.

BCBW: Describe merging your passions for writing and industrial work. How do these two influences affect your poetic imagery, and did this happen quickly or was it a slow revelation?

CS: It happened quite slowly, over the course of many years. A term I like to use is “wool-

Christina Shah’s poetry reflects the reality of a working life and offers “comfort, humour, connection and a sense of wonder—even in the most ordinary moments.”

gathering.” I see so many things and have many interesting conversations while on the road. I love the contrast of poetic language or sensory descriptions with some of these very utilitarian and spare environments (and even technical terms). I was influenced by the work of the Vancouver Industrial Writers’ Union, and received a lot of encouragement from its founders, **Calvin Wharton** (my former Creative Writing instructor), **Kate Braid** and **Tom Wayman**.

BCBW: There’s a sense of past times, of long ago, in some of your poems (*Britannia Mine, rig veda, noble gas town*). What attracts you to this link to history?

CS: I’m a collector of other people’s stories in addition to my own. I’m fascinated by boom-and-bust stories. There’s also been this insistence in Vancouver of wanting to forget our roots as a forestry and mining town (the “world-class city” refrain). Granted, the world has changed since the bad old days, and as this city has grown, it has necessarily diversified. That said, there was also a lot of colour back then that makes for interesting material.

BCBW: In the middle of *if: prey, then: huntress*, there is a series of “food” poems. What was your inspiration for this?

CS: I love to bake and eat, and food is one of the best ways

to connect with people of all walks of life, whether through homemade gifts or through a shared dining experience (in both personal and professional contexts). Also, when I’m out on the road, I’m foraging/fishing for food (my commissions). Plus, I’m an avid mushroom forager. A recent ethnographic study published some interesting results stemming from some archeological evidence from the Holocene era that questions the notion of traditional gendered divisions of labour (e.g., men being hunters and women being gatherers). Apparently, back in the bad old days, women were skilled big game hunters as well!

BCBW: You visit many subjects in this collection, not just work. How do you choose a subject to focus upon when you begin a poem?

CS: Work is my main squeeze, but I love object poetry, or random urban scenes as well. Those three subjects offer some kind of loose parameters in my mind—gesture drawings that can meet the blank page.

BCBW: In your process of writing, what motivates your writing? How does a poem start?

CS: I’m often motivated by a scene that involves some kind of contrast, whether it’s scenic or emotional. Today it was crimson foliage cascading down some berms on either side of Highway 1 as I headed into the Cassiar Tunnel. It starts with some kind of imagistic and sound collision in my brain, some kind of “quantum leap.”

BCBW: Anything else you want to add?

CS: To me, it’s worthwhile to write about working people and our environments. Most of us spend the majority of our time at work, and poetry that reflects this reality can offer us so much in our day-to-day lives: comfort, humour, connection and a sense of wonder—even in the most ordinary moments and places.

9780889715028



“I’m fascinated by boom-and-bust stories. There’s also been this insistence in Vancouver of wanting to forget our roots as a forestry and mining town (the “world-class city” refrain). That said, there was also a lot of colour back then that makes for interesting material.”

CHRISTINA SHAH

STEVEN KIRBY - SCHWARTZ PHOTO

Hummingbird
by Elaine Ávila
(Talonbooks \$18.95)

BY CAROLINE WOODWARD

As soon as I saw the title of this play, I thought of *Flight of the Hummingbird*, the Haida fable recreated in a beautiful little book published by Greystone Books in 2008, retold and illustrated by the Indigenous artist, **Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas**. The spirit of the hummingbird (and talisman for environmentalists), beloved in so many cultures, lives on to inspire us again in this skillfully layered script by Vancouver-based playwright **Elaine Ávila**.

Written for eight cast members, this drama is ideal for Grades 10-12 and, in fact, it has been performed by a number of Lower Mainland high school theatre classes already. Tackling what could seem like an overwhelming subject for that age group, namely activism around large-scale invasive industrial activity and climate change, Ávila deftly balances the dark and the light, conflict and humour, small yet mighty actions to counteract the soul-crushing belief in “our inevitable destruction,” as dispirited teenagers in pre-production workshops put it.

In less-skilled hands, this could be a dogmatic and downright depressing effort but the playwright who has given us award-winning dramas like *Fado*, *The Ballad of Ginger Goodwin* and *Kitimat*, has created another lively, sophisticated and textured work of art which can be staged in many and varied ways. Productions so far have involved video-game voiceovers, flying puppets aided by bamboo rods and fishing lines, screen projections for rapid-fire series of text messages, drones and, of course, eight live actors amidst a mash-up of visuals, music and voice.



THE PLAY IS SET IN 2021, IN THE MIDST OF the Covid pandemic then well underway as was the TMX pipeline construction through Burnaby. In an inspired leap of imagination, there is a parallel cast of characters coping with the Fraser River gold rush era of the



Art vs. the eve of destruction

Flying puppets, screen projections, drones, music and humour fight the darkness as **Elaine Ávila** gives hope in activism against climate change.

1860s. What connects these seemingly disparate periods of societal upheaval and conflict in BC’s history is the hummingbird.

Did you know that there are no hummingbirds in Africa, Europe or Asia? Or that Europeans used to wear hundreds of dead, skinned hummingbirds on their hats and capes? These

and a great many other fascinating facts are in store for theatregoers such as the legally-bound fact that bulldozers cannot, on public lands in British Columbia, knock down trees with the nests of migrating birds in them. Thus a tiny hummingbird’s nest temporarily halted construction of the TMX pipeline at a whopping cost. I compared this

Hummingbirds: DID YOU KNOW?

- There are no hummingbirds in Africa, Europe or Asia.
- Europeans used to wear hundreds of dead, skinned hummingbirds on their hats and capes.
- Bulldozers are legally-bound , on public lands in BC, to not knock down trees with the nests of migrating birds in them.
- A tiny hummingbird’s nest temporarily halted construction of the TMX pipeline at a whopping cost.

latter-day sensitivity to the building of the first dam on the Peace River right when moose and deer were calving and birds were nesting. So many wild creatures were drowned in this mindless destruction in the early to mid-60s in the North Peace region, not to mention the flooding of an entire Indigenous village. This play examines deforestation and major trenching through a city and a forest in unceded Indigenous territory with many well-informed human witnesses.

I am very impressed by the amount of research, with the Community Nest Finding Network in particular, and the workshopping with students in Burnaby Mountain Secondary School and theatre professionals involved in getting this play up on its feet, quite literally. Originally commissioned by the Robert M. Ledingham School of Theatre, Music and Film in Vancouver, the script was developed at the Banff Playwrights Lab and then at the Caravan Farm Theatre National Playwrights Retreat. The original impetus for the play came from Ávila’s long-time collaborator, **Paul Moniz de Sá**, a sound designer, educator, director and actor who asked her to write about what was going to happen to the land on Burnaby Mountain, near his home. The inaugural script was funded by the Arts Umbrella Fund Development team and later performed by the Arts Umbrella Senior Theatre Troupe as part of their Eco Theatre Project in Vancouver. Part of the acceptance of this inaugural commission was for Ávila to teach theatre workshops to students and, with their teachers, to explore climate change.

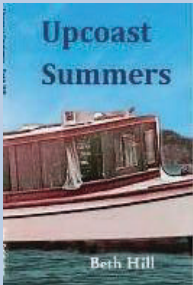
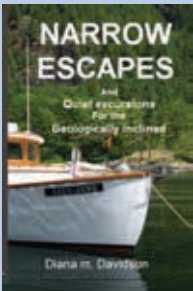
There is an informative foreword by two birders from the Community Nest Finding Network, **Donna Clark** and **Sara Ross**, an introduction by the playwright, a production history and an illuminating afterword by **Chantal Bilodeau**, a Montreal-born, New York-based playwright and translator, and the Artistic Director of the Arts & Climate Initiative. All these “extras” are very useful for drama teachers who may face students distressed about the constant smoke of wildfires, heat domes, atmospheric rivers and the loss of entire species happening in their young lifetimes.

Elaine Ávila has given us a play with great resonance for all ages, especially for the age group which most needs to feel hope and to know they have agency and the power to create positive change in their world.

9781772016529

Caroline Woodward is a New Denver-based writer.

In *Narrow Escapes* an explanation of why the Grizzlies have returned to the lower coast



In *Grizzly* a theory of agricultural excellence of the Shishalh Nation and the significance of its cool burning on forest growth.

AT BOOKSTORES LISTED @ www.inletpublishing.net & from editor@inletpublishing.net & Amazon \$25, except *Dynamite* which is \$23.
From Series: West Coast Stories: Check out Our Website to read excerpts.

A cure for loneliness by cooking

A depressed teen makes meals for the unhoused, talks to a dog and investigates a murder in **John Lekich’s** suspenseful novel.

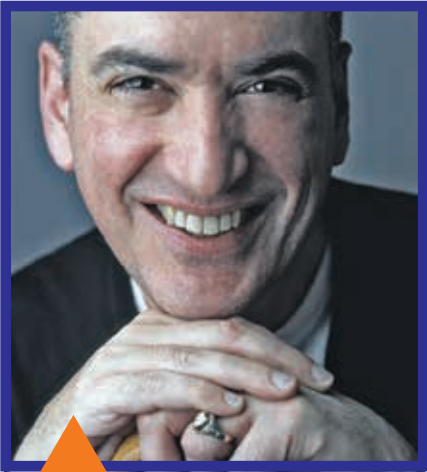
Bark Twice for Murder
by **John Lekich**
(Orca \$10.95)

BY BEVERLY CRAMP

What are the ingredients for a page-turning murder mystery that tackles grief, homelessness and mental illness with a good dose of compassion and, ultimately, optimism?

Journalist and YA author, **John Lekich** does it with a chef’s aplomb by employing a suspenseful plot and believable dialogue in his seventh novel for middle grade readers, **Bark Twice for Murder**. Oh yes, and there’s a lot of food talk thrown in for good measure.

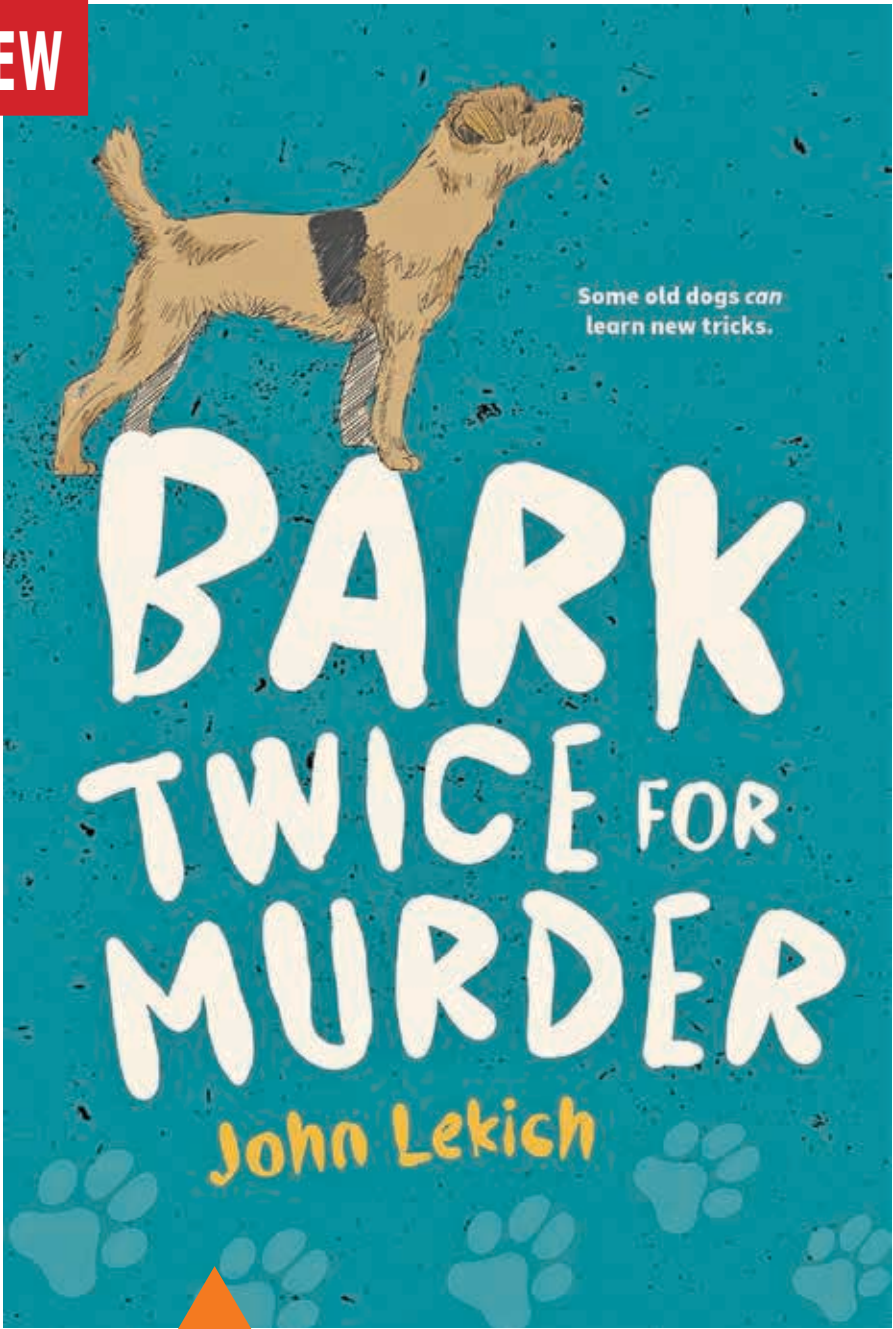
The protagonist, Harry, is fourteen years old and he says in the second sentence of the book, “I love to cook.” While that is a charming trait, it is also a burden because Harry struggles with depression and regularly sees a therapist. When he is feeling anxious, or worries—which is often—he cooks too much. “Before you know it, I’ve made five whole trays of lasagna,” says Harry. Needless to say, his grandmother’s



John Lekich’s debut YA novel, *The Losers’ Club* (Annick), was a finalist for the Governor General’s Literary Award in 2002. He has also co-written two screenplays and lives in Vancouver.

freezer is jam-packed with premade meals.

Harry has lived with his grandmother, Elinor, since his parents died in a plane crash. Fortunately, Elinor is kind and wise. She continues to run the business that Harry’s dad established, a food truck called the Pasta Express, making it even more successful. Soon she is managing several Pasta Express trucks.



Cover art for *Bark Twice for Murder* by John Lekich.

“Harry, it’s okay to feel sorry for yourself,” Elinor says. “But in the end it won’t help anyone, least of all you. And there are people out there who could use a helping hand.”

And that’s how Harry comes to spend a summer cooking for Vancouver’s unhoused. Elinor parks one of the Pasta Express trucks near a homeless shelter so that Harry can make breakfast and lunch for hungry people from the shelter. “I actually look forward to greeting my customers every day,” says Harry. “In fact, I have never met so many people who appreciate my cooking.”

Harry takes a particular liking to one of his customers, Stanley, who, like Harry, is also good with food. Harry learns new cooking techniques

and recipes from Stanley and a bond deepens between the two.

Stanley has two best friends, one of which is a dog named Waffles. Stanley seems to talk to the dog a lot—so much that it bothers Harry, who thinks Stanley should see his therapist. Harry learns that Stanley used to be the chef for a mobster. That’s how Stanley became unhoused: he went on the run to get away from the gang and its leader.

Shockingly, Stanley is murdered. Then Waffles starts talking to Harry and, more startling, Harry can hear him and Waffles understands Harry.

An unlikely detective duo, Harry and Waffles set out to find Stanley’s killer in what is a magical and strangely believable story.

9781459841482

KIDLIT

Of mice & mysteries & faraway creatures

husband-and-wife team **Tara Hungerford** and **Eric Hogan** created *The Gumboot Kids*, an award-winning CBC program for children aged 3–7, starring two felt toy mice (Scout and Daisy—the gumboot kids) who solve nature mysteries. In 2019 Hungerford and Hogan spun off a series of books called *The Gumboot Kids Nature Mysteries* to inspire children to go outside and discover the natural world for themselves. The 11th and 12th titles, published this Autumn, are **The Case of the Tagalong Twin** (Firefly \$6.95)



Cover art from *The Case of the Tagalong Twin* by Tara Hungerford and Eric Hogan.

about the science of shadows; and **The Case of the Buried Treasure** (Firefly \$6.95) when Scout’s missing bulbs reveal a springtime surprise that teaches the gumboot kids about plant life cycles.

Tagalong: 9780228105701; Buried: 9780228105688



After years of writing novels and short stories about spiritual renewal and personal transformation, Victoria-based **RP Mickelson** was inspired by his seven grandchildren to write children’s stories about the wonder of nature. He has released two picture books for ages 3–7, **A Children’s Book of Stories** (Filidh \$20.98) that includes three short stories of local gardens and the beach; and **One Day with Big and Little Elly** (Filidh \$18.95) about elephants, monkeys, parrots, tigers and other faraway creatures. Both titles are illustrated by **Penny E. Ross**.

A Children’s Book: 9781998307111; One Day: 9781998307081

WHO'S WHO BRITISH COLUMBIA



Alison Acheson

A IS FOR ACHESON

In her 12th book, the novel **Blue Hours** (Freehand \$24.95), **Alison Acheson** writes about fatherhood, grief, unanswerable questions and the small, cherished moments that make up life. Keith is a stay-at-home dad in support of his successful photographer wife. Her unexpected death leaves Keith and his son Charlie in bits. When Keith takes Charlie on a road trip, it's a journey that does not end when they return home—Keith must deal with revelations that complicate his grief. Life's magical and mystical moments emerge. Is it enough to heal, though?

9781990601897

B IS FOR BOLEN



Dennis E. Bolen

It's 1967 (the year Canada turned 100) and fifteen-year-old Robin Wallenco illegally drives an unlawfully-obtained 1942 Chevy pickup from Saskatchewan to British Columbia in **Dennis E. Bolen's** novel, **Amaranthine Chevrolet** (Dundurn \$25.99). Robin runs into all sorts of predicaments and characters as he steers clear of authority figures and main roads (he doesn't have a driver's license). He travels over prairie ruts and cross-field tracks "away from the main across rough pasture of cow-pie and sedge" and later crosses mountainous BC via forestry service roads and backcountry trails. A longer review is on BC-BookLook.com.

9781459754775

Tony Correia

C IS FOR CORREIA

The issue of book banning in school libraries is the subject of **Tony Correia's** middle-grade title, **Checked Out** (Orca \$10.95). Thirteen-year-old Seth, a queer kid, is a budding social influencer with 100,000 followers. When he is persuaded by another gay teen to promote library books with LGBTQ+ content at their school, they encounter a conservative classmate determined to undermine their efforts. It doesn't help that Seth worries about the effect of his activism on his YouTube channel. Correia is the author of four hi-lo (high interest, accessible reading) novels for young adults. His first full-length YA novel, a historical novel for queer youth, is *One Summer in Vancouver* (Lorimer, 2017).

9781459842458

D IS FOR DAVID

David Giblin worked for 15 years as a salmon fishing guide at Stuart Island, roughly forty miles east of Campbell River—a fertile environment for fishing stories. His first collection of semi-autobiographical tales was *The Codfish Dream: Chronicles of a West Coast Fishing Guide* (Heritage, 2018), which was a finalist in the Cedric Literary Awards in the creative non-fiction category (for emerging senior authors over 50). He followed up with *Gilly the Ghillie: More Chronicles of a West Coast Fishing Guide* (Heritage, 2020) with new offbeat tales of coastal adventures, colourful locals, privileged tourists and elusive fish. His last book in the series is out: **The Trophy Hunter: The Final Chronicles of a West Coast Fishing Guide** (Heritage House \$24.95).

9781772035551

E IS FOR ELLIS

A Snake and a Feathered Bird (This-tledown \$24.95), **Angie Ellis'** debut novel, tells a coming-of-age story set on Vancouver Island in 1975. Adopted at the age of three, Ben spends his early years in a lush rain forest. At nine, he is taken on a trip that will alter his life completely. The story follows Ben into young adulthood, his physical journey from wilderness to city and his personal journey. Ellis' stories have won the



David Giblin

Masters Review Short Story Award, Best of the Net and Best Small Fictions; two were longlisted for the CBC Short Story Prize. She lives in the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island.

9781771872812

F IS FOR FRENCH

Whitney French imagines a fractured future where memory is currency, migration is survival and love is as dangerous as it is vital in her speculative fiction novel, **Syncopation** (Wolsak & Wynn \$24). After a decades-long earthquake and acid rain have ravaged the Earth, two young women—descended from space pirates and forged by hardship—set out on a journey that tests their values in a world built from the ruins of the past. French is a multidisciplinary artist, educator and co-founder of Hush Harbour—the only Black queer feminist press in Canada. She has led over 500 workshops at schools, prisons and First Nations communities, using language, activism and imagination to challenge boundaries and build community.

9781998408283



Angie Ellis



Leslie Gentile

G IS FOR GENTILE

Leslie Gentile, of Scottish, Tuscarora and Coast Salish ancestry, introduced an Indigenous girl named Truly, who lives in a trailer park, in *Elvis, Me, and the Lemonade Stand Summer* (Cormorant, 2021). It won the Jean Little First-Novel Award and the City of Victoria Children's Book Prize. In the sequel, **Elvis, Me, and the Postcard Winter** (Cormorant \$14.95) set in 1979, Truly has a secondhand guitar from Elvis and has finally found a home—with her puppy Gracie, new friends and Andy El, the Salish elder who took her in.

But when her estranged mother returns asking for a second chance, Truly must choose between the safety of her new life and the possibility of forgiveness.

9781770867666



Whitney French



Keiko Honda teaches the aesthetics of co-creation and arts-based problem-solving at SFU's Continuing Studies.

H IS FOR HONDA

After being paralyzed by a rare autoimmune disease, **Keiko Honda** left her career in epidemiology to rebuild her life as an artist and memoirist. Her debut, **Hidden Flowers: A Memoir** (Heritage House \$26.95) blends essays, memory and watercolour paintings to transform grief into creativity. She draws from personal journals and letters written to her daughter to blend her meditations on motherhood, illness, belonging and the Japanese concept of impermanence. *Hidden Flowers* is as much a visual experience as it is a written one, capturing what Honda describes as “the invisible glow of life.”

9781772035605



R. Bruce Macdonald

I IS FOR IDLER

Many expressions and words, such as “idler” originated from the ancient, closed worlds of sailors who were often away from shore for months or even years at a time. “Holy mackerel,” “abandon ship,” “getting hitched” and “slush fund” all became part of the common vernacular when sailors brought these terms back home with them. Sailor **R. Bruce Macdonald** has compiled a dictionary of these terms in **Sound Like a Sailor: The Book of Nautical Expressions** (Harbour \$24.95). An “idler” is generally known as a lazy person. Sailors initially used it for those crew members who worked all day and didn’t have to participate in night watches.

9781998526239

J IS FOR JOSEPH

Bob Joseph’s first book, *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act* (Page Two, 2018) became a bestseller and covers the problems of the oppressive *Indian Act* enacted in 1876. He explained how to get rid of the *Indian Act* and what self-government could look like. Now he builds on those ideas with **21 Things You Need to Know**



Bob Joseph

About Indigenous Self-Government (Page Two \$24.95). “I will take you on a journey from the early days when Indigenous Peoples were self-governing, self-determining, and self-reliant, to the dark days under the *Indian Act*, and to what the future can look like as Indigenous Nations return to self-government, self-determination, and self-reliance,” he says.

9781774586273

K IS FOR KALLA



Daniel Kalla

Vancouver-based ER physician and best-selling author **Daniel Kalla** blends his medical thriller format with the dangers of artificial intelligence (AI) in **The Deepest Fake** (Simon & Schuster \$25.99). A tech CEO battling ALS becomes the victim of a deepfake conspiracy, pushing her to question reality as her digital identity spirals out of control. The novel confronts the hazards of AI-generated misinformation and asks how we define truth when anyone’s face and voice can be faked. Kalla’s previous Shanghai trilogy explored the Jewish refugee crisis during World War Two and several of his past novels have been optioned for film.

9781668032534

L IS FOR LORNE



Lorne Daniel

After decades away from poetry, **Lorne Daniel** returns with **What Is Broken Binds Us** (University of Calgary Press \$18.99), a collection that reckons with rupture—of body, family and inherited identity. Daniel sifts through personal injury, estrangement, addiction and the revelation of enslavement in his family’s past. But for every fracture, he offers a kind of quiet resilience. Daniel has published four volumes of poetry and co-edited the literary journal *The Canada Goose*. He later shifted to journalism, founding the ReThink Red Deer and Greater Victoria Placemaking Network. Now based in Victoria, he continues to explore the relationship between people and place.

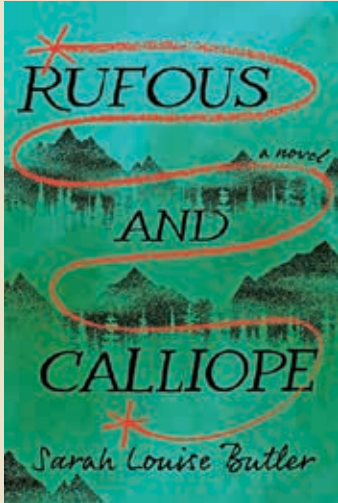
9781773856391

Archaeology ~ Fiction
Memoir ~ Fish



Once Upon This Land: Archaeology in British Columbia and the Stories It Tells by Robert Muckle (UBC Press \$34.95)

Rich in ancient sites, the lure of BC archaeology is what it can reveal about humans who lived here as far back as 15,000 years ago when the last ice age ebbed. Now this plain-language book brings these stories to a general readership. You don’t need a PhD to understand the layers of history in our soil and underwater shipwrecks.

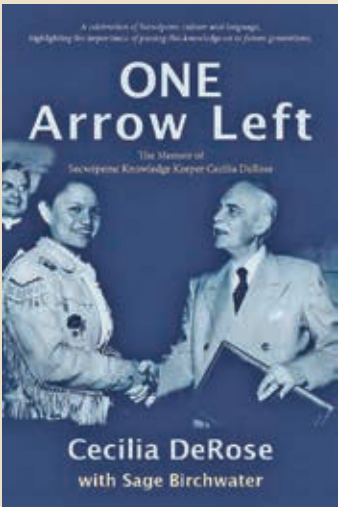


Rufous and Calliope by Sarah Louise Butler (D&M \$24.95)

West Kootenay author Sarah Louise Butler’s second novel features runaway children, a secret treehouse, a man with memory issues, family connections and ecological grief. Butler calls her books “Geographic Fiction:” novels so deeply rooted in a specific landscape that they couldn’t take place anywhere else. Will appeal to lovers of nature, adventure novels and intimate stories.

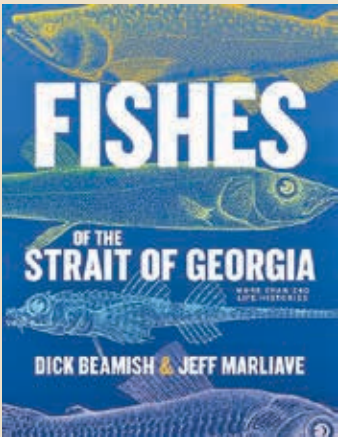
One Arrow Left: The Memoir of Secwepemc Knowledge Keeper Cecilia DeRose by Cecilia DeRose with Sage Birchwater (Caitlin \$26)

Born in 1935, Secwepemc knowledge keeper, Cecilia Dick DeRose shares her stories from her early days in Esk’et, BC on her family’s property where she only spoke Secwepemctsin, to the devastation of St. Joseph’s Residential School, hanging onto her Indigenous identity and later raising her family and passing on her traditional language and knowledge.



Fishes of the Strait of Georgia: More than 240 Life Histories by Dick Beamish and Jeff Marliave (Harbour \$80)

The rich water habitat in the Strait of Georgia, one of the most important in the world, is home to over 50 species. Fish scientists Dick Beamish and Jeff Marliave have spent their entire professional lives studying this bountiful sea and it shows in this essential reference book for homes, classrooms and labs.



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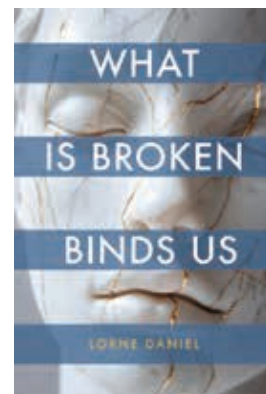
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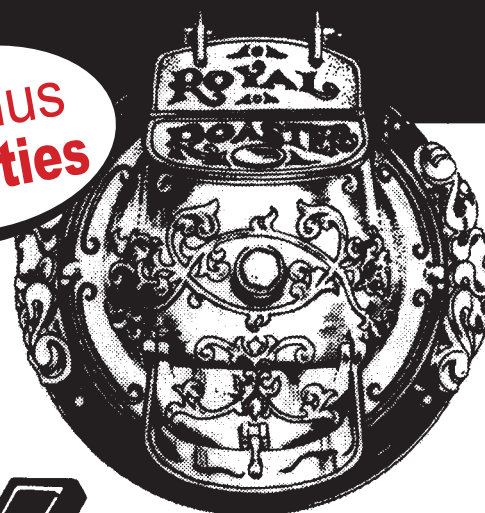
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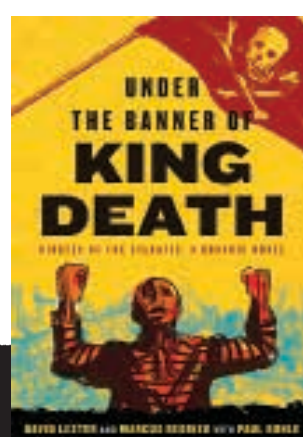
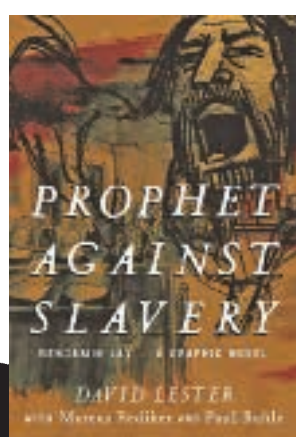
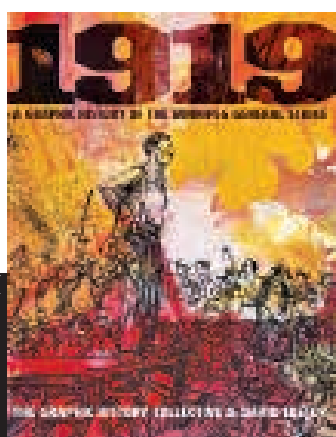
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by Marcus Rediker & David Lester with Paul Buhle

1919:

A Graphic History of the Winnipeg General Strike
(Between The Lines, 2019)

by The Graphic History Collective & David Lester

Prophet Against Slavery:

Benjamin Lay, A Graphic Novel (Beacon Press, 2021)
by Marcus Rediker & David Lester with Paul Buhle

Under the Banner of King Death:

Pirates of the Atlantic, A Graphic Novel
(Beacon Press, 2023) by Marcus Rediker
& David Lester with Paul Buhle

WHO'S WHO

BRITISH COLUMBIA

M IS FOR MA

In **Troubling Criminology** (Between the Lines Books \$34.95), professors **Michael Ma** (UVic) and **Mike Larsen** (Kwantlen Polytechnic) approach the discipline of criminology as a series of open conversations rather than a fixed canon of knowledge. They examine how crime, justice and deviance are socially constructed. Power, inequality and systemic oppression are factors, too. Before entering academia, Ma was involved in community-based anti-racism and harm reduction work. He co-founded The Social Justice Centre and has worked with organizations including the Chinese Canadian National Council and the Vancouver District Labour Council.

9781771136853



Michael Ma

N IS FOR NWOBOSI

Oga Nwobosi and **Christina Myers** met in a postpartum support group where they were exposed to emotions ranging from joy to grief. Many new mothers experience depression, anxiety and other impacts but often don't seek help. Becoming friends, Nwobosi and Myers have co-edited **Beyond Blue: Stories of Heartbreak, Healing, and Hope in Postpartum Depression** (Caitlin \$26), a collection of stories from 26 mothers telling of an inability to make decisions, paranoia, fear of being a bad parent and even thoughts of self-harm. In addition to illuminating the often-invisible experiences of postpartum mental health, the book offers a life raft of hope and healing to struggling new parents.

9781773861739

O IS FOR O'LEARY



Theresa O'Leary

In our hyper-connected world, it's hard to imagine when news and information weren't always at our fingertips. Before the telegraph in the mid-1850s, it took weeks for information to reach North America—by ship—from Europe and vice versa. With the telegraph, information arrived in minutes by wire, changing everything—particularly newsgathering—as told in **Theresa O'Leary's Race to the Cape: The Daring News Chase, the Birth of the Associated Press, and the Journalist at the Heart of It All** (Ingenium, \$29.99). O'Leary, a former CBC news reporter focuses on **Daniel Craig** who was behind one of the earliest news-wire services and his legacy of getting fact-based, objective reporting (what a concept).

9781990688577



WENDY LEES PHOTO



PETER MURRAY PHOTO

Christina Myers and Oga Nwobosi, co-editors of *Beyond Blue*.



VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTION

Arnold & Quigley outfielder Tommy Kennedy with team manager Coley Hall, 1945, from *Play Ball!* by Tom Hawthorn.

P IS FOR PORTER



Natalie Porter

Skateboarding librarian, **Natalie Porter** wrote what is believed to be the first academic thesis on women in skateboarding in 2003. Now a columnist for *Closer Skateboarding Magazine* and an advisor to the Smithsonian Museum's skateboarding board, she also founded the Womxn Skateboard History archive to honour the overlooked stories of women and non-binary skaters. In **Girl Gangs, Zines, and Powerslides: A History of Badass Women Skateboarders** (ECW \$26.95), Porter documents the grassroots resistance that shaped the sport's inclusive evolution. Through interviews, zines and personal reflection, she celebrates the global communities who refused to stay invisible, despite an industry that rarely made space for them.

9781770417922

Q IS FOR QUIGLEY

Arnold & Quigley were a Vancouver businessmen duo in the late 1920s who sponsored a semi-professional baseball team to promote their haberdashery. A&Q played against

such teams as Home Gas and United Distillers Ltd. in Vancouver's Senior League. The league's stars once played an exhibition game featuring **Babe Ruth** as an opponent—one of the many anecdotes included in *BC Book-World* contributor, **Tom Hawthorn's Play Ball! The Amazing Stories and Captivating Characters Who Have Made Baseball a Winning Ticket in Vancouver for Over 100 Years** (Echo Storytelling \$30). Commissioned by the former owners of the Vancouver Canadians, the illustrated history of baseball in Vancouver is available from the BC Sports Hall of Fame.

9781987900231



Alena Rainsberry

R IS FOR RAINSBERRY

Introduced to whitewater kayaking in 2021, **Alena Rainsberry**, who identifies as queer, quickly pursued rivers from the Ecuadorian jungle to the Indian Himalayas, embracing both the challenges of rapids and the cultural connections she formed along the way. Then she became an advocate for women's representation in outdoor sports, fostering community and encouraging others to explore new experiences. Rainsberry has co-edited **Flow: Women's Counternarratives from Rivers, Rock, and Sky** (RMB \$40), a book of stories and photos from women around the world engaged in adventure sports. Rainsberry continues to live and kayak in the Pacific Northwest.

9781771607063

S IS FOR SCOTT



Scott McIntyre

Scott McIntyre left his stamp on BC's literary landscape for more than 50 years. Starting at McClelland & Stewart in 1967, he went on to cofound Douglas & McIntyre in 1970, publishing over 2,000 titles and nearly 900 authors—from **Wayson Choy** and **Farley Mowat** to **Richard Wagamese** and **Douglas Coupland**. In his memoir **A Precarious Enterprise: Making a Life in Canadian Publishing** (ECW Press \$39.95), McIntyre tells of Canadian publishing's postwar renaissance, weaving in anecdotes from the writers, editors and risk-takers who transformed a fledgling industry into a cultural force.

9781770418196



Umar Turaki

T IS FOR TURAKI

In **Umar Turaki's** novel, **Every Drop of Blood Is Red** (Little A \$24.99), lives intertwine in Jos, Nigeria, when Dareng Pamson, a family man seeking redemption, hires Murmula Denge, a young woman on a vengeful quest, at his auto repair shop. Dareng strives to rebuild trust with his pregnant wife after infidelity, while Murmula seeks revenge for the pain his greed caused her family. As Murmula's plans for destruction deepen, both confront their pasts, faith and unexpected connections. A mysterious turning point forces them to reckon with justice, closure and the transformative power of their intertwined fates.

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WHO'S WHO BC



Mary Fox created the *Legacy Project Apprentice Program* for potters.

U IS FOR UNCEDED

The word “unceded” is often heard during land acknowledgments in BC although the history behind unceded territory is less well known. **George Abbott's *Unceded: Understanding British Columbia's Colonial Past and Why It Matters Now*** (UBC Press \$29.95) is a good primer on the BC government's history of injustice toward First Nations. “The simple truth is that when Europeans arrived in the so-called New World, they did not find an empty land but rather a land with millions of Indigenous people who already owned and occupied their homelands,” says **Steven Point**, Grand Chief of the Stó:lō and BC's first Indigenous Lieutenant-Governor in the foreword. 9780774881166



George Abbott

V IS FOR VINCE

In ***Power Metal: The Race for Resources that Will Shape the Future*** (Riverhead \$32), Vancouver-based journalist **Vince Beiser** examines the paradox at the core of our technological age: the same lithium, cobalt and copper that enable the Internet and renewable energy are driving environmental havoc and human suffering. From Nigerian e-waste salvagers risking their lives to billionaires eyeing the ocean floor for exploitation, Beiser exposes the hidden costs of the green transition and the scramble for critical minerals. *Power Metal* was a finalist for the 2025 Balsillie Prize. 9780593541708

W IS FOR WASSERMAN

UBC emeritus professor of English and Theatre, **Jerry Wasserman**, known for his work in theatre, acting and teaching, is also enamoured of African American blues music. His title, ***Life Could Be a Dream: African American Blues, R&B, Gospel and Doo Wop, 1946-1956*** (McFarland \$49.95) is about a musical period that has “drifted into relative obscurity,” he says. Yet it was a time when emerging civil rights were beginning to transform Black lives. Wasserman shows how this “new music” was a prism for viewing a particular period of 20th century African American life. 9781476697116



Yong Nan Kim

X IS FOR FOX

Renowned potter **Mary Fox** shares her knowledge of glazing in ***Developing Glazes: Low-Fire Reduction and Oxidation*** (Harbour \$44.95), a guide that encourages ceramic artists to experiment. Rather than relying on readymade glazes, Fox invites potters to explore the use of minerals and clay slips, offering step-by-step instructions and techniques for low-temperature firing. A self-taught exploratory potter, Fox moved with her family to BC in 1966. She has worked exclusively as an artist since then, developing an international reputation for her sculptural ceramic vessels. 9781998526253

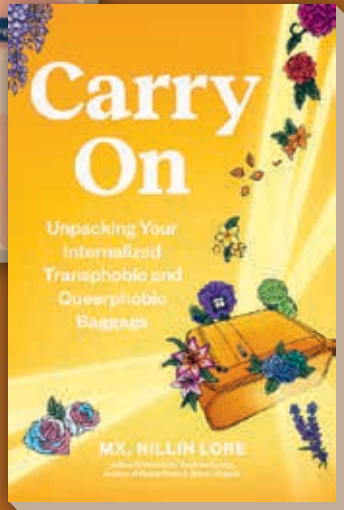
Y IS FOR YONG

In ***Off the Map: Vancouver Writers with Lived Experience of Mental Health Issues*** (Bell Press Books \$22), edited by **Betsy Warland, Seema Shah** and **Kate Bird, Yong Nan Kim** contributes the poem “Dreaming with Ghosts,” in which her ancestral memory collides with loss: “*days before grandmother passed away / i dream with my grandmother / her face glows like the full moon / she says i'm not dead yet!*” These lines echo through Kim's broader body of work—poetry and ghost stories inspired by her Korean heritage and childhood in Paraguay and Brazil. When she's not writing, she hikes, snowshoes or learns new dance moves. 9781738716791

Z IS FOR ZULAYKHA

Who was Zulaykha? She was a mythical married woman who longed for her husband's servant and who appears throughout the Abrahamic lineage of religions (Judaism, Islam and Christianity). Vancouver poet and cultural critic, **Rahat Kurd** examines the possibilities of Zulaykha found in other poets' work throughout the ages in her second full-length collection of poetry, ***The Book of Z*** (Talonbooks \$19.95). “To feel the gift of understanding what someone wrote five or seven centuries ago, continually energizes my writing in English,” Kurd said in a poetics statement. Kurd's first book of poetry, *Cosmophilia* (Talonbooks, 2015), considers the influence of Islamic art and Kashmiri craft practices on her lived experience and outlook. 9781772016895

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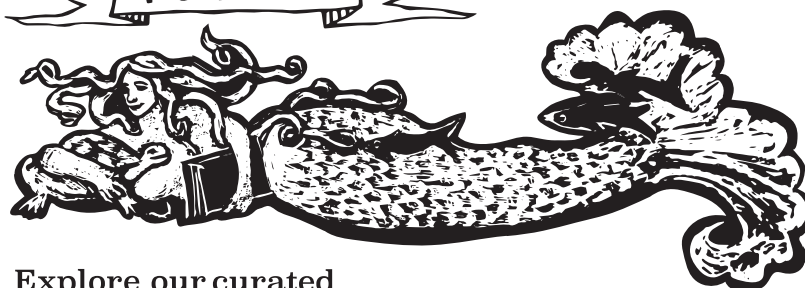
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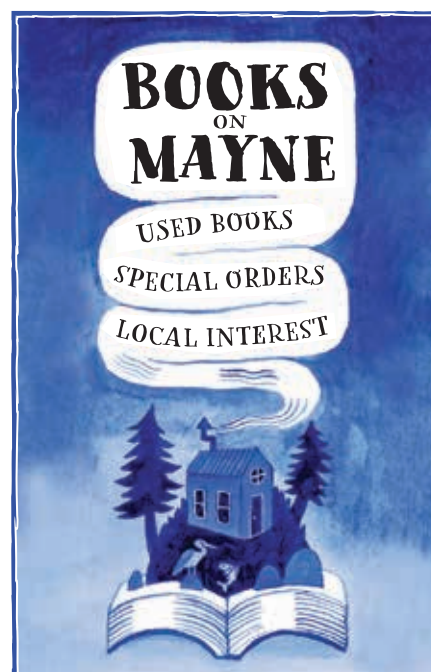
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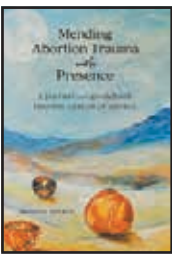
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SOCIAL PROGRESS

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LETTERS

Fighting like a partisan

I love each and every issue of *BC BookWorld* and order practically every book you review from the library. Loved the comics review [Summer issue, "Rising up against fascism"] and wanted to share a related experience at work. I'm a social worker—with a 97-year-old partisan vet from Ukraine. I have the documents confirming he helped the Soviets as a teenager. He is recognized in Ukraine as a vet in the war against the Nazis. In Canada we recognize Red Army vets as Allied Veterans. But not this guy because, as Veterans Affairs Canada told me, "The Soviets used partisans. This gentleman was a partisan and as such we do not recognize partisans as Veterans." Because the Cold War lives on and communists are the bad guys. Needless to say. I'm fighting this one to the bitter end — like a partisan.

John Richmond
XWĒSĀM (Roberts Creek)



A good time for anti-fascist books

Taking the ferry to Victoria to interview an artist for *Fuddle Duddle*, a political comic magazine that came out over 50 years ago. Really nice to see a review I wrote in *BC BookWorld* [Summer issue, "Rising up against fascism"] on the ferry. It's been a while since I had written anything like this. It was during a personally rough time, so it was nice to have something to focus on and make me think. I took a look at the fantastic **Partisans** collection by Raymond Tyler and Paul Buhle. It's a good time for a book like that, given our current global political climate.

Robin McConnell
New Westminster

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Chloe Haigh, working at her parents' bookstore Salt Spring Books.

How to buy a bookstore

Chloe Haigh has heard many times the story of how **Salt Spring Books** came into her family's possession in 2000. "My parents (**Adina Hildebrandt** and **Andrew Haigh**) were looking for a house on Salt Spring Island when Mom was pregnant with my brother (**Aidan**), 25 years ago," says Chloe. The real estate agent had shown them many houses on the island but none were quite right. Then one morning, while getting ready to take Adina and Andrew out for yet another drive around the island looking at houses, the agent said off the cuff, "Do you want to buy a bookstore?" Adina and Andrew both leapt out of their chairs. "Yes!" they said in unison.

"So that is how Mom and Dad bought a bookstore before they bought a house," Chloe says, adding, "And it's the same age as my brother." Happy 25th year, Salt Spring Books.

OBIT Norma Charles (1945 – 2025)

Children's author, **Norma Charles** was born in St. Boniface, Manitoba on May 10, 1945 of French and Irish descent. As a child she was an avid reader who used to drag her younger brother to the library on Saturdays. Charles came to British Columbia with her parents at the age of nine. That automobile trip, taken over 70 years ago, is the basis for several of Charles' books including *Sophie Sea to Sea* (Beach Holme, 1999) that recounts the adventures of Sophie and her four brothers as they accompany their parents by car from Montreal to Maillardville in 1949. The French-Canadian family struggles to speak English without a telltale accent. Charles attended UBC and later became a teacher. When her own four children were in school, Charles began to write, inspired by her students and by her "front row seat on the dramas of children's daily lives." Her first published book, *See You Later Alligator* (Scholastic, 1974/1991/1994), has reportedly sold over 100,000 copies. Charles went on to publish 22 books in total. She was nominated for a Sheila A. Egoff Children's Literature Prize for *The Accomplice* (Raincoast, 2001) and received the Chocolate Lily Award for *All the Way to Mexico* (Raincoast, 2003). Norma Charles died on August 19, 2025.

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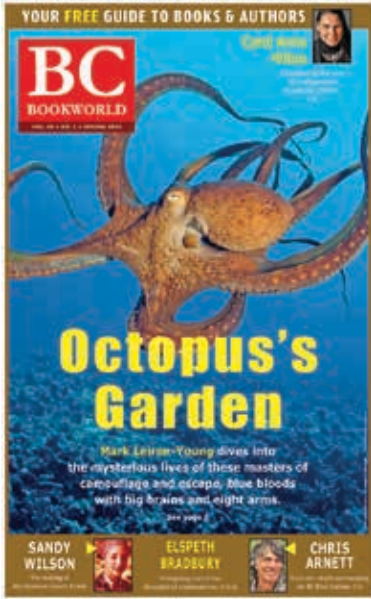
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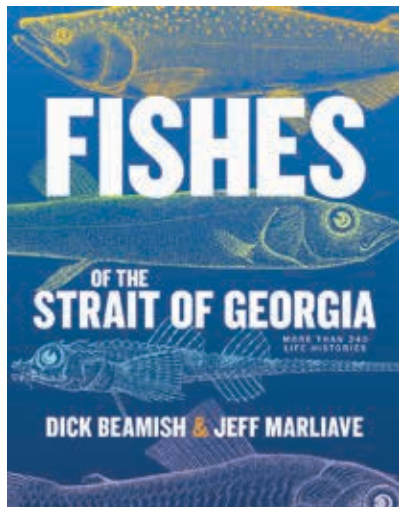


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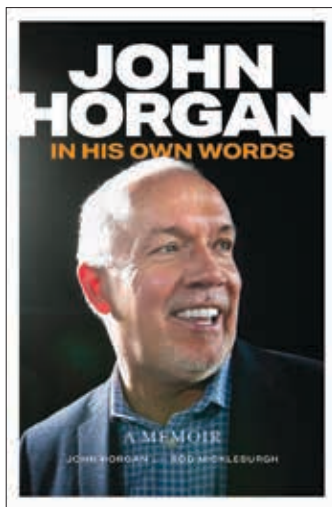
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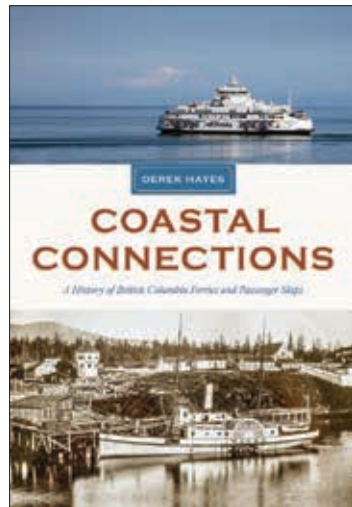


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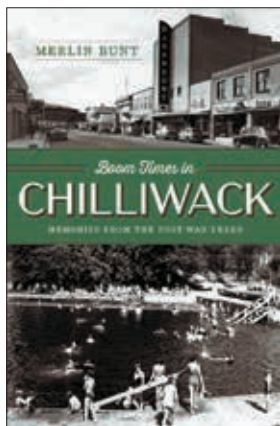


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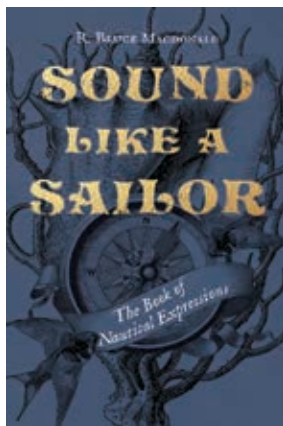
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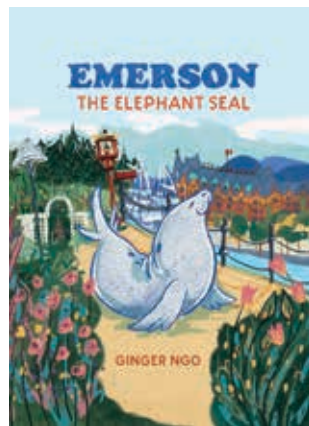
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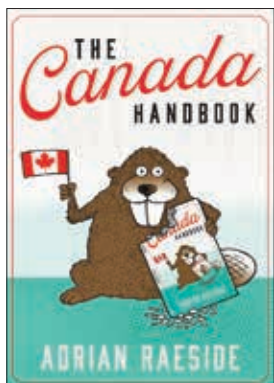


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