

LITERARY SOCIETY

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 | 7:30PM
DISCUSSION VIA ZOOM

Tuesday, September 26, 2023

Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining our Future by Patty Krawec

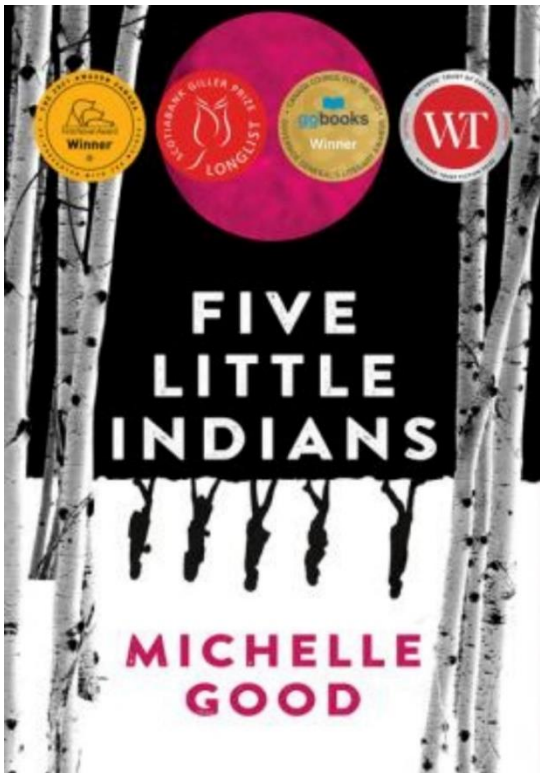
We find our way forward by going back.

The invented history of the Western world is crumbling fast, Anishinaabe writer Patty Krawec says, but we can still honor the bonds between us. Settlers dominated and divided, but Indigenous peoples won't just send them all "home."

Weaving her own story with the story of her ancestors and with the broader themes of creation, replacement, and disappearance, Krawec helps readers see settler colonialism through the eyes of an Indigenous writer. Settler colonialism tried to force us into one particular way of living, but the old ways of kinship can help us imagine a different future. Krawec asks, What would it look like to remember that we are all related? How might we become better relatives to the land, to one another, and to Indigenous movements for solidarity? Braiding together historical, scientific, and cultural analysis, Indigenous ways of knowing, and the vivid threads of communal memory, Krawec crafts a stunning, forceful call to "unforget" our history.

This remarkable sojourn through Native and settler history, myth, identity, and spirituality helps us retrace our steps and pick up what was lost along the way: chances to honor rather than violate treaties, to see the land as a relative rather than a resource, and to unravel the history we have been taught.

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LITERARY SOCIETY

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31 | 7:30PM
DISCUSSION VIA ZOOM

Tuesday, October 31, 2023

Five Little Indians by Michelle Good

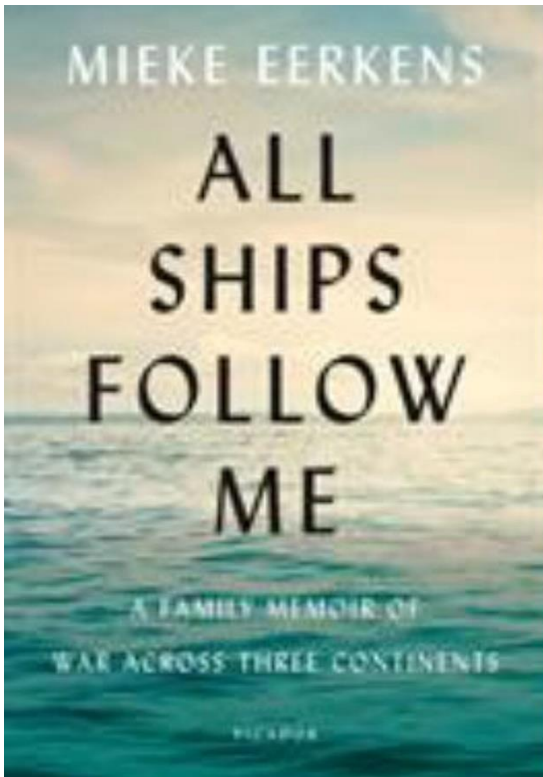
Taken from their families when they are very small and sent to a remote, church-run residential school, Kenny, Lucy, Clara, Howie and Maisie are barely out of childhood when they are finally released after years of detention.

Alone and without any skills, support or families, the teens find their way to the seedy and foreign world of Downtown Eastside Vancouver, where they cling together, striving to find a place of safety and belonging in a world that doesn't want them. The paths of the five friends cross and crisscross over the decades as they struggle to overcome, or at least forget, the trauma they endured during their years at the Mission.

Fuelled by rage and furious with God, Clara finds her way into the dangerous, highly charged world of the American Indian Movement. Maisie internalizes her pain and continually places herself in dangerous situations. Famous for his daring escapes from the school, Kenny can't stop running and moves restlessly from job to job—through fishing grounds, orchards and logging camps—trying to outrun his memories and his addiction. Lucy finds peace in motherhood and nurtures a secret compulsive disorder as she waits for Kenny to return to the life they once hoped to share together. After almost beating one of his tormentors to death, Howie serves time in prison, then tries once again to re-enter society and begin life anew.

With compassion and insight, *Five Little Indians* chronicles the desperate quest of these residential school survivors to come to terms with their past and, ultimately, find a way forward.

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LITERARY SOCIETY

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28 | 7:30PM
DISCUSSION VIA ZOOM

Tuesday, November 28, 2023

All Ships Follow Me: A Family Memoir of War Across Three Continents by Mieke Eerkens

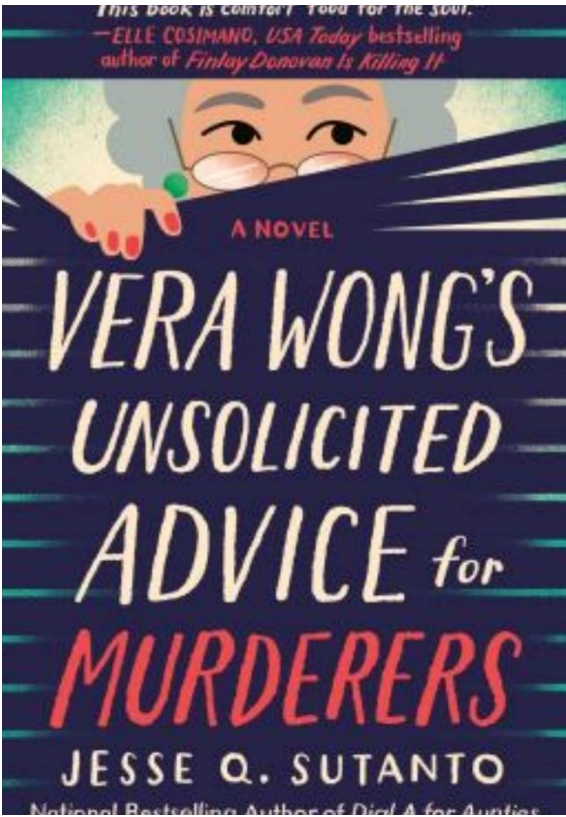
An engrossing, epic saga of one family's experiences on both sides of WWII, *All Ships Follow Me* questions our common narrative of the conflict and our stark notions of victim and perpetrator, while tracing the lasting effects of war through several generations.

In March 1942, Mieke Eerkens' father was a ten-year-old boy living in the Dutch East Indies. When the Japanese invaded the island he, his family, and one hundred thousand other Dutch civilians were interned in a concentration camp and forced into hard labor for three years. After the Japanese surrendered, Mieke's father and his family were set free in a country that plunged immediately into civil war.

Across the globe in the Netherlands, police carried a crying five-year-old girl out of her home at war's end, abandoned and ostracized as a daughter of Nazi sympathizers. This was Mieke's mother. She would be left on the street in front of her sealed home as her parents were taken away and imprisoned in the same camps where the country's Jews had recently been held. Many years later, Mieke's parents met, got married, and moved to California, where she and her siblings were born. While her parents lived far from the events of their past, the effects of the war would continue to be felt in their daily lives and in the lives of their children.

All Ships Follow Me moves from Indonesia to the Netherlands to the United States, and spans generations, as Mieke recounts her parents' lives during and just after the war, and travels with them in the present day to the sites of their childhood in an attempt to understand their experiences and how it formed them. *All Ships Follow Me* is a deeply personal, sweeping saga of the wounds of war, and the way trauma can be passed down through generations.

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LITERARY SOCIETY

TUESDAY, JANUARY 30 | 7:30PM
DISCUSSION VIA ZOOM

Tuesday, January 30, 2024

Vera Wong's Unsolicited Advice for Murderers by Jesse Q. Sutanto

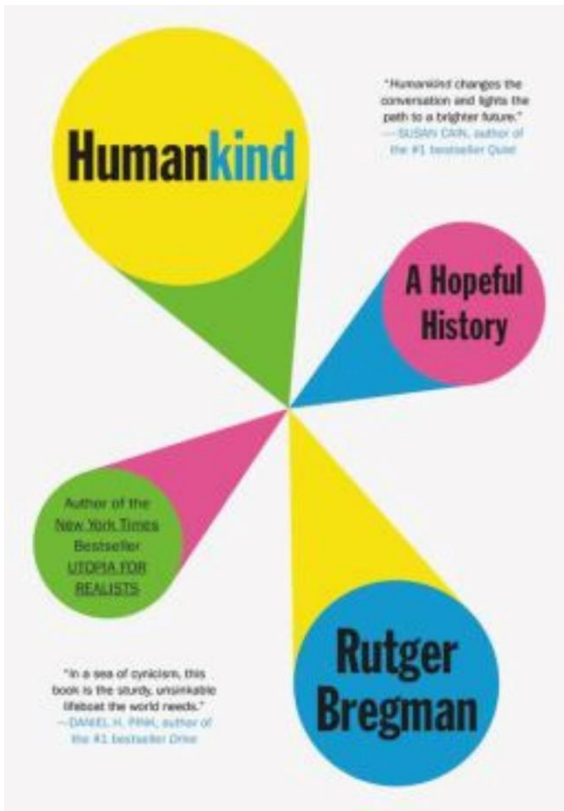
A lonely shopkeeper takes it upon herself to solve a murder in the most peculiar way in this captivating mystery by Jesse Q. Sutanto, bestselling author of *Dial A for Aunties*.

Vera Wong is a lonely little old lady—ah, lady of a certain age—who lives above her forgotten tea shop in the middle of San Francisco's Chinatown. Despite living alone, Vera is not needy, oh no. She likes nothing more than sipping on a good cup of Wulong and doing some healthy detective work on the Internet about what her Gen-Z son is up to.

Then one morning, Vera trudges downstairs to find a curious thing—a dead man in the middle of her tea shop. In his outstretched hand, a flash drive. Vera doesn't know what comes over her, but after calling the cops like any good citizen would, she sort of . . . swipes the flash drive from the body and tucks it safely into the pocket of her apron. Why? Because Vera is sure she would do a better job than the police possibly could, because nobody sniffs out a wrongdoing quite like a suspicious Chinese mother with time on her hands. Vera knows the killer will be back for the flash drive; all she has to do is watch the increasing number of customers at her shop and figure out which one among them is the killer.

What Vera does not expect is to form friendships with her customers and start to care for each and every one of them. As a protective mother hen, will she end up having to give one of her newfound chicks to the police?

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LITERARY SOCIETY

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 27 | 7:30PM
DISCUSSION VIA ZOOM

Tuesday, February 27, 2023

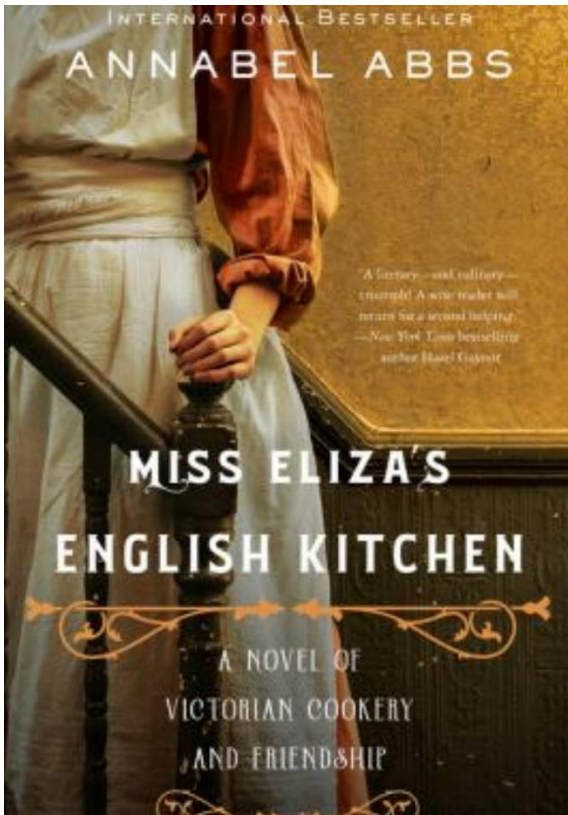
Humankind: A Hopeful History by Rutger Bregman

If there is one belief that has united the left and the right, psychologists and philosophers, ancient thinkers and modern ones, it is the tacit assumption that humans are bad. It's a notion that drives newspaper headlines and guides the laws that shape our lives. From Machiavelli to Hobbes, Freud to Pinker, the roots of this belief have sunk deep into Western thought. Human beings, we're taught, are by nature selfish and governed primarily by self-interest.

But what if it isn't true? International bestseller Rutger Bregman provides new perspective on the past 200,000 years of human history, setting out to prove that we are hardwired for kindness, geared toward cooperation rather than competition, and more inclined to trust rather than distrust one another. In fact this instinct has a firm evolutionary basis going back to the beginning of Homo sapiens.

From the real-life Lord of the Flies to the solidarity in the aftermath of the Blitz, the hidden flaws in the Stanford prison experiment to the true story of twin brothers on opposite sides who helped Mandela end apartheid, Bregman shows us that believing in human generosity and collaboration isn't merely optimistic—it's realistic. Moreover, it has huge implications for how society functions. When we think the worst of people, it brings out the worst in our politics and economics. But if we believe in the reality of humanity's kindness and altruism, it will form the foundation for achieving true change in society, a case that Bregman makes convincingly with his signature wit, refreshing frankness, and memorable storytelling.

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LITERARY SOCIETY

TUESDAY, MARCH 26 | 7:30PM
DISCUSSION VIA ZOOM

Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Miss Eliza's English Kitchen: A Novel of Victorian Cookery and Friendship by Annabel Abbs

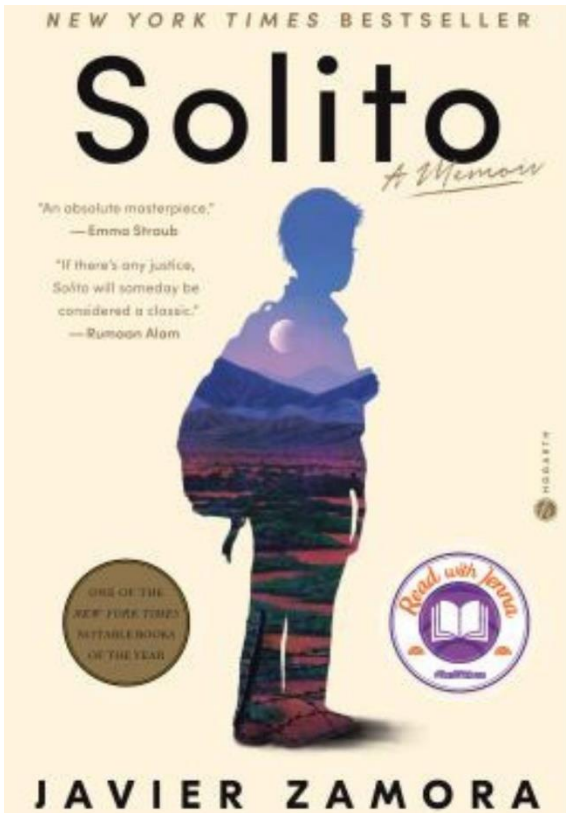
Before Mrs. Beeton and well before Julia Child, there was Eliza Acton, who changed the course of cookery writing forever.

England, 1835. London is awash with thrilling new ingredients, from rare spices to exotic fruits. But no one knows how to use them. When Eliza Acton is told by her publisher to write a cookery book instead of the poetry she loves, she refuses—until her bankrupt father is forced to flee the country. As a woman, Eliza has few options. Although she's never set foot in a kitchen, she begins collecting recipes and teaching herself to cook. Much to her surprise she discovers a talent – and a passion – for the culinary arts.

Eliza hires young, destitute Ann Kirby to assist her. As they cook together, Ann learns about poetry, love and ambition. The two develop a radical friendship, breaking the boundaries of class while creating new ways of writing recipes. But when Ann discovers a secret in Eliza's past, and finds a voice of her own, their friendship starts to fray.

Based on the true story of the first modern cookery writer, *Miss Eliza's English Kitchen* is a spellbinding novel about female friendship, the struggle for independence, and the transcendent pleasures and solace of food.

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LITERARY SOCIETY

TUESDAY, APRIL 30 | 7:30PM
DISCUSSION VIA ZOOM

Tuesday, April 30, 2024

Solito: A Memoir by Javier Zamora

Javier Zamora's *adventure* is a three-thousand-mile journey from his small town in El Salvador, through Guatemala and Mexico, and across the U.S. border. He will leave behind his beloved aunt and grandparents to reunite with a mother who left four years ago and a father he barely remembers. Traveling alone amid a group of strangers and a "coyote" hired to lead them to safety, Javier expects his trip to last two short weeks.

At nine years old, all Javier can imagine is rushing into his parents' arms, snuggling in bed between them, and living under the same roof again. He cannot foresee the perilous boat trips, relentless desert treks, pointed guns, arrests and deceptions that await him; nor can he know that those two weeks will expand into two life-altering months alongside fellow migrants who will come to encircle him like an unexpected family.

A memoir as gripping as it is moving, *Solito* provides an immediate and intimate account not only of a treacherous and near-impossible journey, but also of the miraculous kindness and love delivered at the most unexpected moments. *Solito* is Javier Zamora's story, but it's also the story of millions of others who had no choice but to leave home.

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LITERARY SOCIETY

TUESDAY, MAY 28 | 7:30PM
DISCUSSION VIA ZOOM

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

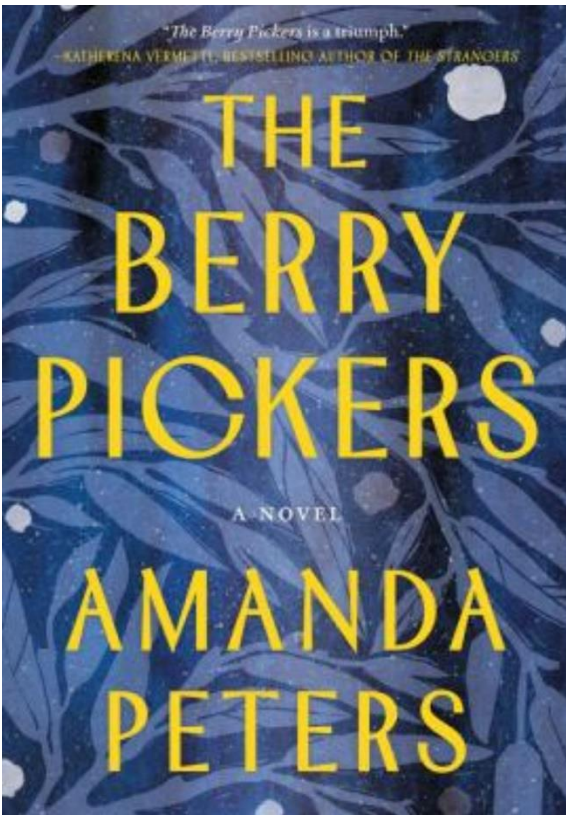
The Watchmaker's Daughter: The True Story of World War II Heroine Corrie ten Boom by Larry Loftis

The Watchmaker's Daughter is one of the greatest stories of World War II that readers haven't heard: the remarkable and inspiring life story of Corrie ten Boom—a groundbreaking, female Dutch watchmaker, whose family unselfishly transformed their house into a hiding place straight out of a spy novel to shelter Jews and refugees from the Nazis during Gestapo raids. Even though the Nazis knew what the ten Booms were up to, they were never able to find those sheltered within the house when they raided it.

Corrie stopped at nothing to face down the evils of her time and overcame unbelievable obstacles and odds. She persevered despite the loss of most of her family and relied on her faith to survive the horrors of a notorious concentration camp. But even more remarkable than her heroism and survival was Corrie's attitude when she was released. Miraculously, she was able to eschew bitterness and embrace forgiveness as she ministered to people in need around the globe. Corrie's ability to forgive is just one of the myriad lessons that her life story holds for readers today.

Reminiscent of *Schindler's List* and featuring a journey of faith and forgiveness not unlike *Unbroken*, *The Watchmaker's Daughter* is destined to become a classic work of World War II nonfiction.

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LITERARY SOCIETY

TUESDAY, JUNE 25 | 7:30PM
DISCUSSION VIA ZOOM

Tuesday, June 25, 2024

The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters

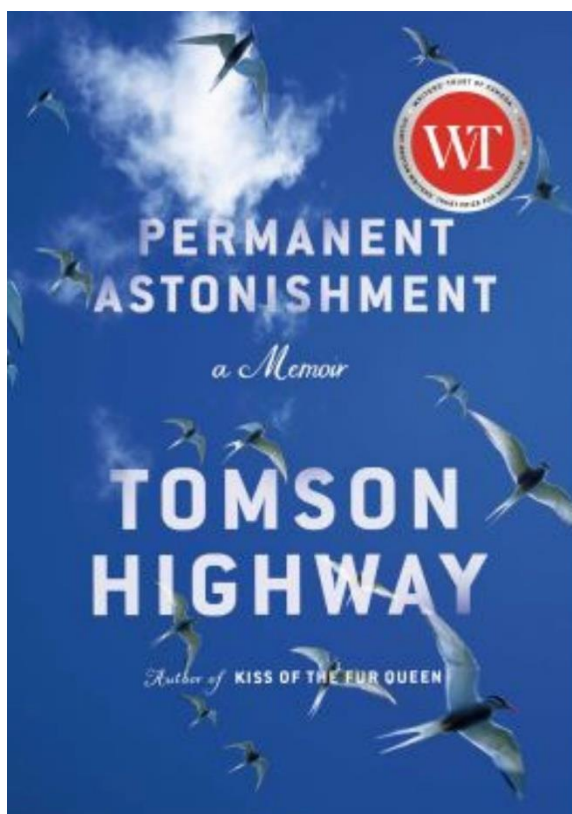
A four-year-old girl goes missing from the blueberry fields of Maine, sparking a tragic mystery that remains unsolved for nearly fifty years

July 1962. A Mi'kmaq family from Nova Scotia arrives in Maine to pick blueberries for the summer. Weeks later, four-year-old Ruthie, the family's youngest child, is seen sitting on her favourite rock at the edge of a field before mysteriously vanishing. Her six-year-old brother, Joe, who was the last person to see Ruthie, is devastated by his sister's disappearance, and her loss ripples through his life for years to come.

In Maine, a young girl named Norma grows up as an only child in an affluent family. Her father is emotionally distant, while her mother is overprotective of Norma, who is often troubled by recurring dreams and visions that seem to be too real to be her imagination. As she grows older, Norma senses there is something her parents aren't telling her. Unwilling to abandon her intuition, she pursues her family's secret for decades.

A stunning debut novel, *The Berry Pickers* is a riveting story about the search for truth, the shadow of trauma, and the persistence of love across time.

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LITERARY SOCIETY

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 | 7:30PM
DISCUSSION VIA ZOOM

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

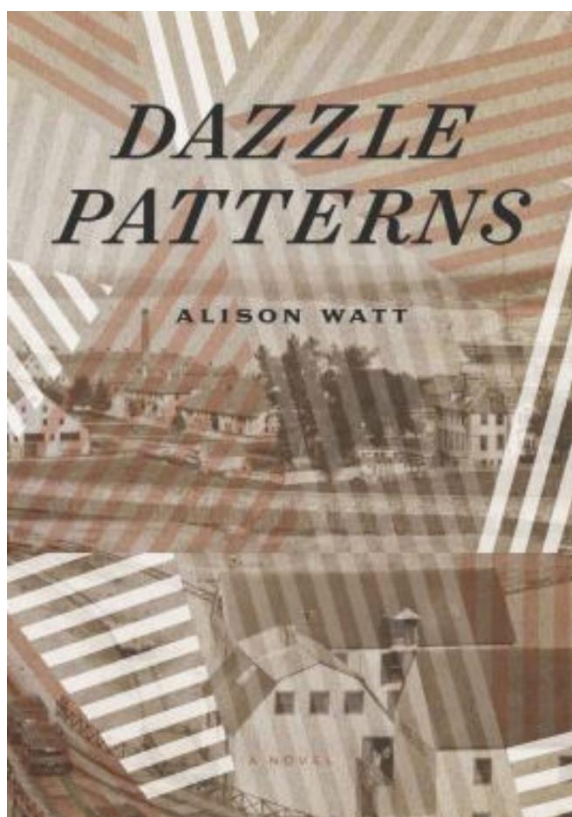
Permanent astonishment: growing up Cree in the land of snow and sky by Thomson Highway

Capricious, big-hearted, joyful: an epic memoir from one of Canada's most acclaimed Indigenous writers and performers

Tomson Highway was born in a snowbank on an island in the sub-Arctic, the eleventh of twelve children in a nomadic, caribou-hunting Cree family. Growing up in a land of ten thousand lakes and islands, Tomson relished being pulled by dogsled beneath a night sky alive with stars, sucking the juices from roasted muskrat tails, and singing country music songs with his impossibly beautiful older sister and her teenaged friends. Surrounded by the love of his family and the vast, mesmerizing landscape they called home, his was in many ways an idyllic far-north childhood. But five of Tomson's siblings died in childhood, and Balazee and Joe Highway, who loved their surviving children profoundly, wanted their two youngest sons, Tomson and Rene, to enjoy opportunities as big as the world. And so when Tomson was six, he was flown south by float plane to attend a residential school. A year later Rene joined him to begin the rest of their education. In 1990 Rene Highway, a world-renowned dancer, died of an AIDS-related illness.

Permanent Astonishment is Tomson's extravagant embrace of his younger brother's final words: "Don't mourn me, be joyful." His memoir offers insights, both hilarious and profound, into the Cree experience of culture, conquest, and survival.

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LITERARY SOCIETY

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29 | 7:30PM
DISCUSSION VIA ZOOM

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

Dazzle Patterns by Alison Watt

Beginning the day of the devastating Halifax Explosion of 1917, *Dazzle Patterns* is an unforgettable story about loss, the resilience of the human spirit, and the transformative power of art.

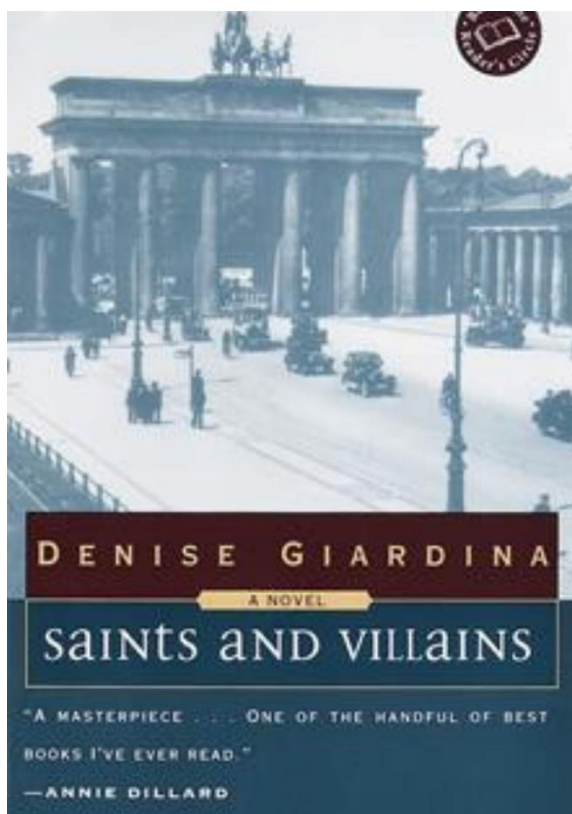
Halifax, 1917. Clare Holmes, a flaw checker at the local glassworks, is saving up for passage to England, to work for the Red Cross and be near her fiancé, Leo, who is fighting in France. But one normal Thursday morning, a deadly explosion in the Halifax harbour shatters the city – and Clare is caught up in the blast.

As Clare struggles to recover from her injuries, she stumbles upon the School of Art, where she finds solace in drawing, and a mentor who encourages Clare's burgeoning artistic ambitions. But how can one be an artist when the whole world has gone mad? When her own city is half-destroyed? When she's not sure if Leo will ever come home?

Meanwhile the city, weary from the seemingly endless war and torn apart by the devastating explosion, is wracked with fear and mistrust of foreigners. Clare's new friend Fred, a glassmaker from Germany, is pulled into a web of suspicion, causing Clare to question everything she thought she knew.

Dazzle Patterns is an unforgettable story about resilience, art, and the casualties of war, abroad and at home. With extraordinary vision and clarity, Alison Watt's remarkable debut novel brings the past to life.

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LITERARY SOCIETY

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26 | 7:30PM
DISCUSSION VIA ZOOM

Tuesday, November 26, 2024

Saints and Villains by Denise Giardina

In the charnel house that was Europe in the Second World War, there were few instances of shining moral courage, let alone secular sainthood. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian and Nazi resister was the exception. This emblematic figure risked his life--and finally lost it--through his participation in a failed plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler and topple his regime. *Saints and Villains* gives us this exemplary life in a sweeping narrative that is bold in conception and utterly convincing in its power of imaginative reconstruction.

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