

**WRITE**

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

VOLUME 47 NUMBER 4  
WINTER 2020

## A Chat with a Translator

**7**

## How to Successfully Pitch to Book Bloggers

**8**

## Writing Through Mental Illness

**17**



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*Early this morning, I gave the cats their cookies, poured my tea, and opened my email. TWUC member Arthur Slade's monthly note was there, along with too many "Act now!" "Huge Discount!" and "You are eligible for" messages.*

I deleted the spam and settled in to read Art's personable update. That he finds time for a monthly letter astounds me, but even more impressive is his mastery. He begins with a grin and ends with a respectful: "Thanks for being a reader."

That's the thing, isn't it? According to last year's *More Canada* report, purchases of Canadian books by Canadian readers dropped by 50 percent over the past two decades, with library borrowing rates at the time of the study at only 7 percent. TWUC's position is that this is due in part to a lack of public awareness about which books are Canadian-authored in the wave of non-Canadian titles pouring into our market. We appreciate our continued readers, many of whom are already "plugged in" to a variety of Canadian programs and aware of highly celebrated book awards such as the Scotiabank Giller Prize, the Griffin Poetry Prize, and the Governor General's Literary Awards. But what of those who aren't?

Today I arranged a meeting with a Member of Parliament. His well-spoken executive assistant had never heard of the GGs.

After swearing in his new cabinet ahead of the holidays, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau directed Heritage Minister Steven Guilbeault to introduce legislation that would force online video streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney Plus to offer "meaningful levels" of Canadian content. Setting aside my bitter first thought that "meaningful levels" without clear definition means about as much as "fair dealing," government should apply the same requirement to international book retailers selling across the border to Canadians.

As Canadian writers, we do what we can. We use social media. We tour. We educate the executive assistants of lawmakers. Sometimes we pay for our own ads and promotional materials while publishers blame bare bones marketing dollars on shrinking sales and subsidies.

A common argument from John Q. Public is that there shouldn't be subsidies. Industry should compete with industry.

Canada is a small market, which means most publishing houses, especially small independents whose bread and butter comes from the Canadian market only, cannot compete with industry giants from large market countries. For this reason, our Canadian industry needs government support. It needs protection.

We know from reports and personal anecdote that Canadians are interested in reading Canadian stories, whether set in this country or elsewhere, whether rooted in history or current physical, political, and social landscapes. Our stories are rooted in *Canadian* values. *Our* sensibilities. *Our* respect for difference and diversity. They reflect our collective culture, which should be of utmost importance to our Government leaders.

In Quebec, government acknowledges the importance of culture and creates policies that promote and celebrate its arts and artists. If our federal, regional, and municipal governments in other parts of Canada did the same, our writing and publishing industry would be healthier, and more of our writers might have a hope of raising writing-related income levels above the poverty line.

In December, TWUC Executive Director John Degen and I travelled to Ottawa where we called upon lawmakers to fix the *Copyright Act* by instituting key recommendations from last year's Department of Heritage *Shifting Paradigms* report. We also told them Ottawa could do a better job of raising public awareness of and access to our Canadian books and authors.

I may have been overly familiar with Senator Patricia Bovey, who years ago taught a University of Winnipeg class on arts policy that I had the pleasure of taking. There's that respect thing again. She was gracious and returned my hug. She also shared details about her Cultural Bill of Rights, which she hopes to present to Government later this year. Her feeling is that the arts, rather than being "siloeed," should be implemented in every part of government and inform all policy making.

The work continues. I expect John will have more detail in his report of this work and our meetings in Ottawa. Let us continue to look for opportunities to raise awareness of Canadian books and authors through programs such as I Read Canadian, which launches this month. To quote my brilliant friend, TWUC member and director of the Thin Air Winnipeg International Writers' Festival, Charlene Diehl, "We have some serious work to do, and we have a lot of tools at our disposal to do that work."

In other news, the cats are back and looking for more cookies.

Thanks for reading, and, above all, thanks for being a writer. In the beginning and the end, it's about our stories.

# Contents WINTER 2020

- 3 Chair's Report
- 5 Writing Rights
- 6 Editor's Note
- 6 Letter to the Editor

## WRITER'S BLOT

- 7 Industry Q & A

## FEATURES

- 8 A How-to Guide for Pitching Book Bloggers  
BY ANNE LOGAN
- 11 Writing Extremely Well: The Secret Formula Behind  
Compressed Writing Competitions  
BY JULES TORTI

## DISPATCHES

- 14 Four Types of Nicknames: An Oft-Forgotten Tool  
in the Writer's Kit Box  
BY WENDEE GUTHRIE
- 16 Archiving My Literary Papers: Revisiting People  
and Projects, and Earning a Tax Receipt Too  
BY DENNIS GRUENDING
- 17 Excluded Voices = Expendable Humans  
BY ANITA DOLMAN

## POETRY & ESSAY

- 18 Birding for Bill  
BY CRYSTAL HURDLE
- 19 What Is It About Travel that Inspires the Muse?  
BY DONNA WOOTON

## MEMBER NEWS & AWARDS

- 20 Announcements
- 20 Awards
- 22 New Members
- 24 NEWS
- 25 IN MEMORIAM

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# Writing Rights

## The Value of Community

By John Degen



The *Guardian* newspaper reports that Great Britain has shuttered almost 800 libraries in the last decade, with 8,700 paid library staff laid off, resulting in a decline in library visits of approximately 89 million. A cynic might say these numbers suggest that libraries and books are simply no longer valued the way they were even a decade ago, but that's not how I read it. Remove libraries from communities and, of course, fewer people will visit libraries. With no library to visit, how exactly would one visit?

Around the same time these dire stats were reported, the *Times of London* profiled a new(ish) British organization called the Reading Agency. This service sends volunteers into the homes of seniors, books in hand, to read aloud to them. From the *Times* story:

The idea of one-to-one reading at home came from Cheryl Hesketh, who runs the charity's Reading Friends programme in Conwy and is services manager for Conwy Library. She noticed that older book-lovers who use Conwy's home library service, including Mrs. Roberts, often wanted to chat to staff who dropped off their books. Many were lonely.

From humble beginnings, the Reading Agency has grown to serve over a million people in Great Britain. It is a registered charity, dependent on donations for its survival. It simply can't be a coincidence that this organization was created during the same period of government austerity that brought about all those library closures. The disappeared libraries left a vacuum; The Reading Agency came along to try, in a small way, to fill that empty space. It was the community's way of taking care of itself in the absence of government support.

In Canada, we are also dealing with an empty space issue. While we've had our share of budget pressures on libraries, our problem is less about access to book collections in general than it is access to books by Canadian authors. The void we face is a perceived lack of Canadian stories for Canadian readers in all of the places one might expect to find them. Recent studies have shown that Canadian-authored books make up only 7 percent of our library loans, there has been a 50-percent drop in sales of Canadian-authored books in bookstores, and as far as our classrooms go there are almost no standards in place for encouraging the teaching of Canadian books.

The Union has been tracking these trends for a long time. Our Books in Schools letter-writing campaign and the launch of a new task force aimed at increasing awareness of Canadian books in our various markets complement the non-stop advocacy we do with all levels of government to encourage stronger supports for writing and publishing in Canada.

As you know, advocacy is a long game. It took over 40 years of concentrated lobbying by the Canadian Authors Association,<sup>i</sup> the League of Canadian Poets, and The Writers' Union of Canada (among others) to finally bring about Canada's Public Lending Right program. We can't anticipate reversing these distressing Canadian readership trends overnight. But we can, as a community, step in to do something about them in the immediate term.

Last year, folks at many writing- and reading-related organizations received a phone call from young-adult and children's author Eric Walters. Eric is a prolific author and school visitor, and he was justly concerned with the dearth of Canadian work taught in our schools. He had an idea. Thus was born I Read Canadian ([ireadcanadian.com](http://ireadcanadian.com)), a national campaign headlined by the Canadian Children's Book Centre, the Ontario Library Association, and the Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators and Performers (CANSCAIP).

TWUC took part in the original visioning day for I Read Canadian, and it's an exciting venture. February 19 has been declared I Read Canadian Day,<sup>ii</sup> on which Canadians of all ages are challenged "to 'Read Canadian' for 15 minutes and to share their experience at their library, in their school, with their families and friends, or on social media." Children's and young-adult author Sylvia McNicoll jumped on board on behalf of CANSCAIP and has helped to organize a series of video shoots of Canadian kidlit authors reading from their work.

This is how the community steps in when our traditional supports weaken. Congratulations to Eric, Sylvia, and everyone involved on the growing influence of I Read Canadian.

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<sup>i</sup> The CAA will be 100 years old in 2021.

<sup>ii</sup> If you missed the 2020 I Read Canadian Day, fear not; plans are already underway for 2021.

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## Editor's Note

By Rhonda Kronyk



January is typically a month to think about the future. Many set resolutions for the year, and gyms and rec centres across the country fill up for a couple months. I've never been successful with resolutions — I usually forget that I made them, so don't follow through. A few years ago I learned about a different process and have found it effective: I choose a word for the year and build an intention around that word. Then I look for creative ways to fit the word and intention into my life. I find that intentions allow me to look at my life in broader terms before I start thinking about specifics. This year, my word is "connections" and my intention is to strengthen my relationships with others.

I just completed the Member News section for this issue and was reminded about how writers must constantly look forward to what's next even while they stay in the present and build connections with their readers. That's similar to how I build my year: I review where I'm at and what I'm working on now while thinking about how I can work towards my intentions.

Looking ahead can sound a lot like planning, which many of us find boring. But planning our next chapter, book, reading, or marketing strategy are tasks that are too important to ignore. What might it look like if you found creative ways to fit these tasks into your routine?

I tend to be an "in the box" thinker. I really have to stretch my imagination to find new ways to do routine tasks. To change my process, I bought coloured markers and a pad of newsprint

— the largest sheets I could find. I spread out on the floor with snacks and water and start putting words and sketches on my paper. The more I do this, the easier it's getting to come up with new ideas.

I've started doing something else that writers are familiar with when looking for story ideas. I listen to people — either those I'm having conversations with or those I overhear when I'm out. I've found that it's an amazing resource for life ideas. I was recently reminded of Success Teams and remembered that joining one is on an old list of things I'd like to do. I couldn't find a group that was a fit, so I'm creating my own. This isn't something I would have come up with on my own.

The possibilities for writers to creatively take care of mundane planning or new writing are endless. New types of books regularly get published. What if you wrote your next book as a graphic novel? The form works well for both fiction and nonfiction. Or you could create an e-zine for your followers as part of your marketing plan. In the last year I've edited several manuscripts that are a mix of prose, poetry, snippets, and art. The finished books are beautiful and unique.

No idea is too "out there." Write them all down, or sketch out what they might look like. The point isn't to be a Picasso or know all the details. The point is to be creative in the ways you look forward to a new year, new projects, and new readers. I wish you all a creative 2020.

## Letter to the Editor

I respected Greg Younging a lot and knew him a little, and while I liked the tribute to him in *Write* [in the Fall 2019 issue], it missed an opportunity to note his work with the Writers' Union through the Creators' Rights Alliance over many years. That group brought together anglophone ideas of copyright, francophone concepts of *droit d'auteur*, and Indigenous understandings of the rights of traditional Knowledge Holders in a way that was quite remarkable and influential, too. Greg's work alongside the Union in the CRA, working closely with our past president Susan Crean in particular, was longstanding — as has been the Union's support for Indigenous rights in Traditional Knowledge and creative work.

— Christopher Moore

WELLSPRING /

## On Hope

**“Anticipation is a gift. Perhaps there is none greater. Anticipation is born of hope. Indeed it is hope's finest expression.”**

Steven L. Peck in *A Short Stay in Hell*

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# Writer's Blot

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INDUSTRY Q+A /

## Conscientious Translations



Rhonda Kronyk talks with Greek translator Emmanuel Aligizakis about the rewards and challenges of translating written work.

### Why did you begin translating Greek poetry?

When I thought about translating Greek poetry, I couldn't find any translations of Greek poetry in English done by a Canadian citizen or one of Cretan descent as I am. I decided to close that gap and provide the best translations of contemporary Greek poetry to Canadian readers by a Cretan Canadian. In a nutshell, I like to do things no one else has done.

### What is your translation process?

First step is a long process of reading and studying the subject poet to the point of being totally knowledgeable of the poet's work. Then I complete a poem-by-poem rendition from the original language to the new one. After that, I leave the book alone for a good month or so and then do the first editorial work. A month or two later I complete the second edit and end up with a draft that seems almost ready to prepare for release.

### What do authors need to know about hiring a translator?

They have to look at work done before, the acceptance that work has received, recognition or positive reviews, and then they have to work with the translator all the way from beginning to end. Still, every effort is done knowing that it'll be an approximation of the original work, rather than an exact rendition of the original. The reviews written by reviewers who speak one of the two languages involved in the translation book are goofy, to use the best word in this case. One can't review a translation book unless they speak both languages, because one has to go from one rendition to the other to speak of good translation or *not so good*. Reviewers who speak one of the two languages simply want to show off rather

than truly review a poetry book; and they tend to find what is wrong with the book rather than promote its positive points.

### What are the challenges of providing accurate translations?

There isn't ever an exact duplication of the original into the second language no matter how experienced the translator is. However, there is a criterion one can use: How happy he feels after the process is finished and the final book is released. The accuracy and faithful transfer of a poetry book from one language to another is simply an approximation, as close as it can be, depending on the experience of the translator and the good handle they have in both languages. There are translators, as I am, who have excellent knowledge of the original language and as good as can be knowledge of the second language. And there are translators who have excellent knowledge of the second language and as close as can be of the original. The preferred kind is the first one. Because when one speaks the original as his mother tongue, he never misses conceptual images of the original poem while he can translate it into the second language as best as one can. In the second category, when the translator's mother tongue is the second language, he will inadvertently miss the exact meaning of the original; therefore he'll rewrite a poem instead of rendering the original in the second language.

### What are the rewards of your work?

The only reward I expect, and so far have, is seeing my translation books sell, and they do so every single month. I have an average of thirty to forty copies of my translations sold every month and only through one outlet: Amazon Kindle.

I said it is my only reward so far since this country, my adopted country, has ignored my contribution. I have never been contacted by any literary "authority" or any other name that can be used in this case, to express a simple thank you for your work, although I'm the only one in this country who has translated so much poetry from my original language to English; and I mean from all translators who live in this country, from any language background they might be from. My *Neo-Hellene Poets: An Anthology of Modern Greek Poetry 1750–2018* alone is an 815-page volume. Who in this country has ever dedicated so long time to achieve such a thing? Canadians can't think on this frequency, believe me. However, this is another story.

*Manolis (Emmanuel Aligizakis) is a Cretan-Canadian poet, author, and translator. He's the most prolific writer-poet of the Greek diaspora. He's recognized for his ability to convey images and thoughts in a rich and evocative way that tugs at something deep within the reader. He has written three novels and numerous collections of poetry, which are steadily being released as published works. His articles, poems, and short stories in both Greek and English have appeared in magazines and newspapers in several countries.*



# A How-to Guide for Pitching Book Bloggers

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BY ANNE LOGAN

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As publishers' marketing budgets dwindle and space for book reviews are shortened or eliminated, authors are faced with the growing challenge of marketing and publicizing their own book.

**A**s if writing the book and surviving the editing process wasn't enough, you now need to embark on an entirely new but equally involved process: finding and enticing readers. Regardless of who your publisher is, there is an expectation that you must contribute to the marketing and publicity plan; unfortunately, the outlets that publish book reviews are an ever-changing landscape. As someone who has blogged and reviewed books for over eleven years, I've been the recipient of some downright terrible book pitches, so below is my advice on how to ensure a successful interaction with book bloggers you contact.

## THE VALUE OF A BOOK BLOG

Increasingly, book blogs are becoming a larger part of book-review real estate. One major benefit to pitching book bloggers is that they will review your book years after its release. Some bloggers prefer recent publications, but just as many are happy to discover books that have been in circulation for a longer period of time. Book blogs also have the benefit of reaching a very specific audience:

bookworms! Unlike the majority of newspapers and magazines with a wide variety of content, there's only one type of person who reads a book blog — book lovers. Blogs have the ability to speak to a very precise but coveted audience, so it is imperative that authors take advantage of this medium.

Every major publisher operating in Canada has a book-blogger program and sends out thousands of physical and electronic books to bloggers each year. When pitching to bloggers, remember that they are inundated with review requests. There is a clear protocol you should follow to increase your chances of success.

## FINDING THE BEST BLOGS FOR YOUR BOOK

Book blogs are relatively easy to find. The best way to locate potential readers is to browse reviews of books similar to yours. Because it is the most popular social media community for readers, many Goodreads reviewers have links to their personal blogs. Once you find a book blog that looks like a potential fit for your book, look for their review policy — this is the single most important thing to do when approaching a blogger. Some may

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# Look for their review policy — this is the single most important thing to do when approaching a blogger.

simply have an “About Me” page, but most clearly state what kind of genres they review and what format they prefer.

Because blogging is typically a hobby for most, many blogs are started and then dropped when life gets in the way, so to ensure you are pitching only active bloggers look for clues. When was the last time they updated the blog? If it was over a month ago, reconsider contacting them. Do they have lots of comments on their site, or is it more than a year old? Both are signs that the blogger takes their site seriously. Another important thing to determine is where the blog originates. As an author, you are free to personally ship your book all over the world, but check with your publisher before you send it to a region other than your own to avoid affecting potential foreign rights sales.

## THE PITCH

Once you are ready to send your email, ensure you use their first name or blog title (e.g. dear: Books Are My Life). Include a direct reference to their site so they are aware you looked at it first. Give a one- or two-sentence synopsis of your book, its release date, and a couple of reasons the blogger may enjoy reading it. Attach a press release and other relevant information such as touring dates, book club questions, and interviews. The overall tone of your email should be respectful. You are requesting something of them, and many bloggers do this as a passion project that takes significant time with no financial return.

If you are able to participate in an interview or send a secondary copy for a giveaway, mention this in your first email. Any ideas for unique content are a welcome suggestion for book bloggers, and they appreciate creative “hooks” about your writing. For instance, did the inspiration for this book come while on vacation? It is also perfectly acceptable to ask approximately when they will post the review of your book before you send a copy, but remember they may not be able to give you an exact date. However, it’s worth waiting for a review if you believe they will enjoy your book. Always try to keep the body of the email as short as possible and end your pitch with a grateful “thank you.” Finally, never pay a book blogger to review your book — very few will ask for payment, but those who do are not legitimate book bloggers.

While many bloggers will happily read and respond to pitches on a regular basis, there are a few things to avoid when attempting to entice potential readers. Do not frame your book as an exception to their requirements. If it doesn’t fit their criteria, move on to one of the many other book blogs you can pitch. Some bloggers may have a temporary warning that they are not accepting new submissions

— respect this and don’t contact them. If you send an email offering a review copy and don’t receive a response, don’t follow up more than once because most bloggers will respond to a pitch in a timely manner if they are updating their blog regularly. Never send a form email as a pitch because it’s offensive to the recipient. Don’t ask them where they post their reviews aside from their blog. Many will include links to their other platforms if they post elsewhere, but asking the question implies their blog doesn’t have a wide enough reach. The book blogging community is a welcoming place, but word spreads quickly when someone feels disrespected, which unfortunately happens often in an online environment.

The worst pitches I’ve received are from people who have clearly never visited my blog. They send badly formatted, undisclosed recipient emails that have obviously been sent to hundreds of other bloggers. Even worse is when a book is pitched to me in a genre I have never or will never read or when the author requests I post my review to a specific website in the same email they ask

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COMIC BY SCOT RITCHIE

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me to consider reviewing their book. These glaring oversights are annoying at best and arrogant at worst. When authors do not take the time to even read my review policy, I don't feel it's worth my time to respond to their email.

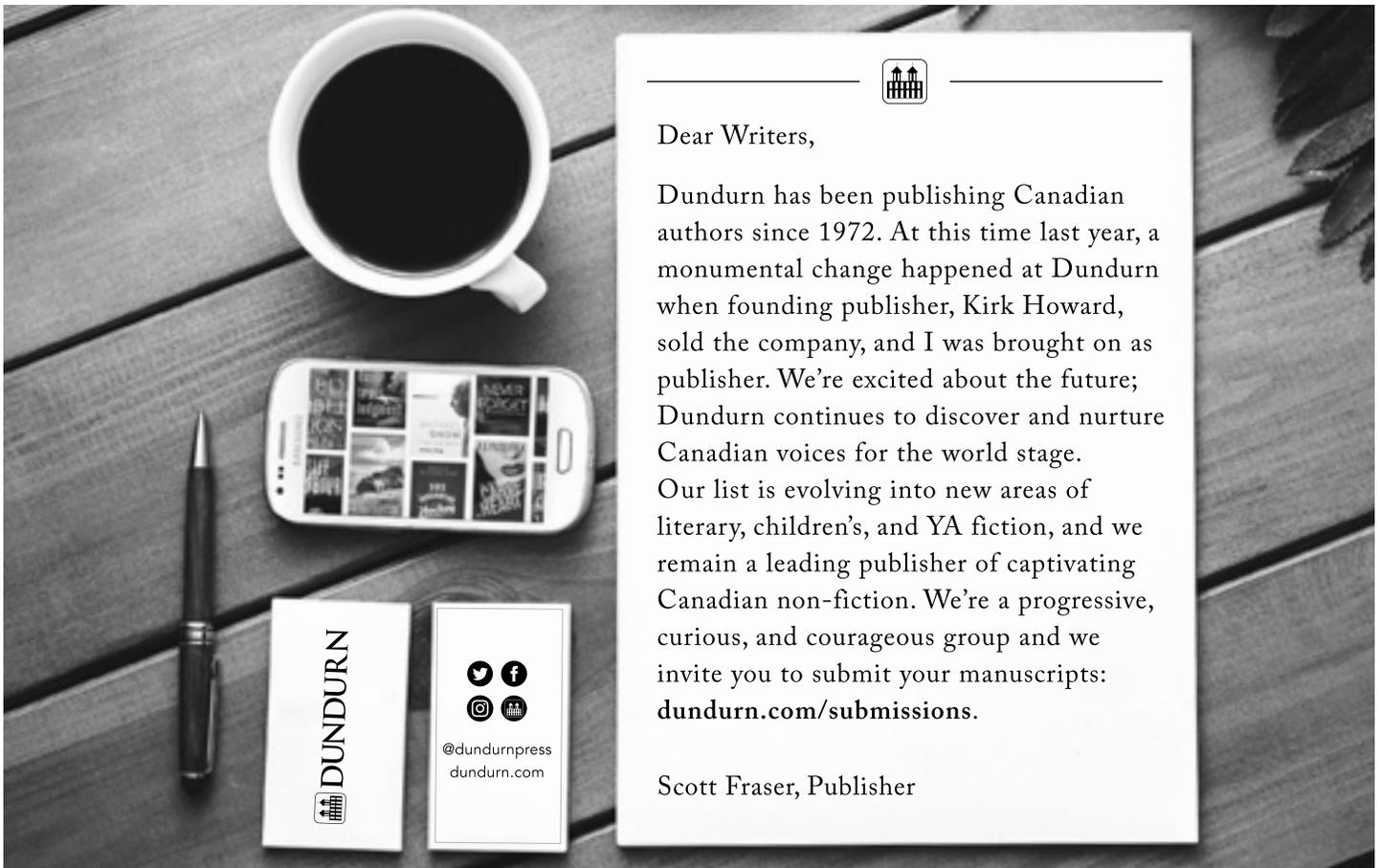
### SENDING YOUR BOOK

Bloggers may agree to look at your book, but that does not guarantee a review. To help your book stand out in their "to be read" pile, include a hand-written note in the package thanking them for their consideration of your work. Simple politeness goes an incredibly long way in distinguishing your efforts and reputation among the blogging community. Again, whether or not your book will appeal to them is determined by how well you researched their site. Spending time investigating various book blogs is the best strategy to successfully pitch your book for review. If your pitch is strong, you will gain a new group of lifelong fans who will not only read and enjoy your books but help build word-of-mouth buzz as well.

*Anne Logan has worked in the Canadian book industry for eleven years as a publicist, literary festival programmer, and book reviewer. She is the past President for the Writers' Guild of Alberta and currently sits on the Board of Directors for Calgary Reads. As the book columnist for CBC Calgary, she reviews books on air for radio and television. She hosts Wordfest's monthly book club We've Read This and reviews books on her blog [ivereadthis.com](http://ivereadthis.com).*

### OTHER WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR BOOK

- Create an author website with links and/or suggestions where readers can purchase your book.
- Link your author website to social media channels you participate on or create a business page/profile on your existing platforms if you want to keep your personal life separate.
- Shop at and make friends with every local independent bookseller in town and ensure they are selling copies of your book.
- Offer book club visits on your website and create a list of discussion questions.
- During the first year of your book's publication, check in with your publicist regularly to see if they need anything else from you to continue marketing your book effectively.
- When meeting new people, introduce yourself as a writer first regardless of your day job.
- Create business cards with your name and website; every event and party you attend is a networking opportunity!



Dear Writers,

Dundurn has been publishing Canadian authors since 1972. At this time last year, a monumental change happened at Dundurn when founding publisher, Kirk Howard, sold the company, and I was brought on as publisher. We're excited about the future; Dundurn continues to discover and nurture Canadian voices for the world stage.

Our list is evolving into new areas of literary, children's, and YA fiction, and we remain a leading publisher of captivating Canadian non-fiction. We're a progressive, curious, and courageous group and we invite you to submit your manuscripts: [dundurn.com/submissions](http://dundurn.com/submissions).

Scott Fraser, Publisher



# Writing Extremely Well

## The Secret Formula Behind Compressed Writing Competitions

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BY JULES TORTI

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After spitting out 75,619 words in 22 days, the extensor muscles in my forearms transformed into a reasonable facsimile for beef jerky.

**I**f I had the ability to safely remove my eyeballs and roll them around in a slurry of Gatorade and aloe vera to help revive them, I would have. Despite having a proper desk with a serene view of West Little Lake, I chose to perch on a totally non-ergonomic but very cool-looking industrial barstool pulled up to my kitchen island. I had the butt chafe to prove it.

Chafe and jerky forearms aside, my second attempt at the annual National Novel Writing Month competition proved that the formula works. Held in November, “NanoWriMo,” as it’s affectionately dubbed, is an online challenge for writers (or “Wrimos”) who voluntarily commit to cranking out a 50,000-word manuscript in 30 days.

The self-imposed competition is cutthroat with its daily word count demand, and in the end, you simply have to write.

Uncomplicated math suggests that hammering out 1,666 words a day will leave you grinning like a Cheshire cat at the finish line with a 50K manuscript in hand. Your eyes might be square from staring at your laptop, but you’ll be grinning.

I first learned of extreme writing from Joe Wiebe, my affable Writing for Magazines instructor at Douglas College in New Westminster, BC, back in 2008. He had competed in the storied 3-Day Novel Contest, held annually on Labour Day weekend. Joe easily convinced me of the contest’s motive — but it took me a few years to act upon it. Joe hashed out the guts of a baseball-themed novel, sidelined in his mind for years. Participants are allowed to develop ideas and create an outline prior to the contest, but, there’s also the bareback, free-range option of surprising yourself with an unexpected plot. Sleep deprivation is ideal for that, and everything about this concept attracted me.

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### THE 3-DAY NOVEL CONTEST VS. NANOWRIMO

Established in 1977, the 3-Day Novel Contest came to fruition in a Vancouver bar thanks to a motley crew of writers boasting of their prowess. The triple-dog-dare was on! The group stumbled home with a mission to write a novel in three days.

On the flip side, the National Novel Writing Month was launched in San Francisco Bay in July 1999 with the sharpened pencils of twenty-one participants at the ready. NanoWriMo's founder, freelancer Chris Baty, wisely moved the competition from July to November to take advantage of the miserable month.

Both competitions pulverize creative juices in differing ways with unique incentives and resources. Participants in the 3-Day Novel Contest are required to pay an entry fee of \$45 (early bird) or \$60. NanoWriMo is free but donations are encouraged. Manuscripts from the 3-Day Novel Contest average 100 pages (double-spaced), and contest winners are privy to prize money (\$500!) and a publishing contract from Anvil Press. Riding on the honour system, entries can't be edited outside of the strict contest timeframe and witness statements and signatures must be submitted, confirming that you're not a surreptitious lawbreaker.

NanoWriMo offers no enticement of cash or publication. Your cat can be your witness. The challenge revolves around generating a decent draft to groom at a less hurried pace. In turn, just like Mom sneaking something healthy like raisins into your cookies, daily writing habits are being formed. There are countless resources for participants including an online course (Nano Prep 101) to help writers ease into November's spandex-tight deadlines. If you need cheerleading and ego rubs, there are forums, writing badges to be earned, regional support groups, and "buddies" that you can add on, Facebook-style.

### BUT WHAT ABOUT HAIKU?

Though I fancied the idea of a compressed 3-day novel production, I love every soupy inch of summer. Typically, Labour Day is the last of the humidex, and I prefer to be lakeside versus laptop-side. If there was a winter version of the 72-hour competition, I'd be all in.

November is a reliably sluggish, dishwater-coloured time of year void of the frisson that January and shiny new year's resolutions entails. Isn't this typically when most of us get real and commit to a better year of concentrated writing? That is, once the champagne-tinged fog of New Year's Eve wears thin thanks to a stiff hair of the dog and follow-up cat nap?

I knew I had the extreme writing chops as I'd participated in NanoWriMo in 2017, a few months after Kim and I moved into our house. While I wrote the blueprint for *Free to a Good Home: With Room for Improvement* (published by Caitlin Press in June 2019), Kim painted our guest room. And then she painted our two guest bathrooms. And our neighbour's ceiling.

What else would I be doing in November? My wife suggested painting baseboards; as I looked around our 3,000-square-foot house, I was instantly motivated. I was getting off easy by committing to another 50,000 words.

If you're not a deadline ninja, the NanoWriMo competition might be just the prescription. If you're a stats junkie, you can track all sorts of things from word speed to the "type" of writer you are. The site also has a feature where you can choose emoticons to express your feelings for the day. Because I failed to chronicle my writing with emojis, it was assumed that I was a closed book. "Any

chance you're writing a mystery?"

Herein lies the beauty. For both of these competitions, there are no sticky genre rules. You can write a dusty western, dystopian, lesbian romance, or sci-fi. Though, if you are a haiku writer, wow. That's a lot of haiku-ing. You might squash the achievements of Japan's master haiku poets, the Great Four.

### MAKING THE WORD COUNTS

Are you still on the fence about whether this sort of hack competition is worthy of a genuine writer? John Boyne told the *Irish Times* that he wrote *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* in two days. The idea came to him on a Tuesday evening, and on Wednesday he launched into the plot and wrote for sixty hours with a few short breaks. He skipped sleeping Wednesday and Thursday and had his first draft scratched out by lunchtime Friday.

Hemingway famously wrote his 1926 novel *The Sun Also Rises* in less than two months. He began on his birthday on July 25, 1925, and tore through his first draft as fast as the running bulls of San Fermin down the historic streets of Pamplona.

In Stephen King's biblical book *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, he talks about his enviable writing speed and daily goal of 2,000 words. Suitably, he wrote *The Running Man* in one week, flat-out. Welsh writer Sarah Waters (*Tipping the Velvet*, *The Paying Guests*) abides by a 1,000-words per day prescription: "My minimum is 1,000 words a day ... Those 1,000 words might well be rubbish — they often are. But then, it is always easier to return to rubbish words at a later date and make them better."

If you are drawn to compact, tidy, start-to-end projects, the competition format might be just the algorithm you need. New Year's resolutions, unfortunately, allow for 365 days of straying, while the pressure-cooker deadline of three days or one month can help produce an instant draft for writers who are strapped for time. In the gig economy, a one-month commitment to the National Novel Writing Month can nestle in symbiotically with other micro obligations like making money.

This bootcamp approach to writing is like any full-on commitment. The suggested itinerary for walking the Camino de Santiago in Spain from St. Jean Pied de Port, France is 31 days. You need to commit to walking an average of 27 kilometres a day and, when you do, one month and 920 kilometres later you will find yourself on the western edge of Spain, in Finisterre. Just like that.

If you want to write a book, you need to sit down for an entire month and write 1,666 words or more each day. Just like a 30-day cleanse or the Camino, you will see the shiny results. Whether you attempt the challenge once or yearly, participating will help refine your skills, approach, and finesse — all in one gratifying swoop. It's surprisingly easy to become engulfed, and with a few hamstringing stretches, you'll find yourself writing extremely, well.

*Jules Torti is the author of Free to a Good Home: With Room for Improvement (Caitlin Press, 2019). After attending a "How to Write a Novel in 40 Days" workshop in 2013, she self-published Forget Me Not. For the 2019 NaNoWriMo challenge, she wrote the first draft of her memoir, Trail Mix: 920km on the Camino de Santiago. She is currently the editor-in-chief of Harrowsmith magazine and has been published in Cottage Life, FASHION, NOW, The Vancouver Sun, and The Globe and Mail.*

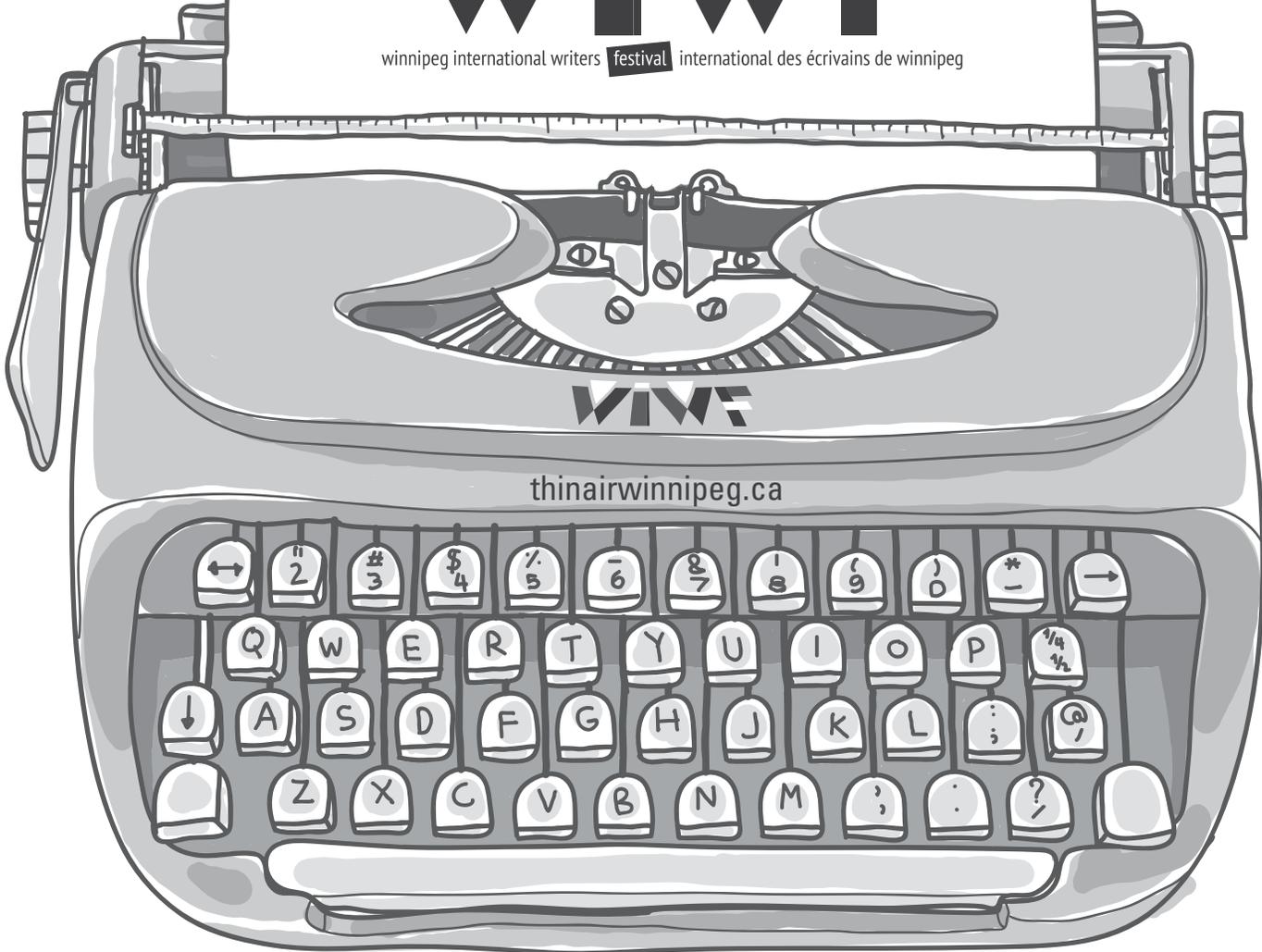


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CRAFT /

## Four Types of Nicknames: An Oft-Forgotten Tool in the Writer's Kit Box

BY WENDEE GUTHRIE



*Nicknames are handy little gadgets. They add complexity and conflict to our characters by providing a portal to their past without bogging down the pacing with backstory. Here are four ways to use nicknames and ideas on how they can add another layer to your story.*

### 1. SHORTENED VERSION OF A GIVEN NAME

Jon Steinberg, founder and CEO of Cheddar says, "Allowing people to call you by a nickname, or shortened version of your name, allows for an emotional connection and accessibility that the more formal version of your name blocks. It's about human connection." Jon goes on to say, "A short name or nickname is a sign of intimacy, trust, and friendship."

Does your story contain a CEO or leader? Choose a short name for your young rookie who connects with fellow workers as they climbs their way to the top. And give the older, aloof, authoritative CEO a longer name, more representative of a dying era.

### 2. CLOSED GROUP

These nicknames generally show affection and camaraderie between members of a specific group.

Sports teams are a great example of closed groups. Every team member has a nickname, many times based on a certain skill or a derivative of their given name. Only team members or opponents in the sport have the right to use these names.

Why is it offensive for outsiders to use this nickname? Because

they have not earned the privilege to use it. It's an unspoken badge of honour and can't be bought randomly.

How can this nickname add conflict to your writing? Relationship lines are drawn when specific characters have the authority to use the nickname, while others don't. A character arc shows relationship development when one character finally earns their right to belong to this closed group. It's a perfect opportunity to show, not tell.

### 3. SLANDEROUS

These nicknames are given by one character to ruin or discredit another. High school is full of hierarchy. Students jockey to be accepted and respected and to find their niche in a world outside their family. It's rife with conflict and competition. The business world is no different.

These nicknames are derived from a past undisclosed action the character carried out, or perhaps from a secret belief system. Or, these nicknames are pure fabrications. More than one feud has begun on the basis of a lie.

Nicknames like Bank Roll Betsie or Slasher Sam can expose a former thief or murderer. The character's life is rocked off-kilter, and they are forced to either prove their innocence or fight to uncover the source of the lies.

### 4. THEIR KNOWN NAME

Some people prefer to use a different name from their legal name. Whether they prefer their middle name, or a different one all together, this is the name their friends and the world recognize.

Miley Cyrus was born Destiny Hope, yet she smiled so much as a baby, that her father began calling her "Smiley." Soon the S was

# The 2019 Shortlist CODE Burt Award for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Young Adult Literature



A Canadian literary award and readership initiative that recognizes excellence in Indigenous-authored literature for young adults ages 12-18.

In honour and in celebration of the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages CODE is proud to feature the shortlisted titles in the new Indigenous Language category for the 2019 CODE Burt Award for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Young Adult Literature.

## Indigenous Language Shortlist



*Inconvenient Skin*  
by Shane Koyczan  
English and Cree  
Theytus Books



*Those Who Run in the Sky*  
by Aviaq Johnston  
Inuktitut  
Inhabit Media

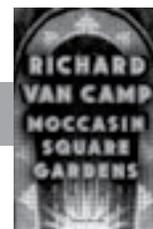


*Three Feathers*  
by Richard Van Camp  
Slavey  
Highwater Press

## English Language Shortlist



*The Case of Windy Lake*  
by Michael Hutchinson  
Second Story Press



*Moccasin Square Gardens*  
by Richard Van Camp  
Douglas & McIntyre



*Those Who Dwell Below*  
by Aviaq Johnston  
Inhabit Media

dropped, and she went by Miley. In 2008, she legally changed her name.

Imagine the conflict and confusion you can create with mistaken or secret identities and mysterious pasts revealed.

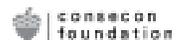
When I was born, my one-and-a-half year old brother couldn't pronounce Wendee and I became known as "Wiener" by my family. Sixty-one years later, the only people allowed to use Wiener are my brothers and one cousin. It's an endearment and I'm filled with warm fuzzy feelings every time because I know it's used in love. However, if anyone else calls me Wiener, my insides grate like nails on a chalkboard.

When I read about a character with a nickname, I anticipate the conflict it will produce. When there's none, I feel cheated because the author picked the name for the sole reason of making their character interesting without exploring the depths behind it. But use caution when creating these names as they might be unintentionally offensive to some readers.

Every nickname is a breeding ground for conflict and drama as they all have one thing in common: backstory. Nicknames should never be chosen at random. Always give them a secret and a purpose. They might be one tiny little onion peel in the scheme of the story, but the conflict, revelations, and motivations they can create make storytelling just a tad easier. So, when you want to reveal another facet of your character, rely on a nickname to do it for you.

*Wendee Guthrie is a member of the Greater Vancouver Writer's Association: Romance and Beyond, and former long-time member of Romance Writers of America. Wendee enjoys mentoring others in their writing challenges and has presented multiple workshops. Wendee writes heartwarming historical and contemporary romance, always with a splash of magic.*

This year financial support for the CODE Burt Award program was generously provided by The Consecon Foundation, Power Corporation of Canada and The Writers' Union of Canada.



The award is the result of a close collaboration between CODE and the following organizations:



www.code.ngo

LEGACY /

# Archiving My Literary Papers: Revisiting People and Projects, and Earning a Tax Receipt Too



BY DENNIS GRUENDING

*When I received TWUC's booklet The Last Chapter in the mail in 2019, I was especially interested in the section on archiving literary papers.*

Coincidentally, I had several brown-stippled bankers' boxes on the floor in my office that smelled mildly of the basement where they had been residing. I was in a last dash to send my papers off to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, a project which I had intended to complete for years.

We all want to believe that we have made a contribution in our time and place, and we hope to live on in more than just the memories of our loved ones. It is a warm compliment to have a library or archive say that what you have written or done is valuable and worth preserving.

I was for many years a print journalist, CBC broadcaster, and book writer in Saskatchewan, and in 1992 I donated eight cartons of documents and audio cassettes to the Provincial Archives. They were particularly interested in the tapes and transcripts of interviews I had conducted in writing biographies of former Saskatchewan Premier Allan Blakeney and Supreme Court Judge Emmett Hall.

I consulted with the Archives, and staff recommended that I organize the papers thoroughly so they would be available to the public more quickly. It was good advice, because in less than a year the material was ready for viewing. It was also professionally appraised, and I received a \$13,000 tax receipt for my donation.

Nine years later, in 2001, the Archives contacted me again. I had served as an MP from Saskatoon and area in the 36<sup>th</sup> Parliament. The staff was interested in my political papers and those arising from additional books that I had written or edited. I promised to assemble and deliver the material but there seemed always to be some reason for me to delay.

Finally, in 2018 I vowed that there would be no new projects until I had finished with the papers. Fortunately, I had a kindly and skilled acquisitions professional from the Saskatchewan archives to guide me. I went through every hard-copy file folder that I had saved as

well as associated digital folders and emails that I had retained on my computer. I printed whatever I needed from this material and placed everything within each file into chronological order.

I was surprised by the amount and variety of work accomplished over the years. I had, for example, kept a diary on a small cassette recorder while I was a candidate in the 1997 federal election, often dictating while I was driving home from campaigning in the far reaches of the riding. I described staying one night in a dingy, small-town motel with no heat, and on another I survived a raucous public meeting about gun control. Eventually, I turned these diary entries into an article for the now-defunct publication *NeWest Review*.

Some of what I found in my files was handwritten on scraps of paper and, occasionally, on napkins. One day in 2015, I jotted down the following: continue United Church Observer blog; revise chapter in CCPA book on Stephen Harper; reactivate speeches book proposal with Fitzhenry; Canada-India piece with Lionel; improve social media profile.

I wrote a detailed finding aid describing the contents of each file folder. I also selected and numbered more than 100 photos. In a separate document I wrote a brief description of those photos and the names of people appearing in them.

I logged hundreds of hours and provided the archives with seven bankers' boxes containing 190 files along with related video and audio materials and the photos. What I provided in July 2018 was made available less than a year later, and the materials I sent in 2019 are now being reviewed.

It is a relief to have this trove out of my basement and into permanent storage where it can potentially be of use to others. And, once again, I will receive a tax receipt for my donation. It was thoroughly enjoyable to revisit my experiences with the people and projects that had consumed me for years, and reviewing the papers also gave me some new ideas to pursue.

*Dennis Gruending is an Ottawa-based writer and blogger and a former Member of Parliament. His most recent book, published in 2018, is Speeches That Changed Canada. You can find his website and blogs at [dennisgruending.ca](http://dennisgruending.ca).*

# Excluded Voices = Expendable Humans

BY ANITA DOLMAN



*When I figured out that I wasn't straight, much of my immediate fear came from realizing I would be more vulnerable to hate than straight people.*

When I also realized my mind didn't work like others', my fear of society's whims grew larger — queerness and mental illness have historically been double-downs for expendability.

With a tiny change in circumstance or power, many people's rights can disappear; our livelihood, and our lives, become threatened. I knew I wasn't at the top of Canada's list of its most expendable citizens. But I was on the list, and always would be. I grew up in a household traumatized by the Second World War. Both of my parents were born in the Netherlands in 1932 and grew up during the Occupation. They lost friends, neighbours, family members, and their sense of safety. Stocking bags of rice deep in an upstairs closet of our Ontario farmhouse, my mother explained for the thousandth time I should always be prepared because nowhere is ever safe from the rise of hate.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CHMA) estimates one in five people are directly affected by mental illness in Canada in a given year. But mental illness isn't distributed equally across the population. Access to helpful, appropriate treatment certainly isn't, either.

That's because mental illness rates are significantly higher among those already most vulnerable in our societies for reasons of poverty, isolation, trauma, oppression, and the many -isms that lurk along or just below the surface of nations.

According to the CMHA, Inuit communities have the highest suicide rates in the world. Canada's immigrant, refugee, and racialized populations include many of this country's most vulnerable to mental illness. Bisexuals, trans, and gender non-conforming people suffer much higher rates of psychological distress than monosexual and cisgender people.

Each of these statistics represents myriad individual human tragedies. For the writing community, they are a reminder that some of the most unique, compelling, important, and insightful perspectives belong to people abandoned or excluded by larger society, let alone by often demanding, scarcity-based communities in the arts.

The arts world and its atmosphere of competition for scant resources can damage even the mentally best-equipped writers. There's the scramble for income; old networks to circumvent; elites

eliting to exclude others; predatory individuals and organizations; and a constant demand to prove oneself, show up, do more, and convey everything to everyone all the time.

For those of us with mental illnesses, the demands to submit heavily, perform publicly, market aggressively, and engage constantly can be dissuasive, overwhelming, and sometimes outright too much.

I admit I don't feel honest submitting a marketing plan to go with my manuscript, for example, when I'm not sure I'll be able to leave my house easily when the book goes to print. I've been too exhausted from an extended panic attack to even look for my socks, never mind making it to see my favourite essayist at the writers' festival event "everyone" is attending.

For writers and artists whose mental illnesses intersect with other identities already facing systemic barriers, the high expectations to engage, network, and self-promote add yet more barriers to inclusion and success.

Understandably, that layering affects not only how often we see writers from these communities get published and marketed, but also how much they write and whether they keep writing and trying to get published at all.

I hate when a stereotype proves true, so, as a bisexual, I can't stand that I actually can be greedy. But I am. I want all the books by all the marginalized voices I can get. I don't want the next trans or BIPOC or disabled or author from any marginalized group to give up on being part of the writing world because all the non-writing demands are too daunting.

I want more books and stories and poems and essays from the mentally ill and all marginalized voices. Their vision and thoughts help me, personally, understand the world in new ways. Moreover, diverse reading can build empathy among our fellow humans. Which means the broader the range of voices we connect with readers, the more likely those authors' humanity — and yours and mine — might someday be considered permanent and irrevocable by everyone.

*Poet, editor, and writer Anita Dolman is the author of Lost Enough: A Collection of Short Stories (Morning Rain Publishing, 2017), and co-editor of Motherhood in Precarious Times (Demeter Press, 2018). Her poetry, fiction, and nonfiction have appeared in numerous journals, magazines, and anthologies including Imaginary Safe House, Another Dysfunctional Cancer Poem Anthology, Canadian Ginger, Arc Poetry Magazine, On Spec, Grain, and PRISM International.*

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# Poetry

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## Birding for Bill

*Bill Schermbrucker's friend  
Crystal Hurdle wrote this poem  
in response to his passing.*



BY CRYSTAL HURDLE

Bill dies the same day the pool closes  
for the season  
I avoid opening emails  
disclosure betrayal in the subject line  
how dare he  
still doesn't delay the coming  
the actual fact of his being dead

And it's a day of sun and showers  
Tears?  
Bill would guffaw at my saccharin pantheism  
too sentimental  
Like the poet's illustrated sequence about her dead dog  
she defends, grief is grief,  
and who am I to judge  
So today I strike "bathetic" and "mawkish" from my review  
For Bill, I will be kind  
Less is more, anyhow, as Bill always says ... said

I mark creative writing assignments  
Years ago, taking over from him, a joy  
I pen gentle emails to new students, fledgling adults  
wondering about writing and life  
I will force myself to know and help the newbies,  
junior colleagues still wet behind the ears,  
as I once was  
even if I have one foot out of the door  
didn't stop Bill  
mentoring long after retirement

I will clear my schedule later today  
sit down to write  
the first novel I've written  
that Bill won't see  
not in this life

I write outdoors on this gentle fall day  
Bill is above me in the rustling maple leaves  
No, scratch that  
Bill, somewhere, is hating this suckiness  
Bill a leaf?  
How could Bill be a freaking leaf?  
He's snort-laughing now

Better the raucous Steller's jay  
family Corvidae  
provincial bird of BC  
where he settled to craft a life  
with the punked out hair and ruff  
like the beard of an Old Testament prophet  
deliberating between which is the better choice of nut  
curious, persistent, demanding  
(he has ventured inside)  
a bird in the house means a death in the house

now flies off, swoop-returns low to the ground,  
laps water in the birdbath but looks up peeved  
head cocked as if listening  
to music only he can hear  
Phil Ochs? Freedom choruses  
wants more than mere water

And about those rationed nuts  
wants more  
knows I can  
give more  
making me my own best self  
in the image of that  
damned clever obstreperous thieving greedy talented adventurous  
cunning bird.

Yes, Bill, mixed metaphor, pantheism, personification, the secret  
sorrow of a pool already opening next spring, the wrong aim for  
the right strategy, or both, whatever, I don't care, who cares, I care  
too much, I know I've gone too far

--as have you

*Crystal Hurdle teaches English and creative writing at Capilano  
University in North Vancouver, BC. In October 2007, she was Guest  
Poet at the International Sylvia Plath Symposium at the University  
of Oxford, reading from After Ted & Sylvia: Poems. Teacher's Pets,  
a teen novel in verse, was published in 2014. Sick Witch (poems) is  
forthcoming from Ronsdale Press.*

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# Essay

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## What Is It About Travel that Inspires the Muse?



*Is it simply being in a country away from the familiar? Or is it seeing the familiar with different eyes?*

BY DONNA WOOTTON

Goethe said that the highest goal humans can achieve is a state of amazement. Can travel to unfamiliar places lead to amazing experiences? I believe it can. Last February I chose to sign on to travel with a local NGO that organizes exposure trips to Central America to educate participants in the work it does.

On the outskirts of Panama City, we met Flor Eugenia, a slight woman with white hair who welcomed us to the community called Madras Maestras/Teachers Mothers which she had founded in 1971. We were all struck by her gratitude and learned that funding from the government and church is now minimal, so they are very dependent on our support. The women who are part of this community care for the children whose families have moved into the city from rural areas.

It took years of dedication to keep this program going and make it work. In fact, it works so well the community school idea has spread across the country. Two visitors from the Philippines arrived while we were there. They were planning to open a Mothers Teachers school in their country.

After Panama, our group continued to Costa Rica. We had the unique experience of crossing the border on foot. With our luggage in tow, we left behind one bus to board another. Awareness dawned. Millions cross borders on foot every day. They do not choose where to land. Unlike us, they are not tourists. Such privilege to be one or the other belongs to the likes of me and my fellow travellers who paid our way.

Now on the bus, I was full of memories of a Panama outside the familiar. Companionship brought warmth, sparks, laughter.

My reward for venturing off the beaten path was the amazing beauty of the south Pacific coast of Costa Rica. The OSA Peninsula, where mostly locals visit, is home to the Bahia Ballena National Park, a vast, protected marine and biological reserve. One boat excursion showed us breaching humpbacks so close we could reach out and almost touch them, colonies of birds across the water from howling monkeys, and a tidal formation in the shape of a whale's fin, a fluke. Total amazement!

Costa Rica is known for its waterfalls. Our group visited them in both Costa Rica and Panama. Despite being told the trail was challenging, I was determined to get to Ngobe-Bugle, our very first visit to a waterfall. It was a windy day, making it difficult to traverse the steep terrain, rocky ground, and narrow path, but the joy of the plunge was worth the effort.

No surprise to learn that fish farms are catching on in Central America. The main fish cultivated are tilapia and freshwater shrimp. In Costa Rica, we visited a fish farm in Boruca which is an Indigenous reserve. The family working this farm were basically squatters on their own land that was once occupied by non-Indigenous cattle farmers. They, too, were grateful for outside support to help them in reclaiming the land.

On our first day in the capital city of San José, I woke up early. Outside our hotel the street was busy with people heading off to work. I joined the throngs who were walking in sunshine. Only one block away I came across a plaza with art installations that resembled the works of Henry Moore. This magical place was an extensive sculpture exhibit of Jiminez Deridia. All the bronze sculptures that lined the plaza had figures with spheres. Earlier on our trip we had been introduced to the phenomenon of stone spheres that litter the countryside in Costa Rica. There is much speculation about how they came to be. Were they carved by ancient people? Did they drop from the cosmos? Were they formed naturally?

Early the next morning, our last before departing for the airport, I came across a work crew with men unloading more sculptures from a flatbed truck. They were busy installing another large piece. Here was the evidence of a country that values the art of its citizens. Such effort, such cost, such attention, by both the creator and the citizens.

Contented, I took away the warmth of the people of Central America. I left having achieved my goal to experience the unfamiliar and to be amazed.

*Donna Wootton is a retired teacher and author. She is a graduate of the Humber School for writers. She writes fiction (novels, short stories), and nonfiction, as well as poetry.*

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# Member News & Awards

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## Announcements

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**Bill Bissett's** collection of poetry and drawings, *breth: th treez uv lunaria: selektid rare n nu pomes n drawings, 1957–2019*, was released in April 2019 by Talonbooks. Several events held in November honoured Bill during his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Kelly Watt's** first novel, *Mad Dog*, was published in the U.S. last fall with Hamilton Stone Editions. She won an Honourable Mention in the gritLIT 2019 memoir contest, and her story "The Road for Conquering" was published in *Nowhere Magazine*.

Toronto-based member **Leslie Shimotakahara's** second novel, *Red Oblivion*, was released in September by Dundurn Press. The novel is a literary thriller set in Hong Kong. It deals with a daughter's investigation into her father's escape from Guangzhou, China, during the Cultural Revolution and the family secrets she confronts.

Ekstasis Editions has published *Gregor Samsa Was Never in the Beatles*, PEI fiction writer/poet/playwright **J. J. Steinfeld's** twentieth book and thirteenth short story collection, an eclectic and thought-provoking mix of forty-five speculative fictions written between 1983 and 2019. These wide-ranging stories explore many of the themes and the psychological terrain, from the absurd to the existential, through the varied literary lenses of science fiction, the surreal, fantasy, horror, the Kafkaesque, and the otherworldly, which the author has been dealing with in his literary writing over the years as he grapples with the desire for meaning and sense in the human condition while confronting the lives of his fictional characters and their imagined habitations. As with his other short story collections, the author's literary exploration of the past, present, and future leads the reader through a multitude of worlds and realities, from the darkly comic to the deeply tragic.

In October at Yerevan, Armenia, **Alan Whitehorn**, poet and Royal Military College of Canada Emeritus Professor of Political Science, was named by the founders of the humanitarian award Aurora Prize as an international goodwill ambassador. In that same month, the Writers' Union of Armenia announced that Professor Whitehorn was named an honorary member of their professional association and awarded him the Narekatsi gold medal for his academic and literary writings on genocide. The Armenian Genocide Museum Institute also invited him to give two major lectures: "A Brief Global History of Genocide and Human Rights" and "Remembering and Understanding Genocide Through Literature and the Arts: A Case Study of the Armenian Genocide

and the Holocaust." The latter lecture was reprised at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs School of Diplomacy.

BC member **Shawn Gale** has launched book three of his acclaimed World of Dawn series. *World of Dawn: The Great Reach* is now available. Gale is hard at work on book four and developing his series into film. In December, Gale launched *The Stories That Make Us* at the New West Artists Gallery where he read several short stories.

**Vlad Bunea** released *The Intimate Diary of Pope Francis the Second*, a novel about the first and last Black, African, gay, atheist pope.

*Summer North Coming*, a children's picture book by **Dorothy Bentley**, was released in September 2019 by Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

**Patricia Keeney** recently presented her novel *One Man Dancing* (Inanna 2016) at the Harriet Beecher Stowe Centre in Connecticut. The Centre — hosting author events associated with social and political issues — is attached to the house in which Stowe lived and wrote her early anti-slavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Keeney read from and discussed the genesis of *One Man Dancing*, which is based on the true story of Charles Tumwesigye, a Ugandan/Canadian actor and member of an experimental theatre company operating in Uganda under the murderous regime of dictator Idi Amin. "The book was the result of two years of interviews with Charles," explained Keeney "It started out as more of a documentary but evolved into what I would call a nonfiction novel. Charles embraced that. It came much closer to the truth than the documentary form could." Highly praised for its dramatization of intense international politics and harrowing personal survival, the novel has recently been turned into a screenplay by award-winning writer Hank Whittemore, also participating, who spoke enthusiastically about the importance of Keeney's book as an explosively effective case of art speaking truth to power.

**Laura K. McRae's** first full-length poetry collection, *Were There Gazelle*, will be released by Pedlar Press on February 28, 2020.

## Awards

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**Mariam Pirbhai's** *Outside People and Other Stories* (Inanna, 2017) is the winner of AmericanBookFest's 2019 Best Book Award for Fiction: the Short Story. She also won the 2018 IPPY Gold Medal for Multicultural Fiction.

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The Governor General's Literary Award for nonfiction went to **Don Gillmour** for *To the River: Losing My Brother* (Random House Canada/Penguin Random House Canada). Many members were finalists across the other categories: For fiction: *Eye* by **Marianne Micros** (Guernica Editions), *Late Breaking* by **K.D. Miller** (Biblioasis), *The Innocents* by **Michael Crummey** (Doubleday Canada/Penguin Random House Canada), and *The Student* by **Cary Fagan** (Freehand Books). For poetry: *St. Boniface Elegies* by **Catherine Hunter** (Signature Editions) and *The Grand River Watershed: A Folk Ecology* by **Karen Houle** (Gaspereau Press). For young people's literature-text: *Break in Case of Emergency* by **Brian Francis** (HarperCollins Publishers). For young people's literature-illustrated books: *How to Give Your Cat a Bath* co-written by **Nicola Winstanley** (Tundra Books/Penguin Random House Canada Young Readers) and *King Mouse* co-written by **Cary Fagan** (Tundra Books/Penguin Random House Canada Young Readers).

Several TWUC members were recognized by the Quebec Writers' Federation's Literary Awards. The Paragraphe Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction was won by **David Homel** for *The Teardown* (Véhicule Press). The Concordia University First Book Prize was won by **Lindsay Nixon's** *nītisānak* (Metonymy Press), and finalists included **Ann Lambert's** *The Birds That Stay* (Second Story Press) and **Rita Pomade's** *Seeker: A Sea Odyssey* (Guernica Editions). The prize for Children's and Young Adult Literatures was won by **Raquel Rivera** for *Yipee's Gold Mountain* (Red Deer Press), and **Monique Polak** was also a finalist for *I Am a Feminist: Claiming the F-Word in Turbulent Times* (Orca Book Publishers). Finalists for the Mavis Gallant Prize for Nonfiction include **Mark Abley's** *The Organist* (University of Regina Press) and **Lindsay Nixon's** *nītisānak* (Metonymy Press).

Members are nominated in several Forest of Reading awards categories.

For the Blue Spruce Award: *Emma's Gem* co-written by **Anne Renaud** (Peanut Butter Press), *Giraffe & Bird Together Again* written and illustrated by **Rebecca Bender** (Pajama Press); *Magic Boat* co-written by **Kit Pearson** (Orca Book Publisher); *A Plan for Pops* by **Heather Smith** (Orca Book Publishers); and *Sloth at the Zoom* by **Helaine Becker** (Owlkids Books).

For the Silver Birch Award Express: *Counting on Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Saved Apollo 13* by **Helaine Becker** (Henry Holt & Company); *Light a Candle: Tumaini Pasipo Na Tumaini* co-written by **Eric Walters** (Orca Book Publishers); and *Meet Tom Longboat: Scholastic Canada Biography* illustrated by **Mike Deas** (Scholastic Canada Ltd.).

For the Silver Birch Award Fiction: *Cross Ups 02: Anyone's Game* by **Sylv Chiang** (Annick Press) and *Oculum* by **Philippa**

**Dowding** (DCB).

For the Yellow Cedar Award: *Follow Your Stuff: What Makes It, Where Does It Come From, How Does It Get To You?* co-written and illustrated by **Kevin Sylvester** (Annick Press); *Hayley Wickenheiser: Amazing Hockey Stories* by **Lorna Schultz Nicholson** (Scholastic Canada Ltd.); *Hubots: Real-World Robots Inspired by Humans* by **Helaine Becker** (Kids Can Press); *My River: Cleaning Up the LaHave River* by **Anne Laurel Carter** (Formac Publishing Company Limited); and *Too Young to Escape: A Vietnamese Girl Waits to be Reunited with Her Family* co-written by **Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch** (Pajama Press).

For the Red Maple Award Fiction: *A Grain of Rice* by **Nhung Tran-Davies** (Tradewind Books); *No Fixed Address* by **Susin Nielsen** (Tundra Books); *Operatic* by **Kyo Maclear** (Groundwood Books), *Stowaway* by **Pam Withers** (Dundurn Press); and *The Unteachables* by **Gordon Korman** (Scholastic Canada Ltd.).

For the White Pine Award: *Baggage* by **Wendy Phillips** (Coteau Books) and *Beauty of the Moment* by **Tanaz Bhathena** (Penguin Random House Canada).

For Le prix Peuplier: *Tellement sauvage!* by **Mireille Messier** (Éditions D'eux).

For Le prix Méléze: *La barbe du géant* by **Alain M. Bergeron** (Soulières éditeur).

For the Evergreen Award: *All Things Consoled: A Daughter's Memoir* by **Elizabeth Hay** (McClelland and Stewart) and *Moon of the Crusted Snow* by **Waubgeshig Rice** (ECW Press).

Member **Sarah Tsiang** is shortlisted for the CBC Poetry Prize for "12." The long list also included members **Lily Gontard** for "Breaking variations: on the death of the eldest sibling" and **Pamela Porter** for "Families don't exist here."

Two members won Writers' Trust Awards: the \$25,000 Vicky Metcalf Award for Literature for Young People was presented to **Susin Nielsen**, and the \$25,000 Matt Cohen award in recognition of a lifetime of distinguished work was presented to **Olive Senior**.

**Ian Williams** won the Giller Prize for *Reproduction* (Random House Canada).

**Mark Bourrie** is shortlisted for the Taylor Prize for *Bush Runner: The Adventures of Pierre-Esprit Radisson* (Biblioasis). The long list also included **Ted Barris** for *Rush to Danger: Medics in the Line of Fire* (HarperCollins Canada).

Four books by members have been longlisted for Canada Reads 2020: *Sputnik's Children* by **Terri Favro**, *Son of a Trickster* by **Eden Robinson**, *The Lesser Blessed* by **Richard Van Camp**, and *Worry* by **Jessica Westhead**.

## New Members

**Marion Agnew**, *Reverberations: A Daughter's Meditations on Alzheimer's*, Signature Editions, 2019

**Eleanor Albanese**, *If Tenderness Be Gold*, Latitude 46, 2020 (forthcoming)

**James A. Conan**, *Our Big Little Place*, Annick Press, 2019

**Mark Cronlund Anderson**, *Holy War: Cowboys, Indians, and 9/11s*, University of Regina, 2016

**Kate Armstrong**, *The Stone Frigate: The Royal Military College's First Female Cadet Speaks Out*, Dundurn, 2019

**Samantha M. Bailey**, *Woman on the Edge*, Simon & Schuster Canada 2019

**Deniz Basar**, *Women and Puppetry*, Routledge and the Taylor & Francis Group, 2019

**Courtney Bates-Hardy**, *House of Mystery*, ChiZine Publications, 2016

**James Beckman**, *The Religious Dimensions of Socrates' Thought*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1979

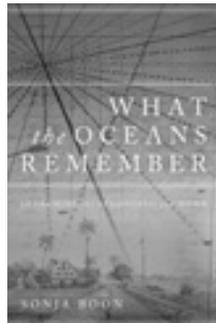
**Carolyn Bennet**, *Please Stand By*, Now or Never Publishing, 2019

**Dorothy Bentley**, *Summer North Coming*, Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2019

**Aleksandra Bida**, *Mapping Home in Contemporary Narratives*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018

**Anne Bokma**, *My Year of Living Spiritually*, Douglas & McIntyre, 2019

**Sonja Boon**, *What the Oceans Remember*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2019



**Mark Bourrie**, *Bush Runner*, Biblioasis, 2019

**Erin Bow**, *Stand on the Sky*, Scholastic Canada, 2019

**Jacquie Buncel**, *Turning the Corner at Dusk*, Wolsak & Wynn Publishers, 2010

**Beth Burnett**, *Eating Life*, Sapphire Books Publishing, 2017

**Bruce Campbell**, *The Lac-Mégantic Rail Disaster: Public Betrayal, Justice Denied*, James Lorimer & Company Ltd., 2018

**Theresa Carle-Sanders**, *Outlander Kitchen: The Official Outlander Companion Cookbook*, Delacorte Press, 2016

**Jacqueline Carmichael**, *Tweets from the Trenches: Little True Stories of Life & Death on the Western Front*, Cathedral Grove Books, 2019

**Ani Castillo**, *PING*, Little, Brown and Company, 2019

**Maria Cichosz**, *Cam & Beau*, Now or Never Publishing, 2020 (forthcoming)

**Daniel Cowper**, *Grotesque Tenderness*, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019

**Su Croll**, *Cold Metal Stairs*, Turnstone Press, 2019

**Cathy Crowe**, *A Knapsack Full of Dreams: Memoirs of a Street Nurse*, FriesenPress, 2019

**Michael Scott Curnes**, *Coping with Ash*, Inkwater Press, 2017

**Helen Dantas**, *Unveiling The Truth*, TLAC, 2014

**Jaclyn Desforges**, *Why Are You So Quiet?* Annick Press, 2020 (forthcoming)

**Alessia Dickson**, *The Crystal Chronicles*, FriesenPress, 2016

**Hellen C. Escott**, *I am Funny Like That*, Bookbaby, 2016

**Rebecca Fisseha**, *Daughters of Silence*, Goose Lane Editions, 2019

**Joe Frank**, *Arthur Garber the Harbor Barber*, Firefly Books, 2019

**Tara Gereaux**, *Size of a Fist*, ThistleDown Press, 2015

**Seyward Goodhand**, *Even that Wildest Hope*, Invisible Publishing, 2019

**Mary Elizabeth Grace**, *Bootlegging Apples on the Road to Redemption*, Insomniac Press, 1995

**Evangeline Greene**, *Sophia Violet and the Fiery Orb*, Amazon, 2019

**gillian harding-russell**, *In Another Air*, Radiant Press, 2019

**Joshua Heath**, *Shopping Cart Boy*, Siretona Creative, 2018

**Sue Farrell Holler**, *Cold White Sun*, Groundwood Books, 2019

**Amanda Jette Knox**, *Love Lives Here*, Viking, 2019

**Wanda John-Kehewin**, *Seven Sacred Truths*, Talonbooks, 2018

**Anne C. Kelly**, *Jacques Escape*, Trap Door Books, 2019

**Grzegorz Kieszkowski**, *Quintessential Quotables Vol 1*, Amazon, 2019

**David Kloepfer**, *Cheap Thrills*, Now or Never Publishing, 2019

**Sohan S. Koonar**, *Paper Lions*, Mawenzi House, 2019

**Karen Le Billon**, *French Kids Eat Everything*, HarperCollins Publishers, 2012

**Thomas Leduc**, *Slagflower: Poems Unearthed from a Mining Town*, Latitude 46, 2019

**Catharine Leggett**, *The Way to Go Home*, Urban Farmhouse Press, 2019

**Alan Lehmann**, *Inca Sunset*, Draft2Digital, 2017

**Graham Lowe**, *Mountjoy: The Reluctant Recruit*, Pegasus Elliot Mackenzie Publishers Ltd, 2019

**Brittany Luby**, *Encounter*, Little Brown, 2019

**Alastair Luft**, *Jihadi Bride*, Black Rose Writing, 2019

**Philinda Masters**, *Inside Broadside: A Decade of Feminist Journalism*, Second Story Press, 2019

**Grant Matheson**, *The Golden Boy*, Acorn Press, 2017

**Anna Maxymiw**, *Dirty Work*, McClelland & Stewart, 2019

**Michael Mayes**, *Which Way Back?*, Figure 1 Publishing, 2013

**Karen McBride**, *Crow Winter*, Harper Avenue, 2019

**Steven McCabe**, *Meme-Noir*, Quattro, 2019

**J.R. McConvey**, *Different Beasts*, Goose Lane Editions, 2019

**Laura K. McRae**, *Were There Gazelle*, Pedlar Press, 2020 (forthcoming)

**Fereshteh Molavi**, *Thirty Shadow Birds*, Inanna Publications, 2019

**Rebecca Morris**, "Next Level," *Qwerty Magazine*, May 2019

**Philip Moscovitch**, *Adventures in Bubbles and Brine*, Formac, 2019

**Monica Nawrocki**, *Cedar Dance*, Yellowdog, 2019



**Hope Nicholson**, *The Spectacular Sisterhood of Superwomen*, Quirk Books, 2017

**Catherine Porter**, *A Girl Named Lovely*, Simon & Schuster, 2019

**J. Jacob Potashnik**, *The Golem of Hampstead and Other Stories*, Penny-A-Pages Press, 2017

**Kelley Raab Mayo**, *Creativity, Spirituality, and Mental Health: Exploring Connections*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2009

**Paul Romanuk**, *Hockey Superstars*

2019–2020, Scholastic Canada Inc., 2019

**Spencer Sekyer**, *Saving Manno*, Simon & Schuster Canada, 2019

**Cynthia Sharp**, “The Unwanted Catch,” *VC2*, Vol. 39 No. 4.

**Kelly S. Thompson**, *Girls Need Not Apply*, McClelland & Stewart, 2019

**Janet Somerville**, *Yours, for Probably Always: Martha Gellhorn’s Letters*, Firefly Books, 2019

**Sonia Sulaiman**, “In Windsor an Educational

Experiment Pays Off for Poetry and Publishing,” *Write*, Fall 2012

**Helen Brown**, *Look After Her*, Inanna Publications, 2019

**Erika Thorkelson**, “The Perils of Professional Dress,” *The Walrus*, July 29, 2019

**Marian L. Thorpe**, *Empire’s Legacy: The Complete Trilogy*, Arboretum Press, 2019

**Cernéliu Tocan**, *Chutes Microscopiques, 50 Micronouvelles Illustrées*, Creatique, 2019

**Caroline Topperman**, *Tell Me What You See*, One Idea Press, 2019

**Bryn Turnbull**, *The Woman Before Wallis*, Mira/Halequin, 2020 (forthcoming)

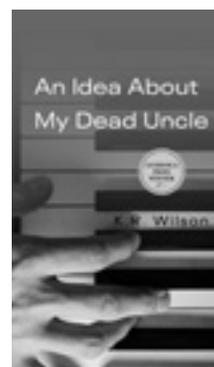
**Carly Vandergriendt**, “Saying I Don’t,” *This Magazine*, Winter 2019

**Mark Warrior**, *Quitting Time*, Macleod Books, 1978

**Georgia Webber**, *Dumb: Living Without a Voice*, Fantagraphics Books Inc., 2018

**Wendy Wickwire**, *At the Bridge: James Teit and an Anthropology of Belonging*, UBC Press, 2019

**K. R. Wilson**, *An Idea About My Dead Uncle*, Guernica Editions, 2019



**Shelley Wood**, *The Quintland Sisters*, William Morrow Paperbacks, 2019

**Winnie Yeung**, *Homes: A Refugee Story*, Freehand Books, 2018

**Ida Linehan Young**, *The Promise*, Flanker Press Ltd., 2019

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# News

THE LATEST ON WRITING AND PUBLISHING  
IN CANADA AND BEYOND

## INTERNATIONAL



### Indigenous Authors in Australia

Similar to changes in literature in Canada, Indigenous authors in Australia are finding increasing acclaim. Prize lists, international rights sales, and national reading initiatives all highlight Indigenous voices.

Magabala Books, an Indigenous press in Western Australia, was established thirty years ago by Elders who wanted control of their stories. They are now one of Australia's fastest-growing publishers with sales tripling in the past three years.

Magabala's CEO Anna Moulton says the industry is changing across the country as more people have access to Indigenous stories.

### 2021 World Book Capital

Twenty years after UNESCO named Madrid the first World Book Capital, the initiative is still going strong. The 2019 capital is the United Arab Emirates' Sharjah, and Kuala Lumpur is the 2020 honoree.

In October the city of Tbilisi in Georgia, the guest of honour at the 2018 Frankfurt Book Fair, was named the 2021 World Book Capital. Their plans for 2021 include using new technologies as tools to promote reading among younger audiences, a book festival for children, and activities designed for young readers who have limited access to books.

### Getting Ready for Frankfurt 2020

As Canada gets ready to be the guest of honour at the 2020 Frankfurt Book Fair, Canadian artists can take advantage of a new initiative: Frankfurt Audio. Launched in October 2019, this is the first time the fair has made a dedicated space for audiobooks.

While audiobook publishers have

been at previous Fairs, they have been scattered among other vendors. Frankfurt Audio brings them together and includes podcasters and a speaker program.

The initiative reflects the growing demand for audiobooks. While Canadian publishers hadn't been confirmed as of October, the Fair is talking to our audiobook publishers about participating in 2020.

## CANADIAN NEWS



### Accessibility for Deaf and Disabled Authors

Physical accessibility is often lacking at Canada's book festivals and literary events. However, more event organizations are recognizing the need to include deaf and disabled authors.

Shane Neilson, Ally Fleming, and Paul Lisson lead the AbleHamilton Poetry Collective in Hamilton, Ontario. Created in 2018, the festival is the first of its kind in Canada. Fleming says it "creates space for and celebrates deaf and disabled poets and performers. ... Something unique and beautiful happens when [they] gather and share their work in a space that centres disability."

The organizers book accessible venues and received funding for live CART captioning at the main events in 2019. They are working to increase accessibility in coming years.

### Canadian Book Clubs

More Canadians are joining book clubs. For the first three quarters of 2019, the number jumped from 7 percent of books buyers to 14 percent over the same period the year before. Less than half of these are members of celebrity book clubs. The popularity of the major genres is: adult fiction, 74 percent; mysteries and/or thrillers, 60 percent; adult nonfiction, 65 percent; and true crime, biographies, and memoirs, 44 percent.

## PRIZES



### BC and Yukon Book Prizes

In 2020, the board of the BC and Yukon Book Prizes will increase the awards from \$1,000 to \$3,000 each. The goal is to eventually increase the prize to \$5,000 for each category.

There are seven categories that cover fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and children's literature. Look for the shortlists in Spring 2020.

The board advocates for increased investment in the BC and Yukon writing community with initiatives such as the Author Tour.

### CODE Burt Award for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Young Adult Literature

In recognition of the United Nations International Year of Indigenous Languages, the CODE Burt Award added an Indigenous-language category — the first-ever Indigenous-language award for YA in Canada. Scott Walker, the CODE executive director says, "Indigenous language revitalization is a powerful goal that elevates the important link between language, development, and reconciliation." The shortlist was announced in December 2019.

### New Category Added to Doug Wright Awards

The Doug Wright Awards recognizes Canadian comics and graphic novels. In 2020 they have added the Egghead Award that recognizes the best book for kids 12 and under. The award is named after Nipper (who was originally named Egghead) in cartoonist Doug Wright's Family cartoon series. Winners will be announced in early May 2020.

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# In Memoriam

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## Bill Schermbrucker

BY CRYSTAL HURDLE, NADEEM PARMAR, AND BRIAN BURTCHE

### 1938–2019

Born in Eldoret, Kenya, in 1938, and having lived on BC's west coast since 1964, long-time TWUC member Bill Gerald Schermbrucker (PhD) died on Saturna Island on September 14, 2019. A founder and mainstay of Capilano College (now Capilano University), Bill was a beloved English and creative writing instructor. He served on many fronts: as the English department coordinator, editor of *The Capilano Review* from 1976 to 1982, humanities division chair, and union steward. Bill was also a tireless worker on many committees and a great mentor and friend. He invited new faculty members to dinner, fully welcoming them. Bill fought for proper recognition of transfer credit for college courses, arguing that BC Universities should grant these credits because Capilano's students had high-quality instruction from well-qualified instructors. Bill took an active part in TWUC's annual general meetings and regional meetings, fully engaged in ways to further TWUC's objectives.

For Crystal, "Bill was always about the good. Getting me into a role on *The Capilano Review*, not that long after hiring me at Capilano College, mentoring me, forcing me — not for long — into the position of union steward; finding places for me and Brian Burtch in Stretchers, his writing group; blurbing my first book, offering fabulous comments about my second; and that was just me! I may have introduced him to Caesar salad at the Marinaside Grill in North Vancouver, but he introduced me to several new worlds. Any committee or meeting that had Bill in it was sure to be fun. Bill continued to work part-time at Capilano for years after his 60<sup>th</sup>, bequeathing sense, history, and wisdom. Even then, he played an active role in a group of retired teachers, wanting everyone to succeed."

Bill took a lasting interest in others, often with special greetings. For Brian, it was "Man." Picture him leaning in, those blue eyes under his "Oliver" cap. "Man, you have to join this group!"

There was a special greeting that found its place in Nadeem Parmar's heart. "Hi, Baboo?" (South Asians, working as clerks under the British Empire in Kenya, were called Baboos).

Nadeem said, "I am not a Baboo."

"Don't you come from Kenya?"

"No. I am from India. Correction: from Coventry, England."

This first conversation with Bill was in a bus carrying TWUC

members from the Winnipeg Airport to the AGM. It was Nadeem's first AGM after becoming a member in 1993. "His cheerful, smiling face, melodious voice, and towering personality pulled me like a magnet. Baboo became our term of endearment, one I accepted wholeheartedly as I came to know Bill. We attended many AGMs along with Crystal and Brian and many other members. Bill encouraged and assisted me in writing my novel, *Inder Jll*, in English. It's a novel in Punjabi with a backdrop of the Air India Flight 182 crash. He tried to publish an anthology of Indo-Canadian writers' selected poems with the cooperation of Capilano University. Unfortunately, due to many restrictions and complicated rules and regulations for translation grants, we couldn't get a dime from the Canada Council for the Arts. When we met, it was always 'Hi, Baboo? How are you?' when he was in a jolly mood. Now, there is no one to greet me that way."

Brian's last contact with Bill was a telephone conversation after Bill had returned to Saturna after medical treatments in Vancouver. He was his usual warm self, reflecting that he had had many "good innings." Even so, they planned to meet for lunch when Bill visited North Vancouver.

Bill's memorial on Saturna Island was packed with more than 200 people. The service captured many facets of this inspirational, generous, witty, kind, and funny man. It covered family life: the husband, father, uncle; the post-secondary instructor at Capilano; the writer (*Crossing Second Narrows*, *Mototherapy and Other Stories*, *Mimosa*, which won the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize at the 1988 BC Book Prizes gala, *Chameleon and Other Stories*, *The Aims and Strategies of Good Writing*, and *The Dialogue Continues* (ed.)); and the community member.

Rosemary Coupe, a former colleague, attended Bill's celebration of life on Saturna, BC, where, she observed, Bill had "joined everything except the woman's group." Family members, friends, and colleagues Pierre Coupey, Penny Connell, and Will Goede spoke. The ceremony ran for two and a half hours. Rosemary remembers that "The MC tried to limit speeches to three minutes, but there was no way the speakers would allow that. Everyone in their own way evoked the spirit of Bill." Even in death, Bill was able to fill and enliven a room.



## David Lewis Stein

BY ERNA PARIS

1937–2019

“I’ve got a great story!” That’s what he would say at the start of most conversations. For David was, above all, a writer with a cocked ear and an observant eye. People’s stories fascinated him. He was interested, compassionate, and perceptive.

David Lewis Stein was a founder of TWUC and one of our first Chairs. He was dedicated to the Union and often spoke about the heady early years. At the AGM of 2010, all living former Chairs were recognized. As David’s friend, I was particularly happy to be Chair that year and presiding over the ceremony. It was a wonderful occasion. He was thrilled.

David was the *Toronto Star’s* formidable municipal affairs columnist for almost two decades. In passionate defense of his city, he took on politicians, advocated reform, and fought corruption — in one instance, encouraging a City of York councillor to call out unsavoury development. He was influential: In the 1990s he favoured the amalgamation of the five cities of Toronto and East York into the current megacity, a move that made him unpopular with many. But he believed in the larger benefits of urban diversity.

He was quirky. He always wore a hat, indoors and outdoors, regardless of the season. And before smoking became unseemly, he enjoyed lighting up smelly cigars in the *Toronto Star* newsroom, to the annoyance of his colleagues. I once visited him there; his feet were propped up on his desk, his hat was tilted over his face at a rakish angle, and a cigar dangled out of his mouth. I think he thought he was Damon Runyon.

David and his wife, Alison, a high school drama teacher, inhabited an inspiring marriage. They did everything together — except the practice of religion. David was a practising Jew, Alison was a practicing Protestant — and they strove to find common ground. For years they held a Passover Seder that included elements of Jesus’s Last Supper as well as Old and New Testament readings, followed by biblical charades. We all came with our children who were exposed to the Stein family’s remarkable

ecumenism. David and Alison eventually wrote a unique Passover Haggadah incorporating their separate and mutual beliefs.

He was a fine father. Rather than repair their television set when it broke, he elected instead to read the entirety of Charles Dickens to his young daughter, Kate. When he loved you — as he loved Alison; his daughters, Annika and Kate; his son, Ben; and his many friends — he was tenacious. Loyalty was what he admired in others: not their worldly success, but their character. It mattered to David that you would drop everything to support a friend; that you did not abandon people close to you, even if they hurt you; then later that you remembered the date his beloved Alison had died.

He also mentored younger writers. “Whatever I became to *Star* readers has a direct link to David Lewis Stein, my mentor, sounding board, and dear friend,” his successor Royson James wrote after David’s death. He also mentored me. When I struggled over my first magazine article, he said, “I’ll help you.” We shared a lifetime of friendship — and banter. In the early 1980s we even got paid for the latter: We had a column in *Chatelaine* magazine called “A Man and a Woman” in which I played the progressive liberal and he played the curmudgeon.

Shortly after his death, Toronto City Council entered a Motion of Condolence into the record. “David had a true passion for ... Toronto ... and made city politics accessible to the city’s residents. His insistence to do the right thing and gather all sides of a story drove his readers and his students to look for solutions ... including for transport, municipal reform, and housing. David’s life and career have left a profound impact on the city of Toronto.”

All who knew and loved him, and we are many, will miss his unique presence in the world.

*This piece was originally published in The Globe and Mail on December 3, 2019.*



# DORIS' LEGACY TO TWUC

Doris McCarthy was a treasured member and friend of the Union. While known across the country for her stunning abstract landscapes, she was also the proud author of three memoirs: *A Fool in Paradise*, *The Good Wine*, and *Ninety Years Wise*.

Doris was an active TWUC member, attending numerous AGMs, donating her art for auctions in support of the Union's work, and even venturing to the Ukraine with several Union members to deliver more than 1,000 Canadian books, periodicals, and magazines (donated by Canadian authors and publishers) to the Verntasky Library of Science and Technology in Kyiv.

When Doris passed away peacefully in her Scarborough home, Fool's Paradise, in her 101<sup>st</sup> year, she left behind not only her creative works but a lasting gift to the organizations she had supported. The Writers' Union of Canada was one of six organization to whom Doris left her artistic estate. Partial income from her estate was the foundation for the Union's Legacy Fund which provides ongoing financial support for the Union. Her home was left to the Ontario Heritage Trust and is now a creative retreat.

We are grateful to Doris for the joy she brought in life, for her creative work that continues to brighten the world, and for the legacy she left that continues to support creators and their organizations.

Remember the Union in your will with a planned gift to the TWUC Legacy Fund. When you give to the Legacy Fund, you ensure that the Union's important work continues for future generations. Learn more at [writersunion.ca/legacy](http://writersunion.ca/legacy).

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

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