



FREEHAND  
BOOKS  
SPRING  
2020



## Message from the publisher

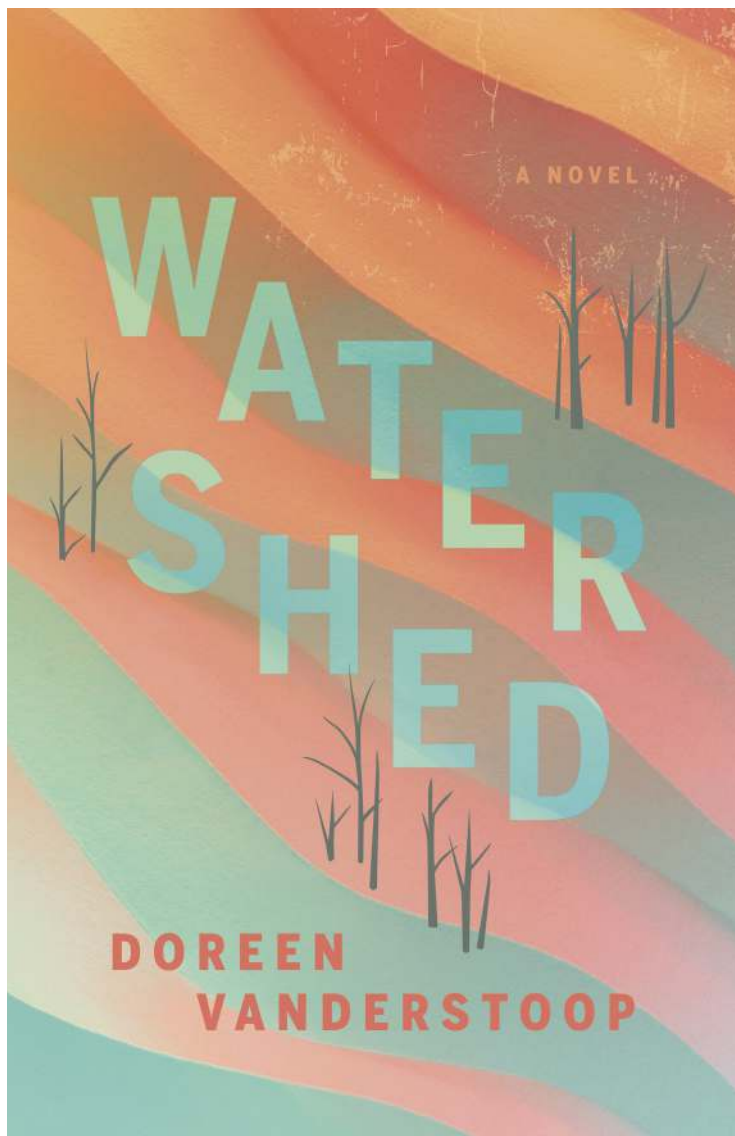
When I look at the list of authors that Freehand has published over our twelve-year history, I'm a bit in awe. And this season we're thrilled to add some big names to the Freehand family. Anne Simpson, winner of the Griffin Poetry Prize and a bestselling novelist, has written a stunning new novel. *Speechless* is about a Nigerian teenager and a Canadian journalist and explores who can (and who should) tell a story. John Gould is a finalist for the Giller Prize, and we're excited to present *The End of Me*, fiction that explores death in ways that are in turn funny, tragic, and absurd.

And we also continue our tradition of publishing exciting debut authors. Doreen Vanderstoop, from Freehand's hometown of Calgary, is definitely one to watch. Her dystopian novel *Watershed*, reminiscent of Margaret Atwood and Cherie Dimaline, presents an all-too-believable look at the consequences of climate change — and is a wild page-turner, to boot.

And on an important note — as of March 1, 2020, UTP Distribution will distribute Freehand's books. LitDistCo will accept returns until May 31, 2020. Please do be in touch if you have any questions about the change in distribution!

**KELSEY ATTARD**

*Managing Editor, Freehand Books*



MAY 2020

## A dystopian near-future novel that explores water scarcity and the bonds of family

In *Watershed*, water is now the most precious resource in Alberta. With the glaciers gone, the province's oil and gas pipelines are being converted to water pipelines. Tensions are high as "water terrorists" threaten to violently cut off the water supply. Against this precarious backdrop, Willa desperately tries to keep her family's failing goat farm afloat.

But when her son, Daniel, goes to work for the water corporation whose high-priced commodity is putting the farm out of business, Willa is stunned. A string of betrayals fractures the family, potentially beyond repair. Willa feels herself losing everything that she values most — her farm, her son, her past, even her very grip on reality. When the water terrorists kidnap Daniel, her world truly shatters. Is there any way to put the pieces back together?

*Watershed* is a fast-paced, page-turner of a novel that cleverly explores the shattering effects of climate change on one ordinary family.

ISBN 978-1-988298-59-7

\$22.95 CDN

5.5 × 8.5 PAPERBACK

320 PAGES

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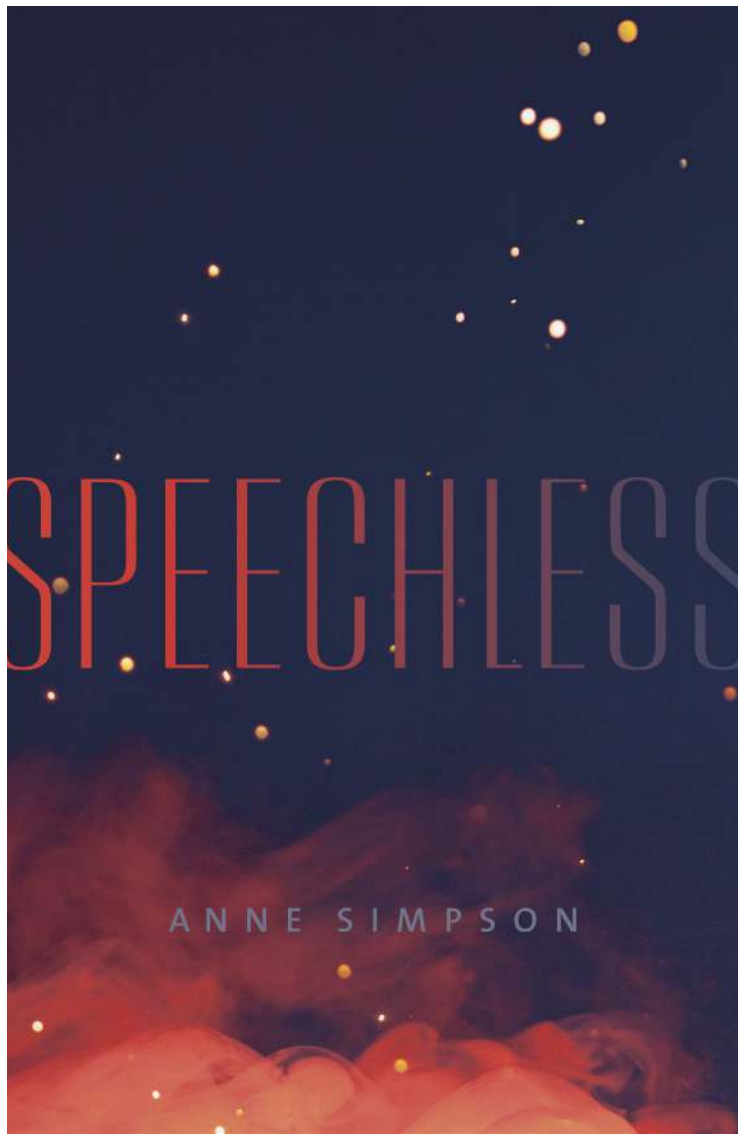
FIC055000 Fiction / Dystopian

FIC019000 Fiction / Literary

FIC066000 Fiction / Small Town & Rural



**DOREEN VANDERSTOOP** is a Calgary-based writer, storyteller, and musician. Her short fiction has appeared in *Prairie Fire* and online at Montreal Serai, *Prairie Journal*, *Epiphany Magazine*, and others. As a storyteller, she often performs at conferences, festivals, schools, libraries, and more, and leads workshops to inspire in others a passion for the oral tradition. *Watershed* is her debut novel.



MAY 2020

A fast-paced novel about a Nigerian teenager and a Canadian journalist and the power of words.

A'isha Nasir is a Nigerian teenager who has been charged with adultery. She is sentenced to death by stoning — a sentence to be carried out after her daughter is weaned. Sophie MacNeil is an ambitious, though inexperienced, Canadian journalist living in Nigeria. *Speechless* is the story of how their lives become intertwined in a fast-paced tale of justice, witness, and courage.

Sophie MacNeil is working in Lagos as a contract reporter for *The Daily Leader*. After meeting with A'isha, she writes an impassioned article about the way women suffer under Shariah law. Her story is regarded as inflammatory, written by an outsider. The newspaper office is firebombed and rioting quickly slips into sectarian violence. Sophie must come to terms with the naiveté with which she approached the story. Still, A'isha had spoken to her. And she had a duty to listen.

Who should tell a story? What happens when one speaks on behalf of another? Compelling and lyrical, *Speechless* presents a nuanced cast of characters trying to navigate the power of their words, their responsibility for them, and how they affect others in matters of life and death.

ISBN 978-1-988298-62-7

\$22.95 CDN

5.5 × 8.5 PAPERBACK

320 PAGES

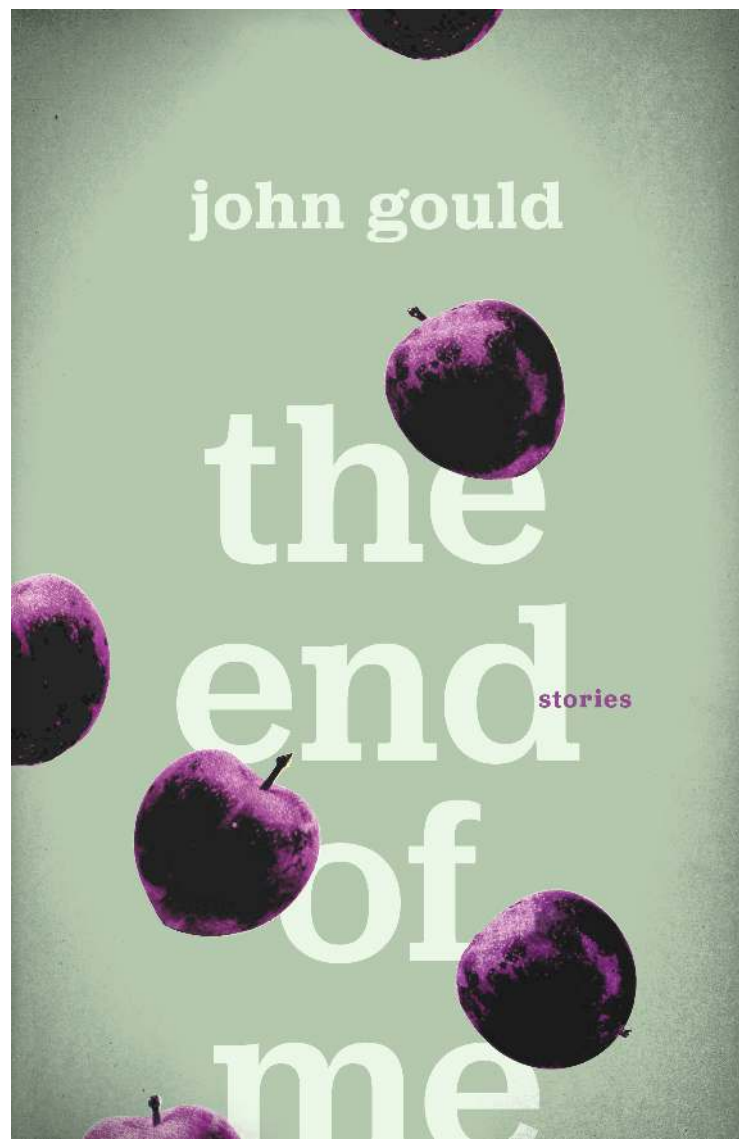
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FIC019000 Fiction / Literary

FIC044000 Fiction / Women



**ANNE SIMPSON** has published two novels, *Canterbury Beach* and *Falling*, longlisted for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award and winner of the Dartmouth Book Award for Fiction. She has also written five poetry collections, of which *Strange Attractor* is the most recent. She won the Griffin Poetry Prize for *Loop* in 2004. Her book of essays, *The Marram Grass: Poetry and Otherness*, examines poetry, art, and philosophy. A writer-in-residence who has worked at libraries and universities across the country, she lives in Nova Scotia.



MAY 2020

## 56 very short stories about death by Giller Prize finalist John Gould

*The End of Me* is an astonishing set of sudden stories that explores the experience of mortality. With an ear attuned to the uncanny and the ironic, John Gould catches his characters at moments of illumination as they encounter the dark mystery of their finite being. A marooned astronaut bonds with a bereft cat; kids get caught pelting a funeral procession with plums; a woman's dreams swarm with victims of the new age of extinction; a young girl ponders the brief brutality of her last life, and braces herself for the next one.

Rife with invention, with fresh ideas and arresting voices, this collection of flash fiction — funny, sad, absurd — draws from the imponderable a great compassion and vitality.

ISBN 978-1-988298-56-6

\$22.95 CDN

5.25 x 8 PAPERBACK

192 PAGES

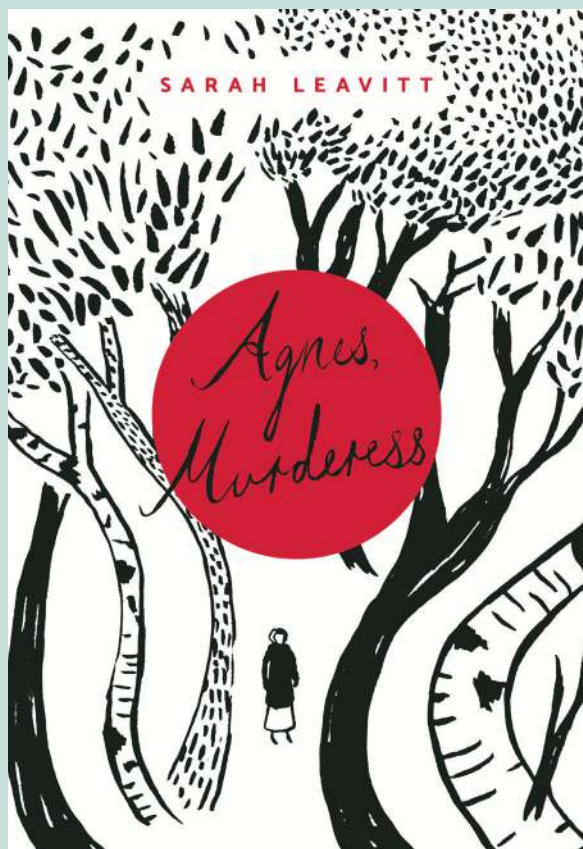
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FIC029000 Fiction / Short Stories (single author)

FIC019000 Fiction / Literary



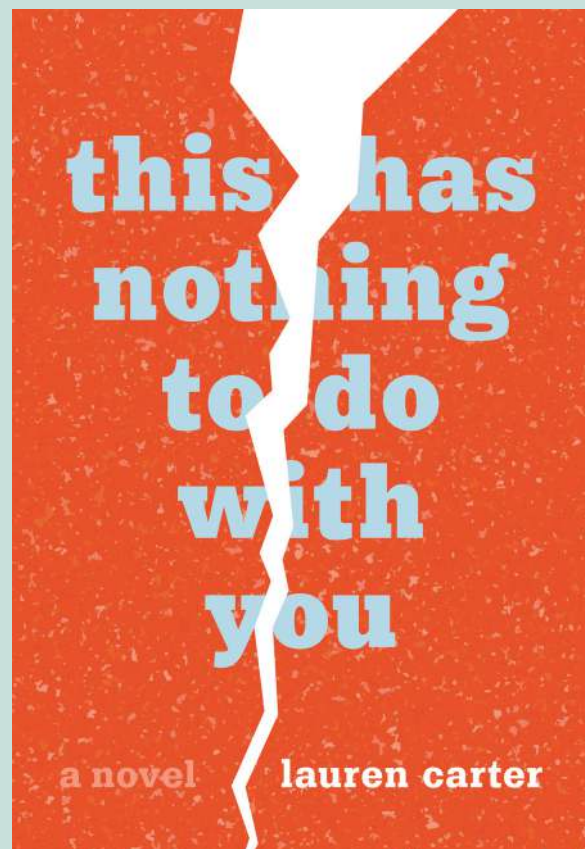
**JOHN GOULD** is the author of two previous collections of very short stories — including *Kilter*, a finalist for the Giller prize and a Globe and Mail Best Book — and the novel *Seven Good Reasons Not to Be Good*, described by the *Vancouver Sun* as “a marvel of delicacy, depth and insight.” His fiction has appeared in literary periodicals across the country, and been adapted for film. He lives in Victoria, where he taught in the Department of Writing at the University of Victoria and served on the editorial board of the *Malahat Review*.



ISBN 978-1-988298-47-4 \$29.95 CDN

"I could not put *Agnes, Murderess* down. Gothic horror meets feminist history in this deceptively spare novel of a 19th-century Scottish waif turned serial killer. Along the way, the characters and reader alike are haunted by considerations of power stolen away and seized back, colonialism, loneliness, desire, obsession, friendship, and even love."

— Annabel Lyon, author of *The Golden Mean* and *The Sweet Girl*



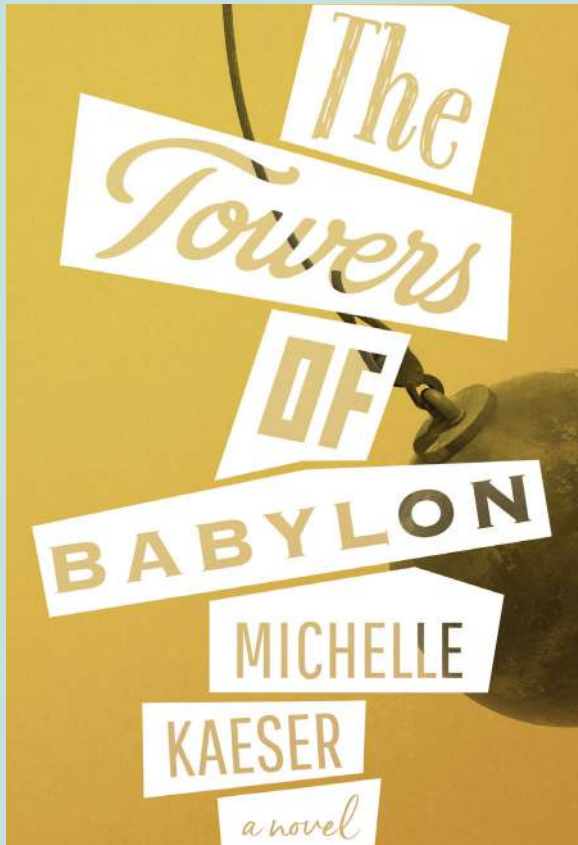
ISBN 978-1-988298-54-2 \$22.95 CDN

"Unflinching and mesmerizing, Lauren Carter's novel explores the daily impact of generational trauma, the need to love unreservedly, and a woman inching toward dealing by dredging up the past."

— Emily Pohl-Weary

"I found it tender and devastating. A deep dive into the trauma created by family secrets — and secret-keeping. Also, an ode to Northern Ontario!"

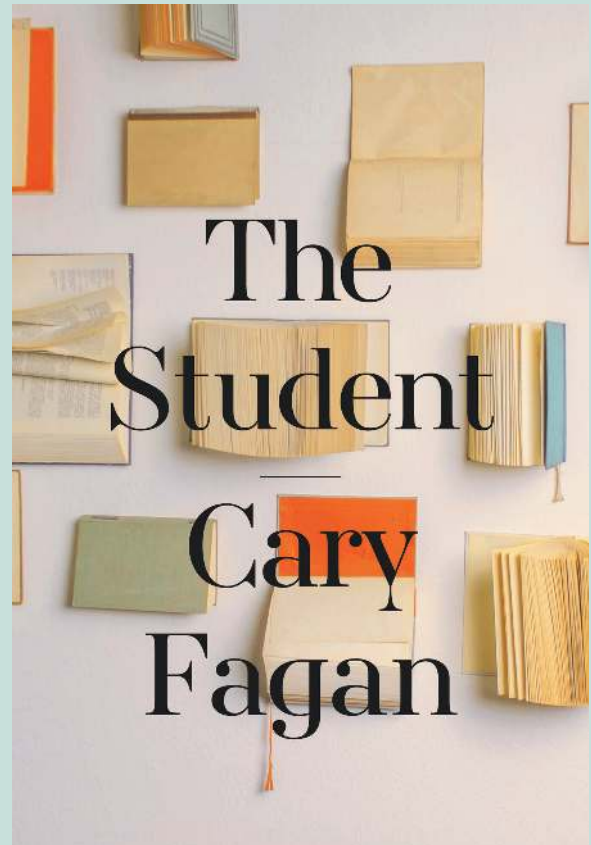
— Sarah Selecky



ISBN 978-1-988298-49-8 \$22.95 CDN

“Michelle Kaeser has written the perfect classic for millennials. She captures us in all our overeducated, underemployed, anxious glory. At once devastating and funny, whip-smart and sexy, this is the definitive portrayal of a generation shipwrecked by post-recession capitalism. It left me winded.”

— Sigal Samuel, author of *The Mystics of Mile End*



ISBN 978-1-988298-44-3 \$21.95 CDN

★ Finalist for the 2019 Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction

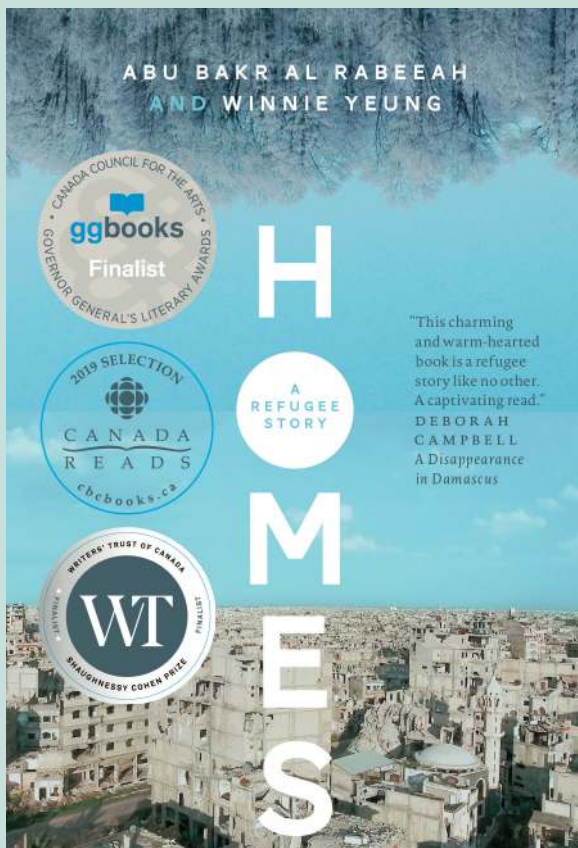
★ Finalist for the City of Toronto Book Award

“Beautifully crafted and bursting with love”

— Tara Henley, *Toronto Star*

“Cary Fagan’s latest novel, *The Student*, seems like one of his best. It has the agreeable quality of being both simple and deep, with prose as clear as a smooth pond whose waters go to impressive depths.”

— Bill Gladstone, *Canadian Jewish News*

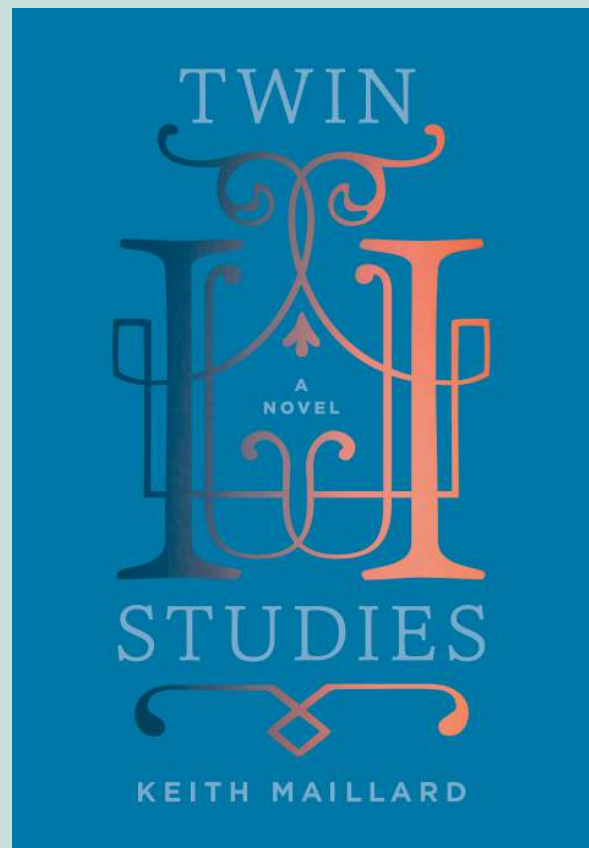


ISBN 978-1-988298-28-8 \$19.95 CDN/US

- ★ Audience choice winner of Canada Reads, 2019
- ★ OverDrive's Big Library Read selection—April, 2019
- ★ Finalist for the 2018 Governor General's Literary Award for Non-Fiction
- ★ Finalist for the 2019 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing
- ★ Winner of the 2019 Wilfred Eggleston Award for Non-Fiction
- ★ Winner of the Alberta Book of the Year Award, Trade Non-Fiction

"This extraordinary story is about the resilience of family in the face of profound terror; Yeung writes with a deceptively simple, meticulously observing eye and novelistic attention to plot and character."

— 2018 Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing Jury (André Picard, Angela Sterritt, and Chris Turner)



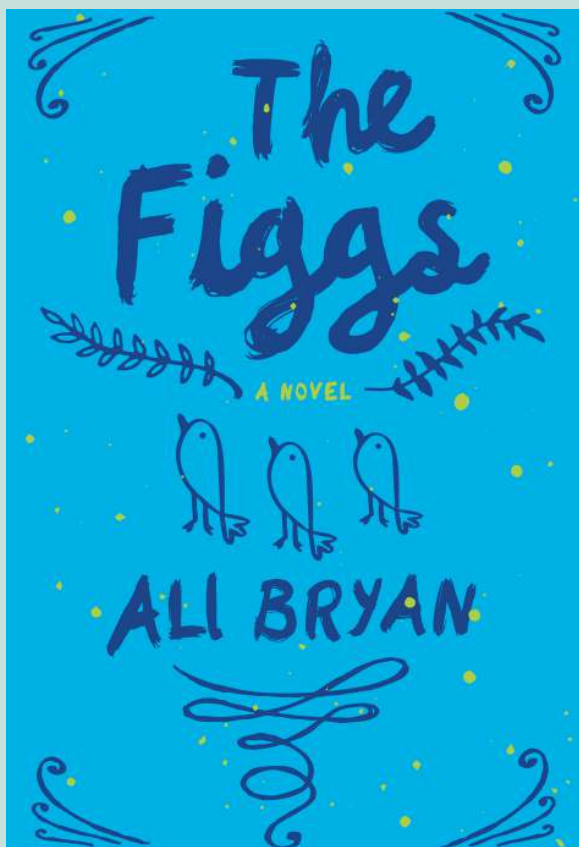
ISBN 978-988298-31-3 \$24.95 CDN

- ★ Winner of the Alberta Book of the Year Award, Trade Fiction
- ★ A Globe and Mail Best Book of 2018

"Keith Maillard's long-awaited new novel opens with an e-mail from twins Jamie and Devon to the Interdisciplinary Twin Studies Program at a Vancouver university. Despite weighing in at 576 pages, it never flags. It turned out to be the perfect length for this story of gender and sexual fluidity and the emergence of one unconventional family."

— *The Globe and Mail*

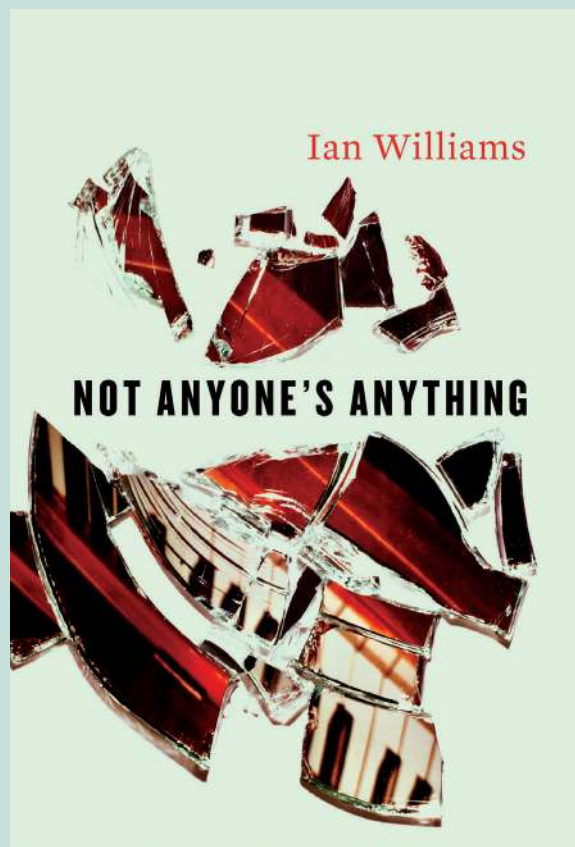




ISBN 978-988298-25-2 \$21.95 CDN/US

★ Shortlisted for the 2019 Stephen Leacock Medal for Humour

"In *The Figgs*, Ali Bryan takes us to bedlam and back in a story that grips you from the start and never lets go. With equal parts humour and heart, a masterful storyteller explores the meaning of love and family in complicated and challenging times. Extraordinary."  
— Terry Fallis, two-time winner of the Leacock Medal for Humour



ISBN 978-1-55111-995-3 \$21.95 CDN

★ A short-story collection by 2019 Giller Prize finalist Ian Williams  
★ Winner of the 2011 Danuta Gleed Literary Award

"In these nuanced, restless stories, Williams subverts our conventional expectations of narrative. Minutely observed, his characters' disconsolate lives swerve off one another, as they again and again attempt to connect. And yet this oblique, intense approach to story and character profoundly captures the real. *Not Anyone's Anything* discloses a radical new voice in Canadian fiction."  
— Rhea Tregobov

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978-1-55481-265-3	Afterlife of Birds, The	Elizabeth Philips	2015	21.95	21.95	29.95
978-1-988298-47-4	Agnes, Murderess	Sarah Leavitt	2019	29.95		
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978-1-988298-56-6	End of Me, The	John Gould	2020	22.95	22.95	30.95
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978-1-988298-59-7	Watershed	Doreen Vanderstoop	2020	22.95	22.95	30.95
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