

WORDS ON THE WATER

10th
Anniversary

2011

Welcome to Words on the Water 2011

Welcome to the 10th annual Words on the Water Writers' Festival. In celebration of this anniversary, a commemorative collection of the ten poems commissioned by WOW over the past decade has been created for your pleasure. The writers this year reflect a broad spectrum: poets, journalists, novelists, a humorist, and a spoken word poet. We invite you to laugh, cry and ponder thoughtfully. The music, the food and use of the lovely Maritime Heritage Centre are provided for our enjoyment by our generous sponsors.

Festival Schedule of Events

All events take place at the Maritime Heritage Centre

Friday, March 11th - 7:30 pm

Master of Ceremonies *John Elson*

Words on the Water Commissioned Poem *Kate Braid*

Writers in Conversation

- Kevin Chong and Ian Mulgrew
- Patricia Robertson, Adam Lewis Schroeder, and M.A.C. Farrant
- Angie Abdou, interviewed by host John Elson

Intermission

Music by The Wire Choir

- Kate Braid and Shane Koyczan

Friday night sponsored by the Scotiabank

Saturday, March 12th

MORNING

9:00 Angie Abdou
9:45 Kate Braid
10:30 *Break*
10:45 Patricia Robertson
11:30 Kevin Chong
12:15 *Lunch*

AFTERNOON

1:00 Adam Lewis Schroeder
1:45 M.A.C. Farrant
2:30 *Break*
2:45 Ian Mulgrew
3:30 Shane Koyczan

EVENING

7:30 Literary
Cabaret
and Music by
Leenie Bennett
and Nathan Krell

Prey for the Whale

Rolling on the wet black blocks of a watching sea,
we wait for the whales. Through empty days my men carve
the likeness of their prey in whalebone and wood, figure
how they'll spend their pay on pretty women and rum.

As our days slip into the rhythms of water, wet rolls of it ripening
from one hammock to the next, memories of land slip away
and we're purged of gardens and grass, the sharp knock of a path
replaced by the wide-legged swagger that mimics the roll of water.

Everything on an ocean is round, from my captain's wheel
to portholes and plates, the sides of the fish the cook fries for dinner,
even the wooden walls of my ship curve as we journey in a great sea circle
seeking a glimpse of ourselves before we disappear over the round horizon.

It's enough to make a man soft, make his eyes drift
off the straight line of arrow and gun. The sea is a temptress
who teases my men, makes them sink to their knees
to worship her swells.

I double their ration of prayers, fight with the deep
for their rough men's souls as day after day I watch them sway
to the round mouthed, easy O
of ocean, while their flesh grows slack as butter.

And that's when the whales come, black ballast that bursts off the cold sea floor,
shadows just waiting for our moment of weakness.
When the lookout cries, There she blows! then they're mine again
as they spring alive, their nerves shot taut with the promise of whale.

When the whales breach, I sing God's anthems, trumpet to the Almighty to help us
battle a worthy foe. *Rise Up, Oh Men of God!* as the great beasts lift
and breach and blow and I split the air with my singing, *Rock of Ages!*
as they rise, larger than any of the boats we launch to destroy them.

A single body vast and black, heaves up to scan me with its numinous eye.

I fear that eye. It's the eye of judgement, set in a leathery skin so tough, so slight
that harpoons pass through. It's an eye from the Hells of the Deep
but I'm storming now, the spit and spray of words mixed with the heartbeat of ocean.
Salt beads a wafer on my beard

and howl! as harpoons are readied and boats unleashed like dogs
to harass one chosen beast, bite at its sides 'till
the harpooner shoots and all hands row, God damn them! Row!
my fists locked in a grip on the rails of the tossing mother ship.

Six men jerk back when the line strikes flesh and they pull like hell
in a terrible tug of war. Onward my men, my Christian soldiers!
as the animal heaves like the sea itself and the men are exhausted now
but I beat them on – the Lord helps those who help themselves –

'till they pull alongside – Ludvigson, Johnston, Hill – my boys,
their faces lit by sweat as the harpooner lifts his lance and thrusts again
and again into heart and lungs and hot winds blast as air rushes out
and the great beast dies, wallowing, wallowing in our wake.

After, it's celebration, all bonus and a break to the monotony of days.
Now there are stories to tell, the chase and the capture and the kill.
There are prayers and thanksgiving too, I see to that.
Another round of rum and the men are happy tonight.

Later, on the bridge where I walk, moon wavers. There's a slow hum on the sea,
a wind that marks me, haunts me. Tonight I'll dream the ghosts of whales
as they circle my ship in goodbye to the one bound tight as an eyelid to the round
sides of my small craft aimed now, over the wet lens of horizon.

When finally we land, I'll find a church, on Sunday,
asking the first preacher I see for a blessing, and another, protection
against I'm not sure what; something large and dark and round, Oh Father,
lies buried in my heart, something somewhere in that sea, watches me.

Kate Braid

Note to the poem:

In April 1997 the Royal BC Museum in Victoria, BC opened an exhibit called "Whales: The Enduring Legacy." I was haunted by that show and took copious notes, so the facts here are as accurate as I can make them: there was indeed a whaling captain named William Heater who was a street preacher during the off season and who sang hymns to his men as they hunted; there were three sailors named Ludvigson, Johnston and Hill, and so on. Thanks to the folk at the museum for their help on the details, especially Bob Griffin. This poem was commissioned for the 2011 Campbell River Writers' Festival.

Angie Abdou



Angie Abdou is a fiction writer from Fernie, BC. BC BookWorld called her short story collection, *Anything Boys Can Do* (2006), an “extraordinary literary debut” and the *Victoria Times Colonist* commended its original take on female sexuality. *The Globe and Mail* praised her first novel, *The Bone Cage* (2007), for its “beautiful writing” and *Quill & Quire* called it “vivid, intense, and authentic.” The Kootenay Library Federation chose *The Bone Cage* as the official book for the inaugural “One Book One Kootenay” reading series and it was a finalist in CBC’s 2011 Canada Reads debates. *The Canterbury Trail*, a black comedy about mountain culture, was just released by Victoria’s Brindle & Glass Press (February 2011).

Kate Braid



Kate Braid’s five books of poetry have won or been nominated for various prizes including the Pat Lowther Award, the BC Book Prize, the Milton Acorn People’s Poetry Prize and the Vancity Women’s Book Prize. She also co-edited with Sandy Shreve the ground-breaking book of Canadian form poetry, *In Fine Form*. She has published three books of non-fiction and her poems and personal essays have been widely published and anthologized. She has given readings, guest lectures and workshops across Canada and has lately begun collaboration with musicians in her work, including the fabulous Clyde Reed.

She lives with her partner on the edge of Vancouver where she can wake to the music of gulls. She has been commissioned by Words on the Water to write a poem for the festival’s tenth anniversary.

Kevin Chong



Kevin Chong is the author of a novel, *Baroque-a-Nova*, published by Penguin in 2001 which received an honourable mention in the Amazon.ca/Books in Canada First Novel Award, a non-fiction book called *Neil Young Nation* published by Greystone in 2005 that was named a book of the year by *The Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star*, and *The Ottawa Citizen*, and a forthcoming memoir about horse-racing, also by Greystone.

He teaches part-time at UBC and as a book reviewer, fiction writer, and journalist has published in *The Walrus*, *Chatelaine*, *Maclean’s*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Vancouver Magazine*, *Geist*, *Descant*, *Maisonnewave*, and others.

M.A.C. Farrant



M.A.C. Farrant is the author of ten collections of satirical and philosophical short fiction, a novel-length memoir, *My Turquoise Years*, and a book of non-fiction/humour, *The Secret Lives of Litterbugs*. *Down the Road to Eternity: New & Selected Fiction* was published by Talonbooks in the fall of 2009. *The Secret Lives of Litterbugs* appeared from Key Porter Books, also in 2009, and was a finalist for the 2010 Victoria Butler Book Prize. In 2011 Talonbooks will publish *The Strange Truth About Us*, a “novel of absence.” Her stage adaptation of *My Turquoise Years* is slated for production by the Arts Club Theatre of Vancouver in the 2011/12 season.

A full-time writer currently residing in North Saanich, B.C., she also reviews books for *The Vancouver Sun* and *The Globe & Mail*. Farrant’s work is infused with acerbic wit and iconoclastic innovation. As *The Globe & Mail* has noted, “Farrant is better at startling us with unnerving, often misanthropic, visions of everyday life than perhaps any other Canadian writer.” *The Ottawa Citizen* has called Farrant “One of the best humourists in the land.” *BC Bookworld* has called her “Canada’s most acerbic and intelligent humourist.”

Shane Koyczan



In a world where poets rarely intersect with stardom, the Opening Ceremonies for the 2010 Winter Olympics introduced us to Shane Koyczan. Koyczan is both a writer and spoken word virtuoso. His first published collection, *Visiting Hours*, was the only work of poetry selected by both *The Guardian* and *The Globe and Mail* for their Best Books of the Year lists in 2005. Destined to become a future classic, *Visiting Hours* is now in its third edition, and includes “We Are More,” the powerful and moving poem that defines itself, originally commissioned by the Canadian Tourism Commission.

Ian Mulgrew



Ian Mulgrew is a journalist and author based in Vancouver who is currently a columnist with *The Vancouver Sun*. Over the last three decades as a writer, his work has appeared in a variety of newspapers and magazines around the globe. He is the author or co-author of *The Waterboy: From the Sidelines to the Owner's Bob* — *Inside the CFL, the XFL and the NFL*, with Bob Ackles; *Bud Inc.* — *Inside Canada's Marijuana Industry*; *Amazon Extreme: Three ordinary guys, a rubber raft and the most dangerous river on Earth*, with Colin Angus; *Who Killed Cindy James?*; *Final Payoff: The True Price of Convicting Clifford Robert Olson*, and *Unholy Terror: The Sikhs and International Terrorism*. He is also the ghost writer of *Webster! The Autobiography of Jack Webster*.

His work has been optioned for film and he also is an accomplished broadcaster and regular commentator on television and radio.

Patricia Robertson



Patricia Robertson's most recent book is *The Goldfish Dancer: Stories and Novellas*. Her work has been nominated for the B.C. Book Prize, the Journey Prize, the Pushcart Prize, and the National Magazine Awards (three times). She was also recently named as one of the top forty Canadian short story writers of the twentieth century.

Born in the UK, she grew up in Canada and received her MA in Creative Writing from Boston University. She now lives in Whitehorse, Yukon, where she teaches creative writing at Yukon College. She is the 2010-2011 Writer-in-Residence at the Haig-Brown House in Campbell River.

Adam Lewis Schroeder



Adam Lewis Schroeder is the author of the story collection *Kingdom of Monkeys*, a Danuta Gleed Award finalist, the novel *Empress of Asia*, nominated for the Amazon.ca/Books in Canada First Novel award and the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize, and the 2010 novel *In the Fabled East*, one of Amazon.ca's Best Books of the Year.

He received a Creative Writing MFA from the University of British Columbia before travelling extensively. Adam lives in Penticton BC with his wife and sons, writes for CBC radio and teaches at UBC Okanagan.

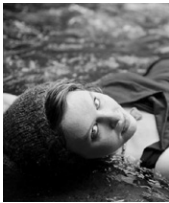
Master Of Ceremonies



Involved with WOW from the beginning, John continues to be in awe of writers and their work. He is only too happy to interrupt his life of pensioned play to spend a weekend in their company. Check out his latest venture, “A Way With Words,” at www.johnelson.ca.

Our Musicians

Leenie Bennett



Words on the Water is proud to feature Leenie Bennett, an up and coming musician currently working out of Chilliwack to perform at Saturday evening's cabaret. With an 'Ani DiFranco' vibe to her music, Leenie is pleased to have just released her new LP “About a Girl” and received her first radio play on the Village 900 in Victoria with her song “HEY.”

Nathan Krell

Words on the Water is pleased to welcome Nathan Krell to the festival this year. Nathan is currently a grade 12 student studying grade 10 piano with Shelley Roberts and is also a Dorothy Breaely Memorial Scholarship recipient. Nathan is a summer student of the Victoria Conservatory Piano Academy. Relax and enjoy as Nathan plays before the cabaret and during intermission on Saturday evening.

Wire Choir



The Wire Choir is Dave Blinzinger Jr., Grahame Edwards, and Grant McLellan; their repertoire encompasses traditional swing, through jazz standards to modern classics. Words on the Water is happy to welcome back the Wire Choir and their melodic weave for your musical enjoyment on Friday night.

Words on the Water Organizing Committee

Rebecca Berry
Angel Murphy

Charlene Brown
Paul Murphy

Trevor McMonagle
Barbara Preston

Ruth McMonagle

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the many volunteers who help make Words on the Water function smoothly. You have been steadfast and perennial in your support and your expertise in running the weekend is invaluable and deeply appreciated.

Words on the Water Student Outreach Program

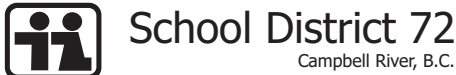
An important commitment of Words on the Water is to foster an appreciation of literature in the youth in our community. Thanks to the joint sponsorship of WOW and School District #72, Adam Lewis Schroeder will offer readings in the schools and a writing workshop to Campbell River students on Friday, March 11th.

Ann and Roderick Haig-Brown



From its inception, Words on the Water has taken inspiration from the lives and works of Ann and Roderick Haig-Brown. The Haig-Browns were philosophers and conservationists who carefully considered their place in the world. Roderick's writing and Ann's humanitarian work continue to influence this community. Words on the Water aspires to contribute to keeping their memory alive and to honour their legacy.

A Very Special Thank You to Our Sponsors!



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