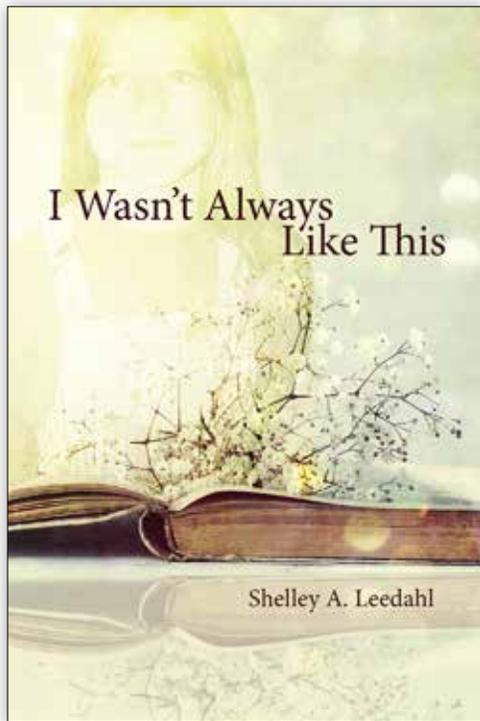




Signature
EDITIONS

FALL 2014



BIOGRAPHY, BIO026000, BIO022000
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 176 pp, 5.25 x 8.5, PAPER
 OCTOBER 2014

I Wasn't Always Like This

Shelley A. Leedahl

Some people claim they would like to walk away from their lives. Shelley Leedahl had the nerve to do it. Was it an act of selfishness, or self-preservation?

Provocative, candid, and engaging, these intimate essays explore the implicit complexities and contradictions when personal and professional lives both complement and clash. How can she be a good mother when her literary calling requires her to be away — sometimes countries away — from her school-aged children? How does she reconcile the fact she is often more comfortable with strangers in foreign countries than with her own kith and kin? Yet personal experiences — including travels near and far, parental dilemmas, relationship breakdowns, new love, emotional chaos, and the care taken in creating gardens — also inspire the work.

Leedahl digs deep into her well, drawing upon childhood memories, hikes and road trips, her self-imposed exile to a rural Saskatchewan village (and the cutting loneliness that ensued), fortuitous meetings with strangers, and her habit of jumping off cliffs and starting over, again and again.

A facility for gratitude and a generous capacity for awe permeate the individual essays in this assured collection. The subject of the writing life weaves through the book, and the interior life is revealed for what it is — beautiful and hideous, joyous and forlorn, singular and relatable.

It's been variously said—and famously so by Virginia Woolf—that every woman writer needs a room of her own.

I had a room.

It was not enough.

o o o

I am a 39-year-old woman, in love with my husband and having fun with my teenagers, and I have spontaneously just bought myself a house away from them all. Today, the day after I signed the deposit cheque and lined up a lawyer, I am four hours west and north of the city that's been making me crazy, raw nerve by raw nerve.

o o o

I could weep for all that's ahead of me. Solitude, and my own furniture. My own yard. The requisite planting around the house; the flowerbeds appear to have been neglected for years. A wood stove. Rooms that require scrap rugs. And paint.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Multi-genre writer **Shelley A. Leedahl** assuredly shifts her creative focus between critically acclaimed books of poetry, short fiction, novels, and children's literature. With *I Wasn't Always Like This*, the seasoned writer and popular presenter now adds creative non-fiction to her literary repertoire. Her numerous titles include *Wretched Beast*; *Listen, Honey*; *Orchestra of the Lost Steps*; *The Bone Talker* (with illustrator Bill Slavin); *The House of the Easily Amused*; and *A Few Words For January*. Leedahl's work has appeared in anthologies ranging from *The Best Canadian Poetry in English, 2013* to *Great Canadian Murder and Mystery Stories*; *Slice Me Some Truth: An Anthology of Canadian Creative Nonfiction*; *Country Roads: Memoirs from Rural Canada*; and *Outside of Ordinary: Women's Travel Stories*. Born and raised in Saskatchewan, Leedahl has been calling that province as well as Alberta and British Columbia home over the last several years. Aside from literary writing, she also works as a freelance writer, editor, writing instructor, and an advertising copywriter for two Edmonton radio stations.



Blue Vengeance

Alison Preston

In the spring of 1964 troubled teenager Cookie Blue dies in the Red River. Cookie's younger brother, Danny holds Miss Hartley, her despised gym teacher responsible.

Blue Vengeance follows Danny through a Winnipeg summer and fall, as he plots to kill her with a well-chosen stone and a slingshot. Janine Sénécal, a girl who had been Cookie's friend, and who harbours her share of secrets, insinuates herself into his plans as his accomplice. The connection between Danny and Janine is complicated by his growing love for her, and her fascination with an older boy, Rock Sand, who has his own secret that links him to their deadly scheme.

Danny's father is long gone, and his mother suffers from debilitating fatigue and pain – symptoms of fibrositis. In some ways their roles are reversed as he takes over the meal-making and other chores. But her illness and self-medicated state free Danny from certain restraints traditionally put upon a young teenager by a parent...like murder.

Danny stood bareheaded in the rain, watching his sister's coffin being lowered into the ground. A puddle was forming at the bottom of the grave. If they didn't hurry, it would turn into a pool. Cookie wasn't fond of getting wet. At Rock Lake she wouldn't even poke her toes in the water. She didn't understand going in the lake, not even as a young girl.

He wondered if he should mention it to someone, the minister maybe: hurry the heck up so Cookie isn't buried in a lake. Grownups could be an ignorant lot.

His mother had been weeping on and off for days with tears Danny didn't entirely trust. He couldn't bother her with his fears. He decided to speak out in a general way to the group at large.

"Cookie doesn't like the rain."

Aunt Dot, his mother's sister, darted over and encircled him with her arms.

"No, Danny, dear. She didn't like the rain."



MYSTERY, FIC022000

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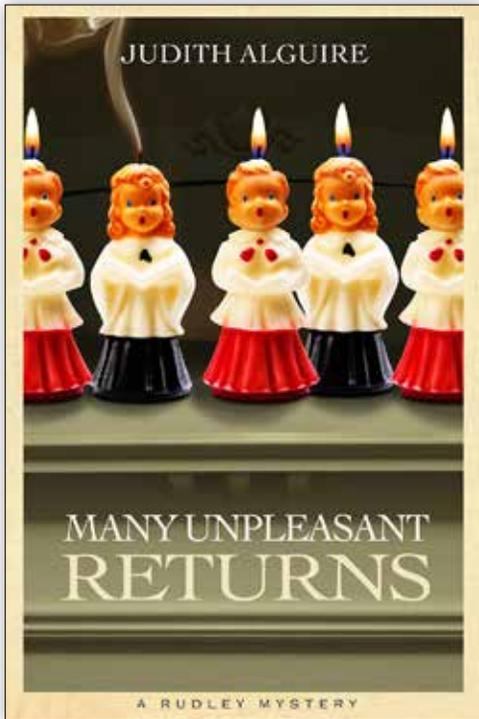
240 PP, 5.25 x 8.5, PAPER

OCTOBER 2014



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alison Preston was born and raised in Winnipeg. After trying out Calgary, London, Ontario and Vancouver, B.C. she returned to her hometown, where she currently resides. She is a graduate of the University of Winnipeg and was a letter carrier for 28 years. Alison has written seven novels, the first published by Turnstone Press, the last six by Signature Editions. Her last book, *The Girl in the Wall*, won the Margaret Laurence Award for fiction in 2012. Her quirky Norwood Flats mysteries take place in her own Winnipeg neighbourhood.



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Many Unpleasant Returns

A Rudley Mystery

Judith Alguire

Everyone at the Pleasant Inn is looking forward to Christmas. Oh, irascible proprietor Trevor Rudley has his usual complaints about Mrs. Blount and her floral arrangements. And he's sure he won't like housekeeper Tiffany's new beau, Dan Thornton. But it's Christmas. Surely nothing catastrophic could happen.

Bad things do happen, of course. The snow starts falling and doesn't seem to want to stop. Margaret Rudley runs into a man lying in the road during a whiteout. Walter Sawchuck almost chokes when someone doctors his Mrs. Dash. And those disturbing little dolls begin to appear, each one representing a gruesome event in the Pleasant's past. Then a dead body is found hanging from one of the chalets. As the snow continues to fall, paranoia at the Pleasant mounts.

The door opened. Lloyd came in, bringing a gust of wind that caught the door, came close to slamming it back against the wall.

"Did you find Margaret?"

"Did do."

"Where is she?"

"Back up the road, maybe a mile."

"What's she doing back up the road, maybe a mile?"

Lloyd unzipped his coat. "I got up the road, past that big maple, and there was Tiffany's car."

"Yes?"

"And the snowplough."

"Well, hell," Rudley said. "She got stuck ahead of the plough."

"Then the police car with all its lights flashing."

"And a police car?"

"Sounds like the usual so far, Rudley," said Aunt Pearl.

"And a line of cars waiting behind."

"Probably our first sitting for dinner." Rudley took a long breath. "Lloyd, did Margaret come back with you or not?"

"Couldn't do."

Rudley gave him a murderous look.

"Officer Ruskay was talking to her on account she ran into Santa Claus."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Judith Alguire is a Kingston, Ontario writer, whose previous novels include the Rudley mysteries *Pleasantly Dead*, *The Pumpkin Murders*, *A Most Unpleasant Wedding*, as well as two earlier novels, *All Out* and *Iced*. Her short stories, articles, and essays have appeared in such publications as *The Malahat Review* and *Harrowsmith*, and she is a past member of the editorial board of the *Kingston Whig-Standard*. A graduate of Queen's University, she has recently retired from nursing.



Tropéano's Gun

An Aliette Nouvelle Mystery

John Brooke

It's late January: cold, bleak, everyone waiting for a much-desired spring. On orders from HQ, Inspector Aliette Nouvelle is attending sessions with the police psychologist. The powers that be have ruled that Aliette's failure to carry her gun is directly related to the messy conclusion of a major murder case she led the previous summer. She must learn to use deadly force. There is practice at the police shooting range. There is counseling with the psychologist. Both are deemed vital to perfecting her aim.

The killing spree begins with savage knifings. When city-based Police Judiciare Inspector Pierre Tropéano becomes a victim, the knife is left. But his service arm is taken and subsequently used in more killings. The knife pulled from Tropéano's gut changes everything.

As she wanders the night streets, getting a feel for the gun in her pocket, Inspector Nouvelle finds clues to the whereabouts of Tropéano's gun —and a killer. But her unofficial investigation takes place off-duty and far from her allotted patch. One false step and she could lose her job. Or her life. Is she ready to use her gun?

Sergio Regarri gave his head a glum shake. "And it's complicated because Tropéano's gun is missing."

"No!"

"Afraid so."

Aliette got up to fetch another bottle and mulled the ramifications of that. Presenting bottle and corkscrew to Sergio, she suggested, "So maybe it isn't Spanghero. He'd have his own gun."

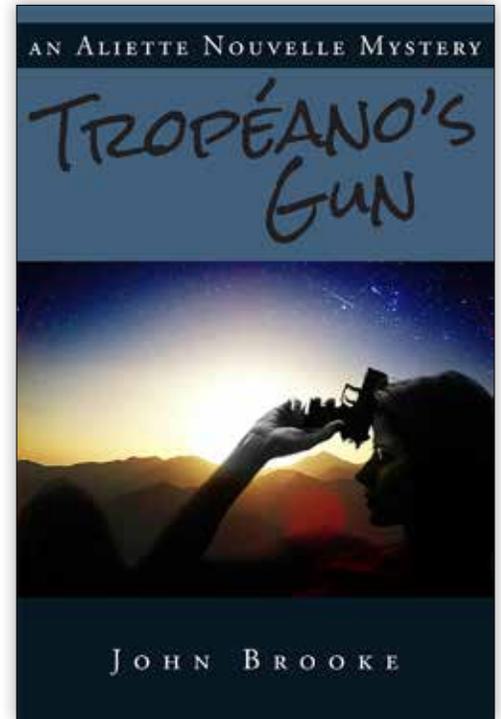
"Tropeano's service arm is unaccounted for — like him. He quit, but he never turned in his gun." He pulled the cork and tasted. Shrugged. Poured. "But if the knife's a gesture — returning Nabi's gift, as you say — so is taking Tropéano's gun. Like a warrior taking a scalp?"

"Mm. Nice image, monsieur." Yes, complicated indeed. "Another note?"

"They didn't find one... One of the crowd may have picked it up. Then forgot."

"They do that."

They talked about the possibility of a bitter cop on a deranged murder spree, a cop pissed that a kinky-haired Burr had got the top job, a job he had assumed was his. A cop who knew how to kill. Who'd snapped. The last thing a city needed as it lurched politically rightward, struggling to adjust to new French realities.



MYSTERY, FIC022020, FIC022040, FIC022020

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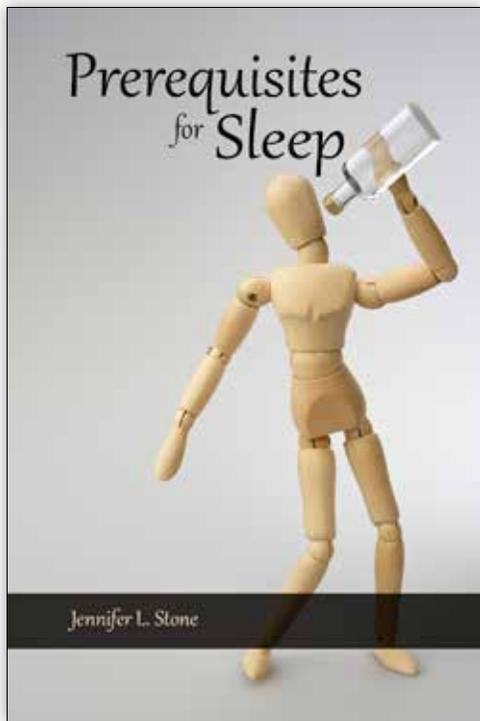
256 PP, 5.25 x 8.5, PAPER

OCTOBER 2014



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Brooke became fascinated by criminality and police work listening to the courtroom stories and observations of his father, a long-serving judge. Although he lives in Montreal, John makes frequent trips to France for both pleasure and research. He is a freelance writer and translator, has worked as a film and video editor, and has as directed four films on modern dance. Brooke's first novel, *The Voice of Aliette Nouvelle*, was published in 1999. There have since been five more titles in the Aliette Nouvelle series: *All Pure Souls*, *Stifling Folds of Love*, *The Unknown Masterpiece*, *Walls of a Mind* and now *Tropéano's Gun*. His poetry and short stories have also been widely published and in 1998 his story "The Finer Points of Apples" won him the Journey Prize.



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Prerequisites for Sleep

Jennifer L. Stone

The thirteen stories in *Prerequisites for Sleep* describe the bartering between individuals and their consciences at the end of the day; the deals and concessions one makes to live with oneself and to, hopefully, get a good night's sleep. The collection hinges on events that create the need for this nightly bartering. In "Double Exposure," a gay woman opts for a straight relationship. In "Stepsister," even fairytale decisions have real-life repercussions. In "Fragile Blue & Creamy White," an elderly woman grapples with her senile husband and the decision to put him in a home. Whether it is the decision itself, the need to make such a decision, the aftermath or the failure to make a decision, the characters will all have sleepless nights. And who among us doesn't? We recognize these characters in ourselves, our family, friends and co-workers. We recognize these decisions as similar to ones we have either faced or run away from.

Standing in the window, Anita continued to revisit the day in her thoughts. For her this is a nightly habit, rehashing the events of her life in twenty-four-hour segments, one of her prerequisites for sleep.

Richard had come to the wedding. Richard, who managed university the way she did, on part-time jobs and student loans, barely making ends meet as he worked his way towards being an heart specialist. She knew he would be excellent, he had already filled a hole in hers.

"It's up to you," he had said to her, "but I think you should go. Why stay home all alone when you can go out and enjoy yourself?"

That night with Kevin had been a fluke. Who would have thought they would run into each other at a party that Richard couldn't attend because he had to work? She and Kevin had been together several years earlier, the summer she was eighteen. No commitments, there were universities to attend and careers to secure. Sex was something that had happened between them. It happened again, aided by memories and alcohol.

There was the baby to think about. She considered an abortion, discussed the option with her doctor. He told her she needed to make a decision quickly, but she let the deadline pass. It wasn't that she was religious or that she thought it was wrong. Some days it seemed perfectly right; other days, not right for her.

The child could belong to either of them; both have similar features. Kevin was so excited when she told him. "We'll get married," he said. "I hope it's a girl."

— from "Prerequisites for Sleep"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jennifer L. Stone left Nova Scotia for Toronto in 1981. It wasn't until she returned, seventeen years later and saw her home province as an outsider, that she was inspired to begin writing. Her fiction has appeared in numerous literary journals including: *The Fiddlehead*, *The Antigonish Review*, *Grain*, *Other Voices*, *FreeFall*, *carte blanche*, *All Rights Reserved*, *The Wascana Review*, *Qwerty* and *Riddle Fence*. Her short story "Prerequisites for Sleep" was selected by Nelson Education Ltd. to appear in *Canadian Content*, Seventh Edition. In 2010, she was awarded first prize in *Grain's* 22nd Annual Short Story Contest. A graduate of Ryerson, York University and The Humber School of Writers, she has worked as a designer of advertising inflatables, a software instructor, and currently earns a living as a graphic designer.



Brilliant

Denise Roig

Brilliant is a collection of short stories set in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates, a polyglot city where cultures collide and converge, where money — and sometimes justice — is no object, where in less than two generations towers have replaced tents. In these dozen-plus stories, a mixed grill of characters — an Egyptian pastry chef, a Filipina nanny, a Canadian nurse, a cross-dressing Emirati — navigate this land of sudden plenty, discovering the limits of freedom, money, tolerance and their own good sense.

Several linked stories hinge on a hit-and-run bicycle accident in which Victor, an Australian expat, is killed. If the Emirati authorities know who's responsible, they're not saying. But more important than whodunit is the impact the accident has on Victor's racing mates, each wrestling with careers, women and the complex, dangerous pleasures of expat life in the richest city in the world.

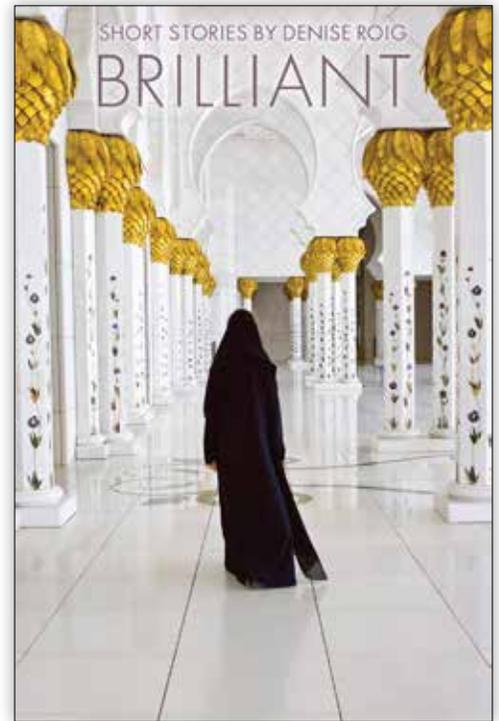
In the title story, a couple, who've spent their long marriage in the Gulf, are returning to Liverpool with nothing but memories of a lavish life. For all the years abroad, theirs has been a tiny, contained world, in many ways as insular as that of Asma in "Coffee," an Emirati girl searching for meaning and a little excitement in a life of unimagined wealth and entitlement.

Folded into these everyday lives are the myths and urban legends that swirl around the place like sand. In a society where a tourist can be jailed for taking photos of the wrong monument, yet where a sheikh can traffic in drugs with impunity, an underground life springs up — rich, extreme and sometimes darkly humorous.

Once, in the first year after she and Firaj moved to Abu Dhabi, to a compound in Al Mushrif, she'd heard screams coming from the villa next door, then an hour later an ambulance pulling into the shared drive. They had only a passing acquaintance with the neighbors, a couple from Belgium (a bit stuffy, but pleasant enough) and the two Filipinas who worked for them.

"I don't understand," she'd told Firaj. "What could they possibly need two maids for? They don't even have kids." And Firaj had explained that most likely one did the shopping and cooking, the other took care of the house. "Polishing the silver, who knows?" he'd said. "You'll never get this, will you? When money is no object, people don't have to do anything they don't feel inclined to do."

— from "Fridays by the Pool in Khalidiyah"



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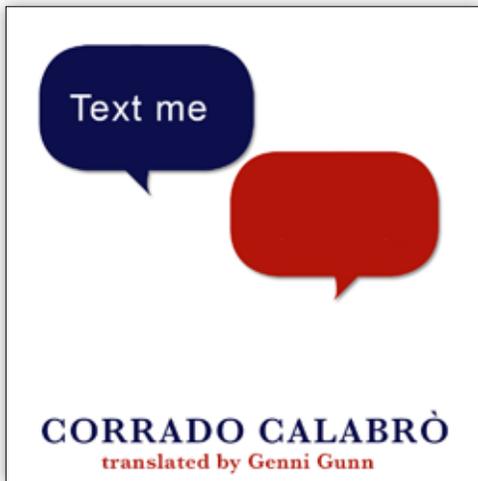
256 pp, 5.25 x 8.5, PAPER

OCTOBER 2014



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Denise Roig is the author of two critically received collections of short stories: *A Quiet Night and a Perfect End* (Nuage Editions), and *Any Day Now* (Signature Editions), and the memoir *Butter Cream: A Year in a Montreal Pastry School* (Signature Editions). Born in New York, raised in Los Angeles, and a longtime resident of Montreal, Denise moved to Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates, in 2008. She now lives in Hamilton, Ontario. Denise's first collection was translated in 2000 as *Le Vrai Secret du bonheur* (Éditions de la Pleine Lune) and her fiction has been heard on CBC's *Between the Covers*. As a journalist, Denise's work has appeared in *The Montreal Gazette* and *The National* (Abu Dhabi). Denise is the co-editor, with her husband Raymond Beauchemin, of two anthologies of Quebec English literature: *Future Tense* and *The Urban Wanderers Reader*.



Text Me

Corrado Calabrò, translated by Genni Gunn

Text Me is a collection of love poems between lovers, outlining through language and metaphor the many ways to say “I love you.” Calabrò’s poems often evolve from the experiences of the body: impressions of a sense, “Your cheek on my weary shoulder / the day pales, your lips pale / up, up, one more wing-beat / till we run out of oxygen”; an image, “In cold blood / the ice contrail of a Phantom jet /stabs the blue. / Like a blade in honey / you plunge your gaze into my heart”; to the memory of a contact, “We met and I kissed you / already consumed by the need to betray you.” His metaphors open the door to associations and memories. His poems move in a geography identified with the Mediterranean, and assume a representative role, an anonymous voice that bears our common load of love, sorrow and guilt.

“Corrado Calabrò pursues, with a tension that is both lyrical and philosophical, his own ultimate confession. Calabrò orchestrates stunning concerts for the mind, woven among a merciless feeling for existence, love, and time.” —*Pietro Cimatti*

“The great seascapes, the mythical apparitions happen in a lyrical absence of time....A hypnotic, nearly trance-like state is created: the words themselves become hallucinatory, they repeat and freeze the liturgy of love on the stage of a forever indifferent nature.” —*Renato Minore*

“In the velvet of night, vision rescues the poet and opens psychic scenarios in which the re-established contact with the forces of nature enables him to penetrate the mystery of life and the universe; penetrate but not decipher. The women he sometimes names in his poems (Jessica, Michelle, etc.), are nothing but masks of love, the true one, who doggedly pursues Calabrò, who has the ability to surprise him by the throat and who flows inexhaustible in his arteries.” — *Fabia Baldi*

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AUGUST, 2014

Intervals

*There are no notes
without silences*

*trains without stations
flights without landings*

*words of love
without white spaces.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & TRANSLATOR

Corrado Calabrò, born in Reggio Calabria, completed his first book when he was twenty and has since published seventeen more collections. His poems have been translated into more than a dozen languages and they have been collected in a theatre recital that toured extensively throughout Italy, Europe, Australia, and South America. His novel, *Ricorda di dimenticarla*, a finalist for the Strega Prize, was the basis for the 2006 movie *Il mercante di pietre*, (*The Stone Merchant*). In 2011 Calabrò was awarded The Cetonaverde Prize for career achievement.

Genni Gunn is an author, musician and translator. Born in Trieste, she came to Canada when she was eleven. She has published five books of fiction, the most recent, *Solitaria*, nominated for the Giller prize; two poetry collections, *Faceless* and *Mating in Captivity* – finalist for the Gerald Lampert Award), and two collections of poems translated from Italian —*Devour Me Too* (finalist for the John Glassco Translation Prize) and *Traveling in the Gait of a Fox* (finalist for the Premio Internazionale Diego Valeri for Literary Translation) by renowned Italian author, Dacia Maraini. She lives in Vancouver.

