

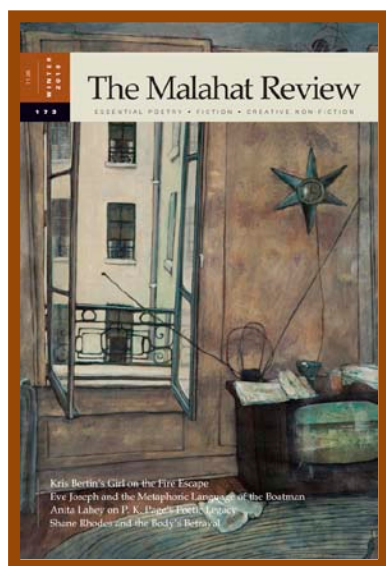
Malahat *lite*

Virtual Newsletter of *The Malahat Review*

Vol. 7, No. 4, Winter 2010

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Wither?—The Book Review?



1. Issue 173, Winter 2010 In the mail and on newsstands Jan. 2011!

Be prepared. Our winter issue is going to make you think. Don't say we didn't warn you.

First up, you'll encounter "Intimate Strangers" by **Eve Joseph**, winner of the 2010 CNF Prize. Her essay explores different cultural approaches to death as well as the power of metaphor to ease the transition from life to death. "Those who work with the dying must learn to think like the poet who reaches for language the way a child reaches for the moon, believing it can be held in the hand like an orange at the same time it shines on in the night sky."

Is "Girl On the Fire Escape" by Halifax-based fiction writer **Kris Bertin** a love story? You'll have to decide for yourself. "I practically vibrated in my seat, and everything she said was funny and sharp and witty and I was on fire. But little by little I started to remember that I knew nothing about her, that she knew nothing about me...."

Deirdre Dore of Westbridge, B.C.'s "Sappers Bridge" weaves a near-cinematic spell of brewing suspense as the world of a pot-growing hermit is disrupted by the nymphet twins from across the river. You'll feel the summer heat rise as these unforgettable characters collide. "The taller one looked him in the eyes and held the stare, one eyebrow cocked as if to ask what the hell he was doing still standing there."

As usual, every poem in this issue will cry out for reading, pondering, and re-reading. Savour the wonderful words from **Robert Colman, Anne Compton, Stephen De Paul, Laurie D Graham, Erina Harris, Jason Heroux, Jessica Hiemstra- Van der Horst, Andrew McEwan, Kathy Mac, Orlando Ricardo Menes, Shane Rhodes, and Kenny Tanemura.**

Cogent reviews of recent Canadian poetry, fiction, and non-fiction round out the issue from contributors **Robert G. May, Brenda Proctor, Jay Ruzesky, Karen Schindler, and Chelsea Rushton.** A featured review by **Anita Lahey** considers three of P. K. Page's last collections of poems.

Are you ready? Pour yourself a beverage of your choice, put on your thinking caps, and settle in for some seriously entertaining intellectual stimulation. Cheers.

2. Writing Back to the Self: Corinna Chong in conversation with Eve Joseph

Eve Joseph talks with Malahat volunteer Corinna Chong about “Intimate Strangers,” winner of The Malahat Review’s 2010 Creative Non-Fiction Prize:

Corinna Chong: You are an accomplished writer of both creative non-fiction and poetry. How does the process of writing prose differ from that of poetry?



Eve Joseph: I suppose the most immediate difference is that there is more room to explore with prose. My natural tendency in writing is towards precision; I would love to write in a looser, less contained way, but I am drawn to a kind of exactness, particularly in poetry. Prose breaks the line open and lets me keep going. I think I tap into imagination in a different way; with poetry, memory is often related to specific imagery whereas with prose I think there is a fluidity to memory. One holds a moment; the other tends toward story.

CC: The idea of memory as a bridge to self-understanding plays a prominent role in “Intimate Strangers.” What role do memories play in your work as a writer?

EJ: I don’t know how to separate memories from writing or if one can even do that. I don’t think I start out trying to write about a certain memory; rather, I start out often by observing something in the physical world or mulling some idea and I am then led back into specific memories. I try to stay open to associations and to trust that one thing leads to another. I love how the act of writing unearths memories and how I never know, when I start a piece, where I will end up. Writing, in my experience, is a way back to the self.



Read the rest of the interview on our website!

[http://www.malahatreview.ca/announcements/creativenonfiction_2010_interview.html]

3. The Malahat Review's winter issue launch (#173) and tribute to P. K. Page

Friday, January 28th

7:30 p.m.

The Black Stilt on Hillside
(Planet Earth Poetry)

Admission: \$3

**Friends of The Malahat
get in FREE**

Join us as we launch our Winter 2010 issue (#173) and pay tribute to P. K. Page following the anniversary of her death.



The evening will begin with the usual Planet Earth open mic; poets are being asked to bring their own P. K. Page-inspired work to read.

Afer the break, **Eve Joseph** will read from her Creative Non-Fiction Prize-winning piece, "Intimate Strangers," and we will then hear local writers **Kate Braid, Barbara Colebrook Peace, Lorna Crozier, Sandra Djwa, Patrick Friesen, Eve Joseph, Patrick Lane, Carol and Mike Matthews, Linda Rogers, and Patricia and Terence Young** share their favourite P. K. Page poems.

On **January 24th**, from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., tune into "Wild Orphans" on **CFUV 101.9 FM** to hear a pre-launch chat with **Eve Joseph**, and more of our launch readers.

**4. Of Croquet and Bodily Functions:
Eliza Robertson in conversation with Devon Code**

Devon Code talks with Malahat fiction board member (and fellow 2010 Journey Prize nominee) Eliza Robertson about "Uncle Oscar" (Fall 2009, #168), winner of the 2010 McClelland & Stewart/Writers' Trust Journey Prize.

Eliza

Robertson: There is a simplicity in the prose that arises from Leo's young age, and in your *National Post* interview you mention "Uncle Oscar" was inspired by your participation in the Students, Writers, and Teachers program. Which fed the narrative voice—your work with these grade-nine students, or your own inner adolescent? Both?



**Devon
Code:**

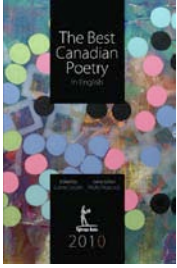
Working with grade-nine students allowed me to recontextualize my own adolescent experience. The Toronto Catholic High School where I've served as writer-in-residence is very different from the tiny public junior high in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, where I attended grade nine. I was intrigued and inspired by the differences. The simplicity and directness of the voice in "Uncle Oscar," like some of the stories in my collection, owes an obvious debt to Raymond Carver's prose.



Read the rest of the interview on our website!

[http://www.malahatreview.ca/announcements/2010journeyprize_interview.html]

5. **Our Fall issue (#172)/*Best Canadian Poetry in English* 2010 launch: November 14th at The Legacy Art Gallery and Café**



On November 14th, we celebrated our Fall issue and *The Best Canadian Poetry in English* 2010. *BCPiE* 2010 Editor, **Lorna Crozier** began by speaking to us about her (difficult) selection process for the book. She shared with us a couple of poems whose authors could not join us: “Nocturnal Visitors” by Glen Downie, and “7lbs. 6oz.” by Lenore and Beth Rowntree.

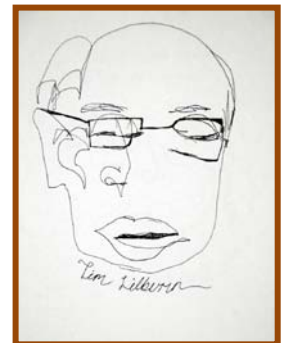


We then heard from several local poets who appear in the book: **John Donlan** read “Babies’ Cottage” (from *BCPiE* 2009), **Sonnet L’Abbé** read “The Trees Have Loved us All Along,” **Tim Lilburn** read “Rupert’s Land,” **Melanie Siebert** read “Ditch,” and **Anne-Marie Turza** read “Anthem for a Small Country” (which originally appeared in *The Malahat Review*’s Fall 2009 issue, #168).



After the break, **Patricia Young**, who appeared in both books, read “Night-Running” from *BCPiE* 2010, and then “Stunned” from our Fall issue. **Dede Crane** then read an excerpt from her short story, “The Fall of Langued’Occ,” **Karen Enns** read her poems “After” and “In Memory,” and **Steve Noyes** finished up the afternoon with his medically inspired poem “Morbidity and Ornament.”

Thank you to launch volunteers Benjamin Willems for general helpfulness; Kelly Bouchard, Jessie Jones, Jay Morrirt, and Eliza Robertson for their excellent book-selling skills. An extra big thank you to Chelsea Rushton, our official launch photographer and illustrator.



6. Web Tribute to P. K. Page



On January 14, 2011, *The Malahat Review* will post a permanent tribute to P. K. Page on our website to coincide with the first anniversary of her passing. The tribute will include short anecdotes and poems in honour of P. K. Page, along with photos and illustrations.

7. Malahat Holiday Subscription Campaign!

Spread the word(s)...

Give *The Malahat* this holiday season
(We won't tell how little you spent!)

The more you give, the more you save!
Give one subscription for only \$20 or two for \$30.
Additional subscriptions are only \$15 each.

Offer expires January 14, 2011!

Visit our website to download an order form for an amazing holiday deal on Malahat subscriptions!

Buy a one-year subscription or subscription extension for yourself for \$20 (regular price is \$35), and buy another for \$10 more (total: \$30) and any additional subscriptions for \$15 each.

The printable order form can be found at:

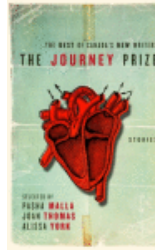
[http://www.malahatreview.ca/documents/gift_form2010.pdf]

or, visit our homepage [www.malahatreview.ca] and click right through!

Take care of your gift list in one go and save over 40% per subscription.

8. Malahat Authors' Award Wins and Nominations

2010 McClelland & Stewart/Writers' Trust Journey Prize



Congratulations to **Devon Code**, whose story "**Uncle Oscar**" won the \$10,000 2010 McClelland & Stewart/Writers' Trust Journey Prize!! "Uncle Oscar" was published in our Fall 2009 issue (#168).

Devon Code is from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. His story collection, *In a Mist* (Invisible Publishing, 2007), was chosen by the *Globe and Mail* as a notable fiction debut of 2008.

Devon isn't the only *Malahat* author you'll find between the covers of the *2010 Journey Prize Stories*. **Eliza Robertson's** "**Ship's Log**" (Fall 2009, #168) and **Ben Lof's** "**When in the Field with Her at His Back**" (Spring 2009, #166) were also nominated for this year's Journey Prize.

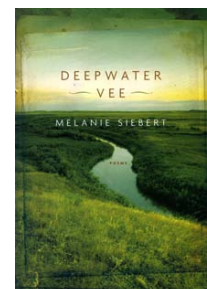
2010 Western Magazine Awards

Congratulations to **Lindsay Cuff**, whose creative non-fiction story, "On Atrocity and Grace: A Contrapuntal Vision" (Spring 2009, #166) won the Western Magazine Award in the Human Experience category.

Ben Lof's "**When in the Field with Her at His Back**" (Spring 2009, #166) and **Bill Gaston's** "**Petterick**" (Winter 2009, #169) were also nominated in the fiction category.

2010 Governor General's Literary Awards

Congratulations to *Malahat* author **Melanie Siebert** (most recently, Spring 2010, #170), whose first book of poetry, *Deepwater Vee* (McClelland & Stewart, 2010) was nominated for a 2010 Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry.



9. Upcoming Malahat Contests

2011 Long Poem Prize

Enter a single poem or cycle of poems between 10 and 20 published pages in length (a published page is up to 32 lines, including breaks between stanzas).

Deadline: **February 1, 2011**

Entry fee: \$35 CAD for Canadian entries
 \$40 USD for American entries
 \$45 USD for entries from elsewhere
 (entry fee includes a one-year subscription)

Prize: two **\$1000** prizes will be awarded

More info: http://www.malahatreview.ca/long_poem_prize/info.html

2011 Far Horizons Award for Short Fiction

Deadline: **May 1, 2011**

Writers who have yet to publish their fiction in book format are welcomed to enter one short story under 3500 words.

Entry fee: \$25 CAD for Canadian entries
 \$30 USD for entries from the USA
 \$35 USD for entries from elsewhere

(entry fee includes a one-year subscription)

Prize: **\$1000**

More info: http://www.malahatreview.ca/far_horizons_fiction/info.html

2011 Creative Non-Fiction Prize

Deadline: **August 1, 2011**

Enter a work of creative non-fiction (personal essay, memoir, cultural criticism, nature writing, literary journalism, etc.) between 2000 and 3000 words in length.

Entry fee: \$35 CAD for Canadian entries
 \$40 USD for entries from the USA
 \$45 USD for entries from elsewhere

(entry fee includes a one-year subscription)

Prize: **\$1000**

More info: http://www.malahatreview.ca/creative_non-fiction_prize/info.html

2012 Open Season Awards

Deadline: November 1, 2011

Enter up to three poems (100 lines each, max.); one short story (2500 words max.); or one piece of creative non-fiction (2500 words max.)

Entry fee: \$35 CAD for Canadian entries
 \$40 USD for entries from the USA
 \$45 USD for entries from elsewhere

(entry fee includes a one-year subscription)

Prize: **\$1000** to be given in each of three categories (poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction)

More info: http://www.malahatreview.ca/open_season/info.html

10. Friends of *The Malahat*

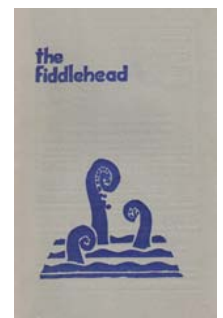
. . . for lovers of the written word. Our Friends group was launched in January, 2010 in order to bring together literary types in the Victoria area. For \$45, Friends receive a one-year subscription to the magazine and discounts at local bookstores, on subscriptions to other Canadian literary magazines, on Malahat-sponsored workshops, and more. In this edition of *Malahat lite*, you'll learn about:

- ***The Fiddlehead***, a Canadian literary magazine that offers discounted subscriptions to all Friends of *The Malahat*
- **Susan Braley**, a Friend of *The Malahat*.
- A review of our first ***Malahat*-sponsored workshop**:
“Whither—or Wither—the Book Review? A Panel Discussion.”

The Fiddlehead

fiddlehead, *n*: the unfurled fronds of a young fern, sometimes harvested for food.

Every spring in rural New Brunswick, locals are commonly seen parking their vehicles along the highway and trudging through grassy ditches in tall rubber boots, snapping juicy fiddleheads from their stems and collecting them in baskets. If you've ever tasted steamed fiddleheads drizzled with butter, or creamy fiddlehead soup, you'll understand why. The distinctive taste, rarity, and ornamental beauty of the fiddlehead make it a valuable commodity in many areas of the world.



It's a fitting name for a New Brunswick-based literary magazine that strives year after year to seek out and publish the freshest and most engaging poetry, fiction, and reviews for hungry readers across Canada and the world. *The Fiddlehead* began in 1945 as a modest eight pages of writing, mimeographed and stapled into journals. It has evolved over the last 65 years to become a household name among the Canadian literary community. Showcasing the unique talents of Atlantic Canadian artists while remaining committed to celebrating literary innovation and merit from around the globe, the magazine has published a diverse array of excellent writing over its long lifetime. Past and present contributors include renowned favourites like A. F. Moritz, Don McKay, Erin Moure, Lorna Crozier, Pasha Malla, and Priscilla Uppal as well as the brightest new voices emerging on the scene. In John Metcalf's words, "*The Fiddlehead* was, and is, an essential part of Canada's literary life. Its editors have always taken seriously their responsibility to seek out and encourage new young writers and give them a hearing in the company of their elders." Indeed, many new writers have seen their first poems or stories printed in *The Fiddlehead's* pages, and have gone on to publish books and win accolades. Countless poems and stories first published by the magazine have been selected for anthologies and shortlisted for prestigious awards like the Journey Prize, the Governor General's Literary Awards, and the CBC Literary Awards. *The Fiddlehead* is a testament to the vitality of Canadian literary magazines.

Friends of *The Malahat* receive a discount of up to 20% on a one-year subscription to *The Fiddlehead*—four issues for \$25, or eight issues for only \$45! That's almost 50% off the cover price!

~ written by Corinna Chong

A Conversation with a Friend: Susan Braley

Susan

Sanford Blades: You attended our panel on the book review November 20th, “Whither—or Wither—the Book Review?” How did you enjoy it?

Susan

Braley: I found the panel discussion really stimulating, both as a writer who hopes to be reviewed one day and as a reviewer seeking out other reviewers. It was informative to hear from panelists from diverse backgrounds: from the publishing sector, from community-based print and non-print media, from the editorial team of a literary journal, and from academia. Over the course of the afternoon, these speakers explored what constitutes a satisfying review, whom reviewers are accountable to, how reviews are changing in light of new media, and how reviewing has flagged in Canada. I also enjoyed the wide-ranging conversation following the panelists’ comments.



Having written a review earlier in the year [in the Spring 2010 issue of *The Malahat Review*, #170], I came away from the discussion excited about new approaches to reviews and imagining ways that reviewers might work together.

I hope *The Malahat* is planning more such workshops.

SSB: You’ve recently ceased teaching English and Women’s Studies in order to work full-time at writing. How’s that going so far?

SB: I’m grateful for the opportunity to write full-time, even on days when the blank screen will not relent. Over the last six years, since I moved from London, Ontario, to Victoria, I have written some short fiction and my first novel—with generous support from a Victoria writing group and excellent mentorships with Annabel Lyon (through UBC’s Booming Ground) and Sandra Birdsell (through the on-line Humber School of Writing). My novel, called *Falling Home*, is now with publishers and doing its best to distinguish itself from others on the pile.

I bring a passion for literature to my writing desk, but creating fiction, I’ve learned, is remarkably different from reading, studying, and teaching it. But out of the challenges and frustrations of this complex art come rewards, like knowing when a character’s voice finally rings true. I’ve also discovered how transformative it is to write poetry, especially if I do so regularly. Having poems accepted for publication, both locally and nationally, has been motivating too.

And I haven’t forgotten teaching: I love the energetic exchange of ideas that often happens in the classroom, so I return from time to time. I’ve taught a course for the

English department at UVic, and I occasionally offer workshops on journal writing to community groups.

SSB: Are you satisfied with the support for writers and the literary scene in Victoria?

SB: The literary scene in Victoria is very lively—I can always find events that celebrate authors and their writing: book launches, poetry readings, UVic symposiums, writing-society meetings, awards nights, and library seminars. At times, I have to choose between literary events, since several are happening at once.

I've also enjoyed working with accomplished writing mentors at workshops, courses, and intensive retreats. These learning experiences have been transformative and the connections with other authors long-lasting. And I feel very much at home in the Planet Earth Poetry community, which warmly welcomes everyone who loves to write, read, and hear poetry.

SSB: You've been a Friend of *The Malahat* for almost a year now, which means you've received almost a full year's subscription. What has been your favourite issue this year / your favourite poem / favourite prose piece?

SB: A difficult question, since there are so many fine pieces!

But since you ask, I would choose:

- The Spring 2010 issue (#170) as my favourite in 2010, because of its celebration of two extraordinary Victoria writers, Lorna Crozier and Patrick Lane, and also because of its theme of aesthetic kinship; this theme reflects the reciprocity and connectedness enjoyed by many of Victoria's writers.
- Eve Joseph's "White Camellias" (Fall 2009, #168) as my favourite poem, since it explores so poignantly the "broken" beauty of poetry and the world that births it (Dave Margoshes' "Stephen Hawking in Saskatchewan" (Summer 2010, #171) was another favourite).
- Dede Crane's "The Fall of Langue d'Occ" (Fall 2010, #172) as my favourite prose piece, because her eighty-one-year-old character Nancy is so heartbreakingly real. I'm sure I've met her.

SSB: Finally, do you plan to join us on Friday January 28th at the Black Stilt during Planet Earth Poetry for our Winter issue launch/Tribute to P. K. Page?

SB: Yes—I know I will be among friends.

SSB: Thank you very much, Susan, for your thoughtful answers. I'll see you on January 28th, if not before then!

A Review of *Malahat*- Sponsored Workshop: Whither—or Wither—the Book Review? A Panel Discussion

The Malahat Review has started offering workshops. In a period of arts cuts, threats to print media, and increasing reliance on sound-bites, *The Malahat* is expanding its purview. An excellent strategy, in my opinion, and one which demonstrates their commitment to the literary arts.

In November, I attended the first: “Whither—or Wither—the Book Review?” We packed the back room at the Oak Bay Library. Rhonda Batchelor introduced the workshop’s purpose and panel members: Jamie Dopp, UVic Lit Professor; David Kosub, poetry blogger; Ruth Linka, publisher; and Amy Reiswig, columnist.

Panel commentary was wide-ranging, but all agreed on two points: one, reviews are essential; and two, they receive insufficient attention. The panel offered advice on how to write good reviews: be concise; read an author’s work widely; avoid evaluation; avoid cliché; and do explore issues about the nature of writing. Ruth Linka discussed the continued benefit of reviews for small press publications, while Jamie Dopp elucidated the difference between reviews and literary criticism. David Kosub and Amy Reiswig commented on the differing review requirements and opportunities on the net and in journalism, respectively. All agreed on the need to be respectful.

A lively Q & A followed, and audience feedback was encouraging. Participants felt inspired. One commented that she better understood the importance of reviews to the literary conversation. Another wondered about organizing an informal reviewers’ group. One writer said that the workshop helped her positively link reviews and promoting her own writing, and left her with a sense of responsibility to write reviews for fellow writers.

The workshop was stimulating, a most successful beginning to the new *Malahat* plan for greater involvement in the local literary community.

~written by Arleen Paré

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For a mere \$45, why not enjoy:

- a one-year subscription to *The Malahat Review*
- a %10 discount at Renaissance Books
- half-price admission to our biannual writing workshops
- discounted subscriptions to other Canadian literary magazines (*The Fiddlehead*, *Arc Poetry*, and *EVENT*)
- free admission to all ticketed *Malahat* events
- and more!

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