

# WORDS

ON THE WATER

## Campbell River Writers' Festival

March 10 & 11, 2017

Maritime Heritage Centre



# Welcome to Words on the Water 2017

**Welcome**  
writers and readers  
alike to the  
16th annual  
*Words on the Water*  
Writers' Festival!

*Words on the Water* Writers' Festival marks its 16th anniversary this year, once again bringing eight of Canada's top writers to Campbell River for readings and great conversations in front of an audience of local readers, many of whom return year after year. We are honoured to welcome our distinguished guest writers who have come to share their work, and our dedicated readers who have come to listen. We sincerely hope you enjoy the beautiful setting, music & food, and the stimulating readings, dialogue and conversations. We invite you to escape into the richness of words that will be presented. Enjoy!

*The Words on the Water Committee – 2017*

## Festival Schedule of Events

All events take place at the Maritime Heritage Centre

Master of Ceremonies | Grant Lawrence

**Friday**  
**March 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**7:30 PM**

**Saturday**  
**March 11<sup>th</sup>**

### **Welcome**

Commissioned Poem John Donlan

### **Writers in Conversation**

7:30 pm Briony Penn &  
John Donlan

8:00 pm Wayne Johnston &  
Yasuko Thahn

### **Intermission**

Music on the mezzanine by Rick Bockner

9:00 pm Jillian Christmas &  
Molly Peacock

9:30 pm Charles Demers &  
Daniel Justice

### **Morning**

9:00

9:45

10:30

10:45

11:30

12:15

### **Afternoon**

1:00

1:45

2:30

2:45

3:30

### **Evening**

7:30

John Donlan

Yasuko Thahn

**Break**

Briony Penn

Jillian Christmas

**Lunch**

Wayne Johnston

Charles Demers

**Break**

Daniel Justice

Molly Peacock

Evening Finale

Featuring Guest Writers  
and Music by Peaches &  
Gasoline

## At Kingfisher Creek

Silt-slimed, ash-grey  
salmon corpses strewn like cordwood  
clog Kingfisher Creek. After high water  
some droop from branches like Dali watches.

Carried far by bears and eagles, some say,  
minerals in their bones feed the forest:  
but this scene is best explained  
by the constant voiceover of water on stone

which tells us nothing  
yet somehow changes our minds for the better.  
The last voice exhausted salmon hear  
sings through the long slow winter sleep

of eggs clinging to sand against the pull  
of summer, of downhill, of ocean future.

February 7, 2017

*John Donlan's commissioned poem*

# Guest Authors

## John Donlan



{ 2017 Writer-  
in-Residence  
at Haig-Brown  
House }

John Donlan was raised in Baysville, a hamlet of 200 people in Ontario's Muskoka district on the Canadian Shield. His father worked with teams of horses hauling logs in the bush; neighbours raised skunks, crows, and porcupines as domestic pets (a neighbour's crow, named for his father, stole clothespins from the wash to tease his mother).

Surrounded by some of Canada's most beautiful wilderness (celebrated in the paintings of Tom Thomson and the Group

of Seven), the poet developed a deep sense of belonging in the natural world.

He is a poetry editor with Brick Books.

He was the 2012 Barbara Moon Editorial Fellow at Massey College, University of Toronto, and Writer in Residence at Saskatoon Public Library and Campbell River.

John Donlan's poems and reviews have appeared in leading journals in Canada, the United States, and Iran.

Additionally, he has given readings and conducted writing workshops in schools, libraries, universities, and art galleries throughout Canada and the United States while his books of poetry – *Domestic Economy*, *Baysville*, *Green Man*, and *Spirit Engine* – are available either from the author or the works' respective publishers; they can also be found in fine bookstores across the continent.

Photo and description taken from: [johndonlan.wordpress.com](http://johndonlan.wordpress.com)

## Jillian Christmas



Jillian Christmas was born and raised in Markham, Ontario. She currently lives in Vancouver, BC, where she serves as the Artistic Director of Verses Festival of Words. She has won Grand Poetry Slam Championship titles at both the Vancouver BedRoc poetry slam (2011) as well as the Vancouver Poetry Slam (2012 & 2014). An enthusiastic organizer within the Canadian poetry community, Jillian has developed and executed programs in partnership with Toronto Poetry Project, Wordplay, Brendan McLeod's Travelling Slam and the CULTCH Mentorship, and facilitated spoken word workshops for youth and adults across the country.

She is the founder of Toronto's acclaimed Peace Pipe Poetry Sessions on Bloor, former Artistic director of the East Van Culture Awards, as well as past and present Volunteer Coordinator for Hullabaloo: Youth Spoken Word Festival. She is the former Secretary and current Member at Large for Spoken Word Canada. As her most recent personal, artistic endeavour, Jillian tours the west coast experimenting with music/poetry fusion. She was recently featured in the Huffington Post article "Some of the Coolest People Who Call Vancouver Home."

Photo and description taken from: [tonightitspoetry.com](http://tonightitspoetry.com)

# Charles Demers



Charles Demers is an author, stand-up comedian, and faculty in the Creative Writing Program at the University of British Columbia. His collection of essays, *Vancouver Special* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2009), was shortlisted for the Hubert Evans BC Book Prize for Non-Fiction. He is also the author of a novel, *The Prescription Errors* (Insomniac Press, 2009). As a stand-up comic, he has performed for national television and radio audiences, and at the Just For Laughs Festival. He is one of the most frequently returning stars of CBC Radio's smash-hit comedy *The Debaters*, with a weekly listening audience of 750,000. Demers lives in Vancouver, BC.

Charles' most recent books include *The Horrors: An A to Z of Funny Thoughts on Awful Things* (Douglas & McIntyre, 2015) and *The Dad Dialogues: A Correspondence on Fatherhood (and the Universe)* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2016), co-written with George Bowering.

Photo and description taken from: [douglas-mcintyre.com](http://douglas-mcintyre.com)

# Wayne Johnston



Wayne Johnston was born and raised in Goulds, Newfoundland. After a brief stint in pre-Med, Wayne obtained a BA in English from Memorial University. He worked as a reporter for the *St. John's Daily News* before deciding to devote himself full-time to writing.

En route to being published, Wayne earned an MA (Creative Writing) from the University of New Brunswick. Then he got off to a quick start. His first book, *The Story of Bobby O'Malley*, published when he was just 27 years old, won the WH Smith/Books in Canada First Novel award for the best first novel published in the English language in Canada in that year. Subsequent books consistently received critical praise and increasing public attention. *The Divine Ryans* was adapted to the silver screen in a production starring Academy Award winner Pete Postlethwaite - Wayne wrote the screenplay. *Baltimore's Mansion*, a memoir dealing with his grandfather, his father and Wayne himself was tremendously well received and won the most prestigious prize for creative non-fiction awarded in Canada - the Charles Taylor Prize. Both *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* and *The Navigator of New York* spent extended periods of time on bestseller lists in Canada and have also been published in the US, Britain, Germany, Holland, China and Spain. *Colony* was identified by the *Globe and Mail* newspaper as one of the 100 most important Canadian books ever produced (including both fiction and non-fiction).

Photo and description taken from: [waynejohnston.ca](http://waynejohnston.ca)

# Daniel Justice



Daniel Heath Justice is a Colorado-born Canadian citizen of the Cherokee Nation. He received his B.A. from the University of Northern Colorado and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Before coming to UBC, he spent ten years as a faculty member in the Department of English at the University of Toronto, where he was also an affiliate of the Aboriginal Studies Program.

Daniel currently holds the Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Literature and Expressive Culture. He is the author of *Our Fire Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History* and numerous essays in the field of Indigenous literary studies, as well as co-editor of a number of critical and creative anthologies and journals, including *The Oxford Handbook of Indigenous American Literature* (with James H. Cox) and the award-winning *Sovereign Erotics: A Collection of Two-Spirit Literature* (with Qwo-Li Driskill, Deborah Miranda, and Lisa Tatonetti). He is also the author of *Badger* in the celebrated Animal series from Reaktion Books (UK).

2015 marks the tenth publication anniversary of the first volume in Daniel's Indigenous epic fantasy series, *The Way of Thorn and Thunder*, which was published under that title in an omnibus edition in 2011. His current projects include *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*, a literary manifesto forthcoming from Wilfrid Laurier University Press in 2016, a collection of essays and short stories titled *Imagining Otherwise: Reflections on Indigenous Belonging and Desire*, as well as a new dark fantasy trilogy, a cultural history of raccoons, and a critical monograph on other-than-human kinship in Indigenous writing.

Photo and description taken from: <http://fnis.arts.ubc.ca/persons/daniel-justice/>

# Molly Peacock



Molly Peacock is a poet, biographer, essayist, and short fiction writer whose multi-genre literary life has taken her from New York City to Toronto, from poetry to prose, from words to words-and-pictures, and from lyric self-examination to curiosity about the lives of others. Her newest book is *The Analyst: poems*. *The Analyst* tells the story of a decades-long patient-therapist relationship that reverses after the analyst's stroke and continues to evolve. She is also the author of the best-selling biography *The Paper Garden: Mrs. Delany Begins Her Life's Work at 72* (McClelland & Stewart in Canada, Scribe in Australia and New Zealand; Bloomsbury in the US and UK). Beginning her literary life as a poet, she has published six books of poetry, including

*The Second Blush* (W.W. Norton and Company; McClelland & Stewart) and *Cornucopia: New and Selected Poems* (W.W. Norton and Company; McClelland & Stewart).

A dynamic speaker, she has spread the word about late-life creativity, poetry, and the artist's life from The Art Gallery of Ontario to the Barnes Museum in Philadelphia, from NPR to the CBC. She is a subject of a documentary film by Renee McCormick: *A Life Outside Convention*.

Photo and description taken from: [mollypeacock.org](http://mollypeacock.org)

# Briony Penn



Briony Penn is a naturalist, writer, educator, and broadcaster well known in BC for her indomitable spirit and tireless devotion to protecting endangered species and sensitive ecosystems in her native British Columbia.

Penn has published hundreds of articles in newspapers and magazines, government publications and peer-reviewed journals. She's written environmental guides and handbooks for teachers in British Columbia on topics ranging from forest ecosystems and biodiversity to the natural and cultural history of the Salish Sea.

Books by Briony Penn include:

- *A Year on the Wild Side*, Touchwood Editions, 1997.
- *The Kids Book of Canadian Geography*, Kids Can Press, 2008.
- *The Real Thing: The Natural History of Ian McTaggart Cowan*, Rocky Mountain Books, 2015.
- *For the Love of Nature: Solutions for Biodiversity*, Columbia Institute, 2010.

In 2016 Briony Penn was awarded the Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize for her book *The Real Thing: The Natural History of Ian McTaggart Cowan*.

Photo and excerpt from: [cowantherealthing.com](http://cowantherealthing.com)

# Yasuko Thanh



Yasuko Nguyen Thanh is a Canadian novelist and short story writer born June 30, 1971 in Victoria, British Columbia to a German mother and a Vietnamese father. She was named one of ten CBC Books' writers to watch in 2013. At 15, Thanh dropped out of school and lived on the streets. Previous to winning the Journey Prize for her short story *Floating Like the Dead* in 2009, Thanh earned her living as a busker, an opium dealer, a cleaner of goat pens, a Bed & Breakfast operator, housekeeper, and panhandler. She has lived in Canada, Mexico, Germany, and Honduras. Thanh completed a Bachelor of Arts as well as a Masters of Fine Arts from the University of Victoria. She screams in the punk band 12 Gauge Facial, and lives with her husband,

Hank Angel, and her two children, on Vancouver Island, BC.

Thanh's debut novel, *Mysterious Fragrance of the Yellow Mountains*, published by Hamish Hamilton Canada (2016) is the winner of the 2016 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. This historical novel is set in French Indochina and is based on Thanh's own family stories and the real-life Hanoi Poisoning Plot of 1908.

Photo and description taken from: [yasukothanh.com](http://yasukothanh.com)

## Our Master of Ceremonies

# Grant Lawrence



Grant joined the 2016 *Words on the Water* festival as a guest author; now we're delighted he's back as our Master of Ceremonies!

For years the gregarious and encyclopedic Lawrence has hosted the top-rated *CBC Radio 3 Podcast with Grant Lawrence*, a monthly showcase of Canadian independent music. Grant is also the host of CBC Radio 3's popular web radio station. Grant can be heard throughout the week and weekend on various CBC Radio One programs such as *DNTO*, *North by Northwest*, *All Points West*, *RadioWest*, *On The Coast*, and various afternoon programs across the country, and has been a frequent past contributor to *Q*, *Spark*, and *Sounds Like Canada*. In the summer of 2012, Grant hosted *The Wild Side*. In 2014 Grant won a Canadian Screen Award for his onscreen work with CBC Music presents: *the Beetle Roadtrip Sessions*.

In May 2017 Grant will release his third book and rock 'n' roll memoir, *Dirty Windshields: the best and the worst of the Smugglers tour diaries*. In advance praise for the book Will Ferguson, Giller Prize winning author, comments:

"*Dirty Windshields* should come with a disclaimer: 'WARNING: may induce feelings of wanderlust and the itching desire to throw a guitar case into a van and hit the road.'"

Grant is married to Canadian singer Jill Barber and they live together with their son Joshua and daughter Grace in Vancouver, BC Canada.

Photo and description taken from: [grantlawrence.ca](http://grantlawrence.ca)

## Our Musicians

### Friday evening – music on the mezzanine

#### Rick Bockner

Rick Bockner is a guitarist and songwriter living on Cortes Island. He has been playing guitar for most of his life and has performed widely at festivals and concerts throughout Europe, the UK, Canada, and the US. Working from traditional music including blues, Celtic, folk, and jazz, Rick fashions his own sound and feel of finger style guitar. He was a part of the seminal San Francisco band Mad River during the late 60's, and has learned from some great players such as Stephan Grossman, Woody Mann, Rev. Gary Davis, John Renbourn, and more. He has recorded 5 cds of his music and songs.

### Saturday evening – music on the mezzanine

#### Peaches & Gasoline

Josie Simpson and Alex Browne make up this duo of singing guitar players. In their music, they bring together the sounds of winter days by the woodstove on Cortes Island and summertime in Montreal, with scraps of all their favourite influences thrown in: Hank Williams' country, swinging jazz, and low-down blues.

# Words on the Water Organizing Committee

Rebecca Berry

Charlene Brown

Clay Carlson

Tylere Couture

Connie Kretz

Betsy Muir

Angel Murphy

Paul Murphy

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the many volunteers who help make *Words on the Water* function smoothly. You have been steadfast and perennial in your support and your expertise in running the weekend is invaluable and deeply appreciated.

## WOW Student Outreach Program

An important commitment of *Words on the Water* is to foster an appreciation of literature in the youth in our community. Thanks to the joint sponsorship of WOW and School District #72, Charles Demers will offer readings in the schools and a writing workshop to Campbell River students on Friday, March 10th.



## WOW Official Book Seller

Coho Books is located in the heart of downtown Campbell River. We carry a large selection of new books catering to a wide range of interests. Our goal is to provide a warm and inviting environment that readers of all ages will enjoy.

## Campbell River Art Gallery

Campbell River Art Gallery is the region's sole public gallery, with a mandate to stimulate thought, understanding, curiosity, involvement and discussion of contemporary visual art. The gallery exhibits the artwork of professional contemporary artists from across Canada and beyond.

## Ann and Roderick Haig-Brown



From its inception, *Words on the Water* has taken inspiration from the lives and works of Ann and Roderick Haig-Brown. The Haig-Browns were philosophers and conservationists who carefully considered their place in the world. Roderick's writing and Ann's humanitarian work continue to influence this community. *Words on the Water* aspires to contribute to keeping their memory alive and to honour their legacy.

Words on the Water logo design by Lesley Mathews

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