

The background is a solid teal color. On the right side, there are dark, silhouetted evergreen trees. In the upper left, above the word 'Thistledown', there are three small white snowflake icons.

Thistledown Press

FALL
2023

A Message from the Publisher:

Welcome to Thistledown's Fall 2023 season. We're very proud of the books we have on offer, starting off with *The Heathens and the Dragon* by Kate A. Boorman. This middle grade novel has a very wide appeal; certainly, all the adults on our editorial board were absolutely enchanted by it, and we're sure that kids, parents, and teachers alike will share our enthusiasm.

When it comes to fiction for adults, we have a wonderful debut collection of short stories by Emily Paskevics: *Half-Wild and Other Stories of Encounter*. And we have *The Economy of Sparrows*, a first novel by Trevor Herriot, who is a widely respected author of nonfiction about the natural history and ecology of the prairies. Both books share a profound interest in and commitment to the natural world, yet come from very different places, both in terms of the physical world and their imagined worlds.

Enjoy!

JoAnn McCaig

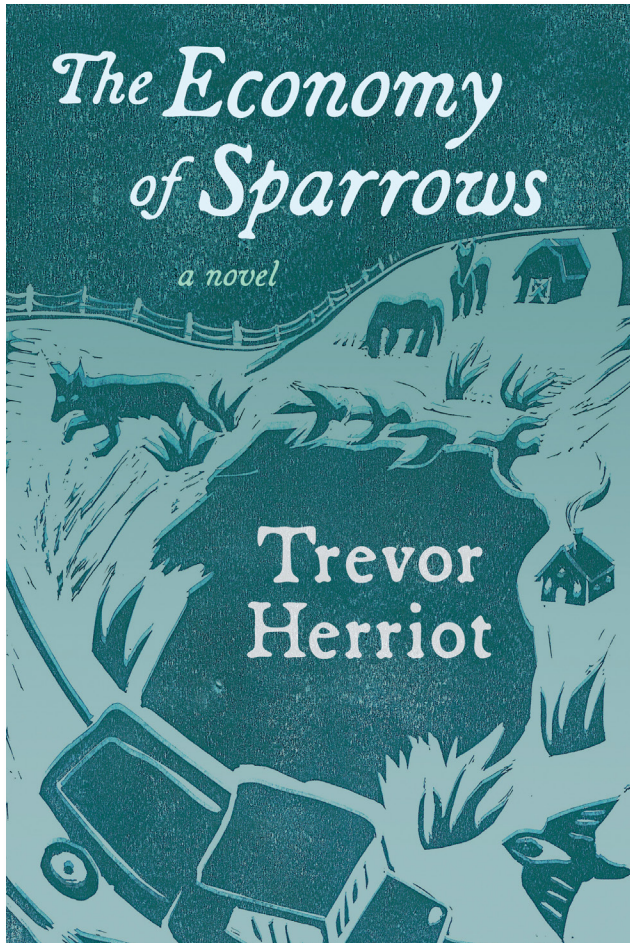
Thistledown Press gratefully acknowledges the financial support of The Canada Council for the Arts, SK Arts, and the Government of Canada for its publishing program.



Canada Council Conseil des arts
for the Arts du Canada



Canada



Publication: September 12, 2023
\$24.95 paperback | 5.5 x 8.5 | 264 pages
ISBN 9781771872461
FICTION / Literary / Nature & the Environment
Distributor: UTP Distribution

About the Author

Trevor Herriot is a naturalist, grassland conservationist, and the author of several award-winning books, including *Grass, Sky, Song* and the national bestseller *River in a Dry Land*, both of which were short-listed for the Governor General's Award for Nonfiction. *Towards a Prairie Atonement*, published in October 2016, took two Saskatchewan Book Awards. *Islands of Grass* (2017), a book of his essays accompanying the photographs of Branimir Gjetvaj, also won two Saskatchewan Book Awards and was short-listed for a High Plains Book award. He is a recipient of the Kloppenburg Award for Literary Merit and the Saskatchewan Order of Merit. He and his wife Karen live in Regina, and spend much of their time on a piece of Aspen Parkland prairie east of the city. *The Economy of Sparrows* is his eighth book, but first novel.

The Economy of Sparrows

by Trevor Herriot 🍁

This debut novel by Trevor Herriot, one of Canada's foremost writer-naturalists, is the richly observed story of Nell Rowan, who has inherited her family's prairie farmstead and returned there to live after many decades away. Nell is increasingly obsessed by a 19th-century bird collector while haunted by memories of her mother's disappearance.

Nell's fascination with 19th-century bird collector William Spreadborough began during her janitorial night shifts at the National Museum of Nature. Now retired and back home on the same prairie where Spreadborough collected birds, her obsession with his life and death becomes more urgent. Though she finds consolation in the company of her border collie and horses, and the wild birds passing through each season, Nell feels increasingly isolated. Her neighbours seem indifferent to the ongoing devastation contemporary agriculture wreaks on prairie ecosystems and less than supportive of Nell's attempts to track native bird populations. And now she is unable to escape the central mystery of her life: what happened to her mother in that long-ago snowstorm?

Things begin to shift for Nell when she provides temporary shelter to Carmelita, a fifteen-year-old foster child whose fresh view of the world around her just might rescue Nell from the hopelessness she fears is her inheritance.

Trevor Herriot's *The Economy of Sparrows* connects today's settler culture and natural science to their roots in colonial empire-building. As Nell Rowan finds the people who might help her come to some peaceful resolution of her life's challenges, readers are faced with questions of how we engage with and value the natural world, how its truths illuminate both history and our present lives, and how we justify ourselves to the wild things of the earth.

"What happens when two opposing notions of 'economy' are pitted against each other on a single patch of Prairie Earth? Does Nature's economy—how birds and animals make their living—stand a chance against the all-consuming economy of humans? *The Economy of Sparrows*, Trevor Herriot's exquisite, cataclysmic novel, makes us question our earnest assumptions about the role of *Homo sapiens* in the natural world."

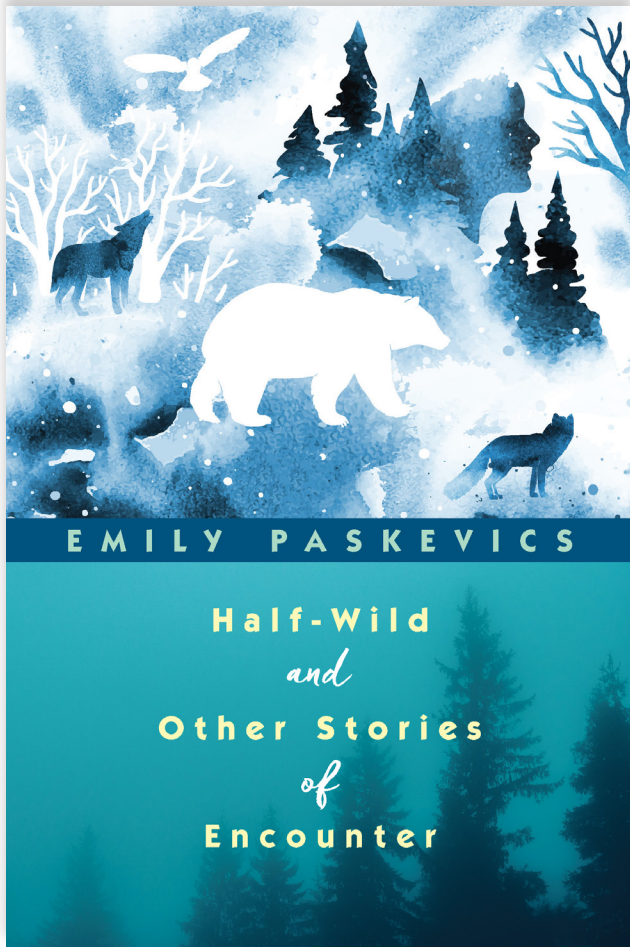
—Wayne Grady, author of *Pandexicon* and *The Good Father*

Praise for Past Work:

River in a Dry Land: "Nothing short of a poetic masterpiece. Every reviewer of the book thus far has been hard-pressed to find anything wanting in it and collectively we are running out of superlatives to praise it."

—Books in Canada





Publication: September 5, 2023
\$24.95 paperback | 5.5 x 8.5 | 156 pages
ISBN 9781771872485
FICTION / Nature & the Environment / Short Stories
Distributor: UTP Distribution

About the Author

Emily Paskevics is a graduate of the Humber School for Writers. Her work has appeared in several publications, including *Vallum Magazine*, *The Humber Literary Review*, and *Hart House Review*. In 2022 she was a finalist for the Writers Trust of Canada's RBC Bronwen Wallace Award, for her short story "Wild Girls." She was also longlisted for the 2019 CBC Short Story Prize for her story "Little Wild Creatures." She divides her time between Toronto and Montreal.

Half-Wild and Other Stories of Encounter

by Emily Paskevics 🍁

In *Half-Wild and Other Stories of Encounter*, a startling debut short story collection by a new Ontario writer, intergenerational relationships unfold in a context of environmental change and degradation.

Emily Paskevics takes her characters—mothers, daughters, fathers, sisters—into the wilderness to lose themselves in their primal nature . . . or to find what they've always been missing as they struggle in a borderland between irrevocable environmental change and hope for ecological connection and healing.

A man searches for his wife and son who have mysteriously vanished into the woods while they were exploring a small island in Northern Ontario—are they truly lost, or did the woods rescue them from an inadequate husband and father? A mother takes her daughters into the remote wilderness to tell them about a harrowing encounter with a mountain lion, only to find that her story has already been told and is no longer quite her own. An old woman stands on a frozen river, contemplating her own death, until she locks eyes with a curious fox. A retired professor-turned-beekeeper has an affair with a former student, and ultimately learns that she *can* live alone on the edge of wilderness.

In her stories, Emily Paskevics subtly subverts traditional nature writing: the forest is burning, rivers are flooding, and the exploitation of land looms large. At a time when human-animal sharing of territory is more fraught than ever, these enthralling tales challenge us to consider how our own existence intersects with the wild creatures we share the earth with, and to understand our place in a threatened ecosystem.

"Emily Paskevics' wilderness is a land apart. In her distinct and beautifully rendered stories, humans and wild animals exist on parallel planes, where reckoning might come in the form of a blue coyote with its own story to tell. Her characters, often bent on escape, are neither welcomed nor absolved, but find wonder and meaning in a world that is struggling to survive." —Dianne Warren, author of *Cool Water* and *The Diamond House*

Praise for a New Writer:

"Emily Paskevics invokes fairy tale and children's play to reach into the raw experience of childhood imagination, fear, beauty, magic, and grief. 'Wild Girls' moves easily between worlds and shapeshifts into more-than-human ways of seeing and sensing, all the while remaining perceptively grounded in a living, breathing existence shared by beings both dangerous and marvellous. This story is alive with vividly descriptive prose that traces the imprints of those who have passed before us to bring to light bonds of love and kinship far beyond our human selves."

—The 2022 RBC Bronwen Wallace Award
Short Fiction Jury





Publication: September 5, 2023
\$16.95 paperback | 5.5 x 8.5 | 300 pages
ISBN 9781771872478
JUVENILE FICTION / Historical / Medieval /
Action & Adventure / Social Situations / Values
Ages 9-13+
Distributor: UTP Distribution

About the Author

Kate A. Boorman is an author from Edmonton, Alberta, with roots in the small town of Rimbey. Her books have been published in four world territories and have appeared on a variety of Best Of lists, from *Seventeen* to *O! The Oprah Magazine*. The first book in her acclaimed, *Winterkill* trilogy won the Alberta Writers' Guild Award for Children's Fiction. Her latest YA, *Into the Sublime*, was a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection. *The Heathens and the Dragon* is Kate's middle grade debut. When she is not writing, she is wrangling her family and dreaming up travel to faraway lands.

The Heathens and the Dragon: A 13th-Century Adventure 🍁 by Kate A. Boorman

From award-winning author Kate A. Boorman comes her first middle grade historical novel, set in France in the Middle Ages at a time of great religious upheaval. *The Heathens and the Dragon: A 13th-Century Adventure* stars twelve-year-old Elodie, a resourceful guardian to her little brother Bertran and his often willful pet chicken Codet. Together with Joie, a young troubadour, they perform for their very survival.

Elodie works hard to keep a clean house for her master, take care of her little brother, and guard the secret pagan beliefs she was taught by the mother they recently lost. But the world around her is growing suspicious of paganism and violent toward non-Christians. When Crusaders arrive to arrest her kindly master, a Cathar, for heresy, he flees, and the orphans Elodie and Bertran try to follow his trail.

Armed only with meagre supplies and a few good stories, and accompanied—to Elodie's dismay—by Bertran's pet chicken, they head into the forest, where they soon become lost. Luckily, they stumble upon a penniless female troubadour, Joie, who has mysteriously left court life and appears eager to help them. To earn money and food, the trio improvises a spectacle involving storytelling, music, and a chicken-assisted magic trick. The crowd's applause almost allows Elodie to forget that her dragon tale dishonours an origin story sacred to her mother.

When Joie's own secrets emerge, Elodie is faced with a new dilemma. With Crusaders hovering and a voracious audience clamouring, Elodie realizes that, to save herself and Bertran, she'll need to decide who to trust—and who to betray.

"Gripping, enchanting, and funny, this is a truly beautiful story about the secrets we keep, the timeless search for belonging, and the possibilities of wonder."

—Alison Hughes, Governor General's Literary Award finalist and author of *Fly* and *Over the Top*

Praise for Past Work:

Into the Sublime: "With well-developed, sympathetic characters, a taut plot, and an unreliable narrator, the novel straddles the line between mystical and psychological horror to keep readers guessing to the end . . . A sublimely scary thriller."

—Kirkus, starred review

The *Winterkill* trilogy: "An engrossing romance, set against a chillingly vivid repressive society. WINTERKILL will haunt you."

—Julie Berry, author of Carnegie-shortlisted *All the Truth That's in Me*



a beautiful rebellion

poems

rita bouvier



a beautiful rebellion

by Rita Bouvier

Publication: April 10, 2023

\$19.95 paperback | 6 x 9 | 72 pages

ISBN 9781771872348

POETRY / Canadian / Indigenous

This evocative new poetry collection speaks with a fierce tenderness of many aspects of the poet's life: a childhood spent on the banks of the Churchill River, the death of a beloved one, the struggle to try to find forgiveness for wrongs done and the weariness of trying to redress those wrongs. And, most poignantly, a beautiful rebellion reaches one hand back to Louis Riel and one hand forward to future Métis generations.

Gordie's Skate

by Bill Waiser; illustrated by Leanne Franson

Publication: April 15, 2023

\$14.95 paperback | 10.25 x 8.5 | 24 pages

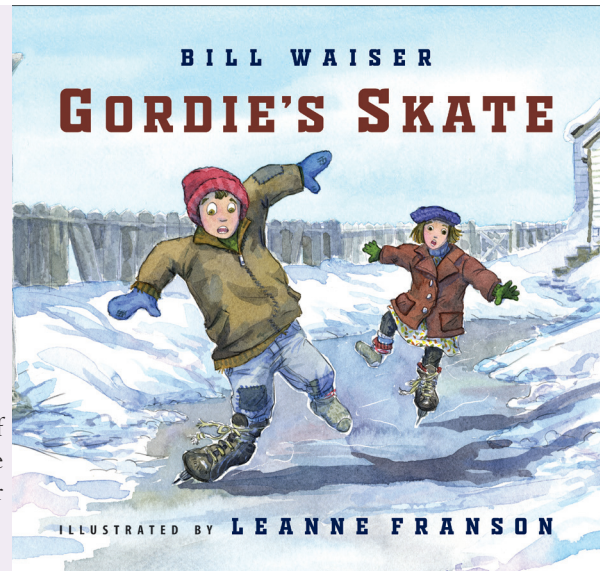
ISBN 9781771872355

\$21.95 hardcover | 10.25 x 8.5 | 24 pages

ISBN 9781771872393

JUVENILE NONFICTION / Biography & Autobiography / Sports & Recreation

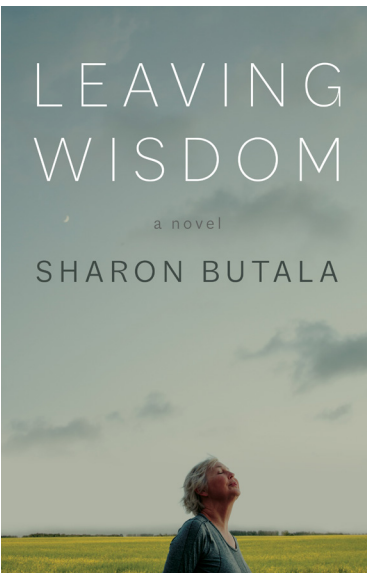
Set in Saskatchewan during the Great Depression, this is the story of hockey legend Gordie Howe and his first experience with skating. The book is charmingly illustrated in full colour by Leanne Franson. Bill Waiser is a popular historian and Governor-General's-Award-winning author.



LEAVING
WISDOM

a novel

SHARON BUTALA



Leaving Wisdom

Sharon Butala

Publication: May 30, 2023

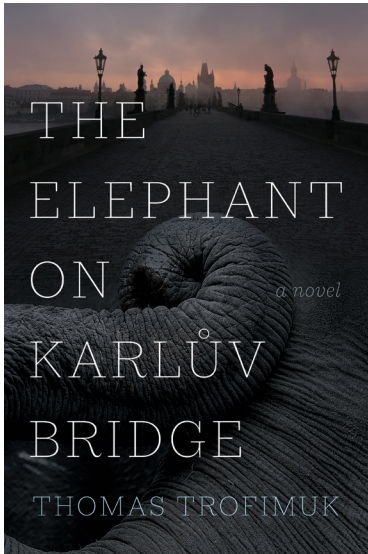
\$24.95 paperback | 6 x 9 | 282 pages

ISBN 9781771872362

FICTION / Literary

Sharon Butala's new novel begins with the wrong kind of bang when retiring social worker Judith falls on the ice on the way to her retirement party. The debilitating concussion that follows seems to shake loose a confusing whirl of memories.





The Elephant on Karlův Bridge

by Thomas Trofimuk

Publication: August 15, 2022
\$24.95 paperback | 6 x 9 | 352 pages
ISBN 9781771872256
FICTION / Literary

Set in Prague and narrated with great panache by the 600-year-old Charles Bridge, this novel begins with an elephant named Sál escaping the Prague Zoo. As the elephant moves through the beautiful Czech city, the lives of the men and women she meets are altered by the encounter. Each character is at a crossroads, and desperately seeking the wisdom they need to wrestle with profound questions—how to live, how to love, who to love, how to heal.

Silencing Rebecca

by Nikki Vogel

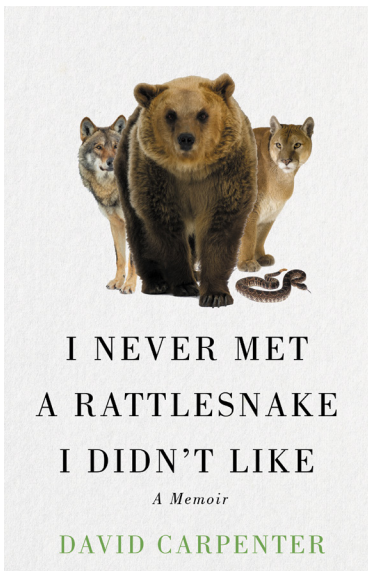
Publication: August 31, 2022
\$18.95 paperback | 5.5 x 8.5 | 240 pages
ISBN 9781771872263
YOUNG ADULT FICTION/Literary/Magical/Religious/Jewish

In this genre-bending debut YA novel combining elements of horror, magic realism, and realistic fiction, Rebecca Waldmann's sheltered life as an Orthodox Jewish teen in Toronto is shattered when her father moves them to Edmonton, where she is plunged into the worldly life of a public high school. Rebecca doesn't just defy the strictures of her ultraorthodox religion by wearing tight jeans and flirting with a non-Jewish boy. She discovers to her horror that she has undergone a change that makes puberty look easy—she's been transformed into a golem!



I NEVER MET A RATTLESNAKE I DIDN'T LIKE

A Memoir
DAVID CARPENTER



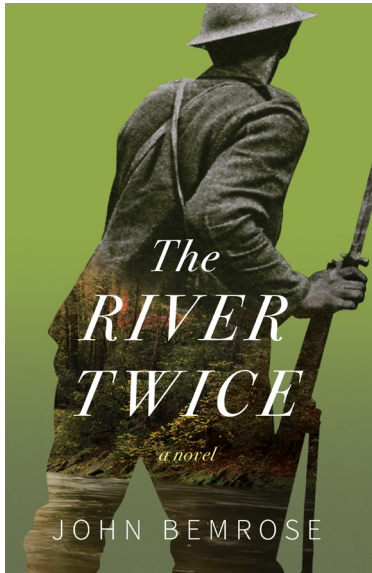
I Never Met a Rattlesnake I Didn't Like: a Memoir

David Carpenter

Publication: August 31, 2022
\$24.95 paperback | 6 x 9 | 230 pages
ISBN 9781771872270
NATURE/Essays/Personal Memoir

David Carpenter's collection of essays explores a city boy's love of the wild, a passion that has enriched his life from boyhood. At 80, this irrepressible Saskatchewan raconteur examines his intense fascination with predators large and small, and his awe in the face of the variety of creatures that may be out to get us—or who are out to get one another.





The River Twice

by John Bemrose

Publication: May 30, 2022

\$24.95 paperback | 5.5 x 8.5 | 354 pages

ISBN 9781771872201

FICTION / Historical / Literary

The River Twice, by the Giller-nominated author of the bestselling *The Island Walkers*, is a gripping new World War I novel set in the Southern Ontario factory town familiar to his many readers, where residents are reeling as the wounded return and the list of local young men who have been killed continues to grow.

Setting Fire to Water

by Phoebe Tsang

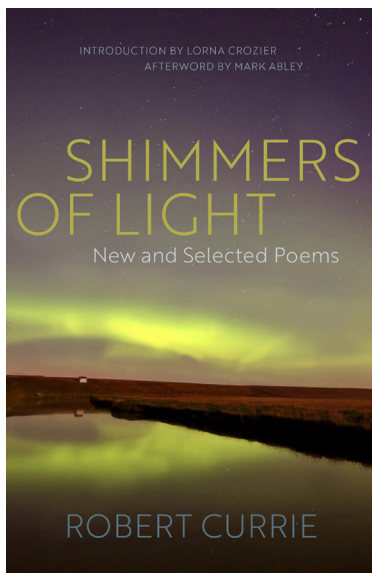
Publication: May 30, 2022

\$24.95 paperback | 5.5 x 8.5 | 234 pages

ISBN 9781771872195

FICTION / Short Stories

Shifting restlessly from dark to light and back again, written in lithe, precise prose, the stories in Phoebe Tsang's debut collection illuminate the lives of those who exist inside otherness. The seventeen stories in *Setting Fire to Water* unfold outside the Canadian mainstream, where longing—for home, for love, for artistic achievement, for spiritual fulfillment—is a given, and acceptance—of self, of the knowability of others, of the limits to knowing—is always in question.



Shimmers of Light: New and Selected Poems

by Robert Currie

Publication: March 18, 2022

\$24.95 paperback | 5.5 x 8.5 | 312 pages

ISBN 9781771872188

POETRY / Canadian

Robert Currie's *Shimmers of Light: New and Selected Poems* uses the vernacular of ordinary working people to tell stories and sing songs of small-town prairie life. Like Alden Nowlan, or more recently, Billy Collins, this poet constructs poems from the unvarnished wood of common language—there's no veneer, no glossing over here.



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Discount: 47% Code: BAC6

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Combinable across all Ampersand's participating UTP publishers.

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SAN 115 1134

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