

## News from the Feminist Caucus, by Anne Burke

This from Nicole:

We've just received the skeleton for programming at the Canadian Writers' Summit, so I'm happy to be able to let you all know when the Feminist Caucus programming will be taking place.

The Feminist Caucus has one room booked for three hours on the morning of Friday, June 15 – from 9:00am to 12:00pm. This is for the panel/presentation, business meeting, and open reading. You can schedule the three hours however you like – my recommendation, for what it's worth, would be the following:

9 a.m. – 10:15, presentation/panel

10:30 a.m. – 11:15, business meeting

11:30 a.m. – 12, open reading

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## Poetry: The Finalists for the Governor General Awards for Poetry

***All the Names Between*** – Julia McCarthy (Upper Kennetcook, N.S.) Brick Books

***On Not Losing My Father's Ashes in the Flood*** – Richard Harrison (Calgary)

Buckrider Books / Wolsak and Wynn Publishers

***Selah*** – Nora Gould (Consort, Alta.) Brick Books

***Slow War*** – Benjamin Hertwig (Vancouver) McGill-Queen's University Press

***What the Soul Doesn't Want*** – Lorna Crozier (North Saanich, B.C.) Freehand Books

**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: CANADIAN WOMEN AND THE VOTE 1918-2018:  
PRAIRIE FIRE (39.1) SPECIAL ISSUE** (Poetry, Fiction, Nonfiction, Drama)

*Deadline: December 1*

*Prairie Fire* magazine is calling for original, unpublished creative work that commemorates or castigates, honours or howls about the 100th anniversary of the “Act to Confer the Electoral Franchise upon Women.” Send us poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, memoir, drama—or another genre, as you see fit—that celebrates, reflects on, or engages with women's issues in Canada in the last 100 years, such as the suffrage

movement, women's rights, gendered political issues, etc. We welcome submissions in all sorts of styles from writers who live anywhere on the gender spectrum.

Hi Anne,

Just a little note our submissions deadline has been extended...I am contacting people who have submitted to let them know our publishing date has just been moved to winter 2018/spring 2019. This means our submission deadline has been extended from Dec 15 2017 to March 2018. Consequently, I will be contacting people concerning acceptance and edits and so forth sometime near April/May 2018.

Hope you're well!

Elee

I am sending out the call for an anthology I am doing with Anvil Press for 2018 called *Against Death*. The deadline for submissions is Dec 15.

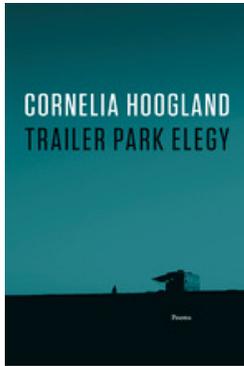
I am looking for articulate first person essays by people who have brushed up against death and found their psychology, or way of being in the world, altered in some way. Details and context are here <https://eleepg.com/against-death-anthology/> and of course I am happy to talk through anything.

Please feel free to share this with anyone who may be a good fit. Apologies for cross-posting!

Thanks!

Elee Kraljii Gardiner  
author, editor, facilitator  
*serpentine loop* (Anvil Press, 2016)  
*V6A: Writing from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2012)  
*Tunica Intima* (forthcoming 2018)  
[www.eleepg.com](http://www.eleepg.com)

<FemNewsSept2017.pdf>



**Review of *Trailer Park Elegy, Poems*, by Cornelia Hoogland  
(Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 2017) 88 pp. paper.**

On arrival, the poet observes both the RV Park and the sea are deserted. There is a half-life between sound and memory, a membrane between the living and the dead. A haiku sets the scene, “Deep Bay opening/ the mouths of the dead.” (p. 13) Of her brother’s stint in rehab she recalls his three sober years. His stories contained well-known characters. Climbing pertains to not only mountains but a playground slide, and then to bed. The weather is a major agent. A Greek Chorus suggests tragedy. The path is detailed by highways and fraught with danger. The allusions to *Beowulf* reference epic and what may be the oldest surviving long poem. The poet’s view shifts from the park to the Toronto subway, then the London tube, by means of a map. Just as whales echo, she hears her brother. However, echolocation is interrupted by shipping traffic. (p. 37)

The epigraph “*Where are you?*” shouted over a phone introduces “I heard his suffering” (p. 28) his death split open a darkness which she owns. She ponders how he experienced leaving this world, his last words, “at the end of fear.” (p. 32) Her car is a womb, her brother trades places with a baby. “Just Breathe”, by Pearl Jam, signifies the problems of losing one’s breath. She wishes on herself a sense of breathlessness whether fainting or a dizzy exhale, diving. (p. 59) “as I push all/ the breath out of me.” (p. 60)

A pattern poem simulates the narrowness of a seaward approach to the Gulf Islands. (p. 37) She shares memories, genetics, and a sense of death. A Watchman is a totem. Tecumseh was a native-American Shawnee warrior and chief. Hence, The War of 1812, about which she speaks, in dashes, as well as the geology, tectonic plates, scapula, no fault lines. (p. 41, 20) A dog has a spirit, but wet smell; “wild for Deep Bay”, the animal noses a carcass, symbolic of fermenting. The dog “knocking me/ sideways” before tears. (p. 63) Then “watching my dog/ being ripped apart.” (p. 65) After “The dog’s wet nose pokes the air, her mind expanded to his Hubble-snout, a nursery for newborns. (p. 82) She looks past the empty seat “to the dog”. (p. 83)

Other haikus are on “My brother alone” (p. 43) “his absence” (p. 48) An imaginary ship’s mainmast, the vanishing point, rehearsing “her story/ her road.” (p. 47) In her beginnings, “I grew up next to a graveyard.” (p. 56) “O” an interjection is in the formal vocative voice, paired with “hyphens” of rain. (p. 56) Furthermore, “a word surfaces”, then “thrashes to shore.” (p. 61) Jacob van Ruisdael was a Dutch artist, draughtsman, and etcher; the reference is an elegant way to describe the sky as moody.

Burial is abandonment. The casket is “over the gaping” (p. 57) The dead require cocooning, gargoyle, secret and elliptical (p. 58) Guy Fawkes Day, Sleeping Beauty; the poet also quotes Carl Jung and W.H. Auden. This heavy lifting is associated with the wharf, while “lifting light becomes us.” (p. 67) Dark matter such as dwarf stars, thirteen billion-year-old light, invisible anti-matter are all elements which impact us. (p. 68)

The titles are derived throughout from the first lines of the poems. The elegy is a formal and sustained lament for the death of a particular person, usually ending in a consolation. Hoogland does a shout-out “*Hey*” to the memory of her brother, William. (p. 87) She personifies her brother’s truck: “rolling”, “groaned”, while the body responds, “folded,/ and the spin/ flew from the last wheel. Horrific intensity and graphic in tone. The solitary replicates “without us”. (p. 77) That moment of the sad and shocking news “and I couldn’t hear.” (p. 79) By comparison, her own car has been rusting (ageing). “I breathe. There is no *I*.” (p. 78)

She was reoccupied with the road accident, “*invisible, deadly*”, “*black ice*”, a weather phenomenon coined in 1962, when her brother turned four, as though predestined. (p. 45) “Since my brother died”, a barometer or marker (p. 49) for the object of a punchline, the wise cracker who intimidated his anxious sister. She recreates his last hours on earth. “It was about him”: a cocoon, pupae, or else he never emerged. In her memory, he is backlit, his life a funnel (p. 53) a private joke. “Yes, this was close”, as love poems, they emphasize mutability and loss. Of the accident and sense of emptiness, “His death is that incident light, the lamp.” (p. 71) The poet memorizes the occasion he stood back from helping their eighty-five-year-old mother, so she could feel the sense of accomplishment while fishing. The cortège, ironically colourful in black and white, a haiku of salamander and boy. This fish weir, high tide, tidal flow remind her, “I feel the ancestors” (p. 75) pungent decomposing leaves. Her world alternates between the present and the past, nearness and distance, hope and despair. The world is personified with sorrow, deep darkness, undertow; “braille on the sidewalk./ Reading with eyes closed”. (p. 81) “I’m the sibling”, she intones, who left home, “Know where I am, brother. Find me.” (p. 83) Container ships, cruise liners, an orca can hear the other. “*Where are you?// where are you?*”, heartbreaking.

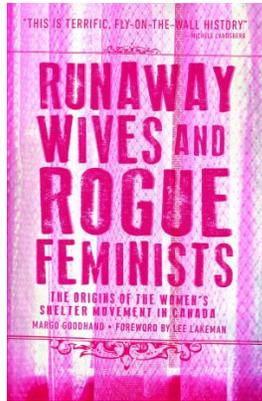
The epigraph is from Seamus Heaney, who was an Irish poet, playwright, translator, lecturer, and the recipient of the 1995 Nobel Prize in Literature. Four poems of “Elegy at the Trailer Park” won second place at the Vancouver Writers Fest, 2016. The “Endnotes” document the research on Ocean Noise Pollution, Mapping Ocean Noise; there are traditional interests in Deep Bay and the Comox Valley, of the Pentlatch First Nation People of Vancouver.

Cornelia Hoogland is the author of several poetry collections, including *Woods Wolf Girl* (Toronto: Wolsak and Wynn, 2011) which was a finalist for the ReLit Award for Poetry. Her short story “Sea Level” was shortlisted for the 2012 CBC Creative Nonfiction Prize. She lives on Hornby Island, B.C. *Trailer Park Elegy* is her seventh book.

### **Cornelia Hoogland Upcoming Events**

- Thru, December 7, 2017: [Cornelia Hoogland reading at Knife Fork Books \(Rick's Cafe\)](#) - Rick's Cafe 281 Augusta Avenue
- Tue, December 5, 2017: [Cornelia Hoogland reading at Art Bar in Toronto](#) - Free Times Cafe 320 College Street Toronto

- Tues, October 24, 2017: [Cornelia Hoogland and Joe Denham read in Victoria](#) - 1644 Hillside Ave #111
- Thur, October 5, 2017: [Cornelia Hoogland reads at BC Maritime Museum](#) - 634 Humboldt St, Victoria



In the supposedly enlightened '60s and '70s, violence against women was widespread. Yet, it wasn't talked about and women had few, if any, options to escape their abusers. In 1973 — with no statistics, no money, and little public support — five disparate groups of Canadian women quietly opened Canada's first battered women's shelters. Today, there are well over 625, demonstrating the ongoing needs. The author Margo Goodhand is the former editor-in-chief of the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Winnipeg Free Press*. She has been published in newspapers and magazines across Canada, including the *Globe and Mail* and *The Walrus*, as a syndicated columnist, news reporter, travel writer, editorial writer

and arts and book reviewer. <https://fernwoodpublishing.ca/book/runaway-wives-and-rogue-feminists>

The Women Alone Society was a new Saskatoon group, working with provincial funds, to start employment programs for single mothers on welfare. Many of the pioneers are still working in the shelter system. According to Liane Faulder, in her review "Grassroots heroes created women's shelter system", the project was "massive" because it took six years to complete. *Runaway Wives and Rogue Feminists: The Origins of the Women's Shelter Movement* was launched in Edmonton on September 19, 2017. The complete review was published in the *Calgary Herald*, Saturday, September 23, 2017, Section F, p. 12.



The cover text is a line from "The Sound of Water's Footsteps", a long poem by Iranian poet, Sohrab Sepheri. It can be translated as: *My father is dead after the passage of times.*

**Review of *Letters to My Father*, by Bānoo Zan (Toronto, ON: Piquant Press, 2017) paper 52 pp.**

This is Zan's second poetry collection. The title evokes epistolary communication (across the boundaries of life and afterlife); as well as the alphabet of letters themselves in brief dispatches or otherworld messages. At the outset, Zan refutes her muse of female gender, in deference to a persona addressing her father after his death. Her credo is as follows: "It is only when stories have exhausted themselves that poetry happens." ("Introduction and Acknowledgements")

The poems in this collection are not titled but numbered one through forty-one. In 1) she reverses “me” with death (phallus) and “you” with life (womb) from the (un)known. In 2), “My eyes”, “My hands”, “My voice” are overtaken like her words have been. In 3), the “mihrab” is a niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the direction of Mecca (Muslims should face when praying). The “distich” is a pair of verse lines, a couplet, usually a self-contained statement, ironically the form of most of these poems. Her cry is “Father/ Oh father”, (p. 4) “Baba” is a term of endearment for “father”. Sometimes the “you” appears to be addressed to herself.

Rumi was a 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian Sunni Muslim poet. “Shams” may refer to sun, to false fronts, and to the name of Rumi’s mentor and beloved. “Rome” is actually a term used in the Muslim world to refer to the Byzantine Empire. The poet, an adult child, refuses to repent from her use of words. In 5) she suffers a loss of words, of irony, without logic. His death was “weightless”, “wordless”, leaving her to “interrogate/ silence” (p. 9) “My words have aged”, by 7) “lonely letters”. God is “her”, not ancient ideologies, Azan may refer to Islamic call to prayers. The Muslim holiday of Ashura brings pilgrims. She feels the need of “decoding/ the ink/ of the unseen.” (. 13)

The “qasida” is an Ancient Arabic word and form of writing poetry, an ode, although she does allude to other forms, such as the ghazal, “your tragedy/ into epic”, and epitaph. (p. 14) “Azal” is an Arabic theological term for time without a beginning and is compared with “abad” time without end. Names are used as accusations, anonymously, and she has run short of them. (p. 16) As death, she assumes a position at his death-plot. In place of “you”, “Ou” in the language and writing of Uzbek, a Turkish language, may be “digrah” (or ligature in the extended Latin alphabet (p. 18). However, the poet indicates “ou” is the third person, singular gender, inclusive subject pronoun, used for both “she and “he”. (p. 52) “God wishes ou was you.” (p. 18) In 15, she blends cultures of Demeter, Prometheus, Electra, Antigone, Agamemnon with “My Socratic Hallaj” and Narcissus. (p. 19) In 16), she “wishes”, while 17) repeats the deficiencies in their fragile relationship. Battle images denote armour in 18) and devotion in 19) is punished. She obtained poetry from the muse, “the beat of feet/ on my line”. (p. 25) “I write/ standing up” (p. 26) because “You must be a poem// more loved/ than poetry”. In 23) we “had no word/ for words” (p. 28)

Zatoun is olive. The Qur’an verses are compared with “poetry so profane”, Mohammed, Moses, and the prayer rug. (p. 30) “Ithar” means sacrifice. She personifies his shirts, prayer beads. Then, the river and the cemetery; epic similes, such as “the calligraphy/ of breath” and “the final/ writing”. (p. 33) She plays with the elements of time, past and present. As extended metaphor, she imagines herself as his prayer rug. Distance “across words and worlds.” (p. 36) The story she weaves may go untold. Indeed, “I write in a language/ you couldn’t speak/ when you could speak”. (p. 38) Fatherhood remains “unexplored” due to innumerable conflicts. Death is symbolic of contraries: the greatest liar, never lies, “telling lies/ honest to death.” (p. 41) “God was an infidel”, still signified and gendered as “She” and

“her”. “Intifada” means “tremor”, referring to the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation. She rejects suicide. As poet, “I melt into the lava/ of lines”. (p. 43) The pain inspires her (“orenda”). In 37) Ophelia, “the Sufi of death”, means devotional poetry. (p. 45) She decides “I need a verse/ from your oracle”. (p. 46) Death is the “smirking shadow” (p. 47) She calls on him to open these letters “to decode my screams”. (p. 47) War extends beyond the end of life. Story “killed you”. (p. 48) In 40) “open you arms/ Dad// Open fire/ on peace”. (p. 49) Now, “bars of breath” transfer from her father to the poet, “this legacy of mirrors.” (p. 50)

Although the collection is dedicated "For My Father (1937-2012)", the publisher's note states that the speakers in the poems are not to be confused with the poet. Zan is a poet, translator, teacher, editor, and poetry curator. *Song of Phoenix: Life and Works of Sylvia Plath* was reprinted, in Iran, in 2010, under her academic name. Her first poetry collection *Songs of Exile* was released, in 2016, by Guernica Editions. It was shortlisted for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award, in 2017.



**Roghyeh Ghanbaralizadeh** received her M.A. in English Language and Literature from Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran, in 1997. She has taught English literature and translation at various Iranian Universities. Her poems, articles and translations of such poets as Adrienne Rich, Langston Hughes, Audre Lorde have appeared in numerous journals in Iran. Her book *The Song of Phoenix: Life and Works of Sylvia Plath* was published in Iran, in 2007.

Source: *Pen International*, 2007, volumes 57-58 retrieved online October 6, 2017. Includes reviews of works written in languages of lesser currency, news from PEN Centres, original works, and papers delivered at International PEN congresses

Poems by new League Member Joan Conway

**Streambed**

*For Kathleen*

My sister collects our past in a shoe box,  
greeting cards span over five decades  
link us together like stepping stones  
strewn across a tumbled streambed.  
She is the keeper of stories  
reaching below the surface  
from deep internal wells,  
accounts etched in fluted patterns  
after a once turbulent flow.  
We examine birthday cards,  
scrawl of mother's handwriting binds us  
with words that loop off the sheet  
like river rocks worn smooth with age.  
Channel of tombstones carried in a container,  
my mind peers into darkened pools  
where layers shift,  
granite slabs shimmer with life.  
Never mind that they no longer exist,  
have not existed for some time  
and how we question the remains of truth.  
Memories awash on forgotten shores  
made perfect by their absence.

## Safe Haven

I look out the attic window  
into arms of giant spruce,  
a tree house embraced in boughs  
symmetrical weaving as they bend  
up and down in October wind.

Some nights gusts blast the still sturdy trunk,  
limbs flail overhead,  
bones groan with forgiveness,  
cones pelt down like thick hail upon chipped wood  
worn grey from years of windswept rains.

This tree knew Molly, the first owner  
raising seven children under 2x4s lean frame.  
Did she stack her babies in bureau drawers,  
tuck them in amongst red gingham aprons?

Did they wake like loaves of bread  
rising on the cook stove?  
Plop out of pans with golden crusts  
waiting for dabs of butter,  
crimson scoops of raspberry jam.

Molly, a thin veil of flour on her brow  
has no time to sift words through her mind,  
pause in her berry patch and think  
how each jeweled orb holds a summer's worth  
of sweetness beneath its skin.

Could she allow dahlias and sweet peas to spill  
over the potato patch where she might inhale  
honey infusion of rose petals?  
Yet she too looked out this window,  
noticed green arms cascading thick silhouettes  
onto matted needle bed below,  
felt their weight above her during winter storms.  
I imagine Molly's whisper,

her breath a prayer upon the pillow.  
Its own symmetrical weaving  
curves in and out.  
Gentle     be gentle     hold us gently.

### **Skeena River Flood**

i.)

*The community of Terrace is largely isolated from the rest of the province...A mudslide and flooding have closed a highway and left the CN main line under water.     – BC Environmental Center 2007*

Rivers underground life expands.  
The earths swollen cavities form veins and capillaries,  
fan their way beneath our home three blocks from the main flow.  
Water rises through the concrete floor.  
Jack hammer releases a geyser of spray  
cold and clean as deep springs,  
drone of pump a tireless rumble.  
I had a sanctuary along the riverbank.  
Nook of trees in cool relief,  
feel water wrap around  
like soft breath upon my face  
whispering secrets of her large body.  
River canyons compress waters.  
Open streams shift in complete surrender,  
my refuge gouged out with spring swell,  
in its place a steep slice of bank.

ii.)

*The Skeena River is above flood stage. The discharge is the second largest recording measured in seventy-seven years. Substantial snow remains in the Skeena Basin.*

The basement transforms into an underground cave.  
Frigid tendrils settle in walls and furnishings,  
early morning mist saturates the upper rooms.  
I huddle in blankets, drink green tea  
remember my childhood home.

Stucco walls chipped around the bottom  
like scabs continually picked away.  
Wire mesh, its brittle shell expose  
fist sized holes that lead to a crawl space.  
My mother alone with four small children  
worn thin with this house.

iii.)

*Water levels are dropping or at least not rising so fast.  
Cooler than seasonal weather has put the brakes on snow melt.*  
A thin skin of water envelopes the cement floor,  
trickles into sides of the hole                      pump slows  
an eerie vacuum fills the space.  
Months later I dream of Skeena.  
A pool forms outside my door,  
I dive in fully clothed,  
swim out to the open river.  
A shadowy presence moves alongside  
swift and sure.  
I am not alone  
the river is silent    waits                      just beneath my floor

### **Open for Business**

The house plunked square centre at the dead end of Kalum Street  
appears as though it was always there. Always the stage  
for slow moving CN trains chugging in its rear,  
car loaded with saw chips heading east.  
The peaked roof bears a Union Jack flag,  
flapping in the chill October afternoon.  
It appears to be waving at the almost empty street  
at the fitted brick sidewalk winding  
its way around patch of turf,  
too green for this late in the fall.  
Waving at the cedar tourism sign announcing  
one of Terrace's early pioneers,  
George Little lived here.  
His wife, Claire Beste Little, designed the house

but it is George who is quoted for saying  
“You can’t get ahead in life until you have a nest.”  
“Get ahead” rings off the grand entranceway,  
off freshly painted white pillars surrounding the porch.  
Thick timber doors polished in oil-finished gleam,  
large wrought iron windows framed on either side.  
“Get ahead” reflects off a paddlewheel model on display.  
Boats that forge new frontiers  
push along banks of the Skeena River,  
torrents of water pounding their bodies.  
Ahead in life, new life-  
the sawmills spewing out logs and chips.  
George Little, the first pioneer to start  
a mill in this town, to hire its first employees.  
The house tall and white  
against blackened bodies of the CN rail line,  
cars in motion rattle as they joust into position,  
clang and groan under their weight.  
Iron frames pick up speed, roll ahead  
past the house, past neatly trimmed lawns,  
empty park benches inviting rest.  
Tall and white against  
the only other building on this block,  
the Terrace Hotel, equally anchored.  
Its squat body lined with windows  
reflecting the grey afternoon sky.  
At the corner stands a man.  
He does not look at the house.  
His head tilts,  
listening, watching.  
Eyes blending into long thick hair  
into dark skin of crushed velvet  
draped inside a black jacket  
that flaps open in the breeze.  
He does not look at the park benches.  
Does not rest here.  
The house tall and white against  
yellow cottonwood leaves,  
stands punctured with fur.

Fall air crisp, potent  
calling out to the treed hill behind the track,  
to shelters with deer in full rut.  
Bucks listening, watching.  
Velvet horns push their way  
through red alder brush,  
through rosehip and snowberry jewels.  
The winding tracks no longer their territory  
circling the town.  
Still the flag waves,  
ruffles the grey lead sky,  
salutes the parking lot-  
open for business signs  
inviting commerce.

### **Snapshots of Port Edward Cannery**

We amble down the board walk,  
smiles like contented tourists  
dreaming our stories.  
*history has a way of remaining silent*  
We peer into display cases  
the manufactured antiques,  
tobacco cans, enamel dishes,  
wooden fruit boxes.  
Purchase old fashioned gum drops,  
gold nugget bubble gum  
from a Scottish store keeper,  
his thick brogue disappearing  
between the tours.  
He entertains with tales of adventure,  
displays bounty-  
Chinese green-tinted opium bottles,  
a Japanese salt-glazed sake bowl,  
dug up at opposite ends  
of the cannery.  
We purchase thin coiled  
notebooks of local history,  
the official version

of the growth of the town.  
*history has a way of remaining silent*  
A Japanese mannequin mends nets.  
Paint-chipped face, unkempt wig,  
thick wool pants folded over.  
She has no feet,  
hunches over her nets  
like a feral child  
frozen.  
Black and white snapshots-  
fish line the floor in a great  
ocean of bodies,

assembly lines,  
head and tail removed  
day after day.  
Bodies stagger off to bunkhouses,  
their segregated sections,  
do not mingle.  
Not much left.  
Portions missing like dismembered limbs,  
buildings that housed First Nations  
towed away then burnt,  
structures for the Chinese  
swept into the channel.  
A Japanese net loft still remains-  
its platform, a sliced off segment,  
holds a tangle of nets  
sprouting hemlock  
with nowhere to grow.  
*history has a way of remaining silent*  
Nearby, homes for European Families,  
white like gutted halibut bellies,  
stand in fine repair.  
Fresh paint covering weathered timber,  
a neat little row without the scars  
of chopped off fingers.

## **Frozen Reflections**

I would melt the patterns  
on single paneled windows-  
lacy ferns crystal caverns.  
My breath hot against the glass  
fingerprints screwed  
into this pristine world.  
If it was cold enough  
the pipes would freeze.  
We huddled around the door  
of the electric stove  
wrapped in blankets,  
grey army wool cloaks  
like dark sentries  
guarding the red-hot element  
greedy for its heat.  
My mother would press  
her back against the oil furnace,  
skin like a sponge  
willing its flailing heat  
into her small hands  
lined with veins,  
empty against the cold.  
She would hug me  
in fleeting moments  
catching me by surprise  
like a sudden snowstorm  
that would leave me blind,  
uncertain of my way.  
I later came to understand  
they were a form of apology.  
I have examined my own hands  
skin that is weathered  
into many rivulets  
and wonder at the marks  
I too leave behind.

Gaping holes words cannot fill  
the void where icicles grow,  
inch by inch,  
become gleaming daggers  
in the sharp sunlight.

**Acknowledgements:**

"Streambed", "Safe haven", and "Skeena River Flood" in *Writers North of 54<sup>0</sup>'* Chapbook, Water Worn, 2017

"Frozen Reflections" in *Writers North of 54<sup>0</sup>'* Chapbook, Snow Feathers, 2016

"Open for Business" and "Snapshots of Prince Rupert Cannery"  
published in *Unfurled: Collected poetry from Northern BC Women*  
(Halfmoon Bay, B.C.: Caitlin Press, 2010)

**Biography:**

**Joan Conway** lives in NW British Columbia. Her love for the culture and geography of her home strongly influences her work. She sees her poetry as an avenue to create social change, build community, and to celebrate life. You can find her poems in journals and anthologies.

<https://greenblossomstudio.wordpress.com/>



## WORKSHOP: WRITING THE EARTH

Sunday, October 29, 2017

9:30 am – 3:30 pm

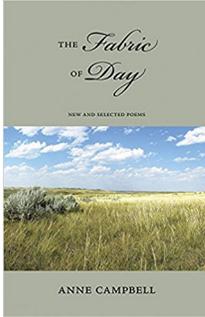
Devonian Botanic Garden

**Jenna Butler** is the author of three critically acclaimed books of poetry: *Seldom Seen Road*, *Wells*, and *Aphelion*, and a collection of ecological essays, *A Profession of Hope: Farming on the Edge the of Grizzly Trail*. Her current work includes *Magnetic North*, a collection of prose poems linking the Norwegian Arctic and the northern Canadian boreal, and *Revery: A Year of Bees*, essays about women, beekeeping, and international community-building.



Back by popular demand, a writing workshop for the naturally inclined, led by critically-acclaimed author **Jenna Butler**, in the beautiful setting of the University of Alberta Botanic Garden. Participants will take in the sights, sounds, scents, and light of a fall garden during an outdoor walk, then head inside for inspired writing, overlooking the tranquil Kurimoto Japanese Garden. This workshop is suitable for writers of poetry or prose, at any level of experience. Limited capacity – register early to avoid disappointment.

<https://writersguild.ca/workshop-writing-the-earth-autumn-reflections-at-the-garden-with-jenna-butler/>



**Review of *The Fabric of Day: New and Selected Poems*, by Anne Campbell (Saskatoon: ThistleDown Press, 2017) 160 pp. paper.**

The Fabric of the Day is the domestic equivalent of the fabric of the cosmos: space, time, and the texture of reality (a text by Brian Greene, one of the world's leading physicists and the author of the Pulitzer finalist *The Elegant Universe*.) I am not arguing there is a one-to-one correspondence, only that Campbell's poetical universe is rapt with as much angst, grief, wonder lust, and awe.

In "New Poems" (pp. 138-174) she dreams about the actor Walter Matthau, a poem is "more open-ended". The act of leaning leads to more, in a human relationship, than trees. Love is let loose. She revisits anxiety, simply a name for an experience, but seeks what is missing in herself. Sleep welcomes you, when you are too tired to "serve the Lord". ("You are Gone") A "Memorial" draws on Simone Weill, Nelson Mandela, Wade Davis. "Fecund" ("Taking a Break") is God's position, the fallen, "a poem coming on". ("Real Winter") The substance may be: matchmaking, the power of the colour blue; love addict, the shaking and the trembling; but memory is a hard bargain. How to live the long haul, ("The Strength"), the seniors complex preoccupied by puzzles. Of migraines, "Manifest is a word", a body limp with pain. ("The Cross") In a clean sweep, "Best Before" bar codes as philosophy, it is a gymnastic feat to repaper the shelf, the Lazy Susan. Campbell offers a visionary picture poem with light, perhaps in early spring. As always, swimming, ballerinas, a scent of pine. ("North Memory"). Nowhere is paradoxically everywhere. Rembrandt painted hyper realism. *Proust Was a Neuroscientist* is a nonfiction book by Jonah Lehrer. The dark is "she" who whispers. Experience is "Redux" or brought back, revived. She assumes her second skin ("Body Going Home")

In an Introduction "On Time", the poet look back (not in anger), or else she suffers the fate of Saul's wife turning to salt. Poetry is the result of strong feelings recollected in tranquility, according to William Wordsworth. In this instance, with cyber technology, the poet actually performed a word search, "book by book; poem by poem", in order to arrive at her most recurring image, as prairie and most often appearing word is "time", indeed "each moment, one after another". One example is her poem "Prairie", wind principle of "my heart". Another is, "A month of Sundays" engrains habit. ("Time Comes to Houses on Sundays")

*No Memory of a Move*, which was published in Edmonton, by Longspoon Press, in 1983; by NeWest Press, in 1985, runs from pp. 18-51. "Pine Poems" is a long poem, in eight sections. "This is the beginning", an account of before the initial "pine scent", its stirring, "the memory of pine". Primal sensations are conveyed through scent, poetical transference, as in the olfactory receptor neurons which transmit nerve impulses. The pre-lapsarian "knowledge before the fall", of season, and sinning, or experience. "This is perfect/ aware", as a child. In part 8, "memory of a move", the St. Joseph's School is now a co-operative model of the Catholic School Board, in order to preserve Indigenous culture (see: Native Survival School, Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre). "Babushka" in Poland and Russia means an old woman or grandmother; it may also be a headscarf

tied under the chin, typically worn by them. The poet alludes to “Old Country ways. “Polenta” is a dish of boiled cornmeal, part of the daily round of activities. Chinese acrobats and Heritage Park, in Calgary, are presented in terms of tourism. The landmark Gledhills drugstore, The Burnside Ranch, Ranchman Helge (a volunteer), and the NW Mounted Police Barracks are only some of the amusement attractions. “The Birthmark”, a short story by Nathaniel Hawthorne, is retold. The poet puns on “I absent myself// absinthe myself”, as well as “assure myself” and “sure enough”. (“O.K.”, p. 29) The Novia Café, a setting for “Other Man”, is in Regina. The question is assumed, in “The Answer”. The poet, in cap and bells, acts as the court jester, in “Queer Cornered Cap”. Another role is as “The Magician”, like King Solomon, but on Cloud Number Nine. E.J. Pratt was still capable of writing an epic on a grand scale. (“Union”) The poet is the woman who watched. (“The Dancer”) She feels “off centre”, “odd/ [at]an angle”. (“Edging Out”) There are physical and mental illnesses, including migraine headaches, either for “Christ’s sake” or wrestling with the Angel D. (of Death). As a result, she realizes she must look within herself, at Mass. (“The Image”) “The Wiz”, a circus clown, ballet mistress, dancer are all forms of juggling and/or entertainment. Saskatchewan’s “Eco Lake” evokes “This lake is a metaphor”. (p. 47) The middle of the earth is another imagined location.

In *Death is an Anxious Mother* (Thistledown Press, 1986) which runs from pp. 54- 85, Death is thus personified. Words turn over stone (“Stone Detour”) much is made of memory. A poem dedicated to poet Fred Wah uses the conceit of a fish hooked by a line. Some men keep too many secrets from women. (“It follows”) A pattern poem appears wind-blown. (“Another Love Poem”) Our basest habits theorized by Marx and Freud. (“Shopping”) Her directional climb depends on time. (“Getting Up”)

*Red Earth, Yellow Stone* was published by Thistledown, in 1989, and runs from pp. 68-106. She sounds removed: “the person I think of as me” (“Dark Mystery”), while imagining a connection, but fears that loss; so she compares the word or state of marriage as difficult to get right. She questions commitment but feels stunted. (“Pruning”) Her silence is an empty space. (“Coming Home”) For The Franciscan monastery (“Today is Love”), Adam means earth, and visions means risk. A prose poem about a stone cutter (“Deciding”) turns on the meaning of “De” and “Cide”; therefore “Decide is a word filled with undoing, slaughter, killing/ and living.” (p. 77) She examines one, of all the stones she has carried home, to capture “spirit enfleshed”. (“The Beginning”) She believes “Time/ is female, a mother”. (“Another Time”) Fossils are time (“Amber”) but memory of a Tarot sign and suicide intrude. (“Hanged Man”) An offering is wrong. (“Orange”) A man has hooks (“Prey Was Holy”) Language has maternal qualities.

*Angel Wings All Over* was published by Thistledown Press, in 1994, and runs from pp. 88-105. A poem composed after a watercolour by artist Ken Lochhead is an effective ekphrasistic work The visual art prompts more literary images, as though the poet has been cast in a spell. Absence and emptiness hurt. (“Long Way Home”) A witty physiotherapist prefaces the description of a book cover; the function of stones was as markers, removed from the body by surgery. (“Stones”) A kitchen device holds history, she is thinking of a Tarot card. Some angels appear awkward but bring grace. Elvis

Presley has been sighted, as a saint. The salt crust of the earth has hidden a slough. (“Exploration”) The shape is preserved in design. (“Lilac”) Life experiences can be dangerous. (“The Way She Cares”) Birds “tiny breathing graces”, in metonymy, (“Small Fears”), wounds, as synecdoche, may be married. (“Old Friend”) Grace replaces ashes, the grey gone (“Grace”), like ducks. (“Grace 2”) The elements of weather are personified as “not rational”. (“A Good Perspective”) The role of light is restricted by the observer looking up. (“Light Change”) Angel of D. reappears. (“Angels All Over”) The spirit of God is everywhere. (“The Moon”)

*Soul to Touch* was published by Hagios Press, in Regina, in 2009 and runs from pp. 108-136. The poet announces: “I see this desert as home find in my heart room”. (“Drought Relief”) St. Peter’s Abbey, in Muenster, Saskatchewan, is the oldest Benedictine monastery in Canada. It was founded in 1903. St. Michael’s, a retreat, is associated with the Franciscans. The poet conveys a spiritual connection through nature and awe. Some of these poems remind me of sprung rhythm in God’s grace, by Gerald Manley Hopkins. Poetry is the means of bringing the dead back to the living through the agent of memory. Grief abides in a tiny bee. She prays, God take away everything. (“Giving Up the House”) A few of the poems are centred on the page. Rae Johnson is an artist, who lives and works in Toronto. Her work is in the Canadian data base. (“The Moon Draws”) The poet embraces wildlife, the red fox and the swift fox, nearly extinct, in a poem for poet D.G. Jones. An idea of God remains a mystery, whether metaphor is from nature, for mood, for wild. She adopts some words from Emily Dickenson and makes them her own. (“Falling into the Sky”) Catherine Bush is a Canadian novelist. Migraines offer “that strange land of colour.” (“Bacon Lover Prayer”) Music and song generate vibrations. At Tunnel Mountain, she contemplates the meaning of writing. The view is from her studio. The viola has a special purpose in the orchestra. Her annual birthday poem to herself prompts her to let go. The Butchart Gardens and the Abkhazi are in Victoria. A picture gallery replaces the cathedral for worship. Martha Wainwright is a Canadian-American folk singer and songwriter. Her brother is named Rufus. The poet explores Heidegger and Buddhists for the meanings of detachment and negation. (“Time and Being”) Angels are on the job, Archangel Gabriel. (“The Faces of Love”) She declines what she describes as wild rides. (“Not a Question of Love”) The poet is truly a visual artist who makes marks on a page. (“Commissioning of Words, after the Art Galley of Regina”)

Campbell is an award-winning author of five collections of poetry and of popular nonfiction: *Regina’s Secret Spaces, Love and Lore of Local Geography* (University of Regina Press, 2006) and *Biblio Files, A History of the Regina Public Library* (University of Regina Press, 2017, both of which she co-edited. At the Regina Public Library, she administered Canada’s first public Writer-in-Residence program. She has served with the Writers Union of Canada, the Writers Development Trust, the Saskatchewan Writers Guild, and the Heritage Committee of the Wascana Centre Authority.