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The Cast Stone
Harold Johnson

A dystopian novel in which a First Nations professor confronts and addresses the impact of the US annexation of Canada.

Ben Robe is a retired political science professor who has returned to his reserve at Moccasin Lake to live out his life in relative peace and solitude. But the complications of a sudden and intense US annexation of Canada change his plans. Cued into a Canadian resistance movement by his former student and lover, Monica, Ben soon learns that the layers of political and military activity go far beyond his careful social conscience in this dystopian world. Radical young women like Monica, Betsy Chance, and Joan Lightning post one face of the resistance, while farmers like Abe Friesen, and Mennonite Mary Wiens post another. Paralleled with characters like these are the reserve’s citizens who remain sheltered from the immediate troubles down south, but must accept that they cannot remain passive forever.

*The Cast Stone*’s themes are not emphatic; rather they emerge slowly from within the narratives as Ben encounters the players in the Canadian resistance and must balance his call to civil action with the call to defend Canada amid the discovery of a son he never knew he had, his friendship with his neighbours, and the community elders with their long-standing knowledge of Treaties, history, and racial oppression conflict. The novel accents Ben’s struggles with his own desire for independence, love, and forgiveness, but at its core it remains a telling and passionate portrait of First Nations community life, the value and safety of family, and the need for friendship. It achieves an understanding of what an individual’s responsibilities are when civil liberty, order and stability are jeopardized by an occupying power, but shows that solitary acts of defiance that champion family trust and the individual’s capacity to love are their own agents of resistance.

Born and raised in Northern Saskatchewan, HAROLD JOHNSON has a Master of Law degree from Harvard University. Johnson is the author of three novels, *Billy Tinker* (Thistledown Press 2001), *Back Track* (Thistledown Press 2005), and *Charlie Muskrat* (Thistledown Press 2008), all set against a background of traditional Cree mythology and all shortlisted for Saskatchewan Book Awards. Johnson practices law in La Ronge, Saskatchewan, and balances this with operating his family’s traditional trap line using a dog team. He is of Swedish and Cree descent.
The Maladjusted
Derek Hayes

Sixteen clever and insightful stories about people who fail to meet fundamental social or cultural expectations.

Derek Hayes’ collection The Maladjusted concerns people who are unable to react successfully to the demands of their environment or of social exchange. When they fail to cope with their life realities, or lack the skill, readiness, or ingenuity to adapt to change they become Hayes’ maladjusted.

These contemporary urban, mostly short commuter-like stories capture quirky events in satisfying ways. The dark undertones and sharp-witted ironies employ settings such as apartments, lofts, and studios, and use as backdrops the tensions of city life to outré characters and their given idiosyncrasies.

Some of his characters are on the social fringe, such as the mentally challenged narrator of the title story who finds his way through urban life with the aid of his seventy-year-old neighbour and the possibilities inherent in a game of chess. Some obsess privately, like the protagonist in “The Runner” who becomes neurotically repulsed by the hair follicles on his girlfriend’s upper lip, while others, like the older street ball “cager” of the story “In the Low Post” stews over his eroding prestige on the inner city basketball court.

Hayes' character interactions often produce a controlled edginess as in “The Feel For America” where the Englishman, Canadian, and American who share an apartment while teaching English in Taiwan find their lives beset with a creeping entropy that threatens their livelihoods. Similarly the sexual tension between Chris, Max and Nadia in the story “Maybe you Should Get Back There” produces an intense anxiety that even the liberal, permissive narrator cannot ignore.

Although DEREK HAYES has been writing professionally for ten years, he is new to the Canadian literary scene. He lives in Toronto, ON.

Martin Amis, the author of The Pregnant Widow and London Fields, wrote: “Derek Hayes is a talented new writer from Canada who is worth keeping an eye on. His prose style is fresh and innovative. He has imagined a story that is funny and engaging with characters that are sympathetic and honest. It was an immensely enjoyable read.”

Alan Cumyn, author of the novel, Losing It, on the story “Maybe You Should Get Back There”: “I like the spare style that focuses so much on what the narrator sees . . . the material is . . . very strong.” And on “Tom and Wilkie”: “. . . an interesting story around an intriguing narrator, and it’s very well done.”
Leaving Berlin
Britt Holmström

Stories that blossom with a literary affluence and bristle with a fierceness found in the best of contemporary fiction.

The intimate portraits in Britt Holmström’s first collection of short fiction at times have a strong journalistic sense while at other times evoke the intimacy of a diary. The stories employ underlying humour — particularly irony, incongruity, paradox, and derision. They move fluidly through time operating in the present tense while creating tangents to the past.

For example, in the title story “Leaving Berlin” an emotionally mismatched couple travel to Europe where they find themselves at odds with each other. They realize that other events are also conspiring against them when they are held for importing propaganda upon entering East Berlin. The narrator in “The Soul Of A Poet” rediscovers a notebook from her university days that details the events of a meteoric friendship she had with an alter-ego figure. Her notebook details her friends sudden descent into madness, and her own obsession with Eleanor’s life that remains years later. “The Blue Album” relates the incident of a freshly divorced woman whose new roommate’s ex-con brother comes to stay for the weekend leaving her with alternate states of paranoia and a tender interest that she can’t quite understand. In the story “Doing Laundry on a Sunday”, two women who always do laundry together on Sundays realize that they have no other knowledge of each other’s lives except their laundry sessions. Although not an explicit rubric, feminism underlies some of the stories, and Holmström’s development of women’s voices and viewpoints as a dominate force in her storytelling contribute significant texture to her writing.

BRITT HOLMSTRÖM was born in Malmö, Sweden, and immigrated in Canada in the 1970s. Her novels The Wrong Madonna (Cormorant 2002) and The Man Next Door (Cormorant 1998) garnered Saskatchewan Book Award finalist nominations. Claudia was published by Coteau Books in 2008. She lives in Regina, SK.
A Close Shave
Marty Chan

A reworking of the Sasquatch myth that is creatively funny and educational

The first book in the Barnabas Bigfoot Series introduces us to Barnabas, adolescent sasquatch, and his family and tribe who live in the woods of BC. The story is told in the first person by Barnabas, who is a wonderfully engaging and genuine character, immediately relatable to preteens. He is experiencing the normal pangs of growing up: physical changes, pesky girls, embarrassing parents. On top of all that he experiences what for sasquatches is a dire handicap: small feet. He is determined to keep this terrible flaw a secret.

The action begins right away and never stops. Soon the peaceful, hidden society of sasquatches is being exposed to the human world, with dangerous results. The central story arc involves Barnabas’ adventures when he is sasquatchnapped and finds himself having to be a sasquatch in a human, “baldface”, world.

His friendship with a helpful human girl, Jaime, weaves in threads of multicultural understanding and personal identity, as Barnabas must sacrifice his unique sasquatch appearance to literally save his hide! Of course young readers will be able to identify with the fish-out-of-water flavour of these adventures: “Do I look normal? How will I fit in? Does how I look define who I am? What happens when my own friends reject me?”

Marty has created a social structure, history, and vocabulary for his sasquatch society that is accessible and fascinating. For example, over the course of the three books, readers will learn many sasquatch idioms, based almost exclusively on the race’s hairiness. The series raises environmental questions as well by connecting the treatment of one’s fellows with the treatment of the earth, the implication being that greedy and selfish behaviour toward other beings will naturally cause one to be greedy and selfish with one’s environment, and vice-versa.

Novelist, playwright, television writer, and radio humorist, MARTY CHAN has been entertaining audiences across Canada for over 15 years. His first children’s novel, The Mystery of the Frozen Brains, won the 2005 City of Edmonton Book Prize. The sequel, The Mystery of the Graffiti Ghoul, won the 2008 Diamond Willow Award. He was the story editor on the Gemini-Award winning kids’ series Incredible Story Studio, and he wrote “The Orange Seed Myth”, a half-hour television program that won the Gold Medal for Best Children’s Television Pilot at the Charleston World Television Festival. His stage play, Mom, Dad, I’m Living with a White Girl, has been produced across Canada as well as Off Broadway in New York. Chan lives in Edmonton, AB.
NEW RELEASE: Teen

The Source of Light

David Richards

A detective mystery infused with abnormal psychology, diced with particle physics, and sprinkled with industrial espionage.

The Source of Light profiles two seventeen-year-olds, Badger and Mike, as they put on their detective mind sets and physical disguises to seek answers to serious questions such as Mike’s mother’s infidelity and Mike’s father’s involvement in industrial espionage. Obsessed with sleuthing and science, these grade-twelve geeks begin a transformation that will change the lives of everyone they know. Setting the mystery against the background of a synchrotron, a football field-sized facility that uses light millions of times brighter than the sun to peer inside matter, the teen detectives soon begin to connect the world’s most powerful microscope to nefarious black market schemes and the powerful men who spawn them. The result of their investigative surveillance uncovers the complicated truth of a parent’s infidelity, the secret plans of a synchrotron physicist with a split personality, evidence of a foreign agent, and the discovery of a powerful secret code named the Genesis Project that has become the target for international corporate theft.

Add some girls who motivate the espionage obsession, vodka for the inexperienced, wiretapping a church confessional, an armed intruder, lockdown and you get The Source Of Light — a novel dedicated to the pure fun of dazzling light science, the adventure of private investigation, and the surprise when you suddenly discover your true purpose in life while trying to learn someone else’s.


MARKETING & PUBLICITY

- Classroom reading tour Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw
- Saskatchewan Festival of Words
- Print advertising in Resource Links, Voya, and Library Bound
- National review copy send out
- Excerpts available
Our Kind of Work:
Dwayne Brenna

A concise history of the development of Saskatoon’s popular 25th Street House Theatre

Twenty-fifth Street Theatre Players was established in 1972 as an artists’ collective under the direction of the enigmatic Andreas Tahn. The company would proceed to incorporate in 1974 and become the first professional theatre company in Saskatoon, and the legacy it would leave would be nationally acclaimed. But as Brenna details in this succinct genesis of the Theatre, how it managed its personality conflicts, confronted its obstacles of inadequate funding, and grappled with the shifting of its artistic vision makes this account of 25th Street Theatre a unique and original history.

As anyone involved in the arts knows financial and artistic struggles often are the fire through which a cultural organization is forged. Brenna understands this and recounts such events with precision, but just as importantly he knows that this theatre’s perspicacity and passion are what made it special. Whether discussing how the Theatre would lay the groundwork for notable playwrights such as Brad Fisher, Linda Griffiths, Greg Nelson, Kit Brennan, Ken Mitchell, and Connie Gault, or detailing the background for the vision and energy of Andreas Tahn, Brenna leaves the reader with a clear understanding of the ingenuity and inventiveness of its players as much as he does the unique challenges faced by collectives, and the constant assault that finances and an unforgiving Board of Directors can have on artistic vision.

The book offers photographs of Theatre personalities both onstage and in the dressing rooms, but it is the story of the theatre’s own personality, its small, youthful beginnings, its risky devised performances, its original scripts, and its improvised collective creations with famed icons such as Theatre Passe Muraille’s Paul Thompson that give this book its edge.
The Ditch Was Lit Like This
Sean Johnston

“Poetry is the closest thing to silence, which alone on earth is as close as we can get to heaven.”
— from “The Ditch Was Lit Like This”

In order to place themselves in their art, poets must return to their roots. This is Sean Johnston’s return to the roots - ancestral and poetic - that have shaped his language and his consciousness. Structured in five sections, the work interplays the convergence of memory and personal history. Although such a pattern is familiar ground in the world of poetry, Johnston’s movements to establish roots through his use of the anecdotal, unexpected, and profound are both wise and revealing. We are all invited to that universal moment where “there is always a man with a guitar/ somewhere/ and the response is either love returned or love withheld - that is, of course, if something has been risked.”

As with his prose, Sean Johnston’s poetry strives for a kind of minimalism in which the written word leads the reader to discovery, rather than by pushing a didactic discovery of something he deems to be important. The images, lines, and to some extent, the subject matter establish trigger points for involvement. The line structures and breaks are as much about the poetic rhythm as they are about this kind of triggering where the reader is signalled that the meaning may be changed or altered in the coming line. There are significant patterns of line development within the work - some relying on prosaic conventions, others using a more traditional compact pace and meaning and forms such as gazhal or those familiar free verse patterns with short stanzas.

SEAN JOHNSTON grew up in Asquith, Saskatchewan and received his Bachelor of Journalism degree from Carleton University in Ottawa. His early influences were Roger Bird, Christopher Levenson, and Robert Hogg. His later work shows an affinity for Canadian icons like Guy Vanderhaeghe and Leonard Cohen. Sean has been at Okanagan College for the last four years, teaching composition, literature and creative writing. He has worked as a journalist and is the author of the novel All This Town Remembers (Gaspereau 2006), and the story collection A Day Does Not Go By (Nightwood 2002). Johnston lives in Vernon, BC.
To the Edge of the Sea

Anne McDonald

NOVEL
BISAC: FIC014000
$19.95 CAD / 5.5” x 8.5” / MARCH 2011

Set on Prince Edward Island in the late nineteenth century, this is the story of three young people who yearned for escape and experience. All three would get their wish, but coincidence would shape those wishes in profound ways. Alex would find himself on a circus trapeze fated to meet the Niagara Falls tightrope artist, Farini. Reggie would join the farmers’ protests against the tax collectors, and battle the demons of guilt in the supposed death of his brother. Mercy would find herself landlocked on John A. Macdonald’s hard-drinking and dancing campaign to sell confederation statutes, attracted to his power while thinking him the ugliest man in Canada.

Anne MacDonald weaves a series of spells that pull this beautifully written novel through a tightly woven script. Rich in tone and textured for a very rewarding reading experience, To the Edge of the Sea combines great storytelling with polished literary control.

Anne McDonald has been writing for sixteen years and her work has appeared in The Society and Descant and has been broadcast on CBC Radio. She lives in Regina, SK.

Walking Through Shadows

Tara Manuel

SHORT FICTION
BISAC: FIC029000 / BISAC: FIC005000
$18.95 CAD / 5.5” x 8.5” / MARCH 2011

There are always invisible connections, as well as loyalties and betrayals, between people in small communities. In this collection a clutch of these citizens are singled out for attention. What we discover is both disturbing and yet morbidly fascinating. Throughout the town the sway of the Everlasting Church of the Evangelical holds the town’s morality in check while its members slink off into their own little corners of deviance. But no one is really safe from the prying eyes, and no one will escape scrutiny.

TARA MANUEL is a Newfoundland writer and actor. Her first novel, Filling The Belly, was published in 2003 by Thistledown Press. Manuel lives in Corner Brook.
In the Embrace of the Alligator

Amanda Hale

SHORT FICTION
BISAC: FIC029000
$18.95 CAD / 5.5" X 8.5" / MARCH 2011

The narratives that make up this book have their origins in Hale’s travel journal, but they emerge as stories, arriving at that place just beyond creative non-fiction. Vivid and sensitive portraits are balanced with the dark undercurrents of Cuban life. The narrator witnesses how politics have re-shaped the culture and lives of the people she encounters, while she falls deeply in love with the true and hidden life of El Caimán, the grand alligator, Cuba.

AMANDA HALE has been writing for over 30 years. Her previous publications include Sounding the Blood (Raincoast 2001), The Reddening Path (Thistledown 2007), and My Sweet Curiosity (Thistledown 2009).

Nobody Cries At Bingo

Dawn Dumont

TEEN NOVEL
BISAC: JUV030090
$15.95 CAD / 5.5" X 8.5" / MARCH 2011

It’s all here — life on the Rez — in rich technicolour — as Dawn, the narrator, invites us to witness first hand Dumont family life on the Okanese First Nation. Beyond the stereotypes and clichés of Rez dogs, drinking, and bingos, the story of a girl who loved to read begins to unfold. It is her hopes, dreams, and indomitable humour that lay bear the beauty and love within her family. Nobody Cries At Bingo is a book that embraces cultural differences and does it with the great traditional medicine of laughter.

DAWN DUMONT is a Plains Cree comedian and actress, born and raised on the Okanese First Nation. Dawn has made people laugh at comedy clubs across North America, including New York’s Comic Strip, the New York Comedy Club, and the Improv. She began her comedy career in Toronto on stages such as Yuk Yuk’s and the Laugh Resort. Dawn is currently a comedy writer for CBC Radio and the Edmonton Journal, and is a Story Editor for By the Rapids, an animation comedy series on APTN.

Dumont’s writing has been published in the anthologies Native Women in the Arts and Gatherings, as well as in Rampage Literary Journal. Her personal essay “Transformations” was published by Toronto’s Now Magazine. Most recently her play, Nicimis (Little Brother) was workshopped at Native Earth’s Performing Arts Weesageechak Begins to Dance Festival in Toronto, with artistic director Alanis King. She lives in Edmonton, Alberta.
RECENT FICTION

Mennonites Don’t Dance
Darcie Friesen Hossack

SHORT FICTION
BISAC: FIC000000 / BISAC: FIC019000 / BISAC: FIC045000
$18.95 CAD / 5.5” X 8.5” / SEPTEMBER 2010

This vibrant collection of short fictions explores how families work, how they are torn apart, and, in spite of differences and struggles, brought back together. Darcie Friesen Hossack’s stories in Mennonites Don’t Dance offer an honest, detailed look into the experiences of children — both young and adult — and their parents and grandparents, exploring generational ties, sins, penance and redemption.

“Arresting, mesmerizing, stunning...” — Globe & Mail

“This slender book of 11 short stories is a complex treasure.” — Winnipeg Free Press

Shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers Prize, Canada & Caribbean Region, and the Danuta Gleed Award

DARCIE FRIESEN HOSSACK is a graduate of the Humber School for Writers. She has been a food writer for the Kelowna Daily Courier and Kamloops This Week for the past six years, and most recently, thepeartree.ca. Her story “Little Lamb” was nominated for the 2008 McClelland & Stewart Journey Prize.

Raising Orion
Leslie Choyce

NOVEL
BISAC: FIC000000 / BISAC: FIC019000
$19.95 CAD / 5.5” X 8.5” / SEPTEMBER 2010

Raising Orion tells the tale of an eccentric, timeless woman, Molly, a second-hand bookshop owner, and her childhood as the daughter of the last lighthouse keeper of Devil’s Island at the mouth of the Halifax Harbour. At its core, Raising Orion is a novel of discovery, and a chronicle of intense individualism where to believe you can set the stars in the sky will make it so.

Shortlisted for the 2011 Dartmouth Book Award

LESLEY CHOYCE is the author of seventy books for adults and young adults. He has taught at Dalhousie University for the past twenty-five years and is the publisher of Pottersfield Press. He’s worked as a rehab counselor, a freight hauler, a corn farmer, a janitor, a journalist, a lead guitarist, a newspaper boy, and a well-digger. He also hosts a nationally-syndicated TV talk show on BookTelevision. Along with the Surf Poets, he has released two poetry/music albums, Long Lost Planet, and Sea Level.
**Memoir of a Good Death**

Anne Sorbie  

*NOVEL*  

BISAC: FIC019000 / BISAC: FIC000000 / BISAC: FIC044000  
$19.95 CAD / 5.5" x 8.5" / SEPTEMBER 2010

Anne Sorbie’s engrossing contemporary novel of a mother and daughter relationship ignites when Sarah witnesses her daughter’s death. She watches, helpless and horrified, as a bear attacks her daughter, knocking her from her canoe into the river. From beyond the grave, Rhegan, her daughter, helps her by recreating shared life events that will guide Sarah in her painful journey. Using water imagery as a vehicle for atmospheric tension, and land as the force of stability, a bittersweet story of their relationship emerges as the characters confront the complexities of fate and coincidence.

ANNE SORBIE’S work has been published in *Geist, Other Voices,* and *The Walrus.* *Memoir of a Good Death* is her first novel. She lives in Calgary, AB.

**Flyways**

Devin Krukoff  

*NOVEL*  

BISAC: FIC000000 / BISAC: FIC019000  
$19.95 CAD / 5.5" x 8.5" / SEPTEMBER 2010

Through a protracted series of vignettes, Krukoff transforms *Flyways* into an interconnected, psychologically intense novel. The book dramatizes people’s unseen connections to others while they encounter their own problems awaiting an impending snowstorm. *Flyways* delves into the intricacies and implications of the Human Web, and proves that, whether we know it or not, we are all linked, and the results of our actions reach far beyond our limited perception, and often impact upon one another’s lives.


**Man Facing West**

Don Gayton  

*SHORT FICTION*  

BISAC: FIC000000 / BISAC: FIC029000  
$18.95 CAD / 5” x 7” / SEPTEMBER 2010

This collection is part of Don Gayton’s ongoing life journal, recounting moments of his boyhood in the United States and the Peace Corps, and detailing his opinions regarding the draft and the Vietnam War. Guiding these accounts are the forces of science and geology that have shaped Gayton’s career in Canada.

DON GAYTON is the author of four books of non-fiction, *The Wheatgrass Mechanism, Landscapes of the Interior, Kokanee,* and *Interwoven Wild.* He lives in Summerland, BC.
Odd Ball

Arthur John Stewart

TEEN NOVEL
BISAC: JUV039230 / BISAC: JUV039250
$12.95 CAD / 5.5" x 8.5" / MARCH 2011

In a series of intimate monologues interspersed with dialogue and description, the lives of students at Central Middle School are exposed and explored. Four main characters emerge: Kevin, the likeable grade nine student who refuses to accept the “geek” label, Stephanie, the girl with the social conscience, who realizes that Central's school life is deteriorating and she must do something to stop it, Paula, whose home life has fallen into a state of disrepair, and finally Jobbi, the new Latvian immigrant who will be the catalyst for change at Central.

ARTHUR JOHN STEWART is a writer living in Victoria, BC

The Mystery of the Cyber Bully

Marty Chan

JUVENILE NOVEL
BISAC: JUV000000 / BISAC: JUV039230 / BISAC: JUV028000
$10.95 CAD / 5.5" X 8.5" / SEPTEMBER 2010

In their toughest case yet, the sleuths, Marty, Remi, and Trina must follow the electronic trail to their enemy, but the cyber bully outsmarts them at every turn, leaving the trio to wonder if they’ve met their match. When a ploy to expose the culprit goes wrong, Marty does the unthinkable and loses his best friend Remi’s trust. Not only does Marty have to find the cyber bully, but he also has to find a way to win back Remi’s friendship. Marty Chan is back with the exciting fourth installment in the Marty Chan Mystery series.

MARTY CHAN is the author of the Chan Mystery Series. He lives in Edmonton

A Girl Called Tennyson

Joan Givner

JUVENILE NOVEL
BISAC: JUV000000 / BISAC: JUV037000
$12.95 CAD / 5" X 7" / SEPTEMBER 2010

This classic fantasy quest from established YA author Joan Givner takes young readers on an adventure written in the British tradition, fused with a contemporary voice. Givner alludes to the work of Tennyson, as “Tenn” loves poetry, story and rhyme; in fact it will be her love of great writers that helps her in her quest and leads her to success.

JOAN GIVNER is the author of the Ellen Fremedon series (Groundwood). She has published biographies of Katherine Anne Porter and Mazo de la Roche, as well as an autobiography. She lives in Mill Valley, BC.
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Recent Awards and Nominations

**Mennonites Don’t Dance**

Winner of the 2010 Relit Award for Fiction

**Raising Orion**

Shortlisted for the 2011 Danuta Gleed Award and the 2010 Commonwealth Writers Prize

**The Beautiful Children**

Winner of the 2010 ReLit Award for Fiction

**The Monkeyface Chronicles**

Finalist for the 2011 Ontario Library Association’s White Pine Award

For information on these books and writers go to thistledownpress.com or email marketing@thistledownpress.com