

WRITE

THE MAGAZINE OF
**THE WRITERS'
UNION OF
CANADA**

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I first heard about The Writers' Union of Canada perhaps 5 years after its foundation in 1973. As an aspiring writer who knew next to nothing about the world of publishing, I was tantalized by the notion that writers now had a "real" union.

A vision danced in my head of underpaid, underappreciated writers who had nothing to lose but our chains uniting under a union banner — one designed, preferably, in Constructivist blacks and reds. After an appropriate supervised apprenticeship program, we would be issued our union cards. And then, when necessary, we would flex our impressive if metaphorical biceps, hammer together picket signs, and go out on strike against Big Publishing. To quote the Woody Guthrie song, "Union Maid," "Oh, you can't scare me, I'm sticking to the union."

Of course it was naïve of me to think that The Writers' Union of Canada could be construed as a conventional labour union. Such unions do exist for film and television industry screenwriters and for newspaper writers. But the self-employed status of our membership (and the lack of formidable Status of the Artist laws in Canada) preclude our union from taking on the traditional role of bargaining with the employer on behalf of the employee.

The goals of traditional labour organization may not make much sense within our rather disorganized context. The notion of equal and fair wages, for example, is a tough fit. A stunningly talented debut poetry collection is just not going to command the same advance as a bestselling fiction writer's latest blockbuster novel, or a public figure's tell-all memoir. Decent work hours are tough too. Those of us who have day jobs may need to get up at 6 a.m. so we can write for two hours before sitting down to our desk job at 9 a.m. And in the context of literary production, we're not looking for a traditional union effort to eliminate piecemeal (one poem at a time) or save us from midnight shifts (which may be preferred for those of us who are night owls).

Although we're not a traditional labour union — despite my aspirational fantasies — there is a lot we do offer members. We put money in members' pockets through the National Public Readings Program, the National Public Readings Northern Program, and the Ontario Writers-in-the-Schools Programs. Our grievance process helps members find their way through the thicket of conflict with publishers, agents, and other industry middle-folk. We offer access to a group health care plan, a crucial benefit often out of reach for freelancers.

Equally importantly, the Union does improve our working conditions via our staff's powerful and informed advocacy. During the past year and a half, for example, Union staff have gone to bat for us very effectively to help ensure that more writers might be eligible for the federal COVID-relief Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) program.

As many of you are aware, our long- and hard-fought advocacy to protect copyright was badly battered this past summer. The case between York University and Access Copyright was heard by the Supreme Court of Canada in May 2021. York was arguing that mass copying for course packs fell under the "fair dealing" clause of copyright law. On July 30, 2021, the Supreme Court ruled that because Access Copyright is a collective working on behalf of rightsholders and does not directly hold copyright on the works they charge tariffs on, they have no right to represent the authors whose works have been stolen. While not actually ruling on the fair dealing question, this astounding decision effectively supports the offensive idea that educational institutions should use copyrighted works in classrooms freely without having to pay authors. Furthermore, the court focussed on a technicality of language to argue that the tariffs set by the Copyright Board are not "mandatory," and for that reason, York University is not bound by them.

This is certainly a time when our collective voice needs to be heard. Our only avenue now is legislative reform. As I write, a federal election has been called for September 20, and the Union is preparing a Federal Election Platform that is a call to action. If ever there were a time to station ourselves at the political barricades, this is it.

Writing Rights

The Supreme Court Decides Not to Decide

By John Degen



A decade is a long time to be engaged in a debate only to have those deciding who wins the argument slip out of the room without actually making a decision.

That has been the experience of Canada's authors and other professional creators with the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) non-decision in *Access Copyright vs. York University*. After consistently winning the question of whether York's massive amounts of copying are "fair" — at every lower level of the courts — we technically won that question again at the Supreme Court. But it was a hollow victory.

In ruling to uphold the Court of Appeal's dismissal of York's fair dealing claims (their copying remains not fair), the SCC actually said that the question of fairness itself was no longer relevant. There remains no active complaint against York University from Access Copyright. That's because in the same hearing, the SCC also decided that Copyright Board tariffs (the copying rates set by Canada's federal regulator) were not mandatory. Even though it has been common understanding and practice that unlicensed copiers are obliged to pay Copyright Board tariffs in place of a negotiated licence, the word "mandatory" does not actually appear in the Board's founding legislation. That technicality has now opened an escape hatch for industrial-grade copiers.

Without recourse to a mandatory tariff, Access Copyright technically has no claim against York or any other licence-flouter. Therefore, the SCC considered any judgement on fair dealing a dead issue. To bring that issue back to life, they suggested, individual authors will now have to sue York (or some other educational institution) for infringement of their individual rights.

That is an absurdly unjust result for Canada's cultural workers. We were encouraged by Parliament to create collective societies to represent our rights in these circumstances. We were further encouraged to use the courts to defend those rights, and to do so collectively to make such action as reasonable and affordable as possible. Now, because the Supreme Court chose to entertain appeals to technicalities in the wording of the law — to focus on the letter rather than the spirit — all Canadian cultural workers are suddenly working without dependable protections for our labour.

I would argue this is no less unjust a result for the students, teachers, and professors caught in the middle of their sector's refusal to pay for copying. The amount of copying being done is still technically illegal, and yet that copying will only grow after this ruling. The educational budget-makers have received this ruling joyously, as an encouragement to save more money through free copying. Students and instructors remain at risk of infringement action; yet they will be encouraged, if not required, to buy less and copy more by their schools. They are now the primary targets for hugely expensive and disruptive class action that have been encouraged by the SCC.

As bad as all this news is for Canada's authors and students, it contains clear direction for our country's lawmakers. After years of focussed advocacy involving endless meetings with MPs and testimony before Senate and Parliamentary Committees, there shouldn't be a legislator on Parliament Hill who doesn't understand the implications of this legal mess. Canada's Copyright Act needs immediate amendment and clarification to remove the infringement escape hatch cut into it by the SCC.

As I write this, at least one federal party (the Conservatives) has included fixing copyright in their election platform. That in itself is a victory, because arts issues are often buried at election time. TWUC will continue our work on this file. We will not let technicalities destroy our markets.

Editor's Note

By Rhonda Kronyk



As I write this, we are 18 months into the largest and longest disruption to our lives since the mid-20th century. The challenges we have faced have ranged from the inconvenient to the devastating.

Yet, I continue trying to maintain hope that things will turn around soon. Some days are more difficult than others, especially lately. I couldn't figure out why until a friend told me she's struggling with no longer having an end in sight: "I've been counting on the vaccine to get to the end of the pandemic." Unfortunately, individual and government choices seem to have taken that milestone away from us — at least for now.

I've had additional challenges in the last 18 months. I was diagnosed with ADHD in spring 2020. The diagnosis made me aware that I will always face more difficulties than people without ADHD when it comes to writing, editing, and life in general — knowing those challenges will never disappear is demoralizing. But the diagnosis has been incredibly beneficial because now I understand why my brain works — or often doesn't! — the way it does. It turns out that my brain's not broken — it's a perfectly normal ADHD brain. In the last year+, I've learned that I can mitigate the negative effects of ADHD and that I can benefit from the positive aspects of it, such as the bursts of creative energy that help my writing and art. That creates hope.

Then, on March 8 this year, my doctor said, "Rhonda, unfortunately your tests confirmed that you have cancer." As you can imagine, that news knocked me on my ass. But again, this diagnosis is a two-sided coin. On the one side ... cancer. Because of my family history, the word has always contained terrible memories. Yet, I'm fortunate because my cancer and genetic

markers are about as "good" as cancer gets. I'm finished treatment, and my 10-year survival rate is almost 100 percent. Again, there is hope in this diagnosis.

I tell you all this not to depress you or elicit sympathy, but to talk about that word I've been using: hope.

Every one of us is dealing not only with the pandemic but with additional personal challenges that often exacerbate the trauma of the past 18 months. And do not doubt it for a moment — the pandemic *is* trauma. But unlike the traumas we more often face, the pandemic has been a sustained assault on our physical, emotional, and mental health. And unless we work hard to mitigate the effects of everything we are collectively and individually dealing with, this assault will only get harder, and hope will become ever more elusive.

Last month, a Blackfoot Elder shared some words of wisdom. He reminded the group I was part of that we need to celebrate today, because what we choose to do *today* brings *tomorrow's* hope. If we "exploit the exhilaration of life," we are more likely to successfully navigate our journeys.

Let those words sink in; savour the possibilities contained within them. What do they mean for you?

For me, they solidified an idea that had been percolating in the back of my mind for months — hope isn't something you wait for. Hope is something you reach for, something you seek, something you create, something you nourish. And sometimes hope can be found on the flip side of bad news. Think about it as a verb rather than a noun — seek opportunities to bring hope into your L.I.F.E. and let it help you Live It Fully Every day (Elder C's wisdom).

As we move forward into a future that remains uncertain, my wish for all of us is that we find ways to maintain and build our hope. In doing so, let's also find ways to live life fully every day — no matter what a full life looks like right now.

Letters to the Editor

Governors General and Canada's Premier Literary Awards

On January 21, 2021, Julie Payette, the 29th Governor General of Canada, resigned following a Privy Council investigation that determined she had “created a toxic, verbally abusive workplace” at the viceregal residence, Rideau Hall. The fact that she was the first Canadian Governor General who was forced to resign focussed public attention on the office of the GG and raised many questions. Is the role purely ceremonial or has it a political dimension? What is the relationship between The Writers Union of Canada and the office of the Governor General?

Historically, Governors General represented the British monarchy in the governing of colonial states; such governance entailed the establishment of British control of Indigenous Peoples and possession of their territories. This was justified on the spurious grounds that white races were inherently superior to the coloured races of the world (Kipling's “lesser breeds”), so colonial states had the Christian duty to convert and educate non-white people even if that meant subduing them by force of arms. That is why the Governor General's position is as much a military appointment as a civil one and why Julie Payette was also Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Colonization, in short, is state-sponsored and state-sanctioned; the key agents in implementing policies that caused millions of deaths and destroyed numerous Indigenous cultures were the Crown's Governors General.

Some examples. The ninth Earl of Dalhousie, Governor General of North America (1820–28), according to Dalhousie University's 2019 Report on Lord Dalhousie's History on Slavery and Race “...embarked on policies, laws, and regulations that marginalized the Black Refugee community for the next 200 years.” These policies included ordering the deportation of enslaved rebels to their former owners. The first Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, Governor General of Canada (1872–78), approved of the Canadian government's enacting of the *Indian Act* of 1876. The Act's purpose was to assimilate Indigenous Peoples into the settler population while suppressing Indigenous cultural and religious practices; he did the same thing when, as Viceroy of India, he “annexed” Burma in 1886 and exiled the Royal Family. The conduct that forced Julie Payette's resignation pales in comparison with such genocidal policies.

Other Governors General of Canada adopted a different tack better suited to a country that had gained dominion status in 1867. Governors General promoted cultural racism under the premise that British culture was inherently superior to other cultures. Even sports were weaponized by being associated with their names; for example, the Devonshire Cup (golf), the Grey Cup (football), the Minto Cup (lacrosse), the Lorne Cup and the Lansdowne Cup (yacht racing), and the Stanley Cup (ice hockey). Lord Stanley,

Governor General (1888–93), renamed land in Vancouver as Stanley Park, land already named by its Squamish inhabitants who were removed without compensation. Vere Ponsonby, 9th Earl of Bessborough and Governor General of Canada (1931–35), spearheaded the founding of the Dominion Drama Festival — its top award was (naturally) the Bessborough Trophy — whose adjudicators could be selected only from France or Britain (no Canadians were allowed to adjudicate until the 1960s) and whose “safe” theatrical repertoires mirrored French and British imperial values. Vincent Massey, the first Canadian to become Governor General (1952–59), fitted the role perfectly. More English than the English, he was anti-Semitic and misogynistic; when he founded and financed Hart House at the University of Toronto, he stipulated that women be barred.

I highlight these examples of British imperialism because while so many of Canada's Governors General have been associated with systemic racism and imperial colonial practices, their office is still associated with many of our Canadian institutions. A particularly egregious example is the coupling of the office with Canada's premier awards in the arts and sciences, including the Governor General's Literary Awards. This association is an enduring example of colonial cringe, a cultural form of the Stockholm Syndrome on a national scale.

I am certain that the Writers' Union would reject any notion of complicity with organizations that have racist associations, but it does cooperate in the administration of the GG Literary Awards by providing the services of its members as jurors; without our cooperation the GG Literary Awards as named would cease to exist. What to do? TWUC should cancel such cooperation and work to have the Governor General's Literary Award renamed; its administration can and should be continued under the auspices of the Canada Council which has always been responsible for its funding and promotion — not the Governor General's office.

To sum up: It is time to rename Canada's pre-eminent literary awards to recognize their Canadian provenance, time to mask up and observe a proper social distance from Rideau Hall. We have been warned by Madame Payette's resignation — Rideau Hall is in the red zone; the place is toxic.

— Eugene Benson

EDITOR'S NOTE

While some jurors for the Governor General's Literary Awards have been TWUC members, there is no arrangement between the Union and the Canada Council for the Arts (who administer the awards) regarding jury selection. TWUC is not involved in any way in selecting GG juries.

Writer's Blot

WRITER'S PROMPT /

In-Visible Ingredients of Being a Poem

BY DANIELA ELZA



Each time I get discouraged with how we narrow our words — or the small world even poetry can become — I remember Heidegger thinking of poetry as that which brings us into the open clearing of truth, and Robert Bringhurst saying that poetry knows more than any of us who write it. As a poet, I live this tension.

Poetry as institution and poetry as freedom — this attempt to touch something wild. Each time I get lightheaded, or begin to lament, I go back to the basics: curiosity, play, attention, love, and participation.

BE CURIOUS

In her Nobel lecture, “The Poet and the World,” Wisława Szymborska reminds us that “Poets, if they are genuine, must also keep repeating *I don't know*. Each poem marks an effort to answer this statement.” A curious mind is essential to writing that matters. Curiosity is informative and transformative, allowing us to attend to the nuanced and troubled life of words. Too much certainty can be dangerous.

PLAY

In the only surviving record (1937) of Virginia Woolf's voice, she says, “It is words that are to blame. They are the wildest, freest, most irresponsible, most unteachable of all things. Of course, you can catch them and sort them and place them in alphabetical order in dictionaries. But words do not live in dictionaries; they live in the mind.” Institutionalized poetry can trap me with *oughts/shoulds/nots*. Yet, when I give myself to daydreaming with words, to poetic reverie, the rewards are immediate and contribute to my daily *well-being*.

ATTEND

Poetic attention is an enhanced awareness of our interconnection

with all things. Li-Young Lee reminds us that “Sacred reality is the saturation of presence in the world. Wind and trees and clouds and people and rocks and animals are all saturated with presence.” The poem is a testimony for my connection and engagement with this presence, through my unique lens and subjectivity, the endangering of which Sir Ken Robinson considers the other environmental crisis.

LOVE

“I suppose,” says Li-Young Lee, “when the world gets into my blood, it finds a way to express itself.” Let the world get into your blood, and trust that it will find a way to express itself. Immerse yourself in the word with more than just your undivided attention, where *attention is time* and *love is attention*. “The digital world cannibalizes time,” suggests Abha Dawesar, “and in doing so it threatens the completeness of ourselves. It threatens the flow of love.”

PARTICIPATE

“But the rose is not beauty. What beauty is, is your ability to apprehend it,” says Mary Ruefle. Grow your ability to apprehend beauty. Find the mischievous words to sing it. “Each thing attentively pondered,” says David Abram, “gathers our senses in a unique way.” When it does, we are better for it, even if the attempt may not be considered satisfactory, successful, or perfect. And in the process, we also heal our words.

Each time I get discouraged — there is a lot to grieve these days of fires, floods, commodification, and wars — I come back to these friends of writing which have remained true.

Daniela Elza lived on three continents before immigrating to Canada in 1999. Her latest poetry collections, the broken boat and slow erosions (a chapbook written in collaboration with poet Arlene Ang), were published under pandemic conditions. In the last year, Daniela has published essays in Queen's Quarterly, Riddle Fence, Grain Magazine, Motherwell, About Place Journal (Geographies of Justice), and subTerrain. She lives in Vancouver, BC, where she is fighting for the preservation of affordable housing.

From the Union

Are You Protecting Your Virtual Performance Rights?

BY WARREN SHEFFER



Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, authors now frequently make professional appearances, readings, and other presentations online.

In connection with their participation in virtual events like webinars or Zoom conferences, some TWUC members have been asked by hosting organizations to sign contracts that govern the terms of the author's virtual appearances. However, not everyone knows how audiovisual recordings of their appearances can be used by the host organization. Some of those contracts contain terms that are less than friendly to authors. I want to draw attention to some of those terms and to offer suggestions about what authors may wish to consider when asked to sign such contracts.

PERFORMER'S PERFORMANCE

An author's recitation of a literary work or the presentation of other materials (including responding to questions, etc.) is considered under the *Canadian Copyright Act* to be a "performer's performance." Authors reading their literary works or delivering other presentations to an audience online are considered performers who have a copyright in their performance. The copyright in the performance is separate and distinct from the copyright in their literary works.

Generally, copyright in the performer's performance is much different and more limited in scope than the copyright in a literary work. For example, under the Act one of the most substantive rights the audiovisual performer has is merely the statutory right to "reproduce any fixation [of the performer's performance] that was made without the performer's authorization." Moreover, performers do not have in their audio-visually recorded recitations or presentations the moral rights that authors possess in their literary works under the Act (for example, the right to be named as performer or the right to protect the integrity of the performance).

CONTRACTUAL OVERREACH

The relatively weak statutory rights and protection afforded to performer's performances under the Act heighten the need for authors to advocate for their own interests when signing virtual appearance contracts. This is especially important for authors who are concerned about retaining some measure of control over where and for how long their recorded performances may be made available online by the host. To effectively self-advocate, authors need to pay attention to the wording of the contract. For example, it is not uncommon for a host organization to seek a full assignment of "all rights" in the recorded performance and "irrevocable" permission to exploit such rights "on a worldwide, perpetual basis in any medium, format, or platform." They may also seek to combine the recorded performance with others done by different authors on a different date.

COUNTERING CONTRACTUAL OVERREACH

For some authors, the opportunity to present their literary works at a virtual event organized by an organization they trust will outweigh issues presented by overreaching language of the contract they may be offered. Other authors may not be so sanguine and may wish to negotiate conditions on the permission they grant under contract. Regardless, authors may benefit from considering the following suggestions to improve such contracts in their favour.

1. Some contracts give the host organization "irrevocable" permission to do things such as "reproduce, distribute, or make available" the recorded performance. In these cases, the author may want to ensure that their permission is granted only to the host organization — not to sublicensees chosen by the host — "conditional on the host organization fulfilling all of its obligations under the contract." Contractual obligations could include, for example, things like paying the author on time if the contract calls for payment of a fee or honorarium (the Union recommends that authors be paid for all presentations). Authors can also stipulate

that the host only make the recorded performance available on a certain online platform for a prescribed period. If the host organization fails to fulfill such obligations under the contract, the author may make the case for revoking permission.

2. As mentioned above, the Act does not provide for moral rights in audiovisual performances for the recitations of literary works. In instances where the author has concerns that the host may edit the recorded performance in a way that fundamentally alters the author's presentation, they have two options. First, they can ensure that they don't waive any moral rights under the contract. Second, authors can insist in the contract that the host organization agrees to get the author's written permission prior to making substantial edits to the recorded performance. Substantial edits can include combining the performance with other performances delivered by different performers at different times or on different topics.

3. In virtual appearance contracts, host organizations sometimes ask the author to indemnify the organization for legal claims or demands and associated costs and damages that may result, for example, from something slanderous that the author says during their presentation. In this context, an indemnity is essentially the author's promise to pay for the financial loss to the host organization in the event a third party sues them for something the author said or did during their presentation. Financial losses may include items like the legal fees the host organization pays to defend the claim. The probability of legal claims or demands resulting from an author's uncontroversial presentation should be very low, particularly where the literary work that is the subject of the presentation is fictional and the author is only drawing from their own original work. However, the bar for a third party to make a legal claim, regardless of its merit, can be low. Accordingly, if the host organization insists on an indemnity, it is prudent for authors to specify in their contracts that they will only indemnify in respect of claims "proven" by the third party or claims "admitted" by the author.

Authors and their audiences stand to benefit from participating in webinars and other online events. It should be rare instances where negative consequences stem from the author's virtual presentation. Nonetheless, when asked to sign a virtual appearance contract for any presentation, authors should read the terms carefully and seek reasonable amendments where necessary.

Warren Sheffer is an intellectual property and business law lawyer. He regularly advises authors and performers as well as professional organizations that represent them. Warren is TWUC's legal counsel and serves on its Grievance Committee.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Union has two Writers' How-to Guides to help writers evaluate and negotiate publishing contracts: *Model Trade Book Contract* and *Help Yourself to a Better Contract*.

You can access these and other resources at <https://www.writersunion.ca/contracts>.

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Democratizing Literature

BY JASON LEE NORMAN

“I love to give art for free to people.” – Francis Ford Coppola

Summer days in the time of COVID have been just like the days in all the other seasons. Waves, surges, and spikes come and go, and I stay in exactly the same place — my own house. August feels different though. It feels as though something has to give, so we manage to get out of town for a few days. We do it safely, and the change of scenery does wonders. When we return to our stuffy house and the modest pile of mail that awaits us, I notice right away the small pink envelope on the top that is addressed to me. It’s my first letter from the Dream Delivery Service (dreamdeliverservice.com). American writer Mathias Svalina writes dreams every day and delivers them to people who sign up for the service (nightmares cost extra). He spends time in different cities throughout the year, and if you live in the same city as he does, he will hand deliver the dreams to you every day via bicycle. You may not be reading the words from the Dream Delivery Service in the pages of *The New Yorker* any time soon, but the connection that has been made between myself and this wildly imaginative writer is now cemented forever. I get to read as much of his writing as I want, as long as I keep paying for it.

IT’S UP TO YOU

It was about ten years ago that I first read Mathias Svalina’s very short chapbook, *I Am a Very Productive Entrepreneur*. The “businesses” the narrator describes to the reader are very similar to the dreams that are now sent to me via mail each week. What Svalina’s book taught me all those years ago is that while we writers are all the beneficiaries of strong imaginations, it is also

a severe lack of imagination that is keeping us from getting our writing in front of more and more eager eyeballs each day.

My motivation for spearheading some of the projects that I have been involved in has revolved around the idea that writers need to work hard to create and support local literary communities, because nobody else is going to do that for us. If you are lucky enough to get a book published in the near future, you will most likely be asked by your publisher about what sorts of things you can bring to the table that can help that company market your book for them. What is your social media like? What about a virtual book tour? Do you have any connections in local media? How many Instagram Lives are you willing to do in a day, in a week? Don’t know what Instagram Live is? How about TikTok? Can you help us in that department? Writers are constantly being asked to do more with less when it comes to marketing their book projects, so why wait for a book to come out? Why not do more to help ourselves and our community of writers right now?

DON’T WAIT

You don’t have to come up with your own ideas from scratch. The best thing you can do if you want to empower creators is to support the things they are creating. Democratizing literature is about balancing the scales a little more for those creators who don’t have large marketing budgets or big publishing houses behind them. Support your local student-led journal, lit mag, or small press. These are usually run by dedicated groups of literature-loving volunteers scouring the earth for the next

big thing. Every writer gets started somewhere, and if you're supporting grassroots organizations like literary magazines and presses, you are helping support artists when they need it the most. If you're looking for great ideas, you don't need to reinvent the wheel, either. The small press Hingston and Olsen, out of Edmonton, took one look at advent calendars and said, if it works for beer and chocolate, it can work for literature. Their Short Story Advent Calendar shattered any preconceived ideas about how readers consume literature and showed that if you build it beautiful, readers will support it. It is that initial support of Hingston and Olsen's Short Story Advent Calendars that helped them expand into different projects that take books or stories and turn them into pieces of collectible art.

One example of using established projects: In the Edmonton International Airport, near Gate 64, there is a small machine that looks sort of like a skinny ATM. On the machine there are three buttons: 1, 3, and 5. Press any of those buttons and the machine will print out a little short story that will take you about 1, 3, or 5 minutes to read. It's free and features writers from all over the world, but most importantly, it features about 100 writers from the Edmonton area.

I helped the EIA bring this Short Story Dispenser, created by Short Edition (short-edition.com) in France, to Canada for the first time in 2017 because I wanted to get literature into people's hands as easily as possible. When I look back at interviews I have done over the past years, I see that I have been saying the same thing over and over for a decade now. When a painter sees a blank wall, they see a canvas. When a musician walks into a coffee shop and hears nothing but silence, do they not see an opportunity to have their music playing over the store's speakers? Where do writers see their readers? Is it only in bookstores and magazine racks and literary festivals? Do they look at that same coffee shop and see a room full of potential readers? Do they see that five-minute stretch of time when people are waiting in line to board the airplane and see 200 potential readers for a new short story? When they see someone cracking open a can of beer on a summer evening, do they see a potential reader? Well, they should.

DEMOCRATIZING YOUR WRITING

In 2014 the American fast food chain Chipotle published writing from well-known authors such as Jonathan Safran-Foer, Toni Morrison, and George Saunders on their packaging. The website for this new promotion/literary endeavour asked the question, "Must a cup, or bag, suffer an existence that is limited to just one humble purpose?" I wonder if we writers ask ourselves whether we are okay with limiting our writing to just being read in books or magazines, or if we are genuinely lucky, have Reese Witherspoon adapt our book into an eight-part limited series on HBO. My own thinking on the matter lines up pretty closely to what Malcom Gladwell (who also had his writing featured on Chipotle cups) said when he was interviewed about the Chipotle project. "The goal of storytelling should be to make storytelling as ubiquitous as music."

In 2007 I went to grad school in Manchester. Every day I walked from my student residence to the university and passed a massive poem painted on the side of a takeaway shop. The poem, suitably titled "Rain," was by the poet Lemn Sissay. Sissay's poems have been painted on walls and murals,

projected in light onto buildings, and even etched into sidewalk cement since 1994 in England. His first poem that was turned into a mural was painted on the side of the pub Hardy's Well (lemnissaylandmarks.com) in Manchester, where I spent many evenings with my fellow students. In the summer you could sit outside in the shadow of that massive poem. While Sissay was the trailblazer, there is nothing in the literary rule book that says a good idea can only be used by one writer at a time. In Boston in 2016, a group called Mass Poetry created a project that printed poetry on sidewalks with a special substance that only revealed the poem when the sidewalk was wet. The Calgary Public Library and WordFest tried the same thing with #YYCLiterarySidewalks. If you are reading this article and wondering, why doesn't my city do more things like painting poems in rain paint on the sidewalks and in murals on the sides of buildings, then you're asking the right question — and you might be the one person who can get these ideas off the ground in your community.

Edmonton has poetry and short fiction printed on coffee sleeves and beer cans and buses, but that should be just the beginning. If you are a writer looking for a captive audience, then you should think about where those spaces are that readers can find you. Let the Chipotles and the 300 short story machines across North America be your proof of concept. Writers, like most other artists, have to make these opportunities and projects happen. We can't always wait for our agents or publishers to do it for us. If our readers can be anywhere, then our writing has to be everywhere.

A LITERATURE TO THE PEOPLE TIMELINE:

1904: One of the earliest mobile libraries in the United States was a mule-drawn wagon carrying wooden boxes of books. Created by the People's Free Library of Chester County, South Carolina, it served rural areas.

2009: The first Little Free Library was built by Todd Bol in Hudson, Wisconsin. There are over 90,000 such structures all over the world today.

2013: Chipotle launches packaging featuring writing by prominent U.S. writers.

2013 (Edmonton): #yegwords coffee sleeves are introduced via local cafés. Cardboard coffee cup sleeves feature poetry and tiny short stories from local writers. Thousands are circulated each month. New writers are published two to three times per year. This program is still going strong in Edmonton.

2014 (Edmonton): The Zine Machine is a converted vintage snack machine filled with zines by local creators as well as publications from around the world.

2015 (France): the first Short Story Dispenser is unveiled in Grenoble. The creators, Short Edition, now have over 300 dispensers on five continents, delivering literature to people for free every day.

2016 (Italy): Italian winery Matteo Correggia teamed up with designer Reverse Innovation to bring short stories to wine packaging. The line of wine is called Librottiglia (librottiglia.com). Each bottle of wine in the collection is paired with a short story that is wrapped around the bottle as part of its label.

Jason Lee Norman is a writer and publisher living in Treaty 6 territory in Edmonton, Alberta. He edits Funicular Magazine and publishes Monto Books.



From Digital to Print and Back: Where Do Words Live and Thrive?

BY SALLY ITO WITH SEYWARD GOODHAND

I write, therefore I am. But where does one write and who is reading it?

In 1930, Japanese children's poet Misuzu Kaneko put together all the poems she'd ever composed in her life into three handwritten notebooks. One of these notebooks was for herself, the other for her beloved younger brother, and one was for a literary critic and editor in Tokyo. Shortly after, Misuzu took her life at the age of 27.

Only the brother's notebook survived, and it was on the basis of this discovery that Misuzu's words came back to life in the 1980s. Poet and editor Yazaki Setsuo discovered one of her poems in an old children's literary magazine in a Tokyo library and embarked on a quest that led him to Misuzu's younger brother and the formation of the JULA publishing company, which published all of Misuzu's poetry in book form.

Flash forward to 2011. I'm working for a multicultural children's literature blog PaperTigers with a particular interest in poetry. I discover Misuzu Kaneko's work — a snippet online —

and, in excitement at the power and simplicity of her expression, track down whatever is available in books in English about her and write a blog post. I discover that, despite some information available online about Misuzu in Japanese, there is little about her in English and even less of her poetry, so I decide to translate her work. I enlist the help of my aunt in Shiga, Japan. And thus, we begin the project of translating Misuzu.

Around the same time, editor and journalist David Jacobson is introduced to Misuzu's poetry by a Japanese friend. He is moved by it, and when he sees the public service announcement video of a Misuzu poem aired immediately after the tsunami and earthquake of 2011, he decides he would like to write a book about her life and poetry. The book he envisions is a narrative picture book. He does extensive online research and discovers my blog post. He emails me: *Sally Ito, would you be interested in providing translations for an illustrated children's book on Misuzu Kaneko?*

As I viewed the images and read the comments, I saw the social media platform as a medium for restoration, renewal, and recognition.

In 2016, *Are You an Echo: The Lost Poetry of Misuzu Kaneko* was published by Chin Music Press in Seattle. It has sold 8,000 copies, and it launched my career as a literary translator. From handwritten notebooks to published print to digital manifestations in blog posts and video interpretations, Misuzu's words have gone far, farther than I could have imagined without the constant back-and-forth movement between words on a page and words on a screen.

A MEDIUM FOR RESTORATION

A few years ago, I noticed that Paul Seesaquasis was posting images of Indigenous peoples on Facebook. They were an arresting candid array of photos of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities from the 1920s to the 1970s gleaned from archives and libraries. Who were these people and who photographed them? As Paul posted the images, people made comments. For me — an outsider — the images provoked curiosity, but for others, the images evoked memories. They restored connections and relationships to a way of life that had been disrupted by governmental policies and residential schools. As I viewed the images and read the comments, I saw the social media platform as a medium for restoration, renewal, and recognition. This was a project in living time whose process ended in a book: *Blanket Toss Under Midnight Sun: Portraits of Everyday Life in Eight Indigenous Communities*.

Through Paul's project, I came to realize that the digital medium is its own manifestation of an artistic process. The Facebook feed was a site for gathering and gleaning. My participation in it was as an observer, but for others it was a place for commenting and sharing stories.

I asked Paul if he started writing online with the aim of later publishing in print or if there was something innately special about posting work online himself. He said that it was a bit of both. As a curator of images, social media platforms allow him to expand beyond the confines of "physical art spaces or museums." For writing, he says social media platforms are a way "to connect but also to promote and engage. Hopefully, it [the posts] inspire people to seek out 'print' forms of my magazines and books." Paul sees the social media platforms as engagement. For him, as he says, "It has always been about the work. Generally, the audience grows if there is interest, which fortunately there has been.... I do less 'promotions' in search of audiences. My agent is on board I think partially due to my social media presence." In *Blanket Toss Under Midnight Sun*, there is an archival photograph of an old woman in a birchbark canoe with a child

sitting in the bow. The text in the book tells me that she is Maria Mikenak who spoke Cree and Anishinabe and that she was with her grandson, paddling him in a traditional, handmade boat that she repaired herself with nails and cotton twine. The photo was taken in 1956.

I encountered this arresting image (which might have been posted online) in traditional book form, and my experience of the image felt qualitatively different than what was posted digitally. It felt deeper, but was that because I'm a traditional book reader at heart or because I saw the digital images first and was haunted by them? Hard to say.

TWITTER AS MEANS TO AN END

Popular social media personality, red carpet host, TV guest, and author Anthony Oliveira began his writing career by tweeting. He's been on Twitter for almost a decade and has acquired thousands of followers. When he first went on the platform, he was working on his Ph.D. at the University of Toronto and says, "It was absolutely not my goal to find an audience — Twitter was just a way of staying connected to the world in the depths of my comprehensive exams, and it stuck!"

It's tempting to see all those years on Twitter as a kind of workshop experience where Oliveira refined his exuberant, maximalist style in relation to real time feedback. However, it was only when Oliveira finished his Ph.D. and his writing output became more "public-facing via essays and short fiction" — three of which have won National Magazine Awards — that he was noticed by agents and publishers. This led him to eventually write the GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) Media Award-winning work for Marvel Comics as part of their Marvel Voices series, and he has a novel forthcoming. When asked about what other platforms he uses for his writing, he responded that he maintains a "Patreon for podcast/research work and [his] own domain just for collection of biographical detail/publications for interested parties."

As a writer who started and developed his writing career on digital platforms, Oliveira's feelings about Twitter are interesting: "I think Twitter remains useful as a way to stay in contact with my readers and as a platform of my own (rather than through publishing channels) — I think increasingly writers are left to their own devices promotionally, so I doubt that will go away. But I also think that Twitter's interface faltering and hostility to its user base is increasingly apparent, so I suspect the feeling of a migration of talent to other platforms will continue, but I am not tech-savvy enough to know what that future looks like.... I think

The digital word and the printed one are the same thing — it's the *interface* that's different.

we are all kind of sick of the monocultural exchange Twitter represents, where everyone is all talking about the same thing, so I think the future is about granularity of subcultures and specialization.”

Oliveira suggests here that Twitter is both a means to promote his more sustained work, and an end — a platform of his own where he can nakedly see what readers want without the interventions of marketing analysis.

INTERFACES AND PLATFORMS

The digital word and the printed one are the same thing — it's the *interface* that's different. And it's how the interface is used by writers that determines whether the words will live and thrive or wither and die.

As a writer and reader, the digital has provided me with *encounters* with other writers and readers. The encounter often leads to curiosity, and curiosity can lead to inspiration. But curiosity alone and the rabbit hole of the internet leads only to tunneling as an activity. The act of writing does not get done by tunneling.

In my case, I encountered Japanese poet Misuzu Kaneko online inasmuch as there was information on her available at the time, but ultimately, I went to her books to really get to know her writing and sensibility. And once I got to know her, I was inspired, and the real creative work of translation began. For Paul Seesaquasis, the digital offered a literal platform on which images could be posted that could facilitate the encounter and the subsequent engagement necessary to produce the final product — the book. Putting the images on the platform was part of a process that led to a book.

Oliveira's tweets were worded expressions that revealed a personality that led to followers of his longer public-facing essays and short fiction. The longer pieces got the attention of agents and publishers who are seeking these encounters. In Anthony's case, being on Twitter helped facilitate the encounter with traditional publishing. Since it is the goal of most writers to be read, facilitating early encounters with readers through digital platforms is an increasingly important strategy.

As a daily Facebook writer-of-haikus, I enjoy the brief encounters I have with readers because of the reciprocity of the platform, however fleeting the exchange. But on a deeper level, I, like Misuzu Kaneko, enjoy observing the natural world by putting

that experience into words. The longer process of getting those words read, recognized, and put into a book has gotten simultaneously more complicated and easier with the different interfaces and platforms that exist today. I can only imagine the wonder in Misuzu's eyes at her words flashing across the world on a screen into the hearts of readers in Paris and Guangzhou, Seattle and Winnipeg, were she alive today; it is in that state of wonder that I aspire to be as a writer no matter where and how those words reach the reader.

Sally Ito is a writer and translator who lives in Winnipeg. She is always looking for places for her words to thrive and be read. With fellow writer and TWUC regional representative for Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Seyward Goodhand, she interviewed writers who have explored both digital and print interfaces for their writing.

COMIC BY SCOT RITCHIE



Dispatches

NOTES ON THE WRITING LIFE

CRAFT /

How Authors Can Level Up Their Virtual Events

BY DEBBIE RIDPATH OHI



As virtual events became the norm rather than the exception during the pandemic, I'm sure I'm not the only one with audiences experiencing Zoom fatigue.

So many virtual meetings and events! When I started to receive an increasing number of invites to do virtual presentations to both young readers and adults, I knew I had to level up my virtual game. I spent a great deal of time researching, experimenting, and getting feedback. Here are a few things that I've learned that might help some of you ramp up your own virtual events.

Have a good physical set-up, including decent lighting and audio. You may have the best presentation in the world, but if people can't see or hear you properly, it won't matter. Natural light is flattering, but inconsistent. Avoid having bright light behind you, or you'll be silhouetted. Test your audio and always have a Plan B, just in case. I use an external microphone with headphones; I've found this to be the most reliable way to control my audio and prevent echo. If that fails, however, I'm also prepared to switch to my computer's built-in microphone.

Eliminate distractions so you can focus on your presentation. Make sure noise-making devices are turned off. Have someone available who can help you with tech issues and moderate chat and questions.

Do a tech test ahead of time. In addition to making sure all is working properly, tech tests are a chance to establish a connection with the event organizer. Each virtual platform has its own requirements. Ask for the event organizer's number so you contact them if something goes awry at the last minute.

Know your audience. Find out more about your attendees and why your content matters to them.

Look directly into your computer's camera. This helps your

attendees feel as if you're making eye contact. This takes some practice since our natural tendency is to look at attendee windows. Some authors tape up small pictures of people's faces behind or near the camera. I usually shrink the Zoom window (or whatever platform I'm using) as small as possible, positioning it as close to the camera as I can so nobody will notice if my eye strays to the attendee windows.

Include visual variety. Avoid just talking at the camera the whole time. Vary the way you present information. Give your readers a peek into your work environment and process by showing them your office, things you found inspiring or useful. If using slides, include images, not blocks of text.

I use live-streaming software called Ecamm Live that enables me to easily switch between cameras: the built-in Mac webcam for headshots, my second monitor for slides, my iPad, and an overhead camera for drawing demos.

Look for call-and-response opportunities. Look for ways to help the attendees feel more engaged and less like passive observers. Include a Q&A. Have questions prepared just in case no one asks any. Investigate what other interactive tools will be available, such as polls and surveys.

With younger students, I always ask the event organizer what kind of call-and-response interaction is possible; I find that this can vary widely, depending on the size, age of the group, and region. Students are usually muted, but I can always call for a raise of hands ("How many of you like reading? Raise your hands if you do!").

Always look for ways to improve your own virtual presentations. If your presentation is being recorded, take the time to watch it afterward. Identify places where you could improve. Listen to feedback.

Be enthusiastic and fully engaged during your presentation. If you don't come across as interested in your topic, your audience won't be. Smile. Use body language the same way that you would in person, or even a little exaggerated. Get comfortable with putting your hands closer to your face when gesturing, to keep them within the camera frame. Be animated. I find that rehearsing my presentation out loud beforehand helps my confidence as well as timing and flow. If you're using Zoom, you can record your practice sessions and review them later.

When I first started doing online events, I was terrified. When I watch some of my early attempts, I cringe at how awkward and robotic I used to be. Now I get frequent compliments on my virtual presentations and (gasp) actually have fun with them. If I can learn to do this, so can you. Good luck!

Debbie Ridpath Ohi's writing and art has appeared in over twenty books. She is the award-winning author and illustrator of Sam & Eva and Where Are My Books? (Simon & Schuster). Her illustrations appear in books by Michael Ian Black and Judy Blume, among others. She is currently working on a middle-grade novel, a graphic novel, and a new solo picture book. Debbie lives in Toronto. For more info, see DebbieOhi.com.

WRITER-IN-EXILE /

On the Wrong Side of Life

BY ASCHALEW KEBEDE ABEBE



*Have you ever felt to be on the wrong side of life?
I have.*

Ten years ago, when I turned 40, I examined those four decades. Besides the scratchy childhood I had, I felt that my young-hood was sublimated. So far my life, as I considered it, had no colours of the rainbow in its spectrum—it was gray and monotone.

I was born in Ethiopia, three years before rebel Ethiopian, communist-oriented soldiers overthrew the great emperor Haile Selassie I. The “Red Terror” began when I was a second-grade student. The term was coined by the revolutionary socialist government. It was a sceptre borrowed from Joseph Stalin to crush the opposition socialist parties.

I think my adulthood could be best described by Freud: “The child is the father of the man.” Fifty is considered a golden mark on life’s timeline. During the ten years since I had reflected on my first four decades, the grayness in my life hasn’t changed even its shades—despite crossing the Atlantic Ocean to change my location so I could get away from the upheaval in Ethiopia.

I remember the clinking sound of streetlamps hit by rocks thrown by slingshots by boys older than me, women crying for help to distract the revolutionary guards’ attention, and then the gunshots. Encountering dead bodies in the street was a common experience for school kids. In school, the pro-government teachers used to force us to sing songs. The song about how we were pleased to see anti-government rebels lying dead in the street is what I still hear in my mind every once in a while when I wake up in the morning.

My mother used to tell me, “Son, don’t be like other kids. Don’t see the dead bodies in the street, otherwise the demon coming to smell their fresh blood would put you in his possession.” Sometimes I say to myself that had I took my mom’s advice seriously, I could have seen life in colours.

At the age of 15, I had to register to join the National Military Service. It was a prerequisite for enrolling in universities or colleges. When I was a first- and third-year student at university, I had to hide for months to avoid going to the war. In the decade-and-a-half-long war, the government forcefully took young people from the streets and homes to the northern front to fight the Albanian communist’s followers and others.

Those days were nightmares for mothers. I remember my mother’s sleepless nights and her everyday prayer from the Book of Psalms. Her ears were on the stone-and-tin fence piercing into post-

midnight darkness. She was like a lioness defending her cubs from lurking predators.

Eventually, the rebel fighters won and took power. They retained communist elements and empowered Stalinist ethnocentric politics. The regime had no place for the middle stand; it prosecuted so many of its citizens with the motto “Be with us or you are the enemy.” So, many of us fought back; when others picked up the guns, I chose the mighty Pen. After being attacked mentally and physically for being critical of the government, I fled my country and came to Canada 6 years ago.

Canada is a sanctuary for someone like me. There are institutions that make sure that the system is working well. You meet people committed to their ideals. I would say the rule of law is on the top of the political pyramid. And investigative journalists are out there to crucify anyone who thinks they are above the law and that their crimes are invisible.

Despite all the good of living in Canada, the continuing war in my country, the politically motivated hatred among the Ethiopian diasporas that live in Canada and different parts of the world, the difficulty in learning new systems and customs, and even the uncertainty I encounter in my everyday life, I am kept locked in the psychological profile I developed over the years back home. What a gray! What an accomplice to underperformance!

The stanza in my poem that I performed on poetic jazz before I fled my country echoes in the back of my mind after my bedtime prayer:

Dwelling in the empty space, I live in the twilight.
My eyes are longing to see the morning light.
What you see in the horizon when the sun rises and sets,
That is the deepest depth of my sorrow,
the color of my eyes.

My name is Aschalew Kebede Abebe. By profession I was a math teacher back home. I have been a freelance writer and columnist for almost 3 decades and have written for different newspapers and magazines. Poetry is my passion. I am the author of a novel, Ezekiel-Catastrophic Eyed, and three nonfiction books including Ethiopia and heavenly power. My short stories are published in an anthology and an ebook. I won the 2012 Dede Korkut international short story award from PEN Turkey. Four of my short stories have been translated into Turkish from their English version by PEN Turkey.



The Window Pain

BY RANA BOSE

It is not a team game, this business of writing. It is a solitary exercise in self-confinement and isolation.

There are, however, periods of time when we pull the circuit breaker — we choose to be unfocussed, abandon the keyboard and *stare out through windows*. This is about that.

The source and the inspiration. Perhaps the first cry of fury at injustice, inspired by overhearing a casual exchange between parents about famines — or leapfrogging to adulthood — the realization, while watching a play, that the rabble in Paris, during *La semaine sanglante* (The Bloody Week), May 1871, had an idea after all? That they were simply asking for bread and equality and nothing more, and yet the Republic bulldozed them after two months of direct democracy and nearly 20,000 workers and soldiers, who had turned their guns around, lay dead! Then there is the hilarious experience of the way Einstein or Chaplin casually exposed the stupidity of dictators. And there could be the first stirrings of sensuality when one was only 10 years old and saw the teacher's inner thighs, accidentally of course. Such are the powers of the ingrained subconscious. The source and the inspiration!

When I was growing up in Calcutta, looking out through small-framed windows, dark monsoon clouds and thundershowers moved by. They did invoke sadness and the ineffaceable memory of Durga's plight — the thin and wiry older sister in Satyajit Ray's film *Pather Panchali* — the sad but belligerent fight-back of young girls in a patriarchal hellhole.

That registered.

Montreal clouds are rarely monstrous. They disappear suddenly, chatting amongst themselves, a little flash here and there, and a timid growl follows from far away. Fall leaves scatter, winter comes and we see the military-style removal of ice and snow. Intimidating European-style sirens accompany advance scouts, marching down the centre of the street; powerful searchlights — like in a World War II movie set — terrorize the elderly as they scurry home. They must be hearing something else. The grim sounds of massive snowploughs, as they panzer down, the vacuuming blowers with precision manoeuvres heaving ice, rocks and debris against the walls on the side of the trucks.

The window that we sit behind could be in a plush setting on the 10th floor, at a rickety kitchen table on the ground floor, in a poorly insulated shared studio or in a languid country cottage, where the dark wood frames around windows make the landscape outside look like paintings hanging in a museum. Sometimes we come overground. We charge out of our hobbit-holes, walk up to a cliff, button up against the cold, and then run back. And what will then pour out of our minds and onto the file onscreen, could be an enigmatic smasher. There are times when we will look out from our windows, from a row-house district, and see or hear kids planning a bullying attack in a basketball court. Again, we will scurry back and write something up.

Those who assess must be prepared to do research and be open to assessment themselves.

Leaves rolling on the asphalt, the gashes in the icebound sidewalks, the rickety branches of November, the false summer for two days, the barn door that bangs with the wind on a hilltop far away, and the imaginary noir in a typical Montreal *ruelle* (alley) where nothing happens — no shadows cross — but there is terrifying intrigue building up, anyway!

We will come back to the house and maybe a panchromatic photo will be found, wedged in at the back of a desk drawer, belonging to a World-War-II-era aunt who looked at you strangely. Sometimes we will travel abroad and have an encounter. In Aix or Tuscany, or on the Inca trail, or on Lake Champlain — and out will come another chapter. As storytellers, we are up to our ears in lies, inspired by the truths that we see around us. Always, looking out through windows. Will it be accepted, understood?

This essay is really about the process of acceptance and assessment in Canada, a country of some 37 million people. Scenic emerald lakes, rocky mountains with trains winding through them, prairie flats, gentle people, mostly. And then stories will emerge of dark secrets, incest, pedophile uncles, gangster families, Nazi grandparents who hid away, suicides that were never recorded, murders that were hushed up, and plane-crash mysteries that went cold! Everything is fitted into genres.

For many of us who came from elsewhere, who have lived here for decades, who have had intense encounters of another kind, who have mixed myth with beliefs and beliefs with science and a fatalistic perspective associated with migration, tales of brutality, massacres or simple family feuds — we will colourize our world in another way. Or we will sell *dhup* (incense sticks) and yoga to the chronically gullible. We are conflicted about *other* things. So, when we sit down to write, it will be a massive mash-up of emotions. Local, international, straddling classes and playgrounds. Not always catering to the overwhelming familiarity of where we are now.

Which leads me on to the issue of “peer assessors.”

The folks who are actually outside, looking in through the window as we stare out. The folks who assess our sources of inspiration, our disturbed emotions and make it all palatable to their own minds. For sure, you do not have to be culturally tuned-up or aligned to pass verdict on poor writing. But the magic and difference of other experiences? What “peerage” can cover that territory? What is their pedigree?

Are the fictional works of the assessors adequate enough for them to be selected? Is it enough to have dark skin of any tone to be an auto-select? Is it ok to have written two short stories or one novel to be selected? Is it of consequence that a person who has taught creative writing for two decades, who has not produced a

significant body of fiction, be a best fit to be a juror on fiction?

Irrespective of the number of recognitions and awards an assessor may have, or the number of book reviews that one has cranked out, can one become comfortable in understanding the conflicts that are the engines that propel a novel forward? *And FFS*, this is not about diversity, but about studying the grains, the mud, the soil, the din, the skies that produce a separate reality. And selecting assessors or jury members to assess grant applications, never mind awards etc., could be an exercise in deeply internalizing the granularity of lives lived elsewhere. Is it an aroma or an odour?

Many Montreal cab drivers are engineers, doctors, technicians, and teachers. “But is hematology taught properly in Teheran? Have Ethiopian engineers had the exposure to finite element analysis?” It is that which is on the mind, undocumented, when making an assessment. It is the shadow of a systemic discomfort. So, what are the chances that a story about an Inuit woman, forced into sex work in Montreal and battered to death in a *ruelle*, be the focus of a story by a Punjabi writer who escaped the 1984 pogroms against Sikhs in India? Should the assessor be turned off by the context as addressed by the obscure pain in the writer’s mind?

The question is: How can someone who is singularly groomed in the contextual world of Atwood, Munro, Gallant, Joyce, Durras, Richler, or for that matter Baldwin, Coates, or Ondaatje be an automatic peer assessor for that particular emotion and the possible funding project? Those who assess must be prepared to do research and be open to assessment themselves. As in a jury trial, where both prosecution and defence interrogate the selected jurors, assessors must not be selected by friends of friends.

One clarification. I do differentiate jurors from radio and journal reviewers. Radio show hosts and a limited number of reviewers in Canada are exemplary. Some of the best radio shows on literature come out of this country — up-to-date, nuanced, and aware of others. Granularity is *de rigueur*.

That is what I mean, when I say that when each one of us stare out of our windows, to UNFOCUS, we see different things. If you do not see the UNFOCUS, you are not seeing the essence. And that is a pain.

Rana Bose has written three novels and twelve plays. His last novel, Fog, won the Miramichi Reader “Best work of fiction in Canada for 2019.” In 2016 he was awarded the Judy Mappin Community Award by the Quebec Writers’ Federation. He has been a professional engineer for over 35 years.



Self-Editing Tools: Refine Your Writing Before You Send It Out

BY TRACEY L. ANDERSON

So, you've done it. You've typed the last period on your first draft. Now what?

No matter where you're sending your work — an editor, a client, a publishing house, or even your grandmother — you want that person to receive the best possible text, one that makes sense and reflects well on you as a writer. Self-editing effectively can help you refine your writing to achieve that best possible (though not perfect) text, even if a professional editor will see your work next.

In the current publishing climate, many editing budgets have been drastically reduced or eliminated, and self-editing has become almost required. The task can seem daunting, and you may not know where to begin. But don't fret — great tools are out there to help you.

TIME

When I edit my work, time is a key tool. The more time I can allow between the first draft and self-editing, the more distance and objectivity I have when I pick up the (literal or metaphorical) red pen. Even on a tight deadline, I build in a break, however short it might have to be.

COURSES

Fellow editor Kimmy Beach notes that “a lot of new writers don't necessarily even know what they should be looking for in their work.” Her main advice is this: “Don't be precious. They're only words... It's words on paper or a screen, nothing more. Everything

can be improved.” She recommends taking editing courses because “every writer needs to have a fairly good command of the basics of editing ... [and] writers can use what they learn with anything they write in the future. The skills and techniques are transferable.” You can find general editing and writing courses or specific ones in areas you struggle with, such as characterization or grammar. Another benefit of taking courses is that your first drafts will likely improve over time so that you have less self-editing to do.

SOFTWARE PROGRAMS

Many software programs (or functions within other programs) can help writers self-edit. The most common is Microsoft Word's spelling and grammar checker or equivalent in other word processing programs. This built-in tool may meet your self-editing needs, but others — free and paid — are out there. A browser search will help you find free ones, but be sure to research and test out a few to find one you like and trust.

If you want to invest in paid software programs, you can also find them through a browser search, with the same disclaimers about research, or through recommendations from writers and editors you may know. I use PerfectIt and ProWritingAid.

PerfectIt

Intelligent Editing, which produces PerfectIt (<https://intelligentediting.com/>), calls it “proofreading software for professionals.” It's a Microsoft Word plug-in that works on Windows and MacOS and

In the current publishing climate, many editing budgets have been drastically reduced or eliminated, and self-editing has become almost required.

is sold as an annual licence.

The program checks consistency within a single document, including elements such as spelling, hyphenation, acronyms, number format, and serial commas. With recurring issues, you can “fix all” (which I suggest caution with using because it can create unexpected issues or errors) or fix occurrences individually. It will even identify areas where you may have forgotten to add text, for example if you highlighted items to check later, but you didn’t remove the highlighting.

You can run the program “straight out of the box.” Or you can tweak it from the opening screen:

- Click the drop-down list to set your preferred dictionary.
- Click or unclick boxes to “Choose Checks.”

You can run quick tasks from buttons at the top:

- Access instructions from “Getting Started” and “Using PerfectIt.”
- Create a “Summary of Possible Errors.”
- Create a “Table of Abbreviations.”

Advanced users can further modify the checks; for example, you can add your novel characters’ names to ensure consistent spelling or match the checks to personal preferences or a specific style. To enhance this feature, Intelligent Editing recently integrated the Chicago Manual of Style, one of the most common standard style guides, to the platform (but only for CMOS Online subscribers).

Quite a few of my professional editing colleagues use PerfectIt. I run it as a final check, but others run it as the first editing task. Experiment with the timing, and choose the approach that works best for you.

ProWritingAid

ProWritingAid (<https://prowritingaid.com/>) is a “grammar checker, style editor, and writing mentor in one package.” It can integrate with Microsoft Word, Google Docs, Scrivener, and other word processing programs.

You can get a summary report with overall grammar, style, and spelling “scores” and “where your document looks great” and “where your document may need work” sections. You can also generate twenty in-depth reports on specifics, such as repeated words and phrases, sentence structure and length, and clichés. You can run the program after you finish writing or in “Realtime,” where it shows suggested edits as you write.

In the “Settings” tab, you can do the following helpful tasks:

- Choose a specific writing style, such as creative, business, or technical.

- Choose an approach to dealing with dialogue as compared to narrative, such as whether to ignore clichés or diction errors.
- Create a personal dictionary.

The PerfectIt and ProWritingAid websites have detailed information, videos, tutorials, and access to free trials.

I find these two self-editing programs helpful time savers, but you don’t need software to self-edit effectively. Many writers don’t use them. Beech, for example, says, “I don’t fully trust any electronic grammar or spelling tools.... I’m a tried-and-true dictionary and physical-style-guide fan.”

HARD-COPY RESOURCES

Writers know that a dictionary and a thesaurus are useful writing tools, but they’re also beneficial for self-editing after the writing. They’re mentioned here under hard-copy resources, but electronic versions are quick and easy to access.

What some writers don’t know about are style guides. A style guide outlines common writing standards that don’t relate to grammar (correctness) but are specific usage conventions that ensure consistency within or across documents. These conventions relate to items mentioned in the PerfectIt section and others, such as punctuation and citation and list format.

Many corporations or publishing houses have an internal style guide for documents written within and for the organization. Ask the client or publishing house if they have a style guide to follow. If not, or if you’re writing a text with no set “destination” yet, you can use an external/standard style guide. You might even use multiple style guides on a project; for example, if I can’t find an answer in the *Canadian Press Stylebook*, I consult the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

Another hard-copy, self-editing resource is the text itself. When I print the text, edit by hand, and change the electronic copy, I often notice things I missed when working on the screen, especially with overall text organization.

AN OUTSIDER’S PERSPECTIVE

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try to fix it, a portion of your text “just isn’t working.” For those small but sticky issues, I suggest getting an outsider’s perspective from someone you trust (who may or may not be a writer or editor). Sometimes another perspective can help, especially if you establish an ongoing relationship where you and another person trade honest feedback regularly. I do this with a colleague, and it always helps. And often getting that small sticky piece unstuck helps me refine the rest of the text.

CAVEAT EDITOR

When self-editing, keep these important caveats in mind.

1. Be careful with free tools. They are not all created equal. They are not all as helpful as you might think — and worse, some may introduce new errors.
2. Your judgement is your best self-editing tool. You want to find and correct errors and write as clearly as possible, of course, but effective use of editing tools includes interpreting what the tools tell you. Consider suggestions carefully and decide which to incorporate and which to ignore. In the end, your name is attached to the text (even if not publicly), so it should reflect your writing skills and thought processes; computers and algorithms can never replace the capacity of the human mind.

CHOOSE YOUR TOOLS

My self-editing tools will differ from yours, and that's okay — find the ones that work best for you. The more you practise self-editing, the more you'll learn which tools help you and which don't. Keep what helps. Toss out what doesn't. As long as you do some self-editing, you'll be on your way to sending out your best possible text. And an added bonus: Investing time into self-editing can save you time — and often money! — later because you'll have fewer revisions if/when an editor edits the text.

Tracey L. Anderson is the sole proprietor of Ideas Into Words (ideasintowords.ca), a writing, editing, and instructional design company in Edmonton. Tracey seeks out projects that teach her new things, satisfy her curiosity, and engage her interests in education, health, and professional development. When she's not working, Tracey enjoys savouring the finer things in life, exploring the outdoors, and writing and reading haiku.

THE BARBIE APPROACH

Even writers experienced in self-editing can learn new approaches. I, for example, recently learned this from Kimmy Beach:

"Open the file, and turn the entire thing into neon pink Comic Sans or Gigi. I'm not joking. I call this the Barbie technique. Make it look as pink and frilly and ridiculous as you can, print it off, and then read it with pencil in hand. This works. I "Barbie" my writing all the time, and I'm always amazed at how unfamiliar it becomes."

SELF-EDITING TOOLS TO TRY

- *Oxford Canadian Dictionary*
- *The Canadian Press Stylebook*
- *The Canadian Press Caps and Spelling*
- Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL)
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus
- *Chicago Manual of Style*
- *MLA Handbook (Modern Language Association of America)*
- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*

Poetry

Double Verse

(For Wonderful Lilly Anne)

BY JOHN PARR

Nostalgia

Remember when you had progeny
At your knee
And you said, Anyone want to go pee-pee?
How about wee-wee?
No, we would just like a fairy story
Well, here's a real life story
One day I will meet JP
And I'll go live in his tee pee
Oh, Mom, that sounds real creepy
No, it's not. Now please go sleepy

EARLY DAYS

Hi there, would you like to pitch some woo?
Scram and no thank you
Well, how about hanky panky?
Scram again, and no thanky
No, but seriously, you are very cute
Would you like a punch on the snoot?
No, but I would like to hold your hand
And take you to a far-off land
Well, I haven't been to Peru
That'll do

ACCESSIBILITY



New Accessible Book App

The Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) has launched the Global Book Service (GBS) app, provided by ABC free of charge to participating libraries to facilitate the sharing of accessible books. ABC is a public-private initiative funded by participating governments and hosted through the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The Writers' Union of Canada is connected to ABC through its leadership at the International Authors Forum (IAF). The IAF is part of the advisory board for the Accessible Books Consortium. The GBS app provides for print-disabled access without infringing on the exclusive rights of authors. It is in direct contrast to initiatives such as the Internet Archive's controversial and legally dubious "Open Library" project.

Canada's Orca Books Commits to New Accessible Format

Orca Books, from Victoria, BC, announced a new Ultra-Readable publishing format they say will help readers with dyslexia or other reading-centered learning difficulties. Printed to minimize contrast with a larger trim size and "more readable" font, the Ultra-Readable format will be used for all of Orca's "hi-lo" books in the future, and any reprints of their extensive hi-lo catalogue will be done in the UR format. Hi-Lo refers to books that are aimed at readers with a high interest in reading, but a low reading level due to identified learning difficulties.

COPYRIGHT



The Push for Stronger Copyright

While Canada's situation has worsened because of the SCC non-decision, we are not the only country fighting unjust copyright infringement. At the 41st World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

meeting in spring 2021, International Authors Forum (IAF) Secretariat Luke Alcott called on legislators to ensure fair licensing by reducing exceptions for "fair use." The IAF estimates that if changes aren't made, authors in Britain alone whose work is used in educational institutions will lose an estimated 10 percent of their income, leading to a 20 percent drop in output.

The International Publishers Association (IPA) Secretary General, José Borghino, said that exceptions make it less likely that publishers will invest in cultural production, which will harm creative industries and make it more difficult for authors, especially those from the Global South, to publish their work. TWUC has chaired the IAF steering committee since 2014 and is a regular advocacy partner of the IPA.

RECONCILIATION



BookNet Canada Surveys Reconciliation in Canadian Publishing

In June, BookNet Canada published the results of the investigation into the Calls to Action from the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report. In line with TWUC's own 2015 reconciliation resolution, BookNet focusses on telling stories in an educational context. BookNet interprets Calls to Action #16, #62 and #86 from the TRC as challenges to Canadian writing and publishing to encourage and create more works with age-, program-, and medium-appropriate curricula on residential schools and to make them available to educators. Key to this action is support for Indigenous authors. TWUC's 2015 reconciliation resolution is "to endorse the spirit and the challenge of reconciliation emerging from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and commit to both taking and supporting relevant action, especially focussed on increasing the space for Indigenous-authored stories in standard K-12 school curricula, including

residential school stories, their context in the history of colonialism in Canada, and their lasting impact."

POTENTIAL DISRUPTIONS TO PUBLISHING



Worldwide Supply Chain Trouble

Supply chain challenges are going to cause delays getting books into readers' hands. In July, the Book Industry Study Group (BISG) brought attention to the challenges facing publishers. Choices by manufacturers and the results of COVID-19 have resulted in shortages of paper, cardboard for boxes, and higher transportation costs due to shortages of port capacity and truck drivers. Printers, retailers, and wholesalers are also facing staff shortages. The problem will get worse as the holiday-gift season approaches. BISG has recommended that everyone in the retail side of the industry place their orders as early as possible.

INDUSTRY SALES



Canadian Book Market Rebounds

BookNet Canada has released big-picture figures for the first half of the 2021 book sales year in Canada. The results are encouraging, showing a strong rebound year-over-year from 2020. According to BookNet, over 1.5 million more books were sold in the first half of 2021 than the same period in 2020, representing an increased sales income for the sector of \$47 million.

Sadly, these numbers are still off-target for regaining all the ground lost since the beginning of the pandemic, with 2021 running 1 million books and \$16 million behind the same period in 2019. Particularly strong holiday sales will be required to bring the sector back to pre-pandemic numbers. Even then, unlicensed educational copying continues to damage the relatively small Canadian market.

Member News & Awards

Announcements

Lorne Shirinian's new book of poetry, *Rendering the Timeline*, and his novel, *Like Standing on Shifting Sands*, were published this June by Blue Heron Press. Contact lorneshirinian@mac.com.

Calgary author and professional geologist **Dale Leckie** has released *The Scenic Geology of Alberta: A Roadside Touring Guide* where he guides you to Alberta's scenic sites. Leckie tells the story of Alberta's landscape from Waterton Lakes National Park to Dinosaur Provincial Park, into the Prairies, and across the North. Trips to Edmonton, Calgary, Crowsnest Pass, and Elk Island National Park let you explore volcanoes and glaciations long past. Using eye-catching illustrations and photographs, Leckie blends storytelling with science, incorporating natural landscape beauty with art and history. His book topped the bestseller lists in Calgary and Edmonton for May, June and into the summer. Dale's first book *Rocks, Ridges, and Rivers: Geological Wonders of Banff, Yoho, and Jasper National Parks* was highly successful. Visit brokenpools.ca.

K. R. Wilson's second novel, *Call Me Stan: A Tragedy in Three Millennia*, will be published by Guernica Editions in December. The book tells the story of a self-described immortal under investigation for a horrific crime who takes his interrogator on an idiosyncratic tour of 3 thousand years of Eurasian history. Sean Michaels calls *Call Me Stan* "a ludicrous epic and a tender-hearted romp — an easy-reading humanist adventure that feels as if Monty Python rewrote Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*." Wilson's debut novel, *An Idea About My Dead Uncle*, won the inaugural Guernica Prize in 2018.

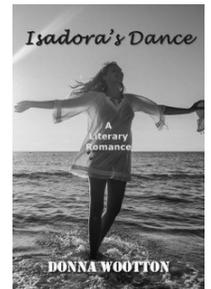
A video of an interview and poetry reading by **Marvyne Jenoff**, hosted by Kathleen W. Smith, Ph.D., is available to the public on the Mensa Canada YouTube Channel. Recorded in July 2021, the video is part of Kathleen's series of Creativity Interviews. The interview sheds light on Marvyne's life and her approach to poetry; the reading features poems from each of her books plus new, unpublished work.

Dr. Thomas R Verny is pleased to announce the publication of his much anticipated new book, *The Embodied Mind* (Pegasus Publishers, New York). Verny is a Stratford psychiatrist and author of the bestselling *The Secret Life of the Unborn Child*.

On September 11, **Carmen Rodríguez's** novel *Atacama* (Fernwood/Roseway Publishing) was released. This is the story of two people of disparate backgrounds who are connected by a profound understanding of the other's emotional predicaments, their unwavering commitment to social justice, and their belief in the power of writing and art. Firmly rooted in historical events

and set in the first half of the 20th century, beautifully crafted *Atacama* resonates loudly with today's changing times while covering issues related to class, gender, trauma, survival, and the role of art in society. <https://fernwoodpublishing.ca/book/atacama>

Donna Wootton's latest novel, *Isadora's Dance*, published by Blue Denim Press, is a literary romance that follows the coming of age of a young millennial who travels to Oxford in 2010 where she begins research on the life of Lucia Joyce, daughter of James Joyce, who missed her calling as a modern dancer. There Isadora finds her muse. She then travels to Italy where she finds love and uncovers family secrets.



Ami Sands Brodoff launched her novel-in-stories, *The Sleep of Apples*, in September. These stories centre on nine closely linked characters who confront crises related to mental illness, mortality, and gender identity. Lisa Moore calls it "masterfully spare and rich, full of love, quakingly honest. Brodoff's stories are sparklers held up in the dark — brief, fierce, and bold." Look for a schedule of Ami's events on her website (amisandsbrodoff.com) and Facebook page.

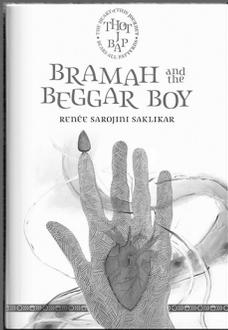
Kamal Parmar has been appointed the poet laureate of the City of Nanaimo, BC (2021–2023), and is looking forward to spreading the word of poetry among the city's wonderful community.

Elena Johnson's poetry collection, *Field Notes for the Alpine Tundra* (Gaspereau, 2015), has been translated into French. *Notes de terrain pour la toundra alpine*, translated by Luba Markovskaia, was published in March 2021 by Jardin de givre, an imprint of Les Presses de l'Université du Québec. Johnson wrote this collection of poems at a remote ecology research station in the Yukon. Johnson is also an editor of *Watch Your Head: Writers and artists respond to the climate crisis*, an anthology published by Coach House in 2020. *Watch Your Head* is an ongoing online project, which you can find at www.watchyourhead.ca.

Monica Kidd premiered her new National Film Board of Canada (NFB) animation, *The Storm*, at the FIN Atlantic International Film Festival in Halifax on September 17. In *The Storm*, Kidd and St. John's-based animator Duncan Major reflect on what it means to bring a baby into a world under pandemic lockdown. *The Storm* is produced and executive produced by Annette Clarke for the NFB's Quebec and Atlantic Studio. Monica Kidd wrote, directed, and narrated the film, which will be programmed on the NFB's streaming platform, NFB.ca, in 2022.

Frank O’Keeffe’s latest young-adult novel, *Mad About Marvin*, was released in mid-August on Amazon. This is Frank’s ninth YA novel. Grade 9 student Paula Schaefer is mad about Marvin in more ways than one. When her mother breaks her New Year’s resolution to not freak out, she sets off a disastrous chain of events. Paula’s whole family is dragged into a hilarious but sometimes terrifying situation, and like it or not, Paula and Marvin find themselves much closer than either of them ever imagined. Hold on to your seat. Frank’s three adult books are *Woodbine*, *The Grand Getaway*, and *Outside Enniskerry and Beyond*.

Alison Lohans’ twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth books were released in 2021: her fifth picture book, *The 1-Dogpower Garden Team*, illustrated by Gretchen Ehrsam (Your Nickel’s Worth Publishing), and her first contemporary romance novel, *Canine Cupid* (BWL Publishing), through Smashwords. During summer 2021, Alison’s short works appeared in *apart: a year of pandemic poetry and prose* (the Saskatchewan Writers’ Guild), *Grain Magazine*, and a piece by her pseudonym, Ainslie Lloyd, appeared in the anthology *Ink* (Other Worlds Ink). Late in 2020, Alison re-released her speculative fiction novel, *Timefall*, through Kindle Direct Publishing and Smashwords. The first edition (Five Rivers Publishing) was a finalist for the 2019 Prix Aurora Award, YA category.



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Awards

Catherine Graham’s seventh poetry collection, *Æther: An Out-of-Body Lyric* (Wolsak & Wynn/Buckrider Books), is shortlisted for the Toronto Book Awards.

The 2021 Indigenous Voices Awards finalists include four TWUC members. Published Prose in English, Fiction: **Jenn Ashton** for *People Like Frank* (Tidewater Press) and **Michelle Good** for *Five Little Indians* (Harper Perennial); Published Prose in English, Creative Nonfiction and Life-Writing: **Michelle Porter** for *Approaching Fire* (Breakwater Books); Published Poetry in English: **Norma Dunning** for *Eskimo Pie: A Poetics of Inuit Identity* (Bookland Press).

The 2021/2022 Chocolate Lily Awards in BC nominees include members in two categories. Novel Category nominees (Grades 4–7): *The Ride Home* by **Gail Anderson-Dargatz** and *Me and Banksy* by **Tanya Lloyd Kyi**; Chapter Book/Early Novels nominees (Grades 2–4): *Penguin Days* by **Sara Leach**, *Marisa and the Mountains* by **George M. Johnson**, *Why Are You So Quiet?* by **Jaclyn Desforges**, and *Salma the Syrian Chef* by **Danny Ramadan**.

Beth Kaplan’s *Loose Woman: My odyssey from lost to found* is a non-fiction finalist for the Whistler Independent Book Awards.

Jillian Tamaki is the winner of the 2021 Eisner Award for Young Readers for *Our Little Kitchen*.

The Toronto Book Awards 2021 long list includes **Catherine Graham** for *Æther: An Out-of-Body Lyric* by (Wolsak & Wynn), **Faye Guenther** for *Swimmers in Winter* (Invisible Publishing), **Ted Staunton** (Josh Rosen, illustrator) for *The Good Fight* (Scholastic Canada), **Sharon Jennings** for *Unravel* (Red Deer Press), and **Kim Echlin** for *Speak, Silence* by (Penguin Random House Canada). **Catherine Graham** and **Faye Guenther** made the short list.

The winner of the 2021 Fred Kerner Book Awards is **Joanna Lilley** for *Endlings* (Turnstone Press). Finalists included **Vanessa Farnsworth** for *The Haweaters* (Signature Editions) and **Lori Hahnel** for *Vermin* (Enfield & Wizenty, an imprint of Great Plains Publications).

The Non-Fiction Award long list for the Newfoundland and Labrador Book Awards (NLBA) includes **Sonja Boon** for *What the Oceans Remember*. The NBLA’s E.J. Pratt Poetry Award long list includes **Michelle Porter** for *Inquires*.

The winners of the Alberta Book Publishing Awards were announced on September 17. The following members were among the winners: **Dionne Brand** for *An Autobiography of the Autobiography of Reading* (University of Alberta Press) and **Lisa Richter** for *Nautilus and Bone* (Frontenac House). Design awards were given to *The End of Me* by **John Gould** and *If Sylvie Had Nine Lives* by **Leona Theis**, both of which were published by Freehand Books and designed by Natalie Olsen (Kisscut Design).

New Members

Ekiuwa Aire, *Idia of the Benin Kingdom, Our Ancestories*, 2020

Alexandra Amor, *Cult, A Love Story*, Ingram Spark / Amazon, 2009

Michelle Anderson, *Making Artisan Breads in the Bread Machine*, Harvard Common Press, 2020

Sharron Arksey, *Waiting Place*, Turnstone Press, 2016

Heather Babcock, *Filthy Sugar*, Inanna Publications, 2020

Nadine Bachan, *Ol' Talk*, Tigh trope Books, 2015

Saumiya Balasubramaniam, *When I Found Grandma*, Groundwood Books, 2019

Anne-Marie Beattie, 'Ninety Days of Isolation', *BRITISH COLUMBIA MAGAZINE*, 2021

Bruce W. Bishop, *Unconventional Daughters*, Amazon, 2020

Emily Brewes, *The Doomsday Book of Fairy Tales*, Dundurn Press, 2021

Russell Brooks, *The Demeter Code*, Russell Brooks, 2014

Yvonne Brown, *Dead Woman Pickney: A Memoir*

of Childhood in Jamaica, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010

Dorothy Christian, *Indigenous Knowledge(s) and Indigenous Visual Sovereignty and Aesthetics*, Fernwood Publishing Co. Ltd., 2023 (forthcoming)

Dana L. Church, *The Beekeepers: How Humans Changed the World of Bumble Bees*, Scholastic Focus, 2021

Conyer Clayton, *We Shed Our Skin Like Dynamite*, Guernica Editions, 2020

Patrick Collins, *Murder at Mosquito Cove*, DRC Publishing, 2013

Hilary Scharper, *Pedita*, Simon & Schuster Canada, 2013

Denise Davy, *Her Name Was Margaret*, Wolsak and Wynn, 2021

Junie Désil, *eat salt / gaze at the ocean*, Talonbooks, 2020

Barrie Doyle, *Musick for the King*, Word Alive Press, 2020

Carol B. Duncan, *This Spot of Ground: Spiritual Baptists in Toronto*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008/2012

David Dunne, *Design Thinking at Work*, Rotman-UTP Publishing, 2018

Jane Enright, *Butter Side Up: How I Survived My Most Terrible Year & Created My Super Awesome Life*, Friesen Press, 2020

Luciana Erregue, 'The Orchid Clinic,' *ROOM Magazine*, 2021 (forthcoming)

Jennifer Falkner, *Nineteen Above*, Discovery, Invisible Publishing, 2023 (forthcoming)

Margot Fedoruk, "What to Expect," *PORTAL*, April 2021

Loretta Garbutt, *A Stopwatch from Grampa*, Kids Can Press, 2020

David Giuliano, *The Undertaking of Billy Buffone*, Latitude 46 Publishing, 2021

Joseph Burton Gough, *Come From Away*, Oberon Press, 1981

Andrea Gunraj, *The Lost Sister*, Nimbus/Vagrant Press, 2019

Jane Heinrichs, *Every Home Needs An Elephant*, Orca Book Publishers, 2021

Eric Hogan, *The Case of the Wooden Timekeeper*, Firefly Books, 2019

Mahak Jain, *Maya*, Owlkids Books, 2016

Naj Johnson, *I Come As I Am: Reflection in Verse*, In Our Words Inc, 2016

Jennifer Kelly, *Jackson Jones: The Tale of a Boy, an Elf and a Very Stinky Fish*, Zonderkidz, 2010

Andrew Kipp, *Galaxy 2,000,000,000 Darkness Falls*, Volumes Publishing Ltd., 2011

Leila Kulpas, *Into the Eyes of Hungry: Growing up in the Wilds of Australia*, Amazon, 2019

Margo LaPierre, *Washing Off the Raccoon Eyes*, Guernica Editions, 2017

Amy LeBlanc, *Unlocking*, University of Calgary Press, 2021

Timothy Martin, *Moral Hazards*, Friesen Press, 2020

Rob McLennan, *A halt, which is empty*, Mansfield Press, 2019

Wendy McLeod MacKnight, *The Frame Up*, Greenwillow Books, 2018

Jennie Morrow, *Bird Shadows*, Inanna Publications and Education Inc., 2021

Michelle Kim, *Running Through Sprinklers*, Simon and Schuster USA (Atheneum), 2018

Daniela I. Norris, *On Dragonfly Wings*, Axis Mundi/John Hunt Publishing, 2014

John Oliphant, *Brother XII: The Strange Odyssey*

of a 20th-Century Prophet, McClelland & Stewart, 1991 + Twelfth House Press, 2016

John Oughton, *Higher Teaching: A Handbook for New Postsecondary Faculty*, Guernica Editions, 2021

Laura Peetoom, *Alex vs the Four-headed Gargantuan*, James Lorimer & Company Ltd, 2015

Pearl Pirie, *footlights*, Radiant Press, 2020

Cam Scott, *ROMANS/ SNOWMARE*, ARP Books, 2019

Jane Powell, *Butterflies in the System*, Tellwell Talent, 2020

Brian Preston, *Me, Chi, and Bruce Lee: Adventures in Martial Arts*, Penguin Random House Canada, 2007

Olivia Robinson, *The Blue Moth Motel*, Breakwater Books, 2021 (forthcoming)

Peter J. Roe, *Haunted Town Halls: From the Case Files of the Searcher Group*, Quagmire Press, 2018

Jamal Saeed, *Yara's Spring*, Annick Press, 2020

Jade Shyback, *Aqueous*, Red Hen Press, 2023 (forthcoming)

Hendrik Slegtenhorst, *Caravaggio's Dagger*, Iguana Books, 2013

Lillian China Smith, *Space Boy: The Boy Who Went To Outer Space And Back*, Pegasus Publishers, 2021

Hannah D. State, *Journey to the Hopewell Star*, Amazon, 2020

Michael Stewart, *Heart Sister*, Orca Book Publishers, 2020

Henry Adam Svec, *Life Is Like Canadian Football and Other Authentic Folk Songs*, Invisible Publishing, 2021

Linda Thompson, *Black Bears in the Carrot Field*, Mother Tongue Publishing, 2021

Iryn Tushabe, "Lucky Baboon," *Grain Magazine*, 2020

Marie-Anne Visoi, *Transgression, Stylistic Variation and Narrative Discourse in the Twentieth Century Novel*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014

Jack Wang, *We Two Alone*, House of Anansi, 2020

Jason Winders, *George Dixon: The Short Life of Boxing's First Black World Champion, 1870–1908*, University of Arkansas Press, 2021 (forthcoming)

Lindsay Zier-Vogel, *Letters To Amelia*, Book*hug, 2021 (forthcoming)

In Memoriam



Gloria Varley

BY ELAINE CLOW

“The very powerful and the very stupid have one thing in common. Instead of altering their views to fit the facts, they alter the facts to fit their views ... which can be very uncomfortable if you happen to be one of the facts that needs altering.” — One of Gloria’s posts on the TWUC List

The TWUC Writer’s List lost a generous and good friend when Gloria Varley left our forum overnight on August 6, 2021. We will miss her posts about temperamental computers and unpredictable joggers crossing the Bloor Viaduct in all weathers and traffic, and her well thought out, intense rants about injustice on wide-ranging political and publishing topics. We thoroughly appreciated her sense of the absurd with the Time Wasters, Just for Fun, Friday Follies, and provocative thoughts for Friday Breaks for the online humour we share. Always showing timeless grace and grand elegance, she

had beautiful movement. Gloria and I met online when I joined the TWUC List in 2000, and we soon developed an off-line friendship for our love of crime and detective fiction, tea, coffee, biscuits, wine, the Cornwall connection of the Boscawen family... and her gifts of Tregothnan tea. I will miss her Rosedale view and views when I next visit Toronto.

Author of *To Be a Dancer: Canada’s National Ballet School*, with Peter Varley, Photographer, and a forward by Eric Bruhn (Peter Martin Assoc. Ltd., 1971) and a food columnist for *Toronto Life Magazine*, she generously shared her opinions and recipes, not only with our list but with the world. She would appreciate having a glass of wine (or cup of tea and a biscuit) raised in her memory. Her obituary can be found at <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/theglobeandmail/obituary.aspx?n=gloria-varley&pid=199776530>.



Dr. David Malcolm

TWUC Member Dr. David Malcolm lived in Canada’s Far North (Yellowknife and Inuvik), and was known for his scientific writing, his fiction, and his poetry. He held a Ph.D. in Engineering Science from the University of Warwick in the U.K. and was a leader in research around permafrost and climate change in Canada’s Arctic.

Ever the scientist, Dr. Malcolm documented his long fight against Stage 4 renal cell carcinoma on his personal blog, “I’m Still Alive: A Cancer Recovery Journey” (<https://davidisstillalive.blogspot.com/>) — it’s still online and well worth a read.

In 2014, he published a book of poetry entitled *Pine Cones and*

Small Stones. Even after retirement, Dr. Malcolm continued to consult and do important contract work on permafrost engineering for green energy projects and sustainable living in the circumpolar north.

Dr. Malcolm was a member of the Rotary Club, the Canadian Science Writers Association, and the Saskatchewan Writers Guild. In 2016, Dr. Malcolm was a guest of honour at Buckingham Palace in London for the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 Reception where, to his great delight, he met Princess Anne and Prince Philip.



Kent Elgin Thompson

COURTESY OF THE THOMPSON FAMILY

1936–2021

Friday the 13th of August 2021 marked the passing of Kent Elgin Thompson, who died peacefully in his sleep in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, after a brief illness. Kent was born with curly blond hair (to the annoyance of his older sister) the day after Groundhog Day in 1936, to parents Maurice and Clarice (née Graves) Thompson, in Waukegan, Illinois. He later returned with his parents to their familial roots in Washington County, Indiana, where Kent got his first job at a haberdashery and, like every boy in Indiana, played basketball, in his case, on four teams at the same time with nary a hope of playing beyond high school because his father was too short. Upon graduation from Salem High School and at the beginning of the end of his curly blond hair, he attended Hanover College in Hanover, Indiana (home of fictional character Woody Boyd from *Cheers*), which included a one-year exchange to the University of Exeter in England. It was then onto the University of Iowa for a master's degree. He funded his education through scholarships (his report cards describe an overachiever), raising 5,000 chickens in his parents' backyard, sweeping a factory floor, and working on a small-town newspaper in Pekin, Indiana, where he covered the local stock-car races and operated the linotype press. Somewhere in all of this he managed to play semi-pro baseball, which was "semi" because some of the players were paid, but he was not.

Armed with a master's degree, he joined the United States Army before they had a chance to draft him in 1959 (he received his draft notice while on basic training). He served three years in the Counter-Intelligence Corps, starting at Fort Holabird, Maryland, where he met and married Michael Fowler in 1960 prior to being stationed in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he was most certainly accidentally placed in charge of all nuclear responses in the Ohio-Indiana-Kentucky tri-state area for at least three days. Discharged as a "buck" sergeant in 1962, he started his first teaching job at Ripon College in Ripon, Wisconsin, where he chaperoned a college ski trip that included a young Harrison Ford, who apparently remained solo throughout the trip. Not too long afterward, he won a Fulbright Scholarship to attend the University of Wales at Swansea. The doctoral research he conducted into Dylan Thomas is still widely cited (though not wisely by some of his students — always know your professor's area of specific expertise in order to avoid mentioning it) in academic analyses.

Upon return to the United States in 1965, Kent, now Dr. Thompson, took a job teaching at the Colorado Women's College in Denver, which he did not enjoy, and so when he was offered a job in New Brunswick (which his wife had to explain to the moving company was in Canada, not New Jersey) he jumped at it, packed up his young family, and joined the wave of immigrants streaming north across the Canada-US border in the mid-1960s. He and his family jumped right into being Canadian and readily accepted that there are only three downs necessary in gridiron football. Kent even tried to teach his sons how to play hockey with a questionable degree of success. Unfortunately, despite their hoosier pedigree, neither son

showed much talent for basketball.

From his arrival in 1966, until retirement in 1994, Kent was a professor at the University of New Brunswick where he taught English literature, creative writing, and theatre. Early in his tenure at UNB, he was also the editor (1967–71 and 1974–75) of *The Fiddlehead*, Canada's oldest literary magazine, where he was noted for his promotion of young Canadian writers and Canadian literature. Later, he again promoted Canadian literature as the Canadian Exchange Writing Fellow at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1982–83. An instrumental founding member of The Writers' Union of Canada, Kent was notably proud of his work in establishing the Public Lending Right. Over the years, he authored numerous works of fiction, including five novels, two books of poetry, two books of short stories and many works for television, radio, and stage. He also edited a number of anthologies and was a jury member for several literary prizes, including grants from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Governor General's Literary Awards. In his own right, he was nominated for a Stephen Leacock Award for *Married Love*, and he received a number of awards, including fellowships and Canada Council grants and bursaries. Known for his sense of humour, he once worked on the production of *King of Kensington*, and his play *Kid Humley's First Game* was turned into a pilot for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. In addition to his work in fiction, he published a book on cycling in the Maritimes, for which he received the Evelyn Richardson Prize for nonfiction. Active in the arts throughout his life, he was the founder and artistic director of the Annapolis Royal Theatre Company, which sought to develop young actors in Nova Scotia. In conjunction with the town of Annapolis Royal, he promoted the history of the local area, notably with the play, *Washing Soldiers*, a collaborative effort with other local artists. His most recent publication was *The Man Who Said No*, a biographical essay of an Annapolis Royal Loyalist.

Outside of the arts and academia, Kent was an avid cyclist and a terrible handyman — despite his ability to name and describe the use of virtually any tool (because his father had them all). His adventures included cycling in Cuba and cycling naked down a mountain in Cape Breton (as part of a group of like-minded eccentrics). A Great-Depression-era baby, the amount of money he spent in the name of frugality and finding solutions that were adequate would have made Heath Robinson and Rube Goldberg proud.

Kent is survived by his wife of 62 years, Michael, his sons Kevin (Francine) and David (Ann Marie), his sister Joan Vickers (Hugh), his sister-in-law, Honey Fowler, and his grandchildren: Kate, Meghan, Liam, and Duncan. At his request, there will be no funeral, but a celebration of life is being planned for a later date. His body has been donated to Dalhousie University for the advancement of science. In lieu of flowers, a donation to any literary or cycling charity would be much appreciated. He will be sorely missed by his friends and family, but by his chickens not at all, for they have all been eaten.



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