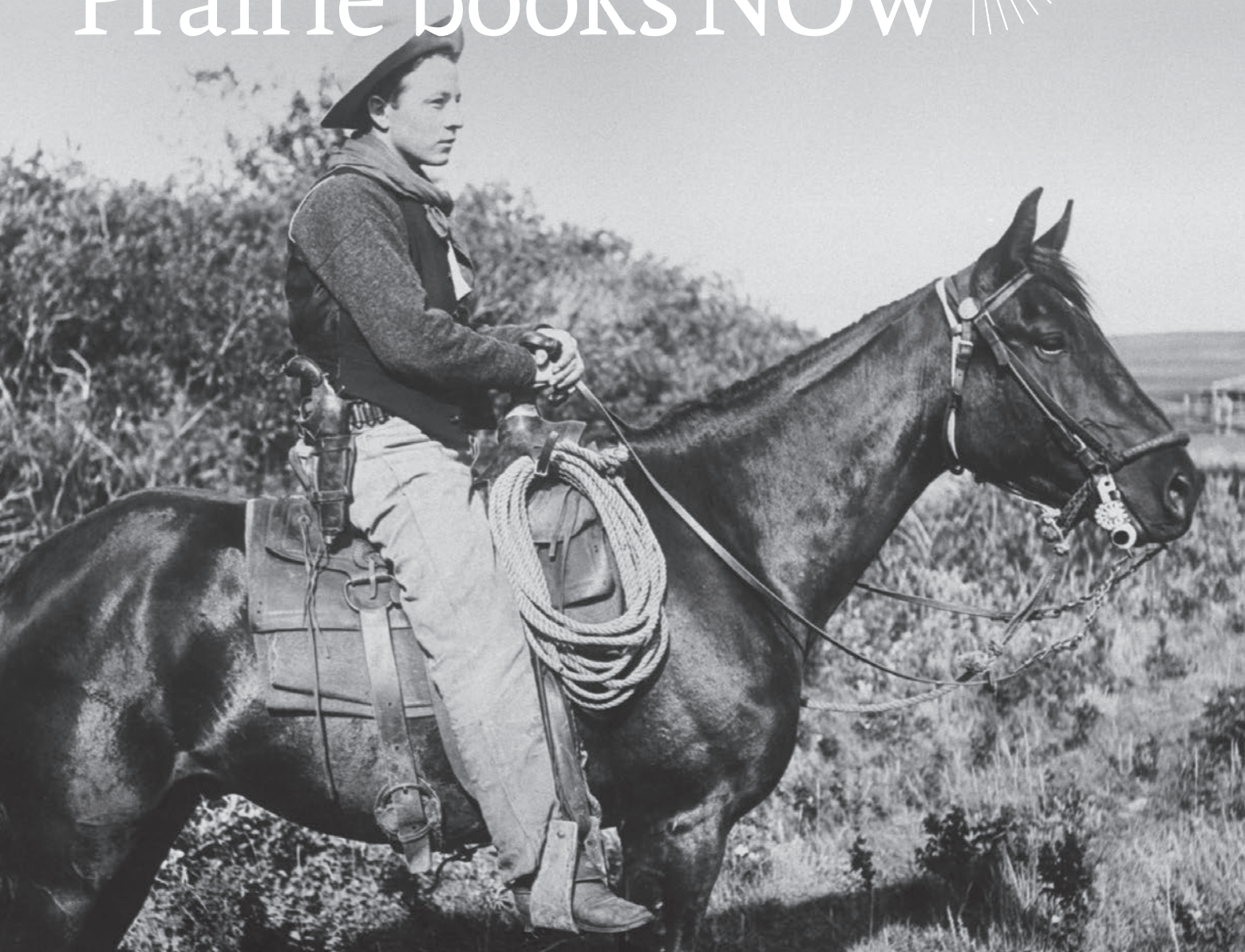


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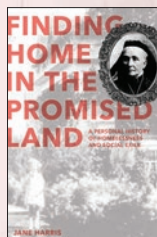
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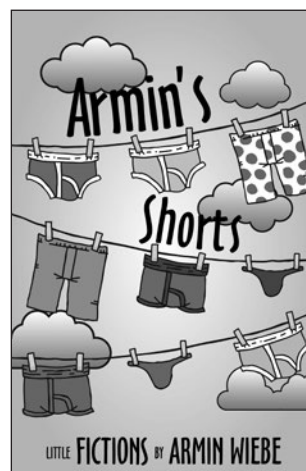
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He writes short SHORTS

Collection offers a brief retrospective of Armin Wiebe's career

by Margaret Anne Fehr

There's an aspect of a literary homecoming in Armin Wiebe's recent collection of short fiction, *Armin's Shorts*. The stories represent an offering of Wiebe's creations, encompassing nearly 40 years of "little fictions" strewn hither and yon in western Canadian grass roots publications, including *Prairie Fire*, *Grain*, and *Rhubarb*, and numerous anthologies.



ARMIN'S SHORTS

Armin Wiebe
Turnstone Press
\$19.00 pb, 304 pages
ISBN: 978-0-88801-546-4

The opportunity to round up these wayward progenies was not to be squandered, says Wiebe.

"Gathering my short fiction into one book had been on my mind for some time, and being closer to 70 than to 60 gives one some incentive to do that."

He explains that about half of the stories had been published in small magazines with rather specialized audiences, while the unpublished pieces were at risk of vanishing should we stop believing in bits and bytes.

"I felt that readers might get some enjoyment from these stories if they were gathered in a book," he says.

Wiebe also wrote a number of stories specifically for this book, and he appreciates the

attractions of the short form, particularly the reduced time commitment, which is "refreshing after the eternity of struggling with a novel."

Now into his third retirement from teaching, Wiebe recognizes a pattern to his productivity. "The first one lasted a year and I wrote one novel. The second one lasted seven years and I completed two novels and a draft of a third. In this third retirement I've written a draft of a novel waiting to be rewritten, a full-length stage play, a one-act stage play (both produced), and some new stories for *Armin's Shorts*."

"I still enjoy the process of writing which is a pre-requisite for the thrill of having written."

Readers of Wiebe's novels will recognize and become re-acquainted with Wiebe's motley, unvarnished cast of characters including Oata and Yasch of *The Salvation of Yasch Siemens* and Beethoven Blatz of *The Moonlight Sonata of Beethoven Blatz*, the stage play produced by Theatre Projects Manitoba in 2011 that garnered both popular and critical acclaim.

The previously written stories that made the cut met a few benchmarks. "The main selection criterion was that the stories had not appeared in my previous books," Wiebe says. "The second criterion was that I was not embarrassed by them."

The more seasoned Wiebe resisted the urge to substantially revise his earlier work, and did only copy edits to smooth out the awkward passages.

"I let the stories stand as they were when I wrote them," he says.

As for imposing themes, Wiebe clarifies, "There may well be themes running through these stories, but I tend to allow them to emerge from stories rather than writing stories to fit a preconceived theme."

Wiebe is probably best known for his comic vision.

"While I frequently see experience through a comic lens, the comedy happens because of the honesty of the characters' thoughts as they encounter the incongruities and ironies in the world around them," he says.

"At times, too, the characters are clowns with oversized painted smiles hiding the sad face underneath." 🐾

ONCE UPON A MIDNIGHT DREARY

Novel explores the effects of climate change, war

by David Jón Fuller

Harold Johnson's fifth novel *Corvus* is set in an imagined late twenty-first century, in which climate change and war have dramatically changed Canada.

The idea for *Corvus* came when Johnson heard David Suzuki, Al Gore, and James Lovelock discuss climate change. Gore asserted climate change could be fixed. Lovelock said it was too late; climate change is the new reality. He advised Suzuki to move north and build nuclear reactors for electricity.

CORVUS

Harold Johnson
Thistledown Press
\$19.95 pb, 282 pages
ISBN: 978-1-77187-051-1

"Climate change is not global warming. It is more severe weather, bigger storms, more floods, longer droughts. Wars are predicted, and seeing the political climate in the USA, I imagined the wars occurring there."

Johnson has served in the navy, and has worked as trapper and fisherman, a miner, a lumberjack, a heavy equipment operator and mechanic, a firefighter, and a tree planter. He now works as a Crown prosecutor in La Ronge, the town in which *Corvus* is set.

But the La Ronge in *Corvus* is no longer a small town. It is a huge city, transformed by the collapse of North American agriculture, refugees from the south, and two intra-American wars. Two main characters, Lenore and George, are up-and-coming prosecutors, aiming for a shot at a

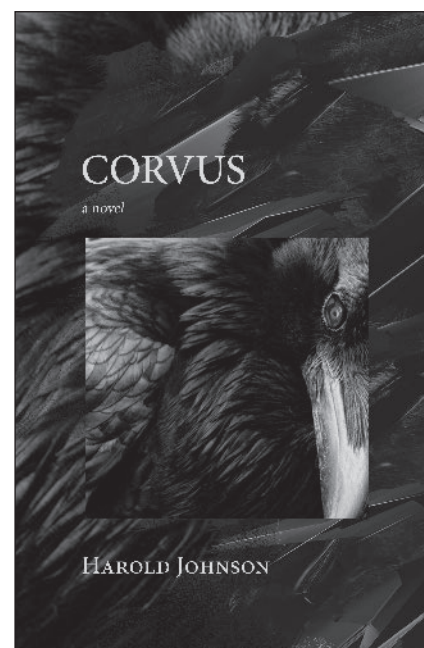
better life, such as those offered in exclusive communities floating high above the ground. A third, Richard, just wants to live an ethical life on the margins, but finds poorer communities off the grid have their own hierarchies.

"I took the idea that people will move north and increased the population of a small town in northern Saskatchewan to a megacity, added some technology, and simply wrote those things that are already predicted," says Johnson.

"Climate change will be a new era in human history," says Johnson, who over a lifetime of working outside, became a skilled weather forecaster but no longer trusts the signs he used to. "Like the weather, we cannot accurately predict what is coming. I do believe that we have to get ready for it."

"Like the weather, we cannot accurately predict what is coming."

Lenore's and Richard's wartime experiences still haunt them. George seeks an understanding of the natural world without knowing how – one of the ways he tries is to buy an organic recreational vehicle. His ORV is a lab-grown raven construct, large enough for a person to wear and pilot via mental commands. Soaring through the air – though not high enough to reach



one of the floating cities – leads George to question his entire worldview.

The book takes its name from the Latin word for "raven," and each character encounters ravens, or, perhaps even Raven, a central character. Some realize the old natural cycles are breaking down or changing. Sundogs no longer give an accurate indication of coming weather, nor does the behaviour of bees (few or which are left).

"Raven is my friend. I have heard him speak and I wondered what he was trying to say," says Johnson.

Raven, it seems, has much to say.

"Raven is a magical being that has been around for a long time. I needed someone to speak for nature, and Raven volunteered," says Johnson.

"We have to be careful of him, though; he is a trickster." 🦅

The sum of its parts

Debut collection examines social issues

by Bev Sandell Greenberg

It was stint at theatre school first sparked Lana Pesch's interest in writing.

"Twenty years ago, I was studying theatre at Dawson College in Montreal and ended up writing plays for the stage and radio. I even started a novel, then began writing short fiction," she says.

For the past seven years, Pesch has focused on writing short stories, experimenting with techniques and subject matter. The nine stories in her debut collection, *Moving Parts*, encompass a wide range of themes and characters. Several pieces take place in Toronto, Pesch's current home,

and like her, two of the protagonists come from rural Saskatchewan.

"Not a word is wasted in a short story, but it can cover a lot of territory," says Pesch. "It can, and should, be as complex and provocative as a novel."

Admittedly though, she didn't intentionally set out to write a collection.

"It evolved over time. It took years," she says. "I was reading short stories and sometimes trying to imitate style and form, writing about characters and ideas I was curious about. The penny finally dropped after a lot of writing (and rewriting). At some point, the story tells the writer what it needs to be."

Pesch likes to write about characters who are in trouble, stuck, or broken.

"I am attracted to them because I'm curious about the choices a person makes and the consequences of those choices. Also, what has happened to create the situation in which the character finds him or herself?"

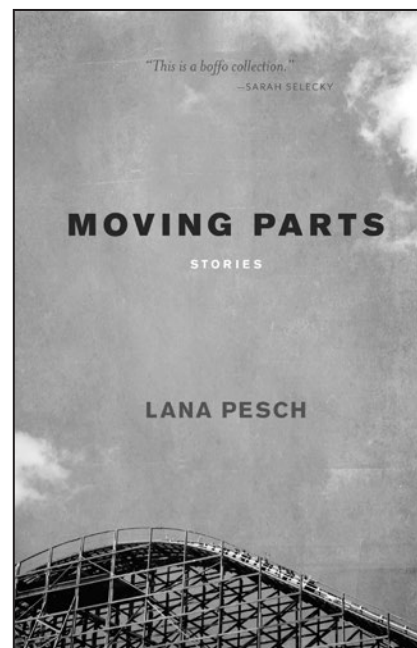
Included in the collection are stories dealing with social issues, such as coming out, assisted suicide, and the sensationalism of criminals by the media. Writing, says Pesch, is a way to process things she finds difficult, absurd, unfair or sorrowful.

According to Pesch, the assisted suicide story was inspired by something she read in a newspaper. The story stayed with her, so she explored it through different angles and points of view, and "Brotherhood" is the result.

"Habits of Creature" came from a friend's idea about a man coming out at Thanksgiving dinner. Based on a true crime, "Natural Life" stuck with Pesch as well. It centres on a murderer and her TV interviewer, who were former childhood friends.

Other stories deal with relationships. The titular story focuses on a date between two lonely young people. In "Chewing Slower is a Sign of Mindfulness," the protagonist's lengthy bus trip offers her time to draw some startling conclusions about her ex-husband and their marriage. The humorous epistolary story "The Rogues and Scoundrels among Us" starts out as a complaint letter about a hair removal product, but later discloses many intimate details about the protagonist's life.

In Pesch's opinion, the book is about the many journeys we're on, not so



MOVING PARTS

Lana Pesch
Arsenal Pulp Press
\$17.95 pb, 262 pages
ISBN: 978-1-55152-624-9

"I'm curious about the choices a person makes and the consequences of those choices."

much the destination. Ideally, she hopes that the stories in the collection will help readers feel more connected to the people in their lives, to strangers and humanity.

"A short story needs to take its reader on a journey with selected brushstrokes," she says. "It should also make you wonder and question." 🍷

MOVES LIKE A BUTTERFLY

Van Camp releases graphic novel, short story collection

by Ian Goodwillie

When someone refers to the hardest working person in show business, the mind automatically drifts to the late, great James Brown. When you want to talk about the hardest working person in the world of writing, Richard Van Camp is quite possibly that man. This fall he launches his fourth short story collection, *Night Moves*, and his latest graphic novel, *A Blanket of Butterflies*.

And that's on top of a host of other creative pursuits.

"When inspiration comes," he says, "it's the story that's the boss. It shows me quickly what it wants to be: a baby book, a graphic novel, a short story, a novel, a children's book."

Featuring the art of Scott Henderson, *A Blanket of Butterflies* is the story of Japanese man coming to Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, to collect a suit of samurai armour from a museum. Once there, the man finds the sword is missing and goes on the dangerous path to retrieve it, a path that also helps him discover the Dene people.

A real-life suit of armour at that very museum was the inspiration for this story.

"There was a real suit of samurai armour in our Fort Smith museum," says Van Camp, "and seeing it for myself, I wrote the story in my head standing there with my mouth wide open."

Why move from prose to a visual medium for this story? As the author quite accurately puts it, "Prose wouldn't have done this story justice." He's

right. *A Blanket of Butterflies* is an engaging story framed by stunning visuals, both in the action scenes and in the quieter moments.

"The fun is in the crafting something visually poetic and timeless in message. At the same time who can deny the skull throttling ballet of a great battle scene," says Van Camp.

It makes for an excellent graphic novel, just like the stories collected in *Night Moves* take full advantage of the short story form.

"I think short stories are perfect galaxies just like Saturday nights loaded with promise," says Van

Camp eloquently summing up the allure of short story collections and what keeps bringing him back to this form of storytelling.

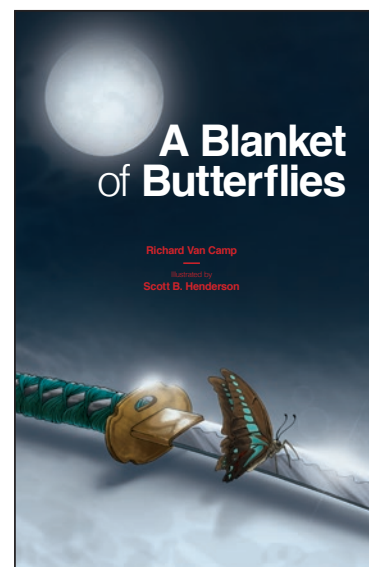
Many of the same characters Van Camp has explored in previous collections have returned, and also appear in *A Blanket of Butterflies*. Beyond the characters, there are other connection points between the two projects. "The samurai sword that Flinch sees in Benny's kitchen in the short story "Because of What I Did" in *Night Moves* is the same samurai sword honoured in *A Blanket of Butterflies*," he points out.

"I think short stories are perfect galaxies just like Saturday nights loaded with promise."

But why keep coming back to the same cast? "I'm just so interested in their lives," Van Camp says.

Van Camp genuinely cares for his characters, and wants to give the reader an ongoing window into their lives.

"I'd love for readers to truly enjoy the stories in *Night Moves* and discover or rediscover how all of my books are connected." 🍷



A BLANKET OF BUTTERFLIES

Richard Van Camp
Illustrated by Scott B. Henderson
Highwater Press-Portage & Main
\$18.95 pb, 48 pages
ISBN: 978-1-55379-548-3

NIGHT MOVES

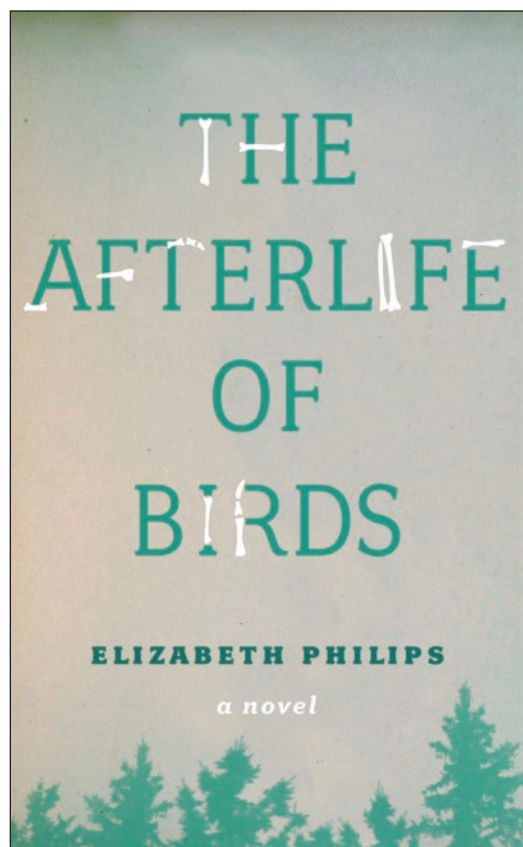
Richard Van Camp
Enfield & Wizenty-Great Plains
\$19.95 pb, 200 pages
ISBN: 978-1-927855-23-2

Words take FLIGHT

Debut novel a modern love story

by Margaret Goldik

Elizabeth Philips has received the Saskatchewan Book Awards' poetry award twice, so it should come as no surprise that the prose in her first novel, *The Afterlife of Birds*, sings.



"Initially the transition to prose was quite a struggle, until I realized that the novel was poetic," says Philips. "My attention to word use, and metaphor, was going to be as crucial to the success of the novel as it would be in a poem. This freed me to use more of the skills I brought with me from poetry.

"Through the course of writing the novel, I learned to balance my love of language with the practical necessity of moving the characters along a journey from the beginning of the story to its conclusions."

"Nature is more mysterious, and more abiding than we sometimes give it credit for."

Philips's characters are flawlessly rendered, and the sweetness and

unexpectedness of the love story blend with the descriptions of nature to make *The Afterlife of Birds* a delight to read.

The central character is Henry, a shy young man, living alone and working at a job he dislikes. His life is enriched by his hobby of bird articulation, that is, putting together bird skeletons.

"I came up with Henry's hobby pretty much by instinct," Philips explains.

"I didn't actually know that people articulated bird skeletons when I decided that Henry loved bones and that he reconstructed the skeletons of birds. Then I did some research and discovered that this was a genuine vocation for some biologists and for amateurs who simply enjoy the challenge

of 'remaking' a bird's skeleton into something beautiful."

THE AFTERLIFE OF BIRDS

Elizabeth Philips
Freehand Books
\$21.95 pb, 314 pages
ISBN: 978-1-55481-265-3

Henry's life is not solitary. Brother Dan is pursuing a new obsession, running. As he trains for a marathon, their widowed mother involves Henry in keeping an eye on him. Henry's relationship with his brother dominates the novel.

"Henry does love Dan despite how much he has lived in Dan's shadow," Philips says. "Perhaps Henry was in some sense hiding in his brother's shadow – seeking camouflage there, so he wouldn't be seen by others, because he was shy, and because he wasn't sure who he was, who he wanted to be in a way that distinguished him from Dan."

"Nature is more powerful than all our attempts to subdue it beneath concrete and office towers."

And until a pregnant Marcie came into his life like a force field, "Henry could watch his brother acting in the world, taking risks and having relationships, and live vicariously this way, without taking risks himself," say the author.

Henry connects to nature as well as people. His love of birds and animals, of the woods, and of the river that runs through the city he lives in reflects some of Philips's own passion for wilderness.

She admits some of Henry's favourite haunts are also hers: the riverbank in

Saskatoon, and the Torch River and boreal forest in northern Saskatchewan.

"I think the point of Henry's engagement with nature in the city is that a city also lives in nature," she says. "And I think nature will overcome a city eventually – nature is

more powerful than all our attempts to subdue it beneath concrete and office towers.

"I believe this is a hopeful message: that nature is more mysterious, and more abiding than we sometimes give it credit for." 🌿

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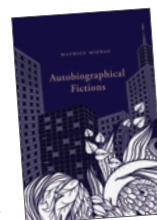


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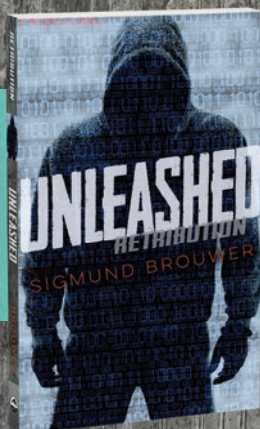
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A GRAPHIC HISTORY

Graphic novel takes a new look at Canadian Confederation

by David Jón Fuller

For many Canadians, learning our history is a bit of a chore. Maybe because Canada's story is, well, boring. Right?

Perhaps we should be looking at it with fresh eyes.

Alexander Finbow is one of the people behind the bestselling graphic novel *The Loxleys and the War of 1812*, and its sequel, *The Loxleys and Confederation*. Originally from Great Britain, now a Canadian citizen, he says all this was new to him.

“Our riches lie in the way we interact, the gifts we trade, the stories we share – nothing else.”

“In England, they don't talk about Canadian history,” he says. Growing up, he learned about Napoleonic part of the War of 1812. He was shocked when, in Canada, he saw commemorations of the burning of the White House and thought it had to be made up.

He also noticed that even Canadians don't seem to be that aware of seminal events, such as the formation of our country.

“I didn't know much about Confederation. It turned out there was a lot less information in people's heads in Canada about that than the War of 1812.”

Mark Zuehlke was a historical consultant on the earlier book, but, he says, “for *Confederation* I was the lead story writer – creating characters

such as Lillian and integrating the Loxleys into the true story of the birth of Canada through the Confederation process. It was a very exciting and challenging undertaking.”

One of the challenges, he says, was to make the story engaging to young readers, which he did by fleshing out the historical characters such as John A. MacDonald and George Brown, “so that Lillian and the other Loxleys in the story could interact with them as living and breathing individuals with all their strengths and weaknesses and various character traits rather than as historical cutouts.”

The newest graphic novel picks up with descendants of the Loxley family, but also places Confederation in 1867 within the context of European relations with Indigenous peoples.

To do this, University of Manitoba professor Niigaanwewidam Sinclair contributed to the story and wrote the afterword.

The book starts with a prologue showing a 1534 encounter between Jacques Cartier and Donnacona of the Iroquois, including how Donnacona's sons were taken by Cartier to France.

That thread of the exploitation of First Nations is echoed throughout the book. During the hubbub of political maneuvering, Lillian Loxley is struck by the fact Aboriginal children are being removed from their homes to work on farms. “Best way to teach them how to become civilized,” says George Brown, one of the fathers of



THE LOXLEYS AND CONFEDERATION

Mark Zuehlke, with Alexander Finbow and Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair

Illustrated by Claude St. Aubin
Renegade Arts Entertainment

\$19.99 hc, 104 pages

ISBN: 978-0-9921508-9-1

Confederation, confidently.

But George Loxley, speaking to delegates who will determine what form the Dominion of Canada will take, points to the greed with which Cartier saw the land of “Canada” and contrasts it to the notion of “Kanata,” the Iroquois word meaning village or community, where people work together to prosper.

In his afterword, Sinclair says, “As much as we can see Canada in these pages I encourage you to see Kanata too, in the moments it could have been, the place it always has been. Our riches lie in the way we interact, the gifts we trade, the stories we share – nothing else.”



MORE FICTION AND SHORT FICTION

SHORT FICTION

ACT NORMAL

Greg Hollingshead

These 12 stories by the Governor General's Award-winning author present characters confronting art, sex, and other accidents of life in comic, insightful, dark, and endearing ways.

(Astoria-House of Anansi, \$19.95 pb, 240 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77089-970-4)

NOVELS/NOVELLAS

BADLANDS

Robert Kroetsch

This reprint of the classic novel about a paleontologist who leads an expedition to the Alberta badlands in 1916 and his daughter who reveals the folly of his ambitions fifty years later is illustrated with haunting black and white photos by George Webber.

(Rocky Mountain Books, \$40.00 hc, 360 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77160-063-7)

BIRDIE

Tracey Lindberg

In this darkly comic and moving debut novel, Bernice (Birdie) Meetoos, a big, beautiful, quiet Cree woman, is a traveller – not only through space, but also through time – on a quest for healing and home.

(HarperCollins, \$29.99 hc, 280 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55468-294-2)

THE BRINK OF FREEDOM

Stella Leventoyannis Harvey

The human cost of war is explored in this novel about the refugee camps in Greece, which brings together a young Asian refugee, the well-meaning Canadian aid worker accused of kidnapping him, and the rookie police officer trying to get to the bottom of the mystery.

(Signature, \$22.95 pb, 272 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927426-77-7)

LEDGER OF THE OPEN HAND

Leslie Vyrenhoeck

Cautious, conservative Meriel-Claire makes an improbable friendship with her new college roommate, capricious Daneen, but after years of allegiance and heartbreak and

finally breaking off, she must come to her old friend's rescue in this novel that explores the intimate power of money and emotional debt.

(Breakwater Books, \$19.95 pb, 328 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55081-604-7)

MADDER CARMINE

Tyler Enfield

In 1849, Dannon Lereau returns to his Appalachian home from the Mexican War, but as he flees the owner of the slave he "stole," Dannon's mind slips into a surreal mind of its own, as the mountains of his youth are transformed into the Nine Circles of Hell and the slave named Virgil becomes his guide.

(Enfield & Wyzenty, \$14.95 pb, 224 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927855-30-0)

MAHIHKAN LAKE

R. P. MacIntyre

After their adopted brother commits suicide, estranged siblings Denny and Dianne head north to Mahihkan Lake to spread his ashes and confront the ghosts of their youth.

(Thistledown, \$19.95 pb, 152 pages, ISBN: 978-1-771870-53-5)

MEADOWLARK

Wendi Stewart

An accident on a winter lake tears a family apart, leaving six-year-old Rebecca motherless, alone with her grieving father. Eventually she finds the support of Chuck, whose father is abusively violent, and Lissie, an Aboriginal girl being raised by a white mother.

(NeWest, \$21.95 pb, 300 pages, ISBN: 978-1-926455-38-9)

THE ROAD TO ATLANTIS

Leo Brent Robillard

A moment of distraction on a beach changes lives forever in this intimate, resonant portrait of a family blown apart, exploring how individuals cope with tragedy and the way grief sifts through generations.

(Turnstone Press, \$19.00 pb, 200 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88801-555-6)

RUMI AND THE RED HANDBAG

Shawna Lemay

This fresh, intelligent novel tells of two women, Shaya and Ingrid-Simone, working in a second-hand clothing shop, who end

up on a journey to the Museum of Bags and Purses in Amsterdam, a journey to find Rumi, the soul, and the secret hidden in a red handbag.

(Palimpsest Press, \$19.95 pb, 148 pages, ISBN: 978-1-926794-26-6)

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Sharon Butala

In this richly detailed historical novel set in the 1880s, a headstrong young woman, glad to leave behind her stifling Quebec family for the southern prairie and a new life with her handsome husband, must evolve from homesteader to businesswoman in order to survive.

(Coteau Books, \$21.95 pb, 396 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55050-636-5)

YES, AND BACK AGAIN

Sandy Marie Bonny

In this suspenseful and thought-provoking story, Tanis and Neil Cameron move to Saskatoon's west side, then two of Neil's teenage students suddenly go missing, thrusting the couple into a world of deeply rooted class and racial divisions.

(Thistledown, \$19.95 pb, 184 pages, ISBN: 978-1-771870-52-8)

MYSTERY, THRILLER, FANTASY

ANOTHER MARGARET

Janice MacDonald

In this latest Randy Craig mystery, the first novel in the series (long out-of-print) is embedded in a new one, where Randy is attending a university 20th anniversary reunion, and revisits the events – and dangers – of her graduate studies there.

(Ravenstone, \$16.95 pb, 362 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88801-551-8)

THE CASE OF THE VANISHING PRAIRIE

John Parr

In this comic take on the classic Sherlock Holmes detective stories, Watson strikes out on his own, seeking a quiet life in the Old West. He ends up employed as a personal vet to a rancher/rustler, and takes up detective work trying to solve various mysteries: who robbed the bank, who is causing cowboys to disappear, and what is biting the locals in the neck?

(Davus Publishing, \$12.00 pb, 112 pages, ISBN: 978-0-915317-49-3)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

EXECUTOR

Louise Carson

When an elderly writer dies of apparent suicide, her former student and lover agrees to publish her poetry, but is drawn into the legacy of her social activism on behalf of dissidents in China, at great risk to him and his newly adopted daughter. (Signature, \$16.95 pb, 192 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927426-68-5)

ICE

Karen Bate

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unusual suspects, and the solution to the crime takes a strange path through a community association meeting, prison, and the world of child beauty pageants. (Signature, \$16.95 pb, 272 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927426-79-1)

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Christine Rehder Horne

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(NeWest, \$19.95 pb, 280 pages, ISBN: 978-1-926455-47-1)

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Chadwick Ginther

In this final installment of the Thunder Road trilogy, Ted Callan, war herald of the Nine Worlds, must build a cage from Surtur's bones, unearth the Bright Sword, and vanquish the fire giant once and for all. And all of this in Edmonton, without the help of Loki or the Norns, who stayed behind to watch over Winnipeg.

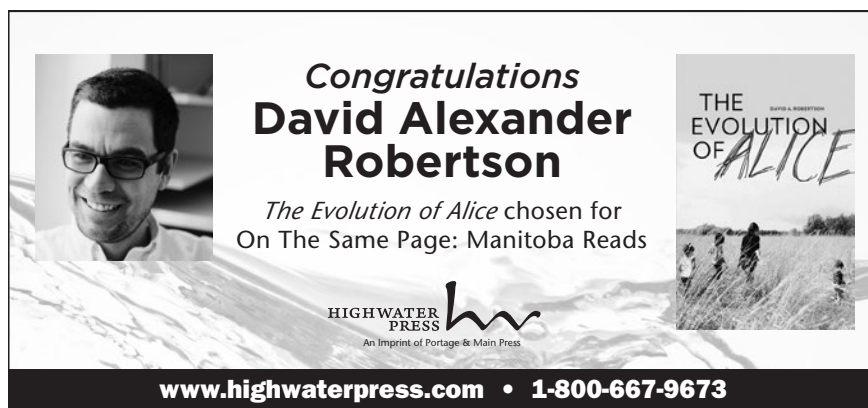
(Ravenstone, \$16.95 pb, 496 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88801-541-9)

WHILE THE MUSIC LASTS

John Brooke

The latest Aliette Nouvelle mystery finds the Inspector investigating threats made against one of France's most popular stars, released from prison for the murder of his film star girlfriend, by townspeople who will neither forgive nor forget.

(Signature, \$18.95 pb, 256 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927426-71-5)



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FREE PRESS?

Journalist examines business practice in Canada's media

by Margaret Anne Fehr

Steeped in the daily brew of Canadian newsrooms for over 30 years, Brian Gorman has authored *Crash to Paywall: Canadian Newspapers and the Great Disruption*, a book that encapsulates his eye-witness viewpoint on events leading to the current state of Canadian media.

Gorman says that his publisher suggested *From Crash to Paywall* as the book's title, but he edited out the "from."

"I like the violent and ambiguous sound of it without the first preposition," he says. "The title relates to the financial crash of 2007–08 and the institution of metered paywalls at most North American news organizations in 2010–12."

Gorman's perspective is that of an ordinary working journalist. "I have been a copy editor, reporter, feature writer, critic (movies and TV), and a couple of times a middle manager," he says.

"I'm not a big-name political pundit, nor am I a media executive, privy to the backroom planning of the top management. I'm not famous. I have no axes to grind, tubs to thump, or agendas to forward. I approached this project as a curious reporter, simply trying to find the story."

Crash to Paywall attempts to pull back the curtain on the state of the free press in a democratic society. "In Canada, media criticism is seen almost as an act of treachery," says Gorman, an assistant professor of communication studies at MacEwan University.

"With the slow starvation of the CBC, the sorry financial state of our national print and online media, and a government that was allergic to inspection and criticism, the public discourse in this country is in a bad

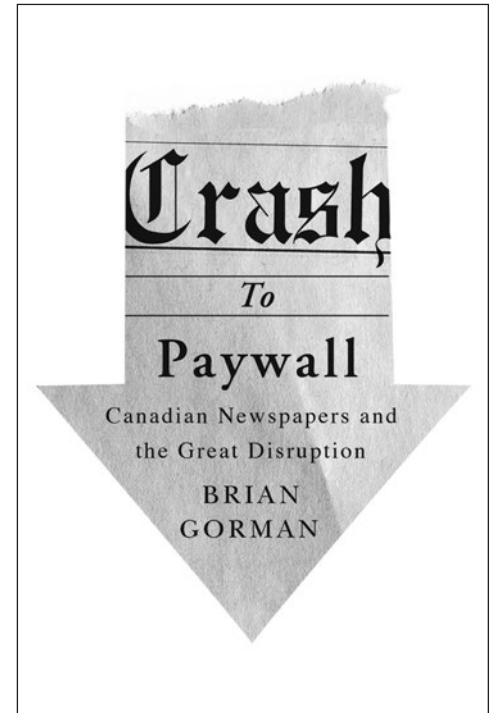
way, and I don't see many signs that it's going to get any better. Perhaps that's why, in the space a year, we're seeing what, in Canadian terms, amounts to a flood of books about media and power, such as David Taras's *Digital Mosaic* and Mark Bourrie's *Kill the Messengers*."

"In Canada, media criticism is seen almost as an act of treachery."

In addition to academics and journalists, Gorman expects his book will be of interest to the same people who watched *The Daily Show* for the criticism of the Fox News Network and CNN, "that is to say, anyone interested in the public conversation about the public conversation."

Conducting research for the book was not difficult for the long-time journalist.

"I had worked for *The Toronto Star* and Sun Media, so I was acquainted with people like John Honderich, Wayne Parrish, Paul Godfrey, and Les Pyette. Two of the journalists interviewed were old friends. A few were referred by other interviewees, and a lot of the blind quotes were the result of casual conversations with journalists. Many of the academics – particularly those at Carleton – were



CRASH TO PAYWALL:
Canadian Newspapers and the Great Disruption

Brian Gorman
McGill-Queen's University Press
\$32.95 pb, 304 pages
ISBN: 978-0-7735-4592-2

people I knew and respected and who represented a range of interesting viewpoints."

While there were no jaw-dropping surprises that emerged during the research process, Gorman reveals, "I was constantly unnerved by the abundance of evidence that there was an almost willful, self-destructive drive on the part of the media companies themselves. As David Taras said to me, 'This wasn't murder; it was suicide.'" ❧

MORE THAN WORDS

Authors seek to get to the truth behind reconciliation

by Paula E. Kirman

Relationships between Canada's First Nations and newcomers have been a contentious part of the country's history. Debates rage on between those who support Aboriginal land rights and sovereignty and those who want an end to "special" Aboriginal, despite court cases upholding Aboriginal land title rights.

In their book *From Treaty Peoples to Treaty Nation: A Road Map for All Canadians*, Greg Poelzer and Ken Coates examine approaches that have both failed and succeeded in reconciling conflicting interests. However, they focus on the success stories and try to steer the conversation in the direction of moving forward on common ground.

FROM TREATY PEOPLES TO TREATY NATION:

A Road Map for All Canadians

Greg Poelzer and Ken S. Coates
UBC Press

\$34.95 hc, 366 pages
with appendices, references, index
ISBN: 978-0-7748-3087-4



Ken Coates



Greg Poelzer

The book was the result of the authors' long-standing work and interest in Aboriginal issues, and was two decades in the making.

"Greg and I have shared a professional and personal interest in Aboriginal affairs our entire adult lives," says Coates, who has authored and edited more than a dozen books on Aboriginal issues.

"We are amazed by Indigenous resilience, troubled by poverty and marginalization, frustrated by the absence of good policy options, and

hopeful that things can get better," he says. "It took 20 years for two main reasons: Aboriginal realities changed dramatically, and we were extremely eager to develop our ideas in full and not race to print with quick thoughts."

Coates says that many of the changes in Aboriginal communities and policies have been for the better, especially more recently, and he hopes the books reflects this reality to readers.

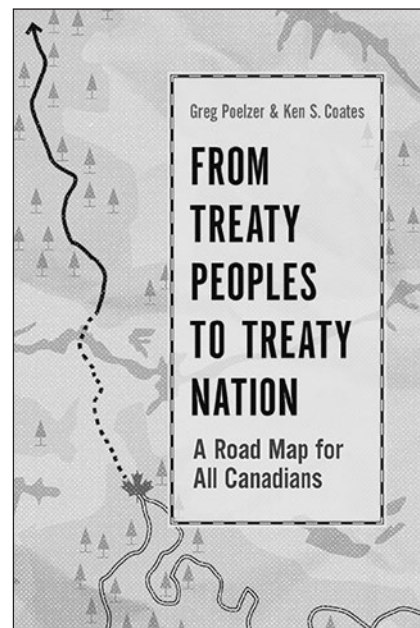
"We want them to leave with a sense of real possibilities," he says.

"Aboriginal policy and Indigenous peoples have experienced positive changes in recent years, but we know things can get much better. We want people motivated to support changes, optimistic about the prospects for real improvements, and determined to build real reconciliation."

Coates emphasizes now is the time to move beyond talking about problems towards finding a solution.

"We wrote this book to focus on practical and applied solutions. We need, as a country and for and with Aboriginal people, to move beyond problem identification and blame to problem solving and partnership building. We need action, not talk."

Coates and Poelzer (who has also written extensively on Aboriginal issues) discovered evidence of existing steps toward reconciliation. "The investigation of current conditions revealed many different examples of



"We need action, not talk."

reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, organizations, and governments," says Coates.

"We do not need to contemplate the future and imagine what might happen but, instead, can discuss what has already occurred and what is already in process. Significant strides have been taken – there are real reasons to be optimistic."

And optimism is the bottom line.

"We want our leaders to know that the greatest reason for optimism is the strength and commitment of Aboriginal leaders. These individuals – men and women in the hundreds – are devoted to their communities and cultures and are working extremely hard to create the conditions for success," Coates says.

"These people are remarkable in their dedication to bringing about real and sustained change in Indigenous communities and across the country." ❧

A DAMMING look

Author examines how humans have changed the Bow River

by Paula E. Kirman

Alberta's Bow River is a source not just of water, but of beauty and history. However, the river's annual flows have decreased by more than a tenth, due to dam construction and water management decisions that have ignored the health of the land.

Award-winning author Kevin Van Tighem explores the history and ecology of the Bow River headwaters through stories, and highlights the importance of the need to heal the damaged landscape in his latest book, *Heart Waters: Sources of the Bow River*.



Brian Van Tighem



Kevin Van Tighem

"I've been involved with this project since I was old enough to go camping and fishing with my dad – I just didn't realize it back then," he says. "The book is my attempt to give something back to landscapes and streams that have made my life worth living by telling their stories and trying to motivate people to care for them better than we have to date."

Van Tighem spent about two years conducting interviews with ranchers, foresters, fishery biologists, hydrologists, and others, as well as doing library and archive research in Calgary and Edmonton.

The book is for anyone who relies for water on the streams that drain from the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains, which would be most people in the Canadian Prairies. It will be of particular interest to anglers, hunters, hikers, and others who know the foothills and mountains of western Alberta and/or would like to know them better.

"It's for people who care about land, water, and the future, and who take pleasure in the beauty and complexity of nature," he says.

Van Tighem hopes readers will come away from *Heart Waters* with a "deeper understanding and concern for the little creeks, mountain valleys,

foothills forests, and hidden green places where our water originates. I'm hoping that readers will know our headwaters better and realize more fully that these should, in fact, be our heart waters," Van Tighem says.

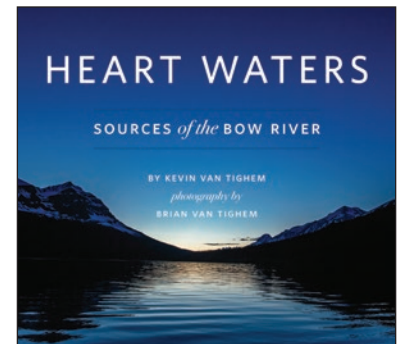
Heart Waters is illustrated with photos by Brian Van Tighem, a professional wedding photographer and Kevin Van Tighem's youngest son. "He does a lot of nature and travel photography, and it seemed like a perfect fit to collaborate," Kevin says.

"He and I discussed the kinds of photographic images that might work best, and then he went out backpacking, hiking, and exploring on his own to create those images. It was fascinating to see what he produced, because he was forming his own relationships with places I knew before he was born. I learned as much from his imagery as he did from my writing. It was hugely satisfying to collaborate with my son on a project like this."

Over all, *Heart Waters* is a beautiful and well-researched way to show the importance of the Bow River watershed and the need for it to be restored.

"We are in a water crisis," says Van Tighem. "The only sustainable way to improve our water supply is to restore the ability of those headwater landscapes to store and retain water so that springs and creeks continue to flow with cool, clean water when we need it."

"We need to invest in restoring that landscape. That's where our water future lies." 🌿



HEART WATERS: *Sources of the Bow River*

Kevin Van Tighem
Photographs by Brian Van Tighem
Rocky Mountain Books
\$40.00 hc, 256 pages
with full colour photos
throughout
ISBN: 978-1-77160-139-9

"The book is my attempt to give something back to landscapes and streams that have made my life worth living..."

SECRETS TO SUCCESS

A proactive approach is imperative when dealing with organizational change

by Liz Katynski

Many leaders and managers still see change as a barrier, but when they realize change is inevitable and integrate it into their professional process, they create a more successful organization.

LAUNCH, LEAD, LIVE:
The Executive's Guide To Preventing Resistance & Succeeding With Organizational Change

Dr. Dawn-Marie Turner
Your Nickel's Worth
Publishing
\$24.95 hc, 184 pages
with figures, tables,
endnotes
ISBN: 978-1-927756-47-8

"Change is part of the natural flow," says Dr. Dawn-Marie Turner, author of *Launch, Lead, Live: The executive's guide to preventing resistance & succeeding with organizational change*. "It is not going to go away. I encourage leaders to make change part of the way they lead and manage, to consider how they are doing it and how they can do it differently."

Through her company, Turner Change Management, Turner has been helping leaders navigate the complexities of organizational

change for a decade. Prior to that, she encouraged behavioural change in the health care field. She has a doctorate in applied management and decision science from Walden University, a master of education from the University of Manitoba, and has developed her own proprietary change transition methodology – DEAM®.

"Organizations change to grow. My goal is to create healthier, stronger organizations because of change, not in spite of it. It's about building readiness, not managing resistance."

When change is implemented, people can choose to do one of three things: engage, leave, or try to maintain the status quo. The third option, also known as resistance, should not be assumed. Turner's approach is proactive, creating a plan for success and engagement rather than a plan that assumes people will resist the change.

Everyone goes through predictable steps when dealing with change, she says.



"We need to realize people will experience discomfort and ask questions.

If they are not ready, we need to get them ready. It's not resistance. They simply can't see themselves adopting the change. So we go back and work with them to raise their perceived ability."

Leaders must listen actively to understand the barriers, or what is preventing people from moving forward with the change. "They must understand why and allow them to have time to engage with the change and get comfortable with it," says Turner.

Turner's process is based on research, and part of a shift in thinking that started back in the mid-1970s.

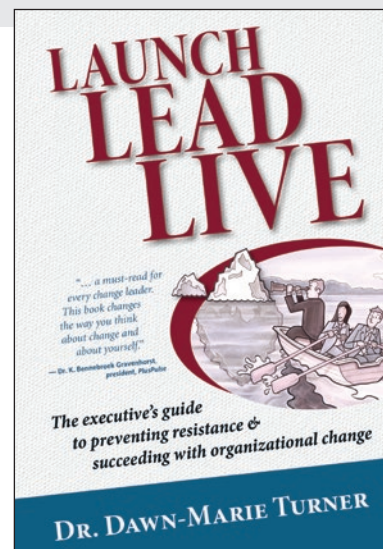
Whether a company is implementing new software or an individual is trying to lose weight or quit smoking, in general, she says, all change is uncomfortable.

"As people, we are well equipped for change. We don't necessarily resist change. We resist being changed, people changing us. Generally, when we are ready for change, we move forward with it."

In the book, as in her consulting, Turner explains how to implement change effectively. Once leaders understand the normal, predictable pattern people move through when confronted with change, and prepare their employees for it, the anxiety of change is reduced and people are more likely to go along with it, understand it, and support it.

"Over and over, we see how this approach helps organizations succeed," Turner says.

"Creating a shared understanding moves an organization forward." 🌿



Freedom of choice?

Authors examine Canada's physician-assisted death policies

by Paula E. Kirman

The right to choose the time and circumstances of one's death, especially in the cases of people who are terminally ill or have suffered catastrophic injuries, has been a hotly debated topic for a long time. Linda McIntosh examines the question of whether or not Canadians should adopt physician-assisted death in *Master of My Fate*.

McIntosh, a former Manitoba cabinet minister who now lives in Ignace, Ontario, explores this contentious topic through her documentation of the life of Steven Fletcher, who was paralyzed from the neck down in 1996 after a car collision with a moose. Until the most recent federal election, Fletcher was an MP with the Conservative Party. He introduced a private member's bill in March of 2014 to make physician-assisted death legal under Canadian law.

institutionalized and his determination to have a meaningful, productive life, it was impossible not to be inspired by his courage."

The "with Steven Fletcher" addition to the byline came about as a result of McIntosh and Fletcher's close friendship. "During the writing of *Master of My Fate*, Steven and I communicated frequently," she says, "sharing thoughts and perspectives on various aspects of the book. In a very

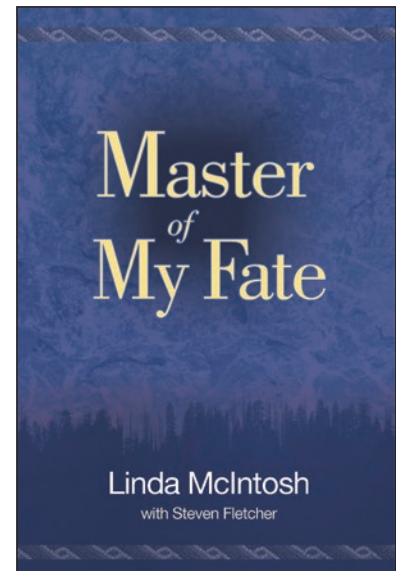
real sense he was 'with' me throughout the creative process."

In addition to her discussions with Fletcher, McIntosh received help from Fletcher's parents, who provided boxes of print text and photographs, as well as from many people who shared their stories of the anguish and grief they experienced while watching loved ones

endure painful deaths.

McIntosh also went to experts in bioethics, and the book presents the opposing perspectives of Margaret Somerville, who is against physician-assisted death, and Arthur Schafer, who says that making it legal is preferable to the underground way the practice exists now.

McIntosh says she hopes readers will gain "a deeper compassion for



MASTER OF MY FATE

Linda McIntosh
with Steven Fletcher
Heartland Associates
\$19.95 pb, 168 pages
with b/w photos throughout
ISBN: 978-1-896150-83-3



"The irony of this world is that sometimes people who want to live, die, and sometimes people who want to die, live."

This is not the first time McIntosh has written about Fletcher. Her previous book, *What Do You Do If You Don't Die?* discussed Fletcher's long battle after his accident.

"I first met Steven about two years after his catastrophic accident," says McIntosh. "We became close friends and confidants. As I watched him struggle to get back into the world and witnessed his refusal to be

the suffering of others, the need to continue investigating this issue in detail, a willingness to discuss it with others, and to come to some personal conclusions about it."

Master of My Fate is an examination of an important moral and ethical question that has grown more complex in the modern world. Technologies can now extend life far beyond its natural span.

"The irony of this world is that sometimes people who want to live, die, and sometimes people who want to die, live. What is our right as individuals to have control of our lives, including the ultimate in self-determination?" says McIntosh.

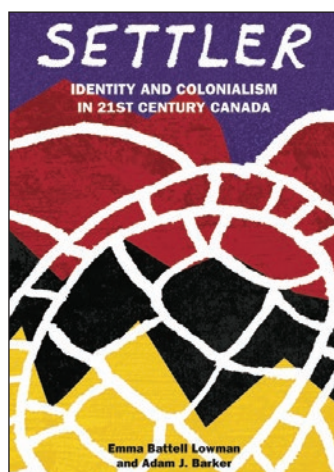
"Whatever our opinions may be, the debate that Steven has stimulated is one that we need to have. With scientific advancement and the ability to sustain life in ways not dreamed of in days gone by, it is right to pause and consider the meaning of life – and its ending." 🌿

FEELING UNSETTLED

Authors want Canadians to talk about colonialism

by Paula E. Kirman

Canada has a Settler problem. But what exactly does the term “Settler” mean? *Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* by Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker explains what it means to be a Settler and to be entangled in the colonialism that continues to dominate political, economic, and cultural life in Canada.



The book also argues that acceptance of the Settler identity is the first step toward decolonizing relationships between Settler Canadians and Indigenous peoples, something necessary for a better future.

Settler was born over a decade ago when Barker joined the MA program in Indigenous governance at the University of Victoria in 2004. Most of his classmates were Indigenous.

“They really held me to account, and forced me to re-examine a lot of my own fundamental assumptions and beliefs. This wasn’t an easy process,” he says.

That same year, Barker and Lowman heard Paulette Regan, a lead researcher for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission who was then a PhD student, refer to herself as a “settler,” and it immediately resonated with them.

Lowman says they decided to write something that would “share and clarify how we have come to use this term, a way which differs from some other popular usages and which we came to believe could be useful to much wider discussions and efforts.”

The issues of settler colonialism and Indigenous resistance apply to all. “We firmly believe that these are important issues that affect the lives of every person in Canada, every single day, whether they know and are aware, or whether they remain in the dark,” notes Barker.

“The conversation about these topics, and about what we need to do to confront settler colonialism and transform our Settler society, has to happen primarily outside of the academy – in our workplaces, our communities, and around our kitchen tables – to make real positive change.”

There are parts of the book that may provoke strong emotional reactions, but, Lowman says, “the take-home message is that each of us has the power to do something positive and to bring about truly just and mutually beneficial relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada.”

The first positive step for Settlers is to recognize how colonialism works. “The goal of a settler colonial society is to become ‘naturalized’ on the land, to claim a kind of ‘nativeness’ that allows us to forget that we ever belonged anywhere else, and that our claims to belonging here exist at the expense of Indigenous belonging,” says Barker.

“But in the practical sense, almost everyone who is a Settler Canadian is also a settler colonizer because the invasive systems that we have built are so vast and powerful, the stories so enduring and foundational to our cultural practices, that we cannot simply opt out of them – we remain complicit in settler colonialism as a fundamental part of how we think about ourselves and our communities.”

The authors hope *Settler* provides tools that can be used in conversations and that those conversations will generate important and positive change in Canada.

“We look forward to listening to what people have to say, whether they agree with us or not. And we will be available for those conversations,” says Lowman. ☘

SETTLER:

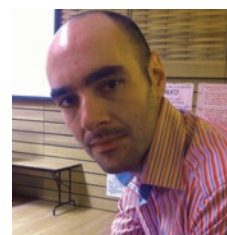
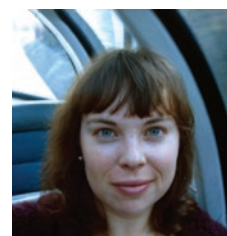
Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada

Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker

Fernwood Publishing

\$18.95 pb, 160 pages

ISBN: 978-1-55266-778-1



Close encounters

Book compares frontier ranching in Canada and Australia

by Paula E. Kirman

Western Canada and Northern Australia may be thousands of miles apart, but historically these areas have had some astounding similarities with regard to cattle ranching. Warren M. Elofson compares these two frontier cattle ranching societies in great detail in his latest book, *So Far and Yet So Close: Frontier Cattle Ranching in Western Prairie Canada and the Northern Territory of Australia*.

“My interest in cattle ranching derives first from my own days as a farmer and rancher in Alberta,” says Elofson.

“I have spent a considerable part of my adult life in agriculture and I felt that my inside knowledge of the business would bring new insights to the subject.”

In *So Far and Yet So Close*, Elofson facilitates a direct comparison with what was going on at virtually the same time in the Australian outback and the Canadian West. The book examines grazing techniques and problems, marketing challenges, and attempts the ranchers in both places made to diversify into sub-industries.

The book’s title, *So Far and Yet So Close*, “refers to the reality that despite the fact these two frontiers were a world apart and had to deal with very different climate, terrain, and vegetation, their early history was astoundingly similar largely because their frontier conditions were so much the same,” he says.

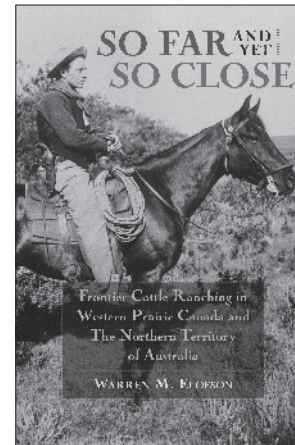
“The first agriculturalists in these two geographically disparate communities struggled with the ecology and climate, four-legged predators, such as wolves in Canada and alligators down under, and they battled diseases in their herds – above all, the mange here and Redwater or Texas Tick fever down there.”

The book stresses the crucial role family (and women in particular) ultimately played in helping a fledgling industry gain a foothold. And it gives due credit to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory who laboured on the early cattle stations, learned the cowboy trade, and did so much to make the open range industry work.

“The first agriculturalists in these two geographically disparate communities struggled with the ecology and climate...”

“In both cases,” Elofson says, ranchers “instigated the Texas system for grazing cattle, which required an open range approach dependent on the trade of the cowboy, and in which single young men dominated numerically, law and order was poorly enforced, rustlers abounded, racial conflict was part of life, and women, despite their relatively small numbers, proved instrumental as they routinely crossed gender boundaries to handle all the tasks on the ranch or cattle station that men were performing.”

Elofson, a professor and former head of the history department at the



SO FAR AND YET SO CLOSE:

Frontier Cattle Ranching in Western Prairie Canada and the Northern Territory of Australia

Warren M. Elofson
University of Calgary Press
\$34.95 pb, 330 pages
with illustrations, appendices,
select bibliography, notes, index
ISBN: 978-1-55238-794-8

University of Calgary, did extensive archival research to complete this study.

“In both countries, the primary sources are rich and rewarding.”

Elofson has previously published three books and numerous articles on the frontier cattle ranching societies on the northern Great Plains of North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

So Far and Yet So Close, the first ever historical comparison of the frontier cattle ranching societies in western Canada and northern Australia, represents the culmination of his work on this subject.

“All readers will witness the power of the environment as it molded the ranching industry and the society that spawned it on both ends of the earth.”

ArtiFACTS

New book examines how the CMHR came to be

by Liz Katynski

While most museums focus on the past, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR), in Winnipeg, Manitoba, aims to change the future.

The Idea of a Human Rights Museum, edited by Karen Busby, Adam Muller, and Andrew Woolford, examines the formation of the CMHR (the building and the concept), compares it to other international institutions, and encourages people to think about its content and message.

THE IDEA OF A HUMAN RIGHTS MUSEUM

Edited by Karen Busby, Adam Muller, and Adam Woolford
University of Manitoba Press
\$27.95 pb, 384 pages
with illustrations, bibliography
ISBN: 978-0-88755-782-8

"I've always been a big fan of the idea of a human rights museum," says Karen Busby, a law professor and director of the Centre for Human Rights Research at the University of Manitoba.

"Any tool promoting human rights is a great thing unless it is just government propaganda. I look at the museum as a supporter. It is a fantastic thing. I think it is important to understand it and how it can do a better job rather than criticize it."

The book is the first one published about the CMHR, and it was written before the museum opened in 2014. Most of the essays compiled here began as papers presented during a seminar series called *Critical Conversations on the Idea of a Human Rights Museum* held by the Centre for Human Rights

Research in 2011–2012. Because of this, the book focuses more on the idea and potential of the CMHR than on its existing exhibits and programs.

"There are a lot of great papers," says Busby. "We compiled them to engage Manitobans in a discussion about the museum and what it is all about, including decisions around exhibits and content, and how to incorporate Indigenous content."

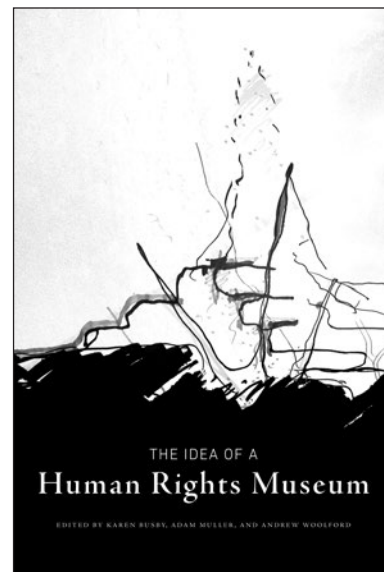
Many people visit the CMHR, and the book offers all of them a better understanding of what went into creating their experience.

"Winnipeggers are proud and excited about the museum, but they have lots of questions," says Busby. "From the building's design to how much space is devoted to one atrocity compared to another, questions of budget, politics, and more, the book uses public information to provide readers with a better understanding."

Recently, Busby took a group of her law students through the museum, and realized many of them did not know many of the stories told there.

"For example, my generation knows the October Crisis was a massive abuse of human rights in Canada, with an over-response by the state. For them, it's history. But what is amazing is how they connect history to issues of today," she says.

"We watched a fantastic film about anti-Semitism in Canada during World War II, when Jews were denied entry into Canada because none was considered too many. My students



"Any tool promoting human rights is a great thing unless it is just government propaganda."




Adam Muller, Andrew Woolford, Karen Busby

were immediately moved by it and connected it to the plight of Syrian refugees today."

Such museum experiences bring up questions of human rights, encourage discussion, and may also inspire action and change.

"We want people to think about what human rights are, talk about them. We hope visiting the museum will inspire people to go away and find out more about what surprises or inspires them during their visit," says Busby.

"People can learn more and take action." 

MORE NON-FICTION

BIOGRAPHY, LETTERS, & MEMOIR

APOSTATE ENGLISHMAN: GREY OWL THE WRITER AND THE MYTHS

Albert Braz

This first comprehensive study of Grey Owl's cultural and political image in light of his own writings argues that people were troubled by not only his deception about his identity, but also that he had forsaken European culture. (University of Manitoba Press, \$27.95 pb, 224 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88755-778-1)

A CANADIAN GIRL IN SOUTH AFRICA: A TEACHER'S EXPERIENCES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR, 1899-1902

E. Maud Graham

Edited by Michael Dawson, Catherine Gidney, and Susanne M. Klausen

This is an annotated reprint of the memoir by highly educated, hard-working, and opinionated E. Maud Graham, one of the teachers chosen from all over the Commonwealth to teach thousands of Boer women, children, and non-combatants in concentration camps at the end of the South

African War. With photographs, maps, bibliography, index. (University of Alberta, \$34.95 pb, 264 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-046-2)

A CANTERBURY PILGRIMAGE/AN ITALIAN PILGRIMAGE

Elizabeth Robins Pennell and Joseph Pennell
Edited and with an introduction by Dave Buchanan

This new edition of two out-of-print and highly entertaining travel memoirs from the 1880s about the advent of leisure touring, by cycling pioneers, writers, and illustrators Elizabeth and Joseph Pennell, provides the cultural contexts surrounding these adventures. Illustrated.

(University of Alberta Press, \$29.95 pb, 232 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-042-4)

EXILED FOR LOVE: THE JOURNEY OF AN IRANIAN QUEER ACTIVIST

Arsham Parsi and Marc Colbourne

This is the deeply personal, inspiring story of Arsham Parsi, who used the Internet to speak out about the human rights abuses against LGBT people in his native Iran. After discovering that an order had been issued for his arrest and execution, Parsi fled to Turkey

before being granted asylum in Canada. (Fernwood, \$20.95 pb, 224 pages, ISBN: 978-1-552667-01-9)

FINDING HOME IN THE PROMISED LAND: A PERSONAL HISTORY OF HOMELESSNESS AND SOCIAL EXILE

Jane Harris

When Jane Harris tumbles down the social ladder after a violent crime, she recognizes that trauma and poverty are inextricably linked, and asks why Canadians accept institutions such as food banks that dole out small acts of charity and merely fund the poverty industry. (J. Gordon Shillingford, \$24.95 pb, 268 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927922-11-8)

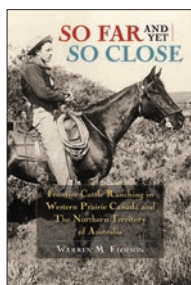
FROM THE BARREN LANDS: THE FUR TRADE, FIRST NATIONS, AND A LIFE IN NORTHERN CANADA

Leonard G. Flett

This story of the development of northern Canada, as experienced by Leonard Flett, Cree status member of the Big Trout Lake Ontario First Nation, as well as his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, includes the dying days of the fur trade and the rise of a new retail business tailored to First Nations. (Great Plains, \$29.95 pb, 320 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927855-33-1)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

Celebrate the Cowboy



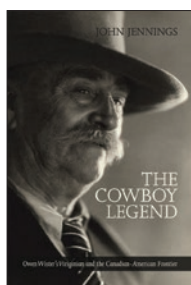
SO FAR AND YET SO CLOSE: Frontier Cattle Ranching in Western Prairie Canada and the Northern Territory of Australia

WARREN ELOFSON

332 pp, illustrations | paperback, e-book, \$34.95
978-1-55238-794-8 sc, 978-1-55238-797-9 epub,
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Also by Warren Elofson, *Somebody Else's Money: The Walrond Ranch Story, 1883-1907*.



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JOHN JENNINGS

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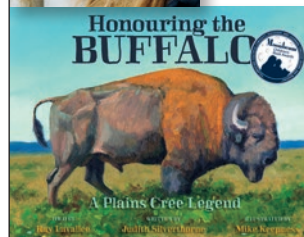
A study of the cowboy frontier is melded with an intriguing account of Wister's creation of the cowboy mystique.



Don't Lick the Flagpole David Banman

Does life often seem to be little more than a series of disappointments and frustrations? In the dark depths of night, do you allow yourself to ask, *Why am I here?* Be forever transformed as you learn to express the wonders and glories of God's kingdom by simply being who God created you to be!

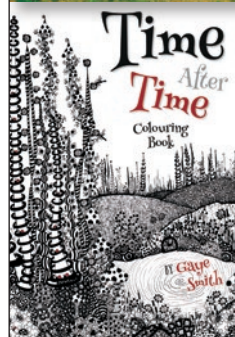
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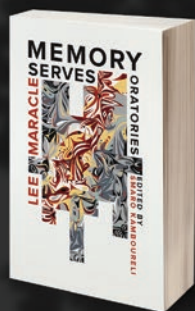
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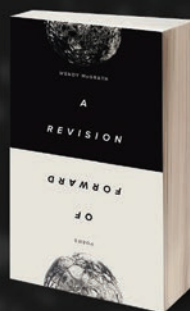
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Myrl Coulter

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Edited by Ghada Ageel

This collection of essays that humanize the historic processes of occupation, displacement, and apartheid is intended for historians, students of colonialism and Israel-Palestine studies, and anyone interested in nuanced debate. With photographs, maps, bibliography, notes, and appendix.

(University of Alberta Press, \$59.95 pb, 304 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-082-0)

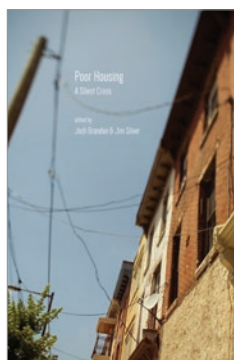
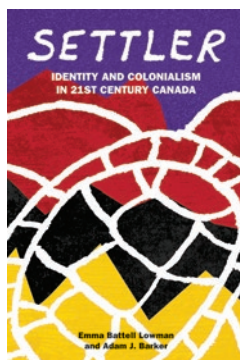
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This examination of the Aboriginal labour market outlines the deeply damaging, intergenerational effects of colonial policies and neoliberal policies and demonstrates that a fundamental shift is required in order to ensure labour market access for one of Canada's fastest-growing populations.

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DISARMING INTERVENTION: A CRITICAL HISTORY OF NON-LETHALITY
Seantel Anaïs

This study of the non-lethal weapons, from rubber bullets to electroshock, that are widely used by police and military forces to subdue individuals and control crowds, traces the social, historical, and legal legitimization of non-lethality.

(UBC Press, \$32.95 pb, 180 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7748-2854-3)

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Elizabeth Coffman

This practical book offers ways to use play to investigate stories, big ideas, and events, exploring dramatic play as a natural response to learning and incorporating elements of voice, characterization, movement, stillness, concentration, and listening.

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Ted Barris

Historian Barris brings together first-hand accounts of the steamboat packet owners, captains, stevedores, engineers, firemen, immigrants, soldiers, and carpetbaggers who travelled the inland waterways of the West between 1859 and the turn of the twentieth century, showing how pivotal steamboats were to realizing the expansion of Canada from coast to coast.

(Dundurn, \$33.99 hc, 376 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4597-3208-7)

FROM TREATIES TO RESERVES: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND NATIVE PEOPLES IN TERRITORIAL ALBERTA, 1870-1905

D. J. Hall

This re-examination of the complex interaction between the Federal Government and Native Peoples reveals that divergent understandings of treaties contributed to mistrust on both sides, but also that there was more initial positive cooperation between government and First Nations people than is commonly acknowledged. With photos and maps.

(McGill-Queen's University Press, \$34.95 pb, 512 pages, ISBN: 978-0-77354-595-3)

GENDERED MILITARISM IN CANADA: LEARNING CONFORMITY AND RESISTANCE

Edited by Nancy Taber

This collection of essays examines and critiques how learning, militarism, and gender intersect, and how ingrained societal ideas of militarism and gender influence lifelong learning patterns and practices of Canadians.

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Mama's boys

Mennonite men reflect on their mothers

by Liz Katynski

A mother's influence on her son stays with him his entire life.

In *Sons and Mothers: Stories from Mennonite Men*, 12 men from ages 32 to 70 open their hearts and share their memories of their moms.

"These are important stories (and poems) with many themes and an underlying love and respect that is quite lovely," says Mary Ann Loewen, the editor. "I believe strongly in stories. Sharing first-person stories helps us all to understand each other, get along, and love more easily."

Loewen explains further: "Any time you read a story about someone else, you learn, you have those aha moments where you realize that person experienced something you have too. You better understand yourself and your relationships, you better understand others, and you feel less alone."

In these stories, the mothers' personalities shine through. For example, Byron Rempel shares how his mother always had to have her hair done, even when dying in the hospital. "He doesn't mince words," says Loewen. "He just says that's who she is. He doesn't judge. There is an honest beauty to it. I respect the honesty."

Some of the mothers are still living. Others have died, some more recently than others. Some of the sons are bereaved and some have increased perspective due to the passing of time. Depression, an unspoken trouble in

times past, is illustrated but never labelled.

Michael Goertzen explores the effects of his mother's cancer. Lloyd Ratzlaff relates the anguish of his mother's sudden illness. Lukas Thiessen tells of his mother's support and openness with him no matter what, even when he chose to become an atheist.

"The stories create a very moving adult sons' connection to make you reflect on your own life," says Loewen. "You feel the impact the mothers had on their sons. Despite the challenges and troubles of life, all of these relationships at their core were solid. There was a love that was not to be denied."

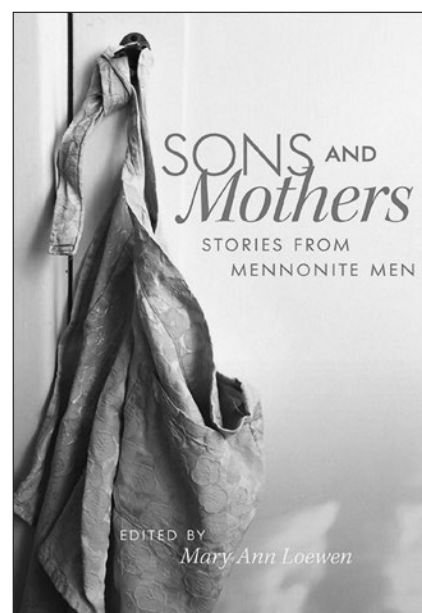
Loewen wrote her English literature thesis on her own 80-something-year-old mother. During the interview process, "She told me things she never did before. I learned how things happened. She finally shared and lightened her load. She was okay with it."

Loewen says she was closer to her mom in her 50s than when she was younger, but she strives to be open with her own adult children.

"The act of interviewing and writing things down and thinking about it helped me to understand my own mother as a human being, and let go of some things. It was hugely helpful. I'm not ready to do that with my own



"There is an honest beauty to it. I respect the honesty."



kids now, but later, it would be okay with me."

Having a conversation with a younger mom is different today, Loewen says. "There is a permission to have all these discussions about things we never used to talk about. There is an increased openness."

Everyone has a story, something to say, maintains Loewen. They should say it, if they want to.

"Pretty stories aren't going to help us. It's important to be honest, to say what is worth saying, with love and respect." 🌿

SONS AND MOTHERS:

Stories from Mennonite Men

Edited by Mary Ann Loewen

University of Regina Press

\$21.95 pb, 158 pages

ISBN: 978-0-88977-403-2

Behind closed doors

First time novelist wants people to talk about domestic violence

by Yvonne Dick

F*riendly Fire*, the debut novel by Saskatchewan writer Lisa Guenther, deals with a commonly known yet often hidden problem – domestic violence – during a hot Saskatchewan summer when Darby Swanks discovers the body of her beloved Aunt Bea in a local lake.



The police find Bea's car on the side of the road, packed with belongings and money, as though she is leaving town for good. Not only has she been strangled, but one of Aunt Bea's fingers has been cut off – along with her wedding ring. Suddenly Darby and her family all play a role in the homicide

investigation and become, to a degree, voyeurs into the intimate and private life of Bea and her husband, Will. What happens in the privacy of intimate relationships is always a mystery, but this one appears to be deadly.

FRIENDLY FIRE

Lisa Guenther

NeWest

\$19.95 pb, 154 pages

ISBN: 978-1-926455-41-9

The plot was loosely inspired by a story Guenther heard about a near-drowning incident nearby. "I could feel a sense of that tragedy, what it might be like," she says.

In addition to the murder of her aunt, Darby is dealing with the recent death

of her mother, a complicated love life, plans for the future, and a brushfire that threatens her neighbours and the diner where she works.

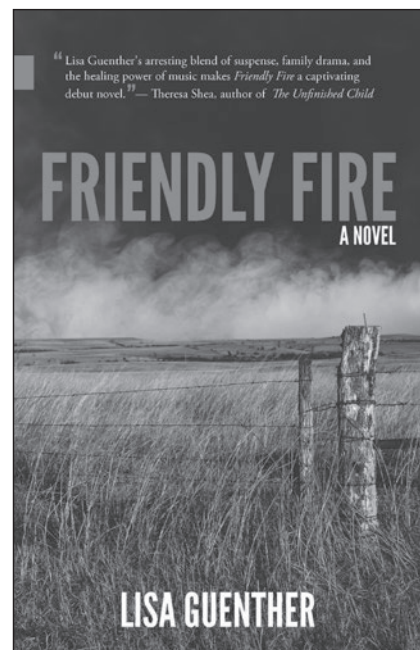
And that's just in the present – through the murder investigation, she is drawn into the past, with hints that her aunt had long been in danger.

Guenther explores the implications of such a tragedy on various relationships, especially those within families, and looks at how people can turn a blind eye to the dark side of others.

"When it's someone you love, in your family, you can hardly believe they would be capable of that," she says.

Guenther wrote this book with the help of a distance education program in creative writing offered by Humber College. She works best with deadlines, she says, so it helped to be accountable for writing a certain amount in set time frames. She learned that revising is not just checking for spelling and flow and grammar in a work, but that it can be a process of re-imagining the story and re-creating it.

Some of this revising was spurred on by her local weather. "We were snowed in with one of those really late March blizzards and I didn't have anything else to do except revise my book, and it sort of kicked off a creative spurt," during which she added depth to Darby's character.



"When it's someone you love, in your family, you can hardly believe they would be capable of that."

Guenther says, "I've read that most first-time novelists base their characters a bit on themselves. Parts of Darby are based on me, but some characters are very different from me."

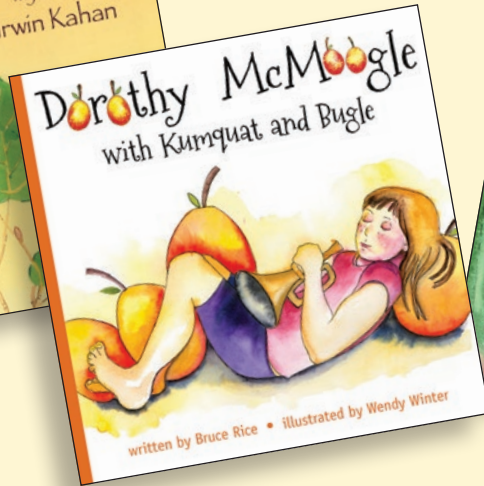
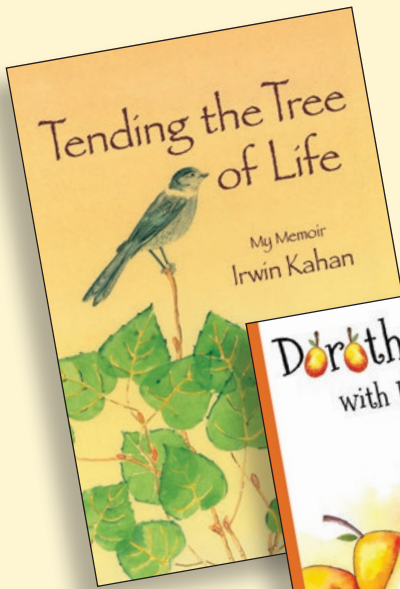
One part of Darby is her musical abilities, which Guenther doesn't share. Through her songwriting and creative tendencies, Darby was able to connect on a deep level with her aunt, who was an artist. Guenther's husband is a musician, and while writing the novel, she found it interesting to talk about it with him, and they noticed similarities in the creative process, whether that process is music or writing or art.

"We both believe," she says, "that you put a bit of your personality into your art." 🍷

MORE FAMILY SECRETS, SECRET HISTORIES ON PAGE 30

Prairie Delights from

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LIVING on the **EDGE**

Alberta publisher celebrates 15 years

by Quentin Mills-Fenn



Photo courtesy the Calgary Herald

“**W**hen you think about it, the vessel containing the words of an author is but the tip of a proverbial iceberg.”

“Publishing has been a part of my life for, well, forever,” Brian Hades explains. But the head of Calgary’s EDGE Science Fiction and Fantasy Publishing came to the field by an unusual route.

“I grew up in a magic family and magic (as a performing art) was my business for a long time,” he says. His father involved young Brian in his show as a child “box jumper,” and he also had a professional stage show from the age of seven, with bookings for pay, until he was 14.

“Performing magic on a stage is essentially a stand-and-deliver form of storytelling,” says Hades. And magic acts need to be written down for copyright

protection, which is getting close to being published.

Hades’s past involvements in theatre and the arts, including performing in a ‘70s rock and roll band, meant that

he was always surrounded by young talented people, actors, musicians, artists, writers, and he always found ways to include them in some sort of “show.”

“Some of those early projects are not so different from what I now do – which is to cull the wheat from the chaff, mine for gold by shifting tons of the dirt and mud, planting seeds in the spring, and waiting,

and hoping, for a crop of stories and storytellers to magically appear, magically forging themselves into shape for public presentation, and then figuring out a way to expose their talents to the world,” Hades says.

“I guess being a publisher means that I am a talent scout, an agriculturist, a thinker, a dreamer, a planner, a motivator, an accomplice, a bum, a hack, and a futurist all rolled into one.”

Hades was off to a great start with his first book, *The Black Chalice*, by Marie Jakober, the award-winning fantasy and historical fiction writer. Still a little subterfuge was required.

“After many attempts, false starts, errors in judgment, sessions of self-loathing, some ego bashing, and ultimately a tremendous amount of love and encouragement from my wife,” says Hades, “I ‘accidentally’ met Marie Jakober at a Calgary convention of science fiction and fantasy enthusiasts.”

There she told him that she had a duology that was looking for a home.

“Somehow I talked her into making it a stand-alone,” he says, “and my business partner at the time, Lynn Jennyc, and I began a journey that, after 15 years, has produced hundreds of speculative fiction books, published countless writers, started multiple imprints, won some awards, and encouraged others to become published.”

Now, a decade and a half later, EDGE is publishing 21 new works in print as well as in digital format with their new eBook imprint EDGE-Lite. Fall highlights of the new imprint include *Bad City* by Matt Mayr, and *The Triforium: The Haunting of Westminster Abbey* by Mark Patton.

“We shied away from digital books for quite a while,” he admits, “but ultimately we developed a

“I guess being a publisher means that I am a talent scout, an agriculturist, a thinker, a dreamer, a planner, a motivator, an accomplice, a bum, a hack, and a futurist all rolled into one.”



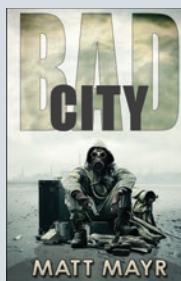
MORE FROM EDGE

BAD CITY

Matt Mayr

Simon Gray, a talented young thief, would like to escape the violent post-apocalyptic South Town with the woman he loves, but he is handed a new job for the powerful Eli Baxter, which makes leaving difficult.

(EDGE-Lite, \$5.99 e-book, ISBN: 978-1-77053-093-5)



BEDLAM LOST

Jack Castle

Deputy Hank McCarthy and ballet dancer Emma Hudson arrive in HavenPort, Alaska, where they begin to see there is more to this sleepy little town than they expected.

(EDGE-Lite, \$5.99 e-book, ISBN: 978-1-77053-105-5; print available January 2016)

EUROPA JOURNAL

Jack Castle

In 2168, Commander Mac O'Bryant and her team of astronauts discover a mysterious five-sided pyramid on the ocean floor of Jupiter's moon, Europa, where they find the body of a missing World War II pilot.

(EDGE-Lite, \$5.99 e-book, ISBN: 978-1-77053-091-1; \$19.95 pb, 280 pages, ISBN: 978-77053-104-8)

MILKY WAY REPO

Michael Prelee

Nathan Teller owns and operates a starship repo company, and when he and his agents get involved in a ransom delivery for a starship crew being held hostage, they find themselves up against a cult and the mob.

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RAILROAD RISING: THE BLACKPOWDER REBELLION

J. P. Wagner

Steam engines, railway lines, gunpowder magic, and the advent of flight merge this fantasy adventure with steampunk, as Carrtog hires himself out as a mercenary and gets caught up in an uprising against the King.

(EDGE-Lite, \$5.99 e-book, ISBN: 978-1-77053-098-0)

THE RED WRAITH

Nick Wisseman

Naysin, a child of the Lepane nation in Early America, manifests powers of a dual deity forever torn in two by light and darkness. He is exiled from his clan, only to survive the

destruction of his people by the pale men from the sea and to become known as the Red Wraith.

(EDGE-Lite, \$5.99 e-book, ISBN: 978-1-77053-095-9)

THE ROSETTA MAN

Claire McCague

Estlin Hume, a man exiled and broke due to his squirrel-attracting talent, is adopted by aliens to work as their translator in this light-hearted, accessible sci-fi novel.

(EDGE-Lite, \$5.99 e-book, ISBN: 978-1-77053-094-2)

STRANGER KING

Nadia Hutton

Lena Greenwood leads her company into the Canadian Rockies when her city is invaded by a hostile alien race, and eventually they cross paths with the alien priest Thegn, who is there to study the human species.

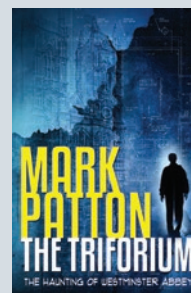
(EDGE-Lite, \$5.99 e-book, ISBN: TBA; print release TBA)

THE TRIFORIUM: THE HAUNTING OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Mark Patton

Newly graduated architect Wallace Butterfield is hired by the Westminster Abbey Foundation, and he's so eager to add a major architectural project to his CV that he overlooks the fact that the chairman of the Foundation can only meet with him in the middle of the night in the dark attic of the Abbey.

(EDGE-Lite, \$5.99 e-book, ISBN: 978-1-77053-097-3)



business model that we believe in. We have this motto: you can't have a dream without a plan. And that's driving us to take on new challenges."

EDGE is also the current publisher of the Tesseract series of Canadian short stories. The forthcoming volume is titled *Superhero Universe (Tesseract 19)* and is edited by Claude Lalumière and Mark Shainblum, and volume 20 is already in the works. It'll be released in the spring of 2017.

"I started EDGE with a very long future view," Hades says. "We've

always had 5-, 10-, and 15-year goals. I'm so proud of all of the folks who have helped make EDGE what it is today. When you think about it, the vessel containing the words of an author is but the tip of a proverbial iceberg."

Hades appreciates all the editors, artists, designers, publicity people, web designers, distributors, wholesalers, book retailers, online resellers, supporters, and most importantly, readers who support each of EDGE's books and eBooks.

"I'm thankful every day to be doing something I love with so many talented people," he says.

And yes, his last name is actually Hades.

"It has stood the test of time, and been a suitable if not a somewhat controversial part of my life during my various stints as a magician, musician, theatrical producer, publisher, and husband," he says.

"Okay, maybe my wife has to bear the brunt of it more than I. Love you, dear." ☞

Shedding light

Family history at the core of Hunter's latest

by Yvonne Dick

Catherine Hunter has a penchant for family history. She remembers listening to family stories her mom, aunts, and cousins would tell of past lives. Although her new book, *After Light*, is a work of fiction, some of the characters and situations were inspired by people she knew or had heard of in her family history.



For example, the early life of the grandmother, Deirdre, is based on Hunter's great-aunt's story of a poor childhood and arranged marriage to a widower with children.

"I always remember my aunt telling that story and it just caught my imagination, being in that situation," she says. "Suddenly going from being a teenager, which was a pretty carefree life then, to running a farm and taking care of someone else's kids."

And Deirdre's son Frank has a similar life to Hunter's father.

"In World War II, my dad was blinded and for a while needed to learn how to navigate through this new world he was now in. He was American and had come to Canada to fight for the Canadian army, so after the war the best help and health care available to him were here. So he not only lost his vision but he also lost his country," says Hunter.

While creating this fictional portrait of four generations, Hunter coupled stories heard with considerable research.

"They were at Dieppe, well, when were they at Dieppe? What beach

would they have landed on? What boats were they in, what did they wear, where did they set off from?" she says.

"There were some newspaper articles kicking around the house and stuck in the back of photo albums that I had access to. I went to Ireland to the little town where my grandmother had grown up."

Hunter, the author of multiple works of poetry and mystery fiction and a professor at the University of Winnipeg, says writing *After Light* took a number of years. The book came to her intermittently

"It's a story I've always wanted to tell, all my life."

— there were blocks of time when the words flowed, and times when she was so busy she didn't work on it at all.

"It was a huge project that really took up a lot of space in my head," she says.

After Light has a dual narrative — the story of Von (Siobhán) and her sister



AFTER LIGHT

Catherine Hunter

Signature Editions

\$23.95 pb, 448 pages

ISBN: 978-1-927426-73-9

Rosheen (Róisín) around the turn of the twenty-first century and the story Von uncovers about her grandmother Deirdre, who left Ireland for Boston and the hope of a better life.

The contemporary storyline is filled out with flashbacks to Von's and Rosheen's childhoods and further back to the Second World War and their father's experiences.

The result is a powerful family saga, delving into ideas of survival and resilience.

"It's a story I've always wanted to tell, all my life," says Hunter, "and kind of explore the way that trauma gets passed on from one generation to the next." 🌿

TRUTH BE TOLD

Poet documents her mother's residential school experience

by Quentin Mills-Fenn

Rosanna Deerchild wrote about her childhood in her first book, *this is a small northern town*, which won the 2008 Aqua Books Lansdowne Prize for Poetry. Her latest collection, *calling down the sky*, shifts the focus to her mother's experiences in the residential school system. It's a moving, lyrical document of suffering, survival, aftermath, and love.

Deerchild and her mother began the process of creating the book after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hosted a national gathering in Winnipeg in June 2010. The TRC travelled the country hearing survivor stories to put on the public record following the Prime Minister's apology for the Indian Residential School era.

"I told her, 'I will listen. I will tell your story and no one will tell you to be silent ever again.'

"My mother had no interest in going to the gathering or sharing her story with anyone," says Deerchild. "She believed in forgive and forget. But her story had already been etched on her skin, her body, her spirit, and upon our family. All that was left was the telling. After some convincing she went with me to the gathering and after hearing many experiences, decided she was ready."

But, Deerchild says, when she approached one of the sharing circles, she learned that so many had come to tell their stories, there was no room for her mother, and she should come back another time.

"I told them that my mother had been waiting 50 years to tell her story and she would not wait one more day," she says.

"I told her, 'I will listen. I will tell your story and no one will tell you to be silent ever again.'"

The book came about after numerous conversations, many of which had nothing to do with the schools.

"But sometimes," Deerchild says, "when we sat with each other and she had told me of her day she

would pause and then... she would share a memory. They were stark and honest and she never cried. But I did. Many times."

Deerchild filled out her mother's memories with research from the public record and interviews with other people. She found out when her mother's first school burned down and why there are no records of her there, and she discovered the name of the nuns who ran the schools and even the name of the woman who cut her hair.

"When you see the name of the person who violated your mother, something breaks inside of you," she says. "It is not something that can be silenced again."

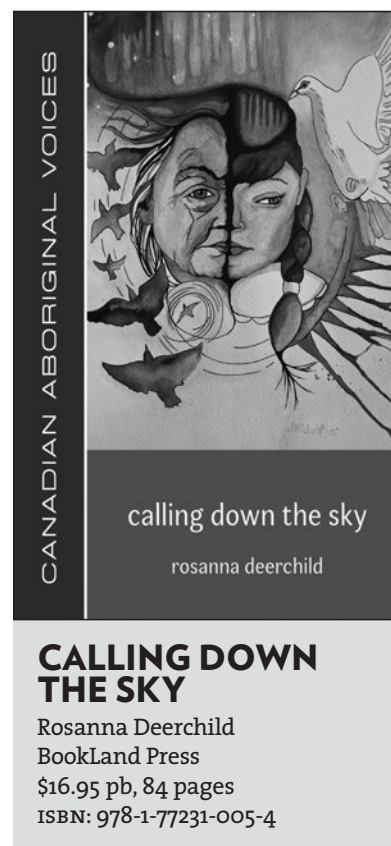
And her mother went over every poem, correcting, suggesting.

"She told me the same stories over and over until I got it right," Deerchild says. "There is not a word that does not have my mother's breath on it."

Deerchild is forthright in what she wants readers to take from the book.

"I would like people to take away the truth. To stop seeing Indigenous People as cattle deserving of slaughter," she says. "I want them to see their own children, their own reflection. I want them to be enraged by the forced weight upon generations of Canadians."

"What happened in those institutions was a genocide. That cannot be denied any longer." 🌿



Strings...of Pearl

Debut novel examines family dynamics

by Bev Sandell Greenberg

Writers get their inspiration in a variety of places. Erna Buffie's came from a want ad in the classified section of a newspaper: "For sale. Two mother-of-the-bride dresses. Size 12."

"Suddenly, there was this character Pearl, in all her glory: loud, blunt, grieving, and pissed off, at the world in general and her daughters in particular," says Buffie.

"So I started thinking... how *did* Pearl become this woman who would sell her mother-of-the-bride dresses? What was her secret past? And how did it shape her children?"

Buffie's short story about Pearl won the Nova Scotia Writers' Federation fiction contest, but the character continued to haunt her.

But Pearl embodies her past and unwittingly passes it on to her children in how she raises them; they are a product of her mothering. Only as middle-aged adults do they discover clues about their mother's past and begin to question her.

Throughout the novel the chapters hopscotch back and forth through time. "I wanted to write about women who had lived through the Great Depression, the Second World War and who, like Pearl, may also have grown up with a father horribly damaged by the First World War," says Buffie.

"Many of these women were intensely private and taciturn. As Pearl would say, they just 'got on with it,' but many never came to terms with the past."

Ever the storyteller, Buffie's background in making documentary films serves her well as a novelist. "The job, either as a writer or filmmaker, is to tell the story as vividly, compellingly, and truly as possible. Working in a cutting room teaches you what you absolutely need to say, what you can leave out, and how fast you can make the cuts, whether between places, characters, or time frames, and still keep your reader/viewer with you."

As well, filmmaking taught Buffie about the value and economy of language.

As for the Prairie setting, Buffie insists that it is essential to the novel. "The Great Depression wasn't just

Pearl has many secrets: her sister's abandonment, her mother's premature death, her father's emotional wounds from one war, as well as her lost brother and boyfriend in another war.

"Even at the best of times the prairies can be a cruel and forbidding landscape."



LET US BE TRUE

Erna Buffie
Coteau Books
\$19.95 pb, 240 pages
ISBN: 978-1-55050-635-8

an economic disaster; it was also a tangible, physical catastrophe because of the drought. Even at the best of times the prairies can be a cruel and forbidding landscape."

That said, she hopes that her novel isn't an exclusively "Prairie" story in terms of its themes and characters. Buffie once read that only through a deep knowledge of the particular can one write stories that are truly universal.

"I think that's true," she adds. "At least I hope so. I'll let readers be the judge of that!" 🌿

Chasing liberty

Dianne Warren explores the mysteries of ordinary lives in new novel

by Margaret Goldik

Dianne Warren's debut novel, *Cool Water*, was launched to critical acclaim, winning the Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction. And in *Liberty Street* she has given us another exceptional tale with characters who will live on after the book is finished.

Frances Moon, a middle-aged microbiologist in a western city, has an enviable life, but as one of the characters in this densely populated story remarks, "We are all such mysteries to one another." She and her longtime partner, Ian, are on vacation in Ireland when the funeral of a young woman surprises Frances into blurting out something about her past, without realizing she was speaking aloud.

Frances can either say more or less, and she chooses to say less. But that couple of sentences, awakening memories tamped down for decades, sends her back to Elliot, Saskatchewan, to her mother's rental property on Liberty Street.

Liberty Street – the title has many layers – is a failed subdivision. Frances's uncle had built a house there, but died after the house was completed. It remained the only house on Liberty Street, and was willed to the Moons (a "backup plan" Alice Moon called it, for the time when her husband's failing eyesight would force the family to move from the farm into town).

The stories of the various renters are woven into Frances's story, including one of a First

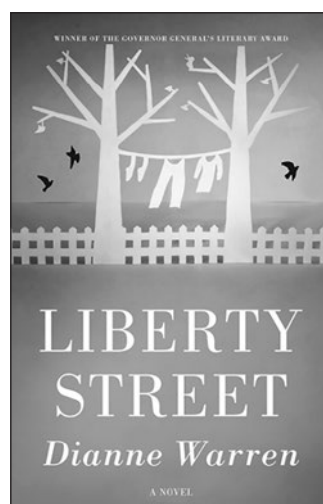
Nations man, Silas Chance, who dies at the side of the highway the same night that Dooley Sullivan crashes his truck into a bridge.

Dooley Sullivan is a troubled youth who is kind to prickly, impetuous, socially diffident Frances. She dreams of Dooley, and "when she's old enough to have a boyfriend, she wants him to be Dooley Sullivan." But Dooley's path leads to alcoholism and exile.

Upon her return as an adult, Frances realizes there are "no locked doors in Elliot." When she arrives there, she finds a second occupant on Liberty Street – a hippie living in a trailer. She meets her neighbour and then realizes that she is not the only person with onerous memories of Elliot.

"There are many acts of kindness throughout the lives of the two main characters."

In *Cool Water* the Saskatchewan landscape was almost another character. But the connection to the landscape is perhaps not as strong in *Liberty Street*.



LIBERTY STREET

Dianne Warren
HarperCollins
\$32.99 hc, 384 pages
ISBN: 978-1-55468-560-8

"The place where this novel is set is boreal forest, of which there is plenty in Saskatchewan," says Warren. "People just don't see it because they pass through Saskatchewan on the No. 1 highway, which is in farming and ranching country. So I still see *Liberty Street* as a very Saskatchewan novel, but it's a part of the province that is further north and not as familiar to most people. It's distinct culturally."

And perhaps kindness is part of that culture. "I didn't think about kindness while I was writing, but when I look at it now, there are many acts of kindness throughout the lives of the two main characters (Frances and Dooley)," Warren says.

"It's perhaps toward the end of the novel that they, and Frances in particular, recognize the importance of kindness, and it becomes cathartic." 🌿



FAN LETTERS

Mierau's latest collection examines pop culture and celebrity

by Quentin Mills-Fenn

Things are rarely straightforward in the writing of Maurice Mierau. Ideas bristle against each other in provocative ways, and you'll come across the most unexpected people. With his latest



poetry collection, he examines popular culture, and ideas of who speaks on behalf of an era. The reader's questions might start with the title. What exactly are *Autobiographical Fictions*?

"It has long fascinated me that poetry is classified as non-fiction in the Dewey decimal system," Mierau explains, "and on an instinctive level, many of us consider poetry to be true in a way that fiction is not."

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FICTIONS

Maurice Mierau
Palimpsest Press
\$18.95 pb, 72 pages
ISBN: 978-1-926794-28-0

While writing the book that became *Autobiographical Fictions*, Mierau wrote a memoir, *Detachment*.

The memoir, says Mierau, "used a lot of fictional techniques to tell painful and personal truths about my own family life. So my autobiographical fictions intermix autobiography, fiction, and celebrity biography in a much looser way than I could in the memoir, and one that I hope entertains readers."

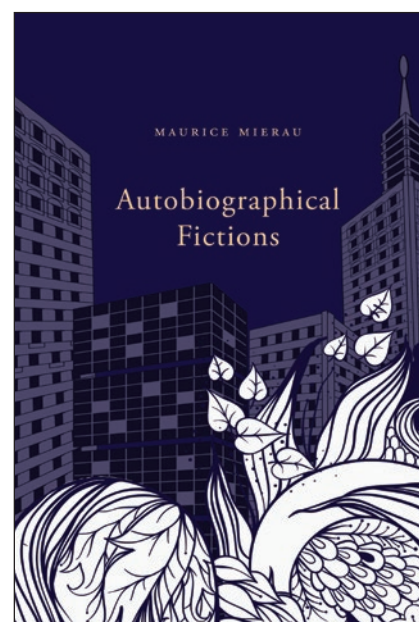
Mierau's previous poetry collection, *Fear Not*, drew from the Bible, but he points out that it shares a lot of territory with his latest book.

"There's less of a shift than might be immediately apparent," he says. "*Fear Not* is crammed with references to the King James Bible, but also to pop culture: Mel Gibson, Tony Soprano, Britney Spears and Alan Turing (both of whom also appear in this new book), Diana Krall, Janice Dickinson.

"*Autobiographical Fictions* features a bunch of poems about writers, too, including John Berryman, Emily Dickinson, Lord Byron, Oscar Wilde, and Ayn Rand (who should not be described as a writer). Another continuity between the two books is my interest in religious figures: here instead of Jesus, you get Joseph Smith, Ted Haggard, a Mennonite martyr, and so on."

"Celebrities, even minor ones... are great sources of accidental poetry."

This interest in public figures, with varying degrees of literary and cultural respectability, is announced on the opening pages of the book, which feature epigraphs from Celine Dion (with a great, bizarre quotation) and



basketball player Stephon Marbury (currently with the Beijing Ducks of the Chinese Basketball Association).

"Celebrities, even minor ones like Marbury, are great sources of accidental poetry," Mierau says.

"They are not respected, as poets sometimes are, for their linguistic craftsmanship. Instead they speak the language of society's unconscious."

Mierau delights in surprising readers, repeatedly coming up with striking juxtapositions. Many of the poems are dedicated to notable individuals, and sometime dedicatees make unusual neighbours: Robert Dziekanski next to Posh Spice, Allen Ginsberg next to Britney Spears. But Mierau has more than mere playfulness in mind.

"By making these juxtapositions, I'm interested in violating notions of decorum and logic that stop poets from inhabiting our cultural moment, where Google levels all discourse to a search result," he says.

"A poet should be engaged with contemporary language, as Wordsworth argued, and also the language of poetic tradition. That's why Ovid belongs in the same poem with Posh Spice." 🌿

Finding her niche

Poet's latest collection has strong ecological emphasis

by Ariel Gordon

Basma Kavanagh's second collection could be defined as eco-poetry, that is, poetry with a strong ecological emphasis.

While *Niche* includes elegies for lost flora and fauna and for the ways that humans interact with them, in these poems Kavanagh was reaching for something other than anger or despair.

"I want people to know that although some of the poems may seem dire, *Niche* is meant to be an inspiring text, a tool or a talisman for re-visioning a more optimistic and grounded view of climate change and mass extinction, and of the role humans play (or could be playing) on Earth," says Kavanagh.

While the poems in the Manitoba-based writer's first book, *Distillō*, engaged the natural world and explored our relationship to it, in *Niche* Kavanagh almost inverts the equation.

"*Distillō* was about re-learning how to be in the world in a new place, both geographically, and figuratively, after the death of my father," says Kavanagh, who is also a visual artist and letterpress printer.

"With *Niche*, I was attempting to write something that revealed what has been lost (culturally, linguistically, ecologically) in Nova Scotia by looking at what *isn't* there."

Kavanagh focused on extinction generally and, specifically, worked with the endangered species list for Nova Scotia, called the Red List.

"Although *Niche* emerges from a specific location, and a preoccupation with extinction, it ended up reaching across time and place to ask that ancient question, 'Why are we here?'" says Kavanagh.

Though she moved to the Prairies from Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley, Kavanagh has also lived in Cape Breton, on Vancouver Island, and in the Arabian Gulf.

"Moving every few years, I always seem to be writing about the place I lived last, and by the time I have gotten to know the new landscape, I'm writing and remembering it from somewhere else," she says. "To call that a method would be a stretch, but it's a pattern that seems to work, regardless."

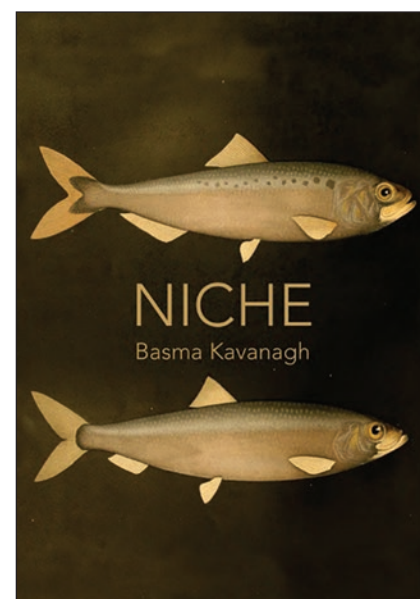
NICHE

Basma Kavanagh
Frontenac House
\$15.95 pb, 120 pages
ISBN: 978-1-927823-30-9

"I was attempting to write something that revealed what has been lost (culturally, linguistically, ecologically)... by looking at what *isn't* there."

Kavanagh notes that there are several things about the Prairies that she didn't anticipate.

"The tectonic solidity of the prairies was a surprise," Kavanagh says. "Maybe it shouldn't have been, but having spent most of my life in a



landscape of fault lines, a landscape that is slowly sinking into the ocean, and fairly rapidly being eroded by the ocean at the same time, the deep stillness of the land here is both comforting and unsettling."

When not touring *Niche* or producing artist's books under her imprint, Rabbit Square Books, Kavanagh is already at work on her next project.

"Although I am writing some miscellaneous poems, I am mostly concentrating on writing a book-length poem about my family history, the influences of Arabic language and poetic traditions in 'the West,' and women's lives, in the classical Arabic quatrain form – the *ruba'i*," says Kavanagh.

"So I am reading a lot of Arabic poets (classical and contemporary) in translation, including the fascinating *Desert Tracings: Six Classic Arabian Odes*, translated by Michael Sells. I am also spending a great deal of time squinting at my small but excellent Arabic-English dictionary (the Hans Wehr *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*)."



The centre of the universe

Science a source of metaphor in Major's latest

by Steve Locke

In her latest poetry collection, *Standard candles*, Alice Major continues to draw from science as a source of metaphor to ground the big ideas floating around the universe. Like Carl Sagan and Neil deGrasse Tyson, who bring scientific concepts to a public consciousness in their documentary television shows, Major takes up the poet's essential challenge to make grand concepts accessible and relatable to the reader. The result is a collection of thoughtfully crafted suites that feel mythological or biblical in scale, yet as familiar and common as our offices or kitchens.



To help transition readers into a more complex universe, Major includes a series of notes explaining the theories behind her work. As a whole, the collection might be ahead of its time, though as the public consciousness continues to expand to include more lofty ideas, *Standard Candles* may not be so far ahead that it's out of reach.

"Poets always have the challenge of incorporating less familiar material into their work in a meaningful way," says Major. "At the same time, many of these ideas become more and more common as time goes by, so hopefully, future readers don't need the notes. In my first book that came out in 1991, I had a poem about black holes and I used a note because at that time it was still a

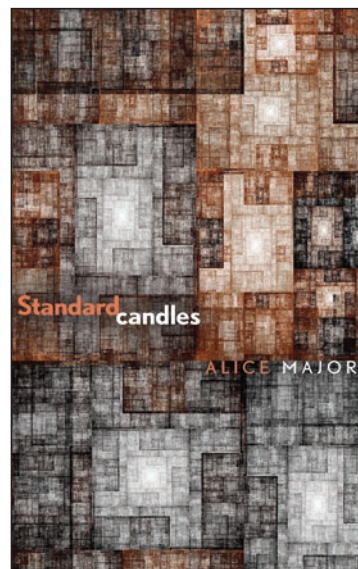
fairly unfamiliar idea in popular culture. Now I wouldn't have to."

"Poets always have the challenge of incorporating less familiar material into their work in a meaningful way."

Major's skill as a poet and cosmic herald reveals itself particularly in the suite "Ordinary Matter." There, the scope of science and myth pare down to tender moments between small creatures who share the same stardust as

STANDARD CANDLES

Alice Major
University of Alberta Press
\$19.95 pb, 176 pages
ISBN: 978-1-77212-091-2



the planets. In "Three-body problem," the geometry in the orbit of celestial bodies figures into the delicate balance of an intimate relationship and how the addition of one more body – be it

child or lover – affects their pull toward each other. In "Heavy elements," romantic relationships are examined via the formation of planets, from the casual, dizzying couplings that compress lighter elements, to those that become more dense, and capable of bearing substantial gravity.

Other suites, like the titular "Standard candles," the linked sonnets in "Let us compare cosmologies," and the final suite, "Underworlds," similarly draw on the language and ideas of science and mythology to add meaning to human experiences of loss and creation, in poems where "Although our shoulders touch, we each inhabit / a different rainbow, whose wavelengths travel / unique and separate radii to our eyes."

Space cadets: be warned. In reading *Standard Candles*, there is the potential for a most palpable experience of having one's mind blown. Readers will certainly find themselves putting the book down to stare out the window at the night sky and feel a sense of loneliness wrapped in communion. Call it the human condition.

"We can't help but be, each of us, the centre of our own world," says Major. "But there's no border to consciousness and sometimes we try to think right out to the very edge." 🌌

MORE POETRY

CHANGELINGS

Cassy Welburn

In these insightful poems, the magical combines with the natural, the mythical with the literary, to portray moments when children, men, and women are on the verge of transformation.

(Frontenac House, \$15.95 pb, 88 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927823-33-0)

CLOCKWORK: POEMS AND ESSAYS

Zaid Shlah

From the perspective of an exile, Shlah explores the role of the poet/critic and what one might do to get back to seeing oneself and the world with new eyes.

(Frontenac House, \$15.95 pb, 114 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927823-39-2)

EXILE ON A GRID ROAD

Shelley Banks

This celebration and exploration of the human experience, from youth to adulthood and illness to health, reveals the wonders to be found among the seemingly mundane details of the day.

(Thistledown, \$12.95 pb, 64 pages, ISBN: 978-1-771870-57-3)

LOVE IS NOT ANONYMOUS

Jan Wood

Wood explores the expectations and heartaches often projected onto women's lives and their spiritual journeys, and examines the pain and injustice to which women are subjected in the realms of love and faith.

(Thistledown, \$12.95 pb, 64 pages, ISBN: 978-1-771870-56-6)

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Nick Thran

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PAGE AS BONE – INK AS BLOOD

Jónína Kirton

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(Talonbooks, \$16.95 pb, 80 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88922-923-5)

QUESTIONS FOR WOLF

Shannon Quinn

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A REVISION OF FORWARD

Wendy McGrath

The title sequence of not-quite-mirror poems, the product of a decade-long collaboration with printmaker Walter Jule, highlights McGrath's inventive, formal powers, and the whole collection demonstrates her sensitivity to the details of working-class life.

(NeWest, \$17.95 pb, 72 pages, ISBN: 978-1-926455-37-2)

TWO MINDS

Harold Rhenisch

Masterfully using the Persian poetic form of the ghazal, Rhenisch presents at least two minds about history, society, philosophy, art, the sea, the earth, and the sky in these fresh and joyful poems.

(Frontenac House, \$15.95 pb, 108 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927823-36-1)

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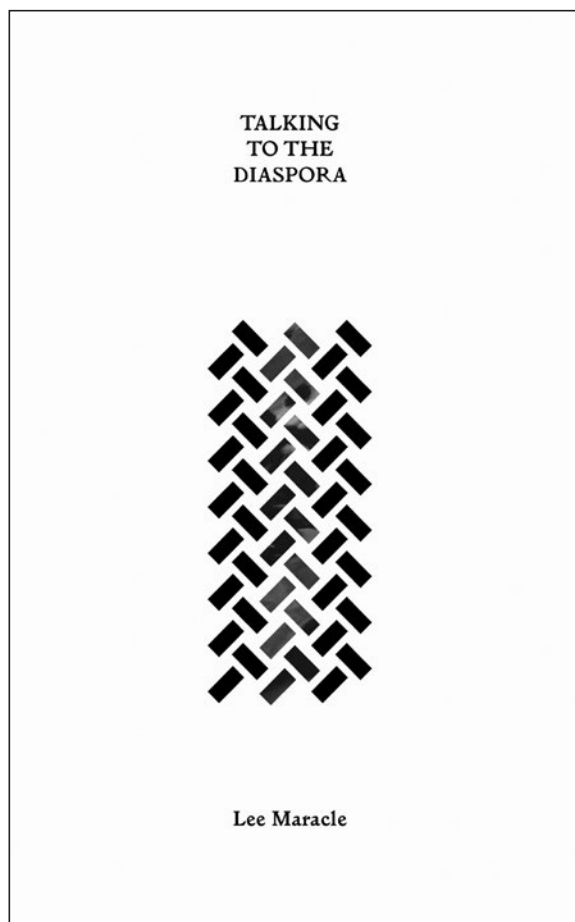
PEMMICAN PUBLICATIONS INC.

Poetic movements

Maracle uses poetry as a call to action

by Ariel Gordon

Sto:loh writer Lee Maracle has been a part of Canada's writing and publishing community for four decades. Like other Indigenous artists, including Maria Campbell, Basil H. Johnston, and Rita Joe, Maracle's work has melded art and activism.



TALKING TO THE DIASPORA

Lee Maracle
ARP Books
\$16.95 pb, 128 pages
ISBN: 978-1-894037-65-5



Maracle, who is based in Toronto, is a prolific writer. She has published multiple short story collections and novels, and has edited anthologies.

"I am proud of my work," says Maracle, who received the Queen Elizabeth II

Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work promoting writing among Aboriginal youth, among other honours.

"I read [my books] again every now and then to see if I am still satisfied with them and for the most part I am. There are always things you would change in hindsight, but I am still proud of all my work to date."

Maracle's latest book, *Talking to the Diaspora*, is only her second collection of poetry, after 2000's *Bent Box*. But that doesn't mean that Maracle doesn't value the form.

"Poetry is the language and dreams of the spirit," says Maracle. "Fiction is a story, and non-fiction is about your worldview. There is nothing finer than expressing your spirit."

The impetus for *Talking to the Diaspora* comes from the title poem's epigraph: "On Turtle Island anyone who is not Indigenous is part of some Diaspora." Maracle explains that she sees the book

"I think that what is important is that Canada will not say yes."

"The law says they have to consult with us, but so far they have not done so, and we are still colonized."

as being addressed to settlers, as opposed to the diaspora of Indigenous people in North America.

"I want settlers to understand the content of this book," says Maracle. "Every part of it is connected to my way of seeing the world, this place, what it deserves, and how we should take care of it."

It was no accident that Maracle, a long-time activist, elected to publish *Talking to the Diaspora* with Winnipeg-based ARP Books.

"I saw a book written by a friend of mine, Leanne Simpson," says Maracle. "It was published by ARP and it was beautiful. The words were beautiful, but the design was too, and it made a difference in how I read the work."

The poems in *Talking to the Diaspora* touch on a wide range of subjects: 9-11, the 1971 murder of Helen Betty Osborne, the 1989 Montreal Massacre, and the 25th anniversary of Martin Luther King's death. There are also poems on grass dancing, on Toronto's wolves and rivers, and meditations on what it means to be an Indigenous woman and Elder.

Taken together, the poems are both history lessons and calls to action.

Maracle's short poem "Oka," for instance, about the 1990 Oka Crisis, includes the lines: "On June 23rd Elijah whispered no / killing the accord, and for 18 days / we rejoiced / Until the guns went off at Oka, / we thought we really could / just say no."

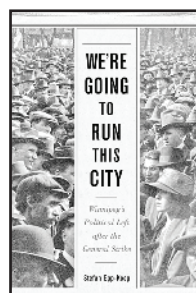
"I think that what is important is that Canada will not say yes," says Maracle. "The law says they have to consult with us, but so far they have not done so, and we are still colonized." 🐾

University of Manitoba Press



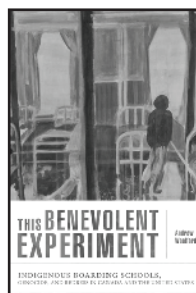
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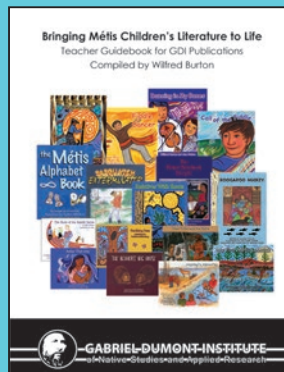
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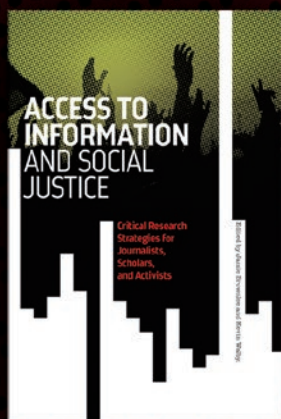
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HAUNTING MEMORIES

Play shines light on a piece of little-known Canadian history

by Kyla Neufeld

Some stories need time to sit and stew before they're ready to be told well. For Sean Dixon, his newest play, *The Wilberforce Hotel*, needed 10 years.

"Lately I've discovered it's better to sit with an idea. The trick is to avoid sitting forever," says Dixon. "I'd say I benefited from a 10-year break between first draft and second. I thought I'd forgotten all the source material, but when I returned to it, I found I had the facility to use it in more relevant ways than when I had first read it."

The Wilberforce Hotel tells the story of Austin Steward, who was the president of the little-known Wilberforce Colony from 1831 to 1837.

The history of the Wilberforce Colony is interesting, albeit somewhat tragic. It was established in 1829, just north of what is present-day London, Ontario, by free African-American citizens, and was named after William Wilberforce, the British abolitionist. However, due to internal disputes and little funding, the colony only survived for just under 20 years; by 1850 most of the families had left and the colony effectively dissolved.

"His struggles were likely very common for African-Americans of his time."

The Wilberforce Hotel is adapted from Steward's 1857 autobiography, *Twenty-two Years a Slave and Forty Years a Freeman*.

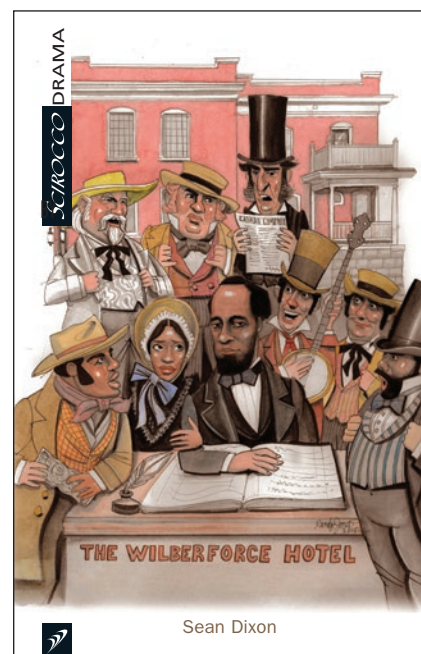
In the play, Steward is about to leave the Wilberforce Colony to return to his family in Rochester, New York, when two minstrels, Henry Hill and Robert Cole, arrive at his hotel, on the run from the law. Steward houses them for the night and finds himself haunted by his former slave master, Captain Helm, and his enemy Israel Lewis, as Hill and Cole transform into apparitions of them. Steward's own story is told through his interactions with these apparitions; we learn how Steward escaped from slavery, how he came to Wilberforce, and how Lewis scammed the colony out of its money.

Dixon portrays Steward as a tired and broken man who has realized that the good he's tried to work in the colony has come to nothing.

"He wasn't a hero. He didn't change the world. His struggles were likely very common for African-Americans of his time, working to make a better life for himself in a landscape of enormous historic shifts," says Dixon.

"I chose to write about a man at a turning point in his life, who had always used a careful and affable manner to extricate himself from all the troubles he had encountered until he met the foil who would almost destroy him."

But Steward faces his ghosts and comes away with new resolve.



THE WILBERFORCE HOTEL

Sean Dixon
Scirocco Drama
\$15.95 pb, 86 pages
ISBN: 978-1-927922-19-4

"Musing on his failure to collaborate with Israel Lewis, Austin has to find something in there that he can take away to the next part of his life. What he finds... is a connection with Lewis's spirit in challenging the status quo."

The Wilberforce Hotel premiered in July 2015 at the Blyth Festival in Blyth, Ontario, to great success.

"I believe it was their biggest seller of the season. The audience was hungry to learn something about this little known history." ✍



MORE DRAMA

THE BRICKLIN: AN AUTOMOTIVE FANTASY

Paul Ledoux and Allen Cole

This '70s-inspired musical is about big dreams, risk takers, and a sexy sports car that takes audiences on a wild ride through politics, business, controversy, and one of Canada's most colourful stories.

(Scirocco Drama, \$15.95 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927922-14-9)

HAPPY PLACE

Pamela Mala Sinha

This play explores the lives of seven female residents of an in-patient care facility, a microcosm for the world outside its walls, who teach one another how to live with what happened to them as no else can.

(Scirocco Drama, \$15.95 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927922-13-2)

REFUGE

Mary Vingoe

A former soldier from Eritrea arrives in Canada without papers in this timely play, which is presented by the couple who takes him in and the lawyer who represents him, and which lays bare the shortcomings of the Canadian refugee system.

(Scirocco Drama, \$15.95 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927922-16-3)

A ROUND FOR FIFTY YEARS: A HISTORY OF REGINA'S GLOBE THEATRE

Gerald Hill

This history of Regina's Globe Theatre, the only professional theatre-in-the-round in Canada, marks its fiftieth anniversary, and is illustrated with historical and contemporary photographs, from its early days as a touring company devoted to young audiences, to the present.

(Coteau, \$34.95 pb, 240 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55050-638-9)

THE SECRET ANNEX

Alix Sobler

Speculative history, this play posits what would happen if Anne Frank survived the war and moved to New York City. When the publisher of her memoir demands rewrites, she wonders, Why did she survive, if not to tell her story?

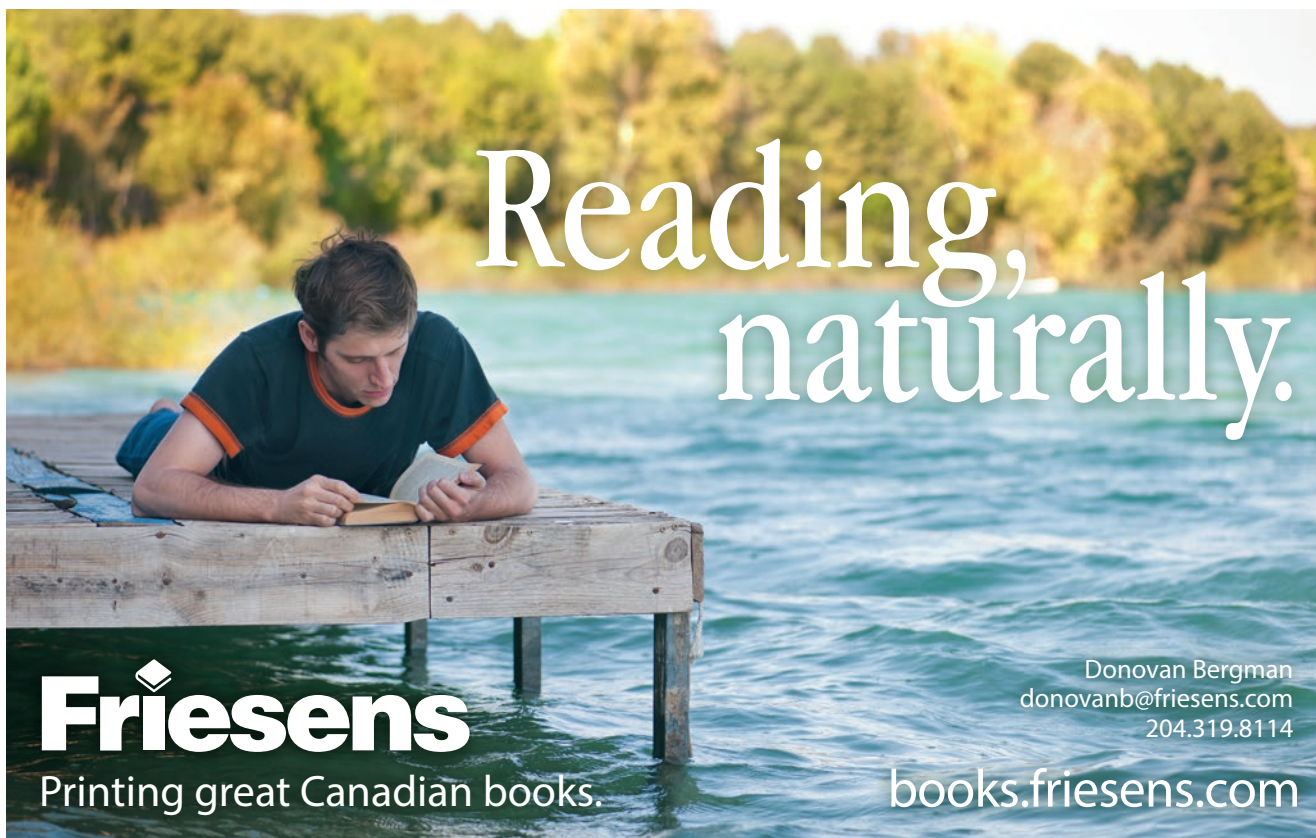
(Scirocco Drama, \$15.95 pb, 106 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927922-10-1)

SHARON POLLOCK: FIRST WOMAN OF CANADIAN THEATRE

Edited by Donna Coates

Pollock, as playwright, actor, director, teacher, mentor, administrator, and critic, has played an integral role in Canada's national theatre tradition. This collection comprises new and original assessments of her work and contributions to theatre.

(University of Calgary Press, \$34.95 pb, 320 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55238-789-4)

A photograph of a man with dark hair, wearing a dark green t-shirt with orange trim, lying on his stomach on a wooden pier. He is reading a book. The pier is over a body of water, and the background shows a forested shoreline with trees in autumn colors. The text 'Reading, naturally.' is overlaid in large white serif font on the right side of the image.

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(Scirocco Drama, \$15.95 pb, 60 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927922-12-5)

STAG AND DOE/BED AND BREAKFAST**Mark Crawford**

In these two comedies, a couple throws a party to pay for their wedding in a distinctly Canadian prenuptial tradition, and a male couple inherit a historic house and discover what it's like to be "out" in a small town as they finally find a place to call home.

(Scirocco Drama, \$18.95 pb, 144 pages, ISBN: 978-1-927922-17-0)

TWELVE HOURS**Dave Carley**

A man convicted of rape and murder faces his last hours on death row in this play that goes into the hearts and minds of ordinary people affected by a

terrible crime, and the cruel and biased punishment that results.

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PERFECTLY IMPERFECT

Author wants kids to know perfection is by no means ideal

by Linda Alberta

Whenever things look too good to be true, it's probably time to throw the proverbial wrench into the machine. That wrench could be a person, a situation, an idea, or it could be a character in a new book by Edmonton author Alison Hughes.

The award-winning author's sixth children's book is *Beatrice More Moves In*. There are big ideas in this small book that percolate into a smart and funny read.

The story begins on moving day with the More family. Daughter Beatrice is mortified by the chaos and tries to contain it with lists, orders, and activity, while younger daughter Sophie is a catalyst for further mess – a happy wrench for any machine. After Beatrice invites new friends to visit her home, she insists that everything be unpacked and organized – in three hours.

"I wanted to show how perfectionism is unattainable in life and how our society is so focused on that. Even children are affected. Our homes have to be perfect. Our bodies have to be perfect. Celebrities have to look the same as they did 30 years ago." But this is where Sophie comes in," says Hughes. "Sophie tempers perfectionism."

Moving is on par with getting married and other big life events, and Hughes says she chose this setting because it was a stressor that allowed core character traits to surface. She adds that while "character" is the bedrock of any story, situations have to be interesting and sometimes moving takes "interesting" to another level.

"We have moved quite a lot. We've moved to England, Australia, London, Calgary, and Edmonton," says Hughes. "I am not a huge fan of moving. I don't like living out of boxes. And the idea of Beatrice being a neat freak – well, my daughter happens to be very, very tidy."

Hughes says she took a "long and twisted road" to become a writer. The author studied English literature at the University of Alberta and then completed a master's degree in law. But that calling contained a decisive drawback.

"It didn't allow for child raising," she explains. "And I needed something flexible so I could drive kids to school and still run a household. I needed something I could do during the day within a certain small set of hours. So writing chose me. But I enjoy the creative freedom and the creative challenge. I love meeting children and presenting to schools and libraries."

One challenge for most writers is finding a publisher. However, Hughes says she was fortunate because after submitting her current book to only two publishers, it was accepted.

Even as a child, Hughes loved books.

"As a child, I would take what seemed like



"I wanted to show how perfectionism is unattainable in life and how our society is so focused on that."

hundreds of books out of the library. Books were very important to me," she says. "They were harbingers of adventure, escape, and information. Then as a parent, I read books to my kids and that was part of their growing up and our bonding.

"There is nothing like laughing together cuddled up." 🐾

BEATRICE MORE MOVES IN

Alison Hughes
Orca Book Publishers
\$6.95 pb, 76 pages
ISBN: 978-1-45980-761-7

Not all fun and games

Cosplay novel for teens shows how obsession can go too far

by Amanda Sanders

Calgary author Kim Firmston is an avid cosplayer (costumed role-player), and when she was approached to write a book for teenagers, she felt that could accurately reflect the culture and atmosphere of cosplay and fan conventions.

CREEP CON

Kim Firmston
Lorimer
\$14.95 pb, 152 pages
ISBN: 978-1-4594-0977-4

Firmston loves cosplay because of the great community that surrounds it – a community of people sharing common interests, helping each other with costumes, or getting someone safely home after conventions.

“In cosplay anyone can be anything and it’s okay to try new things,” she says.

In *Creep Con*, Mariam and her mother move from Fort McMurray to Calgary. The reader meets Mariam on her first day at a new school and of course, she’s lost! Enter Tya, an outgoing Jamaican-Canadian who is also new. The two become quick friends and learn that they have many things in common, most importantly – a love for Dr. Who. Mariam’s love for superhero comic books overlaps with Tya’s obsession with anime.

Big cities like Calgary have big conventions, and while Mariam cannot afford the tickets for Calgary Comic and Entertainment Expo, she and Tya

plan on going to Otafest, a yearly anime convention.

Mariam, cosplaying as Haruhi from Ouran High School Host Club, ends up going without Tya, and finds herself joining a cosplay group portraying the rest of the Host Club. One of them, Rick, takes his character too seriously and begins to treat Mariam as if she were really Haruhi, manipulating and controlling her to the point where she can’t enjoy the convention. At the end of convention dance, Mariam finds Rick trying to force himself on her.

Firmston says this is not based on a true Otafest incident, but she wanted to show the uglier side of fan conventions. When people put themselves out there in the world (in or out of costume), some “creeps” do not see anything wrong with encroaching on personal boundaries by touching, groping, or manhandling – but all of those without consent are sexual assault.

“Kids need to learn that it’s not okay to act like that and that if it happens to them, that they aren’t to blame – no matter what they are wearing,” she says. “They are dressing as their favourite character to celebrate the creation, not to get grabbed.”

Firmston wants her readers to know that being targeted “doesn’t mean they are powerless. They can be their own superhero and a superhero to their friends who may have gone through it.” She also wanted to show that finding someone who respects you is much better than someone who is flashy and only tends to their own needs.

“They are dressing as their favourite character to celebrate the creation, not to get grabbed.”

Firmston has advice for fan convention attendees.

“The most important thing to remember is you’re going somewhere you can be the best version of yourself. A magical place where the characters you love are real and where you can let your fan flag fly. Nobody wants the weekend to end and everyone is a little sad when it does,” she says.

“So join the community and have fun.” ☞



GOOD THINGS COME IN...

Maureen Fergus releases three picture books

by Paula E. Kirman

Winnipeg author Maureen Fergus is having a busy year, with three picture books published this fall. *And What If I Won't* features Benny, who gets into a game with his mother of one-upping each other in what becomes a fantastic adventure – and a lesson about consequences – laced with love and humour. *InvisiBill* deals with the middle child (named Bill) who feels ignored by the rest of his family and becomes invisible. *Buddy and Earl* is a playful story about the shenanigans between two family pets – a dog named Buddy and a hedgehog named Earl.

Fergus gets inspiration in daily life.

“Buddy and Earl was inspired by my family pets Buddy and Earl, a dog and a hedgehog,” she says. “I got the idea for *A Dog Day for Susan* (to be released in the spring of 2016) from a friend who told a true story of acquaintances who brought their dog for the weekend and expected my friend to cook scrambled eggs and sausages for the dog.”

When inspiration strikes, Fergus starts writing. “If there’s magic in the idea, a picture book manuscript is born!” she exclaims.

Known more as a novelist, Fergus has, in addition to the three new picture books out this year, four being published next year, as well as projects lined up for 2017 and 2018.

“It wasn’t until a couple of years ago that I decided to really focus on picture books,” she says. “Over the course of about a year I wrote a bunch of manuscripts hoping to get at least one placed; I ended up placing seven.”

Still, she does receive rejections. “Sometimes it’s because a particular manuscript isn’t the right fit for a particular publisher; other times, the manuscript may be good but just not quite good enough,” she says. “In those cases, I’m okay getting rejected because I only want my very best manuscripts to make it into the hands of my readers, anyway.”

Fergus’s three current picture books each have different illustrators, and very different artistic motifs. She does not work directly with the artists.



“Laughing is good for us and having great reading experiences helps kids develop into lifelong readers.”

AND WHAT IF I WON'T?

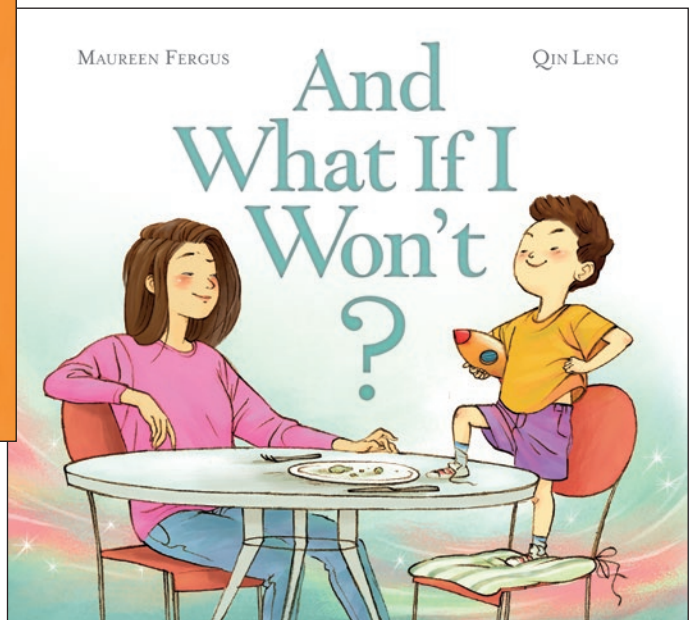
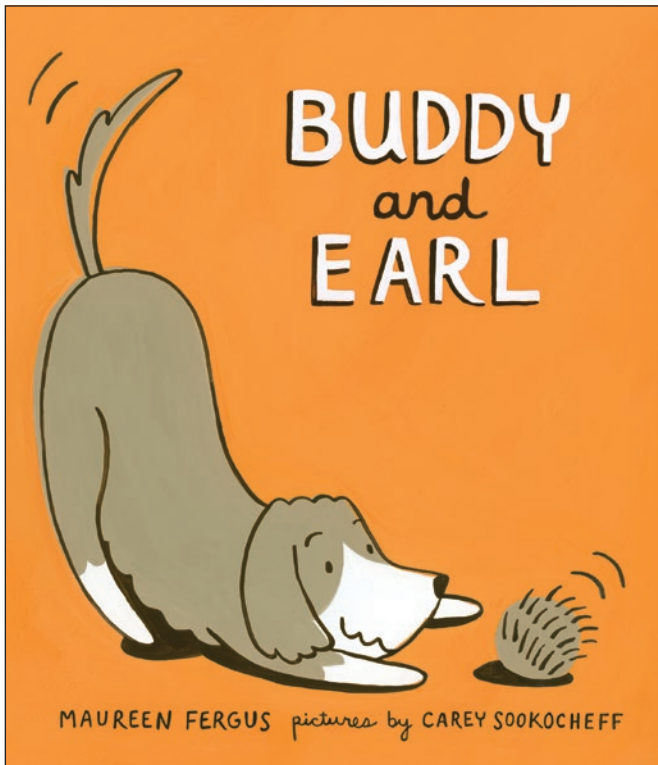
Maureen Fergus
Illustrated by Qin Leng
Owlkids Books
\$17.95 hc, 32 pages
ISBN: 978-1-77147-065-0

BUDDY AND EARL

Maureen Fergus
Pictures by Carey Sookocheff
Groundwood Books–
House of Anansi
\$16.95 hc, 32 pages
ISBN: 978-1-55498-712-2

INVISIBILL

Maureen Fergus
Illustrated by Dušan Petričić
Tundra Books
\$19.99 hc, 40 pages
ISBN: 978-1-77049-613-2



*When inspiration strikes,
Fergus starts writing.*

Instead, the editor for each book selects the illustrator believed to be the best fit for the project.

“Because I am a very visual writer, I always include many footnotes describing what I ‘saw’ happening at different points in the story, but the illustrator is free to take my suggestions – or not – as he or she sees fit,” Fergus explains.

She’s comfortable with this process. “I strongly believe that the illustrator should have complete creative freedom when it comes to their part of the process,” she says, “and I have always been thrilled with the final product.”

What Fergus’s picture books have in common is humour.

“Laughing is good for us and having great reading experiences helps kids develop into lifelong readers. If kids also learn a little something from my books, that’s a bonus,” she says.

“The thing I like most about writing for kids is that the things that make me laugh seem to make them laugh, too. It’s nice to know that there are so many kindred spirits out there!” 🌟

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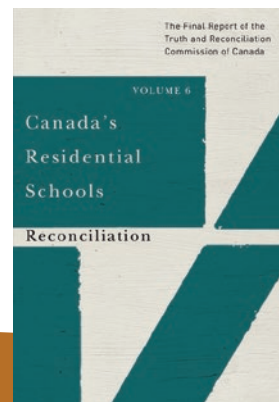
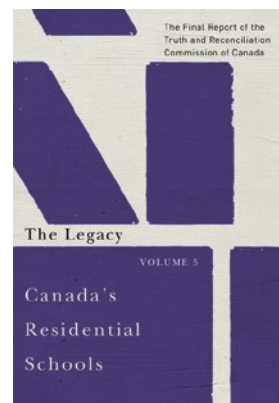
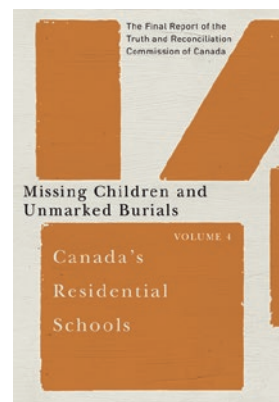
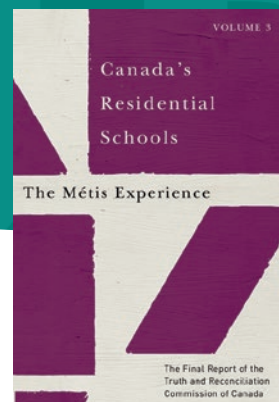
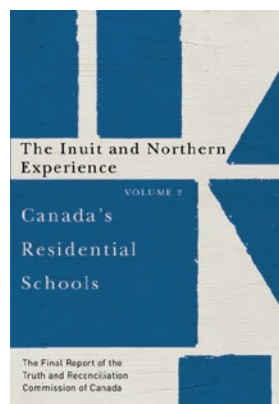
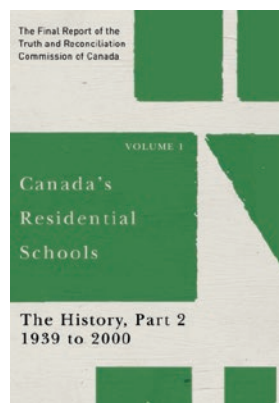
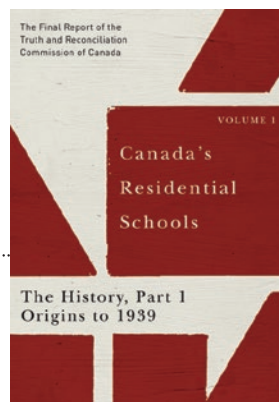
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Honorer la vérité, réconcilier pour l'avenir :
Sommaire du rapport final de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation du Canada



MORE YOUNG ADULT AND KIDS BOOKS

PICTURE BOOKS

THE CHILDREN OF LIR

Alexandra Soranescu

This retelling of the classic Irish myth about King Lir and his four sons and daughters who were changed into magical swans by their evil stepmother Aoife inspires the values of patience, forgiveness, and solidarity.
(XLibris, \$29.99 pb, 30 pages,
ISBN: 978-1-5035-7147-1)

FINDING WINNIE: THE TRUE STORY OF THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS BEAR

Lindsay Mattick, illustrated by Sophie Blackall

In this true story of WWI veterinarian Captain Harry Colebourn, who rescued a bear cub in Ontario and named the bear after Winnipeg, Winnie travels across the ocean to an army base in England, and eventually the London Zoo, where he meets the real-life Christopher Robin. Written by Colebourn's great-granddaughter. With photographs and ephemera from the Colebourn family archives.
(HarperCollins, \$19.99 hc, 56 pages,
ISBN: 978-1-4434-2918-4)

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS IN CANADA

Ellen Warwick, illustrated by Kim Smith

In this charming epistolary picture book, Juliette writes home about her visit with her cousin Theo and the very special gifts he gives her for each of the twelve days of Christmas, starting with a loon in a maple tree, as they travel across Canada.
(Sterling Children's Books, \$12.95 hc, 32 pages,
ISBN: 978-1-4549-1431-0)

FOR YOUNG READERS

CAVE BENEATH THE SEA, THE SHARDS OF EXCALIBUR, BOOK 4

Edward Willett

The latest in the Shards of Excalibur series sees Ariane and Wally race to find Ariane's mother and the fourth shard of Excalibur before the ancient sorcerer Merlin can gain the upper hand.
(Coteau, \$14.95 pb, 216 pages,
ISBN: 978-1-55050-639-6)

HEAD HUNTER

Eric Howling

This action-filled football story explores the dangers of concussions in contact sports and the lasting damage they can cause, as Colt, the captain of the Westside Warriors, has to deal with the increasingly erratic behaviour of the team's coach, who happens to be his father.
(Lorimer, \$9.95 pb, 128 pages,
ISBN: 978-1-4594-0967-5)

THE LAKE IN THE CLOUDS, THE SHARDS OF EXCALIBUR, BOOK 3

Edward Willett

Ariane, descendant of the Lady of the Lake, must use her powers to avoid Rex Major (a.k.a. Merlin) in this modern take on the Arthurian legends.
(Coteau, \$14.95 pb, 218 pages,
ISBN: 978-1-55050-616-7)

RED STONE

Gabriele Goldstone

Inspired by a true story, this novel tells of Katya, who is taken to a forced labour camp with her mother and younger siblings after her father is arrested by Stalin's secret police.
(Rebelight, \$10.99 pb, 168 pages,
ISBN: 978-0-9939390-8-2)

THROUGH FLOOD AND FIRE, A SECOND BARR COLONY ADVENTURE

Anne Patton

Based on a true story, this sequel to Full Steam to Canada follows Dorothy Bolton, a recent immigrant from England with her family, as she discovers the true strength of community as a settler on the plains.
(Coteau, \$9.95 pb, 216 pages,
ISBN: 978-1-55050-640-2)

WONDER HORSE

Anita Daher

Sera finds fitting into a new school in a new city challenging, but dreams come true with a gift from her parents: a beautiful American Paint horse with a big personality.
(Rebelight, \$10.99 pb, 96 pages,
ISBN: 978-0-9939390-6-8)

YOUNG ADULT

BURNED

Natasha Deen

Josie has spent two years living on the streets trying to bring down the cop who killed her

family in a fire, but her time is running out, unless she learns the importance of trust and teamwork. Part of the new Retribution series by three Prairie writers.
(Orca, \$9.95 pb, 168 pages,
ISBN: 978-1-4598-0726-6)

CRACK COACH

Steven Sandor

In a fictional story based on recent headlines, Maurice and Vijay are thrilled to be the only Grade 9 students to make the junior football team, but their new coach is also the town's mayor, a divisive figure who attracts controversy, including allegations of drug abuse.
(Lorimer, \$14.95 pb, 160 pages,
ISBN: 978-1-4594-0980-4)

EXPOSED

Judith Graves

Raven is a young, whip-smart car thief who thinks she owes her current boss everything, but she learns to see him for what he really is. Part of the new Retribution series by three Prairie writers.
(Orca, \$9.95 pb, 144 pages,
ISBN: 978-1-4598-0722-8)

THE JOURNAL

Lois Donovan

A mysterious letter convinces Kami's mother to uproot them and move to Edmonton. Lonely and upset, Kami discovers a family journal with newspaper clippings that sends her hurtling back in time to 1929, where she encounters some notable historical figures as well as racial prejudice.
(Ronsdale Press, \$11.95 pb, 204 pages,
ISBN: 978-1-55380-350-8)

LADY OAK ABROAD, THE AUDREY O'KRANE CHRONICLES, BOOK 1

Glenda Goertzen

Audrey's personal life, and the entire planet Earth, seem damaged beyond all hope, so she escapes through a magic porthole, only to discover that the universe is also something of a mess. And her magic powers only make her a target for the bad guys.
(Hazeldell Productions, \$15.95 pb, 264 pages,
ISBN: 978-0-9879232-2-6)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50

NOWHERE WILD

Joe Beernink

In this dark, riveting survival story set against the rugged backcountry of northern Manitoba, two teenagers are forced to draw on resources they never imagined they had, in order to save themselves, and each other. (HarperCollins, \$19.99 hc, 304 pages, ISBN: 978-1-44342-243-7)

THE OCCASIONAL DIAMOND THIEF

J. A. McLachlan

On his deathbed, Kia's father discloses a secret to her: his possession of a magnificent diamond from the distant colonized planet of Malem. Kia must use her skills in languages, and lock-picking, to unravel the secret of the mysterious gem. (EDGE, \$14.95 pb, 304 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77053-075-1)

QUEEN OF THE GODFORSAKEN

Mix Hart

When Lydia's family moves from urban Vancouver to an isolated farmhouse in Saskatchewan, she is appalled at her parents, the locals, and the godforsaken land that forces her to leave childhood behind. (Thistledown, \$14.95 pb, 288 pages, ISBN: 978-1-771870-63-4)

SIZE OF A FIST

Tara Gereaux

In this novella for teens, a young woman must decide if she should fulfill her wish to move to the city, or stay in her small working class town and help a boy for whom she feels responsible. (Thistledown, \$12.95 pb, 64 pages, ISBN: 978-1-771870-59-7)

SLEIGHT OF HAND

Natasha Deen

One stupid mistake and Javvan's life has never been the same. Unable to get a job, and in danger of violating his parole, he thinks he's a getting a second chance, but his new boss gives him an impossible choice: steal again or go back to jail. (Orca, \$9.95 pb, 144 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4598-1120-1)

250 HOURS

Colleen Nelson

This is the story of two unlikely cohorts – the son of a residential school survivor, and an ambitious young woman from a conservative town who is obligated to look after her ailing grandmother – who discover that the secrets that keep their communities apart might very well bring them together. (Coteau, \$12.95 pb, 160 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55050-641-9)

UNLEASHED

Sigmund Brouwer

On the run from his father's abuse, and trying to protect his brother, Jace discovers there are different kinds of vengeance and learns he is not alone and there are people he can trust. Part of the new Retribution series by three Prairie writers. (Orca, \$9.95 pb, 168 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4598-0730-3)

THE UNQUIET

Mikaela Everett

In this futuristic and literary novel, Lira has been trained since childhood to kill and replace an alternate version of herself on a parallel Earth at age 14, and she is beginning to question this plan and wonder about which version deserves to live. (Greenwillow-HarperCollins, \$21.99 hc, 464 pages, ISBN: 978-0-06-238127-9)

URBAN TRIBES: NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE CITY

Edited by Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale

The stories, poems, and art in this follow-up to *Dreaming in Indian* chronicle how urban Aboriginal youth connect to their cultures, break down stereotypes, and use their Indigenous world views to make a better future for all. Included are pieces about the Perception photography project by Winnipeg's K. C. Adams and the voice of musician iskwé speaking up for Canada's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. With full colour images throughout. (Annick, \$14.95 pb, 136 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55451-750-3)

WHISTLE

Richard Van Camp

This epistolary story for reluctant readers brilliantly portrays the restorative justice process from the viewpoint of Darcy, in a youth detention facility, as he writes letters to Brody, the boy he bullied for years. (Pearson, \$9.95 pb, 32 pages, ISBN: 978-0-13-385531-9)

GRAPHIC NOVELS**BETTY: THE HELEN BETTY OSBORNE STORY**

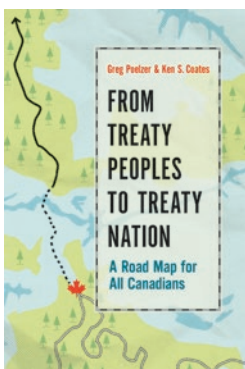
David Alexander Robertson, illustrated by Scott B. Henderson

In this telling, the story of Helen Betty Osborne, who was brutally murdered in The Pas in 1971, is put into the context of the issue of Canada's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, which is at the forefront of our country's consciousness today. (Highwater Press, \$16.00 pb, 32 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55379-544-5)

THE BLUE RAVEN

Richard Van Camp, illustrated by Steven Keewatin Sanderson

Benji, who is dealing with the loss of his father, befriends Trevor, an older boy who never really connected with his community or Aboriginal heritage, as they try to find Benji's stolen bike. (Pearson, \$9.95 pb, 32 pages, ISBN: 978-0-13-385527-2)



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(Coteau, \$24.95 pb, 288 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55050-637-2)

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS IN CANADA: EXCLUSION, INCLUSION, TRANSFORMATION, 1947–1955

Adara Goldberg

This examination of the immigration, resettlement, and integration experience from the perspective of Holocaust survivors and those charged with helping them is also an exploration of the relationships between survivors, Jewish social service organizations, and local Jewish communities.

(University of Manitoba Press, \$24.95 pb, 296 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88755-776-7)

IMPLIED CONSENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT: INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS, AUTONOMY, AND VOICE

Michael Plaxton

Drawing upon a range of contemporary criminal law theorists and feminist scholars, this study challenges widespread beliefs about sexual consent and reconsiders the nature of mutuality in a world dominated by gender norms, the proper scope of criminal law, and the true meaning of sexual autonomy.

(McGill-Queen's University Press, \$37.95 pb, 288 pages, ISBN: 978-0-77354-620-2)

INDIGENOUS MEN AND MASCULINITIES: LEGACIES, IDENTITIES, REGENERATIONS

Edited by Kim Anderson and Robert

Alexander Innes

Building on Indigenous knowledge systems and feminism, as well as queer theory, this collection of essays by scholars from Canada, the US, and New Zealand opens pathways for the nascent study of Indigenous masculinities.

(University of Manitoba Press, \$27.95 pb, 304 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88755-790-3)

INDIGENOUS NATIONHOOD: EMPOWERING GRASSROOTS CITIZENS

Pamela Palmater

This is an accessible, critical collection of blog posts that analyze legislation, Aboriginal rights, and Canadian and First Nations political and social issues, by Indigenous activist, lawyer, and academic Pamela Palmater.

(Fernwood, \$19.95 pb, 232 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55266-795-8)

THE LAND WE ARE: ARTISTS AND WRITERS UNSETTLE THE POLITICS OF RECONCILIATION

Edited by Gabrielle L'Hirondelle Hill and Sophie McCall

This collection of writing and art that interrogates the current era of reconciliation and Indigenous-settler relations is the result of a four-year collaboration between artists and scholars. With colour illustrations.

(ARP, \$24.95 pb, 256 pages, ISBN: 978-1-894037-63-1)

MAGAZINES, TRAVEL, AND MIDDLEBROW CULTURE: CANADIAN PERIODICALS IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH, 1925–1960

Faye Hammill and Michelle Smith

This new cross-cultural approach to periodical studies examines mainstream magazines like *Chatelaine* and *La Revue Moderne* in relation to an emerging transatlantic middlebrow culture, and looks at how they forged a connection between upward and geographic mobility. With photographs, bibliography, notes, and index.

(University of Alberta Press, \$49.95 pb, 256 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-083-7)

MAKING A SCENE: LESBIANS AND COMMUNITY ACROSS CANADA, 1964–84

Liz Millward

Enriched by interviews, this account of the youthful and ambitious lesbian movement that arose in Canada in the 1960s shows how women who had been pathologized and erased called attention to themselves and created places to come together and forge their own culture.

(UBC Press, \$85.00 hc, 168 pages, ISBN: 978-0-7748-3066-9)

MEMORY SERVES

Lee Maracle

This first collection of oratories by one of Canada's most important Indigenous writers is a series of lectures that hold the features and style of oratory intrinsic to the Salish people, through which Maracle shares knowledge about history, memory, philosophy, law, feminism, and colonialism.

(NeWest, \$24.95 pb, 260 pages, ISBN: 978-1-926455-44-0)

MINING AND COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN CANADA: HISTORY, POLITICS, AND MEMORY

Edited by Arn Keeling and John Sandios

This collection of essays examines historical and contemporary social, economic, and environmental impacts of mining on Aboriginal communities in northern Canada, combining oral history research with

intensive archival study. With illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index.

(University of Calgary Press, \$34.95 pb, 400 pages, ISBN: 978-1-55238-804-4)

ROAD TO RECOVERY: FOLLOWING YOUR MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT

Lawrence Matrick

This self-help guide written by a psychiatrist helps victims cope with the stress of medical and legal processes that can occur after an accident, as well as the personal effects, including anxiety and sleep disorders, that trauma can inflict on accident victims.

(Granville Island Publishing, \$16.95 pb, 154 pages, ISBN: 978-1-926991-42-9)

SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING AND COLLABORATION IN RURAL CANADA: TAKING THE NEXT STEPS

Edited by Lars K. Hallström, Mary A. Beckie, Glen T. Hvenegaard, and Karsten Mündel

In step with rural development initiatives across Canada, these case studies examine the shift toward sustainability-based planning as a key element of community development, as they explore the growth of partnerships between communities and post-secondary institutions.

(University of Alberta Press, \$49.95 pb, 408 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-040-0)

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Andrew Woolford

Woolford analyzes policy around the "Indian problem" in Canada and the US at the end of the nineteenth century, and the "solution" of Indigenous boarding schools, comparing how they were implemented in Manitoba and New Mexico, and how different historical, political, and structural influences led to very different responses to the harms caused by these schools.

(University of Manitoba Press, \$27.95 pb, 448 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88755-786-6)

THOSE WHO BELONG: IDENTITY, FAMILY, BLOOD, AND CITIZENSHIP AMONG THE WHITE EARTH ANISHINAABEG

Jill Doerfler

Doerfler explores how White Earth Anishinaabeg understood identity and blood quantum, how this understanding was employed by the US government, and how contemporary efforts led to the rejection of blood quantum as a criterion for citizenship and replaced it with lineal descent.

(University of Manitoba Press, \$29.95 pb, 214 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88755-796-5)

TRANSNATIONAL RADICALS: ITALIAN ANARCHISTS IN CANADA AND THE U.S., 1915–1940

Travis Tomchuk

Based on Italian government security files and anarchist newspapers, this history of a little-studied political movement shows how Italian anarchists established strength through transnationalism against a backdrop of class war and repression. With bibliography, index, illustrations.

(University of Manitoba, \$27.95 pb, 280 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88755-773-6)

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Douglas Roche

This brief, well-informed account of the United Nations today focuses on the most challenging issues: the use of military force in conflicts, the challenges of climate change, human rights, and disparities between rich and poor.

(Lorimer, \$14.95 pb, 96 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4594-0949-1)

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Peter MacKinnon

Drawing on more than a decade of service at the helm of a major Canadian research university, MacKinnon offers an insider's perspective on the challenges faced by Canadian universities today, including funding, governance, and fostering innovation.

(University of Toronto, \$24.95 pb, 200 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4426-1611-0)

UNSUSTAINABLE OIL: FACTS, COUNTERFACTS AND FICTIONS

Jon Gordon

This groundbreaking examination of the relationship between culture and energy extraction offers readers the chance to consider literature's potential in confronting the hegemony of the oil and gas industry – for students of cultural studies, literature, eco-criticism, energy humanities, and Indigenous studies. With photographs, maps, bibliography, notes, and index.

(University of Alberta Press, \$45.00 pb, 288 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-036-3)

WEAVING A MALAWI SUNRISE: A WOMAN, A SCHOOL, AND A PEOPLE

Roberta Laurie

Laurie tells the inspiring story of Memory Chazeza, a Malawian woman who struggled to get an education and then build a school for girls, combining personal narratives with scholarly analyses of social and economic development issues. With photographs, map, index, and notes.

(University of Alberta Press, \$39.95 pb, 432 pages, ISBN: 978-1-77212-086-8)

WE'RE GOING TO RUN THIS CITY: WINNIPEG'S POLITICAL LEFT AFTER THE GENERAL STRIKE

Stefan Epp-Koop

This study looks at the grassroots, municipal level of the dynamic political movement that came out of the largest labour protest in Canadian history and the ramifications for Winnipeg in the 1920s up to the 1930s, when the city was governed by a mayor who had served jail time for role in the strike.

(University of Manitoba Press, \$24.95 pb, 216 pages, ISBN: 978-0-88755-784-2)

WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE NATION: CANADIAN HISTORY AS TRANSNATIONAL HISTORY

Edited by Karen Dubinsky, Adele Perry, and Henry Yu

This collection of essays explores Canada's past through transnational scholarship, connecting Canada with Latin America, the Caribbean, and the wider Pacific world, and examining themes including the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and the impact of global migration. With illustrations, maps.

(University of Toronto, 384 pages, \$75.00 hc, ISBN: 978-1-4426-4677-3; \$34.95 pb, ISBN: 978-1-4426-1463-5)

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BOOKENDS

Prairie books NOW values your feedback. Please send your comments to pbn@mts.net.

On the cover

Our cover illustration comes courtesy of the Glenbow Archives (NA-237-20). The image of "Tom Graham on horse," photographed by S.A. Smyth, is featured in the book *So Far and Yet So Close* (University of Calgary Press), which is showcased in this issue.

Mistakes happen...

In our coverage of Roland Vandal's *Off the Ropes* in our Spring 2015 issue (#66, page 27),

we inadvertently left out the name of the book's publisher in the ordering information. Our apologies to J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing.

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We made love in the dirt and the shade of the old oak trees like we usually did. And after, as we put our clothes back on, I wondered where Becky and I were headed. She had told me she was going back to school and was thinking of moving to Winnipeg. I wasn't sure what I wanted. I had a steady job at the factory, I'd been there for a few years, and I didn't know what else I could do. I kept thinking about it, about Becky and me, and I wondered what else we could be.

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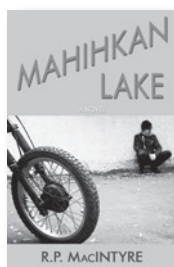


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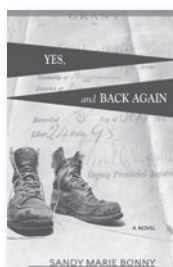
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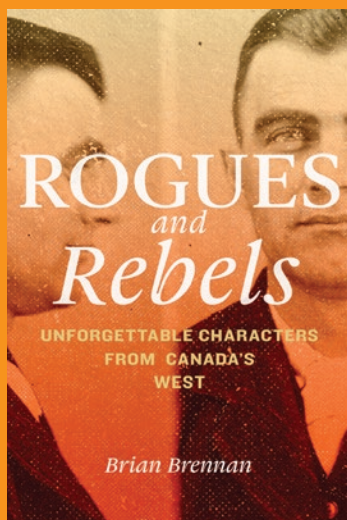


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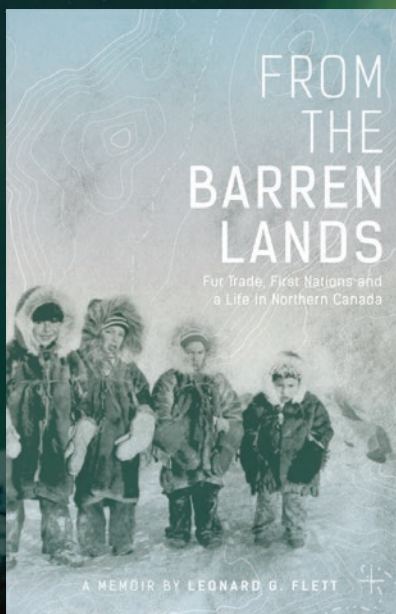
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