

22nd Annual
WORDS
ON THE WATER
CAMPBELL RIVER WRITERS' FESTIVAL

Painted image by WOY President, Richard Franklin



Friday and Saturday
MARCH 13-14, 2026

MARITIME HERITAGE CENTRE
621 Island Highway, Campbell River

2026
AUTHORS

Michael CrummeY
Conor Kerr
Vincent Lam
Tracey Lindberg

Claire Mulligan
Garth Mullins
Maria Reva
Iona Wishaw

www.wordsonthewater.ca

WELCOME

Words on the Water Writers' Festival marks its

22nd 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, the stimulating readings, dialogue, and conversations.

We invite you to escape into the richness of words.

Words on the Water Committee
2026



Grab a limited-edition
WoW tote or mug
at the Coho Books table



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 13TH

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 JoAnn Milutinovic

Festival Poem

by Michael Crummey

7:30pm

Claire Mulligan and Iona Whishaw

8:00pm

Michael Crummey and Conor Kerr

Intermission

Live music by Collin Masse and James Vining

9:00pm

Tracey Lindberg and Garth Mullins

9:30pm

Maria Reva and Vincent Lam

SATURDAY, MARCH 14TH

Saturday is organized into four 90-minute sessions. 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 - Maria Reva

9:45am - Tracey Lindberg

Break

Session 2

10:45am - Garth Mullins

11:30am - Vincent Lam

Lunch

Session 3

1:00pm - Conor Kerr

1:45pm - Claire Mulligan

Break

Session 4

2:45pm - Iona Whishaw

3:30pm - Michael Crummey

SATURDAY EVENING LITERARY CABARET

Doors open at 6:45pm, 7:30pm start

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

Includes local musical talent and a no-host bar.

ON WATER

Before the world was, water resided.
Before the firmament, before light.

Before the face of the deep was seeded,
before day was divided from the night

water occupied the dark, dreaming
the morning star and the evening.

Before the naming of the heavens
water dreamt years and signs and seasons.

After our kind, we surface naked
out of the ocean's chaos

lacking only a human voice,
and water is where we seek it -

dropping stones into still
reflections at the bottom of a well

to raise an echo of our selves.
What is patient in us we inherit

from rain, from the rivers steady.
The part of us that believes

the stars are a map of our lives,
the part of us that grieves -

that part of us is the sea.

- Michael Crummey
2026

GUEST AUTHORS

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

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



MICHAEL CRUMMEY



Michael Crummey is the author of seven books of poetry and a collection of short stories, **Flesh and Blood**. He is also the author of the novels **The Wreckage**, a national bestseller and finalist for the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize; **Galore**, winner of the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best Novel and finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award; **Sweetland**, a finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award; and **The Innocents**, a finalist for the Scotiabank Giller Prize, the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize, and the Governor General's Literary Award. His most recent novel, **The Adversary**, was a #1 national bestseller.

Michael Crummey lives in St. John's, Newfoundland.

CONOR KERR



Conor Kerr is a national award-winning Métis/Ukrainian writer and bird hunter living in amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton), born in Saskatoon, and raised in Buffalo Pound Lake and Drayton Valley. He is a member of the Métis Nation of Alberta. Conor is the author of the novels **Avenue of Champions**, which was longlisted for the 2022 Giller Prize, and **Prairie Edge**, which was shortlisted for the 2024 Giller Prize and the 2024 Writer's Trust Atwood Gibson Fiction Award and won the Crime Writers of Canada Best Novel award.

He has also published the poetry collections **An Explosion of Feathers**, and **Old Gods**, which was shortlisted for the 2023 Governor General's Award for Poetry and named one of CBC's Best Books of 2023. His latest book is the poetic novella, **Beaver Hills Forever**. He has a forthcoming novel, **Duck Blind**, coming out in 2027.

VINCENT LAM



Vincent Lam's first book, **Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures**, won the 2006 Scotiabank Giller Prize, and was adapted for television and broadcast on HBO Canada. **The Headmaster's Wager**, Dr. Lam's first novel, was shortlisted for the 2012 Governor General's Literary Award and the 2013 Commonwealth Book Prize.

Dr. Lam served as executive editor and co-author of the textbook, **Opioid Agonist Therapy: A Prescriber's Guide to Treatment**, published in 2022. In 2011,

he published a biography of Tommy Douglas, **Father Of Medicare**, for Penguin Canada's Extraordinary Canadians Series.

Dr. Lam is an emergency physician and addictions physician who lives in Toronto. He is the medical director of the Coderix Medical Clinic. His most recent novel is **On The Ravine**.

TRACEY LINDBERG



Tracey Lindberg is the author of two bestselling works: **Birdie** and **The Cree Word for Love: Sâkhitowin**. Her work has been recognized, much lauded and nominated for a number of awards. A proud citizen of the As'in'î'wa'chî Ni'yaw (Kelly Lake Cree Nation), she is a little mother, an aunty, a partner, a daughter, a niece, a sister and a cousin and works hard at building meaningful relationships while maintaining her status as asocial.

Dr. Lindberg is also a professor and teaches Indigenous laws and legal orders and transsystemic law. She does community work and publishes academic papers in the areas of Nehiyaw and Indigenous law, Indigenous legal education, Indigenous legal theory and Indigenous law and love. She sings the blues and is always looking for a band with whom to create music and sound.

CLAIRE MULLIGAN



Claire's historical novels--**The Reckoning of Boston Jim** and **The Dark** – have been nominated for the Giller Prize, the BC Book Prize, and the Canadian Author's Award. Her multi-award-winning short fiction has appeared in *Writers Magazine*, *Grain*, *The Tulane Review*, *Canadian Author*, the *Dalhousie Review*, and the *Antigonish Review* amongst others.

In 2017 Claire earned an MFA screenwriting with a focus on adaptation. Her latest script, **Obscura**,

has won multiple awards including best short screenplay at the 2024 Leo Awards and the Pacific Rim Film Festival. She teaches at Uvic Continuing Education and offers writing courses, workshops, and author interviews at www.mulliganmethod.ca. Claire is the Haig-Brown writer-in-residence for 2026. During that time, she will be working on a screenplay and a novel and offering workshops and consultations.

GARTH MULLINS



Garth Mullins is a best-selling author of his debut book, **Crackdown**, harm-reduction activist, award-winning journalist, broadcaster, and musician. He was an injection heroin user for over a decade, during which time he overdosed and survived.

He is now an organizer with the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users, where he works with others trying to end the mass death. He has saved over a dozen people from overdose death. Garth is executive producer and host of the award-winning podcast **Crackdown**. He lives in Vancouver.

MARIA REVA



Maria Reva was born in Ukraine and grew up in Canada. She is the author of the short story collection **Good Citizens Need Not Fear**, and the novel **Endling**, which was longlisted for the Booker Prize, nominated for the Dublin Literary Award, and was the winner of the Atwood Gibson's Writer Trust Fiction Prize in 2025.

Her fiction has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *McSweeney's*, *The Best American Short Stories*, and elsewhere, earning a National Magazine Award. She also works as an opera librettist.

IONA WHISHAW



Iona Wishaw is the bestselling author of the **Lane Winslow mystery series**. She is the winner of the Bonny Blythe light mystery award and two-time finalist for both the Left Coast Crime "Lefty" Award and the Crime Writers of Canada Award.

Wishaw been a youth worker, social worker, teacher and an award-winning High School Principal, who continued with her writing throughout her working life. Receiving her Masters in Creative writing from UBC, Iona has also published short fiction, poetry, poetry translation and one children's book, *Henry and the Cow Problem*.

MUSICIANS



FRIDAY NIGHT

COLLIN MASSE & JIM VINING

Collin and Jim met in high school, Carihi in fact. Collin was a student and Jim was a teacher(band). In 2015 they started playing music together and in 2016 recorded their first album; Collin and James: Live at Jimmy Lings. After a brief pause, a couple of years, they are back together playing music again.



SATURDAY NIGHT

JAZZ ON THE ROCKS

Collin and Jim met in high school, Carihi in fact. Collin was a student and Jim was a teacher(band). In 2015 they started playing music together and in 2016 recorded their first album; Collin and James: Live at Jimmy Lings. After a brief pause, a couple of years, they are back together playing music again.

OUR EMCEE



JOANN MILUTINOVIC

JoAnn's deep love of books and the people who read them shines through in her work across seven libraries. Through her involvement with Words on the Water, she has the privilege of connecting directly with the Canadian authors who shape our literary landscape.

Born and raised in Campbell River, JoAnn earned a Liberal Studies BA. A month studying in Florence remains a treasured highlight of her education.

After many years as a loyal festival attendee, JoAnn joined the Words on the Water planning committee and now serves as secretary of the Campbell River Writers' Festival Society. When invited to emcee this year's festival, she accepted with her characteristic warmth, enthusiasm, and courage: "Absolutely!"

SPECIAL THANKS

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Richard Franklin
President

Darlene Garat

Emmy Sayward

JoAnn Milutinovic
Secretary

Dennis Hawkins-Bogle

Sandra Seib

Dionne Lapointe-Bakota

PamWonnacot

Peg Spies
Treasurer

Liz Mackay

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the many volunteers who help ensure Words on the Water runs year after year. You have been steadfast and perennial in your support, and your expertise in running the weekend is invaluable and deeply appreciated. To the volunteers this year - and for all the years before - thank you!

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, Conor Kerr will be offering four writing workshops between the two local highschools.

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!



Want to see YOUR name here next year? Contact us at info@wordsonthewater.ca