

east word



Jan Coates and Christopher Moore were two of the five finalists for the Governor General's Literary Award for children's literature. Christopher was the eventual winner.

At the GGs with Jan Coates

by Kate Watson

Back in 2007, author Jan L. Coates wrote an article for *The Acadia Alumni Bulletin* about a 26-year-old student named Jacob Akeck Deng. Jacob's experiences as one of the more than 20,000 young boys who were orphaned and displaced by a civil war in Sudan during the 1980s and 90s struck Jan as an incredibly powerful story of hope and determination. She was inspired to share Jacob's story in a young adult novel called *A Hare in the Elephant's Trunk*, published by Red Deer Press in 2010.

The book has been nominated for numerous awards, including the 2011 Governor General's Award for Children's Literature (text). Although the GG ultimately

went to Christopher Moore for *From Then to Now: A Short History of the World*, Jan was able to attend the ceremony at Rideau Hall in November. She shared some of the excitement of being a Governor General's Award nominee.

Kate Watson: *When did you find out your book was shortlisted?*

Jan Coates: Tuesday, October 12th. Red Deer Press publicist, Cheryl Chen called to ask if I'd been on the Internet that morning. I was oblivious to the fact the finalists would even be announced that day as I had



WRITERS' FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIA

ISSN 1187 3531

1113 MARGINAL ROAD

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA B3H 4F7

TEL: 902-423-8116

FAX: 902-422-0881

WWW.WRITERS.NS.CA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: NATE CRAWFORD

E-MAIL: DIRECTOR@WRITERS.NS.CA

PROGRAM OFFICER: HILLARY TITLEY

E-MAIL: PROGRAMS@WRITERS.NS.CA

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER: SUE GOYETTE

E-MAIL: EVENTS@WRITERS.NS.CA

WITS OFFICER: HEIDI HALLETT

E-MAIL: WITS@WRITERS.NS.CA

EASTWORD EDITOR: PEGGY AMIRAULT

WFNS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT: KATHLEEN MARTIN

VICE PRESIDENT: RYAN TURNER

SECRETARY: BRETT LONEY

TREASURER: DON ROY

PAST-PRESIDENT: STEPHENS GERARD MALONE

MEMBERS AT LARGE: BRIAN BRAGANZA,

VALERIE COMPTON, JAMES LECK, SHERRI

RAMSEY, JON TATTRIE

The Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia is a registered not-for-profit organization that operates with funds raised from membership fees, from fundraising endeavours, corporate sponsorship, with operating support from the Government of Nova Scotia through the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage, and with project assistance from the Canada Council for the Arts – all of whom we gratefully acknowledge for assisting us to make the work of the WFNS possible. The WFNS is a member of the Atlantic Provinces Library Association, Access Copyright, the Canadian Children's Book Centre, CANSCAIP (Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators and Performers), the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia, the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), and the Nova Scotia Children's Literature Roundtable. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor or of WFNS.

Services and markets advertised or mentioned are not necessarily endorsed by WFNS. We reserve the right to edit manuscripts and letters. Copyright to bylined material remains with the writer and cannot be reprinted without the permission of the writer.

Typeset in Amethyst, an original type design by Jim Rimmer, New Westminster, BC. Printed offset at Gaspereau Press, Kentville, NS.

 NOVA SCOTIA
Communities, Culture and Heritage

 The Canada Council
for the Arts Le Conseil des Arts
du Canada

absolutely no inkling that *Hare* would be chosen. In fact, I had just returned from a four-hour writing session at the Acadia Library when she called.

K.W.: How did you react?

J.C.: I cried, briefly. Of course, in the back of your mind, I think you always have a little seed of hope that your work will be recognized in some way, but this was more than I had ever expected or hoped for. I got right on the phone to my editor, Peter Carver, who was at his summer house in Port Joli, NS, where I've spent three weeks writing over the past few years, immersed in writing heaven. The book may never have happened without his support and encouragement, and that of my mentor, Gary L. Blackwood, and, of course, Jacob. When I heard who the other four finalists were [Deborah Ellis, Christopher Moore, Kenneth Oppel and Tim Wynne-Jones.], I was almost embarrassed to be included in such an accomplished and well-published group, all of whom had already won at least one GG.

K.W.: Why is that sort of recognition important for a book and an author?

J.C.: To be perfectly honest, I didn't know much about the Governor General's Literary Awards, but it was interesting to look back over the past few years to see who the finalists and winners have been. Of course, winning would have drawn considerably more attention to the book, but I hope it might provide a boost to my next novel (which I'm hard at work on), in that librarians, booksellers, etc. may recognize my name – or not. There were between 200 and 300 children's books nominated this year, so I have no idea how the jury members whittle it down to five books, but I'm very thankful they included *Hare* among the finalists. I did get some press around the nomination, and I hope that helps both the book and Wadeng Wings of Hope, a charity Jacob founded dedicated to raising funds for education in the Southern Sudan.

K.W.: What were some of the highlights of the GGs for you?

J.C.: Definitely talking to one of the jury members was a highlight. I was amazed to hear that all three people read all 260 books in the children's text category. They each compile a list of their top 10, then the five finalists were selected by comparing lists. He had some very nice things to say about *Hare*, and it certainly gave a little boost to my fragile writer's ego. I also enjoyed talking to the Governor General's wife, Sharon Johnston – living proof that we are all, after all, ordinary human beings. And, of course, just being in that beautiful building with all those writerly people. I was interested in the writers' speeches, too – they were all so eloquent and poised.

K.W.: Totally frivolous: Where did you get your dress?

J.C.: I hoped you'd ask – I got it for \$7 at Frenchy's! It's simple, but I like to think elegant as well. Other than proms, I'd never actually been to such a formal event before, so it was a learning experience for me. ■

Kate Watson, the coordinator of the Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Award, was invited to the Governor General's Literary Awards ceremony in November. We asked her to interview Jan about the experience of attending the event.

Who's doing what



Mary Topshee and A.J.B. (John) Johnston at the Ordre des Palmes Academiques ceremony in Moncton.

Originally created by Napoleon, the Ordre des Palmes Academiques (Order of Academic Palms) is awarded for significant contributions to French education and culture. The Government of France recently recognized **A.J.B. (John) Johnston's** contribution by making him a chevalier, or knight, of the order – a rare honour for a foreigner. The Consul General of France, Gilles Courregelongue presided over the ceremony at the French Consulate in Moncton on November 30.

John is an expert on 18th-century Louisbourg and Acadia, and author of 11 books and numerous scholarly and general interest articles on these subjects. He enjoyed a 35-year career with Parks Canada, primarily at Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site. His latest book, *Endgame 1758: The Promise, the Glory and the Despair of Louisbourg's Last Decade* (CBU Press, 2008), won a Clío award from the Canadian Historical Association and was shortlisted for an Atlantic Book Award. After a long delay because of a fire at the Quebec press, it has just been released in French by Laval University Press.

One of John's latest writing projects was unveiled at the Black Cultural Centre in September when it revealed an extensive refreshment and makeover of its exhibits. As an associate of Camus Productions, John wrote the new interpretive panels on the ground floor of the BCC.

■ Want to find out how you can take charge? Efficiency Nova Scotia took a half-page ad in *The Chronicle Herald* in November to announce it's sponsoring free public talks by **Silver Donald Cameron** on the topic of Take Charge! Saving Money, Creating Jobs and Helping the Planet. ENS says 15 years ago Nova Scotia declared war on waste and made the province a world leader in reducing waste materials. Today the challenge is to become world leaders in reducing wasted energy. Silver Don explains how this quiet revolution is transforming the provincial economy and environment, while helping everyone to slash their energy bills. He spoke in Truro, Stellarton and Sydney in November and December and will be in Amherst on January 10, Bridgewater January 12, Wolfville January 19, Yarmouth February 1, and Halifax February 6. For more information visit www.energyns.ca

■ The Next Chapter hosted by Shelagh Rogers on CBC Radio 1 periodically features the Literary Smackdown, great authorial debates about the ins and outs of writing. **Donna Morrissey** and Wayne Johnston faced off on whether it's better to write by day or by night. Donna championed sunshine and daylight while Johnston prefers the quiet of the midnight hours. Visit www.cbc.ca/thenextchapter to hear the discussion.

■ In early 2011 poet and playwright **Pam Calabrese MacLean** participated in a three-day script development workshop led by Jenny Munday, Artistic Director of the Playwrights Atlantic Resource Centre (PARC), developing her latest play *Toss*. It tells the story of three women – 50-year-old Grace, her mother Eleanor who has dementia, and Anna a nurse caring for Eleanor. What if Eleanor has a secret? What if she can't remember? What if the rest of Grace's life depends on the toss of a coin? Fast-forward to November when Pam spent a week as PARC's playwright in residence at Mt. Allison University, where she fine-tuned the script. A scene from *Toss* will be included in *Scenes from a Diverse World*, an anthology published by The International Center for Women Playwrights.

■ **John Wall Barger** continues to make his presence felt in national and international journals, with work in *The Fiddlehead*, *The Cincinnati Review*, and *Arc*. John's poem "The Stiltwalkers" is on the shortlist for the \$50,000 Montréal International Poetry Prize (<http://montrealprize.com>) and is part of the 2011 *Global Poetry Anthology* published by Véhicule Press (www.vehiculepress.com).



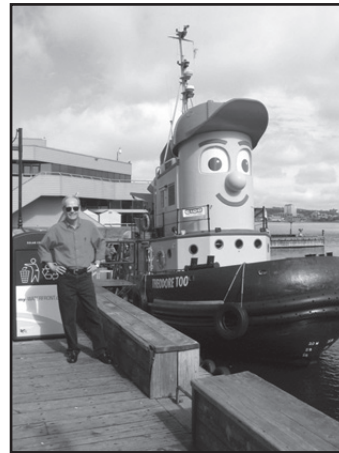
■ **Budge Wilson**, flanked by Premier Darrell Dexter and Lieutenant Governor Mayann Francis, now has the Order of Nova Scotia to go with the Order of Canada she received in 2004. Budge has published 33 books with 30 foreign editions in 14 languages. Previous ONS recipients include **Daniel N. Paul**, **George Elliott Clarke** and **Joyce Barkhouse**.



■ **Marie Riley** signs copies of her book *Righting the Wrongs: Gus Wedderburn's Quest for Social Justice in Nova Scotia* (Pottersfield Press) for Gus's granddaughters Eve and Sophia Wedderburn. A crowd of about 100 attended the launch at Mount St. Vincent's Seton Centre.

■ *Dumb Luck* is **Lesley Choyce's** latest YA title from Red Deer Press. It's the story of 18-year-old Brandon who buys his first ever lottery ticket and becomes a millionaire.

■ **Jon Tattrie** recently realized two of his freelancing ambitions – to do more travel writing and to write for *The Globe and Mail*. He did both at the same time – taking business travellers who read the paper on a guided tour of his home town, Halifax. The latest issue of *Atlantic Books Today* ran Jon's feature "Bibliomania" that focused on four book collectors, including Nate Crawford who collects the *Adventures of Tintin*, and *Arak, Son of Thunder*. You can read both on Jon's blog (<http://payperhackwriter.blogspot.com>)



■ Theodore Tugboat was the stage for **Ron Lightburn's** reading from his latest picture book, *Juba This, Juba That* (Tundra Books). Sandra Lightburn created a thigh-slapping, hand-clapping routine to accompany the reading and the audience joined in. Ron reports a great response at schools and libraries.

■ Look for a second book series by **Jessica Scott Kerrin**. Building on the success of her popular *Martin Bridge* series, Kids Can Press will begin publication in the spring of *The Lobster Chronicles*, a trilogy that centres on the accidental capture of a giant lobster. Each book is told from the perspective of a boy living in Lower Narrow Spit, a small fishing community on the coast of the North Atlantic. The first story, *Lower the Trap*, is told by Graeme Swinimer, the son of the fisherman who caught the giant lobster. The second, *A Narrow Escape*, is told by Norris Fowler, the son of the owner of the town's lobster cannery. The final book, *Spit into the Wind*, is told by Ferguson Beaver, whose grandfather is a retired fisherman in a seniors' residence. Jessica's video featuring Maritime scenes and the people who inspired this trilogy can be found on YouTube or by following the links on her website (<http://jessicascottkerrin.wordpress.com>). And if you want advice on how to write a book series, check out Jessica's article in the summer 2011 edition of the *Canadian Children's Book News*. (Past editions are online at www.bookcentre.ca.) She also wrote a fiction short story for *ChickaDEE Magazine* (winter, 2011). Jessica will be touring Ontario in May, as part of TD Canadian Children's Book Week.

Barbara M. Little (Mosher) released two children's books from Cubhunter Cubbie Books. *Pen Pals* (\$12.95, ISBN 978-09696595-5-5) tells the stories of two boys, Jud in Nova Scotia and Sammy in England, who exchange letters during World War Two. In *Globe Magic* (\$12.95, ISBN 978-0-9696596-6-2), Danny Whitman's grandmother tells him stories of an ancestor who was a wizard. She says when a boy in the family turns 14 he may inherit the ability to produce magic. Now that Danny is 14, strange and exciting things are starting to happen. Could his grandmother's stories be true?

■ The Holiday 2011 issue of *Atlantic Books Today* features Heather Fegan interviewing writers who participated in "Pitch the Publisher," the popular event sponsored by the Atlantic Publishers Marketing Association during Word on the Street. **Steve Vernon** began his book writing career by pitching *Haunted Harbours* (Nimbus) at the first event in 2004. And **Marie Riley** discusses her participation which led to the 2011 publication of *Righting the Wrongs: Gus Wedderburn's Quest for Social Justice in Nova Scotia* (Pottersfield Press).

■ **Alexander MacLeod** was the guest narrator for A King's Christmas, a concert of seasonal song and story featuring the Chapel Choir of the University of King's College. Alexander selected readings of prose and poetry by writers from the Atlantic provinces writing in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries to go with the music that spans the 13th to 21st centuries. CBC broadcast the concert on Radio 2 (music only) and on Radio 1 on Christmas Day on *Atlantic Airwaves* (the complete concert).

■ Accolades continue for **Shandi Mitchell**'s award-winning first novel *Under This Unbroken Sky* (Penguin Canada). It's on the shortlist for the \$25,000 Kobzar Literary Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to Canadian literary arts by authors who develop a Ukrainian Canadian theme with literary merit in one of several genres: literary non-fiction, fiction, poetry, young readers literature, plays, screenplays, and musicals. Also nominated are Larissa Andrusyshyn (*Mammoth*), Myrna Kostash (*Prodigal Daughter: A Journey to Byzantium*) Myroslav Shkandrij (*Jews in Ukrainian Literature: Representation and Identity*) and Rhea Tregobov (*The Knife Sharpener's Bell*).

■ Back in the fall **Mark Oakley** was cartoonist in residence at the Berwick, Kentville, Wolfville and Windsor libraries. Visit www.iboxpublishing.com to see his web comics and graphic novels, sci-fi and fantasy.



■ An excited **Jim Williams** receives the inaugural Beacon Award for Social Justice Literature. Jim was presented with his award of \$1,000 before a crowd of 50 people on November 17 at Just Us Cafe, Halifax. Later he answered questions and read from his soon to be published novel *Rock Reject*. The novel chronicles the personal struggles of Toronto-born Peter against the backdrop of the health, safety and environmental issues in an asbestos mine in Northern BC. As part of the award he has negotiated a contract with Roseway Publishing with a scheduled release date of fall 2012. Further information on the award can be found on page 14 and at www.beaconaward.ca



■ **Dan Paul** (third from the left) is one of 20 contributors to *The Mi'kmaq Anthology Volume 2 – In Celebration of the Life of Rita Joe* (Pottersfield Press). The book was launched in November at the Millbrook Senior Center. Editors were **Lesley Choyce**, Theresa Meuse and Julia Swan. **Peggy Amirault** copy-edited and typeset the text.

Winter workshops at WFNS

All workshops will be held at the WFNS office at 1113 Marginal Road, Halifax

Keep an eye on our website (www.writers.ns.ca) and e-loop for additional winter program announcements.

Writing Stories from Life with Gwen Davies

Mondays, January 16 to March 19, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Cost: \$160 for WFNS members; \$180 for non-members

T.S. Elliot said about memoir, "This is the use of memory / For liberation ... / From the future as well as the past."

Over 10 weeks you will find pathways into memory, bring what you discover to life as story, and look at ways to strengthen your writing. Work in a small group; give yourself a weekly deadline; create a body of work.

Appropriate to writers at any level of experience.

Gwen Davies specializes in teaching new and emerging writers, offering workshops in both fiction and life story. She ran the acclaimed writing retreat Community of Writers and continues to offer programs at the Tatamagouche Centre. She holds degrees from Wilfrid Laurier and King's universities. You can find her stories in anthologies and literary magazines.

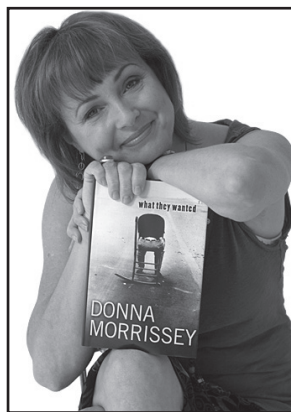
To register, write programs@writers.ns.ca or call 902-423-8116.

Creative Writing Workshop with Donna Morrissey

Tuesdays, January 10 to February 14, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Cost: \$165

The workshop will focus on: finding narrative voice and character's voice; writing with tension; a fun, intriguing technique of tapping into one's past and combining truth with fiction to create short stories; finding the heart of your story; rediscovering rhythm in language; the three dynamics of writing effective scenes; and a technique of writing Super Great Sentences.



Bryan McBurney Photography

Donna Morrissey is the author of award-winning novels – *Kit's Law*, *Downhill Chance*, *Sylvanus Now*, *What They Wanted* – and a screenplay, *Clothesline Patch*, which won a Gemini Award. Her work has been translated into several languages. She grew up in the Beaches, a small fishing outpost in Newfoundland, and now lives in Halifax.

To register, email morrisseyworkshops@bellaliant.net or donnamorrissey@ns.sympatico.ca. Or call 902-425-1120.

Carrying a Griefcase, Waiting for the Light: Writing About Loss with Lorri Neilsen Glenn

Saturday, February 4, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cost: \$55 for WFNS members; \$70 for non-members

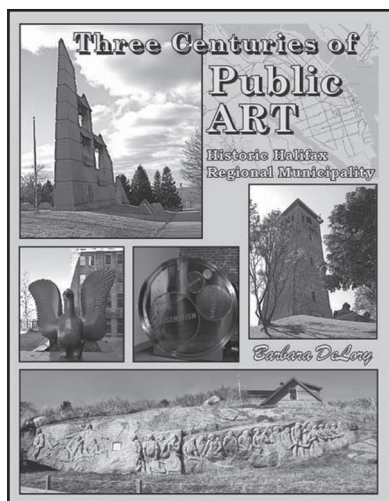


"Given a choice between grief and nothing, I'd choose grief," said William Faulkner. Poet Maureen Harris calls it opening the griefcase. What can we bring to light when we write about loss? This workshop will provide writers with activities, approaches, readings, and examples of how we write our way from loss to a new awareness. Forms include poetry, memoir, and creative nonfiction. This workshop is suitable for writers of all levels.

Lorri Neilsen Glenn's most recent book is *Threading Light* (Hagios Press), a memoir about loss and poetry. The author of several books of non-fiction and poetry, she has led workshops in poetry and life writing across Canada and internationally. She lives and writes in Halifax.

To register, write programs@writers.ns.ca or call 902-423-8116.

imPRESSed – New books by WFNS members



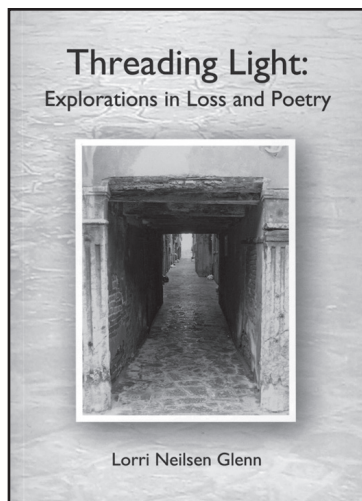
Three Centuries of Public Art: Historic Halifax Regional Municipality

Barbara DeLory

**New World Publishing, Oct. 2011, \$35, ISBN:
9781895814354**

This book is a first for Halifax Regional Municipality – a publication cataloguing three centuries of the history of the region through its public art: 114 public monuments, cenotaphs, sculptures and statuary illustrated with more than 280 colour photographs, many significant and detailed histories, dozens of poems, nine maps, and directions depicting the location of each objet d'art, plus six walking tours of the historic downtown regions. Geographically organized in walking and driving tours, it includes the gems that are found in the towns, suburbs and rural villages in the larger municipality.

Born and raised in Halifax, Barbara DeLory is married to Cullen and has raised four children. She received her MLS from Dalhousie University and was employed as a librarian at Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources.



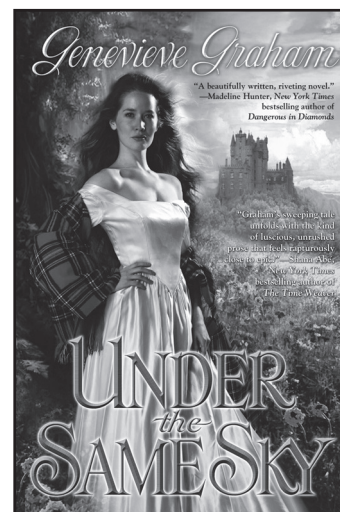
Threading Light: Explorations in Loss and Poetry

Lorri Neilsen Glenn

**Hagios Press, Nov. 2011, \$18.95
ISBN: 978-1-9-926710-11-2**

Threading Light takes us down prairie roads, to the shores of the East Coast, into Asian market stalls, to the site of the *Titanic* graves, and the kitchen tables of poets, to bring us back whole, refreshed in our understanding about loss, home, and the heart of poetry. In Neilsen Glenn's lyrical language – language that George Elliott Clarke has called "bordering on the sacred" – we explore loss, grief, and the paths that lead us into writing and community. A blend of memoir, observation, wit, and lament, this book is a trickster, layering the philosophical, the spiritual, the literary, and the personal in ways that both challenge and comfort us, and leave us filled with hope.

Lorri Neilsen Glenn is the author and editor of several collections of award-winning poetry and prose. She was Halifax Poet Laureate from 2005 to 2009.



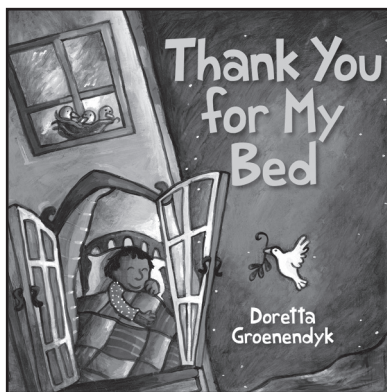
Under the Same Sky

Genevieve Graham

**Berkley Trade (Penguin US), Jan. 2012,
\$17.50, ISBN: 978-0425245231**

It's 1746. A woman from South Carolina and a Scottish Highlander have known each other their entire lives. Yet they have never met. Maggie Johnson has had "the Sight" ever since she was a child. Her dreams bring her visions of the future, and of a presence she knows is real. She calls him Wolf. When her life is torn asunder by unspeakable tragedy, he is her only hope. Andrew MacDonnell is entranced by the vision of a beautiful woman who has always dwelt in his dreams. War drives him from the Scottish Highlands for the New World to find her. Their quest to find each other will test the limits of courage and endurance.

Genevieve Graham lives in Musquodoboit Harbour where she divides her time between writing novels, editing other authors' novels (www.WritingWildly.com), teaching piano, and trying to keep up with her family. Her website is www.GenevieveGraham.com. Her second novel is due out in May.



Thank You For My Bed

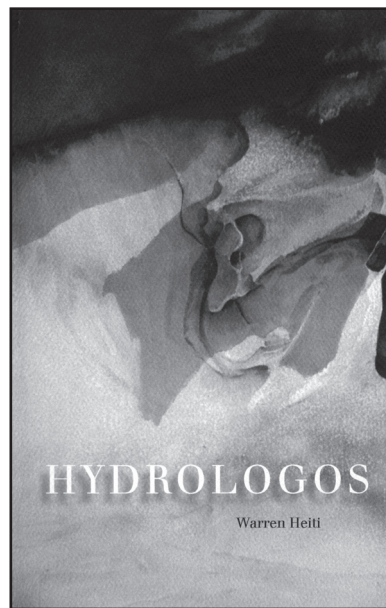
Doretta Groenendyk

Acorn Press, 2011, \$9.95

ISBN: 978-1-894838-66-5

Doretta Groenendyk's whimsical illustrations bring this lyrical bedtime story to life. Cuddle up for a cozy adventure as we see how children from all over the world snuggle up and say, "Thank you for my bed." Children will realize that although cultures may differ, we are all the same in that each night, we all go to bed.

A graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Doretta Groenendyk delights in the colours, lines, and stories around her. Her whimsical paintings can be found in galleries throughout the Maritimes. She paints, illustrates, writes, and teaches art with her husband and three children in Canning. She's the illustrator of the children's books *I'm Writing a Story* (Acorn), *Bounce and Beans and Burn* (Acorn) and *Fiddles and Spoons*.



Hydrologos

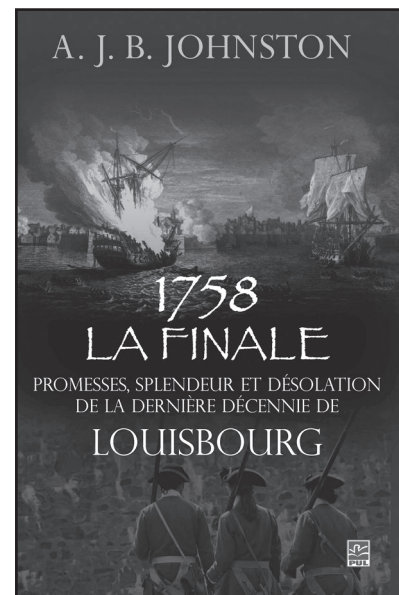
Warren Heiti

Pedlar Press, \$20; ISBN: 978-1-897141-43-4

Hydrologos is one long poem composed in five suites and a coda, and spoken through masks. It is a poem about a specific passion, the one that always follows love: sorrow.

"From a phantasmagoric treatment of Billy the Kid (in the voice of Sally Chisum), where angelic surgery is performed on a stupefied Pat Garrett, to love poems that are equally sensuous and cosmological, we are in the company of a daemonic mind at quick play," writes poet Tim Lilburn.

Warren Heiti was born in Sudbury, Ontario. He currently lives in Halifax, where he is a doctoral candidate in philosophy at Dalhousie University and a teaching fellow at the University of King's College.



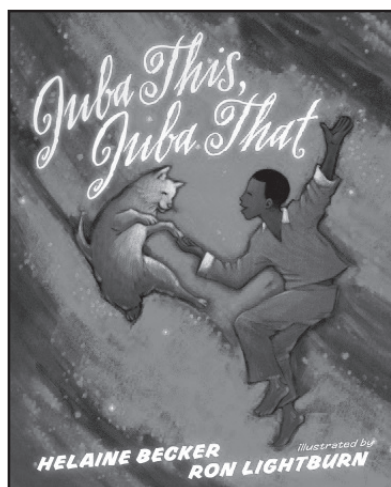
1758 La Finale: Promesses, Splendeur et Désolation de la Dernière Décennie de Louisbourg

A.J.B. Johnston

Presses de l'Université Laval, Aug. 2011, \$39.95, ISBN: 978-2-7637-9060-2

Le récit des événements survenus dans la ville coloniale fortifiée de Louisbourg entre 1749 et 1758 est l'un des plus grands drames de l'histoire du Canada et, en réalité, de celle de l'Amérique du Nord. La forteresse française bâtie dans l'île du Cap-Breton, située en un lieu stratégique proche de l'entrée du golfe du Saint-Laurent, est peu après sa fondation une possession d'envergure dans la quête d'un empire. Dans cette biographie poignante de la dernière décennie de la colonie, présentée autant du point de vue des Français que de celui des Britanniques par A.J.B. Johnston, s'entremêlent l'histoire militaire et sociale dramatique de cette forteresse, ce port de mer et cette communauté d'envergure mais à la vie éphémère et celle des citoyens qui y trouvèrent leur chez-soi.

A.J.B. Johnston est l'auteur de nombreux ouvrages dont *Grand-Pré: Coeur de l'Acadie*; *Storied Shores*; *Control and Order in French Colonial Louisbourg, 1713-1758*; *L'été de 1744* et *La religion dans la vie à Louisbourg, 1713-1758*.



***Juba This, Juba That*
Helaine Becker**

Illustrated by Ron Lightburn

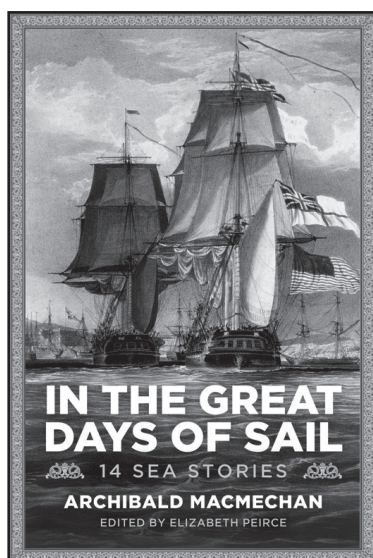
Tundra Book, Sept. 2011, \$19.99

ISBN: 978-0-88776-975-7

Traditional juba rhythms originated in Nigeria as hand-clapping games. People who were brought to the New World as slaves fought hard to keep their culture alive against terrible odds. They transformed juba rhythms into work songs that were passed down orally.

Juba This, Juba That is based on one of the most popular songs. With its strong beat and read-along repetition, it will delight small children. There's also fascinating history and concepts including opposites and prepositions. Children will have fun discovering the story told in the art about a boy named Juba who follows a mysterious yellow cat on a magical, middle-of-the night adventure that leaves them both happy and ready for slumber.

Ron Lightburn, a Governor General's Award-winning artist, has illustrated many best-selling picture books. His work has appeared on the covers of over 60 books. He lives in the Annapolis Valley.



***In the Great Days of Sail: 14 Sea Stories*
Archibald MacMechan**

Edited by Elizabeth Peirce

Nimbus, \$17.95, ISBN: 9781551098210

Archibald MacMechan (1862-1933) revelled in tales of worldwide sea adventure, pirates, storms, fires, rescues, and tragedies. His popular best-selling collections have been out of print for several years. Here are 14 stories collected for a new generation of readers. Edited and with an introduction by Elizabeth Peirce, the book displays the very best of this master chronicler's work. His stories reflect the pride Nova Scotians took in their ships, and the legendary tenacity of the captains and crews who sailed them. Among others, we encounter George Churchill of Lunenburg, who rebuilt his rudder eight times during a voyage; Samuel Bancroft Davis of Yarmouth, who dreamed the precise latitude and longitude of a distressed ship before steering off his course to rescue it; and a routine trip from LaHave to Halifax that made an unplanned detour to England.

Elizabeth Peirce is the author of *Grow Organic: A Simple Guide to Nova Scotia Vegetable Gardening* (Nimbus)



Holidays

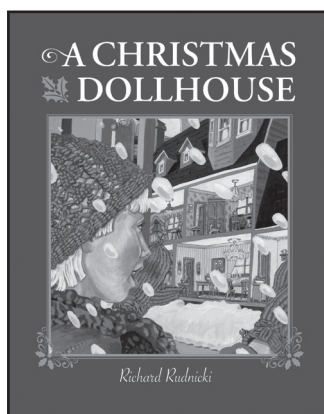
Darcy Rhyno

Borealis Book Publishers, 2011 \$19.95

ISBN: 978-0-88887-431-3

In this themed short story collection, Darcy Rhyno explores holidays – official and invented – as times when desires, motivations and relationships come into sharp focus. In language at times graceful and playful, in narratives both poignant and dark, he offers up an arc of vividly told stories of clear characters and rich detail.

Darcy Rhyno is the author of the short story collection *Conductor of Waves*, available through Roseway Publishing. A columnist for *Saltscapes* magazine and for the website *Life as a Human*, he's also a travel and magazine features writer, playwright, and children's author. Darcy manages the Osprey Arts Centre and the Shelburne County Arts Council. He lives and writes in Little Harbour on the South Shore. His website is www.darcyrhyno.com.



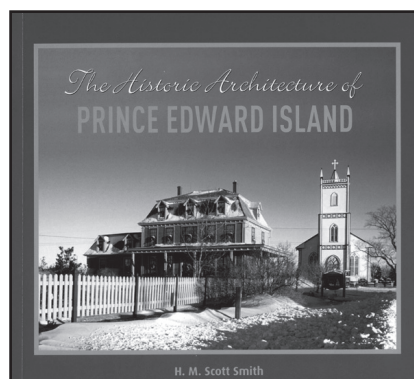
A Christmas Dollhouse

Richard Rudnicki

Nimbus, \$18.95, Oct. 2011, 9781551098685

Inspired by a true story, *A Christmas Dollhouse* is set in Nova Scotia during the Great Depression. Dot's family is having a difficult time. Her father has work, but her mother is very ill, and there is barely enough to make ends meet. Dot is captivated by a beautiful dollhouse in the window of the local drugstore. It's the prize in a raffle but Dot does not have the dollar to buy a ticket. This Christmas tale is one of hope in the face of hardship, the importance of community and will appeal to anyone who believes in the magic of Christmas.

Richard Rudnicki is an artist and the award-winning illustrator of *Gracie*, *The Public Gardens Duck*, *I Spy a Bunny*, and *Viola Desmond Won't Be Budged*. His website is www.richardrudnicki.com.



The Historical Architecture of Prince Edward Island

H.M. Scott Smith

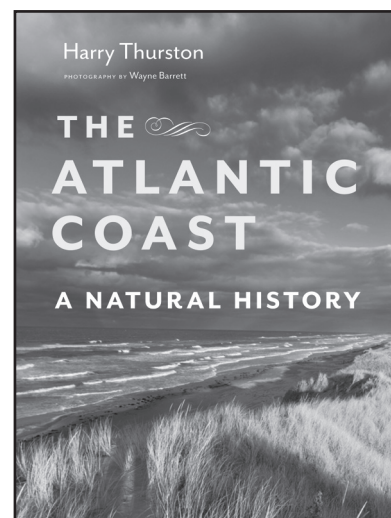
SSP Publishing, \$34.95

ISBN 978-0-9868733-0-0

Seen through the eyes of an architect, *The Historical Architecture of Prince Edward Island* is a thorough exploration of the Island's unique pre-1914 built heritage. From lighthouses to churches, picturesque houses to stately civic buildings, the book is a comprehensive study of architectural history in The Garden of the Gulf.

The book boasts meticulously detailed descriptions and beautiful images, including black and white and colour photography, drawings and archival material.

Scott Smith is an architect and journalist with a practice in Halifax, NS. He lived and worked in Charlottetown from 1978 to 1981, during which period he conducted research for this book.



The Atlantic Coast: A Natural History

Harry Thurston

Greystone Books/David Suzuki Foundation, Oct. 2011, \$45, ISBN: 978-1-55365-446-9,

The North Atlantic coast of North America, commonly known as the Atlantic Coast, extends from Newfoundland and Labrador through the Maritime Provinces and the Northeastern U.S. south to Cape Hatteras. Filled with stunning photographs, the book includes chapters on the geological origins of the region, the two major forest realms, and the main freshwater and marine ecosystems, and describes the flora and fauna within each habitat. It looks at what has been lost but also what remains of the natural heritage of the region and how that might be conserved in future.

Poet and journalist Harry Thurston has published more than 20 books on subjects as diverse as dinosaurs to shorebirds. The award-winning *Tidal Life: A Natural History of the Bay of Fundy* is a "natural history classic." *A Place between the Tides: A Naturalist's Reflections on the Salt Marsh*, was a finalist for the Drainie-Taylor Biography Prize and the B.C. Award for Canadian Non-Fiction and won the 2004 Sigurd Olsen Nature Writing Award in the United States.

The Eastword Interview with Jill MacLean

Jill MacLean has the distinction of winning the Ann Connor Brimer Award, Atlantic Canada's highest honour for children's literature, in both 2009 and 2010 for her books *The Nine Lives of Travis Keating* and *The Present Tense of Prinny Murphy* (both published by Fitzhenry & Whiteside). Her third book, *Home Truths* (Dancing Cat Books), was published in 2010. Now – out of all the children's books published in English in Canada since 2008 – the Canadian chapter of the International Board on Books for Young People has selected *The Nine Lives of Travis Keating* for IBBY's 2012 Honour List, a distinction that will see her book housed in permanent collections of IBBY Honour List books in libraries all over the world. We caught up with Jill about getting started with writing for children, appreciating what lies beneath the surface of things, and about the honesty of young readers.



The way you tell it in your biography on your website (www.jillmaclean.com), your first book for younger readers was written solely at the request of your grandson. Is this actually the case or was there a little more deliberation in the process?

No deliberation whatsoever!

Write me a book, Nan.

Sure.

The deliberation came afterwards:

I've made a promise.

It's a promise I have to keep.

I have no idea how to write a children's book.

How many years since I last read a children's book?

That long? You're kidding.

What am I going to write about?

And where will I begin?

Etc.

Did you succeed in writing what he wanted to hear?

I started writing the first children's book early in 2004, when my grandson was nine. It was published, as *The Nine Lives of Travis Keating*, in the fall of 2008, by which time he was 14 and too old for the book.

Fortunately, I had self-published six copies of an earlier draft, called "Making Waves," because I wanted him to have the story while he could enjoy it. On the cover was a photograph of him facing the sea beside an old fish shack in northern Newfoundland.

When I asked him recently if I'd succeeded in writing what he wanted to hear, he said, "Just for you to try and write me a book was a success in itself. It brought me great joy ... everything above and beyond that made it even better."

If I succeeded with my grandson, other kids have also been touched by Travis's story. There's nothing in the world like having a boy or girl come up to you in school and say, "I love your book, miss ... but why did the cat have to die?" And just in case I start feeling a little too successful, there's also the kid who says, "Well, the book was kind of boring at first, but it got better." Children are the world's best critics, because they're honest.

So ... if your son, niece, neighbour's kid, granddaughter asks you to write something ... I'd say, go for it.

Your education includes a B.Sc. (Hons) in biology from Dalhousie and an M.A. from the Atlantic School of Theology. What elements of these degrees do you bring to your writing?

My science degree left me with a lasting appreciation of what lies beneath the surface of living things. There's a marsh reed called *Juncus*, for instance – you see it growing everywhere in Nova Scotia, trampled by cows and careless hikers. Each cell of the stem is six-sided with a

gap in its centre (hence the flexibility of the stem); a blue-stained cross section of *Juncus* is a delightful, airy mosaic. The structure of a tree trunk, seen microscopically, is enormously and gorgeously complicated, some of the xylem cells the product of an imagination gone wild. Threadlike spindles haul chromosomes apart during mitosis. Bizarre single-celled creatures zip through a droplet of pond water...

As a writer, I'm curious about what's below the surface of everyday living. The actions we regret, the words we wish we could take back. The deeds for which we pat ourselves on the back. The loves and dreams and terrors that drive us.

Are all writers voyeuristic? Or, worse, cannibalistic?

While my degree didn't emphasize our native flora and fauna, I love being outdoors, wandering the byways of the plant and animal kingdoms. Sunlight on the needles of white pine as a porcupine waddles across my path. A ruby-crowned kinglet living up to his name. I have yet, I realize, to write a book with an urban setting.

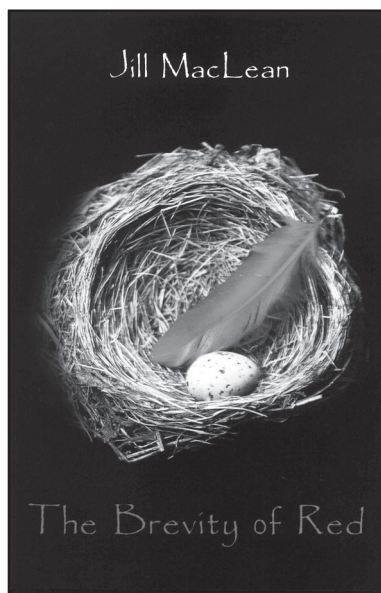
My second degree was a Masters of Theological Studies. Because, as a young woman, I was married to a clergyman, I listened to and participated in the stately rhythms of the King James Bible and the old hymns, although even back then I was questioning their theology and my beliefs. What took me by surprise at AST was my pull to story. Have you ever read Genesis from beginning to end? Talk about a page-turner. Spare, terrible and unrelenting, story following on story.

I studied Hebrew for a year, because I wanted, however rudimentarily, to read some of these stories in the language in which they had been written. How did language shape the stories? What do they say about the human condition, about the questions and fears that plague us through dark nights when the stars are infinitely far away and enigmatic?

My thesis centred on the last four chapters of Job, in which God admits chaos as a legitimate part of creation – the only place in Hebrew Scripture where that happens (also the only place where a father, the much-chastened Job, gives his daughters names). I linked the poetry of these chapters – very beautiful poetry – to chaos theory with a dash of quantum physics and wrote the whole thesis as an extended metaphor of Jung's night sea journey – I discovered, in other words, how to play with words.

I started writing poetry at AST, urged on by my newly acquired feminist critique of scripture. How did Hannah feel when she gave up her son Samuel? Who was the unnamed concubine so horribly murdered by a mob of men in an isolated village? It was one of the

high points in my life when a series of poems about this concubine were published by the feminist theology journal of Harvard University. Such validation, for a fledgling writer, was important: what I was doing mattered, not just to me, but to others. Surely all writers need encouragement to keep slugging on those days when our thoughts feel banal, when phrases and sentences won't lift themselves off the page, and our characters lie down in the margins, stone-dead.



You published a collection of poems, The Brevity of Red, in 2003, but have published books for young people since. Do you regret staying away from poetry for so long?

The Brevity of Red (Signature Editions) honours the dead of my family. While I wrote a few poems during and after its publication, I soon concluded that I'd said all I needed to say; other poetic attempts felt ungrounded and contrived. Shortly afterwards, of course, I started writing for young people, and poetry (which requires time and focus) became impossible.

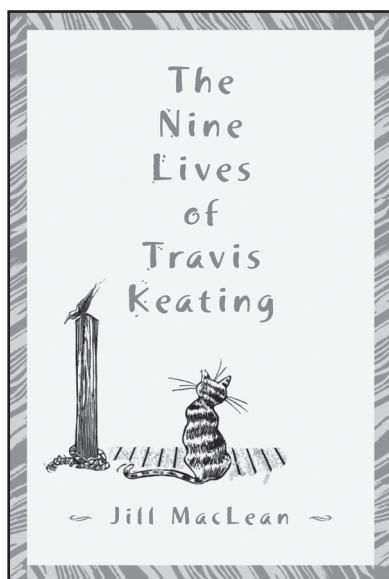
Yes, I missed it. It's intensely satisfying when a poem "works." It's a pleasure like no other when the right word falls into your mind, when a metaphor resonates, a phrase sings.

It's also a discipline from which I've benefited as a fiction writer: "the least number of best words" is a good rule for any genre of writing.

It's no coincidence that my fourth novel for young children – my second for teenagers – is written in free verse. I felt the need for a new challenge; and the content of "Nix Minus One," as it's tentatively titled, dictated its form.

Telling Nix's story has been more than a challenge. One thing to write a free-verse lyric poem, which captures a moment in time; which is, in other words, without story. Quite another to write a 210-page free-verse novel about a 15-year-old boy, all the while allowing character and action to shape the lines on the page.

Have I succeeded? I'm sure the kids in school will let me know.



In September of last year, you announced on your blog your inclusion on the IBBY Honour List. Of the ceremony in London this summer, you asked, "Do you think I should go?" Have you decided if you are going to go or not by now?

The official invitation to the gala in London is sent, I believe, in December. I suspect that holding the invitation in my hand will make the decision for me.

I feel very honoured that *The Nine Lives of Travis Keating* is the English-text, children's novel chosen to represent Canada internationally. Astonishing how a simple request – *write me a book, Nan* – has changed and will continue to change the direction of my life. ■

Health & dental benefits available to WFNS members

WFNS members can sign up for health and dental benefits through the Writers' Coalition. Underwritten by the Actra Fraternal Benefit Society, the program is available for individuals, couples and families. You get a "pay direct" drug and dental card to settle claims automatically at the pharmacy or dentist's office. Visit the Writers' Coalition website – www.writerscoalition.com – and click on "Program at a glance" to see the premiums and benefits. For more information call 416-967-6600, ext. 24 or visit www.writerscoalition.com.

PLR registration begins Feb. 1

The Public Lending Right (PLR) Commission distributes annual payments to Canadian authors for the presence of their books in Canadian public libraries. The next registration period runs from February 15 to May 1. Registration forms for new authors will be downloadable from PLR's website during this period. Visit www.plr-dpp.ca for details.

Writing workshops in Cape Breton with Alex Pierce

Alex Pierce will be offering two levels of her *Landscape & Memory Workshop* in Sydney during January and February.

Landscape & Memory I: Finding the Inner Voice – Lyric, Dramatic, and Narrative is for new and experienced writers who want to explore voice in areas outside their usual range. Begins Monday, January 16, 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. for six weeks with meetings on January 16, 23, 30, and February 6, 13, and 27.

Landscape & Memory II: Exploring the Craft – Fiction, Non-Fiction, Drama, and Poetry is for experienced writers who want to concentrate on issues of craft and produce new work with a view to sustaining their effort through revision and rewriting. Begins Tuesday, January 10 from 7 p.m. 9:30 p.m. for six weeks with meetings on January 10, 24, 31, and February 7, 14, and 28

Playwrights, poets, fiction and non-fiction writers are welcome in both workshops. We work across genres and welcome interdisciplinary discussion. Both workshops will begin in January with details of the meeting place to be announced.

Cost: \$160.

For further information and registration contact alex_pierce@cbu.ca or call (902) 842-0477 (landline) or (902) 789-3457 (mobile). Her website is www.ealexperce.com

COURSES IN CREATING WITH RUSS BARTON

**Experienced instructor & author Russ Barton offers
30-hour courses in creating for new & intermediate writers
Fee \$130**

**10 Lessons on Wednesdays, starting, January 11, 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
at the Evergreen House, 25 Newcastle Street, Dartmouth.**

**These interactive classes feature discussion & exercises in editing,
plotting, characterization, dialogue, settings, scenes, & more.**

Phone: 902-446-2427 or email rusbarton@eastlink.ca

Markets, etc.

■ Beacon Award for Social Justice

Literature: 1177 Hwy 1, R.R.#1, Falmouth, NS, B0P 1L0 (www.beaconaward.ca) A \$1,000 prize and publication by Roseway Publishing for an unpublished novel. Open only to residents of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Deadline February 1. Its purpose is to stimulate the creation, publication and dissemination of new works of fiction designed to ignite readers' passion for and understanding of social justice. Complete details on website.

■ **Mosaic:** University of Manitoba, Room 208 Tier Building, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 2N2 (www.umanitoba.ca/mosaic) This journal for the interdisciplinary study of literature will publish a special issue on Blindness – deadline April 16 – that will bring together critical and disability theories to address historical and contemporary studies and interpretations of blindness across various genres, as well as studies of, to use Samuel Weber's title words (in *Institution and Interpretation*), "The Blindness of the Seeing Eye." Seeks submissions relating to any of the following: blindness as disability; blindness in theory; exposition or exposé; architecture's historical and contemporary engagements with light and sight; humanism; image; history and philosophy of the senses; sexual difference; autobiography; surveillance; spectacle; animal ethics; perception; psychoanalysis; prosthesis; weeping; vision and visibility; haunting; gaze; the frontal perspective.

■ The Malahat Review's East Coast Issue and The Fiddlehead's West Coast Issue: Deadline May 15.

The Malahat Review invites submissions from East Coast writers (i.e. from NB, NS, PEI, and Newfoundland and Labrador), while *Fiddlehead* invites work from The West Coast (i.e. the whole of British Columbia, including Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii, and the B.C. mainland from the coast through to the eastern interior). Looking for poetry, fiction, personal essay, memoir, cultural criticism, and literary journalism. No definite "regional" theme or focus is required. See the full guidelines at www.malahatreview.ca/east_coast.html and www.thefiddlehead.ca/west_coast.html The magazines will launch a joint website where web surfers can also engage in the convergences and differences in the literatures of two of Canada's remarkable coastlines. Proposals for web content may be sent to either or both magazines.

■ **Descant:** PO Box 314, Station P, Toronto, ON M5S 2S8 (www.descant.ca) **2 theme issues: The Hidden City,** deadline June 15 – an issue dedicated to that which escapes first notice in the world's myriad urban landscapes. "From buried rivers to underground habitats to the city's silent/silenced citizens to the city transformed by darkness, we want your best creative work on the creatures, geographies, and societies that elude our surface experience. What do we cover over? What escapes us? What have we forgotten or missed? The Hidden City wants you to show us the unexamined corners of the world's living cities." **Masala:** deadline August 15 – In Indian cooking, masala is a delicate and savoury fusion of spices that changes from region to region. So the peoples of India, scattered

throughout the world today, display a fusion of cultures and histories. *Descant* is looking for the stories of the Indian Diaspora, its triumphs and its tragedies. Essays, poems, fictions, memoirs, and art work which show the ways in which the Indian peoples connect with one another worldwide and also differentiate themselves from and yet are still linked to modern India.

■ **UP!** (www.upmagazine.com) "WestJet's inflight magazine, is a Canadian travel-lifestyle magazine designed to reach WestJet passengers each month. ... With prongs into 71 destinations and a focus on WestJet destinations in Canada, United States, Mexico and the Caribbean, *up!* explores destinations through people, places and ideas that excite us." Both the extensively redesigned mag and website has several new editorial features and departments. Says it's always looking for freelancers. Detailed guidelines on website, click on "contact us." (WestJet flies into Halifax)

■ **enRoute:** (<http://enroute.aircanada.com>) Air Canada's in-flight magazine. Base rate is \$1/word. Celebrates the travel lifestyle of its readers and speaks to an international audience. Has several departments or sections open to freelancers including long and short travel features, essays or think pieces, etc. Detailed guidelines on website – scroll to bottom of page, look under "About enRoute" and click on "Write for Us."

■ **Spirit:** (<http://spiritmag.com>) Southwest Airlines publishes this general-interest magazine that appeals to the upscale consumer. Explores a diverse array of subjects, including pop culture, business, personal technology, sports, health,

food, and drink. Typically pays about \$1/word. Several departments are open to freelancers. Also accepts short fiction up to 1,500 words – “Stories should be written for a general audience: Think PG-13 and spare us anything violent or salacious. ... We do not publish stories about road trips, international travel, politics, or religion.”

■ **Hemispheres:** the inflight magazine of United Airlines (www.hemispheresmagazine.com) Various sections are open to freelancers. Guidelines on website – click on “Talk to Us.” (United flies into Halifax)

■ **Best Fiction:** (www.bestfiction.org) says it’s an online publication of brilliant stories by new, emerging writers alongside the work of established authors. Pays a minimum honorarium of \$25 US for first electronic and first North American serial rights. Established authors may negotiate a fee for their stories.

■ **J JOURNAL: New Writing on Justice:** Department of English, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 619 West 54th Street, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10019 (www.jjournal.org) Published twice a year. Justice, approached from any angle, is journal’s theme. Examines its subject through creative work, directly and tangentially. Send fiction, personal narrative (6,000 words max) or poetry (3 max) that expands reflection on the question: What is justice? Seeks new writing that examines questions of justice. Although they find their most powerful pieces relate tangentially to the justice theme, they also welcome work that speaks directly of crime, criminal justice, law and law enforcement. As a literary project, however, *J Journal* is less

likely to publish straightforward genre fiction. Encourages writers to approach the justice issue from any angle. Details on website.

■ **Puritan:** (www.puritan-magazine.com) An online Canadian magazine based in Toronto that publishes new fiction, poetry, interviews, and reviews. Pays between \$20 and \$50.

Contests

■ **Canada Writes: The CBC Literary Prizes** are the flagship competitions of Canada Writes. Formerly the CBC Literary Awards, the CBC Literary Prizes are now made up of three separate competitions – fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction – that take place throughout the year. \$25 entry fee. Accepts online submissions. The first-place winner of each category receives \$6,000 and each of the four finalists \$1,000. First place winners are published in *enRoute* magazine and online on Canada Writes and broadcast on CBC Radio. **Creative Non-fiction** deadline is February 1, entries must be between 1,200 and 1,500 words. **Poetry** competition opens March 1, submission deadline is May 1. **Short story** opens September 1 deadline is November 1. Details at www.cbc.ca/books/canadawrites.

■ **TWUC’s 14th annual Postcard Story competition:** The Writers Union of Canada, 90 Richmond Street East, Suite 200, Toronto, ON M5C 1P1. (www.writersunion.ca) Deadline February 1. Entry fee \$7.50. Prize \$750. The challenge is to create a dramatic, short, snappy piece in only 250 words. Fiction or non-fiction. You can use humour, poetry, dialogue ...anything goes. Details on website, click on contests.

■ **The Malahat Review:** University of Victoria, P.O. Box 1700 Stn CSC, Victoria, BC, V8W 2Y2 (www.malahatreview.ca) **Novella Prize:** deadline February 1, a single work of long-form fiction between 10,000 and 20,000 words. **Far Horizons Award for Poetry:** deadline May 1, emerging writers may enter up to 3 poems. Details on website.

■ **Arc: Poem of the Year Contest,** Arc, PO Box 81060, Ottawa ON K1P 1B1. (www.arcpoetry.ca) Deadline February 1 postmark. Entry fee \$32, includes subscription. Contest fees may be paid online. No online submissions though. May submit 2 unpublished poems. Each poem may not exceed 100 lines. Blind judging. Grand prize is \$5,000. Details on website.

■ **Event 2012 Non-fiction Contest:** PO Box 2503, New Westminster, BC V3L 5B2 (<http://event.douglas.bc.ca>) Deadline April 15. Open to manuscripts exploring the creative non-fiction form. 5,000 words max. Judges reserve the right to award two or three prizes: three at \$500 or two at \$750, plus payment for publication in *Event* 41/3. Other manuscripts may be published. Entry fee \$34.95 includes subscription. Details on website.

■ **TWUC’s Writing for Children Competition:** The Writers Union of Canada, 90 Richmond Street East, Suite 200, Toronto, ON M5C 1P1. (www.writersunion.ca) Deadline April 15. Entry fee \$15. Prize \$1,500. Entries of the winner and finalists will be submitted to three publishers of children’s books for consideration. Any writing for children up to 1,500 words. Details on website, click on contests.

Charles Dickens free film fest at Dal Art Gallery

by Ron Foley Macdonald

Charles Dickens' 200th birthday takes place in 2012, and the world-wide commemoration of the man who helped define the Victorian Age offers us a chance to reacquaint ourselves with a writer who had a profound effect on English-speaking culture. Here in Halifax, Dickens will be celebrated by a free film series at the Dalhousie University Art Gallery beginning on January 18.

Dickens visited Halifax in January 1842, aboard the *Brittania*, a Cunard Line ship that he described as "a gigantic hearse with windows." It ran aground on the Eastern Shore, but ultimately made it safely into the harbour and the city where the world-famous writer was the guest of Joe Howe, then just beginning his career as a crusading journalist covering the provincial house of assembly, a job Dickens held in London reporting on Parliament before achieving fame as a novelist.

Dickens writes about his arrival in Halifax in his non-fiction book *American Notes*. He spent nearly six months on this side of the Atlantic in 1842. Travelling in a newly internationalized world opened up by Imperialism and the Industrial Revolution, Dickens was both a profound critic and a prime example of the new middle class that was rising in Britain, Europe and North America as prosperity, poverty and change rippled through Western societies.

Most of us encounter Charles Dickens at least once a year with the annual theatrical productions, film screenings or public readings of *A Christmas Carol*. In the last two

decades a rash of newer versions of his work has been splashed across both small and big screens, giving his sprawling stories a new sense of urgency in a world that looks more and more Dickensian.

The razor-sharp characterizations, twisting plots, acute social descriptions, and relentless sentiment contained in his narratives were spurned by the leading edge of modernist writers and critics. Henry James and Virginia Woolf, for example, found him too sentimental, obvious and manipulative. Interestingly enough, more people are probably reading Dickens right now than James and Woolf put together. Postmodernism and the champions of the "big" novel – the likes of Tom Wolfe, Thomas Pynchon and John Irving to a more recent arrival such as Jeffrey Eugenides – evoke the spirit of Dickens on almost every page, revealing that his influence may be more powerful than ever.

Like that other great English writer, William Shakespeare, adapting Dickens for film involves a great deal of judicious cutting. There's no way you can include all of his rich social detail and endless pantheon of characters, even in the longest film version. Consequently, each take on Dickens must struggle to maintain some kind of faith with his narrative intentions while dealing with the reality of today's shorter attention spans.

One of the greatest challenges of looking at screen adaptations of Dickens is, like his writing itself, the sheer volume. There are more than 50 *Christmas Carols*, 10 *Olivers*, and 9 *David Copperfields*. Choosing the

best must be balanced with available screening time and logistics. It's unrealistic to expect audiences to sit through all of *Bleak House* in a single, 8-hour session.

There are a couple of fascinating Nova Scotian connections in Dickens' screen history. The first film version of the *Mystery of Edwin Drood*, his unfinished last novel from 1870, stars Halifax actor David Manners in the title role. And the 1968 musical of *Oliver* won an Oscar for choreography – one of only three ever given out – for Onna White, who was born in Inverness, Cape Breton.

The series will begin on Wednesday, January 18 at 8 p.m. with Dickens first novel *The Pickwick Papers*, in a version made in 1954. Consecutive Wednesdays will see unspoolings of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Oliver!*, *Bleak House*, *David Copperfield*, *Hard Times*, *A Tale Of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, *The Mystery Of Edwin Drood*, and Roman Polanski's version of *Oliver Twist*.

Screenings are free but seating is limited; donations are gratefully accepted. Other Dickens events will be happening across the globe, especially in the United Kingdom, so a thorough Internet check would be worth pursuing. And google "charles dickens film adaptations" to see what pops up that's available on DVD. Meanwhile, the legacy of Charles Dickens seems to loom larger for all his 200 years. And, of course, his writing remains the very definition of timeless.

For the full gallery schedule, check out www.artgallery.dal.ca or call 494-2403. ■