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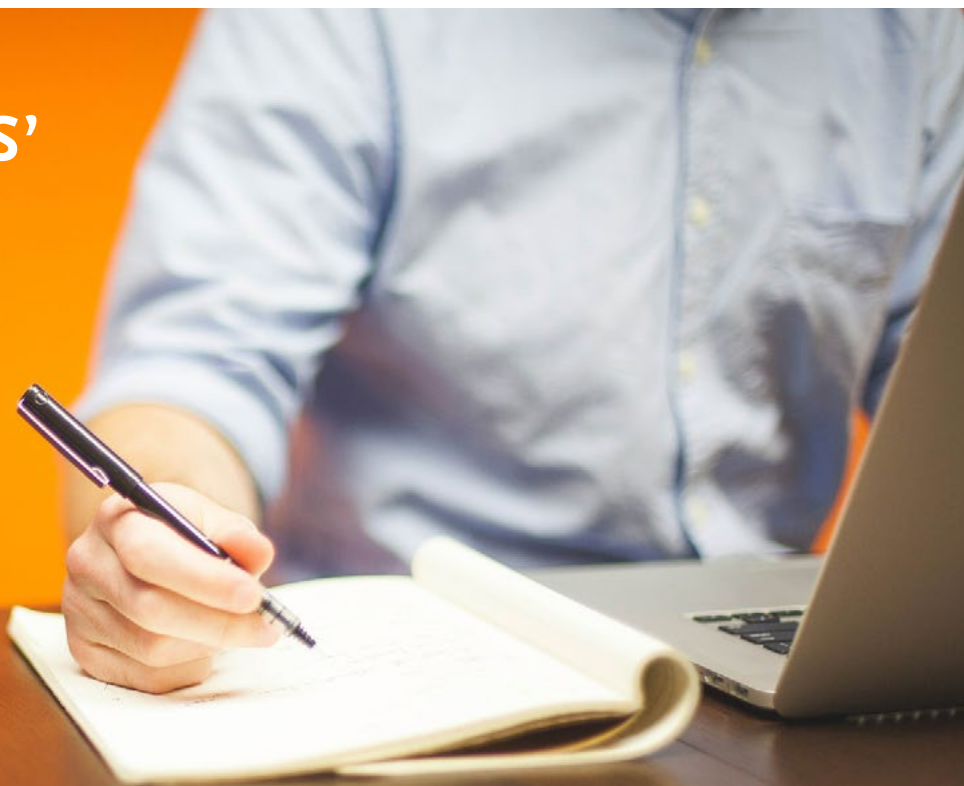


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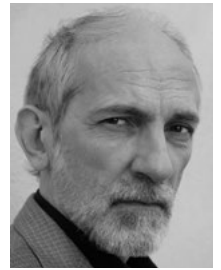
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Many of you who are now reading these words are people I've known for years — for decades, in fact. At our big Summit in June, I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with even more of you. But I'm scarcely a household name (not even in my own household, it sometimes seems). So it's perfectly sensible to assume that the majority of TWUC's 2000 members have no reason to know me from Adam. That being the case, I thought it might be helpful if I were to use this first report from the Chair to introduce myself and explain what I'm doing here.

I've been writing — hard — since 1965 and have been publishing books — pretty steadily — since 1968. Doing so hasn't enriched me materially; like so many of us, I just get by. So, while I don't have enough money to tithe for good causes, I therefore tithe with my time instead. I try never to miss a chance to sit on boards if I think I can somehow, in however small a way, be useful. Access Copyright, PEN Canada, the Arts Foundation of Greater Toronto, and the Federation of BC Writers are a few examples. Another case involves a museum. And like many of you who have lived in various parts of the country, I've had the chance to do committee work and the like in a number of locales — in my case, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and BC. I've published fifty books — fiction, poetry, history, biography, criticism — without ever having won a book prize, but I'm proud of having served on or even chaired juries that have given municipal, provincial, and national awards to many other authors.

My interest in TWUC goes back to its very beginnings. I

remember when the notion of some sort of union of writers was first being discussed by three novelists in the living room of a house on Brunswick Avenue in the Annex neighbourhood of Toronto. I was far offstage, hiding in the wings, so to speak, eavesdropping on the conversations of people older than myself: Margaret Laurence (who was twenty-three years my senior), Marian Engel (sixteen years), and Margaret Atwood (ten years). I didn't become a member of the Union until a few years had passed but I vividly remember the atmosphere of TWUC's early days, so different from what confronts us today, when our audience has fragmented and, let's admit it, people simply aren't so interested in what we do.

Yet our Union, instead of becoming tighter and narrower, as many other cultural bodies and institutions are doing, is instead opening wider, growing in physical presence and in voice. Certainly much of the news, especially where copyright and writers' incomes are concerned, is abysmally bad, and all of us must be prepared for even more developments in the publishing industry, in technology, and even in what seems to be the fuzzy new focus of the Canada Council for the Arts. Yet it's important to keep believing that some improvements may be on the not too terribly distant horizon.

I sought to become the chair of TWUC because I believe that a period of such jagged transition might benefit from having a transitional leader. One never knows, of course, but I presume that I might well be the last chair who remembers the many troubles and triumphs of the early days. The assumption is based only a little bit on the notion that such institutional memory could serve some useful purpose. Mostly it's based on the assurance that an entire new generation of young writers, ambitious ones of all backgrounds, with new solutions to old problems as well as to ones we haven't discovered yet, will stand up and take over.

I'm looking forward to working with, and for, all of you between now and our AGM in Vancouver next spring. So in a sense it's almost as though I'm saying hello and goodbye in the same letter — albeit a letter that's postdated.

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We acknowledge the support of the Ontario Arts Council (OAC), an agency of the Government of Ontario, which last year funded 1737 individual artists and 1095 organizations in 223 communities across Ontario for a total of \$52.1 million.



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Writing Rights

The Sum(mit) of Many Parts

By John Degen



We made history this past June in Toronto, when The Writers' Union of Canada combined with thirteen other writing- and reading-related groups to host the inaugural Canadian Writers' Summit (#CWS2016). By all measures, the Summit was a huge success — the crowds came, the weather cooperated, the press noticed (previews appeared in *The Globe and Mail* and *Quill & Quire*; a Summit panel, on *copyright* of all things, was featured on CBC's *The National*), and a great deal of goodwill and coalition-building was accomplished.

Two full years of cooperative planning and dreaming culminated, for me, on the evening of Wednesday, June 15 when I walked into the blinding spotlight of Harbourfront's main stage and formally welcomed all the Summit attendees to our opening event. I thanked our major funders, such as the Canada Council for the Arts, our many sponsors, and all of our guests and attendees. In terms of real numbers, that meant I was thanking close to a thousand people. TWUC members made up the largest chunk of that population, and at that I am delighted and extremely proud.

There are many memories to choose from when looking back on the Summit, but I'm sure I will never forget waiting backstage before that opening event. I had the honour of sharing a small greenroom with keynote speaker Lawrence Hill, TWUC Chair Heather Menzies, journalist and Freedom to Read Award honouree Mohamed Fahmy, author Antanas Sileika, and TWUC BC Regional Rep Carol Shaben. The six of us made polite small talk with the Harbourfront technicians and staff, all of us a bit jittery and trying to focus on our stage manner. And then, Mohamed Fahmy looked at Lawrence Hill and said, "You know, they gave me your book when I was in prison. Reading was essential in there."

No more small talk.

We've recently been asking for responses to our #WhyWritersMatter campaign. It's likely I won't hear a more powerful reason than that.

Planning for #CWS2018 has already begun, and we'll be taking all of your feedback into consideration as we move that big project

forward. Thanks to everyone who completed TWUC's post-conference survey. Of course, next spring we will be holding our own OnWords Conference and AGM in Vancouver (June 1–4, 2017 — save the date!), just for TWUC members. Stay tuned for details as they're confirmed, and please do plan to join us in Vancouver. TWUC's new chair, George Fetherling, is a long-time Vancouver resident, and he guarantees the weather will be perfect.

By the time we meet on the West Coast next year, Canada may very well have a dramatically altered landscape for cultural support. We have all heard about the Canada Council's changes to their funding system. In fact, Canada Council CEO Simon Brault attended #CWS2016 in order to explain the new model (as fully as possible at this interim stage) and to take questions from those interested. Council staff are now criss-crossing the country on the same mission, and we'll keep you informed when someone is in your area.

But changes at the Canada Council are suddenly overshadowed by an ambitious cultural policy review announced by the Department of Canadian Heritage. Declaring "Everything is on the table," Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly has the entire arts sector scrambling to be heard in a review of laws and regulations that could affect the very fabric of cultural creation in this country. Positioned as a way to bring our cultural sector fully into the digital age, the review has many in the sector worried about sweeping deregulation in the face of tech sector pressure.

With the Copyright Act, CanCon regulations, and publishing-industry foreign ownership rules as part of the "everything" on the table, you can bet The Writers' Union of Canada will be elbowing its way into this discussion. Work has already begun with our many sector partners — relationships strengthened and widened over the past two years of #CWS2016 work — on common messaging. Of course, our own communications with senior policy staff at Canadian Heritage are ongoing. There will almost certainly be opportunities for individual TWUC members to participate in sending TWUC's views to Ottawa, and we will keep you updated and informed on those strategic efforts.

News

THE LATEST ON WRITING AND PUBLISHING
IN CANADA AND BEYOND

POLICY



Newfoundland and Labrador becomes the first Canadian province to tax books

In April, Newfoundland and Labrador's provincial budget surprised publishers, booksellers, and readers by including a 10 percent provincial HST on books, in addition to the 5 percent GST already required. The measure, which goes into effect January 1, 2017, would make Newfoundland and Labrador the only province to tax books.

The week after the budget was released, writers, literacy advocates, and book industry folks came together in protest. The coalition wrote a group letter saying "Books are not luxury items. Stories are not commodities."

Many in the province are particularly worried, since 2012 data from Statistics Canada indicates that the literacy rate in Newfoundland and Labrador is the lowest of any province.

"This kind of tax is hurting artists, it's hurting students, and it's hurting women, who buy the most fiction," said Newfoundland author Lisa Moore.

Gavin Will, the owner of regional press Boulder Publications in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, has also been a vocal opponent of the measure. "It sends a message that reading, the culture, is not particularly important, that the bottom line is what really counts here," he told CBC Radio's *St. John's Morning Show*.

PUBLISHING



James Patterson and his publisher devise a new line of books for non-readers

One of the best-selling, blockbuster authors of our time, James Patterson, has launched a new line of cheap, short, plot-driven books called BookShots.

Released through Little, Brown, his publisher, Patterson intends to write some

of the 150-page-or-less books and handpick the others. The new line of short action-packed books cost \$5 or less and started hitting shelves in June.

"They're like reading movies," he said in a recent interview in *New York* magazine.

Getting big sales with small, action-packed novels may be something only a name like James Patterson can pull off these days, though the concept harkens back to the pulp novels and pocket paperbacks of yore.

Patterson and his publisher plan to apply the same formula to BookShots' nonfiction expansion, with one of its lead titles bearing the no-nonsense title *Trump vs. Clinton*.

"Predictive data" select books for publication

German company Inkitt is partnering with fantasy and science fiction publisher Tor Books to "bring about the first book chosen by predictive data." Inkitt, an online writing platform for emerging and established writers much like Wattpad, is using an "artificially intelligent" algorithm to select books for publication.

The first lucky winner? *Bright Star*, a work of YA fiction by emerging writer Erin Swan. "I had built a small readership online," explained Swan, "but it wasn't until I joined Inkitt and was connected to Tor Books that the possibility of getting *Bright Star* published became a reality."

Inkitt is confident that algorithms will become a critical new strategy in publishing. Ali Albazaz, the company's CEO, said, "This book deal sends a clear signal to the publishing industry that predictive data analysis is the way of the future. Inkitt is at the forefront of the movement."

DIGITAL



Textbook publishers see a decline in print

Some of the largest textbook publishers, including McGraw-Hill and Cengage Learning, say that their digital textbook

sales are now surpassing, or about to surpass, their print sales.

According to *Inside Higher Ed*, this trend is being seen across the board in the industry, despite less excited reporting from publishing houses like Pearson, who don't distinguish between digital and print sales.

While analysts, publishers, and academics have been anticipating the moment that digital sales overtake print as a milestone in a shifting education publishing industry, some have questions about how to compare the two media. The definition of "digital sale" might mean access to a single text, or to a bigger bundle of material — which may also include a print book.

"I am not sure that perpetuating a metric like digital versus print adds value," CEO Ken Michaels of Macmillan Learning said in a statement. "Most teaching delivery today and student engagement involves a combination of reading, thinking, research, formative studying, and analytical feedback that involves both print and digital tools/services."

Subscription services for digital books find more success outside of the U.S.

Ebook subscription models are faring far better in Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere than in the American market.

A panel at DigiCon during BookExpo America in May brought together Nathan Hull, Chief Business Officer of Danish-based subscription service Mofibo; Mikolaj Malaczynski, co-founder of Poland's Legimi subscription service; and Jens Klingelhöfer of the German-based Bookwire. Hull led the conversation observing that U.S.-based services like Oyster and Scribd have struggled while European services are thriving in their home countries.

He told *Publishing Perspectives* that "country-by-country — perhaps, with the exception of the U.K. — new, young retailers have been able to thrive in their individual nations and generate significant new income streams for authors without cannibalizing the traditional print industry."

"This is new money, from new readers," he pointed out. "The industry has transformed from just a 3 percent digital share to 18 percent in less than two years."

AWARDS AND CONTESTS



A new \$50k prize celebrates well-rounded female characters in books

The World Globe Literati Award is a new US\$50,000 cash prize to be awarded to a short story, novel, or screenplay featuring one or more well-rounded female lead characters. It has been created by Half the World Holdings, an investment company focusing on businesses and products primarily serving women.

The original work must be unpublished, written in English, and bring a new, fresh perspective on women's lives and stories. The panel of judges for the first year of the contest (deadline now closed) includes heavyweight literary and cultural figures from around the world, including Anne Harrison, producer of *The Danish Girl*; scholar Lisa Tomlinson of the University of West Indies; writer Margie Orford; and author Gina Otto.

"According to 2015 research from author Nicola Griffith, the majority of the significant literary prizes are awarded to works written from a male perspective. The Half the World Global Literati Award is specifically designed to put the spotlight on real female characters and positively impact how women are represented in contemporary writing," said Caroline Bowler, representative for Half the World Holdings. "This award is a natural fit for us, to support the voices and stories of women as well as play a leading role in developing an ecosystem created by, and for, half the world."

BOOKSELLING



A new system aims to make it easier for publishers and retailers to return books

In May, Ontario-based Book Depot — one of the largest bargain book wholesalers in North America — began to use a new, large-scale mechanical sorter and other automated technologies to make book returns faster and more efficient for booksellers and publishers alike. They are the first company in the bargain book business to use this sort of large-scale automation to work through incoming inventory.

"While some bargain book wholesalers have scaled back or shuttered operations," Book Depot CIO Bill Van Vliet told *Publishers Weekly* in April, "[we] continue to invest in people and operations... As our tagline states, 'The largest selection pays,' and we intend to over-deliver on that promise."

The new equipment will enable Book Depot to sort more than 100,000 books per day and free up to 70,000 square feet of warehouse space.

LIBRARIES



Canadian libraries continue to work toward fair ebook pricing

In June 2015, public libraries and allies in Canada launched the Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing campaign, lobbying the largest publishers to consider a more affordable pricing model for ebook licenses. Starting in January 2016, Penguin Random House became the first of the Big Five publishing houses to lower ebook prices, putting a \$65 per title cap, a big step down from the previous limits of US\$85 and CAN\$95.

Currently, many libraries cannot afford to keep a wide variety of ebooks in their stacks, despite widespread demand. This is because the current pricing structure offered by many publishers demands premium rates for ebooks, sometimes five times higher than the consumer price.

This blanket pricing may be the industry's response to the potentially infinite number of "lends" a library book

could get. Organizers with the Fair Ebook Pricing campaign say this fails to account for the diverse needs — and budgets — of individual libraries.

"Public libraries want the option to pay according to their size and needs. We are advocating for a hybrid of existing pricing models that introduces fairness and flexibility," Toronto Librarian Ana-Maria Critchley told *Publishing Perspectives*, adding, "Our issues are with multinational publishers, and not Canadian independent publishers. Many independent and Canadian publishers make their ebooks available at reasonable prices and with reasonable terms of use."

PLAGIARISM



Author finds a rip-off of her crime novel on the Kindle Bestseller List

U.K. Author Eilish O'Hanlon, who co-writes with her partner Ian McConnell under the name Ingrid Black, discovered by chance through Twitter that their book *The Dead* had been wholesale plagiarized and re-branded by a stranger — and doing quite well, landing as the 111th bestseller on Kindle U.K.

Although *The Dead* and its sequel *The Dead Eye* had been fairly well received, the series petered off. But when a Twitter user tipped O'Hanlon off that her work may have been appropriated, she was stunned to see her own story "raided and filleted," she wrote in *The Independent*. O'Hanlon notes that the story and much of the text was the same, though the title was changed from *The Dead* to *Tear Drop*, character names were swapped, point-of-view was shifted from third person to first, and the setting had moved a few cities over.

After reporting the issue to Amazon, the plagiarist's many books were removed from the site. O'Hanlon and McConnell declined to pursue it further through legal means.

Writer's Blot

WRITER'S PROMPT /

Writers' Purgatory: Eradicating Your Pesky Pet Words

BY KIMBERLEY FEHR

The first novel, Draft 3. I turned the final page with a sigh of relief. In my own biased opinion, the book, called The Great Cubicle Escape, had a compelling momentum, coming together in a way that was more than the sum of its parts. Maybe I was really, finally, done.

But something was nagging at me. Skimming the manuscript again, words began jumping out. The same words, used the same way, much too often.

There was *feel* and *seem*.

Just. Even. Still.

Suddenly. Realize. For a moment. At this moment. Really.

And the kicker combos: *suddenly feel, really seem, suddenly realize*, and best of all: *suddenly just feel*.

Leah, my main character, felt a lot of things, and constantly needed to express them starting with "I *feel*...." She could barely turn her head without *realizing* something or other, most of which happened *suddenly*.

My pesky pet words *just* kept popping up despite my best intentions. They were an infestation running rampant in my manuscript. I had no choice; I had to kill them all.

Early readers had warned me about my overwhelming fondness for the word *suddenly*. The classic writing maxim, "Show, don't tell," said that instead of saying suddenly, you convey the suddenness with the story. Or not, as the case might be.

In my 357 pages, there were 167 instances of *just*, 151 of *even*, 121 of *feel*, and 132 of *realize*. *Suddenly* had enjoyed a good purge already, but *still* managed to evade detection.

Here were the insidious pet words in action.

Just what this country needs: more Cambodian babies. It doesn't mean anything, this imagining, *just* a biological phenomenon in women when longing and love collide. But now, marrying an opium farmer *just* doesn't seem prudent.

or

I suddenly feel the strength of the sun on my body. It's like a *thick blanket of heat* (another of my catch-all phrases.)

Crutch words weren't an issue in my short stories, where space demanded every word be precious. But the novel, with so many pages to fill, and a sense of drama and intensity required to fuel it all, had me using fodder to bridge the gap between what I was trying to say and *actually* saying something.

For my writing sins, I spent a week in find-and-replace purgatory, hunting down my pet words one by one and eradicating them.

Thankfully, words like *just*, *still*, and *even* are throwaway words. You don't *even* miss them when they're gone. *I feel* and *I realize* are self-evident. Removing them only strengthened my sentences.

Occasionally, my pet words added a little something, and I let them be.

The process was painful. I had thought I was nearly done, and I wasn't. I had to be merciless. A week in purgatory made me more aware of the errors of my ways. Now when I use my pet words, it's because I intended to. *Really*.

Kimberley Fehr is a Toronto freelance editor/marketing copywriter for hire. Her fiction has been published in North American literary magazines, and she has won awards for fiction, travel, and report writing.

New Press Explores Jewish Canada

BY HAL NIEDZVIECKI



Write talks to Malcolm Lester, co-publisher of the newly formed Toronto-based press New Jewish Press. Their first list appears in winter 2017.

Why start a new publishing house devoted exclusively to Jewish-themed material? Is this material having trouble getting published or reaching an audience?

There are, of course, publishers bringing Jewish-themed books, both scholarly and trade, to wide audiences, but we have a mandate and perspective, as the publishing arm of the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies, to publish nonfiction, fiction, and creative nonfiction that place Jewish themes and content front and centre, that bridge the academy and the community, that bring Jewish studies to the broader Canadian and international community.

Does the press have a foundation story or an a-ha moment of sudden realization?

The a-ha moment came in February 2014, when I met with then-director of the Centre, Jeff Kopstein, to learn more about the Centre and started to think about the possibility of the Centre doing some publishing. Jeff liked the idea, and Andrea Fochs Knight soon joined us in discussions of what the Press would be and how it would enhance the work of the Centre. New Jewish Press didn't officially launch until October 2015, but the core ideas emerged from those early conversations.

What titles are you working on and what kind of material are you looking for? Do you have to be Jewish to submit a book?

Our first list (winter 2017) will have five titles: *The Evidence Room* by Robert Jan van Pelt, Donald McKay, Anne Bordeleau, and Sascha Hastings; *The New Spice Box: Jewish Canadian Writing (Volume 1)*, an anthology edited by Ruth Panofsky; *Double Threat: Canadian*

Jews, the Military, and World War II by Ellin Bessner; *Come Back for Me*, a novel by Sharon Hart-Green; and a new edition of *The Riot at Christie Pits* by Cyril Levitt and William Shaffir, the first of a reprint series called Canadian Jewish Essentials. We do not have a rigid definition of what we consider to be a Jewish-themed book, and our authors certainly do not have to be Jewish.

It seems like independent Canadian presses are all trying to develop a particular area of special interest, a niche. Can you comment on why this is and how New Jewish Press fits into that trend?

I don't see it as a new trend — there have always been small presses that have focussed on particular areas such as literary fiction or poetry, or on geographic regions. You could even say that by calling the firm "The Canadian Publisher," M&S under Jack McClelland was a niche publisher. I think that all publishers, large or small, want to establish some kind of identity.

Malcolm Lester is a veteran of the Canadian publishing industry and founder of presses including Lester & Orpen Dennys.

Hal Niedzviecki is a novelist and nonfiction writer and editor of Write.

COMIC BY SCOT RITCHIE



ONLINE BOOKSELLERS /

Angles of Amazon: The Online Retailer in Germany and Canada

BY JONATHAN VALELLY



Amazon is known for its pull in the publishing industry, often setting the terms for publishers and even lawmakers. But some countries play hard ball when it comes to staking their own claims. While Canada has been a most accommodating host, German courts, legislators, and labour organizers haven't been so welcoming.

	GERMANY	CANADA	AMAZON'S LINE
PRICES	Fixed-price books are the rule here. Publishers determine the price for all of their titles and booksellers, including Amazon, must abide by those prices. The intent is to protect small bookshops from being undercut by larger competitors and to promote "bibliodiversity," encouraging publishers to put out smaller runs of riskier, but culturally valuable, content. In February, this rule was extended to include ebooks.	No law regarding book pricing, though the Parti Québécois once proposed a law that limited discounts on books for the first nine months after their release.	In June 2014, Amazon commented on ebook pricing in Germany amidst a number of disputes with the publisher Bonnier: "Ebooks should cost customers less than the corresponding print edition — in digital there is no printing, freight, warehousing, or returns. We believe this should also be reflected in the terms under which booksellers buy their books from publishers."
TAXES	Amazon.de got some flack in the news last year when it paid only 11.9 million euros in tax in 2014, despite recording 11.9 billion euros in sales. It turns out that Amazon.de reported most profits through Luxembourg, where corporations are not taxed as heavily as in Germany.	Although Amazon hasn't gotten in trouble in Canada for taxes, it did operate without any physical presence in Canada for eight years before becoming subject to foreign ownership laws in 2010, when it built its first "fulfillment centre" on Canadian soil. Meanwhile in the U.S., the American Booksellers Association and Civic Economics recently revealed a \$1-billion tax gap created by online retail, with twenty-three states failing to collect full sales tax on sites like Amazon.	When the news about Amazon.de's tax payment came out in 2014, a spokesperson for the company said "Corporate tax is based on profits, not revenues. E-commerce is a low-margin business and highly competitive, and Amazon continues to invest heavily around the world, which means our profits are low."
LABOUR	German workers have repeatedly executed short-term strikes in order to pressure Amazon to increase pay and protections. The union, Ver.di, has organized actions at Amazon warehouses across Germany since May 2013, most recently in March 2016.	No evidence that employees at Amazon have organized any kind of union drive. In the U.S., Amazon has repeatedly defeated its employees' attempts to unionize, using aggressive lobbying tactics and deal-making. Most recently it defeated the organizing efforts of a group of technicians at a warehouse in Delaware, who ended up voting against joining the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. During the campaign, a manager told workers a tear-jerking story about his family being abandoned by his late father's union. The story was later revealed to have significant inconsistencies.	In a <i>New York Times</i> article about the difficulty American Amazon workers have had when trying to unionize, Amazon spokesman Scott Stanzel responded: "Amazon's culture and business model are based on rapid innovation, flexibility, and open lines of direct communication between managers and associates. This direct connection is the most effective way to understand and respond to the wants and needs of our associates."
AUDIOBOOKS	In November 2015, Germany opened an anti-trust investigation against Amazon (and Apple) for unfair control over the audiobook market. Amazon owns Audible.com, which accounts for about 90 percent of audiobook downloads in Germany if you factor in sales through the iTunes store, which is exclusively supplied by Audible.	Amazon-owned Audible.com had a similarly high 90 percent market share of audiobooks in Canada in 2014, though there has been no move to investigate them through anti-trust provisions. However, Burlington-based Audiobooks.com and its mobile app, Recordio, increased its share from 2 percent in 2012 up to 7 percent in 2014.	Amazon has not commented on the anti-trust investigation in Germany. However, they have cooperated in distributing settlement reimbursements after Apple lost an anti-trust settlement regarding ebooks.

WRITERS IN EXILE /

Shall I Be Happy that I Am Alive and Free?

BY ADNAN ALMEKDAD



I am a Syrian veterinary doctor. I worked for the last years in the animal pharmaceutical field, in production and importing into Syria.

I started writing at age ten and publishing in 1989. I have two published works of poetry and two prizes for my poetry, from Kuwait in 2000 and from the Arab Emirates in 2003.

For many years, I read Arabic and world literature and I knew, of course, that many Syrian poets were living outside Syria or were experiencing difficulties from the Syrian dictatorship. At that time, I believed two things: There could be no good poetry in the absence of freedom and, as Tolstoy said, “Everyone thinks of *changing the world*, but no one thinks of changing himself.” So I spent many years of my life developing myself, my family, my job, my poetry.

But eventually I realized that I was wrong. I was trying to avoid our regime; at the same time I was talking about freedom in my poetry! But the dictatorship has all kinds of crimes in its own structure; you will not be able to build anything when it is present.

There are two kinds of physical disease: chronic and acute. The chronic one is continuous but has less pain than the acute one, which is much more painful and comes suddenly. Syrian people experienced chronic pain for the last fifty years. They knew that it would be very hard to change the regime. They tried to build Syria starting with themselves. But then the regime caught some young men who wrote statements on the walls after what they saw in Tunisia and Egypt, which was called the Arab Spring. They tortured and killed these young men in Daraa — my city, where I was living and working. The killing by the regime had begun. Killing in such a stupid way was very acute, very compressive, and passed all the red lines. So we reacted with demonstrations, in Daraa at first then in all of Syria.

As a witness, I participated in filming what was happening. I wrote some articles about the lies and false things that the media started to say about it. After that I went back to my small village, trying to help with daily needs such as water, wheat, etc. I participated with coordination groups — we established a human rights group to follow up on the new situation — trying to do any helpful thing.

I did this for four years until I was warned that the security units had connected the false name I was using for my writing to who I really was. So I left Syria through Lebanon to Turkey with my three daughters and my wife. It was dangerous as I didn’t know what might happen at every checkpoint on our way. But at last we arrived

in Turkey. We stayed there and I tried to find work, but could not. When I didn’t find stability in Turkey, I tried to find another solution. I received an offer to come to Canada, and now here we are.

We are the lucky ones. We weren’t imprisoned or arrested or bombed. I was careful and escaped many dangerous things, but many Syrian people were killed, their homes destroyed. They left their cities for other places many times; their children didn’t go to schools for years; they were put in bad camps; they experienced bad situations of all kinds: bombings, air strikes, and army attacks. Maybe the hardest thing to discover was how so much of the dictatorship was supported by governments, parties, persons, and dark forces such as ISIS. Just to “teach” people that the dictatorship is better than terror! Actually, the terror and dictatorship are the same, different versions of the same book.

Benjamin Franklin said something about who chooses between freedom and stability: you will lose both of them. Revolutions are not good things. They are just social movements that happen when there is no justice, no respect, no freedom. They just happen... no individual decisions. But you can’t say: “Hey, revolution! Why did you come?” Instead, you can say: “Who was the criminal that opened the door?”

And after all that, we can ask: What poetry will be written in such an environment? The Syrian poets mostly used symbolism techniques, hiding what was in their minds with thick language, trying to survive while still communicating some aspect of their true experience. They were separated from society because most people couldn’t understand what they were saying. But it was good in some ways: The security units could not understand, either.

They were in a prison called Syria, just like any other Syrian. So some of them tried to find something else they liked as a job. I turned to science and biology. Others, who challenged the regime in their writing, lived very badly.

When the revolution began poets started to say directly how they felt. They were arrested, left Syria, or were killed. All but the ones who supported the regime with weak arguments.

And here I am, between you, confused: Shall I be happy that I am alive and free? Or sad that Syrian people are still being killed and are still not free?

Adnan Almekdad is the author of two collections of poems as well as a writer for Syrian and Arabic media outlets. He worked in Daraa, Syria as a veterinary doctor and now lives in Kingston, Ont.

This column is part of a series exploring the lives of writers in exile now living in Canada. It is a partnership between TWUC and PEN Canada.

The Unthinkable: Remembering Gordon Shillingford, My Publisher and Mentor

BY JANE HARRIS



It's January 26, a Tuesday morning. At 10:54 a.m. a chorus of smartphone buzzes and MacBook dings summon me to read a message from a fellow TWUC member in Edmonton. She thinks I know. I don't.

"I'm so shocked and saddened to hear about Gordon. Yours was his last book, a testimony to how much he cared for the disenfranchised...."

She's saying my publisher, Gordon Shillingford, is dead. I scramble for her number and grab the phone.

It's true. My colleague reads aloud from an email that has landed in her inbox. It says Gord died yesterday. My mind rushes back to an email Gord sent me just after Christmas. He wrote that he thought he had the flu. That made sense: The H1N1 virus was filling up emergency departments across the prairies.

But it wasn't the flu. It was cancer. She says they found it Friday night after Gord was rushed to hospital, so advanced it killed him before the weekend was over. She stays on the phone with me, walking me through the shock. We talk about how happy Gord was when the *Winnipeg Free Press* reviewed my book *Finding Home in the Promised Land* and when it made *The Edmonton Journal's* bestseller list. We talk about how Gord told me not to give up writing after I suffered a head injury in 2013. We talk about what Gord would want now. By the time I hang up the phone, my brain is on autopilot, the setting it goes to when the world changes too fast for me to make sense of it. I must stay on autopilot to do what must be done today.

When Gordon Shillingford died on January 25, 2016, *Finding Home in the Promised Land* had been in bookstores for just over three months. Gord set up readings for me in Whistler, Calgary, and Edmonton. We hoped to do more. The morning I found out Gord was dead I was waiting for him to get back to me about an ad for the book. After I got off the phone I numbly emailed some text about the book and a few JPEGs, hoping they could put something together. Then I sat at the kitchen table, asking the dog and the Christmas cactus: "Why?"

Gord had been the only publisher I'd ever worked with, the first person who thought I was a good enough writer to write books and win literary awards, who still believed that I had something important to say, even after I was beaten and brain injured, and bureaucrats and the shame of my poverty almost made me forget who I was, let alone what I wanted to do.

In 2009, I landed my first book contract. J. Gordon Shillingford

Publishing was going to pay me for a book called *Eugenics and the Firewall*. In 2012, I started writing a proposal for a second book. Naturally, I asked Gord if he wanted me to send it to him. "I'd love to see it," he said. I thought I was writing a proposal for a nonfiction about escaping homelessness. But my sample chapters turned into an unwieldy mess of history, fiction, and autobiography. "You've got two books here," Gord wrote back, urging me to try again. I was still struggling with my book concept in June 2013 when I hit another roadblock: A violent beating left me with a head injury. It took seven more months until I recovered enough to send Gord a proposal for a memoir. I had a signed contract a couple of weeks after that.

Usually we worked by email, less often by phone. I never met Gord in person until I took the Greyhound to Winnipeg for TWUC's 2015 AGM. When I got to Winnipeg, Gord and I held a pre-launch meeting at the King's Head pub. About half an hour into our meeting, I asked him why he hadn't given up on my second book after I sent him that first confused proposal. He paused before answering, then smiled. "I was content to wait until you were ready to write the book," he said.

A few weeks after Gord's death, I knew that his contribution to Canadian literature was not going to disappear. Books published by J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing, mine included, never stopped heading to bookstores while the authors waited for news about the company's long-term future. Then, at the end of May 2016, we received our royalty statements along with news that Gord's widow, Karen Haughian, was going to remain at the helm of both J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing and Signature Editions, the company she founded.

The memoir Gord waited so patiently for is now bringing me assignments to write about social exile and Canada's poverty industry. I won an Alberta Literary Award for one of those assignments, "The Unheard Patient," published in *Alberta Views* in November 2015.

The morning after the Alberta Literary Awards, I sat alone at a Denny's in Calgary, pushing soggy spoonfuls of puffed rice around a paper bowl, ignoring pings and buzzes summoning me to check my phone messages, trying and failing to figure out why the last six months unfolded the way they did.

I don't know, because nobody knows why things happen the way they happen. But I do know this: I win sometimes now, because a publisher saw something in my work and believed I could achieve it. That is who J. Gordon Shillingford was, and it is what he did.

Jane Harris is a TWUC member from Alberta. Finding Home in the Promised Land (J. Gordon Shillingford, 2015) is her third book.

PERFORMANCE /

Pomegranate: How my Self-Published Chapbook Became an Opera

BY AMANDA HALE



My entry into the world of opera was circuitous. It began with a series of poems, written after a visit to Pompeii and self-published as a chapbook in 2007.

Longtime friend and composer Kye Marshall approached me about setting five of the poems to music for presentation at Toronto's Heliconian Club on International Women's Day 2014, with harpist Natalie Hoffmann, soprano Elizabeth Rose Morriss, and mezzo soprano Gabriella Sundar Singh. Our first rehearsal, in the basement of the Conservatory where Natalie was studying, was a revelation — to hear my poems brought to life musically for the first time! Our student cast generously agreed to work for honoraria, and I took the role of director and called on a friend to pull together basic costumes — togas with laurel wreath head-dresses. The audience response to our ten-minute performance was strong; they loved the music, the story, the singers, and the harp, and they wanted more! Kye and I decided to move ahead with the development of *Pomegranate* as an opera.

At first we were working in the dark, both of us new to the world of opera, but we had a story, we had music, and we had audience support. Now, two years later, *Pomegranate* is a 75-minute opera-in-progress which has recently been work-shopped under the guidance of Toronto's Tapestry Opera, located in the Distillery District, whose mandate is to "create and produce new opera for the heart of the here and now." My first move as librettist was to write a second act, parachuting Suli and Cassia out of Pompeii circa C.E. 79 into a 1984 downtown Toronto lesbian bar.

The story: Suli and Cassia, teenagers in the Villa of Mysteries, are being prepared through ritual for initiation into the Dionysian Mysteries. They will become women and take their place in Roman society as maenads, matrons, priestesses.... The nature of the Mysteries dictates that the girls cannot know exactly what fate awaits them. Cassia is drawn to the Priesthood, while Suli is flirtatious and rebellious. Meanwhile, as they gather grapes, winnow the grain, and collect honey from the hives, Cassia and Suli fall in love and pledge themselves to each other. With Vesuvius rumbling in the background and the revelation of the Mysteries

looming, Cassia falls into trance and divines a future where she and her lover are separated and with that, the first act reaches a crescendo.

In Act 2 we find Cass and Suzie in the Fly By Night — a 1984 downtown Toronto lesbian bar. Jules the Bartender sings a smoky torch song in Brechtian style — "I see it all, night after night, romance and pleasure, falling in love feels like forever...." Each role is doubled, significantly: Silenus (companion and tutor to the young Dionysus) becomes the Uncle, the Priestess is Mother, Julia the initiate and handmaiden to the Priestess becomes Jules. Suzie has come out to her mother; Cass is horrified and fearful. They fight. Cass storms out. Suzie's uncle comes to claim her. Cass returns and Suzie's mother enters for the final quartet. Suzie is given an ultimatum — to renounce her lover or to be disowned by her family — an impossible choice. Once again the future cannot be borne, and the girls are transported back in time to ancient Pompeii where they sing their final poignant duet. With a pomegranate resting in Suli's hand, the young women feed each other the years in pomegranate seeds, pledging to remember as Vesuvius rumbles, now louder than ever.

CASSIA	<i>Tomorrow the Mysteries will be revealed</i>
SULI	<i>We will be women, leave this House of Revelation</i>
CASSIA	<i>Suli my love, if we should part if I cannot keep my pledge promise to remember how I love you</i>
DUET	<i>Together we squeeze our pomegranate opens seeds bursting the bloody fist</i>

After the Heliconian Club performance I developed a Friends of Pomegranate newsletter, talked up the project, and followed every lead on audience building and fundraising with a flurry



Dionysian Maenads: March 2014 performance at Toronto's Heliconian Club in Yorkville

of phone calls, emails, grant writing. But I'd rather be writing than doing arts admin. Just as I was beginning to feel strangled creatively Tapestry came to the rescue! I had asked Artistic Director Michael Mori for a letter of support, and he not only gave it, but suggested that Tapestry could help as a developing partner, offering use of their infrastructure, dealing with casting, contracts, and space rental for the workshop. Kye and I had to cover all the expenses but with Tapestry's know-how the budget came out to less than we had estimated. Michael put me in touch with Marjorie Chan, an experienced librettist, playwright, and director. After reading my fledgling libretto Marjorie agreed to work with me as dramaturge in developing the story as an opera. Although I am a trained playwright and have worked in many genres, writing for opera requires a distinct skill set. I learned from Marjorie that opera is a relatively crude form. Get rid of the nuance, she said; keep the diction simple and singable; focus on overt conflict, structural tension, compression. The music will carry the emotional transitions. Use little or no dialogue — how difficult is that for a playwright! I had to complete the libretto before Kye could begin composing, and I had to preserve her original five melodies which were written for harp, evoking the sound of the lyre and the modal music we imagined was played in Pompeii. Now, with the addition of the Toronto bar scene, Kye would compose for keyboard, a jazzier, disco, ballad-type of musical accompaniment.

After more than two years work *Pomegranate* was workshopped for the first time in May 2016, and what an experience it has been! Tapestry provided us with an experienced creative team which included five singers, two musicians, and a musical director. Hearing the marriage of libretto and score brought to life for the first time was akin to that first rehearsal at the Conservatory in 2014, but so much larger! During four days of song, music, and discussion, with valuable input from each member of our team, Kye and I were able to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of *Pomegranate*. The workshop blew it apart, as workshops are supposed to do, and we can now re-vision and rewrite with confidence in the contribution of our collaborators. For the libretto it is a matter of adding more muscle to a languid Pompeii love story which began as lyrical poetry; clarifying confusion between characters; pinpointing conflicts in the bar scene. Kye will add cello (which happens to be her own instrument) and more percussion to her musical palate, while exploring new compositional opportunities in the bar scene. For us it is a labour of love, but we had to raise the money for artist fees and administrative expenses. On the final day of the workshop our singers stood at their lecterns and sang through the entire opera for a small invited audience of professionals and supporters. Afterwards we received lots of valuable feedback.

Developing new opera is a long road. It can take up to six years to reach final production. We're now working towards a second workshop scheduled for early next year, which will result in a performance-in-progress for potential co-producers. Meanwhile, we have received an Ontario Arts Council grant towards our next workshop, and will build on that with more fundraising and audience outreach. This exciting world of new opera combines the solitary work of the writer and composer with intense bursts of challenging collaborative work. For me the great thing about *Pomegranate* is the opportunity to create two distinct worlds and parallel them in significant ways. Ancient culture can be a vital form of liberation when brought into a world that has lost its sense of the Mysteries.

TWUC member Amanda Hale divides her time between Hornby Island and Toronto. Her fiction includes the novel Sounding the Blood (Raincoast 2001) and a collection of short fiction set in Cuba, In the Embrace of the Alligator (ThistleDown 2011). Forthcoming is a second collection of Cuban fictions, Angéla of the Stones, and a new novel, Mad Hatter, set in WWII and postwar England.

Into the Void: Life, Work, and the Struggle to Make Art

BY CORDELIA STRUBE



Chekhov got it right — “We must work, Uncle.” Forget following your passion, follow the jobs.

Growing up in Montreal, I started working at fourteen, teaching arts and crafts to kindergartners. Then, I scored a job scooping ice cream as Lemon does in my novel *Lemon*. This segued into waitressing at restos, including the Bombay Palace (FYI curries are made from yesterday’s Tandoori), Les Filles Du Roy (baguette gets recycled), the Hong Kong House (fried rice is last week’s steamed rice), and Kuzins, the chicken restaurant that hatched my novel *Dr. Kalbfleisch and the Chicken Restaurant* (where day-old barbecue chicken becomes chicken sandwich specials).

Finally the big break: retail clerk. The boutique owner, a triangular-headed man with small, wandering hands, was so impressed with my ability to set up displays that he offered me a full-time position. I passed on that to take a position as the personal assistant to an egomaniacal fashion designer, who expected me to double as a showroom model. I’d been under the misconception that my visual art skills could earn \$\$\$\$ in the fashion trade, but witnessing the exploitation of immigrants on the sweatshop floor put me off the fashion industry. I quit and reinvented myself as a British telemarketer (featured in my radio play *Marshmallow*) while moonlighting as a self-defence coach (martial art moves used in *Lemon*), and subsidizing my acting career (featured in my novel *Milosz*). But playing TV/movie token female roles, even with stars like Robert Reid (*The Brady Bunch*), Kris Kristofferson, and Harvey Keitel (all smaller in real life than on screen) was soul-eroding.

Fast forward to receiving a disappointing offer for my third novel. I called Nino Ricci for advice. Our connection was tenuous; he, a member of the CanLit Pantheon, had graciously blurbed my first novel, and we’d met briefly post-blurb. I’d introduced myself at a reading and asked him what he was going to do with the unpublished short story he’d just read — where was he going to send it?

“Into the void,” he said.

Querying him about the offer for my novel, he said, “You should be making a living off your books by now.”

Too embarrassed to admit how remote earning a living from the sale of my books was — or that I hadn’t applied for grants because rejection, in any form, quashed what little faith I had in my projects — I kept quiet. Radio drama budgets had been slashed, a stage play of mine that was set to go suddenly wasn’t, a movie in development wasn’t developing, and I’d pissed off a TV posse by

saying what I really thought. Seven days a week I taught fitness, shouting at spandex-clad people with real jobs. I envied them. *They* were building careers, buying condos and cars, getting married, taking tropical vacations, while I was destroying my knees.

That third novel was nominated for a GG, a major boost to my self-esteem, until my publicist informed me, “It’s not like it’s the Giller.”

By novel five, I was still far from making a living from my books. With my knees degenerating, I started personal training, which enabled me to stand back and watch. A wealth of raw material came my way during these sessions. I trained doctors, lawyers, CEOs, retail kings and queens, stars of broadcasting, shrinks. All had something to complain about despite riches, big houses, and glassy condos. It was the most palpable lesson in the school of money-isn’t-everything.

I kept writing novels and had a child I strapped to my back during training sessions (and who fell asleep on my body or in car seats but never in a crib). Between appointments I loitered in public places, jotting down scraps of dialogue in a notebook, adding behaviours, noting interactions, incidents. There isn’t a character in one of my novels whose pulse didn’t start with something I saw or heard while working. It all begins with unfiltered exposure to the human condition while *on the job*. The fabric of my fiction is spun *from my life experience resulting from not making a living from my books*.

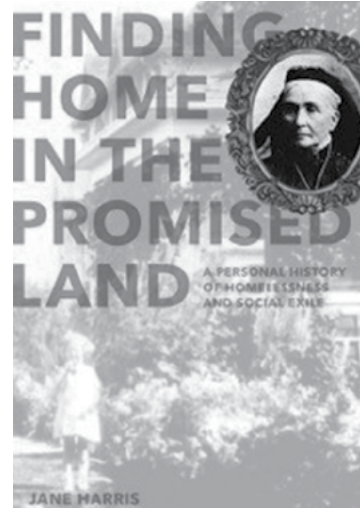
I have recently published my tenth novel. The plummeting book advances of the twenty-first century barely cover property tax. The occasional foreign sale causes jubilation, but amounts to small change. To make the mortgage, I teach creative writing to all ages. My students are constant story sources, particularly the mature ones, providing endless tales of human misadventure. From all ethnic backgrounds, they endure downsizing, restructuring, chronic or fatal illness, heartbreak, disability, divorce, bankruptcy, mental illness. My day job is what enables me to get lost in the lives of others. That’s what writing novels is, to me. For a few years I get lost in the lives of my characters before sending my manuscript off into the void.

This fall, my early novels *Alex & Zee* and *The Barking Dog* are being brought out in new editions. If you wait long enough, everything becomes new again.

Cordelia Strube is an accomplished playwright and the author of nine critically acclaimed novels. She has been nominated for the Governor General’s Award, the Trillium Book Award, the WH Smith/Books in Canada First Novel Award, and the Prix Italia.

Fireflies in the Night
by Nalini Warriar
Available at: Amazon.com; .ca
ISBN 978-0-9877-484-1-6

Kavita, growing up in Assam in the late 50's, is moving with her family to Assam, the land of tigers and tea plantations. Living with the threat of a Chinese aggression and the death of her brother Arun, Kavita is both a witness and a victim of her family's disintegration. Set against the lush background of tea estates and wild animals, *Fireflies in the Night* portrays a close-knit family torn apart by events. Krishnan, the father, realizes his wife is not the timid, shy girl he married. Devi, mother of 3, discovers that she's a sexual being after all. Kavita is fifteen when the Indo-Sino war of 1962 breaks out. Inspired by her sister's courageous stand against her parents, there is only one choice left for Kavita: leave.



FINDING HOME IN THE PROMISED LAND

A PERSONAL
HISTORY OF
HOMELESSNESS
AND SOCIAL
EXILE

BY JANE HARRIS

Finding Home in the Promised Land is the fruit of Jane Harris's journey through the wilderness of social exile after a violent crime left her injured and tumbling down the social ladder toward homelessness — for the second time in her life — in 2013.

J. GORDON SHILLINGFORD
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Thank you, Gord Shillingford. You always said, "Don't Quit." So I didn't, and I won't.



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Becoming a Writer

BY JEAN LITTLE

After graduating, I needed a job. I knew I wanted to write but I was told by everyone I knew that it was impossible to make a living as a writer. People who want to write, they said, especially women, must do it as a hobby and support themselves with a “real job.” I believed them, partly because I had never met a self-supporting woman writer and partly because I knew somehow that I was not yet ready.

When I was offered a position teaching children with motor handicaps at a centre where they could both have therapy and attend school, I jumped at it. Since I had no teacher training, I was insecure but I did one thing perfectly. I read aloud to my class every day. Although I read them all sorts of books, including *Six Darn Cows* by Margaret Laurence, I began to search for stories which included kids with disabilities. I found such stories were either hard to obtain or were overly sentimental. Most finished with a hard-to-credit miraculous cure or with the death of the disabled

child. Most of them were written before physio or occupational therapy was used. My students disapproved, pointing out such flaws and asking me why the writers allowed the heroes and heroines to be so neglected or such goody-goodies. The children pointed out the problems in the books we read. They liked Colin in *The Secret Garden*, for instance, but asked me if he could have got well so fast.

Finally I realized that the writers did not believe a child could be in a wheelchair or walk on crutches and be leading a life complete with joys as well as sorrows. The authors clearly believed that in order to give your story the necessary happy ending, you had to

first either cure the disability or kill off the poor little cripple. This made me angry. I was handicapped and so were the children I was teaching. We were also enjoying our lives. When we weren't, it was not because of our disabilities but because we were human beings and got our feelings hurt or didn't get our wishes granted or met up with a bunch of bullies.

At last, I decided it was time someone wrote the kind of story I could not find. It gave me an excuse for embarking on my first novel. Until then my family and friends had been my readers but this time I would submit my manuscript to a publisher and have it judged by strangers. I took a year off and wrote *Mine for Keeps*.

A librarian told me about the Little, Brown Canadian Children's Book Award and I sent off my manuscript. It arrived on noon of the last day, and I was astounded when I learned I had won.

My book was due to be published the following June. Friends were holding a book launch to celebrate, and I bought a dress from Holt Renfrew to wear. I was ecstatic.

I had not yet laid eyes on my book but I knew it was on its way. Then the teamsters went on strike and the shipment of *Mine for Keeps* was not permitted to cross the border. The people who were going to attend my book launch left for their summer cottages and the party was cancelled. I left my new dress in the closet and went to hospital to have an eye operation. It was a crushing disappointment. Then, after the surgery was over, an orderly came into my hospital room.

"This just came for you," he said and handed me a parcel.

I had no idea what it was until I tore off the wrapping and held, in my own two hands, my first book. I have been asked, "How did you feel when you held your first book in your hands?" I grasped it. I smelled it. I looked around for someone to share the glory of it. Nobody was there. Nobody at all.

I phoned Mother. She was delighted. She was also in the middle of office hours. She would come tomorrow. She could hardly wait. Goodbye.

After indulging in what Georgette Heyer would call "a fit of the dimals," I called Elizabeth Pearson, a friend who I thought would sympathize. She did. But she didn't go overboard. She actually sounded slightly impatient and hung up in about three minutes.

I will skip over the next bout of self-pity. Then Elizabeth walked in with a cake, balloons on which she had written "Hurray for the author," and a huge box of chocolates. What a glorious time we had as she stuck the balloons up on the walls of my room and flourished my book at everyone who came within earshot. The chocolates were a huge success. My book was launched.

A year later, I had to have my left eye removed. The vision in it was almost non-existent and it had grown painful. When the surgery was over, I became depressed. I think now they

would call it post-traumatic stress. Then I discovered I could no longer focus my eye steadily enough to read. This terrified me. I determined to force my eye to read again. I chose *Outcast*, by Rosemary Sutcliff, which had clear print, and used it to retrain my vision. It didn't take long. And the book not only taught my eye how to behave, it pulled me out of the depression into which I had been sinking. Her words rekindled the sun, set the wind to blowing, put the fragrance back in my mother's roses, and returned me to myself.

I had been nearly finished writing my second book, *Home from Far*, and I went back to it. I gave my heroine Rosemary's books to read as she grieved over the death of her twin brother. When the story was published, I mailed off a copy of it along with one of *Mine for Keeps* to say thank you to this English author. I had no idea that she had been handicapped by a form of arthritis when she was a small child. I taped a letter onto the parcel and sent it, but my letter came adrift from the package, and Rosemary got the books without my explanation. I got this letter back:

Dear Jean Little,

What a lovely surprise! I took both books to bed with me and read one one evening and one the next. I was so thrilled to find the mention of my books in Home from Far which I loved, but Mine for Keeps I think I loved even more. You have done Sal so beautifully and the relationship between her and the other children.... I shall treasure both books. Thank you again for sending them to me.

Yours,

Rosemary Sutcliff

The letter I had sent with the books had clearly not reached her. I wrote again explaining why I had sent her my books and later that summer, I visited her at her home in Sussex. We continued to write to each other and we became good friends.

I had actually made friends with a writer.

Excerpted from the thirtieth annual Margaret Laurence Lecture, delivered by Jean Little on June 17 at the Canadian Writers' Summit. The Margaret Laurence Lecture is a program of the Writers' Trust of Canada and is delivered annually on the occasion of The Writers' Union of Canada's AGM.

Jean Little has written more than fifty books of children's fiction. Almost blind since birth, she uses much of her real-life experience as the basis for her writing. Her best-known book is From Anna (1972), which has sold more than 130,000 copies. She is a past recipient of the Vicky Metcalf Award for Literature for Young People and the Matt

The Bitter, the Sweet, and the Unexpected: Four Writers Taste-Test the Canadian Writers' Summit



Luke Reece



Renée Sarojini Saklikar



Chuck Bowie



Nadia L. Hohn

We asked four writers from across the country working in four different genres to respond to the first ever Canadian Writers' Summit. Below is their take on what they did, saw, felt, and tasted.

Tastes: One Bittersweet Day at the Summit

BY LUKE REECE

"Different stories require a different way of being told," said the playwright, instructor, and actor Paula Wing early on the morning of Saturday, June 18. I sat in an audience of familiar faces at the Teaching Playwriting panel, on which Paula Wing was joined by fellow artist-educators Bruce Barton and Brian Quirt. I generally like to tell stories through the writing of plays, but that day at the Canadian Writers' Summit was about stepping out of my element and experiencing what the other genres have to offer... so that's the

only quote I'll be using from that panel.

For me, the day truly began after that panel, when I put a teabag in my cup only to fill it with coffee by mistake; I was already mixing things up. I let the image, and taste, of coffee over tea sit with me as I moved through the Writers' Summit. It was a useful metaphor for what the summit would bring: surprise, laughter, misperception, and, of course, the occasional sensation of not-altogether-unexpected bitterness.

Kenneth Oppel, a Canadian author of over thirty novels, tells his stories in a way that allows readers to "leave your own skin and live moment to moment." This is how he describes writing fiction for young audiences. These tales exist in a world that is full of discoveries and where the stakes are always high. Trust me when I tell you the stakes were never higher than when eight-year-old Luke had to find enough money to purchase *Firewing* and conclude the trilogy that started with Oppel's best known work, *Silverwing*. I must admit that I was a little star struck at his keynote speech, but

it was humbling to hear him speak about starting from writing story outlines in his fourth grade notebook. I also scribbled ideas in an elementary school notebook back in the day. Thanks to my mother these writings have been preserved, just in case I need them for my own keynote speech in the future. Who knows?

The Performing Identity: The Politics of Culture panel brought me closer to home again, as panelists included playwrights and performers I recognized from the theatre community. Things got a little fiery and the audience chimed in way before the question period, as everyone wanted to opine on how Canada can better facilitate multiple identities in literature and performance. Andrea Thompson, poet and co-editor of *Other Tongues: Mixed Race Women Speak Out*, said it best: “You need to be able to speak to people in a community in a language that the community will understand.” It just so happens that Canada is a fairly large community, with many different voices needed to address it. These voices need equal time.

Familiar met the unfamiliar as I was treated to five performances of texts I’d never read or witnessed at the panel titled Performing Women: Playwrights and Performance Poets. The immediacy and urgency in their storytelling was compelling and “made the art a different thing,” as playwright and performer Kelly Jo Burke described it. I didn’t want the readings to stop, so I bought *Performing Women: Playwrights and Performance Poets: the Panel, the Anthology* to continue reading at my own leisure. I was told that after hearing Burke, Cornelia Hoogland, Penn Kemp, Catherine Kidd, and Susan McMaster perform their work, I would recollect their voices when enjoying the text at home. This was true. Like a seashell remembering the ocean waves, their speech continues to wash over me every time I open the book.

My breakfast drink concoction was long gone by this point, and I was in need of another experiment. This meant it was time for science fiction; I don’t usually read it (it’s been awhile since my infatuation with Oppel). Nalo Hopkinson, a fantasy/science fiction writer and the final keynote speaker of the day declared, “We’ve been telling fantastical stories forever.” In other words: all fiction is a form of fantasy. When she said this, I’m certain several people in the Fleck Dance Theatre had small but meaningful epiphanies. Who is to say that one text is more fantastical than another? Hopkinson said in many different ways during her address that “stories need not be factual in order to exist.” Heck, they don’t even have to be written down.

I ended the day by attending the student readings. There was a good mix of undergraduate and graduate students from schools across the country, including my old stomping grounds at York University. It was a nice way to wrap up the summit and see what’s cooking in the minds of creators not that much younger than myself. They came from each coast, and everywhere in between, as did the panelists I heard throughout the day. They had travelled to share and refine their voices with the audience. They came to tell stories, however they do it. Since this was my final event, I had a beer. Although the initial taste of coffee over tea was gone, the flavour had stayed with me all day long.

Luke Reece is a biracial storyteller and community builder from Mississauga, engaging with young-in-craft artists that are as diverse as the community he lives in. He is the artistic director of Little Black Afro Theatre, co-creator of Dark Nights, and Obsidian Theatre Company’s associate general manager.

Literary Translation Revealed

BY RENÉE SAROJINI SAKLIKAR

Several years ago, while writing a book-length sequence of poems, I found an online essay by Dennis Lee, “Cadence, Country, Silence: writing in colonial space.” Lee’s thoughts on cadence came to me again as I sat outside Toronto’s Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, under a white tent canopy, the air warm and humid down by the lake. I had joined a group gathered to listen to Jessica Moore and Madeleine Stratford speak about literary translation. We were part of this year’s mega-conference, the Canadian Writers’ Summit (CWS), and as a member of TWUC (as well as the League of Canadian Poets, the Canadian Creative Writers and Writing Programs, and the Canadian Authors Association), I wanted to take advantage of learning about language from a different point of view. Of the many sessions offered, this one held fresh appeal, as both presenters were recommended by Quebec friends of mine who often chide me for not connecting enough with French-language poetry.

Confession: I’ve always held to the idea represented by the infamous paraphrase attributed to Robert Frost — that poetry is what gets lost in translation. However, this spring, at a reading series I co-host with Wayde Compton — Lunch Poems at SFU — my skepticism got jolted by the beauty of Patrick Friesen’s Griffin shortlisted translation of a Danish poet, Ulrikka S. Gernes (*Frayed Opus for Strings & Wind Instruments*). I’d also recently been reading another work in translation, *Mend the Living* (Maylis De Kerangal). This novel, a finalist for the Man Booker, was translated by Jessica Moore, and it was she who drew me to the CWS panel.

Moore, in a well-modulated voice whose timbre seemed to contain room for those ephemeral echoes in writing that haunt the page, spoke about her journey from creative writer — she’s an accomplished poet — to translator. In childhood, she said, she was drawn to arranging things (the spice jars in a cupboard, for instance), and in her undergrad years, she felt a pull toward translation. She illustrated the act of translation as more than simply knowing two languages through the analogy of knowing how to play the piano: the use of ten fingers is no guarantee of concert pianist abilities. So, too, with the kind of “knowing” that we inhabit in our day-to-day language. To begin work on translation, Moore does a close reading of the text, staying open to resonances, reminding us that when translating, the writer is in a collaborative effort in “one’s own head” as Moore described it. So, of course, the act of translation is not some mere plunking of one word for another, a continuing myth (accompanied by that other unease, that translation is dilution). Moore suggested that a translated text might even supersede its original and is the creation of something new.

We were reminded, as the afternoon heat grew dense, the air heavier, that translators support new incarnations of work which in turn keep literary texts current and in circulation. *Mend the Living*, Moore noted, is available in the U.S. market in another translation, with a different title. “From the very first sentence, it is clear that

Despite this bits and bytes age, the writing and editing of a book takes as much time as it takes.

they are very different works.” And of course, this statement, as I sat under the white tent canopy, brought me again to my unease with literary translation even as I, too, felt the pull of Moore’s passionate defence of her craft: “You have to love the sound of the language,” she said, reminding me again of cadence: that echo of rhythm and sound are integral to “getting the voice of an author,” to paraphrase Moore.

Later, in the question time, I asked both Moore and her co-presenter, Madeleine Stratford (poet, professor, and president of the Literary Translators of Canada), about something both of them touched on: *the myth of translation*, the idea that literary translators can “go both ways” in both languages. Not so, these two rather remarkable women said. Jessica Moore only does translation into English. “Translation is more than just transferring,” was Madeleine Stratford’s rejoinder.

Stratford, it should be noted, was a commanding presence throughout, speaking of the technical aspects of life in Canada as a literary translator: from the guidelines established for funding within the rules of the Canada Council (18 cents per word for prose, 25 cents a word for poetry translation), to what it takes to teach translation and to get established in the Canadian marketplace: “It’s really hard, you have to build a portfolio, you have to know people, you have to get your work in front of publishers.” Stratford also noted that publishers will often omit the names of translators from book covers, particularly in Britain. Throughout the panel discussion I was impressed by Stratford’s ability to make the case for translation. As she put it: “When you translate a piece of literary work in Canada, you contribute to Canadian culture.” Despite the heat, Stratford and Moore fielded with aplomb questions both technical and esoteric. I was happy to listen to writers from across Canada probe into the art of translation and enjoyed the opportunity to hear in one place a diversity of voices from within the Canadian literary community.

Renée Sarojini Saklikar writes thecanadaproject, a life-long poem chronicle that includes award-winning poetry, essays, and fiction. She is the inaugural poet laureate of Surrey, BC, and she collects poems about bees.

To Write is Human; To Edit, Divine

BY CHUCK BOWIE

As a writer, I’ve always felt like editors were a necessary evil. I’ve treasured and harboured the preconceived notion of the antagonistic, adversarial relationship between editor and writer. So there I was at a Book Summit panel on editing, something I’d forced myself to attend to satisfy the request of, ahem, the editor of *Write* magazine that I attend a session I wouldn’t otherwise, surprised by an unfamiliar feeling: empathy.

Could I really be feeling empathy for editors? Where did my preconceived notions disappear to? Before me was a panel of editors speaking about the long, hard hours they spent agonizing over the feedback they would soon have to give a writer on his or her way to a completed, book-ready manuscript. One by one, they got to me, mainly by sharing a simple truth that won me over: “Authors, we editors know it’s a hard life.”

The venue was a panel discussion delivering wonderful point-after-point wisdom from Anita Chong (McClelland & Stewart), Patrick Crean (HarperCollins), Pamela Mulloy (The New Quarterly), and Janice Zawerbny (freelance editor). They had placed themselves at our service to delve into the alchemy between editors and writers. I felt as if I was receiving trade secrets, which, in fact, I probably was.

In the “feeling out” period, where we gained some background from each of the panel speakers, I knew I would be in for a treat. They were invited by the moderator, Susan Scott, to employ anecdotes — the reader may understand this to mean “juicy editorial tidbits from industry insiders” — to illustrate the challenges and rewards each experienced as editors to the famous and the still trying.

One editor — an agent at the time — told this story: He had what he knew to be an excellent property, a manuscript he suspected would be big. But he also knew he would soon leave the business

to become an editor, so he referred the manuscript to a small publisher. That publisher subsequently went out of business and the agent-cum-editor had the chance, in his new role, to get it back. The book went on to become one of his most lucrative properties.

The editors also shared the things they look for in a submitted manuscript: First of all, good writing. Editors want commitment to the craft, for without it, you'll quit before you get started. They want chemistry: a "marriage partner" of sorts, an organic process, they want to "be on the same page" as their author, they want energy. And they want to hear the writer's voice, manifested through crackling prose. It's funny; the way they phrased it, it didn't seem too much to ask.

But then, they volunteered, as a caution, the other things they required. After acknowledging (again) that it is, indeed, a hard life, they reiterated the need for commitment. Anita pointed out, to quiet nods from the other panel members, that writers should not cloud their minds with dust jackets and marketing ploys until the manuscript has been completely and satisfactorily written, re-written, and edited to the very best of the editor/author team's collective abilities.

The author needs to be coachable and to not feel as if they are being bullied. They have to do the heavy lifting; editors ask questions — they don't solve everything. And there must be no yelling or crying. Outside of the range of the microphone, one editor muttered, "You yell, no subsequent contract." I had the impression this was a "just joking/not joking" comment. The panel ended this segment with a two-word observation: "Editors push."

It seemed at this point we had arrived at the Lightning Round, where pearls of wisdom were shared in the form of brief, pithy quotes. They were wonderful, and posters could be made from these:

"The code (notation) of a novel begins with the first sentence, and the first page." Writers must get these right.

"Genre writers need to know what their readers want." Other kinds of writers should not concern themselves with what readers think, until their book is completed.

"Books resist speed." Despite this bits and bytes age, the writing and editing of a book takes as much time as it takes.

"When one is house-hunting, the prospective purchaser projects themselves into the house, imagining how they would feel if it were theirs. Similarly, editors project themselves into the space of a book (manuscript)." If this (projection) is possible, they will do anything to help make it the best possible version of itself. But if they cannot (imagine occupying it), they won't accept it.

The insights shared by the panel kept the audience rapt. The bulk of the audience, editors and editor-students, wrote notes furiously, but we writers tried not to draw attention to ourselves. It isn't often we get to peek behind the curtain.


Chuck Bowie is a New Brunswick genre writer, an avid people-watcher, a closet introvert, and unapologetic Canadian. His third novel, Steal It All, drops in paperback later this year.



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Finally, KidLit Gets a Seat at the Adult Table

BY NADIA L. HOHN

I am a writer with a day job. While teaching elementary school, I have been looking for ways to make this writing thing work, opportunities to sharpen my craft. So I awaited the Canadian Writers' Summit, an event that I nicknamed "the mega-conference" to my writing friends, with the anticipation of a kid waiting for an ice cream truck on a hot summer's day. Like a kid, I wanted it all: my favourite flavour (workshops on writing for children and young adults); dairy-free soft-serve in a cup (accessibility, structure); sprinkles on top (diversity); topped with hot fudge and nuts (meeting famous authors and going to fancy wine and cheese affairs).

For children and young adult authors like me, there was a wide array of workshops. For a change, we KidLit writers felt welcome to the "adults' table" instead of the kids' menu: it was wine, steak, and caviar, a welcome change as children's and young adult authors were given space and respect and opportunities to hobnob with authors of different genres.

There was so much to take in at the conference it was sometimes a challenge to know which workshop to attend. I overlapped and skipped around over the two days. I went to the talk To MFA or Not to MFA for twenty minutes and then to the diversity panel presented by the Writers' Union. I attended an open mic reading after having left the open one-page critique for children's writers. Then I sprinted to Artists on Trial with poet laureate George Elliott Clarke, playwright Kat Sandler, and one of my mentors, young adult author Richard Scrimger. This was a laugh-out-loud event rated R for roast and raunchiness with attorneys, jury, judge, and stenographer.

But I wasn't done yet. I attended Big Issues in YA Literature after having left another panel, only then to leave to attend Kevin Sylvester's presentation, Author As Performer: Grabbing and Keeping Your Audience, which offered very practical advice for authors like me who are trying to develop my school and library presentations. Perhaps I was too ambitious, greedy even, trying to get to all of these workshops, but it could have been made a bit easier. Organizers, take note: The walks from one building or tent to another were arduous at times. Also, not having a printable or easily viewed schedule/map in advance made it challenging to pre-plan workshops.

Not surprisingly, I kept being drawn into the panels for YA and KidLit. The panel on dealing with serious issues in young adult writing focussed on autism and LGBTQ. I caught the tail end of this one but felt that more issues could have been included. Sharon Jennings' workshop on Writing Craft for Kids' Writers was more of a "how-to" guide to kids' writing. The case for Black Canadian children's literature was presented by Shauntay Grant, who discussed the importance of using Black English in the classroom, including discussion of how she used her book *Up Home* in schools.

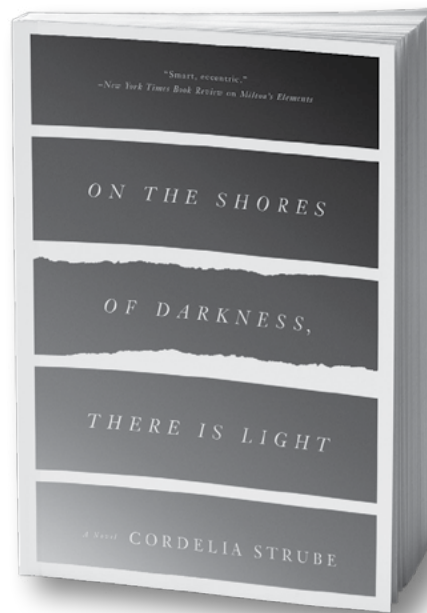
There were sumptuous nuggets of wisdom from the keynote speakers. I loved the intimate "fireside chats" with two of Canada's most known children's book authors — Kenneth Oppel and Jean Little. Oppel shared that "when you write a book for children,

you write for adults as well." I have often seen author Jean Little attending CANSCAIP meetings with her guide dog, but it was fitting to see this eighty-four-year-old on stage speaking about her early start in writing. After hearing Jean Little, there was a reception — one of a few held during the conference. We were able to relax, talking and networking with fellow writers across genres. We do not get enough opportunities to mingle like this. Sadly, I missed both Lawrence Hill's and Nalo Hopkinson's lectures, but at least I managed to get Hopkinson to autograph her latest book and take a photo with me.

Although diversity was apparent in the keynotes for the conference, I still wanted to see more diversity in the actual panels and amongst the attendees of the conference. We Need Diverse Books has been a major discussion in the American publishing industry. How is it being played out here in Canada? Also, some of the workshops with similar topics and issues could have been combined so as to prevent overlap. Finally, more attention could be paid to scheduling workshops aimed at similar genres in different time slots. These are definitely areas for growth and improvement. In all, the Canadian Writers' Summit was a formidable first-time effort and a conference needed in so many ways. I cannot wait to see how it evolves for the next one in 2018.

Nadia L. Hohn is a teacher and children's author. Her first picture book, Malaika's Costume, was published by Groundwood Press, and a sequel will appear in 2017.

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To Explore and End Suffering: A New Poetic Form

BY LAKSHMI GILL

One of my Punjabi father's stories in my childhood was about a stranger you might encounter on an early morning walk. If you looked this person in the eye, the story went, it meant that your life would be changed. I can't remember whether things would get better or worse. But I always remember the moral of the tale: There is power in the chance meeting.

All my life I've had the good fortune to have met people who have been supportive of my creative efforts. When I entered Canada in August 1964 to take up a master's degree at UBC, my first phone call was from Earle Birney who had been told by my Western Washington University professor and fellow poet, Knute Skinner, that I had arrived. Now that's a Malcolm Gladwell outliers moment — to be handed from tutor to tutor. Prospective writers are no geniuses. They have mentors, patrons, editors, collaborators, friends with similar interests and disciplines who inspire them and each other.

I was thirty-five when my father died in 1979. The chance meeting with Death, too, is a life-changing moment. It is somewhat like Siddhartha seeing an old man, a diseased person, and a decayed corpse for the first time. Strangers. Should you look them in the eye? And if you do, what can you do with all that suffering?

Since then, I have sought a way to end the suffering condition. As a Socialist and Liberal Humanist, I found the pragmatic ways. As a poet, I had to create my own.

Because I was trained as an academic, my initial impetus was to look at classical Greek forms of poetry, specifically ones that dealt with emotions (pathopoeia). There is a preponderance of negative expressions: *ara*, *bdelygmia*, *cataplexis*, *categoria*, *epilexis*, *mycterismus*, *onedismus*, *proclees*, *sarcasmus*. Next to those aggressive assertions are the forms that lose hope and lament in extremis: *anamnesis*, *apocarteresis*, *threnos*. At the opposite end are a few positive, joyful ones: *paramythia*, *medela*, *paeanismus*. Then emotions are so heightened that the poet falls into fragmented speech and silence: *apostrophe*, *ecphonesis*, and my favourite — *aposiopesis*.

I, myself, fell into that last stage by 1997. My poems had been negative, hopeless, positive, fragmented, then silent. They had

mirrored my life to the extent that my doctor told me that if I spoke beyond five minutes at any one time, I would lose my voice. Thus, no more live performances or interviews. Aposiopesis — from the Late Latin, from Greek *aposiōpēsis*, from *aposiōpan* to be fully silent, from *apo-* + *siōpan* to be silent, from *siōpē* silence.

The general feeling in these classical Greek forms is one of adversarial debate as in a courtroom, two barristers arguing against each other, or personal conflicts that end in exhaustion much like TS Eliot's bang/whimper conundrum, or the nihilist's no exit. Humanity was in a perpetual battleground and poets sang its war cries. The aftermath of war is deadening silence.

My enlightenment came at the age of sixty. I was sitting across from my mother in her apartment having tea when I suddenly realized that she had been using me for her purposes since I was sixteen. This is a long story and irrelevant here, but my point is that I finally looked into the eyes of all the malignant narcissists and non-empaths in my life and saw there a cause of suffering. Aging, disease, and death cannot be avoided, but the eradication of the Self as a treatment for their cure is an extreme solution.

I began to seek out a new poetic form. Eventually, I decided to call this form *sagama*, from the Punjabi word for confluence. The denotation is the coming together, meeting, flowing, or gathering at one point of two or more streams as in rivers but, in connotation, of people.

I say eventually, because I wasn't there yet.

In November 2015 I accepted an invitation from a kind friend to read my work. As it was a long list of performers, we were given five to ten minutes each, which was my doctor's prescribed limit for speech. He also prescribed Propanolol because I was nervous to the core. I intended to read the five-minute poem I had timed at my home rehearsal, but this new drug in my system kicked in to make me rant and rave onstage for five minutes beforehand. One of the organizers must have sensed my disorientation because he was suddenly in my eye by adjusting the microphone which surprised me into silence. Now, because of my life experiences, my first thought was his purpose: Here was this white man, silencing me with his eyes. Like Byron who used to compose poems on horseback, I, too, am hit by poetry anytime — driving, showering, sleeping — and this poem went through my brain while we stared at each other.

The Curator Fixes My Mic (An Anthypophora)

Is he after the perfection of technology
or the capture of my voice?

But the poet's words should dissolve
in gradations of soundwaves

like battered relics, eroded memories,
half-limbs, blind gazes.

Sahib, I will not be re-colonized.

After the drug wore off several days later, I realized he was trying to save me from embarrassment. As the whole thing was recorded on video (without permission!), my vanity must now suffer humiliation as long as that technology survives. This is the *sagama* I wrote four months after that event. It is the acceptance state which will be explained shortly when I describe the structure of the *sagama*.

Caritas: Excitation for a Ground State

Shield me from selfkill with the aurora in your eyes.

Glow around me. How did you divine it?

How did you see what was hidden, O Northern Light?

The rain shadow dispels the clouds.

In this last darkest coldest winter, your skies rouse my heart.

This young generation of fortysomethings is exceptional. Where we old witches and wizards were collegial and elitist, the new creative workers are professional and democratic. The twentieth century is the Old World. This century's New-World poetry is collaborative and infusive. But more than that, it is inevitably mind-bending. In December 2015, this experience led me to consolidate my *sagama* theories into a structure. Confluence. I had met strangers and looked them in the eye; now, a stranger, whom I had not seen, looked me in the eye with the consequence, not of my silence, but of my true voice. Compassion and self-restraint: power. Can these traits be nurtured through poetry? By studying the undersongs of humanity, can we achieve a more pacific world?

STRUCTURE OF SAGAMA

It starts with one character (a Catalyst), but it develops into a look at another character or group of characters (a Receiver/s) as in the confluence of two or more streams, but instead of a juxtaposition or contrast as in haiku or catachresis, it's connectivity, relationship, collaboration, all done through indirection like an illusionist's hand.

Modern poetry which seems to be *sagama* is different because what resolution may transpire at the end of the poem is for the narrative voice alone, not for both Catalyst and Receiver. A scan of the words Confluence and Poetry online seems to fall into *sagama* ("Confluence" by Sandra Marchetti and "Confluence" by Yusef Komunyakaa), but if one reads the poems, they are descriptive, beautifully insightfully so, but unresolved. They fall into the old concept that a poem "must not mean but be;" "poems don't make anything happen."

Even the most published Indian women poets, despite their very significant political and social currency, fall into old thinking: the view that "a poet is a contrarian" (Arundhati Subramaniam) is classical Greek. To what end? To win a point? To re-phrase Amy Winehouse: The world is a losing game.

Let me just play this puzzling game.

There's no limit in lines or syllables, style or format, because the focus is on the developing consequences of the connection, the effects of the Catalyst on the Receivers, just as political (global and/or local) events affect personal lives. Thus, the poet is free to render these ideas in as many lines or different forms as needed to fully express them.

I've looked at three possible themes for *sagama*: human connection, environment or nature, and abstract or ideas.

THE CATALYST

Sagama always begins with the Catalyst — the character who will infuse ideas into other characters to the extent that those ideas

will alter, amend, influence, inverse, break, break open, bewilder, disturb their mindsets. This is what I mean by mind-bending.

This infusion can be achieved in three ways: a) powerfully; b) subtly; c) indirectly. A powerful Catalyst is dominating, conquering, subjugating. A subtle Catalyst is persuasive, manipulative, controlling. An indirect Catalyst is hidden, elusive, self-effacing. Think a) Emperor; b) Machiavelli; c) Rasputin or the bearded guy with the pointy hat behind the arras.

The poet can use the Catalyst in a positive or negative way; however, an indifferent way would be more challenging. Indifferent can mean a) detached; b) balanced; c) impersonal (paradoxically unemotional in such an emotional context). Whichever stance the poet may use depends on the traits of the Catalyst.

The first line must introduce the Catalyst who can then be either followed throughout the poem or not. If two lines are needed for the introduction, so let it be.

THE RECEIVER/S

The Receiver, like the Catalyst, is significant only as a character in a literary life. The focus of *sagama* is the confluence of the two, the result of their symbiotic relationship. Although the rest of the poem may extend to as many lines as needed to expand the poet's ideas, the content of these lines must focus on how the Receiver is influenced by the Catalyst.

Reactions depend on the mental and emotional capacities of the Receiver. These are a) vulnerability; b) dependency; c) compatibility; d) acceptance.

In the vulnerable state, a Receiver may not be intellectually or emotionally strong to resist a powerful Catalyst. In the dependency state, a Receiver may act like a child and accept the "parental" authority of the Catalyst. In the compatibility state, a Receiver may agree with the Catalyst because they share similar concepts. In the acceptance state, a Receiver may be equal to the Catalyst, so much so that the Receiver will respect the Catalyst, and the two of them will share their separate theses for the good of all.

EXAMPLES

1. The Human Connection

I am in my seventies and still bewildered by human behaviour. I don't understand violence. I've read theories by criminologists and lean towards a neurological dysfunction explanation but not everyone is psychopathic or sociopathic; even the most inert human can inflict pain.

Love Where the Days are Hot

Imelda, eyes dazzled, sits up on her bed
as the piles of cash grow higher.

Ferdinand, as to his Isabella, crinkles
the silk sheets with more bills that she must
double up her legs to her chest (for you for you
the owl in his head hoots) and says, my bride,

my beauty, my birdsong in our long long
life of sunrises our coffers filled in the kingdom
of my heart (for you for you) and, smiling, adds,
all your past lovers I've killed.

Brief analysis: The female Machiavellian Catalyst uses her wiles to manipulate her compatible Receiver husband to retain her power, but the murders make her an accomplice.

Prayer Cell

Creeping in on his cane, he interrupts our *tête-à-tête* to say
that it is time for her to go to her room to pray.

She whips up as fast as her creaking knees allow
and tells me, her guest, it will only be an hour
for the daily novenas, rosary, meditations,
spiritual exercises, prayers for family and friends —
including you! — and I nod my thanks. Well, now.
Fifty-year wedlock. I watch her half-drunk tea
turn cold.

Brief analysis: Here's a once-sociable wife (vulnerable Receiver) who has been brainwashed by her religious husband (Emperor Catalyst).

2. The Environment/Nature

As part of the world, humans relate to their habitat. Which/ whoever is Catalyst or Receiver depends on the poet's intentions. It may be that there is an inversion of roles here. The environment might be so powerful or insidious that it overwhelms the Catalyst. A symbiotic relationship can be positive, negative, or neutral for the organisms involved. It can be good for both, good for one but bad for the other, or good for one but not destructive for the other. One may thrive in a good environment, or a great place may be obstructive for the person living there, or it may be a great place but it doesn't affect the person in any way for some reason such as attitude, discipline, distractions, or ability to cope.

Hong Kong Ghost Notes

In the end, it's the loneliness that'll get you:

eating roasted pigeons in Lamma
shopping for piece goods you don't need —
a shirt in Sham Shui Po, a skirt in Mongkok —
meeting the nod in the eye of other foreigners in Wan Chai
sharing secrets like drunken businessmen during Happy Hour
cruising with gays in Lan Kwai Fong for that acrobatic weekend
walking up the Peak for more photos of the harbour smog
photographing the snotballs on the ground
looking for their best light angle and concrete texture
watching desperate johns hanging on to suziwongs
listening to despairing poets in Central dives
attending am-drams of expats reliving old college repertory
soon you're really enjoying them
soon you're really laughing at the jokes

out loud through the noise at 5 a.m. when Lockhart Road
 construction joins the giggling woman singing at 4 a.m.
 after the angry yelling man at 3, the rats scurrying at 2,
 the ten-year-old boy jumping off his highrise window at 1,
 soon you're really desiring, configuring the money
 through the smells of public toilets, hanging carcasses,
 the old woman and her cart at 6 a.m. sweeping up produce
 soon the dust begins to dance in the half-light
 you imagine he loves you
 you believe you're full
 you smile in satisfaction Cheshire-cat-like
 you disappear

Brief analysis: A "ghost note" in music is muted, almost silent,
 rhythmic, softly percussive in sound. Here, the Catalyst is so immersed
 and overwhelmed by the environment that she becomes a Receiver.

Northern Mountain Top

Beyond the crooked wood line, nothing grows.

At the extreme edge, spruce give up their spine,
 kneel to holy tundra, kiss the ice,
 their world abruptly matted to one spot
 where their frost-bit roots kill feelings.
 If they could, they'd lift their heads,
 demand sunshine like tamaracks.
 If they could, they'd turn to the timberline
 where it all began, redress the issue,
 move a metre off, let the other conifer
 push on to hit the alpine wind.
 After all's said and done, the final border
 crossed is the Barren.

Brief analysis: This symbiotic relationship of Catalyst and Receiver
 is inevitably neutral because of its nature's "nature" but indirectly
 negative if the poet's belief is that barrenness is negative, or
 directly positive if being barren is an acceptable end.

3. The Abstract

As philosophical or pseudo-philosophical creatures, humans seek
 abstract thoughts. These, too, are fodder for sagama. Can an idea
 be a character? A Catalyst or Receiver? Can logic have emotions?
 Only if you're half-human like Spock? Or android? I don't know.
 I'm a tinker, not a thinker (yeah, yeah, a stinker, ha ha). For now,
 let me play with it.

Brushes

Here's an existential choice.

Bristle's best; not sable.
 Flat soft hair a quarter
 to half inch. When done
 clean immediately with warm water.

It's their long life you're after.
 None of this dying young unable
 to be useful. Gone is gone.

Brief analysis: The choice is for perseverance in the struggle of
 one's art/life, rather than suicide. Bristle is tougher than sable
 when maintained properly/carefully.

At the Funeral

This winter tale is of eternity:

pushing out of the forest floor full
 of aphids and the larvae of moths
 feasting on leaves. A dead tree
 stands defiantly against the dark
 refusing to fall as the surprised liana
 climbs on its amputated arm and folds.

Trees decay, fallen one over another
 onto springtail mouths and closed seeds
 sleeping, waiting for an aubade, life-song
 of the sun that's felt in the ancestral bone.
 Tangled trunks rot into soil, blur walls,
 become blind in their dotage, become one
 with fungi, earth, worm. Without boundaries,

wood pushes away from the coffin to twilight —
 that cow dust time, that blue hour, that stopped
 sun when light stuns dark, when balance tips
 on eggshell point, holds the foetus fast before
 it bursts open.

Brief analysis: This isn't really a Nature poem despite the heavily
 described nature because it takes a philosophical stance for life-
 affirmation. The Catalyst (funeral event) is also a Receiver (life is
 an eternal tale).

CONCLUSION

I was born a foreigner in a foreign land. In 1966, Dorothy Livesay
 said of my first book in Canada: "What emerges most strongly
 perhaps is an *identity*: a personality unafraid to say its piece,
 unafraid of treading on toes, of bowing or praising."

I belong nowhere and that's all right. I have been marginalized
 which led to fragmentation but I never believed that I was off-
 centre whatever/wherever that silly centre was. It was bloody
 annoying but I'm grateful that I've lived this long to zen out my
 annoyance. Practising sagama is the poetsword puzzle that gets
 me through the days.

*Lakshmi Gill, of Punjabi/Spanish parentage, came to Canada in 1964.
 She and Dorothy Livesay were the first women members of the League
 of Canadian Poets in its inception in 1966. She is the author of six
 works of poetry and prose and has been anthologized extensively. She
 lives in Vancouver.*

Fiction

Paper

BY DENNIS VANDERSPEK



"I have this idea for a story," the lawyer said, spooning sugar into his coffee and stirring. His wife continued to scrape a pair of fried eggs onto two pieces of buttered rye bread on a plate in the middle of the table. The eggs had cooked together, and she steadied the heavy iron skillet in one hand while sawing with the spatula.

"Mhm," she said. One yolk was still intact; the other broke and ran around the pan in a quick ring, golden and then white.

"Actually, it started out as a dream. I dreamt there was a ferry from the mainland loaded with people and cars. Then there was a storm and all the people ran to one side to look, and the ferry flipped over, because of the shift in weight. Capsized."

"Huh." She sat down opposite the lawyer and handed him one of the egged slices. "Nice dream. Real cheery. Salt?"

"No, no — yes. That wasn't the whole thing, though. In my dream — in the story — everyone survives. It's a miracle. A huge ferry loaded with cars runs into trouble half-way from Caribou and flips over in the Northumberland. You can picture it: That shiny red hull turned up to the sky, beautiful and strange, bobbing in the waves. But everyone lives. They all... swim to shore, I suppose. And the ferry is beached upside down. It runs aground."

"Everyone lives? Even the captain? Eat your egg. But how do they swim ashore, really? It's the Atlantic. It's freezing. You wouldn't last two minutes."

"Even the captain. Everyone lives," he said. "So they swim ashore and go back to their regular lives. One's a carpenter, one's a farmer, one's a teacher, one's a grandmother. Everyone lives."

"I guess that's better than it started. At least there's a happy ending." Morning sunlight streamed through the bay window. The white tablecloth and plates underlit their faces with an eggshell glow. The house was silent. Outside the window, a row of maples already starting to turn flanked a gravel road running to the water's edge.

"No, because that's not the end. Everyone lives, but nobody can write anything down to tell about it. As soon as they do, they disappear. Completely."

"Disappear?"

"Yes. Completely. Poof. No one actually sees it happen, but it happens every time."

The lawyer was becoming excited. His lawyer's instinct guided him: He was pleading to an invisible jury that would adjudicate what was plausible and what invented. His job was to make them see another world separate from their own but joined to it, like a second egg. The trick was to make sure his clients, at least, were telling him the whole truth, whatever he told the court. How else could he help them?

"And no one sees it happen, this... disappearing? No one says anything?"

"Right. It goes on like this for a long while. Gradually all the people who were on the ferry realize that each of them is compelled to describe the event in some way. It starts to bother them, to torment them, like an obsession. But they can't write it down: as soon as pen touches paper, bingo, gone. So they draw instead. They can't resist: Each of them doodles or paints their memory of the miracle, how they escaped death. One by one they go down to the beach and pin the picture to the rusting hull of the ferry, next to the other pictures."

"Pins?" His egg was getting cold; hers was almost gone.

"Affixes. With waterproof tape. A paperclip spot-welded. It doesn't matter. The point is that one by one they listen to this voice and recreate the tragedy. Each puts his picture with the others and goes away. Still, though, they disappear. Each one of them goes back his or her house and is never seen again. In the end there's just the pictures."

"That's how it ends? But that's nothing, just a bunch of pictures and no people. Even for a dream that's nothing. What's the last line?"

But he never told her, because he had taken the first bite of his egg and was chewing energetically, his jaw working as though he were still talking. But she was right: In the end that's all there was — just an upturned hull on a beach decorated with colourful pictures, pictures fluttering in the breeze, pictures making a sound like paper fluttering in the breeze.

Incunabula

BY DENNIS VANDERSPEK

Preamble

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For the purpose of this agreement “you” will refer to you and “I” will not.

Similar agreements you may have are hereby categorically rescinded.

Section 01

It is conceded that you are here by invitation. It is further conceded that I may have invited you.

At this time you may at least provisionally consider whether the Preamble was in fact entirely complete and accurate. For instance, you now have conditional permission to retain, store, reproduce, transmit, and retrieve whatever you can of the foregoing, concurrent, or succeeding. You may choose to remember these terms silently to yourself in unguarded moments. During a crisis, if a sentence or phrase contained herein for which you have formed a special attachment rises unbidden to your mind, this is now permitted. If you are standing in a bus stop on a rainy night

in December trying to decide whether to go home, you may even recall with a certain wistfulness that here at least your belonging was unquestioned.

Still here? Then you may provisionally infer a certain level of mutual dependency.

It has become necessary to revise a prior term. When I said “I,” I was not entirely myself.

So let us begin again. You may not leave, not when we have only just started.

Section 02

Gilgamesh was king in Uruk. He had a body like a lion and a bull. The sun god shone from his face. Have you seen the ramparts of Uruk? Carved stone and fire-hardened brick. There is none like them. He was a good king.

Gilgamesh was alone. He fought everyone. The people cried to heaven for a companion, and Enkidu appeared. His hair was long and his body was like a lion and a bull.

Enkidu arrived in Uruk. He looked like a bridegroom. Gilgamesh prevented him from entering his house, and they fought like lions. Gilgamesh threw Enkidu down, and they became inseparable.

Together they defeated the Bull of Heaven and the giant Humbaba on his cedar mountain. But Enkidu became sick. He prayed against his death. Shamash, the sun god, heard him and said Gilgamesh would wear the pelt of a lion and wander the desert wailing his name. Enkidu died happy.

Gilgamesh wore the pelt of a lion. He crossed the desert to find Utnapishtim, the wise old man who survived the flood, to learn the secret of death. Siduri, the young goddess, advised him to return to Uruk, to its strong walls, to find happiness in the hand of his child and arms of his wife. Gilgamesh refused. He found Utnapishtim, who said to become immortal he must stay awake one week. Gilgamesh failed. Utnapishtim relented and gave him a plant to restore youth. Gilgamesh left for home, but a snake stole the plant and slithered away, shedding its skin as it became young

again. Gilgamesh tore his hair and clothes but returned to Uruk. He saw its high walls of carved stone and fire-hardened brick. He saw his wife and child. He understood that immortality comes also through a life repeated in stories. This was Gilgamesh.

Section 03

You may ask where I am. I would ask you as well but under the terms this is not permitted. Where I sit there is a window, just one: it looks across a courtyard pale as moonlight. Twice a day a grey-haired man comes through a soundless gate to give a dish of milk to an orange and black tabby with a notched ear who slithers down a chimney to lap from the dish with its pale forked tongue. I watch the man. He wants to take the cat away, I am sure, but his reasons are entirely inscrutable, whether generous, nefarious, curious, compassionate, or scientific. But the milk is unmistakably a lure, whatever his other motives, and the man squats over the cat awkwardly as though for a sudden grab — and he is a thin, bony man with black suspenders to keep his pants on his pointy hips — while the cat licks, preens, and even sometimes rubs against the man's leg languorously, or mockingly, before stalking slowly away again and shedding its skin. Then the man straightens up and leaves.

Section 04

When the world turned ten it was green and bustling: Ossurians, Akkanatens, and more whose names I have forgotten. They are in my books.

During that time, long ago, there was a man who lived in a cavern. He would walk the perimeter of his prison in total darkness — he knew it that well, every inch. He trailed his fingertips over the ossified woodgrain, small ridges to large, and tried to imagine the whole chain from fusion to photosynthesis to saw, limestone, calcium, the skin of elephants, a cherry desk, a bunk bed, bookshelves; and he would wonder whether the trees' ghosts were embarrassed to find themselves so far underground and still showing every ring of youthful growth, every naked summer rippling out from the sun thrown in a pond; the trees were ashes and dust, but they lived on.

Section 05

For my tenth birthday I was given a typewriter and my brother got a puppy, a yellow lab. It was supposed to be for both of us, but it was something he wanted because he loved to fish and ride his bike in the woods behind our house, while I preferred the library or the basement. So it was really for him.

I wanted the typewriter because no one could read my

handwriting. But it was a struggle: it was manual rather than electric, the keys jammed, the ribbon left my fingers black when I flipped it over to prolong the ink, and there was no backspace like on a computer; everything was permanent. But it was mine, and it listened to me.

The first thing I wrote was a curse. I am ashamed to say this. You, however, have helped me remember, and I remember now perfectly: every word has been preserved. I could hear my brother playing with Sadie, the dog, and I went into the clothes closet we shared, and I sat with my typewriter in the dark with a little LED flashlight that I carried everywhere for safety and I wrote: i hope my broter will get sick and leav me Sadi that i wanted. It looked just like that.

The thing is, though, my brother really did get sick. In fact, he died. He got a fever, and then he was gone. And that wasn't all: other things I wrote started coming true, one by one, barely noticeable at first and only in my dreams, then larger and in real life.

Then I had a dream. One night after my brother died, alone on top of my bunk bed after I put the flashlight away, I saw a raven spiralling down slowly toward me, wheeling in a round space like a tunnel with a tiny sliver of light at the top. It was nothing, just a black bird, but it was the only bird there was, and I knew somehow the last I would ever see. It circled closer and closer; I got dizzy following it. It made a shadow that blinked the sliver of light on every revolution. And then I heard a voice, the voice of a hollow-headed giant roaring in my mind, and it bellowed in a long, ruinous, rumbling echo. And the raven vanished in a brilliant flash right over my head.

I ran to tell my parents, and of course they didn't believe me. Who would? They didn't listen until I wrote it down here and it came true, all of it. Then I was sent to my room.

Codicil

And so I remain in this grey concrete room with my typewriter and books and everything I could ever need. I discovered the switches and codes to keep the door locked from the inside, and after a long time reading learned from my library the laws to keep my stories safe. I still think of them sometimes at night, those first wild stories before I learned the law, and I see them rising and flying around the world on tongues of flame as in a dream, and I think how brightly they went out and how bright the day when you and I will be able to leave, when it is safe again, when it is safe.

Dennis Vanderspek lives and teaches in Peterborough, Ont. His current project is an illustrated collection of animal tales tentatively titled Baby's First Apocalypse.

Member Awards & News

Announcements

Charlottetown TWUC member **Jeff Bursey** announces his new book *Centring the Margins: Essays and Reviews* (Zero Books). The collection focusses on Canadian literature, little-known and forgotten writers, and works in translation — always with an eye to those writing outside the mainstream.

New member **André Narbonne** announces his first collection of award-winning stories, *Twelve Miles to Midnight* (Black Moss Press). The book abounds with intriguing and raw characters ranging from a mad oil tanker captain, a chef who refuses to cook, and a sex worker seeking transcendence.

Toronto member and *Write* editor **Hal Niedzviecki** is continuing with the online serialization of his novel *The Archaeologists*. Read chapters and follow along at archaeologistsbook.com. *The Archaeologists* will be published by ARP Books in September. There will be a co-book launch at the Gladstone Hotel, Toronto, Tuesday, October 18, featuring *The Archaeologists* and *The Conjoined* (ECW Press), the new novel by member **Jen Sookfong Lee**.

Awards

Member **Caitlin Hicks'** book *A Theory of Expanded Love* won Bronze in the Foreward Reviews' 2015 INDIEFAB Book of the Year Awards. The winners in sixty-six categories are considered the year's best books published by independent publishers, university presses, and self-published authors.

The shortlist for the Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children's Book Awards has been announced. Members on the list include **Dennis Lee** for *Melvis and Elvis* (HarperCollins); **Allan Stratton** for *The Dogs* (Scholastic Canada); **Eric Walters** for *Regenesi* (Doubleday Canada) and *Today Is the Day* (Tundra); and **Susin Nielsen** for *We Are All Made of Molecules* (Tundra Books).

The Leacock Medal for Humour has been awarded to **Susan Juby** for her novel *Republic of Dirt*, published by HarperCollins. Member **Terry Fallis** was also a finalist for his novel *Poles Apart* (McClelland & Stewart).

Peterborough, Ont., member **Janette Platana's** short story collection *A Token of My Affliction* (Tightrope Books) was among the shortlisted works nominated for the Trillium Prize.

Edmonton member **Laurel Deedrick-Mayne's** first novel *Awake for the Dreamland* is among those on the shortlist for the Alberta Reader's Choice Award, a first for a self-published title. Also in contention on the shortlist is member **Shawna Lemay** for *Rumi and the Red Handbag* (Palimpsest Press).

TWUC member **Heather O'Neill** won this year's Danuta Gleed Award for a first collection of short stories for her collection *Daydreams of Angels* (HarperCollins).

One Hundred Days of Rain (BookThug) by member **Carellin Brooks** is the winner of the International Publishing Triangle's 2016 Edmund White Award for Debut Fiction by an LGBT writer.

Vancouver's **Leah Horlick** has won the tenth annual Writers' Trust Dayne Ogilvie Prize for LGBT emerging writers.

Member **Michael Crummey** won the 2016 Newfoundland & Labrador Book Award for Fiction for his novel *Sweetland* (Penguin Random House). Member **Joan Clark** was also shortlisted for *The Birthday Lunch* (Knopf).

Several members were among the winners in the Ontario Library Association's Forest of Reading Competition. **Linda Bailey** won the Blue Spruce Award for *If Kids Ruled the World* (KidsCan); **Gordon Korman** won the Silver Birch Fiction Award for *Masterminds* (HarperCollins); and **Allan Stratton** won the Red Maple Award for *The Dogs* (Scholastic Canada).

Back over to Alberta where the 2016 Alberta Literary Awards winners included member **Jane Harris** of Lethbridge who was awarded the James H. Gray Award for Short Nonfiction for "The Unheard Patient" published in *Alberta Views* and member **Greg Hollingshead** who was awarded the WGA Golden Pen Award for Lifetime Achievement.

TWUC member **Lorna Crozier** won big at the League of Canadian Poets Awards, taking home both the Pat Lowther Memorial Award and the Raymond Souster Award for her collection *The Wrong Cat* (McClelland & Stewart).

Shar Levine, TWUC member and children's book author of over 70 books, has been appointed to the Order of Canada.

New Members

Kelley B. Aitken, *Love in a Warm Climate*, The Porcupine's Quill, 1998

David Asher, *The Art of Natural Cheesemaking*, Chelsea Green, 2015

Terese Brasen, *Kama*, Outpost 19, 2016

Lisa Brown, *A Casualty of Grace*, Lisa Brown Books, 2016

Miji Campbell, *Separation Anxiety*:

A Coming of Middle Age Story, Writin'erant Press, 2015



Lyse Champagne, *The Light that Remains*, Enfield & Wizenty, 2016

Judith Chopra, *Something Worth Doing*, W.W. Norton, 1995

Paul Dean, *Come on with the Punt: March Hare Stories*, Pedlar Press, 2016

Sonia Di Placido, *Exaltation in Cadmium Red*, Guernica Editions, 2012

Michael Glassbourg, *Learn to Speak Film*, OwlKids, 2013

Sheryl Gordon, *A Rewording Life*, Create Space, 2015

Leslie Greentree, *A Minor Planet for You*, University of Alberta Press, 2006

Arnold Logan, *Springtime in Lawrence Park*, Fire and Ash Publishers, 2016



Donna Macdonald, *Surviving City Hall*, Nightwood Editions, 2016

Sophie J. Morgan, *Contradictions*, Bookland Press, 2015

Suzie Napayok-Short, *Wild Eggs*, Inhabit Media, 2015

André Narbonne, *Twelve Miles to Midnight*, Black Moss, 2016

Lenore Rowntree, *Cluck*, Thistledown, 2016

John L. Steckley, *The Eighteenth-Century Wyandot: A Clan-Based Study*, Wilfrid University Press, 2014

Damian Tarnopolsky,

Goya's Dog, Hamish Hamilton, 2009

Deborah Toogood, *Chasing the Phantom Ship*, Nimbus Publishing, 2016



Heather Tucker, *The Clay Girl*, ECW Press, 2016

THANK YOU

The Writers' Union of Canada would like to thank the following individuals for their generous donations:

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In Memoriam



Ken Stange

BY BARRY GRILLS

1946–2016

Canada, the North Bay area, and TWUC have lost a renaissance man. Long-time TWUC member Ken Stange died at home in North Bay on May 8. A special event to honour him as a writer, poet, colleague, husband to Ursula, father, and grandfather was held Saturday, May 25. It was crowded with friends.

I first met Ken at a reading not long after I moved to North Bay in 2003. I was reading somewhere with a cluster of other readers and Ken was in the audience. We would see each other on a regular basis at the North Bay monthly reading series, Conspiracy of 3, which dates from about three-and-a-half decades ago. He was often at TWUC gatherings, especially AGMs. He wasn't as big on the plenary sessions as he was on the socializing, but I have fond memories of ordering scotch out on the patio in Ottawa and walking the streets with him and Ursula, four of us — my wife, Jennifer Rouse Barbeau, with us. (Ken and Ursula celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary a few months before his death.) Ultimately, TWUC member Steve Pitt formed a writers' enclave in this area called, with tongue in cheek, NOLL, Northern Ontario Leading Lights, and Ken was a constant participant before he fell ill. Mostly this group meets for lunch. Sometimes, though, its members hold public readings together.

I say renaissance man. Ken Stange was a writer, visual artist, occasional scientific researcher, and Professor Emeritus at Nipissing University, where he taught psychology for forty years, including a course on the Psychology of Art, which he continued to teach online after his retirement from Nipissing. He worked in many forms and liked to mix his media. His works included poetry, fiction, nonfiction, journalism, scientific research reports, computer programs, philosophical essays, visual art, a weekly blog about interesting ideas. (His book *A Smoother Pebble, A Prettier Shell*, published by Penumbra Press, was a collection of his art works integrated with poems and an extended essay on the relationship of science to visual art.)

Writing remained his primary passion. His works included nineteen books of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction, and hundreds of publications in literary magazines. He won the 2011 Vanderbilt/Exile prize for short fiction. He called all his books “hypotheses”

because of his interest in the integration of the sciences and the arts. For over a decade he devoted much of his energy to his recently published nonfiction trilogy about the similarities and differences of creativity in the arts and the sciences: *Secret Agents Past*, *Secret Agents Present*, and *Secret Agents Future*.

His other recent books include a collection of short fiction, (*God When He's Drunk*, 2012); a work combining his art with his tanka poems (*Embracing The Moon: 25 Little Worlds*, 2013); a memoir of a bike trip with his son from New Orleans back to Canada (*Going Home: Cycling Through The Heart Of America*, 2014); and a tongue-in-cheek guide to Canada (*Explaining Canada: A Primer For Yanks*, 2014).

He was still working at the time of his death. Current works-in-progress include a new collection of poetry (*DiVerse Dedications*), a collection of aphorisms (*Hippokritic Oaths*), and a memoir (*Chicago Days: Growing Up Absurd On The South Side*).

He also published articles in computer magazines, wrote commercial software for test evaluation, was an arts columnist, and published in refereed scientific journals on empirical aesthetics, statistics, and computer research applications. He presented papers at numerous international conferences, most of which relate to creativity, and in 2011 gave a TEDx talk on “Redefining Creativity.” He was the founder and editor of *Nebula* magazine from 1975 to 1984 and in later years, edited the reincarnated *Nebula* as a very “unperiodical” internet publication committed to interesting work that often bridged the “two cultures” of science and art.

As a visual artist interested in the interface between the visual and literary arts, as well as the boundary between science and art, the computer seemed the perfect medium with which to explore these colourful “grey” areas. So his visual art always contained textual elements. These digital works were collaged together from digital photographs, mathematical experiments with such things as fractals, freehand (or rather “free-mouse”) drawing, and image manipulation tools — with the textual element as a sort of glue. The final digital image is called a “construction.”

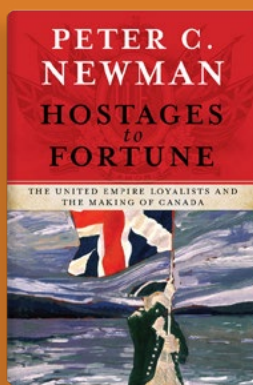
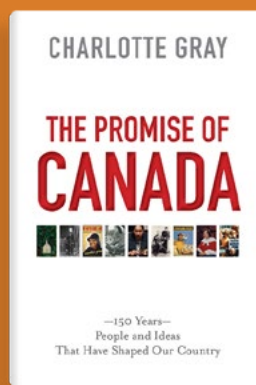
The digital images are then individualized when creating hard-copy works by running monoprints, each of which is made unique by carefully varying some feature of the original digital image for the printing process. He had numerous juried and curated exhibitions of his prints, and his work is represented in numerous public and private collections. His latest book, *Art's In The Head, Not The Hand*, is a full-colour retrospective of his digital art.

Ken was also a member of PEN and the League of Canadian Poets. On the night we paid tribute to him in May, some of his books were on sale and a series of jars — for Amnesty International, PEN, the LCP, and TWUC — collected funds raised in the book sales to be donated to these various organizations he respected and supported.

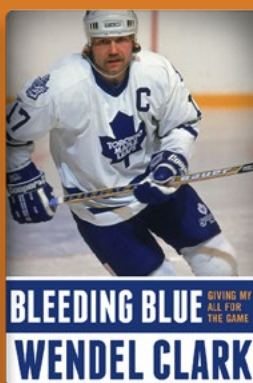
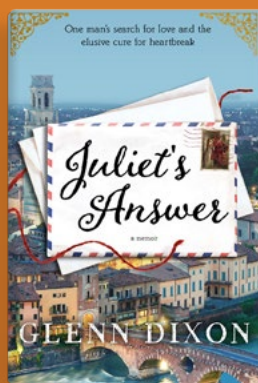
A friend to literature, science, and worthwhile organizations is gone. Ken Stange is missed deeply by so many of us.



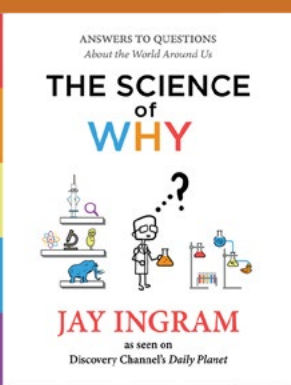
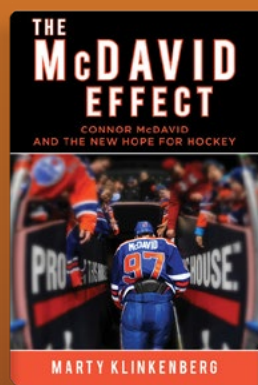
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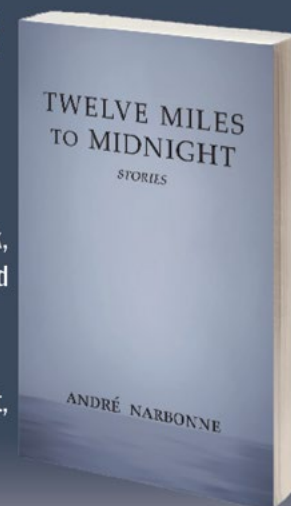
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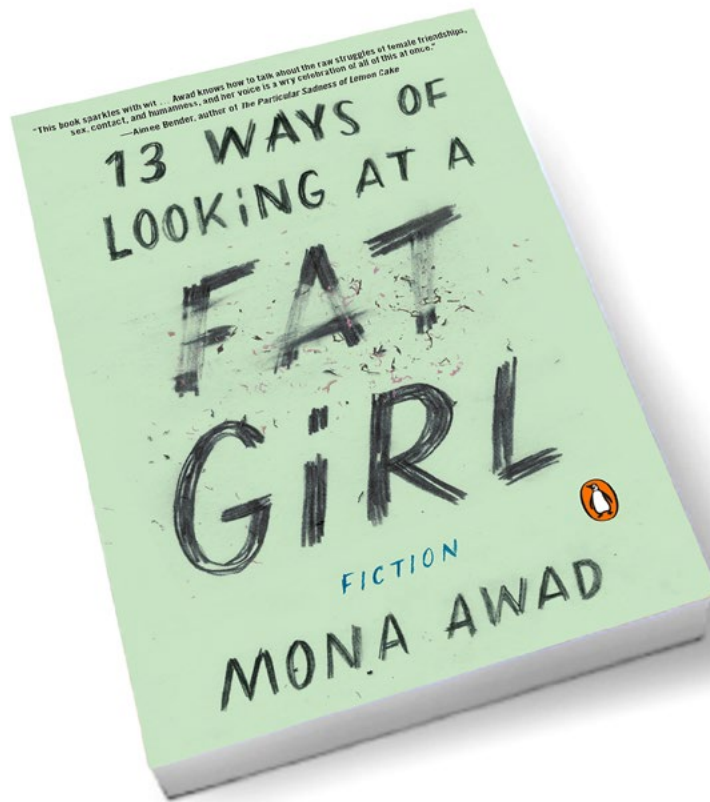
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