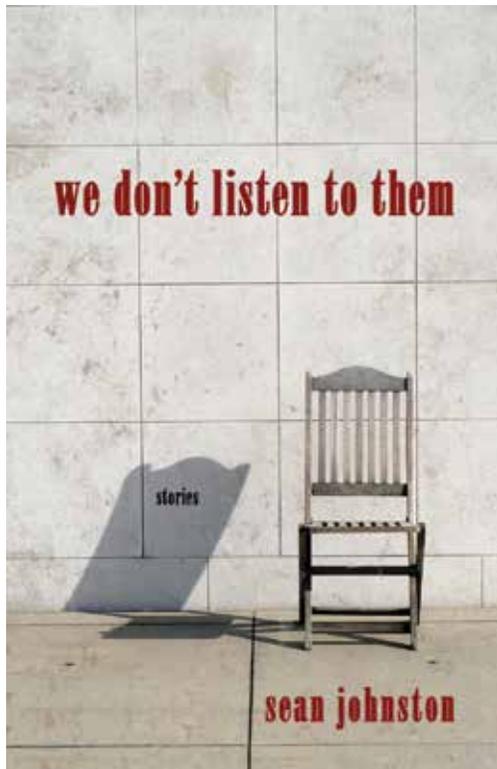


We Don't Listen to Them

Sean Johnston



SHORT FICTION

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In an inviting and challenging series of fictions, Sean Johnston's *We Don't Listen to Them* will leave readers puzzling while they smile at the acrobatics of his words and techniques. Some of Johnston's stories border on "flash fiction" where incidents rather than an actual narrative drive the story.

Several stories, particularly "Whose Origins Escaped Him" and "We Don't Celebrate That", feature metafiction that explores writing about writing. In the former, elaborate footnotes delineate the characters and their actions, explaining why the story is unfolding the way it is and why the writer has chosen to do this. In the latter, the narrator, a writer, explains how rules can be absurdly imposed on writers in a futile attempt to govern the writing process.

At various junctures in the collection Johnston focuses his writing through the lens of metafiction. Shifts in narrative, jumps in time, and intrusions into the narrative tension are all common here.

While the world often turns upside down in these stories and logic and reality are violated, this is fiction that also ebbs and flows with human struggle. *We Don't Listen to Them* is recognizable and relatable and, despite the challenges and uncertainties placed in the reader's path, there is always a way to see more clearly than we think we do.



Sean Johnston is the author of *Listen All You Bullets* (Gaspereau Press, 2013), *The Ditch Was Lit Like This* (Thistledown Press, 2011), *All This Town Remembers* (Gaspereau Press, 2006), and *A Day Does Not Go By* (Nightwood Editions, 2002), which won the 2003 ReLit Award for short fiction. Johnston lives in Kelowna, BC, where he co-edits *Ryga: A Journal of Provocations* and teaches at Okanagan College.

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