



## Association of Italian Canadian Writers

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Our next Biennial Conference, *The Traces We Leave: Italian Canadians and Their Works*, will be held at the University of Turin, October 8-9, 2020. As the deadline is approaching, we would like to remind you to send us your proposals as soon as possible and no later than the 30th of December. For more details, please see our website: [www.aicw.ca](http://www.aicw.ca).

Another exciting initiative is taking place next year: the *Venera Fazio Poetry Contest*. The deadline for submissions is the 30th of April 2020. Please see more details on page 2. Thank you to Anna Ciampolini Foschi, Cristina Pepe and Delia De Santis for organizing this in memory of poet Venera Fazio. As you all know, Venera gave a precious contribution to the AICW, as a president and a member, and to the promotion of Italian-Canadian literature in general.

Best wishes for a lovely Christmas and restful holidays,

Maria Cristina

Dr Maria Cristina Seccia

AICW President

## AICW on Facebook and Twitter

Follow the AICW on Twitter [@AICWCanada](https://twitter.com/AICWCanada)

If you are on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/AICWCanada), please take the time to LIKE our page and to post information about your new publications and events.



## Seasons Greetings

*Porgiamo a tutti i soci e alle persone a loro care i nostri migliori auguri per le Feste Natalizie e il Nuovo Anno.*

We wish to extend our best wishes to all members and their families for the Christmas holidays and the New Year.

*À nos membres et leurs familles, nos meilleurs vœux pour le temps des fêtes et une bonne et heureuse année.*

*Il Comitato Editoriale per il Bollettino:*

*The Newsletter Committee:*

*Le Comité de rédaction*

*Anna, Francesca, Christina, Domenic, and Josephine*

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## Association of Italian Canadian Writers (AICW)

### Venera Fazio Poetry Contest

Entries : Limit of 3 poems of up to 40 lines each or 1 longer poem up to 140 lines.

Submissions should be in English, French, or Italian.

Blind judging, entrant's name should not appear on the pages.

Provide a separate sheet with name, address, telephone number, and e-mail.

Manuscripts must be in a Word file and typed, double-spaced, with the title(s) appearing on each numbered page.

No previously published or simultaneous submissions.

Manuscripts will not be returned.

Entry Fee: Ten dollars (\$10). Limit of 2 entries per person.

Pay by e-transfer at e-mail address: [ciaocristina@telus.net](mailto:ciaocristina@telus.net)

Or send a cheque made out to the Association of Italian Canadian Writers. Mailing address: AICW, c/o Delia De Santis, 2961 Delia Cres, Bright's Grove, ON N0N 1C0, Canada.

Prizes: First prize \$100; Second prize \$ 75; Third prize \$ 50; One Honourable Mention.

Winners will be contacted by e-mail or phone and they will be announced and published on the AICW website, on the AICW newsletter and circulated on the media—AICW Facebook page and Twitter.

Submissions that do not comply with the above criteria will be disqualified.

Information: Delia De Santis at: [petrucci.delia@gmail.com](mailto:petrucci.delia@gmail.com)

Send entries to e-mail addresses: [petrucci.delia@gmail.com](mailto:petrucci.delia@gmail.com) and Anna Foschi: [anna@foschimitchell.ca](mailto:anna@foschimitchell.ca)

Or to postal address: AICW Poetry Contest, c/o Delia De Santis, 2961 Delia Crescent, Bright's Grove, ON, N0N 1C0 Canada

Deadline: Postmarked by April 30, 2020.



## Michael Mirolla: WIR at Historic Joy Kogawa House in Vancouver



Michael Mirolla. Photos courtesy of Michael Mirolla

Hamilton author Michael Mirolla is the Writer in Residence at the Historic Joy Kogawa House in Vancouver until the end of January 2020. In

November, he has taken part in various events in Vancouver and Victoria, including: a launch of his newest novella *The Last News Vendor* (November 2019, Quattro Books) at Book Warehouse with author Amanda Hale, a launch at Bastion Books in Victoria, the New Dominion Reading Series, and a launch of the Group of Seven Reimagined. *Contemporary Stories Inspired by Historic Canadian Paintings*, an anthology edited by Karen Schaubert.

Scheduled for January:

- On **January 8**, Michael will be speaking at the Canadian Authors Association (BC Alliance for Arts and Culture)
- On **January 9**, catch him live on World Poetry Café, hosted by Ariadne Sawyer and Diego Bastianutti at Vancouver Coop Radio
- On **January 11**, Michael will be doing a workshop on writing the short story followed by the launch of *The Last News Vendor* at the Gibsons Public Library in Gibsons, B.C.
- On **January 15**, catch Michael reading from his work-in-progress poetry collection *Repositories* at the Lunch Poem Reading Series at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby
- On **January 19**, he'll be reading a selection of Bukowski's poems at the Dead Poets Reading Series at Vancouver Public Library Central Branch.
- On **January 21**, he'll be doing a reading and book signing at the Italian Cultural Centre (in collaboration with the AICW, Word Vancouver and the Centre)
- On **January 26**, join him at Joy Kogawa House for an evening of readings with other Vancouver-

based novelists

- On **January 29**, Michael will be giving a guest lecture on Canadian Noir at UBC
- On the evening of **January 29**, catch him at Words in the Burbs in Port Coquitlam



Photos courtesy of Michael Mirolla



Michael Mirolla's new novella, *The Last News Vendor*, follows an existentialist narrator who devises a plan to fade out of his own life in a subversive and comically absurd attempt at self-preservation, leaving his partner and two children with no memory of him. Called by B.W. Powe "one part Kafka, one part pure Mirolla, lively, witty, vivid, and in the end troubling and hallucinatory" and "the quintessential metamorphosis of the observer to the observed and at the cutting edge of literary metaphors" by the Ottawa Review of Books, *The Last News Vendor* is a dreamlike meditation on broken spirituality, a collapsing society and the overburdened contemporary soul.

For more information: [www.michaelmirolla.com](http://www.michaelmirolla.com) or follow him on Twitter @MichaelMirolla1 for the most recent event updates.

A short excerpt from *The Last News Vendor*:

I pull up the left leg of my trousers and place my thigh across the railroad track. Though it's late evening, the flesh is hot and sticky where it rests on the metal rail. I lie flat on my back and look up. I see the shadow of someone leaning over the bridge railing, scattering shredded pieces of paper into the water. Some of them float over me, wafted by the gentle breeze. Some incriminating documents, no doubt, put through the office shredder.

The seagulls are at it again, thinking there's more food, more manna falling from the sky. One of them has a streamer caught in its beak and



Photos courtesy of Michael Mirolla



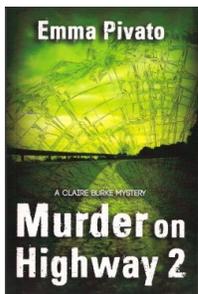
Photos courtesy of Michael  
Mirolla

tries frantically to free itself. Others chase the streamer and peck at it. Gravel is pushing through my shirt and imbedding itself into my skin. I shift positions slightly. The person on the bridge, emboldened, seems to be pouring the shredded paper out by the bucketful, blanking the entire sky above me. Must have lots of secrets to unload. Where's that train? That train, comes the echo. That train. Is it better on my back or on my stomach? I've always assumed it would be better on my back with a vision of the heavens before me. But now I can't find anything to support that. For there are no heavens – just a lot of confetti. Maybe to celebrate a marriage between heaven and hell.

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## Joe Pivato Busy Again

by Emma Pivato



Since his return from Lille, France in September Joe has kept busy with writing and publishing. His critical essay, "Arguments for Comparative Literature Book Projects" appeared in the volume, *Comparative Literature in Canada: Contemporary Scholarship, Pedagogy and Publishing in Review*, edited by Susan Ingram (York U.) and Irene Sywenky (Alberta). Published by Lexington Books, New York, this diverse volume was, in part, a response to Pivato and De Gasperi's book, *Comparative Literature for the New Century*, published by McGill-Queen's U.P. 2018.

In answer to invitations, Joe contributed the critical essay, "Self-Translation as Problem: Italian-Canadian Writers," to the Italian journal, *Oltreoceano* 16 (2020).

He submitted, "Pasquale Verdicchio and the Poets of Anti-Nostalgia" to the volume, *The Invention of Italy as*

*an Imaginary Homeland on Canadian Soil*, edited by Oriana Palusci at the University of Naples. His historical review article, "E.D. Blodgett and Comparative Canadian Literature" went to a special issue of *The Canadian Review of*

*Canadian Literature* (2020). And finally, before his trip to Europe in June Joe also sent in the essay, "Teaching *Tay John* on the Yellowhead Highway," for the book, *Howard O'Hagan: Essays on His Works* edited by Sergiy Yakovenko (MacEwan University). It is part of the Guernica Essential Writers Series which has now reached 50 volumes with the book on Antonio D'Alfonso edited by Licia Canton in 2019. And if that wasn't enough Joe keeps talking about editing a volume on Frank Paci, "the invisible novelist."

By keeping busy Joe has less time to give me advice on the two books that I am working on: a memoir of my life with Alexis, our disabled daughter, and volume seven of my murder mystery series. And maybe that is just as well since I prefer to write away from any distractions. I am thankful to Marisa De Franceschi for her positive comments about my writing. All 6 of my Claire Burke mysteries are available on Amazon.

And finally, for the last two years Joe and I have been doing research on the benefits of urban pole walking during all seasons. Fresh air is good for the brain and can help with concentration, creativity and writing. See the photo of Emma and Joe Pivato taken by a random visitor.



Emma and Joe Pivato. Photo by unknown



## Call for Papers

### The Traces We Leave: Italian Canadians and Their Works

18th Biennial Conference of the Association of Italian Canadian Writers (AICW)

The Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures of the University of Turin will be hosting the 18th Biennial Conference of the Association of Italian Canadian Writers (AICW), **October 8-9, 2020**. The organizers invite abstracts for academic papers and proposals for literary readings and artistic performances.

Writers and artists, academics and researchers from all disciplines are encouraged to submit proposals to present new work in Italian, English or French. Graduate students and emerging writers/artists are encouraged to participate.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Re-tracing tradition in contemporary texts
- Writing and transmitting literary, cultural and linguistic memory
- Representations of place, space, and (dis)location
- Trajectories, the Italian diaspora and globalization
- New traces in cinema, photography, and in new media (DH)
- Culinary culture and literature
- Representations of queerness
- Translation and self-translation
- Innovation, renovation, and Italians in Canada
- Environment (EH), city planning, architecture, museums, fine arts

For academic papers (20 minutes), please send a 200-word abstract and biographical information (60 words). For panels of two or three papers (20 minutes each), send max. 200-word abstract for each paper as well as bio (60 words) for each presenter and contact information for all panelists. Preference will be given to papers that discuss new works.

For literary readings of 15 minutes, please send a

200-word excerpt of the text to be read (or four poems) along with biographical information (60 words). Preference will be given to readings and performances of new works.

Please **NOTE** that the organizers may request additional details after an abstract/proposal has been submitted.

**Deadline: December 30, 2019.** Acceptance will be sent by January 31, 2020. Once a proposal has been accepted, a fee of \$100.00 will be requested for presenters who are not full members of the AICW in good standing. And the University of Torino may also request a conference registration fee.

Please send proposals to the following addresses:

[aicwtorino2020@aicw.ca](mailto:aicwtorino2020@aicw.ca)

AND [aicwtorino2020.concilio@unito.it](mailto:aicwtorino2020.concilio@unito.it)



# NEWS

# Accenti

12<sup>th</sup>  
Writing  
Contest

"If I waited for perfection,  
I would never write a word."

*Margaret Atwood*

**ENTER NOW**

**Grand Prize  
\$1000 and publication  
in Accenti**

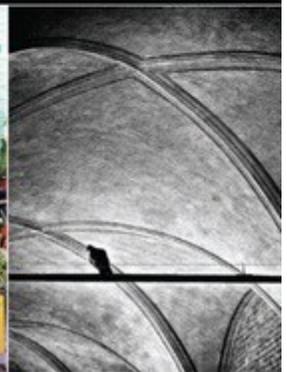
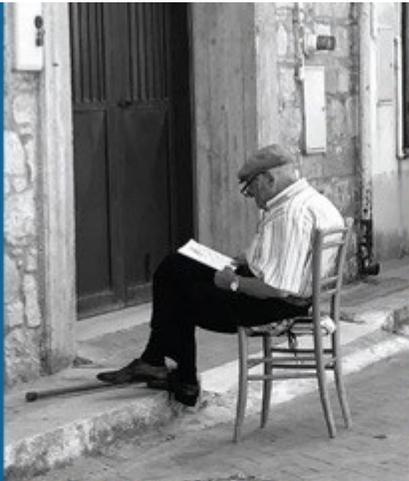
## 10th Accenti Photo Contest

Capture an  
Italian Moment...

anywhere in the world!

Grand Prize: \$1000  
and publication  
in Accenti

**ENTER NOW!**





## GOLD FOR THE ITALIAN FALLEN WORKERS

by Paola Breda



Photo by Mauro Abballe

Hundreds of contributors including many Italian Canadian professors and AICW members collaborated on what became a ten-year project, culminating in the publication of a groundbreaking new book on the whole story of the Italian immigration to Canada. *Land of Triumph and Tragedy* covers the century of migration out of the various regions of Italy at varying times fanning into and across the vast Dominion of Canada from the early 1880s to the end of the 1980s.

Started as the brainchild of now ninety-year old Cav. Marino Toppan, the project from which the book sprung was formally unveiled on 28 April 2016. *The Italian Fallen Workers Memorial Wall* represents the largest Memorial Wall of its kind in Canada and commemorates the fallen workers of Italian origin who were killed in workplace tragedies across the soil of our great nation. After a 50-year quest to begin this project and a decade long period of in-depth research, the *Italian Fallen Workers Memorial Wall* has become an historically significant piece of Canadian History and is now being considered for designation as an official Heritage site. Once the *Memorial Wall* was completed, we realized that the stories of the fallen workers completely opened the history of Italian immigration in Canada like never before; everywhere there was a fallen worker was a community. Taken together, the communities form the geographical atlas of the Italian settlements in Canada which sprang to life, as well as the contribution to the fields of railway-building, mining and construction, the staggering statistics of fallen workers, and so many themes (never before brought to light) in the story of our immigration to Canada became integral parts of this large volume.

To date, *Land of Triumph and Tragedy* (and its sister book, *The Voice of Labour*) have received critical

acclaim in various print materials, most notably *Quaderni d'Italianistica* and *Italian Canadiana*. They are also currently being included by various professors for inclusion in their syllabi. *Accenti Magazine* in Montreal also recently published a



Photos by David Benjamin

complimentary review. In one of the proudest days of the author's lives, The Italian Fallen Workers Memorial Project was awarded a *medaglia d'oro* by the Government of Italy, the first time such a prestigious level of award was given outside Italy. A poignant poem of the same name was gifted to the Project by pre-eminent poet Gianna Patriarca and is included in the book. Incredibly significant photographs and artistic consultation was gifted to the project by Vincenzo Pietropaolo – award winning Toronto photographer – making the book an artistically stunning and historically significant volume.

*Land of Triumph and Tragedy: Voices of the Italian Fallen Workers* is a seminal work and a significant new entry into the body of work reflecting the Italian Canadian experience historically. It weaves together all the communities, connecting related themes across the country, in every place where settlement occurred. The volume profiles and details for the first time in Canadian history, the story of the Italian Fallen Workers, who were killed in workplace tragedies throughout their immigration – an untold story in Canadian history.

The authors have already engaged in a book tour of sorts, presenting their findings in St. Catharines at the invitation of ICAP, at the Famèe Furlane in Toronto, at the North Bay Davedi Italian Club, as well as the Sudbury Caruso Club (in conjunction with Laurentian University). Several other significant talks are being scheduled in the New Year and over the course of the spring at the University of Toronto, the Istituto



Photos by David Benjamin Photography



Culturale in Toronto, the Italian Club in Vancouver, the Archives of Montreal at Casa d'Italia, the Veneto Club in Vaughan and many more.

The authors of *Land of Triumph and Tragedy: Voices of the Italian Fallen Workers*, Paola Breda and Marino Toppan, gratefully acknowledge the support of Villa Charities, the Embassy of Italy and prominent figures in Toronto's Italian community. Paola Breda is the Assistant Co-Ordinator, Italian Fallen Workers Memorial Project

For more information:  
[www.ItalianFallenWorkersMemorial.com](http://www.ItalianFallenWorkersMemorial.com) or  
[info@ItalianFallenWorkersMemorial.com](mailto:info@ItalianFallenWorkersMemorial.com).

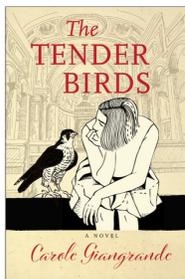


Carole Giangrande. Photo by Brian Gibson



Carole Giangrande. Photo by Brian Gibson

## Carole Giangrande Launches Her New Book.



Novelist Carole Giangrande launched her tenth book, *The Tender Birds* this fall, in Montreal and Toronto. These photos were taken at the Argo Bookstore and the Visual Arts Centre in Montreal.

*"A literary page-turner of the highest order. I'm in awe of Giangrande's work and the reassuring wisdom that suffuses it, wisdom our world badly needs right now"*

Carol Bruneau, author of *A Circle on the Surface*

[www.carolegiangrande.com](http://www.carolegiangrande.com)

## Lillian Conti's Book Chosen for the "Archivio Storico"

by Lillian Conti



Enrica Marchesi, the secretary to Senator Francesca Alderisi, informed me that my book *The Two Hearts of My House* has been chosen, along with 50 other works written by Italian emigrants, that she gathered during her trips. These works now have a section in the "Archivio Storico del Senato della Repubblica", under the name of "Donazione Alderisi." Scholars and students who are interested in the Italian emigration phenomenon, may consult these works in the Senate archives, and soon also on an online web site. Senator Alderisi is a member of the Italian Parliament elected in 2018 in the foreign electoral colleges that include North America and Central America

My book, *The Two Hearts of My House. One Woman's Spiritual Journey* translated in Italian as *I due cuori di casa mia* was published in 2005. It features a collection of poems and short stories. This is indeed a great honour for me and for those whose works are displayed and know that their poems, their stories and their emotions are now an integral part of the Italian history.



## Lillian (Liliana) Conti: A Profile

When Liliana came to Canada at the age of ten, she felt like a guest in someone's home. Immigrating into such a diverse society, she felt that her Italian heart was quickly becoming an Italian-Canadian heart and that these two sides lived together in harmony.

She attended Lakeshore Teacher's College, University of Toronto, and York University and attained a Bachelor of Education. Lillian also obtained a Bachelor of Religious Education from Tyndale University College & Seminary and is now a licenced Pastor.

- Lillian is the author of two books:
  - ◇ I DUE CUORI DI CASA MIA, depicts the heart-cry of a child immigrant whose pungent memories of her eradication have grown strong deep roots in both the Canadian way and the Italian ethnicity.
  - ◇ In ILLUMINATA, her unapologetic spirituality beams off the pages into the heart and soul of the reader to placate, encourage and to heal. Here she freely describes her own Spiritual journey beginning with a near death experience, while ill with typhoid fever at the age of seven while still living in Sant'Onofrio Calabria. Lillian is not ashamed to say that after her miraculous healing, she developed a desire to be a spiritual leader!
  - ◇ Her newly published, **WHERE IS GOD? TEENS WANT TO KNOW!** aims to reach the hearts, minds and souls of the students in the Catholic High Schools, young people in general and anyone else, from all walks of life who are seeking a Spiritual connection, greater wisdom about the world surrounding them, the origins of humanity and the mysteries of God.
- As a member of the Association of Italian Canadian Writers (AICW) her poems and short stories have been read on Telelatino, Omni and Rogers television. Some of her poems are part of the anthology - IL Viaggio and a 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Anthology of Canadian Writing entitled, People, Places, Passages.
- Lillian was televised in Il Giardino, 'The Garden', a production by Katalin Eszterhai, depicting the

importance of keeping the Italian heritage alive through their Gardens. "From old Roots Come New Fruits!"

- "Andiamo in Canada!" An Immigrant Story, was published on "Transformations: An Italian Canadian Experience", ([www.transformationscanada.com](http://www.transformationscanada.com)).
- In 2016 she was the recipient of the Farfalle D'Argento from Rome Italy, by the magazine 50&PIU for her poem, ITALIA MIA!
- Her paintings of Italian landscapes and Religious Psalms have been displayed at several exhibitions.
- Lillian, now retired from teaching religion in the Catholic high schools, she ignites her passion by writing and presenting Biblical/Spiritual PowerPoint seminars in the Catholic high schools, in the community, retirement homes and churches. Some examples seminars from over 100.
  - ◇ **WHO IS GOD?**
  - ◇ **THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS**
  - ◇ **AMAZING FACTS ABOUT EASTER**
  - ◇ **SALVATION!**
  - ◇ **THE LAMB OF GOD**
  - ◇ **THE TRUTH ABOUT ANGELS**
  - ◇ **WHO ARE THE FALLEN ANGELS?**
  - ◇ **HOW TO RECEIVE YOU E HEALING!**
  - ◇ **THE POWER OF FAITH.....and many more!**
- Lillian has been teaching weekly Bible studies at retirement homes in Woodbridge for the past 22 years. She reminds the early Italo-Canadesi to keep and share our heritage and our spirituality strong. In their honour, Lillian wrote a short story, 'L'Aurora', 'Dawn', published in 2010.
- She is presently a music therapist for Pine Grove Lodge, Villa Colombo North and Leonardo Gambino Retirement Home. She plays her violin for the elderly residents who enjoy listening to the songs of their youth. Her violin playing, and choir singing is the joy of her heart.
- As part of the **Italian Music Trio**, Liliana has initiated Italian Heritage Celebrations in June at senior's residents and the community at large.
- Since 2011 when Michael Tibollo and the Canadian Government, have dedicated June, Italian Heritage Month, Lillian has organized '**Books and Biscotti**' events dedicated to the reading of Italian immigrant stories and music.

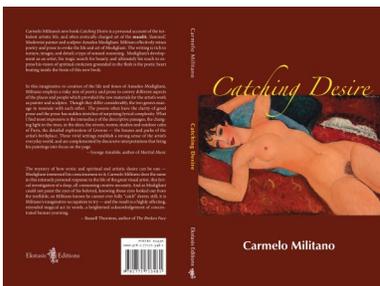


- In 2018 Lilliana and Kintel General Contractor have sponsored and initiated a pilot heritage writing contest entitled: **Passing the Torch!** to encourage 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Italo-Canadesi to share and keep alive memories of their Italian heritage.
- In July 2018, Lillian has been awarded the **DIPLOMA D'ONORE** from the CTIM (Comitato Tricolore per gl'Italiani nel Mondo) founded by Mirko Tremaglia (1926-2011) who served as the Minister for Italians in the World during former Premier Silvio Berlusconi's second and third government terms.
- October 2018 Diploma D'Onore Links for Interviews on the book, **WHERE IS GOD? TEENS WANT TO KNOW!** <https://youtu.be/EIIMWoQLfe8>
- **The book is on Amazon, Barns and Nobles and Chapters - Indigo**
- Lillian is asked to Skype interviews with Sister Myriam on her program **Cristianità on RAI. (2018)**
- Lillian and her husband, Angelo, are proud parents of five grown children, eight grand-children and make their home in Woodbridge, Ontario.

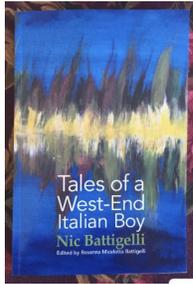
Francesca Alderisi presentation of the books to the Congress. ([link](#)).

## Carmelo Militano's Latest Book *Catching Desire* (Ekstasis Editions )

*Catching Desire* on the life and art of the modernist painter and sculptor Amendo Modigliani will be published spring, 2020. It is his sixth book.



## Sudbury Launch of *Tales of a West-End Italian Boy*



*Tales of a West-End Italian Boy* by Nic Battigelli (edited by Rosanna Micelotta Battigelli) was launched on Sunday, November 24th at the *Società Caruso Club* in Sudbury, Ontario. Most of the stories are based on Nic's memories of growing up (as an immigrant from Friuli) in Sudbury's West-End neighbourhood in the 60s and 70s. The cover of the book features one of Nic's paintings and is called "My Northern Reflections."



Copies are available for \$15 plus postage. Please email your request to Nic at [nicbattigelli711@gmail.com](mailto:nicbattigelli711@gmail.com) with your full address. *Grazie!*



Photo by Martin Kotyluk



Photo by Rosanna Battigelli



## A Busy Few Months for Rosanna Micelotta Battigelli



Rosanna's children's book. Photo by Rosanna Micelotta Battigelli.

Rosanna had her launch of her children's book *Pumpkin Orange, Pumpkin Round* (Pajama Press, Sept. 3rd, 2019, Tara Anderson, illustrator) at Chapters Sudbury on September 28th. On Oct. 3rd, she read

the book at Ronald McDonald House in Toronto, donating a copy to each of the children in the group. Also on that day, she read from her novel *La Brigantessa* at the conference "Fragments of Culture between Diaspora, Language and Semiotics" at U of T Mississauga in honour of Dr. Paul Colilli.

Rosanna was one of the four authors featured at the Parry Sound Festival of Authors on October 29th. On Nov. 2nd and 3rd, she participated in two events at Wordstock Sudbury Literary Festival. On Nov. 13th, she was guest author at Novel Idea Bookstore in Kingston. On Nov. 20th, she was guest author at a CFUW Sudbury book club meeting held at the South End Public Library. On Nov. 22nd and 23rd, she was guest author at Parry Sound Books. On Nov. 24th, she and her husband Nic launched Nic's book *Tales of a West-End Italian Boy* at the *Società Caruso Club* in Sudbury. She edited the collection.



Reading at Parry Sound Festival of Authors. Photo by Nic Battigelli.



Reading at Ronald McDonald House, Toronto. Photo by Nic Battigelli.



La Brigantessa. Photo by Rosanna Micelotta Battigelli.

## Special Offer for AICW Members!



*Where Angels Come to Earth, An Evocation of the Italian Piazza* is an unprecedented visual and lyrical journey – a celebration of the richness and diversity of Italian culture and the Italian worldview reflected in the humanity and social integrity of the Italian piazza.

"Italy is indeed the kingdom of the piazza, the ubiquitous city square that is a key element in Italian architecture as well as its social, economic and cultural life – and the reason so many Italian cities today remain civilized places to live. Piazzas offer vibrant, diverse spaces that continually recreate and revitalize the urban environment. Many of them also happen to be extraordinarily beautiful. They are stage sets with real-life backdrops: ancient cathedrals, palazzos, baptisteries and fountains, as well as cafes, shops and bars."

– Excerpt from *Where Angels Come to Earth*

**"This is a critical book for our time." – Ken Greenberg**

**"A book unlike any other." – Francesco Loriggio**

The authors have focused on many of Italy's piazzas still used today by local residents as community gathering spaces, revealing both the grit and beauty of daily life. Working out of different artistic disciplines, the combined creative voices of photographer Vincenzo Pietropaolo and writer Mark Frutkin come together to present a poetic and thought-provoking look at Italian community life.



**Hardcover with dust jacket**, English: 160 pages, 120 photos (in colour and black & white). **Special offer \$59.95 (save \$20). Includes delivery in Canada.**

To order: <https://accenti.ca/product/angels/>

Write to [info@longbridgebooks.com](mailto:info@longbridgebooks.com) or call Longbridge Books at 514-329-3254.

Internationally recognized as one of Canada's pre-eminent documentary photographers, **Vincenzo Pietropaolo** is the author of nine books on art and photography. He was born in Calabria, Italy, and now lives in Toronto.

**Mark Frutkin** is the author of over a dozen books of fiction, non-fiction and poetry, several of which are set in Italy. His books have won or been shortlisted for major literary prizes, including the Trillium, Governor General's, Commonwealth Writers and Sunburst awards. He lives in Ottawa.



## NOTTE BLU

di Pier Angelo Piccolo

Le dune del deserto scorrevano veloci, meraviglioso dondolio, come fossero state le onde del mare e noi, mollemente distesi sulla gobba dei nostri animali, sentivamo le nostre facce solcate dal vento, sognavamo di essere in mezzo all'oceano.

Il cielo era così terso e stellato, che sembrava possibile sfiorare, con le dita della mano, ogni piccola stella lucente.

Tra la sabbia infinita emergevano spesso luci e fuochi colorati di lontani, piccolissimi villaggi e noi ne eravamo attirati. Attraversandoli stupefatti, ci apparivano popolati di gente affascinante, inspiegabilmente festante ed estroversa, che ci lanciava ampi cenni di saluto, offrendoci tè caldo, sorrisi, erbe bollite, ceci arrostiti.

Strano.

Incomprensibile in quei popoli che avevano subito ogni onta, ogni sorta di oltraggi e di ingiustizie, di infamie e di violenze. Stirpi sottomesse e umiliate. Famiglie che avevano dignità e che, da un po' di tempo, non erano in grado di sfamare i propri figli.

Così come in tutto il Grande Impero, persone forti, ricche e industrie erano cadute in miseria in breve tempo, tanto repentinamente come non era mai successo in nessuna epoca precedente, in tutta la storia dell'Umanità.

Eppur adesso, quelle piccole, misere oasi, erano attraversate da un qualcosa di inspiegabile, un fermento di emozioni fino ad allora sconosciute.

Era una strana eccitazione, ognuno si accorgeva che la mente, l'anima e il proprio corpo stavano cambiando, come se la sua vita, così come quelle degli altri, stesse subendo una inenarrabile, inarrestabile e meravigliosa catarsi.

Continuavamo a correre, attraverso il deserto, noi

tre e dall'alto dei nostri cammelli, tanto carichi di merci, si intravedevano sempre più chiarori di umanità, qua e là come se i paesetti si fossero moltiplicati: in realtà era l'atmosfera che, in quella strana e stupenda notte, si era fatta molto più trasparente, chiara e cristallina tanto che, ci sembrava di riuscire scorgere ogni forma di materia celeste ed ogni singola creatura anche la più distante.

Poi, ci apparve Lei d'improvviso.

Era chiarissima, imponente: a noi sembrò una enorme nave che solcava il cielo. Immensa roboante, illuminante, quasi esplodente, piena di luce propria.

Seguiva, fissamente e inesorabile la sua rotta, che pareva saper benissimo dove andare, rendendo luminescenti gli altri corpi celesti come per magia.

Ma, in verità, quella prodigiosa stella indicava qualcosa di gravemente importante ad ogni abitante del cosmo. L'emozione divenne insopportabile, il mio stomaco ebbe un sussulto di gioia, di paura, di stupore. Dovetti fermarmi e anche i miei due compagni.

Elia era come estasiato e guardava fisso verso l'orizzonte.

Baltazar bloccò gli animali, anche loro nervosi, senza guardarmi.

Mi sedetti sulla sabbia e lì mi persi, immobile, a contemplare, quasi senza respiro, quella visione unica.

Davanti a me, al mio corpo, ai miei increduli occhi, si stagliava l'Universo intero.

In quella notte incredibile di follia e gioia mistica, riuscii ad ammirarlo proprio tutto.

Passavano, intanto, altre genti che venivano dai villaggi ed andavano verso la scia inebriante della stella. Si muovevano rapidi, sbraitando, con concitata frenesia.

Qualcuno urlava: "di là, di là la fonte."

Altri dicevano: "seguila, seguila, rincorriamo quella luce."



Qualcuno si era bagnato di urina, sudato, bagnato ma proseguiva lo stesso a camminare.

Cosa stava succedendo, questa notte?

Guardai verso i miei compagni, risalii sul mio fidato animale, che mi scrutò masticando. E filammo, galoppammo. Più andavamo avanti per la strada, più aumentava la folla.

C'eran tante donne, bambini, vecchi, dottori, signori, straccioni, puttane, saggi, soldati, pastori e rabbini. Un gran vociare e un gran respirare affannoso.

Un compagno mi disse: "Marco, forse dovevamo andare a Samarcanda a vender la nostra roba e a rifornirci. Che facciamo?"

Ma io gli risposi: "No Baltazar, no, un momento come questo non lo rivivremo più, ma neanche se dovessimo campare un miliardo di anni. Non serve andare a Samarcanda a vendere. No. l'oro e l'incenso servono qui, doniamoli e doniamoci noi stessi, alla fonte della vita, la nostra e quella di tutti. Quella eterna che mai finirà."

Dopo una lunga corsa seguendo la scia, ci arrestammo: il nostro respiro arrivava allo stomaco e lo nutriva di aria fresca e prodigiosa.

L'atmosfera era densa di miracoli, ne era piena.

Qualcuno si sgolava, come impazzito, ma di una follia gioiosa:

"È venuto, è venuto tra di noi a sconfiggere la morte."

Altri urlavano: "Abatteremo ogni muro, apriremo nuovamente il mare e vinceremo il dolore, le sofferenze, la miseria, la tristezza."

E poi: "Lui cancellerà tutti i nostri debiti e ci darà il perdono."

Tutti se ne stavano immobili a osservare, sembravano milioni, tanti quante le stelle. Volgevano lo sguardo ad

un piccolissimo tugurio di paglia sotto una grotta. Dalla capanna usciva un po' di fumo. Uno strano e bellissimo individuo volteggiava là sopra che non si capiva come facesse. Pareva come un piccolo angelo.

Poi ... sentimmo a distanza, ma chiaramente, il pianto di quel bambino. Sentimmo nei nostri cuori muoversi qualcosa.

L'orologio del tempo suonò, forte.

Ci disse che era scoccata l'ora santa.

In quell'istante, il Firmamento ci abbracciò tutti, come a dirci:

"E da oggi, abbiate fede, qualche cosa cambierà."

## A Poem by Erminio G. Neglia

### Homo Sapiens

We squat on toilet bowls.  
 We swear in many languages.  
 We deliver babies in hospitals.  
 We go places fast.  
 We aim high to the sky.  
 We see ourselves on screens.  
 We send messages anywhere.  
 We go to pray in imposing temples.  
 Yes, we have come a long way.  
 But some of us have not changed.  
 And when they refuse to share our beliefs,  
 We sharper our knives and poison our arrows.

Erminio G. Neglia was born in Triggiano, near Bari, Italy. He is Professor Emeritus University of Toronto. He taught Hispanic Literature. He has published scholarly articles and several books, including one on Pirandello. Two of his books were published in Italy with the financial contribution of the Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione. He has also published collections of short stories and two plays were staged at the University of Toronto. He holds a Ph.D. from Washington University in St. Louis. Neglia lives in Mississauga, Ontario.



## Vittorino Dal Cengio



Nato a Novoledo di Villaverla, provincia di Vicenza nel 1953. Educazione. Diplomato perito industriale all'ITIS "A. Rossi" a Vicenza, specializzazioni: metallurgia, lavori subacquei, metallurgia superiore, RPIII computer system. Biennio

propedeutico di ingegneria all'università di Padova. Baccalaureato in francese, storia e scienze politiche all'università Simon Fraser.

Servizio militare. (1974-75) Nel corpo Alpini, al comando di brigata a Belluno nella brigata Carnia-Cadore. Specializzazioni: trasmissioni, sci-alpinismo, corso rocciatori.

Lavoro. Subacqueo, tutore in un istituto privato, direttore di fabbrica in Italia e in Canada.

Emigrato in Canada nell'ottobre del 1977.

Lavoro letterario:

articoli e racconti per giornali italiani e per un periodico canadese.

Curatore de **Il libro d'oro delle Dolomiti**. Milano: Longanesi & C., 1980. (libro che era rimasto incompiuto dopo la morte dell'autore Severino Casara)

**Severino Casara, una vita sulle crode**. Milano: Club Alpino Italiano, 1985

**Armonia Pastorale**. Surrey, BC: Il conte di Mille Fulgher (inprint of Alpha Mensae Publishing), 2008

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**Come niente fosse**. Surrey, BC: Alpha Mensae Publishing, 2018

Prossime pubblicazioni: *'Ragazza calabrese'* e *'Racconti dell'altro ieri'*.

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