

CANADA IN REVIEW

Book Review Editor
SHANE JOSEPH



Dear Readers,

Our selection of reviews is smaller in this issue, but eclectic. We are following the principle of “quality over quantity,” a good mantra for the publishing world, given the prevailing misguided one of “more reviews equal more sales,” which leads to countless sales pitches masquerading as reviews and flooding the book-o-sphere.

In this issue we have the works of two eminent Canadian poets, both Poets Laureate of Toronto and one of them going on to become Parliamentary Poet Laureate: A.F. Moritz and George Elliott Clarke. In Moritz’s collection, *Great Silent Ballad*, reviewer Gordon Phinn “craves to critique, somewhere, anywhere, but is left empty handed and grabbing at air.” And so, Phinn’s review is a pean to a masterful work that cannot be dismissed as a “sales pitch,” but is an expression of genuine affection for a master craftsman and his art. In *J’Accuse...!*, Clarke comes to the aid of Indigenous women who were raped and murdered by white men, and rebuts accusations made of him in media

and academe for being “guilty by association.” Like with Phinn on Moritz, reviewer Katerina Fretwell, has only compliments for Clarke’s work and his courageous stand.

Moving into the area of novels, we have Susan Statham’s “Agatha Christie comes to Southern Ontario” type of murder mystery, *True Image*, featuring her amateur detective, painter Maude Gibbons, in her second appearance in ten years. Statham’s novel rises above the standard crime genre because we are given insights into the worlds of Autism and the Painter’s Craft (also the title of her first Gibbons mystery) in addition to the opportunity to wrestle with a typical mystery puzzle. As to whodunit, that is extremely difficult to unravel, as reviewer Linda Hutsell-Manning discovered.

Bringing up the rear, is Giller Prize 2024 short-lister Deepa Rajagopalan’s attempt to rescue CanLit’s slide into conformity and mediocrity with her visceral short-story collection, *Peacocks of Instagram: Stories*, which dives into the lives of the Indian Malayali diaspora in North America. We need more of her kind of bold literature these days.

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