



Association of Italian Canadian Writers
Associazione di scrittori/scrittrici italo-canadesi
Association des Écrivain(e)s Italo-Canadien(ne)s

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Happy Holidays

AICW on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Follow the AICW on Twitter [@AICWCanada](#) and Instagram [@aicwcanada](#)
If you are on [Facebook](#), please take the time to LIKE our page.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends,

Happy December! It has been a challenging year for many of us, but we're looking forward to finally getting together with family during the holidays.

Over the past few months, AICW executive members and volunteers have been working on a number of activities and projects, including the "Relaunch Your Passion for Writing" Mentorship Program. ([See details:](#)) We are grateful to AICW members who agreed to mentor emerging writers and to Maria Pia Spadafora and Giulia De Gasperi for coordinating the project. (Funded by the Government of Quebec's Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers, with the English Language Arts Network (ELAN) as project supporter and the assistance of *Accenti Magazine*.)

At the Books and Biscotti Open Mic, on October 29, we were thrilled to hear the work of Lucia Gagliese, Silvia Fiorita Smith, Carole Giangrande, Luigi Spadari, Emma Pivato and Sante Viselli. The event was co-hosted by Delia De Santis, Annalisa Panati and Maria Pia Spadafora. If you missed it, you can watch the video by clicking the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQGgODs6lZ0>



Books and Biscotti October 2021

Maria Pia Spadafora is working on the AICW's anniversary video, and there's still time to send in testimonials and photos. As we move this project along, we will be sharing photos on social media and at aicw.ca. The AICW-Bressani Prize committee, headed by Giulia De Gasperi, is looking forward to announcing the shortlisted titles. Thanks to Villa Charities, Federazione delle Associazioni Venete del Québec, and Associazione Italo-Canadese del "West Island" (Montreal) for supporting the Prize.

Thanks to Emma and Joseph Pivato for co-hosting the weekly "Shut Up and Write" on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. ET. All members are welcome.

You are invited to "Verses for Venera," featuring the winners of the 2021 Venera Fazio Poetry Prize, on January 23 at 2:00 p.m. ET. (Details will be sent out soon.) In the coming months, check your inbox for invitations to showcase your writing (Poetry Month, Prose Month, Italian Heritage Month), to read at the next Books and Biscotti event, to enter the Venera Fazio Poetry Contest, and to contribute to the 40th anniversary anthology.

A warm welcome to new and returning AICW members. Please visit aicw.ca to create your profile which will be shared on social media. And take a look at our publications at aicw.ca/books.

Thank you to long-time members for your continued support. If you haven't yet done so, please send in your fees and take advantage of our two-year deal.

We are looking forward to a productive 2022 at the AICW. Thanks to all who contribute to the success of our activities.

Happy Holidays! Joyeuses Fêtes! Buon Natale!

Best wishes for 2022,
Licia Canton, President

Happy Holidays



Porgiamo a tutti i soci e alle persone a loro care i nostri 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 de fêtes et un bonne et hereuse année.

The Newsletter Committee

Anna

Christine

Francesca

Maria Pia

A Few Useful Tips on How to Promote Our Books

by Darlene Madott



Writer's desk (courtesy of Darlene Madott)

It is shockingly wonderful how productive our AICW membership has been with the writing of books and winning of awards, and how shockingly few of us know how to post reviews of each other's work. I know we are reading each other's works, because I've received personal missives from members that prove to me my writing has been read. When I timidly asked a few persons if they would mind posting a review of the recently published *Dying Times* on Goodreads or Amazon, confessions were made concerning not knowing how to do this. So, I reached out to the one-and-only Writers' Union of Canada colleague who had posted. (Yes, it is the only one that has been posted), and asked him how he did it? Because I, too, had no idea how to do this. And I was shamed by Professor Joseph Pivato's Call-To-Review in the AICW Newsletter. So, my Writers' Union colleague sent me a Tip Sheet. Here it is. Now, none of us have any excuse. It is really easy to do. And I felt so proud of myself when I did it – cracked another internet mystery. We should be shouting each other's praises from the rafters. Here's how:

Amazon gives more weight to the ranking system of books purchased through Amazon. It will "discount" the stars placed by reviewers on books not purchased through them. A way to rectify this is to buy the book on Kindle at a discounted rate, and then post the review.

To leave a review on Amazon

1. Sign into your Amazon account;
2. Search for the book;
3. Select it from the list;
4. If there are existing reviews, click the underlined hyperlink showing the number of reviews;
5. This will take you to the Customer Review section;
6. If there are no reviews, scroll down the page until you get to the section;
7. Click the Write Customer Review button;
8. Select a rating and write a review;
9. Click the Post button;
10. Amazon divides reviews by country but is again displaying a section labeled Reviews from Other Countries;
11. If, after a week, you find that a review on Amazon.ca is not listed in Amazon.com or vice-verse, you can sign into the other country's platform and enter the review in that country. Amazon may try to redirect you to the country where you reside. You should be able to ignore this, though they may not allow you to do so. Decisions by Amazon sometimes seem to be random and arbitrary.

NEWS

To leave a review on Goodreads

1. Sign into your account;
2. In the box labeled Search Books at the top of the window, enter the title and click the magnifying glass icon;
3. Click the desired book in the list;
4. The book detail will appear;
5. Click the down arrow in the drop-down box beneath the cover;
6. This will display Want to Read if this is the first time you have viewed the book or Currently Reading if you have already added it to your reading list;
7. If you click Want to Read this will become your status and you just have to click the down arrow;
8. Change the status to Read;
9. Check the box labeled Done;
10. A dialog window will appear;
11. Enter a rating and write a review;
12. You can indicate when you started and finished the book;
13. Click the Post button.

NEWS



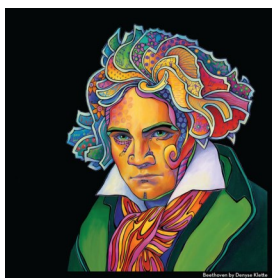
Call for Photos
Send to projects@aicw.ca

The AICW is looking for hi-res photos (AICW conferences and events) to be included in our anniversary video. Please indicate the date and the photographer as well as the names of people appearing in photo. Please note that we may not be able to include all photos received.

 The AICW Executive *Since 1986*

EVENTS

Poems and Music Performance



Electrifying Eroica

Tina Biello's poems from her book *Playing into Silence* will be featured in a performance with the Vancouver Island Symphony coming up on January 22, 2022, in Nanaimo BC. Tina collaborated with composer Katerina Gimón to create three songs for performance. They will be sung by soprano Dory Hayley with accompaniment by the full orchestra.

Please see link below for all the details:

<https://www.vancouverislandsymphony.com/electrifying-eroica/>



Association of Italian-Canadian Writers
Associazione Scrittori/Scrittrici Italo-Canadesi
Association des Écrivains/Écrivaines Italo-Canadiennes



ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA DI LETTERATURA IN CANADA
Associazione italiana di letterature di lingua italiana



Dipartimento di LINGUE LETTERATURE STRANIERE CULTURE MODERNE



ASSOCIAZIONE ITALIANA DI LETTERATURE DI LINGUA ITALIANA

AICW BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

May 5-7, 2022

University of Torino

Sala Lauree, III floor

Complesso Aldo Moro, Palazzina A

Via S. Ottavio angolo Via Verdi

Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Modern Cultures

Conveners: Carmen Concilio, Domenic Beneventi, Licia Canton,

Maria Cristina Seccia



© Photo: Vincenzo Pietropaolo, Part of a Mural in Letino Campania
Courtesy of the author

THE TRACES WE LEAVE

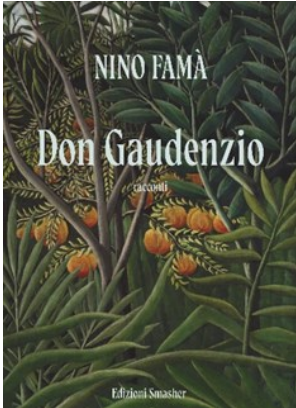
Italian-Canadians and Their Works

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

Info: carmen.concilio@unito.it

BOOKS AND OTHER PRINT

Un anno fruttuoso per Nino Famà



Una nuova edizione dei racconti Don Gaudenzio di Nino Famà, originalmente pubblicati nel 1996, totalmente rifatta sia nello stile che nel contenuto e con l'aggiunta di alcuni nuovi racconti e di una introduzione. Edizioni Smasher, Novembre 2021.

In questi racconti si matura un percorso che oscilla tra coscienza e incoscienza, tra esperienza e percezione, tra sogno e realtà. I personaggi di Don Gaudenzio si muovono in un ambiente surreale nel quale il passato e le memorie si confondono con il presente.

In molti racconti, il viaggio è un importante elemento sul quale giace la struttura della narrazione. Esso assume il duplice ruolo di viaggio fisico attraverso la geografia e al tempo stesso di viaggio mentale, attraverso la memoria. L'appartenenza dei personaggi a due paesi diversi e a due culture distinte crea uno sdoppiamento, nonché una scissione psicologica. Sono personaggi che mentalmente devono lottare con due realtà che si contendono la loro attinenza.

Credo che il 2021 sia stato un anno generoso: oltre a *Don Gaudenzio*, è uscita la traduzione in inglese di *The Ocean in the Well*, Guernica Editions 2021. Lieto anche di annunciare che nel 2021 sono stati pubblicati due saggi importanti che trattano le mie opere.

– Gabriel Niccoli, “Frammenti e digressioni sul *nostos* come ritualizzazione e culto della memoria ne *Il sogno di Toloma* di Nino Famà.” *Patterns of Nostos in Italian Canadian Narratives, Italian Canadiana*, Volume 35, maggio 2021. pp. 251–268.

– Francesco Loriggio, “Italian-Canadian Italoophone Fiction; the Works of Nino Famà.” *Forum Italicum* volume 55 issue 3, November 2021 pp. 805 – 824.

Comments Upon Reading Two New Inspiring Books

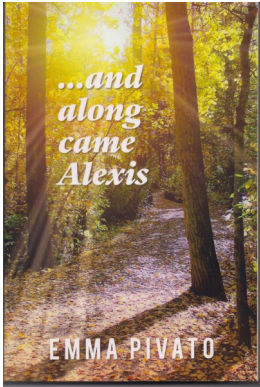
by Darlene Madott

EMMA PIVATO ...and along came Alexis (Guernica Editions)

A Journey Toward Becoming More Human

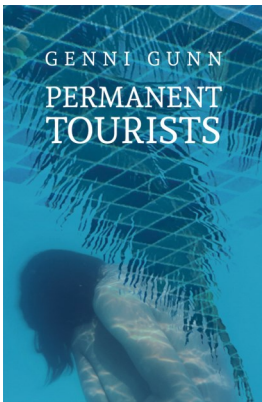
“I felt ruptured, torn apart. I have asked myself many times since if it was normal to feel that way – to feel like I had lost not only my daughter but also myself?”

BOOKS AND OTHER PRINT



This is a mother's story of the 4-decade-long journey (thus far) taken with her youngest daughter, Alexis. The questions and suspected partial answers began with a missed Rubella vaccination in the mother's early childhood and then measles during pregnancy, and continue with the likely self-blaming that is a part of all parenting when the child, the organizing principal of a family, isn't turning out according to hopes and expectations. What is striking about this remarkable book is its honesty, the straightforward prose with which the journey is recounted, not seeking sympathy or judgment or commiseration, but from which the reader emerges with a sense of wonder and enriched faith in all that is good in human nature. It is ultimately a book that celebrates life. It is not about "disability" but the rich and humbling experience of being human, accepting that none of us have any control except perhaps the choice of reaction. This mother has chosen to celebrate, and we are fortunate as her reader, to have been able to participate in the experience.

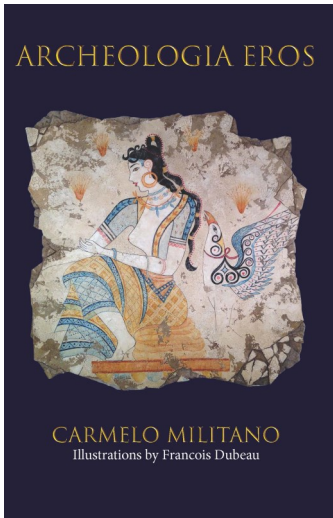
Genni Gunn, *Permanent Tourists* (Signature editions)



From masterful first sentences that grip you and pull you in to the dark interiors of human relationships, in this collection of linked short-stories, you just know you are in the hands of a master story-teller. The reader is a tourist in this world of *Permanent Tourists* -- the ultimate destination being the human heart. There are times when the journey feels like detective fiction or a murder mystery, for putting me on the edge of my seat. I could not put it down, and when finished the first time, just knew I just had to start all over again, right from the beginning.

BOOKS AND OTHER PRINT

Carmelo Militano Explores “Memory with Desire”



Carmelo Militano’s new poetry collection is a reworking and a fresh evocative meditation on desire.

The collection mixes “memory with desire” and offers a wise and sometimes melancholy but always passionate exploration of erotic love and desire.

The collection roams across the centuries for its inspiration: the poetic fragments of the ancient Greek poet Sappho, Japanese Shunga art, Ben Johnson’s 17th century poetry, Cleland’s *Fanny Hill* and the poetry of Pablo Neruda to name a few sources.

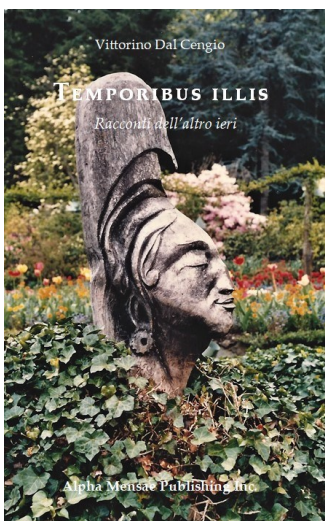
The collection includes the sumptuous and sensual drawings of famous Quebec artist Francois Dubeau.

The book was published October 25, 2021.

Look for the Zoom reading in the spring of 2022.

Temporibus Illis, di Vittorino Dal Cengio

a cura di Anna Maria Zampieri Pan



“Racconti dell’altro ieri”, indica il sottotitolo del libro, uscito di recente per i tipi della Alpha Mensae, che dello stesso autore annovera ben altre sette pubblicazioni, tutte rivolte a ricreare episodi esperienze incontri e memorie di un passato intensamente vissuto tra Italia e Canada. O meglio tra l’amato Veneto di una zona agreste del vicentino e la British Columbia della metropolitana Vancouver e del magnifico territorio circostante.

Temporibus consiste in tredici racconti, suddivisi in tre parti i cui rispettivi temi indicativi sono: Essere alpini (e come no, conoscendo l’orgoglio di Dal Cengio di esserne parte), Nel suol natio (indimenticabili preziose fondamenta educative familiari e comunitarie) e All’estero (escursioni fantasiose e immaginazioni collocate in differenti parti del mondo).

Chi si aspettava una specie di continuazione, nello stile e nei contenuti, di *Armonia pastorale* e *Spes* in particolare, può forse essere rimasto sconcertato da pagine di scrittura non conforme alla precedente produzione letteraria di Dal Cengio. Egli stesso spiega essere la propria scrittura “non più forse briosa come ai tempi spensierati sulla mia terra d’infanzia e giovinezza, ora più cupa e grave riguardo la narrativa sociale,

BOOKS AND OTHER PRINT



Vittorino Dal Cengio

veristica, di ambiente e di costume con tutte le magagne di contenuti e tabù che questa espone”. E confessa: “forse questo *Temporibus illis* segna una fase non pretendo di maturità o di qualità ma di più profonda riflessione”. Da accettare e condividere. Perché le storie raccontate ora dall’autore - ad eccezione di quelle semi-autobiografiche riferite al ‘suolo natio’ - sono frutto di ascolto, lettura, studio, osservazione realistica delle vicende di uomini e condizioni sociali. Immaginazione e surrealismo caratterizzano parecchie pagine di *Temporibus*, ma - “nonostante racconti di guerre e conseguenti sofferenze, nel finale c’è sempre un filo di speranza, proprio come nei miei scritti precedenti”. Parola di Vittorino Dal Cengio, prolifico autore tra Vicenza e Vancouver”.

Now Available for Preorders: Terri Favro’s New Novel “The Sisters Sputnik”

“The Sisters Sputnik” is the sequel to “Sputnik’s Children” (2017), a Globe 100 Book, shortlisted for the Sunburst Award for Canadian Literature of the Fantastic, and long listed for CBC Canada Reads 2020.



Described as an odyssey wrapped in a love story, *The Sisters Sputnik* is the name of a time-travelling trio of storytellers-for-hire who are much in demand throughout the multiverse of 2,052 alternate worlds, each one created by the detonation of a nuclear bomb. Frank Sinatra and the not-quite-queen of England, Princess Elizabeth, make appearances, along with the feisty Nonna of the Sisters’ leader, time traveller Debbie Reynolds Biondi.

“Terri Favro’s writing hums with otherworldly power. Brighter than Technicolor, faster than Wi-Fi. How lucky we are to exist at the same time, on the same planet, as this book. *The Sisters Sputnik* is pure delight.” — Paul Vermeersch, author of *Shared Universe: New and Selected Poems 1995-2020*.

“The Sisters Sputnik” was recently featured in *Publisher’s Weekly* science fiction books of spring 2022 and will be released by ECW Press on May 17, 2022.

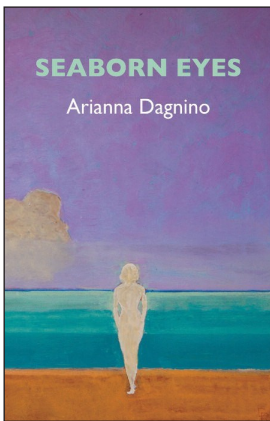
Preorders are always important but never more so than this year, due to paper shortages and supply chain challenges. I’d be very grateful if AICW members could help support the book by preordering a copy at your favourite bookstore or through [Chapters](#) [Indigo](#).

BOOKS AND OTHER PRINT

Seaborn Eyes

Poems for Sea Lovers and Lovesick Seafarers

by Arianna Dagnino



We are all born in the confined sea of our mother's womb, but once we realize we belong to the infinite ocean of life, we act like selkies drawn to those wider horizons. The poems of this collection can be read in many ways, depending on your "seaborn eyes." They are deeply private messages from the inside person we wish someone else could know; fleeting reports of universal longings that people can use as they like, like good song lyrics – both urgent and wistful. To a more basic level, they are chronically hopeful odes written by someone who is missing who she used to be.

"The sea speaks to us as the sorceress "drowns within herself." Emotions and sensory impressions silence the train of thoughts. Only a few lines remain – written on the waves. This is pure contemporary poetry".

Paolo Gambi, founder of *Poetry Renaissance*

"When Arianna Dagnino, an intelligent essay writer and insightful novelist, unravelled her poetic papyrus, I drank the salty seas she had travelled, and marvelled at how she found sweetness where bitterness reigns, light where no light shines. This world of oxymorons is the only place to find the solace she offers her readers with such mastery."

– **Antonio D'Alfonso**, writer and poet

Over the years **Arianna Dagnino** has built an international experience as a lecturer, writer, and literary translator. She has written across genres and languages (English and Italian) as much as she has lived across borders. Among her books, the transcultural novel and screenplay *The Afrikaner* (Guernica, Toronto, 2019; also available in audiobook), inspired by the five years she spent in South Africa as an international reporter, and the creative nonfiction *Il quintetto d'Istanbul* (Ensemble, Roma, 2021). *Seaborn Eyes* is her first collection of poems. www.ariannadagnino.com

If you ever get to read [Seaborn Eyes](#), please let Arianna know your honest opinion by sending an email to: aridag@me.com

Seaborn Eyes is available for purchase online via PayPal at www.ekstasiseditions.com

For further information: Richard Olafson or Carol Sokoloff

phone & fax: (250) 385-3378

web: www.ekstasiseditions.com

e-mail: ekstasis@islandnet.com



Arianna Dagnino

BOOKS AND OTHER PRINT

Fiction vs. Non-fiction: It's Complicated

by Emma Pivato



Emma Pivato

In several recent interviews about my new memoir, *...and along came Alexis*, I have been asked an interesting question. How difficult and how fair is it to speak for my daughter when she cannot speak for herself? Am I simply appropriating her voice for my own purposes?

Okay. Nobody has asked me this question so baldly, but it is there in the subtext! And perhaps I am projecting a bit, based on my own mixed feelings about the issue. What I have tried to describe about my daughter is our relationship, our non-verbal relationship. I have interpreted her reactions in certain circumstances to replace her absent words.

Last night, Joe, Alexis and I listened to Mariah Carey's video, *All I want for Christmas*. Alexis and I were not impressed, and she kept her head down throughout. Then we watched a recent video, *Love Goes*, by the English singer, Sam Smith, in which he sang some of his best-known songs. I found his vocal command to be very impressive and Alexis, for her part, kept her head up and appeared alert and responsive right to the end. Draw your own conclusions. I think this indicates her strong sense of musical taste. Her father thinks that this behavior just reflects her often observed preference for male tenors. Neither of us really knows the answer. Because we can never know for sure what she is thinking, in my memoir I have tried to portray Alexis behaviorally and not through her imagined missing words so readers can draw their own conclusions. That is respectful and I do not think it can be called 'appropriation of voice'.

I was reminded of this issue this week as I finished the last page of my new *Claire Burke* novel, *Justice for All*, the 9th in my mystery series. What I was thinking is that it is much easier to write fiction than non-fiction. All the characters in these fictitious writings, including several who have various developmental disabilities, are characters of my imagination or amalgams drawn from my own past work experiences as a psychologist. I have no problems appropriating their voices, nor do I have any problem with presenting the ugly or difficult sides of any of them. However, in my non-fiction writings I find myself scrupulously avoiding any direct identification of such characters and instead I try to describe their, sometimes egregious, acts as matter-of-factly but as non-judgmentally as possible.

What I am wondering is how other writers deal with the ethical issues around speaking for or against other people in non-fiction works. If you have any thoughts on this matter and would like to respond you can reach me at emmapivato2@gmail.com or you can ask to join our "Shut Up and Write" group on Wednesday mornings starting at 10 AM EST where we will be discussing all sorts of writing related problems during our brief breaks between writing stints.

BOOKS AND OTHER PRINT

Rosanna Micelotta Battigelli's *Pigeon Soup & Other Stories*: News & Reviews



I am pleased to announce that my fiction collection *Pigeon Soup & Other Stories* has been honoured as a “Finalist” in the “Fiction: Short Story” Category of the 2021 Best Book Awards, sponsored by American BookFest. Various links are below. I’ve also included an abbreviated review by Angelo Sgabellone.

Publisher website: <https://www.inanna.ca/product/pigeon-soup-and-other-stories/>

Finalist Best Book Awards: <http://americanbookfest.com/generalfiction/shortstory.html>

The Miramichi Reader Review: <https://miramichireader.ca/2021/09/pigeon-soup-other-stories-by-rosanna-micelotta-battigelli/>

Rosanna Micelotta Battigelli

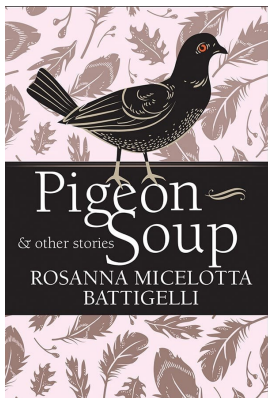
Two-part interview featuring *Pigeon Soup & Other Stories* on "All About Canadian Books" with Crystal Fletcher.

Link to the book portion: <https://youtu.be/HygVkJTR9-ul>

Link to the reading & writing tip: <https://youtu.be/eZsNIRdoalQ>

Pigeon Soup & Other Stories by Rosanna Micelotta Battigelli

Reviewed by Angelo Sgabellone (*Note: this is the abbreviated version*)



Since the first acts of creation the roots of civilization have been grounded in the human narrative as “story telling” and its ability to evidence experience, implicit and explicit, to explain life’s emotive conditions. Such empathy pushed our belief systems to higher levels of consciousness. This notion of collective awakening became the essence of who we are and as such is at the heart of the intrinsic art of Sudbury author Rosanna Micelotta Battigelli.

In Rosanna’s latest book, *Pigeon Soup & Other Stories*, we discover the singular sensitivity of such social norms and universal truths. The author builds these perceptive fields with layers of allegorical intrigue and diametrical allusions of broken souls yearning for hopeful resolutions.

History tells us, the migratory aesthetics of writers such as: T.S. Elliot, Joseph Conrad and Thomas Wolfe were imbedded within multi-layers of ethereal imaginative schisms that polarized the variance of light/shade as “fear and loathing.” This permeated primordial Neolithic imagination into Jungian notions of chiaroscuro instincts as temporal sfumato springboards used as primal “logos” of symbolic influence.

These ethereal notions are at the heart of Rosanna’s enchanted tales of northern Ontario influence.

BOOKS AND OTHER PRINT

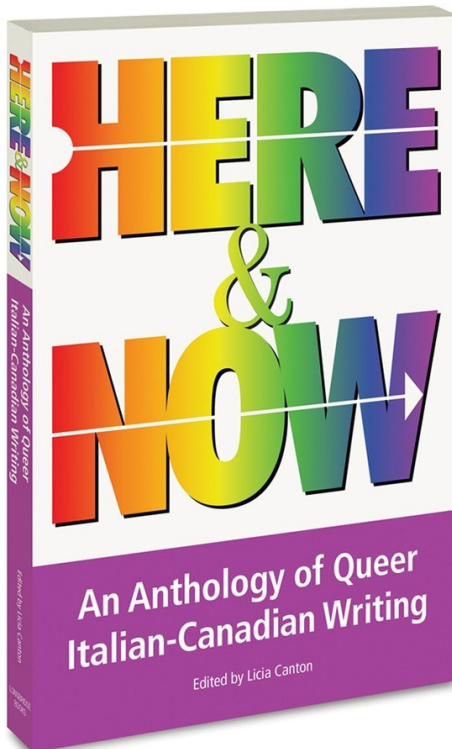
Her voice becomes a blended echo, mixed with the diverse uncertainty and grace of personal human struggles. The stories are measured accounts of rustic neo-Calabrian dissonance elevating the intense spiritual forces of subconscious open fields that colour their tempered harshness and burst into sparks like a rustic cavalleria of song and hopeful substance.

Like our ancient Palaeolithic ancestors, Rosanna understands the primal act of storytelling. She weaves her Ionian tapestry into a Jungian notion of harnessed light pushing its lurid obsessions of fluid mysteries that originally shaped her creative foresights.

Rosanna is a pivotal writer you must read.

Angelo Sgabellone is a Toronto-based writer and editor. He has worked for *Maclean's*, *the Financial Post*, *Canadian House and Home*, and *University of Toronto Magazine* among other publications. His latest work is *I Terroni*, a metaphysical journey into the soul of Southern Italy.

Here and Now



The Most Comprehensive Volume Yet on Queer Italian-Canadian Writing

Here & Now demonstrates, in various ways, the bonds of feeling, affect, and desire that cut across the artificial borders of languages, communities, genders, and sexualities.

– *Domenic Beneventi*

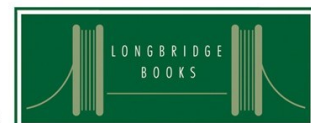
The stories found in this anthology are filled with sadness, shame and frustration, but also with tenderness, joy and hope.

– *Michela Baldo*

A celebration of change and diversity.

– *Paolo Frascà*

Edited by Licia Canton
English: 288 pages • \$34.95
ISBN: 978-1-928065-20-3
To order: accenti.ca/store



MEMBER SHOWCASE

The Hawk

from *Pigeon Soup & Other Stories* by Rosanna Micelotta Battigelli

Your mother sometimes scolded her mother, your nonna, for telling you old-fashioned stories from the old country. She would tell you tales of zingari and u babau, gypsies and the boogeyman, who would gleefully snatch you if you wandered too far or disobeyed your parents, and then raise you as their own.

Nonna would provide you with a comforting bowl of broth, or a panino streaked with giardiniera and stuffed with mortadella and provolone, while telling you stories that she had grown up with. Her tales simultaneously entertained and frightened you, making the hair on your arms stand up. But strangely enough, you always begged her for “one more story.” It was almost as if you had this insatiable hunger for tales of wicked children being entranced by bejewelled gypsies, who would lure them into bright caravans filled with other captives and lead them far away from their homes. Or of a big hulking boogeyman hovering in the shadows, waiting to terrorize a child.

One of the stories you kept asking for was the one about il falco, the Hawk. Your nonna would get a gleam in her eye, set you in her lap, and wrap her black shawl around you both before lowering her voice to almost a whisper.

The Hawk was the size of a man, she said. A hulk of a creature that heralded ill luck or even, at the very worst, a death in nonna’s village.

It was both feared and admired. Feared for its craftiness, its stealth, its predatory instincts. Admired for its effortless grace while gliding, its regal bearing in stillness, the immensity of its wingspan. It came out at night, hovering over rooftops, its curved claws scratching the shingles of the dwelling it chose to rest upon. its sleek wings draped around it like a signora’s fashionable cape.

Then, one night, you caught sight of it.

You saw it swoop across your bedroom window, and in your pajamas, you tiptoed across the linoleum floor and went outside for a better look.

For a moment you felt awe as you stared at its statue-like form, but when you took in a breath, it swiveled his head to pierce you with a gaze icier than death. You didn’t hesitate to see what it would do. You had no intention of being attacked by that menacing creature; you imagined its sickle of a beak slicing into your eyes, as it had apparently done to a cocky observer in nonna’s village.

Horror-stricken—you had recently seen Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds* at a friend’s house—you willed your leaden feet to lift, to propel you to the safety of the porch, but the warrior cry it emitted flew inside the cavity of your chest, chilling your heart and the blood in your veins. You feared for your life, then; you wished you could take back your brazen belief that you could share space with the Hawk and not pay the price.

MEMBER SHOWCASE

In the Shadow of November

by Joseph Pivato



Toni Pivato at War in Greece, 1941.
(Photo courtesy of Joseph Pivato)

Every November 11th we pause to remember the men and women who served in the armed forces in the Great Wars. This year, November was particularly poignant as we endure the second year of the global pandemic that has killed over 5 million and changed everyone's lives. We recall that many of the soldiers and civilians who survived the horrors of WWI soon died in the Spanish Flu global pandemic which killed over 50 million including my Pivato grandfather's two brothers.

I have been writing stories about my relatives who emigrated to Canada and those who stayed in Italy. My Sabucco grandfather, Raimondo, who was working in Canada as a stonemason, volunteered in 1915 to go back to Italy to fight in WWI. He survived the 10 battles of the Isonzo and the Battle of Caporetto in which the enemy used poison gas in the attack. Despite the patriotic acts of my grandfather and many others, not much improved in Italy after WWI. The Fascists came to power in 1922 which resulted in Italy going to war in Africa and later in Europe when Italy joined an alliance with Nazi Germany. My father, Toni, was drafted into the Italian army and fought in Albania, Greece and Southern France. He was very lucky that he was not sent to fight on the Russian front where thousands of Italians disappeared: 30,000 died and 65,000 were taken prisoners and later died of disease and severe cold. All Mussolini's handy work.

When Italy signed the Armistice on September 8, 1943, my father and hundreds of other Italian soldiers became prisoners of the German forces who used them as slave labour. He was able to escape and barely got home alive. If he had been caught, he would have been shot. The Nazis caught and publicly hung 31 young men in the near-by town of Bassano del Grappa in March 1944. My mother's brother, Luigi, also escaped home but the arduous journey on foot took a toll on him, and he died of typhoid at age 20.

I recently read the book by Francesco Filippi, *Mussolini Also Did a Lot of Good: The Spread of Historical Amnesia* (2021). The original Italian subtitle is a much stronger condemnation of the nostalgia for Italian fascism: "Le idiozie che continuano a circolare sul fascismo."

My family came to Canada in 1951 and '52 and we soon lost any homesickness for Italy. Many years later, Pier Giorgio Di Cicco made us aware of the growing number of Italian-Canadian writers—an extraordinary phenomenon that changed my whole life. They were for the most part of my generation: born in Italy after WWII and dealing with the trauma that their families experienced in that war. For many, emigration was part of that trauma. Some examples are: Di Cicco has a poem about his older brother who died during the war. Mary di Michele has poems about her grandfather and later about her father which allude to this war history as does her book on Pasolini. Caterina Edwards' *Finding Rosa* deals with this history. It is the background of Genni Gunn's writing, that of Dino Minni, Frank Paci, Gianna Patriarca, Marco Micone, Filippo Salvatore, and others. We cannot escape it as I find myself returning to this history in the shadow of November.

MEMBER SHOWCASE

WINTER SOLITUDE

by Frances Garofalo

Tiny gray-green tendrils peek out from the snow,
errant perennials that stubbornly refuse to surrender
to the frigid winds.

Barren branches, like stark black brush strokes, tower over the garden.
Crystalline snow clings to them, creating whimsical geometric patterns
on naked tree limbs.

He is gone now.

He succumbed to the merciless disease in February.

She quietly mourns his passing,

just as she mourns the stark, cold landscape of her garden.

It was her haven and her purpose,
sustaining and nourishing her family
and her husband,
until the very end.

She is alone now.

The familiar rhythm and routine of the garden provide solace and peace,
in the face of unbearable heartache.

Her children come to visit sporadically,

but they cannot understand the depth of her loss.

They cannot understand her fierce attachment
to the land and the garden.

She is now the lone sentinel.

It is her duty to preserve and protect,

to continue to nurture her garden,

to reap its harvest,

and safeguard it for future generations.

MEMBER TESTIMONIALS

A Sense of Belonging

by Eloise Carbone



Eloise Carbone

In 2019, the AICW accepted me as a member of their organization. The association gave me a new sense of belonging through its validation, inspiration, and connection. I was validated as a writer, though a fledgling one inexperienced in process, and as a person of Italian heritage. I was inspired by the other members, particularly those in the “Shut Up and Write” series, through their encouragement and example. And a connection with new friends was created! I consider myself very lucky and I am extremely grateful to have had an on-line family during this time of Covid. Thank you for keeping me writing. It is my lifeline.

NEW MEMBERS

JoAnn Catania



JoAnn Catania was born in Sicily. Her works of fiction often focus on themes involving average Sicilians from humble backgrounds. She has a Modern Languages degree from the University of Toronto and a Journalism certificate from Ryerson University. A Scarcity of Virgins, her debut novel, touches on many relevant women's issues. She is currently working on a historical work of fiction that takes place in 1860 Sicily.

Dosi Cotroneo

Born and raised in Ottawa's Little Italy, Dosi Cotroneo has had a passion for stories and writing since as far back as she can remember. Being raised by Italian immigrants, Cotroneo was immersed in stories, and embraced her Italian culture. This led to a successful career in journalism, where she was a news reporter, widely read weekly columnist, where her Italian family was at the center of her writing. Cotroneo indie-published two books, "The Secret Diary of an Italian Girl," and "if..." Her work has been published nationally.



Donatella Bozzi



Dona moved to Montreal in 1982, after earning a Diploma of Interprete e Traduttore in Bologna. She studied journalism and photojournalism at Dawson College in Montreal. She remained active in the Italian community, teaching Italian at PICAI. In 2009, she published on the Montreal magazine Grafika a reportage on the election of President Obama.

Later she went on to cover the Arab Springs for different agencies, writing stories in her website <https://blogsofwar.me> on her meetings with the leaders of the oppositions on the front line, and the issue of the Syrian refugees. She just started adding stories about moving back to Italy from Montreal.

Anna Migliarisi



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