

News from the Feminist Caucus, by Anne Burke, Caucus Chair

This month, original poems from new members Laura Zacharin, Michelle Poirier Brown, and Fiona Raye Clarke; and a review of *Beyond Forgetting: Celebrating 100 Years of Al Purdy, An Anthology of Poems Written in Tribute to Al Purdy*, edited by Howard White and Emma Skagen, with a Foreword by Steven Heighton (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2018)

Bio: Originally from Montreal, **Laura Zacharin** currently lives in Toronto. In 2018, she completed her Creative Writing Certificate at University of Toronto's School of Continuing Studies and was the recipient of the Marina Nemat Award for poetry. She was a finalist, in 2016, for the Janice Colbert Poetry Award and, in 2018, for *The Malahat Review's* Far Horizons Poetry Contest. In 2017, she attended the Emerging Writer's Intensive at the Banff Centre. Her poetry has appeared in *The Fiddlehead* and is forthcoming in *CV2*. Her first book *Common Brown House Moths* will be published, in fall 2019 (Frontenac House). "**American Mestengo**" was published on line at Frontenac House website as a sample of the upcoming book. "Sixteen Sweet" and "Opening the Country Shack" were published in *The Fiddlehead* Spring 2018

American Mestengo

Every time the horse dies she writes another prayer.
Some in plain English, some in languages
she doesn't speak or understand.
The pen keeps moving or sometimes it's just her lips —
Blessed be or May he rest in or Restore him.
On her desk, scribbles pile up,
booklets, loose-leaf binders, scraps. Her skin
against bond, smooth and flat. Calluses
on her inky thumb and index.

In the predawn,
horses cross the field, over the bridge. Some gallop, forage,
get their fill. Others stumble, limp; their legs
are thin and weak. Cracks mark their hooves.
Some are ringed with flies, their eyes
so runny and swollen they don't close. Some nicker and bray,
lie down on the vast and dusty plain.

And she is in her room,
listening. She's always listening, waiting
for another horse to jump a make-shift fence
or clear a river. She scrawls wildly,
running alongside horse as fast as her legs
— slow and only human —will carry her.

The light in her room is on and on. She loves.
Has always loved. The horses, their doleful eyes, their coats
—bristly in one direction, smooth in the other —
rubs her palm along the mane.
But they are miles away, running and running. Can't stop
thinking of those damn horses. Their horsey smell,
the rhythm of their hooves on the sandy plain.
It doesn't matter if they're not really hers.
That they belong to horse.

Can't sleep, always expecting or not expecting news
to come and it does it doesn't come. She gets an email,
a text, *ur horse*, the phone rings. A man shows up
at her door with a special delivery, or letters
smudged in the night through the grime on her window,
a prickle on the back of her neck.

She just knows.

I'm so sorry to inform you —

In the Light Of

the brand new Bentley or the rusted-out Dodge, her father's car,
or no one's car, the parking lot of In-N-Out where she never goes
(a trap door, her fire escape), never orders a burger with fries in a
paper carton with greasy red palm trees every other night, doesn't
eat burgers, it makes her feel fat. *No Delay*, flashes the, flashes the
redgold. Gold makes her look cheap, she knows, like this town in
the middle of nowhere, a hole in the sleeve, but she loves it, it
reminds her of. Its woolly ballings, loose gold threads, for
plucking or get out of this town, or the whole thing come undone.
Slices of plump tomato slick or onion slivers gleam on blacktop in
the light of neon so like moonlight unlike moonlight. Just the
sameness of an iridescence blinking: *Ordering is as easy as*. So
bright it's blinding. Worries the golden threads. Combo 1 a
double-double, vanilla shake and fresh-cut fries, golden outside,
steamy soft inside. That breathless feeling of full. In the not pale
moonlight, oil glistens on her face and finger tips.

Meanwhile, Back at Home

He told her she was bristly, turned away
and left the room

She called out after him
in a hairy voice with a monkey tail
I'm not bristly

She grew fangs, a curve
in her spine, her nails curled
to claws. In a burgundy housecoat

cinched at the waist,
toothbrush in one knuckly hand
close up to the bathroom mirror

through frothy green toothpaste
she breathed
hot stink

Sixteen Sweet

Other girls bought theirs from Honey
size 12 (*her* size) baby blue brushed denim
all edges corners and dark my soft new heart Sweet
Sixteen Other girls bought theirs I took it when I opened
My soft new heart Sweet Sixteen
Other girls bought theirs I learned
to live with dirty hands long nails in a dress from Simplicity
size 12 (*her* size) baby blue brushed denim all edges
corners and a long dress from places called Honey or
he was just just come out he was just come
out or Charming Had said years before but every time
I opened my ride to Heaven those girls swayed
heads bowed devoutly in time I wanted one of those pimply
boys with me wouldn't go with me wouldn't go with it
Every time I opened my soft new heart Sweet Sixteen
Other girls bought their gowns from places called Honey
or Charming Squinted sideways in the mirror I learned
to catch my stubborn flat chest in a coverall top in the coat check
Sus4 and dark my soft new heart Sweet
Sixteen Other girls bought their flowery whoosh
and I'd forgotten to speak the cliché but he
was just come out or Charming Had dates hairdos eye shadow
My hairdos eye shadow My hair was thin and limp
and a coverall top over my stubborn flat Sometimes he'd meet me
at McDonald's Every time I learned to squint out sideways
pined after his best friend In the coat check room
cool and creases the coat check cool and again and limp
and flow and dark my soft new heart Sweet Sixteen
Other girls bought theirs I could still hear it

Opening the Country Shack May 24

So close in here can't catch my breath,
can't get a word in, can't find a seat, stand stiffly
squeezed against the wall. Voices hum

in the wind that brushes through. Is that you?
In peeling birch bark—a letter I once wrote. *Raucous birds!*
Louder than city traffic! I hope summer never ends!

Jangle in the handmade stoneware wind chimes (her hand).
There's no such thing as ghosts? Listen carefully.
Those things that will

and won't return. The sundress
with yellow poppies a ghost once promised
to another ghost when they both cast shadows but

now she doesn't answer when I ask her where it is.
She blinks past me. Says *ba ba ba ba* then drifts up.
A fleck in my eye. I keep believing

I'll find it. The dress, that vase, her favorite photograph
(How young she looks, eyes so soft). I open drawers and bags
each time I come here thinking I might have

missed it last time. Mouse droppings, gnawed Life
Magazines. Plastic crumbs – shards
of shatter in my bloodless hand. While out back

a field of baby blue forget-me-nots watches
with fierce black pinpoint eyes&eyes&eyes

Michelle Poirier Brown is an emerging Cree poet and performer, and retired federal treaty negotiator, living in Lekwungen territory (Victoria, BC). Her poem “Wake” was her first to be published and appeared in *PRISM international* 57.1, the *DREAMS* issue. *PRISM* has included the poem in their 2018 Pushcart nominations.

Wake

You dream me still. Racialized, de-racialized, de-colonized. You ask if I have or use a “pre-colonial mind.” You suggest edits to my biography, tell me my stated identity doesn’t exist, and that you know this because you are getting a phd in indigenous lit. You ask me flat out if I’m queer, if you can tick off another box on the grant application.

You dream we are friends, and I become someone you get to say you met for tea in the village. You dream we are friends, and you tell me you’ve taken oranges to the tent city because, of course, that is something I would want to know.

In your dreams, I am often too much, more often not enough. Because of your dreams, you find me repellant, take a prurient interest in my childhood. Your dreams make it hard for me to wake up. I dream I am drowning. I have this dream while I’m awake.

I remember the time we met on the phone, your rude awakening when I showed up at your door. I was still asleep. I checked my shoes to make sure they were clean. As if that had to be the problem.

There was the year you told me it would be best if I chose a different week to rent a cabin, that my daughters were two children too many. You stood beside me on the river bank as I watched the children float by in inner tubes, one of mine vibrant with excitement, the other grinning with fear. I think you dreamed I would never tell.

The grief from that one dreamed me for a long while.

The past is a dream that streams around me, my voice rising through it like bubbles void of vibration, their only sound an almost inaudible pop when they reach the surface. What you cannot see of me fills my lungs.

Always I am waking. I turn up in strange clothes, new words in my mouth, people I no longer know smile as if I remember. I look for others, also awake. Mostly go home alone.

Always I am swimming, cold and asleep, upstream. Bear dips a paw into the stream, flips me breathless against the sky. Wake, he says. Wake.

Fiona Raye Clarke is an award-winning Trinidadian-Canadian multi-disciplinary artist. Her writing has been featured or is forthcoming, in print, in *Broken Pencil Magazine*, *alt.theatre*, and *The Peak Magazine*; and online at *Room Magazine*, *Shameless Magazine*, *The Puritan*, and *This Is World Town*. She was a 2018 Diaspora Dialogues Long-Form Mentorship Program mentee and a Firefly Creative Writing Writer-in-Residence. She is currently based in Toronto and takes up space online at www.fionarayeclarke.com and @fionarclarke.

Why a Black Woman Deserves an Award for Being a Woman Everyday: Acceptance Speech

(originally created for “Panic in the Labryinth” an intersectional feminist poetics, directed by Annie Wong)

For her hair that requires visits to sweatshop salons
that seem to keep non-Black owners rich
while our own struggle,
and poisoned products
that leech through scalp, to body, to mind, to children.

For a mouth that can't speak
because it would never tire screaming
at the secret depressions we're taught not to reveal.

For arms that do the work of holding up the world
- from cooking your food
to cleaning your house -
so you can actualize yourself as a working woman,
while we came to this country working.

For a uterus bought,
sold, and criminalized
because to you our fruits are not worth protecting.

A back bent,
broken, and whipped
for others to cross over.

A vagina that gave passage to lives
that once meant money to you,
without which you would not have respite
from fistula
or appointments with your friendly neighbourhood speculum.

For legs that please when they win races
but are violations
when they're used to run from you.

Black women deserve this award
because we kill lions,
fight tigers,
and slay bears
underwater,
in space,
in every continent
everywhere
everyday of the week.

nasty woman

nasty woman gnawing
squeezing life out of her husband's teats.
giving life in the idle moments
sucking teeth and marrow equally.
no fear but dying.

I stole the secrets to immortality
I give daps,
pounds,
whatever my people need spiritually.

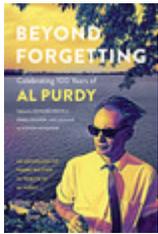
I lost words through years of silence
but god, toronto, you colonizers
-won't collar me.

Precipice

(originally appear in "Stuck Zine" published by nano publishing 2018)

My hand doesn't want to move.
My body freezes on the precipice
of motion.
All thoughts are falling from their perch,
hanging upside down
like bats resting.
Your voice disturbed them.
Their wings are frenzied,
punctuating the supersonic
bleats of their echolocation.
Asking me to write
Is like asking for a corpse

to come home.
Every burial it seems impossible,
but then every year
the third day comes,
the boulder crumbles
and there isn't anyone to bury anymore-
the words flow.



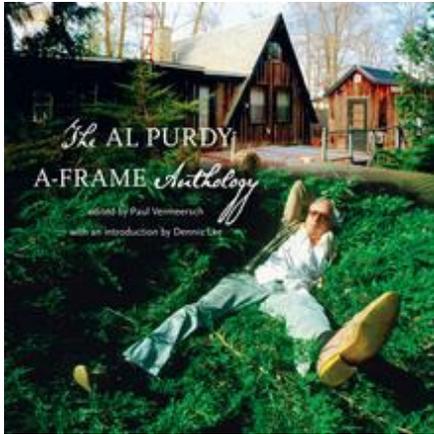
Review of *Beyond Forgetting: Celebrating 100 Years of Al Purdy, An Anthology of Poems Written in Tribute to Al Purdy*, edited by Howard White and Emma Skagen, with a Foreword by Steven Heighton (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2018) 192 pp. paper.

Beyond Remembering: The Collected Poems of Al Purdy was published posthumously, in the fall of 2000. Other celebratory titles of Purdy were: *And Left a Place to Stand On: Poems and Essays on Al Purdy* (Hidden Brooks Press, 2009) edited by Allan Briesmaster and published by the Canada Cuba Literary Alliance and *The Al Purdy A-Frame Anthology* (Harbour Publishing, 2009) edited by Paul Vermeersch.

In spirit(s), December 30, 2018 was the one hundredth birthday of Alfred Wellington Purdy. Better known as Al Purdy (1918-2000) he produced thirty-nine poetry books, a novel, a two-volume memoir, four books of correspondence, and anthologies. Purdy won the Governor General's Literary Award for *The Cariboo Horses*, in 1965, and *The Collected Poems of Al Purdy*, in 1986. He was an officer of the Order of Canada and a member of the Order of Ontario. Purdy supported new voices in the *Storm Warning* anthologies. However, he was only an "unofficial" Poet Laureate, since George Bowering was the first, in 2002.

The Roman term is *Genius loci*, or, alternately, in Christianity, the Holy Spirit, by which it is sometimes referred, who invades or inhabits poetry festivals, bookstores, pubs, Roblin Lake, and especially the A-frame writer-in-residence to reflect Purdy's self-built A-frame home in Ameliasburgh, Ontario.

The indwelling spirit of a place pervades these poems and reported experiences, either directly or indirectly, with detailed encounters associated with beliefs about the sacred character of places. Although increasingly secularized, a guardian who watches over their part of the world and imbues it with a special character, is a protective spirit attached to a place, a sense of place used in humanistic geography. (Sourced online "Can Spirit of Place Be a Guide to Ethical Building?" by Isis Brook, *Ethics and the Built Environment*, London, Routledge from W. Fox, 2000).



Although the League of Canadian Poets initiated the one-time "Voice of the Land" Award for Lifetime Achievement, which Purdy received in 2000, there is also a bronze "People's Poet Al Purdy" statue with the same moniker, at Queen's Park, in Toronto. John B. Lee, in "The Unveiling", celebrates the memorial statue. So too Sid Marty's "The Statue of Al Purdy" and David Helwig's "At Queen's Park".

The "People's Poet" Award was first bestowed on Purdy's friend Milton Acorn (1923-86) when Acorn's 1969 collection *I've Tasted My Blood* was passed over for the Governor General's Award that year. While I was a graduate student at York University I was personally invited by poet and professor Eli Mandel to attend the event in a downtown Toronto pub. I should add, this was before the advent of the subway extension and a bus trip could take hours.

Bowering received the Governor General's Award that year and contributes "At the Cecil Hotel" an Ottawa bar on the down-low, subtitled as a translation of Al Purdy's poem "At the Quinte Hotel". Editor and poet Howard White alludes to the Cecil Hotel in Vancouver, where he heard Purdy read, with poets Peter Trower and Curt Lang.

In "Knowing I live in a Dark Age", Acorn writes lovingly of "my friend Al" as a union builder and cynic, but "a poem erases and rewrites its poet". In "Problem", Acorn recalls talk about suicide. Purdy wrote "House Guest" and Acorn's "Poem For Al Purdy" reflects "you're caged man...I see the bars.// My own, I can't see."

This collection of one hundred poems contains a "Who's Who" of League of Canadian Poet members. Many are occasional poems, written to celebrate or memorialize a specific occasion, such as a birthday, a marriage, a death, a victory, the dedication of a public building (in this instance, the Purdy statue unveiling), the opening performance of a play. The loosely selected themes of the poems are "Encounters", "Wildness", "Inspiration", "Legacy", and "Elegies". The term elegy is limited to a formal and sustained lament, in verse, for the death of a particular person, usually ending in a consolation.

In addition to the poems, there are a Foreword by poet Steven Heighton, an unsigned introduction (likely by the editors), biographies and prose statements, as well as acknowledgements and credits.

This anthology begins with an epigraph by Dennis Lee “Tell the Ones You Love”. Lee’s most recent collection is *Heart Residence: Collected Poems 1967-2017* (House of Anansi Press, 2017). Robert Curie acknowledges “We’re gathered together” but not for a wedding. (“Once in 1965”). Candice Fertile adds “and Al tells his poem” (in her “Sensitive Men” from Purdy’s “Now I am a Sensitive Man”, in “At The Quinte Hotel”).

Heighton recounts how Purdy removed the toothpick from his mouth, before launching into a raucous reading at Queen’s University, in 1983 or 1984. He contributes “Maps of the Top of the World”, an instruction to “know where the words come” and on how “*He loved the poetry of place-names most/ and set them down accordingly—*”.

In the Foreword, Heighton’s memories extend to the summer of 1988 and the early nineties, in Ameliasburg. Bruce Meyer, in “Al Purdy: Voice”, is “saying simply this is my place”. Earle Birney pays heed to this folkloric place: “In Purdy’s Ameliasburg”, “man there’s only dandelions/ barring the way to the privy”. Birney describes the “ferocious” wife (Eurithe) and the “very cowpads before your eyes.” Purdy’s Eurithe being comparable to Birney’s Esther, a wife whom Elspeth Cameron included in her biography of Birney.

As further evidence, Howard White’s “The Poet’s Wife, for Eurithe Purdy”. Rob Taylor has gotten to know Eurithe (“as fine a person as they come! I’m sure Al didn’t deserve her.”) Linda Rogers adds, “I defended Eurithe to the death, not that she, lethal words being the arrows in her quiver, needed help either”. Wednesday Hudson wrote a poem “For Eurithe” a wife who endorsed the idea of Purdy being posthumously nominated as the Canadian Ambassador for the CCLA.

In Calgary, I met in person, Eurithe (Parkhurst) Purdy, his business manager as well as wife since 1941. As a pair, there was an unreal sense of his dramatic, “take-no-prisoners” performance in poetry, followed by his chilling introduction of her. Rodney DeCroo rhetorically asks, “what do you say//not much”, in “Al and Eurithe”. “I Met You Only Once, Al Purdy”, by Dale Zieroth, “but that was enough to know”.

Purdy’s first published book was the doggerel or self-styled “shit” of *The Enchanted Echo*. 1944. “A good writer is somebody who hates himself and loves the world”, cited p. xiii. In Taylor’s “On Realizing Everyone Has Written Some Bad Poems”, Purdy was snatching up loose copies of *The Enchanted Echo*, to burn.

Amid self-loathing, Purdy made a grudging peace with death. “Being dead isn’t so bad, in fact it has a lot going for it”, writes White, in “A Word From Al”. Patrick Lane said “one of the least favours I did for Al was to nail his deathbed back together after it collapsed under him.”

Posthumously, Purdy’s selection *Rooms for Rent in the Outer Planets: Selected Poems 1962-1996*, edited by Sam Solecki, was featured in the CBC’s 2006 Canada Reads competition. A film “Al Purdy was Here” was released, in 2015, when the League of Canadian Poets was meeting, in Toronto. The Al Purdy Songbook was released, in 2018.

In the "Introduction" we learn that Purdy's widow was responsible for encouraging the fundraising efforts to preserve their lakeside cottage, first built in 1957, and the present anthology began with her folder of tribute poems. Tom Wayman, who prepared a work plan, contributed "Purdy's Crocuses", on the "brown blooms", an array of empty beer bottles, and describes my *alma mater*, Loyola College, in Montreal, where Purdy was poet-in-residence, in 1973. Wayman also wrote "In Memory of A.W. Purdy", an elegy. "His gift to me/ was his rambling: his itinerant lines and/ peripatetic stanzas".

David Helwig remembers how "the poems compose themselves" ("Al on the Island"). In "Purdy's Otters", by Robert Thornton, Purdy's collection of Victorian pornography is referenced. Eden Mills, Ontario, hosts an annual Writers' Festival, and Purdy was last interviewed there, by Shelagh Rogers. "He had to find his poems, like children, or an epiphany, every mouthful a poem." ("Famous Last Lines", by Linda Rogers). Heighen wears one of the poet's polyester shirts. Doug Paisley dons Purdy's leather coat. Roblin Lake endures, with the A-Frame's belongings, inside and out. ("In Al Purdy's House", by James Arthur).

Grace Vermeer imagines Purdy drawing a map, when the phone rang. ("Transient") "not sure what to say to the man", "Al and Eurithe", by Rodney DeCroo. The ubiquitous portable Underwood (typewriter). "He regaled me with his genius/ poem after poem never stopping" (Richard M. Grove, in "A Drive with Al Purdy").

In the second section on "Wildness", we learn: "The world doesn't run on poetry" despite the adage "You Have to Keep Writing", a poem by Rolf Harvey. Sid Marty's "My Editor", in memoriam to Purdy and John Newlove, and in a note Marty declares that Purdy discovered his work in *Elfin Plot*, an Andrew Suknaski project. Marty says he refused Purdy's offer to write a preface for his first poetry book, *Headwaters* (McClelland and Stewart, 1973).

"For Al", by Wednesday Hudson, reveals "my stack of failures loom like the goddam Rockies". Gregory Betts, in "Shoulders Descending", complains of how Purdy pushed him down the stairs. "Broken bones heal, but/ national literatures are much more fragile." K.V. Skene, in "As the Days and Nights Join Hands", was inspired by "The Dead Poet", a poem by Al Purdy. League Past President Susan McMaster says "How I Think of Al" is of his taunting of younger poets, so "Al, you're not my muse" but "I think of you, Al/ as you go", in part due to "my own frozen lake/ in my own dank cabin". She indicates her feminism was "budding", in the nineteen-seventies, which was antithetical to Purdy's pose as "the drinking man-among-men".

In "Another goddam poem about drinking beer", Bowering puns in a poem "draft" and "draft beer", "like a Milton Acorn poem". A particular allusion to poet Rob McLennan (who was not a contributor) resembles the unnamed mimeographer and recorder of poetry, who makes an offer of "a dollar a poem."

In part three: "inspiration", F.R. Scott puns with poetry book titles drawn from Purdy and himself, such as "my OVERTURE, my EYE OF THE NEEDLE". ("This Inn is Free") "Say the Names", invokes Kate Braid. "Standing on a Newfoundland Cliff", by Magie Dominic, was inspired by "Trees at the Arctic Circle", by Purdy. In "3 Al Purdys", Bruce Cockburn, offers

three Purdy poems for a twenty dollar bill. In “Spring at Roblin Lake”, by Kath MacLean, this is No Man’s land and her “Too Tall for Antiquity” (“his 6’3 inches to my 5’ 8 inches”, by Russell Thornton). Lynn Tait, with an epigraph from Purdy’s poem “Listening to Myself”, offers “Challenging the Law of Superimposition”, from the Purdy County Literary Festival, 2009.

“Stone Song”, by Christine Smart, depends on Purdy’s “*like a stone song*”. “Lament for a Small Town”, by Solveig Adair, is from Purdy’s poem “Lament for the Dorsets” about the death of the Dorset culture, the people extinct in the 14th century A.D. Kat Cameron, in “How Students Imagine the Dorsets”, begins ironically: “I thought it was a simple poem”. Karen Solie, “The Sharing Economy”, speaks of how the last human being on earth will perish. John Oughton’s “Long Reach: Thanksgiving, 2000” was inspired by Purdy’s Long Reach, Quinte Bay, and “big Canadian presses pumping/ out Al Purdy poetry books”. Glen Sorestad,, a practitioner of the Pub Poems tradition, contributes: “Cactus Cathedral: remembering Al Purdy”, who, like Christ, was drawn to the desert and who ruminates. Peter Trower, in “The Last Spar-Tree on Elphinstone Mountain: for Al Purdy”, alludes to the provincial park on the west side of Howe Sound and north of Gibsons, near the community of Roberts Creek, in British Columbia. Trower was proud of his first book *Moving Through Mystery*, published by Talonbooks, in 1969. Autumn Richardson, who was poet-in-residence at the Al Purdy A-frame, in 2017, contributed “When the Deities are Tended, Morning Comes”; “Chrysalids”, at the edge of Roblin Lake, and “The Oracle”.

Jeanette Lynes, in “Roadtripping: to a Kingston ex”, writes of an abusive relationship and “why I stayed: because it was like living/ inside an Al Purdy poem. Good grief”. She also contributed a playful inventory of “English Assignment: Situate Al Purdy’s Poems in Their Various Literary Traditions”. Rachel Rose dedicated her poem “Iowa City” for the writers of IWP 2015”. The allusion pertains to the International Writing Program, a residency program for international artists, in Iowa City, Iowa. Since 2014, the program has offered online courses to a large number of writers and poets across the world.

Ben Landouceur, in “Stockpile”, is ostensibly earning a man’s love, by writing. Past League President Dymphny Dronyk contributes “Ode to Al Purdy—A Litter of Poets”, in order to unite us from “coast to coast to coast”. An ode is a long, lyric poem, serious in subject and treatment, elevated in style, and elaborate in structure. Some are written to praise and glorify someone (and therefore encomiastic).

Ian Williams, in “Ground Rules”, relies on Johnny Cash songs. Cornelia Hoogland’s “Al Develops His Pleasures”, tells us about both Al and Eurithe. Ken Banstock, “Cromwell’s Head Under the Antechapel”, relates to the Empire Loyalist country, where the Cornwall Public Inquiry took place, in April 14, 2005. The Ontario Attorney General was tasked with an investigation into abuse of young people.

In part four “Legacy”, the poem “Most days, Al Purdy” plays with Al Purdy and Alden Nowlan poems, in an excerpt from “Essay on Legend” by Phil Hall, who also contributed an elegy “from An Oak Hunch: Essays on Purdy. We learn about how “poets piece together the fragments left behind”, in “How Students Imagine the Dorsets”, by Kat Cameron, who was inspired by Purdy. John B. Lee in “The Unveiling”, speaks of Purdy’s statue.

Doug Paisley's "Roblin Lake". and his elegy, "Last Night" are both for Purdy. Nicholas Bradley, "On Being Archaic", was derived from Purdy's poem "On Being Human". Susan Musgrave contributed: "Thirty-two Uses for Al Purdy's Ashes"; "Al Purdy Took a Bus to the Town Where Herodotus was Born", and "Each Life is a Language No One Knows". Laurence Hutchman 'composed "Al Purdy's Place" and, in Lorna Crozier's "A Cat Name Purdy", she ponders "if Al comes back", as a cat.

In part five (and the final section) "Elegies", we discover: Doug Beardsley's "breakout", Julie McNeill's "Trains, Beer & Bronze: the voice of the land", Patrick Lane's "For Al Purdy", an extended prose poem, and John Watson's "Variations" on Saskatchewan.

Among the Biographies and Statements, Solveig Adair identifies as someone growing up in a small northern town. James Arthur spent two months in residence at the Purdy A frame, in Ameliasburgh, after Purdy had passed away. For Doug Beardsley, Al came to read at the University of Victoria, in the fall of 1974. Gregory Betts encountered Purdy and his wife in a Kingston bookstore. Earle Birney (1904-95) was my first poet whom I met, at his reading in Montreal, because my high school librarian invited me. He was a friend, a model, and a mentor to Purdy, according to his biographer Elspeth Cameron, who was an undergraduate professor at my *alma mater* Loyola College. Nicholas Bradley says, "I heard the real thing only for a half-hour that I can scarcely recall". Kate Braid enjoyed Purdy's down-to-earthness and rough humour". Kat Cameron took a course with Heighton, about poetry piecing together stories. Bruce Cockburn said "I went out and got Purdy's collected works". Robert Currie reported "Al Purdy was the first poet I'd ever seen." Sadiqa de Meijer spent a July at the A-frame. Magie Dominic was inspired to write "Standing on a Newfoundland Cliff". Dymphny Dronyk discovered "Al's poetry" as a young teen. Candace Fertile believes Purdy's poetry "runs the gamut of emotions." Richard M. Grove was like many who corresponded with Purdy.

Rolf Harvey waited for Eurithe or Al to pick him up and drive to the A-frame. David Helwig and Purdy met, in 1968, in Kingston, Ontario. Cornelis Hoogland never met Purdy but feels she knows something of the man and poet through his many books. Wednesday Huson had only read a few of "Al's poem"s before writing her poem "For Eurithe". Laurence Hutchman's first encounter with "Al's work" was in grade thirteen, when he read his *Cariboo Horses* at the Kipling Public Library. Patrick Lane "resembles" Purdy because he was born eighty years ago and has written poetry for sixty of those years. John B. Lee dedicated a series of readings to the memory of Al Purdy. Jeanette Lynes remembers her "Purdy revelation". Susan McMaster says Purdy has provided touchstones for her, but she never knew him. Julie McNeill asserts Al Purdy has always been a presence in her world.

Sid Marty thinks Purdy was the kind of poet who could change lives. Susan Musgrove met Al Purdy in Mexico. John Oughton says that Purdy's poetry and life have influenced him, in many ways. Linda Rogers, another past president of the League, said that Purdy and she were in a relationship. K.V. Skene said that Purdy's poetry makes her emotionally react. Christine Smart read Al Purdy's poetry, in the early eighties, and she met him on Salt Spring Island, in the nineties. Glen Sorestad was influenced by Purdy after reading his *Cariboo Horses*.

Lyn Tait says the Purdy Festival was a great time to be reacquainted with the land in this century. Purdy was the first contemporary Canadian poet Rob Taylor found on his own and read deeply. Russell Thornton compares Purdy's poetry with the work of all real poets, in his opinion. Purdy said the life of Peter Trower (1930-2017) was a lot like his. Grace Vermeer was a newcomer to Al Purdy's poems.

The co-editor Howard White published many of Al Purdy's books including the final title, *Beyond Remembering: The Collected Poems of Al Purdy*. Others were Purdy's autobiography *Reaching for the Beaufort Sea*, a collection of prose writings, and his last three books of poetry. He says that Purdy was the first poet he ever encountered and it completely changed his thinking, and "has been one of the greatest rewards of my years in the book trade." He serves on the board of the Al Purdy A-Frame Association. David Zieroth came across Al Purdy when first learning to write poems. Purdy published some of his poems in his anthology *Storm Warning*.



Co-editor Emma Skagen has added her editorial expertise to many bestselling books, including *On the Line: A History of the British Columbia Labour Movement* and *Grizzlies, Gales and Giant Salmon: Life at a Rivers Inlet Fishing Lodge*. She has also worked on a number poetry collections, including Cornelia Hoogland's highly acclaimed book, *Trailer Park Elegy*. A former bookseller at the legendary Munro's Books in Victoria, Emma now lives in Sechelt, BC.

Reviewed by Anne Burke