

# Prairie books NOW



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Inuit publishers and writers*

## Getting to know the Gabriel Dumont Institute

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Roland Vandal's  
*Off the Ropes*  
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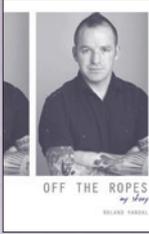
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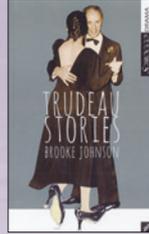
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### Off the Ropes My Story Roland Vandal

Having been sexually abused by a boxing coach as a teen, and not knowing who to trust or tell, Roland Vandal found solace in drugs and alcohol. His battle with addiction, and his unwillingness to speak of his demons, led to failed relationships, bad choices, crime, trouble with the law, and PTSD. After a night of partying with friends in 2001, Roland found himself alone in a Winnipeg hotel and attempted suicide. When he woke plagued by guilt and shame at what he had done, he knew he had hit bottom.

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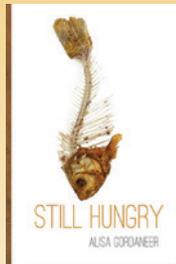


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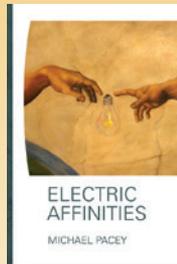


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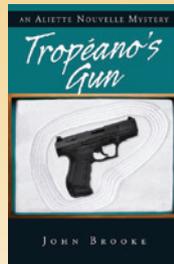


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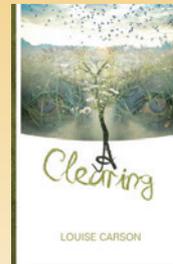


### Executor Louise Carson

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MYSTERY

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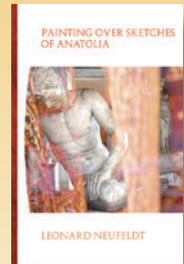


### A Clearing Louise Carson

*A Clearing* is a meditation of the everyday — the joys and the losses observed in the natural world mirroring human experience. It explores how letting go of the things that bog us down can lead to a place where sun shines through the shadows.

POETRY

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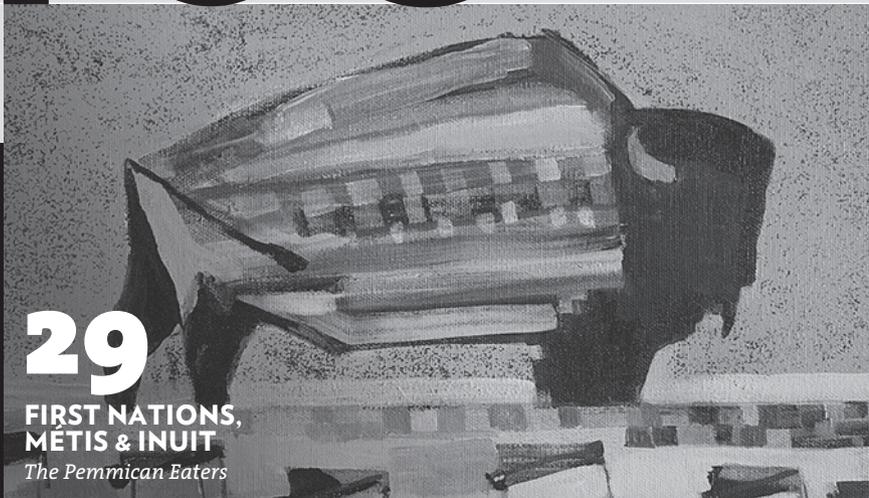
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# TOC

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SPRING/SUMMER  
2015



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**FIRST NATIONS,  
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# Growth SPURT

*Cook's second novel set under the blazing South African sun*

by Margaret Goldik

**A**ward winning poet and novelist Méira Cook brings poetic sensitivity and language to her second novel, *Nightwatching*. “The summer Ruthie turned eleven was a strange one,” begins the novel, and the reader is immediately struck by the heat and sounds of the African summer, and by the unhappiness of Ruthie, who is leaving her childhood behind.

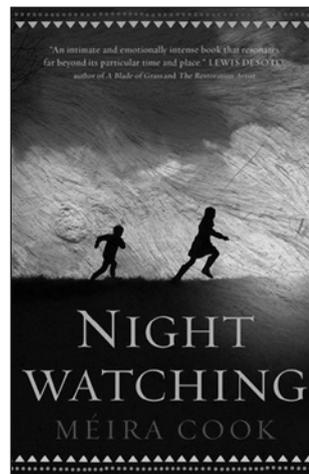
Ruthie is lonely and mercurial, at the mercy of her hormones. When she can't sleep at night, she rides around the small town on her bicycle, perfecting the art of spying on people. There is another watcher, Bettina Foley, Ruthie's widowed music teacher, whose despondency in the overpowering heat keeps her wakeful.

Ruthie is trailed by eight-year-old Siphso. Siphso adores Ruthie, and is led by her into difficult situations because he never says no, even to her most outrageous schemes. Cook says it's interesting to write from the point of view of children.

“They understand some things instinctively and shrewdly, and others not at all. But the gap between their lack of empathy or worldly knowledge and the reader's more sophisticated understanding is a creatively charged place,” she says.

Miriam, housekeeper to Ruthie's widowed father, has cared for the girl since infancy, but – like other black housekeepers – has had to send her own children away to be cared for by others.

“Miriam has a fatalism that is not passive but realistic,” says Cook. “Miriam has three children of her own and she doesn't really want to be a



maternal substitute for either Ruthie or Siphso despite her good-natured fondness for them. In effect both Ruthie and Siphso are motherless children.”

Miriam and Bettina Foley are finely drawn characters. Cook remarks that they “are meant to be flawed and particular – and hopefully interesting – women rather than products of their time. Although race and class always define a person, fiction has to find a way of writing character that is not based only on social structure but also on the surprise of personality.”

Cook worked as a journalist in South Africa until she moved to Canada. When asked if she would consider setting a novel in Canada, she replied, “My last book of poetry, *A Walker in the City*, was set in Winnipeg. I think of that collection as a homecoming, a way of placing myself, by way of a poetic narrator, in the city that has been my adopted home for 13 years.”

Cook also recently released a poetry collection, *Monologue Dogs* (Brick Books), which presents a wide range of voices, timespans, and characters. But in her fiction, the voices are more specific in place and time.

“So far, when I've written fiction, the voices I've heard and the scenes I've imagined have been South African ones,” Cook says. “I don't mean to imply that I'm taking dictation from the universe – nothing as grand as that.

“But writing is a compulsion and since I feel passionate about Canadian writing, I'm hopeful that my fiction will take me north.”



## NIGHTWATCHING

Méira Cook  
HarperCollins Publisher  
\$19.99 pb, 288 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-44343-386-0

## MONOLOGUE DOGS

Méira Cook  
Brick Books  
\$20.00 pb, 80 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-926829-91-3

# TOTALLY EXPOSED

*Short story collection embraces tragedy and comedy*

by Quentin Mills-Fenn

In *Lessons from a Nude Man*, Donna Besel's debut collection of stories, her characters spend a lot of time on the roads and in the small towns of rural Manitoba and northern Ontario.

"I know the setting well," Besel says. "I grew up in Whiteshell Provincial Park, at West Hawk Lake, right next to the Ontario border. Our family visited Kenora for doctors, dentists, and shopping. As kids, we spent our spare time roaming around in the bush, swimming, hiking, skiing, camping, and canoeing.

I have never heard any other writer identify as boreal, but it certainly suits me."

Besel's stories move from the comic to the tragic, something she shares with writers she admires. In the title story, for example, a widow struggling to keep her family together has an awkward encounter with a dedicated, even evangelical, nudist.

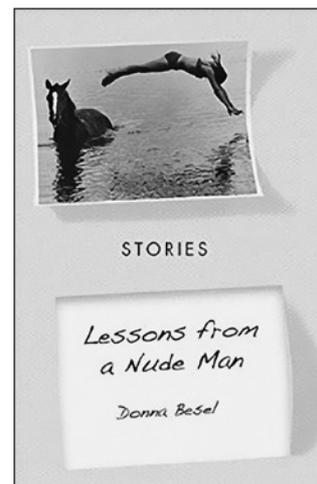
"I love the combination of sad and funny," she says. "I find that life often throws both dynamics at us, sometimes within minutes of each other. For example, you joke at a funeral and can't stop laughing because

you feel like crying. I enjoy Miriam Toews's writing; she combines both with great skill. I think of the term 'bathos,' the idea that things can go far beyond pathos to become hilarious."

Besel describes her stories as simple but deep. "I know they are accessible because I've read some of the stories to elementary and high school students, and they 'get' them."

Besel points out that her publisher, Hagios Press, published *Lessons from a Nude Man* through its Strike Fire New Author Series. She learned a lot with the publication of this, her first book.

"It takes a lot longer than expected," she says. "People have been asking for months (years?) to see my book. When I say it isn't finished, they tell me about their friend who got one published in



a week. When I explain the difference between self-publishing and publisher-publishing, they look at me like I'm selling them personal care products via a pyramid scheme.

"It takes a lot more work than people think," she adds. Before Hagios offered to publish her book, she slogged along for 12 years, getting known as a writer and learning to write at an acceptable level.

"Finally, through years of work, I learned that I write for the writing," Besel says. "It makes me happy. When I'm not writing, I feel restless and slothful. Publishing is exciting, but writing is what matters most." ✎

*"I think of the term 'bathos,' the idea that things can go far beyond pathos to become hilarious."*

## LESSONS FROM A NUDE MAN

Donna Besel  
Hagios Press  
\$18.95 pb, 232 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-9267103-0-3

"I only lived in cities, Winnipeg and Brandon, during university," she adds. During the summers while at university, she worked for the Parks Branch, and after graduating, she taught in Powerview. She lived in Lac du Bonnet for 35 years, and now lives in St. Georges, on the Winnipeg River.

In 2012, when *Prairie Fire Magazine* put out a call for writers who lived in or wrote about the boreal forest, Besel qualified on both counts. Earlier versions of several stories in *Lessons from a Nude Man* appeared in the literary journal.

"*Prairie Fire's* interest in my writing helped to clarify that I am indeed a boreal writer. Manitoba has writers who identify as Prairie, Mennonite, urban, Indigenous, or some other designation.

# A NOT SO DEAD END JOB

*Novelist comes of age alongside his protagonist*

by Paula E. Kirman

**B**rendan is 20 years old and has been pumping gas for three years at a gas station in his hometown of Oakbank, just outside of Winnipeg. He is good at his job – so good that he worries that if nothing changes in his life quickly, he’ll be stuck dealing with an endless parade of idiot customers. To shake things up, he takes a writing course at a local university, where he meets an older woman.

So begins the coming-of-age story at the heart of *The Guy Who Pumps Your Gas Hates You*, Sean Trinder’s debut novel.

“My inspiration for the novel was the time I spent in my late teens and early twenties working in gas stations,” says Trinder, who is a graduate of Red River College’s Creative Communications program and has also worked as a news cameraman and an electrician’s apprentice.

Trinder explains that when you work with the general public, you gather many stories and anecdotes. “Most customers you deal with are nice and pleasant, but every once in a while someone will come in and be really rude or ridiculous, and those are the interactions you remember.”

Trinder wrote the novel over the course of about a year, from 2012 into 2013, taking some time from it to do his electrician apprenticeship at Red River College.

Getting the novel published so quickly by a legitimate publisher

was the ultimate thrill for Trinder.

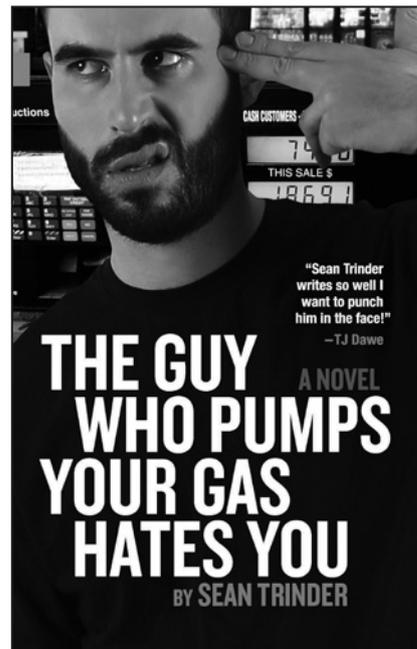
“I’ve been writing with the intent of getting published since I was 18, and I’ve been self-publishing my writing since 2010, so it really feels now like things are happening and that a career as a professional writer is possible,” he says.

Similarly, Brendan’s life picks up over the course of the novel and writing for a living looks like it could happen for him, too.

“Much of the main character’s life in *The Guy Who Pumps Your Gas* mirrors my life when I was in my early twenties, when all I wanted was to escape the gas station jobs and become a professional novelist. So it seems fitting that this is the first work of mine that will be published by a legitimate press. I’m just so happy. It’s a dream come true.”

Trinder’s literary influences are varied, but his style is definitely his own.

“I read a lot of Stephen King and Dean Koontz as a teenager,” he says.



## THE GUY WHO PUMPS YOUR GAS HATES YOU

Sean Trinder  
NeWest Press  
\$19.95 pb, 256 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-927063-78-1

*“Every once in a while someone will come in and be really rude or ridiculous.”*

“As an adult, I’ve read a lot of Chuck Palahniuk. I don’t feel that my style of writing is similar to those guys, but they were definitely inspiring to me. Also, I read a lot of Noam Chomsky. Of course, my writing is nothing like his, but I do mention him a few times in my book. Out of pure respect.”

Trinder hopes that readers are entertained by the novel, because “my number one goal with writing is to be funny and entertaining. Also, if people relate to the main character’s workplace angst and laugh at their own not-so-great work lives, then that would be good, too.”

# Absolute absurdity

*Collection shows life is a bit of a circus*

by Bev Sandell Greenberg

**R**eplete with quirky characters, the stories in Rhonda Douglas's first short story collection range from poignant to disturbing to laugh-out-loud funny.



"For the most part, the stories come from little pieces of the world that I loved and wanted to explore further," says the author of *Welcome to the Circus*.

The title of the book is taken from one of the stories, "Welcome to the Circus, Sooky Baby," where a young woman going through a difficult

time meets a circus elephant and finds a few moments of respite for herself in that encounter.

According to Douglas, the story title reflects the outlook portrayed throughout the collection. "All the stories have this sense to them, that life's all a bit of a circus, and we should take our moments of sanctuary where we can find them."

Douglas previously published *Some Days I Think I Know Things: The Cassandra Poems* and placed first in short fiction contests sponsored by *Prairie Fire*, *The Malahat Review*, and *Room*. Her prizewinning stories are included in this collection.

Douglas considers herself a Newfoundland writer, for she was born and raised there. "I've now spent more time living out of the province than in it, but I was moulded and made there, and it informs how I think in some fairly profound ways," she says. "Good ways, I think – the parts of myself I am proudest of definitely have a

'Made in Newfoundland' stamp on them."

But the Prairies have been good to her, with Prairie-based publishers taking on her poetry (Winnipeg's Signature Editions) and short fiction (Calgary's Freehand Books) debut collections. And the Prairie sensibility is not as far from the Newfoundland one as the geographic distance might imply.

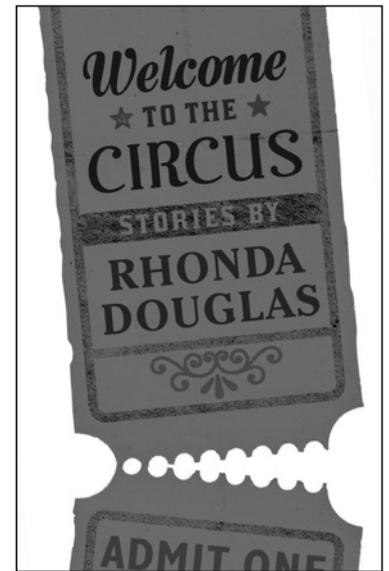
Douglas delights in poking fun at certain cultural phenomena. "Monday Night at the Porn Emporium" recounts the story of a soft porn business gone awry, and "Sounds of Our Paleolithic Past" focuses on a gentle romance between a woman and a Neanderthal at the Royal Tyrell Museum in Drumheller, Alberta.

"I honestly think that the world's gone completely around the freakin' bend," states Douglas. "Satire feels like a sane reaction. It lets me play with the world to see what I think is really going on underneath the surface."

This sense of play extends to formal innovations. "I went through a period in my writing where I would have a crazy idea and just wanted to see if the short story form could hold it," she says. "How far can you bend the form and still have the reader enter the story easily and have a meaningful encounter?" For example, the final story about the tenderness of a woman's last days is structured as an oratorio because the character loves choral music.

Douglas hopes that readers will fall a little bit in love with some of the characters and have a good time.

"When people put the book down," she says, "I hope they feel slightly more tender about the swirling, nutso world and our fellow circus performers." 🎪



**WELCOME TO THE CIRCUS:**

**Stories**

Rhonda Douglas

Freehand Books

\$21.95 pb, 188 pages

ISBN: 978-1-55481-228-8

***"I honestly think that the world's gone completely around the freakin' bend."***

# MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

*Debut novel riffs on entropy and chaos*

by Margaret Goldik

In award-winning author W. Mark Giles's debut novel, *Seep*, the reader is taken on a challenging and mesmerizing exploration of what he calls "geographic self," where one's sense of self is "inherently interdependent with one's habitation of space."

## SEEP

W. Mark Giles  
Anvil Press  
\$20.00 pb, 224 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-77214-012-5

Giles says that in some ways the project began when he found himself thinking of Prairie grain elevators. "There was and still is a kind of handwringing over their disappearance. And I thought about these towns and this history as a history of place. I was struck by the thought that while some folks sought to preserve the grain elevator as a symbol of an essential Canadian history and experience, the First Nations and Métis might see the grain elevator as a symbol of conquest and dispossession."

Born in Saskatchewan, reared in Edmonton, now living in Calgary, Giles has his own finely tuned sense of place.

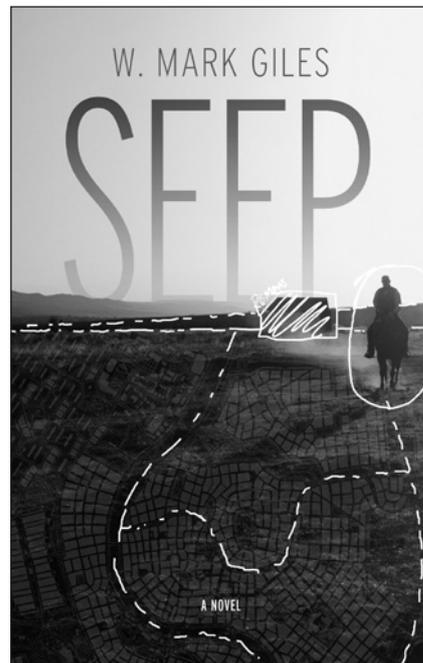
"For me, place is social – a geographic space becomes 'place'

when we start to tell stories about it. And these stories accumulate, and importantly are continually rewritten and sometimes even erased."

The place in Giles's novel is Seep, a company town, dying for decades but now being reinvented as a resort development. Dwight Eliot, who had been born under the bleachers of Seep's baseball field as a riot emptied the dugout, had left Seep decades before. Now middle-aged, with two failed marriages behind him, he finds himself laid off from his job as archivist. Then one day he sees the house that he grew up in go by on a flatbed truck. As Seep is being developed, the original houses are torn down or relocated.

He heads over to what is left of the town to walk the baseball field again, where he meets Amy, an old friend, now a security guard for the development consortium. Amy has a child by Dwight's brother Darcy. Dwight hasn't seen his brother in a decade, not since he ran off with Dwight's fiancée.

Over the years Dwight has been researching the fabulous story of his birth, talking to old-timers, finding newspaper articles and ephemera: he has collected an archive of the time. But things are not necessarily what they seem. As Dwight digs into the past, his and Seep's stories are reinvented in mythological fashion, so it is difficult to sort the true from the false. According to Giles, "Whatever really happened isn't necessarily mythic, but



the myth seems more meaningful than the reality."

Darcy arrives on Dwight's doorstep, all chaos and appetite. The brothers speak only superficially, avoiding any mention of the blood ritual that binds them. Giles says, "I think part of one's coping strategies can be a reluctance to peek under the surface. We practise a kind of mythmaking about families, or where we are from, or actions we have taken. These myths can create confusion or despair, or even pain – whether we look behind them or not.

"And yet once one begins to unravel these myths, one can also alleviate at least some of the suffering and make progress toward wholeness." 🌿

*"First Nations and Métis might see the grain elevator as a symbol of conquest and dispossession."*

# Meeting in the middle (world)

*Faith meets sci-fi in new anthology*

by Ian Goodwillie

The challenge of combining science fiction and faith into a cohesive concept is not an easy one. Many have tried, and many have failed. But the newest edition of the long-running speculative fiction anthology, *Tesseracts*, asked authors to find a way to make that combination inventive, engaging, and magical.

Edited by Liana Kerzner and Jerome Stueart, *Wrestling with Gods: Tesseracts Eighteen* tackles technology, society, higher powers, spirituality, and how it all fits together. Sounds easy, right? According to Stueart, there was an expectation that this might be a difficult topic for potential contributors to tackle, in part due to how science fiction and religion tend to view each other.

***“It was the fact that there was a risk of being ‘psyched out’ by taboos.”***

“While science fiction and fantasy have tackled faith before, we knew that it was difficult to write about faith to begin with, much less as fiction, or as science fiction or fantasy. We also knew that faith and science have been feuding families in the past – and we all had assumptions about each other,” he says.

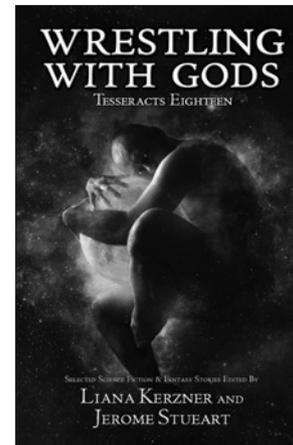
Taking it a step further, Liana Kerzner points out that those past associations between science fiction and religion run deep. “Religion is wired into sci-fi and fantasy – *Star Wars*’ the Force, for instance, is a

pseudo-religious concept. So I don’t think the concept itself was any more challenging than another, technically. It was the fact that there was a risk of being ‘psyched out’ by taboos.”

Like the iterations that came before it, *Tesseracts Eighteen* contains submissions from some amazing contributors, both established and new. Robert J. Sawyer, Derwin Mak, Janet K. Nicholson, and David Jón Fuller are just a few of the writers who supplied their work to this impressive anthology. Kerzner was especially impressed by the contributions they received. “I truly believe that some previously published writers submitted their best work to date in this collection,” she says.

But the editing process was difficult, not only due to the number of submissions but also the quality of them. As Stueart said, difficult choices had to be made. “Reading more than 200 [stories] was long, yes, but having to admit that one story was slightly better than another and that you couldn’t take them all? Painful.”

Work has already begun for the 19th and 20th *Tesseracts* anthologies. When you add in *Tesseracts Q*, that’s 21 volumes in this series. And its continuation serves an important purpose, according to Stueart: “I



## WRESTLING WITH GODS: *Tesseracts Eighteen*

Edited by Liana Kerzner and Jerome Stueart

EDGE Science Fiction and Fantasy Publishing

\$15.95 pb, 280 pages

ISBN: 978-1-77053-068-3

think *Tesseracts* inspires Canadian-affiliated writers to write stories. Other anthologies collect stories that have been previously published, and that’s wonderful, but *Tesseracts* is about sparking new writing. It’s mostly concerned with representing Canadian writing – today – in as broad a sense as possible – speculative fiction (sometimes poems).”

As you can imagine given the subject matter, the stories feel like they come from a personal place. They resonate with the reader as they probably did with the writer, and that goes back to the duo that edited the volume. Kerzner lays it out quite clearly: “Jerome and I are both people of faith, so we wanted the stories to be insider perspectives on the struggle everyone has with their chosen religion.” 🌿



## MORE FICTION AND SHORT FICTION

### SHORT FICTION

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#### *BRUNCH WITH THE JACKALS*

Don McLellan

Darkly comical neo-noir tales tell of questionable morality and the seedy underside of contemporary urban life, complete with twisting plotlines, seedy villains, and anti-heroes hovering on the boundary between dark and light.

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#### *DADDY LENIN AND OTHER STORIES*

Guy Vanderhaeghe

The nine stories in Vanderhaeghe's first collection of short fiction in over 20 years fulfill readers' high expectations – protagonists young and older, in settings past and present, rural and urban, discover deep truths about the human condition in ways that resonate and inspire.

(McClelland & Stewart, \$29.95 hc, 272 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7710-9914-4)

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#### *ENTROPIC*

R.W. Gray

This collection of stories takes readers to where the beautiful, strange, and surreal all meet, and characters – couples, the lovelorn, a resourceful massage therapist – are launched into a new reality, sometimes harmonious, sometimes violent.

(NeWest Press, \$18.95 pb, 218 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927063-86-6)

---

#### *THE LITTLE WASHER OF SORROWS*

Katherine Fawcett

This collection of smart, inventive, and funny stories embraces a world of freaks, fables, and folklore, as it explores the messy “what-ifs?” of life and the ever-present paradox of free will.

(ThistleDown, \$18.95 pb, 208 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77187-049-8)

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#### *STREET SYMPHONY*

Rachel Wyatt

These stories, told with piercing wit and sardonic humanity, are about people, seniors and others, sidelined and dismissed, who refuse to go gently into that good night.

(Coteau, \$18.95 pb, 224 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55050-618-1)

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#### *WHAT CAN'T BE UNDONE*

dee Hobsbawn-Smith

In this debut collection of gritty short fiction anchored in the complexities of life in the vast Western Canadian landscape, protagonists struggle to navigate the troubles common everywhere, from homelessness to domestic violence.

(ThistleDown, \$18.95 pb, 280 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927068-89-2)

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### NOVELS/NOVELLAS

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#### *A BEAUTY*

Connie Gault

Set in the dusty 1930s, this novel follows Elena Huhtala, a young beauty abandoned by her father, as she drives off with a stranger in his gold Lincoln convertible. As they pass through small Prairie towns they, and the unforgettable locals they encounter, discover the meaning of home and belonging.

(McClelland & Stewart, \$29.95 hc, 328 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7710-3655-2)

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#### *CLOSE TO HUGH*

Marina Endicott

Endicott returns to modern life in her latest work of fiction, giving insightful portrayals of two generations – 50ish Hugh and his friends, and the sons and daughters of his friends about to graduate from high school – all on the verge of transformation.

(Doubleday, \$32.95 hc, 492 pages, ISBN: 978-0-385-67860-5)

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#### *FAMOUS LAST MEALS*

Richard Cumyn

This trio of contemporary novellas are about politics, literary jealousy, and two couples who re-enact the last meals of famous people who died before the age of 39.

(Enfield & Wizenty, \$19.95 pb, 208 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927855-17-1)

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#### *THE GALLERY OF LOST SPECIES*

Nina Berkhout

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#### *GRACELESSLAND*

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(ThistleDown, \$19.95 pb, 240 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77187-062-7)

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#### *THINGS YOU'VE INHERITED FROM YOUR MOTHER*

Hollie Adams

In this debut novel, middle-aged Carrie grieves the loss of her mother to ovarian cancer by planning to write a hilarious self-help book while drinking lots of red wine and driving away everyone close to her.

(NeWest, \$19.95 pb, 158 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927063-83-5)

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#### *ZOO AND CROWBAR*

David Zieroth

The Wind has blown across the world and killed all the people, except for Zoo, who wanders his town and explores his new situation in writing, a situation that includes hallucinating, making a new canine friend, visiting with the ghost of his ex-wife, and awaiting what he feels is the inevitable.

(Guernica, \$18.00 pb, 114 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55071-936-9)

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### GENRE

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#### *EXPIRATION DATE*

Edited by Nancy Kilpatrick

This anthology includes 25 original stories by such writers as Kelley Armstrong, Paul Kane, and Steve Vernon, stories that explore our possibly expiring future in big events like the extinction of species and the melting of glaciers, which threaten the ecosystems of our planet.

(EDGE, \$14.95 pb, 336 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77053-062-1)

### THE FIRST CANDLE

Eric B. Swanson

Martin Longbow, minstrel in a post-apocalyptic village, must gather with allies both physically and spiritually and enlist the aid of the mighty Cherubim and Seraphim to combat a demon prince and his legion of demons. (Trafford, \$16.95 pb, 270 pages, ISBN: 978-1-49073-376-0)

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The long-awaited sequel to the best-selling *The Secret Book of Grazia dei Rossi* is a sweeping historical romance set in the court of Suleiman the Magnificent in sixteenth-century Istanbul, a place of forbidden love, adventure, and danger. (Anansi, \$19.95 pb, 496 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77089-892-9)

### SEEING THE LIGHT

E. C. Bell

This paranormal mystery introduces readers to Marie

Jenner, amateur sleuth and ghost communicator. Marie finally gets a job with potential, only to meet Farley Hewitt, a ghost with attitude who is more interested in investigating his death than in moving on to the next plane of existence.

(Tyche Books, \$16.95 pb, 378 pages, ISBN: 978-1-928025-08-5)

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(McClelland & Stewart, \$29.95 hc, 320 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7710-2400

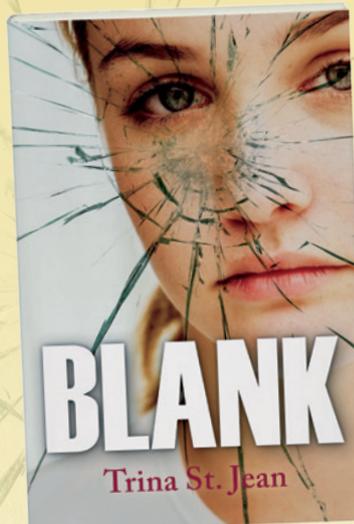
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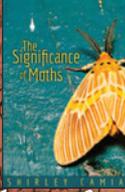
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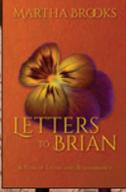
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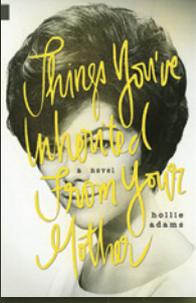
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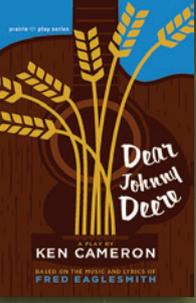
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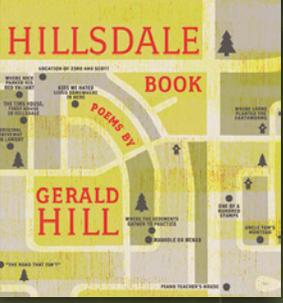
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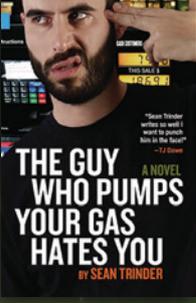
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# ON THE HERIZON

## *New book documents feminist struggle in Canada*

by Paula E. Kirman

Today's women in Canada – and society in general – owe much to the activist women of the past. *About Canada: Women's Rights* documents the feminist struggle, from gender roles in First Nations societies before the colonization of Canada by European settlers, through to women's demands for the right to vote, attend university, and divorce, to the fight for child protection laws, wage equality, and better working conditions.

Author Penni Mitchell was inspired by what she says is the largely unknown history of women in Canada.

"Many people have heard of Nellie McClung or Laura Secord, but not a lot of people know that the first female newspaper publisher in Canada was Mary Ann Shadd, a Black woman who came to Canada from the US to aid the settlement of former slaves in

the Windsor area. This was in 1850 or so. And she was also a supporter of female suffrage – very much ahead of her time!" says Mitchell.

In fact, women have been instrumental in the area of social justice for more than 100 years. But history is biased and women's contributions are usually forgotten.

"So Tommy Douglas is reverentially called the Father of Medicare, but what about Annie Gale of Calgary who was lobbying for municipal hospitals in 1915?" asks Mitchell.

Many women were involved in key moments in our history, but they don't often get the credit because their stories aren't what are taught in classrooms.

"And why is that? It's unfair, it's inaccurate, and it's a national disgrace," says Mitchell, who has been the managing editor of *Herizons*, a feminist magazine, for 22 years.

Working on the book was a side project for the past three years, fuelled by inspiration.

"I was inspired over and over again as I read about these women's lives," she says. Lives like that of Emily Howard Stowe, the first female physician to practise in Canada, who also started the first women's organization devoted to women's equality in Canada, the Toronto Women's Literary Society, in 1876, and helped set up the first women's medical college in Canada.

And with gender equality still an issue in contemporary society, *About*



### **ABOUT CANADA:** *Women's Rights*

Penni Mitchell  
Fernwood Publishing  
\$17.95 pb, 136 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-552667-37-8

*Canada: Women's Rights* provides enough background for readers to understand that the struggles faced today are in many ways similar to those that have already been faced by women.

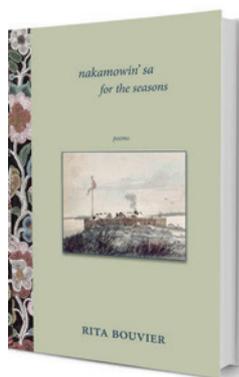
"I think that every generation of girls and women faces unique hurdles in terms of gender equality, but all of those obstacles have the same purpose: to make girls and women feel less than. Right now, the sexual objectification of girls in the media seems way more intense in some ways than it was 30 years ago. So girls and women have 'rights' – thanks to the work of feminists – but this means people dismiss feminism as passé. Yet girls and women are still judged based on their attractiveness, their sexual desirability," Mitchell explains.

"This idea that women must meet impossible gendered, sexist standards in order to be taken seriously, to matter, has to be taken down in order for equality to have any social currency. Every generation of women must fight double standards in order to inch us further forward." ✍

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# IN THE SHADOWS

*Book tells the story of English immigration to Canada*

by Margaret Anne Fehr

**I**nvisible Immigrants: *The English in Canada since 1945*, co-authored by Marilyn Barber, adjunct research history professor at Carleton University, and Dr. Murray Watson, honorary research fellow at the University of Dundee in Scotland, was written to fill in a hitherto under-examined gap in Canada's immigration story.

## INVISIBLE IMMIGRANTS: *The English in Canada since 1945*

Marilyn Barber and Murray Watson  
University of Manitoba Press  
\$27.95 pb, 288 pages  
with illustrations, bibliography, index  
ISBN: 978-0-88755-777-4



COLIN TIMM

“We both think that the development of modern Canada owes much to the many communities of immigrants who settled here. It is strangely paradoxical that the largest (and certainly a very significant) group of immigrants has received little published attention from scholars,” says Barber.

This gap exists not only in Canadian studies. “The Canadian situation seems part of a wider conundrum in that the English diaspora until recently has been largely neglected by academics throughout the world,” she says. “There are many studies about the Irish, the Scots, Italians, Jews,

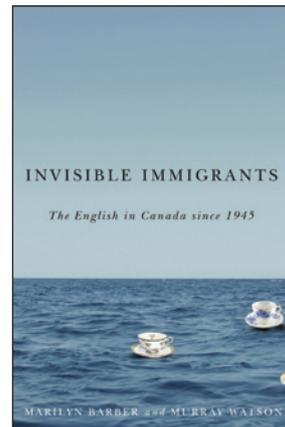
Japanese, and others, but inexplicably few about the English who have formed one of the largest diaspora groups of all time.”

Filled with facts, graphs, and statistics, the book is leavened with oral history reminiscences of post-Second World War British immigrants that address their experiences and memories, capturing a part of an intimate history that would most certainly have vanished because it is not preserved in archival records.

Barber notes that unlike other immigrant groups, the post-war English, with a very few exceptions, did not form an English cluster or community. “They tended to live and work among Canadian-born people and other immigrants. They tended not to belong to English ethnic organizations, which are few and far between, and did not try to preserve traditions identified as English.

“Although they might know a relative or friend in Canada when they emigrated, they usually came as a nuclear family or as single people. They did not form part of extended family or chain migration. They effectively merged into Canadian society – hence our title *Invisible Immigrants*.”

The book took two years to write after three years of conducting research, says Barber. “We sought help from a number of organizations to identify potential interviewees, including CBC Radio, the British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa, the Ontario Jaguar Owners Association, local newspapers, Alternative Old Pocklingtonians, and the Ottawa English Country Dance Club.”



*“They effectively merged into Canadian society – hence our title Invisible Immigrants.”*

They were also given access to transcripts of interviews conducted earlier by Professor Jim Hammerton and used other interviews conducted at Pier 21. “The vast majority of potential interviewees agreed to be interviewed most willingly,” she says.

The book is intended for a wide range of readership. For the academic community, the book contributes to an understanding of immigration history and transnationalism, oral history, and the history of Canadian society and identity.

“We have taken care to write the book to be accessible, informative, and engaging for general readers interested in history, the immigrant experience, and a changing Canadian society,” says Barber.

“The census tells us that there are over 6,500,000 people claiming English origins currently living in Canada, including over half a million immigrants of English birth. Our book has been written for these people, as well as other Canadians interested in the development of modern Canada.”

# Lovingly remembered

*Memoir a tale of love, obligation and family values*

by Paula E. Kirman

**B**reaking up with a long-term partner is rarely easy. When a crisis becomes part of the equation, things become even more complicated. This is the situation Calgary writer Lynette Loeppky found herself in when she planned to end her eight-year relationship with her partner Cecile. While Loeppky was planning her exit, Cecile fell seriously ill, and Loeppky instead became Cecile's sole caregiver.



*Cease: A Memoir of Love, Loss and Desire*, Loeppky's first book, tells of this relationship and how she chose to stay. The book started in the aftermath of Cecile's death. Loeppky says she processes experience by writing. "So it was only natural that after Cecile died, I would try to make some sense of what had happened by writing my way

through the thoughts and emotions."

"I was also beginning to feel as though my memories of Cecile were fading," she says, "and I wanted a way to preserve them."

She gradually crafted her writing into a narrative that would appeal to a wider audience.

"It wasn't until several years after her death, after I had gained the benefit of time and distance, that I was able to see the experience as a story of complexity and intensity with a number of different threads and a depth of emotional resonance. I could see that if I was willing to be honest, it was a story worth telling," says Loeppky.

She didn't think seriously about publishing until much later, at a point when the experience was no longer so raw. "When I read *Cease* now, I can see the person that I was then, in that relationship and in that time," she says, "but I have moved beyond that. I've grown into the next evolution of me."

A work of creative non-fiction, *Cease* presented challenges as Loeppky emotionally confronted the subject matter in writing.

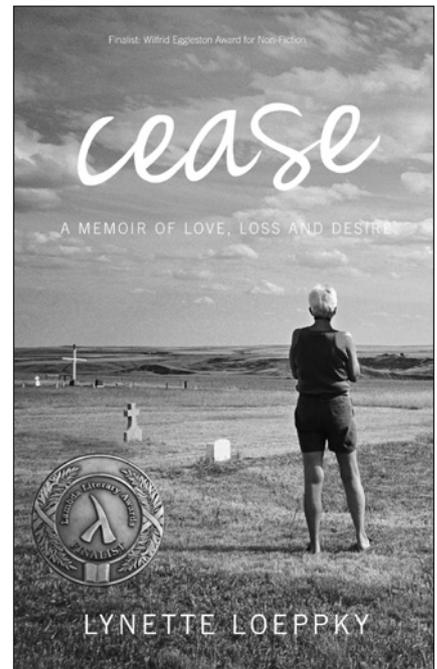
"The biggest challenge for me was to be honest – what I really thought, what I really felt – and lay it all out on the page," she says.

"There were many ways in which I hadn't been completely honest with Cec when we were together. I didn't often lie outright, but I withheld from her quite a bit." Loeppky knew that if her account of their relationship was going to ring true at all, she couldn't withhold.

"It felt strange, in a way, to be so open on the page, also about Cec, when I hadn't offered her the same honesty and when she wasn't around to respond or speak for herself," she says.

Although it is not difficult to anticipate how the story ends, *Cease* remains a fascinating read that provokes questions about relationships, caregiving, and "family values" in Alberta. "I hope that readers will find themselves immersed in the story, find themselves living right in the midst of the experience with Cec and me, a part of our lives, emotionally engaged," says Loeppky.

"I hope it's one of those books that they can't put down, that even though they know how it ends, they don't want it to end." 🌿



## CEASE:

### *A Memoir of Love, Loss and Desire*

Lynette Loeppky

Oolichan Books

\$22.95 pb, 400 pages

ISBN: 978-0-88982-309-9

*"I could see that if I was willing to be honest, it was a story worth telling."*

# The shopper's bible

Author proposes consumerism as a 21st century religion

by Liz Katynski

Jeanne Randolph has a somewhat tongue-in-cheek proposition for us: North Americans should accept that we are only capable of psychological and emotional attachment to objects. Product pantheism is a suitable religion for the 21st century.



## SHOPPING CART PANTHEISM

Jeanne Randolph  
Arbeiter Ring Publishing  
\$14.95 pb, 150 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-894037-61-7

*“Christian phrases and ideas are being used by advertisers to sell, and often to sell a silly product.”*

In defence of this opinion, the Winnipeg author wrote an apologia – defending why she believes worshipping consumer goods is the right way to go for our society, the best thing we can do. The result is her latest book, *Shopping Cart Pantheism*.

“I consider it might be good to just give up and worship objects, just relax. It’s a slacker proposition. It’s absolutely absurd,” says the writer and psychiatrist, an art and culture critic who bases her critiques on psychoanalytical theory.

Fascinated by the effects Christianity has had on the western world, Randolph notes

how Christianity has moved from a dominant force in society to a subconscious one. “During the Crusades, we could kill in the name of Christianity. Today we can’t say Christianity will save us from ISIS. But Christianity’s ideas still exist in the back of most people’s minds. You could be an atheist and see all of these references.”

In the book, the narrator travels to Las Vegas and finds many examples of how Christian worship and dogma are transformed into consumer ideology and advertising copy.

For example, the beginning of Christianity was once said to herald a new beginning, a new era of human life. And now an ad promises a new era of hair after a transplant.

“The messages of Christianity are absorbed by advertising and used to sell something as trivial as a toupee,” Randolph says. “This is my discussion of advertising as having taken over where Christian lore has been absorbed and rebroadcast. Christian phrases and ideas are being used by advertisers to sell, and often to sell a silly product.”

People embrace consumer goods as deities, and advertising blends Christian mythology and the remembrances of the subconscious.

While Randolph draws on her background in psychiatry to form her ideas, her writing takes a wider perspective than her clinical practice.

“It’s a very scary business to look at yourself and your life. I believe that conversations help eliminate suffering,” she says. “In my writing, I don’t psychologize human life. Who knows what’s good and bad? My approach is philosophy-based.”

Randolph travelled to Las Vegas to find and photograph imagery to fit her hypothesis, and some of these images are included in the book.

“Las Vegas is an absurd town, an idiotic place for an idiotic proposal. There is no sense of community. It is meant to be a carnival. This book is a verbal carnival.”

Randolph has a dedicated following of intellectuals, artists, academics, and poets who look forward to reading her books. “It is a non-mainstream book, a book that explores unusual ideas. I am pleased to release this book and let it speak for itself,” she says.

“It’s a little, thin book that sticks in your brain.” 🌿



# VOLUNTEERING IS THE NEW BLACK

Author wants more people to spend time with prisoners

by Linda Alberta

Gary Garrison wants you to go to prison. Furthermore, he wants you to enjoy the experience. According to Garrison, volunteer visiting in prison is the ticket to a better life for prisoners craving contact with everyday normalcy. And there's one guarantee – they won't break a coffee date because they have somewhere else to go.

When Garrison isn't trumpeting the benefits of volunteerism, he is advocating the rights of Canadian prisoners. He recounts their unique life stories in his book, *Human on the Inside: Unlocking the Truth about Canada's Prisons*. From prison volunteer to coordinator of the prison visitation program to Edmonton author – Garrison says it has been quite a journey.



*"It's about the importance of making the effort to reach out to somebody who is totally different from themselves."*

"I knew I had something to say and experiences to share that most people wouldn't have access to. But, the book started in 2004 and I didn't start writing it until 2010. It's really been a journey of finding my own voice," says Garrison.

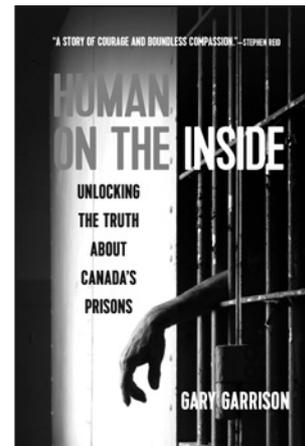
"Basically, the book is designed to talk about the hunger prisoners have for visitors and volunteers. It's about

the importance of making the effort to reach out to somebody who is totally different from themselves."

Garrison adds that it's like soldiers in wartime facing each other and realizing that the enemy is also a human being. Humanizing prisoners through the vehicle of oral history, his book also contains stories about guards, agencies, victims, and volunteers. Stories that Garrison hopes will galvanize readers to new levels of awareness.

"I am hoping the stories do more than entertain. I want readers to realize there are people doing work out there, people who are making a difference and doing jobs in ways that recognize the humanity in others. My book is dedicated to the Mennonites because this organization [the Mennonite Central Committee] is in the forefront of humanitarian endeavours around the world."

Garrison explains his affiliation with prisons in a simple story. He says that in 1970 at the height of the Vietnam War, he was a draft dodger moving to Canada. He recounts, "One of the things in the back of my mind is that I



## HUMAN ON THE INSIDE: *Unlocking the Truth about Canada's Prisons*

Gary Garrison  
University of Regina Press  
\$29.95 pb, 256 pages  
with bibliography  
ISBN: 978-0-88977-376-9

could have ended up in prison for not killing people, if I stayed in the US." Now he addresses criminal injustice, and he says that if the definition of an activist is someone who wants social change, then he is an activist.

Writing his book, the author frequented dangerous places but never felt in danger.

"No, I never felt in danger. Talk about surprising things about prisons. The max is depicted as a dangerous place but, historically, the safest people going into prisons are volunteers and visitors. They want more volunteers," says Garrison.

"The person coordinating visits before me was yelled at by a prisoner. And there was such a protective reaction from the other prisoners." Garrison adds that inmates want more visitors because it's like food for a starving person.

"It's like when I took my mother to Israel in 2008. It's a war zone but large parts of it were pleasant." 🌿

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## MORE NON-FICTION

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### **ABOUT CANADA: CORPORATE CRIME**

Laureen Snider

Focusing on crimes against workers and the environment, as well as financial malfeasance, this study examines why governments, regulators, unions, and activists have such a difficult time preventing and sanctioning corporate criminals. (Fernwood, \$17.95 pb, 140 pages, ISBN: 978-1-552667-33-0)

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### **ACADEMIA INC.: HOW CORPORATIZATION IS TRANSFORMING CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES**

Jamie Brownlee

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### **AUTONOMOUS MOTHERHOOD? A SOCIO-LEGAL STUDY OF CHOICE AND CONSTRAINT**

Susan B. Boyd, Dorothy E. Chunn, Fiona Kelly, and Wanda Wiegers

This examination of the fundamental assumptions within the law about family parenting draws on case studies, interviews, and legislative history, as increasing numbers of women decide to become mothers without intending the biological father to participate in parenting. (University of Toronto, 288 pages, \$75.00 hc, ISBN: 978-1-4426-4895-1; \$32.95 pb, ISBN: 978-1-4426-2645-4)

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Susan Hawthorne

This scathing critique of the global publishing industry, set against a visionary proposal for “organic publishing,” looks at free and fair speech, the environmental costs of mainstream publishing, and the challenges of the move to digital. (Fernwood, \$10.95 pb, 98 pages, ISBN: 978-1-552667-47-7)

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Yves Engler

This groundbreaking analysis of Canada's foreign policy in Africa challenges the myth of Canadian benevolence, from Canadian

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An updated edition of the classic resource, this guide is for paddlers preparing to face the challenges of Canada's fur trade highway as well as for the armchair voyageur taking a trek into the past. With colour and b/w photos. (University of Regina, \$34.95 pb, 512 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88977-148-2)

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### **CULTURAL MAPPING AND THE DIGITAL SPHERE: PLACE AND SPACE**

Edited by Ruth Panofsky and Kathleen Kellett

Fourteen essays in English and French examine various Canadian cultural works and the advances in technologies that facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations, covering new archival and storytelling methodologies as well as specific cultural and literary works. With illustrations, maps, bibliography, notes, appendices. (University of Alberta, \$39.95 pb, 336 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-049-3)

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Leigh McAdam

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### **FINDING McLUHAN: THE MIND/THE MAN/THE MESSAGE**

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Daryl H. Hepting

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used social media to harness the forces of hundreds of thousands and defeat a battle-hardened premier.  
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Gary Moir

Moir relates the history of the first half-century of radio in Manitoba, when the province was a hotbed of innovation, from the first publicly owned station

to the first play-by-play broadcast of women's hockey to Neil Young's very first studio recording.  
(Great Plains, \$29.95 pb, 208 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927855-26-3)

**OVERCOMING CONFLICTING LOYALTIES: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE, COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND FAITH**

Irene Sevcik, Michael Rothery, Nancy Nason-Clark, and Robert Pynn

This examination of the intersection of faith and culture in the lives of religious and ethno-cultural women is based on qualitative research studies, intended for individuals in secular and sacral services who work with victims of domestic violence.  
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Edited by Lois Harder and Steven Patten

Harder and Patten revisit the constitutional negotiations, including the personalities and political struggles, from when Pierre Trudeau battled the "Gang of Eight" provincial premiers who opposed his

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This sobering account of the connection between institutionalization and eugenics, and the treatment of “mentally defective” children and adults, resulting in overcrowding and routine and extraordinary abuse is based on rare interviews, institutional documentation, and government archives. With images, figures, tables.

(University of Toronto, 320 pages, \$75.00 hc, ISBN: 978-1-4426-4953-8; \$32.95 pb, ISBN: 978-1-4426-2689-8)

**TRANSFORMING PROVINCIAL POLITICS: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CANADA’S PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES IN THE NEOLIBERAL ERA**

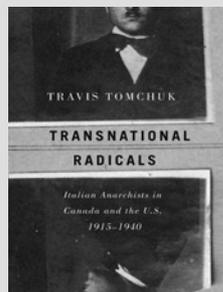
Edited by Bryan M. Evans and Charles W. Smith

These essays directly examine the turn to neoliberal policies, including deregulation, tax reduction, and government downsizing, by experts in the politics of each province and territory. With figures, tables.

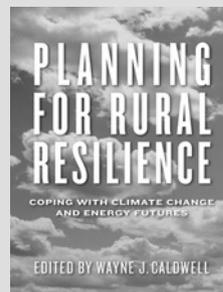
(University of Toronto, 432 pages, \$80.00 hc, ISBN: 978-1-4426-4334-5; \$36.95 pb, ISBN: 978-1-4426-1179-5)

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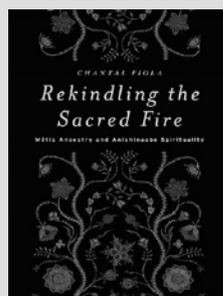
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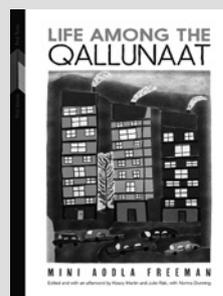
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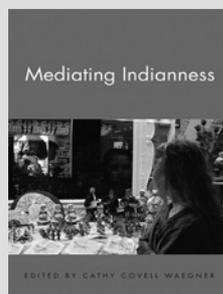
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# INTO THIN AIR

*A father's disappearance leads siblings on an adventure*

by Shirley Byers

The opening scene showing Tala, almost 13, struggling to take care of herself and her little brother, Dason, quickly draws the reader into *Culloo*, Murielle Cyr's young adult novella. Tom, their dad, still raw from the death of his wife, works long and sometimes erratic hours as a forest guide, while prying neighbours and officers from Social Services constantly hover, waiting, it feels to Tala, for the opportunity to snatch the children away from their remaining parent.

Tala's not about to let that happen.

So when Tom doesn't come home from work one night and still doesn't appear long into the next afternoon, Tala decides that she and Dason must go and find him. The children pack food and water into their backpacks, Tala brings a hammock and a plastic tarp, and off they go on their bikes for the adventure of a lifetime. Over the course of the next 24 hours, the youngsters will encounter not only the twenty-first century peril of poachers but also the mysterious Stone People and a giant black bird, Culloo.

Stories have always been a part of Cyr's life. She remembers the stories her mother told her and her sisters, stories about her mother's grandfather.

"There was always a gleam in my mother's eyes when she told her stories of her grandfather, and I suppose it's that same sense of pride in my ancestors that made me want to write *Culloo*," she says.

And Cyr has been writing all her life. As a child in school she would write stories during history or math class while the teacher's back was turned. This may have had a detrimental effect on her popularity with the teachers and on her scholastic performance, she says, "but the stories had to come out."

Her poems and short stories were already being published in literary magazines when she was a young mom, but it wasn't until she had retired from her day job as a teacher that she began writing for children. Cyr has also written a children's picture book, *Turtle Wish*, and a YA novel, *Catori's Worlds*— she's currently working on a sequel to that novel.

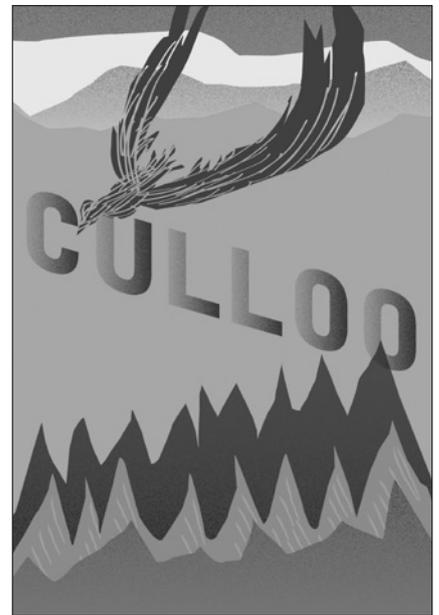
Reading aloud to her class was her favourite activity as a teacher. In a sense, writing for younger children brings back the wonderful feeling she had reading to them for all those years, she says.

Cyr recognizes the power that stories have in the development of a cultural identity.

"The basic premise of the story is about finding strength in your cultural heritage, and about honouring the courage of those who came before



*"Our ancestors were able to survive great hardships because of the loyal adherence to their cultural beliefs."*



## CULLOO

Murielle Cyr  
Pemmican Publications  
\$14.95 pb, 64 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-894717-94-6

you. Our ancestors were able to survive great hardships because of the loyal adherence to their cultural beliefs."

She hopes that *Culloo* will benefit its young readers.

"Our modern schools are populated with children from diverse backgrounds living all sorts of problems. My hope for my book is that it finds its way to the desks of many children who need to be reminded of the great wisdom of those who came before them." ✍

# Wordsongs

*Bouvier's poetry collection about the importance of time, place*

by Quentin Mills-Fenn

Telling stories comes naturally to Saskatoon-based Rita Bouvier. Ask her about the title of her third collection of poems, *nakamowin'sa* for the seasons, and a tale appears spontaneously.

"In part, the title was inspired by a quotation I came across preparing some work for a project on the Métis of northwest Saskatchewan," Bouvier explains. "A 'voyageur' was queried about what sustained him during the long journeys up and down the rivers – his response went something like this (of course, I am embellishing a wee bit): he could slog through it all as long as he had 50 songs to sing.



## NAKAMOWIN'SA FOR THE SEASONS

Rita Bouvier  
Thistledown Press  
\$17.95 pb, 80 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-77187-055-9

"It struck me as a great metaphor. Perhaps I too, can slog through 'the seasons' – tensions and contradictions of Canada's colonial legacy – as long as I have *nakamowin'sa* ('wordsong' or 'little songs') to sing. And, yes, it would help if others sang with me!"

Cree/Michif is Bouvier's first language. "It shapes my worldview," she says. "In the Cree/Michif tradition, words have immense power to bring into being what is imagined and spoken. Truths are underscored. Silence holds value. I am reminded through

the language that I/we are part of the whole."

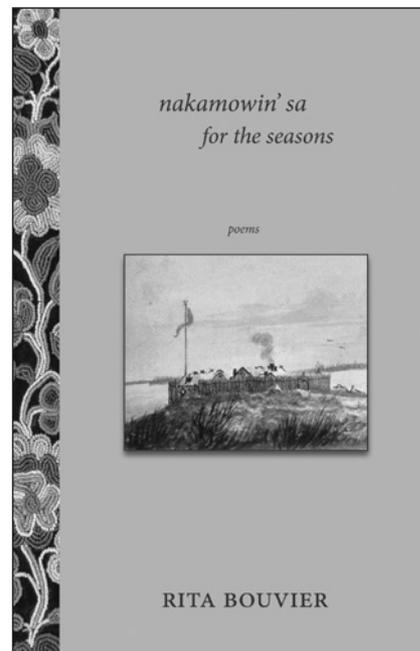
With Cree/Michif vocabulary sprinkled throughout the text, Bouvier writes movingly about seasonal rhythms and the land, especially of a place in Saskatchewan called Île-à-la-Crosse, on the Churchill River.

"It is the home of my family and ancestors and a place I know in my heart," she says. "Because of its location and interconnected systems of rivers and lakes and portages north, south, and east, it was a central hub for fur trading companies and exploration into what is now northern Canada."

Concern for the natural world and people forgotten by history is evident throughout the collection. One of the most powerful poems here is "remembering Charlie." It's based on the tragically short life of 12-year-old Charlie Wenjack, who ran away from a residential school in October 1966. His body was found a week later; he had attempted to walk the 600 miles back to his home. Bouvier says she's carried the memory of his death for a long time.

"I was attending high school far away from home when the story of Charlie Wenjack hit the news," she says. "I knew the loneliness of being far away from family and the familiarity of 'home.' As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made its way across the country, I remembered him."

Bouvier noted that Charlie's story didn't garner much public interest,



*"I am reminded through the language that I/we are part of the whole."*

despite interest by the media. She wondered if Canadian attitudes towards Indigenous people had changed much and whether the Prime Minister's public apology had made much of a difference.

"Once again with my pen in hand I found myself trying to reconcile the weight of this indifference," she says. "My best defence in these situations is to sing a 'little song' of love. In the passage of time (past-present-future) or cycle of seasons, I think it is a life/story worth remembering. It is relevant to our story, in this so-called time of 'truth and reconciliation."

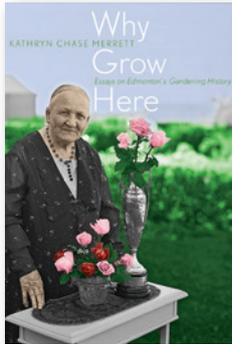
"I have placed this poem in the autumn phase of time, as it does invoke sadness, but also hopefulness. He was loved." 🌿

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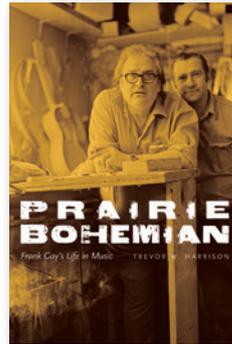
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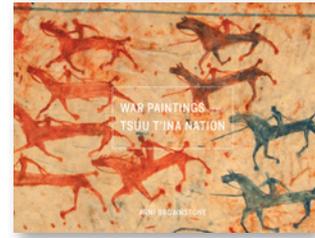
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# CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE  
AT THE FOREFRONT  
OF MÉTIS PUBLISHING

by Quentin Mills-Fenn

Karon Shmon



**K**aron Shmon says her experiences at the one-room cabin at Chitek Lake where her mother was raised and the family’s annual visits to Batoche helped her to understand her heritage and to be proud of being Métis.

Shmon is the Director of Publishing at the Gabriel Dumont Institute. Publishing is one of the institute’s founding programs. In its work in cultural and resource production, it’s published books for adults and children. One recent title, Darren Préfontaine’s *Gabriel Dumont: Li Chef Michif in Images and in Words*, is the most comprehensive book about Gabriel Dumont and was selected as Book of the Year at the Saskatchewan book awards in 2011.

“The Institute has paid keen attention to this side of its mission and has produced over 160 Métis learning resources and publications as the only Métis-specific publisher,” Shmon says.

“We have also created the world’s largest repository of online Métis content through our Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, added a museum and gallery

housing art, artifacts, and special collections, and we deliver cultural and educational workshops

and special events. As you can see, the Gabriel Dumont Institute is a complex organization. Our multi-faceted mission calls for us to inspire, aspire, and achieve.”

Shmon explained that GDI’s publishing program is flexible, changing from year to year.

“The number [of publications] varies depending on factors like funding and the scope and complexity of the publications we are working on for any given year,” she says.

Some books take years of research to complete. Some manuscripts come to them close to being ready for publication, others are a concept only. They may need to commission art, which also takes time.

“Our books are distinctive because they are Métis-specific,” Shmon says. “The topics are about Métis history and culture, and the authors and illustrators are primarily Métis, as well. By design, we also ask ourselves, ‘How might this publication be useful as an educational resource?’”

“It would be fair to say we produce two to four publications per year, and yet this year we made a children’s series containing 27 books.”

That big project is the Taanishi Books emergent reader series, based on six community consultations





**GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE**  
of Native Studies and Applied Research

## The idea for the Gabriel Dumont Institute sprang from a cultural conference in 1976

at which the Métis community expressed the need and desire for a Métis-specific education, training, and cultural institute to provide services to the Métis of Saskatchewan. It was clear to these forward thinkers that education was the key to employment, empowerment, and cultural renewal and retention. Four years later, the Institute was founded with the mission, “To promote the renewal and development of Métis culture through research; materials development, collection, and distribution of those materials; and the design, development, and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services.”

This mandate has guided the Institute over the last 35 years where it has accomplished a number of goals, including seeing over 1100 teachers graduate from the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), the first program offered by the Institute. The Gabriel Dumont Institute has also provided education and training to thousands of others at all levels: adult basic education, high school completion, the delivery of certificate and diploma programs, university courses, employment readiness, and apprenticeship support. The ability to adapt, invent, and create has enabled the Institute to continue to meet the mission, just as those abilities have ensured the flourishing of the Métis people.



“Our multi-faceted mission calls for us to inspire, aspire, and achieve.”

**Gabriel Dumont Institute staff (L to R),**  
Darren Prefontaine, David Morin, Karon Shmon, Amy Briley, George Gingras, and Ryan Nordmarken

that involved nearly 300 Métis who were asked, “What makes us Métis?”

“The results were very consistent throughout,” Shmon says. “Our final consultation brought 15 Elders together to validate, change, or add to the information, a step we felt was essential because they are our cultural knowledge keepers.

“This provided countless topics from which to choose the first nine themes of the series,” she adds. The nine themes chosen include dance, beading, fiddling, and the Roogaroo.

The project was led by Wilfred Burton and Angela Caron, and was

designed to provide Métis cultural content for very young children. Shmon says, “The levelled readers are a format many teachers like, and of course, the books convey Métis stories and culture for all to enjoy.”

The bilingual versions, Michif and English, will come with CDs to help preserve the Métis heritage language, and to provide an aid for those who want to learn it.

“We are extremely proud of all of the children’s titles that we’ve produced,” Shmon says. GDI has recently created an online teacher’s guide, compiled by Wilfred Burton. *Bringing Métis*

*Children’s Literature to Life* provides lesson plans and strategies to help teachers use 19 different resources. This number will grow as they add more books and more lessons.

“Teachers have expressed a lot of appreciation for this guide because they feel more confident about sharing literature from a cultural background other than their own. We want teachers and students from all backgrounds to value and appreciate Métis stories.”

# Truth and reconciliation

*Author believes recovering Indigenous laws is imperative*

by Margaret Anne Fehr

“**N**êhiyawak walked and lived on these lands long before the Europeans came here. They lived in vibrant, beautiful, and sustainable societies and nations. There are laws that guided and directed them, original instructions in harmony and reverence with creation.”



So begins *Nationhood Interrupted: Revitalizing nêhiyaw Legal Systems* by Sylvia McAdam (Saysewahum), professor at the First Nations University of Canada and co-founder of the Idle No More movement. In her book, McAdam gives context to the series of

“interruptions” that befell Turtle Island now known as Canada, beginning with the arrival of Europeans 500 years ago. “The interruptions are the Doctrine of Discovery, *terra nullius*, manifest destiny, Indian residential schools, Indian Act, colonial laws – basically all the colonial apparatus,” she cites.

Recovering and reviving ancient Indigenous laws is a present-day imperative, says McAdam. “Our Indigenous languages are disappearing at a heartbreaking rate. Many of the Indigenous young people no longer speak their languages. This is one of the processes in which Elders have given permission to begin recording and writing down some of our Indigenous laws. Our oral tradition is impacted because language is no longer being passed on, so I’ve translated what I could so that all people could learn some of my people’s laws.”

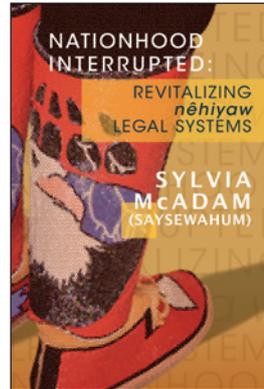
McAdam was limited as to what she could include in her book – only the physical laws could be written down, not the spiritual laws. McAdam explains that Indigenous spiritual laws belong to the spirit world and spirit keepers. We can speculate and speak about the unknown and the mysterious, but no human has the depth or the knowledge to put spiritual laws to paper.

“We can speak of them, but no human being has the knowledge to write about them,” she says.

**“Protocol is the ‘key’ to a door of knowledge a person seeks.”**

That is why protocol is so important in retrieving *nêhiyaw* knowledge, says McAdam. “Protocol is the ‘key’ to a door of knowledge a person seeks. The tobacco symbolizes the pipe which triggers our pipe laws that become the guiding force in the knowledge shared. The spirit world is therefore involved and we must now speak a spiritual language.”

McAdam explains that *nêhiyaw* is specifically Cree, but other nations from the same language group could likely identify similarities. “I am hoping



## NATIONHOOD INTERRUPTED:

### *Revitalizing nêhiyaw Legal Systems*

Sylvia McAdam (Saysewahum)

Purich Publishing

\$25.00 pb, 120 pages

with Cree glossary, images

ISBN: 978-1-895830-80-4

in time other Indigenous Nations will begin revitalizing their laws.”

McAdam hopes her writing will highlight a few issues, such as the impact of colonial laws and policies on Indigenous women, an impact that is reflected in the horrific numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women; how the doctrine of discovery remains the basis of this government’s assertion of ownership and title to Indigenous lands and resources, even though there is no international law to support it; and that Indigenous lands have been stolen, resulting in Indigenous peoples living in continuous poverty and oppression.

McAdam expects that these laws will be new knowledge for some *nêhiyaw*, as well as for others.

“This is ancient knowledge that has not been shared with the ‘public’ because of the interruptions that have occurred. It may surprise some people who have been impacted by Indian residential schools and did not have an opportunity to learn about them, but a majority of Indigenous people know of them.” ↵

# DOWN BUT NOT OUT

*Former boxer Roland Vandal fights back against abuse and addiction*

by Paula E Kirman

**T**hirteen years ago, former boxer Roland Vandal attempted to throw in the towel. Addicted to alcohol and cocaine, and without hope, Vandal attempted suicide in a Winnipeg hotel following numerous days of heavy drug use and alcohol consumption.

Vandal is—thankfully—living proof adversity often makes people stronger. He is also a shining example of how those who have overcome major obstacles in life can move forward and help others.

By the time Vandal was a teenager, he'd been sexually abused by six different males. Embarrassed and ashamed, he told no one. Struggling with the anguish of keeping the secret inside, his life took a downward spiral into substance abuse and criminal activity, and he developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and low self-esteem.

***“Many people suffer in silence, fighting a battle we know nothing about.”***

When he woke up on the floor of the hotel room on May 15, 2002, he realized he'd hit his bottom. He picked up the phone and reached out for help. His journey of recovery has led to a life that has included boxing, coaching, public speaking, and running programs and group homes for young people at risk. He is now sharing his story in the memoir, *Off the Ropes: My Story*.

Vandal believes the stigma and lack of understanding surrounding mental illness is dangerous. Victims often find themselves isolated and don't ask for help.

“I want people to understand they are not alone,” says Vandal of why he decided to tell his story.

*Off the Ropes* shows how Vandal dealt with the interrelated challenges of PTSD and addiction.

“I hope readers will empathize and understand that trauma runs deep,” he says. “Many people suffer in silence, fighting a battle we know nothing about.”

Vandal stresses his mandate is to work in the areas of “mental health, homelessness, and addiction.” Having given over 700 motivational speeches, he wants his message to reach as many people (in as many ways), as possible. In addition to *Off the Ropes*, a documentary about his life, *The Wounded Healer*, will be aired on CBC around the same time as the book's release. He is also in negotiations with some production companies for a feature film based on *Off the Ropes*.

Giving back and helping others is an important part of Vandal's makeup.

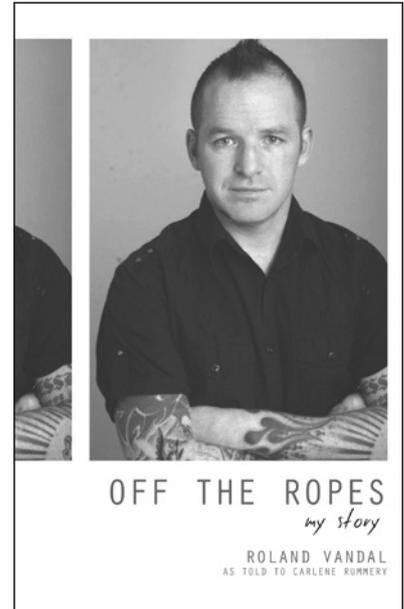
“It's my duty to help others,” he says. “I experience a profound freedom when I tell my story at schools and conferences, and if people need me to help, I will always make the time.”

The book was a year in the making, and Vandal worked with writer and editor Carlene Rummery to shape the manuscript. For Vandal, getting his story onto paper was far from easy.

“Reliving the trauma was probably the hardest thing I've ever done,” he says. “I had a mental microscope on myself, but I have healed immensely from this experience.”

He hopes the book will be a useful addition to his work in schools.

“My hope is it will touch many different people, especially kids in the 12-to-20-year age range, who might be too afraid to speak up.” ✍



## **OFF THE ROPES:**

***My Story***

Roland Vandal

As told to Carlene Rummery

\$24.95 pb, 220 pages

ISBN: 978-1-927922-09-5

# OUTSIDE looking in

*Graphic novel explores the impact of colonialism*

by David Jón Fuller

**Y**ou might not think a PhD dissertation could be the inspiration for a graphic novel. But with *The Outside Circle*, Patti LaBoucane-Benson and Kelly Mellings have brought Canada's colonial history and its effects on Aboriginal people today to life in a powerful story.

In this full-colour graphic novel, written by LaBoucane-Benson and drawn by Mellings, a young Cree man in Edmonton, Pete Carver, struggles to support himself and his younger brother as a gang enforcer. When Pete is sent to prison, he can't protect his brother anymore and has to find a way out of the gangster life. A program called In Search of Your Warrior, which incorporates traditional teachings and unpacks Canada's long-standing colonialist policies, gives him a chance to begin reconciling what his family has been through.



***“I believe that this is a very common story, but very few Canadians understand our history.”***

LaBoucane-Benson has worked at Native Counselling Services of Alberta for 20 years and been involved with the In Search of Your Warrior program for 17 years.

Of Métis background herself, she says, “I’ve witnessed the healing journeys of many people and have been working on my own healing for

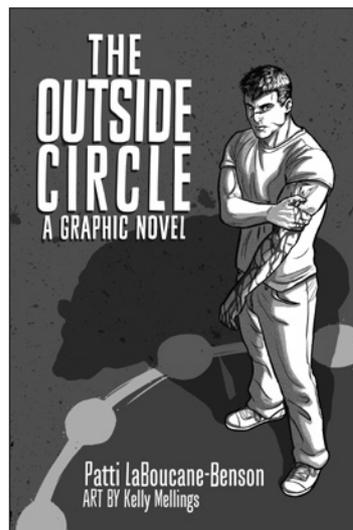
20 years. I believe that this is a very common story, but very few Canadians understand our history, how it affects families today, and what needs to happen to break intergenerational cycles of violence, pain, and disconnectedness.”

LaBoucane-Benson began seeking traditional knowledge 23 years ago. “Ceremonies, Elder’s teaching circles, and reconciliation circles are an important part of my entire family’s life,” she says.

In 2009, she completed her PhD in Human Ecology, focusing on Aboriginal Family Resilience, which she describes as an extension of this way of learning. When she pitched the idea of using her PhD work as the basis for a graphic novel, “Everyone – and I mean everyone – was really enthusiastic,” she says.

To portray the characters and the settings accurately, Mellings met with residential school survivors, Elders, and people living in northern communities, and participated in smudge and sweat lodge ceremonies.

“Many of the Elders I met had similar stories to those in the book, and faced similar hardships,” says Mellings. “Touring a residential school with survivors, having them describe their experience as we were in the rooms they were in, and them yelling at us as we walked up the stairs as they had been yelled at was emotionally affecting.”



## THE OUTSIDE CIRCLE

Patti LaBoucane-Benson  
Art by Kelly Mellings  
House of Anansi Press  
\$19.95 pb, 128 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-77089-937-7

LaBoucane-Benson wants the story to engage young people, men and women on their own healing journeys, front-line service providers, and Canadians who may not be aware of this country’s colonial past and what its policies have done to generations of Aboriginal people and families.

The prevailing principle in telling this story, she says, was *tapwe*, a Cree language term that means “the truth.”

“If a former gang member in Edmonton reads this book, I want him or her to feel that I’ve told the truth. If a ceremonialist reads the book, I want him or her to feel connected to the way that ceremony and the extremely difficult work of healing is portrayed,” she says.

“If a front-line service provider reads this book, I want them to feel that there is truth in every character.” ✍

# STRINGING BEADS AND HERITAGE

*Collection explores family roots, culture*

by Ariel Gordon

As early as the 1960s, members of Marilyn Dumont's family began asking the obvious question: Were they related to Gabriel Dumont, Louis Riel's general in the Riel Rebellion?

While Dumont's first three books of poetry focused on her Métis heritage and questions of identity, the Edmonton-based poet hesitated to explore the connection, even after it was discovered that her father's family was descended from Gabriel's uncle.

"I frequently found my lack of interest in history puzzling, fraught with a reluctance to approach a subject that seemed merely to recount the lives of famous men," says Dumont. "I knew the history of women, like my mother, deserved retelling too."

It's fitting, then, that the most striking poems in her fourth book, *The Pemmican Eaters*, are the poems that touch on beadwork, which was traditionally perceived as women's work.

When not writing poems or teaching creative writing, English, and Native Studies for both Athabasca University and the University of Alberta, Dumont beads.

"Beading is meditative and takes acute eye-hand coordination

*"Beading is meditative and takes acute eye-hand coordination while the mind drifts off to ..."*

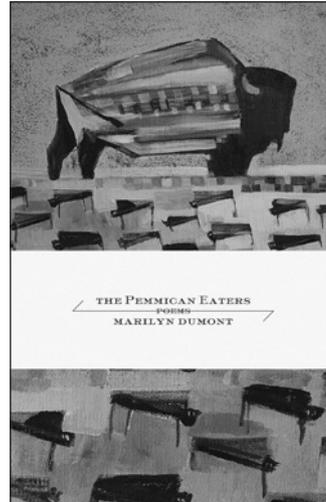
while the mind drifts off to... ." says Dumont. "Writing a poem about beading required me to write and exhaust all the clichés I'd ever heard or read about the subject."

But being a Métis woman who beads didn't necessarily help her write poems about beading.

"I had to develop language that conveyed the sense of ancestral connection to performing this task as if it were ancestral memory taking over," notes Dumont. "I had to stop thinking about every rational idea I had about beads/beading and strike out new. It was difficult, but highly rewarding."

Also in the difficult/rewarding category for Dumont is performing her poems, and not just because she's a closet singer.

"For me, the vocalization of my work makes it that more meaningful, not only because of the sharing with the audience but also with the universe by tapping into the vibrational energy of the cosmos," says Dumont. "I know this sounds airy-fairy, but I really do believe that humans tap into vibrational energies when they drum, dance, sing, and create with their hands, and that these vibrations are inspiring and healing."



## THE PEMMIGAN EATERS

Marilyn Dumont  
ECW Press  
\$18.95 pb, 80 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-77041-241-5

Bringing in her mother and her father's people in one book meant touching on historical events, but also on more general cultural aspects of the Métis, including Red River carts, fiddling, and step dancing.

"I included the beadwork poems as part of the impression I wanted to give of the Métis in general," says Dumont. "The repetition in beadwork is also part of connecting to this vibrational energy."

In addition to launching *The Pemmican Eaters*, Dumont has another project in the works. Her first book, *A Really Good Brown Girl*, will be released this fall as part of Brick Books' Classics series.

"I never thought that *A Really Good Brown Girl* would travel so far, partly because I thought the content was timely in 1996," says Dumont. "For the multiple reprints the book has undergone, I realize now that it was actually ahead of its time. Who knew 20 years later that it would be breathing a new life?"



## FIRST NATIONS, METIS AND INUIT

# LEARNING BY DOING

Seven books explore seven values

by Shirley Byers

Award-winning author Katherena Vermette has just released a seven-book series for children based on the Seven Teachings of the Anishinaabe: *The Just Right Gift: A Story of Love*, *Singing Sisters: A Story of Humility*, *The First Day: A Story of Courage*, *Kode's Quest(ion): A Story of Respect*, *Amik Loves School: A Story of Wisdom*, *Misaabe's Stories: A Story of Honesty*, and *What Is Truth, Betsy? A Story of Truth*.

Each book features Indigenous children learning one of these core values as they interact with their friends and families in an urban landscape.

"The Seven Teachings Stories are inspired by my time working with preschoolers at the Aboriginal Head Start program, and I started writing them in grad school when I was missing my wee friends," Vermette says. "It just worked. Not every project works so well. They were such a gift."

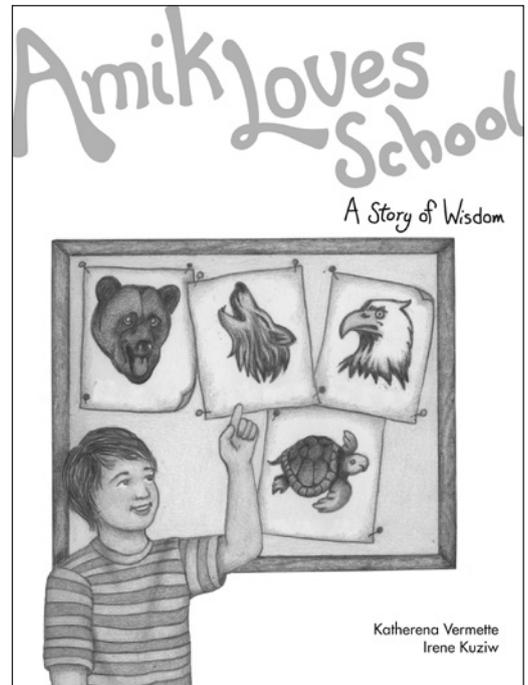
Vermette, who won the Governor General's Literary Award for poetry in 2013 for her book *North End Love Songs*, doesn't remember a clearly defined "Aha!" moment when she knew she wanted to be a writer. She just remembers writing. Playing with poetry and making up stories made her happy, she says. "It made everything better, and I just kept doing it."

Drawn to the idea of the eccentric hermit poet-type, she says she was very

disappointed when she found out that writers were supposed to present their work to an audience.

"That was a blow. I just wanted to hole up in a dark but cozy office and make stuff up. I still do, mostly."

Vermette likes to get up early on weekends, before everyone else in the house is awake, and work on whatever it is she's working on. "I am always working on a bunch of projects. I like it, though. I like switching gears some



**AMIK LOVES SCHOOL:**  
*A Story of Wisdom*  
ISBN: 978-1-55379-523-0

**THE FIRST DAY:**  
*A Story of Courage*  
ISBN: 978-1-55379-521-6

**THE JUST RIGHT GIFT:**  
*A Story of Love*  
ISBN: 978-1-55379-519-3

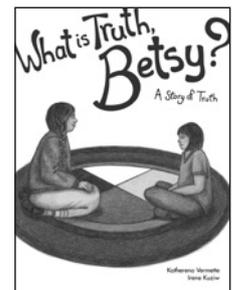
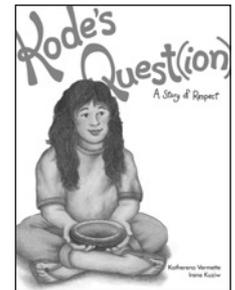
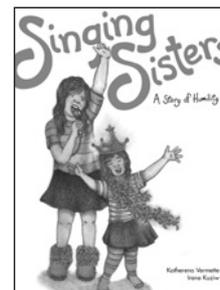
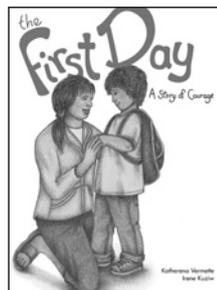
**KODE'S QUEST(ION):**  
*A Story of Respect*  
ISBN: 978-1-55379-522-3

**MISAABE'S STORIES:**  
*A Story of Honesty*  
ISBN: 978-1-55379-524-7

**SINGING SISTERS:**  
*A Story of Humility*  
ISBN: 978-1-55379-520-9

**WHAT IS TRUTH, BETSY?**  
*A Story of Truth*  
ISBN: 978-1-55379-525-4

Katherena Vermette  
Highwater Press  
\$9.95 pb, 24 pages



of the time,” she says. “Some moods just scream poetry; others demand tiny little stories for young children.”

Artist Irene Kuziw, a graduate of the University of Manitoba School of Art, has worked in galleries, museums, and schools. She had just finished some pen-and-ink illustrations for *P̄sim Finds Her Miskanow* published by HighWater Press, an imprint of Portage & Main Press, when she was chosen to illustrate The Seven Teaching Stories, based on some sample drawings.

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*“Not every project works so well. They were such a gift.”*

She and Vermette collaborated on the illustrations, creating each child’s appearance and establishing the layout. “I then asked Kate to give me a rough idea of how she envisions each scene as to the characters involved, settings, and action,” says Kuziw. “I wanted to be true to Kate’s vision and also get to know the children myself. I felt them coming alive.”

Working on one book at a time, she emailed the uncoloured drawings to Vermette and Annalee Greenberg, editorial director of Portage & Main Press. They made suggestions, she made changes.

“We discussed certain aspects of culture and customs to make sure I captured them correctly. Once approved, I did the colouring, then moved on to the next one,” says Kuziw.

By the time they reached the seventh book, she felt like she knew all of the characters personally.

“It was bittersweet to finish the illustrations and say goodbye.” ✍

## **MORE FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT WRITINGS**

### **ART**

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#### **WAR PAINTINGS OF THE TSUU T’INA NATION**

Arni Brownstone

This study of pictographic war paintings by the Tsuu T’ina (Sarcee) relates them to social, historical, and artistic forces, and provides insight into the changing relations of the Tsuu T’ina, other plains tribes, and non-Native communities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With colour plates and figures, bibliography, appendix, index.

(University of Alberta, \$35.00 pb, 176 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-046-2)

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### **PICTURE BOOKS**

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#### **DANNY’S CHALLENGE**

James Robert Chambers, illustrated by James Mathieu Chambers

Catherine, the first female apprentice in her village, takes on her own apprentice, an eager young man named Danny, who learns that hard work and a generous soul aren’t enough. The follow-up to *The Blacksmith’s Apprentice*.

(Pemmican, \$10.95 pb, 32 pages, ISBN: 978-1-894717-96-0)

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#### **THE FIRE WALKER**

Shezza Ansloos, illustrated by Sheldon Dawson

In this dramatic story, a strong wind blew out every fire in a little village a long time ago, but one brave child undertakes a daring search to find the fire and help her people.

(Pemmican, \$10.95 pb, 32 pages, ISBN: 978-1-894717-93-9)

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#### **HONOURING THE BUFFALO: A PLAINS CREE LEGEND**

Told by Ray Lavallee, written by Judith Silverthorne, illustrated by Mike Keepness

This is the story of how the buffalo came to share themselves so freely, giving themselves as a gift for the sustenance and survival of the Plains Cree people, providing shelter, food, clothing, tools, hunting gear, and ceremonial objects.

(Your Nickel’s Worth, \$14.95 pb, 48 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927756-33-1)

## **YOUNG ADULT**

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#### **DREAMING IN INDIAN: CONTEMPORARY NATIVE AMERICAN VOICES**

Edited by Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale

This visually stunning anthology shatters commonly held stereotypes, with pieces by over 50 contributors including Grand Chief (The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs) Derek Nepinak, visual artist Christi Belcourt, poet David Groulx, and comedian Ryan McMahon. (Annick, \$19.95 hc, 128 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55451-687-2)

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#### **THREE FEATHERS**

Richard Van Camp, illustrated by Krystal Mateus

Through the story of three young men who live nine months on the land as part of the circle sentencing process, this graphic novel explores the power and grace of restorative justice.

(Highwater-Portage & Main, \$16.95 pb, 48 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55379-536-0)

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### **FICTION**

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#### **AUTUMN LEAF**

Ken Gervais

This novella is about an unlikely trio – Victor, a 54-year-old medic, his hotheaded co-worker Sean, and Pauline, who’s trying to get away from the bad guys in her life – as they head north from Fort Nelson to the Yukon one winter.

(Pemmican, \$14.95 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-1-894717-80-9)

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#### **WAKE THE STONE MAN**

Carol McDougall

This prize-winning novel is about the complicated relationship of two girls coming of age in the 1960s, as Molly finds herself a silent witness to the abuse and racism her friend Nakina, an Ojibwe survivor of the residential school system, must face every day.

(Roseway-Fernwood, \$20.95 pb, 256 pages, ISBN: 978-1-552667-21-7)

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### **MEMOIR/BIOGRAPHY**

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#### **THE EDUCATION OF AUGIE MERASTY: A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL MEMOIR**

Joseph Auguste Merasty, with David Carpenter

This is a courageous, intimate, and warm-hearted chronicle of life in a residential school. The author, a retired fisherman and trapper,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

was one of an estimated 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children removed from their families and sent to government-funded, church-run schools. (University of Regina, \$21.95 hc, 120 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88977-368-4)

**LIFE AMONG THE QALLUNAAT**  
Mini Aodla Freeman

In short vignettes, with humour and heart, Freeman tells of her journey in the 1950s from her home in the Inuit communities of James Bay to the land south of the Arctic. The third book in the First Voices, First Texts series, with b/w illustrations. (University of Manitoba, \$24.95 pb, 264 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88755-775-0)

**A TALE OF MONSTROUS EXTRAVAGANCE: IMAGINING MULTILINGUALISM**

Tomson Highway  
In this 2014 Henry Kriesel Lecture, Highway tells the magical story of his life and languages, growing up amidst three languages (Cree, Dene, and Inuktitut) in northern Manitoba, adding the language of music, and Latin, English, French, and finally Spanish to the mix as he became a citizen of the world through his music and writing. (University of Alberta Press, \$10.95 pb, 56 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-041-7)

## NON-FICTION

**AN ACT OF GENOCIDE: COLONIALISM AND THE STERILIZATION OF ABORIGINAL WOMEN**  
Karen Stote

This study argues that the coercive sterilization of Aboriginal women and the eugenics of the 1900s must be considered in relation to the larger goals of Indian policy: to gain access to Indigenous lands and resources while reducing the numbers of those to whom the federal government has obligations. (Fernwood, \$22.95 pb, 192 pages, ISBN: 978-1-552667-32-3)

**DEBRIEFING ELSIPOGTOG: THE ANATOMY OF A STRUGGLE**  
Miles Howe

This is a first-hand account of the government policies that led to one-seventh of New Brunswick being leased to a Texas-based energy company for the purposes of natural gas extraction via fracking and the successful grassroots struggle, spearheaded by the Elsipogtog First Nation, to oppose the decision. (Fernwood, \$18.95 pb, 128 pages, ISBN: 978-1-552667-44-6)

**FROM NEW PEOPLES TO NEW NATIONS: ASPECTS OF METIS HISTORY AND IDENTITY FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE TWENTIETH-FIRST CENTURIES**

Gerhard J. Ens and Joe Sawchuk  
This broad historical account of the emergence of the Métis as distinct peoples over the last three hundred years is based on archival materials, interviews, oral histories, and ethnographic research. With illustrations, maps, tables. (University of Toronto, 656 pages, \$95.00 hc, ISBN: 978-1-4426-4978-1; \$48.95 pb, ISBN: 978-1-4426-2711-6)

**FROM TREATY PEOPLES TO TREATY NATION: A ROAD MAP FOR ALL CANADIANS**

Greg Poelzer and Ken S. Coates  
The authors suggest that even as recent court cases have strengthened Aboriginal rights, the cooperative spirit of the original treaties has been lost in endless discussions about First Nations "issues" and argue that if all Canadians take up their responsibilities as treaty peoples, Canada will become a leader among treaty nations. (UBC Press, \$95.00 hc, 256 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7748-2753-9)

**MEDIATING INDIANNES**

Edited by Cathy Covell Waegner  
This collection of essays examines the construction of Indigenous images and identities and investigates a wide range of media: print, film, theatre, ritual dance, music, photography, and

treaty rhetoric. With illustrations. (University of Manitoba, \$34.95 pb, 348 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88755-779-8)

**METIS AND THE MEDICINE LINE: CREATING A BORDER AND DIVIDING A PEOPLE**

Michel Hogue  
Hogue takes an ambitious look at how the Canada/U.S. border and notions of race were created and manipulated to unlock access to the Indigenous lands of the Northern Plains, where once an astonishing diversity of people met and mingled. With illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography. (University of Regina, \$32.95 pb, 352 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88977-380-6)

**SPIRITS OF THE ROCKIES: REASSERTING AN INDIGENOUS PRESENCE IN BANFF NATIONAL PARK**

Courtney W. Mason  
Mason draws on oral testimony, archives, and visual records

in this account of the Nakoda people, who were displaced by the reserve system and the creation of Canada's first national park, and of how they reasserted their presence. Illustrated. (University of Toronto, 224 pages, \$60.00 hc, ISBN: 978-1-4426-4930-9; \$27.95 pb, ISBN: 978-1-4426-2668-3)

**UNSETTLING CANADA: A NATIONAL WAKE-UP CALL**  
Arthur Manuel

Manuel, son of George Manuel and a Secwepemc leader and Indigenous activist himself, describes the victories and failures, the hopes and fears of a generation of activists fighting for Aboriginal title and rights in Canada. (Between the Lines, \$29.95 pb, 320 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77113-176-6)

# THIS IS WHY

"For more than a century, more than 150,000 children were separated from their families and communities. This attempt to assimilate an entire culture has had a lasting and damaging impact on many generations of children by depriving them of the care and nurturing of their parents, grandparents and communities.

It is my hope that Kookum's Red Shoes will be a gentle reminder to all Canadians of the importance of nurturing our children, protecting them and providing them with a safe, positive environment, regardless of their race, culture or creed."

—Peter Eyvindson, author

The legacy of the residential schools is conveyed with respect and imagination in this illustrated story for young readers.

**Kookum's Red Shoes**  
Written by Peter Eyvindson  
Illustrated by Sheldon Dawson  
ISBN: 978-1-894717-54-0  
\$10.95

For more information on new titles, past titles and e-book titles, please visit our website at [www.pemmicanpublications.ca](http://www.pemmicanpublications.ca), or call us at (204) 589-6346.

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INC.

# GETTING OUR **FILL**

*Gordaneer's poetry collection suits all tastes*

by Steve Locke

It's a simple gesture to prepare a meal for another person, or inversely, to eat one that's prepared for you. How you go about doing so can simply do the job of satisfying bodily needs, or the gesture could be loaded with subtext that may demonstrate a tender attention to detail. In her poetry collection *Still Hungry*, Alisa Gordaneer explores moments of trust and acceptance that sustain us beyond simply feeding our bodies.

"Everyone seems to have their food 'things,' which I think makes us all that much more individual," says Gordaneer. "Honouring those things – habits, taboos, dietary concerns, allergies – seems to have become an extension of honouring the person and your relationship with them."

Within the universality of communion through the sharing of meals, Gordaneer's characters demonstrate the idiosyncrasies of their relationships via the thematic use of taste sensations. Arranged to form a loose narrative, and grouped into sections labelled Salt, Sour, Bitter, and Sweet, Gordaneer's poems move through tonal and contextual notes, through various cravings, through a life of young family love, marital breakup, abstinence and self-denial, and finally, reconciliation and the return of desire.

"Circumstances change and we look for different flavours," she says, "because we're curious and can't resist tasting new things."

Salt is the taste of love and family. In "Eating Dinner at Your Father's House," a salty patriarch trades up tinned meat for a four-square meal, and despite his lack of culinary tact, he succeeds in both gathering and providing for his kin.

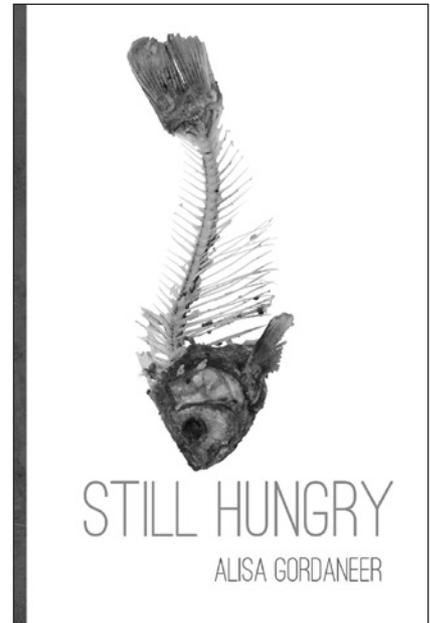
Sour is the aftertaste of love gone wrong. In "Peppermint," a relationship is soured by hints of adultery during the holiday season: "It will be January before the tree is down, needles on the floor and / catching in your socks. You will appreciate the pricks then, / having become one // or so I will say."

Throughout the Bitter suite, Gordaneer focuses on eating habits that turn against the body, particularly those that involve suppressing one's appetite, or condemning it altogether. In "Deserve," the cycle of bulimia shows how the hunger for company leads to desperate, yet futile, acts. "Waste" gives up on turning down meals when "no amount of guilt can change the world," all while fruit rots on

## STILL HUNGRY

Alisa Gordaneer  
Signature Editions  
\$14.95 pb, 92 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-927426-64-7

*"To be fed by another is to accept what they give you."*



the counter. "Rules" is terse and direct, outlining a draconian regimen where "a glass of water is a meal."

With a "maniacal / dinner fork poised," Gordaneer's characters regain their appetites in "Breaking the Fast." What follows is the sweet course, a return to smacking lips and salivating for communion with sighs of fulfillment. In "Soup," the speaker craves substance, "trying not to spill," and in "Saturday," characters indulge in "all the sleeping-in-flapjacked-happiness of maple morning."

"To be fed by another is to accept what they give you," says Gordaneer, "what they have created in your name, to receive their energy into your body. It's kind of weirdly holy. You have to trust in order to receive." ☞



# The ties that BIND

*Family at the core of poet's new collection*

by Ariel Gordon

**L** Lynda Monahan's third book of poetry begins with a fox, waiting at the river's edge.

"The small fox in *Verge* symbolizes a woman at a turning point in her life," says Monahan, who is based just outside of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. "She is on the verge of some understanding, some thing she is meant to know. The fox lopes through the poems, at first looking back on the 'cold yesterday' of childhood, then travelling with her as she moves through various changes and losses in her life and the lessons she learns along the way."

## VERGE

Lynda Monahan  
Guernica Editions  
\$20.00 pb, 120 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-55071-963-5

Monahan's fox/woman harkens back to Japanese folklore, specifically to the *kitsune* (Japanese for fox).

"*Kitsune*, among many other things, were believed to to be spirit guides and were commonly portrayed as lovers," says Monhan. "The idea of kitsune was my inspiration for introducing the small fox into these poems as a way of acting as a guide throughout the book, as a way of helping tell the story, if you will."

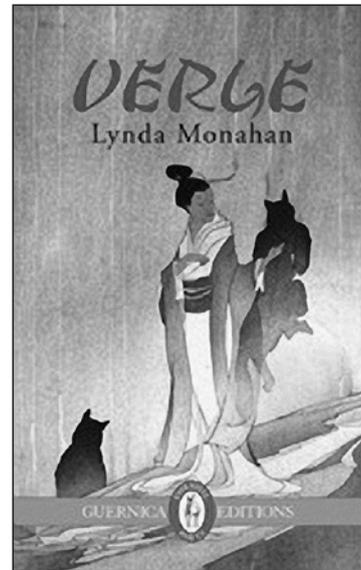
In addition to poems that range from childhood onward, growing up and starting her own family, *Verge* includes elegiac poems for her parents and

brother. It also features a long poem for her sister, who had a stroke at the age of 47.

"Her entire world was changed completely and instantly, and I wanted to, needed to, really, write about her struggles to find her way in the world again," says Monahan. "We are in it together, she and I. I wanted her to know that."

That connection, to family and community, is how Monahan grounds her writing practice.

**"I need to live my life fully,  
with my whole being."**



"I've finally learned and come to accept this about my own process – I need to live my life fully, with my whole being, aware of all that is going on around and in me, so that when I do come to the writing it is all there for me, waiting," says Monahan. "I just have to pay careful attention."

But careful attention is only half of the equation for Monahan.

"If I have learned anything throughout the process of writing three books, it is patience," says Monahan. "At first I sent work out there before it was even close to being ready. I've learned to slow down, to take my time to make the work the best I know how to make it. To revise and revise. To give the poems time to percolate inside of me. I'm not so impatient any more."

Monahan teaches creative writing across Saskatchewan, for organizations as diverse as the Sage Hill Writing Experience and the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild. Recently, Monahan led the Writing for Your Life project for the Canadian Mental Health Association, which gave her a profound awareness of what it is to live with mental illness and the stigma that surrounds it.

"This experience has been very much informing my own writing of late," says Monahan. "I am on my way with a fourth manuscript of poetry that speaks to the hard truth of living with mental illness. There is a history in my own family, too."

"It is these hard truths I want to explore in my poetry." ✍

# FROM IRAQ TO CANADA AND IN BETWEEN

Poet's selected works span 45 years

by Linda Alberta

Poetry and dictatorships go together like coffee and vinegar. But whether their cup is half full or half empty, some poets are unstoppable. They write during a dictatorship, they write from a cell in the dictator's prison, and they write after the dictator's demise, in a new country.

Edmonton poet and former Kurdistan refugee Jalal Barzanji demonstrates a lifelong passion for poetry with *Trying Again to Stop Time: Selected Poems*. In this selection from six previous poetry collections, Barzanji constructs panoramic life-views with sometimes only a handful of words. But the most surprising feature of this internationally accessible verse is that its original language was Kurdish.

"Translating the feeling and keeping the beauty of the stories as you move from one language into another is sensitive work. The translated poems are not identical to the originals, but I was lucky to find a good translator with English professor Sabah A. Salih," says Barzanji. He also says an English translation will introduce his poems to a potentially larger audience.

Although Barzanji was imprisoned and tortured by Saddam Hussein's cohorts, from 1986 to 1989, he says that he is never tempted to write protest poetry. He says protest poetry detracts from the aesthetics of poetry, and aesthetics to him are part of the magic that sustains poetry.

*"There is freedom of expression in Canada so I can write freely about any topic without fear."*

"I want to write for the world, not just for Kurds. So, I don't write resistance poetry because I don't want my poems to lose their beauty. Also, I don't want to write poems that push people towards death."

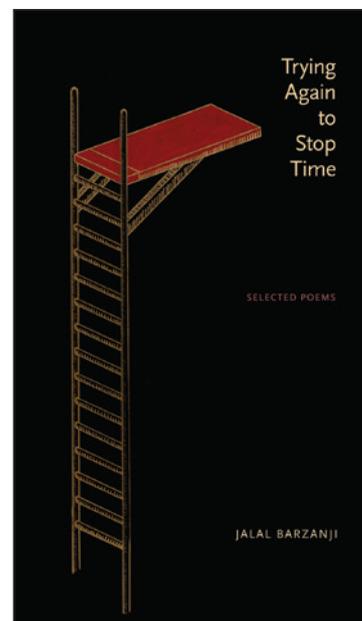
With selections chosen from a 45-year body of work, Barzanji's verse flows with a dream-like cadence. Marrying the spiritualism of Rumi with the classic symbolism of Leonard Cohen, topics shift according to the memories and experiences of a chosen year. He recounts life in a small village, the Kurdish war, immigrating to Canada, nature, beauty, and best of all he writes love poems to rival Byron, as in these lines from "Falling in Love":

*What are you doing in this desert?  
Moonlight won't allow your words  
to reach me.*

*That's why I must stand atop the  
world's ruin  
and sing your name*

From love poetry to snow poetry – arriving in Alberta in 1998 brought many changes for the Iraqi Kurdistan poet.

"The move definitely brought new elements and landscapes to my writing. There is freedom of expression in Canada so I can write freely about any topic without fear," he says.



## TRYING AGAIN TO STOP TIME: *Selected Poems*

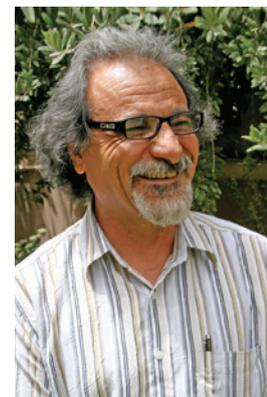
Jalal Barzanji  
Translated from Kurdish by Sabah A. Salih  
University of Alberta Press  
\$19.95 pb, 144 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-77212-043-1

Barzanji adds that poetry has the power to bring beauty and fresh ideas to everyday lives and dictators hate that. He equates being a "free" writer under a dictator with prison or death.

With a constitution protecting his freedom, life is different.

"What I enjoy most about Canada is the diversity, the respect for human dignity, the democracy, and peace. In Canada there is freedom of thought and writing," says Barzanji.

"Now I write poems as they come. I write a poem when the idea is ready inside of me, and I try to find words to make beautiful images." 🌿



## MORE POETRY

### AFGHANISTAN CONFESSIONS

Victor Enns

Enns takes on the voices of a variety of soldiers in the war in Afghanistan, telling their backstories, their fears, and their ways of coping in this powerful collection of poems. (Hagios, \$17.95 pb, 176 pages, ISBN: 978-1-926710-32-7)

### A CLEARING

Louise Carson

These poems are a meditation of the everyday – the joys and losses observed in the natural world as they closely mirror day-to-day human existence, with a mystical edge that opens them to a deeper understanding of homelessness, failed relationships, and loss in childbirth. (Signature, \$14.95 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927426-63-0)

### THE DAYS RUN AWAY

Robert Currie

Currie examines everyday turning points in this series of narrative poems, in boyhood activities such as setting traps and reading the Hardy Boys and in old age losses and frustrations.

(Coteau, \$16.95 pb, 120 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55050-608-2)

### EIGENHEIM

Joanne Epp

This debut collection of poems shapes and reshapes ideas of home. Examining death and birth, loss and love, deep searching and unquenchable longing, Epp reaches back to her rural Mennonite roots. (Turnstone, \$17.00 pb, 120 pages, ISBN: 978-0-888015-17-4)

### ELECTRIC AFFINITIES

Michael Pacey

In this collection of poems, everyday objects – a cup, a mirror, a pair of scissors – become points of departure, connecting them to larger questions of human nature, language, and the environment. (Signature, \$14.95 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927426-66-1)

### EXQUISITE MONSTERS

K. I. Press

These fearless poems splay open the intimacies of our lives – such as motherhood and mourning – juxtaposing them with pop culture myths. (Turnstone, \$17.00 pb, 112 pages, ISBN: 978-0-888015-25-9)

### HILLSDALE BOOK

Gerald Hill

This collection of poems fuses history, geography, and autobiography to create a document of life in Regina's suburbs, then and now, peeling back placid suburban archetypes to expose the messy, challenging systems underneath. (NeWest, \$19.95 pb, 140 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927063-81-1)

### HOMAGE TO HAPPINESS

Judith Krause

Contemplating the classic themes of lyric poetry – time, mortality, nature, and the contradictions of the human heart – Krause takes them to unexpected places. (Hagios, \$17.95 pb, 104 pages, ISBN: 978-1-926710-29-7)

### MEASURES OF ASTONISHMENT: POETS ON POETRY

League of Canadian Poets

This refreshing and eclectic mix of deeply personal and formal essays offers a glimpse into the minds of some of Canada's most influential poets, including Margaret Atwood, Tim Lilburn, Glen Sorestad, and Don McKay. (University of Regina, \$27.95 pb, 250 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88977-371-4)

### PAINTING OVER SKETCHES OF ANATOLIA

Leonard Neufeldt

This collection of poems is about war, revolution, the Holocaust, obsolete belief systems, Alzheimer's, and the ever-present potentialities of the autistic as well as the illusory in the spoken or written word. (Signature, \$14.95 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927426-65-4)

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MOTHS

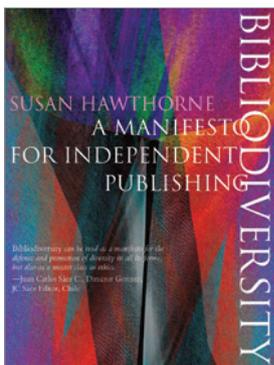
Shirley Camia

These poems are permeated by the spirit memories of the recently deceased who, as believed in Filipino culture, may return in the form of a moth, fragile but insistent. (Turnstone, \$17.00 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-0-888015-33-4)

### THE TONGUES OF THE EARTH: NEW AND SELECTED POEMS

Mark Abley

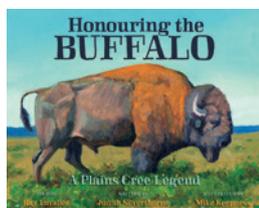
This collection includes 20 new poems along with the finest pieces from Abley's three previous books, poems that combine clarity and grace, high intelligence and deep feeling. (Coteau, \$16.95 pb, 128 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55050-610-5)



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# STOLEN MEMORIES

*Play tackles the horror that is early onset Alzheimer's disease*

by Kyla Neufeld

**B**eth Graham isn't exactly sure why she chose to write about something so terrifying. And at its core, terrifying is exactly what her play *The Gravitational Pull of Bernice Trimble* is.

Iris Trimble is coming to terms with her mother Bernice's early onset Alzheimer's disease. Iris, her sister Sarah, and her brother Peter must watch their mother slowly fall deeper into the grip of Alzheimer's as they try to stave off the disease.

"Alzheimer's is a great fear of mine," says the Edmonton-based playwright. "I can't imagine anything worse than losing memories because memories are what make us who we are. Alzheimer's steals your identity."

*Gravitational Pull*, which was first produced in 2013 at the Factory Theatre in Toronto, explores heavy themes and emotional material. To prepare, Graham did a great deal of research in order to make her characters' experiences with Alzheimer's authentic.

*"I can't imagine anything worse than losing memories because memories are what make us who we are."*

"I had been thinking about my own parents getting older and worrying about what might happen to them as they age. I guess I was searching for some sort of catharsis," she says.

"I read a few books about the disease. I surfed the net. I talked to a doctor. I talked to friends. I watched YouTube videos. And when my brain

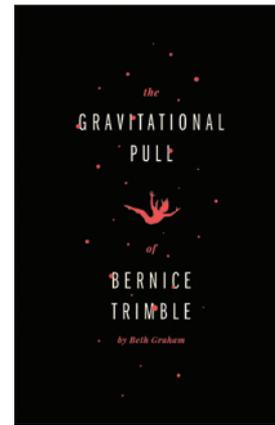
felt that it had absorbed enough information, I wrote."

Throughout the play, Iris, Sarah, and Peter all orbit around Bernice as they try to spend as much time as they can with their mother before she loses her memory completely. They find themselves reacting to Bernice's news in different ways: Sarah panics and loudly demands they go to another doctor for a second opinion; Peter quietly asks questions; Iris panics on the inside and feigns calm on the outside, determined to keep her family together. And Bernice. Bernice faces the disease head-on and keeps her pluck, even when she knows it's getting the better of her.

As the title suggests, Iris has her own gravitational pull, as the characters all came from her. She is the central figure in this play.

"I find starting a new play both exciting and daunting," says Graham. "Usually, I sit with an idea for a while and roll it around in my brain until the voices of the characters begin to emerge and then I start to write. Once I had found the voice of Iris I began to write. The other characters and the story all came from Iris – she was the seed."

Graham, who graduated from the University of Alberta's BFA acting program in 1998, is currently a member of the Playwright's Forum at the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton, where



## THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL OF BERNICE TRIMBLE

Beth Graham  
Playwrights Canada Press  
\$16.95 pb, 104 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-770913-30-1

she is working on a new play. She is also working on a commission with the Tarragon Theatre in Toronto.

"I always try to approach the emotional journey of the play from the character's perspective. Perhaps this is because I'm also an actor," she says.

"The characters give me the opportunity and the strength to live through the experience of the play." ✍



## MORE DRAMA

### DEAR JOHNNY DEERE

Ken Cameron, based on the music and lyrics of Fred Eaglesmith  
Johnny and his wife Caroline not only have to fight the government, the banks, technology, and nature itself to keep their farm, but also have to worry about whether their marriage can survive the return of a high school classmate. Featuring more than a dozen songs by Eaglesmith.  
(NeWest, \$18.95 pb, 136 pages,  
ISBN: 978-1-927063-82-8)

# The sweet smell of SUCCESS

*Dreams can come true when you work together*

by Charmagne Reimer de Veer

A novel for young people based on business how-to books is well, a novel concept. Karin Adams isn't afraid to follow uncharted territory in *Frostbite Hotel*, a hilarious look at a budding entrepreneur, who learns that success is about more than money.



## FROSTBITE HOTEL

Karin Adams  
Lorimer  
\$12.95 pb, 160 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-4594-0706-0

“*Frostbite Hotel* is about figuring out how to bring together two potentially competing concepts: achieving a personal dream and collaborating with others,” says Adams.

Kirby Katz is a dreamer who plans to become a millionaire tycoon. His inspiration is hotel baron William T. Williamson, whose book *How to Make Something from Nothing* is Kirby’s bible.

An ersatz snow fort-building competition at his school inspires Kirby to create a relaxing hotel experience for the other kids – for a price. Enough old candy bars and leftover change, and he’ll be rich – or at least on his way to it! He creates Frostbite Hotel,

puts together a team of friends as his staff, and slowly builds a business – ignoring the wishes of his friends in his race to the top of the school recess corporate ladder.

That is until a bully named The Bear catches on to Kirby’s idea and with his team of enforcers intimidates the other kids into frequenting his “hotel,” trampling on Kirby’s dream.

What follows is a lesson in collaboration that teaches Kirby the icy road to success can include the cooperation of other people.

“As many of my readers have noticed, Kirby’s behaviour sometimes sinks to the same level as that of The Bear,” says Adams. “Kirby has to go through some tough times and learn to tap into his creative side in order to build a business that balances his personal ambitions and his friendships.”

Adams says creating a story about a budding entrepreneur came simply from “the quirky image of a Grade 5 boy who idolizes a hotel tycoon.”

The fun of the book is not just in Kirby’s business story but also in the excitement of school recess after the first snowfall.

“I wanted to bring to life the icy-cold, snow-filled storyworld of winter recess. I wanted readers who know about blizzards and deep freezes to say, ‘Hey, that feels like home!’ ” says Adams. “I spent a lot of time thinking of the different ways a blustery winter engages our five senses, and tried to use language that makes winter leap off the page.

“If you can see your breath in the air as you read, then I’ve done my job!”

Although Adams has no plans to become a hotel tycoon, and while business is closed at *Frostbite Hotel*, she does liken her writing career to entrepreneurship.

“Writing is a kind of a business in the sense that your career is your passion, and it’s up to you to find the motivation within to keep going and keep creating,” she says. 🐾

*“Frostbite Hotel is about figuring out how to bring together two potentially competing concepts: achieving a personal dream and collaborating with others.”*

# STICKS AND STONES

*YA novel explores emotional and verbal abuse*

by Amanda Sanders

Winnipeg author Jodi Carmichael’s new young adult novel tackles a heavy topic that millions of women and girls face: abuse. Readers follow 16-year-old Julia, who has recently lost her father to cancer and is having a hard time coping.

She is on depression and anxiety medication, and the only good thing in her life is her boyfriend, Jeremy, who seems to be amazing. Carmichael soon reveals that Jeremy is not as sweet as he seems, and is actually emotionally abusing Julia – but he masks it with compliments and promises of love.

confrontation with the aggressive Jeremy. She becomes increasingly insecure, which gives Jeremy more power.

“Words hurt. They bury deep into you, far beyond a surface bruise,” says Carmichael. “They lodge themselves in your brain and wrap themselves around your self-confidence, squeezing life out of who you believe yourself to be as an individual.”

*Forever Julia* turned into a different kind of book from the romantic comedy or YA chicklit novel that Carmichael originally intended to write.

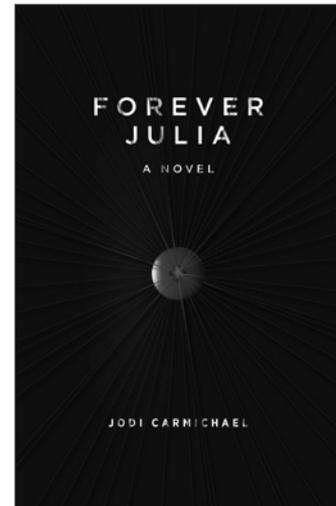
“The working title for the novel, for a long time, was *Who Needs a Romeo: A Tale of a Modern Juliet*. Although it was an entertaining read, that

version had zero dramatic action, and it fell flat in terms of character growth,” she says.

Carmichael participated in the Manitoba Writers’ Guild Sheldon Oberman Mentorship Program as an apprentice, where she worked with Carolyn Gray – playwright, puppeteer, and author. Gray helped Carmichael turn *Forever Julia* into the powerful novel it is.

Carmichael urges everyone that may be facing abuse to seek help.

“Although it may be hard, you need to ask for help. Talk to a parent or



counsellor. Counsellors are trained to help, and they have heard everything, so you can’t shock or offend them. You can also call Kids Help Phone at 1-800-668-6868. They offer web counselling and phone counselling. Their service is free and they are non-judgmental, confidential, provide services for those under age 20, and are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

She wants victims to remember that they are not alone.

“Sadly, millions of women and girls around the world are abused. No one has the right to hurt you in any way, and definitely not because they love you,” she says.

“Real love supports and nurtures; it does not smother, control, or hurt.”



## FOREVER JULIA

Jodi Carmichael  
Great Plains Publications  
\$14.95 pb, 266 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-927855-20-1

*“Words hurt. They bury deep into you, far beyond a surface bruise.”*

“Emotional abuse begins with stinging words, emotional blackmail, and controlling behaviour dressed up as attention and infatuation,” says Carmichael.

*Forever Julia* shows how abuse creeps into relationships, “how ‘smart’ girls like Julia can be drawn in, and ‘villains’ like Jeremy pull it off,” says Carmichael.

Tension builds as readers impatiently wait for Julia to see Jeremy for what he truly is. Jeremy tells Julia how to dress, how to act, who to be friends with, and what she can do, and Julia starts to change her actions to avoid

# AND YOU ARE?

*Teen novel explores the after effects of traumatic brain injuries*

by Yvonne Dick

**I**n Trina St. Jean's debut YA novel, *Blank*, Jessica is 15 and while she may not like who she is, she doesn't even know who she used to be. Diagnosed with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and retrograde amnesia, Jessica does not remember her family or anything about herself or her life before being injured on the family farm.

The Woman, the Man, and the Boy, as Jessica first thinks of her family, attempt to come to terms with their new reality, as does Jessica who is frustrated by her efforts to be who she was. Occasionally she takes her newfound rage (common in TBI injuries) out on a nearby mirror or the frog collection she no longer has any interest in. Throughout the book lies a thread of suspense – no one but Jessica knows exactly what happened on that Very Bad Day, and Jessica's past self (the Girl) isn't telling her.

The book, says St. Jean, was “one of the hardest things I've ever done.”

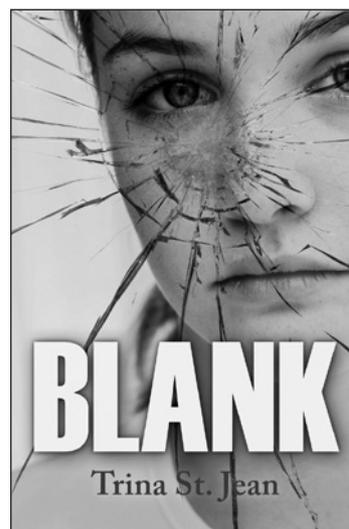
A labour of love, St. Jean worked on *Blank* over an eleven year period, all while completing a psychology degree, teaching, raising two children, and getting her MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College. In spite of the distractions of everyday life, the voice of Jessica was always somehow there for St. Jean, and by the time St. Jean's youngest was 11, she had completed the book.

As her children grew older, she says, she found it easier to just schedule a bit of regular writing time every week – one full day and two afternoons, “which usually turn into one half-day and two hours in the afternoons,” St. Jean laughs. She wouldn't have it any other way.

Spending time with young people probably helped her writing.

“I actually found it fairly natural to get into the mind of a teenager,” she says, “The character of Jessica came into my head as the voice of this girl. She's not me by any means, but I could relate to her. In the book she struggles to figure out her identity.”

St. Jean has been fascinated by memory and how the brain works since she was a teen. After her degree in psychology, she became even more curious, and went about learning the answers to her questions about how personality is shaped and the role of memory in identity development.



*“She’s not me by any means, but I could relate to her. In the book she struggles to figure out her identity.”*

That learning helped to make the story of Jessica building her sense of self intriguing and powerful.

St. Jean's thesis at Vermont College provided the basis for a second title she is working on. Her goal for writing the second one, she says, is under five years.

It won't be a sequel, though. To St. Jean and doubtless to her readers, *Blank* and its characters are complete at the end,

maybe not who they were or who they want to be, but just like her second novel, on their way.

Of her current project, she says, “It will be a different story, with different characters.” 🌿

## BLANK

Trina St. Jean  
Orca Publishers  
\$12.95 pb, 312 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-45980-807-2

# Haunted Hoops

*Seeing ghosts adds another layer of stress for young protagonist*

by Perry Grosshans

The loss of a mentor, whether it be a relative, teacher, or friend, can be devastating to a young person. Imagine then the stress it would cause if that mentor returned as some ghostly apparition.

This is exactly what happens in Patti Grayson's new novel for middle school readers, *Ghost Most Foul*. Thanks to Coach Nola Blyth, Summer



Widden's grade 8 basketball team has never performed better, and she even names Summer as team captain before the Christmas break. But disaster strikes over the holidays when the coach's plane crashes over the Caribbean. For the next few weeks, Summer tries to deal with her grief, but when she, and only she, starts to see Coach Nola's ghost, the stress

starts to get to her, and she finds that only her friend Dodie can help her figure out what it all means.

The idea for *Ghost Most Foul* came to Grayson while she herself was contemplating the recent passing of a colleague, a teacher who had taught one of her own children, and who was a very positive influence.

"This made me reflect on the influences that teachers, coaches, and mentors have on the lives of youth," she says. "I thought about how words spoken by someone can resonate and leave a permanent impression in another's life."

Grayson is a self-proclaimed scaredy-cat when it comes to spooky movies and books, so for her to delve into a ghost story might seem a little strange at first. But when it comes to personal accounts of people and their stories of encountering ghosts, she becomes intrigued.

"My mother had a spooky sixth sense about things when I was younger," she says. "I remember

one particular day when she 'paced the floor' continuously. Late that afternoon, our family received a telegraph bearing tragic news that she couldn't possibly have anticipated."

It was with this sense of gentle mystery Grayson tackled the ghost part of her story in *Ghost Most Foul*.

"I wanted to maintain a balance that left the reader with a shred of hope that the haunting could actually be for positive reasons," she says.

The mental stress that Summer deals with in *Ghost Most Foul* can be all too real, and it was something Grayson wished to explore. "I wanted to maintain a realistic edge along with the layer of the paranormal," she says. She adds that times have changed since she first wrote the book.

"The dialogue surrounding such things as bullying and mental health has subsequently opened up so much in the past five years or so," she says.

While she hopes that readers enjoy the book first and foremost, her bigger hope is the book reaches out to people.

"I hope the book might have some ability to resonate at a deeper level – that the reader might recognize their own similar predicaments or even their own foibles, and be moved by this emotionally or actively." ✍



## GHOST MOST FOUL

Patti Grayson  
Coteau Books  
\$10.95 pb, 192 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-55050-614-3

# Through the looking glass

*Fantasy and adventure at the forefront of new novel*

by Paula E. Kirman

**E**ric and his friend Jessica make a shocking discovery in the isolated village of Middle Wogglehole, where Eric is spending the summer with his father, the eccentric Septimus Trinket. Using a mysterious sphere to open a portal, the two friends enter Koronada, a country in another universe, where they fight for their lives against the powerful and evil Galderon. *The Sphere of Septimus*, the latest novel for young people by Simon Rose, is an exciting story of fantasy and adventure.



Rose is originally from England but now lives and writes in Calgary. His English roots provided details for some of the novel's setting.

"The fictional village of Middle Wogglehole that is featured in the early chapters is located in rural Derbyshire in England. Many of the features of the village and surrounding area are based on real locations in that part of the world. Other parts of the early story are based on my own childhood memories," explains Rose. These memories provided inspiration for Septimus's home, and also for some of the characters, including Septimus himself.

Rose says the world of Koronada and all its natural features, realms, cities, and inhabitants is in some ways similar to other fantasy worlds such as Middle Earth, Westeros, Narnia, and so on.

"The mythology of ancient Egypt partially inspired one of the characters, too, but Koronada is very much my own invention," he says. "I also created the map of Koronada that appears at

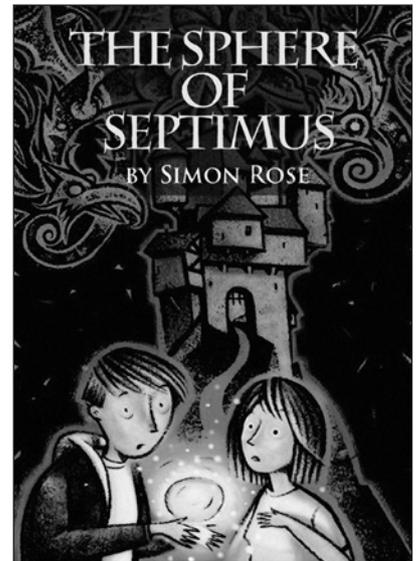
the beginning of the novel, although the version that appears in the book was designed by a professional artist."

Writing for young people in today's world has some challenges, Rose says – one needs to create stories that middle school readers will find engaging and want to keep reading.

"There are so many distractions today for children of this age. It's important to create stories that are exciting, and have great beginnings and page-turning action. You don't want to give the reader any excuse to put the book down. After all, there's no guarantee that they're going to pick it up again."

At the same time, there is much Rose enjoys about writing for this age level. "I enjoy creating stories about topics and themes that interested me at this age. These include time travel, history, parallel universes, the paranormal, superheroes, alternate realities, ancient mysteries and civilizations, and so on," he says.

"I enjoy writing stories that the reader can truly relate to and in which



the young characters solve the issues or mystery by themselves, with a high degree of danger, suspense, and intrigue along the way."

Rose hopes that his young readers simply enjoy the story and the imaginary world he has created in the novel.

"If they're aspiring writers, I hope that it might encourage them to invent their own fantasy worlds in which to set exciting adventure stories.

Perhaps readers would also like to see the novel's characters have more adventures that take place in Koronada," he says.

"There's certainly a great deal of potential for sequels to *The Sphere of Septimus*." 📖

## THE SPHERE OF SEPTIMUS

Simon Rose  
Tradewind Books  
\$9.95 pb, 136 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-896580-75-3

# SMALL FISH IN A BIG POND

*New book helps teens realize they aren't alone*

by Laura Kupcis

**W**e all know being a teen is tough, but a bit of communication and understanding can help kids get through that trying time of life.



“There are going to be times when you feel on top of the world, that ‘you got this.’ Then there will be days when you walk in the house and want nothing more than to lock yourself in your room and live out the rest of your life under your covers,” writes Treena Wynes in her latest book, *Am I the Only*

*One? Struggling Being a Teen.*

Herein lies the reason this book will relate to the teenagers who read it: teens will quickly realize that what they are feeling is totally normal and is happening to everyone else.

While being a teenager has always been tough – a time fraught with strong feelings – the advent of technology, and the increased reliance on social media for communication, has made this time even harder. Instead of just comparing themselves to their peers, as was the case 15 to 20 years ago, teens are now comparing themselves to millions of people.

“Although kids are highly connected to the big open world through our modern technology, they still feel isolated and alone,” Wynes notes.

Adolescence is a time to explore one’s identity, to figure out where one belongs, and, most importantly, a time to develop self-esteem. Today’s world is making that extremely difficult. Teens often deal with more competitiveness and negativity due to social media.

“Technology has allowed us to say things you would never say to someone’s face. It’s become a very harsh world and most of the attacks are in the direction of young people.”

With children as young as nine years old taking their own lives (the national rates are staggering), and self-harming rates on the rise, Wynes felt it

important the book cover a wide gamut of issues plaguing teens these days – all with the hope of making these teenagers’ years just a little easier.

“We are not born with this self-image. What created this negative self-image? Where did these thoughts and beliefs come from?” Wynes questions. “I try to address these things in my book. I am hoping I can help teens sort through some of these feelings and reach out for help.”

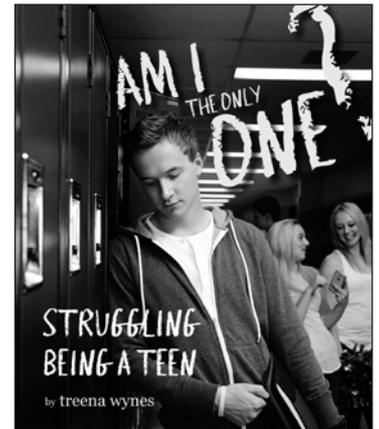
Teens resort to suicide and self-harm as a solution to stop their emotional pain. “It happens when their negative self-talk takes over, telling them they are worthless, stupid, unlikeable, ugly, and useless,” she says.

***“We are not born with this self-image. What created this negative self-image? Where did these thoughts and beliefs come from?”***

“They are hopeless about their future and feel that they are burdening those they love.”

Wynes says she hopes her book will get adults and teens talking about the pressures facing adolescents today. If kids feel safe to talk about their struggles, then help and intervention can happen sooner, in a proactive versus reactive manner.

“Adolescence is a critical time for the development of self-esteem, life skills, emotional and mental health,” Wynes says. “We need to bridge those communication gaps, provide support, and be positive role models.” ✍



## **AM I THE ONLY ONE?**

***Struggling Being a Teen***

Treena Wynes

Your Nickel's Worth Publishing

\$16.95 pb, 208 pages

ISBN: 978-1-927756-37-9

## MORE YOUNG ADULT AND KIDS BOOKS

### PICTURE BOOKS

#### *DO TREES SNEEZE?*

Jean Freeman, illustrated by Val Lawton  
This colourful, whimsical story asks an age-old question as it traces nature's cycles and promotes respect for the trees around us. (Your Nickel's Worth, \$12.95 pb, 32 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927756-32-4)

#### *GRATEFUL*

Marion Mutala, illustrated by E. R.  
This charming book presents a conversation between a daughter and mother through the years – from the narrator at age five through to when she is a mother herself. (Your Nickel's Worth, \$9.95 pb, 24 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927756-29-4)

#### *MR. JACOBSON'S WINDOW*

Deborah Froese  
Emily-Ann learns to get to know her neighbour, old Mr. Jacobson, who is not as scary as she first thought when seeing him scowl through his window. (Peanut Butter Press, \$19.95 hc, 32 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927735-04-6)

#### *THE TWO TREES*

Sally Meadows, illustrated by Trudi Olfert  
When Jaxon sees his brother Syd having trouble interacting with other kids, he is torn between loyalty to his brother and the frustration of having a sibling who is "different," in this poignant story addressing Autism Spectrum Disorder. (Your Nickel's Worth, \$14.95 pb, 40 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927756-43-0)

## FOR MIDDLE YEARS READERS

#### *BETWEEN SHADOWS*

Kathleen Cook Waldron  
When 12-year-old Ari inherits his grandfather's lakeside land and cottage, his family wants him to sell it to a luxury hotel developer. But Ari doesn't want to lose the connection to his beloved grandfather, and must speak up for his hopes. (Coteau, \$8.95 pb, 112 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55050-612-9)

#### *BUTTON HILL*

Michael Bradford  
Dekker and his little sister Riley are stuck in Button Hill with their weird Aunt Primrose. There's nothing to do, until Dekker discovers a secret world and has to travel to the Nightside to rescue Riley from the Blood Knights. (Orca, \$9.95 pb, 256 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4598-0775-6)

#### *LOST IN THE BACKYARD*

Alison Hughes  
No nature lover, Flynn is a young boy in a light hoodie and inappropriate footwear who gets lost in a snowy forest full of wild creatures. Will he get rescued, or at least charge his phone? (Orca, \$9.95 pb, 136 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4598-0794-5)

#### *MISSING IN PARADISE*

Larry Verstraete  
In his debut work of fiction, award-winning writer for young people Verstraete tells the story of Nate and his best friend, Simon, as they go off on a search for the gold that Nate's grandfather died before finding. (Rebelight, \$9.95 pb, 144 pages, ISBN: 978-0-9939390-2-0)

## YA FICTION

#### *EMPTY CUP*

Suzanne Costigan  
This debut novel is told in the voice of Raven, a 17-year-old who is abused by her mother's boyfriend and betrayed by her mother and who has to learn who she can trust and depend on. (Rebelight, \$12.95 pb, 180 pages, ISBN: 978-0-9939390-4-4)

#### *ROCK THE BOAT*

Sigmund Brouwer  
Aspiring singer-songwriter Webb arrives in Nashville to make his mark, but he discovers how tough the music business can be. (Orca, \$9.95 pb, 120 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4598-0455-5)

## YA FANTASY

#### *LOOD MATTERS*

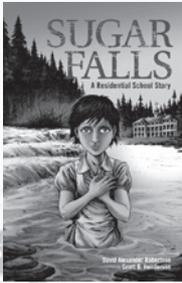
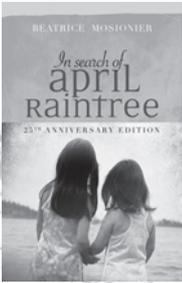
Aviva Bel'Harold  
Brittany used to be a normal teen, but after she found her best friend dead, she can't eat or sleep, everyone she touches develops bruises, and she's attracted to the smell of blood. (EDGE, \$14.95 pb, 336 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77053-073-7)

#### *A DRAGON'S MAGE*

Cecilia Lietz  
Two years after high school, everything's working out for Samson Drake Slayer: he has a job as a cop and the girl of his dreams. But warriors are being prepared and plots are afoot, and Samson must find a way to stop things from going too far or people will die. (iUniverse, \$29.95 pb, 588 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4917-3319-6)

#### *ENSLAVEMENT*

Melinda Friesen  
The first book of the One Bright Future series follows Rielle, who is forced into a Community Service Contract – a legalized form of slavery – when her parents refused to comply with the OneEarth Bank's demands after a global economic collapse. (Rebelight, \$13.95 pb, 228 pages, ISBN: 978-0-9939390-0-6)



## Must-Read Young Adult Titles

Listed on **CBC's 100 Novels**  
Revisit the Past, Imagine the Future  
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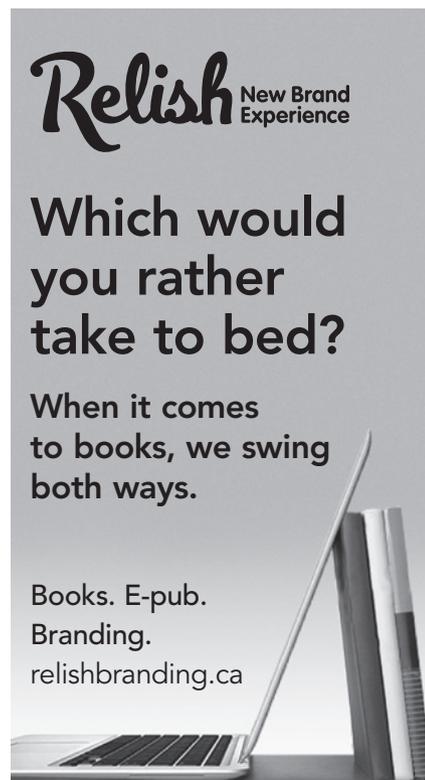
Our cover illustration is by Terry Corrigan at Relish New Brand Experience, courtesy of Pemmican Publications. The beautiful image is the cover artwork from *Culloo* by Murielle Cyr, which is showcased in our First Nations, Métis and Inuit feature.

### Whoops! Math is hard!

In the excitement of launching our new format last year, we inadvertently mis-numbered our issues. The Spring 2014 issue should have been #64, and the Fall 2014 issue should have been #65. Our apologies.

### Wondering how to order?

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## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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**YVONNE DICK** is a central Alberta magazine writer with more than two decades of experience who enjoys reading anything she can get her hands on.

**MARGARET ANNE FEHR** is a freelance writer who resides in Milton, Ontario.

**DAVID JÓN FULLER** is a Winnipeg writer and editor.

**MARGARET GOLDIK** is a freelance editor and reviewer, as well as Executive Secretary of the Quebec Library Association.

**IAN GOODWILLIE** is a freelance writer based out of Saskatoon who contributes regularly to *The Feedback Society* and *The Winnipeg Review*. He blogs, writes screenplays and short fiction, and maintains a day job writing radio advertising. It's the long way of saying he spends a lot of time in front of a computer.

**ARIEL GORDON** is a Winnipeg writer.

**BEV SANDELL GREENBERG** is a Winnipeg writer and editor.

**PERRY GROSSHANS** used to be the General Manager of the Winnipeg International Writers Festival, but is now the Publishing and Arts consultant for the Government of

Manitoba. This was Perry's last article for *PbN*. We wish Perry all the best.

**LIZ KATYNSKI** is a writer and communications consultant. Visit her website at [LizWords.com](http://LizWords.com).

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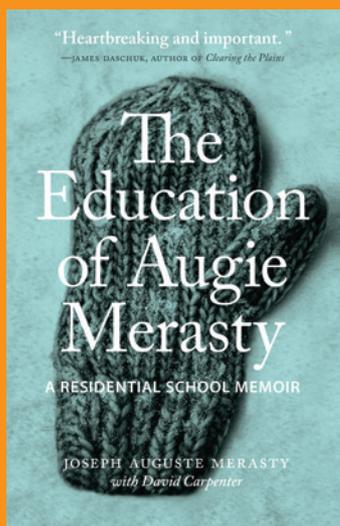
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***The Education of Augie Merasty: A Residential School Memoir***  
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“Unlike many of his peers who suffered similar or worse abuse silently, Merasty remained courageously determined to publish a book that would expose the injustices he and so many other children endured. This book offers a glimpse into Merasty’s life in the residential school, exposing a terrible regime where evil went entirely unchecked. A quick read, it’s nevertheless a historically significant one.”—*Publisher’s Weekly*



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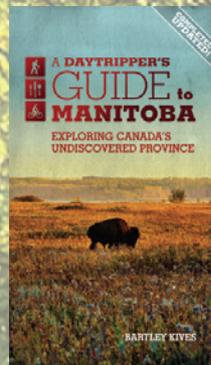
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