

# PEARLEEN OLIVER

Canada's  
Black Crusader  
for Civil Rights



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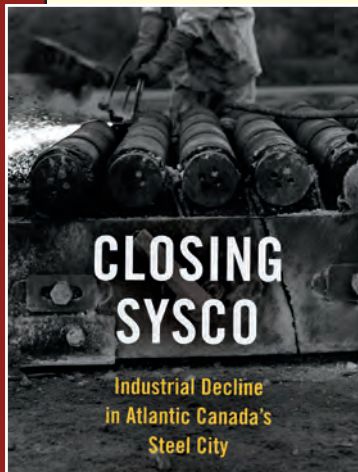
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SHORTER  
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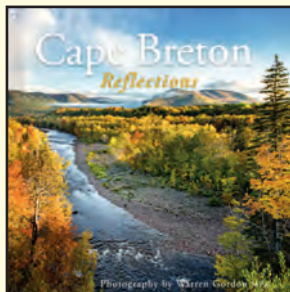
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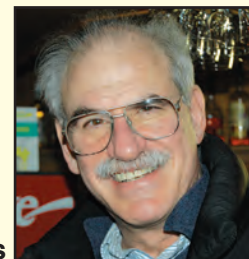
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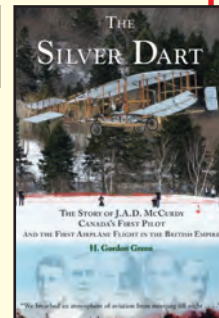
by H. Gordon Green

WARM, ENTHUSIASTIC, entertaining biography of an independent young man who became the first to fly an airplane in Canada: J.A.D. McCurdy.

With Alexander Graham Bell, Casey Baldwin, Thomas Selfridge and Glenn Curtiss—the Aerial Experiment Association—their teamwork culminated in the 1909 flight of the *Silver Dart* over the Bras d'Or ice.

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## From I'm Just Sayin' by David Muise:

I DON'T THINK MY MOTHER EVER SAT DOWN to eat a meal as she was busy cooking and serving. With nine kids there was just no room. She never went to bed early either but used the quiet hours when we were finally in bed to do the wash or darn socks or patch our torn clothes. She helped us with our homework, bandaged our scraped knees and chased away the bad dreams.

The only payment she ever demanded was that we dance with her in the kitchen whenever Freeman Roach played a country tune she liked.

I have fond memories of the ten of us around the kitchen table, nine kids with the Old Man at the head. Freeman would play "Waltz Across Texas" by Ernest Tubbs, and the Old Man would jerk his thumb over his shoulder and say, "David. Dance with your mother." And Mom and I would do a kind of boxstep around the kitchen table.

It was tricky trying to get the step right while keeping an eye on your supper so one of your brothers wouldn't steal it....

(SEE I'm Just Sayin' ON PAGE 3)

## 56 Pearleen Oliver CANADA'S BLACK CRUSADER FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

NEW

EDITED BY **Ronald Caplan**

ONE VOICE DOES COUNT!

A shining example of how one woman's voice changed the course of Nova Scotia's history.

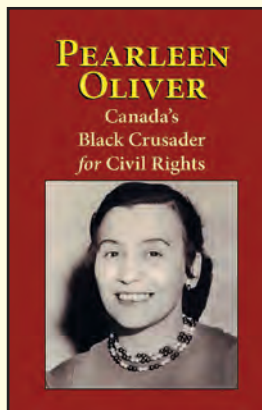
Pearleen Oliver pushed open doors that blocked Black girls from nurses' training. She kicked *Little Black Sambo* out of public schools. She counselled and led Viola Desmond's appeal of her 1946 conviction for challenging racist customs.

A minister's wife, mother of five, and church organist, Oliver mentored girls and women, wrote histories of Black communities, and was a moderator of the African United Baptist Church.

She spoke out—before Boards of Trade, Rotary luncheons, B'nai Brith and Baptist services, disarmament conferences. Her voice of reason overcame fear and apathy, and the entrenched racism that was ready for change.

"A very readable and historically important autobiography...raising Pearleen's historical stature to the prominence it deserves."

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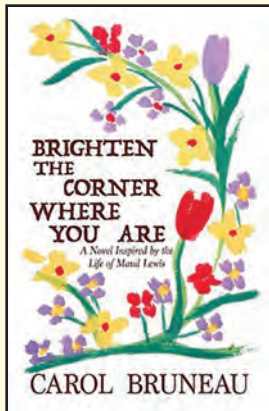
## Brighten the Corner 11 Where You Are A NOVEL INSPIRED BY THE LIFE OF MAUD LEWIS

by **Carol Bruneau**

MAUD LEWIS'S VIBRANT ART brightens our lives, while her own story remains a curiosity. Acclaimed novelist Bruneau trains her imagination on a life of disability and poverty to present a wry, feisty woman

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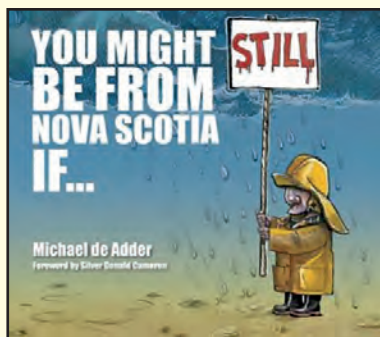
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## 10 Blood in the Water A TRUE STORY OF REVENGE IN THE MARITIMES

by **Silver Donald Cameron**

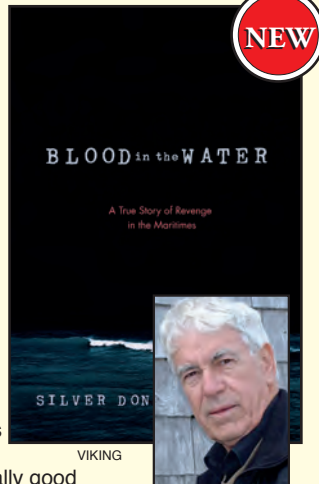
DIGGING INTO THE TRAGEDY of the 2013 murder of a lobster fisherman in Petit-de-Grat, this author has used all of his skill as a writer and his experience from decades living on Isle Madame.

Here are a wily, threatening, occasionally kind-hearted local criminal, and the neighbours he bullied, frightened, confounded, and occasionally helped. Exasperated beyond measure and relentlessly taunted to their faces, local fishermen cracked at one encounter too many, and Phillip Boudreau disappeared, for good.

Cameron details the stories—as he heard them from many sources, including the law. It's a troubling picture of our inability to deal with deviance, and of lives twisted by fear and pain. In style, detail, and thoughtful focus, this is an exceptionally good read.

"Grapples with the complexities of small-town culture, where history, blood, and tradition can override everything, even murder." —DONNA MORRISSEY, author

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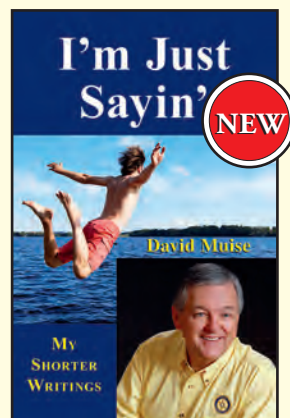
## 45 I'm Just Sayin' MY SHORTER WRITINGS

by **David Muise**

FUNNY, MOVING, INSIGHTFUL, Muise's enthusiasms portray the decent man he was. His greatest joy is to make us laugh, with advice gleaned from advisors at Tim's, or country music song titles guaranteed to pull anyone out of depression!

Raised in Ashby, Sydney, Muise shares growing up in the 1950s and '60s—rock-and-roll, miners' vacation on the Mira, circuses, bobsledding. And his admiration—for honesty, for heroes like Terry Fox or the Nathansons of Whitney Pier, for his parents who raised 9 children on a steelworker's wages—points the way to a better community. Fruitcake wars, Chasing the Ace, the dreaded Man Cold, and so much more!

Lawyer, mayor, member of the Nova Scotia Legislature, storyteller, volunteer, proud Rotarian who lived their motto "Service Above Self"—David Muise gives us a portrait of Cape Bretoners at work and play, creating a good world out of friendship and respect.



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## Awake at a WAKE

AND OTHER STORIES FROM THE MARGAREES

by **David Muise**

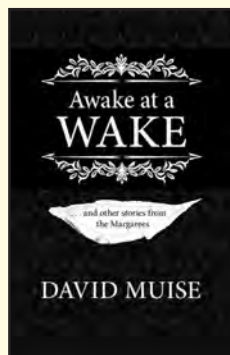
DELIGHTFUL! TWO ELDERLY BACHELOR BROTHERS in Margaree Valley make a living cutting pulp on Crown land, jacking deer, and making and selling moonshine.

An eye-opening mix of canny and naive, they get into some serious fixes, succumb to the siren call of alcohol, and give-and-take with their neighbours in ways both kind and curmudgeonly.

David Muise's opening says it all: "To my father who introduced me to Jim and Farquhar and to my mother who wished he hadn't."

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BORN INTO A BASKET of clean sheets, Emmeline never quite fit in on that rural Nova Scotian farm. Losses inflicted by the First World War left her family so heavy with grief, toxicity, and mental illness that she felt smothered, and fled, to build a life in England.

We follow Emmeline's life story as it wins her friends at a memoir-writing class. Then...she inherits the farm she grew up on, and arrives back—like a tornado. Offending and inspiring in equal measure, she believes that a spoonful of kindness can set to rights this family, so broken by loss and secrecy. This is classic Lesley Crewe!

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Now, Fortune agrees to accompany the marshal to Deadwood to bring back a notorious outlaw. Life gets complicated when she rescues a pair of orphaned brothers along the road. In Deadwood she picks up the trail of a lost gold shipment, and is forced to confront a dark memory from her past and settle a long-standing score with the cold-blooded Mose Horn.

Mona Knight's long-awaited sequel, aptly named *Second Chance*, is to curl up with on a wintry night!

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## 71 The Silence of the Vessel A NOVEL

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MacLennan-Dunphy

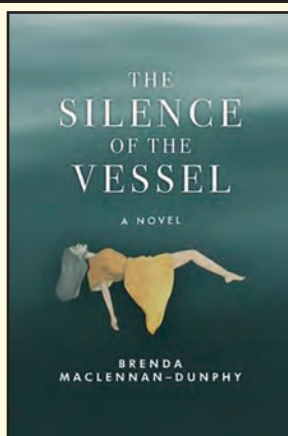
"I WANT TO BE A NUN."

The quiet teenager's graduation plans confound her academic mother, and threaten to further widen the gap between them.

As she tries to understand her own strange desire to become a nun, Cecelia befriends the aging Sister Madonna, who is struggling with her own transition in the convent in Mabou. Looking for hope in an increasingly fragile world, Cecelia and her mother are challenged by Madonna's past.

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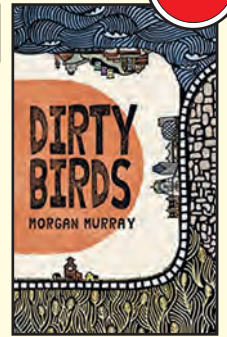
## Dirty Birds

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IRONIC AND IRREVERANT—a quest novel for the 21st century—a coming-of-age romantic comedy and crime-farce thriller.

It's late 2007 and, as the world's economy crumbles, the remarkably unremarkable Milton Ontario—not to be confused with Milton, Ontario—leaves his parents' basement in Saskatchewan and sets forth to find fame, fortune, and love in the electric sexuality of Montreal; to bask in endless Millennial adolescence; to escape the infinite flatness of Saskatchewan; and to find his Messiah: Leonard Cohen.

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—CAROL BRUNEAU, author

In rural Cape Breton, 40-year-old Willow must deal with the past, when the doctor who jilted her 15 years ago returns to her community. Her confusion and concern are amplified by the sudden deaths of a close friend and her husband, as Willow must confront secrecy and an uncertain future.

MacNeil gifts us with insight into solitude, caregiving, and the human heart.



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## Crow

by Amy Spurway

HARD TO PUT DOWN, this debut novel offers zippy dialogue, smart-ass characters of all ages, the highs and lows of rural Cape Breton life, and an engaging young narrator (with three brain tumours) whose loyalty and love keep hauling her up from self-pity.

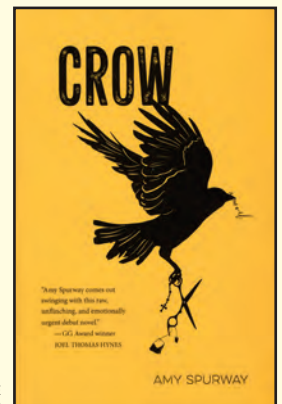
Witty, energetic, and crackling with sharp Cape Breton humour, *Crow* is a story of big personalities, big twists, and big hearts.

Amy Spurway was born and raised on Cape Breton Island, and lives in Dartmouth.

"Depicts a side of Cape Breton populated by characters that are flawed and achingly real. It's poignant and funny."—LESLEY CREWE

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## He's Around Here Somewhere

43 A MEDICAL MEMOIR

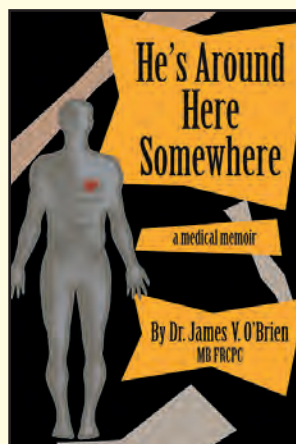
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Born in wartime London, Jim's education, apprenticeships, residencies, and practices took him to Dublin, Winnipeg, the Yukon, Halifax, and Cape Breton. The early years of his career intrigued and frustrated him—a world of medicine still based in the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

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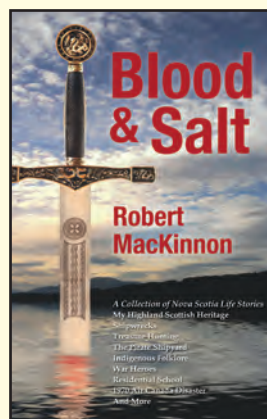
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He shares with us his friend Frenchie Bernard's efforts to educate him in Mi'kmaq history. Stories of salvage and frustration, pirates and privateers, and the horrors of war. There is history here, an examination of salvage law, and the brutal experience of a 1970 air crash that killed 109 people.

A captivating and wide-ranging read!

NEW

## Introducing Harry Bruce to a new generation of Canadian readers!

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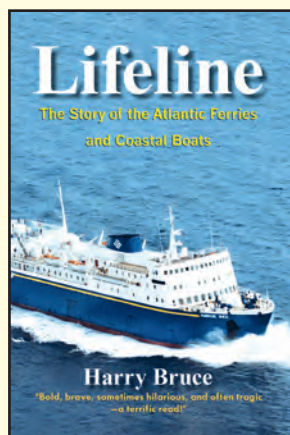
Award-winning author Harry Bruce recounts tales of heroic captains and crews, ships wrecked against ice floes and rocks and the ocean's fury, political machinations, and the tragic outcome of a Nazi torpedo's attack on the *Caribou* ferry in 1942.

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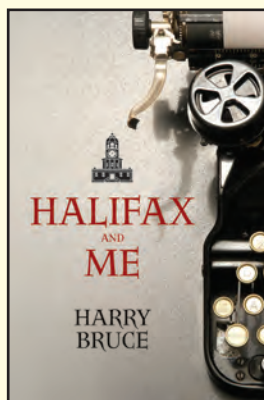
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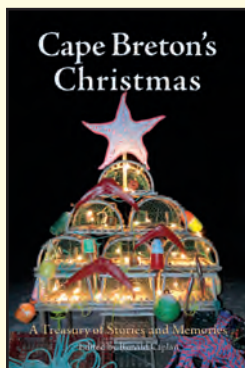
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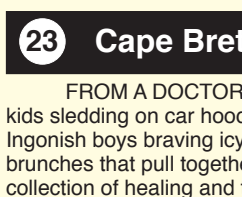
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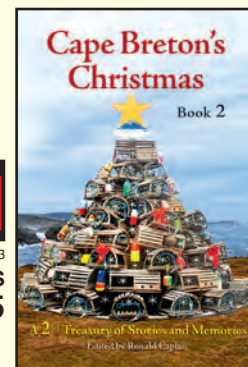
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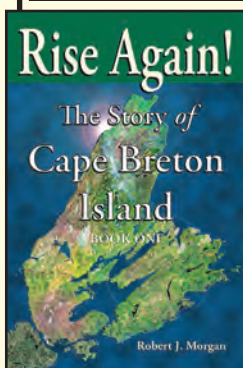
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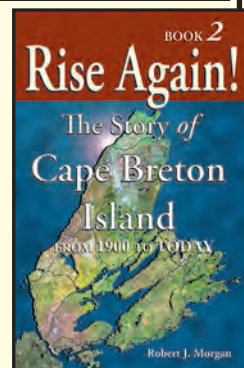
by **Robert Morgan**



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THE STORY CONTINUES with industrialization, as coal mines consolidate and steel plants rise. **Book Two** takes you through the Island's Second Economic Boom, our role as supplier and soldier in two World Wars, and the Mi'kmaq battle for cultural survival. Cape Breton becomes a battleground for Labour's Wars, while farmers, lumbermen and fishery workers struggle for subsistence. Community activism keeps this island alive, and our music and literature entertain and inspire the wider world.

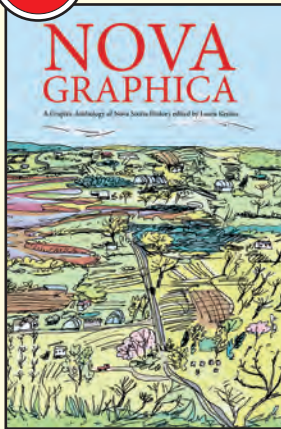
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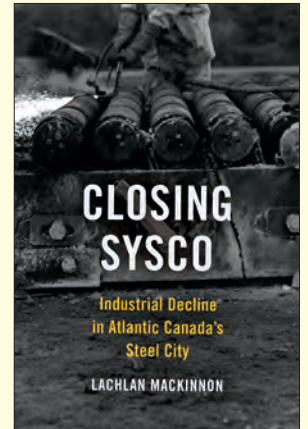
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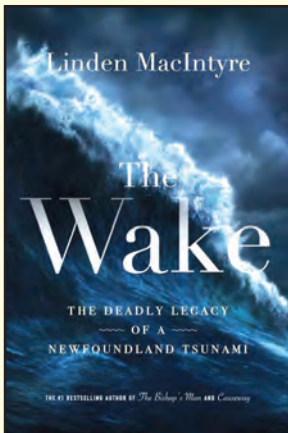
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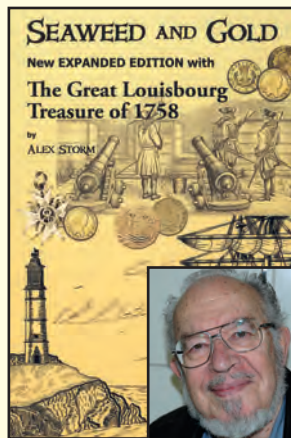
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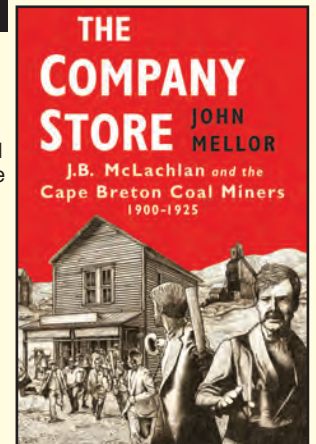
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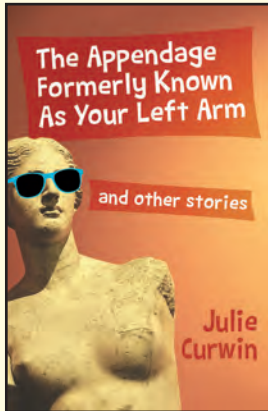


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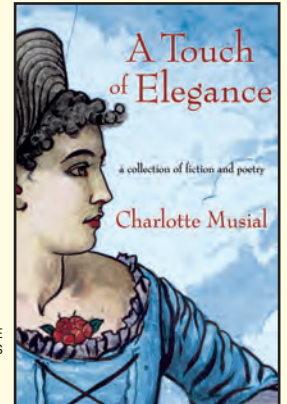
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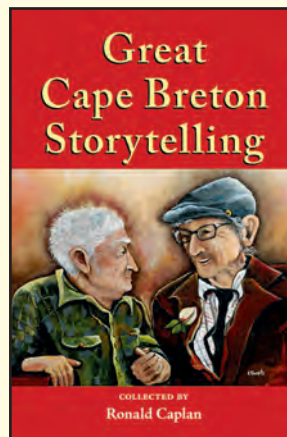
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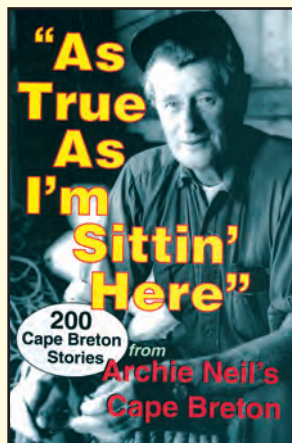
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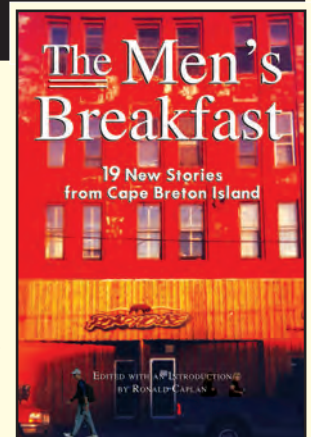
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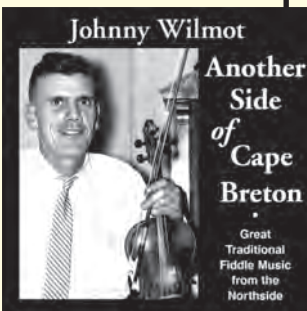
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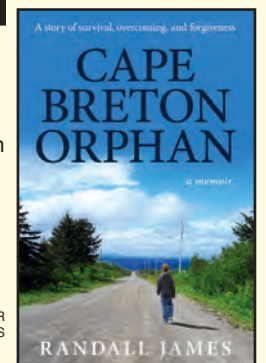
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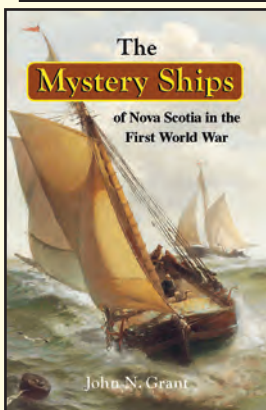
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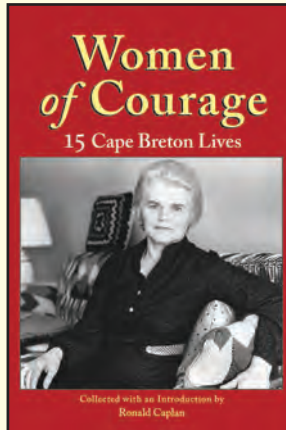
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## Chapter One from *Pearleen Oliver: Canada's Black Crusader for Civil Rights . . . .*

### A Black Girl at My Front Door

WATCHING THE YOUNG WOMAN WALK AWAY, I knew that my life had now been marked forever, forever changed. God had challenged me, and it was up to me to figure out what to do about it.

I had opened the door of the parsonage to find a lovely light-skinned girl, very fair, lighter even than myself. This was Cornwallis Street Baptist Church in Halifax, Nova Scotia, around 1937. I remember her standing there weeping, really distraught, but her name is gone with time. She had hoped to see the minister, my husband Rev. William Pearly Oliver. But Bill was away and so she was left with me, crying her heart out and trying to tell me her story.

As a minister's wife in the heart of a poor Black section of Halifax I expected moments like this—that again and again I would face life's pain as part of the job. But that day I knew right away that a cup of tea and a sandwich and maybe a few dollars and my best advice—none of these were going to help this young woman. I also knew that God had put her there, trying to tell her story on my doorstep. I knew this was my challenge. I just did not know what to do.

When she could finally talk, the young woman told me that she had come from Guysborough, Nova Scotia, to Halifax to begin her nurse's training at Children's Hospital. She was bitterly disappointed and she was exhausted. She said that a taxi driver had dropped her off at the parsonage because she had no other place to go. And he didn't know where else to take a Black person so obviously troubled.

Her parents had put her on the bus to Antigonish, and from Antigonish she took the train to Halifax. She went right to Children's Hospital to register for the nursing program. Other arrangements had been made by mail and over the phone. She was given the forms to enroll. There was space requiring the applicant to identify herself according to race. The young woman wrote "Negro."

Now, this girl was mixed-race. Her father was white and her mother was half-Black and half-white. Since her mother classified herself as Negro, the young woman considered herself a Negro as well. And this woman was so fair that she could have written "Caucasian" in the blank and she never would have been questioned.

She told me when she handed in her form, the registrar told

her that she had made a mistake by writing down Negro as her racial origin.

The girl said, No, she had not made a mistake, and that she was, indeed, a Negro.

That's when the registrar told her that the school of nursing did not accept Black women into their program, and that she might as well go home.

The young woman, a country girl, not knowing what to do next, hailed a taxi and asked the driver to take her where she could get help. He took her to see Reverend Oliver. Bill was away, so that poor thing was left with me.

I tried to comfort her. I remember saying something mindless like, "But Dear, didn't you know you couldn't study here?" I thought everybody knew.

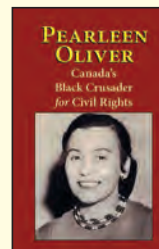
I did what I could. I paid the train and bus fares to get her back home to Guysborough. I knew she would still be upset, so I arranged for someone to meet her train at Antigonish station and get her on the next bus home.

But watching those thin shoulders as that young woman walked away, standing that cardboard suitcase along with the weight of what had just happened to her—a suitcase that likely carried everything else that mattered to her in the world—everything except her dream of becoming a nurse—I imagined I could almost see her broken heart through that young woman's back.

As it happened I too had had the dream of becoming a nurse in Canada. I guess I had lots of dreams. But then I fell in love with William Pearly Oliver and together we planned for a quiet country life: he would serve as Baptist minister in a small community and I would raise our children and keep the household while helping Bill and the church, doing whatever was needed to make our life together work. But there's a story in how we got to Halifax, not at all part of my dream—it's pretty romantic and I'll tell you about that later.

The point is—until that poor girl showed up in Halifax—once I was married I really never gave a nursing career, or the racism that made it impossible, another thought. Not until that young Black woman crying on my doorstep stirred the latent crusader inside me.

(TO ORDER, SEE **Pearleen Oliver** ON PAGE 3)





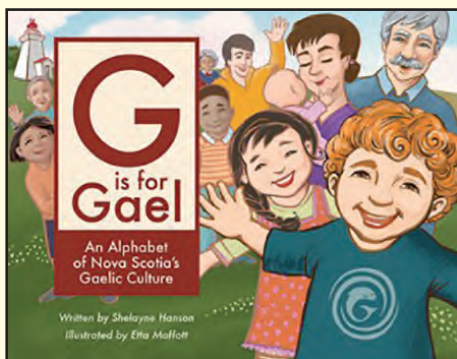
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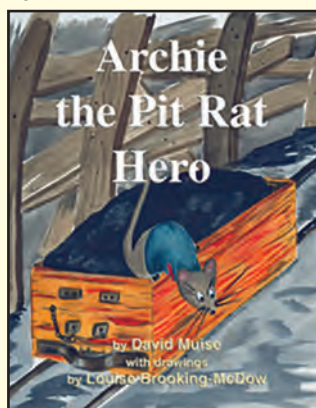
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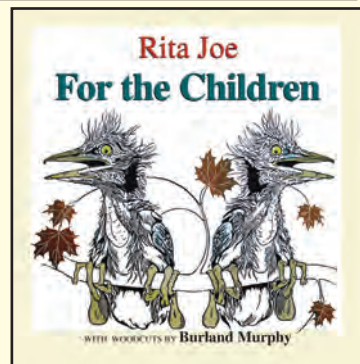
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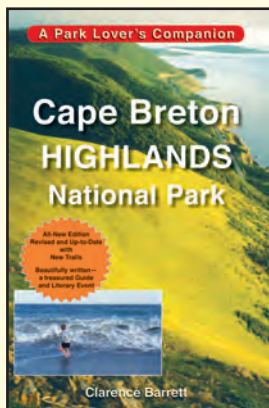
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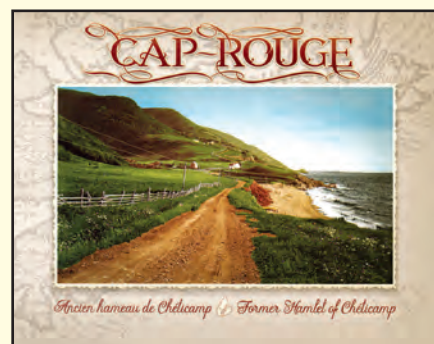
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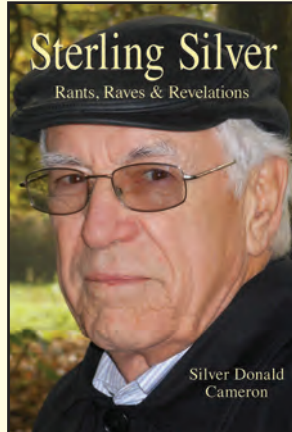
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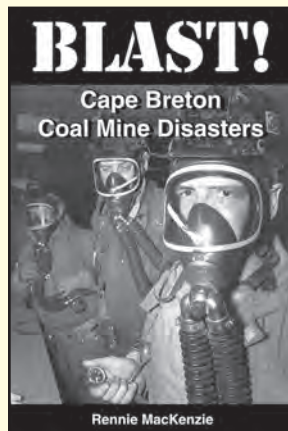
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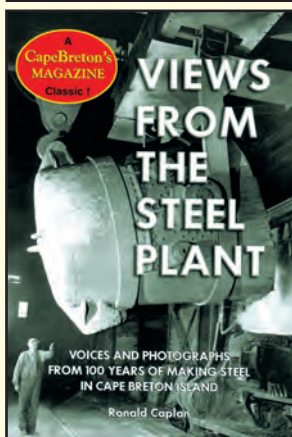
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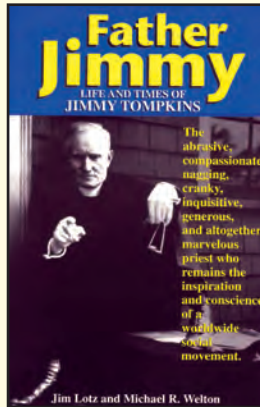
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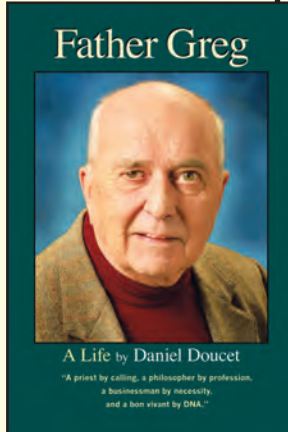
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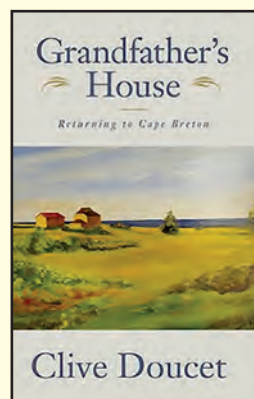
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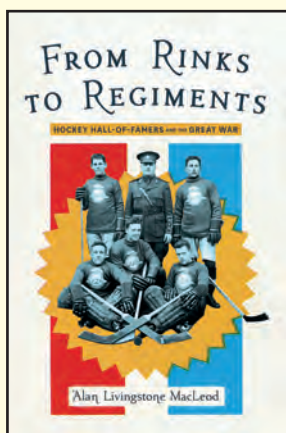
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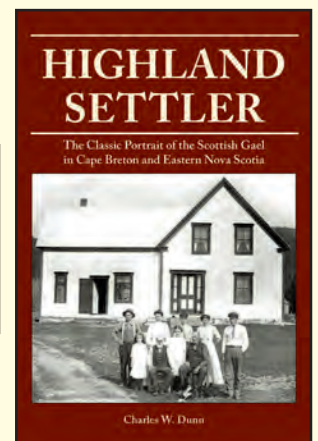
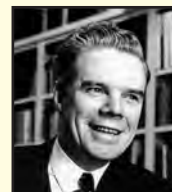
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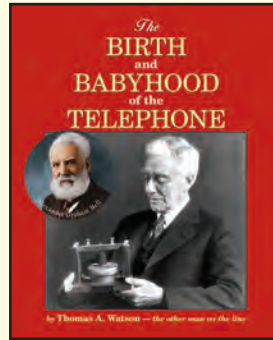
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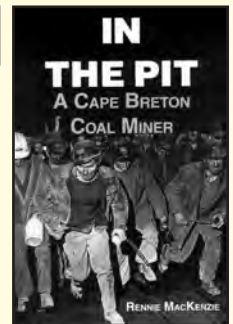


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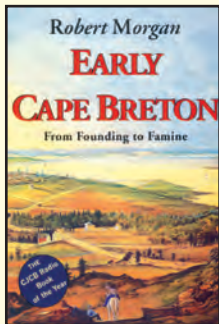
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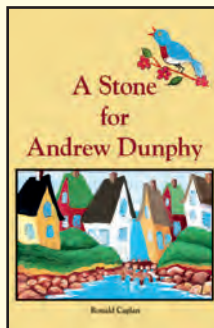
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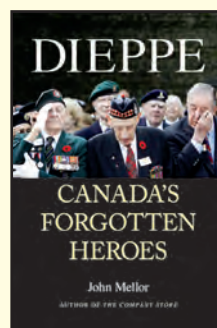
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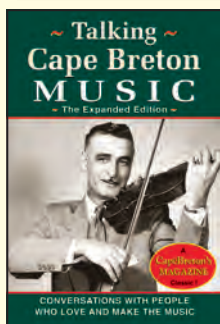
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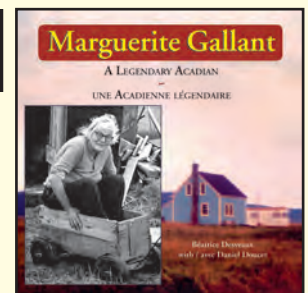
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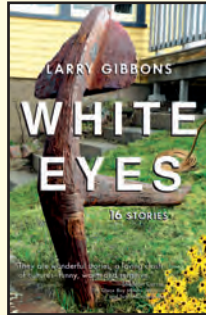
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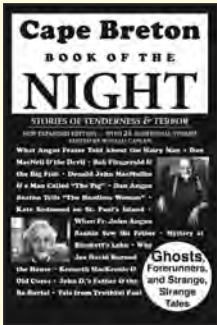
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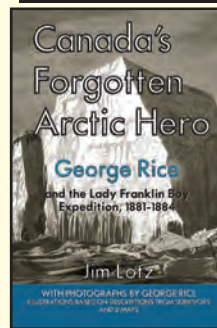
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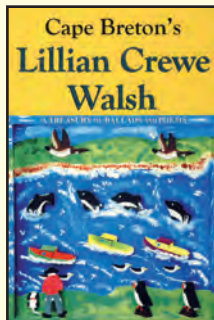
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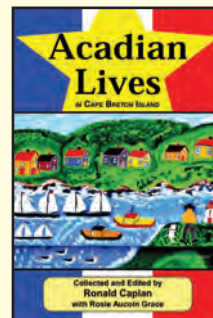
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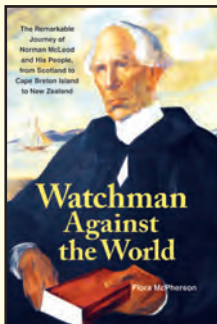
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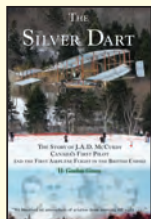
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