

# Véhicule Press

Spring/Summer 2023

**FICTION** Andrew Steinmetz · Gabrielle Boulianne-Tremblay

**NON-FICTION** Michael Lista · Lorna Goodison

**POETRY** Anita Lahey · Pierre Nepveu



5





# Véhicule Press

## A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHERS

As we were finishing up this catalogue, we received news of Baharan Baniahmadi winning the 2022 Paragraphe Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction for her debut novel *Prophetess*, beating out a strong list. This is the third time in four years that the QWF prize has been given to a book in our Esplanade Fiction imprint. We've enjoyed an accolade-rich year, with Dimitri Nasrallah's *Hotline* finding itself on the longlist for the Scotiabank Giller Prize and Tawhida Tanya Evanson *Book of Wings* receiving the 2022 New Contribution Literary Prize by Blue Metropolis. As we gear up to celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2023, watching our recent titles run the table with wins and nominations has been a gratifying reminder of the great literature we've been fortunate to publish. Our spring 2023 releases — a mix of gripping true crime, ground-breaking translation, and distinctive fiction and poetry — are further testament to Véhicule's vibrant history and heritage. Along with a specially commissioned logo for the anniversary year, we're planning events and readings and plotting our first-ever tote bag. Stay tuned!

### Publishers

Simon Dardick  
Nancy Marrelli

### Associate Publisher

Carmine Starnino

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge that we are publishing from Tiohtià:ke, the Mohawk name for a historic place for gathering and trade for many First Nations. It is unceded traditional Indigenous territory, on which there have now been non-Indigenous settlers for more than 375 years. As publishers we know we cannot rewrite our history, but we can be part of a concerted effort to contribute to reconciliation between Indigenous Peoples and Settlers.

Cover art by Jenn Kitagawa

Véhicule Press acknowledges the support of the Canada Book Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Société de développement des entreprises culturelles du Québec (SODEC).

PRINTED IN CANADA



Conseil des arts  
du Canada

Canada Council  
for the Arts

SODEC

Québec

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# THE HUMAN SCALE

## Murder, Mischief & Other Selected Mayhems

### Michael Lista

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**Michael Lista's** reporting has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Slate*, *The Walrus* and *Toronto Life*. He is the author of three books: the poetry volumes *Bloom* and *The Scarborough*, and *Strike Anywhere*, a collection of essays. He was the 2017 Margaret Laurence Fellow, a finalist for the Allan Slaight Prize for Journalism, and winner of the 2020 National Magazine Award Gold Medals for both Investigative Reporting and Long Form Feature Writing. His story, "The Sting," is being adapted into a television series for Apple TV+.

Whether investigating a gruesome triple-murder, a fairy tale marriage gone horribly wrong, or a brilliant con artist, Michael Lista has proven himself one of the most gifted storytellers of his generation. In his belief that crime reporting thrives the closer it moves to "the human scale" — where every uncovered secret reveals the truth of our obligations to each other — Lista builds his compulsively readable narratives from details (fake flowers, a little girl's necklace) others might pass over, details that provide a doorway into the extreme situations he is drawn to. *The Human Scale* not only includes Lista's most celebrated magazine stories to date, but comes with postscripts that describe his process in writing each piece, and the fallout from publication. Here is long-form journalism in its most hallowed form: brilliant and bingeable.

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**"Michael Lista brings a poet's heart and a philosopher's eye to the darkest parts of human behaviour. *The Human Scale* is a brilliant collection by one of the best, and most astute, true crime chroniclers in the country."**

— Jana Pruden, author of *Fear on the Family Farm*

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TRUE CRIME • MAY 2023

ISBN: 9781550656206 • \$22.95 CDN • \$18.95 US

TRADE PAPER • 5 ½ x 8 ½ • 240 PAGES

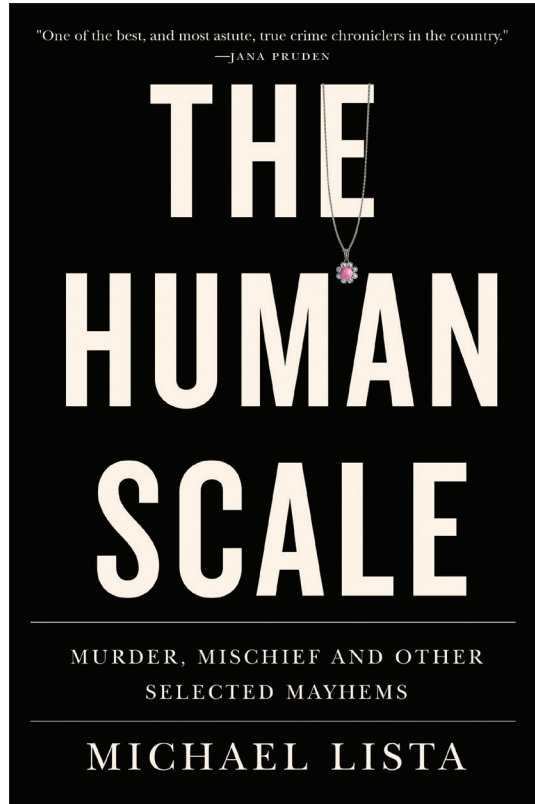
EPUB: 781550656275 • \$14.99

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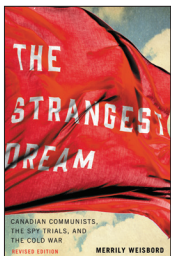
Advance reading copies • Review copies • Web advertising  
Online promotions • Virtual & In-Person launches



True crime stories from one of the  
most gifted storytellers of his generation



Recommended Non-fiction



**The Strangest Dream**  
*Canadian Communists,  
the Spy Trials, and the  
Cold War*

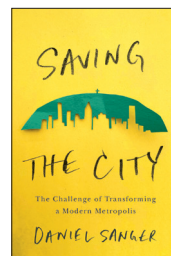
Merrily Weisbord

ISBN: 1550655995

\$22.95 CDN • \$18.95 US

8 ½ x 5 ½ • 280 PAGES

EPUB AVAILABLE



**Saving the City**  
*The Challenge of  
Transforming a Modern  
Metropolis*

Daniel Sanger

ISBN: 9781550655803

\$22.95 CDN • \$17.95 US

8 ½ x 5 ½ • 300 PAGES

EPUB AVAILABLE

# REDEMPTION GROUND:

## Essays and Adventures

### Lorna Goodison



**Lorna Goodison** was Jamaica's Poet Laureate from 2017 to 2020 and received The Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in 2019. She's the author of numerous books of poetry and short fiction. Her memoir, *From Harvey River: A Memoir of My Mother and Her People* was a finalist for the Charles Taylor Prize and the Trillium Award, and won a B.C. Award for Canadian Non-Fiction. Her most recent poetry collection, *Mother Muse*, was nominated for the Derek Walcott Prize. She lives in Halfmoon Bay, British Columbia.

In her first-ever collection of essays, poet and novelist Lorna Goodison interweaves the personal and political to explore themes that have occupied her working life: her love of poetry and the arts, colonialism and its legacy, racism and social justice, authenticity, and the enduring power of friendship. Taking its title from one of Kingston's oldest markets, *Redemption Ground* introduces us to a vivid cast of characters and remembers moments of epiphany — in a cinema in Jamaica, at New York's Bottom Line club, and as she searched for a black hairdresser in Paris and drank tea in London's Marylebone High Street. Enlightening and entertaining, these essays explore not only daily challenges but also the compassion that enables us to rise above them. They confirm her as a major figure in world literature.

---

Praise for *From Harvey River: A Memoir of My Mother and Her People*

**“Goodison unveils intimate worlds teeming with all the local flavor and poignancy of a Zora Neale Hurston novel.”**  
— *Kirkus Reviews*

**“A feat of history, imagination and artistic achievement.”**  
— *Toronto Star*

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BLACK & AFRICAN AMERICAN PERSONAL MEMOIRS • MARCH 2023  
ISBN: 9781550656213 • \$21.95 CDN • \$21.95 US  
TRADE PAPER, FRENCH FLAPS • 5 X 7 ½ • 208 PAGES  
EPUB: 9781550656282 • \$13.99

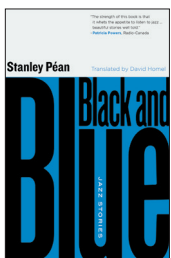
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Advance reading copies • Review copies • Web advertising  
Online promotions • Virtual & In-Person launches

Essays about poetry, colonialism, social justice, authenticity, and the enduring power of friendship



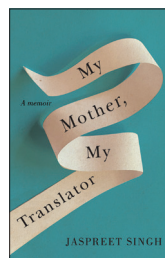
Recommended Non-Fiction



**Black and Blue:**  
**Jazz Stories**

Stanley Péan  
Tran. David Homel

ISBN: 9781550656114  
7 ½ x 5 ½ • 240 PAGES  
\$21.95 CDN • \$17.95 US  
EPUB AVAILABLE



**My Mother, My Translator**  
Jaspreet Singh

ISBN: 9781550655797  
8 ½ x 5 ½ • 280 PAGES  
\$22.95 CDN

# DANDELION DAUGHTER

Gabrielle Boulianne-Tremblay

*Translated from the French by Eli Tareq El Bechelany-Lynch*



## Gabrielle Boulianne-

**Tremblay** is a writer, actor, model, and trans activist.

The first trans woman to be nominated as an actress at the Canadian Screen Awards, her other publications include two poetry books *Le Ventre des volcans* and *Les secrets de l'origami*.



## Eli Tareq El Bechelany-

**Lynch's** books include *knot body* and *The Good Arabs*, which was awarded the 2022 Grand Prix du livre de Montréal.

*Dandelion Daughter* is an intimate portrait of growing up having been assigned the wrong sex at birth. Set against the windswept countryside of the remote Charlevoix region some five hours north of Montréal, Boulianne-Tremblay's autobiographical novel immortalizes her early years as an alienated boy trapped in a world of small-town values. In the midst of her parents' dissolving marriage, Boulianne-Tremblay takes us through the complex adolescent years of self-discovery and first loves, to the harrowing episodes that fuel the growing realization that she must transition and give birth to her new self if she is to continue living at all. One of the first novels of its kind to appear in Québec, this inspiring story has connected with a wide readership and has been adopted by many schools.

Winner of the Prix des Libraires 2022

Praise for *Dandelion Daughter*

**"Three hundred pages of heartbreaking storytelling, right from the start."**—*La Presse*

**"A literary marvel, one of those that remain in our minds forever."**—*Elle Quebec*

NOVEL • MARCH 2023

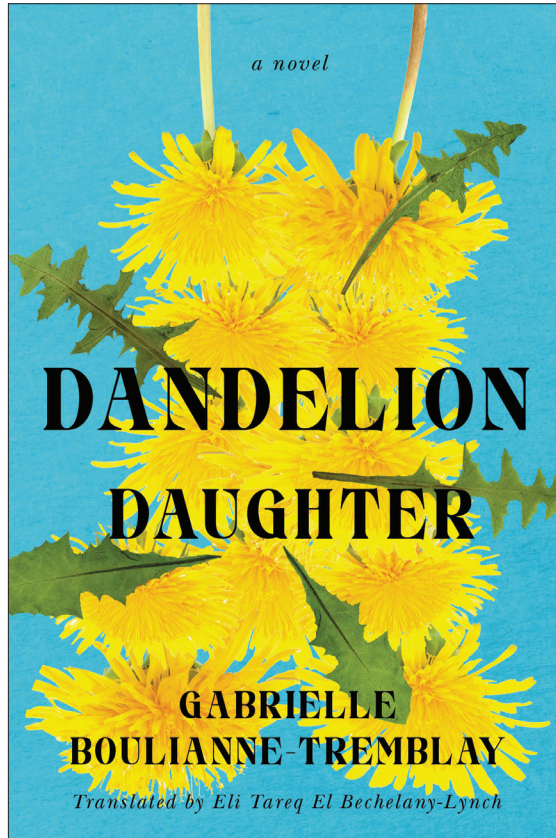
ISBN: 9781550656183 • \$21.95 CDN • \$17.95 US

TRADE PAPER, FRENCH FLAPS • 5 X 7 1/2 • 280 PAGES

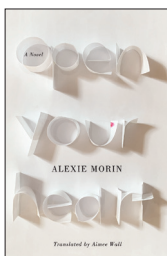
EPUB: 9781550656251 • \$13.99

Advance reading copies • Review copies • Web advertising  
Online promotions • Virtual & In-Person launches

A runaway bestseller in Québec, where it pushed trans-identity into the mainstream conversation



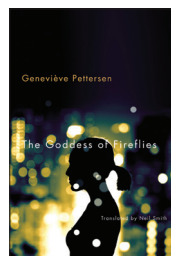
### Recommended Fiction



#### Open Your Heart

Alexie Morin  
Tran. Aimee Wall

ISBN: 9781550655780  
\$19.95 CDN  
5 x 7 1/2 • 300 PAGES  
EPUB AVAILABLE



#### The Goddess of Fireflies

Geneviève Pettersen  
Tran. Neil Smith

ISBN: 9781550654370  
\$19.95 CDN • \$19.95 US  
8 1/2 x 5 1/2 • 200 PAGES  
EPUB AVAILABLE



# BECAUSE

## Andrew Steinmetz

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**Andrew Steinmetz** is the author of five previous books. *This Great Escape: The Case of Michael Paryla* was a finalist for the 2013 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction, and *Eva's Threepenny Theatre* won the City of Ottawa Book Award and was a finalist for the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. A life-long musician, Steinmetz formed the band Weather Permitting in 1985. In the 1990s, he was a member of the alt-country band Good Cookies. He lives in Ottawa.

Teenage brothers Hombre and Transformer spend their days locked up in their suburban Montreal bedroom, writing songs and dreaming of stardom. Hombre, the younger one, is quiet, contemplative, and talented, a poet in the making. His older brother Transformer is stubborn, domineering, and secretly struggling with mental health issues. Their sequestered world is broken open one summer when their mother hires Spit, a girl from the local guitar shop, to help the boys improve their modest skills. But these good intentions set off a chain reaction with tragic consequences.

Set in the early 80s, in a local music scene brimming with post-punk ethos and a disdain for classic rock, *Because* is a wry and charming depiction of a sibling relationship founded on feverish angst, unspoken admiration, jealousy, and the pursuit of the greatest song they can write from their own room.

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Praise for Andrew Steinmetz's writing

**"[Steinmetz's] observations are sharp, sympathetic and oddly comforting, and he knows his way around a metaphor."**  
— *Toronto Sun*

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NOVEL • MAY 2023

ISBN: 9781550656190 • \$21.95 CDN • \$17.95 US

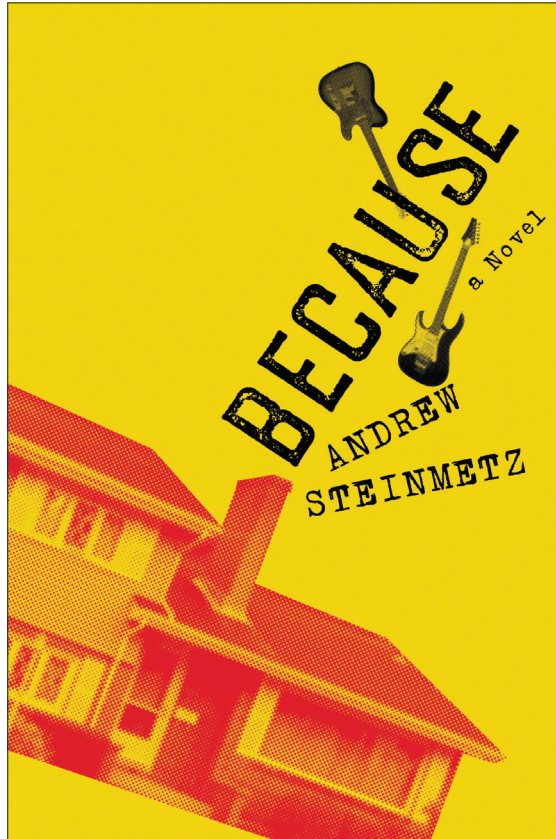
TRADE PAPER, FRENCH FLAPS • 5 X 7 1/2 • 280 PAGES

EPUB: 9781550656268 • \$13.99

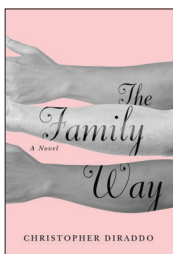
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Advance reading copies • Review copies • Web advertising  
Online promotions • Virtual & In-Person launches

An engrossing punk-rock novel about teenage daydreams and sibling dynamics

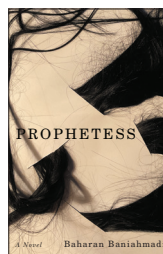


Recommended Fiction



**The Family Way**  
Christopher DiRaddo

ISBN: 9781550655650  
7 ½ x 5 ½ • 400 PAGES  
\$22.95 CDN • \$17.95 US  
EPUB AVAILABLE



**Prophetess**  
Baharan Banihmad

ISBN: 9781550655957  
7 ½ x 5 ½ • 180 PAGES  
\$19.95 CDN • US \$16.95  
EPUB AVAILABLE



# THE FOUR-DOORED HOUSE

Pierre Nepveu

*Translated by Donald Winkler*



**Pierre Nepveu's** awards include the Governor General's Award, the Québec-Paris Prize, and the Victor-Barbeau Prize. A member of the Order of Canada, his last collection was *The Hardness of Matter and Water*.



**Donald Winkler** is a three-time winner of the Governor General's Literary Award for Translation. He lives in Montreal.

*The Four-Doored House* evokes two key women in Pierre Nepveu's life. First, his granddaughter Lily, who he imagines maturing into a complex world, haunted by her memory of him as he is haunted now by her projected self, navigating an era awash in uncertainty and unease. Imbued with both wonder and disquiet, it is an aging poet's celebration of childhood, as well as a meditation on his own "future absence." There follows his celebration of C, the woman with whom Nepveu shares his nights and days. These are love poems dedicated to a companion who has aided him in finding "new phrases that reformulate the impossible." The culmination of a brilliant career, translated into fluent and thrilling English by Donald Winkler, *The Four-Doored House* is Nepveu's most enduring work yet.

Praise for *The Four-Doored House*

**"These pages draw the picture of a life dedicated to the observation of a world in transformation."**

— *Lettres Québécoises*

**"A moving collection."** — *Le Devoir*

POETRY • APRIL 2023

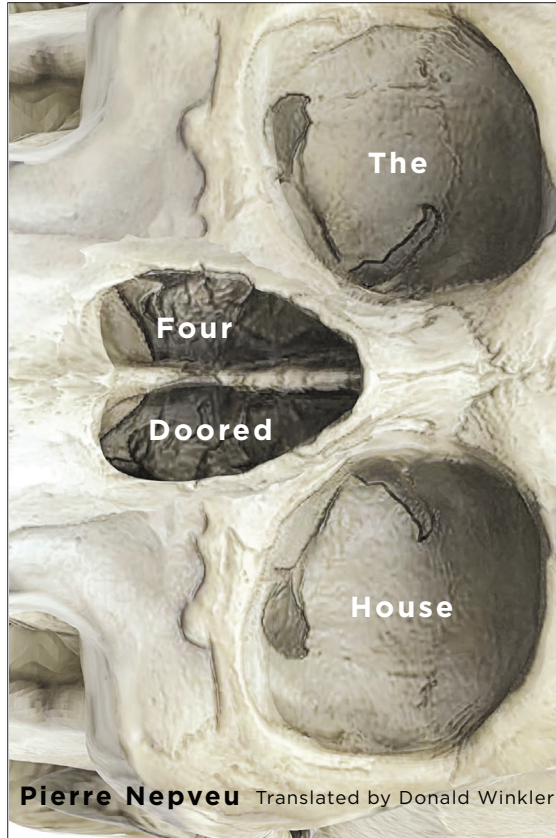
ISBN: 9781550656237 • \$19.95 CDN • \$16.95 US

TRADE PAPER, FRENCH FLAPS • 5 X 7 1/2 • 95 PAGES

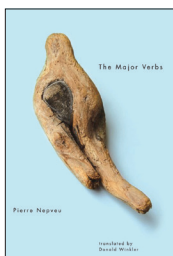
EPUB: 9781550656305 • \$13.99

Advance reading copies • Review copies • Web advertising  
Online promotions • Virtual & In-Person launches

# The culmination of a brilliant career and Pierre Nepveu's most enduring work yet

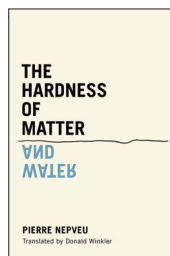


Also by Pierre Nepveu



## The Major Verbs *Tran. Donald Winkler*

ISBN: 9781550653397  
8 1/2 X 5 1/2 • 72 PAGES  
\$18.00 CDN • \$18.00 US



## The Hardness of Matter and Water *Tran. Donald Winkler*

ISBN: 9781550655094  
8 1/2 X 5 1/2 • 104 PAGES  
\$17.95 CDN • \$14.95 US  
EPUB AVAILABLE

# WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

## Anita Lahey



**Anita Lahey's** most recent book, *The Last Goldfish: A True Tale of Friendship*, was a finalist for the Ottawa Book Award. She the author of *The Mystery Shopping Cart: Essays on Poetry and Culture* and two poetry collections: *Spinning Side Kick* and *Out to Dry in Cape Breton*. An award-winning magazine journalist, Lahey serves as series editor of the annual anthology, *Best Canadian Poetry*. She lives in Ottawa with her family.

Anita Lahey writes the kind of rigorously observed, emotionally charged poetry few can match. In *While Supplies Last*, her first collection in eleven years, Lahey throws herself on the mercy of a changing climate, takes refuge in art and revels in everyday wonders. In the final section, about a forest fire that devastated the Cape Breton village of Main-à-dieu in 1976, she becomes a custodian of local histories. No matter the subject, whether traffic reports during the pandemic, a fossilized baby mammoth, or Toronto's iconic Don River, Lahey extends the sense of what language can do and say. This is tour de force writing: mischievous, unpredictable, urgent, never boring. In *While Supplies Last*, Lahey comes fully into her own.

Praise for Anita Lahey's poetry

**"In crisp, descriptive phrases, Lahey turns details of ordinary domesticity into vivid tableaux."** — *Toronto Star*

**"Her poems are vividly imagined, technically and formally astute, and stylistically rich."** — Poetryreviews.ca

**"Poems built on detail, colour, and texture; they're supple and muscular, showing the tenderness inside toughness."**  
— Susan Gillis

POETRY • APRIL 2023

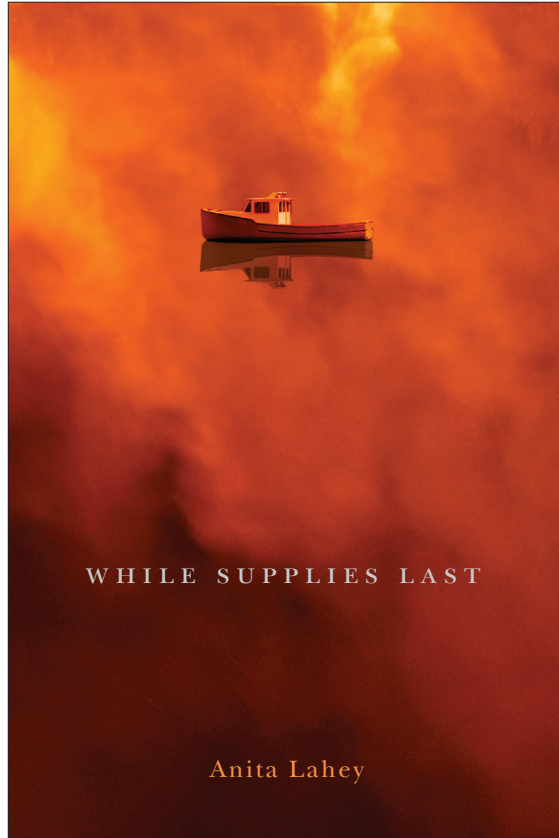
ISBN: 9781550656220 • \$19.95 CDN • \$16.95 US

TRADE PAPER, FRENCH FLAPS • 5 X 7 1/2 • 80 PAGES

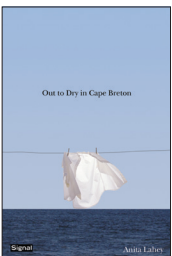
EPUB: 9781550656299 • \$13.99

Advance reading copies • Review copies • Web advertising  
Online promotions • Virtual & In-Person launches

Tour de force writing:  
mischievous, unpredictable, urgent



Also by Anita Lahey



**Out to Dry in  
Cape Breton**

ISBN: 9781550652093  
8 1/2 x 5 1/2 • 80 PAGES  
\$16.00 CDN • \$12.95 US  
EPUB AVAILABLE



**Spinning Side Kick**

ISBN: 9781550653212  
8 1/2 x 5 1/2 • 78 PAGES  
\$18.00 CDN • \$18.00 US

# THE MONTREAL POETRY PRIZE ANTHOLOGY 2022

Edited by Eli MacLaren

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**Lorna Goodison** was Jamaica's Poet Laureate from 2017 to 2020 and received The Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in 2019. Her most recent poetry collection, *Mother Muse*, was nominated for the Derek Walcott Prize. She lives in Halfmoon Bay, British Columbia.

Founded in 2010, the Montreal International Poetry Prize has established itself as a major event in contemporary poetry, both in Canada and around the world. The 2022 anthology continues the work of its predecessors, building the community of contemporary poetry on the twin principles of aesthetics and accessibility. Under this banner — *poetry is for everyone* — these poems speak of historic desolation and everyday bravery. Their images grip and hold. Here common experience crystallizes into stanzaic form, lending dignity to life in a ravaged world. From Canada, Australia, the Caribbean, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Romania, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and elsewhere, these sixty poems were chosen for the virtue of their speaking to the reader, artfully and clearly. They voice a reality that you will recognize as strangely yours.

Lorna Goodison, winner of the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, judged the finalists, selecting the one poem — included here — to take the \$20,000 prize. Entries were juried by Cameron Awkward-Rich, Martin Breul, Heather Christle, Nabina Das, Liz Howard, Joanne Limburg, Conor O'Callaghan, Tanure Ojaide, Michael Prior, Medrie Purdham, Mark Tredinnick, and Rhian Williams.

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POETRY ANTHOLOGY • APRIL 2023

ISBN: 9781550656244 • \$18.95 CDN • \$15.95 US

TRADE PAPER, FRENCH FLAPS • 5 ½ X 8 ½ • 116 PAGES

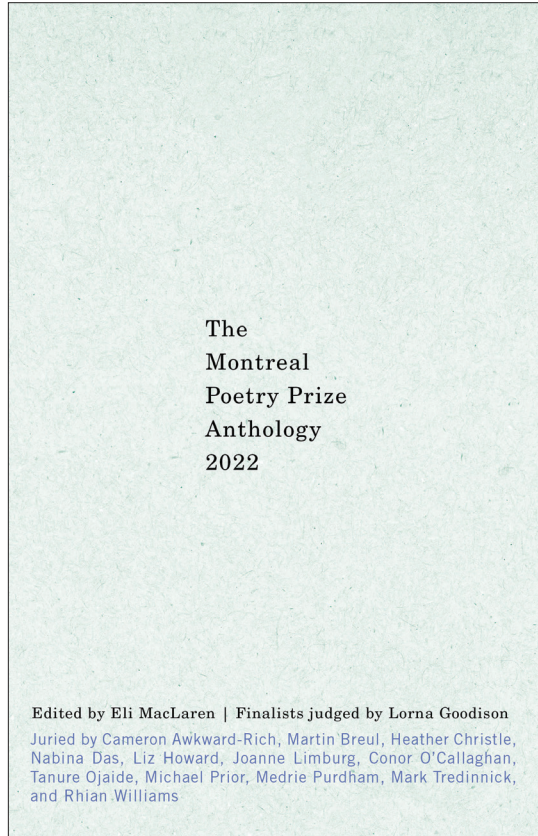
EPUB: 9781550656312 • \$12.99

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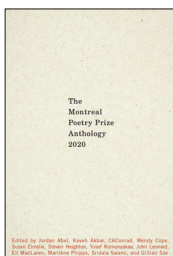
Advance reading copies • Review copies • Web advertising  
Online promotions • Virtual & In-Person launches



Sixty poems celebrated for their ability to speak to the reader, artfully and clearly



Recommended Poetry Anthologies

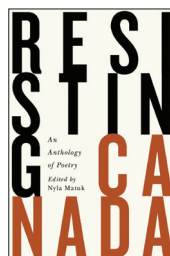


**The Montreal Poetry Prize Anthology 2020**

Edited by Yusef Komunyakaa, Wendy Cope, Jordan Abel et al

ISBN: 9781550655698  
8 ½ x 5 ½ • 110 PAGES  
\$17.95 CDN • \$14.95 US

EPUB AVAILABLE



**Resisting Canada:  
An Anthology of Poetry**  
Edited by Nyla Matuk

ISBN: 9781550655339  
8 ½ x 5 ½ • 280 PAGES  
\$22.95 CDN • \$17.95 US

# HOTLINE

## Dimitri Nasrallah

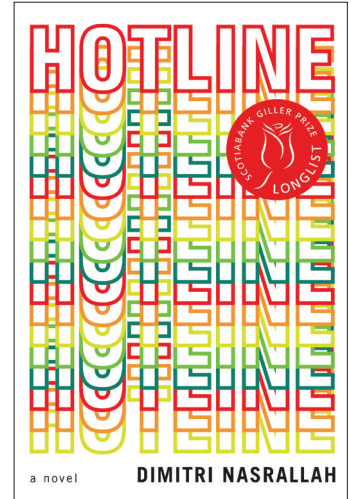
It's 1986, and Muna Heddad is in a bind. After escaping Lebanon's civil war, she'd hoped to work as a French teacher in Montreal, but no one trusts her to teach the language. The only work Muna can get is at a weight-loss centre. All day, she takes calls from people phoning a hotline who are responding to ads seen in magazines or on TV. These strangers all have so much to say once someone shows interest—marriages gone bad, parents dying, isolation, personal inadequacies. Even as her new life faces invisible barriers at every turn, on the phone Muna is privy to the city's deepest secrets.

Following international acclaim for *Niko* (2011) and *The Bleeds* (2018), Nasrallah's intimate new novel, now in its third printing, is a vivid elegy to Montreal in the 1980s. Highlighting the era's marginalization of migrants, *Hotline's* endearing portrait of struggle and perseverance raises issues that are still alarmingly relevant today.

**"Hotline intertwines hope and sorrow to create a moving story that sears the heart."** — *Quire & Quire*

**"A quietly transformative story, one that takes your assumptions, twists them into a shape you didn't initially see and casts them back at you in a really lovely way."**  
— *The Miramichi Reader*

**"[A] significant addition to the literary chronicling of the Canadian immigrant experience."** — *Montreal Gazette*



**Longlist —  
2022 Scotiabank Giller Prize**

NOVEL • ESPLANADE FICTION

ISBN: 9781550655940 • \$21.95 CDN

TRADE PAPER, FRENCH FLAPS • 5 X 7 1/2 • 280 PAGES

EPUB: 9781550656008 • \$13.99

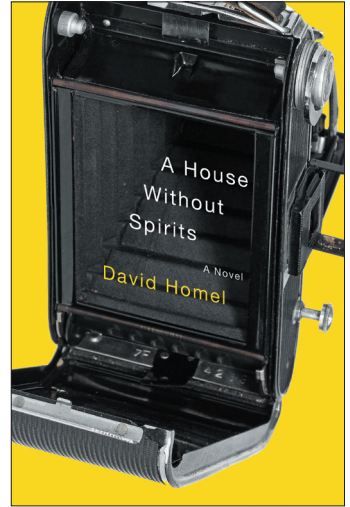


# A HOUSE WITHOUT SPIRITS

## David Homel

When Paul is hired to write a monograph of the Montreal photographer John Marchuk, he assumes he'll be able to turn over the eccentric project in a matter of weeks. Little does he know that over the next few months his visits with Marchuk, in a house stuffed with boxes stacked floor to ceiling with his life's archive, will expose an emptiness in his own home.

In this ninth novel, Homel delivers some of his most memorable characters to date—reclusive artists, disaffected life partners, wandering ghosts, cult-affiliated nuns—in a contemporary Montreal noir that reveals how much we learn about ourselves when we begin to ask questions of others.



**“An impactful novel of ideas that weaves together art, ethics, and the personal in exciting ways.”** — Clementine Oberst, *The Miramichi Reader*

**“Homel writes with remarkable grace about the simplest aspects of life, and the most complicated.”** — *Quill and Quire*

**“His novels are acts of witnessing, and his characters carry the conscience of our times.”** — Marie-Claire Blais

NOVEL • ESPLANADE FICTION

ISBN: 9781550656060 • \$21.95 CDN

TRADE PAPER, FRENCH FLAPS • 5 X 7 ½ • 228 PAGES

EPUB: 9781550656121 • \$13.99

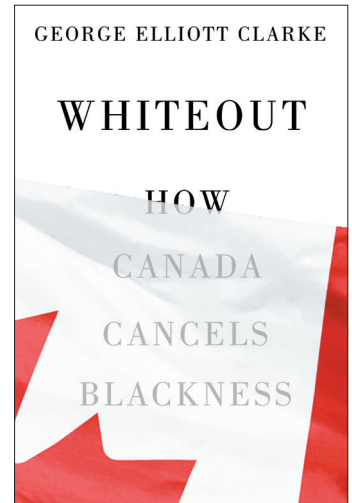
# WHITEOUT

## How Canada Cancels Blackness

### George Elliott Clarke

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In *Whiteout: How Canada Cancels Blackness*, his new and essential collection of essays, George Elliott Clarke exposes the various ways in which the Canadian imagination demonizes, excludes, and oppresses Blackness. Clarke's range is extraordinary: he canvasses African-Canadian writers who have tracked Black invisibility, highlights the racist bias of true crime writing, reveals the whitewashing of African-Canadian perspectives in universities, and excoriates the political failure to reckon with the tragedy of Africville, the once-thriving, "Africadian" community whose last home was razed in 1970. For Clarke, Canada's relentless celebration of itself as a site of "multicultural humanitarianism" has blinded White leaders and citizens to the country's many crimes, at home and abroad, thus blacking out the historical record. These essays yield an alternate history of Canada, a corrective revision that Clarke describes as "inking words on snow, evanescent and ephemeral."




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**“George Elliott Clarke is an extraordinary wordsmith, and so it is no surprise that his prose is often glorious.”**

— *Literary Review Of Canada*

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LITERARY NON-FICTION

ISBN: 9781550656077 • \$24.95 CDN • \$19.95 US

TRADE PAPER, FRENCH FLAPS • 5 X 7 ½ • 300 PAGES

EPUB: 9781550656138 • \$14.99

# LETTERS FROM MONTREAL

## Tales of an Exceptional City

### Edited by Madi Haslam

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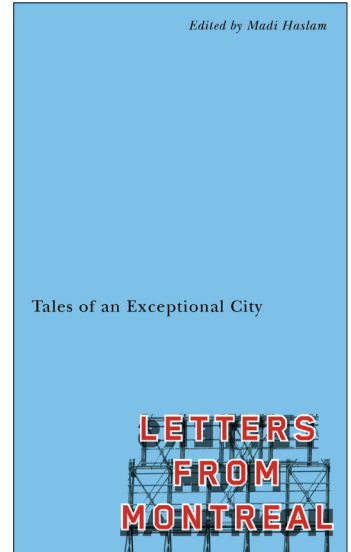
*Letters From Montreal* documents the experiences of Montrealers past and present, creating a portrait of the storied city unlike any other. Drawn from the celebrated column in *Maisonneuve* magazine, this anthology features Canadian writers documenting a quintessential part of local life. Narrated with the intimacy of journal entries, each letter bridges the playful and profound. In early dispatches, Melissa Bull ditches a boyfriend over pétanque in Parc Laurier; Deborah Ostrovsky frets over the sublime sophistication of the Plateau’s French children. More recently, Ziya Jones spends a summer herding sheep through Parc du Pélican; Eva Crocker performs in a “fake orgasm choir” at the Rialto Theatre; and André Picard takes a pause from the pandemic by running up Mount Royal.

Edited by former *Maisonneuve* editor-in-chief Madi Haslam, these letters buzz with a sense of possibility, surprise and transformation. They remind us that a city can’t quite be defined, that every person inside it interprets it anew.

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**“*Letters from Montreal* contains unforgettable writing about city life.”** — Jean Marc Ah-Sen, *Toronto Star*

**“Whimsical, occasionally profound, and highly entertaining.”**  
— T’Cha Dunlevy, *Montreal Gazette*




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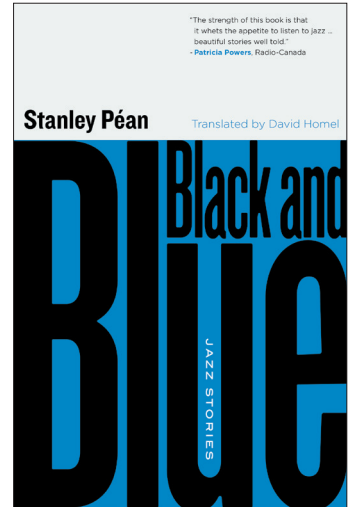
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# BLACK AND BLUE: Jazz Stories

Stanley Péan

*Translated from the French by David Homel*

In *Black and Blue*, author and radio personality Stanley Péan guides us through a history of jazz, stopping at a number of high points along the way. He takes us behind the scenes with anecdotes that tell much about the misunderstandings that have surrounded the music. How could Jean-Paul Sartre have mixed up Afro-Canadian songwriter Shelton Brooks with the Jewish-American belter Sophie Tucker? What is the real story behind the searing classic “Strange Fruit” made immortal by Billie Holiday, who at first balked at performing it? And since this is jazz, there is no shortage of sad ends: Bix Beiderbecke, Chet Baker, Lee Morgan, to name a few. Péan also shows how musicians like Miles Davis worked with the emerging voices of hip-hop to widen jazz’s audience. The intricate crisscross between Black musical forms, from Marvin Gaye to the Last Poets is explored, as well as how the movies, Hollywood and European cinema alike, tried to use jazz, often whitening it in the process.



**“The strength of this book is that it whets the appetite to listen to jazz ... beautiful stories well told.”**

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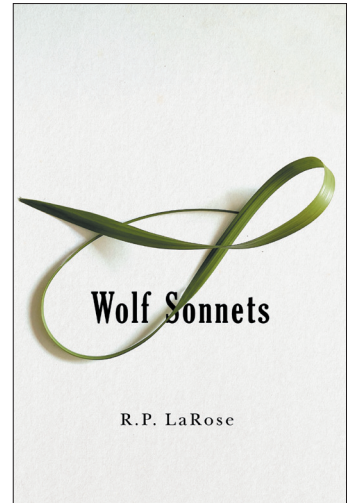
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**“R.P. LaRose’s fierce and fiercely beautiful sonnets whirl like cyclones of dream and memory, converging on questions of Indigenous land stewardship, romantic heartbreak, family history, and Métis identity.”** — Michael Prior

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## James Pollock

*Durable Goods* is a book of sharply imagined poems about everyday technology. James Pollock calls to surprising life everything from microwaves to kettles, sprinklers to umbrellas, with a precision both unerring and effortless. By conjuring the essential spirit of each object, the poet reveals the tools and appliances that surround us as both sympathetic reflections of ourselves — our fear, love, rage, hope and grief — and strange beings with inner lives of their own. “It knows how much pressure you’ve been under,” Pollock writes, of the barometer, “that you could use a change of atmosphere.”

Read together, these poems immerse us in an imagined world with the power to make us see our own in a new way. Suffused with dazzling wordplay, razor wit, and rippling sonic effects, the poems richly reward being read aloud. For Pollock, the most durable good is language itself.



**“Pollock makes us see both sides of the ordinary as he spins and stirs his objects and perspectives, always making the familiar a little strange, so that we notice it in a different light.”**

— Michael Greenstein, *The Miramichi Review*

**“James Pollock’s latest collection, *Durable Goods*, presents a speaker able to mine seemingly insignificant objects for the astonishing.”** — Alexandra Oliver

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## THE MAKING OF AFTER REALISM

*After Realism: 24 Stories for the 21st Century* is the first anthology to represent the generation of millennial writers now making their mark. Diverse, sophisticated, and ambitious in scope, the short stories in this groundbreaking book are an essential starting point for anyone interested in daring alternatives to the realist tradition that dominated 20th century English-language fiction.

All Lit Up, a recommendation website for Canadian books, included the anthology in its summer book club in August 2022. As part of the publicity materials, ALU interviewed Carmine Starnino, who commissioned the anthology, and André Forget, who edited it. Those interviews are reprinted here with the kind permission of ALU.

**All Lit Up: You had the original idea to produce this anthology. Tell us about how that idea came about and what you'd hoped would come from the initial call-out for submissions.**

**Carmine Starnino:** I edited a poetry anthology in 2005 called *The New Canon*, which was billed as a generational snapshot and a shot across the bow. I had always wondered what a short-story equivalent would look like — something similarly combative, that staked out a position and defended it. When I started working with André, I realized he would be the perfect editor. That realization was



**After Realism:**  
*24 Stories for the  
 21st Century*  
 Edited by André Forget

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almost entirely based on the literary essays he was writing for me at the *Walrus*, pieces where described the newer, millennial writing in engaging and discerning ways. I'm grateful he said yes, and that he shared my manifestoing vision for the book. He hammered out a list of 24 candidates that he believed set the stage for what was coming next in Canadian short fiction, and we took it from there.

**ALU: How does this anthology find its place, and at the same time subvert, the “CanLit canon”?**

**CS:** As André makes clear in his introduction, while these writers represent a significant stylistic break, they don't necessarily upend what came before. More often, they extend the realist tenets that dominated 20th century writing in Canada in provocative and unprecedented ways. Worth noting, too, is that we decided not pitch the anthology as an explicitly Canadian project. Most of these young writers don't see themselves in those parochial terms.

**ALU: What can readers look forward to in *After Realism*? What do you find most exciting about it?**

**CS:** I love that André was able to show how these stories reflect our political moment without shortchanging their experimental qualities. But the anthology doesn't need special pleading. It's a collection of good writing, period. As a friend of mine described the book: all killer, no filler.

**ALU: We know it's hard to play favourites, but is there any story or stories you feel are**

**an indicator of the collection as a whole?**

**CS:** It's always invidious to single out one example, especially when each story hits its mark so brilliantly, but I will say Jean Marc Ah-Sen's contribution scandalized me and charmed me in equal measure.

**ALU: We love this cover! Why googly eyes, and how do you think they evoke this idea of writing “after realism”?**

**CS:** That cover is why working with house designer David Drummond is such a delight. You never know what he will do. The eyes are a play on the idea that these are writers to watch, and that the eyes are in turn watching back—tracking our moment. Why googly? Well, this is a book about a big generational shift, about writers who might change the whole game in Canadian writing. But the googliness reminds you that they're also a whole lot of fun.

**ALU: Did anything surprising or wild happen on the way to publication? Any anecdotes you might have?**

**CS:** Alas, no. There are a lot of wild stories in this book. But everyone was pretty professional.

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**All Lit Up: Congratulations on this incredible achievement: bringing together major writing talents from across the country. How did the submission and selection process work for *After Realism*? What were you looking for when you selected a story? How did you collaborate with Véhicule Press?**

**André Forget:** Thank you for the kind words. Véhicule Press gave me a very broad remit for putting the anthology together, so there wasn't really a traditional submission process. I spent a few years as a reader and editor at *The Puritan*, an online literary journal based in Toronto, and I've been reviewing Canadian fiction as a freelancer for nearly a decade, so I already had a strong sense of which writers I wanted to see in the book.

But the assignment was also an opportunity to do a lot of reading in Canadian literary journals, and in the process, I came across plenty of authors and stories that were doing work I felt was important. There are a lot of really thoughtful writers labouring in relative obscurity these days — perhaps that's a perennial feature of literary culture — and if the anthology accomplishes one thing, I hope it is to direct readers toward short story collections that deserve more attention than they've received.

**ALU:** In the introduction, you identify how millennials — and millennial writers by extension — have grown up amid destabilizing local and world events. Is the millennial's existence inherently “after realism”?

**AF:** It's a good question. I'm a little leery of making over-broad claims about the experiences of my peers, but I do think that the past decade has seen a significant rupture in what we consider possible, both for good and ill.

I was drawn to the idea of “realism” in part because the word has so many applications. It refers to a style and tradition of writing, of course, but there is also a social and political connotation: consider the realism-idealism binary, in which the “realist” is often un-

derstood to be reasonable and grounded, while the “idealist” is well-meaning and naïve. I think one of the strong emotional undercurrents of the past decade has been a rejection of this proposition. We are living through a time of profound economic precarity, a global pandemic, war and the threat of war, runaway climate change, and resurgent fascism; to borrow a phrase from Cormac McCarthy, if the world that “realism” built brought us to this, of what use is realism?

Now, obviously that's an answer that deals more with politics than literature. In the introduction to the anthology, I try to be a little more nuanced in making the connection between formal developments and socio-political developments. But I think the parallels are there.

**ALU:** In a review for the *Montreal Review of Books*, Aishwarya Singh says of many of the stories that they “are marked by a strong sense of place, as they delineate the texture of various towns and cities in Canada. We may feel a jolt of recognition as we read the names of specific neighbourhoods and streets, of the daily occurrences that make these places charming or unbearable.” How does place — a huge part of much of the existing, “traditional” CanLit canon — become a new way to experiment with form in *After Realism*?

**AF:** The traditional CanLit obsession with place is deeply colonial, because the institutions of CanLit as we know them were created by settlers. In addition to the many other things we might say about settler-colonies, they are deeply uncanny places.

On the one hand, settlers are trying to create a new society by paving over and destroying existing societies, with their unique languages, mythologies, stories, and place names. On the other, they look back longingly at the imperial homeland, a homeland they try to recreate by importing languages, religions, architectural styles, traditions, and so forth. This creates an ersatz culture that studiously avoids looking at the actual history of the land it occupies, while also feeling a sense of inferiority in relation to the imperial centre.

In many ways, most of the CanLit forged in the sixties and seventies was an attempt to overcome this inferiority complex by creating new settler myths that would provide a cultural basis for new, fully independent settler states (this is one of the reasons Anglo-Canadian fiction and Franco-Canadian fiction have such a fraught relationship). *Survival*, by Margaret Atwood, is probably the most famous example of this, but Hugh MacLennan and Robertson Davies — both of whom go to great lengths to set their novels in recognizable Canadian places — were up to something similar.

I think the stories in this anthology are doing something slightly different with place. The fact that generations of writers have already given us novels set in Canadian cities and landscapes, especially by immigrants from countries in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean, means there is perhaps less self-consciousness on the part of settlers and immigrants about setting a story in Canada. But while there is less reflexive inferiority, there is also this reckoning with the fact that this country was founded on the world-historic crimes of

colonization and slavery, crimes which still haven't been meaningfully addressed. This is further complicated by the fact that many of Canada's immigrant populations come from countries that suffered under the British, French, Spanish, and Russian Empires, and so have a different relationship again to this place. Because younger writers are, on average and rightly, quite conscientious about these things — and deeply aware of how economic class determines the kind of place one lives in — “place” continues to be this very fraught concept.

With all that being said, the writers in this anthology relate to place in a variety of different ways, and I don't think place is the overriding obsession it may have been, say, fifty years ago. Plenty of the stories in this book are set in landscapes that aren't clearly part of Canada, or any other state, and if place has shaped the forms a lot of these writers are adopting, it's probably because of the new sense of cosmopolitanism that globalization and the rise of the Internet have fostered.

**ALU: There are some ventures into the epistolary in these stories: the letters in Jean-Marc Ah Sen's “Swiddenworld,” researcher entries in Eliza Robertson's “The Aquanauts,” D&D tables in John Elizabeth Stintzi's “Going Toward Gadd.” Do you think there's something about millennial and Gen-Z life that is hypertextual, lending to this form more often?**

**AF:** I actually hadn't thought about that! But now that you mention it, it's true that this book does contain a bit of epistolary play. I'm not sure this is something that's new, exactly — the epistolary novel has a long history in

English, and Jean-Marc Ah Sen, for one, is knowingly winking at it.

“The Aquanauts” is playing around with an established tradition, too, I think. But in Eliza Robertson’s case it’s this delightfully weird blend of documentary and sci-fi, where she’s taking an actual experiment done by NASA researchers in 1970 and narrating the thoughts and experiences of one of the participants. It’s poetic, but it’s also this wonderful exercise in defamiliarization. John Elizabeth Stintzi’s story is a good example of the same thing, with half of the story taking place inside a D&D game.

Both of these stories remind me of an argument made by Viktor Shklovsky, a Russian Formalist writer of the revolutionary period, who believed that literary style develops through hybridization with “popular” forms of storytelling. The Modernists in the twentieth century, for example, renovated the tradition of the 19th century novel and short story by borrowing from journalism, film, and psychoanalysis, which produced Hemingway’s famously terse style and Woolf and Joyce’s experiments in stream-of-consciousness. I think a similar thing is happening now, where writers are being inspired by social media, Wikipedia, text messaging, and games. Patricia Lockwood’s *No One is Talking About This* is another prime example of that, as is Éric Plamondon’s *1984 Trilogy*, which I’ve written about.

**ALU: The stories in the anthology demonstrate a rejection of the kind of form CanLit is known for, but also the kind of writer CanLit is known for: white, settler, straight, cisgender. How does *After Realism* represent the diversity of voices that Canada has to offer?**

**AF:** *After Realism* includes a number of stories by Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQ+ writers, and by writers with family roots across the globe; I have no interest in participating in the venerable Canadian fantasy that the only writers who produce literature worth reading are white, straight, cisgender settlers.

I think, however, that it is equally important to avoid a cheap or lazy approach to diversity. If you pay attention to certain newspaper columnists, right-wing politicians, and reactionary academics, you could come away with the idea that the values of “representation” and “diversity” are at odds with a commitment to artistic rigour. Hogwash. In addition to being evil in and of itself, white supremacy only narrows and impoverishes our sense of art. I became an editor and writer because I love literature, and it’s a simple fact that a lot of the best writing in this country is being produced by people who are not white, settler, straight, or cisgender. I don’t think of this anthology as a sociological survey, but as a collection of stories by authors who are imaginatively grappling with serious cultural, political, aesthetic, and existential questions, as artists have always done.

## RICHARD SANGER (1960–2022)

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Playwright, translator, teacher, and poet, Richard Sanger, wrote for numerous journals, and been writer-in-residence at various universities. His poems appeared in many publications, including the *TLS*, *LRB* and *Poetry Review*. His poetry collections are *Shadow Cabinet*, *Calling Home* and *Dark Woods*. His obituary in *The Globe and Mail* called him a “instigator of friendships, meals, trips, stories, and descorchamientos.”

The following poem is taken from his chapbook, *Fathers at Hockey*, which Véhicule Press published in 2021.

## SCHISM

*For David Rothberg*

Ice by chance, by fate or divine grace,  
Ice as a prayer answered or seasonal necessity... We approve.  
But ice by any means possible? Ice, a commodity  
manufactured, apportioned, rented, sold by the hour?

No: the end, no matter how smooth and immutable,  
cannot justify the means: ammonia, compressors, chain-link fences,  
the whole rotten professional petrochemical sports industry...  
They just want to make us skate — and drive — round in circles.

Hear, hear. But the kids do need to run some drills:  
We have no power play and a pathetic penalty kill.  
Can we not just have a practice, like other teams?  
There's the rub: we buy into it and the kids will as well.

A-ha the purist shows his true colours!  
Next you'll want to ban rubber pucks and plastic helmets.  
How about refusing to consume? I'm coach. I decide.  
Tomorrow it is. To Dave, my fellow Ottawan, this aside:

Seen the pond? I caught a glimpse as I drove by.  
Minus twenty tonight. Imagine it all sheer and black.  
Let's skip practise, grab our skates, rope and sticks,  
And ride our bikes down there first thing to tiptoe out

and test our convictions. Tap-tap. Give us a faith  
sufficient to withstand, though free to crack,  
a surface that inspires awe and dread.  
What love does not tremble at the touch and quake?  
How can it be ice if it doesn't break?





**EDITORIAL**

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that journalism can fail:  
by not being accurate,  
and by not being beautiful.”**

— Michael Lista, *The Human Scale*



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