

# ABT

*Atlantic Books Today*

Fall 2011 • No. 67  
Publications Mail Agreement  
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## TANYA DAVIS

IS NOT SO LONELY:  
MUSICIAN, SPOKEN WORD  
ARTIST AND POET LAUREATE  
Inside her creative space

WORDS OF WISDOM  
Advice all writers should  
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MacLeod, Sheree Fitch,  
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[Canadianbookshelf.com](http://Canadianbookshelf.com)  
An all-you-can-read  
buffet. Page 16

CREATIVE NESTS:  
When musicians and  
authors flock together

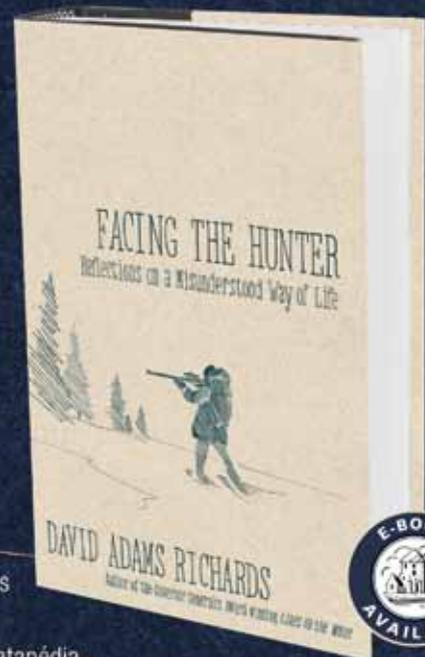
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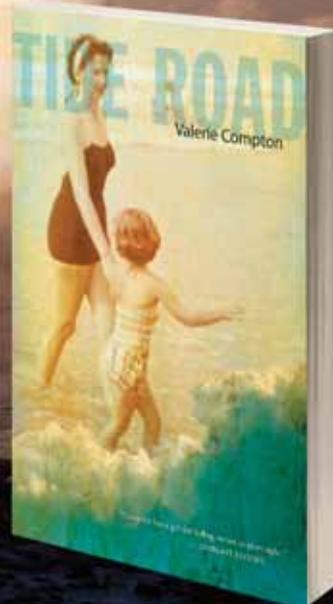
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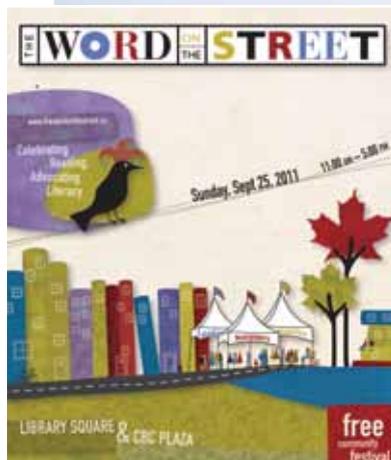
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The Word On The Street Book and Magazine Festival takes place on the Halifax waterfront surrounding the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and across the harbour at Alderney Landing in Dartmouth. *A celebration of literacy and the written word*



# WORD on the water



# tanya davis

Cover image and Tanya Davis photo on this page:  
kelly clark photography: typicalgirl.com in Halifax, N.S.  
Taken on the Halifax waterfront, home of the 2011 The Word  
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**The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea**

An-depth crime investigation by Steven Laffoley as he travels the tough streets of 1896 Halifax to the courtrooms of Boston in search of a killer. Along the way he discovers that nothing in this case is what it first seems

**Danny Williams, Please Come Back**

A collection of social and political commentaries written by Bill Rowe published from 2005 to 2007 in the *St. John's Telegram* and the *Corner Brook Western Star*

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## Our contributors

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**Margaret Patricia Eaton's** third poetry collection, *Vision & Voice*, in collaboration with artist Angelica De Benedetti, was released in July by Eagle Wings Press, Moncton.

**Sue Carter Flinn** is the former arts and deputy editor for Halifax's *The Coast*, currently working in Toronto as web editor for *Quill & Quire*.

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**Len Wagg** is the author of *Nova Scotia Landmarks*, *Wild Nova Scotia* and *Nova Scotia*. He is a photography columnist for *The Chronicle Herald*.

**Kate Watson** is a freelance writer and theatre critic for *The Coast* living in Dartmouth, N.S.

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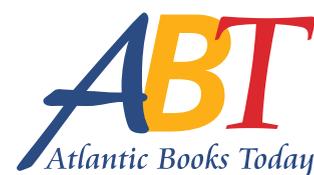
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## Dear reader,

You may notice some changes with this issue of *ABT*. Only because we like to take into consideration what you, our dear readers, have to say. According to our 2010 Readers Survey, our In the Author's Studio section is one of the most popular we have. So we've decided to give you more. This section has expanded to two pages and our hope is to take you even deeper into the creative minds—and spaces—of Atlantic Canadian authors and illustrators. This issue, we're dropping by the at-home studio of Tanya Davis, the musician, spoken word performer and poet who graces our cover with ease (more on that in a moment).

We've also changed up our Interview with an Author section. Now you'll find the *ABT* edition of the Proust Questionnaire. This survey includes questions that Marcel Proust answered in the 1880s. The question-

naire was a popular Parisian parlour game among the novelist's bourgeois crowd. We can't believe we didn't think of this before—a perfect fit for *ABT*. We hope you enjoy our interrogations into the personal lives of some of your favourite authors—we know we'll come across some humorous and creative answers along the way.

The Word On The Street Book and Magazine Festival is going seaside this year with a move to a new location on the Halifax waterfront, in and around the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and we have all the details (page twenty-four). Our cover girl Tanya Davis dropped by the new venue for a photo shoot. You may recognize Halifax's new Poet Laureate from the hit "How to Be Alone" video-poem, which has garnered over three million hits since going viral on Youtube. Davis will take to the stage at Word

On The Street on September 25 with fellow poets Sue Gyoette (our first respondent to *ABT*'s Proust Questionnaire, page seven) and George Elliott Clarke. Also appearing are Linden MacIntyre, Alexander MacLeod, Sheree Fitch and dozens more. For all our aspiring writers, these authors and others offer up invaluable wisdom learned from their trade (page twenty-five). Based on the popularity of Pitch the Publisher, back at the festival for another round this year, there are many of you with the desire to be published. Take note, this is sought-after advice all writers should hear. Hope to see you at Word On The Street and don't forget you can check in with us anytime on twitter (@abtmagazine), facebook or on our website, atlanticbookstoday.ca.

Heather Fegan & Peggy Walt

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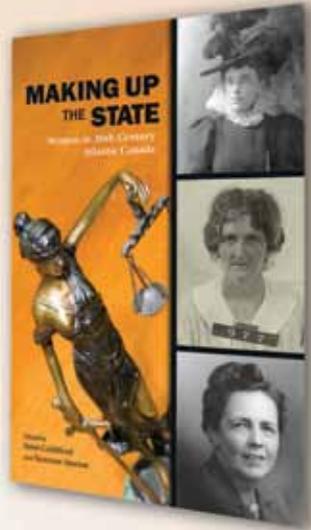
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# ABT's Proust Questionnaire

## SUE GOYETTE



Sue Goyette



Sue Goyette's poetry has appeared on the Toronto subway system, in wedding vows and spray-painted on a sidewalk. With three collections of poetry published, including the most recent tour de force *Outskirts* (Brick Books) she's been nominated for several awards. Here, the Halifax poet contemplates misery, happiness and life as a... dancer?

**What do you consider your best quality?**

My enthusiasm though it's not always a good thing on the dance floor.

**A quality you desire in a partner:**

A sense of humour and a sense of direction.

**What do you appreciate most about your friends?**

That they're willing to disagree with me, and that they laugh at the right time.

**Your worst quality:**

The dark side of my enthusiasm which can make me operatic or single-minded.

**Your favourite occupation:**

I really like being a poet.

**What is your idea of happiness?**

August, my backyard and its trees, the tiny lights in them, friends, my record player and a good box of records.

**Your idea of misery:**

Besides the obvious: hunger, poverty, war; the inability to do what I love, not being able to see my kids and step-kids and, way at the bottom of the list, mosquitos and tippy canoes.

**Where would you most like to live?**

Somewhere sustainable but urban, I like the energy of a well-run city. I was just in New York and it was pretty amazing. I like it here because the Atlantic keeps me humble.

**If you could be someone else for a day who would it be?**

I'd like to be a dancer in a Marie Chouinard choreographed performance with all of the physical strength and grace that would require. It would be amazing to feel that kind of leap and play and to be in a body that is capable of that. Or maybe a biologist working with packs of wolves and coyotes. It would be fascinating to be familiar with the habitats and habits of that kind of wilderness and to be able to track a pack.

**Favourite colour:**

Orange and raspberry next to each other.

**Favourite animal:**

Wolves and foxes. (Owls, bats).

**Your favourite poet(s):**

There are so many poets who've been essential to me. Walt Whitman, Elizabeth Bishop, René Char, Rilke, Paul Celan, Saint Denys Garneau. More currently: Dean Young, C.D. Wright, Amy Gerstler...

**Favourite author(s):**

Roch Carrier, Italo Calvino, Katherine Mansfield, William Faulkner.

**Your favourite fictional heroes:**

I still think of Hagar Shipley from Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel*. Her spiciness and bewilderment in the face of aging still rings vivid and true and I read that book many years ago.

**Your real life heroes:**

The Dalai Lama, people who ride their bikes in Halifax, organic farmers, teachers, activists, artists, people who work with children or seniors, nurses, kids standing up for other kids, people who talk and listen to teenagers.

**Your favourite food and drink:**

Sweet potato tempura and udon noodles and I really like real lemonade though some days it's a poutine and a Kilkenny.

**What is your greatest fear?**

Having a greatest fear is my greatest fear. The idea of a "greatest fear" totally freaks me out. I'd be on the look-out for its long shadow all the time, and it would be out there, like the ocean: skulking.

**A natural talent you would like to possess:**

I'd like to be able to sing. To really sing. But then I'd be unbearable, one big, constant Vegas act.

**How you want to die:**

Peacefully, elderly, surrounded by family and dear friends.

**Your present state of mind:**

I'm pretty relaxed and happy.

**Favourite or personal motto:**

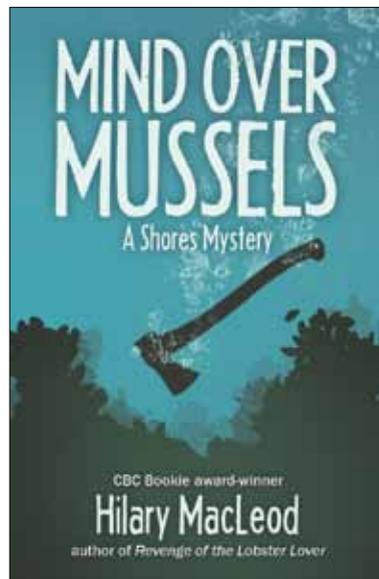
Goethe's "Do not hurry, do not rest." **ABT**

# ABT book excerpt: Mind over Mussels: A Shores Mystery

By Hilary MacLeod

Excerpted from *Mind Over Mussels* by Hilary MacLeod  
The Acorn Press, \$22.95 (pb) 320 pp. 978-1-894838-60-3, September 2011

Nothing big ever happens in The Shores. Ceilidhs, yes. Killings, no. That all changes when amateur sleuth Hy McAllister trips over a body on the beach and stumbles head first into a murder case. As Hurricane Angus storms up the coast, Hy must vie against the elements to uncover the murderer in a village where almost everyone has something to hide.



New fiction from The Acorn Press

An unusual mix of gulls and crows was circling low over the shore, cawing, screaming, battling for their trophies with a greater fuss than usual.

It struck Gus Mack as odd when she lumbered to the back room, the one that used to be a porch. The sky was grey and angry. The storm was moving in. Hurricane Angus, they were calling it. Except here in The Shores it was Hurricane Gus—the neighbours teasing her because she was afraid of storms, she who'd seen so many of them, whose shock of white hair looked as if she'd been hit by lightning, her greatest fear.

There was a storm coming, no doubt of that. It had been brooding around The Shores for days. After a month of sunshine, the skies hung heavy over Red Island, encouraging carpenter Harold MacLean to pronounce: "Storm coming," every night for a week. Now people wanted it to come just to shut him up.

"The longer it takes, the worse it will be," Gus kept saying. Unlike Harold, she was usually right about the weather. She'd lived so long she'd seen it all.

Gus gazed on the green fields, the red cliffs, and the shore, washed today by steel-grey water spiked with whitecaps. Her

neighbours found her fascination with the coast peculiar. They preferred to scan the road to see who was driving by, when and why.

Gus looked at the road, too. From her big purple recliner beside the large picture window that looked out on the crossroads, she saw everything that came and went through the village—what was left of it. The Hall. The empty lots where the school and General Store used to be.

One of the most dramatic moments had been when an explosion sent her husband, Abel, flying out of the old store. A drunken farmer had backed into a fuel pump after the tank had just been filled. A pop machine and several cartons of canned food cleared a path for Abel out the shop window. He landed on his feet, unharmed. That was Abel all over. Good luck stalked him.

In spite of this and other entertainments provided by the road view, Gus liked to look out the back way to see the ocean in its many moods, and to keep track of the new cottages popping up along the capes. One had literally popped up overnight.

"Have you looked out your back window?" came the call last May from her neighbour, Estelle Joudry.

To her chagrin, Gus had not.

"Go have a look. I'll hang on."

Gus went to the back porch.

"Good Godfrey!" She stared at the dome. A white dome. It had appeared overnight. It looked like a scientific research station in the Arctic, or a snack bar—definitely not a cottage.

Gus was so shocked she never did go back to the phone, leaving the old-fashioned receiver hanging on its cord for most of the day, frustrating neighbours who wanted to share their outrage at the oddity.

But when they learned there were only a few like it in the world, and one of them was "right here in The Shores," they watched with pride as the outer coating was applied over the white bladder. Before the owner moved in, most of them had been up the cape to peek in the porthole windows.

Gus stepped out onto the stoop. She'd gazed at the water, land, and sky every morning since she'd come here as a bride sixty years ago—and she didn't tire of it. She knew the shore and its wildlife as well as she knew any of her eight children. So you'd think, the way those birds were acting, she'd have known something was wrong. But, rich as her life had been, Gus Mack had very little experience of murder. Hy McAllister almost missed him.

Hy McAllister almost missed him.

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She was running at the water's edge, the damp air turning her red curls into a frizzy mass, a stopwatch bobbing around her neck, beach treasures swinging in a make-shift fishnet bag from a washed-up lobster trap. Her camera, slung across her chest, was thumping up and down.

There was a great photo now—a thin sun peeking through a bank of clouds, its glow reflected in pools of water. The sun—over and over and over again in the sand and water. Click. She got it. And it was gone. There had been something else. Footprints? She couldn't see them now. Odd. Who'd have been here before her?

She shivered at a gust of wind from the water, pasting her jacket to her thin body, her feet sinking into wet sand as she ran. Toby, the beach dog, a black Lab with a bleached red stripe down his back, dashed along beside her, darting back and forth, spraying up wet sand from his big feet.

When she stopped to pick up a rock, Toby tore off toward the cape. Hy went sprinting after him.

And tripped.

Thump! She came down on all fours, shells scattering in the sand. She hauled herself up, cursing. She was always falling.

Then she saw him.

He lay sprawled out, a crow pecking at the back of his head, a half-dozen gulls hovering above. He wore a lime-green bandana, an orange dashiki, and bellbottoms. An Afro wig was askew on his head. In one hand, he held a sign that read: No Trespassing.

He looked like Jimi Hendrix, but it was Lance Lord, clinging to his property even in death. Hy shuddered. She was looking at a corpse. She'd fallen on a dead man. She began to heave, and threw up all over Lord's leg.

Toby licked the vomit.

"Tobeeeeeee!" She shooed him off.

She was disoriented, the day becoming dark under black clouds, the wind whining in her ears. She grabbed her bag, and began gathering up the shells and rocks that had spilled out. She didn't know why she did it. Trying to feel normal? She clung to the bag as tightly as Lance Lord was clutching death and that pathetic sign. She looked at him again. Was that a lobster on his head?

She closed her eyes.

Opened them.

Not a lobster. A crow sat on Lord's head. A carrion eater. She almost retched again. The crow flew off, and she saw the wound, black and green.

It had to be murder. And where there was murder, there was a murderer. Her mind raced.

Was he still out here on the shore? Thank God for Toby. Except he was showing as much interest as the birds in the contents of Lance Lord's head. She dragged him away with a beach rope tied to his collar, and stumbled up to Lord's cottage. She kept looking around. When had it happened? Was the murderer watching her right now?

**ABT**



## about the author



Hilary MacLeod is a writer and former journalist and broadcaster who divides her time between a cabin in the woods near Ameliasburgh, Ontario, and a house in Sea View, Prince Edward Island—a house that was once inhabited by the hired hand on L. M. Montgomery's Uncle George Campbell's farm. She is a professor of Media Studies at Loyalist College, and spends her free time plotting what her next murder will be. Her first book, *Revenge of the Lobster Lover*, won the CBC Book Club Bookies Award for Best Mystery. Check out her website at [hilarymacleod.ca](http://hilarymacleod.ca)

# ABT book excerpt:

## The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea

By Steven Laffoley

Excerpted from *The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* by Steven Laffoley  
Pottersfield Press, \$19.95 (pb) 223 pp. 978-1-897426027-2 September 2011

“Investigating murder is grim business. This is particularly true if the murder happened more than a hundred years ago in the cramped cabin of an old schooner later torpedoed and sunk. Think about it. Everybody involved in the case is dead. And the important clues to the mystery are buried somewhere beneath the ocean sand.” And so begins another in-depth crime investigation by writer Steven Laffoley, as he travels the tough streets of Halifax to the courtrooms of Boston in search of a killer. Along the way, he explores the world of 1896 and discovers that nothing in this case is what it first seems.



New Creative Non-fiction  
from Pottersfield Press

Lester Hawthorne Monks awoke with a start.

In the near-darkness of his cabin, he sat up in his narrow berth, his heart racing, and he listened. He listened intently. Around him, he could hear the familiar sounds of the ship and the sea—the groans of the schooner’s wooden hull rolling against the waves, the creak of the thick cordage tightening and slackening against the mainsails, and the faint slap of the ship’s bow, cutting deeply into the cold skin of the North Atlantic. Nothing, it seemed, was out of place. Nothing was amiss.

And yet his heart raced.

He took a deep breath and shifted gently in his berth. As he did, the fog of sleep receded. And he remembered. The scream. He’d heard a woman’s scream, a terrifying, shrill howl of pain.

Or had he?

He wondered. Had the cry been part of a dream, some distant siren’s song in the grey shadows of sleep? Or had it been a true, flesh-and-blood scream, a scream of fear, of horror, of pain? In the stillness and silence of the cabin, he couldn’t be sure.

He listened again. Listened carefully.

Still, he heard nothing.

So he pulled back his blanket, swung his feet to the floor, and looked about the room. The space was small, eight feet by six feet, with a ladderback chair in one corner and a chest of drawers in the other. The walls, ceiling, and floor were bathed in a dim, diffused moonlight that drifted gently through a small porthole above his berth. On the wall opposite was a door that led to the main cabin where the officers gathered around a simple wooden table to eat or chat. Above the table was a skylight, and next to that, a hook on which hung a small oil lamp that burned into the night. Even now, Monks could see the lamp’s faint yellow glow in a thin line along the doorframe. To Monks’s left, just past the head of his berth, was another door that led to the chartroom where the captain spent much of his time working and where, sometimes, he would sleep. To Monks’s right, just beyond the foot of his berth, was the third door in his cabin, which led to the room occupied by captain’s wife. It was at this door that Monks stared hard. After all, he had heard a woman’s scream. He listened.

Silence.

Then, to his left, he heard a rasp or gurgle. So he turned so his ear toward the chart-

room door. Again, he heard the sound, low and muffled.

“Captain Nash,” Monks called out.

Another sound. More silence.

Dread welled up in Monk’s chest. Again he called out, “Captain Nash!”

And again came the thick, watery gurgle. Then, silence.

Monks retrieved a shirt that lay across the back of the chair and pulled it over his head. He found his shoes and slipped them on. Then he crossed to the chest of drawers and removed a box of cartridges. He returned to his berth. There, carefully, he slipped a hand under his pillow until he found the metal of a gun. He withdrew it, loaded it, and turned toward the chartroom door.

His heart still raced.

With an outstretched hand, he groped for the copper latch. When he found it, he lifted the hook and opened the door. Tentatively, he leaned his head into the gloom.

As in his cabin, diffused moonlight passed through a small porthole, painting the chartroom ceiling, floor, and walls with faint grey and black shadows, textured and jagged. Monks looked left, where the captain’s narrow bunk ran along the wall and where the captain would often sit reading a

*To Monks's left, just past the head of his berth, was another door that led to the chartroom where the captain spent much of his time working and where, sometimes, he would sleep. To Monks's right, just beyond the foot of his berth, was the third door in his cabin, which led to the room occupied by captain's wife. It was at this door that Monks stared hard. After all, he had heard a woman's scream. He listened. Silence.*

book or smoking a pipe. Despite the darkness, Monks could make out the contours of the berth.

It was empty.

Then Monks heard the gurgle again, low and rich, and he looked down. Amid the moon-crafted shadows, he saw something on the floor. At first, it looked like a pile of canvas or rope or clothing strewn below the berth. But when the gurgle came again—this time louder and more laboured—he knew it was the captain. He took two steps forward and knelt by the figure. He held the gun low and, with his free hand, reached out and touched the captain's shoulder.

The body was stone still.

Confused by sleep or by fear or by the darkness, Monks tried to make sense of the scene. The captain, he thought, had somehow fallen from his berth and folded himself into this position on the floor.

Maybe.

But no matter what had happened, the captain was injured, terribly injured, and he needed help. So Monks pulled back his hand and stood. As he did, he was conscious of wetness on his fingertips. He looked down. Even in the gloom, he could see the blood.

His heart now pounded.

Fear rose to panic. He recoiled and staggered backward, his eyes darting left and right. He searched the room for danger, pointing his gun recklessly at the shadows—first right, then left, then right again—until finally he retreated from the chartroom.

He backed into his own berth then turned and headed toward the room of the captain's wife. At her door, he frantically groped for the copper latch, slid it up, and pushed open the door.

He entered.

A faint light from the main cabin's oil lamp radiated through a second door that opened into Laura Nash's room. The glow was timid, and much of her room remained in stubborn darkness. So Monks moved cautiously in the shadows, his free hand outstretched.

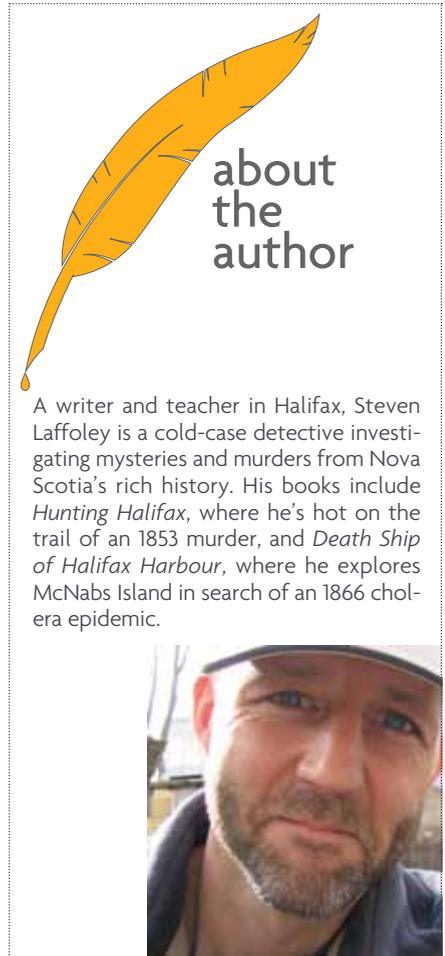
"Mrs. Nash?" he called as he stepped forward.

Only silence responded.

When he reached the berth, he put his hand on the pillow. It, too, was sticky and wet.

He withdrew his hand and froze.

Then he remembered the scream. **ABT**



A writer and teacher in Halifax, Steven Laffoley is a cold-case detective investigating mysteries and murders from Nova Scotia's rich history. His books include *Hunting Halifax*, where he's hot on the trail of an 1853 murder, and *Death Ship of Halifax Harbour*, where he explores McNabs Island in search of an 1866 cholera epidemic.



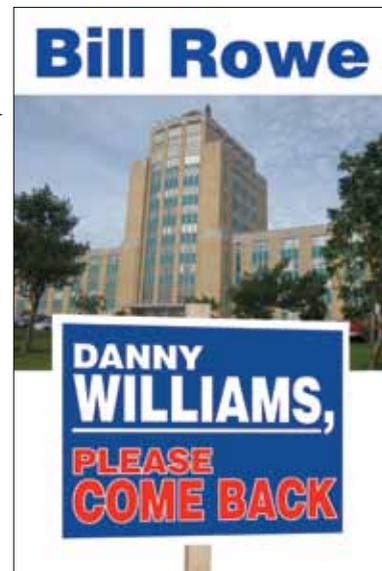
# ABT book excerpt:

## Danny Williams, Please Come Back

By Bill Rowe

Excerpt from *Danny Williams, Please Come Back* by Bill Rowe  
Flanker Press, \$19.95 (pb) 288 pp. 978-1-92688-118-8, September 2011

*Danny Williams, Please Come Back* is a collection of social and political commentaries written by Bill Rowe and published from 2005 to 2007 in the *St. John's Telegram* and the *Corner Brook Western Star*. Rowe writes using a lot of humour, with a strong emphasis on political commentary: municipal, provincial, federal and global levels.



New non-fiction from Flanker Press

Stephen Harper, bless his little heart, flies down to Gander to speak at the Tory convention. The next thing the honoured guest at the banquet knows, his own *cojones* are being skewered on the shish kebab. You've got to love our world-famous Newfoundland hospitality.

Evidently, something Harper didn't say made our colourful premier mad enough to launch another onslaught against yet another prime minister of Canada. It was as good as a skit. But what was Danny really up to? Theories are flowing freely. The one that seems to have curried most favour locally is that Danny was right and sincere, and Harper deserved everything he got. [Williams attacked Harper for reneging on his written election commitment to remove our non-renewable resources, e.g., offshore oil, from the equalization formula.] But here's another.

When a political leader is heading for trouble at home, he must divert attention from it and rally the ragged-arsed artillery by declaring war against an outside enemy. Machiavelli had some instructive tips on the subject. But, as usual, Shakespeare makes the point best.

King Henry V of England was facing problems at home himself. His father had

stolen the throne from the legitimate king, his cousin Richard II. So when Henry inherited that wobbly, usurped throne from daddy he didn't feel his future was too secure. Solution? Concoct a claim to the French crown, declare war, and invade France.

The daring exploit had all the good stuff the home crowd loved: Henry's Englishmen hopelessly outnumbered by the French, "Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more"; "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers"; then a miraculous victory by the English over the French at Agincourt, with the cream of French nobility cut down or taken hostage for hefty ransom, and little loss of notable English lives. All England rallied around their Henry and he became the national hero. Ricketty throne shored up. Problem solved. Henry's tactic worked beautifully for him - unfortunately for us.

I say "unfortunately" because Henry's success has encouraged every generation of political leaders since, whether anointed, elected, or power-grabbing, to follow his ploy to prop up popularity. Even here in our little outpost of democracy, the examples have been numerous and striking. And who has become the outside enemy against

whom our premiers have declared war all the time? Take a guess.

Joey Smallwood, after a decade as premier with singular lack of success in his industrial development schemes, seized upon Term 29 and its \$8 million a year cut by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, to declare war on the federal Tory government. Our people rallied, including even some Opposition members, and fresh electoral success for Joey's Liberals shortly followed.

Brian Peckford made himself the "bad boy of Confederation" during his tenure as premier. You'd need a calculator to keep count of the elections he won by declaring war every couple of years against the feds, whether Grit or Tory, on the offshore oil. Then Clyde Wells, after barely getting his first government elected (in fact, he lost the popular vote), soon made himself a provincial hero, and a national hero outside Quebec, by going to war against Brian Mulroney over Meech Lake. His next election was a cakewalk.

And now during this provincial election year it's Danny Williams's turn again. The only problem with this brilliant theory, though, is that Danny is not facing political trouble at home. His success with the Atlantic Accord (his first war with Ottawa)

*When a political leader is heading for trouble at home, he must divert attention from it and rally the ragged-arsed artillery by declaring war against an outside enemy.*

still has him riding high. Three-quarters of the province say they're satisfied with his government. So what's his game in declaring war on the feds again now? The word from Confederation Hill is that he wants to make history here by winning every single seat in the House of Assembly. And this new war against the outside enemy is just the ticket to do that.

Perhaps. Or, then again, maybe he's just genuinely outraged that the prime minister would renege on a solemn commitment to this province. Take your pick.

\* \* \*

Remember when caffeine and candy and booze were bad for you? Now, evidently, "scientific studies show" that coffee, along with dark chocolate and red wine, have suddenly become the best things going for your heart and your brain. But, as good as consuming those delights may be for you in moderation, we all know people who will be encouraged by the "studies" to climb the walls in a caffeine-fuelled frenzy unless they're already too bloated or drunk to move, after gorging on chocolate and vino.

I had an alcoholic friend once who was doing well staying clear of the booze. Then, one of these famous "scientific studies" came on the news. There's no rational reason, it claimed, why alcoholics cannot enjoy a glass of white wine in moderation now and then. Buoyed by the science, my friend started to enjoy a glass of white wine in moderation now and then. The next time I saw him he'd been picked up for drunk driving and was in hospital drying out under the tender mercies of his old buddy delirium tremens, before being sentenced to some months of farming under guard in Salmonier.

These unfortunate, immoderate compulsions of life remind me of politics. There's an unrestrained impulse for overwhelming success among many involved in that all-consuming racket. Success in moderation is not sufficient. It has to be absolute, over-the-top success even though such total triumph often carries with it the seeds of its

own destruction.

Take Joey Smallwood. In the election of September 1966, he strove mightily for total, unconditional success. Among other popular, high-profile deeds, he recruited as candidates powerful new names like John Crosbie, Clyde Wells, Bill Callahan, and Ed Roberts, and he all but achieved his aim of winning every seat. Only the three Tory stalwarts Tom Hickey, Ank Murphy, and Gerry Ottenheimer staved off his absolute domination of the political scene.

Then, not two years later, the cracks appeared that led to Joey's downfall: the loss of the by-election in the formerly safe Liberal Gander District, the hubris that kept him ramming ahead with the Come by Chance oil refinery and the Stephenville linerboard mill despite alarming financial implications, the defections of important ministers. Next election, the best he could achieve was to half-win and half-lose. Within months he was driven out of the province to temporary exile in Florida, and the once formidable Liberal Party was reduced to eight seats.

It's much the same story wherever you look. The success of Rene Levesque's separatist Parti Québécois in forming the government of Quebec in the seventies came only one term after Robert Bourassa's federalist Liberals had won an overwhelming victory in the previous election.

Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservatives won a record number of seats in the federal election of 1984. But, despite impressive achievements in government, a couple of elections later the party utterly collapsed and was pushed out of existence altogether. Only now are revisionist historians bringing Mulroney back from political disgrace.

Can Danny Williams profit from those painful lessons of history? It's going to be hard because he's in a bind. On the one hand he needs to show Stephen Harper and the feds how strongly the electorate down here supports his stand against them. The more seats he wins in October, the stronger the message he sends. On the other hand, if he wins every seat, or nearly every seat, wait

for the horrific backlash in a year or two as expectations are not met and visceral disappointment sets in.

I'm not saying he will destroy his party as Mulroney did. But he could well push his party into the outer darkness for a couple of decades as Joey did. So, while he drives towards massive victory in October, Danny might well remember that leaders as lovable and powerful as he now is, incredible as that now seems, sowed the seeds of ruin by their overweening success. **ABT**



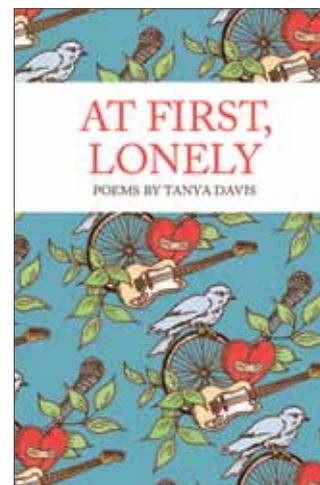
Born in Newfoundland, Bill Rowe graduated in English from Memorial University and attended Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar, obtaining an honours MA in law. Elected five times to the House of Assembly, Rowe served as a minister in the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and as leader of the official Opposition. He practised law in St. John's for many years, and he has been a long-time public affairs commentator, appearing regularly on national and local television, as well as hosting a daily radio call-in show and writing weekly newspaper columns. He is married to Penelope Ayre Rowe, CM of St. John's. They have a son, Dorian; a daughter, Toby; and three grandchildren.



# Not So Lonely

Musician and spoken word performer Tanya Davis takes to the page with her debut collection of poems *At First, Lonely*

By Jon Tattrie



Tanya Davis arrived in Halifax five years ago as a broke artist full of dreams. She haunted the city's cafes, notebook in hand, jotting down her thoughts and later harvesting them into poems and songs. Her lonely poetic PhD studied the human condition: we are born, we eat and procreate, we die. What do we do in between?

"I remember feeling quite doubtful. A lot. I'd call my mother, like, what am I doing?" she recalls.

Today, Tanya Davis is a broke artist full of dreams, haunting the city's cafes, notebook in hand, jotting down thoughts on life and death and later harvesting them into poems and songs. Only now, she's not so alone: she is the city's Poet Laureate, just published her first collection of poetry (*At First, Lonely*, The Acorn Press), shot to international YouTube fame with her spoken word gem, *How To Be Alone*, and opened the Canada Games.

Davis, who is originally from P.E.I., lives in a pretty Victorian home in north end Halifax. It's white, with purple trim and yellow highlights. In the summer, the flower garden decorates the house like it's dressed for church. She shares the home with a musician, a fiddler/farmer and an engineer who knits. The paintings of another former artist-in-residence hang on the walls.

Her writing studio is upstairs. It's a simple room with a few plants, two desks and lots of books. An acoustic guitar rests on a stand. There is one comfy chair and two wooden desks. One holds a computer and is pressed against a wall; the other faces the street window.

"I don't let my computer go on that desk. I write there, and I compute there," she says, pointing to the window and then wall desks.



Among writers, there are two basic camps: the microwavers and the slowcookers. Microwavers zap words onto pages at high speeds, and then come back to clean up. Slowcookers stew over each word and when they're done, they're done.

Davis is a slowcooker. She writes in the morning, savouring each word, mixing it carefully into a line, editing back and forth over each stanza to make sure it all tastes good, before simmering to the end.

"And once it's done, it's done," she says.

Travel brings vital spice to her creative machine. In her twenties, she crisscrossed Canada by bus and by thumb, sleeping "tentside in a field behind a gas station," as she puts it in her poem, *Made in Canada*, adding, "I hold out my hands that have never held a passport; they show me their stamps, I show them the hats I bought at thrift stores in the towns I stopped."

"One of my favourite things about going to a glorious new city is finding the best coffee shop to sit in," she says. "It's about what the new scenery does to my observations. Everything is new, but it's always the same. We're here, we live until we die. In between, we need to eat and procreate. I think about that stuff all the time!"

Given that everything is futile, she figures, why not do something fun? Or at least that brings consolation. And so she writes.

Success hasn't changed her writing process. She is more efficient, and the rhymes and half-rhymes that populate her poetry come more easily, but the challenge remains the same. To borrow from Leonard Cohen, she pays her rent every day in the Tower of Song.

Davis has lofty plans for epic poems digging into her abandoned Catholic roots, and perhaps trying her pen at short stories and novels. But meantime, she's enjoying life.

"In the arts world there are so many people running around with their heads cut off. It's so stressful. I want to work hard, but I also want to enjoy my life. I don't want it to pass me by as I'm trying to achieve these goals," she says.

As Poet Laureate, she replaces Shauntay Grant with a five-year mandate to capture the city in words, and to promote poetry. One of her first tasks was to write a poem celebrating Pride week.

"The mayor may or not show up—" she says, and then stops dead, tasting something new. "The mayor may or not. Is that right? The word? The mayor may or may not show up," she repeats.

You sense a poem has just been born. **ABT**



All photos by Kelly Clark

## Tanya's work at a glance

### *To Mary Magdalene who wept (from At First, Lonely)*

The poem started at Easter when Davis overheard the line, “Woman, why are you weeping?” and jotted it down in her notebook. It’s Jesus, disguised as a gardener, addressing Mary Magdalene, crying outside his tomb. It’s a big moment—he’s about to announce the resurrection. But that’s not where Davis’s mind went.

What if Mary was just another woman and Jesus was just another guy, she wondered. It started as a song, but it became a poem.

“Woman, why are you weeping?  
‘Cause Jesus up and left you  
‘cause Jesus disappeared?  
Did he pull a man trick, finish his business  
and vanish,  
leaving you feeling weird?”

Jesus’ words about weeping are no longer spiritual consolations, but the tone-deaf question of “another unintuitive man.” Davis worked on the poem for two weeks, discovering that all abandoned lovers find the same solace. “Fast forward two thousand years and all the chocolate will go on sale to mark the anniversary of this weekend,” she writes.

### *How to Be Alone*

The spoken word piece was born when Davis and her filmmaker friend Andrea Dorfman decided to create a project. For a topic, Dorfman suggested, “How about, how to be alone?”

Artists are professional loners, needing time to make observations and turn them into work, so Davis used her expertise to write a how-to guide. “We could start with the acceptable places: the bathroom, the coffee shop, the library,” she writes.

She and Dorfman posted the video to YouTube in July 2010. Interviews with local media brought it 100,000 views before Davis took a break in a cabin in the woods. While she was away, *How to Be Alone* went viral, passing the one million mark with a helpful tweet by film critic Roger Ebert. Today, it’s past 3.3 million views and Davis still gets daily emails from those who have just found it and found it perfectly captured their life—and found they weren’t so alone after all.

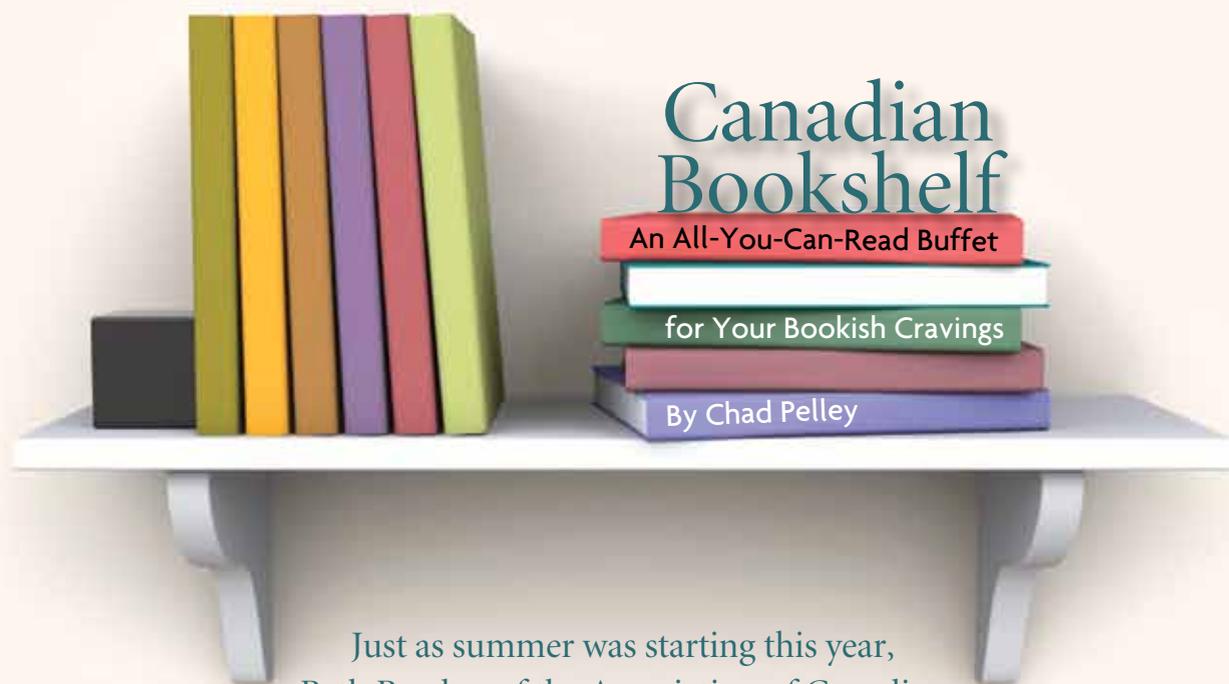
### *Your Heart Beats Hard the Whole Time*

Davis was commissioned to write a poem to start the Halifax Canada Games in 2010. The organizers wanted it to be about three minutes and directed to the athletes, but accessible to the tens of thousands of fans watching.

Davis drew upon the emotions of performing on stage to capture the thrill of crouching at the starting line. “Look self, here you are, and if you don’t win this race, you still made it this far,” she writes.

She slowcooked word after word, rhyme after rhyme. The day before the performance, she tested it in the Metro Centre—and found her words echoed into incoherence. She pruned and slowed the poem.

At the opening ceremony, the words floated through the air like butterflies, joining their companions in the nervous stomachs of the competitors.



Just as summer was starting this year,  
Beth Bruder, of the Association of Canadian  
Publishers, stated the mission and purpose of a  
newly bloomed literary resource, called  
**Canadian Bookshelf.**

“Our goal is to make it easier for readers to discover Canadian books.”

Their motto is simple, “*If it’s Canadian, it’s here,*” and they are well on their way to living up to that claim. Canadian Bookshelf already houses “*the largest publicly available collection of Canadian books and authors ever assembled.*”

It’s a project produced by the Association of Canadian Publishers in partnership with the Canadian Publishers’ Council.

Industry consultant Craig Riggs is acting as Project Manager, and the website is rounded out by two of the country’s leading book enthusiasts, Kerry Clare (as Editor) and Julie Wilson (as Host/Producer).

Far more than just another literary website, this is an authoritative and interactive resource for readers, that strives to put information about every Canadian book and author at our fingertips. In addition to its user-friendly database of Canadian books, visitors can avail of the website’s many bells and whistles, including a wonderful blog, called *Off the Page*, that posts thoughtful interviews, interesting guest posts, regular competitions and giveaways, and many other engaging features, all to help you “find your next great Canadian read.”

One of the most prominent features on the website is the themed suggested reading lists that are posted weekly. These have included everything from “books that made me laugh out loud in public” by Kathleen Winter, to “accessible poetry” by Jacob McArthur Mooney, and “queer fiction” from Zoe Whittall, as well as suggestions from site visitors like “Books set in Winnipeg.” Another feature is a themed showcasing of new releases.

It sounds a bit like a bookish heaven, really, and it is. Canadian Bookshelf is shaping up to be absolutely everything we—the



Craig Riggs



Kerry Clare



Julie Wilson

Canadian reader—have desperately been in need of. Things like literary awards can help put books on our radars, but ultimately, like snowflakes and fonts, no two readers are alike. We all have preferences, and no one knows what we like to read more than we do. That’s where Canadian Bookshelf comes in. You know what you want to read next, but you don’t know the name of it yet. Canadian Bookshelf acts as an all-you-can-read buffet, laying out a full spread of options to feed your bookish cravings. It’s the best available place to poke around and see what’s out there. Whether you want to browse by publisher, to see their new releases, or use the database to keep up on your favourite author, scan suggested reads from fellow booklovers, or read up on other titles by your favourite new writer: this is the place to do it.

Monique Trottier and Crissy Campbell of Boxcar Marketing take care of publicity for this project. When I asked Crissy how the website came to be, she said, “Many people want to be able to find Canadian books more easily, and we wanted to make it easier for them to find [a good read]. Readers have a vast selection of books to choose from, but while every book is theoretically findable, not all are equally visible in today’s crowded marketplace.”

She couldn’t be more right, and for that very reason, all the things that make Canadian Bookshelf a wonderful resource for readers also happen to make it a wonderful thing for Canadian writers, who will be more visible than ever as Canadian Bookshelf evolves into a reader’s go-to source for Canadian literature. More than 10,000 books are published every year in Canada, but maybe ten of them will find themselves basking in the yearly awards’ spotlight. The browsability and varied promotional features of Canadian Bookshelf will certainly help all books, from Giller winners to hidden gems, reach the readers who would appreciate them the most.

Canadian Bookshelf also stands out by being a “*book community*.” It lets members create their own suggested reading lists and review books on the website, and it solicits guest posts from authors themselves. This mingling of readers and writers, and direct author-reader connection, helps to foster a positive, patriotic community feel on Canadian Bookshelf.

There is a celebratory sense of excitement and enthusiasm about Canadian literature on this website, and it helps tremendously that it is staffed exclusively by some of the finest, hard-working book enthusiasts in the country. People like Site Host Julie Wilson, of Book Madam fame, who’s done as much paid and unpaid promotional work for Canadian writers as anyone, and Site Editor Kerry Clare, who runs one of the country’s best book blogs, Pickle Me This.

“What sets Canadian Bookshelf aside to my mind,” Julie says, “is that while it’s a professional venture, it’s curated by people I’d describe as professional fans, people who are intrigued by all aspects of the publishing industry. Beyond that, while there’s a lot of frontlist on Canadian Bookshelf, we also like to remind readers of our backlist. The titles remain the same, but the authors themselves have become more storied.”

It is Julie who conducts many of the interviews on the site, and I know, from personal experience in being on the receiving end of her interviews, and from following her thoughtful discussions with other authors, that they couldn’t have a better host for the website. “My interviews evolve one question at a time over the course of a few days,” she says. “We allow ourselves to take both care and time, if it means offering original content that is truly unique and provides the interviewee a positive experience.”

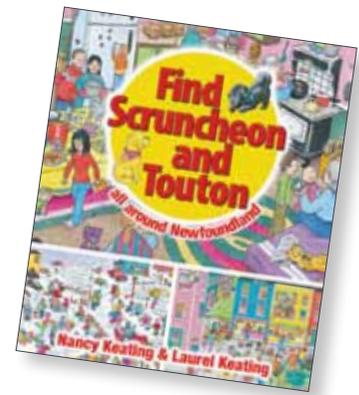
As a self-proclaimed “chatty sort,” Julie says her role as host reflects her love of conversation, and allows her to actively participate in the promotion of Canadian authors, rather than simply providing them with a publicity platform. And, as Julie herself said, “that’s something we don’t often see in print, but have come to expect of television and radio.”

As host, Julie is also the face of Canadian Bookshelf’s “Personal Book Shopper Contest.” With this monthly contest, Canadian Bookshelf goes beyond suggesting books, to finding suitable ones to put in your lap. Once a month, they ask readers to submit five words to describe themselves, and then Canadian Bookshelf assembles a panel of librarians, booksellers, publishers and authors to “put on their collective thinking hats” and decide on three books that pair well with the lucky winner’s five words. There are three lucky winners a month.

Canadian Bookshelf sees itself as “a virtual community-bookstore, stocked with more great books than you could ever get through in a lifetime.” Their website states that they’d “supply the hammock and sunscreen if we could. We can’t. But we can promise that you’re going to have fun. You’re going to find books you’ll never forget, meet people whose reading lists and reviews you’ll admire, and learn more about the authors who intrigue you.” **ABT**

# Children's Books

The best of children's and young adult books



## Find Scruncheon and Touton

All around Newfoundland

By Nancy and Laurel Keating, \$10.95 (pb)  
978-1-897174-69-2, 32 pp.  
Tuckamore Books, April 2011

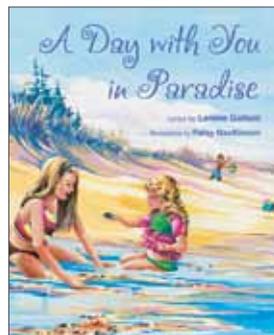
Two breeds of dog dominate Newfoundland lore, both known and revered for their historic assistance to fishermen. The giant-sized Newfoundland, with its tremendous strength and loyalty, is legendary for water rescue and life-saving while the energetic Labrador Retriever became renowned for its abilities pulling ropes between boats and hauling in nets. Two winsome dogs, representative of their breeds, get some play days in a lively new search and find book by Portugal Cove mother and daughter Nancy and Laurel Keating who are both award-winning artists.

In a bow to Newfoundland culinary tradition, the Keatings named their dogs Scruncheon, after bits of fatback pork fried crisp and served with fish, and Touton, after bits of bread dough historically fried in rendered fatback pork.

Portrayed by the Keatings as frisky, inquisitive young puppies, the dogs have eleven different adventures around Newfoundland and Labrador. These adventures appear on double pages and young readers must first find the dog and then a long list of items ranging from lost mittens to garden rakes, life preservers and puffins. Their adventures take them downtown, to the regatta, down to the harbour, to a kitchen party and out around the bay where they sniff out spider webs, lost sandals, knitting needles, rubber boots, crabs and starfish. Just as the adventures come to a close, the Keatings issue another challenge by providing four pages of odds and ends, from family portraits to home baked bread, an igloo and an iceberg, which are scattered throughout the book.

A wealth of small, vibrantly coloured depictions of busy lives in interesting places makes this an appealing book for young children. Anyone planning a visit to the province will enjoy the virtual tour while residents will appreciate all the little touches that enhance the book's Newfoundland flavour. It is a good choice for driving in the car or waiting for the ferry.

—*Rosalie MacEachern*



## A Day with You in Paradise

By Lennie Gallant,  
illus. by Patsy MacKinnon, \$12.95 (pb)  
978-1-55109-832-6, 32 pp.  
Nimbus Publishing, July 2011

A sun-soaked day at the beach in Prince Edward Island is one of my favourite things, so it was a pleasure to take along the new picture book, *A Day with You in Paradise*, on my annual sojourn to red-sand land.

Based on Lennie Gallant's song of the same name, from his Juno-nominated album *When We Get There*, this is a sweet—and needless to say—rhythmic tale of a family revelling in a peaceful day on a PEI beach.

Native son Gallant is well known and esteemed, as a singer-songwriter with nine albums to his credit and a member of the Order of Canada, and his words don't disappoint in this format.

"Sand on your belly and in my hair, Sun have mercy on skin so fair," the story begins. It opens with two girls, eventually

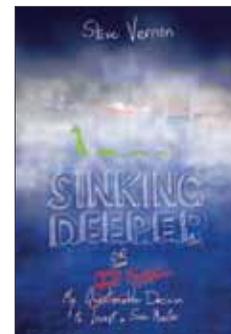
joined by two boys in their frolics, including swimming, burying each other in the sand and building sand castles.

Two adults (parents, presumably) arrive as well, and the day concludes with a bonfire and singsong: "Build a fire, 'neath a waning moon, Old guitar strumming a new tune."

The story and vivid eye-catching illustrations evoke those simple beach days most of us experienced as children—the same ones modern kids still bask in. It's obviously familiar territory for Gallant, who grew up in Rustico, PEI, with five siblings.

New Waterford-based artist Patsy MacKinnon, a member of the prestigious Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour, creates a bright yet soothing canvas for readers' eyes.

When I read the book to a group of youngsters, aged three to nine, during our family friendly vacation, reaction was a bit mixed. That said, the five-and-six-year-olds in the group were enthusiastic about the story and paintings. —*Skana Gee*



## Sinking Deeper

By Steve Vernon, \$12.95 (pb)  
978-1-55109-777-0, 160 pp.  
Nimbus Publishing, September 2011

Roland MacTavish would likely describe himself as a fairly typical fourteen-year-old boy—who just happens to sleep in a jail cell (his father is the local police chief).

And has serious issues with the mayor (who just happens to be his mother). Then there is the caber-tossing escapade involving the neighbour's clothesline pole, another neighbour's dory and Roland's Granddad Angus as the mastermind behind the whole sorry incident. So perhaps "typical in his own unique way" is a more fitting description.

Typical or not, Roland is certainly content with his life, which is why he is outraged and furious when his mother announces that she's going to step down as mayor and move them both to Ottawa. Why would he want to move to Ottawa when he has everything he could ever want in Deeper Harbour? Most especially his grandfather Angus, a friend and mentor, a colourful character who has always been a significant part of Roland's life. Determined to make his mother see that there is a future for them in Deeper Harbour, he and his cronies come up with a plan to put their home town on the map, a scheme that will lure tourists from everywhere to this sleepy little town. They decide to build... a sea monster!

This book is as filled with warmth and wit as it is with folksy charm. Vernon very ably captures the spirit of this small town with the neighbours who all know each other's business but who also look out for one another like kin. He provides a delightful cast of characters who give the story its depth and heart. Roland's relationship with his grandfather is beautifully depicted and the life lessons that he learns along the way are true nuggets of wisdom. Perhaps the most endearing thing about this book, however, is the voice: anyone who has ever had the pleasure of hearing Steve Vernon tell a story will hear his voice in their head as they read, lending the book an extra appeal—and making it an excellent choice to read-aloud! —*Lisa Doucet*

### Chasing Freedom

By Gloria Ann Wesley, \$18.95 (pb)  
978-1-55266-423-0, 240 pp.

Roseway Publishing, September 2011

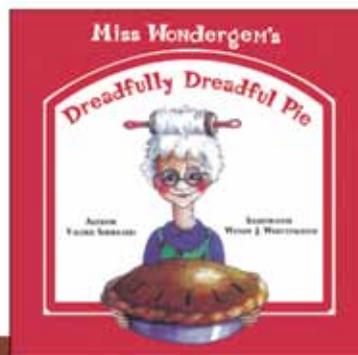
When Sarah and her grandmother, Lydia, find themselves being shipped away to a new life of freedom in Birchtown, Nova Scotia, they hardly dare to hope that things might



truly be different for them there, better than the cruelty, hardship and never-ending toil that defined their lives as slaves on a southern plantation. But when the Black Loyalist slaves arrive in Nova Scotia, they very quickly discover that there is no escape from the tyranny of hatred, persecution and discrimination, even here. The land and provisions that they were promised never materialize, and Sarah and Lydia along with all of their friends and neighbours must struggle just to survive. Also, they must remain ever vigilant against the slave traders who make their living by abducting free Negroes and selling them back into slavery. Sarah and Lydia are among the

lucky ones whose determination and will to survive enable them to get by. But Lydia's wounds from the past run deep and when her long-hidden secrets finally come to light, Sarah and her father decide that the time has come to try to pull Lydia's scattered family together at last.

This book provides an intriguing and revelatory glimpse into the early days of what is now Shelburne, and into the deplorable conditions that the newly freed slaves faced upon their arrival in Nova Scotia. Wesley depicts the stark reality of their situation: the living conditions were harsh, and while they were, in theory, free, they by no means enjoyed any sense of equality or fair treatment. Sarah and Lydia are both sympathetic characters despite the fact that the third person narration tends to emotionally distance the reader from the full impact of the events as they unfold. The secondary characters are less well-developed and remain essentially one-dimensional. Nevertheless, the story is fascinating and an important one, particularly for young readers who might be tempted to believe that black



### Miss Wondergem's Dreadfully Dreadful Pie

Valerie Sherrard  
Illustrated by Wendy J. Whittingham

1-897174-81-0 / 978-1-897174-81-4  
32 pages / 8.5" x 8.5" / \$12.95

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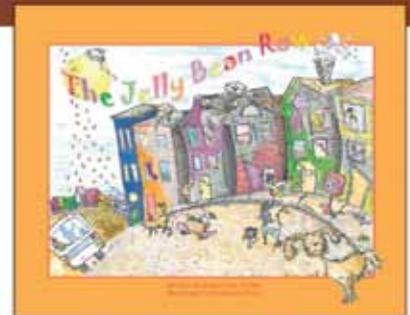
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Susan Pynn Taylor  
Illustrated by Elizabeth Pratt

1-897174-80-2 / 978-1-897174-80-7  
32 pages / 8.5" x 8.5" / \$12.95

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slaves who escaped to Canada found freedom and prosperity and lived happily ever after. Wesley's book reveals how tightly people clung to their beliefs about their new neighbours, how slow attitudes were to change and how challenging life was for the newly-freed former slaves.

—Lisa Doucet



**Ashes, Ashes**

By Jo Treggiari, \$19.99 (hc)  
978-0-54525-563-9, 352 pp.  
Scholastic, June 2011

Sixteen-year-old Lucy Holloway is a survivor. From the moment we are introduced to her, readers know that they have found

in her a headstrong, fiercely independent young woman who has the strength and the will to make it on her own. Which is precisely what she must do because over ninety per cent of the world's population—including her entire family—have died, victims of a vicious, merciless plague. She is truly all alone in what is left of the world, a world that has been ravaged by floods and natural disasters that have rendered it virtually unrecognizable.

Against all odds, Lucy has survived and now ekes out a meager existence for herself in the twisted remnants of what was once Central Park. Then she meets Aidan, and when a tsunami wipes out her modest dwelling place, she decides to check out his ragtag band of fellow survivors while she tries to figure out her own next move.

Resourceful and stubborn and proud, Lucy is not at all certain that she wants to commit herself to throwing in her lot with Aidan's small community that has become a sort of family. She is also not entirely certain about what exactly her feelings for Aidan are. However, when the Sweepers come and whisk away members of this

tight-knit group one by one, she finds herself becoming increasingly concerned for these people and anxious to help. When she eventually becomes part of a rescue mission, she is unprepared for the numerous surprises that await her at the Sweeper's compound.

This book is vivid and taut, a grim portrait of our world as it could so easily be in a not-too-difficult-to-imagine future. And yet it is a story of hope and survival, and of friendship and love. Lucy's character is the heart of this story as she learns to see that there is more to people than meets the eye and she faces large questions of right and wrong, questions that have no easy answers for she or the reader.

Treggiari has created a starkly compelling rendering of this dystopian world and among the few people who have managed to cling to life she has given us a cast of intriguing characters, people that we earnestly hope will continue to flourish in the face of these terrible losses. Urgent and intense, it is an arresting tale.

—Lisa Doucet *ABT*

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# On CanLit book blogging

Steven W. Beattie administers the literary website That Shakespearean Rag. Here, he tries to answer the question: why blog?

Like most artistic endeavours, in Canada, one doesn't become a dedicated book blogger for fame and fortune. There are easier and less time-consuming ways to make money, should that be one's ultimate goal. Indeed, since launching That Shakespearean Rag (TSR) close to five years ago, I don't think I've made a nickel directly off any content posted there. I have repurposed various posts, and things I've written there have resulted in paid gigs (like the piece you're reading now, for example). But the site itself is a labour of love.

This is no small thing. A typical post on TSR runs between 700 and 1,000 words, and takes anywhere from two hours to four or more to research, compose and edit. That doesn't include the time it takes to read a book for review. If Doctor Johnson was right, and only a blockhead ever wrote anything for any reason other than to make money, then I must be the biggest blockhead around.

Why persist, then? In the first place, the medium of the Internet offers the opportunity to write whatever I want, in whatever format I please. This is liberating, but it is also dangerous, since there is nothing in the way of editorial oversight. The temptation to hit "publish" before a piece is entirely honed is great, and in many cases I've uncovered errors in thought or fact that an editor would have picked up on. The Web allows for these mistakes to be erased as though they never occurred, but this is intellectually dishonest: online writing is in the public domain and it is my feeling that it should be held to the same standards as any other writing.

Indeed, I take the writing on TSR every bit as seriously as I do the writing that appears under my name in any other venue. Craft and thought are important, and these things take time, which is something the Internet is extremely inimical toward. If there is one complaint I receive more than any other about the pieces I post on my blog, it is that they are too long. People generally don't want to sit still for the time it takes to read a 1,500-word essay or review anymore; they want to surf, to skim, to sample. This is one reason why many former bloggers are abandoning the field for sites like Tumblr and Twitter, which encourage and reward communication in shorter, sharper bursts.

But what these places gain in speed, they lose in nuance and subtlety. It's impossible to have a reasoned, meaningful conversation on Twitter (believe me, I've tried). But it is possible, with a bit of effort on the part of both writer and reader, to engage in an extended, multifaceted argument in the long-form of blogging. This is the kind of thing that is disappearing from newspapers and magazines as they shrink their book pages or eliminate them altogether. And it's the kind of writing I continue to value.

In many ways, mine is an antiquated attitude and an approach that finds less and less appeal with the vast majority of online readers. My site stats bear this out: unless I'm saying something incendiary (which I've been known to do in the past, but which I find I have less and less interest in doing any longer), very few people seem to visit the site, or to remain there long enough to read a post in its entirety. The apparently unbridgeable gap between the values the Internet promotes—and the public seems to want—and the values I continue to endorse left me so despondent that I had to take a break from blogging, putting the site on a self-imposed hiatus for a couple of months this summer.

But TSR is back as of August 2011. In the end, my enthusiasm for literature compels me to keep writing about it. And I'm thankful for a medium that allows me to indulge my enthusiasms, to write about the books and authors I love, in the way I want to write about them. Why blog about literature? That's as good a reason as I can come up with. **ABT**

*Why blog about literature? It's a compelling question, and one for which I'm not sure I have a compelling answer.*

## ABT's recommended book blogs

THAT SHAKESPEAREAN RAG:  
notes from a literary lad  
[www.StevenWBeattie.com](http://www.StevenWBeattie.com)

THE READER:  
a blog from the Readers' Services staff at  
Halifax Public Libraries  
[www.TheReader.ca](http://www.TheReader.ca)

SALTY INK:  
promoting Atlantic Canadian writers  
and writing  
[www.SaltyInk.com](http://www.SaltyInk.com)

OFF THE PAGE:  
a blog on Canadian writing, reading and  
everything in between  
<http://CanadianBookShelf.com/Blog>

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THE AFTERWORD:  
postings from the literary world,  
*National Post's* Book Blog  
[arts.NationalPost.com/Category/Afterword](http://arts.NationalPost.com/Category/Afterword)

# Creative Nests

When the musician and the writer live under the same roof

By Sandy MacDonald



Inspiration may come from some higher place but Halifax author Ainslie Stewart was just depending on her printer to spit out the latest draft of her first novel *The Entangling* (Bryler Publications).

As she drew close to finishing the novel last year, Stewart decided to rearrange the sixty-four chapters in her book, and had printed out stacks of pages. Soon her living room was buried beneath a blizzard of white paper.

Stewart's husband and acclaimed songwriter Lennie Gallant chuckles at the memory.

"Towards the end, the house was literally taken over by the novel," he says. "We had to tiptoe through the chapters."

Stewart and Gallant somehow keep order in their creative home, shared with their seven-year-old daughter Amélie. Juggling the routine of a busy home life and two careers with raising a daughter is always a challenge—"She pretty much dictates everything," laughs Stewart.

*Keeping our home going is a bit like running a relay race," says Stewart. For periods she'd put the book away while Gallant was on the road, then write feverishly when the opportunity presented itself.*

"Keeping our home going is a bit like running a relay race," says Stewart. For periods she'd put the book away while Gallant was on the road, then write feverishly when the opportunity presented itself.

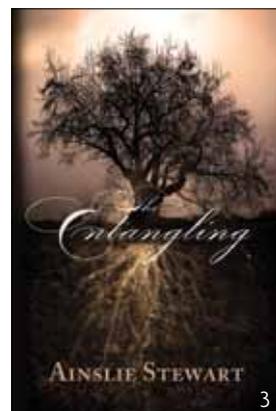
"When I come back from touring," says Gallant, "I'd take over (the chores) around the house to give her the time to work and get the book done. Sometimes, the bedroom would become her office and we'd just work around that."

Stewart's writing regime became cyclical—"sometimes I'd write very intensely for a few months, and other times I wouldn't touch it for weeks."

She says it's the unpredictable pace of creative urgency that dictates those periods of intense writing.

"Sometimes you feel something is coming and you have to get yourself to a place where it can come out. That is just the momentum of the story building, but there were times when I felt I had no choice—I had to remove myself (from home routine) and go engage with that."

Sharing a home with a spouse who understands the need for a creative outlet helps. Novelist and CBC radio host Stephanie Domet (*Homing*, Invisible Publishing) is married to musician Kev Corbett. Across the harbour, graphic



novelist and wood-burn artist Rebecca Kraatz shares a Dartmouth home with her husband musician Joel Plaskett.

Kraatz recently published her second book *Snaps* through Conundrum Press, a Wolfville-based publisher.

Her 144-page graphic novel is set on Vancouver Island in the 1940s, written around a collection of characters inspired by snapshots from a photo album she purchased on a whim at a flea market in Victoria, B.C. a decade ago.

"The '40s is a time I think about a lot," says Kraatz, "so I'd been wanting to make a book about the period." She attributes her

*“Joel was the first person to read Snaps... he’s got really good input. And usually I agree with what he says.”*

fascination with the ’40s to watching old movies while recuperating from an illness as a teenager. She immediately loved the clothes and the hairstyles, even the way the actors spoke.

Kraatz tapped out the stories for *Snaps* on her manual typewriter—“I just love the sound it makes.”

Then she illustrated her stories based on the clothing and hairstyles from the ’40s to bring the stories to life. It’s taken four years to complete the book, which was released in May 2011.

Plaskett is one of the East Coast’s busiest touring musicians, on the road weeks at a time to play his music. How do he and Kraatz balance a home life and a creative career?

“I’m not sure how it happens,” says Kraatz, “but somehow it does. I’m a person who needs a lot of time alone. And I’m a morning person so I get that time early in the day, and Joel is a night person.”

With his keen eye for detail and storytelling, Plaskett is a crucial sounding board for her work.

“Joel was the first person to read *Snaps*... he’s got really good input. And usually I agree with what he says.” Kraatz also illustrated the striking covers for some of Plaskett’s solo albums, including *In Need of Medical Attention*, *La De Da* and *Ashtray Rock*. She also illustrated last year’s *Dream House* album by U.S. musician Steve Poltz.

While there are certainly creative similarities in writing music and writing novels, Kraatz says the biggest difference is the solitary nature of writing a book.

“Though Joel writes the songs by himself, a lot of his music is performed with other people. But with me, I just want to be by myself.

“It is hard when he’s away so much, but that’s the nature of his work. But I don’t go on the road with him—when he’s away is the time I get to work.”

## SUPPORT SYSTEM

Having harnessed that creative impulse himself in writing music, Gallant knows the importance of tapping the tree when the sap is rising.

“There were also times when I was off the road that I was able to arrange for her to go away to write,” says Gallant. Stewart was able to slip away for a few days at a time to find the solitude to devote herself entirely to writing.

“We had friends who helped out, loaning us a cottage or an apartment, so she could go and just separate herself from everything.”

With two critical writers under the roof, there is always someone close to bounce ideas around. Stewart says Gallant saw some early drafts of her book and

offered constructive suggestions.

“Lennie was a huge editor from the start. He read *The Entangling* many times and that was amazing because I got a fresh perspective, even though it is a little difficult having your partner reading it.”

Stewart began writing stories as a child, and has written a stage play (*Comfort of Home*, a black comedy about agoraphobia) and shorter works but *The Entangling* is her first full-length work of fiction. The mystical story turns on two women living in the same rural Nova Scotian home but separated by 200 years.

“This book came from a dream I had many years ago. I became intrigued with the idea that you could make connections with people who are not necessarily of this time.”

In late July *The Entangling* was already sitting near the top of the Nova Scotia book lists and gaining popularity as the word continued to spread.

Gallant is also a recently published author, but admits his book project was somewhat less arduous than Stewart’s.

“I was actually more of a censor than an author,” he says with a smile. “Nimbus Publishing came and asked me if they could turn one of my songs into a children’s book. I was really happy about that. A lot of my songs are story songs and would work well like that. So I was happy to comply.”

Nimbus chose *A Day with You In Paradise*, from his 2005 album *When We Get There*. “The song is a chronicling of a family’s day at the beach but my version wasn’t necessarily just for children.”

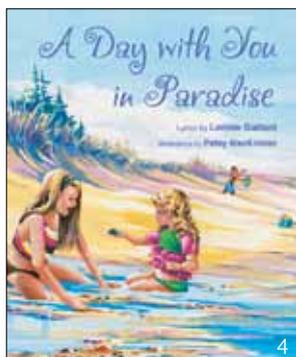
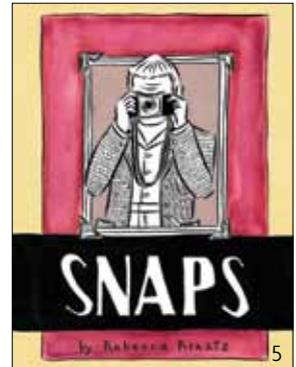
Gallant made a few editorial changes to the song, dropping the reference to beer and kisses on the beach in favour of more kid-friendly fun. Nimbus brought in illustrator Patsy MacKinnon and Gallant loved the results from the first time he saw them.

“When I saw the illustrations, it represented the story quite well.”

Though he always has story ideas percolating, Gallant has no plans to write a novel of his own.

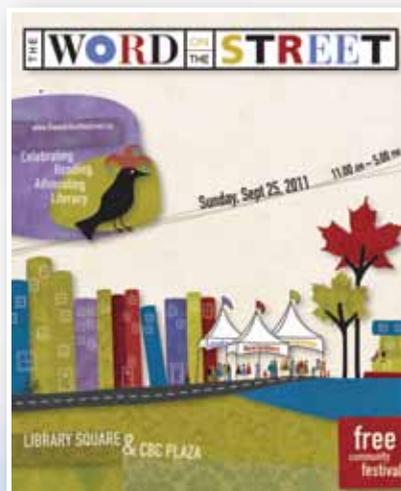
“I know how much work goes into a novel and it is a daunting task, having seen it unfold in our household—especially a first novel when you have so much to learn.

“I think about it, then put it on the back shelf and write another song.” **ABT**



**Photos:** (1) Author Ainslie Stewart and husband musician Lennie Gallant; (2) graphic novelist and artist Rebecca Kraatz and husband musician Joel Plaskett; (3) Stewart’s novel, *The Entangling*; (4) Gallant’s children’s book, *A Day with You in Paradise*, based on a song from Gallant’s album *When We Get There*; (5) Kraatz’s graphic novel, *Snaps*.

Lennie Gallant photo by Andrew MacNaughton



# WORD ON THE WATER

## HALIFAX BOOK AND MAGAZINE FESTIVAL GOES SEASIDE

The Word On The Street is back in town and this fall, the book and magazine festival takes to the water—and for the first time ever, two cities. Like the bridges that span the harbour, programming will stretch over to Alderney Landing on the Dartmouth waterfront. The always popular graphic novel zone will fittingly find its home not far from Strange Adventures' Portland Street location. The Festival will be on the Halifax waterfront from 11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. From 11:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. meet your favourite graphic novel artists and take part in some fun programming in Dartmouth.

# SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2011

The main attractions will unfold on the Halifax waterfront, both inside and on the wharves behind the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.

As always, attendees can access book and magazine publishers, booksellers, literary and literacy organizations. With readings on Theodore Tugboat and the *CSS Acadia* and activities inside the museum and out, visitors can celebrate reading and words all while enjoying some suitable Maritime heritage.

Festival organizers are pleased to be partnering with the Waterfront Development Commission and the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic—Canada's oldest and largest Maritime museum.

"Hosting a free national caliber event, where people can combine their love of literacy with the stories and history of one of the world's great harbours is wonderful," says Colin MacLean, President & CEO of Waterfront Development.

On Sunday, September 25, the Halifax waterfront is the place to be. The Word On The Street Festival will be flanked with the Francophone Multicultural Festival on one side and the International African Bazaar on the other, with as many as three cruise ships docked in the harbour that day. Tourists and locals alike will have plenty to take in, rain or shine. Fingers are crossed for sunshine, but given our maritime weather this season, your rubber boots and raincoats must be at the ready. If not, you clearly haven't ventured out of doors this summer. We're maritimers, we're hardy and a little ocean breeze, fog or salty drizzle can't keep us away!

## CELEBRATING READING. ADVOCATING LITERACY

A celebration of literacy and reading from cradle to grave will be part of this year's Word On The Street festival. The literacy session will open with Giller Award Nominee, Alexander MacLeod, author of *Light Lifting* talking about "My life in books" and what he read as a child that turned him into a committed reader, author and teacher. Then representatives from four diverse literacy and reading organizations in HRM will share their inspiring stories:

**Read to Me:** A non-profit early literacy organization that provides a gift of books, a CD of lullabies, and information about reading programs to each baby born at the IWK.

**The Halifax Memorial North Branch Library:** After-school and summer reading programs that encourage elementary and high school students to read for pleasure and to explore the worlds that open to us through books.

**The Dartmouth Literacy Network:** Promotes literacy, essential skills and lifelong learning and helps those who have low literacy skills to improve and become lifelong readers.

**Halifax Humanities 101:** A unique program that invites adults living on low incomes to read classic works of philosophy and literature under the guidance of professors from local universities who volunteer their time. Halifax Humanities offers its students the opportunity to step away from the stress of life on a low income and engage with some of the greatest books ever written.

The event will truly be a celebration with a book-themed cake, refreshments, balloons and a chance for anyone who drops by to share their personal story of "*The Book that Got Me Hooked!*"

## HIGHLIGHTS

Many popular authors will appear at Halifax's Word On The Street on September 25<sup>th</sup>.

Critically acclaimed poets George Elliott Clarke (*Red*), Sue Goyette (*Outskirts*) and Tanya Davis (*At First, Lonely*) take to the main stage. As do Giller Award-Winner Linden MacIntyre, Great Big Sea's Bob Hallett and *New York Times* best-selling author Joy Fielding.

Hear Jerry Lockett read from his award-winning *Captain James Cook in Atlantic Canada* in the oh-so-appropriate below decks of the *CSS Acadia* moored behind the Maritime Museum! Steve Vernon and Steven Laffoley are also scheduled to board ship.

Look for Maureen Tilley, author of *Hold That Hidden Salt!* at the Flavours of the Atlantic stage inside the Maritime Museum. Kathy Chisholm of *Urban Tigers* fame and Holocaust survivor Philip Riteman will be sharing their stories too.

Richard Starr, author of the recently published *Power Failure?* will join Richard Zurawski (*Media Mediocrity*) for a discussion about contemporary issues.

Young Readers will find lots to do at the Ross Creek Centre for the Arts Zone with crafts and activities. They will also have a chance to hear stories from their favourite authors including Sheree Fitch, Hugh MacDonald, Vicki Grant, Don Aker and many more.

\*all programming subject to change. Visit [www.WordOnTheStreet.ca](http://www.WordOnTheStreet.ca) for a full schedule of events

## WORDS OF WISDOM—ADVICE ALL WRITERS SHOULD TAKE

The Word On The Street Festival is a celebration of reading & writing. Among the book lovers who flock to the Festival, there are also lots of people with the desire to be published who attend—writers with laboured-over manuscripts at home in their desk drawers, or great book ideas that have yet to be written. Pitch the Publisher offers these aspiring writers the unique opportunity to present their ideas to a panel of publishers. Every year writers across the region bravely submit their work to the Atlantic Writing Competition and this year's winners are being awarded their prizes at the festival's opening ceremonies. There is no doubt that literary talent in Atlantic Canada blossoms year round. Here, some of our pros impart a little sought-after wisdom that all writers should heed.

STEVE VERNON

*Sinking Deeper* (Nimbus Publishing)

### What wisdom have you learned from your trade?

> Never be afraid to leap. In 2004, when I pitched my first ghost story collection at the very first Pitch the Publisher session I was actually terrified. I was certain that I would be booed from the stage. Now while boos and terror are a natural state of being for a ghost story collector such as myself—feeling frightened at this point of time was not. Fortunately, I refused to let the fear get the better of me. I cinched my belt tight around my gutline, pasted a grin to my bearded visage, leaped up from my chair and made my best pitch. As a result of that pitch *Haunted Harbours* was one of the first books to actually be published as a result of the Pitch the Publisher program. My entire life changed as a result of the release of this collection. I became a maritime author and achieved the modest degree of success that I now enjoy.

### What advice can you offer to aspiring authors?

> Read and feed your imagination constantly. Write like your fingers were on fire. Listen to your editors. Don't be afraid to change. Every word you write is not sacred. Read some more. Write some more. Keep on going. Never quit. And like I said—leap!

### Who are the ones to watch: up & coming writers from Atlantic Canada:

> I love the work of Jill Maclean (*The Nine Lives of Travis Keating*). As for up and coming writers you definitely want to watch for Jo Ann Yhard (*The Fossil Hunters of Sydney Mines*), Richard Rudnicki (*Viola Desmond Won't Be Budgeted*), and a writer I just recently heard at a local literary reading and who has just won first place in the Young Adult—Juvenile Novel category of the Writer's Federation of Nova Scotia's 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Atlantic Writing Competition—Kat Kruger, with her as-yet unpublished novel "The Night Has Teeth".

### Your recommended read at the moment:

> I've got over a dozen books of research material for my next collection heaped and teetering upon my desk—so I'm afraid my reading time is limited. However, the last couple of books that both curled my toes and knocked my socks off were Don Aker's *The First Stone* and Gary D. Schmidt's *The Wednesday Wars*.

SHEREE FITCH

*Pluto's Ghost* (Random House)

### What wisdom have you learned from your trade?

> A book (good or bad or mediocre—it's pretty subjective) gets born if and when it's meant to be born. A book can't be a book unless it's read. Writers need readers. We make the book together along with a whole team of people: publishers, editors, graphic artists or illustrators, typesetters, book reps, publicists, booksellers, etc. in between. In other words, it takes a scribe and a tribe to make a book. Readers co-create "the book."

### What advice can you offer to aspiring authors?

> Keep on keeping on. Nevaah surrendah. It takes a lot of faith in the work to keep going in the face of rejection. It's not about you, not really. Stamina and patience required. You are the listener, the scribe in service to the story. Keep asking: what means excellence?

### Who are the ones to watch: up & coming writers from Atlantic Canada:

> Every writer who is writing, regardless of age, and how many books under the belt is up and coming. But to name a name right now: I love Kate Inglis's work—in her *Dread Crew* books but also her take on the world in her blog. I look forward to her book. It will be a gift. Also, I just read a manuscript by an old friend (secret for now) that blew me away. A cross between Toni Morrison and Alice Walker. It's at a publisher now. I'm hoping to hear she'll be published. Soon. Knock your socks off writing and a story from our region that's not been told. Exciting.

### Your recommended read at the moment:

> Um... *Pluto's Ghost*. Seriously, adult fiction: The Atlantic Canadian book that had the most impact on me is *The Quilt* by Donna Smythe. My own current Reading: *Great Village* by Mary Rose Donnelly. Brilliant. Y/A: *The Year Mrs. Montague Cried* by Susan White. Heart-wrenching. Picture book: *The City Speaks in Drums* by Shauntay Grant and Susan Tooke, illustrator. Non-fiction: *Sailor's Hope* by Rusty Bitterman, *The Gift of Loss* by Paula Simon. Poetry: *Is* by Anne Simpson, *At First, Lonely* by Tanya Davis.



**STEPHENS GERARD MALONE***Big Town: A Novel of Africville* (Nimbus Publishing)**What wisdom have you learned from your trade?**

> Every time you open a book, you meet someone who writes better than you.

**What advice can you offer to aspiring authors?**

> Read. Read. Read. Write. Write. Write. Cliché, I know, but everything else is either expensive, unnecessary or distracting.

**Who are the ones to watch: up & coming writers from Atlantic Canada:**

> I heard Keir Lowther read at the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia Mentorship Program a few years back. His novel *Dirty Bird* coming from Tightrope Books is one to watch. I was also privy to hear Stephanie Domet read from her followup to *Homing*. Can't wait. And if you thought Sue Goyette's poems in *Outskirts* were wonderful, she has something coming from Gaspereau Press that is going to blow your mind!

**Your recommended read at the moment:**

> *Incidents in the Life of Markus Paul* by David Adams Richards.

**ALEXANDER MACLEOD***Light Lifting* (Biblioasis)**What wisdom have you learned from your trade?**

> Writing a book and publishing a book are two different things. The former is mostly a private task that the writer undertakes by themselves or in consultation with trusted editors. The latter, on the other hand, is by definition "public" and plural; a successful book requires contributions from many people: designers, type-setters, reviewers, book sellers, distributors and especially readers.

**What advice can you offer to aspiring authors?**

> If you care about your material and you hold a deep respect for your readers, everything will work out.

**Who are the ones to watch: up & coming writers from Atlantic Canada:**

> For the ladies, I take any chance I can to recommend *What Boys Like*, by Halifax's Amy Jones; and for the guys, I'll go with Devon Code, from Dartmouth, winner of last year's Journey Prize and, Kris Bertin, from New Brunswick, a former Saint Mary's University student who recently won the Jack Hodgins prize from the *Malahat Review*.

**Your recommended read at the moment:**

> *Refresh, Refresh*. Short stories by Benjamin Percy, an American writer from Oregon.

**SUE GOYETTE***Outskirts* (Brick Books)**What wisdom have you learned from your trade?**

> That the actual writing is the most important and rewarding part of the process—that first collision with invention, imagination, curiosity and silence has an undeniable vitality that is like a vitamin boost and leaves me feeling way more fortified than anything else.

**What advice can you offer to aspiring authors?**

> I think anyone starting out has a great sense of purpose and intent that can sometimes transform into impatience and frustration if their writing gets stalled or is rejected, so the best advice I can offer is to know, if you're a writer, that you're in it for the long haul and the pace of that takes some getting used to. And all you have to do right now is to write and read (like mad).

**Who are the ones to watch: up & coming writers from Atlantic Canada:**

> I'm excited about a lot of up and coming writers here, especially in Halifax. I've been teaching in the Creative Writing Program at Dalhousie University and am continually blown away by the vitality of the young writers emerging there. I also work at the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia and our Mentorship Program works with new writers on their book-length manuscripts and every one of our mentored writers are writers to watch out for.

**Your recommended read at the moment:**

> I'm not sure I should recommend it because I still haven't read it, but I'm looking forward to reading *Swamplandia* by Karen Russell. The main character swims with alligators and knows how to tape their mouths shut. This, for me, is reason enough to read it.

**VALERIE SHERRARD***The Glory Wind* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside)**What wisdom have you learned from your trade?**

> More than anything, I believe I've learned patience. It's tempting to nudge a story along when it isn't moving forward the way I'd like it to, but I've found that waiting until it's ready always serves the story best.

**What advice can you offer to aspiring authors?**

> Read. Read more. Read, read, read.

**Who are the ones to watch: up & coming writers from Atlantic Canada:**

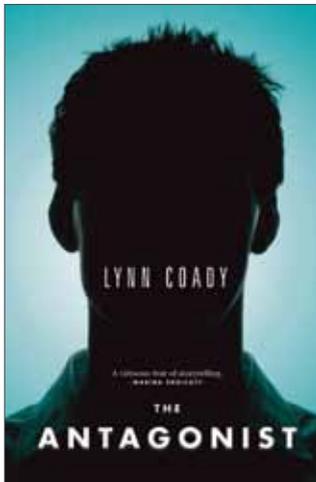
> There are many gifted Maritime authors in the field of children's and young adult books. I wouldn't dare try to list them as I know I would leave out someone deserving.

**Your recommended read at the moment:**

> *A Hare in the Elephant's Trunk* by Jan L. Coates. **ABT**



# she said... The Antagonist



Cape Breton Native Lynn Coady on the origins of her new novel *The Antagonist*, creativity and her Atlantic Canadian roots

By Stephen Patrick Clare



Lynn Coady

*I believe the creative process is amoral—every writer has to decide upon his or her own boundaries. Everyone has a right to his or her own experience and imaginative world, needless to say.*

The little community of Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia (pop. 3,517) has produced some big-time talent in recent decades; motivational speaker and success guru Robin Sharma, NHL defenseman Aaron Johnson, actor Mark Day and award-winning author Lynn Coady all spent their formative years in Cape Breton.

Though she now resides in Edmonton, Alberta, Coady's Maritime roots can be traced back through her bestselling titles *Strange Heaven*, *Play the Monster Blind*, *Saints of Big Harbour* and *Mean Boy*.

Her humble beginnings are again at play in her latest effort, *The Antagonist* (\$32.95, 352 pp. House of Anansi), scheduled for release this September.

## On the origins of *The Antagonist*

I had unfinished business with a character from *Mean Boy* named Charles Slaughter who was a lot like Rank (the protagonist in *The Antagonist*.) Much of the inspiration for the setting and plot of *Mean Boy* came from the life of the poet John Thompson, but I didn't want people to think that I was writing about a real person. At the same time I couldn't exactly deny a connection. I became obsessed with the weirdness of fiction and the danger involved in the way it intersects with reality. In thinking about the impossibility of explaining myself, my writing process, to the people who knew and loved Thompson, I came to the conclusion that the only way to adequately convey the process to them would be to have them undertake the process themselves. And that's how the book developed.

## On the challenges and rewards of writing *The Antagonist*

The first person, direct-address style of the novel ended up work-

ing really well for me—it allowed me to immerse myself in the character to a degree I've never experienced before. Plus, Rank's anger, the thing that prompts him to start writing, worked as a kind of narrative adrenalin—it just kept things moving, even when Rank had no idea where the story was going. He'd just say, "Oh to hell with it, let me start over," and start over again. Because Rank is learning how to write his story as he goes along, the writing process felt really free in some ways; it could be sloppy, colloquial, rude, disjointed and even occasionally incoherent—in fact it had to be in order to be true to what the character is experiencing.

## On creativity

I believe the creative process is amoral—every writer has to decide upon his or her own boundaries. Everyone has a right to his or her own experience and imaginative world, needless to say. However conflict will always reside in determining what constitutes "my" experience and what experience "belongs" to someone else. I think an author's only obligation is, at the very least, to care about these questions enough to give them serious thought. But any writer will tell you the only moral authority that matters is that of the story—the imperative to get the story right and tell it as best you can.

## On her Atlantic Canadian roots

I don't really know how I rep the Atlantic Provinces in my writing. But I think a lot of my characters exemplify the same kind of ambivalence I've dealt with over the years. Sometimes you just want it to be a place that you're from and have it not be such a big deal. At other times, you feel like the "mainlanders" are never going to understand and you just want to spend the afternoon with your relatives drinking tea and talking in your accent without someone making fun of you for it. **ABT**

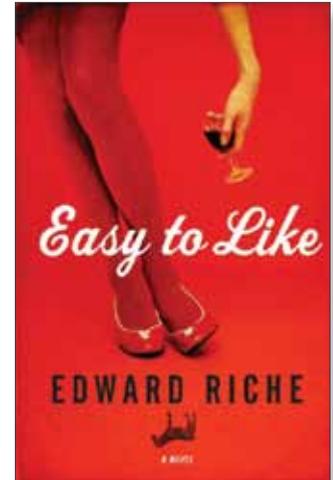
# he said... The Protagonist

Newfoundland's Edward Riche on the origins of his new novel *Easy to Like*, creativity and his Atlantic Canadian roots

By Stephen Patrick Clare



Edward Riche



*My process is now, after years, very straightforward.*

*I walk the dog for about an hour every morning where*

*I essentially think out the day's writing.*

Newfoundland might very well be the country's current hot-bed for books; the list of great writers from The Rock is impressive; Michael Crummey, Michael and Kathleen Winter, Joan Clark, Wayne Johnston, Donna Morrissey, Kenneth J. Harvey, Russell Wangersky, Leslie Vryenhoek, Bernice Morgan, Joel Thomas Hynes, to name but a few.

St. John's author, screenwriter and playwright Edward Riche has contributed his fair share to that catch with a variety of film, television and theatre credits, as well as two critically acclaimed novels, *Rare Birds* and *The Nine Planets*.

His newest work is *Easy To Like* (\$29.95, 336 pp. House of Anansi) due out this September.

## On the origins of *Easy To Like*

It began with my concern over the trending I have seen in recent years with the "dumbing-down" of the CBC and the overall simplification of popular culture. I wouldn't call it gentrification, but in a sense we are "softening the edges" of our lives in our efforts to define and refine public taste as a whole. What concerns me there is that the diversity of our everyday experiences is being paved over with the undemanding. So, by way of example, saying a wine is "easy to like" is a putdown among wine cognoscenti, it says that something is simple, uncomplicated and so gives smaller rewards than something more complex. I extend this notion, in a satirical manner, to all things in the book; film, TV, literature, human relationships, institution bureaucracy—the works. My wife has observed that the title sounds like the name of a racehorse, which is true and desirable.

## On the challenges and rewards of writing *Easy To Like*

It was a challenge, at first, to keep the weirdo philosophical musing about "taste" from being a clumsy polemic. But somewhere along the way I found it easier to make it funny. The real task was in trying to take what made perfect sense in my mind and convey it on to the written page in such a way that readers would be able to follow the logic. It's odd, being immersed in this little world in my head for so long, fumbling through ideas, all the while without anyone able to see what transpires during the writing process. My greatest fear was that it would all come out as mumbo-jumbo; a big, sloppy mess that no one would be able to digest as a comprehensive, comic narrative.

## On creativity

My process is now, after years, very straightforward. I walk the dog for about an hour every morning where I essentially think out the day's writing. Sometimes that takes me to the evening, other days it's just a couple of hours writing. I have to be working on two projects at once, in different fields, say a film script or a magazine article, to be able to not feel trapped when I run out of gas on the novel.

## On his Atlantic Canadian roots

Newfoundlanders are storytellers. They relate their day to you not as series of facts and incidents but as a narrative with connected nodes. Why this should be, and whether or not it has to do with the roots of the culture or their isolation, I have not been able to figure out just yet. That being said, it has been exciting and inspiring to see so many great books coming out of the province, and the entire Atlantic Canadian region. Maybe there is something in the water here that brings out the best in us. **ABT**

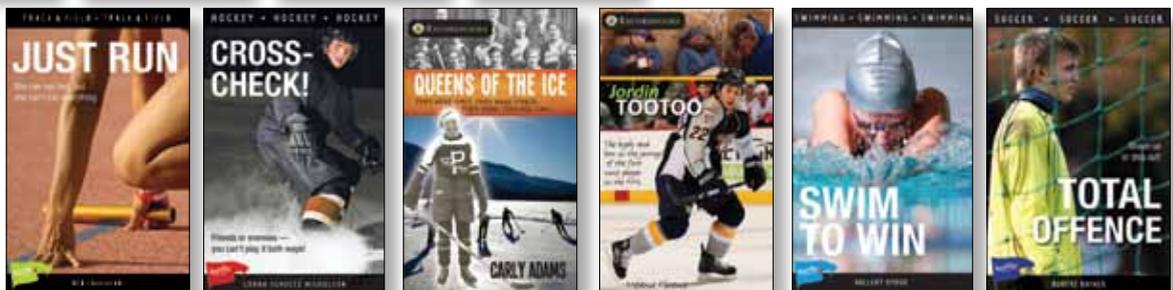
# Reluctant to Read

Finding ways to engage and excite children are keys to igniting a love of reading

By Kate Watson



Award-winning Halifax author for Young Adults, Vicki Grant



“Reluctant reader” is not a term that educator Janet Porter likes to use. In her twenty-one years of classroom and resource teaching, she’s certainly met children who are less-than-avid readers. However, she feels it’s infinitely more helpful to explore ways to engage and excite a child with the world of print than to stick them with a label that blames them for being “unwilling” to read.

*“We have to recognize that children are also interacting with text when they’re using the computer or playing video games. Many ‘screen-time activities’ tap into other ways of thinking and have merits of their own. But I also think it is important that young people are exposed to the pure pleasure that reading can bring.”*

“Many people are looking for some sort of program that will get a child interested in books,” she says. “But what students have taught me is that it really comes down to making a successful match between a reader and their interests. Instead of trying to force someone to engage with a certain book, you find the novel or magazine or non-fiction book that engages that specific reader.”

It’s important to make the distinction between a child who is “illiterate”—who hasn’t learned the skills for reading—and “aliterate”—who simply chooses not to read. Porter says that in her experience, children in the younger grades who are not as keen to read are often having difficulty with the processes involved with reading, but that by junior high, students are much more likely to be able to read, but choose not to for a variety of reasons.

And although in today’s day and age reading must compete for a child’s leisure time with screen-based activities like video games and television, Porter feels that it’s not particularly helpful to pit the activities against one another.

“We have to recognize that children are also interacting with text when they’re using the computer or playing video games. Many

‘screen-time activities’ tap into other ways of thinking and have merits of their own. But I also think it is important that young people are exposed to the pure pleasure that reading can bring.”

One tool that is sometimes used to draw students into the pleasure of reading is the so-called high interest/low vocabulary or hi/lo book. (The term is not universally embraced, as some feel it is another label that can deter readers from picking up what is essentially a short, well-written, fast-paced book.)

Carrie Gleason is the Children’s Book Editor at James Lorimer & Company, a publishing house that produces several different series of hi/lo books such as the popular Sports Stories for ten-to-thirteen-year-olds and the non-fiction Recordbooks that deal with Canadian sports history.

*If a book is really great, people hear about it and want to pick it up. It doesn't matter if they're a so-called 'reluctant' reader, or someone whose first language isn't English or a really avid reader. No one is reluctant to have fun!*

Gleason says that books in the genre are not “dumbed down” but are streamlined so that they are a fast read that captures a reader’s interest right away. Many of the titles are aimed at boys, since studies show that males are more likely to be reluctant readers than girls.

“Our authors need to be experts in what they write about,” says Gleason. “If it’s a book about hockey, the writer better know the game inside and out because nothing turns a reader off faster than not getting the facts straight.”

And Gleason says that hi/lo does not mean that the topics are lightweight. Teen prostitution, anorexia, mental illness and bullying are just some of the issues that are explored in the Lorimer SideStreets series aimed at ages thirteen and up.

Award-winning Halifax author Vicki Grant has written several books for Orca Soundings, a series of books from the B.C. publisher with contemporary themes aimed at teen readers.

“I don’t write for the kid who assumes that reading is going to be a ton of fun, who’ll slog through convoluted prose or complicated story devices because they love to read so much,” she explains. “I don’t like putting obstacles up for the reader. My writing style is very much to the point.

“And I think that something that Orca does really well is to recognize that just because someone is not a big reader, it doesn’t mean that they’re not smart or that they don’t want to be challenged.”

Grant says that the end result to this kind of thinking is books that appeal to all sorts of different readers.

“If a book is really great, people hear about it and want to pick it up. It doesn’t matter if they’re a so-called ‘reluctant’ reader, or someone whose first language isn’t English or a really avid reader. No one is reluctant to have fun!”

Grant finds that there is sometimes a kind of snobbery among people who love reading and who have strong views about what literary merit consists of. She notes that adults often think that books that are wordy or dense or that conform to an adult’s nostalgic view of the world are the only “worthy” reads for young people.

“You wouldn’t start a baby on arugula,” she says with a laugh. “You know they’re not going to like that. It’s the same with reading. Kids need entry-level books that get them hooked.”

Often those books are the short, fast-paced novels, but Grant also mentions the importance of matching readers with reading material, whether that is non-fiction, biographies, graphic novels or periodicals.

“Let’s face it, reading is an important—and fun—part of our lives. It’s not like teaching blacksmithing or something. It’s a skill that people use all the time, and if you can find something exactly right to get readers interested, they’ll thrive.” **ABT**

Grant has written several books with contemporary themes aimed at teen readers.



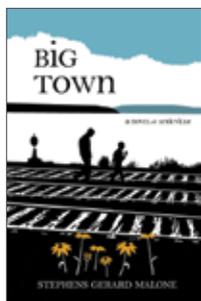
## 5 Tips for Sparking Interest in Reading

1. Create an environment where reading is valued. Schedule trips to the library. Fill your home with a variety of reading material. Limit the time watching television and playing video games. Talk about the things you’re reading.
2. Read aloud to younger children. Try some interesting or funny parts of your favourite books. Share bits of interesting things with older children. It may pique their interest and inspire them to read on.
3. Reading for pleasure can mean much more than reading a novel. Introduce your child to riddle books for kids, graphic novels, biographies and magazine or newspaper stories.
4. Look for book versions of your child’s favourite movie.
5. Reading needs to be fun! There shouldn’t be a quiz or assignment attached to reading for pleasure.



# Reviews

## FICTION



### Big Town

By Stephens Gerard Malone, \$18.95 (pb)

978-1-55109-864-8, 224 pp.

Nimbus Publishing, September 2011

*Reviewed from an Advance Reading Copy*

Traditionally, Nova Scotian historical literature has been dominated by events like the Halifax Explosion. Outside of a few novels, children's books and the noted work of George Elliott Clarke, Africville and the shameful legacy of its destruction during the mid-1960s has remained largely untouched by local authors. A year before *Big Town* was released, the city of Halifax officially apologized for the loss of the community, which will hopefully act as a catalyst for future Africville stories, from different perspectives, to be told.

As *Big Town* proves, there is no shortage of stories. The novel begins as rumours of relocation take hold in the community, but Malone focuses on Early Okander, an unexpected and, in some ways, problematic choice of narrator. The seventeen-year-old white teenager suffers from learning disabilities caused by his father D Jay's horrific abuse of his mother while Early was still in utero, and the alcohol poured into his bottle as a baby. Early, whom D Jay treats worse than a stray dog, receives his only nurturing from Africville residents Mrs. Aada and Aubrey, who have quietly adopted the boy, providing him with food, clothing and a sense of belonging. Early doesn't respond to discrimination because he's incapable of feeling it himself; he can't understand the racism his friends encounter, and the pain they experience as they

fight to keep their homes. Written in third person, Early's innocence becomes a barrier between the book's at-times terrifying events and the reader.

The emotional centre of *Big Town* doesn't lie with its innocent protagonist as much it does with Aubrey, an aging veteran who lost his leg in the war, fighting for a country that ignored the contributions of African Canadians, and his grandson Toby, a frail boy so conflicted over his heritage he ritually pours bleach onto his skin. Toby and Early become fast friends with Chub, a wealthy white girl dealing with discriminations of her own as she defies the rigid gender expectations of the day. The trio's friendship and the emerging romantic feelings between Chub and Toby develop into a sweet-natured and charming respite from the adult worries and the backwards politics, carrying the book to its inevitably tragic conclusion.

*Big Town's* ending won't come as a surprise to anyone who has read John Steinbeck, though its abruptness is shocking. It comes quickly, the heartbreak slicing through any feelings of hope, especially for readers who find themselves emotionally attached to three young people whose lives are inextricably tied to one of the biggest human rights tragedies in our country's history. —Sue Carter Flinn



### The Town that Drowned

By Riel Nason, \$19.95 (pb)

978-0-86492-640-1, 263 pp.

Goose Lane, September 2011

*Reviewed from an Advance Reading Copy*

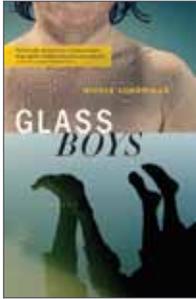
In the mid-1960s, residents of one small New Brunswick town learn their commu-

nity will soon become uninhabitable. Riel Nason's fictional Haventon will experience massive flooding thanks to the construction of a hydroelectricity plant along the Saint John River. Although a new town will be constructed to replace Haventon, residents react with a range of anxiety-based emotions including fear and anger. If the flooding of a small New Brunswick town sounds familiar, it's because *The Town That Drowned*, Nason's first novel, is based on the real-life development of the Mactaquac Dam during the same period in which the novel is set. But the background story is where reality ends and the author's imagination begins.

Nason's main character is a teenager with a lot on her mind. In addition to an ever-increasing awareness of Haventon's eventual demise, Ruby Carson has her hands full attending to the needs of her eccentric younger brother Percy. Percy, as Ruby describes, "wasn't wired to understand that you can't control change." And then there is the ongoing torment from nemesis June Crouse. This torment escalates after Ruby falls through the ice during a community skating party and, although Haventon's fate has not yet been made public, has a vision of her town floating underwater. To make matters worse, Ruby's cousin Sarah—who is also her best friend—moves away leaving Ruby feeling abandoned and alone. Despite the turmoil, Ruby finds comfort in her interactions with a beloved elderly neighbour, through a brief encounter with a boy from Ontario and in her new hobby: woodcarving.

Riel Nason is effective in maintaining the novel's voice as that of a young girl and she uses Ruby's internal dialogue to illustrate the teenager's humorous perspective. For example, in reference to her fall through the ice, Ruby explains: "From what Sarah said, I wrecked the skating party. After that everyone had to clear off the river. They went for supper early at the Legion and it was my fault the men got extra gassy from underdone beans."

An enjoyable reading experience, *The Town That Drowned* is about more than the loss of land, homes and monuments. As Ruby observes, it's about the loss of something much harder to replace. "But for every inch the water wets, every blade of grass, every tree stump, driveway, foundation, rock, lawn, garden, it drowns a memory." And it's about how one community struggles to come to terms with such loss. —Clare O'Connor



### Glass Boys

By Nicole Lundrigan, \$22.95 (pb)

978-1-55365-797-2, 304 pp.

Douglas & McIntyre, September 2011

Sometimes the worst things happen in seemingly ordinary moments in life. Such is the case in *Glass Boys*, a new novel by Nicole Lundrigan. This terrible thing, the defining incident in the novel, is the death of a drunken young man in an encounter with an older, abusive one; it colours the rest of the novel and the lives of the characters in it.

Although the death of Roy Trench is ruled an accident, his brother Lewis blames Eli Fagan, and hatred sets in between the two families living in the ominously named Knife's Point, Newfoundland. Despite marrying and becoming a father, Lewis' life remains overshadowed by the death of his brother, and as his own family unravels, he is drawn back to unfinished business with Eli and Eli's stepson, Garrett Glass.

*Glass Boys* is not gentle, easy reading; the honesty with which the characters and events are portrayed makes the story challenging at times. Still, this novel is worth the effort because of Lundrigan's strong and evocative writing. This is her fourth novel—her earlier works are *Unraveling Arva*, *Thaw*, and *The Seary Line*—and she has honed her skill at setting a scene quickly and succinctly.

In the first chapter, Lundrigan provides many of the elements of a good fairy tale, but the original kind of fairy tale that is filled with suspense and threat: a boy running by himself in the woods, a treasure he has hidden in a jar and his obvious fear of being discovered by the man he lives with. What is going on here? What has he hidden in the jar and why is he so afraid of this man? While you can't wait to find out the answers, you also fear what you will discover.

At its heart, *Glass Boys*—a great title—is a story as old as the oldest stories. It's the battle between good and evil, and also a tribute to the amazing power of love.

—Sharon Hunt



### A Possible Madness

By Frank MacDonald, \$24.95 (pb)

978-1-897009-65-9, 364 pp.

Cape Breton University Press, July 2011

After all of the critical and popular acclaim following the release of his debut narrative, *A Forest for Calum* (2005), Cape Breton scribe Frank MacDonald knew that he would be hard-pressed to repeat or surpass his initial success.

Credit the multi-award winning author, columnist, playwright and musician for putting aside the accolades and for taking the time to properly design and develop his sophomore effort, *A Possible Madness*.

Like many small communities peppered across the East Coast, the town of Shean is not immune to the post-war, post-industrial economic meltdown. When a multinational corporation offers to exploit the last of the region's coal, the promise of prosperity brings a renewed hope to the townspeople.

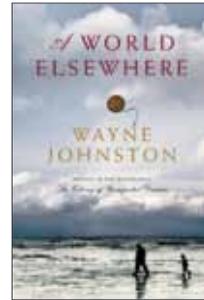
But not is all as it appears, and as backroom politics rears its ugly head, conflicts of interest arise among individuals, families and the general population, threatening to grow the already-present divide between the town's haves and have-nots.

Like his previous book, the novel's sweet spot is a sweeping narrative arc that pulls readers in from the first page and keeps them engaged until the story's stirring climax.

All the while, MacDonald carefully crafts his characters upon the stage, unravelling layers of pretense and posturing to reveal the myriad of ideas and emotions at play in the deeper human drama. The author's liberal usage of regional dialect and slang also help to anchor time, place, setting, mood and tone.

More than a compelling community drama, however, the bittersweet tale is a telling snapshot of a region, and of a country, struggling to come of age. And, like a seasoned painter or director, MacDonald brings the big picture to life through the little details.

As such, and like *A Forest for Calum*, *A Possible Madness* would work well on the silver screen—something that should be considered. —Stephen Patrick Clare



### A World Elsewhere

By Wayne Johnston, \$32.00 (hc)

978-0-30739-989-2, 320 pp.

Knopf Canada, August 2011

If consistency is the hallmark of greatness, then Wayne Johnston must be considered among the country's finest writers.

The Goulds, Newfoundland-born and bred author's resume reads like a litany of literary masterpieces. *The Divine Ryans*, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*, *The Custodian of Paradise* and *The Navigator of New York* each compiled a chorus of critical and popular acclaim for their stirring storylines and compelling characters—perhaps most notably the eccentric Sheilagh Fielding, who ranks among Can-Lit's greatest creations.

Johnston's latest novel is *A World Elsewhere*, a near-epic narrative of the bonds that can both bring us together and tear us apart.

Set in the late nineteenth century, and spanning the Eastern seaboard from St. John's to New Jersey and North Carolina, the new tome testifies to the trials and triumphs of human relationships.

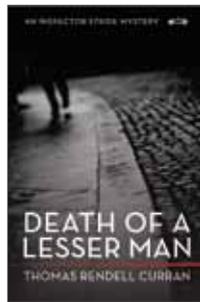
Years after their fall-out at Princeton University, the now-downcast Landish Druken reconnects with the mega-affluent Padgett Vanderluyden. When "Van" invites his former friend and newly-adopted son to visit his south-of-the-border estate—the amazing and aptly-titled "Vanderland"—Druken wanders into a world of wealth beyond measure.

The reunion is bittersweet, and as each recounts their destiny during their decades apart—and despite the overwhelming disparity in their life's design—the pair soon discover that they still share many things uncommon.

Though Johnston has long lived away from his native Newfoundland, his twenty-plus years in both Toronto and Virginia have not garnished his gift for East Coast gab; the storytelling is sheer swagger—poignant, powerful and peppered with dialect that is fluid, funny and will surely ring familiar and true to those here at home.

More than a glimpse into the Gilded Age however—and much like Hemingway's fabled *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*—*A World Elsewhere* explores the deeper drives of desire, devotion, ambition, regret and restitution that resonate within those who both enjoyed and endured the excesses of the era.

With this work now dust in his rearview mirror, a more formidable task may lie on the scribe's horizon—rumour has it that Johnston is ready to resurrect the infamous Sheilagh Fielding. —*Stephen Patrick Clare*



### Death Of A Lesser Man

By Thomas Rendell Curran, \$19.95 (pb)  
978-0-9865376-2-2, 298 pp.

Boulder Publications, May 2011

*Reviewed from advanced reading copy*

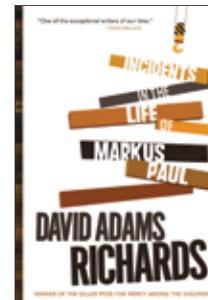
There is a dictum, well-known to readers of murder mysteries, which states that the key to finding the killer lies in getting to know the victim. When Harrison Rose is found assassinated in a park on a rainy September night in 1947 he appears to be the victim of a senseless attack. Why would anyone want to kill Rose, a retired British officer with a distinguished war record and a prosperous businessman in his adopted city of St. John's, Newfoundland? And why do his daughter, the men who served with him and his current business associates all have such different views of his life and character? The questions continue to multiply as the police investigation, led by Inspector Eric Stride, turn up clues which only serve to complicate an already complex enquiry and which lead inexorably back into the shattered battlegrounds of the First World War.

The story is set against the background of postwar St. John's whose inhabitants are striving to make their way forward in a world where the once black and white precepts of honour, decency and good and evil

have been harshly smudged into grey. The losses of two World Wars have descended like a mallet on the characteristic warmth and ebullient humour of the Newfoundlanders and left a kind of grim acceptance of fate and the knowledge that there can be a wide gap between the legal and moral definitions of right and wrong. During the investigation Stride sees the lasting effects of honourable people being required to participate in the horrors of war and both his personal and professional life are affected by this moral uncertainty.

Curran tells an intricate story with deftness and grace, gradually weaving together the strands of the past and present. His abundant use of dialogue moves the story forward and creates the intimate illusion that the reader is participating in the solving of the crime. Inspector Stride is both a hard-nosed police officer and a man who understands that compassion is sometimes needed for both victim and perpetrator.

—*Ralph Higgins*



### Incidents in the Life of Markus Paul

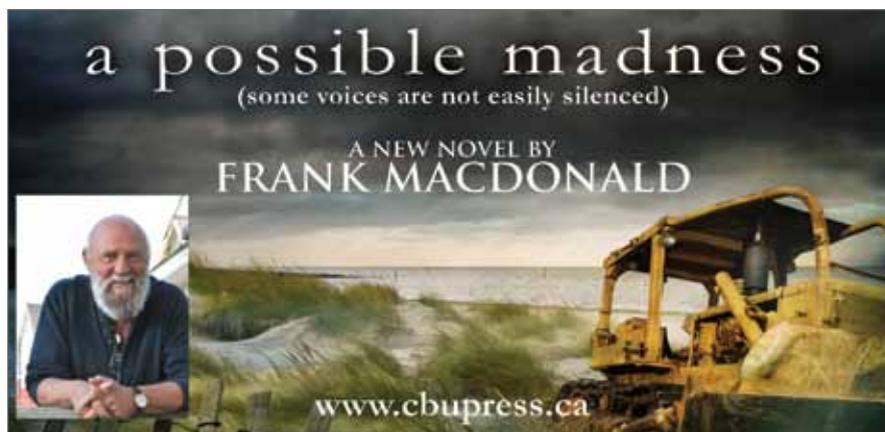
By David Adams Richards, \$32.95 (hc)  
978-0-38566-653-4, 304 pp.

Doubleday Canada, May 2011

When the *Globe and Mail* called David Adams Richards "a literary master-craftsman at the very peak of his creative powers" after the release of his epic 2006 narrative *The Lost Highway*, critical and public expectations to produce an even more compelling follow-up were set sky-high.

Instead, the duly-dubbed "Bard of the Miramichi" responded two years later with *God Is*, a highly personal treatise on spirituality—effectively buying him time to flesh-out his latest work of fiction, *Incidents in the Life of Markus Paul*.

For fans of the multi-award-winning author, the new novel has been well worth the wait.



Spanning two decades, and set against the now-familiar backwoods and bog of eastern New Brunswick, *Incidents* is the story of one man's efforts to piece together a murderous puzzle.

When Hector Penniac is killed on the docks, all fingers point to journeyman Roger Savage, stirring the already-swirling pot of politics, rumour, racism, shame, guilt and injustice. Battling his own demons, Constable Markus Paul witnesses the complexity of events unfold across his First Nations reserve, determined to uncover the facts. Over time, the protagonist discovers that truth is never a black-and-white affair, but rather settles somewhere within the everyday grey.

Like the finest scribes, Richards is a master of understatement, and *Incidents* is filled with omissions—from the sketchy circumstances surrounding Penniac's death to the simmering tensions that boil beneath both the central character and the community. The wily writer knows when to speak-up and when to shut-up, inviting readers to fill in the blanks.

The result is a highly engaging story that both explores the light and dark that circle the soul, and examines the daily moral dilemmas that push and pull them in and out of our orbit.

A damn fine read, and a worthy successor to *The Lost Highway*. —Stephen Patrick Clare



### Firmament

By Bruce Johnson, \$27.95 (pb)  
978-1-554470-77-8, 224 pp.  
Gaspereau Press, October 2010,  
e-release: March 2011

On first read, I approached Bruce Johnson's dreamy, poetic *Firmament* as a story-driven novel. Big mistake. The heart of this book is a specific place (Caplin Cove, Newfoundland: "a real place and the inspiration for its fictional setting"), and while themes and images are threaded throughout all

thirteen stories, there is little point in attempting to play connect the dots with plot or character.

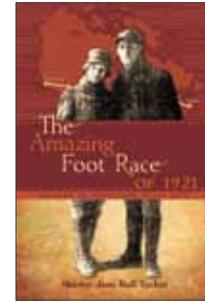
Once I stopped trying to string everything together with a narrative thread, I found I could sit back and enjoy the originality and beauty of Johnson's Caplin Cove, an outpost village that is both an otherworldly place where angels and witches reside and the more familiar hardscrabble locale peopled by hard-working sinners.

While Johnson's imagery is effective and original, he favours choppy, staccato sentences that become annoying, even confusing, at times: "Poole leaves a clutch of churchmen. They labour together, against the wind. Applying the storm windows to the ground floor of the tabernacle's north side. School bus passes. Speeding empty along the gun-grey highway. Making for Friday's carriage load."

The stories span 200 years (although not sequentially). With careful reading, they reveal themselves to be interconnected in subtle ways, as well as tied together by recurring motifs such as stars and angels. Some are fragments of everyday life, as in "Jigging the Veil", where a young bride in 1892 contemplates marriage, cooking and the stars. Others describe situations that are more out of the ordinary such as the story "windlight" that has a west coast writer taking up residence in Caplin Bay where he meets ghosts, and discovers, more than 100 years later, the aforementioned young bride's artistic rendering of the stars.

The end result is a book of snapshots that have somehow captured both the real and the imaginary, making *Firmament* haunting and wholly original. —Kate Watson

## HISTORY

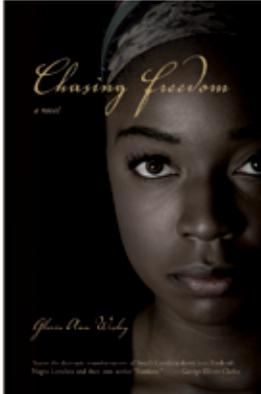


### The Amazing Foot Race of 1921

By Shirley Jean Roll Tucker, \$19.95 (pb)  
978-1-55109-855-5, 224 pp.  
Nimbus Publishing, April 2011

With the sacrifices of wartime fresh in their minds, winter upon them, unemployment rampant and prohibition in full force, the weary people of Halifax perked up at the prospect of a challenging, adventurous 3,645-mile hike across Canada. The largely forgotten trek, completed by a lone hiker, a middle-aged man and his son and a newly married husband and wife, is brought to life in *The Amazing Foot Race of 1921*.

Shirley Jean Roll Tucker relies heavily on newspaper accounts (the race was sponsored by the *Halifax Herald*) to convey the sentiments of the hikers and the crowds that cheered them on. She delivers a gripping story of a race that for the most part followed the railway lines from coast to coast. Readers will yearn for more information on the youthful, jobless and athletic Charles Burkman, returned men Jack Behan, a Dartmouth post man, and his son Clifford and the most unlikely hikers, stalwart Frank Dill and his fiercely competitive and outspoken wife, Jenny. Ninety years after the fact, many of those details are simply and regrettably lost to time.



**CHASING FREEDOM BY GLORIA ANN WESLEY**  
9781552664230 \$18.95 Young adult historical fiction

"This novel ... is arresting with startling events, intriguing characters, and vivid language. Reading Wesley, you hear that sweet, special Africadian lingo, 'right to the marrow in the bones.' By the end, you understand why folks'd rather be ruled by the king than a bunch of rebels with nothing to offer but 'gab and blood.' But you can't gain freedom without experiencing 'a rough tussle and a good shake.' Grab hold of this tale: it won't let you go." —George Elliott Clarke

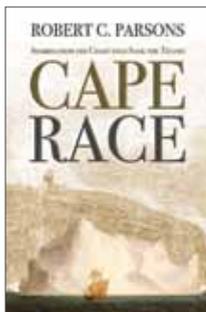
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Tanned and trouser-clad, Jenny Dill had more to prove than the other walkers and Roll Tucker gives her centre stage. Jenny was determined to prove the hike could not only be done but it could be done by a woman. Roll Tucker skillfully presents her as the toast of Montreal and Ottawa but uses the daily dispatches to show that as the trek continued west she pitted herself against the other hikers, including her husband.

Roll Tucker makes it abundantly clear this is no tale of corporate bankrolling of gear and accommodations, rather it was catch-as-catch-can all the way with meals, beds and clothing supplied by supporters and the participants' only income coming from the sale of promotional postcards. More than the story of a race, Roll Tucker has presented a view of Canada at a time in its history when Maritimers had spread out across the country to find work, when cities were struggling to meet post-war demands and prairie farmers were burning their crops in protest. Such a view is always informative and may prove particularly helpful in terms of context to anyone doing genealogical research.

"The Amazing Race of 1921 is a social history presented in journalistic form," Roll Tucker states succinctly in her introduction. That is precisely what Roll Tucker's book is, as well as being a captivating story of Canada's own amazing race. —*Rosalie MacEachern*



### Cape Race

Stories from the Coast that Sank the *Titanic*

By Robert C. Parsons, \$19.95 (pb)  
978-1-926881-06-5, 263 pp.  
Flanker Press, May 2011

Everyone knows the North Atlantic can be dangerous but until you read a book like this, it doesn't really hit home just how deadly it is. Thanks to interest in all things *Titanic*, people are more interested in the history of these waters but this book demonstrates that the sinking of that legendary ship was just another marine tragedy. Yes, more than 1,500 people lost their lives when the *Titanic* went down in 1912—but that's only one short chapter of a book that features forty-eight—and some of those chapters talk about several disasters.

Robert Parsons specializes in marine non-fiction, with more than 200 articles and stories published, along with about twenty books. He knows his stuff and this book is testimony to that. Every tragedy is detailed to the last fact and some of those facts aren't pretty. For example, even though ships were going down all the time, no lighthouse existed at Cape Race until 1856. There wasn't even a road to the area so people could be rescued from the ships. Parsons also looks at the not-so-delicate task of salvage. "While there is fog, there is hope," was once a

popular saying and for good reason. While Parsons tends to downplay the role of these sometime vultures, he doesn't ignore it either. Of course, some ships were much more desirable than others. One abandoned vessel laden with beer was a popular offshore destination, which no doubt led to the sinking of some hardy salvagers in the process. —*Elizabeth Patterson*



### Molly Kool

Captain of the Atlantic

By Christine Welldon, \$15.95 (pb)  
978-155109-836-4, 113 pp.  
Nimbus Publishing, May 2011

Part of Nimbus's Stories of Our Past series, this slim but attractively-packaged biography is the story of a woman who pushes against the endemic sexism in attitude and law in 1930s and '40s Canada to achieve her vocational goal: she became a sea captain at the age of twenty-three.

Kool, a New Brunswick mariner, learned her trade as many captains before her, as part of a family business—she was part of her father's crew sailing the lumber scow *Jean K* through Atlantic waters. Gender aside, she didn't think twice about following her father's footsteps.

But it wasn't that simple. As late as 1929 there were court rulings that women were not persons (and could not sit in the Canadian Senate). So it was not surprising that new laws requiring each captain to have their mariner's license were worded in a "gender specific" fashion. Only men were expected to apply.

Kool was undeterred, planning to go the "long route" and earn a mate's certificate before applying for her master's. Passing the mate's exam with distinction, she continued her trade for the next two years, until applying to the Marine Institute in Yarmouth for her master's license; she was refused an exam on the grounds that "no feminine pronouns were used in the *Canada Shipping Act*."

TRUDY J. MORGAN-COLE  
that forgetful shore

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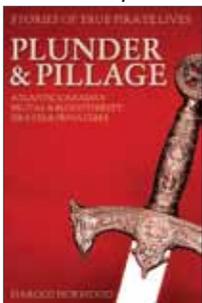
DEREK YETMAN  
*the Beothuk*  
EXPEDITION

Molly persisted and eventually the wording was changed and the oral exam arranged. Although there is a suspicion the standards may have been raised for fear of letting in an unexceptional woman, Kool passed and the rest is history.

Author Christine Welldon does a good job of creating suspense out of Molly Kool's ambition and she also catches the flavour of Kool's determined but cheerful personality. Kool fits into her time as a no-nonsense young woman game for any argument or repartee. She became something of a celebrity and, among other appearances, was courted by Ripley's Believe It Or Not programme in New York.

Welldon also proves adept in placing this story in historical context through broad sweep introductory paragraphs and text boxes. We learn, for instance, that a Soviet merchant sailor predated Kool by several years as the first female marine captain in the modern era (although there were women captains in previous centuries in various countries, as far away and as far back as ancient Crete).

We also learn that the fear of women and sea is more complex and superstitious than straightforward sexism, and that while both "sea" and "ship" are feminine, an actual woman on board, or sometimes even on the dock, was considered by many a bad omen. This is all the more reason to celebrate Molly Kool. —*Maura Hanrahan*



**Plunder & Pillage**

Atlantic Canada's Brutal and Bloodthirsty Pirates and Privateers

By Harold Horwood, \$19.95 (pb)  
978-0-88780-949-1, 216 pp.  
Formac Publishing, March 2011

While some readers will undoubtedly have seen these essays in the late Harold Horwood's previous publications, it's still fun to encounter them again in this handy and attractive modern package.

Horwood combined deft storytelling skill with an astute understanding of the trends underlying world history. These opportunists, rebels and downright villains lace Atlantic Canadian history with colour, but the author ensures they also give insight into the political context of their times.

The great privateer Henry Mainwaring, for instance, in 1614, applied to King James I for letters of marque which would allow him to attack Spanish shipping. James, whose avowed policy was peace with Spain, wanted the revenue of Mainwaring's intended pursuits but had to be careful. Mainwaring's request was granted but only in western waters—the Caribbean and the Americas.

The English Crown's reasoning went that since the Spanish were in western waters through the authority of the Pope, a Protestant country, like England, was justified in defying that authority and attacking the Spanish.

This was a time of discovery—cultural, moral as well as geographical. In North Africa, Mainwaring was vastly impressed with Moorish culture and dared to go unarmed about the streets, a risk unthinkable in England where "cutpurses" infested every city.

From Peter Easton and his fleet of forty ships, to Black Bart, the eighteenth century pirate, to the Masterless Men of Newfoundland's Southern Shore, Atlantic Canada has seen its share of those who defied legal authority and did well for themselves in the process.

Bartholomew Roberts, or Black Bart, the most flamboyant of pirates, makes for a wonderfully dramatic chapter as Horwood eases the reader into a pre-dawn scene in 1720. Trepassey's hardworking fisher families sleep soundly having toiled into the night "under the reddish light of cod-oil lamps," salting fish.

With first light the peace is shattered by "a hellish uproar of gunfire and trumpets, a continuous cannonade accompanied by the blaring of brass horns." Roberts, Horwood explains, kept an entire orchestra on his ship not only to entertain the crew but to strike fear into the hearts of sleepy villages when Bart decided to sail into battle.

While Horwood's work will frustrate the scholar wanting to re-tread his research—

**Pottersfield Press**

**Righting The Wrongs**  
Gus Wedderburn's  
Quest for Social Justice in Nova Scotia  
by Marie Riley

\$17.95 ISBN 978-1-897426-28-9

Gus Wedderburn was a teacher and lawyer, a driving force in the NSAACP, a founder of the Black Educators Association, the Black United Front, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, and the Black Cultural Centre – a vocal crusader for the rights of the disadvantaged at a time when discrimination in education, employment and housing was the status quo.

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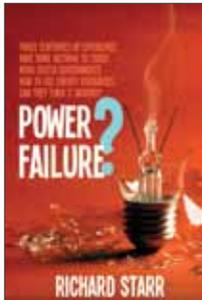
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there's a bibliography but no footnotes or endnotes—there are plenty of splendid moments like these, and a flowingly written background setting these stories against the history of Canada and beyond.

—Paul Butler

## NON-FICTION



### Power Failure?

By Richard Starr, \$24.95 (pb)  
978-0-88780-953-8, 128 pp.  
Formac Publishing, May 2011

It's hard to argue with Richard Starr; the man knows his stuff. As the former policy analyst and practicing journalist says on the last page of his excellent account of Nova Scotia's failure to embrace its energy future, "With fossil fuels losing economic clout amid growing concern about carbon emissions and supply, reliance on renewable energy in the form of the winds and tides will likely be permanent."

It's hard to argue with this, but for the fact that he is entirely, fatally wrong, even as he is thoroughly, winningly correct. What the author proposes is a magnificently cracked dream in which there is "an opportunity for Nova Scotia, in step with the rest of the Atlantic region, to take a new direction in energy policy, one based on in-

creased self-sufficiency, less consumption, lower emissions and stable prices."

Still, as he articulately demonstrates in 243 pages of cogent prose, there is not, and never has been, in the Atlantic Provinces, such a happy marriage of virtue and convenience. More likely, it's been a road show of political jealousies, connivance and outright pandering to federal forces in Ottawa, which have, with every breaking chance, manipulated the concept of East Coast energy self-sufficiency to its own ends.

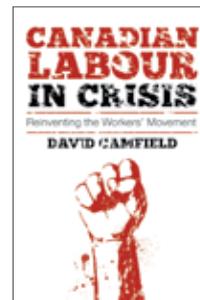
As Starr states, "Under the misnamed National Oil Policy, adopted in 1961, the Diefenbaker government came onsite with Washington's initiatives, approving increased exports to the U.S. to provide an expanded market for western Canadian oil in Canada, the government drew the imaginary National Oil Policy Line at the Ottawa Valley and ordered refiners west of the line to buy from Alberta and Saskatchewan. Quebec, Nova Scotia and the other Atlantic Provinces would continue to have their needs met with cheaper imported oil."

Cheaper is the operative word. Cheaper for whom? Energy policy has defined this nation's politics for more than a century. Is it cheaper for the nation to subsidize tar sands development to the tune of billions of dollars a year? Is it cheaper for the nation to claw back offshore oil and gas revenues, against federal equalization payments, in Atlantic Canada (which would not have been necessary had the East Coast's economy been allowed to thrive without the "industrial redistribution" policies of the early, mid and (yes) late twentieth Century)?

To craft a new future based on renewable energy, people, not power, must make the difference. Nova Scotia Premier Darrel

Dexter won't do it. Neither will Newfoundland and Labrador's Kathy Dunderdale, nor New Brunswick's David Alward, nor Prince Edward Island's Robert Ghiz. A grass-roots movement that understands what's at stake for the future of the region, without political calculation, might just do the trick, as long as it can avoid what Starr calls the "higher purpose" of energy development: To enrich some jurisdictions at the expense of others. Indeed, he writes, "As we move into the second decade of the twenty-first century, Nova Scotia is close to energy-indigent."

As a chronicle of everything that's wrong with energy policy in Atlantic Canada, this book is a work of genius. It should be required reading in high schools and universities across the region. Where it fails—and it does fail in minor ways—is in its policy prescriptions. But, then, as an old policy advisor, myself, I will concede: We all fail as we seek the good, the strong and the righteous idea among us. —Alec Bruce



### Canadian Labour in Crisis Reinventing the Worker's Movement

By David Camfield, \$19.95 (pb)  
978-1-55266-416-2, 160 pp.  
Fernwood Publishing, April 2011

Remember the great Canada Post strike of 2011? In the age of e-mail, it passed almost unnoticed. And Air Canada losing its customer service staff to a strike? The jokes practically wrote themselves. These low-grade, low-impact labour disputes are precisely what worry David Camfield, whose book *Canadian Labour in Crisis* attempts to diagnose why the country's working-class movement appears to have lost its way.

Those looking for a balanced argument will be disappointed. Camfield, who teaches labour studies at the University of Manitoba, is a committed ideologue: he laments that unions today are bureaucratic and anti-democratic. They are, he says,

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"a feisty story..." —TIME OUT

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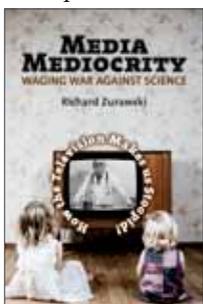
"...you can hardly stand to put the book aside until you've finished." —ORSON SCOTT CARD

too willing to work with management, to limit their role to collective bargaining, and to obey federal and provincial legislation. Even the NDP, he says, has acquiesced to what he calls the “neoliberal” agenda.

Any concession to capitalism, he suggests, is bad, as is any allowance for a private business owner wanting to make a profit. The notion that governments must balance their books does not appear to register with Camfield whatsoever; he makes no concessions to mainstream consensus.

But the book has its merits: Camfield rightly notes the ossification of some large unions, and he is correct that an unfettered free market will pay workers as little as possible, given the chance. And, for the non-expert, he helpfully explains a decisive moment after the Second World War, when governments allowed collective bargaining in return for unions agreeing to live within the law—to gain certification by a labour board, for example.

Alarming, Camfield laments this willingness of unions to play by society’s rules—though, other than condemning violence, he doesn’t suggest precisely what workers should do, beyond obvious tropes such as “more democracy,” “better activists,” and “more militancy.” The radical left will find much to agree with here, and other labour activists will find his arguments stimulating and provocative. But readers who are not already ideological soul mates will find his proposals utopian, at best.  
—*Jacques Poitras*



**Media Mediocrity**  
Waging War Against Science: How the Television makes us Stoopid!

By Richard Zurawski, \$24.95 (pb)  
978-1-55266-400-1, 192 pp.  
Fernwood Publishing, March 2011

The cover of Richard Zurawski’s new book, *Media Mediocrity*, contains a sly bit of fun in its subtitle. “How the television makes

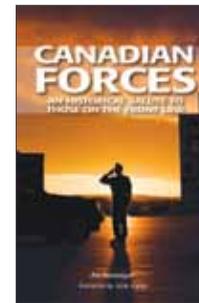
us stoopid!” it proclaims. The internet-savvy reader recognizes the curious spelling of “stupid” as a reference to the rise of instant texting, messaging and the inability of many people to spell even ordinary words correctly. While the title might make us smile, the material inside this book is far more explosive, serious... and important to read.

Many people know Zurawski as the amiable meteorologist who has been on many television stations, or perhaps as host of a children’s science program called “Wonder Why” which ran for several seasons on Atlantic stations. He’s currently the on-air meteorologist for several private radio stations, but also is a documentary film producer, university lecturer and passionate advocate for putting the science back into science reporting in the media. His newest book, following several well-received books on Maritime weather and climate change, takes huge issue with the way science has been dumbed down in media reporting, particularly on television.

“Big Business and Big Media have become inseparable,” Zurawski writes, backing this up with some of the myriad clever ways tobacco companies, neoconservative politicians and religious fundamentalists have been able to insert their agendas into media reporting. As he points out, one doesn’t have to be literate to watch television, and the unfortunate truth is that four out of five viewers get their science “knowledge” from watching television. With many television networks dropping their science reporters and dumping the workload onto already overworked general reporters who aren’t able to think critically about the subjects they’re called on to report, it’s easy for

information to be manipulated into something palatable for the masses.

Zurawski must feel sometimes like a Cassandra, crying a warning in the wilderness but unheeded by far too many. He posits no easy answers because educating ourselves with actual scientific facts and information can be difficult—the topic of global warming being a prime example. Learning to think critically, especially in a climate where critical thinking is attacked by opponents as being “naysaying” and “against progress”, is also no easy task. Zurawski ends his book by writing that he hopes his work has been one small step in changing the way television presents science news for the better. *Media Mediocrity* is well-worth reading. —*Jodi DeLong*



**Canadian Forces**  
An Historical Salute to Those on the Front Line

By Art Montague, \$19.95 (pb)  
978-1-926916-09-5, 192 pp.  
MacIntyre Purcell Publishing,  
September 2011

Canada’s military has been brought to the fore in the minds of Canadians in recent years. Much of this has been due to Canada’s war in Afghanistan and the resulting visibility afforded by the former Chief

Basement, New Academic Building  
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**October 6th, 2011**  
is the birthday party!  
(shhh it's a surprise. check out [kingsbookstore.ca](http://kingsbookstore.ca) for more details)

of the Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier. Not since WWI and WWII have Canadian military members been so highly regarded by the majority of the Canadian public. Consequently, Art Montague's treatise on the historical aspects of that military contribution is probably timely.

To profile the history of the Canadian Forces is a daunting task, especially within 192 pages, including several pictures, some of which are duplications. Nevertheless Montague has diverted from the traditional chronological approach and has provided seven chapters based upon a potpourri of military events and "facts" about the Canadian Forces. The many vignettes, in some instances, of relatively unknown wartime individuals such as Private Smokey Smith, Tommy Prince, Major Marguerite Downs, Sergeant-Major John Osborne, Corporal Francis Pegahmagabow, and even "Pal", the Newfoundland Dog regimental mascot for the Quebec-based Royal Rifles, lend an individual approach to the selfless contributions made by Canadians to our military history.

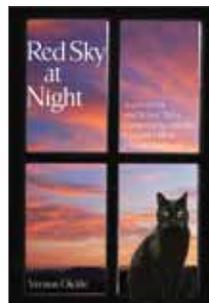
It is unfortunate that many major Canadian military accomplishments have been left out of this work in favour of more mundane topics, such as three and a half pages about the Canadian horse. No story of the Canadian Forces can be complete without discussing the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan which produced Commonwealth pilots and which gave Camp Borden Ontario the name "the Aerodrome of Democracy" by President Roosevelt. Or, the Dieppe raid, a major horrific military blunder with 3,367 Canadians killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Or the Battle of Britain.

While it is understood that not all of Canada's military endeavours can be ac-

commodated in such a brief work, much of it must be at least mentioned in deference to the obscure and little-known. It should not be said that "This book would make an ideal teaching aid for history teachers to liven up their lessons with interesting anecdotes and factoids." (A factoid is an unproven statement or fact and hardly part of the teaching of history.) Several of the facts stated are not attributed to a reference, especially in the tables with numbers and also in some quotes.

While the book is certainly a quick and interesting read, especially for former members of Canada's military it should not be considered historical but rather insightful of the contributions made by very many relatively ordinary Canadians within Canada's military, both past and present. —Don W. McLeod

## LOCAL INTEREST



### Red Sky at Night

Superstition and Wives' Tales Compiled by Atlantic Canada's Most Eclectic Collector

By Vernon Oickle, \$16.95 (pb)  
978-1-92691-610-1, 220 pp.

MacIntyre Purcell Publishing, September 2011

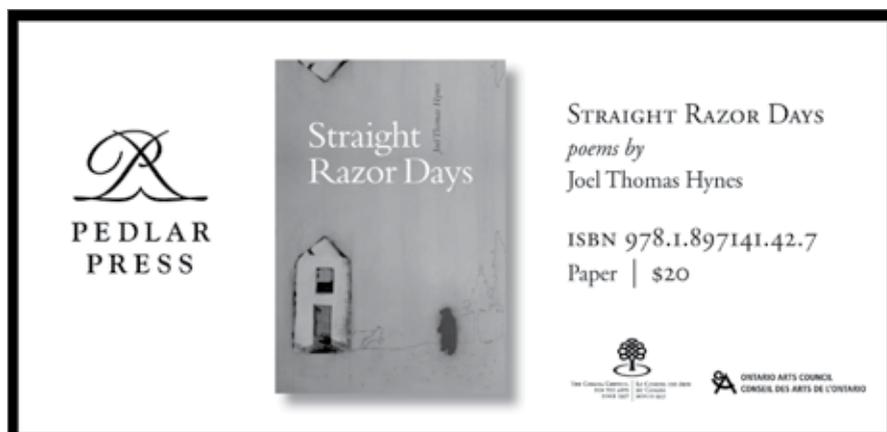
We, as Atlantic Canadians, are fortunate to have inherited a rich oral heritage from our

Native and immigrant ancestors. Thousands of stories and folk traditions have been handed down to us through word and song, but they have been rarely committed to paper. Liverpool author Vernon Oickle has made it his mission to capture and document these important remnants of our past. A prolific writer with a keen interest in history and the supernatural, he has been collecting regional stories, sayings and superstitions for decades and making them available through his numerous publications. Oickle's fourteenth book, *Red Sky at Night: Superstition and Wives' Tales Compiled by Atlantic Canada's Most Eclectic Collector*, continues his work of preserving and disseminating our regional history and culture.

*Red Sky at Night* is a compendium, a virtual encyclopedia of superstitions on every topic imaginable, from home remedies to animal lore and how to stymie a witch. Did you know that the tradition of having a best man at a wedding stemmed from the need for the potential groom's best swordsman to stand guard when an unwilling bride or family and friends did not want the ceremony to take place? Or perhaps you knew that washing your hands in the moonlight cures warts?

Our ancestors had dozens of warnings to heed, disasters to avoid and good luck to court. But Oickle reminds us that superstitions do not belong strictly in the past. He solicits well-known Atlantic Canadians, including meteorologist Peter Coade, former Nova Scotia premier Rodney MacDonald and comedian Cathy Jones, to talk about their particular family beliefs.

The text of *Red Sky at Night* is complemented by charming wood block prints and folksy illustrations. Each chapter begins with an introductory text, which nicely contextualizes the information that follows. It is a handy resource for writers, folklorists and history buffs alike. I found myself checking off the superstitions I recognized while adding others in the margins. These fragments of our past contribute to its whole; collecting and remembering them honours both our ancestors and their legacy. —Laurie Glenn Norris





**The Lunenburg Werewolf**  
And other stories of the supernatural

By Steve Vernon, \$15.95 (pb)  
978-1-55109-857-9, 160 pp.  
Nimbus Publishing, September 2011

With his newest anthology, Steve Vernon proves once again that the art of oral tradition is not dead, unlike many of his characters. While his words of part legend, part history and full fright are imprinted on the page, readers envision his voice and presence telling each of the book's twenty-three narratives. Each tale starts off with readers sitting at Vernon's kitchen table and then entering his time machine to travel across Nova Scotia, as far back as the sixteenth century.

*The Lunenburg Werewolf* is the anticipated follow-up to Vernon's *Haunted Harbours*. This time round, his compilation presents the ideal balance of well-known ghost stories and chilling accounts rarely told. Some of the stories you may read to your children, such as "The Capstick Bigfoot" that describes an endearing creature with a frightening physique. Other tales may only be stomached before the sun goes down, such as the book's title story, as it seems terrifyingly plausible.

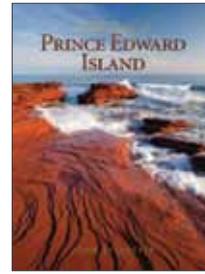
In addition to horror, the stories engagingly provide insight into the daily lives of Nova Scotians from centuries past. In "The Tale of the Screeching Bridge" you will learn of traditional superstitions, like walking backwards with a mirror to reveal the identity of your soul mate. You will mingle with once believed-in supernatural characters, including selkies and lutins. For those who have always wondered about the Oak Island Treasure, all is revealed.

Although his grandfather passed his talent for storytelling onto Vernon, it is acutely obvious that this author has developed his own creative phrasing and tone, as shown in excerpts like "the moon looked

down and winked just once" or "he had been built from mosquito bones and cat whiskers."

To compose these stories, Vernon talked to historians and heard firsthand accounts from locals, some who are still haunted by ghostly apparitions to this day. In tales, such as "The Fires of Caledonia Mills" the descriptive setting is so vivid that it seems like Vernon was on location, directly observing the past.

I read that Vernon was once a palm and tarot reader at Halifax's Little Mysteries. This mystical side of his makes me wonder if these stories were actually told to him from the ghosts themselves. —Michelle Brunet



**The Little Book of Prince Edward Island**

By John Sylvester, \$16.95 (hc)  
978-1-89483-859-7, 78 pp.  
The Acorn Press, June 2011

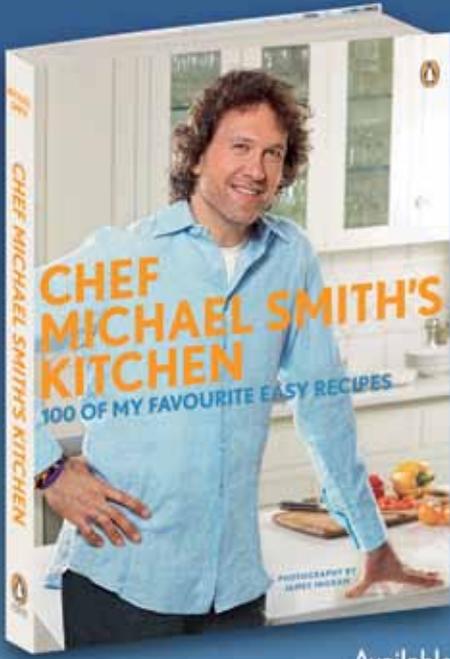
One of the things about trying to capture Prince Edward Island visually is that you are following in the footsteps of dozens of photographers who have published books on the same subject and when you are shooting Canada's smallest province the images and books can be repetitive.

John Sylvester's *The Little Book of Prince Edward Island* isn't.

The reason why it isn't a rehash of the same stereotypical scenes is because Sylvester gets it, it's about the light.

You have seen hundreds of images of a farmhouse and the gentle rolling land-

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scapes but have you seen the brightly lit farmhouse with black clouds as a thunderstorm rolls across the sky?

How about another atypical farmhouse backlit in a winter's afternoon with the amber light of a falling sun shining through "sun flurries" as Sylvester calls them?

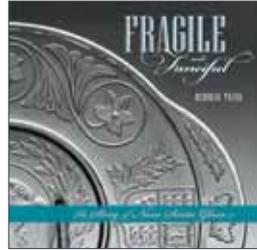
Browsing through the pages it looks like ninety per cent of the images were taken in the early morning or evening light when the sun is warming up the scenes with the reddish light.

This honey-light adds warmth as well as shadows to the images and brings a new level of depth to waves pounding the red shore that we have seen before but this time in a different way. Add some slow shutter speed and allow the water to move across the film (sensor) plane causing slight movement and Sylvester brings out an additional element in his images.

Sylvester brings us through four seasons on the island and captures the people, landscapes and some wildlife. Traditional scenes are mixed with the future as wind farms and the red shore are featured, bring-

ing together the old and the new. Couple that with an almost Norman Rockwell approach to a farm lit by Christmas lights in December and you almost wish for the winter season, almost.

Acorn Press and John Sylvester have packed a lot of talent into a small book. —Len Wagg



**Fragile and Fanciful**  
The Story of Nova Scotia Glass

By Deborah Trask, \$22.95 (pb)  
978-0-86492-655-5, 120 pp.  
Goose Lane Editions, May 2011

We handle glass every day; probably rarely stopping to reflect on its long, myriad history and use. This book provides reason to pause and consider its heritage.

At the end of the nineteenth century pressed glass had a brief, if not glittering, period of production in Nova Scotia. Why would anyone make glass in Nova Scotia in the 1880s? That is the question Deborah Trask asked herself almost forty years ago when a curator at the Nova Scotia Museum.

Her curatorial instincts and curiosity resulted in *Fragile and Fanciful*, an unexpected, interesting addition both to the history of Nova Scotia and its little-known early industrial enterprise. And an important reference source for collectors and admirers of pressed glass.

Trask devotes much of the first half of her book to a history of the three glass factories active in Nova Scotia at the end of the 1800s and early 1900s. The Nova Scotia Glass Company, Humphreys Glass Company and the Lamont Glass Company were all located in Pictou County, where a ready supply of coal, necessary for the furnaces, was available.

Drawing extensively on newspaper reports of the period Trask gives a detailed account of the ups and mainly downs of

Marie Helène Allain

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Beaverbrook Art Gallery

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Tribute Gala: Thursday, October 6, 2011, 7:00 pm, Delta Beausejour Hotel, Moncton. Tickets can be purchased by contacting 506-458-2028 or [www.beaverbrookartgallery.org](http://www.beaverbrookartgallery.org)












these enterprises, begun with political incentives, but hindered by distance from raw materials, lack of large markets, skilled workers departing to the United States, devastating fires, lack of real committed investment and competition from major companies in Montreal and Ontario.

Particularly interesting reading is a report from the *Halifax Morning Chronicle* of January 1885 describing the process and factory setting. These companies mainly produced useful items such as lamp chimneys, bottles and attractive tableware.

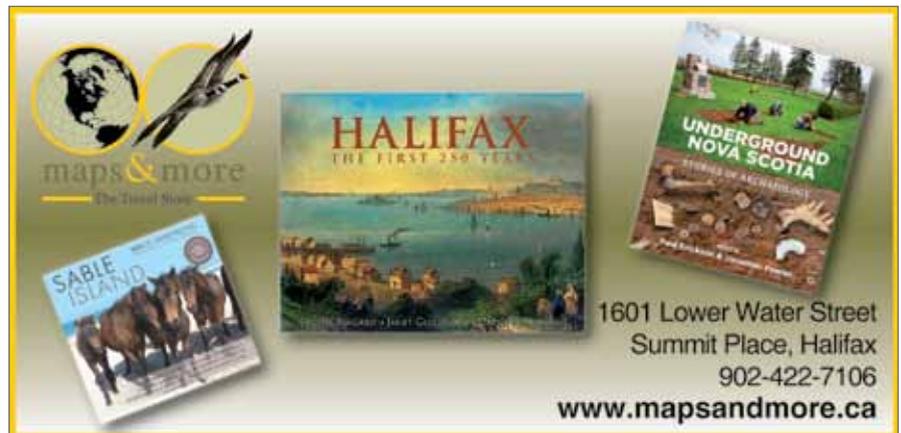
A visually satisfying appendix with beautifully lit photographs will help collectors, owners and historians identify the pressed glass patterns produced in Nova Scotia during this enterprising period. Readers will discover Buttons and Bows, Trenton Block, Starflower and Raspberry and Shield. There is also a chapter on the care of antique glass and a useful glossary.

Deborah Trask includes an epilogue on Nova Scotian Crystal, an entrepreneurial company that celebrates its fifteenth anniversary this year. An encouraging coda. —*Joanna Manning*

captures the ambiance of angling, examines conservation issues and presents some quirky salmon facts about *Salar* (Latin for “leaper”), so named by Roman legions invading Gaul when they saw great fish leaping in the rivers.

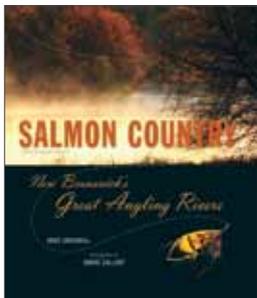
Underhill begins, “Sunlight dances through morning mist as we make our way down a winding path to the river’s edge.” Through his poetic prose, one steps into a Sharpe Canoe produced by a three-generation family of craftsmen on the

Restigouche, or dons hip-waders to fish in the Oxbow Pool on the Little South West Miramichi. This pool, along with the Augustine Mound, is a National Historic Site near the Mi’kmaq village of Metepenagiag, dating back over 3,000 years. “I start at the top,” Underhill writes, “where the water swirls over a rock less than three feet in diameter, sending out currents, before curving in against the bank to form an inviting sheet of blue-black water that is alive with the hope of hooking into a salmon.”



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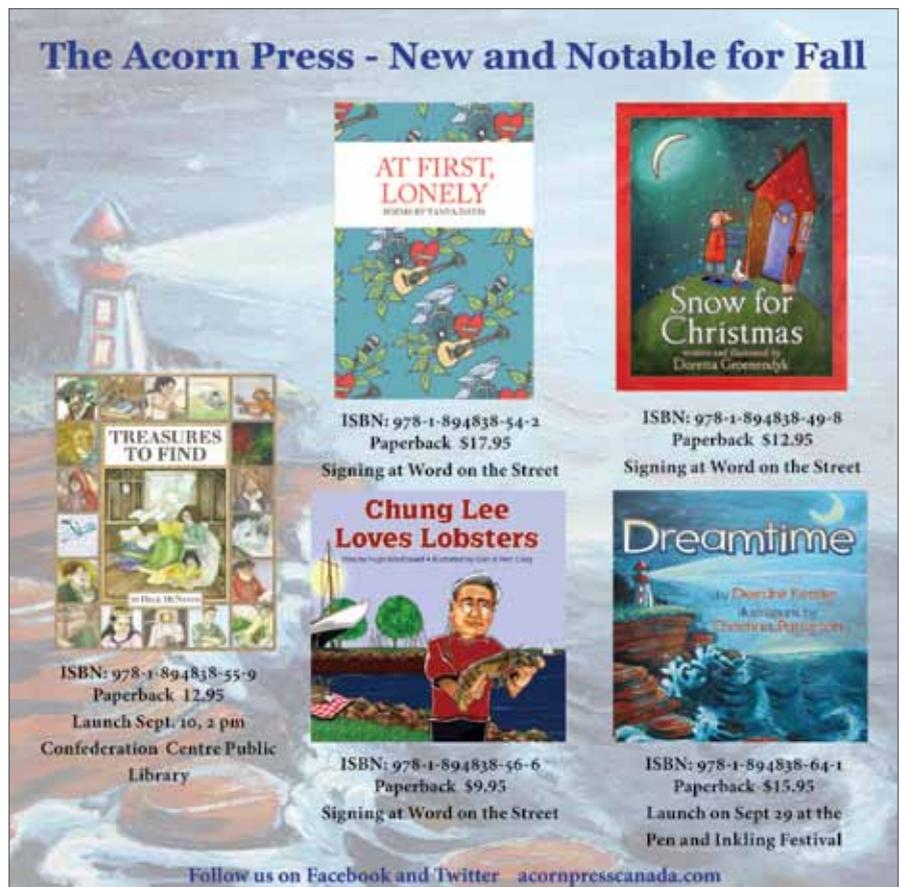


### Salmon Country

New Brunswick's Great Angling Rivers

By Doug Underhill,  
photographs by André Gallant,  
edited by Jacques Héroux \$45.00 (hc)  
978-0-86492-629-6, 262 pp.  
Goose Lane Editions, April 2011

Working as a team over three years, Miramichi poet and columnist Doug Underhill and André Gallant, a professional photographer from Saint John, New Brunswick, made Jacques Héroux's vision a reality in *Salmon Country*, a handsome, full-colour, 260-page coffee table book celebrating New Brunswick's great angling rivers. Héroux, an avid salmon angler, professional guide and master fly-tyer, was the catalyst for the book which



The Acorn Press - New and Notable for Fall

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ISBN: 978-1-894838-49-8  
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Signing at Word on the Street

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ISBN: 978-1-894838-64-1  
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Launch on Sept 29 at the  
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Follow us on Facebook and Twitter [acornpresscanada.com](http://acornpresscanada.com)

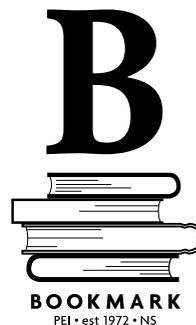
Meanwhile, Gallant's stunning double-page-spread photographs capture spring fishing on the North West Miramichi, a mystical autumn morning on the Hammond, a meditative sunset on the Saint John and an aerial shot of the Quarryville Pool where the Renous flows into the Main South West Miramichi. His camera not only goes inside the New Brunswick government's exclusive resort at Larry's Gulch but also captures Chef Jacques Giorgis preparing bananas flambé at Cheuters Brook Lodge, both on the Restigouche. His keen photographic eye also frames a black bear dining on green leaves, a bald

eagle in mid-flight, a partridge doing a "shuffle dance" to lead hikers away from her chicks, and of course, salmon, caught and about to be released.

The combination of Gallant's beautiful photographs and Underhill's finely crafted writing and fishing expertise in *Salmon Country* adds a meaningful contribution to the growing interest in environmental and conservation issues. We have to love and celebrate our environment and wildlife before we're motivated to preserve it and *Salmon Country* does just that.

—Margaret Patricia Eaton **ABT**

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# Upcoming events

Readings, launches, signings and more

**Saturday, September 10, 1:00 p.m.**

**Confederation Centre Public Library,  
Charlottetown, P.E.I.**

Join The Acorn Press and author/illustrator Dale McNevin for the launch of a new children's picture book, *Treasures to Find*.

**Monday, September 12**

**Saint Mary's University, Halifax, N.S.**

Senator Douglas Roche, Nobel Peace Prize nominee and author of *How We Stopped Loving the Bomb* (James Lorimer & Company) will be at the Sobeys Building for an author event. In addition, as part of his cross-Canada speaking tour he will deliver lectures at both St. Mary's and Dalhousie on September 13. He then appears in Fredericton on September 14. Check local media for details.

**Sunday, September 18**

**Eden Mills, Ontario.**

Alex Andrew (*Giant's Dream: A healing journey through Nitassinan*) will be a featured author in the Aboriginal Writers Tent at the 2011 Eden Mills Writers Festival. For more information please visit the Eden Mills Writers Festival Website.

**Tuesday, September 20, 5 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

**Moncton City Hall, Moncton, N.B.**

Award-winning author Lawrence Hill will be the star of the Frye Festival's first event of its 2011-2012 season, the fall Community Read. The event will be followed by a reception with refreshments hosted by the City of Moncton. The event will be 'Pay What You Can'.

**Thursday, September 22, 7:00 p.m.**

**Legislative Library of New Brunswick,  
Fredericton, N.B.**

Award-winning author and journalist Jacques Poitras launches his new non-fiction work *Imaginary Line: Life on an Unfinished Border*. This launch is free and open to the public.

**Saturday, September 24, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**Saint Mary's University, Halifax, N.S.**

Explore the present and future of books and book-like technologies at Book Camp, the "unconference" dedicated to books and the publishing industry. Open to anyone interested

in the publishing industry and the reader/creator/publisher relationship. Registration is free and can be completed at <http://bookcampfx11.eventbrite.com>

**Sunday, September 25, 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

**Halifax, N.S.**

The Word On The Street Book and Magazine Festival takes place on the Halifax waterfront surrounding the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic and across the harbour at Alderney Landing in Dartmouth. A celebration of literacy and the written word.

**Tuesday, September 27 – October 2**

**Charlottetown, P.E.I.**

The Pen & Inkling Festival will celebrate the literary arts with readings, workshops, visiting authors, songwriters and a gala, culminating with the 24<sup>th</sup> annual Island Literary Awards Ceremony. Visit [www.pei-writersguild.com/pen-and-inkling-festival](http://www.pei-writersguild.com/pen-and-inkling-festival) for more details and a full schedule of events.

**Wednesday, September 28, 7:00 p.m.**

**Fredericton Public Library, Fredericton, N.B.**

Riel Nason has her first official reading of her debut novel *The Town that Drowned*. Nason will be reading selections from the novel, and will discuss some of the factual underpinnings of her story. This reading is free and open to the public. Nason will also appear on September 29 at 7:00 p.m. at the Honourable Charles Connell House in Woodstock, N.B. and on September 30 at 7:00 p.m. at Nackawic Public-School Library in Nackawic, N.B.

**Thursday, September 29, 6:30 p.m.**

**Halifax North Memorial Library, Halifax, N.S.**

Join Roseway Publishing (an imprint of Fernwood Publishing) for the book launch of Gloria Ann Wesley's young adult book, *Chasing Freedom*. All are welcome.

**Saturday, October 1, 10:00 a.m.**

**Keswick Ridge School Gym, Keswick Ridge, N.B.**

As part of the Keswick Ridge Heritage Festival, Riel Nason will be signing copies of her debut novel *The Town that Drowned*.

**Saturday, October 1, 6:00 – 7:00 pm**

**Fishers' Loft Inn, Port Rexton, N.L.**

Bill Rowe will be reading from *Danny Williams: The War With Ottawa* as part of the Just Before Dinner reading series. For more information, please contact the Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador at 709-739-5215 or toll-free at 1-866-739-5215, or the Fishers' Loft Inn at 1-877-464-3240.

**Sunday, October 2, 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**The Guild, P.E.I.**

Writing on Prince Edward Island will be honoured with the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Island Literary Awards Ceremony and reception as a culmination of the Pen & Inkling Festival.

**Tuesday, October 4, 6:30 p.m.**

**Shelburne County Museum, Shelburne, N.S.**

Join Roseway Publishing (an imprint of Fernwood Publishing) for the book launch of Gloria Ann Wesley's young adult book, *Chasing Freedom*. All are welcome.

**Thursday, October 6**

**Yarmouth County Museum, Yarmouth, N.S.**

There will be a book launch for Gloria Ann Wesley's young adult book, *Chasing Freedom*. Time TBA. Please contact the museum at 902-749-1120 for more details. All are welcome.

**Thursday, October 6, 7:00 p.m.**

**Inprint, Saint John, N.B.**

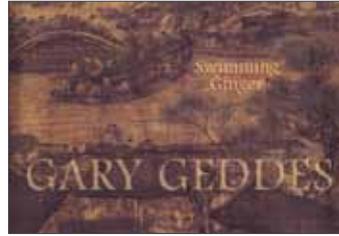
Riel Nason will be reading selections from her debut novel *The Town that Drowned* as well as discussing the factual underpinnings of her novel. This reading is free and open to the public.

**Thursday, October 27, 7:30 p.m.**

**The Honourable Charles Connell House,  
Woodstock, N.B.**

In cooperation with the Carleton Country Historical Society, award-winning author and journalist Jacques Poitras brings his new non-fiction work *Imaginary Line: Life on an Unfinished Border* to Woodstock, N.B. This talk is free and open to the public. **ABT**

# All the News in the Atlantic Book Community



## Honour Roll

Goose Lane Editions is proud to announce that two of their authors have claimed prizes at this year's Independent Publishers Book Awards. The Bronze Medal for Poetry has been awarded to poet Gary Geddes for his collection *Swimming Ginger*. The Silver Medal for Performing Arts has been awarded to veteran music columnist Bob Mersereau for his book *The Top 100 Canadian Singles*.

Goose Lane Editions is also pleased to announce that it was awarded a Regional Design Award by *Design Edge Canada* magazine in the Print Design category for its catalogue design (by Goose Lane Art Director Julie Scriver) in *Breaking Boundaries: Four Young Canadians Re-Imagine Ceramic Art*, published by the Gardiner Museum in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name.



The Canadian Booksellers Association (CBA) has named Gaspereau Press the "Small Press Publisher of the Year". The CBA announced the winners of its 2011 Libris Awards at a gala event in Toronto on May 14. The Libris Awards recognize the best in the Canadian book industry, namely Canadian book selling and book production. Gaspereau Press has now been named Small Press Publisher of the Year three times, capturing the title in 2005, 2006 and 2011.

The Canadian Children's Book Centre has announced the finalists for their 2011 book awards. New Brunswick author Valerie Sherrard's new novel, *The Glory Wind* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside), has been nominated for both the TD Canadian Children's Literature Award and the Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction for Young People.



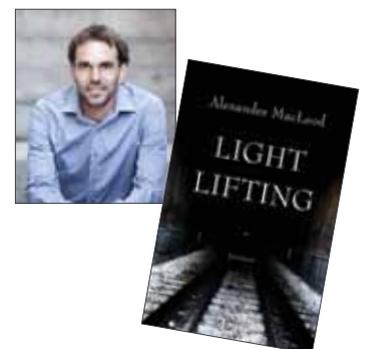
*Viola Desmond Won't Be Budged* (Groundwood Books) by Joyce Nyasha Warner and illustrated by Halifax's Richard Rudnicki is nominated for the Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children's Non-fiction. The winners will be announced at an invitation-only gala event at The Carlu in Toronto on October 4, 2011.

Giller nominee Alexander MacLeod (*Light Lifting*) has been shortlisted for the world's largest and most prestigious award for the short story—the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award in Ireland. The award (€ 35,000) is presented each year to an original collection of stories judged to be the most accomplished. The award will be presented at the culmination of the Cork International Short Story Festival on Sunday September 18<sup>th</sup>.

## In Other News

The Writer's Federation of Nova Scotia has announced the winners of the thirty-fourth Atlantic Writing Competition. Eighteen writers (along with three honourable mentions), placed in six categories that include young adult/juvenile novel, poetry and creative non-fiction, along with the Budge Wilson Short Story Prize, the H.R. (Bill) Percy Novel Prize and The Joyce Barkhouse Writing for Children Prize. For a full list of winners, please visit [www.writers.ns.ca](http://www.writers.ns.ca). Congratulations to all who entered.

All winners will accept their prizes on the main stage of the Word On The Street Festival on the Halifax waterfront on Sunday September 25 at 11 a.m., kicking off a huge day of excitement for, and celebration of, the literary scene in Atlantic Canada.



Recent winner Susan White, after winning first-prize in the young adult novel category in 2010, went on to publish her manuscript, *The Year Mrs. Montague Cried*, with PEI's Acorn Books this past spring. The deadline for the thirty-fifth Atlantic Writing Competition is November 4, 2011.

Another successful Atlantic Author Day took place this past summer across Atlantic Canada. On Saturday, June 18 forty-six authors made appearances at twenty-eight different participating bookstores. Readers from across the region came out to meet their favourite storytellers and pick up books for summer reading. Thank you to all who attended.

Just two weeks after its release *Reinventing the Rose*, by international bestselling Newfoundland author Kenneth J. Harvey, went into its second printing. First published in Russia, the book quickly became a best-seller upon its Canadian publication by Dundurn Press.

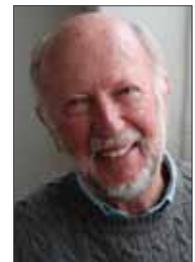
Earlier this summer, Harvey, whose books include *The Town That Forgot How to Breathe*, *Blackstrap Hawco* and *Inside*, announced he has decided to give up writing books and focus on making films instead. Harvey's first film, a nine-minute short called "I'm 14 and I Hate the World," premiered this summer and screened at festivals world-wide, including in Chile, India and Russia. He says his ultimate goal is to one day turn his novel *Inside* into a feature film.

Harvey has won the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize, the Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award, the Winterset Award and Italy's Libro Del Mare, and has been nominated for numerous other awards including the Giller and Commonwealth prizes.

The Acorn Press is pleased to announce they have signed a contract with Bruce Rainnie, host of CBC's *The Compass*, for a book to be released in May 2012. All author proceeds will go to the PEI Cancer Treatment Centre. Stay tuned for more details!

Charlottetown, PEI has been designated a 2011 Cultural Capital of Canada. The designation is awarded annually to communities that "demonstrate an ongoing commitment to arts and culture." Through this program, Charlottetown is eligible for project funding of up to \$500,000. With this money, the city is able to revive its Pen & Inkling Festival for a second year. Organized by the Prince Edward Island Writer's Guild, the literary festival is scheduled to run from September 28 to October 2 with readings, workshops, visiting authors and a gala, culminating with the twenty-fourth annual Island Literary Awards ceremony. The funding will also support the Guild's Writers in the Schools Program and allow for French submissions to the Island Literary Awards.

**Remembering Arthur Motyer (December 15, 1925 – June 23, 2011).** The arts community lost one of its own this summer as teacher, director, author, playwright and loving mentor, father and grandfather Arthur Motyer passed away at his home on June 23 in Sackville, New Brunswick. Born in Bermuda, Arthur attended Mount Allison University, where he later had a distinguished career as a Professor of English, Dean of Arts and Vice-President Academic. He also taught English and Drama at the University of Manitoba (1948-50) and Bishop's University (1950-70), where he led the development and realization of the Centennial Theatre. At Bishop's, he encouraged one of his students to pursue writing and suggested he wasn't quite cut out to be an actor. That student was Michael Ondaatje, who recently paid tribute to his mentor in a moving *Globe and Mail* interview. Arthur served for many years as Chair of the Performing Arts Committee at Mt. A. and of the classical concert touring organization, Debut Atlantic, founded Windsor Theatre and the Mount Allison Drama Program and was mentor and founding chair of Live Bait theatre. In his retirement, he wrote two distinguished books, the novel *What's Remembered* (Cormorant) and a memoir sharing his thoughts about and correspondence with author Carol Shields and another former student, Elma Gerwin, *The Staircase Letters: An Extraordinary Friendship at the End of Life* (Random House of Canada). He also found time to serve as jury member for the APMA's Best Atlantic-Published Book Award. In September he will be posthumously awarded the Bermuda Arts Council's 2011 Lifetime Achievement Award. **ABT**



**Photos: Opposite Page:** Gary Geddes' *Swimming Ginger* • Bob Mersereau's *The Top 100 Canadian Singles* • Gaspereau Press, "Small Press Publisher of the Year" • Valerie Sherrard's new novel, *The Glory Wind* • *Viola Desmond Won't Be Budged* by Joyce Nyasha Warner, illustrated by Richard Rudnicki • Alexander MacLeod and his novel *Light Lifting*.

**This Page:** Susan White's manuscript, *The Year Mrs. Montague Cried* • Kenneth J. Harvey • *Reinventing the Rose*, by international bestselling Newfoundland author Kenneth J. Harvey. • Arthur Motyer

Kenneth J. Harvey's photo by Janet Power and Alexander MacLeod's photo by Heather Crosby

# The Great Book Giveaway

Simply answer the questions below, clip it out, mail it in and if your correct entry is drawn, we'll send you this basket of great Atlantic books.

## Books in the basket:

- Molly Kool: Captain of the Atlantic by Christine Welldon
- The Little Book of Prince Edward Island by John Sylvester
- Mind Over Mussels: A Shores Mystery by Hilary MacLeod
- At First, Lonely by Tanya Davis
- Outskirts by Sue Goyette
- A Possible Madness by Frank MacDonald
- A Day with you in Paradise by Lennie Gallant, illustrated by Patsy MacKinnon
- Salmon Country: New Brunswick's Great Angling Rivers by Doug Underhill, photographs by Andrew Gallant, edited by Jacques Heroux
- Power Failure? by Richard Starr
- Plunder and Pillage: Atlantic Canada's Brutal & Bloodthirsty Pirates by Harold Horwood

## Win this basket of books!



## Congratulations!

The winner of the last issue's book contest is Shelley McCallum of Central Onslow, N.S.

GIFT BASKET CREATED BY TINA COLADAS GIFT CREATIONS BEDFORD, NS - (902) 233-8658  
PHOTO: KELLY CLARK

These questions are taken from this issue of *Atlantic Books Today*

Name one of Sue Goyette's favourite poets:

What is the name of the video-poem made by Tanya Davis that has over three million hits on Youtube?

What is the motto of the Canadianbookshelf.com?

Name two authors who will be appearing at The Word On The Street on Sunday, September 25:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_



Please fill out this form and mail by October 14 to:  
**Atlantic Books Today Book Giveaway**  
1484 Carlton Street, Halifax, NS B3H 3B7

The information below will not be used for any purpose other than contacting the winning entry.

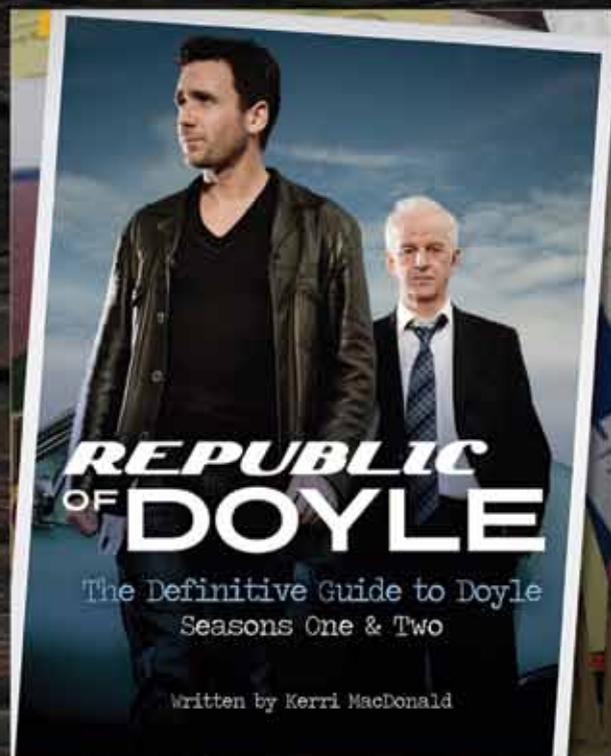
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NEW RELEASES FROM  
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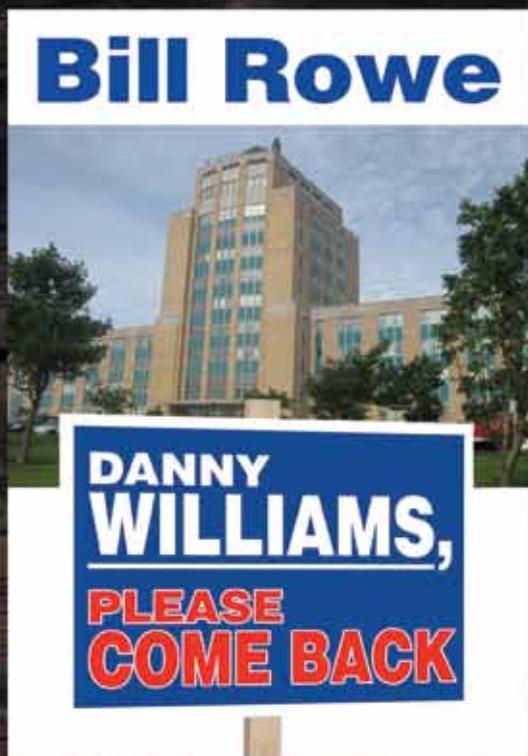
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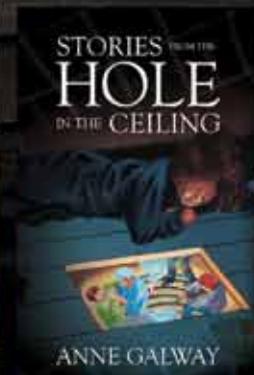
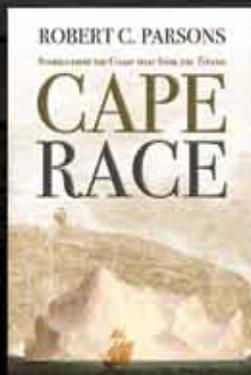
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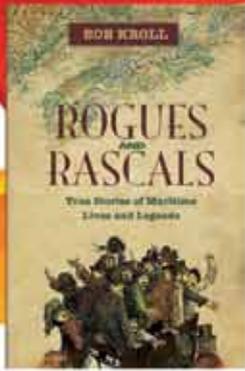
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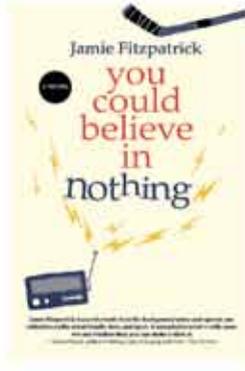
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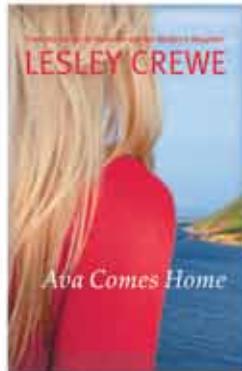
# New for Fall 2011



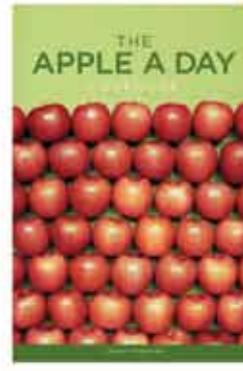
*Rogues and Rascals*  
by Bob Kroll



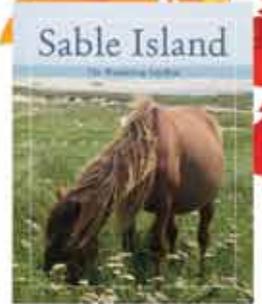
*You Could Believe in Nothing* by Jamie Fitzpatrick



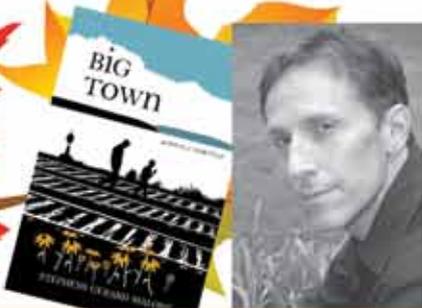
*Ava Comes Home*  
by Lesley Crewe  
(paperback)



*The Apple a Day Cookbook* by Janet Reeves



*Sable Island: The Wandering Sandbar*  
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