

NEW STAR BOOKS

21/2
Spring 2021

**New Titles
& Recent
Highlights**

The Wig-Maker

Janet Gallant &
Sharon Thesen

Fiction

72 pp

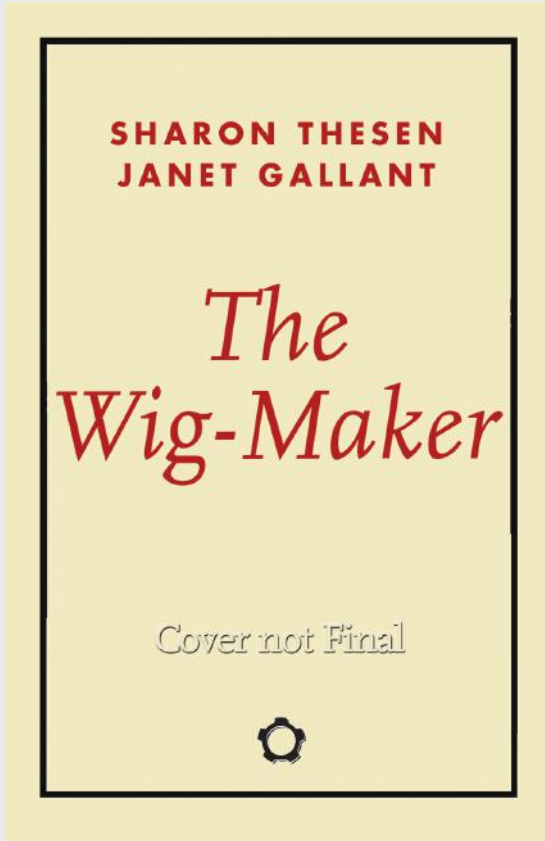
Trade paperback :: 5.5" x 8.5"

ISBN 978-1-55420-171-6

\$18 CAD :: \$16 USD

Publication date :: March 11, 2021

- Molecular Book Launch from Lake Country, BC
- Vancouver based Zoom launch
- Advertising in *BC Bookworld*, *subTerrain*, *Prairie Books Now*, and *Literary Review of Canada*
- Review copy distribution to key radio, interwebs, and print media



A powerful tale of violence, grief, resilience, and transformation, told in the voice of Janet Gallant, transcribed and lineated as a long poem by Sharon Thesen, *The Wig-Maker* gathers and weaves together themes and incidents that accumulate toward “the moan” of racism, sexual abuse, maternal abandonment, suicide, mental illness, and addiction.

Though the subject-matter ranges from a lengthy first-person account of sufferings both personal and cultural, historic and current, the pulse of the telling ultimately led to healing and reconciliation. Almost by magic — certainly with the assistance of the uncanny — the 18-month long process of Gallant’s telling/Thesen’s listening-writing resulted in Gallant’s discovery of her true genetic, and social, identity. In the early part of her story Janet longs to know the reasons that her mother abandoned the family when Gallant was three years old, leaving four young children with their abusive father. She also wants to know what turned her father into “the monster” he had become. Her mother, Valerie Johnson, is Black and grew up in the Black community of Wildwood, Alberta; her Canadian serviceman father, Tom McCrate, grew up in Irish-Catholic poverty in Nova Scotia. As a biracial child, Janet was unaware until she was eleven years old that her mother was Black; nor did she know until very recently that Tom McCrate was not her biological father.

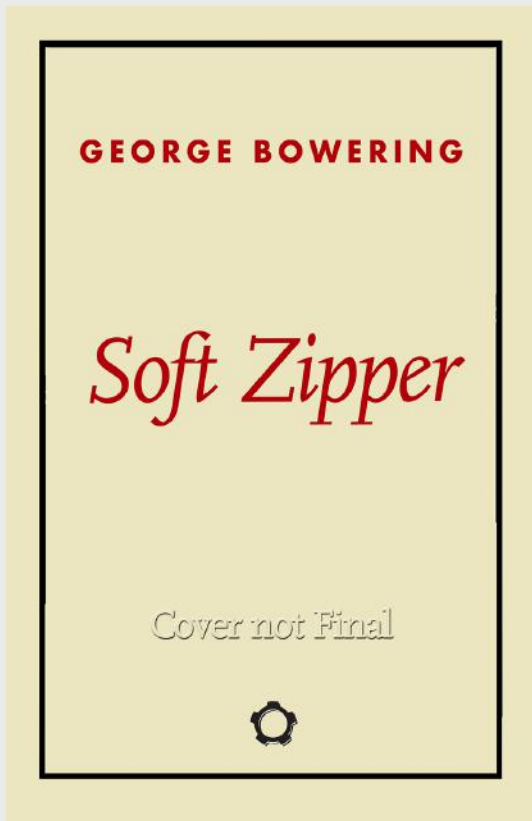
The twists and turns of the narrative gather a range of topics and incidents: the human hair industry, Black immigration to Alberta and Saskatchewan in the early 1900’s, maternal abandonment, the stresses of military life, adoption search websites, the suicide of Gallant’s teenage brother, the sudden death of her young husband, the stress-disorder of alopecia, and the loneliness of surviving all this but never finding answers. But some important answers have been given and received as a result of Gallant’s research being inspired by the mysteriously healing process of the telling itself.

“The Wig-Maker” is Janet Gallant’s song; her story comes to life in Sharon Thesen’s poem.

Janet Gallant, the wig-maker, is the mother of two grown daughters. After thirty years in Calgary where she worked as an office administrator, most recently in the renewable energy sector, she relocated to Lake Country, BC, where she has a home business making wigs for alopecia and cancer patients. After her relocation to Lake Country, Gallant and Thesen, neighbours at first, became friends after spending an evening together waiting to know if they would be evacuated because of a wildfire in the area. Gallant wanted to tell her story, Thesen wanted to hear it. Gallant insisted she wasn’t a writer; Thesen is an established Canadian poet and editor. Thus began what has turned out to be this tale.

Sharon Thesen is the author of a dozen books of poetry, a three-time Governor-General’s Award finalist, editor of two editions of *The New Long Poem Anthology*, and Professor Emerita of Creative Writing at UBC’s Okanagan campus.





Soft Zipper

Objects / Food / Rooms

George Bowering

Fiction

160 pp

Trade paperback :: 4.75" x 7.5"

ISBN 978-1-55420-172-3

\$19 CAD :: \$17 USD

Publication date :: March 25, 2021

- Vancouver based Zoom launch
- Advertising in *BC Bookworld*, *The Capilano Review*, *Brick*, and *Literary Review of Canada*
- Review copy distribution to key radio, interwebs, and print media

This engaging memoir relates stories about George Bowering's small-town BC upbringing and his parents, his father long dead and his mother more recently passed on at the age of 99, while at the same time honouring the author's other "parents": Gertrude Stein, Charles Olson, and Roland Barthes.

Borrowing a structure and some precepts about writing from Stein, Bowering remains true to his inimitable self, relating his recollections and observations, his ever-curious mind travelling across the decades as he recounts some of the objects, food, rooms, and people that have shaped his engagement with the world. Charles Olson's ideas about proprioception shape Bowering's approach to himself as "an object among objects" (and, with increasing age and frailty, even containing numerous objects), while Roland Barthes's writing strategies also make themselves felt throughout.

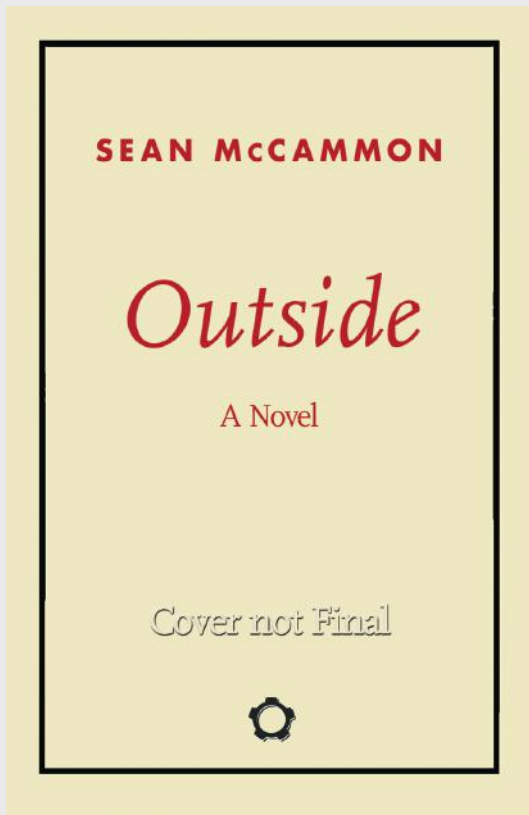
But these stories wear their learning lightly — it's ridiculously easy to enjoy these wise and gentle reminiscences of an older writer who spent his childhood in sunny South Okanagan, without even noticing the carefully wrought structure.

Lisa Robertson (*The Baudelaire Fractal*, *The Weather*, *Cinema of the Present*, *3 Summers*, &c.), herself a student of George Bowering, provides an introduction to this deceptively simple and richly rewarding work by an old master.

Two-time G-G laureate **George Bowering's** most recent works include *Writing and Reading* (essays, 2019), *No One* (fiction, 2018), *Ten Women* (stories, 2015), *Some End* (poetry, 2018) and *The World, I Guess* (poetry, 2015).



PHOTO: MARK MUSHNET



Outside

A Novel

Sean McCammon

Fiction

288 pp

Trade paperback :: 6" x 9"

ISBN 978-1-55420-168-6

\$24 CAD :: \$20 USD

Ebook

ISBN 978-1-55420-169-3 (epub)

ISBN 978-1-55420-170-9 (mobi)

\$9.99 CAD :: \$9.99 USD

Publication date :: March 11, 2021

- Toronto, Kitchener, Ottawa and/or Zoom book launches
- Advertising in *subTerrain*, *Geist*, the *Globe*, and *Literary Review of Canada*
- Review copy distribution to key radio, TV, interwebs, and print media

David Woods, a first-year teacher, shares his grade-4 students' passion for nature and their reluctance to be hemmed in by classroom walls. He pushes the boundaries of risk and the constraints of school board policy, leading his class on outdoor adventures with hooting owls, curious stream creatures, and maple syrup making.

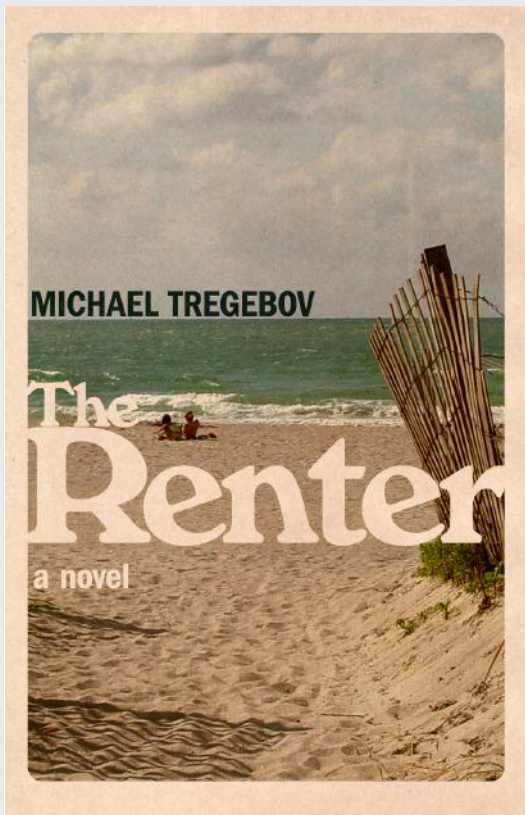
Then, during a seemingly innocuous field trip, a fateful decision leads to disastrous consequences, not just for himself but many around him. Consumed by guilt, and desperate to make sense of the seemingly random incident, David flees to Japan, going to ground with a group of Western ESL teachers in a Kyoto boarding house.

As the tragedy is recalled, a parallel narrative finds David drawn into the chaotic lives of his boarding-house companions. The group, including a food-connoisseur deejay, a crude karate student, and an Israeli draft dodger, drag David into experiences that offer hope, love, and the possibility of redemption. In a city cloaked in the ancient trappings of Buddhism and Shintoism, David Woods struggles to draw meaning from his surroundings and experiences before being called home to answer for his actions.

Sean McCammon, who now lives in Kitchener, Ontario, grew up along the Rideau River near Ottawa. After graduating from Queen's University in Kingston, McCammon taught English in Japan before returning to Canada to earn a teaching degree. He has been an outdoor education teacher in Kitchener-Waterloo for twenty years, a job that has called on him to be a beekeeper, a maple syrup producer, and a cross-country skier.

Sean McCammon is also a musician and songwriter, who has released a CD, *Songs From the Sugar Bush*, and is working on his next project, about beekeeping, tentatively titled *A Bee CD*.





The Renter

Michael Tregobov

Fiction

160 pp

Trade paperback :: 5.5" x 8.5"

ISBN 978-1-55420-163-1

\$18 CAD :: \$16 USD

Ebook

ISBN 978-1-55420-164-8 (epub)

ISBN 978-1-55420-165-5 (mobi)

\$9.99 CAD :: \$9.99 USD

Publication date :: February 25, 2021

- Winnipeg and/or Zoom book launch
- Advertising in *BC Bookworld*, *Prairie Books Now*, *Geist*, and *subTerrain*
- Review copy distribution to key radio, interwebs, and print media

The Renter, Michael Tregebov's fourth novel, is set in Winnipeg Beach, Manitoba's version of cottage country, ca. 1968. Once the preserve of the city's establishment, by the time the events of the novel take place, Winnipeg Beach has declined to the point that even the city's middle classes, including its prosperous Jewish citizens, could afford addresses there.

Michael Tregebov's would-be hero in *The Renter* is a young man sporting a summer tan, Keds and crisp short-sleeved white shirts, and toting a transistor radio. Bret Yeatman is out to recoup the social position his father lost through financial ruin, and is determined to realize his fantasy by marrying up and into the well-to-do family of his first perfect love, Sandra Sugarman, and renouncing his easy, promiscuous life in the drug trade. But his fantasy collides with Sandra's own — stars are crossed, and the fates will have their day.

The Renter is the latest installment in Michael Tregebov's *comédie humaine* Winnipeg-style, which also includes *Shot Rock* (2019), *The Shiva* (2012), and *The Briss* (2009). A literary translator, Michael Tregebov was born and raised in Winnipeg but now lives near Barcelona in Spain, his home since the 1980s.

Born in Winnipeg in 1954, **Michael Tregebov** obtained his BA in English from the University of Manitoba and his MFA in Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia. His book of poems, *Changehouse*, was published in 1976 by Turnstone Press. He later studied in the Master's Program at Simon Fraser University, before moving to Barcelona in 1982, where he continues to live with his family.

Working also as a translator between Spanish, Catalan, French, and English, his translation into Spanish of William Carlos Williams's *Kora in Hell* was published in the 2017 volume *William Carlos Williams: Poesía reunida* (Penguin Random House-Lumen).

Tregebov's first novel, *The Briss* (2008), was a finalist for the Commonwealth First Novel Prize (Canada-Caribbean Region). *The Shiva* was published in the summer of 2012. His most recent novel is *Shot Rock* (2019).





The Smallest Objective

Sharon Kirsch

Memoir

Trade paperback :: 5.5" x 8.5" :: 224 pp

ISBN 978-1-55420-155-6

\$21 CAD :: \$19 USD

Ebook

ISBN 978-1-55420-161-7 (epub)

ISBN 978-1-55420-162-4 (mobi)

\$9.99 CAD :: \$9.99 USD

Published May 28, 2020

A lantern slide, a faded recipe book, a postcard from Mexico, a nugget of fool's gold — such are the clues available to the narrator of *The Smallest Objective* as she excavates for buried treasure in her family home.

Together, these objects belonging to several Jewish personalities afford an intriguing vantage point on 20th-century Montreal — from a Runyonesque character well-known by the city's gossip columnists to a Lithuanian botanist versed in the fossil record to a young woman whose newfound opportunities mirror the promise and ambiguities of the city itself. As the narrator struggles with her mother's failing memory and final decline, unexpected secrets are revealed and expired truths exposed.

Sharon Kirsch is the author of *What Species of Creatures* (2008), a book of creative non-fiction about first encounters between early settlers to North America and unfamiliar "beasts."

A writer and an editor, she has published fiction, narrative non-fiction, and journalism, most recently in *subTerrain* and *Room* magazines.

Sharon Kirsch is originally from Montreal and has lived in the US and the UK, the latter as a Commonwealth Scholar for postgraduate study in Middle English literature. She is a graduate of the Humber School for Writers Correspondence Program. She currently is based in Toronto. More about her can be found on sharonkirsch.com.



Hungry Slingshots

Louis Cabri

Poetry :: Literature

128 pp

Trade paperback :: 6" x 9"

ISBN 978-1-55420-156-3

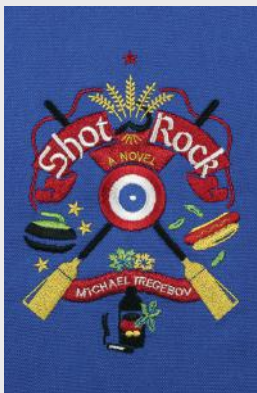
\$18 CAD :: \$16 USD

Published May 28, 2020

Hungry Slingshots, Cabri's fourth book-length work, extends his explorations into language / sensibility / intelligibility, and into the sheer sound (and silence) of the line to produce a suite of poems that return a piquant critique of the excess that stands in for contemporary normality.

Original, in the original sense of the word (i.e., returning to the earliest examples of something), Cabri's recent work opens up the resonating chambers of constraints imposed by poetry conventions — most noticeably in the title sequence, "Hungry Sling Shots," which hearkens to the French 17th century civil war and the widespread use of the triolet form — to make our oldest literary genre vibrate in new ways and in unexpectedly contemporary directions.

Louis Cabri is a teacher (of poetry, theory, and creative writing, at the University of Windsor) and critic (his writing considers work by Bruce Andrews, Ted Greenwald, Harryette Mullen, Frank O'Hara, Catriona Strang, Fred Wah, Lissa Wolsak, Ezra Pound, and Louis Zukofsky). As well, he examines poetry's "social command" propounded by Osip Brik and Vladimir Mayakovsky, and the literary nonce-word). He is the author of *Posh Lust* (2014), *Poetryworld* (2011), and *The Mood Embosser* (2001), one of Small Press Distribution's Poetry Books of the Year. In addition, he is editor of *The False Laws of Narrative* by Fred Wah (2009) and wrote the Foreword to *Flow: Poems Collected and New* by Roy Miki (2019). Born in Montreal, he lives and writes in Windsor, Ontario.



Shot Rock

Michael Tregebov

Fiction

220 pp

Trade paperback :: 5.5" x 8.5"

ISBN 978-1-55420-153-2

\$22 CAD :: \$20 USD

Ebook

ISBN 978-1-55420-157-0 (epub)

ISBN 978-1-55420-158-7 (mobi)

\$9.99 CAD :: \$9.99 USD

Published September 26, 2019

"Rich in local colour and alive with Yiddish humour and shtick, Shot Rock manages the feat of making curling dramatic and engaging as this motley gang of old friends go through a whole shmear of spiels, schmoozing and shmaltziness and resolve this shemozzle of a situation, learning to value their rock-solid friendships amidst their beefs, their corned beefs, their regrets and their triumphs. The personal is political and the political can give you heart burn, but in the end, the heart wins out."

— Gary Barwin, author of *Yiddish for Pirates* (winner, Stephen Leacock Medal; finalist, Governor General's Award & Giller Prize)

Campus politics collide with curling club realities, releasing pent-up forces and triggering a chain reaction of unintended consequences. Blackie and his curling buddies find themselves whipped up by Blackie's university-age son to oppose the shut-down of their beloved Queen Victoria, Winnipeg's friendliest — and only Jewish — curling rink. Under the shadow of threat that this might be their last season ever, Blackie's foursome marches

relentlessly towards the provincial bonspiel and the promise of glory.

"Tregebov has captured so many of the sights and sounds of a bygone era that it is bound to bring a smile to the face of even the most jaded of Winnipeggers."
— Bernie Bellan, *The Jewish Post & News*

"Imagine Richler, Lenny Bruce and Sarah Silverman collaborating to bring the best of their distinctive genius for comedy to bear on a Canadian content epic about the diaspora, curling and leftism."
— Tom Sandborn, *Vancouver Sun*

Michael Tregebov's first book of poems, *Changehouse*, was published in 1976. In 2009, his novel *The Briss* was short-listed for the Commonwealth Writers Prize. *The Briss* was followed by *The Shiva* in 2012. *Shot Rock* is his third novel. Michael Tregebov lives with Virginia, his wife of 39 years, in El Masnou, a Catalan coastal town just north of Barcelona.



Writing and Reading

George Bowering

Essays :: Criticism

176 pp

Trade paperback :: 5.5" x 8.5"

ISBN 978-1-55420-154-9

\$18 CAD :: \$16 USD

Ebook

ISBN 978-1-55420-159-4 (epub)

ISBN 978-1-55420-160-0 (mobi)

\$9.99 CAD :: \$9.99 USD

Published November 28, 2019

George Bowering has been provoking and inspiring writers and readers for half a century. While he may be better known for his poetry and fiction, the essay holds an equally important place in his work.

Writing and Reading includes discussions of writers (ranging from Michael Ondaatje and Alice Munro to Oana Avasilichioaei and Robert Kroetsch), difficult poetry and close reading (from Gerard Manley Hopkins to Judith Fitzgerald and David Bromige), Vancouver's poetry pre-history, making lists and collecting, and the importance of our National Archives.

Whether writing about fiction or poetry, film or music, Bowering's message, delivered with his inimitable style, is the same: for best results, pay attention.

"The volume is an important addition to his body of late work. Whatever his idiosyncrasies, Bowering is never dull."

— Nicholas Bradley, *The Ormsby Review*

"What's fun to read is the pleasure Bowering takes in writing as 'an old coot' — after long years in the writing game, he can laugh at himself. But the

poet-professor still has veteran chops and can use an offbeat, apparently unrelated story to suddenly crystallize his point. ... It's artful writing about writing and reading from a guy who remains an indelible part-of-the-scene."
— Trevor Carolan, *subTerrain*

"And it's exactly this sort of wide-eyed freshness that makes it easy to keep coming back to this book, dipping into it for a little bit more, a little bit more. I suppose that's one of the beauties about a book like this. You don't need to read it front to back. You can poke around, sampling a bit of this, and then go back for a bit more of that when you're ready."
— Heidi Greco, *BC Bookworld*

Born in 1935 and raised in Oliver, BC, **George Bowering** has won the Governor-General's Award for both Poetry (*Rocky Mountain Foot*, 1969) and Fiction (*Burning Water*, 1980). He was Canada's first Parliamentary Poet-Laureate, and is a member of the Order of Canada as well as the Order of British Columbia. His most recent books include *No One* (2018), *Ten Women* (2015), *The World, I Guess* (2015), and, with George Stanley, *Some End/West Broadway* (2018).



I Am a City Still But Soon I Shan't Be

Roger Farr

Poetry :: Literature

102 pp

Trade paperback :: 5.5" x 8.5"

ISBN 978-1-55420-152-5

\$18 CAD :: \$16 USD

Published September 19, 2019

Across nine cantos, Roger Farr's *I Am a City Still But Soon I Shan't Be* metabolizes the modernist long poem to provide a new, psychogeographical I-witness account of the post-Real city.

Avoiding the worn paths of the flâneur, Farr works with “pre-conceptualist” footage of Vancouver shot in 1973, later discovered in a dream. New York becomes an “elegant incubator” for the new avant-gardes, who are preparing for another civil war. Berlin is a nightclub, or a mall, that “kettles” its negotiations.

Nanaimo is a necropolis seen through a lens held by the hand of a dead poet. Meanwhile, a statue of Artemis explodes from the streets in Siracusa, setting off a riot during the 2010 Olympics. Throughout, bodies fail to align with their coordinates. Urban streams, floods of capital, and other libidinal “flows” offer multiple routes through the contemporary metropolis.

“The wager — the excitement of this book — is how radically and openly we are thrown into the project of thinking and feeling our way through the contemporary — no assumed ‘truths’; no established ‘methods’ or ‘theories’ or ‘ideology’ — just the ineradicable will to resist. Poetry has always been there when nothing else is left. This is poetry as the last stand — but the magic is that it reads as much like poetry as the first skirmish of what is to come.”

— Stephen Collis, *The Capilano Review*

Roger Farr is the author of *Surplus* (2006), *Means* (2012), and *IKMQ* (2012), a finalist for the 2013 Dorothy Livesay BC Book Prize. He lives on an island the size of Manhattan, in Snuneymuxw territory.



Collapsible

Tim Conley

Fiction

180 pp

Trade paperback :: 5" x 8"

ISBN 978-1-55420-151-8

\$18 CAD :: \$16 USD

Ebook

ISBN 978-1-55420-166-2 (epub)

ISBN 978-1-55420-167-9 (mobi)

\$9.99 CAD :: \$9.99 USD

Published February 28, 2019

The short story form is unambiguously un-dead in this new album of thirty fictions from writer Tim Conley, coming at the reader in a variety of shapes and guises running the gamut from elliptical micro-fictions to tales of the inexplicable.

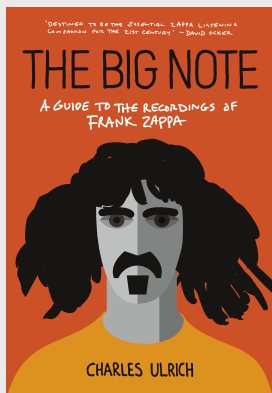
“Outstanding ... Conley’s combinations of surreal plot developments and silly comedy alongside often sincere, even sentimental character moments has drawn comparisons to Franz Kafka and Italo Calvino, but a better comparison might be the rarely read but stunningly brilliant Robert Walser, whose microfictions remain some of the greatest in history. At his best, Conley recalls Walser’s strange, quiet, near-mystical and somewhat mystifying moments. ... electric and exciting, dense but breezy, and exceptionally well-crafted.”

— Jonathan Ball, *Winnipeg Free Press*

“Conley marshals a succession of anti-realist tactics to examine the nature of human consciousness and its fragility in a world of shifting signifiers and unstable referents. ... Though there is a political undercurrent at work here, Conley’s stories are never so determined as to suggest a rigid or incontestable meaning; the title of the collection can refer to the form and function of the short story itself, which the author delights in stretching, reducing, altering, or contorting in pursuit of idiosyncratic modes of expression.”

— Steven W. Beattie, *Quill & Quire*

Tim Conley is the author of several collections of short fiction, including *Unless Acted Upon* (Mansfield Press, 2019) and *Dance Moves of the Near Future* (New Star, 2015), as well as poetry and criticism, including *Useless Joyce: Textual Functions, Cultural Appropriations* (University of Toronto Press, 2017). He teaches modernist and contemporary literature at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario.



The Big Note A Guide to the Recordings of Frank Zappa

Charles Ulrich

Music
800 pp
Trade paperback :: 6.75" x 9.75"
ISBN 978-1-55420-146-4
\$45 CAD :: \$39 USD
Published May 8, 2018

Now in its third large printing, *The Big Note* is the ultimate guide to the music of Frank Zappa.

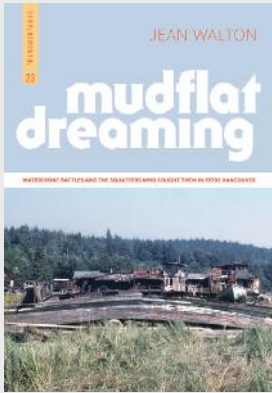
The product of more than fifteen years of research and careful listening to authorized and unauthorized recordings, and drawing on hundreds of interviews with Frank Zappa and numerous musicians who worked with him, *The Big Note* provides detailed commentary on 1,663 tracks spanning 100 albums recorded over 35 years, backed up by 1,773 citations.

"Wow. This is it. This is the big one.¹ A fantastic achievement.¹ Fantastic. I've been a Zappa listener/scholar for 30+ years, and I'm learning new things.² Just unbelievable!¹ Unbelievably phenomenally excellent!!!³ The final say in the matter of Frank Zappa's music.⁴ Indispensable.⁵ Unparalleled.⁵ Simply amazing. This book is a must buy for any Zappa fan.² Essential.⁵ Big, beautiful and smells great.² I find it enhances my listening experience and comprehension.³ It is a monster.¹ You will learn more about Zappa and his music from this book than from anything else ever written.² Extraordinary ... not only for

Zappa fans. Musicians of all genres will benefit from his approach to creating complex arrangements with uncommon devices and instruments.⁶ A must-have!¹ An absolute must-own.³ Will thrill dedicated musicians and musicologists alike.⁷ Worth every dollar.¹ You need this book!⁵ Seems mandatory to me.¹ Charles Ulrich has done a great service to Zappa fans everywhere.⁵ Damn, is all I can say.¹ I simply have no words!¹ Words fail me.¹"

1. Zappateers.com forums
2. Steve Hoffman Music Forums
3. Zappa.com forums
4. John Corcelli, Critics at Large
5. Amazon customer reviews
6. BC Bookworld
7. Georgia Straight

Charles Ulrich (BA, Pomona College; PhD, UCLA) taught linguistics at ten universities in the United States and Canada. Since 1994 he has been active in the on-line Zappa fan community — on alt.fan.frank-zappa.com, zappateers.com, and his own website, The Planet Of My Dreams. He lives in Vancouver, BC.



Mudflat Dreaming **Waterfront Battles and the Squatters** **Who Fought Them in 1970s Vancouver**

Jean Walton

Transmontanus 23

History :: Cultural studies

204 pp

Trade paperback :: 6.75" x 9.75"

ISBN 978-155420-149-5

\$24 CAD :: \$20 USD

Published October 4, 2018

Mudflat Dreaming tells the story of two communities on Vancouver's waterfront fringes in the 1970s — the Maplewood Mudflat squatters' community on the North Shore, and Surrey's embattled Bridgeview neighbourhood.

"Mudflat Dreaming is a wonderfully evocative account of the varied ways in which an alternative Vancouver was imagined, constructed and lived by its residents in the 1970s. From waterfront squatting to protests over basic amenities, the book recovers a city that has long since disappeared but whose history remains as important as ever. A timely and urgent reminder of what it means to think about and inhabit cities differently."

— Alexander Vasudevan, author of *The Autonomous City: A History of Urban Squatting*

"Jean Walton's lively account of two quite different 1970s communities resisting a growing 'culture of cement' appears at a time when Vancouver's neighbourhoods are being eaten up by that same cement. Part oral history, part film archive research, Mudflat Dreaming resuscitates the spirit of opposition to

uniformity and profit-making at the expense of those who recycle, self-build, and live by water."

— Daphne Marlatt

"Squatters, shackers, beachfront bohemians, whatever you want to call them, they've been a neglected chapter of Vancouver's history for too long. Now Jean Walton has rescued two of these communities from obscurity in her vivid and thoughtful account."

— Daniel Francis

Jean Walton teaches English and film studies at the University of Rhode Island. She spent her teenage years in North Surrey, where her family operated Wally's Motel.

Trade Distribution

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Canada Council
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