

21st Annual
WORDS
ON THE WATER
CAMPBELL RIVER WRITERS' FESTIVAL

MARCH 7-8, 2025



MARITIME HERITAGE CENTRE
621 Island Highway, Campbell River

www.wordsonthewater.ca

WELCOME

Words on the Water Writers' Festival marks its

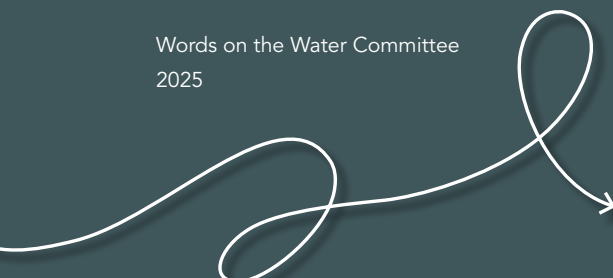
21ST ANNUAL EVENT

once again bringing eight of Canada's top writers to Campbell River for readings and great conversations in front of an audience of local readers.

We are honoured to welcome our distinguished guest writers who have come to share their work, and our dedicated readers who have come to listen. We sincerely hope you enjoy the beautiful setting, music and food, and the stimulating readings, dialogue, and conversations.

We invite you to escape into the richness of words.

Words on the Water Committee
2025



Grab a limited-edition WoW tote
at the Coho Books table for \$15!

* Printed locally



Words on the Water respectfully acknowledges the Liḡw̓iḡdaḡw̓ First Nation, on whose traditional lands we host this festival. The Liḡw̓iḡdaḡw̓ First Nation is comprised of the Wei Wai Kai, Wei Wai Kum and Kwiakah First Nations.

Our closest neighbours are the Coast Salish Xwemalḡkwu, Klahoose and K'ómoks First Nations.

These nations have close connections to the land where Campbell River is located today.

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, MARCH 7TH

Writers in Conversation

This evening serves as an introduction to all of our guest writers. The writers will address questions about the craft of writing and the art of storytelling.

This conversation will begin the festival. The opening also features local musical talent, a no-host bar, and charcuterie.

Welcome by Emcees and Shawn Decaire

Festival Poem

by Jess Housty

7:30pm

Michael Christie and Scott Alexander Howard

8:00pm

Shashi Bhat and Susan Musgrave

Intermission

Live music by Doug Folkins

9:00pm

Celia Haig-Brown and Ian Ferguson

9:30pm

Jess Housty and Adam Shoalts

SATURDAY, MARCH 8TH

Saturday is organized into four 90 minute sessions and each author will have up to 45 minutes for a reading.

Many writers leave time at the end for audience questions.

Session 1

9:00am - Celia Haig-Brown

9:45am - Jess Housty

Break

Session 2

10:45am - Shashi Bhat

11:30am - Scott Alexander Howard

Lunch

Session 3

1:00pm - Ian Ferguson

1:45pm - Adam Shoalts

Break

Session 4

2:45pm - Susan Musgrave

3:30pm - Michael Christie

SATURDAY EVENING LITERARY CABARET

Doors open at 7:00pm, 7:30pm start

A final celebration of our authors and a time for stories.

Includes local musical talent, Rick Bossom, on the piano.

Our Emcees

Sara Lopez and Jenelle Pasiechnik

SURFACING

When I was small,
I loved the stories of people who,
with unhurried gestures,
lifted the edges of the sea
and walked into other worlds.

Of course water is a portal,
the pathway between us
and some magnificent other space
beyond our imagining.

What else could we expect
of a substance that,
even in this heavy world,
lets us float?

We rest our palms on the surface
and it binds our grief,
speaks that grief back to us
like a story, like a prayer,
like something we've always been
strong enough to bear.

Only water, as it moves around us,
shows us what is hard in this world
and what is soft and what is light
and what is impermeable.

Someday I'll look at a shoreline
and know where to place my hands
so I can lift the water up,
and my grandchildren will tell their grandchildren
that I could move water.

You'll know, though, and I will,
that it's water which moves me.

GUEST AUTHORS

Each year, the festival brings eight of Canada's best authors to our city for a weekend of readings, conversation and connection with the local audience.

(below) 2024 Authors Interviews: Yann Martel and Tsering Yangzom Lama



SHASHI BHAT



... is the author of the story collection **Death by a Thousand Cuts**, and the novels **The Most Precious Substance on Earth**, and **The Family Took Shape**.

Her fiction has received the Writers' Trust/McClelland & Stewart Journey Prize and was a finalist for the Governor General's Award for fiction, the Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award, the National Magazine Award for fiction, and the RBC Bronwen Wallace Award, and was longlisted for the Giller Prize.

Shashi's work has appeared in such publications as *Hazlitt*, *The Fiddlehead*, *The Malahat Review*, *Best Canadian Stories*, and *The Journey Prize Stories*. She is the editor of *EVENT* magazine and teaches creative writing at Douglas College.

MICHAEL CHRISTIE



... is the author of the novel **If I Fall, If I Die**, which was longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize, the Kirkus Prize, was selected as a New York Times Editors' Choice Pick, and was on numerous best-of 2015 lists. His linked collection of stories, **The Beggar's Garden**, was longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize, shortlisted for the Writers' Trust Prize for Fiction, and won the Vancouver Book Award. His essays and book reviews have appeared in the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Globe & Mail.

Greenwood, his most recent novel, was longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize. Rights have been sold in seven countries.

A former carpenter and homeless shelter worker, he lives with his family in Victoria, British Columbia, the unceded territory of the Lkwungen speaking people, and the Songhees, Esquimalt, and WSÁNEC First Nations.

IAN FERGUSON

... won the Stephen Leacock Medal for Humour for **Village of the Small Houses** and is the co-author, with his brother, Will, of **How to Be a Canadian**, which was shortlisted for the Leacock Medal and won the CBA Libris Award for non-fiction.

He is the co-author, with Will Ferguson, of the bestselling Miranda Abbott Mysteries, **I Only Read Murder, Mystery in the Title**, and the upcoming **Killer on the First Page**, and has written several humour books, most notably **The Survival Guide to British Columbia**.

Ian has also written & directed for the theatre, radio, and film & television.

JESS HOUSTY

... ('Cúagilákv) is a parent, writer and grassroots activist with Heiltsuk and mixed settler ancestry. They serve their community as an herbalist and land-based educator alongside broader work in the non-profit and philanthropic sectors. They are inspired and guided by relationships with their homelands, their extended family and their non-human kin, and they are committed to raising their children in a similar framework of kinship and land love.

They reside and thrive in their unceded ancestral territory in the community of Bella Bella, BC.

SCOTT ALEXANDER HOWARD



... lives in Vancouver, British Columbia. He has a PhD in philosophy from the University of Toronto and was a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard, where his work focused on the relationship between memory, emotion, and literature.

The Other Valley is his first novel.

Connect with him at
ScottAlexanderHoward.com

CELIA HAIG-BROWN



... is the author of one of the first books written about Indian Residential schools. *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* won the 1988 Regional BC Book Prize. In 2022, following the recovery of the 215+ children and with input from the original people involved, she published *Tsqelmuwíl: KIRS, Resistance, and a Reckoning*.

A person of white, euro-ancestry, she credits Indigenous people across the continent for continuing the education her Campbell

River family knew was so important. Author and editor of three other books, she is a member of the Royal Society of Canada, a former teacher and Professor Emerita/Senior Scholar at York University.

Her next book is to be auto-ethnographic fiction on film with interviews and her own experiences.

SUSAN MUSGRAVE



... has published more than 30 books and received awards in six categories — poetry, novels, non-fiction, food writing, editing and books for children. She lives on Haida Gwaii where she owns and manages Copper Beech House. Her most recent book is **Exculpatory Lilies**, which was a finalist for the Griffin Poetry Prize and the Governor General's Award for Poetry, 2023. **Hunger: the Poetry of Susan Musgrave**, will be published in 2025 by Wilfred Laurier University Press.

Her two biggest claims to fame are 1) the Tyee salmon caught by her great-grandfather's brother at Campbell River in the late 1800s that is on display at the Campbell River Museum; and 2) finding her name in the index of Montreal's Irish Mafia, by D'Arcy O'Connor.

ADAM SHOALTS



... is a professional adventurer and Westaway Explorer-in-Residence at the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. His expeditions range from mapping rivers to archaeological projects, but Shoalts is best known for his long solo journeys, including crossing nearly 4,000 km of Canada's Arctic alone.

Named one of the "greatest living explorers" by CBC, Shoalts's latest adventure was a 3,400 km solo journey from Lake Erie to the Arctic, the subject of

his new national bestselling book **Where the Falcon Flies**.

His other books include **Alone Against the North**, **A History of Canada in 10 Maps**, **Beyond the Trees: A Journey Alone Across Canada's Arctic**, and **The Whisper on the Night Wind**, all of them national bestsellers. He has a PhD from McMaster University in history, and in his free time, enjoys long walks in the woods.

MUSICIANS



FRIDAY NIGHT **DOUG FOLKINS**

Doug Folkins is a country music songwriter from Campbell River, British Columbia, Canada. With 6 of his own indie albums and over 1000+ live shows behind him, Doug is focused on writing hit songs for country and Americana artists. To date, Doug's songs have been cut by seven artists in Canada and the US, resulting in 2 charting radio singles.



SATURDAY NIGHT **RICK BOSSOM**

Rick is a contemporary pianist with a performance history spanning over 40 years. From large and small bands to duos, he is now adding solo pianist to his list of accomplishments. Versatile in material, Rick mixes contemporary and ambient songs from the top 100 covering material from the '60s through the '90s.

Rick also has been busy writing original songs and scores which you can see on all major streaming platforms or his website www.rickbossom.com

OUR EMCEES



SARA LOPEZ & JENELLE PASIECHNIK

We are delighted to welcome Sara and Jenelle from the Campbell River Art Gallery. Sara is the Executive Director and Jenelle the Curator of Contemporary Art. Together they bring a rich blend of passion for literature, art, culture, and community.

Their dynamic interests in curating exhibitions and engaging with artists makes them ideal guides for our festival.

SPECIAL THANKS

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Richard Franklin
President

JoAnn Milutinovic
Secretary

Peg Spies
Treasurer

Tylere Couture

Darlene Garat

Dennis Hawkins-Bogle

Jane Hirst

Dionne Lapointe-Bakota

Libby King

Liz Mackay

Emily Sayward

Sandra Seib

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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.

WOW 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, Jess Housty will be offering four writing workshops and sharing works from their collected Crushed Wild Mint to selected groups of students at the two high schools.

WOW OFFICIAL BOOK SELLER

Coho Books is located in the heart of downtown Campbell River. They carry a large selection of new and used books catering to a wide range of interests. Their goal is to provide a warm and inviting environment that readers of all ages will enjoy.

ANN & 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.

This incredible event is made possible by the generous support of these businesses and organizations!



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