



# *Gaspereau Press*



*A clutch of new books  
recently released by  
those inky fellows  
toiling under the sign  
of the mirthful g*

PRINTERS & PUBLISHERS  
KENTVILLE, NS

*June 2019*



2019

THE RIGHT SOLUTIONS  
THE RIGHT PARTNER



WALKING  
THE  
LINE

Harwell  
Harris

Harwell  
Harris

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PREVIOUS SPREAD: It's the Gaspereau Press bindery! On the right we see the Smyth sewing machine. It sews all the book's folded sections or 'signatures' into a book block. Along the back wall is a simple press that compacts the thread-swollen spines of the book blocks before binding. And on the left is the Sulby three-pocket perfect binder. It applies an adhesive to the spines of the sewn book blocks and crimps them into the paper book covers.

Now that we have a clutch of new books finished we feel secure in telling you about them. As has become typical at Gaspereau Press, this is a *retrospective* catalogue, heralding the books we've released since the beginning of 2019. We have never been a fan of the hype-machine mentality that dominates the book publishing trade, where covers are designed, blurbs are written and books are flogged many months before they actually come into being—often even before the author has finished writing the final draft. We would much rather tell you the solid facts about *what is* than prognosticate about what might perhaps come to be, and put the thing directly in your hand. Doubtless, this preference has sometimes frustrated those intrepid souls tasked with promoting and selling our books in a marketplace where the giant multinational commodity-makers dictate the book-marketing orthodoxy and timetable, accommodating the steady stream of bland widgets coming off the end of their conveyor belts. But it has been our observation that the cultural-industrial complex often seems utterly oblivious to the daily facts of literature's working life out here in the community. We would rather that the acts we preform as a publisher—from editing and production through to marketing and promotion—prioritize the thoughtful creation of coherent and useful things over concerns imported from carnival pitchmen. We would rather speak of these books from a place of knowledge, intimacy and affection than one of haste and speculation. After all, we're not mere hawkers of perishable confections; we're agents of culture.—A.S.



LINDSAY BIRD

## *Boom Time*

POETRY | \$19.95 | 9781554471942

*Printed offset on laid paper making 80 pages. Smyth-sewn paperback trimmed to 5 × 8 inches and enfolded in a letterpress-printed jacket.*

*Includes illustration by Adam Smith. Typeset in Huronia.*

Inspired by her time working in isolated construction camps in northern Alberta, Lindsay Bird's *Boom Time* describes the unruly social space of the work camps and the 'in-between' state of existence that they create. Like any resource boom, Canada's oil patch is awash in contrasts and contradictions—between risk and reward, isolation and assimilation, and wilderness and industrial intrusion. Deep in the oil patch, the luxuries of civilization—things like rules and objective facts—sometimes seem in short supply, but Bird's poems attempt to chart a place where there "isn't a decent map to be had," sketching blurry boundaries between truth and talk, reckoning with rumours and half-truths heard around camp.

*Boom Time* shifts from passages of prosaic observation to rhyming word play and witty, imagistic asides. With this range of modes the collection offers contrasting accounts of the disorienting locale. A common thread throughout the collection is people's uncanny ability to adapt to or resist the environments they throw themselves into—other than Donnie, who fell into a tailings pond and disappeared, becoming "a murmured lunchroom tale." The characters

populating Bird's poems have both immediacy and inevitability, their complexities presented with little explication, judgment or endorsement, their stories narrated with compassion and humour. While her stance is most often one of amusement, Bird doesn't shy away from the more troubling aspects of life in camp, touching on subjects like workplace safety, harassment, gendered violence, over-indulgence and infidelity.

Many travel to the oil patch in pursuit of prosperity, accepting the demands of the work, the isolation of the job sites and the sometimes stifled living environment in exchange for better wages than they could make at home. While the poems in *Boom Time* depict this as a world somewhat apart, they also acknowledge there's something intriguing about this experience that we've willfully edited out of our everyday notion of the civilized world, and yet it has remained "just over / the hill this whole time."

LINDSAY BIRD is a poet and journalist living in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. Her poems have appeared in *Event*, *The New Quarterly*, *CV2*, and *40 Below: Alberta's Winter Anthology*. This is her first book.

## *Clearcutting*

the timberline tiptoes  
backwards like the faint  
hope to still fit  
into skinny jeans

excavators idle for lunch  
break, foxes edge  
in and eye  
sandwiches out of reach

shaved ham, men's hands,  
a meaty freedom  
fouled as ravens plop  
down on stumps

delighted to chew  
the fat, molt feathers  
for loud crowns  
and rule the leftovers



DOMINIQUE BÉCHARD

## *One Dog Town*

POETRY | \$19.95 | 9781554471959

*Printed offset on laid paper making 80 pages. Smyth-sewn paperback trimmed to 5 × 8 inches and enfolded in a letterpress-printed jacket.*

*Typeset in Custodia.*

In her first book of poems, Dominique Béchard writes of the push-pull of departure and return, of our ability to take hopeful action while already inhabiting the dread of tomorrow's failure and relapse. In contemplating the inevitable unravelling of all efforts and the seductiveness of familiar poor choices, Béchard's speaker often seems mysterious to herself, probing her own impulses and memories but unable to "account for why I end / the day undoing the day's paltry attempts / at poise." Like an old-time bluegrass song, these poems are more often wearily resolute than wholly despairing, preoccupied with, but distrustful of, the beauty of change's possibilities, their speaker ever-renewing her plans to act—to get out, to get better, or to somehow get her shit together.

Though the poems are situated in the anti-pastoral landscape and hard-living youth culture of northern Ontario—where "balsam nearly touches roof," and poverty, isolation, addiction and heartsickness loom both inevitable and foreboding—Béchard's focus is more introspective than sociological, pursuing "the mind's paraphrase of days and nights spent alone." Taking the form of reveries, nocturnes and

elegies, these poems are often enveloped by various kinds of bounded space—rooms, relationships, letters, books, songs and states of mind. Though acute and unflinching in her description of the brutal realities of poverty and addiction, Béchard's speaker wavers with competing longings—for joy and pain, confrontation and withdrawal, memory and forgetting—wrestling with both her sense of isolation and her seemingly “impossible proximity” to love and tragic loss.

Vivid in its imagery, lyrical in its language, *One Dog Town* offers intimate poems of craving and thirst—for the momentary escape of excess, for some lasting truce with the world, and for affirmation and love.

DOMINIQUE BÉCHARD is from Timmins, Ontario. She received her MFA from New York University and is currently writing and studying in Fredericton, New Brunswick. *One Dog Town* is her first book.

## *Overhaul*

I come home to the inconsolable hours,  
furniture wrecked and carried out

into the hallway where nothing is  
anybody's and there for the taking.

I can no longer justify long  
walks at night, a worsening off

in what's to be expected,  
what might yet be salvaged.

An impossible proximity  
overcomes the night ahead—

balsam nearly touches roof,  
the downstairs tenant shifts

between radio stations, and the long-  
winged goshawk planes a way.

I did not presume to love you here.



MADELINE BASSNETT

## *Under the Gamma Camera*

POETRY | \$21.95 | 9781554471966

*Printed offset on laid paper making 96 pages. Smyth-sewn paperback trimmed to 5 × 8 inches and enfolded in a letterpress-printed jacket.*

*Typeset in Baskerville.*

*Under the Gamma Camera* is a frank portrait of our relationship with disease, exploring the contrary state of being that is illness. Rooted in her own experience of diagnosis, treatment and remission, Madeline Bassnett's poems bristle with authenticity, with tactile and emotional detail available only to one who has lived it.

A major preoccupation in these poems is reconciling the contradictory ways in which we experience illness and treatment—an experience at once deeply personal and human and also strangely impersonal and clinical. On one side is a catalogue of emotional responses, from denial, resistance and a sense of betrayal, to gratitude and relief; on the other, the strange detachment from our own body, the indifference of our corrupt cells to our fate, and the often alienating medical complex and the technology mobilized in our aid. Bassnett pays particular attention to the way the body is the medium through which all these things are experienced.

As a collection, *Under the Gamma Camera* is not a survivor's memoir; Bassnett's objective lies elsewhere, beyond any particular story line, beyond individual experience. At

heart, these poems recount our internal struggle with external realities, portraying a tactile awareness of being—in states of distress and pain, in spiritual movement, and in the natural world. Their frankness is balanced by their sense of reverence and vulnerability. Bassnett accomplishes much of this through skillful use of form, through control of language, rhythm and sound, and the offer of striking metaphor. She also repurposes traditional frameworks like the seven deadly sins, the virtues and the pilgrimage narratives, refreshing their potency.

Introspective as this collection sometimes feels, where the natural world and the human body share vulnerability, its view ultimately turns outward, contrasting self-perception's snare against a persistently alive, evolving world.

MADÉLINE BASSNETT is the author of two chapbooks, *Pilgrimage* (2016) and *Elegies* (2011), as well as a literary monograph, *Women, Food Exchange, and Governance in Early Modern England* (2016). She is currently on the board of Poetry London and teaches in the Department of English and Writing Studies at Western University. She lives in London, Ontario.

## *Starfish*

Furred metallic blue washed up on brick-dust sand, gun-metal armour rusting by the shore. Two arms, two legs, a head, a carnival rotation creased and flattened—five evolve to one revolving centre, upheld by land as sand leans in to sea. This day:

a cliff, another beach, a belly-curve of bay.  
A pause that stirs their world with ours, turfs goose-necked clams to air, to loll on hammock-dents of sand. Pale mole-like necks that burp and search, extruding from the bloated waistcoats of their shells. Inside

the pools, behind the weeds: a clutch of sidling crabs, five scuttling hermits, legs protruding marble-green, their well-kempt spirals pirated from snails with jellied feet that rivulet the shore in cursive curlicues—collaborative palimpsests of zoological

design. The sun dwindles, tilts beyond the cliff, pastes window-shutter shadows over pools. We came, we saw, we conquered nothing: the snails will doodle till the tide comes in and we'll retreat, erased by shifting sand. Beneath the waves the starfish

softens in the flow and curls, now blue, now underbelly pink, resurrected as it glides along a milky concave scallop shell: first one and then the next, two arms, two legs, a head, its language locked ironclad in prehistoric code.



MONICA KIDD

*Chance Encounters  
with Wild Animals*

POETRY | \$21.95 | 9781554471973

*Printed offset on laid paper making 96 pages. Smyth-sewn paperback trimmed to 5.3 × 8.5 inches and enfolded in an offset-printed jacket. Typeset in Walbaum.*

Having worked in a range of investigative fields—including journalism, biology and medicine—Monica Kidd is habitually inquisitive and observant, and her poetry employs this exacting eye to map each new terrain she encounters. While the vantage points, locales and subjects of *Chance Encounters with Wild Animals* cover a considerable range, the poems find common cause in their spirited testing of what is observed against the native intelligence of the heart.

The poems are gathered into four sections. In ‘Curious’ they depict a speaker working through grief after the death of a parent. The poems of ‘Meeting the Eyes of the World’ are rooted in Kidd’s month-long trip to Antarctica, where she lectured on the natural and cultural history of the polar south. ‘Chance Encounters with Wild Animals’ considers both wilderness-dwelling creatures and the unexpected happenings of our everyday lives. And in ‘Westerlies’ the preoccupation moves toward curiosity, but also absence and longing.

Diverse as they at first seem, a common thread through

the poems is Kidd's interest in various kinds of exile. Whether chosen or imposed, the distance exile places between us and our familiar world inevitably opens possibilities for discovery. Writing with the fresh, direct language of a trained observer, Kidd's accounts of fascinating, seldom-visited places (like a Gentoo penguin colony) and of historical figures manage to reenergize our curiosity about Antarctic dwellers, adventurers and exotic destinations.

But the animating effect of exile's distancing extends to seeing the domestic landscape in new ways as well, whether it be encountered in the loss of a family member, in the subtle shifting of a Newfoundland wharf, or in an immigrant's quest for precisely the right English word for an everyday object. In the tension between familiarization and estrangement, Kidd's poems often make a home of two places at once without quelling longing.

MONICA KIDD is the author of six previous literary books, most recently the poetry collection *The Year of Our Beautiful Exile* (2015). As well as writing, she has worked as a seabird biologist and as a reporter for CBC Radio. She lives in Calgary, Alberta, where she is a family physician, a fledgling letterpress printer and co-publisher of Pedlar Press.

### *Vesalius Falls to His Knees*

It unearthed me. The blink of its camera eye,  
each tiny sucker grasping, arms unfurling.  
It blushed—orange to umber to plum—

gentle as a sunset until a bulb flashed  
and it fled, white as a corpse. The terrible truth  
is that I will forget. Be unable to tell you

the ancient muscle that fired. The hunger  
that gnaws at my sleep. The words tender things  
vanished under the rocks.



KAREN HOULE

*The Grand River Watershed:  
A Folk Ecology*

POETRY | \$19.95 | 9781554471843

*Printed offset on laid paper making 80 pages. Smyth-sewn paperback trimmed to 6 × 8.5 inches and enfolded in a letterpress-printed jacket. Typeset in Zenon.*

How might we grasp the natural history of a river in a way that transcends mere data and description? How might we chronicle the way in which a living consortium of geology, weather, plants, animals and people has impacted, and been impacted by, the existence of a particular watercourse over the passage of time? In her new book, philosopher and poet Karen Houle employs the wildest tool she knows—poetry—to contemplate the complexities of the Grand River watershed in southern Ontario, stretching our notions of what can be known about a river.

Houle's writing is inspired by, and borrows from, various kinds of scientific inquiry and documentation, integrating strands of thought from across the fields of archeology, entomology, molecular ecology, cultural anthropology and geography. But these established sources aren't presented as the sole custodians of all that's worth knowing. With often jarring juxtapositions and a prosody that sometimes flirts with chaos, Houle's poems make a virtue of straining against the settled rules, agitating for a more complex,

robust portrayal of the Grand River watershed by fusing apparently disparate narratives and methodologies—the scientific and the anecdotal, the personal and the collective, the emotion and the information, and the organic and the manufactured.

Like the river itself, Houle's *The Grand River Watershed* suggests how seemingly jumbled, separate parts in fact exist in a web of relationships. For Houle, the best hope we have of comprehending the complexities of a phenomenon like the Grand River is rooted in our accumulated encounters with, and our collective articulation of, the river's countless aspects over time, not in any one measurable part or moment of it.

Houle's creative pairing of literary and ecological modes presents the Grand River as a complex living system that is full of interconnection and meaning, reinvigorating poetry's possibilities as a tool for engaging with and speaking of the natural world.

KAREN HOULE is the author of two poetry collections, *Ballast* (1995) and *During* (2000). She teaches in the Philosophy department at the University of Guelph. She is also involved with the Guelph Centre for Urban Organic Farming, where her interest in putting environmental ethics into practice has shifted her toward land-based approaches to learning. She lives in Guelph, Ontario.

## *Elm*

When everything has disappeared ... the "everything that has disappeared" appears: This is the other night.  
EMMANUEL LEVINAS, *ON ESCAPE*

The fully reconstructed longhouse on display at Crawford Lake is buck naked—

*so quiet as if uninhabited.*<sup>1</sup>

Her roomy sternum is exposed  
elm saplings, sheath-lashed, hunched over  
a four-family fire, a triple-palisade heart, no cord  
blood, no spine pole, no needing to support her  
outer membrane.

Percussion driven and pressure flaking,  
a rubbing and the blowing on, the cross-hatched  
on the wet lip with a cord-wrapped stick, the punctate,  
the precise incision.

The laying out flat, and the ironing, and the cutting into cooling  
white flesh

is a man with a burning head  
sweeping upstate with the Dutch cough—

*thus ending the supply of elm bark—*  
is what the key-gouged legend reads.

*Ulmus americana*

---

1. Remark made by Samuel Champlain or Jean de Brebeuf upon approaching a fully-occupied Mohawk four-fire longhouse.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

*Still Deep & Sweet*

In the spring of 1856, Henry David Thoreau immersed himself in the collection of sap and the production of maple sugar, recording his observations in his journal. This limited-edition letterpress book collects Thoreau's thoughts on maple sugaring and adds to them an afterword by poet Peter Sanger and two illustrations by J.J. Steeves.

REGULAR EDITION: Composed in Linotype Fairfield and letterpress printed on Stella cotton paper, making 32 pages. Sewn chapbook-style into a paper cover and enclosed in a decorative paper wrapper; the wrapper paper was handmade by the Saint Armand paper mill. Limited to 100 copies. \$70

DELUXE EDITION: Same as above, except printed on dampened paper handmade by the Saint Armand paper mill and bound in full leather by Katherine Victoria Taylor. The illustration and endpapers are handcoloured by J.J. Steeves. Limited to 16 copies. \$300

ROBERT FROST

*The Figure a Poem Makes*

In his short 1939 essay "The Figure a Poem Makes," the American poet Robert Frost is at his plucky best, offering the reader equal measures of terse New-England matter-of-factness and slippery riddling on the subject of writing: "the straight crookedness of a good walking stick." Frequently mined for its pithy lines, this essay is one of Frost's most concise commentaries on the elusive nature of his craft.

Robert Frost (1874–1963) is one of America's best known poets of the twentieth century. He was also a failed poultry farmer and, later, poet laureate of Vermont.

REGULAR EDITION: Hand composed in Monotype Joanna and letterpress printed on Mohawk Superfine paper, making 16 pages. Sewn chapbook-style into a paper wrapper; the wrapper paper was handmade by the Saint Armand paper mill. Limited to 120 copies. \$30

QUESTIONS REMAIN, but I suppose we can share some news about the forthcoming books we are working on. The trade books described below are slated for release between September and November 2019; as for the limited-edition letterpress projects, their schedules are necessarily more haphazard.

STARTING WITH the trade books, we're working on the next two volumes in our *Gaspereau Field Guides to Canadian Artists Series*, short primers on Canadian visual artists written by curator and journalist RAY CRONIN. These new volumes will feature sculptors John Greer and Colleen Wolstenholme.

Speaking of series, we are also planning to publish volume one in the *New Brunswick Bibliography series*, a project we've initiated in partnership with the University of New Brunswick Libraries. This volume is expected to include the keynote addresses from two recent bibliography conferences held at UNB, as well as a brief bibliography of New Brunswick bibliographies.

We will be publishing a new essay collection by ANNE SIMPSON (Antigonish, NS) called *Palaces of the Brain: Notes & Poems*. As with her essay collection *The Marram Grass: Poetry & Otherness*, which we published in 2009, Anne plans to create a series of line drawings to accompany the essays. Anne is the author of seven books, including novels and collections of poems and essays. Her poetry collection *Loop* won the Griffin Prize in 2008. We're delighted to be working with Anne again.

The remaining 2019 trade books will all be by authors who are new to Gaspereau Press, but none of them are new to Canadian letters.

We will be publishing a collection of short stories by RYAN TURNER (Halifax, NS) called *Poses*. His first collection of stories was published by Oberon Press in 2009.

BREN SIMMERS's *Pivot Point* (Charlottetown, PEI) is a lyrical work of creative non-fiction about a group of women who, along with their partners, take a week-long wilderness canoe trip in Bowron Lakes Provincial Park in British Columbia. Bren has previously published poetry collections with Wolsak & Wynn and Nightwood Editions. The book will be generously decorated with illustrations by EMMA FITZGERALD (Halifax, NS)—Emma's first-ever assignment for Gaspereau Press.

We are also pleased to be publishing a new collection of poems by TAMMY ARMSTRONG (Shag Harbour, NS) called *Year of the Metal Rabbit*. Tammy has published four books of poetry, including the Governor-General's Award shortlisted *Bogman's Music*, and two novels.

AND SPEAKING OF Bren Simmers and Tammy Armstrong, they are scheduled to read at the 19th Annual Gaspereau Press Wayzgoose here in Kentville on Saturday October 26 this year. Our guest printers this year will include MARY BRUNO (Bruno Press, Minnesota) and LARRY THOMPSON (Greyweathers Press, Ontario), and many of our inky friends and neighbours. I hope you can attend. Details to follow in September.

RECENT Devil's Whim chapbooks include SUSAN HALDANE's *Picking Stones* (DW 39) and BRUCE WHITEMAN's *The Sad Mechanic Exercise* (DW 40), both poetry. Forthcoming this summer is KLARA DU PLESSIS's *Unfurl* (DW 41), four short critical essays on the work of poets Erin Moure, Dionne Brand, Lisa Robertson and Anne Carson.

THE LIMITED-EDITION LETTERPRESS projects that are nearing completion will most likely bear 2020 imprints. The first project is our 300+ page wood type specimen book, *Literarum Ex Arboribus*. This large folio book includes 145 prints showing the wood type in our collection. It also includes an essay by myself and a short salutation by renowned poster printer and wood type enthusiast AMOS KENNEDY (Detroit, Michigan). The book was composed in over 145 different fonts of wood type (some quite uncooperative) with Linotype Sabon and Trade Gothic type, and printed on Mohawk Superfine paper. This monumental work will be bound in a limited edition of 26 copies by Toronto's Don Taylor and placed in a maple box. I'm estimating that copies will be priced somewhere around \$2500 each.

The second project, now standing in type and awaiting printing, is a new edition of WENDELL BERRY's *Notes: Unspecializing Poetry*, an essay that originally appeared in *Standing By Words* (1980). This 64-page octavo book was typeset in rare Linotype Falcon. I plan to print it on Stella cotton paper and hand bind it (cloth over boards) in an edition of about 150 copies. Price to be determined.—A.S.

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