

A POST-HOC
CATALOGUE OF
BOOKS ISSUED
UNDER THE SIGN
OF THE MIRTHFUL &

MMXV

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Introduction

This is the eighteenth year that Gary Dunfield and I have published books under the sign of the mirthful g, and we're still every bit as intrigued by the wide range of technical, economic and sociological puzzles that being a literary publisher and printer encompasses in the twenty-first century as when we first started. Certainly, much knowledge and skill has been acquired over this time, tools procured, jigs and processes developed and honed. But printing and publishing constantly present new problems, and like all crafts that are practised through engagement rather than rote, if you approach each day with curiosity and love every book is a Heraclitean river. ¶ Books have unpredictable lives, and what will happen after they leave our loading dock and enter the wider world is always hard to guess. To that end, it was exciting to learn that Halifax poet Sue Goyette has recently received the Lieutenant-Governor's Nova Scotia Masterworks Award for her astonishing poetry collection *Ocean*, which we published in 2013. We were thrilled to see that this book continues to find readers and admirers, and to see Goyette recognized for her contribution to the life of our community. ¶ The text of this catalogue is set in a type any longstanding admirer of Gaspereau books would be familiar with: Rod McDonald's CARTIER BOOK. But the titling type is new. It is Jim Rimmer's TOTEMIC, one of Rimmer's earliest designs which was recently rediscovered and reissued by Patrick Griffin at Canada Type, Toronto (at the urging of a certain small-town Nova Scotia typographer). It is a natural companion to Cartier Book as its design is highly reminiscent of Carl Dair's original Cartier type. ¶ This season saw the publication of nine trade books, four poetry books in the spring and five works of prose in the fall. They are all given notice in the following pages. Backlist titles can be viewed on our website at www.gaspereau.com.

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GERMAN MILLS

John Steffler

Fiction

\$29.95

9781554471485

October 2015

Printed offset on laid paper making 336 pages trimmed to 5.3 × 8.5 inches; Smyth sewn, bound in a paper cover and enfolded in a letterpress-printed jacket. Jacket paper by the Saint Armand mill in Montreal.

Includes illustrations and hand lettering by Jack McMaster. Typeset in Neacademia.

Talented, privileged and ambitious, the young William Berczy is disaffected with the strictures of eighteenth-century European society. Quitting Germany to pursue a future of his own making, Berczy refashions himself as a secret envoy in war-torn Poland and a portrait painter in Italy before his charisma and skill for self-invention land him the ultimate romantic role—leading a group of German settlers into the American wilderness. After abandoning his deceitful partners and fleeing from the Genesee Valley to Upper Canada with his settlers, Berczy's facade of influence crumbles as he fails to secure either acceptance or success, his talent squandered on petitioning the powerful. Based on Berczy's compelling, hyperbolic life, *German Mills* is a portrait of a man entangled in the vain romanticism and restless ambition that propelled the colonial dream and yet lurks just below the surface of Canadian society.

JOHN STEFFLER's critically acclaimed poetry collections include *The Grey Islands*, *That Night We Were Ravenous* and *Lookout*, which won the Atlantic Poetry Prize. His novel *The Afterlife of George Cartwright* was shortlisted for the Governor General's Literary Award for fiction. Steffler served as Parliamentary Poet Laureate of Canada from 2006 to 2008. He divides his time between Montreal and rural Ontario.

German Mills

A NOVEL PERTAINING TO
THE LIFE & TIMES OF
WILLIAM BERCZY

PAINTER, ADVENTURER, SPY,
SPECULATOR, PIONEER &
INCIDENTAL FOUNDER OF
THE CITY OF MARKHAM
UPPER CANADA

John Steffler

KENTVILLE: PRINTED BY G. DUNFIELD &
A. STEELES UNDER THE SIGN OF
THE MIRTHFUL G
SMILEY

The Grand Ducal draper has ordered 400 more yards of white laces and 600 yards of green woollen coat cloth. I have prepared a shipment of 20 small pietra dura views of Florence. The perspective in them is remarkable. Also a crate of cases which will not go to waste even if it does not sell. I can work 24 hours non-stop with that drink at my only sustenance.

*In devoted friendship,
Berczy*

On the 21st of January, 1981, Charlotte wrote saying that since he already occupied the chief place in her heart she was very happy to accept Berczy's proposal to be engaged. Reading her letter by his studio window, Berczy found himself trembling with relief and a strange feeling of nervousness. For the rest of that day, instead of painting, he wandered the cold brilliant late-February streets thinking about how his life had changed. On the surface very little. His work and his fantasies had been aimed toward returning to her in any case. But those plans had been provisional, balanced by other vague options in case the future shifted or new opportunities arose. Now a kind of artery carried blood between Charlotte and him. She was his heart's sun, around which he would orbit. He would buy a house large enough for a proper commercial studio and a family. His commissions to paint for the royal courts of Europe would now be forays out from a centre instead of mere wanderings.

A few days later a letter came from Mlle Grasser in which she said, rather puzzlingly Berczy thought, that after changing her mind several times she had decided that it would be best for Berczy to return to live in her house in spite of everything, and that the soul, like the pearl, would grow stronger and more beautiful by embracing and containing the source of pain. He thought probably one of her letters had gone astray and wrote asking if she was alright. She answered that she had had a winter of bad health

but that she rejoiced to see the spring returning and to have Charlotte's beauty and happiness in her midst.

By the middle of August, 1781, Berczy's portrait of the grand duke's family was finished. During the first weeks of the month many artists and members of the court had dropped into his studio to see the nearly-completed work, and he had basked in their praise of its fine detail, its clarity and the accuracy of the faces. It's true that he overheard one of the visitors, whom he didn't know, remark that the family must have posed in the winter because they looked stiff with cold, and another viewer, after counting some things in the painting with great care, announced to his companion that although there were only twelve heads he could have sworn there were more than twenty-four arms and twenty-four legs. Berczy ignored these comments. He had been around art and its viewers long enough to have heard plenty of cheap jokes.

He had made a lot of money in Florence. At the end of the month he set out for Bern, excited and nervous to be going home.

{ 8 }

“But what if she comes back early?”

“She won't. The concert's not over till five, and even if she did, we'd have her come in. You need to be a bit closer to the window. No one can see you.”

“Hurry up, it's colder than you think.”

“You could be on the bed like the Venus of Urbino if that would be warmer, but I like this Venus of Medici pose a lot.”

“Get it down then. I want to do you too while there's still light.” After standing for three quarters of an hour, her left arm curved in front of her breasts, her right hand hovering over her public neck, calling attention to those parts more than screening them,

* AN EXCERPT FROM JOHN STEFFLER'S GERMAN MILLS:

What do you mean he offered you a job?' Charlotte whispered. 'Something other than doing his portrait?' Eight-month-old William was asleep in the bed beside her.

'I mean a real job,' Berczy whispered. Having gotten the candle lit, he continued standing beside the bed fully clothed. Charlotte raised herself on the pillow so she could look at him.

'We started out talking about portraits,' he said, 'but then we never got back to that. He wants me to find German settlers for a huge piece of wilderness he owns in America.'

'Oh go on, that's the kind of work you did in Croatia, and you hated it.'

'I know, I know, but I think this will be different. I'll be more a partner, and the chances for making money are unbelievable. As I said, Pulteney is probably the richest man in England. He's just bought over a million acres somewhere in New York State, and once we've escorted the settlers there I can have a thousand acres myself and the commission for settling a hundred thousand acres more and one twentieth of the settlers' produce for six years!'

'Wait a minute. Are you talking about going to America?'

'Yes, it's—'

'But we just got here. I just bought material for drapes. We just bought this bed.'

'Yes yes yes.' Berczy began taking off his boots and clothes.

'And with a baby! Where will we stay? In some cave in the woods?'

Naked, Berczy turned back the covers, knelt in the bed cautiously next to his sleeping son, and reached across to stroke Charlotte's hair. 'No, no, don't worry,' he said. 'He's got a Scottish agent named Charles Williamson over there, building houses. We'll be leading hundreds of people there, families with children. We'll have lots of help.'

‘But we’re doing well here. We planned for over a year to come to London. You’re getting commissions from people like this rich Pulteney, the gallery’s doing alright, both my Tuscan kitchen paintings were chosen for the Royal Society exhibition. We’re just getting established. Once William’s a bit older, I’ll be able to start giving music lessons again. I’ve got three or four pupils waiting.’

Charlotte’s voice had wakened William who began squirming and fussing. Picking him up, Berczy got out of bed and paced about the room, rocking him in his arms. ‘Ah, I haven’t wanted to say anything, but it will be hard to do well here,’ he said amid William’s grating cries. ‘I can see that already. Two more galleries are selling Italian art since we came here. Some portrait work, music lessons—we’ll never get out of this kind of small apartment. You know all that British money we used to see pouring through Florence, well I know where it comes from now—not from London itself as it turns out, but from America, India, the West Indies, China. Europe is finished. These people like Pulteney know that. We can get in at the start of something fabulous. We can own an estate over there—whole rivers and mountains and forests. And do you think they don’t have art galleries in America, that they don’t want music lessons and concerts? We can start things there!’

‘He’s hungry,’ Charlotte said, reaching for William who nuzzled into her breast with sobs of relief.

Berczy lay beside her, and she spread her right arm to cradle his head close to her free breast. ‘Please come with me,’ he said. ‘I won’t take the job if you won’t come with me.’ He took some of her leaking milk on his tongue and lay still, waiting for her reply.

For several minutes there was only the sound of the baby slowly nursing, yelping faintly with each gulp.

‘It’s almost unimaginable,’ Charlotte finally said. ‘To take with you only what you want. And start over again.’

I AM WHAT I AM BECAUSE YOU ARE WHAT YOU ARE

Carole Glasser Langille

Short Fiction

\$24.95

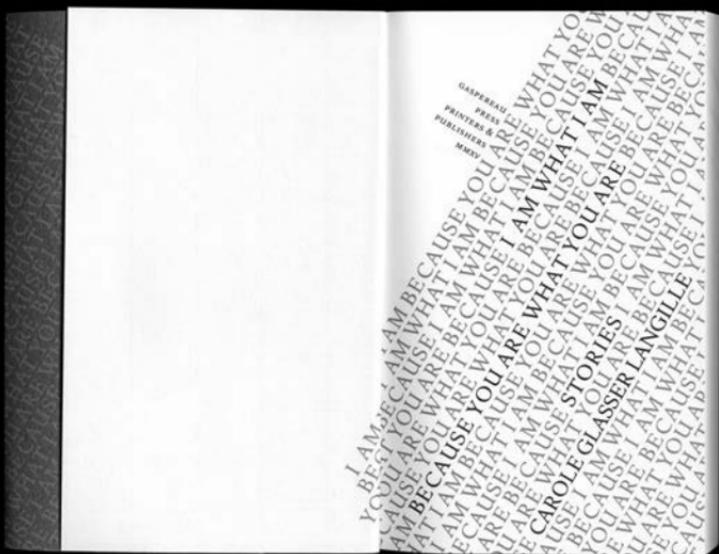
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A collection of linked stories can closely approximate everyday experience, where repeat, intimate encounters might gradually uncover the private, inner lives of others, and the accumulated fragments of incidents and revelations might slowly unveil the context for the choices people have made. Through the authenticity and subtle interconnections of her characters, Carole Glasser Langille explores the nature of our relationships; what we conceal, what we reveal—and at what cost.

CAROLE GLASSER LANGILLE is the author of four books of poetry, including *In Cannon Cave*, which was short-listed for both the Governor General's Literary Award and the Atlantic Poetry Prize. She has also published two children's books and a collection of short fiction entitled *When I Always Wanted Something*. Originally from New York, Langille lives in Black Point, Nova Scotia, and teaches creative writing at Dalhousie University.



A SICKLY SCRAWNY THING

'Come on!' he repeated, genuinely surprised. 'I like these women very much.'

'I know you do,' Jenneke said, thinking of the two middle-aged secretaries who sat at the desks out front. 'But no one would accuse you of sleeping with them.' And with that she smiled and left the room.

The following week, when they were alone in the office and about to leave for the night, she moved close to him and gave him a hug.

'Have a good weekend, Tony,' she said, as she usually did, but this time she kissed him full on the mouth. He kissed her back.

On their first date he said, 'This is the first time we're together on my free time.'

Jenneke didn't understand what he meant. Then the meaning struck home. Did he only want to see her on company time? Or when he was getting away with something? But she refused to be put off.

They went on date number two. Three months later they were married. She knew exactly what she wanted when she married Tony: an artistic, aesthetically pleasing life as the wife of a professional. And she had that. Every Christmas she sent out linoleum-print Christmas cards she made. She prepared meals from French cookbooks and bought expensive wine.

Now, trying to fall asleep in the spare room at Honey's, her whole life with Tony seems an act. Still, jealousy is poisoning her. How could he choose Marlis? She can't sleep. She turns the pillow over to the cool side, switches on the radio. There's a late night talk show on and though she barely listens, the voices are soothing. It's light out by

the time she falls asleep, she's awake again a few hours later. She waits til nine, then she calls Tony.

He is surprised to hear from her. 'Marlis is ill,' he tells her when she confronts him. 'We spent the night walking on the beach and talking because she was too distressed to go home. She slept on the couch.'

'Right?' Jenneke says. Does Tony think she is brain dead?

'Look, Marlis has cancer,' Tony says finally.

The words are like a thunderclap in a conversation already thick with pressure. Is Tony making this up? Is he this self-serving?

'It doesn't look good. She's waiting to hear about the biopsy,' he continues, addressing a question Jenneke hasn't asked.

'The marriage is over,' she says.

'I never question you,' he yells into the phone.

'Because I'm not the one having an affair, you idiot,' she says, and slams down the receiver.

Later that afternoon she goes to her favourite coffee shop and sitting at a table in the back, writes down thoughts buzzing in her head. She doesn't understand how she could have lived with a man so long and not known he was betraying her.

She orders herb tea, that's all she wants, but in this restaurant even tea takes a while to arrive. She glances around the restaurant to make sure Marlis isn't there. She and Marlis used to come here together. She wonders if she will ever be free of her.

Tony smells funny. Jenneke once complained to Marlis. Of course her friend knew exactly how Tony

✧ AN EXCERPT FROM CAROLE GLASSER LANGILLE'S STORY
COLLECTION, I AM WHAT I AM BECAUSE YOU ARE WHAT YOU ARE:

Mr. Mercier is aware, perhaps because he is a quiet man and short as well, that he is often invisible to the world and at times has tried to remedy this. He's taken books out of the library about how to get ahead in business, and about the art of conversation, though he prefers the book he's reading now, *Ferns, Mosses and Lichen*. Today, at the hospital, he doesn't mind being invisible and having Dr. Holmes address his wife. He notices that the doctor looks at her as if she, rather than their daughter, is the patient.

'Mrs. Mercier,' the doctor says and clears his throat, 'your daughter cannot feed or clothe herself. She must learn these skills as a baby would. And she may never regain them.'

Does the doctor think he is telling his wife something new? Their own daughter doesn't recognize her mother or him. Mr. Mercier looks down at the pattern on the carpet. He will not break down in the doctor's office. It would be humiliating. This doctor is young with a full head of brown hair, not even a strand of grey. He proceeds to say exactly the wrong thing to Mr. Mercier's wife.

'What would you say if I suggest you put your daughter in an institution?' he asks.

'Over my dead body. That's what I'd say.'

Mr. Mercier tries not to smile.

'I don't think you know what you're getting into,' the doctor insists, but Mrs. Mercier does not let him continue. Liz is like a newborn, and what does a mother do with a newborn? Takes care of her.

'Come, Michael,' she says to her husband. He gets up immediately. 'We'll take her home with us now.' Mrs. Mercier doesn't have to ask her husband what he thinks of this idea.

When they walk into Liz's room she has her fingers in a jar of cold cream. Then she sticks her fingers in her mouth.

'Don't eat that,' her mother shouts. 'That's dirty. Do you want chocolate? Your father will get you chocolate.'

Liz looks around as if to see what 'chocolate' is and what a 'father' is who might bring it to her.

Mr. Mercier's hands tremble as he puts Liz's sneakers on her feet and laces them. Liz is tall, nearly five foot nine, and though she's only thirty her thick auburn hair is streaked with grey. She has dyed her hair from the age of sixteen but since she's been in the hospital it has turned into a ratty tangle of roots and fading dye.

He still thinks of her as his little girl, the girl whose skates he laced when he took her to the rink. This is the girl he taught to play chess and who played as well as he did when she wasn't yet twelve. He'd always wanted a daughter and what a daughter he had. And now this.

His wife packs what few articles of Liz's clothing they brought to the hospital. Liz, looking at Mr. Mercier and Betty, does not know these two old people are her parents but she is keen to go outside and lets Mr. Mercier put on her jacket. She lets him wipe the cold cream from her hand with a tissue, and then lets him stroke her hand with his own as she sits in the wheelchair. He keeps stroking it as if he were doing something constructive, as if he could take the shattered afternoon that Liz's car went off the road and reconstruct it, like a movie that can be reshot.

Now Liz pulls her hand away. She doesn't want to go in the car with him and his wife any longer, these two strange old people.

'I have chocolate,' he says, showing her and telling her that if she sits in the back seat with her mother, she can have the bar.

OF THINGS UNKNOWN: SELECTED LITERARY ESSAYS, 1978–2015

Peter Sanger

Literary Essays

\$34.95

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For over four decades, Nova Scotia poet and essayist Peter Sanger has quietly shaped the literary landscape of the nation, both through his own critically acclaimed books and as the long-serving poetry editor of *The Antigonish Review*. Underpinning this contribution is Sanger's dedication to the long-form critical essay, a form of which he is an acknowledged master. *Of Things Unknown* gathers 24 of Sanger's previously uncollected critical essays, their subjects ranging from writers with whom he has been long associated (John Thompson, Douglas Lochhead, Richard Outram, Elizabeth Bishop) to others like Geoffrey Hill, David Jones, Saint-Denys-Garneau and Emily Carr. Appraised as a whole, Sanger's essays map the evolution of a critical methodology which worked counter to the inward-looking, nationalistic cheerleading (and sometimes juvenile sniping) that often dominates Canadian criticism. Through his intense focus on the texts, on reading deeper and ranging wider, Sanger modelled a way for the generation of Canadian literary critics and readers that followed, challenging our sense of how we might think and write about what we read.

PETER SANGER's poetry collections include *Aiken Drum*, *John Stokes' Horse* and *Fireship: Early Poems, 1965–1991*. His prose projects include, *The Stone Canoe: Two Lost Mi'kmaq Texts* (with Elizabeth Paul), *White Salt Mountain: Words in Time* and *Spar: Words in Place*.

ESSAYS INCLUDED IN THIS COLLECTION

- 1978: John Thompson's *Stilt Jack*
- 1983: Two Memoirs: Donald Davie & Charles Tomlinson
- 1984: Geoffrey Hill: *The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy*
- 1984: David Jones: *The Roman Quarry & Other Sequences*
- 1985: Elizabeth Bishop and Nova Scotia
- 1986: Saint-Denys-Garneau: A Cento on Poetry, Writing, Painting & Music
- 1986: White Studio: For Paul-Émile Borduas
- 1987: Warden of Stories: On the Letters and Conversation of David Jones
- 1987: Finding D'Sonoqua's Child: Myth, Truth & Lies in the Prose of Emily Carr
- 1989: The Real Round of the Saying: An Introduction to the Poetry of Douglas Lochhead
- 1989: A Chase for the Vine-Juice Skipper: David Jones and Thomas Dilworth
- 1989: Some Kind of Revelation: Geoffrey Hill's *The Lords of Limit*
- 1990: As the Eyes of Lyncaeus: A Celebration for Douglas Lochhead
- 1992: 'And even spoke some myself': Elizabeth Bishop and the Community of Imaginable Words
- 1993: 'To tell tales of wilderness': Douglas Lochhead's Homage to *Henry Alline & Other Poems* and *Black Festival*
- 1997: Sobieski's Shield: On Geoffrey Hill's *The Enemy's Country* and *New & Collected Poems*
- 2000: Monumental Questions: Mark Strand and Elizabeth Bishop
- 2001: 'My house, my fairy palace is': Notes on Elizabeth Bishop's Paintings, *Nova Scotia Landscape* and *Landscape with Gray Hills*
- 2003: A Word Still Dwelling: On Richard Outram's *Lightfall*
- 2005: Pig's Ear: Poetic Diction in Eric Ormsby's Work
- 2009: Night Sea Voyage: John Thompson
- 2009: Traces of Passage: Douglas Lochhead, John Thompson and the Tantramar
- 2008: Good as Green
- 2015: Finding Scheherazade

✕ AN EXCERPT FROM PETER SANGER'S ESSAY COLLECTION,
OF THINGS UNKNOWN:

Some years, by mid October, before the ground freezes, a green three-quarter ton pickup truck marked with the name and insignia of the New Brunswick Department of Highways moves slowly, stopping every two hundred metres or so, along the straight gravelled reaches of the High Marsh Road. The road runs southerly then northeasterly for about twelve kilometers from Upper Sackville Ridge to a scatter of houses and a crossroads which is the village of Jolicure. Beyond Jolicure, the road leaves the concerns of this essay to rise from lowlands into upland where it eventually joins the paved road to Baie Verte and Northumberland Strait.

The green truck's wagon box is packed with layers of spindly spruce saplings. None of the saplings is more than three or four centimetres thick at the butt. Each is a little under two metres tall. The saplings are weedy crop from thin, acid soil. Except for a thirty centimeter topmost plume, each of the saplings has been stripped of its branches. When the truck stops on the High Marsh Road, two men get out of its cab, their safety helmets of orange plastic glinting in autumn's scoured light. One walks to the shoulder of tan-coloured grass which separates the road from a shallow ditch. With a crowbar he drives a hole into the ground. The other man brings one of the saplings from the wagon box. He fits its stem into the hole, twists it down and stamps the sapling firmly into place with his boots. A ribbon of white reflector tape is tied just below the sapling's plume. Then both men return to their truck, which they have left running, and drive down the road another two hundred metres or so to repeat the job with another sapling until the length of the road is marked on both sides by stripped, plumed, ribboned saplings swaying in a constantly blowing southwesterly wind forcing its way through an aerial flume shaped by the valley of the Cumberland Basin, fifteen kilo-

metres away at the head of the Bay of Fundy. Each plumed sapling is curved by the wind to point northeasterly with the fluttering, tethered precision of a compass needle freed to pivot and swing true.

Life on the Tantramar marsh has to be a matter of observed directions, of knowing which way the weather turns. As John Thompson said of his experience of the Marsh in ghazal X of his poetry collection *Stilt Jack*, 'Those winds in summer turn the head rancid, in winter / drive a cold nail through the heart down to the hardwood floor.' By late November or early December of every year one gale at least will have drifted snow across the High Marsh Road until the road has become impossible to distinguish from the wide, flat, snow-covered hayfields, fields of cattle-corn stubble and rough cow pasture with which three centuries of farming have replaced the original thousands of hectares of swamp, tidal marsh and seasonal wetlands which once lay between Sackville Ridge to the north and Fort Cumberland Ridge to the south. Almost the only storm guides then for travellers on the road are those saplings, with their flutter of reflecting white ribbons. And at night there may also be the lights of less than half-a-dozen houses scattered along the last five kilometers of road before the Jolicure crossroads, lights which appear and disappear unpredictably as branches of the great spruce trees planted to serve as windbreaks around each solitary cluster of house, outbuildings and barn thrash intermittently.

Neither Douglas Lochhead's nor John Thompson's poems refer to the stripped saplings, although the place which the saplings help to define, the High Marsh Road, is also the actual locus of the finest extended work of both poets. I choose to begin with the saplings, however, for two other interconnected reasons.

The first is that this essay should convey the unique physiographic and topographical space to which both poets responded in a way which is independent of their work....

HECTOR MACLEAN: THE WRITINGS OF A LOYALIST-ERA MILITARY SETTLER IN NOVA SCOTIA

*Jo Currie, Keith Mercer, e³
John G. Reid, Editors*

**Pre-Confeder-
ation Canadian
History**

**History of
the American
Revolution**

\$34.95

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e³ Scala Sans.*

Hector Maclean (1751–1812) was a Lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion of the 84th Regiment during the War of the American Revolution. After the war, Maclean settled in the newly-created county of Hants, Nova Scotia, near present-day Kennetcook. This volume presents the annotated texts of two major historical sources: the letters Maclean wrote between 1779 and 1787, primarily to Murdoch MacLaine, and the diary he kept between April 1786 and April 1787 using the empty pages of his orderly book from the South Carolina campaign of 1781. ¶ The combined force of these sources is considerable. The letters show Maclean as an actively serving officer, in contexts ranging from a recruiting expedition to Newfoundland in 1779 (which led to his shipwreck in Ireland in early 1780) to the Battle of Eutaw Springs, South Carolina, in September 1781. The entries in the orderly book provide further details of this strategically significant battle. The letters from 1783 onwards provide vivid

insight into the settlement process by which Maclean established himself at Kennetcook, while the diary offers a detailed, day-by-day account of a year during this phase of his life—both a valuable record of the environmental and labour history of a military settler’s farm and an account of the social and cultural life of the Windsor-based elite with whom Maclean mingled. ¶ Carefully reproduced and supported by extensive annotation by editors Jo Currie, Keith Mercer and John G. Reid, Maclean’s letters and diary will appeal to readers and scholars interested in the military history of the Revolutionary War and the environmental, cultural and social histories of postwar settlement in Nova Scotia.

JO CURRIE is a former Special Collections librarian and archivist at the Edinburgh University Library. Among other publications, she is the author of *Mull: The Island and its People* and *Mull People: Macleans*.

KEITH MERCER is Research Fellow at the Gorsebrook Research Institute, Saint Mary’s University. His articles on Atlantic World history, and particularly on social aspects of naval impressment, have appeared in such journals as *Acadiensis* and the *Canadian Historical Review*.

JOHN G. REID is a member of the Department of History at Saint Mary’s University and Senior Research Fellow of the Gorsebrook Research Institute. He has published books and articles on northeastern North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.



86

Jaunt to Parrsborough &c.

Thursday 22d. June
Do Do. Do
Dind at Mt Denson

Friday 23d. June
Waiting still for K McD.
24th. 25th 26th: 27th: &
28th: still at Windsor
waiting for K McD.

Thursday 29th: June
Set out this day on our
boating excursion,⁷⁵
Capt Miller Mr. McD. &
Mr. Robertson & self
with Bowman Servt.

►75. This 'excursion' of almost two weeks took Maclean and his companions across the Minas Basin to Partridge Island and Parrsboro, back across to Tenny Cape, thence along what became known as the Noel Shore to Selma, a side trip up the Shubenacadie River, and then back to Windsor with some weather- and tide-related delays. From the table of William Pleater's work days on p. 49 of the book, below, it would seem that Pleater too had time off—from Maclean's work at least—during this time. How farm work could be suspended for so long at this time of year Maclean did not record.

Slept tonight at Capt
Cranes⁷⁶ Partridge Island

Tuesday 30th: June
Slept at Sutherlands⁷⁷
at Fox bay in Parsborow

Saturday 1st July
Slept at Tenny cape

Sunday 2d July
Reached Selma⁷⁸—
at Do.— { 3d 4d 5th 6th: &
 } 7th: July

During which time we
went up the Shubenacadie
River about Nine Miles
& visited the Sweet Girls
Mr W Putnams⁷⁹ often

[Here there is a gap in the diary, for reasons possibly connected with the inclusion of the record of Pleater's work; but there is no indication that a page has been removed].

- 76. Jonathan Crane, a settler at Partridge Island in the pre-Revolutionary era, and first of a succession of Cranes on the island. See Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, *The History of Kings County, Nova Scotia* (Salem, MA: Salem Press Company, 1910), 620–2. ►77. Maclean offers no details on this Sutherland. There were two private soldiers of the 84th of this name. See Craig, 'The Young Emigrants,' 42. ►78. Selma, so named after the home of the culture-hero Fingal as represented in the purported (but inauthentic) epic poems of Ossian, which were at the height of their readership during the 1780s, was the site of the estate of John Small. See William B. Hamilton, *Place Names of Atlantic Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 399–400. See also Introduction, 40, Figure 1, and Figure 9. ►79. William and Dorothy Putnam, New England Planter migrants to the Shubenacadie area, had a large family including nine daughters. See Eben Putnam, *A History of the Putnam Family in England and America* (Salem, MA: The Salem Press, 1891), 398–9.



MY LIFE WITH TREES: A SYLVAN JOURNEY

Gary L. Saunders

Memoir

**Nature &
Ecology**

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the author.*

At heart, this book is an unconventional memoir. While organized by tree species like a reference book, Gary Saunders' essays actually impart equal parts natural and personal history. And like the best sylvan essayists of earlier generations (Thoreau, Leopold), Saunders draws greater truths about our relationship with nature—and with each other—out of what on first glance might appear to be recitals of botanical facts or yarns about adventures past. A close reading of this book promises not only to expand one's understanding of the ecology of the forest, but also to offer a rich, evocative model for how we might better live our lives with trees.

GARY L. SAUNDERS originally trained as a forester and went on to study fine arts at Mount Allison University and the Ontario College of Art before taking a position with the Nova Scotia Department of Lands and Forests extension program. Here, he honed his skills as an editor and writer. Saunders has been a frequent contributor to periodicals such as *Atlantic Advocate*, *Rural Delivery*, *Atlantic Forestry Review* and *Saltscapes* and is the author of numerous books, ranging from guidebooks (*Trees of Nova Scotia* and *At a Glance: A Guide to Identifying and Managing Nova Scotia Hardwoods*) to essays (*Alder Music* and *September Christmas*) to illustrated children's books (*The Brook and the Woodcutter*). He lives in Clifton, Nova Scotia.

* AN EXCERPT FROM GARY L. SAUNDERS' MY LIFE WITH TREES:

Long before I was a forester, even before I could name the local trees, I knew jack pine. Not in the flesh—the nearest real ones were hundreds of kilometres away—but by sight. How? I was only 12. Our home had few books, our Newfoundland village no public library and Wikipedia was decades away.

Answer: I saw one in a movie. You see, our family had just moved from the Bay to a small town with a movie theatre and one day our Grade Six teacher trooped us there to watch a colour movie on Art. I'd seen lots of Saturday matinees in St. John's the year before, but never a film on Art. The film, said Teacher, was about an Ontario artist named Tom Thomson who was a guide and fire warden in Algonquin Park before he drowned. Because my father was also a guide, and drawing came easy to me, my ears perked up.

Among the film's first images were two oil paintings: one of a shoreline pine in a summer gale, the other, called 'The Jack Pine', of a still, drooping pine set against a greenish yellow sky with pastel-tinted ice and blue hills beyond. For some reason, the second image gave me goosebumps. Looking back, I think it was the technique as much as the subject. The painting had a frozen, brickwork look that chilled you just to look at it.

Moreover, until then I'd thought paintings were just coloured drawings. But no coloured drawing ever made me feel like that. Long and short dashes of paint laid edge to edge had done this to me. So the paint was the drawing! I walked home as if on air. From then on I wanted to be a woodsman-painter like Tom.

Seven years later, while a freshman forestry student at the University of New Brunswick collecting leaf and twig samples on the university woodlot for Dendrology 100, I met my first real jack pine. The next year, busing the Salmon River Road between Fredericton and my girlfriend's home in eastern New Brunswick,

I passed whole groves of them. Straight, slender and mop-headed, they reminded me of bog spruce back home. Up north, we learned, it forms vast, pure stands—even on permafrost, where red and white pine can't grow.

During the late ice age, *P. banksiana* couldn't grow in what would become Atlantic Canada either. Instead it survived somewhere around present-day Florida and Texas. Bog pollen analysis reveals this. But as we've seen with white and red pine, over the millennia all three migrated back here, even to the tiny Magdalen Islands. How? In the same way red pine got to the Grand Banks—via ice age land bridges and corridors long since submerged. At that time, the Magdalen Islands were just another sandbar to be colonized, like Sable Island.

Yet its absence from Newfoundland and Anticosti is puzzling. Was the proto-Saint Lawrence River canyon, now submerged, too recent and wide a barrier? Geologists tell us it was created when an ice jam near today's Quebec City broke, releasing the pent-up waters of colossal Lake Agassiz, mother of today's Great Lakes. So red and white pine made it across, but not, to my knowledge, jack pine (Glen Blouin's otherwise accurate 2001 tree guide notwithstanding).

Otherwise this versatile tree made a wonderful post-glacial comeback. One reason was surely the drying up of sandy-bottomed meltwater lakes across most of Canada. All pines thrive on sand, but jack pine makes a specialty of it—with the help of wildfire. Of our three pines it is the most specialized for this.

The secret is in the seed—or rather in the seed's packaging. That, and the jack pine's prodigious fertility. Open-grown individuals can produce viable seed by age three! Forest-grown trees reproduce from ages 10 to 25—and gradually ante up production until age 40 or 50. By then a healthy jack pine is averaging 300 to 500 cones a year (roughly 15 litres), and twice that every three to four years. Each cone averages 40 to 50 viable seeds. Go figure.

FIELD NOTES FOR THE ALPINE TUNDRA

Elena Johnson

Poetry

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In 2008, Elena Johnson was invited to be the writer-in-residence at a remote ecology research station in the Yukon's Ruby Range mountains. For several weeks she lived in the alpine tundra, working alongside a team of biologists whose research interests ranged from plants to marmots and ptarmigan. *Field Notes for the Alpine Tundra* is the result of that residency, evidence that 'Each landscape leaves its mark— / a scratch at the heart'. Employing a range of poetic techniques (from the lyric to maps, charts and lists), Johnson's poems are immersed in the remoteness of their environment, where the weather is 'a cup over the valley', 'nights are mostly sunset' and people are 'the tallest objects / bent by the wind'. Johnson observes how both the routine (laundry, camp life) and the minute (lichen, flowers, contour lines) take on new meaning in the vast wilderness of the tundra, how the creek 'carries the sound of rain even in sunshine' and how the fox, encountered, 'fits no guidebook description'. Like caribou silently appearing 'antlers-first / from behind a ridge', Johnson's poems reward the reader with a mixture of surprise and recognition.

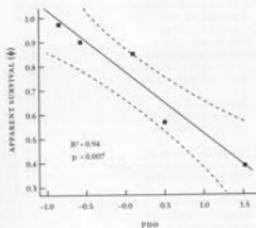
ELENA JOHNSON has worked as a park naturalist, field ecology researcher, editor and translator. She has been a finalist for the CBC Literary Awards (2010) and twice shortlisted for the Alfred G. Bailey Prize. Born in New Brunswick, she resides in Vancouver.

FIELD
NOTES
FOR THE
ALPINE
TUNDRA

POEMS BY
Elena Johnson

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Survival of Juvenile Hoary Marmots



"Survival of juvenile hoary marmots declines in warmer springs with earlier snowmelt (positive PDD values). PDD refers to the Pacific Decadal Oscillation, which is one measure of regional weather conditions (temperature and precipitation) in Yukon mountains." From correspondence with Dr. David H. Diaz from Vidal Paul (2008), master's thesis, University of Alberta.

§ 26 §

Topographic Map 115 G/1

Named on Map:

Ruby Range
Shabusuk Trench
Calstr Creek

Not Named on Map:

Dead Sheep Valley

We hefted axes
and rucks and ropes
to drag it.
Shunk
through fog
in gizzly country,
stopping briefly
to shout.

Bear marks
in its flank.

No hell
to lift it away.
A dying
out-phone told us
to hand it
up-mountain,
far from our only trail.

§ 27 §

THE YEAR OF OUR BEAUTIFUL EXILE

Monica Kidd

Poetry

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In *The Year of Our Beautiful Exile*, Monica Kidd observes the ways in which estrangement and loss punctuate our days, but need not always diminish them. Whether she is writing of the bicentenary of Charles Darwin's birth, the displacement of whole communities during the epic flooding of Alberta's rivers in 2013, or of the many minor disconnections which occur in the headlong tumble of domestic life and love (where sometimes a smartphone might seem better connected than a spouse, 'remembers my birthday with a cheery tra-la'), Kidd demonstrates a keen eye for the ordinariness of loss, for the way in which the world evolves and adapts in the midst of perpetual change and for the many small moments of human connection that form our lives.

MONICA KIDD grew up on the Alberta prairies. Her previous literary works include two novels (*Beatrice* and *The Momentum of Red*), a book of non-fiction (*Any Other Woman: An Uncommon Biography*) and two collections of poetry (*Actualities* and *Handfuls of Bone*). Her short experimental films have shown in Atlantic Canada and in Amsterdam. She has worked as a seabird biologist and as a reporter for CBC Radio, where her news items and documentaries have won numerous awards. Kidd presently lives in Calgary, Alberta, where, as well as writing, she works as a medical doctor and tends to her young family.



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The Year of Our Beautiful Exile

MONICA KIDD

*Let us now consider the steps by which domestic races
have been produced*

Dear Mother—
My little garden has begun to sprout:
the stubborn potatoes, stiff as history, and
the beets, wall-eyed, escaping rank.
The tomatoes flower from their pots,
their woody smell settling somewhere
behind my ribs, small green fists of sky.
I push my hands through the soil like hair.

The tangled bank. The body electric.
What is a garden but a republic of puppies,
or a string tied to a young girl's finger?
I have learned to weed while the baby sleeps.
I have found that love will grow
amidst the shattered crockery.

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*So it is that the great Tree of Life fills with its dead and
broken branches the crest of the earth*

Margie cut my muscles and asked me again how much
I wanted. I'm tired of getting robbed. I say to her, and
she harrumphs. No light in her face, now that I look at
her, her breasts pointing this way and that, but she's a
fine hand with a pair of shears. My own flesh. I say, not
believing it. I want to leave a note in the glove box for
whoever goes through it night after night: You're a prick.

Margie cut my muscles and charged me six yards
instead of seven.

55

KEEPING WATCH AT THE END OF THE WORLD

Harry Thurston

Poetry

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In *Keeping Watch at the End of the World*, Harry Thurston explores the ways in which poetry stands sentinel at the edge-places where known and unknown meet. Whether that frontier lies between land and sea, present and past, health and illness, or youth and aging, Thurston holds that the poet's duty is to survey the horizon and 'see things before they take shape', chronicling occurrences both acute and remote. A poet-naturalist in the tradition of Thoreau, Thurston reminds us of the importance of being fully present in the midst of our own brief lives, of shaping what we see into poetry's 'steeped words—dark, light, and sweetened gifts.'

HARRY THURSTON'S most recent poetry collections include *The Deer Yard* (with Allan Cooper) and *Animals Of My Own Kind*. His environmental writing has been published in many of North America's leading magazines, including *Audubon*, *Canadian Geographic* and *National Geographic*. He has been awarded numerous writing prizes in both Canada and the United States, including the Sigurd Olson Nature Writing Award, the Lane Anderson Award and the Evelyn Richardson Literary Award. Thurston lives in Tidnish, Nova Scotia.

Keeping Watch at the End of the World

Harry Thurston



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HURRICANE AT THE HOLIDAY INN

All night the empty planes flee inland, up-
roaring into the still air heavy with fear.
The skyscrapers, anchored like steel stems,
begin to sway, mere grames in the gathering wind.
The facade of an apartment building
collapses to reveal the dollhouse within.
The sea rises in the subway, reclaiming
the underground.

Transformers light up the night sky
with fireworks of domestic shock and awe.
Downtown, a crane, broken-necked, dangles
like Damocles' sword over the canyon street.

Along the shore, the islands give way, the sea
floods into basements, living rooms, sofa float,
can become boats.

Offshore, the aging ship labours to escape
the tightening noose. The sea is in riotous,
the oakum and bretnails spring loose. Onshore
the wind rips through the vacant sails
of bankrupt billboards, the pundits fall silent.

In the morning, the great airport, hub
of the world, is curiously quiet, the skies
over the ocean, over the coast, empty
for the first time since the great towers
came tumbling down—a hawk circles
in the free air.

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The hallways of the darkened hotel
are like nightfall alleys, suddenly sinister
as faceless figures, common cardholders,
pass each other, shoulders to shoulder,
handing flashlights in stairwells.
Burrowing animals, we hole up
in our rooms, hoarding food.

In an instant, the screens have drawn a blank,
the mumbling chatter has stopped. We forage
for a phone, a landline to the world,
to loved ones, a continent away. Overpasses
are ornamented with broken glass,
the sodden blankets of the homeless.
In the park the Doric columns of the oaks
stand headless in the new light. A grey squirrel
explores the ruined trunks of the trees,
the carefree geese crop the grasses.

At dusk I watch the colour leave the river,
the silhouette of the great city go ashore,
charcoal, where a carnival of lights once flared.
Over there, humans in their millions huddle
in the dark to ward off the wet, the cold,
walk where they once drove and rode.
They wait for the generation, the pumps,
the sirens—our feeble old gods—to restore order,
the everyday, belief in the future itself.

—Newark, New Jersey, October 2012

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THE BRIEF REINCARNATION OF A GIRL

Sue Goyette

Poetry

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In 2006, a four-year-old Massachusetts girl died from prolonged exposure to a cocktail of drugs that a psychiatrist had prescribed to treat ADHD and bipolar disorder; her parents were convicted of her murder.

In *The Brief Reincarnation of a Girl*, Sue Goyette strives to confront the senselessness of this story, answering logic's failure to encompass the complexity of mental illness, poverty and child neglect (or that of our torn and tangled social 'safety net') with a mythopoetic, sideways use of image and language. Avoiding easy indignation, Goyette portrays the court proceedings' usual suspects in unusual ways (the judge, the jury, the lawyers, the witnesses and the girl's troubled parents), evokes the ghost of the girl, personifies poverty as a belligerent bully and offers an unexpected emblem of love and hope in a bear. Like the utterances of a Shakespearean fool, Goyette's quirky, often counter-logical poems offer a more potent vision of reality than any documentary account, her eulogy for a girl society let down renewing the prospect for empathy and change.

SUE GOYETTE has published four collections of poetry, most recently *Ocean*, which was a finalist for the 2014 Griffin Prize and won the 2015 Lieutenant-Governor's Nova Scotia Masterworks Award. She lives in Halifax.



The Brief Reincarnation of a Girl

SUE GOYETTE

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MMXX

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Sleeplessness was another symptom, the doctor explained and the lawyer wanted to know if one had to be two-and-a-half to be diagnosed with bipolar or could anyone have it? Anyone, the doctor announced looking widely around the room. Poverty tried eating her book but choked on the saw blade of her ax and coughed the book back up like steel wool. The girl often woke in the night, the doctor explained to the jury, and the mother was at her wit's end. The father laughed at the idea of the mother's wit and the jury roared his laugh. It sounded like a cigar and leered like a pervert, one of the jurors would report later and the rest of the jury agreed, he laughed like a pervert all right. Don't all two-year-olds wake up in the night? the lawyer asked. In this particular case, the doctor noted, given the caterpillar and witch recklessness, the loud motor and the silliness of a girl being a truck, the girl's sleeplessness indicated that the synapses in her brain were not releasing enough serotonin which is generally where lullabies incubate. The drug the girl was given would increase lullabies while inhibiting or closing the window after they'd been released so they couldn't get back in. So the drug was also an inhibitor, the lawyer said, grasping, and poverty swooped in and ate his tie dissuading the idea that he had formally dressed for the occasion. Objection, one of the lawyers yelled, and poverty was told if it didn't sit down it would have to leave the courtroom.

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Hyperactivity, the lawyer said. Tell us a little about that. The doctor cleared her throat of her siblings and all their trophies. Poverty had to hold itself back when it saw the trophies glistening like treasure. The ghost of the girl sat on the daycare teacher's lap and the teacher told her a story about a red hen who couldn't find her missing hen to make her bread. The ghost of the girl muzzled between the teacher's breasts. She felt sad for the red hen because she, as a girl, had always lost things. She was told she'd lose her head if it wasn't screwed on so tight. Which is why she'd wake in the middle of the night, her heart alarming. Wake up! Do something! Don't forget to screw your head on! The doctor was explaining how in a hyperactive child, the child couldn't finish a sentence and would follow every shiny thing they could find. The girl, for example, would ask her mother for her keys, find something to play with on the doctor's desk and forget about the keys entirely, all the while being a caterpillar then a witch. Would the caterpillar or the witch ask for the keys? the lawyer wanted to know. That depended on the girl's mood, the doctor explained. The girl was also extremely moody.

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