



WRITE

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

VOLUME 49 NUMBER 4
WINTER 2022

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STORYTELLING
ISSUE /**

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We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, which last year invested \$153 million to bring the arts to Canadians throughout Canada.



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We acknowledge funding support from the Ontario Arts Council, an agency of the Government of Ontario.



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an Ontario government agency
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Write is produced four times yearly by The Writers' Union of Canada, 460 Richmond Street West, Suite 600, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 1Y1 T 416.703.8982, F 416.504.9090, info@writersunion.ca, www.writersunion.ca. © The Writers' Union of Canada, 2022.

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From the Chair

Literacy: The First Step in Freedom to Read

By Rhea Tregebov



“People say that life is the thing, but I prefer reading.” – Logan Pearsall Smith

I have a feeling quite a few Union members would, like myself, agree with this tongue-in-cheek quote. Many of us live as intensely through reading as we do through our writing. So we’re likely a receptive audience for Freedom to Read Week, the annual project of the Book and Periodical Council of Canada, which this year ran February 20–26. As part of Freedom to Read Week, the Union sponsors an annual Freedom to Read Award. In 2021, the Union was proud to name David A. Robertson the winner. When his graphic novels *7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga* and *Betty: The Helen Betty Osborne Story* were listed as “not recommended” by the Edmonton Public School Board, Robertson eloquently defended the importance of own voices stories as resources for teaching Indigenous history and culture. (As I write this in December 2021, the 2022 winner had not yet been announced.)

The freedom to read struggle also encompasses the economic conditions under which authors work. As the Union’s executive director, John Degen, writes in “Keeping Authors Writing in a Collapsed Economy”: “We talk a lot about the freedom to read and the importance of free expression, but threats to these essential freedoms don’t always come from censorious governments or inflexible ideologies. Sometimes they come from global disaster.”

In addition to the social conditions that aid or hinder us as authors in the production of literary works, it’s also valuable to consider the social conditions that offer or deny readers the opportunity to read. First of these is literacy — the ability to read. Despite our country’s affluence, far too many adults in Canada struggle with functional literacy. A 2021 OECD study defines functional literacy as “accessing, understanding, evaluating, and reflecting on written texts in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential, and to participate in society.”

Canada scores poorly in functional literacy, with nearly half of adults falling short of a high school level of competency — the kinds of skills that would allow them to successfully undertake such tasks as completing job applications, fully comprehending news articles, or composing emails.

I only have to turn to my own family for examples of barriers to literacy. None of my four grandparents were native English-speakers. Their educational opportunities in “the old country” were limited both by prejudice and financial constraints. My father’s mother told the story of literally standing at the threshold of the room in which her brothers were being instructed by a tutor. There was no free public education in Tsarist Russia, and while the culture didn’t deem women worthy enough of education to be seated in the room, my grandmother’s parents, at her insistence, did acquiesce to this oblique way of accommodating her intellect.

What-If Sara, my 1999 children’s picture book, was inspired by another family story. The child protagonist in the book is based on my son’s paternal grandmother. As I was drafting the story of how Sara, like many Canadian-born children of immigrants, acted as translator for her father, my assumption was that the father was literate in Russian but not English. I still remember the pain and shame on my mother-in-law’s face as she explained that her father was completely illiterate. Though he’d been trained as a tailor, there was no money for formal education of any kind, not even the most basic. And I remember as well my own chagrin at having made careless assumptions that had amplified her pain.

So as we lobby for and support freedom of expression, let’s not forget the barriers that prevent some from participating in the joys of reading. For resources to assist an adult struggling with literacy, ABC Life Literacy is a nonprofit that promotes adult learning. And if you wish to help eliminate illiteracy at its roots through a donation or volunteering, One to One and the Canadian Children’s Literacy Foundation are just two of many non-profits that help children develop literacy skills that will last a lifetime.

Writing Rights

Lighting a Fire

By John Degen



As I write this column, I am also preparing for TWUC's first Zoom meeting with the freshly minted staffers at the Department of Canadian Heritage in Ottawa.

We do this after every election — introduce ourselves to new people in new jobs who are really just learning about our issues for the first time. The opening topic on the agenda for this meeting... take a guess.

Yes, the Union continues to press the government on the urgency of amendments to the Copyright Act, in order to repair the educational market for published work in Canada. Sadly, this has been an advocacy focus for TWUC since 2012. It has involved a lot of meetings both in person and over video conference, a lot of letters from TWUC members to their elected leaders, a lot of evidence gathering, a lot of testimony before Parliament and in court, and a whole, awful lot of waiting. For one reason or another, even through focussed copyright reform consultations that generated many positive recommendations for change, successive federal governments have asked again and again if we could just wait a little bit longer while they prioritized elsewhere.

Well, there can be no more waiting, and there is no higher cultural sector priority. While Ottawa declined to act on this file, Canadian publishers necessarily shifted their investment away from works that might appeal to the educational sector, writers saw their copying royalties shrink to irrelevance, and Canadian students were increasingly taught with scans, photocopies, and now even cell-phone camera photos of old textbook pages. This is blatant copyright infringement — as proven in Federal Court and the Federal Court of Appeal — and undisputed at the Supreme Court of Canada.

For Parliament to not act immediately to repair this broken market framework would be for our lawmakers to admit they are uninterested in making good law. Hey, that's a pretty good

line. I think I'll use it in the meeting, and maybe again on social media. Feel free to use it yourself if you, like TWUC member Eric Walters, happen to be having lunch with your MP sometime soon. We must light a fire under members of Parliament on this issue, so they will know the wait is over. And we can only do that by working together. Watch out for a public petition, coming soon from TWUC and our sectoral partners. Please challenge yourself to get at least ten other people in your network to sign it. After all, fair pay for work and the collapse of investment in high-quality Canadian content for our classrooms are not just writers' issues. They are everybody's issues.

TWUC has already secured more meetings with more new policy people to discuss some of our other federal concerns. We are looking for timely fulfilment of the government's election promise to increase the Public Lending Right budget by 50 percent. That would take the budget from \$15 million to \$22.5 million and would go a long way to addressing the PLR program's longstanding difficulties in keeping up with industry growth.

We would also very much like to see the establishment (re-establishment, really) of a special postal rate for shipping books across the country. One of the silver linings of the pandemic has been that Canada's independent bookselling sector quickly and efficiently upgraded its capacity to sell books online; but small independent stores still struggle to compete with huge market players like Amazon and Indigo on shipping. A special postal rate, perhaps one restricted by a volume cap, would work to level that playing field and help grow our indie selling sector.

Finally (for this report at least) we want to make sure all federal support programs are aware of the hugely positive growth of Canada's independent writing sector. The number of writers choosing to self-publish all or some of their works is on the rise, and TWUC's own membership growth in this area proves that professional standards for self-publishing are not in question. It's beyond time all funding programs, awards, libraries, and presenters accepted independently published books as a vital part of the cultural mix.

Don't you think you should be paid fairly for your work? Add your voice to the chorus of Canadian creators sending a message to the federal government that the Copyright Act urgently needs to be fixed.



Natasha Deen
@natasha_deen

...

Not amending the Copyright Act leaves Canadian Creators out in the cold. The education sector needs to pay for the use of our work. Please fix the Copyright Act, @JustinTrudeau @pablorodriguez @FP_Champagne #IValueCdnStories #cdnpoli #creatorscallingonottawa



I Read Canadian 🇨🇦 and 2 others

1:48 PM · Nov 16, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

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I VALUE
CANADIAN
STORIES

Writer's Blot

WRITER'S PROMPT /

Children Will Listen

BY JANICE MACDONALD



The tradition of the bedtime story can probably be traced back to stories told around a communal fire, and they are still a vital part of the development of our children today.

In those magical years before school swallows them up, our days have a general pattern. We hug sleepy children awake, help them dress, feed them, and through the day generally mind that they don't kill themselves. After supper, we pop them into the bath, and then once they're clean and tucked into bed, we offer them a way to decompress from the myriad actions of the day. Our voices lull them into thoughtfulness, the pictures on the page connect the ideas they are hearing with the world beyond their comforters, and our heartbeats settle into companionable rhythms as we flip through an old favourite picture book or pick up a chapter book where we left off the night before.

Although Tom Selleck was amusing in *Three Men and a Baby*, when he read a book about a prize fight to a baby in dulcet tones, it really does matter what you read to your children. Their first exposure to the world beyond them will come from the books you read them. They will absorb your values, and your reactions to the ridiculous, the sublime, the frightening, and the ferocious as they hear you deliver the words. Most of all, they will absorb your valuing of literature and the act of reading.

My mother told of reading an alphabet book to me. "Look, Janice," she pointed to the picture of a shiny red apple perched on the corner of a desk, "An apple for the teacher!"

"Yes," I apparently responded with ghoulish glee. "A poison apple!" So, sometimes children make problematic synaptic

connections. This is likely why I now write murder mysteries.

Some of the fairy tales that have been handed down from generation to generation hold hidden wisdom that children understand on a cellular level. "Not all adults have your best interests at heart;" "ingenuity and loyalty will take you further than beauty and wealth;" and "never trust a stranger offering you candy" are all valuable life lessons hovering under the surface of the entertaining stories given to us by the Brothers Grimm or Hans Christian Andersen.

In his 1976 book *The Uses of Enchantment*, Bruno Bettelheim writes of this intuitive ability. While giants aren't real, children catch on that "there are such things as grown-ups, and they're like giants." He goes on to underline the value of telling these tales to your children rather than just having them read a story where a cunning child can get the better of a powerful adult. The oral tradition of the bedtime fairy tale lets children understand that their parents approve, at least in principle, of their "retaliating against adult dominance."

But the bedtime tradition is a gift, not just another teachable moment. It is as much a reward for us, the tired parents — who have lived through another long day of never-ending questions, tantrums, bickering, and lack of adult conversation — as the children listening. Every moment is worthwhile. The silly, the frustrating, the tender, the fierce. At the end of the race, we gather our children into our arms, snuggle their sweet-smelling, bubble-bath-clean little sleeper-covered bodies close, and open a book.

Janice MacDonald is proud to be TWUC's regional rep for Alberta-Northwest Territories-Nunavut. While she has written in pretty much every genre, she is best known for the Randy Craig Mysteries, set in Edmonton, where she also lives. A one-time university lecturer, she now keeps the Government of Alberta safe from dangling modifiers.



The Power of Everyday Storytelling

BY RICHARD VAN CAMP

Everyday activities that can invite more sharing of stories into your life, and help you get through the pandemic.

A friend of mine recently summed it up best: All the hope we had for a return to normalcy — all the visions of going to restaurants, concerts, family reunions, movies, everything — is gone. He's right, and now we are all looking for hope. We are all looking for reasons to trust the universe for answers, or insights into why this is all happening now. We are carrying more stress and anxiety and worry as parents than we realize, and it comes out in the most surprising ways: maybe way too many hours scrolling on our phones, maybe way too many trips to the fridge throughout the day.

And this is where stories come in.

One of the smartest things we did as a family when the pandemic began was ordering a portable firepit for our front yard and then getting split wood delivered. The gift of the pandemic is we've never been closer with our neighbours in Edmonton's Old Strathcona neighbourhood, located in Treaty 6 territory. Whenever I feel low, that old Northerner inside of me starts a fire, I make a hot drink for myself (coffee, chaga, or hot chocolate), and it's kind of like the bat signal for our neighbours to come over and pull up a chair. That's when we start visiting,

and that's when the magic of stories fills all of our love cups.

Another thing we did as a family is join the Sherwood Park Archery Club. We head there with our bows and quivers of arrows. It's about the outside range, and the family time, and connection, but it's also about the lovely walk on the forest trails and the big sky. I'm always amazed by the clear sky, the moon, the constellations, or the massive city of clouds. I once remarked that the Alberta sky is our ocean here, and I think I may be onto something.

And let's not forget the moon. Can we all just take a second and appreciate our gorgeous Aunty in the sky who checks up on all of us once a month? I have a crush on her. Even my wife knows. I guess you could say I am a bit of a lunatic. There isn't a day that rolls on by when I don't ask Google, "When is the moonrise?" And I wait with anticipation to see her.

Growing up in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, I was raised to listen, celebrate, and share what we have. I've always said that northerners are the hobbits of Canada. All we want to do is cook for you, bake for you, wrap you in a warm blanket, make you laugh, and give you hope through the stories we share with you. And the longer you stay, the heavier your arms will be with

Your lifelong friends know the missing pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of your life and your family's life.

the gifts we keep racing into our homes to spoil you with. We're great friends who only want the best for you and for your family, and for your work and for your dreams.

So how do you go out and gather the family and community medicines you need to help carry you through this overwhelming time?

Uncle Richy V has a few pointers for you to consider:

1. Get a portable firepit and wood for your yard.
2. Host a full moon giveaway. Prepare food and things you don't need anymore, and give them away to those who come. Invite your friends, families, neighbours. See who shows up and spoil them. Do this every full moon.
3. Start cooking those old family recipes. Pick up the phone and get someone you love to walk you through meal preparations for a feast that will be enjoyed even more because you were mentored.
4. Join outdoor clubs. Whether it's walking, biking, skiing, archery, etc. etc., get on out there and take responsibility for your well-being. We're social animals, and one of the leading causes of depression is social isolation.
5. Get physical. Moving your body makes you feel good. A long time ago (pre-pandemic), I was in China studying acupuncture, and I learned a saying from the doctors at the Hangzhou Hospital of TCM and that is, "The heart is the base of the mind." When you exercise your heart, they told us, you exercise your mind. And what are the two sayings I keep hearing over and over from my chiropractors? "Motion is lotion" and "Motion is magic." I believe this wholeheartedly. We are built to move every single day, and nothing clears the mind like a good long walk.
6. Volunteer to walk a neighbour's dog. You'll know more dog walkers and dogs in no time flat. Plus, you can be outside

four to five times a day.

7. Pick up the phone, or use FaceTime or Zoom or the video option on your phone and call old friends and family. Pick ones you've never done this with, and you'll be surprised to see familiar faces.
8. Surprise an old friend by telling them exactly what their friendship means to you. Tell them you love them. There's nothing like an old buddy saying, "I love you, too," right back. Often, your lifelong friends know the missing pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of your life and your family's life, and there's nothing like comparing stories with an old pal to get the memories and celebrations rolling right back into your soul.
9. Start scanning old photos and yearbook portraits and send them to friends. It's amazing to see their reactions.
10. Go to your municipal or provincial archives, in person or online, and start sharing those old photos you find. We have a Facebook group called "Memories of Fort Smith, NT," and I love scanning photos from the Roman Catholic Diocese in Yellowknife and uploading them to this site. Even if I don't know who my fellow townies are, it's amazing how in minutes others do. There's nothing like finding someone's baptism or wedding photos, or community celebration photos, and reclaiming them for others. I love doing this.
11. It's easy now to digitize old cassettes and upload them to SoundCloud and/or YouTube. I've used the pandemic to digitize and upload stories from Elders who've passed and have come back to talk about it. Check out my SoundCloud account (<https://soundcloud.com/richardvancamp>) and you'll hear the late Okanagan Elder Glen Douglas talk about being hit with a concussion grenade in the Korean War and seeing the other side, only to be told he could not stay and

I hope you do this. I hope you start gathering medicines for yourself, your community, and for future generations.

that he still had work to do. He ended up waking up in his body bag knowing he would walk again and that he had to continue to do his good work here in his life. You can also hear Chipeywan Elder Maria Brown share her story about passing in her sleep and seeing Heaven. And you can hear Anna Tonasket share her story about how the Little People saved her life in Vernon, British Columbia, when she was a teenager babysitting and three men came for her. They'd been drinking and they knew she babysat alone, but it was the Little People who saved her. I'm going to keep using this time during the pandemic to upload more Elder interviews that I did in the '90s, with permission of the families, of course.

12. I've also started getting permission to upload community footage of drum dances, tea dances, talent shows, and love song competitions. In the '90s, a producer named John Gon recorded so many incredible events. He's retired now, and he's given me permission to upload so many wonderful community celebrations in Behchoko, Northwest Territories, to my YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/richardvancamp>). To see our Elders, our leaders, our matriarchs laughing, dancing, visiting, feasting — I can't tell you what this means to me. The best video I've shared so far is my uncle Eddie Washie singing a love song, and oh, it is so beautiful. The most treasured video of all for me is my late grandmother Melanie Washie standing up at a talent show and cracking a few jokes before launching into a Tlicho love song that makes me ache with admiration. I miss my *Ehtsi*, and I'm proud to share her love song with the world now.
13. I hope you do this. I hope you start gathering medicines for yourself, your community and for future generations.
14. One of our laws as Dene people is to share stories every day.

One of the many reasons we love Edmonton is we always have time for stories. Whether it's Tim, our mailman, all my friends who work at Save-On-Foods, or the ladies who work at Canada Post, I've been visiting and sharing stories with a few of them for 10 years now. And you know what? Now, after 10 years, they are starting to share their stories with me, and they are dazzling.

15. Pick up that phone. Your voice, your laughter, your stories — they're needed more than ever. I promise.
16. I'm lucky to have known some of my friends for 45 years. I text them. I Messenger them. I share hilarious memes with them. I don't let up. Why? Because my love cup fills every time I make someone laugh, or I send them a recording of one of their relations.

I hope something I've shared with you resonates and inspires. Share what you have. Give away what you no longer need. It's still a sweet life and, when you listen to your Elders, you start to realize that we've been here before with sicknesses: influenza, TB, the Spanish Flu. We will get through this storm, and we'll get through it one day at a time.

Crank those tunes. Read those books. Start calling and recording the stories, recipes, songs, and craft techniques that you've always wanted to, with permission. Then share them with others. Why wait?

Why wouldn't you want to be remembered as a good medicine gatherer for yourself, for your family, for your community, for future generations, for the world?

Mahsi cho and with respect.

Richard Van Camp
Tłı̨chǫ Dene, Author, Storyteller
www.richardvancamp.com



Catch Them by the Ear

BY JEFF STOCKTON

The magic of oral traditions — for storytellers and listeners.

1.

The Wizardry of Words

What you are doing right now is astonishing.

You are looking at a jumble of inherently meaningless lines, squiggles, curves and circles. These symbols have absolutely no meaning to the multiple billions of other living organisms on this planet.

These squiggles have no scent, no sound, no movement, and absolutely no nutritional value. They did not come from — nor do they fit into — any natural landscape on this planet.

Yet you are translating these squiggles into silent sound, into a flow of meaningful language that you actually “hear” inside your mind.

You are creating an oral experience — an experience filled with pauses, inflection, mood and sensory relevance.

Astonishing.

And you are only capable of performing this astonishing act because you were born into an oral tradition: a world of human sound, sensation, cadence, rhythm, and meaning.

2. What Are Words?

Language is nothing more than hooting and clicking. We vocalize with the vocal cords (hootng) and then we cut and shape the sound into language (clicking) with tongue and teeth.

The meaning we ascribe to the hoot and click is entirely anchored and rooted in physical experience.

This symbol:

“d”

has no sensory anchor in it.

Nor does this symbol:

“o”

Nor this:

“g”

But because of a lifetime wrapped in the human oral tradition (along with countless hours of practice over the course of more than 12 years of formal public education), you have an ability to create something from this squiggle combination.

When you combine the symbols “d” “o” “g” an image leaps into your mind. That image is encoded with your own personal experiences with real-life canines. The word is suddenly alive. The word becomes both a clear image and a vivid sensory experience.

All of this happens in the mind, in the faculty of the imagination. Imagination comes from the word “image.” The image is power, and words are a shortcut to that power.

3. The Art of Weaving Words

I have great admiration for your craft as a writer in the written tradition. The written word is a precise and sometimes unforgiving medium.

As someone who works almost exclusively within the oral

The experience of the storyteller in writing is utterly separated from the experience of the reader. In the oral tradition, there is no separation between the storyteller and the listener.

tradition, I am an editor's nightmare. Ask the editor of this article if you don't believe me. [I was actually just thinking this is an easy and fun piece to work on.—ed.]

As a storyteller and orator, I fight the written format. I have paragraph breaks before they are necessary.

I leave spaces where I want a pause in the flow of language...

When I am in the flow of a live presentation and performance, the rhythm and cadence are my realm to create. I set and maintain the pace.

A raised eyebrow... a dramatic pause... a rise of the voice — or a trailing off... these create landscapes that I and my listeners travel through together. There is no skimming ahead or glossing over. We travel as the nomads of long ago travelled — together, at one pace.

In the tradition of oral storytelling, EVERYTHING depends on the process of "closure." Closure is the art of giving just enough detail that the listener cannot help but engage their own faculties of imagination to fill in all of the remaining important details.

The written tradition is somewhat different. The page is so densely packed. Although the writer hears and feels the rhythm of pauses and moments of emphasis, she surrenders control to the reader.

The experience of the storyteller-in-writing is utterly separated from the experience of the reader. Writer and reader are separated by time and distance.

In the oral tradition, there is no separation between the storyteller and the listener.

It is a live, lived, sensory, co-created experience. We pause for breath in the same moment. We feel the drop in the stomach, the awakening of worry and suspense in the same moment, at the same time.

The live oral experience is a profound and luxurious experience. And it has, of course, a very enormous drawback.

A live storytelling/spoken word experience can only be enjoyed by a select number of people in one, finite moment in the flow of time.

This is the reason the oral tradition of any culture... of EVERY culture... is always just one generation away from extinction. Every oral tradition is confined by its nesting in the temporal and fleeting moment. The oral tradition is confined by time.

The magic of your written tradition is in its timelessness.

You polish your craft such that language and ideas are capable

of literally leaping from the printed page (or screen) into the mind of the reader. And your readers can number in the tens, the hundreds, the thousands, the millions...

Your craft can potentially connect with readers over months, years, decades... even centuries.

The great opportunity that presents itself here is to share skills between both the oral and written traditions.

For both the oral and written traditions have the same essential quality in order to be successful...

We must catch the listener/reader by the ear.

4. Caught by the Ear

The air — most intimate of the elements — surrounds us. The air envelops us, it embraces us. It touches every being and object in the space around us. It is alive upon your skin and mine. It moves over our public faces, and is drawn inside — into our most secret, unseen places.

The air is charged with secret things at every moment in time. It is filled with sudden impulses, a rush of inspiration, a pulse of instinct, an alert of danger, a promise of possibility.

The air holds and releases our songs, our stories.

The air is filled with sound.

The 6th-century Irish abbot St. Columba wrote:

Éist le cel na cruinne (Listen to the music of the universe)

Éist le cel na réaltaí (Listen to the music of the stars)

Éist le cel na dúlra (Listen to the music of nature)

Éist, Éist, Éist! (Listen, listen, listen!)

The power of the oral tradition is the power of listening. The sense of hearing is simply a marvellous, ongoing physical sense. We hear things 24 hours a day over the course of a lifetime. It is an almost passive inflow of stimuli.

Listening is an entirely different thing all together. Listening is a selective process, and becomes a powerful personal experience.

The power of listening is central to our most ancient human traditions. Every spiritual tradition has come from an oral tradition. Every one of them emerged from the dance of sound and song and spoken word. This is the shared root system of human culture. It is the shared experience of every human life.

The hearth was the place where magic happened.... where speech became story. Words are a blaze through the body, like the warmth from the hearth.

Every human life begins with an immersion in a flow of sound and meaning.

Infants are not born with language “installed.” Infants attend to the physicality of language, to its sensuous, sonic flow — they attend to the volume, the tone, the repetitive sounds, the rhythm.

We enchant them. We catch them by the ear. And thus, they begin to soak in the context, grasp that this sound has meaning, that there is more to it all than simply the magical flow of sound.

To be “caught by the ear” is a wondrous thing.

We never outgrow being caught by the ear.

6. The Celtic Traditions — Hearth & Homecoming

In the long nights of long ago, our ancestors — yours and mine — were bespelled and caught by the ear.

In every human culture, in one form or another, walked the story-singer — the dreamer of dreams, the music maker, the song weaver, the praise singer, the teller of tales, the chanter of the songs of the people.

This one would breathe in the song — the sound, the chant of the living world around — and breathe it out once more. She would speak it out — catching the listeners by the ear. She would bring them back to the greater dreaming of the world.

Every clan, every tribe, every tradition, every long-term gathering of the peoples we come from understood in some way the power of, and the need for, the *seanchai*, storyteller, bard... the *fiodóir brionglóidí* — the weaver of dreams.

Our human responses to spoken word are primal and powerful.

In the dreaming that is woven through song and through story, there is a wildness that is touched. We can never predict the parts of ourselves that will suddenly rise up to a place of strength through the right song, through the right story.

The Celtic traditions are home and hearth for me in the oral tradition. I play the harp as I speak, and the additional layers of mood and tempo, of major and minor scales add power to the catching of the ear.

This tradition is a hearth-side tradition. For uncounted generations, it was the liminal space of the fireside where the artforms of story, song and spoken word blazed brightest.

The Celts measured time in nights rather than days. They divided months (moon spans) into two halves: the dark half and

the bright half. The new day began at sunset — not dawn.

And they were culturally ferocious about keeping the art form oral. They fought and forbade the written recording of the stories and songs.

They had an oral tradition that was primal in its power — in part because of its anchor in the blaze of the hearth.

In Ireland, there is the expression “Teach is Tinteán” — “Home is Hearth.” To invite another to your fireside was to invite them to come home in a very real sense.

Tending the hearth was a daily ritual of kindling, of blazing, of tending, and of smooring (banking).

The hearth was the place where magic happened. It was the place where darkness became light; where food became a meal; where silence became song; where speech became story. And most importantly — it was the place where human beings were woven out of their inherent solitude into community.

In that magical space, words had power.

7. Hearing the Way Home

Words are far more than just hooting and clicking. Words catch us by the ear and become fire and ice.

Words are a blaze through the body, like the warmth from the hearth. Words can be a cold burn, filled with clarity — like the music of the stars. The precise and exact words might eventually blur in the memory... but the emotion is incandescent, vivid and unforgettable.

Perhaps this is where our two crafts come together. We catch our listeners/readers by the ear, and call them home to their own hearth.

There is an old Gaelic proverb that states: “To him that farthest went away, the sweetest music he ever heard was ‘Come Home.’”

We never know when the words we offer may light the way home in the life of another... if we can just catch them by the ear.

Jeff Stockton is a Celtic harpist, singer, and storyteller. Since 1997, he has performed nationally and internationally, nourishing the imagination of thousands of listeners. An award-winning recording artist, he has released five recordings of his work with song and story. He has also released two illustrated books. Jeff’s website can be found at www.jeffstockton.ca.



A War of Words

BY DWAYNE MORGAN

The long history of poetry as competition.

I have always been curious. Five years into my career, way back in 1998, an email found its way to my inbox, advertising a poetry slam taking place in Philadelphia. At the time, I had no knowledge of what a poetry slam was, but my curiosity was piqued. It seemed to me that the only sensible thing to do was to drive to Philadelphia to figure out what this thing was.

I wasn't expecting it, but I ended up in the show. If this was baptism by fire, I had just showered with gasoline. As the night progressed, I was amazed by what I was hearing, by the energy in the room, and by the performances. I was a flame of inspiration. As I drove back to Toronto the following day, I wondered if such a concept would work in my city. Curiosity got me again!

Upon my return, I started the Roots Lounge Open Mic and Poetry Slam. This was only the second such event in the country, following in the footsteps of the Vancouver Poetry Slam, hosted by the Vancouver Poetry House. Fun fact: Vancouver is the only Canadian city to win the American national poetry slam title. But I digress. The Roots Lounge took a while to catch on. I had to explain what a poetry slam was, demonstrate it, convince artists to try it, explain it to the audience.

It took a year before the idea took root, but there would soon be another problem.

As the popularity of the poetry slam started to grow, there was

debate and discourse about whether poets should be competing and whether these were legitimate poetry events. Now, I have a lot of personal thoughts about what some of the critiques were tied to, but I'll avoid getting into that here. I mean, maybe the issue was that art was being judged. But that still didn't make sense to me, because judging art often determines what makes it into galleries and the literary canon. As writers, we compete for publishers, shelf space, readers, attention, and sales, so it seemed odd to me that all of a sudden people had an issue with competition.

That aside, I saw so many positives coming from the events: new voices, young voices, marginalized voices, no gatekeepers. I doubled down, helping to co-create a national competition that became the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word, because competing with words was not something new to me.

Many cultures rooted in the oral tradition have histories that include elements of competition. While I could trace roots back to Africa, I will instead focus on this part of the world. It is important to note that there has always been a close relationship between the oral tradition and music, especially within the Black community. One can look at the connection between jazz and the era of Langston Hughes; funk and Gil Scott-Heron; reggae and dub poetry; and hip hop and spoken word. All have forced us to expand our definitions of the oral tradition.

I saw so many positives coming from the events: new voices, young voices, marginalized voices, no gatekeepers. Many cultures rooted in the oral tradition have histories that include elements of competition.

Extempo

Coming out of slavery, the tradition of extempo was born. Originally, stories about living conditions would take centre stage. As the tradition developed, performers would speak rhythmically on a particular theme, usually politics or social commentary. The goal was to win over their audience through wit and ingenuity, often even incorporating their competitors into their performance for extra points from the audience. The tradition of extempo continues today, from Trinidad to Toronto, as a part of Carnival celebrations.

Dub to Dancehall

A bit north of Trinidad, in Jamaica, reggae artists were releasing their songs on vinyl records, with the instrumental on the flip side. This instrumental was called the dub. People would play the dub and start making their own lyrics to go with it. This is the tradition that gave birth to dub poetry and the likes of Mutabaruka, Lillian Allen, d'bi young, and many more internationally.

The '70s saw a new sound emerge from the slums; by the '80s, dancehall, the precursor to hip hop, was a major force in Jamaica. The DJs who would play reggae at parties were known as toasters. The toaster would make up a story to put the song they were about to play into context. Toasters would try to win over the crowd with their wit and storytelling. Soon, these stories were brought to the studio and recorded, giving rise to dancehall artists — the storytellers of the people.

As dancehall evolved, these storytellers, often from different parts of the country, would compete with one another to win over the Jamaican public. Festivals like Reggae Sunsplash would pit artists against each other, and patrons from around the world would flock to Jamaica to witness the verbal warfare.

Hip Hop

The tradition of sharing lyrics over a beat the way the toasters did gave birth to Hip Hop in New York City. DJ Kool Herc started rhyming to get a crowd excited, and this simple act

grew into what we now understand as hip hop.

With hip hop came the cypher. In cities across the world, young people could be found huddled in groups, taking turns sharing their rhymes, often making them up on the spot. These cyphers gave birth to freestyle battles — where participants would go back and forth in a competition against another artist, each trying to win over the rest of the audience with clever word play, their ability to infuse their current environment into their stories, and their bravado.

These freestyle battles continue today and have a huge niche following.

The Dozens

Closely related to freestyle battles are the dozens. Some may be familiar with "Yo' Mama" jokes, which come from the tradition of the dozens. The dozens are a comedic battle of wits where two people compete with each other using one-liners and jokes until one taps out. The dozens are always played in front of an audience who egg on both participants. Today, this tradition is known to some as roast battles.

In the Black community, words, creativity, storytelling, music, and competition have always gone hand in hand and complemented one another. Knowing this, poetry slams were a no-brainer. Just like the traditions before them, I knew that they would resonate with audiences, and force artists to focus more on the work that they were bringing to the stage.

That being said, sure, poetry slams have their flaws, but I have always believed they are outweighed by the positives. Since the first slam I produced, I've put over \$20,000 into the pockets of other artists who've embraced the war of words.

Dwayne Morgan is a two-time Canadian National Poetry Slam champion, with fourteen collections of poetry and nine albums to his credit. He has also performed in eighteen countries around the world. Morgan is an inductee to the Scarborough Walk of Fame and has performed for dignitaries including former President of the United States Barack Obama.



The Reburying of Canadian Literature: The Writer and the Public Library

BY DAVID NEIL LEE

As a writer, is the public library your friend?

In a video that's been making the rounds lately, the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks about what books meant to her when she was growing up in Nigeria.

"What I read were British and American children's books. And when I began to write... I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading. All my characters were white and blue-eyed. They played in the snow. They ate apples... Because all I had read were books in which characters were foreign, I had become convinced that books, by their very nature, had to have foreigners in them, and had to be about things with which I could not personally identify."

The young Adichie soon made a life-changing discovery: There were such things as books by Nigerians and other Africans, although, "There weren't many of them available. And they weren't quite as easy to find as the foreign books."

"They weren't quite as easy to find as the foreign books." This is an old story to Canadian writers.

As Roy MacSkimming has written, the environment for

English Canadian writing and publishing has traditionally been dominated by two factors: a common language ("there is no such language as Canadian") and by our open borders. For decades, the shelves of Canadian bookstores were dominated by American and English titles, with Canadian work included as an after-thought. In 1972, Beth Appeldoorn and Susan Sandler opened Longhouse Books in Toronto. It sold only Canadian titles. In a 1995 interview, they told *The Globe and Mail* that in most bookstores, "There were Canadian books around, but they weren't given the emphasis they deserved... That little Canadiana section was insulting."

Over the last half-century, there have been hard-won advances to help Canadian writing survive the tsunami of heavily-funded, better-promoted competition, mostly from the U.S., that floods our shores on a daily basis. But it turns out that with the many challenges facing publishing in recent years, it's time for us to return to the struggle to preserve and promote Canadian work. If we do this, we have to start taking stock of our weak points.

Were my local library in danger, I'd sure go to bat for it. But increasingly, we're not getting the same love coming back at us.

One of these weak points, it turns out, is our public libraries. Uh-oh. I know I'm getting onto dangerous ground. All writers are of course readers, and they love their local public library. So do I. Were my local library in danger, I'd sure go to bat for it. But increasingly, we're not getting the same love coming back at us.

Last summer, Hamilton publisher Wolsak & Wynn published my YA novel *The Medusa Deep*. Noelle Allen and her staff are experienced professionals, so *Medusa* got about as good a launch into the world as a small-press book can get in this place and time and in these unique pandemic circumstances. *Medusa* has a Hamilton setting and characters; it's the sequel to 2015's *The Midnight Games*, which won the Hamilton Literary Awards' Kerry Schooley prize for the book that "best conveys the spirit of Hamilton." I also got interviews on local TV and a full page in the *Hamilton Spectator*; but after a couple of months, I couldn't help but notice that *The Medusa Deep* still wasn't in the Hamilton Public Library collection.

Why not? The library catalogue, of course, is online. I could see that the new Stephen King had forty or so copies on order and the same for the new John Sandford. That's to be expected. Those are big, bestselling authors. But why no copies of my book?

I got in touch with the librarian in charge of collections to find out what was happening. It turns out that many library staff, being city employees, had been seconded to other jobs when library branches were closed to the public at the pandemic's height. This had put them behind on their ordering.

I'm happy to sympathize. As noted above, I am one of those library-loving writers. If library staff are stretched thin because of the pandemic, they have my full support.

But do I have theirs? The next thing the collections librarian told me was that even if the library stops ordering books from Canadian independent presses, they *automatically* keep getting in books from the New York Times Best Sellers list. In other words,

as a Canadian writer trying to get his work to readers (and building a writing career in Canada often feels like a job where you're forever stuck in an entry-level position), I'm being asked to forego library sales during the pandemic, but the library makes sure that James Patterson and Nora Roberts still get their money. In fact, since I'm a Hamilton city taxpayer, they get my money.

There aren't actually many systems set up to benefit people who write books, but I assumed that the public library system was one of them, and it was a shock to me to find out that when things got tough, it would cut out local writers without a qualm. How to respond to this? I felt I should ask a few people who know more about Canadian publishing than I do.

First on my list was Howard White, who runs two independent publishing houses — Harbour Publishing, which he founded with Mary White in 1974, and Douglas & McIntyre. As someone who has dedicated his career to Canadian books, White calls public libraries "holdouts of the kind of colonial thinking that believes the only truly important books come from London or New York." While small-press sales reps hustle to get a copy or two of their latest titles into the largest public libraries, skids full of the latest American releases arrive on their loading docks and, as in so much of our cultural life, the more we allow the big multinational players to move in, the more Canadian players get pushed out. "At one time," White points out, "independent Canadian publishers had 25 percent of the book market; now it's more like five percent."

I realized that Canadian independent publishers were having a harder and harder time — and that COVID, with the wet blanket it's thrown over in-person launches, signings, readings, and sales visits, had been a big factor in this. But I had thought that in these precarious times public libraries might offer some kind of consistent support. It turns out that's not the case, and hasn't been for some years. Having talked to White on the west coast, I phoned Halifax to talk to James Lorimer, who has been a major

player in Canadian publishing for decades. Now he runs More Canada, a think tank dedicated to “increasing Canadians’ awareness and reading of Canadian books.”

“Libraries do want to emphasize Canadian work,” Lorimer tells me. In fact, he points out, for years most public libraries, when they did their own ordering, went out of their way to make sure Canadian books and authors were featured. Over time, however, “following the dictates of modern management, more services were contracted out.” Libraries increasingly depend on a small number of wholesalers to supply them with books. These wholesalers in turn, rely on ordering software that was designed in the U.S. Using this software, Lorimer points out, “There is no tag that says a book is Canadian. Libraries do want to emphasize Canadian books, but they use systems that create invisibility.”

Invisibility. Here I am writing and publishing books in Canada, but, like the Nigerian writers who young Chimamanda Adichie didn’t read because she didn’t know they existed, my work is often invisible in my native land — because I trust certain people and institutions to support Canadian cultural work, and those people and institutions are letting me down.

“If you take out human oversight, you end up with bad collections,” Noelle Allen says.

Outsourcing of ordering to commercial wholesalers, dependence on software designed for another country, the indifference of library management — the thing is, all this can be changed. Julie Fairweather at Canadian Heritage points out that in Quebec, bookstores are required to stock a certain amount of Canadian

content, and, in turn, libraries are required to order from bookstores instead of depending on wholesalers who are basically doing sell-through for the multinationals.

“These are the structural things that are killing Canadian writing,” White says, and although I’d like to think he’s exaggerating, he’s not.

Since I first contacted the Hamilton Public Library, not much has changed, although I’m glad to say they finally ordered my YA novel. The book is set in Hamilton in order to help young Hamilton readers envision fantastic events and revelations on their own turf, and not in an imagined New York, California, or England, so that these readers can see their own culture and place as central. The library has finally ordered, for its twenty-four branches, two copies. At the same time, they’ve brought in fifty-two copies of the new Matthew McConaughey memoir, so the inroad I’ve made is small. But I really think that Canadian writers, and their indie publishers, have to start making noise and making themselves known to their local public libraries.

If we make enough noise, they will have to look. And if they look, we will stop being invisible.

David Neil Lee has written books on Canadian jazz pianist Paul Bley, the American saxophonist Ornette Coleman, and the history of the chainsaw. He has also written the novels Commander Zero, The Midnight Games, and The Medusa Deep. He lives in Hamilton, Ontario. davidneillee.com



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Dispatches

NOTES ON THE WRITING LIFE

CRAFT /

Walking for Words

BY JOHN CORCELLI



Writing poetry during a pandemic ... even though I'm not a poet and usually write non-fiction long-form works.

In March 2020, my employer sent me home with a laptop under my arm. I had to set up my “working-from-home” office. For years I was accustomed to being in a separate building 40 hours a week. My work-life balance was steady, with work and life clearly distinguished from each other. Then the pandemic and the order from my boss threw my life out of sync. “You can’t have a work-life balance if it all takes place in the same location!” exclaimed my friend Dan. I laughed at his conclusion. My employer had hijacked the one place where I could dream and think and write: home.

With a lockdown in Toronto, my new schedule soon troubled me. My boss, to try and normalize the process, had me working the same hours at home as I did at the office. I thought if I could get out every day to clear my head and get some exercise, maybe I could cope. So, I booked a daily excursion.

Walking through the empty downtown core helped me shed the doldrums of working from home. I felt present and open to my environment, soaking up the sunshine, breathing in the fresh air. It’s remarkable how a brisk jaunt can get your creative juices flowing. It worked for Beethoven, whose Symphony No. 6 was based on his regular walks through the woods. Although I didn’t find the same majesty in the concrete forest, as the days passed, writing poetry seemed like a way out. The kicker? I’m not a poet. I write long-form non-fiction works.

Poets are my heroes. They write, polish, and fashion their words with care. For me, long-form writing wouldn’t suit the occasion. I needed to express my feelings precisely like my favourite poets. So, I decided to give writing poetry a try.

It beat working.

I kept it simple in my first attempt. I wrote unfiltered and without judgment. I paid no attention to form or rhyme or meter. After all, I’m not a poet, so why would I follow any rules? My daily walks helped. The phrases kept coming, giving me a sense of order in a disorderly world. I called it, “COVID-19: a minimalist rant,” and put it in a folder named “Words 2020.”

I felt good writing down the thoughts I had after walking the

streets of Toronto for several months — a city still cold from a long winter of discontent. It calmed my anxiety and built my confidence. I even had a poetry expert look at a much-revised version. I blushed when she wrote, “You have a strong, confident voice.”

I found the work-life balance. As George Carlin once said, “Words are all we have.”

COVID-19: a minimalist rant

is it Sunday?

feels like yesterday: life as barren as the northern wilderness on a good day
oh, how moderne

walking through the park I see

McCartney's lonely people
dog walkers and families of three, socially cohesive

then empty parking lots

abandoned construction sites
shuttered cathedrals

but the birds are singing, flying, cavorting
the sky is high, and the unworried wind is brisk

but i worry about the poor who are friendless
fearing the deserted streets desperate to get out of ghost town

a ghost looked ME straight in the eyes: “do you have a dollar? I only need
one more for a bus ticket to Timmins”
“sure”, I quietly said and wished him “good luck”

two metres equal six feet

a mask covers your face but not your inner-city blues

keep your distance.

John Corcelli lives in Toronto. His first book was about Frank Zappa. He's currently working on a biography of George Carlin for Rowman & Littlefield. Copyright in the poem above: 2020 John Corcelli

News

THE LATEST ON WRITING AND PUBLISHING
IN CANADA AND BEYOND

PUBLISHING AND BOOKSELLING

Canadian Independent Bookseller Day Set for April 30, 2022

The Canadian Independent Booksellers Association (CIBA) is preparing to celebrate its second annual Canadian Independent Bookseller Day (CIBD). Held on Saturday, April 30, the event is a celebration of the many fabulous independently owned bookstores in Canadian communities and will feature a “Contest for Book Lovers.” Each book purchased at an indie on that day will generate an entry into a draw for valuable independent bookstore gift cards. Books by Canadian authors or illustrators will generate two entries. You can find more information about CIBD promotions on the CIBA website (cibabooks.ca).

Pandemic Driving Growth in Canadian Printing Sector

Marquis Book Printing has taken on the pandemic challenge to the book supply chain, accelerating a plan to invest \$30 million in automation and expansion. The company has plants in Montmagny and Louiseville, Quebec, and an operation in Toronto. According to a report in *Quill & Quire*, Marquis aims to become a preferred supplier for North American publishers, making a repeat of last year's offshore printing and shipping debacle unlikely. The plan will see print capacity for softcover books double across their operation, while hardcover output will triple. And while automation will be strategically expanded, vastly increased workload at Marquis plants mean staff reduction is not part of the plan.

Focused Funding and Programming Continues in Response to Pandemic Upheaval

The Writers' Trust of Canada is continuing

its Amplified Voices program into 2022, providing promotional support to twenty-five recent titles selected by a panel of industry experts. The program is open to Canadian writers who identify as BIPOC or racialized with books published between March 2020 and August 2021. Amplified Voices is meant to give an extra push to BIPOC authors whose books may have suffered from ongoing pandemic disruptions. Meanwhile, The Writers' Union of Canada announced a second round of the Mentorship Microgrants program, in which authors are given \$500 to either hire a mentor for 10 hours of consultation or be a mentor to another writer on the same terms. Mentorship Microgrants is designed to help authors move projects closer to publication during the pandemic. Feedback from the first round, held in early 2021, has been extremely positive. These two programs came into being shortly after the Canadian Writers' Emergency Fund, a joint effort between the Trust and the Union, completed its last round of emergency funding.

INTERNATIONAL

Australia Introduces Copyright Reform Legislation

The Australian Society of Authors is carefully analyzing recent proposed changes to Australia's copyright regime. As with Canada's amendments in 2012, the Australian government has declared the law needs reform to make it more relevant to the digital age. Unlike Canada's reforms, the Australian proposal seems to provide protection to existing rights for authors and publishers while tweaking the law to provide clarity for digital practices. For instance, new educational provisions appear to be limited to providing the same rights in remote learning environments as are already found in physical classrooms.

No new permission for unlicensed copying appears to have been introduced, and, in fact, Australia's collective licensing regime is given special mention in the proposed legislation, providing assurance that licences must be respected.

New York Governor Protects Authors' Rights

In late December 2021, New York Governor Kathy Hochul vetoed a bill at the state legislature designed to shift important digital rights from authors to libraries. Bill 5837-B, the library e-book licensing bill, would have forced authors and publishers to grant licences for e-lending on unilaterally defined terms. Opposition to the bill was mobilized by the Authors Guild, the Association of American Publishers, the Copyright Alliance, and the New York News Publishers Association. While recognizing that the lending terms suggested in the bill may appear reasonable, Gov. Hochul concluded the entire enterprise defied U.S. copyright law, which grants exclusive rights to authors. In her veto document, Gov. Hochul wrote, “Federal law would allow the author, and only the author, to determine to whom they wish to share their work and on what terms.”

Strong Book Piracy Laws Pushed in Europe

In late January 2022, members of the European Parliament (EP) voted in favour of the EU's Digital Services Act's (DSA) regulatory framework — new laws designed to better regulate giant internet companies, and make them more responsible to the markets in which they operate. European publisher and author organizations are lobbying hard to make sure effective anti-piracy provisions are part of that legislative package. The Federation of European Publishers released a statement pushing the EP to

strengthen its wording around digital piracy, saying “the Parliament decided ultimately to limit the potential of the DSA by not adopting amendments that would have given it real teeth against illegal content.” The statement notes that publishing sector workers “need effective rules to ensure that their content can be protected, as well as clear and strong obligations on online services to ensure that they do not let illegal content fester on their services. Europe had the opportunity to lead the world by example, as it has done in the past in other digital policies.” The Digital Services Act now moves to the EP’s trilogue process, where further

amendments may be suggested.

FUNDING

Creative Nonfiction Collective Pushes for Funding Assurance from Canada Council

In a blog post on the Creative Nonfiction Collective site (creativenonfictioncollective.ca/blog), CFNC Vice-Chair (and former TWUC Chair) Christopher Moore examines persistent rumours that the Canada Council for the Arts is phasing out funding for nonfiction writing and

publishing. Moore speaks with several industry professionals and digs deep into the Canada Council’s “glossary of terms” to get the official word, which as of November 2021 is as follows: “The Canada Council for the Arts supports creative writing in all of its genres and forms. Literary nonfiction is one of the genres supported by the Council, with no restrictions on subject matter. All literary works are evaluated based on their artistic merit.” Moore concludes his piece with an important call to writers serving as Canada Council jurors to aggressively insist on an expansive interpretation of the Council’s assurances about nonfiction.

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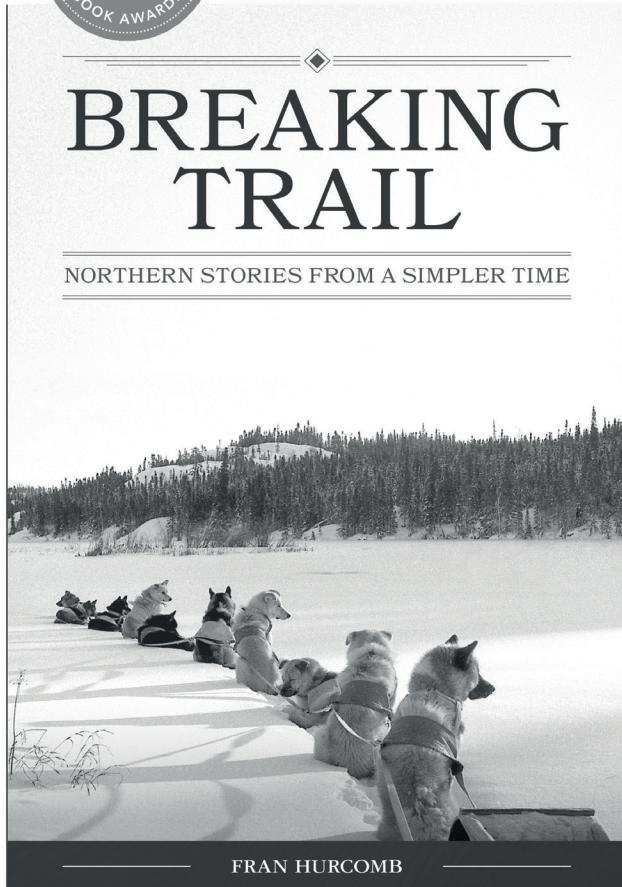
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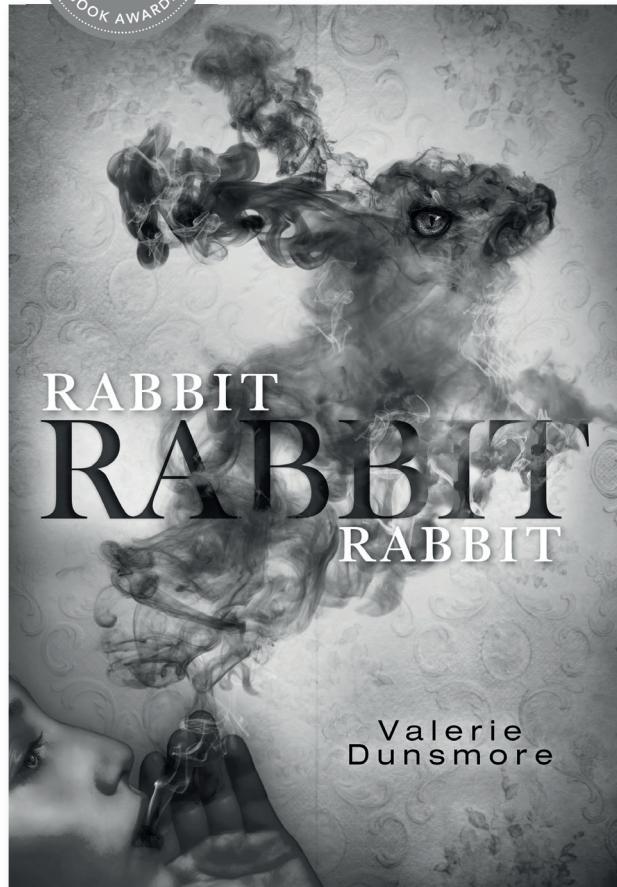
Non-fiction Winner
FRAN HURCOMB



"This collection of short stories was a delight to read and revealed the flow of a natural storyteller."
"Funny in parts, sometimes charming, often astonishing . . ." WIBA JUDGES
franhurcombphotography.wordpress.com



Fiction Winner
VALERIE DUNSMORE



"Dunsmore has threaded magic into the ordinary world and created an extraordinary story woven out of a tragic cloth."
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valeriedunsmore.com

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independentbookawards.ca

Member News & Awards

Announcements

Nancy Chislett is releasing *Bombing the Moon* (Now or Never Publishing) on April 15, 2022. The book launch will be held on April 22, 2022, at 7 p.m. at McNally Robinson Booksellers on Grant Avenue in Winnipeg. For more information, visit nancychislett.com.

Stephen Dale's fifth book of nonfiction, *Shift Change: Scenes from a Post-Industrial Revolution*, was published by Between the Lines publishing in October 2021. *Shift Change* examines the changing face of Hamilton, Ontario, as it redefines itself in a post-Steeltown era, asking whether the city must inevitably succumb to brutal patterns of gentrification and dislocation seen elsewhere or whether its egalitarian history can help it chart a different course. "The Hammer" is a battleground, a laboratory, a chessboard — and a place with a future that's not yet defined. <https://btlnbooks.com/book/shift-change>

Marvyne Jenoff is pleased to announce the publication of two poems. "Late Afternoon, My Place," has appeared in *Love*, Volume 4 of the 12-volume Lifespan Series planned by Pure Slush Press, Adelaide, Australia. Released in late October 2021, this 482-page volume includes poetry and prose by writers across the English-speaking world (pureslush.com). See Marvyne's poem at www.marvynjenoff.org/writing. "We, as Poetic Device" has been accepted by Poetry Present for online publication on December 25, 2021. A joyful poem on a festive day. It will be archived, as is "From Southern Ontario: A Sea Tale" published there in 2020, at www.sunshineinajar.com/poetry-present-a-weekly-email-publication.

A J B (Jay) Johnston and Jesse Francis have a new book out: *Ancient Land, New Land: Skmaqn—Port-la-Joye—Fort Amherst National Historic Site of Canada*. It's published by Acorn Press, beautifully designed by Stéphane Breton, and offers insights into the history of the Island's Mi'kmaq, Acadian, and French colonial history and the early stages of the British colonial era on what became Prince Edward Island. An earlier book by Johnston and Francis was *Ni'n na L'nu: The Mi'kmaq of Prince Edward Island*, which won three awards, including best Atlantic-published book.

Professor Lubomyr Luciuk's latest book, *Operation Payback: Soviet Disinformation and Alleged Nazi War Criminals in North America*, was published by Kashtan Press in December 2021. Based on a recently declassified KGB document, the book exposes how Soviet operatives planted "fake news" stories in North American newspapers in order to provoke discord between the Jewish and Ukrainian diasporas. Included are a collection of Luciuk's published op-eds on the debate about alleged Nazi and Soviet

war criminals in North America and a selection of documents demonstrating how official inquiries into this matter just after the war, and more recently, all concluded that claims made about "thousands" of Nazis hiding in Canada and the U.S. had been "grossly exaggerated."

Stephens Gerard Malone released *The History of Rain* (Nimbus Publishing) on October 18, 2021.

Harry Posner has released *Malware: A Novella Trilogy* (Shaw's Creek), which includes the novellas *Malware*, *Dux Dispar*, and *Here is Betty*. ("A furious brilliant spew of words" ... "A marvelling maverick of meddling madness"). Available at Booklore in Orangeville or directly from the author at harryposner@rogers.com. He is also featured in *Spike: Poems in the Time of Pestilence* (Cannons Creek Poetry Press), a collection of eighty poems from forty poets who live in the traditional territories of the Saugeen (northwest of Toronto). ("This collection of poetry represents both suffering and salvation on a global scale"). Available at Booklore in Orangeville, Ginger Press in Owen Sound, or direct from cannonscreek@yahoo.com.

Anne Shmelzer released *EREV: The Evening Years of Reuben Gurewitz* (Railway Creek Books Canada) on November 17, 2021.

Edward Butts has released *This Withering Disease of Conflict: A Canadian Soldier's Chronicle of the First World War*, published with support from the Guelph Historical Society. Print and ebook format available from www.guelphhistoricalsociety.ca/bookstore.

Floyd Spracklin launched his third book, *The Write Day*, at the Corner Brook, NL, Rotary Arts Centre on November 25, 2021. Floyd brings his years of teaching junior high English Language Arts, instructing Adult Basic Education with the Inuit and Innu of Northern Labrador, and the implementing of his thesis on junior high writing strategies to this present moment in time and the realization of his new and exciting project. *The Write Day* encourages writers of ages to write the family and community stories while we still can.

Awards

The Governor General's Literary Awards were presented in November 2021. Norma Dunning's *Tainna: The Unseen Ones* (Douglas & McIntyre) won the Fiction Award, for which G. A. Grisenthwaite's *Home Waltz* (Palimpsest Press) was also shortlisted; Tolu Oloruntoba's *The Junta of Happenstance* (Anstruther Books / Palimpsest Press) won the Poetry Award, for which Hoa Nguyen's *A Thousand Times You Lose Your*

Member News & Awards

Treasure (Wave Books) was also shortlisted; Sadiqa de Meijer's *alfabet/alphabet: a memoir of a first language* (Anstruther Books / Palimpsest Press) won the Non-Fiction Award, for which Ivan Coyote's *Care of Letters, Connections, and Cures* (McClelland & Stewart / Penguin Random House Canada) was also shortlisted; Philippa Dowding's *Firefly* (Dancing Cat Books / Cormorant Books) won the Young People's Literature – Text Award, for which Basil Sylvester and Kevin Sylvester's *The Fabulous Zed Watson!* (HarperCollins) and Sharon Jennings's *Unravel* (Red Deer Press) were also shortlisted; and Brittany Luby was shortlisted for the Young People's Literature – Illustrated Books Award for *Mii maanda ezhi-gkendmaanh / This Is How I Know* (Groundwood Books / House of Anansi Press).

Rachel Rose's story collection *The Octopus Has Three Hearts* (Douglas & McIntyre) was longlisted for the 2021 Scotiabank Giller Prize.

Jillian Tamaki won the 2021 Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award from the Canadian Children's Book Centre (CCBC) for *Our Little Kitchen* (Groundwoods Books). The following members were also shortlisted for the 2021 CCBC Awards: Melanie Mosher for *A Beginner's Guide to Goodbye* (Nimbus Publishing); Suzanne Del Rizzo for *Golden Threads* (Owlkids Books); Naseem Hrab for *Weekend Dad* (Groundwood Books); Tanya Lloyd Kyi for *This Is Your Brain on Stereotypes: How Science is Tackling Unconscious*

Bias (Kids Can Press); Heather Smith for *Barry Squires, Full Tilt* (Penguin Teen Canada); Kathy Kacer for *The Brushmaker's Daughter, A Holocaust Remembrance Book for Young Readers* (Second Story Press); Heather Stemp for *Under Amelia's Wing: The Ginny Ross Series, Book 2* (Nimbus Publishing); Danielle Younge-Ullman for *He Must Like You* (Penguin Teen Canada); and Anne Renaud for *Albertine Petit-Brindamour déteste les choux de Bruxelles* (Groupe d'édition la courte échelle).

The Smallest Objective (New Star Books), Sharon Kirsch's Montreal memoir, won a Vine Award for Canadian Jewish Literature (History) in December 2021.

Kate Cayley won the 2021 Ross and Davis Mitchell Prize for Faith and Poetry for her poem "Lent." Kate Marshall Flaherty was shortlisted for the same prize for "Quinn Abbey, Ireland." The 2021 Fiddlehead Creative Nonfiction Contest shortlist included Kimberly Fahner for "Spirited" and Margo LaPierre for "A Spectre in Blue."

The Writers' Trust Awards were presented in November 2021. Frances Itani won the Matt Cohen Award: In Celebration of a Writing Life. The finalists for the 2021 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction included Ken Haigh for *On Foot to Canterbury: A Son's Pilgrimage* (University of Alberta Press); Darrel J. McLeod for *Peyakow: Reclaiming Cree Dignity, A Memoir*



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Writers' Trust of Canada is proud to help promote these standout books by BIPOC authors who lost opportunities for in-person events due to lockdowns and closures.

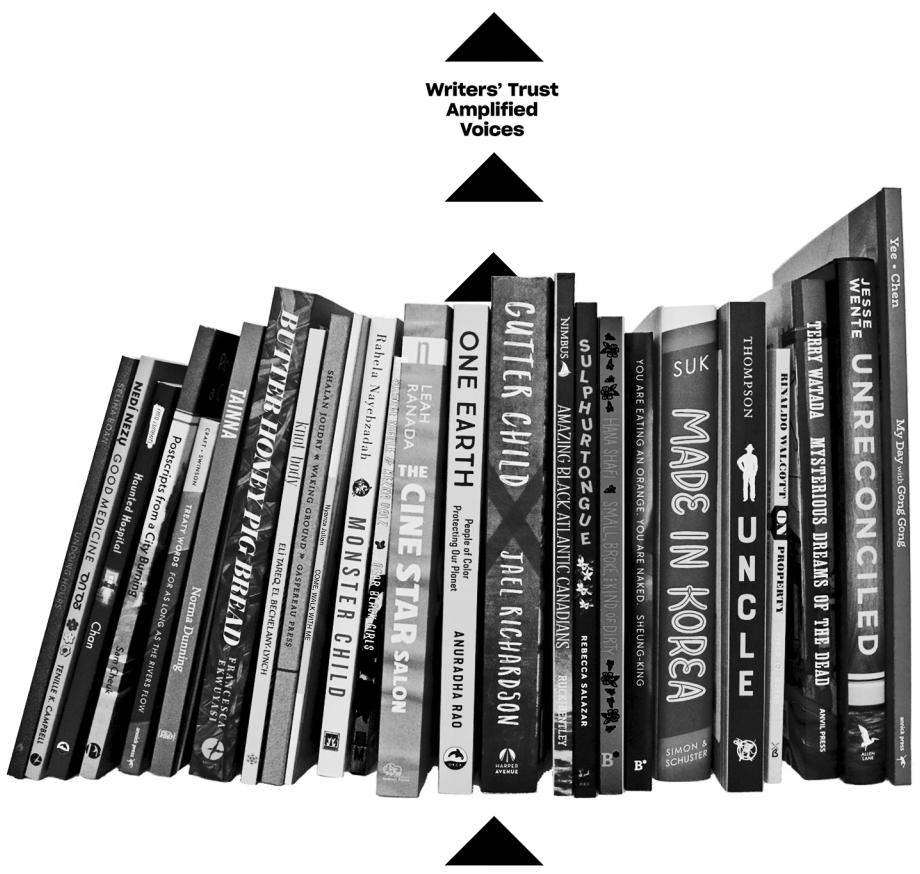
Featured writers:

Selina Boan, Tenille K. Campbell, Marty Chan, Sam Cheuk, Aimée Craft, Norma Dunning, Francesca Ekwuyasi, Eli Tareq El Bechelany-Lynch, Shalan Joudry, Nyanza Julian, Rahela Nayebzadah, Shanice Nicole, Leah Ranada, Anuradha Rao, Jael Richardson, Lindsay Ruck, Rebecca Salazar, Hana Shafi, Sheung-King, Sarah Suk, Cheryl Thompson, Rinaldo Walcott, Terry Watada, Jesse Wente, and Sennah Yee.

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(Douglas & McIntyre); and **Ian Williams** for *Disorientation: Being Black in the World* (Random House Canada).

The 2021 Canadian Jewish Literary Awards were announced in September 2021. **Gary Barwin** won in the Fiction category for *Nothing the Same Everything Haunted* (Knopf Canada), and **Lisa Richter** won in the Poetry category for *Nautilus and Bone* (Frontenac House).

The winners of the 2021 Alberta Book Publishing Awards were announced in September 2021. **Dionne Brand's** *An Autobiography of the Autobiography of Reading* (University of Alberta Press) was named Trade Non-Fiction Book of the Year, and **Lisa Richter** won the Robert Kroetsch Award for Poetry for *Nautilus and Bone* (Frontenac House).

The winners of the 2021 BC and Yukon Book Prizes were announced in September 2021. **Shaena Lambert** won the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize for *Petra* (Random House Canada); **Billy-Ray Belcourt** won the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize for *A History of My Brief Body* (Hamish Hamilton Canada/Penguin Random House Canada); and **Joanna Lilley** received the Borealis Prize: The Commissioner of Yukon Award for Literary Contribution. The recipient of the Borealis Prize is recognized as having spent significant time living and working among the writing community in Yukon and made substantial contributions to

the Yukon writing and publishing community through writing, publishing, community organizing, Indigenous writing and storytelling, or in many other ways.

Joanna Lilley received the Canadian Authors Association' 2021 Fred Kerner Book Award for *Endlings*.

The winner of the 2021 CBC Poetry Prize was *James* by **Lise Gaston**. **Basma Kavanagh's** *Bone Shadows* was longlisted for the 2021 CBC Nonfiction Prize.

Kim Echlin won the 2021 Toronto Book Awards Grand Prize for *Speak, Silence!*

Leslie Gentile was awarded the City of Victoria Children's Book Prize for *Elvis, Me, and the Lemonade Stand Summer* (Dancing Cat Books). **Briony Penn** was awarded the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize for *Following the Good River: The Life and Times of Wa'xaid* (Rocky Mountain Books).

The Quebec Writers' Federation (QWF) Literary Awards were announced in November 2021. The Judy Mappin Community Award was presented to **Richard King**, the co-founder of Paragraphe Bookstore who passed away in January, and writer **H. Nigel Thomas**, whose teaching and founding of *Kola* magazine has been transformational for Black writers in Quebec. The Janet

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Savage Blackford Prize for Children's and Young Adult Literature was awarded to **Monique Polak** for *Room for One More* (Kar-Ben Publishing). **Robyn Sarah's** *Music, Late and Soon* (Biblioasis) was shortlisted for the Mavis Gallant Prize for Non-fiction.

The nominees for the 2022 Forest of Reading were announced in October 2021. *Beep Beep Bubbie* by **Bonnie Sherr Klein**, *The Doll* by **Nhung N. Tran-Davies**, *Harley the Hero* by **Peggy Collins**, and *Malaika's Surprise* by **Nadia L. Hohn** were nominated for the Blue Spruce Award. *Elvis, Me, and the Lemonade Stand Summer* by **Leslie Gentile**, *The Fabulous Zed Watson!* by **Basil and Kevin Sylvester**, *Harvey Holds His Own* by **Colleen Nelson**, *The Language of Ghosts* by **Heather Fawcett**, *No Vacancy* by **Tziporah Cohen**, and *ParaNorthern: And the Chaos Bunny A-hop-calypse* by **Stephanie Cooke** were nominated for the Silver Birch Fiction Award. *Firefly* by **Philippa Dowding**, *The King of Jam Sandwiches* by **Eric Walters**, *Linked* by **Gordon Korman**, *Tremendous Things* by **Susin Nielsen**, and *Under Amelia's Wing (Ginny Ross #2)* by **Heather Stemp** were nominated for the Red Maple Award. *Albertine Petit-Brindamour hates Brussels sprouts* by **Anne Renaud** was nominated for Le prix Peuplier Award. *Duck Days* by **Sarah Leach**, *That's No Dino!: Or Is It? What Makes a Dinosaur a Dinosaur* by **Helaine Becker**, and *Walking for Water: How One Boy Stood Up For Gender Equality* by **Susan Hughes** were nominated for the Silver Birch Express Award. *Finding Home: The Journey of Immigrants and Refugees* by **Jen Sookfong Lee**, *This Is Your Brain on Stereotypes: How Science is Tackling Unconscious Bias* by **Tanya**

Lloyd Kyi, and *Wild Outside: Around the World with Survivorman* by **Les Stroud** were nominated for the Yellow Cedar Award.

Michelle Good won the City of Vancouver Book Award for *Five Little Indians* (HarperCollins). Shortlisted titles included **Alex Leslie's** *Vancouver for Beginners* (Book*hug Press) and **Danny Ramadan's** *Salma the Syrian Chef* (Annick Press). **Fiona Tinwei Lam** was named the City of Vancouver's Poet Laureate for 2022-2024.

Lucky by **Marissa Stapley** was chosen by Reese Witherspoon as the December 2021 pick for Reese's Book Club.

A Sky-Blue Bench, illustrated by **Peggy Collins** and published by Pajama Press, Inc., was a 2022 Schneider Family Book Award Best Young Children's Honor Book.

Joanne Levy's *Sorry for Your Loss* was a Notable Book in the Middle Grade category for the 2022 Sydney Taylor Book Awards, which are presented by the Association of Jewish Libraries.

Michelle Good's *Five Little Indians* was chosen as a contender for Canada Reads 2022.

Members may submit announcements to be included in an upcoming issue by emailing it to write@writersunion.ca.

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February 20–26, 2022

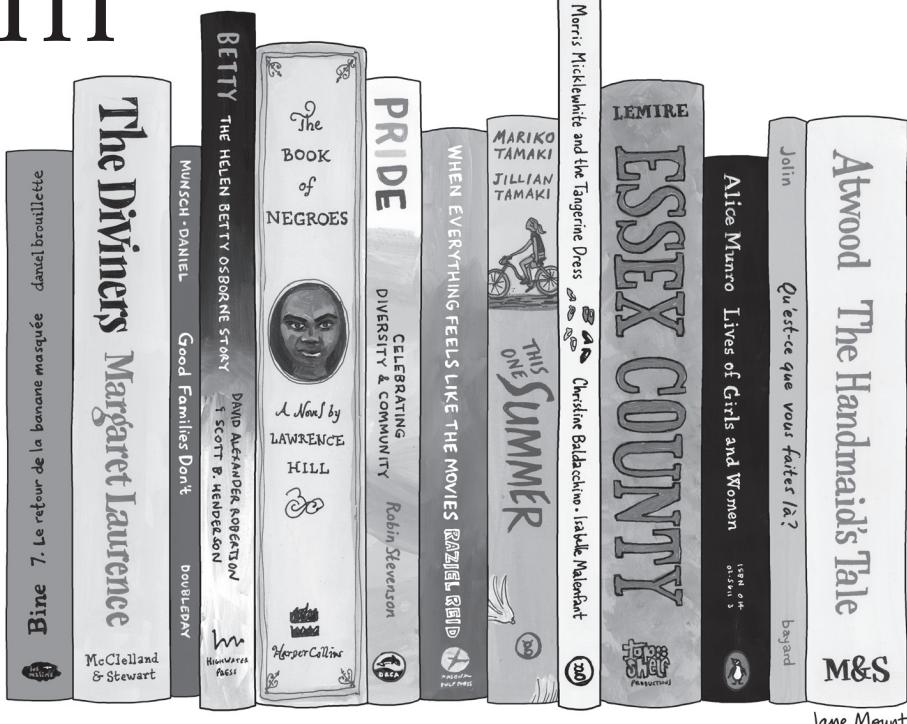
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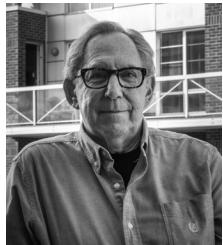


New Members

List is current as of December 14, 2021.

- Lisa Alward,** "Cocktail," 16: Best Canadian Stories, Oberon, 2017
- Christine Baldacchino,** *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress*, Groundwood Books, 2014.
- Tanya Bellehumeur-Allatt,** *Peacekeeper's Daughter: A Middle East Memoir*, Thistledown Press, 2021.
- Tina Biello,** *Playing Into Silence*, Caitlin Press, 2018.
- Elizabeth Blanchard,** "The Running of the Hounds," *The Antigonish Review*, Winter 2021.
- Ross Breithaupt,** "Midland," *Porcupine's Quill*, 2021.
- Kristy Campbell,** *The Power of Connection*, RapidoBooks, 2021.
- Curtis Carmichael,** *Butterflies in the Trenches: The Hood, an Epic Bike Ride, and Finding Inspiration*, Synergy Books, 2021.
- Leonarda Carranza,** *Abuelita and Me*, Annick Press, 2022 (forthcoming).
- Genevieve A. Chornenki,** *Don't Lose Sight*, Iguana Books, 2021.
- Theodore Christou,** *Progressive Education: Revisioning and Reframing Ontario's Public Schools, 1919-1942*, University of Toronto Press, 2012.
- Tziporah Cohen,** *No Vacancy*, Groundwood Books, 2020.
- Megan Cole,** "Symbiosis," *Untethered Magazine*, Autumn 2020.
- Peggy Collins,** *Harley the Hero*, Pajama Press, 2021.
- Habiba Cooper Diallo,** *#BlackInSchool*, University of Regina Press, 2021.
- Christina Crook,** *Good Burdens*, Nimbus, 2021.
- Jasveer Singh Dangi,** *Ensemble - A collection of short stories & essays*, Ukiyoto Publishing, 2021.
- Michael Devillaer,** *Buzz Kill: The Corporatization of Cannabis*, Douglas & McIntyre, 2022 (forthcoming).
- Douglas Diaczuk,** *Chalk*, Anvil Press, 2016.
- Em Dial,** "triracial triptych," *Sonora Review*, September 2020.
- Ceilidh Michelle,** *Vagabond*, Douglas & McIntyre, 2021.
- Jessica Dunkin,** *Canoe and Canvas: Life at the Encampments of the American Canoe Association, 1880-1910*, University of Toronto Press, 2019.
- Shauna Paull,** *roughened in undercurrent*, Leaf Press, 2008.
- Sharon Frayne,** *The Sound of a Rainbow*, Latitude 46 Publishing, 2023 (forthcoming).
- Matthew Fries,** *The Sick Box*, Czykmate Productions, 2021.
- Lise Gaston,** *Cityscapes in Mating Season*, Signature Editions, 2017.
- W. L. Hawkin,** *To Kill a King: A Hollystone Mystery Book 4*, Blue Haven Press, 2021.
- T.J.S. Hayes,** *The Bastard of Colonial Volume One of The Song of the Franks*, FJI Press, 2021.
- Kevin Andrew Heslop,** *the correct fury of your why is a mountain*, Gordon Hill Press, 2021.
- KPH,** *For Those I Have Loves*, HARP Publishing: The People's Press, 2020.
- Michael G. Hobson,** *A Walking Parody*, Authorhouse, 2006.
- Shahanaz Hoque (Nipu),** *I Feel Time's Tide*, Friesen Press, 2017.
- J. Ivanel Johnson,** *Just A STILL LIFE*, BlackRose, September 2022 (forthcoming)
- Tamara Jong,** "Are You There, God? It's Me, Talking to Mary Karr," *Body & Soul: Stories for Skeptics and Seekers*, Caitlin Press, 2019.
- Kurt Kirchmeier,** *The Absence of Sparrows*, Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2019.
- Laurie Lam,** "While You Wait," *Made in Manitoba: 22 Great Canadian Short Stories*, Turnstone Press, 1990.
- Jessica Leeder,** "One Doctor's Fight to Provide Abortion Care in New Brunswick," *The Walrus*, Sept/Oct. 2021.
- Colleen van Niekerk,** *A Conspiracy of Mothers*, Little A, 2021.
- Geoff Mann,** *In the Long Run We Are All Dead: Keynesianism, Political Economy & Revolution*, Verso Books, 2017.
- Jim McDonald,** *Smash Palace*, Amalit Books, 2018.
- Nicole Delay,** *My Wondrous World of Kindergarten*, Maracle Press, 2017.
- Premee Mohamed,** *Beneath the Rising*, Solaris, 2020.
- Silvia Moreno-Garcia,** *Mexican Gothic*, Penguin Random House, 2020.
- Roslyn Muir,** *The Chimera's Apprentice*, Rainscape Media Inc., 2020.
- Cassandra Rachel Myers,** *Smash the Headlights*, Write Bloody North, 2022 (forthcoming).
- Sofi Papamarko,** *Radium Girl*, Wolsak & Wynn/Buckrider Books, 2021.
- Jamila Pomeroy,** "The Heart of the Canadian Rockies: the Art of Banff," BBC, 2018.
- Anna Quon,** *Migration Songs*, Invisible Publishing, 2009.
- Marilyn Reaume,** *The Village Christmas*, Impressive Printing, 2021.
- Anna Rosner,** *Journeyman: The Story of NHL Right Winger Jamie Leach*, Great Plains Publications, 2020.
- Janet Coulter Sanford,** *Memories on the Bounty*, Nimbus Publishing, 2021.
- Ellie Sawatzky,** *None of This Belongs to Me*, Nightwood Editions, 2021.
- Dale Martin Smith,** *Flying Red Horse*, Talonbooks, 2021.
- Nicole Leona Smith,** "Something Really Unbelievable," *The New Quarterly*, Fall 2021.
- Jo Sorochinsky,** *Dancing with My Father*, Amsterdam Publishers, 2021.
- Diana Stevan,** *Lilacs in the Dust Bowl*, Peregrin Publishing/Island Blue Print Co., 2021.
- Mark Stobbe,** *The "Mr. Big" Sting: The Cases, the Killers, the Controversial Confessions*, ECW Press, 2021.
- Mira T. Sundara Rajan,** *Collected English Writings by C. Subramania Bharati*, edited and with an Introduction and Notes by Mira T. Sundara Rajan, Penguin India, 2021 (forthcoming in Canada).
- Iris Wilde,** "Zoom," *Voices*, University of Gloucestershire, 2021.
- Anna Yin,** *Seven Nights with the Chinese Zodiac*, Black Moss Press, 2015.
- Felicia Zuniga,** "Hospital garden project feeds both body and mind," *Calgary Herald*, August 2021.

In Memoriam



Richard King

BY ELISE MOSER

1945–2022

“Don’t tell me you love books,” Richard used to say to job applicants. “Tell me you love moving heavy boxes.”

Richard did love books. As a student, he would carefully save 50 cents every week for his one indulgence: a paperback mystery novel, which he would read in one sitting. Decades later, after a career that helped shape the cultural scene in Montreal and bookselling across Canada, he would write mystery novels of his own. His growing audience was eagerly awaiting the third book in his series featuring nurse Annie Linton and Montreal police officer Gilles Bellechasse (*Serving Life*, to appear in April 2022), when he died at the age of 76.

With two history degrees under his belt, Richard found his career niche at Classics Bookshops. There he met fellow Classics manager Jonathan Penney, and together they launched Paragraphe Bookstore and Café in downtown Montreal. Bookstore-cafés, now a cliché, didn’t exist at the time (if there was one somewhere, they didn’t know about it), and the café immediately became a hangout for caffeine-seeking academics, creative types, and book lovers.

It wasn’t Richard’s only innovation. Paragraphe was one of the first bookstores in North America to use electronic ordering, was an early adopter of computerized point-of-sale systems, and also adopted a no-smoking rule before it became law. Richard, who was active in the Canadian Booksellers’ Association (CBA), borrowed the author breakfast concept from CBA conventions, where it was a professional development activity, and transformed it into Books & Breakfast, selling stacks of books to the general public.

Paragraphe was a meeting place for Montreal writers and book lovers, as well as the occasional celebrity. Michael Jackson popped in to buy some books on theatre craft. Pierre Trudeau and René Lévesque borrowed Paragraphe for a photo op before going next door to the University Club for an event; an exception was made to the no-smoking rule for the former Quebec premier, and a burn in the carpet was a souvenir of the historic meeting.

Richard was an active supporter of the community of readers, writers, and publishers. *Montreal Gazette* political cartoonist Terry

Mosher (Aislin) called him “an absolute icon.” Richard served on the board of the CBA, including as president. He was a founder of the Quebec Society for the Promotion of English-language Literature (QSPELL), one of the parent organizations of the Quebec Writers’ Federation (QWF) — now a pillar of the English-language writing community in the province. His radio book segments introduced new and established writers to listeners at a time when newspaper book pages were shrinking fast. Having sold Paragraphe, he realized a long-cherished dream to write and joined the board of TWUC as our treasurer. When he died, he was also developing a podcast profiling other writers.

Richard was a model of service. He received the QWF’s Judy Mappin Community Award last November, in recognition of his lifelong work to develop the community of readers and writers. Beyond the book scene, he spent ten years as a volunteer at Montreal’s Jewish General Hospital (JGH). This led directly to the character of nurse Annie Linton, based on real-life nurse Maggie Quinsey, and the JGH itself provided the model for the Gursky Memorial Hospital, where much of the action in his mystery series took place. For those familiar with Montreal, one of the pleasures of this series was the recognizable presence of the city, and his warm vision of its multilingual, multicultural richness.

A stint as a Paragraphe employee was a waystation for many of us who went on to become writers, editors, translators, or publishers’ sales reps. There was lots of moving of heavy boxes, but also hearty laughter, passionate book talk, and long-lasting friendships, including with Richard. His kindness, generosity, and good humour were felt wherever he went: by aspiring and established writers, in the green room at CBC, at TWUC national council meetings.

Contributions in his memory may be made to the Richard King Memorial Fund at The Jewish General Hospital Foundation <https://jghfoundation.crowdchange.co/14038/page/335467> (514) 340-8251 or to the charity of your choice.



Trysh Ashby-Rolls

BY MEGAN EDGE

1943–2021

There are so many words one could use to describe our beloved Trysh, but at the same time she defied common language. As a journalist, author, writer and poet, she used language beautifully, creatively and powerfully. She spoke the truth — hers and that of others — bringing stories of healing and hope to so many. She was the voice for so many who didn't have one of their own, hearing their stories and then sharing them as a path to healing. As a survivor, in the truest sense of the word, she understood the resilience of the human spirit and human beings.

Trysh was a force to be reckoned with in so many ways: a champion to those marginalized by abuse and a true mentor for survivors of all manner of trauma. She was working on three books at the time of her death, and two were to the point of submission to publishers. *Unbecoming a Physician* is about a criminal case she was involved in with a well-known psychiatrist in Toronto who was sexually abusing his female patients and got caught; *Burnished Gold* is about people from around the world who have survived extreme trauma from war or natural disaster, and *Left Behind Dad* is the true story of a father who's ex-wife kidnapped their two daughters and his search for them across the globe. Her published book, *Triumph: A Journey of Healing from Incest* was a bestseller. Trysh never shied away from the hard topics.

Life for Trysh was always a journey and an adventure to be

seized. She was an actress and model, a world traveller, ordained Buddhist nun, TV host, daughter, sister, mother, grandmother, and dear friend. She was a student of life, and a teacher and mentor to so many. Trysh wore many, many hats! Her smile lit up the room, her laugh was completely contagious and her love, warmth, and generosity will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

It is with love in our hearts that we say farewell, but never goodbye. She will be with each of us in ways we will recognize, and we will know she's with us when we need her most.

The keepers of her memory include her son, Tristram, and his loving partner, Jayne, (Jenevieve and Greg Stenmark), (Bobbie and Troy Stenmark, Griffin), (Adan Clark, Marlee, Hannah, Tavin and Aurelia); her sister, Rosie Burgess and family; her honorary sister, Denise; honorary daughter and granddaughters, Megan Edge, (Emily, Charlotte); and her venerable feline, Mister Gingerpants. And so many friends beyond counting, memories of Trysh will last for generations.

To them she will always be mother, sister, friend, grandmother, Great-Nana Trysh, Nana Tryshie, and Great-Great-Grandma.

The family asks friends to please consider donations to Paws on Pender (<https://www.facebook.com/PenderPAWS/>) and The Pender Island Food Bank (Barb at 250-629-6052 or Donna at 250-629-3970).



Roma Lillian Karsh

1949–2021

Roma Lillian Karsh of North York, Ontario, passed away on Wednesday, October 20, 2021, at age 72. Roma won the Canadian

Jewish Book Awards' Dorothy Schochet President's Award for Holocaust Literature in 1998 for her novel, *Endless*.



Sue Calhoun

BY VALERIE MANSOUR

1949–2021

When I met Sue Calhoun in Halifax in 1978, she told me she'd just been fired from the Halifax daily *The Chronicle Herald* — for signing a union card! The newspaper didn't admit that was the reason. After all, eleven workers had signed cards and only ten of them were sent packing. Over the next several years, I was sure not to miss the annual raucous party Sue and the others hosted to lament and to celebrate.

Sue didn't miss a beat, and soon after embarked on an enviable freelance career, writing regularly for *Maclean's*, *Canadian Geographic*, and *Atlantic Insight* magazines; creating documentaries for CBC Radio; and researching regional investigative programs at CBC Television. Later, based in Shédiac, New Brunswick, she worked on CBC Radio's morning show in Moncton. She was smart, she worked fast, and she knew a good story when she saw one.

Sue's work reflected her commitment to social justice. She won several awards, among them a 1991 Atlantic Journalism Award for best magazine/feature writing for an engrossing piece called "Death on the Farm," published in *New Maritimes*. Also recognized with an

honourable mention from the Canadian Association of Journalists, it is a devastating account of a New Brunswick farmer, an activist behind right-to-farm legislation who killed himself on the eve of losing his farm. Sue's three books are also indicative of her support of, and passion for, working people: *The Lockeport Lockout: An Untold Story in Nova Scotia's Labour History*, about a 1939 strike of fishermen and fish handlers for the right to unionize; *A Word to Say: The Story of the Maritime Fishermen's Union*; and *Ole Boy: Memoirs of Canadian Labour Leader J.K. Bell*.

Born in southern Ontario, Sue earned a B.A. from the University of Waterloo, a Diploma in Economic Development from St. Mary's University, and an M.B.A. from the Université de Moncton. She left journalism to be a fisheries consultant and then ran her own research company, where she often worked with women on community economic development projects.

Sue volunteered throughout her life, working for the last ten years to help alleviate homelessness in Moncton. She grew veggies, studied piano, hiked, and analyzed the world's problems over a glass of red wine with friends. Sue went on adventures all over the world, often with her daughter, Raphaëlle, a Moncton doctor. Becoming a grandmother made Sue so happy. Knowing she would be unable to watch Laurélie Susan and Nolan Gabriel grow up broke her heart, as pancreatic cancer took its toll. She lived with that unrelenting disease for fourteen months, keeping friends informed with online updates and following what she proudly called her new "vegan and lobster" diet. She continued to work, play with her grandchildren, and laugh with her friends. We remember her as a wise, curious, fun, and brave woman. And a damn fine writer.



Barbara Lambert

BY SHAENA LAMBERT

1935–2021

"Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs / About the liltin house and happy as the grass was green..." – Dylan Thomas

Barbara Rose Lambert died peacefully on October 1st, 2021 at the age of 86. As a fiction writer, wife, mother, grandmother, aunt and friend, Barbara was loved and admired for her delight in words, her keen observation, her subtle wit, and her wisdom.

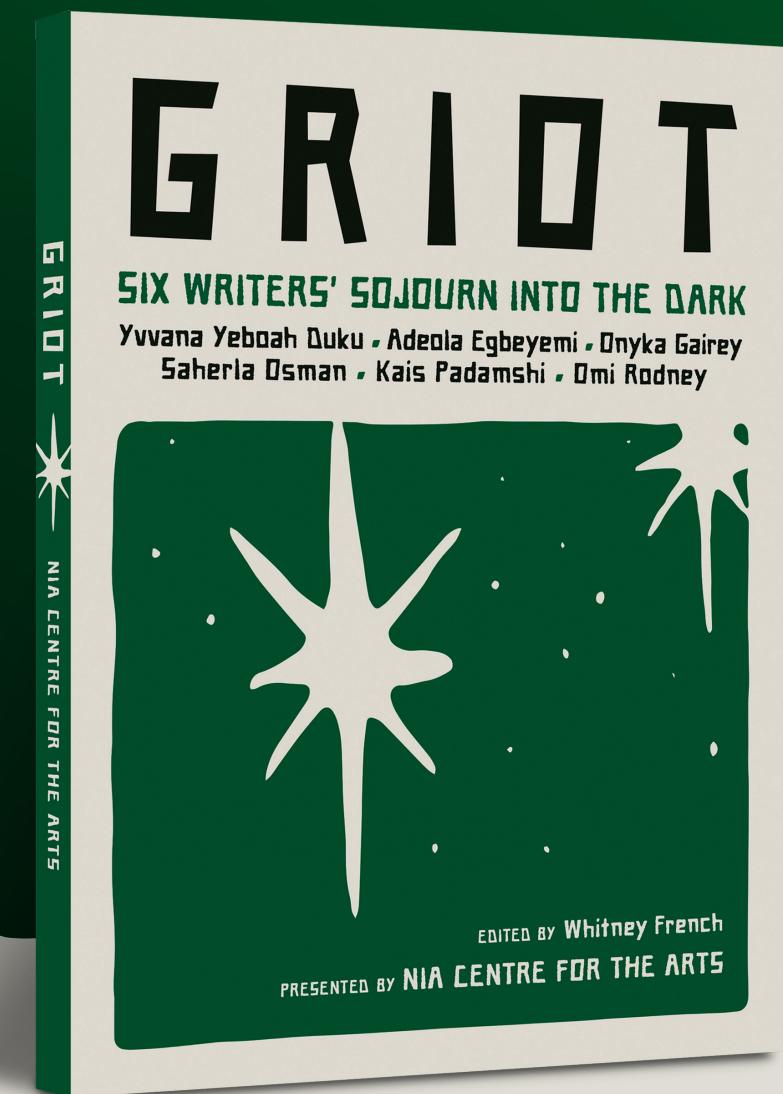
Barbara was the daughter of artists and orchardists Adolf and Louise Schwenk, who founded an artistic community near Penticton, BC, after the First World War, and whose work as potters, visual artists, and lovers of literature and myth indelibly marked her character. While attending UBC and studying creative writing, Barbara met her husband Douglas Lambert when both were acting in George Bernard Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*. They were married within a year, on New Year's Eve, 1956, and were devoted partners for 64 years, sharing their love of art, justice, home, travel and

family.

Together with Douglas, she raised three children while working as a fabric artist, founding Tree House Studio and later running a pottery gallery. She inspired her children to read, explore, and examine life's mysteries. As a young mother, she initially published some stories with John Drainie and the CBC, and later returned to writing full force after her children were grown. Inspiring and determined, Barbara would often get up at dawn, drink a strong cup of tea, and dive into her work. Early stories were published in *The Malahat Review* and *The Journey Prize Anthology*. Books followed: *The Allegra Series*; *A Message for Mr Lazarus* (winner of the Danuta Gleed Literary Award and the Malahat Review Novella Prize, and a finalist for the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize at the BC Book Prizes); *The Whirling Girl*; and the novella *Wanda* — published last year, even as she struggled with bravery and grace with cancer — which returns for inspiration to her childhood in the Okanagan Valley. Barbara will be deeply missed by her husband, Douglas Lambert, former judge of the Court of Appeal; her children James Lambert (and Alexa Echeveria-Lambert), Shaena Lambert (and Bob Penner), John Lambert (and Marie Lambert); her sister, Lorna Schwenk; her grandchildren, Andrew (and Saya), Gaby (Harneil), Peter (Alice) Lucy, Sophie, Leo, and Yann; her nieces Ginny Manning and Brenda Leir and their families; and her many friends, writing colleagues and readers of her work.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to The Writers' Union of Canada.

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